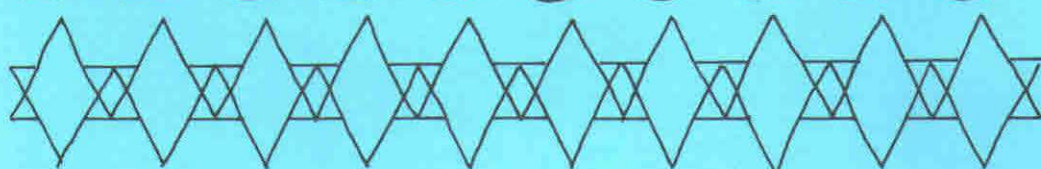
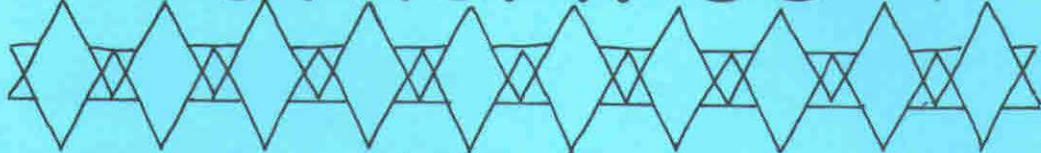


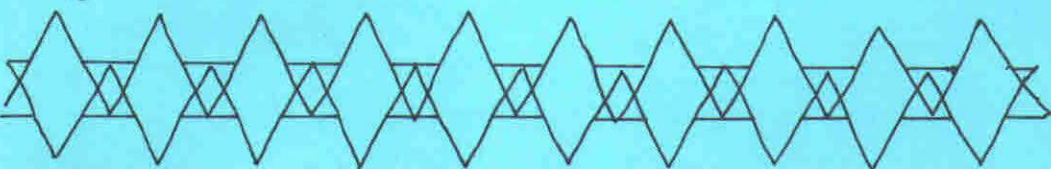
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otherwise



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THE NEXT ISSUE

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The Deadline for Contributions is:

1st July 1999

Please include your name, address and telephone number and mark material 'For Publication'. Contributions are more likely to be included if they are concise and it would be helpful if they were typed. Some Editors may be able to accept material on disc.

There will be a special section on the following subject;

Teenagers & EO - exams, college, work experience and all that

August '99 - deadline 1st July

Michael Allen 01792 523965

71 Belgrave Rd, Loughor, Swansea
SA4 6RF

Please share your experiences and expertise with other members and send your contributions as soon as possible.

DISCLAIMER

The opinions in this publication are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editor, nor of Education Otherwise as a whole. This newsletter is edited by a volunteer and its primary purpose is to provide support and communication between members.

All contributions (including adverts) have been accepted in good faith and have not been in any way endorsed by Education Otherwise which cannot be held responsible for the consequences of responding to any of them.

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EDITING THE NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter is edited by volunteers. If you would like to know more, please contact the Newsletter Coordinator.

**WE CURRENTLY NEED EDITORS
FROM THE
OCTOBER '99 ISSUE ONWARDS.**

EDITORIAL

Noel, Naomi (14), Sebastian (12), Carl (8) and I have all played our part in editing this newsletter. Naomi has produced the cover and science illustrations and Carl drew some pictures. I arranged and typed the material, Noel gave his opinion throughout and proofread the finished item, and Sebastian did some work from a maths book each day, without prompting, so that I did not feel guilty about neglecting his "education".

I wanted to produce a newsletter that focused on describing and celebrating what home-educated children actually *do*, rather than discussing the pros and cons of various educational philosophies. Coincidentally, I received several such descriptive accounts. I asked friends for one or two more and collected them under the heading of "Watching Children Learn". Anyone who reads the American "Growing Without Schooling" will know that this is a regular feature of the magazine. I think it is important that we celebrate our children's successes and achievements out of school, whatever they are, and that we are not shy about writing to the newsletter editor, or anyone else, to publicise them.

I should also like to highlight the importance of an organisation like Education Otherwise. We have been members for over 10 years now, and know of many, many people who have been helped and supported. If you are home-educating successfully and feel that you no longer need EO's support, please remember that many past and present members have worked hard to help dispel ignorance and prejudice about educating our own children. The climate is far more hospitable than it was 20 years ago, and far more children enjoy learning at home. But there are always new challenges to be met, and I hope we do not become complacent. I believe that every member should know that their contribution is valued and that their continued membership not only helps others, but promotes the acceptance of home education as a reasonable alternative to school. That is something from which we all benefit.

Christine Adey, Dunbury Cottage, Milton Abbas, Dorset DT11 0DH

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A SIMPLE PUMP
FOR RAISING LIQUIDS
A SHORT DISTANCE

SPECIAL SECTION

Book Reviews a Compilation

In our family we are definite bookaholics – or perhaps to be more formal we should be called bibliophiles! When I edited the newsletter last October, Su and I spoke about what I would write in an edition of my choice. I instantly stated "Books!" So I was asked to compile a list of book reviews, not on any particular subject – no workbooks, or reading schemes. We advertised not only in the EO newsletter but on the UK HomeEd, UL and HomeEd mailing lists on the internet. Thanks for all those who wrote and sent in book reviews.

Our own book collection is very varied from comic books (Calvin and Hobbes being a current favorite) to heavy textbooks and the technical manuals that Vin uses for work. We have just (two days before this was written) moved house, so our reading matter was limited and the books when unpacked were greeted joyfully. We now have two bookcases on the landing and two children that sit on the stairs and read – which can make access to the phone quite difficult!

Having compiled all the reviews, I felt that we should also supply our favorite so wandered around our new house and asked:

Matthew, when asked his favorite book, said: "Asterix" and "Tin Tin" books as they have lots of interesting things happening, but he also loves "Calvin and Hobbes" and models some of his behaviour on Calvin's;

Leah replied: Magic School Bus books, I like Liz and Ms Frizzle! Leah also loves poetry from modern to the classical Winnie the Pooh's "When we were Young" and "Now we are six";

Vin rereads the Dune series by Frank Herbert on a regular basis. The first two books are the best and he feels that they peter out after that. Vin also enjoys anything by Ian M Banks, otherwise he goes for computer books and textbooks;

I have just finished "The Lord of the Rings" I love fantasy and science fiction, my favorite authors include Anne McCaffrey and Sheri S Tepper. I am re reading "Raising a Son" by Don and Jeanne Elium (they also wrote "Raising a Daughter") to help me find ways of talking to Matthew as he is growing into what they call his "Tom Sawyer Years" risk taking and testing everything he can.

We have just started "The Wheel on the School" by Meindert De Jong and "Catwings" by Ursula Le Guin as our daily reads, I am waiting until we finish unpacking all of our books to find something else for me to read although I have just discovered a fourth installment to the "Wrinkle in Time" series by Madeline L'Engle so have ordered it – it has been some time since I read the previous three, so I'll have to re-read all the other books though.

But for my birthday last week I received a comic collection of "Rose is Rose" called "She's a Momma not a Movie Star!" which is at the moment my favorite book!

The Yearling by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings.

I think the book I most loved as a child was The Yearling by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. It is about a family in the 30's in Florida. The family is very honorable. The little boy finds a yearling and wants to keep it as his pet. It is the story of the little boy and his yearling struggling to survive and learn about life. It is a great book. Leslie Montemayor, Conyers, Georgia

Sheep in a Jeep by Nancy Shaw

Our favorite picture book is Sheep in a Jeep by Nancy Shaw. It's easy to read; the words flow, and there are no awkward parts to stumble over. It's short enough that Alex will let me hold the book and turn the pages, and if she does insist on doing it herself, I know all of the words. And since her daddy's hobby is rebuilding his old trucks --not Jeeps, but I can't find a picture book about International Scouts -- it's relevant. And it's a book that we found ourselves, not something that we were SUPPOSED to love.

A Dark Dark Tale by Ruth Brown

Another one that we really like is A DARK DARK TALE by Ruth Brown. The cat is on every single page - something that I didn't notice until 5:30 one morning when Alex was pointing at a tiny little speck on the stairs of the house and telling me it was a kitty. After I woke up and had my glasses on, I realized that she was right. There's NO way I would've made sense of that little dark blur on my own! Michelle in Salem, Oregon with Alex who is 2.

The Hiding Place by Corrie ten Boom

A true book (that I really like) details the involvement of a conservative Christian Dutch family in the hiding of Jewish refugees during WWII. "The Hiding Place" by Corrie ten Boom then goes on to tell of the family's experiences in prison and in the labor camps after they were arrested by the Nazis. I would recommend this book for anyone who blames the holocaust on Christians. It has also been made into a movie, but I learned more from the book. (caution: it is written from a Christian perspective) Barb Early

Sophie's World by Jostein Gaarder

"Diogenes lived in a barrel and owned nothing but a cloak, a stick and a bread-bag. One day, he was visited by Alexander the Great. The emperor stood before him and asked whether he could do anything for him - was there anything he desired? 'Yes,' replied Diogenes. 'Stand to one side. You're blocking the sun.' Thus Diogenes showed that he was just as happy and rich as the great man before him. He had everything he desired."

This story is from "Sophie's World" by Jostein Gaarder, a lesson in philosophy in the shape of a novel. It manages to encompass history, art, science, religion and sociology in an accessible and enjoyable way. The first few chapters are a little harder (it is apparent that this novel is a translation from another language and way of

life), but from the Greek philosophers on it is simply wonderful compulsive reading for all, teenagers upwards, who have ever wondered about the meaning of life and the world we live in.

It could even be the basis for a shared study based on reading it aloud together, story time for bigger kids.

J. Bain, Richmond, London.

The Chalice and The Blade by Riane Eisler

A decade ago, shortly after graduating from college, I began to become acutely aware of the human suffering and environmental degradation occurring all over the world. Since then, I've been searching for a common denominator to all of the seemingly disparate problems facing the world (child abuse, massive species extinction, failing educational system, people starving to death, etc.).

Recently, I've discovered *The Chalice and The Blade* by Riane Eisler in which she sets forth her "Cultural Transformation Theory". It is a theory that states that the way we structure fundamental social relationships between men and women dictates the way that society functions. Relationships can be structured with one half of humanity ranked over the other half, as we find in our current dominator social structure, or relationships can be based on a mutually respectful, equalitarian structure as was found in partnership societies of the distant past.

Through Cultural Transformation Theory, I learned how social structures, and particularly how our current social structures, are maintained. It also allowed me to see our current problems in a much broader historical context. An understanding of Cultural Transformation Theory then provides us with clues as to how systems changes occur and how we can move from the current dominator system to an equalitarian partnership system. Personally, this information has enabled me to define the type of work I would like to undertake in the world. This is one of those books that completely, and forever, changes how you look at the world.

Your Money or Your Life: Transforming Your Relationship with Money and Achieving Financial Independence by Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin

Your Money or Your Life revolutionized the way I relate to money! The key concept in the book is that if you have a job, you trade your "life energy" (our limited time on earth) for money. Commuting, costuming, meals, hired help (babysitters, house cleaners), daily decompression, escape entertainment, escape vacations and expensive playthings, and job-related illness all go into the calculation of your true hourly wage - what you're trading your life energy for. It's a very enlightening experience! Oftentimes, families find that they actually "spend" money to support a second wage-earner in their family! From there they give you three questions by which to examine your expenditures: "Did I receive fulfillment, satisfaction and value in proportion to life energy spent?", "Is this expenditure of life energy in alignment with my values and life purpose?", and "How might this expenditure change if I didn't have to work for a living?" It's a completely different way to regard money, your time and making choices about both that support your values.

From Renee Maxfield

Mouse Butcher by Dick King-Smith

My favorite book is the Mouse Butcher, by Dick King-Smith. It is the story of a cat named Tom and how he goes to work for a family of posh cats and how he fancies the daughter of the house. Also in the story a huge cat called General Mog who inhabits Mog's hall and how he comes to hate Tom and tries to kill him and how Tom traps and rids him from their company.

I found this book very entertaining, it always had something going on in it. It is in some places funny and in some serious and is a bit like a fairy tale.

Gregory Capon

Pippi Longstocking by Astrid Ericsson Lindgren

Hurray for Pippi! She's the quintessential example of a strong, independent, and creative girl who doesn't happen to go to school. (Well, she went for part of one day, which ended up being just another of her funny adventures.) She can turn a tea party or a housecleaning or a police chase completely upside down!

A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle

Meg Wallace and her younger brother Charles Wallace are two exceptional children in an exceptional family. When the tramp-like Mrs. Whatsit suddenly appears in their mother's lab in the middle of the night, life really takes a strange turn. The children realize they must be the ones to find their missing father. How will they escape the tesseract (the wrinkle in time)? Themes of bravery, creative thinking, and love prevail in this Newbery Award winner.

Review copyright 1999 by Jan K. France. All rights reserved worldwide. These reviews and additional ones for outstanding children's books appear on the web at: <http://www.dimensional.com/~janf/newbery.html> and <http://www.dimensional.com/~janf/wtkidsr.html>

The Celestine Prophecy by

Have you read "the Celestine Prophecy"? That book changed my thinking very much.

It is basically fiction about a 'manuscript' that was discovered in South America. The government and the church (catholic) were trying to destroy it. Yet many people by word of mouth became aware of its existence and content.

Each 'insight' was disclosed by being aware of your surrounding, like synergy. And talking to people. And it being the correct time for you to know (being ready and open). There is a wonderful chapter with a child that is truly great. It is a quick read, for me maybe 12 hours. And I am a slow reader.

Jill in Virginia

A FEW OF OUR FAVOURITE BOOKS

Books - where do we start?! Well here's just a few special ones (honest!)

Seth (4 1/2) has lots of favourites. A Cheese and Tomato Spider is his best funny book. The pages divide in half to allow for lots of implausible combinations like wiggly ice creams and grey haired cars. He also loves books by Mairi Hedderwick, especially Peedie Peebles Colour Book- in spite of the adults constant refrain Oh no, Peedie Peebles Peedie finds his own creative ways to get access to the paints as the family decorates and ends up with the best painted room of all. Hush - a Thai Lullaby by Minfong Ho is a mothers plea to all the animals to be quiet and let her baby sleep - meanwhile Holly Meades lovely illustrations tell another story of baby - out of his hammock doing his own thing. Seth loves the humorous contradiction between text and pictures. Seth (and all the others) love Korky Paul books, especially Winnie the Witch and The Rascally Cake - he enjoys the detail and the constant action and imagination.

Cottia (8) likes books with really lavish illustration and slightly bitter-sweet stories. The Boy and the Cloth of Dreams by Jenny Koralek (about a boy who finds his own courage when he has to gather threads from the sun and moon); The Whales Song by Dyan Sheldon (about a girl who hears the whales calling her name as she sits on the pier at night pondering of her grandmothers tales) and The Toymaker by Martin Waddell (about a little girls enduring relationship with her toymaker father) - all fit the bill. Cottia also likes quirky books with a good dose of wry humour. In The Witch Baby by Wendy Smith the little girls spells are never quite as expected, but a pink moon is a good compensation; in The Paperbag Princess by Robert Munsch Elizabeth not only outwits the dragon, but doesn't marry the snooty prince after all and in the short, but very funny, I hear a Noise by Diane Goode mother isn't always right, but the monster mother saves the day. If its a longer read that's required Cottia likes Dick King-Smith's Sophie series because she admires Sophie's down to earth determination.

Tamsyn (11) is the family social realist - at least when she's not enjoying a fantasy with its feet firmly in the realm of mythology. Shirley Hughs Stories by Firelight has lovely pictures, the favourite story being Sea Singing which tells a version of the Scottish Selky myth. In the past Tamsyn has really enjoyed Jill Murphys Worst Witch series - overcoming adversity being a favourite theme and some of the Helen Creswell books, particularly, The Little Sea Horse - a magical and slightly weepy tale of learning to let go. The Firework Makers Daughter by Philip Pullman with lots of action and the wonderful theme that anyone can do anything with enough creativity is another of Tamsyns favourites. Currently she is reading all of the Jacqueline Wilson books. She likes the way they deal with real issues in childrens lives - sick parents, homelessness, divorce, having a twin sister, being stereotyped by others etc. She really likes the resilience of the characters as well as the humour. Tamsyn also loves reading human biology books - an endless stream of borrowed library books with big illustrations of your insides!

Rowan (12) likes action in his books - wizardry, magic, adventure, suspense or horror (but not too much) are the elements he looks for. He's enjoyed many of the Goosebumps series and loved Michael Morpurgo's Arthur. He liked both the adventure and the victory over adversity in the sometimes surreal Krindlekrax by Philip Ridley - its a great new perspective on heroism. Rowan has also enjoyed The Indian in the Cupboard series by Lynne Reid Banks for its combination of historical detail and modern imagination and he likes reading factual history books, whether in

the form of Terry Deary's Horrible Histories series or articles on the Mongol empire gathered from the internet.

Mike loves science fiction. His favourite authors are Larry Niven, Robert Heinlen and Harry Harrison and a favourite individual book has to be Job by Robert Heinlen, in which a man ends up in a series of parallel universes finding himself tested by the devil and reaching his own definition of heaven. Mike also likes humour and particularly enjoyed Garrison Keelers Lake Woebegone Days for its wry look at ordinary life. Mike and Rowan share a passion for history and Mike loves history as it is filtered by Jane Austen and Anthony Trollope. He enjoys Austen's work because of her complex characterisations, which make the reader care what happens to these people and he loves Trollope for the dry humour, for his interesting exploration of the concept of justice and because he recognises the clergy in the books oh so well! Mike also enjoys older histories - Viking sagas or an out of print account of the Siege of Malta being just a couple of favourites dealing with the clash of cultures and Heroditus being a great travel book with a surprisingly modern style.

I enjoy novels, poetry and theology. Over the last year I've read several titles by Barbara Kingsolver and enjoyed them all. Her latest novel, The Poisonwood Bible deals, intelligently and with humour, with the tragedy that results when narrow thinking is imposed on others without cultural sensitivity. It also speaks volumes about human resilience, individuality and creativity. I am fascinated by literature which deals with the themes of belonging and identity and very much enjoyed Anne Michael's debut novel, Fugitive Pieces which tells the story of a Polish boy, who is the sole survivor in his village after a Nazi raid, and a single Greek archaeologist, who becomes his family. It is poignant and intimate without ever becoming sentimental or didactic. In a totally different genre I enjoyed Clarissa Pinkola Estes book Women who run with the wolves. It combines story telling, theory of mythology, feminist theology and elements of Jungian psychology to explore female development in western cultures. I don't share all of her theories, but as a feminist theologian I found it well written and a source of some interesting insights and possibilities. I also like reading poetry - anything by e.e.cummings (i like browsing the complete works whenever i have some solitude) and, more recently, I bought the new paperback edition of Ted Hughes, Birthday Letters - I'm very impressed at how such extravagant language and large simile can convey such detailed intimacy - it takes a lot of savouring.

Well that just about scratches the surface. Happy reading!

Jan Fortune-Wood et al

Dick King-Smith - Sophie's Snail, others in same series

A delightful series about a small but determined girl who is determined to be a lady farmer when she grows up. Teased by her older twin brothers, she plods through life adopting more and more pets, learning to ride, and developing a special relationship with her great aunt.

Shirley Hughes: Dogger, Alfie and Annie Rose series

Alfie and Annie Rose are now almost classic picture books, describing everyday living with two delightful children in a typical British home. The text is enjoyable, the pictures full of detail and charm. 'Dogger' is probably my favourite picture book of all time: it is the story of a child's much-loved toy, and how an older sister gave up

something she had won for the sake of her little brother. There are many other books by Shirley Hughes, all of which my children enjoyed when they were younger. Both the above are from Sue Fairhead from Cyprus, do visit the Fairfields book loving web site – the Fairheads' Home Education site:
<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Lake/3262>

Books for Autonomous Children

Why is the Sky Blue? Sally Grindley, illustrated by Susan Varley

A book that we discovered some time ago, and that has really struck a chord with me, is 'Why is the Sky Blue?' It is the story of Donkey, who is old and "knew a lot of things" and Rabbit who is young and "wanted to learn". Donkey offers to teach Rabbit what he knows, but he "can only teach you if you sit still and listen". Rabbit is very keen to learn but he has too many questions and is too busy to sit still and runs about the field discovering all sorts of interesting things for himself while Donkey sits complacently in his corner thinking he already knows everything. When Rabbit returns full of his discoveries Donkey is somewhat dismissive and announces it's time for his sleep, but agrees to another lesson tomorrow. Rabbit keeps promising "I will sit still, I will sit still and listen" but he just never seems able to contain himself. Eventually when one day Rabbit does not return Donkey ventures out in search of him and finds there is knowledge and experiences out there that he did not know about, or had forgotten. It is a most wonderful little tale of passion and enthusiasm for learning and exploration and I highly recommended it (Quotations courtesy of Andersen Press Ltd.)

"How Tom beat Captain Najork and his hired Sportsmen", and "A Near Thing for Captain Najork" by Russell Hoban, illustrated by Quentin Blake

My second enthusiasm which we came across when Lewis was small are the tales of Tom and Captain Najork. Tom lives with his Aunt Fidget Wonkham Strong, who spends her life trying to get him to learn pages of the Nautical Almanac (whatever that is?) while Tom spends his time 'fiddling about', much to her annoyance. When she calls in Captain Najork to sort him out it becomes apparent that during the course of all this 'fiddling about' Tom has acquired many valuable skills, which enable him to defeat the Captain. In the end he match-makes between his aunt and the Captain and he goes off to find himself a new aunt, more amenable to the life he wants to lead. In "A Near Thing..." Tom creates a fantastic 'Jam Powered Frog' and has a race with Captain Najork. From the ensuing mayhem they all emerge relatively unscathed, apart from the headmistress of the Girl's Boarding School across the river! Tom is an all round amazing and inspiring character and Aunt Bundlejoy Cossyweet (his replacement aunt) is a wonderful image of a laid-back HE parent.

When the bookshops and libraries sometimes seem so full of the 'Topsy and Tim go to School' type titles it is lovely to find such great images of another way of learning for young children.

My final plea is from our family's passion for Dr Seuss. Basically there is something for everyone, from the simplest toddler books, easy first readers (yes they have a restricted vocabulary, but you'd never know it), lots of silly stories, through to books like 'The Lorax' which tackles environmental destruction. I enjoy reading his books aloud because they are in rhyme, which also makes them easy to remember,

something very important to young children. There is lots of word play and invented words, silly rhymes and crazy imaginary creatures. He shows children that it is okay to play with language, to put incongruous things together, to write meaningless things and have them make sense in their own context. The man must just have had the most incredible imagination, his world is the kind of place children would love to live.

You can get most of his more popular books from ordinary bookshops, but for some not widely available, and for all sorts of other fun too, visit the Seussville website on www.randomhouse.com/seussville

Martine Archer, 3 Brookfield, Hampsthwaite, Harrogate, HG3 2EF.

Homeschooling books that made me change my mind:

Teenage Liberation Handbook, by Grace Llewellyn

This book really blew me away! It opened my mind up to so many possibilities - so many alternatives to the traditional textbook. I began to think of all the things that I might have accomplished had I come across this book as a teenager and how different my children's lives could be as a result of these new ideas.

The Homeschooling Handbook and The Unschooling Handbook, both by Mary Griffith

The Homeschooling Handbook is a very well-rounded book which explores many methods of homeschooling. I found it to be a very reassuring and encouraging book at a time when I was experiencing doubts about homeschooling. It is also a good book to give to doubting relatives.

The Unschooling Handbook is great for any family who is thinking of unschooling, beginning to unschool, or just wants a little more reassurance about their unschooling choice. It's also a great book to give to doubting relatives who are having a hard enough time accepting the homeschooling, let alone the unschooling!

The Successful Homeschool Family Handbook, by Raymond S. Moore, Dorothy Moore

This book I discovered after we had been homeschooling for just a few months. I was beginning to get burnt out and we'd only been at it for 5 months! I just couldn't imagine continuing to homeschool the way we were for much longer. Dr. Moore's books (and not just this one but many of his others) helped me see that I could relax what we were doing and the world wouldn't end. He also helped me accept the fact that my youngest was going to be a late reader and that I shouldn't push reading on him.

Learning All the Time, by John Holt

I have not read all of Holt's books, but have read several of them. I need to reread them again, I think, because I can't tell you which one I got what from. All of them, though, helped me see the potential in my children and the part that I had in helping them reach that potential.

In Their Own Way, by Thomas Armstrong

This book helped me with learning styles. My children learn so much differently than I and Armstrong's books helped me realize this. I was able to change the way I present some things, or the types of materials that I purchase for my children, because of the information I learned in this book.

Cafi Cohen's And What About College? and Allison McKee's From Homeschool to College and Work: Turning Your Homeschooled Experiences into College and Job Portfolios_.

These both helped me not to obsess over the high school years and to see that there are many alternatives to the traditional transcript process. I guess they kind of reinforced the "Teenage Liberation Handbook" in a very concrete way - providing examples from their own children's lives.

Karen from Alabama

URLs for Book reviews:

<http://www.underhill.nildram.co.uk/>

<http://www.dimensional.com/~janf>

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Lake/3262/readaloud.html>

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/index.html>

http://www.maastech.com/Books_Books_Books.html

<http://homearts.com/depts/relat/bookintr.htm>

<http://edfu.lis.uiuc.edu/puboff/bccb/>

<http://www.carolhurst.com/titles/allreviewed.html>

<http://www.fgcom.demon.co.uk/>

<http://www.secondstartotheright.com/>

<http://www.geocities.com/Broadway/Stage/4935/>

Other useful sites:

There are sites where you can find out the title of that book you remember reading when you were very young - a few details remain in your memory? Try <http://www.az.com/~dday/books.html>

Favorite authors also often have sites - you can write to them and they sometimes write back!

<http://www.janbrett.com/>

<http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/author/say/index.html>

HTTP://www.friend.ly_net/scoop/index.html

A site that allows you to write book reviews and read what other kids have said about their favorite books:

<http://www.worldreading.org/>

Have a search on line – you can connect to the Internet at some libraries, try searching under "Books AND reviews".

Resources of GOOD books:

Your Library! Most will allow you to request books, if you need to pay it is usually less than the book would cost to buy.

Chinaberry Catalog – this is a US catalog that I love, originally I wasn't going to mention it as the shipping costs are prohibitive. The shipping can double the cost of your order (in dollars). However two separate people wrote and asked me to mention it so here it is – one also pointed out that it is more common to have friends or relations in the states and they can ship any items surface mail which cuts the costs. I also organise orders around visits (either way) and have known someone to have a package shipped to the New York office of her husband's employer when he was going over for a business trip (with permission of course). Yes, the selection is that good!

Chinaberry Book Service Inc. 2780 Via Orange Way, Suite B, Spring Valley, CA 91978 Tel: 00 1 619 670 5200 Fax: 00 1 619 5203 and open 6am – 6pm (Pacific Time – eight hours behind UK) Monday to Saturday.

HERO books is run by an UK Homeschooling family and carries some homeschooling books – see ad pages.

Your local bookstore will order any book in print for you if you can supply them with an author, title and even better ISBN. I have had more luck with independent stores, they seem to be concerned with customer satisfaction more than the bigger chains.

For those times you are not able to read (during meals is our favorite) cassettes of story telling or books being read aloud are wonderful. We love the selection that Chinaberry carry, you can also request them from the library if there is a particular title that the library doesn't carry (same system as the book request service).

I have also had recommended to me "The Talkingbooks Book Shop" 0171 491 4117 or looking on their web site: <http://www.talkingbookclub.co.uk>

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ARTICLES

Albert Einstein, Jessica Mitford, Gerald Durrell – all gifted, passionate, shining – and none of them went near a classroom. What does that tell us?

By David Cohen

No matching socks, no clean knickers and where's the reader? Stuff down the cornflakes, dash for the door. Every school morning, the same last-minute hectic dash. If there's one thing Nineties parents are absolutely sure of, it is that a "proper" education is the prime determinant for success in life. We'll move home and hearth to get our pride and joys into the right catchment area, to get them in at 9am and out at 3pm, to read and write on cue, all in the name of providing the best possible start to their hopefully "brilliant" careers.

And then, when the little darlings are safely packed off, we sit down with a steaming cuppa, open the newspaper and read in the obituaries: "Gifted, shining, passionate, brilliant – and never went to school!" It's enough to make you choke on your biscuit.

Last week it was Jessica Mitford, the celebrated English author of *Hons and Rebels* and *The American Way of Death*, who died, aged 78. She had never been to school but was educated instead – along with her five talented sisters – by her mother at the family home in Swinbrook in the Cotswolds. There she devoured the collected works of Bertrand Russell (also educated at home) by the age of 12, penned her first novel by 15 and developed the remarkable traits that would allow her to lead such a fiercely individual and colourful life.

Last year it was Gerald Durrell, naturalist and author of 35 books including the acclaimed *My Family and Other Animals*, whose obituary declared that he was home-educated from the age of three. His naturalist instincts, we read, were apparent from the start: his first word was "zoo" and he learnt the basics of maths through a series of calculations involving the body parts of bugs and beetles. When he was 14, Durrell was deposited in a public school, but his headmaster mocked him as "the most ignorant boy he had ever come across" and he was soon whisked away.

The list of famous people, both living and deceased, who have appeared to thrive from an unorthodox education is impressive. Scientists Albert Einstein, Isaac Newton and Thomas Edison were all self-taught or home educated. The Bronte sisters, Beatrix Potter, Louisa May Alcott, CS Lewis, George Bernard Shaw, Agatha Christie, Noel Coward, Doris Lessing, Sue Townsend and Mary Wesley head a long list of writers whose parents elected not to send them to school.

Their education conjures forth an image not of quadrangles and classrooms, but of wandering through woods, communing with nature, indulging in outrageous flights of fancy, reading under trees and passionately following interests. Their books – like *Little Women*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Secret Garden* – portray childhood as a realm of wonder, innocence, insight and imagination, a land close to the spiritual source from which the rest of us are cut off as we grow older.

It is an evocative view of childhood that many parents subscribe to in the early years of parenthood: allowing what is

there to come out, letting them learn at their own pace, delighting in what they can do rather than worrying about what they can't.

Why does the lack of formal education seem to produce such extraordinary people? Or are we just talking about extraordinary talented people who would have succeeded anyway? The latter is hard to prove, but events of the sort that befell Thomas Edison – his teacher said his brain was "addled" and wrote him off as "uneducable" – so permeate the literature that one questions whether their confidence would have survived the school system.

Yehudi Menuhin, 80, who by the age of 10 had spent less than a day at school, puts it thus: "I have no academic training at all, relying only on my own reading, philosophy, thought, and breadth of experience. In a way, my lack of formal education means that I can distance myself from details and take a broader view of problems that face us."

The space to develop an original take on life is a common thread running through the lives of the unconventionally educated.

Sue Jennings, famous within her field as a pioneer of drama therapy in the UK, never went to school until the age of eight and even then, it was only a tiny village school with two rooms. "My passion was for the theatre and for ballet," she says. "I was very self-motivated – I used to get up at 5am to do three hours of practice voluntarily. I had phenomenal energy. The most tiring thing is doing something that one doesn't see the point of, but I was doing what I loved, so I was never tired. I was reading Shakespeare by the age of nine. I used to make up my own choreographies and entertain the family using my sister as a guinea pig. It

wasn't work, it was play, but it wasn't a free-for-all. I very much had a formal lesson pattern run every day by my mother."

Much to her chagrin, Jennings's alternative education came to an abrupt halt when she was deposited in a conventional secondary school. She found it stultifying, hated every minute and became expert at developing fake temperatures to bunk off the lessons – like science – she hated most. She left after completing her O-levels, burning her uniform, books and hat in an impressive funeral pyre on the day of departure.

Does she feel she would have been different if all her schooling had been in the orthodox lane? "I may not have developed the courage to be who I am. For me home education is all about developing the courage to be who you are. Courage not to assume that other people know best, to challenge the status quo, to make the right choices for you and not to be defensive about it. The headmaster could not understand why, with my grades, I did not want to go on to university. I had much more exciting plans. I went to university when I was 33 because that was when I was ready. Later I pioneered drama therapy, which is about helping people to unlock their creativity. It's about reactivating their capacity to play, a lost art for many people after going through the rigours of the school examination system."

Zoe Readhead, daughter of AS Neill and now principle of Summerhill, the alternative school founded by her father in Suffolk with an extraordinarily liberal regime, where pupils can choose to go to lessons or not, says that it doesn't surprise her that so many famous people had such an unconventional education. "They have been given the space to pursue their passion. A

passion by definition, is something that requires you to give up almost everything else to follow that route. In conventional schools, children are not allowed to follow their passions and so their gift is lost and their energy is directed into cheating the system. How useful is that?"

But surely the cost of following one's passion is enormous gaps in one's education? "So what" says Readhead, "I'm hopeless at maths – can't multiply or divide – but I find that I don't really need it. The things I do know are far more important to me." It's like the difference between having a football coach who, rather than trying to make you into the complete player, is happy to let you play to your strengths. "If not knowing how to add does bother you, you can take your GCSEs when you're 70. Education doesn't finish just because you've left school," she says.

Indeed, going to university early – as in the case of mathematical genius Ruth Lawrence, who went to Oxford age 13 – or late, like Sue Jennings, is common with home learners. They learn to respect their own pace. And because their education never formally began, so the process of learning never ends.

Interestingly, very few famous rock stars have had an unorthodox education. They need, it appears, the conforming cage of conventional or religious schools to fuel the energy that they burn on stage.

But it is also a fact that most of the famous figures educated at home are either elderly or dead. As Mary Wesley, author of *The Camomile Lawn*, admits, being educated as she was by a series of governesses at home wasn't that unusual for upper-class girls in the Twenties and Thirties. While boys, like her brother, were sent to Eton and on to

Oxford, education was regarded as useless for girls who were "just waiting to be married."

So is home education still viable in the "classless and sexually liberated" Nineties? According to Education Otherwise, an organisation set up in 1977 to support parents who decide to educate their children at home, at least 25,000 families throughout the UK choose to do so. They are all different. Some are hothouses. Others adopt the philosophy of following the child's interests. Some home educators still dress their children in school uniform and make them sit behind a table, though such types are rare. The only thing they have in common is a shared dedication to their children's upbringing.

Caitlin Moran, 21, who wrote her first novel, *The Chronicles of Naremo*, at age 13, was home educated from the age of 11, along with her five siblings, by her mother, Margaret, a member of Education Otherwise. No green fields or lush woodlands for them. Just an overcrowded 3-bedroom council flat in Wolverhampton.

"We had cabin fever and hated each other. In between fights, we taught ourselves. My mother gave us a couple of lessons, then said – you know where the library is, here's a computer, now we get on with it. And we did. I didn't waste time on things that were supposed to be good for me, but did what I fancied. I got into cake decorating and witchcraft. Then I wrote my first novel. People still persist in asking me: do you know much about maths? I say no, but I know enough about English and how to use words to earn loads of money. And so I can hire an accountant who knows loads about maths and probably likes it. That shuts them up."

Was she lonely at home? "Oh yeah. But that's part of what made me who I am. I had no friends, so I constructed a huge imaginary world. I resented it like **** at the time, but now I'm pleased because if I had continued at school, I would have gone to Cambridge and I'd be there now, making loads of friends, and they'd all be saying: "When we leave university, we'll write novels and TV sitcom," whereas I grew up with such unbounded self-confidence that I've already done those things and am now working on a novel about drugs, and another about sex and rock. I'm trying to cover all the big themes by the age of 25."

The abiding impression of parents prepared to take their children out of school is one of enormous dedication to their children. Indeed, according to Caitlin her mother is a "groovy person who loves motherhood".

But for most parents, the morning still comes when they wrap up their little 'un in scarves, tie up his boot laces, stuff a Disney lunch box in his bag and say: "You're starting school today". The excitement of launching their child into the big wide world soon wears off to be replaced by a very unarticulated, private grieving as they become dimly aware that the uniqueness of their child - the side most developed, precocious and yes, eccentric - is being ironed out by the narrow formality of the conventional school system. Most parents adjust quickly because they perceive no real alternative. Home education is redolent of an age which ended circa the 1930s, an age when it was fashionable to be eccentric, when careers were less structured and when "passing exams" was less critical to life success. Even the Royal Family sends their children to school nowadays.

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EQUIPMENT REVIEW

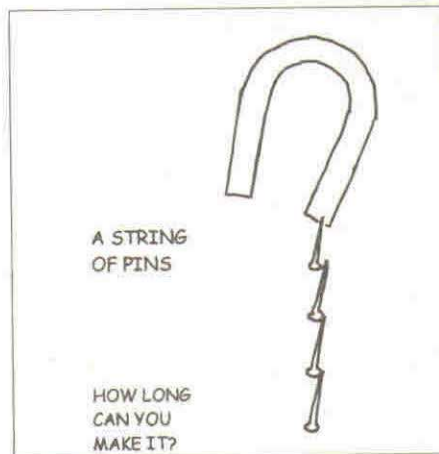
Check-O-matic

If you are looking for a fresh approach to basics, you may find Check-O-matic a useful tool. The starter pack is designed as an exciting and enjoyable method of learning for children aged 6 to 12 and over. As children only need to know the alphabet and numbers to 25 to use it, they can work at their own pace, without having to write. There are no batteries, bulbs or levers.

It may be useful to children who need a fresh approach or who will enjoy the reinforcement of a different approach. The inventor, Carl Schyberg, is sufficiently confident of his product to offer "a prompt and courteous refund" if you are not delighted with it and if you return it within 30 days.

The Check-O-matic game, starter book, tables book and record sheets cost £19.97 including postage & packing. Contact Check-O-matic Ltd, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 7QV Tel. 01227 372002 or fax 01227 369 378.

Hilary Allington, 1 Trebllan Drive, Hemel Hempsted, Herts HP2 5EL



THE HOME EDUCATION CONFERENCE 1999

*Held at the Friend's Meeting House,
Euston Road on April 8th and 9th*

My wife and I went as salesmen to sell our *Non-Stop Reader*. We came away as converts to the cause of Home Education. Here, briefly, is why:

What impressed us most immediately was the general atmosphere. This was helped by the physical surroundings, an uncramped and well-equipped hall (comfortable seats and microphones that worked), a pleasant courtyard (for picnic-lunching), and a well-stocked playroom (for the younger members), but by far the most important factor was the admirable parents (no angry words to their children) and the no less admirable children (who never gave cause for any).

There was much to see. Our neighbours in the display room were celebrated Home Education names – *Education Otherwise*, Roland Meighan's *Educational Heretics Press*, John Holt Books, Dorling Kindersley and others. But there was even more to hear. The speakers included Peter Kindersley (himself home-educated), Alan Thomas (author of *Educating Children At Home*), Professor Wragg from Exeter University, Roland Meighan and his wife, and two champions of home-schooling in the USA, John Gatto and Pat Farenga. There were also panel discussions and sessions open to questions from the floor, too many to summarise one by one. I shall just give our main impressions.

First came the astonishing facts and figures. Despite having had over ten years at school, one in five adults (both here and in USA) are effectively illiterate, one in seven (in USA) cannot

identify America on an unmarked map of the world and one in four cannot name the Pacific. Other thought-provoking things we heard were:

- Schoolchildren spend 50% or more of their time waiting
- 90% of what you are told in a school lesson you forget by the end of it
- An alert 5 year-old asks questions at the rate of 30 per hour. How many of them can a class teacher answer?
- In academic achievement, schoolchildren are on average 1-2 years behind home-educated children
- The story of the headmaster who told a boy, "Of course you'll be bullied if you bring books to school and read them"

Bullying, believe it or not, was explicitly approved of by a Harvard educationist in 1918 because it helped to enforce the conformity of thought and behaviour necessary in a mass-production age. This horrifying view of the purpose of education was, it appears, very "scientific" and very fashionable in the US at the turn of the century.

Two important points were new to us and immediately convincing. One was that the universal first reaction to the idea of home education, "What about social life?" was the wrong way round. "Social life experience" at school is narrow and unnatural. The other children you meet are all of your own age (and perhaps sex): the adults all belong to the same profession, and, as teachers, stand to you in a most peculiar and unnatural relationship. In a normal home-based life, on the other hand, there will be a broad spectrum. And the proof is in the product, or so it is claimed. The home-educated teenager is not only more independent and strong-minded but also much more at ease in society than his schooled equivalent. Certainly the claim seemed

to us to be borne out by those at the Conference, especially the ones who appeared on the dais as panel-members and who answered questions as confidently and articulately as any of the adults.

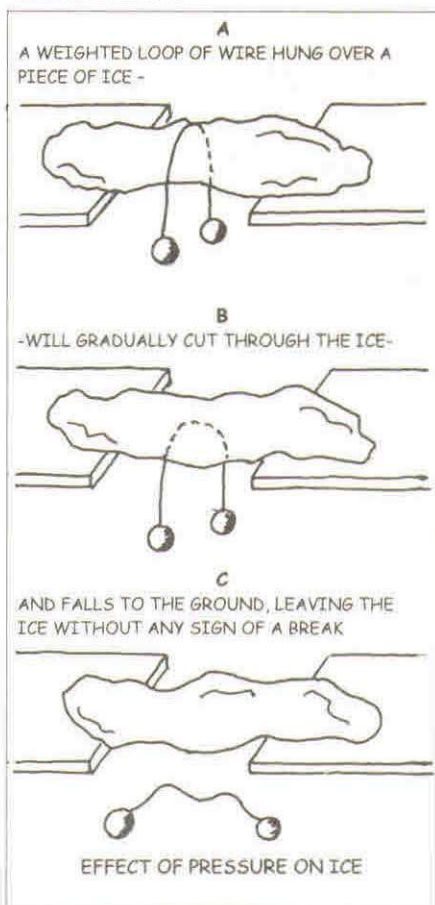
The other point was most powerfully made by Alan Thomas. This was that to begin with, most people see home education as simply "school at home" with the bonus of one-to-one contact. They start off with formal lessons in a formal timetable. This works reasonably well. Gradually the formality gets whittled down and restricted to morning only. This works better. The third stage is for the formality to disappear. The child learns (as he did up to the age of 4) by living with you and being a help round the house. If the parents talk to him, answer his questions or get them answered and foster his curiosity about the world, this stage works best of all.

Another topic was the law. Parents were given advice and re-assurance. Not only is home education perfectly legal, but there is no need to follow a prescribed syllabus, let alone enter for certificate examinations. The only requirement is that the education be suitable. Very few home-schoolers have been taken to court for non-compliance, and when they have been, the courts have almost always found decisively in their favour. And as for LEAs, very few are hostile. Most are passive, and a few are positively helpful. Future developments also came under discussion. One image particularly attracted me, that instead of being in the role of judge or prison officer or expert in crowd control, a teacher should be like a travel agent, helping the individual choose what he wants and then advising how to get there. It was also pointed out that the choice between "home" and "school" need not be a stark either/or one. Flexible arrangements

(i.e. school for only some subjects) are possible in theory. They depend on the headteacher's consent, but this is by no means always hard to obtain.

Those who did not attend this extremely successful conference can get a video of it and/or audio tapes of some of the lectures from its organiser, Malcolm Muckle. Better still, they should write to him and urge him to stage another next year.

Maurice Pope, 26 Lathbury Road,
Oxford OX2 7AU



CONCRETE POETRY
EASTER-WINGS

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most Poore:
With thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did beginne:
And still with sicknesses and shame
Thou didst so punish sinne,
That I became
Most thinne.
With thee
Let me combine
And feel this day thy victorie;
For, if I limp my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the fight in me.

George Herbert

Bacon butties are poems. Eating poems does not go down well with the hungry, but the word POETRY comes from the Greek meaning, *made thing*. So making a meal can be a poem. Indeed, some artists do make meals as artworks. 'Concrete poetry' uses this 'thingness' definition to manipulate letters, words and typographic marks in sculpture poems, visual poems, sound poems and semantic poems.

Playing with words is an important part of traditional poetry, juggling meaning and ambiguity. Concrete poetry throws up the basic elements of words, giving parts of letters and punctuation equal importance with blank space. Concrete poems are seldom featured in anthologies of ordinary poetry because meaning, rather than significance, and emotion, rather than meditation, are the mainstay of everyday life. They are nearer illustrations than lines of type, and not so near music and the spoken word as yawling cries and wordless joy

shouts.

The using of individual words decayed to sound bits or bites, or their repetition like Chinese whispers, or phrases relished out of context is similar to the first attempts of children towards language. Spontaneous pieces of 'meaningless' sound are useful when a child who has had too much stress has come to the cuddle or reclusive phase and is ready for the world, but still sensitive to mistakes. It is best if it guided rather than controlled, and if there is a definite end; and also if an adult or two joins in. Visual poetry is in the province of road-signs, labels, packaging, advertising and all the stuff we're told to point out to children who are learning to read.

This rich commercial and information environment can be recreated at home using homemade words, not brand names. Collections can be made of picked-up letter-shapes: Smartie tops, lolly sticks, the odd license plate number, twigs often look like letters, parts of packaging. If this seems too rubbishy, the equivalent can be bought. These can be used to label objects, make three-dimensional models and mobiles. With so many shops going out of business, one phone call to the previous owners or the agent, a ladder, a screwdriver and some wheels, can make you the proud owner of some exceptionally sturdy lettering.

If you have access to a garden, letter-shapes can be pinned on areas of grass and left till the colour of the ground changes. If you live on the ground floor, you can trace large letters on an outside window (eg the word OUT) and pin some large letters to the opposite interior wall (eg IN). Then, if the sizes are well worked-out, you can go outside and move around to see IN go in and out of OUT.

There are pattern poems and shape poems. In the first, not usually called concrete, normal lines of verse make a shape by the length of lines increasing or decreasing (eg Dylan Thomas), or the straight lines typographically re-arranged (eg Appolinaire 'Il Pleut', where the lines fall like rain). Shape poems are specially drawn letterforms so the words stretch and squash into the object they describe.

There are also 'Wordles' (by Paul Sellers) and Dingbats, where words express their sense visually.

Semantic poems can be made by using 'nonsense' statements like "colourless green ideas sleep furiously", which are sensible as sentence construction, but useless. This can be elaborated by mixing the word order.

All these ideas can then be translated into painting or collage, woodwork, metal, brick (or even concrete!). Books on Pop Art can be found in local libraries for examples of words as the main element of pictures. The Dada movement, especially Kurt Switters, used rubbish as a political statement against the Nazi party. So much of Concrete Poetry is primarily visual that you will be likely to find it in the Art Section.

Information on Concrete Poetry can be obtained from the Poetry Library at the South Bank, London, or better still, at the local library for the anthologies by Mary Ellen Solt and Hansjorg Mayer, then maybe this neglected form will become better known.

Damian Robin

(This article first appeared in the Poetry Supplement of issue 92 of the EO newsletter, June 1993).

IDEAS FOR WRITING

Adverts announcements brochures bumper stickers cartoons
complaints contracts diaries documents exaggerations explanations
fashion articles folklore game rules greeting cards headlines
horoscopes interviews invitations job applications jokes labels lists
magazines menus nonsense nursery rhymes obituaries observations
proposals protest letters quizzes quotations ransom notes recipes
slogans spoonerisms titles tongue twisters uncertainties
underground messages vignettes valedictories wanted posters wills
yellow pages yourself zero tolerance statements zither songs

WATCHING CHILDREN LEARN

MANAGING A LARGE FAMILY

A mother writes about her family's experience of home education in a large family. Cilla Nicholson and her husband have 9 children.

We home-educate our 9 children. Most days we choose to work on a structured basis doing maths and English projects, but some days they are free to play and nothing "educational" is accomplished, and then other days we just have a great family day out, running wild on a North Devon beach.

Our decision to home educate was taken after a great deal of thought and research, and we took the three school age children out of the local village school in October '97. With 9 children aged under 9, we realised it would take a lot of commitment, patience, organisation and sheer hard work! My husband had unfortunately just been made redundant, but having him around the house all day to help out with all the children has been a godsend! I had the added advantage of having been a primary school teacher before my children arrived, so was fully aware of the commitment involved.

Activities start on the dining room table as soon as the breakfast dishes have been cleared away. I try to do an English and a maths task with the eldest four every day. They are now aged 9, 8, 7 and 6. Last week, for example, we were working together on division and also on a project about the planets. I do admit that it does take a lot of preparation to get suitable work ready for each age group. Are we unique in having such a large family involved in home education? But the wonderful family days out we have at tourist

attractions deserted in mid-week, or playing on empty beaches, certainly make up for the few late evenings spent preparing tasks and projects. The rest of the day is spent playing, going for long walks, working together on art and craft items, cooking, painting, gardening and doing musical instrument practice. Our house is always busy, always noisy, and with 8 brothers and sisters, there is always someone around to play with.

My patience has increased four-fold and I have become adept at doing a multitude of things at the same time. We don't use a set timetable (knowing that we would never be able to keep to one). Some of the best ideas and projects are produced on the spur of the moment, carried along by the unhindered enthusiasm of the children, like working together on making a kite one windy day. This morning I was sorting our maths problems, listening to a story of Peter Pan being read aloud to me, holding a discussion with 4 year-old twins about building a Lego model, and trying to read my mail all at the same time ... oh, ... and I forgot to mention that I also had a grumpy, teething 8 month-old baby tucked on my hip!

Yes, it has been difficult to find the right balance between being a Mother and a Teacher, something I'm sure most home-educators will empathise with. And of course we have got some things wrong, and have had worries and doubts along the way. At the moment, we believe our decision to home-educate our children has been the best decision we have made so far.

Cilla Nicholson, Hill View, Lapford, Crediton, Devon EX17 6QN

LEARNING TO LOVE BOOKS AND LEARNING TO READ

Everybody has their own theory about how and when reading should be taught, which aspects are most important, which schemes are worth using, how to deal with "problems" children have. The one thing that currently seems to be a universal opinion is that children should be taught to love books, and that this will make them successful, lifelong readers. Schools need children to love books so they will want to learn to read, a skill that is vital to progress in the system, but in our house things have worked out rather differently. My own most pleasurable school memories are of the Friday afternoon story during top year Juniors (Year 6 now) when our teacher read such classics as "The Hobbit" while we dozed at our desks. At home my mother continued to read to us after Sunday dinner until quite an age, one book that really sticks in my memory is "Watership Down". I know now that a love of books developed in me, not by someone wanting to "teach" me something but by people who cared wanting to share a great story with me. Since they were babies, I have shared my love of books with my children. I read to them, sometimes for hours a day. I share stories from my own childhood and search out new ones. We visit the library religiously and we look things up together when they have questions.

I wrote to the newsletter in April 1997, describing my children's progress. Now more than two years on, there has been very little progress in the process of learning how to read. The older children have all spent some time in school and experienced a fairly standard range of reading "instruction". On the surface, they appeared to grasp the basics, but since coming out of school, there has

been no inclination to continue with this "course of study". When we moved house nearly two years ago, we decided to count our book collection as we packed it, and it amounted to 1689 books, from the simplest baby picture book to the heaviest theological tome. The children are surrounded by books, so many great stories that they have loved listening to, but not one of them (except my 4 year old, who loves to "read" her favourites to me) will pick up a story and read it. None of them think of themselves as a reader. Why, I ask myself, do my children not want to read? How can they love books so much and not want to read? What should I do now? Basically, I realised that the purpose of reading is the more important part of the process. It's what you get from a book that matters. There is the mechanical process of decoding the letters as they are written on the page. Then there is the intellectual process of entering into a story or discovering a piece of information, relating this to your life and experience, and growing in knowledge and understanding of the world as a result. You cannot teach the second process, it is something that always happens autonomously. You can teach the first, but without the second it is meaningless. So on reflection, my children love the important part of books. They enjoy and learn from books all the time. When they want to hone their decoding skills (the value of which school seemed unable to impress upon them) I will be around to help them, and I will continue to do the mechanical process for them for as long as they need it. You can love books without feeling it should automatically lead to reading or even that the two processes are as closely linked as they may appear. So yes, we definitely love books.

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MUSIC AND GROUP LEARNING

Editor's note: For over a year we have made a weekly family outing to a friend's house, where we meet as four home-educating families in all. The main purpose has been for the musically-inclined among the children to play in their own string group, called Tullagh Ensemble. I asked Jo Handy, who created and conducts the ensemble to write about the experience. Jo and her husband, Lionel, are professional cellists. They have four children.

Tullagh Ensemble currently comprises eight children, aged 9 to 14: six violinists and two 'cellists. It's an awkward name, I know, "Tullagh", but it seemed good at the time. It means "little hill", and is the name of our house, which we moved to from London 3 ½ years ago, with 4 children. The core of our string ensemble was really a string quartet for boys, at the time, two 12 year-olds and two 10 year-olds. They started out on simple arrangements and proceeded to "Birds of a Feather" by Anita Hewitt-Jones. (What would the music scene be without her wonderfully practical musical inventions and the equally useful work of Sheila Nelson?) They won a cup in the local music festival against a school quartet in an older category, the adjudicator being pleasantly surprised by the vision of four boys playing chamber music. They went on to play at various community events, such as the church flower festival and carol service.

Meanwhile, several children of families in our local home-educating community were improving their string-playing and needed an outlet to show why they had to expend so much time and energy on such a difficult instrument. With the approach of Christmas (always an excellent spur for making joyful noises) I bit the bullet and squashed into our medium-sized living room a mixed bag

of string-playing children who had to bring music stands, music parts and extra chairs. Some poor souls ended up in comfy chairs peering at the dots of music on the stand that was yards away. However, we survived, and the following spring entered our first competitive festival. Since then, we have played at a disabled club, a Gateway club, two more festivals, two schools (one of the schools is interested in having us back) and in a Prizewinners Concert, with a brass band, a pianist and a singer.

We parents are all very proud of our children for rising to the challenge of learning an instrument and playing together. At times, it has not been clear to them all what the aim of the whole process was, but the experience has definitely been enriching now that they can look back and see their achievements. Music requires a certain amount of dedication – one does not become a Jafcha Heifetz or a Yo-Yo Ma overnight. Putting down one's finger in the same place to obtain an "E" needs constant repetition. It can be very difficult retaining motivation, especially when there is the temptation of the television or the Nintendo in the next room.

Some may think that this arrangement smacks of parental self-gratification. But the children have become great friends. After running up and down our garden, screaming with excitement, inspecting the latest batch of baby guinea pigs, filling the kitchen at lunchtime with chatter like sparrows, leaving it covered in trails of crisps, breadcrumbs and half-empty glasses, they go into our music room (converted, once the garage), tune up and start themselves off playing! They are at least getting enough socialisation!

AUTONOMOUS EDUCATION IN PROGRESS

When we made the decision to home educate some months ago, my first inclination was to draw up detailed action plans and rush off to buy a copy of the National Curriculum so I could keep pace with the school system. Fortunately, the local bookshop wasn't able to supply me with a copy and I received a pile of information from EO first, which made me rethink my plans!

One of my reasons for considering home education for Emily was that I wanted her to be able to learn at her own pace, whether that turns out to be faster or slower than the "average". Another reason was that I wanted her to have a broader education than I felt she would receive in a mainstream school. When I thought about it, these ideals both seemed pretty incompatible with following the National Curriculum.

Taking that train of thought a little further, I began to notice that the times Emily really seems to absorb new ideas and retain them is when she initiates the conversation or activity. Similarly, the times when Emily is at her happiest is when she is doing what she chooses to. Bearing these things in mind, I'm hoping that Emily will dictate the path for her education. Natural curiosity in children seems to inevitably cover all areas of the curriculum anyway, so I don't think intervention will be needed to any great degree to keep a balance.

When I was preparing this, I was asked to write about examples of my children's self-directed learning and I confess this made me worry a little. Was I able to provide hard evidence to back up my firm belief that autonomous education is the best education I can give my children? What exactly have my children learnt? I think it's not so much

What they've learnt, in terms of being able to read, count, etc. The difference is more subjective: it lies in the way they learn and the way that they are developing as people.

As in all areas of her life, Emily's educational needs are constantly changing, therefore the time may come when the autonomous approach is no longer beneficial to her, and if or when that happens, we will make some adaptations. Until then, I hope I'll continue to have enough faith in Emily's natural drive to learn to allow her to choose her own way and to try to facilitate rather than teach her. I think the most important things to remember are that all children are different and will develop at different rates in different areas, and that you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink!

Emily is eager to ask questions and has never been told that she is too little to understand something – it is always explained in terms that are appropriate to her. She is allowed to work when it suits her, which means it is almost never necessary to force her to sit down and concentrate. This happens naturally because she is interested in the task to hand. A natural end always comes, usually because the task finishes, but sometimes because Em has had enough (typically, "can we talk about this later, Mummy?"). I think this method particularly suits her because a negative experience – one where she feels under pressure – can put her off for some considerable time, and these can be completely avoided.

I have been surprised at how Emily's interests have been sufficiently wide to cover most areas that I would have considered necessary. It is also good to know that ideas are being introduced at a point where Emily has

decided she is ready for them. (If she has asked, then she is ready and interested to hear the answers.) Without exception, this has resulted in her remembering what she has learnt and, more importantly, has fuelled a continued interest.

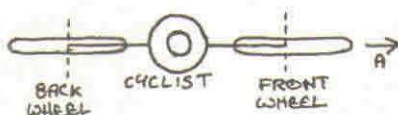
All parents, whether home-educating or not, are aware of those days when you know you are on to a loser from the start! Your child may be tired, unwell or simply in a bad mood. Whatever the reason, you know that you are going to end up with a struggle or a lot of effort with little achieved. It seems to me that there is no merit in proceeding on those days. My rules for autonomous education would allow us to forget completely about "work". We might go to the park, to the shops, to see Nanny, or even back to bed. Sometimes this has meant that by the afternoon, Emily is ready and willing for a discussion about something. This might even happen whilst we're out skiing (or again, in bed) but even if it's not for 3 days, at least Emily's attitude to education remains positive: it's a fun thing that she is never forced to do.

Freddy is learning autonomously, as is normal for a 20 month-old, and of course, it suits him! It suited Emily as a baby and toddler, it suits her now, and I believe it will continue to do so. This kind of education cannot, by definition, be given in school. Above all, it seems to me that some of the qualities that we adults most cherish in life are democracy, personal freedom and the ability to make choices according to our own will. These are not aspirations which are considered subversive or undesirable - quite the opposite - so why should there be disapproval when a parent encourages autonomy in their children? The reason the mainstream education system does not provide for autonomous education is because, at

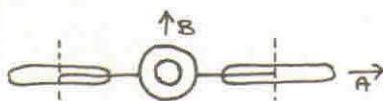
most levels, it cannot, due to its size and the numbers of children involved. The autonomy afforded in, for example, many forms of further education is precisely why they are considered beneficial and highly respected.

Jane Newson, 50 Cedar Road, Bedford, MK42 0HK

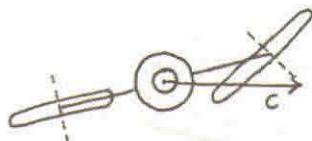
A
YOU ARE LOOKING DOWN ON A CYCLIST FROM ABOVE, AND HE IS RIDING STRAIGHT ALONG, AS SHOWN BY THE ARROW A.



B
NOW THE BICYCLE TRIES TO FALL OVER ON THE CYCLIST'S LEFT SIDE, AS SHOWN BY ARROW B.



C
THE CYCLIST STEERS TO THE LEFT AND THE FORCE OF HIS OWN FORWARD TENDENCY SHOWN BY ARROW C, PULLS THE BICYCLE THE OTHER WAY AND STOPS ITS FALL.



D
IF THE MAN STARTS FALLING TO THE RIGHT, THEN HE STEERS TO THE RIGHT.

HOW YOU KEEP UPRIGHT ON A BICYCLE

THOUGHTS AS WE ENTER THE FINAL STRAIGHT...?

Let me introduce the family – Charlotte is 18 and at Salisbury College doing her A levels. She wants to read Marine Navigation at Plymouth. Bobby is 14 and a carbon copy of "Just William". He loves penknives, climbing trees, making dens and playing scout wide games. He started his GCSEs at home last September. Andy works as an Information Security Manager to allow everything to happen. Rosemary is the "family enabler" who runs the family taxi service and gets meals on the table to allow everyone to dash out to the next event.

We are lucky to live in a village attached to a small town in North Dorset, in a house full of books, no television, a video player (seldom used), and a computer (used constantly). All the family uses the Internet for research, a really exciting window on the world and invaluable tool for home educators. We all read a great deal – Charlotte and Rosemary: travel books, Andy: popular science books and Bobby: absolutely anything (but especially Redwall books, Arthur Ransome, Sharpe's novels etc.).

Charlotte came out of school at 6, when the village school was closed, despite a desperate fight to save it. The LEA behaved appallingly, with no regard for individual wishes, and we lost all confidence in "the system". We had previously considered home education, but decided to use the cosy village school. My mother had said, "You've tried natural childbirth, breast fed till goodness knows when, you've got to conform at sometime". (Before she died 6 years later, she asked me to promise never to send the children to school so as not to spoil them.) We always intended to look at local school "at the next stage", but somehow that never

arrived. Bobby has never been to school, but attended the local playgroup, where he made local friends he continues to see regularly. He stayed on till he was 6, to allow me time for Charlotte. This was not a problem, as I had been very involved with running the playgroup. Bobby now helps there one morning a week.

"Education" soon evolved into a pattern – going out if the sun was shining, otherwise some formal music, maths and lots of reading. Both children learnt to read easily – I found the Individualised Reading scheme most useful for Bobby. (This uses popular books to form a scheme – write to the Institute of Reading and Language, University of Reading for a book list.) Then I just used to put out books that they might find interesting for them to find, which they always did, and would spend the morning poring over them. There have always been boxes of craft materials to use at will, and enough Lego to stock a toyshop. We used a few textbooks, for example, in geography and science, but these were just looked at informally, chatting on the sofa. Their first stories were written as part of their GCSE English coursework (honest!) and both children have had no problems moving from informal to formal work at 13/14.

We used to visit every museum, nature reserve and open day within a 40-mile radius, and used our motor caravan as a base for trips further afield. I always kept a diary, mostly leaflets and a few photographs, dated, with a few lines written by me – I don't believe in spoiling a good day out with "Now we will write about it". The diaries always proved useful starting points for conversations with inspectors, and proved to myself we were doing something when I had a panic.

I had always imagined that GCSEs would be the "impossible hurdle", but with hard work and perseverance, they have proved quite possible. I wrote to the examination boards to gather information, and got together with other home-educating families (of similar ages) to form a small group to work together. We have used tutors where necessary, sometimes other EO parents, who could offer expertise we did not have. We usually visit the tutor once a fortnight for two hours, when they go over marked work, set new topics and set work. The children work very well indeed, well able to organise their study time efficiently. We use the local FE college to sit exams. Charlotte did 3 subjects whilst at home, then went to college to do more. Bobby won't have that option - he's doing 5/6 subjects over 2 years at 13/15, then 4 more at 15/16, before going to college for A levels. Charlotte had absolutely no problems in fitting in at college, and in fact fitted in better than children from school, as she treated everyone - young students, mature students and lecturers - all the same.

"What about the social side?" - My heart always sinks at that question! Our only problem has been containing it! We have lots of EO friends and go to local meetings. The children are also members of Scouts, Guides, St John's Ambulance and sailing clubs. We have always regarded the youth organisations as firm commitments not to be given up on a whim. We would not stand for bullying, but learning to persevere is a necessary skill for life. (I've got a thing about acquiring life skills.) Charlotte was teased at St John's for being sweet on one of the boys. Despite being miserable, she continued to go - later she also met him at Venture Scouts. He is now one of her best friends and Charlotte is an adult member of St John's. In that capacity, she feeds

patients at the local hospital for the service of her Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. (More life skills!) Bobby really disliked sailing to start with, but had to come, as I could not leave him by himself, and Charlotte was so very keen. He's now got his own much loved dinghy (a Topper) and won the Junior Progress Trophy at the sailing club last year! Charlotte was lucky enough to be chosen to be a patrol leader at the World Scout Jamboree in Chile - she was amongst 35,000 scouts who saw 1999 in together, and then went on to a host family in Brazil - an unforgettable experience!
(See www.jamboree.mcm.com)

One might expect that if children spend so much time with their parents they might only reflect their views. We have found nothing could be further from the truth. Both our children are very outgoing and adventurous. No one who knows me would describe me as an "outward bound type" - I swim very anxiously, with armbands firmly inflated. However, I taught both children to swim. You don't have to be an expert to successfully lead learning. For his 52nd birthday, Andy had his first pair of roller blades, and he has just started a sailing course. We are not sure if this is a mid-life crisis or just an attempt to catch up with the children.

We have taken every opportunity to provide "tasters" of experiences. Bobby loves canoeing, abseiling and skiing, and the highlight of the last few years has been a trip on Thalatta with other EO children, thanks to Sandie Cottee. Charlotte has enjoyed sailing larger sailing yachts with the Ocean Yacht Club (OYC).

You may be thinking that this article is sounding too comfortable and self-congratulatory. However, we believe that travel not only broadens the mind,

but also provides the most perfect education in itself. If we'd really had the courage of our convictions, we would have sold the house and gone off round the world like the Grant Family (last newsletter), but without the horse. However, the best we could manage has been a month each summer in our motor caravan. We have aimed to visit every country in Europe. We have especially enjoyed visiting Eastern Europe. Prague is amazing and Slovakia so unspoilt and friendly.

Looking at the children now, we are delighted with the way they are turning out - independent, confident, articulate and happy. And what will we do when it is "all over" and they are settled in their own lives? Work for a bit to earn some pennies, take early retirement and ride into the sunset (well, over the Channel) with our beloved motor caravan.

*The Newton Family, 6 Yeatmans Close,
Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset
SP7 8LU*

*To help a brother up the
mountain while you yourself
are only just able to keep a
foothold; to struggle through
the mist together - that
surely is better than to
stand at the summit and
beckon.*

Forbes Robinson

WILL YOU SPONSOR US, PLEASE?

Sussex Eoers, the Lawes Family, Jessie, Jennie and Ian are going for a stroll in aid of charity. But it'll be no ordinary ramble. It's a Walk In The Woods with Bill Bryson! Yes, we'll be in West Virginia in June, as part of a group of 50 brave or demented souls, taking a 116 kilometre stroll along the Allegheny Trail in the Appalachians. The walk will take us 8 days, trekking through dense woodland and climbing high peaks, starting from the Canaan Valley State Park, following the Glady Fork River Valley, taking in Shavers Mountain, the Laurel Run, passing Little Mountain and the National Radio Astronomy Observatory and ending up at the Snowshoe Mountain Resort. We hope to see a variety of wildlife along the way, including Virginia Whitetail Deer, Black Bear and Wild Turkey.

It all sounds pretty exciting. It'll be our main holiday of the year and, thankfully, we round it off with a couple of 'relaxing' days when the more adventurous of us can try a bit of rock-climbing, white water rafting and the like! But a substantial proportion of the cost of our holiday is going to the NSPCC and we're hoping to raise a good deal more from the sponsorship of our kind friends! So please, if you can, dig deep into your cargo pants and come up with a contribution. Call us to pledge what you can. Thanks a lot, everyone.

*The Lawes Family, 35 Waldergrave Rd,
Brighton BN1 6GR (01273 883977)*



EO FAMILY DIARY:
THE FORTUNE-WOOD FAMILY

By the time this is being read there should be blue skies and sunshine – writing in April, that's what we are all beginning to crave. It is fuelled by the prospect of a couple of trips in the pipeline – next week we have a day trip to Legoland, not only avoiding the school holiday crowds, but also at reduced rates, thanks to someone else's organisation. In May we are off to the home-educator's seaside festival, with fun activities and interesting people. It feels like it is the season to come out of hibernation and that certainly seems to be reflected in the sudden flurry of new activities that are going on around me.

Mike and Tamsyn are keen potters and have been trying to keep an afternoon clear each week to use the workshops where they have passes. The rest of us have been going along to the same arts centre and using the afternoons for our own artistic explorations. With the aid of a book on mixed media and a backpack full of paints, charcoal, oil pastels, soft pastels and paper, much fun has been had and I've been learning to allow myself to join in: giving myself the kind of permission to let go and experiment that thankfully my children don't need. In between making our marks, we've also walked and cycled, used the adventure playground and sat around in the lovely little café.

The art has also been going on at home. We've done block printing with lino tiles, screen printing onto paper, made collages and are part way through some frottage and laminate pictures (tissue paper, wax rubbing, objects and water-colour). Today a new set of art supplies arrived and the children are planning their designs for the much bigger screen prints onto fabric, as well as looking

forward to silk painting, tie-dyeing and batik.

Along with another family, Mike has facilitated two home-based pottery sessions, getting us through basic techniques like thumb pots, coil pots, slabwork and joins. The results have gone off to be fired and glazed. Next week we are going to follow it up with a trip to a Victorian tile museum, where we can each decorate our own tile and then it's off to Staffordshire another day to look at the potteries' museums there.

Our local home educators' group has also been trying our new things. A visit to an urban environmental centre has furnished us with a large amount of frog-spawn and tadpoles, all of which look determined to survive and become a plague of frogs. The children have had their first, not last, taste of ice-skating. They have also just experienced a fun session on a climbing wall – next month it's caving as well as climbing, so they're twice as eager to go again.

Often when I tell people that we follow an autonomous style of education, there is an assumption that whole family activities and group activities must be somehow incompatible with people following their own interests. That hasn't been our experience. The key for us is that people try a suggested activity or don't as they feel best – most of the time the children seem keen to avail themselves of stimulating suggestions and there is always the possibility of doing as much or as little as they want of anything. There is also, of course, lots of time for completely individual pursuits – finding warhammer sites on the Internet, watching favourite TV programmes, devouring biology books or climbing trees. Autonomy and true learning thrive on lots of suggestions and possibilities, without imperatives.

Jan Fortune-Wood, St. Barnabus Vicarage. Jan.Mile@fortunewood.force9.co.uk

LETTERS AND CONTACTS

HELP WANTED PLEASE

I have read accounts from home-educators of the benefits of home education and how easily a child, if he later goes back to school, can cope with school subjects. But what if you know your child would not be able to cope? What if you know your child would not feel able to take GCSEs and you felt you had not been able to educate him well enough, and because of this, your own child would be unable to get a rewarding and successful job?

I have enjoyed home-educating and my son enjoys being home-educated, and we both feel the benefits of being free from the pressure that school brings – timetables, homework after school, and having to study often boring, tedious subjects. But I cannot help being worried that I have failed to educate my son well enough, and that his prospects after school will be greatly diminished by having *not* taken GCSEs. If my son had attended school, he may or may not have achieved GCSE passes, but if he had failed, I could have blamed the school, whereas now, I can only blame myself. Can anyone reassure me that I have done the right thing, that GCSEs are insignificant and there are sufficient opportunities in the workplace without the need for qualifications? Or should I insist that my son does the extra study so that perhaps he may achieve a few GCSE passes? I welcome your letters and views.

*Linda Darby, 10 Lime Close, Leigh,
Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs ST10 4PP
Tel: 01889 502573*

RESPONSE TO NEWSLETTER 127

After reading in the last newsletter Belinda Harris Reid's response to an e-mail sent to her, disagreeing with her views on autonomous education, which were published in the February newsletter, I felt that I should write in and express my feelings on how Belinda handled the response. I felt strangely humiliated after reading the article. Whether this was on behalf of Lucy (the girl who e-mailed Belinda) or myself, I'm not sure. I felt that the response was patronising and totally one-sided. I quote from the article, *"I'm sorry you think that allowing my children the freedom to choose what they do is bad."* From my perspective, this is totally inappropriate, and both twists Lucy's words and makes her point of view seem unnecessarily authoritarian. And as for Belinda actually asking her, *"Are you allowed to choose what to do, when, how, if at all?"* I find this very degrading, especially when asked of a teenager, who I'm sure values her freedom very much. I'm 14 years old and will be starting my G.C.S.E.s in September with the local college. I'm personally very glad that my life isn't one big holiday and that (at least for the moment) I'm using my time to study, and hopefully obtain certain goals (G.C.S.E.s, A levels etc.) that will enable me to follow whatever route I choose to follow.

I hope I haven't offended anyone in the course of writing this letter, but I felt strongly about the way Lucy's letter was answered.

Evelyn Irving, Clay Cottage, Hundred Lane, Stowmarket, Suffolk

HAVE YOU TAUGHT SPANISH?

Does anyone have experience of teaching Spanish at home? Can anyone recommend a course to follow that children can relate to easily and is not too expensive? Or does anyone have any such material for sale? I have been using a mish-mash of Usborne books, "Teach Yourself Beginners Spanish", BBC and Channel 4 programmes and so on. Unfortunately, course material from such as Oxford University Press is very expensive – cassettes for one course for 14-16 year-olds are £50 + VAT. Does anyone know of courses for beginners from age 11? Any suggestions will be gratefully received.

David Urwin, Bellevue, Llanboidy, Whitland, Carmarthenshire, SA34 0HB
Tel: 01994 448318

(Editor's note: If you have suggestions, for Spanish or any other GCSE level learning material, Wendy Plested in Oxfordshire will hold an information bank for inquiries from members. See inside back cover of NL. If you find a resource that is rather expensive, why not write in to see if someone could share the cost? It might be possible to share some resources, like cassette tapes, even at a distance.)

REPRESENTING EO

My name is Kim Woodward and I have been a member of EO on and off for the last 11 years. We are currently home-educating our 12 year-old daughter, Natasha.

I haven't done too well in contacting other EO families locally, I guess we're just all available at different times. If anyone would like to get in touch, it would be good to hear from you.

I feel that there is a lot of benefit to both individuals and EO if EO can be seen as a coherent group within mainstream society and would like to offer some suggestions.

I teach Morris dancing and English seasonal songs and customs to young people aged 5-16 years – in themselves a minority group. Each year in Bristol there is a Children's Day of Dance held at Blaise Castle. This year it was on Sunday 9th May. All schools in the area are invited to take part. This is open-air country dancing to a live band, and lots of schools attend. I attend with a small group of assorted young people, sometimes on the performance side and sometimes just to join in with the general dancing. If any EO families would like to be involved, I would be happy to see you join my group. I also run workshops at Chippenham Folk Festival School's day. This was on Friday 28th May this year and is another potential chance for EO to be represented as a group in the future.

On a slightly different line, I have a 15 year-old daughter, Rebecca, who is in mainstream education. She is a good runner and takes part in school and county championships. Natasha also has the ability to run and take part in these events, but is excluded by not attending a school or club. I do not really have the ability to teach running, but I would be happy to make contact with appropriate authorities if we felt that it would be good to have an EO group taking part in these events.

I look forward to hearing your views. Thank you for your time.

Kim Woodward, 10 Bedford Crescent, Horfield, Bristol BS7 9PP

Tel: 0117 940 1566 or e-mail:

Dancingwords@yahoo.com

NEW FAMILY

We are the Inan Family, Erdinc, Julie, Menekse (8) and Meric (7). We have been considering home based education for several months as we feel that school is not fulfilling the potential of either of the children. We are also concerned about the level of peer pressure that they are experiencing at such a young age. Having received our EO membership pack and other literature recommended by the association, we have come to the decision to home-educate from September. Now we feel excited, apprehensive and slightly worried by the already negative remarks being made by family members among others. However, we are confident that we are doing the right thing for both children and look forward to learning alongside them! Especially maths and science!

We are a Turkish/English family. The children are already bi-lingual, as is Erdinc. Julie hopes to catch up some time soon. We look forward to being members of EO and hopefully to getting to know some of you.

Thank you so much for the wonderful information already received and the encouragement it has been to take the final decision.

*The Inan Family, 44 Tennyson Avenue,
Bridlington, East Yorkshire YO15 2EP*

Tel: 01262 671963

e-mail: inan@mcjumer.demon.co.uk

TUTORIALS IN LONDON

I am writing as a new member to let you know what I have discovered.

Throughout London, there is a chain of tutorial centres for children, based in schools and colleges, operating on Saturdays at £10 for 2 hours. Phone 0181 888 4959 or 0171 937 6022 for

details of your local prospectus. The application form I received asked no questions regarding schools currently attended.

At Waltham Forest College, London E17 they are giving English/Maths/Science and French courses in Keystage 1 (4-7yrs), Keystage 2 (7-11 yrs), Keystage 3 (11-14 yrs) and Keystage 4 (14-16 yrs). The groups are organised into 4 children per tutor (where possible) and homework is given. Also, the cost is reduced for brothers/sisters attending together.

Laura will be starting Keystage 3 in September and I have agreed she can do English and Maths 2 hours one week, Science and French the next, on a four week rota. We are looking for another member to start with her or preferably 3 others to make up our study group and form friendship. If you are in our area and interested, please contact me.

*Jackie Goldsworthy 23 Parkhill Rd,
Chingford, London E4 7ED*

Tel: 0181 529 8962

AMAZING RESPONSE

Thank you for publishing my letter in last month's EO newsletter. I was totally amazed and delighted at the number of phone calls and letters I received and would just like to apologise to anyone I have failed to respond to, either by letter or phone. My daughter, Jenny is also thrilled and has been busy replying to all the letters sent to her.

I am now drawing up a list of names and addresses, after first asking permission from those who have contacted me, so that other parents and teenagers can benefit from similar support and friendship.

*Liz Gledhill 12 Wren Garth, Sandal,
Wakefield, W. Yorks (01924 255910)*

SPECIAL NEEDS CONTACT

My name is Christine Waterman and I am the new acting special needs contact. I am married to John and have one son, Charlie, who is 7. We have been home educating for three years now. Charlie went to the nursery attached to the local school, but it wasn't a pleasant experience and so we took him out. At first he had mixed feelings about being different in this way but he is enjoying life at home now, learning at his own pace, mastering the skills that he wants to master, whatever they are at the time. For example, at the moment he is interested in the number of millimetres in all the different containers he can find. A few months ago he did wonders for his mental arithmetic by playing endless games of snakes and ladders with ever changing numbers of dice. I find that he learns well like his, and has a lot that he wants to find out about or master. I like having the flexibility to go with the flow, to go out when he is restless, stay in when he wants some quiet time, do his co-ordination exercises before he gets too tired, and to help him to learn without getting bogged down in writing. (He hates writing and drawing and found that he was expected to do a lot of colouring at school) We do a little bit of more formal work too, which we plan together.

We do have our bad days when neither of us can find something that he wants to do, or when I decide to tidy the house, and realise just what a bad state it is in, but we have a lot of fun. We are both enjoying making friends through our local HE group, who have been very supportive and tolerant over the last three years. It was hard to go along to group activities to begin with, and I felt very isolated but now there just aren't enough days in the week to fit it all in. It's wonderful to see Charlie starting to make friends, and to

become a little more confident with every happy social success.

Before I had Charlie I taught in a special school and then worked with families who had pre-school children with special needs. I've even worked for a short while helping my old local authority out with their backlog of unwritten statements, so my interest in special needs goes beyond my own family experience.

I am trying to get together some information to help parents sort out any issues regarding statements. I would be really keen to hear from any families who have either:

1) Taken a child with a statement out of school. What happened? Did the LEA continue to provide anything, or did they insist that you did? Any LEAs cease the statement when you took the child out?

2) Requested a statement for a child who is already out of school. Did the local Authority provide anything? I would like to hear from you even if you weren't successful so that I can talk to other parents about the possibilities.

I would also like any families who are prepared to be a contact for a particular aspect of special needs to get in touch. Lesley has passed to me a list of people who have already volunteered and I am slowly working my way through them. It's going to take some time, so it would be really helpful if you could write a short piece for me telling me a little about yourself and the experiences that you could share. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Christine Waterman 85 Elfrida Rd,
Watford Herts WD1 8AT 01923 464773.
christine@the-atermans.freereserve.co.uk

EDUCATING ARCHIE

by SEG

5199

The Ratman cometh

AFTERNOON MADAM,
RATMAN HERE



Oh GOOD
(~ I thought
you were
the
Inspector!)

WHAT? WITH
A BUCKET OF
POISON IN
MY HAND?

Well you
never
know these
days



(A pause then...)
NUMBER
WORK!



AAAARGH
(nervous
scream)

shame

THE
INSPECTOR
STANDS
REVEALED
(for it is he)



WHAT WAS
THE
GIVEAWAY
CLUE,
MRS G?

Something about the way he
peered down the rat hole & said
'I am here to support and
advise you'...



→ ARCHIE EXPLAINS:
'MANY RETIRED
INSPECTORS ARE NOW
WORKING IN THE
COMMUNITY'



THE RATS SAY "WE WEREN'T
FOOLED - IT SAID 'OFSTED'
ON THE BUCKET"

IF YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN A RATMAN & A MEMBER OF OFSTED & WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT IT ~ YOU CAN'T!

EO BUSINESS – EO BUSINESS – EO BUSINESS

New Members

We have had more new members this spring than ever before! Welcome to you all. You have joined the rest of us volunteers and it is your organisation so I hope you will help us improve and provide the things you would find most useful. Please answer requests for help in the newsletter, don't feel that because you are new you don't know enough. You are welcome to contact me with ideas for improvements. Priscilla Park-Weir, Treasurer – see inside back cover.

Educating Children At Home by Alan Thomas (Cassell 1998)

This book covers research into 100 home educating families in delightfully readable format (reviewed in December newsletter). There are accounts of different methods and lots of quotes from families.

Offered to EO members at special price of £12.99 from 85 Coleridge Road, London N8 5EG, cheques payable to Education Otherwise.

Summary of the Law

EO's booklet *A Summary of the Law Relating to Home Education in England and Wales* is now available, and copies have been sent to all LEAs. If you would like a copy please send an A5 SAE to Jill Fisher, 54 Ratcliffe Rd., Leicester, LE2 3TD.

Education Otherwise
International Home Education Conference

Planned for the summer (possibly end of July) of 2000, and hopefully an annual event thereafter. This could be a brilliant opportunity to join with home-educators from around the world, to learn about their experiences – good and bad – and to move forward together. We welcome any ideas including:

1. **VENUE.** We are looking for a cheap place to accommodate a conference day/weekend with a hall for speakers and rooms for workshops, activities, discussion groups and a creche; this is to be followed by a gathering for a few days to allow those who have travelled, plus any of us, to meet, talk, share resources and have fun (and maybe find foreign exchange places?). Would it be possible to find one venue suitable for the conference and gathering (taking over a small school closed for the summer?), or would it be better to split the two parts? We do need camping facilities plus beds or bunks.

2. Ideas for interesting **SPEAKERS, WORKSHOPS** (eg legal, dyslexia, use of technology in education), and **ACTIVITIES** (eg lantern-making, tribal drumming (Sue?), puppetry, woodworking, science experiments – does anyone know Adam Hart-Davis?). Let's share our own skills and invite others in too.

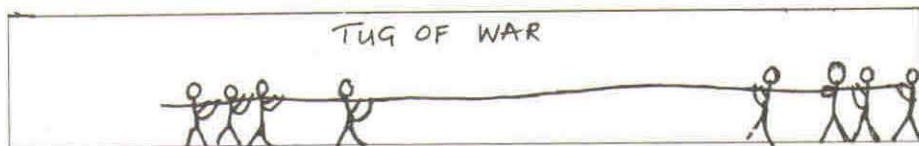
3. Ideas for the best ways of helping to **NETWORK**, by having badges showing county, country and organisation, having meeting areas and notice boards, splitting up into small groups to introduce ourselves as Human Scale Education does...

4. **ACCESS.** Does the venue need to be near an international airport or should it be more central and on a good transport system for our members – and bus foreign visitors in? Is there a big conference venue and a cheaper gathering venue in the same place to allow as many as possible to participate?

5. **VIDEO CONFERENCING.** Would it be good to 'share' speakers by linking up to a couple of other venues around the country, or would those who can't attend prefer the chance to buy copies of videos and audio tapes? (NB we are also going to run some more regional conference/gatherings as we feel offering accessible information/meeting/activity days is a crucial support for EO members – please contact me if you'd like to help with this).

Please help - by working together, we could do so much (like establishing resource centres in each region, and regional legal support.

Gwen Baldock, 6 Villa Grove, York YO31 7TB Tel. 01904 421982



One Day Regional Gathering

A one-day Regional Gathering is being planned for October 2nd in Leicester. We hope to have a speaker, workshops, and an opportunity to swap resource materials. The gathering will also provide an opportunity to meet EO members from outside your local group, and to make contact with council members. We will have the use of the Friends Meeting House for the day, which is about ½ a mile from the train station and the centre of Leicester. Details will probably not be available until August or September, but if you would like details when they become available, please send an SAE to the address below.

Any offers of ideas and help will be gratefully received, please contact Jill Fisher, 54 Ratcliffe Rd., Leicester, LE2 3TD (jjgis@msn.com) 0116 212 8120.

EO CAMP in KENT 1ST - 5TH July

A long weekend packed with performance, crafts & games

African drumming & dance, volley ball, drama, metal work, problem solving, lanterns, sculpture, firestaffs, KungFu, bonfire, marquees, café, very cheap food, beautiful field, £30 per family.

for full details & booking form send sae to:

Sue Hutchin, Oakwood, Sparrow Hatch Lane, Bethersden, Ashford, Kent,
TN26 3ED. 01233 820008

or email Sue@oak-wood.freemove.co.uk

****ALL ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN PRICE****

limited places!!!

GWERSYLL DEWI SANT

Pembrokeshire Summer EO Family Camp

Thurs. 17th to Thurs. 24th June 1999

In the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, close to St David's, West Wales

Campsite with showers & shop, some caravans available.

200 metres to beach, dramatic coastal scenery, surfing,

RSPB reserves, leisure park, castles.

Please will each family bring an activity to share

For details please send SAE with 50p in loose stamps for admin. to:

Yvette Hartley, 17 Maes Ingli, Newport,

Pembrokeshire SA42 0TE

Phone: 01239 820 968

Replacement Stationery Despatcher required

Have you considered offering time and energy to help run EO, and would prefer a job that fits in with your established lifestyle? We need someone who can accommodate 6-12 A4 boxes of EO printed matter and who will package up and mail out requests to enquiry and membership secretaries, co-ordinators and PR volunteers. Workload over the past year has averaged 2 hours per week.

Want to discuss it? Please phone Pam on 01869 252701

Co-ordinators Update

We are considering renaming this role. Maybe Local Contact, Area Contact, County ContactOpinions please. I have had just a few. Responses with 'Local Contact' being preferred.

Resignations None

New Acting Co-ordinators :

Merseyside Ann Stevenson 0151 7078146

Grampian/Aberdeenshire Liz Alderdice 01464 841489

New Phone Number

London South Julia Noble 0181 9477594

New Address Same Tel. No.

Yorkshire South Gary Podmore 52 Rupert Rd. Sheffield S7 1RP

Areas needing a co-ordinator:-

Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Glos.South, Hertfordshire, Isle of Man, London East, Strathclyde.

We have increasing numbers of members living abroad, would anyone be interested in becoming their contact person? Why not find out more about the role from

Isobel Bogucki 01403 261178

E-mail isobelb@cheerful.com

Teenage Experiences

The 'Special Supplement' in the August newsletter is all about teenage experiences of home education. Please send in your articles now! We want letters from teenagers and their parents, anything that is relevant to the subject. How did you manage with taking exams from home, did the LEA help or hinder you? Are you taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme? Are you part of a drama group, or a sports team that's doing well? Do you help with younger members of the family, or EO groups? Is home education different for teenagers than it is for younger members? Or just tell us about anything that is important to you. This is our last 'Special Supplement' for the newsletter, so please help us to make it a really good one. Send entries by post to the address below or by e-mail to jill.allen@virgin.net.

Mike Allen, 71 Belgrave Road, Lougher, Swansea SA4 6RF

REGIONAL DIARY

EVENTS ORGANISERS PLEASE REMEMBER, WHEN GIVING FULL DETAILS OF ACTIVITIES, THAT THE NEWSLETTER CAN BE READ BY PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF EO.

All regular meetings listed below will now be automatically included in every issue. Please notify the Newsletter Co-ordinator of any changes.

New members, attending their first meeting, should phone to check it has not been cancelled.

BATH

Hedgehogs meet for a wide variety of outings and events.

Contact: Jo Ball & Andy Hannen,
25 Larkhall Place BA1 6SF
Ros 01225 471253

BEDFORDSHIRE

Lots of outings & get-togethers. For newsletter & events list send sae to June McDonald 7 Clover Avenue, Bedford MK41 0ST (01234 341375)

BERKSHIRE

Mondays – Egham Gym 9.30-11.00
Tel. Jeanette 01784 741715.

Swimming at Rivermead, Reading 1.30. Contact Lyn Joyce 0118 9721420 or Pat Connor (below).

Tuesdays – Swimming at Windsor Leisure Centre 12.00 pm. Tel. Dawn Dingwall 01628 783107 or Sue Charles-Hendy 01753 855800

Wednesdays - Ice skating at John Nike Leisure Centre, Bracknell, 2pm - 4pm £1.50 incl. lesson & skate hire.
Contact: Pat Connor 0118 9662123

BRISTOL

Weekly events – ice-skating, outings, swimming, trampolining & 2 craft workshops. For details contact Joss or Nancy on 0117 902 8464

BUCKS (SOUTH)

Fortnightly meetings for crafts, activities, play, speakers, drama, trips to museums, theatre etc.

Contact: Trish 01494 783 398
Dorothy 01494 782864

CAMBRIDGE

Regular monthly meetings at St Matthews Church Hall, nr Grafton Centre.

Fridays 5-8 yrs, French group (Alliance Francaise £3.50), shared lunch, music group (£2.50)

Contact: Penny 01223 322703

Monthly at Alconbury, activities run by Christian group. All welcome

Contact: Audrey Hill 01480 219881

CLEVELAND & DURHAM

Last Wednesday of the month

Contact: Pauline 01642 55 628

CORNWALL

Thursdays - outings and events. Quarterly NL with events, resources, ideas etc, send 4 SAEs for 1999.

Contact: Anna Wheeler
Cambrose Farm, Redruth
TR16 4HT, 01209 890378
AJWheeler_Mineng@compuserve.com

DERBYSHIRE

Wednesdays - 11am-3pm.

1st Wed Watermeadows, Mansfield (swimming), 2nd Wed, Atlow nr Ashbourne, 3rd Wed, Matlock area, 4th Wed Long Eaton area.

Contact: Trevor Denyer 01629 56609

DEVON

Contact: Sammy & Nick Vidal-Hall
01548 830716
Linda & Paul Hitchman
01392 660216

Plymouth Alternate Wednesdays & Thursdays. Swimming & ice skating, 12 noon £1.50/person/child (under 5s free) Contact: Sandra 01752 408362
Kim 01752 223906
Debbie 01752 480901

DEVON EAST/DORSET WEST

Fortnightly meetings at Monkton Wyld Court. Activities + grounds to play in. For activities list

Contact: *Habiba 01297 561070*
Lisa 01297 445685

Fortnightly meetings at Bridport Leisure Centre, Fridays 10.30-12.30
£2.50 per family

Contact: *Helen Rothery 01297 631108*
3 Coup Cotts, Lyme Rd, Axminster

DORSET

Regular meetings, keep in touch.

Contact: *Christine Adey 01258 880355*
Rosemary Newton 01474 853593

Bournemouth - weekly meetings and visits. Contact: *David Dowland 01425 672237*
Peppercorns, Sopley
Christchurch, BH23 7BB

ESSEX

Essex Epicycle gives details of all events. £2.50 for 4 issues.

Contact: *Sandie Cottee 01268 73325*
17 south View Rd, Rettendon,
Chelmsford CM3 8DX

FIFE

Outings & get togethers

Contact: *Karen Spy 01334 655361*

HAMPSHIRE

Hants/West Sussex Activities & support, all welcome. 2nd Saturday of month - potluck social at Lisa Costa's house, Winchester. Monthly newsletter
Tel. *Lisa 01794 368287*

Mid-South of England group meeting frequently for social, play, art, science, dance, history, sport & other activities. For introductory newsletter send sae to ACTIVEO c/o 30 Spring Rd, Sarisbury Green, Hants SO30 7FH

HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

Second Wednesday of each month at Yvonne Rowse's house, near Kidderminster.

Last Wednesday, Jane Charles and Chris Harper's house near Malvern.
Contact: *Yvonne Rowse 01209 400750*

HERTFORDSHIRE

Fortnightly Thursdays in Hatfield
Contact: *Jeffrey Bengé 0181 442 7528*

ISLE OF WIGHT

Weekly activities (photography, crafts, green activities) in members' homes. Age range presently 1 - 12 years, more boys needed !!

Contact: *Sharra 01983 822965*
Ailson 01983 810862

KENT

Regular meetings & activities:

Canterbury - *Janet 01227 454309*

Bishopsbourne - *Sarah 01304 812859*

Barming - *Jean 01622 820206*

Dartford - *Angie 0181 3007238*

Kington "Young Explorers" parent led lessons, activities. *Teresa 01843 850389*

West Kent - see S.E. London

Events list available.

Contact: *Send sae to Amanda Mackenzie*
16, Brambletree Cotts, Borstal
Rochester, ME1 3TN,

LANCASHIRE

Monthly in Bolton, St Johns Hall, Darwen.

Contact: *Angelika Walter 01254 603 497*
108 Tockholes Rd, Darwen
BB3 1LL (SAE please)

LEICESTERSHIRE

Monthly meetings at Friends Meeting House, Leicester plus meetings at homes, visits, newsletter etc.

Contact: *Lucy Charlton 0116 2592118*

LONDON

CHOICE - newsletter covering events, info, views in London & SE £4.50pa
Contact: *PO Box 5, Belvedere DA17 52U*
Angie 0181 3007236, Andy 0181 3060168
http://choice.memail.com

<eochoice@memail.com>

Tuesdays - 11am Chissold Park playground.

Contact: *Charlotte 0171 254 0419*

Wednesdays - Honor Oak playground.
Contact: *Keith Hertog 0181 776 859*

SE London/West Kent, new group in Orpington/Sidcup/Bromley area. For

workshops, fun and educational activities.
Contact: Kate 01732 458804

MANCHESTER

1st & 3rd Wednesdays - activities & socialisation. Tel. Lesley or Gill on 0161 427 5705 or 0161 442 8723
Alternate Fridays - sports. Tel. Pam on 0161 862 9621. Lots of other events & activities.

NOTTINGHAM

Weekly meetings for socialising, support and outings. For full list
Contact: Wendy 0115 9114312
Louise 001773 780634

NORFOLK

NEON gives details of all events. £1 plus four large saes.
Contact: Ali Willer 28 Cozens-Hardy Rd
Sprawston, Norwich. NR7 8QF

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Tuesdays & Fridays weekly activities and visits including Kingsthorpe Community Centre, Museums, Parks, Wacky Warehouse, factories etc
Contact: sae to Mr & Mrs F Berham
4 Pilgrim Way, Wellingborough,
Northants NN8 2A

OXFORD

Weekly meetings - Wednesday classes in Philosophy (over 8's) & English (all ages).

Fridays - activities for all ages.

Monthly - social afternoons (city centre) all welcome.

Monthly parents meetings

Contact: Wendy Plested 01865 514973

STAFFORDSHIRE/SOUTH CHESHIRE/NORTH SALOP

Fortnightly meetings in rural location for crafts, drama, music etc
Contact: Patricia 01785 851150

SUFFOLK

Meetings every 3 weeks with grant-aided professional workshops.
Contact: Sarah Guthrie 01379 783678

SURREY

Fridays - Ice skating at the Spectrum 1.30-2.30, £2.35 (+65p for group lesson).

Tuesdays - fortnightly visits, walks etc around Guildford. (SAE please)

Contact: Penny Meader, 11 Thompsons Ct,
Pirbright, Woking GU24 0JG

SUSSEX

There is something happening nearly every day.

Contact: Isobel Bogucki 01403 261178
Anne Rix 01435 862794

Tuesday Club at Lindfield

Contact: Liz Evans 01444 414058

Monthly Newsletter/ Events List - £8pa or £4 for 6 months, cheques to ESEO please.

Contact: Rose (EO), Silver Birch, Firgrove Rd, Cross-in-Hand, Heathfield TN21 0QL

TAYSIDE

Lots of different activities each month.
Contact: Catriona Morrison 01382 864930

TYNESIDE

Monthly meetings - South Shields, visits, activities etc
Contact: Linda Robertson 0191 4567007
Newcastle/Northumberland group Tel.
Cal Cassidy on 0191 245 2113

WALES

Mondays - Cardigan area, meetings & outings nr Newport

Contact: Anne Pope 01239 710905

Monthly meetings in Llanelli/ Swansea area. Tel: Sue Haggerty 01269 861902

Weekly meetings in NE Wales / Borders area.

Contact: Genny Bove 01978 757489
49 Westminster Rd, Moss
Valley, Wrexham LL11 6DH
£2 for a year's listing

WARWICKSHIRE

Regular monthly meetings, both social gatherings and trips out as a group. For further details tel. Sue Cardus on 01203 543801

WEST MIDLANDS

Regular meetings throughout the region, something happening most weeks. Full details in our newsletter, HELM. Contact: Penny Clarke 01922 745465 pennyclarke1@x-stream.co.uk or Joy Beasley 01922 863115
RogJoyBeasley@compuserve.com
Birmingham - Last Wednesday of month - Central Library 10.30-1.30.
Tel. Jackie & Alan Harley on 0121 243 8242

YORKSHIRE - NORTH & EAST

Regular meetings & visits etc
Contact: Meraylah Allwood 01904 448643
jemergram@zetnet.co.uk

YORKSHIRE - SOUTH

Tuesdays 12-3 term time at Highfield Adventure Playground. Outdoor equipment plus indoor room for crafts,

table tennis etc. Free entry, small contribution for materials only. Off London Rd/Abbeydale Rd. Tum Up or
Contact: Annette 0114 2583502
Fiona 0114 22751142.

YORKSHIRE - WEST

Outings & activities.
Contact: Diane 01484 846946
First & third Wednesdays 10.30 - 1.00 Ground Floor Centre Hebden Bridge. Other activities arranged.
Contact: Katherine 01422 844459
Last Thursday of each month 11.00 - 1.30 at the Civic Centre, Huddersfield.
Contact: Diane 01484 846946
Clare 0113 2690061
Second Friday of the month, 1.00 - 4.00at Moortown Baptist Church, King Lane, Leeds. £2 .50 per family
Contact: Judith 0113 2265515

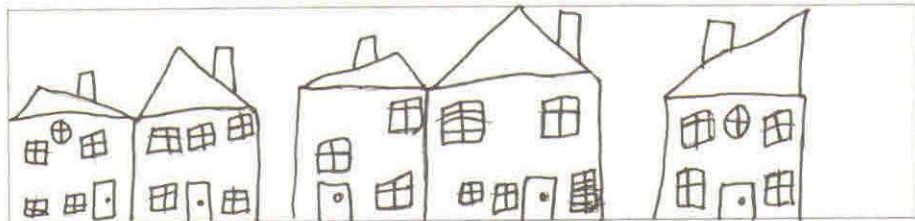
EO PEAK CAMP '99 -reminder

9th - 18th July

Barracks Farm, Beresford Dale,
Hartington, nr Buxton
(grid ref. 123 586)

The gathering is on a basic site with two large fields for tents and tourers, also toilets, showers, washing facilities and small shop. Beautiful, peaceful setting close to River Dove and Peak Park cycle tracks. Original Peak Camp spirit continues: no meeting(!); do-it-yourself entertainment (especially music) and a responsibility to enjoy yourself! For more details and map send SAE to:

Gary Podmore, 52 Rupert Road, Sheffield S7 1RP (0114 258 5702)



Advertisements

Books and Resources for Resale

Latin Books for Sale *Cambridge Latin Course* Pupil's books I, IIA, IIB, IVB: £4 each. Teacher's book I, IIA and IIB combined: £4 each. *Oxford Latin Course Part I* Pupil's book, Teacher's book: £4 each.

Elaine Bowyer: 01823 335289

Tuition and Resources Available

THE NON-STOP READER

For teaching your child to read within weeks

What parents say:

"An exciting reading programme"; "very carefully planned"; "a lovely approach to children's learning"; "wonderful mixture of scholarship, wit and fun"; "my daughter (5) loved it & would get it out each night, eager to carry on".

Enquiries to: Non-Stop Books, 26 Lathbury Rd, Oxford OX2 7AU

Tel: 01865-554953;

e-mail:

NonStopBooks@compuserve.com

English Tutor High Wycombe Gentle and friendly tuition/coaching in all aspects of English, for any age, by O.U. graduate and EO member. Very reasonable rates.

Contact: *David Taplin 01494 521787*

Educational Assessment & Tutoring West Sussex

A full independent assessment and written report for children aged between 5 and 13. Includes a measure of IQ, reading, spelling and mathematical ability. Individual tutoring available for children to age 11.

Both assessments and tuition by former prep. school headmistress.

Telephone: *Gail Wyatt 01798 867 472*

Services and products advertised on these pages have not been endorsed by Education Otherwise

Advertisements

MATHS & ENGLISH SUCCES!

Help for age 5 to GCSE
From £10 per family, per week

Phone 01536 200902 quoting ref CS1
THE STUDENT SUPPORT CENTRE

Activities/Holidays/Property Rental

Holidays in South Devon We are taking to the caravan again and offering our home to rent to EO families for holidays, a week or longer. Spacious 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom Victorian house with garden, 15 minutes drive to beautiful beaches. June to September.

Contact: *Nick Vidal-Hall 01548 830716*

Camp for teens/almost teens: 13/14

July 1999 A camp by the River Thames between Streatley and Pangbourne in grounds of Child Beale Trust. Map reading and orienteering, fire-lighting and cooking on campfire. Experienced, energetic leader who encourages groups and individuals to take responsibility. Philosophy based on Woodcraft movement, Native Americans and Quakers etc.

£35.00 per person incl. food.

Details from *Pat Connor 2 Whitegates Lane, Reading, Berks RG6 1ED*

Tel: 0118 9662123

CAMPSCENE DIRECTORY 1999

Campscene Directory is the only complete listings and info on all alternative/wholistic/new age/spiritual camps this summer (over 100 different camps listed). All are held in the countryside. Most give concessions and welcome children. *So don't miss out this summer.* For your free copy send sae to:

Crissie, Cirenor, Wells in the Field, Whitchurch, Hants RG28 7NG

Advertisements

Country semi-detached house for rent. 2 beds with attic, kitchen/diner, lounge, big vegetable patch, garden. EO Family next door. Rural location, 5 minutes from beach.

Tel Angela: 01507 472758.

Northend Farmhouse, Crook Bank, Kent Avenue, Treddlethorpe, St Helens, Lincs LN12 1QF

LOWER SHAW FARM

Weekend courses and activity holidays for adults and children. Friendly atmosphere, wholesome food, organic gardens, green space and trees.

Lower Shaw Farm, Shaw, Nr Swindon
Wiltshire SN5 9PJ
Tel/Fax: 01793 771080

Special Interest Groups

Taking Children Seriously TCS is about how to bring up children in such a way that their learning is motivated entirely by their own interests, and not by externally imposed incentives or penalties. *Taking Children Seriously*, the journal, is edited by Sarah Lawrence.

To subscribe, send a cheque (payable to TCS) for £8 for 4 issues or £15 for 8 issues to *TCS REF E, 2 Cedar Close, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8UZ*

For other rates phone: 01626 776728
info@TCS.ac Web:<http://www.TCS.ac>

Christian Home-educators We would like to make contact with those who educate for religious reasons. We are non-denominational, Protestant, conservative and hold to the Bible as our rule of life.

Contact: Mark and Lesley Lamprecht,
17 Prospect Place, Truro TR1 1HW

Services and products advertised on these pages have not been endorsed by Education Otherwise

Advertisements

TO BE FREE

A Radical Alternative

**Children. Women. Freedom.
Autonomous. Libertarian. Families.**

EXPLORE

Subscription (3 issues, A4 48pp) Low income £6, average £11, higher £15. Cheques payable to: To be Free, sent to Vidal-Hall family, Homecroft, Brownston Street, Modbury, Devon PL21 0RQ
Tel: 01548 830716

Health and Special Needs

ASTHMATIC CHILD?

Is your child on powerful drugs that may have little effect on their asthma? Who knows the long term effects on their health? The BUTEYKO breathing method can radically improve your child's asthma symptoms and reduce reliance on drugs – as seen on QED! Qualified BUTEYKO practitioner offers courses or individual tuition for children or adults with asthma. For details phone: MIDLAND BUTEYKO SERVICES 0115 966 4754

Healthcall Dyscovery Centre has an interdisciplinary team of health and educational professionals who assess and treat children and adults internationally. They see individuals with living and learning problems with a special expertise in Dyspraxia (DCD) and related problems. Training courses, fact sheets and specialist equipment to help in school or at home. Contact:

Healthcall Dyscovery Centre, 12 Cathedral Rd, Cardiff CF1 9LJ Tel: 01222 222011 Fax: 01222 666850
e-mail healthcall@healthcall.co.uk

Advertisements

ADHD Charity ADD-ON is a charity for children with ADHD (Attention Deficit Disorder) and covers the Merseyside and Cheshire area. We have educational aims and get together for social/educational sessions.

Tel: Judith Routledge 0151 632 3324

Miscellaneous

Pet sitting We are Wendy, 41, and Richard, 10, who loves pets. We are offering a service of living in to look after your pets while you go on holiday. We don't want to make a profit, just to have a change of scenery. A contribution towards our travel expenses would be helpful.

Write to: W. Cooper, Flat A, Vernon Dudley Rd, Ventnor, I.O.W. PO38 1EW

AND FINALLY....

HOME EDUCATION CONFERENCE

April 8th & 9th 1999

Video/audio tapes & transcripts
now available.

Includes John Gatto & Pat Farenga.

Prices from £6 plus p&p

Details & order form enclosed with this
issue, or write to Malcolm Muckle at:

HE2K-Plus Ltd. (Tapes),

14 Springfield Av. London N10 3SU

Advertisements

Bays

National network of science clubs
Bays is a charitable organisation running children's clubs in the UK for 5-13 year-olds. Material sent to your home. Cost £25-£40 per yr per family. Write to Elaine Stanley, BAYS Office, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 2NB or tel: 0171973 3061 fax 0171 973 3051 email elaine.stanley@britassoc.org.uk

IGCSE

Little Arthur Independent School

Offers low-priced home-educator packs and exam centre facilities in Maths, English, Accountancy, History, Biology, and Physics from £55. Also residential "get you started" & tuition courses. For details send SAE to: Little Arthur Independent School, St Martin's, Isles of Scilly, Cornwall

HOME EDUCATION MAILING LIST

If you would like to join a free online discussion & support forum for HE, send an e-mail to:

LISTSERV@LISTSERV.AOL.COM with the following line in the message area:

Subscribe UK Home Ed your name.
If you experience difficulty subscribing,
e-mail:

UK-HOME-ED-REQUEST@AOL.COM

Services and products advertised on these pages have not been endorsed by Education Otherwise

Advertising in the newsletter is free, but if you are running a business or hoping to profit from your advert, please send an appropriate donation. Cheques should be made payable to 'Education Otherwise'. Remember that EO is run entirely by volunteers and has no income except members' subscriptions.

Adverts should be limited to 50 words and an eighth A4 page and sent (with any donation) to the editor of the next issue. A flyer may sometimes be included at the cost of £125; contact the newsletter co-ordinator to discuss this.

Chair: Gwen Baldock
6 Villa Grove, Heworth Green, York,
YO31 7TB Tel: 01904 421 982

Vice Chair: Eleanor Stapleton
63 Sweet Briar Grove, Edmonton,
London N99LU Tel: 0181 8884 1368

General Secretary: Lucy Charlton,
2 Wistow Rd, Newton Harcourt, Leics LE8 0FT
Tel. 0116 2592118

Treasurer: Priscilla Park-Weir,
212 Gordon Avenue, Camberley, Surrey,
GU15 2NT Tel: 01276 22735

Database Secretary: Janet Wilkinson
58 Brindley Close, Wembley, London HA0 1BS
Tel 0181 998 3252
*(subscription renewals, address changes,
newsletter mailing, membership cards etc)*

Publicity Contact: Beverley Young
Tel: 01772 734314

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Kent TN26 3ED Tel: 01233 820008

Coordinators' Secretary: Isobel Bogucki,
20 Rusper Road, Horsham, West Sussex,
RH12 4BD Tel. 01403 261178.

Single Parent Family Contact: Sarah Martin
Lammas, 34 Cowslip Drive, Little Thetford,
Ely, Camb CB6 3JD

Special Needs (acting): Christine Waterman,
85 Elfrida Rd, Watford, Herts WD1 8AT
Tel: 01923 464773

Research Contact:
Catriona Morrison Nursery Cottage, Brighton,
Ruthven, by Meigle, Perthshire, PH12 8RQ
Tel: 01828 640353

School Phobia: Geraldine Adams
Tel: 0171 2263 4922

GCSE Contact: Wendy Plested
Tel: 01865 514973

College Contact: Kathy Chilton
Tel: 01969 623707

Enquiries Secretaries Coordinator:
Eileen Wilson, 39 Tatenhill Lane, Branston,
Burton-on-Trent, DE14 3EZ
Tel: 01283 532547

Membership Secretaries Coordinator:
Pam Bellinger 19 Fortescue Drive,
Chesterton, Bicester Oxon OX6 8UT
Tel. 01869 252701 (252701)

EO Stalls: Lucy Charlton,
2 Wistow Rd, Newton Harcourt, Leics
LE8 0FT Tel 0116 2592118

Stationery: Pam Bellinger *EO stationery, re-
use labels (£2.50 per 100) leaflets, posters,
membership forms, car stickers and are
available from;*
19 Fortescue Drive, Chesterton, Bicester Oxon OX6
8UT Tel. 01869 252701 (Donations towards
postage & printing welcomed)

Publications: Chris Harper
For details of EO publications, information
leaflets and back issues of newsletters, send a
SAE to; Badgers Holt, Birchwood, Storridge,
Malvern, Worcs. WR13 5HA (01886 884740)
*If you have had your publications list for a
while, ring Chris to check on the availability of
the items you want before ordering.*

Council Members

*If you have a problem, contact your nearest
council member;*

Geraldine Adams (North London)
Christine Adey (Dorset)
Jude Ashley-Walker (Isle of Wight)
Gwen Baldock (North Yorks)
Pam Bellinger (Oxon)
Isobel Bogucki (Sussex West)
Lucy Charlton (Leics)
Jill Fisher (Leics)
Sue Hutchin (Kent)
Priscilla Park-Weir (Surrey)
Gary Podmore (Yorks)
Eleanor Stapleton (London-North)
Jenny Stevens (West Sussex)
Anne Wade (London Middx)
Bruce Wallace (Highlands)
Janet Wilkinson (Middx)
Beverley Young (Lancs)

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education otherwise

Education Otherwise is a membership organisation which provides support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school, and for those who wish to uphold the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of their children.

Our principal aims are to:

- encourage learning outside the school system;
- reaffirm that parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility by educating them out of school;
- establish the primary right of children to have full consideration given to their wishes and feelings about their education.

For further information send an A5 s.a.e. to:
P.O. BOX 7420
LONDON N9 9SG

HELPLINE 0900 151 8303

(calls charged at 60p per minute at all times. Recorded message,
average call length; 1- 2 minutes)

<http://www.netlink.co.uk/users/e_o/>

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