

# education otherwise



April Showers bring May Flowers

**No. 175 – April 2007**

£2

**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS 1<sup>ST</sup> MAY 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.*

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# First Page

## CONTENTS

### Business Section

- Notice of Open Council Meeting 2  
Notice re Contact List 2

### Government Policy/Campaign Group

- Sunderland Campaign Workshop 3  
Notice of Kent & SE Campaign Workshop 4  
GPG Update: The Way Forward 5

### Spotlight on the Regions

- The North East 6

### Letters

- 8

### HESFes Notice

- 9

### EO Merchandise

- 10

### Education Spot

- GCSEs for HE Children in Dudley Area 11

- GCSE Art & Design for HE Children 12

### Advertisements

- 13

### Articles

- Diary of a Home Educating Nobody 16

- Home Educating Children with SEN 17

- Understanding our Children 18

- What have we left behind? 19

- Star of the Week 20

- Responses to Structured Education article 20

- Our Day 23

- Beanbag Games 24

- Seven Lessons for Home Schooling 25

- Teen Home Edding 26

- Local Network Fund 27

- Developing Regions & Democratising EO 28

- Stepping Up 31

### Events

- Historic Events 32

### Archie

- 33

### Reviews

- 34

### Regional Diary

- 36

### Inspirational

- 43

### Small Groups

- 44

### Co-ordina, Co-ordinat, Co-ordin, My Bit!

Well you certainly didn't let me down. Thank you so much for all the letters and articles which you have sent in for the April issue of the Newsletter. I know I've enjoyed reading them so I'm quite sure everyone else will as well.

Now, we need some more...for next time. Go for the next one on February's list: 'Home Educating children of different ages simultaneously'. That is a question I often see asked by people on the email lists so, how do you do it? What are the tricks of the trade?

You can see we have two 'new spots'. The Education Spot and the 'Spotlight on the Regions'. Anyone can send in anything of interest for the former; we'd like local group organisers and local contacts to put something together for the latter. It could be 'your' group, or you could get together like the NE local contacts did and produce a joint effort. We like to read what you're doing and how you do it.

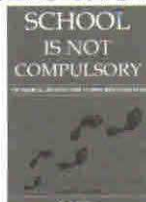
Sue Ryan

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- the practicalities of dealing with education authorities
- the legal position of home education

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### EO Merchandise

To gain the 10% discount available to members who use the Online store, you must enter the code:

showers

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

# Business Section

**Notice of Open Council Meeting**  
**Saturday 28 April 2007**  
**10.00 am for 10.30 start**

An Open Council Meeting will be held at The Institute, Hartley Street, Heeley, Sheffield. S2 3DA.

All members of Education Otherwise are welcome to attend the meeting. There is a lot of discussion at these meetings and they rarely finish before 6 pm so it is important that it starts on time and remains on topic. To ease the flow of discussion, everyone is entitled to be heard but it is requested that people speak when acknowledged by the Chair of the meeting.

Any member of Education Otherwise may request an item be added to the agenda for the meeting. If you wish to have something discussed at the meeting, please send your agenda item together with a brief report on why you wish the item to be placed on the agenda and what you expect to be discussed. (Please note, EO is using a 'Consent Agenda' so that uncontentious group reports are accepted en bloc. If someone wishes to query a report, they should contact Jacqui asking for the report to be removed from the 'bloc' with reasons as to why you want to discuss the report. This should reach Jacqui by Wednesday, 4 April and it will be circulated with the agenda so that people can consider their views prior to the meeting.



If you have placed an item on the agenda but cannot attend the meeting yourself, please nominate someone (with their agreement) to speak for you at the meeting, or contact me and I will speak on your behalf if you don't know anybody attending.

Jacqui Houlding, 38 Garwood Close, Westbrook, Warrington. WA5 8TF  
jacqui@thecrystalball.org.uk

## 2007 Contact list

This mailing contains your new handbook and contact list. Please take the time to check your details and make sure that they're correct and you're listed in the right area. If you have any changes to make to your entry, please send them to Lynda, [database@education-otherwise.org](mailto:database@education-otherwise.org) Tel: 01553 617551

# Government Policy Group/Campaign Group Activities

## Extracts from the Sunderland Regional Campaign Workshop Saturday 3rd March 2007 Report

The day was well attended by parents from all over the North East which was brilliant and allowed us to network with each other. The morning began with a frantic phone call between our three main speakers - Fiona, Annette and Carole. Fiona and Annette were stuck in traffic on the A1 because of an horrendous accident involving air ambulances! They were still 30 miles away and we were in a bit of a panic. LOL Karen stepped in and re-jigged the time of events and we were able to change around the slots. Carole started the day talking about Local Authorities, particularly in our region and how much we knew about each of them.

We got feedback of both good and bad experiences - in some cases in the same authorities. Many people at the workshop had no experience of their Education Authorities as their children had never been to school. There were only two LAs not represented in the whole of the North East so we had a good range of people from across the area from North Yorkshire, Tees Valley, County Durham, Tyne and Wear and Northumberland. We found that there was absolutely no consistency within each LA or across the regional LAs. This is something which needs to be noted as we are clearly not all playing on a level playing field. It became clear that sometimes how we are treated is down to who the actual 'Inspector' or person that we see, or who writes the letters or even who sends out the information. There was no consistency even within the same authority! The afternoon sessions run by Annette and Fiona were really helpful as we could apply their knowledge and experience with Sheffield to our own Region quite well. Models of good practice could be given to LAs as a format to work to and from. Although there were no plans made on how to approach our LAs, by the end of the session people understood that this was a problem that would not go away and needed to be addressed. We will take this back to the 5 local lists and discuss to see if we can get together and make this happen.

Carole also touched on how any changes could affect children with any special educational needs. There were at least 5 families with children who have SEN at the Workshop so it was very relevant to us. Carole talked of the problems that some families who have children with SEN face from LAs - especially through de-registration; some are reported to Social Services and deregistration is turned into a care issue. Some have even been accused of emotional abuse of their child as a way of forcing them back into school. Of all the areas of change that are being proposed, SEN could be the most challenging as clearly many LAs believe that the best place for these children is in school and many parents are not clear about their rights.

### ***Karen Bowlzer***

Annette opened the afternoon session with a bit of background about themselves. Fiona Nicholson and Annette Taberner, are home educating members of Education Otherwise in Sheffield for around 10 years and recent recruits to Education Otherwise Government Policy Group and the newly formed EO GPG Campaign Team. Fiona is also Local Contact for Education Otherwise in Sheffield and Annette is Chair of Sheffield Home Educators' Network.

Fiona introduced some of the changes which have been taking place in all Local Authorities in England following the 2004 Children Act. She took along her trusty visual aids, namely the 5 large laminated envelopes with illustrations of the 5 Outcomes of Every Child Matters: Be healthy; Stay safe; Enjoy and achieve; Make a positive contribution; Achieve economic well-being. Time was spent discussing the implications of these.

The current state of play with the DfES and the chronology of the mixed messages and lack of any satisfactory dialogue with Ministers or members of the Department for Education and Skills was explained together with an outline of what the Government Policy Group were doing in terms of pressing for an answer at Ministerial level .

The main message about the national campaign for home education is that by the time the full public consultation on home education is launched by the DfES, much of what home educators stand to lose will already have been lost and so the time to act is **NOW**. Before the consultation questions are framed. Before the great British public decides on the evidence of biased media reports that home educated children need more government interference.

There is no current date for the consultation going live. It just keeps getting more and more delayed as the DfES increasingly realise that they may have bitten off more than they can chew and that home educators turn out to be a well-informed, public-spirited and highly conscientious bunch of people.

The rest of the afternoon was devoted to outlining the ways that HEers seize control of this waiting period and use it to their best advantage.

This was the major theme of the meeting; namely that **WE** are the experts on home education and that the media and politicians and policy makers need to be listening to **US**. In addition home educators are a very diverse group of people with skills and experience in many different areas and that we are now finding ways to work together for the future of our children's education and wellbeing.

Fiona Nicholson  
Home Education Campaign Team  
Education Otherwise Government Policy Group

#### REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR KENT & SOUTH EAST

***Tuesday 3rd April 10.30 am - 2.30 pm***  
***Crofton Hall (adjacent to Orpington BR Station), Orpington, Kent***

Please bring a packed lunch. Crèche facilities available (must pre-book)  
For more information contact:

ANN NEWSTEAD, 01689 826504, [thenewstead5@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:thenewstead5@yahoo.co.uk)

Ann Newstead and the Education Otherwise Government Policy Group will work to put people in touch with each other to help make this event really productive and useful. Full information on disabled access and transport links to the venue available on request.

**Freedom for Children to Grow:** [www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org](http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org)  
**Hands Up 4 Home Ed - Children speak out for home education**  
[www.handsup4homeed.blogspot.com](http://www.handsup4homeed.blogspot.com)

You've read the report of the Sunderland Workshop. Don't miss this Workshop which has been geared to Kent and the South East

Claire Turnham has resigned as Media Co-ordinator. Ann Newstead has taken over as Acting Media Co-ordinator. Thank you and good luck to Claire. Welcome and good luck to Ann.

## EO GOVERNMENT POLICY GROUP (GPG) UPDATE THE WAY FORWARD

I wrote in the February Newsletter about the forthcoming DfES consultation on changing how home education is monitored (pp 22-24) I was writing at the beginning of January when we thought that the launch of the consultation was imminent.

A lot of things have changed since then. The consultation threat has not gone away but now we do not have a firm indication of when it will start. The DfES and ministers have backed away and said that they need to consult with "stakeholders" and that it might make more sense to look at finally issuing new written Guidelines on Home Education for Local Authorities and that this could be before, or during, or even after a full 3 month public consultation on changes to monitoring arrangements.

Another major thing which has changed since then is that, at the EO AGM and Open Council Meeting in Okehampton, EO Council formally agreed to fund a realistic budget for the GPG Campaign Team to run a series of regional workshops and to set up a new EO Campaign Website and to produce a completely up-to-date information pack which will be sent out to each and every member of EO as soon as the DfES consultation goes live.

If I had to sum up what all the different people at the DfES have said to us, then the phrase that keeps recurring is "the way forward". They say that there is no point in talking to us until they have found "the way forward" but that we will be "fully consulted" once this "way forward" has been reached.

We in EO GPG are pointing out repeatedly that WE have to be part of the way forward. We are the experts in home education and we are going to continue our efforts to get a meeting and proper dialogue with government ministers and officials from the DfES. The situation may have changed again by the time you read this, but at present Elaine Haste from the DfES has just passed us over to Lord Adonis.

Directly after I wrote the article for the last Newsletter, we began working ridiculously hard (but it was fun!) setting up the new campaign website which was launched on 4 February.

<http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/>

As it says on the home page :

The reason why this website is called "Freedom for Children to Grow" is that we believe that constant testing and the imposition of one-size-fits-all from birth onwards are not the best way to raise the next generation of UK citizens.

And now we need to convince the DfES and the Government that we are right!

By the time this newsletter article appears we will have run Regional Campaign Workshops in Sheffield, Okehampton, Sunderland, Warrington, London and Bromsgrove and there will be a workshop on in Kent on **TUESDAY 3 APRIL**. Details above.

As I write this on the 9 March, there are some indications that the consultation could be launched around Easter time in the first weeks of April. This would mean that it would run through April, May and June and finish in early July which is when we would be looking at holding the Home Education Awareness Day. EO Council have agreed to fund expert legal advice for any such public event in order to ensure that our members stay on the right side of the law. This would include a full exploration of the legal implications of all public

gatherings and also of any substantial group of people who might hand in a petition or hand over bound copies of their consultation responses to Government ministers or to the DfES.

I also need to say how moved I have been by all the letters I have received following my last Newsletter article. If you sent me something and you have not yet heard back from me, this is because we never expected so many people to respond. There have been some incredibly moving personal testimonials to the success of home education which will form a strong part of our case for home education as truly personalised learning.

I personally think that we are now winning the battle for hearts and minds because the recent media coverage of home education has been on the whole much more favourable and we are keeping up the momentum.

Fiona Nicholson  
Education Otherwise Government Policy Group  
fiona\_j\_nicholson@yahoo.co.uk  
205 Leverton Gardens, Sheffield, S11 8FD

# Spotlight on Regions

## **What a wonderful county is Tyne and Wear! Rosemary New. LC Tyne & Wear**

It sprawls along two rivers and with two great cities – Sunderland and Newcastle – it has all the amenities you need, but it's all small scale and manageable. Where ever you are in Tyne and Wear you are never much more than 15 minutes from the countryside which helps me – a country girl from Devon! – to not feel trapped and overwhelmed by endless urban-ness.

So, we're in a great place for home education with stacks of museums, galleries, days out; many of them for free.

However, we have been home edding now for five years and it hasn't always been easy. When I first took my son out of school I did so knowing that home educators were very thin on the ground. I also knew that the LEAs were not particularly friendly and that, with the highest concentration of private schools in the country, home ed was seen as the preserve of the lunatic fringe.

Over these five years I have seen home ed in Tyne and Wear 'mushroom', blossom and flourish so that we have gone from a situation where I was having to work very hard to get Michael to see the one or two other home ed kids in the area, to us having to say 'Whooooa, steady on!'

### **So, what's going on up here?**

Well, we have a brilliant group of teenage kids who have been meeting fortnightly at a local café which is attached to a private cinema. Here they have used the late morning to do a number of things. Many sessions were filled with what was called 'Desert Island Whatevers', during which a different child each session would present his/her favourite book/film/music – whatever! This time has also been used for some local history work and for a photography project lasting a number of weeks. Lunch would be provided at a small price by the café, then they would use the cinema to watch a film of the children's choice which would be discussed afterwards. These kids have at various times got their instruments out and formed impromptu bands, many of them proving very capable musicians. Now however, the GCSEs have taken a huge slice out of their time and this group, although officially still going, hasn't actually met for a while. However, among these kids we have a lovely crop of GCSEs (including some As) and there are more to

come. One of the lads is doing a Journalism course and has had a book published ('Aunty Liz the Lollipop Lady' by Peter David Bromley, illustrated by Lauren Bromley, available on line from the main book stores) and a second book due soon; one clearly has a talent for poetry, and a couple have gone to local colleges to study music.

Another brilliant group is the Walbottle group (Walbottle being a village just west of Newcastle). This tends to be for the younger age ranges (mainly 6 – 9) where, again fortnightly, they do all sorts of wonderful things, mainly of a creative nature. One feature of this group is the book club which gives the older children among them something to get their teeth into.

One totally brilliant opportunity that has been given to us, and which is being taken up by the Walbottle group is an 18 week project on local and personal history with Alnwick Museum. For the first nine weeks the children will be working with a local author on local history, the second nine they will work with a local artist on the theme of personal history. It's the Curator's aim to assemble the work into an exhibition for the public to view. Wow!

Chopwell Woods is the venue for a monthly get together, drawing folks from Tyne and Wear, County Durham and Northumberland. This is the longest standing event, having been going for the best part of five years. Sometimes we have done specifically 'educational' things like learning about trees, or fungi, or once we even attempted an orienteering task, but the parents got lost! They can't stay on task these days, parents. The times at Chopwell have been very special because they have been occasions where all age groups have met together and all the children have played equally with each other. They have also been times of healing for a lot of children who have been hurt by the system. Here, they have had time and space to rediscover themselves, to be unfettered and work off some of their pain. Many trips have resulted in a homeward journey with Michael saying how much better he felt.



Washington (where apparently *the* George Washington was born!) is sort of between Gateshead and Sunderland. Here, a couple run an art group and a photography group. The results have been quite spectacular.

As well as these regular meetings there are always lots of one-offs. There's the ice rink, the climbing wall, Washington Wildfowl Park is a regular as is Beamish open-air museum. We have had trips to the Centre for

Life where we have had access to their labs with technicians to guide us through experiments, the Discovery Museum (free!) is well known to us and Segedunum our Roman site at the end of Hadrian's Wall (called Wallsend would you believe) is falling over itself to welcome us! Two trips I have enjoyed organising sort of annually have been to Killhope Lead Mine and – favourite of all – St Mary's Lighthouse – where we have had many a wonderful, highly educational day.

**“And the leaving's gonna get me down” – Roger Whittaker  
Well, it would if I was leaving. Karen Bowlzer, LC County Durham**

I live in County Durham. Most of the County remains agricultural and it is known as the Land of the Prince Bishops from its rich Christian history. In the capital City of Durham, which I think is the smallest City in the Country, stands Durham Cathedral which is 900 years old. Other areas of County Durham's rich heritage include; mining; the University of Durham, which is the third oldest University and still collegiate like Oxford and Cambridge; Farming, especially in the Durham Dales and Weardale; Roman heritage along Dere Street in the form of Ebchester, Lanchester, Binchester and Piercebridge Roman Forts; Smuggling at Blackhall; The Durham Light Infantry and lots more interesting things to find out about in County Durham. Karen Bowlzer, LC County Durham

## And of the future?

Well, this government consultation has got us properly excited and propelled towards action. There are a few ideas floating around which would be intended to raise the profile of Home Ed in the area and I am increasing my contact with our four LEAs with a view to working more closely with them and being on better terms with them. Recent activities in the NE have brought a lot of the home educators together; so much so that it is quite possible that they will be one of the first areas to become the Regional group as proposed at the Council Meeting in Langdale in November 2006.

Anyone in any of the NE area is welcome to join their email lists which is their primary form of communication – but they're all so busy that even without the internet you wouldn't be left out.

Education at Home Tyne and Wear - Owner Lynn Huggins-Cooper:  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Education-at\\_homeTyneAndWear/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Education-at_homeTyneAndWear/)

Home ed Tyne and Wear - Owner Rosemary New:  
[http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/home\\_ed\\_tyneandwear/?yguid=197550383](http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/home_ed_tyneandwear/?yguid=197550383)

County Durham Home ed - Owner Karen Bowlzer  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/County-Durham-HomeEd/>

Tees Valley Home Education - Owner Linz Hillman:  
<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/tvhe/?yguid=197550383>

Education Otherwise Northumberland Owner Liz Cole:  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EO-Northumberland>

*If you have an entry in the Regional Diary, could you please check that it is correct and contact Jo Borthen on [jo4eo@aol.com](mailto:jo4eo@aol.com) if amendments need to be made.*

*NL Co-ordinator note: We'd like to make this a regular spot in the newsletter. If you are a local contact and would like to promote home education in your region...the NE are the trailblazers. Don't hesitate to follow!*

# Letters

I have recently opened up an email list for the County Durham area to share information, help to support home educators and their families and inform people of their rights and what is happening in the home educating arena. The list will run under Education Otherwise guidelines but is open to anyone who is home educating or thinking of home educating as well as current EO members. People in the surrounding areas are also welcome to join and to share information and events happening in their Counties too. This list is co-owned and co-moderated by Jacqui Houlding who is well known for her tact and diplomacy from many other home educating lists and will be helping to keep us up to date with current legislation and information from around the country and from EO.

In view of the looming government consultation, and the potential threat it has to the whole structure of HE in this country today, I have also taken on the role of EO Local Contact for the area – by email. I am hoping that I will be able to work with other LC's in the area, and members of the list to fight in our corner of the country to ensure we can not only home educate, but home educate in a style that suits our individual children.

If anyone wishes to apply to join please go to the following URL:  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/County-Durham-HomeEd/>  
Karen Bowizer

## HEing a child with Down's Syndrome

In response to Sue Ryan's request we are HEing a child with Down's Syndrome.

We have only just started HE but we are finding that our son is enjoying it rather than school because he enjoys what he is doing . We have a tutor in for 8 hours per week which he enjoys as it is someone different to mum and dad teaching him.

The only thing he does miss are a few of his friends but we are trying to sort a few things out.

The trouble is we live in the Forest of Dean and there are not many clubs etc in our area, so if anyone knows of anything can you let us know please.

The one thing we are finding is that a child with SEN has to be kept occupied with the things that they enjoy. This can sometimes

be difficult but we have not been at it long and are still learning ourselves but we will get there.

If you want to get in touch do so by all means and if I can be of any help let me know.

*Alan and Jayne Bowkett*  
E-mail: [alan.bowkett@btinternet.com](mailto:alan.bowkett@btinternet.com)

### Archie – where were you?

I was disappointed not to have the 'Archie's Pages' in the recent edition of the EO n/l (Issue 174). For me this is the highlight of the magazine!

I do hope it has not been discontinued permanently.

*Charlotte Seale, 33 Sandbrook Road,  
London N16 0SH*

## HESFES 2007



**The Home Educator's Seaside Festival**  
The World's biggest gathering of Home educator's now in it's ninth year.  
A week of free workshops, music and fun suitable for all ages  
Superb campsite next to beach.

29<sup>th</sup> June to 6<sup>th</sup> July

HESFES PO Box 20284 London NW1 3AA

[www.hesfes.co.uk](http://www.hesfes.co.uk) [info@hesfes.co.uk](mailto:info@hesfes.co.uk)

Tel. 020 7388 5005

Mobile 0783 379 4062

The Home Educator's Seaside Festival is the World's biggest gathering of home educating families and has been held annually since 1998.

Once again we are in Essex. Our venue in Mersea Island has some of the best facilities to be had and is directly adjacent to the beach.

Lots of workshops and activities, such as archery, drama, dance, music, metalworking, woodwork, circus skills and much, much more. All of workshops are completely free.

As usual a very varied line-up of musicians performing live on stage, from rock bands to folk, from top DJs to open mic sessions.

Tents, camper vans and caravans are all very welcome. Although all onsite caravans were booked up long ago, there is accommodation available in nearby caravan site. Contact us for details.

Tickets can be obtained online or by post. Please see [www.hesfes.co.uk](http://www.hesfes.co.uk) for details or contact us.

A huge thanks to all those working hard to make this HES FES the best yet!

Best wishes,

Andy and the HES FES crew

Tel: 0207 388 5005

# EO Merchandise

## 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

(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

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# Education Spot

## GCSEs FOR HOME EDUCATED CHILDREN IN THE DUDLEY LA AREA Joy Beasley

Until quite recently I was the Education Otherwise Local Contact for the Dudley (and for part of the time) the wider West Midlands area. Although I have now resigned from this post, I continue to speak to many home educators, both those new to the task and those who have been educating their children at home for some time. One constant concern over the years, especially for those with older children has been the question of what to do about GCSEs.

As a Local Contact and an experienced home educator I have always pointed out to parents that GCSEs are most definitely not compulsory, and that if their child isn't interested or they don't wish to work towards formal examinations or perhaps wish to bypass GCSEs altogether in favour of alternative qualifications, that is absolutely fine. However, there have always been a number of families where the young people were keen to do these examinations.

Some young people have been able to get places at a local college pre-16 but here in the Dudley area this has usually meant attending evening classes rather than daytime college, costs can be quite heavy and getting a place is difficult. For many families Correspondence Courses have provided the answer however, parents have frequently raised with me their concerns about the financial outlay involved with them, particularly if a young person is interested in doing several subjects or indeed there are several children, close in age, within the family. By virtue of the fact that these are home educating families most are dependant on a single salary, they do not begrudge contributing towards their child's education but at £300 or more per subject, it can be very difficult for families to do. The only alternative has then been to wait until the young person reaches the age of 16 and enrol at college. Whilst this option does not incur high costs, it does mean that the young person is either one or two years behind their peer group before taking the exams. This may not be an issue and for some families this is still their preferred choice.

When at a meeting in 2005, Tom Burwood the School Development Adviser for Dudley LEA asked me what I felt would help the home educators in our area most, one of the subjects I raised was this question of GCSEs. He agreed to look into the situation and see if there was anything which could be done to help. Tom was at that point relatively new to his post as Adviser and very keen to develop an in-depth understanding of home education and to build good relationships with home educators in the area.

I know that Tom researched the subject with lots of local home educators and gathered sufficient information to present a case for enabling home educated young people to have access to at least some GCSEs at low or no cost. Dudley LEA had already been making significant changes in the way they contacted home educated families, in their written documentation and in information leaflets in an effort to move from a 'monitoring' role, to one of a two way relationship, where they were able to offer help and advice should families need it. This then culminated in Tom Burwood being able to inform home educators early last year that he had been able to gain funding to provide classes in GCSE Maths and English (Language and Literature). These classes were to be entirely voluntary for those who expressed an interest in attending.

The classes now run one morning per week at Saltwells Education Centre. The young people receive some teaching and then continue to work at home with their parents during the rest of the week. The young people have set up an email support group and Tom and his colleague are available during the week to give any advice or assistance via telephone or email. The class opened with perhaps 15 youngsters aged between 10 and 15, but numbers have grown and at the most recent class over 20 were present. Families are not charged for the classes and the young people are provided with text books, learning materials and their exam fees will be paid under the scheme.

The classes are proving very popular with the young people who all work hard but enjoy a more relaxed approach to learning than they would perhaps experience at school. Not all of them will be taking their exams at the same time but the classes are flexible enough to allow for this. Some parents choose to stay either just to help their own child or to be an 'extra pair of hands' generally and it is clear to see that a great deal of mutual respect has built between parents, children and tutors.

On a recent news programme I saw how the Government now wishes to introduce 'individual learning plans'. It seems to me that Dudley Education Authority is at the forefront of such a scheme. They have looked at the needs of home educated children and been able to integrate these into their general education provision for young people in the Borough. They have done this without compromising the freedom of choice for Home Educators, in fact what they have done is widen that choice; they are providing another option for us and our children. I think this is a very forward thinking move by Dudley Education Authority, I would like to think that they will be regarded as leaders in the field and that other authorities will follow suit. Rather than constantly making demands of home educators they will work with them to help them to provide the best education they can for their children.

Educational professionals requiring further information may like to contact:

Tom Burwood  
School Development Adviser  
Directorate of Children's Services  
Westox House  
1 Trinity Road,  
Dudley.  
DY1 1JQ

Tel: 01384 818019

Home Educators wanting to know more may like to contact Tom Burwood (as above) or:

Joy Beasley  
ejb27@blueyonder.co.uk

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### **Introduction**

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The full report can be viewed on line at

[http://www.education-otherwise.org/forum/forum\\_posts.asp?TID=986&PN=1](http://www.education-otherwise.org/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=986&PN=1)

If you would like a paper copy of the report please send an ssae marked GCSE A&D to:  
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We do not have exclusive use of the site. Other campsite users (Duke of Edinburgh parties and members of the public) should be treated with complete respect. Normal campsite rules apply.

Hartington is approached by the A515 either from the North, via Buxton, or South, via Ashbourne. From the A515 take the B5054, signed to Hartington. Follow the road through and out of the village. Just under two miles out of the village, and shortly after entering Staffordshire, turn left, following signs for Beresford Dale. Keep following Beresford Dale signs until you near the end of the road. Barracks Farm is on the left.

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# Articles

## Diary Of A Home-Educating Nobody.

We're a diverse lot!

I don't just mean our family, I mean the whole community of Home Educators!

Some go for structure; some autonomy. Some are very public about what they do, some very private. Some political and proactive, some just quietly doing what they do. And most of us fall into no extreme at all and are somewhere in between, just quietly HEing hoping we won't get noticed or upset the authorities in any way by the diverse way we have of educating our children.

But I would guess that despite our diversity we all have the same concerns. We are all united in wanting to be able to continue to HE in any way we wish, diverse or not. And we're probably all concerned, fearful even, about what the authorities will say about the education we're providing.

In fact our fear of that can become so big I think many of us try to keep as quiet as possible, continuing to give our children the best we can, gently educating them in individual ways, but staying hidden.

Yet here we all are, as many of us have been for years, turning out happily educated children whose diverse intelligence enriches the world and the people in it. There are now HEed adults who are moving successfully into the working world and even gaining a reputation for being more intelligent, more sociable, more adaptable, more motivated than many employees who come down the traditional educational route.

Which leads me to sometimes wonder why do we need to keep that quiet?

I know there's a feeling among some HEors that the less noticed we are the better it will be. The less fuss we make the less flak we'll receive from the Local Authorities. And the less likely it will be that the government feels they need to do anything about us and we'll hopefully be left alone to get on with educating our children in a variety of ways.

Trouble is; it's now growing too big for that. And if fear is actually governing the type of education we provide then that could prevent us from providing the education we feel our children may need. Fear is not a good message to be putting across to our children, for they will be picking it up how ever much we try and hide it.

We are all troubled by fears. But remember, HEors will not be the only ones who are fearful! I would guess that the Local Authorities and the government are becoming just as fearful of HEors as we are of them. Because now they are desperately trying to gain more control over what we do. A sure sign of fear! And the types of control they want to introduce (outlined in the last n/l) are exactly the types of things many HEors wanted to rescue their children from in the first place, feeling that they are more detrimental to a broad education than enhancing.

This is what the current consultation, reported in the last n/l, is all about; giving LAs more power to monitor what HEors do, more control over content and teaching methods, and possibly even the right to test set work.

They want to change the law and basically control the diverse and successful way HEors educate their children. Ignoring the fact that it *is already* successful, which is probably what makes them so afraid!

However, there is an antidote to fear. Both theirs and ours. And that is; *understanding*.

Most authorities have very little understanding of what HEors do and why it works.

Which is not surprising since we are such quiet unassuming souls who want to keep our heads down!

But sadly, by doing that, we're shooting ourselves in the foot! Because by keeping quiet we are failing to promote that understanding to the wider world, and in the end that could be the death of HEing as we know it. Especially if the LAs gain this power over our rights.

So we've got to do something. NOW. Before it's too late. Before the consultation ends and we find that LAs have powers based on *MISunderstanding and ignorance*. Powers that may deny future families the right to the type of education your children have had.

Many find the thought of doing something very scary. Since most HEors are just ordinary people wanting to do the best for children, not militant or political or proactive.

But it doesn't have to be that scary! If it was I wouldn't be doing it, for I'm the biggest coward going when it comes to being noticed. And I was absolutely terrified at the thought of doing something like writing to the MP. And I don't really like getting political here.

But then I found out it wasn't scary at all – and apparently my letters enlightened some members of parliament who sit up there in their offices having no real idea of how HE works and that it is successful. My letter taught someone something about the success of HE. But lots more are needed.

There is a campaign to resist these changes in the law regarding Home Educators. And you can help in ways that are not too scary or really that noticeable to you, but that will really make a difference.

There are ideas on the website: [www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org](http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org) or you can write into the newsletter or directly to Fiona Nicholson (p24 in the last newsletter – if you haven't read that piece please find a moment to do so). Or write to your own MP. That's all that's needed.

What's needed is many voices from as many people as possible who believe in what they are doing, who can describe how what they are doing works, and who want to retain the right to educate in the way they think fit, however diverse!

For however diverse HE is it *still* works. That's the vital message we need to get across, especially to those people in power who have such little understanding of education outside of their blinkered little worlds!

Each one of your voices will help. The consultations are already underway but it is not too late to let people know how your experience of HE has helped your child. It is not too late for you to do something.

I believe HE makes our children special. They have a special angle on things, special ideas and a special intelligence. With these they make a very special contribution to the world. There will always be millions of school children making a valid contribution, but now, seeing it happen, I know that HEors make a contribution that is different and which is sorely needed. Just to keep our own human diversity! And it is the diversity of their education that makes it so.

That's worth preserving.

Your help is needed. Just so future families have the escape route from an un-diverse system that you had. Just so the very quality of HE survives.

*Ross Mounthey.*

*ross.mounthey@tiscali.co.uk*

### **HEing children with SEN**

Among the wide range of labels which we call 'Special Needs', dyslexia is probably the most common and the most difficult to deal with – in a school environment.

We took our daughter out of school just as she entered Year 5 and our son followed a month later, once he saw what was on offer! Both suffer with dyslexia and both are very different. The only thing in common is that reading and writing is a chore to avoid!

However, in the past 3 years we've gone through all the different styles of help available (which may have helped?) When I look back to our first year, my expectations were far too high for an

8 and 10 year old. I've always treated them the same as far as education goes, because we all go to the same museums, workshops, do the same crafts and models for projects at home and play the same games. One to one conversations seem to meet any individual need for further information.

Dyslexia can be frustrating for them and for me. It is frustrating because they can't get on and do things for themselves, for example, reading instructions or looking up information. As for me, not only do I read for them, but I also supplement their own learning with researching topics to present in a multi-sensory way they will enjoy. It probably wouldn't matter if I stopped doing the different topics, but I really enjoy it too and they get some fun from the ideas I come up with (like making a Parthenon cake as part of our Ancient Greece project, which then collapsed – but was great fun to eat!)

Teaching any child is a challenge, not just those with Special Educational Needs. You probably need a bit more patience and stop wondering if it is all going to work out in the end. My daughter summed it up nicely the other day when she said 'Mum, where are all the Special Needs adults?'

*Child says:*

'Why can't I learn the way I want?  
Maths and English is such a bore  
I want to do gardening, watch the birds,  
Paint a picture and play out more!'

*Gillian Wright, 35 Aireville Avenue, Frizinghall, Bradford, W Yorks BD9 4ER Tel: 01274 586146*

*Parent says:*

'They must learn to read and write,  
It's what's expected after all.  
Hang on, who's expecting it,  
The poor child, or the school?'

### Understanding our children

I hope these anecdotal notes may be useful to someone.

My six year old son would not be classed as having "special educational needs" however, many children have special needs if we start to really understand and listen to them.

My son went to playgroup two mornings a week at age 3 ½ (I hoped he would make friends there though in practice that didn't happen) and he didn't speak there for a whole year although he was very talkative at home. He spent a lot of time just observing. I started to notice other habits such as going to his hidey place behind the sofa, where he would play for long periods; avoiding visitors; his desire to be at home a lot and certainly no wish to be left anywhere without me (although he did accept going to playgroup which was a very caring one, he never actually wanted to go and always found it a long time). He also refused to speak to adults (except for family members whom he saw regularly). He would not reply to the mother of a friend he visited (he agreed to go without me), which upset her quite a lot! He played many games alone and his teddies still have a complete world of their own, he does their voices and spends many hours in this world which is totally private. He has two brothers with whom he plays at other times. Also, he learns through acting out and role play and whatever he is doing does not like to sit still.

On the spectrum of extrovert-introvert personalities, this child is very introverted. The book "The hidden gifts of the introverted child" by Marti Olsen Laney (published 2005, Workman Publishing, New York) has lots of information about introversion and suggestions for helping the introverted child. It is relevant to all families, as it includes an exploration of relationships and family dynamics and many families will have a mixture of introvert and extrovert personalities.

The home environment caters perfectly for the very introverted child as there is a strong need for own space and time. Many aspects of this personality type are unsuited to the school environment: the need for much private time; exhaustion caused by over stimulation; the need to recharge energy after activities/socialising by having quiet time alone; the difficulty with being "put on the spot" (usually an adult asking a question); reluctance to communicate except on own terms; being very self sufficient; being a deep thinker. Some of these traits are strengths and can be developed at home. The child's social inhibitions are not helped by forcing socialisation

upon him/her, which can become very stressful; the natural social situations which occur in family life are enough.

Our society tends to value the extrovert, busy, noisy outgoing personality types who attract attention however, I believe we should nurture the strengths of the introvert and listen to their rhythm. My son recently asked to learn dance, so we went to observe a class. I thought that would be the end of it, especially as the class was composed of 18 girls in pink (he doesn't like either pink or girls!). I was amazed when he still wanted to join and it took quite a few weeks of butterflies in the stomach and feelings of fear before the class before he could start to enjoy himself but I am glad we persevered as he is always so happy afterwards. Clearly, he finds the movement to music a way in which he can express himself. I think it is important to be aware of the distinctive ways that "different" children develop and we need to listen to their (often very discreet) requests or signals.

I think that home-education allows children to become themselves and it is so much more exciting and rewarding to see them flourish from within than to conform to the enforced world and standards of school. Every child has their own potential and discovering and enabling those strengths is the best we can do as parents and educators.

*Rosie Benson-Bunch*  
(contact details supplied)

### **What have we left behind?**

Elisa Lloyd's reflections (Issue 174) reminded me of all we left behind when we took our son, now aged 12, out of school two years ago.

During one whole year he was the only child in his small country school not to reach the top of his ladder and receive a prize. Other children zoomed to the top many times in the course of the year, being rewarded for things like neat work, finishing work quickly, helpfulness to teachers etc. Instead he was 'rewarded' by being humiliated in front of the school for his slowness and by being repeatedly kept in during play times to catch up on work he had failed to do satisfactorily.

Eventually, after several years of trying unsuccessfully to convince the school he had learning difficulties, we referred him to a visual stress clinic and then to the Dyslexia Institute, both of which confirmed what we had suspected – and much more. While in many areas it appeared we had a gifted child, his speed of processing was so low it was a wonder to us he had been able to function at school at all.

Alas by this time the damage had been done. The ridicule and derision he experienced from some of the teaching staff had been taken up by the other children. He was excluded from playground games, called all sorts of names suggesting he lacked a brain and generally treated with contempt. When things become too much for him he would lash out, resulting in him getting into more trouble with the teachers and losing whatever points he had managed to gain on his ladder. Our approaches to the Head teacher about this treatment from staff and pupils were met with rudeness and hostility towards us. It was only in the last two months before we took him out of school that her attitude changed completely, when a very concerned learning support teacher became involved in our meetings. Suddenly she was coming up with various suggestions to help. However nothing she did managed to change the now entrenched attitude of the other children towards him and despite her protests we did what we should have done years before – rescued him from a system that had brought nothing but stress, unhappiness and a sense of failure into his life. Thankfully, these last two years he has been regaining his confidence and sense of self-worth.

Although we live in an isolated part of the country, he has made a number of close friends and keeps in regular touch with them.

He is by nature gregarious, exuberant, fun-loving, sensitive and creative – qualities that had been all but extinguished while at school but happily are blossoming once again.

*Marjorie Finlay, Finlay's Cottage, High Corrie, Corrie, Isle of Arran KA27 8JB Tel: 01770 810689*

### Star of the week!

I was interested to read "Reflections" about rewards systems in school. I have one child in school at present, and she is driven mad by "star of the week". She is a bright child who works really hard, but she hasn't been star of the week once since she went back to school in September. She went back in the hopes of enjoying the experience of being in the top class in the primary school. For the first couple of months when she did her homework, she would do double and triple the work asked. No star. She did every possible extra little job in the break and lunch times. No star. She still does everything you could possibly ask in a perfect school child. No star. Yes, it makes her extremely despondent, especially when others have received it more than once – one even two weeks running!

It was an even worse experience with my younger son who was at school until the age of seven. He did get "star of the week" once, but at that age it soon passes off the horizon and for the rest of the year as the weeks went on he came home sadder and sadder every Friday when he didn't get it. He had learnt the life-cycle of a star with me at home and knew that they ended up as some sort of lump of black stuff, and he started to say to me "I'm not a star Mum, I'm a dirty black rock". My beautiful little boy. Did that make me cry! Finally at the end of the year most children went up to the next class and some didn't, as they have to with split-year classes. His two mates, from whom he had been inseparable since the start of school went up, and he didn't. When he heard he turned and, just managing not to cry, said "See Mum, I told you I was a dirty black rock". He couldn't bear to go back when September came. Now he's been at home for a year and a bit, and he is, and really believes that he is, a true star.

Thanks to Ursula Clark for taking the trouble to write such an interesting article – it was great to read about how you organise yourselves, and I certainly agree with the general thrust of your argument. We work most mornings in the kitchen, and with the wooden table and bench, and woodburning stove, it has the feel of a frontier schoolhouse about it. I think I'll get some posters!

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### Response to Ursula Clarke's article on structured home education (issue 174)

It was so good to read Ursula Clarke's article about structured home education. I, too, do very structured home-ed with my five year old and seven year old. We have a timetable and a daily/weekly and monthly curriculum. I sit down at the end of each week and fill in a 'report' form (approved by the LEA) on how they did in each subject the previous week and what progress has been made/what more needs to be made and then I work out what they will do the next week and how to balance those academic requirements over the days of the week. We do HE five and a half days a week and around fifty weeks a year in that they get a fortnight off at Christmas. I treat it very much as school – we even call it 'Mummy School' – and the school rules are much as they would be in a brick school with lesson times, playtimes (which they miss for bad behaviour) and 'detentions' or extra work if they misbehave or don't work hard enough. And the system works very well for us – not just for me, but for the children as well.

Like Ursula, we have text books, a reading scheme and work books and both children are expected to do a number of hours of written work/reading/sums each day. Through non-home-educating friends, I keep a close eye on the curricula being used in both the local village school and a nearby high-achieving private school, and I base a lot of what my children learn on those. We do daily Literacy Hour and Numeracy Hour which include weekly spellings tests for both children and twice weekly tables tests for the oldest. We do history and geography twice a week, Science, Art and Craft and RE. The seven year old also goes to a French tutor twice a week who give him homework which he is expected to do. They also have riding, tennis, gymnastics and swimming lessons, to cover PE.

I have been HEing on and off for three years, in that my eldest was flexi-schooled for a year before being finally taken out of school about fifteen months ago. My youngest child has not yet been to school, but will start into Year One in September. I don't know how long he will remain

at school – the decision to send him there is more so he can make some friends in our village, than it is academic. I would like to think that he will stay a few years before coming back out again if he wants to. I only hope that his academic education will not fall behind when he starts school – he is currently a Reception age child doing Year One level writing and Year Two level reading and maths.

Right from the start of our full-time home-education, I knew I would be very structured. The LEA received a lengthy philosophy of our education, along with a curriculum and timetable from us and they know that I actively ask for advice and suggestions from them. My eldest has just done his 7+ SATS, as I feel that, if SATS are there to judge a school's competence at teaching, it is only fair to judge my own competence in the same way. The SATs were done under exam conditions and the LEA will be told the results when I next contact them (I am assuming that an SAO is the equivalent of 'being put into Special Measures'!)

I have no problem with other people being autonomous, but it was never for us and I would never advocate it as a way of education. The only thing I have a big problem with is when people criticise me for not being autonomous, and either say outright or imply that structure is wrong. I was recently informed that I was 'wasting the real opportunities' of HE by my attitude. I never give other people a hard time about their methods of HE and I rather resent being seen as fair game for their criticism of how I do it.

I actually, actively worry that people new to HE are being given an erroneous impression of how it all works – or at least how it *can* work. Talking to someone new to HE at my local group a year or so back, I was bothered to hear that no-one had told her that structured learning was 'allowed'; she had never before met someone who was non-autonomous.

I agree totally with Ursula about how intimidating other HE-ers can be when they hear of someone breaking 'the party line' of autonomy and non-co-operation with the LEA. In fact, I don't feel able to use my real name in writing this article and maybe that, in itself, is an indication that it is time for a debate about how we treat each other in the HE community. So, I echo entirely her plea that we let nobody feel that they are under pressure to conform to one way of doing it or to feel ridiculed or criticised for daring to do what they feel to be right for their own children and for daring to be different.

*Annabel Sanders*

*(real name and address supplied)*

#### **And another.....**

I was so pleased to read Ursula Clarks letter (Issue 174) on her structured approach to education. This type of letter is just what is needed for the newsletter to put across that no matter what route of home edding we choose, we are all connected by our commitment and love for our children.

People we have met have been put off the thought of home education because they feel they wouldn't fit in - because in the media home educators are still viewed as tree hugger types, living off family money and not living in the real world.

The truth is I feel lots of people choose home edding as just an alternative to school – that's it - just ordinary every day people who have the courage to stop and think about their children's education.

It would be so good to read of other people's experiences with home education, good and bad, so that lots of different lifestyles etc are covered; that way people won't be so put off giving the different route a try.

We as a family do it in a quite structured way. We hope our son does obtain some higher qualifications etc enabling him to enjoy a more successful lifestyle than his poor uneducated parents!

We get constantly criticised from family, neighbours etc for home schooling – that's life and I suppose we are not alone in this.

We love technology and the latest fads, junk food and have no wish to travel round the world on a donkey or anything like that (sorry but this is a popular view amongst non home educating friends)

Home educating can be very lonely but it is great to learn together at home, as a family, and be able to spend so much time together. Even though there are rough days, we intend to home ed for ever and ever!

Thanks again to Ursula for her letter - it gave me the courage to write in and best wishes to everyone, no matter how you do it!

*Leanne and Tony Osgerby*

#### **And another .....**

Congratulations to Ursula Clark for having the courage to speak out on behalf of all of us who believe in the need to provide at least some structure in educating our children. Like Ursula, I have spent many years feeling completely intimidated by the 'autonomous' education brigade and, whilst I uphold the right of parents to choose how they educate their children, I resent the negative vibes I get about any attempt at structure when I read the EO newsletter, particularly in latter years.

I speak from two perspectives:

Firstly as the parents of seven children, we opted for home education as a result of the life style we chose. It was not that we objected to the maths, English, physics or biology that would be taught in school. It was that we wished to avoid subjecting our children to the social life of school and the indoctrination with views that were anathema to our principles.

At first, we believed that our children would simply absorb what they needed to know from their surroundings in as far as science, technology, arts and crafts were concerned. We had a mixed farm, were engaged in many practical projects and it seemed logical to assume that the children would simply pick up all they needed to learn. All that we'd need to do would be to devote a little time to Maths and English.

To a degree, this proved true. From birth, the children all became extremely practical people – gardening, cooking, looking after animals, building, spinning and weaving, candle-making, boat building, plumbing and so on. However, our very busyness in these areas meant we found it extremely difficult to create a space for academic learning (that Maths and English!). There were always more pressing things to be done. Eventually we realised we needed to make book learning a part of our daily routine.

Like Ursula, we created our own schoolroom out of an old outbuilding. It was nothing fancy but a place where it was understood by all that we did our 'schooling'. Because our whole life was anyway governed by routines enforced by the need to tend animals regularly, it was not difficult to see lessons as just another part of our routine. OK – we might have had the odd day when the timetable got overthrown but, by and large, the children were quite happy to settle down to lessons for a couple of hours a day, 36 weeks of the year.

As the children became older, the nasty question of qualifications reared its head. We didn't feel that pieces of paper meant much but, on the other hand, without any qualifications, our children might resent their education in the future. Anyway, what does GCSE level Maths, English, Science, History etc. involve? Just a basic knowledge in a number of subjects. We, therefore, undertook to see that each of the children studied seven subjects and achieved a grade C in five of them. As the Government undertakes this as its aim, we felt that it was no great hardship to do likewise.

Twenty-five years on, I feel content that we have provided our children with the best of both worlds – a very practical, outdoor and healthy childhood, unfettered by peer group pressure/bullying/illness/drugs and sex education etc. – combined with as good an academic education as they would have received in school and, this was achieved through a structured approach.

My second perspective is, more latterly, as a teacher and tutor of home-educated children. In my day-to-day work, I now speak to many home educators and would-be home educators. Many of these people are what I would term as 'reluctant' home educators. They are having to consider home schooling because their children have been ill, or are bullied or in other ways not thriving at school. These parents want to follow the same topics as their children would in school. They want to feel that, in the future, their children can slot back into the system if they want to go to college or university. They want reassurance that their children are keeping up, academically with their peers. And, what is more to the point, they and their children want structure.

I do not find this remotely difficult to accept. When I look at the animals that surround me, I witness how routine and known guidelines reassure young animals and make them feel secure. The young can flourish within this known environment. Why then, must we feel there is something wrong in providing a structured education? In my experience, when children have an overwhelming desire to find out about something, (be it in their schedule or not) they will explore. We don't have to say that the only learning that is laudable is that which is self-motivated. There is such a thing as the moral imperative – doing some things because they need doing, not just because we fancy doing them. Providing a structure for learning is to me a logical concept if I would like my children to emerge with certain skills and knowledge which I (dare I say, as an older and, hopefully, wiser person?) consider it will be in their interest to master.

A final observation – unlike Ursula, we did not have an easy relationship with the LEA. When we began in home education, it was still in its infancy and locally people queried whether it was even legal to keep our children away from school. We suffered a great deal of harassment and intimidation, so much so that, rather than come under our LEA's jurisdiction, we actually registered as a school which meant that we received OFSTED inspections instead. OFSTED does at least have rules! Things have moved on a great deal since then and the pendulum is swinging more in favour of home-educators. Nevertheless, so much agonising can be avoided by being able to demonstrate that you have a structured plan for educating your children. Why waste time fighting the LEA when your efforts can go into the actual task of teaching your children?

I very much feel that parents should decide on the type of education their children receive. For this reason I fully applaud Ursula in her suggestion that those of us who do want to play at classrooms within the nice cosy security of home should be allowed to do so without feeling we are likely to experience the wrath of an organisation set up to defend our choice to home educate.

*Note: this is not to imply that EO is, in itself, anti-structured education, merely that some of us (possibly a culpably silent minority – who knows, could be the majority?) perceive structure as a taboo topic in newsletters.*

Jenny Morton

### Our Day

Following on from posts on this theme in the EO online forum and the interest that we all feel in how everyone else does it, I thought I would describe a bit about how home education works for us.

My daughter is 4 years old and my son is 2, so sometimes I feel a bit of a home education fraud – does what we do actually 'count'? Due to the children's ages, we don't do much in the way of structured activities yet. In the next couple of months (after a long-awaited house move), I am hoping to start making contact with local home ed groups, mainly for my daughter's benefit, and mainly just for social interaction at this stage.

Our days tend to follow a pattern, more of a gentle rhythm than a set routine, which seems to help the children feel secure and know what to expect. In the mornings after breakfast, we go out somewhere. This can be to the supermarket, health food shop, shoe shop, park, or just for a walk. We try to stay out for at least an hour or two and it serves many purposes: to run off

energy, to get fresh air and sunshine (if there is any!), to do shopping or chores, to get out of the house, and to interact with other people.

When we get back, the children play while I tidy the kitchen, do household chores and get the lunch and then we eat together round the table while chatting. After lunch, the children often watch a bit of television or a DVD and I use this time to have a bit of 'me-time' while popping in and out to keep an eye on them.

When telly-time is over, we try and do a slightly more structured activity all together, maybe building with mega-bloks, creating a railway track, doing colouring (or writing for my daughter) or something else we can all join in with. We will also often sit down together for a long reading session, which can include an informal reading lesson for my daughter. Depending on the weather and the moods of all concerned (!) we may also have a bath or water play session, go out into the garden, or make a cake or bread.

By this time, it is almost time for my husband to return from work and I start making tea. When he gets back, both children like a bit of Daddy-time which often consists of physical play while I prepare tea, or they will help him in the kitchen if he cooks. We all sit down together for tea and share stories about our days before it's time to start bed preparations.

I don't know how others might label our approach – it is flexible but there is also routine to it. We do sometimes have formal 'lessons' in reading and writing for my daughter when she wants them. We use some literacy workbooks and also have lots of books on everything and anything the children express an interest in. My daughter is currently very interested in the human body.

I think that the pattern we do have is as much for my benefit as for the children's. It is constantly evolving depending on the children, the weather, social options open to us. I hope that other people who also feel that they are 'not doing very much' with their children may feel reassured by the fact that neither am I!

Liz Pilley

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

### Beanbag Games

If you are short of something to do on a rainy day (or even want a regular activity regardless of the weather) then beanbags are an ideal resource to have. Beanbags are easy to make and older children may enjoy making them as a craft project. Look for either sewing or knitting patterns or you can buy them ready-made. You can get them filled with all sorts of stuff; rice, beans or plastic pellets (easier to wash but less eco-friendly! - be safety conscious if you have very little ones and check the filling is properly secured). Try and get a variety of colours and patterns as it makes it easier to distinguish between them for games.

I have a 5-year old so everything we do is kept appropriate to her developmental abilities. The first beanbag game that we like is very simple and involves gently throwing the beanbag at a target. For us, it's our beanbag basket (you could use a cushion). Apart from being fun, this is great for hand-to-eye co-ordination and you can either make the game co-operative or competitive depending on your child's personality.

Another favourite is to take one beanbag and throw it back and forth from person to person (with children who are still learning these skills then passing it is easier), perhaps using a song or rhyme and adding more bags to make it more interesting. We also throw the beanbag slowly up and catch it on the way down (good practice for future juggling, which I still can't do).

Another fun thing to do is to place the beanbag on your head, balance it there whilst you walk or dance around and then attempt to catch it as it falls forward. Shoulders work well for this too (a good one is to drop it from one shoulder and try and catch it with the other hand). We have another game which is passing the beanbag around the waist area, round and round, and back again the other way from hand to hand - again if you can find a song or rhyme to go with that then even better. This activity helps cross the *midline*.

The holistic educational approaches such as *Steiner Waldorf* and *Enki* utilise beanbag games and these activities certainly help with sensory integration. Remember that having fun is essential and if your child is struggling too much or not enjoying it then do something else.

### **Further Reading:**

Resource Teacher's Developmental Exercise Manual - available at [www.waldorfbooks.com](http://www.waldorfbooks.com)

Carla Hannaford's Smart Moves: Why Learning is Not All In Your Head

Enki Education's Movement package [www.enkieducation.org](http://www.enkieducation.org)

A First Book of Knitting for Children by Gosse and Allerton - Wynstones Press - contains simple knitting ideas

Joyful Movement by Christopherus Homeschool

*Liz Plant (and Emily, age 5)*

## **Seven Lessons for Home Schooling**

Being a teacher is fundamentally one of the most challenging and rewarding jobs - apart from parenthood. It is therefore little surprise that the two roles of teacher and parent are extremely close in nature. After all, each milestone made by your baby was down to the dual role you played as teacher and parent.

However, the divide between what happens at home and what happens at school begins almost as soon as a child crosses the threshold of the classroom. Parents ask, "what did you do today at school?" and children respond, "I don't know, can't remember." The paradox that we face here is that the learning and social opportunities that are available in school are meant to be memorable; full of creativity, fun and stimulating. At times though, there are not enough memorable events at school that inspire a child to want to explain the colourful story of their day. In fact, most children choose to keep home and school quite separate.

We therefore have a duality that can be divided into seven areas helping to explain why so many of our children are becoming disaffected with their school and family life.

### **Confusion**

All children are party to confusion because the teachings of school can be out of context, with too much information being presented for children to make sense of. As one bell rings to signal the end of a lesson, some children may not be ready to move on. Given the time, many children would choose to spend more time on a particular subject, whilst others actually need more time on the same subject. As a result, clarity of learning is often hindered by time restraints and set timetabling.

### **Class position**

Does competitive behaviour really need to be seen as the driving force of learning? The long term effect of learning what position one has within a class environment can produce arrogance in some, and be soul destroying for others. As such, this shapes the way children reflect their position in the world around them.

### **Indifference**

Thirdly, there is indifference. The effect on children who are constantly moving from one classroom to another at the will of the ringing bell can lead to apathy. Children learn to turn themselves on and off like a light switch, resulting in little time for true interest to deepen.

### **Emotional Dependency**

The goodness of children can not always be seen within the classroom as some schoolteachers have to invest a great amount of time managing group behaviour. This causes the emotional needs of some individuals to be overlooked, which is why, although part of a group, some children feel invisible to their teacher and their peers.

### **Intellectual Development**

Apart from an emotional dependency, children are also dependent on their teachers for intellectual development. Many schools do provide professional development programmes for their staff while others are so adverse to training that they only recruit unqualified staff, in order to mould them to their own school ethos. There are also schools who recruit subject specialists

who absolutely love their subject, but not children! How can a child aspire to become a great poet if her English teacher is ensconced with knowledge, but void of communication skills?

### **Provisional Self-Esteem**

Human beings thrive on being told what they are worth. Not all teachers think through their communication, and as a result make flippant remarks which can deconstruct self-esteem. Taking on the approach of positively praising and encouraging children to overcome challenges will enable them to respect and develop their own self-esteem – an invaluable part of growing up.

### **One cannot hide**

In today's educational climate, children are faced with an extremely busy timetable. Just as adults need time to themselves so too, do children. In this time and space, trust and respect develop, allowing privacy to become a legitimate part of life. Currently school commutes, attendance and homework can take up to 50 hours of a child's week. If one adds to this the number of hours spent sleeping, eating and engaged in commercial entertainment, a child is left with approximately 9 hours out of every week in which to create an understanding of who they are. Therefore, it is vital that teachers and families work together to provide children with an opportunity to fulfil their childhood.

Working to eliminate these seven reasons must be at the heart of authentic education and also helps explain the continuing popularity of Home Schooling. Throughout the U.K. there are over five thousand families that are choosing to home-school their children. Their children are of all ages, some even taking their GCSE's three years early as their home curriculum has allowed them to complete their learning and follow subjects that truly inspire and stimulate their curiosity.

### **Melissa Carter**

For over 15 years, Melissa has worked within the field of child development encompassing special needs, Waldorf Steiner, Montessori and pre-preparatory pedagogy. Trained at the Tavistock Clinic in Psychoanalytic Observational Studies together with her qualifications in teaching, Melissa developed her practice through working with leading professionals from the education and therapy world, as well as teaching within diverse educational environments.

Melissa along with her partner founded Bloo House – a Home Education School, providing a highly specialised, personalised and educational service. Bloo House offers primary aged children access to a diverse and inspiring teaching curriculum covering the core subjects, taught over four hours a day, four days a week. In addition, they also offer specialist lessons such as Philosophy Club for older children. Three and four year olds may attend two sessions of afternoon nursery per week, overseen by a qualified nursery nurse.

Most importantly the children have access to an authentic educational curriculum that provides formal learning in an inspiring and unique setting creating time for family life and time to experience childhood fully.

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### **Teen Home Edding**

My son never really fitted into school, it was one problem after another through primary school and we so looked forward to him moving onto a secondary school we knew well with staff we trusted. He started off enthusiastically but went downhill from there until it was clear it was not going to work for him being at school of any kind. So my husband and I braced ourselves for the challenge ahead.

Our son had previously been diagnosed with dyspraxia but he obviously had other challenges too as he found it hard to mix with other children and couldn't understand why people did what they did. He had major tantrums that didn't make sense. His sleep pattern was all over the place and he didn't play like other children but also seemed very intelligent and mature.

At the point we took him out of school he had just got over breaking his arm in three places during PE; a sprained wrist from a Chinese burn; was in a wheelchair due to being pulled off his bike on the way home and beaten; daily headaches just before lunchtime each day which led him to be in the medical room all lunch hour and half the afternoon until they decided to call us to pick him up. After a short period of trying flexi-schooling we decided to call it a day and de-registered him when he was 12.5 years old, around the same time that he was diagnosed as having Asperger's Syndrome.

Day one of home ed was such a relief, we felt like we had got the 'get out of jail free' card. Within hours he felt able to walk without the wheelchair and the pain went from his leg. We ventured out to the local museum and had a fab morning, but it felt too good to be true. Half the time we were waiting for the bad stuff to happen or a phone call to tell us how we couldn't possibly home-educate our son but none came.

Our son didn't have anymore tantrums, no more days wondering why he is having a fit about something that we didn't understand because now we knew exactly what he had been doing. He could now eat when he was hungry having realised that his blood sugar levels were all over the place due to stress no doubt and having access to machines full of chocolate and fizzy drinks. Also we found out later he had not felt able to cope with the noise in the dinner hall so hadn't tried to get any lunch.

His sleeping was very unsettled at first, as he didn't really believe he was not going back to school and dreaded waking up one day and being told he would have to go back. Even when we repeatedly reassured him he still did not feel safe. Each day he told us more of the things that had happened at school, he had not been able to get the words out when he was so stressed with it all. He also started having nightmares about what went on at school - it was like he was going through post traumatic stress syndrome. But as he didn't have to get up early it didn't matter so much that he couldn't get to sleep until 4am and so could, and often still does, lay in to lunchtime.

Gradually he recovered and trusted that this was it, and that he was free to be himself and could relax. With this came eager learning, a driving force in him to discover all those things that he had never had time to research and learn about. People encouraged us to get tutors for him and to start him on courses and I must admit we tried both but they were not for him.

He has taught himself a huge amount and is extremely confident in many areas that he hopes to follow through for future employment. He found a few places to do work experience and did 6 weeks at the local castle and related museums; he did a few weeks at the local theatre learning the sound and lighting side of putting on productions; joined the local hospital radio where he has learned a lot about office management, archiving and producing radio programmes which has led him to being part of an on-line radio channel. He does attend part-time computer courses at the local college but what he has learned the most is that he can be happy.

To anyone who is daunted by the idea of taking responsibility for the education of their child, especially a child with special needs, I would say just do it and see how you get on. The pleasure we have all gained from having our son at home learning with us is a part of his life we would not have missed for the world. He is 16 next month and in my opinion far more prepared to step out into the world than his class mates are. All our children are different and deserve to be given an individual way to live and learn that suits their needs. I am so glad we had the opportunity to do this with him as we have learned so much about ourselves too.

*Sally Pain*

### **Local Network Fund**

I'm writing to you as I am an ex-home-educator now working on a project (part time) to promote the Local Network Fund. I'm based in South Derbyshire but it's a national fund. EOers may or may not know about. It seems to be a good source of funding though for 0-19 yr olds and gives grants from £250 to £7,000. The LNF prefers to carry all the costs of a new project (or at least MOST of them). It helps new initiatives benefiting children and young people and has given funding to lots of very different groups for a massive range of things. Projects that have been

supported in the past are extremely varied and I thought EOers would probably have ideas that easily fit the criteria. If there's something that groups have been thinking about then this could help. The money needs to be awarded by the end of the year when the Local Network Fund winds down.

Here's some info about it:

**Criteria:**

- This fund is for NEW activities or projects **or** start up costs for a new group or new service
- It will treat extensions to projects as new activity e.g. reaching out to a new area, new age group, extra night a week due to success etc
- *\*\* The fund will not support Core running costs for existing projects*
- LNF gives priority to projects where the fund will cover between 70% - 100% of the total costs.
- Your activity must focus on children and young people aged up to 19 years. However, they can fund activities that help parents and families improve children's lives. – Grants can be accessed for young people up to 25 where the beneficiaries have learning difficulties.
- Most of the children and young people benefiting from your activity must be facing some form of "disadvantage". This could be something like being in a rural area or not being able to get together for a particular activity easily.
- You need to be a small locally managed, voluntary, community or self-help group. – 'Small' according to LNF criteria is an annual turnover of under £100k. Groups with a higher turnover than this must submit evidence that they are the only organisation/facility capable of delivering the proposed project in the area.
- You must have people volunteering to help with your activity, who are NOT part of your management committee.
- You must have written rules (Constitution) of the group.
- You must take steps to ensure that the children and young people taking part in your activity do not come to any harm while in your care, therefore you must have written procedures for keeping children safe – this will be needed as a condition of funding.
- Groups are only able to hold one grant at a time.
- Equipment costs must be reflective of the overall project aims (likes well-rounded projects)
- The Fund does not usually fund refurbishment /renovation/building work.

Hope you don't mind me sending this info. I just thought it might be something for the newsletter now...

The National link is: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/localnetworkfund/>

All good wishes,

*Liz Ramsay, South Derbyshire*

### **Developing the Regions & Democratising EO**

Thanks to a multitude of generous and hard working members, EO continues to evolve; at times cautiously through lack of consensus, sometimes feebly through sheer exhaustion, sometimes far too fast or in the wrong direction for others (and other times progress is really very good (-:)). Often there just isn't one ideal way to proceed. Home-edders represent a very diverse range of opinions and beliefs. I think it's great that so many of us can still hang together under the banner of EO.

#### Democratising EO

However, I believe the time is right for a more major rethink on the way we operate. With the increase in membership, and the potential threats to our current freedoms that must be dealt with, together with the wish to develop more resource opportunities for home-edders (an area of work that can be put on the back burner at times); there is soooo much work going on and yet to be done. I believe we can no longer run such a substantial organisation through open Council meetings. I used to think this was the best way to operate, and for a long time they were a good way to informally share decision making with those who wished/were able to participate. As a

good number of attendees were Local Contacts, there was also a degree of input through them from the local membership. A measure of the meetings' success is how few times Council members have held a CM only vote. Consensus is always lengthy hard work but invariably it can be achieved.

However, **consensus is not democracy** and with an increasing number of members not necessarily knowing those attending the meetings, most of the membership is unrepresented. This clearly is a cause for concern. Also, this approach gives any individual member who can attend a meeting a hugely unbalanced input into issues that then affects all members. And those who are not Council members are not accountable. *There is no balance between power and responsibility* which can have serious consequences as well as being unfair. I believe:

- EO must remain a national charity with its present structures.
- That we need a new way to elect the Council i.e. a mix of representatives elected by/from each region, plus reps. elected by/from each specialist Small Group (see back of newsletter).
- As the Council would then consist only of elected members, it would be inappropriate for the decision making process (at the national Council meetings) to be open to all members.
- Regionally elected Council members would only have a meaningful mandate when drawn from well developed regions, where people get to know each other, and are able to discuss concerns and topical issues.
- This focus on regional development would also enhance opportunities for all.

### Regional Development

In some parts of the country members have managed to get together particularly well locally and have all sorts going on. In other areas this hasn't been possible, or there might be a lull in activities due to greater age differences or difficulties with travelling or whatever. Also people naturally vary in what they like to do. For example the last EO conference we held here in York had speakers and workshops on various topics, including dyslexia, approaches to learning/computers at home, legal information etc., as well as offering lots of things for the kids to do. This included making things like 'fabulous hats', plus we had a brilliant lecturer in Mecatronics (Mechanics and Electronics) come over from a nearby University and set small groups of children and parents the task of building little buggies, and then building bridges out of straws (to span a metre) for the buggies to go over... This fun but more formal day wasn't to everyone's taste, but we ended up with over 300 EOers, many of whom had not previously attended the more casual type of EO gathering.

My point is that many members may not be able, or wish, to get to current national EO gatherings, which are usually arranged around Council meetings and are away from route centres (because of the accommodation needs). Other members may not have much going on locally. So I feel there is an untapped role for regional events, both because there'd be a larger pool of volunteers to organise a greater variety of accessible events, but also as this would be a way for members to get to know more people in their region and so be in a position to elect 'Regional Representatives/Coordinators'.

### Regional Representatives/Coordinators

These people would have a dual function of coordinating the development of regionally based opportunities for EOers as well as representing the region at national level as Council Members (the rest of the Council being made up of members elected from the Small Groups). The Regional Reps/Coords would:

- Collaborate with members, *especially Local Contacts*, to **catalogue** existing social, support and learning opportunities within the region, and make this knowledge available to all members in the region/country, perhaps via a 'Regional Bulletin' section on EO's Website.
- **Develop**, again in collaboration, the above range of opportunities. As long as everyone is agreeable different people could be charged with concentrating on certain aspects of this development. The scope for this could be tremendous and might include working with libraries and other potential resource providers, as well as overseeing a varied programme

of gatherings, conferences and workshops at regional level to compliment the events already under way more locally. All EOers could participate in the activities of any region, but would only be allowed to vote for the Regional Rep/Coord in their own region.

- Particular attention could be paid to **legal support and training**, both for members and for the Local Authorities. The latter to include members of the local Councils' Education Committees, in addition to Education Officers, as these Councillors can be very influential. It would be vital to liaise with all the Local Contacts in the region, as well as members of the L/EA Small Group, to compliment any work already under way.

To establish this network of Regional Reps/Coords in the first place, we'd need to have the regions defined through a national poll of EO members. Then, perhaps the Local Contacts in each region would agree to organise a regionally based get-together; or they might elect someone else to do this. At these first open meetings EOers could discuss the election of Regional Reps/Coords, and the requirements of the role, not least that these people would also become Council Members. Willing EO Members would then put their names forward, with information about themselves, and say a bit about how they envisaged the regional development going. A properly adjudicated secret ballot could be held in each region to decide who would fill the posts.

Although a consequence of having all elected Council Members (Regional Reps/Coords plus Reps from the Small Groups), would be that meetings would no longer be open to all members, ideally decisions would still be arrived at through discussion and consensus – taking into account views expressed at regional events.

So I'd like, through the newsletter as this is the only forum where all members can participate, to contribute to a discussion on developing the regions further and democratising EO. Apologies if people are already working on this. Sorry also if this sounds like an old record to some but I really, really feel we shouldn't delay in making EO more democratic, more stable and even more focussed on a) working at the political level, and b) developing great and accessible support and resources. EO is great; but we could stimulate much more social and educational opportunities for each other, and perhaps even become a stronger force for changing the broader educational landscape.

**Gwen Baldock**

**Dear Gwen**

*I thought it might be helpful if I responded to your article. I'm not going to discuss the issues you've raised as I'm broadly in agreement with the need for a regional level to the organisation, however, I thought I should let everyone know what work is currently being undertaken to reform EO and how members can get involved in helping to shape these reforms.*

*Last year the trustees created a small group of volunteers which was rather grandly named the Strategic Development Group (SDG) to look into the future of EO. One of the first things this group did was consult with the membership through the questionnaire in the last newsletter. In addition to this, it has sought outside expertise to look into changing the structure of the organisation for many of the reasons you've identified. As a group, we were well aware that this had all been done before and that, despite the fantastic work that had been done, there had been very little progress to show for it. In light of this, we decided to create an agenda for these changes to ensure that this time there was the possibility that the proposals put forward would be implemented. The following is the agenda for these reforms:*

- *29th April 2007 - the SDG is meeting to produce the draft policies, procedures and remits and post holder role descriptions for the proposed new structure and to draft the changes required to the Articles of Memorandum for final consultation with the current post holders prior to the next meeting. There has already been one round of consultation with post holders.*
- *8th September 2007 - the SDG is meeting to finalise the policies, procedures and remits in light of the input from the current post holders and to finalise the changes to the Articles of Memorandum ready for publication in the October Newsletter together with an advert for an EGM to take place on the 17th November 2007.*

- 17th November 2007 - an Extraordinary General Meeting is to be held to vote on the proposed new structure together with the necessary changes to the Articles of Memorandum, the post holder role descriptions and the policies, procedures and remits for this new structure.

I'd like to take this opportunity to really encourage members to get involved with these changes as they will fundamentally affect the structure of EO. To get involved members can call me on 0117 9592435 or email me at [homeed@gmail.com](mailto:homeed@gmail.com) and I will ensure that they receive copies of all the draft documentation that the group produces and ensure that any comments they have are put before the group. There is also an SDG forum on the website where discussion can take place and where the current documentation and minutes of meetings can be found.

**Joss Nowell**

**Trustee and Member of SDG**

**When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.**

**Victor Frankl**

Are YOU Stepping Up?

Stepping up to life brings up reaction.

I stepped up last week. It meant facing the wrath of family, confusion of friends, a stern letter and a good dressing down from someone I'd rather not mention!

For weeks I researched - talked, read, met, explored and thought. I followed my intuition and, as usual, followed synchronies as they unfolded.

I risk assessed - looked at the upside and down side of the choice from all angles and then touching my heart, made a decision that would change the life of someone I dearly love and am responsible for.

Despite all the plotting and planning the decision I made still went against the grain. Those who disagreed with me have endeavoured to try to make me feel foolish and thoughtless. One even tried to bully me into reversing the decision.

Can you relate to this?

As I retreated into a bubble of protection last week, I tried to bless these people. After all, my decision - as a foolish thoughtless person - was based on, inspiration, intuition, synchronicity and hours of study and thought. Meantime, the finger wagers had nothing more than preconceived judgements and an instant prejudice towards the choice.

I'm open to the possibility that I really am a very big fool. Philosophically, I balance this with an understanding that only time can really tell.

Overcoming Resistance.

Stepping up means overcoming resistance. First it's often our own resistance. This is followed by facing the resistance from those around us.

Silly isn't it, that we, or those around us, would try to thwart something that could be immensely beneficial to our well-being. Why would we do this to ourselves? And why would those around us try to stop us?

But last week I came to a point where nothing was going to stop the decision I had to make. It just wasn't acceptable for someone I love to spend another day in a painful and soulless existence.

Having discussed the choice with my son on several occasions, over several weeks, a choice was made that would change his life.

For my son, someone behind him, 'stepping up' has meant a world of difference. He's had the soul sucked out of him at school, trying to learn in a way that others say he needs to learn so our government's education inspectors can tick boxes and be happy.

He used to get up in the morning like a ghost and return in the evening like a zombie. Yet give him a weekend, or a holiday, and he's up like a lark and ends the day like a life-loving pup.

What I've seen since we chose to remove him from school is an incredible change.

By not socialising with peers, and minus the pressures of school, he is a teenager willing to put on a coat when he goes out in the rain (without being nagged), a greater willingness to share his heart with the family, offering to help around the house and already finding joy in alternative learning.

Stepping up has meant freedom and pleasure and a new experience in learning.

What I want to say is, 'Sorry, but no thanks,' to those who want to criticise and are too scared to make a bold decision that brings huge benefits.

Sure, education is important; but academic education is only a part of the whole and should never be crippling to the soul.

Stepping up has meant my son will learn for the love of experience and the joy of being alive, rather than because someone else says he has to.

Stepping up means he will learn about what he loves, in a way that is specific and appropriate.

Stepping up means he can learn in bliss. He can learn music, playing guitar until his fingers cramp, learn art on a hill top or a beach, maths from daily activity and English from reading books that ignite a genuine, authentic interest and spark.

And who knows where it will lead him?

Is stepping up scary?

Yes, a little. Of course! But it's better than being soulless. It's better than drifting through days, wishing you could do, be or have other things.

Neil Millar, CommunitySoul

[www.CommunitySoul.co.uk](http://www.CommunitySoul.co.uk) - 01934 743 649

My very special thanks to Sally Lever for her kindness and genuine support during the decision making process on home educating. My thanks also to EO for all the information.

## Events

There is a database of events open to the public on <http://www.historicevents.org/>

Regarding "History" there are some hands-on events happening in north Wales over this summer. We will certainly be going to them all.....as we are helping in the production of one and 'demonstrating' at the others.

**JUNE 4-8 Ruthin Castle** Open days for school visits. **Medieval Living History Demonstration**

**JUNE 9-10 Ruthin Castle** **Medieval Weekend** – Living History, Country Fair, Archery & Combat (Weather permitting)

**JULY 14-15 Chirk Castle** Many Medieval groups will be demonstrating living history and there will be a battle. Huge, authentic cannons firing!

**AUGUST 11-12 Bodelwyddan Castle** **Medieval Living History**, battles, demonstrations. A full weekend of entertainment including a Czech group.

If you know anybody who may be interested in this information, please pass it on. Ruthin is certainly free of charge.

These are very good opportunities to see medieval life close up. Not people in Robin-Hood-velour, but people who are serious about accurate portrayals.

All the best, Andy

**The Mummy's Curse**

<http://www.hunterian.gla.ac.uk/education/mCurse.html.old>

# EDUCATING ARCHIE - back on your pages!

CONTRARY TO RUMOUR, the absence of January's EDUCATING ARCHIE WAS NOT part of NHS cuts, just an editorial hiccup. Happy 2007 to all fans

At this time of year Mrs G has her customary rush of enthusiasm [prospect of choc?]

NOW- let's look at EASTER LENT, a period of purification or fasting, when we choose-

CAN I HAVE ANOTHER HOT X BUN?  
watching DVD of 'qigong for beginners'

if you make me a coffee

THOUGHT YOU'D GIVEN IT UP FOR LENT

Archie - purification doesn't have to be just PHYSICAL.  
black or white?  
Yes please. As I was saying -

Would you like to do a PROJECT on, let's say: Religions of the World?

IS THIS AN APRIL FOOL'S, MUM?

do if! No - I thought you could do a GRAPH of .. umm

Sigh

ok, no - a SURVEY a global assessment, if you will, of how belief has influenced socio-cultural behaviour down the ages..

OK.. THERE'S AN ELEPHANT IN THE GARDEN, BY THE WAY

\* Mrs G repeats word for word R4 trailer in background

# Reviews

Additional book reviews can be found in the Members Area of the EO website

## **It's True! Everest Kills by Kim Wilson.**

This is a non-fiction book that gives you all the information you could ever possibly need about Everest. It is jam packed with awesome facts about Everest, the people who managed to climb it and those that failed. We really enjoyed reading this book together and talking about it. Robert said: "I liked finding out about the people who climbed the mountain and the crazy things they did". Eleanor said: "I liked the pictures and cartoon".

Suzanne with Robert 8 and Eleanor 6

£4.99 ISBN 1-74114-414-0 Allen & Unwin

## **Circus Shoes by Noel Streatfeild**

Having loved *Ballet Shoes* as a child, I was looking forward to this one also by Noel Streatfeild. However despite several attempts to *get into* this book, we failed. We found the story of Peter and Santa orphan runaways, joining the circus to find their only relative, a clown called Gus very dated in its language and out-look, it was written in 1938. The children try hard to please Gus and the circus community by working hard and learning new skills, they want to fit in and belong. We found ourselves struggling to feel connected to any of the characters and we certainly weren't interested in what happened to them. Very disappointing.

Denise with Lewis (12) and Katie (8)

£4.99 ISBN 1-90325225-3 Jane Nissen

## **No More School by Meg Harper**

"I feel thick at school. The other kids tease me 'cos I live on a boat. You always have to do what the teachers say, even if you think it's really stupid...I just hate it!" Flora loves living on a canal boat, but she loathes school. So her best friend, Joss, covers for her when she bunks off. Perfect! Then something happens to change everything – Flora makes a new friend Tan. And soon she has a very big secret. Meanwhile, Joss becomes strangely distant and preoccupied. Is she jealous of Tan, or is there something more sinister going on? The subject of this book will strike a chord with those children who suffer the stress of going to school. And it also covers the relief children feel when they discover that school isn't compulsory! A delightful story for everyone, but might be especially interesting to those de-schooling.

Caroline with Connor (13) and Jamie (11)

ISBN 1-904529-28-3 [www.back-to-front.com](http://www.back-to-front.com)

## **Freya and Heath are Home Educated**

*by Liz Pilley*

If you go to a bookshop or a library there are lots of books about going to school. This is fair enough. Lots of children do go to school. But many children do not. Don't they deserve a story that reflects their experiences too? Well, now they have one. This is the first book I've read about home-educated children. It's a simple and charming story about a brother and a sister who do not have to leave their family behind to go out to school. Illustrated throughout in full colour, this book follows the average day of the titular characters Freya and Heath. It shows them baking, drawing, gardening and shopping. Freya and Heath are Home Educated also clearly explains some of the misconceptions people have about home education. You could keep spare copies of it to give to people who have questions about the subject. Whatever you decide to do with this book, the gentle humour and warm writing means you won't mind reading it again and again and again – that's if your children are anything like mine of course!

Available from <http://www.lulu.com/content/563010>  
or via [www.lizpilley.co.uk](http://www.lizpilley.co.uk)

## **Nothing but Trouble by Alan McDonald**

Bit short and there is not much atmosphere in this story. You do not get any impression of the characters or the locality. It needs more detail to make it work. The storyline is quite good, but it is very simplified. New boy Jago is allotted to Paul as a 'buddy'. Jago comes from a family of travellers and is very quiet, not interested in making friends. Paul is intrigued when he sees Jago sneaking food from the dinner table and wants to know why. Following him, he discovers Jago is feeding a vixen and her cubs. Paul and Jago become friends but there are problems when Jago is accused of stealing by Paul's other close friend. It all seems a bit unfair on Jago. I get the idea of prejudice but it could have been covered more fully and deeper. This book is ideal for young children who like short reads or are just getting confident to read on their own. An OK book.

Karis (12) and Galen (8)

£4.99 ISBN 0-7136-7679-5 A & C Black

### **Make your own pyramid** by *Clare Beaton*

This activity book aimed at the 5-8 year old audience is colourful with a simple layout. The instructions for making the pyramid were very easy to follow and all the children enjoyed colouring in the paper cut out figures. Yahya said, "I liked moving the people around in front of the pyramid, but they kept falling over! I think they should have been made of thicker paper." All in all a good book for a rainy afternoon.  
Almaas with Musa (10), Hawwa (8) and Yahya (6)  
£4.99 ISBN 978-1-905710-05-8 *b small publishing*

### **Game, Set and Match** by *Donna King*

I really enjoyed this book. It kept me on the edge of my seat as I couldn't wait to see what happened in the end. I got my Mum to read it to me because it is quite long and she did all the accents for me! It is about a girl called Carrie who is really good at tennis but her parents push her too hard and she feels like giving up. She ends up going to a tennis academy in Florida for the summer and makes some friends and some nasty enemies. She also learns how to stand up to her parents. I can't wait to read the other books in this series which are about girls who do other sports.  
Romy (7)  
£4.99 ISBN 978-0-7534-1356-2 *Kingfisher*

### **Viking Longship**

by *Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom*

Yet another book about the Vikings - but this one should definitely not be missed. An excellent story and picture book that would appeal to all ages, but also bursting with facts to keep older readers interested. Researched on location and produced in consultation with Dr Richard Hall of the York Archaeological Trust, it is a reliable source of information as well as being an enjoyable and interesting read. A book to be enjoyed by all.  
Jill, Sarah (9) and Edward (7)  
£10.99 ISBN 1-84507-465-3 *Frances Lincoln*

### **There Was Once a Boy Called Tashi**

by *Anna and Barbara Fienberg*

This book is about a boy called Tashi who has to find a magic animal called a familiar to cheer up the ogre Gloomin. When Gloomin comes he makes all the plants die. Tashi finds a singing cat (the familiar) and Gloomin goes away and the plants come back to life. I thought this was an interesting and exciting book and I liked the singing cat idea. I also think that the pictures are really good as well. I think children, who are about six, or learning to read would really like this book, but I liked it anyway.

Holly (9)  
£9.99 ISBN -741144198-2 *Allen & Unwin*

### **The Parent and Child Group Handbook** by *Dot Male*

An inspiring book that really does cover everything you need to know about starting up a group. It is mainly looking at the Steiner Waldorf style approach but has lots of general information on the practicalities, such as venue, funding, planning, songs, rhyme, stories and celebrations. There is a list of useful addresses and helpful books. This is a 'must have' for anyone who want to start a Steiner style group.  
Hilary with Isaac (6) and Finty (2)  
£16.99 ISBN 1-903458-46-3 *Hawthorne Press*

## **BOOKS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

### **The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome** by *Tony Attwood*

With a well-thumbed copy of 'Attwood's Asperger's Syndrome - a Guide for Parents and Professionals' already on my bookshelf, I expected this new book to be of little interest to me. I was wrong! Although the format of the book is similar, covering every aspect from 'what is AS' through to sensory sensitivity and motor co-ordination, there the similarity ends. His new book explores each aspect in considerably greater depth. For example, the chapter on cognitive abilities has been expanded to include new subsections dealing with attention problems, organisational and planning abilities, problem solving and classroom strategies - a must read if you are considering your child returning to school at any time. There are also additional chapters including college, careers and relationships, making this book of use to adolescents and adults as well. The style is easy to read using non-technical language and there is a good mixture of clinical observations, research information and first person accounts. Each chapter concludes with a useful summary of key points and strategies. Whether you have received a recent diagnosis of AS or have been involved for some time, this book would be an asset.

Mary  
£17.99 ISBN 1-84310-495-4 *Jessica Kingsley*

### **An Asperger Dictionary of Everyday Expressions** by *Ian Stuart-Hamilton*

At last! This is a book I could have done with for the past 10 years. As the title suggests, it is a dictionary of expressions, everything from 'A-Z' to 'Zero to hero'. People with Asperger's Syndrome often take language literally and fail to understand the hidden meaning, so expressions such as 'go through the roof' or 'go off with a bang' can be extremely confusing, if not terrifying - think about it! Both traditional and up-to-date expressions are included and in the six weeks our family has been trialling the book, only two could not be found. As well as a

comprehensive definition, often including from where the term derives, an extremely useful politeness rating is given, from \* meaning unlikely to offend anyone, to \*\*\* which indicates that the expression will always offend, avoid if possible. Anything that makes people and language a little less confusing for my son (16) is a 'must have' and the book also makes him a little more independent, not having to rely on someone else to explain what was meant. It would also make a useful reference book on the shelf for anyone interested in languages and also for anyone, like me, who has difficulty keeping up with the latest additions to the English language.

Mary

£13.99 ISBN 1-8431-8518-3 Jessica Kingsley

**Any EO member can review books for these pages. If you would like to be part of the review team please email or telephone Sally for more information (01559 370798 or email [sally@phonecoop.coop](mailto:sally@phonecoop.coop)).**

## 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.

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

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.

*Contact List of Publishers available in Members Area of EO website and can be supplied on request.*

# Regional Diary

All regular meetings listed below are included automatically in every issue, please inform us 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 non-EO members, & please check your details. Changes to Jo: 01392 438876

## ENGLAND

### 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** & 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 & surrounding counties.

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

Varied activities & HE events for all ages most days  
Details & 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 & support. Contact Tracey on 01793 813325 or [roge.tracey@virgin.net](mailto:roge.tracey@virgin.net)

### BRISTOL

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

Email list for **Bristol** & 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 meeting Mondays & Friday afternoons. under 7's, study groups, music, drama, & lots more. Carla 0117 935 4389

## **BUCKS**

Newsletter for **Bucks/Northants & Milton Keynes** home educators network extends a warm welcome to all (wherever you live): activities, socials & support. Local Contact Georganne 01908 662256  
[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 ;  
[eostationery@gmail.com](mailto:eostationery@gmail.com)

## **CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**Cambridge** regular meetings & 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 01233 265043 [sarah.lambert7@ntlworld.com](mailto:sarah.lambert7@ntlworld.com)

**Peterborough Muddle Puddle Group** The group's primarily for under 8s & meets 3 Fri afternoons a month. To make contact with the group there is a Yahoo list at:

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

## **Cambridge/Norfolk border North Cambs:**

Fortnightly at March. Contact Jane 01354 677869 or Sarah 01354 688245 or email Pat:  
[Northcambs@chauntryhouse.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:Northcambs@chauntryhouse.fsnet.co.uk)

## **CHESHIRE**

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

**Delamere** Weekly alternative education programme with Delamere Forest Rangers 01490 412167

**Chester** Meetings every other week for music crafts & educational activities 01490 412167

**Frodsham** Social meetings & Youth achievement/DoE award meetings every other week 01490 412167

**Deeside** Monthly ice Skating 01490 412167

**South Cheshire & North Staffs** Contact Carrie: 01782 786720 Email: [home.ed@ntlworld.com](mailto:home.ed@ntlworld.com)

**CLEVELAND & DURHAM** (see also DURHAM) email lists: <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/tvhe/>  
<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/tvhe/>  
Billingham contact Linz 01642 800940

## **CORNWALL**

Free events sheet bi-monthly via email or SAEs. Contact Helen, Pro-Tem, West Pentire Road, Crantock, Newquay, Cornwall, TR5 8RZ Phone 07779 559535 or email Beth on

[bethany.sampson@talk21.com](mailto:bethany.sampson@talk21.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 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  
[rboulton@phonecoop.coop](mailto:rboulton@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 & activities. Contact Yvonne 01246 555645, Suzy 01246 240917, Alastair 01246 520820

**Chesterfield** - Hasland Village Hall ART CLASS - Ages 10 & over, 4th 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](mailto:andy@derbyhe.co.uk)

**Amber Valley**, Alfreton area, meetings, 30 minute drive from Derby, Nottingham, Matlock & 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 & 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 & 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 meetings on Tuesdays: Ring Louise 01237 441786 or Amanda (above)  
**North Devon** Home Grown Kids. Twice weekly meetings & events.  
**Swimbridge** Wed 1pm-4pm - Social, music, science, arts.  
**Swimbridge** Wed 4.30pm-5.30pm French,  
**Swimbridge** Fri 10.30am-11.30am - Spanish  
**Barnstaple** Fri Funderzone, general play. Term time only. www.homegrownkids.co.uk 01271 830456/830804  
**South Devon** Local Contact Bridget 01803 862158 email: 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 We organise regular meetings for home educators eg a monthly natural history group, historical visits group & photography group. All have yahoo groups to share ideas, links & photos & to plan activities. We also help families set up non-profit HE interest groups &/or to network with like-minded families. Also organise one-off events. If interested contact: Gordon/Hannah: lindnich@tesco.net or ring 01803 762788 & for more details on above groups, see Devon newsletter.  
**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 Meeting every Monday for crafts, games, play etc. Friendly, welcoming group. Contact: June 01202 827945 bugchick@btinternet.com  
**Poole & Bournemouth** area, for fortnightly meetings with lots of space & lots of activities - contact Rachel or Donna, email: shec4u@yahoo.co.uk  
**DURHAM**  
 email lists: http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/tvhe/  
 http://groups.yahoo.com/group/County-Durham-HomeEd  
**ESSEX**  
**Chelmsford** meetings - monthly, third Thursday. 2-4pm email Sarah, tower@tesco.net  
**Colchester** Bowling & Swimming monthly on last Wed except School holidays.  
 Sharron: sharron@brainydata.com  
**Southend** OTHENA - Older children/Teens News & Activities (11+) for details contact Michelle: ab006h6097@blueyonder.co.uk or 01702 307834 http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/OTHENA/  
**Tiptree** monthly meetings, last Tuesday of month 2-5pm. Contact Julie, email: julie.ashton@ntlworld.com  
**Various venues** across Essex, New Teens Group, meeting monthly - Sally@brisley.freemove.co.uk  
 Around Essex Educational visits twice monthly Thurs. Details of Essex groups & events in **Epicycle** available by email from Corinne: epicycle@wavy.org 07802630693  
**Southend/Westcliff** monthly get-togethers on the 1st Friday of the month. Shirley 01702 308698 indigoshirl@fsmail.net  
**GLOUCESTERSHIRE**  
 Monthly social meetings open to all. Regular workshops & outings. Website: http://members.lycos.co.uk/GlosHomeEducators/index.html also Email list for events & forum. Rob & Fiona 01684 290087 openhorizons@ntlworld.com  
 Caroline 01242 890351 cambrose@ieee.org  
 Beverley 01242 524091 or Mhairi 01452 384104.  
**Dursley** Home Educators meeting first weds every month for social, support & activities. Swimming & occasional outings. All welcome. Contact Paula 01453 519287 email: uks\_sneaky@hotmail.com  
**Gloucester** meetings & swimming. Contact Dawn 01452 540019 dawnandmike@blueyonder.co.uk or Tracy 07941 612092  
**Stroud** regular meetings, 1st Tuesday + 3rd Thursday every month contact Nick 01453 840036 email: nick.weir@freeuk.com  
**South Gloucestershire**  
 http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SouthGlousHomeEd  
**HAMPSHIRE**  
**Petersfield**, ACTIVEO, 5 events a week within 20 miles, all welcome. 01428 712394 website: www.activeo.org.uk  
**Fareham & Gosport**, FAREGOS HE meets twice weekly for craft, swimming & other activities. Contact Tracey 02392 551870 or Julie 01730 261468, email: 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 & other activities.  
 http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/NHEO/  
 Contact Carol 01264 357650 eo@azakit.com  
**Farnham/Aldershot** area, friendly group for under 10s; fortnightly meetings & occasional outings. Contact Paula: 01252 316497 paula.oakley@talk21.com or Emma: 01483 426277 emmajevavons@supanet.com  
**Romsey/New Forest** area, fortnightly - details email Anne on anniemax1@yahoo.co.uk  
**Southampton** & area, SEEDS meetings at least once a week contact Lyn 02380 487879

lynb@dsl.pipex.com

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/SEEDS1>

#### **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 & 4th Thurs. Carolyn 01727 851073

**Stevenage** Swimming Pool, Swimming Lessons every Thursday 10.30am, term time. All ages & 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.

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

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

#### **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 & 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 website: [www.when.omnia.co.uk](http://www.when.omnia.co.uk) & email group: Wealden

[homeeducatorsnetwork@yahoo.groups.com](mailto:homeeducatorsnetwork@yahoo.groups.com)

**Ash, Sandwich, Dover, Canterbury, Ramsgate** & 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 & games. Yoga for children. Contact: Katherine 01892 863958

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

Weekly sports & meetings at local hall, social activities & fun! 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, regular meetings & visits, contact Liz 01634 323959

#### **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 & 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 the under 8s.

We will be starting up in the new year & will be meeting twice a month, dates & venue to be confirmed. All are welcome. For more details contact Tammy on [mattamsam@btinternet.com](mailto:mattamsam@btinternet.com) or 0116 2692499, or Vikki on [martinvikki@aol.com](mailto:martinvikki@aol.com)

#### **LINCOLNSHIRE**

ActiveIncs Home Education Group.

Helena 01724 720595

**Central Lincoln**, Bluebells - activities, crafts, play,

walks etc. Regular meetings, Ruth 01522 804583

Variety of informal events & 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 & 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 & Wednesday, all ages from babies to adults welcome. Sarah 07816 872841 or

Gigi 020 732 88990

**South East London/Kent** borders regular social gatherings, science workshops & other activities, contact Ann 01689 826504

**East London** HE Group meets on alternate

Wednesdays in **Leytonstone** from 1 - 4 pm. Contact Jo: [acoo@mirehall.freeseve.co.uk](mailto:acoo@mirehall.freeseve.co.uk) Tel: 020 8520 5709

**East London** Home Educators formerly at Stratford.

New Venue in **Forest Gate**. Meets every Friday 1 - 3

for unstructured social get togethers & outdoor fun.

All ages welcome (currently 1 - 13) Annalise 0208

5001053

**Bromley/Croydon** Chrysalis Group meets most weeks for activities & 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 & 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, table tennis - open to any ideas.

Contact: Claire 020 8402 5831

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

**Lewisham** Thursdays 11-1 then to park afterwards  
Joolz: 0208 2895026 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 & board  
games, on going speed networking for HE families  
call Sophie on 020 7581 5238 to book.

**Stanmore** events on Tues & Wednesdays.  
Programme available from Vivienne, email:  
timsharkey@aol.com, call 020 8954 1885 or Vicki  
email: Aceva@btinternet.com

**N London Hornsey** Home Educators Club  
Currently up to 12, but older kids welcome. Range of  
activities, socialising & 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 (& Middlesex)** Home Ed group meets  
every Tuesday for varied educational & social  
activities & visits. Betsy 020 8993 0677  
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 & support.  
Alison 020 8569 9398 or Kathryn 020 8566 0543 or  
kathrynvglynn@hotmail.com or  
Alison@rothwell1973.fsnet.co.uk

**West London (Chiswick & Ealing)** home ed group  
meets every Tuesday. Naomi 020 8567 7589 or  
naomisandler@yahoo.co.uk. Also contact for details  
of yahoo group membership - discussion &  
information about events in the area.

#### **Greater London**

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MuslimSistersHomeEducationNetwork> This group is primarily for Muslim  
Home Educators in the Greater London area, but is  
open to those willing to travel in for activities from the  
neighbouring counties. Entry to the group can only  
take place after you have met one of the moderators  
or attended an event organised by Ms.Hen. For  
information to join, &/or attend the next event please  
email: fizzatiislamhomeed@hotmail.co.uk

#### **MANCHESTER**

**Manchester**, contact Sue 0161 881 4830  
Madcow Manchester + District events & support  
email list from Lesley:  
lesley.blackshaw@ntlworld.com

#### **MIDDLESEX**

Hayes, We are an informal group that meets at a  
Church. We meet every other Thursday, from 10.30  
to 1.30. For further details please contact: Jenn 0208  
573 9042, email: 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

**Downham Market** - bimonthly social meetings,  
including fun & creative activities & occasional  
outings. All age groups are welcome, as are  
members from other areas. Website:  
[www.freedm.org.uk](http://www.freedm.org.uk) for more details or  
email: info@freedom.org.uk Nicola 01366 385380.

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

**Norfolk/Suffolk** border Steiner style grp 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**

Informal group of home educating families meet up  
for various activities & support. Anyone welcome.  
[www.northantshe.org.uk](http://www.northantshe.org.uk) email:  
info@northantshe.org.uk or phone Imogen 01604  
781316 or 07756 011189

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

#### **NORTHUMBERLAND**

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EO-Northumberland>

#### **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

Nottingham Weekly meetings. For full list. Local  
Contact: Damian 0115 9603005 or  
damian.carnell@ntlworld.com or  
Louise 01773 780634

**Amber Valley** area, meetings, contact: Deborah  
01773 778380 or Helen 01332 883545

#### **OXFORDSHIRE**

Group meets alternate Thursdays for varied timetable  
of activities. Children split into 3 age groups.  
Workshops & regular speakers. Contact: Wendy  
01865 514973

#### **SHROPSHIRE**

Activities & outings, contact Val 01952 502225  
South Shrops regular meetings every Tuesday,  
outings & workshops. contact: Maria 01588 630314

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

## SOMERSET

**Bath** H.E.L.P. group meets regularly for outings & activities. Louise: 07957618988; jensen-thomas@clara.co.uk

**Bath Meetings** 3 days per week for semi-structured child-centred learning activities with parents & a teacher. Contact: Andy & Rachel 01373 464754

**Frome & Beyond (FAB)** home educators' support group. Social gatherings, group activities, outings & newsletter. Contact Sally 01749 674842 or Jennifer 01373 813830

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

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

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

**Somerset North** W.A.V.E.S group meeting fortnightly for crafts & activities in Weston-Super-Mare. Friendly group. Contact Viv 07957580935

## STAFFORDSHIRE / S. CHESHIRE / N. SALOP

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

**Staffs North & South Cheshire** newsletter for local social & educational events. Carrie: 01782 786 720 email: 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 & 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 & 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 & learn from our kids in a chaotic, eco friendly & creative way! For more info contact Mell on 0845 337 0282

## SURREY

P.A.C.T. Surrey's home education group. Monthly newsletter containing information about activities, outings, events etc. contact: pact@jellyed.com or Jeremy on 01483 546515

**Surrey**, Bloo House providing a unique learning environment for primary aged children. Piers 01932 228940 enquiries@bloohouse.co.uk / www.bloohouse.co.uk

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

**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 & problem solving. For more details contact Rachael: 01932 706191 rachael.underwood@classicfm.net

**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 & occasional outings. Contact Paula: 01252 316497 paula.oakley@talk21.com or Emma: 01483 426277 emmajeavons@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

## 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 the County. Paper edition - £12/year or £6 1/2 year Email only £2.50 year from Tula 01323 648127 email: 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

**Eastbourne 'SHINIES'** home ed. group - All ages & abilities welcome. Contact Loretta 01323 509283 or email 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

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

**Wealden** Home Ed website: www.when.omnia.co.uk also email group: wealdenhomeeducatorsnetwork@yahoo.groups.com

## TYNE & WEAR & NORTHUMBERLAND

Regular, frequent & varied activities. Age range from 1 to 17yrs. Website: http://uk.groups.yahoo.co

m/group/home\_ed\_tyneandwear

Music - Rosemary 0191 2853707 or

paul@thenews.icom43net

National Trust & English Heritage Visits

& Woodland visits - Deborah 01434 674713

## WARWICKSHIRE

Usually 2 Thursdays a month; at **Wolston** nr

**Coventry** & 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. HELM is available free by email or by post for a small charge & covers HE related articles & events throughout the West Midlands & surrounding areas. All entries for Helm should now be sent to: 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

**Chippenham** & surrounding area: 'Out & About Learning Centre' Tuesdays, termtime only 10.00am - 2.30pm Biddestone. Program of activities facilitated by qualified teachers, visiting professionals/interesting people/speakers. Trips out. Parents evenings. Contact: Rachel: 01249 890525 or Amanda: 01380 739845

info@outandaboutlearning.org.uk

**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 with almost 100 HEers in North Wilts, send email to: NWilts\_HE-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

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

**Swindon** informal get-together, 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 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

**Devizes** last Thursday of month, 11:30-2:30 social activities & support, contact Janet 01249 818672 or email Janet for this & book club: janet@eldekvisit.com

#### **WORCESTERSHIRE**

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

Meetings - Karen 01527 835384

**Worcester** Home Education Group  
Meetings 3rd tuesday of every month, art+craft activities, contact: Jayne: 01905 424451

**North Worcs/Kidderminster** meetings - Gail Tutchter 01562 822034 email: gail@tqmi.co.uk

#### **YORKSHIRE EAST**

Regular meetings & visits. Alison 01405 769902  
**Bridlington**, regular meeting every Thursday 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 & social contact. Please email: 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 & outings. Contact Karen 01904 400317 kcarensandy@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  
**Scarborough**, New Group started on Fridays contact Tess: 01947 825772 email: 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, or Kate on 01423 865777, email ksbtscott@aol.com

#### **YORKSHIRE SOUTH**

**Bradway**, Mon's fortnightly. Contact Barbara 0114 235 3224, Jax 01246 430616 or Kirsty 01709 865721  
Regular meetings for arts/crafts, visits, swims, hanging out & more. Contact: Jo 01709 820866 or Denise 01226 733478 or Gary 0114 2585702.

**Sheffield**, Highfield, Tuesdays. Contact: Annette 0114 2583502 or Fiona 0114 22751142

#### **YORKSHIRE WEST**

**Bradford** Weekly meetings & activities. For a monthly schedule of activities, please contact Sarah on (01484) 361206 or email: sl.marshall@ntlworld.com

**Leeds** Ten-pin bowling & weekly meeting. For more information, please contact Emma on (0113) 217 2795 or e-mail emma.birkenshaw@gmail.com

**Halifax**: every Monday except bank hols. 2-4pm. Meeting: Free-range activities + exchange of friendship & support for HE children & parents. Gill 01422 311876, email: Gill Kilner@aol.com

**Huddersfield**: Swimming Wednesdays - term time except 2nd Wed of month. Tracy (01484) 317176.

**Huddersfield** monthly meeting (2nd Wednesday of month - except Feb when on 2nd Friday of month). Contact Helen (01484) 841041 or Jane (01484) 645034

**Huddersfield** "Lunch & Chat" (last Thursday of month) at Civic Centre. Contact Tracy (01484) 317176. Huddersfield Art Gallery, Art Workshop, last Thurs of month. 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

## FIFE

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

## HIGHLANDS/MORAY

Informal network for information & support, occasional outings & get-together, suggestions welcome. Contact Toni, email: tee.kay@hotmail.co.uk or 01463 831574 or Rebecca 01343 542245

## IRVINE

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

## LOTHIAN, CENTRAL & S.E. SCOTLAND

fortnightly group for meetings & outings. contact Jane 01835 862118.

## WALES

### SOUTH WALES

South Wales Home Educators Network, Weekly meetings in **Llantrisant & Swansea**, Home Learner's days at local museums, e-mail support list, plus trips, parties & get-togethers. For information & support e-mail: contact: SWHEN@aol.com or 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.netfirms.com

**Mid Glamorgan** - Rhondda Cynon Taff meetings on a friday, contact Lisa 01443 772278

## PEMBROKESHIRE & Cardigan area

For local information contact Yvette 0845 458 9251

## CEREDIGION & CARMARTHENSHIRE

**Lampeter**, weekly mtgs Tues, Laura 01545 580528

**Aberaeron** weekly mtgs Fri, Laura 01545 580528

**Llanddeusant** monthly mtg. Laura 01545 580528

## GWYNEDD

**Bangor** & area home ed network, mtgs & social activities + Montessori sessions. Heather 01248 352336

**Tregarth** Creative Learning & Support group meet Wednesdays at Tregarth. Free weekly newsletter of events. Julie 01286 678181 jdchapmanmaurice@aol.com or Nick (Anglesey) 01407 811049.

## POWYS

**Welshpool** on wednesdays, swimming/Tumble Towers, workshops, skateboarding, & events, contact Dee + Dave 01938 590098

email:d.yeoman@tesco.net

**Brecknock/South Powys** area occasional events in South Powys contact Hela 01874 610190 email: ry.ella@liscali.co.uk

**Newtown** area: Fortnightly get-together in Newtown, for activities, play & socialisation. Contact Sue 01686 688748 or email: smw5@tutor.open.ac.uk

## N.E. WALES / BORDERS

weekly gym/trampolining in **Wrexham, Oswestry, WestCheshire/NE Wales**. local newsletter of events please send your details & £2 payment to; HENWOS, Berllan Gron, Llany Cil, Bala. Gwynedd LL23 7YG  
**Wrexham** themed craft sessions run by prof. artist, with parental help. Contact: Marie 01978 362436

# Inspirational

## April

- 1 April Fools Day
- 2 International Children's Book Day
- 2-15 Edinburgh Science Festival
- 7/4-7/5 National Pet Month
- 8 Easter Sunday
- 21 Queen Elizabeth's Birthday
- 23 St George's Day
- 23-29 International Turn-off TV Week
- 29 International Make-a-Wish-Day

## May

- 1 World Asthma Day
- 6-12 Compost Awareness Week
- 5-12 National Doughnut Week
- 7 International Dawn Chorus Day
- 7-13 Deaf Awareness Week
- 12 World Fair Trade Day
- 14-20 National Allergy Week
- 20 Cultural Diversity Day
- 22 National Moth Night
- 23 World Turtle Day

# Competition 175

This issue's prize is a book of your choice, from a donated selection. The winner of last issues prize is Oliver Trapmore-Hyde from Chartham, Kent. The competition is open to all EO members, except Council Members & paid contractors. Entries to - EO Competition, 79 Cumberland Avenue, Cleveleys, Lancs. FY5 2DS by 30 April.

V	C	K	Y	M	E	K	C	D	W
E	A	H	A	G	B	O	H	N	S
O	S	P	E	H	C	E	E	B	Q
G	L	R	O	S	M	W	R	E	E
E	V	M	O	M	T	X	R	Y	F
T	K	C	N	H	D	N	Y	C	U
J	C	D	F	P	E	T	U	D	E
S	Y	C	A	M	O	R	E	T	M
W	K	L	H	Z	D	C	I	Q	I
H	N	H	A	L	L	R	P	T	L

HORSE CHERRY CHESTNUT BEECH OAK  
LIME MAPLE SYCAMORE

# Small Groups

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, **Laurie Charlton**, Sarah Cook, **Gail Borrows**, Lynda Hitchman, Jacqui Houlding, **Joss Nowell**, Cella McDonagh, **Janet Wilkinson**

**Steering:** Jane Bathgate

**Finance:** Julie Arnold, Lynda Hitchman, Ann Samuel Till, Janet Simpson, Martin Wise

**Enquiries:** Anne Rix, Geraldine Adams, Iris Harrison, Jo Borthen, Edwina Theunissen

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

**Core Govt. Policy:** Phil Hicks, **Laurie Charlton**, Fiona Nicholson,

**L/A/E A Group:** Anne Wade, Sarah Cook, Rob Wade

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

**Safeguarding Children:** 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:** Ann Newstead, 01689 826504 thenewstead5@yahoo.co.uk

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

**NI (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 2752 simonf@surefish.co.uk

**Wales (S):** Celia McDonagh, Cardiff, 07763 729055 celiamcdonagh@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

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

**South East:** 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.com

## EO Email Lists & Forums

EO runs four email lists with Yahoo Groups.

The **general** discussion list for advice and peer support.

The **Single Parents** list for the sharing of problems & solutions.

A **Scotland** list for Scottish home educators or those interested.

The **Children's List** for the **children** of members only.

All 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 business forum for members to take part in the business of EO. 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

**Julie Arnold** (Merseyside) 01744 8852434  
julielarnold@msn.com (Treasurer)  
**Jane Bathgate** (Borders) 01835 862118  
**Jo Berry** (Cheshire) 07986 461719  
joffreespirit@googlemail.com  
**Emma Birkenshaw** (W Yorks) 0113 217 2795  
emma.birkenshaw@gmail.com  
**Gail Borrows** (Bucks) Tel: 01628 483895  
gail.borrows@gmail.com (Membership Secretary)  
**Pauline Butterworth** (Cleveland) 01642 570786  
pollyb47@aol.com (LC Co-Ordinator)  
**Beverley Cameron-Young** (Lancs) 01772 734 314  
beverley.young@blueyonder.co.uk  
**Laurie Charlton** (Leics) 0116 2591051  
lauriecharlton@hotmail.com (M: 07837 061126)  
**Imogen Cooper** (Northants) 01604 781316  
imogen@rebelalliance.fsife.co.uk  
**Joss Nowell** (Bristol) 0117 9592435  
homeed@gmail.com (Publications Secretary)  
**Anne Rix** (Devon) 01237 451535  
anne@annerix.demon.co.uk (Enquiries Sec.)  
**Janet Wilkinson** (Peterborough) 01733 554436  
thewilkinsons123@ntlworld.com (Company Sec)  
**Rowenna Williams** (Gwynedd) 01678 521348  
rowenna73@hotmail.com  
**June Wilson-Billing** (Dorset) 01202 827945  
educationotherwise@mac.com

### Membership

Membership and newsletter subscription enquiries, membership cards, address changes, new member packs, other queries or missing newsletters contact: Database Administrator, Education Otherwise, 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 Borrows, 48 Marlow Bottom, Marlow, Bucks SL7 3NB 01628 483895  
email: eostationery@gmail.com

**Truancy Cards (HE cards)** (free on joining). Extra cards S5AE + £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

#### **Contact 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)

**Campaign Team Contact:** Fiona Nicholson  
fiona\_j\_nicholson@yahoo.co.uk 0114 281 9974  
205 Leverton Gardens, Sheffield, S11 8FD

**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.freereserve.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:** Joss Nowell (See CM List)

**Membership Secretary:** Gail Borrows (See CM List)

**General Secretary:** Vacant

**Enquiries Secretary:** Anne Rix (See CM List)

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

**Company Secretary:** Janet Wilkinson (See CM List)

**Treasurer:** Julie Arnold (See CM List)

**Chairperson:** Vacant

**Vice-Chair:** Vacant

# 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 0845 478 6345 or 0870 73 000 74

(the 0870 number will be phased out over the next year or two)

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

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