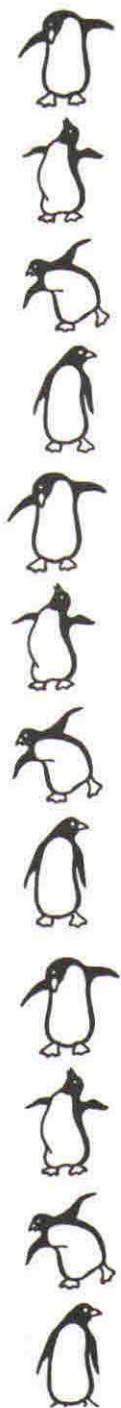


newsletter 155
december 2003 – brrrrr!!



education
otherwise



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TO THE FOLLOWING EDITORS:**

LETTERS AND ARTICLES

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HOME EDUCATION in the NEWS

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REGIONAL DIARY NL Co-ord
(Anne Rix - inside back cover)

CHILDREN'S PAGES *N.B. deadline 20th December 2003*

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

Simon Hoggarth
Ssahoggarth@aol.com

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS 1ST JANUARY 2004

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 saae.** 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.

DISCLAIMER

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All contributions (including advertisements) have been accepted in good faith and have not been in any way endorsed by Education Otherwise, which cannot be held responsible for the consequences of responding to any of them.

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**IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, EMAIL OR OTHER DETAILS,
OR IF YOUR NEWSLETTER DOES NOT ARRIVE**

PLEASE CONTACT THE DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR (See inside back cover)

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Co-ordinatorial

*Thanks to: Simon for cover picture,
Belinda for cover design
and Dan for technical expertise and support
above and beyond the call of duty....*

... because it was touch and go whether you got this newsletter at all this time! I'd got it all (bar this page) set up ready to print and found I needed a new ink cartridge in the printer. As I got up to fetch the necessary, my foot caught in a wire and yanked the modem connection - not that hard, really! I changed the cartridge, sat down again and made with the mouse ... which didn't work. Oh, I thought, must have pulled the plug out, I can check that ... no, all connections fully in place. Still no action. Time to call in the cavalry: "Dan, I think I've killed the computer ...". OK, try re-booting the machine (a nuisance because all my newsletter bits will go back in the folder and have to be fished out again, but if it gets the thing going ...). Re-boot started - and stopped. What's this? Sucking in of lip by technical support department - "Sorry Mum,

you HAVE killed it!" ... pause for stunned disbelief: WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER? But he came up trumps - took out the hard drive and put it in his own machine so that all my files could be accessed and the newsletter could get printed and all is not lost.

Worth his weight in gold!
So - a little on the late side (which explains why it's probably fairly well into December by the time you get this) the newsletter gets off to the printer. Now I just have to work out where I go from here ... *Anne Rita 20.11.3*

EO RESEARCH

Thank you to everyone who responded to the EO newsletter which was sent out at the end of last year and for all the additional information, comments, questions and suggestions (they kept coming regularly until April) As the total received was over five hundred, the responses should be quite representative of our membership.

Your responses do give a clear picture of why we home educate and how we go about it and confirm that these reasons and approaches can be so diverse.

Now I just need time (that is, a block of time) to deal with the next stage. It's all so interesting but I have to avoid getting too involved just yet as, for the moment, I need to be more available for my son.

Thank you also to those of you with young children under the age of five who chose to respond and share with us the reasons why you intend to (continue to) home educate. Your views are important.

More feedback soon...

Pam Vickers, EO Research Contact

Apology

Education Otherwise wish to apologise to the Vidal-Hall family for an article that appeared in issue 154 of the newsletter. We are sorry if offence has been caused by this article, and wish to point out that the opinions expressed were those of the contributor, and not of Education Otherwise. We reiterate that the primary purpose of the newsletter is to provide support and communication between members.

Gary Podmore, Chair

SUMMARY OF OPEN COUNCIL MEETING

Featherstone Castle, Northumberland, 4th October 2003

The database is now back in the capable hands of Lynda Hitchman, who has resigned her position on the Council of Management in order to be paid for this work. The Employment Issues Group is looking into EO's position as an employer.

It was decided to continue the practice of payment for EO membership by postage stamps for families with no bank account.

The meeting affirmed that EO's information leaflets provide a principal source of information for families and that Local Contacts and Enquiries Secretaries should be supplied with leaflets as requested.

The work of Ann Samuel Till and her team in Scotland was commended and a payment of £500 for legal work on the response to the draft guidelines approved.

The Enquiries Secretaries are doing a good job and the system working well.

Belinda Harris-Reid was formally accepted as EO's Media/Press Officer. This work will be done on a self-employed and self-funded basis and will be supervised by a Council Member.

The Local Contact Co-ordinators will present revised Local Contact Guidelines before the next meeting.

Jill Fisher (Leics) is working on clarification of the relationship between EO and local Home-Educators' groups.

It was recently noticed that some EO post holders are no longer members of EO. This may be due, in part, to inefficient management of the database. These people will be notified that their membership has lapsed and invited to renew. If they take no action the post will be advertised as vacant.

The facility of joining EO on line should be continued. Options and costs for making the system secure are being investigated. EO is also investigating the possibility of a password-protected web page for EO correspondence. This would be a valuable resource for people corresponding on EO's behalf.

A group was appointed to consider EO's response to the government's Green Paper "Every Child Matters".

Julie Ridley and Martine Frampton are compiling an information pack for LEAs. They are also compiling a "Personal Stories Digest" from newsletters of the 1990s to add to EO's publications list.

Geraldine Adams is collating information about home education and examination centres.

The meeting reaffirmed that Open Council Meetings will continue to be attached to National Gatherings. When a meeting is held separately from a gathering, so that people may need to get to and from it in a day, it should be easily accessible by public transport. For this reason Sunday may not be a suitable day of the week.

The next National Gathering will be at Coalbrookdale Youth Hostel, Shropshire, Thursday 5th - Monday 9th February 2004. An Open Council Meeting and the AGM will be held at this venue on Sat 7th February.

Full copies of the minutes of this meeting are available by sending a 23cm x 16cm SAE with 34p or 42p (1st class) stamps to:

Yvette Hartley, 17 Maes Ingli, Newport, Pembrokeshire, SA42 0TE or email yeh@onetel.net.uk

Keith Charlton

EO COUNCIL BUSINESS

The Annual General Meeting of Education Otherwise Association Ltd will be held at Coalbrookdale Youth Hostel, Shropshire

on Saturday 7th February 2004 at 2pm
The business of the AGM is to consider the accounts, to receive reports from officers, to elect members to the Council of Management and to appoint auditors.

The number of Council Members is set at between 14 and 19. As at October 2003 there are 15 members in post (see inside back cover), five of whom must stand down, but may seek re-election. The Council may recommend other candidates for election.

Signed-up members (i.e. guarantors) of EO may also propose candidates. In this case, written notice from the proposer and signed consent from the candidate (who must also be a guarantor) must both reach the

Company Secretary no earlier than 12th January 2004 and no later than 2nd February 2004. In the event of a vote at the AGM, guarantors present at the AGM are entitled to take part, provided that they have paid their EO membership.

If you wish to become a guarantor of EO, please complete the form on the last page of the May 2003 EO Handbook.

Company Secretary, Pam Bellinger, 56 Beech Drive, Braunstone, Leicester, LE3 3DA

There will be an
Open Council Meeting of Education Otherwise Association Ltd
On Saturday 7th February 2004 from 10am
At Coalbrookdale Youth Hostel, Shropshire
All members of E.O. are welcome to attend.

For copies of or contributions to the agenda, please send SAE or return label with attached postage stamp to:
The Chair, Gary Podmore, 52 Rupert Road, Sheffield, S. Yorkshire, S7 1RP

E.O. NATIONAL GATHERING

Thursday 5th to Monday 9th FEBRUARY 2004
Coalbrookdale Youth Hostel, Telford, Shropshire

Close to Iron Bridge and various museums, with walks along the River Severn
A chance to meet with other home educators from far afield.

Social events and discussion groups will be welcomed.

Costs tbc, to include all food and accommodation.

Day visitor rates and family rooms available.
For booking forms and information send SAE or return label with attached postage stamp to:

Yvette Hartley, 17 Maes Ingli, Newport, Pembrokeshire, SA42 0TE

NEW TREASURER NEEDED

The treasurer will be completing three years in post at the AGM, and is looking to stand down from the council.

If there is anyone in the membership who is interested in taking on the role, please e-mail the current treasurer, garryhumphreys@lineone.net to discuss the job in the first instance.

It requires on average 10 hours per week, although you will need some flexibility. The job is unpaid, but expenses are available to meet costs. You will need to become a trustee of the charity. The job is an interesting and vital one, but you will need patience and tolerance to cope with the multiplicity of demands, you will also need storage space for seven years back paperwork.

Garry Humphreys, (treasurer)

Can't wait the whole two months to find out what's going on in EO? Then you need the 'Bulletin', which is produced in the months between newsletters. This is part of what the last one looked like:-

Education Otherwise Bulletin 1st November 2003

This Bulletin comes out in the month between newsletters and is emailed or posted to everyone who holds a post in EO along with any other member who requests an email copy. Contributions to the Bulletin are welcome as are requests for the type of information you would like to see.

Priscilla Park Weir (Surrey) <priscilla@pvpw.fsnet.co.uk>

HE Stand at The Education Show 2004

I have recently received the booking information for the Education Show 2004 @ the NEC Birmingham on 11 - 13 March 2004. I will not be in a position to fund raise, book and organise the HE stand for this Show and wondered if anyone else or a group of people would like to do this? Please get in touch with Penny Clarke (West Midlands) <pennyclarke@blueyonder.co.uk> if you are interested.

Council Members

There has been a call for more Council members in some recent newsletters, but no one has come forward. We urgently need some more members on the Council. Please will some of you consider taking on this role or encouraging others in EO, who you think might be suitable, to apply. If you would like to know more about the role please feel free to contact Julie Ridley Tel: 0161 860 7589, Jacqui Houlding Tel: 01925 654856, Anne Rix Tel: 01237 451535 or Penny Clarke Tel: 01922 745 465.

Here is a piece from Ann Samuel Till with further encouragement:

Could you consider becoming a Council member? It can be as much or as little work as you decide. The main thing to consider about it is taking a share in the legal responsibility for decision making in EO. As you know, nearly everything goes out for discussion and views of the membership influence decisions. Council members generally do the listening to that and then make sure that the decisions actually taken (most are at the open council meetings) help to fulfil our official aims, are within our ethos and within our legal parameters as a charity. Some council members also do a lot of actual EO jobs; others just meet the above responsibility, which is fine. The qualities you need are a commitment to the freedom to home educate, honesty, the capacity for clear thinking and hearing different views (including those of young people!) and it helps if you have the knack of making a molehill out of a mountain! If you think that's you, and you value the existence of EO as a home ed mutual support network, then it's recommended! You learn a lot too, not least about yourself and human nature - After a term on the council and having home educated your children you can do anything!

Publications Person

Hazel Hutton wishes to stand down from this job, having done sterling work for a number of years. We need someone who can store the books for sale and send them out in a reasonably timely manner as people order them. The money collected can be banked by post, but a post office not too far away would be helpful. If you would just like to find out a bit more, why not give Hazel a ring or drop her an email? Tel: 017687 72546 <HHutton422@aol.com>

Web Site Reviews

Jacqui Houlding is asking for people to send her reviews of web sites they have found useful and/or interesting. All the criteria are set up and ready to go and can be seen at <http://www.education-otherwise.org/Links/SiteWeek/Current%20Site%20of%20the%20Week.htm> We just need willing volunteers to produce the reviews. Please contact Jacqui at :

<jc_houlding@onetel.net.uk>

SCOTLAND/ The Guidance

EO has submitted a formal response to the revised draft guidance in Scotland. It can be found on our website at:

<<http://www.education-otherwise.org/Legal/ScottishHE/Revd%20Draft%20Guid%20Response.pdf>>

EO along with HEAS, Schoolhouse, Highland Home Educators and a representative of a local group met with the Scottish Executive after the responses were in to go over the main issues. As usual we were all concerned with the same main things: consent to withdraw, views of the child, access to the child and home. The recent general obsession with child protection was discussed and the Executive team seem pretty balanced on this - our concern is with the attitudes of those higher up who will do the final signing off of the Guidance.

For now, at least in any direct way, the actual content of the Guidance in Scotland is out of our hands and looking promising. We just need to keep an eye on public attitudes and how home educators and parents in general are portrayed in the media (throughout the UK) because clearly in these days of threatening increased social controls at every turn, moods can swing fast and 'good guidance' is not so good if a couple of spoiler clauses are slipped in at the last mile.

Rational contributions to any discussion whether large scale or small can help to moderate knee-jerk type media hype and reactions by government. At this time more than ever because the threat of oppressive social controls is so widespread, all home educators share the responsibility of defending the right and freedom to choose and practice home education. Let's continue to do it well.

Ann Samuel Till

RESOURCES

Learn Premium Web Site

As many people will be aware, EO subscribed to this on behalf of members, and EO members are able to join for £15 per family until October 2004. Further details can be found on the EO website at

<http://www.education-otherwise.org/About%20EO/Joining/LearnCoUk.htm>

Jill Fisher

Educational Discounts on Software

A new member of the Highland group has negotiated FULL EDUCATIONAL DISCOUNTS on software including operating system software with MICROWAREHOUSE tel 020 8327 5777. They've been selling a huge range to schools for about 15 years now including Microsoft and Apple products. Just call them and mention you are a home educator and that you are eligible to educational discount. There should be no problems.

Alison Sauer

Tel 01463 232 571

Email alison@sauer.demon.co.uk

SUPPORT FOR NO TIMETABLE?

A quote from Fred Moyle's autobiography 'Home is Where the Wind Blows' published by Oxford University Press:

"The essence of research is to have sufficient continuity in one's work to allow one to build up large patterns in the brain. Interruptions destroy such patterns, and repeated interruptions even destroy the will to reform them."

Fiona Chaff, Knowes, Ollaberry, Shetland ZE2 9ZU Tel. No: 01806 544233 E-mail: podmorefamily@blueyonder.co.uk

LETTERS

"LEAVING HOME EDUCATION"

In the spring term, Bedford Home Educators will be running a pilot scheme involving a series of six workshops aimed at older home-educated children (13/14 plus) in North and Mid-Bedfordshire. Firstly, these workshops will aim to establish a link between home educators and service providers in Career Guidance, Further Education provision and home-based GCSE learning, etc, to help signpost children into the world of further study and work; secondly, it is hoped the sessions will provide a valuable learning experience for the children who attend. Workshops already planned will include:-

1. Connexions Service
2. Science, Careers and Home Ed
3. NEC Service
4. Art: Beyond Home Ed
5. Farming Careers
6. Dyslexia & Kinesiology

If take-up is good and evaluation promising, funding may be made available to home educators in other areas to enable them to run similar schemes.

If you would like further information and full details of the scheme, please contact info@Bedford-Home-Ed.org.uk or write to Bedford Home Educators, 7 Clover Avenue, Bedford MK41 0ST, telephone 01234-341375.

June McDonald: Local Contact, Bedfordshire

NEW GROUP

We are getting a new group set up and we wanted to let people know about it. It is based in the North of North Yorkshire and we are planning to meet on a monthly basis at the village hall in Kirby Misperton (Near to Flamingo Land).

We have chosen this hall because we felt that it would be accessible for a larger number of people and therefore could be a meeting place for those from Whitby, Scarborough, York, Thirsk and any other intrepid persons who fancied joining us. It is a nice big hall, with a kitchen and an outdoor play area. There is also access by bus on the coast liner bus.

The current age range is under ten, but I am aware of teenagers who are looking to meet up too, so am very keen to hear from older kids too. I think it is very important for there to be a visible group meeting so that we can support each

other and be there for people looking to start home educating. It is for that reason that I am hoping that those of you who have been home educating for longer will come along too. We are also arranging some outings in various places. So if you do fancy coming along please let me know.

Tess Geall, Grosmont Gallery, Front St, Grosmont, Whitby YO22 5QE Tel. 01947 895007

FEATHERSTONE CASTLE

I am just writing to say what a brilliant time Maya (7) and I (45) had at the EO gathering. The castle must be an almost ideal venue. Maya loved the castle. Lots of corridors and rooms to explore and lots of children of all ages to play with. For the parents the social side was a bit daunting at first as was the idea of cooking, cleaning, washing up for 70 people but as everyone chipped in these became enjoyable social activities. Several times the cooks had live music of a good standard to accompany the vegetable chopping and the food was plentiful and tasty.

Maya made quite a few crafty things and we also went on trips to Hadrian's Wall, Vindolanda (a Roman fort), and Beamish (an old North Eastern mining village, now a museum with a mine and a farm and the High Street as in 1913 as well as a tram and old locomotives). Add to that the beautiful Northumberland scenery and the lovely South Tyne valley that the castle is situated in, plus the warm atmosphere and friendliness of the people, what more could anyone want?

Ian Chatfield, 14 Narrowways Road, Bristol, BS2 9XB Tel.0117 941 2707

REPLY TO MARK LAWRENCE'S LETTER

I feel he missed the main point (*Oct NL p.21*) of what "Education is compulsory - school isn't" achieves - getting the reader on your side, in agreement with you before introducing the 'controversial' bit. I'm not claiming the best solution ever, but a consensus seeking one. With "You're right to home educate" we are straight back to a more aggressive, in-your-face, stance. And do you know what? I, too, have a little experience with advertising.

On another note, I really enjoy the reviews.

Gina Purrmann

HOW DO WE COPE?

Help! It's crunchtime. I am about to embark on home educating my son, 4½, and in the future his sister, now 2, and find myself swinging between total confidence in our decision and the inevitable "are we doing the right thing" line of self-analysis.

Ever since he was born we've considered home education an option and when Ben proved to be a shy boy who took a while to settle at his lovely, small local nursery we thought it would be right to home educate. But now, when it comes to the crunch and all his friends and contemporaries are starting 'big school', I feel the need for advice and support from others, particularly those who have educated their children at home from 4 years of age.

Typically, he is now really enjoying his time at nursery and I wonder whether the home environment will be as stimulating as a reception class with lots of activities, etc. He enjoys adult company and is happiest when helping mum or dad around the house or garden. Although shy he is a bright boy with a great vocabulary for his age and is always full of questions. But will home be enough and how will I cope with an energetic 2-year-old sibling who wants to "join in" but lacks the same concentration span?

Any encouragement gratefully received. Many thanks,
Sam James
The Old Forge, Hawkedon, Bury St Edmunds, IP29 4NN. samjames178@hotmail.com

PRAISE FOR THE NEWSLETTER

I just wanted to say what a good read the last newsletter was. I was home educated from nought to nineteen and, now 27, recently thought I would subscribe, although I am not actively home educating anyone (unless you count myself!) because I remembered with fondness as a child reading the newsletter and hearing about all the different things that EO people did. I have to say I was disappointed at first: every newsletter seemed to be about internal wrangling or interminable legal issues, not at all the newsletter I remembered.

But the last newsletter was GREAT, so full of interesting and funny (and moving) stories, lots of inspiration and excitement. EO should be there to inspire and cheer on people on the days when it isn't quite so much fun! Let's keep

hearing from everyone who's doing it on a day by day basis!

Melissa Addey, London SE24 OPS

EO - OU

I noticed that the Open University has a new course called Inclusive Education - Learning from Each Other. It's a 30-point level 2 course, code E243, and the link for it is <http://www3.open.ac.uk/courses/bin/p12.dll?C02E243>.

E243 is part of the new Foundation Degree which is receiving funding from the DfES. The funding can include payment of course fees, a £500 bursary, childcare fees paid for and the loan of a laptop & printer.

This is some of the information about the course:

"This new course is about the need for education to be responsive to all learners. It is for anyone interested in children and young people who encounter difficulties in education, whether related to disability, disaffection, learning difficulty, or other aspects of diversity. The course enables you to pursue a broad interest in learners from birth to adulthood, or to take an early/primary years focus. There is an emphasis on learning from one another - both for pupils as a key element of inclusive education and as practitioners and students interested in the issues."

I've compared 'home ed to school' throughout my OU assignments for other courses, and it seems that E243 could also be suited to this approach.

Sue Barnicoat MA Education (Open) Falmouth. fredidon@hotmail.com

REQUEST FOR HELP FROM STUDENT

I am a student at University College Northampton (in the UK). At the moment I am in my 3rd year studying education studies and sports studies. This year I have to write a dissertation and my topic is on home education. I am looking for children who are home educated or who have recently been home educated (who live in the UK) and have taken GCSE, AS Level, A Level or GNVQ exams to take part in a questionnaire. Please could anyone willing to take part contact me at: *Shakespeare House, Rm 9, 12 Carey Street, Northampton, NN1 3QN* or e-mail: 20069724@northampton.ac.uk

Thank you for your help.

Charlotte Seaton

Go easy with autonomy

When I was about 15 years old, and freed at last from the schooling system, I met and was very much inspired by my first home-ed family. Some time later, and expecting my first child, I was very keen to home-educate but plagued by self-doubt, believing that I would be the 'source' of all my child's knowledge and learning.

Years later, and prompted by friends opting to send their children to school, I made one of the most important decisions of my life.....

Home-education, Day One: I introduce a little bit of 'structure', which is immediately and dramatically rejected.

Home-education, Day Two: The real beginning! I find it amusing that so much effort is put into force-feeding' children what they will consume twice as quickly, and in a much shorter time, if left to their own devices.

My son is now seven, loves reading and filling forms, playing, exploring and listening to protest songs (where did he get that from, I wonder?) and composing tunes on the piano. He is witty, wise and compassionate and has quite a nice-sized vocabulary (I'm pleased to say that the word 'bored' has not yet been admitted!). When chatting to people my son will usually be asked about school; to which he replies that he is home-educated. "Oh..... so your mummy teaches you at home, does she?" they say, followed by a swift top-to-toe visual evaluation of myself. "No, I teach myself" he replies.

I get on with my life pretty much unaffected by my son's status as a home-educated child. I liken home-education to breastfeeding: It's 100% natural, totally adapted to the needs of the child, utterly convenient and EASY. But you do have to want to be there!

Joanne Lovewood, Tiree Cottage, Kintra, Isle of Mull PA66 6BT

Defining positive male gender roles

Writings on Home Education focus a good deal on the benefits of stress-free learning situations for young people. But perhaps just as important for children, is the space Home Education provides to define their gender roles positively. As a dad of two boys, I'm going to concentrate here on masculinity, as it's more in the realm of my experience, though I'm aware that school can be just as tough on girls 'failing' to live up to their 'femininity'.

With the onset of the Men's Movement and Men's Groups, men's experience as boys is being more openly discussed. I think it's clear that most boys would not want to be in a situation where their masculinity is defined by violence; by having to prove that they are 'tough' to other boys in the playground or outside the school gates. I'd guess that relatively few boys have never felt fear of going to school at some point or other. For many, the experience is akin to being a goldfish in a tank of sharks - literally terrifying. Yet they find it hard to articulate the terror, as the model of masculinity they have imbibed in the school playground forbids them to show fear. To do so is to be 'a girl's blouse', 'a wimp', 'a big softie'. I could actually fill a whole page with insults that boys throw at the ones who cannot blank out their pain. That in itself shows the scale of the problem.

At lunchtimes, as I shop in a nearby town with my own two sons, I watch the lads from a local secondary school walk out to find dinner. They kick each other relentlessly, throw mock punches to see if the other will flinch (and if he does he is jeered at) and I look on, knowing that few of those boys want what is happening. But they have to swallow the pain, and the fear, because nobody is going to protect them. They are on their own.

It becomes a vicious circle. Boys are thrown into this bear pit and told to stand up for themselves. If they can't, they're not a man. *They're not male*. For this reason, they think that expressing their pain will only make them more lonely, more of an outcast, more hurt, because 'real men' take it on the chin. John Wayne fights on with a hundred arrows in his heart because that is what men do. To pull the arrows out and cry, and say you don't want to defend the goddamn fort any more, just isn't done. So some boys run away, commit suicide, hide extreme bullying, or become cruel themselves, because to do otherwise is to face the monstrous shame of not being masculine. I once refused to fight at school. When I revisited the event with a therapist, the shame that was released was almost too great for me to bear - even as a memory of an event thirty years ago. One boy in my class was taken out onto the school playing fields every day for a month and savagely beaten because some older boys were determined to make him cry. Perhaps the really sad thing is, that *he never did*. He told his mum he'd got the bruises playing rugby.

Many adults think bullying, vindictive behaviour in boys is innate and inevitable, but it is clear to me that boys who come from a non-violent background and who do not go to school grow up able to channel aggression in a positive way. Moreover, they are able to experience emotions that they are forced to deny or conceal at school. I find Home Educated boys are able to admit that they are frightened or in pain more readily, and show tenderness, joy, imagination and other positive emotions in abundance. They can be friendly with children of all ages and seem to have fewer (or no) problems mixing with girls.

Which makes me think that if there's anybody wavering out there, wondering, can they really hack educating their son at home and all that it might entail - well, look at it another way: you could do virtually nothing with your son 'education-wise' and still give him the greatest gift of his life. You could just protect him and look after him until he is ready to look after himself. Some time, probably in his teens, he will let you know that he is ready to be a strong man and a good one. It cannot be worth trading the little that boys learn unwillingly from the school curriculum, for a lifetime of damage to their sensitivity and manhood.

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Our adventures in France

Having read the article in the June 2003 EO n/1 (reprinted from 'The Independent') about my family, I wondered if you might be interested in hearing how the children are getting on? Just to recap, William (then 11) came out of school in September 2000 having been severely bullied by teachers AND pupils, closely followed by Antonia (then 9) and finally Rebekah (then age 14) fourteen months later.

We decided about a year ago to sell our home in Worcestershire and eventually moved from the UK earlier this year. We put our furniture into storage and our pony with friends and set off with four children and two Labrador dogs via the Channel tunnel to France. Our eldest daughter, Sarah, aged 18 years, had finished her college course and we were delighted she wanted to travel with us. She was not home-educated. To my eternal regret I did not realise home-education was an option and, consequently, my poor daughter spent years in misery at school.

We have now driven 10,000 miles and visited quite a sizeable area of France, staying in our caravan (fortunately a large one!). The children's confidence, particularly William's, has grown so much. It is a joy to see them happily speaking French and making new friends. My poor little bullied 11-year-old son has now grown into a handsome 14 year old who is 6 feet tall and has the courage and confidence to match his height. Antonia (who successfully battled leukaemia,

contracted when she was just 3 years old) is now an enchanting 12-year-old. Rebekah is now 16 years old and Sarah, 19.

The children are meeting many people of different nationalities and seeing some beautiful places; it is really a unique experience and education for us all.

Obviously, quite a lot of folk we have met have asked "What about school?" and when they hear about home-education all have been totally supportive. I mention this because the same reaction has been received from the very high percentage of teachers we have encountered travelling around, many of whom have taken early retirement from a profession they readily admit to have become severely disillusioned with.

Our original intention was to house-hunt in central France but we caught the travel bug and decided to travel further around France then cross the Pyrenees into Spain, which we shall do in a few weeks, then - who knows?

We feel very privileged that we are able to do this and spend so much quality time together. The children get on amazingly well – in fact they get on better than they did in our spacious six-bedroom house - quite an achievement! Apart from the children autonomously following several GCSE subjects plus various other courses purchased from the 'Little Arthur School', their education has included seeing 15,000-year-old cave paintings in Lascaux; visiting extinct volcanoes; staying in beautiful chateaux; seeing vultures flying free in the gorges; canoeing on vast rivers; viewing the 'jet set' on their fantastic gin palaces in the port of St Tropez; witnessing the majesty of the high Alps and experiencing a little bird accept us and continue to sit on her eggs despite the very close proximity of our caravan parked next to her for several days.

William is brilliant at any DIY especially electrics and continues to amaze us with his practical skills. He also loves cooking, and McDonalds should be very afraid of his fantastic cheese and bacon burgers! Antonia's French is excellent and she will converse with anyone and is totally confident. She is also our resident 'patissiere', producing excellent cakes in our oven in the caravan. In fact, since we began our adventure, I have had quite a holiday from cooking!

We are certainly experiencing life the French way and thoroughly enjoying it and, unless we find 'the place' in Spain, we shall certainly return to France to look for our dream home to buy (Antonia is very much looking forward to having Harry, our horse, come and live with us again). Until then we are enjoying being free spirits and learning with our children.

Jan and Tony Price with Sarah, Rebekah, William and Antonia (Contact address supplied)

Training the LEA

I must be mad! I thought this every day for at least a month now. Why when the head of our LEA mentioned he'd welcome training for his inspectors, did I open my mouth? I must have the biggest mouth this side of the Channel Tunnel. But I did, and I was left arranging the training; I have never arranged anything more than my children's birthday parties.

So the day drew near and I had a plan. Thank goodness for Professor Roland Meighan who had agreed to speak, and guided me with ideas and reassurance. Gary Podmore also agreed to speak on the legal side of H.E. and his cool calmness was transferred down the phone wires.

The LEA was arranging the venue and lunch, which was a mistake. Quite by chance, I visited a week before the day. I thought, as we had no plans that afternoon it might allay my fears to see the place, and visualise the event taking place. It was a dump. We were in the ESW building, sandwiched between rooms used by educational psychologists. No time to change venue, but still time to do something. No Laurence Llewelyn Bowen and 'Changing Rooms', but my three

wonderful children, having come with me, agreed they needed to help and painted pictures, helped mount photos and generally work miracles to make the room pleasant. Alison Elliott worked wonders with her computer and produced two display boards of pictures and Sue Cardus' sons lent maps for the occasion. Many thanks everyone. So the phone wire hummed, the lists of things to do were ticked off and the day dawned.

My 4 a.m. start to the conference day: nothing to do with plans, children or the conference, but an attack of the butterflies who held a world conference in the pit of my stomach! Still at least it prevented me from oversleeping and I was up and ready to drop the children at my mum's for the day. "Nanna's breakfasts are better than yours!" was the parting shot, as I set off for the day.

15 members of Warwickshire LEA turned up for a conference on home-based education. We could only hope that they would come open-minded and ready to learn.

We began with coffee and a chance to talk, building bridges with individuals. It helped create a friendly atmosphere, and then the day began for real.

Gary opened the day with his talk about the law. It was interesting to watch body language – one inspector statue-still, folded arms, crossed legs, impassive chiselled face. Some nodding in agreement; but some felt that their safety zone had been invaded, their school environment threatened, and spoke their thoughts negatively and forcefully.

It broke the ice, divided the camps and opened up the day. We now knew exactly where we stood and Gary handled it superbly, coolly and calmly.

We moved onto the parents' contributions, which were well received - I think because it threatened nobody and didn't ask the LEA representatives to look beyond their comfort zones. This was just our personal experience of H.E. Chris, Alison and Sue followed on from my story. Thanks you three for your powerful and personal accounts; it was very positive and by lunchtime we had many of the LEA firmly on our side. It was wonderful to have one inspector so forcefully declaring her support for home education.

Lunchtime gave us an opportunity to network with the different reps. Many positive relationships were forged over a sandwich. Particularly positive was the representative from Connexions with offers of support for finding work experience. I only hope that these contacts can be built on.

So into the afternoon session and we had Roland and Janet Meighan to speak. His speech was great, it was fascinating to hear, and many people in the room were very responsive to the ideas of autonomy and different ways of learning.

Unfortunately a couple of officials felt his ideas to be a personal attack on them and felt they should interrupt his talk to defend schools and their practices. This I felt was extremely bad mannered and reflected badly on them. Roland, being the experienced person he is, concluded his talk early and we turned the negativity into a positive by acknowledging our differences and yet our common goal which is the care and welfare of, and firstly the education of our children - even if with certain people we are unable to agree on the best way to do it.

We then had some time to answer questions. This proved useful to hear the concerns that the inspectors have: their own feelings of vulnerability at having to visit our homes, and how to "pass" educational provision, especially when, to them, some elements were missing. Most agreed that they had no prejudice against self-directed learning and educational philosophies. To build self-confidence and esteem are as valued as an aim to achieve GCSEs. To prepare the child for life in the modern world was also discussed and one inspector expressed a concern about families who have no TV or IT provision: she said they were providing excellent traditional

educational provision but was concerned that lacking these made it difficult to prepare a child for modern life.

By the end of the afternoon I felt we had gone a very long way towards breaking down the "them and us" attitude, had aired concerns on both sides and presented an example of caring parents who want the best for their children and aim to achieve it although in an unconventional manner.

Finally, outcomes from this meeting have been:

- An invitation to comment on the LEA's booklet "Guidance to Parents" and a further meeting to offer suggestions on letters to parents, e.g., remove that question on timetables.
- John Sullivan also asked for regular (termly) meetings to allow concerns to be shared.
- A yearly event where inspectors come to an Education Otherwise meeting, just to help break down barriers and we are also invited to hold another conference! Let's recover from this one first. !!

It has been extremely hard work, but very interesting, and I hope for positive outcomes.

If any Warwickshire folk feel able to join in working with the LEA please let me know, it could be as simple as just coming along with me to a meeting for moral support, or agreeing to write comments on paperwork. I also need your feedback on inspectors and inspections, or dealings with the LEA.

Sue, Chris, Alison and I are now off to collapse over the cream cakes and teapot. Thanks everyone.

Martin and Helen Hall

Diary Of A Home Educating Nobody

It is four years now since our children went to school. As Christmas approaches there's one thing I really appreciate about them not being there any more; they don't get their happy illusions shattered quite so brutally!

It was just before Christmas, when she was seven, that the kids in her class decided to enlighten my little girl about Santa.

"Some kids say there isn't a Santa," she said one night when we were doing the usual juggling match with the homework, the tiredness, the uniform, and the tea getting.

I was so taken aback I dropped some gravy granules into a cup of tea.

"Do they?" I played for time and gave the tea a good stir. I was thinking desperately about all those answers I'd prepared for such an occasion that seemed to have abandoned me!

"Mmmm. But I think there is otherwise we wouldn't get a stocking, would we?" she said.

I didn't answer but glued my eyes on the revolving tea, stirring madly, sensing her staring at me.

I also sensed she perhaps didn't really want to know – not this near to Christmas. So I suggested she get on with the homework, (can't imagine that now!), whilst I got on with the meal, hoping no one would notice the funny taste in the tea!

We didn't get to speak of it again so we maintained the charade even though I always swore I would never hoodwink my children about Santa, God, Sex and all those other things we adults keep mysterious about to increase our sense of importance!

We carried on with the stocking, the creeping into the bedroom on Christmas Eve desperately tired since she'd lain awake for hours trying to spot him.

Then we threw ourselves into bed for the few short hours we'd have before they woke and wanted to know if it was morning.

I love Christmas, don't you?

A few weeks after Christmas, back in school, the tinsel of the season worn off into the duller work term in the school year (how wonderful not to be doing that any more!), she brought it up again.

"Mu-um?" She'd got her hands screwed into the crotch of her school skirt, favourite place for awkward moments.

"Ye-es?" I was immediately suspicious.

"Can I ask you something?"

"Is it difficult?"

"Oh, mum!" We grinned.

"Go on then, what is it?"

"Well..." voice diminished to a whisper, "... Is there a Santa?"

Hot sweats were nothing compared to what my body did just then! Despite all my well thought out answers my brain just went dead. I parried the question back to her.

"What do you think, darling?"

"I'm not sure." She looked down at her creased skirt and I thought, heck – it was time for honesty, not for burying my head in Home Front as much as I wanted to!

But I couldn't bear it – I still tried to wriggle out of it.

"How do you think the stockings get filled if there isn't a Santa?" I asked.

"The kids at school say it's your mum and dad." Her head went right down and she looked sad. I got a lump on my chest that was surely going to give me a heart attack any minute!

"Is it? Is it you and dad?" she asked. Her school skirt would never be the same again.

I avoided her eyes and pulled her onto my knee taking a big breath.

"Yes darling, it's me and dad who fill the stockings," I said quietly my lips on her hair.

"So there's no Santa?" Her voice sounded so small.

I don't care what they say about puberty; it will never hit as hard as this! And yes, I'm definitely going to have a heart attack!

But I was determined not to let the whole magic go and I started talking.

"Santa is a very magical story that all the grown ups keep. All the little children believe that Santa comes and fills their stockings and it makes Christmas all magical. But now that you know the truth it doesn't mean that it's not going to be just the same for you. We're still going to creep into your room and still going to fill your stocking with presents as if there really was a Santa."

I held her tight. She felt heavy and sad. I kept on gabbling, more to keep the heart attack at bay than anything!

"And we'll go on filling your stocking as long as you want us to. As long as you don't peep of course!" I laughed – a little hysterically perhaps but I think she was getting brighter!

"You're part of the secret too now aren't you? You're such a grown up girl. But you'll never be too grown up for us to hang a stocking on the end of your bed nor for Christmas to be special. Nor to leave a mince pie out for your dad to eat." We giggled and she looked up at last. I squeezed her tight, kissed her hair again and sniffed at the little bits of magic still in childhood.

We hugged for ages. Talked a little more, mostly about presents. Laughed some. And she cheered up and I think I was off the critical list!

Then I just couldn't help asking. "Are you sad there's really no Santa?"

"A bit," she sighed, "but at least I still get presents!" She laughed and looked at me. Right into my face, with that astuteness all children seem to possess when they know exactly what we're feeling.

So, aware that I needed comforting too, she offered these consoling words.

"Don't worry mum, I shan't mind about Santa too much. There's always the Tooth Fairy!"

As you can imagine, the school children soon put her right on that one as well!

Thanks to home-edding her little sister had a much more gentle eye-opening!

Name and address supplied

EO Gathering At Featherstone Castle, 2nd – 9th October

I have just returned home from another wonderful, stimulating and highly supportive EO gathering. This time it was at Featherstone Castle, expertly organised by Keith and Lucy Charlton (a BIG thank you to them!). Having had such a fantastic and enormously valuable time at Featherstone, I felt I must write particularly as I understand a few members have expressed a wish to abandon gatherings and to have Council meetings as one-day only affairs. I believe this would be a very great loss, damaging to the workings and 'open' policy of EO and not in keeping with EO's ethos.

When my son had been out of school just a few months (he was then 11 yrs old) we plucked up courage to go to a gathering that was close to home so that we could 'escape' easily if necessary. We didn't escape and that weekend was the beginning of our new life as home educators. Until that time we knew very few other home educators, my son was lonely, unhappy, afraid and unwilling to attend groups and mix with other home-ed children. And I was lonely and frightened at the enormity of the task I had undertaken. But I was so warmly welcomed and given tremendous support. Some very caring and considerate young people gently involved my son in the group of other young people. We have never looked back!

Since that weekend we have attended several EO gatherings and with each one have got to know more and more EOers, learnt so much about home-ed and the workings of EO and have had the privilege to help and support other new and frightened people starting out on the home-ed adventure themselves. So apart from the valuable support and networking that has changed our lives, we have become familiar with EO – the organisation – and got to know the Council members and discovered how we can do our little bit to help, maybe even be a council member one day? How can members achieve all this if gatherings are stopped? However will EO get 'new blood' into the running of the organisation and how will it ever be successful in fully supporting its members and promoting Home Education? One-day meetings will certainly not achieve all this! It wouldn't be worth travelling from one end of the country to the other just to sit in on the council meeting and there is so much more to EO than the Council meetings – surely?!

To me EO is about supporting one another to home educate our children, to pass on the 'word' of Home Education and to promote Home Education nationally and internationally. Gatherings provide the opportunity to discuss in detail so many aspects of home-ed. Those who don't want to stay at the gathering can still attend the meeting only (though how you travel 8 hrs, attend an ALL day meeting and return home for another 8 hrs, all in one day, I do not know).

EO please don't stop the gatherings, for the sake of people who aren't already familiar with the mechanics of the organisation, for the sake of new, lonely, uncertain, frightened people venturing out on the home-ed journey for the first time, for the sake of getting new blood and ideas into the organisation, for the sake of a few people having so much fun and supporting one another in a safe, loving and caring environment, PLEASE keep the gatherings.

And finally – for anyone who hasn't been to a gathering yet – give it a try – they are GREAT!

Gail Borrows (address supplied)

Memories

I am 27 years old, and have never been to school. I was home educated, as were my brother and sister, 5 and 7 years younger than me. Some memories:-

We lived on a farm in Italy and I think the best thing was not being tied down to strict timetables: we used to sit down together in the mornings and have a set amount of work that needed to be got through that day, and if we wanted to be involved in something else like the grape harvest, or mushroom hunting in the woods, or shearing sheep, we could go and do that, and return to the schoolwork later on in the day.

I remember writing stories, painting pictures, copying out lines of a poem to make my writing neater (this famously stopped when someone pointed out that my handwriting looked just like my mother's!) and keeping a list of all the books I read every year (a lot!!).

Learning maths was awful! I appeared to have no natural aptitude. My stepfather Martin, who had been an accountant, was good at maths and did the teaching on this subject. It must have been torture for him. My main memory is first of all trying to learn the two times table. The session went something like this:

“Once Two is Two, Two Twos are Four, Three Twos are.....” Long pause.....
(Dissolving into tears) “I can't remember what three twos are!”

There was a lot of dissolving into tears with maths. Fractions were just dreadful, and once I had vaguely grasped the concept (I think with a lot of examples of slices of cakes, etc), Martin tried to introduce the concept of the Decimal Point. I remember being utterly appalled that there was another thing to learn in maths, yet **another** way of dividing things up. Where would it end?! Martin would frequently explain a problem, do it with me, do another one with me just to be on the safe side, ask if I understood, receive a firm positive, leave me to do the next one, come back and discover me in tears, with no comprehension of how to do it all. The other great thing was that occasionally I would actually arrive at the right answer but would be entirely unable to explain how I got there. Martin would be desperately trying to explain that in maths it was quite important, on the whole, to be able to explain **how** you got there as well as the actual answer. I'm not sure how he remained calm or indeed how he didn't end up dissolving into tears himself. I think I would have done in his position. The thing is though, I can actually do everyday, “useful” maths just fine now, so it must have seeped in somewhere along the line!

One of the funniest things that I still tease my mother about is that without fail, come the start of a new school year, she would enthusiastically unveil a new educational tool that she had read about over the summer. Right at the beginning of teaching my brother to read she had a set of flash cards which worked on the principle that every day you asked the child what word they would like to have and they then had it written down for them on a card and went through them all together each day. The idea was that if the child themselves had chosen the word they would be more likely to want to learn it. My brother promptly asked for the word “poo”. My mother didn't bat an eyelid.

One year it was drawing upside down (I don't mean hanging from the ceiling – it had something to do with left/right brain stimulation), one year Cuisenaire rods for learning maths in a more concrete and visible (rather than abstract) way, and another year it was listening to Baroque music (something about how it got brain waves going in the right kind of patterns). The Baroque music fad is very memorable. We listened to it every day, whilst doing schoolwork, rather than the radio we usually listened to. I suspect we moaned about it a lot. The really funny thing about these theories was the immense enthusiasm that they were started with, and the way in which, a couple of months into the school year, when we were playing up and being awkward, my mother would have a morning where she would explode, threaten to send us all to school because we were impossible to teach and driving her crazy, and that would be the end of that year's theory. It was very funny but I have to say it does encourage you to try new things as you go through life.

Both my brother and I took GCSEs and then A Levels, sitting as Private Candidates. A lot of people who home educate seem to put their children back into school when the time comes for exams, which is a shame I think, because although the exams were hard work doing them at home was fine. On some subjects at A Level we used the NEC (National Extension College), who have very good materials and supportive tutors.

My main memory of A Levels is my mother washing clothes in a big tub, with me leaning against a wall reciting facts to her whilst she occasionally looked at the folder propped up in front of her and asked questions. I remember I was let off all housework for the last few months in the run-up to the exams and that when I'd finished I was temporarily myopic from staring at books and the first time I swept the courtyard of our house I got blisters on my extra-soft hands.

I did love university when I got there. I mystified my tutors at university by spending a lot of time with them, talking to them for hours, and mystified my fellow students even more by actually studying! I do remember my first lecture though and being stunned by the idea that 300 people were all learning the same things at the same time as me. Not only that, but we were all sitting in rows facing one person - what a novel experience!

Perhaps the most telling thing about being home educated is that I can't actually remember any "ordinary" days. I don't remember just getting up, doing X hours of schoolwork and then stopping to go off and do something else once it was finished. Presumably this must have happened on lots of days – not all days can be wildly exciting, but I don't remember them.

I'm very grateful to my mother for her unending enthusiasm, her new theories (even if we giggled or moaned about them at the time), her flexibility and for the sheer determination to do things her way and our way rather than the "right" way. I don't actually know how she did it because although I can only remember the highlights, there must have been a lot of days when it was boring and slow for her, but I don't remember her ever letting on. I am also grateful to Martin, who was stupendously patient, persevered with what I can only describe as a pretty hopeless case and managed not to take my appalling lack of ability in maths personally!

I'm not sure, if I had children, that I would have the patience or strength to teach my kids myself. I also know it's not really very feasible for everyone to teach their kids at home.

But I wish everyone could be educated the way I was.

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More on learning styles

I withdrew my son from mainstream education at Easter this year (2003). After 7 months we are still developing our 'learning style' and perhaps this will be a perpetual process. We are both learning and developing as we go along.

On reading the October issue and the article 'Alternative Vision' submitted by a couple who withdrew their son from school but are now returning him to mainstream education, I was left wondering whether their vision is one shared by their son? And whether they might have saved themselves some anguish that they seem to be feeling by finding out if other home educators shared their particular 'vision' before launching into such a crusade. Fortunately I came to home education without such high expectations; I simply knew that I could offer more to my son than the state educators. As a diagnosed dyspraxic of 'average' intelligence there was no provision for his special needs in school. He was depressed and had low self esteem, by the age of 13 he was heading towards the suicidal and despite my taking and leaving him at the school gates each morning it had become so unbearable for him that he had started taking his own leave from school.

I was aware that I could not simply shift the responsibility for the education of my child from the state to the whole home educating community, but had to accept the responsibility as wholly my own. However, I have felt encouraged, informed, relieved and comforted to know there are more home educators 'out there' than I ever could have imagined.

In the short time my son has been away from school, he has been totally happy and content (I exaggerate not). He has found no shortage of people 'to bounce ideas off'; my son talks to me, my adult friends, his guitar teacher, his peers from his old school, other friends he has made locally. He also enters into discussion on the Internet, he discusses politics with people from as far and wide as Saudi Arabia and Canada for example. Other adults who have nothing to do with home education (we are building an extension to the house, partly ourselves and employing skilled workmen to do some jobs, such as the bricklaying, and they are happy to show us what they are doing and let us have a go).

We have no limit to the subjects we research; only last week my son noticed (whilst lounging under this duvet cover) that he could see through it. He asked me (sat in a chair at the other end of the room) if I could see him, of course I couldn't so we surmised there must be tiny holes in the fabric, "filled with what" he asked, "nothing?" air? a vacuum? We discussed it and decided that it couldn't be nothing and must be air, as a vacuum would be nothing and therefore wouldn't exist "but it does exist in space" he said. A few days later we visited Grandad (a retired science teacher) and asked if he could answer these questions, which he did by explaining further the force of gravity - we ended up talking about matter and anti matter. All this without a plan for a science lesson in sight!

I have read much on autonomous learning, this philosophy suits us, I see it not so much *laissez faire* as encouraging and following of child's curiosities and my own. Often I suggest my son 'try something out' and we see if we/he wants to go further with it.

I note Penny and Paul's comment about equipping our sons and daughters to compete for a job, but I have not been aware of stories of home-educated children having problems in the job market. I am confident that my son will be able to pursue his chosen career whatever that may turn out to be. I have found home educators to be a diverse and resourceful bunch who don't necessarily want 'to build a different sort of school that combines home and education', because home already combines education. If you want to create a classroom in your home you might as well send your child back to school as Paul and Penny have indeed chosen to do.

For us (despite the social pressures and the temptation to go into blind panic if my son shows no interest in taking any exams yet) the journey is one of enjoyment and discovery and to follow our own way.

Tegan Wilde 57 Tatton Road North, Stockport SK4 4QX E-mail: tegan.w@ntlworld.com

In response to Learning Styles section “Alternative vision” by Caplan & Wilson:

I read with interest Paul Caplan and Penny Wilson’s “Alternative vision” article. It is always encouraging to read of others’ discoveries in home education; the discovery of the freedom to walk away from prescription and the national curriculum’s iron fist, the liberation of the individual to make one’s own path through development and learning.

The Caplan/Wilson article appears as no exception to these benefits of home education. However, after pointing out in detail how their son is happier, learns more, is supported enthusiastically by his parents and has plenty of social contact, they express the view that they will have to pull the plug on their whole home education lifestyle for the sole reason that they cannot meet up with other home educators who want the same style of education as they do. The authors describe their vision of “Home Schooling” as something like a kind of mini-university with networks of six to 12 year olds busily engendering an unrestrained thirst for learning.

I would like to know how this situation is supposed to be resolved by simply going to school? Since when has it been a common school experience to find organised, detailed and academic study networks brimming over with dedicated enthusiastic kids?

There are several implications in this article that I find disturbing. First, is the conflation of “education and learning” with “jobs and employers”; I think that it is hugely important to avoid this folly. We learn to read and count for ourselves first, not because it is useful to employers.

Additionally, as a home educated person (and now a home educating parent), I feel a little insulted by the implication that my own distaste of “Home School” learning styles would render myself to be someone who was not enthusiastic or actively interested in learning. One of the lasting memories of home education for me is that learning tends to happen by accident – not by design.

For me the more a structure or a delineated space of time, or any form of imposed learning was presented, the more I did not want it; it felt wrong – contrived – unreal even. This led to disinterest.

I think home education reveals the truly organic nature of human maturation and learning. You don’t always have much control ultimately about what happens in a day (i.e. intention and outcome do not always meet), but the overall result is genuinely growth and development in the long-term.

By George A. Weitz

As to the authors’ challenge to the HE community: “how much emphasis are we putting on learning?”, please demonstrate how HE is *not* built on learning! Some people do not want to formalise learning, but this does not mean that it is not taking place. Also, a family’s individual approach, lifestyle and educational choices are serious, attractive, relevant and challenging *to themselves* and then to society.

The very non-prescription and acceptance of various learning styles of Education Otherwise is its greatest strength, but we are not homogeneous. Neither do we share the same perspectives, e.g. some families want to be an alternative to school, whilst others are not interested in being compared with schools, or the outcomes of schooling. Luckily, we have this forum, the EO Newsletter, to learn, exchange ideas and, maybe, understand each other (and our differences).

*By Gita Prasad
both from 21 Cozens Road, Norwich NR1 1JJ.*

LEARNING STYLES AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

There seem to be many different meanings for the term "learning style". Often in EO/HE circles it's used to describe the way in which we fulfil our legal responsibility for our children's education – e.g. "autonomous", "learner-directed", "exam-orientated", "flexible", etc. In connection with training (e.g. of adult learners for a particular type of skill) you'll hear about "theorists" and "pragmatists" – i.e. those who like to read all the instructions first and those who just get stuck in and see what works. There are other ways of classifying the way we learn.

Of course, everyone's learning style – the way that individual absorbs, organises and uses knowledge – is unique to that individual, and it's usually quite easy to spot if your child's preferred method differs from yours: if your child keeps asking what time you're going to the park and you haven't yet got around to thinking about breakfast; or if s/he isn't interested when you explain how to gauge the exact quantities of flour, salt and water but just wants to tip stuff into a bowl and mix it up – well, it's fairly clear that there's a bit of a mismatch and one or other of you (guess who?) has to adapt your approach.

There's another set of parameters that's rather less obvious but which has a good deal of influence not only on the way we learn but on the way we relate to and communicate with each other – and that's to do with our "preferred sensory style". I discovered this one several years ago, while my daughter was studying GCSE course in Maths and English at home. Mostly she got on with it by herself, but now and then she found it helpful to talk over some of the concepts with me – that is, she would have found it helpful if, nine times out of ten, it hadn't resulted in both of us getting frustrated that the other didn't seem to be able to understand what we were on about! We both knew that the other was reasonably intelligent, and were both really trying to communicate clearly, but somehow we seemed to get at cross-purposes. It was puzzling.

Then I met these ideas about sensory styles. Although all of us who have our full faculties use sight, hearing and touch in understanding our world, for most of us there is one style which dominates, in which we prefer to organise our experience, and which affects how we describe and explain things or ideas.

Around 50% of the population are predominantly 'visual' – i.e. they understand and judge things by how they see them. A lesser percentage are mainly 'auditory' – i.e. hearing is their preferred way of gaining information, and fewer still are 'tactile' (or 'kinaesthetic') meaning that touch/movement is their major style. Quite often, there's a joint or secondary style as well: for example, people can be 'visual/auditory' or 'auditory/tactile'. And the main styles can be sub-divided: e.g. 'Kinaesthetic' (tactile) into touch/movement, feelings/emotions, taste and smell.

But for now let's keep things simple by sticking to single styles: 'Visual' people not only prefer to learn by watching, looking, seeing – but many of the phrases they use in speech will be 'visual' also. A similar sense-language link applies to Auditory and Tactile styles. Some typical phrases are:

Visual: *Let's see ... picture this ... focus on ... sketch out ... crystal clear ... mirror ... obscure ... transparent ... with hindsight ... rose-coloured glasses ... a shady deal ... gone blank ... see the point ... illustrate ... view ... with hindsight ... show me ... identify ... look into ... as an illustration ... cloud the issue ... clear as day ... a bit foggy ... outlook ...*

Auditory: *Rings a bell ... tone of voice ... in harmony ... crying shame ... sounds good ... amplify ... discord between ... resonating with ... interpretation ... echoes of ... chime with ... hear what you're saying ... listen to the problem ... talk about ... tell me in detail ... I am debating ... get the message ... in tune ... overtones of ... I'll echo that ...*

Kinaesthetic: *Hung up on ... under the weather ... stick with ... gut reaction ... shut the door on ... breaking up ... grasp the idea ... fit into ... pushed around ... grounded ... moving ... get the feeling ... weigh up ... sensing your interest ... we can be flexible ... a bit slow ... falling to pieces ... heavy handed ... get on top of things ... keep in touch ... that feels right ... draw upon ... pull strings ... put a package together ...*

So – do you see the light? Hear what I'm saying? Get the hang of it? It's not the only answer, but it can sometimes be a useful tool for improving communication. Because once you know your own preferred sensory style and can recognise other people's, you can begin to 'translate' between them. Read the first part of the article again, and see if you can guess my preferred style (N.B. I've consciously tried to avoid making it obvious!).

For me and my daughter, it was a revelation. We discovered that we had completely different styles, the effect of which was that we were, in effect, speaking a different language. She's out-and-out visual: when she wants to check how to spell something she looks up and reads it off the ceiling. Me, I grab a pencil and an old envelope – *now* you know, don't you? I'm as kinaesthetic as they come. But once we realised what was going on, we could both make allowances: I'd try to explain things in pictures (rather than acting out trains or whatever) and she'd pull my leg when I was ham-fisted about it!

Most (but not all) people will have a predominant style, often with a secondary one, e.g. visual/auditory, audio/tactile. Since the majority of people in UK tend to be visual, visual/auditory, or visual/tactile, most school activities are in these categories. A tactile/audio child would automatically be disadvantaged.

I've drawn on many sources for these ideas, and cannot now clearly separate what's come from where. However, they are based largely on NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) – which got a bad press in the '80s when some of its techniques began to be used in high-pressure sales pitches. But it offers many useful tools for self-development, and there's a large body of literature. If you're interested to find out more you might start with one of the following:

Steve Andreas and Connirae Andreas, *Change Your Mind and Keep the Change*, Real People Press, 1987
 Richard Bandler & John Grinder, *Frogs Into Princes*, Real People Press, 1979
 Joseph O'Connor & John Seymour, *Introducing NLP*, Aquarian press, 1993

Anne Rix, December 2003

Here's a way to find out in which sensory system your brain prefers to operate:

SENSORY STYLES QUESTIONNAIRE

Circle the letter next to the statement to which you react most strongly or which feels most like you. Go with your first impressions. If you can't decide between two, ring both. If all three seem equally valid (or useless!) leave blank. Everyone has their own particular style, and will have a different pattern of answers.

(N.B. Family members can use different colours on the same sheet – save trees!)

1.	Which can you most clearly bring to mind :- Seeing your front door Hearing someone call your name Stepping into a cold stream	V	A	K
2.	When you try to spell a word, do you:- See the word in your mind's eye Make the letter sounds so you can hear it Write it down to get the feel of it	V	A	K
3.	When you imagine events, do you:- See pictures/scenes in vivid detail/colour Hear voices or have an impression of sounds Have an awareness of movement/action	V	A	K

4.	When you are reading do you:- Like descriptive scenes you can see in your mind's eye	V		
	Hear the characters talking		A	
	Prefer action stories or ones with emotion/feeling			K
5.	If you are angry do you:- Rage silently inside and 'see red'	V		
	Shout, swear, rant or rave		A	
	Grind your teeth, clench fists, storm off, slam the door ...			K
6.	When trying to interpret someone's mood, do you:- Look mainly at their facial expressions	V		
	Listen to the tone of their voice		A	
	Notice their gestures and body movements			K
7.	When having a discussion, so you:- Dislike listening for long periods, keep it short when talking	V		
	Enjoy listening but also feel impatient to talk		A	
	Gesture with your hands and move as you speak			K
8.	When waiting for classes/meetings to start, do you:- Look around the room, gaze out of the window	V		
	Talk to other people or yourself, hum/whistle		A	
	Sharpen pencils, sort papers, drum feet/fingers, just sit			K
9.	In your leisure time, do you prefer to:- Read, watch TV, go to a cinema or a play	V		
	Listen to music or the radio		A	
	Do something active, a sport or hobby			K
10.	After a trip/party/course where you met lots of people, do you:- Remember faces but forget names	V		
	Remember names but forget faces		A	
	Remember what you did but not who was there			K
11.	When learning something new, do you prefer:- Demonstrations, diagrams, posters, slides, video	V		
	Talks, lectures, discussion groups, audio cassettes		A	
	Role-play, direct activities, trying it out			K
12.	Which of these arts do you prefer:- Paintings	V		
	Music		A	
	Dance			K
13.	When you have to discuss something with someone, do you prefer:- A personal, face-to-face meeting	V		
	Using the telephone		A	
	Talking while doing something else (e.g., hobby, having a meal)			K

Now count up your score:

Number of VsAs Ks

If you have most Vs, you are mainly VISUAL (prefer to use sight)

If you have most As, you are mainly AUDITORY (prefer hearing)

If you have most Ks, you are mainly KINAESTHETIC (TACTILE) (prefer movement, touch)

SURVEYS

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.

Water Shrews

Help *The Mammal Society* to find out more about water shrews. Water shrews *Neomys fodiens* are one of the least known British mammals. There is a widespread perception that they are declining in this country but no one really knows. By taking part in this survey you will be helping to determine the distribution of this little known mammal and allow future population changes to be monitored.

No experience is needed and full details and equipment will be provided. Analysis of droppings found in small bait tubes can indicate water shrew presence. Choose a site or use one of the pre-selected sites. Set out the supplied bait tubes. Collect the tubes a week later and send any droppings back to *The Mammal Society*. *The Mammal Society* will analyse the droppings and send results back to all participants.

To take part just email surveys@mammal.org.uk with your name, address and postcode or tel. 020 7350 2200.

Winter Mammal Monitoring

The Mammal Society and the *British Trust for Ornithology* have jointly won a government contract to design and run a pilot multi-species mammal-monitoring project. It is an extremely exciting and important project as there has been considerable debate about the need to monitor terrestrial mammal population changes in Britain and something is at last happening. There is a full account of the project on the BTO web site (www.bto.org), including the methods that are used and a full account of the results so far. Volunteers are needed to take part in this innovative project.

Every person taking part in the project will be given a pre-selected one-kilometre square near their house. You will be asked to visit this square twice during the project as well as to collect some simple habitat data. (You can of course do more than one square!). October – December: You will be asked to walk a transect across the square early in the morning, recording all the mammals that you see. January – March: You will be asked to walk transects across the square recording mammal field signs (droppings, footprints etc.). You don't have to take part in both halves of the survey, but it would be helpful if you could so that the effectiveness of the two approaches can be compared. Prior experience is not necessary, but it would be helpful if you can identify all British land mammals and their signs. Alternatively make sure you take a good field guide with you! As many people as possible are sought to participate in this project, particularly from the remoter parts of Scotland and Wales.

If you would like to help over the coming Winter then please either telephone The Mammal Society on 020 7350 2200 or e-mail your name, address and telephone number together with the number of squares you could survey to enquiries@mammal.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

ARCHIVES

This month's selection comes from the HMSO publication of 1944: *Handbook of Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others concerned in the work of Public Elementary Schools*. Its approach is relatively progressive by today's standards, and could apply equally to children taught at home!

"We realise more and more the importance of broadening the aims of education and of placing greater emphasis on the social development of children; we appreciate more thoroughly the value of space and of activity in securing and maintaining their health and vitality, and we feel more deeply the need of relating what is taught ... to what is happening in the world outside."

"For the fully educated person, we should do well to remember, is one who is enlightened in his interests, impersonal in his judgements, ready in his sympathy for whatever is just and right, effective in the work he sets himself to do, and willing to lend a hand to anyone who is in need of it."

"It is ... unwise to introduce outside influences in the shape of external examinations that would almost certainly tend to stereotype methods and curriculum and to cramp the initiative of the teachers - the proper aim (of the school) is to make sure that every child, whatever his ability, shall leave school with the sense that he has completed something that has been worth the doing."

"When school life is over, only those activities will endure which have acquired a sufficient momentum through a long period of self-direction and independence and have been drawn, as it were, into the mainstream of the child's own lasting interests."

And some timeless tips:

"It is probable that far more can be done in the way of teaching children to find out simple things for themselves from books"

"Poetry should be a source of genuine enjoyment to the children not less than to the teacher."

"Mathematical conceptions are easier to understand and to apply when they arise out of the pupils' interests and experiences."

"The formal teaching of geography has no place in the education of little children, for it is not an interest or activity which falls within the compass of childhood ... it has long been recognised that the study of nature, handwork and stories are the natural approaches to geography."

"There can be no greater mistake (in teaching history) than to attempt so wide a survey that it is necessary to hurry in order to cover it in the time available."

"Our own sense of values has been so moulded by our early training we may easily go wrong in taking it for granted that the lessons of our childhood are the right ones for children of today."

Finally, two important reminders even for home educators:

"(Young children) should be required to perform certain actions as a matter of regular routine: for example, the use of the handkerchief..."

"While a course in beekeeping may be rich in educational value to all - the actual handling of the bees ... should be a purely voluntary exercise so far as the pupils are concerned."

Affiliation of Local Groups

Present Situation

Over the years there have been a number of recurring concerns about local groups and their relationship with national EO. These concerns fall mainly into three areas:

Insurance Cover

At present there are a lot of groups of home educators who meet more or less regularly and who might be covered by EO's insurance. It is often unclear at the moment which groups would definitely be covered in the event of a claim. Local groups are anxious to know things like:

1. How many people at the group need to be EO members for it to be an EO Group?
2. Is everyone covered by the insurance should something happen even if they are not EO members?
3. What happens about people who have for whatever reason fallen out with EO, refuse or feel no need to join the organisation. Are they still covered by the insurance?

As things currently stand there are no clear answers to any of these questions.

Start up Grants

EO provides start up grants for groups without any control over how the money is spent nor how the group is run.

Behaviour within Groups

EO members within local groups often expect the national organisation to have some control over the behaviour of other people in the group. At the moment the national organisation has no official role in local groups. People can be put off the national organization because of their experience of a local group.

Affiliation of Local Groups

I suggested to the October council meeting that these concerns could be addressed to some extent by establishing a system of affiliation of local groups with the national organisation. I would envisage a fairly loose relationship, with local groups receiving support and insurance cover from the national organisation in return for an agreement to abide by EO's Equal Opportunities and Child Protection Policies.

Only groups who chose to affiliate would:

- be covered by EO's insurance
- be eligible for a start up grant
- have access to information from EO on setting up as a group or club or whatever

EO would expect affiliated groups to:

- have a named contact person or persons who are members of national EO, and to inform national EO should that contact person change
- abide by EO's child protection and equal opportunities policies
- encourage people to join national EO
- have a contact name listed in the regional diary of the EO newsletter
- be open to new people, whether or not they are EO members, although it would be reasonable for them to charge people to join or attend the group

Such a system could clarify which groups were eligible for a start-up grant and which groups were covered by EO's insurance (only groups who had officially affiliated and who had a named contact). EO would have a named contact person for each group and some influence on behaviour within groups.

EDUCATING ARCHIE ☆☆ by SFC happy christmas to all!



this month we look at the varying quality of drinks offered to the Inspector...

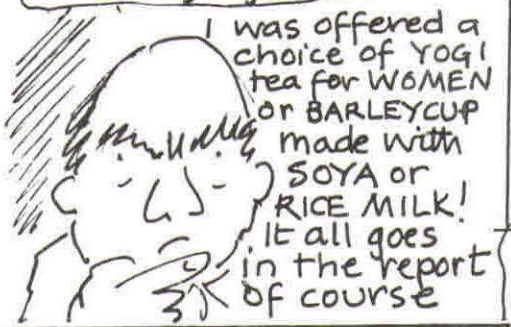


but in the case of ONE family who shall be nameless-

in some places I get a cup of REAL coffee with frothed hot milk & a piece of flapjack

* Motto: let sleeping dogs lie

- suffice to call them MRS G and "A" anyway, dear - oh dear



I was offered a choice of YOGI tea for WOMEN or BARLEYCUP made with SOYA or RICE MILK! It all goes in the report of course



We'll keep that Barleycup up there till the next visit - we won't use it

meanwhile... in the kitchen of the infamous pair... (whose names have not been changed)



hmm - I see he didn't eat these sugar free biscuits but he has left us a special Christmas present - in return for everything, he said. He was laughing in a funky way -



and it's a bottle of his own alcohol-free TOFU WINE

for Jackie + Dornic

REVIEWS

The Wind on Fire Trilogy by William Nicholson

This series of 3 books really blew my mind. They take you on a weird and wonderful journey. The first is *The Wind Singer* and the three main characters go on a long journey to find the wind singer's voice, having to deal with lots of danger from some very unusual characters on their travels. *The Slave of the Mastery* is the second book and in this story the main characters embark on another journey when their town is destroyed and the residents are made slaves of the Mastery, a very peculiar and sometimes cruel kingdom. The last book is the *Fire Song* where the final journey is made to the homeland. All the journeys take them through a labyrinth of very different places with different characters – some nice and some horrid. The descriptions are so vivid you really feel you are there and the characters seem very real. I find some of the bits in the second book a bit gruesome (like the monkey cages for humans), but I still couldn't stop reading. These books are definitely for older children as some of the scenes are disturbing. Adults will probably enjoy them too – my mum did!

Keith Hall (9)

£6.99 each Egmont

Peter and Lotta's Adventure by Elsa Beskow

Set in Victorian times in Sweden, the story is about Peter and Lotta. Their cat Esmeralda had three kittens called Purr, Snowball and Misty. They had to find new homes for two of them. Misty was given to the cook and Purr to Wendy. Their adventure began when they took Purr to Wendy and got lost on the way home. They had their clothes stolen in a wood, and a kind woodcutter found them and gave them some clothes. He took them to the fair so as to find someone to take them home. At the fair, the children had a ride on a tame dancing bear. The illustrations are bold and colourful, they are realistic and seem to stand out from the page. The black and white silhouettes are fun. We liked this book and would recommend it to others.

Karis (9) and Galen (5) Youngman

£9.99 ISBN 0-86315-398-4 Floris

The Outer Limits - More Mysteries From The Philosophy File by Stephen Law

This is a sequel book to the *Philosophy Files* in which the author explores different topics. In this book, there are seven different topics: astrology (flying saucers and ESP); killing people (does Murderous Mick deserve to be punished?); where did the universe come from?; is time travel possible?; could a machine think? and, but is it science? At the end of the book there is a glossary that gives explanations for certain words. *The Outer Limits* is written in a fun way, as most of it is discussion between two people. You can either read a chapter each night or have it as a coffee table book that you pick up and delve into anytime. It does not have a plot and to explain much more would be to spoil it. I enjoyed this book a lot better than the original books and I recommend it for people

aged 13+. Even an adult can enjoy this book! See web site too at www.thinking-big.co.uk.

Simon Hoggarth

£7.99 ISBN 1-84255-062-4 Dolphin

The Greenwooders Gang

by Geoffrey Palmer and Noel Lloyd

This book is brilliant because it has got character, perfect countryside and gets you thinking - can I do something like they do? I didn't want to go to sleep until I had finished this book. The illustrations are lovely. Six children living on the edge of Sherwood Forest become the Greenwooders gang and things seem to happen to them all the time. Two of the children, Tony and Peter, rescue a cat in a flood while Pauline and Felicity are given a cat. Which is which? Felicity goes on stage for the first time and she knocks the scenery down. Has she ruined it? Peter decides to run away with the fair and get a job. They put up stalls to raise money to help children in need - but the results are not what they expect.

Karis Youngman (9)

£14.95 ISBN 1-85776-706-3 The Book Guild

Lion Boy

I was proof reading this book. The main character is called Charlie Ashanti, and he can talk cat language. He comes home one night and his parents are gone. He sets off in pursuit of them. While hitching on a river police boat Charlie stumbles across a magnificent circus boat. Onboard he meets 6 proud beautiful lions who need to get back to Africa. Both the lions and Charlie need help. They have some exciting adventures, that's the reason I liked the book. I recommend this book to readers 7 and upwards.

Joseph Leech (8)

£12.99 ISBN 0-1413-8024-1 Puffin

Surprising Sharks by Nicola Davies

We both thought this book was excellent. This is a story about sharks, which is picture book style, yet includes loads of facts about sharks. These range from an ID chart, description of the outside and inside of a shark, interesting and funny facts and a reminder that humans kill more sharks than sharks kill humans (the ethical element). This book is funny, informative and interesting. Well worth the read. Rowan especially liked the last page which relates to how many sharks are killed by humans, "If you were a shark swimming in the lovely blue sea, the last word you'd want to hear would be HUMAN!!!"

Kathleen Smith with Rowan (5)

£10.99 ISBN 0-7445-8624-0 Walker

The Dark Beneath by Alan Gibbons

This is a story about 16 year-old Imogen who has just finished her GCSEs and is looking forward to a summer holiday of working at a boarding house. She also supports allowing refugees to stay in her home town despite local opposition. At the boarding house she is

constantly teased and taunted by a group of guests who are against refugees. Also there is the owner's stepson; Anthony who's 14 and has a crush on Imogen and is often taking photos of her. Imogen is aware of the crush but makes friends with Anthony. The story is exciting to begin with (even with lack of action) because you're never sure what will happen next but after a while it just gets boring, repetitive and predictable. Also I didn't think it was very well put together. Overall, I rate this book 5/10 but if the ending had lived up to the beginning, I would have given it at least 8/10.

Matt Longmuir (14)

£4.99 ISBN 1-84255-097-7 *Dolphin*

The Boy with the Magic Numbers

by Sally Gardner

This is about a boy called Billy who was given a magic moneybox by his father. When he went out to America to visit him, the secrets of the moneybox become clear. Billy has adventures such as taking Mighty Momma on a helicopter ride, cracking open a safe and solving the kidnap of his best friend. He wins a cake and a blender in TV competitions. I love Billy because his adventures are so funny.

This story is for everyone and is very easy to read. I could not put it down. I loved the book and it is a good story. The illustrations are eye catching and bring the story to life.

Karis Youngman (9)

£3.99 ISBN 1-84255-228-7 *Dolphin*

Shakespeare by Richard Brassey

Part of the *Brilliant Brits* series, this is an introduction to the life and times of William Shakespeare. The illustrations are bright and catchy and appealed to both Karis and Galen. The pictures of the inside of a theatre were very good and descriptive. We liked the story and the way it was written, but it left us feeling we wanted more than was given in the book. Karis liked learning about quotations we use today and where they came from. There are useful short descriptions of some of the most famous plays such as *Hamlet*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*. The history plays like *Henry V* and *Richard III* are hardly mentioned beyond a passing comment that Shakespeare wrote about Kings and Princes. Unusually the book does refer to the fact that some people doubt whether Shakespeare actually wrote the plays and sonnets. A fair, but brief, introduction to Shakespeare.

Karis (9) and Galen Youngman (5)

£3.99 ISBN 1-84255-228-7 *Orion (Dolphin)*

The Spanish Letters by Mollie Hunter

The Spanish Letters is a very slow starting book, which only livens up slightly near the end. It is about two men, Macey and Forbes, as well as a caddie called Jamie trying to get some papers called the Spanish Letters from two evil people, Sempill and D'Aquirre. It takes ages to spark and wasn't really that exciting at the end. Although it was a true story, I give the book only three out of ten.

I believe that it's a book suitable for children from 12 upwards.

James Baker (11)

£4.99 ISBN 0-86315-412-3 *Floris*

Brick-a-Brek by Julia Donaldson

This is quite funny in places and good for the 5-7 age range but I still liked it. I think the best bit is probably about inside the factory with the conveyor belts and funny machines with the choc-o-hoops coming out! But it's all about to change when the factory closes but then it re-opens as it changes again. It has a good ending when it changes to pasta.

Jem Freieleben (8)

£8.99 ISBN 0-7136-6438-X *A & C Black*

Clever Lollipop by Dick King Smith

Great pictures and a wonderful story about a princess, her friend Jonny and their pig Lollipop finding a governess. The chosen teacher ends up being Collie Cob, the conjuror!! Very funny with Lollipop being able to fertilize the Queen's flower beds with commands like "busy" and "rootle" and learning by magic!! Lots of references to the first book about Lollipop, left us a little disappointed and confused with the story so we would recommend reading *Lady Lollipop* first.

Denise Ridgway with Kate (5)

£8.99 ISBN 0-7445-9076-0 *Walker*

Jay Jay the Jet Plane PC/MAC

This software double pack is based on an aeroplane TV character and his friends that we have only seen once, but that didn't matter to Finn as he was mesmerised by the strange faces of the characters! The games are not unexpected - matching, pattern recognition, measuring, letter recognition etc, all of which earn the successful player a token towards a bigger reward of a picture of the characters to colour/print off. The recommended age is 3-7, but I feel 3-5 is more realistic as older children would probably quickly bore of the games. The CDs don't compare that well to others we have come across such as the brilliant *'Thinking Things'* series or even *'Pingu'*.

Tina Burnett-Pope with Finn (3)

£19.99 *Mindscape*

Scooby-Doo and the Glowing Bugman CD

On attempting to load this CD, our computer displayed an error message telling us it wouldn't run on Windows 95. It definitely said the CD was compatible with Windows 95. I contacted the manufacturers and was told it runs on Windows 95B. Fair enough, but it could have said so in the blurb - we can't be the only family in the world with an antiquated Windows 95 in its original form (or can we?). Having found a family with a computer to run it on, *the Glowing Bugman* proved to be worth the wait. This is a logical thinking game with lots of activities that can be set at harder or easier levels depending on the ability/confidence of the user. There are five museum workers, one of which is the Glowing Bugman in disguise. You and Scooby Doo and Shaggy

have to find out which he is, using the clues you are given on successful completion of an activity. The activities are in various rooms of the museum. Faith says "This was good and the graphics worked well. Some of the puzzles are quite challenging. The Bugman wears a Superman outfit with horns - he's really funny - he peers out of a room and you have to go in there and get a clue". Ben says "I like this. There's a chart with the museum workers on where you fill in the clues - like if the Bugman likes burgers and designing exhibits and has glasses, then you can work out who he is. Some of it is really hard". Bethany says "I like the ice-cream machine game. Scooby Doo keeps going 'Slurp'". The consensus was that this CD is to be recommended - much more interesting than those overly educational ones designed to get people good SATs grades.

Vivienne Hughes with Faith (11), Ben (9) and Bethany (7) Hill
£20.00 Mindscape

What Shall I Make? by Ray Gibson

This is a really good book because we made a parachute and it worked really well. The instructions are easy to read with drawings, pictures and photographs that are bright and colourful. There is lots of other fun stuff to make, such as model dough babies, octopuses, vegetable people, paper flowers, crowns, caterpillars, brooches and much more. Both children and adults will enjoy making things from this book.

Eoghan Steenman-Clark (7)

£4.99 ISBN 0-7460-2026-0 Usborne

What Shall I Paint? by Ray Gibson

This is a really good book because it gives you lots of ideas for things to paint. I liked painting a monster and an alien using symmetry by folding and pressing the paper, which can also be used the other way for a dragon or shaggy dog. It shows how to use lots of other different painting methods for all kinds of pictures and patterns, using all sorts of things for stamps such as hands, shoes, sponges and potatoes and using wax and wool, or blowing through straws. The instructions are easy to follow and the illustrations bright and colourful. This is a very good introduction to making painting activities fun for the under-8s.

Freyja Steenman-Clark (11)

£4.99 ISBN 07-460-2026-0 Usborne

The Penguin Expedition by Jed Mercurio

In Antarctica, a local factory is polluting the sea and making the climate hotter, so the ice is melting. Scott the penguin and his friends realise what's happening and head to the South Pole to find somewhere safe to live, whilst pursued by a giant security penguin from the factory. They have many adventures on the way. The story is trying to tell us there's too much pollution and it's a danger to nature. I enjoyed this book and would recommend it for 7-9 year olds.

Alex Burnett-Pope (8)

£5.99 ISBN 0-7445-9092-2 Walker

We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen

This is a music/spoken word CD Walker Audio. We love Michael Rosen but we all found this CD too repetitive.

We generally enjoy music and movement type stuff (look out for *Hop, Skip and Jump* by the BBC), but this was just too dull and none of us endured the full 60 mins plus. No idea how much it costs, if you think you might like it, try to borrow a copy first.

K McIntyre Bhaty

ISBN 0-7445-8658-5 Walker

Counter Challenge

This is a challenging board game for two that uses and practises maths skills - addition, subtraction, division but particularly multiplication. There are different methods of scoring to suit the abilities of the players. An excellent and fun quality game for children (8+) and adults, it comprises of a board with 24 beech counters. We found the rules a bit confusing and difficult to interpret at first but once we had worked through them carefully there was no stopping us. Very much a game of strategy using moves not dissimilar to chess. Each player has 12 counters, each counter being marked with two sets of numbers. The board is marked out with different patterned squares that allow moves in different directions. The aim is to capture the opponent's counter and work out the score for that capture by first multiplying the numbers and then using the addition, subtraction or division scoring option. A game is an ingenious way of improving mental arithmetic in a fun way. We loved it.

Keith Hall with Keith junior (9)

£19.99 (incl VAT and p&p) - this is a discounted price for EO members until 31st January.

01527 574334 www.counterchallenge.com

Milet Picture Dictionary English - French

£9.99 ISBN 1-84059-352-0

Milet Mini Picture Dictionary English - French

£5.99 ISBN 1-84059-372-5

both by Sedat Turhan and Sally Hagin

The main dictionary is arranged into categories such as colours, plants, fruit, animals, animals and insects, human body, house and living room, and so on. This is a very colourful dictionary with no white background on any page. The pictures are very unusual, with a lively, scruffy style in bold, slightly garish colours. I think some of the pictures work very well like the musical instruments but others are not so good, the proportions on the tiger and the giraffe are a little odd and the refrigerator looks to me like a white wardrobe. The pictures and writing are very large which means that on the bedroom page there are only ten objects. The English word is written in clear type with the French word underneath. There is no pronunciation guide. I like this dictionary because it is so unlike any other I have seen.

The mini dictionary is board book about 13 x 15 cm and a nice size for a toddler to handle. This dictionary shares

many of the same pictures as the other book; the pictures are smaller whilst the writing is the same size. On the 'fruit' page there are eight fruit on a double page spread. The words chosen are more suitable for a younger child, for example, on the 'home' page the following words have been chosen: chair, table, cup, spoon, mirror, bottle, bowl, picture and television. Although the pictures are generally the same, the backgrounds in this board book are mostly a simple plain colour which makes the book a little less busy. I think this makes a very good first dictionary, it is bright, cheerful and nicely laid out.

Clare Crane with Natasha (8) and Anthea (7)

Milet Publishing

The Singing Day by Candy Verney

This is another lovely book from the 'Festivals' series. Even a non-singer would find this an easy book to follow. The words are accompanied by the music should you want to play an instrument too, but can be sung on their own. The accompanying CD helps you learn the tunes – all the songs (over 100) are included on the CD. As the title suggests it provides songs to sing for getting up, washing, cleaning and how this can help with a particular activity. The author has taught in Steiner schools where they use singing to create repetition and rhythm for the day. There are dancing songs, songs from around the world, lullabies, old songs and new ones and some prayers. This is also an interesting book to look through and has beautiful illustrations.

Hilary Woolf

£16.99 ISBN 1-903458-25-0 Hawthorn Press

Atoms in Action by Susanne Lakin

This is a really excellent book with fun characters like Sydney Sodium (my favourite) and Charlie Carbon. You learn all about the changes that happen to elements by the adventures the characters have. After each story there is some information and diagrams that help you understand more about what has happened to the elements in the story. I learnt how street lights are powered, a new name for water and a lot more. I would tell people to read this book.

Lewis Ridgway (9)

£8.95 ISBN 1-85776-713-6 Book Guild

Work and Play in Early Childhood

by Freya Jaffke

Having read *Toy Making with Children* by the same author, I found this one quite disappointing. It doesn't have the same practical approach and refers to the more spiritual / religious elements of Steiner education. It tries to cover development in children by cramming a year or two of a child's life into a page that doesn't work. The rest of the book gives you a practical description of activities that take place in the Steiner kindergarten. It reinforces ideas about the importance of play and imaginative toys but it doesn't tend to tell you anything you didn't know and this subject has been covered far better in *The Genius of Play* by Sally Jenkinson. The book would probably be quite useful to somebody

considering a Steiner education as an alternative to conventional school, as it does give a good description of what goes on in their kindergartens.

Hilary Woolf

£7.99 ISBN 0-86315-227-9 Floris

The Deathwood Letters ISBN 1-84270-228-9

Two Weird Weeks ISBN 1-84270-073-1

Two very cleverly constructed stories; *The Deathwood Letters* is a thriller with a touch of fun. It is written as a series of letters between a girl, and a boy whom she has never met. The story shows how different perspectives can be used for deception and manipulation, and is not only a good story, but can be a useful tool for discussion. *Two Weird Weeks* follows similar themes, again dealing with manipulation and deception with pace and humour. This time it is constructed as alternate chapters of two people's diaries, which clearly show the different perspectives of the two people involved. All in all, these were quickly read books, dealing with intricate themes in a novel and interesting way. Books that will be read more than once I am sure.

Gill Humphreys with Oliver (9)

£3.99 each Andersen

Millie's Big Surprise by Gerald Rose

We're big fans of this author as he is a fantastic illustrator and his pictures of animals are lovely. This book, where all the animals dress up to surprise – very colourful with lots of carefully observed detail. The story is simple, almost a list and similar in to *Trouble in the Ark*. It is ideal for the 2-4 age group. We'd love to see him produce books for the 4 – 10 age group too. Celeste says, "The animals dress up and I like looking at all the things they wear. The leopard turns into a cockerel that is funny. We do voices for the animals. It's really fun."

Kirsten Friesleben with Celeste (5)

£9.99 ISBN 1-84270-176-2 Andersen

Time Spinner by Roy Apps

I think that this book is unusual, being set in the future and some of the ideas are very good but I think that the characters are a bit two dimensional and quite hard to identify with because the book is written simply. I think that it is written for younger children. I did not find it very stimulating. However, the idea of the space colony and the story being set in the future make it quite an interesting read.

Kit Friesleben (10)

£4.99 ISBN 1-84270-231-9 Andersen

'The Secret of Happy Children'

'More Secrets of Happy Children'

both books by Steven Biddulph

The first book covers positive ways of speaking with children; from avoiding criticism to giving helpful advice such as "make sure you are careful when you are so high up" rather than the "you'll fall" approach. It looks at how to give children emotional security, ways of handling situations and different ways we can all get on better with

our children. The books are written in a friendly and non-judgemental way, acknowledging different views and needs but with a clear objective – smacking and controlling by fear is damaging so we need to find practical, positive ways of co-operation and avoid the need for old fashioned discipline. He emphasises the need for parents to have time together and alone and the need to work on a relationship together – something that can often be forgotten in busy periods of our lives. The sequel looks at issues such as daycare and the effects of children not spending enough time with a parent at home. A large part of the book deals with raising children, looking at the need for positive role models, avoiding stereotyping and acknowledging the differences between boys and girls. It is re-assuring to know that the first book was a million copy best seller and I'm sure the author has done a lot to help child/parent relationships. Very positive and helpful books.

Hilary Woolf

£8.99 each *Ted Smart (Hilary purchased her copies from the Book People for just £4.99 for both!)*

I Don't Want to Go to Bed by Tony Ross

The Guardian says this book is hilarious and a godsend to parents but I'm giving my review copy to the charity shop as soon as I've written this. I'm a newcomer to reading modern children's books and this is the first time I've come across Tony Ross. Until recently, when my daughter discovered other children had bedtime stories, she perfectly happy to have a goodnight kiss and be left to sing herself to sleep. While I miss her innocent self-sufficiency, I do love reading to her. But a story has to be a story and this book doesn't fit my description of one. Manipulation, coercion, ridicule, phobia encouragement and furious adult logic replace a plot. On the other hand the illustrations are pretty inspired. It's a bit stereotypical and negative to have such a beautiful maid and frumpish mother, but that aside Ross's drawings are full of imagination and quirky charm. My daughter found something of interest in every picture. She was bemused at a tricycle up a tree, amazed at the size of the Princess's mouth when she screamed, she likes the old sea dog playing with his boats, the cellars of the castle and the Princess sleeping in the cat's basket. On second thoughts maybe I won't pass this book on. I'll keep the pictures, cut the text and my daughter can make up her own story instead.

Caroline McCourt with Li Chen (3)

£9.99 ISBN 1-84270-223-8 *Andersen*

Waving not Drowning by Rosie Rushton

This book is about three teenagers who all have problems. Jay lives with his grandmother and he is worried because she keeps forgetting what she is doing or losing things. He doesn't want anyone to find out in case she is taken away. Fiona is upset because her father has been scandalised in the local paper where he was shown with a different woman to her mother. Lyall is furious because he has overheard his foster parents talking and

thinks they are going to get rid of him. The book is written in first person narrative and the three main characters have small parts in each chapter. The three separate stories become more interconnected as you read further on. It is quite interesting to read because it has different people with different lives who slowly become more involved with each other. This is quite a good book that is interesting to read.

Emma Whitehall (13)

£5.99 ISBN 1-84270-237-8 *Dolphin*

The Tree of Life by Peter Sis

This is a fascinating book about the life and works of Charles Darwin. It is written for children but would appeal to adults as well. There are some wonderful illustrations and you get a good and intimate grasp of what Darwin's life was all about just by looking at the pictures. It is also a beautiful, visual book about life in the 1800s. Jack's reaction on finishing the book was "Aw, is that the end, can we read it again?". A lovely book to give as a gift.

Carole Yeomans with Jack (7)

£12.99 ISBN 0-7445-9870-2 *Walker*

Music Express - Foundation Stage

This is the first of a series of seven play-based learning resources covering the primary school years, written for use by teachers. It comprises workbook, CD-Rom & 2 CDs and although aimed at group activities, can easily be adapted. It took a little work to get my head round all the information but once I'd downloaded everything from the CD-Rom, things fell better into place. The aim is to use music to develop a child's personal development, understand musical terminology and learn about world issues using the resources, (songs, picture gallery, video clips, stories, etc). Both my boys enjoyed the songs and playing the tunes on the piano. This is an expensive resource but you do get a lot for your money.

Carole Yeomans with Jack (7) and Luke (4)

£29.99 ISBN 0-7136-6582-3 *A & C Black*

The Twelve Tasks of Flavia Gemina

by Caroline Lawrence

This book (VI in the Roman Mysteries series) is set in Ostia in Ancient Roman times. It is about a girl called Flavia Gemina, her ex slave girl Nubia and two boys called Lupus and Jonathan. Flavia thinks her father loves Cartilia Poplica, who she believes to be a witch who is trying to get rid of her. Flavia and her three friends go to places that relate to Hercules' twelve tasks to get clues about Cartilia because Flavia had told her father that she was never getting married or having children. Her father told her that she was killing her descendants which is exactly what Hercules did. Flavia and Nubia meet Cartilia's sister Diana. She has short hair and hunts very often. Flavia and Nubia were shocked. Flavia and Nubia find out that you could buy some gladiator scrapings to make love potion to mix some into the food of the person who you want to love

you, together with some of your bodily fluids. Diana wants Aristo, the four friends' teacher, to love her, so she puts some into his stuffed mushrooms. The potion doesn't work and Flavia sees that it was all Diana's fault because she had gone around pretending to be her sister Cartilia. At the end of the book, Flavia starts to like Cartilia but fever spreads across the city and Cartilia, her father and Diana (Cartilia's sister who turns out to be the main cause of the problems) catch it. I enjoyed this book. It was quite a light, easy read, but it is written well and I liked it.

Molly Whitehall (10)
£4.99 ISBN 1-84255-025-X

'Where in the World?' and 'Year 1 Phonics'

Photocopiable Resources on CD-Rom

If you despise worksheets then read no further! These are two CD-Roms from a whole range aimed at teachers. Each CD-Rom (PDF files - Adobe Acrobat supplied) contains (mainly) worksheets which can be printed out. "Where in the World?" is aimed at the KS1 geography unit "Where in the World is Barnaby Bear" (who can be seen in the BBC's *Watch!* series), though the CD-Rom features *Barnaby Bear*. It also features jumbo postcards and photos in colour of various places and 15 types of transport, 36 "artefacts flashcards" (ranging from a taiko drum to fried chicken!) - all from Europe, Asia, Australia and the Americas. *Year 1 (ages 5-6) Phonics* has cheerful illustrations based around a circus to practise writing 3 and 4-letter words. It includes a Phonics Blend list. Thomas loved using the sheets etc from both of them. If you have two or more children who could use them or you are following the National Curriculum then they're certainly worth considering. Printing the contents can be rather expensive in terms of ink cartridges; printing once and then photocopying at a shop could be cheaper than reprinting.

Sue Onions with Thomas (7)

Keynotes Education. 01566 776932. For free sample pages visit www.keynoteseducation.com. Special offer to EO members - Buy 1 CD and get 3 free - £20.74 (incl p&p)

Revolution Within: a manifesto towards freedom By Sammy Kunina

Essential reading for anyone with even a hint of interest in autonomous learning. This is a beautiful, moving, thought provoking and profoundly challenging book. It forced me to look again at my own childhood and certainly, with blinding and often uncomfortable new clarity, at how I am relating to my daughter. This book speaks directly from one parent to another. It speaks of the intensity of feeling that accompanies the birth of one's children and of the possibility that such intense feelings of protection and awareness of the child's sense of innocence and innate freedom and individuality may, with care and commitment, be allowed to continue and flourish as the child grows. I am sure that this book will become a particular comfort to me in my 'wobbly' moments when neighbours and 'friends' question my

parenting/educational approach, which can look distinctly non-formal and non-intrusive to the point of seeming to the casual observer like 'non-existent'/'couldn't care less'. The following quote reminds me why my daughter is not in school right now. It reminds me that the educating otherwise decision, for me, had little to do with what LEAs and society as a whole would call 'education' ... it was a massively emotional decision that in its aftermath took me straight back to the intensity of feelings I had at her birth - which was a huge surprise. The decision had and has to do with giving my daughter back to herself. I am only sorry and ashamed that, because of my own fear and ignorance, she was ever taken away:

"Children are the beginning ... I felt this from the moment their souls came to sentience inside me ... from the moment I looked into their eyes and recognised that within them was the reflection of the whole of the human experience. They looked into my eyes and I just imagined them free. I've tried to act from this political instinct ... I don't want my children mourning for themselves. I want them to be alive throughout their lives. I have imagined this. I just couldn't bring them into this world without trying to change the world."

Review by Deena Newton-Cox, Reprinted from *Choice in Education*

Note

Prices quoted are the publishers' recommended retail prices (rrp). Shop around for lower prices - try discount book shops, mail order discount book clubs and the internet. Contact details from publishers are set out below but many titles can be ordered from your local book shop. *The Book People* (tel 0870 6077780 or visit www.thebookpeople.co.uk) is a good, economical source for books. It is NOT a book club and you order what you like, when you like (at prices well below publisher's rrp). Postage / packing is usually free on order over £25 but if you are ordering less tell them you are home educating and you will be able to get a discount rate. Many local EO groups have meetings where books and other resources are swapped or sold. Don't forget you can usually pick up cheap books at car boot sales, jumble sales etc., and the library is a free resource.

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.

CONTACTS

A & C Black 01480 212666 www.acblack.com
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Send in your reviews to Sally Hall, Nant-y-garreg, Saron, Llandysul SA44 5EJ or email sally@aecb.net

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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

Roman theme for spring term. Lots of craft, drawing and art workshops, plus Roman Day, Verulamium, visit to Bath and other outings for Roman activities and events. Regular swimming, ice-skating, 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

Maldenhead 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@ntworld.com for more information

Fridays Caversham 12 - 5pm social, all ages, sep. m 4 teens

in hall with park outside and woods. £2/ family.

Monthly, 2nd Tuesday, 11am - 6pm near Pangbourne

chat and play, Adventure playground, animals. £3/family

Also activities 4 teens. Contact Lynda 0118 961 4466 or Gail

01628 483895 or email hitchmans@ntworld.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, 6-16 yrs. 11am-noon. Contact Muriel 01628 664939

Windsor Leisure Centre, Fris termtime, family swim 12.30.

contact Angela or Edwina (see Bracknell)

Newbury Group Contact Heidi 0118 9710178

Lambourn. Weekly meeting on a farm for crafts, cooking and

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

world and an unhurried childhood. Contact: Tracey or Roge

01793 810448 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@ntworld.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, aft

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@ntlworld.com

Caroline 01242 890351 cambrase@ieee.org

Beverley 01242 524091 or Mhairi 01452 384104.

Gloucester meetings & swimming. Contact Dawn

01452 540019 dawnandmike@blueyonder.co.uk

or 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

kasturi@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 at **London Colney**,

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

01438 840674 olsandpjs@aol.com

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

Wealden Home Ed website:

www.when.omnia.co.uk and email group:

wealdenhomeeducatorsnetwork@yahoo.com

For events listings send SAE: Amanda Mackensie,

16 Brambletree Cotts, Borstal, Rochester ME1 3TN

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 group meet every Monday from 10-4 for Tae Kwan Do, art and crafts, and many other activities. Contact Kim 01892 863941 or Lesley 07900 503247

French for beginners through songs and games.

Yoga for children. Contact: Katherine 01892 863958

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

Fortnightly play sessions at Botany Bay: contact Jacqueline 01204 361072 or Angela 01204 659634

Fortnightly badminton lesson followed by swim:

contact Angela 01204 659634 or Jacqui 461418

Old Cobblers Wed 10th Dec. contact Pam 01706

215585 davidandpam@ntlworld.com

Hoping to organise trip to Fudge Factory, Bacup,

early Dec, if interested contact Pam (above) a.s.a.p.

Martinmere Wetlands - Friday 16th, plus

Shakespeare4kidz at the Lowry, 11th March contact

Pam to book

Events on Fylde coast: Please contact Tracey on

01253 858840

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 Kidbrooke Contact: Fiona 020 8852

9756 bettieslake@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 6392 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,

Croftwick, 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 kann.samuel@blueyonder.co.uk or Jane 01835 863 118.

SHROPSHIRE

Activities and outings Contact: Val 01952 502225
South Shrops. regular meetings every Tuesday, outings and workshops: Carolyn 01588 680503
SOMERSET

Frome and beyond (FAB) home educators support group. Social gatherings, outings and newsletter. Contact: Sally 01749 841554, Helen 01373 465260

Wivelscombe/Taunton area - regular get-togethers and outings: Maggie 01984 624651.

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

SOMERSET NORTH - Regular get-togethers and activities Contact Vicky 01275 848425 or Sarah 01275 842300 or e-mail hegns@btopenworld.com
STAFFORDSHIRE/SOUTH CHESHIRE/NORTH SALOP Stafford every 2nd and 4th Wednesday in village hall for games craft etc. 12-3.30 Contact 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.

Karen 01394 279117 kjc88@whsmithnet.co.uk

Foxburrow Farn, 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: 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: Tisha 01483 898575. Skating during term time Friday 1-4: Jane 01420 88188. Under 10s: 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

Wealden Home Ed website:

www.when.omnia.co.uk also email group: wealdenhomeeducatorsnetwork@yahoo.groups.com
Local Contact: Isobel 01403 261178 (W.Sx)
Winnie Durdant-Hollamby 01342 826087 (E.Sx)
Many events and activities throughout the County. Monthly newsletter gives full details: £8pa or £4 six months, For NL contact Tula 01323 648127, email asanababy@aol.com

Or ring one of the following local events organisers:

Lewes: Sylvia on 01273 474375, Hope 01273 401594 or Jan 01273 514528

Lindfield EO Friday club: Liz 01444 414058

Hastings HEDGE Group: Rachel 01424 422178, Emily 01424 719570 or Ali 01424 814175

Brighton: Kathy 01273 685674, Lucy 01273 204764 or Jim 0779188343

Eastbourne Home-Ed Club: Tula 01323 648127 email asanababy@aol.com

Worthing/Shoreham Beach: Sam 01903 233799

Forest Row Area: 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@ntworld.com or Geraldine, 01792 405894 or email: julafan1@ntworld.com

Pembrokeshire EO swim & sauna: Haverfordwest pool, Dew St. 3pm at main reception, fortnightly. Call to check dates. Contact: Yvette 0845 458 9251

Cardigan area social meetings and outings on Mondays - Contact: Yvette 0845 458 9251

Gwynedd Mondays swimming at Bangor

Contact: Louisa 01248 361254

Friday swimming at Porth Madog Weekly meetings at Tremadog Thursdays. Contact Jo 01766 512330

Powys Weekly swimming/Tumble Towers in Welshpool on Fridays. Contact: Julia Phillips 01691 648152 gwastad@lycos.co.uk

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.freeseerve.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.freeseerve.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/NWWilts_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 Tutchter 101562 822034 gail@tqmi.co.uk

YORKSHIRE EAST

Regular meetings and visits.
Contact: Alison 01405 769902

YORKSHIRE NORTH

Regular meetings and outings. Contact Karen 01904 400317 kkaresandy@aol.com

New group in Kirby Misperton (near Flamingo Land) first Monday of every month. Current age range 1-9 but keen to have teen group. Tess 01947 895007

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/Abbeylea rd. Contact: Annette 0114 2583502 or Fiona 0114 22751142

YORKSHIRE WEST

Bradford: Ice Skating Fridays (except 2nd Fri) from 11:00. Ice Arena, Cost £1.50/skater, skates included. Contact Judith (0113 226 5515).
Swimming in term time on Tuesdays.

Halifax: Halifax Gymnasium, Heath Training Centre, Free School Lane. Mondays, weekly except bank hols. 10AM-1PM on drop-in basis. Contact: Gill Kiener 01422 311876 or gillkillner@aol.com.

Huddersfield. Last Thursday of month, 11-1:30 at Civic Centre. Lunch & chat.

Huddersfield Sports Centre. Swimming, Weds, term time 12-1:30. Contact Tracy 01484 317176.

Leeds Monthly Meetings. 2nd Friday of the month (10:30AM-4PM) at West Park Centre, Spen Lane, (Classroom 9). Contact: Susan (0113) 226 3595.

Wednesday Science Club. Early Club (10:30-1:30).

Afternoon Club (1:30-3:30) at West Park Centre (see above). Contact: Judith (0113) 226 5515.

Group Outings. Contact Judith.

Gymnastics (12-1) Weds in term time. Carnegie Gym, Leeds. Coach-directed. Contact Sarah (01484 361 206) or Elizabeth (0113) 262 7786.

LOCAL CONTACT UPDATE

New acting local contacts

Bristol - Ian Chatfield
Buckinghamshire South - Gail Borrowes
West London - Betsy (Elizabeth) Anderson
Central London (Westminster) - Phil Hicks
phil@communityofnebo.fsife.co.uk

Resigning local contacts

West Midlands - Penny Clarke
West Midlands - Joy Beasley

Areas needing a local contact

Durham Fife Glamorganshire
Gloucestershire Herefordshire
Hertfordshire Humberside Isle of Man
Manchester North Strathclyde Tayside
Tyne and Wear West Midlands Wiltshire
Update LC details Julia Phillips, Powys, new email gwastad@lycos.co.uk

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

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 Seasonal 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'

Now also available to view (if you missed seeing the designs in the February and April newsletters

(Children's Pages) and purchase via

EO's website: <http://www.education-otherwise.org/GreetingCard.htm>

EO Car Stickers

Help spread the word.

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

Home Education Cards

Extra cards are available from:

EO HE Cards, 5 Ridge Way, Aldridge,
Walsall, WS9 0HL

Please send a stamped, addressed envelope
plus 1 x loose 2nd class stamp for each card required.

SALE - EO VIDEOS only £4.50

Special reduced price of £4.50 for our videos.

Perhaps you could buy one and pass it on to a Teacher Training College or a library or anywhere that it might be looked at. Please help us promote the right to home education.

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

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

EO Hoodies and Mugs

Hooded sweatshirts

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

EO 25th anniversary mugs

available in white and red with a picture of Archie

(£5 including postage and packaging).

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

Back Page Part Two

New volunteers for any of the groups most welcome, with expertise or just an interest
For more information contact any of the council members listed (In bold)

Get involved and join a small group:

Finance: Garry Humphreys, Lynda Hitchman, 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, Fritchelstock, Torrington, EX38 8JT 01237 451535anne@annerix.demon.co.uk

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:

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

Scotland: Alison Sauer, Inverness.

Tel: 01463 232571 Fax: 01463 220 825

Mob: 07956 193 983 alison@sauer.demon.co.uk

Northern Ireland (VACANT) Volunteers please!!

North West (VACANT) Volunteers needed please!!

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

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

Wales: Celia McDonagh, Cardiff, 02920 733629
celiamcdonagh@yahoo.co.uk

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

mailto:webmaster@education-otherwise.org

South West: Belinda Harris-Reid Buckfastleigh, Devon
01364 643343 bharrisreid@baselinedata.co.uk

South East (VACANT) Volunteers needed please!!

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

London(2): (Acting) Kathleen McLaren, Walthamstow.
0208 527 3296 krmclaren1@tiscali.co.uk

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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.freeseve.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 (W. Midlands) 01922 745465

<pennyclarke@blueyonder.co.uk>

Martine Frampton (Glocs) 01608 812411

<martine-frampton@macunlimited.net>

Yvette Hartley (Wales) 0845 458 9251

yeh@onetel.net.uk

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)

<podmorefamily@blueyonder.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
Berlan 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)
podmorefamily@blueyonder.co.uk

education otherwise

Education Otherwise is a membership organisation which provides support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school, and for those who wish to uphold the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of their children.

Our principal aims are to:

- encourage learning outside the school system;
- reaffirm that parents have 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

