

education otherwise



No. 157 - April 2004

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DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS 1ST MAY 2004

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Please send contributions via the most appropriate section editor above

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PLEASE CONTACT THE DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR (See inside back cover)

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Co-ordinatorial

Hello, I'm back again ... won't bore you with all the details, but sadly William isn't in a position to continue with the NL Co-ordination right now - so it's landed back on my desk. Help!

Thank you, William and family, for the February issue, and here we are calling for volunteers once more.

The NL team are all experienced and efficient - copy arrives from the section editors virtually ready to print. Things can be hectic for the few days of putting together in the right order on the right number of pages and getting to the printer on time. In between it's more relaxed, and it's up to you whether you deal with the bits and pieces as they come in or save them up to do in a bunch.

There are some additional hassles which arise from time to time (complaints, awkward contributions, being regarded as oracle, etc.) and support is available to deal with these. I can support with proof-reading also.

If anyone knows someone who's organised, calm, diplomatic and can keep everyone on time, please encourage them to give me a ring on 01237 451535 and talk about what's involved. You probably do need to have email access. I'm willing to give all the support anyone needs in the early stages, and will be around in the background as publications secretary afterwards.

The Regional Diary is getting too unwieldy again, overflowing with detail of local events. Somehow, I shall have to slim it down a bit ...

Some areas just have a contact name/number/email for an events/news local bulletin, and don't put all the details in the RD - not only does this help with space, but gives a bit of extra security (NL can be seen by outsiders ...). Not another job, I hear LCs sigh; but you don't have to do it yourself. When I came to Devon there was no county-wide newsletter so I just put a note in the national NL asking for a volunteer to do one, and hey presto! We now have a wonderfully efficient monthly Devon newsletter. Please, areas with lengthy entries - see where you can cut down on the detail; and if you're in an area without a local events calendar - why not start one? (and if distributed by email, please use bcc to ensure privacy ...)

Anne Rix 13.3.4

SCOTLAND

Spring is sprung and so is Statutory Guidance – at last!

No more drafts.

"Statutory Guidance on the circumstances in which parents may choose to home educate their children at home" was issued in early March 2004. You can find the guidance document on the Scottish Executive website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk> and on the EO website at <http://www.education-otherwise.org/Legal/ScottishHE/ndxlglbsScot.htm> Those who made individual contributions to the consultation will have received paper copies through the post. Others can send for copies to TSO (The Stationary Office).

In brief:

The final guidance closely resembles the last revised draft, which was a vast improvement on the first draft, although there were still a few concerns. One important additional feature of the final guidance is that in two years time the Executive are to review how it has worked in practice. This should encourage education authorities to make the guidance work well in cooperation with home educators, and the promised review can give home educators some confidence that our input will count.

The document lays out the relevant statutes and conventions clearly and accurately in a context of encouraging cooperation and of acknowledging diversity.

The following are distilled versions of key issues which are to be found in the guidance:

Authorities have

- no right to unreasonably withhold consent.
- no right to expect to be given reasons for home educating.
- no right to expect qualifications of parents.
- no duty to search out home educated children.
- no duty to monitor home education provision.
- no automatic right to visit the home or have access to the child.
- no right to define the content of the education provision or to dictate a curriculum.

Child protection is dealt with in its own section and is not allowed to muddy the guidance on education provision. It is pointed out that child protection is everybody's responsibility, that there are existing protocols and that all children are entitled to protection whether they are at school or home educated.

Overall, this guidance is a huge improvement on the ad hoc way in which the law was interpreted by different local authorities before the guidance process was begun. Now there is a universal baseline upon which good practice and good relationships can grow.

Inevitable disappointments:

Unfortunately the legal anomaly remains which requires parents whose children are registered at a state school to seek consent from the education authority before being able to exercise their legal right to provide a suitable education for their child at home.

While the guidance did not have the power actually to change the statute, this anomaly could have been overcome had the guidance *explicitly* advised that home education should be regarded as a

reasonable excuse' for non-attendance at school until the formality of giving consent was completed. As it is, it is still *implicit* in the statute that home education is a 'reasonable excuse' for non-attendance, and Education Otherwise hopes that education authorities will continue to grow in their acceptance of this in practice. Some do already so long as letters requesting withdrawal are sent as soon as the child is withdrawn or the decision to home educate is made. There is some compensation in that the guidance has made significant progress by stating that consent should be granted immediately in almost all circumstances and that previous irregular attendance is not of itself a sufficient reason for refusing consent.

There are still a number of areas where home educators are left vulnerable to narrow interpretations but throughout, the guidance does encourage education authorities to acknowledge the diversity of home education and to treat home educators with respect.

Unfortunately areas with funding implications, such as access to exam centres for home educators and specific training of education officers in home education, were not addressed - though the guidance does positively encourage authorities to be flexible and to provide resources and support to home educators where feasible.

Next steps:

All in all this is a guidance with which home educators can work. It is an important step in the possibilities for building trust. Local authorities now need to embrace the positive attitude of the guidance and develop policies, procedures and practices which, like the guidance, are compliant with statute, mutually developed and respectful of home educators. Home educators in Scotland may need to help them achieve this! To do that well we need to be supportive of each other and to be ready to work together as needs arise.

EO will be writing within a couple of weeks to the Minister for Education and Young People, acknowledging the guidance. Please send EO any immediate comments or feedback that you would like us to take into account.

Also, Education Otherwise will be monitoring carefully the use of the guidance in practice over the coming two years. Please send us (see email address at end) details of your experience as it unfolds so that we can build feedback for the Executive's review. You can of course also feed back directly to the Executive using the email box they have opened for this: ceu@scotland.gov.uk

THANKS!

NOW, last but not least, a very big **thank you** to all of you who have contributed to and supported this work. This includes all of you busy home educators who sent in your thoughts. It includes the EO Council, now and over the past three years, the editor of this newsletter and many others doing jobs within EO, without whom the info and support would not flow.

It is also a **special thanks** from me to those in the Guidance Response Group: Jill, Jane, Lucie and Rob who kept me on the rails when things started to hurtle and were there throughout the process, including during some difficult moments. This guidance is evidence that when we work together with commitment and good shared thinking, we can make a difference.

Ann Samuel Till

ann.samuelattill@blueyonder.co.uk

A summary of the EO OPEN COUNCIL MEETING held on 7th February 2004 at COALBROOKDALE YOUTH HOSTEL, by Keith Charlton

A new printer is to be tried out for the April Newsletter – please let the NL Co-ordinator have your comments. The Contact List and Handbook will be sent out with the June issue, therefore amendments to these are required *as a matter of urgency* to allow time for printing schedules to be co-ordinated. Please send changes in your contact details to the database secretary (Lynda Hitchman) and any material for the Handbook to publications secretary (Anne Rix). Contact details for both inside back cover of NL.

There was some discussion about the advertising of gatherings and camps. Clarification is needed on whether an event is an EO one (i.e. open only to EO members, such as the Coalbrookdale residential gathering) or an “EO-friendly” one (i.e. open to EO members and to home educators who are not members; organised by EO members, such as some of the camps) or one which is for home educators and has no organisational involvement from EO. Organisers and advertisers of camps and gatherings must make clear in which category the event falls.

Ann Samuel Till (Lothian) reported that the final statutory guidance on home education for EAs in Scotland had not yet appeared but that feedback indicated that home educating families were generally being treated more fairly by EAs.

New Local Contact Guidelines produced by the Local Contact Co-ordinators were approved, and will appear in the next Handbook.

The report from the LEA/EA group highlighted the importance of monitoring how LEAs (EAs in Scotland) deal with home educating families and of maintaining good relations with them. Poor practice on the part of LEAs must be persistently and energetically corrected, and families encouraged not to give in to LEAs’ unreasonable requests.

The meeting agreed that a variety of standard letters would be prepared as official EO responses to authorities issuing incorrect information with regard to truancy initiatives and home educating families. Lize Stevens will liaise with Local Contacts with regard to provision of appropriate letters.

Rob Wade (London, Middx.) has prepared a Deregistration Leaflet. This will be added to the website, sent to Local Contacts and included in both the next LEA bulletin and new members’ pack. It is also available to all members on request – see notice elsewhere in this issue. A Scottish equivalent will also be produced.

Work on the affiliation of local groups to EO is continuing. Anyone interested in contributing to this should contact Jill Fisher (Leics.)

There was discussion about attempts by benefits agencies to persuade single home-educating parents into work. Rowenna Williams (Wales, Clwyd) is collating information on this and an item will appear in the newsletter.

Jacqui Houlding (Cheshire) reported that EDEXCEL wishes to liaise with EO about IGCSEs without coursework. Jacqui and Sarah Cook (Cumbria) will follow this up.

EO made a formal response to the government’s Green Paper “Every Child Matters”. This is available on the website (www.education-otherwise.org) or from Jill Fisher. The group that worked on this are looking at more responses to government misrepresentation of home education.

Janet Simpson (Lincs.) brought to the meeting information about research into home education among people of colour. It appears that there is little awareness of the option of home education among this group. A website (www.diversity-otherwise.tk)* has been established as a

* *may be .uk at end ... sorry no time to check. Anne R.*

preliminary to bringing information about home education to people of colour. There was further discussion about diversity and it was agreed that EO will seek funds for specific projects. Martine Frampton (Gloucs.) will co-ordinate.

Chris Harper (Herefordshire) offered to hold an archive of all official copies of EO publications. Anne Rix will co-ordinate the updating of EO information and leaflets.

It was agreed that EO should adopt a more inclusive policy by seeking venues for meetings and gatherings that are accessible to all. Nikki Kenward (Shropshire) has offered to liaise with organisers, and Julie Ridley (Manchester) will collate information with a view to drafting a check-list. Interested members are invited to contact Julie with views and suggestions.

Brief Extract of the Report to the Meeting about LEA Work

Lots of EOers understand basic H.E. law these days – this hands-on learning is the only way to discover how it works in practice, and to develop expertise in strategies to combat what is sometimes ignorance and miscommunication, and sometimes downright prejudice and manipulation. At the same time we have to keep in mind the longer term need to develop good personal relationships with the LEA and educate them, rather than humiliating them so that they take it out on the next home educator they meet. This work is best done locally whenever possible, and Anne Wade is always glad to support experienced EOers, whenever a case arises, to learn how to offer this support to local members.

Ian Dowty, an experienced home educating solicitor, has also been on standby in some cases. However, it is very rare for a case to come to crisis point if a member seeks support at an early stage and resists LEA bullying.

Surrey: Judith Wright, supported by Anne Rix, has been working with Croydon LEA to improve the literature they send to home educators. Also in this area there have been a number of threats from LEAs to involve Social Services. Anne Wade has offered to support members to co-ordinate and prevent this.

Cumbria: Sarah Cook has been working with local members and the LEA to improve the LEA's documents, policies and practice and supported local members who have been harassed.

In Devon Anne Rix has met and corresponded with officials from Devon LEA and succeeded in getting them to make a number of changes to the literature they send out to HE families.

Deregistration leaflet: Rob Wade, at Gary Podmore's request, has written a leaflet detailing briefly and formally the legal position on deregistration. It is intended for the membership pack, so that new members who are illegally refused deregistration have something authoritative to give the Head and scare them into complying with the law. If you would like a copy, email anneandrob@onetel.net.uk for a Word version, or send an A5 SSAE with additional 2nd class stamp to Anne Wade (London – Middlesex.)

The Enquiries Team are dealing with a lot of problems immediately themselves, and passing on anything they cannot handle. There is concern at the number of calls with EWO or LEA stating "There are other issues involved" without saying what those issues are. It is usually found that there is no substance to this but families may need support to deal with this. In one South Wales family, the children have been put on the "at risk" register for alleged isolation. Ian Dowty is now involved, as Social Services are still behaving unreasonably.

To anyone else who has been doing similar work: sorry you've been missed out – please will you share it with us?

Anne Wade

IMPORTANT NEWS FOR LOCAL CONTACTS

EO's Local Contacts (LCs) do an essential job. They form the front line of information and support for families choosing or considering home education.

Part of our job as Local Contact Co-ordinators is to support, encourage and appreciate LCs and the work that they do. The number of LCs means that it's impossible for us to have one-to-one contact with them on a regular basis.

Too many LCs are working in isolation, are overburdened and are not getting the help that they deserve. We think that LCs need to connect with each other, share their experiences and be able to delegate some of their work.

Our plan is to hold a series of one-day workshops for LCs in particular geographical regions so that they can get to know each other, share information about what works well, have an opportunity to say where they struggle with the work and think together about how to make it easier, more efficient and enjoyable.

We'd then like to establish a co-ordinator for each of these regions to act as a reference person for all LCs in his/her region and to communicate regularly with each other and with the Local Contact Co-ordinators. We envisage on-going regional meetings facilitated by these co-ordinators and occasional national meetings of the regional co-ordinators with the national local contact co-ordinators.

The following series of workshops are also open to EO members who may be considering becoming LCs and to those with an interest in finding out what the role means and how they can assist their LC.

LCs are free to attend as many workshops as they like but may claim travel expenses only for the workshop in their own region.

The Schedule

22nd May 2004 **EAST MIDLANDS** (Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire)

2nd August 2004 **SOUTH MIDLANDS** (Berkshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire)

18th September 2004 **WEST MIDLANDS** (Birmingham, Warwickshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire)

23rd October 2004 **NORTH WEST ENGLAND, NORTH WALES** (Cheshire, Lancashire, Manchester, Merseyside, Gwynedd, Clwyd, Powys)

18 - 25th November 2004 (at the National Gathering in Melrose) **SCOTLAND** (Borders, Dumfries and Galloway, Lothian, Fife, Central Tayside, Strathclyde, Grampian/Aberdeenshire, Highlands and Islands)

22nd January 2005 **LONDON**

26th March 2005 **SOUTH OF ENGLAND** (Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Avon, Bristol)

23rd April 2005 **YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE**

28th May 2005 **SOUTH WALES** (Glamorganshire, Ceredigion, Gwent, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire)

20th August 2005 **SOUTH WEST** (Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset)

24th September 2005 **SOUTH EAST** (Sussex, Surrey, Kent, Isle of Wight, Channel Islands)

22nd October 2005 **NORTH** (Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham, Cleveland, Isle of Man)

26th November 2005 **EAST** (Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex)

PLEASE NOTE: The LC for **Northern Ireland** will be contacted to discuss which venue would be the most convenient for them to attend. If you live in Ireland and wish to attend one of the above workshops please contact the local contact coordinators (contact details in the back of the newsletter) to discuss these arrangements.

Keith Charlton/Lize Stevens, Local Contact Co-ordinators

Child Protection

The child protection situation within EO continues to be good, thanks to the care and vigilance of most of the members. Our concern is to establish structures to keep children safe during EO activities. Most EO parents we talk with are keen to discuss these issues and keep themselves well informed. Many local groups have met to consider the draft child protection guidelines (printed in the Handbook) and to agree policies tailored to their circumstances. The key safeguards continue to be that: *within EO gatherings parents keep responsibility for their children at all times unless they specifically delegate it to someone they trust; and that no adult should be alone with a child who is not their own.*

We have not heard any over-reactions to these issues for some time. However, we are still concerned that occasionally there is a member who undermines the safety of a local group through taking an unrealistic view of human behaviour. It is not that these people are careless, but rather that they may be idealistic and believe that if everyone is trusted then they will be trustworthy. While this is a sound principle in educating our children, it cannot be applied to all adults, who may themselves have been damaged and must not be given any opportunity to pass this damage on.

This problem has decreased considerably over the fifteen years EO has been working actively on child protection, but we did have one example recently. A local contact was criticised for making a complaint to the police child protection team about someone she felt was targeting the group. She had been phoned by a man who said he was setting up a private school with an ethos he hoped would appeal to home educators. He asked for access to the local group to try and sell it to them.

This is a not infrequent irritant, with variations such as joining EO in order to contact members directly. At one time it became so common that we were forced to decide that misusing the contact list for gain would lead to terminating the membership, as well as other measures in certain cases.

This local contact quite properly refused, telling the man she did not feel his school was relevant for EO members as they had chosen to take responsibility themselves for the education of their children. He asked if he could have her address to send her more information, and she refused. He asked if he could come round for coffee to explain his plans, and she refused. At this point she thought he was just a pushy salesman. Later he turned up unannounced on her doorstep, saying he'd just dropped by for coffee because he had something he wanted to tell her - having obtained her address from a local member by deception. He made her very uneasy and she sent him packing.

She discussed the situation with the EO child protection group, and was supported to contact the local police child protection team. Her decision was confirmed when the man rang and said he had got a group together, and would she like him to come and collect her little boy to join them in an educational activity session? The police agreed that no-one, and especially not a teacher in the current climate of awareness, could behave so inappropriately out of ignorance, in particular in suggesting taking a child in his car without a chaperone. They confirmed the local contact's misgivings and the way she had handled the situation, and asked her to ensure that all local EO members were fully informed of the potential danger.

Even if some people feel that a local contact may be overly suspicious, the safety of our children is paramount and it is important that we all support local contacts in this sort of situation. The point is not whether or not the man in this account actually did have ulterior motives: his behaviour was unacceptable in any case. Whenever there is some uncertainty in a situation we must always ensure that the balance is in favour of keeping children safe, even if that means that we may be judged unfair to an adult.

Jane Bathgate (Borders), Janet Simpson (Lincs), Jenny Stevens (W Sussex), Anne Wade (London - Middx)

Please contact us if you would like to discuss any child protection issues.

A Note About Security

Someone had placed the Children's Pages of the newsletter in their recycling bin – and then had second thoughts. Members are asked to be careful of how they dispose of the Children's Pages and the Contact List so that there is no risk to others' security by private information falling into the wrong hands.

For similar reasons, organisers of local events who wish to use the national Regional Diary to contact EO members in their area should be aware that the newsletter can be seen by people outside of EO (it's in some public libraries, for instance). Where full information as to date, time and venue is given for an event or activity, it would therefore be possible for outsiders to turn up and – even if they did not make themselves known at the time – to use the opportunity to target individual member families.

Please would all local events organisers consider revising their Regional Diary entries to provide the basic minimum of information necessary for a new member to contact their local group and find out what activities are available. A general statement about the type of activities organised, plus contact details for organiser/s or local newsletter/events list should be sufficient for a new family to obtain the information they need.

Anne Rix

Problems with deregistration?

When you take your child out of school in **England and Wales**, you need to see that he or she is *deregistered*. You should be able to do this simply by writing to the school. If you tell them that the child is receiving education otherwise than at school, they must delete the child's name from the admission register. This relieves you of your duty to send the child to school.

Deregistration information sheet

Unfortunately, not all schools are equally aware of the legal basis of deregistration. To make it easier to explain this to them, an **information sheet** is now available. It consists of a single sheet of A4 printed on both sides. One side gives the legal basis of deregistration with references; the other sets out the relevant legal texts. The sheet is intended for LEAs and schools in England and Wales.

How to get a copy

To get the sheet in the form of a **Word document** (Word 97 and above), please send an email to

<database@education-otherwise.org> or to

<anneandrob@onetel.net.uk>.

(Before printing, you should check that each page starts with the title *Deregistration* and ends with a horizontal line followed by a single line in italics. You should print page 2 on the back of page 1.)

To get one or more **paper copies**, please send a stamped self-addressed A5 envelope plus an extra second class stamp for each copy to Rob Wade (London – Middlesex).

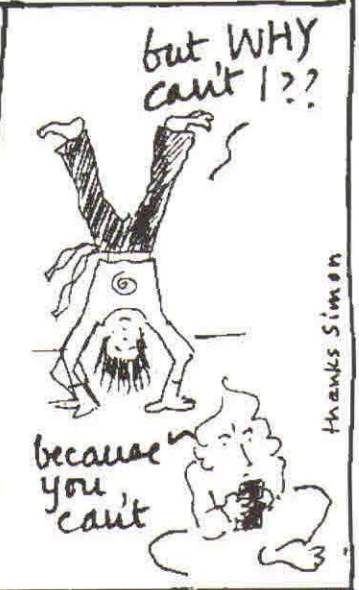
Rob Wade

EDUCATING ARCHIE The career advisor



what an idyllic scene readers! let us tune in to their Tuesday morning debate..

TUESDAY LIST
socks!
sums?



Diary of a Home Educating Nobody

It's Wednesday. We've been cloistered in the house since the weekend. Moods are low. Irritation stakes are high.

I'm wondering: should I risk it?

It's not often we get this housebound. We're most likely to have been off somewhere, at some point during the day, seeing people or a trip to the swimming pool or library. In fact, it's often the case that we're having to actually book time to stay at home and achieve something!

But this week's been different and suddenly I find "the Mood" has set in. This is when we all find ourselves arguing with each other over the silliest things. I mean - I couldn't care less whether the Cornflakes are stale, how they got stale, or who's fault it is. But for pity's sake could we discuss something more challenging than the state of the Cornflakes, before I go mad!

Thus I'm wondering whether I should risk it.

When the youngest starts irritating the cat, yet again, and the teenager starts irritating the youngest, yet again, and I start irritating them both - yet again, I decide to pluck up courage and suggest it!

"Come on - we'll go for a walk."

G - r - o - a - n!

The body language of my teenager couldn't be clearer than if she'd rubber stamped the words 'disdain' 'disinterest' and 'apathy' all over herself. The youngest has a more logical brain and concocts a recipe of excuses.

"My favourite programme's on in a minute." (Isn't that always the case?) "Teddy doesn't want to!" "I'm too tired." "My little finger hurts."

"Well never mind darling, you can walk on your feet instead of your little finger." I try, but it doesn't work at raising a smile.

"But it's wet and muddy, my jeans'll get dirty. Why can't we go out on a nice day?" groans the teenager, ever conscious of her outfit. I'm silently thinking that by the time she's changed her outfit, as she'll no doubt have to do, the season will have turned anyway and it'll be high summer not April!

Youngest is still clutching teddy. I try and not let this barrage of ground fire get me down while gathering coats.

"Come on, teddy can come too. I'll make him a sling."

I see I'm winning here so I try another tack with the teenager.

"You know how much the exercise does you good. And it's wonderful for your complexion!"

She groans again, but rolls off the settee to go and get changed. We get teddy in the right position: this takes two attempts as this idiot put him so he couldn't see out first off - silly me!

And while we stand waiting, with me trying to keep the enthusiasm going, I rapidly start to think; why do I bother?

Then we get outside and get going and I remember why. The miracle happens.

Within five minutes the teenager, who's walking at a suitable distance from an annoyingly right parent, is singing! Yes - singing. Yes - the one who'd been moaning about her outfit! The youngest is skipping along - forgotten her tiredness, and her little finger.

Within ten minutes the teenager is chatting to me happily about all the things in life she's got to look forward to and how great everything is. She's smiling and rosy. The youngest is chatting

happily to teddy telling him all about everything she can see, just as someone did for her!

Within fifteen minutes everyone is laughing and happy and joking with one another, me included, and there's absolutely no sign of "the Mood"!

It happens every time. It never fails. It's my antidote to the indoor doldrums. It's amazing. All we need to do is just get outside.

It is so easy in our culture of comfort and safety and easy indoor entertainment to forget one of our basic human needs. In fact, I think it is a human need that is never even recognised. And that's the need to be outdoors. Under the sky.

I know that sunshine and daylight are recognised treatments for the condition Seasonal Affective Disorder, where sufferers become depressed if not getting enough time under natural light. But that aside, I believe we all become moody and irritable, particularly children, if we are cloistered inside for too long. I believe we all have a need for regular doses of daylight, fresh air and outdoor space. Although many are reluctant to acknowledge the fact, especially if the weather's not that inviting!

Yet it doesn't really matter if we are in the country or in the city, it still seems to work the same.

We are very lucky to live in an environment where we are surrounded by wide-open spaces. But when we spend time in the city I still notice the same lift in our moods as soon as we step out onto the street - after all - it is still under the same sky. Even a brisk walk along the pavement changes the mood dramatically. And most cities have accessible places to take children to let off steam.

Which was all that was needed. For me too! I'm not too proud to run and skip if the need takes me! Despite the children groaning with embarrassment.

When we get back, the outfit gets changed back again and the teenager may flop back down with her book on the settee once more, and the youngest may sit with Ted in front of the television. But they have roses in their cheeks, contentment on their faces, and no one is irritating anybody.

Bliss! Only one thing left to do - put the kettle on and join them!

(name and address supplied)

A response to 'Diary of a Home Educating Nobody,'

(with apologies to K.A. Applegate, author of The Animorphs series)

After reading the Diary of A Home Educating Nobody in Issue no 156 I felt I had to put fingertip to keyboard. You see, I had had a bad day. A really bad day.

It started in the usual way, getting up before Peter to read my email. But he woke after I had only read one. About how Charles Clark wanted to get early identification and intervention available for kids with Autistic Spectrum disorders. I identified my son's autism early enough, but nobody listened to me. And I don't want intervention, I want support. Intervention implies interference. I don't want interference, I want someone to do the shopping, walk the dog, cut the grass, and all the other things I can't do as a single parent with a home educated autistic son. Not a good start to the day.

So my son wanted me to read the rest of the Animorphs book to him that needed to go back to the library. So I did, but then he wanted the watch the tape that had to go back. So I let him.

But then he wanted to do a thousand other things. So I didn't let him. Not this time. This always happens when we need to go into town. There is always just one more thing that he wants to do. He hates going into town. Hates the crowds, the noise, the smells, the waiting around for the idle chit chat that adults do when shopping.

But I didn't stand for it. I made him go, with me now in a horrible mood.

Oh, and did I tell you that they didn't deliver the Action Man comic again. I had to ring them. You'd think that they could remember to deliver a monthly magazine, wouldn't you. 'Is it monthly' she asks? 'Did you want it monthly?' How often did she think we wanted it? Every other week and twice on Sundays?

I was fuming by the time we got into the car.

You should never drive when you are angry. It makes you speed. Luckily the cops weren't out today. It also doesn't help when trying to find a place in an over filled car park on a Friday morning.

We had a very quiet shop. I wasn't speaking to my son. The one person in the world I loved more than the world itself.

After half an hour of checking out the charity shops I had calmed down enough to speak civilly to him. We ventured into the library. I told him we were never getting a video out of the library again. He agreed, but came up to me with the only Animorphs book they have that we haven't read. I couldn't refuse him. After all, I can just keep renewing the book over the internet so we wouldn't have to bring it back.

Then there was the supermarket. We didn't need much but I was determined not to come back to this place for a long time. I bought every double licker Ice-lolly they had in the shop. Every White Chocolate Chip Cookie.

We made it through the checkout, just. He was simmering, and so was I. We had to get out of there, and fast.

At the door they had a counter set up to give out the new loyalty cards. 'I can't stop. I have an Autistic child. Let me have one to fill out at home.' 'No Madam,' came the reply. 'Head office says you have to do it here. I can't let you leave with the card.'

I slammed the trolley into reverse and went to the manager. 'I have a disabled son,' I shouted. 'I can't fill this in now. That is discrimination. I'm complaining to head office.' I slammed out of there, with a curiously quiet boy by my side. Maybe I should be that angry more often. Home. Again in silence.

He offered to watch a film. I was glad. I needed to get all this extra food into the deep freeze. And ring head office.

The woman in Somerfield customer services earned her money that day. Apparently I wasn't the only one to complain. She had already got on to the marketing department to tell them that customers should be allowed to take the forms home. They were going to contact all the branches as soon as possible. 'There was never any intention to discriminate against the disabled.' Well, she would have to say that. But she did put a form in the post for me.

Somehow, just being calmly listened to, having someone do something for me, calmed me down. I put the shopping away and had a late lunch. Peter even had something to eat with out fussing. He was still scared of my temper. But we were both calmer.

Later, during Blue Peter, I felt calm enough to sit beside him, as I usually do when he is watching TV. I took the EO NL with me. I nearly didn't. I nearly put it straight away unread.

But I didn't. I read it during the boring bits of Blue Peter.

I read it. The Diary of a Home Educating Nobody. That was what I was. A nobody. Someone who is ignored by the government and the health services. Someone who was ignored by the supermarket. Well, until I rang head office that is. Someone who was ignored by her son. The one person in the world I love more than the world itself.

I read this line: 'Because that's actually what it is about: perspective. About not letting one awful moment colour our view of years of successful time with our children.'

I burst into tears.

One of the advantages of having an autistic son is that they don't notice when their mother bursts into tears. They just keep right on watching Blue Peter. I didn't have to explain why. Don't think I could have articulated why.

But I felt better. I felt that finally someone understood. I had made contact.

After Blue Peter I was functioning normally again. We turned off the TV and settled into reading the latest Animorphs book. Settled back into home education, as we know it. Settled back into loving the one person in the world I love more than the world itself.

Jennifer Skillen E-mail: cyberbarn9@aol.com

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A Man Speaks

I'll never forget the night in the Spring of 2001, that my wife Winnie and I sat down to talk about home education for the first time. There I was, father of two girls Anna and Sophie (now 14 and 11 respectively), already beginning to wonder how to find the time to balance my growing business in personal development with my desire to be an active and involved father and partner. With a new book about men nearing publication and a growing list of clients and talks, I started off that conversation feeling sure that there was no way I could give even more time to my girls. After all, I worked from home, they were attending a Steiner school which was just five minutes walk, we spent hours together every day- why risk creating greater pressure?

The truth was that cracks were beginning to appear in the walls of their 'education'. Whilst it all looked superficially lovely, and there was certainly much more of a 'holistic' approach to their education than we had experienced in conventional schools, warning bells were sounding. For five years the girls had been very happy. We had adopted a policy of giving them freedom of choice as to whether they went to school or not. Interestingly they were unusual among their peers in hardly ever missing a day. However, when we started to hear comments such as 'I hate....various subjects' and even more worryingly 'I'm no good at...' or worst of all 'It was so boring because the teacher spent most of the lesson trying to control the class...' we both knew that it was time to listen more closely to what our girls were really saying.

Quite simply, our eldest (then 11) was asking if we could try home education - which was how we came to be having that conversation that night. As we talked, we started to realise that core values such as honesty, integrity, happiness, self-respect, trust and self-worth, were becoming of prime importance to us in our lives but were seemingly of decreasing importance in the school environment in comparison to the learning of more abstract and academically oriented subjects. Working as someone who helps adults to create greater present-moment awareness and 'uncreate' the negative conditioning of childhood, I now understand these core values to be a necessary part of any education. A happy, balanced individual is by definition 'rich' in life, regardless of wealth, status or 'education'. It is not what someone does that is important. It is who someone is - their sense of self. And Anna and Sophie's sense of self was beginning to be weakened in their school environment by the expectations and projections of teachers and pressure from their peers to conform in ways that did not reflect their true selves.

Throughout this discussion, it became clearer to both of us that if we were really going to 'walk our talk' we needed to offer the girls the freedom to home-school (whatever that meant!). I needed to trust that the development of my 'business' would fit in around my helping to meet the family's needs as opposed to the family's needs fitting in around my business. For me this meant a quantum shift in my life. I'm sure that many men and women in our work/money oriented society would understand that this is a scary step to take.

But I couldn't stop myself from becoming increasingly excited about what home-educating might mean to us as a family and at 1.30am, by which time we had of course both become experts on the subject, we were all ready to go and wake the children and tell them they couldn't go back to school even if they wanted to! (Fortunately we slept on that one and decided just to 'sit' with the whole idea for a few days while the implications sank in.)

Our enthusiasm didn't wane, in spite of my uncertainty as to how this would fit in with life. We discussed the option with the girls and received two very different responses. Anna, our eldest, was very excited; Sophie however was initially horrified at the thought of being at home and leaving her friends but at the same time didn't like the idea of remaining at school without her older sister. We told her that no decision needed to be made immediately and that she would not be made to do anything she didn't want to. This reassured her. She returned to school and saw it with new eyes – observing more things that she was not happy about (with no influence from us – we truly wanted them to make whatever decision felt best to both of them and have tried to act unconditionally throughout).

By the end of the summer term Sophie had moved her position entirely and was now happy to give home-schooling 'a go'. We took them out of school provisionally for a year and held our breath...

Two and a half years later they're still out of school. Two and a half years later and I find myself scratching my head because somehow I seem to have just as much time as I ever had – in fact I possibly have more time now. Perhaps one of the main reasons for this is the relaxed routine we now enjoy as a family in our new-found freedom from the limiting strictures of the school day.

As importantly as being able to 'have a life', my feelings of self-worth as a man, father, husband, playfellow to my children etc have increased beyond all measure. How much is that worth? Priceless I believe. In fact the more this 'one year' experiment continues, the clearer I am that home education is every bit as much for the parent(s). It is probably one of the best therapy courses in existence. And of course, the happier and more fulfilled mum and dad feel, the more likely it is that the family environment will become the safe, nurturing, uplifting space in which children can fulfil their highest potential.

Where will it go? I haven't got a clue. This is a classic case of a 'work in progress'. And for once I'm okay with that, which is no small thing considering my conditioning to achieve 'results'. At last I'm not needing to see an end result because I'm beginning to understand what many philosophers have written of – that life is all about the journey. And by challenging my ego to put up with the daily 'trivia' of playing with and learning alongside children, I am finally becoming a conscious participant on that journey.

A few points to end on:-

- 1) I received a public school education – Winnie went to a high-achieving grammar school. We both feel that Anna and Sophie have already experienced as many things relevant to "real life" in their two and a half years of home-ed as we did in our whole school careers.
- 2) Our families, almost without exception, believed us to be mad. Taking the decision was in many ways frightening, going against convention as it did. But somehow listening to our children and letting them guide us has given us the confidence to experiment. Doubters may well remain doubting for the rest of their lives (after all even if our girls become 'captains of industry' the argument can still be thrown at us of 'well yes, but imagine how much better they would have done if they had gone to school') – we have to learn to accept their judgements even if we don't agree with them.
- 3) People often think you need money for home-schooling – 'it's a middle class thing'. Well yes, we both had

middle class upbringings. But no, we do not have pots of money. Since 1996 we have been personal change consultants, until very recently on a donations-only basis. We have no savings, we don't own a house and we live literally from month to month. We try to trust that if we're following our hearts, if we are 'listening' to our truth, we'll get provided with what we need. We have not really wanted for anything as a family and home education has been anything but a drain on the family's resources.

4) I had heard it said that you can't stop a child learning and you can't stop a child being sociable. Now I'm one of the people saying it; the thing is, now I'm not quoting it from a book or a story, I'm simply speaking my truth based on my experience.

5) I feel that I am a more complete man as a result of entering even more fully into the world of children. I experience frustration, anger, tears, hurting, joy, elation and impatience at levels I had never been to before.

6) Home-schooling can involve a timetable, but it doesn't have to; it can involve a curriculum, but it doesn't have to; it can involve tutors, 'play dates', organised activities and meetings but it doesn't have to. Put simply - there are no rules and the only wrong way of doing it seems to be when we stop listening to our children and start to impose upon them the things that we think they need. They're the teachers, we're the pupils.

*Barry Durdant-Hollamby is the author of three books including The Male Agenda.
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New member's EO experiences

As new members and new home-educators, I thought our experiences so far might be of interest to families 'teetering on the brink' of taking a child out of school.

We had been thinking of taking the plunge more and more as SATs approached, but were galvanised into action on finding a plaintive little note on my pillow on the last night of the last Christmas holidays.

'Dear Mummy and Daddy, I'd like to start home-education tomorrow please, love Theo'

So, the next day 10-year-old Theo and I began our new routine. Very scary at first, but within a couple of days, I learned to relax and Theo seemed to have grown visibly, at least, 6 inches. He has become very self-assured, talkative and quite concentrated on his work. He also reads for pleasure (new!).

I have learned to 'go with the flow' and although we try to have a formal 'sums and writing' session in the morning, I try not to be too guilt-ridden if we snatch a walk on a sunny morning. At a concert recently, I found him writing character studies of 'The Famous Five' during the interval. This at 8.30p.m on a Saturday - so I reckon he puts the time in somehow.

Many thanks to the contributors to the December 2003 issue (especially 'Defining positive male gender roles'; 'Our adventures in France' and 'Go easy on Autonomy') - all three letters were decisive for us.

Theo (who was brought up in France and Germany, is trilingual but was seriously behind in the SATs race and, despite our best efforts, had a very poor self-image) is flourishing. It is like he was in such a thick defensive bubble that he couldn't even see out. It has been a joy to watch him blossom in such a spectacular manner.

My advice to parents thinking of home-education is 'Go For It!' If you are thinking about it constantly, it probably means the time is right anyway. I am sure Theo will go back into formal education one day - though perhaps not in England. But for the time being we are just enjoying discovering all sorts together.

Chris and Gill Clar, 6 Green Close, Cornworthy, Totnes, Devon TQ9 7HW Tel: 01803 732726

GCSEs or not?

Thank you to all of you who put together the EO newsletter and to all those who send in their letters. Everything else stops when it arrives and after we've finished reading I, personally, invariably feel a little bit stronger in my belief that we are on the right road (this unfortunately dissipates a bit over the next weeks until the next newsletter arrives). But we are now at a crossroads and would welcome contact with others who have reached and/or passed this point too.

My husband John and I started home education with our daughter Kelly in 2002, after she had an unpleasant first year of secondary school. Her brother Tristan (then 6 years) joined her a year later.

The first two years were wonderful: we did our own thing, following usually in great depth any subject that they had an inclination for. For example, Kelly became very interested in the Stone Age after her dad suggested she read the Jean Auel books. She immersed herself in the subject and, without knowing anything then of the Steiner approach to teaching, that topic spread over from history into geography, archaeology, crafts (she made some wonderful dioramas of stone age scenes) etc. and led to some great field trips

Later on, after we had read about Steiner Ed, John and I would see where the children's current main interest lay and then look at how other subjects could be covered by it.

Our son became interested in the Romans after playing the computer game 'Age Of Empires'. This was a brilliant topic for the Steiner approach (another was the topic of 'Christmas' - there were very few subjects that this didn't overlap). We took it and covered every other subject: for example, in Geography he looked at Italy and the countries the Romans once ruled; in maths he learnt the Roman numerals; in crafts he and his sister made wax writing tablets, models of Roman kitchens, Roman sandals, and a full Legionary's outfit; in languages he learnt some basic Italian and a little Latin; for cookery we had a go at some Roman recipes (but not dormouse stew!); and for field trips we joined English Heritage and went to numerous Roman Sites and re-enactments. This spring we are driving to Italy to visit Rome and Pompeii.

These were our happiest times, but now Kelly is 14 and if she were at school she would be considering which GCSEs to take. As a family we always said that if Kelly were to take GCSEs, we would aim to stagger them as one of our objections to state education is the pressure they put children under. But here we are at the decision time. If she decides to go for them it's the end of HE as we know it.

I am well aware that whatever I say about the taking of GCSEs or not can influence Kelly. Since I am ambivalent about them, I'm now seeing Kelly be that way too. Being ambivalent, how on earth can I help and guide her? If we encourage her to take some aren't we selling out to the very system we rejected (I know I still feel pressure to conform); but if she doesn't, how will a prospective employer be able to determine what she is capable of?

So we would be very grateful to hear from other home-eders who have passed this point. Did you opt for GCSEs or not? What factors helped form your decision one way or the other? How did this work out? Are you glad of your decision or do you think you made the wrong one? If you decided against GCSEs did you find this barred your son or daughter from a job/career they wanted? We would welcome emails or letters.

E.mail: jackie.snow1@ntlworld.com

Address: 1A Bloomfield Road, Darlington, Co Durham, DL36SA.

What do they do after they've been home educated?

Here's one example ...

I used to be home educated until I was 18 and went to college, though I'm not currently an EO member. I am now 26 and involved with the Nottingham radical social centre: www.veggies.org.uk/sumac, which is where the Notts Home Ed group meets. In the past I've been involved with setting up Manchester Social Forum.

Social Forums are meant to be sites of free discussion and also where people can plan to do stuff together. They are not organisations that people join, but rather places and events in which people take part. All decision-making is usually done on the consensus model rather than majority voting. They are based on the ideas of freedom from all forms of domination, on mutual aid, co-operation and respect.

The European Social Forum is coming - let's get involved!

At the European Social Forum (ESF) in Paris last year over 40,000 people came along from all over Europe to discuss the problems of the current world system and to put forwards alternatives to capitalism. In November 2004 it will be happening in London. I'm proposing that the Home Ed/Autonomous Ed movement organises some kind of event or space there.

The slogan of the European Social Forum is 'Another World is Possible': too often school - one of the basic problems in our society - gets left out of the picture. Too many people in the campaigning movements just want to change the curriculum but keep the school. The London ESF will have events, workshops, music, films and talks covering issues like environmental damage, racism, sexism, war and the movements that have grown up against them. I think that Home/Autonomous Ed should also be on the agenda.

So what next?

We need to start talking about what we want to put on. Please get in touch with me if you want to suggest anything or want to help form an organising group. You can email me on saddleback@union.org.za

There's more info about the past social forum events plus a critical discussion of them here:

<http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/free/wsf/index.htm>

Cardiff Social Forum: <http://www.cardiffsocialforum.org.uk/>

London Social Forum: <http://www.londonsocialforum.org/FrontPage>

Manchester Social Forum: <http://www.manchestersocialforum.org.uk/>

Sheffield Social Forum: <http://www.sheffieldsocialforum.org/>

Loukas Christodoulou, 11 Foxhall Rd, Forest Fields, Nottingham, NG7 6NA, 0115 962 0839

Statementing Procedures and Home Education

Anyone out there whose children have been in school and were statemented, take note!

My son William, 14, has been home educated (very happily) for four years. I thought I'd heard the end of the statementing process.

Then in January I received a letter from our Local Education Authority, saying that now William is 14 they are doing a transition statement review. They invited me to a meeting before a panel of people (educational psychologist, health rep., Connexions rep. and the local S.E.N. Education Officer).

I naturally 'phoned our local County Hall and spoke to the S.E.N. Officer, who said they were happy just to have a talk about Connexions, my future plans, etc. I might have gone if our inspector could make it, but he wasn't available. I didn't feel it was fair that I had to answer to anyone other than on a one-to-one basis, but at that point I didn't say anything.

The next day I received a letter from the educational psychologist saying she'd like to visit us at home to do some literacy/numeracy work, to help them decide whether to carry on with the statement even though it was so long in the past. I felt a bit pressurised, so I 'phoned a few numbers to find out about the legality of the statement process - thank goodness I did! I'll return to the legal facts later. I rang for an appointment with the psychologist to do some work at a local venue - that was as far as I was prepared to go. William wasn't worried, but didn't enjoy it either. But at least it's over with before our inspector's next visit.

After seeing the psychologist, who was happy with William's progress, I wrote to all parties concerned to say that I would not be attending the meeting. I did, however, indicate my future plans, etc. for William to attend a local college, and say that I would possibly get in touch with Connexions at a later date although we did not wish to do so at present. Had I gone to the meeting I dare say they would have put me on the spot; but so far I have heard nothing so I presume they are happy.

With regard to the legalities of the LEA doing a transition statement review, it is entirely optional. However, if they are going to do a statutory statement, you have to participate. If it had been the latter, I would have insisted on seeing people on a one-to-one basis. Anyway, thank goodness it's all over.

I had to find out the full facts on the statementing process, otherwise I wouldn't have known what was optional and what wasn't. Should anyone be in the same situation then hopefully this letter will help with the facts - it's quite costly to do all that enquiring by telephone. At least you won't be in the dark should you ever receive a similar letter; this is the price you pay if your child had a statement while in school.

Regarding William's school career, with the help of hindsight I wish he'd come out a year earlier. Things were okay in Infants; it was in Junior school that difficulties occurred, especially bullying. What annoys me is that there wasn't anyone at his school who helped me into home education. School is all right for some, but not for all children - thank goodness I did the right thing for my son. There were some nice guys from his school, who keep in touch regularly; the rest aren't worth worrying about. Most people accept you for what you are. William is lucky to have an opportunity to do home education, and what's more my family are understanding over home education, especially as school didn't work out in the long term.

Julie Burgess, E.Yorks (full address supplied)

Getting Funding for an under-16 at College

I thought there might be other parents out there who could benefit from hearing the saga of my son's college place.....

James has been home-educated for most of his life, he's very bright but also dyspraxic, which was quite a challenge for schools but no problem at all at home. In Sept, '02 he was 13 and wanted to take a couple of GCSEs, so I enrolled him for Maths and English at our local FE college, on courses aimed mainly at adults. There was an hour's lecture each week, for each subject, and if James had been over 18 it would have cost us £19/course. 16-18 year-olds are free, of course. For us, it cost £250/course - extortionate, but a way in. When James decided he wanted to do more courses, and in particular a National Diploma course that the college offers, but that would require a minimum of 4 GCSEs for entry, (including Physics which is not on offer as FE), I decided I had to find funding from somewhere.

Last March I started talking to County Hall about routes to funding. I was wary at first, because we're not registered with them, and I thought I might be opening a can of worms, but although the first department I spoke to (and was refused by) "informed" me to the Inspectors, and I received a number of phone calls suggesting they might be able to help me if I invited them to meet James, they finally took "no" for an answer and left us alone again - they knew what I knew, which is that they have no resources to offer us, so there was no point in meeting.

Altogether I spoke to 8 different departments within the LEA (Somerset), and was refused by all of them. We'd chosen to home-ed so now we had to pay for it. I also spoke to several of the local secondary schools, to see whether James could enrol there and still work from home. One school said they would accept him as a student and let him work at SCAT (the college), but not until Sept. 2004 because it would take that long for them to get capitation for him: most refused to discuss anything except James attending full-time - even to the extent of having to repeat the Maths and English he would already have passed, in order to "treat him like everyone else" and "help with his socialization" - that last phrase, by the way, was a euphemism for acting as an unpaid classroom assistant, the expectation being that helping the other kids with the work would somehow benefit James too. Personally I felt it was setting him up for bullying, but then, I'm just a parent, not an "education professional", so presumably I know nothing at all...

Quite by chance I had heard of an organization called the Learning and Skills Council, who told me (through intermediaries, because they wouldn't speak to me officially) that they had funding for 14-19 year-olds, and that could include paying James' fees at college. So I went back to the LEA and asked them to request funding from LSC. They refused, saying that LSC provide funding for specific purposes, rather than individuals.

By now I had spoken to the college, saying that James wanted to take the diploma but we were finding the GCSEs hard to access. I met with the head of faculty for the course James wanted to do, who interviewed James, got references from his course tutors, and said he'd accept him on the course without the necessary qualifications, but it would cost about £1000/year (2 year course). So I went to see my M.P.

I had discovered that there were a number of under-16s at the college, who'd all been excluded from school. I was told that if James had been disruptive instead of ill as a result of "schooling", not only would he be able to take any college course he wanted, free of charge, but also we'd have been given a grant for tutors for him over the past x years. I saw no reason why we should pay for something that every other child gets as a right, and luckily neither did our M.P. He told me it would cost about £4,500/year to have James at school, so the County should be grateful to get away with just £1000/year at college! He wrote to the LSC asking them to intervene, and promised more embarrassing-to-the-LEA action if that didn't work.

Then we waited. It was August by now, and term was due to start in just a few weeks. Meanwhile, the college threw a spanner in the works by saying that "best practice" meant they would have to employ someone to act as James' pastoral support, so the fees would now be £10,000/year! When I pointed out that he'd been at the college for a year already with no pastoral support they were shocked - no-one had told the under-16s crowd that he was on campus, apparently. So they scrapped the extra fees, but then said that he had to have enough GCSEs, they wouldn't make an exception for a 16-year-old so couldn't do it for a 14-year-old. We were introduced to a lady who promised to be James' support tutor if he needed one, and with just a few days remaining before the start of term she contacted the LSC direct and was told that they would definitely fund James' place if the LEA refused, but they would need to see a copy of the refusal letter. This was enough for the college to allow James to enrol again, and he's now doing another 3½ GCSEs, and AS Maths, with a guaranteed place for the Diploma next year as long as he passes everything. Yvonne, James' tutor, also arranged for him to be given a lap-top to let him type notes in his lectures, as his typing speed is marginally better than his writing speed, and a lot less tiring for him. (He'll also get extra time during the exams, something I negotiated with them last year, through the Special Needs dept.)

It has taken another term to get the funding finalised. The LEA wouldn't put a refusal in writing, so now, finally, they are paying James' fees themselves, through their Lifelong Learning Directorate. Altogether, it's taken 10 months to achieve, but the door is now open for any other family in Somerset to get course fees paid for their under-16s, and hopefully for others across the country to put pressure on their own local authorities, to achieve a similar result. So if you have a child who'd like to attend college next September, start making waves!

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FREE - THE RED BOX

This is a free resource pack available from **Inland Revenue**. It gives a simple overview of tax and public spending. Although recommended for 11-16 year olds it is written in such a way as to also be suitable for younger children as an excellent way of explaining about taxation. The pack includes an A4 48 booklet, posters and a video all in a red box. My 10 year old was immediately interested in the posters and was astounded by how much the government was paying for the health service, education etc. A lot of effort has gone into making the resource fun to use and I am sure we will find it an excellent introduction to this subject.

There is a supporting web site www.redbox.gov.uk

The only criticism I have is that we requested the box months ago and it has only just arrived. Apparently not many are produced and it would be easier to obtain if you ordered it for a group. For your box email Redbox@edcoms.co.uk or use the feedback form on the Red Box website. If it does not come contact Neil Ross, Project Editor, Educational Communications 020 7401 4011 as he was the person who eventually got mine sent!

COMPETITION PAGE

Hi and welcome to our new bi-monthly competition. In each newsletter there will be different prizes on offer for the winner.

This issue's prize is a year's subscription to the 'Learn Premium' website. If you aren't lucky enough to be the winner then fear not! - The subscription is available to all EO members for the cost of £15, subscriptions run from Oct - Oct no matter when you join. For more details please contact Jill Fisher or look it up on EO website at:-

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

There will be a different prize on offer each issue (any thoughts on what sort of things you would like to see, would be gratefully received.) Not all the prizes on offer will be internet based, so as to make prizes available to all :o)

This competition is not open to members of the EO council, the puzzle compiler or their immediate family. Judge's decision will be final. Please send all entries to: Education Otherwise Competition, 79 Cumberland Avenue, Cleveleys, Lancashire FY5 2DS.

Winner will be contacted by post or email, and announced in the next newsletter issue.

Closing date is 30 April 2004

Tracy

Home WORDSEARCH Education

M A G R E N I E T S S H B E V O K E
U D R N T J H T J U O J C O L S D B
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MUSICAL
STEINER
TEACH

LETTERS PAGES

Thank you

I have just submitted an M.Ed entitled 'Deschooling Twenty Five Years On'. My thanks to everyone in EO who helped with this.

Once passed (I hope!) by Hull University, I will leave an abstract with Anne and Rob Wade. I interviewed early EO families and found that, despite wide variation in family size, occupation, lifestyle and original reasons for home educating, all interviewees had found the experience to be **very** positive and rewarding. The home educated 'children' (now adult) were mostly graduates and/or employed in alternative/creative occupations.

Families considering deschooling may find my work just one more little piece of evidence which could help them make their decision.

Anne Gillespie, 77 Desmond Avenue, Hull HU6 7JX Tel: 01482 445590

E-mail: annegillespie48@hotmail.com

Steiner-style group

We are starting a Steiner-style group for young children, involving imaginative play, craft activities, celebrating seasons and festivals without any religious bias, so children of different religions or no religion can play together in a small peaceful group without stereotypes or guns and sword play.

The aim is for children to experience childhood, explore, imagine and celebrate life, learning to be kind to each other and the world around us.

If you would like more information or would be interested in coming to our group, please call Hilary on (01508) 518870.

Hilary Woolf, Holmwood, 137 Yarmouth Road, Ellingham, Nr Bungay, Suffolk NR35 2PG

House swap

M and I were wondering if any EOers out there would fancy a house swap for a week or 4-5

days in late May or June? We have a 3-bedroom estate-setting village house near Ashford, Kent, and would be happy to travel up to 250 miles. We have a great appreciation of our county and so would be able to point you in the right direction according to your interests and ideas.

So that the whole experience is a little more personal, how about a combined family lunchtime meal in each of the houses at the beginning and end of the experience? We are up for almost anywhere so contact us on 01233 820062 or meadhbh@supanet.com

Phil, M, Ro (14) & Daisy (4) Cook

Visits to EO families

'We are a home educating family who have recently acquired a caravan and are hoping to use it over the spring/summer to visit other home educating families as well as other friends, festivals, etc.

We are Emma (34), Ceinie (15), Megan (11), and Corryn (7). Emma is a musician with an interest in co-operative living, raw food, direct action, alternative health, plants, etc, Ceinie loves horses, drawing and painting, and meeting new friends, Megan loves watching TV, talking about interesting things, and making new friends, and Corryn is generally boisterous and loves getting muddy. We are all vegetarian, Emma has been following a raw food diet for nearly 4 years.

We are keen to broaden our horizons, and meet new people. We currently live at Stepping Stones Housing Co-operative, in the Wye Valley, if you want to see where we live then visit www.highburyfarm.freeserve.co.uk.

If you want to get in touch, please email us at seedsolve@msn.com, or phone 01600 719629, or write to Highbury Farm, Redbrook, Glos, NP25 4LX.

Emma Jackson, Ceinie, Megan, and Corryn

Funding for Learning Web Sites

Is there anyone out there with ideas about web sites for children or family learning, that they would love to be able to create?

I have spoken to a web design company who would like to actively partnership such a scheme and would help obtain funding.

There is money currently available through the National Learning Network - Treacle Funding (£2,000 to £20,000) for forms of web or e-learning involving child learning or adult learning-to-learn or family learning resources. Current round two has application closing date of 7 May, but there are other sources of funds such as LSC or European Social Fund.

The trick is to fit your idea into the criteria for the funding and under the EO charitable umbrella.

For more information contact:

Priscilla Park Weir, Surrey

E-mail: priscilla@pypw.fsnet.co.uk

Funding ideas for local groups

The following plea recently appeared on the EO Business List:

'I'm really keen to find out how other people have gone about getting funding for their groups.'

Here's one response:

I've been working on this one too!! In the end, someone came up with this idea:-

'I have booked several group visits to a theatre, and every so many tickets you are given a free one. This has almost been a problem, i.e. what to do with the extra seat, and so far I have just shared out the money saved between the families who have gone, which has just amounted to a pound or so.

Anyway, on the last trip one of them said why not put it towards the craft days/postage costs.

This seems a good idea to me, as I have sent out about 3 newsletters to every local member on the contact list (unless I have the email address when I have used that) to just try and

make contact (!!)

Well - as long as I book theatre trips, this would probably cover the cost of a £15.00 donation for the church hall, which has a kitchen, is always heated, etc. - and go some way towards hiring/purchasing materials.

Although not an organised person in this respect, I am trying to keep some sort of record, and have been discussing with a couple of local families the possibility of opening an account, really just to cover ourselves.

I too would be very interested to hear what others do.'

PamParkin, Lancs. davidandpam@ntlworld.com

And it would be great to have a note of other similar initiatives for the newsletter, so the good ideas can spread around the whole EO community. Anne R (Retiring NL Co-ord).

New group in Welshpool, Powys

We are a new group that set up less than 12 months ago and have decided that it is time to get a regular meeting going.

We have booked the Youth and Community Centre in Welshpool because we feel that it is very accessible (walking distance from the train station and the bus stop) and because the venue is suitable for a large age range. The room we will use has a carpeted area for toddler play, a kitchenette, tables and chairs for craft etc., 3 computers, pool tables, table football and the use of the skateboard park.

Our first meeting was art and craft themed and was on Wednesday March 17th from 10am until 12.30pm. We also have planned a music and percussion workshop, a science workshop and a variety of outings. If you are interested please do come along, and if you would like to receive an email of the events let me know.

Julia Phillips (local contact for Powys)

Gwastad, Llanfyllin, Powys SY22 5HL

Tel: 01691 648152 E-mail:

gwastad@lycos.co.uk

Contacts in Portugal wanted

We have happily home educated in England for the last 13 years and will be moving to Portugal in the autumn where we will continue to home educate (I hope just as happily).

Firstly, I'd love to be in contact with other HERS in Portugal, all leads I have followed so far have gone nowhere. Has anyone any contacts in Portugal?

Secondly, we intend to spend the summer touring the UK, and would love to meet up with other HERS on our travels (as we prepare to leave we've realised just how little of our own country we've actually seen). We particularly want to visit the Highlands and some of the islands of Scotland, Northumberland, E. Anglia and Cornwall but we are interested in any suggestions for places we should not leave Britain without seeing.

Any suggestions of places to visit/invitations to meet and have a chat/offers of guided tours/offers of accommodation will be gratefully received.

*Sheila Mariscotti 01420 476749
sheila@mariscotti.freemove.co.uk*

Multicultural request

Croeso, Bienvenue, Willkommen, Welcome, Failte romhat, ... and all the ones I don't know!

EO is looking for members whose first language is something other than English. I would like anybody who wants to know more about home-educating to be able to chat and get more information in their mother tongue. If you would be willing to chat to families or just like to find out more about how you could help people of your own language and culture to access more information about home-educating please do get in contact with me.

We are looking into publishing the EO leaflets into other languages other than English and if you have any input about this I would also like to hear from you.

Rowenna (Details inside back cover of NL)

P.S. Ross – Please do carry on with the diary if you can, it's lovely – maybe you could collate it into a book soon like Chas Griffin did with his 'Smallholding Scene' from the back of the Organic Way magazine. There's nothing like real life experience to give you that little lift and a giggle needed on some days – Thank you!

Single parents and benefits

It seems that some benefit agencies/job centres are not being supportive of home-educating single parents. We'd love to hear about your experiences of benefit agencies and also your lives as single parents.

The first time I had my letter '*you must attend a meeting to discuss your plans to go back to work now your child is of school age*' ('School age'?), I hope this dies out like the 'Victorian age') I had a bit of a panic, just a little one! This was despite Jo (Borthen) priming me for it.

So in I went and virtually jumped down the interviewer's throat (in a confident, polite and professional manner!) about what courses I would like to go onto so I could become self employed and continue home-educating. I stressed how wonderful it was to H.E. and how I was still gaining skills on the Helpline and through my local group! When I eventually stopped to breathe the interviewer – looking rather shell-shocked – apologised that they couldn't put me on any courses and said that they just wanted to be there for me *if* I wanted to go back to work. They made it very clear that they would not take my benefits from me if I refuse to go to work or that they would pressurise me in any way to get work.

So much for the panic of having to fight my corner, but they had come across the rare breed "Home educator" before, so maybe my predecessors to the job centre had smoothed the path for any following in their footsteps – if so, 'thank you', whoever you are.

Since then I have been in touch with the benefit agency about these letters threatening withdrawal of benefit, and I was sincerely told

that they don't withdraw benefits from families just because they are H.E.ing. What they did stress was that it was very important to reply to these letters, even if it was just to change the date of the interview or to inform them that you are still H.E.ing.

So my advice is, when you get one of these letters, refrain from panicking! Go to the meeting or call them to rearrange it for a convenient time, explain to them that you are still H.E.ing and that working for someone else for money is not an option – and remember to claim for your travelling expenses at the end of the meeting!

Rowenna (Details inside back cover of NL)

Responses to 'Diary of a Home-educating Nobody'

Please Ross, keep writing!

I had just had one of those days too with the "s" word threatened! I don't want my children to see school as a threat. We never know if we may need their services! BUT it does tend to slip out at times. Thankfully not too often!

I think children do need to see and understand that not only do we like following the Home Ed route, but that it is a privilege that unfortunately not every child has the luxury of. Being together so much means a lot of give and take. That, although the main priority is their education, we also need to do the washing, cook meals, clean up, tidy rooms, get dressed.....

I wouldn't swap the life I have with my three at home but we do need support and time out and as you said, admit when things aren't on track. We can have some fantastic days. We can also have days when nothing seems to have been done except moan. A good sleep and a change of scene and we soon get back into enjoying each other.

On another point. We are in the process of setting up a Home Ed site. A project that the whole family are working on with the aid of my brother in Italy, (isn't the internet great for keeping in touch?) We would love to include

your article on the site, as it was such a good read. We are not trying to reinvent the wheel. During our research we have visited some great sites. It is just something that we were all interested in working on. Strike while the iron is hot as they say!! It is in its very early embryonic stages but if you or anyone would like to contribute we would be very appreciative.

Michelle Dickson

E-mail: micha.dickson@virgin.net

I am writing in response to Ross Mountney's request for comments on her 'diary'. I look forward to it every time I get the magazine. It always seems to strike a familiar cord. If we home educating parents are honest we all have days where we wonder what on earth we are doing, and days also where we feel so sure that it is right and it is hard not to berate our friends who are sending their children to school.

Although I live in Southport, which is a fairly big town, we don't seem to have been able to get anything going as regards regular meets. We have tried putting an ad in the libraries and local shops asking whether anyone would like to get together. We have also emailed, with no joy. So for me the magazine is a lifeline, as I don't really have contact with any other home educators. Every two months I read it and reassure myself that I am doing the best for my two girls.

So what I am trying to say in response to Ross' articles is, please don't stop writing them. You don't know how much good they do. Thank you so much.

Georgia Fowler,

mum to Candace (12) and Lara (9)

Tel: 01704 233957

In response to Ross Mountney's note at the end of this month's 'Diary of a home educating nobody': please, please, please, please, please, please, please, please, please, please, Keep it up! I need it, and I think a lot of other people need it too..... on those bad days it's nice to

know there's some one else going through the fighting and frustration, as well as the enjoyment and satisfaction of Home Ed..... Your pages are normally the first thing I turn to. Other than Educating Archie.....

Why don't you put a book together of all your tales? I know I'd buy it..... Keep up the good work!!!

Chloe Leckie, High Wycombe

E-mail: eden.planet53@talk21.com

I just wanted to let Ross Mountney know that "The Diary of a Home-educating Nobody" is very much appreciated and enjoyed. Personally, I love to read about other people's experiences, the 'not-so-good' as well as the good. Please, keep it coming!! :-)

I'm starting out on HE for the second time having two children with a 16 year age gap. My son was HEd for 8 years from the age of 8 - he's now 19, and my daughter is just 3. I have no intention of sending her to school and am finding a whole new set of challenges to face.

I never expected her to be so caught up with the idea of going to school when she's 'a bigger girl' especially seeing as how I've been taking her to local EO meetings since birth. I suppose it doesn't help though that we live on a corner between the 2 local primary schools and the only thing she knows about school is that the children play out and there is interesting looking play equipment in the playground!

I know it's the right decision though when my son walks in and takes his little sister off to 'do' some science. He spent all afternoon with her mixing different ingredients with vinegar so she could see all the different results - including exploding film canisters. Then, after writing a shopping list and sending me to the shop, they baked pies for tea together. Lovely!

It made me realise just how often other people had been eager to share with my son any skill or interest they may have had, specifically BECAUSE he was HEd. He's always learnt

things from enthusiastic people and he in his turn is passing on his enthusiasm to his younger sister. She, of course, loves the attention from her big brother and enjoys herself immensely. A positive learning experience all round!

*Helen Royston, 35 Brougham Road, Marsden
Huddersfield, Yorkshire Tel: 01484 841041
E-mail: hroyston@hotmail.com*

Invitation to camp.

We have been delighted so far with our experience of home educating our 5-year-old son and, particularly, with the welcome we have had from the Leicestershire E.O. group. We live in the countryside between Melton Mowbray and Leicester and would like to invite home educating families to take advantage of the 2 acres of rough land we have to camp in.

We keep sheep and the land borders on the River Wreake, which is suitable for canoeing a short way in our home made canoes. The house is a converted Victorian railway station and the railway line is still running so if you like trains it would suit you!

I was interested to read that someone in Skipton is arranging music sessions and thought I would mention that we have music and movement sessions nearby which a few of us enjoy, so if anyone else would like to join us for story telling, drama, dance and music making you are very welcome. Contact us via email or phone and you can view my adult son's website at www.stationcrafts.net

Thank you to E.O. for all the encouragement and help we receive through the group activities and newsletters. We look forward to meeting more of you!

*John and Carole Clohesy,
Brooksby Station House, Hoby Rd, Brooksby,
Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE14 2LE
Tel. 01664/434689
E-mail: carole.clohesy@milestonenet.co.uk*

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To place: Adverts should normally be limited to 1/8 page or 50 words and sent to the NL Advertising Co-ord. (see inside front cover) but please send cheque payable to 'Education Otherwise' to Treasurer (see inside back cover).

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REVIEWS

Yoss by Ode Hirsch

£5.99 ISBN 0-7445-8337-3 Walker

Yoss is set in a medieval type community. The main character is a 13-year-old boy who lives in a remote mountain village. Historically boys had to leave the village and bring back something from the outside world, which would be of value to the village. Now it is merely custom by which the returning boy is accepted by the village as a man. Yoss uses the occasion to explore the world beyond the village but is warned that the town "swallows people up". He discovers the truth of this as he experiences life in the town as a rogue, beggar, slave and artist. He loses his naivety and uses his new knowledge to escape as a free person. The book explores the inner life of Yoss and the many and varied characters with whom he comes into contact. It is a long book but in general, each chapter is on its own. The story is parallel to real life, as many younger kids would have gone through the realisation that not everyone is incorruptible. I would probably recommend it for ages 11+. Anyone who considers reading this must realise that this is not the action-adventure type story that it first appears to be. I would rate this book 92%.

Matt Longmuir (14)

Monkey by Veronica Bennett

£4.99 ISBN 0-7445-8347-0 Walker

I had to read this book quite quickly but didn't find this a chore as once I had started, I could not put it down. It is about a boy called Harry Pritchard who is being quite badly bullied at his school. He feels he cannot tell his parents as they both work long hours so he decides to deal with the bullying himself. One of his teachers finds out about it but makes a pact with Harry to leave telling his parents until the end of term. Harry's Mum is a District Nurse and asks him to visit a quadriplegic man a couple of times a week and Harry's Dad will pay him. Harry reluctantly agrees and he sets up a good relationship with the man, Simon, who was once an actor. They end up helping each other. A really good book, very cleverly written and I am certainly going to look for more of Veronica Bennett books in my library.

Francesca Houghton (13)

Aristotle by Dick King-Smith

£7.99 ISBN 0-7445-8320-9 Walker Books

This is a nicely paced storybook that Finn thoroughly enjoyed even though it is quite long for a picture book. Aristotle is a witch's cat who uses up eight of his nine lives getting into various scrapes as he grows up. Luckily his owner is always there to save him and eventually he becomes a proper witch's cat. *Aristotle* is a delightful book that I would recommend for a snugly read with any 3 to 7 year olds.

Tina Burnett-Pope with Finn (3)

Northern Lights by Philip Pullman

£6.99 ISBN 0-5906-6054-3 Scholastic

This is an extraordinary book. It reveals endless possibilities about our existence in this world. It raises endless questions and refuses to give all the answers. It causes you to think and to question everything that you know, everything anyone has ever said to be true. Not only does it reveal the secrets of the universe, it is also magnificently written using sparkling vocabulary and vivid description to create a story that is nearly impossible to put down. It will make you laugh, cry, gasp in wonder and sit on the very edge of your seat all the way through. Do you want to know the very best part? It is the first in a trilogy.

Robin Barber (15)

The Underground Railroad

by Maurine F. Dahlberg

£4.99 ISBN 0-86315-426-3 Floris

This book is set in America just before the war between the Northerners and Southerners regarding slavery. Gilly is an eleven-year-old girl who is sent to live with her aunt and uncle in Virginia, following the death of her mother. Her father lost all his money gambling and leaves to go in search of gold. Her uncle comes home one day with a new slave girl called Rissy. Rissy and Gilly become great friends and they find out about an 'Underground Railway', which is in fact the means of getting runaway slaves out of Virginia and on to freedom in Canada. There are various people along this freedom route who help these slaves. I am not going to tell you how Gilly gets involved with the Underground Railroad as I will leave you to read the book. A great book and once I picked up it up I couldn't put it down!!!

Francesca Houghton (14)

Cinderlily A Floral Fairy Tale

by David Ellwand and Christine Tagg

£12.99 ISBN 1844287211 Walker

In terms of its educational value, other than just being a storybook, it does follow the literary tradition of canonical re-writing. It takes a familiar, highly regarded story and adapts it for modern times. In this case the story is Cinderella, which almost every child is familiar with. I can see this being used as a springboard for work on other, more complex, rewritings, of which there are many fine examples. My children all loved it for different reasons. Minnie enjoyed its visual beauty. The pictures are unique and very beautiful. They are formed from the images of flower petals. Hamish likes creating artwork on the computer so he loved the possibilities the book opened up for him. Holly is a total bookworm and recognised the rewrite so we had interesting discussions about that. This has a coffee table feel about it but also has educational merit, so it is worth a look.

Karen McIntyre-Bhatty with Holly (6), Hamish (4) and Minnie (2).

A SELECTION FROM USBORNE

Book of Facts and Records

£7.99 ISBN 0-7460-5855

This book covers the following subjects: amazing animals, seas and oceans, dinosaurs and prehistory and planet Earth. This is a very good ; it has nice, realistic pictures and some photos, and almost all are in colour. It is a nice size to carry around (20 x 13 cm) and is good for reading in spare moments. The facts are unusual and interesting. Usborne has created a website which gives extra information as well as some very good links. I enjoyed looking at some websites from a link on a page about volcanoes. I think people would like this book age seven to adult.

Natasha Crane (9)

Internet-Linked Mysteries and Marvels of Nature

£12.99 ISBN 0-7460-5295-7

This is a book of fascinating and strange general facts about plants and animals from around the world. I thought this was a very interesting book, as it had many facts that I hadn't known before, such as starfish have a very strong sense of smell, and kangaroos can travel up to 30 feet in one bound! The internet links on the website were brilliant, and although it said in the book that you didn't necessarily need them, I found them really useful, as they lead you on to many more facts. I thought this was great, and give it a rating of 8 out of 10.

Jenny Allwood (11)

Internet-Linked Book of Knowledge

£14.99 ISBN 0 7460 5787 3

This superb reference book is crammed with information on planet earth, astronomy and space, plants and animals, the human body and science and technology. It also contains timelines, maps, flags, facts about countries, world records and many other lists. Although covering such a vast subject matter the book contained lots of information we hadn't come across elsewhere. The text is broken up into small sub-headed paragraphs with numerous beautiful colour photographs and illustrations throughout. As an Internet-linked book it details specially chosen websites for further information, although the book works on its own as an excellent reference book and great for browsing through too. Clement and I have dipped into the book many times – plenty to appeal to a wide age range.

Jennie Holmes, with Clement (7)

Drawing Cartoons by Anna Milbourne

£6.99 ISBN 0-7460-4842-4

This is from the 'Art Ideas' series. I like drawing cartoons and this book has given me lots of hints about how to draw them. It tells you how to do everything about cartoons, such as expressions, animals, colours, scenes and backgrounds. There are tips on animation and drawing cartoons on computers, with links in every section for access to websites connected with cartoons although you don't need to have a computer to use the book. The instructions are easy and the drawings of all

sorts of cartoons are bright and colourful. This is a really good book for anyone who would like to draw cartoons, or for anyone who already does and would like more ideas for them.

Freyja Steenman-Clark (11)

The Chaos Clock by Gill Arbuthnott

£4.99 ISBN 0-86315-422-0 Floris

The *Guardians of Time* are holding off the Lords of Chaos who are from another time dimension and want to take over the present and make time repeat itself. Two children, Kate and David, find they can help the *Guardians of Time* using Kate's golden necklace to stop the power of the Millennium Clock through which the *Lords of Chaos* can enter the present. This book is a rather slow moving story of the children's adventures and I didn't find it very gripping until the end. It wasn't until about half way through that I managed to get a picture of the characters in my head, as they weren't described well. Some of the ideas are interesting but I didn't enjoy much of the story.

Alexander Burnett-Pope (8)

The Enemies of Jupiter by Caroline Lawrence

£7.99 ISBN 1-84255-251-1 Orion

This book has a slow start, an interesting middle and an exciting finish. Four young 'detectives' go to Rome to find the cause of a fever that has spread through the entire city. One of them, Jonathon, has a well respected doctor for a father, who is there to help stop the fever. Jonathon spends a lot of time trying to bring his mother and father together, because they had separated several months ago. The book has a spark at the end that leaves you wondering what'll happen next. This book is suited to children from ten upwards and I give it about eight out of ten. I think this book is the seventh book in a series, but it doesn't seem to matter whether you read this before or after the first six.

James Baker (12)

The Lion Boy by Zizou Corder

£12.99 ISBN 0-1413-8024-1

I would like to recommend this book as it is one of the best books my mum has read to me. The story is about a boy called Charlie who can speak to cats. He goes on a search looking for his kidnapped parents. They have been kidnapped because the rulers want to stop them from making something that will cure asthma. The rulers make a lot of money from selling drugs for asthma. One of the best parts is when Charlie escapes on a circus ship and rescues some lions. Another exciting part is where Charlie has to hide the lions on a train and a man (who is working for the rulers) called Rafi, who is really mean, tries to stop Charlie and the lion. If you like the sound of this book get yourself down to the local bookshop. Keep a look out for the next book because I think there is more to come.

Georgina Devine (9)

Unqualified Education A Practical Guide to Learning at Home Age 11-18 Gareth Lewis

£12.50 ISBN 0-9522705-7-9 *Nezert Books* (£10.95 including postage and packing to EO members, direct from Nezert Books, Le Nezert, 22160 Duault, France)
This title follows on from *One-to-One: A Practical Guide to Learning at Home, Age 0-11* and uses the same clear, friendly style with plenty of illustrations. It is a guide to home education with an emphasis on self-directed, self-motivated and enthusiastic learning. It is a mini-text book, complete with lesson plans. The ideas and information for studies in Literature, History, Geography, Languages, Science, Technology, Music, Mathematics, Art and Craft can be used as a springboard to further explorations, with Cooking and Gardening as separate subjects. The text is full of sensible home educating advice and tips. The final chapter is devoted to practical matters such as Timetables, Curriculum, Qualifications, Work and Employment.
Sally Hall

Thief by Malorie Blackman

£4.99 ISBN 0-552-55165-1 *Random House*
This story is about a 12-year-old girl called Lydia Henson. Lydia and her family move to a village called Tarwich in Yorkshire. At Lydia's new school Anne, another pupil, steals the sports cup and puts it in Lydia's locker. Because it was in her locker, everyone thinks it was her. After that more things happen to make people think even worse of her. But then, on the Yorkshire moors a strange electric storm captures her. She is whipped into a strange future dominated by tyrants and computers. Lydia discovers the ruler of the town is her brother Daniel. She is whirled into adventures to try and get into Daniel's mansion to stop him being so cruel to the villagers of Hensonville, the same town as Tarwich. I liked *Thief* a lot. It's very exciting and imaginative. I would recommend it to other children who enjoy exciting, action packed novels.
Molly Whitehall (10)

Eric and the Peculiar Pong by Barbara Mitchell

£3.99 ISBN 1-84270-288-2 *Andersen*
This is a funny story about a boy named Eric who lands himself an unwanted solo part in his school play. Events take on an unusual turn when his mum receives perfume as a birthday gift. Amy and Isabel particularly enjoyed the part when Eric and his best friend Wesley made moustaches from bits of Wesley's sister's hair in exchange for sweets. This is a quick moving storyline that keeps your attention. We found it entertaining and enjoyable although a little predictable.
Julie Randall with Amy (7) and Izzy (6)

The Jamie and Angus Stories by Anne Fine

£4.99 ISBN 0-7445-9086-8 *Walker*
This book includes six short, well-paced stories about a small boy, Jamie, and his toy bull, Angus. 'Tell Me a Story' was our favourite – about how Jamie grew out of

his buggy. Jamie's dad has told this story a million times before but Jamie never gets tired of hearing it. Consequently the conversations between Jamie and his dad are both familiar and amusing with phrases like "who is telling this story?" and "so don't interrupt". The book has lots of warm-hearted descriptions and observations of familiar, everyday events supported by attractive black and white illustrations. The stories are both gentle and humorous, appealing to children and adults. A really enjoyable read. Highly recommended.
Julie Randall with Amy (7) and Izzy (6)

And the Good Brown Earth by Kathy Henderson

£10.99 ISBN 0-7445-8141-9 *Walker*
There's a difference between imagination and patronisation. This is a book that patronises its young reader because it's afraid of telling the truth. Anyone who can produce a harvest on a Garden of Eden scale after just seven visits to their vegetable plot must have direct links with the divine. Nan and Charlie, the gardeners, appear quite normal; it's the fruits of their labour that are not. This whole book is too full of feathers and rainbows for me. What's wrong with telling children that the good brown earth needs working hard and that it takes application and sweat to produce a crop? At harvest time Nan's seeds that were sown in tidy rows and Charlie's that were tossed on unprepared soil, have flourished. Fantasy and imagination are at their peak in childhood and it's the adult's task to prime young ground for future harvest. A story about gardening that suggests abundance flows without effort is patronising and irresponsible. However, this said, my daughter enjoyed this book immensely.
Caroline McCourt with Li Chen (3)

Dangerous Reality by Malorie Blackman

£4.99 ISBN 0-552-55167-8 *Random House*
This is a story about a boy named Dominic whose mum and prospective step dad work on a robot called VIMS. But when it goes wrong at a demonstration they have 2 days to figure out what went wrong. This book has many twists and turns but can get a bit monotonous, picking up greatly towards the end. There are many human relationships in the book and it is an exciting drama with a thrilling climax. I would recommend this book for ages 8+ although towards the end it does get a bit gory and quite scary. If you are older than this then it will still be a good read as long as you don't mind the fact that the main character is around age 10. Overall I would give this book 90%, but less if you don't like killer robots!
Matt Longmuir (14)

The Hutchinson Book of Dog Tales by

£7.99 ISBN 0-09-189234-0 *Random House*
This is an anthology of dog adventures by different authors, for younger children. The stories are easy to read, warmly written with lovely illustrations. One of Amy and Lizzie's favourite stories is about the

developing friendship of Mr Bill, a manx kitten and Clarence, a collie. It highlights simple, everyday events in the two character's lives: sharing food, playing together, even snuggling up in their big basket to sleep, resulting in a strong bond between them. This is an ideal book for young children who love dogs.

Julie Randall with Amy (7) and Izzy (6)

Good Morning Maisy by Lucy Cousins

£9.99 ISBN 1-8442-8674-6 Walker

Maisy is a very familiar character and very popular with the under fives. The gentle, colourful stories are quite entertaining despite the fact that Maisy Mouse is bigger than the sheep! In this book there is a 9-piece puzzle on each double page, which Ivo very much enjoyed. However, the pieces often fall out as he reads it, so it's more of a toy than a book. One for the high shelf!

Frieisleben with Ivo (3)

Hacker by Malorie Blackman

£4.99 ISBN 0-552-55164-3 Random House

This book has quite a straightforward plot and is simply written, although some of the computer jargon is baffling to me as I don't use a computer. Despite this I liked the characters and could not wait to discover the culprit in this exciting story.

Kit Frieisleben (10)

Kindergarten Education: Freeing Your Children's Creative Potential by Betty Press

£12.00 ISBN 1-903458-33-1 Hawthorne Press

The author has been a life long kindergarten teacher. She writes about her kindergarten – the children's garden – a place where she believes children should be: outside-playing, close to nature – touching, smelling, growing and celebrating the natural world. She created a peaceful, beautiful environment, free of synthetic materials, full of meaning, wonder, stories and festivals. Her book gives many ideas for songs, activities and rituals, ideal for a small group or to be used at home. One lovely idea was to find a 'kindergarten baby'; the mother would come to the group throughout her pregnancy and talk about what was happening to her. The children would anticipate the wonderful, magical event of the birth and would all embroider squares for the baby, enjoying the preparation and participation. This celebration would also give the older brothers / sisters a great sense of pride. This has many heart warming stories, and is a very inspiring book, one that reminds you just how precious the first years are.

Hilary Woolf

Quirky Times at Quagmire Castle by Karen Wallace

£4.99 ISBN 0-7136-6572-6 A & C Black

Jack and Emily live with their aunt in a falling down old castle but they can't afford to repair it. The bank manager says if they can't pay off their debt, they will have to move out and the castle will be knocked down.

Then Jack and Emily find two ghosts who want to help them save the castle, so they decide to make it into a hotel, but their aunt isn't very sure because the house is too big, so the ghosts pretend to be cleaners and they clean and cook while the people are staying over. The bank manager finds out and he is angry. He hires two terribly bad children to wreck the place so that it will be a mess and everyone will leave. One of the ghosts finds out and he turns the children into pigs. The bank manager is found out and they get to keep the castle. I found it easy, funny and exciting.

Lara Fowler (9)

Ultimate Book Guide

£12.99 ISBN 0-7136-6718-4 A & C Black

If you enjoy reading these review pages then this new book is just for you - 280 pages crammed full of reviews and summaries of over 600 books suitable for ages 8-12. I found lots I had read, some of the titles are new and some old classics. Different well-known authors say which books they like best and why. There are also readers' polls listing the 10 most popular books in different categories. All the books are listed in alphabetical order with brief details of similar books along with the main ones listed so you have titles of others you may enjoy. I liked the main features, which were in more detail, especially the one about fantasy books. It is the kind of book that you just can't help dipping into a lot. You can even be involved in voting for your best books via www.ultimatebookguide.com.

Susan Hooper (11)

Vaccinations, Yes or No? Helping You Decide by Will and Lara Sussman

£9.99 Merrydown Publishing

The authors have a background in medicine. This book gives unbiased information, medical studies, reports and statistics on the findings of MMR jabs and other childhood vaccinations, with a view to giving parents full information to help an informed decision on whether to vaccinate or not. The book tells you of some of the substances used in vaccines, such as mercury, chick embryos, aluminium, formaldehyde, monkey cells, cow foetal tissue and the links with BSE. It talks about side effects and alternatives such as single jabs and the decision not to vaccinate. There is a large section on the links to autism and a section on policy in other countries. I wish I had read this book before I made the difficult decision to vaccinate. It certainly gives you the advantage of knowing unbiased facts.

Hilary Woolf

Aren't they Lovely When They Are Asleep by Ann Benton

ISBN 1-85792-876-8 Christian Focus

On reading this book's title, I must admit that my initial thought was, "Ah, but you don't know what they're dreaming about!" The author went some way along the same lines of thought, although perhaps more forcibly -

no child is totally innocent in her eyes (in fact, we are all sinners!). Perhaps this is why she gives her book the subtitle 'Lessons in unsentimental parenting'. The book is divided into six 'Lessons' - Accept, Beware, Communicate, Discipline, Evaluate and Fear the Lord. Each lesson ends with something to think over and something to act upon, turning parenting into too much of an 'academic' activity, in my opinion. I was not struck by anything 'new' in the ideas expressed in the book apart from the fact that every suggestion was linked to a Bible passage. With this in mind I would suggest that this would not be a book suitable for non-Christians. The author used to be a teacher and also ran parenting classes in schools. I think I might probably have preferred to listen to one of her talks rather than just read her book.

Christine Murphy

Understanding Waldorf Education

Teaching from the Inside Out by Jack Petrash

£9.99 ISBN 0-86315-430-1 Floris

This is a deeply soulful and intelligent book on child development. If all teachers were like Jack Petrash and more schools followed Waldorf/Steiner principles there would be viable alternatives for home educators. The central concept of Steiner education is three dimensional development; the engagement of children emotionally, mentally and actively. The left handed power hitting baseball captain who lapses into 'Don Giovanni' at the end of a long day, is Waldorf in full flight. In sketching out their methods, Petrash offers home educators a wealth of ideas. The chapter on teachers lifts one's own expectations as an educator, and the final chapter, immersed in images of eagles, leaves you with a real high. This book is about imagination and change in both the child and the educator. It taught me a lot and best of all, left me with the feeling education is FUN.

Carolyn McCourt

Milo's Olympics by Richard Brown

£4.99 ISBN 1-871173-76-0 Anglia Young

This story is set in Ancient Greece at the time of the Olympic Games. The story is about Milo and Demetrius, two friends who are going to run against each other in the boys' foot race. Cronus (Demetrius' father) tries to bribe Milo's father and threatens Milo that something bad could happen to his family if he doesn't let Demetrius win the race. What should Milo do? As well as learning about the Ancient Olympics, I also found out that, once they were married, women lost their freedom and had to stay indoors sewing and such. There are notes about Ancient Greece and the Olympics at the back of the book, which are very helpful. I enjoyed the story a lot and couldn't wait to find out what happened next. It was an interesting read, great for comparing with this year's Olympic Games in Athens. Suitable for children aged 8 - 10.

Chrissy Murphy with Deiniol (8)

Death and the Arrow by Chris Priestley

£4.99 ISBN 0-440-86514-X Random House

This is a thrilling story in the Tom Marlowe series. Tom, with the help of Dr Harker and Ocean Carter, tries to find a mysterious murderer who is killing off people throughout London after a special card had been slipped into their pocket, the Death and the Arrow card, a card with a picture of Death holding an arrow on it. He is also avenging for the death of his friend, Will Piggot. A good story, which has several different twists and turns all the way through it. I recommend this book for both boys and girls from the age eleven upwards. Eight out of ten for this one.

James Baker (12)

Errand Lass A Time-Slip Adventure

by Theresa Tomlinson

£3.99 ISBN 0-7445-8321-7 Walker

Thomas said he didn't want to read this book. I asked him to just try a bit and he read the entire story without a break, which must be a sign of a good book! The main character has been forced to leave one school because of "teasing" about her dyslexia. At her new school it starts again but she finds a friendly face in Michael, who is also teased. Visiting the Sheffield Millennium Galleries, she slips back in time and works as an errand lass with the buffer girls (who polished newly-made cutlery). The experience teaches her to "stand her ground" so when she returns to her own time and school she deals with the bullies and earns her classmates' respect. The text is clear, unjustified and well-spaced out with black and white illustrations. It's a good read, we'd recommend it and will be buying other Time-Slip adventures if we find them.

Sue Onions with Thomas Onions (8)

Pig-Heart Boy by Malorie Blackman

£4.99 ISBN 0552-55166-X Random House

This book is about Cameron, a 13-year-old boy who needs to have a heart transplant as quickly as possible. There are no human donors available, so an adventurous doctor proposes to give Cameron a heart transplant - with a heart from a pig. It isn't certain that the operation will work, so Cameron and his family become extremely worried as the important event approaches. This is a really good story which makes you want to read more as the suspense increases.

Emma Whitehall (13)

Eyes Wide Open by Jan Mark

£4.99 ISBN 0-7136-6717-6 A & C Black

I've got mixed feelings about this book. Some of the stories are good, but others I am not sure about - they did not keep my attention. For example, *Left Foot Forward* is a story about a boy who wanted to have extra football rather than extra maths. The content of that story did not appeal. The best story is *Dan Dan the Scenery Man*. It is about a ballerina who wanted to be in the pantomime, and made me smile; while in another story there is a

ghost. Uncle Matthew tells the story about his childhood when a ghost boy led him into danger. The boy was his father's twin brother. I quite liked that one. It is mystical because the boy appears in mirrors and looks just like Matthew. It kept me guessing. *Mystery Tour* made me laugh because they never knew where they were going on the underground. There are six stories in the book. There are some pictures too, which add to the atmosphere.

Karis Youngman (9)

The Lost Boys' Appreciation Society

by Alan Gibbons

£4.99 ISBN 1-84255-095-0 Dolphin

This book is about the Cain family, who live in Liverpool, trying to cope after the loss of their mother in a car crash. In a way, there are 3 separate stories featured in the book, which are all tied together in family problems. The book mainly centres on Gary Cain's problems as he descends into hell by taking drugs, drinking booze, smoking and joyriding as he spends his spare time with bad boys, but the book features Phil Cain (the father) as he tries to fall in love with somebody else. The book is written from the oldest son, John Cain's view of events. He is a teenager studying for his GCSEs and the book features his troubles in life as he realises that Olivia Bellman (who he thinks is gorgeous and has a crush on) is not as nice as she seems. By the end of the book there is a twist in the tale as to who he falls in love with...but I'm not going to spoil it for you so you'll have to read the book to find out! Although this book is quite depressing, I could really visualise it in my mind. To begin with I wasn't sure whether I would like it considering the graphic and disturbing opening chapter, about how the mother Lisa Cain dies. As a Blue Peter Book Award winner, I would certainly recommend this book for teenagers 14+.

Simon Hoggarth (15)

The Xmas Files The Philosophy of Christmas

by Stephen Law £7.99 ISBN 0-297-84722-8 Orion

This hardback book takes a look at 14 different topics about Christmas. It goes into various subjects in depth and some of them I felt were going a bit over the top of me. I had read Law's *The Philosophy Files* and *The Outer Limits* (in the same series) and I felt that these were more geared to my age group than this book. I feel that this book is more orientated towards adults than children, even though there are some funny pieces to read. Another thing about the book is that you don't have to read the chapters in order. You can jump about the book as I did. My favourite chapter was *Aunt Gertrude's Hideous Tie*. This chapter discusses whether you should lie or tell the truth and at the end it's up to the reader to decide what to do. I would recommend this book for 16+ although some younger people might like to read it also.

Simon Hoggarth (15)

Stephen Law's site: www.thinking-big.co.uk

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

Andersen Press 020 7840 8701 www.andersenpress.co.uk

Anglia Young 0800 7312837 www.millpublishing.co.uk

Christian Focus www.christianfocus.com

Dolphin (Orion) 0207 520 4318 www.orionbooks.co.uk

Floris (Scottish Book Service) 0870 240 2182

www.florisbooks.co.uk

Hawthorne Press 01453 757040 www.hawthornpress.com

Merrydown Publishing 08707 2000 67

www.vaccinations-yesorno.co.uk

Orion www.orionbooks.co.uk

Random House 020 8231 6800 www.randomhouse.co.uk

Usborne 020 7430 2800 www.usborne.com

Walker Books 01256 302692

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

FREE RESOURCES

(see also page 20)

Interesting Magazines from RSPCA

The RSPCA offer free curriculum linked resources magazines for teachers, published on a regular basis. These magazines are also available to home educating families. *Animals Focus* (key stages 1 & 2) and *Animal Issues* (key stages 3 & 4). The magazines are cheerful, bright and colourful, full of information on animals and issues involved with animals. Full colour posters, activities, projects and facts.

For more information contact Marion Gibson, Education Projects Co-ordinator 0870 7540 14

The RSPCA's education website is at:

www.rspca.org.uk

New Free Guides for 'Teachers'

Free down-loadable guides are now available for all the Floris titles (including those reviewed on our review pages). www.florisbooks.co.uk/teachers.html

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 may 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 us know if changes are needed. Please do check every issue, it really helps!

- CHANGES BY LETTER OR EMAIL PLEASE -
to: Anne Rix, (see inside front cover for address) 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 in Bedford and other areas of the County, contact June McDonald on 01234 341375 or email info@Bedford-Home-Ed.org.uk
"Animals" theme for summer. Lots of art and craft, plus cloch visits to Woburn Safari Park & Huntstanton Sealife Centre; visits to London Zoo, Whipsnade, Wimpole Hall, Wood Green & RSPB. Regular swimming, multi-sport & gym sessions. New Youth Group & Chess Club, + Open afternoons, resource library and more
Website: www.Bedford-Home-Ed.org.uk

BERKSHIRE

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

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BerkshireHomeEducators>

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

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

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

Fridays Caversham 12 - 5pm social, all ages, sep. rm 4 teens in hall with park outside and woods. £2/family

Monthly, 2nd **Tuesday**, 11am - 6pm near **Pangbourne** chat and play. Adventure playground, animals. £3/family Also activities 4 teens. Contact Lynda 0118 961 4466 or Gail 01628 483895 or email hitchmans@ntiworld.com

Bracknell Weds termtime, ice-skating at John Nike Leisure Centre, 2-4pm, £1.50 show EO card at reception. Contact: Angela 0118 9661331 (weekends only) or Edwina, email: wgodfrey@netcomuk.co.uk

Burghfield Common Thurs termtime Swimming at Willink Leisure Centre 1.30-3pm. Contact Angela (see Bracknell)

Windsor Leisure Centre, Fris termtime, organised sports session 5 yrs up, 11am-noon. Contact Muriel 01628 664939

Windsor Leisure Centre, Fris termtime, family swim 12.30, contact Angela or Edwina (see Bracknell)

Newbury Group Contact Heidi 0118 9710176

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

BRISTOL

Thursdays meeting at St Paul's Adventure Playground 1-3pm; Spanish, Science and Pottery happening on a regular basis. Contact Ian or Silke 0117 9412707

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@ntiworld.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 Weds of month for crafts 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 Castletown 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: £3.00 for 6 months by post. E-mail copies free: news@ed-he.org.uk or 01297 625439

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 - full details in Devon newsletter (above)

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: local website www.he-ed.org.uk
Meeting every Monday for crafts, games, play etc.
Friendly, welcoming group Contact: June
01202 827945 bugchick@btinternet.com

DURHAM

Durham based group, monthly newsletter £5 p.a.

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

All over Essex trips (usually Thursdays) and workshops
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, 3rd Thurs of month 1-4 pm

Colchester Meetings, social and activities, alt Weds,
11am to 3pm

Tiptree Meetings, social & activities alt. Tues. 2-5pm

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 cambrose@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
kmdd@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: Friendly group for children aged 0-13
meets Wednesday afternoons. Regular themed meetings
in Scott Centre, Andover; Ice skating in Basingstoke plus
other educational visits and fun activities in Hants and
Wilts borders. Contact Carol 01264 357650 email
eo@azakit.com

Farnham/Aldershot Friendly group for under 10s,
weekly meetings/outings/activities. Contact: Paula 01252
721348 or emmajeavons@supanet.com

HERTFORDSHIRE (see also N.London)

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
oisandpjs@aol.com

St Albans, Social group meeting at Sandridge village hall,
1- 3pm, 2nd and 4th Thurs. Contact: Carolyn 01727
851073 or Jenny 01727 810345

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.
Contact Jude 01983 531680

KENT

Wealden Home Ed website:

www.when.omnia.co.uk and email group:
wealdenhomeeducatorsnetwork@yahoo.groups.com

East Kent including Dover, Canterbury and all
surrounding areas ...

Medway towns Contact: Bridget 01634 234938

Tunbridge Wells group meet every Monday from 10-4
for Tae Kwan Do, art and crafts, & 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.freeserve.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 sessions at Botany Bay: contact Jacqueline
01204 361072 or Angela 01204 659634

Fortnightly badminton lesson followed by swim: contact
Angela/Jacqueline

2nd April Crafts at St Paul's contact Pam 01706 215585 or
davidandpam@ntlworld.com

7th April Old Cobbler's - all ages - play area contact Pam
21st May Another trip to Martinmere, pond dipping -
please book, contact Pam 01706 215585.

It may be possible to do more sessions at Burrs - kayaking/wall climbing etc. Please contact Pam for details a.s.a.p. davidandpam@ntlworld.com
Events on **Fylde coast**: Contact Tracey on 01253 858840
Ice skating group on 2nd Wed every month at Blackburn Arena. Cost £4.15 + £1 skate hire 2pm - 4.30pm.
Tel: Jackie 01695 424220 for information

LEICESTERSHIRE

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

LINCOLNSHIRE

For a newsletter of activities and local events contact: Donna 01472 752507
Christine 01507 338070, Kathleen 01522 869239
ashnkath@shhh.fsnet.co.uk

LONDON

Clissold Park. Tuesdays. All welcome.

Contact: Charlotte 0207 254 0419

SE London Wednesdays Honor Oak playground.

Contact: Steve 8680 2933

Lewisham Thursdays 11-1

Contact: Clare 8480 0740

rollerblading Kidbroke Contact: Fiona 020 8852 9756
bettlelake@clara.net

Sydenham Fridays fortnightly at 11.30-2.30

Contact: Chrystia and Keith 8776 8597

Forest Hill Nature Reserve Fridays alternate fortnight 11.30 Contact: Dave 8692 4080

Plumstead Common Adventure Playground SE18 alternate Fridays, meeting at 12.30 pm.

Contact: Bev 0208 312 2160, Kim 0208 317 7262

NW London Otherwise Club Contact: Leslie 0208 969 0893
Harrow meetings fortnightly on Fridays

Stanmore events on Tues and Wednesdays.

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

or Vicki on Aceva@btinternet.com

N London Hornsey Home Educators Club

(currently under 10s, meet for arts, crafts, drama, games etc) Thursdays 11.00-12.30

contact: Tina 0208 340 4212

N London Barnet Group, meets Mondays, contact Mirelle 0208 449 7868, email lance.e@virgin.net or

Lynda 0208 368 9046. Also, if you would like to participate in the Hertfordshire Childrens Folk Dance

Festival on Sat. 3 July ring Jenny 0208 441 8779.

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

Contact: Betsy 020 8747 3911,

betsylanderson@aol.com

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 Sats at Moores family home, limited places, Contact: Karen 01204 573136

NORFOLK

NEON gives details of all events £1.50 plus 4 large SAEs. Contact: Steve Williams, North Cottage, Crostwick, Norwich NR12 7BD

Workshops/social meetings 1st and 3rd Thursday

Contact: Anne Weitz: 01362 688 466

Ali Willer: 01603 401 020

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 or phone Jane 01234 326479.

Want to get together with other local home ed teens? Please contact Lynne Stewart 01604

454240, andrew.stewart77@ntl.com

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

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

OXFORDSHIRE

Classes in creative writing Monthly Newsletter. Fortnightly Workshop group.

Local Contact: Wendy 01865-514973

SCOTLAND

Fife: Friday fortnightly meetings, activities and social get-togethers. All welcome. Contact: Nicola 01334 478530 nicola.stubbs@btinternet.com

Irvine: For details of regular and one-off activities please contact: Rhona 01294 273644

or Shirley 01563 540063 or Vivien 01563 537428

Highlands meetings Fortnightly meetings in **Inverness**, plus occasional outings. All ages welcome. Contact: Rebecca 01667 462772 or

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

Lothian, Central and Southeast Scotland: fortnightly group for meetings and outings. Ann 0131

556 6271 or <ann.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

Wiveliscombe/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

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.freeseve.co.uk or Theresa 01889 563052

Alsager : 1st Weds of the month at YPCO for craft, music, games, chat. Contact: Caroline 01270 875 633 or Sue 01270 883978 Suedavies@tesco.net

STAFFORDSHIRE NORTH meetings on 3rd Tues 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 Farm, Woodbridge Once a month, activities organised by Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Wetherden meetings every 3rd Friday 10.30-2.00 £3 per family, shared lunch: Details from Heather Ward, 01953 688 128

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 woodland, based on High/Scope approach to independent learning and problem solving. 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:

Rachel 01483 565703 (no Sunday calls please)

Under 10s: Nicky 01483 232080

Dorking/Reigate area.

Contact: Helen Burnett 01737 243606

Farnham/Aldershot Friendly group for under 10s, weekly meetings/ outings/activities. Contact: Paula 01252 721348 or 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

Regular, frequent & varied activities. New members welcome. We have a Yahoo chat group at [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EO-TyneAndWear/Younger Group \(under 8\) - contact Becky \(0191 478 5322 or becky.feeney@virgin.net\).](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EO-TyneAndWear/Younger Group (under 8) - contact Becky (0191 478 5322 or becky.feeney@virgin.net).)

Older group (over 8) - contact Rosemary (0191 285 3707 or paul@thenews.icom43.net).

National Trust & English Heritage Visits - contact Deborah (01434 674713); Monthly visit to Chopwell Woods - contact Juliet (01207 544473 or ablettjules@tesco.net); Spanish (under 8) - Tues 11.30am Contact Carol (0191 2291178),

Music (8 & under) - Tues 2pm, Community Room, Gosforth Library. Contact Rosemary (0191 285 3707 or

paul@thenews.icom43.net); Spanish (over 8) - Fri 1pm at Walbottle Village First School, Newcastle. Contact Carol (0191 2291178); Music (age 10+) - Weds 1.30pm. Contact Rosemary

(0191 285 3707 or paul@thenews.icom43.net); Book Club (age 10+) 2nd Weds of month; Film Club (age 10+) last Weds of month, contact Peter or Carol (0191 229 1178). Citizenship discussions & debates (age 10+) - other Weds

WALES**South Wales**

Cardiff area FREE email newsletter/contact list from bev1.french@btinternet.com or Beverley 02920 797628. Monthly museum visit, organised by museum.

Swansea Group For information on local activities and events, contact Juliet 01639 760987; Frankie, fran.kie@ntlworld.com or Geraldine, 01792 405894 or email: julafan1@ntlworld.com

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

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

Gwynedd Mondays swimming at Bangor

Contact: Louisa 01248 361254

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

Powys Weekly swimming/Tumble Towers in Welshpool on Fridays (term time only). Monthly workshops, outings, skateboarding and events in Welshpool and surrounding area. Contact: Julia Phillips 01691 648152 gwestad@lycos.co.uk

Newtown area: Mondays get-together, twice a month, in the Scout Hall, for activities, play and socialisation. Contact Sue 01686 688748 or smw5@tutor.open.ac.uk

NE Wales/Borders weekly gym/trampolining 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.freeseve.co.uk

WARWICKSHIRE

Usually 2 Thursdays a month; at Wolston nr Coventry and for an outing in Coventry/Warwicks area. Contact: Helen Hall 01926 771958

WEST MIDLANDS

Meetings, trips out, activities etc are held throughout each month at a variety of locations all over the West Midlands. The newsletter HELM lists many of them. HELM is available free by email or by post for a small charge and covers HE related articles and events throughout the West Midlands and surrounding areas. Contact: Joy Beasley 0121 585 6450 JoyBeasley@b-bunch.freereserve.co.uk

WILTSHIRE

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

Swindon: Informal get-togethers twice per month; badminton weekly Contact: Shena on 01793 334673 or join email list at

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NWilts_HE/
Last Thursday of the Month The Scout Hut, Southbroom Rd **Devizes**, 11.30-14.30, games, activities, support and socialising.
Outings most Thursdays Contact: Janet 01249 818672 email: janet.eldekvis@btpenworld.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

Kirby Misperton (near Flamingo Land) Group meets 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: Ten-pin bowling - Monday (once a month) at Hollywood Bowl. Contact Sarah (01484) 361206 or by e-mail sl.marshall@ntlworld.com

Ice skating and optional lesson - Friday (weekly, except 2nd Friday) at Ice Arena Contact Judith (0113) 226 5515 or e-mail: judith.shalkowski@ntlworld.com

Ice Hockey lesson - Friday (weekly, except 2nd Friday) at Ice Arena Contact Sarah.

Leeds: Ten-pin bowling - Monday (once a month) at Hollywood Bowl. Contact Sarah (as Bradford)

Gymnastics lesson (coach directed) - Weds (term-time only) at Carnegie Gym, Leeds Metropolitan University Becketts Park Campus. Contact Sarah.

Wednesday Club - Wednesday (twice a month) from 1.30pm - 3.30pm at Room 9, West Park Centre. Contact Judith (0113) 226 5515 or by e-mail judith.shalkowski@ntlworld.com

Monthly meeting - 2nd Friday of the month (except April 9th) from 11.00am - 3.30pm at Room 9, West Park Centre. Contact Sarah.

Group trips - for list of dates contact Sarah.

Halifax: Gymnasium, Heath Training Centre, Free School Lane, every Monday except bank hols. 12 noon - 3pm. Meeting: Free-range activities + exchange of friendship and support for home educating children and parents. Contact: Gill Kilner 01422 311876, email: GillKilner@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.

LOCAL CONTACT UPDATE

New acting local contacts

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Nottingham City | Wendy Tebbatt |
| W. Mids.(Sandwell) | Andrea Lomax |
| Tyne and Wear | Carol Bromley |
| Norfolk | Ali Willer & Anne Weitz |
| Berkshire | Lynda Hitchman |

Resigning local contacts

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Dorset West | Peatra Withnall |
| Highlands & Islands | Pauline & Donald MacKay |
| Kent | Heather Carter |
| London North | Geraldine Adams |
| Northumberland | Maxine Roake |

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Staffordshire | Eileen Wilson |
| Somerset | Vivienne & Stuart Cumming |
| Yorkshire South | Gary & Sian Podmore |

Areas needing a local contact

Carmarthenshire
Durham
Dorset West
Fife
Glamorganshire
Gloucestershire
Herefordshire
Hertfordshire
Highlands & Islands

| |
|----------------------------------|
| Humberside |
| Isle of Man |
| Kent |
| London North |
| Manchester North |
| Northumberland |
| Staffordshire |
| Strathclyde |
| Somerset |
| Tayside |
| West Midlands Birmingham, |
| Solihull, Walsall, Wolverhampton |
| Yorkshire South |

If you want to volunteer or are interested to know more about the job of being a Local Contact please contact the Local Contact Co-ordinator (see inside back cover)

Education Otherwise Adverts

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

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.

Lucinda Smart, 4 Chester Gardens,
Church Gresley, Swadlincote,
Derbyshire, DE11 9PU.

EO Car Stickers

Help spread the word.

Please send a reasonably large SAE to:

Ali Willer, 28 Cozens Hardy Rd,
Sprowston, Norwich NR7 8QF

EO Hoodies and Mugs

Hooded sweatshirts

with the **triangle logo** and the letters **SINC** 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

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 '03 newsletters (Children's Pages) and purchase via

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

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: Martine Frampton, Lynda Hitchman, Ann Samuel Till, Ali Willer, Helen Donaldson, Priscilla Park-Weir

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

Publications: Gary Podmore, Lucy Charlton, Ali Willer, Anne Rix

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

DIES Team: Anne Wade, Ann Samuel Till, Anne Rix, Gary Podmore

LEA/EA Group: Anne Wade, Gary Podmore, Ann Samuel Till, Keith Charlton, Lize Stevens, Rob Wade

Communications: Priscilla Park-Weir, Anne Rix

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

Information for other organisations: Priscilla Park-Weir, Anne Rix

Grievances and Complaints

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

Lynda Hitchman, 31 Audley St., Reading, Berks, RG30 1BP 0118 961 4466 hitchmans@ntlworld.com

Celia McDonagh, 169 Habershon Street, Splott, Cardiff, CF24 2LA 07763 729055

Anne Rix Hembury Orchard, Frithelstock, Torrington, EX38 8JT 01237 451535 anne@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, 07763 729055 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: (acting): Claire Turnham, 6 The Butts, Aynho, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX17 3AN 01869-811099 email: Claire@birhandbeyond.co.uk

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@yahooogroups.co.uk
You will receive an automatic response from Yahoo asking for your full name and address. When you have responded and your membership has been checked as valid, you can be added to the list.

EO Home Education Cards

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

EO/NEC vouchers

- £30 discount per course -
A5 SAE to Sarah Cook, The Old Cottage,
Croglin, Cartisle, 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
Carolyn Ashley-Wheeler (Notts) 0115 849 5710
carolyn.ashley-wheeler@ntlworld.com
Jane Bathgate (Borders) 01835 862118
Pam Bellinger (Leics) 0116 282 7929
(Company Secretary)
Keith Charlton (Leics) 0116 259 2118
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Sarah Cook (Cumbria) 01768 896019
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Martine Frampton (Gloucs) 01608 812411
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(Treasurer)
Jacqui Houlding (Cheshire) 01925 654856
jc_houlding@onetel.net.uk
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Ali Willer (East Anglia) 01603 401020
simon.whitehall@tesco.net
June Wilson-Billing (Dorset) 01202 827945
educationotherwise@mac.com

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 query not covered below please contact your nearest Council Member (list left)

Single Parent Family Contact: Rowenna Williams
rowenna73@hotmail.com Berllan Gron, Llanycil, BALA, Gwynedd, LL23 7YG Tel: 01678 521348

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

GCSE Contacts: Geraldine Adams 0207 263 4922

Sarah Cook: 01768 896019
sarah@croggies.freemove.co.uk

School Phobia: Jo Borthen (acting until August)
01392 438876 Gremlin24358@aol.com

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

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

Treasurer: Martine Frampton, 3 Redesdale Mews, Hospital Rd., Moreton-in-Marsh, GL56 0BQ 01608 812411
martine-frampton@macunlimited.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@btopenworld.com

(Assistant): **Liz Stevens**, 96 Ivanhoe Street, Leicester, LE3 9GW. 0116 2425802 kissit@yawout.me.uk (NEW)

Coordinator for Enquiries Secretaries: Iris Harrison (Assistant) **Jo Borthen** 01392 438876
Gremlin24358@aol.com (NEW EMAIL ADDY)

Newsletter Coordinator (Retiring - volunteers please!)
Anne Rix, Hembury Orchard, Frithelstock, Torrington, EX38 8JT. 01237 451535 anne@annerix.demon.co.uk

Chairperson: Julie Ridley, 32 Cheltenham Road, Chorley, Manchester, M21 9QN 0161 860 7589
julier@breathemail.net

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>

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