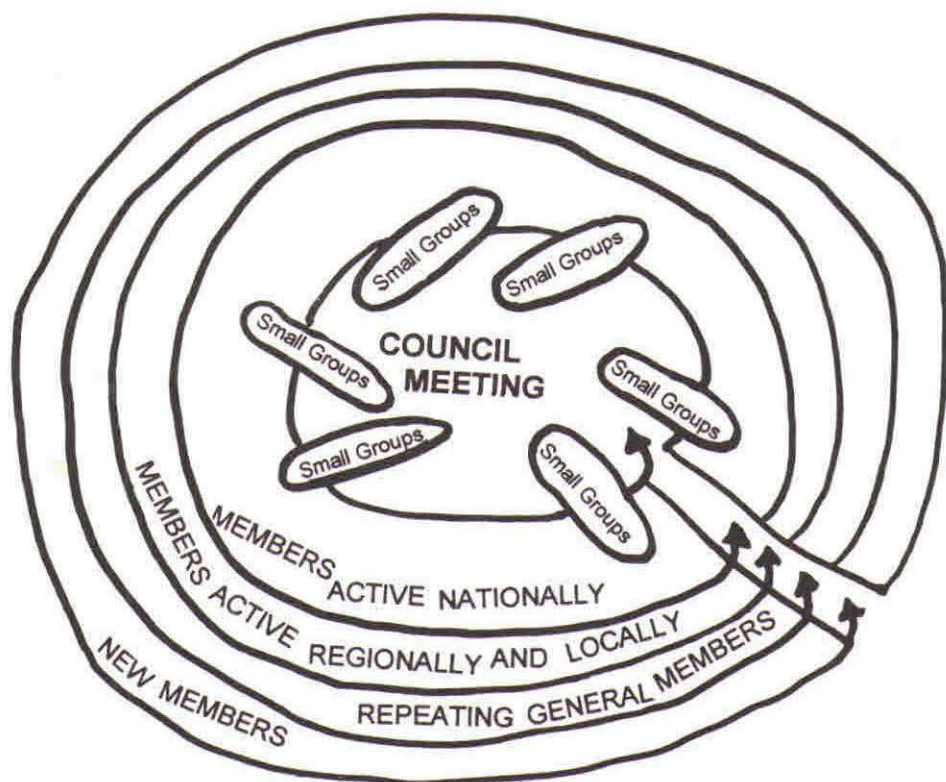


education otherwise

*** 4 Membership & Decision Structure Diagram**
(see centre pages)



No. 152 - June 2003

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TO THE FOLLOWING EDITORS:**

REGIONAL DIARY & ADVERTISEMENTS

Please send direct to NL co-ordinator until further notice: anne@annerix.demon.co.uk (postal address inside back cover)

BOOK AND SOFTWARE REVIEWS

Sally Hall, Nant-y-Gareg Farm, Saron, Llandysul, Carmarthenshire, SA44 5FJ
01559 370908 sally@aecb.net

HOME EDUCATION in the NEWS

Ann Kennedy-Smith, 21 Kimberley Road, Cambridge, CB4 1HG. 01223 356627
akennedysmith@yahoo.co.uk

CHILDREN'S PAGES

Molly & Emma Whitehall, 28 Cozens-Hardy Road, Sprowston, Norwich, NR7 8QF
Tel: 01603 401020 simon.whitehall@tesco.net
N.B. deadline 20th June 2003 (earlier than main NL)

LETTERS AND ARTICLES

Sue White, 2 Pretoria Villas, Eye Road, Brome, Eye, Suffolk IP23 8AL
01379 870036 sue_white@tiscali.co.uk

EO BUSINESS

Martine Frampton, 3 Redesdale Mews, Hospital Road, Moreton in Marsh, Glos. GL56 0BQ 01608 812411
martine-frampton@macunlimited.net

ARCHIVE SELECTIONS

SARAH GUTHRIE. 01379 783678
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DEADLINE FOR THE AUGUST ISSUE IS 1ST JULY 2003

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Please send contributions via the most appropriate section editor above

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REVIEWS

Make Shapes 1

by *Gerald Jenkins and Anne Wild*

This book has mathematical shapes to cut out and glue. It ranges from simple tetrahedron and pentagonal prisms to the complicated small stellated dodecahedron. All the models are printed on thin white card and there are ideas given for colouring them. The amount of scoring and the accuracy needed to produce a nice finished model means that this is really suitable for the older child. It is an attractively presented booklet with clear, simple instructions and the extra information section at the back has some interesting facts about the names of the shapes. Excellent value.

Clare Crane with Natasha (8)

£2.95 Tarquin, also available *Make Shapes 2*

The Multiplication Tables Colouring Book

by *Hilary McElderry*

We reviewed the first book in this two book series. A picture has been hidden and can be found by colouring all the numbers of a certain times table. On the left hand page is a table to complete of the 2 times table and a number square up to a hundred which needs all the multiples of 2 colouring in. On the right hand page is the picture puzzle, which reveals a picture once all the multiples of 2 have been coloured in. On the next page is the same for the 3 times table and so on up to 12. The same idea is then repeated but for two different times tables at a time. The last page is for prime numbers. Natasha really enjoyed the book and says that while you are having fun colouring in and guessing what the picture is going to be, you don't realise that you are doing work practising your tables. The book works best with a basic knowledge of the tables so that numbers are seen quickly rather than having to constantly refer to a list of times tables whilst completing it. Excellent value. The other book in the series uses the same format with different pictures.

Clare Crane with Natasha (8)

£2.95 each Tarquin

Cars Stars Electric Guitars by James Carter

In my opinion, poetry books can be bland and boring, but this one is an exception to the rules! I was instantly attracted to this book as soon as I saw its bright green front cover. The poems inside (which are illustrated in black and white only) rely on visual effects as well as verbal use. The poems are really exciting and are quite short, so they are fun to read. I couldn't decide which one to look at first! I would recommend this book to reluctant or first time poetry readers of any age, there's something for everyone!

Megan Whiteman (13)

£3.99 ISBN 0 7445 8635 6 Walker

Into the Lion's Den by Terry Deary

This is the story of Cass, a trainee lion keeper in the days of the Roman Empire; the plot surrounds an attempt to assassinate the Roman Emperor, and includes traitors, gladiators, and Christians (not) being thrown to the lions. This is a clever story, but the book failed to really grip Oliver's imagination. I sensed it was a relief for him to reach the end, and go on to another book, although he described it as ok, rather than a complete no no. The writing is quite clear, and perhaps works better as a 'learning' book read together, than as a read alone book.

Gill Humphreys with Oliver (8)

£4.99 ISBN 0 7136 6190 9 A & C Black

The Jungle of Peril by Patrick Burston

"Top banana" says Galen. "It was brilliant, it was super" says Karis. The book was very challenging. Most puzzle books go straight forward but this book is different. You have to choose which path and sometimes you end up in very strange places facing dinosaurs, monsters, lions, a spider's lair, bandits or a graveyard. There is a monkey who is your companion and who is not always helpful. There are so many different paths, you have to find things and get to the treasure. This book really kept us busy for nearly an hour while we tried to get to the treasure. It was so frustrating when the command came - return to page 6. This book is good for people who need help in reading as well as those who can read on their own.

Karis (8) and Galen Youngman (4)

£5.99 ISBN 0 7445 946 77 Walker

The Nature of the Beast by Janni Howker

Bill Coward lives a boring life with his father (Ned) and his grandfather (Chunder). He and his friend are shocked when Stone Cross Mill is said to be closing down. But, meanwhile, some dreadful things are happening. Chunder finds that his hens are lying around the henhouse, dead. All the local farmers say that their sheep are being killed. Bill and Mick his friend, go searching for whatever killed all these animals. They discover the killer - a big black panther, feeding on a dead body and manage to take a photograph which they take to the newspaper office. The editor believes it's a hoax and tells them to go away. Bill feels frustrated and goes to kill the beast. He finds it and makes it follow him to a moss pit where it drowns. He tells everyone about it, but no-one believes him. In his anger he then sets off on his own to take the place of the beast... I thought this book was quite creepy, so I only read one chapter per night. I give this book nine and a half out of ten and recommend it for age 11 upwards.

James Baker (11)

ISBN 0 7445 9032 9 Walker

Reader Rabbit Triple Pack PC/Mac

This pack of three CD-ROMs consists of 'Reader Rabbit Maths 6-8', 'Reading 6-8' and 'Year 2'. *Reader Rabbit Maths* is set on Pirate Island. Sam the Lion and Reader Rabbit are shipwrecked and Penelope the Parrot helps them as they search the island for parts to build a new boat. As activities are completed then boat parts are awarded. There are nine activities covering a broad range of maths skills. There are two types of activities; arcade activities are fast action to encourage memorising maths facts, and exploration activities are completed more slowly. The auto levelling will continually adjust the skill level in response to the player's ability as the activities are completed. I like this because the games get harder when the player is ready. However, this facility can be turned off if you choose.

Reader Rabbit Reading has fifteen Reading Lands. Each Reading Land consists of two storybooks, objects to click on and a 'skills house' with word games such as rhyming syllables. The storybooks are well thought out. The player can hear the page read or hear just a single word. There is a record and playback facility; this is a favourite with Natasha and Anthea as they add their own interpretation to the characters' voices. Natasha and Anthea like this software but found that each Reading Land was a little similar to the others. *Year 2* uses a multi-disciplinary approach to cover reading, maths, language and science. Sam the Lion explores a castle and the player has to help complete activities such as the Castle Journal where a story needs to be finished, and helping Sam along a Runway, which is the dragon's obstacle course, finding the correct shapes in order to earn points.

These CDs are the usual high standard that I have found with other *Reader Rabbit* software. Of the three, Natasha and Anthea prefer the maths because the story line makes you want to make the boat.
Clare Crane with Natasha (8) and Anthea (6)
£19.99 (3CD set) *Mindscape*

Lazy Jack by Tony Ross

This is the funniest book we have read. The drawings are brilliant and very very funny. Jack is very lazy and does stupid things like putting cheese on his head when his mother meant that he should put the jug of milk on it. I like the insults his mother uses; my favourite is 'jelly headed hen brain'. The story is based on a folk tale about a princess who cannot laugh. Lazy Jack's activities succeed without even trying. The illustration in the bakery where Lazy Jack pulls the dough and makes it look like a giant moustache left me bursting with laughter. This book is for anyone who likes funny stories. It is ideal for anyone to read aloud or to yourself.

Karis Youngman (8)
£4.99 ISBN 1 84270 1665 Andersen Press

Chip Donovan and the Dragonfly Boy

by Bill Russell

When I picked up this book I was puzzled and amazed because there are two different covers. One is cartoony in style; the other one is very pencil like and delicate in style. There are two versions of the story in one book. When you turn it upside down and back to front there is a different cover and a different version of the story. There are two different types of print used - one is larger and chunkier, the other story has a smaller and less bold print. The story is about a young boy whose uncle said his parents had died in a car crash and threw him out of the caravan where they had been living. Wondering where to live, Chip met a boy called Draco who was really a dragonfly. Draco helped him find his real parents. I couldn't put this book down once I started reading, it was great. The story is not what I expected, it has surprises. It shows there is not just one way of making a story, you can alter it and make it seem very different.

Karis Youngman (8)
£8.50 ISBN 0 9539119 26 Delancey Press

Poems For Year Three chosen by: Pie Corbett

This is a fun poetry book and although the age is a little young for me, I still found it very enjoyable. Despite the somewhat ominous title (please don't be put off by this, the lyrics are in no way related to school) and the straight-laced front cover, the poems inside are crazy! *Mum's Infallible Method For Solving Arguments About Who Gets The Biggest Slice Of Cream Cake.*

*I'll make sure No one loses;
You cut She chooses!*

It's well worth a delve into, all rhymes follow this hilarious style, and none exceed one page. Go on, you might get a surprise!

Megan Whiteman (13)
£3.99 ISBN 0 330 48288 2 Macmillan

Stan the Dog by Scoular Anderson

A four book Rocket Reading set about 'Stan the Dog ... and the Country Cats', '... and the Major Makeover', '... and the Golden Goals', and '... and the Sneaky Snacks'. Stan lives in a house with his family and he writes from his point of view. He has pet names for his family i.e. Canopener, Handout, Crumble and Bigbely. He also, like our dog, has one thing on his mind - FOOD. The stories are really funny and even though the pictures are in black and white the style of using cartoons with writing makes them interesting. We both liked these books. I read them all as soon as we received them and Rowan could understand the story by following the cartoons. I think that anyone just learning to read would enjoy these books as they are divided into smaller helpings and are set out to make them easy to read.

Kathleen Smith with Rowan Butterfield (4)
£4.99 each from A & C Black

The School Year Three Terms Of Poems

chosen by Brian Moses

This is a plain poetry book, no frills, and no thrills! There's nothing to excite you in this book, just 147 pages of poetry all typed in the same boring, black font, on insipid off-white paper. The poems are all about school (hence the title) and are in three sections (autumn, spring and summer). There is one remotely normal limerick by James Carter that lifts the oppression, but I still wouldn't recommend this to anyone, please save your £4.99! If you are interested in buying this, the age range is for Key Stage 2.

Megan Whiteman (13).

£4.99 ISBN 0 330 48246 7 Macmillan

Explorers wanted - under the sea

by Simon Chapman

The style of this book is a clever one, it puts the reader into the position of an explorer, and presents information and facts as part of the explorer's journey, such that the reader is asking questions of themselves, and finding the answers in the text. Very much a case of feeding the imagination. The writing has a fresh, modern feel, and the author manages to invoke a sense of excitement throughout, and the illustrations add to the fun but informative aspect of the book. The front cover sells the book as 'real adventure from the comfort of your couch', and this was spot on. When Oliver wasn't sitting reading it, he was finding us with 'did you know's' from the book, such as 'did you know that octopuses can eat their own tentacles.....' All in all, this is a book that holds the attention, and is informative as well as a good read.

Gill Humphreys with Oliver (8)

£4.99 ISBN 1 4052 0554 7 Egmont Books

My Dog Is A Carrot by John Hagley

This is one wacky and brilliant poetry book; it's so colourful that sunglasses are required (which is handy as there is a pair of glasses to cut out inside!)

The first thing I saw was the bright front cover, and as I flicked through the book I was drawn to all the colour! It was so appealing, all the pages are fluorescent! I was more interested in the set out than the poems! When I came to look through again, the poems matched the illustrations; they are short, snappy and hilarious, certainly living up to the title!

A COMPARISON OF LOGS AND DOGS

Both are very popular at Christmas

But it is not generally considered cruel

To abandon logs

And dogs are rarely used as fuel.

I would recommend this book to everyone who wants some fun out of limericks. There is something in here for all ages.

Megan Whiteman (13)

£5.99 ISBN 0 7445 8633 X Walker

You by Sandra Glover

Josie is a girl who is eighteen and lives with her carer, Moira. The book is written as if she is talking to someone called Alex who has committed an awful crime and Josie is connected to this in some way. She is very traumatised and cuts herself with pins and glass. Eventually the reader discovers that Josie and Alex are the same person. Alex was released from prison with a different name and appearance. I was quite surprised as I had thought Alex was a boy, but I realised it was never clear whether she was a boy or a girl. The subject is a highly disputed issue that the author has used very well to create an interesting and moving story. The reader is kept gripped from the beginning by the mystery of Alex and how Josie was involved. There are often things that happen to Josie which remind her of her life as Alex and it tells you a bit more about it each time, so you can piece together more and more detail. The story line gets more and more complicated as you carry on through the book. Writing the book as if Josie was addressing Alex is a very interesting format and an unusual change from normal writing styles. I think this is a good book, which is quite different from other books I have read. I enjoyed it and would recommend it to anyone who is interested in the subject of people who have committed crimes when they were children and being released early, or who would just like to read an exciting book.

Emma Whitehall aged 12

£9.99 ISBN 1 84270 168 1 Andersen Press

Massive by Julia Bell

It's like a Jacqueline Wilson book, a teenage story; it was realistic, like a real family. The mum has an eating disorder and that makes the daughter feel fat and that makes the daughter have an eating disorder, but in the end she is happy with herself.

Erin Hartley (13)

£9.99 ISBN 0 3304 0098 3 Macmillan

Sultan of the Sea by Duncan Watt

I think this book is very good because there are a lot of tense moments when you wonder what is going to happen next. Compared with the other books by Duncan Watt it is probably the second best because it is a sea adventure which I like more than one set on land but *Trouble in Tristan* is more dramatic because there are more storms!! The first chapter is definitely the most tense because you don't know whether the pirates will catch them or not. Another good thing is that nothing happens too straightforwardly which often happens in books. Also some things do go wrong; which also doesn't happen in most books but this book is like in real life because disasters do happen a lot.

Kit Freiesleben (10)

£4.99 ISBN 1 85646 1149 Gazelle

Go Facts – Birds, Insects, Reptiles, and Mammals – Reading & Writing Non-Fiction

Jem says, "I like looking at these books but not reading them because they say things like penguins are sea birds which I already know. I like the fact that there are numbers to tell you what happens". Kirsten says "These bright appealing reference books are clearly laid out and full of close-ups of animals, insects, birds and reptiles. At first Jem thought they were rather simplistic and for much younger children because of the style and relatively small amount of text in large font but Jem keeps going back to them. He is fascinated by the life cycles that are presented in four numbered stages – one to two sentences per stage – that is really excellent. They will be much used, but I would extend the suggested age range from 3–9 instead of 6–8 as recommended. There is a Teacher's Book with notes and photocopiable worksheets, which I can see might be useful in a classroom to check if the children are learning anything, but unless you are keen to stick to the national curriculum I don't think they are all that useful at home where there is always someone to listen to. At home too it is easy to rush outside and find an ant's nest and identify the stages; see butterflies laying eggs etc. as made so clear by these books, and the learning is so apparent. Definitely recommended." Kirsten Friesleben with Jem (8)

£8.99 each or £25 for the set A & C Black

Let's Look at the Jungle by Penelope Stanley-Baker

My children loved this book. The 'magic' torch lights up hidden animals and plants while the text gives enough, but not too much, information for younger would-be botanists and zoologists. Mine couldn't put it down. We thoroughly recommend this book and will be looking out for others in the series. Just out is 'Let's Look at the Zoo at Night'.

Karen McIntyre Bhatti with Holly (5) and Hamish (3)
£6.99 each ISBN 1 85103 332 7 Ragged Bears

The Great Castle of Marshmangle by Malachy Doyle and Paul Hess.

If your children enjoy making up new words and/or nonsense rhyme they will really like this book. It is an old-fashioned style yarn about a little boy who goes to stay with his Granddad for the very first time. Granddad is rather eccentric and has new names for familiar objects and soon the little boy is using a whole new language (soggadrop for water etc.) to save the castle from ruin. A great book which Hamish, in particular, really loves.

Karen McIntyre Bhatti with Holly (5) and Hamish (3)
£5.99 ISBN 1 84270 215 7 Andersen

Bitsa The Vintage Car & Friends by Sharon Kirk

From the cover this seemed like a book that Rowan would enjoy as he is mad about cars, but on flicking

through the book the stories were quite long and the pictures were not very child friendly. The pictures were in black and white and reminded me of cartoons from the 1940s though this maybe due to the fact that the book is based on vintage cars.

Rowan did say he enjoyed this book though whilst reading it to him his attention often lapsed, I think this was mainly due to the stories being difficult to read, as they did not flow easily. The book seemed to me to go into too much detail when referring to the characters and there seemed too many characters to remember, so as a result the stories became confusing. I think this book is a good idea, by telling stories about vintage cars, but it needs to be more easy to follow and able to capture the attention more. When my sister read it she stated she preferred Brum - that probably does hit the right level more than this book.

Kathleen Smith and Rowan Butterfield (4)
£8.95 ISBN 1 85776 6148 The Book Guild

The Book of Pooh CD-Rom for PC / Mac

The hardest part was getting the CD going, as there can sometimes be problems if you are using Windows XP and also the settings needed changing. Once it was going it was as you would expect from Disney / Mindscape, i.e. really good graphics and well thought out. I originally thought that it was not challenging Rowan enough, but have now changed my mind. As, although it may be simpler than some games, it is reaffirming what he already knows and is developing his concept of reading. I think it can be used on different levels and the recommended 2-5yrs is appropriate. This is now one of Rowan's favourite games and he especially likes the read along story with Piglet, guessing the first letter of objects with Pooh and letter bouncing with Tigger.

Kathleen with Rowan
£19.99 Mindscape

The Big Messy Art Book by Mary Ann F Kohl

This is a great book for families who really enjoy art activities. There are many ideas for simple paint-based activities - each given a 'messy' and 'complexity' rating. The emphasis is on fun rather than on creating masterpieces that is refreshing - even the youngest child will find the challenges manageable. Be warned though, there are suggestions for painting the lawn with acrylics... not for the fainted hearted!

Karen McIntyre Bhatti with Holly (5) and Hamish (3)
ISBN 1 903853 184 Brilliant Publications

Mr Bear and the Bear by Frances Thomas

This is a sensitive, thought-provoking story that we all enjoyed. The illustrations by Ruth Brown are beautiful. Mr Bear is a grumpy old man. The children stick their tongues out at him behind his back. Mr Bear one day comes across a performing bear who is treated very badly. He wears a muzzle and a ring through his nose. Mr Bear is moved to buy the bear and 'rescue' him from

his cruel captivity. What happens next is quietly moving and delightful. You will like this story if, like us, you care about the rights of animals and the plight of performing animals in particular. Definitely recommended.

Louise Smith with Emily (4) and Oliver (7)
£4.99 ISBN 1 84270 226 2 Andersen Press

The Space Twins Series by Wendy Smith

Titles include - 'Sun, Sea and Space', 'A Star is Born', 'Space Football', and 'Time Travellers'. Mixed views on these books! These are stories aimed at 'children who have just launched into reading'. The books contain blocks of text and speech and thoughts in bubbles. My pet hate! I found the stories quite complicated to read aloud so would agree that they are better for children who can read by themselves. The main characters are Mik and Mak, the space twins of the series title. They are in touch with a group of children on earth, and invite the children up on to their space ship in each of the stories. The earth children introduce various earthly activities, egg, and football, to the space twins, who in turn teach the children a little about space. The books are illustrated throughout with black and white line drawings, and are broken down into short chapters. Oliver enjoyed the stories while Emily did not. I think they are ideal for boys especially, who are getting into reading.

Louise Smith with Emily (4) and Oliver (7)
£4.99 each A & C Black

Grow Up by Sandy Turner

The little boy wants to be a cowboy, scientist, dentist, mountain climber, jockey, magician, window-cleaner, astronomer, chef, fireman, lion-tamer, and ticket collector. He wants to play the saxophone, be a talk-show host, stop pollution and save the whales. Lots of unusual collage pictures. Celeste takes this book to bed but no-one else thinks much of it. I think it is or will be special for the little boy it was written for, in the way I've made books for my own children but I wouldn't expect anyone else to enjoy them much. We found the pictures fairly dull with a few interesting touches, all in all it did not have much substance.

Kirsten Freisleben with Celeste (4)
£10.99 ISBN 0 7445 8666 6 Walker

Movers, Shakers and Record Breakers: 20 stories from British History

by Geraldine McCaughrean

This is the last of five books in a series containing all 100 stories from *Britannia: 100 great stories from British History*. This book contains true stories told in an idiosyncratic fashion and spanning the period from 1829 (Stevenson's Rocket) to 1993 (the Braer oiltanker spill). Each story is very short (3 or 4 pages) and followed by a single page that gives a biography of the main individual in the story or adds some facts. We liked the fact that the book contains some familiar

stories (Grace Darling, the Titanic, the Suffragettes and Dunkirk) and others less familiar (Dr Barnardo, Tay Bridge disaster, the Jarrow Marches). We also liked the range of areas covered (politics, science, war, sport) and that it comes right up to date (the second last story is about Live Aid). Because each story stands alone, it is very good for dipping into. The language is simple enough for reluctant readers but the text is not patronising. This book is well worth the cover price and we will look out for others in the series. Shena Deuchars with Katherine (10) and James (8)
£4.99 ISBN 1 85881 895 8 Dolphin (Orion)

A Shocking Accident - stories with a STING in the tail, edited by Sara Corrin

In this book, there were fourteen different stories. Some were by famous authors and some were by authors that I had never heard of before. Each story was "shocking" in its own way. I found that some of the stories were better than others. My favourite story is the well-known *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe. In this story a young man lives with an old man, who is possibly a relation. The young man decides to kill the old man, in his sleep, because he hates his glass eye that seems to stare at him. One night, he kills the old man in a disgusting manner (which I will not repeat here) and hides him under some floorboards. Soon enough, police officers coming knocking on the door because a neighbour had heard a scream. While, the police officers search the house, the young man becomes dizzy with an aching head. He hears ringing in his ears which gradually gets louder and louder until he can't bear it any more. You'll have to read the book to find out what happens. I particularly liked 'How Un-American Can You Get?' by Art Buchwald, 'The Night The Bed Fell' by James Thurber and 'A Shocking Accident' by Graham Greene. I did not like 'At the Airport' by Marina Mizzau. Another good thing about this book is the short piece about each of the authors at the back. Recommended for teenagers or adults who like weird stories.

Simon Hoggarth (14)
£4.99 ISBN 0 7445 8641 0 Walker

Storytelling with Children by Nancy Mellon

My child loves my made up stories but to me they seemed repetitive so I was keen to get new ideas. It starts with many useful suggestions; lighting a candle, making a special place or time, using dolls or objects. The book tells how a story can be personal to the child and told to help with worries or subjects hard to understand. It suggests how the child can be directly involved, choosing what happens, using dance, rhyme and creative play. There are many suggestions and examples re starting points and subject matter. 'How we were born' is my favourite one as I think it is a very natural way to introduce a child to new ideas such as birth and unlike reading from a book you can include as

much information as you like and aim it at what your child can understand. Stories can also be useful in tackling sensitive subjects such as death. This is a lovely book to read and keep referring to. Storytelling is special for parents and children. Children will remember this peaceful and magical time spent with their parents, listening to stories made up just for them.

Hilary Woolf

£8.99 ISBN 1 903548 08 0 Hawthorn Press

Celebrating Irish Festivals by Ruth Marshall

This is a beautiful book celebrating Irish festivals and seasons; traditions and folklore with lots of Celtic celebrations, natural and seasonal references and the imagery of witches, fairies, pumpkins and dragons - always popular with children. The solstices and equinoxes are lovely for children to celebrate, and help them understand the changing seasons and passing time. There are interesting factual pieces on the history of Ireland, the saints and the Vikings and Normans - a great starting point for further research into Celtic/Irish history. There is a lovely section on Beltane or May Day, a festival that fascinated me as a child. Make floral crowns and garlands, decorate trees, sing songs, play games and make festival food - plenty of ideas here. Just like others in this 'Festivals' series, it is crammed full of ideas, beautiful illustrations and something to interest all age groups and occasions.

It gives a great insight into a very interesting country and its traditions. I am sure this will be a very popular.

Hilary Woolf

£14.99 ISBN 1 903458 23 4 Hawthorn Press

Mannekin Pis - A Simple Story about a Boy who Peed on a War by Vladimir Radunsky

I liked the story and the bright and modern style of the illustrations. Unfortunately the book would seem to be aimed at very young children and it is not one I would want to read to my 3 year old because of the subject matter and the way in which it is dealt with. The story is a re-told folk story of a little boy living in a wonderful town with lovely parents and he has a great life until war happens. He is surrounded by fighting, scared and cannot find his parents. He starts to weep and the result is that everyone laughs at the boy 'weeping on the war'. They realise it is much better not to fight. It is a lovely tale but I would not want to read about war to young children without explaining how difficult it is to find solutions and there is never a happy ending. Having said that I did like the book and feel these types of folk tales need re-telling to keep them alive. This one was originally done and may be enjoyed by an older child but the text is very basic. It is a good book with a well-intentioned message of peace but perhaps aimed at the wrong age group.

Hilary Woolf

£10.99 ISBN 0 7445 9683 1 Walker

Set Free Childhood by Martin Large

Tony Blair and others have widely espoused the great educational benefits of the electronic revolution; TV, computer, the internet. In fact even the supporter and educational academic, Roland Meighan postulated that computers and the Internet are the way forward for education. This book presents a very different picture and through well-referenced research evidence damns the popular and dominant view promoted by the commercial, media and marketing organisations. The text of this book has strong Steiner/Waldorf leanings. However, the author provides a mass of data and findings which, at the very least, indicate we should err on the side of caution. For myself, a latter-day Luddite and abstaining ex TV addict who has lived without a set for the past 13 years (with my wife and children aged 16 and 8), I must admit to a degree of pleasure in having my thoughts and feelings validated by this book. However, for anyone concerned about their own health and well-being and that of their children and the wider community, whether techno fan or Luddite, this book is a vital read and deserves its sub title *Parents Survival Guide to Coping with Computers and TV*.

Keith Howarth

£10.99 ISBN 1 9034 58439 Hawthorne Press

A Stroll Back in Time

These are dramatised audio-guided tours - CDs of main tourist areas. Guides are currently available for Bath, Westminster, Southwark with lots more planned for the future. The guides have excellent educational potential. Included is a map of the area concerned. The commentary is entertaining and you can follow the tour at your own pace stopping and starting whenever you like. You will need to take a CD player with you but they really do make history fun for all ages. Excellent value for money.

Sally Hall

£9.99 A Stroll Back in Time

Does Your Child Have A Hidden Disability?

by Jill Curtis

Jill Curtis is a London psychotherapist whose book "focuses on the social and emotional impact of these (hidden) disabilities". Its target readership is parents who feel something is not quite right with their child but haven't found a diagnosis - it is based on interviews with parents who have been (or still are) in that situation. The first part deals with general issues, such as possible reasons for concern, fighting for a diagnosis or appropriate help, feelings and reactions (e.g. guilt and anxiety) and brief descriptions of twelve conditions. The second part details parents' experiences of particular conditions ranging from autism, Asperger's and ADHD to dyslexia, ME, depression and Tourette syndrome; Curtis notices that "one disability often merges into another". There are also a number of self-help checklists. I have mixed feelings about this book. Some parts could be useful in showing you're

not alone; others have also been there and can wear the T-shirt (sadly a reflection on the difficulty in getting any necessary help). Sometimes I felt like shouting "That's us!" It is of more limited use in part 2 - although some conditions share "symptoms" others are quite distinct, making certain chapters redundant for individuals. My first real problem with the book is the frequent use of the word "handicap" which I simply don't like. Even if you accept that, EO members may dislike Curtis' two-page treatment of home schooling. She acknowledges home schooling is growing especially for special needs children and gives a parent's positive anecdote. But, "In other circumstances, rightly or wrongly, other parents are convinced it is the best way to proceed" - do I sense disapproval here? HEAS and Schoolhouse are mentioned along with curriculum guidance, but not EO. A few websites are listed, including a DfES site that "sets out conditions parents have to fulfil"; actually, it's the DfES homepage so you have to hunt down the relevant (and possibly misleading in places) page that has "useful guidelines" rather than "conditions". In the section on ME Curtis writes, "Education is an area where parents and teachers often seem to fall out" and tells of children being pushed to do too much by schools. Well, Ms Curtis, if you'd really been listening to the parents perhaps you would have investigated home education properly instead of just paying lip service. I would borrow this book from the library but I'm not sure I'd buy it to feel so irritated at times.

Sue Onions

£7.99 ISBN 0 340 78679 5 Hodder & Stoughton

The Joyful Family

by John Dacey and Lynne Weygint

This is a book that seeks to strengthen family bonds in a rat-race world. It would seem the average family eats together twice a week and the average parent spends about ten minutes each day in conversation with each child. Frightening. Aren't you glad you are an EO family, not an average one? This book tries to improve the quality of the time families spend together by introducing rituals into everyday life. Some chapters are better than others. The one on 'Marking Milestones' I found particularly cringe making. One suggested ceremony is the sharing of a shaving session by a father and teenage son. The father presents the boy with an expensive razor (probably not the one he wanted) and a bottle of the same brand of aftershave as he uses (how many teenagers want to smell the same as their parents?) before finishing off with some patronising comment such as, 'Well, you certainly seem to have mastered the shaving process.' Guaranteed to make your adolescent feel understood! The suggestions for some of the other rituals seem to be a hotch-potch of feng shui, spirituality, paganism and attempts to 'gain from the combined wisdom of all the peoples in the world who have gone before us.' I feel it is better

to decide which spiritual path you are on and stick to it. To be fair, there is also a chapter on 'Recognising your Family's Cultural and Religious Heritage', and the implication is always that the rituals be adapted, not used exactly as seen. I think I am safe in saying that virtually everyone reading this has left that rat-race world, and so is not in need of these contrived measures to express their feelings for others. I feel that if you have a good relationship with your children, and make time for them, then they will ask for the information they need at the appropriate moment for them. If the relationship is already strained, then I feel that these rituals mismanaged might cause harm and resentment. I know that if my parents had tried to implement any of these when I was a child, I would have been acutely embarrassed.

Vivienne Hughes

ISBN 157 324 5720 Words of Discovery

FEEDBACK

Sue Barnicoat read the last issue of EO and saw the 'Big Mama makes the World' review. She says 'My friend has bought this book - she says it's lovely. I've not seen it yet but I trust her judgement. I think it's available from - 0870 6077780 or visit www.thebookpeople.co.uk. Purchases accrue points towards more books. Free delivery for 4 or more books. Special rate delivery for EO members. I've been buying loads of books from them for my children - and their friends; or www.redhouse.co.uk - similar set up. Both companies have many titles at £2.99 - (excellent for Birthday pressies) One or other of these companies sells 'Big Mama ...' at £2.99. Also take a look at www.letterboxlibrary.com. They select books covering issues such as disability, race, important people like Martin Luther King...'

Family Holiday Games by Shando Varda

I found this a very inspiring book; one that I suspect will be used over and over again. It's a repertoire of games to play when you're on holiday - mainly aimed at the summertime - and includes beach games, but most of the games can be played anywhere anytime! There's a chapter on travel games to play in the car, really useful for keeping everyone happy. The chapter on beach games makes you want to go to the beach just to play them! There's a whole piece on sandcastles and beach sculptures with excellent pictures. I had a go at 'Jaws', a really crazy shark that rears out of the beach. The kids I was with loved it, collecting shells and bits of plastic for the teeth. Included also is a section on games to play at your holiday home. Possibly my favourite chapter is one on nature contact games to play in the park or on a picnic. I'm not sure who loved these games more, the kids or me! Then there's some good birthday party games, and a section on ...wait for it.... *Playful Parenting!!!* Just a couple of ways to sort out family disputes in fun ways. At the end there's the loveliest section on groovy things to do out in nature

RESOURCES FOR HOME EDUCATION

Listening Books can help at no cost to you!

Listening Books is a charity that provides a postal audio book library service to anyone who suffers from an illness or disability that makes it impossible or difficult to hold a book, turn its pages, or read in the usual way. We provide audio books for both leisure and learning. The service caters for those with physical disabilities, visual impairment and specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia and dyspraxia for whom reading print is frustrating, even impossible.

Listening Books has three digital recording studios and records books in their entirety. Our library includes: classics, history, poetry, biographies, autobiographies, science, travel and dramatizations in addition to well-known novels, sci-fi and general fiction.

We are able to offer **FREE** membership to a limited number of qualifying people across the UK (due to the generosity of charitable trusts, in response to a major fundraising initiative). FREE membership will be given on a first-come-first-served-basis. The member can cancel at any time and there are no hidden costs.

To determine if you qualify, contact Samantha Fletcher at Listening Books on 020 7407 9417 or by writing to Listening Books, 12 Lant Street, London SE1 1QH or by email: sfletcher@listening-books.org.uk

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DISCOUNTS FOR NEC CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

A discount of £30 per course can be claimed on enrolment by using an EO/NEC voucher available from sarah@croggies.freeseerve.co.uk or (Together with the NEC's newsletter 'Home Education Matters') by sending an A5 SAE to: Sarah Cook, The Old Cottage, Croglin, Carlisle, CA4 9RZ. The NEC's newsletter is also available (by A5 SAE) for anyone considering distance learning. Please quote your EO membership number (as on the envelope your newsletter arrived in) when requesting vouchers/newsletters.

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ALTERNATIVE KIDZ

A quarterly magazine for 7-11 year olds "For kidz, about kidz, by kidz, it includes physical pursuits, environmental issues, news, views, travel stories, puzzles, jokes, quizzes and competitions." Special offers to EO members: Current issue half price £1.50 (full £3) Annual Subscription £10 instead of £12
One back issue free

Contact: Alternative Kidz, 47 Woodplace Lane, Coulsdon, Surrey, CR5 1NE

Tel: 01737 55 67 68 Fax: 01737 554 664 www.alternativekidz.com

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EDUSS is a new Integrated Learning System on CDROM for Maths and English. It has become the principal distance-learning product in Australia, making its first UK appearance at HesFes. It provides an automated tutor to allow children up to their early teens to plot their own course round a comprehensive library of Maths and English subjects and acquire number skills at their own pace, and might be of use to HERS who want a structured but flexible programme. The system works on a group licence with individuals purchasing discs. Schools can be sponsored by grant (sponsors' company logos appear on startup screen, but there is choice of sponsors) so that the licence is free, then students get the discs at approx. half price (£96 instead of £185). Sponsorship is guaranteed for 3 years. There is hotline support and free updates. Eduss want feedback from users (this is a condition of the grant) to aid further development. They are keen to involve home educators, and want to find a way to sponsor groups of HERS (hence their approach to EO) to hold a licence - they need a named person/people to apply for this and act as a contact. If there's enough interest amongst members, I'd be prepared to put a formal proposal to Council to investigate further - so let me know if you think you might use this.

Anne Rix

Anyone who wants to know more can ring the company on 0870 747 6218 or 01428 725067.

E.O. GATHERING
AT
FEATHERSTONE CASTLE

2nd – 9th OCTOBER, 2003

This much loved venue has been a firm favourite for 16 years

Come and enjoy a week's holiday with other E.O. families in this wonderful, rambling castle, situated in the beautiful South Tyne valley in Northumberland, in acres of parkland, surrounded by attractive countryside, close to Hadrian's Wall.

For information send SAE to
Keith Charlton, 2 Wistow Road, Newton Harcourt, Leics., LE8 9FT

Greetings cards

Thanks to everyone for their contributions, both in designing the cards, and sending us your thoughts. All the cards had their champions, and we think everyone should be proud of their efforts. There was less of a response to the second three, but of those, penguins and robins drew the most positive accolades, and we have decided, after leaving the printer with something of a twisted arm, to halve the print run between 'penguins and robins' and the overall recipient of the largest vote, (and it was a big vote), which was 'snow walk', so a special 'well done' to Luke Austin and Kirsty Wilson. Details of how to order cards, (and they will be printed blank inside for your own message), are in the education otherwise adverts section towards the rear of the newsletter. All profits from the cards will go to education otherwise, so it's not just a way of spreading the home ed. message, it's contributing to funds as well.

Thanks again to everyone who has joined in,

Garry Humphreys, Treasurer.

EO MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Do You Pay By Banker's Order?

Thank you to all those who have increased their banker's orders.

If you have not already done so, please would you telephone or write to your bank and ask them to increase your annual standing order from £15 to £20 in line with the new membership fee, which has been in effect for over a year.

This will save us having to write to you asking you to do this.

Thank you!

HOME EDUCATION IN THE NEWS

In the headlines in March '03 was the discovery that up to half of all children starting school cannot recite a nursery rhyme or even speak in a way that can be understood by others. According to research carried out by the governments basic skills agency there has been a sharp decline in pupils language abilities over the past five years, a drop that has been noted in middle class as well as working class families. The director of the research agency, Alan Wells, blamed the lack of talking skills on parents who are too busy to talk and listen to their children, instead allowing them to spend long periods in front of a television or a computer screen. He described family communication in too many cases as being reduced to the daily grunt, and suggested that schools should offer parents classes in how to have regular conversations with their children, an art which seems to be fast disappearing.

It is ironic then that at the same time as this research comes fresh urging by the government for schools to raise the literacy strategy, which is failing to deliver the promised results of higher standards in reading and writing in 11-year-olds. Ministers seem unwilling to make the connection that a school which puts such a high premium on writing and reading from the start is ignoring the use of language at its most important and enjoyable level for young children, as a means of spoken communication. If those basic language skills are not in place by the time the child reaches school, it is very unlikely that they will be gained in a classroom where painstaking letter formation and neat handwriting are the main abilities to be prized, along with silence in class. Small wonder then that teachers cannot communicate the joys of reading and writing when talking and listening to every child is simply not possible, especially nowadays with so many targets to be attained and boxes to be ticked. So perhaps Mr Wells is right, and classes for the parents in how to communicate with children in the home are the best way forward. But will any parents bother to attend them?

In contrast, an article written at the time of EOs 25th anniversary last August shows parents who struggled against the odds to do what they felt to be the right thing for their children and have survived to see, for the time being anyway, a less hostile time for people choosing a different form of education.

Ann Kennedy Smith

Pioneers of education at home toast their 25-year Revolution

By Richard Garner, Education Editor, 27 August 2002

A charity that helps parents to educate their children at home celebrates its 25th anniversary this week. Education Otherwise started with a meeting in a barn between six sets of like-minded parents and a former nun who wanted to find a husband and raise a family. Now an estimated 50,000 children learn out of school. Iris Harrison, the charity's founder, says opinions on home education have had a sea change. The numbers involved are also growing as technology makes it an easier option. But Mrs Harrison can recall covering in her home 25 years ago, fearful that council officials could arrive at any time to take her four children into care.

One day when she had to go out she even left her oldest son, Grant, at home with an air rifle with instructions to "shoot at their feet until I come home". Now she is consulted by education department officials in Worcestershire, ironically the council that took court action against her all those years ago, and runs a helpline set up by the charity for other parents wanting to follow her example.

The case of Mrs Harrison and her husband, Geoff, and their four children became a *cause celebre* for parents who wanted to educate their children at home. She said Education Otherwise was launched soon after the legal challenge began. Since that first meeting, it has steadily grown and now has 3,500 members. The rise is put down to an increase in the number of families dissatisfied with the state system realising they had the power to do something about their concerns. The success of the internet has enabled them to access materials that broaden their children's horizons and has made study at home much easier. Official recognition of the value of home learning is also growing. Next week a pioneering scheme starts in three local education authorities combining to launch an online service to educate school phobics and excluded pupils. The authorities, Buckinghamshire, Hillingdon and Hounslow, have set up Notschool.net from the start of this term and estimate 60 pupils will be taught this way.

"We are taking up society's problems; helping children who cannot succeed in school," Mrs Harrison said. "I have had parents phone me and say, 'If I don't take my son out of school, he's going to end up as fodder for the penal system. He's so unhappy and withdrawn at school'. They start talking and they start crying. There are children who threaten suicide because of the bullying they suffer at school. Once they've taken the decision to take their son out of school, though, it's a great relief. They know they don't have to go back. Education Otherwise takes its name from a clause in the 1944 Education Act, which states: "It shall

be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, either by full time attendance at school or otherwise."

The question of how the word "efficient" is interpreted has led to legal clashes of the kind the Harrisons experienced. Three of their four children Wanda, now 36, Andrea, 35, Grant, 34, and Newall, 33, were profoundly dyslexic. Wanda began running away from school after another pupil hit her and she elicited the unsympathetic response from a teacher: "Hit her back."

The other children soon wanted to be taught at home. But, the Harrisons said, an official from the local education authority told them the children would become socially isolated if they were home-educated. Court action aimed at penalising them for allowing the children to play truant followed. During this, the family moved to a remote cottage in Scotland to evade detection and were at one stage planning to send their children to a friend in Sweden to avoid the nightmare of them being taken into care, which had been threatened.

Eventually, after years of legal hearings that ended in the High Court, an out-of-court settlement allowed them to educate their children at home. The children spent their days at their farmhouse near Tenbury Wells in Worcestershire gaining what their parents firmly believe was a far more practical education for life than would have been on offer in school. Andrea spent hours practising her violin, but Grant was more practical, repairing a Morris Minor they still have.

Iris and Geoff Harrison helped with their children's education, although they prefer to describe their efforts as "facilitating" rather than formal learning. Grant now works for the local social services department with disabled people, Newall manufactures kitchen units, Andrea is a shiatsu practitioner and Wanda trains people to use recycled waste in a project to help provide employment for people who have been in trouble with the law.

Mrs Harrison is convinced the trend towards home education will grow. "The world is a fast-changing place," she said. "Technology offers exciting possibilities. I was dismissed as an anarchist and very political 25 years ago but people are becoming more aware of the shortcomings of the school education system in providing for everyone."

Life-saver - when Jan Price's bullied son tried to kill himself she knew school was not for him. Jan Price was at her wits' end when her son tried to kill himself because he was being bullied at secondary school two weeks after he started there, and she is convinced he would have tried again if she had not immediately taken him out.

Now Jan is teaching three of her four children, William, aged 13, and daughters Rebekah, 14, and Antonia, 11, at home in Firth Common, Worcestershire. She says: "He was dyslexic and at primary school the school refused to accept he needed extra help. He had been bullied and he couldn't cope with it when it happened at the high school. After he tried to commit suicide, I realised I couldn't take a chance. He would have gone through with it if I hadn't found out I could educate him at home.

Jan contacted the helpline and for the first time realised the law would allow her to teach her children at home and William was taken out of school. She was immediately confronted by Antonia who told her: "If William's at home, why can't I be?"

Rebekah stayed on for another year and a half until one day her mother heard her "come out with words I never knew she knew" and she admitted she had one voice for school and another for home. "If I speak normally at school, they call me a snob," she confided.

The two girls do most of their learning through websites on the internet and can motivate themselves but Jan has to take more of a personal role in educating William. "His reading has improved," she said. "His writing on the computer is good, too, but he's more practical, a genius with electronics. He makes TVs that don't work, work.

Jan said she would have educated all her children at home if William's problems had emerged earlier. (Her eldest daughter is 17 and is at the local sixth-form college.) But she added: "It doesn't suit all children. A lot of children need the stability of a school and if you've got a good school and good teachers to go with it they might get a lot more from that."

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SURVEYS A Learning Opportunity that can be Interesting and Fun

Getting involved in surveys can be an educational experience for adults and children of all ages. The majority of surveys I have been involved in, with my home educated son who is now 9, have been organised by conservation bodies. They have been designed to be fun, to encourage volunteers to participate. They can be used as a learning resource for home educating families: diverse range of subjects covered, valuable free information and materials, new ideas, and most can lead on to more in-depth study of a particular subject. You will also, of course, be helping provide statistics and data that will be of benefit to the wider community and environment, helping to set indicators for the future.

Survey packs are usually provided free of charge and in many cases you do not even need to be a member of the organisation(s) involved. Most even provide post paid envelopes for returning your results. Some of the current surveys, where volunteers are being sought, are listed below.

Garden Butterflies Count Tel: 0870 7744309 Web: www.butterfly-conservation.org

This is an annual and ongoing survey organised by *Butterfly Conservation*. It is particularly suitable for young children. The pack is very colourful and the work involved is simple – recording, on a monthly basis, the first date you see a particular butterfly species (target species only) in your garden. You get a full colour identification chart showing the butterflies being surveyed and a four-page, colour newsletter about the project and its findings. There are also competitions you can enter.

Bluebells for Britain Tel 020 7808 0118 E-mail: bluebells@plantlife.org.uk

Web: www.plantlife.org.uk

This is a *Plantlife* survey. Each year this association organises a single species survey and for 2003 it is 'a survey to find out where the UK's bluebells grow'. Its aim is to find out more about the status of our native bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*. Did you know that the UK is home to 50% of the world's population of this species? It is apparently being threatened by competition and hybridisation with its closest relative the Spanish bluebell, *Hyacinthoides hispanica*! This is a simple and fun survey to do. Your job is to choose up to three sites and record the bluebells you find there, indicating the species and habitat details. You get a survey form and leaflet that shows how to recognise the bluebell species. You can record your results either on the form provided or enter the details directly onto the web site. The closing date for results is July.

Common Plants Survey Tel 020 7808 0100 E-mail: enquiries@plantlife.org.uk

Web: www.plantlife.org.uk

This is another *Plantlife* survey, undertaken in partnership with the *Botanical Society of the British Isles*. It is part of the *Making it Count for People and Plants Programme* funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. 2003 is its third year and it involves recording a selection of our most familiar plants in order to detect changes in the plant composition in our countryside and help identify ways of protecting our wildlife. The aim is for you to do the same survey each year to build up a pattern of plants in your survey area. This survey is more complicated, particularly interpreting the instructions regarding selecting your survey area (near to your home) using a random number and grid references! Map skills needed here but clear instructions, using an example, are provided. You get full instructions, a survey form, a colour *Flower Guide* (that should enable you to identify the 65 target species - most are well recognised plants but there are a few unusual species), habitat information and a letter to use if you need access to private land for your survey. You visit your site three times between June and September and record your findings (plant species, habitat information) on the forms provided or directly onto the web site.

I hope to include this as a regular page that lists the surveys you can participate in. If you know of any interesting ones that should be included please email full details to sally@aecb.net or post to Sally Hall, Nant-y-Garreg Farn, Saron, Llandysul SA44 5EJ

Truancy Patrols: Scotland

The truancy patrols which have been sweeping through parts of England and Wales recently have now had Scottish counterparts established.

It was reported again in city newspapers that Truancy Watch Initiatives were being staged in Edinburgh following earlier pilot schemes. The city council in conjunction with police and shopping centre management have placed truancy patrols in at least two of the city's shopping centres.

In Scotland in general, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 does not apply so the authorities do not have the powers specified in it to 'remove truants' - however they are acting under sections 35-44 (which cover irregular attendance/truancy situations) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 which include the sections of key relevance to home educators. Particularly they cover serving notices (and ultimately attendance orders) to parents if a child is not attending the school (at which they are registered) regularly without a reasonable excuse (section 35) but also they cover where the authority is not satisfied that a child is being provided with an education suitable to his or her age ability and aptitude etc. (section 37). However the target group of these initiatives consists of truanting young people and parents who condone truancy, not home educators even though the same sections of the law are involved.

The paper said "Youngsters loitering around malls or spotted in stores with their parents will be confronted under plans by the city council to extend the initiative.

Warnings will be issued to parents caught taking their children out of school, while youngsters will be reported to their school for further action to be taken."

As far as I understand they would be considered justified in approaching "school age" young people or their parents during usual school hours to enquire as to why they were not in school. EO has written to both the local authority and to the police to remind them of home education and to say that EO recommends that similar guidance as given with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, with regard to such patrols, be given to their officers as to respecting the rights of home educating families in Scotland and remembering that home educators are not the target group of these initiatives.

Members are reminded of an article in the EO newsletter last year on this (Aug 2002, No.147 pages 14 - 15). Families may wish their children to carry the Scottish version of EO's truancy cards as issued last summer (*For more copies of the card please send a stamped addressed envelope (please state SCOTLAND clearly in the request) plus 1 x 2nd class stamp per card required to: EO HE Cards, 5 Ridge way, Aldridge, Walsall WS9 0HL. Please note that the EO Home Education Cards are available for EO members only.*) You do not need to put your child's name on these unless you wish. They summarise the relevant law, and on the back, give the guidance given to police officers in relation to the powers in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Showing a card with this information is likely to back you up when you or your child say that your child is home educated, thereby removing any reasonable cause they may think they have to doubt you and minimising your and your child's inconvenience and potential distress. Some officers may know nothing or little of home education although it is hoped that both police and education authority will inform their officers about home education regularly.

Get in touch if you have any problems with regard to this.

Ann Samuel Till, Edinburgh >ann.samueltil@blueyonder.co.uk<

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Truancy sweeps have of course also been operating in many areas of England and Wales from May 6-23. We would be interested to hear your experiences of these - did you see them? Were you stopped? How did the Police and EWO's behave? How did you respond? - Please send in your experiences or observations from recent truancy sweeps throughout the UK for the August or October Newsletters.

* See also page 44 for extra copies of Home Education Cards (Truancy Cards) England/Wales as well as Scotland

25 YEARS OF EO

(Amended from a contribution for an EO 25th Commemorative Booklet, which sadly failed to generate sufficient submissions for publication.)

Prior to our 25th Anniversary Gathering in Leicestershire in August 2002, Sarah Guthrie asked me "When did you actually join EO?"; I said that, although I'd been talking to Dick (Kitto) a lot on the 'phone during 1977, I didn't think we'd actually paid any money until probably 1978. Well, I've recently been reflecting on 1977, and what I was doing was this ...

... Although our elder daughter, Eleanor, was to reach the "magic" 5 in September (hence why I was talking to Dick), I was also involved in building a new Nest (moving house: involving several months of to-ing and fro-ing organising builders, plumbers, electricians, carpet-fitters ...) for the baby due in October.

I was also, most-importantly for me at that time, spending a lot of time researching and communicating with anybody I could discover (e.g. Radical Midwives' Assoc.) to assist in my fight to have a home-birth! (since I'd not wanted to go into hospital with our second daughter Madeleine, whose "labour" was 1hr.40m; and we were, now, 10 miles from the hospital).

The result was Thomas ... a forty-minute labour (and "unassisted" birth)! Like his two older sisters, he was educated from home, from birth to 16, and, along with EO, celebrated 25 years in 2002 - on 19 October: National Home Education Day: a very happy coincidence!

So ... as well as talking to an ignorant EWO who threatened court-action and care-proceedings, which (knowing better) I tried to ignore ... that's what I was doing during the birth of EO in 1977.

The membership then being literally a handful of people, it of course wasn't long before I was "persuaded", by Sarah, to join the Core Group (now Council), become Enquiries Secretary (jointly with Sarah) and, as a result of increasing numbers of enquiries, set up the Local Co-ordinator (now Contact) system, so that straightforward enquiries could be responded to locally.

Where on earth did I find all the energy I had then? Ah, I remember, it's called 'Maternal Instinct' ... an energy which the menopause seems to take with it; the brain, I presume, regarding it to be no longer so necessary. Twenty five years of "otherwise" education have taught me that there's a lot of sensitive programming in that brain! - and most of it completely unrecognised and therefore ignored by those responsible for devising our governmental "Departments" and regulations ... at what cost to the future of the mental and physical wellbeing of our society? Long may EO - necessarily - thrive!

Di Cox, Suffolk

EO MEMORIES

Have I really been a member of EO for over 20 years? Yes, the label on my newsletter confirms I joined in January 1982. I joined to support the right to home education. I was educated at home till I was nearly 12 years old but I did not plan to remove my children from school as I felt it would be worse prison than school - I was no earth mother!

We were living in Scotland and I began to meet some of the scattered home educating families. There were none in Grampian where we lived. It was meeting the home educated children that persuaded me I had to give home education a go. These were children it was a pleasure to know.

In the summer 20 years ago I wrote to the school saying I was removing my daughter to educate her privately and please also remove my son from the names to start in September. We had a peaceful autumn adjusting to life at home. Come winter, how sorry I felt for the children going to school before the sun was up and home after it had set. On sunny snowy days we were out with tin trays in the hills.

The most memorable EO event from those years was driving all the way from Aberdeen to Brighton where we stayed with a friend and went to a weekend EO gathering and meeting in Hove I think. The children long remembered being tossed up in blankets by adults while I sat in on the meeting. The meeting was little different from now with many adults sitting on the floor and children wandering in and out with their loudly whispered requests. I ended up taking the minutes and I think Bruce Cox was in the chair.

To pave the way for others in the Aberdeen area we eventually told the local authority we were home educating and put up with the indignity of one home visit in the two years before we moved abroad. My children only had four years out of school, as my husband was never really converted to the idea and my daughter, at 11, wanted to give school a try. Just the same I know those important four years at home stands them in good stead as they confidently make their way in the world.

Priscilla Park Weir

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HANSARD DEBATE ON HOME EDUCATION – WESTMINSTER HALL

Tuesday 13 May 2003

For full text of debate see:

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/200203/cmhansrd/cm030513/halltext/30513h05.htm#30513h05_sprew0

Mr. John Randall (MP for Uxbridge) spoke about Home Education, having been advised by long-time HER Fiona Berry (who must have been working incredibly hard and deserves massive congratulations!)

Mr Randall said: " Like the vast majority of people in the country, I was rather ignorant of home education, not to say slightly prejudiced ... It may surprise hon. Members, as it surprised me, to learn that there is no such thing as a compulsory school age... "

He went on to talk about reasons for Home Educating, the different ways of going about it, the benefits of HE and the difficulties that HERs face. He addressed concerns about misleading information from LEAs and in some government publications, HERs being lumped in with truants, and the increasing difficulties for home educated children who wish to take GCSEs, saying:

"All that home educators want is for the Government to acknowledge that the law makes education, not school, compulsory; for accurate information about home education to be given freely to all parents; and for access to GCSEs and facilities in colleges to be available to home-educated children as they are to others in our country."

We could hardly have hoped for a better exposition of the HE cause!

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Mr. Ivan Lewis) replied:

" ...we need to focus more on the issue than we have done in the past... education is compulsory, schooling is not" but he seems to have much less well-informed than Mr Randall, and much of his reply was concerned with justifying the government's position on truancy and discussing improvements to the school system. He also referred to LEA procedures with regard to home-educated children:

" LEAs do not have the legal right to enter a home or physically see a child, but it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that enough evidence is submitted to the LEA to satisfy it that the child is receiving a suitable education ... It is a question of balancing the right to freedom and individual choice with the state's responsibility and duty to ensure that an appropriate education is being secured." Hmm.

However, he held out some hope with regard to GCSEs etc., saying "I will examine the hon. Gentleman's point about access by young people, particularly under-16s, to further education. The playing field should not be uneven and we should examine whether the system disadvantages young people who could benefit from placements in colleges in the further education system." We'll hold him to that!

Mr Lewis also recognised the benefits of home education: " ... the independence, the maturity and the keenness to learn that it can foster and the opportunity it provides for children to develop at a pace that suits them." But he was clearly keen for the DFes to take a more active role in evaluation, and stressed the information provided on the government's website. Although he agreed that "... the main thing is the best interest of children ..." his final comment: " We need to pay more attention to the contribution that home educators make" might carry a sting in the tail! Do try to read the full transcript. *Anne Rix*

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CONTRIBUTING TO BOOKS/COURSES

The Sir Steve Redgrave Charitable Trust – LIVING WITH DYSLEXIA AND/OR DIABETES

Part of Letter sent to schools, May 2003, from Sir Steve Redgrave –

I'm writing a book featuring letters from pupils who suffer from dyslexia and/or diabetes. The purpose of the book is to give pupils a platform to write about their experiences of coping with either diabetes and/or dyslexia on a daily basis... If you would like to help me gather the material so I can write this book, then please contact me - details of how you can reach me are provided at the end of this letter.

...You will be helping me show pupils (and their friends) currently facing the challenge of either of these conditions, that they are not alone. Some may concentrate on the negative aspects of their daily challenge, but we also hope that many will focus on the more positive aspects. By sharing their thoughts and seeing the replies of so many other pupils who are in the same situation, I hope that each pupil will gain strength, hope and inspiration from the book. ...

At all times, when we are writing and publishing the book we will comply with Data Protection and Child Safety Laws ... This may mean that we feature the age of the pupil and the school, but not the name of any pupil, unless we are given permission by parent or guardian. ...

I'd be grateful if you could let us know as soon possible if you ... would like to take part in this project... Mike Robertson, a friend of my Trust, is helping to co-ordinate this project. I very much hope that you will wish to participate in this potentially life-changing project, and look forward to hearing from you ...

Yours sincerely, Sir Steve Redgrave

full letter and application form available by email from Alan Tait, who says:

"As Mike Robertson, who is actually doing all the hard organisation work for this, works near me, I suggested that they might like to include HE kids. I mentioned that quite a few kids HE because of problems with the school system's 'approach' to dyslexia. Both Mike & Sir Steve think this is a great idea and are in fact considering a separate chapter for HE kids (result!)"

"So if any of you have kids who are dyslexic or have diabetes and would like to contribute then contact me on alan_d_tait@homeeducation.org.uk for an 'e-copy' of the form which should accompany contributions and details of where to send them. I think this is a good opportunity to get some of the benefits of HE over or at least raise it as an alternative approach and I have permission for the letter to be reproduced."

Anyone who's not on email can get a copy of the full letter and application form by post – please send SSAE to Anne Rix, (address inside back cover).

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Now, here's another interesting development: OPEN UNIVERSITY – NEW COURSE ABOUT CHILDREN

Officially the cut-off date for contributions to this one is 31 May, but who knows? If they get a flood of letters from home educators over the next few days ... but if it interests you, better get going quickly!

Material for the new course is being collected by George Marsh, of the OU's Centre for Widening Participation, in collaboration with the School of Health and Social Welfare and the Faculty of Education and Language Studies, and will focus on children's development up to the age of 11. They want contributions from parents of young children, and direct from older children. It's not a questionnaire, and contributions may take any form, e.g. "short pieces of writing, poems or drawings on subjects relating to the experiences of being a child" What they're looking for includes: For children under 3, contributions from parents on:

- How did your newborn baby communicate different needs to you?
- Who are the most important adults and children in your young child's life?
- Who does your child meet in a 'typical day'?
- Examples of where your child aged under 3 plays co-operatively with other children
- How does your child adapt to relationships with different people?

Children aged 5-7 are asked for pictures, stories or poems (and parents' written accounts/poems/reflections) on Bedtimes and Starting School/Nursery (1) ... For children 10-11 they want views on: What is a family and what are families for? What do you do to help in the home? Outside the home? Caring responsibilities for adults or younger children? Pocket money? Computers, mobile phones, etc.? What do you do in one day? ... I'm running out of space! The email address given didn't work - but you can write to George Marsh, Y006 Course Manager, Centre for Widening Participation, Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA. To discuss contributions contact Lucy Rai on 01908 655841. (Info. from Sesame - OU students mag.: www.open.ac.uk/sesame) *Anne Rix*

EDUCATING ARCHIE

by *STG*

Mrs G meets a headmistress at the summer fete.....



EO / The Map

The Map of EO (see centre spread) was devised to help set a context for the discussions on the future of EO, which were held for one day recently. (See Jill Fisher's notes on the discussions). The top section (*1 and *2) is applicable to the structure of any organisation and the bottom section depicts what actually happens in EO today, i.e. "the Practice". It doesn't get into detail of the practice, just broad headings of EO's various functional operations in order to give an overview or context for EO as a whole. It is worth noting at this point that these functions within EO are almost entirely carried out by members/volunteers. (If you have a suggestion to improve this map for future use please send it.)

*1 AIMS: EO's aims are set down in our memorandum of association and the core aims are:

The object for which the Association is established is:-

To promote, maintain, improve, and advance public education, particularly by the provision of information, support and facilities to enable parents to make educational provision for their children otherwise than through full-time state or private educational institutions.

And the Association shall have the following powers exercisable in furtherance of its said object but not otherwise, namely:

- (a) *To present, promote, organise, provide, manage and produce such classes, lectures, tutorials, seminars, workshops, conferences, exhibitions and publications, whether on any premises of the Association or elsewhere, as shall further the promotion, maintenance, improvement and advancement of education.*

(The rest of the memorandum concerns things like property and money)

EO's aims are summarised in a few lines for everyday purposes on many of EO's publications (always on the back of the newsletter)

And interestingly, in the first newsletter (produced after the third meeting of what has become EO, Dec 1976 and recently reprinted for the 25th anniversary) it says:

"... This suggests that the network is really needed, to give that little bit of support and advice that will help people over the hump." And, (not yet the formal statement of aims and objectives)..."We identified some of the needs that exist that might be met by establishing some sort of national network. These are listed below, but not in any order of priority, except that the first overall aim underlies all the others:-"

1. *To alleviate the sense of isolation of most de-schoolers, and the consequent anxieties and undermining of confidence they suffer from.*
2. *To maintain contact between de-schoolers and others by a newsletter, by helping in the formation of groups, by arranging meetings, etc.*
3. *To disseminate through the newsletter and otherwise up-to-date information about a) people's experiences b) available resources c) exchanges d) schools e) local education authorities.*
4. *To support people with general advice and where needed with specific help a) legal aspects b) presenting their case to the authorities c) facing up to intimidation d) formation of groups e) educating children over 16 (problems of tax, social security and student privileges.)*
5. *To initiate a network of exchange resources.*
6. *To establish contact with other groups with whom a fruitful liaison might evolve. Suggested groups were:- National Association of gifted children, Advisory Centre for Education, Confederation for the Advancement of Education, The A S Neill Trust Assoc., Schools Without Walls, Nat Assoc of Governors and Managers, New Education Fellowship, P.N.E.U., Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment.*
7. *Eventually to establish resource centres*
8. *In the long term to act as a political pressure group.*

(You may agree that EO, 25 years on, has done remarkably well by that list)

*2 In any organisation aims need to be followed by policy to guide or underpin how the aims might be achieved. Policy is usually about the values behind the means (procedures and practices) and is not changed very often nor, generally, does it need to be. Some of EO's policy has not been written down and where it has, it is buried in various old minutes and decisions from way back when. It has generally been passed on in the council meeting. In recent years EO has been trying to capture policy on paper when it makes itself obvious! The idea is that this goes into the handbook.

An example of original policy from EO's earliest days has been that decisions are made at the council meeting and these are made as far as possible according to consensus principles. An example of policy evolved over the years is that local authorities are not allowed to become members of EO (policy evolved when an LEA asked to join). Another old policy of EO's has been not to pay (except for out of pocket expenses) any member for EO work done. All work has been done by volunteer members until recently, when two small outside agencies were contracted to open the mail for redistribution and to look after the database and membership administration. This didn't change the old policy (after all we have purchased certain services like the printer's for years) but was the start of a shift which led to some of the key discussion points on the table today, which may result in changes of policy namely whether to pay for more of EO's work to get done or not AND, whether EO should "employ" or "contract" to do this (see meeting notes).

'Procedures' logically follow on from policy and are the agreed, preferred or recommended ways things are done, but sometimes procedures evolve from actual practice and certainly can be modified over time by practice. In theory, practice should aim to match laid down procedures. In EO, agreed procedures have generally evolved from practice and often, like policy, are not written down. Guidelines for Local Contacts and Enquiries Secretaries include some examples of procedures written down. Some procedures lend themselves to writing down more than others, e.g. an administrative task can be spelled out step by step but how to support a distressed parent on the telephone is a bit less precise.

'Practice' is what actually happens, how things are actually done on the ground (i.e. how the underlying aims are actually achieved) and that's what the Map depicts under broad headings. (The detail of how some of the jobs are actually done by different people in different parts of the country probably varies greatly.)

*3 ADMIN :

Administration appears on the map like a many-legged spider to indicate that it is not really a separate function but actually goes on in every job in EO and is usually carried out by the member doing that job, although there is now, as indicated above, an admin agency handling some specific areas of database and membership admin work.

Of course admin is facilitated these days by computer and internet use throughout EO.

*4 The diagram (*4 - see front cover) takes two aspects of the Map "Members" and the "Council Meeting" and looks at them from the point of view of the spread of members and the decision making process.

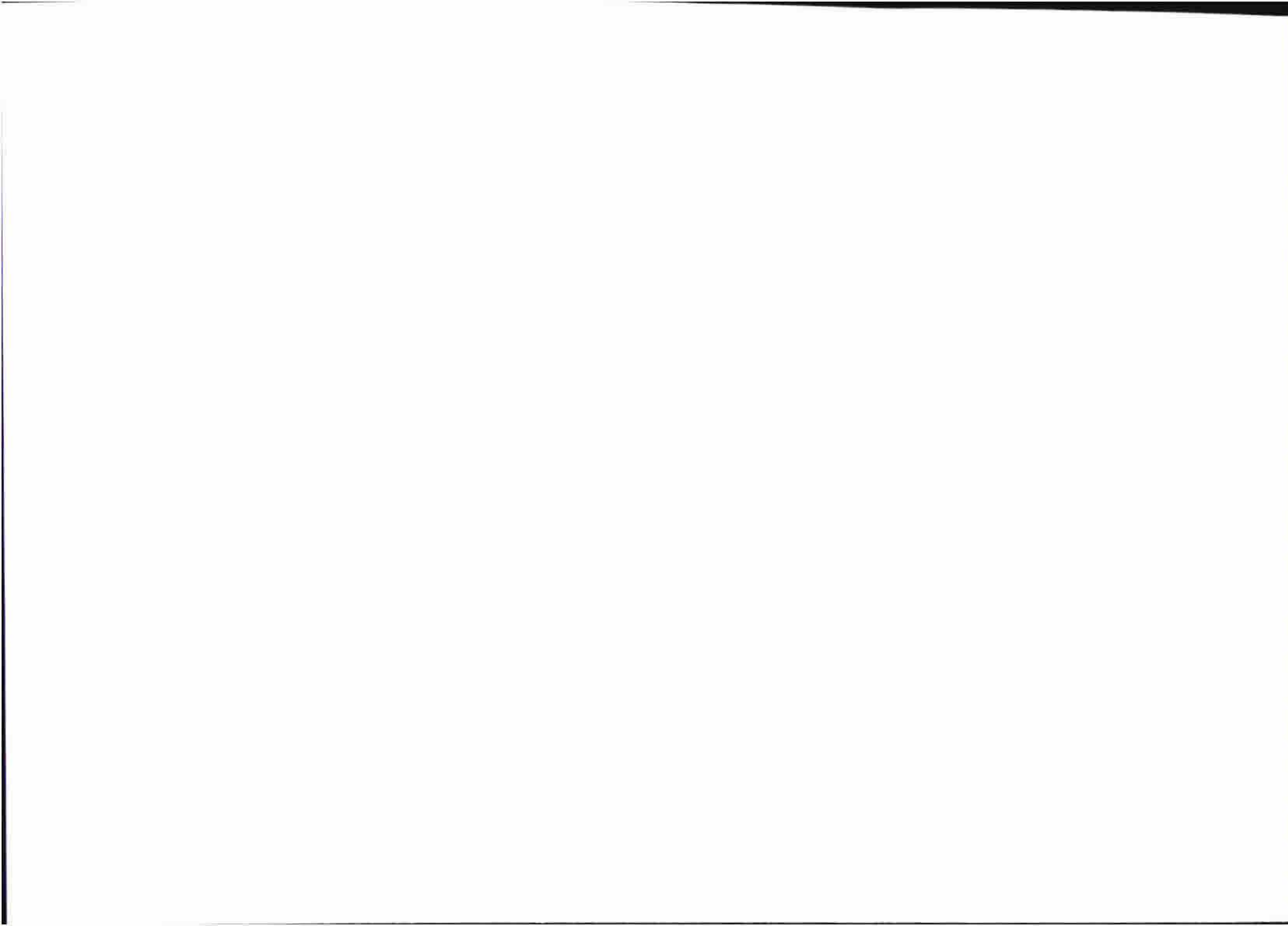
At any time EO's membership roughly falls into the depicted categories, generally more active nationally towards the middle of the circle (but of course in every layer, some members are more active than others, with some local members very active). At the heart of the members' decision-making is the council meeting where things are proposed, discussed and decided upon using consensus principles. Any member can attend and participate in a council meeting and any member can contribute to the work of EO. Most of the work done in EO is done by members active locally or active nationally and not surprisingly most of the participants in council meetings are from these more active members. However there are often also local members and new members at council meetings where their contribution is welcomed. N.B. A member who cannot attend a council meeting can ask that their comment or proposal to be put by someone else on their behalf.

Funding:

EO's current funding for the functions and activities depicted by the map is almost entirely from membership subscriptions. There are some donations and some surpluses (and sometimes losses) from merchandising, gatherings and occasional other events. There is currently a comfortable reserve but generally income is a close match to running costs.

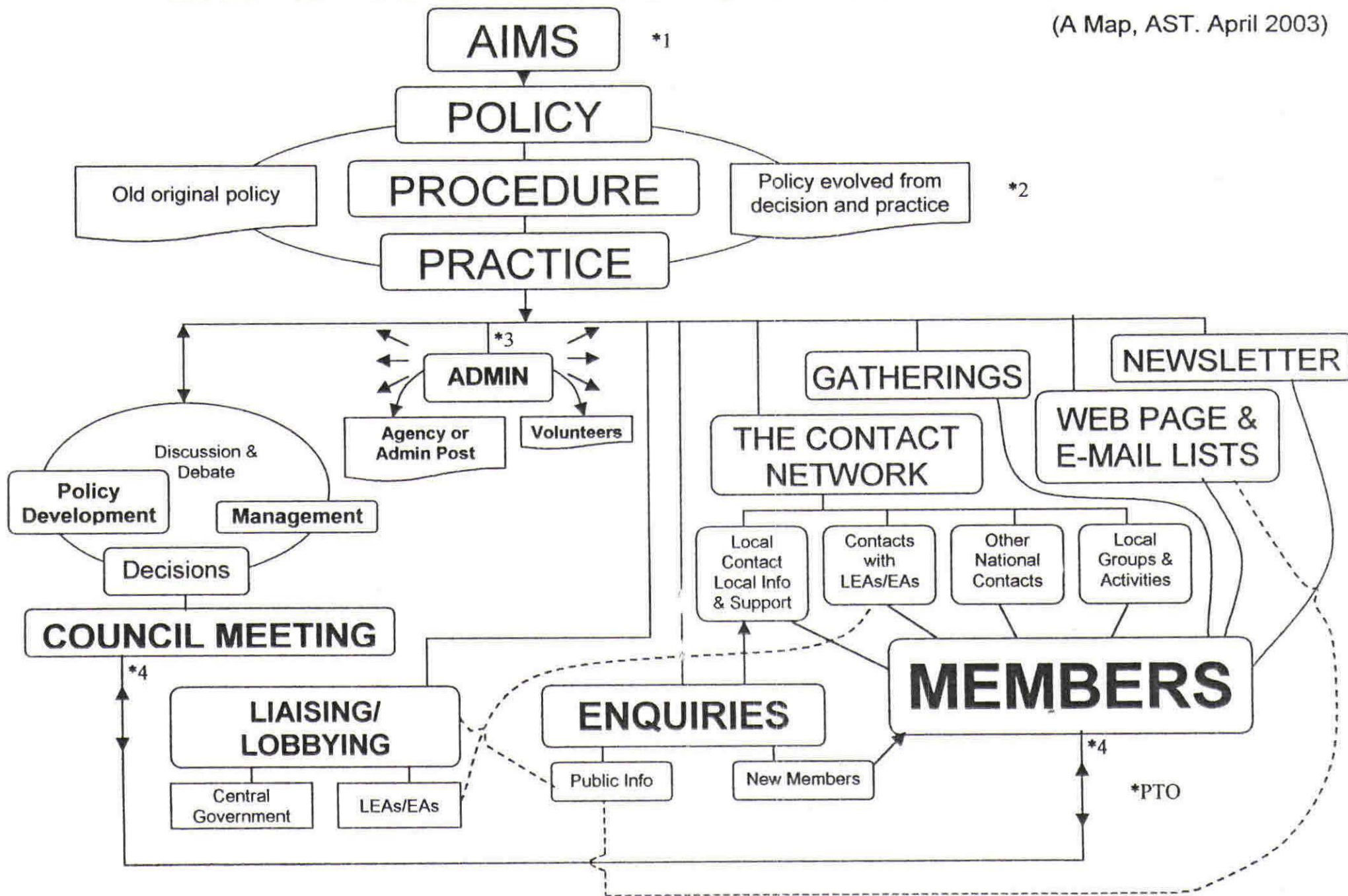
The Future of EO: putting the discussions in context:

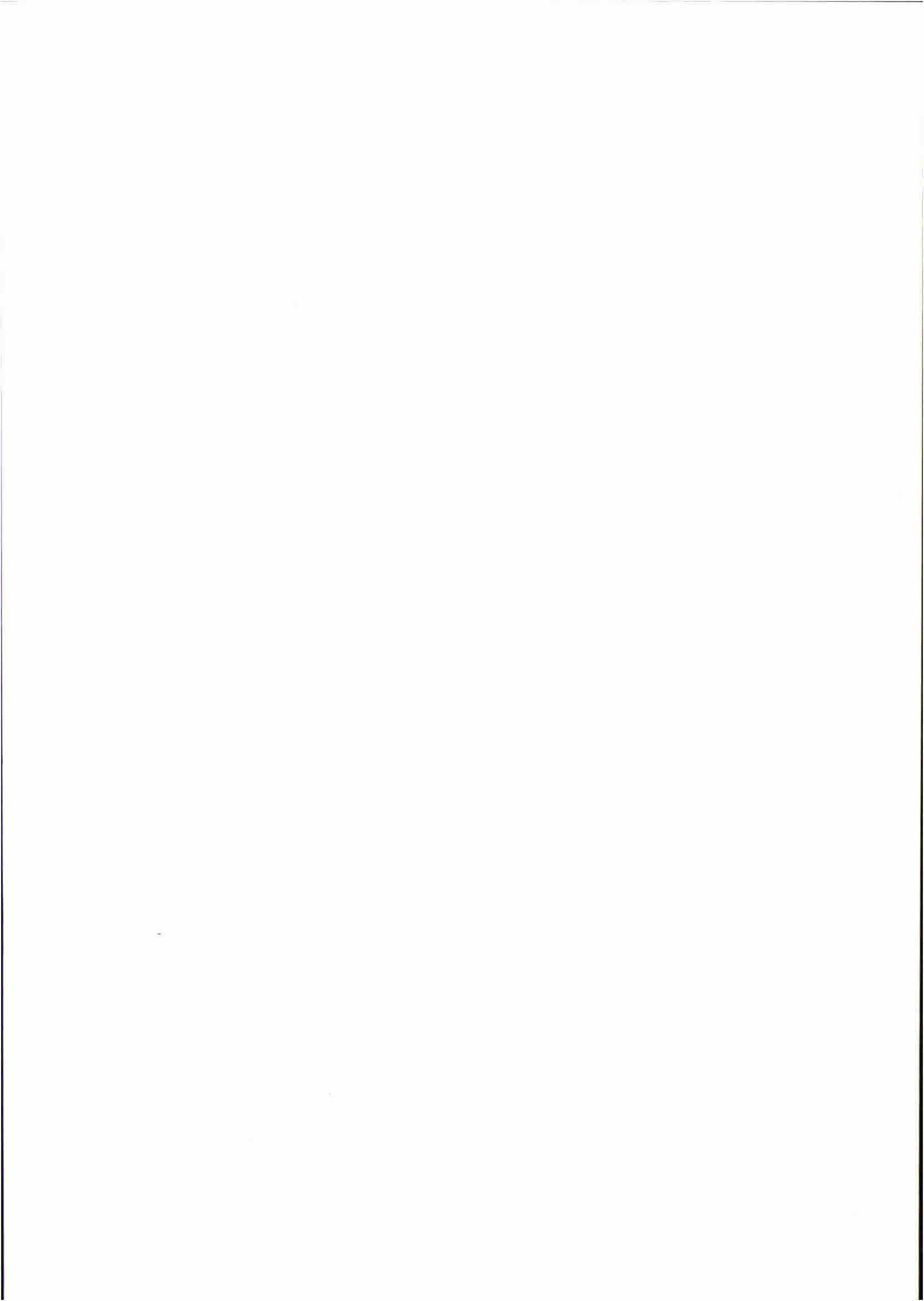
The meeting recently on "the Future of EO" was not a council meeting but an open members' meeting for the purposes of discussion and exploring of ideas. The process was begun at the 25th anniversary gathering and its purpose has been and is to review how EO is matching up to its aims, whether the aims are still valid and to discover and agree any changes and improvements thought necessary to aims, policy etc. In terms of the map such a discussion can take place throughout the organisation, e.g. locally in groups, in families, between two or three members etc. as well as in the newsletter, at gatherings and on the email lists. The meeting was just a part of the process albeit a more formal part in that it was planned, purposeful and focussed for a day.



EDUCATION OTHERWISE

(A Map, AST. April 2003)





(The EOMAP legend, continued from p. 21 ...)

Any proposals to do with significant changes in EO in terms of policy, procedure and practice need to be made to a council meeting before they can be implemented. Proposals can come from anywhere in the organisation. In practical terms because there is so much business (grand and humble) to do in the course of a one day council meeting it is difficult for a proposal for significant change to be allowed enough time for a full and broad discussion on the day and decisions on such matters are often deferred to allow wider discussion and possibly gathering of further information (e.g. financial if appropriate). Even after a matter has had a good general airing and there is a broad sense of agreement beforehand, it will usually command some further discussion, final objections and refining qualifications at a council meeting before a decision is made.

It should be obvious from all of this that major decisions are not usually taken lightly or quickly. Though the process can be slow at times this is not usually the problem as to change in EO. The problem is often not a shortage of good ideas, but a shortage of worked-up integrated proposals in addition to a shortage of human resource in terms of time, both for the full discussion and working up of the ideas and for their implementation. (Not to mention any proposal being subject to financial viability!). Hence the reason for discussions about hiring or employing to get some of EO's work done! EO needed to stop sawing inefficiently (with a blunt saw) long enough to sharpen the saw! The discussion day has perhaps sharpened the saw a little ... or maybe just let us step back enough to acknowledge it is blunt!

Procedures for change!

So hopefully now you can see where this meeting and other discussions fit into the overall picture. Also, now or in the future, if you have an idea for change, you may wish to use the map and the above to help you to integrate it into the overall picture to see at an early stage if the idea could work or not. New initiatives should be considered in the light of how they further EO's main aims and how they affect and interact with other areas of EO's activity and jobs done by other voluntary members.

The next stage is **discussion**; ideally, especially with an idea which will lead to significant change, you need to put it about for discussion (newsletter, other members, gatherings etc. or you may wish to discuss the idea on the business list.) The intention has been that council members or others feed back from discussions on it. This is a current example of procedure evolving out of practice as well as practice following from agreed procedure. Then, if it still seems like a good idea and seems to be getting agreement, work it up into a proposal for further discussion and for taking to a council meeting. As can be seen from diagram *4 (cover), all members have direct access to the council meeting. If you wish to put something to the meeting and can't come yourself, it is a good idea to get in touch with one or more council members beforehand (or another general member who you know to be going to the meeting) and if appropriate write down the idea, proposal or comment for the meeting.

But remember, a proposal for the meeting is a much firmer and more definite thing than a discussion idea.

N.B. for completeness: 'constructive criticism' should follow the same route as ideas, comments and proposals, 'complaints' have a specific complaints procedure which should be followed, 'moans' are best aired with the most appropriate relevant person (...or a good friend) and 'attacks' - which are never useful - have no place.)

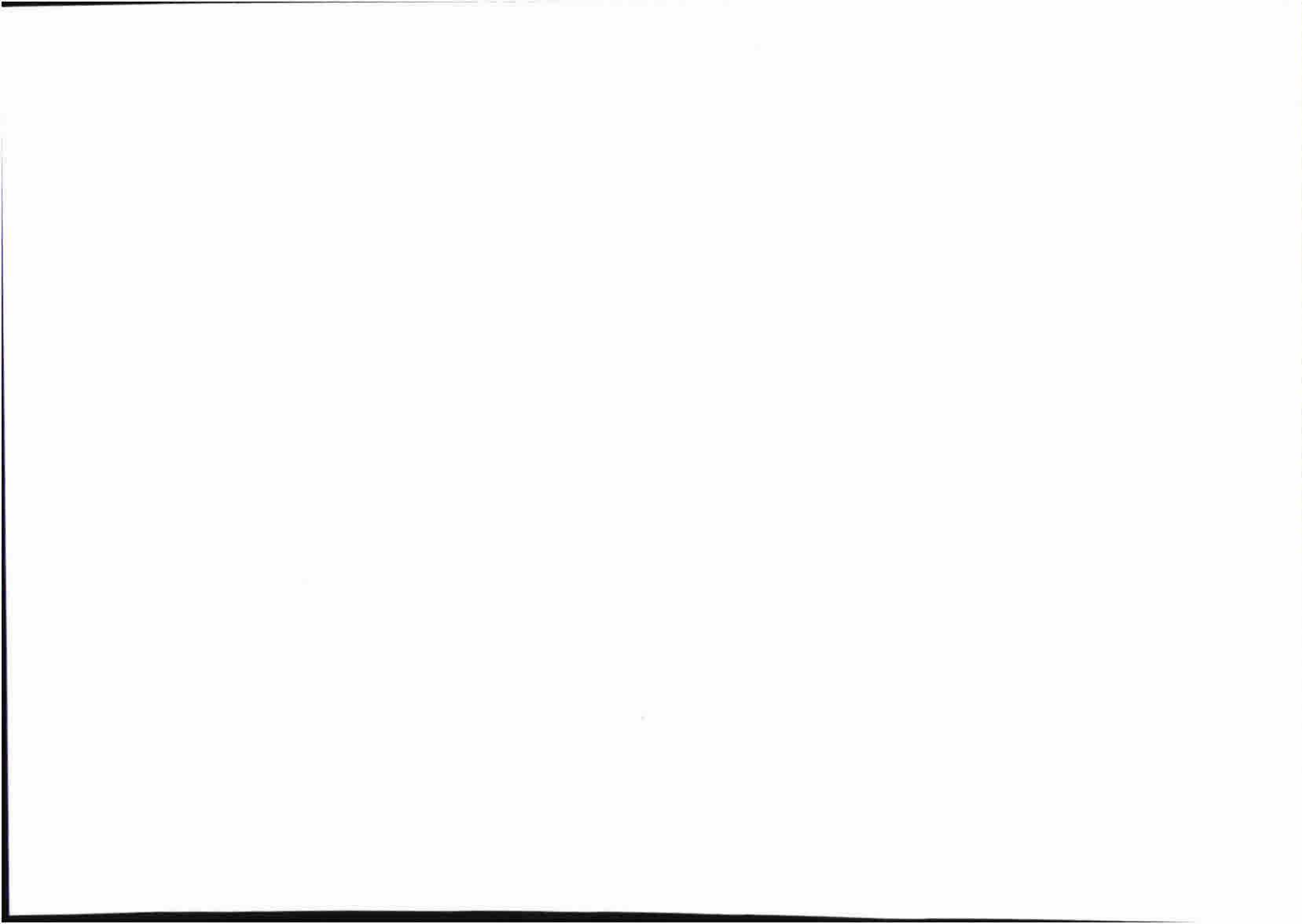
TOP TIPS: The more thought out (following discussion) a proposal is in terms of how it will actually work, be implemented, affect other aspects of EO's work and volunteers and be financed the more likely it is to be passed in principle and encouraged to be put into practice.

Ideas for improving existing procedures and practices will be all the more welcome if they come with some offer of help to put them into action and/or a plan as to 'how' built in.

Ideas alone are welcome too because even if many of them will not bear fruit on their own, they are stimulating and encouraging to others and often help a more workable/integrated idea to germinate somewhere in the mind pool of the membership! e.g. Martin Wise made a written contribution before the discussion day as to having the discussions 'in context' to make them more useful and efficient...the above maps and outlines, which did help at the meeting and now contribute to wider understanding, are the result.

Hopefully you will be inspired, if you can, to help pathfind an efficient future for EO. Your contribution is needed; this might be for example in doing a practical job, in coming up with ideas or in supporting others to do those things. Of course let's not forget, renewing your membership is also supportive to EO's work.

Ann Samuel Till ann.samueltill@blueyonder.co.uk



Future of EO Day – Notes from discussions

This day was planned as an opportunity to discuss issues around EO's future development. The meeting was not a decision-making forum, but some of the issues raised at the meeting will form the basis for proposals to be made to the council meeting in June.

In the morning the meeting discussed EO's Aims and current structure. We agreed that the aims as set out in the articles of association should still be EO's principal aims. We also clarified our understanding of the overall structure of EO, with the help of a diagram that had been prepared (see centre pages), and discussed our core activities. These were seen to be member support, enquiries and a limited amount of interaction with government at various levels.

We went on to identify issues important to EO's future development to discuss in detail in the afternoon. The topics the meeting decided to concentrate on were:

- EO's role in providing counselling
- The relationship of national EO with local groups and issues around regionalisation
- Sources for further funding
- The need for paid staff and or a central office
- Decision making structures within EO

During the course of the morning discussion we identified a number of issues which should come to the next council meeting for discussion but that we did not feel needed to be discussed further then. These were:

- Information provided by members on their membership forms about skills, experience etc is currently not being used. It was suggested that codes should be reintroduced into the contact list to indicate what skills and experience members had.
- LEAs are making use of the enquiries line to find out about home education. Packs could be put together for LEAs which they could buy for £10 or £15. Any LEA making an enquiry could be told to buy a pack.
- The aims on the back of the newsletter should make it clear that informing the general public about alternatives to school education is one of EO's aims. Martine will bring a specific proposal about this to the council meeting.

In the afternoon we divided into three discussion groups and explored the five topics in depth. Summaries of these discussions were then presented to the whole meeting and common ground was sought for areas where there was disagreement.

EO's role in providing counselling

The meeting acknowledged that the support provided by many EO volunteers does border on Counselling, but it was generally felt that offering professional Counselling was beyond EO's remit. Perhaps in the long term this could become possible but in the meantime some people felt that EO should develop further its guidelines for listening skills for those handling enquiries and crisis calls.

The relationship of national EO with local groups and issues around regionalisation

There was discussion about whether it would be useful to introduce some way for local groups to affiliate with EO. This would clarify issues around start-up grants and insurance and might have other beneficial effects.

There were some differences in views of just what regionalisation might actually mean in practice. In general people acknowledged that regionalisation should be encouraged to connect several local neighbouring areas for sharing information and to develop regional cohesion. It was recognised that more active members may emerge to volunteer locally and nationally but the meeting was divided on the subject of regions sending "official" representatives to council

meetings mainly because of the acknowledged difficulties around any one person "representing" many home educators. It was also recognised that there are probably some regions which would naturally be strong and cohesive and lend themselves to a regional "structure" and others (e.g. dispersed rural areas) where formal regionalisation might not work well and only lay on another layer of structure.

The possibility of appointing a limited contract development officer to work with the regions to support this kind of growth was also discussed.

Sources for further funding

The meeting agreed that the fund raising group should be free to consider all sources of outside funding, but that EO should be cautious about funding that came with strings attached. The fundraising group will ask the council for clarification about what kinds of outside funding might not be acceptable.

The need for paid staff and or a central office

The meeting accepted that workloads for key volunteers were unmanageable and that paid help was becoming necessary.

There was a general feeling that we didn't have enough information to make decisions on employing staff, contracting other paid help and or having a central office. It was proposed that EO should join NCVO and seek information from them on setting up offices and employing staff.

In the meantime the meeting suggested that EO provide paid support to key volunteers, particularly the treasurer and the enquiries secretaries co-ordinator, but possibly other volunteers as well. This expense could be met for the moment from EO's reserves and the fundraising group could explore outside funding for it.

It was suggested that it might be useful to appoint a limited contract development officer to work on improving EO's structures to enable the volunteer network to function more smoothly and help lessen volunteer burn-out (one off funding for overview and rationalisation). This sort of worker would probably need outside funding.

The meeting also agreed that further support should be offered to the enquiries line by improving the technology used. Specifically it was suggested that EO should provide a second telephone line for enquiries secretaries and key special contacts, and that the answering machine be replaced with a better system for redirecting calls. This could be met initially from reserves but outside funding could also be sought.

Decision making structures within EO

Postal voting to elect council members and on particular issues was discussed. The meeting agreed that binding postal votes on issues was not appropriate. It was pointed out that the council has the legal responsibility for any decisions taken.

The meeting did not feel that postal voting for council members was appropriate. There are never more candidates than places for council members at present. The meeting felt that an important issue was how to get more members to stand for council. It was recognised in the discussion on regionalisation that as more activities and meetings were encouraged at local and regional level more active members might emerge to participate at a national level.

Other

Other longer term possibilities were discussed including paid administrator, treasurer, counsellors, media officer and editor and retained solicitors and educational psychologists. The idea of resource centres was also raised. All these seemed like possible long-term goals and should not be forgotten.

Jill Fisher

Early Years Funding

I've managed to work myself into a position of being one of approximately only 12 Accredited Childminders in Cornwall who can draw Funding for providing Early Years Sessions for 3 and 4 year olds. I am providing funded sessions for children from home educating families and spending the money on resources that I loan to the families.

I have been writing many 'it's not fair' letters to people like Baroness Ashton because I was not allowed to draw funding for two of my own children, who would get a funded place at any other early years establishment. I was miffed that I had made the effort to run my own provision and provide more of the early years places that are so desperately needed, yet my own children were being discriminated against.

Apparently my campaign has been instrumental in getting the rules changed. I've just had written confirmation that both of my eligible children will receive their funding from Summer term. Can you imagine how delighted I am?

I think it's possible that other people with young children might want to become Accredited Childminders in order to draw funding. I would be prepared to support them. It's not for the faint hearted though, there is loads of paperwork to get used to, and there are lots of visits from well meaning ladies!

There is 'Start Up Grant' funding available which can be up to £600 depending on the kind of area you live in (Sure Start areas get most funding) which can help towards new toys & safety equipment. There is further funding for relevant training courses.

In order to become a Registered Childminder you and your partner will have to be checked by the Criminal Records Bureau and meet OFSTED's set of 14 National Standards, which cover issues such as safety, equal opportunities and how you encourage children's nice behaviour. An OFSTED inspector will visit to check and fill in forms. Within the first six months of being registered you need to do the Introducing Childminding Practice Certificate. The First Aid and Food Hygiene courses are a good idea too and they are easy. You can do them whilst you wait to become registered.

To become Accredited you have to be a member of your local Approved Childminding Network. Your local Network Co-ordinator will visit you and fill in forms. It's her job to visit you every 6 - 8 weeks. I've got a fantastic relationship with my Network Co-ordinator, we email each other often, the children look forward to her visits because she brings different toys and books for us to borrow. She is supportive of home education and is happy that the home educating mums are with me when she visits. Your Network Co-ordinator will fill in more forms demonstrating how you meet the Foundation Stage Curriculum for you to be Accredited. Don't worry about Foundation Stage, you are probably covering it already through the ordinary course of your daily life. I haven't changed anything I do to meet the requirements. It's all a matter of knowing what to write on the forms. When you are Accredited get your home educating friends round to play, plan what to spend the money on - oh, and fill in a few forms!

If you have any experience of working or volunteering in an early years setting, teaching or running a business then you already have a head start. Contact your local Early Years Service to find out when they are running their next Childminder introductory session to get the ball rolling. Check out www.childcarelink.gov.uk and www.ncma.org.uk. I wish you good luck. Let me know how you get on, and if you need any info call me on 01326-210297 or email tredidon@hotmail.com

Just think, I'm getting money for doing what I was doing anyway, you could be getting money for having your friends come to play too!

*Sue Bamicoat
MA Ed (Open)
Falmouth*

Congratulations on this breakthrough, Sue!

LETTERS PAGES

Research Request

I spent about ten very happy years home educating my own children, and need some help with an M.Ed. I am writing on 'Deschooling Twenty Five Years On.'

What did you read that influenced you to deschool your children? I read Ivan Illich and John Holt, and pulled my kids out around 1980.

What was EO reading in the early days of EO, and what has been helpful to people since?

Any ideas to my email, please annegillespie48@hotmail.com. or by post to: Anne Gillespie 77, Desmond Avenue, Hull, HU6 7JX.

French Exchange

French home schooling family go to South of England next July, and would like to meet families with children about 14 to practise English with her daughter Alissa 14, and may be Giovanni 3 years old. We can camp, we need water and toilets. We can receive the same (camping, water, toilets in the nature) in our beautiful area: South West of France, 2 kms from a road, with forests, a swimming pool and a lake 6 kms around. Call to 05 53 40 72 24 or email to mailto:campdugeai@free.fr Brigitte and J.Pierre Tichané-Gormond le camp du geai, 47370 COURBIA, France

A Place in the Sun?

We are an home schooling family with two boys (10 and 12 years old) and a girl of 16 all musicians. We are living in a finca in a nice land in Andalusia, Malaga (Spain). There are 2 other home schooling families living just nearby. We are selling 2 parcels of land with water for other home schooling families to create amical neighbourhood and collaboration.

Thank you to diffuse this news in your association.

Our Phone: 00 34 952 11 25 30

Our Address: Annabelle Gosselink, Florian Macarro Romero; 29 567 Alozaina, Malaga, Spain

-- usuario [arenalaides@eresmas.com] --

Educational discount on software

I recently looked into getting a copy of Dreamweaver (a web site creation program) partly to create a local web site for our Home Education group and partly as a resource for our two children.

Many software companies offer an educational discounts on certain of their software products. However, if you read the small print many of these organisations describe those that are eligible using the following text:

"The student must be registered full-time or part-time in any school/college/university or attending a course that awards qualifications recognised by the UK Department of Education & Skills (DfES), or the Irish Department of Education (DoE)"

Typically when you buy an educational version of the software you receive a voucher to complete - proving that child is in school, not in education - and to send the voucher off to a fulfilment house that then sends you a copy of the software.

I contacted the fulfilment house and asked if the definition was written on purpose to exclude children that were being educated outside of the school system. After a brief exchange of e-mails, I was offered the software at the educational price. This fulfilment house is now "educated" in the ways of EO and if anyone wishes to take a look at what is available, you can find further information about products and prices at:

www.licencetoclick.com/student

Should you wish to purchase anything please contact the person below who was most helpful with my enquiries:

Alan Berry, Account Manager
Civica Services Ltd, 27 Ackmar Road, London SW6 4UR
Email: aberry@civica.co.uk
Tel: 020 7731 9202 Fax: 020 7731 9275

Trevor Lever, The Beeches, Stoke Hill, Stoke St Michael, Radstock BA10 5JJ

Wildlife concerns

I am very worried about the declining numbers of dolphins, porpoises, and whales in our seas. They are being washed up on beaches due to inhumane and cruel fishing by pair trailers, that kill 100s and 100s of the most BEAUTIFUL GENTLE and INTELLIGENT creatures that live on this earth.

If other people have the same views as me, could you get in touch with me to talk together via-email or post and discuss ways of helping/getting information to other people to inform them of the REAL CRUELTY of killing these creatures due to pair Trailers, and sending letters to MPs to voice our real concern of this world wide disaster that is happening before our very eyes.

Charlotte Sherrard, 2 Sunnyside, South Milton, Kingsbridge, South Devon, TQ7 3JW.
E-mail: CShrrrd@aol.com

Video Tape wanted

Does anyone happen to still have a video of the Channel 4 programme 'We don't go to school', screened on 2nd March 2002, that they no longer need?

We have been trying to get hold of a copy for our home education group in Blundeston to lend to new members; we also thought it would be good to lend to relatives of home-educating families as it is sometimes hard to explain what sort of things we do. From what I can remember, this programme would give somebody unfamiliar with home-education some idea of it and maybe help answer some questions.

If anyone has one and would be kind enough to give it to our group, please contact me and I can send you the postage.

Thank you

Hilary Woolf, 3 Blacksmiths Cottages, Clarkes Lane, Ilketshall St. Andrew, Suffolk NR34 8HR
Tel: 01986 781527

Contact wanted

We have been home-educating our three daughters since April 200s. Previous to this two of them did attend a local school. At first the girls kept in touch with lots of their school friends, but one by one, over the year they have dwindled away to leave just a few staunch friends that we regularly see.

Although they have friends who are at mainstream school, and they have EO penfriends, it would be lovely for them to meet and play with other home-educated children too. I would also love to meet other full-time mum/ teacher/ housewife/ childminder parents as it is often hard to find similar minds or people who even understand what home-education is all about. Most of my friends who have children at mainstream school think I am crazy to home-educate. How can I stand to have my children with me all day!

However I know of no local group within my area or if there are any other families who home educate. Would it be possible for anyone to get in touch? Also could anyone put me in touch with my local EO contact. I would love to belong to a cosy EO community where others understand my and my children's enthusiasm for education and the joy in learning.

Please help!

Mel Hills, The Little School House, 87 Linden Road, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO21 2BB

Note: Mel has now been contacted by Sussex members, and sent a copy of the Sussex NL. But for other new members in the same predicament: try the Regional Diary (near the end of the NL), or contact any member from the Contact List and just get together for a chat – even if your children aren't the same age, it will make a change and you never know what it might lead to. Or, if you're feeling bolder, arrange an outing to somewhere you enjoy going, publicise it to local members and/or in the library, post office etc., get some leaflets from Ali (Stationery – see inside back cover) and see who turns up. If no-one, well – that's why it's got to be somewhere you like going anyway ... *Anne*

RESPONSES TO APRIL N/L

'The Future of EO'

The 'office', which Iris referred to in "The Future of EO ... Lessons from History?", was that of the Membership Secretary; and it occurs to me that perhaps the "Lesson from History" is that, while EO was then still in its relative infancy, we have nevertheless managed to go on for 20+ more years without an office!

But then I do realise that EO has grown somewhat now (although the membership does seem to have been fairly static for quite some years), and so have been unable to make up my mind on this question of 'An Office' except that I do definitely feel that such should be run by people with first-hand experience of EO.

But surely there must be enough people out there in EO by now whose children are older, or left home, who have the time (as Janet Everdell did), who would be delighted to be able to earn a small amount of money by using the **experience** they've gained over the years, especially since this "experience" counts for very little else when the time might come to need to earn an income; and especially for those who have no paper-qualifications because they've devoted their lives to their family. And this *I do know!* For several years (until just a year ago) I lived on an Income of £200 per month (£46pw) from part-time work; and I would far rather have spent an infinite number of hours for EO (as, say, an Enquiries Sec. again) but I had to have an income; and I had to work from home. I'm sure EO having an office would cost far more than even several multiples of this (to equal several employed people).

So if there are EOers out there in a similar position to that which I've just described, I would far rather see them employed than an Office set up. Added bonuses would be: working from home means no travel costs etc; working in one's own time allows for interspersing it with, say, a bit of necessary gardening; and, for any household with a low income and less than £3K in savings, no Council Tax to pay! And who in EO wants to

pay that when 2/3rds of it goes on so-called Education"!!

(And for the record, I'm no longer available for the job!)

Diana Cox, Grey Row Cottage, St. Margaret, South Elmham, Suffolk E-mail: dicox45@yahoo.co.uk

Further comment on above:

Today Education Otherwise is a thousand times more complex than 20 years ago and yet it still runs on the same system of calls coming in to the enquiries secretaries, though this is now done via virtual numbers on an answer machine which divert callers to several enquiries secretaries on a rota basis.

We cannot compare today with yesteryear, when we could receive approximately the same numbers of calls in a week as we can receive in an hour today.

It would be impossible for one person alone to cope with the incoming calls. I deal with referrals the enquiries secretaries cannot deal with. There are days when these calls are coming in so quickly that I have not been able to lift my hand from the receiver before the next incoming call.

Iris Harrison

'Globalisation of Home Education'

I am writing in response to Amanda Petrie's article on the 'Globalisation of Home Education'. It seemed to me that it painted rather too bleak a picture of home education in France. We have been home educating in France for the past eight years and have not been subjected to the difficulties described in the article. The only change that we have noticed in recent years has been that the local Mairie informed the education authority that we home educated our children. This was unwelcome but has not led to any further action.

On a purely personal level we have found people more sympathetic to home education in France than in England - in eight years here our children have never once been asked why they aren't in school, we have not had a single visit from an official or an advisor (or asked to sit

any tests), and people that we meet are interested rather than antagonistic to the idea of teaching children at home.

I am not convinced by the argument that home education is not possible in France. It flies in the face of my own experience and, in any event, is too depressing to be accepted. People (including researchers) are always telling parents what they can and can't do, but the recent history of home education has demonstrated that when parents try to do what they believe to be best for their own children, they somehow manage to do it, and I am sure that this applies in France now just as much as it ever did in the past.

With best wishes,

*Gareth Lewis, Nezert 22160 Duault
France Tel: 0033 (0)296 215597*

(N.B. We hope to have a further comment from Amanda Petrie on above letter in the next issue. AR)

'School is Optional'

We think that Anne Rix's idea about 'School is Optional' is absolutely right. For a long time we've been thinking that 'School is Not Compulsory' doesn't quite get the idea across. We congratulate Anne on getting past the thinking block and coming up with a solution.

We like the positive message that 'School is Optional' conveys for Home Education and we think it should be added to the range of slogans used by EO. We are sure there are many EO families who would agree - we certainly know some who do.

A while ago we bought transfers that you print onto from computer then iron on, and thought it was about time we used them, so we've designed a new T-shirt for our family, based on 'School is Optional' (See page 9). We hope you like it - why not make your own T-shirt for fun?

All the best to everyone

Sue & Deryck Barnicoat, Falmouth
E-mail: tredidon@hotmail.com

ENQUIRIES/HELPLINE

As a home educator with four young children who have never been to school, I've always had a nagging feeling that I had used EO but never given anything back, so when I read in the April magazine "EO enquiries line recruits urgently needed" the guilt really kicked in and I finally plucked up courage to phone Jo for details.

Jo was very friendly and I was set up as a member of the enquiries team.

I was nervous to start off with, but it soon emerged that all most people want is a friendly voice to tell them that "yes it is legal" and to answer the familiar EO questions (Do I have to follow the National Curriculum? Are there other EOers nearby?).

Jo and Iris have provided me with loads of support. If I get a call I feel unable to deal with I can (and do) put it through to them. I have spoken to some lovely people, most of whom have been really thankful to have someone to talk to who actually home educates. Calls are only put through to me every other week, and total perhaps five or six calls on a busy day.

So if you are reading this with a similar nagging feeling that perhaps it is your turn to put something back into EO, phone Jo on 01392 438876 and volunteer. With more volunteers each person may only have to answer calls one week in three or even one week a month and a parent who is in despair because their child is unhappy/being bullied etc may reach a friendly voice giving them hope for the future.

*Frances Daunt, 190 Dale Road, Matlock Bath,
Derbyshire, DE4 3PT*



*Thank you, Sue and Deryck!
Glad you found a use for it.
See also following pages
for further slogan ideas
and discussion from email lists
Anne*

SPECIAL SECTION - SPREADING THE WORD

Well, a sort of impromptu Special Section, because 'School is Optional' found its way onto the EO Business Email list and sparked off a rash of further suggestions for slogans together with some thoughtful comments on what we say, how we say it, and the impression it makes. There's a freshness and informality about the list discussions which can get stifled if people think about writing an article for the NL, and I hope this way of picking bits up (with a few modifications for clarity and to avoid offence) will preserve some of that. Many of the points made are thought-provoking, interesting and valuable and it occurred to me that it would be great for all the suggested slogans and some of the thinking behind them to be given a wider readership via the EONL, as people do seem to be interested in the various nuances of meaning and perception Please note: there is no suggestion of replacing SINC on our literature, but of having a bit of fun with the way we try to get the message across.

Here are the slogans suggested:

"School is not the only option" "School is but one method of education"
"School isn't the only option" "did you cry when your child started school?"
"School is just one option" "School is just an option"

And some points from the discussion ...

WHOSE OPTION?

I can see the appeal of 'School is Optional' - it's upbeat and lighter etc. than SINC and it may be appropriate for use on some occasions where other information is also available to back it up, for example on posters at exhibition stalls where there are actual home educators, and on leaflets. The slogan SINC prompts further questioning, typically "oh...isn't it? I thought it was (compulsory)" and it is at least clear that school is not, though something else might be ... namely education. 'School is Optional' seems to imply the option is that you can go to school or you can 'not go' - that's not quite the reality behind it: education is compulsory. I think in the end 'School is Optional' though it may be pedantically still accurate gives the impression that the choice is more casual and accepted than it is in reality. Because of that it could be seen as misleading to some people particularly young people as, in the law, the option is not theirs but their parents'.

Ann Samuel Till <ann.samueltil@blueyonder.co.uk>

THE MESSAGE AND THE MEDIUM

I like 'School isn't the only Option!' We printed our own transfers on our Tees to go to the park yesterday; my youngest wore 'School is optional' but, easier to understand than 'School is not compulsory' as it is, I suppose it could still be construed as meaning that you can bypass their education altogether. 'School is not the only option' is a good starting point! It's a slogan that is more likely to lead to decent questions about what other options are available without attacking School itself. We started our crusade (if you can call it that) to promote our Home Ed status just as an activity for the children to do, and to hopefully nip in the bud those 'No school today?' questions. They enjoyed drawing and designing either on the simple paint program on the PC, or onto paper and then scanning it in to print off onto T-Shirt transfer paper so that they could flaunt their efforts. Having a pile of old Tees; what we didn't chop up for other arts activities, we tie dyed, and ironed transfers onto others. They've made badges and bookmarks, too and I've got one or two bumper stickers and window clings out of their enthusiasm. It's fun for them to do, but I believe they also feel empowered by wearing their intentions on their sleeves (quite literally sometimes <chuckle>)

Tracy M <themightyone@ntlworld.com>

CHANGE THE VIEWPOINT

I can't help feeling that as a high percentage of grown-ups do send their children to school, using the 'school is optional' line is always going to put backs up whatever the situation unless the only people involved are HE-ers. If people who don't HE are involved there needs to be a fresh, interesting approach which isn't going to put backs up - maybe totally unconnected with school in that way ... something like, 'did you cry when your child started school?' did you know you don't have to send them? Teach them at home yourself ... blah blah blah

Julie <julearnld@ntlworld.com>

ARE WE THAT DESPERATE?

I'm not sure about 'did you cry when your child started school?'. On first reading it did make me feel a bit like a rather desperate Mum who is putting MY feelings first ... I understand where it's coming from, just not sure that is the image we are trying to convey? I personally think 'School isn't the only option' is more my take on it ... making sure that people realise there is a valid alternative to school.

Carrie <boboandspud@aol.com>

A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

To be quite honest, I was just trying to think of something which came from a totally different direction from 'knocking' school - as with anything very emotive, you will never get people to listen to you if you are knocking what they are already doing. I think many people are very inward-looking and their favourite subject is themselves or their family so it needs to be something they can identify with without being made to feel bad or defensive. Just an idea, but to someone with children in school I can't help thinking the current approach is (not deliberately) designed to raise backs and defensive reactions. I personally have never cried when any of mine have started school but I know many do and it was simply an example of something from a different perspective.

Julie <julearnld@ntlworld.com>

.....

N.B. The process that's been initiated here - the gathering of people's ideas from email list discussion and putting it in the newsletter - is exactly the procedure described in the article on the structure of EO (see page 24) and how the procedure of decision making works (or should work!) under our present set up. It's a pity that it doesn't happen more often - how about some people who are on email lists etc. appointing themselves as correspondents, to extract good stuff for the NL, tidy it up a bit and share it with others who haven't got internet access? Volunteers please contact NL co-ordinator ... or just do it when you feel inspired (... in pyjamas ... at lunchtime!)

It's also been pointed out that no-one has actually taken responsibility for feedback from the lists to Council, groups, etc. - getting it going with the NL would be a start ... Anne

.....

HOME EDUCATION ROCKS!

I must admit to being a bit peeved at the article in the April NL "Home Education is not compulsory." EO is where I turn when I have a bad day, not to be told that we are so close to chucking it all in, (NEVER!) but to gather inspiration and support for carrying on in the face of so much antagonism.

We would have no end of support from in-laws, neighbours, and well-meaning strangers were we to suddenly decide to send our children back to school. This NL is supposed to be an arena where we can gather support for our decisions to home educate, not justify any reasons for sending our children back into what I believe is a damaging environment. If some feel the need to explain why they choose school, then I need to take the time to remind myself why we choose to home educate. And just to make it perfectly clear, I am anti-school, and I am certainly not ashamed of being so. I completely reject the institution of the school as an educational model. School has very little to do with education, and so much more to do with compliance, social control and conformity. That is what it has always been about, and that is what it will always be about. No amount of school reform can take away the fact schools are designed for the convenience of adults, and with adults' goals in mind, however well-meaning.

I reject the idea that children NEED to know anything. What good is knowledge that you do not want?

What children need is to be around adults who will answer their questions, read them the books they want to hear, and help them with the tools they want to learn to use. I have had to re-examine my reasons for home educating recently when my eldest daughter S turned 12. For some reason this was important to me, not because of the wonderful person she is becoming, but because she would have started secondary school. I suddenly thought that we were leaving our relaxing days of picnics in the park behind us. She showed interest in doing an IGCSE in Natural Economy, and since the IGCSE is not going to be open to private candidates after June/ November of this year, I thought we had better get cooking. I set about to buy the curriculum, to find a college and to have dedicated study time with my daughter. Suddenly I was stressed. I thought I didn't know what I was doing, was nervous at the prospect of her taking an exam, perhaps failing, blaming me, or having her self-esteem damaged by the situation. We were actually enjoying some of the material but the idea of an exam loomed ahead. She wanted to follow through on certain topics that interested her, and skip over bits that were irrelevant. That is what we had always done, but for some reason, it was different this time.

I am not really sure what happened, but luckily I was brought back to my senses. I think it must have been a sudden jump in our social lives that made finding time to study a bit more difficult. After years of home educating and looking for things to do, places to go and people to visit, we now have to make sure we have one day a week at home, to run errands or just hang out with each other. And that sort of reminded me what had always been the most important thing about home educating. Us. Our family was the important thing. Wanting to be together and share experiences, and help the children, ages 12, 8, 6, 3, grow and develop as they are ready had always been uppermost in our ideas of what home education should be. When S was younger I remember being surprised at the questions, you know the ones what about socialisation, etc., but I could never get over the "What about exams?" question. We were talking about a 6 year old, a 7 year old, and on and on. Who cared about exams?

Well, I am back there now. Who cares about exams? My view of education is back to being based in experience and motivation, with the ultimate goal of having a fulfilling life. For me and for them. It is not about what they will be when they grow up, preparing for some idea of success that we didn't subscribe to in the first place. It is about being who we are, enjoying who we are now, not waiting until they grow up. It is about doing, not studying so that they can do someday. It is about rejecting the idea that anybody else, including us parents, but especially some teacher, knows what is best for our children.

I am glad that more people are finding out about home education, that more people are realising how dangerous schools really are. But why do so many of us sometimes doubt ourselves, or think we need curricula, and resources, and targets? This doubt is what school is about, making us think we need to be told what to do. Home education isn't just about helping my kids. It is about getting over my own schooling, that nagging teacher's voice in the back of my head that says "Are you sure you're doing that right?" Well, the kids say "Yeah!" So roll on picnics in the park.

And schools? Quite frankly, the world would be a better place without them.

Julie Ridley, 32 Cheltenham Road, Chorlton, Manchester M21 9QN

More From the Diary of a Home Educating Nobody.

Do you ever get the feeling that Home Education is taking over your life?

Not only was the meal late, and everyone was starved to the point of tantrums, but also I was eating it with utensils covered in wax, I'd had to drain the pasta in the sink which was purple with dye, and eat off a table with bird poo on it!

I ask you – isn't this taking home education a bit far? Justification for me having a tantrum, don't you think?

It wasn't fresh bird poo I hasten to add. Actually it wasn't even bird poo at all even though it put me in mind of it! It was an owl pellet lovingly carried home like treasure, to be dissected and examined and crooned over after the boring exercise of having dinner. But it was the last straw and I wasn't enjoying looking at it while I sat chewing in stony silence.

My daughter gobbled hers down as fast as possible so she could get her hands on the bird poo. She was just itching to get at it, wriggling about, shoving pasta down like there was no tomorrow and throwing her water down her throat in one gulp.

"Finished! Can I do it now!"

"No!" the rest of us shout in unison with our mouths full and our plates only half empty.

"Oooohhh!" She sulks, her impatient eye flicking between our dwindling meal and the pellet. "She's deliberately taking a long time!" she says of her sister. We ignore it and keep on eating.

The minute we've all finished she whips our plates away in a whirlwind of helpfulness and pounces on the poo with a pair of tweezers.

The rest of us give up. We've gone off the pudding anyway, and everything seems to taste of melted candle wax (we were baking earlier). The rest of the family drifted away from what they consider to be the most disgusting member of the household and she and I start dissecting.

The pellet was indeed a treasure. My imminent tantrum forgotten I was as absorbed in the examination as she was. It was fascinating.

There were stones, shells, bones, fish scales, bits of shellfish, a beetle (in pieces – piecing it together was fun), fur and hair. We oohed and aaaahed so much and so loudly that everyone came back and took part and we were soon fighting over who was going to tweezer out the next gem! We wouldn't have missed it for the world. Who needs pudding when you've got all this excitement going on?

So what if home education was running my life; it was such fun!

The point, though, (when I'm sane and rational and the tantrum alert is past) is not about whether home education is running my life or not. It is more to do with the fact that I believe that real life and real education are not separate from one another. Learning goes on all the time. It's *all important* to a child's education. And so much is lost when people try to compartmentalise learning into neat little packages and impose restrictions.

So many children are put off learning completely by schools and institutions like them trying to fragment education and force it into different straightjackets. They fragment by subject and content, by levels and ability, by age, by standards and testing, by time and period, and by clustering people together. They segregate it from life by the very action of removing children from real experience and confining them. Yet out in the real world learning takes place just by the simple action of living a life and being exposed to all manner of things, bird poo included! What a loss it would have been if we hadn't collected the bird poo because we were exercising at the time! If I'd said we couldn't dissect it because we had to do reading now!

All right, I admit, I did want my dinner first and so did the other members of the family! But what if I'd dampened the enthusiasm because it didn't fit into our curriculum, and we had to 'do Vikings' just then!

What a loss it would be if I didn't answer, at the time, those inquisitive questions that come at me constantly; in the car, in the supermarket, at bedtime, even when she's sitting on the toilet, just because it wasn't on our 'timetable'. Or if I stopped the natural curiosity by saying the child was too young, or too old, or too slow a learner. Or wasn't wearing the right uniform! Or wasn't in the 'right' room, or sitting in the 'right' position! Or if I withheld information because the first bit hadn't been learnt yet!

How much education would not go on if I had to stick to so many rules, timetables, schedules, subject divisions and age segregation. How ridiculous all that seems in comparison to living an educational life, as all life surely is.

I am not saying that there is no place for any kind of structure. Of course there is. Most people have some kind of self-imposed structure in their day, in their home education, and for successful interaction with society. But to separate children from real life, compartmentalise their learning into subjects and times continually, define them by age and ability only, is to miss a wealth of opportunity and at it's worst to kill their curiosity and enthusiasm for learning dead.

There is no doubt in my mind that education is running my life! That's how it should be. By living our lives to the full there is learning going on all the time. For all of us, children and adults! That is education!

Although one rule I shall be applying shortly is: no bird poo on the table while I eat my pudding!

Name and address supplied

Advertisements

For small items, advertising in the newsletter is free to members, but if you are running a business or hoping to make a profit from your advert please send £25 per issue (possible reduction for first insertion), quoting your EO membership number. Non-members may submit adverts, subject to space and interest to members, at £35 per issue (for 50 words). Adverts should normally be limited to 1/8 page or 50 words and sent to the NL Co-ord, - send cheque payable to 'Education Otherwise' to the Treasurer (address inside back cover) by deadline for issue.

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(primary level), Spanish, German (beginners).

20% discount to home educators,
group reductions. 0208 368 0930

E-mail: Gmontmartre@aol.com

Services and products advertised on this page have not been endorsed by Education Otherwise. EO does not make recommendations about any tutors or youth leaders, whether members of the association or not. Use of people in any such role, whether paid or unpaid, remains the responsibility of the parent.

CAMPING SEASON 2003

GWERSYLL DEWI SANT - ST DAVIDS' CAMP

EO Family Camp ~ 19th to 30th June 2003

Coastal campsite in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

Good facilities, boat trips etc

PLACES LIMITED BOOKINGS ONLY

For info and booking form send SAE to

GDS, 17 Maes Ingli, Newport, Pems,

SA42 0TE or email to yeh@onetel.net.uk

PEAK CAMP 2003

Fri 4th - Sun 13th July

Open to all EO members

& to those interested in home-education.

Farm campsite with good facilities.

Charges (payable direct to the farm, not to EO) per person per night:

Adults: £1.50 Children: £0.80 Cars: £1.00

No need to book - long or short stay.

No pre-organised activities, offers of shared activities or workshops welcome.

Popular in past: walks, cycle rides, rock climbing, circle dancing and shared meals. Near cycle tracks & hire centres, riverside walks. Time to socialise freely and share experiences of home educating with other families.

Usual site - Barracks Farm, Beresford Dale, Near Hartington (grid ref 123 586).

To indicate number of families and for full details/directions please contact Gary Podmore, 52 Rupert Road, Sheffield S7 1RP.

Tel :- (0114 2585702)

<SianPodmore@eotherswise.fsnet.co.uk>

Rainbow Circle Magic Hat Camps

The "magic" is that we all put in as much money and energy as we can manage (there is no "site crew" or "creche") and have a wonderful experience camping in beautiful countryside

Advance Party Camp 25 July - 3 August

Crafts and Earth Magic Camp 4-12 August

Detox, Renewable and Healing Camp

13-20 August

Quaoar Celebration Camp 22-31 August

For more information:

www.rainbowcircle.co.uk/

Or ring: Annette 01423-500699

Sarah 01970-617570

LLYN PENINSULA CAMP

Sat 12th to Sat 19th July

A New Venue for home ed. Families on Heritage

Coastline, One of Wales' best-kept secrets.

Rocky coves, sandy beaches, small harbours.

Abundant wildlife, sea birds, falcons, seals.

Sue & Pete who own the environmentally friendly site have experience running similar camps for Natural Nurturing Network

6 toilets, 3 showers, laundry room, alter fires & wood, marquee for rainy day activities & pow wows, 4 electric hook ups for tourers £1/night, small organic shop, daily bread and milk deliveries. Transfer to/from Pwllheli for those using public transport.

No pre-organised activities, but plenty to do in the area, surfing, snorkelling, scuba diving, fishing, sailing, local hill forts, mountains of Snowdonia, steam railway, castles, hovercraft!

We are limiting the camp to 30 families, an optimum number for facilities & space & community spirit. Discounted site fees per night £1.50 per adult, 75p per child, 10% of site fees will be donated to Education Otherwise. Booking form by post with SAE & £1.50 booking fee per adult to cover admin. & firewood payable to Sue Kennedy, Penrallt Coastal Campsite, Tudweiliog, Pwllheli LL53 8PB Tel 01758 770654 Email Penrallt@AOL.com website www.penrallt.co.uk

FOURTH STUDLAND BAY CAMP DORSET

*** *Note amended dates:* ***

Saturday 19 - Sunday 27 July

Chrystia and Keith warmly welcome all home educating families and friends

Area of great natural beauty - pine forests, lowland heath, heather-filled dunes. 4 miles from sea, nature reserve, bird sanctuary (pheasants, deer, buzzards...). Dorset steam railway nearby - to beach at Swanage. Free outings to nearby Corfe Castle. Cycleways and paths through woods and to sea. Camping in large field backed by pine woods, stream, access to full facilities at adjoining Bumbake campsite.

We provide canoes, cargo nets, rope swings, craft materials, marquee, benders, fire barrels (off ground) and separate teen area and fire.

Bring cycles, drums and other instruments.

Some singing and dancing.

Camp theme: Healing (skills sharing).

There will be a quiet bender.

Cost for whole camp £100/family (concessions available, also half camp rate).

For more information and booking 'phone Chrystia + Keith 020 8776 8597 75 Kent house road, Sydenham, London SE26 5LJ.

Regional Diary

All regular meetings listed below are included automatically in every issue, but if you have a local NL, please reduce your details to minimum.

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 is happening as shown.

Thank you to contact people who are keeping an eye on their local entries and letting me know if changes are needed.

Please do check every issue, it really helps.

- CHANGES BY LETTER OR EMAIL PLEASE -
to: Anne Rix NL Co-ord (see inside back cover)

BATH

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

BEDFORDSHIRE

For full details of events programme in Bedford and other areas of the County contact June McDonald on 01234 341375 or email

info@Bedford-Home-Ed.org.uk Continuing science theme for first half of summer term; Victorian theme for the second half. Lots of craft, drawing sessions, science/Victorian workshops and visits, including the Science and the Victoria & Albert Museums in London. Also regular swimming, multi-sport, softplay, TumbleGym and chat sessions in Bedford and other areas.

Website: www.Bedford-Home-Ed.org.uk

BERKSHIRE

E-mailing list for home educators in Berkshire and surrounding areas for events/activities

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BerkshireHomeEducators>
For Local NL/What's on Contact: Dawn 01628 783107
thirdEye1@compuserve.com Or New Web Site for Berkshire www.homeeducators.co.uk

Maidenhead Heros Club Holyport, Mondays 10-3 sports, dancing, pottery crafts and cooking. £29 month or £10 family/day. Dawn 01628 783107

Reading: Mondays, 10am - 12noon swimming at Central Pool, lots of teenagers Contact: Lynn 0118 972 1420
Thursdays, 5.30-7pm. Activities for teens incl. video production, mixing decks, web design etc. Email becky.h@ntlworld.com for more information

Fridays Caversham 12 - 5pm social, all ages, sep. rm 4 teens in hall with park outside and woods. £2/ family. Monthly, 2nd Tuesday, 11am - 6pm near Pangbourne chat and play, Adventure playground, animals. £3/family Also activities 4 teens. Contact Lynda 0118 961 4466 or Gail 01628 483895 or email hitchmans@ntlworld.com
Bracknell Wednesdays ice-skating at John Nike Leisure Centre, 2-4pm, £1.50 show EO card at reception. Contact: Pat Connor 0118 9662123

Newbury group on Fridays for younger children. Contact: Gillian 01491 671328

Woodland Camp venue running end May through Sept, Thurs & Fris. Woodland, large adventure playground, plenty of play area, BBQ, camp fire, splash pool, in- and outdoor eating areas, club room, TV & games, lots more, all day, also possible Camp Evenings. Costs available on www.homeeducators.co.uk 01628 783107 Dawn

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

BRISTOL

Thursdays meeting at St Paul's Adventure Playground 1-3pm; Spanish, Science and Pottery happening on a regular basis Contact: Carla 9354389

Email list for Bristol and surrounding areas at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BristolHomeEducation>
Also local group website for more information about home education in Bristol: www.bristolhomeeducation.org.uk

BUCKS

Newsletter for Bucks/Northants Contact:

Georgeanne on 01908 662256.

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

Contact: Jackie 01753 886924 or 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 at Guyhirn.

Contact: Pat 01354 656582 or Ruth 01945 480232

North Cambridgeshire fortnightly meeting at Chatteris on Monday afternoons. Contact Sarah 01354 694710 or Jane 01354 677869.

CHESHIRE

Contact Gill Wilson 0161 443 8723 for North

Cheshire/Stockport

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

Contact: Sue: SueElaineDavies@aol.com

Sue 01270 883 978 (for South Cheshire)

CLEVELAND AND DURHAM (see also 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 Mondays Endmoor Village Hall

1-4pm, Contact Jo Collier 015395 67005.

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

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

Lots of varied activities - see Devon newsletter (above) for full details.

North Devon

Local Contact: Amanda 01237 422403

Bideford area Fortnightly social meetings on

Tuesdays. Ring Louise 01237 441786

South Devon

Local Contact Bridget 01803 862158

Lots of activities for all ages - full details in Devon newsletter (see above)

DEVON EAST/DORSET WEST

Lyme Regis, Axminster, Bridport, Chard

Contact Ann 01297 561070

Or Habiba 0845 4582984 (local rate)

DORSET

Regular meetings, keep in touch. Contact Christine 01258 880355 or Rosemary 01747 853 593

Bournemouth area: Meeting every Monday for

crafts, games, play etc. Friendly, welcoming group.

Contact: June 01202 827945,

bugchick@btinternet.com

DURHAM

Durham based group, monthly newsletter £5 p.a. (contact Lisa Belcher at 0191-5672655).

We also have a yahoo chat group at

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/durhamhome_ed.

We meet weekly and have other less regular

activities scheduled. Contact Schuyler Waynforth

(01740-622499 or s.waynforth@btopenworld.com) or Beth Currie (0191 3735109).

ESSEX

Full details in Essex Epicycle newsletter, available from Corinne 07802 630693 epicycle@wavy.org

Braintree Cheeky Chimps indoor play area

1st Thursday of the month (ex school hols) 2pm

Chelmsford Ice skating, Riverside Fris 3.30-5pm

Elmstead Market Teenagers Fortnightly Fri 10-2pm

Marks Tey Meetings, social and activities

Fortnightly Weds 1-5pm (close to the rail station)

Springfield Meetings social and activities

Third Thurs of the month 1- 4 pm

Tiptree Meetings, social and activities

Fortnightly Tues. 2-5pm

All over Essex trips (usually Thursdays) and workshops.

Info also available from Sue 01206 520284

East London/Essex group contact Gill 020 8597 8537

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Monthly social meetings open to all. Regular workshops and outings. Website

<http://members.lycos.co.uk/GlosHomeEducators/index.html>

Email list for events and forum for discussions,

information and virtual activities. Contact Rob and

Fiona 01684-290087 openhorizons@nthworld.com

Caroline 01242 890351 cambrase@ieee.org

Beverley 01242 524091 or Mhairi 01452 384104.

Gloucester meetings & swimming

Contact Dawn 01452 540019

dawnandmike@blueyonder.co.uk

Tracy 07941 612092

HAMPSHIRE

Portsmouth EO. Warm and friendly group meet Thursdays for art, craft, music, chat and outings.

Contact: Kirsten on 02392 428 952, or email

kastun@pkinteractive.co.uk

ACTIVEO meet 3 times a week within 25 miles of

Petersfield. All welcome. Contact: 01428 712394

FAREGOS HE Group meet weekly at Holbrook,

Gosport, for swimming or skating, weekly in

Fareham for crafts and other activities. Other

outings on an ad hoc basis. Friendly, welcoming

group. Contact Gayle 01329 82-3112.

Email Gayle@v21mail.co.uk for more details.

North Hampshire: group aged 0-12 meets weekly,

Contact Carol 01264 357650 mobile 07760 355740

or e-mail eo@azakit.com

Farnham/Aldershot area. Friendly group for under

10s, weekly meetings/outings/activities

Contact: Emma 01252 350034

emmajeavons@supanet.com

HERTFORDSHIRE

TOP Health and Education Together. Numeracy,

literacy and parenting health sessions. Literacy

home study program 3-10 years. All at

London Colney

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 or 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

Canterbury Regular meetings and activities
Contact: Irene 01227 709570

East Kent including Dover, Canterbury and all surrounding areas. Contact Heather on 01227 370822 or email slimeheva@eurobell.co.uk for an up-to-date activities list.

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 Mackenzie,
16 Brambletree Cotts, Borstal, Rochester ME1 3TN

Bromley Contact: Claire 0181 460 7347

Claire@wadefamily99.freemove.co.uk

SE Kent 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
or Angela 01204 659634

LEICESTERSHIRE

Frequent meetings for play, craft, walks, hanging
out, singing, swimming, science, skating and much
more. Contact: Lise 0116 242 5802

LINCOLNSHIRE

Cleethorpes events, contact Christine 01507
338070 or Caroline 01472 690738.

Grimsby events, contact Donna; 01472 752507

Lincoln group: For list of events contact

Gill 01507 359213, Louise 01522 533582 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

SE London

Wednesdays Honor Oak playground.

Contact: Steve 8680 2933

Lewisham Thursdays 11-1

Contact: Clare 8480 0740

rollerblading Kidbrooke Contact: Fiona 020 8852

9756 bettleslake@clara.net

Sydenham Fridays fortnightly at 11.30-2.30

Contact: Chrystia and Keith 8776 8597

Forest Hill Nature Reserve Fridays alternate

fortnight 11.30 Contact: Dave 8692 4080

Plumstead Common Adventure Playground SE18

alternate Fridays, meeting at 12.30 pm.

Contact: Bev 0208 312 2160, Kim 0208 317 7262

NW London

Otherwise Club Contact: Leslie 0208 969 0893

Harrow meetings fortnightly on Fridays;

Stanmore events on Tues and Wednesdays.

Programme available from Vivienne, email
timsharkey@aol.com or tel. 0208 954 1885

or Vicki on Aceva@btinternet.com

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

Evans 0208 943 4491 timesteps@freemove.co.uk

West London EO group meeting 1st and 3rd Tues

each month, at Chiswick Park, W4. Meet outside

the cafe, from 11am. Alternative venue if wet. For full

details Contact Naomi 0208 5677 589 or

naomisandler@hotmail.com

MANCHESTER

Monthly formal art lessons at Stockport Art Gallery

£1.50. Also 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,

Croswick, Norwich NR12 7BD

Workshops/social meetings 1st and 3rd Thursday

Contact: Sue 01603 738494

NORFOLK/SUFFOLK BORDER

Term-time, every Thursday 2.30 - 4.30

Swimming, indoor sports/play at Breckland Leisure

Centre, **Thetford**. Contact Fay 01953 681785

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

New activities/meetings in addition to others already

running. Contact: Jane Newson 01536 418885

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Weekly meetings. For full list, Contact: Wendy 0115

9114312 or Louise 01773 780634

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

01334 478530 nicola.stubbs@btinternet.com

Irvine: For details of regular and one-off activities

please contact: Rhona 01294 273644

or Shirley 01563 540063 or Vivien 01563 537428

Highlands meetings Fortnightly meetings in

Inverness, plus occasional outings. All ages

welcome. Contact: Rebecca 01667 462772 or

Alison 01463 232571 alison@sauer.demon.co.uk

Lothian, Central and Southeast Scotland:

fortnightly group for meetings and outings. Ann 0131

556 6271 or <ann.samuel@blueyonder.co.uk> or

Jane 01835 863 118.

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 465280

Wivellscombe - new meeting on the 1st Tuesday of the month (term time) at Scout Hut 10.30-13.30

Contact: Maggie 01984 624 651

Wells and Glastonbury Area Regular social meetings, weekly swimming, outings and nature activities. Contact Lesley 01749 689241, Tanya 01458 834871 or Steph 01749 812959

SOMERSET NORTH - Regular get-togethers and activities Contact Vicky 01275 848425 or Sarah 01275 842300 or e-mail hegns@btopenworld.com

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 or Sue 01270 883978

Suedavies@tesco.net

STAFFORDSHIRE NORTH meetings on 3rd Tuesday each month, 12.30 to 3.00. Our aims are to support each other and collectively provide a variety of social opportunities for our children.

Contact Julie 01782 316434 or Helen 01782659112.

SUFFOLK

Felixstowe, group meeting fortnightly in town centre location for socialising, outings, sports etc.

Contact Karen 01394 279117

kjc88@whsmithnet.co.uk

Foxburrow Farm, Woodbridge

Once a month, activities organised by Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Wetherden meetings every 3rd Friday 10.30-2.30 £2.50 for family, shared lunch.

Contact: Sarah 01379 783678

East Suffolk (Lowestoft/Gt.Yarmouth area)

Contact: Lin 01502 741097 or Jackie 01502 566266

SURREY

*****NEW*** Banstead** base but everyone is welcome. Weekly meetings/activities. Contact Sue 01737 556683 or Lindsay 01306 501229

*****NEW*** near Cobham** just off A3 - Learning Group for parents & children 0 - 7, in 26 acres of private woodland, based on High/Scope approach to independent learning and problem solving. Planning now for Sept.

For more details contact Rachael rachael.underwood@classicfm.net or phone 01932 706191

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

Dorking/Reigate area.

Contact: Helen Burnett 01737 243606

Farnham/Aldershot area. Friendly group for under 10s, weekly meetings/ outings/activities. Contact: Emma 01252 350034 emmajeavons@supanet.com

North Surrey Home Ed group meets up in **Croydon** once a month, Age range from 2-15, small group, looking to grow. For more details, contact

Karen: karen_wilkins@hotmail.com

or Viv: viv@madtoyman.fsnet.co.uk

SUSSEX

Monthly newsletter £8pa or £4 six months, cheques payable to "ESEO" to Ian Lawes, 35

Waldegrave Rd, Brighton, BN1 6GR - gives full

details of local events. ianhowardlawes@lineone.net

Contact: Isobel 01403 261178 (W. Sx.)

Winnie Durdant-Hollamby 01342 826087 (E.Sx.)

Lewes Tues 1.30-3.30, term time, Southover Church

Hall, Ring Sylvia on 01273 474375

Sports with qualified coach Weds 12.30 - 1.30pm,

Southdown Club, £2 per child. Youth Club (fortnightly)

from 2pm - basketball, rollerskate, skateboard, table

tennis etc. Ring Hope or Jan 01273 514528

Lindfield EO Friday club, contact Liz 01444 414058

Hastings Area Home Educators, regular arts, craft, gym,

outings and meetings. Contact: Ali 01424 814175

Brighton Phoenix Centre, Weds 10-12 Creative play for

younger ones; more focused activities for older children.

Ring Cathy 01273 685674

Eastbourne 10-1 Meets Shinewater Community Centre,

10-1 pm £2 per family.

For dates Contact Tula 01323 648127 dverbyname@aol

Shoreham: St. Mary's Church Hall, Thursday 10.30-1.

Cooking/arts/crafts/games; excursion last Thursday of

each month. Contact: Sam 01903 233799

Forest Row Area: regular support group meetings,

drama club, outdoor games mornings and outings -

Contact Winnie 01342 826087

TYNESIDE

Monthly art sessions at the Laing Art Gallery - for

children over 6. Contact: Lilian 0191 2809150

lavendereco@aol

Regular outings, visits, etc. Contact: Becky 0191

478 5322 beckyfeeney@hotmail.com

WALES

South Wales

Cardiff area FREE email newsletter/contact list from

bev1.french@btinternet.com or Beverley 02920

797628. Monthly museum visit, organised by

museum.

Swansea Group For information on local activities

and events, contact Juliet 01639 760987; Frankie,

fran.kie@ntworld.com or Geraldine, 01792 405894

or email: julafan1@ntworld.com

Pembrokeshire EO swim & sauna: Haverfordwest

pool, Dew St. 3pm at main reception, fortnightly. Call

to check dates. Contact: Yvette 0845 458 9251

Cardigan area social meetings and outings on

Mondays - Contact: Yvette 0845 458 9251 (More →

Gwynedd Mondays swimming at Bangor
 Contact: Louisa 01248 361254
 Friday swimming at Porth Madog Weekly meetings
 at Tremadog Thursdays. Contact Jo 01766 512330
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
 year's listing. eo@7times7.freemove.co.uk

WARWICKSHIRE
 Usually 2 Thursdays a month; at Wolston nr
 Coventry and for an outing in 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
 or Penny Clarke 01922 745465
 pennyclarke@blueyonder.co.uk

WILTSHIRE
Salisbury Friendly innovative group meets every
 Tuesday pm, (except last of calendar month) Lower
 Street Hall, off Netherhampton Rd., 2-5pm. £3.00
 per session. Regular outings + visiting guest
 speakers: Contact: Martina (01722) 744715 or
 Miranda (01722) 320167

Swindon: Informal get-togethers twice per month;
 badminton weekly Contact: Shena on 01793
 334673 or join email list at
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NWILts_HE/
 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.eldekvisst@btopenworld.com
 Jemima: 01380 727470 Helen: 01249 822958
www.geocities.com/wiltshirehomeed/index.htm

WORCESTERSHIRE
 Local Contact - Rachel 01527 597809
 Meetings, events, trips out etc happening all through
 the month throughout the county.
 Meetings - Karen Raybould 01527 835384
 Meetings - North Worcs/Kidderminster - Gail
 Tutchter 101562 822034 gail@tqmi.co.uk

YORKSHIRE EAST
 Regular meetings and visits.
 Contact: Alison 01405 769902

YORKSHIRE NORTH
 New group for regular meetings and outings.
 Contact: Karen 01904 792819

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/Abbeydale rd. Contact:
 Annette 0114 2583502 or 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 Fri of 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: Frances 01274 884750

LOCAL CONTACT UPDATE

New acting local contacts

Cheshire - Sue Davies 01270 883978
 Kent - Heather Carter
 Lancashire - Pam Parkin 01706 215585
 Manchester South - Julie Ridley

Resigning local contacts

Gloucestershire - Fiona & Rob Brookes
 Gloucestershire South - Sue Summerhayes
 Hertfordshire - Christine Waterman
 Tyne and Wear - Marlene Dawson

Areas needing a local contact

Durham	Dyfed
Fife	Glamorganshire
Gloucestershire	Gloucester South
Hertfordshire	Isle of Man
Leicester City	Manchester North
Northern Ireland	Strathclyde
Tayside	Tyne and Wear

Updated Contact No:

Powys - Julia Phillips 01691 648152
 gwastad@btconnect.com

If you want to volunteer

or are interested to know more about the job of being a Local Contact please contact:

Keith Charlton, 2 Wistow Rd, Newton Harcourt, Leicestershire, LE8 0FT

0116 259 2118

kcharlton@care4free.net

(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

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 Greetings Cards.

Greetings cards are now available. They are blank inside for your own message, and have the message 'School is optional' on the back. all profits from these cards go to Education otherwise, charity no. 1055120.

They come in packs of 10 with envelopes, and cost £3.99 per pack (inc. p&p), send cheques payable to 'Education Otherwise', to Garry Humphreys, Fairacre, skidbrooke Rd., South Somercotes, Louth. LN11 7DD.

Please state which design you would prefer; 'Robins and Penguins', or 'snow walk'. e-mail garryhumphreys@lineone.net to see the designs if you missed them in the February and April newsletters (Children's Pages).

EO Car Stickers

Help spread the word.

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

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.**

SALE - EO VIDEOS only £4.50

Special reduced price of £4.50 for our videos.
Perhaps you could buy one and pass it on to a Teacher Training College or a library or anywhere that it might be looked at. Please help us promote the right to home education.

If you can afford it please could you add £1 post & packing, but if money is short and you are going to pass this video on, this is waived.

Cheques payable to "Education Otherwise" to Diane Green, 18 Colne Cres, Warehouse Hill, Marsden, Huddersfield HD7 6AD

EO Hoodies and Mugs

Hooded sweatshirts

with the **triangle logo** and the letters **SINC** now available in navy blue and black children's and adult sizes (£15 for children's and £20 for adults' including postage and packaging).

EO 25th anniversary mugs

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.

Back Page Part Two

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)

Get involved and join a small group:

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

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

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

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

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 029 20733629

celiamcdonagh@yahoo.co.uk

Martine Frampton 3 Redesdale Mews, Hospital Road, Moreton in Marsh, Glos. GL56 0BQ 01608 812411

martine-frampton@macunlimited.net

Ann Rix (see inside back cover)

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

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): Linda Eileenschild 020 7787 6692
lindaflora2002@hotmail.com

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

Ireland: VACANT] *Volunteers needed please!!*

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EO Email Lists

The EO Business list discusses the organisation and policies of Education Otherwise. Open only to EO members (memberships will be regularly checked to ensure that the list members are still members of EO) and only for the discussion of EO business. (General HE discussion can take place on the EO general list, which can be accessed via the website at www.education-otherwise.org)

To join the business list: Go to:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eobusiness>

Or send a blank email to:
eobusiness-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk You will receive an automatic response from Yahoo asking for your full name and address. When you have responded and your membership has been checked as valid, you can be added to the list.

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.

EO/NEC vouchers

- £30 discount per course -
A5 SAE to Sarah Cook, The Old Cottage,
Croglin, Carlisle, CA4 8RZ
(quoting EO membership number)
or sarah@croggies.freeseve.co.uk

Who does What in EO

Council Members

- Geraldine Adams** (N. London) 0207 2634922
Jane Bathgate (Borders) 01835 862118
Pam Bellinger (Leicester) 0116 282 7929
Keith Charlton (Leics) 0116 259 2118
<kcharlton@care4free.net>
Penny Clarke (W. Midlands) 01922 745465
<pennyclarke@blueyonder.co.uk>
Martine Frampton (Glocs) 01608 812411
<martine-frampton@macunlimited.net>
Yvette Hartley (Wales) 0845 458 9251
yeh@onetel.net.uk
Lynda Hitchman (Berks) 0118 961 4466
<lynda.h@lineone.net>
Jacqui Houlding (Cheshire) 01925 654856
<jc_houlding@onetel.net.uk>
Garry Humphreys (Lincs)
<garryhumphreys@lineone.net>
Celia McDonagh (Wales) 029 20733629
<celiamcdonagh@yahoo.co.uk>
Gary Podmore (Yorks) 0114 2585702
<SianPodmore@eotherwise.fsnet.co.uk>
Julie Ridley (Manchester) 0161 860 7589
<julier@breathemail.net>
Jenny Stevens (W. Sussex) 01243 783469
<jennystevens@argonet.co.uk>
Ali Willer (East Anglia) 01603 401020
<simon.whitehall@tesco.net>

Membership

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

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

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)

Useful contacts

- Single Parent Family Contact:** Sarah Martin, Lammas,
34 Cowslip Drive, Little Thetford, Ely, Cambs, CB6 3JD
01353 648716 (assistant) Rowenna Williams
rowenna73@hotmail.com Tel: 01678 521348
Berllan Gron, Llanycil, BALA, Gwynedd, LL23 7YG
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
**Contact with LEA / Other Problems / Member
Support.** If you need help in dealing with your LEA ring
your Local Contact or any Council Member. If you have
a problem not covered above please contact your nearest
Council Member (list above left)
Research Contact: Pam Vickers 25 Boxley Rd,
Walderslade, Chatham, Kent Home: 01634 671507
Work: 01227 712206 pjvickersscan@aol.com
Company Secretary: Pam Bellinger 56 Beech Drive,
Braunstone, Leicester LE3 3DA 0116 282 7929
Treasurer: Garry Humphreys 'Fairacre', Skidbrooke Rd.,
South Somercotes, Louth, Lincs. LN11 7DD,
garryhumphreys@lineone.net
EO Stalls: Lucy Charlton, 2 Wistow Rd, Newton Harcourt,
Leics LE8 0FT 0116 2592118
Coordinator for Local Contacts (acting): Keith Charlton,
2 Wistow Rd, Newton Harcourt, Leicestershire, LE8 0FT
0116 259 2118 kcharlton@care4free.net
(Assistant): Liz Stevens, 96 Ivanhoe Street, Leicester,
LE3 9GW. 0116 2425802 kiss.it@lineone.net
Coordinator for Enquiries Secretaries: Iris Harrison
(Assistant) Jo Borthen 01392 438876 (NB new tel. no.)
jo4eo@aol.com
Website and email lists: Jacqui Houlding, 01925 654856
jc_houlding@onetel.net.uk
Newsletter Coordinator: Anne Rix, Hembury Orchard, (NB
slight change of address) Frithelstock, Torrington, Devon,
EX38 8JT 01237 451535 anne@annerix.demon.co.uk

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

