

education otherwise



December 2000

No. 137

**SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE FEBRUARY ISSUE OF THE
EDUCATION OTHERWISE NEWSLETTER TO THE FOLLOWING EDITORS:**

CHILDREN'S PAGES

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LOCAL NEWS (vacant)

HOME EDUCATION NEWS

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ACTING NEWSLETTER

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(For information about volunteering for any
of the jobs on the newsletter contact
Christine Adey)

Please include your name, address and phone number and mark material 'for publication'.

Contributions are more likely to be included if they are concise.

DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY ISSUE IS 1ST JANUARY 2001

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OR IF YOUR NEWSLETTER DOES NOT ARRIVE, PLEASE CONTACT THE
DATABASE SECRETARY (see inside back cover).

From the Editors...

HAPPY CHRISTMAS 2000 !

Our December 2000 Newsletter celebrates with the wonderful **ARCHIE** and some children's poems from years gone by in the Archives. Articles cover a range of subjects, from accounts of the first year of home education to meetings with an LEA – and do study the alternative Christmas Cake recipe carefully (one for the adults).

The Special Section, edited by Sue Davis, provides helpful information and ideas, as well as reassurance, on ideas for children's writing. One more tip – persuade your kids to write your Christmas cards for you this month! If you're having trouble finding time for yourself in the run-up to Christmas, turn to the Problem Page for a few ideas.

There is a bumper section on Book Reviews and Resources this month, which may give parents a few ideas for Christmas presents. Books, CD Roms and story cassettes: they're all there.

Home Education in the News covers the Guardian's article on the Alternatives in Education Fair, and news from Ireland. And if you need to remind yourself about the police powers to remove truants from public places, because you have been recently approached while out, turn to Education Otherwise Business. If you have any problems dealing with police or EWOs regarding this power, do get in touch with an EO council member.

Thank you to those who have offered to write articles for the Newsletter in the future – and YES PLEASE to you all! All articles and letters are welcome and will be gratefully received. Could we have some contributions from some long-time home educating families too? We know you're busy, but we'd love to hear your story, by 31 December 2000, if humanly possible.

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Please write in: next issue's Special Section is **What about Science?** What science do your children enjoy learning? Do you cover science formally or informally? Have your children gone onto take GCSE? Send your ideas to Wendri Heywood, address opposite.

SPECIAL SECTION: ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO WRITE

Ideas for children's writing

Starting very young, label children's drawings by vehicle, animal etc, and always put on their name. Soon they will do this for themselves (in their own way!) before they even have to be taught! Later write a full sentence underneath (dictated by the child?) to be "read" or copied. Children later do this for themselves out of habit.

Habit is important, even if you start with only a few words each day. We started picture diaries from an early ("pre-school") age, at least a couple of days a week: a picture with a sentence underneath e.g. "We went to the beach and threw stones". This became a sentence every day with no picture and Kit (7) writes half a page after tea every day voluntarily. Jem (5) writes about 3 sentences. Kit likes to write about he saw or did and Jem prefers to put what he played and what went wrong: "I brook my Lego model and was veer angry." This means that whatever else goes on they will have done some writing every day.

Other ideas:

Copy ingredients from a recipe on to a list – buy them and follow the recipe.

Write your own picture books – a picture and sentence a day about a pet, a toy that comes to life, something strange that you found in the supermarket/woods. An adventure about a family member makes a great Christmas present for an appreciative relative – "Granny and the Bank Robbers"!

Ask a willing relative to correspond – start with postcards.

Make a game – write the rules.

Write something on the calendar ("my birthday!").

Take a pencil and notepad on a walk, write what you find – older children can identify makes of car, fungi, trees, colours of bikes etc.

Write a poem and decorate it for a present.

Write invitations to tea, a party, a game of football.

Make tickets for your own cinema, make a poster, invite the family, watch the video, eat snack, even write a review.

Make a family newspaper and get everyone to contribute. We have one every 6 weeks or so: short story from Jem with picture, reports on days out by Kit, crossword or wordsearch, photos and list of what's coming up soon. I do the typing, we photo copy it and send to Grandparents and family who WRITE AND REPLY – very important.

Cut out cartoon characters and write your own captions.

SPECIAL SECTION: ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO WRITE

Make signs (Keep out. Danger, Dragons live here.).
Write gift tags, birthday cards, words to a pop song.
List things to do, ambitions, Christmas present.
Write clues for a treasure hunt.

Most of all **READ AND WRITE** in front of your children, it's a necessary part of life, not an obscure form of torture inflicted on school children! The earlier they get hold of a pencil and start forming their own "words"/ scribbles and dots the easier it will be later. Involve them in your writing – "Can you write eggs on the shopping list before I forget?"

I often find notes addressed to me: "Play Cluedo tomorrow", "Let me bake some biscuits" and I write to them: "PLEASE Put this away!", "Postcard from granny downstairs" I've noticed that requests written down are more often carried out – very useful!

Older children could write a joint story with friends/brothers and sisters – one writes a page, then passes it on. Over a period of days/weeks a collaborative story could build up. Make your own library/family post-box.....

The list is endless!

Kirsten Freieileben (Devon)

One of the earliest things I enjoyed writing was when we moved house when I was 5. I took photos of around the village, then stuck them into a scrapbook and wrote a sentence for each of them underneath. I've still got it!!!

Gren (13)

SPECIAL SECTION: ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO WRITE

Children's writing

We have been home educating our soon – to – be – 9 son and recently – 7 daughter for two years now, and although we know that they are both numerate and literate at least a year beyond the Key Stage system applicable to their ages (we use the Key Stage Papers to test this), they are both reluctant to write. Interestingly, despite this reluctance to write, both enjoy spelling tests and will often suggest words that they would like to practise.

Our answer to this has been two pronged. Firstly, we don't do much writing, in the hope that they will develop a need and thus a desire for it through games and puzzles. This seems to be working quite well. Secondly, when we go out, we use our PC to create a page with relevant pictures on and spaces, complete with lines for them to write about what we saw or did. In this way they are writing about something that is real and relevant to them and most of our trips out are prompted by their desire to learn more about something than we can gain from books.

*Steev Stamford
Derbyshire EO Local Contact*

Writing throughout childhood

Surprisingly, when stripped to their basics, the Key Stage targets from the National Curriculum do reflect the natural pattern of progress found in children's automatic development. I find it convenient to divide these stages into:

1. Early Steps – Key Stages 1&2, approximately ages 4 – 10.
2. Building a Range – Key Stage 3, approximately ages 11 – 14.
3. Towards Exams/Adult Literacy – Key Stage 4, ages 15 onwards.

I think it is important to realise that our children develop at different rates and chronological stages; it is a temptation to panic when they seem not to be up to our expectations or their peer group. THEY INVARIABLY CATCH UP! In my own experience as parent and teacher, boys do often appear more reluctant and slow to progress, despite a non-sexist upbringing/approach! A relaxed attitude (and the space to do what they can when they want to) does pay off eventually.

SPECIAL SECTION: ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO WRITE

1. EARLY STEPS

Small children soon become aware of the printed word and its obvious link with writing. Start encouraging them to write/copy their name on birthday cards, thank you letters etc. Since most children like sticking things up, they often enjoy making labels on bits of card – “fridge”, “door”, “television”, “sink”, “radiator” and so on; then comes the fun of sticking them on the relevant items with bluetack!

Lists are a natural progression from this: help with the shopping list, ideas for presents for birthday/Christmas, favourite food for a special meal.

When moving on to whole sentences (don't hurry the reluctant – especially left-handers, who usually need to spend more time on each stage practising their motor skills) make the outcome something they can be proud of. Buy or make a scrap book, stick in pictures (the child's own?) and write a short sentence together. Do the same with photographs of, say, a holiday or visit.

My own children have always enjoyed using workbooks, like those produced by Letts, which encourage writing, but in small chunks!

Modern technology (to me) in the form of the word processor is a boon; it encourages writing without the pain and the result looks attractive.

At the upper end of this age range an introduction to the art of calligraphy can be an incentive.

NB. When children are beginning to form letters it is useful if from the outset they use little “tails” or “kicks” e.g. *l, m, t, g, b, s*. This makes cursive/joined up writing easier to attain.

2. BUILDING A RANGE

At this stage most children can cope with writing to a greater length, as they become more fluent. Again, unless you have a very enthusiastic writer I have found it counter-productive to force volume production.

Reports of visits or outings, thank you letters, stories for younger siblings or friends and diary keeping can maintain a regular “flow”, and incidentally provide “evidence” for Local Authority visits. Children in school at Key Stage 3 seemingly produce vast quantities of material – they do have a lot of time to fill! In my opinion they do not need years of such mass production to become literate, or to gain good grades at GCSE. Personal writing for a specific purpose e.g. letters to pen-friends, passing on a tasty recipe, articles or letters to local newspapers (or even the EO Newsletter!) on subjects of concern can provide plenty of practice for the more extensive range of expression necessary if they are to follow external examination courses.

SPECIAL SECTION: ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO WRITE

As I love reading, I like writing stories of my own.
I usually do this on the computer.

Kit (11)

3. TOWARDS EXAMS/ADULT LITERACY

At this stage students will be honing their skills in transactional writing as part of daily life – letters, e-mail etc. For most families the motivation will probably be external exams or job applications. For those taking a traditional route this will mean GCSEs with their somewhat burdensome Coursework. At least most home-educated children have not had to churn out the volume required in school, and come to this relatively fresh and enthusiastic! Should you wish to enter your students as external candidates it is perfectly possible for literate parents to prepare for exams from home; most of the Exam Boards welcome this. As far as English is concerned, if you obtain the relevant syllabus and study the Schemes of Assessment it is very straightforward to ensure that students can cope with the wide range of writing- and of course reading/speaking/listening, which are an integral part of the course.

Clear communication is the aim, with the writing adapted to suit the particular audience and/or purpose. Students will be expected to use Standard English, to weave sentences into paragraphs and full texts using relevant punctuation and appropriate vocabulary. Presentation is important, and although most Coursework may be word-processed, a proportion must be hand written, as, obviously, must the exams themselves.

It may be useful to have an idea of the range expected. The National Curriculum requires evidence that students at Key Stage 4 can

Explore, imagine, and entertain.

Inform, explain, and describe.

Argue, persuade, and instruct.

Analyse, review, and comment.

Use a variety of forms and genres.

There is a wealth of syllabus support material available: I can personally recommend the Letts publications and those available from Coordination Group Publications, which are both student-friendly and excellent value.

Folens "GCSE English Examinations Techniques" is most useful for the NEAB Syllabus, which is interesting and challenging.

Sue Davis, Milborne St. Andrew, Dorset.

Book Reviews and Resources

Malu's Wolf by Ruth Craig

My overall impression of this book is that it is brilliant. It is set in the Stone Age and is very exciting. It is about a girl called Malu who likes wolves and wants to become a hunter. Malu finds a wolf with cubs and the mother doesn't have anything to feed them with. Malu makes a vow to the Moon Goddess that if the wolf cub Kono attacks anyone the cub will be killed, as animals are not allowed in Malu's clan. Kono attacks someone from the clan and Malu leaves home because she does not want Kono to be killed.

Malu learns to hunt and Kono finds some mammoths that her clan have spent years looking for. They go back to the clan and are accepted back. The best bit I enjoyed about this book was when Malu and Kono left the clan and had to learn how to hunt and survive by themselves. I didn't like Gunto, who tried to kill Kono. I think boys and girls aged 8-10 years old would enjoy this book because it tells you about Stone Age people and how they lived, what they ate, what they believed in and how they hunted. I think this book is definitely a hit.

Freyja Steenman-Clark (8)

£4.99 ISBN 0 86315 316 Floris Books (0131 229 6800)

Detective Files - Magnets

Half book, half science set, *Magnets* aims to introduce the weird and useful characteristics of magnetic devices of all kinds. It does so via a series of six "cases" set for the young "detective" by the "chief". There is no apparent theme to the cases so each task simply attempts to explain certain phenomena by conducting simple experiments with the help of some of the supplied material. As well as the cases, come explanations of what is actually going on, short historical pieces on the main scientific players responsible for discovering and unravelling the mysteries of magnetism and descriptions of how magnets feature in our everyday lives. The pack consists of a slim booklet, basic (but by no means all) the equipment needed for the experiments, half a dozen cards with questions, games and tricks and a code-breaker wheel (the relevance of which totally escaped us). These are contained in a thick and sturdy gatefold box whose size belies the amount of content (ie the packaging is filled with mostly empty space). Given the strength of the packaging it was somewhat surprising to find how delicate the contents were. Two of the magnets get

broken even before the first experiment after what we consider to be a fairly minor coming together with the floor. Tricia and Thomas decided that this was "good fun" but the objectives of each case were unclear and as a result they never quite knew what they had learnt or what they were supposed to be learning. What was most disappointing was that not one experiment could be done without having to find additional equipment over and above that supplied in the pack - be that paper clips, nails, card/paper, string, straws or batteries. The intended age range is 8 years and up and from our experience that is fair. Also available is *Detective Files - Human Body*.

Tim Onions with Tricia (8) and Thomas (5)

£14.99 ISBN 1-84028-050-6 Marshall Editions
(020 8889 9735) www.marshallpublishing.com

Where Are You Blue Kangaroo

by Emma Chichester Clark

This is a nice story, suitable for children aged from about 2-5 years. It is about a little girl called Lily who takes her toy blue kangaroo with her everywhere she goes and then forgets him. Blue Kangaroo gets very worried after his trip to the zoo and decides to hide in a very good place that gives Lily an idea for keeping him safe on their next trip. The illustrations are nice and bright, with colourful hats and Lily has matching bows with her outfits. There are lots of things to look out for, especially where Lily has left Blue Kangaroo. The text is short enough to keep younger readers interested. Eoghan liked the speech bubbles and the animals. He enjoyed the book very much and liked looking for other interesting things in the pictures.

Eileen Steenman-Clark and Eoghan (4)

£9.99 ISBN 0 86264 923 4 Anderson Press
(020 7840 8701) www.andersonpress.co.uk

What's Inside the Alphabet Book

by Satoshi Kitamura

I got this book to help Sophie with learning letters. She liked the pictures. The format is good, with clues to go with the letters and then finding the answers on the next page in word and picture form. Some of the words are a bit obscure for a child of this age and Sophie occasionally wondered what an illustration was supposed to be, but on the whole we liked this book.

Anne Pope with Sophie (4)

£4.99 ISBN 0 86264 756 8 Anderson Press
(020 7840 8701) www.andersonpress.co.uk

Clue Finders CD Roms

The Clue Finders range recently received the Gold Award from PIN (Parents Information Network) whose aim is to help their children learn using computers and the Internet.

Years 5 & 6 for PC or Mac

Liz says "You are stuck on this island, and your friends are stuck in this chamber. You have to collect cryptials by doing puzzles and you use cryptials in bigger puzzles. There are two big puzzles and each big puzzle has three smaller puzzles in it. When you have finished both big puzzles you go inside the island, then you have to complete spelling, maths and geography puzzles. There are 4 levels to each puzzle so this enables you and/or your child to select the appropriate level to work at. Some of the puzzles took some working out before we could start to solve them, but once we got the hang of them they were challenging, but not impossible." Iain says "I liked the spelling but it was sort of hard. The geography was fun, you chose a predator and prey, then you chose a starting number for them both, then you pressed start to see if they could survive. If both animals survived then you moved onto another puzzle." We have found this CD to be fun and educational at the same time. The puzzles are interesting and we liked the adventure that ran through it. It took about 4-5 hours to complete the adventure. Repeat tries showed that there are limited changes to the puzzles, so this may be a CD Rom to buy between several families (if you haven't got lots of children to work through it) to get your money's worth.

Sue White with Liz (12) and Iain (10)

Years 6 & 7 CD for PC or Mac

This is interesting and fun. You have to go on a journey through the empire of the plant people to rescue Josie and Sebastein from the evil plant king. You have to do a lot of different subjects including English, Maths and History. My favourite activity is one in which you do estimating and rounding up and down to get the right amount of chemicals to knock out a monster. My least favourite is when plants with sums on their leaves produce spores which you have to explode with the berry that has the right answer on it. There are weird animated people who say stupid things like 'hurry up' and helpful things like 'why don't you look at Laptop' (Laptop is a pretend computer with lots of help on). Although it says

years 6-7 on it, this is school years; it's age 10-12. I have found other CD Roms for my age very easy, but this was quite challenging. The instructions are not always clear but mostly they are easy to understand.

Emma Whitehall (10)

£19.99 each from software retailers. *Mattel Interactive* (01293 651 710) www.mattelinteractive.co.uk

I Didn't Know That Tidal Waves Wash Away Cities by Kate Petty

This book is full of interesting facts set out in an exciting way and it appealed to Lucy who says "I think this book is good because it has lots of things that I didn't know". A good book to have on the shelf. There are a lot of similar books in the same series on such diverse subjects as snakes, cars and earthquakes.

Anne Pope with Lucy (7)

£8.99 ISBN 0 7496 34243 *Watts Publishing* (020 7739 2929)

Madlenka by Peter Sis

We all like this picture book. The story is about Madlenka, who lives in New York with neighbours from many parts of the globe. One day she notices that one of her teeth is wiggly and she goes to tell all of her neighbours. A simple story but for us the illustrations made this book special. The colours used are unusual to see in a children's book, there is lots of detail and a different feel to each turn of the page as the reader 'visits' each country. I think we will re-visit this book many times. I feel quite envious of her friendly neighbourhood!

Sally Jarvis with Hazel (8) and Kim (5)

£9.99 ISBN 1 86508 293 7 *Ragged Bears* (01264 772269) www.ragged-bears.co.uk

Frog and the Wide World

by Max Velthuijs

Jem says "I like this book very much and it was funny when Frog said he was strong when he wasn't! It was good in the last two pictures where all the friends were standing up and then sitting down eating cake!! I like frog because he's like me when he says he can't walk!" Kirsten says "We enjoyed the simple, uncluttered pictures and frogs rapidly diminishing enthusiasm was portrayed by his increasingly agonised expression. We all found frog's 'injury', which suddenly disappeared at the thought of going home, very reminiscent!"

Jem (5) and Kirsten Friesleben

£4.99 ISBN 0 86264 956 0 *Anderson Press* (020 7840 8701) www.andersonpress.co.uk

Crafts through the Year

by Thomas and Petra Berger

This is one of the nicest craft books we have used. It is beautifully illustrated (in full colour) and includes many innovative ideas. The instructions are simple and clear with the materials being readily available in our 'resource cupboard' or easily obtained. We loved how it works its way through the year, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, celebrating festivals on the way and using lots of materials that can be found just by walking in the countryside. Many of the ideas help to make visible indoors what is taking place outdoors. Our sheep had left us with plenty of wool bits so we made a realistic flock of sheep for our play farm using odd bits of fleece and pipe cleaners. Different animals could be made to create a nativity scene for Christmas. For Halloween we made two different variations of a cob web and a dragon made with conker cases, cocktail sticks, rosehips and hawthorn berries. For Christmas we will be making the straw (or in our case reed) decorations.

Sally Hall with Keith (6)

£12.99 ISBN 0 86315 322 4 Floris Books
(0131 229 6800)

It's My Turn! by David Bedford & Elaine Field

The bright illustrations make this picture book instantly appealing. Tilly the cat goes first on everything at the playground and does not let Oscar the dog have a turn. When Tilly gets dizzy on the roundabout Oscar takes his chance and shouting, "It's my turn", does not let Tilly join in. Only when they discover that the see-saw needs two to make it work do they enjoy playing together. I felt slightly uncomfortable with the story-line because although by the end of the book they are having fun together, it is questionable if they have learnt how to take turns. The book is suitable for one to three year olds. We quite like the book, essentially for the illustrations. Natasha enjoys reading the simple text on her own and Anthea likes re-telling the story.

Clare Crane with Natasha (5) and Anthea (4)

£8.99 ISBN 1 85430 669 3 Little Tiger Press
(01480 212666)

Creating a Cooperative Learning Center

by Katherine Houk

This book has been written to inspire people to create their own learning centres. Houk begins by describing how in the early 90's she started The

Alternative Learning Center (TALC). It covers descriptions of what the centre was like, how it developed and what Houk sees as its future. The appendices take up almost half the book with actual copies of questionnaires, letters, forms, lists of activities offered over the years and so on. There is a lot of information and Houk encourages the reader to 'steal and redesign the ideas offered in this book'. I feel that Houk tends to get side-tracked easily into discussions of general home education issues. I felt it lacked focus and I would have liked more specific business ideas. It is an easy read and shows a fascinating slice of US Home Education. I particularly valued its positive outlook.

Clare Crane

\$16.95 0 9636096 3 7 Longview Publishing

Damian Drooth Superstealth, The Case of the Disappearing Daughter by Barbara Mitchel

The plot is that Damian has to rescue a film star's daughter who a pretend teacher (who was really a crook) has locked up in a desolate farm. I think a funny bit was a picture of mum carrying 30 plates in a pile with one hand on the top and one on the bottom. It was very good the first time because I did not know what was going to happen but now I do I probably won't read it lots of times because I like much longer books. It was very easy to read as I'm used to Namia books but I enjoyed it. I would recommend this book to people who haven't been reading themselves for long who like detective stories.

Kiri Friesleben (7)

£3.99 ISBN 0 86264 982 2 Anderson Press
(020 7840 8701) www.andersonpress.co.uk

The Learning System and why home-schoolers are trailblazers by Roland Meighan

An interesting little book! Unfortunately though it is only 60+ pages long it does repeat itself. One is left with no doubt at the end that schools will be obsolete in a matter of years and home schoolers are the innovators of tomorrow. Which is nice to be told, but not quite so often. For anyone starting out it will be very nice to know that your child is going to 'do better' in almost everything compared to the still-in-school child and for those who are struggling with opposition it will boost them and give them ammunition to throw. But otherwise I felt that so much of this

had been said before that I would not want to buy it. Sorry Mr Meighan!

Diane Cromie

£7.95 ISBN 1 900219 04 2 Educational Heretics Press,
113 Arundel Drive, Bramcote Hills, Nottingham NG9
3FQ

Learn Songwriting

by Caroline and Nigel Hooper

With simple, easy to follow instructions for both lyrics and tunes, this book covers all aspects of songwriting. Anyone who wants to write songs should find it helpful no matter how lacking in musical ability and those with some musical knowledge will find the background information and 'tricks of the trade' useful and interesting. The inclusion of advice regarding copyright law and recording contracts holds out the hope of success for all. An asset on your shelf.

Gerry O'Donnell with Daniel (14) and Richard (10)

£6.99 ISBN 9 780746 030462 Usborne Publishing
(020 7430 2800) www.usborne.com

Learn to Play Beethoven

by Michael Durnin and Emma Danes

We found this book to be both enjoyable and informative. The facts were clearly laid out and easily understood, giving a reasonable amount of information without being too detailed. There is a wide range of pieces to try out forming a comprehensive introduction to the music of Beethoven. This book would hopefully encourage any young pianist to practice and appreciate some great pieces of music. Highly recommended.

Geny O'Donnell with Richard (10) and Daniel (14)

£5.99 ISBN 0 7460 1026 5 Usborne Publishing
(020 7430 2800) www.usborne.com

The Day of the Sheriffs by Roger Pilkington

This is a story, set in London, about 3 children and their quest to thwart two thieves. One of the children, Janet, overhears a conversation that sets the three of them off on an adventure. A gang is going to steal something in two days time - but what, where and how? This is a well-written book with plenty of opportunities to try to work things out for yourselves before the story unfolds. The story is timeless but we can't tell you too much otherwise we could spoil some of the story. Read it for yourselves! The story was fun and exciting. We enjoyed trying to work out how they were going to get out of, seemingly, impossible situations throughout the book. It kept us guessing until the end as to how

they were going to keep the treasure away from the crooks. We thoroughly enjoyed this book.

Ian (10) and Rebecca (7) White

£12.95 ISBN 1 85776 409 9 The Book Guild
(01273 472534) www.bookguild.co.uk

The Subtle Knife by Philip Pulman

When we started listening to these tapes, we hadn't read or listened to anything by Philip Pulman before. What we didn't realise at first was that *The Subtle Knife* is the middle part of a trilogy, and it would be best to read or listen first to *Northern Lights*, as the second story is clearly a continuation of the first. That aside, this unabridged version of the book, read by the author with a full cast presenting the dialogue, was a delight to listen to. Running for 8 hours on 8 cassettes, we sat down together over a number of afternoons and evenings and enjoyed the story; and that was a nice experience in itself. The story ends on a real cliffhanger, which was a bit frustrating, so part 3 is a must. Although the cost is a bit off-putting, when compared with a family trip to the cinema, with all the trimmings, I think it is justified. And you have the joy of listening to it again and again. *Northern Lights* is also available on cassettes.

Christine Adey with Sebastian (13) and Carl (9)

£24.99 *Cavalcade Story Cassettes*, Chivers Press
(01225 335336)

Little Monsters CD ROMS

'Ticklish Timmy' & 'Grown Up Gabby'

These are educational (literacy) rather than games and proved to be very popular with Rachel. *Ticklish Timmy* is aimed at the 3-4 age group, but this is seldom a reliable guide. However, the level of humour involved in finding feathers to help his inventor father make an anti-tickling suit was excellent, and Rachel was completely involved in the program within minutes. The level of interaction was extremely good and not as patronising as some of the titles you can buy originating in the USA. Rachel particularly enjoyed the carnival theme and the way that virtual rewards were given for achieving correct spelling of a fairly wide range of words. The use of word recognition and the use of capital letters was welcome, unlike the almost universally accepted practice of phonics,

which Rachel doesn't feel comfortable with. This was not enough to put her off though and the CD is now in regular daily use. *Grown-Up Gabby* is aimed at the 4-5 age range, and again Rachel waded into it immediately. However, her immediate view was that it wasn't as good as *Ticklish Timmy* in certain areas. Firstly, the program does not allow you to go back to Gabby's home when you want, concentrating instead on finding grown-up books in the library instead. This annoyed Rachel somewhat, and is off-putting if you are used to navigating freely on other CD based programs. The plus side was the use of highlighting a line at a time when reading the books, allowing Rachel to read at her own pace a little more and not have to be drip fed word by word. This would be an advantage to any child who is into reading early and wants to improve the pace of their reading. The most useful aspects of both, however, was that the interface was simple and reliable, and as anyone who has used *Bananas in Pyjamas* will tell you, this is not always the case! There was little need for parental guidance and so Rachel felt that she could explore and discover everything herself, which boosts confidence in using the PC as well as in the literacy aspects of the programs. Overall rating is excellent - and I imagine that the rest of the series would be likewise.

Dave Shenton with Rachel (4)

£9.99 each Ransom Publishing

(01491 613 711) www.ransom.co.uk

Look! There's Elmer by David McKee

We have met Elmer the patchwork elephant in other adventures and so Lucy took to this book straight away. Elmer hides while Bird seeks in their colourful, stylised jungle. On each page there is a hole through which we are convinced we can see Elmer, only to turn over and find the glimpse of patchwork was actually something as surreal as Lion's parasol. Of course, on the last page, there is Elmer, and his response to being found raises a smile. This is a gentle peep-hole book with wonderful pictures and not too much text. We thoroughly enjoyed it.

Vivienne Hughes with Lucy (4)

£6.99 ISBN 0 86264 983 8 Anderson Press

(020 7840 8701) www.andersonpress.co.uk

The Most Marvellous Invention of All

by Douglas Mothershaw

"This book had at its core a good idea but was the

worst book I've ever read" said Daniel. With the basic premise that a transmuter could turn computer-generated images into actual beings, it could and should have been a good story. But, it is so full of cliches, so over-the-top and so rushed together that it fails miserably. The characters are neither sympathetic nor believable and its only saving grace is its brevity. Younger children may find it amusing.

Gerry O'Donnell with Richard (10), Daniel (14) and Alice (6)

£8.95 ISBN 1 85776 424 2 The Book Guild (01273 472534) www.bookguild.co.uk

The Sun Robbers by Gus Clarke

A 'Read Alone Book'. Rabbit thinks the sun has been stolen. By the time the wise Elderly Owl has shown him his mistakes, Rabbit has already woken up all the other animals. Rather than admit the truth he goes along with owl's plan to trick the others into thinking that he (Rabbit) has defeated the 'sun robbers' and brought the sun back. Kim says he likes it although he only heard it all through once. The second time he fell asleep! Hazel thought it long and boring. At 60 pages (small line drawings on each page and large print) I would think it's a bit drawn-out and would need a very determined child to see it through to the end reading alone.

Sally Jarvis with Hazel (8) and Kim (5)

£7.99 ISBN 0 86264 954 4 Anderson Press

(020 7840 8701) www.andersonpress.co.uk

CRAFT CATALOGUES

The Optitec 2000/2001 catalogue kept us occupied for several days. It is crammed with over 7,000 items, most of which seem to be excellent value and we ended up ordering several of the project models, most being under £5 (prices given are excluding VAT and delivery). To date we have completed the musical whistle (£1.30) made from strong cardboard. This was great fun to make and to use. We have also finished a sturdy wooden nut cracker press (£3.45) which involved lots of drilling and gluing. Still to make (all project packs using softwood timber) is a cassette stand that should hold 40 cassettes (£4.65), Puff, the flying dragon (£2.10), an ago £1.70 and a sand timer (£2.85). Each item comes with a detailed, clear instruction sheet. The catalogue includes information such as suitable age range, time

needed and tools required for each project and suggestions. The catalogue is supplied free of charge to groups but individuals should initially send £3.

Specialist Crafts Limited 2000/2001 is divided into 14 sections supplying materials for a very wide range of crafts. There is a minimum order value of £20, prices shown are exclusive of VAT and delivery. The catalogue costs £3.

Keith Hall with Keith Junior (6)

Optitec, 7 West Road, Woolston, Southampton
SO19 9AH 023 80446515 www.optitec.co.uk

Specialist Crafts Ltd PO Box 247, Leicester LE1
9QS 0116 251 0405 www.speccrafts.co.uk

TITLES RECOMMENDED BY EO'ers

The Hobbit by J R R Tolkien

Bilbo Baggins, The Hobbit, doesn't like leaving his hole in Hobbiton. He has no choice in the matter when Gandalf (the wizard), accompanied by 13 dwarves turn up on his door step! Their adventure is to rescue the treasure from the mountain. The only problem is, that it is guarded by Smaug, the dragon! In their adventures they meet Gollum, the riddle telling throtter, Bearn, the morphing bear, golden eagles, wargs, goblins, giant spiders and much, much more! The tale draws to an end with the giant "Battle of Five". I enjoyed *The Hobbit* immensely, because something enthralling was always going on! I would recommend this book to anyone over the age of ten.

Megan Whitehead (10)

(Note from Sally Hall - Keith has had the tape of *The Hobbit* since he was 5 and also loves the story!)

Available from good bookshops as book or on tape

Harriet Carpenter Books Website DOWNLOAD A FREE BOOK!

This book is exciting and has interactive bits too. The very first Harriet Carpenter children's fantasy novel (Harriet Carpenter and the Wizard's Staff) is now available on floppy disc. It is also available on the author's website where it can be downloaded, or read, absolutely free. The author (who is a home educating dad) will also be publishing his next Harriet Carpenter novel (Harriet Carpenter and the Sleep-Over on Selenius) so that readers can sample each novel before they purchase the whole book! The free novel (The Wizard's Staff, suitable for 9+ year olds) is available at www.geocities.com/carpenter2000_harriet123.html

The Clay Marble by Mingfong

This is the story of 12 year old Dara and her family who leave their war ravaged village to become refugees on the Thai/Cambodian border. Their dream is to return home in peace, to rebuild their shattered lives and restart their family farm. This beautifully written book captures both the tragedy of families caught up in and shattered by war and the indomitable courage and love which keeps their hopes alive. It is hard to recommend an age group for this exceptional book. Meada, who is 3, listed on and off but spent days playing refugees and really seemed to have gained a lot from the story and our talks about it. Hope, who is 6, and I read, cried and talked together captivated by the story and the depth of feeling with which it is told. It gave us all a lot to think about for some time.

Harriet Pattison

ISBN 0 374 41229 4

published by Farrar Straus Giroux

Homeschooling: A Patchwork of Days by Nancy Lande

This book consists of a "day in the life" of 30 home schooling families. Every day described is unique and the vision of home education held by each family is equally unique. Nevertheless, many shared goals and ideals are apparent forming a common thread through the book. I can't recommend that you dip into this book on a bad day. There are too many families of 4 children plus winning national academic competitions, baking their own bread, running craft businesses on the side, keeping up with the laundry and serving meals on time, at least for my taste. Nevertheless, if your own inadequacies are firmly in check, it is an interesting insight into the lives of others. My overwhelming impression at the end of the book was that here are 30 families enjoying their lives, having no end of fun and no end of education and above all, doing it their way.

Harriet Pattison

ISBN 0 9651303 0-4 Windy Creek Press

Keep sending in your favourite titles and or let me know if you would like to review new books or software. Write to me, Sally Hall, at Nant-y-Garreg Farm, Saron, Llandysul, Carmar SA44 5EJ or e-mail admin@aecb.net

Home Education in the News

HOME NEWS

In September the government announced an educational campaign with a novel twist: they want to encourage parents to become involved in their children's education. While not actually going so far as acknowledging any deficiencies in a school system that bases its achievements on league tables and performance targets rather than the needs of children themselves, David Blunkett has urged parents to consider themselves part of the educational process. For too long, he says, children's education has been a 'secret garden' from which parents felt excluded. He forgets that this is precisely what schools have been designed to do: to insist that only the teacher has the mysterious powers required to convey an education, and that the main role of parents is to deliver the child to school on time, make sure homework is done and perhaps join the PTA. (The government is worried that by offering such advice parents will object to being told what to do. The irony of children being switched off education because of constantly being told what to do apparently does not occur to them.) Now millions will be spent on reminding parents that they can make education enjoyable and relevant to their children, which is usually what it was before they went off to school in the first place. Still, it's always heartening to see the government admit that parents are capable of doing more than the school run to help their children. The three age-related guides to the national curriculum (containing some useful ideas for activities) are available free by calling 0800 389 3899, and there is an expanded parents' website at www.parents.dfes.gov.uk.

The first article from *The Guardian* features the second Alternatives in Education Fair which took place in September this year, drawing the media's attention to the fact that there is education going on out there beyond the national curriculum.

Dream on

Tired of tests and targets, disaffection and decay? Then join us, say the devotees of 'small schools'. But is small always beautiful? Dave Hill examines alternative education.

Somewhere out there, far from the teeming corridors of the state system, deaf to politicians' talk of "excellence" and "performance", there is an education promised land. True, it exists mainly in the dreams of anxious parents, but what a pleasant place it is. There is freedom of expression, yet chairs never arc through classroom airspace. Knowledge is treasured, yet young minds are not oppressed by achievement targets, and neither are teachers. Schools are communities rather than institutions, and every child is seen as a special individual rather than just another inmate in some government-controlled academy of stress.

This Saturday in central London, at the second annual Alternatives in Education Fair, a diverse group of educators, campaigners and parents will gather in the shared conviction that such a promised land not only exists, but that all children should be delivered there. The two best-known alternative education philosophies will be represented: Steiner-Waldorf, whose fellowship encompasses 26 schools and 45 kindergartens in Britain and Ireland, and the followers of Dr Maria Montessori. Also providing a presence will be Summerhill, the Suffolk secondary whose policy of making lessons voluntary recently survived a nasty brush with Ofsted.

Those are the big names, but a growing number of smaller operators will also be espousing their own distinctive ways of making learning in some way more spiritual, less prescriptive, less impersonal - "holistic" is a favoured term. If there is a common theme, it is that small is beautiful. The charity Human Scale Education (HSE), which represents alternative schools and organises the fair, campaigns for small classes, smaller schools, and large schools to be "restructured into smaller units".

The wish to create "learning experiences that will

Home Education in the News

develop in young people the attitudes, skills and knowledge to shape a fairer world" is, of course, wholly admirable. But what are such schools actually like? The principles informing them can also trigger suspicions, not only among

traditionalists who smell zealots and cranks. Liberal parents sympathetic to "alternative" ideals may also have their doubts. Is it necessarily true that virtue follows smallness? Can smallness also lead to small-mindedness, a suspicion of diversity and of majority ways? What exactly are some alternative schools an alternative to?

The possible answers to the last question demonstrate the dangers of generalisation. Many one-off alternative schools demonstrate an intellectual position in action, just as the Steiners and Montessoris do. For example, the Educare Small School, a primary in Kingston-upon-Thames, is described by its co-founder Liz Steintal as "a reflection of my philosophy of teaching." A maximum of 50 pupils, whose parents pay £910 per term, follow the national curriculum, but also do lots of art, drama and meditation. "It allows children to learn how to be still and silent," Steintal explains, "and how to recognise what is going on inside them instead of just what's going on around them."

By contrast, the founding impulse behind the Abinger Hammer Village School, a primary near Dorking, was simply to avoid closure. It was due to be shut by the local authority in 1982, but local residents raised funds and have kept it going. The school is now financed by a trust and vigorous fundraising efforts, and attendance is free. There is no over-arching ideology, just a straightforward conviction that a village school is essential to village life. That said, trustees' secretary Shirley Corke is clear about its values: "We like the idea of it being an unschooly school. It's not that we don't teach them anything! I sometimes help out by giving a French lesson, which gets them used to all the funny noises! But I'm not keen on children sitting down all day, struggling with too much reading and writing."

The school has just one teacher and only a dozen pupils. The oldest is the sole member of year four and as such stands unchallenged as head girl. Hammond is pleased that working with such tiny numbers means she can deliver tailored learning, and thinks the modest numbers are a positive advantage in terms of social skills. "They're like a large family. The big ones look after the little ones, and it all helps with sensitivity and communication."

The failure of mainstream schools to be sensitive towards pupils with certain special needs lies behind some of the more specialist schools under the "alternative" umbrella. Far removed from Abinger Hammer, Home School of Stoke Newington in north London began life nine years ago as one boy and his mum - teacher Catherine Allen, now Home School's principal. She was certain her boy would flounder in a conventional secondary. Dyslexic, dreamy and, his mother says, "unconsciously setting himself up as a victim," he'd already struggled at primary school, and had been baffled by basic rules. "He couldn't understand why he had to ask if he could go to the toilet," Allen recalls. "He thought that was mad."

Her son's sense of disconnection was underlined for him by the contrast between himself and his twin sister. Where she was tuned-in and confident, he was "busy off with the birds". So while her daughter moved up smoothly into secondary schooling, Allen gave up her career and began teaching her son at home. "Educationally, that was fine," she says. "But where were the mates?" After a couple of years she placed an ad in the local paper. Her son described the day he was first joined by two additional pupils as the best one of his life. Most lessons take place in two rooms of Allen's terraced house. There is lots of artwork, plenty of books, computers, a piano, some old-fashioned school desks and a warm atmosphere. Fees are £2,700 per term. The school has nine teachers, most part-time, and 10 pupils - all boys, though girls are welcome. Most suffer from dyslexia, though the school also takes

Home Education in the News

children who are school phobic or have been bullied.

A sympathetic inspector described Home School's pupils as "mainstream refugees". Allen thinks that's about right: they aren't children who'd qualify for a special needs statement, yet a normal secondary school simply can't give them what they need. And maybe the description could bear a broader application. The growing interest in alternative and home schooling suggests that more children and parents are seeking refuge from an education culture increasingly dominated by a tests-and-targets ethos and the spectre of disaffection and decay.

Do the alternatives have the answer? HSE coordinator Fiona Carnie emphasises that her organisation wants to see the most innovative values of the alternative movement backed with public money and practised at the heart of the state system. "All children need to have a nurturing, caring school environment," she says. To which we all say, amen.

(*The Guardian*, September 26, 2000, reprinted with permission. For more information on alternative schools call HISE on 01275 332516)

(To which at least some of us say, a nurturing and caring environment for all children, yes, but not necessarily in a school...)

HOME EDUCATION ABROAD

Campaigners for home education in Ireland suffered a setback in September when Christine Best, who had been home-educating since 1996, was ordered to send her son, now 14, back to school. Mrs Best had claimed throughout the long drawn-out case that she was entitled under the Irish Constitution to educate her son at home as long as the education provided was of a certain standard. While the judge accepted that Mrs Best's assertion that her son, who had been bullied at school, was happier since withdrawing from school, and placed on record that his parents were caring and sensitive, the court

decided that the arrangements made for him would not encourage his development. An order was made to oblige Mrs Best to send her son back to school. Acknowledging her disappointment, but lack of surprise, at the judge's decision, Mrs Best said that her only regret was that she had sent her son to school in the first place, but was sure that his years of being educated at home had caused him to gain in confidence.

Other Irish home educators have strongly criticized the new Department of Education guidelines in Ireland which could see parents being fined up to £500 or facing a month in prison if they are judged as failing to provide an 'adequate education' for their children. A spokeswoman for the Irish organization supporting home-educating families, Home Education Network, pointed out that teachers do not face similar penalties if children in school are not being adequately educated. See the Home Education Network's website at <http://acer.ge.tcd.ie/hen/it>

A happier story comes from Germany, where the case of the Becker family has drawn attention to the little-known fact that German families do have the right to home-educate. More of this in the next issue.

Thanks to all those who have taken the trouble to send me news clippings on fascinating aspects of home education: Mrs S. Price, Clive and Kathryn Genders, Liz Alderdice, Jeff and Allison King, Yvette from Newport and Priscilla Park-Weir. Some articles I am still trying to get copyright permission to reprint, and will appear in future issues. There isn't that much published in the press about home education, so anything that you spot I would love to see and keep on file. I really appreciate your help, so please do keep sending those news stories! Ann Kennedy Smith

Bi-lingual language learning and a foreign language

I am a mother of a nineteen month-old bilingual daughter, and a fully qualified teacher of English as a foreign language. Both my husband and I speak our own languages to our daughter; Afrikaans and English, but English to each other. However, for those of you who speak the same language all is not lost. We recently met a couple who were both English speakers. The mother had learnt French at school and had re-learnt it when pregnant. She then spoke French to her daughter, whilst her husband continued speaking English. So, if you wish to learn a second language, it will not only benefit you but also your children.

As my husband is South African, we are unable to get any videos, books, toys or games in Afrikaans here in England. Instead, we make our own. A trip to the second-hand shop means we can buy several cheap toddler books and cover the words with plain white labels. We then write the Afrikaans words over them. As she gets older, this will become more difficult because she will be fussier. We have got the address for South African TV and are now trying to buy some educational videos. We are also planning a trip to South Africa next year so we can stock up on materials for the future. This would be fairly easy if you chose French, as there are often cheap day trips available.

For the past six years I have been teaching English as a foreign language in England and Thailand. The youngest children I taught in Thailand were 4 years old and they came for a 3 hour lesson on Saturday morning. I felt the parents used us more as a creche than a school, but it proved successful. We had breaks every half an hour for snacks. In the 'lesson', we played on the floor, drew pictures and labelled them in English, learnt the alphabet and the alphabet song, learnt numbers 1-10, sang many songs performing them to the school (in a relaxed way), and words and sentences for simple everyday activities such as walking to school or eating breakfast. All talking by teachers was in English. It was successful, not just because they learnt some English, but because they overcame their obvious fear of foreigners.

Here in England I teach many Korean children in their own homes. The youngest is nearly 3 years old. Again, this is successful as long as 'lessons' are kept to half an hour with activities being changed about every 2-3 minutes. Those who begin learning before 7 years, and preferably 4-5, pick up the language incredibly quickly with minimal grammatical problems, no pronunciation difficulties as they adopt native English speaker pronunciation and no formal English 'teaching' is needed. From my studies and teaching experience, it is much better to begin learning a second language, if you wish to, as early as possible. It is then acquired like our first language rather than learnt.

Sam Kruger, 11a Browning Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 4NS

Learning a foreign language

At school I was taught 'the hard way'; conjugating verbs, learning tenses and vocabulary by rote and dissecting parts of speech – and loved it! But for those who were less interested in the mechanics of speech, it was dull and did not enable the learner to communicate orally, so in that sense it failed. [At university] I radically rethought how languages should be learnt. Our tutors refused to speak English if at all possible – it was total immersion – thinking on one's feet and not giving you time to worry about correct grammar or syntax. There is a minimum amount of basic vocabulary that a person needs to communicate and that is only about 2,000 words, so we learnt those... My foreign language learning did not stop when I left university. I have taught myself conversational Spanish and I hope to embark on a course of Czech soon!

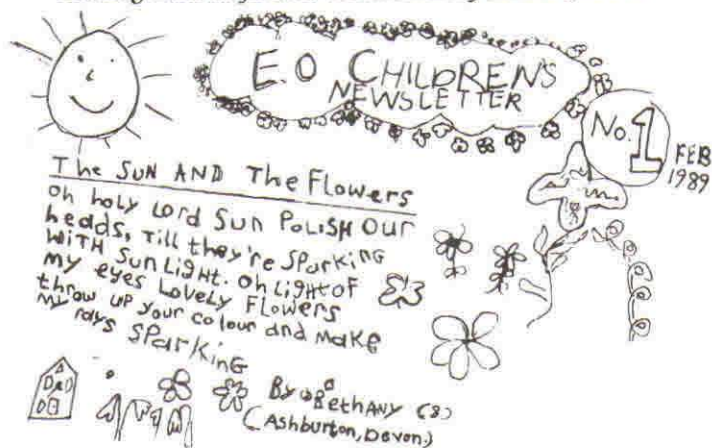
How do you get authentic language learning?

- Go on holiday to the country of your chosen language.
- Get magazines and newspapers. Titles such as *Paris-Match* or *Hola* are written in a colloquial style so it's a good general introduction to day-to-day language and it's in bite-sized chunks so learners don't get discouraged.
- Watch foreign language films or TV. Don't be put off by subtitles – they can help initially to give you the sense of the language.
- Listen to the radio. Long wave and medium wave will get most western European language stations.
- Advertise at your local college for native speakers to come once a week. Give yourself a weekly theme and bone up on local culture. There's a lot of history and literature to be found in learning a language. Using puppets to tell stories is especially good for young children.
- CD Roms are helpful to begin with but aren't inspirational once you're beyond that.
- Have a Spanish/French speaking morning (or hour) where everyone communicates without using their own language. As a start it's worth writing down the words and phrases we use every day, translating them and writing them on 5x3 inch cards and sticking them on the wall e.g. 'A table' = dinner's ready, 'Qu'est-ce qu'il y a?' = what's up?
- Get a good colourful textbook that details vocabulary groups e.g. family, home, work etc. The BBC beginners' courses are generally of a high standard and include audio and video sections too. Usborne language guides are extremely useful and play down grammar in favour of communication. Oxford picture dictionaries group relevant vocabulary together too.
- If the idea takes off, a penpal with another EO family can reinforce written work and may lead to 'exchanges'.

The Nelsons, Old Timbers, Little Sutton Lane, Iver Bucks SL3 8AN

FROM THE ARCHIVES...

Looking back at poems, researched by Sarah Guthrie



This one appeared
in the very first
Children's Pages

The SUN AND The Flowers

Oh holy Lord SUN POLISH OUR
heads, till they're SPARKING
WITH SUNLIGHT. Oh LIGHT OF
my eyes LOVELY FLOWERS
throw UP your colour and MAKE
me rays SPARKING

By Bethany (8)
(Ashburton, Devon)

Shadow Monster Man by Meriel Vincent (then 7)

I made a shadow monster man
He had some great big claws.
He had six arms and several legs
And also clamping jaws

The teeth went crackety crackety crack
He really looked quite scary,
His body was a glumptions glosch
His hands and feet were hairy.

But you don't need to live in fear
When him -oh him you see.
My massive monster man is just
My sister, mum and me!
(October 1994)

The Bumble Bee by Katie (then 3)

Bumble bee
I can see you on our kitchen door
Bumble bee
Buzz, buzz around the house
Bumble bee
Buzz, buzz around the house
You can't catch me!
(February 1985)

parent Sue Brown in June 1988:

I have watched you struggle endlessly

FROM THE ARCHIVES...

*I have seen you fight for breath
I have known you suffer needlessly
In your efforts to conform.
I have cried with you and for you
In your struggle to be the 'norm'.*

*Now I have released you
From the effort and the strife.
Now I see you flourish
As you follow this new life.
Now I watch you laugh and learn -
Each day is not a fight.
Now I know this must be right.*

*The Scarecrow by Sarah Tribe (then 8)
Standing in my muddy field
My lonely job is done
I've frightened all the birds away
And now the crops have gone
The farmers cut down all the wheat
The mice have had to leave
They've come to say hello to me
And run inside my sleeve.
(December 1989)*

*Helen by Helen Bridgeman
My head is round my feet are long
What d'you think of my new song.
Piper and Fiona are coming today
well at least I think they may.
I'm watching Rainbow ho what fun
I say it's sobby to my mum
it's finished now oh what a shame
but Helen Bridgemen is my name.
The Sullivans is starting now
that girl Kitty's such a cow
Alice is in love with Jim
Katy also fancies him.
I'm doing somersaults in my room, as Basil Brush would say boom boom.
Mum's off on a shopping trip
hope she comes back with a drink to sip
Rhonda has just made a call
stick insects wanted for Tors school.
It's one o'clock on Wednesday now
time is passing quickly, how?
(December 1984)*

The First Year...

Almost a year ago, I made the decision to take my daughter out of school. This was something I had wanted to do for a long time but was not aware that it would be so easy. I had been under the impression that I would have to sit my daughter down and teach her for five hours a day and I knew she would not tolerate that from me. Having said that, school had become a punishment for my daughter. She stopped being a happy, talkative child who loved to learn and withdrew into herself; she didn't even eat during the day whilst at school because she was so stressed out.

When I told my daughter that she did not ever have to go back to school, she said, "Does that mean I can write stories and read books all day?" An indication that the state school system is sadly failing to educate the children of today.

I would like to thank Mary Thompson, the voice on the other end of the phone, who gave me the confidence to take the first tentative steps into home education. I would also like to thank Sammy and Nick Vidal-Hall and Belinda Harris-Reid for being patient and listening to my moans and particularly to Nick whose advice on how to deal with the LEA has been invaluable as has his knowledge of the law relating to autonomous home education. A big thanks to everyone who has had the time to talk and listen to me. I had the LEA knocking at my door on the fifth day after I had taken my daughter out of school and a visit to assess us within six weeks. This was quite a frightening time but I already had a good support network and managed to stay sane throughout – only just!

The one thing lacking was a group that met regularly in the immediate area. The last co-ordinator had left the area just as I had joined, unfortunately. I felt that as I had received a lot of support from members of EO, that if nobody else was going to set up a support group, I would have a go at doing so. To date we have held two meetings. At the first one, there were 15 adults and 20 children/young people; at the second meeting, probably half that many attended, but we felt as if we had developed good relationships and decided to look for a permanent venue in which to hold weekly or fortnightly meetings.

We shall be holding regular meetings in Exeter and hopefully other meetings in surrounding areas if enough people are interested. The first meeting was attended by people from as far away as Bideford, Okhampton, Dulverton, Axminster, Honiton, Ottery St Mary and all places in between; unfortunately, my daughter and I were the only people from Exeter. Since that meeting, we have made contact with some Exeter people. If there are more home educators in Exeter, please contact me. I have taken on the role of Local Contact for this area as I would like to be able to offer help and support to anyone else going through what I went through at the beginning of this year.

Jo Borthen, Exeter 01392 679499

Another First Year...

Here it comes: the moment I'd look forward to all day; the moment my daughter would emerge from the school; a moment I learned to dread when I saw what was pictured in her face. Here she would come, loaded down with bag, papers, homework (at only eight) half-eaten, soggy remains of lunch, the weighty effects of the National Curriculum on her shoulders, and on her face that dead-meat, switched-off –to-numb-the-pain sort of expression I'd come to dread. Her steps were those of an old person worn down by the hardships of life, her spirit totally crushed and no longer alive.

That's what happened to my daughter after several years of school. That's what I see reflected in the faces of today's school children thanks to the cloning effect of so-called education. These days the picture of my daughter is quite different. Take last week as an example. We walked down to the trees. Well – the kids didn't walk, they ran with enthusiasm and energy and eagerness and the spirit of adventure. Their faces alive and happy, bursting and bubbling, talking all the time with their friends, pushing and pulling, skipping and experimenting with the natural paces of their bodies. Once among the trees they absorbed themselves busily in their den making, selecting and improvising with the natural materials around them. Discussing and problem solving, experimenting and inventing, making discoveries, asking questions, drawing conclusions. Making collections, looking and feeling and learning. Learning also to be happy again, learning that education can be a happy experience, not an imprisonment of their bodies, souls and minds.

We are a year into home education now. Our girls (ten and seven now) are different people, although the eldest will obviously take a lot longer for the brain and spirit-crushing effects of school to really leave her. I think it was that effect that really persuaded us that we could no longer follow the school route to their education. And the fact that the youngest had learnt to 'hate learning' by the grand age of six, when she'd had an insatiable appetite for it before. After ten years of teaching, I had a pretty low view of most of what went on in schools, but was prepared to give it a try, and wanted the girls to experience it and judge for themselves. Makes me wonder what idiocy I was thinking of, since, if I followed that line of thought, I would also want them to experience the use of drugs too!

But it has been an enormously rewarding and successful year. Not without difficulties, obviously, but then, sending them to school is not without difficulties either, like badgering them into going when they hated it, like trying to justify to them what a good place it was (all lies), like having to face the extinction of everything that made my daughters what they were: idiosyncratic, life-loving individuals.

Now, one year later, we have just had a visit from the education authority. They had sent a form following our deregistration. It asked for subjects we would follow, curricula, timetables, our qualifications, resources we would use, and a lot of other irrelevant stuff, so I wrote back and told them that all this was totally inappropriate to us and I was therefore unable to fill in their (stupid – but I didn't say that!) form. We would instead be following a flexible path with as much of the inspiration for the children's learning coming from them as from us, and this would not take place within the confines of a timetable but would be going on all the time, as indeed life does. It was nearly a year before I had a letter requesting a visit and that was on my birthday. So I wrote back again, told them it was inconvenient (because I wanted to whoop it up on my birthday, not deal with bureaucrats, but I didn't tell them that) and suggested some other dates.

A nice lady came who had an amazingly enlightened attitude towards education. (She having been a teacher, this was even harder to believe!) She supported everything we'd been doing (not a lot), she made it plain that we shouldn't feel we had to justify what we did, or be able to produce masses of evidence to support it, and she even acted like she liked and was interested in kids! Surprise! Surprise! I couldn't help showing surprise at all this, having read and heard about some rather grim visits other home educators had suffered. I didn't actually have to say much because she was being kept busy by the girls, who were eager to show her all their pictures and books and bits and pieces they'd make. She said that she could see that the children were happy and that's what concerned her most.

So now we have the seal of approval, I feel! Now we can perhaps stop worrying about the justification and the proof bit and get on with the real, important job of living an educational life. Because that's how life is. Life, for the children, is always moving forward into new experiences, is waiting to be discovered and enjoyed. If there's one important concept that the girls have learned this year, which I think is more valuable than everything else, it is the idea that education is something that *they themselves can take charge of and enjoy* rather than be something that is *done to them* by other people, often in unpleasant ways.

Anyone out there who is considering taking their children out of school because they feel their children are suffering, I wish you courage and confidence to do so, for I don't believe there is anything greater one can do for their kids than to rescue them from the awful institutionalisation that state education has now become. And do not be afraid of things like lack of support, lack of company, isolation, or just not knowing what to do, because all those things are easily overcome. There's plenty of support, plenty of others, plenty of ways round any problems. (Education Otherwise offers most of them.) And those problems are far smaller than those encountered when sending children to school.

Ross Mountney, Rose Cottage, Sea Lane, Old Leake, Boston, Lincs PE22 9JA

LEA Group Meeting for Parents

Our LEA arranged for all the parents/carers of the 240 'registered'* home-educated children in Cheshire to receive an invitation to an evening meeting in October. After an ice-breaking welcome by the head of the LEA, who obviously felt nervous, there followed two 20 minute presentations about the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. (New name mathematics.)

Both presentations were lively, informative and beneficial. Next, we met the "field officer" who spends one and a half days a week visiting families. A most reasonable lady, who even offered to supply a support letter to help us when any Authority questions as to why our children are not at school.**

Following this, we enjoyed a 30 minute coffee break and a chance to meet the other home educators, also individual LEA officers. The evening closed with a chance to chart pack our reflections, note questions and where we would like to go forward in our relationship with the LEA. Allison and I both had reservations about attending such a meeting, after reading about confrontations with the LEA officers in other areas, but our worries were completely unfounded.

The new 7 person team seems to have adopted a fresh approach in both satisfying OFSTED inspectors and offering support to home educating families. We feel their positive response to a somewhat sensitive issue deserves a supportive reaction from all home educators. After all, we have the same worthy goal – our children's welfare. The pioneering spirit displayed by our LEA, and the results it achieves could be a blueprint to other less helpful LEAs.

We even volunteered to entertain the new field officer on December 14 for our first home visit!

Finally, the only two things that marred the success of the entire evening were the late arrivals of almost half of our home education group and the confrontational attitude of one of our group. Our view of the LEA has certainly changed; we hope that their view of us has also changed.

Jeff and Allison King, Crewe, Cheshire

Editor's note:

** 'registered' is a term used by some LEAs to describe the names of families known to them to be home-educating. There is no registration of home-educating families in any legal sense.*

*** Please see 'The Police Power to remove Truants' pp36 and 44.*

The Joys and Anxieties of Home-educating

Before I had my children, I had no intentions of sending them to school. I hated the school system and wanted no part of it. When Ben was born, he was bright and alert. When he could hold something in his hand, I put a cloth book in with him in his pram. I was constantly talking to him, and singing nursery rhymes. When Claire came along, I did the same.

By the time Ben was 4 years old, he knew all his times tables and at 5 could do long multiplications. We also realised that Claire could read fluently by the age of 4 years. Ben, due to being dyslexic, found reading very hard and couldn't read fluently until aged 9. So we worked hard with him at his reading skills; now he reads well and even gives talks.

It was a joy to watch them learn and progress, to see them grow and find out about life. I loved being with them, answering their countless questions and exploring the answers with them. I had been hopeless at maths, so Ben now 14½ teaches me, and he teaches Claire. Claire teaches Ben biology and helps him with grammar. We visited museums, art galleries, did puzzle books, made up stories, read many storybooks, visited parks, planted seeds. We hardly saw our LEA; it was great.

Then when they were 9 and 8 years old, we moved near my sister, who has a daughter taught at school. Ben and Claire wanted to try it. Ben was bullied from the start. Countless visits to the headmaster did nothing, but Ben wanted to persevere, until 7 months after starting, he was beaten up by 5 boys. We made that his last day. It took months to get our old Ben back; he had become nervous and withdrawn. We took Claire out when she had finished a school year: she was bored.

We got Ben a maths tutor, who really boosted his confidence. Our relationship with the LEA completely changed, especially once they reached 11 years old. The LEA inspector expected us to be following the National Curriculum, and every time we had a visit, he would spend 20 minutes talking to the children about the benefits of being in school. He would then say he was pleased with their work and then send us a letter saying he wasn't happy. After threatening to serve a School Attendance Order, I finally sent a timetable explaining it was only a plan and that it could and would change. I would not be seeing the inspector at our home again; another place would be fine. But he said that it is the LEA's job to make sure that a child is being suitably educated and to do this he had to see them in our own home. It made me physically sick with worry. Knowing I was in the right didn't help much, so we saw a solicitor, who said that the LEA didn't have a leg to stand on.

The problem was that our LEA officer was new to his job – an ex-headmaster – and had not dealt with home education before. So we moved. Ben still attends

college, the youngest to pass GCSE A grade maths, in an adult class in our local college. He has also done 2 weeks work experience at Iceland and got an excellent report from them. Claire is training her own puppy, now 5 months old.

After countless letters, and even writing out the law by hand for our LEA, we feel as though we have been bullied and the LEA seem to think that we have to please them and meet their standards. I chose to teach our children at home because I feel it is the parents' responsibility to teach their own children. I didn't want anyone else to have the joy of teaching my children. Now they are teenagers, they are being taught by newspapers, workbooks, reading books etc: they are teaching themselves. We all love it.

Veronica Conway (Suffolk)

Events for Teenagers: Berkshire Group

Eighteen months ago some of our young people met for a one night camp at a beautiful spot on the banks of the River Thames near Pangbourne in Berkshire. It was such a success that they have since met for another two camps; one of two nights and another of three nights duration. They have also spent a week caving and walking on Dartmoor and, another week camping on a remote hillside in Wales, shepherding sheep and helping to reconstruct a 17th century farmhouse. On all but one of the camps there was no electricity and no flushing toilets. They have dug latrines, cooked their own food and made their own entertainment. They have made bread without yeast, cooked bullace pie, devised menus, bought food and cooked for eleven people for five days. They survived two inches of Welsh rain in twenty-four hours. They have pitched tents with snow on the ground and three days later suffered sunburn.

The person who runs the camps has years of experience with all age groups and gets so much pleasure from his work that he does not consider it as such. He has boundless energy and enthusiasm and is on just the right wavelength for this age group. He aims to promote personal independence and group co-operation, an approach based on Native Americans, the Quakers and the Woodcraft movement.

The programme for the remainder of 2000 and 2001 includes; a one day cycling trip; three days of gaming/role playing; one week caving in the Mendips; a two week working holiday in Italy; three day camp in Pangbourne, Berkshire; three day cycling tour; one week return visit to Wales.

If you would like to know more send a s.a.e. to Pat Connor, 2 Whitegates Lane, Earley, Reading Berks. RG6 1ED and information will be sent to you prior to the next event. Alternatively, telephone her

Christmas Cake

Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup diced fruit
- 1 tablespoon nuts
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 bottle brandy (or whiskey if you prefer)

Method:

1. Sample brandy to check quality.
2. Take large bowl, check the brandy again to be sure it is of the highest quality. Pour one level cup and drink. Repeat.
3. Turn on electric mixer, beat one cup butter in a large fluffy bowl, add spoontea of sugar and beat again.
4. Make sure the brandy is still OK. Cry another tup.
5. Turn off the mixer. Break two leggs. Add to the bowl and chuck in the cup of dried fruit. Mix on the turner. If the fruit gets stuck in the beaters, pry it loose with a drewscraver. Sample the brandy again for tonsisticity.
6. Next, sift two cups of salt, or something, hic, who cares. Check the brandy.
7. Now sift the lemon juice and strain your nuts.
8. Add one ballspoon of brown sugar, or whatever colour you can find. Wix mell, grease the oven.
9. Turn the cake pan to 350 gredees.
10. Don't forget to beat off the turner, throw the bowl out the window. Check the brandy again and go to bed.

Merry Christmas to All.

Aunt Beryl, NSW Australia.

Submitted by Sian Podmore. Why not make your own version?

Funding for Pre-16's with college courses.

HELP THE CAMPAIGN © HELP THE CAMPAIGN

As members will know from newsletter reports concerning EO's work with the DfEE, more flexible opportunities for pre-16's to use college courses, either through attendance at college or via Distance Learning, is high on our agenda. We need your help to support this development. Have you:

- Tried to get a place at college, or to use college Distance Learning materials, but found funding to be a problem (the FE Funding Council pays for post 16's, LEAs hold the purse strings for pre-16's but mainly provide schools...)
- Managed to get a place, or to use materials, with financial support to pay the costs
- Found the college wouldn't even consider offering a place to a pre-16 home educated child, even though they may have students excluded from schools
- Found college would offer a place in exceptional circumstances

In fact whatever your experience has been in this area, positive or negative, we would like to hear from you - likewise if you have any ideas, possible solutions or have a relevant work background. Confidentiality will be assured unless you indicate otherwise.

The aim is to put together a file of case studies that can show the extent of the demand and need. In addition we expect to be able to highlight the unfairness of situations where families have been directed to Education Otherwise because clearly school is not working for a child, only to find there is no support if the student wishes to attend college later on. To this effect please write a concise summary of your experiences, perhaps with a letter from the student themselves and add photocopies of any communications with the college, your LEA, MP, the education committee etc., and address it to me (include your name and address). In view of the likely numbers of responses, a typed letter would be useful. Alternatively phone our College Contact: Kathy Chilton 01969 623707. PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE get out, or borrow, a typewriter and do this - every single letter counts!

Gwen Baldock. 6 Villa Grove, York YO31 7TB Email: gwen.baldock@cwcom.net

Latest in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY GUIDANCE

As far as guidance on home education for local authorities goes, the wheels of government grind on predictably slowly. The sad and sudden death of our first First Minister, Donald Dewar has led to Cabinet changes. Meanwhile, the Scottish Qualifications Board crumbles before our eyes, or "tries to stop slipping down a steep slope" as its interim chairman said in the parliamentary enquiry into the recent Scottish exams fiasco. The Scottish Executive is still gathering responses from local authorities on their views for the draft guidance on home education. We understand that they will consult again with the home educating organisations (EO, Schoolhouse and HEAS) with their proposals for the draft.

Meanwhile, I have heard of one local authority that has produced better procedures already. Another has accepted a 'letter of withdrawal', for a child withdrawn from school, before consent was granted, as a *fait accompli*, and implied their consent to withdraw, while awaiting the guidance, before suggesting a visit. Yet another LEA is quoting the new section 2 of the Standards in Scottish Schools Act 2000, regarding development of a *child's fullest potential* and the family's educational provision, in its letter requesting a home visit and its wish to satisfy itself.

COSLA and *Homeworks*

The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) appears to be so prejudiced against the whole concept of home education that they, so far, won't talk to us at all. It appears we're in good company: they refused to be drawn into discussions with Schoolhouse as far back as 1997 (See Education Now, News and Reviews No. 29). They did talk with the Scottish Consumer Council (SCC), however, following the publication of the SCC's report, *Homeworks*. I understand that they were kept firmly on track by SCC, that despite their apparent prejudices against home education, it is a legal right and that the research shows that it's the local authorities that are generally behaving badly with respect to that right. The importance of *Homeworks* cannot be overemphasised. Because of this report, produced by an independent consumer agency, the issue is out in the open. There is no going back, and our case as home educators is strengthened. Indeed it should be acknowledged here that it was Schoolhouse's campaigning and reports in the first instance which led the SCC to undertake the research for the *Homeworks* report which in turn benefits all home educators in Scotland.

EO was delighted to participate in the final stages by commenting on the draft report. There seems to have been a misperception in some quarters that because we reported so enthusiastically about *Homeworks*, that EO was taking credit for its instigation. I hope the above clarifies this issue.

Despite an early clash of views over funding applications and public representation Schoolhouse and EO have co-existed in Scotland as independent organisations for

the most part civilly and with a varying overlap of membership. There has never been a problem with EO members also being members of Schoolhouse. Each organisation offers different things. The aims of each organisation, while largely overlapping, do also differ and each operates in its own way.

EO IN SCOTLAND

Following in the new EO 'small groups' style, a Scottish Legal Issues Group has been formed in EO to deal with matters concerning Scotland because of legal differences (eg the new Act, the Scottish Executive Guidance and the issues around the requirement for consent to withdraw). Currently the group consists of Ann Samuel Till, Liz Alderdice and Lucie MacAuley with Jill Fisher and Anne Wade in consultative roles as council members. The purpose of the group is to continue the work towards the full rights of home educators in Scotland, bringing them at least into line with the rest of the UK and contributing to work leading to good practice by local authorities. Home educators need solidarity, while tolerating our differences and appreciating our similarities and shared aims. Thank you to those who have contributed views and suggestions already. They have all been useful and were broadly what we expected. Contributions are still welcome.

Ann Samuel Till 49 Bellevue Road, Edinburgh EH7 4DJ
EO in Scotland: hedbestscot@hotmail.com

Brain teasers

I'm 15 years old and have been educated at home for just over a year. I have a very good tutor through e-mail. He is very helpful with anything I don't understand and always at hand as we are in constant touch through the e-mail. He also sends me many brain teasers, which I enjoy and thought I'd share with you. For more puzzles, you can contact me at hannah.scaplehorn@virginnet.co.uk and I will also supply answers, free of charge, together with explanations.

In a certain family, each girl has as many sisters as brothers, but each boy has twice as many sisters as brothers. How many children are there?

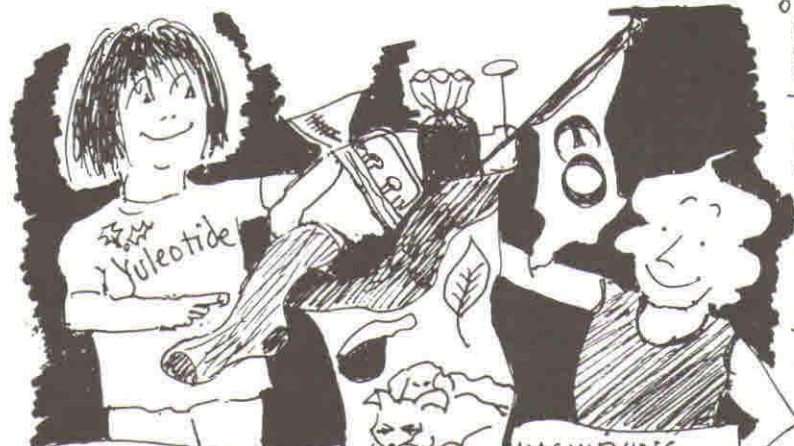
Are you good at reading the question carefully? Rovers played United at football. After 4 minutes, Rovers scored, then United Scored after another 9 minutes. 11 minutes later, United scored again, then Rovers scored 2 minutes before half-time. 5 minutes into the second half, United scored the last goal. For how many minutes during the game were United in the lead? (Each half lasts 45 minutes.)

The other night, Bob bought the first round of drinks. 3 people ordered cider and 2 ordered beer. The round came to £9.85. Then two more friends joined us; one of them drank cider and the other drank beer. The next round totalled £13.75. How much was cider? (Hannah Scaplehorn, South Glos.)

Educating Archie

by **SEG**

A time for giving. THE HOME EDUCATOR'S CHRISTMAS STOCKING



CONTENTS

TRUMPET -
for blowing your own
FLAG - for waving the
Socks - pull them up
NEW LEAF - turn over
PATCH - for turning a
blind eye ...
SLEEPING DOGS -
Let them lie
CANOE - Paddle
your own
NUTS - you must be
ROD KIT - make one
for your own back

MAGNIFYING
GLASS - for
Setting fire to
things (see
Science)
A PINCH of SALT
BRASS TACKS -
for getting down to
in the New Year
and
MARBLES ...
(DON'T LOSE THEM)
OPTIONAL EXTRA: CRACKERS
(see NUTS)
CONTENTS MAY VARY DEPENDING
ON MOOD OF THE
CONSUMER

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MIDWINTER SOLSTICE Greetings to our readers.



Problem page

A PROBLEM ANSWERED:

I have two sons under five, and I wish to home-educate. Although I feel sure it is the best thing for them, I am worried that I will have no life outside of the children. How do you find time for yourselves? Also is it possible to have a job and home-educate?

Here is a selection of the answers received:

Have a set bedtime—even if the children are not asleep, they can be in bed reading or winding down in their room

Watch a good video—much better than 'blobbing' kids in front of daytime TV. Many films have some educational value. My children used to watch Disney films over and over again, getting to grips with the morals and emotions within the stories. A wonderful lesson!

Become a childminder. Another child could be company for your own.

Organise a childminding swap with

another EO family so that you each have an afternoon or two off per week.

Train as a therapist or practitioner in something that interests you and set up work at home to fit around the children. Alternatively find an evening/weekend job that still leaves you free to be with your children during the day.

Time for you is important so that you can recharge your batteries and give your best to your children. Try USSR (Uninterrupted Silent Sustained Reading) for everyone, including yourself. This could be your version of the Literacy Hour!

Please send replies to the following problem or any problems you would like to put forward for this page to tackle, to Sue White.

People outside EO are often concerned with difficulties around socialisation. My problem quite simply is, that all my child does is socialise! He is 11 now and I feel that a bit of more formal learning is needed. Does anyone have any ideas as to how I can encourage a bit of education?

Letters

Please include full name and address when writing to newsletter editors. Name and address can be withheld on request. Due to limited space, some editing may occur.

USE OF SCIENCE EQUIPMENT

I am a one-time EO parent and have just renewed my membership as a gesture of moral support, though that's not why I'm writing. I'm writing to offer interested EO families the use of my science facilities. I do independent research into alternative biology and physics in my own home and have quite a range of good quality equipment, including an Olympus biological microscope. While busy at home, I often think what a pity it is that no-one else can benefit from all these items and it has occurred to me that EO students are the obvious possible users. I know it is hard to get access to scientific equipment when you are leaning at home. The work I am doing is serious research into Wilhelm Reich's orgonomic biology and physics, in particular repeating and developing his bion experiments. This is very interesting and exciting work - the results contradict all the known 'rules' and expectations of conventional biology. If there are EO members interested in serious alternative science I would be quite happy to teach them about this work. I would also be happy for anyone to use the facilities who has a serious interest in microscopy, freshwater and marine biology, and biology in general... I plan to acquire a stereoscopic microscope shortly too. This allows close up examination of small items and dissection in 3-D. I

have a small collection of books on microscopy, freshwater life, history of science, microbiology and related subjects. There are plenty of interesting habitats nearby to collect samples from, but of course you could bring your own from your home area too.

I don't particularly want to act as a 'teacher' to any EO members who may be interested in taking up my offer, though I am in fact a very experienced teacher and will be happy to give learners any help that I can. I am a great believer in learners' ability to learn what they want themselves as long as they are left to their own devices and given access to what they need to learn. I hope this information will be of use and interest to EO members.

*Peter Jones, 23 Sandown Court,
Avenham Lane, Preston PR1 3RS*

PEMBROKESHIRE CAMP

Feedback on Pembrokeshire camp: don't forget to send me your ideas and comments on Gwersyll Dewi Sant. I've only had a couple of letters so far; I know there are more of you out there!

*Yvette Hartley, 17 Maes Inqli, Newport,
Pembrokeshire SA42 0TE (0845
4589251)*

THE WORLD OF ROBIN HOOD

We recently took our caravan to the Camping and Caravan site at Clumber Park, based in the remains of a walled garden of a house long gone. As it was our daughter's birthday, she had the choice of what to do and opted to visit The World of Robin Hood. There are numerous Robin Hood attractions to choose from, so why this one I don't know, but what a good choice.

Letters

We got there only to find it was closed due to the fuel shortage, and a look around the outside didn't look good. As we stood there all forlorn, trying to explain we couldn't go in, a lady came out and, after hearing it was Flossy's birthday, said they would open up just for us.

This place was used for a film set in *Robin Hood Prince of Thieves* and the attention to detail is brilliant. A costumed guide showed us around and really did the place justice, I don't know how many; hundreds of times she must have been round the place herself, but it was still presented as fresh and exciting, a feeling which was shared by us all. Disney makes a goo job of popularising history, but he sure can make it all glossy to suit his purpose. For instance, if King Richard hadn't been off on a costly crusade, would Prince John have needed to have raised so much tax? And the regal voice in the cartoons, very good, but King John didn't speak English.

By way of a bonus, there's a pub serving food on the site too, as well as an owl sanctuary where in some places the only thing stopping you getting closer to the birds is the fact you don't want to – a very odd feeling indeed.

The World of Robin Hood is at Retford, Notts and can be contacted on 01623 860210x costs £3.95 adults, £2.95 children, family ticket 2+2 at £15 and has partial disabled access.

Steev Stamford, Derbyshire

EARLY FRENCH

My daughter Elisabeth is 4½, and we intend to home-educate her. A local unemployed languages teacher in our

small town decided last Spring to start French or German classes for nursery age children. (Her own daughter is that age.) French was the language most parents opted for.

After 4 months, Elisabeth knows a stock of social phrases (e.g. Comment t'appelles tu?), some basic vocabulary, and is really interested in France and its possibilities as a holiday destination. One of the spin-offs is that, as the only home-educated child in our town, it gives Elisabeth a chance to meet with her "schooled" friends in a learning environment. My husband and I are enjoying brushing up our rusty command of the language too!

MoragAnne Elder, 5 Provost Rd, Tayport DD6 9JE

THANK YOU EO

Could we just say a big 'thank you' to all the people who responded to our request for help in the October Newsletter. It is nice to know there are caring people out there who took the trouble to put pen to paper. The Home Education Network over here got in contact with us too after reading the Newsletter.

The Wales family, Cottage 815, Goolds Cross, Cashel, Co Tipperary, Ireland

SEEKING CONTACT

I am a Mum of a teenage girl affected by bullying and out of school. We are keen to get in touch with anyone with similar problems from and around Kent. *Debbie Manning, 10 The Avenue, Tollgate Borough Green, nr Sevenoaks, Kent TM5 8EA (01732 887218)*

EDUCATION OTHERWISE BUSINESS

Education Otherwise Adverts

STEVE A Story of Home Education (64 pages incl. valuable index) published under the pseudonym Elizabeth James - is now available from the author, Mrs Margaret Stevens @ £4.50 (+ £1 p&p). Details: **01844 343 928** or order (with cheque made payable to Education Otherwise) from: **High Beech, Lower Rd, Looseley Row, Princes Risborough, Bucks HP27 0NU**

EDUCATING CHILDREN AT HOME

by Alan Thomas (Cassell 1998) This book covers research into 100 home educating families in delightfully readable format. There are accounts of different methods and lots of quotes from families. Offered to EO members at special price of **£9.50** from: **85 Coleridge Road, London N8 5EG.** cheques payable to Alan Thomas

Free EO Car Stickers

Help us spread the word, please send a reasonably large new SAE for your free sticker to **Ali Willer, 28 Cozens-Hardy Road, Sprowston, Norwich NR7 8QF.** They will only be free during the year 2000.

RESOURCES BOOKLET

50 page booklet giving information on different curriculum materials available to home educators who are interested in a more structured approach. For a copy please send a **£1 coin** to cover printing and postage, with your address to: **H. Turnbull, Hall Lodge, Biddenden Rd, Headcorn, Ashford, Kent, TN27 9JD.**

Free electronic rtf. copy, e-mail me at: henrietta.turnbull@ntlworld.com
Comments about it include "very useful indeed"; "what a lot of information"; "we really enjoyed reading your booklet"

HELP REQUIRED

Volunteer needed in the Reading area willing to occasionally send out batches of newsletters and membership cards or answer queries when our database secretary gets overloaded. Please apply to **Lynda Hitchman 0118 961 4466**

VACANCIES

Additional help still wanted on the finance team so please get in touch if you have experience or enthusiasm to offer. For more information contact **Priscilla Park Weir. 0845 458 3085**

Small Treasurer's Job

We need someone to take over the finances of the Trading company. There are not very many transactions and you would need to write the occasional cheque and keep a record of all the incomings and outgoings from the bank account. For more information contact **Donna Williams 01202 529 245** or **Priscilla Park Weir 01276 22735.**

Vacancies for Enquiries Secretaries

We still need new volunteers urgently for both postal and telephone enquiries. Full support and training will be provided. A training day is currently being organised and expenses will be paid for volunteers. For more information please contact **Geraldine Adams Tel: 0171 263 4922**

Vacancies for Membership Secretaries.

Job involves sending out membership packs to new members. People needed for Midlands and South West. For more information contact **Pam Bellinger 01604 686521**

Wanted: Newsletter editors

Christine Adey hopes to step down as editor for Letters and Articles from April. We are also looking for a Newsletter Co-ordinator. If you are interested in finding out more about either job, please give Christine a ring on **01258 880355.**

EDUCATION OTHERWISE BUSINESS

Help Please for Resources Booklet for older children. Gill Dove has kindly offered to create a booklet on curriculum material for secondary age children along the lines of Henrietta Turnbull's resources for younger children. If you have anything you can contribute to get this off to a good start, please send to: Gill Dove, 392 Lodge Ave, Dagenham RM9 4QU Tel: 020 8595 2760 email: gillchris@willrich.fsnet.co.uk

New Acting Local Contacts

Gwynedd Jo Tuffnell
Devon North Jo Borthen

Areas needing a Local Contact

Bristol, Carmarthanshire, Channel Islands, Cheshire, Dorset, South Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, Isle of Man, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, North Manchester, Powys, Strathclyde, Tayside, N. Yorkshire

First contact with EO

I have had quite a few replies to my request in the October Newsletter. If you have an opinion that you would like to be heard please find a moment asap to pass it on to me. Do you want your Local Contact to be actively home educating? Should the Local Contact be asked to stand down and move on to another role within EO once their last child has reached 19 or starts full time work whichever is reached first or should they be able to continue? Should there be an upper limit on the number of years that a LC can be in place without the post being re-advertised? Maybe 10 years? What do you think?

e-mail addresses of Local Contacts: please let me know if you have one that I have not yet used.

Isobel Bogucki 01403 261178
E-mail: isobelb@cheerful.com

LEGOLAND Special Discount.

EO members can visit Legoland during term time for the reduced rate of £6.50 per person. This is a substantial saving. Tickets must be pre-booked and you can ring 01753 626100 (Group Sales) for information. There are also educational workshops running through the day for a minimum of 10 children, and special events. For more info contact: **Linda Friedler 01344 886882**

Winter Holiday

January 25th -28th 2001

Oxfordshire

Biennial treat of a national EO gathering (no resemblance to Arthur Ransom) in historic, atmospheric Abingdon. The last word in comfort: ensuite bedrooms, central heating, private swimming pool, top notch catering. A must for all Warhammer devotees and their children.

*Send S/AE and hat size to:
Jude Ashley-Walker, 1 The
Firs, Dodpits, Ningwood,
Isle of Wight PO41 0TL*

*For e-mail bookings send computer to:
pamandjude@dottyasapotty.bottly*

LOCAL CONTACT UPDATE

Resignations

Joss Nowell Bristol
Lucy and Keith Charlton Leicestershire
Christine Adey Dorset
Julie Truepenny Lincolnshire

EDUCATION OTHERWISE BUSINESS

Lottery Funding for Local Groups

Funding from the Lottery is available to local groups under the Awards For All Scheme. Grants of between £500 and £5,000 can be obtained if you have a well thought out project that needs funding and you set yourselves up as a constitutional group. Grants can be obtained for an event, training courses, conference, equipment and materials or transport costs etc. To apply you need a constitution (I can help with a draft), a bank account with 2 signatories and a clear view of how and who the money will help. I suggest you start by phoning your regional Awards For All office and obtain an application pack. The South East office is 01483 462 900. They can give you phone numbers for other areas.

Pricilla Park Weir 0845 458 3085

Teenage Support

You may have noticed the new entry inside the back cover of the newsletter: Teenage Support. This is aimed at two groups:

1. Parents/carers and teenagers coming out of school and new to home education.
2. Teenagers already in EO who would like to meet more people of their own age.

We have a small team of parents willing to talk on the phone and who may be able to put families in touch with each other. They may also be able to arrange events specifically for the older age range. If you want any help please contact me, **Geraldine Adams** on 0207 2634922

The Police Power to remove Truants (Section 16 Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

It is important that all home-educating families remain aware of this power, in order that its misuse does not begin to occur, as so often happens with the "powers" some LEAs think they have. NLS 124, 125 and 126 dealt with this issue in detail, and a brief reminder of the main points is restated below for new families. The Guidance

published at the time by the Home Office and DfEE stated:

Children being educated otherwise than at school

4.20 In planning for, and operating, a truancy initiative using the new power it is important to remember that not all children aged five-16 are registered at school. Children educated outside the school system altogether (see paragraph 4.1), for example, by home tuition, might be out and about during the daytime for wholly legitimate reasons, for example visiting a library.

4.21 Local procedures should take account of possible contact with such home-educated children and it should be emphasised that they are not the target group for the new power. The power can only be exercised in relation to registered pupils of compulsory school age absent from school without authority; it does not apply to children who are lawfully educated at home. No further action should be taken where children indicate that they are home-educated – unless the constable has reasonable cause to doubt that this is the case.

It is clear that home-educated children are not the target group and, if stopped, need only indicate that they are home-educated. You can discuss with your child what might be appropriate, but please be wary of LEAs offering their own authorised identification. To comply could undermine the authority and responsibility of parents and place that authority with LEAs. It would also condone any suggestion that the word of home-educated children and their parents is not to be believed if they indicate that they are educated at home. You can retain your own authority by possibly providing your child with your own letter of explanation, perhaps including a phone number, or a small card, such as the one produced by Choice.

Parents accompanying children may be stopped and questioned. The Guidance said:

Planning

4.7 ...During this process, particular attention should be paid to ensuring that

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.

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

All regular meetings listed below will now be automatically included in every issue. Please notify changes or any meeting no longer taking place to:

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

BATH

H.E.L.P. group meet regularly for outings and activities.

Contact: Louise Jensen 01225 840735

Louise Verran 01225 859852

BERKSHIRE

Mondays - Swimming at Rivermead, Reading 1.30pm. £1.85

Tuesdays - Swimming at Windsor Leisure Centre, noon onwards £2.80

Wednesdays - Ice skating at John Nike Leisure Centre, Bracknell, 2pm - 4pm £1.50 including lesson & skate hire. Show EO card at reception.

Contact: Pat Connor 0118 9662123

Local newsletter: Dawn Dingwall 01628 783107
www.zednetdemo.co.uk/2eddin

BIRMINGHAM

Last Wednesday of the month, Central Library 10.30-1.30 Free monthly newsletter (send SAE).

Contact: Jackie or Alan Harley 0121 243 8242

22, Danzey Grove, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 6JY
birminghamco@lineone.net

http://website.lineone.net/~birminghamco

BRISTOL

Alternate Mondays - Ice skating

Alternate Tuesdays - Swimming at Bishopsworth Pool, 1.30 - 2.30

Fridays, Totterdown YMCA, 10.45 - 2.00, term time only.

Contact: Kathy Nott 0117 966 8265

BUCKS

Newsletter for Bucks/Northants,

Contact: Dawn Waddington 01908 569380

e-mail dawnwaddington@hotmail.com

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

Contact: Jackie 01753 886924 or

Dorothy 01494 782864

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Cambridge - Regular meetings and outings, Ring for a newsletter.

Contact: Penny 01223 526441

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

Contact: Audrey Hill 01480 219881

Peterborough - Weekly visits and outings

Contact: Janet Wilkinson 01733 554436

CHESHIRE

Cheshire/Stockport Area: For event information.

Contact: Nicky Forster 01625 869719.

Or see Manchester or Staffordshire

CLEVELAND & DURHAM

Anyone interested in setting up a new group

Contact: Pauline Butterworth 01642 899247

CORNWALL

Twice weekly events all round the county. **CHEERSS** newsletter. To subscribe or for information:

Contact: Anna Wheeler, Cambrose Farm, Redruth, TR16 4HT 01209 890378

e-mail anna@wheeler19.fsnet.co.uk

CUMBRIA

Informal gatherings for socialising, support and activities.

Kendal - alternate Wednesdays Castle St. Youth Centre 12.30-3.30

Penrith - alternate Tuesdays Castletown Community Centre 1.30-3.30

Contact: Sarah Cook 01768 896019

DEVON

Contact: Sammy & Nick Vidal-Hall 01548 830716

Ice skating at Plymouth Pavillions Wednesdays at 12pm.

Contact: Pat Stoolman 01626 854592

South Devon: meetings every Wednesday

Contact: Corine 01626 361856

Penny 01626 360640

Carole 01364 643956

Exeter area regular meeting, all welcome

Contact: Jo Borthen 01392 679499

Brixham regular meetings

Contact: Sally Fisher-Smith 01803 856 862

Totnes EARTH group Christmas party all welcome, see adverts page for details. Also meetings & outings Totnes area every Monday.
Contact: Bridget 01548 550917

New Exter group starting 2nd Mondays from 11th December at 46 Bovemoors Lane.

Contact: Julia Williams 01392 411 724

DEVON EAST/DORSET WEST

Fortnightly meetings at Monkton Wyld Court.

Activities + grounds to play in. For events list

Contact: Habiba 01297 561070

Lisa 01297 445685

DORSET

Regular meetings, keep in touch.

Contact: Christine Adey 01258 880355

Rosemary Newton 01747 853593

Bournemouth/Pool/Christchurch, weekly meeting regrouping.

Contact: Wendy 01202 438254

ESSEX

Colchester - fortnightly meetings, Wednesdays. £2.50 per family.

Contact: Sue Johnston 01206 520284

35 Letha Grove, Colchester, Essex CO2 8RG

Also monthly meetings in Chelmsford and

weekly meetings in Southend.

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

Contact: Sandie Cottey 01268 733259 17 South View Rd, Rettendon, Chelmsford CM3 8DX

FIFE

Outings & get togethers

Contact: Karen Spy 01334 655361

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

1st Tuesday in month at Twynning near

Tewkesbury.

Every Thursday swimming and trampolining.

Other outings every month - play areas, ice skating, bowling, climbing, picnics, crafts etc.

Contact: Rob or Fiona Brookes 01684 290087

brookes@openhorizons.screaming.net

HAMPSHIRE

Portsmouth EO Play, Learn, Enjoy. Warm and welcoming group with kids 5-15 meet Fridays for art, craft, music and chat, also local outings.

Contact: Julie Chappell 01705 640242

ACTIVEO meet 3 times a week within 20 mile radius of Petersfield. All welcome.

For introductory newsletter send SAE:

ACTIVEO c/o 30 Spring Rd, Sarisbury Green,

Hants SO30 7FH *kaydaywest@dircon.co.uk*

Chichester 01243 528508

Fareham, Gosport, Winchester, Southampton area. P.W.C. Home Education Group meet regularly for ten-pin bowling, swimming, and many other activities. All welcome.

Contact: Gayle Joubert 01705 553842

Deborah Bull 01705 587868

Group for young children meeting for socialising, invite others to join.

Contact: Alison or Nicholas 0170 3 283727

Southampton: New club for teenagers and older

kids. Friendly and welcoming. Fortnightly, next

meeting Fri. 13th October 10am-1pm

Contact: Anita 023 8049 8840

HANTS/WEST SUSSEX

Teenager Day; every 2nd Thursday of the month. Activities planned by the group, for any home educators 12+. Chichester area.

Contact: Edward 01243 528508

ed@bevmat.demon.co.uk

Activities and support, all welcome Solent Area EO (S.A.E.O.)

Contact: Sally Andrews 01794 368821 or

Bernadette Bury 01243 264837

ISLE OF WIGHT

Fridays - picnics, BBQs, swimming, photography. All ages welcome.

Contact: Jude 01983 531680

Jackie 01983 530378

Isle of Wight Learning Zone has workshops and social events several times a week.

Contact: Shara 01983 822965

Alison 01983 810862

KENT

Regular meetings & activities:

Canterbury -

Contact: Irene Judd 01227 709570

Medway towns -

Contact: Bridget Becci 01634 234938

Tunbridge Wells -

Contact: Kim Dale 01892 863941

For theatre outings and events listing send sae

to: *Amanda Mackenzie 16, Brambletree Cott,*

Borstal Rochester, ME1 3TN,

Bromley New group starting the first Tuesday in September 12-3

Contact: Claire Wade 0181 460 7347

claire@wadefamily99.freeserve.co.uk

LANCASHIRE

Regular meeting, please ring.

Contact: Angelika Walter 01254 603 497

Outings and Get-togethers, for information

Contact: Brenda or Diana 01254 389673

LEICESTERSHIRE

Frequent meetings for play, crafts, walks, hanging out, singing, swimming, science, skating and much more.

Contact: Lise 0116 242 5802

LINCOLNSHIRE

1st and 3rd Monday of the month (including bank holidays and school holidays) 1pm -3pm. Meeting in Cleethorpes in church hall.

Contact: Caroline: 01472 690738

Informal group for chatting and playing, Boston/Spalding/Sleaford area.

If this group is still happening could Chris Stevens contact me with current phone number, thanks.

LONDON

Tuesdays - Clissold Park for socialising and support. Current ages 1-8 yrs but all welcome.

Contact: Charlotte 0207 254 0419

Wednesdays -Honor Oak playground.

Contact: Steve 8680 2933

Thursdays - Lee 11am-1pm

Contact: Clare 8333 9455

Thursdays Fortnightly rollerblading Kidbrooke.

Contact: Fiona 8852 9756

Fridays fortnightly Sydenham 11.30 - 2.30

Bring an activity 1st and 15th Dec +12th Jan.

Contact: Chrystia and Keith 8776 8597

Fridays alternate fortnight Forest Hill Nature Reserve 11.30am

Contact: Dave 8692 4080

NEW Bromley group Fridays once a month.

Contact: Claire 8460 7347

NW London Otherwise Club

Contact: Leslie 0181 969 0893

Wandsworth HE Group, Tuesdays fortnightly

from 26th October. Meeting at 12.15, cost

£3.50 per family, for directions

Contact: Shan 0181 673 6307

E-mail: shan@hogonline.co.uk

Middlesex Harrow Leisure Centre 1-2pm probably fortnightly meetings.

Contact: Karen Clarke 0181 907 7797

W.London HE Group - every Thursday in Ealing/Richmond area for fun and activities.

Contact: Kate 020 8568 4792

MANCHESTER

Bi-weekly at Peel Moat Sports Centre, Stockport. Sports, games, all ages welcome £1.40 per child. **Monthly** formal art classes at Stockport Art Gallery, £1 per child

Contact: Gil Wilson 0161 442 8723

Anyone from 10+ age group wanting to get together for activities, any suggestions?

Contact: Gil Wilson 0161 442 8723

Computing Skills, 1st & 2nd Sats at Moore family's home. Limited places.

Contact: Karen 01204 573136

Manley Park Autonomous HE Group, Wednesdays 11-3 Come and play at Manley Park Methodist Church, Cromwell Ave, Whalley Range.

Contact: Sue Flindt 0161 881 4830

Also monthly reading group for over 10's at Manley Park

Contact: Julie 0161 860 7589

MADCOW news-sheet Free. Send stamped addressed envelopes to Gill Wilson, 20 BrookRoad, Heaton Chapel, Stockport SK4 5BZ.

NORFOLK

NEON gives details of all events. £1.50 plus four large saes.

Contact: Steve Williams, North Cottage, Crostwick, Norwich NR12 7BD

Workshops/social meetings every 1st and 3rd Thursday plus many other activities.

Contact: Sue Robinson 01603 738 494

NORFOLK/SUFFOLK BORDER

Diss area - new group aiming to meet bi-monthly.

Contact: Judith Tooth 01397 890622

Lowestoft area -meeting to start new group

Contact: Lin Walker 01502 741097

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Tuesdays & Fridays weekly activities and visits including Kingsthorpe Community Centre,

Museums, Parks, Wacky Warehouse, factories

Contact: sae to Mr & Mrs F Benham 4 Pilgrim

Way, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 2A

NOTTINGHAM

Weekly meetings for socialising, support and outings. For full list

Contact: Wendy 0115 9114312

Louise 001773 780634

East Midlands Christian Home Educators 1st

Tuesday of the month 10am-2pm Stapleford Baptist Church, Stapleford, Nottingham. Fun, support and group activities.

Contact: Jo Dunn 0115 8770281

Julia Terry 0115 8494083

OXFORD

Weekly meetings - 267 Marston Rd.
Classes in Art, (all ages) Philosophy (over 8's)
German, (all ages). **Fortnightly**, Science Theory
& Speakers Corner.

Monthly, parents meetings
Contact: Wendy Pleded 01865 514973

SCOTLAND

Central Scotland: Sale of secondhand
educational books for all ages. Great bargains!
Contact: Penny Veitch 01786 825171
veitchfamily@compuserve.com

Irvine: weekly drama workshops Fridays, for
ages 5-9 and 9+.

Contact: Rhona 01294 273644

Ayr: Bead craft workshop, over 10's
Contact: Anne 01292 441060

Monthly activities at Eglinton Country Park,
Wednesday afternoons under 10's
Contact: Shirley 01563 540063

January visit: Pauley Abbey

Kilmarnock Rude Mechanicals Woodworking
Workshop in January.

Kilmarnock/Irvine Geology indoor activities in
February.

Contact: Vivien 01563 537428

**Other visits coming up in the new year so
watch this space or**

Contact: Vivien 01563 537428

SHROPSHIRE

Visits: Royal Airforce Museum 18th January,
Jackfield Tile Museum (tile decorating
workshop) 15th February,
Hoo Farm Animal Kingdom 29th March.
For more details and other activities

Contact: Val Higgins 01952 502225

STAFFORDSHIRE/SOUTH

CHESHIRE/NORTH SALOP

Fortnightly meetings in rural location for crafts,
drama, music etc

Contact: Patricia 01785 851150

Stafford: Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday
meeting in village hall for crafts, games etc.
12-3.30pm.

Contact: Nicola 01785 612410

Alsager: 1st Wednesday of month at Y.P.C.C.
for crafts, music, drama, games and chat.

Contact: Carolline 01270 875 633

Sue 01270 88 39 78 Suedavies@tesco.net

SUFFOLK

Meetings every 3 weeks with professional
workshops.

Contact: Sarah Guthrie 01379 783678

SURREY

Fridays - Ice skating at Guildford Spectrum
1.30-4.00, £2.35 (+75p for group lesson).

Tuesdays/Thursdays - weekly meetings in and
around Guildford.

*Contact: Lynne Sowden, 25 Tychbourne Drive,
Guildford GU4 7DH (£1.50 for 3 events lists)*

SUSSEX

Monthly Newsletter/Events list - £8 pa or £4
for 6 months, cheques payable to 'ESEO' please,
to Sarah Raine, 6 The Diggers, Golf Drive,
Brighton, BN1 7LB

Contact: Bo Howard 01580 201681 (East Sussex)

Isobel Bogucki 01403 261178 (West Sussex)

Friday EO Club at Lindfield

Contact: Liz Evans 01444 414058

There have been many teenagers starting on
home education in the area recently. What
activity or event would appeal to you? Ring Jan
01273 514528 with your suggestions.

Home Educators Hastings Area New group
meeting first Monday and third Thursday of the
month, plus other outings and day trips.

Contact: Ali Hudson 01424 814175

TYNESIDE

Monthly meetings, visits, activities etc

Contact: Linda Robertson 01911 4567007

For regular outings and monthly get-togethers

Contact: Wendy Field 0191 5489 470

WALES

Cardigan area Social meetings and outings on
Mondays.

Contact: Yvette Hartley 01239 820 968

Swansea monthly meetings in Llanelli/ area.

Contact: Sue Haggerty 01269 861902

NE Wales / Borders - gym/ trampolining in
Wrexham (Thurs), meetings in Oswestry area
(Tues), W.Cheshire/NE Wales (Mon or Fri)

Contact: Jenny Bove 01978 757489

*49 Westminster Rd, Moss Valley, Wrexham LL11
6DH £2 for a year's listing*

North West Wales has lots of members.

Anyone interested in hosting/organising an event
contact Jenny Bove as above

Glamorganshire - Regular group meetings
planned once or twice a month. Suggestions and
new families,

Contact: Celia McDonough 01633 669104

Gwent - Regular group activities. Suggestions and new families welcome.

Contact: Dawn 01495 303468

Gwynedd - Mondays swimming at Bangor

Contact: Lousia 01248 361254

Friday swimming at Porth Madog

Monthly meetings at Tremadog

Contact: Jo Tuffnell 01766 512330

WARWICKSHIRE

Coventry and Warwickshire area meetings usually 2 Thursdays a month. Activity meetings at Binley Woods and variety of outings, plus famous Christmas Party. See HELM newsletter

Contact: Sue Cardus 024 7654 3801

suecardus@aol.com

WEST MIDLANDS

Fortnightly meetings at Coseley with a planned calendar of activities and workshops e.g. music & drama. Monthly Science Club (BAYS), resource centre, time for discussion, socialising and support. All home educators welcome.

Contact: Penny Clarke 01922 745465

pennyclarke@homeschool.freemove.co.uk

Joy Beasley 0121 585 6450

JoyBeasley@b-bunch.freemove.co.uk

Regular meetings and events throughout the region. Full details in our newsletter, HELM £7.20 per year.

New regular meeting Halesowen library 2nd Thursday meet in the coffee lounge 11-3pm

Contact: Joy Beasley 0121 585 6450

WILTS/DORSET/HAMPS

Outings and visits every Tuesday pm

Lower Street Hall, off Netherhampton Rd,

Salisbury. 2-5pm every 1st Tuesday.

Contact: Vicky Slater 01722 324863

Sam Moody 01794 342041

WORCESTERSHIRE

Regular activity meetings and outings in the north Worcestershire area,

Contact: Gail Tatcher 01562 822034,

email gail@tqmi.co.uk

Weekly meetings Worcestershire area

Contact: Pat 01527 876184

YORKSHIRE - NORTH

Regular meetings & visits etc Please send two second class stamps for quarterly news-sheet, or your e-mail address.

Contact: Sarah Mellord-Wolny 01904 750324

e-mail sarah@wolny.org.uk

YORKSHIRE - EAST

Regular meetings and visits etc. Please send two second class stamps for quarterly news-sheet.

Contact: Alison Houston 01405 769902

Hull, informal meetings every Friday, 2pm

Pearson Park (nr Conservatory entrance)

Contact: Karen 01482 345655

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/Abbeyle Rd. Turn up or

Contact: Annette 0114 2583502

Fiona 0114 22751142

Thursday - weekly informal social meetings.

All South Yorkshire members welcome.

Contact: Angie Targett 0114 2817466

Swimming fortnightly, 2nd Tuesday at

Hillsborough Leisure Centre 12pm and 4th

Wednesday at Barnsley Metrodome 12.30

Contact: Ian Bennett 0114 2817466

YORKSHIRE - WEST

Outings & activities.

Contact: Eva 01535 274520

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 - 4.00at

Moortown Baptist Church, King Lane, Leeds.

£2.50 per family

Contact: Eva 01535 274520 Susan 0113 268 1137

Swimming (term time, occasionally, phone

first), Tuesdays at Bradford

Contact: Eva 1535 274520

Huddersfield Sports Centre

Contact: Tracey 01484 317176

Skating Fridays (except the week of the Leeds meeting)

Contact: Francis 01274 884750

Please help to keep this diary reliable and phone me with any changes or meetings no longer taking place. Thanks Martine 01423 770396

ADVERTISEMENTS

It's Bigger and Better than ever

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01398 351411

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Contact: Barbara Edwards 01483

832250

becoach@csi.com

Totnes EARTH Group invites

Devon Home Educators to a

Christmas party .

Tuesday December 19th 3 - 6pm

at Dartington Village Hall

(nr. Shiners Bridge roundabout)

Fancy dress (optional), Cabaret

(bring an act), Games, Disco.

Bring festive food and drink to

share and £1 present labelled for

your own child/ren.

£1.50 per family

R.S.V.P. or for more info

01548 550917 or 01803 862158

CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES.

New catalogue, including Greenleaf Press, Saxon
Maths, English from the Roots Up, Wordsmith
and Explorers Bible Study (and lots more), send

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Sunderland SR2 8SD

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The Elective Home Education Guidelines

www.choiceineducation.co.uk

ADVERTISEMENTS

Family Health and Education Consultancy

Licensed Homoeopath (15 years experience) and qualified teacher just finished 16 years of home education offers: holistic treatments and advice on allergies, attention deficit, nutrition, vaccinations etc. Also tuition in English, English Lit., Human Biology, French, Spanish. Based in Hereford, will travel to your home on request.

Discounts for lone parents/unwaged.

Dyana Hart BA CertEd LCH DIAT
28 Merryhill Crescent, Hereford HR2
7AH 01432 265 218

SURVIVAL for Tribal Peoples

Activity pack for 8-12 year olds that explains the lives and experiences of three real tribal children. Includes world map, posters, mock letters and extensive background information.

For your **FREE** copy send an A4 SAE with two first class stamps to:

Survival International,
11-15 Emerald St.
London, WC1N 3QL
www.survival-international.org

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Fax: 0161 626 2640

denecivil@hotmail.com

Free Range Education

a book for parents: for those contemplating home education, those families just getting started and those just plain interested in this fast growing form of education. Full of ideas, experience and practical suggestions.

editor Terri Dowty

foreword by Dr Alan Thomas

Published by Hawthorn Press January 2001

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To place an advert...

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 payable to "Education Otherwise". Remember that EO is run entirely by volunteers and has no income except members' subscriptions. Adverts should be limited to 1/8th page or 50 words and sent (with any donation) to the advertising editor.

BACK PAGE PART TWO

Get involved and join a Small Group.

Finance

Priscilla Park Weir, Lynda Hitchman, Celia McDonagh, Ann Samuel Till, Ken Grindley

Enquiries

Gary Podmore, Pam Bellinger, Janet Wilkinson, Priscilla Park Weir

Publications

Jill Fisher, Gary Podmore, Lucy Charlton, Chris Harper, Ali Willer

Media

Liz Alderdice, Beverley Young, Eva O'Rorke, Fiona Brookes, Celia McDonagh, Janet Wilkinson, Belinda Harris-Reid

Business Practice Group

Jill Fisher, Priscilla Park Weir, Martine Archer, Gwen Baldock

DfEE Team

Anne Wade, Jill Fisher, Gwen Baldock,

Membership Support

Isobel Bogucki, Christine Adey,

LEAP (LEA Positive Contact)

Isobel Bogucki, Jude Ashley-Walker, Jill Fisher, Beverley Young, Anne Wade

Local Groups

Janet Wilkinson, Priscilla Park Weir, Julie Eaton, Julie Ridley, Penny Clarke

Communications

Janet Wilkinson, Jill Fisher, Priscilla Park Weir, Richard Eaton, Penny Clarke

New volunteers for any of the groups most welcome, with expertise or just an interest. For more information contact any of the council members listed (in bold) or Janet Wilkinson (General Secretary).

Media Contacts

Please contact one of the following people if you would like to volunteer to be interviewed or are contacted by the media and would like help/advice/support on giving an interview.

Scotland: Liz Alderdice 01464841489

ejid@alders99.freeserve.co.uk

**North West: Beverley Young 01772 734314
beverley.young@btinternet.com**

**North East: Eva O'Rorke 01535 274520
evaandmary@aol.com**

**Midlands: Fiona Brookes 01684290087
brookes@openhorizons.screaming.net**

Wales: Celia McDonagh 01633 669104

**East Anglia: Janet Wilkinson 01733554436
eo_database@ndirect.co.uk**

**South West: Belinda Harris-Reid 01364
643343**

bline@compuserve.com

South East: Vacant

London (1): Vacant

London (2): Vacant

Ireland: Vacant

(Volunteers needed for these areas)

More Useful Contacts

**Complaints (acting): Celia McDonagh, 169 Habershon St. Splott, Cardiff Tel: 029 2021 8160 or Beverley Young 01772 734314
beverley.young@btinternet.com**

The Police Power to remove Truants

(cont. from page 36)

...thought is given to how to deal with children in the company of adults. Parentally condoned unjustified absence is a significant problem for some schools and many of these children will have no good reason to be out of school. This is also a potential child protection issue. The police officer and accompanying education representative should aim therefore to establish whether the child is a registered pupil and the reason for absence. Parents should be reminded that they are legally responsible for regular school attendance.

The Guidance makes it clear enough that the purpose of approaching a parent/adult is to establish whether the child is a registered pupil. Like a child in paragraph 4.21 above, a parent need only indicate that their child is home-educated. You need not feel obliged to provide any further information, and the Guidance makes no suggestion that you should. And remember, this police power can only be used in designated areas (e.g. a shopping centre) on pre-arranged dates.

Council Members

If you have a problem contact your nearest council member;

Geraldine Adams (North London) 0171 2634922

Christine Adey (Dorset) 01258 880355

Jude Ashley-Walker (Isle of Wight) 01983 531680

Pam Bellinger (Northants) 01604 686521

Isobel Bogucki (West Sussex) 01403 261178

Lynda Hitchman (Berkshire) 0118 961 4466

Jill Fisher (Leics) 0116 2128120

Sue Hutchin (Kent) 01233 820008

Priscilla Park-Weir (Surrey) 0845 458 3085

priscilla.park-weir@racalgroup.co.uk

Gary Podmore (Yorks) 0114 2585702

Eleanor Stapleton (London-North) 0181 8841368

Jenny Stevens (West Sussex) 01243 783 469

Anne Wade (London Middx) 0181 904 7155

Dawn Waddington (Bucks) 01908 569380

Janet Wilkinson (Cambs) 01733 554436

Beverley Young (Lancs) 01772 734314

beverley.young@btinternet.com

Membership

Membership and newsletter subscription queries, membership cards, and address changes.

Lynda Hitchman, 31 Audley St., Reading, Berks

RG30 1BP Tel: 0118 961 4466

database@education-otherwise.org

Stationery

Leaflets, posters, membership forms, car stickers.

Ali Willer, 28, Cozens-Hardy Road, Sprowston,

Norwich NR7 8QF (*Donations towards postage*

and printing welcomed, reuse labels £2.50 per

100 -free for EO business use)

Publications

Books, information leaflets and back issues of newsletters. For a full list send an SAE to:

Hazel Hutton, 39 Millfield Gardens, Keswick

Cumbria CA12 4PD Tel: 017687 72546

hhutton422@aol.com

(If you have had your publications list for a while ring to check availability of the item you want before ordering.)

Contact with LEA

If you need information to help in dealing with your LEA ring your Local Contact or any council member.

Small Jobs

If you have a little time to help EO contact

Angela Smith 01434 322372

Useful Contacts

Single Parent Family Contact: Sarah

Martin, Lammas, 34 Cowslip Drive, Little

Thetford, Ely, Cambs CB6 3JD Tel: 01353 648 716

Special Needs: Christine Waterman

85 Elfrida Road, Watford, Herts WD1 8AT

Tel: 01923 464773

School Phobia: Geraldine Adams Tel: 0171

263 4922

Autonomous Education Support and

Advice: Sammy and Nick Vidal-Hall, Home

Croft, Brownston St, Modbury, Devon PL21 0QR.

Tel: 01548 830 716

GCSE Contact: (Vacant)

College Contact: Kathy Chilton

Tel: 01969 623707

Teenage Support: Geraldine Adams

Tel: 0171 263 4922

EO Stalls: Lucy Charlton

2, Wistow Road, Newton Harcourt, Leics

LE8 0FT Tel: 0116 2592118

Research Contact: (vacant)

Chair: (vacant)

Vice Chair: (vacant)

General Secretary (acting): Janet

Wilkinson, 31 Framlingham Road, Peterborough

PE2 8UG Tel: 01733 554436

Treasurer: Priscilla Park-Weir

212 Gordon Avenue, Camberley, Surrey

GU15 2NT Tel: 01276 22735

Newsletter Coordinator (acting):

Christine Adey, 1 Dunbury Cottages, Milton

Abbas, Dorset DT11 0DH Tel: 01258 880355

Local Contact Coordinator: Isobel Bogucki

20 Rusper Road, Horsham, West Sussex

RH12 4BD Tel: 01403 261178

Enquiries Secretaries Coordinator:

Geraldine Adams Tel: 0171 263 4922

Membership Secretaries Coordinator:

Pam Bellinger, 9 Main Road, Kelmash,

Northampton NN6 9LY Tel: 01604 686521

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.education-otherwise.org>>

Education Otherwise Association Ltd, Registered Charity No. 1055120



Merry Christmas

From

THE CHILDRENS PAGES

Issue 137

Edited by: Shelle Williams
145 Robertson Road
Eastville
Bristol
BS5 6LB



Christmas Time

Christmas is the time of year

When happy times are always near

Stoke up the fire, it's snowing outside

With snow the world is beautified

The Christmas tree is sparkling bright

The day is fading into night

Open your presents and give presents too

Christmas is for everyone and it's for you

On this day 2001 years ago Jesus Christ was born

And of the 21st century it is now the dawn

Once again we reach the end of another year

Rejoice, Hurrah to everyone, for Christmas time is here!

A Christmas Tree

By Grace Stuart

By Kali Stuart age 12

Contributors. Drawings should be in Black and White Only. Please include your full name, age and Country with each contribution. If you would like to edit the Children's Pages, contact the Newsletter Co-ordinator. The Editor of the next issue is: Becky Hitchman, 31 Auley St, Redding, Berks, RG30 1BP

PEN-PALS

Hi my name is Helena, I am 4. Would anyone like to be my picture pal cause I love drawing. I also love girlie things like clip-clops, make up and Barbie's. Please draw to: Helena John, 'Memories', Blackgang Chine, Blackgang, Isle of Wight, PO38 2HW.

Tweet Tweet! My name is Bethan. I am 6. I love birds, playing and drawing. Would anyone like to write to me? At: Bethan John, 'Memories', Blackgang Chine, Blackgang, Isle of Wight, PO38 2HW.

My name is Stuart. I like Science, Art, Harry Potter, Dr Who, Sports, Animals, Model Railways, Funny Things and TV. I would like M/F Pen Pals aged 7-9 I WILL ANSWER ALL LETTERS. Write to Stuart Quigley address: 7 Lark Hill, Crescent, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 2HN. PLEASE WRITE BACK!

Hi! My name is Christie Walsh. I'm 8 ¾ and would like a pen pal aged 8-12. I like reading, writing, watching Digimon, web surfing, reading Digimon fanatics, web page building, web page designing and drawing. Please write to me at: 16 Bay View TCE, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 4HS, or e-mail me at: mimilove@btinternet.com

Hi my name is Mattie. I am 9 and would anyone like a pen pal my age. I only get tough at home part time. I have a hamster a rabbit and a Shetland pony, which I race. I live on a farm and my favourite things to do are playing on my rope ladder, trapeze in the hay barn, going down to the woods, watching movies, playing on the PC, inventing things and writing stories. I also like listening to rock and role and some pop. Please write to me at: Mattie Hare, Thorpe Lea East Farm, Easington Colliery, CO. Durham, SR8 3UT.

Hi my name is Leah I'm 14 years old and would like pen pals M/F 13+. I like horse riding, art, animals, reading (horror books), history and music (esp. Travis, Coldplay, All saints and Robbie Williams), and of course I like writing! So please write to me at: Leah Evans, 23 Hanstone Road, Stourport-on-severn, Worcestershire, DY13 0HB

**CHILDLINE 0800 1111, KIDSCAPE 020 77303300 (London) or
01273 557133**

TALKING WALL

This wall is for any E.O. child to use. You can send messages (for example to people you don't know how to contact otherwise.), make suggestions (for example, Anthea Axten suggested this wall .), Ask questions, state facts or just say hello to your friends. To put something on the talking wall just send it to the next editor (address & details in the current children's pages)



I would love to
Say a huge hello
To my best friend
Roisin Howard.
So Hi then! I
Hope you are alright
Lots of love and hugs
Your best mate Annelise Green



Hi there my name
is Herrie Lyon
I want to say hello
to my 8 Pen pals
Emma Smythe,
Jenny Crjar,
Rachel Cripps,
Sarah Patterson,
Jessica Day,
Naomi Johnson,
Breeze,
Jemma Hoden,
And Tara McLenzie.
If you still want
To write to me my
New address is
12 Pickard Road,
Tricketts cross,
Ferndown,
Dorset, BH22 8AX

Hi Anina and
Allison lost your
Address. Please send
it to me. Love Eleanor
46 High St
N. Berwick
EH39 4HQ

