

education otherwise



June 2001

No. 140

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

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DEADLINE FOR THE AUGUST ISSUE IS 1ST JULY 2001

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From the Editors...

June's Newsletter is another bumper edition, with 48 pages. Thank you to everyone who is contributing – and there's more to come for next time. Linda Cutler has edited the letters and articles for the first time this issue, and is happy to continue, so please send your contributions for these sections direct to Linda, in Cornwall, from now on.

Included in this issue is a wonderful account of getting away from it all and setting up home in Spain – with some of the pitfalls. The TV debate continues with some interesting stories, and, if you're looking for an activity to draw the kids away from the TV, try animal bread. Isobel Bogucki has contributed another thought-provoking article, this time about teaching and learning, and trusting children, and Garry Humphreys continues our Profile of a Council Member.

As well as the usual wide range of interesting book reviews, this month Sally has included *Learning Unlimited* and *Teaching Tomorrow*, which sound a good read. Home Education in the News covers one subject in detail this issue: about the children's experience in the BBC's *Castaway 2000* series. (Are you watching the BBC's *Surviving the Iron Age*, to see home-educating family, the Rickards, living in a small Iron Age community for several months?)

Our Special Section this month is about computers, and thank you to Trevor Lever for initiating the idea for this section. Trevor's article is hopefully an introduction to future contributions, designed to inform those of us who would like to know more about the subject. Ahead of our planned Special Section on poems for August, and just to encourage and inspire, Jan Randall's poem appears this month. (Why not have a go at home, putting it to music?) Do get writing if you would like to see your poem in print; that's children and adults, please and send your contribution off as soon as you can to the Special Section editor opposite.

We still need volunteers for Special Section and Children's Pages editors. Both editors are for one issue, so have a go! Children and adults, please include your telephone number when you contact Christine Adey.

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PLEASE volunteer to edit the special section of the Newsletter. Also, more children are needed to edit the Children's Pages. Thank you.

Computers and Home Education

Getting Started

This article is an overview of the key questions that many people have when they first consider getting a home computer. I'm going to limit the information here to PCs that use the Windows operating system. This is, in part due to the fact that this combination is the most popular configuration for home use and also as it's the configuration that I have most experience of. Future articles will go into more detail on topics such as the Internet, educational software and e-mail.

Of course, home education is possible without using a PC, but it certainly adds to the learning opportunities available for many families. Equally, you can consider home education without using a library or the television but having a variety of options and activities available adds to the home education experience.

So, if you've been thinking about getting a PC but have been put of by the cost, jargon or usefulness of the thing...read on.

Why do I need one?



It's not essential to have a computer to educate at home, but it does help. A computer can be seen as a source of information, an interactive go-at-your-own pace tutor, an aid to creativity amongst many other things. Of course, you may also pick up some computer skills along the way, although these are far from essential.

As part of a multi-sensory approach to learning a computer is capable of stimulating both the eyes and ears at the same time. However, unlike television there is an interactive rather than passive involvement. There is a large range of educational software available for the PC that covers all of the major disciplines such as the sciences, geography, history, English and the arts. The PC can be used to store and organise your own notes on a particular subject and these notes can easily include pictures (graphics) as well as text. If the computer is connected to the Internet, then the possibilities increase enormously; it's like having almost instant access to information, ideas and people around the world from the comfort of your own home.

Another argument for having a computer in the home is that they are such a part of everyday life and everyday work in today's age. I was introduced to my first PC at work nearly 25 years ago. It had a black and white screen, large floppy disks and no mouse. I used it for writing letters and creating graphs of sales figures. There was only one other computer in a department of around 35 people. Today, that

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same office has a computer on every desk. The computers now are used for the same activities as the late '70's, together with the creation of presentations, e-mail, access to the Internet, budgeting and accounting.

So, computers today are an almost essential part of the office regardless of which department you are in and almost certainly if you are running your own business. Being able to use a computer today can be considered as a life-skill in much the same way as a having a driving licence or speaking a foreign language. Of course it's possible to get through life without being able to speak French or being able to drive a car – but having these skills certainly opens up more possibilities for many people.

What can I do with a computer?

A computer on its own isn't a very useful item. It needs software before it can be turned into a productive tool. The first piece of software you need is an "operating system" – on most PC's this is invariably some flavour of Microsoft Windows. The operating system is the first piece of software that is loaded when the computer is turned on and is the software that you use to interact with the computer. It's the operating system that controls the screen, mouse, keyboard etc. It also let's you load and run other software – application software – such as a word processor.

Key Application Software

- **Word Processing**

A word processor can be considered as an extension of the typewriter. With a typewriter, documents can be written that are neat and legible. A word processor goes in that layouts may be easily changed, individual words can be corrected. The order of sentences paragraphs can be easily swapped around in order to improve comprehension. The word

processor is ideal for sketching out the ideas in a document, moving them around, expanding earlier sections and for trying different layouts. Add to this spell and grammar checking, coming back to half finished documents that you saved earlier and including pictures with your text and it's easy to see why word processing is the most common piece of application software used on a PC.



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further

and

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- **Spreadsheets**

If a word processor can be considered as an extension of the typewriter, then a spreadsheet can be considered as an extension of the calculator. A spreadsheet is to numbers what words are to a word processor. At its simplest level, you can type ten numbers into a spreadsheet and it will add them together to get the total. If you then find that the third number of your ten was 420 instead of 42 you can simply change that one number and the total will be updated to reflect the change. Spreadsheets can be used to track your domestic finances, draw a graph of your child's height as they grow, compare the costs of two different loan's (which is best, 7.25% over 10 years or 8% over 7 years?)

- **Graphic/Art Packages**

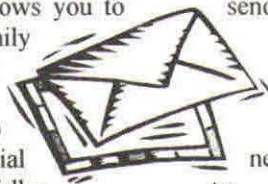
These programs allow you to create new pictures from scratch or edit and modify existing ones. My son uses a graphics program to create new Pokemon creatures by editing existing Pokemon graphics that he found over the Internet (more on the 'net later). He also draws, colours and prints other mythical creatures that seem to roam inside his head. This is, in addition, to the many hand drawn and coloured paintings that he produces.

- **Multi-Media**

Pretty much any computer purchased today comes with a sound card ("card" is computer speak for a special type of circuit board) which allows music and speech to be played back over a couple of loudspeakers – usually placed either side of the screen. "Sound" files are very large and would soon fill a floppy disk and so they usually come on a special type of CD that the computer can read. The combination of a sound-card and CD player (or CD-ROM to give it its full title) with a computer, create a multi-media system that is the ideal for educational software. Imagine an Encyclopaedia where the pictures are animated and move to their own soundtrack, where you can interact with the information and try out your own ideas...it's no wonder that this type of software draws enquiring minds like Pooh Bear to honey!

- **Internet and E-mail**

With your computer connected to your phone line (this is done using a device known as a modem) you can connect to the Internet. Once connected you can "surf the web" i.e. look up the web pages of organisations, institutions, governments as well as individuals. Getting onto the web for the first time is rather like an initial visit to a large new library. There is so much that you could do, it can be easier if you are looking for something specific. Or of course you can just browse and look around. E-mail allows you to send, almost instantaneously, mail messages to friends, family and organisations around the world. E-mail can bring together "virtual communities" of people with a similar interest or hobby. My wife belongs to several HE groups and one for HE children with special needs. If you think it's tough finding like-minded EO folks to share



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experiences with, imagine how tough it is to find others who are home educating children with special needs. Well, there is an e-mail group for just this (in fact there is likely to be an e-mail group for just about any specific interest no matter how rare or unlikely) and it allows us to share ideas and experiences in the “virtual world” which would be impossible or impractical in the real world.

How much will it cost?

Wow, I've got so far and managed to get away without using (I hope) too much jargon. Here's a brief guide to what those PC specifications mean.

- Processor or “chip”. This is the equivalent to the brain of the computer. The speed of the brain is measured in megahertz (MHz). Generally, the higher the MHz the faster the brain.
- RAM. This is the temporary workspace for the computer and is measured in megabytes MB. The more RAM memory your computer has the more things it can do at the same time.
- Hard Disk. This is the permanent storage space for the computer. Think of it as a filing cabinet. The larger the hard disk in gigabytes (GB) the bigger the filing cabinet.

If you are shopping around here's what your money can get you (and like the magazine advertisement, these prices do not include VAT).

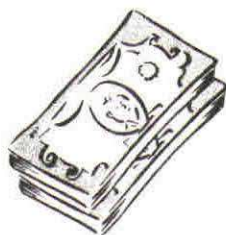
A basic PC can cost as little as £500-£600. This will allow you to do basic word processing, spreadsheets and so on. You should also be able to get on the Internet for this. You don't need a powerful computer to do these things. A PC with a 500MHz chip and 64MB RAM is more than adequate for these tasks

A good all-round PC including a sound card and CD-ROM would cost around £1000 give or take. This would be more than capable of running “educational” software programs. The £999 price point seems to be a very popular one and many PC organisations try to configure a good all round machine to this price. A PC with a 800MHz chip and 128MB RAM can easily be found for this price.

It's very easy to spend more. If you want a DVD (a CD-ROM type drive but capable of playing back films) or to play the latest games (these may require a powerful graphics card) you can easily spend £1,500. Expect to pay over £2,000

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for the latest and greatest technology. If this sounds like a lot of money, then wait 18 months and the price will have halved.



Yes, there is never a good time to buy a PC. The technology is moving so fast (and has been for so long) that in 18 months time the price for today's state of the art will have fallen by around 50%. My current PC is just over two years old and cost around £1,500. Today's £600 machines are faster and more powerful. Such is "progress". If this scares you, I strongly advise starting with a £600 machine and working your way up. CD-ROM / DVD / Graphics Cards /

Modems can all be added as and when required. Alternatively, there are a number of companies that sell "end-of-line" PCs at attractive prices. These PCs were state-of-the-art 18 months ago. If you look in the back pages of Personal Computer World magazine there are a number of companies that offer PCs that are no longer the "current model" but work and have a 12 months guarantee.

Well, I hope this is enough to get you thinking or considering purchasing your first computer. Over the next few issues of the Newsletter, I will be expanding on some of the topics and issues outlined above. If there are specific areas you would like to see covered drop me a line (see the EO contact list for Bath area) or if you are already "on-line" my e-mail address is trevor.lever@btinternet.com

Trevor Lever, Somerset.

Computers: keeping them in perspective

We have a computer for the family's use with the usual word processing facility, access to the internet, a few 'educational' CD Roms and encyclopedia and atlas programmes. We use the internet after 6 pm when it's cheaper and I download some of the schools' websites with activities on for the kids to use during the day. They use the 'educational' CD Roms for number, English and science games and activities perhaps several times a week, although some weeks not at all. Occasionally for research, although I would see this increasing as they get older. They are 7 and 10 years now.

I have put 'educational' in inverted commas because I am very concerned that some of these programmes, promoted as educational and therefore to be valued as such, are merely nothing more than animated entertainment and, like with TV, what the kids get out of them in terms of learning is minimal. (The parents get half an hour of peace though, which of course has its value!) But it is worrying that parents may be allowing their children hours of time that they think is more worthwhile than it really is. Computer programmes which stimulate and inspire are rare. Mostly, if you study them closely, they are doing little more than reinforcing existing skills, requiring the child to be fairly passive – little more than deciding a multiple choice answer and clicking a mouse. Ask ourselves what the children come away from the computer with – in terms of development or knowledge – and it's not much! Far better to experience things first hand where possible. Although I imagine those families who follow a more academic and structured approach to education than we do would feel differently.

I believe the powers that be, i.e. the manufacturers, try their hardest to lead us to believe that without computers our children are deprived! Let's keep that in perspective. It is an advantage in contemporary society for our kids to be computer literate. But the computer's value as a learning tool is over-hyped. I see them simply as another resource, *among many* resources at our disposal as HEers, and should keep their place as such.

And however many wonderful resources we choose to use – and probably the more the better and the broader our children's experiences will be – there is still only one resource that our children cannot do without! No – it's not the computer! Or books, which come a close second! It is the attention and input of an enthusiastic, caring and motivated human being. God help us if the government manages to convince folks that computers could ever become a substitute for that!

Ross Mounthey, Rose Cottage, Sea Lane, Old Leake, Boston, Lincs PE22 9JJ

Skills and qualifications

Computers are an essential part of employment in the modern world and a basic understanding of them is on par with the three R's. Having no knowledge of them myself, I sought a course at an adult education centre, finding that often day time courses were under subscribed. Laura has so far completed the basic computing course, which involved introduction to Word, Excel, Access, Powerpoint and Publisher. At the end, she received an RSA Certificate in word processing and an LOCN credit certificate. That was at age 12.

I wanted to find out more and made inquiries. LOCN stands for London Open College Network and is part of a National examining body, whereby people can go to their local centre and do the courses at different levels, achieving a certificate based on their course work. As you collect the certificates you can swap them in for a GCSE, A-level or even build up to a degree.

This year Laura has completed three more courses to advanced Excel and a Photoshop course. Strictly speaking, you should be 16 years to attend these courses, but if there are places available ... If you don't ask, you don't get!

Jackie Goldsworthy, Chingford, London E4

Learning through interest in computers

Computers: my son loves them. Also, my daughter, aged 13, has had a Nintendo 64. Computers have a good point; my son loves his Playstation. With the internet, he looks round computer net game sites. He has wheeled and dealt at a secondhand shop to part swap games, and completely swapped computers. He has learnt the value of money, price of things. Also, he has the confidence to speak to strangers about buying games on the phone. He has even tried to design a game. He's 14. It is addictive when you get into a game and it can go on for hours. Even when you want them to have a break, they will want to finish – complete the game. Sometimes, when I want them to stop, I've put an hour limit before now.

There is a massive range of games: adventure, puzzle, sports etc. Things can be learnt from games, such as strategies, finding out what has happened, like games based on history.

My daughter finds using the internet educational because everything she needs to know is there for her to find out.

Teresa Mercer, 23 Northgreen, Bullbrook, Bracknell, Berks RG12 2NY

Book Reviews and Resources **Natural Childhood**

Learning Unlimited by Roland Meighan
15 stories, 'case-files', collected over many years, each is short and in an easy to read style. The book starts in a punchy way. The first story describes how a group of families, shocked by a bad road accident, go on strike from school in order to get the local authority to listen to their pleas for a crossing. The school is helpful and provides a little schoolwork. Weeks pass and the families enjoy learning, for the most part, without schoolwork. When the council agree to a road crossing, one of the families decide not to return to school but to become a home educating family. The positive energy towards learning described within this family is uplifting to read. There is a breadth of topics covered. The style is strikingly different to many other home education books I have read, in that a lot of the case files are told through speech which gives the impression of listening to home educators in conversation. It acts as a reminder of the many positive things to say when asked the usual barrage of questions about home education. This is a book I will enjoy dipping into again and one which I will be passing on to friends and relatives to read.

Clare Crane

£7.95 ISBN 1 900219 18 2 *Educational Heretics Press*
0115 925 7261 www.gn.apc.org/edheretics

Teaching Tomorrow by John Adcock

Such revolutionary thoughts on education from a teacher of 32 years! Could this really be the way of the future? John Adcock details how the school system came about - a literate workforce was needed and most parents were not capable of teaching their children to read or write - and questions why the nation is happy to continue with a system more than 125 years old. He proposes "Teaching children without schools", a system where all parents are really involved in children's education (even paid for this), and children come first with a personal study plan and tutors they know, where a child's well-being and confidence is far more important than future exam results. Teachers would train as tutors and have better stress-free working conditions using a central audio-visual education library, and the government would gain a technology-literate workforce for the future. Adcock observes that "the second industrial revolution, in the 19th century, brought about a revolution in education no such initiative has followed the third"; we now have videos and the internet, yet the 19th century's school-based education is still here.

Sue Onions

£9.95 ISBN 1-871526-44-2 *Education Now*

This is a practical guide to the first seven years and is practical without being patronising. It is supporting in suggesting ways in which we can understand our children's behaviour and some of our own putting it into context with our own children. The book draws on a wealth of experience from its six authors. Areas covered include natural learning, the Steiner educational approaches with information on rhythm of development. Other topics include communication and child development through play and creativity (with lots of valuable ideas to enhance child's play for their and your enjoyment). There is also a useful chapter on health and healing. The book is well set out and nicely presented with good illustrations that are clear and colourful. There are lots of inlay blocks to highlight the important bits. I really enjoyed this book which you can dip into time and time again.

Eileen Steenman-Clark

£14.99 ISBN 1 85675 022 1 *Gain Books*

Mother Goose Remembers by Clare Beaton

This is a beautifully illustrated collection of nursery rhymes. The colourful pictures are made from a mixture of new felt and antique fabrics, they have been photographed and the text lies within the pictures. There are many felt animals and our favourites are the pigs and cats. There is an extraordinary range of embroidery stitches and techniques, many different fabrics, threads, ribbons, lace, buttons and beads. Mother Goose's loose feathers are used to unify the collection. She gives some feathers at the beginning of the book and one feather appears with every new nursery rhyme. This is an exquisite book and by far the best nursery rhyme collection that I have come across. Natasha and Anthea like it a lot.

Clare Crane with Natasha (6) and Anthea (4)

£12.99 ISBN 1 84148 072X *Barefoot Books*
0870 241 5031 www.barefootbooks.com

The Genius of Leonardo

by Guido Visconti & Bimba Landmann

I liked this book. It has lots of lovely pictures. It is about Leonardo Da Vinci who was an inventor and artist who painted lots of pictures, including the Mona Lisa. It is told from the point of view of Giacomo who was Leonardo's assistant. I liked the part where they set the caged birds free but I don't think birds should be kept in cages. Leonardo speaks in italics because his own words are used in the book. It is published by Barefoot who have also bought out 'The Mountains of Tibet', which is a lovely story about being reincarnated. I have read lots of Barefoot books and they have all been lovely.

Molly Whitehall (8)

£9.99 ISBN 1 84148 300 1 *Barefoot Books*
0870 241 5031 www.barefootbooks.com

Grafix and Comix Books

These are a new series of books which bridge the gap between books and comics. Each is a short story by different authors and with black and white illustrations. Divided into short chapters, less than a third of a page is in conventional script before the traditional comic style takes over. The Grafix books place the script in a separate box from the cartoon. Matt, who likes video games, found **System Shock** by *Liam O'Donnell* (Grafix) set in the twenty second century to be an exciting and gripping storyline. Trapped in a video game, the two boys and a girl have to escape. The wicked wizard Azkar releases all the video game villains and programmes them to attack the kids. In contrast, the storyline of **Respect** by *Bernard Ashley* (Grafix), a moral tale against the pressures of the peer group and judging by appearance, had no appeal for Matt. Haunted by the humiliation of his father by imprisonment, forced with his family to move into a new neighbourhood in cramped quarters with his mum's sister and husband, Mal is envious of the close friendship of classmates Phil and Chas. To win their respect and to join their gang, he is drawn into progressively more dangerous and foolhardy escapades leading him into conflict with his family. His 'friends' double cross him and he realises their true worthlessness and that real respect comes with the ability to act sensitively towards his family in their time of need. It took Matt barely an hour to read **The Planet Machine** by *Steve Bowkett* (Comix) is the story of a boy, a girl and a space ship captain travelling in space. They thwart an octopus shaped robot with jets coming out of his bottom from taking pieces of rock out of asteroids thereby saving planet Mars and securing the survival of Earth by killing the robot's evil creators. Matt found the story exciting and adventurous and said that the pictures were good too. *Anne Longmuir with Matt (11)*

Mine's a Winner by *Michael Hardcastle* (Grafix) is a story about a boy, Tex, who loves horses. He meets Sadie and likes her a lot. She comes and sees him often and then they go to a horse race together. Sade's horse goes running off with her. Tex goes after her on his horse and they both fall off. Then she kisses him. I think this book is too soppy because there is a lot of boy/girlfriends and kissing. It was difficult doing this review because the books are aimed at reluctant readers and I love reading. Although it's not for me I think that people who don't like reading would enjoy it.

Emma Whitehall (11)

£3.99 each (Grafix or Comix) A & C Black
0120 7242 0946

Understanding Physical Processes

This is a workbook about science. At the top of each page there is a title which is a subject. Under that there is a fact. Here are some of them. Forces can make things change shape. Electricity passes through metal, it does not pass easily through plastic, wood, bricks or concrete. The earth moves around the sun and it takes a year. Underneath it tells you to do or investigate. In one you have to guess how far the car goes when it goes down a ramp onto either a carpet or smooth tiles. In another you have to stretch three elastic bands to different lengths and twang them to see which is the highest pitch. There are also puzzles like word searches. I liked doing the workbook. It was fun and very easy. *Molly Whitehall (8)*

ISBN 1 897675 615 Brilliant Publications
01525 222844

A Flute in Mayferry Street

by Eileen Dunlop
We got totally immersed in this wonderful and intriguing story. It is a classic ghost story with a difference. Colin and his disabled sister delve into the history of their house and find an old letter, a faded photograph and crumpled jacket. These clues from the past reveal a family secret which has repercussions for their own lives. Excellent value and highly recommended. *Sally Hall with Keith (7)*
£4.99 ISBN 0 86315 328 3 Floris Books 0131 229 6800

Let's Look At(Torchlight Series)

We reviewed **Let's Look at Fish Underwater**. An appealing little book and an instant hit with Hazel and Kim. It has 6 white pages with illustrations of 6-9 creatures on each. The creatures are named, with a very brief description. Opposite the 'light' page is a black page and a plastic transparent page which you 'explore' with a very effective paper 'torch', as if it's an underwater scene. There are 5 other pages, mainly illustrations, which introduce the topic, and briefly explain how humans can explore underwater. It's good fun and could whet the appetite for further reading or snorkelling/diving. *Sally Jarvis with Hazel (8) and Kim (5)*

I was very pleased to review **Let's Look at Caves** and **Let's Look at Lost Treasure**. I looked for the torch but I could not find the torch but the torch was at the back of the book and you pressed it out. It went in between the black paper and the cellophane paper. I liked the books very much and because it was a cardboard torch it did not waste batteries which is very good. *Keith Hall (7)*

£6.99 each. There are several of these innovative books in the First Discoveries/Torchlight range. *Ragged Bears*
01264 772269 www.raggedbears.co.uk

Best Ever Book of Questions and Answers

This book has five sections with questions and answers about different subjects. The sections are: space, our world, nature, history and science. Within them there is a different thing on each page; such as computers or insects or spiders. It asks rather odd questions which don't have enough detail for me and are light and frothy like uncooked meringue, but others might find them fascinating. It has good pictures illustrating each question, so you can see what things look like. Each subject has its own colour on the corner of the page, quite useful for opening on the right topic. On the whole it's not really my sort of book, but I'm sure a lot of people will love it.

Emma Whitehall (11)

£9.99 ISBN 1 8 61990480 Vineyard Books, Oxford

Tom and the Pterosaur by Jenny Nimmo

Tom has a secret - it lives in the shed in his neighbour's garden and it waits. It seems to be comforted by the sound of Tom's sisters' singing. If you read the title you'll know what the secret is, which leaves the second half of the story to tell you what happens. As it's not illustrated (except for a small drawing at the start of each chapter) I guess this 80-page book is intended for 6-8 year olds. Kim liked it. Hazel thought it was okay but not as good as some other Jenny Nimmo stories - eg *The Stone Mouse* and the *Delilah* series (about a cat with magic powers). Sally Jarvis with Kim (15) and Hazel (8)

£3.99 ISBN 07445 4178 6

Emerald Island by Ted Reeve

This story is about three children called Liam, Amy and Christina, who go to the seaside, where they find a cave. They go through a crack at the back of the cave and find a boat manned by Captain Stump, Master Speak (who can't speak at all) and a talking bird called Chirpy. The children go out to sea with the Captain. They see mermaids and dolphins and they go to an island called Emerald Island. The Queen of Emerald Island has lost her own children and the three set out with Chirpy the bird to find them. They go through a creepy forest and Christina gets captured by the baddy, who is called Captain Grabb and known as "the Wave Maker". It is an exciting story which boys and girls who are confident readers will enjoy.

Freya Steenman-Clark (8) with Eileen

£12.95 ISBN 185776540 0 *The Book Guild*
01273 472534 www.bookguild.co.uk

Make Lemonade by Virginia Euwer Wolff

This book is about a teenager who goes round for a baby-sitting job in a really dirty and messy house. She baby-sits for a very young mother and her children. But she soon finds herself doing more

than just baby-sitting. The book is written in poetry style, but reads as a book. I thought the book was written very well. The book makes you realise how hard it is for some people in their lives, but also how they can make things better. I really enjoyed reading 'Make Lemonade', and would recommend it to other teenagers.

Elizabeth White (13)

£4.99 ISBN 0571 20207 1 *Faber* 020 7465 7573

The Time Travelling Cat and the Roman Eagle by Julia Jarman

This is a very exciting story about a time-travelling cat called Ka who has adventures with and without her owner, a boy called Topher. Topher is very unhappy about moving house and school and believes that another boy is being horrible to him, but finds it hard to prove. When a local gang come to his house to attack him, a Roman Eagle from the past comes to his rescue and he gets caught up in AD79. I thought this book was fascinating and very good.

Kit Freisleben (8)
Kirsten, his mum adds "Kit loved this book and we took it in turns to read it - I thought the historical aspect was very good. It touches on aspects of glue sniffing and gang violence, though not in an excessive way at all and raised these and other topics for discussion. An excellent book all round and recommended for 9 - 12 year olds.

£9.99 ISBN 086264 861 0 *Anderson Press*
020 7840 8701 www.andersonpress.co.uk

Wordworth's Interactive Classics

There are several titles in this new series and more are planned. Each book and accompanying CD represents very good value. The interactive edition of the *Merchant of Venice* is very well presented and does its job very well. The CD-ROM contains a very interesting and comprehensive description of the play. It runs through the whole set of elements, including the characters, a glossary of terms and a very good background section giving the historical context of the play. This really enriches the experience of studying the play and is very useful in understanding the underlying meanings. Both the CD and the book are easy to navigate and the CD's sections are linked together extensively which helps when you are following a particular line of study. This book, and the others in the series, are excellent for anyone studying Shakespeare or other classics, whatever the level of study. Adrian White (18)

Romeo And Juliet by William Shakespeare is a complete and unabridged version of William Shakespeare's play. Definitely for the older reader, this book features romance, tragedy and drama. The notes and the glossary, (also featured on the CD Rom), were very useful in helping me

understand some of the terms and phrases used! The CD Rom, proved very invaluable, amongst other things, there was; a timeline, a background of the characters, an extensive glossary and even a test! All in all, this play was a challenging read, made easier, by us all reading out different parts in a group!

Megan Whiteman (11)

£4.99 each (book/cd) Wordsworth Editions
0207 706 8822 www.wordsworth-education.com

The Man Who Wore All His Clothes

by Allan Ahlberg

This book had Natasha and Anthea rolling around with laughter. The story is about the Gaskitt family. It begins enigmatically with Mr Gaskitt wearing all his clothes and going off to work. Mrs Gaskitt is a taxi driver and she gets a strange phone call from a burglar. The story unfolds moving in quick succession from one character to the next as the robber tries to escape. His activities have repercussions for all the family. The pace is fast and although I had imagined I would read the book in chapters, this proved impossible and it really needs to be read from start to finish in one sitting. It is a very theatrical book and a lot of fun to read out loud. Mr Blotter, the supply teacher, is old-fashioned, he gets the children to put their hands on their heads, then fingers on lips, elbows on knees and left legs behind necks and over right shoulders! Natasha and Anthea tied themselves up in knots trying to do it. The illustrations by Katherine McEwen are brightly coloured, clear, imaginative and amusing and complement the text wonderfully. We all enjoyed this book and I can see it being read over and over again.

Clare Crane with Natasha (6) and Anthea (4)

£9.99 ISBN 07445 59553 Walker Books 020 7793 0909

What's The Time Grandma Wolf ?

Celeste was rather intimidated at first by the fierce looking wolf and as the tension mounts as she prepares to cook dinner she half wanted to stop. However, it all turns out happily and Celeste loved the double page pictures, full of animals in the woods. She said "I like the animals in this book. I like my new book." Kit and Gem enjoyed reading it to her too, especially as they know the Little Riding Hood story and could see the joke in that.

Kirsten Freisleben with Celeste (3)

£9.99 ISBN 0 86264 468 2 Anderson Press
020 7840 8701 www.andersonpress.co.uk

Silly Sausage & the Little Visitor Silly Sausage in Trouble

These are just two of the *Sausage* books in the

Rocket series. Jem says "I liked the two books because they were funny and I would like to read the other books in the series. The cats are funny because they say 'huh' on nearly every page but *Sausage in Trouble* is silly because he never gets in trouble!!!" Kirsten, his mum, says "Jem hates dogs so I expected him to reject these books but he found them very funny. He liked having chapters and the black and white illustrations added to the humour. With only 1 or 2 sentences to each page he raced along and really felt a success!" Kirsten Freisleben with Jem (6)

£7.99 each (hardback). A & C Black 020 7242 0946

Throwaway Bear by Sandy Nightingale

When Sophie is given yet another teddy bear for her birthday he is left discarded amongst the wrapping paper, and mistakenly thrown in the dustbin.

"Throwaway bear" begins his travels tied to the front of a lorry, then buried by a dog, picked on by a crowd of rabbits, taken for food by a raven, thrown into the bottom of a lake and finally fished out and left lying battered and torn. A little boy, Paul, finds and takes him home to be washed, mended and finally he presents Throwaway Bear to his little sister for her birthday who happily replies "Bear ... own bear." And so 'throwaway bear' is 'throwaway' no more.

This is a lovely story, beautifully illustrated by Sandy Nightingale who gives almost equal weight to words and pictures. It is therefore more suited to children from two upwards. Hamzah certainly enjoyed listening to this story quite a few times as I did reading it to him.

Aalyah Naqvi with Hamzah (2)

£9.99 ISBN 0 86264 899 8 Anderson Press
020 7840 8701 www.andersonpress.co.uk

Why Can't I Fly by Ken Brown

This is about an ostrich who couldn't fly. The bird held a piece of string and he could fly. I liked the pictures of the birds and animals. It was funny when he went into a tree. I think he can't fly because he is big and heavy. This is a good story and I think other children would like it too.

Eughan Steenman-Clark (4)

£4.99 ISBN 1 84270 017 0 Anderson Press
020 7840 8701 www.andersonpress.co.uk

Dog's Night

This book is about lots of dogs in an art gallery who jump out of the paintings just one day each year. It is the National Gallery so the illustrations are all of well known paintings. I think that it is very funny when the dogs jump out of the paintings. I also think that it is funny when cheeky little and big dogs eat the party food, they play games, have fights and run up and down the staircases.

Lucy Pope (7)

£10.00 ISBN 0 7112 1360 7 Francis Lincoln

Oomph! by Colin McNaughton

Preston Pig is an adorable young porker. He lives a charmed life, blissfully unaware of all the near misses he has from a constantly pursuing Mr Wolf. This hilarious format has been used in five other picture books and Preston has even starred on TV. In this story he goes on holiday; Mr Wolf follows. Preston ends up with a sun tan and a new love: Mr Wolf ends up with lots of sticky plaster and bandages. When the book arrived, Stephanie and Claudia immediately took it away to read together, and were giggling so much they could barely get to the end. There is enough text for a new reader to feel that they are really reading, and the very funny pictures have speech bubbles to add interest. Lucy also loved the book, when I finally got it back from the older two. I would recommend it to any family with young children as I feel it has a very wide appeal.

Vivienne Hughes with Lucy (4), Claudia (7) and Stephanie (8)
£9.99 ISBN 1 84270 001 4 Anderson Press
020 7840 8701 www.andersonpress.co.uk

FACTS AND FICTION

This is a quarterly magazine for anyone interested in stories and (oral) storytelling. It contains stories, poetry, radio and TV reviews, book reviews, web surfing, articles on customs and mythology, media coverage and information on courses, workshops, festivals and performances. It embraces cultures from all around the world. Aimed at all ages

£10 per year or sample issue £1. 01332 346399

TITLES RECOMMENDED BY EO'ERS **Do Little Mermaids Wet Their Beds?**

by Jeanne Willis and Penelope Jossen

Sophie chose this story. It is a story written in rhyme about a girl who is 4 who wets the bed each night. It stresses how clever she is at lots of things. One night she has a dream about going to the bottom of the sea with a mermaid, who says that her bed is wet anyway, so a wet bed doesn't bother her. In the morning when she wakes up, the girl has a dry bed. I think Sophie chose this title because she could identify with it and she did enjoy listening to the story. The illustrations are lovely too. I think it could help any child who does wet the bed but it is also a light-hearted and enjoyable story.

Anne Pope with Lucy (4)

£9.99 ISBN 0 86264 974 9 Anderson Press

Books by Jill Paton Walsh

These are historical novels for young people (and their parents). We found "A Parcel of Patterns" in our local library, and enjoyed it so much that we ordered more of Jill's books. All are well researched, imaginative, beautifully written and have their own distinctive "voice". A Parcel of Patterns is the history of the heroic villagers of 17th century Eyam in Derbyshire. When the Bubonic Plague was brought to them via fleas infesting a parcel of dress patterns sent from London, they decided to isolate themselves rather than spread the disease. Moving and gripping. Erin says "It is a good story, it made me feel sad." (ISBN 0-14-036259-2 Puffin). Grace is the story of Grace Darling. Discover about life in an 1830's lighthouse, before the national network of lighthouses & the RNLi that we take for granted today. Feel pity for the crew from Sunderland who also rowed out, as their efforts are overshadowed. Erin says "I enjoyed hearing about how they lived in lighthouses and about Grace Darling". (ISBN 0-14-034729-1 Puffin). The Butty Boy is a fascinating insight into 19th century canal life told through the adventures of three children who have to travel alone to deliver their brother's cargo. A simple story brought vividly to life with details of narrow boat life. Erin says "I think it would be beautiful to still have lots of canals and narrow boats instead of so many lorries." (ISBN 0-14-031962-X Puffin).

Fireweed is the adventure of two runaway teenage evacuees during the WWII Blitz in London. It brings to life war time in the city. Told with an air of deep sadness and loss, as well as secret adventure. Erin says "I would have put a different ending to the story, because it is so sad, but I enjoyed the way that the children didn't have adults looking after them." (ISBN 333-10618-0 Macmillan). Torch is set in a future of lost technology. It tells of the quest of a group of young people from Greece who search for the Games to which the treasured Torch belongs. During their travels the history of the Torch and the Ago (our present time) is discovered. Erin says "My favourite of these books, it gives us a different way of looking at how we live now (TV is flying pictures) with a very happy ending." (ISBN 0-670-81554-3 Viking Kestrel).

Yvette Hartley & Erin (11)

PLEASE SEND IN REVIEWS OF YOUR FAVOURITE TITLES. Write to Sally Hall, Nant-y-Garreg Farm, Saron, Llandysul SA44 5EJ, e-mail sally@aecb.net or tel 01559 370908

HOME EDUCATION IN THE NEWS

Just one article this time, featuring one of last year's more interesting educational experiments (and not a test or an inspection in sight). The BBC sent a group of people to spend a year on a deserted Hebridean island, including several families with young children. At the start of the year various pundits expressed anxiety that the children's education might be adversely affected. Instead, as this TES article shows, the children enjoyed a happy and productive year working and learning alongside their parents.

Treasure island

The 36 plucky souls who volunteered to become modern-day Robinson Crusoes for the BBC's 'Castaway 2000' series had to become self-sufficient - and that included schooling. As Monica Cooney reports, the year-long experiment provided a golden opportunity to discover the riches of home education.

A year on a remote and windswept island in the Outer Hebrides may not sound like everybody's cup of tea - especially those with children used to the hectic pace of the city. But the five families among the 36 people who took part in Castaway 2000, the BBC's experiment in communal living, saw it as a unique opportunity to investigate the reality of home education.

When we arrived in January, renovation of the old schoolhouse, which had not been used as a school since 1935, was still incomplete. So we spent the first month putting up shelves, laying floors and fixing leaky windows and doors while the children were taught in a rundown house belonging to the island's owner. It was March before we finally moved into our dream school overlooking the beach.

We had two qualified teachers - Julie Lowe, an ex-primary teacher, and myself, a further education lecturer in English language and learning support, here with my partner and our four-year-old daughter, Ciara. I had taken a sabbatical from my post at Hackney Community College in east London. As well as escaping the stress of city life, I was looking forward to taking an active part in my daughter's education.

Another of the parents, Rosemary Stephenson, had already been thinking about home education for her two children, Oliver, seven, and Felix, five. She says: "Coming to Taransay gave us a chance to create our own kind of school and, above all, to devote as much time to our children as they needed."

With the £4,000 we were given to equip and run the school for a year, we bought furniture, a computer, musical instruments, a cassette player and art materials, as well as books and stationery. The most expensive item was a piano, so Rosemary's husband, Roger, could teach the children music, which, he maintains, "is as basic as maths to children". Fortunately, we soon made contact with the local library, which regularly sent us reading books for all ages. With eight children of varied ages, we split them into two groups. The four- and five-year-olds, Felix, Ciara and Yoneh, went into one, and the four older children, Oliver Stephenson and Natasha Corrigan, aged seven, and Michael and Jodene Prater, aged nine and 11 respectively, into the other. The youngest, two-year-old Aaron (Yoneh's brother), would come along to school for half a day with his mother so he could benefit from the stimulating learning environment.

Julie Lowe taught the younger children, and the older ones were taught by myself, as well as Rosemary and Roger and Julia Corrigan. I concentrated on teaching grammar and spelling, Rosemary taught French, Roger Stephenson maths and Julia creative writing, with other members pitching in to teach the full range of national curriculum subjects.

It soon became clear that grouping the four older children together was a problem. While Oliver and Natasha worked well together, Michael had difficulty concentrating, and distracted the others, and Jodene was not being stretched - it was difficult to pitch the level to suit all four children.

We decided Michael and Jodene would benefit from individual tuition. Luckily, we had so many enthusiastic people who wanted to get involved

HOME EDUCATION IN THE NEWS

that this was no problem. So while I taught Jodene and Michael reading, grammar, spelling and French, Julia continued to teach creative writing to Jodene.

The school day began relatively late - 10.30am for Jodene and Michael, and 11am for the younger children. It suited the children, who liked to play the piano, do their homework or read in the morning. And we reckoned the intensive teaching we provided gave the children more than they would get in a longer day at a mainstream school.

Mornings were given over to literacy, numeracy, science, French and history, while the afternoon sessions concentrated on the more creative subjects, including art, drama, music, sports and even circus skills.

Our school day had to be flexible as events often disrupted it, such as the delivery boat arriving with supplies and the mail. Then, it was all hands on deck as the children ran down to the beach to help unload.

But schooling was not confined to the classroom. We were living in an enormously stimulating environment where the children were learning constantly. The world around us - especially the weather and wildlife, the seals, deer, mink, otters and eagles on the island and the farm animals - provided many spontaneous teaching opportunities, such as the birth of a foal or a calf, which could be linked to the lessons of the day.

And being surrounded by alternative technology, such as wind and hydro-power generators, gave the children valuable insights into the production and use of renewable energy.

Even their leisure time was educational, feeding the animals, collecting shells, driftwood, stones and buoys, growing vegetables, making rafts and helping in the kitchen.

So as we start to pack the schoolbooks into boxes in preparation for leaving the island on January 1, how have the children fared?

Julie Lowe says the younger ones have made rapid progress. "At the start of the year Felix and Ciara were beginning to decipher the reading

code, and, thanks to the Oxford Reading Tree, are now enthusiastic readers and racing through the scheme. Yoneh was just starting to recognise letters and numbers and was making good progress when the family left last summer."

From a personal point of view, it has been exciting watching Ciara progress. Her reading and writing have come on well and she loves writing stories and reading them aloud.

Oliver and Natasha have flourished, working together as a pair and being well matched in ability. Julia Corrigan says: "As they are both articulate and imaginative children, they leapt at the opportunity to allow their imaginations to run riot. The results have been impressive and their writing skills have improved immensely."

Michael and Jodene responded well to individual tuition. "It's been fantastic," says their mother, Trish Pater. "The difference is amazing.

Michael's reading is so much better, and Jodene is relaxed and confident, and even goes up to the schoolhouse on her own to do her homework. I feel I'm cheating the kids by taking them back to mainstream school."

And the piano proved a sound investment, with all six children queuing to practise before the start of school each morning, justifying Roger's belief that "there are four Rs - the fourth one is rhythm".

But the children weren't the only ones to benefit. Phily Page, who taught Jodene science, had previously spent time helping in after-school classes. But, she says: "I had never had the chance to teach academic subjects within a relaxed school environment. I have learned a lot myself and I feel lucky to have had the chance to teach here."

Julie Lowe found the teaching different from her past experience. "Having the opportunity to provide quality education to just a few highly motivated children has been immensely satisfying and their progress has been swift and measurable," she says.

Above all, the children knew that during the day the schoolhouse was their space. They were often there out of school hours, reading, making

HOME EDUCATION IN THE NEWS

things or using the computer.

The inspectors seemed impressed when they visited us halfway through the year. Their only concern was how the children would adapt back into the mainstream, after having had such a vast amount of individual attention.

Julia Corrigan says any concerns she had before coming soon disappeared. "Natasha was already doing well in school, so my concern was that she might slip behind. But this has not happened. Her reading, maths, science - well, everything - has come on in leaps and bounds."

Rosemary and Roger Stephenson are happy with the way their children have developed, and plan to carry on educating their children at home when they leave Taransay. Rosemary says:

"Oliver and Felix have progressed well academically, but, more importantly, they have developed into happy, confident, enthusiastic learners. We want them to continue to have the freedom they have enjoyed here. Children have an innate desire to learn and do not need to spend six hours a day in school."

Our plans for Ciara's future schooling remain open. We feel confident that we could educate her at home. I am due to return to my teaching post in September 2001, so until then we plan to give it a go.

Teaching here has been a wonderful experience. And whether or not we are sending our children back to mainstream education, we have all become more aware of our children's learning.

The greatest thing this year has given us - and something every teacher would wish for - is the flexibility to be able to adapt to meet the individual needs of each child. And it has been an idyllic location to teach in. Where else could we look out of the window and see waves crashing on the beach, and the mountains beyond?

* MY SCHOOL DAY ON TARANSAY

On Mondays I have my mum and we do stories and poems. It's my favourite lesson because I like doing poems. On Tuesdays I have maths, which is quite fun, and on Wednesday we do spelling and grammar.

On Thursday we do French and on Friday it's reading and writing.

In the afternoons we do fun things like art, drama, music, sports and projects. In art we have been making a Christmas tree and decorations because we haven't got any shops to buy them from.

Sometimes we don't do school because the boat comes and there is a lot of work to be done unloading the food. I like school on Taransay because of the beautiful view.

Natasha Corrigan (pictured), 7 We start at 11am. Every day we have a different lesson. In the morning we have things like maths, English and French. In the afternoons we have things like art and drama. For morning school my favourite lessons are maths and French, taught by my mum. My best afternoon school is drama. It used to be taught by Ron, but he left. We used to throw water at the roof and say "there's a leaking roof". Now it's taught by Gwyneth and Ben Murphy.

I like school here better than at home because we have more time to play, and we do more fun things, like making rafts and dens.

Oliver Stephenson, 7 I get up at 8:30am and go to the steading (communal building) for breakfast. Afterwards I play the piano or do homework.

I don't start lessons until 10.30am, but I get mostly one-to-one teaching, so I concentrate harder. It's made a big difference to the way I learn. My favourite lesson is about evolution, with Pdraig Nallen. He is a very good teacher because he knows so much. School here is much easier than at home because the teachers have more time for me.

I read every night now, that's made a lot of difference to my writing and grammar. I've written some really good stories and poems. Maths has also improved. Everything has improved for me this year.

Jodene Prater, 11

(The Times Educational Supplement, 29th December 2000, (c) Times Supplements Limited)

Robert Krampf's Experiment of the Week!

Fluorescent Blues (and Yellows)

This week's experiment is one that I have been playing with for quite some time. It is something that I first noticed when I was a child in school. Way back then, we watched educational movies sometimes in class. There were no VCRs or video tapes. Instead, the film was on big reels and fed through a movie projector. When the movie was over, you would rewind the film back onto the reel, and as the reels were spinning quickly, you could see bands of yellow and blue light, like the spokes of a wheel on the reels. Since then, I have found several other ways to see these blue and yellow bands. For this demonstration, you will need:

a fluorescent light
aluminium foil

Tear off a piece of foil about 3 inches wide and as long as the roll of foil is wide. Fold this strip in half, with the shiny side out, so that it is 1.5 inches wide. Then fold it in half again, and again, so that you have a long, thin wand of foil. Place it on a hard surface and rub your finger over it to make it very smooth and shiny.

Hold the foil wand about a foot or more under the fluorescent bulb. Swing the wand back and forth very quickly, watching carefully. You should see bands of yellow and blue light reflecting on the foil. Not all fluorescent bulbs will do this, but most do. If the one you are trying does not work, try a different one.

Why do you see the bands of colour? It has to do with the way a fluorescent light works. Most fluorescent bulbs have had the air removed and replaced by a small amount of mercury vapour and argon gas. These gases are at very low pressure. The inside of the glass tube is coated with a white powder, called the phosphor.

When you turn on the light, a burst of electricity causes the gas mixture to give off blue and ultraviolet light. Your eye cannot see the ultraviolet light, but when it hits the phosphor powder, the powder glows brightly. If the electricity was constant, you would not see the bands of colour, but the electric current is alternating current. The electricity flows one way, stops, flows the other direction, stops and then back in the original direction again. The electricity in your house alternates back and forth 60 times each second. (50 times per second for some countries.) While the electricity is flowing, you see mostly the blue light from the argon gas. When the electricity stops, you see the residual glow from the phosphor powder, which is yellow. The colours change so quickly that your eye combines the two colours. If you mix blue and yellow paint, you get green. If you mix yellow and blue light, you get white. Yes, that is not a typo. White. Just like the white light you see from the fluorescent light bulb.

Get the first 100 experiments in book form! Send \$9.95, plus \$3 p&p to: Robert Krampf, 5 Willard Dr., Suite 610, St Augustine, FL 32086. For other experiments, e-mail krampf@aol.com

TEACHING AND LEARNING

From Home and At School

Teaching in schools meant accepting a large percentage of failure year after year. Learning is a life long process. Each child has a different rate of development with individual interests and needs. No one can be made to learn anything before they have a need for and a capacity for that understanding. Being unwell does not stop education from taking place. The awareness of changes in body function can be very educational. Increased knowledge of the malfunctioning of human bodies can encourage healthier living in the future.

Schools fail to educate most children. Many pupils who emerge after 11 years, even with their 10 grade A's show few signs of being educated. Industry rightly despairs of their raw material. They need workers who can take decisions, think flexibly and be prepared to change, and are emotionally literate. Many learning difficulties have been created by the teaching methods used in school. Schools indoctrinate and dictate what a child is exposed to. Schools do not teach their pupils efficiently. They do not consider the needs of any child. They deliver a curriculum designed for a non-existent average child.

In home education I do not look for short-term success. Real understanding takes time and patience. I value the person more than the product. Many children seen as successful at 7 -10 switch off through boredom and become non-readers, non-thinkers, alienated from learning. Some children (myself included) do not switch off. Instead, to escape boredom, they work harder and harder to achieve higher and higher meaningless grades. They become less sure of themselves, anxious, stressed, damaged.

I try to nurture an understanding of self and of the rest of the world. An understanding of one's motives for all interactions. I try to equip them to be inventive in solving problems and to initiate responses to the needs they see around them. I want them to have the ability to constructively criticise their society and to have a sense of responsibility which makes them look for ways to improve it. I want them to recognise that life is an incredible adventure to be tackled with energy, although periods of relative inactivity may be needed to recharge the emotional batteries.

At school if a child is 'successful' the school is praised. If a child is 'not successful' it is not the school's fault; the child failed to work hard enough. At home however if a child is 'successful' that child must be exceptionally bright. If a child is 'not successful' the child's parent has failed to educate them. Reports contain derogatory comments and unconfirmed judgements. Sometimes they contain very positive comments but these are also not always true! Every parent that home

educates wants the best for each child. Children are incredibly varied in their interests, activities, abilities and timings for achieving goals.

Many parents have passed responsibility for their child's education to the local LEA and subsequently discovered that the education provided was not efficient and not meeting their particular child's needs. They therefore withdraw them from school. The LEA then requests proof that the parent is doing what they have failed to achieve!

My view is this: Love your child, trust your child, be a good example. Show that you forgive yourself when you do not live up to expectations, and similarly forgive them. Enjoy the uniqueness of each and respect their individuality. Let children do the things that they want to do, that they value. Offer your child all knowledge but allow them to decide what to accept. Give them valid meaningful reasons for doing things. Discovering that exercise increases the number of red blood corpuscles did more for my desire to exercise than all the general comments about keeping fit or losing weight.

You can plan your teaching but you cannot plan learning. Sometimes things seem to be static for some time, then there is a leap in comprehension. Children can quickly lose interest in a topic if too much emphasis is placed on recording and written work.

LEAs do not check that schools are meeting the needs of each of its' pupils efficiently. Suppose they were threatened with home education if these needs were not being met! The schools would be virtually empty.

An educated person understands what he knows
knows when he does not know
knows how to find out what he wants/needs to know

An educated person knows what he does not want/need to know
and knows what he does not understand

Teaching is a very efficient way of learning for the one doing the teaching. To be taught by someone else is a very inefficient way of learning. If you try to impose your own structure on a child's activities they usually switch off. If the LEA really cared about the needs of a child, Flexi-schooling would be more widespread.

An educated person can make reasoned decisions. Real learning takes place when the learner actively works at understanding. But is doing work efficiently as much fun as muddling through?

Isobel Bogucki, West Sussex

Profile of a Council Member

My name is Garry Humphreys. I am the 'novice' on council having been appointed treasurer at the last AGM. I live with my wife and best friend of the last 20 years, Gill, and our son, Oliver, (aged 7 in July), in Lincolnshire.

We are fortunate in living in a beautiful part of the country, and some of my favourite times are spent with my family at the Gibraltar point nature reserve; bird-watching, beach-combing, pond-dipping, mushroom hunting, or just wandering. (Un?)fortunately, it is also a sparsely populated area, and when we made the decision to take Oliver out of school, we were hugely grateful to have EO there to provide support, and contacts.

One of the fears many people have when taking a child out of school is 'How will he make friends? How can he socialise?'. As an only child, we were particularly concerned about these aspects, but we need not have worried. Whilst our son had frequently come home from school expressing himself as 'bored and lonely', he now has a wide circle of friends of varied ages, and an active social life driven by his own interests. Boredom, I have discovered, is not a word often used by home educated children!

What made us take him out of school? Seeing a lively, energetic, questioning, four year-old degenerate into a lethargic, negative, unhappy five year-old. He had suffered from glue ear, and as such was quickly labelled inattentive by teachers whom he could not hear, and became an easy target for the school bullies. I should confess at this point to working in schools as a teacher and careers officer for five years after graduating. The least said about this the better. I suppose it gives me some insight into school culture from both sides of the fence, but why I ever took this career path is a mystery to me.....

I decided to take a more active role in EO for two reasons. Firstly, because the organisation was so helpful when we needed help and advice ourselves. It felt right to put something back. Secondly, because I feel that parents should be able to take a more active role in their children's education, and men, in particular, should be able to take a more active role in child nurturing throughout their children's lives. Men are often alienated from this role by working practices which are unreceptive to flexible conditions, (not that it's easy for women, either), and I take my role as a parent very seriously. Having a child has meant sharing in all aspects of his upbringing, not always easy when the baby changing facilities are in the ladies loo. Some shops are even alienating just by their names. Why can't mothercare be called parentcare?

Don't get me wrong. I'm not superdad. Sometimes walking the dogs seems a lot more attractive than cooking the dinner. I would like to think that I am 'there' for my

family when they need me though. Seeing a child as an individual, listening to his/her developing opinions. For me, these are the joys of parenthood.

What do I do for EO? As treasurer, it is basically to keep the books. On a day to day basis, this means keeping the bills paid, and making sure our income supports our outgoings. On a long term basis, it means looking at prospective areas of expense and income, and assessing their potential impact. One of the most enjoyable aspects of the role is that I am in contact with so many of the wonderful people who put so much time and energy into making EO work. EO IS its members, and the fact so many people take active roles, large and small, is an important part of the overall philosophy of the organisation. Whatever people's skills, there's always something that needs to be done that will suit. Have a look at the back of the newsletter, and see if there's a vacancy that sounds of interest to you.

What else is important to me? Vegetarianism. For me, respect for all sentient creatures is fundamental to the way we view ourselves, and our relationship with our planet. Peace and compassion go together, in our treatment of animals, of children, and of our fellows.

So there you go. I hope I'm more than a name in the back of the newsletter now. If you want to say hello at the next council meeting, or EO gathering, or talk about what it's like getting more involved with EO. I'll probably be found with the levellers on the headset, and a little boy kicking a ball at me, shouting, 'Viduuuuukkkkkaaaaaa'! People often see treasurers as more at home crunching numbers on the computer, but even we like to socialise occasionally. Now, where's that abacus?

"The mind is not a receptacle that can be mechanically filled. Nourishment is best absorbed by the organism that feeds with appetite..... Passively.....he sits at his desk while the teacher pumps and mechanically repumps information into his mental receptacle.....Ram it in, ram it in, children's heads are hollow. Ram it in, ram it in, still there's more to follow" (*Aldous Huxley*)

LIFE IN SPAIN

Life in Spain for a home educating family

This article comes as an attempt to provide those who are feeling that 'a place in the sun' must be the answer to everyone's dream, with the benefit of our experience as a family who moved out to Andalucia in March 1999.

We are a family who have allowed Samuel, our 10 year old son, the opportunity to direct his own learning opportunities throughout his life. Our lives and our focus over the past 15 years have been a conscious and sometimes unconscious preparation for the kind of life that we now lead caretaking an 8 hectare piece of land at 1300m in the mountains above Lanjaron, south of Granada. The process of coming to Spain took us 3 years of one or two visits a year before finding the place where we now live....La Chaparra, and this was with the help of a British couple, who have lived in Spain for 20 years, and operate a property search service under the name of Andalucia Househunters...I cannot recommend their services highly enough.

The legal position of home education

All children resident in Spain are required to attend an approved educational establishment from the age of 5-16 years of age. However, we have heard of families who are in the process of educating their children at home and are allowed to do so, provided the children prepare for, and sit the Spanish exams. Our response to this has been to carry on regardless. We have maintained our non-residency status, which means that in theory we have to leave Spain every 6 months, but as passports are no longer stamped within the EU, similarly we have carried on regardless. We are, nevertheless, quite clear about what our response would be should we be challengedwe would be prepared to take the matter to the European Court as a human rights' issue if there was no other option, in order to maintain Samuel's right to educate himself in the manner of his own choosing.

Buying property in Andalucia

The Alpujarras, the range of mountains in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas, has recently been put on the map by Chris Stewart's book, *Driving over Lemons*, with the result that this is becoming a sought-after area, and prices are rising. Unless you speak the language fluently, and have the opportunity to spend long periods of time in Spain undertaking the search and conveyancing yourself, I would suggest you carry out a general reconnoitre yourself to determine what area you feel an affinity with, and thereafter use an English-speaking agent to act

on your behalf. Our recommendation for this area would be Nicola Hamilton and Terry Batram of Andalucia Househunters, Casa de Nogal, 18412 Bubion, Granada, Spain Tel: (0034) 958 763 028 Fax: (0034) 958 763 365. The bottom price range now is about £12,000 for a few acres and a ruin.

Words of Warning

The single most important factor in this part of Spain is the availability of water on your own land, unless you are prepared to drive or ride up and down the mountain to obtain it. Water comes in two forms: a spring surfacing on your land and rights to irrigate water from the nearest river. Useful things to find out are: does the spring dry up in the summer? what irrigation water rights come with the property? what does that mean in real terms?...we have a legal entitlement to 12 hours of water per week, in reality we get 11/2 hours of water per week in the height of the summer. How far does that water have to travel? It's 5-6 km from the river to our land, and during the summer it takes that in hours to reach our land, which would mean that we would get no water at all in the summer if it wasn't for our neighbour who has a 36 hour allocation!

The other thing we have noticed since we have been here is that most people buying down the lower end of the market undercapitalise. They have enough money to buy the property, but do not think about providing themselves with any working capital. Even if you have a 'trade' behind you, it is not going to be possible to generate a living income and rebuild/renovate your property without exhausting yourself! Also if you move into an area where property prices are low, it generally indicates an area with a low per capita income... will the local population be able to afford to pay for your services/products? I would recommend some serious thinking about a realistic forecast of when you can rebuild, and when you can establish your 'trade' and then bring with you sufficient capital to cover you for your 'setting up' years. In terms of price/time calculations ...however much you think it will cost, treble it! and however long you think it will take, treble it!

Escaping

I have come across this word several times in letters to me, and I advise caution if you feel Spain holds **some panacea** for the ills that trouble you at home... it doesn't. We did a **great deal of preparation** and soul-searching before we made this move, and have **no regrets about our** decision but life goes on...we still have concerns about the **weather, only it's the sun** not the rain; our lives are still affected by local **politics, only it's the illegal** selling of water rights; we still have our concerns about **natural space being** developed, but in this case it's for tourism; and so on...It is easy to get over-enthusiastic about the fact that you can

probably get away with doing any building work without planning permission, and forget that this 'leniency' seeps into other areas of local authority politics that you might not be so keen on.

Having said all this, we have found that the opportunity to caretake 8 hectares of land in an inspirational setting at 1300m in the mountains, with breathtaking views over these mountains to the Mediterranean Sea (on a clear day you can see the Atlas Mountains in Morocco), has given us the chance to care for ourselves in a way that would never have been possible in the UK. We can walk for days in any direction over the mountains from our front door. We can bask on the sands by the Mediterranean Sea, and toboggan down some of the most beautiful snowy mountain slopes in Europe. We can go skinny dipping in our local river, and dry ourselves on baking hot rocks in the sun.

We have an opportunity to be in control of our basic living expenses...we can grow our own vegetables, we have our own solar power, we pay no water rates, the local rates are £16 per year, through developing other renewable energy resources, we can eliminate reliance on any other energy sources, such as gas. There is the possibility to continue to simplify one's life to the extent that it significantly reduces the enormous pressure around income generation.

It is the above two aspects that brought us to Spain, although we have also had the bonus of finding the Spanish in our area warm and friendly with a deep love and appreciation of children. They have a strong forthrightness too which does us good to be around.

Aspen, David and Samuel Edge, Apartada de Correos 19, 18420 Lanjaron, Granada, Spain Tel/Fax (0034) 958 34 70 53

Contact with other EO'ers

We are two mums. My name is Theresa and I have been home educating my son for five years. My friend, Rachel, has two boys; although we have different religious beliefs we both love letter-writing and many other things. I especially love travelling to different places in the UK, including the Isle of Wight.

We would both love to hear from other parents in the UK who are home-educating, or considering it. Also if anybody needs a temporary pet sitter or holiday cover as childsitter/housesitter, please get in touch. I would love to meet up with other families. We have both benefitted from the EO magazine and contact. I think the Home Educators' letters make the magazine extra interesting.

The inspector came to check my son's home "school work" recently. I was

nervous as I had put him off several times as they let me down badly when I tried to get him into school a year ago. However, he came and said my son had worked well in 2000 but needed more written work this year. This was despite the fact that my son and his friend had got themselves a car at 14, done it up to roadworthy condition and done lots of other practical things, like making furniture and a pool table. However, test papers from Smiths saved the day for last year. We have been advised to visit our local computer user centre for my son to do a project on his forthcoming football team holiday and also for him to write a letter for job. As they let me down with school, they may fund college for him a year early!

Theresa Mercer, 23 Northgreen, Bullbrook, Bracknell, Berks.

Rachael Baldock, 11 Rye Court, Haverhill, Suffolk

In response to Ross Mountney's letter about "The Dreaded One-Eyed Monster" the following two letters were received. Ross himself has sent up a follow-up letter, printed on the Letters Page.

In reply to "The Dreaded One-Eyed Monster":

As a child we had our first TV at the age of 7. My parents didn't limit my watching time. As we got new TVs my brother and I got the old TVs in our rooms. So for many years we had our own TVs in our own rooms, so we could watch what we wanted when we wanted.

When we got to our teens, we watched very little TV and neither of us bought TVs when we left home. My brother got one when he was about 38. I got one bought for the children four years ago. My eldest child is 16 this year. I didn't want a TV and was horrified at the thought of the children spending more than two hours a day watching it. I was emotionally blackmailed into getting a TV.

Having got one, I haven't limited their time watching it. When we first started watching, I was amazed at how important it made me feel. These people were working really hard to entertain ME! The children, aged 12, 8 and 3, watched it constantly until they found their way around programmes and found what kind they were likely to enjoy. The youngest was a baby and didn't watch it until Teletubbies came along.

Now the eldest hardly watches TV. She watches E.R., Eastenders and Hollyoaks, but doesn't mind missing them. My 11 year old just watches animal programmes, but discriminates between the best and worst and doesn't like Rolf Harris much. My 8 year old made a conscious decision to watch less, but she's the one most likely to watch the most TV. She falls for all the trailers and adverts and will watch videos until she knows them off by heart. My 5 year old watches CBBC mostly and Robot Wars and programmes about dinosaurs and

space. If he doesn't like a programme he goes and finds something more interesting to do.

My 8 year old is the only one whose thinking may have been damaged by watching too much. She seems the most gullible and believes most of what she is told by anyone except me. My two eldest daughters have never been to school. My 8 year old went to school at the age of 7 after spending six months making up her mind. My youngest boy started school shortly before he was 5.

I don't think TV is as harmful as school. It is something that has to be learned about and coped with. I think it's better if they can do that at home, rather than spending the first years away from home watching TV.

Fiona Chaff, Hillhead, Ollaberry, Shetland

Regarding the One-Eyed Monster

No sensible parent would offer their children chocolate biscuits and salad and expect them to make a good choice. Faced with salad or cooked greens, however, children (and adults) will make a good choice.

TV distorts choices in the same way that sugary food does. We had TV for five years, from the time our first-born was seven until our fifth child was one. I resented the TV more and more. I refused to have it in the dining room, so the meals I cooked were regarded as an imposition by the children because they had to leave the TV to eat. My husband would come home at 8pm, grab something to eat and then spend the whole evening in front of the TV. The 9 o'clock News was important, the half hour programme was relaxing, the 10 o'clock News was essential in case something had happened since 9, and by then we were too tired to do anything except watch another half hour of rubbish. If I wanted any adult company, I had to sit there with him, in silence.

One Christmas I was determined to read the children Dickens' Christmas Carol and each evening we'd go through the same routine. They would plead to watch more TV and skip the story but when we got upstairs they'd plead for the story anyway. I read it, a chapter at a time, because I was so keen for them to hear it, but I was too tired to do as good a job as I would have liked.

Nevertheless, by the next year they were still talking about The Christmas Carol and wanted to hear it again. By then we had moved and I had taken the opportunity to get rid of our rented TV. Amazingly, no-one challenged this unilateral decision. I discovered my husband's talent for reading. He read The Christmas Carol several years running and many other books. When our youngest was five I realized that she could enjoy an adult story. (We started with

Man and Master by Tolstoy, the only thing available at a house where we were guests). One year, just after Christmas, we started David Copperfield which took us until Easter. This is how Dickens' books were intended to be read: a chapter at a time with the whole family. These are treasured memories, all the more so as my husband died a year ago. He gave his family some wonderful times through reading.

A few months after we moved, the children were given a little puppet theatre and they spent hours making up stories for it. David remarked then, "You know, I'm glad we don't have a TV". Another time when I was delivering our third daughter to her piano lesson, the teacher asked if we had TV. She had guessed we hadn't because "the only other child I teach who regularly practices doesn't have TV".

Ross, I would wholeheartedly recommend getting rid of it. If you think this would be imposing your will on your children, ask yourself whose decision it was to have it in the first place. No young baby would choose to watch a TV in preference to looking at the responsive face of a parent. It's a rare home that acquires a TV as a result of a child's choice. Since you are making the choice, you can just as well choose not to have one.

I do know one family where they would all study the "TV Times" together at the beginning of the week, highlight their (limited) choices and watch only those programmes and no more. While the three year old watched "Playschool", the older child would leave the room. This worked for their family, but I personally could no more live like that than fly. They only had two children. If you have many, who is going to supervise the older children's choices while you are upstairs settling the baby and your spouse is elsewhere?

Our children are now adults, ranging in age from 25 to 35 years old. Two of them are without TV. The youngest is sharing a flat, so I don't know whether she will have a TV when she has her own home. It always surprised me how rarely they complained of not having TV. I think they were too busy doing interesting things to notice. If you can get rid of it, I'm sure you'll notice a big improvement in your family life.

Peggy Thomas, 10 Sanders Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8NN

The following article is the second part of "Resurrecting Rituals" which appeared in the last newsletter.

Animal Bread

Recipe

300g strong white flour (organic preferably)
200g rye flour
1 tsp sugar
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp (level) dried yeast or 1 sachet
3 tbsp olive or sunflower oil
1 tbsp molasses/black treacle (optional)
warm water

1. Sprinkle yeast on to 300 ml WARM water, stir in sugar. Cover and leave in warm place for about 5-10 mins until frothy.
2. Combine flours, salt, molasses and oil in large bowl. Make a well.
3. Pour yeast into well, beat in some of flour until it is too thick to stir. Add more warm water until mixture has formed a fairly stiff dough.
4. Knead, either in the bowl or on a lightly floured surface for 5-8 mins, until springy (kneading is pulling and folding basically)
5. Return to bowl, cover with a tea towel and leave to rise in warm place (near radiator, airing cupboard etc) for 1-2 hours or until doubled in size.
6. Knock back dough (hit it until it sinks) and knead for 3-5 mins.
7. Heat oven to 200 C/375 F approx. (our rayburn varies and it doesn't seem to matter much).
8. Divide dough into about 8 pieces and form into balls.

Hedgehog

Pull one side into a snout shape. Push in nuts or seeds for eyes. Pinch 'spikes' all over body. Leave to rise on oiled tray for 15 mins

Turtle

Form five 'sausage' shapes from a piece of dough, one fatter than the others. Press ends firmly onto a ball of dough. Turn over. Push seeds into fattest 'sausage' as eyes. Using a sharp knife, cut a pattern across the back about 1/2cm deep. Leave to rise on oiled tray for 15 mins

Snake

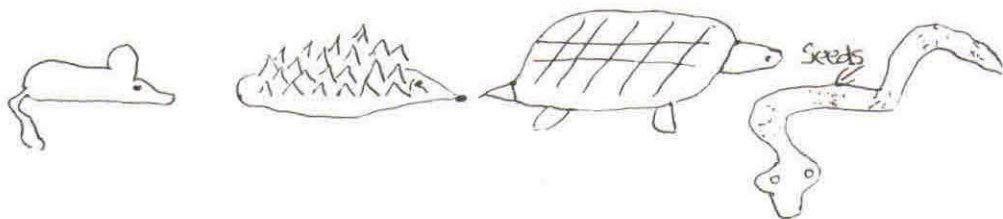
Fairly obvious! Use seeds/nuts for eyes. Bend to shape. Score shallow pattern in body or use seeds. Leave to rise on oiled tray for 15 mins

Mouse

Form dough to shape. Roll out a tail with your hands, press on firmly. Pinch dough to form large ears, add seeds for eyes. Leave to rise on oiled tray for 15 mins

9. Bake in the oven for about 20 mins until they sound hollow when tapped. Leave to cool on a wire rack.

10. Eat as part of a celebration of Spring!



Kirsten Freiesleben, Worlington, Devon

The following two letters offer information which may be of interest to readers. The first one is from the Little Arthur Independent School:

International GCSE Natural Economy

One course that may well be of interest to home-educators with children approaching GCSE age is the Cambridge Board IGCSE in Natural Economy (Ecology). This is an exam-based course so no problem with course work and getting this assessed by a school or college.

The syllabus will be of interest to any family interested in the natural world, ecology, conservation and sustainability. The course was initially conceived of as educating children to be more world-aware, more understanding of the inter-relatedness of life on this planet and the need to grasp the complexity of many global problems. It covers all the major issues like acid rain, greenhouse effect, over-fishing, destruction of rainforests etc. and provokes students to question

both the way we live and how we can move to a more sustainable, less exploitative life-style - the idea of thinking globally but acting locally.

Many home-educators are worried about whether their children have covered sufficient of Key Stage 3 (11-14) work to enable them to start GCSE courses. Natural Economy has the advantage of being a 'stand alone' syllabus in that it does not depend on prior learning in any particular discipline. Its coverage is wide - geography, earth science, anthropology and biology - but it is not over-technical. There are many excellent videos, widely available, that cover many aspects of the syllabus and all areas of the country offer opportunities for local investigations.

Our first small group of home-educated students to take the exams this November all found the course stimulating and all achieved well - grades A* and A's.

Details of the syllabus and past exam papers can be obtained direct from the Cambridge Board, 1 Hills Road, Cambridge. Alternatively, we offer home-educator packs in the subject (price £100) along with our other small range of packs for IGCSE and Key Stage 3 Maths, Science and English.

For pack details, please send an A5 SAE to:

Little Arthur Independent School, St Martin's, Isles of Scilly, Cornwall, TR25 0QL Tel 01720 422457 Headteacher: J A Morton

The second is from a home-educating family with information about a music school:

Beauchamp Music Group

Beauchamp House is a period country house set in beautiful countryside about 3 miles west of the city of Gloucester, the family home of Alan and Caroline Lumsden, two professional musicians of wide teaching experience. During term time, the complex is used by Beauchamp Music Group, with lessons taking place in the barn which has been converted into a concert hall with kitchens, toilets and showers, and also in the dairy which has been converted into rehearsal rooms. Beauchamp has a wonderful family atmosphere, having originated in the Lumsdens' front room, with all four of their own children attending, and has gradually grown and sprawled further into the grounds. Children and adults alike sit together in orchestras, choirs, percussion and recorder groups, theory sessions and wind bands, with the toddlers starting percussion and singing from

the age of two. Individual lessons are available during the week, and home-schoolers can be found taking advantage of 'school' hours for their tuition time. During the breaks children can climb trees, play on the climbing frame, play football on the field or table tennis in the "goat shed". The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed, with very informal concerts where pupils come along and play for pleasure, with barn dances, bar-b-cues and fetes. For those who wish to take exams, there is an internal exam system with a syllabus carefully worked out to run alongside group work, using an examiner that the students know in a familiar environment.

In the holiday weeks, we run music and drama courses with students coming from as far away as France, Belgium, Italy, Spain and Australia. Again, children and adults will be found working alongside one another, although two courses are specifically for adults only - a chamber music course, and early music. Other courses include orchestras for all levels from beginner to diploma, a jazz and big band course, Grade 5 theory, and a choir weekend. There is a percussion course for players, whether advanced or beginner, and a Music Theatre week for those who enjoy singing and acting.

Accommodation is camping in your own tent on the field, with welfare staff staying on duty throughout the night. There are outings organised to places such as the Imax Cinema in Bristol, the National Birds of Prey Centre, and canoeing in the Forest of Dean. For advanced string players, there is a course during the autumn half term held in southwest France, in self-contained gites, in another property owned by the Lumsdens.

If anyone is interested in further details on the Beauchamp Music Group, please phone 01452 750382. For course details, please phone/fax 01452 312661 or email mouflon@breathemail.net
Beauchamp House, Churcham, Gloucester, Glos. GL2 8AA

Congratulations to Danny Ashley-Walker and Tara on the birth of Jordan Lee on 1st May, weighing in at a healthy 7 lbs 7 ozs.
Best wishes from Mum (Jude).

Learning Centres - The Schools of the Future

We have been home-educating for just over a year now - Louise is 12. Jo (9) chose to return to school after six months because she missed the company and stimulation that she felt school had to offer. However, she is now beginning to change her mind. She isn't keen on school, but neither does she want to be at home all the time. We live in a very quiet area of Cornwall, with very few EO families close by. The Cornish branch of EO (CHEERSS) is very supportive and runs many worthwhile workshops and outings but events are held all over Cornwall and it is not always economical to travel the distances involved. Also, many of the children are much younger and have different interests and needs to older ones like mine.

Personally, I don't feel that home-educating is the ideal solution. In larger communities I'm sure it works well with support and companionship available. I think older children need the contact and interaction with their peers, particularly for 'bouncing off' ideas with each other (mum and dad are OK, but they also need their own age group too). However, as state education is in its death throes (my personal opinion) that isn't an option, particularly at senior level - even a LEA inspector expressed reservation about large secondary schools. So what choice do we have?

My dream - and I hope it's a dream shared by other like-minded parents - is to have a small learning centre, offering workshops, classes, learning opportunities, perhaps alongside adults. There are a lot of disillusioned teachers out there who have such a lot to offer; there are also people, not connected with teaching per se, who have skills to share; there are a lot of retired people with time/experience/energy to offer; and last but not least, there are parents who have the commitment, incentive, and a desire to do whatever it takes to give their children the opportunities to grow into mature, thoughtful, responsible adults. I believe the future lies in small communities of people, sharing and learning together. Is there anybody out there, particularly in the South West, who feels the same way as we do and would like to do something positive? I'm sure there are also parents and children from state education who would like a choice - perhaps home education is not for them but something smaller, more flexible might interest them.

Linda Cutler, 01566 781694 email: arf.linda@btinternet.com

Starting a Small School

I recently joined Education Otherwise with the full intention of taking my children out of mainstream schooling and to home-educate them. For many years now, my son, in particular, has suffered from bullying at school, both from other children and teachers. Mostly verbal bullying, undermining him and knocking his confidence to reduce him to a depressed, miserable child with very low self-esteem.

He is normally a bright, clever and loving child and I have been very saddened to see him reduced to the child he is today. I sit in the car, waiting anxiously to see if he will come out of school with his head lowered, spirits dampened by bullying teachers, telling him his work is rubbish and that he is stupid, or by so-called friends. Or whether he will have had a "better day" today.

When I spoke to my husband about home schooling, he was very reluctant. "What about the social side?" he asked. "Taking him out will make him different and even more of an outcast." He went on to explain that he was unhappy with the idea of me schooling the children, and in particular, my son, at home. So I started to look for an alternative. There must be better schools that make learning fun. However, I have now spent several months looking for this alternative type of schooling, to no avail. Bedfordshire certainly seems to be lacking in this type of education.

So, taking my husband's advice to "do something about it if you are unhappy with the system", I have decided to set up a small school of my own. Children will be taught in a happy, relaxed atmosphere, with a flexible approach to learning. I would like the school to go up to the age of 16, as many other 'alternative' type schools finish at age 11, and then what do you do? The idea of putting them back into mainstream schooling just isn't an option.

I expect it to be hard work, encountering many difficulties in the first few years – but none as difficult as the problems I have had to deal with over the past 4 years, dealing with the heartache and pain. I would like to know if anyone else in the Bedfordshire area feels the same as I do, and would like to become involved in this exciting project. I will no doubt be spending many hours drawing up my plans for the school and would be very pleased to hear from anyone else who has either done this, or has any information that would be helpful.

I think Education Otherwise is a wonderful organisation – keep up the good work!

*Maxine Hayes, Holly Villa, 31 Princes Street, Toddington, Beds LU5 6ED
mhayes@bedsparish.fsnet.co.uk*

The following is a poem from an EO parent who has privately published two books of children's poems, some rude, some disgusting, which she says the children love!

School Talk

"Get her in the system, that's the only way she'll be
Educated properly, and get good grades, you see.
She has to have uniform, a blazer and tie,
Black skirts or trouser, sports gear,
Bag and bus pass you must buy.
In school your child's bombarded
With the things she needs to know,
History, maths, geography,
All help her mind to grow.
Well, yes, she will be bullied, but no need to get distressed,
That's quite the norm in schools today,
As you may well have guessed.
The punch-ups at the bus stop?
Well, that's nowt to do with us.
If she comes to you complaining,
Don't come in and make a fuss!
Good results are what we aim for,
And we do our very best
To mould and shape and work them
So they do well in their tests.
The reputation of our school
Is topmost of our list,
The children are our least concern,
If you can get my gist.
You say you're having second thoughts,
And don't think she will cope -
You haven't heard of Education Otherwise, I hope?"

*Jan Randall, 28 Jarrett Ave., Wainscott, Nr Rochester, Kent ME2 4NL Tel
01634 725459*

WANTED: NEWSLETTER EDITOR

I will be standing down shortly as Newsletter Co-ordinator, and the editorial team is looking for a replacement. If you are interested in finding out more about the job, please contact me on 01258 880355

Christine Adey

Educating Archie- Midsummer madness with the Inspector... by



Well here we all are round the kitchen table again - shall we all hold hands... tune in?

Archie has sorted out his options haven't you, dear?

(gone PUNK but mortified nevertheless)

Yeah - like - I might do GCSEs, or I might not. See how I feel.

is that the time??

do take notes Inspector if you'd like

NO IT IS NOT!

How much longer must I endure this madness?

x	0	x
x	x	x
x	x	0

INSPECTOR! Please don't just go off like that - PLEASE -

DISINFECT YOUR FEET!

14/2001

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.

LEA Home Visits

My local contact, Julie Ridley, was brilliant. She arrived on a bicycle to give a normal feeling to the unknown territory of a home "Ofsted". Her relaxed but firm attitude to the legal position on questions asked was most helpful to both parties. Best of all, my son had a friend on the sofa with him while his mother waffled on about Norwegian kindergartens. Thanks, Julie.
Susan Flindt, 19 Beech Hurst Close, Manchester M19

The GCSE/IGCSE Nightmare

We live in southeast Cornwall and have been a home-educating family for nearly four years. We are now nearing the run-up to the dreaded GCSE's. I would greatly appreciate any help or info about how to cope with the minefield. We have found it impossible to find an exam centre willing to accept a private candidate and our choice of exams, not theirs. Coursework would appear to be another stumbling block. Why should we have to join a school or college just to take exams?

At the moment we are turning towards the IGCSE exams instead and travelling to Cambridge to sit them. Has anyone any experience of this, the IGCSE's or the ICE certificate and then AICE's. Are they accepted everywhere? Have you found any useful web-sites, books or courses (distance learning or otherwise)

that helped with a particular exam? Please let me know. All info greatly appreciated.
Geraldine Hazel, Keval Mill, Hossenford, Cornwall Email GeraldineHazel@aol.com

Singing the Praises of EO!

I'd like to sing the praises of EO! When I joined in 1994, my son was two and I wondered if I was crazy contemplating home education as a single parent. I went to an EO camp that year and it was an eye-opener for me. I was inspired by the beautiful children of all ages and the friendly, relaxed adults. Probably for the first time in my life I saw adults being real with children and I loved how those children were as a result. I then joined the Sheffield EO group and during the three years I was part of that group it became the centre of my life - fantastic adults and children. I had no doubts then that home education was the best thing for my son. I even learnt to enjoy playing rounders as well as all the other things we did. For various reasons my son spent two years at school here in Wales, but he's been home-educated again for a year now and it's unlikely he'll go back to school. We've met some new EO people here in Gwynedd and there's a great new group just started. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank all the people I've met through EO for their support and friendship, the people who organise camps, the people who run the organisation. Thank you!
Sue Frisby (nee Backhouse) Bryn Foulk, Rhiw, Pwllheli, Gwynedd

...And more praise!

As parents of a home-schooled child we are so grateful for the support that EO has given us.

Dayle has always been a shy, sensitive boy who, throughout school, was virtually ignored except for school reports where they always stated that Dayle lacked confidence.

In 1995 when our son went into High School things came to a head. Being split from his previous classmates and placed in a class of 32 strangers, Dayle struggled to fit in. We tried to support our son and had many meetings with teachers but after two years of very little progress we decided to take matters into our own hands and teach Dayle at home.

At first we were quite strict in our routine. We would sit for hours studying with him, mainly because we were scared that the authorities would come along and decide that we were not doing what we should and demand that our son be made to go back to school. As time went on we joined EO and realised that we were doing fine. We relaxed into a more flexible timetable, taking Dayle to art galleries, museums and places of interest. We went hiking, swimming, bird-watching, beachcombing; we learnt so much more than by sitting with books for hours on end.

Dayle has grown in confidence and now attends college and is fitting in well. Exams are starting soon and his tutors have said that Dayle should have no trouble in passing them. I feel that we have all benefitted from homeschooling. We are a close family and it has been a pleasure not a chore teaching in a relaxed atmosphere. Our son is doing well now and loves to learn, he has many hobbies and wants to improve himself more. He studies things which interest him outside of college.

We would like to say a big thank you to EO and its members. It is not always easy when you take your child out of school but in our experience it was the best thing we could have done.
*Carol, Michael and Dayle Mitchell, 69
Kirtan Park Terrace, North Shields,
Tyne & Wear*

Request for Recipes

I am currently beginning a friendly campaign to get children, and adults, to eat more healthily. I am compiling a recipe book giving recipes which contain no sugar. Honey is acceptable. I want to show kids that they can still eat yummy cakes, biscuits and puddings but which are healthy. It always surprises me how many people want to give their children a treat by giving them sweets or cakes, which in the long run can harm them.

Sugar is not only bad for their teeth, but depletes the body of vital minerals and creates terrific mood swings if consumed in great quantities. Would you knowingly give them a tablet containing such a chemical? Probably not, but it's OK disguised in sweets and cakes. So, if anyone feels like sharing a favourite recipe with me, I will let them have a copy of the book, if I get it printed.

*Linda Cutler, Canworthy Villa,
Canworthy Water, Launceston,
Cornwall PL15 8UW Email
arf.linda@btinternet.com*

Educational CD Roms

I have two boys aged 4 and 6. They love the Dorling Kindersley CD Roms. The best are *Reading and Counting for 3-5's*, and *Writing and Calculating for 5-7's*. I have a very old computer with little memory. These CD Roms do not have to be installed before use. They will sit for hours laughing at the amazing animations and sounds. I recommend them to anyone.
*J M Atkinson, 40 Mendip Crescent,
Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex*

The Dreaded One-Eyed Monster

I would like to thank all those people who so kindly responded to my piece about "The Dreaded One-Eyed Monster" in the March newsletter, offering their advice and support. I do so appreciate contact from other Home-Eds, and their kindness in taking the time to write.

It would be great to meet everyone - I can see we could get some great debates going!
Several people advocated getting rid of the TV which I would personally like to do. But I believe in everyone's right to choose and for the moment the rest of the family's choice is to keep it! I'm outvoted! I think the answer, as some recommended, is to keep talking about the influence of it and keep TV in its place in our and diverse lives!!! Home educating is all about management really, isn't it? Thank you once again.
Ross Mountney, Rose Cottage, Sea Lane, Old Leake, Boston, Lincs

Seeking Contact

We are looking for HE contacts in the Calne, Wilts. Area. My daughter, Bridget, is 7 and has never been to school. We have recently moved here and she misses her old HE friends. She loves animals and we have lots of pets. Anyone home-educating who would like to meet up would be welcome.
Heather and Tony Brothers, 55 North End, Calne, Wilts.

We have just removed our two children, aged 10 and 8, from school and are home educating with the help of a tutor, 8 hours a week. We would like to hear from anybody else in a similar position or with a view to sharing ideas, advice, opinions etc.

*Susan Tyrer, 8 Eccleston Gardens,
Eccleston, St Helens, Merseyside, Tel
01744 731795*

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.

EO Car Stickers

Help us spread the word, please send 50p and a reasonably large new SAE for your sticker to **Ali Willer, 28 Cozens-Hardy Road, Sprowston, Norwich NR7 8QF**

RESOURCES BOOKLET

50 page booklet giving information on different curriculum materials aimed at 5-11 year olds 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, Hadlow House, 2, Hadlow Road, Sidcup, Kent DA14 4AF**.

Free electronic rtf. copy, e-mail me at henrietta.turnbull@ntlworld.com

E.O. T-SHIRTS

Good quality "Fruit of the Loom" white cotton T-shirts printed with the E.O. logo (red triangle kicked open by running children)

£5 adult (M, L, XL)

£3.50 (3/4, 5/6, 7/8, 9/11, 12/13)

P&P : up to 6 shirts £2, 7 or more £4

Cheques payable to "E.O. Trading LTD"

Pat Connor, 2 Whitegates Lane, Reading, Berks RG6 1ED

Resources for older children

Information on curriculum materials for later years. For a copy please send 50p coin to cover printing and postage with your address to: **G Dove, 392 Lodge Ave, Dagenham RM9 4QU**.

For a free copy send an e-mail to gillchris@willrich.fsnet.co.uk and it will be returned to you by e-mail.

Future Gatherings

We are looking at new venues/ ideas for future EO gatherings. One possibility put forward is Butlins. As this would be quite different from the normal format, we would like to know what you think about it. Do you think it's a good idea? Have you other ideas of what you would like an EO gathering to be? Let us know.

Telephone Beverley 01772 734314, or Garry 01205 871399.

LOCAL CONTACT UPDATE

Resignations

SW London Julia Noble
Lancashire Debbie Bentley
S Manchester Gill Wilson (from Sept.)

New Acting Local Contacts

Lincolnshire North Stella Howden
Channel Islands Katy Barrett
North Manchester - Tameside Christine Caton-Greasley
Powys (Marcia Hughes is in process of moving, hopes to then cover the area)

Areas needing a Local Contact

A new area: North Kent/Outer SE London

Carmarthanshire, Cheshire, Dorset, Grampian, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Isle of Man, South Lincolnshire, London East, London SW, Lancashire, North Manchester, Strathclyde, Tayside,

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

EDUCATION OTHERWISE BUSINESS

Y.H.A. GROUP MEMBERSHIP

E.O. is currently a group member of the Youth Hostel Association in England and Wales. It is possible for groups of five or more E.O. members to use the membership card at most hostels for a charge of £2 per group which will go towards offsetting the cost of the card. Only one group may use the card at any one time.

If you are interested contact Pat Connor, 2 Whitegates Lane, Earley, Reading, Berks. RG6 1ED; Tel: 0118 9662 123.

Ciwersyll Dewi Sant

6th - 16th September

Pencarnan Farm

St Davids Pembrokeshire

Lovely coastal site, good facilities, many activities, communal spaces and bonfires.

Some static caravan available.

For full details of costs and what's on offer please send

SAE to:

Yvette Hartley, 17 Maes Ingli,

Newport, Pembrokeshire

SA42 0TE

0845 458 9251

yeh@onetel.net.uk

PEAK CAMP 2000

30th June - 9th July

The camp is open to all EO members and to those interested in home-education.

Two large fields for tents and touring caravans; showers, toilets, wash basins and small shop.

Charges: per person per night

Adults: 1.20

Children: 0.80

Cars: 1.00

Caravans: 4.50

There is no need to book - families can make their stay as long or as short as they wish. Fees are payable direct to the farm, not to EO. In the past walks, cycle rides, rock climbing, circle dancing and shared meals have been popular activities. There is always plenty of time to share experiences of home educating with other families, and for families and children to socialise freely.

The site is Barracks Farm, Beresford Dale, near Hartington (grid reference 123 586).

Hartington is approached by the A515 either from the north, via Buxton, or from the south, via Ashbourne

From the A515 take the B5054, signed to **Hartington**. Follow the road through and out of the village.

Just under two miles out of the village, and shortly after entering Staffordshire, turn left, following signs for **Beresford Dale**.

Keep following Beresford Dale signs until you near the end of the road; Barracks Farm is on the left.

Gary Podmore, 52 Rupert Road,
Sheffield S7 1RP. 0114 2585702

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 *By post only please.*

BATH

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

Contact: Louise Jensen 01225 840735

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

Heros Club Holyport Maidenhead. Mondays 10-3. Regular sports, dancing, pottery crafts and cooking workshops. £25 per month membership or £10 per family per day

Contact: Dawn Dingwall 01628 783107

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
birminghameo@lineone.net

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

BRISTOL

Tuesdays: trampolining with coach am followed by workshops pm Totterdown YMCA

Fridays: Ice-skating am

Contact: Kathy Nott 0117 966 8265

Thursdays: meeting at St Pauls Adventure Playground 1-3 pm
(all above term time only)

Contact: Carla Macgregor 9354389

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

Contact: Gill Wilson 0161 442 8723 for North Cheshire/Stockport

Meetings 1st Weds of month for crafts, games and activities.

Contact: Carrie 01270 875 633

Sue 01270 883 978 for South Cheshire

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 info:

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

DERBYSHIRE

Chesterfield - new group meets every Wednesday morning for socialising, support and activities.

Contact: Karen Bradley 01246 865532

Kaz Undrell 01246 205463

Yvonne Witham 01246 555645

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 :

Fortnightly at Crediton Family Centre.

Contact: *Ashen 01363 775478*

Jo Borthen 01392 679499

Also fortnightly in Exeter

Contact: *Becca 01404 549479*

Jo 01392 679499

Brixham regular meetings

Contact: *Sally Fisher-Smith 01803 856 862*

Totnes EARTH group meetings & outings

Totnes area every Monday.

Contact: *Bridget 01548 550917*

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 Lethe Grove, Colchester, Essex CO2 8RG

Also monthly meetings in Chelmsford and weekly meetings in Southend.

Essex Epicycle newsletter gives details of all groups, events and meetings in Essex.

Contact: *Corinne 07802 630693*

epicycle@wavy.org

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 023 92 640242*

ACTIVEO meet 3 times a week within 25 mile radius of Petersfield. All welcome.

Contact: *01428 712394 activeo@37.com*

Christian Group: Fareham, Gosport area

Contact: *Gayle Joubert 023 92 553842*

email gaylie@btinternet.com

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

Activities and support, all welcome Solent Area EO (S.A.E.O.) St. Faith's Church Hall, The Pallant, Havant, alternate Mondays 1-5pm

Contact: *Bernadette Bury 01243 264837*

Julie Chappell 023 92 640242

Val Shrubbs 01243 641221

ISLE OF WIGHT

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

Contact: *Jude 01983 531680*

Jackie 01983 530378

Isle of Wight Learning Zone has workshops, social events and regular newsletter.

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 Cotts, Borstal Rochester, ME1 3TN.*

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

Contact: *Claire Wade 0181 460 7347*

claire@wadefamily99.freereserve.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

Fortnightly play sessions at Botany Bay, Chorley, Junction 8 M61

Contact: Jacqueline 01204 361072

LEICESTERSHIRE

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

Contact: Lise 0116 242 5802

LINCOLNSHIRE

Every Monday 1pm onwards.

Meeting in Cleethorpes in church hall.

Contact: Caroline: 01472 690738

Boston area group. Regular meeting/outings

Contact: Gill 01205 871399

Ross 01205 870679

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

Harrow, every other Friday plus swimming

Thursdays and other stuff.

Contact: Sue Foote 0771 802 2677

Vivienne Sharkey TIMSHARKEY@aol.com

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

Contact: Naomi & Stephen 0208 567 7589

Lewisham EO meeting: All ages. Thursdays weekly.

Contact: Clare Troy 8333 9455

MANCHESTER

Monthly formal art lessons at Stockport Art Gallery £1.50 per participant.

Monthly meeting at Stockport Library (contribution towards room rental)

E-mail Young Writers Group - contact Ed Wilson for details wilson-net@lineone.net

MADCOW news-sheet. Free. Send SAEs to Gill Wilson, 20 Brook Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, SK4 5BZ. Or get the newsletter via e-mail by sending a request via the MADCOW website at

www.wilson-net@freemove.co.uk/madcow_index.htm

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

Contact: Karen 01204 573136

Manley Park Autonomous Ed Group meeting wednesday once a month, to be arranged.

Contact: Julie 0161 860 7589

Also monthly reading group for over 10's

Contact: Julie 0161 860 7589

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 01379 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.

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 Plested 01865 514973

SCOTLAND

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

Contact: Rhona Cathcart 01294 273644

Contact: Vivien 01563 537428

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

Contact: Vivien 01563 537428

Highlands EO Meeting: everyone welcome at the Highland Museum of Childhood in Strathpeffer, Tues 26th June 10.30 (only 75p admission) Picnic area and cafe. Lifts and/or accommodation available.

Contact: Rebecca Kail 01667 404676

Beverley Addams the.addams@virgin.net

Regular meetings planned every couple of months, suggestions welcome. Possible non-competitive sports day later in the summer

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: Caroline 01270 875 633

Sue 01270 88 39 78 Suedavies@tesco.net

SUFFOLK

Regular meetings every third Friday, either at Wetherden or Stowupland village hall. Parents and all ages of children welcome for socialising and focused activities, 10.30-2.30 or so. £2.50 per family, shared buffet lunch.

Contact: Sarah Guthrie 01379 783 678.

See also: details of new satellite groups listed under Norfolk/Suffolk border areas.

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)

1st and 3rd Thursdays - Board games for all ages in Dorking

Contact: Lindsay Wheeler 01306 501229

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

Eastbourne Home Educators Club alternate Fridays, 9.30 - 11.30 Shinewater Community Centre. 75p per child

Contact: Angelique 01323 509702

TYNESIDE

Monthly meetings, visits, activities etc

Contact: Linda Robertson 01911 4567007

For regular outings and monthly get-togethers

Contact: Lilian Devitt 0191 2809150

WALES

Cardigan area Social meetings and outings on Mondays.

Contact: Yvette Hartley 0845 458 9251

Swansea monthly meetings in Llanelli/ area.

Contact: Sue Haggerty 01269 861902

NE Wales / Borders - weekly gym/

trampoline in Wrexham (Thurs), various meetings in Oswestry, W.Cheshire/NE Wales Also sports and ice skating at Deeside Leisure Centre.

Contact: Genny Bove 01978 757489

49 Westminster Rd, Moss Valley, Wrexham L1.11 6DH £2 for a year's listing

eo@7times7.freeserve.co.uk

Glamorganshire - Regular group meetings planned once or twice a month.

Contact: *Celia McDonough 01633 669104*

South Wales - Regular group activities and newsletter £3 pa. Weekly ice-skating.

Contact: *Dawn 01495 303468*

Beverley 02920 797628

Cathy 02920 460203

Gwynedd - Mondays swimming at Bangor

Contact: *Lousia 01248 361254*

Friday swimming at Porth Madog

Weekly meetings at Tremadog Thursdays.

Contact: *Jo Tuffnell 01766 512330*

Pembrokeshire EO swim and sauna:

every last Saturday of the month. 12pm Haverfordwest pool. Family ticket (2+2) £4.95

Contact: *Yvette 0845 458 9251*

WARWICKSHIRE

Coventry and Warwickshire area meetings usually 2 Thursdays a month. Activity meetings at Binley Woods and variety of outings

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.freeseve.co.uk

Joy Beasley 0121 585 6450

JoyBeasley@b-bunch.freeseve.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 Titcher 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-Wollny 01904 750324*

e-mail sarah@wollny.org.uk

YORKSHIRE - EAST

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

Contact: *Alison Houston 01405 769902*

YORKSHIRE - SOUTH

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

Free entry, small contribution for materials only. Off London Rd/Abbeydale Rd. Turn up or

Contact: *Annette 0114 2583502*

Fiona 0114 22751142

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: *Tracey 01484 317176*

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 send corrections and additions to the Regional Diary by post only: Martine Archer, 3, Brookfield, Hampsthwaite, Harrogate HG3 2EF

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Admission free.

Contact: Rick & Andrea Williams,
38 Bland Road, Prestwich,
Manchester M25 9WG 0161 798 8189
rawilliams@telinco.co.uk

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ADVERTISEMENTS

Sports Event

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**Cost: adults £4, child £2,
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Entrance by pre-booking ONLY

Contact: Jane 01484 645034

janewildwood@hotmail.com

For further information:

Eva 01535 274520 or Trisha 01535 610495

Membership Support

Isobel Bogucki, Christine Adey,

LEAP (LEA Positive Contact)

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

Communications

Janet Wilkinson, Jill Fisher, Priscilla Park

Weir, Richard Eaton, Penny Clarke

Scottish Group Ann Samuel Till, Liz

Alderdyce, Lucy McAuley, Anne Wade, Jill

Fisher, Gwen Baldock

Information for Other Organisations: Penny

Clarke, Jill Fisher, Martina Macklin

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).

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

Garry Humphreys, Lynda Hitchman, Celia McDonagh, Ann Samuel Till, Ken Grindlay

Enquiries

Gary Podmore, Pam Bellinger, Janet Wilkinson, Edwina Theunissen

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, Pam Bellinger

DfEE Team

Anne Wade, Jill Fisher, Gwen Baldock, Ann Samuel Till

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.freeseve.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!)

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

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Council Members

If you have a problem contact your nearest council member:

Geraldine Adams (North London) 0207 2634922

Christine Adey (Dorset) 01258 880355

Jude Ashley-Walker (Isle of Wight) 01983 531680

Pam Bellinger (Leicester) 0116 282 7929

Isobel Bogucki (West Sussex) 01403 261178

Penny Clarke (West Midlands) 01922 745465

pennyclarke@blueyonder.co.uk

Lynda Hitchman (Berkshire) 0118 961 4466

Jill Fisher (Leics) 0116 2128120

Garry Humphreys (Lincs) 01205 871 399

Gary Podmore (Yorks) 0114 2585702

Eleanor Stapleton (London-North) 0208 8841368

Jenny Stevens (West Sussex) 01243 783 469

Anne Wade (London Middx) 0208 904 7155

Dawn Waddington (Bucks) 01908 569380

Janet Wilkinson (Cambs) 01733 554436

Beverley Young (Lancs) 01772 734314.

beverley.young@btinternet.com

Ann Samuel Till (Scotland) 0131 556 6271

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

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Publications

Books, information leaflets and back issues of

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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 **Martina Macklin**, 16 Victoria

Street, Wall Heath, Kingswinford, West

Midlands DY6 0JJ Tel: 01384 833 883

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: 0207

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: 0207 263 4922

EO Stalls: Lucy Charlton

2, Wistow Road, Newton Harcourt, Leics

LE8 0FT Tel: 0116 2592118

Research Contact (acting): Pam Vickers.

25 Boxley Road, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent

Home: 01634 671 507 Work: 01227 712 206

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Framlingham Road, Peterborough PE2 8UG Tel:

01733 554436

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Three Stacks, Wicken Lane, Old Leake,

Boston, Lincs PE22 9QE Tel: 01205 871 399

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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:

Edwina Theunissen Tel: 01978 661 882

Membership Secretaries Coordinator:

Pam Bellinger, 56 Beech Drive, Braunstone,

Leicester LE3 3DA 0116 282 7929

Chair: Jill Fisher, 54 Ratcliffe Road,

Leicester LE2 3TD Tel: 0116 212 8120

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:

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