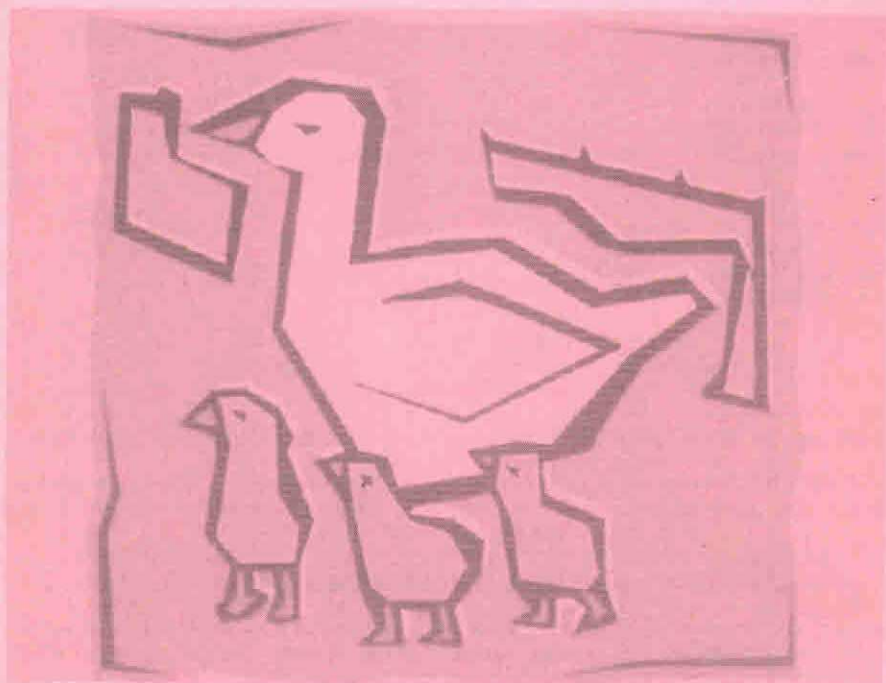


# education otherwise



No. 163 - April 2005

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE EONL  
TO THE FOLLOWING EDITORS:

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*DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS 1<sup>st</sup> May 2005*

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inside back cover)*

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**CHILDREN'S PAGES N.B. deadline 20<sup>th</sup> April 2005**

Angeline Fortin, 25 The Medway, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 2WU  
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Please mark material 'for publication' and include your **name, address, phone number and email** (if you have it) as we may need to contact you to discuss your contribution (though details may be withheld from publication on request). **Email contributions will be acknowledged within a few days. If you require a postal acknowledgement please enclose ssae.** If no acknowledgement is received, or in case of queries, please contact the

NL co-ordinator (see inside back cover). *Please also ensure your EO membership is up to date.*

**Please send contributions via the most appropriate section editor above**

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### **DfES Consultation on Draft Guidelines for LEAs in England on Elective Home Education**

On Feb 18<sup>th</sup> DfES issued draft guidelines for LEAs in England. When adopted, these guidelines will apply to England, but not to Wales or Northern Ireland, although they may inform future guidelines in both, and DfES have said that the guidelines will be passed to them. Guidance for local authorities in Scotland was the subject of much discussion in 2001-2004, and was issued in March 2004. The final version of the Scottish guidance, after much lobbying and debate from home educators on both sides of the border, was very positive towards home education. Since much of the debate over the Scottish guidance is also relevant to the law in England, DfES have sensibly drawn heavily on the Scottish guidance in drafting the guidelines for England. Much of the best text in the draft English guidelines is taken unchanged from the Scottish Guidance, so on behalf of all English home educators we would like to express our thanks to everyone who put effort into getting such successful Scottish Guidance particularly Ann Samuel Till and the EO Scottish group. The guidelines will not be statutory. This means that the guidelines cannot add to the law expressed in the Education Acts, nor alter it. The EO small group who keep in contact with DfES officials have had two meetings with DfES about the proposed guidelines. In the first, in July 2004, we raised some of the major concerns that home educators might have about guidelines, and pointed out some of the more serious difficulties experienced with LEAs which could be addressed. The second meeting took place on February 10<sup>th</sup> 2005, in which we had an opportunity to look at a draft of the guidelines, and were able to point out a number of problems, some of which were changed before the consultation draft guidelines were issued. Full notes of those meetings are available online in the EO discussion group files, or from phil@hicks london.com, or by sending an SAE (A5 – notes are 40 pages!) to Phil Hicks, Westbourne Grove Church, Westbourne Grove, Notting Hill, London W11 2RW.

DfES have stated that they do not have the resources to assess individual responses to the consultation, and have asked for group responses. EO will be making a response drawing on the comments of all home educators both EO members and others. Anyone wishing to comment on the draft guidelines through Education Otherwise may do so via [leaguidelines@education-otherwise.org](mailto:leaguidelines@education-otherwise.org), or to the mail address above. Other responses will be made by HEAS and Mike Fortune-Wood, Mike will collate a response especially from home educators who are not members of a national organisation. There may be other group responses of which I am not aware at the time of writing. The consultation will extend till April 29<sup>th</sup>.

The draft guidelines can be downloaded from the EO website at:  
<http://www.education-otherwise.org/Legal/IndexToLegalBits.htm>

If you do not have web access perhaps you could ask someone from a local group to print them for you. Alternatively you can obtain a copy by sending an SAE (A4 width) to Phil Hicks, Westbourne Grove Church, Westbourne Grove, Notting Hill, London W11 2RW.

By the time you read this there will already have been a great deal of discussion about the draft guidelines. If you wish to read the debate online, you can join the EO-Members discussion group at: <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/EO-Members/> or a discussion group which has been setup for consultation discussions at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HE-consult-UK/>, where you will be able to look back at discussion which has already occurred.

**Please do read the draft guidelines and give us your comments. These guidelines will have a major influence on LEAs' practices in future, and your input is valuable.**

*Julie Ridley, Jill Fisher, Phil Hicks*

## Proposed Information Pack for LEAs – a response from LEA/EA group

Following the article, 'Proposed Information Pack for LEAs', requesting feedback from members in the December 2004 issue of the EO newsletter, Anne Rix also posted a notice on the following email lists - EO Business List (now called EO Members list), EO Local Contacts List and the (non EO) LEAWork List, in order to draw as much attention as possible to this topic.

The total number of people who responded on email lists was about 30. In addition there were two articles in the February 2005 newsletter replying on this topic.

A poll was also posted on the LEAWork list, closed on Dec.17<sup>th</sup> 2004, with the following results to the question asked: How do you feel about EO's proposal to send an information pack to all LEAs in England and Wales?

- It's a good idea and should go ahead as planned, 3 votes, 14.29% -
- It's a good idea in principal but I have concerns about the contents, 8 votes, 38.10%
- The idea should be scrapped and the resources put into other projects, 10 votes, 47.62%
- 

It could be argued that EO members who did not respond are in favour of the pack or trust the LEA/EA group to continue to act in the best interests of EO members and the home educating community, and therefore the overwhelming majority feel it is a good idea to send out the LEA information pack. However, we suspect that many of the EO membership may either have not read the article or felt that they had nothing to add.

All the people who did respond are actively involved with home ed issues and the LEA/EA group accepts the need to take their views into consideration when planning the next step regarding any proposed Information Pack for LEAs.

About 50% of respondents are in favour of a pack, but some are concerned by the contents, and about 50% are against the idea of sending out a pack completely. A number of reasons were raised against the production of an Information Pack for LEAs, some of the main ones of which the LEA/EA group would like to respond to.

### 1. "The proposed pack is a waste of money that could be better spent elsewhere"

This was a common response to the proposal, with various suggestions made as to where people felt the money and the energy could be otherwise employed. Please understand that EO does not have the money to fund this project – the LEA/EA group was to pursue funding from other charitable bodies that are interested in projects that, for example, engage in education policy, support professional development work, and support children, young people and families. There is no question that money not spent on this project is available within EO to be spent on other projects.

### 2. "The human resource would be more usefully employed on other projects"

A variety of other projects were suggested as an alternative to the proposed Information Pack for LEAs. The energy of members of the LEA/EA group was aimed specifically at this project. LEA/EA group members all do various other jobs within EO and, as with everyone who volunteers within EO, we want to put our energy into projects that inspire us and that we feel are worthwhile. Our energies are not necessarily transferable to other areas of EO work, although we agree that several of the suggested projects would be worth pursuing by those with the energy and expertise to do so.

### 3. "The LEA won't read it anyway"

Our belief that LEAs might actually look at the packs and find them useful is based on experience with the 'Summary of the Law' booklet. Several years ago EO sent 10 copies of 'Summary of the Law' to all LEAs in England and Wales. The memory of those involved in this project suggested that EO had feedback from about a third of the LEAs, with a large percentage of that third wanting more copies. This suggested to the LEA/EA group that LEAs were interested in information on paper about home education, and that the unsolicited mail shot was not universally ignored.

We know, from the DfES and from calls from LEAs to the EO Helpline, that many LEAs are looking for information about home education and about what they need to do about home educators. Although the packs would be unsolicited material they might still be welcomed by many LEAs. Assuming the packs weren't immediately discarded by the LEA, the LEA/EA group hoped that they would also be useful for home educators to refer to in their dealings with LEAs. On encountering LEA personnel who didn't seem to understand home education or the law reference could be made to the Information Pack by families, with the ideal outcome that the LEA staff could read the relevant section and return to the family better informed and with increased understanding of home education.

**4. "The contents of the pack will not be representative of the HE community at large"**

The aim of the proposed Information Pack is to include information on how home education can work, rather than just the legal bits which are included in 'Summary of the Law'. The LEA/EA group, when thinking about how to build relationships with LEA personnel, considered that it would be useful for LEA staff liaising with home educators to have some information about the great diversity of home education, e.g. self directed learning, autonomous education, learning through play etc. So many LEAs insist on using phrases like 'broad and balanced', and 'structured', and are able only to think in terms of school-based teaching rather than child-based learning. The inclusion of case studies indicating how children learn out-of-school and of some outcomes of home education for young adults, of research projects such as that done by Alan Thomas and Paula Rothermell, and of some of EO's leaflets relating to various topics would reflect the range of approaches to home education within the HE community at large. Feedback on the contents of the pack has been encouraged by the LEA/EA group.

**5. "It will undermine the work already being done by HEers with their LEAs"**

We aimed to be able to distribute the pack to named personnel within an LEA that we know are involved in contact with home educating families, and considered a number of ways that this might be done - e.g. personally or by direct mailing. We realise that distribution of the packs needs to be carefully coordinated with any local home educator already working with an LEA and a picture is slowly being built up of work that is going on with LEAs, via the Local Contact workshops and the LEAWork email list.

Assuming that the information pack did get to the right person initially we hoped that it would be useful not only to that person, but that the Information Pack would be passed on to subsequent LEA personnel involved in home education. LEA personnel dealing with home education change, often frequently, and often get no training in dealing with home educators from the LEA or from the person they are replacing. Information in the pack about how home education works, from home educators, could improve the attitude of some staff as they take on a new role. The LEA/EA group had feedback from several Local Contacts who felt that the opportunity to present such a pack to their LEA would be beneficial and would enable them to feel more confident in entering into dialogue with an LEA.

**6. "Cost/ resource to update information"**

This aspect had not been fully considered by the LEA/EA group. Much of the proposed contents would not go 'out-of-date'. Various possibilities about updating the pack are possible, which would need to be considered further in the event that this project was to continue.

**7. Some who responded felt it was "inappropriate for EO to endorse/advertise any training to LEAs on home education offered by outside agencies"**

The LEA/EA group felt initially that it was appropriate to include information about training that is available. It seemed more constructive for LEAs to be encouraged to purchase training from companies that are known to EO and other home education organisations, than for LEA personnel to receive training about home education from misinformed (or uninformed) internal or external education, social services or other local authority staff. In the light of feedback received the LEA/EA group needs to reconsider its opinion on the inclusion of training company information.

The possibility of utilising the EO website to expand information available to LEAs was suggested in the feedback we received. The LEA/EA group agrees that as this facility is already available this could be a useful exercise. Information could be readily added or removed, feedback on content could be easily received and info could be easily updated. LCs and others working with LEAs/EAs can refer LEA staff to the site as well as download information for themselves. This new information can also be brought to the attention of LEAs via the Bulletin and feedback from them requested. This option is being investigated and is likely to be developed. The LEA/EA group is concerned that making this resource totally web-based does have disadvantages. LEA personnel have many demands on their time and might prefer a hard copy document on the shelf rather than having to search the website for the relevant information they need. Not all LCs have access to the internet or have the time or inclination to print out lots of documents, and even in this electronic age many people still prefer hard copy documents to read.

Also in the feedback, several LCs suggested that it would be useful to have an information pack for LCs along the lines of that provided to Enquiries Secs. The LEA/EA group supports this suggestion and the LC Coordinator will follow this up.

**Taking into consideration the feedback received, it was decided, at a meeting of the LEA/EA group in January 2005, that it would not be appropriate to send out a hard copy Information Pack for LEAs at this time. Further thought needs to be given to content, style, distribution and liason with home educators working with LEAs. However it was considered that there could still be a place for such an Information Pack for LEAs to be produced at a future date.**

*With thanks to those who took the time to respond to our request for feedback.*

*Any further comments can be directed to*

*Sarah Cook, The Old Cottage, Croglin, Carlisle, CA4 9RZ*

*01768 896019 sarah@croggies.freemove.co.uk*

## Insurance for local groups:update.

Following various enquiries concerning the insurance cover for local groups,

I feel I need to clarify the nature of the cover offered.

According to the definition which I gave to the insurance company, a "local group" consists of families, i.e. parents and their children, meeting together for social and educational purposes.

EO cannot offer cover for ANY situation where parents leave their children in the care of another person.

I currently have a list of over 50 groups covered by the insurance. You can check if your group is included by visiting the web site or by phoning me. Following discussion at the council meeting, a group of interested people will be looking at the general situation regarding local groups, and we hope to develop some helpful guidelines in the next few months. Input from anyone interested is most welcome.

**Martine Frampton (Treasurer) 01608 812411**

## **AFFILIATION TO THE PHONE CO-OP FOR CHEAP PHONE CALLS**

EO has been given some new deals for phone calls and this info is towards the bottom on the home page on the EO web site. If you do not have web access, please phone Priscilla on 0845 458 3085 and she will post you the information. The ip Anytime rate is unchanged.

## LOCAL CONTACT UPDATE

### if you want to volunteer

or would like to know more about being a local contact please contact the  
Local Contact Co-ord (see inside back cover) or see pg.33 of your handbook.

#### New Acting Local Contacts

Alex Caldwell	Leicestershire
Denise Wood	Barnsley South Yorkshire
Diane Lovett	South Gloucestershire
Fiona Sendall	Merseyside
Heather Melville	Gwynedd
Joanne Collett	Bolton Lancashire
Lesley Beales	Doncaster South Yorkshire
Linda Johnson	Withernsea, Hull
Louisa Haywood-Samuel	Carmarthenshire
Marie Lumb	Wrexham County
Sandra Jones	Kent
Stephen Tarlton	London East
Tracy Coates	Blackpool Lancashire

#### Resigning Local Contacts

Louise Murray	Glamorganshire/Gwent
Jo Berry	Gwynedd
Genny Bove	North Wales
Julie Loughlin	Derbyshire
Helen Hall	Warwickshire
Christina Viti	Overseas Contact
Jackie Goldsworthy	London East

#### Areas Needing a Local Contact

Berkshire	Highlands & Islands
Coventry City	London - South West
Central Scotland	Flintshire North Wales
Denbighshire North Wales	Manchester North
Dorset East	Strathclyde
Dorset West	Somerset
Durham	West Midlands (Birmingham, Solihull, Walsall)
Edinburgh	Wolverhampton
Fife	West Sussex
Gloucestershire North	Rotherham South Yorkshire
Herefordshire	Sheffield South Yorkshire
Hertfordshire	

## EO STATIONERY

Gail Borrows has taken over the stationery distribution job from Ali Willer.

Trifold information leaflets, EO Posters, letter headed paper etc can all be ordered from Gail by any member of EO. Please send clear details of quantity needed etc. and be aware that Gail is new to the job – please be patient!

Gail prefers to receive orders by email on [gail@borrows.plus.com](mailto:gail@borrows.plus.com)

Also tel: 01628 483895 or write to 48 Marlow Bottom, Marlow, Bucks SL7 3NB

#### **AMAZON.CO.UK ORDERS**

*If you are buying books or software from Amazon, Education Otherwise receives a small percentage for everything purchased through the link from the EO website. The link can be found at the top of the publications pages.*

# VOLUNTEER VACANCIES

GET INVOLVED WITH EO!!

## **RESEARCH CONTACT**

EO is looking for someone with knowledge of research to take on this post. In addition to knowledge of research, the person should have knowledge of data presentation, a good standard of English and a knowledge of home education (not necessarily a home educator themselves). Someone undertaking research for an Open University degree or other qualification might be interested in this post.

If you think you have the relevant skills, please send an application by **30 April** to: Jacqui Houlding  
38 Garwood Close, Westbrook, Warrington, WA5 8TF email: jacqui@thecrystalball.org.uk

## **ENQUIRIES HELPLINE**

We are looking for people who have been home educating for at least 2 years. An ability to talk objectively but sympathetically about home ed and problems caused by LEAs etc is necessary. You would be required to answer the phone calls redirected to your home for one week in every 4 weeks, send out information packs, pass on information and help people to be able to help themselves. You can claim expenses for postage. If you are interested call Jo: 01392 438876

## **VOLUNTEER SUPPORT**

We are looking for someone who is happy to chat on the phone and support some of the people in EO who do remote jobs and do not have a co-ordinator. It would be your job to contact these people twice a year; find out if they are still happy doing their job, and whether there might be ways of improving things for them. It would mean less than one phone call a week, to slowly build up some knowledge of the people involved and their work. For further details, please contact Priscilla Park Weir Tel: 0845 458 3085 Email: priscilla@pvpw.fsnet.co.uk . She can answer your questions and will provide information and support for the job.

## **FUND RAISER**

Pamela Walker has resigned and has material to pass over, but we need a volunteer to take this on. Anyone interested please contact Julie Ridley (chairperson – see back page for contact details)

## **MEDIA CO-ORDINATORS**

Agree to be contacted for interview or give support and advice to other EO members who have agreed to be interviewed by the media. For more information contact Belinda Harris-Reid.

Tel: 01364 643 343 bhamisreid@baselinedata.co.uk We currently need media co-ords for:

Scotland

Northern Ireland

Northwest England

London (1)

## **LOCAL CONTACTS**

Informing, welcoming and supporting families new to home ed, or those experiencing difficulty.

If you want to volunteer or would like to know more about being a local contact please contact Lize Stevens 0116 2425802 or email Kissit@yawot.me.uk Or see page 33 of your handbook.

### **Areas currently needing a Local Contact:**

Berkshire	Highlands & Islands
Coventry City	London - South West
Central Scotland	Flintshire North Wales
Denbighshire North Wales	Manchester North
Dorset East	Strathclyde
Dorset West	Somerset
Durham	West Midlands (Birmingham, Solihull,
Edinburgh	Walsall, Wolverhampton)
Fife	West Sussex
Gloucestershire North	Rotherham South Yorkshire
Herefordshire	Sheffield South Yorkshire
Hertfordshire	

## **GENERAL VOLUNTEER DATABASE**

If you would prefer to volunteer for infrequent or small tasks please contact Emma Birkenshaw emma-birkenshaw@ntlworld.com tel: 0113 2172795. Emma will add you to our volunteer database and contact you with information when help is needed.

# EDUCATING ARCHIE BY SEG a neighbour comes to call



## MORE TRIBUTES TO ROSEMARY JACKSON

Peak Camp was the first EO camp to be established, in 1988. Over the years, and for many families, Peak Camp has been a magical experience, a real example of community in action. There are still a handful of families who have not missed a camp since its inception. Apart from its beautiful setting, Barracks Farm has been a perfect place for an EO camp. Facilities are basic, and there is lots of space. Many young people and many families have benefited from the freedom they have found there. One reason for this has been Rosemary's unfailingly welcoming, cheerful, friendly and trusting presence. She always remembered families and children who were regular visitors, and always asked about families she might not have seen during a particular year. Even though she might see us only for one week a year, there was always a sense of an ongoing relationship. She always trusted that families would pay before leaving and, even though prices were low, she was always prepared to be flexible with large families. The camp has always operated on a sense of trust: no booking; no unnecessary checking. There has always been a sense of freedom and flexibility around it. It has operated as a small village and has given many of us the chance to experience the kind of social support that should be possible in a rationally organised society. The camp has acted as a powerful contradiction to the socially fragmented, atomistic manner in which our regular lives are led (as do National Gatherings). Though the camp has grown over the years (to around 70 families), Rosemary always reassured us that there need be no booking or limits on numbers.

Rosemary was an intuitive ally of young people. A good example of this occurred a couple of years ago. At the camp, groups of young people sometimes hang out by the small wash-up facility during inclement weather. On this occasion, a small pane of window glass was broken. Instead of blaming, Rosemary recognised that young people need places to hang out. She accepted our apologies and said it was no problem. Similarly she was happy for young people to make use of an old barn a field or two up from the camp, from where, last summer, some young people were fortunate enough to witness an electric storm at close quarters!

Last summer, Rosemary was clearly ill and in discomfort. Despite this, she remained cheerful and insisted on carrying out her normal jobs, refusing offers of help. I was shocked to find out about her death; the cancer she had overcome several years earlier had returned. My son Ben (who has spent part of every summer of his life at Peak Camp) and I spent some time with Marjorie, Rosemary's mother, before Christmas. She told us, 'It will never be the same again.' And it won't. Marjorie said that it may not be possible for EO to return to Barracks Farm. If this proves to be the case it would be useful for us to think of possible alternatives within the Peak District. At the moment, Marjorie has no help in dealing with large numbers of campsite visitors. We have offered to organise our own cleaning rota if this helps us to keep using Barracks Farm. Marjorie has said that she will keep in touch with us and let us know.

*Gary Podmore*

My first Peak Camp was when I was 12 years old. I hadn't been out of school for long and still had serious phobias about large groups. It was here I began to relax and lose some of my inhibitions. That year was marvellous - extremely hot and extremely happy. I made friendships there that I still have today. I have visited with my family every year since. The friendships I made have grown stronger and the fun has continued. The games of British Bulldog; climbing trees and going on cycle rides, will stay with me for a lifetime. The last camp (2004) however has some very significant memories for me. Here I met my much loved girlfriend Olivia. The weather wasn't so great, with wind and thunderstorms like I have never seen before. But running hand in hand with her in the torrential rain made it all worthwhile. I even lost my tent! It was first struck by lightning (reports of my death are greatly exaggerated) and then it blew down in 70mph gales. Even mum gave up and went home early, but I stuck it out. It is sad to think that Peak Camp may not happen again but if it does I would willingly give it my full support.

*Alex Wood, age 16, (AKA Tennyry)*

The annual EO camp at Barracks Farm has been an important event in our family's calendar for 15 years now, so it was with heartfelt sadness that we learnt of the death of Rosemary Jackson, who was a truly special person. The weather was most unkind on many occasions but Rosemary never failed to bring sunshine into every day. She couldn't help but do so - it was just how she was. Rosemary's unflinching patience with all of us was tremendous. She happily opened her kitchen door to a constant stream of requests for milk, ice creams or "special mixes", without a single complaint. Every child was given as much time as required to choose their treats and, though we may have been a trifle concerned about the rate of sugar consumption, the purchasing of it was a valuable lesson in mutual respect, and an enjoyable exchange - not to mention the mental arithmetic, which Rosemary always encouraged the children to work out for themselves. Rosemary's naturally relaxed attitude to running a busy campsite worked away unseen to create the stress free experience we all looked forward to year after year. Whilst her manner was easy-going, her work was carried out with great vigour and meticulous attention. We won't forget the delightful spectacle of Rosemary in her glamorous clothes and perfect make-up plus wellies and long-sleeved rubber gloves, doing the most important job of all - the daily scrubbing and slooshing out of the toilet block - more thoroughly than I have ever seen it done anywhere, and an invaluable contribution to our comfort and level of contentment. Rosemary didn't "check-up" on us or oversee anything but trusted and respected everyone. In turn, we respected and appreciated her more than I am able to express. Camping in Beresford Dale will be a different experience without Rosemary. As one of my daughters commented, "She was very sparky and chatty and just nice to us all and she was always there." And of course in some way she always will be. Thankyou.

*Ian, Angela, Kia, Rowanne and Holly-Rayne Bennett*

We were so sorry to hear of Rosemary's death. Since 1994 we've been to moSt Peak Camps and have always enjoyed the warm welcome the Jackson family give. Like many others, we were taken by Rosemary's gorgeous glittery clothes, her sunny nature, her patience and her kindness. Her generosity of spirit towards the children was remarkable. She always had time for them, and always saw them in a loving light. She had the patience of a saint when the children spent forever deliberating over which penny chews to buy. We will remember Rosemary with great fondness, and I'm sure that, for our children, she will always be a favourite lady from their childhood.

*Diane and Jem Brown and family*

## **This can't be happening to us... Can it?**

Where to start? It is the early hours of the morning and I cannot sleep. Frankly, I am terrified. Why? Because my husband and I are accused of emotionally abusing our seven-year-old son, Tom (name changed). We are to be visited by two representatives of Social Services. They have received an anonymous letter alleging abuse. Our 'task' is to counter this allegation and to try to protect our child. Our crime? To choose to exercise our right to educate our child other than at school.

The background: We are both senior university academics in the field of education. I am a child psychologist specialising in the education of children and young people with special needs. Tom's father specialises in head teacher education. We both have doctorates in our specialist fields. Tom was born to us seven years ago - a great surprise (we were both in our mid forties and 'child free'!) but also a great joy. He was a summer baby - August born. From the start he was active, assertive and 'up for it': a real challenge. In the early years we employed a nanny. He also attended various playgroups, nurseries and other pre-school provisions. He was a happy, lively and confident child. However, it seemed to us that he was at his best when out in the 'real' world, with a degree of freedom, being able to set his own agenda. In more structured settings, he did not always appear to thrive. As school-age approached we anguished over provision: how would he fare in the school system? He continued to be very much 'up for it' but, as a summer-born child he was

chronologically very 'young' for the system. We knew from our reading and from personal and professional experience that summer-born children, especially boys, did not always fare well in the early years of formal schooling (Tom's father was a summer-born child). Tom also appeared to us to be emotionally 'young'. We were concerned that his developing – but still fragile – ego could be vulnerable in a system which set such store by the achievement of academic age-related targets and which had expectations for age-related 'appropriate' behaviour. In the end we decided to opt for education 'otherwise'. We employed a 'helper'; we employed a tutor; we exercised our right to work at home in order that we could participate in Tom's education; we planned a variety of educational and enriching activities; we joined 'Education Otherwise'; we participated in locally-organised groups; we enrolled him in various community-based activities; we informed the local education authority (who never responded to our overtures to come and see what we were up to); and we diligently recorded his day-to-day activities. Although frequently we questioned our decision to educate Tom 'otherwise', for two years we felt that, on balance, we had made the best choice: Tom was happy, was thriving and was making progress. And then we received the letter from Social Services, and then they came to 'visit'.

The long and the short of it is that they came, they saw and Tom conquered. he is a confident child who likes nothing better than to regale visitors with vivid accounts of his activities. He talked... and he talked... and he talked... about his chickens, his ducks, his beloved cat, his 'gymnastics', his computer, his prowess in swimming, his advanced web-spinning abilities (reference Spiderman), the birthday party he had recently attended... and so on. And then he showed... how he could do cartwheels... double-elbow thrusts (reference Ninja Turtles)... his swinging tennis serve, etc. until their eyes glazed over. We left him to it. We were not needed. Hardly the profile of an emotionally abused child!

It was clear from the start that the Social Workers who visited had limited knowledge, understanding or awareness of the law as it relates to parents' rights to educate their child other than at school: given the potential powers of Social Services this is unacceptable. As parents who are immersed in the world of education we were well able to present our 'case': it could be said that we have an unfair advantage. Had we been less well-informed, and had Tom been a less assertive child (no crime in that), it could have been such a different story. This is appalling. It should not be like this. A few weeks after the visit we received a letter from Social Services stating that: *'the allegations appeared to be unfounded and the department has agreed to close their involvement without the completion of an initial assessment.'* Ironically, the letter concluded with: *'May I take the opportunity to apologise for any stress caused by the intervention'*. A letter to our family doctor (who had been contacted prior to the visit without our knowledge or permission) stated that: *'(Tom) appeared to be thriving and there was no evidence to substantiate the allegations made' and: 'Mr & Mrs... presented as loving parents who have made an informed decision regarding (Tom's) education'*.

In terms of the possible provenance of the anonymous letter, we have previous experience of false allegations against us (of a different nature); the provenance is known and stem from a legal action taken (reluctantly) by us against an individual. The outcome was in our favour and costs were awarded. It is our view that the history is relevant to the false allegations of emotional abuse of our child. This history is a matter of record: no-one bothered to check.

So that's the end of the story... It all ended happily... didn't it? Well, not exactly. Two weeks later we received a letter from our local education authority (the same LEA which did not respond to our requests two years previously to contact us to discuss our plans for Tom's education) stating that a referral had been made to the Education Welfare Service *'due to educational concerns'* and that representatives from the department intended to visit us in three days time in order to discuss *'in*

*detail 'this situation'*: It seems that choosing to educate our son 'otherwise' than at school is our Achilles' heel in terms of being a target for malicious allegations: watch this space.....

## **This can't be happening to us again... Can it?**

Three days later and I await the visit from the representatives of the LEA. I am much less nervous this time – and considerably more angry. We have received from Social Services written endorsement of our parenting and educating of Tom and an assurance that the case is closed and that no further action is required; nevertheless, in the light of the impending visit, we seem to be the victims of a lack of 'joined up' thinking between Social Services and Education. I prepare for the visit. This time Tom will not be 'available' – enough is enough – he has better things to do than 'perform'; he is taken out by his father. I, meanwhile, amass the 'evidence' of our educational provision for Tom over the past two years (e.g. diaries - eight A3-size books of written accounts of activities, photographs, artefacts, etc. - videos, workbooks) and make plans for the showing of his 'living' exhibitions (e.g. the chickens and ducks he has reared and cares for, his garden, the pond he created with his father, the cat he has nurtured). I make Tom's bedroom and its contents available for inspection (e.g. his computer and computer programmes, his books, art materials, construction apparatus). I also assemble the paperwork: my original letter to the LEA written two years previously, informing them of our intention to educate Tom otherwise than at school (never responded to); my follow-up letter, requesting a visit from an LEA representative to discuss our intended educational provision (never responded to); a record of the telephone calls I made to various LEA departments, requesting a discussion of our intended educational provision (never responded to); the letter from Social Services confirming that no further action was required. I left the visitors with their paperwork. I showed them our 'evidence'.

To cut another long story short the visitors departed. Ten days later I receive another letter from the LEA:

'... I am writing to thank you for allowing us to look at the wealth of work and diarised social experiences that (Tom) has completed. The diaries in particular are a great asset for inspection purposes and we felt a good record of (Tom's) childhood for when he gets older. As agreed at our meeting... we will not be recommending an early inspection. We can only apologise on behalf of the LEA for the lack of contact with yourselves... I can assure you that...'

So that's all right then, isn't it? Three days later I receive a letter from another 'representative' of the LEA to inform me that *'a School Improvement Consultant will make arrangements for a visit to assess the education provision you are making...'*

Enough really is enough this time... we are exhausted. Tom now attends school – four days a week. We are desperately hanging on to some remnant of the 'education otherwise' principle on a Friday anyway. We have informed the LEA of our arrangement. Dare I say watch this space?

**P.S. The saga continues:** we are to be visited next week by a 'school improvement consultant' who wants to 'inspect' our home provision - despite the fact that Tom is now in school! Clearly, wires are crossed, but we are letting the 'consultant' visit and intend to make our views known. We are then going to ask for a meeting with the Director of Education for our area, in order to outline our experience as a home educating family. Apparently, home education is an area which our LEA has targeted for 'improvement'....I have a few suggestions!!

*name and address supplied*

## The Tale of Sheringham AGM

I was asked if I would write up an informal account of the council meeting and AGM held in Sheringham in February. Nobody defined 'informal' for me...so those of you that know me can start shaking now...and the rest of you can wonder who on earth I am!

Having braved the elements to get to the meeting, we (son Chris) and I arrived just before midnight. After a sleep in an awfully hard bed, but in a lovely quiet room with its own loo, I got up ready to face the usual tedious day seated in a chair which did not quite match the comfort qualities of my rocking recliner at home. As people drifted into the room just after 10am (Julie did start the meeting on time as soon as we were quorate) it was obvious that the usual sartorial elegance was being adhered to. The most colourful person was Alex...her socks were a beautiful splash of rainbow colours. Jill had red socks with black cats on them. Martine had grey socks with white fluffy clouds on them. Anne and Rob Wade were wearing colour matched sensible, warm socks. Gary had a pair of comfy moccasins and Lize had twinky denim jeans and bare feet...and I had my fluffy pink slippers on. I'll get a numb bum for EO but not cold toes!

The usual name tags were created by Anne W. for us all, and the usual business of signing in and apologies etc were given. The matters arising were dealt with quite efficiently as well. A steady stream of 'on going' was echoing around the hall. A collective sigh of relief was heard. It may be a short meeting!

The business of the day is helped along by the production of reports in advance...and it is hoped that most people read these before entering the meeting. Most of us do. The first few items went through quite quickly with just a few comments on the reports. For me, the highlight here was that we've metaphorically joined the plain English society. The deregistration leaflet for parents (as opposed to the deregistration leaflet for LEAs) is to be renamed and will now be headed 'Taking Your Child Out of School'. Anne Rix is also putting together several of the HE stories published in the newsletter, with various accounts of governmental attempts at repression of HE, to create booklets which will be available to the public...suitably anonymised where appropriate.

Under the website report...I get to spend some EO money. We're going to have a nice new shiny copy of Adobe Acrobat to produce all the pdf files planned for the website. Fizz joined us for the first time and you'll notice elsewhere in this newsletter that the UK Muslim home educators and EO are looking at working together more closely so that muslim home educators can access the support and services offered by EO more easily. Workshops will take place at the next Gathering where minority groups (not just muslim but ALL minority groups) can let it be known what they require from EO as a support organisation...and this is expected to help EO prioritise what support and information we can offer.

Lunch was the usual vegetarian fare with no worries about toxic colourings or CJD etc. And the AGM then began at 2 pm. This was conducted very speedily because, although it is probably the most important meeting of the year, it is very formal and over and done with within about 20 minutes. We've now lost (I know...careless of us) Geraldine Adams and Ali Willer as council members although thankfully they are sticking around and staying involved. We've ratified Phil Hicks onto the Council and have added Tracy Coates, Rowenna Williams, Martine Wise, Gail Borrows and Lize Stevens. It was quite a shock to realise we had more than the bare minimum for once.

There was discussion of the LEA/EA small group's work, but really only clarifying what had been said in the written report. The same with the treasurer's report and the DfES group report. There was an additional discussion on the inflexibility of the DfES in only accepting comment on the new draft Truancy Guidelines from EO and HEAS. The

meeting also commented that most of the new guidelines for LEAs was lifted straight from the Scottish guidelines. Unfortunately nobody wanted to minute this the way I suggested; 'EO, on behalf of the DfES, would like to thank Ann Samuel Till for writing most of the draft guidelines for LEAs in England and Wales'.

Dave Hill had put forward an item for discussion but unfortunately omitted to tell anyone why...and didn't turn up either. So we had a discussion anyway. Basically all members (and non members) who are contacted by Education Otherwise, Anytown Council, should complain to the Council that EOs trade mark is being misused. Certainly EO complain about this on a regular basis and sometimes the council's even do something about it!

We all looked at the examples of new membership cards which Sarah had sorted out. The one we all liked is now going to be investigated further to see if it is available as a pvc free card...and you'll see elsewhere in the newsletter a request that you let Sarah know if you are prepared to pay extra for having a nice, durable card. We had a quick straw poll at the meeting...and there was a definite age divide here. The older members were happy with the current card...the younger members wanted the new card. I won't mention the poor man who was ribbed rather a lot because he fell into the 'old' (I'm not being insulting...I was in that group as well) group.

We had some nice fireworks then. Well...one or two council members are extremely concerned that, should a volunteer working for EO give out information which proved to be harmful in some way (we came up with some really way out scenarios that probably wouldn't happen...but might) then council members as trustees could be sued. Most of the council members were more than happy with the information found out by Lize. I now have a REALLY painful posterior which is full of splinters, as I wouldn't get off the fence on this one! Anyway, everyone kissed and made up (literally as well as figuratively) and hugged and we're now going to use our membership of NCVO to get to the bottom of this problem.

Anyway...if this has sounded interesting...it wasn't for a lot of the time. But it was very productive. Everyone works together; when there is disagreement it is resolved and it is one of the few organisations where hard work is appreciated. Hopefully, we'll see more members at future council meetings.

*Jacqui Houlding (back page)*

## An Opinion re: LEA Information Packs

I am writing with regard to the current debate over LEA packs. My own view is that they are a good idea. In this age of constantly 'moving on', not all employees stay in the same position for a long time and I.F.A employees are no exception. I favour the 'plugging away' approach. If we keep sending accurate, up-to-date information to LEAs, eventually we will encounter a change of employee, which may bring about a change of attitude.

Whilst many of us have had unpleasant contact with an LEA, it is negative and condescending to suggest that *all* LEA employees cannot or will not read and understand their mail. Surely it is part of their job description! There is some obligation, at the very least, on the part of a chief executive of a local authority to read his or her post. They may not like what they read but they do have to read it and action it.

LEAs need to be educated. Our LEA found out about us from our health visitor, who had reported that we were home educating our son (not unlawful!) They sent us a pack entitled Education Otherwise with a covering letter, thanking us for our enquiry about education otherwise and telling us we had to do all sorts of things in order to home educate. Somebody had clearly read the legislation and had embroidered on it by slipping in odd phrases here and there to

create a negative bias against home education. They were aware of Education Otherwise, the organisation and other membership groups, since they listed them at the back of their pack. Their pack needs to be addressed in detail, not separately by dozens of home educators. I have contacted another home educator in a different authority who is willing to write to the LEA here, but she is a solicitor and I am not, I could spend a huge amount of time checking the education acts and pulling apart the LEA's pack sentence by sentence, but I think it sends a better message if an organisation such as EO does it centrally. It shows that we as an organisation are sitting up and taking notice. I think a proactive LEA pack is a wonderful idea, but that we also still need to react centrally to inappropriate contact and pressure from LEAs.

*Anne Dias, Harrow, Middx*

## Making life cycle wheels

(science, maths, CDT etc.)

All you need is a paper plate, a brass paper fastener, a piece of thick card about 6cm longer than your paper plate, pencils and paints or crayons to decorate illustrations with.

- 1) Decide on your chosen life cycle (water, bird, plant, frog, butterfly etc.) and count the number of stages in the cycle eg: egg – chick – fledgling – bird = 4 stages
- 2) Mark equal divisions on the back of the plate for every stage of the cycle, ie quarters for the one mentioned above. Measure 3cm out from the centre of the plate, and cut out one of the sections, leaving a 3cm rim at the edge of the plate.
- 3) With the brass paper fastener, pin the centre of the plate to the bottom half of the piece of card, allowing room to write a title at the top of the card. Draw the shape of the cut out window onto the card, using the hole in the plate as a stencil and turning it until all the segments of the life cycle are drawn.
- 4) Remove the plate, draw the life cycle stages in the correct order on the backing card; colour in, label and decorate with a title etc. Replace the plate and slowly spin it around to demonstrate your work to admiring friends and family!

*Kirsten Freiesleben, Crediton, Devon*

## Blackpool and Area Group Win Prize in Local Art Competition!

Every year the Blackpool Gazette, in conjunction with Myerscough College run the Young Seaside's Art Exhibition....They have 3 sections: Individual entries for Primary and Secondary schools, and a group section for Primary schools. The theme for this year was 'The Outdoor Classroom'. We entered both Primary school sections and won the group section! There were another 27 entrants....We entered a tree made from everything that comes from a tree; putting leaves on made from paper, all tied on with raffia and with information on each one - All very abstract! And so different from all the school entries - we certainly stood out! We called it 'Wood You Believe It!' Anyway we won a trophy with our name engraved on it, and £100! The organiser from the newspaper said she was quite glad to see another name on the trophy, as the same 2 schools have won it for the past 8 years! All our art works are on display at the Blackpool Grundy Art Gallery until Saturday 2nd April....A spin off from this is that the newspaper are now doing an article on home ed!

*Tracy Coates, Cleveleys, Lancs*

## Continuing on...

We have been members of EO for nearly 16 years. At present I am the Media Officer for EO. I felt I needed to write because it a closing of a chapter for our eldest son. Gus is 18 years old – currently studying for four A levels at Exeter College. Our other son is Barnaby, 13 years old and is still at home; surfing, skateboarding, stunt-biking, playing (lots and lots), dancing and generally have a whale of a time... but back to Gus.

Sitting here tonight, listening to Gus read his Personal Statement to me (which is necessary for University entrance – he wants to study Mechanical Engineering), I realise that all those years of playing and ‘being’ has been ...has been...ummm... it is difficult to articulate – has been the most brilliant way for Gus to have lived his childhood. All the freedom, all the marble runs and magic potions and crazy games and laughter... all the times of sitting and chatting and doing nothing... a lot of doing nothing - has been okay. Has been more than okay. Gus has never ever produced ‘work’; essays or pages of sums or anything that most adults construe as necessary to prove to themselves or to the authorities that ‘education’ is taking place. This idea is nonsense... Thinking and loving and hating and knowing and learning are personal. How can we, as parents force our children to know ‘things’; expect our children to regurgitate fact and figures which we or the government feel is ‘for their own good’; demand they have specific knowledge in fields that we deem ‘necessary’? How dare we?? How dare we rob our children of their childhood? It’s like saying, “Let’s teach our children about dentistry – we all have teeth.” It’s ridiculous!

Knowing/learning/discovering; birth and death dates of Kings and Queens, Algebra (all those x’s and y’s), C sharp major scale on the clarinet, the chemical compounds that make up glazes, quotes from Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, surfing (tide times and riding the waves), sculpting (making armatures), tie-dye and magnetism (the forces of the world) and... - is personal. Who is to say what one individual should know/not know... it’s not honourable to make/cajole/force people (and children are people) to learn ‘things’ that we feel are important. It is unjust. Teaching is based on the premise that because we are older and therefore supposedly wiser, we know what is best for our children to know – this is a lie.

Children who are made to learn; are told it is *for their own good*; made to be passive in their acceptance and not encouraged to be active in their criticism; are made to recall and regurgitate facts (which is thought of as the highest form of intellectual achievement); who obey the voice of authority; who are taught the theory that orthography (the art of letter formation) and ‘rote’ reading are more important than thought; who are learning in an environment where dogma is more desirable than doubt, that men are more important than women, that adults are more important than children - these rules and pedagogues will break our little peoples spirits - it diminishes our children’s lives.

Remember, these small humans are the adults of tomorrow. Should they be obedient, compliant, unquestioning?

I write this tonight... with tears in my eyes... my big son is growing into manhood. I asked him tonight why he thinks he is like he is... he said because he has engaged parents, a close family and had some very dear and special friends (Arran, Rachel and Edward) while he was growing up. He was recently interviewed for the Guardian and asked if he could reflect on his experience of home-education. His considered response was, “Like a permanent holiday, really!”

I asked Gus if I could send his Personal Statement to the EO newsletter – he gave his blessing... and so here it is:

## **Personal Statement – Gus Harris-Reid**

I played a lot as a child; constructing and creating Lego models and puzzles – taking them apart and putting them back together. I was not sent to school; therefore I was able to do/play/learn what I wanted, when I wanted. Because of this, my natural curiosity for learning was not stifled or directed. Books on machines, buildings and inventions used to (and still do) fascinate me; how they are made and why they work. I moved to Devon from London, though did not lose my scientific inclination despite the ‘poetry’ of rolling hills and fields of sheep. Throughout my childhood I have had many interests and have attended numerous workshops and classes. These include; metalwork, a Lottery-funded animation project, rock-climbing, philosophy classes, printmaking, fencing and Aikido (the last three each for over two years).

In the past four years, my interest in all things ‘technical’ led me to local youth theatres and the Northcott Theatre (Exeter), as well as the Theatre Royal (Plymouth), where I joined the young company and have worked on six productions as a lighting technician. Two of these productions we took to London to perform at the National Theatre.

At the age of fourteen, I felt it was necessary to prove to myself that I was academically equal to my school-attending counterparts, so I studied three GCSEs from home. I took Maths and English to prove that I was numerate and literate, and Physics due to my scientific interest and my belief that it would answer many questions I had regarding the world and the universe. I am currently studying four A-levels: Maths, Physics (for which I studied the AS-level at home), Psychology and English Literature. I also have an AS-level in History.

I have always been interested in technology and construction. This was initially fuelled by a love of science-fiction, especially the technical aspects - robots, spaceships and laser guns. When I was younger, I spent many hours constructing Airfix models. I especially enjoyed experimenting with designs and constructing hybrid models, as they were ‘not meant to be’. This led onto a war game called Warhammer, a two-or-more player tactical tabletop game, for which I have been a member of a gaming club for over three years. Soldiers and war machines in Warhammer are represented by models that must be self-constructed and painted, which has furthered my interest in the possibilities of using science to adapt and compose innovative designs. The premise that ‘science leads the way’ has always inspired me to think further than what is. Einstein said, “imagination is more important than knowledge” – the juxtaposition of these concepts, ‘imagination’ and ‘knowledge’, encapsulates the qualities required in a field such as engineering.

Where does this lead? I wish to explore the possible and attempt to overcome the impossible; to understand ‘the box’ in which creation lies, and not only think outside it, but act outside it. Why engineering? Engineering is discovery and innovation. It allows us to enhance our environment and preserve what is already valuable. Through the application of Maths and Physics I wish to actualise mechanical designs that are beneficial and practical, especially in the areas of robotics/cybernetics. Hopefully these aspirations will be realised in and beyond higher education.

© 2005 Gus Harris-Reid

*“...I wish to explore the possible and attempt to overcome the impossible; to understand ‘the box’ in which creation lies, and not only think outside it, but act outside it ”*

I have tears in my eyes... I love him so very much, he is brilliant.

He has been offered places at all the Universities he applied for.

*Belinda Harris-Reid, Buckfastleigh, Devon (Media Officer)  
01364 643343 – bharrisreid@baselinedata.co.uk*

## Home Education Centre in Chard, Somerset

I would like to take the chance to tell you a little more about Chard Home Education Centre (HEC). Their aims and philosophies are very exciting, and I'm sure resonate with all our views on education, but I thought a little personal input might paint a better picture of what HEC is actually like.

We are a local voluntary group based in Somerset, supporting families who home-educate or whose children are struggling in the mainstream education system.

As part of our support services we have opened an independent learning centre for the 5-14 age range. We have an entirely child led approach, where children actively make decisions about their own learning and the way the centre is run. It provides them with opportunities to experience a wide range of different activities and workshops in a safe secure setting. We provide a meeting place for families, an advice and information service and we are gradually becoming a focal point of contact for those interested in alternative education, and for those whose children are having problems in the mainstream. We also have experienced teachers on site for families who need extra support and access to teaching and learning advice.

Since the official opening in September 2004, around a dozen families have utilised the centre already: some attend regularly, some needed a "breathing space" after coming out of school and have since decided to re-enter the system and some access the group occasionally, in addition to other activities they are involved in.

So far we have secured funding to set up and run an interactive website and purchase computer equipment and a digital video camera. Activities offered to date include science, maths, crafts, computing, drama and filming.

We want to bring into the mainstream a new vision of education where children are empowered to direct their own learning and are able to seek freely the answers to the questions they ask. We are aware that nationally much is being done to achieve these aims and we feel it is vital to work collaboratively with other organisations, to strengthen our case nationally and generally increase public awareness of home education as a viable option.

We strongly believe that our weekly session could become a model of how a more flexible approach to mainstream education could operate, with schools acting as a resource for family/community learning. We have received funding from the local network fund and South Somerset District Council, whilst remaining entirely independent and able to achieve our political aims unhindered. We have had meetings with Somerset County Council and local MPs and, through working on mainstream committees, have managed to get a high local profile in children's services discussions in Somerset.

Our interactive website contains more details of the work we are doing at: [www.home-education-centre.co.uk](http://www.home-education-centre.co.uk) We are very interested in bringing this group and others like it into the national debate. We are particularly interested in the mass of children who are struggling in the mainstream system, whose parents have no idea of the options open to them. We are working to alleviate this problem locally but feel there needs to be some form of national agenda.

We are hoping that this letter, which is going to be sent to all the major national home education organisations, will stimulate discussion and can somehow contribute to bringing together all the fantastic work we are all doing locally and separately, to gain maximum change for the better for all our children. We look forward to getting responses from organisations and individual homeschoolers. Please do feel free to respond.

*Karen Turner, Chard Home Education Centre, 10 Tansee Hill, Thorncombe, Nr. Chard, Somerset TA20 4LQ. E-mail: [Karen.turner@uku.co.uk](mailto:Karen.turner@uku.co.uk)*

## **Chard Home Education Centre -- a personal view**

My children have been going to the group since September, and for them it is the one, non-negotiable activity that we do. Everything else in the week may not get done, but Chard is a must! The activities are child-led, with the adults as facilitators. The children have drawn up their own charter of how the space should be used, and have regular meetings with the adults to decide what activities they want to do. This has included a carol concert for the children in the nursery downstairs and a retirement home in the town; exploring various periods of history through drama re-enactments; junk modelling, sewing and other craft activities, etc. The children also contribute to the website with jokes, news, timelines, whatever their particular interest is. Various funding grants have paid for the computer, website and software for all age groups and a digital video camera to enhance the popular weekly drama sessions. There are craft, maths and science activities organised every week for those who want to participate in them.

As well as the benefits to the children, the centre is a great asset to parents too. A library of information and resources is being built up, and there are two trained and experienced teachers, one of whom homeschools her own child, to give advice and ideas if necessary. There is also help with LEA and other bureaucratic issues and the centre can be used as a neutral ground for inspections and meetings. There are about a dozen children currently using the centre. There are some who have visited after leaving school, and found it a useful breathing space for de-stressing and de-schooling after negative experiences, but who have since re-entered the school system. My own children have never been to school, so I like the fact that they are able to take part in group activities and discussions, which are difficult to create in a home environment. One family is leaving the group to go travelling, but we will all be able to keep in contact and hear one another's news via the interactive website. Another child flexi-schools, and the HEC fits into his weekly pattern of school and home. Children who have been to school find it helpful to have ideas and activities offered to them if they are as yet unused to deciding what to do for themselves. Children can be left at the centre, which means that some parents have been able to pursue part-time education for themselves. For me, this means that my older children can be doing group activities with older kids, while I take my 2 year-old to a toddler group, and spend some rare one-to-one time with him.

Many of these opportunities are available at many other groups, but to have all these assets together under one roof is unusual in my experience. The group is already doing well, mostly thanks to Karen, whose brainchild it is. She has a fantastic degree of empathy with the individual children who attend the group. I know she has inspired my children to do activities they would never try with me at home (!). This is coupled with a desire to bring the philosophy and knowledge of flexible and home education to a wider audience. The building used is designated as one of the "Children's Centres" mentioned in the Government's recent White Paper, and so will be at the centre of provision for children in the future. The local MPs, councils and LEA are aware of the centre and it is hoped to be able to establish and continue a positive relationship with them. The centre has already been featured in an extremely positive article on local BBC TV, and a radio piece is coming soon.

If you want to find out more about the Centre, please do look at the website - [www.home-education-centre.co.uk](http://www.home-education-centre.co.uk). And if you are within striking distance of Chard, we look forward to seeing you if you want to drop by!

*Becca Bradley-Carter*

### **VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

**If you have difficulty with reading small print in the newsletter, please contact the NL co-ordinator (back page) to discuss alternative access options.**

## How Home Education Works

One family's story

(from EONL no. 141, August 2001)

Six months ago, my husband and I decided that we would home educate our son. We had no choice – he had become school-phobic through no fault of his own. We had watched him go through months of agony and been through the same ourselves. We had watched our son go through the sort of stress which, had he been an adult, would most likely have ensured him months off work and counselling. And yet, we were still advised to force him back into a situation that affected him so badly. It had got to the stage where he was threatening to harm himself. He was a nervous wreck, and close to a breakdown.

The reason, as is often the case, was a bullying problem that had not been dealt with effectively. Our boy had lost faith in the teachers to sort things out. Frankly, so had we. Surely every child has the right to feel safe at school?

Other schools were not really an option at this stage, although we tried. However, by this time our son had lost faith in the whole education system.

To be honest, the thought of home education terrified us initially. We could not afford to employ home tutors, and we were not teachers. There were some excellent correspondence courses available but they were far too expensive for us to even consider. However, we soon discovered there was a wealth of information at our fingertips. We joined an excellent group "Education Otherwise", which consists of other home educating families, and began attending local meetings. EO also has a network of people who can be contacted for advice. The Home Education Advisory Service is also very good. Many museums allow us free entry on production of our EO card.

For the first 'term' we realised that our son needed a period of recovery. He had lost his sense of humour, his self-esteem, and was sleeping badly, suffering from frequent nightmares. For those few months we allowed him to choose to learn about things he was most interested in. He did this with an enthusiasm that astounded us.

Now, several months later, we understand what home education is all about. The child is educated rather than schooled. There is a big difference.

Our son learns from many different sources – CD roms, the internet, library books, history, geography, science, biology, English, maths, I.T. and DIY programmes on digital satellite television programmes and also from the BBC Learning Zone and 4Learning. He reads two newspapers daily and is keen to discuss various topics such as politics and education, among others. His computer skills have rocketed. He has started up his own website building business, and has written to professional people for advice, of his own accord. We are trying to find a mentor in this field to guide and encourage him further. His latest project is a website for home educated kids, where they can all communicate with each other. Socially he still has friends that he sees in the area where we live, and he has also made other friends through Education Otherwise.

Our child is not doing GCSE courses at this stage but can go on to college and take these when he is older – if he chooses. I imagine academics reading this will throw up their hands in horror, but our child is motivated, he is learning, and most of all he is happy.

He is following a path of his own choosing, with supervision and tuition from us, his parents. Imagine if we had gone to a school and learnt only the subjects that we truly enjoyed and were interested in along with the basics of English and Maths? Imagine if such a school had catered only to our individual needs, rather than forcing us to learn languages which we loathed, and wouldn't even need later in life, for example? How many of us, then, would be in careers we love rather than jobs we hate because we had been able to pursue subjects which we had a thirst for learning about? Not possible I know in the education system as it is, but in Home Education – yes!

Since I wrote this piece which was printed as a letter in our local newspaper, our son has had the website he created for kids of EO accepted by the council of EO. He has also done a week's work experience at a company which creates and makes computer games. I am sending this in case it may help and encourage other people who are worried about home educating.

*(name and address supplied)*

## Centralised EO Office, or Regionally Based Groups, to Communicate with the LEA?

In response to Ross' article in Feb's newsletter, about her thoughts on packs for LEAs - Yes, EO has done a wonderful job so far. Yes, we have grown out of all proportion. No, we do not need a national office. Who would run that office? Where would it be situated? If the people working in the office were not home educators how would they know what advice to give? How could we trust them to give the right advice? The database was, for a time, run unsuccessfully by someone employed by EO who was not a home educator. It took Lynda quite a while to sort out the mess that had been made. Now Lynda is back running the database and is paid (I believe) per application form she processes. She deserves to be paid more, as I'm sure she doesn't claim for even half of her expenses. If everyone doing a valuable job within EO did claim their expenses then EO would be broke. So how can we even think about having a national office with paid workers?

On the EO helpline there are people working in Shetland, Edinburgh, North Yorkshire, Lancashire, Humberside, Derbyshire, Cheshire, East Midlands, Wales, Ireland, Hereford, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, East Sussex and Exeter. How would you get all those people into one central office? How would you give a non home educator the knowledge these people have?

To have a central office which would just supply information to LEAs would be expensive and wouldn't necessarily work anyway. All LEAs are, according to the DfES, 'autonomous'. I think that is just the DfES way of saying that they have no control over what each individual LEA says or does.

Which is why it would make more sense to have regionally based local groups, who could communicate with the LEAs within their area, and hopefully educate them. Many LEAs do need educating about elective home education; some, I believe, are already very understanding. There could be an information file which is regularly updated so that all the information given out is nationally regulated.

EO is too big to carry on as it is; the alternative has to be regionally based groups supporting families and LEAs, not one National Office which would eat money faster than we could make it. We can continue to be 'cupboard based' as long as we are prepared to form county based groups to link together when facing the LEAs.

An LEA is made up of regular people who are just doing a job; I know - my Dad was a Deputy Chief Education Officer with the LEA until he retired 20 years ago. Although he was not too pleased initially to hear that we were home educating, he understood that I knew what I was doing and trusted me to home educate my daughter.

Only when my daughter had been accepted into college to take her A levels (without any GCSEs) did we tell my father that she planned to go to college. He then saw how the home education, that he may have initially doubted, had worked out and he was doubly pleased for us both. If my daughter hadn't chosen to go to college I would still have felt that her home education was successful; how could I not? She is very sensible, well balanced and extremely happy. She has a part time job, as well as going to college, and loves it. She fits into the 'adult' world perfectly.

And yet, if she had decided to do nothing I would still see her as a success.

*Jo Barthen, 57 Florida Drive, Exeter, EX4 5EX, Devon. Email: jo4eo@aol.com*

## Another View on EO Admin

With regard to EO having a more formal administrative structure, how about seeking funding to pay those people who are doing perhaps the more high profile jobs; for example maintaining the website and the advice lines? Many volunteers are happy to do the things they do but there is no doubt that it takes up time that could be used to earn money. It also seems sensible to harness some of the very valuable expertise that members have built up over their years of home-educating, rather than seeing it disappear once their children grow up. I still home-educate my youngest two (my three eldest are either at college or in the world of work now) and would far rather earn my money promoting/supporting EO than having to go out to work, leaving them working on their own, whilst I am engaged in employment to fund their home-education (an ironic situation at times!).

It is a really tricky issue, fraught with difficulty (how, for example, would it be decided whom we should pay?) But I also feel that contracting out to people not involved with home-education (however supportive they may be) creates even more problems. Advice given based on personal, practical experience is generally far more valuable than a 'textbook' answer.

*Sue White, letters editor*

## Diary Of A Home Educating Nobody.

by Ross Mountney

Don't laugh, but I'm thinking of cutting up a black plastic bin liner and making myself a romper suit. You know - the type babies wear? Vest like, no legs, but with poppers to hold it snug around the bum! The reason being that I am sick of having my bottom, back, and even hair sometimes showered in slimy, wet mud every time I go out for a cycle at this time of the year. It whips around the back tyre and right up into the air. If I cycle fast enough I can even get the mud fountain right up over my head and onto my face. And what with the stresses of HEing I certainly go fast some days, sprinkling my hair with sloppy brown jewels! That's why I do it, you see; to burn off the stress. To keep fit - fit enough to home educate. Because you certainly have to be fit to HE. And when I say fit I don't mean bulging muscles and marathon-running lung capacity. I don't necessarily mean high profile gyms, weights, or masochistic aerobics, or any sort of self-flagellation in the form of exercise. I'm just talking fit enough to cope. To stay bright. To stay enthusiastic. To stay sane! To stay happy. I'm just talking looking after oneself. Sensibly.

Now, experience tells me that actually parents are not that good at looking after themselves. They're great at looking after their children. But as for themselves, most mums I think rate their own looking-after way down the list of priorities. Way down below HEing I would guess. Ring any bells yet?

I know there are parents who do everything for their children and nothing for themselves. And HE gives them an even better opportunity. For example, it's very easy to make the excuse not to pop out for a swim on your own - that is, for your own benefit - because the children really would benefit from a swim too, wouldn't they? And it's ever so easy to put off that ten minutes in front of the exercise video because Little Herbert is dying for you to make his plane with him and if you don't do it when He wants you feel guilty. And should you really neglect the teenager and pop out to the gym - actually on your own for once - because you really ought to be chasing them up to do their course work while they're fresh. You see what I mean? There are always other things we could convince ourselves we should be doing. Other than paying ourselves attention. And with HEing, I think the guilt about it being our job to always encourage the children drives us to neglect our own needs sometimes.

Yet the silly thing is, if we're going to be able to HE successfully (that means successfully for everyone in the family not just the children), if we're going to be able to stay the course and come out the other end of it still intact, happy, and sane, then we really are going to have to pay attention to keeping ourselves fit to do so. As we would if we were doing any other job.

HEing is hard. It is a tough option. Admirable definitely, but knowing it's admirable doesn't make it any easier! It is tiring. It is a test of endurance, patience and biggest of all FAITH.

Any path, which is not a path that many others have chosen before, is always going to be tougher than one that's well worn. There is often huge uncertainty with HE. Lots of

dilemma. Lots of decision making, whereas those on the school path have many, ready-made decisions.

With HEing there are very few 'breaks' or 'holidays' of the type you would expect from any other kind of employment. And sometimes it seems there is very little reward. No nice big paycheque for doing it; no encouraging words from the boss; no incentive rewards. Apart from being able to see our wonderful children develop, of course. But even the wonder of that can sometimes pall when all the feedback you ever get is stuff like: 'I'm going to watch the telly ALL day and you can't stop me!'

It's tough. Glorious, but tough. And we've got to keep fit to survive it. Better than survive it - to do it well. To enjoy it. Because it IS enjoyable. It IS rewarding. It IS one of the best things we'll ever do. But we won't appreciate that if we're not fit.

Hence me cycling round the lanes at more revolutions per minute than a propeller. (Only boasting!) I only cycle because I like it. I have a nice place to cycle and I like to be outdoors. I haven't even got my own bike any more: it died a dirty death with grit in the gears, so I borrow my daughter's. Luckily for me she has now graduated from the Barbie bikes with doll carrier, which she used to ride, to a full size!

But it doesn't matter what you do. I just think it is SO important that you do something to look after yourself. To keep yourself fit to HE, to give yourself and your family the best chance of achieving all that you want to.

You could walk, run, swim, dance, horse ride, play football, badminton, join some kind of club, do yoga, Pilate s, sailing, rock-climbing, anything, there's masses to choose from. Just do something. Something that fits in with your life, that's easily accessible, and that you like doing.

Take the time. We need to let our children see that our welfare is important too. And what a great example we're setting them by attaching some importance to getting some exercise and keeping ourselves fit. Most particularly we're making sure we're not sacrificing all our own needs to those of our children. And that's something they need to learn, if they're going to learn how they fit into the world around others, as others fit around them sometimes. Try it!

Actually, now I come to think of it, maybe I'll give the black plastic romper suit a miss. Folks round here already think I'm strange enough actually wanting to have my kids at home with me all day! I don't want to make their perception of me even worse. Besides, I think the poppers would chaff in unmentionable places!



# April Competition

Closing date: April 30<sup>th</sup>

Hi all, Spring is here and hopefully a long, warm summer is on its way? Our next competition for you is a word search which, as usual, is open to all ages but NOT to council members, the puzzle compiler and/or their families.

Please send all your entries, remembering to include your name, address, phone number (and email address if you have one) to:

EO Competition, 79 Cumberland Avenue, Cleveleys, Lancs. FY5 2DS

Last issue's winner is PJ Bork from Manchester, who wins an EO Hoodie!

April's prize is a copy of 'Educating your Child at home' by Jane Lowe and Alan Thomas. An excellent book for your collection!



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## CONCESSIONS

Please would all members look out for places of educational interest around them that may be willing to offer concessionary access to EO members. Please contact me with their details so that I can send them a letter of request, or let me know of existing concessions to include in EO's concessions list. Many thanks for your help! Write to

- Dawn Waddington,

Ty y Llyfrau, Bangor Rd, Penmaenmawr, Conwy, LL34 6AF. Phone - 01492 622063.

*Email - dawn@home2school.co.uk*

# LETTERS

## HOUSE WANTED

We are a prospective HE family looking to move to a village/town in the SE/ Home Counties with good transport links (pref train to London) but with the countryside in close proximity. If you live in a pleasant community where the average 2/3 bed house prices are between £160 – 180 k, I should be grateful if you would call Sara on 01584 891756 (Shropshire)

## JAPANESE PENFRIEND

A Home Ed friend in Kyoto has asked me to post this. If you can put it in the next newsletter that would be great. Clare Troy SE12 London Home Ed group

*'My Name is Manaka Hatta*

*I am a girl (15)*

*I am looking for a penpal aged 15-17.*

*I love painting*

*I have a dog (Welsh Corgi) called Maillin.*

*Please write to:*

*637 Shoukokuji - Monzen*

*Kamigyo-ku*

*Kyoto*

*Japan 602-0898'*

## SEN BOOK REVIEWERS

I am looking for people to review books about children with learning difficulties (DCD), dyslexia, dyspraxia etc. Anyone interested should email [sally@aecb.net](mailto:sally@aecb.net) or tel 01559 370798.

## SMART MEMBERS CARDS

Sarah Cook has been carrying out investigations into the possibility of EO having new membership cards. However, it became obvious that it was not possible to introduce new cards without an increase in subscription rates to members. So we would like to know from you, the members, whether you

think that having a better quality, durable membership card is worth £1 over and above whatever other price increases may be necessary in future (this does not mean there is a price increase in the offing...just that the issue of a membership card is a separate matter).

Please let Sarah Cook know whether you would be prepared to pay this additional sum on: 01768 896019 [sarah@croggies.freeseve.co.uk](mailto:sarah@croggies.freeseve.co.uk)

## LEA TRUANCY CARD SCHEMES

I am writing in response to Edana Edward's letter entitled 'LEA truancy card scheme' (N/L 162). I am moving to Bamsley in the summer (close to where Edana lives) and I was gob-smacked at the possibility of being offered an ID card to 'prove' my daughter is home-educated. We have something similar from EO which does not require displaying personal information alongside a photo. Perhaps LEAs should provide a list of home-educated children for their officers to use during truancy patrols?

Hollie Hartnell Sheppey Kent ME12 3LN

I would like to state an emphatic 'NO' to an ID scheme for home-educators. We should all resist the insipid creeping 'database state' attitude. We do not need permission to home-educate our children and I would be very unhappy about having them filed and listed like criminals. The EO card is adequate and young children are out with their parents anyway, who can do any explaining necessary. If we accept ID cards in this way, soon we'll have to carry proof we are 'authorised' home-educators and so on!

I'd like to take the opportunity to rant against ID cards in general. It is not a

harmless bit of plastic, but a massive and intrusive database that takes the balance of power even further from individuals to the state. There are no guarantees about who will see the lists and audit trails of day-to-day activities. ID cards did not stop the September 11<sup>th</sup> hijackers, nor will they prevent benefit fraud or illegal immigration. Most of Europe has ID cards brought in by the Nazis, and they have not stopped any of the above problems.

I know ID cards and a National Identity Register are not directly connected to home-education as such but it is about CONTROL, AUTHORISATION, and a destruction of privacy. You may be happy with that under this government (!) but this information about you **and your children** will be available **forever**. Anyone wanting more information or to offer support to the campaign can contact: NO 2 ID, PO Box 412, 78 Marylebone High Street, London W1U 5AP Tel: 07005 800 651 E-mail: [support@no2id.net](mailto:support@no2id.net) Web: [www.no2id.net](http://www.no2id.net) (Name and address supplied)

#### COVER YOUR BACK!

Having just had a heated phone call with my LEA officer, I would like to warn all home edders who agree to meet with these people to take along a 'witness' to what is said at the meeting. My LEA officer was most put out that I refused to meet him again, after what I had perceived to be his rudeness and prejudice at our last meeting. He basically denied ever having said any of the things he'd said - which I guess makes me a compulsive liar or fantasist! Hardly the basis for a relationship of mutual trust. This situation could so easily have been avoided had I been less trusting and insisted on a third party being present at our meetings. In

addition I would advise making it clear that you are tape recording the proceedings, which should ensure that these officials behave within the law, should you be unfortunate enough to have an unsympathetic, controlling LEA. Edana Edwards (NL co-ord)

#### SHARING LIFE AND WORK IN ITALY

Pratale is a small hill farm, run organically, in the foothills of the Apennines near Gubbio with horses, milk sheep, donkeys, hens and woods, vines, olives, fruit and vegetable gardens. Our three children, now grown up, were home-schooled and we are always interested to meet EOers. We are part of the Italian Bioregional Network, Servas and WWOOF. We welcome people who would like to share our lives and work for a few weeks or months and who are committed to down-scaling their lifestyle. Bring a sleeping bag, stay free and just contribute for food. Write or consult the website [www.pratale.cjb.net](http://www.pratale.cjb.net), or call our daughter, Melissa, in London on 0207 733 0990. (We prefer letters to emails). Martin Lanz and Etain Addey, Pratale, Vallingegno, 06020 Scritto, PG, Italy - Email: [goldiel@yahoo.it](mailto:goldiel@yahoo.it)

#### FOREST RESOURCE PACK

The World Land Trust has produced a resource pack, which is free to any "educators". We've just got our copy and it looks good! Focus on Forests - An educational resource for homes and schools in the UK, outlining the issues of forest conservation, as well as highlighting the success stories from around the world. The Focus on Forest pack contains separate illustrated students' workbooks as well as a corresponding teaching manual, with photocopyable worksheets.

Aimed at 11-13 year olds, the pack has been designed by teachers, education specialists and conservationists, to supplement Key Stage 3 teaching of the National Curriculum. As part of the World Land Trust objective to promote education about conservation, the Focus on Forests pack is available free to homes and schools in the UK.

Please send your name & address (enclosing £2.50 to cover postage & packaging) to: World Land Trust, Blyth House, Bridge Street, Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 8AB. Or if you have any queries about this or about the work of the World Land Trust, please contact us by phone(01986 874 422),

email: [info@worldlandtrust.org](mailto:info@worldlandtrust.org) - or see our website: [www.worldlandtrust.org](http://www.worldlandtrust.org)

The World Land Trust is beavering away, raising awareness about the rainforests and raising funds to buy back large areas of forest for wildlife corridors etc. Well worth investigating!  
*Meraylah Allwood, Linstead Magna, Suffolk*

### THE MINORITY GROUPS

Calling ALL minority groups and interested parties! Are you a member of an ethnic, racial or religious minority group? Do you have any ideas of how we and EO can work together? How can minorities contribute to EO and also make better use of the support on offer? At the next EO Gathering (2-9th June) there will be a chance to join a topical discussion group. Can you attend? Any ideas? Plans? Proposals?

Please give your comments to either:

Janet, tel: 01427 617313

[janet@hubblesimpson.co.uk](mailto:janet@hubblesimpson.co.uk)

Celia, tel: 07763 729055

[celiamcdonagh@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:celiamcdonagh@yahoo.co.uk)

Fizz, tel: 01895 422138

[fizztryingtohomeed@hotmail.com](mailto:fizztryingtohomeed@hotmail.com)

Rehena, tel: 0208 336 1583

[info@diversity-otherwise.tk](mailto:info@diversity-otherwise.tk)

### LEA QUERIES

If you come across families with questions about their LEA, you would be welcome to direct them to the LEAwork list, where their queries can be answered.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LEAwork>  
Priscilla Park Weir (collating data for and on behalf of the LEAwork list)

### EO ACCOUNTS

The EO Accounts for 2004 are now on the website at:

<http://www.educationotherwise.org/Accounts%20Files/AcctsIndx.htm>

### NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

I recently participated in a foundation training in non-violent communication. It was an experience that left me feeling very energised and hopeful. Hopeful about being able to improve how I communicate with others, particularly my children and hopeful about the possibilities for using this simple process as a tool for transformation at societal/world level.

The perhaps unexpected thing I learnt however, was that this simple, four-part process first needed to be applied in communicating with myself. The language of the heart starts with giving oneself understanding and compassion. From this place we are better able to listen to others with empathy. The model is based on the notion that we all communicate from a place of either met needs or unmet needs. NVC is effective because it seeks to offer compassionate listening and to address the needs of all involved. There is a training workshop in York 21-22<sup>nd</sup> May. Contact Selma Khan for more details: Tel: 01653 693690, or email: [selmakhan@onetel.com](mailto:selmakhan@onetel.com)  
Home Farm, High Hutton, York, YO60 7HW

# EDUCATION OTHERWISE MERCHANDISE

## Resource Texts

Based on National Curriculum materials. Covering all primary levels and some secondary.

Most useful to parents looking for a structured, curriculum approach.

Available **FREE** from  
henrietta.turnbull@btinternet.com  
(rtf or wpd or doc file);

or please send a stamped SAE  
plus £1 for printing costs to

**H. Turnbull, Hadlow House, 2 Hadlow  
Road, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 4AF**

## EO Home Education Cards

(*"Truancy 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 2<sup>nd</sup> class stamp  
for each card required.

## EO/NEC vouchers

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

## EO Car Stickers

*Help spread the word.*

Please send a reasonably large SAE to:  
Lynda Hitchman, 31 Audley St, Reading  
Berkshire, RG30 1BP

## **EO Hoodies - hooded sweatshirts**

with the triangle logo and the  
letters SINC - Now available in  
navy blue and black - children's  
and adult sizes - £15 children's  
and £20 for adults' size  
(including postage and packaging)  
For further details please contact  
alex.caldwell@tiscali.co.uk  
tel: 0116 2720209

## **EO Cotton T-shirts**

Good quality - choice of 2 designs:  
a) white shirt with red, triangular  
'school patrol' EO logo.  
b) 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, More  
than 7 shirts, p+p £4  
Cheques to E.O.Trading Ltd.  
Lucinda Smart, 4 Chester Gardens,  
Church Gresley, Swadlincote,  
Derbyshire, DE11 9PU.

## Learn Premium Website

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

Access to the service from now until **October 2005** will cost EO members £25 per family. There are about 35,000 pages of online lessons, tests and topic based information on a whole range of subjects. Due to our agreement with Learn.co we can only offer this service to members of Education Otherwise.

**Please note that membership lasts until October only**

Their web address has more details of the services available. If you would like to subscribe, please send your email address to Sue Radford [sradford4@aol.com](mailto:sradford4@aol.com) for details of how to pay your £25 and of how to log on to the service.

## "Home Education" (working title)

Special edition (March '05) edited by Paula Rothermel, of academic journal "Evaluation and Research in Education". This publication provides a round up of the research on home ed globally. Its compilation led to the new academic email list through which home ed researchers all over the world are talking on a daily basis.

**EO special discount price £7.50 incl. p&p (full cover price £16)**

Cheques/postal orders payable to EO Trading Ltd  
from June Wilson-Billing, Wychwood, 17 Woodland Close,  
Verwood, Dorset BH31 7PN Tel: 01202 827945  
[educationotherwise@mac.com](mailto:educationotherwise@mac.com)



## Academy of Circus Arts and Physical Theatre

Britannia Rd, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 8DB

**Now auditioning for the Autumn 2005 intake of students for their BTEC National Diploma in Performance (accredited through City of Bristol College)**

Based in Bristol since 1993, Circomedia has an international reputation for its work and prides itself on a family atmosphere. **The two year course will be FREE for 16-18 year olds** and will provide a broad introduction and foundation in performing arts including physical theatre and circus skills. Areas of study will include the history of theatre, physical theatre, dance and fitness as well as circus arts (trapeze and rope, acrobatics and juggling). Students will be able to use this qualification to gain university entrance in a related subject such as drama, dance, sports and teaching, or continue to train in circus. The training is also an excellent means of building confidence and life skills which are easily transferable to work environments.

The tutors will be experts in their field with a background in performance and a wealth of experience in theatre and circus skills. There may also be opportunities for lectures and demonstrations by visiting artists from professional circus or theatre companies. Although the course is practical all training will be underpinned with academic study and key skills. For further information about the BTEC course please contact course director, Kate Webb on 0117 947 7288 or [kate@circomedia.com](mailto:kate@circomedia.com)

## REVIEWS

### **Bella Balistica and the Temple of Tickal**

by *Adam Guillain*

This is the first book in the series. Bella is a wonderful strong female lead character in this amazing adventure fantasy. She is 11, being bullied at school and was adopted from Guatemala, where she travels back to for her adventure, encountering evil treasure-hunters at the Temple. Back there she learns a lot about who she is and the magic she has. We all really enjoyed this book, a real Indiana Jones for the girls.

Denise Ridgway with Lewis (10) and Katie (6)  
£5.99 ISBN 1-84059-394-6 *Milet*

### **Tales told in Tents; stories from Central Asia** by *Sally Pomme Clayton & Sophie Herxheimer*

These are unusual stories set in the steppes, mountains, deserts and cities of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. They include *The Bag of Trickness*, *The Fountain of Life*, *The Secret of Felt*, *The girl who cried a Lake*, *Father of Stories and Horse of Songs*. Karis liked the *Carpet of Dreams* best because it was about a boy who wanted to travel to Asia and trade carpets on the Silk Way. One day he sleeps on a carpet. It gives him a dream about a princess, when he wakes he is holding a ruby and he travels until he finds her. Galen liked the riddles of Uzbekistan such as 'One eye and a sharp tooth' (answer; a needle), because they were different to any he had heard before. It is superbly illustrated with bold colours, in the styles of paintings from central Asia. *Blue Sky*, *White Wing* is a story about how the earth was made and it is written in the shape of white leaves on a tree set against a blue background. The stories are brilliant for reading out loud as well as for enjoying on your own. We all thoroughly enjoyed them and would recommend the book to anyone who likes folk tales, legends and magic.

Angela Youngman with Karis (10) and Galen (6)  
£12.99 ISBN 1-84507-066-6 *Frances Lincoln*

### **Nurse Nancy and Hollyberry Hospital** by *Donna Beacham*

Nurse Nancy deals with the casualties of the toyworld in her hospital. Elsbeth loved this 'it looks like a grown up book'. Each chapter is a self contained story written in bold writing and suitable for those gaining confidence in reading. It expands sentences with description and real to life circumstances. The book has become a favourite with all the children and the babysitter.

Sarah and Elsbeth Beard  
£9.99 ISBN 1-85776-862-0 *Book Guild*

### **The Crystal Unicorn by Odette Volpeliere-Pierrot**

This was truly an amazing book. When I first received it I was excited because I love Unicorn stories but when I saw that it was in fact a play not really a story, I thought "oh no!" But what a book it turned out to be. Even written as a play, it was really enjoyable to read. It tells the story of a female unicorn who is kidnapped by an evil Unicorn (yes there are such things!) and is imprisoned in a sealed cave. She gives birth to two baby Unicorns and their father sets about freeing them. Being an artistic person, this play conjured up all kinds of pictures in my mind, and in fact I made a stage from a cardboard box and then drew, coloured and cut out the figures. I was then able to 'see' the play the author had written. It made the story come alive. It really inspired me. A book worth getting from the library and maybe asking a group to put on the play!

Francesca Houghton (15)  
£12.95 ISBN 1-85776-873-6 *Book Guild*

### **Playing with Fire by Henning Mankell**

This book is about Sofia, a 15 year old girl who lives in a small village in Mozambique. Her family is very poor and only just make enough money to pay for food and school fees from selling the vegetables they grow. Sofia's sister, Rosa, becomes ill and does not get better. The doctor reveals she has AIDS and it is Sofia who has to help her cope with her illness. This is a very good book which I enjoyed reading, although it is really sad. It has a lot of big ideas and I would recommend it to any teenager. Emma Whitehall (14)  
£5.99 ISBN 1-86508-714-9 *Frances Lincoln/Allen & Urwin*

### **Finding Voices, Making Choices**

Edited by *Mark Webster and Glen Buglass*

An uplifting read that conjures images of disaffected housing estates finding purpose and cohesion through community art projects. People working together as a true democratic force, essentially free from the constraints of pedagogic authority. Blowing the top off the arts establishment by showing that most human beings, given enough space and encouragement, can produce "art" of the highest order. Home schoolers with ambition to stage a play, concert, art exhibition or parade will find this book invaluable. Their well-documented, loose and sensitive approach shows how to make the principles of radical democracy work. In essence this is a book about how to harness the power of people through harmony, not hierarchy. Come to think of it, (harmony not hierarchy) would make a good slogan for a home schooling T shirt! Send designs and resource information to me via the mag, and we'll make it happen. Long live community art!

Carolya McCourt  
ISBN 1-900219-22-0 *Educational Heretics Press.*

## Illustrated Dictionaries from Usborne

### 1. Physics ISBN 0-7460-3796-1 £7.99

I found this book to be really useful. It explained things simply and the diagrams are very clear. It explains how some electrical components work, which allowed me to finish a project that I was having great difficulty with. The information included goes up to a very high level but it does not allow it to become difficult to understand. It covers every area and is extremely interesting. Could be used for 10-16 ages I should think. Excellent.

Kit Freisleben (11)

### 2. Biology ISBN 07460-3792-9 £7.99

The title of this book made me think it would be in alphabetical order so I was surprised to find it wasn't. By using the index I found it was easy to find the subjects I wanted to look up. The book had loads of different subjects and is very good for finding out small amounts of information about these subjects, but if you needed more detail you would have to use other books as well. It has really good, coloured pictures, which really help you understand the text. All the diagrams are well labelled. I think it is aimed at children older than me as I had some problems reading the text. Words such as 'interstitial' and 'endothelium' were new to me. If you are new to biology you would need to read a more basic book first. I think I will get more use from this book over the next few years.

Jake (11)

### 3. Chemistry ISBN 0-7460-3794-5 £7.99

I like chemistry but have not studied all the areas covered in this book so I found it all really interesting and very informative. It covers physical chemistry, inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry, environmental chemistry and general chemistry and would interest all ages over 10 to adult. The diagrams are brilliant and help you understand the text really well although I did find it a bit confusing in places. My favourite section was about crystals and the information on general chemistry. It taught me a lot about atoms and molecules. A brilliant book for anyone interested in this subject.

Keith Hall (11)

All three of the above included in *The Usborne Illustrated Dictionary of Science* £14.99 ISBN 0-7460-3485-7

### *The Thief Lord* by Cornelia Funke

The book opens with the parents of two children having died in a house fire. An aunt wants to adopt the younger one (Bo) but not the older one (Prosper). They claim that Prosper is far too wild and would be impossible to adopt. The two children run away together and go to Venice because their mother had frequently talked about the place. In the first chapter they visit the famous detective, Victor Getz, in Venice before meeting up with a girl named Hornet who takes them to join her own family of orphans who live in an

unused cinema. Scipio, known as the Thief Lord, steals things for the orphans to sell. Whilst this is the main setting of the book, another storyline develops later on and then those two become interwoven. I can't really say much else without spoiling the book. Although this book is meant for children, it isn't really that noticeable apart from the quote on the front. It is quite a mature book and the characters aren't all they seem. There isn't a "good vs. evil" theme that occurs in most adventurous fiction. I must warn you, although it may seem at first that the book is realistic, it does have a bit of magic later on (there's no witches or wizards or anything though). I recommend it for ages 7+ and rate it 89%.

Matt Longmuir (15)

£5.99 ISBN 1-903434-77-7 *The Chicken House*

### *Arf and the Happy Campers*

by Philip Wooderson

This is a book which we thought was aimed at a more confident reader, perhaps 7-8 year olds. The story is about Arf and how he sets up his own campsite in his back garden. He ends up with some interesting campers who help him, with the other characters in the story, to solve a mystery and save the town from a big scam. Rowan thought the story was very good, funny and that other children would like it although he sometimes had difficulty following the storyline as it was not a straightforward narrative. This was because it had a number of themes throughout the story, which came together at the end of the book. Overall we liked the story and would recommend it to slightly older children.

Kathleen with Rowan (6)

£4.99 ISBN 0-7136-6856-3 *A & C Black*

### *The Diamond Throne* by David Eddings *Book One of the Elenium*

The hero in this book is named Sparhawk who is a knight in armour and Queen's Champion, with a big sword, which he uses more than clever thinking to get out of most situations, along with some magic spells he's learnt from his mentor Sephrenia. This is not a good book for anyone who is the least bit squeamish, as there is quite a lot of gore in it. I do not think this book is suitable for anyone under the age of 14. Don't let this put you off though. There is something about David Eddings' writing that makes reading very easy and usually light hearted. Scary in some places and funny in others, the plot is interesting and engaging, with twists and turns to keep you wanting to read more and more. It makes you wish that there were more than three books in the series. An all round good read, I give it 8 out of 10.

Samuel Edge (14)

£6.99 ISBN 0-586-20372-9 *Voyager*

### **The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho**

There is enlightenment on every page. I have read this book 3 times already and still find something different in it every time. It is such a simple story of a shepherd boy setting out to explore the world; finding adventure on the way. Realising in the end that he had to make the journey back to his home to find the treasure that he had been searching for – as it was there all the time. We all have the treasure within us but have to make the journey to realise that it was there all the time. A book I got from the library and which I could read again and again and again.

Sicilia Dicaner

### **Finding Your Feet by Kay Challenor**

*Feather's Flight* (one of the short stories in the book) is about a pigeon tired of living the city life, taking off to find a different life. In the country, she swaps the noise of the cars for that of the dawn chorus. Finding her own peace she also finds contentment. There are talking points related to the story's themes - this one being 'following dreams, being yourself and being happy.' Written to explore social and moral values, it does so in a lighthearted, fun way that is very easy to understand by children of all ages (even me at 43!!). I have enjoyed sharing this book with my daughter and hope that you will enjoy it too. Based, I think, on KS2 but my daughter is 12 and enjoys the stories. It is for children 5 - 10.

Deborah and Sheila

£8.00 ISBN 0-9544188-0-8 Kaiamea Press.

Mounts Lane, Newnham, Daventry, NN11 3ES

### **100 per cent Pig by Tanya Landman**

This is a story about a little girl who helps a pig escape the meat factory. After escaping the lorry the pig has lots of funny adventures before finding his way back home to the rare breeds farm. I thought this book was really good, and suitable for children aged 6-10 years old.

Holly McIntyre-Bhaty (7)

£4.99 ISBN: 0-7136-7248-X A & C Black

### **Shark Attack by Anthony Masters**

A gripping thriller and part of a series called Predator. They are out on a cruiser looking for whales, and see a great white shark. The boy, Jack, is frightened of sharks. Then a storm comes. The dad, who wants to please everyone, wants to carry on but the boat's captain says they must return, but the dad says no. So they carry on and are shipwrecked with no food and water in the middle of nowhere. Sharks attack them. It is a page turner. I could not put it down and would recommend this book, but not to those who get scared easily.

Bcm Cromic (13)

£4.99 ISBN 1-84121-906-1 Orchard Books

### **Poppycock Tales by Harry E Baxter**

Unfortunately this was not my sort of book. I can only give the book an overall mark of 3/10 because of its writing style – long sentences and old fashioned language. There were some funny bits, for example, in 'The Mayor and the Seven Men of Poppycock' when all the men put their noses in the cow pat to solve a counting sum. That was my favourite story, which I would mark as 7/10. In every story the animals always solve the problems and secretly tell the mayor. The names of the people were silly, but if you understand German some of the translations were funny. Some of the stories had such a simple plot. I am sure that some children may enjoy the book if it is read aloud with expression, which my mum did with some of the stories.

Renate Brown (10)

£12.95 ISBN 1-85776-884-1 Book Guild

### **Freddy the Detective by Walter R. Brooks**

Freddy isn't your average pig. He reads and he's made loads of changes to the farm. He's risen to many jobs, jobs like a politician, campaign manager, magician and many more. In this book, Freddy is a master detective, solving the "Case of the Armoured Train", the "Case of Primmy's Dinner" and the "Mystery of Egbert" while singing "Oh, I am the King of Detectives, And when I am out on the trail, All the animal criminals tremble, And the criminal animals quail, For they know I'll trace 'em And chase 'em and place 'em, Behind the strong bars of the jail." This is a fairly long story, but well worth the time. It was ace!!! Excellent for 7 or above.

Oliver Landsbert, (9)

£12.99 ISBN 0-87951-809-X Overlook Press

### **The Tomten and the Fox adapted by Astrid Lindgreen**

A beautifully illustrated tale adapted from an old Swedish poem. The Tomten, who looks after the farm at night, meets a hungry fox and agrees to share his supper with him if the fox promises to leave the hens alone. A very gentle, friendly story. It is refreshing that he understands that the fox is hungry and needs to eat – rather than the 'nasty fox' approach. The children I have read this to loved it.

Hilary Woolf with Isaac (5)

£8.99 ISBN 0-86315-154-X Floris

### **Surprise! Surprise! by Michael Foreman**

This is a beautifully illustrated book about a Panda and his birthday present for his mum, which finished with a clever fold out page. Little Panda is scared of the dark but overcomes this to keep his present hidden from his mum. Although this was a pleasant read the story line was a little unoriginal. The fold out page also tore very quickly.

Sarah and Elsie Beard (7)

£4.99 ISBN 1-84270-379-X Andersen

### The Wizard's Web, Fractal Works Ltd.

The inventor of this board game, David Gibson, struggled very badly with maths as a child. Now a lecturer, he has rethought the concept of 'number' as it is traditionally taught, realising that children recognise pattern and colour better than abstract concepts such as numerals. Schools in New Zealand, where he now lives, were enthusiastic about his methods, which he turned into this board game. The game is for up to 4 players from age 5 (with help from an adult). Using pattern, and coloured counters, it teaches place value, groups of ten, and mathematical operations with numbers up to 1000, in a way that even young children find easy and fun. There are teacher's notes included for more complex maths ideas. There is also a times tables CD-ROM based on fractal patterns. Please note that prices on the website are in NZ dollars - about 40p conversion rate.

Edana Edwards

Full demonstration at [www.rainbowfigures.com](http://www.rainbowfigures.com)

### I Love My Mummy by Sebastien Braun

ISBN 0-9547373-1-8

I loved the sentiment, with beautiful bold illustrations for little ones and with enough content for discussion. I liked the acknowledgement that "mummy's work really hard"! Only one line worried me "My mummy is always there for me," in our world full of uncertainty your mummy loves you but may not always be able to be there for you. Robyn said: "Very, very good drawings, I liked the whole book. The Chipmunk page was my favourite" and Max said "I like it. I like all the rabbits and there are lots of different animals."

Jane with Robyn (7) and Max (4)

### AND

### I Love My Daddy by Sebastien Braun

ISBN 0-9547373-2-6

"Ah look, Baby Bear and Daddy Bear" "Daddy loves little bear and little bear loves Daddy". My two year old got this book straight away - the pictures, the words and the meaning. My suddenly mature older boys were more suspicious in their reactions - though I could see they kind of liked it, but didn't want to look un-cool. It is a great one for the under 4s (maybe older if you homeschool!). Beautiful art work, a simple yet alluring theme with some much needed positive messages about dads and how great they are.

Only to be read in conjunction with *I Love My Mummy*, however!

Hazel with Tristan (6), Haydn (5) and Ruby (2)

£10.99 each Baxer Books

### A Heroes History of World War 2 1939-1945 Life on the Home Front

I think this book is very interesting. The illustrations are good, and there are questions in boxes at the bottom of each section which are there to help you understand the main points. I enjoyed the sections on

The Battle of Britain (the planes are fantastic) and The Blitz. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in World War 2 as it is a useful introduction.

JJ Legge (9)

£2.99 ISBN 0-9542102-9-8 Colour of History

### Mary's Little Donkey and The Flight To Egypt by Gunhild Sehlím

This is a delightful book that retells the birth of Jesus in a new and charming way, with a touch of humour and an insight into the reality of the long journey. It tells of a stubborn donkey that is no use to anyone, who becomes a willing worker under Mary's care. It tells of how the donkey carries Mary, with Joseph, to Bethlehem for the census, where Jesus is born. And then of the flight to Egypt to escape Herod, and the journey back to Nazareth. This book is not just one of those to drag out for Christmas, but could be read all year round. It says it is for children aged 6-10, but I found that it was quite childish at times and an advanced reader of 10 would get very bored with it.

Diane Cromie

£5.99 ISBN 0-86315-064-0 Floris Books

### Monster School by Garry Kilworth

Tommy is sent to boarding school for one term whilst his parents are away in Canada. Unfortunately, his short-sighted mother thinks she is sending him to the 'best' school and it turns out to be the 'beast' school. A lively comic-style book full of Tommy's adventures which starts off quite worryingly but naturally has a happy ending. Enjoyed by both boys. Part of the 'Comix' series.

Carole Yeomans with Jack (8) and Luke (5)

£4.99 ISBN 0-7136-6098-8 A & C Black

### Petar's Song

by Partima Michael and Caroline Binch

This book arouses mixed emotions. You feel both sad and happy. Petar loves his violin and plays everywhere he goes. When war breaks out, Petar, his mother, brother and sister have to leave home and go to a safe town in another country leaving their father behind. As refugees life is hard and Petar feels so sad that he cannot play his violin. Will he ever play again? It is a good storyline and you feel a lot of sympathy for the children. The ending does leave you feeling hopeful. The illustrations are really beautiful and lifelike. They feel so real that you feel you are there. I would recommend this book to others. It makes you think about refugees and how they live.

Karis Youngman (10)

£5.99 ISBN 0-7112-2078-6 Frances Lincoln

### Positive Childhood: Educating Young Citizens, by Mildred Mashedor

This is a practical guide to finding ways of enabling children to live happy, caring and positive lives. Mildred Mashedor approaches communication skills, creativity and play, and peaceful conflict resolution with great clarity and sense. She focuses on positive reinforcement: "[Children] can easily get the wrong messages if we seem to be everlastingly correcting them rather than responding positively and approving of their efforts." The book is mainly geared towards school-type groups but there are lots of ideas for games and activities, designed to nurture children's confidence, cooperation with others and being at peace with themselves, which could be used in families or home-ed groups. It should definitely be on the "essential reading list" for anyone working with children. Inspirational!

Meraylah Allwood

£9.99 ISBN 1-85425-0949 available from the author  
020 7435 2182

### Blitz Baby by Theresa Tomlinson

At the start of the story, the main character (Jamie) is feeling rather miserable. He is having to spend the night before Christmas sleeping on the sofa because his grandad, Jim, is staying with Jamie's family over the holiday. Even worse, Jamie's grandad has brought a special decoration for the family's Christmas tree - the Blitz Baby. Jamie doesn't want the "tatty thing" on his sparkling tree and, during the night, takes it off the tree and falls asleep with it under his pillow on the sofa. That is when strange things begin to happen - Jamie suddenly hears a voice shouting that he needs to get down to the cellar; but there isn't a cellar in Jamie's house!! The story continues with Jamie's dream (or is it really a dream?) as the city of Sheffield is bombed by the Germans. I really enjoyed the story. It wasn't difficult to read; in fact, I read it in just a few nights! I think it is suitable for readers aged from about 7 to 10 as the print is large and the story is fairly short.

Demiol Murphy (10)

£8.99 ISBN -1-84362-264-5 Orchard Books

### Rocky and Toppy All At Sea

by Marjorie Holstead

The consensus of opinion was that this was a less than inspiring read. Amy said "You should certainly judge this book by its cover. The jacket was unappealing as were the black and white illustrations inside. Rocky and Toppy are on two separate journeys looking for each other, having lots of unexciting adventures along the way. There are too many different characters that made it difficult and confusing to understand. The basic idea is simple but it just doesn't work well. I think it's a book you should definitely put down!" As parents we found the story unengaging and lacking somewhat in coherence. It

was a laborious read that was completed only to fulfil the obligation of reviewing it. In all honesty we would have difficulty recommending this even in a library selection.

Julie and Paul Randall with Amy (8) and Isabel (7)  
£10.95 ISBN 1-85776-8337 Book Guild

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Any EO member can review books or games for these pages. If you would like to be part of the review team please email or telephone Sally for more information (See inside front cover for Sally's contact details).

### CONTACTS

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Information and booking: Keith and Christia, 020 8776 8597; 75 Kent House Road, Sydenham, SE26 5LJ.

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## Regional Diary

All regular meetings listed below are included automatically in every issue, *please reduce your details to minimum.*

New members attending their first meeting should phone to check it is happening as shown.

**CHANGES BY LETTER OR EMAIL PLEASE -to:**

EDANA EDWARDS, (see inside front cover for addresses) by 10th of month preceding publication. or by phone to Jo, 01392 438876

### ENGLAND

**BATH** H.E.L.P. group meets regularly for outings and activities. Contact: Louise Jensen 01761 472568 jensen-thomas@clara.co.uk

**BEDFORDSHIRE** For events programme in Bedfordshire contact June McDonald on 01234 341375 email info@Bedford-Home-Ed.org.uk "Countries" theme for first-half of summer term; "Human Body" for second. Lots of Art, Craft, Pottery and Sculpture sessions with a geographical and anatomical focus, workshops and visits including Science Museum, an India Day and a Spanish Day, plus a session at a University Biology Department. Also regular swimming, multisports, gym, chess club, carpentry group, GCSE groups, etc. Website: www.Bedford-Home-Ed.org.uk

**BERKSHIRE** emailing list for home educators in Berkshire and surrounding areas for events/activities <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BerkshireHomeEducators> "NEW" Camp Mohawk Home Education Centre 4 days per week - workshops; lessons; other activities; also for Local NL/What's on Contact: Dawn 01628 783107 thirdEye1@compuserve.com Or New Web Site for Berkshire [www.homeeducators.co.uk](http://www.homeeducators.co.uk)

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

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

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

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

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

**Windsor** Leisure Centre, Fridays term time, 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)

**Lambourne.** 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; 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](http://www.bristolhomeeducation.org.uk)

**BUCKS** Newsletter for Bucks/Northants Contact: Georgeanne on 01908 862256.

**Milton Keynes home educators network** extends a warm welcome to all (wherever you live): activities, socials and support. Local Contact Georgeanne Scott 01908 862256 or [www.mkhen.co.uk](http://www.mkhen.co.uk) (and another Milton Keynes HE group ...)

**MKHE** - Milton Keynes Home Educators, friendly group welcomes all, lots going on, arts + crafts, socials, outings, chess club, sports, open afternoons, themed activities etc, monthly newsletter + online discussion room contact Georgina 01908 371945

[www.miltonkeyneshomeeducation.co.uk](http://www.miltonkeyneshomeeducation.co.uk)

**South Bucks:** meetings for craft, activities, play, speakers, drama, trips etc. Contact: Jackie 01753 886924

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE** Cambridge regular meetings and outings. Contact: Penny 01223 526441 penny.k@ntworld.com

**Alconbury** monthly activities run by Christian group. All welcome Contact: Audrey Hull 01480 219881

**Peterborough** weekly meetings for art, craft, science, swimming, sports, play and visits. Contact: Sarah 01733 265043 sarah.lambert7@ntworld.com

**Cambridge/Norfolk border:** North Cambridgeshire: Fortnightly at March.

Contact Jane 01354 677869 or Sarah 01354 688245

Email: Pat Northcamps@chauntryhouse.fsnet.co.uk

**North Cambridgeshire** Contact Jane 01354 677869.

**CHESHIRE** South Cheshire and North Staffs

newsletter for local social and educational events.

Contact Carrie: 01782 786 720. Email: home.ed@ntworld.com

**CLEVELAND AND DURHAM** (see also DURHAM)

Tel: Lynsey Hutchby 01642 800940 l.hutchby@tesco.net

**CORNWALL** Small School for HE children age 5 - 10.

Menheniot, Thurs term time. Led by qualified teacher. £5 per child/session payable half termly. Contact Kath Revell (01752 851091) or Michelle Virgo (0845 3305034).

**Sci/History Wkshp.** Menheniot, 2nd Monday of month.

For ages 6 - 13. Theme for Spring is colour. £5 per child/session - book in advance - Contact Katinka

Soetens (01208 813490).

**Forest School.** Last Monday of month, Pensilva. Contact Ruth Cuillin (0845 4580247).

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](http://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 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 01788 896019

**DERBYSHIRE** Chesterfield home ed group, meets Weds - NEW larger premises. Age related activities. Contact Yvonne 01246 555645 or Sian 01246 473902.

**\*\*NEW\*\*** Derby Group, 4th Thurs of month.  
Contact Andy 01332 752998 or andy@derbyhe.co.uk  
**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)** - free membership/entry to NT sites to all Devon EO members for pre-booked 'educational' visits. Card held by Moira Kneale on 01395 279026

**Exeter:** Tuesdays, Free Range Learning, something for all ages: 10 - 12.30am Yoga, Maths, cooking, swimming, free play indoors and out. Plus 1.30 - 3.30pm, A varied arts programme provided by Magic Carpet, Wren Trust etc. including Drama, Craft + Musical activities. Bring packed lunch & stay all day, further details Annie 01392 434167

Thursdays, fortnightly EO social meetings, 2-4pm, Exeter, outings on alternate weeks, contact Louise on 07745 461317 Crediton, meetings, contact Kathy 01363 82401

Pottery - held in pottery workshop with kiln etc. fortnightly 11am contact Neil 01363 82314 or Annie 01392 434167  
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 or Amanda (above)

**South Devon** Local Contact Bridget 01803 862158  
Loads of activities for all ages - full details in Devon newsletter (see above)

Youth Club at Buckfastleigh (& alternate weekly outings)  
Thursday 12 to 3pm contact Corine 01628 368044

#### **DEVON EAST/DORSET WEST**

Lyme Regis, Axminster, Bridport, Chard  
Contact Habiba 0845 4582984 (local rate)  
Regular meetings on Thursdays, Contact:  
All 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 weekly meeting contact Juliet 01207 544473 or Beth 07719530472. There is a yahoo chat group at  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/durhamhome\\_ed](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/durhamhome_ed).  
To join e-mail s.waynforth@btopenworld.com.

**ESSEX\*\*NEW\*** Chelmsford meetings - monthly, third Thursday 1-4pm, various activities. Sally@brisley.freeserve.co.uk  
Chelmsford ice skating - Riverside, Fridays 3.30 - 5pm.  
Colchester - Bowling and swimming monthly - also informal meetings fortnightly. debbie-m@lineone.net or 0778 8570870

Southern - informal meetings monthly, first Mondays. paul.nadine@blueyonder.co.uk 01702 319682  
Tiptree - monthly meetings - last Tuesday of month 2pm - 5pm. Contact Julie email: julie.ashton@ntworld.com  
New Teens Group - meeting monthly - various venues across Essex. Sally@brisley.freeserve.co.uk  
Around Essex Educational visits twice monthly, Thurs.

Full details of all Essex groups and visits in *Epicycle* available at meetings - or for more info contact Corinne [epicycle@wavy.org](mailto:epicycle@wavy.org) or 07802 630696.

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE** Monthly social meetings open to all. Regular workshops and outings. Website: <http://members.lycos.co.uk/GlosHomeEducators/index.htm> also Email list for events and forum for discussions, information and virtual activities. Contact Rob and Fiona 01684 290087 [openhorizons@ntworld.com](mailto:openhorizons@ntworld.com)  
Caroline 01242 890351 [cambrose@iee.org](mailto:cambrose@iee.org)  
Beverley 01242 524091 or Mhairi 01452 384104.  
**Gloucester** meetings & swimming. Contact Dawn 01452 540019 [dawnandmike@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:dawnandmike@blueyonder.co.uk) or Tracy 07941 812092

**\*\*NEW\*** South Gloucestershire: New group has occasional meetings/outings in a variety of locations throughout South Glos. Mailing list available at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SouthGlousHomeEd/>  
For further details contact:

Diane Lovett@blueyonder.co.uk or phone 01454 853455

#### **HAMPSHIRE**

**ACTIVE:** 5 events a week within 20 miles of Petersfield. All welcome. 01428 712394 [www.activeo.co.uk](http://www.activeo.co.uk)  
**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](mailto: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](mailto:eo@azakit.com)

**Farnham/Aldershot** Friendly group for under 10s, weekly meetings/outings/activities. Contact: Emma 01483 426277 [emmajeavons@supanet.com](mailto:emmajeavons@supanet.com)

**\*\*NEW\*\* Romsey/New Forest** area, fortnightly - details email Karen Robinson on [karenca@btinternet.com](mailto:karenca@btinternet.com)  
**HERTFORDSHIRE** (see also N.London)  
Events List for Herts Home Educators please email [karen.bartlett1@tesco.net](mailto:karen.bartlett1@tesco.net)

St Albans, Social group meeting at Sandridge village hall, 1- 3pm, 2nd and 4th Thurs. Carolyn 01727 851073  
Swimming Lessons at Stevenage Swimming Pool, every Thursday 10.30am, term time. All ages and abilities. £1.40 per session. Contact Barbara on 01707 891021 or email: [babs.mcdonald@ntworld.com](mailto:babs.mcdonald@ntworld.com)

**ISLE OF MAN** **\*\*NEW\*\*** Isle of Man Home Education Network. Meet monthly for themed activities. Web Group Address: <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/hen-iom/>  
email [hen-iom@manx.net](mailto:hen-iom@manx.net)

**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](http://www.when.omnia.co.uk) and email group: [wealdenhomeeducatorsnetwork@yahoo.com](mailto:wealdenhomeeducatorsnetwork@yahoo.com)

**\*\*NEW\*** East Kent including Dover, Canterbury and all surrounding areas - East Bleas HE Group. Meets alternate Thursdays for social and activities, £2.50 per family. Contact Wendy 01227 463077 or Heather at

he@simonandheather.fsnet.co.uk

**\*\*NEW\*\***Ash, Sandwich, Dover, Canterbury, Ramsgate and surrounding areas Contact Leanne 01304 814498

**\*\*NEW\*\***Isle of Thanet Contact: Vanda 01843 842629

**Medway towns** Contact: Bridget 01634 234938

**Bromley** Contact: Claire 0181 460 7347

Claire@wadefamily99.freemove.co.uk

**Tunbridge Wells** group meet every Monday from 10-4 for Tae Kwan Do, art and crafts, & many other activities. Contact Kim 01892 863941

French for beginners through songs and games. Yoga for children. Contact: Katherine 01892 863958

**\*\*NEW\*\***Edenbridge: Family Learning every Tues 11-1pm Group meet fortnightly afterwards. Swimming, workshops, museums etc on other Tuesdays. Contact Tracey for details on 01732 700477

**LANCASHIRE** Regular events on Fylde coast - contact Tracy on 01253 858840

Blackburn Ice Rink monthly - contact Jackie on 01695 424220

Botany Bay - contact Angela 01204 659634/Jackie 01204 361072

Badminton/Swimming/Preston - contact Angela/Jackie Old Cobblers 23rd March/all ages children - contact Pam 01706 215585 davidandpam@ntworld.com

For comprehensive list of monthly events please email Pam at davidandpam@ntworld.com or send SAE to 2 Melia Close, Rossendale,Lancs. BB4 6RQ.

**\*\*NEW\*\***Pendle and Craven Group

Meet once a month in Carleton (near Skipton) for music and dance etc. For info call Judith on 01756 791356

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

**LINCOLNSHIRE** website: www.activeinlincs.org.uk

Activeinlincs Home Education Group - for a newsletter and list of regional events call:

Donna 01472 752507 or Helena 01724

720595 or Tessa 01522 790452

Variety of informal events and get-togethers. Contact Christine 01507 338070, christinehalse1@yahoo.co.uk

**\*\*NEW\*\*** S Lincs Regular meetings & activities, swimming etc. Contact Lorraine 0845 458 3004

#### **LONDON**

**Bromley/Croydon** Chrysalis group meets most Tuesdays in Bromley also other activities + outings, contact Jenny 0208 654 3972 or Mish 0208 289 5886 or email chrysalishomeed@yahoo.com

**Clissold Park**. Tuesdays. All welcome.

Contact: Charlotte 0207 254 0419

**Dulwich**, Woodland Club, Wednesdays.

Activities/social, ages 7-16, contact Jo 0208 693 5066

**Forest Hill**, all day meetings for age 11 plus, contact Denise 020 8699 6866

**\*\*NEW\*\***Grove Park group meets every other Friday. music group, archery, crafts, volleyball, football, table tennis and open to any ideas.

Contact: Beverly Meekings 0208 312 2160

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

**Lewisham** Thursdays 11-1 then to park afterwards

Contact: **\*\*NEW\*\***Jemima 0208 2975672

jemimacornish@tiscali.co.uk

**New Cross**, term time swim on Tuesdays at 12.30, contact Denise 020 8699 6866

**Sydenham** contact Christya + Keith 020 8776 8597

**NW London** Otherwise Club Contact: Leslie 020 8969

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.

**West London (and Middlesex)** Home Ed group meets every Tuesday for varied educational and social activities and visits. Contact Betsy 020 8993 0677 or betsyhomeed@yahoo.com. Also contact Betsy (EO West London Local Contact) to join WestLondonHomeEd yahoo group. Also Wednesdays 12-2.30 pm, fortnightly during termtime. Good-sized meeting place, with pool table, soft play room, outdoor play area, equipped for all ages. Optional organised activity for part of the session. Welcoming all for fun, friendship and support. Please ring: Alison 0208 56 99398 or Kathryn 0208 566 0543 or e-mail Alison@rothwell1973.fsnet.co.uk or kathrynvglynn@hotmail.com

**West London (Chiswick & Ealing)** home education group now meeting every Tuesday. Outdoor activities throughout the Spring / Summer, Warmer/ dryer activities every Tuesday during the rest of the year. For full details and more information about winter activities, contact Naomi 020 8567 7589 or naomisandler@yahoo.co.uk. Also contact for details of yahoo group membership for discussion and information about events throughout area.

**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** **\*\*NEW\*\***Norwich area - Free Wheel for

under 10s - activity group Weds fortnightly. Details tel:

01603 478402

Yoga Bugs Fri fortnightly. Contact Sally 01603 279832

Free e-mail listing of events for Norfolk available from

Ali Willer at simon.whitehall@tesco.net or ring 01603

401020.

**Norfolk/Suffolk border****\*\*NEW\*\*** Steiner style grp for the

under 7s. Craft activities and peaceful, imaginative play.

Contact Hilary 01508 518870

Swimming, indoor sports/play at Leisure Centre, Thetford.

Term-time Thurs 2.30 - 4.30 Contact Fay 01953 681785

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE** For email updates of activities

and outings send your email address to

northantshomeed@aol.com or tel: Jane 01234 326479.

Want to get together with other local home ed teens?

Please contact Lynne Stewart 01604 454240

andrew.stewart77@ntl.com

**\*\*NEW\*\*NORTHUMBERLAND/NORTH EAST**

http://groups.msn.com/EducationOtherwise

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE** Weekly meetings. For full list,

Contact: Wendy 0115 9114312 or Louise 01773 780634

**OXFORDSHIRE** Group meets alternate Thursdays for

structured timetable of activities. Children split into 3 age

groups 0 - 4, 5 - 7 and 8+. Workshops include - singing,

cooking, crafts, science, history, literacy, sport, watercolour painting and lots more. Regular visitors to the group bring subjects we can't cover as individuals and we go on lots of trips. Contact Wendy 01865 514973

**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 / S. CHESHIRE / N. SALOP**

**Stafford** every 2nd and 4th Wednesday in village hall for games craft etc. 12-3.30 Contact Jane 01283 820642 jane@jackslane62.freemove.co.uk

or Theresa 01889 563052

**North Staffs and South Cheshire** newsletter for local social and educational events. Contact Carrie: 01782 786 720 Email: home.ed@nitworld.com

#### **SUFFOLK**

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

Karen 01394 279117 kjc88@whsmithnet.co.uk

**North Suffolk nr Lowestoft** - Weds pm - £2.50 per family. Christine 01502 519649 or Jackie 566266

**\*\*NEW\*\*Suffolk/Norfolk border** Steiner style grp for the under 7s. Craft activities and peaceful, imaginative play. Contact Hilary 01508 518870

**Woodbridge**, Foxburrow Farm, 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

#### **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: Emma 01483 426277 emmajevons@supanet.com

**North Surrey** Home Ed group meets up in Croydon once

a month, Age range from 2-15, small group, looking to grow. 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:** **\*\*NEW\*\***Avis 01273 542589

or 0770 3647954

**Forest Row** Area: Winnie 01342 826087

**Petersfield** ACTIVEO: 5 events a week within 20 miles,

All welcome. 01428 712394 www.activeo.co.uk

**\*\*NEW\*\*St Leonards/Hastings** call Jenny 01424 434953

for an informal chat/meeting

**TYNE & WEAR and NORTHUMBERLAND**: Regular,

frequent and varied activities. Age range from 1 to 17yrs.

New members welcome. Website:

http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/home\_ed\_tyneandwear

Music- Rosemary 0191 2853707 or

paul@thenews.icom43net

National Trust & English Heritage Visits - Deborah 01434

674713 Woodland visits - Juliet 01207 544473 or

ablett.jules@tesco.net

**WARWICKSHIRE** Usually 2 Thursdays a month; at

Wolston nr Coventry and for an outing in the 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@bbunch.freemove.co.uk

**WILTSHIRE** contact: Beccy 01985 840174

**Warminster** meeting each Monday at Tropical Park,

Woodcock Road from 2.30pm, Beccy 01985 840174

**Salisbury** meeting every Tuesday afternoon, for details

contact Vicky 01722 324863

**Swindon** Swimming every Monday term time 1.30

onwards phone Susan: 01666 510217 07801734044

or Mandy: 01793 644472

Ice Skating 2nd and 4th Wednesday 10am-12pm,

optional lesson. phone Susan.

Swindon meeting: informal get together 1st and 3rd

Wednesdays 2pm-4pm phone Shena: 01793 334673 or

Mandy. 2nd Friday of the month 12.30-2.30 phone

Eleanor: 01793 616854

Pottery 1st Friday of the month 11am-2pm in Lamborne.

Phone Jane: 01380 860969

Join email list at: http://groups.yahoo.com/NWILts\_HE/

Devizes: Last Thursday of month 11.30-2.30 activities,

support, socialising. Tel: Janet 01249 818672 email:

janet@eldekvist.com Or tel: Jane: 01380 860969  
**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. Alison 01405 769902

**YORKSHIRE NORTH** Regular meetings and outings.

Contact Karen 01904 400317 kkarensandy@aol.com

**\*\*NEW\*\*** weekly on Wednesdays near Malton - contact Tess on 01947825772 or tess@chrisgeall.com

**\*\*NEW\*\*** Pendle and Craven Group

Meet once a month in Carleton (near Skipton) for music and dance etc. For info call Judith on 01756 791356

**YORKSHIRE SOUTH** **\*\*NEW\*\*** Bradway, Mondays

fortnightly 1-4Activities /play for 0-8s but older siblings welcome. £1 per family. Contact Barbara 0114 235 3224, Jax 01246 430616 or Kirsty 01709 865721

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:** Bradford Environmental Community Project

(1st Monday of month) at Carlisle Road Business

Centre, Bradford. Contact Niki (01274) 583164.

Badminton, football and table tennis (every Monday except 1st and last in the month) at Manningham Sport

Centre, Carlisle Road, Bradford. Contact Gillian (01274) 586146.

Ten-pin bowling (last Monday of month) at

Hollywood Bowl. Contact Sarah (01484) 361206.

Ice skating (every Friday) at the Ice Arena, Bradford.

Contact Anne (01274) 875357.

**Leeds:** Ten-pin bowling (2nd Monday of month) at

Hollywood Bowl, Leeds. Contact Sarah (01484) 361206.

"Wednesday Club" (every Wednesday) at West Park

Centre, Headingley, Leeds. Contact Sarah as above.

For a list of local Museum/places of interest and Theatre

trips, please contact Sarah (01484) 361206 or e-mail

sl.marshall@ntlworld.com.

**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

**\*\*NEW\*\*** Pendle and Craven Group. Meet once a month

in Carleton (near Skipton) for music and dance etc. For

info call Judith on 01756 791356

**Huddersfield:**Swimming (every Wednesday - term time

except 2nd Wednesday of month) at Huddersfield

Sports Centre. Contact Tracy (01484) 317176.

**\*\*NEW\*\***Huddersfield monthly meeting (2nd Wednesday

of month - except Feb when on 2nd Friday of month) at

Paddock Scout Hut, West View Rise, Paddock. Contact

Helen (01484) 841041 or Jane (01484) 645034.

"Lunch and Chat" (last Thursday of month) at Civic

Centre, Huddersfield. Contact Tracy (01484) 317176.

Art Workshop (last Thursday of month) at Huddersfield

Art Gallery. Contact Jane (01484) 645034.

## **SCOTLAND**

**ARGYLL** Home-Ed Group - Monthly meetings and occasional outings/activities. All welcome. Contact Joanne 01868 822034 or Debra 01631 730469 email: debra@celtic-soul-music.com

**\*\*NEW\*\* DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY** home ed group planning monthly meetings. Contact: Jean 01387 820374 or Debbie 01848 600348

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

**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

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

or Shirley 01563 540063 or Vivien 01563 537428

**LOTHIAN, CENTRAL & S.E. SCOTLAND** fortnightly group for meetings and outings. Ann 0131 556 6271 or

<ann.samuelitill@blueyonder.co.uk>

or Jane 01835 863 118.

## **WALES**

### **SOUTH WALES**

South Wales Home Educators Network

Weekly meetings in Llantrisant and Swansea, Home Learner's days at local museums, e-mail support list, plus

trips, parties and get-togethers. For information and

support e-mail: contactSWHEN@aol.com or

bev1.french@btinternet.com or contact Louise 01443

231362 (Llantrisant), Bev 02920 797628 (Cardiff), Juliet

01639 760987 (Port Talbot), Amanda 01792 862305

(Swansea) or see www.swhen.netfirms.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** Weekly meetings for crafts, socials and

outings. Contact Heather 01248 352336

Weekly meeting at Tremadog on Thursdays. Contact

Annie & Keith 01786 514867

**POWYS** Welshpool on wednesdays, swimming/Tumble

Towers, workshops, skateboarding, and events, contact

Dee + Dave Yeoman 01938 590098 email:

d.yeoman@tesco.net

**Newtown area:** Mondays get-together, twice a month, in

Newtown, for activities, play and socialisation. Contact

Sue 01686 688748 or srmw5@tutor.open.ac.uk

**N.E. WALES / BORDERS** weekly gym/trampoline in

Wrexham, Oswestry, W. Cheshire/NE Wales. local

newsletter of events please send your details and £2

payment to: HENWOS, Berlan Gron, Llanycil, Bala.

Gwynedd LL23 7YG

**\*\*NEW\*\*Wrexham** themed craft sessions run by prof.

artist, with parental help. Contact: Marie 01978 362436

**National freephone Women's Aid/Refuge**  
0808 2000 247

**Survivors UK Helpline for men**  
0845 1221 201

## 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)*

If you would prefer to volunteer for infrequent or small tasks please contact Emma Birkenshaw  
emma-birkenshaw@ntlworld.com tel 0113 2172795 Emma will add you to our volunteer  
database and contact you with information when help is needed.

### Small Groups:

**Finance:** Martine Frampton, Lynda Hitchman,  
Ann Samuel Till, Ali Willer, Priscilla Park-Weir

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

**Publications:** Gary Podmore, Lucy Charlton, Ali  
Willer, Anne Rix, Terry Scott-Alexander

**DfES Team:** Ann Samuel Till, Gary Podmore,  
Phil Hicks

**LEA/EA Group:** Anne Wade, Sarah Cook, Ann  
Samuel Till, Lize Stevens, Rob Wade, Priscilla  
Park-Weir

**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** 70 Fossey Avenue, Moreton  
in Marsh, GL56 0EA 01608 812411

**Lynda Hitchman**, 31 Audley St., Reading, Berks,  
RG30 1BP 0870 765 3650  
database@education-otherwise.org

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

**Anne Rix** Hembury Orchard, Frithestock,  
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 SW)

**Scotland:** (VACANT) *Volunteers please!!*

**Northern Ireland:** (VACANT) *Volunteers please!!*

**North West:** (VACANT) *Volunteers please!!*

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

**Midlands:** Simon Foster, Birmingham tel: 0121  
443 2752 email simonf@surefish.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

**South East:** (acting) Claire Turnham, 6 The Butts,  
Aynho, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX17 3AN  
01869-811099 Claire@birthandbeyond.co.uk

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

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

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### EO Email Lists

The EO general list, where general HE  
discussion can take place, can be accessed via  
the website at [www.education-otherwise.org](http://www.education-otherwise.org)

The EO Members list discusses the  
organisation, admin. 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.

To join the Members list go to:  
<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/EO-Members/> or send a blank email to:  
EO-Members-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 verified, your  
membership will be approved.

## Council Members

Jane Bathgate (Borders) 01835 862118  
Pam Bellinger (Leics) 0116 282 7929 (Co Secretary)  
Gail Borrows 01628 483895 gail.borrows@tiscali.co.uk  
Tracy Coates 01253 858840  
tracysolooney@tiscali.co.uk  
Sarah Cook (Cumbria) 01768 896019  
sarah@croggies.freemove.co.uk  
Martine Frampton (Gloucs) 01608 812411  
martine-frampton@macunlimited.net (Treasurer)  
Phil Hicks (London Central)  
0207 2294385 phil@hickslondon.com  
Jacqui Houlding (Cheshire) 01925 654856  
jacqui@thecrystalball.org.uk  
Celia McDonagh (Wales) 07763 729055  
celiamcdonagh@yahoo.co.uk  
Gary Podmore (York) 0114 2585702  
podmorefamily@blueyonder.co.uk  
Julie Ridley (Manchester) 0161 860 7589  
julier@breathemail.net (Chairperson)  
Anne Rix (Devon) 01237 451535  
anne@annerix.demon.co.uk  
Janet Simpson (Lincs) 01427 617313  
HE@hubblesimpson.co.uk  
Rowenna Williams 01678 521348  
rowenna73@hotmail.com  
June Wilson-Billing (Dorset) 01202 827945  
educationotherwise@mac.com  
Martin Wise 01539 732918 martiakes@dsl.pipex.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 0870 765 3650 or  
01945 860483  
Email database@education-otherwise.org

## Stationery

Leaflets, posters, membership forms, car stickers:  
Gail Borrows, 48 Marlow Bottom, Marlow,  
Bucks SL7 3NB tel: 01628 483895 email:  
gail@borrows.plus.com (donations toward postage  
welcome; reuse labels £2.50 per 100, free for EO  
business use)

## Publications

Books, information leaflets and back issues of  
newsletter For a full list send SAE to:  
June Wilson-Billing, 17 Woodland Close,  
Verwood, BH31 7PM Tel: 01202 827945 e-mail  
educationotherwise@mac.com (please ring to  
check availability of items before ordering)

Website and email lists: Jacqui Houlding,  
01925 654856 jacqui@thecrystalball.org.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, Llany Cil, 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: Mary Thompson (acting)**  
01942 795975 ktmusic59@yahoo.co.uk

**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 tel: 01548 830716

**Research Contact: VACANT - volunteers please!!**

**Company Secretary: Pam Bellinger** 56 Beech Drive,  
Braunstone, Leicester LE3 3DA 0116 2827929

**Treasurer: Martine Frampton**, 70 Fosseyway Avenue,  
Moreton in Marsh, GL56 0EA  
01608 812411 martine-frampton@macunlimited.net

**EO Stalls: Lucy Charlton**, 2 Wistow Rd, Newton  
Harcourt, Leics LE18 0FT 0116 2592118

**Coordinator for Local Contacts: (resigning)**  
Lize Stevens 96 Ivanhoe Street, Leicester LE3 9GW  
0116 2425802 kissit@yawot.me.uk

**Coordinator for Enquiries Secretaries: Iris Harrison**  
(Assistant) Jo Borthen 01392 438876 jo4eo@aol.com

**Newsletter Coordinator Edana Edwards**,  
7 Firvale, Harthill, Sheffield, S Yorks, S26 7XP  
01909 774811 vulpixie3@btinternet.com

**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>

Education Otherwise Association Ltd., Registered Charity No. 1055120

