

# education otherwise



Illustration by India Wilson-Billing Age 13

**No. 174 – February 2007**

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**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2007**

**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 sae. 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 below:**

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### EDUCATION OTHERWISE ASSOCIATION TREASURER

Do you have a little time to spare each month and some experience with book keeping and preparing accounts? Education Otherwise is in need of a new Treasurer as Martine, our current treasurer, is stepping down from the role.

This is a very responsible role, required under our Articles of Association to be held by a Council Member, and in the past has proved to be a big job. However, the amount of time-consuming work has now been reduced, as the EO insurance for local groups and the Gift Aid records are now being done by different volunteers.

Martine is willing to continue acting as book-keeper for a short time, and to assist the incoming Treasurer in becoming familiar with the job. Please contact Martine for more details of what is involved.

*Martine Frampton, 70 Fossey Avenue,  
Moreton in Marsh, Glos, GL56 0EA.  
Tel: 01608 812411 (not mornings)  
Email: martine-frampton@bbmax.co.uk*

## CO-ORDINATORIAL

WELCOME to my first newsletter. I've twisted arms of friends to bring some of this to you.

Early indications from questionnaires in the last newsletter apparently indicate that you are generally happy with the newsletter but that there are two areas which you want to see more of: personal stories/experiences and more information about the increasing number of Government Consultations which EO is responding to.

This newsletter is, therefore, 'heavy' on the legislative issues. Arms will be further twisted to keep you informed on this.

Articles for future issues are requested from you. I'll run out of friends if I push them too much. Areas we'd like to cover over future issues are:

- HEing children with SEN
- HEing children of different ages simultaneously
- HE styles, eg structured, autonomous, Steiner, Montessori, etc
- Faith based HE
- Has HE worked for your child?
- How you provided evidence of educational provision to your local authority - and was it accepted?
- Activities with your local group
- Young people to write in with what they feel about their HE experience

I have lots more ideas for themes for future issues, but this co-ordinatorial (what a difficult word to say that is) is already an article by itself so I'd better shut up.

Please think about things **you** can contribute to the newsletter which will help others who are willing someone to address a question they're too shy to ask about. As a self-help organisation, we help each other - the help doesn't come from a panel of professionals, it comes from experts, **us!**

We would like to use the theme 'HE children with special educational needs' for the next issue. If you are HEing a child with SEN, tell us what SEN you are dealing with, and how you cope with it. The newsletter is EO's major vehicle for offering help and inspiration - be a part of it.

*Sue Ryan*

## EDUCATION OTHERWISE NOTICES

### ♪ ☺ ♪ EO Merchandise ♪ ☺ ♪

An order form is available in the newsletter for those who prefer not to use the online store. This order form quotes Member prices only. To gain the 10% discount available to members who use the Online store, you must enter the code:

**Daffodil**

**If you forget to enter the discount code, you cannot claim it back later.**

### EO HOME EDUCATION CARDS

("Truancy Cards")

Extra cards are available at £1 for each card required (up to the maximum number of children registered as members with Education Otherwise):

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

Please send a stamped, SAE plus a cheque or postal order, or the equivalent in 50p or £1 stamps.

Cheques and postal orders made payable to Education Otherwise Association Ltd

Email queries to [database@education-otherwise.org](mailto:database@education-otherwise.org)

### 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](mailto:sarah@croggies.freemove.co.uk)

### 2007 CONTACT LIST

#### WILL YOUR ENTRY BE CORRECT?

The 2007 contact list will be prepared in February 2007 for distribution with the April newsletter and 2007 Handbook. Changes to your details must be received by 10 February 2007.

If you have changed your name, address, phone number, e-mail address or wish to add any further children or star them as home educated, please let me know asap.

Thanks, Lynda Hitchman  
[database@education-otherwise.org](mailto:database@education-otherwise.org)  
Tel: 01553 617551

### Where to Find Resources

A list of information on National Curriculum materials and resources and where you can get them is available free from [henrietta.turnbull@btinternet.com](mailto:henrietta.turnbull@btinternet.com) (rtf or wpd or doc file); or by post (please send a stamped SAE plus £1 for printing costs) from H Turnbull, Hadlow House, 2 Hadlow Road, Sidcup, Kent. DA14 4AF

### LOCAL CONTACTS

Do you think you could be a local contact for Education Otherwise in your area? Volunteers wanted for all areas, some as 'job share'. Please contact Pauline Butterworth on 01642 570786 or [pollyb47@aol.com](mailto:pollyb47@aol.com) for more information.

**The Annual General Meeting** of Education Otherwise Association Ltd  
will be held at Okehampton Youth Hostel, Devon  
on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2007 at 2pm.

The business of the AGM is to consider the accounts, to receive reports from officers, to elect members to the Council of Management and to appoint auditors.

The number of Council Members is set at between 14 and 19.  
As at January 2007 there are 11 members in post (see inside back cover of NL),  
five of whom must stand down, but may seek re-election.  
The Council may recommend other candidates for election.

Signed-up members (ie Guarantors) of EO may also propose candidates. In this case, written notice from the proposer and signed consent from the candidate (who must also be a guarantor) must both reach the **Company Secretary** no earlier than 13<sup>th</sup> January 2007 and no later than 6<sup>th</sup> February 2007.

In the event of a vote at the AGM, guarantors present at the AGM are entitled to take part, provided that they have paid their EO membership fee.  
If you wish to become a guarantor of EO, please complete the Signed Up Member form. Electronic versions available from Jacqui ([jacqui@thecrystalball.org.uk](mailto:jacqui@thecrystalball.org.uk)) and hard copy or electronic copies available from Anne ([anne@annerix.demon.co.uk](mailto:anne@annerix.demon.co.uk) or 01237 451535) and should be returned to Company Secretary, 56 Beech Drive, Braunstone, Leicester, LE3 3DA

There will be an  
**Open Council Meeting of Education Otherwise Association Ltd**  
On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2007 from 10am at Okehampton Youth Hostel, Devon  
**All members of EO are welcome to attend.**  
For copies of or contributions to the agenda, please email Jacqui Houlding (Virtual Administrator) [jacqui@thecrystalball.org.uk](mailto:jacqui@thecrystalball.org.uk) or send a large stamped SAE to:  
38 Garwood Close, Westbrook, Warrington WA5 8TF

**DIRECTIONS TO VENUE**

For detailed directions, please contact Joss Nowell  
53 Wilton Close, Southmead, Bristol, BS10 5PF or email [homeed@gmail.com](mailto:homeed@gmail.com)  
**For information on disabled access, contact Joss**

**Agenda for AGM:**

1. Minutes of the previous AGM
2. Consideration of the accounts.
3. Auditors Remuneration
4. Appointment of Auditor
5. Election of new Council Members

## AGMs and Council Meetings

Further to the notice of the Council Meeting and AGM, this extract from the Handbook may answer some questions you might have.

### Who is on the Council?

Council members are elected by signed up members at the AGM. Candidates are either recommended by the council or proposed by any signed up member following the procedure which appears in the newsletter before every AGM. Any member of EO can become a signed up member by completing the form mentioned on page three above and sending it to the Company Secretary. Members can also become signed up members at the AGM.

On the whole council members are people who have taken on jobs within EO. People who are interested in becoming council members usually start by coming to business meetings, joining in the work of the organisation, and showing that they are reliable and co-operative.

Anyone who is competent, responsible, willing to be active, and in sympathy with the general ethos of EO, is likely to be an asset as a council member. We rarely have more people willing to accept council membership than we need.

Council members should normally not serve more than two consecutive terms or 6 consecutive years and should normally have some direct experience of home education.

### What happens at a council meeting?

There are three council meetings a year with an AGM at one, and EGMs (extraordinary general meetings) are held when necessary. Council meetings are normally open (i.e. anyone can attend, and speak when recognised by the chair) and run by consensus, with no differentiation between council members and others. Anyone can ring or write to put something on the agenda, can make their views and concerns known to the meeting, and can ask the meeting to consider doing something. This means that in practice regular attendance at meetings is more important than council membership.

The council, however, remains legally responsible for what is done (with unlimited liability in certain situations), so it has to be allowed the last word if controversy should arise. When there is disagreement and an issue is urgent, it can be settled by a vote of the council members only. This might well be preceded by a vote of the whole meeting, which has no binding power but which the council members would take into account. If there is controversy a decision is usually postponed to allow for wider discussion in the newsletter. On the rare occasions when something can be boiled down to yes/no, and agreement cannot be reached, postal voting may also be used so that the whole membership can express their opinion.

Full council minutes are sent to anyone who sends apologies, as well as everyone who was there. Members can receive an electronic copy by email from Jacqui Houlding at [jacqui@thecrystalball.org.uk](mailto:jacqui@thecrystalball.org.uk) or by sending stamps and a self addressed label or A4 envelope to Jacqui at 38 Garwood Close, Westbrook, Warrington, WA5 8TF. Also, some time ago a custom was started of publishing an informal summary of the meeting in the newsletter, generally written by a volunteer at the meeting.

In addition there is a steering group consisting of the Company Secretary, the Chair, the Treasurer, and two other council members. The steering committee, in consultation with as much of the council as possible, deals with any business too urgent to wait until the next Council meeting.

### Signed Up Members

Signed up members are members who have guaranteed to pay £10 in the event of EO going bankrupt, thus 'acquiring an interest in the company' and becoming eligible to vote at general meetings. An application form for this purpose can be requested as mentioned on page 3.

## Election of Council Members at 2007 AGM

At the AGM there will be four co-opted members on the Council whose places will be up for election at the AGM. A third of Council is required to stand down by rotation. The five Council members who are standing down by rotation will be:

Martine Frampton, Jane Bathgate, Anne Rix, Janet Simpson and Sarah Cook. Of these five, Martine and Janet will not be standing again.

This leaves on Council Pauline Butterworth, Martin Wise, Fzeelah El Sawah and Laurie Charlton. Therefore, we will be electing between 10 and 15 members to Council. Fzeelah has accepted the role of General Secretary. All other posts will require to be filled at the AGM. If re-elected to Council, under Article 35, Sarah and Anne will retain the posts of Chair and Enquiries Secretary of Education Otherwise.

All members who wish to stand for election to Council are asked to send a resume to Jacqui Houlding (contact details on back page of newsletter) and a signed copy of the Trustee Declaration of Eligibility should be sent to Pam Bellinger, Company Secretary, 56 Beech Drive, Braunstone, Leicester LE3 3DA. The names and resumes will then be added to the agenda for the OCM ready for being named as potential CMs.

### Education Otherwise Trustee Declaration of Eligibility

I declare that:

- I am over age 18.
- I am not an undischarged bankrupt.
- I have not previously been removed from trusteeship of a charity by a Court or the Charity Commission.
- I am not under a disqualification order under the Company Directors' Disqualification Act 1986.
- I have not been convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty (unless the conviction is spent).
- I am, in the light of the above, not disqualified by the Charities Act 1993 (section 72) from acting as a charity trustee.
- If elected as a trustee of Education Otherwise I will undertake to fulfil my responsibilities and duties in good faith and in accordance with the law and within Education Otherwise's objectives / mission.
- I do not have any financial interests in conflict with those of Education Otherwise (either in person or through family or business connections) except those which I have formally notified in a conflict of interest statement. I will specifically notify any such interest at any meeting where trustees are required to make a decision which affects my personal interests, and I will absent myself entirely from any decision on the matter and not vote on it.

Signed: .....

Name (Block capitals): .....

Address: .....

Date: .....

## **Informal Report of the Open Council Meeting held at Langdale on 12 November 2006.**

Frankly, I thought it was a horrible meeting. We've had meetings in the past which discussed controversial topics and some people would get hot under the collar. This one, the atmosphere could have been cut with a knife. There appeared to be lines drawn between two/three factions and there was obviously a lot of hostility as a result of the EGM held the day before (which I cannot report on as I wasn't there).

I think the only thing that anyone agreed on in the whole meeting was that EO has grown and the structures and procedures have not grown with it. It is no longer a small organisation where everyone knows everyone else and expectations are that everyone helps each other. It is a large organisation that appears to be reluctant to move forward, despite many individuals wanting this.

A lot of this is due to people not wanting to take on and use the technology that is available to us, the insistence that members must be present at a meeting to have a voice, allowing members to feel that they have no say in the way the organisation is run...so 'why bother' attitudes prevail...and they leave us! So EO is constantly having to reinvent itself (and not with a new image...just maintaining the old image) because we keep going back to the same people who do attend meetings and no fresh, new ideas and enthusiasm being picked up on.

The other side of the argument is that people feel that others should not be denied inclusion because they don't use modern communications technology; that, if people don't attend a meeting they cannot have an understanding of the issues and therefore would not have the right information to make decisions.

The result is that everything seems to stall.

One of the most heated and controversial subjects at the meeting was the Child Protection Group (CPG), their remit, their procedures and their actions. One faction wants them to cease their operations until they have a defined remit with limits on their actions and procedures and making them accountable to Council 'before' taking any actions rather than afterwards. The pro CPG faction feel they cannot cease any of their operations, that they are acting within the guidelines issued by the Charity Commission and they, the CPG members, talk among themselves so that good practice is followed at all times. There was obviously no reconciliation between the two sides, despite the best efforts of Jill Fisher, Chair. So, in typical EO fashion...what happens? Council will go away and have to make the decision as they are responsible. (As at 9 January 2007, no decision has been announced.)

The meeting also decided to remove Lynda (database manager) and myself (general admin and website/communications) from their email list and wanted a forum which Council would use for non confidential discussions and through which Lynda and I would be able to communicate with Council. One argument was that council needed to be able to talk about contractors without us being there, valid if there had been something they wanted to talk about. That particular decision is to be reviewed at the next meeting.

The meeting also decided that, if members had questions to ask related to anything they saw in the forum that they would not receive answers from the Council as they would be busy. The questions which members have should be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. (By the time you read this, it will be too late to add agenda items.)

As a result of all the friction at the meeting, one council member, Gail Borrows, resigned at the end of the meeting. Since then, again due to the ongoing frictions, two more council members have resigned in protest – including one who was only co-opted onto the Council at this meeting.



One thing which did work...and worked very well, in my opinion, was the experimental 'consent' agenda. For those of you who won't have read/seen this, instead of spending the whole meeting reading and dissecting the reports of post holders, it was stated on the agenda when it was circulated, that all the reports would be considered en bloc and they would not be discussed at the meeting unless someone had raised any queries prior to the meeting. If queries do arise as a result of people reading the report, then that particular report would be removed from the bloc and receive individual consideration. If a report is not received in time to be circulated in advance of the meeting, then that report

could not be submitted until the next meeting.

The Steering Group report was not submitted, so they will have to submit a 'double' report at the next meeting. The Govt Policy Group's report was removed from the bloc and had their own item number so that questions submitted about EO's involvement with Govt Consultations could be answered.

This sped up the process tremendously so will be repeated for the next meeting. It meant that there was plenty of additional time to discuss 'issues' concerning EO rather than the administration of it. I just hope that the time it frees up for us will mean people leave the meeting with a sense of achievement this time.

Finally, you'll notice there are no whimsies or private reflections of mine included this time. It really wasn't that sort of meeting. However, there was a light side as well. The daughter of one of our Enquiry Secretaries works for a company that manufactures glue products. They had a load of stock which they offered to EO...and like a mug, I said, 'Yes, I'll distribute it around'. I was told they had 966 boxes...and I thought I could cope with that. However, on the due date of arrival, one of the biggest lorries I have ever seen came down our road. I'm sure the inside area of this lorry was bigger than the floor area of my house! And of these 966 boxes, they'd only sent half. That half was five full pallets! Seems it was 966 boxes of boxes...each of the boxes held between six and 12 other boxes of glue!



The driver had thought he was delivering to a 'company' and we had no way of offloading the pallets. So he and eldest son stood up in the lorry and tossed boxes out...onto my neighbour's lawn!

Following day, I folded down the back seats of my car, loaded it to the brim with boxes of glue, and headed off to Langdale. During the lunch break Martine Frampton, our treasurer, and several of the children helped unload the car into the hostel for everyone to

take some away for personal use, or for their local groups' use.

About an hour into the afternoon session, a harassed Lize came into the meeting, very apologetic. Some of the children were using it to 'paint' on the walls. Others were jumping on the tubes to see how far across the room they could make it go! Several parents shot out to sort out their offspring...and I had to laugh when a couple came back and said to the parents of teenagers, 'Don't know why you're still sitting there. It's not only the little ones using the glue!'

So...honest Guv, it wasn't my fault that the meeting was totally disrupted, and a huge cleaning session started taking place. Honest. And, just to worry the organisers of the February meeting...my garage is still full of glue and I shall be bringing a load of it with me if I get to Okehampton for the local groups down there to benefit as well.

Jacqui Houlding

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS & LOST OR MISSING ITEMS**

If you change your address, phone number, email or other details please remember to contact the Database Administrator. If we don't have your new address then you may miss newsletter mailings. If you would like a replacement newsletter or lose your contact list or members handbook or membership card and require a replacement you need to send a cheque or postal order made payable to "Education Otherwise Association Limited" along with an sae to the address below:

#### **Cost of Replacement Items:**

Contact List £3 and 55p sae  
Contact List and Handbook £6 and 75p sae  
Handbook £3 and 55p sae  
Newsletter £2 and 37p sae  
Membership Card £1 and 23p sae  
Truancy card £1 and 23p sae

Lynda Hitchman,  
22 Lewis Drive, St Germans, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3FB

## Activities for March...for younger children

The old saying goes...

If March comes in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb.

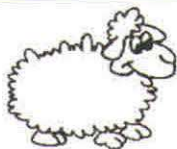
Talk to your children about what this might mean? What aspects of weather determine its ferocity or gentleness?

Draw a two column table. Call one side LION and one side LAMB. List elements of weather like temperature, wind, rain, snow, etc that fit on each side.

Make a note at the top of the graph about whether March 1st is a lamb or a lion day. Then see if March 31st is the opposite.

Day 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: 31: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Paper Plate Crafts

### Lion Paper Plate

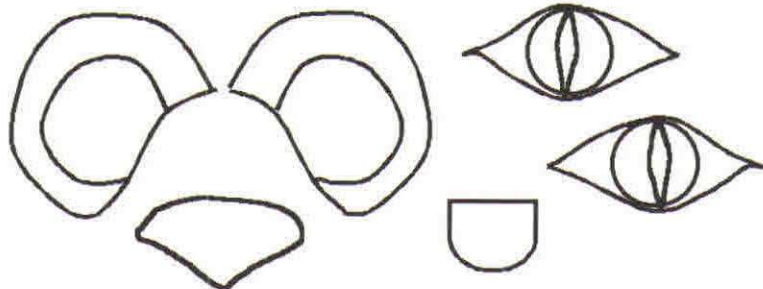
Materials...you will need

- paper plate (whatever size) or cardboard cut into a circle
- yellow paint, yellow construction paper or yellow tissue paper
- brown and/or orange paint or brown and/or orange tissue paper
- brown and/or orange wool
- black paint or black marker or black wool



### Instructions

1. Paint your paper plate yellow or glue ripped (approx 1 inch) squares of yellow tissue paper on the plates.
2. Options for the main:
  - a. Swirl yellow, brown and/or orange paint in a plate (don't mix it totally). With a toothbrush, dip into the paint and brush on a mane
  - b. Swirl yellow, brown and/or orange paint in a plate (don't mix it totally). With a sponge, dip into the paint and sponge on a mane.
  - c. Cut 1/2 inch wide x 2 inch (ish) long strips of brown, yellow and or orange construction or tissue paper and glue them around the outside edge of the plate to make your mane. You can curl all/some of them around a pencil to make some curly parts
  - d. Cut 1/2 inch wide x 2 inch (ish) long strips into the paper plate itself. Roll them around a pencil to make curly parts. You can paint/colour with marker the tips brown if you like
  - e. Cut 2 inch (ish) long strips of orange/brown/yellow wool and glue onto the paper plate to make the mane
3. Make the face:
  - a. Copy the template below to a size that fits your plate and cut out the pieces.
  - b. Draw a mouth with black marker or paint or glue bits of black wool in a mouth shape



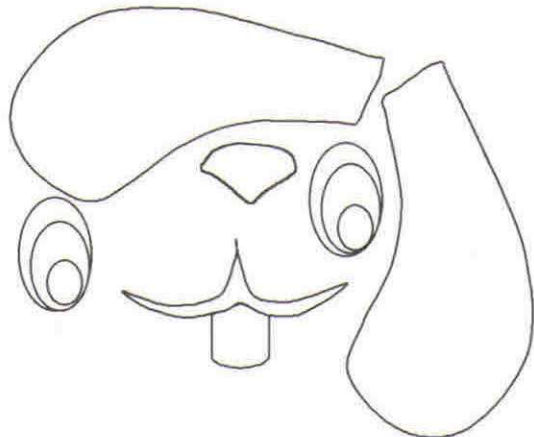
## Lamb Paper Plate

Materials...you will need

- Printer
- Paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Something to colour with
- Paper plate or cardboard cut into a circle
- White cotton wool
- Bow to decorate (optional)

### Instructions

1. Spread glue all over your plate and glue on pieces of cotton. If using cotton wool balls, rip them in half first as they're fluffier that way.



2. Make the face:
  - a. Copy the template below to a size that fits your plate and cut out the pieces.
  - b. Colour the pieces and glue them into place
  - c. Draw a mouth with black marker or paint or glue bits of black construction paper in a mouth shape.

**Other Paper Plate Ideas:**  
(Can you think of more?)



Bumble Bee



Monkey

## EDUCATION OTHERWISE BRIEFING PAPER FOR HOME EDUCATORS:

### **DfES CONSULTATION ON THE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK FOR HOME EDUCATION, DUE JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2007**

DfES invited Education Otherwise to a pre consultation discussion meeting on December 19<sup>th</sup> to discuss draft plans for a full public consultation on changes to the law on home education. The consultation is expected to begin sometime in the New Year and run for 12 weeks. The December meeting confirmed earlier indications from the DfES public communications unit that the consultation will propose possible changes to legislation. The changes will focus on compulsory registration of home educated children, standards defining "suitable" education, and arrangements for the monitoring of home education.

This document is a briefing paper on the background leading up to the consultation, offering some insight into what DfES are aiming to achieve through changing the law, and describing why such changes would not be beneficial for local authorities, home educated children and their parents.

#### **The Fundamental Freedom to choose Home Education**

Home Education is a fundamental freedom of parents. The right of parents to determine the form of their children's education has been included in the European Convention on Human Rights for over 50 years. Parents, and not the state, have the primary responsibility for their children's wellbeing and education. This principle is clearly stated in the European Convention on Human Rights, 1<sup>ST</sup> (Paris) Protocol, Article 2:

**"NO PERSON SHALL BE DENIED THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION. IN THE EXERCISE OF ANY FUNCTIONS WHICH IT ASSUMES IN RELATION TO EDUCATION AND TO TEACHING, THE STATE SHALL RESPECT THE RIGHT OF PARENTS TO ENSURE SUCH EDUCATION AND TEACHING IN CONFORMITY WITH THEIR OWN RELIGIONS AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONVICTIONS."**

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/80042--e.htm#sch1ptII>

This article is confirmed in the UK Human Rights Act 1998

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/80042--a.htm#1>

Despite the clarity of Protocol 1 Article 2, the principle that parents should be free to choose the place and content of their children's education has been under attack from those who believe that the state is better equipped than parents to provide and to determine the content of education.

#### **Local Authorities Voicing Concerns about Children Educated at Home**

As the numbers of children withdrawn from school has risen, local authorities (LAs) have been faced with the question as to what their responsibilities are. The law places a simple duty on parents to provide an education "suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, and to any special education needs he may have". [s7 of the Education Act 1996]. There is also a simple duty on local authorities to act "if it appears to a local education authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education." [s437 of the Education Act 1996]. The local authority can issue a formal notice asking the parent to satisfy them that provision is being made, and if not satisfied, they can issue an order requiring the parent to send them to a school. If the parent does not agree then the LA can prosecute for non attendance, and the

parent has opportunity to demonstrate as their defence to the court that education is being provided at home.

The provisions in the Education Act already give local authorities considerable power to require information from parents. But some local authorities are still not satisfied, and seek additional powers to intervene in the arrangements of home educating families. The list of powers they have called for, and duties they would like to impose on home educators, is alarming:

- A duty for parents to register children educated at home.
- A duty for parents to meet with the local authority annually.
- Powers to require access to the child for welfare checks.
- Powers to require access to the child to assess educational development.
- Powers to require the child's work to be inspected.
- Powers for DfES to set curriculum content which must be included in the educational provision.
- Powers for DfES to set standards and methods of teaching.

### **No Evidence Base Justifying a Change in the Statutory Framework**

The alleged grounds being given for such major interventions are described in recent reports produced for DfES by the National Foundation for Education Research, and other consultants. None of the reports offer substantial evidence that home education is failing children. By contrast the most substantial studies conducted in the UK, by Dr Paula Rothermel of Durham University, found that the outcomes for home education were on average substantially higher than those for school provision. <http://www.dur.ac.uk/p.j.rothermel/Research/Papers.htm>

While local authorities often cite individual (and often extreme) anecdotal cases in which they believe interventions are necessary, none of the studies which have been referred to by DfES, and which are described below, gather evidence in a way that allows a comparison of the home education provision to the alternatives available in that situation. Whilst home education by parents with limited resources and in a community with limited opportunities may restrict some of the possibilities available to a child, the available state provision may be at least equally restrictive.

Parents have the right to determine the educational provision for their children, and home education has intrinsic advantages leading to positive outcomes, which are gained by parents at the cost of extra effort and involvement with their children's education. In view of those good outcomes, there would need to be clear grounds for setting limits on parents' judgement as to the most effective education. The studies do not offer evidence that would justify such statutory interventions.

Local authorities assert that in the present statutory framework they cannot ensure the welfare and education of the children in their area. However there is already a strong statutory framework for interventions in any situation where there is evidence of either lack of educational provision, or significant welfare concerns. Since such powers already exist, the addition of further powers risks harming parents' freedom to explore methods and discover the best option for provision. EO believes that such changes would be expensive and unproductive.

The studies which are summarised in Appendix C lack impartiality since they were carried out by organisations whose funding largely comes from the government. They also lack objectivity, because in all cases they draw largely on local authorities' opinions for their evidence base. Some of the studies refer to the views of home educators in general, when they are based on a tiny number of interviews with home educators.

### **1) NFER Study: Evaluation of the Vulnerable Children Grant Jan-Sept 2004**

No home educators were included in this study.

### **2) NFER Study:**

#### **Vulnerable children's access to examinations at Key Stage 4 Jun 04- Feb 05**

The study was based on 94 interviews with local authority officials, teachers and other stakeholders. Only 2 interviews were with home education organizations, and 1 interview was with a home educating parent.

### **3) DfES Draft Guidelines on EHE Limited Consultation Feb 2005 – Apr 2005.**

Five home education organisations were invited to submit responses, but individuals were advised they could not participate. More than 20 local authority responses were accepted. Home educators and LAs were given 10 weeks to reply. Local authorities were given an 8 week extension which was not offered to home educators. In the year and a half since the end of the consultation DfES have met with local authorities and heard their views on this subject, but no further input has been accepted from home educators despite regular requests. DfES advise that they plan to issue these guidelines in February 2007 in parallel with the consultation. To do so without further consultation would be contrary to the government code of practice on consultations which says that responses should be summarised within 3 months, information about changes resulting from feedback should be explained, and the next steps for the policy should be described / discussed further with stakeholders who are significantly affected.

### **4) NFER Study: Some Perspectives on Home Educated Children Research Period Late 2005, Published August 2006.**

21 local authority officers were interviewed, but with only 4 home educating parents, and no home educating organizations. The report acknowledges that its focus is on the local authorities views.

### **5) DfES Commissioned "Research": The situation regarding the current policy, provision and practice in Elective Home Education for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children. Study Period: 2005-6. Published: August 2006.**

Mr Ivatts was responsible for educational provision for Gypsies and Travellers within Her Majesty's Inspectorate from 1982 until he recently became a consultant to the department. The study and its recommendations cannot be considered impartial given his background.

The study surveyed 23 LAs and received 36 individual responses about half from Traveller Education Service officials and the balance from officials responsible for home education.

There are two additional studies in hand which the DfES already have draft copies of, but home educators do not:

### **6) NFER: Support for children who are educated at home. August 2006 - January 2007**

### **7) York Consulting:**

#### **The Prevalence of Home Education in England - A Feasibility Study August 2006 – December 2006 (unreleased)**

#### **Compulsory Education and The Pressure of Conformity on Children**

Compulsory education was introduced in the period 1870 – 1880 to ensure that all children received an education at school or otherwise. A benign view of compulsory education sees it as

ensuring the right of all children to receive an education by central provision to a minimum standard. The fifth part of Spielberg's "Into The West" mini-series shown on BBC2 in November was a vivid reminder that compulsory education can have another agenda. The drama re-enacts Native American Indian children being taken from the reservation to abusive treatment in a boarding school, to be conditioned into citizens of the Union.

Pratt's founding principle for the Carlisle Indian Industrial School was to "Kill the Indian and save the man."

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlisle\\_Indian\\_Industrial\\_School](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlisle_Indian_Industrial_School)

While none of our state schools in the UK are as extreme as the Carlisle Indian School, the principle remains as active today as then, that one of the purposes of compulsory schooling is to conform children, and teach them to subordinate their ideas and preferences to those of the institution and "national" culture. Although the conforming role of compulsory education generally has a low profile in our society, it is still present in the structures and principles of schools where one size, with only very limited variations must fit all. From time to time the requirement to conform can be seen on the surface, for example in the form of extreme truancy measures seeking to coerce parents to buy into a school system which is no longer functioning for their child, or in local authorities trying to impose school style planning and curricula on home educating families. It is most obvious in the astonishment most parents (and many teachers) experience on discovering that in England school is not compulsory.

#### *Conformity Causes Some Children Serious Problems*

The uniformity of the classroom and the national curriculum has become an increasing problem for some children. Children's tolerance for conformity, just like that of adults, varies greatly. The national curriculum has resulted in the introduction of continuous testing, rigidly defined numeracy and literacy strategies and lesson plans, and teachers have much less flexibility to adapt lessons to individual children. Both local authorities and child support organisations report that there are rising numbers of children who are disaffected from the curriculum and schools' rule based routines. The rigidity of the curriculum delivery can also cause serious problems for children with special needs. Some children from these categories are highly intolerant of coercion to a rigid institutional pattern and may become ill, exhibiting depression, school phobia and suicidal patterns.

Home education provides an essential alternative option to school in those circumstances, and steps to restrict parent's latitude in how to conduct it would in our opinion, undoubtedly put some children's lives at risk. Our helplines regularly hear about such crises, and it would be a tragedy just as serious as that of cases like that of Victoria Climbié, if children were to come to harm because their parents' judgement about how best to protect them from curriculum pressures had been curtailed by legislation. The current legislation on home education prudently recognises that in the balance of responsibilities between the state and parents about children's education, it is the parents who must make the final judgements about what is right for the child, with recourse to the courts available to the local authorities if they disagree. Any further legislation giving the state the right to make a judgement about the provision up front, or to make regulations about the provision, would as Lord Adonis recently said in the House of Lords "Elevate one of those elements" and "risks weakening the others." And... could... be used as a legal argument to cut across parental choice and the right of children to be educated either at home or at an independent school".

#### **The Serious Danger of Standards for Home Education**

There is a grave danger that the proposals in this consultation seek to extend the universal curriculum of school to home educators. Proposals already mentioned by DfES include the introduction of curriculum standards such as citizenship, or a definition of suitable education

based on performance of a list of criteria. The concept of monitoring of home education implies measuring the provision against some universal standard. But parents have to provide an education suitable to age, ability and aptitude. The difficulty with universal education systems is that they may cater well for the average child, but for some children they are ineffective at delivering to the child's **ability** and **aptitude**, the very areas in which home education excels.

Consequently, while home education is chosen for children of all capabilities and types, on balance it is populated with a high proportion of children who found themselves ill fitted in the school system. This may be because of unusual learning styles, or special educational needs, or because a child's social patterns are not well suited for the classroom. Or it may be that the child's personal style is strongly at odds with other pupils, teachers or the ethos of the local school. For those children, parents frequently make decisions about provision that would surprise a school oriented educationalist. The education may exhibit some of the following characteristics:

- It may be very free form, play based, conversation based, or child-led.
- Development may occur in orders not possible in school, for example late reading and writing ages, with advanced verbal skills at an early stage.
- A focus on relationships, personal skills or values may predominate over academic skills.
- A child who is very project or creatively oriented may spend extended periods happily working alone in very narrow areas of interest.
- While adjusting to home education there may be a period of months or even years while the child recovers from being in school and may do no formal work at that time, instead learning self management skills.
- Even after adjustment, some children are interested solely in vocational and personal skills and not in bookwork and that is a valid learning style.

The outcomes from such approaches are excellent because they are well adapted to a child's ability and aptitude, but they will not easily match a set of standard criteria. Indeed based on the narrow understanding of education used by OFSTED, ie testable academic learning, there may be periods where no progress is apparent because the focus of home education may be on other areas of development that school standards do not measure. Especially in the case of children who have experienced trauma on exit from school, standards and monitoring represent a real threat to parents' ability to adjust the provision to maximize the child's natural motivation. For such vulnerable children, there is a grave risk that interviews and monitoring would undermine the benefits of home education, and even represent a serious threat to the child's wellbeing.

### Truancy and Worsening School Provision

Over the last decade the situation in schools has steadily deteriorated, although recent injections of funding in the last few years have brought some improvement, with better pupil / adult ratios in schools. Some schools do provide a sound education for many children, but across the country there are many where the standards are poor, and many more where the provision ranges from poor to completely failing. The underlying trend is that quality of provision is falling, with increasing numbers of disaffected children voting with their feet, quite literally, and refusing to attend. Factors include the inflexibility and irrelevance of the national curriculum, excessive testing and measurement of pupils and teachers, and the integration of special needs children in the classroom without adequate classroom support, which its architect Baroness Warnock has now described as "a disastrous legacy", "of which children are the casualties". The Dearing Report as far back as 1993 found that the national curriculum had grown into an unwieldy structure almost impossible to implement and proving detrimental to good teaching and learning.

The government has responded to this by raising the stakes on its demands that parents coerce children into school. In 2004 they told parents that every child must be "anchored in school". And more recently they said that schools requirements for behaviour and attendance standards should be supported by parents "without question" ! Meanwhile truancy can now result in on the spot fines, or up to 3 months in jail. Despite the injection of large sums of money (a figure of nearly a billion pounds since 1998 has been published !), truancy rates have continued to rise.

### **Growing Knowledge of Home Education**

As school provision faces serious problems and the numbers of home educated children rises, more parents are aware of the option of withdrawing their child from school. Numbers of home educated children are hard to estimate, and as home educators are not required to register with the local authority there are no government figures, but there are many indications that numbers are growing. On the simple measure of EO memberships, the numbers have grown steadily at a rate of about 10% a year.

There are many new home educators who have chosen home education after seeing how effective it is for other families, and whose children have never been to school. Many others however, do so due to disaffection with school, and this is one of two key factors that has drawn the attention of the local authorities towards them. The other factor is the increasing duties of local authorities to take active steps to promote the welfare of children, including those who are not at school. New duties have also followed from the enquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié, in the form of a new duty to identify "Children Missing Education".

### **SUMMARY**

DfES propose to issue a full consultation in January or February on changes to the law on home education.

The consultation has been motivated by local authority concerns about their perceived welfare responsibilities under Every Child Matters.

The evidence base that there are real problems underlying local authorities concerns is very poor, and was acknowledged by DfES at the pre-consultation meeting to be limited. The studies are neither impartial nor objective.

There is no evidence base for concluding that new legislation would improve educational outcomes. Nor has there been any comparison of the education outcomes recognized by home educators, and how they differ from local authorities expectations.

EO will advise DfES throughout the consultation that the existing legislation is perfectly adequate. Introducing new regulations will seriously damage outcomes for a proportion of home educated children, and put others at increased risk. It would not offer any significant positive benefits, and the cost of monitoring and of prosecution when provision is deemed unsuitable will be enormous.

Government Policy Group, EO

## **APPENDIX A**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON INFORMAL EDUCATION**

Any considerations about whether standards should be set for home education must take into account that home education conducted along the lines chosen by parents is a highly successful methodology. There is a serious risk that any intervention might inadvertently harm methods that are already known to be more successful than school provision. This is especially the case with learning strategies based on child-led or self-directed strategies, where it is well

understood that the internal motivation of the child can be adversely affected by external demands (John Holt et al).

Informal education methods work extremely well because of the small adult / child ratio at home. With this model of learning the acquisition of skills and understanding occurs through example, dialogue and mentoring, rather than through structured teaching. Although formal learning is sometimes deferred while a child pursues the acquisition of skills and an overview of the world, when academic interest develops studies often proceed very rapidly due to the well developed framework of knowledge that has been acquired by the child. Frequently children will do little study until their teens and yet continue to higher education with ease.

Where children do transfer back into school based education from informal education methods, they tend to rapidly acquire any information missing from their subject knowledge, due to breadth of learning skills and general knowledge they have.

Further background information can be found in the following article:  
<http://www.infed.org/biblio/home-education.htm>

Thomas, A. (2002) 'Informal learning, home education and homeschooling', *the encyclopaedia of informal education*

## **APPENDIX B**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON REGULATING HOME EDUCATION**

In the United States regulation of home education varies state by state and allows a direct comparison of the impact of regulation from states with little or no regulation, to those with regulated curriculum content and testing. According to a comparison conducted by Dr Brian Ray, president of the National Home Education Research Institute in the United States, in 1997 there is no difference in the education outcomes based on school measures, across the different states.

<http://www.hslda.org/docs/study/ray1997/12.asp>

Study on home schooling, conducted by Dr. Brian D. Ray, president of the National Home Education Research Institute. (1997)

### **EDUCATION MINISTER CONFIRMS BALANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY WITH PARENTS**

Lord Adonis in the recent debates in the Lords on a proposed amendment to the Education and Inspection Bill 2006, which would have created a duty for LAs to "secure education" for every child said:

*"This could cut across the existing fourfold foundation of the right to education which, as I expounded at length at cols. 657 and 658 on 17 October, also places duties on parents, the Secretary of State and governing bodies".*

*"We believe that seeking to elevate one of those elements risks weakening the others. Furthermore, an effect of placing a duty on local authorities to secure the right of every child to suitable education in the way proposed here could, we are advised, be used as a legal argument to cut across parental choice and the right of children to be educated either at home or at an independent school".*

The same argument would seem to apply to extending regulations for home education.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **STUDIES OF HOME EDUCATION**

### 1) NFER Study: Evaluation of the Vulnerable Children Grant Jan-Sept 2004

NFER conducted a major study of the Vulnerable Children Grant which is used by local authorities to support looked after children, children unable to attend school because of their medical needs, Gypsy/Traveller children, asylum seekers, young carers, school aversion, teenage parents and young offenders. In four regional focus group discussions following the study local authorities said that **a minority** of families "were struggling to provide a suitable and efficient education".

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/pims-data/summaries/evaluation-of-the-vulnerable-children-grant.cfm>

Impartiality: NFER receives substantial funding from DfES

Objectivity: No home educators were included in this study.

### 2) NFER Study:

#### Vulnerable children's access to examinations at Key Stage 4 Jun 04- Feb 05

Following the previous study home educated children were added to the key groups of vulnerable children associated with the Vulnerable Childrens Grant. A further study was undertaken into access to examinations.

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/pims-data/summaries/vulnerable-childrens-access-to-examinations-at-key-stage-4.cfm>

The report noted the following key issues in the Appendix:

AREA	BARRIERS/CHALLENGES
Pupil ability	An increasing number of young people and their families accessing home education in key stage 4 as a result of disengagement from school may not have the ability, motivation to complete self-directed learning.
Cultural factors and parental issues	Some families choose not to take GCSEs. Pupils who have left school for anxiety / BESD-related issues may have a family background which is not supportive of education. Parents may have to address behavioural difficulties, as well as educational provision. Difficulties for young people when there is little financial or motivational support from the family.
Other concerns	Additional difficulties when the reason for home education is linked to anxiety or BESD. If home education fails young people may effectively be left stranded without any educational provision.

The points listed in the key issues are not detailed in the report, appearing only in the appendix.

Impartiality: NFER receives substantial funding from DfES.

Objectivity: The study was based on 94 interviews with local authority officials, teachers and other stakeholders. Only 2 interviews were with home education organizations, and 1 interview was with a home educating parent.

### 3) DfES Draft Guidelines on EHE Limited Consultation Feb 2005 – Apr 2005.

In July 2004 DfES said that they were looking at draft guidelines for home education. In Feb 2005 they issued draft guidelines, stating

"We have attempted to strike a balance between rights and responsibilities, duty and accountability, and hope that LEAs will find this helpful in building positive relationships with home-educating families."

The draft guidelines and responses to them from EO, other home educators and 20 local authorities can be found at

<http://www.education-otherwise.org/Legal/Consultations/English/FrtPgEngland.htm#DrftGdlnes>

Only 3 home education organisations were invited to submit responses, with 2 more accepted during the consultation period, but individual home educators were told that there was insufficient resource available for their views to be considered individually. However at the end of the consultation period when local authorities became aware that only a limited number of authorities had been invited to respond and objected, they were given a 2 month extension to the consultation deadline, and more than 20 responses were accepted. The extension was not offered to other home educators.

No feedback was offered to home educators as to the status of the guidelines until a meeting between EO and DfES in December 2006 when it was announced that the guidelines would be issued in February 2007 as an interim measure, in the course of the proposed full consultation on the statutory framework for home education.

#### **4) NFER Study: Some Perspectives on Home Educated Children** **Research Period Late 2005, Published August 2006.**

NFER then conducted what it describes as a small scale scoping study into the local authorities' role regarding home education, which it reported under the title "Some Perspectives on Home Educated Children" in August 2006.

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/pims-data/summaries/home-educated-children.cfm>

The report describes local authorities' concerns:

- The inaccessibility of some EHE children also raised concerns about welfare issues and the local authority responsibility to safeguard children.
- One of the main challenges identified by local authority interviewees was fulfilling the local authority's responsibility to act if they believe children are not receiving a suitable education. Half of all the local authority personnel interviewed cited the lack of a definition of an 'efficient and suitable' education as an obstacle.
- Interviewees felt that having no requirement to provide education of a certain standard could lead to some variation in the quality of education provided.
- A quarter of local authority interviewees cited as an issue the fact that there was no legal responsibility for parents to notify the local authority they were home educating if children had not attended school.
- Local authority interviewees felt that there was an inherent conflict between legislation relating to EHE and ECM guidance. They felt that current legislation relevant to EHE appeared to focus on the wishes and rights of parents rather more than the welfare of the child.

The report states that as a result of these concerns LAs made the following proposals:

- that all parents' register their intent to home educate with the local authority
- that the term 'efficient and suitable' full-time education be more accurately defined
- because of the local authority's responsibility with regard to safeguarding children, a requirement for EHE children to be seen by professionals
- monitoring the educational provision made for EHE children
- regular assessments to determine EHE children's educational progress.

Impartiality: NFER say that they funded this study themselves. While this is clearly intended to improve the credibility of the study, it does raise further questions about why they would choose

to do so, and whether they anticipate the placing of other research projects in this area. NFER receives substantial funding from DfES.

**Objectivity:** The study is described as an initial small-scale exploratory study. It consisted of "semi-structured telephone interviews" with "21 local authority officers", but with only 4 home educating parents, and no home educating organizations. The report acknowledges that its focus is on the local authorities views, describing the study as an:

"initial small-scale exploratory study, largely focusing on local authority perspectives on home education,"

The study is therefore biased to LA views. Also the informal study structure means that the LA proposals have not been supported with any evidence or examples.

**5) DfES Commissioned "Research": The situation regarding the current policy, provision and practice in Elective Home Education for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children.**  
**Study Period: 2005-6. Published: August 2006.**

The study was commissioned from Mr Arthur Ivatts.

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/programmeofresearch/projectinformation.cfm?projectid=14976&resultspage=1>

**Impartiality:** Mr Ivatts was responsible for educational provision for Gypsies and Travellers within Her Majesty's Inspectorate from 1982 until he recently became a consultant to the department. The study and its recommendations cannot be considered impartial given his background.

**Objectivity:** The study surveyed 23 LAs and received 36 individual responses about half from Traveller Education Service officials and the balance from officials responsible for home education. The study claims

"1.4 Research findings provide a wide range of evidence that would justify the concerns expressed by the TESs and other commentators including the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). "There is a growing trend among Traveller families for secondary-aged pupils, in particular, to be educated at home. The adequacy, suitability and quality of such provision are very uneven and raise serious concerns.

However looking through the detail of the report no evidence appears to be put forward, beyond the opinions and reported concerns of the LAs surveyed.

The study appears to exhibit bias against the Traveller community's cultural preferences, and preferred educational objectives:

"6.2 Few Gypsy/Roma and Traveller parents have the knowledge, skills and resources to provide or deliver a full-time education that is efficient and suitable. And yet the percentage of Gypsy/Roma and Traveller families who have opted for EHE is increasing at a high rate. There may also be a possible 50% to 75% of children from these communities opting out of secondary education. Given the research findings about school curricular irrelevance and racist bullying, the developing situation re EHE is a clear example of racial discrimination and social exclusion.

The study does not adequately acknowledge that the interpretation of education that is efficient and suitable will vary substantially within a different cultural community. We are very concerned that the cultural differences of these ethnic groups will be used as an excuse to regulate all home education. To do so would be discriminatory against traveller's cultural preferences which are protected by the European Convention on Human Rights.

**Incomplete Research which DfES have received draft reports on.**

There are two additional studies in hand:

## **6) NFER: Support for children who are educated at home.**

**August 2006 - January 2007**

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/pims-data/outlines/support-for-children-who-are-educated-at-home.cfm>

An initial study of home educators and local authorities views on the effectiveness of "support for home educators" from national networks, local groups and local authorities.

## **7) York Consulting:**

### **The Prevalence of Home Education in England - A Feasibility Study**

**August 2006 – December 2006 (unreleased)**

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/programmeofresearch/projectinformation.cfm?projectId=14863&type=3&resultpage=31>

A feasibility study, to assess the prevalence of Home Education in England (cost £38,583 !!!!! – for information already effectively researched by Mike Fortune-Wood for minimal cost).

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## **Government Policy Group Responding to DfES Consultation**

There is shortly to be a full DfES consultation about the monitoring of elective home education and it may well be underway by the time you read this.

I am a member of Education Otherwise Government Policy Group. I am also Local Contact for EO in Sheffield and I home-educate my 13 year old son, Theo.

Education Otherwise Government Policy Group members have had a pre-consultation meeting with the DFES to express the home educating community's concerns about the ideas of standards and monitoring being introduced.

We obviously believe that intervention and surveillance and assessment procedures would be hugely detrimental to home-educated children. The Policy Group flagged up the particular injustice of this with regard to special needs children, who require highly individualised learning environments and whose development may not match any kind of "standard" expectations.

Notes are taken of all meetings with DfES and will be available at the Education Otherwise GovConsult website: <http://www.education-otherwise.org/Legal/Consultations/GovConsultFrtPg.htm>

The consultation period is likely to be around 3 months so it could be over by April. You can find out about the questions in the consultation by going to the DFES e-consultation website at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm> or by telephoning the DfES 0870 000 2288 or 0870 001 2345 to get a publication reference number and then ordering paper copies of the consultation from the Department's distribution centre Prolog on 0845 6022260 quoting the document's reference number.

Full consultations address a range of issues and responses are invited from voluntary and community sector groups and individuals as well as parents and other interested parties.

Education Otherwise Government Policy Group is taking this very seriously and will be making an exhaustive consultation response. I will be supplying updated information to the newsletter and to the Education Otherwise message group webpages about the progress of this. I hope that the material we share will also encourage local home education groups, SEN support networks and concerned individuals to participate fully in the consultation process on their own behalf as well.

I should like briefly to outline the background to the consultation from what we understand via letters and conversations to be the DfES point of view.

Many Local Authorities now believe that they have extra responsibilities since the 2004 Children Act which brought in a duty to promote the 5 outcomes of Every Child Matters [be healthy; be safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being]

This has led some Local Authorities to press the DFES for wider powers to monitor home education. The LAs are pushing for access to the child and for written guidelines which say that home educators should be expected to supply a programme of study ahead of time and also should be required to provide examples of the child's "work" to demonstrate "progress". There may also be moves towards a mandatory "broad and balanced" curriculum which was the forerunner in maintained schools for the National Curriculum and which has never applied to home educated children.

Studies undertaken by the National Foundation for Education Research, NFER, for the government, demonstrate that Local Authorities are frustrated over not being able to influence the form and content of home education. Local Authorities also express their concerns that if they never see the children, they cannot ensure their welfare. Similar concerns are expressed in a recent study of LA work with home educated children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities by Arthur Ivatts, a former HMI Schools Inspector.

There is another piece in this jigsaw, which is the Children Missing From Education initiative, CME, from the Education And Inspection Act 2006. Local Authorities now argue that this requires them to be pro-active in identifying home educated children whose educational status is "unknown" until they are categorised as "electively home educated". There are therefore renewed calls to make compulsory a "register" of home-educated children.

LA pressure on welfare, standards and tracking down Children Missing Education have all now prompted the DfES to initiate a consultation which could result in "Regulations" giving new powers to Local Authorities in registration of home educators, setting a standard for suitable

At present we are thinking of things like:

- writing to members of parliament emphasising our national and international right to educate our children at home
- putting a positive spin on home education in the local and national press
- publicising the benefits of home education to a wider audience
- pointing out how the school system is failing some of the most vulnerable children
- showing how home educated children grow up successfully
- demonstrating that learning is for life and that home educated children do not switch off education at 16
- having a national home education awareness day (date to be announced; please contact me for further details or ask at one of online home education support groups; early thoughts on this are that it may usefully be timed to coincide with the closing date of the consultation)
- running regional workshops
- having a workshop/meeting in London

education and the prospect of annual monitoring which would then be mandatory rather than discretionary.

DfES "regulations" or "guidance" could represent a fundamental legislative erosion of home educators' freedoms.

The EO Government Policy group was told by the DfES just before Christmas that, in addition to the new consultation, they also plan to issue in February the final version of the Guidelines for LAs on EHE, on which they consulted in Spring 2005.

The home education community is understandably up in arms about all the ways in which our freedoms are being undermined. There are lots of suggestions about what we can do and these are being discussed on home education websites such as Education Otherwise and the HE-consult list (details at the foot of the page )

This appeal for solidarity and support in the campaign to preserve home

education freedoms is not just directed to families currently home-educating.

There must be a lot of people out there who know that home education benefited their family hugely. If you are reading this and you are one of those people, or you know someone who is, please could you get in touch with me at the address below and I will make sure that your experiences (suitably anonymised) form part of a briefing about the positive benefits of free range home education.

You can write into the newsletter as well, but the deadline for the consultation response may be some time in March so if you want to be sure your voice counts, then please send material to me directly, by email, letter or by telephoning me (answer machine picks up after 6 rings) my contact details are at the foot of this article.

We are very pushed for time so any replies or queries need to be sent to me directly rather than going via the newsletter.

Please circulate this information freely to local groups.

Fiona Nicholson  
Education Otherwise Government Policy Group  
205 Leverton Gardens  
Sheffield  
S11 8FD

Telephone 0114 2751142

fiona\_j\_nicholson@yahoo.co.uk (the middle letter there is j for jam ; underscore jam underscore)

*This article is authored by Fiona Nicholson and the views expressed here are her own but have been formulated as a synthesis of views expressed on the Education Otherwise message group support list and also in close discussion with the chair of the Government Policy Group*

governmentpolicy@education-otherwise.org - Education Otherwise Government Policy Group.  
All mail to this address will be forwarded to Fiona. <http://www.education-otherwise.org>

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### Child Protection Group Debate

About the current debate over the role of the Child Protection Group: I am concerned by the tone of the criticism of the group. It seems very ill informed and paranoid. I expect this was all debated at the last meeting in November, and will be again in Feb, before this letter is published in the next newsletter. But still I felt moved to write in defence of the Group and EO's Child Protection Policy. I have been a member of EO for several years and remember the long consultation process involved in the development of the child protection policy. I have to admit that I took very little notice of it, but have recently had reason to look into the issue more seriously.

The whole area of child protection has raised its head in the context of the local home education group I am involved with. After many years of burying my head in the sand on this issue I have eventually realised that we need to have some sort of policy and practice in place. It is very easy in a local group where everyone feels very cosy to think that these are not relevant or necessary questions to deal with. But groups grow and times change. I was very impressed by the EO child protection policy (and the equal opportunities policy too). I was also very happy to find such a thorough and well thought out policy, thus saving our group much time and effort trying to devise something similar.

As soon as it was suggested to the group that we should have some child protection policy in place for the group, the question was raised how do we make sure it is implemented? And I asked the question what do we do if someone has suspicions that a child coming to the group is being abused? We have an open decision making process similar to the national EO one. But is

that an appropriate context in which to raise such a suspicion or make those kinds of allegations? As Peter says, false accusations can ruin people's lives, and therefore any suspicions should be taken to the relevant authorities such as social services and the police, and it is not the remit of EO or any other group to make a judgement on such an issue. But as one mother said in our group what if a person comes to the group and, not realising the special needs of say an autistic child, assumes that their 'odd' behaviour is a cause for concern and takes it upon them selves to report the family to social services? Similar things have happened, so the fear has some foundation. So one has, perhaps, a need for a child protection officer or perhaps a child protection group who both adults and children can trust, raise concerns with and be guided by, with regard to which authorities to refer to and how to do it if necessary. Do you know the number of your local social services? On a more basic level, who is going to take responsibility for the ensuring that there is an adequate first aid kit, and proper fire safety precautions are taken.

We delegate other roles to individuals and groups in EO. It only makes sense to take a similar approach with regard to child protection.

I really disagree with most of Leslie and Peter's criticisms of the Child Protection Group. I fail to see in which way the activities of the group are any more opaque than any those of any other group acting within and for the council. (I see we have recently established a Strategic Development Group). Leslie and Peter seem to mistakenly assume that the Child Protection Group have a remit to make decisions and act on them with out consulting the council. I fail to read any such remit in to the summary of the role of the group, especially as it is a given that any small group is there to do the leg work and refer back to council for decision making and it may then fall to that same group to carry out the decision of council. The four points were a summary of the group's role and need to be seen in the context of the group's over all remit to act within the limits set on all small groups in EO.

Peter is concerned about personal accusations being made in council, a concern I share. Council is a very public place in which to raise such potentially damaging allegations against someone. That in my mind makes the need for group where a degree of confidentiality is observed, such as the child protection group, all the more vital. Perhaps Peter should offer to be a member of the group and act as a watchdog on our behalf, ensuring that they do not go beyond their remit?

I hope that Peter has reread the article he responded to and the comprehensive letter from Gwen Baldock, and realised that the group has members with a large amount of knowledge and experience, who have over a long period of consultation come up with what I consider a very good child protection policy. But a policy that is not implemented is not worth the paper it is written on. Therefore we still need the group to function within EO.

Which brings me on to Leslie's second letter. I am surprised that she was not satisfied that her questions in her first letter were answered by the response from the Child Protection Group.

Leslie's letters are full of contradictions, for example in her first letter she says 'It is because this is such an emotive issue that policies and procedures must be laid out openly and discussed before an incident occurs, so that if such an incident were to happen, clear procedures rather than emotion would guide people's actions.' I agree with her there and I find that the EO Child protection Policy found in the Hand Book exactly fits this requirement.

In her second letter Leslie questions the need for the Child Protection Group, firstly because in her view the policy has been established and implemented so their job is done. I seriously question this. Yes the policy is established but I don't think it is fully implemented, and in the area of implementing it constant review and work will need to be done.

Leslie agrees that EO council needs to be kept up to date on changes in the law or developments in Child protection policies but at the same time questions the need for EO to

keep informed about child protection issues, stating that 'these areas are not about promoting HE.' These two views contradict each other. I am in agreement with the first view and strongly disagree that the issue is not about HE. HE is about happy healthy children; and child protection is about ensuring children are in an environment which, and with people who, protect their health and happiness.

Lastly, Leslie in fact goes further than questioning the need for and remit of the Child Protection Group, she questions whether EO should be undertaking to deal with this issue at all? I could argue against each of her points, but do I really need to? Is there really any question that we should be taking our responsibilities in this area seriously? Was it not a decision of Council to do so?

I would respectfully ask Leslie to specifically name any action or event that has caused her to take up the cudgel against EO's policies on this subject and let the specific issues be dealt with properly. In every organisation things go wrong, (we are but the sum of the individuals) but surely the way to deal with mistakes is to face up to them, not to try and tear down the whole show? The amount of time that has been taken to take her seriously and reply to her letters shows that the people of EO are willing to deal with issues in an open and forthright manner. I am aware that there have been recent incidents that have raised the question of how EO handles child protection issues, and from what I have heard things have been done that have not complied with the Child Protection Policy as I understand it. I would be interested to know if the Child Protection Group was involved at all? We need to remember that local groups may be affiliated to EO and even come under the EO umbrella but they are to all intents and purposes autonomous. (Something I fully endorse by the way).

From Carla Macgregor

*Co-Ordinator note: To keep the flow of debate going, the two people named in this letter have been given the chance to respond.*

The editor was kind enough to offer me the opportunity to respond to a reply to my letter in the last issue of the Newsletter. I'm glad that this has prompted at least one further contribution to the debate about child protection in EO. However, it doesn't really address my concerns about the Terms of Reference of the Child Protection Group. And I must admit to some surprise at the implied accusation of paranoia – especially at this early stage of the debate!

But neither Carla Macgregor's nor Gwen Baldock's defence of present arrangements convince me that these do not need revisiting, however well they may have served in the past. They did, though, persuade me to read again the relevant section in the Members Handbook. That document has to be looked at as a whole and so it is with some trepidation that I suggest that the "Child Protection Code of Good Practice" needs re-examination: incidentally, this is not a policy although it contains elements of policy. Whilst I understand the attraction of gathering

together a range of subjects relating, in their widest sense, to the health and safety of children, I consider that this confuses different issues.

Fire safety, first aid and infectious diseases, for example, are essentially housekeeping issues for EO gatherings that affect adults and children alike. They should be a matter for the organisers and hardly warrant a dedicated and permanent small group, although EO would do well to keep statistics on these matters in order to be able to demonstrate good management. Paedophilia and other abuses by adults of minors are very different issues. Several of the bullet points in the Code address these directly, but are buried in unrelated, if important, other issues.

All of which leads me to think that there may be a need for a small group to tidy up policy in respect of actual or potential child abuse, including defining clearly what it covers and does not cover, for Council to ratify. Thereafter, it would be good to maintain a

**Home Education Organisation seeks a little tender loving from its members  
please let it know how you feel!**

The response to the questionnaire placed in the December 2006 newsletter was very good. However, we have received quite a few comments that it had been done in December when people were busy with Christmas preparations. Therefore, we have included it again in this, the February 2007 newsletter. We're not asking you to complete it again if you have already done so, but if you didn't fill it complete it in December, please fill it in today and send it off by last post tomorrow...or the next day. As long as it reaches us by 28 February 2007.

This questionnaire has been created by the Strategic Development Group, set up by the council to help EO decide what its members want from it, and to work out how best to achieve that. Even if you are new to home education and Education Otherwise, your views count. When your children are thinking of becoming parents, what would you hope to see EO being able to do for them?

Help us find out what's going on; the SDG would be grateful if you'd fill out the questionnaire below. Again, for questionnaires of this type, we've had a fairly good response...but it could be a lot better. So please spend five minutes and let us have your views – the good, the bad and the ugly! Please don't worry about filling it all in - just answer the questions you feel you can answer – Thanks.

*Don't forget, we're basically a volunteer run organisation. Not all suggestions will be feasible, especially with the current level of volunteers. So...please think carefully about question 13! ☺*

**Your Membership of EO**

1.	How long have you been a member of EO?	years
2.	Has your membership ever lapsed?	Yes / No
	Did you lapse inadvertently?	Yes / No
	If so, for how long and why did you decide to rejoin? .....	
	.....	

**Your Relationship with EO**

3.	Have you ever sought help from your local contact?	Yes / No
4.	Have you found it easy to decide who to contact within EO if you needed information about anything?	Yes / No
5.	Have you contacted any of the other Useful Contacts or Council Members from the back page of the Newsletter?	Yes / No
	Which post holders have you contacted? .....	
	.....	
6.	Do you attend local home education group meetings?	Yes / No
7.	Do you think local groups should be more closely associated with national EO?	Yes / No
	If so, how? .....	
	.....	
8.	In what ways have you benefited from your membership of EO?.....	
	.....	
	.....	
9.	Are you happy with the level of support you've had from EO?	Yes / No

10.	Have you had any problems in your dealings with EO? If yes, please indicate nature of problems. ....	Yes / No
11.	Do you feel part of EO or disconnected from the national organisation?	Conn / Disconn
12.	Are there ways EO could make better links between national EO and local members? ....	
13.	Would you be interested in doing voluntary work for EO? If yes, please add a short note when you return the questionnaire and your offer will be forwarded to the Small Jobs Co-ordinator. It will be separate from this form so that your anonymity can be maintained when completing the questionnaire.	Yes / No
14.	Are there ways in which EO could make it easier for members to get involved in the work of the charity? .....	Yes / No

#### You and EO's Resources

15.	Do you read the newsletter? What additional things would you like to see in the newsletter? ..... Is there anything you would wish to change in the newsletter? .....	Yes / No
16.	Do you find the Contact List helps with meeting others? How do you think this could be improved? .....	Yes / No
17.	Do you find the Member's Handbook useful? What more/less would you want to see in the Handbook? .....	Yes / No
18.	Do you use the EO website?    Never / Occasionally / Daily / Weekly / Monthly / More Do you have any suggestions for improvements? .....	
19.	Do you belong to any home education email lists?	Yes / No
20.	Do your children read the Children's Pages of the Newsletter?	Yes / No
21.	Do your children use the EO Children's email list?	Yes / No
22.	What more would your children like EO to do?.....	

**Please don't forget to fill in as much of this questionnaire as you can.  
Your comments will help shape the EO that your children will inherit**

### EO and National Meetings

23.	Have you been to an EO Council meeting?	Yes / No
24.	Do you have any suggestions for ways in which EO could improve Council Meetings or the current decision making process? .....	
25.	EO Council meetings traditionally move around the country to cover the widest range of members. Do you think this is a good idea or do you think they should be in a central location each time, eg London or the Midlands?	London/Mids Mobile
26.	Should EO use postal votes on major issues of policy? What type of thing do you define as a major policy issue? .....	Yes / No

### EO and Local Government

27.	Have you had any difficulties with your Local Authority?	Yes / No
28.	Have you needed help in your dealings with the Local Authority? Did you find this help within EO? Are there any ways EO could improve this? .....	Yes / No Yes / No
29.	Should EO work with Las to improve the way home educators are viewed and treated?	Yes / No

### EO and National Government

30.	Should EO be more forceful when responding to Government consultations about proposed legislation?	Yes / No
31.	Do you think EO should interact more with Government to 'promote' an EO/Home Education viewpoint?	Yes / No

### EO and Fund Raising

32.	Do you think EO should apply for outside funding? If yes, what should outside funding be used for? .....	Yes / No
	What kinds of funding would you find unacceptable? .....	

Start thinking about what you'd like to include in the 'Any Other Comments' which is important to you (in relation to home education and Education Otherwise only please) but which may not have been addressed in this questionnaire.

## EO and the Future

33.	What would be the single most useful thing EO could do to make your life as a home educator better? .....	
34.	If EO was to stop doing one thing, what should it be? .....	
35.	EO has a fairly high turnover rate of members. Do you have any ideas of things EO could offer to encourage more members to renew?.....	
36.	Would you like EO to provide additional facilities like: exam centres, resources centres, insurance based legal service for home educators with retained solicitors?	Yes / No
	Exam Centres?	Yes / No
	Resource Centres?	Yes / No
	Insurance based legal service for home educators with retained solicitors?	Yes / No
	Other?.....	
	What level of subscription would you be prepared to pay to achieve an expansion of EO services to members? .....	

### Miscellaneous (wouldn't be a proper questionnaire without a miscellaneous)

37.	Does EO do enough about proactive publicity? In what ways could this be improved? .....	Yes / No
38.	Would you like to see EO negotiate more access to curriculum material such as Learnpremium? (See Handbook p16 or webpage <a href="http://www.education-otherwise.org/About%20EO/Joining/LearnCoUk.htm">http://www.education-otherwise.org/About%20EO/Joining/LearnCoUk.htm</a> ) for more information on Learnpremium). Do you have any particular suggestions?.....	Yes / No
39.	Do you think the aims of EO, as on back cover of Newsletter, should still be EO's principal aims?	Yes / No

Any other comments? .....

.....

.....

.....

Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Jacqui Houlding, 38 Garwood Close, Westbrook, Warrington. WA5 8TF.  
You can also email your responses (please match answers and numbers) to Jacqui.  
[jacqui@thecrystalball.org.uk](mailto:jacqui@thecrystalball.org.uk)

small cadre of trained individuals to whom concerned parents could turn for confidential support (NOT advice) in the event that they were unsure about whether or not to refer their concerns to the appropriate authorities. These people would need to be chosen carefully (and CRB checked) with one or more present at EO gatherings. They would not be a substitute for social services and would not themselves, either in their own name or that of EO, refer concerns – other than their own.

As for the suggestion that I should join the CPG or act as a watchdog, I'm flattered but decline. I could not be a member of a group with a remit I cannot subscribe to and, if a watchdog is needed, that role surely should rest with a Trustee. But if it will help, I am prepared to take on coordination of CRB checks.

Now let's hear from others how they think this important and delicate matter should be handled.

Peter Borrows  
Marlow

I am so glad that Gwen, Carla and Peter took the time to write to the newsletter. It gives a chance for a full and open debate, something that has not happened in EO for sometime. I also thank the newsletter editors for letting me address the debate further.

I agree, as Carla says, that home education is about healthy and strong and safe children. But there are many issues that children face in a modern world, for example, poverty, having very few rights in law as well as safety issues. While all these issues also impinge on home educating families, I think EO's main concern is to promote and deal with home

education issues. No other organisation does this. However, there are many other organisations that people can go to for help on these other issues that children face, including child protection.

In this debate over the type of policy EO needs, if any, a distinction has to be made between EO as a national home education organisation, EO meetings and gatherings and EO local groups. These are three different levels of organisation. Different debates are needed to address the different situations at each of these levels of the organisation.

Any policy EO needs should be written by volunteers who (bless their hearts) steep themselves in the legislation and the many examples of policies from other organisations. They can then draft a policy, which can be debated in the newsletter and EO Council, to be eventually passed by council. Perhaps every two years other people can look over the legislation and EO's policies and see if they are up to date. This will require less time than the initial implementation of the original policies and does not warrant a separate standing group.

I am afraid I am not willing, as Carla asked, to name individuals, talk about specific people or incidents as I would like this debate to remain at the level of principles, policies and procedures. Of course there are individual people that have done good work for EO, as both Gwen and Carla suggest, but no organisation, to remain healthy, should depend on any one person.

Thank you  
Leslie Barson

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### Request for information.

For over a year now I have been making enquiries into the way hospitals treat children who are injured at school and the way they treat children who are injured at home.

### Letters

The situation seems clear that where a child receives an injury at home and is taken to A & E if the injury may be non accidental and the parent does not give a satisfactory explanation, then the Social Services would be informed. However if a child receives an injury at school which may be non accidental, it seems to be taken for granted that this is

acceptable and it is left to the parent to take up the problem with the school. No outside organisation investigates incidents of bullying, but when the parent takes the child away from school for its own protection, the parent is the one who is often viewed with suspicion.

I have raised questions with both the Dfes and the Dept of Health and I am told that ALL non accidental injuries, whether bullying or other causes, would be treated the same and an outside organisation like the Social Services would deal with these. I am told that it does not make any difference where the injury occurred whether this is at school, at home or somewhere else, they would all be treated the same. I don't believe this for a moment but unless parents will give information about their experiences, then both children and parents will continue to be treated unfairly and with suspicion.

Has anyone had any experience of taking a child from school to A & E who may be able to tell me first hand of the way bullying or non-accidental injuries were handled? Anything at all which may be helpful would be much appreciated.

Please telephone or email me.

*Kathleen Thompson*  
01942 795 975

My name is Emily; I'm a Christian home-schooler from Australia. In May 2007 I'll be spending 6 weeks in Zambia on a short term mission, and would like to see some of the UK after the trip. Would anyone be willing to have me stay with them for a short time? I can help with domestic chores, child minding and I also teach music (piano/keyboard). I'm 20 years old and have completed a Bachelor of Social Science. If you are interested or want to know more, please write and let me know.

*Emily Calvert*  
PO Box 1116  
Young  
NSW 2594  
Australia

[calvertz@ozemail.com.au](mailto:calvertz@ozemail.com.au)

ITV are producing a documentary about bullying in schools which aims to give practical advice to families who are affected by it. We would like to hear from families whose children are currently being bullied, or who have experienced bullying and are now being educated at home, and who might be interested in being involved.

All calls will be treated in strict confidence. Please contact *Jodie Gravett* on 020 7578 4216 or *Kate Ansell* on 020 7578 4044. Many thanks. (*Kate Ansell is a producer with ITV & requested that her letter be placed here*)

### CHANGE OF PO BOX ADDRESS

We have a new PO Box address for Education Otherwise and will gradually wind down the London one, though will run the 2 boxes concurrently for a year or two. The new address is: PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW

### Reflections

When a child gets 'learner of the week' or gets picked for Mary in the school play, what about the children who don't get an award? What about all the children who have lesser parts? How do these children feel?

Isn't it all competitive and comparable right from the word go? Is it just idealist to dream of a co-operative democratic and 'free from rewards - just be- community'? Why have children got to have awards, stars and stickers? Isn't the learning experience enough?

When I hear these things, I see what I really am giving my son - the freedom to enjoy learning for its own sake. And he does. I am thankful for that. He doesn't feel he is 'better' than others or that others are 'better' than him. He is confident in himself.

Sometimes I find myself doubting what I am doing. Often because this reward-based, competitive school environment is seen as normal. But I see a better way than normal.

I just want to share that.

*Elisa Lloyd*  
*Rhondda Cynon Taff*  
Tel: 01443 772278

## Diary of a Home-Educating Nobody.

I've got a secret that I feel I ought to tell you in case you think I'm a fraud: I can't do English! I discovered this with a shock last year when my teenager was trying to do some English exercises for GCSE course work.

She struggled hopelessly with them. She became more and more frustrated. She just couldn't work out their point, or agree with them. Even after looking at the answers!

She asked for my help. I tried. I got it wrong. I looked at the answers. And I didn't agree with them either.

We're obviously both failures, for that's what we felt like. Until I got angry!

For I have never seen such a load of unnecessary exercises for children to be doing than those expected of them in GCSE English!

They're fine if you're interested and take to that sort of thing. Fine, maybe, if you want to be a literary genius, or if you think you might pursue a career in writing or journalism – or maybe not. For if this is supposed to prepare you for that path, then you are more likely to be put off than encouraged!

And after all, isn't that what we want; encouragement? We want children to be encouraged to write, to be able to write and communicate usefully with the written word. We don't necessarily require them to be literary geniuses. And we certainly don't want them ever to be put off.

Writing sentences is fairly easy. Writing good sentences is a little more difficult. Writing enjoyable, informative or entertaining writing requires a little more skill. But over and above those skills it requires passion.

Now I may not have the literary skill of Bernard Shaw. I may not have the brain to write the kind of books that Dan Brown writes. Or the imagination of J K Rowling. But I don't think my writing's that bad. It seems to be quite well received. Some of you have even said you find it entertaining and helpful!

But guess what? I can't do GCSE English!

Wading through that GCSE coursework would kill my passion for writing dead, and it's passion that produces the best writing. We need to be concentrating on the passion and the purpose for writing within children. And leave the literary and academic stuff for a lot later – if at all.

What is the relevance for children of all these exercises in the first place? What difference does it make if they know about compound and complex sentences? Or aural imagery? Or identifying linguistic devices? This being the type of questions my daughter was required to work out.

A more relevant exercise would be to simply ask; what is it that we want our children to do with English?

Surely, we want them just to be able to write confidently. To use language clearly so others can understand them. They seem to be able to do that fairly well already with texting, MSN and email and despite what you may think to the contrary I was reading an article the other day that said that children who text tend to spell better! We perhaps want them to be able to take notes, write reports, or write creatively if they have the desire to. Fill in a form. Communicate or express ideas through writing.

But I'm sure that children don't need half the stuff they are expected to do in GCSE English coursework.

Obviously GCSEs help children jump through hoops and some children achieve them readily. GCSEs set a standard. They help standardise children's ability. (Questionable?) They help

children gain entry to colleges, jobs etc. They are a useful key if you want that route and are suited to it. I respect that.

But what about the others whom it doesn't suit? Have we just gone too far with GCSE stuff? We've certainly gone too far with English, if we still think that this type of English is relevant to children and their future. We've gone too far in letting some English obsessive design an English curriculum that is totally inappropriate to the mass of us who are not English obsessives. Who just want to be able to read and write, mostly quite simply.

And what is even worse is that we have gone so far we have begun to put children off writing and make many children think that they are failures. Like we did!

My child was despondent and frustrated. A bright, intelligent and creative teenager who thought she was thick because she couldn't grasp some of the exercises in her GCSE coursework easily.

This is a person who's written some lovely poetry. She's written some excellent essays demonstrating a competent use of language, sentence construction, punctuation use and expression. She wrote such a good letter to college they interviewed her without GCSEs and have taken her on.

Which all makes me wonder what possible use could any of those English exercises have been to her! Why go through this gruelling, boring irrelevant stuff just for the sake of it? Just to get the right label. Just to get over the right hurdle.

Now I'm all for tackling hurdles. I'm all for squaring up to challenges and confronting obstacles in my path. I'm all for grit and determination to achieve ambition.

But when these types of irrelevant hurdles set themselves up in front of me I can't help questioning. For who decides? Who decides what's relevant to individual children and their futures or not? And what planet are they on for they certainly don't seem to be English!

I would like to see more people question and rebel! I would like to see a halt called to heaping more and more irrelevant academics on children en masse. And I would love people to start saying; just a minute – is this useful, and do we actually need to do it?

For as long as we keep quiet and keep on accepting the hurdles put in front of our children without questioning if they are appropriate, the longer the powers that be will go on designing them! The longer we will have children who feel inadequate because of them. And the more children we will have who think of themselves as failures when clearly they are not at all!

And incidentally, she's just got her first college assignment back – she got a distinction! It obviously made no difference to her not completing those GCSE English exercises for we never did get them done!

*Ross Mountney.*

*If you wish to contact me you are very welcome to do so at: [ross.mountney@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:ross.mountney@tiscali.co.uk)*

In the 1970s there was a series of adverts on the television for dried instant mashed potato. The premise was that a group of infinitely more advanced Martians looked down upon their poor deluded human counterparts still peeling, boiling and mashing their potatoes by hand. Each revelation of the Earthlings' laborious potato preparation had the Martians hooting with derision until they were all rolling on the floor of their spaceship unable to contain themselves.

### **We're all different, thank goodness!**

Well I feel I'm about to subject myself to a similar level of derision when I make my own revelations and I have reason to believe my misgivings are not unfounded. My thoughts which had been gathering over the past few years of reading the EO newsletter finally began to crystallize when I received the questionnaire in December's

issue and discussed it with other home educators, one of whom urged me to write a contribution "pour encourager les autres", as it were.

So here goes.

I'm a structured home-educator of three children aged 11, 9 and 5.

Not just semi-structured but seriously, seriously structured with a timetable and a curriculum based on 36 weeks of study each year accessed via a weekly programme of work.

And there's more.

We have a 'school room'. (It was once our dining room but we now eat in the kitchen). It has a blackboard (and whiteboards too). Each child has her own desk and a personal cupboard in which to keep her work and materials. The youngest child also has her art easel, her own craft table and access to her own art supplies. I have my own desk in there and my files of curricular resources. The computer's in there, as is an old-fashioned display cabinet in which the children can put things they have found or made. We have 'educational' posters on the walls. The older children have exercise books for most academic subjects (their curriculum includes Maths, Language Skills, Literature Studies, Science, Spanish, Music, History, Geography, Latin, Bible Study, Art, Crafts and Cookery) and I check their work and if appropriate I mark it. The youngest does daily maths, phonics and handwriting. We don't use many 'workbooks' but we do use good quality text books and lots and lots of other books, fiction and non-fiction and the Internet.

And still there's more.

The LA are fully informed of what we are doing. We are inspected annually in our home by an LA 'assessor'. The same one has come each year and the children look forward to her visit and willingly show her as much of what they have done as will fit into the time available.

There. When the sad shakings of the head have stopped, and the hoots of derision have died down why would I want to put myself on the line by revealing that I am guilty of practising what is apparently to many EO'ers nothing short of home-educating heresy? I am doing so because it works for us and there is just the smallest possibility that somebody considering home education who wants to embrace academic study tailor-made to their child's needs may read this and feel that if we can do it they can too. For as long as I have been a member of EO (about nine years) there has been plenty in the newsletter to offer succour to parents preferring the autonomous approach but little but condemnation of its alternatives. Whilst the handbooks and website make it clear that whatever approach a family finds best for them is the one each family should follow, there has been nonetheless in many of the published articles not just a vigorous defence of autonomy, which is absolutely their right, but also an undertone (if not an outright declaration in some instances) of entrenched antipathy to anything else. Furthermore, inciting members to refuse to cooperate with LAs, extending to condemnation of those who do cooperate, in my view, oversteps the mark and has made me feel intimidated. I know of other members who feel similarly and I know of at least one person who was considering joining EO who was 'scared off' after reading the newsletter and felt it just wasn't for them.

The fact is that people come to home education from all manner of backgrounds and from wide-ranging political and philosophical standpoints: for some it is a positive lifestyle choice in favour of the value of the family; for others it represents a turning away from excessive State intrusion; for others it is nothing short of a life-saving escape from bullying and health-wrecking stress. In between these are any number of perfectly valid reasons for choosing to home educate. Just as there are any number of equally valid reasons why people would choose not to, or would choose to do a mixture of both over the course of their compulsory education years.

My background was not privileged unless you count the fact that my parents valued education, recognised our academic, artistic and musical potential and did their utmost to support and encourage it. My siblings and I, like many of our generation from working-class families were

the first to go to University. My siblings went to the local grammar school but as the youngest I was too late to catch that educational train and I attended the local comprehensive instead. But right the way through my education I was lucky to be surrounded by people who recognised my academic abilities and pushed me. I worked hard at studying but I thrived on it. I am still somebody who really enjoys academic study. Would I want anything less for my own children if I recognise in them the same love of learning but also of studying? If your child is not academically-inclined but has a passion for something else, as a loving parent you help them to follow the direction best suited to their talents and inclinations.

Our current education approach was in fact directly borne out of my children's own wishes as it always has been. As I said we have been in EO for about nine years and were considering not sending our first child to school. However she was keen to go as was the second. The first child was in school for just over two years and the second for one term before recurrent ill health and a sense of disconnection set in and we all agreed then to revert to the original plan and home educate. In spite of my professional background as a teacher we were not especially structured in those days. The children were still only young and as they were both good and avid readers they largely followed their own interests apart from Maths which I insisted upon. This period lasted just over a year by which time our youngest was a toddler being demanding as only toddlers know how. The older two decided they wanted to return to school, a different one, and did so. Things went well for one but not for the other and after much effort and nearly two years of watching her failing to thrive physically, socially and academically we brought her out and she has never looked back. She has always been highly motivated, intelligent, polite, articulate and independent and all I had to do was give her access to opportunities, resources and discussion for her to flourish.

Meanwhile our second daughter was still in school of her own choosing and the youngest was in the feeder nursery for a couple of sessions per week. We didn't feel she needed more than that: it was more for the social benefit of being with her future classmates that she attended rather than for any perceived academic edge it would achieve. Then our second child started with persistent ill-health which she just couldn't shake off. The EWO got in touch to say our child was at that time in the year (January) at 79% attendance and this was putting her education in jeopardy. The school did not support us by stating that her absence had in every case been authorised. This, and a growing dissatisfaction with other aspects of the provision, and with a sudden unacceptable change to the prospective provision for the youngest child's education, led us to the decision that we had to home educate again.

We spent a period of time considering what sort of approach we should follow with all three of them this time around. What had worked for the eldest didn't seem to be what the three of them wanted or needed now that they were all at home together. Then we saw a programme on television called "That'll teach em" in which a group of 21<sup>st</sup> century teenagers was subjected to a 1950s-style state boarding school experience. Needless to say many of the participants found it far too restrictive for their modern tastes but our oldest two were captivated by the idea of it and wanted us to have a go at emulating what they had seen, from the academic rigour right down to the uniform, the school bell, the 'house system' and the assemblies with hymn singing...

So we did. This is where, I grant you, we definitely start to look more than a little different from the norm.

We turned the dining room into a school room and put up a small blackboard from IKEA. The piano was already in there and the local church lent us two copies of Hymns Ancient and Modern for assemblies. We already had two old-fashioned desks given to us by a friend years before so they came out of the

shed and we bought a small one at the charity shop for the youngest child who wanted to be like her sisters. The oldest child wanted us to have a display cabinet such as we had seen in the schoolroom at Beamish Museum and she wanted informative posters and maps on the walls and exercise books with our own

"school" logo on them. The school bell was an old cowbell which had always been on the wall but which now found a new use. The girls chose house names based on stately homes and they chose identical dresses for their uniform. The computer whilst not really authentic to the period thought it might as well come and join the fun.

And that's exactly what it was: good fun. And like so much that is good fun it actually served a serious purpose. It gave everybody in the family a new sense of direction and

togetherness. I got to play a variety of roles including Principal, Class Teacher (stern but fair) and Cook. My husband got the rather duller role as Bursar and Head of Science (he works as an analytical chemist). Grandma who lives next door became Head Gardener and Groundsperson. So for several weeks we played our part with gusto and people who didn't really know us but who obviously had heard what we were doing would come up to us and say, with a barely concealed smirk, "How's the school, then? How's the bell, eh?" and we would smile back and say, "It's great, thanks."

Eventually though it had run its course and the girls traded their dresses for their jeans, they started coming straight to the dinner table instead of lining up at the sound of a bell, and the daily corporate act of worship in the form of hymn singing dwindled away.

But curiously what has remained is everything else: we like having the cupboard to put artefacts in, the blackboard is really useful for putting up spellings or diagrams and saving on paper, the desks are the ideal place to work comfortably when the girls are writing, the posters are still scrutinised and discussed and the girls have a huge sense of pride in the work they have produced in their books. Furthermore they have insisted that they like to work hard at a wide range of academic subjects and then enjoy a holiday from them just as children in school would, hence the 36 week year. The youngest child catches the buzz from what her sisters are doing and in her own way enjoys working just as hard but not yet at 'academic' work. I have not thus far had to coerce or cajole them into doing their work and we are regularly evaluating what we are doing to make sure it's as right as it can be for everybody. The work for each week is set but is flexible around social engagements and the unforeseen trials of everyday life. The timetable is a starting point for them to organise their work: if they choose to organise it differently that's all well and good. What is important is that they are learning a sense of self discipline which is an essential life skill. The structure that is in place is to support their progress and help them to progress. I offer them avenues to go down so that they can discover if that avenue is for them or not. Because they respect me and the choices I am offering them there has been no conflict. The proof for us that this way has been right for us is that the girls are happy, healthy and engaged with what they do. When their 'set' work is finished they are usually found to be doing more of the same of their own volition.

So here are three girls apparently ideally suited to life in school who just haven't been able to get on with it. Even if we could afford to give them today's closest equivalent to the rigorous academic study of yesteryear by educating them privately (which we can't) I believe they would still find the cut and thrust of life in a modern school too draining on their personal resources and too restrictive of their personal interests. They each enjoy very different interests and have ample time in which to enjoy them, as well as being able to spend time with each other, their parents, grandparents and friends.

As I said before, despite not having had an easy time with some aspects of the educational authorities we have no qualms about continuing to allow the assessor to see what we are doing because we believe it is right for us. We don't do it because we have to but because we want to and the children want to. We take each new situation on trust and we have been given no reason so far to believe that trust is misplaced. The assessor has recommended that all three children continue to receive their education at home. She has not just accepted begrudgingly that we may be doing a reasonable job given the circumstances but has fully endorsed the

education we are providing. The fact that we are providing a recognisable educational model should not of itself be a problem to other home educators and to suggest anything else has more than a ring of the "dog in the manger" about it. They are as much at liberty as I am to justify the "full-time, suitable and efficient" nature of their educational provision if they choose to do so, and the key again is personal choice.

What we are doing is putting our professional and personal skills and interests to good use and investing them in our children in a way which works for us. We have been in schools, we have been out of them. We have worked in a fairly unstructured way and a highly structured way. We have no personal experience of a totally autonomous approach and so I cannot make a direct comparison. I know several families who educate autonomously and whilst I know it is an approach which we could not follow I have no reason to doubt their satisfaction with it. Conversely they would abhor following our approach but are courteous enough not to criticise us for the choices we have made.

So to those who have been amused by our admittedly eccentric approach to education but see some possibilities in it for themselves (in part if not in the whole) then I would encourage you to consider having a go. It isn't for everybody. It is hard work but hard work does not preclude a sense of enjoyment. To those who are still rolling on the floor like the Martians because what we are doing is so alien I would ask only for tolerance and understanding.

Home educating is a matter for personal and informed choice. Organisations such as EO have a valuable role for many families at what can be very difficult and isolating times. The newsletter is one of the public faces of the organisation and being belligerent helps nobody's cause and could do untold harm. Let us continue to share our experiences of education in the hope that they may help others but please let nobody feel that they are under pressure to conform to one way of doing it, or to feel ridiculed for daring to do what they believe to be right for their own children. For daring to be different.

*Ursula Clark*

### **Home-ed in Exeter; how our group has evolved**

I started to home educate in January 2000, I didn't know what I was doing, there were no local home edders visible and my LC lived at the opposite end of the county, about 45 miles away.

I no longer home ed, my daughter is all grown up now, but I home educated her from 12 to 16 years old. Apart from getting the ball rolling, making sure that all local home edders had someone to communicate with and somewhere to meet, the success of our local home ed group has little to do with me. A lot of people have put a lot of work into the group, they know who they are and their work is much appreciated by all.

I was lucky in that two families in my county were very supportive, without them I might have just given up. With their encouragement I wrote in the newsletter asking for any local families with similar age children to contact me and from that received only one reply. So, I used my Contact List and called at weekends all of the families listed, asking them if they would come down to Exeter for a meeting.

Kate, who had initially responded to my article, and I decided that the best place for a meeting would be The Double Locks, it is a pub but one side of it serves no alcohol and is a large room with tables (used as a dining room) with a conservatory and doors on to the outside play area, just a perfect place to meet up – unless you had small children then the canal was a bit of a hazard, we never lost anyone though!

We had our first meeting in September 2000, many people with small children came but Kate and I were the only ones with older children, apart from Anne who lived about 60 miles away and had come down to support us, so it was decided that we should arrange a meeting place

more suitable for small children. By this time I was the acting LC for my direct area and I felt it was important for everyone to be involved in the setting up of the group; I didn't want to be the one arranging everything, particularly as my child was so much older than the others.

By December we had our first proper meeting in a part of a school that we rented from them, we met fortnightly there, the money came from the parents, we split the cost between us, so if more people came we paid less, great incentive to drag friends along. The room was used by other child orientated groups so had toys and comfy chairs as well as a big craft table. My daughter ended up 'babysitting' the little ones, which was good for her confidence as all the little ones thought she was great, and she got to read endless stories to them. She later wrote and illustrated stories for them.

In January 2001 we arranged another meeting place, an empty hut in a park, with kitchen and toilet facilities, tables and chairs, we met there on the alternate fortnight, so there was something happening on a weekly basis, and all the parents said how good it was to be mixing with other home ed families, it was only for a few hours each week but it was a life line to many.

After a couple of years some of our group thought it would be a good idea to apply for funding, that was the start of hard work for some parents and of great grants enabling our groups to offer the home educated children the chances of a lifetime.

The group, I believe, had to have a name, a committee and then form a constitution, open a bank account, and work out what we needed funding for. I personally do not know much about this, if anyone wants any information on applying for funding just send me your details which I will pass on to someone who knows; or contact Annie on 01392 434167.

At present the group are applying for the 2nd part of an environmental grant, the 1<sup>st</sup> part of £2,600, was obtained for (and spent on) a bush craft course resulting in a qualification from the Open College Network; a week's stay in an eco cabin at The Centre of Alternative Technology in Wales; a Circus Skills course; a trip to a local organic farm; and a boat trip, amongst other things. When applying for a grant you have to put down the reasons why you need/want this and exactly what you intend to do with it, and then write a report for the funders on what you used the money for and furnish this with evidence. It's not easy money, but it is well worth the effort.

From a rocky start (having no local group) to a wonderful home ed community 6 years later.

We now have such an active and productive group, at present there are five teenagers in the group applying for a place at a local college for vocational courses to start in September 2007, they will hopefully gain an NVQ in a variety of subjects. From the Exeter contingent, there's a group of under 16s who have applied to The Ivy Project (an organisation that arranges voluntary work) who will be starting this voluntary work in January 2007. There is also the exam centre set up in Exeter for those who wish to take GCSEs.

My daughter decided she wanted to go to college when she was 16 for the social life; she also went on to pass A level English Literature (B grade) and obtain a Btech in Journalism (Distinction). Kate's daughter went to a vocational college to study and obtain a diploma in Floristry; another friend's son has just started an NVQ in animal care; others went into work and apprenticeships or are at present still studying at college, in both academic subjects and vocational subjects. Many, like my daughter, had no GCSEs and had not worked in a structured way before attending college, preferring the independence of autonomy.

There are now ten home educated teenagers following on with a good idea of what they want to achieve in life and they are well on their way to getting there, with the confidence to do so.

Starting up the group was easy; keeping it running was probably the hardest part. We were/are a motley crew; from families living in big private houses, and living the rural life on farms, to families living in a Yurt, in a caravan, or being temporarily housed in a Bed + Breakfast, and all

types of housing in between, but we all had one thing in common, we all home educated. That is what pulled the group together, there may have been personal differences but we were big enough to get over them for the sake of our children.

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

## What did EO do in 2005/2006?

Each year, when preparing the accounts ready for audit, the Trustees have to add a statement to say what EO has done in their financial year over and above the routine tasks of administering memberships, newsletter and maintaining websites.

The following will be included in the accounts for the financial year 2005/06:

- o New bank account opened with Triodos Bank for Development Fund.
- o Establishment of Strategic Development Group to look at streamlining EO's structures and taking it, as a larger organisation, forward.
- o Members of EO Scotland Group met with Scottish Executive to discuss operation of Scottish Guidance for Education Authorities with regard to home education in Scotland.
- o Government Policy Group (GPG) responded to Schools White Paper issued by DfES
- o GPG responded to Government Consultation on Pupil Registration Regulations.
- o GPG responded to Schools White Paper issued by DfES
- o Members of EO's GPG met with DfES personnel to discuss guidance for 'children missing from education', guidelines for Local Authorities and other issues relating to home education.
- o Following enquiries from LEA personnel, tutors, etc. wishing to join EO, membership forms revised to include declaration of professional or business interests and undertaking to use Contact List for personal social contact purposes only.
- o Email bulletin sent to every LEA (now LA) in UK regarding delay in DfES home education guidance, giving links to EO's information for LAs on our website, which has been expanded.
- o In collaboration with New Communicators, EO Trifold sent to every school, special school, LEA, SENCO, Young Offender Institute and many charities connected with disabilities in England and Wales.
- o Continued development of website; to include government consultation forum. Increasing use of both members' and public areas of website.
- o Venues for gatherings and meetings to be checked for compliance with Disability Discrimination Act to ensure accessibility for all members.
- o Outreach services providing information and support by telephone, email and letter continue to be well used by members of the public.
- o Revision of guidelines for local groups; awards of small grants to help establish new local groups.
- o Information Directories for all Media Contacts produced and distributed.
- o Information Directories for all Local Contacts produced and distribution has begun.
- o Display stand with laminated posters etc. made available for use at exhibitions etc.
- o 'Credit card' membership cards and truancy cards now being used
- o EO Postcards and Business Cards produced, to aid members increase awareness of EO/HE.
- o New printer for Newsletter, Handbook, Contact List and other publications from April 2006.
- o Full revision of 'School Is Not Compulsory' arranged, with appropriate budget allocated.
- o New PO Box number arranged to increase speed of dealing with membership enquiries, etc.
- o Standard expense form for volunteers produced, including a Gift Aid section; costs for car travel agreed at 25p/mile
- o EO merchandise extended, including new T-shirt design chosen from a range of designs submitted by members' children.

## Advertisements

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

Advertising Rates: Non-members (subject to space and interest to members) £35 per issue (50 words)

Members (please give full contact details) - small items/notices, free; commercial enterprises, £25 per issue

NB: DEADLINE FOR ADVERT COPY AND PAYMENT - 1<sup>st</sup> OF MONTH PRIOR TO ISSUE

~ NEW ~

### Arts & Crafts sessions & dance classes in Beckenham!

Lots of fun with arts & crafts activities for  
home educated children  
aged 4 to 10yrs & parents

(toy corner available for younger siblings)

Also fun dance classes

Close to trains, buses, trams  
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Your child would receive one to one teaching at a  
pace suitable for them and plans drawn up to  
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Parents who need to work or require longer periods  
of care, can use my childminding service while  
incorporating their child's lessons.

This service is available, near Staines Middx  
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Further childminding info can be found on  
website [www.totscare.childminders.biz](http://www.totscare.childminders.biz)

For all other info please email:

[trustlanguedoc@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:trustlanguedoc@tiscali.co.uk)

or call me Fran, on 01784 258828

### ADDACUS LTD - CORRECTION

The £10 discount for EO offered in the last  
issue should have been printed as 'up to end  
December 2006' (not 2007).

We apologise for the error. Addacus (see flyer  
enclosed with NL) have agreed to extend the  
£10 discount until end March 2007

Services and products advertised on this page  
have not been endorsed by Education Otherwise.  
EO does not make recommendations about any  
tutors or youth leaders, whether members of the

### HOLIDAYS IN WEST WALES

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Inexpensive holidays in converted barn  
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~ NEW ~

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**Maths, English & other subjects covered**

with lots of fun & exciting activities for  
home educated children aged 4 to 7yrs

(can attend without parents)

Close to trains, buses, trams

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association or not. Use of people in any such  
role, whether paid or unpaid, remains the  
responsibility of the parents/guardians.

## **EO COMPETITION ISSUE 174**

Congratulations to the winners of the last issue's competition  
Abby and Bobby Vidler from Barnstaple, North Devon  
who won a copy of the DaVinci Game

The answers to last month's competition were:

Codex-Jupiter

Logic Key-7243427

Rose-North Pole

Vitruvian Man - Eddie Murphy

This issue's winner will receive a personal radio. The competition is open to all members of EO, except members of the Council and paid contractors. All entries to be sent before the end of February to:

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

Just for Valentine's Day, find the loving words hidden in the grid.

R	S	V	E	N	B	R	F	C	U	P	I	D	P	E	
E	E	I	V	S	Z	R	L	L	D	R	A	C	K	H	
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G	I	E	I	A	U	J	E	Q	U	R	E	I	C	T	
B	K	M	Y	L	H	O	R	W	S	Q	T	I	I	V	
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CARD
CHOCOLATE
CUPID
FLOWERS
GIFT
HEART
HUGS
KISSES
LOVE
ROSE

## Regional Diary

All regular meetings listed below are included automatically in every issue, please let us know of any changes. New members attending their first meeting should phone to check it is happening as shown. Events organisers please remember when giving details of events that the newsletter can be read by people who are not EO members, and please check your details. Changes to Jo: 01392 438876

### ENGLAND

#### BATH

HELP group meets regularly for outings and activities. Louise 07957 618988 [jensen-thomas@clara.co.uk](mailto:jensen-thomas@clara.co.uk)

#### BEDFORDSHIRE

The Luton Home Education Group established 2004 - We are a small but expanding group. For a copy of the latest newsletter contact Fran on 01582 515458 email: [franticfran100@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:franticfran100@yahoo.co.uk)

**South Bedfordshire** Home Education Group, we are a small friendly group covering Houghton Regis, Dunstable and surrounding areas. We meet regularly with a variety of activities. Bernie 01582 866207 or email: [southbeds.homeed@ntlworld.com](mailto:southbeds.homeed@ntlworld.com)

#### BERKSHIRE

email list for home educators in **Berkshire** and surrounding counties.

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

Varied activities and HE events for all ages most days

**Details and list of all Berks activities** from Gail:

[eostationery@gmail.com](mailto:eostationery@gmail.com) or 01628 483895

#### Hero's Education Centre

4 days / wk - workshops, lessons, activities. Contact Dawn 01628 783107 [thirdEye1@compuserve.com](mailto:thirdEye1@compuserve.com) or website [www.homeeducators.co.uk](http://www.homeeducators.co.uk)

**Lambourn** Meeting weekly on Fridays on an organic farm for play, activities and support. Contact Tracey on 01793 813325 or [roge.tracey@virgin.net](mailto:roge.tracey@virgin.net)

#### SEEN - South East Educators Network.

Muslim home education support group will be held in South Reading every fortnight on a Wednesday - 11.15am til 3.45pm. for further details please contact 07816665629 or email [kchechi@googlemail.com](mailto:kchechi@googlemail.com)

#### 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 ed in Bristol: [www.bristolhomeeducation.org.uk](http://www.bristolhomeeducation.org.uk)

**Bristol Home Education Learning Place.** Now meeting Mon & Fri pm. under 7's, study groups, music, drama, and lots more. Contact Carla 0117 935 4389

#### BUCKS

**Newsletter for Bucks/Northants** Contact: Georgeanne on 01908 662256.

**Milton Keynes home educators network** extends a warm welcome to all (wherever you live): activities, socials and support. Local Contact Georgeanne 01908 662256 or [www.mkhen.co.uk](http://www.mkhen.co.uk)

**MKHE** - Milton Keynes Home Educators, friendly group

welcomes all... 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 or Gail 01628 483895  
email: [eostationery@gmail.com](mailto:eostationery@gmail.com)

#### CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Cambridge regular meetings and outings. Penny 01223 526441 [penny.k@ntlworld.com](mailto:penny.k@ntlworld.com)

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

**Peterborough** weekly meetings. Contact: Sarah 01733 265043 [sarah.lambert7@ntlworld.com](mailto:sarah.lambert7@ntlworld.com)

**Cambridge/Norfolk border** North Cambridgeshire:

Fortnightly at March. Contact Jane 01354 677869 or Sarah 01354 688245 or email Pat:

[Northcamps@chauntryhouse.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:Northcamps@chauntryhouse.fsnet.co.uk)

#### CHESHIRE

**Chester area Outside Education Group** for details of events contact Clare 01490 412167 [cefarrall@corwen.net](mailto:cefarrall@corwen.net)

**Delamere** Weekly alternative education programme with Delamere Forest Rangers

**Chester** Meetings every other week for music crafts and educational activities.

**Frodsham** Social meetings and Youth achievement/DoE award meetings every other week.

**Deeside** Monthly ice Skating

**South Cheshire and North Staffs** Contact Carrie:

01782 786720 Email: [home.ed@ntlworld.com](mailto:home.ed@ntlworld.com)

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

email list: <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/tvhe/>

**Billingham** contact Linz 01642 800940

#### CORNWALL

Free events sheets bi-monthly via Email or SAEs.

Contact: Anna Wheeler, Cambrose Farm, Redruth, TR16 4HT 01209 890378.

[Annawheeler.cam@btinternet.com](mailto:Annawheeler.cam@btinternet.com)

Local information on our local home ed website:

[www.freewebs.com/cornwallhomeed](http://www.freewebs.com/cornwallhomeed)

**Menheniot near Liskeard**, Home Grown Small School Contact Kath 01752 851091 or Michelle 0845 3305034.

**Menheniot**, Science/History Days.

Contact: Katinka 01208 813490

**Pensilva**, Forest School. Last Monday of the month.

Contact Ruth 08344 560247.

**Penzance PZ HOME ED** Monday afternoons, Contact

Ruth Boulton 01736 350887

[tboulton@phonecoop.coop](mailto:tboulton@phonecoop.coop)

#### CUMBRIA

Cumbria Otherwise Newsletter, for full details of events throughout the county contact Martin, 01539 732918 email: [cumbria.otherwise@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:cumbria.otherwise@dsl.pipex.com)

**Kendal** 3rd Friday each month Contact Jayne 01539 534541 or email [jaynewoodbank@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jaynewoodbank@yahoo.co.uk)

**Kendal** alternate Mondays. Jo Collier 01539 567005.

**Penrith** alternate Tuesdays Castletown Community Centre 1.30-3.30 Contact: Sarah Cook 01768 896019

**South Lakes**, Wednesdays. Contact: Lex 01229 885206  
**DERBYSHIRE**

**Chesterfield Home Ed Group** meet Weds. Outings and activities. Contact Yvonne 01246 555645, Suzy 01246 240917, Alastair 01246 520820

**Chesterfield – Hasland Village Hall**

**ART CLASS** – Ages 10 and over, 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of month 12pm-2pm, with professional art teacher. Term time only. Contact Sian or Marek on 01246 473902  
**Derby Group**, 4th Thurs of month. Contact Andy 01332 752998 or andy@derbyhe.co.uk

**Amber Valley**, Alfreton area, meetings, 30 minute drive from Derby, Nottingham, Matlock and Mansfield  
contact: Deborah 01773 778380 or Helen 01332 883545

#### DEVON

**EO Devon Newsletter** for details contact Kate: email [katefernhill@aol.com](mailto:katefernhill@aol.com) or phone 01392 851370

**National Trust (Devon)** card is held by Louise, 01392 209289 email: [louise\\_239@fsmail.net](mailto:louise_239@fsmail.net)

**East and Mid Devon Local** Contact Kate 01392 851370

**Exeter** Wednesday, Free Range Learning, all ages., Spanish, Yoga, science, music, cooking, art + craft  
contact Annie 01392 434167

**Exeter** Thursday, alternate weekly outings contact Louise 01392 209289 email: [louise\\_239@fsmail.net](mailto:louise_239@fsmail.net)

**Exeter** Friday, Pottery Workshop with kiln and wheels, fortnightly 1-3pm contact Neil 01363 82314

**Exeter** Green Woodworking contact Neil 01363 82314

**Okehampton** meetings on alternate weeks, contact Barbara 01837 55805

**Tiverton Adventure Playground** Eileen 01884 256955

**North Devon** Local Contact Amanda 01237 422403

**Bideford area** Fortnightly social mtngs on Tuesdays. Ring Louise 01237 441786 or Amanda (above)

**South Devon** Local Contact Bridget 01803 862158 email: [bridgetmeadows@onetel.com](mailto:bridgetmeadows@onetel.com)

**South Devon Home Education Group**

Mondays: swimming at Totnes - Ivana 01803 840830

Tuesdays: outings, museums + camping trips contact Sally 01803 551955

Wednesday: weekly meetings in hall near Totnes  
contact Helen 01803 665604

Thursday: workshops – Sara or Helen 01803 665604  
see Devon Newsletter (details above) for more info.

**South Devon: Dart Valley H.E. Network** Group meets fortnightly - a small group of children and parents interested in exploring history in an autonomous way.

**Natural History Group** group meeting monthly for a Natural History ramble. For details of all of the Dart Valley groups Hannah/Gordon: 01803 762788, Email: [gordon@staverton.com](mailto:gordon@staverton.com)

**Devon East/Dorset West Lyme Regis, Axminster, Bridport, Chard.** Contact Habiba 0845 4582984

**Dorset/Somerset/Devon borders**

Regular meetings on Tuesdays, Karen 01460 30461, on Thursdays, Ali 01297 443816

#### DORSET

Rosemary 01747 853593

**Bournemouth** area: local website [www.he-ed.org.uk](http://www.he-ed.org.uk)  
Meeting every Monday for crafts, games, play etc.

Friendly, welcoming group. Contact: June 01202 827945 [bugchick@btinternet.com](mailto:bugchick@btinternet.com)

**Poole & Bournemouth area**, For fortnightly meetings with lots of space and lots of activities - contact Rachel

or Donna, email: [shec4u@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:shec4u@yahoo.co.uk)

#### DURHAM

Durham based weekly meeting call Beth 07719530472

#### ESSEX

**Chelmsford** meetings - monthly, third Thursday. 2-4pm  
email Sarah, [tower@tesco.net](mailto:tower@tesco.net)

**Colchester** Bowling & Swimming monthly on last Wed except School holidays. Sharon: [sharron@brainydata.com](mailto:sharron@brainydata.com)

**Southend OTHENA** - Older children/Teens News & Activities (11+) for details contact Michelle:

[ab006h6097@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:ab006h6097@blueyonder.co.uk) or 01702 307834

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/OTHENA/>

**Tipitree** monthly meetings, last Tuesday of month 2-5pm. Contact Julie, email: [julie.ashton@ntlworld.com](mailto:julie.ashton@ntlworld.com)

**Various venues across Essex**, New Teens Group, meeting monthly - Sally@brisley.freeseer.co.uk

**Around Essex** Educational visits twice monthly Thurs. Details of Essex groups and events in Epicycle

available by email from Corinne: [epicycle@wavy.org](mailto:epicycle@wavy.org) or phone me 07802 630693 for more info

**Southend/Westcliff** monthly get-togethers on the 1st Friday of the month. Shirley 01702 308698

[indigoshir@fsmail.net](mailto:indigoshir@fsmail.net)

#### GLOUCESTERSHIRE

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

<http://members.lycos.co.uk/GlosHomeEducators/index.html> also Email list for events & forum. Rob and Fiona

01684 290087 [openhorizons@ntlworld.com](mailto:openhorizons@ntlworld.com)  
Caroline 01242 890351 [cambrrose@ieee.org](mailto:cambrrose@ieee.org)

Beverly 01242 524091 or Mhairi 01452 384104.

**Dursley** Home Educators meeting first weds every month for social, support and activities. Swimming and occasional outings. All welcome. Contact Paula 01453

519287 email: [uks\\_sneaky@hotmail.com](mailto:uks_sneaky@hotmail.com)

**Gloucester** meetings & swimming. Contact Dawn

01452 540019 [dawnandmike@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:dawnandmike@blueyonder.co.uk)

or Tracy 07941 612092

#### South Gloucestershire

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

#### HAMPSHIRE

**Petersfield**, ACTIVEO, 5 events a week within 20 miles, all welcome. 01428 712394 [www.activeo.org.uk](http://www.activeo.org.uk)

**Fareham and Gosport**, FAREGOS HE meets twice weekly for craft, swimming and other activities. Contact Tracey 02392 551870 or Julie 01730 261468, email:

[jkbar1955@myrealbox.com](mailto:jkbar1955@myrealbox.com)

**North Hampshire**, NHEO. Open to all home educators in North Hants & surrounding areas. Regular meetings from Sept 2006 in Oakley. Plus ice skating (including ice tots), swimming and other activities.

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/NHEO/>

Contact Carol 01264 357650 [eo@azakit.com](mailto:eo@azakit.com)

**Farnham/Aldershot area**, friendly group for under 10s; fortnightly meetings and occasional outings. Contact Paula: 01252 316497 [paula.oakley@talk21.com](mailto:paula.oakley@talk21.com) or Emma: 01483 426277 [emmajevons@supanet.com](mailto:emmajevons@supanet.com)

**Romsey/New Forest area**, fortnightly – details email

Anne on [anniemax1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:anniemax1@yahoo.co.uk)

#### HERTFORDSHIRE (see also N.London)

For events List for Herts Home Educators please email [karenbartlett@btinternet.com](mailto:karenbartlett@btinternet.com)

**St Albans**, Social group meeting at Sandridge village

hall, mornings 2nd and 4th Thurs. Carolyn 01727 851073

**Stevenage Swimming Pool.** Swimming Lessons every Thursday 10.30am, term time. All ages and abilities. £1.40 per session. Contact Barbara on 01707 891021 or email: [babs.mcdonald@ntlworld.com](mailto:babs.mcdonald@ntlworld.com)

#### **ISLE OF MAN**

Isle of Man Home Education Network. Meeting monthly for themed activities.

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/hen-iom/>

email: [hen-iom@manx.net](mailto:hen-iom@manx.net)

#### **ISLE OF WIGHT**

Local Contact Shara 01983 562313

**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

**Isle of Wight Learning Zone** workshops, social events + newsletter, contact Sue 01983 241095 for details

#### **KENT**

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

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

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

**Medway towns** Contact: Bridget 01634 234938

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

Contact Kim 01892 863941

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

**SEFLAGS Edenbridge, Kent; Sussex + Surrey**

Weekly sports and meetings at local hall, social activities & fun! For details contact Karen 01732 864 524 website: <http://www.flags-education.org.uk>

**Leham** anyone wanting to meet in this area please contact Jayne 01622 859882

**Medway Towns,** fortnightly play activities, fortnightly bowling, swimming weekly. Regular shared learning days with volunteer tutors. Contact Ann 01634 826188

**Orpington, Kent:** 'Kidzone' - a brand new club esp for older children (11+) - all suggestions & offers of help gratefully received! Perhaps initially the kids could bring along games consoles/games, laptops,

keyboards (karaoke machines?) or anything else they enjoy doing, to 'chill out' & make new friends. Nominal charge envisaged to cover venue, drinks & nibbles. Sue 01689 823479 [greeniehouse@ntlworld.com](mailto:greeniehouse@ntlworld.com)

#### **LANCASHIRE**

**Blackburn** Ice Rink monthly - Jackie 01695 424220

**Botany Bay** - contact Angela 01204 659634

**Preston** Badminton/Swimming - contact Angela

**Old Cobblers,** all ages children - contact Pam 01706 215585 email: [davidandpam@ntlworld.com](mailto:davidandpam@ntlworld.com)

For comprehensive list of monthly events please email Pam at: [davidandpam@ntlworld.com](mailto:davidandpam@ntlworld.com) or send SAE to:

2 Melia Close, Rossendale, Lancs, BB4 6RQ.

#### **LEICESTERSHIRE**

5 regular meeting venues across Leicestershire.

Also meetings for swimming, skating, walks, playing, hanging out and much more. To find out what's going on in Leicestershire please contact Alex Caldwell 0116 2720209 or email Alex: [alex.caldwell@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:alex.caldwell@tiscali.co.uk)

**Leicester area-Syston** A new group for under 8s. We will be starting in the new year & will be meeting twice a month, dates & venue to be confirmed. All welcome.

More details contact Tammy 0116 2692499 or [mattamsam@btinternet.com](mailto:mattamsam@btinternet.com) or Vikki on [martinvikki@aol.com](mailto:martinvikki@aol.com)

#### **LINCOLNSHIRE**

Activelincs Home Education Group

Generally suitable for home educated children 12 plus, can offer information on resources for older children.

Call Helena 01724 720595

**Bluebells - Central Lincoln** activities, crafts, play, walks etc. Regular meetings, contact Ruth 01522 804583

Variety of informal events and get togethers. Contact Christine 01507 338070, [christinehalse1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:christinehalse1@yahoo.co.uk)

**Lincoln Cathedral Home-educators - Central Lincoln**

activities crafts, play, walks, science etc. Regular meetings for the city. Contact Ruth 01522 804583.

Variety of informal events and get-togethers. Contact Christine 01507 338070, [christinehalse1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:christinehalse1@yahoo.co.uk)

**South Lincs** Regular meetings & activities, swimming etc. Contact Lorraine 0845 458 3004

#### **LONDON**

**Ladbroke Grove/Queens Park** group meets every Monday and Wednesday, all ages from babies to adults welcome. Sarah 07816 872841 or Gigi 020 732 88990

**Central and East London, Stratford Home-Educators,** Bryant Street Methodist Church, Stratford, London E15

Every Friday 12.45 - 2.45. Open, informal meeting for home-educators new and established. Currently ages up to 11 but all welcome. For more information contact:

[annalise@tesco.net](mailto:annalise@tesco.net) or phone: 020 8500 1053

**Bromley/Croydon** Chrysalis Group meets most weeks for activities and outings, age from 0-10. Very welcoming. Contact Jenny 020 8654 3972,

[jen9@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:jen9@blueyonder.co.uk)

**Dulwich,** Wednesdays. Mornings: Science, Magic Maths and guest speakers (various topics chosen by the kids) for ages 7 - teen. Low cost. Afternoons:

socialising & playing in the 3 adjoining fields. Families stay all day or just am or pm. Tel Gina 020 8299 1135

**Forest Hill** contact Denise 020 8699 6866

**Grove Park** group meets every other Friday. Crafts, volleyball, football, tabletennis - open to any ideas.

Contact: Claire 020 8402 5831

**Kidbroke** rollerblading Contact: Fiona 020 8852 9756

[bettleslake@clara.net](mailto:bettleslake@clara.net)

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

Joolz: 0208 2895026 [teachyourown@hotmail.com](mailto:teachyourown@hotmail.com)

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

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

**NW London** Otherwise Club Leslie 020 8969 0893

**Chelsea** Open House Project SW London, NLP cafe study group Mondays afternoons, acting & storytelling, visiting lecturer, poetry evenings and board games, on going speed networking for HE families call Sophie on

020 7581 5238 to book.

**Stanmore** events on Tues and Wednesdays.

Programme available from Vivienne, email: [timsharkey@aol.com](mailto:timsharkey@aol.com), call 020 8954 1885 or Vicki

email: [Aceva@btinternet.com](mailto:Aceva@btinternet.com)

**N London Hornsey** Home Educators Club

Currently up to 12, but older kids welcome. Range of activities, socialising and fun. Thursdays 11-12.30

contact: Tina 020 8340 4212

**N London Barnet** Group, meets Mondays, contact

Mirelle 020 8449 7868, email lance.e@virgin.net or Lynda 020 8368 9046.

**West London (and Middlesex) Home Ed group** meets every Tuesday for varied educational and social activities and visits. Call Betsy 020 8993 0677 email: [betsyhomeed@yahoo.com](mailto:betsyhomeed@yahoo.com)

Contact Betsy (EO West London Local Contact) to join West London Home Ed yahoo group, details above. WEDNESDAY 12-2.30 pm, fortnightly during termtime. Pool table, soft play room, outdoor play area, equipped for all ages. Optional organised activity. Welcoming all for fun, friendship and support. Alison 020 8569 9398 or Kathryn 020 8566 0543 or [kathrynvglynn@hotmail.com](mailto:kathrynvglynn@hotmail.com) or [Alison@rothwell1973.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:Alison@rothwell1973.fsnet.co.uk)

**West London (Chiswick & Ealing) home ed group** every Tues. Outdoor activities in Spring/Summer. Warmer/drier activities Tuesdays during rest of year. For full details & more information about winter activities & details of Yahoo group membership, contact Naomi 020 8567 7589 or [naomisandler@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:naomisandler@yahoo.co.uk)

#### MANCHESTER

Manchester, contact Sue 0161 881 4830 Maccow Manchester + District events and support email list from Lesley: [lesley.blackshaw@ntlworld.com](mailto:lesley.blackshaw@ntlworld.com)

#### MIDDLESEX

**Hayes**, We are an informal group that meets at a Church. We have free-play in a carpeted main hall, with a craft table, climbing frame, slides, lego and boardgames, each meeting there is a fun, hands-on science experiment in a smaller side room. We have access to a well equipped kitchen and all the facilities of the church. We meet every other Thursday, from 10.30 to 1.30 For further details please contact: Jenn 0208 573 9042, [Jenn@shadowdale.demon.co.uk](mailto:Jenn@shadowdale.demon.co.uk)

#### NORFOLK

##### West Norfolk

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/WestNorfolkHomeEducators> Want to meet up with other local home educators? Call Lynda 01553 617551

**Norwich area** - Free Wheel for under 10s - activity group Weds fortnightly 07760 203728 Yoga Bugs contact Sally 01603 279832

**Norfolk/Suffolk border** Steiner style group for the under 7s. Craft activities & peaceful, imaginative play \*

**Norfolk/Suffolk border** craft activities for 5-10 yr olds, \*contact Hilary 07799 065097 could people please text their number, not leave a message - for both

**Thetford**, Swimming, indoor sports/play at Leisure Centre Term-time Thurs 2.30-4.30 Fay 01953 681785

**Norwich**, Fridays, fortnightly activities run by Christian group, contact Sue: 01953 454278

#### NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Want to get together with other local home ed teens? Please contact Lynne 01604 454240

#### NORTHUMBERLAND/NORTH EAST

<http://groups.msn.com/EducationOtherwise>

#### NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Meetings in Amber Valley area, contact: Deborah 01773 778380 or Helen 01332 883545

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 & lots more. Regular visitors to the group bring subjects we can't cover as individuals & 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

**Newport nr Telford**, meetings every Friday from 12.30pm for all ages. Contact Julieann 01952 401571 or email: [weshallook@aol.com](mailto:weshallook@aol.com)

#### SOMERSET

**Frome & Beyond (FAB)** home educators' support grp.

Social gatherings, grp activities, outings & newsletter. Contact Sally 01749 674842 or Jennifer 01373 813830

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

**Wells and Glastonbury area**, regular social meetings, weekly swimming, outings and nature activities. Lesley 01749 689241, Tanya 01458 83487, Steph 01749 812959

**Somerset North** - Regular get-togethers and activities Contact Vicky 01275 848425

#### STAFFORDSHIRE / S. CHESHIRE / N. SALOP

**Stafford HESEO** (Home Educators Supporting Each Other) Meeting 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month 11:30 - 3:30. Craft, drama, dance, socializing and varied activities. Bring lunch. Jane 01283 820642 email: [christopher.perkins@onetel.net](mailto:christopher.perkins@onetel.net)

**Staffs North and South Cheshire** newsletter for local social and educational events. Carrie: 01782 786 720 email: [home.ed@ntlworld.com](mailto:home.ed@ntlworld.com)

#### SUFFOLK

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

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

**Suffolk/Norfolk border** craft activities for 5-10 yr olds, contact \* Hilary 07799 065097 could people please

text their number, not leave a message \* for both **Woodbridge**, Foxburrow Farm, for 5-12yr olds, activities organised by Suffolk Wildlife Trust, for more details and to book call Jenny on 01394 380113

**Wetherden** meetings every 3rd Friday 10.30-2pm. £3 per family, shared lunch: details from Heather 01953 688128

**Wild Meadows** ... A Group of 3-14 year olds meet regularly with a bunch of 26 to 40+ year olds in

Ringsfield, Suffolk. We meet to skill share and learn from our kids in a chaotic, eco friendly and creative way! For more info contact Mell Harrison on 0845 337 0282

#### SURREY

P.A.C.T. Surrey's home education group. Monthly newsletter containing information about activities, outings, events etc. For more information and subscription form please contact [pack@jellyed.com](mailto:pack@jellyed.com) or Jeremy on 01483 546515.

**Guildford Spectrum** skating during term time Friday 1-4pm Rachel 01483 565703 (No Sunday calls please.)

**Cobham area** 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](mailto:rachael.underwood@classicfm.net) 01932 706191

**Guildford area:** Theatre bookings: Tisha 01483 898575.

Under 10s: Nicky 01483 232080  
**Dorking/Reigate** area. Helen Burnett 01737 243606  
**Farnham/Aldershot** area, friendly group for under 10s; fortnightly meetings and occasional outings. Contact Paula: 01252 316497 paula.oakley@talk21.com or Emma: 01483 426277 emmajevons@supanet.com  
**North Surrey/Croydon** meets once a month. Park in the summer, activities in winter, age from 0-15. Contact Jenny 0208 654 3972 or [jen9@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:jen9@blueyonder.co.uk)  
**SUSSEX**

**Regional Contact for East Sussex:**

Winnie Durdant-Hollamby; 01342 826087

**Sussex Newsletter for Home Education**

Monthly newsletter gives full details of news, groups, events & activities throughout County. Paper edition - £12/year or £6 1/2 year Email only £2.50 year from Tula 01323 648127 email: [asanababy@aol.com](mailto:asanababy@aol.com) or ring one of the following local events organisers:

**Lewes:** Jan 01273 514528

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

**Brighton** Lucy 01273 699099 [lucygulland@hotmail.com](mailto:lucygulland@hotmail.com)

**Eastbourne 'SHINIES'** home ed. group - All ages and abilities welcome. Contact Loretta 01323 509283 or email [madboys@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:madboys@tiscali.co.uk)

**Worthing/Shoreham Beach:** Avis 01273

542589 or 07703 647954

**Forest Row Area:** Winnie 01342 826087

**Petersfield ACTIVEO:** [www.activeo.org.uk](http://www.activeo.org.uk)  
5 events a week within 20 miles. For details please tel: 01428 712394

**St Leonards/Hastings** call Jenny 01424

434953 for an informal chat/meeting

**Shoreham, West Sussex,** HEDspace open to all. Weekly meetings & special events. Well equipped for all ages (incl babies). Structured & unstructured activities, including languages, drama, dance and play-leader led sessions. Vickie 01903 244571 or Hayley 01273

454366, email: [martinandhayley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:martinandhayley@yahoo.co.uk)

**Wealden Home Ed website:**

[www.when.omnia.co.uk](http://www.when.omnia.co.uk) Email group: [wealdenhomeeducatorsnetwork@yahoo.groups.com](mailto:wealdenhomeeducatorsnetwork@yahoo.groups.com)

**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](http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/home_ed_tyneandwear)

Music - Rosemary 0191 2853707 or

[paul@thenews.icom43net](mailto:paul@thenews.icom43net)

**National Trust & English Heritage Visits and**

**Woodland visits** - Deborah 01434 674713

**WARWICKSHIRE**

Usually 2 Thursdays a month; at Wolston nr Coventry and for an outing in the area. Call Helen, 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 & is available free by email or post for a small charge & covers HE related articles & events throughout West Midlands & surrounding areas. All entries for Helm to: [helmeditor2112@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:helmeditor2112@blueyonder.co.uk) 01562 720046.

**Coseley, West Midlands,** we meet monthly, 1st

Monday every month at Coseley Womens Resource Centre, 11.30am-3.00pm

**WILTSHIRE**

contact: Beccy 01985 840174

**Wiltshire - Chippenham and surrounding area:** 'Out and About Learning Centre' **Tuesdays**, termtime only 10.00am - 2.30pm Biddestone. Membership encouraged. Based on the Reggio Emilia approach to learning. Program of activities facilitated by qualified teachers & includes combined Arts, Science & Nature. Currently mostly 0-6 years looking to develop older group 7-11 years. All parents participate & can lead a group using their own skills/get involved with the running etc. Visiting professionals/interesting people/speakers. Trips out. Parents evenings. Contact: Rachel: 01249 890525 or Amanda: 01380 739845 email: [info@outandaboutlearning.org.uk](mailto:info@outandaboutlearning.org.uk) for more details. Please let us know if you'd like to come along and see what we do.

**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

**North Wiltshire**

To link up with almost 100 HEers in North Wilts, send an email to: [NWilts\\_HE-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:NWilts_HE-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

**Swindon** (term time) Mondays swimming at Oasis, from 1:30; 2nd and 4th Wednesdays ice-skating at Link Centre, 1:30-3:30

**Swindon** informal get-together, 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed, 12:30-3:30, phone Shena 01793 686433 or Mandy 01793 644472

**FLL** Robotics team, phone Shena 01793 686433

**Calne** book club, contact Janet 01249 818672 or email;

**Devizes** last Thursday of month, 11:30-2:30 social activities and support, contact Janet 01249 818672 or email Janet for this and book club: [janet@eldekvist.com](mailto:janet@eldekvist.com)

**WORCESTERSHIRE**

LC Rachel 01527 597809 Meetings, events, trips out etc happening all through the month throughout county. Meetings - Karen 01527 835384

**North Worcs/Kidderminster** meetings - Gail Tutchter 01562 822034 email: [gail@tqmi.co.uk](mailto:gail@tqmi.co.uk)

**YORKSHIRE EAST**

Regular meetings and visits. Alison 01405 769902

**Bridlington**, regular meeting Thurs morning except first in month. Ring Jacqui 01262 679769 or Alison 01377 240324.

**YORKSHIRE NORTH**

**Near York**, new group meets Wednesdays for various educational activities, crafts and social contact. Please email: [contact@yorkeo.co.uk](mailto:contact@yorkeo.co.uk) for further details

**Carleton** Music Group meets the last Friday of the month, 1-3pm, in Carleton Village Hall (near Skipton) for musical activities. Contact: Judith 01756 791356

**Regular meetings and outings.** Contact Karen 01904 400317 [kkarensandy@aol.com](mailto:kkarensandy@aol.com)

**near Malton**, meeting weekly on MONDAYS in a hall or around the region for outings. contact Tess on 01947 825772 or email: [tess@chrisgeall.com](mailto:tess@chrisgeall.com)

**Scarborough**, New Group started on Fridays contact Tess: 01947 825772 email: [tess@chrisgeall.com](mailto:tess@chrisgeall.com)

**Harrogate** new group started at the Hookstone Chase community centre. Meeting weekly on Tuesdays 1-3pm for playing, arts & crafts, games etc. Contact either Liz on 01423 320341, email [Blessingway1@aol.com](mailto:Blessingway1@aol.com), or

Kate on 01423 865777, email [ksbtscott@aol.com](mailto:ksbtscott@aol.com)

#### **YORKSHIRE SOUTH**

**Bradway**, Mon fortnightly 1-4 Activities/play for 0-8s 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 or Denise 01226 733478 or Gary 0114 2585702. Tuesdays

**Sheffield, Highfield** 12-3 term time. Free entry, small contribution for craft materials. Contact: Annette 0114 2583502 or Fiona 0114 22751142

#### **YORKSHIRE WEST**

**Bradford** Weekly meetings and activities including ice skating, ten-pin bowling, racquet sports, art, music, theatre trips and language workshops. For a monthly schedule of activities, please contact Sarah on (01484) 361206 or e-mail [sl.marshall@ntlworld.com](mailto:sl.marshall@ntlworld.com)

**Leeds** Ten-pin bowling and weekly meeting. For more information, please contact Emma on (01113) 217 2795 or e-mail [emma.birkenshaw@gmail.com](mailto:emma.birkenshaw@gmail.com)

**Halifax**: Gymnasium, Heath Training Centre, Free School Lane, every Monday except bank hols. 2-4pm. Meeting: Free-range activities + exchange of friendship and support for home educating children and parents. Gill 01422 311876, email: [GillKilner@aol.com](mailto:GillKilner@aol.com)

**Huddersfield**: Swimming (every Wed - term time except 2nd Wednesday of month) Huddersfield Sports Centre. Contact Tracy (01484) 317176. Huddersfield monthly meeting (2nd Wed 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 & Chat" (last Thurs of month) Civic Centre, Huddersfield. Contact Tracy (01484) 317176. Art Workshop (last Thurs of month) Huddersfield Art Gallery. Contact Jane (01484) 645034.

#### **SCOTLAND**

##### **ARGYLL**

Home-Ed Group - Regular meetings & occasional outings/activities. All welcome. Contact Joanne 0845 345 2291 or Debra 01631 730469 email: [debra@celtic-soul-music.com](mailto:debra@celtic-soul-music.com)

##### **FIFE**

Friday fortnightly meetings, activities and social get-togethers. All welcome. Contact: Nicola 01334 478530 [nicola.stubbs@btinternet.com](mailto:nicola.stubbs@btinternet.com)

##### **HIGHLANDS/MORAY**

Informal network for information & support, occ outings & get-together, suggestions welcome. Contact Toni, [tee.kay@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tee.kay@hotmail.co.uk) or 01463 831574 or Rebecca 01343 542245

##### **IRVINE**

Details of regular & one-off activities contact: Rhona 01294 273644, Shirley 01563 540063, Vivien 01563 537428

**LOTHIAN, CENTRAL & S.E. SCOTLAND** fortnightly group meetings & outings. Contact Jane 01835 862118

#### **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: contact: [SWHEN@aol.com](mailto:SWHEN@aol.com) or

[bev1.french@btinternet.com](mailto:bev1.french@btinternet.com) or contact Louise 01443231362 (Llantrisant), Bev 02920 797628 (Cardiff), Juliet 01639 760987 (Port Talbot), Amanda 01792 862305 (Swansea) or see: [www.swhen.net/firms.com](http://www.swhen.net/firms.com)

**Mid Glamorgan - Rhondda Cynon Taf** meetings on a Friday, contact Lisa 01443 772278

#### **PEMBROKESHIRE**

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

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

#### **CEREDIGION & CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**Lampeter**, weekly meetings on Tues, Laura 01545 580528

**Aberaeron** weekly meetings on Fri, Laura 01545 580528

**Llanddeusant** mthly mtng. Contact Laura 01545 580528

#### **GWYNEDD**

**Bangor** & area home ed network, meetings for craft spanish climbing chemistry music outings & other, social activities also Montessori sessions. Local contact: Heather 01248 352336

**Tregarth** Creative Learning & Support group meet every Wed at Tregarth for craft, social & other activities. Free wkly newsletter of events. Phone Julie (Gwynedd) 01286 678181 or e-mail [jdchapmanmaurice@aol.com](mailto:jdchapmanmaurice@aol.com) or Nick (Anglesey) 01407 811049.

#### **POWYS**

Welshpool on Wednesdays, swimming/Tumble Towers, workshops, skateboarding, and events, contact Dee + Dave 01938 590098 email: [d.yeoman@tesco.net](mailto:d.yeoman@tesco.net)

**Brecknock/South Powys** area occasional events in South Powys contact Hela 01874 610190 email: [ry.ella@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:ry.ella@tiscali.co.uk)

**Newtown area**: Fortnightly get-together in Newtown, for activities, play and socialisation. Contact Sue 01686 688748 or email: [smw5@tutor.open.ac.uk](mailto:smw5@tutor.open.ac.uk)

#### **N.E. WALES / BORDERS**

weekly gym/trampoline in Wrexham, Oswestry, WestCheshire/NE Wales. local newsletter of events please send your details and £2 payment to: HENWOS, Berlan Gron, Llany Cil, Bala. Gwynedd LL23 7YG

**Wrexham** themed craft sessions run by prof. artist, with parental help. Contact: Marie 01978 362436

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## **REVIEWS**

### **The Remarkable Life and Times of Eliza Rose by Mary Hooper**

This book provides a clear-cut picture of life in the lower classes of London, 1670. Honest but never really harsh, the story is in turns worrying,

shocking, exiting and homely, and Eliza adapts very well to the many twists in her fate. Though sadly lacking in proper, interesting male characters, and therefore in real romance, the many female characters are strong and full of life,

especially that of Nellie Gwyn, mistress to King Charles the Second. As the author is quite honest about the bedroom comings and goings of the richer and poorer classes, I would not recommend this for kids below 13.

Sophie (15)

£6.99 Bloomsbury

#### **Make Your Own Garage by Clare Beaton**

This book offers basic information on garages and traffic, a travel game, people and transport pictures to colour in and the book itself can be 'built' into a 2D-garage. My son liked talking about the pictures in the book, but wasn't prepared to colour all 23 figures. The garage itself was okay to look at, but not appealing and stable enough to play with. I would use the pictures as templates, borrow a book about transport & garages and get the toy cars out.

Raphael (4) and Mirjam

£4.99 ISBN 1-902915-46-1 B Small

#### **Earth Cell by George Marshall**

Set in a world ravaged by global warming; food is scarce. People are being formed into Earth cells - almost mini tribes - to produce their crops. This is the story of Jess who lives on a farm with her parents. An Earth cell invades the farm and tries to take over. Then Jess's father goes missing and Jess searches for him, helped by Denny. Pursued by rebels and trying to make sense of the changing world around them; their task is not easy. I found this readable but it was not really my type of story. The storyline just did not appeal and did not keep my attention for long. This book will appeal to those who enjoy science fiction and wonder what might happen after climate change has taken place.

Karis (12)

£5.99 Penpress Paperback Tel 01273 601233

#### **River Secrets by Shannon Hale**

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> book in the *Earth, Wind and Fire Trilogy*. It is a warm and unpretentious novel, a story whose many threads are portrayed lightly and clearly. With situations and problems that challenge its characters and a sweet and unconventional spy at the centre, our journey is both exciting and insightful. The author's use of language is such that we do not even see the creation of two beautiful cultures, and the people who inhabit them are portrayed fairly and with compassion. When at the end we stand back and see this book as a whole we are left with the feel of the sun on our cheeks and the smell of orange blossom.

Sophie (15)

£12.99 Bloomsbury

#### **Playtime (Around the World) by Katy Petty**

Produced in association with Oxfam, this book takes the child on a journey around the world explaining through whole page photos and simple text; the games children play in their own countries. There is a simple world map at the rear of the book so children can relate to the photographs. This is a wonderful book for expanding young children's horizons - an ideal first geography lesson.

Carole with Jack (10) and Like (7)

£9.99 ISBN 1-84507-332-0 Frances Lincoln

#### **Why Children Don't Listen (A Guide for Parents and Teachers) by Monika Kiel-Hinrichsen**

How we speak to each other is at the very heart of human relationships and children are often much better than adults at reading between the lines and deciphering the messages we send through body language and tone of voice. This book provides useful advice regarding better communication with children. It covers all aspects of talking to and, equally importantly, listening to children of all ages (including why those adolescent years might be harder). It also looks at the wider situation in which the conversation is taking place. The book includes practical solutions and exercise to help with better communication. I think this book is worth a read regardless of how well you think you communicate with your child.

Caroline

£9.99 ISBN 0-86315-574-X Floris

#### **Riddle of the Nile by Deborah Nash**

Baby Crocodile's search for the answer to a 'mathematical' riddle takes him on a fascinating journey through ancient and modern Egypt. His story makes a great introduction to several subjects: mathematics, geography, history, religion, etc. There are very useful extra notes on each page (e.g. explaining what a Nilometer was) but we were inspired to visit the library to further explore some of the topics. The illustrations, based on Egyptian art, are bright and clear enough that both my children enjoy leafing through the book on their own as well. This is a book we'll go back to again and again over the next few years and I would certainly recommend it as a good introduction to many subjects for 5-8 year olds.

Tamlyn with Benedict(4) and Rowan (1)

£11.99 ISBN 1-84507-466-1 Frances Lincoln

#### **Hiding Out by Elizabeth Laird**

Peter was having such an interesting time exploring the cave, he didn't notice that his Mum and Dad had driven off, leaving him alone in the French countryside! He realises that his parents will come back for him as soon as they realise he

isn't in the car. All he has to do is hide and wait. However, managing in a strange country when he doesn't even speak the language is not easy and Peter realises he needs all his resources to survive. I really enjoyed this book and learnt some useful survival tips! Suitable for older children/young adults.

Connor (13)

£5.99 ISBN 1-903015-537 Barn Owl

### **The Waterless Sea** by Kate Constable

This is the exciting sequel to *Constable's 'The Singer of all Songs'*. The book is based in the magical world of Tremaris, where magic is interwoven with songs which affect the elements of the land. This one starts off from where the last one finished where the evil sorcerer Samis was supposedly destroyed. In the second book of the series, the adventures of Calwyn and her fellow travellers continue as they go on a long search for some captive children. However, Calwyn and Darrow, the man who accompanied her all the way through the first book, have gone their separate ways, but this is one aspect of this book that is interesting: how will they meet again? Another good book from Kate Constable, one that I'd recommend to anyone who enjoys fantasy stories. However, I think it would be a good idea if you were to read the first book before this one for it to make full sense.

James (14)

£5.99 ISBN 1-74114-533-3 Allen & Unwin

### **Max Moves To Moscow** by Winifred Rise

Annie wrote: *This is the story of a dog called Max who goes to live in Moscow. It is a simple story about making new friends and discovering new places. Max is a black labrador who is 3 in dog years and 21 in people years. I think this book is suitable for 5-7 year-olds to read by themselves and younger children will enjoy having the story read to them. My sister Rosie who is nearly 3 likes the book and enjoys being Sasha, one of Max's dog friends. I like the fact that this is about a real dog. There is a photo of Max at the back and history about Russia. It taught me how to say "hello" and "goodbye" in Russian.*

Adrian and Annie (6)

£10.99 ISBN 1-84507-482-3 Frances Lincoln

### **It's True! The Vikings Got Lost**

An excellent book for the 8-12 age group, this book provides a lively and interesting insight into the lives of Vikings. Written in a fun style, similar to the Horrible Histories range, yet packed with information - some of which we haven't come across in our previous studies

of the Vikings. There are many amusing illustrations and it is an ideal book for dipping in and out of for younger readers, or more detailed study by older children. Accompanying teacher notes can be downloaded from the publisher's website. We think it is definitely worth reading and we will be looking out for the other books in this range.

Jill with Sarah (9) and Edward (7)

£4.99 ISBN 1-74114-800-X Allen & Unwin

### **Sammy and the Starman** by Anne Cassidy

This is a story about a boy called Sammy who finds a starman in a broken rocket and helps him to return to his own planet. Elena said: *It was a bit scary when Dennis Frogman (the bully who lives next-door and surprisingly doesn't get his comeuppance at the end of the story) was around but the rest was really good. The best part was when Sammy found the starman in the park when he was walking because Dennis Frogman wasn't around so it was nice. I would recommend this book to my friends. Gillian said: There was quite a lot of detail in this story which makes it may be a bit over the heads of 6 years olds (unless they are really into the subject of starmen) so I'd say age 7+ and for those who can cope with books which don't have many pictures in the book.*

Gillian and Elena (6)

£4.99 ISBN 1-84299-355-0 Barrington Stokes

### **Mathematics in Space and Time** by John Blackwood

This is an exciting and unusual book. Written as part of the Steiner-Waldorf education curriculum it covers the Five Platonic Solids (hexahedron (cube), tetrahedron, octahedron, dodecahedron and icosahedrons) and Rhythm and Cycles (circles and diameter, time, wheels and seasons). It links mathematics with other subjects. There are explorations of art, culture, nature, accurate drawing and model making with a wide range of photographs and diagrams. This book is written for the teacher to use with 13/14 year olds and is more of an exploration than a manual but many non-specialists would enjoy this book as well.

Clare

£12.99 ISBN 0-86315-560-X Floris

### **Bay of Life**

Sit back and spend half an hour immersed in the beauty of Cardigan Bay. This dvd shows one of the most unpolluted and stunning areas of West Wales with some incredible footage of dolphins, porpoises, seals and sea birds. In the summer you may also see minke whales, basking shark and

sunfish. Lots of facts about sea life and an excellent resource.

Sally

£7.50 01545 560032 or [info@cbmwc.org](mailto:info@cbmwc.org)

**It's True! Women were Warriors**  
by Carol Jones

I really liked this book even though some of it was too gory for me. It tells you about women in history who were warriors just as fierce as men. It was very interesting to learn all about women like Boudicca, Zenobia and Cleopatra and the reasons they are famous. There are lots of other good books in the series that I would like to read too, like 'We came from slime' and 'Dinosaurs never died.' I would recommend this book to all girls and boys aged 7 to 14.

Romy (7)

£4.99 ISBN 1-74114-734-4 Allen & Unwin

**Ophelia** by Lisa Klein

This is a powerful and poetic retelling of the tale of Hamlet. Set in the same time and place as the original work but drawing on the experiences of Ophelia; the woman Hamlet wooed, it brilliantly brings forth the feelings of mounting tension and impending doom that pervaded the royal court at that time. Ophelia is a strong and independent minded young heroine, and though the dramatization of all characters is done well she, along with Queen Gertrude, the lady in waiting Christiana, and Horatio, Hamlet's closest friend, are particularly noticeable. Though primarily a passionate love story, it also serves as a reminder of just how stifling it was to be a woman in a time when you were under constant pressure to be completely obedient to the will of your father, brother or husband. It is a dark but enjoyable book, and suitable for kids of 13 and up.

Sophie (15)

£5.99 Bloomsbury

**I Conquer Britain** by Dyan Sheldon

Dyan Sheldon writes of a sixteen year old girl, Cherokee, who swaps lives with another teenager, Sophie. She stays with Sophie's family in England while Sophie goes to hers in America. Cherokee has an interesting holiday, during which she discovers English tea is disgusting, gets arrested twice, goes on two completely different tours of London and totally disrupts Sophie's posh and peaceful home with her boisterous gothic ways! This was a quick, light read, funny and exciting in parts. I enjoyed it.

Molly (13)

£5.99 ISBN 1-84428-9443-3 Walker

**The Poacher's Son** by Rachel Anderson

Set in a rural 1900s community, this book follows the trials and tribulations of a gamekeeper turned poacher's son. Written in a very easy, readable style, it has made good bedtime reading for me and Emily, but don't expect any laughs along the way. What you have here is a Thomas Hardy like world where all that can go wrong does go wrong. Death is a regular event throughout the book, be it human or game. The author provides a good, accurate portrayal of country life, much of which strikes a chord with my own childhood. She has painted a picture of a kind of life rarely realistically portrayed in a children's book and reading this has prompted much discussion with Emily about rural poverty, class ridden society and country ways. An excellent read, but not one for the faint hearted.

Jonathan with Emily (8)

£5.99 ISBN 1-90301-551-0 Barn Owl Books

**Seven for a Secret** by Laurence Anholt

Ruby lives in an apartment high up in the city and her Grampa lives far away in his home on the forest. Ruby writes to Grampa and they begin to share a secret that is linked to the ancient rhyme of the magpies. One for sorrow, two for joy..... We all enjoyed this story. Even though it is most probably aimed at 5-7 year olds, the fact that it focuses on family relationships makes it applicable no matter what your age.

Almaas with Musa (10) Hawwa (8) and Yahya (6)

£5.99 ISBN 1-84507-590-0 Frances Lincoln

**Getting the Point. A Panic-free Guide to English Punctuation for Adults** by Jenny Haddon

This book is designed for adults but it is great for kids too. I started writing properly last year, late because I am a bit dyslexic but mostly because I'm lazy! Most books on spelling and grammar I therefore find a bit young for me. However, this book is perfect and I have referred to it a lot. Near the end of the book there is a list of punctuation marks, then next to each is a description of the purpose of each written as a road movement making it easy to remember the facts. It is also full of witty illustrations and quizzes making it fun to read.

Keith (13)

£9.99 ISBN 0-86315-567-7 Floris

**The Tenth Power** by Kate Constable

This is the third book in a series, and as I hadn't read the first two books, it was quite hard to get into. However, the story is very well written and tells the tale

of Calwyn a teenage girl who has magic powers. She and some of her friends go on a journey to find a young sorcerer who plans to take over the world. Although a little surreal in places and sometimes rather predictable I found this book enjoyable and I would definitely look for the first two books. For anyone who is interested the series is "The Chanters of Tremaris" and the first two books are called "The Singer of All Songs" and "The Waterless Sea". I would recommend it for teenage readers who like fantasy.

Jenny (14)

£5.99 ISBN 1-86508-976-1 Allen & Unwin

**Games discover and play 5 famous ancient games by Irving Finkel**

When this book came I thought, hey this will be really fun/Lots of games I've never heard of and from different times but no ... you have Snakes and Ladders and Ludo (they call it Pachisi). And if that wasn't bad enough the first two games (Duodecim Scripta and Royal Game of Ur) are exactly the same game but played on different boards! I wouldn't get this for a kid over 7, although one of the games is so complex and badly explained you must need to be a genius to work out how to play it!

Keith (13)

£6.99 ISBN 0-7141-3112-1 British Museum

**Christophe's Story by Nicky Cornwell**

This book tells the story of a Rwandan boy who starts a new life in England. Christophe uses his grandfather's way of storytelling to describe to other children what happened in the past. The book gives a good description of Christophe's experiences and emotions and also of the problems that children might encounter at school. We found this a moving, well-written story (8+), which proves ample subjects to talk about with children and adults.

Mirjam with Max (8)

£4.99 ISBN 1-84507-521-8 Frances Lincoln

**By Max (9) and Mirjam Spindrift**

Over 200 Steiner style songs, poems and stories for the under 7's! There are stories About princesses, magic cows, talking cats, woodcutters, castle and other fairytale favourites. Many of the stories are traditional tales from all over the world.

Hilary with Isaac (6) and Finty (1)

ISBN 0-946206-50-3 Wynstone Press

**Age of Empires, The Age of Kings**

Imagine you are back in dark times, where war is rife and legendary leaders are conquering the world. You can become the most powerful leader of them all, fighting fearless foes, constructing massive armies and winning great wars. Secure your lands by building colossal castles and massive cities that will allow you to hire Persian war elephants and many other units to defend your great empire. As an added bonus, this fantastic game comes with a large library of historical facts that your parents will approve of! Great graphics too.

Bobby (11)

Nintendo Game

**Understanding behaviour**

**Fiona May – NAS Autism Helpline**

This is a National Autistic Society pamphlet about problematic behaviour that may arise from an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. It defines the triad of impairment that is at the basis of a diagnosis of Autism and how this translates into coping mechanisms. This is essentially a pamphlet to help parents and carers determine the why behind the way the person is behaving, in order to find means of managing the situation more successfully. It outlines different techniques and signposts where to find further information. This is a remarkably useful booklet, considering its size.

Laura

**That's life with Autism, Tales and Tips for Families with Autism, Edited by Donna Satterlee Ross and Kelly Ann Jolly**

This is a collection of interviews with parents of children with Autism and professionals involved in their care. It covers a wide range of topics such as diagnosis, education and diet. I liked the way the children are all different in their diagnoses, their strengths and needs and the parents vary in their reactions and attitudes. This is an American book, therefore some of the services mentioned won't be available or relevant here – although it is possible to find equivalents. For instance, their IEP is our 'Statement of Educational Needs'. I was disappointed that the chapter on Faith is entirely about Christianity. I was also surprised that none of the children are educated at home. It is simply not mentioned as a possibility; in fact there seems to be an emphasis on the importance of finding the right school. Apart from this, I found the book enjoyable, easy to read and fascinating in many respects. I would recommend this for parents who want to know about how other parents deal with

potentially difficult situations and emotions; and for people unfamiliar with the subject, who are interested in how it feels to be the parent/carer/sibling of an autistic child. I would not recommend this as a fact finding book – it is well balanced with pros and cons of a variety of approaches but scant in detail.

Laura

£12.99 ISBN 1-8431-0829-1 Jessica Kingsley

## CONTACTS

### Note

Prices quoted are the publishers' recommended retail prices (rrp). Shop around for lower prices - try discount book shops, mail order discount book clubs and the internet. Some contact details are set out below but many titles can be ordered from your local book shop. *The Book People* (0870 6077780 [www.thebookpeople.co.uk](http://www.thebookpeople.co.uk)) and *Red House* (0870 1919980 [www.redhouse.co.uk](http://www.redhouse.co.uk)) are good, economical sources for books where you can order what you like, when you like (at prices well below publisher's rrp). Postage / packing is usually free on orders over £25 but if you are ordering less tell them you are home educating and you may be able to get a discount rate. Many local EO groups have meetings where books and other resources are swapped or sold. Don't forget you can usually pick up cheap books at car boot sales, jumble sales etc and the library is a free resource.

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Dorling Kindersley [www.dk.com](http://www.dk.com) offer a 20% discount to home educators. Follow the online instructions to register and contact [bodcustomerservice@penguin.co.uk](mailto:bodcustomerservice@penguin.co.uk) if you need any help.

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## CONTACTS

A & C Black 01480 212666

Allen & Unwin see *Frances Lincoln*

*Andersen Press* 020 7840 8701

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

*Barn Owl* 0208 883 7063 [www.barowlbooks.com](http://www.barowlbooks.com)

*B Small Publishing* 020 8974 6851 [www.bsmall.co.uk](http://www.bsmall.co.uk)

*Barrington Stokes* 0131 557 2020 [www.barringtonstoke.co.uk](http://www.barringtonstoke.co.uk)

*Book Guild* 01273 472534 [www.thebookguild.co.uk](http://www.thebookguild.co.uk)

*Bloomsbury* [www.bloomsbury.com](http://www.bloomsbury.com)

*British Museum* 0207 323 1234 [www.britishmuseum.co.uk](http://www.britishmuseum.co.uk)

*Egmont* 020 7761 3696 [www.egmont.co.uk](http://www.egmont.co.uk)

*Floris* 0141 642 9192 [www.florisbooks.co.uk](http://www.florisbooks.co.uk)

*Frances Lincoln* 020 7284 4009 [www.francislincoln.com](http://www.francislincoln.com)

*Jessica Kingsley Publishers* 020 7833 2307

[www.jkp.com](http://www.jkp.com)

*Walker Books* 01256 302692

## Inspirational Days

### February

27 Jan - 3 Feb	National Storytelling Week
2	Candlemas (Christian)
2	World Wetlands Day
2	UNICEF Day for Change
5 - 11	Make Chatter Matter Week
6 - 13	National Bramley Apple Wk
14	St Valentine's Day
14	Gold Heart Day
14 - 21	National Nest Box week
18	Chinese New Year (Year of the Pig)
20	Shrove Tuesday
21	Lent Begins (Christian)
21	Int Mother Language Day
22	World Thinking Day
23	National Doodle Day
26 Feb - 4 Mar	Student Volunteering Week
26 Feb - 11 Mar	Fair Trade Fortnight

### March

1 - 31	The Great Daffodil Appeal
1 - 31	Veggie Month
1	St David's Day
1	World Book Day
8	International Women's Day
9 - 18	National Science & Engineering Wk
12	Commonwealth Day
12 - 18	Brain Awareness Week
12 - 16	National Ideas Week
17	St Patricks Day
18	Mothering Sunday
18	British Sign Language Day
20	Earth Day
21	World Poetry Day
21	Spring equinox
22	World Day for Water
25	British Summer Time Begins

## EDUCATION OTHERWISE MERCHANDISE

The online store is now open for business...and several orders have already been processed. If you have internet access, I strongly recommend you have a look at what there is there. Every item you buy and wear/use, will help advertise home education as 'a normal option', without having to make a big statement. Especially for those of us who tend to prefer to not be trailblazers. The prices here are for MEMBERS ONLY; if you order via the website, remember to input the code (elsewhere in this newsletter) so that you receive the members discount. Money cannot be refunded later if you forget.

Colours: Apricot (A); Ice Blue (IB); Pink (PK); Beige (BG); Jasmine (J); Purple (P); Black (BK); Kelly Green (KG); Red (R); Bottle Green (BG); Khaki (K); Royal (RB); Burgundy (BN); Kiwi (KW); Sand (S); Burnt Orange (BO); Lavender (L); Sky Blue (SB); Cerise (CR); Lime Green (LG); Sunflower (SF); Charcoal (CC); Navy (N); Tomato (T); Cream (C); Ocean Blue (OB); White (W); Grey (GR); Orange (O); Yellow (Y); Pastel Yellow (PY); Pastel Blue (PB); Pastel Pink (PP).

(PERS) – Items include embroidered image of the EO logo and, for an additional £1.85, you can personalise the logo with a name of up to 12 characters.

Clothing	Price Incl P&P	Publications	Price Add P&P
(N): Home Education – a real option Sizes M, L or XL	£6.00	Early Years	£3.60
		Teach Your Own by <i>John Holt</i>	£5.85
(N): Home Education – a real option Sizes 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-11 or 12-13	£4.50	Free Range Education – <i>Ed. Terri Dowty</i>	£9.90
		Learning from Home Based Education	£4.50
(W): SINC Sizes M, L or XL	£6.00	School's Out - Educating Your Child at Home - <i>Jean Bendell</i>	£3.60
(W): SINC Sizes 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-11, 12-13	£4.50		
Oskar: The World's My Playground P, RB, SB - Sizes S, M or L	£5.15	Educating Your Child at Home – <i>Jane Lowe &amp; Alan Thomas</i>	£10.75
Oskar: The World's My Playground P, RB, SB - Sizes 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-11, 12-13	£4.70	Evaluation and Research in Education, Special Edition Home Education - <i>Guest Editor Paula Rothermel</i>	£6.00
Children's Polo Shirt PERS, BK, BG, GR, N, P, R, RB, SB, SF, W. Sizes 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-11 or 12-13	£8.15	Home Educating Our Autistic Spectrum Children: Paths are Made for Walking Edited by <i>Terri Dowty &amp; Kitt Cowlshaw</i>	£13.50
Children's Unisex Dungarees PERS, PY, PB, PP, RB, R. Ages 6-12 mths, 12-18 mths, 18-24 mths, 2-3 years	£9.85	Leaflets (free to download from website) Choosing Your Approach to Home Education Courses and Qualifications GCSEs Useful Home Education Organisations	£0.45
Hoodie BK, N. Sizes 5-6, 7-8, 9-11 or 12-13	£15.00	Educational Resources Directory	
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL	£20.00	Taking a Child Out of School and LEA Contact	
Children's Fleece PERS, PY, PB, PP, R, RB. Ages 12-18 mth, 18-24 mth, 2-3 yrs	£11.11	Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Home Education	
Ladies Wrapover T-shirt PERS, J, KW, SF, T. Sizes S, M, L, XL	£9.77	Dyslexia Legal aspects of home education in England & Wales	
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		Further Reading Related to Home Education School Anxieties	
Nylon drawstring rucksack PERS, BK, BG, CR, J, N, OB, O, PK, P, R, SB, Y	£4.05		
Sun Shades Single/Pair	£4.75/£9.00		

Wristbands	£1.00	Home Education and Steiner England and Wales Trifold Leaflet Scottish Trifold Leaflet Flexi-Schooling Home Education Research	
Car Stickers	£1.17	Their Own Voices	£3.15
Re-Use address labels x 50		Educating Children at Home - <i>Alan Thomas</i>	£9.85
8" sitting style teddy – Oskar or SINC design			
Wearing T shirt	£7.76	Paula Rothermel's PhD Research (2002) Leaflet	£0.54
Wearing Jumper	£8.25		
Non Stop Reader - A Complete Guide to Reading for Parent & Child by Maurice Pope, Helen Morrison & Selena Codd.	£14.85	<b>Postage (based on value of order book order only):</b>	
		Orders under £20 in value = £2.00	
		Orders between £20 and £30 = £3.00 Orders over £30 = £4.00	

Item	Size	Colour	Quantity	Cost	Person- alisation £1.85 ea	Total
					Sub Total	
					P&P (UK)	
					Total (Sub Total plus Postage)	

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Cheque Number: .....

Please send this order form to:  
Susan Ryan, 211 The Meadway, Tilehurst, Reading, Berks RG30 4NN Email: [merchandise@education-otherwise.org](mailto:merchandise@education-otherwise.org)  
Credit/Debit card orders only available online.

**Cheque to be made payable to: Education Otherwise Trading Limited**



Children's Polo Shirt



Home Education Our Autistic Spectrum Children



Rucksack



Children's Dungarees



Children's Fleece

## 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@gmail.com tel 0113 2172795

Emma will add you to our volunteer database and contact you with information when help is needed.

### **Small Groups:**

**Strategic Planning Group:** Phil Hicks, **Martin Wise**, Laurie Charlton, Sarah Cook, Fizz El-Sawah, Gail Borrowes, Jill Fisher, Lynda Hitchman, Jacqui Houlding, Julie Ridley, Joss Nowell, Celia McDonagh, John Bathgate

**Steering:** Sarah Cook, Fzeelah El Sawah, Martine Frampton, Jane Bathgate, Martin Wise,

**Finance:** Martine Frampton, Lynda Hitchman, Ann Samuel Till, **Janet Simpson, Martin Wise**

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

**Publications:** June Wilson-Billing, Gail Borrowes, Sue Ryan, Jacqui Houlding, Lynda Hitchman

**Govt. Policy:** Ann Samuel Till, Phil Hicks, **Martin Wise**, Julie Ridley, Jill Fisher, Laurie Charlton, Fiona Nicholson, Annette Taberner

**LA/EA Group:** Anne Wade, Sarah Cook, Ann Samuel Till, Rob Wade

**Scotland Group:** Ann Samuel Till, Fiona Chaff, Rebecca Kail, Jill Fisher, Jane Bathgate

**Child Protection:** Anne Wade, Fzeelah El Sawah, Jane Bathgate, Pam Bellinger, Jenny Stevens

### **Grievances and Complaints:**

**Pauline Butterworth** 6 White House Croft, Long Newton, Stockton on Tees, TS21 1PJ 01642 570786 Pollyb47@aol.com

**Lynda Hitchman** 22 Lewis Drive, St Germans, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3FB 01553 617551 database@education-otherwise.org

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

### **Media Contacts**

Please contact one of the following people if you would like to volunteer to be interviewed or are contacted by the media and would like help/advice/support on giving an interview:

**Media co-ordinator:** Claire Turnham, Oxfordshire.  
Claire.turnham@btinternet.com

**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  
0121 443 2752simonf@surefish.co.uk

**Wales (S):** Celia McDonagh, Cardiff,  
07763 729055 celiamedonagh@yahoo.co.uk

**Wales (N):** Edwina Theunissen, Wrexham 01978  
661 882 theunissen@freeserve484.fsnet.co.uk

**East Anglia:** Ali Willer, Sprowston, Norwich  
01603 401020 simon.whitehall@tesco.net  
mailto:webmaster@education-otherwise.org

**South West: (Acting)** Kay & Simon Smith,  
Cornwall 01726 842057  
smithsontour@myway.com

**South East: (Acting):** Ann Newstead, Kent  
01689 826504 thenewstead5@yahoo.co.uk

**London(1):** Winnie Durdant-Hollamby, East  
Sussex. 01342 826087

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

**Isle of Wight:** Shara Ouston, Ryde  
01983 562313 sharaouston@aol.co

### **EO Email Lists & Forums**

EO runs four email lists with Yahoo Groups. One is for **general** discussion and would normally be the first port of call for someone seeking advice and peer support. The second is for **Single Parents** for them to share the unique problems they have. Third is for home educators living in **Scotland**. Finally, the Children's List for the **children** of members only. All four lists may be joined via the EO Home Page at [www.education-otherwise.org](http://www.education-otherwise.org)

There is also a **Members Area** on the website with several discussion forums, including a forum for members to see the discussions between council members and contractors who manage EO on a day-to-day basis. To join the Member's Forum, send an email to [forums@education-otherwise.org](mailto:forums@education-otherwise.org) giving your preferred User Name which should be between four and fifteen characters, your Full (real) Name, the email address you wish to have associated with the forum and either your EO Membership Number or your full postal address. You will receive an email at your associated email address confirming your Username and giving you a password. You will be able to alter this password to something more memorable.

## WHO DOES WHAT IN EO

### Council Members

Jane Bathgate (Borders) 01835 862118  
Emma Birkenshaw (Yorks. West) 0113 2172795  
emma.birkenshaw@gmail.com  
Pauline Butterworth (Cleveland) 01642 570786  
pollyb47@aol.com (LC Co-Ordinator)  
Laurie Charlton (Leics) 0116 2591051  
lauriecharlton@hotmail.com (M: 07837 061126)  
Sarah Cook (Cumbria) 01768 896019  
sarah@croggies.freemove.co.uk (Chair)  
Fizz El-Sawah (London Middx) 01895 422138  
fizztryngtohomeed@hotmail.com  
Martine Frampton (Gloucs) 01608 812411  
martine-frampton@bbmax.co.uk (Treasurer)  
Anne Rix (Devon) 01237 451535  
anne@annerix.demon.co.uk (Enquiries Sec.)  
Janet Simpson (Lincs) 01427 617313  
HE@hubblesimpson.co.uk  
Sue White (Suffolk) 01379 870036  
Sue\_white@lineone.net  
Martin Wise (Cumbria) 01539 732918  
marlakes@dsl.pipex.com (Vice-Chair)

### Co-opted January 2007

Pam Bellinger (Leicester) 0116 2827 929  
pam@phonecoop.coop  
Priscilla Park Weir (Wilts) 01980 629737  
priscilla@pypw.fsnet.co.uk  
Ann Samuel Till (Leicester) 0116 2949 170  
ann.samuel@ntlworld.com

### Membership

Membership and newsletter subscription enquiries, membership cards, address changes, new member packs, other queries or missing newsletters contact : Database Administrator, Education Otherwise, Lynda Hitchman, 22 Lewis Drive, St Germans, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3FB  
01553 617551 or 0870 765 3650  
Email database@education-otherwise.org

### Stationery

Leaflets, posters, letterhead, compliment slips, membership forms, car stickers etc: free (donations toward postage welcome); reuse labels £4.00 per 100 (free for EO business use). Gail Borrowes, 48 Marlow Bottom, Marlow, Bucks SL7 3NB 01628 483895  
email: eostationery@gmail.com

**Truancy Cards (HE cards)** (free on joining). Extra cards SSAE + £1 per card. P.O./cheque (payable to 'Education Otherwise' or in 50p or £1 stamps, to: EO HE Cards, 5 Ridge Way, Aldridge, Walsall, WS9 0HL

### Publications

Books, information leaflets and back issues of newsletter. For a full list send SAE to : Debbie Barker, 19 Cedar Drive, Worlingham, Beccles, Suffolk NR34 7EW 01502 714413  
Debs.barker7@btinternet.com  
(please ring to check availability of items before ordering)

**Website & Email Lists** Jacqui Houlding  
01925 654856 jacqui@thecrystalball.org.uk

### Useful Contacts

#### **Contract with LA / Member Support / Other Problems**

If you need help in dealing with your LA/EA please 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:** (Acting) Cal Bailes:  
0191 241 4870 (for address: see contact list for Tyne & Wear)

**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:** Kathleen Thompson 01942 795975  
ktmusic59@yahoo.co.uk

**College Contact:** (Acting) Roger Scaife, Glen House, Cragg Vale, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 5SQ 01422 884682 roger46@3-c.coop

**Autonomous Education Support:** Sammy and Nick Vidal-Hall, Home Croft, Brownston St, Modbury, Devon PL21 0QR 01548 830716

**Research Contact:** Sue White, 2 Pretoria Villas, Eye Rd., Brome, Eye, Suffolk IP23 8AL 01379 870036  
sue\_white@lineone.net

**EO Stalls:** Jacqui Houlding 01925 654856  
jacqui@thecrystalball.org.uk

**Newsletter Coordinator:** (Acting) Sue Ryan, 211 The Meadow, Tilehurst, Reading, Berks RG30 4NN  
sue.andhercrew@btinternet.com

**Small Jobs Coordinator:** Emma Birkenshaw  
emma-birkenshaw@ntlworld.com 0113 2172795

**Local Contacts Co-ordinator:** Pauline Butterworth (Cleveland) 01642 570786 pollyb47@aol.com

**Publications Secretary:** Vacant

**Membership Secretary:** Vacant

**General Secretary:** Fzeelah El Sawah

**Enquiries Secretary:** Anne Rix, Hembury Orchard, Frithestock, Torrington, EX38 8JT 01237 451535  
anne@annerix.demon.co.uk

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

**Company Secretary:** Pam Bellinger 56 Beech Drive, Braunstone, Leicester LE3 3DA 0116 2827929  
pam@phonecoop.coop

**Treasurer:** Martine Frampton, 70 Fossey Avenue, Moreton in Marsh, GL56 0EA tel: 01608 812411 (not mornings) martine-frampton@bbmax.co.uk

**Chairperson:** Sarah Cook, The Old Cottage, Croglin, Carlisle CA4 9RZ 01768 896019  
sarah@croggies.freemove.co.uk

**Vice-Chair:** Martin Wise, Mill Beck, Linnet Grove, Kendal, LA9 7RP 01539 732 918 marlakes@dsl.pipex.com

# 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 sae to:

PO BOX 325  
KINGS LYNN PE34 3XW

Helpline 0870 73 000 74

**Web Site:** <http://www.education-otherwise.org>

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