

College Contract P8

EDUCATION OTHERWISE



AUGUST 1999

NEWSLETTER 129

THE NEXT ISSUE

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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.

The themes of the next issue will be:

- **Reflecting on the past
Envisioning the future**
Contributions to the editor,
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- **Tribute to Dick Kitto**
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The Deadline for Contributions is:

1st September 1999

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EDITING THE NEWSLETTER

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

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the August newsletter.

I had wanted to fill the newsletter with young peoples articles, unfortunately I did not get my request into the June issue and so have had to call on all my young friends. This has worked out amazingly, as almost all wanted to write something, whereas a blank invitation may not have done so well. With the special supplement also being written by teenagers or their parents, on their experiences, this should be a cracking good issue. A big thank you to everyone who contributed, and sorry to anyone who wished they had. But you know what to do, write in! Young people have almost always got loads to say, and frankly I like listening to them, their openness and sense of fun is a breath of fresh air.

I have four children of vastly varying ages, all being really lovely people. I have a daughter of 29 who disliked school, was bullied and got very little out of the whole experience. She wanted to grow up and become an adult, now she is, she is a contented happier person. She would have loved to have stayed at home, but I had never heard of such a thing. I did not have the pioneering spirit of some people of that time. I also felt rather vulnerable being a young single mum. But she had days off when ever the pressure got too much, and I didn't work, so that she knew I was always there for her. My 27 year old son on the other hand, loved school. It was a good start as his first 2 years were spent mainly doing his favourite subject, Art. He had about 4 days off in his whole time at school! He had a fabulous time getting his fine art degree at Falmouth, and is now making films. Will is my 17 year old son, and he is how I got into home ed. He never liked leaving my company, no one else had enough time for him, he felt anyway. I choose a wonderful little school, but it still got too much in the end and he left when he was 9. His little sister Hettie had been there a term by then, but they both knew that this was temporary. I had felt I couldn't take on a new venture of home ed. when I was already committed to help Sam with her wedding that summer. As it happened I shouldn't have

worried, home education come naturally to us.

I only once tried a 'lesson' as such, and it was a joke and I was the joker, never again! We have loads of resources, and when they, or I want to find out about things, we learn together. It was quite a revelation to my son when I told him that adults don't know everything, by no stretch of the imagination. I don't know where he'd got that idea from, living with me, still his father's rather bright!! Will and Hettie have always been very self motivated, and have never really understood people who have said they were bored. It does help tremendously that all my children, (apart from Sam who buried her head in a book from as early as I can remember), have had the ability to create and make. From the little space ships of years ago, to the rusty old Sprite, which Will is restoring at the age of 17.

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Teenage Experiences of Home Education.

My name is Katie, I'm 14 (15 soon), I've been home educated all my life and have never had the slightest desire to go to school. I'm hopefully going to college in September to start my GCSE coursework, and to do said exams and A'levels (I hope to go on to get an English degree). The college are more than happy to have me, but the LEA, however, have been less than supportive ever since we approached them for funding before last Easter. Their reaction was, 'It is not our 'policy' to fund college places for school aged children. There always has been, and always will be, an available place in a local school for Katherine. Therefore we feel that it would be inappropriate to fund a college place.' The fact that it's approximately £100 cheaper for them to send me to college rather than school unfortunately doesn't wash.

Other people's reactions to me being home schooled over the years have been mixed. Old ladies in the greengrocers used to lecture my mother about it being 'disgraceful' and that I'd 'grow up to be a social misfit' and 'unable to fit in with other school attending children my own age'. This is true to a certain extent and I have enjoyed every moment of being a social misfit!

Other people (i.e. our children's librarian who has advised me with choosing books since I was five, and still does occasionally, even now I'm nearly 15) think home education's wonderful and that it's a marvellous thing to do, but 'I could never do it myself - what a wonderful thing you are doing, Mrs Morley'. I plan to home educate my own children when I'm older, because home education was the best thing my mum ever did for me (except possibly buying me a Brio train set when I was seven). I grew up to be self-sufficient, to have a mind and opinions of my own, to be an individual. I don't feel that I have to wear what everyone else wears, or that I have the same views and like the same things as other people to 'fit in'.

Unfortunately, being home educated all my life means that I am unable to keep it to myself when I feel I've been unfairly treated (my guide leader and I have often come to blows because of this - not literally!). I don't think that this is so bad, but my guide leader has problems with it.

I also get a lot of 'Do you find it hard making friends?' and 'What about your social life?' (the only problem I have with my social life is that my mum's always telling me to stop socialising and to *do* something constructive - i.e. maths) and also questions like 'What's 12 times 12?'. There's a funny story about the 12 times 12. When I was about eight or nine there was a girl of about my age at my Girl's Brigade who thought it was a good laugh to test me with spellings and times table questions. One day we were gluing things to things at a table when she started her usual rampage of 'How do you spell 'difficult?' and 'What's 3 times 7?' when she suddenly asked 'What's 12 times 12?'. I told her that the answer was 144. She pounced on this with a gleeful cry of 'No it's not stupid! It's 134.' I said 'It isn't.' She was adamant that she was right ('How would you know?' she said to me, 'You've never been to school.') She told the leader about this, and the leader confirmed that I was in the right. My Maths and English examiner went bright red, went and sat at the other end of the

table and never spoke to me again! I also get asked if I do PE? I am heavily involved with my local gymnastics club, Turnford GC. I have only been going there since July 1996, although I have been doing gym since I was 15 months old. I am in the Elite Squad and train 6-12 hours per week. I also compete individually and in teams against other clubs within Hertfordshire. I also help out with coaching the recreation classes 3½ hours a week. It started as a community service thing for guides (I had to do 40 hours unpaid volunteer work to get my service flash towards my Baden-Powell award that I'm working on for Guides), and I asked the coach if I could stay on. It's now 18 months later, and there's been talk of me doing my coach's exam when I've got more experience.

I've also written a book called 'The Museum' which I will send to a publisher whenever I remember/get around to it.

On a final note, if any other teenagers want to write to me about anything at all, then write to:

Katie Morley, Golf Cottage, Cozens Lane West, Broxbourne, Herts, EN10 6QL

IGCSEs and EO.

My son Ben took IGCSE Maths this June. Using IGCSE means no need for coursework but you do have to find a school or college willing to accept your child as an external candidate. You can also contact: Alan Mansfield at the Open Learning Centre, University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 1, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU - Tel: 01 223 553311. You can also buy past exam papers, syllabuses etc. from them.

Another approach is to enrol on a correspondence course. You still need an exam centre but your fee covers coursework and other assignments. Ben is enrolled for GCSE English and has a friendly and helpful tutor who is used to children and special needs. We enrolled with the Open Learning Centre International, 24 King Street, Carmarthen, SA31 1BS. They use NEAB materials but are cheaper!

There is some useful information in 'Steve: A Story of Home Education' by Elizabeth James, Able Children (Pullen Publishing) Ltd, ISBN. 0907616631. I ordered it through the local library.

I gained a lot of this information from Wendy Plested, the GCSE contact (see back of magazine). Thank you Wendy for your help and advise.

I am happy to be contacted for further details or just a chat!

Tel: 0191 265 8233.

Janet Appleby, 73, Shaftesbury Grove, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 5JA.

Jim and I joined EO in January 1996 and gathered as much information and advice about home education as we could before withdrawing our two unhappy, youngest sons - Jamie who was then 14, and Richard who was 12, from school to educate them at home.

During the first few tentative months we tried to encourage the boys to study academic subjects similar to the way they had been doing at school, but this only resulted in arguments and resentment. After much discussion we realised that it was our responsibility to listen to our sons' wishes and opinions and to take them seriously. Therefore we decided that an autonomous approach to their education would be our best way forward.

Since then we have provided access to as many educational resources as the boys have required, such as libraries, museums and other places of interest: Brimham Rocks is a huge family favourite where we have witnessed the effect of weathering on prehistoric rock formations, and have observed the local flora and fauna whilst rock climbing.

We have provided Jamie and Richard with an environment where they have been free to follow their own interests, explore their aims and ambitions without coercion, construct their own potentials and develop their own natural abilities and their own strategies for problem solving. They learn English, maths, science and technology within the context of everyday life.

They have chosen not to study for GCSEs yet but are aware that formal qualifications are required for some employment. They know that they have the option to study for qualifications at college or evening classes, if and when they chose to.

However, there are employment opportunities without the need for formal qualifications:

Jamie showed an interest in electronics so Jim arranged for him to participate in two weeks work experience with a local electronics company. On completion of the work experience he was offered and accepted a training position which would normally have required him to have a minimum of 4 GCSEs at level C or above, but because he showed an aptitude for the work this requirement was waived. I believe that there are many other companies willing to do this, to find interested, therefore motivated, employees.

Richard intends to pursue a career in the RAF and is a very active RAF cadet. He has passed two written exams resulting in promotion to his present position of Leading Cadet. He piloted aircraft at RAF Leeming where he attended summer camp last year, and has piloted aircraft twice since.

The boys are much happier and have grown and matured well during the past 3½ years. We are confident that by allowing them the freedom to learn autonomously they have had the best possible start to a successful life. We are impressed by the volume of knowledge that they have absorbed in this way. At times it's been exhausting (particularly when taking part in the role playing game "Hero Quest" by candlelight, during a thunderstorm, at 1am!) but it's always been a pleasure to share their enthusiasm and enjoyment of life.

Thanks to everyone in EO. You have provided us with much-needed encouragement and confidence. We are especially grateful to our ever-helpful co-ordinator Gary Podmore; Belinda Harris Reid and Nick Vidal-Hall for all their advice and support.

We recognise the importance of EO and the need for our continuing support.

I AM.

By Gordon Bailey

I'm sorry that I feel I must express this point of view:
Society's professed concern is sham!
For I'm judged quite completely on the basis of 'IQ',
Instead of on the basis of 'I AM'.

Karen Coleman,

126 South Street, Highfields, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN6 7JJ
.....

CAN ANYONE HELP?

We're living in France, and our eldest is about to start studying for IGCSEs. As access to resources are difficult for us can anyone help with a couple of questions please?

- 1) Does anyone recommend subscribing to the 'Living Library', "pathways" or "Edu Web" on the Internet? As financial resources and my time is limited (we have five children), I don't want to spend a lot on something which is too complicated to use or not effective as a learning tool. Would a correspondence course be more time/cost effective?
- 2) Does anyone have any up to date IGCSE material, course books, CD Roms, worksheets, old papers etc, they could sell on second hand?

Judith Allen, Le Bois Meen, Pleslin - Trigavou, 22490, France

My Experience of Home Schooling as a Teenager.

I left school for the second time when I was eleven, after doing two years at Primary School. I went to Secondary School for about a week but didn't like it.

At first I had a home tutor for maths, but then I started going to evening classes for GCSE maths. I wouldn't have thought of going unless a friend was going. So I would advise you to check out what courses they do near you because when you have something to aim for like a certificate or whatever it really helps to motivate you. It only cost £3.00 for the lessons and then £18.00 for the exams. I also have someone who comes to teach me Spanish once a week along with my brother and sister.

The other subjects that interest me are cooking, DIY, history and archaeology. I also like swimming, mountain biking, boules and acting in our local drama group.

Some people say that you won't get anywhere in life unless you go to school, so then I just tell them about my older brothers and sisters, all of whom were home educated at some point in their lives: one has finished university with a degree, two are still in university and the other is at college.

So I think if you work hard enough you have just as good a chance as someone that went to school.

Cecily Fearnley (13), Brereton Lodge, Goathland, N. Yorkshire, YO22 5JR.

Cecily's mum, Jackie, added:

Cecily took the maths exams in June. Because she was away from the stressful atmosphere of GCSE time it did not seem to bother her at all. Rose, her sister, had taken English in the same way at evening class, but she'd found the language course rather boring, possibly because it was adult-orientated. Cecily was taken on a trial basis and only put in for the exam when her teacher judged she would be capable of doing it. It did make a difference to have a friend of her older sister with her. In every other sense her life is unpressurised but this bit of structure seems to be the right thing for her at the moment.

(please let us know how she did. ed.)

A Plea for Help!

I'd appreciate any help anyone could give in preparing my son for his GCSEs, and in how to find an exam centre that he can use. Also, has anyone had any help from Torrridge Council (Devon) in encouraging home-educated pupils with exams? Is there some advice on books/coursework that are recommended? And finally, is there a support group of Christian parents who are home-educating?

**Alison.J.Hardy,
Downeycroft Farm, Virginstow, Beaworthy, Devon, EX21 5EA.**

College Contact / Teenage Issues.

We're the Chilton family, Mike, Kathy, Nikki(16) and Helen(14), and as I recently volunteered to take over the job of College Contact I thought this would be a good opportunity to introduce myself and to ask you for some help!

We live in Wensleydale, North Yorkshire and are relative newcomers to EO and to home education in general. Our younger daughter, Helen, is at school but Nikki left school, aged 15, about eighteen months ago, when we finally cottoned on to the fact that the migraines, and lack of self-confidence/self-esteem were due to school related problems (predominately bullying). At the time taking Nikki out of school seemed the only solution, we have since come to realise that it was a good solution and one which we wish we had considered much earlier.

In her letter (see next page) Nikki tells you about some of her GCSE experiences but in terms of GCSEs via college we have had mixed responses to accepting an under sixteen student. Our local FE College happily enrolled Nikki on an open learning GCSE Maths package. This cost £59 and was excellent. As she had already 'proved' herself with the Maths, when it came to enrolling as a part-time student to take Human Biology GCSE once again the college was happy to take her on at no cost to ourselves other than the fee for sitting the exam. I guess the college either absorbed this expense or 'hid' it somewhere as Nikki was still under statutory school leaving age. They were very supportive and also offered the option of transferring to an open learning package if she found the classroom environment threatening.

On the other hand, we did approach another FE College with a view to Nikki taking GCSE History. At first this college refused point blank to accept Nikki saying that they had a policy of never admitting under 16s unless, of course, she had been excluded from school (in which case, they would welcome her + the LEA funding which would follow her I take it!) When coerced, they finally agreed that Nikki could enrol on the course with the proviso that I enrolled as well (paying full fees), that I accompanied her at every session and that I confirmed this arrangement in writing. We agreed to this only to find that the standard of teaching was so abysmal that we saw no point in continuing.

We also had mixed experiences of home tutoring; Nikki's English tutor was particularly sensitive to her need to be in control of her own learning, whereas her History tutor had a rather didactic approach (definitely in pursuit of an A* at all costs). Having said that, both tutors volunteered their services and would accept no payment! - they suggested that we make a contribution to a children's home in India which the school sponsors.

Despite a traumatic couple of years, Nikki has managed (we hope) to acquire some GCSEs, to develop her own interests and to recover from her school experiences to a large extent. She's definitely happier!

Having spoken recently to some other long-standing EO members about college-related issues, I realise that my expertise/experience is very limited, but I am more than willing to

try and help anyone who gets in touch. I have quite a lot of information which Val Gommon, previous college contact, forwarded, but the situation concerning admission for under 16s (and the financing) seems to vary enormously according to where you live, what your circumstances are and the course(s) you wish to take. Val started to compile a sort of geographical dossier and in order to update this I would love to hear from anyone who has tried recently/is trying to gain a place for an under 16 in an FE college. It would be particularly helpful if you could drop me a line or E-mail me giving the following brief details and letting me know if you would be prepared to share your experiences with other local parents:-

- Age of child
- Course that your child wishes to pursue
- Full time/Part time
- Name/location of the FE college
- Name of the LEA
- Success or otherwise in:-
 - a) gaining access
 - b) obtaining funding (+ resume of methods tried)

This information would enable me to get an up-to-date picture of the situation nationwide and to confirm/disconfirm my suspicion that funding is getting much more difficult to access given the increasing numbers of home-educators.

The Further Education Funding Council (I have telephone numbers of regional offices) are only prepared to fund college places for under 16s in exceptional circumstances. They seem to suggest that individuals should approach their LEA as they are responsible for provision for under 16s. According to FEFC (East Midlands) *'the standard spending assessment settlement made to each LEA contains funds for each student of compulsory school age in a maintained school, excluded from school or educated otherwise'*. If this is so it seems anomalous that those excluded from school have ready access to funding for college-based education whereas those who are home educated have a real struggle to access this funding.

I look forward to hearing about your college experiences and particularly about funding struggles you may have had with your LEAs. I will then collate this information and make it available to anyone who needs it.

Also, I have been contacted by the principal of a small independent 5th and 6th form college with bases in Bath and Birmingham which is apparently seeking to recruit home-educated students wishing to take GCSEs and A Levels and would be prepared to offer huge bursaries (90%). This sounds almost too good to be true but if anyone is interested in pursuing this, please get in touch. I am probably very gullible when it comes to sales patter!

**Kathy Chilton (College Contact), Tel/Fax: (01969) 623707
e-mail: Kchi23456@aol.com**

Overture, Jenkins Garth, Leyburn, North Yorkshire, DL8 5SP
.....

Hi, I'm Nikki (Kathy's daughter) and I thought I would write about my experiences of college, exams etc, since I have experienced working towards GCSE exams in many different ways. Firstly in school and then once I had left through correspondence courses, evening classes and home tutors. At school I was very worried and stressed about my GCSE's, convinced that they were incredibly difficult to achieve and absolutely essential if you were ever going to make something of your life. It was only once I'd left school that I began to realise that although certain jobs entail having GCSEs they are much less important than I thought and much easier to achieve. Also very few places ask that you have more than five GCSEs, not the ten that I was trying to take at school. The first GCSE I began to work on outside school was Maths and I did this through a correspondence course with the local college. For the first time I began to enjoy a subject that at school I had loathed. I also found it much easier than I had at school, the course started from the very basic things that although I had probably been taught at school somewhere along the line I had completely forgotten. It was also very flexible I could work on the areas that I had trouble with and didn't have to keep repeating things I understood well. It also gave me a sense of freedom and control over what I learnt that I'd never experienced before. I finished the course in about three months and took the exam last November and got a B.

I also took a Human Biology GCSE with the same college as an evening class. Although at first it felt very strange to be in a classroom environment with all adults, once I got used to it I really enjoyed it. The atmosphere was so much more relaxed and it only took a year to complete the course.

The other three GCSEs I took were English Language and Literature and History I did them at home with tutors, these tutors were my ex-school teachers who very kindly agreed to come down to my house once a week to help me. I think having tutors on a one to one basis can work very well, but is completely dependent on the relationship you have with the tutor. It worked very well with my English tutor she knew me very well and we decided together where my weak spots were and what we needed to work on and what we could leave. But things were very different with my History tutor, she didn't listen and respect my views and came down each week gave me a lecture on the topic she had covered with her class at school and then set work to be done next week. After having the freedom to study for my GCSEs how I liked it I found this very restrictive and frustrating. I found myself doing exercises and essays purely to show her what I knew, whether or not I felt I knew the subject matter didn't seem to count. A lot of the time I didn't do the work that was set, because I thought it was pointless and that made for very uncomfortable sessions when she came to see me. I now wish that my parents and I had had the confidence a few years back to study for GCSEs entirely without help from anyone else, as I think I would have enjoyed History much much more if I could have taken the syllabus and planned how to learn the information I needed myself.

I am now looking into what I am going to do over the next few years. I have been to taster days and open evenings at various sixth form colleges, but although I would like to study for some A-Levels I do not want to attend college full-time. I also want the chance to pursue my own interests, get a job and some work experience and travel. I would love to hear about what other people have done in their late teenager years. I was also wondering if

any home educating families with young children would like a teenager around to help out. I have quite a bit of experience in looking after children. I baby-sit frequently and am a Young Leader with the local Brownie Pack. I would also love to see how a home educating family actually works as most of my home education has been concerned with GCSE work. I would be interested in spending any length of time with a family from a few weeks to months, in any part of the UK or abroad. If anyone is interested or wants to share experiences please write to,

Nikki Chilton,

1 Jenkins Garth, Leyburn, North Yorkshire, DL8 5SP or email, Nchi23456@aol.com

I've been home educated for six years now and have enjoyed every minute of it. Once I came out of school I worked in a school way, if you like, for a while but soon adapted my own way of learning. For long spells I didn't do much formal work, we just used to go out to lots of different places and I found this was a much more enjoyable way of learning.

Because I hadn't done that much formal work, when I came to do some GCSE's last year I had to learn the whole structure of academic working (e.g working out of textbooks and getting work done for certain dates etc.) again.

I took Physics, English Language and Music GCSE's last year and I am now relaxing after all of the hassle of revising and the exams is over. I did them from home by a distance learning programme. For those who do not know what this is - first of all you pay the fee for each subject and enrol at a college that offers this distance learning programme. You are then assigned a personal tutor and a different tutor for each subject you are studying. The personal tutor is your overall tutor, they are not a specialist subject tutor, they help you out if you are having any general problems or if you have any queries. The subject tutors specialise in their subjects. They guide you through the course and help you out with anything relevant to the subject. The idea of the distance learning programme is that you work from home and you contact your tutors by phone, post or e mail. However, if you live near the college you are enrolled at and you can get to there easily enough, you can go in for regular tutorials with your tutors. This is what I did. The only extra fee you have to pay is the exam fee. You don't have the hassle of trying to find somewhere to take the exam and find out where your coursework needs to be sent, as the college sorts all of this out for you. I have enjoyed doing them this way and would recommend it to anyone who is looking at the options of doing GCSE's from home. If you would like more info, please contact me.

I am going to do more GCSE's next year as I took these ones a year early. I am hoping to go to college full time to do about five more. I feel seven or eight GCSE's will be sufficient for whatever option I take in the future.

Nick Clarke (15)

**5 Ridge Way, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands, WS9 0HL
e-mail (nickclarkel@x-stream.co.uk) - Tel: 01922-745465**

ARTICLES

ONE IN FIVE CHILDREN 'HAS MENTAL PROBLEMS'

By Richard Downs

A fifth of children are suffering from psychological problems at any one time, according to a report into the mental health of people under 20 yesterday.

Conditions range from anxiety and depression to serious psychotic and development disorders, including phobias and bulimia.

The report, by the Mental Health Foundation, used more than 1,000 pieces of evidence collected over two years from child care and mental health experts, parents and children.

"The Government, professionals and media seem obsessed with children's physical well-being and academic achievements," said June McKerrow, director of the Mental Health Foundation. "Our study shows that children, the country's most important resource, are failing to thrive emotionally."

Children face greater pressures than ever, said Dr Oliver James, a clinical psychologist. "Most children leave school thinking they are failures," he said.

They spend twice as much time in school than their parents did and are forced from an increasingly early age to compare themselves with their contemporaries through exams and assessments.

They are also pressurised by advertising, which stirs up desires to have things they do not have or to be someone they are not.

These stresses are heightened because they cannot rely on the emotional

stability of their families. In 1950, the divorce rate was 12 per cent; it is now approaching 50 per cent.

Poverty also damages mental health and is an increasing factor in the lives of the young, the report said.

The number of children raised in low income families has risen from 17 per cent in 1981 to 32 per cent today.

Even children in affluent families can suffer because their parents are working harder and cannot devote enough time to them.

"We found that the help young people obtain can be patchy, underfunded and plagued by a lack of co-ordination between the agencies," said Ms McKerrow.

The report, *Bright Futures*, makes 130 recommendations to address the problem and improve child support.

Helen Kay, its author, said it was hard to legislate against extreme cases of distress. However, it would be possible to stop minor psychological problems from leading to mental illness by providing support for children and identifying those at risk, she said.

The report calls for schools, as well as parents, the Government and local authorities, to take responsibility for young people's mental health, and suggests that measures to promote children's social and emotional well-being be included in school league tables alongside academic results.

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT?

SCHOOL REFUSAL

I was being interviewed for a job as a child and adolescent psychotherapist. The first question the psychiatrist asked me was:

What is the cause of school phobia?

I blinked. What was he really asking? Did he want to establish that I did not think in such simplistic terms? I had twenty years' experience of the problem, so I answered out of that experience:

School refusal is a symptom, not a diagnosis, and there are as many causes as there are children expressing it; the problem may originate in any aspect of society, in the school, in the home, in the child, or in any mismatch amongst them.

I went on to describe some case histories - the child who was bereaved and unable to function, in the same way as an adult might be unable to go to work at the height of their grief; the child who was bullied by classmates; another where the bullying was led by a teacher; the child who was in the early stages of a psychotic episode; the healthy but alienated child who found no fit between their aspirations and what the school offered; the child who was distressed because his parents kept fighting, and wanted to keep an eye on the situation; the child who was being sexually abused by a teacher; the bright child who was bored; the slow child who could not keep up...

But what about the mother?

Oh dear, not that old chestnut, surely?

In my experience the mothers are as varied as the children.

The psychiatrist exploded:

It is always the mother - the overprotective mother is always at the root of all these cases. She is unable to separate from the child and the child picks this up unconsciously and acts out in response to its mother's covert wishes...

He continued raging like this for some time, and that was the beginning and end of the interview.

I could afford to dismiss him philosophically, and laugh at how crass he was, as the local educational psychologist did when I described this episode to him. But concern for the mothers who sought his help in good faith has stayed with me for another twenty years; especially as I became involved in Education Otherwise soon after this, and heard from family after family who had been treated damagingly. I found that I had been exceptionally lucky in the people I had worked with until then, and that this psychiatrist was not a unique

anachronism. Incredibly, this continues to be the attitude of some psychiatrists, with tragic effects for children and their families.

So where did this idea come from?

I think it developed in the 1950s and '60s - I would be interested to hear from other people on this. Before that teachers considered that they had truants, and poor attenders whose mothers accepted excuses too readily and were not firm enough. Children were not expected to like school, except perhaps for a clever minority. This was normal, not a psychiatric problem. If you did not attend, you were bad, not mad. Life was hard for most people, and they did well if they kept their families fed and clothed, clean and decent. Work was hard, and you were lucky to have it: it would have been ridiculously self-indulgent to expect to enjoy it. School was not intended to be a nice place: the main purpose of schools was to teach the populace to accept authority, and then to train them according to what the country currently needed of its work force.

Truancy had always been a significant and intractable problem, giving rise to a fascinatingly rich variety of dialect terms. When the school board man caught up with you and returned you to school, you could expect to be caned or strapped to encourage you to attend regularly. And in practice, society was pragmatic. Despite campaigns against child labour, there were various escape routes once you were old enough to be useful, such as being essential to bringing in the harvest or looking after younger children: and there was a lower school leaving age.

Changes in the aspirations of ordinary people, and changes in child rearing, meant that it became harder to impose traditional discipline in school. Children no longer necessarily accepted that they were delinquent in resisting a harsh regime, and adults became ambivalent about imposing it. Changes in the philosophies of psychiatry and education led to confusion among children, parents and teachers: for whose good is the school system set up? All the fine words about child centred education were contradicted by the experience of many children.

It was observed that women who were agoraphobic had children who tended not to go to school regularly. Without therapeutic intervention, might not a family pattern develop, resulting in these children becoming agoraphobic in turn, with a permanently diminished lifestyle? This 'pre-agoraphobic' phase was also seen as phobic, and a proportion of the naughty children of previous generations were now labelled school phobics. They were treated as phobic, and often responded accordingly.

With muddled thinking and very little evidence, 'school phobia' had become defined as a 'disease' caused by agoraphobic mothers. By extension and inversion, it was considered that there might be mothers who were of this type, even if not overtly agoraphobic, who were unconsciously dependent on their children and reluctant to allow them to separate: school-refusing children were seen as sufficient proof that the mother must have this latent

pathology, even though she happened not to have any symptoms. This might only be perceptible to the clever psychiatrist. By definition, you cannot know what you are doing unconsciously. Your anger, when told that you unconsciously wish to keep your child with you to sustain your weak ego, may be defined as hostility to the accuracy of the psychiatrist's interpretations. Never mind that you have happily sent your child off to school throughout the primary years, and have had to give up your job because they are so distressed by something about their secondary school: it's always the mother's fault. This simplistic perception has been elaborated over the years into something more sophisticated, but parents still complain of this lack of logic in the accusations made against them.

In a study some years ago, a hundred children diagnosed as school phobic were followed through the standard behaviourist treatment for this condition, and for three years afterwards. It was found that one third of them were healthy at the end of three years, in terms of social adjustment and satisfactory performance at work or in education. One third were moderately maladjusted and the remaining third were severely disturbed and unable to function.

It was claimed that this was a good result, because this condition of school phobia is so intractable and has such a poor prognosis for adult life that most school phobic children are expected to become permanently disabled. This is what justifies the extreme measures taken to get them back into school.

This was not, however, what we were seeing in EO. Within much less than three years, and often within weeks, psychiatric symptoms disappeared when these children were deschooled. Anxiety, depression, bedwetting, rages, nail biting, pulling hair out, agoraphobia - all sorts of problems melted away. Patricia Knox started collecting data, and passed it on to me; and at last I am beginning to write up the research we have done over the years. I would be glad to hear from anyone who has not told me their story. In some ways the issues have been revealed as vastly complex, a reflection of so much that is going on in society. Every family is different, and everyone has problems which can be pathologised if enough pressure is put on them. And yet the first simple idea still holds: if a family can take charge of the situation, refuse 'treatment,' and home educate, the child begins to function in a healthy way, often very quickly. The 'disease' evaporates and does not reappear in a variant form, as it should if it were truly a psychiatric disorder.

I hope to present all this in a sufficiently orthodox form to be useful to future families who have to fight this battle with the authorities. I would be interested to read or hear your experience, as well as arguments against this thesis.

Anne Wade

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EARLY EDUCATION FOR A 'SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD'

Through concern for our child growing and developing, in retrospect we can do too much when perhaps we should let them be.

My daughter, Jade, was only 2 years 9 months when she was seen at a Child Development Centre and diagnosed as 'presents with delayed receptive and expressive language skills with immature behaviour. It is probable that her non-verbal development is potentially normal'. She then attended speech therapy. At 3 years 7 months another assessment stated 'she has a delay/disorder in her speech and language development...'. Then at 4 years 7 months her last assessment stated although 'Jade presented as a social, talkative little girl' she 'presented with immature levels of language ...comprehension of language gave rise to concern...' and finally, 'This misinterpretation of input must hinder Jade's classroom performance, as she will experience problems carrying out classroom instructions'. The summary stated that 'Jade presents with high level language difficulties'.

Jade was referred by Special Needs placement panel to a local nursery school and attended speech therapy for comprehension and communication delay. With hindsight, given time and a more relaxed attitude by us, her parents, Jade would probably have been alright without the above fuss made of her 'disorder'. But it is so easy to get caught up in the trap that they know best and so that is what we should do.

Another instance would be school. Although I have no strong objections to school as such. But in nearly everyone's view school is the best place to put your child, the place where they

will learn the most and anything else just really is not as good. Mention home education to people and they seem to listen but they then expect her to go back to school at some time or they even start recommending 'good' schools that she could go to. They do not seem to take the idea of home education seriously.

Jade really enjoyed her time at nursery school, probably because they are freer with children at a young age and so she was free to wander around and choose what she wanted to do a lot of the time. However, when she moved to Reception class at her designated school, things changed for the worse for her. She hated it and eventually just refused to get up in the mornings. Education Welfare Officers to force her into school in the morning and psychology and behaviour management for children (!!) were suggested for her by now dreadful behaviour. At that point, my mind just said "NO!" to it all. It seemed ridiculous to make such a fuss about a child who was 4 years old. So after much difficulty, I withdrew my child from the school. In the end I had to fill in a notice of withdrawal before they would deregister her, even though she was not of compulsory school age.

The letter I received from my LEA was rather off-putting. It seemed very intimidating to a parent first considering home educating. Stating that: 'The Authority has a responsibility to determine whether your proposals satisfy the requirements of the 1996 Act. In particular, Section 7 specifies:...' and then asking for details of the 'educational programme' which included: detailed schemes of work, methods of teaching, a weekly timetable. Having talked to my EO co-ordinator I knew I didn't have to supply such information. So most of my

answers were N/A or these facilities are available.

I then read lots of home education books, and lots of John Holt, and joined EO and HEAS (Home Education Advisory Service). I decided on an 'autonomous' approach with her learning. I did find it very difficult at first trying not to attempt to 'teach' her things – it's a difficult habit to get out of – thinking they should be reading, writing etc at such and such an age – as if they will never do it eventually by themselves. She has lots of good points to list: some nights she can stay up late into the night in bed, scribble-writing or drawing endlessly – her output can be quite amazing. She loves to draw and paint and can be very imaginative in her play and she does all of these things without our influence. Sometimes her output is fired by a video she has watched: 'Land Before Time' dinosaur videos are a favourite of hers and she can name all of the baby dinosaurs! She wrote a story 'book' about it in her scribble. Or, a TV programme like Pet Rescue will have her doing countless drawings of the dogs in their kennels with people walking along the walkways to choose a dog to adopt. She does not need our input to make her do things as she does lots of stuff by her own volition. She has a natural interest in the world around her and will often call me out so I can see a bug she has found or a ladybird, caterpillar, beetle etc. I really feel that school would stifle her. I think she is really quite intelligent but the 'tests' they perform on children just do not show this up. In a test you cannot show that she: makes up her own songs on the spot, puts on a 'show' for us, does 'magic', puts on a 'tail' (dressing gown tie) to dance as a cat from the musical "Cats" which she loves to watch. She doesn't read yet or write (apart from her name – which she can write forwards and backwards!) but she

has so much other stuff going for her which is of just as much value.

We had our Primary Advisory Teacher, Peter Wright, visit in June for Jade's first home visit report. The visit started off on a not-so-good beginning when Jade stated to him that "I want to go back to school ... I miss other children". I then had to explain to him that she was always changing her mind so probably didn't mean it! If he had visited a couple of months later she wouldn't have said that. She had only been out of school six months and for the last couple of months I had been unwell, so not able to take her out – which was why she was missing other children. Although I talked to him about the things she had done and did, I didn't feel he took that much notice of what I said as such – he became far more interested when I produced some folders of her 'work' that I had kept – her scribbling and drawing and painting.

A few weeks later, her report arrived. It was OK and no follow-up visit was indicated, so we will see a primary Advisory Teacher again in a year's time. So she can continue 'autonomously'. In the report it said 'She is a well-motivated girl and very much on the cusp of taking off on the path to independent reading and writing'. Yet as a recommendation he said that '...careful consideration should now be given to Jade's resurgent interest in attending school...And that she would possibly now adapt more willingly to school-based academic pursuits'. Then in the summary: '...The recommendations offered are for advice only and in no way binding but hopefully will be considered in future planning'. Well, I don't know about you, but I find that a very strange conclusion; very contradictory. On one hand he acknowledges that she is doing well with 'autonomous' home education and on the other hand he is saying, but I think

she would be better off in school. Surely, if she has been doing well autonomously, by continuing in this way she will get there by herself. The report is quite discouraging in this respect. It reads to me as: Oh well, we will allow you to continue home educating for the moment but you really should think about sending her back to school some time, it's for her own good.

I did make an appointment to visit a couple of schools. I went to one to look round. The children were all sitting quietly at their desks doing what they were told. I couldn't see my daughter being happy in such a situation. I asked when she might start and was told bluntly: 'legally, she should be at school now'. I decided to cancel the other school appointment and later that day I had a telephone call from the primary Advisory Teacher's secretary to say that the headteacher of that school had rung them to say I'd cancelled my meeting with them! Amazing! It's none of their business if I decided to cancel an appointment to look at a school, unbelievable. One headteacher even told me that if my child had difficulty getting into school on time she would be labeled a 'school refuser' - she is only just 5 years old! After that I decided not

to pursue 'school' and have stated to them that I will continue 'autonomously' at home.

Unlike some home-educating families that I read about in the EO Newsletter, I cannot say that life at home with a young child is easy or wonderful. It can be very stressful and it would be an easy solution to bundle her off to school so I could have several hours of peace and quiet and no disruption. But if I do not think that is the right place for her, then I have to make the decision that although it can get difficult for me for now, autonomous home education is where she belongs at the moment and it should be given a proper chance. I would add that it was not school that my child missed but the company of other children and that can easily be rectified.

All I can say to end is that if I had not found EO, my 5 year-old daughter would probably now be seeing psychologists and having behavioural management and being forced into school and heaven knows what all that would have done to her. I am glad I saw sense in time to alter her future.

*Miss Lesley Rix, 47 Valley Road,
Sompting, Lancing, West Sussex*

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS LEAFLET

I am currently updating the 'Useful Organisations' Leaflet and would be grateful if anyone has any suggestions for organisations or publications that might be of use or interest to home educators and any other home education support groups which may have been formed recently. If you have a copy of the leaflet and are aware of an out-of-date address, please contact me. (This is not, however, an educational resources list; keep those ideas for later!)

Martine Archer, 3 Brookfield, Hampsthwaite, Harrogate HG3 2EF (01423 770396)

THE CARNEGIE/GREENAWAY SHADOWING PROJECT

Several EO children went to Birmingham for the 'Going For The Gold' event to meet some of the authors of the five books nominated for this year's Carnegie award. The Birmingham and West Yorkshire groups had the opportunity to meet and get to know each other and later to interview an author of a new children's book with a home-educated character.

Here are some of the notes we took: The Carnegie Award was started in 1935 in memory of Andrew Carnegie, and the Kate Greenaway in 1950. These medals are the oldest Children's Book medals. About 100 books altogether were nominated for both awards; this year there were about 40 for the Kate Greenaway (short listed down to seven), and about 60 for the Carnegie (short listed down to five). The process involves a panel of thirteen professional librarians, and the children's shadowing project involves 500 schools, library groups and home education groups. The winning book must be outstanding, have convincing characters, be written in English, and provide inspiration and pleasure. Although all books are good, because they "encourage readers and reward writers", the winners of these medals are outstanding books and writers.

We were invited by our local library to join the shadowing project and read and discussed the short listed books until July 2, when two of us voted on behalf of our home-educating group for what we considered the best children's book. We were also invited to send a few representatives to the award ceremony, which took place in London on July 14. The short listed books for the Carnegie medal this year were *Skellig* (David Almond), *Fly*, *Cherokee*, *Fly* (Chris

d'Lacey), *The Sterkarm Handshake* (Susan Price), *The Kin* (Peter Dickinson), and *Heroes* (Robert Cormier).

We found ourselves very fortunate to also have the privilege to interview David Almond, author of *Skellig*. This book contains a home-educated child as one of its characters. This is an exclusive interview, and included questions from the Birmingham group (the Hardy family) and the West Yorkshire group (Kayleigh O'Rorke, Ellie Cowell, Katie Dent, Elana and Jeanna Shalkowski), invited to participate in the Carnegie shadowing project.

Interview with David Almond
May 24 1999

What got you started writing stories?

'When I was about seven, I knew I wanted to write stories. I used to write them down on paper and fold them into little books. But I think what really made me want to write stories was the way books look, the way words look on a page. Looking at a book I think is beautiful. When I was a baby, my mum used to take me down the hill where my grandad had a printing workshop. I used to love watching the papers being printed. When I was younger, I wanted to write down all the stories that people told me when I was a kid.'

Why was Skellig in the garage in the first place?

'Well, I could take you to my garage today, and it would be very similar to the garage in *Skellig*. It's kind of crumbly. It's been fixed up a bit, but it was very tumble-down, and it was full of rubbish. It was very dusty, full of spiders and blue-bottles. When I started writing, I think that's where the story came from. I thought, what if somebody went in there and looked behind all that rubbish,

what would they find? They could find anything.'

Do you like writing about any subject in particular?

'I like to write about things that are semi-magical. I think one thing I'm good at, as being a writer, is writing very realistically, so that people believe what I've written. I write to the edge of reality, so that things step into the magical, and are a bit imaginative. That's the kind of fiction I like to read as well, stories that have an element of magic, an element of danger. *Skellig* was the first book that I wrote that seemed to 'work'.'

Why did you choose to write about a home-educated child?

'When Mina came into the book, she kind of popped her head over the wall and said 'here I am'. I wasn't quite sure who the character was. When she started talking it was obvious to me that she was taught at home. I was really interested in that, because I've been a teacher for a long time. I still wonder about the effect that school has on children. I think some schools actually stop kids from learning. They're very good at teaching some things but stop them from learning some things.'

Why did you have a baby in the story?

'Tim Bowler (author of *River Boy*, '97's Carnegie winner) said that one of the reasons – though he didn't know it at the time – that he wrote *River Boy* was to come to terms with his grandfather's death. And when I look back now, I think writing *Skellig* was writing about my baby sister, and about saving her. (At this point in the interview, David was fighting back tears.) When I wrote *Skellig* it started out as a story for a collection of adult stories, and to make it a children's book I didn't have to make many changes.'

How do you choose names for your characters?

'I spend a lot of time on names. I sort of collect them. I've got a big telephone directory at home, which is a great thing to have if you're a writer. I've also got a list of baby's names. Some names just come out of the blue, and sometimes you find names, like I found 'Skellig' halfway through the book, when he says, "My name is Skellig". That was the first time I knew what his name was.'

Are you writing any books now?

'I've just finished one, called *Heaven Eyes*, which comes out in January, and I'm starting a new one. (At this point he gets his notebook out, which is covered in scribbles, and the beginnings of sentences.) I scribble things down in my notebook, and scribble them out again, then I go on to the computer, and scribble on the printed paper, and when I'm all finished, you've got a book.'

Do you have anything that you need to have before you start writing?

'I like nice pens, things like that. When I'm writing a particular book, I like to have a place where I can stick things up, like pictures, and maps I draw.'

Do you have a favourite book?

'I've got lots of favourite books: *Moby Dick*, I think is a wonderful one, also, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.'

What advice would you give to young authors?

'Believe you can do it, enjoy it, 'cause writing can be a very anxious activity. Read a lot. When I started to write, I would think, "How can I write a big book like that?!", but now I don't think about that. I think, how can I write that little bit? Like *Skellig*, the book has 40 chapters, but they're all very short.'

According to David, sometimes writing is easy, for example, 'one summer day, I

was walking down the street, and the story of *Skellig* began to form in my head. I had to dash back home and start writing!

At the end of the interview, David, unannounced, tried out what seemed like a creative writing exercise on us. He fumbled through his bag until he came upon his sun cream. All the while, he was talking about this thing he was going to pull out of his bag. He wasn't being descriptive, just making comments and we were getting more and more curious about what he was going to pull out. Then he quickly pulled out the cream and said, somewhat secretively, 'this is not really sun cream;

it is really ...' and we each suggested a different content: alien masking device to anti-aging cream to ... It was an exciting and interesting thirty minutes to interview David and we were so pleased that he agreed to meet with us on the day.

Maybe you could ask your local library if you could be involved in next year's Carnegie/Greenaway project. I highly recommend that everyone reads this book, because it's one of the few books that includes a home-educated person, it's well written, and David Almond is ace!!!

Jeanna Shalkowski, age 13, West Yorks

ps !!!! SKELLIG WON !!!!

EDITORIAL (cont. from page 1)

Will went back into school when he was 13, after a lot of thinking, visiting small schools and alternative ideas. In his opinion school was school, so he went to the local comp. The head was great, I know him anyway, but he never asked any questions, just accepted Will with enthusiasm. I told him Will would probably have the odd day off, and that was fine. He went on to do above average in all his 'Sats' tests and GCSEs, which only goes to show how well you can do, when you don't do much. Although liking being at home, Will, like most teenagers, is totally different to us boring old lot, and I think many of them find the intensity of the one to one of home ed. Quite mind blowing, when their minds are already pretty full of other stuff! I'm telling you anyone who hasn't come across a teenager yet, just wait. I love them, so much so I work in a youth club in the evenings. Very sensitive, needing loads of love, but maybe rude and arrogant a moment later! Will's nearly finished college now, and has an apprenticeship at Westlands, where he wants to become an engineer and eventually invent something eco-friendly.

To finish, Hettie 12, has been home-educated for the past 7 years. She works through maths fairly regularly, and has weekly accordion lessons, but apart from that we just read and learn things together, or on her own, she is very self-motivated. Art and crafts usually figure heavily in a day's activities, as we both enjoy them. She rarely writes unless it's letters to friends, and I was really pleased when she said she wanted to write a piece for this newsletter. In times of inspirational blockage, we help each other.

I don't have a label on how I go about home ed., I just really enjoy it and so does my daughter. But if one day she feels she wants to go into school, that's fine. I've never been black and white about school, it's not fair on children (I personally believe) to denigrate the place they might have a strong impulse to go to at some stage. But good luck to you all with every which way, as long as we believe we have the interests of our children at heart, that's all that matters. *Caroline Griffiths, 91 Brook Street, Milborne Port, Sherborne, Dorset (01963 251094)*

FINDING THE RIGHT PLACE TO LEARN – ONE STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE

Parts of the story of Gemma Smith are no doubt familiar to members of Education Otherwise. One of four children, Gemma learnt to read at about two and a half years old. Her father describes how, at a very early age, he and his wife were surprised by the adult-like answers they got from Gemma and they often wondered from where she had got that level of information. Starting school at 5 years of age she was full of promise: she had a lot going for her and needed to broaden out a lot more. By the time she reached the age of 7, her parents removed her from state education because she was not being stretched. She was bored because she could already read and write and the school didn't expect her to be able to spell and string sentences together properly. When she finished the work set (that was supposed to last all morning) in half an hour, the problems she was having with asthma were being further aggravated by the stress from being bored!

After taking her out of school and teaching her at home she rapidly moved through the junior-type education. She then whizzed through the grammar school entrance-type books with no problems. This then led to high school education in English, Mathematics, Botany (which her mother taught her), History (which she enjoyed when she could combine the subject with others, but otherwise she could be quite obstinate about what she wanted to learn!) and Geography. Education Otherwise helped the family a lot, particularly at the beginning of Gemma's education at home by providing socialisation and knowledge of legal rights. Best of all was sharing problems with other parents and even being able to anticipate and side-step some pitfalls. It helped her parents to realise how each child is different and to learn to push each as far as they are capable of going, knowing when to stop them from slacking off.

At 11 years old Gemma started at the adult education centre doing Information Technology. She went through the initial text processing (RSA exam) course in two terms, having first had to master the computer itself, not having one at home at the time. She went through stage 1 in one exam and not two and went on to stage 2, by which time she was helping out the teacher. Initially, this was a great success and it led to her helping out each morning and doing her own work in the afternoons. At 12 years of age she took her first GCSE examinations in English and Mathematics, achieving C grades in each.

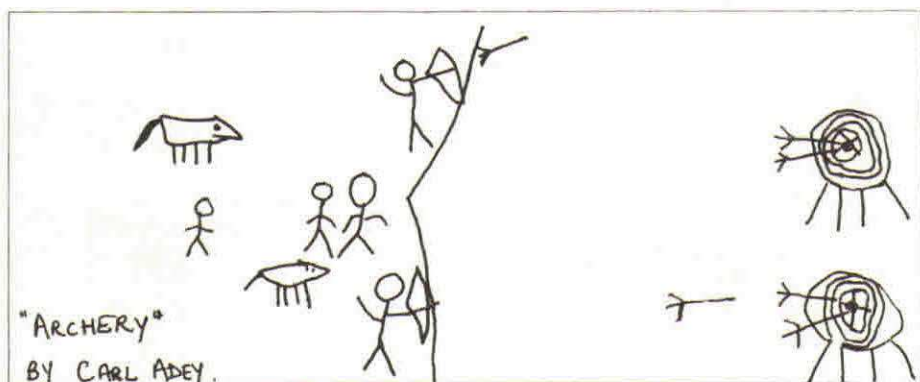
After nearly two years at the adult centre, Gemma's older sister saw a small advert in a local paper. Gemma had wanted to do sciences but found that there are very few adult centres (and often these are only at night) that could offer Biology, Chemistry and Physics courses. The parents approached MPW, the college in the advert, which normally provides courses for older students but, at the time, they were offering bursaries and scholarships for places on one- or two-year GCSE courses. Much to her parents' surprise, Gemma was offered a place although she was a little unsure about going back into a school-like environment. She settled in 'marvellously well' and soon got used to working hard. The parents stress how a small college like MPW can ensure that no bullying takes place as staff are much more on top of what is going on in the school – this is not always the case in bigger colleges.

Academically, Gemma achieved higher grades within a few months of joining in a second attempt at GCSE English and Mathematics. This summer she has just taken Art, English Literature, Chemistry and Physics – she particularly enjoyed combining Art with her interest in design. She found Physics quite tough going, particularly getting used to the differing explanations. She kept on top of her work and learnt to balance the demands of coursework with a wide variety of different needs from the various courses. She feels she receives encouragement in a lot of different ways, particularly in trying other methods of doing things. Her parents see this as a great benefit as she was not used to doing things in another person's way; students educated at home can be very used to doing things their own way (or in the way of their parents).

On a social level, Gemma has enjoyed the change from being at home. She likes lots of people from different backgrounds and cultures, and enjoys big groups of people too. The home-educated child must often make his or her own social life. In a small college like MPW any social clashes, or problems with interaction, do not get the chance to get out of hand. There are too many adults around so that anything untoward will get noticed. Gemma has enjoyed Personal and Social Education (PSE), particularly having a chance to argue her views and to listen to the views of others within a culturally diverse group.

One other valuable aspect of MPW is the personal tutoring system. It has given Gemma the opportunity, when she has had a problem, to have someone to go to. She has had the confidence to go to her personal tutor and they would always be able to suggest a strategy that would help her cope, even when it meant pointing out to Gemma where she had gone wrong. Her parents say that as Gemma is quite young to be sitting exams, the support provided has been extremely helpful.

Mr and Mrs Smith and Gemma are more than happy to talk to other parents about their experiences and can be contacted: Mr and Mrs Smith, 18 Severne Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham B27 7HL



CHILDREN'S AND TEEN'S ARTICLES

STAGE '65

My name is Sophy Hansford, I am 15, have been home educated all my life and am a member of the Salisbury Playhouse Youth Theatre, Stage '65. Stage '65 is for anyone aged 11-25 and puts on several shows a year at The Playhouse with various opportunities for its members to be involved both on and off stage.

The next show we are putting on is a musical called 'Catching The Bus' written especially for us, and with our help, by Andrew Friesner, the Salisbury Playhouse Composer in Residence, and directed by Kirstie Davis, the Playhouse Youth Theatre Officer.

'Catching The Bus' has an all female cast of seventeen, ages 13-18. It is about us and what we think. We keep our own names though we don't always play ourselves.

The first night was on 17th June, but the rehearsal process started way back in January when we met for a three hour rehearsal once a week. In these sessions we discussed issues and did lots of improvisations on the subjects we had discussed. Unfortunately Andrew couldn't make it to most of the early sessions, so the stuff we'd done was written down by Kirstie and our DSM and ASM (deputy and assistant stage managers - both members of Stage '65) and faxed to him in London.

The only problem for me with this was that quite a few of the subjects we talked about had something to do with school and so did some of the improvisation work, which meant I didn't

have anything to contribute and got a little bored at times.

After about three months of these sessions, Andrew had used the material we had sent him to write 'Catching The Bus' and on May 4th we were given our scripts, although we had learnt some of the songs already. The songs are in a fun modern style with witty lyrics and are all very different (we have a pop ballad, a sort of 'All Saints' song, a kind of spiritual and lots more).

And from then on, it was rehearse, rehearse, rehearse ... or that's what it felt like. First we learnt all the songs and music, then we blocked the whole piece (blocking means fixing and writing down all the moves everyone makes during the play). Physically we have a lot to do during the play; whether it's waiting for a bus, reading a magazine, dancing, eating chocolate (real chocolate!) or pushing a giant hamper around, we are *always* doing something and we are on stage the whole time.

We had our technical rehearsals (that's when light and sound is fitted in), then our dress rehearsal (which is just like a performance only without the audience), then the performances themselves and then it was over.

We rehearsed long hours and worked very hard, but it was all worth it. It's a pity you couldn't all come and see it, but by the time you're reading this, you'll have missed a truly brilliant piece of musical theatre by Stage '65!

*Sophy Hansford, 25 Victoria Road,
Salisbury, Wilts SP1 3NF*



1999 World Scout Jamboree - Charlottes's Reminiscences

1999 World Scout Jamboree - Chile. This was by no doubt one of the best times of my life so far. It was depressing to come home again! There is one word to describe it - HOT! With temperatures up to 47deg. C, one contingent member described it as... 'trying to put tents up in a sauna...'

The flight was the worst bit - about 20 hours stuck on a plane with 350 other people improves everybody's public relations! We were stuck on the tarmac at Cape Verde and Salvador for 4 hours while they argued about how to pay for the fuel (wrong credit card)(yes really).

The 10 days we were in Chile passed so quickly. Two of the most popular things were eating ice cream and sleeping! The heat really tires you out. The time to get up every morning was 6.30 - being up till 1.30 that morning doesn't really aid getting up! there was a curfew of 11.30 but nobody really took any notice. We were always too busy meeting new people and trying to communicate with them!

There were two things that people really moaned about: toilets and queues. The toilets were of the type where you have to put the paper in a basket...

The queues were for the bank, the supermarkets and for the showers. The bank was the worst - some people waited for 6 hours in the sun to change money. For the supermarket the queues were up to 2 hours long just paying for the things (not very conducive to frozen ice cream!) The queues for the showers weren't so bad, just when you got one it was either scalding hot or freezing cold. I only had one decent shower the whole time I was there!

The bit that I enjoyed the most was the hike. We left after the Dutch guide almost eliminated 50% of our group by saying anybody who had asthma, anything wrong with their legs or who had heart problems couldn't come! Most people came in the end, though we did have to stop and one of our leaders go back after someone had an asthma attack.

We were bussed to the start in a bus that had twice too many people in, going at about 50 mph among a dirt track, the doors open for coolness and everybody clinging on to stop falling out! The first half was in a deserted area, then we started walking up the hill (or rather mountain). After 5 hours of walking we got to the top, just as the sun was about to go down. Because everybody can only walk as fast as the slowest, and as we had Bobby with us, who is 14 but looks about 10 we had to keep stopping, which was quite frustrating. We had a very cosy campfire, with some Brazilians and some Argentinians. In the morning after sleeping the night in the open in the dust and the rocks (very uncomfy) we walked back down in about half the time it took us to walk up.

New Years Eve was one of the best nights. At 9 o'clock all the British Contingent (2000 of us) had our own ceremony which meant lots of people getting wet and singing Swing Low Sweet chariot over and over again because nobody could remember the words to Auld Lang Syne. At 12.00 there was the real ceremony in the main arena - 35000 people singing and partying without any alcohol is amazing!

Lots of people are expressing surprise that we slept in tents - I don't know how else they were going to accommodate 35000 people! Ours were two man and supplied by the British Scout Association. Luckily I had one to myself as there was 3 girls and I was the odd one out!

Another one of the highlights (I can't explain all of them) was the fruit stands around, sponsored by Chilean fruit producers. These were freshly stocked every morning and it was all free. You had to get there early for the grapes though!

When one of my friends fainted 3 times in one day due to a throat infection, we visited him while he was in the camp hospital. He was in the A and E wing, which was a Chilean Air Force field hospital. Inside it was air conditioned and amazing. While he was laid out on a stretcher with a drip in his arm recovering from collapsing he watched the field medics stitching somebody's hand up! I could go on like this for another few pages but I must talk about Brazil before you go to sleep!

The following day after the closing ceremony which was quite sad we packed up our tents and our dining shelter and our makeshift

kitchen, did some last minute swapping of badges and neck scarves (and hats, in my case). Our hat we were given was very practical but not ultra cool, so I swapped mine on the last day with an American called Colin Webber (his name is on the inside) which is beige and the sides attach up, so it looks a bit Australian. We slept the last night on the ground on our bags. We were being picked up at 3.30am by a bus to take us to the airport to go to Brazil.

Brazil (we went to Curitiba, in the south) was wet and green, compared to Chile. It rained the whole time we were there. We were treated to a bus tour of the city, and I was surprised at how many parks they have there. Curitiba prides itself on being very cosmopolitan, there was even a Baden Powell park! In the evenings we went 10 pin bowling and to arcades. Andrew (Hodder-Smith, from Sherborne) stayed with Ana, & Fernando Arantes, who lived with their parents in an apartment on the 20th floor, with 4 loos! There was a maid that came in every morning too. Fernando had a Playstation; we played endless games of soccer - Brazil vs France or Brazil vs England (needless to say Brazil won!). After 3 days there, we flew home, another endless flight made more enjoyable by the fact the video worked this time! When they announced that it was 2 deg C in England, everyone groaned!

I hope you weren't too bored by my spiel; it just remains for me to thank you for taking an interest in the World Scout Jamboree, I would recommend this to anybody, even if you don't like flying!

I was educated at home from the age of 6 - 15. I am now completing A levels at Salisbury College, and plan to go to Plymouth University to read Marine Navigation. I was chosen to attend the World Scout Jamboree in Chile at the beginning of this year. This is a copy of one page of our web site (www.jamboree.mcmail.com).

Charotte

Charlotte Newton, 6 Yeatmans Close, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset
SP7 8LU . andynewton@cwcom.net



A Holiday in New Zealand

by Rushka Moore age 12 Shaftesbury, Dorset

My time in New Zealand I loved. We stayed there for almost a year with my aunty Judith and her husband, they were doctors so mum had to look after their children (my cousins) Sam and Frances, two boys. Frances went to playgroup and Sam and I went to school (I had not found out about E/O yet .) Well there were 2 islands making up N. Z. , for the first half of our stay we lived on the North island in a town called Wairoa Our house in Wairoa was really nice and we loved our garden. It had a swimming pool, a lemon tree and also an orange tree. Sam and I loved to play tennis down the road and Frances and I loved picking oranges in the orchard next door.

The school I went to was mainly Maori, and I really enjoyed going to it. Most of the schools I went to in England were bad experiences for me but the schools in N.Z. were altogether much less structured and more loving. In the play-ground we had trampolines, and the maori kids did amazing tricks on them. I remember the countless times they asked me to count to ten and then crack up with laughter because they thought the english accent was so funny !

On my auntys days off, we would go on long hikes through rain - forests and sometimes we would find a hot sulphur spring to bathe in. We went to places like lake Waikaremoana (that is a typical N.Z. type name) and we had to cross really rickety bridges called rope bridges.

We had heard that the All Blacks were touring around N. Z. before the world cup...anyway, one day at school we were given paper and told to go to the park. We go there, and there were the All Blacks standing signing autographs. That was something I shall never forget !

We also lived in Nelson, north of the south island There we lived near the sea. While we were there, my granparents came to visit us and I went whale-watching with my grandad. We were on a really fast speed boat and I was neally sick with fear, but it was nice to see the whales.

Another scary thing was, that instead of a firedrill at school we did a earth - quake drill. And that's not punny because one day it actually happened, at home. It wasn't that bad, no houses collapsed or anything , just the furniture

shifted slightly and we had to stand under the door frames. To tell you the truth it wasn't that scary any way.... it was fun !

All in all it was an excellent holiday , really fab people , a lovely country , and a brilliant vibe !

Louise's Story

by Louise Gaubert age 10 Bridport, Dorset.

I was home - educated till the age of nine and have now been at school for one and a half years. I think there are good and bad points to both situations. The bad things about home - education are that you have to make a real effort to get to see friends, and your always taught by someone you knowwhich can be nice, but can also really get on your nerves ! The good things are, that you can go anywhere you like whenever you want, you don't have to wear a uniform and you can plan your lessons (most of the time !)

Enough of that, lets get on to the cataclysm of moving to school ! (only joking !)

The good things about school are you have lots of friends all the time and not just adults. The down side of moving to school is that you don't have any control over the lessons, playtimes are limited and you get tests. My advice to anyone thinking of moving to school is to go and see the headteacher with your parents first and thoroughly vet the school before you decide anything. Also, ask around. Do you know someone who goes or used to go ? If you are starting at the beginning of term see if anyone else is starting and maybe get in touch. Whatever you do, don't rush into it.

Good luck !

Louise

'TIZ - WOZ'

Hello. My name is Bobby Newton, I am 14 and am doing my GCSE's at the moment. When my sister Charlotte (who is now 18) was about 12, she went on a taster sailing session when she was on Guide camp, this started her off and we looked around for the nearest sailing club where we could learn to sail. The nearest, we discovered (from Shaftesbury) is West Wilts Sailing Association sailing club at Westbury near Warminster.

We put our names on the waiting list and the following summer we started going. Westbury lake is quite small with an island in the centre, and it soon earned the nickname " the muddy puddle " in our family ! The club owns 5 Comet Duos, 14 Toppers and some rescue boats. They are now thinking about buying some 'Pico Plus' for the more advanced sailors. When I first started going there I used to be frightened whenever any boat moved even slightly fast! We often play games at the end of the evenings such as running along the slippery backs of upturned toppers without falling off !

Soon after that we brought a Mirror dinghy called Hippo, to sail at Shearwater Sailing Club on the Longleat estate. Shearwater lake is quite big but with VERY erratic winds.

There are about three races every Sunday. It is a very friendly club with nice facilities, there is room to store boats and a good assortment of races. The only problem is the fishermen, they often cast their lines outside the area allotted to them inside the fishing buoys. On one memorable occasion I pulled a fisherman's rod out of his hands when the line caught in our rudder ! The Mirror dinghy, however, proved too slow for us and after 2 years we sold it and brought a Comet for my sister. The year after that we brought a Topper for me ("Tiz-Woz") for about £600. This proved very successful and I have gone on to get several 1st,s and some trophy's including : Junior Progress trophy and First Junior in the Topper Open.

My Dad has just started an adult sailing course at Westbury and sometimes sails my Topper at Shearwater. My Dad now wants to get a bigger boat such as a Topaz or a Pico Plus but I don't know if we can afford that yet ! When I am big and heavy enough I would quite like to get a Laser dinghy, but at the moment I am too light and would capsize all the time !

Sailing is my favourite hobby along with mountain biking, rollerblading, skiing, climbing and abseiling, canoeing and archery

Bobby Newton

P.S Hi to everyone I met on Thalatta

HES FES '99

A very huge thanks to everyone, too numerous to mention, who worked so hard to help make the Home Educators' Seaside Festival '99 such a success. The event took place in 15 acres at Monkton Wyld, Dorset, from Thursday 13th to Tuesday 18th May, 138 families camped, another 10 a day visited. Outside of the USA, HES FES was the world's biggest ever gathering of home educators. People came from all over the place. We even had a family come all the way from Finland. Credit is due to everyone who took part, as both the field and the beach were left spotless. The great HES FES balloon competition results are in: 160 balloons were released and a grand total of 6 were returned. Four from Devon and two from Cornwall. The card returned from the furthest distance came back from Perranporth, Cornwall, 119 miles from Monkton Wyld. Congratulations to the Bara family who win a family ticket to next year's event. HES FES 2000 is already being planned, **Monday 15th to Sunday 21st May**. More details to follow later in the year. See you there!



Hi, my name is Hettie and I am 12 years old.

I have been to school when I was little, but it was only for a term. My brother went to the same school and he hated it, so my mum decided to take us out. Because it would be a bit silly for my brother to be taught at home and me not, so I was taken out as well, (I am so glad). My brother went back to school after 4 years because he was lonely (weird boy).

I don't hate school and some times I think should I go to school. I can't imagine what school would be like, because my friends don't really talk that much about it, apart from homework and tests. But then when I go out I think of all the kids sitting in classes, then I think I definitely prefer being at home.

I hate it when people ask me why I am not in school or what school I go to and I have to explain to them. **"I DON'T GO TO**

SCHOOL", and they look at you like you're a weirdo, and then they start asking you loads of questions about exams and whether I get playtime or clothes.

But apart from that, and that you don't have your friends around you, home - education is the best.

Have a cool summer everyone. I'm not, because I'm going to Greece with my mum. We are going with the youth club, because my mum works there. And it's going to be really HOT!

Cheers Het

THE GOOD TOY GUIDE BY MICHAEL A. BRERETON

LEGO

Every year there are new Lego ranges and the only way you can find out about them, without buying a set, is to get a free Lego catalogue. But sometimes it's hard to get hold of it so that is why I'm writing about it. I've got two of the new Lego "Star Wars" sets and they are excellent. The two sets I've had are the Land Speeder - set number 7110 and X-Wing Fighter - set number 7140. The two sets don't have stickers but the detail is amazing. They both have light sabres made up from new elements so that they look very realistic. They also have the Droid R2-D2 in set No. 7140, and the detail is very good. Great for action packed adventurous games. May the Force be with you! Talking of adventure there are new Lego "Adventurers". They came out last year in the desert but for 1999 they are in the jungle where Sam Grant continues his adventures. Also, there are new bad guys on the block - Senor Gomez and Max Villano. Lightyears away there is the new Lego Space Port with new light and sound system for the rockets. It's really quite outstanding. I've only got the Space Port astronaut set No. 6457 but it's great as he has his own special remote rocket like James Bond. The pictures in the catalogue look great and they are great too.

I think Lego is one of the best toys in the world. Some people would think it a toy like other toys but as I would say "L is for learning, L is for Lego". So if a child wants a Lego set, whatever it looks like, you need to get it because they sell out quickly!



JUST CALL ME TZUKI !

Hi , my name is Tzuki Stewart and I am nearly 10 . I have never been to school , not one day in my life ! I have a lot of friends who go to school, and judging by what they say about it, I frankly don't like the sound of it ! But the discos they have sound fab !

I really love being home - educated, as you can laze around in bed for as long as you want ! Also, on weekdays, instead of being in school, you can do other stuff, such as go on picnics, go swimming and spend more time with your family, as well as loads of other stuff !

I am a traveller which means I travel around the place lots, including Portugal France, Spain and of course, England! I have loads of friends everywhere I go, which is great. I have a cat (Puss - Puss, the most exciting name in the world !) with 4 kittens. I absolutely adore cats. I also like being home - educated, because you can go to E / O meetings and meet lots of home - educated people like myself. I also like it because when I'm doing my work - book and I need helping, I get it straight away, without waiting for ages . To make it short, home -education is GREAT ! I just want to thank my mum for teaching me at home and not sending me to school !

I hate it when I meet schoolgirls who look at me like I'm an alien when I say I'm home - educated, I'm a traveller and my name's Tzuki ! My mum is great as she fills me with confidence and lets me be an individual ! I have a passion for singing. My favorite band is Abba. They are the best ever ! If anyone's thinking about being home -educated, I'll give you a few words of advice, " Do, it's absolutely great !"

Yours faithfully

Tzuki

xxx

P S I would like a pen-pal, if you would like to write my address is: 28 The Street, East knoyle, Salisbury, Wilts, SP3 6AJ.

FREE CRAFT SUPPLIES

In Portsmouth there is a craft bank which is a recycling centre of reclaimed materials from local industries. The unit supplies FREE paper, card, fabric and lots more. It also houses a shop which sells paint, glue and other art and craft materials at prices lower than local shops. Enquiries indicate that there are a large number of these round the country, though they vary in size, membership costs and what they offer. At the Portsmouth craft bank, a home-educating family pays £5 a year for membership. In other areas you may only be able to join as a group, but you could qualify as a "play group" or by joining an umbrella organisation. We have been told that there are 5 in London, also Bristol, Cardiff and many other cities. Why not ask your City council if there is a scrap store or craft bank? Local play groups or school teachers might also know if one exists locally.

You don't need to live in Portsmouth to join the Portsmouth craft bank. If you can get to Portsmouth and would like to know more, contact *Karen Butler* (01715 785334).

Congratulations Sam Truepenny on successfully auditioning for the 'Central School of Ballet, Pre-Senior Boys' Course, which involves weekly training in London and is a preparation for the 3 year full-time training at 16 years. (Central School of Ballet is affiliated with the Northern Ballet Theatre.) Well done that boy!!!!
(Julie Truepenny, Lincs.)

HOME-EDUCATED 30 YEARS AGO

The Observer arranged a competition for secondary school pupils to submit essays on 'The school that I'd like' in 1967. The best bits of these essays were compiled into a book in 1969 and published by Penguin. I read the book, and highly recommend it, but the enclosed section from Frank aged 12, I thought would be of interest to us all. Frank would be 44 now. I wonder where he is and what he's doing. His mother must've been a pioneer in her time. (Helen Donaldson, Domus, Crossheads, Staffordshire, ST18 0UG)

The school I'd like is what I have: my mother teaches my brother and me at home. We study maths, English, science, history, geography, French and scripture.

This system has many advantages. The most important is that we can learn at our own speed; thus I have recently started A level maths but am struggling with O English, while my brother, who is three and a half years younger, is advanced in English but only average at arithmetic. Another advantage is that we have much more free time than other children; we don't waste time travelling to and fro and, as we have individual work, the education officer agreed to shorten lesson times for us. I spend a lot of my leisure time reading, bird watching, stamp and coin collecting, doing jigsaws, carpentry, painting, listening to radio, watching TV, swimming, playing chess, draughts, tennis and table tennis. Another advantage is that we are not hedged in by a lot of silly rules and regulations. We are also free from bullying big boys and from pressure to start bad habits like smoking and drug taking. We dress in comfortable, sensible clothes and do not have to wear ridiculous uniform, nor do we have to play compulsory games.

Again, we have home cooking all the time.

When my mother started, a lot of people told her she was foolish because we would never learn to mix. I don't think this is true because, although I've always liked some time by myself, my brother likes and has lots of friends with whom he goes to play and who come and play with him ... It was also said that we would grow up selfish: I hope we're not. About once a fortnight we have a stall in our front garden to aid Oxfam and have collected £4 2s 3d so far this year. We also do a few odd jobs around the house. People also said Mother would find it too much. I know we get her down at times, but she survives and looks, so people say, much younger than she is ...

The only disadvantage of the system to my mind is the difficulty of doing much advanced practical work in science because of the amount of apparatus required...

I think it would solve a lot of problems if more people followed our system. Of course, not everyone is qualified to teach older children, but millions of mums could teach juniors. This would reduce the terrible overcrowding in some primary schools. Again, as children would be home for longer, it might help to decrease the birth rate.

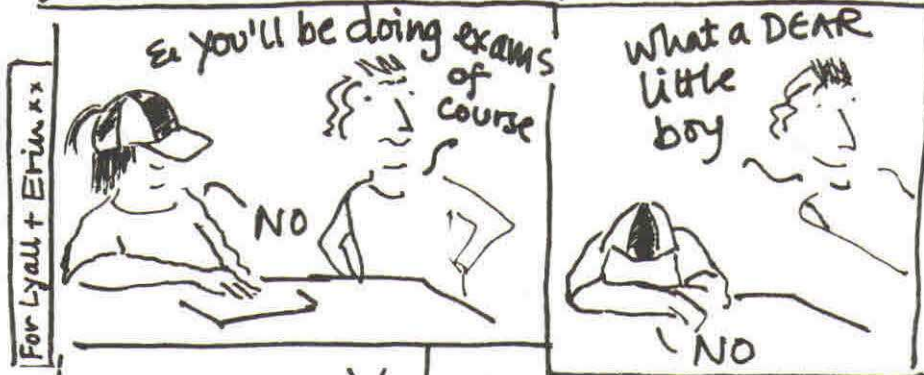
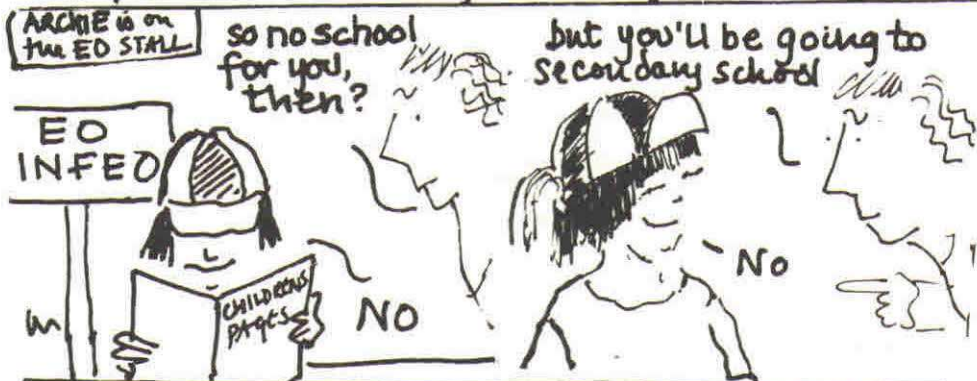
FRANK, 12

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EDUCATING ARCHIE

by SEG

Mrs G and Archie are at Glastonbury Festival 0000



In acknowledgement of Peter Brough, the ventriloquist, who died recently. Peter's dummy Archie was the hero of the long-running 50s radio show, Educating Archie, about a home-tutored boy. Hence the title of this cartoon.

The quality of this cartoon has been affected by SEG being on holiday

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Why we should support Summerhill

During this term we have had yet another visit from the inspectors. There were eight members on the team, which was very intrusive in a community of only 56 children. ... We were disappointed that they did not spend more time looking at the important things which we are proud of such as the social and emotional development of the kids, the creativity, individuality, independence and fun. Instead they were clearly only interested in the lessons and the fact that the children do not have to attend. We feel very negative about the whole visit particularly as they once again completely ignored the school's philosophy (though I am sure they would deny that), but emphasised the problems of non-compulsory lessons.

Sound familiar? The above is part of a description of the recent Ofsted inspection of Summerhill School. Zoe Readhead, head of the school, writes:

The school ethos is about freedom for the individual, equality, democracy, and personal choice. Children are treated as individuals who have a right to be heard, and who are expected to take a responsible part in the running of their own community. These are not poor disadvantaged children as the Ofsted inspectors would have you believe; they are strong, happy individuals with a great sense of self-worth. They understand that learning is their own responsibility and that if they are to pass exams needed for their future then they are the ones who must do the work.

The outcome of the Ofsted inspection was a damning report. Summerhill has effectively been presented with an ultimatum: to betray its principles or face closure.

Why do we owe this school our support? Because we have used their name and philosophy throughout EO's existence to explain and justify some of our own styles of education. Conventional LEA officials often say to us exactly what Ofsted is now saying about Summerhill: and it has been useful to be able to say that if HMIs are satisfied with Summerhill, the same type of education should satisfy an LEA. If Ofsted's arguments succeed in undermining Summerhill, where does that leave us? If the government and courts confirm the prejudices of Chris Woodhead, LEA officials who want to tidy us into our proper boxes will use every word to justify finding that some people are failing to educate their children; and if the courts uphold the Ofsted opinions of what education is, there will be case law to limit our present freedoms.

We know from our own support work in EO over many years that when people twist and distort our truth for their own agenda it is not enough to be right. We have to present our truth in a way that makes it accessible to people of goodwill, and that makes people think better of trying to bully us. It is tedious work, spelling out the obvious, and it entails a lot of time and energy which would be better spent with children.

It is equally essential to stand together – 'unity is strength'. We cannot actively support everything we would like to do, but when freedom and democracy are threatened, we have to respond while the weeds are small enough to pull out.

Anne & Rob Wade

Why we should support Summerhill

What you can do

If you belong to any other relevant groups, raise the issue in their newsletters, and get them to protest. Write to local and national politicians, newspapers, other media. Apart from campaigning letters, support to the school is appreciated. Financial support is also needed: both gifts for current campaigning costs and pledges to be called on if the fight goes to court.

Contact details

Website: <http://www.s-hill.demon.co.uk/index.htm>
Email: zoe_readhead@compuserve.com
Office and fax: tel 01728 830 540
Ofsted website: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/ofsted.htm>
(for a summary and a full account of their report).

Dick Kitto

We are very sad to announce the death, on June 21st in Sheffield, of Dick Kitto, aged 81. We have Dick to thank for getting Education Otherwise off the ground from Lower Shaw Farm in Swindon over 20 years ago, and for guiding the movement along until it had grown to become a strong national network.

Besides Education Otherwise Dick was involved with a number of other concerns, in particular Tools for Self-Reliance. Anyone wishing to make a donation is asked to send it to this charity.

It is hoped that there will be a chance to honour Dick at a memorial occasion at some point. If you are interested in taking part, please contact Sarah Guthrie.

In the meantime we invite you to send Sarah your memories and stories of Dick for a special memorial supplement to appear in the October newsletter.

Addresses

Sarah Guthrie, Field House, Mellis Road, Thrandeston, DISS, Norfolk, IP21 4PU. 01379 783678.
Tools for Self-Reliance, Netley Marsh, SOUTHAMPTON, SO40 7GY. 01703 869697.

LETTERS AND CONTACTS

A MESSAGE FOR BERKSHIRE

Some of the unitary authorities that replaced Berkshire County Council last year are starting to make unreasonable demands on prospective and existing home educators.

Some members in Windsor & Maidenhead Borough have recently received a six page 'Parental Proposal Form' requiring details of timetables, tutor's qualifications, proposed curriculum, etc. In response, I have written to the Director of Education explaining why the questionnaire is misleading and intimidating and, how they are exceeding their powers in sending it out. It will probably work but, if it doesn't, there are other steps that can be taken.

Another member in Bracknell Forest LEA had home-educated for many years. A new advisor visited and decided that unless educational provision improved within three months, the child must return to school. He asked for help and together we drafted a letter to the LEA which completely solved the problem.

In the main, Berkshire County Council had a reasonable approach to home education but, it does seem as though many of the older, more experienced advisors have retired and the new authorities appear to have employed younger staff, many of whom have no experience of home education.

Do be vigilant; if you're unhappy with the approach of your new authority, do let me know. It is usually possible to communicate with them in such a way that they respect our rights and behave reasonably.

*Pat Connor, 2 Whitegates Lane,
Reading RG6 1ED (0118 9662123)*

ADVICE AND CONTACT NEEDED

My name is Amanda, I am a mother of two children Jahara (3) and Zanthia (5 months). I am planning to home educate them. At the moment we are struggling to find friends for Jahara. We recently moved to a village and I'm disappointed there are no clubs etc, that Jahara could attend, because they don't accommodate her age group. What makes matter worse, we live right opposite a school, and everybody in the village that talks to Jahara keeps asking her if she goes to school yet. It is not surprising she is starting to feel a bit alienated, because we do not know of any other children that are home-educated.

I'm desperate for help and would really appreciate it if Eoers could give us some advice, info, contacts, or if you live in the Glamorganshire area with children, could you please get in touch? Also, if you have had similar problems, I would love to hear from you. Thank you very much.

*Amanda McKenzie, 1 Glan-yr-ysgol,
Ystalyfera, Swansea SA9 2AL*

NEW FAMILY

We are a home-educating family who has recently begun 'educating otherwise' our 8 year-old daughter. We choose to educate intuitively and autonomously. We have recently moved to this area, and we are seeking other autonomous Eoers for contact, regular get togethers and support (non-smokers preferred). If you live nearby (or even if you don't) please get in touch. We look forward to your replies.

*Amanda Sutton, David Mather and
Emily Sutton, 8 High Street, Minxton,
Saffron Waldron, Essex, CB10 1QY
(01799 531022)*

THE VALUE OF LESSONS?

Just chewing over the June newsletter for the 3rd time, I noticed again Linda Darby's letter to which I had not paid much notice before (as her request seemed not applicable to our younger family). Well thank you Linda, you put me on a train of thought that has given me a big kick in the figurative 'back seat'.

She mentions having 'to study often boring, tedious subjects' at school. Now I suppose that I have felt in the past that the above have their place. I have had worries and concerns about the boys' lessons not being structured enough and I admit, not trusting that their natural curiosity will teach them what they 'ought to know' – so I do sometimes insist on lessons that they obviously don't enjoy.

Linda set me thinking on the lessons that I found boring and tedious in my own school years, being influenced to take subjects I had no interest in, also having to drop subjects I would rather have taken. The worst was physics, and today I could not, even at knife-point, dredge up anything from those awful hours with any scientific value, not even the simplest, most basic of equations. Spanish, taken for 5 years, I can count the phrases on one hand, literally. Maths ... well, let's just say, where I go, the calculator always comes. Whereas English literature and Art I loved and still remember many lessons learnt (and my teachers with fondness).

Although passing every exam (ingrained fear of failure) I realise that you can fill heads, but to what purpose? My teachers may have felt I 'should know' maths etc. but after holding onto the facts for as long as I had to (walking out of the examination room), I went on to remember what I jolly well pleased and

can honestly say I'd be the same person doing the same thing as I am had I not taken the exams. In fact now at 30, I am taking some interest in subjects that meant nothing to me at school, and am actually enjoying them (history, for example) – which just proves what you've all been saying for a long time! Happily I am now pursuing my plan to write and illustrate my own children's book – English and Art!

So this has been a bit of a revelation for me, I hope I'm going to be able to implement my newfound freedom of thought with our sour sons, Jordan 6, Alex 4, Joe 2 and Robin 3 months.
*Jbid Neary, 26 Coronation Drive,
Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria LA15 8QR*

THE NEXT ISSUE

REFLECTING - Highlights of our pre-millennium experiences shared by home educators throughout the world.

ENVISIONING - Hopes for the future of home education.

What hopes do you have for the future of home education ?

How do you think home education will grow in the next century ?

How is home educating influencing the future?

What would you put in a home education time capsule ?

Please send your ideas and thoughts to Judith Shalkowski, 121 Otley Old Rd, Cookridge, LEEDS LS16 6HH 0113 226 5515

THE NEEDS OF THE YOUNG

Young children need a stable figure to whom they can turn whenever the need arises, (in most cases) parents satisfy that need. The child can obtain comfort in times of distress or sadness and is able to discuss his/her thoughts and ideas on a level of intimacy that prepares him/her socially because he is enabled to trust others and so feels at ease with them and is unafraid of them. In truth, this isn't possible within the atmosphere of a school because all of the child's relationships there are carried out on a superficial level.

It seems to me that it is not the amount of time that is spent with a child that matters, as much as the quality of time spent with him/her. I've noticed that my own child (William 5½) derives more satisfaction from my attention when it is given whole-heartedly for a shorter period of time than when give half-heartedly for a lengthier period of time. Also, all children are different, and whilst two hours attention per day may satisfy one child, another child may need twice that amount. Conversely, I daresay it would be damaging to force attention upon a child when he/she did not want it.

The need for attention tends to fluctuate, sometimes William needs all day, and sometimes he only wants an hour and a half. Sometimes we clash; we're only human after all! But the main ingredient in our relationship is love, which always comes first. Where in a school could he obtain this?

*Lorraine Jessop 12 Wright Street,
Bacup, Lancs OL13 8QQ*

New Family? Moved to a new area?

Looking for contact?

*Don't forget to get in touch with your EO
local contact for details in your area.*

SEEKING CONTACT

I am a lone parent with 3 children, Aimee 6, Daisy 3 and Molly 1 month. We are all vegan and lead an 'alternative' lifestyle. I educate my children in an autonomous way. I would like to make contact with other families, particularly those in the Todmorden and Hebden Bridge area as we would like to move there in the next few months. If anyone in those areas knows of a 3 bedroom house to rent, please let me know.

*Louise Sutton, 33 Morville Road,
Charlton, Manchester M21 0TR*

WORRIED ABOUT HEALTH CHECKS?

When I took my sons out of school, I was concerned about them missing vaccinations and hearing/sight tests normally carried out by the school nurse. She said that my children could have most of the usual tests at the health clinic, GP's surgery or at the optician's. The BCG comes in 7-dose packs for vaccinations, so she said she would arrange for my child to be vaccinated in high school with the school children, when the time came. I imagine that other areas of the UK operate in a similar way.

If parents are worried about their child missing health checks/vaccination, they could contact their school nurse or GP. I have decided I will ring the nurse each September to check what my children are 'due' during the year.

*Mrs A M Morfett-Jones, 80 Albert Drive,
Deganwy, Conwy LL31 9RH*

Our 14 year-old daughter is just starting school for the first time. I asked her 2 younger brothers what they thought of this, since they have always been together. "Very weird and extraordinary" said one. "I'm not going," said the other.
Christine Adey, Dorset

EO BUSINESS - EO BUSINESS

**THE 13th E.O. GATHERING at Featherstone Castle,
Northumberland
9th - 16th September, 1999**

It's been happening for so long because it's so good!

A few comments from last year:

"Lots of fun"

"Freedom!"

"Meeting friends and new people"

"It's so good it needs to be longer than a week"

"It's wacky, funky, super, brill, fabulous, wonderful and fun"

For information / booking form send a S.A.E. to
Keith Charlton,
2, Wistow Road,
Newton Harcourt,
Leics.
LE8 9FT

There will be
an Open Council Meeting
at Featherstone Castle, Northumberland
at 10am on Saturday 11th September 1999.

All EO members are welcome to put items on the agenda and to attend.

Please send agenda items to Lucy Charlton (general secretary) in good time.

EO NEWSLETTER

The current format of the Newsletter has served EO well with very few changes for many years. A rota of volunteer editors has been the best way to cope with a job which would be too much for one person to tackle. It has also meant that the Newsletter has always represented a variety of views.

Changes in communication and technology, however, now mean it would be feasible for the Newsletter to be edited by a regular team of volunteers. I know from the feedback I get from members that most people would like to see more regular features, resource reviews, up to date information about home education etc; an editorial team would give the magazine this continuity.

If you like the idea of some involvement with a new style EO publication, please get in touch with me for more information or just a chat. None of the jobs are very onerous and many of them could be challenging and fun. Every position needs different skills and experience; there should be something to interest many members. If you have an idea which is not already included, I would be very keen to hear from you too.

Applicants will probably need access to a PC and email seems to me a good way for the editorial team to work together. Please get in touch with me as soon as possible as it is hoped to take the decisions at the next meeting in September.

Sue Hutchin

Newsletter Co-ordinator

01233 820008, Sue@oak-wood.freemove.co.uk, Oakwood, Sparrow Hatch Lane, Bethersden, Ashford, Kent TN26 3ED

1. REGIONAL DIARY, ADS, NOTICES, EO JOBS, AGENDA, MINUTES, INSIDE COVERS. This would involve relatively little typing but some **desk top publishing skills** as not all ads and notices come ready to print and will need to be displayed in boxes. The main tasks are updating the inside covers/ regional diary for each issue, laying out adverts, eo notices & jobs. It could be up to 10 pages but much of it is carried over each issue.
2. LETTERS AND ARTICLES. This editor should be a **competent typist**, as about 8 or 10 pages would be given over to general contributions sent in by readers (some of it on disc/by email). It would involve selecting the best articles, a balance of letters, and typing them up. The editor would retain an archive of unpublished work and should be able to select the most appropriate contributions to fit each issue.

3. **RESOURCE AND BOOK REVIEWS.** Although readers would be encouraged to send reviews to this editor, this job is not essentially passive. This editor must approach book and software publishers for review copies and, either reviewing them themselves or passing them to an appropriate family (you do not need an interest in everything!), produce one or two pages for each issue. ***Good English would be essential and an enthusiasm for books and software.***
4. **HE IN THE PRESS.** This editor would be given a subscription to GWS and other appropriate publications and would select articles of interest to reproduce in our NL. They would also try to find relevant articles in the newspapers, esp TES. ***An interest in home education would be vital*** and they would be aiming to fill a page or two for each issue.
5. **EO CONTACT** would report on publicity, campaigns, and other EO work undertaken at national level to do with the running of the organisation. ***A council member would be appropriate*** and should be able to come up with a regular half page or a page.
6. **COMMISSIONING EDITOR** would be responsible for producing a set of articles (up to 10 pages) on a different theme each issue. We could even have 2 who alternate, doing 3 issues a year each. ***This demands initiative and resourcefulness and CANNOT depend on contributions received in the post.*** They must have good EO contacts and be prepared to use them to root out members with relevant experience and ask them to write articles. Old issues are also a source of information, good articles can be re-printed or their authors asked for an updated version. This person will probably not need to write articles themselves but must be prepared to go to some lengths to unearth them. Typing also needed.
7. **NEWSLETTER CO-ORDINATOR** has to proof read the NL and send it to the printer. They must be prepared to hassle the editorial team as the deadline approaches and ensure that each editor is aware of their exact space limits etc for each issue. They will also need to support and advise the NL team, and, although they do not have a regular responsibility, will have to accept that occasionally they will have to cover for some one else.
8. **COVER...** Any ideas how to do this ?

COUNCIL MEETINGS ARE NOT JUST FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS.

Do you have ideas or inspiration, offers of or requests for help, concerns or criticisms? Don't keep them to yourself. Council meetings are open to all members. If you are unable to come please do contact a member of the council, send your ideas to Lucy Charlton for inclusion in the agenda or maybe ask around and find someone local who is coming.

Share your thoughts and help make EO a more effective organisation.

Together we can spread the word! Join us on September 11th at Featherstone Castle

HOME EDUCATION VIDEO

Order your copy of this award winning video documentary on home education entitled "Education Otherwise" and made by students at Bradford University. This fascinating thirty-minute documentary gives a snapshot of the lives of some home-educated children. It includes comments from educational professionals and raises many important issues. It is an inspiration for families considering home education and ideal to show to friends and family to get a feeling for how wide spread and acceptable home education is.

Cost: £7 (£6 for EO members) plus p&p

Cheques payable to Education Otherwise Trading Ltd and envelopes addressed to Education Otherwise - Video, PO BOX 4720, London N9 9SG

ENQUIRIES - All those dealing with enquiries should now have video flyers to include with what you send out. More video flyers can be obtained from Pam Bellinger (see inside back cover).

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARIES NEEDED

EO has gaps in its network of regional membership secretaries. Replacements are needed for the North-West, West and South Midlands, the South-East and London. The job is a postal one, sending out packages to new members on receipt of their application forms. Workload varies seasonally and regionally, with a rough guide of between 6-20 per month.

Please phone Pam Bellinger on 01869 252701 for further information. And if I get anything like the response I received for the stationery job, I shall be tickled pink! Thank you.

NEW DATABASE SECRETARY NEEDED

Urgently as we are moving and will not be able to continue

Would you be interest? The job involves around 3-5 hours work per week. Processing renewals that come by post or standing order, banking cheques once a month, change of addresses, etc.

Also a second person who would just deal with entering the details of new members, this would involve around 2-3 hours per week.

For both of these jobs a person with a PC and a telephone is vital. Someone with a copy of Microsoft Access 97 and some experience of using it is preferable.

If you would like to know more about either of these jobs, please contact:

Janet Wilkinson 0181 998 3252 e-mail: eo_database@ndirect.co.uk

THANK YOU BLEDDWYN

EO would like to express our thanks to Bleddwyn of Argraffdy Arfon who has been printing our newsletter through thick and thin (literally) and without whose goodwill there would, on occasion, have been no newsletter due to past financial constraints. He is retiring this summer and we wish him all he hopes for himself.

ENQUIRY LINE

We have a new telephone number **0870 7300074**

At last we have a new Enquiry Line Number up and running and it costs enquirers no more than any other long distance call. The old number will continue to run side by side for at least another year. Now you can listen to the whole message for less than the cost of a stamp!

CHEAP PHONE CALLS – We have arranged our new enquiry line through SetCo, a non profit making co-operative. I recommend this telephone company as their prices, especially for long distance calls, are well below BT's rates. We have set up an affinity scheme where members can use SetCo on their BT line, save money on their call AND 6% will go to EO. It provides very competitive rates and ploughs back profits into the charities that 'own' it. I have signed up already! See further details in next newsletter or contact me.
Priscilla Park Weir, Treasurer 01276 22735

ONE DAY REGIONAL GATHERING AT LEICESTER OCTOBER 2nd 1999 10 am to 6 pm

Keynote Speaker, Legal Workshop, Discussion Sessions, Arts and Crafts Activities, Computer Software to try, Books to buy, and lots of other home educators from the wider area to talk to! Come to the Friend's Meeting House in Leicester on October 2nd and all this can be yours for £2.00 per adult/£1.00 per child.

If you'd like to know more, send an SAE to Jill Fisher, 54 Ratcliffe Road, Leicester, LE2 3TD and I'll send you a registration form and more details. You can also contact me on 0116 212 8120 or at ijgis@msn.com.

Local Contact update (previously referred to as Co-ordinators.)

When dealing with the LEA or other bodies carry on using the term Co-ordinator for

Resignations Sue McMahon Norfolk Andrew Hannon Bath (Avon)
Beverley Young Lancashire Jane Davies Glamorganshire Don Patter
Shropshire

Acting Overseas Contact Christina Viti NW London

Areas needing a co-ordinator: -

Ceredigion (ex Dyfed), Derbyshire, Glamorganshire, Gloucestershire, Glos.South,
Hertfordshire, Isle of Man, Lancashire London East, Norfolk, Shropshire, Strathclyde,.

Why not find out more about the role from Isobel Bogucki 01403 261178 E-mail
isobelb@cheerful.com

Yet another type of contact person!

We are in the process of preparing a list of people who will help those of you with no access to the internet, to make use of the UK HOME EDUCATION MAILING LIST. (See small ads) While this is still at the discussion stage send your questions or comments plus an sae and stamps to cover printing costs, to me. I will print out and post the responses to you." Isobel.

**Report from the OPEN COUNCIL MEETING
at Stokes Barn, Telford, Salop on 22nd May 1999**

- Responsibility for the **EO web site** has been taken over by the Kingsley Hugheses.
- Priscilla Park-Weir reported that expenditure had exceeded receipts for the first time in several years.
There have been several very large **expenses claims** recently and members are reminded to submit claims when they reach £100 or sooner.
- The **joining procedure** is to be changed to speed things up.
Priscilla is looking for a **payment secretary** to deal with banker's orders, credit card payments and deeds of covenant.
- The meeting agreed that "local co-ordinators" should be renamed "**local contacts**" as this more accurately reflects their role.
It was also suggested that there could be Internet contacts and a LEA liaison in each area. These ideas are to be considered further.
- 10 copies of the **Summary of the Law** have been sent to each LEA in England and Wales, and 1 to each EO local contact.
If you'd like a copy send an A5 sae to Jill Fisher.
- Copies of **Elective Home Education Legal Guidelines** will be sent to all EO local contacts.
- The **Scottish legal leaflet** has been put on hold as the Scottish Parliament is rewriting the Scottish Education Act. A joint campaign will try to bring Scottish legislation into line with England for the right to home educate.
- Publicity is doing well. Beverley Young needs **regional publicity people** to organise information on families willing to be interviewed by the press.
- The **0891 helpline** phone no. will be changed to a 0870 no. which is much cheaper for callers.
- There was discussion about developing positive relationships with **other HE organisations**. In future the newsletter will include a list of all HE support groups.
Martine Archer has offered to be a liaison person between EO and the UK Home ED list.
- An **International Millenium conference** is being planned for next summer, Jenny Stevens is looking for sponsors.
- Members who misuse the **contact list** for unsolicited advertising will have their membership cancelled.
- **Future Gatherings**: Featherstone Castle, Northumberland for 9th - 16th September 1999 and Manorbier Youth Hostel, Pembrokeshire for 27th - 30th January 2000. Help is needed to organise both these gatherings. Contact Lucy Charlton.

If you would like a copy of the full minutes please send an A5 sae to:
Lucy Charlton (general secretary),
2 Wistow Road, Newton Harcourt, Leicestershire LE8 9FT

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

CUMBRIA

Kendal alternate Wednesdays 10.30-12.30 Castle St Youth Centre

Contact: Jane Gregory 01539 567344

Penrith alternate Tuesdays 1.30-3.30 Castletown Community Centre. Also swimming on Fridays

Contact: Sarah 01768 896019

Vicki 01768 899175

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 Rotherary* 01297 631108
3 Coup Cott. Lymne Rd, Axminster

DORSET

Regular meetings, keep in touch.
Contact: *Christine Adey* 01258 880355
Rosemary Newton 01474 853593

Bournemouth - weekly activities
Contact: *Sue North*, 30 Oswald Rd,
Moordown, BH9 2TQ
01202 527350

ESSEX

Essex Epicycle gives details of all events. £2.50 for 4 issues.
Contact: *Sandie Coltee* 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

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
Allison 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
Medway - *Pam* 01634 671507
Bridget 01634 234938
West Kent - see S.E. London
Events list available.
Contact: *Send sae to Amanda Mackenzie*
16, Brambletree Cott, 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 01773 780634*

NORFOLK

NEON gives details of all events. £1.50 plus four large saes.
*Contact: Ali Willer 28 Cozens-Hardy Rd
Sproston, Norwich. NR7 8QF
01603 401020*

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Tuesdays & Fridays weekly activities and visits including Kingsthorpe Community Centre, Museums, Parks, Wacky Warehouse, factories etc
*Contact: sae to Mr & Mrs F Benham
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

PORTSMOUTH

Weekly meetings-small group hoping to grow.

*Contact: Julie (P.) 640242
Karen (P.) 790748*

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 Cl,
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 (except Aug) - meetings in Cardigan/West Wales area.

Contact: Yvette Hartley 01239 820968

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
Joy Beasley 01922 863115

Birmingham - Last Wednesday of month - Central Library 10.30-1.30.

Contact: Jackie & Alan Harley
2 0121 243 8242

YORKSHIRE - NORTH & EAST

Regular meetings & visits etc

Contact: Alison Honston 01405 7669902
ALISON HAS A NEW BABY GIRL CELIA

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. Turn Up or

Contact: Annette 0114 2583502
Fiona 0114 22751142

YORKSHIRE - WEST

Outings & activities.

Contact: Eva 01535 274520
Judith 0113 2265515

First & third Wednesdays 11.30 - 1.30 Salem Community 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

Second Friday of the month, 1.00 - 4.00 at Moortown Baptist Church, King Lane, Leeds. £2.50 per family

Contact: Judith 0113 2265515

Last Wednesday of the month, 11.45

Baildon Rec Centre, Shipley

Contact: Trish Flynn 01274 590788

Swimming(term time), Tuesdays at Bradford

Contact: Eva or Trish

Wednesdays, 10.30 Huddersfield Sports Centre

Contact: Helen 01484 602100

Advertisements

Books and Resources for Resale

Do you have any books or resources that you have used and would like to resell or loan? If so, why not advertise in the newsletter? It might be just what someone else is looking for!

Tuition and Resources Available

THE NON-STOP READER

*For teaching your child
to read within weeks*

"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

Correspondence Courses

Junior to GCSE at £5 per subject per month. Several subjects available.

Send SAE for details to:

*Roger Freeborn, 4 North Fen Road,
Helpringham, Sleaford NG34 0RR*

Tel: 01529 421218

Wise Owl Educational Software

PO Box Abingdon OX14 2YB

Tel: 01235 529808

email: wisewowlsw@aol.com

UK children's shareware library, specialising in educational programs and games for ages 2-16+. 900+ titles (DOS, Windows 3.1 & 95/98) for all types of PC (XTs, 286, 386, 486, Pentiums). 3½" & 5¼" media. All titles £3 per disk. Free catalogue & advice. Est. 1991, no membership fees.

Advertisements

MATHS & ENGLISH SUCCESS!

Help for age 5 to GCSE

From £10 per family, per week.

Phone 01536 200902 quoting ref CS1
THE STUDENT SUPPORT CENTRE

Usborne Books Interested in buying Usborne books, jigsaws, games or CD Roms? A good range available, suitable for children of all ages. 10% of all sales will go to EO.

*For a catalogue phone or fax
Julie Loughlin on 01283 760800*

International GCSE

Little Arthur Independent School

Offers low-priced home-educator packs and exam centre facilities in Maths, English, Accounting, History, Biology, and Physics from £55. Also residential IGCSE tuition/assessment & "get-you-started" sessions for ages 7-14. For details send SAE to:

Little Arthur Independent School, St Martin's, Isles of Scilly, Cornwall

OPEN WAY

Language & Literature Courses

A Correspondence Course for
Advanced Young Readers

Contact: Mrs Margaret Stevens
B.A. (Hons), tel/fax 01844 343928

Books and Resources Wanted

Astrid Lindgren's "Emil" books wanted badly for our 8 year-old. These are out of print and no longer available in our county library. Willing to buy or borrow. All postage paid. Please contact:
*Christine Adey (01258 880355);
Dunbury Cottage, Milton Abbas, Dorset*

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

Advertisements

Activities/Holidays/Property Rental

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

House wanted. Seeking 2 bedroom house/cottage near Michael House Steiner School, Shipley, Ilkeston, Derbyshire. Anywhere else to rent, long term, near a Steiner School (12 yrs+) also considered.
Tel: Lavina 01623 626248

Wanted - Home to Rent. Family seeks 2/3 bed house/flat, large kitchen, garden in pleasant surroundings within daily commute of London. We can afford up to £630 pcm, to include both rent & commuting. Willing to decorate & maintain/restore a garden. Details of any property, housing association etc. to: Sarah Finch or Michael, 22 Harvey Road, London N8; Tel: 0181 3484329; (sarah@sjfinch.u-net.com)

Student House to Let - 3 bedrooms with own keys, plus communal living room. Near to Spaghetti Junction. Rent includes water rates & weekly cleaning if required. £45 per person per week, available now. Tel: Syd and Bernie Pring-Ellis 01902 632298

Advertising 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.

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

Advertisements

Miscellaneous

Au Pair Spanish girl (24 years old) looks for a vegetarian family where she can help with the children (or any old person living in the house), household work and also teaching Spanish. Speaks some English.
Contact: Reyes +34.96.58.88.955

HOME EDUCATION CONFERENCE

April 8th & 9th 1999

Video/audio tapes & transcripts available.

Includes John Gatto & Pat Farenga.

Prices from £6 plus p&p

write to Malcolm Muckle at:

HE2K-Plus Ltd. (Tapes),

14 Springfield Av. London N10 3SU

e-mail: enquiries@he2k-plus.co.uk

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

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.

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Ely, Camb CB6 3JD

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85 Elfrida Rd, Walford, Herts WD1 8AT
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Tel: 01828 640353

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Stationery: Ali Willer *EO stationery, re-use
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available from:*
28 Cozens-Hardy Rd, Sprowston, Norwich, NR7
8QF *(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)
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IF YOUR NEWSLETTER DOES NOT
ARRIVE, PLEASE CONTACT THE
DATABASE SECRETARY TO CHECK IF
YOU ARE ON THE DATABASE

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 0870 7300074

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

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