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

SPECIAL SECTION - LEARNING STYLES & EDUCATIONAL PROVISION:

How do you actually DO home education? How does your child learn things? How does it fit with the rest of life? Have you any insights you have found useful in understanding/motivating/communicating with your child/ren? Practical tips for new HERS. Let others benefit from your experience of how home education works. This seems to have really got people going - let's have some more of your 'how we do it' contributions for Christmas ...

DEADLINE FOR THE DECEMBER ISSUE IS 1ST NOVEMBER 2003

Please mark material 'for publication' and include your name, address, phone number and email (if you have it) as we may need to contact you to discuss your contribution (though details may be withheld from publication on request). **Email contributions will be acknowledged within a few days. If you require a postal acknowledgement please enclose ssae.** If no acknowledgement is received, or in case of queries, please contact the NL co-ordinator. *Please also ensure your EO membership is up to date.*

Please send contributions via the most appropriate section editor above.

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Thanks to Belinda for help with production

CO-ORDINATORIAL

Well, my Dan returned in one piece from the US so we're back to autonomous home education (i.e. doing things with computers from 6pm to 6am then sleeping till the afternoon. Roll on next May when he'll be 19 ... Apart from that, the grant for the trees on the useless grassland is going ahead full steam; the planning permission for my granny annexe (my mum who's 93 next Christmas wants to come back but isn't keen on spending another winter in the caravan) was refused so I need to get back to the architect/planning department; I spent a week in Sussex helping her move into a temporary retirement flatlet and her furniture arrived for storage in my barn last week; my OU tutor has insisted on giving me an extension (to end of September) on the final assignment which I'd decided to drop as I'd got to a stage in personal development where academic kudos didn't seem important any more; income tax return needs to be done by same date; I've been offered a plum supply teaching job which it would be foolish to turn down ... aarrgh - life goes on! Where on earth am I going to find time to do any of the EO stuff? Well, OK you who don't want to



read the reviews, they are towards the back so I hope you'll find them easier to miss. Those of you who enjoy them and find them useful will just have to turn over a few more pages first - what difference does it make, I wonder? Gita is taking over as advertising editor, which will make life a bit easier, I am not going to Featherstone ... One nice feather in my cap: the Principal of the local comprehensive (well, Community College) circulated a letter I wrote him (about home education as an option instead of exclusion) to the whole teaching staff! Unexpected but welcome.

Remember that gold-coloured leaflet which came round with the newsletter in February - Paula Rothermel's research about Home Education? Very useful for convincing LEAs or sceptical relations of the value of what we're doing. We've finally got around to reprinting it and extra copies will be available from Bridget Elgie (see inside back cover) for anyone who wants them. The cost will cover the expense but make no profit.

The theme of Learning Styles/ How We do Home Ed seems to have been popular, with both writers and readers. If you didn't get your piece written in time for this issue (well, it was a bit hot in August!) then please put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard right now, as we're aiming to continue the theme in the December issue.

I suppose there's no-one out there who'd like to take over co-ordinating the newsletter? With all the extra help I've managed to wheedle out of folks over the last few months the workload has got back to a reasonable level to cope with on a voluntary basis, but I do seem to have run out of steam with both children now officially adult ... please get in touch to talk about it if you might be interested.

Anne Poix - 18.9.3

Special Section



LEARNING STYLES

MY HOME EDUCATION AND AUTONOMOUS LEARNING STYLE

I can't remember how I heard about home-education. I just know that by the time my first child was born, nearly 10 years ago, I knew I would never send her to school. I remember holding her in my arms and announcing to my family one Sunday that I was going to home-educate. To say they were shocked is an understatement. "How will she make friends, learn, socialise?" - the questions were fired. I walked away; they didn't really want to hear the answers.

Anyway, while reading a local NCT newsletter, I stumbled across an article on home-education by a woman living in Manchester. I attended a coffee morning at her house and invited myself back to talk about home-education. She home-educated in an autonomous way - child led. This really made sense and appealed to me. The rest is history. I still know this woman (as do many of you)! Julie Ridley is one of my closest friends and has supported and listened to me through the births and education of my (now 4) children. She's always been there for those moments of doubt "are they learning? am I doing it right?", to listen and encourage. Along with Jill, Sue, Nikki, Anthony and my sister Amanda, I feel very lucky having such a support network of wonderful people, who all home-educate in a similar way.

So what do we do? This used to be my favourite bit of the newsletter.

The diaries were always a good read, a particular favourite being the Fortune-Wood diary (any

chance of a re-run??). I miss reading people's accounts of how they home-educate, what they do, why they do it this way, etc. It's interesting to read others' perspectives on this.

At first I had no idea how I would home-educate. I did a lot of reading: E.O. newsletters, John Holt books, etc. and spoke to those I knew who also home-educated. Then the years just seemed to fly by. I suppose as my eldest reached "legal education age" I was busy looking after her and my 3-year-old, so we carried on with life as we had always done. Getting out regularly, painting, baking, reading, etc. Life was and still is very busy. How we would have fitted in "structured" learning I do not know. I then had another 2 children. My children are aged 9, 7, 4 and 16 months. Over the years I will admit I've had doubts about am I doing it the right way (is there one?). Hence the large pile of mostly unused workbooks. Fortunately these phases don't last very long and are soon ended by seeing the frustration on my kids' faces and knowing in my heart that for us at least this is not the right way.

A typical day in our house? It starts probably later than I would like. My older 2 are night owls and as I currently write this, the school holidays mean friends round, late nights and sleepovers. Thus today they got up at 10am. Their days are often filled with television and LOTS of play. Particular favourites are role-playing games.

They may have seen something on TV that sparks off an interest, e.g. playing World War II orphans, survivors, etc. Along with this play comes making things, writing, asking questions.... They really are learning all the time. Yesterday I stood and watched joyfully as they showed me the boats they had made from leaves and sticks on a mud river at the park where we spend MANY a sunny



day. We don't at the moment do any "structured" work though Aimay 9 has decided she wants to do "school" in September. We'll see how long that lasts and if she can surface from her bed by 9am!!

One thing I would like to talk about in this article is reading. It is something not much discussed in the newsletter. I guess inwardly I panicked when at 6 then 7 my daughters were not reading books. I read that home-educated children, in particular autonomously educated children, often read later, sometimes at 10, 11, 12. This calmed me for a while though it was hard. Sometimes I did think maybe they'll never read and it will all be my fault. At 9 and 7 my eldest don't read books yet, though they are NOT illiterate. I can't tell you how many times a day I am asked the questions "what does this say?" or "how do you spell this?". They can read and recognise a lot of words and what is more have not been put off learning, as I would NEVER push them to do something they didn't want to. I guess I wanted to mention this as I know I scoured the newsletters for late reader stories. I couldn't find any. Maybe we don't want to say when our children are not reading by "school" age for fear of people judging us and our young learners. So for those of you who are reading whose older children are not, have patience and trust. They will do one day and will do so because they WANT to not because someone tells them to. Sites on the internet I found particularly useful are www.unschooling.com especially the message boards where you can get answers to your questions and Learn to Read Naturally (do web search for address). I know I spent many a late night reading these and they restored my faith!!

So that's my story to the present day. My children are all active, growing and inquisitive. They have a freedom in childhood most of us never had and could only of dreamed of. Their futures? Well, all I wish for their futures is that they will be happy, be themselves and do what they want to do. How could any parent ever wish for anything else, after all this is their life not mine!

Louise Sutton, 1 Cliffe Royd, Hebden Bridge,
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ALTERNATIVE VISION



It started a year ago. In a fanfare of self-righteousness we rejected the compartmentalism of the National Curriculum; we threw out the narrow confines of tests, banking education and learning divorced from the thinking skills our son would need to earn his living and we began to home educate.

We had visions of virtual and real networks of learners working on projects and hypertext themes through his website, a group of kids working on a newspaper or discussing philosophy. We saw ourselves as enabling his education, supplying the broadband and the biscuits for a group of like-minded enthusiastic learners.



We saw an open curriculum driven by the group's enthusiasms, interests and natural curiosities. We saw the sort of group learning that the National Curriculum won't allow teachers to develop, the sort of co-operative work that checkbox education precludes.



And now after almost a year of home education, successful negotiation of the LEA assessment and some hard work by our son we look again at that vision and our enthusiasm and to be honest, we're considering opening discussions with local secondary schools for September 2004. Why? Not because we don't think there is a better education to be had outside school, not because we think he'll be happier - he's calmer, happier and learning more now than he ever was at school, not because we don't think we can support his learning through to GCSE or A Level. No - we're thinking of backing down because we have failed to find any others who want to concentrate on the education part of home education.



There are numerous sources of emotional, legal and practical support out there.

There are plenty of opportunities for 'socialisation' and sharing time but despite repeated attempts to find families who want to simply learn together, there seems to be no coherent network or framework for study or learning. We've posted to Internet groups, we've advertised in the library, we've talked to people (some very well known and respected in the HE community) but we've met walls of indifference. We've begun to feel that we're the only ones who want to get together to study ethics or *Animal Farm*, read *New Scientist* or the subtexts in *Blade Runner*, or simply play with equations or read novels.



We've set up a Wiki website where kids can work together on projects, we've floated the idea of a properly produced newspaper but to no avail.

We took our son out of school so he could learn better and get a real enthusiasm for study and learning. We've spent a lot of this year developing his study skills. He's worked really hard and come a long way but he needs others. He doesn't need people to play with, learn to interact with or socialise with – he has plenty of them. He needs people to bounce ideas off, argue with, explain concepts to so he can get them straight in his mind. He can do that with us but it's not the same as working with his peers; not just other 10-year-olds but 6-year-olds or bright 12-year-olds, kids he can teach and be taught by. Peer-to-peer networking.



The National Curriculum has squeezed this peer-to-peer learning out of the classroom. We believe it could exist outside of school but only if others, not to put too fine a point on it, are as

obsessed with 'learning' as we are. Of course HE is a lifestyle choice – I gave up work to do it, our family is structured around it – but it is most basically a learning choice. We do not decry those who are doing it to bring their children up in the way they choose with the values and ideals they want. We want to bring our son up with the love for learning and the skills to do it that we value. But for us home education is about education – Hey! we've even embraced the sacrilegious term 'home schooling' to try and make clear what we are trying to do.

It's almost as if we're scared of 'learning' and 'education'; that the words have been taken over by Ofsted and QCA. They have indeed created a hegemony around those terms, but we can wrest control back. We can redefine, reposition them, create a new set of ideas that our friends who are dissatisfied with contemporary curricula and scared of the secondary school around the corner can embrace. At the moment our friends look up from the property pages and don't see learning. They praise us for our bravery and return to looking for a house in the right catchment area. These parents would see HE as a real option if they thought it was built on learning and equipping their sons and daughters to compete for a job.

This article is partly a last ditch attempt to find other families who want to build a different sort of school that combines home and education. But it is also a challenge to the HE community – if we are going to seriously present an alternative vision of education, one other parents can see as attractive, one employers can see as relevant and one government can see as a challenge, how much emphasis are we putting on learning?



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HOW HOME EDUCATION WORKS FOR US

Having discovered that at age 3 our eldest son had taught himself to read fluently, we realised that home education, at least for half a dozen years, would be the best option for him. Our second son was very slow to speak and equally we felt he wouldn't fit in to a school system, so by the time Kit was 4 we were definitely home educating.



At first I took a gentle but structured approach; 15 minutes reading, writing and maths together at 3 set intervals and an afternoon of craft or art. This soon developed into something more unstructured as Kit often spontaneously read or wrote for twice as long. I found Jem really benefited from structure and as he (much later) showed an interest in reading and writing I would set times for him. Craft etc. and cooking was never fixed, and optional, but they both always wanted to do it.



Now there are four children aged 10 - 3

and having much fixed doesn't seem to work - it is almost impossible to teach long division, the six times table, $2 + 2$ and make sure the youngest isn't crayoning the carpet all at once, so the structure was abandoned long ago. At some point in almost every day the 3 older children write between 1 and 15 lines in a diary. They all read, draw and play spontaneously. Two or three times a week they play their instruments with or without help or advice. Four times a week, at a time to suit them, but occasionally spurred on by 'There's something you might like to watch on in an hour' we ask them to do about half an hour's academic work, which we have chosen (but it is open to debate if something equally challenging is suggested as an alternative). Often this 'work time' goes on for two or three times as long, as they get so involved in a story they don't

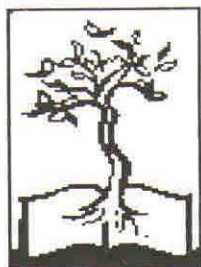
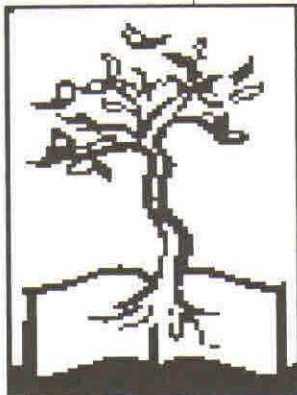
want to stop, or a maths problem is demonstrated practically. For example: 27 raisins, I eat six how many now? Everyone crowds in to offer advice or questions, or the thesaurus comes out and the writer dives into it and is not seen again for an hour or so!



Craft, art and technology is often instigated by me, when I feel like it, and who ever wishes, joins in (usually at least 3) if it's with unusual material or based on a particular idea. We've been making clay gargoyles and everyone gets out paint or tools as they wish. Other than that, bedtimes and mealtimes are fairly fixed - but open to change on special occasions etc. or if we all go outside on a sunny evening and forget to come in!



Having children who love to learn and are always busy making, doing and discovering has made autonomous education easy. On a sunny day any number of learning experiences happen in a few hours. Someone makes a sign to warn others of a slippery path using wood, nails and paint. Others run in and out to identify a butterfly or plant; someone else picks fruit and divides it equally for lunch; another makes cheese on toast; dens are built; complex chasing or role play games go on; tree climbing, dam building, birdwatching, leaf printing, water play and so on. Inside it is just the same only lots of paper, pens, glue, Lego, soft toys, blocks, ramps are involved and I'm often presented with a map of an island or clues for a treasure hunt (for an apple!!) or a poem or a radio programme someone tapes and wanted to share My role as 'teacher' seems much more to listen to what they have learnt themselves than ever to 'teach' them anything. Apart from learning to read and a few other basics, most of what they know comes from reading, discussing and discovering for themselves. For



example: 'Is it all right if I take that clock to bits? I'll put it back together!'

I had no idea **education** could be this easy, and so free – no 8.30a.m. to 4p.m. drudgery for us. We stay in when it rains and drive off to the sea in the sun when everyone else is in school. We have weeks of hermit-like isolation and another with a much-loved guest who must hear everything and be shown at least one play, every model and project.

Having said that, we have some bad days too but even (or especially?) NORMAL families have those. Two children bicker and another hits his head; I stamp up and down longing for peace or to do my own uninterrupted thing; the car won't start or the washing machine leaks or a chicken dies or everything is lost or broken and the bread is burnt.... But we all learn from those things too – when to offer support and when to disappear; that adults can't solve things too. But we persevere and somehow there is always some kind of solution, for example: that losing your temper doesn't mean you won't be friends later, and so on. They watch us learn, overhear our discussions and increasingly take on more responsibility for themselves and each other. Home education is for us LIFE, as creative, diverse and fascinating as possible (on a very low income) – challenging and even relentless too, but thoroughly recommended.

All we need (!) as parents, is time to pay attention and discuss, enthusiasm and self-confidence. After all most of us didn't have to teach them to talk or walk or eat! I thought Lori Forsyth's article (Issue 153) was perfect at pointing out just how much children learn with a small amount of help. Her idea of making lists of books read, topics discussed and 'labelling each daily activity as if it was a school lesson' was a brilliant confidence building trick for any parent, especially those new to home education – I really enjoyed her article.



Kirsten Freiesleben, *Little Witheridge, West Worlington, Crediton, Devon*

LEARNING STYLES/ EDUCATIONAL PROVISION



Our son (George) is seven years old and has never attended school. Obviously people are always asking 'How do we 'do' our educating etc.?' Well, no two days are ever the same. I honestly believe though, that George is coming on really well with his studies. Some days we will spend an hour or so on Maths/English type work. We make it as fun as possible. Currently we are on multiplication. We go outside with some chalks, write some numbers on the floor and then call out different sums for George, to run and find the answer. Yes – very simple but effective. We used a similar game whilst George was learning to tell the time.

Some days we may just do reading or play on the computer. Last month George announced he would like to write a book so he is very busy with that at the moment. George's friends, who go to school, enjoy visiting our house as we usually have some project on the go that they like to join in with. Lately we have made Roman shields, candles, mini houses using real bricks, papier-mâché and hideouts etc. for action men toys. Financially we don't really spend a lot of money on educational resources, although we do go through a lot of 'reading' books and paint. I get a lot of ideas from the Internet and devise our own games/lessons using things from around the home. Lego is great for Maths; so is baking, marbles, tape measures etc. We often write to firms such as Walkers crisps etc, explaining we are a home-educating family and asking for information on the company etc. Often you get great packs back to read through and which you can use for a variety of subjects such as history, advertising etc.

I think the main ingredient for educating at home is time – and a desire to learn and be resourceful with your child + **have fun!**



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OUR HOME EDUCATION EXPERIENCE SO FAR...

In our family we believe in self-directed learning and in the philosophy that education is an end in itself, is a lifelong activity and not about making products for the career market. So we relax! Interests guide our motivations and sometimes they are long lasting and nurturing, and other times we have a bit of what we fancy. I'm saying "we" as engaging and discovering is certainly not confined to the non-adults of the household! I feel very much that we are in this together – "this" being life and the zest and passion that comes with ownership of your life (and what you learn) is not something that can be taught or forced.

"Yes but how do they learn?" I hear you cry:

Observe your baby/toddler/child and how hungry they are to experience and gain knowledge about the world. The child's interests are often extended and, with a bit of parental imagination, other skills develop. For example, an interest in cars can lead to number and letter recognition. Learning does not need to be in subject categories, which can be mistaken for a lack of variety. However, depending on the child's ideas and interest, the depth of learning is greater than the National Curriculum requires of school children – and probably a lot more satisfying.



A lot of Rohan's interests have developed from first hand experiences. For example, an opportunity to see and hear the organ in Norwich Cathedral when he was two years old was a profound experience for him. The spin off interests have included churches, cathedrals, and bells, the piano, organ and keyboards, which then led to towers, ruins, castles, Big Ben, St Paul's Cathedral and playing the piano. These are read about, drawn by him or requested to be

drawn, and when possible, visited. He loves piano music and plays our piano daily. *The important issue here is that Rohan has inspired himself.*

When I was pregnant Rohan attended all my antenatal appointments and was fully immersed into the development of the foetus and wanted to know everything about babies. It was wonderful for me to share this with him and he was in attendance minutes after his brother's birth. This has developed into discussions about birth, the human body, bones and intestines, the growth and change of baby Felix, plus awareness of his own body and ways of healing. *A key part of this is talking.* We have many discussions and reference-hunting sessions, with visits to relatives or the library for sources. Again, Rohan leads this.

From a passion about transport, and in particular, trains, Rohan has taught himself to read. He has enjoyed looking through train magazines for a few years now, and began to recognise the names of places. He would find "Norwich" in the very small text and then see the word "North" and think that they were the same. When he asked about this we would point out which parts were the same and encourage him. He would ask me to write out words that he saw on our walks near the railway such as "caution" and "warning" etc. Rohan is now a fluent reader, but I don't think he knows the alphabet! He simply does not need it right now.

NB: We have never made Rohan "perform" for or show what he has been doing to anyone. For "monkey tricks" as we call this sort of thing, get a monkey! He has no ego about being able to read – *it is his activity for his enjoyment.*



How does learning fit in with the rest of life?

It is our life; there is little delineation between everyday experiences and a learning

experience. The H.E. experience so far has been a natural extension to full time parenting. A practical tip for helping the learning process is *simply to be there!* Incidental and casual comments or suggestions either by me or by my sons (yes, my baby has very direct ways of getting his point across) can lead to a wealth of discoveries. However, this does not mean that I am constantly eager and ready for everything to be educational; it has to feel right and as far as possible a consensus on action needs to be established: e.g. some activities might not be feasible, or financially possible etc. Our way of learning/living has given me an immense feeling of freedom and joy. It has enlivened my interests and reawakened creative instincts. For my children I hope they become creators of their own lives and bask in their adventures.



Gita Prasad, mother of
Rohan (four and a half years old) and **Felix**
(almost one). 21 Cozens Road, Norwich NR1
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LIBERTARIANISM
and being part of the
LIBERTARIAN FAMILY
NETWORK



My family have been part of EO for 15 years as co-ordinators for the South Devon EO group and at present I am press/media officer. Our sons Gus (just 17 yrs) and Barnaby (12½ yrs) have never been to school.

Parents routinely decide for children whether or not the children are being anti-social, wasteful, lazy, dangerous, expensive, un-focussed etc...

Is there something inherently unreasonable about children? Do we



suddenly at 18 years old know all the answers? I think not. This inequality I call child-ism.

I was told once that my life seemed a touch unreal – no stresses or tensions involved, no clash of interests, no losing my temper. Well that is in fact inaccurate. Boy... sometimes we scream and shout and cry and scream some more! Alan and I choose this way of life because we think it is the right way to be with our children. We think it is a free way, a good way, a positive way. And yes, I am only human and some days I am a shitty mother and I apologise to them (or not – even though I should). I do this in my world, quietly getting on with the every day that life presents to us.

Our children's lives are private and illogical and mysterious and messy and expensive and wasteful and sometimes even dull (like adults, just like adults) – all of their lives should belong to themselves. We have no automatic right to control their lives because we are bigger, stronger and richer than our children. What we do have is a duty to share our lives with them, to support them in their dreams. Let's not comply with societies antiquated and invalid expectations and repression of our children's rights and spirit.

So what and who are we? This is all our 'doing'...but please remember we also do a lot of 'doing nothing'.

BELINDA: woman, mother, wife. Has a BA Hons. in Jazz History and Jazz Vocal Performance (London University). And so on to writing pieces of wisdom. Being right on, writing about rights.



Promoting self-directed and democratic learning. A member of the NUJ – freelance. Press Officer for *Education Otherwise*. Make pots – the ceramic kind. Sometimes sell large, fat, weird, women-shaped sculptures. (Sometimes they explode in the kiln). A member of *Heart's Tongue Theatre Company*.

About to take a play entitled 'EAT' into schools, (the play is looking at the body-beautiful image). I write lots of poetry and I am a performance poet/singer. I have just started studying for an MA in *Theatre Practice* at Dartington College of Arts looking at *Feminist Performance Theory*. I have a strange anomaly in my left inner-ear which makes me feel dizzy and unstable sometimes. I love fresh flowers. I love watching old BBC dramatisations of Dickens, Brontë, Hardy and old musicals (we don't have a TV as such – we just use the TV screen for watching videos/DVDs). I buy a lot of clothes (most of which I return) and I wear lots and lots of make-up. I read a lot – science fiction, graphic novels, radical feminist literature, radical education. I buy luscious organic food. I eat animals (aka meat). I try to be lovely to my children. – **I think I'm quite glamorous. I'm loud and bubbly (so I'm told) and laugh a lot.**

ALAN: man, father, husband. Has a BSc Hons. in Maths and Electronics (London University). Has his own software company. He is a programmer, analyst and consultant. He works from home. He is treasurer and player with a local badminton club. He runs and cycles. He plays the drums (not thrash bang, more finesse and rhythm). He watches *The Simpsons* with Gus and Barnaby and laughs a lot. He loves music. He listens to music and talk radio a great deal – always looking for opportunities to email or phone-in to spread the word on home-education. He was the first person I know to use the phrase "Let the children be themselves". He drives us all over Devon for our schemes. He is vegan (for nearly 7 years). He loves avocados. **He is slim and fit and wishes he could play badminton a lot more.**



GUS: teenager, brother, son. Has never been to school. He plays *Warhammer*, a strategic miniature army game, ostensibly toy soldiers. He has three armies: *Dark Eldar*, *Necrons* and *Chaos*. He also plays *Inquisitor* and *Necromunda* - variations of *Warhammer*. He is a member of *South Devon Games Club*. He is part of



the *Young People's Company* at the Theatre Royal in Plymouth – he is a 'teckie' the term used for the lighting/sound/backstage



crew. He has been involved with numerous shows in a technical capacity. He is also a member of *Stage 1 Theatre Co*. Every week he attends a media

workshop and a fencing class. He is a blue-belt in Aikido. He draws the most complex and detailed battle armour and futuristic space vehicles.



He took Maths GCSE last year (obtained a B grade). He has just taken English GCSE (which he studied for at an Adult Education Centre and obtained a B grade) and Physics GCSE (which he studied by himself - he just read the GCSE syllabus! – he obtained an A grade). He loves all sorts of films, everything from *Gladiator* and *The Matrix/Matrix Re-loaded* to BBC dramatisations and old musicals. He loves old English, flowery language - Shakespearean language. He is passionate about reading and has a pile of books waiting to be read. He plays *Star Wars Trivial Pursuits* with us and wins every time because he knows every answer. He is a great philosopher and entertains and enlightens us, family and friends with his fantastical thoughts on the world and cosmos. He loves tomatoes. He eats loads of cheese. He and his cousin won a Disney script-writing competition when they were 13 years old – masses of press coverage. He loves walking, particularly by himself – so he can think. He sits around contemplating life and making beautiful hybrid conversions of his *Warhammer* figures. He decided to go to college. He is studying English Literature, Psychology, History and Physics A Levels. **He's just himself a lot.**

BARNABY: boy, brother, son. Has never been to school. He's very groovy – loves wearing trendy gear – bleaches his hair. He is a fabulous dancer and is part of a dance troupe. Attends a street-dance class once a week. He has performed at loads of prestigious venues and events - the London Palladium, the Queen's Jubilee.



Edinburgh Festival as well as local Devon theatres. He goes to *Stage by Stage* (a theatre group). He seems to be either in the throes of rehearsals or in a show! At present he is rehearsing for *Fame* and a new adaptation of *Othello*. He plays with his hamster Henry-Perkins. He plays pool. He plays with friends, we often have them staying the night with us. He watches films – he likes the TV programmes *Friends*, *The Simpsons* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* – he hires videos (in box sets) from the Library. He is in the throes of collecting and painting an 'Ork' *Warhammer* army and plays *Necromunda* (a variation of *Warhammer*). He and I play *Scrabble* and card games together. He plays games on his PS2. He and Alan play chess. We play *Simpsons' Cluedo*. He reads *Asterix*, *Guinness Book of Records* and his scripts before he goes to bed. He has loads of cuddly animals. He plays computer games. He listens to music a lot – he makes-up dances. He skate-boards and stunt bikes. He eats huge quantities of fruit! **He's 'cool' and funky.**



How does libertarianism fit within the context of home-education? I call it life-education – or even just 'life' – because I don't believe that you can divorce living and learning from each other.

To explain what libertarianism means to me comes down to three key points. The first point is the freedom to let children be who ever they choose to be, for children to be themselves. To narrow my life-philosophy down to just home-education isn't so easy because the way that I feel about my children's 'education' is the same for every aspect of their lives. What they wear, what they eat (meat or not, sweets or not, Nestlé or not), what they buy (guns, wooden or plastic mass-produced toys), what they think, what they say, who their friends are (or aren't), when they sleep, what/if they read, what/if they write, when they wake up, what games they play, what secrets they choose to keep, how they cut or dye their hair etc... should be up to them. Giving children freedom to define their own lives does not make them act like wild animals, contrary to popular opinion. Giving children freedom does not

automatically mean chaos (although sometimes there is) or anarchy (occasionally there is). My children argue and disagree and believe different things than me. Great stuff. All great stuff.



The second point is about looking at assumed power positions (father/man above mother/woman above child/daughter or son). And taking responsibility in eroding this structure which is damaging not only to women and children but also limits father's/men's capacity to be honestly engaged with their children's lives. I am not negating the positive role that lone fathers and supportive dual-parenting partners play in living with their children, but I hear so often stories of mothers trying to balance the needs of themselves and their children against their partners'. It wears women down... the colluding, the lying, the fear. How can mothers, (the majority of people who actually do the day to day home-educating are usually mothers), who are struggling to support their children's autonomy do so within an environment where they, as women, have such little power themselves? The power structure within families, the blatant power-abuse, the sexism, the childism, the undermining of women and children which I see in *all* families, at some level, has to be stopped. This is imperative.

The third point is what I call 'Millerling' – based on the writings of Alice Miller. She explores the sources of violence within ourselves and the way these are encouraged by orthodox child-rearing practices. Her message is clear: *'People whose integrity has not been damaged in childhood, who were protected, respected, and treated with honesty by their parents...will feel no need to harm another person or themselves.'* – For *Your Own Good: The Roots of Violence in Child-rearing* (Virago 1987). She believes, as I do that we suppress the feelings that were painful, humiliating and crushed our spirits – we hide them away, lock them up and throw away the key because these feelings are too painful to access. And later, when we are adults, these suppressions rear their ugly heads and present themselves as poisoned relationships, depression, weight disorders, diseases



etc. Children manifest their suffering too, in different ways – from bitten nails, wetting the bed, petty crime to extreme actions like murder – as in the James Bulger case. As adults, as *parents* we have an obligation to make sure that we do not pass our negative thoughts and fears onto our children. A child responds to and learns both tenderness and cruelty from the very beginning. We must take responsibility. We must be adult.

My libertarianism has been informed not only by living with and loving my children and my husband, the friends and family who support and care for us but also the writings of so many fabulous forward thinking, radical people especially A.S. Neill, Roland Meighan, John Holt, Alice Miller and Andrea Dworkin. Please read their words.



The Lindsey-Turner Family, my sister (Sammy Vidal-Hall) and her family and my family were the founder members of the Libertarian Family Network. My family and the Lindsey-Turner family are no longer members. The concepts that underpinned the LFN - I have re-read them today...tonight - are still everything I believe. Sadly the reality of belonging to this network became untenable for me and my family. The idea of using 'concepts' to describe the LFN's principles was Corinne Lindsey's. (This was the format used by La Leche League, a breast-feeding support group.) Corinne had an understanding that the LFN would be an organisation and network that helped adults become the parents they wanted to be and to be a structure that would support, welcome and 'hold' mothers and fathers while they were exploring a new way of parenting. Perhaps we were naive thinking that by starting an organisation based on our deep-felt thoughts and ideas on the rights of children (and therefore eventually the rights of everyone – because we were all children once) would bring about a revolution. We were mistaken. What we were going to achieve and what became the reality turned out to be the complete opposite. I had (and still have) a feeling that those concepts came about from a belief of 'rightness' - but sadly others did not.

The families that came to meet us, talked with us, wrote to us, then drifted away. We were thought of as bigoted, judgemental and too self-sacrificing to our children. We were slated and talked about by others in quiet whispers. We still carried on...just a few...just a committed few. In the end, the differences between the few who were left, starting small, grew larger and larger, and it came to be that our differences were so huge it became impossible for my family to be part of the group. The Lindsey-Turner family had already come to this decision and were no longer part of the network. Our interpretation of the concepts, the way we lived our lives were now being judged by the few members of the LFN. It was impossible to continue being part of it – especially when the 'ruling' committee's views were perceived as more valid than mine or my family's. As Corinne and I remember we could not sacrifice our lives, especially our children's lives, to the LFN. The LFN became a dictatorship. If the 'leaders' didn't feel that our beliefs measured up to theirs, they would let us know - the gradual drip drip of propaganda against us eroded us, wore us down. With great strength eventually we walked away...

The LFN became dormant - only the Vidal-Hall family remained. I have decided to write this, as it is an ending - the closing of a chapter. I have come to the realisation that those people who thought we were judgemental, all those whisperings – well perhaps they were right... I and my family have not only been the judges but we have also been judged. Having been in both places I realise that neither place is empowering. Being part of the LFN diminished my family's life.

I consider myself a libertarian. The huge love and commitment to my children, the belief in children's right of self, their wisdom and abundance, my overwhelming belief in women's right to support and love in being with their children, men taking responsibility in being true and honest fathers and supportive partners, and parents taking responsibility in being engaged with their children, makes me re-read those original concepts of the LFN over again tonight as I sit and write this - I have a huge feeling of loss - the LFN could have been great, could

have helped to change the world, brought about real change. We failed. We failed all the families who eventually left the LFN, because we could not appreciate that they had different strengths than us. And the LFN failed me.

Tonight as Corinne and I talk about the beginnings of the LFN, we look back with sadness, a sense of frustration, a disbelief of how we were - but still a strong feeling that what those original concepts came from a place of truth, honesty and honour.



LETTERS



AND SO TO UNIVERSITY...



Today we received confirmation from a 1st division University (according to all the league tables) that our 18 yr old home educated son has a place to study for an MPhys degree in Theoretical Physics. I wanted to share our story with other home educators. I'm just a mother, whatever that is, I don't have a degree, I never studied Physics and failed my Maths GCSE (I would pass it now!), and we live on a very low income. I don't think that the academic route is the only way to success; my second son has a very exciting, very practical, non-academic career planned ("not allowed to divulge just what, until he is more certain that it will happen). But nevertheless, J...'s success flies so much in the face of all my critics; it's such fun!



(Thank you to Corinne for her thoughts/words and blessing for me to write about her perception of the LFN. Corinne is very dear to me and is still part of my life even after all the tears, anger and frustration we have shared.)

© 30/08/2003 - **Belinda Harris-Reid**
Devon - email: bharrisreid@aol.com

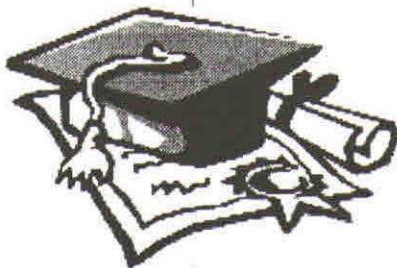
Our story begins with a bright, confident little boy setting off for school. His first year was fine, but he didn't pick up reading, writing and arithmetic the way his classmates did, I worried. His teacher thought he was a wonderful little boy, and as he was one of the youngest in his year, would soon catch up. He didn't. The next year with a new teacher, he was kept in at playtime to finish work; work he couldn't do. His friends began to fall away, he dropped further and further behind. His teacher let me know she thought he was laid back and lazy; by this time he was constantly sucking his thumb and stuttering. I suggested dyslexia. The head teacher was appallingly patronising; as far as she was concerned J... was a nice little boy but not very bright and inclined to be lazy. I was a problem parent (I was ever so good, throughout our several meetings I really did remain calm, polite, but firm). She suggested I might like to read to J... at home; I had read, 'The Hobbit' and all C S Lewis' 'Narnia' books to him before he even went to school! J... failed his 7yr old SATs tests, the only one in his class to do so - at the following parents evening his class teacher asked me, 'You're not still worried about him are you?' I was left gaping like a fish.

We moved house and so school. The head teacher at the new school told me he had a son with dyslexia, I hoped things would be better. They weren't. J... sat on the red table in his class for two years, all the children knew

that the red table (as opposed to the blue/green/yellow) was where the slower children sat. His teacher told me she wasn't worried about him academically despite the fact that he alternated bottom and second to bottom of the class with another boy. He went up to the head teachers class, who did admit there was something wrong and arranged for J... to have 20 minutes special help a week. It was a nice gesture but that was all. Eventually half way through the first term of his last year in primary school J... had had enough. We had talked about the possibility of home education before but J... had been afraid, worrying that he would be completely left out of village life, an outcast. (That didn't happen at all!) Now he didn't care. We took him out of school, he was near breakdown with totally shattered self confidence and esteem – years behind in literacy and numeracy. What had happened to that sociable, eager to learn, happy little boy I had put into the system 6 years previously.

It took J... a year before he could even hold a pen without completely flaking, and then it was a calligraphy pen using gold and silver ink on black paper, it didn't remind him of school. We dug a garden pond and watched and studied the wildlife; I read to him, novels, factual books. We compared and contrasted prices of possible Christmas presents and made nets of complex mathematical shapes. We visited museums and historical sites, the library; we shopped. We watched schools TV, I taped adult documentaries for him; a series of documentaries on Einstein were the seed that flowered into his passion for physics.

We moved again due to a different and totally unrelated life crisis. Our new LEA advisor was an Educational Psychologist, he confirmed J...'s dyslexia. All three children were now out of school. I had sort of thought that J... would go back to school in time for GCSEs but home education



was working too well. As his school going friends were preparing to take exams I thought we ought to. We started studying for 5 IGCSEs: Maths, English, Combined Science, Geography and Natural Economy. We gave up after a couple of months, syllabi stifled our depth and breadth of learning. Then in the October before exams the following May/June J... decided he wanted to study Physics at University. 'Oh heck', thought his mother! In the 8/9 months left to us we studied for IGCSE Maths, Physics and Chemistry. We just used revision books and books we already had. He managed Bs in Physics and Chemistry but only a D in his Maths. I knew that his Maths result was far below his capability, but he was fighting his demons, (those 6 years of negativity at school) he was extremely stressed.

J... still wanted to study Physics at university so we bought A level courses in Maths, Physics and Environmental Science from the Open Learning Centre International at Carmarthen. We live far too far away from any F.E. or sixth form colleges for them to have been an option without J... leaving home and living with relatives. This bothered me at the time, but actually I now think that the way we did it was better. He could still learn his way, without the unnecessary burden of school type learning.

J... worked hard and passed two modules of AS maths the following summer; he got a B and D but decided to retake the D - he was still capable of panic in exams and misreading questions when under stress.

So at the start of his A2 year we applied to universities through UCAS. I wasn't sure whether there would be any point and doubted any offers of a place, but thought he would be in the system, and then if his A level results were reasonable he might have a chance through clearing. He did have a rather

wonderful personal statement. His academic reference was a problem as they wouldn't accept one from me. J...s Open Learning College tutors had never even spoken to him let alone met him, so our local GP and family friend looked through his work, college assignments etc. and wrote him a very nice reference.

To our surprise, interview invitations and offers rolled in. The first interview was wonderful. Whilst I was wandering around in the parent group feeling a total fraud as other parents discussed 10 GCSE, and 4 AS passes, J... was being interviewed by the Professor of Theoretical Physics. He did some Maths and Physics with J... and then told him he was very impressed by his knowledge and understanding, approved of his home education and thought he ought to apply for the MPhys course rather than the BSc. When J... said that he wasn't very good at exams and worried about A level results (you needed higher grades for the MPhys than the BSc) he said that didn't matter and he would do anything legally possible to get him in. In the end J... had offers from all 6 respected 1st and 2nd division Universities that he had applied to.



J... was offered a place at Summer College at his first choice University, aimed at mature students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, advertised as a bridge between school and higher education. J didn't feel he was disadvantaged but decided to go,

then if his A level grades weren't up to scratch the university would probably accept him anyway. The access criteria were met by our low income and J...s



dyslexia. It was very intensive and involved a vast amount of writing, (something J... does not do well). However, he cooked his own meals, found a girlfriend, drank quite a few pints of beer, introduced his mates to malt whiskey (but forewent the vodka jelly!) and

passed the course with flying colours. Oh, and of course, the socialisation bit that always comes up when home education is mentioned. On the last



night they had a ball and the students had to vote fellow students for awards. There was the most frequently inebriated, the college legend (eccentric character), and then the cutest girl and the cutest guy. J... was voted the cutest guy!!! It wasn't a Mr/Miss World contest, as J... says there were a couple of guys that the girls were fainting at the feet of, it was more the

guy and girl that more people knew and liked. How's that for meaningful social skills? (Actually I'm sure the fact that he is tall, dark and handsome helped, (I am his mother!))

J...s A level results came, he did well and they were slightly better than he needed for his first choice offer. I'm back to where I started. To get here from there is surely a positive achievement for home education.

I gather things have changed, special needs are more frequently recognised and help offered. My nephew is an example, but I'm still not sure that it is the right way to go. My nephew is still miserable with low self-esteem and so much homework which takes so long. J... has a B in A level Maths - he doesn't know his times tables. He can write a first year university essay (using a word processor) - he

can't spell for toffee. If he had been in school so much time would have been spent trying to help him to do the things that he is not good at that he wouldn't have had time to find out what he *can* do. (Of course when he was in school he wasn't allowed to try to do the things he could do until he could do what he couldn't with no help at all). I believe J... would have failed his end of primary and 14yr SATs. He would have studied for 6-10 GCSEs and got low grades, he wouldn't have studied Maths and Physics at A level, his ambitions would not have been realised.

I wonder whether too much emphasis is placed on certain skills and standards setting up some children to fail however hard they or their teacher try, and success in these fields can sometimes be bought at a higher price of failure in self esteem lack of realisation potential.

Name and address supplied

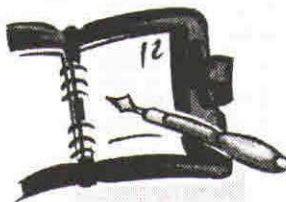
P.S. If anyone feels it might be useful to them to see a copy of J...'s personal statement please feel free to contact me by e-mail or through Education Otherwise*. I rather think that that was what got him the interviews and offers.

**Messages can be passed on via NL Co-ord or Letters/Articles Editor.*

DIARY OF A HOME EDUCATING NOBODY

"How do you know that?"

These days it's me who's asking that question and I've been asking that a lot of my nine year old lately. Because she seems to be increasingly coming out with fascinating gems of information that,



not only did I not know, but also I had no idea she knew either!

We were walking very carefully through a prickly patch of thistles and weeds watching the butterflies.

"Oh - it was on that programme we were watching the other day," She answers in that really nonchalant tone that indicates being master of all this information over and above me!

Other times when I've asked her in amazement 'how do you know that?' she has said, 'off the computer' or 'in my magazine' or 'from that witness book we were looking at either - you remember'. Frankly I n't. Or 'it's on that science CD-ROM' even 'I dunno, I just know it that's all'.

"Well, I'm not sure," I said. "I think it's a tortoiseshell."

Oh, it's a painted lady,' she insisted.

"But it looks just like a tortoiseshell to me," I said.

"It's not, its wings are different at the edges." She was very sure of herself. I kept silent and

concentrated on manoeuvring my legs through the prickles thinking she isn't right, I'm sure!

Okay - so I was the teeniest bit disgruntled at all this stuff she knew that I hadn't taught her! In fact nobody had taught her. And how could she possibly learn all this all by herself? Children need teaching to learn anything, don't they?

I think I would be right in saying that most of us are probably under this same misconception; that children need to be taught in order to learn anything. That the children in schools learn because there are teachers there teaching them things. After all, these teachers have been specially trained to do so, haven't they! So surely in order for our home educated children to learn anything we parents are going to have to teach them!

As I said; these are misconceptions!

Let's think about children learning for a moment. But let's not look at how children learn, which is the way we tend to look at children's education. Let's look at it from the other way round

- me being difficult! Let's look at why they *don't* learn - what stops them learning.

The reason I suggest looking at it this way is because when I think of a baby/infant/toddler I immediately think of an inquisitive little being who will try its utmost, whatever the opposition, to explore, find out about, learn about their surroundings. They feel, taste, handle, chew, sniff at, scrunch, destroy, take apart, squash, generally mess with anything they can get their hands on. And why do they do this? No - it's not simply to annoy us although it may feel like that! It's because they want to know about their world. Because they want to learn.

Even tiny babies come into this world learning. As they grow they want to learn more. As they crawl they're off into all sorts of things we would rather keep them out of, all for the sake of learning. *They just can't help it.*

Which brings me to the obvious conclusion; *children want to learn. Children can't help learning. And children end up learning lots of things without ever being taught.*

They learnt to crawl, walk, talk, without actually being taught. Just with a bit of encouragement. It didn't need any key stages, or standard attainment tests for them to achieve it! Or a specific teacher. Just caring parents, like our children already have or we wouldn't be doing this home education, would we?

So why don't they continue learning? If they can learn things without being taught what happens that they stop learning as they get older?

It's ironic that teacher training involves a lot of research into child psychology which teaches teachers that in order for a child to learn anything its basic needs must first be met! These training teachers learn how children must be comfortable with themselves and their environment, they must feel confident and reassured, their individual needs must be attended to and even very simple basic comforts must first be met, like being warm, not hungry, nor desperate for a wee!

Then what happens? These same teachers go into schools - these institutions being the most unhappy environment for children to be in, because they are set up for crowd control not individual nurturing - and they use tactics like humiliation and

degradation to coerce children into learning things that are irrelevant to them. They make failure appear like a crime instead of a valuable step towards learning. They devalue a child's own knowledge because it isn't relevant to the curriculum. And they even deny them the right to go to the toilet when they need to!

It seems obvious to me why children don't learn!

We're all so lucky in our home educating community. Our children are so lucky to have caring parents who give value to our children's basic need (and right) to feel comfortable and confident and good within themselves. *Therefore enabling them to continue learning as is natural to them.*

I believe the most basic need a child has in order to learn is one of confidence. With confidence they can achieve anything in life. If they feel loved, secure, encouraged and stimulated they are going to learn anyway. If they feel these things they will gain the confidence to tackle the less stimulating repetitive skills they may need to practise to gain the levels they want. Exams they might want. Even in a more competitive situation - they don't need the more damaging competition that comes from a sometimes threatening school environment, from peers and teachers!

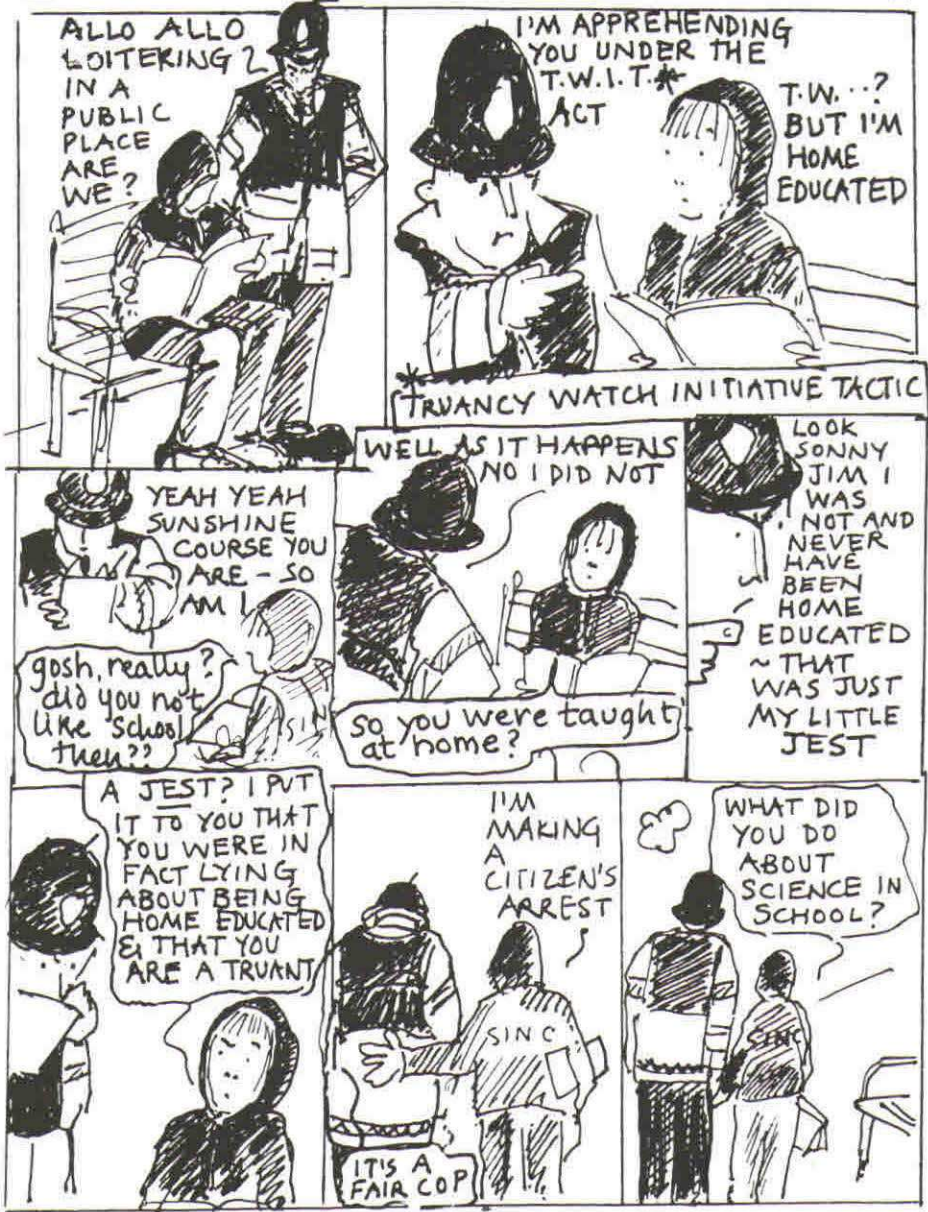
So I must be very careful not to undermine my daughter's confidence in her own knowledge. Because it looks as if she already knows how to learn despite the fact that I might not know how to teach her!

And if I'm honest, my question 'how do you know that?' is perhaps not about my need to know how - I suppose I already do. It is more an expression of surprise and wonderment as to how incredible our children are in the way that learn things - even without us. Children already know how to learn - we can help by nurturing that skill and adding to it. Always giving confidence.

And yes, peevish little wretch that I am, I did look it up when I got back. And do you know? She was right! It was a painted lady!

Name and address supplied

Educating Archie A quiet read... SEG

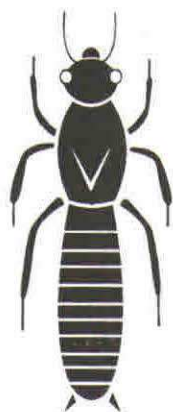


←————→
'COPS' AND 'BANDITS'
(Part I)

My title may mean something to some of you who went to Peak Camp – but I'm not going to talk about snails now (we only returned from camp yesterday so have not had a chance to continue the 'research')!



However, we began a small project yesterday evening, which was completed overnight, and it is this I will describe.



On shaking out the dry washing which awaited us on our return, we uncovered an earwig - a white earwig. To the more aesthetically minded, it may have been quite a treat. My immediate reaction was that it was albino (unable to produce pigment), or just white (i.e. having very little pigment). But D informed me that it was probably merely a specimen that had recently shed its skin, and that this

was its new skin and would soon darken.

A temporary enclosure was made in an empty punnet. Slightly moistened soil, dead plant matter, live plant matter and a wad of wetted cotton wool were placed in the punnet. The earwig was then introduced. We went to bed. In the morning, white earwig was gone: 'normal' type had appeared!

'Cops' and 'Bandits' (Part II) to follow: Watch this space!

J.D.T. (Name and address supplied)

**WANTED:
OPPORTUNITIES
TO MEET WITH OTHER
HOME EDUCATORS**

We are a home schooling family from Ireland with four children, and we are planning to travel to Britain and Europe for about a year, starting at HESFES. As home education in Ireland is becoming increasingly difficult we are also looking for a possible place to settle.

We will be travelling in a very crowded camper van! We would love the opportunity to stop off and meet with other home educators while we are in Britain. We are also interested in talking to anyone who has done something similar.

If you wish to contact us our e-mail is finbob1@eircom.net.

**Finbarr, Angela, Katie, Claire,
Jane and Grace O'Brien**

←————→
**TAKING A
BREAK FROM SCHOOL**

I wanted to write to thank people for their support when I took my son out of school last Easter. I contacted people from the list either by letter or email and the honest and supportive replies were very helpful. It helped to know that I was not alone and not to expect too much too soon.

It is an unusual situation because my son (now aged 13) is now back in main stream school because we have recently moved to Scotland and we felt very good about the school here. So far he loves it although it is early days. My son has ADHD and dyspraxia and has always struggled at school just as I have always battled to explain his "condition". He was not

particularly bullied but was a square peg trying to fit into a round hole. I'm sure many of you will know that children do not all learn in the same way and certainly not at the same pace. Anyway Tony was in with a class of very difficult demanding children who I felt were not being treated as individuals but as a "problem class".

To cut a very long story short, my husband and I took the plunge and removed Tony from the system. All of the "teaching" was left to me as I gave up my job but Tony had a tutor once a week, who had been his booster teacher. She was one of those very special people who can bring the good out in children and make them believe in themselves. She had worked with Tony before, and with some of his peers, and was horrified to see their confidence being shattered at school when they have so much potential.

She not only supported Tony but also supported me when I had my doubts.

Home Education did not go quite how I had planned mainly because Tony needs a great deal of structure in his days and also needs a lot of stimulation (typical ADHD) which mostly had to come from me or my ideas. So it was pretty intensive and he did not go off and "learn" or discover on his own. Had it been my youngest daughter at home it would have been far less demanding on me because she is much more able to motivate herself. In fact she is now very keen to do home Ed! (It was not easy for her having an older brother do it when she went to school). But as I say all 3 children have started new schools and we will see how it goes.

Having said that I very much agree with a lady who wrote in to the last issue to say that children learn and develop in time without any apparent input. My mum always says that children have to be *ready* to learn. This is one of the major disadvantages of school where there is such a rush and everyone is expected to develop at the same time. Also for a child with some learning difficulties they have to cover such a high volume of stuff at school - why? Why not allow them to just cover a few subjects at a time or a

sort of general study with much more over lap. After all subjects are not enclosed in boxes in real life!

The point I suppose I want to make here is that my son benefited greatly simply from the break from school and pressure. He had been exhausted and once the pressure was off he became a different person. Not only that - he has definitely improved in most areas, especially English. He used to hate English and now something has clicked and he writes stories full of imagination and descriptions. This is not all due to my home education but having space and time just to "be". Another factor is the self-esteem he has gained over the last 4 months; he now knows that he can produce good work and has the confidence to go for it.

In a way I am sad to see him back at school but he does love being with lots of people and we will have to give it a chance. I wish all children could have "breather" from time to time.

Like many of you I am not against school in principle but wish fervently that it could be run more as a community centre perhaps with adults and children in the same classes! And certainly with much more relevance to real life. I have heard of some schools run like that which I think were set up by home educating parents who got some sort of grant.

A final point to make is to the people looking for an escape from the rat race (in Leicester I think) - they should move up to Scotland!

We had the same idea (different life style) and have bought a self-catering property on the Black Isle (near Inverness). People are friendly, schools are good, there is loads of space and we are one of the sunniest places in the country! We have a fantastic place looking over the Moray Firth where we regularly see dolphins! If I'm allowed to sneak in a bit of advertising it would be great for home educators because they can come out of season. Look us up on www.hillock-head.co.uk

Michele Jansen, Eathie Road,
Rosemarkie, Ross-shire, IV10 8SL Scotland



TRUANCY SWEEPS

Having been a local contact and now being involved with the helpline I have come across quite a few families who have been stopped by the truancy officers.

Most just told them they were home educating and were left alone but some felt as if it was a personal attack. One lady said that people were actually stopping and staring, someone even stopped to take a photo! Perhaps the truancy officers could have some sort of porta-cabin so that they could shield innocent home educators from the public eye, unless being seen questioning parents is an attempt to demoralise the proletariat and to boost government popularity at the same time!

I recently contacted Essex LEAs re truancy sweeps, partly because I had been contacted by a parent who had been stopped there and felt that it was unjust treatment for a home educator, and partly because I offered to do this ages ago and never found the time. Anyway, I had a reply from one of the Essex LEAs - it is copied below. Many LEA officers are just ordinary people doing ordinary jobs and are quite approachable. It can be the advisors and welfare officers that maybe do not know the Law relating to home-ed who cause problems, although I am sure that there are people doing these jobs who are also reasonable.

Response from Essex LEA.

I am responding to your e-mail dated 13th May 2003, on behalf of David Deeks the Essex Education Welfare Service Manager.

I can confirm that the Essex Truancy Sweep patrols consist of a police officer and an

Education Welfare Officer. All Education Welfare Service staff are conversant with the principles and rights of home education.

I would stress that children who are home educated are not the targets of Section 16 Truancy Sweep activities. However, as you will appreciate until the children or families are approached and dialogue undertaken, it would be impossible to distinguish between those children who are home educated and children out of school without justifiable cause on their own or with parents. We liaise with the LEA Home Education Advisors closely, and no action is taken where children or families indicate that they are home educated, unless there is reasonable cause to doubt this.

We currently do not publish dates, times and locations of truancy sweeps as our experience has been that this is not helpful. In addition there are occasions when truancy sweeps are cancelled at very short notice due to policing priorities and staffing.

Please be assured that when children or families that are home educating are approached they should not be concerned, our staff do understand that home educated children may well be out in the locations where we are holding truancy sweeps, and they will be treated with respect and understanding.

As you can see; quite a reasonable response from a reasonable person. Although I must say that I would feel very angry if I were stopped when out shopping with my daughter, particularly if people were stopping and staring and taking photos. At least we have truancy cards; my daughter never goes out on her own without one.

Jo Borthen, 57 Florida Drive, Exeter, EX4 5EX, Devon. email: jo4eo@aol.com





GREAT JOB



I have never written before - have never read the newsletter before (although a member several months)...

Can only conclude from this that:

- a) Belinda Harris-Reid has done a great job!!
- b) I totally agree with Jill Anderson's comments about the review pages - they should be at the back of the newsletter....

I normally take one look at the pages of reviews and look no further - has appeared so dull in the past!!

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the August edition - here's to many more good reads!!

Fee (Name and address supplied)

E-mail: f.cstewart@btopenworld.com



VIEWS ON REVIEWS



I have to say that I am with Jill Anderson on the Review Pages debate. I too skip through the first 8 pages, to get to what I really want to read, which are the experiences and feelings of other home educators. I still devour these letters and articles greedily and I personally can't get enough of them. The reviews and ads are OK, but I think they should go at the back of the Newsletter.

Frankie Inglis, 145 Maxey Road,
Dagenham, Essex, RM9 5HS
Tel: 0208 595 0934

EO SLOGAN

Gina Purman had some good points last month but 'Education is compulsory - school isn't' doesn't quite do it for me. I have a bit of experience in advertising and I would go with:



I know it is a bit of the old fashioned double meaning, but it works well, has no negative side, and most importantly of all mentions the words home and educate. It is short and positive and, personally, I would be quite happy to have it on a T-shirt. How about you?

Mark Lawrence

E-mail: markandjo2@aol.com



CORRECTION RE: MORRIS AS ANARCHIST EDUCATOR - (N/L no. 153)

Thank you for the latest EO newsletter no. 153. It was interesting to read 'From the Archives' extracts from articles in The Raven. Just one factual point. Colin Ward's article 'Morris as Anarchist Educator' was about William Morris, not Henry Morris. I can see how the confusion arose. There is no mention in the original of Morris's first name. An unfortunate oversight. Perhaps Ward, or the Raven editor, assumed the reader would know. The preceding article, 'Schools of Freedom', in the same journal, also by Colin Ward, mentions Henry Morris at some length.

William Morris was a Marxist socialist activist who worked politically with Friedrich

Engels and Eleanor Marx in the late nineteenth century. He was also, as the article notes, author of 'News from Nowhere', a dream-story about a future socialist society. He is probably better known for his contribution to arts and crafts, in particular his wallpaper designs. As Ward noted, Morris's views on education are perhaps more clearly in an anarchist tradition than a Marxist one. Even so, Karl Marx himself took the view that half-time schooling was more beneficial than full-time (Capital vol. 1, chapter 15, section 9).

It was also interesting to read about a grocer's apostrophe. It helps to explain why so many such mistakes are made. I'm not sure about Anne's rule about an apostrophe always replacing something missing, as in Mr Cox, his Orange Pippin. It doesn't work for Mrs Bramley, her Seedling. One use of apostrophes is to replace letters (e.g. it's red, she's happy, he's swimming). Apart from that, possessive nouns (e.g. in this letter, Ward's, Morris's, grocer's, Anne's) have apostrophes but plurals (e.g. 2 potatoes, 3 carrots, 4 sausages) and possessive pronouns (e.g. whose, its, hers - whose hat? Find its owner. It is hers.) do not.

Dave Ball 43 Brackenbury Road, London N2 0SS

(I think in Old English the possessive would have been Mister Coxes Orange Pippin and Mistress Bramleyes Seedling rather than using his or her(s?)) - either way, and as Dave also indicates, the apostrophe stands for something left out. Anne)

WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO WRITE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES?

Are you a parent of a child with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties who is being educated otherwise than at school?

I am a Senior Lecturer in Psychology and Special Educational Needs at the Institute of

Education, University of London and the editor of the journal *SLD Experience*. I am also the parent of a six-year-old child who is being educated otherwise than at school.

The *SLD Experience* is a journal for parents and professionals who live with, teach, or support children and young people with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties, including those with autistic spectrum disorders. Contributors to the journal are academics, teachers, parents, professionals from health and social services and the children and young people themselves. A forthcoming special edition of the journal is on the theme of parents and families. Most articles are between 1000 and 3000 words. An 'academic' style of writing is not required; interest and relevance to the reader is far more important. Photographs are very welcome.

If you would be willing to write an article, or would like to know more, please contact me as follows:

Dawn Male - Telephone (home): 01522 731775 e-mail (home): dawnmale@aol.com

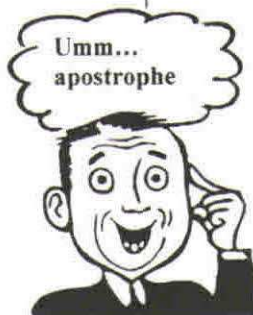


ANY MUSICIANS OUT THERE?

I am an EO dad and bass guitar player. I am looking for other musicians to offer workshops/jam groups for 6yrs + for regular fund, support and tuition in the Brighton area.

Call for a chat!

Andrew Barnett, 7 Gloucester Road, Brighton, BN1 4AD Tel: 07958625040



OPPORTUNITIES THAT CAN BE INTERESTING AND FUN

Getting involved in surveys, campaigns etc. can be an educational experience for adults and children of all ages. Most surveys and campaigns have been designed to be fun and to encourage volunteers to participate. They can cover a diverse range of subjects, give 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 support, statistics and data that will be of benefit to the wider community and environment, helping to set indicators for the future.

'The Great Nut Hunt' A Survey of Dormice
Tel: Your Local Wildlife Trust
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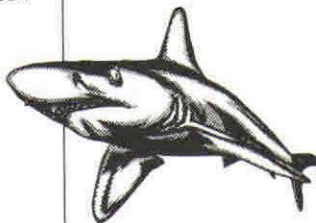


This is a regular and ongoing survey for the University College of London but co-ordinated by the Wildlife Trusts. Most local Trusts are

involved so you should be able to get the survey packs easily – look up the number for your local Trust in the telephone directory or telephone 01636 677711. For those of you in Wales tel. Richard Dodd on 01656 724100. It is suitable for all age ranges. Dormice have specialised habitat requirements, and what with habitat destruction and climate change they are now scarce. The survey aims to encourage a better understanding of the distribution of these wonderful creatures. The information gathered enables populations to be monitored, maintained and hopefully enhanced by better habitat management. They consume high quantities of hazelnuts prior to hibernation in winter, and the characteristically-gnawed nuts found beneath mature fruiting hazel bushes can identify their

presence at a site. Your job is to find a suitable area and look for these eaten nuts.

The Great Eggcase Hunt Tel the Shark Trust
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Do you live near the coast or are you planning to visit the seaside? Help the Shark Trust search for egg cases. The Shark Trust would love to hear from anyone who

finds egg cases (also known as mermaids purses) from skates and rays. Skates and rays are close cousins of sharks and members of one of the most ancient groups of fish on the planet, even older than dinosaurs! Many reproduce by laying leathery egg cases on the seabed, from which hatch miniature versions of their parents. The cases are tough and durable. Storms often wash them onto beaches and they can be found washed up at any time of the year. They are empty after the baby skates or rays have hatched out from them. They are often found on the strandline so you may need to look carefully amongst the seaweed washed up. Many species of skate and ray are now endangered and the Trust wants to know how the species are faring around the UK coast.



Save our Dolphins

We regularly see these beautiful mammals from our local beach (West Wales). However, this winter a record number of dead dolphins were found washed up on UK coasts. They are dying because they get caught in fishing nets, trawled at high speeds in the English Channel to catch shoals of bass. Help the dolphins by writing to Frans Fischer, European Fisheries Minister, c/o Joan Edwards, 16 Burleigh Park Road, Peverell, Plymouth PL3 4QH. Joan will deliver the letters personally to

Mr Fischler later this year. You can also sign the petition at www.wildlifetrusts.org.

**Help Shape the Laws and Policies that
Protect Wildlife in the UK**
www.sustainable-development/biodiversity

Do you care passionately about plants, animals and the environment? Now you have a chance to express your views about wildlife in the UK – and it's fun to do! An exciting new project to listen to young people's opinions on biodiversity has just been launched by the government. You can take part, play the animated games and explore the puzzles and challenges on this new website.

Most of the above information this issue is from WILDLIFE WATCH, the junior branch of The Wildlife Trusts. Tel 01636 677711 or visit www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

If you know of any interesting surveys please email full details to sally@aecb.net or post to **Sally Hall**, Nant-y-Garreg Farm, Saron, Llandysul SA44 5EJ



Download a unique climate change model from www.climateprediction.net and help the Met Office with their worldwide experiments on climate change. Your computer works it its spare time, it's got every possible safety device, doesn't interfere with whatever else you're using it for, and you can be part of the biggest climate simulation model in, for and by the world - Anne (info. from BBC TV News)



FIRST PENRALLT CAMP CHRONICLES

First home-ed camp, and we thoroughly enjoyed it, the weather was superb and the location spectacular, overlooking the sea in North Wales.

By Saturday evening most people had arrived and we had our first campfire sing-along, the most popular being "I'm being eaten by a Boa Constrictor". Sunday was a time to explore the coastal path leading to the big sandy beach.



Monday was the first of the exciting forays into the camp shop, with organic this and that, and fresh baked iced buns for breakfast. Yum Yum. Tuesday was hot again, so workshop no.1 was to build a solar powered paddling pool, and a15-foot waterslide - a great success, with the kids queuing up to have a go. Wednesday was boat day: free rides on Pete's dive boat and a fishing trip for a lucky few, and what a catch -17 mackerel and 4 huge pollack!! Thursday, the rain came - to some, a relief from the burning sun - a chance to chat in the big marquee and get out the craft stuff. It was also the day scheduled for workshop no. 2, building a Mongolian yurt. The men especially seemed to put a lot of energy into this and, though they didn't get the canvas on, it still looked very impressive in its skeletal form, a work of art. Thursday night was another especially good campfire session. Friday saw a return to glorious weather, one last trip to the beach and swim in the sea, followed by a communal banquet and camp concert with great good humour and special guest appearance from

Elvis!!! Bet you didn't know he was a home ed'or?

Saturday, time to go, with lots of hugs and kisses all round, and lots of vows to come back next year!!

So what are we left with?

A sense of new community, new friendships, new bonds, great satisfaction, an empty field with a big bald patch and a cardboard box full of the following: a small Sigg bottle; a grey and black cardigan; a boy's navy tie-dye T shirt; large grey-handled kitchen knife; an ingenious folding picnic cup; a pair of pink sparkly Barbie wellies size 11/29; a football boot for an action man; a blue speckled enamel bowl; a pink plastic plate; a blue plastic mug; 3 Frizet ice packs; 2 orange ice packs; 1 EDA ice pack; a collection of pottery bowls, figures and "objet d'art" which were fired in the Aga and now need glazing; finally, a pair of teeth in a tiny pouch!!! If you recognise any of these, phone me and we'll arrange to have you reunited.

What have we to be grateful for?

The energy and commitment put in by so many in so many different ways, to make it a great success for everyone. Those volunteers who changed the loo rolls and mopped the floors. Those volunteers who ran the shop for an hour a day. Those who were so loving and concerned when they'd heard about my car accident. Geoff's Tai Chi which kept me together the day after the accident. Mel's clay leaving me with a selection of art suitable as exhibits for the Tate Modern. Andy staying in the sea for over 2 hours to help everyone in and out of the boat. Annelie's face painting, Diane's big bag of craft, Julie's guidance with the teens, Sue's lotions and potions and everyone who took part in the Camp Concert ... I can't name everyone! I couldn't even remember your names then, but

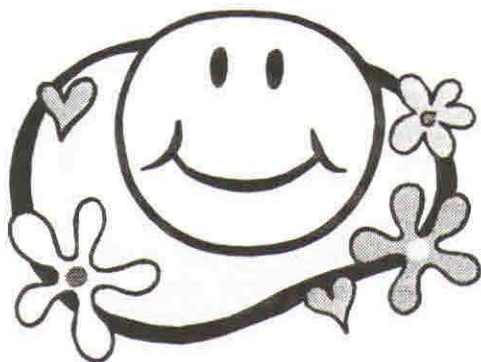


you know who you are and so again a BIG THANK YOU. Thanks too to those of you who have sent photos and cards after the camp, they are much appreciated as "normal" life takes a hold and the memory of the week starts to fade.

What have we to look forward to?

Next year's camp 2004!!! Finishing off the kiln for next year's pottery; canvas on and sleeping in the yurt; an even bigger and better water slide; song sheets around the campfire; Abba as special guests at the Camp Concert; Tai Chi to start every day; another spectacular banquet; smiling faces;

big hugs; friendships renewed. Can't wait!



Lots of love to you all

Sue, Pete, Rhiannon

Penrallt Campsite, Tudweiliog, Pwllheli, LL53
8PB 01758 770654 Email Penrallt@aol.com



MEDIA PEOPLE WANTED

This is a delicious and sexy job...well it isn't actually, but I thought if I said it was, loads of folk would want to be part of EO's media team. (Well, working as a media contact could be

delicious and sexy...it all depends who you are.)
I digress...

EO would love some more families to join the media team. We are looking for contacts in Northern Ireland, North West, South East and a second contact for London... The job entails dealing with all media - TV, radio, magazine and newspaper (local and national if necessary) - requests for HE families to be interviewed and filmed and photographed by fabulous journalists... - who try not to distort the story too much.

I often have requests from the media who are looking for a specific family/lifestyle to fit into their oh, so specific remit. This sometimes seems like an impossible task, but I usually find someone to fit the bill. The job entails; lots of networking (buzz word!), keeping abreast of EO/HE trends, phoning/emailing families (who have very kindly said they are willing to share their lives/philosophies with us), keeping in contact with Jacqui Houlding - EO's web-mistress (who has very kindly created a database of families willing to talk to the media) and also - if all else fails - being happy to take on the task of being interviewed yourself and/or being on TV/radio.

Please, please contact me if you would like to join our team. Also...are there families out there who would be willing to talk to the media. It is great fun...really it is! Admittedly, sometimes I've read the printed copy, after being interviewed and can't believe how the journalist has distorted my meaning but Hey!... they say there is no such thing as bad press... And some articles, radio shows and TV

programmes have been tremendous - completely tremendous.

Let's spread the word...It still troubles me that EO has been around for 25 years (and home-education for...well, for...ever!) and that home-education is still not accepted as a valid alternative to the antiquated mainstream schooling system. There are 70,000 young people at public school in this country and 150,000 young people being home-educated but I read much more about Eton and Winchester and Rodean than home-education. Come on you good people (not only the delicious and sexy) let's go for it...let's put EO on the map.

BWs to you all

Belinda R. Harris-Reid

Buckfastleigh, Devon - tel: 01364 643343

email: bharrisredi@aol.com



BEST OF BOTH WORLDS?

Having home-educated both of our children from the beginning, it was quite difficult to grapple with the idea of them wanting to go to Sands School in Ashburton of their own volition at ages 15 and 13. (A group of their friends had been and experienced 'trial' weeks there and were encouraging them to do the same). So it came as some surprise when a group of eight 'home-grown' young people all decided to leave what had been an extremely supportive and generally successful home-educating

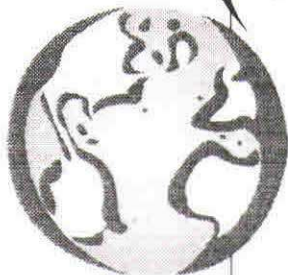


group, to move into a local democratic, fee-paying school. We always had encouraged them to make their own decisions about things!

In fact, the transition was pretty straightforward for them both (unlike some others who very much needed to de-school as part of their process.) They had already been used to being self-motivated, flexible and having their own say; my belief is that it was very refreshing for the school to receive a group of eight very positive, enthusiastic youngsters who slotted in relatively easily to the school's way of doing things – democratically.

They quickly felt at ease in surroundings which were more like 'home' than 'school', supported by fantastically encouraging staff, working within a fairly structured timetable. Both extended their maths, science, English and geography skills, following on from what we had offered at home ourselves and through tutors for some subjects. Art, drama and woodwork enabled them, beyond our wildest dreams, to create fantastic sculptures, furniture and theatre productions, all developing their skills further.

Thankfully they have been able to take part in lots of trips to the cinema, swimming and rock-climbing on the moor, camping in the Scillys, cycling in France and ski-ing/snowboarding in Austria. They have made friends and connections with all sorts of people. I am sure that their lives have been enriched because of it. Sands has really helped them to be more confident and outgoing; also to express their opinions in a large group and work through some difficult situations for the good of the group as a whole. I feel that all of this will help them both as they now embark on making their own way in the world, at ages 18 and 16, and that we have been so privileged in being able to offer them an



extremely positive alternative to mainstream education.

Best wishes to all home educators.

Annie Cole, Valadin, Littehempton,
Totnes,
Devon. 01803 862433



FREE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS FOR 11- YEAR-OLDS

Available for children equivalent to Year 7 (i.e. 11 years old at start of autumn 2003 term). Parents need to write in to Ordnance Survey by no later than 10 October 2003 (closing date), confirming that their child is equivalent to Year 7/Primary 7; also confirming their address and how many children are eligible (normally one). The address is: Free maps for 11-year-olds 2003, Customer Services, Ordnance Survey, Romsey Road, SOUTHAMPTON, SO16 4GU. The free map title will be selected based on the home educator's address and will be despatched along with a 'Map reading made easy peasy' leaflet subject to availability. Parents should note that the map and leaflet is the child's property and given for them to use both for educational and leisure purposes. For full details on the scheme and Terms and Conditions visit the free maps web site: www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/freemapsfor11yearolds/

In addition to the free maps for 11-year-olds, MapZone® is a totally free web site by Ordnance Survey aimed at children between ages of 7 and 16 years, offering interactive fun learning on a host of map-related topics, ranging from map reading skills, interactive fun learning games, to regular competitions where children can win some exciting prizes. Parents wishing to make use of this free resource should visit: <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/mapzone>
www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/mapzone

ARCHIVES - WORDS FROM THE WISE

At the start of another home educating 'term', EO archives looks at some old favourites:

"Separation of learning from other activities is the most serious error. Learning occurs naturally at work and at play, but must be artificially stimulated when separated from them. Learning occurs naturally in the course of encountering real-world problems, but when these are subdivided into mathematics, economics, accounting and business practice they become so artificial that for most people learning can be induced only at great cost. Learning occurs naturally in the course of true teaching. But only with great difficulty in the role of classroom student or classroom teacher."

Everett Reimer School is Dead (1971)

"Again a good lesson with Jose on the typewriter. He is still fearful of making mistakes. I wanted to bring this anxiety into the open. I wanted also to get him to see that he himself must do the learning. He wants to learn, or rather, he wants not to fail; but he still doesn't see that learning is his action, not mine. When he began to look for clues, pointing to different letters on the keyboard and watching my face to see if he was touching the right one, I closed my eyes and said banteringly, "I don't know. I can't see."

George Dennison The Lives of Children: The Story of the First Street School (1969)

"Take reading. People learn to read naturally and easily somewhere between the ages of 5 and 12, some earlier, some later. Late readers are indistinguishable from early readers in a very short time. But the natural course of things can be violently altered by rewarding early readers - and by pronouncing later readers 'in need of remediation'. The lie is then compounded by supplying the deficient with 'special' treatment, including assignment to a separate junk category called 'special education'. You cannot 'teach' children to read any more than you can 'teach' them to walk and talk. Under the right conditions they teach themselves with great facility. But you can teach children to hate reading, to do it poorly, and to hate themselves for not measuring up to the false premises of institutional reading practices"

John Taylor Gatto The Exhausted School (1993)

"Robert Theobald, focusing on education, (said) that incredible changes are going to take place within 35 years and that no human group has ever before faced the problem of coping with changes of such magnitude. Noting that cultures have failed because they were incapable of changing their old concepts and ways of thinking, he suggested that we have to help the young people in our culture learn a new set of values, which will allow them to live in a totally different world. The issue, he said, lies here: how do you change the thinking of a culture with enormous speed?"

Neil Postman and Charles Weingarten: Teaching as a Subversive Activity (1971)

"The human mind is a mystery. To a very large extent it will probably always be so. We will never get very far in education until we realise this and give up the delusion that we can know, measure and control what goes on in children's minds. To know one's own mind is difficult enough. In my mind's ear I can hear the anxious voices of a hundred teachers asking me 'How can you ... be sure the child is learning anything?' The answer is simple. We can't tell. What I am trying to say about education rests on a belief. Call it a faith. This faith is that man is by nature a learning animal."

John Holt How Children Learn (1967)

"The difficult child is the child who is unhappy. He is at war with himself; and in consequence he is at war with the world."

A. S. Neill Summerhill (1962)

Opportunities that can be Interesting and Fun

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Do you live near the coast or are you planning to visit the seaside? Help the Shark Trust search for egg cases. The Shark Trust would love to hear from anyone who finds egg cases (also known as mermaids purses) from skates and rays. Skates and rays are close cousins of sharks and members of one of the most ancient groups of fish on the planet, even older than dinosaurs! Many reproduce by laying leathery egg cases on the seabed, from which hatch miniature versions of their parents. The cases are tough and durable. Storms often wash them onto beaches and they can be found washed up at any time of the year. They are empty after the baby skates or rays have hatched out from them. They are often found on the strandline so you may need to look carefully amongst the seaweed washed up. Many species of skate and ray are now endangered and the Trust wants to know how the species are faring around the UK coast.

Save our Dolphins

We regularly see these beautiful mammals from our local beach (West Wales). However, this winter a record number of dead dolphins were found washed up on UK coasts. They are dying because they get caught in fishing nets, trawled at high speeds in the English Channel to catch shoals of bass. Help the dolphins by writing to Frans Fischler, European Fisheries Minister, c/o Joan Edwards, 16 Burleigh Park Road, Peverell, Plymouth PL3 4QH. Joan will deliver the letters personally to Mr Fischler later this year. You can also sign the petition at www.wildlifetrusts.org.

Help Shape the Laws and Policies that Protect Wildlife in the UK

www.sustainable-development/biodiversity

Do you care passionately about plants, animals and the environment? Now you have a chance to express your views about wildlife in the UK – and it's fun to do! An exciting new project to listen to young people's opinions on biodiversity has just been launched by the government. You can take part, play the animated games and explore the puzzles and challenges on this new website.

Most of the above information this issue is from WILDLIFE WATCH, the junior branch of The Wildlife Trusts. Tel 01636 677711 or visit www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

If you know of any interesting surveys please email full details to sally@aecb.net or post to Sally Hall, Nant-y-Garreg Farm, Saron, Llandysul SA44 5EJ

STOP PRESS: Download a unique climate change model from www.climateprediction.net and help the Met Office with their worldwide experiments on climate change. Your computer works it its spare time, it's got every possible safety device, doesn't interfere with whatever else you're using it for, and you can be part of the biggest climate simulation model in, for and by the world - Anne (info. from BBC TV News)

REVIEWS

The Treasure of the Tiger by *Duncan Watt*

This is an adventure of the Wallace Boys, who have sailed to Singapore. Their friends show them a radio mayday message from a Japanese ship in 1945. They use it and follow clues to track down the legendary treasure of General Yamashita ('Tiger of Malaya') Tomoyuki. Their trail takes them to a small island near Pulau Tioman and an unexploded bomb! An exhausting underwater search leads to the wrecked ship. Their attempts to raise the treasure are thwarted by the presence of a shark, an underwater earthquake and a tsunami - the result of volcanic activity in the Philippines' Mount Pinatubo. The book is well written with a lot of detail about ships and the places that the young men go. Although published in 1994, it reads like an older book. This may be because it is published in Singapore (where the author lives). There is a quote on the back from the Junior and Middle School Education Journal (UK). They suggest that it is useful in attracting boys who are reluctant readers. As the main characters are young men of about 19 to 21, it may be more suitable for young to mid teens, particularly those who are interested in water sports, as it gives a lot of detail about scuba-diving and sailing.

Shena Deuchars with Katherine (11) and James (8)

£5.99 ISBN 1-85646-108-4 *Gazelle*

Moonmallow Smoothie by *Philip Wooderson*

This is an interesting story. Its theme is a sound one: big business moving in and swallowing up the little man. It touches on elements of male bonding, in that the family firm fight back thanks to the son's invention of a unique flavour ice cream that allows them to compete with the standardized flavours of the multinational. It is a good story, aimed to appeal to boys I felt. There's even a meteorite thrown in for good measure. It would be a good one for Dad and son to share for reading beginners, and a read-alone book for probably nine upwards. It is set out in the usual Black Cat series way with illustrations and short chapters making for an encouraging reading experience.

Gill Humphreys with Oliver (9)

£4.99 ISBN 0-7136-6571-8 A & C Black

Zoombinis Island Odyssey CD PC/MAC

This is the latest in the popular maths/logic series about the Zoombini characters. According to the box, it now includes science as well. It has seven activities, each of which can be played at three levels and is aimed at children from 7 years. We have the other two CDs in this series (*Maths Journey and Mountain Rescue*). None of them present the children with number-based activities; instead they use sorting and matching activities to practise logical skills. The Bloats have desecrated the ecology of Zoombini Isle and the player has to restore the habitat of the Zerbles

(described as ecology and life cycles). The characters and the gameplay of the whole series is very engaging and the activities are of reasonable difficulty. The program is adaptive: as you play, it automatically moves you to the next level when you have succeeded at the current one. James particularly likes the hieroglyphs activity and enjoys making up stories about the characters as he goes through the game. He also likes the new graphical designs for the Zoombinis. The claims to practise scientific skills are a bit overblown. The astronomy activity is very complex, but good for making you think about what happens as the earth rotates. On the other hand, the 'gene pool' is fun but not much to do with science. The story is at least a basis on which to be able to talk about real ecological issues. If you do not have any of the Zoombini CDs, or even if you do, this one is worthwhile buying.

Shena Deuchars with James (8)

£15.99 at Amazon. *Mindscape*

Molly Moon Stops the World by *Georgia Byng*

This is the second in the series and as brilliant as the first (*Molly Moon's Incredible Book of Hypnotism* - soon to be made into a film). Like the first book this is about hypnotism and it starts off with a kidnap. The star performer on Stars on Mars is kidnapped because she knows too much and then it is full of adventures. The characters are mainly the same as the first one but with some new ones. In this book you find out some very surprising information about Molly's family. When I started reading I just couldn't put it down it was so exciting and I even read it when I was walking with mum and with a torch at night when I should have been asleep! It is interesting to hear about the powers of hypnotism. It is suitable for girls and boys from about 8 to adult.

Keith Hall (9)

£12.99 ISBN 0-333-99044-7 *Macmillan*

Spark Island Books with CDs for PC or Mac

I would like to tell you about these books with CDs. There are lots of titles in the series and for different age ranges and abilities. They are bright and cheerful and I could do them by myself, as the instructions are very clear. The children of Spark Island help you all the time. There are *English Learning Adventures* that have CDs with some fun learning games and there are *Maths Learning Adventures* with fun CDs. You can earn megahops for correct answers and then use these to play the games. You can play a game in the book or you can play the interactive learning games from the CD. There is also a useful web site. I think they are good value books.

Keith Hall (9)

£4.99 each (CD and book) *BBC Kids & Co.*

Winning business tactics for every family

by Ros Jay

This is the kind of book that comes from the same source as all of those awful crossover television programmes, such as the multiplying reality docu-soaps and makeovers. You can almost imagine its origin as somebody's latest brilliant idea in a brainstorming suggestion session to commission a programme applying something from one area of life/business to another area of life/business, instead of having an original idea. In this case it's a book and as a result, it's very post-modern in layout with the usual suspect trimmings – it's jokey, with wacky and wonky typefaces for the title, chapter and page numbers and not very long or too serious. You might suspect a book like this to have an American origin, but it comes from a wife (author) and husband (editor) team. I disagreed with the author's opening premise about working parents already having a "weapon" that children don't have and know nothing about - business skills. I also don't agree that another motive is to equip them with the same skills to "set them on a fast-track business career". If you turn those ideas around, children are more than well-equipped with many things that adults do not have or have lost, such as an innate natural capacity to learn and develop a wider range of skills than just those restricted to working in the business world. Children can and do learn all of those basic skills and more from everyday life, so they don't have to be put under the "business" heading and labelled as such. This is just a gimmicky book based on the wrong application of ideas directly from one area of adult life into the area of parenting and bringing up children. It is probably not intended to be taken too seriously, which is just as well.

Nick Steenman-Clark

£6.99 ISBN 0-954391-0-3 White Ladder Press

Usborne Book of the Seasons

We were all immediately attracted to this big colourful book of things to do all the year round. In each section there is a star map, weather information, things to do: art, cooking, wildlife activities – all of which have great appeal, even if we've done some of them before, as they are simply but beautifully presented and explained. I consider this would be an ideal present and was surprised at the very reasonable price when compared to so many other books of this kind and size.

Sally Jarvis with Hazel (11) and Kim (7)

£9.99 ISBN 0-7460-4221-3 Usborne

The Cat Who Got Carried Away

by Allan Ahlberg

This is a story about the Gaskitt family where Mrs Gaskitt stays in bed a lot (we find out why later), Mr Gaskitt does the household jobs, the children are kept busy at school and worrying things keep happening to their pets! This is an absolute gem of a book. It is

great fun to read with an ever-increasing pace as events unfold, helped along by good illustrations, maps to help see where it is all happening and an occasional clock or even a set of traffic lights making comments on proceedings. For Gwenan and Ceri it had everything necessary for a good read – animals, sense of humour and fast pace keeping you gripped until the end. Well recommended.

Susan Bain with Gwenan (9) and Ceri (5)

£9.99 ISBN 0-7445-9632-7 Walker

The Barefoot Book of Animal Tales

by Naomi Adler and Amanda Hall

This is a beautifully presented book with nine animal stories from around the world. These traditional tales involve the indigenous animals of each country.

'Grandmother Spider' from USA has an owl, a bear and a possum. 'The Monkey's Heart' from Kenya tells of a tortoise, monkey, lion, hippopotamus, zebra and giraffe. The Brazilian story 'Magic in the Rainforest' mentions the toucan, quetzal, humming bird and parrot. The illustrations are attractive with a different border for each story. These stories are perfect for reading aloud. They are well paced and have repeated rhythms and phrases which, when read out loud, help those listening to feel a part of the story telling. For anyone who enjoys reading aloud and creating a performance with atmosphere then this book is well worth having. We all really liked these stories and it is a good book for dipping into.

Clare Crane with Natasha (8) and Anthea (6)

£7.99 ISBN 1-84148-942-5 Barefoot Books

Kidnapped in the Kafue by Duncan Watt

Two teenage brothers and their friend Mwala have an exciting African adventure when they go to Zambia and stay with Kamwi who is one of the game wardens of The Kafue National Park. Little do they know that Kamwi is under pressure from poachers. The boys go with Kamwi on his checks for poaching activities and they find a kudu cow (an antelope type animal) in a trap and they have to shoot it to put it out of its misery. When Kamwi doesn't try and find the poachers the boys start to wonder what is going on and they plan to try and find the poachers' base. Mwala goes missing and a rescue plan is put into action to rescue him. What the boys thought would be an easy task would soon have them fearing for their lives. This story really opens your eyes to the way in which poachers work and why it is extremely hard to get rid of them. The author provides footnotes to assist in understanding African words and gives tips and pronunciations.

Michelle O'Connor-Christian (15)

£5.99 ISBN 1-85646-091-6 Gazelle

Under the Moon and Over the Sea

Edited by John Agard and Grace Nichols

In a delightful anthology of over 30 poems we are transported to the sparkling waters, the sun and blue sky of the Caribbean. It's divided into 5 sections: we are invited to explore the depths of the sea, be scared by a late night Junbie (ghost) story, listen to the sounds of living things and taste the tempting flavours of the food as well as following the families who journey to other lands far away - 'All our good things are stored up inside, more than enough for any plane ride'. The beautiful illustrations, many in collage, inspired Gwenan to create some of her own as well as writing her own poems. She especially liked the poems about animals, the sea and the feeling of being on an island. Susan Bain with Gwenan (9)

£14.99 ISBN 0-7445-3736-3 Walker

The Prince, The Cook and the Cunning King by Terry Deary

What is good about this book is that it is based on a true story from the past. Most stories seem to be set in the future. I particularly like the bit in the loft. My favourite character is the cunning king but never, never tangle with a Tudor.

Jem Freestleben (9)

£4.99 ISBN 0-7136-6440-1 A & C Black

The Opposite of Chocolate by Julie Bertagna

Sapphire is a fourteen-year-old girl who lives in Hungry, a small town, possibly in Britain. It is a long hot summer and fires keep springing up around the town. In this tense atmosphere Sapphire discovers she is pregnant. Her parents find out and argue about whether she should keep the baby or have an abortion. Sapphire thinks it is unfair that they are trying to make decisions when it is her baby and tells her friend who is disgusted and says that she doesn't want to be Sapphire's friend any more. Sapphire feels abandoned by everyone until she meets Gilbert, who has been lighting the fires in Hungry all summer. They become very good friends, but in the end Sapphire still has to decide what to do about the baby. This book is very well written and is exciting to read. It has no chapters, making it feel like a smooth and continuous story which should be read all at once. It explores the horror of teenage pregnancies through a good story which is enjoyable and interesting. I liked reading it and I think it would be a good book for most teenagers.

Emma Whitehall (13)

£9.99 ISBN 0-330-41345-7 Macmillan

Robin of Sherwood by Michael Morpurgo

This is the exciting story of a girl who finds the grave of Robin Hood. Each day before breakfast she faints

and dreams the story - one that is very different from the traditional story. The merry men, for example, are outcasts because they're albinos, dwarves or deformed in some way. I really enjoyed this book and would recommend it for anyone between 7 and 10.

Alexander Burnett-Pope (8)

£4.99 ISBN 0-3406-9015-1 Hodder Children's Books

Teach Your Child to Read by Stewart J Wilson

This is an excellent book if you want a set formula to teach your child to read. It has been written by a home educator but is aimed at all parents of children who are home educated or those at school who have not learnt to read. It is very structured which the author does not apologise for as his aim is to give you the information to help your child to learn to read within a year. I found this book very easy to follow and his approach is that if it is not working then alter the system to fit your child. At the end of each section he advises you test the child to see that they have learnt what is required before you move onto the next section. What I particularly like about this book is that it demystifies teaching your child to read. You do not need to invest in anything but pens and papers and there is not need for flashy schemes, cards or books. It is also simple to follow by splitting the process into four simple blocks and above all it is about your child enjoying the process. This book is specifically if you want your child to learn to read, and from what I have read is one of the best systems I have seen to achieve this but without the expense.

Kathleen Smith and Rowan (5)

£12.00 from S Wilson stmac@supanet.com

What Shall I Grow by Ray Gibson

This is a lovely, simple book with clear instructions and pictures to help children grow a variety of fun and unusual looking plants. We all love gardening so the book has been a huge hit with us, and one of the best things about it is that it does not call for expensive or unusual materials. Most of the plants are grown from easy to find seeds (cress, tomato) or from vegetable tops. There is also an introduction to taking leaf cuttings and stuff about roots and shoots. Good value

K McIntyre-Bhatty with Holly (6) and Hamish (3)

£4.99 ISBN 0-7460-2715-X Usborne

From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs Basil E Frankweiler

What I enjoyed about reading this book is the sense of mystery that you get as soon as you read a few chapters. Also I like the way the two children plan everything and you are kept in suspense all the time wondering what will happen next.

Kit Freestleben (11)

£4.99 ISBN 0-7445-8327-6 Walker

Look at the Pond (Close-up First Discovery Series)

This is a fact book presented in a novel way, with excellent illustrations. The facts are clear and concise but what really makes this book unusual are the 'magic' pages. Each of these are of pond insects and can only be revealed by moving a card 'magnifying glass' over the page. Ivo found this fascinating and I thought it did simulate looking at insects under a glass. Celeste was less enchanted and found it a rather dull trick. I was interested to see what a diverse list of titles they publish in the series and would expect that Celeste would be more interested in the unusual topics rather than the gimmicks, as there are some excellent books on insects / animals / dinosaurs already.

Kirsten Freisleben with Celeste (5) and Ivo (3)

£6.99 ISBN 1-85103-338-6 *Ragged Bears*

What Shall I Draw? Usborne Activity Books This book is aimed at helping children to find a formula for drawing a variety of animals and vehicles. Rowan was able to use this book by himself to draw a picture he is really proud of even though he cannot read. It does this by showing a step by step approach to each picture i.e. first a circle then adding on different shapes to create the subject. My only comment is that it does not encourage much experimentation or imagination. Otherwise this is a good book to improve your child's confidence and skill in drawing

Kathleen Smith with Rowan (5)

£4.99 ISBN 0-7460-2024-4 *Usborne*

The Dark Blue Bike at No 17

by *Cathrine Mackenzie*

This book is about how having Jesus in your life can change even the toughest and meanest bullies. The book was about this kid Jake being bullied. Jake really wants a new bike and is jealous when he finds out the bully has a lovely new one. He wants to throw the bully's bike in the muddy pond but his friend comes up to him and says "what would Jesus do? Would he push other peoples bikes into the pond?" It's a really good book because every morning they have family prayers and they read bible stories about Nehemiah, David and Peter. At the end Jake was going to ask the bully to come and sleep over at his house but then the book stops and leaves you hanging there. It is a good book for boys and girls aged 8-12 even though it is about a boy aged 9 nearly 10.

Ben Cromie (12)

£3.99 ISBN 1-85792-732-X *Christian Focus*

Festivals Together - a guide to multi-cultural celebration

We LOVE this book. It is full of celebrating; festivals, special events or just the wonder of living. There are stories, songs, poems, crafts, and recipes all from a wide range of cultures, from Hindu to Jewish, from Christian to Buddhist. Chapters are the seasons which is ideal for planning and for "having a go" at a different Festival than the one you normally share. I always think the children are going to be disappointed in a book with black and white drawings, needing a "hit" of bright, bold colour to make it attractive but that's not the case here. These drawings are full of detail and the instructional pictures accompanying craft activities are wonderfully easy to follow, giving Lewis confidence to have a go himself. It's a wonderful book to share as a family, although I think Katie may take some coaxing to take part in the Hindu festival of Raksha Bandhan (celebrating your brother day!!) but also a fantastic resource for home-educating groups to use. I really enjoy giving the children a different rhythm to the year, being able to dip in and out of different cultures with fun while developing an understanding of this multi-faith world.

Denise Ridgway with Lewis (9) and Katie (5)

£12.99 ISBN 1-869-890-46-9 *Hawthorn Press*

The Vernon Bright series

by *Steve Barlow and Steve Skidmore*

These story books use real scientific events that could actually happen. Vernon Bright is a young scientist as is his father who works for M15. At school Vernon and his best friend John Watt aren't popular so they become friends. After school, they go to Vernon's house where there's a laboratory, and Vernon leaves a trail of disaster with his experiments. The books are incredibly funny and I would recommend them for anyone between 7 and 10 who likes science.

Alexander Burnett-Pope (8)

Vernon Bright and the Magnetic Banana £3.99 0-1413-

0584-3 *Puffin* (also *Vernon Bright and the Faster-than-*

Light Show, Vernon Bright and Frankenstein's Hamster)

Willa and Old Miss Annie by *Berlie Doherty*

This is a book about a girl called Willa who has just moved in to this town. Old Miss Annie lives over the road. Her goat looks like a ghost because it is so white. They become best of friends and they have adventures together. It's actually 3 books in 1. One of their adventures is about old Miss Annie's goat. Her goat is very lonely and they find a home for the goat. Another of their adventures is about a girl who adopts an orphan fox and old Miss Annie and Willa help her look after it. Another of their adventures is rescuing a pony. They take it in and call it Bonny. I recommend this book to girls of all ages

Tabitha Cromie (9)

£3.99 ISBN 0-7445-8330-6 *Walker*

Ready to Learn From Birth to School

Readiness by *Martyn Rawson and Michael Rose*

In this book the authors discuss the issue of school (or academic learning) readiness and the different speeds at which different children (and sexes) demonstrate the ability to cope with full time education. They provide interesting information about the philosophies other European and non-European countries have adopted with regard to school starting ages and also explore some of the other options open to children (i.e. Steiner, home ed). There are interesting sections about ADHD/autistic spectrum difficulties and their possible relationship with the increasing stresses the UK education system places children under. They also present some quite shocking American research statistics regarding the relationship between different learning methodologies and instances of misdemeanour and felony arrests, emotional impairment and workplace suspension. These statistics are based on a study of 68 3-4 year olds from their early education until adulthood and the methods of education were: direct instruction; play-oriented loosely structured learning and a child-initiated, learning through doing approach. Needless to say it makes me glad I home-ed! Like all such books, there are parts I found interesting and parts I didn't; there were parts I agreed with and parts I found irritating. I do think it is a very useful book, particularly for those considering an alternative to mainstream school, or for those concerned about their children's readiness for full time education. Get your library to buy a copy!

K McIntyre-Bhatty

£9.99 ISBN 1-9034-5815-3 Hawthorn

The Holistic Educators: Education for the 21st century

by *Cara Martin*

This book should be compulsory reading for all government educational policy makers! This slender volume starts with the author's personal experiences of her daughter's response to schooling, with which as a home-educator I can readily identify: the undermining of confidence and enjoyment of reading, and fear that if she remained at school she would be reduced to a functional illiterate. Withdrawn from school aged 7 in the early 1970s and educated in liaison with other like minded parents, she rejoined mainstream education to study GCE 'A' levels - having gained the inner resources to cope with the sarcasm and other bad practices of the system and the confidence to pursue her destiny. The bulk of the book however is devoted to the definition of and argument for holistic education. It criticises the narrowness of government educational emphasis on functional knowledge and skills and in favour of a gradually evolving process that aims to develop the effectiveness of the person at all levels. Holistic education regards all forms of knowledge as inter-related and part of an underlying truth and spirituality. It also emphasises its practical application beyond the confines of rote learning and

examination regurgitation. The ample evidence from mainstream psychology and educational research that intellectual growth is inter-related to physical/maturational stages and emotional well-being is largely ignored in a politicised culture of categorisation, attainment targets and blame. Children learn when they feel emotionally secure. They place new knowledge in the context of their existing experiences. These differ with the quality of their home environments, making the standardised league table comparisons unfair and meaningless. Mainstream education combines with the media and cultural influences to sideline emotional and spiritual values of love respect for others and creative endeavour for its own sake. It ignores and often runs contrary to the child's the instinct for learning and for finding their individual purpose in life. This failure is costly to children and to future generations and fails to equip them to be the creative, discerning individuals that are required in our new information rich society. The final part of the book looks at possible solutions. Whilst advocating autonomous education the author stresses the importance of the child's need for boundaries in behaviour and self-discipline in education. She advocates small communities with adult learning mentors, and shared resources open to all children. Whilst the younger children may work with employed educational workers on an individual learning plan negotiated with the parents, older children have personal tutors with whom they discuss their ambitions which are flexibly facilitated through work placement or academic projects that reflect their interests. The author speaks with great passion and commitment and argues well against the myopic official educational policy. Occasionally I found her views rather woolly but nonetheless she makes a valuable and thoughtful contribution to contemporary educational issues.

Anne Longmuir

£7.50 ISBN 1-90021-908-5 *Educational Heretics*

Revolution Within: a manifesto towards freedom

by *Sammy Kunina (formerly Sammy Vidal-Hall - an EO member for 15 years)*

This is an exciting book. The author is a social revolutionary and her views of the world are refreshing. She questions society from the starting block; the children. She questions how we teach children, what level of equality we show them and what we project from our own mixed histories onto them. All souls are equal from birth, parents have no authority over their children and 'each child is an autonomous individual in their own right and as such deserves total respect in every aspect of their lives'. She breaks her polemic with frank, personal testimonies throughout the book. This serves to lighten their dogma and reveal a very courageous author. Some familiar libertarians and revolutionaries can be heard clearly in these pages: Alice Miller, John Holt, Adrienne Rich, Andrea Dworkin, Ivan Illich and

John Taylor Gatto are all in there with her. It is not easy going – declarations such as children must be free to eat what they want, clean their teeth or not and go to bed when they want may seem a little extreme to some. But maybe we all need to have experienced a few generations free from poisonous pedagogy to know for certain if it is indeed the right approach. The declaration that 'parents have no right of authority' is a ground rule she repeats throughout the book. Parental collusion with the corrupt and manipulative state is another strong theme as is parent culpability generally. 'In order to survive childhood each child has to forget or justify the childhood tragedies committed against them' Kunina says.

Carolyn McCourt
 £8.00 ISBN 0-9545-062-0-0 Praxis

Alice Miller: The Unkind Society Parenting and Schooling by Chris Shute

This is a very good introduction to the work and ideas of Alice Miller along with the author's thoughts on a very interesting and little talked about subject. Alice Miller studied the effects of cruel and controlled parenting, education and the penal system. She looked at the generally accepted treatment of beating children quite literally almost to death in the time of Hitler's childhood in Germany. Hitler's father beat him so viciously on one occasion as a small child that he was unconscious and believed to be dead. She looked at other figures in Nazi Germany and found this to be a common factor in all their childhoods. Although this would appear to be a depressing subject, I think it's been written in a positive way and there are some important ideas. This is a good book in that it challenges the 'black and white' view of good and evil and it looks for solutions, acknowledging the fact that every persecutor was once a victim and challenging the view that children should be controlled by force, fear and violence.

Hilary Woolf
 ISBN 0-9518022-5-9 Educational Heretics

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Send in your reviews to Sally Hall, Nant-y-garreg, Saron, Llandysul SA44 5EJ or email sally@aecb.net

Any EO member can review books for these pages. If you would like to be part of the review team please email or telephone Sally for more information.

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Members (please give full contact details) - small items/notices, free; commercial enterprises, £25 per issue
NB: DEADLINE FOR ADVERT COPY AND PAYMENT - 1ST OF MONTH PRIOR TO ISSUE.

KUMON MATHS & ENGLISH

Leyland Centre

- Tuition in Maths and English, tailored to students; ideal programme for Home Education.
 - Students attend study centre twice a week for ½ hr, and complete work each day at home. Alternatively work can be by correspondence.
 - All ages and abilities catered for (from pre-school to post-GCSE).
 - Builds confidence and encourages good study skills.
Free Enrolment for EO Members (normally £15).
- Tel for brochure: Marjorie Jackson 01257 267257

HOME EDUCATOR PACKS

National Curriculum Maths, Science and English for 11-14 year-olds.

International GCSEs in Maths, English, Physics, Biology, Environmental Management, History, Agriculture and Accounting for 14-16 year-olds.
Textbooks, syllabuses, study planners, marked assignments and mock exams all supplied, + exam centre facilities for IGCSEs - a complete service for the home educator.

A5 sae for details to:

Little Arthur Independent School, St. Martin's, Isles of Scilly, TR15 0QL or www.littlearthur.org.uk

THE NATIONAL LIVING HISTORY FAYRE

November 14th to 16th

Warwickshire Exhibition Centre nr Leamington Spa

A wonderful opportunity to meet with re-enactors and interpreters of History, many of whom do educational visits.

Details are on www.ewsfairs.com or call David Smith on 01933 225674

Books and more...

Ages 11-14, Maths: 4 student, 3 teachers-£30.

English: 3 student, 2 teachers - £25.

Science: 18 subject, 3 teachers - £25.

Geography: 3 student plus teachers - £20.

History x 3 - £10. CDT x4 - £12.

Lego educational set, 19 projects - £15.

GCSE Modular Maths Textbook - £10.

NEC Physics GCSE - £50.

Tel 01579 345139/paostler@breathemail.net

Want the best for your kids?

Realschool

Happiness, Love and Excellence.

This is an exciting, small and child centred school for all ages about to start in the York area. As a homeschool tutor I want to build a community of homeschooling families.

Contact Paul: www.realschool.co.uk

Tel: 01904 410 504

HILLOCKHEAD FARM COTTAGES

www.hillock-head.co.uk

Self-catering cottages in the Scottish Highlands.

Stunning views across the Moray Firth.

Situated in 160 acres of grazing land and woodland glens. Home to Britain's largest school of wild dolphins, which live in the Moray Firth.

This area of the Black Isle is renowned for its scenic beauty, mild dry climate with sandy beaches, rock pools and fossil beds.

Contact Michele Jansen: 01381 621184

WORKSHEETS FOR FREE! As a home educating family and small publishing business we would like to offer our fellow EOers a set of free worksheets. We currently have available sets of photocopiable Environmental Art Worksheets FREE OF CHARGE in exchange for a s.a.e.. The worksheets are suitable for use with all age groups and can be used on both a one-to-one basis or for group activities. To receive your free worksheets please send a s.a.e. to: Carol Caton, Orca, 71 Osborne Rd, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 3JW

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.

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) or by phone to Jo, 01392 438876

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

Medieval theme for the first half of autumn term, World War II theme for the second half. Lots of craft, drawing and craft workshops and visits, including HMS Belfast, Aladdin, School of Falconry and a cruise on the Ouse! Also regular swimming, multi-sport, Open Houses 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 - 5pm 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 Weds termtime, ice-skating at John Nike Leisure

Centre, 2-4pm, £1.50 show EO card at reception. Contact:

Angela 0118 9661331 (weekends only) or Edwina, email

wgodfrey@netcomuk.co.uk

Burghfield Common Thurs termtime Swimming at Willink

Leisure Centre 1.30-3pm. Contact Angela (see Bracknell)

Windsor Leisure Centre, Fris termtime, organised sports

session 5 yrs up, 11am-noon. Contact Muriel 01628 664939

Windsor Leisure Centre, Fris termtime, family swim 12.30,

contact Angela or Edwina (see Bracknell)

Newbury group on **Fridays** for younger children.

Contact: Gillian 01491 671328

Lambourne Weekly meeting on a farm for crafts, cooking and

nature walks, group based on respect for each other and our

world and an unharmed 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 0117 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 Contact Jane 01354 677869.

CHESHIRE

Contact Sue 01270 883978

South Cheshire Meeting 1st Wednesday of the

month for crafts games and activities. Contact: Sue

01270 883 978 SueElaineDavies@aol.com

CLEVELAND AND DURHAM (see also DURHAM)

Contact: Pauline Butterworth 01642 570786

CORNWALL

Free events sheets every two months via Email or

SAEs. Contact: Anna Wheeler, Cambrose Farm,

Redruth, TR16 4HT 01209 890378

Email: Annawheeler@cambrose.fsnet.co.uk

Local information on our local home ed website:

Homeedinkernow.tripod.com

CUMBRIA

Informal gatherings for socialising, support and activities.

Cumbria Otherwise Newsletter, for full details of

events throughout the county contact Martin 01539

732918 or email cumbria.otherwise@dsl.pipex.com

Kendal alternate Mondays Endmoor Village Hall

1-4pm, Contact Jo Collier 01539 567005.

Penrith alternate Tuesdays Castledown Community

Centre 1.30-3.30. Contact: Sarah Cook 01768 896019

DERBYSHIRE

Chesterfield group meets every Wed. morning.

Contact: Kaz 01246 205463 or 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 Moira Kneale on 01395 279026 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

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

DEVON EAST/DORSET WEST

Lyme Regis, Axminster, Bridport, Chard

Contact Habiba 0845 4582984 (local rate)

Regular meetings on Thursdays. Contact:

Ali 01297 443816 or Karen 01460 30461

DORSET

Regular meetings, keep in touch. Contact Christine 01258 880355 or Rosemary 01747 853593

Bournemouth area: Meeting every Monday for crafts, games, play etc. Friendly, welcoming group.

Contact: June 01202 827945

bugchick@btinternet.com

local website www.he-ed.org.uk

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

Meetings social and activities Third Thurs of the

month 1-4 pm

Colchester Meetings, social and activities, alt

Weds, 11am to 3pm

Tiptree Meetings, social and activities Fortnightly

Tues. 2-5pm

All over Essex trips (usually Thursdays) and workshops. Info available from Sue 01206 520284

East London/Essex group Fortnightly meetings

Contact Gill on 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@ntworld.com
Caroline 01242 890351 cambrose@ieee.org
Beverley 01242 524091 or Mhain 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

kastuni@pkinteractive.co.uk

ACTIVEO meet 3 times a week within 20 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 823112 or Ros 01329

516482 or Email for more details gayle@timica.com

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)

Sandridge village hall, Sandridge, St Albans 2nd

and 4th Thursdays, term time. 1-3pm Contact:

Carolyn 01727 851073

ISLE OF WIGHT

Contact Shara 01983 562313

Isle of Wight Learning Zone workshops, social

events and newsletter, contact Sue 01983 241095

for details.

I.W.E.O. group: craft sessions, visits, swimming,

theatre, picnics, barbecues, mutual support,

especially older EO kids but new members and

visitors always welcomed.

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 Cott, 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

Clissold Park. Tuesdays. 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 Kidbroke 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
N London Hornsey Home Educators Club
(currently under 10s, meet for arts, crafts, drama,
games etc) Thursdays 10.30-12.30
contact: Tina 0208 340 4212

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

Contact: Claire Evans 0208 943 4491
claire@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 newsheet, send SAEs: Gill Wilson,
20 Brook Rd, Heaton Chapel, Stockport SK4 5BZ
Computing Skills 1st and 2nd Saturdays at Moores
family home, limited places
Contact: Karen 01204 573136

NORFOLK

NEON gives details of all events £1.50 plus 4 large
SAEs. Contact: Steve Williams, North Cottage,
Crostwick, Norwich NR12 7BD
Workshops/social meetings 1st and 3rd Thursday
Contact: Sue 01603 738494

NORFOLK/SUFFOLK BORDER

Term-time, every Thursday 2.30 - 4.30
Swimming, indoor sports/play at Breckland Leisure
Centre, **Thetford**. Contact Fay 01953 681785

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

For email updates of activities and outings send
your email address to northantshomeed@aol.com
Regular meeting from 1pm to 4pm on the 2nd and
4th Wed of every month at North Park Pavilion in
North Park Drive off Bath Road in Kettering.
Everyone welcome, just come along, suitable for all
ages. For details phone Jane 01536 418885.
Want to get together with other local home ed
teens? Please contact Lynne Stewart 01604
454240 andrew.stewart77@ntl.com

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Weekly meetings. For full list, Contact: Wendy 0115
9114312 or Louise 01773 780634

OXFORDSHIRE

Classes in creative writing Monthly Newsletter.
Fortnightly Workshop group.
Local 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.samuelhill@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 465260

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@bopenworld.com

STAFFORDSHIRE/SOUTH CHESHIRE/NORTH SALOP
Stafford every 2nd and 4th Wednesday in village
hall for games craft etc. 12-3.30 Contact Jane
01283 820642 jane@jackslane62.freemove.co.uk
or Theresa 01889 563052

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

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

near **Cobham** just off A3 - Learning Group for parents &
children 0-7, in 26 acres of private wood-land, 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 Home-Ed Club Meets regularly. Contact

Tula 01323 648127 email dyerbyname@aol.com

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.com

Regular outings, visits, etc. Contact: Becky 0191

478 5322 beckyfeeny@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@ntlworld.com or Geraldine, 01792 405894

or email: julafan1@ntlworld.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

Gwynedd Mondays swimming at Bangor
Contact: Louisa 01248 361254

Friday swimming at Porth Madog Weekly meetings at Tremadog Thursdays. Contact Jo 01786 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.freereserve.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.freereserve.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: 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 socialising.

Outings most Thursdays Contact: Janet 01249 818672 email: janet.eldekvist@btopenworld.com
Jemima: 01380 727470 Helen: 01249 822958
www.geocities.com/wiltshirehomeed/index.htm

WORCESTERSHIRE

Local Contact - Rachel 01527 597809

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

Meetings - Karen Raybould 01527 835384

Meetings - **North Worcs/Kidderminster** - Gail Tutchner 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

Halifax Gymnasium, Heath Training Centre, Free School Lane. Mondays, weekly except bank holidays. 10AM - 1PM on drop-in basis - chance for children and parents to socialise, make contacts & exchange support in a relaxed environment. Contact: Gill Kiner 01422 311876 or gillkiner@aol.com

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

Northern Ireland Shevaun Rafferty - Correct telephone number 028 703 44006

West Hampshire Karen Robinson 01425 656856

Resigning local contacts

Bristol Carla Macgregor

Wiltshire Martina Hynan-Ratcliffe

West London Claire Evans

Herefordshire Kath and Malcolm Hawkins

Areas needing a local contact

Bristol Durham Dyfed Fife

Glamorganshire Gloucestershire

Hertfordshire Isle of Man

Manchester North Northern Ireland

Strathclyde Tayside Tyne and Wear

West London Wiltshire

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

It would be very much appreciated if all Local Contacts check that their EO membership is current. Please renew your membership if it has lapsed. Thank you. Please do volunteer even if your area appears to be covered - it's often helpful to have more than one contact per county, especially for large areas.

Education Otherwise Adverts

Resource listing

available based on National Curriculum materials available to parents. Covering all primary levels, and some of secondary.

Most useful to parents looking for a structured or NC approach.

Available free from
henrietta.turnbull@btinternet.com (rtf or wpd or doc file); or please send a stamped addressed envelope plus £1 for printing costs to H. Turnbull, Hadlow House, 2 Hadlow Road, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 4AF

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

COUNCIL BUSINESS

NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS NEEDED

Several of our current serving council members will be stepping down at the next AGM at the beginning of February and as such we are in need of new volunteers. The job is not an arduous one but does require some level of commitment and involvement. Council members are required to attend as many of the council meetings as possible, three times a year (travelling expenses can be claimed), and to take responsibility for the decisions that affect the running of EO. We most importantly take responsibility for ensuring that EO's income, as a charity, is spent in pursuit of our stated aims. Most of us are also involved in some of the small groups which deal with specific policy areas.

Access to e-mail would be helpful as we communicate via e-mail between meeting, though this is not essential as arrangements are made to keep some council members up to date on discussions by phone or post. The job lasts for a maximum of two terms (each term is 3 years) and the only other requirement is to have some direct experience of home education (you do not have to be currently home educating). No special skills are needed, we all seem to learn as we go along, some level of involvement with work within EO would be helpful/desirable but most important would simply be a desire to be actively involved in the national organisation. To stand for council you must be proposed by a signed up member (see handbook) or recommended by the current council.

Martine Frampton

If you would like to know more please get in touch with your nearest council member or phone Martine on 01608 812411

Contact List Amendment:

Diana Laing-Wills London East Phone No. 020 8471 1191 Email Address: tim.wills@bt.com

Bulletin

An email bulletin comes out at the beginning of the month between newsletters. It is sent to all those doing a named job in EO and posted to those who do not have an email address.

Any member can ask to be added to the list of those who receive an email copy, just send a request to Priscilla@pvpw.fsnet.co.uk

Confidentiality/Security of information

A point has been raised on one of the email lists about security of information.

Someone had placed the Children's Pages of the newsletter in their recycling bin - and then had second thoughts.

Please be aware that since both the Children's Pages and the Contact List contain private information which is only intended for the use of individual EO members, great care should be taken when disposing of such items, so that the privacy of members is not compromised.

Paula Rothermel's Research - extra copies of the booklet which was distributed with the February newsletter, reporting Paula's PhD research into home education, is being reprinted and will soon be available along with other EO Publications (see inside back cover) for those who require additional copies. The price is being kept as low as possible, just to cover costs.

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, Ann Samuel Till, Ken Grindlay

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

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

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

DfES Team: Anne Wade, Ann Samuel Till, Anne Rix

LEA/EA Group: Isobel Bogucki, Anne Wade, Rob Wade, Gary Podmore, Ann Samuel Till

Communications: Penny Clarke, Priscilla Park-Weir

Scotland Group: Ann Samuel Till, Lucie MacAulay, Anne Wade, Jill Fisher, Jane Bathgate

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

Grievances and Complaints

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

Celia McDonagh, 169 Habershon Street, Splott, Cardiff, CF24 2LA 02920 733629

Anne Rix Hembury Orchard, Frithelstock, Torrington, Devon, EX38 8JT 01237 451535
anne@annerix.demon.co.uk

Media co-ordinator: Belinda Harris-Reid (see S. West)

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 Fax: 01463 220 825
Mob: 07956 193 983 Tel: 01463 23 571
alison@sauer.demon.co.uk
23 Neil Gunn Crescent, Inverness IV2 3EL

Northern Ireland (VACANT) Volunteers please!!

North West: (VACANT) Volunteers needed please!!

North East: Eva O'Rourke 01535 274520
33 Wellington Road, Wilsden BD15 0LP
evaandmary@aol.com

Midlands: Helen Donaldson 01889 882043
Domus, Crossheads, Colwich, Staffs ST18 0UG
serf@unappreciated.co.uk

Wales: (VACANT) *Volunteers needed please!!*

East Anglia: Ali Willer 01603 401020
28 Cozens-Hardy Road, Sprowston, Norwich
NR7 8QF simon.whitehall@tesco.net
<mailto:webmaster@education-otherwise.org>

South West: Belinda Harris-Reid 01364 643343
The Old House, Station Road, Buckfastleigh, Devon
TQ11 0BU bharrisreid@aol.com

South East: (VACANT) Volunteers needed please!!

London(1): Linda Irene'schild 020 7787 6692
78 Hubert Grove, Stockwell, London SW9 9PD
lindaflora2002@hotmail.com

London(2): (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.com 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.freeserve.co.uk

Who does What in EO

Council Members

- Geraldine Adams** (N. London) 0207 2634922
Jane Bathgate (Borders) 01835 862118
Pam Bellinger (Company Secretary)
Keith Charlton (Leics) 0116 259 2118
<kcharlton@care4free.net>
Penny Clarke (Publications Sec.) 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
Jacqui Houlding (Cheshire) 01925 654856
<jc_houlding@onetel.net.uk>
Garry Humphreys (Treasurer)
<garryhumphreys@lineone.net>
Celia McDonagh (Wales) 02920 733629
<celiamcdonagh@yahoo.co.uk>
Gary Podmore (Yorks) 0114 2585702 (Chair)
<SianPodmore@eotherwise.fsnet.co.uk>
Julie Ridley (Manchester) 0161 860 7589
<jasrcm6@yahoo.co.uk> (Vice-Chair)
Anne Rix (Devon) 01237 451535
(NL Co-ord)
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, address changes, new member packs, other queries or missing newsletters contact:
Database Administrator, Education Otherwise, 31 Audley St., Reading, Berkshire, RG30 1BP
Tel: **Lynda Hitchman** 0118 961 4466 or 0118 901 2215, Email 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)

Website and email lists: **Jacqui Houlding**, 01925 654856 jc_houlding@onetel.net.uk

Useful contacts

Contact with LEA / Member Support / Other Problems. *If you need help in dealing with your LEA ring your Local Contact or any Council Member. If you have a problem not covered below please contact your nearest Council Member (list left)*

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: (Acting) **Lianne Smith** Ivy Mount, Canny Hill, Newby Bridge, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 8NU
Tel: 015395 30716 (07717 301 887)

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

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: **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 jo4eo@aol.com

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

Chair: **Gary Podmore** (see Council list)

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 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;
- promote knowledge, understanding and acceptance of education otherwise than at school in the world at large.

For further information send an A5 s.a.e. to:

P.O. BOX 7420
LONDON N9 9SG

Helpline 0870 73 000 74

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

Education Otherwise Association Ltd., Registered Charity No. 1055120

