

education otherwise



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TO THE FOLLOWING EDITORS:**

**REGIONAL DIARY, ADVERTISEMENTS,
AND EO BUSINESS**

Please send direct to NL co-ordinator
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ARCHIVE SELECTIONS

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(NOT for back copies of NLS - see Publications, inside back cover)

SPECIAL SECTION - December

Experiences with Authorities (see p. 34)

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(Ideas and volunteers for future welcome)

LETTERS AND ARTICLES

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(earlier than main NL)

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Please send contributions via the most appropriate section editor above

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Co-ordinatorial

EO's 25th Anniversary Gathering has been a great success - you can read some reports in this newsletter and hopefully there will be more to come; the World Environment Summit ended on a whimper (though some politicians seem determined to make things go with a bang*); the tragic fate of two little girls has recently been confirmed; and the question of aggro on Home-Ed. email lists has come to the fore again.

The abduction and murder of Holly and Jessica coincided with my receiving a copy of recent contributions to the EO business email list regarding child protection and what EO should be doing in that respect. EO has been trying for some time to develop a policy that could act as a safeguard for children at EO activities, and the draft Child Protection Policy is printed on pp 1-5 of the EO Handbook. This includes suggested guidelines on behaviour of all at EO meetings, gatherings, etc. and also mentions police checks. Anne Wade is currently collating feedback, so please contact her with your comments.

And speaking of email lists - I did try the EO list once, but felt it wasn't of much use to me (and that I couldn't contribute much to it) so I'm not on any. But recently a few examples of email list "strings" have been forwarded to me and it's set me wondering why something which is normally a useful and constructive means of communication can also, on occasion, become so intimidating and destructive. Perhaps it's a bit like road rage: in a technological cocoon I can have the illusion of omnipotence - my way is right, everyone else can go hang. And like the roadhog, it takes only one cyberbully to spoil the system for everyone else.

But *all* ways are right - I believe - for those who wish to take them. Just as every family approaches their home education in a different way (acting locally), so everyone has their own views on how best to promote or serve the cause of home education generally (thinking globally). Within EO there has always been room for a wide variety of views and approaches - the only criterion being that we respect the rights of others to do it their way. Of course, we don't all see eye-to-eye all the time; that would be an unrealistic expectation. But with an eye to the common overarching concern to give our children the best possible educational experience, with open minds and a co-operative attitude - we make progress. The recent enthusiastic press coverage of our Silver Jubilee is proof positive of that.

And the Earth Summit? Another analogy (the issues are at least up for discussion, even if they didn't get very far): It's taken a wide variety of approaches to get global ecology high up on the socio-political agenda: Sir Jonathan Porritt working within the establishment as special advisor to the government; Greenpeace protesters draping a nuclear power station with an anti-nuke banner (and getting arrested); scientists reporting observations on changes in the stratosphere, biodiversity and so on; local communities setting up recycling schemes; Green Party candidates hitting politicians where it hurts (in the ballot box); ramblers; bird-watchers; organic farmers; aid agencies; animal rights protesters ... each person is active in the way that suits them best, and everyone's actions contribute to the overall goal of caring for planet earth. Many people belong to more than one organisation and work in different ways at different times and in different groups and countries. Some people disagree strongly with the way others do things. But on the whole, rather than waste energy arguing about whose approach is 'right' they each get on with what they feel is best for them, and these complementary approaches have all added up to the very powerful development of the global environment movement we have seen since the '60s.

So what's that got to do with home education? Simply that I think we need a variety of approaches to make sure that families throughout the UK (and abroad) are empowered to educate as they choose. However anyone chooses to direct their energies is all right by me - local AND global; online AND offline; autonomous AND directed; nature AND nurture; working with AND against Authorities ... all are valid, all are useful, all interact to support the cause of freedom in education - which is surely a global issue. EO has one type of approach; other home education organisations work in different ways. Let's celebrate the variety and aim for synergy.

Anne - 10.9.2

* This is the way the World ends
not with a bang but a whimper." - T. S. Eliot

BOOK & CD REVIEWS

Dovey Coe by Frances O'Rourke

This is a story I think many people would enjoy to read. With its interesting plot and its many twists and turns I just couldn't put it down! It is the story of a young girl and the things she and her family must bear through when a dreadful thing happens. Dovey likes to speak her mind and everybody knows she hates that snobby, self-centred Parnell Caraway, but she didn't kill him, did she? Accused of murder what will happen now? With every word carefully thought out and put in the right place you really feel part of the story, like you are stood there watching it all happen. The way the writer has written it with so much passion and detail makes it a truly amazing book and I think it would be a shame for anyone to miss out on such a good read. It is perhaps a good book for parents or older brothers and sisters to read as it shows how sometimes a younger person can feel squished and powerless. I enjoyed this story very much and I hope this review will inspire others to read it too.

Stephanie Westbury (13)

£4.99 ISBN 0 7445 9029 9 Walker

Trouble in Tristan by Duncan Watt

I really liked this book because it is written in a very adventurous way and also because adventures in boats is one of the things I am always making up. It is certainly the best book that I have read for ages. Another thing I like about it is the fact that it is set in a real place and one page is a map of the island. I would definitely recommend this book for children my age and older. This is just one book in the Wallace Boys series.

Kit Freiesleben (9)

£4.99 ISBN 1 85646 112 2 Tynron Press

The Jamie and Angus Stories by Anne Fine

Gem says "I think this book is very good, mainly because it is lots of different stories about the same boy and his toy cow called Angus. I think people younger than me would still like the stories too. My favourite story is the one about Angus learning to jump. The man doesn't really make Angus jump, it's just in Jamie's dream. Younger children like my sister Celeste (4) wouldn't realise it's a dream and they would think Angus really came to life."

Kirsten says "These are gentle stories from a 5 or 6 year old's point of view. We often hear about the world from Jem's monkey's point of view so this book was a good 'read-alone' one for Jem.. He took it camping and read it non-stop one evening. Celeste loved listening to the stories too, so would suit 3-8s. Definitely recommended."

Kirsten Freiesleben with Jem (7)

£8.99 ISBN 0 7445 59650 Walker

Nervous Norris by Gus Clarke

This is a great story about an old dog who is very stuck in his ways. His peaceful life is shattered when the family get a kitten. There follows several funny chapters where Norris has to adapt to his changed circumstances, and new position in the family. The discovery of the cat flap, and Norris's description of not understanding why he stuck his head through it (but he couldn't help himself), was very funny. The book is easy to read, cleverly written, and one which will be read again. The ending where Norris discovers the kitten can lick that bit on the back of his neck he's never been able to get to, and everyone gets on together again is brilliant.

Oliver Humphreys (8)

£3.99 1 84270 049 9 Andersen

The Boy from Sula by Lavinia Derwent

We have both enjoyed this book. Gwenan because it has some of her favourite subjects - animals, drawing and islands, although she did say it could have been "more adventurous". For myself I enjoyed this relatively gentle story of a small community living on a remote Scottish island. There is a lot of description and you can imagine the peaceful island. Magnus Macduff is the main character and a boy who just wants to be left alone to draw his birds and animals and swim with the seals but this life is threatened by tourism and a life-threatening accident. Ideal for 8 years and above.

Susan Bain with Gwenan (8)

£4.99 ISBN 0 86315 400X Floris Books (Kelpies)

'Jimmy Zest' and 'Zesty'

both by Sam McBratney

Two different books about a boy named Jimmy Zest. They are both really good and I enjoyed reading them. Jimmy Zest is funny. He and his friends Shorty, Legweak, Mandy Taylor, Gowso, Knuckles and Penny Brown get into trouble a lot. In the first book, there are five stories such as *Jimmy Zest's Egg Box Wonder*, *Jimmy Zest Mind Slaves* and *the Strong Stomach Contest*. The girls play tricks on the boys and take full part in their adventures. Like they made a shield from metal and sprayed it in gold and varnished it, then buried it in the castle grounds and got the boys tricked into thinking it was real gold. Jimmy leads in mischief, but always gets paid back. In *Zesty*, there are another five stories like *Giant Moneyboxes*, *A Death in the Park*, *Warts and Witches*. They search for a giant tortoise and find out who killed the hen. The characters come to life and I felt like I was taking part.

Karis Youngman (8)

£3.99 each ISBN 0 330 39986 1 and 0 330 39987 X

Macmillan

The Pirates of Pompeii by *Caroline Lawrence*

This book is fantastic and when I first got it, I just couldn't put it down. It is a really good mystery book set in Roman times following the eruption of Vesuvius. Families seeking refuge from the eruption found a temporary home at the Baths but some children go missing. Four children - Flavia Gemina, Jonathan, Nubia and Lupus - and a slave set out to solve the mystery. Who are the kidnappers? Who are the mysterious actors with their play about the Pirates of Pompeii? The Emperor's officials provide hidden clues. The children are so interesting, I didn't want to stop reading about them. The book brought Roman history to life showing what could have happened after the destruction of Pompeii. It describes what the area would have looked like, and I felt I was there experiencing the period for myself.

Karis Youngman (8)

ISBN 1 84255 202 3 Orion £6.99

Jake's Tower by *Elizabeth Laird*

This book is a story about a boy called Jake, who is about thirteen. Jake keeps getting beaten up by his mother's boyfriend so he finds a secret place by the railway line to hide but then he can't hide there any more, because of other boys. When he gets hurt again he tells his school about what has happened to him and his mother's boyfriend gets put in prison. Jake has a dream house which he thinks about an awful lot, but it changes very much during the story. This is a good story. It is written well, so I wanted there to be more to read. It is quite exciting and a bit funny. The way it is written makes you sympathise with Jake. It is mostly sad but has a happy ending. This is a good book and I enjoyed reading it.

Molly Whitehall (9)

£99 ISBN 0 333 96215X Macmillan Books

Teach Your Child How to Learn

by *Sue Garnett*

This book sets out to show parents how to encourage children to learn through everyday experiences. It explains that children can improve their observation skills and by becoming more interested in everything going on around them will be keen to learn more. It's divided into sections such as 'Learning while on holiday', 'Learning when out on visits', 'Learning while watching others at work'. Each chapter describes in minute detail the things to look out for, e.g. 'Checkouts' explains about different checkout lanes, the conveyor belt, the bar code scanner, the plastic bags for shopping I found this book so obvious as to be irritating. I feel it is suitable for carers of 2-5 year olds who would like to be shown what is around them and be given lots of ideas for a wide variety of outings.

Clare Crane

£8.99 ISBN 1 85703 773 1 How to Books Ltd

The Wind Singer by *William Nicholson*

The Wind Singer is a mythical whistle with the power to protect the city of Aramant from the greedy Mahora. It will sing when the wind is blowing through the tower. The story is about these twins who go on an adventure to get the Wind Singer back from the powerful Mahora and his armies, and to free the city from Mahora's evil rule. Mahora controls all the highest ranked people and they make all the rules that make life difficult for all the people. Everything is graded, even the houses people live in and the colour clothes they can wear. I think the book is so good that I'm now reading the sequel in the trilogy, called *Slaves of the Mastery*.

Natty Hall (10)

ISBN 0 749 74925 3 Egmont

Malka by *Mirjam Pressler*

This book is about a Jewish family in Poland in 1943. They have to escape into Hungary to avoid being captured by the Nazis. In the family there is Malka, who is seven, the daughter of Hannah Mai, an intelligent doctor who is the regional medical officer. Hannah has to give up her job to go to Hungary and is forced to leave most of her medical equipment behind, which makes her sad. On the journey Malka is separated from her mother and sister and ends up back in their hometown of Lawoczne. She has a lot of problems, including typhoid fever and almost starvation. She hides in a coal cellar when the Nazis do 'operations' - taking away all the Jews. Malka lives on her own for many months. She also stays with three families and in a hospital. On her own she survives by begging in the streets for a very long time until Hannah (her mother) finds her. I think it is a good story and it teaches about the persecution of Jews by the Nazis as well as eastern European geography. Malka Mai is a real person and the story is based on true events.

Emma Whitehall (12)

£9.99 ISBN 0 330 400991 Macmillan

Mythological Monsters of Ancient Greece by

Sara Fanelli

Eye catching and unusual, Hazel and Kim were interested immediately. As it says on the first page - "Watch out for their huge teeth, beware their many heads, count their eyes, imagine their powers IF YOU DARE!". It has minimum text giving descriptions of the 14 monsters and their deeds, and some more information and some questions at the back. Hazel thinks if you want to know a bit about monsters it's a good place to start, and the pictures are very good and certainly unusual.

Sally Jarvis with Hazel (10) and Kim (6)

£10.99 ISBN 0 7445 8898 7 Walker Books

The Wonderful Language of Nature The Discovery Series CD ROM

This has a very dated feel to it. It is rather like putting a book onto the screen without the nice feel of a book and without really using the capabilities of computers. Information can be retrieved by clicking on menus and icons and there are pictures but there was nothing particularly fun about it. Natasha thought that watching a nature programme or video would be a better option.

Clare Crane with Natasha (7)

£12.99 *Mate! Interactive (The Learning Company)*

Adventures In The Middle Ages

by Linda Bailey and Bill Slavin

Trish says "I liked this book because it had useful information and funny cartoons. It also had a mystery that the Binkerton children had to find out. Emma, Josh and Libby enter the Good Times Travel. Josh asks for a guide book to the Middle Ages because he wants to be a Medieval Knight and then.....as soon as he opens the book they go all the way back in time to where he had imagined! The children go on a massive adventure (as peasants, not knights), and almost get trapped in time when the book is stolen. It's a good book and there are others in the series - about other times."

Sue Onions adds "Its 48 pages pack in lots of facts and the illustrations and story got both my children interested (planning their own trip back in time). A brilliant introduction to the Middle Ages and the final page gives a succinct summary of the period for anybody wanting to discern fact from fiction."

Sue Onions with Trish (10)

£5.99 ISBN 0 7136 5480 5 A & C Black

All Americal Girl by Meg Cabot

I really liked this book, and the things that the heroine did had me in fits of laughter! Samantha Madison was an ordinary girl thrown into unusual circumstances. The only day she skipped her dreaded art lesson, she ended up in hospital with a broken arm after saving the president! And from there on in things get decidedly trickier. She falls in love with David (the president's son), becomes the teen ambassador and finds out that her pop idol wasn't as lucky as she once thought! I loved the way it was all set out, especially the top tens in every chapter. I would recommend the book to girls 12 and over who like romantic comedies.

Megan Whiteman (12)

£9.99 ISBN 0 330 40069 X Macmillan

Joyride by Amy Ehrlich

This is a fascinating book - a mixture of intrigue and intense, emotional relationships. There are two storylines running through the book. One: the mother-teenage daughter relationship issue; two: why do Joyce and Nina keep moving every time Nina starts to form her own relationships? The author keeps you

guessing right to the (surprising) end. We really enjoyed this book. It is well written, fast-moving and realistic in the emotions that are expressed. The ending made me read the whole book again to see if I could see what was coming, were the clues there all along? No, but I enjoyed it far more second time round as there is a lot to question and consider in this book. I would recommend this book to any teenager.

Sue and Elizabeth (14) White

£9.99 ISBN 0 7636 1346 0 Walker

Free Range Education by Terri Dowty

This is a collection of family stories about home education with a section on the legal aspects of Home Education. Interspersed with the family stories are frequently asked questions and some answers. There is also a list of related organisations and resources. I enjoyed re-reading this book (as I had read it over a year ago) and found that this time round different chapters appealed more as our family learning style has changed. The family stories are rather random, each one saying what they want to say about their family and Home Education. This is in contrast to a similar book, *Homeschooling - A patchwork of Days* by Nancy Lande with 30 families. Lande's US book is highly structured and painstakingly edited and re-edited to produce a very detailed account of a typical HE day which leaves you with a clear picture of the different approaches that each family takes to Home Education. Dowty has found Home Educators with something interesting to say and each chapter is in a different style.

Clare Crane

£12.99 ISBN 1903458 07 2 Hawthorn Press

Who Built the Pyramid by Meredith Hooper

Many people in this book claim to have built Senwosret's pyramid - from the ruling King to the water carrier - but they all had their part in this massive project which probably took around 20 years to build. We enjoyed this book with some interesting facts about pyramids, all told in easy format with more details at the back of the book. We were left thinking how incredible they must have looked once finished with polished faces and gleaming gold capstones all shining in the sun. Ceri liked the pictures of the men hacking out the stones from the quarry with their axes and making the passageway down to the tomb but he didn't fancy being a basket boy carrying all the stones!

Susan Bain with Ceri (4 and Gwenan) (8)

£10.00 ISBN 0 7445 6235 X Walker Books

Jethro Byrde - Fairy Child by Bob Graham

Annabelle is always looking for fairies but her dad says "You won't find fairies in cement and weeds". Gwenan liked this book because it is funny and it's about fairies, not the usual kind but ones that can't make magic and who sell hamburgers and ice creams at the Fairy Travellers Picnic. The illustrations are delightful.

Susan Bain with Gwenan (8)

£10.00 ISBN 0 7445 8863 4 Walker Books

Twenty Spine-Tingling Mini-Mysteries

by *Dina Anastasio*

I first borrowed this book from the library in the Children's section, and thought: "Cool, I've never read any mystery books before, I wonder what this will be like?" Each story is very short around 5-9 pages. Every story is a different chapter and some are scarier than others. The objective of the book is to be detective of the stories and to see if you can find the answer to questions like "How did he know that?", and at the back of the book are the answers to each story. One of my favourite stories was called: *One Sausage Pizza, Two Pizzas with Mushrooms*.

Some other chapters in the book I really enjoyed were: *The Case Of The Horrible Fingerprint, A Night On The Big Wheel, The Spider That Wouldn't Die, The Secret Room, The Horror Film, The Dummy, and the House Of Horrors*. I would suggest this book for boys (or girls) 10 years +

To get the full scariness read this book at bedtime.
Simon Hoggarth (13)

Sundials and Timedials

Mum has bought me lots of Tarquin books and I have never had one I do not like! This one is very educational and great fun to do. It is a collection of models to cut out and glue together to make actual working models of various types of sun dials, including a solar compass, and ways of telling time at night by the stars. It has also got a little booklet to make which tells you all about the earth orbiting around the sun, how sundials work and how time is calculated. I think anyone of my age or older who likes making things will really like this book a lot.

Keith Hall (8)

£4.50 ISBN 0 906121 59 6 Tarquin

The Sun, Moon & Tides

This is a concise and informative guide to the tides and their correlation with the moon, explaining in detail the effect that the moon and the sun have on the tides. The book is more geared towards older children and adults and is a useful aid to science-related studies. The models fit together well and the instructions for assembly are well explained. The models provide an older child or adult with good working illustrations when reading and understanding the text of the book. Really excellent value.

Paul Hooper with Annabelle (7)

£4.50 ISBN 0 906212 76 6 Tarquin

Family Flip Quiz compiled by John Paton

This quiz book is a big hit with all our family. It has four levels of difficulty, which gives all ages of the family something to answer. The different subject categories are history, geography, science and maths, English, natural world and general knowledge. To accompany the questions there are also some colour illustrations and photographs as picture clues. The text

is clearly set out with the questions coded by picture symbols for each category. The book is self-standing, which works well. We first came across the book when we were on holiday and we enjoyed it then. It's fun, informative and a good way for everyone in the family to learn something together. Finally, it showed us just how much our children were learning under an autonomous approach to home education. They had a broad range of knowledge revealed by the right answers they gave to all sorts of questions.

The Steenman-Clark family

£3.99 ISBN 1 902947 10 X The Book People

Usborne Maths Skills Activity Books

We had great fun playing lots of maths games with the eccentric Og family from the Stone Age. These activity books are bright and colourful, clearly laid out and fun to use with some innovating and challenging maths for children beginning to get to grips with basic maths skills. There are clear explanations and answers at the back of the book. Each double page spread features a different story line and deals with different skills using questions and puzzles to solve. The titles in this series include 'Grammar Puzzles', 'Adding and Subtraction Puzzles', 'Multiplying Puzzles', 'Charts and Graphs' and 'Fractions and Decimals'. Excellent value.

Sally Hall with Keith (8)

£3.50 each Usborne

Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Periods ... But Didn't Like To Ask!

by *Charlotte Owen*

Yvette says "A lucky find in a charity shop. Explains simply, and straightforwardly why we have periods, what they feel like, and how to live with them, plus a short section on adolescence generally. With fun pictures and comments from interviews with young people, and a photocopy-able menstrual calendar. Designed to be read by young people. Recommended by Brook Advisory Centres." Erin says, "Easy to read, easy to understand."

Yvette Hartley with Erin (11)

£4.99 ISBN 0 340 63604 1 Hodder Children's Books

Daughter of the Wind

by *Suzanne Fisher Staples*

This book is all about a family living in the Cholistan desert in Pakistan. It features mainly on the youngest daughter Shabanu who does not wish to live her life the way her parents have planned. Shabanu and her family travel through the desert to meet the parents of Hamir and Murad, the people whom Shabanu and her sister Phulan are meant to marry. As things take an unexpected turn Shabanu must decide, will she obey the wishes of her parents or be true to herself? A very thought-provoking read.

Amy Borthen (14)

£4.99 ISBN 0 7445 9011 6 Walker

On The Way Book 2 - 11-14 years old

This is a religious education book, which is intended for teachers of 11-14 year olds. It gives lesson plans, activities and questions covering Easter, St. Paul, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Suffering. Because I am working on it with just my mum we cannot do some of the activities because they require groups of children. However, it occurred to me that it would be a very good book for families with several children and any home-educators that would like to form a group. There are still plenty of things we can do though. Some of them are good ideas that look really interesting. There are 25 chapters in the book. So all in all about 2 terms work if you did one a week. In this series there are books for all ages ranging from pre-school up to 14 and also a teacher training video and a selection of games books. I would recommend this series for any age.

Simon Hoggarth (13)

ISBN 1 85792 705 2 Christian Focus Publications

Manky Monkey by Jeanne Willis

With funny verse and great illustrations we are presented with a story of how Manky Monkey, who has always felt different from his ape relatives, seeks to discover who he really is. Ceri loved the lawn mower and Gwenan thought it a great way to learn about evolution, and the last page a surprise for us all!

Susan Bain with Ceri (4 and Gwenan (8)

ISBN 1 84270 051 0 Andersen

Lion in the Long Grass by Ruth and Ken Brown

What stood out most about this book was the beautiful illustrations which both of us liked. The story described a day in the life of a lion cub who was hiding in the long grass while his mother went hunting. There he befriended an old lion who protected him from the dangers of the plain. I found the ending a bit ambiguous mainly due to the fate of the old lion and am not sure as to the point of the story, although this maybe due to the author wanting to create a discussion regarding the themes in the book. Taking this into consideration I would recommend it for a slightly older age group of perhaps 5-7 years. I tried reading this to a variety of ages due to the lack of interest in the book shown by Rowan, but I still found a lack of enthusiasm for the book, unlike the authors' previous book 'Why can't I Fly'.

Kathleen Smith with Rowan Butterfield (4)

£9.99 ISBN 1 84270 048 0 Andersen

Meow! by Allan Ahlberg

This is a delightful picture book about Clara and her cat. Clara's cat has gone for a walk. Lift the cat flap to find out if he has returned ... Wonderful illustrations, and a quality book, this was a joy to read to the children.

Aalyah Naqvi with Hamzah (4) and Khizr (2)

£7.99 ISBN 07445 6717 3 Walker Books

Treasure Hunt by Allan Ahlberg

A very beautiful picture book, with a simple tale of a little girl who loves to hunt for hidden things around the house and her family who love to join in. The wonderfully detailed illustrations are affectionate and full of character. This is a safe and gentle book, suitable for children of four and under. I think it would make a great present.

Caroline Farquhar with Amber (4) and Leo (3)

£9.99 ISBN 0 7445 7516 8 Walker Books

The Blue Kangaroo by Emma Chichester Clark

Celeste says "I liked this story when Lily puts a bucket on her brother's head and says 'It was you blue kangaroo'. I laughed. I like doing that to my little brother Ivo". Kirsten says "Initially reminiscent of Tony Ross's 'Oscar Got the Blame', this is a lovely, gentle story about misbehaviour and not accepting the blame ('the blue kangaroo did it'). It is an ideal book for 3 - 6 year olds and Celeste particularly enjoyed the pictures and reassuring ending. She often blames things on a toy or most often on Ivo so she empathised with Lily greatly. A brilliant book, definitely recommended."

Kirsten Friesleben with Celeste (4)

£9.99 ISBN 1 84270 023 5 Andersen

Understanding School Exclusion

Challenging processes of docility

by **Charlie Cooper**

The aim of this book is to 'build on existing studies by exploring the nature of school exclusion from the perspective of excluded pupils themselves'. Rather than simply giving us the facts and figures concerning exclusions, the book tells, in people's own words, their experiences of exclusion. Altogether, it builds a horrendous picture of young people and many of their teachers being pressurised and bullied to conform to a system of education that has little regard for the individual and their huge variety of needs and aptitudes. It is driven instead by the need to achieve good test results at any cost. When young people are unable or unwilling, for all sorts of reasons, to take part in this system, and so present 'challenging behaviour', they are excluded.

The book highlights the problems with the school system which many of us have had personal experience of. It makes very interesting reading although personally I found it disturbing and depressing as there seems little likelihood that things will improve; in fact, new government initiatives could very well make things even worse. The one bright spot was the views of the support workers who seemed to have a real understanding of and empathy with the young people they work with. In the words of one of them, 'Some of these youngsters are voicing what the silent majority are not always capable of saying'. Hear, Hear!

Kate Molyneux

£8.50 ISBN 1 871 526 55 8 Education Heretics

Bertrand Russell: education as the power of independent thought by *Chris Shute*

To quote Roland Meighan who wrote the forward of this book: "Russell had a radical vision of officials that is hard to find in our domination-riddled mass schooling system and its endless supply of control-freaks." Russell said "The administrator of the future must be the servant of free citizens, not the benevolent ruler of admiring subjects". When I realised that Bertrand Russell was born in the late 1800s, I was amazed by his insight and understanding. Even in 2002, we have people with the Victorian belief that children should be seen and not heard, yet here in Bertrand Russell we have a man who had a forward-thinking view of life, children, education and society as a whole. Chris Shute writes with respect about Bertrand Russell: on page 3 he writes "I shall try to show in this book that Russell believed in learning as a life long pursuit, from which no-one should be excluded by any factor which could be controlled and eliminated from their life". I believe that Chris Shute managed to do just that and I will be quoting from this book forever more. Russell himself never went to school and said, "I am glad I did not go to school. I would have had no time for original thought" and another favourite "The spontaneous wish to learn, which every normal child possesses, as shown in its efforts to walk and talk, should be the driving force in education". Congratulations to Chris Shute for having written such an inspiring book. Jo Borthen

£10.00 ISBN 1 900219 21 2 Educational Heretics

TLC kids zone, The Discovery series.

'Touch the sky, touch the universe'

With so many cd-roms amounting to little more than books on disc, this was a refreshing change. The easy to use control panel allowed for great interaction, with the planets viewable from the earth, the sun, and in their places in the solar system. The 3D effects were stunning, virtual reality at its best, and immediately gain the viewers attention. The continuity was good too, with information easily accessed on individual planets from every screen. The depth of information also meant it is a program that could adapt to a wide age range.

Oliver picked out the clarity of explanation as a highlight, along with the graphics, finding it easy to understand, and presented in an encouraging way. I could moan about the American accents and spelling, but this program is so good it's forgiven.

Gill Humphreys with Oliver (8).

£9.99 *Mindscape*

Note

Prices quoted are the publishers' recommended retail prices (rrp). Shop around for lower prices - try discount book shops, mail order discount book clubs and the internet. Contact details from publishers are

set out below but many titles can be ordered from your local book shop.

CONTACTS

A & C Black 01480 212666

Andersen Press 020 7840 8701

www.andersenpress.co.uk

The Book People 0870 6077780

www.thebookpeople.co.uk

Christian Focus Publications 01862 871 011

www.christianfocus.com

Educational Heretics Press 0115 925 7261

www.gn.apc.org/edheretics

Egmont

Floris Books 0131 229 6800

Frances Lincoln 020 7284 4009

Hawthorne Press 01453 757040

www.hawthornepress.com

Hodder Children's Books

How to Books Ltd 01865 793806

www.howtobooks.co.uk

Macmillan Children's Books 020 7014 6000

www.panmacmillan.com

Mindscape 01293 651335

www.mindscape.com

Orion Publishing 020 7240 3444

Tarquin Publications 01379 384 218

www.tarquin-books.demon.co.uk

Tyron Press

Usborne 020 7430 2800 www.usborne.com

Walker Books 01256 302692

CORRECTION

Please note some information was omitted from last issue. I apologise if anyone has had trouble locating these books

Pull the other one! String games & stories Book 1,

by Michael Taylor ISBN 1 869890 49 3

Now you see it... String games and stories Book 2,

by Michael Taylor ISBN: 1 903458 21 8

Send in your reviews to Sally Hall, Nant-y-garreg, Saron, Llandysul SA44 5EJ or email sally@aecb.net who is also looking after the following

NEW SECTION:

MEMBERS RECOMMENDATIONS

Increasingly we are receiving requests from members to include lengthy "advertorial" letters and articles (often coinciding with flyers and/or advertisements placed elsewhere in the NL) which we feel are an inappropriate use of their membership for financial/ commercial gain, as well as taking up a disproportionate amount of space.

We would ask entrepreneurs to confine themselves to the spirit of the meaning and wording of the "To place an advert" details which are published in the Advertisements section of the newsletter. (Of course, personal contributions about their own family's experiences may be submitted as articles in the usual way).

However, we recognise that where members have discovered something which they feel could be useful to others it is appropriate to share the information. We have therefore decided to start a new section in the NL for "MEMBERS RECOMMENDATIONS" of services, products or organisations. It will be made clear (by a disclaimer similar to that on the ads. pages) that these are personal recommendations, and are not endorsed by EO as an organisation.

Contributions should be limited to a brief description of (e.g.) what is on offer, how the member found it of use in their particular situation, indication of cost and contact details for further information (max about 200 words in total, please) and may be written **only** by EO members who are **not directly connected** with the creation, management, delivery or promotion of the service/organisation. They should be unsolicited!

Anne Rix (NL Co-ord) and Penny Clarke (Publications team)

MEMBERS RECOMMENDATIONS

Send contributions for this section to Sally Hall – see Book/CD reviews (or inside front cover) for address

GCSEs and The NEC

The National Extension College invited EO to join them on Friday 13 September in a preliminary brainstorming session to discuss the current and future situation regarding GCSEs and home educated students. Geraldine Adams, Gwen Baldock and Penny Clarke attended this first meeting on behalf of EO and will be reporting in full over the next few weeks. Major concerns we discussed were the increasing difficulty HERS face in finding examination centres and the fact that external students will not be accepted to take IGCSEs in the UK after June 2003. Both of these issues mean that, increasingly, HERS will be less able to take GCSEs unless they are aged 16 and enrolled full time in an educational institution. In the meantime we would like to pass on from NEC the fact that their GCSE courses will be subject to a special offer for all students during October. £50 off the first GCSE course ordered and £80 off the second and subsequent subjects. (This will bring the prices from the usual £275 down to £225 and £195.) *Penny Clarke*
The NEC can be contacted on 01223 400350 or via the website www.nec.ac.uk/courses

FREE LECTURES AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE, LONDON

These lectures take place during term-time. 'Lecture' is perhaps a misnomer. I think a more accurate description would be 'live theatre'. They are spectacular entertainment given by scientists who are eminent in their field, contagiously enthusiastic and who contrive to impart fascinating information at the same time. The talks are held in a small intimate theatre and are aimed at different age groups, although I take my 8 year old son to all of them. It doesn't matter that some of the explanations are too complicated for him to understand – he still finds them fascinating. This is a resource that I feel we are privileged to have and cannot recommend these lectures too highly.

Charlotte Searle

Contact 0207 670 2969 or email schools@ri.ac.uk

*This section is intended for recommendations of services, products and organisations, by individual members who are **not directly connected** with the creation, management, delivery or promotion of these enterprises. These have **not been endorsed** by Education Otherwise.*

Learn Premium Website - Special Offer for EO Members

Learn.co.uk, an online educational service run by the Guardian, has offered EO members a joint, low cost subscription to Learn Premium, a digital subscription service aimed at primary and secondary age children and their teachers. EO has agreed to pay Learn.co a lump sum and is making a small charge to each user to cover this cost.

Access to the service will cost EO members £10 per family for a year, beginning in October 2002.

The service is aimed at schools and is not available to private individuals.

There are about 35,000 pages of online lessons, tests, and topic based information on a whole range of subjects. This website looks particularly useful for home educators who wish to follow a more structured learning programme but at £10 it might be worth giving it a try whatever your approach.

Learn Premium resources include:

- Online lessons
- Guardian topical lesson packs
- Revision and homework guides
- Three web guides
- Randomly generated tests
- Projects and events
- Daily news service for 9-13 year olds

The web address is <http://premium.learn.co.uk> where more details of the service are available.

If you would like to subscribe please send your name, address, e-mail address and a cheque for £10 made out to Education Otherwise Association to:

Jill Fisher, 54 Ratcliffe Rd, Leicester, LE2 3TD.

You will then be sent details of how to log on to the service

EO 25th Gathering – the Aftermath

Commemorative Booklet

Following on from the success of the event we have decided to produce a booklet to commemorate the weekend.

We plan to include ideas from the exhibition and also many of the memories which were entered into the memories book.

Is there anything from the weekend that YOU would like to have included in the booklet? Do you have any memories from the last 25 years of EO that you would like to share?

The "Where are they now?" section of the memories book boasts a whole list of names. If you are listed there and are willing to have your contact details passed on please do let me, Penny Clarke, know. Likewise, if you'd like to contact one of those mentioned, do get in touch with me.

So where are: John Elenor, Alan Pye, Robina Pye, The Theobald Family, Haluie McHale, Andy Anderson, Bob Emmett, Georgina Winkley, Geoff and Jane Edwards, Caroline Grant, Simon Grant, Anna Commins-James, Joe O'Connor, Alison Mafham, Maggie, John and Chris, Priscilla Park-Weir, Betty Ball, Sarah (Taking Children Seriously), Nigel and Serena (children Alethea, Crystal and ?), That policeman who came to a Lower Shaw Farm meeting, ?Keale family from near Swindon, Pat Knox (School Phobia) from Leslie Kilbride, Helen Holland (last known Sussex), Helen Fletcher (last known Notts), Janet and Nigel and Nick (son) Everdell (Cambs), Stephanie (& David) Leland, The Laniado family: Farid and 4 children, whose mother Cherity co-ord for Norfolk for many years, and very active campaigner for EO, very sadly died young of cancer, The Lovius family – Barry, Jean, Max, Arne and Anna, The Chaudhuri (sp?) – name often heard on Radio 4! (as is Head: "A Head Production" – any connection?).

I could also do with some help with the layout of the booklet. Does anyone have desktop publishing skills they could offer? Please.....

For any further info or offers of help please contact Penny Clarke pennyclarke@blueyonder.co.uk
Tel 01922 745465 5 Ridge Way, Aldridge, Walsall WS9 0HL



Celia McDonagh would like to say **thank you** to all the volunteers – children as well as adults – who turned up to help in the coffee shop over the weekend
your help is very much appreciated!



Found at EO 25th Beaumanor:

One **spectacle case** found in marquee after the council meeting

One **compass with red cord** found in cabin (3?) when clearing up on the Monday.

If either of these items are yours please contact Penny Clarke (West Midlands)



Visioning EO in the Future – where do we go now?

At the 25th anniversary celebrations there was a half day session on the future of EO. About 50 people participated in small group discussions on what EO's role was now, what it should be, and how EO might develop. This was followed by a feedback session with all the participants to try and identify areas for further discussion. The session raised a lot of questions as well as generating some concrete suggestions.

The next stage is to involve as many members as possible in this discussion. Your views are important! Please read this summary, think about the issues, and write to the newsletter with your thoughts, ideas, opinions. Also, talk to others in your area, bounce ideas around. Remember, EO is a membership organisation. The day-to-day running falls on a small number of active volunteers, but EO belongs to all of us, and all our views are important.

General Issues

Presently EO is trying to fill two roles:

- it is a human rights organisation defending and supporting families who are taking responsibility for their children's education
- it is a service organisation providing publications, helplines, and local support for home educators

There was a general feeling that EO's job is both to support home educators and to support the right to home educate. Various suggestions were made about how to improve the way EO provided support to home educators.

There was a general agreement that not only was EO growing, but that EO should be looking to expand the work it does particularly in the areas of

- Enquiries
- Proactive publicity
- Publications
- Support of members and others

There was a general question raised about whether EO should be growing at a national level, or whether EO should encourage regional and local groups to grow and provide more support directly to home educators.

- Questions
- What should EO's role be?
 - Should EO be growing as a national organisation, or should it be encouraging local and regional development, or both?

Paid Staff or Volunteers

Many people felt that it was time for EO to start employing people to do some of the basic "drudge" work both to make the organisation work more efficiently and to free up volunteers to do other tasks.

Suggestions ranged from paying small amounts to volunteers through employing a paid co-ordinator for volunteers to employing a team of people to answer basic enquiries, provide counselling, support new members, run an EO residential centre, do fund raising etc.

The possibilities of a employing a professional fund raiser and a press officer were also discussed.

Concerns were also raised about paid staff – who would manage them, does EO want to become an employer with all the legal obligations that entails, would paid staff adequately reflect the ethos of EO, how would EO retain control of what the paid staff were doing.

Questions were also raised about how to pay for staff, through raising membership subscriptions or through outside funding.

- Questions
- Would it be possible to involve more members in EO's work and avoid paid staff?
 - Should EO start to employ workers?

- What should those workers do?
- How should they be funded?

EO as a Service Provider

Some people felt that EO should become much more of a service provider. Suggestions included

- Buying a large residential centre for the use of home educators
- Providing exam centres
- Providing counselling
- Providing resource centres
- Improving and expanding publications
- Providing an insurance based legal service for home educators with retained solicitors

- Question
- Should EO expand into a service organisation?
 - If so, what should be the priorities for this expansion?

EO as a Support Network

A number of specific suggestions were made for improving EO as a support network. These included

- having the local contact's job done by teams rather than by individuals, introducing regional support,
- maintaining a national and/or regional experience bank for members to draw on
- Providing specific support for new members attending local and national meetings
- Providing better access to practical and resource information, perhaps through a website
- Providing an e-mail version of the newsletter – members could choose paper or electronic versions when joining or renewing.
- Providing better access to information within EO, again possibly through a web site.
- Provide media training

EO's Business Practice

Concerns were raised that young people were not adequately represented and it was suggested that a standing agenda item was introduced.

It was suggested that in order for EO to reflect more adequately the views of its members, more use should be made of postal voting on major issues, preceded by debate in the newsletter.

It was also suggested that EO have a permanent Envisioning group.

- Questions
- Should EO use postal votes on major issues?
 - Should EO have a permanent Envisioning group?

EO as a Human Rights Organisation

There was concern about a lot of issues to do with how to change governmental and public attitudes to home education. It was felt that EO should continue to talk to national and local government about home education, to respond to proposed legislation, and to work with LEAs/EAs to improve the way home educators were viewed and treated by LEAs/EAs

It was also felt that EO should more actively promote home education through proactive publicity. Ideas included putting information in new baby packs.

Other issues where active lobbying by EO might be useful included funding college places for under 16s, flexi-schooling.

- Questions
- Should EO do more work with government and education Authorities?
 - What issues should EO be actively lobbying for?
 - How do we find people to do this work?

Jill Fisher

Reflections on Beaumanor

I came back from the EO 25th Anniversary Camp with what I imagine must have been a feeling similar to that of someone discovering the Organisation for the first time. What an extremely nice lot of people. I had forgotten what it is like to be with a whole group of people who share some similar assumptions about children – most importantly that children are worth listening to and being with. Seeing children around the Beaumanor site – playing and making dams gave me a nostalgic reminder of the childhood days of our six teenagers and young adults – but also feelings of hope for the future.

Listening to the now grown up children of our children's ages was an inspiring experience. They had all chosen different paths, reflecting their particular abilities and home situation. As well as appearing confident and happy in the choices they had made, they were articulate and funny – not an easy achievement when you're sitting up on a stage. At the same time they were modest and thoughtful – thanking their parents and all who had supported their home education. I felt proud of them in the same way that one does of other family members – not only because of knowing some of them since they were toddlers but because at its best membership of EO can give the kind of support that comes from an extended family. Listening to them also made me think what a strong case one could make for learning through the playing of games, dismantling and reassembling things, making presents, having conversations with all kinds of people and just generally living life. Exams were put firmly in their place as a means to an end and mostly undertaken with a particular purpose in mind – and therefore not a big problem.

It became very clear to me that what we were celebrating in our growing up children was the unfolding of unique individuals, not achievements measured in the narrow parameters of exams or high flying careers (although there are these as well). What is learnt during these years cannot be measured – although proponents of the idea of EQ (emotional quotient) are making an interesting attempt to do just this.

Inevitably these get-togethers spark ideas and, given the nature of this particular one, thoughts turned to how the older hands could offer their experience. One person suggested that free life membership could be offered after so many years of paying an EO subscription. In this way we would be able to keep in touch with people who could be sources either of general support to the organisation or to particular individuals. The children who are now making their way in the world could be contacted (if they agree) for the occasional newspaper article, and maybe would themselves be able to offer support or encouragement to others where appropriate. But we would not expect them at this stage in their lives to pay to be members. It was an interesting thought that some of these children from the 'pioneering days' are hoping to educate their own children at home for at least part of their childhood.

For me it was wonderful to reconnect with EO – making new friends and meeting old ones (to the extent that I was late for my screening of the Open Door programme – apologies). I had forgotten the value of a supportive network. I know it's pathetic still to be worrying about an imminent visit from the LEA advisor, but being re-enthused by meeting so many great people and inspired by hearing again about people like Dick Kitto, John Holt and the Harrison family was the best preparation there could have been.

It was lovely to be made to feel so welcome and I want to give a big thank you (on behalf of all us E Oldies) to the people who worked so hard (under often very difficult personal stresses) to make this event happen. I am so glad we were bullied into going by Sarah Guthrie, whose 60th birthday celebrations appropriately began at Beaumanor.

There was a real sense of occasion about the event. I found myself still humming the special EO 25th Birthday song when I was washing the dishes at home again and I retained the lovely image in

SCOTLAND

Draft Guidance to education authorities

Update:

Draft Guidance from the Scottish Executive stalled a bit over the summer as the personnel doing the job moved on. The posts have now been filled and will be taken up at end of August and the principal, who is also fairly new, has assured us that he too is keen to get things moving again. We have been assured that they want to get the process right and that discussions will take place (both with home education organisations and with local authorities) about the issues raised in the responses to the draft guidance. This is backed up by the Scottish Executive in a letter to all the directors of education making it clear that the draft guidance is a draft for consultation only and not to be implemented by local authorities. (There was one notable exception in Orkney Islands Council which led to this letter being written.)

However, problems in some local authorities continue to happen because of **existing** poor policy and procedures with respect to home education and of course persistent lack of understanding of and prejudice against home education (in the social work departments as well as the education departments), while in other local authorities there is an improved awareness of home education and reports from families indicate that for now a more respectful approach is being taken.

Raising awareness of home education and improving relationships between authorities and home educators is possible, and is promoted by this shared listening approach. EO is optimistic about the consultation process going well and that EO's approach which has been to aim for listening from all sides is beginning to happen and signs are that it can work.

What is EO's approach to the Scottish Executive's Draft Guidance to Education Authorities anyway?

EO has taken a listening and discussion approach. This contrasts quite markedly with a "campaign" approach which tends to portray things in constant crisis in order to keep the cry in the media's eye and exert outraged pressure rather than reason. EO recognises that more direct campaigning methods have their place, and that some members may also engage in a variety of other approaches in collaboration with other organisations and in accordance with individual inclination.

It is effective to have different approaches from different organisations - that way all bases are covered. The approaches are different but the message about the right to home educate is the same.

There is no doubt that local authorities as we know them have no competence to judge home education provision.

Notwithstanding this **they are charged in statute with the duty** to intervene if they are not satisfied that parents are providing an efficient education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the child (section 37 Education(Scotland) Act). (Presumably

this is because if parents were **actually** to fail to make such education provision, as the law stands now the job of making provision, usually by way of state schooling, would fall to the local authority.)

At the moment, in the absence of any guidance to the contrary, what local authorities bring to this duty is their experience as patriarchs of the state school system; very different in almost every respect to home education. This does not leave them competent to judge home education

We can choose to argue the finer points of who should judge home education, if anyone other than parents. Meanwhile, we are real parents of real children now. We are not prepared to sacrifice them on the altar of ideological fine arguments for spurious and doubtful long term gains when we can effect actual change by our efforts now. Treatment by authorities (local and national) needs to improve, and short of radical statutory changes of which there is no sign, the process leading to guidance which can achieve this is under way **now** whether we like it or not. It makes sense to exert our best influence on it.

On the one hand this tendency of the local authorities to consider themselves the custodians (COSLA press release March) of the education service in Scotland (as backed up by tradition and habit since government-provided mass education began) and on the other hand the clarity of home educators that parents are responsible for the provision of their children's education (as backed up in statute and nature) makes it a particularly difficult starting place for anyone producing guidance.

The Scottish Executive needed reasoned responses.

EO responded by looking deeply at the draft and listening to what was being said there within the overall legal framework.

EO's response is not about negotiation. It is about improving understanding.

EO is clear about our statutory rights as parents and there is no question of conceding these. The listening/discussion approach is about increasing understanding on all sides and that includes hearing the executive's and the local authorities' concerns. They will then be better placed to hear home educators reasonably present their situation, concerns and rights.

EO's written response, after the comprehensive commentary, includes an amended version of the draft which is intended to be read alongside the executive's draft, section by section. EO's version both brings the executive's draft into line with the statute and embraces the ethos of home education while leaving the draft still recognisable as the executive's document, which of course it is and will remain.

EO has not submitted an EO draft guidance but an amended version of the executive draft as part of EO's response to that draft. (NB The amended version tests well against autonomous approaches to home education.)

EO intends to conduct the forthcoming discussions with the same approach, which is winning respect with the authorities concerned.

EO members and others are encouraged to take the time to read both the executive's draft guidance and EO's response to it in the context of the above. This is too important (for all home educators in the UK; you can be sure the DfES is watching) to form opinions based on hearsay. You will find both these documents on EO's website.

If you are inspired by this approach then perhaps you can use a similar approach to have preliminary discussions with the education authority in your own area. Contact eoinscotland@blueyonder.co.uk for support in this.

(For an account of how the draft guidance came about see EO NL 135 Aug 2000)

In Brief:

In response to Section 14 of Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 the Scottish executive produced draft guidance to local authorities on home education. (When asked by Jackie Welsh of the Scottish Consumers' Council at a home education family day in Glasgow in early 2000: "Who would home educators want to produce guidance?" the entire group of 30-40 home educators in that discussion said "the Scottish Executive").

The purpose of the section 14 guidance, per the debate in parliament, was to improve relationships and to assist education authorities to "not impede" home educating families in carrying out their right to home educate. Not surprisingly after insufficient consultation, and from a starting point of little understanding and knowledge of home education, the Scottish Executive in this first draft guidance missed the mark in several vital places. Home educators objected, protested and called for withdrawal of the guidance. The Scottish executive pointed out that they needed to hear the detail of why it was so wrong in order to do better, and as such did not withdraw the draft but assured those responding that further consultation would proceed in the form of discussions around the issues raised in the responses.

Home educators responded in writing, in a variety of voices and tones from the dismissive to the constructive and are now preparing for the discussions. EO hopes for preliminary discussions where the original draft and EO's response can be discussed in detail (presumably similar discussions will be held with others) followed by wider discussions which will involve education authorities and all the home education organisations.

EO is acting in good faith and on the assurances that the consultation process continues to be genuine and that home educators in Scotland can make a difference by using it. Home educators in Scotland are not powerless against government as some would portray us; we have reason, skill and statute at our disposal - and a new parliament which claims to aim for listening modern government.

Ann Samuel Till, Edinburgh

Local Contacts Meeting in Scotland

A small business meeting (and attendant gathering) was hosted in Fife by Karen Spy and family at the start of August. It was arranged at fairly short notice to allow local contacts and a few others from various regions to meet and discuss EO's work in Scotland. It was a very successful first meeting and was appreciated by all who attended it. We only touched the surface of many issues but by hearing what was going on in each of our own areas, how it was actually doing the job of local contact or being an EO member/home educator locally and how the relationship with EO was experienced, we at least recognised and acknowledged most of the issues which are around.

The main points arising were:

- 1) It was felt that the guidelines for local contacts need revising. They need to provide a good basic "training" guide as it is clear that dealing with enquiries and families needing support often involves counselling skills, legal knowledge and diplomacy skills. They also need to state clearly the limits of responsibility on local contacts and to remove the direction that "families must not be left unsupported" and replace it with detailed guidance as to how to support families and what to do when the LC can't for whatever reasons. It was agreed while this is EO's aim (not to leave a family unsupported) it is not realistic as a universal directive and places an unreasonable burden on the LC.
- 2) A welcome pack for LCs was suggested including, e.g., stationery etc., guidelines/training material, other LCs' contact details and contact details of those with expertise in specialist areas.
- 3) It was felt that two local contacts in each area would ease the problems and stresses considerably. It would be supportive and ease the phasing in of new contacts into the role.
- 4) The word "voluntary" should be placed before "local contact" and "enquiries secretary" wherever appropriate in leaflets.
- 5) Dealing with telephone enquiries requires similar "training" guidelines. EO is prepared to facilitate training sessions for volunteers in Scotland. We need three or four to spread the job out.
- 6) Local Groups: Good policy guidelines from EO with regard to its relationship with local groups are needed. Meanwhile it was acknowledged that in Scotland EO local groups are open for all home educators to join. Other local groups we heard of are open too - it was agreed that this was a good thing. It was recognised that groups of people can join together for their own purposes with whomever they wish (e.g. special interest/activity groups). The idea is that in general a local group for meeting and associating with other home educators should be open to all home educators in the area (though not necessarily on a drop-in basis - that depends on the group and the activities.)
- 7) The EO tri-fold information flier:
This leaflet has legal information on the back page which mainly summarises England and Wales law with only a small reference to Scots law. New wording for the back page was presented, reviewed and slightly amended, and the Scottish version will be printed. Costs are now being investigated.

It was also suggested that the helpline phone number be moved away from the London PO address and labelled clearly National UK helpline so that it does not give the impression that it is a London number (on all the leaflets at next printing). Calls to this number are directed across the UK.

Other EO leaflets should be checked for Scottish reference before printing. Often it only takes a slight change in wording to become inclusive and accurate. (Volunteer for this occasional EO job?)

8) The EO newsletter:

It is up to us in Scotland to claim some pages for Scottish news and articles each issue. EO and the newsletter editors are of course happy to accommodate this but the material needs to be produced. We agreed that members in Scotland should be encouraged to contribute.

- 9) It was felt a Scottish gathering would be a good thing because it would bring "real" people together which as we could see at this meeting was such an inspiring thing to do. It was also felt that a focus on providing for teenagers in such a gathering was a good idea. This was taken north by Pete Turnbull and is now under way. A gathering is being organised (near Aviemore at Glen More Lodge first weekend in November) by Alison Sauer and others in the Highland Home Educators group so that it is clearly open to all.

- 10) EO, at open meetings, has expressed the wish to have a meeting/gathering in Scotland. Venue suggestions for spring or summer welcome!

The meeting was also updated on the draft guidance to education authorities and on the National debate on Education (see main Scotland report.)

Ann Samuel Till, Edinburgh, Aug 2002

1st Highland Gathering

1st-3rd November 2002

There will be a weekend of fun near Aviemore, Scotland at Loch Morlich Youth Hostel, organised by the Highland Home Educators' Group (HHEG).

We have booked the whole hostel for the weekend so we have it to ourselves.

The hostel is an old hunting lodge opposite a loch, in the woods in the Cairngorm Mountains, lots to do, might have snow.....you get the picture!

Prices are £15 individual, £25 family, all self catering (big kitchens and dining room, good well stocked shop opposite hostel).

Family rooms available.

There will be some activities/visits arranged.

There are direct trains to Aviemore from London, York, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness etc.

Lifts by car will be available from Aviemore station by arrangement (7 miles).

For more details or queries please contact

Allison Clare Sauer

Highland Home Educators Group

23 Neil Gunn Crescent, Inverness, Highland, IV2 3EL

Tel: 01463 232 571 Fax: 01463 220 825 Email: allison@sauer.demon.co.uk

Places limited so book now!

A Meeting of Scottish Local Contacts

We usually just potter about in the North, but when we came back from holidays (still in the North) and found a letter suggesting a meeting of Scottish local contacts in Fife, I knew I wanted to try and get to it. So the following week we (Pauline, plus youngest and oldest daughter) set out on the train from Wick in Caithness, the end of the line in the North. Ourselves and another family arrived in Fife that evening at the home of the Spy family (Karen Spy is local contact) where the meeting was to be held the following afternoon. Everyone was arriving for lunch next day.

On the Saturday morning we all put up a Woodcraft Folk activity tent big enough to have lunch and tea in, and made lots of sandwiches for the sixteen adults and children who were arriving for lunch that day. People were bringing tents with them to camp over that night but due to heavy rain on the Friday the ground was a bit soggy, so between their house and outbuildings Karen and Donald managed to find space for everyone.

In Scotland there are seven local contacts (two regions are vacant at present); of those seven, five were able to come. There were also several others, active in EO, at the meeting. Since it is the 25th Anniversary of EO this year it seemed a good time to be looking at where EO is in Scotland at present and where it could be going.

We spent quite a lot of time talking about people's experiences of being local contact in differing areas with different home educating populations. We discussed difficulties that had arisen for people, and I think it was generally felt that being the only local contact in an area can sometimes feel a bit of a lone position. It was good to meet other local contacts, some of us meeting for the first time, and this helped to get a clearer and more unified picture of what is happening throughout Scotland. We also looked at the future, and a few suggestions arose out of our discussions of local situations.

In the evening we were joined by some of the Fife home educators. We had a leisurely meal together in the tent (plenty of home made quiches, rolls, soups, cakes and lots else followed by many pots of tea in both the tent and the kitchen). There was a heavy shower while we were eating but the camp fire which had been lit earlier survived it, and later there was dancing and sitting talking round the fire.

The Sunday morning was bright and sunny, and we went for a leisurely walk before having lunch and scattering back to our various parts of Scotland.

Many thanks to the Spy family both for suggesting the weekend and for making it possible by organising all the food and accommodation. Also to Ann Samuel Till for co-ordinating us all and chairing the meeting.

As well as being a worthwhile thing to do it was a very enjoyable weekend.

*Pauline and Anna Mackay
Braeval, Bower, Caithness KW1 4TP
Email: braeval@linux.co.uk*

Steve Stephens 20.8.52 - 5.9.2002

Steve Stephens, a long-time home educator, died suddenly from a brain tumour on 5th September in Leeds. In the early 1980s Steve and his partner Sara Bolton ran Natural Break, selling wholefoods. In the course of this they met home educators Jackie and James Fearnley at an East Anglian fair, which - along with knowing David and Sue Lyons (Yorkshire EOers) from Ilkley College - determined them that they too would educate their children at home. Steve and Sara shared 23 happy years of alternative living, educating their two children Lyall (now 18) and Erin (11).

Steve's illness was mercifully short. He died peacefully, surrounded by family and friends. May Sara, Lyall and Erin have the strength and courage to carry them through this time.

If you would like to write to Sara, her address is: 30 Methley Drive, Chapel Allerton, Leeds LS7 3NE.

Sarah Guthrie

September Archive Special

This extract is from an article by Dick Kitto entitled "A Summer Odyssey". He wrote it something over 20 years ago but it seems timely to quote it now:

"In September I camped at Brockwood Park in Hampshire for the annual Krishnamurti gathering. People from all over Europe, and further, had assembled for up to 10 days to hear Krishnamurti elaborate his message that a better society can only come through a change of heart in every individual, but that such a change is a possibility for all of us if only we can see ourselves and our relationships with absolute clarity.

It was inspiring to meet so many people whose feelings were hopeful and positive, who talked of what could be done, inwardly and outwardly, what they were planing, what we might do together.

Well, it is risky to make generalisations on such few and flimsy experiences, but looking back it was quite a heartening summer. I do sense a quickening of consciousness, a rise in the level of energy people are putting into thoughts of the future - perhaps, I must admit, stimulated by a growing sense of desperation, but nevertheless a feeling that many groups of people, religious groups, peace groups, women's groups, political groups, many individuals, are stirring, coming together, surrendering themselves positively to these experiences which will culminate in a new understanding, a new determination, preparing ourselves for the moment when everywhere at once people will rise and cry 'Enough. Now we demand to speak, to be heard. We are not a group of dissidents, or malcontents, we are not a demonstration, we are the people, and we will be listened to. We are an assemblage of many nations, many races, many individuals, many creeds, and we come in peace but we will no longer be brushed aside.'

Well, I don't know: perhaps, perhaps not. But the potential is there, I am sure. The opportunity. Who knows, perhaps the last opportunity for a long, long time."

Sarah Guthrie

Home Education in the news

Home news

As our society's rituals go, a child's first day at school has a powerful image. The excitement mixed with trepidation on their shining faces; the parents' tearful pride as their little ones take the first steps towards independence. So I couldn't understand why, when my oldest son started school this time three years ago, instead of a new beginning it just felt all wrong. How could he, as I felt then, be too young for it all? He was one of the oldest in his reception year; his friends were all going; and hadn't his nursery school teacher hinted that he might prefer the structure of the school day to the sand-and-water chaos of the preschool? I hated myself for being the stereotypical anxious mother at the school gates watching my child being led away in tears as the teacher sympathised: It's harder for the mothers, you know.

In one sense they were right. My son came to accept the boring worksheets, the noise, the perplexing routines and the lack of control over how he spent his time. Children are very adaptable, as any teacher will tell you. But I could not accept seeing him change from a child who was interested in finding out everything to someone who just wanted to get the right answer and a star on his jumper. He was getting used to doing what the teacher wanted and getting used to being bored (see John Holt's *How Children Fail*). After meeting other home-educating families, getting information from Education Otherwise and reading as much as I could, I took him out after two terms. I don't think he's been bored since.

In this issue's article, taken from the *Guardian*, the journalist Dina Rabinovitch addresses the question of the right age to start school, and interviews two parents who were unhappy with what they felt to be school's "too much, too soon" approach. One opted to go outside the system as a home-educator, the other seeks a solution within it. Let's hope that the second mother's optimism is well founded, and that the new minister for education David Miliband's plans for education to be the responsibility of everyone come true. It would be nice to have a real alternative for the future.

Ann Kennedy Smith, with thanks to Di Cox, Yvette Hartley, Carolyn Newsome and Niki Murphy for contributions.

Tender shoots

Aaron, aged five and three-quarters, is sitting at a curvy kind of table, in his own bedroom. He's not wearing any shoes, and he's not on his bottom, but leaning forward over his work from a kneeling position on his chair.

Over the next 15 minutes he shifts position a dozen times in his chair. Now the legs are tucked underneath him, then untucked, now one leg is off the chair, next he's standing over his work. It's as if he's just completed a round of yoga poses. But while his legs move, his hand is steadily tracing out a line of letter Ms in different colours - his choice - across a page. His freedom to move underscores his concentration. What's more, Aaron won't be getting into any fights today. Aaron is learning.

Nine months ago Aaron's chances of studying anything at all didn't look good. He has no handicaps, no disabilities, no behavioural problems. But after a year in reception, which he began after his fourth birthday like most UK children, and then a move into year 1 just after his fifth birthday, his mother, Paulina Liberman, decided enough was enough. "When Aaron was three years old, he wanted to talk to the world," Liberman says. "He enjoyed going to nursery a few mornings a week. Then he went into reception. It was a full day, and it was too long. He showed this by becoming insane in the evenings. He was shorter than the other children, and he doesn't like to hit. He himself said that often: 'Mummy, I don't like to hit'. But he was now getting into fights every single day at school.

"He began to display characteristics he hadn't shown before. His patterns of behaviour began to change. He would tease other children, and then run away. I didn't like it at all, because he had always been sweet-natured."

One month after Aaron began year 1, his mother pulled him out of school. All her instincts told her that her son was too young for formal schooling. She opted for home education. In effect, about three private lessons a day interspersed with swimming and just hanging out with his mother and baby sister. Sent to school, Aaron was unhappy in the mornings; now he's bouncy. She feels she has recovered the child she knew before. One thing she is not worried about is how fast her son is learning to read. She herself reads in three languages, but - not British-born - she only began formal education aged six.

Aaron's mother is not the only one to be questioning why children in the UK are starting school younger than almost anywhere else in the world. Education professionals have been tossing the issue back and forth for some time, and the disquiet is now beginning to filter through to those who use the system. Parents are starting to ask not what reading level is my child on, but has my child played enough today? Parents like Paulina Liberman put the question more forcefully: will a child be marked for life by starting school too young? Can a year or two matter so much?

As the questions are asked, so the research studies abound. Right now there are hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of projects looking at the effect of different styles of curricula on different ages. But the fact is, for every study that shows that too early exposure to school can make boys - boys are worst affected - develop aggressive characteristics not innate to their personalities, there will be another study showing that "early childhood programmes" create more social adults. The truth is, the research is inconclusive, one way or the other. Partly this is for the very simple reason that you cannot prove how any one child will do under two different education systems, without being able to rewind that child's life - so where's your control for your experiment?

The one thing all the studies agree on, however, is that for such early education to be beneficial, there needs to be a high ratio of teachers to children. The legal starting age for children is when they have turned five. However, in order to get your child into a school, increasingly you have to enrol the child into that school's reception class, which means starting at four; 80% of our four-year-olds are in

reception classes within primary schools. The ratio of teachers to children is one to 30 for the reception year. For parents alive to the constant twists and turns of the educational agenda, there is now an added cause for concern. It is becoming clear that the so-called improvements in reading and numeracy are illusory. We're starting earlier than other countries, but our standards are sliding. Surely some mistake somewhere? Again, boys are faring worst: in writing tests, below 50% of boys are achieving level 4 at key stage 2 - and that's with the acknowledged cheating that's going on.

Meanwhile, as standards sink, more and more assessment procedures are put into place. So SATs in year 2 - when children are aged six and seven - mean that children in reception, and in year 1, are being trained to sit the looming test papers. There is a worksheet culture rampant in our schools, and it is creating children adept at recognising and completing a SAT - but at what cost?

So why do children start school so young in this country? The select committee on education and employment reported in June 2000 that "five years of age has been the starting point since the Education Act of 1870. Thus children in the UK enter school one or two years earlier than their peers in other countries, including most of Europe and North America." That 1870 legislation was not, as it happens, enacted on the basis of some conclusive - even if now outdated - evidence on the advantages of early classroom attendance. Back in the 1860s there was a debate over the starting age, ranged between starting at three or starting at seven. Five was the compromise decision.

Last year another mum, Leah Brown, took on the system. Brown's son, Sam, was born on August 30, 1997, which would make him the youngest in any class. Like Paulina Liberman, Leah Brown is not native to this country. She is Australian, and started school aged six. "Where I come from, the kids aren't pushed. We wait till they're gagging to go to school, champing at the bit for it, and that's great."

When the Browns started looking round for local schools for Sam, they discovered that in order to secure him a place they would have to put him into the school's nursery, and then reception class. He started nursery in a school very near his home. "We stayed for 10 days. There was no way he was going to let me leave him there," Brown recalls. "The nursery was okay: 26 kids and two adults. But all the youngest kids seemed confused. The teachers would stand up, clap hands and say, 'Right, tidying up time now, and these three-year-olds just stood

LETTERS PAGES

East Enders meets the GCSE crisis

Hi everyone,

My name is Jackie Goldsworthy and I have recently put my name forward as Local Contact for London East. I am married with one daughter, Laura who is 14, and I work part-time as a Council cleaner. This includes schools and is rather interesting as it constantly reminds me of why Laura is not at school.

Like many of you my daughter came out of the school system following some bitter and disturbing experiences. We follow a structured education and I consider myself as her educational manager, rather than a tutor. This means that I find professional people that we feel comfortable with to do the teaching and I guide her through her courses and towards exams. I am proud to say that Laura has passed 4 GCSEs this year, 2 with A and B grades. Congratulations to all of you who have achieved your own objectives.

Now down to business – Five Borough Councils control the East London area: Waltham Forest, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham. It is my intention, as Local Contact, to establish a chain of representatives with good knowledge of their individual LEAs to assist me in this job. I am Waltham Forest and Liz Swinburne, who was the previous Local Contact, has offered herself as Tower Hamlets. So, please step forward if you can offer yourself for the remaining Boroughs or alternatively send me any information regarding your contact experiences with your LEA.

I have gravitated towards the position as Local Contact since the Cambridge Exam Board announced that they are to phase out the IGCSE exams next year. Several friends have become very concerned about the rug being pulled from under those home educators who have relied on this exam syllabus.

With this in mind I have recently met with our LEA's Head of Student Support. She told me that her department has no first hand knowledge of home educators, although they feel confident that they have now compiled an accurate list of children not attending school and this amounts to a small minority group, who don't reply to

their letters because they are doing something that they know they are not supposed to be doing!

After I supplied her with a copy of the EO Summary of Law she suggested we attempt to compile a list of home educating children who are studying for GCSEs and wish to be entered for their exams locally. I would *not*, of course, divulge names, but if I could provide her with numbers, subjects and dates you intend sitting exams, they might be persuaded to help with the increasing problems home-educated families are having in finding suitable exam courses and centres. So I would be glad to hear from local members – in confidence – about your hopes and plans for GCSEs. I truly expect my list to be far longer than theirs!

*Jackie Goldsworthy, 23 Parkhill Road, Chingford
London E4 7ED Tel: 020 8 529 8962*

Home Education and social skills

Mindful of the commonly-held view that home-educated children do not have the opportunity to develop 'social skills', I though readers might be interested to hear of my 16 year old daughter's experience of her first job interview.

Two Saturday posts were advertised in our local branch of Boots. These jobs would involve handling the main till on the busiest day of the week, and later being trained to serve on the pharmacy counter. No special qualifications were needed, though clearly the ability to deal with other people was a major requirement. My daughter, who has been home-educated from the age of eight, applied along with eleven others, including one other home-educated teenager. Both posts were offered to the home-educated applicants. The manager of Boots, who had conducted the interviews, gave us some interesting feedback. She said that the home-educated candidates had stood out way above all the other applicants; in particular they had been far more outgoing and confident.

This has certainly reinforced our view that the practice of putting children in groups of 30 or more, of exactly the same age, is not the ideal way for them to develop socially.

*Heather McCombie, The Warren, 15 Haygrove Close,
Warmunster, Wiltshire BA12 8SL Tel: 01985 217600
E-mail: heather@theburrow.free-online.co.uk*

Moving to Cambridge area

Hello! I'm a mother of 4 lovely children. We are looking to move to a small village south of Cambridge next spring. We don't know which one yet but wondered if any EOers out there could contact us who live in Cambridgeshire/Suffolk. We'd like any information on a nice village to live in – ideally with bus/train access to Cambridge – we were thinking of somewhere not far from the A1307. Any good places to advertise or look for property would also be useful, as would any advice on housing benefit rates from anyone who might know someone in that area that receives benefit. Or do you know of a property that may be available for renting from March onwards next year? We ideally would like a three-bedroomed property with a garden. All offers of advice/help would be greatly appreciated.

Louise Sutton, 1 Cliffe Royd, Hebden Bridge, W Yorks. HX7 8DJ

Contact for single parents

Being a single parent home educating can be a very rewarding and fun-filled lifestyle; it can also sometimes be very tough. This is where you can help. I am compiling a list of single parent families or those that have been single parent families that would be willing to be contacted by other single parents who want to talk or meet with others in the same boat. If you feel that you can be supportive (or know someone who could) to new or long standing EO members who are or have become single parents families please send your details to me. Thank you.

*Rowenna Williams | Bythynnod Crogen, Llandrillo, Corwen, Clwyd. LL21 0SY.
Tel: 01490 440560 Email rowenna73@hotmail.com*

Bullying

Just recently I was witness to a case of adult bullying towards a young child at a local group outing. I was completely taken aback to witness such an aggressive outburst towards another person's child and then to hear more abusive tones from the aggressor towards the victim's mother who went to defend her child.

This incident has left me with very mixed feeling about being involved with local groups and in particular meeting new people who come along. I am still in a state of shock that something like this could have happened in a home educating group where children and adults would expect to be safe. In fact some children have been removed from school because of incidents like this.

Well, what should be done about bullies? Schools have a policy on bullying and does EO need one? Should these sorts of people and their families be excluded from EO? What do others think? Perhaps people need to be reminded more often that EO does provide guidelines* with a code of conduct, which should be adhered to by members.

This has been a nasty experience for my family to witness and it has left me feeling sad, confused and uncertain about where I stand with local home educating groups in the future.

** See EO Handbook, AR*

Name and address supplied

Getting the word out!

Some time ago, back in the depths of winter our local EO group was asked if we would like to have space for a stall at a 'Green Fair', an event to publicise 'green businesses and charities'. We decided this would be a good opportunity to tell others about EO and so we booked a place and thought little more about it.

Soon enough the weekend of the Fair drew near and suddenly it seemed as if all the other group members were away on holiday and I was asked if I could go along to the Fair. I was a little nervous about this as I don't consider myself to be very outgoing and the thought of having to talk to so many complete strangers was a little terrifying! Also, one of my children goes to school so I felt a bit of a fraud as an ambassador of home ed (although this was an advantage on the day). However, many years ago, when I was still in my teens, I had seen an EO stall at an event and filed away the information that school was not compulsory in the back of my mind. Directly because of this, when my daughter began to have problems at school, many years

.... cont'd →

later, I was aware that we had choices. So, I felt it was only fair to repay the favour and do my bit to inform other people.

EO provided the materials for the stall, posters, leaflets, books etc. One of the other group members had made an excellent stand to display them all using recycled cardboard from our local scrapstore, so all I had to do was go along and be available should anyone want to talk. We went along as a family and seemed to be the only stall (apart from one other with a son who we discovered was home educated!) who had children involved, which seemed strange to us!

During the course of the day we had lots of people coming to chat with us. Some had heard of home ed and others were surprised it existed. Lots of people read the posters that EO had provided and lots more took away the leaflets to read. We met a couple of home ed families from other areas who were on holiday and came over to say hello. We spoke to a trainee teacher interested in alternatives in education and one of my daughter's school teachers was spotted avidly reading the posters although unfortunately she didn't stop to chat! At one point I had a discussion with a lady who had three children at school but only one of them was unhappy there and she felt it wouldn't work to have only one child at home and the others in school. She spoke to my younger school-going child who reassured her that it need not be a problem. It's about knowing that you have choices.

In all, we enjoyed a really interesting day and hopefully someone out there will have benefited by knowing that they have a choice about school. If there are any events in your area where an EO stall would be welcome then do go along.

It's fun, honest!

Kate Molyneux, 5 Redside Terrace, Cowley, Exeter.

Another way to get the word out

My name is Melinda Reineke and we live in Dorset. On Sunday 4th August we took part in the Bournemouth Carnival, advertising home education. We covered the sides of our float with EO posters and life-size paintings of the children and we won 2nd prize for the under 16s category.

We handed out flyers with EO details on, as well as details of our own group which meets here in Bournemouth every week. The group is run by June who is our local EO contact and she worked very hard to organise our place in the carnival procession. She really deserves all the credit because she is very hard-working and very committed and dedicated to home-education.

We all spent Saturday night at our hall so that we could get up really early to decorate the float. It was great fun and we hope to win first prize next year!

*Melinda Reineke, 53 Moorside Road,
Bournemouth BH11 8DG*

Home Exchange/Swap

Hello, we are looking for a family living in or very near to London who might be interested in swapping homes for a week or two in March or April of 2003. We are a family of 4 (daughter age 16 and son, 12) who would like to spend time in the London area. We live near Madison, Wisconsin in the American mid-west. Chicago is 3 hours to the southeast of here and we are only about an hour away from Milwaukee, which is on the shore of Lake Michigan (one of the 5 Great Lakes). We have an older home in a small town just north of Madison. There are many things to do in Madison itself and both Milwaukee and Chicago have tons to offer also. Madison has a population of 200,000, with the total metropolitan area closer to 350,000 or so. Four large lakes surround the city, and the downtown area is actually on an isthmus between two of these. We have one of the largest U.S. universities here (40,000 students) so there are many cultural and sporting events, concerts, performances, lectures etc. always happening. There are several free museums that are worth a visit. We have a nice arboretum and botanical gardens. Madison is also the capital of the state of Wisconsin and you can tour the capital building as well as sit in on legislative sessions if that is of interest. There is a wonderful state park about an hour north that offers gorgeous bluffs for hiking and rock climbing. There is also a living history museum that features pioneer homesteads from various

ethnic groups nearby that is worth a visit. If interested, we can provide many brochures and other suggestions for things to see and do.

Our home could sleep 6 people comfortably and we do have a ½ acre lot to spend time in as well. We have 3 bedrooms (1 double bed and 2 singles) upstairs. There are 2 full bathrooms in all and a spare room downstairs with a double sized futon. If necessary, there is also a sofa sleeper in the living room. The house is not fancy but is comfortable. There is a television/VCR, computer, piano, drum set and home library (books and videos) that you are welcome to use. We have a washer and dryer in the basement. We also have 4 bicycles available for riding and a large collection of board games to play. There is no public transport right to our door but it is only a 10-15 minute cab ride (cost is approximately \$10) into Madison where you can catch city buses. You might also consider the possibility of renting a car. You can catch buses into Milwaukee and Chicago from Madison as well (the cost is about \$20 round trip). It is 2 miles from our house into the small town of DeForest, which has grocery stores and other basic services. You could bike or walk there if necessary. We have many friends in the area with children ranging from toddlers to teens and would be happy to set you up with some welcoming contacts who might act as occasional guides. We also belong to an active homeschooling group which hosts activities such as outings, arts and crafts days, and family potlucks that you could attend if you like.

As far as our family goes, we are not picky about accommodation. We just need to be able to sleep the four of us reasonably comfortably and have access to public transport, and cooking facilities. We would certainly appreciate any suggestions you might have for sights, restaurants, stores, etc. located near your home. If you might be interested in such an exchange or know anyone else who might be, please write to:

Kelly Kotewa-Velde,
4471 Windsor Rd, Windsor, WI 53598 (USA)
E-mail: kkotewa@msn.com

Information and advice

I have just finished reading June's newsletter and I have thoroughly enjoyed it. It was both informative and extremely well written, and some of the stories were very comical. (Although not much for SEN) I think the newsletter is fabulous!! Sometimes I wish there was more to read because once you start you can't put it down and then of course the housework waits until you've finished!!! I think the newsletter is fine - if you make it glossy the price will go up quite a lot and it will lose its charm.

My son has a severe speech and language problem, he is 3 years old and just really starting to communicate with me. My other son, just 2, also has speech delay. Does anyone have similar problems with their child(ren) and do you have any information or advice you could pass on to me?? If anyone does and lives in my area it would be nice to get together with some other children of similar ages and their mums in East London. My children are 5, 3 and 2.

Kim Uysal email: kimuysal@hotmail.com
or alaradesigns@hotmail.com

Redressing the balance

I don't know your name but whoever you are who wrote the article 'Redressing the balance' August NL. I say to you, from the bottom of my heart, I don't think any article I've ever read has struck such a chord with me - thank you so much. I am a lone parent of 4 children, 8, 6, 3 and 4 months. I have always home-educated and its something I so strongly believe it is the only way. I struggle financially and it will be at least a year before our heads are above water. We live on benefits, don't own a computer and if we want a day out anywhere other than our local village (which only has shops, library and cafes) we may have to scrimp and save for a month or two. I wish we had just a bit more money so we could nip on the train for a day out but, hey! one can learn even if you're mainly at home. I think uschooling helps. I don't feel pressured to have piles of resources (though I do have piles of workbooks - mostly unused!) Though saying that I'd love a computer, microscope, telescope etc. - but there's always something we want isn't there? cont'd →

I do think to home-educate it is really important to like being with your children. I spend 24 hours a day with mine, though an hour to myself once a day would be bliss, but they are only very young for such a short time and though it can be quite intense I find sometimes I only have to ask for 10 minutes on my own (+ baby and 3 year old) and my older two will go off and play.

As my children grow the only slight worry I have as regards the home-education is: are there many children 11+ out there being home-schooled? It seems to me (maybe incorrectly) that there are two large dropout points for home-educators - ages 7 and then 11. I find this is when a lot of children start school (or their parents decide to send them!). The first age I think is because, up to age 7 parents don't mind their children playing but then worry begins to set in that their children are not reading/writing, doing enough structured education etc. and it is easier to hand responsibility over to a school. Then at age 11, there are the future worries of achieving academic qualifications and lack of 11+ friends who are home-educated. Let's get something established for these secondary age children - camps, YHA weekends, their own newsletter etc. Is the travel to visit others of a similar age a problem? I know home-educated children can and do enjoy mixing with various ages but my daughter, at nearly 9, would relish one or two special home-educated friends she could have days out or sleepovers with.

Another question I have with regards to home education is on the theme of autonomous radical unschooling. Are there older children (16+) out there who have been home-educated in this way and what are they doing now? It is sometimes thought by a few that if you home-educate in an unstructured way, children won't achieve anything academic or even get a job in the future (unfortunately this is the way society sees success - not just being happy). Come on you unschoolers - drop me a line!

On a final note, obviously I enjoy the newsletter but the style has changed somewhat over the last year or two. I used to love reading home-educators' personal accounts and diaries of how real people out there are doing it and the ups and downs of home-schooling life, but now the bulk of the newsletter is much more formal - law,

book reviews, contacts etc. Which is great but it lacks a personal element. If everyone sent in 'A week in our home-schooling life' every few months we'd have plenty to read and write. Just a thought anyway. Thanks for reading
Louise Sutton, 1 Cliffe Royd, Hebden Bridge, West Yorks HX7 8DJ

P.S. If anyone out there has any 'My little ponies' they could donate/sell cheaply to me, my 3 year old would be delighted.

Reply to Helen Burton

I respect Helen Burton's view that overly dogmatic 'anti-school' beliefs may be detrimental to our children, but if all the sentiments expressed in her letter became the norm I would subscribe elsewhere!

Where else can EO parents safely express their disappointment/grief/rage at how school has affected their kids, or share their vision of a society freed from the straitjacket of conventional education?

Surely struggling teachers would not turn to EC for comfort? And yet many home-educators only have to greet their immediate neighbours/relatives to be lectured on the value and necessity of school. Why cannot we then blow our own trumpets fairly regularly?!

In my experience, passionately held beliefs do not exclude the ability to be objective and balanced and, in fact, I feel the newsletter overall reflects a wide spectrum on the school versus home question.

I abhor the idea that EO should become 'more mainstream'! (Society needs more, not fewer, freaks and weirdos!) It is complex, but I trust that if we have a true respect and relationship with our children, our being ourselves - straight or oddball - will allow them to respond positively to peer and TV culture pressure to become as conformist or radical as is right for them.

Similarly, the strength of EO is in maintaining the distinct position for which it, as far as I understand, came into being: "To alleviate the sense of isolation of most de-schoolers, and the consequent anxieties and undermining of confidence they suffer from" (NL No. 1, Dec. 1976).
Polly Milner, 10 Wordsworth Road, Salisbury, SP1 3BH

It would be great to receive more contributions about home education in practice, throughout the UK – warts and all! All your experiences and viewpoints are valued, and I try to give space to every member with something to say. Remember, the NL is comprised of what you send us... AR

National Home Education Day???

I heard a rumour that October 19th is National Home Education Day. Whether it is or not, could we use the occasion to each do something to publicise EDUCATION OTHERWISE – whether it be topping up the leaflets in the local library, doctor's surgery or youth enquiry service, writing to the local newspaper to remind people of our existence, or ringing up the local radio station.

Letters do not need to be complicated. There are often articles mentioning bullying in local papers, and even more common are the Back To School headlines and advertisements. It can be a general letter, or you can mention that you are yourself involved in home education and willing to put people in touch with others.

*Jackie Fearnley, North Yorkshire
(newly re-enthused after the 25 year celebration:
written before I had read the last NL issue!)*



EO and the Home Education Stand at the Education Show 2003

Following the success of the Home Education stand at the Education Show in March of this year EO has decided to continue to support the venture for the next 2 years. Part of this support will be financial and council have decided to use £700 from the reserve fund for each of the 2 years. I have been asked to put an appeal in the newsletter asking interested members to help reimburse the reserve fund by sending donations to the Treasurer (please write "Education Show" on the reverse of your cheque so the money goes into the correct account.)

The Home Education stand appeared at this year's Show for the first time. It provided an opportunity to promote the whole of the home education community and not any organisation in particular. As mentioned before the stand was a great success and represented a considerable step forward in promoting home education within the "education industry."

If anyone is interested in helping out be it with ideas or time on the stand, or if you would like to know more about the event, please do contact me, Penny Clarke (W Midlands) pennyclarke@blueyonder.co.uk

The website for the Education show can be found at: <http://www.education-net.co.uk/>



EO Truancy Packs

The truancy packs are nearing completion and our thoughts have turned to distributing them.

The contents will essentially be the guidelines to the Crime and Disorder Act (as issued to the police) and specimen letters to be sent to both local police and LEA Access and Inclusion Officers/EWOs. The idea behind the packs is to inform all interested members and local police and LEAs of the situation regarding truancy patrols and home educators.

Ideally we would like to distribute as many copies as possible to members by email and the remainder by post.

Initially we thought to ask Local Contacts to take on the responsibility of distributing letters to their local police and to Access and Inclusion Officers/EWOs, but we do appreciate that all may not wish to do this. If anyone would like to take on this task they would be most welcome to do so but please check with your Local Contact first as they may already be doing some work in this area. We would like letters to go to each LEA in England and Wales so if you could help here, please do contact Penny Clarke by email if you use this medium, post or telephone. pennyclarke@blueyonder.co.uk 5 Ridge Way, Aldridge, Walsall WS9 0HL Tel 01922 745465.

Please contact Gary Podmore (Tel. 01142 585702 52 Rupert Road, Sheffield, South Yorks., S7 1RP) or Penny Clarke if you would like more details of the truancy packs.

Openness & Accountability

EO's accountability is determined by statute (Companies Acts, Charities Commission rules and regulations), our Memorandum and Articles of Association and in addition by attending to good practice wherever possible. EO's policy has been towards increasing openness and accountability over the years.

In accordance with its articles, EO conducts its business through three open council meetings a year, which all members are entitled to attend. These are normally held in the context of gatherings to facilitate attendance at them. The meetings move around the country so that travel distances vary for members. Minutes are available to all members (on request to those not at the meeting). Council members are elected at the AGM held at one of the meetings. Council members usually come from those members doing the work of EO (which is unpaid, attracts little kudos and a lot of flack). The newsletter is used to keep members informed of work being done by EO when possible (people often run out of time to do it all). Council members and other members doing jobs for EO try to handle enquiries as they arise. Members organise local and regional gatherings, meetings and conferences where information is disseminated freely.

EO measures up well against the usual standards in business practice and particularly as seen in other comparable voluntary organisations with no paid staff.

Now though, the internet and email have speeded up communications in all walks of life, including in EO. Some of this is plainly great and has improved efficiency and information-spreading, conflict-solving and the amount of work that gets tackled ... but the down side is that it knows no bounds. The increase in speed has meant that responding to jobs happens faster and the next job pops up faster too. The work load is increasing exponentially, while home education is also growing.

We need to find ways to use the internet to work for us by reducing work load rather than creating ever more work. With the internet, those who are on it can share information faster BUT this can by implication mean that those doing the work are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week .

The unmoderated internet mailing list discussion format is a case in point. While it has the advantages of immediacy, ease and speed of communication there are several disadvantages with respect to using the format for business, for which it was probably never intended, and which limit its efficiency. Useful points frequently get lost in assertion, contradiction and rhetoric, and the normal courtesies of professional debate are frequently abandoned. In addition, it is estimated that fewer than 17% of EO members are on a home education mailing list (and that's with no one "no mail"), which limits the application for purposes of openness and accountability.

Doing business is about decisions and subsequent actions. The processes leading to decisions are usually characterised by the sharing of an outline of the need or the proposal, relevant accurate information and a summary of possible choices and of probable outcomes. The views and ideas of interested parties are then shared and after due consideration a vote or consensus choice taken. All this is usually held together by one person - normally a chairperson or facilitator for the purpose.

Pre-16s and College

In September 2001, Aimi, then 14 years of age, and I went to the course registration days at our local further education colleges to ask about availability of Art /Design /Fashion oriented courses that she could attend.

Aimi is a very art oriented person, taking after her Mum who is a figurative sculptor, and having tried to do GCSE level academic work, and found it depressingly rigid, it was clear that Aimi would never be likely to settle into formal GCSE courses. Both Aimi and I were keen that she not spend the remaining two years till she was 16 filling in time till she was able to go to college to study art, so we were keen for her to get access to college facilities early if we could find a way. When we approached the colleges, the response of one was that she could not attend because the insurance would not allow it. The response of the other was much ruder, they said that they would resist the arrival of all under 16 year olds because they would then be liable to OFSTED inspections!

I was not terribly surprised by these responses as of course the colleges are focussed on the provision of resources for 16+ year olds. Accepting younger children is unlikely to be the colleges' preferred way of filling their places, as it is bound to involve them in some additional work. The main problems are getting funding and ensuring appropriate supervision, but there are also other minor issues such as insurance and different inspection systems for under 16s. So I accepted that for another year Aimi would have to continue her own independent work towards her portfolio. But conscious that this government claims to be very keen to promote educational access that suits the needs of older children who are not academically oriented, I also decided that I would use the next 12 months to see if politely asking for what I thought was right would find a different response.

First I called the colleges and asked them to send me as much information on their courses as possible: vocational qualifications, GCSEs and other academic courses, and adult education courses. All of these are potential entry points to college courses for under 16s and where there is low demand for courses the college is naturally likely to be positive about young applicants. I also did a little background research using websearches and calling my local councillors who I have spoken to a few times. This revealed that the LEA has a contract with the nearest college, as many do, for taking 14-16 year olds who cannot get a school place - due to poor behaviour/exclusions, or overdemand etc. This of course rather undermines their claim that they are not insured for under 16s.

Having identified the courses which appeared likely to be of interest we started to make enquiries about entry. The Adult Education courses we were considering were quickly ruled out, even though home educated children have been successful in accessing Adult Education in some areas. In our area of London the attractive-looking courses in stage makeup and styling, dress design and so on were in heavy demand, and the rules that they are funded for 19+ year olds are very firmly applied. The other obvious option was the GNVQ Intermediate course in Art and Design at the City of Westminster College. No GCSEs are required for entry to this level of course, as the usual intake is of 16 year old Art oriented school leavers who have few or no GCSEs because they were not academically-oriented but had to stay in school till 16 anyway!

The course is a full time 1 year course giving a broad introduction to drawing, painting, digital graphics, textiles, printing, glassblowing, photography, etc. I called the college to check what reaction I would get for this specific type of course and was again firmly told that under 16s could not be admitted. So I changed tack and called again to ask for an interview so my daughter could see if the course would be of interest.

A few weeks later we had an interview with a careers advisor, who again said that 16 year olds could not attend because funding was not available. I asked if Aimi could attend if we resolved

the funding issue by paying ourselves or via the LEA, and he agreed it might be possible, and passed us on for an Art department interview. We met the head of school of art and again were quite open about the situation, saying that we were interested in the course for when Aimi was 16, but explained that she would much prefer to start at 15, and asked if she would have any objection, if we were able to arrange LEA approval and resolved the funding. The Head of Art was very considerate and, having looked at Aimi's portfolio and talked to her, and satisfied herself that Aimi was competent both to benefit from the course and cope with the age group of the class, said that she would be perfectly happy in principle for Aimi to start at 15.

The key with the college seemed to be to make it clear that we were not expecting them to come up with funding, that we would take responsibility for approaching the LEA and resolving the funding issue ourselves. The Head of Art then referred me to the course administrator, who checked with the LEA, and again they agreed that in principle a child could be placed at the college under the funding from the LEA but the content of their special under 16 education could be the GNVQ. So nominally Aimi is a child who can't be placed at a school, but instead of doing the mix of social skills courses, vocational interest and simplified academic curriculum that is provided for excluded children, she would simply be registered as a normal GNVQ student.

The application then has to be settled by the LEA's "social inclusion" procedures. Our application for Aimi was based on the fact she had difficulties before she left school in year 8, so the grounds for applying to the LEA were what they term "reintegration of a disaffected child", but in principle a case can be made for any child who would not otherwise be going to school. What the LEA are not happy about with under 16 applications, is that there is any chance that the impression be given that college is a direct alternative to school.

I then took my courage firmly in both fists and phoned the Development Manager, Social Inclusion at the LEA, and simply explained the situation and asked for the college place to be funded and allocated. I have to be honest, this is when I expected things to get tough, and a round of calls to my councillor, and a visit to the MP to ensue, but no, to my great surprise my call was met with understanding, encouragement, and prompt action. The manager explained that the question would be referred to the Pupil Placement Panel, but that she supported my request and saw no reason why it should be turned down. I was asked to write explaining the facts for the committee to review. It took many weeks to go round the committee loop of course but eventually I heard that the case had been approved, without my having to provide any further information, and in due course the college confirmed that the LEA had authorised the place. We went for an interview with the Head of Foundation Studies at the College, who is a lovely lady who looks after the LEA funded under 16 year olds, who they call "Education Otherwise" students!

In September we had the entertaining job of explaining to the enrolment officers that yes, Aimi was 15, and yes, her place had been agreed by the course administrators, and the Art department, and the LEA, and no, she didn't have to go to school instead! Oh, and we had to have an interview with the course tutor, because nobody had thought to tell her that a 15 year old was joining her course. Once again she began hunting for potential problems but soon mellowed to Aimi's charming manner and gentle confidence. Aimi came away brimming with excitement about the details she learnt about the course content.

So if you feel that a college based course is the best option for your under 16 year old, make some calls, don't take no for an answer first time round, and keep pointing out to people that the government says that it wants to provide education for 14-19 year olds that they find accessible. Funding has successfully been accessed from the LEA, the Learning and Skills Council, and from various special access funds, even if many of the administrators don't know it can. Keep trying different people and making the ethical case for education to be provided for your child that your child is willing and able to access until you find a friend who will show you how the system can be

used to make it possible. There are good guys everywhere in the LEAs and colleges, trying to use the existing systems to maximum benefit. The people who helped me have clearly been working to broaden the access to the college via the LEA funding provision for excluded children. Many LEAs have this kind of contract with a local college in order to support children who can't be placed in school, partly because the number of spare places is now being kept to an absolute minimum. I know we are not the first to find a place on a full time FE college course for an under 16. The officials however did wish to make it very clear that they will only do this in cases where they think the child is mature enough to benefit from the college environment, and to cope with the older people in the class and the level of the work, and would benefit from the course, and would not be a disruptive influence. But they are also very clear that for some children this can be a much more suitable place than school.

Phil Hicks, West London

Special Sections

Following on from the above, Jo Borthen has offered to collate a SS for the December issue, based on the experiences of individual EO members in dealing with authority - good or bad, helpful or intimidating, throughout the UK (or abroad) in recent years. The aim is to give new home educators, or those who are just thinking about it, some idea of the range of procedures employed by Education Authorities and other officials in the field of education, how families have gone about dealing with them and what the outcomes have been. In addition, EO as a UK-wide organisation is uniquely placed to draw comparisons, point out instances of good practice and influence future developments, but we need examples to refer to. So let Jo have your accounts, please. And if anyone has an idea or would volunteer to collate a future SS, please get in touch with the NL Co-ordinator. *Anne Rix*

From Teacher to Home Educator

Twenty-five years ago I had very little interest in the teaching profession but, being unemployed, recently married, having difficulty in paying the rent and unable to find work related to my degrees, the shortage of maths and science teachers made the opportunity to work as a supply teacher too good a chance to ignore.

My lack of a formal teaching qualification, combined with a rather obvious lack of enthusiasm for school-teaching as a career, meant that I had some difficulty in finding permanent employment but I eventually secured a post as a maths and science teacher in an inner city boys' comprehensive school in Bristol.

This proved to be a life-changing experience. My own secondary education had been at a grammar school in Cheshire and it had, on the whole, been a fairly benign experience. Consequently, I was not prepared for life at the opposite end of the educational spectrum. The true extent of the educational divide became shockingly apparent to me very rapidly. I found myself trying to teach maths and science to boys for whom it had no relevance and who had a truly profound antipathy to everything that they were being forced to endure each day that they attended school.

It was a shock to be treated as an object of loathing by hundreds of schoolboys. Within the boundaries of the school fence it was not possible for me, as a teacher, to behave in a normal human way to any of the pupils.

I do not believe that individual teachers caught in this situation can do anything to remedy it: when children are being forced to attend school against their will and teachers are being paid to keep them there, then the relationship is bound to be one of mutual mistrust and even dislike.

I left teaching after three years with a sense that there must be something very wrong with the whole system and this caused my wife and I to think carefully about what sort of schooling would be appropriate for our own children when they reached school age.

Eventually we settled upon an independent school that had small classes and which fostered a close relationship between parents and teachers. The school was always short of teachers and short of money so I soon found myself filling in as the maths and science teacher and it was here that I was introduced to an aspect of teaching that I had never experienced before. I found that when working with small classes, without the need to meet externally applied criteria, it is possible to establish an atmosphere in which learning takes place and in which everyone enjoys themselves and feels fulfilled. From that time I have been hooked on the experience of being a teacher.

I have found that it is not something that can be taken for granted, everything has to come together in the right way for it to happen: parents have to support what you are doing; you have to be able to work in harmony with your colleagues; any external pressures, such as exams, testing or assessment, throw the process off balance or stop it dead in its tracks. When it is working, the process is magical. Children learn things from you that you didn't even know that you knew; you learn as much as they do and you all feel enriched by the experience.

The key to success is to treat children with respect and to remember how you would feel if you were in their shoes. I have been able to apply this principle when working with very disturbed children, teaching them one-to-one on behalf of local education authorities. Every child that I have taught has treated me with friendship and respect when I have followed the simple principle of trying to imagine how life must be like for them. One of the most touching things about this was that even children in young offenders centres or in desperate personal circumstances would try to learn to read or to write a poem or do something that they felt would please me once they realised that I cared about them – such was their fixed idea of what a teacher expected of them.

It became apparent to me that children learn best when they are happy and feel secure. Once I accepted that simple fact I realised that I, as a parent, should take more direct responsibility for the education of my own children. My wife and I started taking a much greater interest in what our children were actually doing at school and we adopted a more flexible approach to the whole process of education. We found that it was much more time consuming and demanding than we had ever imagined.

It also taught us some surprising lessons. We have come to understand that much of what takes place in our primary and secondary schools is not necessarily in the best interest of the children themselves, for example: sending children to school as soon as they are five years old (or even younger) is not always advisable; children do not need to learn to read and write when they are only five or six years old; for very young children, being able to play and to be at home with their mother and family is more important than mixing with children of their own age; exams and testing do not help children at all; practical activities are more important than book work and that most of life's important lessons cannot be learnt in school.

In practice our children's education has been a mixture of school, learning at home, correspondence courses, travel, private lessons, working things out for themselves and mixing with the world at large, which does not seem a bad combination but I still regret the fact that the choices offered to us were so poor. Our educational institutions seem to dehumanise children and make no effort to treat them with respect or to create an environment in which teaching and learning can take place in a natural way.

Gareth Lewis (pen name Martin Williams)

The above article, which has been slightly abridged, was first printed in The Telegraph Sept. 15th 2001

ADVERTISEMENTS

To place an advert: Advertising in the newsletter is free, but if you are running a business or hoping to make a profit from your advert please send an appropriate donation. Cheques should be made payable to 'Education Otherwise'. Please remember that EO is run entirely by volunteers and has no income except members' subscriptions. Adverts should be limited to 1/8 page or 50 words and sent (with any donation) to the NL Co-ord.

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In home-educating household. 4 weeks max.
£7 per night / £10 for couples. Nearest station
Theobalds Grove, 20 minutes into central
London. I have a 4 year old daughter.
Call Lisa on 01992 426710

Home-seekers

Young family wishes to have a small plot of
land to place a caravan. No services needed;
will be living from the caravan.
Three young children. Any area considered.
Contact Paul 07900 186925

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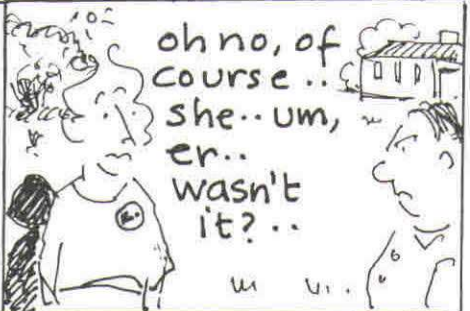
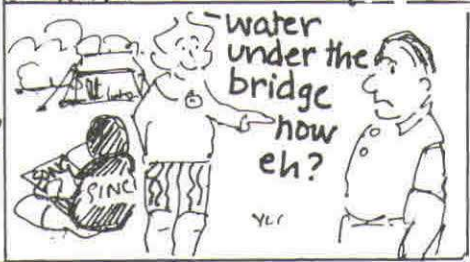
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responsibility of the parent.

EDUCATING ARCHIE

by SEG

STILL
CARTOONING
AFTER
25 YEARS

Mrs G meets friends old & new at the EO Gathering



Regional Diary

Events organisers please remember when giving full details of events 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 included automatically in every issue. Please notify any changes or meetings no longer taking place - **BY LETTER OR EMAIL PLEASE** - to: Anne Rix NL Co-ord (see inside back page) until further notice. Please **DO NOT TELEPHONE Martine** at ANY former telephone number - she has moved.

BATH

H.E.L.P. group meets regularly for outings and activities. Contact: Louise Jensen 01225 840735

BERKSHIRE

Woolinks Leisure Centre Burghfield Mondays 1pm. Tuesdays swimming at Windsor Leisure Centre noon onwards. £2.80

Wednesdays ice-skating at John Nike Leisure Centre, Bracknell 2-4pm, £1.50 show EO card at reception. Contact: Pat Connor 0118 9662123 Heros Club Holyport Maidenhead. Mondays 10-3 Regular sports, dancing, pottery crafts and cooking. £25 month or £10 family/day.

Contact: Dawn 01628 783107 (Also for local newsletter) www.zednetdemo.co.uk/2eddin Newbury group on Fridays for younger children. Contact: Gillian 01491 671328

Lambourn. Weekly meeting on a farm for crafts, cooking and nature walks, group based on respect for each other and our world and an unhurried childhood. Contact: Tracey or Roge 01793 610448 roge.tracey@virgin.net

Reading: Mondays, 10am - 12noon swimming at Central Pool, lots of teenagers

Contact: Lynn 0118 972 1420

Fridays, 11am - 3pm-ish near Pangbourne for chat and play. Separate space for teenagers; adventure playground for younger ones, animals.

Contact: Lynda 0118 961 4466

or Abigail 01628 483895

E-mailing list for home educators in Berkshire and surrounding areas for events/activities <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BerkshireHomeEducators>

BRISTOL

Tuesdays, trampolining with coach am followed by workshops at Totterdown YMCA. Friday am ice-skating. Contact: Kathy Nott 0117 966 8265

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

Contact: Carla 9354389

BUCKS

Newsletter for Bucks/Northants

Contact: Dawn 01908 569380

Dawnwaddington@hotmail.com

South Bucks: fortnightly meetings for craft, activities, play, speakers, drama, trips etc.

Contact: Jackie 01753 886924

Dorothy 01494 782864

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Cambridge regular meetings and outings.

Contact: Penny 01223 526441

penny.k@ntlworld.com

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

Contact: Audrey Hill 01480 219881

Peterborough: weekly meetings on Wednesdays for art, craft, science, swimming, sports, play and visits.

Contact: Sarah 01733 265043

SJLambert@aol.com

Cambridge/Norfolk border: fortnightly meeting at Guyhim.

Contact: Pat 01354 656582 or Ruth 01945 861464

CHESHIRE

Contact Gill Wilson 0161 443 8723 for North Cheshire/Stockport

Meeting 1st Wednesday of the month for crafts games and activities

Contact: Carrie 01270 875 633

Sue 01270 883 978 (for S. Cheshire)

CLEVELAND AND DURHAM

Contact: Pauline Butterworth 01642 899247

CORNWALL

Free events sheets every two months via Email or SAEs. Contact: Anna Wheeler, Cambrose Farm,

Redruth, TR16 4HT 01209 890378

Or Annawheeler@cambrose.fsnet.co.uk

Local information on our local home ed website: Homeedinkernow.tripod.com

CUMBRIA

Informal gatherings for socialising, support and activities.

Kendal alternate Wednesdays Castle St Youth Centre 12.30-3.30

Penrith alternate Tuesdays Castledown Community Centre 1.30-3.30

Contact: Sarah Cook 01768 896019

DERBYSHIRE

Chesterfield group meets every Wed. morning.

Contact: Karen 01246 865532

Kaz 01246 205463 Yvonne 01246 555645

South Derby/N.W. Leics/E. Staffs :

regular meetings, socialising and days out.

Contact: Julie 01283 760800

DEVON

***NEW!!!! Devon Newsletter, FULL details of events throughout the County: E-mail copies free; £3.00 for 6 months by post. Contact Kate and Elsie 01392 851370 or email katefernhill@aol.com NATIONAL TRUST (Devon) - Card held by Nick Vidal-Hall (01548 830716) gives free membership/entry to NT sites to all Devon EO members for pre-booked 'educational' visits.

East and Mid Devon:

Local Contact Becca 01404 549479

Honiton. Meetings each Tuesday for socialising and themed activities. Contact Becca 01404 549479

Exeter. Fortnightly social meetings on Wednesday afternoons resumed 4th September. Cost £1.00 per family. Contact Annie 01392 434167

Exeter. Pottery Drop In. Fortnightly, resumed 4th September. £2.50 per family Contact 01363 82314
Exeter. Learning Together 0 - 8 year olds. 10th Sept until Xmas 11.00am £2.00. Contact 01363 82314
Exeter. Learning Together for 5 years and over. 10th Sept to Xmas. 2½ hrs, Art and Craft based learning. £5.00 per child. Contact 01392 434167
Exeter. African Drumming and Dance Workshop. 5th and 19th Nov. £3.00. Contact 01363 82314
Credon. Social meeting fortnightly, Weds. £1.00 per family. Contact 01837 82365

North Devon

Local Contact: Anne 01237 451535
Bideford area Fortnightly social meetings beginning Tuesday 17th Sept. Ring Louise 01237 441786

South Devon

Local Contact Bridget 01803 862158
Weekly social meeting, Weds pm. Venue has plenty of outside play space. £1.00 per family.
Contact Bridget 01803 862158
Totnes. Teenagers weekly meeting on Thursdays 2.30pm to 6pm. 12 yrs+. £3.00 per young person.. Contact Nick 01548 830716 (adults) Young people contact Arran and Willow 01548 830716
Brixham. Regular meetings on Tuesdays. Contact Sally 01803 856862

DEVON EAST/DORSET WEST

Lyme Regis, Axminster, Bridport, Chard
Contact: Henry & Suzanne 01297 444207
Ann 01297 561070
Habiba 0845 4582984 (local rate)

DORSET

Regular meetings, keep in touch
Contact: Christine 01258 880355
Rosemary 01747 853 593
Bournemouth area: Meeting every Monday for crafts, games, play etc. Friendly, welcoming group.
Contact: June 01202 827945,
bugchick@btinternet.com

ESSEX

Colchester fortnightly meetings, Wednesdays £2.50 per family. Contact: Sue 01206 520284
35 Lethe Grove, Clochester, Essex CO2 8RG
Monthly in Chelmsford and weekly in Southend.
Essex Epicycle newsletter gives full details.
Contact: Corinne 07802 630693 epicycle@wavy.org
New group East London/Essex area
Contact: Gill 020 8597 8537
Swimming at Goresbrook Leisure Pool, Ripple Rd, Dagenham, every Tuesday 1pm onwards
Contact: Cindy 020 8553 0964

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

1st Tuesday of the month at Twyning
Every Thursday swimming and trampolining.
Other outings every month.
Contact: Rob and Fiona 01684 290087

HAMPSHIRE

Portsmouth EO. Warm and welcoming group with kids 5-15 meet Fridays for art, craft, music, chat and outings. Contact: Julie 023 92 640242
ACTIVEO meet 3 times a week within 25 miles of Petersfield. All welcome. Contact: 01428 712394
Fareham/Gosport area, friendly welcoming group.
Contact: Gayle 01329 823112
gaylie@btinternet.com
Basingstoke/Winchester area: group with mainly under 8s meet alternate Wednesdays St. Luke's hall Overton, with trips and activities between.
Contact: Michelle or Mark 07966 159017
Michelle.virgo@il2.com
Friendly group for under 10s, weekly meetings/outings/activities Farnham/Aldershot area.
Contact: Emma 01252 350034
emmajeavons@supanet.com

HEREFORDSHIRE

1st Monday of month for meetings, various venues.
Contact: Kath and Malcolm 01432 830883
homed@appcs.co.uk

HERTFORDSHIRE

TOP Health and Education Together. Drumming + all ages groups/individuals every Tuesday.
Numeracy, literacy and parenting health sessions.
Literacy home study program 3-10 years. All at Bentley Heath Barnet. Also Cuffley Outdoor Centre Group every Friday afternoon
Contact: Priscilla 01438 840674
olsandpjs@aol.com

Casual Swimming Friday morning, term time only at North Herts Leisure Centre, Letchworth. Meet in the pool 9.00am - 9.15am cost 60p per person on production of EO/HEAS card.
Contact: Priscilla Simmons (as above)
or Karen Bartlett 01462 743034
Sandridge village hall, Sandridge, St Albans 2nd and 4th Thursdays, term time. 1-3pm
Contact: Carolyn 01727 851073
Melissa 01462 438577

ISLE OF WIGHT

I. W. E. O. group: craft sessions, visits, swimming, theatre, picnics, bar-b-qs, mutual support, especially older EO kids but new members and visitors always welcomed.
Contact: Jude 01983 531680
Isle of Wight Learning Zone workshops, social events and newsletter.
Contact: Shara 01983 562313
Alison 01983 810862

KENT

Regular meetings and activities
Canterbury
Contact: Irene 01227 709570
Medway towns
Contact: Bridget 01634 234938
Tunbridge Wells
Contact: Kim 01892 863941

French for beginners through songs and games.
Yoga for children.

Contact: Katherine 01892 863958

For events listings send SAE : Amanda Mackensie,
16 Brambletree Cotts, Borstal, Rochester ME1 3TN
Bromley

Contact: Claire 0181 460 7347

Claire@wadefamily99.freemove.co.uk

SE Kent : new group at the Ravensbourne
Community Centre, Ravensbourne Est.

Brangbourne Rd, Bromley. Every Tuesday 10-12
for support and outings.

Contact: Lorraine 0208 461 0885 (9-10am only
please)

LANCASHIRE

Regular meetings

Contact: Angelica 01254 603 497

Outings and get-togethers

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, craft, walks, hanging
out, singing, swimming, science, skating and much
more.

Contact : Lise 0116 242 5802

LINCOLNSHIRE

Weekly meeting in Cleethorpes

Contact: Caroline 01472 690738

Monthly meetings in Lincoln, plus various other
events and gatherings.

Contact: Eileen Tel 01522 803590

Ruth Tel 01522 804583

Kathleen Tel 01522 869239

Boston area group. Regular meetings/outings.

Contact: Gill 01205 871399

Ross 01205 870679

Monthly meetings in Lincoln, last Tuesday of the
month, also educational visits etc.

Contact: Eileen 01522 803590 Ruth 01522 804583
or Kathleen 01522 869239

LONDON

Walthamstow Fridays 2-3.30pm

Contact: Kate 020 8520 2676

Tuesdays Clissold Park. All welcome.

Contact: Charlotte 0207 254 0419

Wednesdays Honor Oak playground.

Contact: Steve 8680 2933

Thursdays Lee 11-1

Contact: Clare 020 8480 0740

Thursdays once monthly during term time
rollerblading Kidbroke

Contact: Fiona 020 8852 9756

bettleslake@clara.net

Fridays fortnightly at Sydenham 11.30-2.30

Contact: Chrystia and Keith 8776 8597

Fridays alternate fortnight Forest Hill Nature
Reserve 11.30

Contact: Dave 8692 4080

Bromley

Contact: Claire 8460 7347

NW London Otherwise Club

Contact: Leslie 0208 969 0893

Harrow every other Friday plus swimming
Thursdays and other stuff.

Contact: Sue 0771 802 2677

Vivienne TIMSHARKEY@aol.com

W. London HE group every Tuesday for social and
educational activities and visits.

Contact: Claire Evans 0208 943 4491

timesteps@altavista.co.uk

Lewisham EO group Thursdays weekly.

Contact: Clare 8333 9455

New group at Plumstead Common Adventure

Playground SE18 alternate Fridays from 1st

February. Meeting at 12pm.

Contact: Bev 0208 312 2160, Kim 0208 317 7262

East London/Essex: every Wednesday 2.30-4.30

The Exchange Mall, Ilford.

Contact: Maria 0208 270 5293

jameson@maria.as

MANCHESTER

Monthly formal art lessons at Stockport Art Gallery
£1.50

Monthly meeting at Stockport library

E-mail young writers group Ed Wilson

wilson-net@lineone.net

MADCOW newssheet, send SAES : Gill Wilson, 20

Brook Rd, Heaton Chapel, Stockport SK4 5BZ

Computing Skills 1st and 2nd Saturdays at Moores

family home, limited places

Contact: Karen 01204 573136

NORFOLK

NEON gives details of all events £1.50 plus 4 large
SAEs

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

Workshops/social meetings 1st and 3rd Thursday

Contact: Sue 01603 738494

NORFOLK/SUFFOLK BORDER

Diss area

Contact: Judith 01379 890622

Lowestoft area

Contact: Lin 01502 741097

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

New activities/meetings being organised in addition
to others already running.

Contact: Jane Newson 01536 418885

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Weekly meetings. For full list,

Contact: Wendy 0115 9114312

Louise 01773 780634

East Midlands Christian Home Educators 1st

Tuesday of the month 10-2

Stapleford Baptist church, Stapleford

Contact: Jo 0115 8770281 Julia 0115 8494083

OXFORDSHIRE

Classes in creative writing. Monthly Parents
meeting, monthly Drop-In, also regular museum trips
and outings. Local newsletter.

Contact: Wendy 01865 514973

SCOTLAND

Fife: outings and get-togethers

Contact: Karen 01334 655361

k.spy@btinternet.com

Fife: Friday fortnightly meetings, activities and social get-togethers. All welcome.

Contact: Nicola Stubbs 01334 478530

nicola.stubbs@btinternet.com

Irvine: weekly drama Fridays for 5-9 and 9+

Contact: Rhona 01294 273644

Monthly activities Eglinton Country Park,

Wednesday afternoons under 10s

Contact: Shirley 01563 540063

Other visits coming up

Contact: Vivien 01563 537428

Highlands meetings

Fortnightly meetings in Inverness, plus occasional

outings. All ages welcome. Contact: Rebecca

01667 462772 or Alison 01463 232571

SHROPSHIRE

Activities and outings

Contact: Val 01952 502225

South Shrops. regular meetings every Tuesday,

outings and workshops.

Contact: Carolyn 01588 680503

SOMERSET

Frome and beyond (FAB) home educators support

group. Social gatherings, outings and newsletter.

Contact: Sally 01749 841554

Helen 01373 465260

Wiveliscombe - new meeting on the 1st Tuesday of

the month (term time) at Scout Hut 10.30-13.30

Contact: Maggie 01984 624 651

STAFFORDSHIRE/SOUTH CHESHIRE/NORTH SALOP

Stafford every 2nd and 4th Wednesday in village

hall for games craft etc. 12-3.30

Contact: Nicola 01785 612410

Alsager: 1st Wednesday of the month at YPCC for

craft, music, games, chat.

Contact: Caroline 01270 875 633

Sue 01270 883978 Suedavies@tesco.net

SUFFOLK

Regular meetings every 3rd Friday 10.30-2.30

£2.50 for family, shared lunch.

Contact: Sarah 01379 783678

SURREY

Guildford area: Theatre bookings

Contact: Tisha 01483 898575

Skating during term time Friday 1-4

Contact: Jane 01420 88188

Under 10s

Contact: Nicky 01483 232080

Nick's Woods fortnightly

Contact: Nicki 01306 884741

Dorking/Reigate area.

Contact: Helen Burnett 01737 243606

Friendly group for under 10s, weekly meetings/

outings/activities. Farnham/Aldershot area.

Contact: Emma 01252 350034

emmajeavons@supanet.com

SUSSEX

Monthly newsletter £8pa or £4 six months, cheques

payable to "ESEO" to Ian Lawes, 35 Waldegrave

Rd, Brighton, BN1 6GR

Contact: Bo 01580 201681 (East Sussex)

Isobel 01403 261178 (West Sussex)

Friday EO club at Lindfield

Contact: Liz 01444 414058

Home Educators Hastings Area, regular arts, craft,

gym, outings and meetings.

Contact: Ali 01424 814175

Eastbourne Home Educators Club, alternate Fridays

9.30-11.30

Shinewater Community Centre 75p per child.

Contact: Angelique 01323 509702

Worthing: Thursday morning group 10-12.30. Many

different activities and outings last Thursday of each

month.

Contact: Sam Kruger 01903 233799

TYNESIDE

Monthly art sessions at the Laing Art Gallery - for

children over 6.

Contact: Lilian 0191 456 7007

lavendereco@aol.com

Regular outings, visits, etc.

Contact: Becky 0191 478 5322

beckyfeeney@hotmail.com

WALES

Cardigan area social meetings and outings on

Mondays - Contact: Yvette 0845 458 9251

Swansea monthly meetings in Llanelli area

Contact: Sue 01269 861902

South Wales: group have moved to the Quaker

Meeting House, Swansea (usually Thursday

afternoons) for crafts, games, friendship,

support and visiting 'workshops'. Also regular

outings, educational visits, organic farming and

nature walks. Contact: Geraldine 01792 405894

Juliet 01639 760987 Frankie fran.kie@ntlworld.com

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 01978 757489

49 Westminster rd, Moss Valley, Wrexham

LL11 6DH - £2 for a years listing.

eo@7times7.freewebs.co.uk

South Wales regular group activities and newsletter

£3 pa. Weekly ice-skating.

Contact: Dawn 01452 540019

dawnandmike@cablenet.co.uk

Contact: Beverley 02920 797628

Bev1.French@btinternet.com

Gwynedd Mondays swimming at Bangor

Contact: Louisa 01248 361254

Friday swimming at Porth Madog Weekly meetings

at Tremadog Thursdays.

Contact Jo 01766 512330

Pembrokeshire EO swim and sauna: Haverfordwest

pool, Dew St. 3pm at

main reception, now fortnightly. Call to check dates.

Contact: Yvette 0845 458 9251

WARWICKSHIRE

The group usually meets 2 Thursdays a month; at Wolston nr Coventry and for an outing in the Coventry/Warwicks area.

Contact: Helen Hall 01926 771958

WEST MIDLANDS

Meetings, trips out, activities etc are held throughout each month at a variety of locations all over the West Midlands. The newsletter HELM lists many of them. HELM is available free by email or by post for a small charge and covers HE related articles and events throughout the West Midlands and surrounding areas.

Contact: Joy Beasley 0121 585 6450

JoyBeasley@b-bunch.freemove.co.uk

Penny Clarke 01922 745465

pennyclarke@blueyonder.co.uk

WILTSHIRE

Outings and visits every 1st Tuesday pm lower Street Hall, off Netherhampton Rd, Salisbury 2-5pm.

Contact: Vicky 1722 324863 or Sam 01794 342041

Calne: informal activities and get-togethers

Contact: Heather 01249 822 630

Last Thursday of the Month The Scout Hut, Southbroom Rd Devizes, 11.30-14.30, games, activities, support and socializing.

Outings most Thursdays

Contact: Janet 01249 818672

email: janet.eldekvist@btopenworld.com

Jemima: 01380 727470 Helen: 01249 822958

www.geocities.com/wiltshirehomeed/index.htm

WORCESTERSHIRE

Local Contact - Rachel 01527 597809

Meetings - Karen Raybould 01527 835384

Meetings - North Worcs/Kidderminster - Gail Tutchet 101562 822034 gail@tqmi.co.uk

Meetings, events, trips out etc happening all through the month throughout the county.

YORKSHIRE NORTH

Regular meetings and visits. Send two 2nd class stamps for quarterly newsheet.

Contact: Sarah 01904 750324

sarah@wollny.org.uk

YORKSHIRE EAST

Regular meetings and visits. Send two 2nd class stamps for a quarterly newsheet

Contact: Alison 01405 769902

YORKSHIRE SOUTH

Regular meetings for arts/crafts, visits, swims, hanging out and more.

Contact: Jo 01709 820866

Denise 01226 733478 Gary 0114 2585702.

Tuesdays 12-3 term time at Highfield Adventure Playground. Free entry, small contribution for craft materials. Off London rd/Abbeylee rd

Contact: Annette 0114 2583502

Fiona 0114 22751142

YORKSHIRE WEST

Outings and activities

Contact: Eva 01535 274520

Last Thursday of the month 11-1.30 at Civic Centre Huddersfield.

Contact: Tracey 01484 317176

2nd Friday of the month 1-4 at West Park Centre, Spen Lane, Classroom 9.

Contact: Susan 0113 2688304

Swimming (term time) Tuesdays Bradford

Contact: Eva 01535 274520

Huddersfield sports Centre

Contact: Tracey 01484 317176

Skating Fridays (except the week of the Leeds Meeting)

Contact: Francis 01274 884750

LOCAL CONTACT UPDATE

New acting local contacts

Sussex East - Winnie Durdant-Hollamby

Devon South - Bridget Meadows

Resigning local contacts

Jill and Peter Fisher - Leicester City

Celia McDonagh - Glamorganshire

Lancashire - Louise Hardy

Mary Trimble - Cumbria

Steev Stamford - Derbyshire

Helen Mason - Yorkshire North

Areas needing a local contact

Bedfordshire Lancashire

Cumbria Leicester City

Derbyshire Powys

Devon North Strathclyde

Glamorganshire Surrey

Isle of Man Tayside

Yorkshire North

If you want to volunteer

or are interested to know more about the job of being a Local Contact please get in touch with Janet Wilkinson, 31 Framlingham Road, Peterborough PE2 8UG

01733 554436 thewilkinsons@ntlworld.com

(see also EO Handbook pp 28-30 - AR)

Education Otherwise Adverts

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.

Send £1 coin with your address to:
H. Turnbull, Hadlow House, 2, Hadlow Rd,
Sidcup, Kent DA14 4AF
Or get a free RTF copy by e-mail
henrietta.turnbull@ntlworld.com

Resources for Older Children

Information on curriculum materials for later years. For a copy please send 60p to cover printing and postage with your address to: G. Dove, 302, High Road, Chadwell heath, Romford, Essex RM6 6AJ
Free e-mail copy from:
gillchris@willrich.fsnet.co.uk

EO Car Stickers

Help spread the word.
Please send a reasonably large SAE to:
Ali Willer, 28 Cozens Hardy Rd,
Sprowston, Norwich NR7 8QF

EO Hoodies and Mugs

Hooded sweatshirts with the triangle logo and the letters SINC are now available in navy blue and black in children's and adult sizes (£12 for children's and £20 for adults' including postage and packaging).

EO 25th anniversary mugs are also available in white and red with a picture of Archie (£5 including postage and packaging).

If you are interested in the above please contact Jill.Fisher@care4free.net or ring at 0116 212 8120 for further details.

EO T-shirts:

Good quality cotton printed with logo in choice of two designs:

1. white shirt with E.O. logo
(red triangle kicked open by running children)
2. navy shirt with white slogan:
"home education - a real option"

£5 adult (M, L, XL)

£3.50 child (3/4, 5/6, 7/8, 9/11, 12/13)

Add p&p up to 6 shirts £2, 7+ £4

Cheques payable to E.O.Trading Ltd.

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

EO's Address

A reminder to members and volunteers to check that any leaflets, forms, etc. you hand out have the national EO address:

Education Otherwise, PO Box 7420, London N9 9SG

The reason is that when people move into a house formerly occupied by an EO contact, they may receive membership forms etc. from prospective members who have kept these for some while, if a personal address is used. This can cause annoyance to the new occupiers and may result in the form not getting through to EO at all. Using the national address on all handouts in future should mean that the problem will gradually fade out.

Ann Samuel Till

School phobia/school refusal — update on research

Many of you know that I have been collecting data for years to follow up Patricia Knox's work on this subject. I have a large database and hope to send out a questionnaire and to travel round and interview a proportion of these families over the next two years.

The main proposition remains intact: that this is not a real phobia but a rational reaction to an unacceptable situation, and that these children respond well to home education. Instead of becoming neurotic and agoraphobic as predicted, they are all functioning normally within three years, and often much earlier. Furthermore, there are interesting indications that, in at least some of these children, school refusal is the result not of weakness and oversensitivity but of positive traits in their personalities.

Changes in EO administration have at times meant that some families have not been put in touch with me. If yours is one of these and you would like to participate, please send me your contact details.

Anne Wade

19 Perkin Close, Wembley, Middx. HA0 2LY 020 8904 7155 Email: rob.wade@tvu.ac.uk

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Back Page Part Two

Get involved and join a small group:

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

Enquiries: Pam Bellinger, Geraldine Adams, Janet Wilkinson, Iris Harrison, Jo Borthen

Publications: Jill Fisher, Gary Podmore, Penny Clarke, Lucy Charlton, Chris Harper, Ali Willer

Media: Eva O'Rourke, Fiona Brookes, Celia McDonagh, Belinda Harris-Reid

Business Practice Group: Jill Fisher, Priscilla Park-Weir, Pam Bellinger, Martine Archer

DfES Team: Anne Wade, Jill Fisher, Gwen Baldock, Ann Samuel Till

LEA/EA Group: Isobel Bogucki, Jill Fisher, Anne Wade, Rob Wade, Gary Podmore,

Communications: Jill Fisher, Priscilla Park-Weir, Richard Eaton, Penny Clarke

Scottish Group: Ann Samuel Till, Lucy McAuley, Anne Wade, Jill Fisher, Gwen Baldock

Information for other organizations: Penny Clarke, Priscilla Park-Weir, Martina Macklin

Grievances and Complaints
Celia McDonagh, 169 Habershon Street, Splott, Cardiff
CF24 2LA 0776 321 3851, Isobel Bogucki

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: Alison Sauer 01463 232571

North West: Marina Orme 019467 28313
marinaatthelakes@aol.com

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

Midlands: Helen Donaldson 01889 882043
serf@unappreciated.co.uk

Wales: Celia McDonagh 0776 321 3851
celiamcdonagh@yahoo.co.uk

East Anglia: Ali Willer 01603 401020
simon.whitehall@tesco.net

South West: Belinda Harris-Reid 01364 643343
bharrisreid@aol.com + blinedata@aol.com

South East: Karen Ingelbrecht 01303 254787
pencraft@ukonline.com

London(1): VACANT} *Volunteers needed please!!*

London(2): VACANT} *Volunteers needed please!!*

Ireland: VACANT} *Volunteers needed please!!*

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)

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Who does What in EO

Council Members

If you have a problem contact your nearest council member:

Geraldine Adams (N. London) 0207 2634922
Martine Archer (N. Yorks) 01423 858916
Pam Bellinger (Leicester) 0116 282 7929
Isobel Bogucki (W. Sussex) 01403 261178
Penny Clarke (W. Midlands) 01922 745465
Jill Fisher (Leics) 0116 2128120
Lynda Hitchman (Berks) 0118 961 4466
Jacqui Houlding (Cheshire) 01925 654856
Garry Humphreys (Lincs) 01205 871399
Celia McDonagh (Wales) 0776 321 3851
Gary Podmore (Yorks) 0114 2585702
Julie Ridley (Manchester) 0161 860 7589
Ann Samuel Till (Scotland) 0131 5566271
Jenny Stevens (W. Sussex) 01243 783469
Dawn Waddington (Bucks) 01908 569380
Anne Wade (Middx) 0208 9047155
Ali Willer (East Anglia) 01603 401020

Membership

Membership and newsletter subscription enquiries, membership cards and address changes:

Administrator, Education Otherwise,
5 Goodyers, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 2SH
<mailto:database@education-otherwise.org>
For other queries or missing newsletters contact
Lynda Hitchman
database@education-otherwise.org
or Phone 0118 961 4466

Stationery

Leaflets, posters, membership forms, car stickers:
Ali Willer, 28 Cozens Hardy Rd., Sprowston,
Norwich NR7 8QF (donations towards postage
welcome, reuse labels £2.50 per 100, free for EO
business use)

Publications

Books, information leaflets and back issues of
newsletters. For a full list send SAE to:
Bridget Elgie, 14 Elizabeth Crescent, Bay Vista,
Whitehaven, Cumbria CA28 6JQ 0845 4582075
bidelge@aol.com (please ring to check availability
of items before ordering)

Contact with LEA

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

EO Home Education Cards

Extra cards are available from:

EO HE Cards, 5 Ridge Way, Aldridge, Walsall
WS9 0HL Please send a stamped, addressed envelope
plus 1 x loose 2nd class stamp for each card required.

Small Jobs

Martina Macklin, 16 Victoria St, Wall Heath, Kingswinford,
West Midlands DY6 0JJ Tei: 01384 833 883

Useful contacts

Single Parent Family Contact: Sarah Martin, Lammas,
34 Cowslip Drive, Little Thetford, Ely, Cambs, CB6 3JD
01353 648716

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

School Phobia: Geraldine Adams 0207 263 4922

Teenage Support: Geraldine Adams 0207 263 4922

College Contact: Kathy Chilton 01969 623707
(retiring - volunteers please!!)

GCSE Contact (acting): Geraldine Adams 0207 263 4922

Autonomous Education Support: Sammy and Nick
Vidal-Hall, Home Croft, Brownston St, Modbury, Devon
PL21 0QR 01548 830716

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

Research Contact (acting): Pam Vickers
25 Boxley Rd, Walderslade, Chatham, Kent
Home: 01634 671507 Work: 01227 712206

Company Secretary (acting): Pam Bellinger 56 Beech
Drive, Braunstone, Leicester LE3 3DA 0116 282 7929

Treasurer: Garry Humphreys Three Stacks, Wicken lane,
Old Leake, Boston, Lincs PE22 9QE 01205 871 399

Newsletter Coordinator (acting): Anne Rix, The Orchard,
Hembury, Frithelstock, Torrington, Devon, EX38 8JT 01237
451535 anne@annerix.demon.co.uk

Local Contact Coordinator: Janet Wilkinson, 31
Framlingham Road, Peterborough PE2 8UG 01733 554436
thewilkinsons@ntlworld.com

Enquiries Secretaries Coordinator: Iris Harrison
01584 781341

Chair: Jill Fisher, 54 Ratcliffe Rd, Leicester, LE2 3TD
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:

P.O. BOX 7420
LONDON N9 9SG

HELPLINE 0870 7300074

<<http://www.education-otherwise.org>>

Education Otherwise Association Ltd, Registered Charity No. 1055120

