

education otherwise™



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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE IS: 1st July 2009

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Welcome...

To the June 2009 Newsletter.

As I type many home-educators are holding their breath waiting for the Badman Review to be published (of which there is some information from barrister, Ian Dowty, and further information in News from the Government Policy Group). Home-educators have had a rough couple of years of it when it comes to the government turning their gaze towards our community, no sooner do we come out of one consultation, then another one is launched (or rather not launched, there wasn't much opportunity for 'consultation' this time around).

The past couple of months have also seen the extraordinary (in my personal opinion) move by an Essex Local Authority to give money to a group of home-educators in order for them to pay for a tutor. Whether you think this is a positive thing or not, it likely paves the way for other groups of parents to look to do the same - and all of a sudden it seems like the landscape of home-education is shifting in some areas.

All of this can leave us feeling a bit battered, bruised and bemused, and I guess I'm probably not alone in wondering what is coming next?

Still, little time to ponder when we're so busy enjoying the wealth of green that has now sprung around us and picking the first of the salad veg from our little patch - my 5 year old is very proud of her radishes!

Nikki Haxell
Newsletter Co-ordinator

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If you are a child and you need someone to talk to, contact: Childline 0800 1111

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Diary of a Home-Educating Nobody

By Ross Mountriev

You just get those days don't you?

You'll know the ones I mean - where you start out with such great educational intentions then immediately the children start groaning or arguing or resisting and before you know where you are you find yourself giving in.

This is partly because the children don't want to do anything parents have suggested - just out of principle - and you get too tired to fight! Partly procrastination from anything 'workish' and partly because, if you were honest, you weren't that enthusiastic either and it all seems suddenly a bit boring and pointless. Then the children persuade you that they've got the burning desire to do something like build with Lego, play their latest techno game, or get back to the current activity that's strewn all over their bedroom floor. And in the face of their convincing enthusiasm for other things you waver just a little bit, they catch you off guard, what little motivation you originally had flies out the window with your will power and you know you're doomed. (If this has happened to you - don't worry - you're not alone; it tends to happen in this house quite often!)

So, you console your guilt and worry, as you reach for the kettle and the latest EO newsletter, with the idea that it's good to let them pursue the things they're motivated to do for motivation really is a valuable skill, isn't it? And by just letting them get on with life they're bound to be learning something, aren't they? And whatever they choose to do there will be some incidental learning that's of use, won't there?

Well, you'll be relieved to hear that all of the above are true.

I've just read 'How Children Learn At Home' by Alan Thomas and Harriet Patterson (published by Continuum) and it endorses this very concept; that incidental learning is equally valuable and has as big an impact on your child's education as the more structured type of learning we generally associate with being educated.

This is not a book that tells you how to HE - that's not what it sets out to do. It is a study that looks at the incidental learning which occurs when children are educated at home. And it basically reinforces what we all have an intuitive feeling about already; that incidental and valid learning takes place even when the

children are not engaged in directed or formal study or activities. And in the end this informal learning can still bring children to a point where they can successfully engage in formal education if they wish despite not having spent endless years practising it.

The book describes how even the aspects of a education that we would mostly consider need a specific learning structure and graded practice, like reading, writing and Numeracy for example, can still happen successfully in this more informal way. And despite the haphazard nature of learning informally through play and self-directed interests and activities with interested and encouraging parents, the children still somehow mentally self-organise what they learn into a coherent whole at the end.

The authors say that what stands out as remarkable in their study of informal learning is how powerful children can become as autonomous learners, how effective they are at actually deciding how and what they need to learn and if they need help with it. And even though their learning just seems to evolve from living day to day alongside their parents and their lives, the children still seem to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to engage later with further education and to continue to learn and develop, to set themselves targets when they need them, to implement their own structure when necessary.

Through broad experiences in their everyday lives, through a diverse range of activities whatever they may be, through remaining motivated to learn and not having that motivation dulled by constant repetitive exercises, by having balance and choice and control over their education, and by having interested parents who help keep stimulation alive and offer constant encouragement, children do end up becoming educated.

If you're anything like me you'll no doubt worry about this 'patchwork' of educational experiences that tend to make up the nature of our home educating lives, maybe worry that it's a huge disadvantage. But the authors suggest that

this patchwork style does not mean that the children end up with 'patchwork' abilities or knowledge, neither are they disengaged, unintelligent, or switched off. Instead it seems that the very opposite is true. The authors remark that 'the apparent disadvantage of informal learning; that it is not structured, sequenced and ordered with the learner in mind, may well be one of its strengths'.

They suggest this happens because this informal style of learning is almost always directly relevant to the children's lives at the time and they can see that. Also it gives plenty of space for developing vital thinking skills, something that children in school often don't have time for, busy as they are meeting required structured targets. And although we have only vague understanding of how this informal learning works it is becoming clear that for many children this alternative to a structured and continual academic practise is a style that really works very well.

When you and I are faced with the enormity of the conventional institution of schooling and the millions of children following that one scheduled, timetabled and tightly controlled route, it's no wonder that we worry, that we lose sight of the very important and true fact; that this one style cannot suit all children.

But maybe the next time you find yourself in this situation, the next time you worry about the value of allowing the children to pull you away from your educational intentions for the day - you shouldn't! You could instead remind yourself that research is now beginning to show that actually these self-directed, informal activities are just as valuable and educational in themselves!

Ross Mountney

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Author of 'Learning Without School. Home Education'. Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.



Aspire English Channel Swim

By Florence Dickin

Dear Everyone,

My name is Florence Dickin, I am 11 years old, I live in Ipswich, Suffolk. I have been home educated since September 2008. Every week day morning I go swimming at Crown Pools with my mum.

Last September we noticed a banner from the charity Aspire, the challenge was to swim the distance of the English Channel which is 22 miles in 12 weeks. I completed the channel swim 3 days before the end and raised £100 for Aspire.

In January, Aspire contacted me to ask if I would accept a special challenge of doing the Channel 10 times (220 miles) that's 14160 lengths. I now go early in the mornings so I can swim a mile a day.

In February I went to London to visit Aspire. I saw a warm swimming pool with easy access, a

gym and computers specially adapted for all abilities.

I have now been in the local newspaper and on 3 different radio stations. One of them kindly invited me into their studio when they found out I was home educated. It was very interesting and good media studies!

I have made many new friends at the pool, I am keeping fit, my stamina and muscles are growing I am having a lot of fun and raising money for Aspire at the same time. None of this would have been possible if I was attending school.

You too can swim the distance of the English Channel this year. Aspires challenge begins on the 14th September and finishes on the 6th December

Thank you!

The CHIPS Initiative

By Emma Thompson, CHIPS Worker, West Midlands

CHIPS is a ground breaking initiative established by ChildLine in 1998 aiming to work directly with children and young people across the UK.

CHIPS endorses the view that children and young people can help each other, can play a part in making changes to improve their own lives, and have a right to be listened to and respected.

CHIPS provides a range of services for children, parents and adults working with children from raising awareness about ChildLine, workshops dealing with issues that affect children and young people today (e.g. bullying, online-safety), to setting up peer support schemes that encourage children and young people to support one another. We are happy to provide any of the services mentioned for EHE children and young people but after attending an EHE meeting in Stafford, I feel that peer support might be the best place to start. Simply because we can help you set it up and then it's over to you!

So what is peer support and how does it work?

Our UK-wide team of CHIPS outreach workers offers advice, support, information and training in the setting up and development of peer support schemes.

CHIPS offers a package of help including:

- training and support to adults planning on setting up peer support schemes
- a range of resources to assist in the set up of a peer support scheme including a Peer Support Toolkit
- training for children & young people acting as peer supporters
- ongoing support to organisations running peer support.

Peer support begins with the willingness of most young people to act in a co-operative, friendly manner towards each other and peer support systems build on this intrinsic quality and create structures which facilitate the young person's potential for responsibility, sensitivity and empathic caring.

Research carried out by the Thomas Coram Research Unit in 2002 shows that 71% of secondary school age children said they would prefer to talk to another young person about their concerns - not an adult!

Peer support is most effective when taking place between those of a similar age, role or background. It can work within a formal setting or an informal setting and enhances the common purpose of the group. The scheme operates within safe boundaries e.g. under your adult supervision and guidance. For me, the greatest benefit of peer support is it enables those children and young people who participate to gain valuable life skills. These life skills help young people to make the transition from being a bystander to standing by and supporting their peers.

The training for the children and young people lasts 1 full day and includes: listening skills, issues they may face, boundaries, confidentiality, making judgments, types of questions, giving advice and culminates with a role play bringing all these aspects together. The training is fun, interactive, experiential learning and I've never known a child or young person not thoroughly enjoy the experience!

We also offer a train-the-trainer programme for organisations who are experienced in peer support. After undertaking this programme you can train any new peer supporters yourselves.

CHIPS are very much led by the needs of the organisation we are working with. CHIPS will help kickstart peer support programmes but then it's up to you. It's important to think from the outset how your scheme is going to work and what you want it to achieve. Will it be face-to-face, online, regional, national and how will you maintain interest and momentum? Although we do offer advice and guidance these decisions and responsibilities are for you and the peer supporters.

If you are interested in CHIPS supporting your organisation please do contact your regional CHIPS Outreach Team:

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/resourcesforteachers/CHIPS/contact/contact_wda55382.html



Waldorf College OCN courses

By Jan Asena

Hello. I have been a Home Educator for the last 21 years, so this is a kind of birthday for me and I got to thinking about our experiences and what I could pass on to other Home Educators. I always felt that advice from past Home Educators was especially helpful to me, so I would like to introduce you to a college for the older home-educated children that my children attended.

After having spent so much time having the freedom and fun to Educate Otherwise, the time comes when you realise that your children are at an age where they need to experience the world for themselves and begin to take their education into their own hands. For me this was rather a big dilemma. My children needed some form of accredited secondary education that would open the doors to any form of higher education they may chose to pursue. We needed to play the game, but somehow still maintain our personal philosophy towards education. And it was around about then that a friend mentioned a rather unique small college to me called the Waldorf College. Well to cut a long story short my elder

two children have been to this college and now my youngest is there.

This college is small enough to cater for individual needs and large enough to present an educational challenge. The Open College Network moderates the curriculum, so provides the necessary paperwork.

The students learn experientially, totally hands on - a lot of time is spent outdoors and this suited my children very well because most of our time together had been spent outdoors. At this school the children cover subjects that really apply to the world they have to live in and cope with. They learn about woodland management by actually managing the woods. They learn about the chemical overuse by our society by making soaps. They learn about other cultures by going on a trip to the Sinai to help the Bedouin build a dam for their gardens and to Lapland to learn about a different way of life. They learn about how to garden and grow vegetables by doing just that, then picking and cooking what they have grown.

Most college matters, from curriculum to interviewing of prospective students, are decided democratically in meetings with staff and students together. A diversity of students from as far away as Canada and South Africa have attended. Each student also has individual time with a personal tutor, who helps them through their journey at the college.

This college has really been a very positive experience for my children. They were given the space to grow and follow their own educational journey in an environment that encouraged and nurtured them.

One of my sons wanted to add to what I have written, so from the horses mouth:

Taking an animal, going through the process of honouring the death of the creature in Native American fashion, skinning, cooking and eating it, then making leather goods from its skin - this process sums up the experiential and hands on method of learning that takes place at the Waldorf College Project. Everything from Drama and History of Science, to Photography and Management skills are handled in a way that puts the student's abilities such as decision-making and self-development first thus creating an environment where one can learn as much about oneself as the subjects that are taught, in the way best suited to the individual student.

On top of this, adventures such as the Sinai Desert trip with the Bedouin and the trip to Sweden are included, making fantastic personal experiences as well as learning opportunities that could not be found anywhere else. All in all, the Waldorf College Project is an experience - rather than a school - where anything is possible, and the choice is yours.

The Waldorf College offers advantages such as personal tutors, who from my own experience are very helpful and always willing; extensive facilities and space; a great library across the road and the most beautiful countryside. I would recommend the Waldorf College to anyone interested in learning more about themselves, more about how to operate with people in a responsible environment and more about

developing the confidence and skills to succeed in whatever path you choose.

If anyone would like to contact me for more info please feel free to email me - my name is Jan - on elixir.can@hotmail.com or phone 01453 840876. The college also has a website: www.waldorf-college-project.org.uk and their phone number is 01453 840009

Red Nose Day

By Gillian Wright



"Our group of Home Educators, from Bradford, Keighley and Leeds, dressed in pajamas or 'Goths' to raise money for Red Nose Day (13th March 2009). We were doing an Animation Workshop at Armley Mills in Leeds that day, raising a few eyebrows with passers by!

Money collected on the day was approximately £100.00. which included selling buns during the lunch break within the group. In addition, £86.75 was raised by Meli and Alison visiting local shop keepers, family and friends."

Please find attached a photograph, showing some of the children dressed up. Altogether, our group consisted of about 20 children who took part in this event.

Thank you.





Young Rangers Programme

A Residential of Two Extremes

By Annette Taberner

In April a Sheffield group member got an interesting telephone call. A school had cancelled a residential at very short notice. Other schools were unable to commit, could we fill the places?

It was all a bit frantic, but two heroic parents rushed through contact lists to see who they could get hold of at such short notice in the Easter holidays and soon had the required ten young people and two parents from the Sheffield and Chesterfield groups.

Our first day was spent at Hartington Hall Youth Hostel - on the posh end of the YHA spectrum

"YHA Hartington is a magnificent manor house standing in its own extensive grounds and dating back to 1611. It offers great comfort within an historic context; boasting oak panelling, stove fires, squishy sofas "The hostel also has its own courtyard with goats, chickens, guinea pigs and

rabbits which our group enjoyed watching. The food was great.

The Peak Park trainers talked about the national park, did some interesting team building exercises, detailed map work and checked that we all knew what to take with us for the following day. We enjoyed glorious sunshine and watching three buzzards being mobbed by one brave crow as we worked in the hostel grounds.

The following day we were joined by Peak Park rangers and split into three groups. Each group took a different route meeting in a woodland near the Staffordshire border by mid afternoon. The weather was glorious, the spring birdsong uplifting, the company enjoyable and the scenery stunning.

Our next task was to use large branches and tarps to make our overnight shelters. Much discussion of who would sleep where and with whom and a first introduction to the hole in the

ground which was to be our communal toilet in its own small tent.

Some of us stacked the branches against trunks of trees, others made self supporting benders and our accompanying dad made a shelter Ray Mears would have been proud of.

A fire pit was made ready, tinder and silver birch bark collected from fallen logs (fantastic for lighting fires) and a welcome cup of hot chocolate made using two big storm kettles. Participants prepared and cooked a vegetarian bolognese with pasta for our evening meal which was challenging given the shortage of kitchen utensils and the lack of horizontal workspaces. The young people rose to the task. Pudding was ginger cake and custard- made all the more interesting by the lack of instructions for the big tub of custard powder. With no running water washing up was more difficult than first expected and conservation of our limited water supplies an interesting experience.

We had a short walk in the woodland and watched the sun setting and then we sat gathered around the fire, thankful for its heat as the skies were clear and starry and the temperature plummeted. We sat and told stories-and cuddled our hot potatoes before eating them.

More hot drinks and then to bed.

"It was hard to get to sleep with only a thin mat and the forest floor below you. We soon discovered how many tree roots there were."

"Some of us woke in the middle of the night needing to go to the loo. It was a very INTERESTING experience to say the least!"

"When we woke in the morning we realised that some of us were a few feet away from where we had fallen asleep. It took a while to "defrost" in the morning and get moving."

It was so cold at first that we could see our breathe. Two intrepid young people managed to

help rekindle the fire which had been left smouldering under green logs overnight and we were treated to hot drinks and freshly made pancakes.

Our shelters dismantled we set to work ensuring that we left as little evidence of our overnight stay as possible before returning to the youth hostel.

As an accompanying parent I really enjoyed the experience. It was cold at first in my shelter but I woke to the very best dawn chorus I have ever heard, bright sunshine and the company of a somehow reassuring tree trunk. Others said:

"We both really enjoyed the residential, we like camping and walking anyway but this was a real adventure. I liked the fire best and enjoyed the walk, my brother loved sleeping under the stars and we learned lots about map reading. Also we found out how fun Youth hostels are and my brother discovered he liked salmon which really pleased my Mum, but I found out I like treacle toffee pudding (grin!)"

"I enjoyed the map reading and navigation"

"Sleeping in a bivi was fun. Looking back I see it as an achievement but at the time it was cold and the tree roots made it a long night. Appreciated home when I got back!"

The residential is part of the Peak National Park Youth Ranger programme which has ASDAN accreditation

<http://www.youthrangers.com/Information.php?aid=65>

The Youth Ranger Programme gives young people an insight into the role and work of a ranger, by providing basic training and practical experience.

The Youth Ranger Programme is a Pan European initiative to get young people involved in national parks. If you are near a national park you might find a similar scheme.

An Invitation from Polish Home Educators

By Leslie Barson

The HE law seems to have eased in Poland (see below) and they are having a get together to which they are inviting other HE'ers. They want to build up their HE knowledge and meet others with experience of HE. Please contact Zbyszek directly (zborys@poczta.onet.pl) if you want to know more. It seems the group will be at this centre for both periods of time. People are welcome at any time during those two periods.

Zbyszek wrote me that:

This month the system eased the situation for homeschoolers by giving the right to provide homeschooling to non-state schools. Until now only state schools could give permission for homeschooling. I must add that in Poland we need official permission from a school to start home education, after that once a year you have to take an exam. In England as I know you don't need any permission.

So far homeschooling was possible only "under the wings" of the state schools. It didn't help at all because state schools mostly didn't understand the needs of homeschoolers, concentrating only on inappropriate examinations. From this month on it will be different. We can now gather round home education friendly non-state schools, which probably will become centres for helping and facilitating. Such centers are not a bad thing because even in countries with totally free choice about education people tend to look for advice and co-operation. When you find a good place, people are happy that they are not alone and some support is possible. It has something to do with feedback and self-assessment. We just need others to develop. Especially when they are friendly, helpful and have some knowledge and skills.

Well, and here is the point. We want to organize the meeting in one Montessori-type school which is going to be a homeschooling friendly place for parents and children. Probably many children and families will start to work with this place in the next school year.

But by place I in fact mean people. We are starting a new educational project and we would like to invite you to take part. It is a private enterprise of people who are interested in education. The idea is to practice cultural exchange and development. We are interested in progressive trends in education (Montessori, Steiner, home-education, a small group exchange system, democratic education). We would like to use this knowledge to teach children at home.

In this project we are planning to organize a summer gathering for small groups, up to four or six people, mainly families of mixed ages.

It is centered round the belief that interaction leads to change. Every day each group (a family) has its day. They present their style of education and approach to life and share with the others their methods and cultural background. Usually it happens in the evening but the formula is open. Apart from that every day we can enjoy our presence, learning from each other in a nice atmosphere. Everything is organized in a Montessori school on the picturesque Polish/Slovakian border in the mountains.

This school next year will bring families for homeschooling. During the visit it will be possible to organize a trip to the historical city of Krakow, which is about 100 km from the place the gathering is organized. It's an intercultural educational project promoting cooperation so we've managed to provide some subsidies in order to ease costs for participants.

There are two terms available: 5 July-18 July 2009 and 9 August-23 August 2009.

The place is called Krzyżówki near Korbielów (a small village on the Polish-Slovakian border near a bigger town called Ływiec). Here is the link to the map where it is: <http://www.region.edu.pl/> (in the Polish version of the site in "aktualności")

The price is: 980 PLN per one person. The price includes rooms and three meals a day for the whole stay.

You would have to pay for your own travel.

Accommodation is in comfortable hostel-style 4 people rooms.

We prefer the human touch to the glamour of big conferences so our gathering has exactly this character. All together it is going to be a gathering for about 25 people so around 5 families or small groups of 4 to 5 people in each. This small number suits the idea integration better.

The Home Education Review

By Ian Dowty

The current Home Education Review was entrusted in January 2009 to Graham Badman with the requirement that he report in May 2009 (although the report is not likely to be published until June). The Review encompasses education, child protection and welfare issues. Of the three, it seems to me, education is easier to deal with; child protection and welfare pose questions that need careful consideration.

Without doubt, in my view, the powers available to local authorities are completely adequate to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education¹. Local authorities who do not believe this to be the case seem to be continually pressing for ever greater powers. In my view, if a local authority does not believe it has sufficient powers already, that is likely to indicate that it either does not understand the law, or home education, or both.

Local authorities are now under a duty² to make arrangements to identify children of compulsory school age not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education. Statutory guidance³ issued originally effectively sought to

define this as a duty simply to locate, and stated that the duty did not extend to home educated children. However, revised guidance⁴, issued in January 2009, reversed this and once more appears to re-inforce the view that home education places a child at risk of not receiving a suitable education. The revised interpretation of section 436A has the effect of creating a presumption that home educated children are missing education and remain so until the local authority is satisfied as to the educational provision. However, it could be said that it goes no further than the duty to be alert proposed in *Phillips v Brown*⁵. Once a child missing education is identified as being home educated, the guidance requires local authorities to follow the procedures set out in the Elective Home Education Guidelines⁶ which interpret sections

⁴ 'Revised statutory guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education' issued January 2009, which incidentally appears to create a category of children who are at risk of being at risk; inasmuch as it refers to the need to identify children at risk of not receiving a suitable education this seems to me an unlawful extension outside the scope of the enabling section 436A. The guidance is at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00202/>

⁵ an unreported case in the Divisional Court, 20th June 1980 which establishes that, if a local authority knows nothing of the educational provision being made for a child, it is entitled to assume that "it appears that no suitable education is being received" and commence to issue a school attendance order. The judge, then Donaldson, LJ, held that as an authority has a duty to take action if there was no suitable education provision, it had a duty to be alert (ie investigate) whether that was the case.

⁶ paragraph 88, 'Revised statutory guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education'; the Elective Home Education Guidelines were issued in 2007 and can be found at

¹ 'suitable education' is defined in section 436A(3) Education Act 1996 as "an efficient full-time education suitable to [a child's] age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs he may have."

² the duty is imposed by section 436A Education Act 1996 which section was inserted into the 1996 Act by section 4 Schools and Inspection Act 2006 which came into force on 27th February 2007

³ 'Statutory guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving education' issued February 2007

437 to 447 Education Act 1996⁷ and which give local authorities ample power to bring before the courts any home educator where it is not satisfied a child is receiving a suitable education.

It is to be expected that local authorities will once again advance the argument that they cannot carry out their duty under s436A unless there is compulsory registration of all home educated children. Eventually such a register would not be necessary, if the much vaunted but fatally flawed ContactPoint database ever becomes operational. Every child in the UK will have a record card on ContactPoint which, amongst other matters, will show the educational provision being made. If it is not known the local authority will be under a duty to investigate.

Registration is an issue, without doubt, of considerable concern to home educators who, frankly, wish to avoid the attentions of those local authorities who seem to be antipathetic and sometimes hostile to home education. It is possible that those who live in areas where there are more enlightened local authorities have a different attitude to the question of registration.

The identification of home educating families also has relevance to the safeguarding and welfare duties placed upon local authorities which brings me to the extent of the role that the local authority has or should have in child protection and welfare issues and whether its powers are sufficient to carry it. Put basically, the position taken by some local authorities is that they cannot be sure that a child is safe, and that the government's ECM agenda is being carried out, if they are not allowed access to every child. It would also seem that some local

authorities seek to rely upon this to augment their powers with regard to home education.

The simplistic point is that children enrolled at a school are 'seen' by an adult who has responsibility to act if it is suspected that a child is the victim of abuse, whereas children not registered at a school are not necessarily 'seen' and so could be being abused and no-one would know. I think it is fair comment to acknowledge that, in addition to the desire to prevent abuse, local authorities and central government fear public criticism, and the loss of their jobs, if it is retrospectively considered that they, or the system they have sanctioned or put in place, are at fault when a child suffers harm or dies at the hands of a carer.

Since the late 19th century, the law has developed to impose duties on local authorities and give them power to intervene in family life when a child was suffering neglect, cruelty or injury and such matters were made criminal offences. The Children Act 1989 imposed on local authorities the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and their upbringing by their families and to that end to deliver services to children in need⁸. There is a duty to investigate⁹ and if necessary to protect¹⁰ a child where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that he or she is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, and care orders¹¹ can be made in respect of such a child.

Although the government had plans for a national database of children long before the Laming Inquiry reported, it used this to implement what has become an increasingly more concentrated effort to regulate children, their behaviour and upbringing. More things about a child than ever before are recorded and measured. Schools are being made central to the life of a child with the intention that

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/localauthorities/_documents/content/7373-DCSF-Elective%20Home%20Education.pdf

⁷ section 437 Education Act 1996 provides when a school attendance order might be issued; section 443 makes it an offence not to comply with the order unless the parent proves that a suitable education is being received, although that reverse burden may not now be compatible with Article 6 European Convention on Human Rights, see for example, *R v Keogh* [2007] 1 WLR 1500, [2007] EWCA Crim 528

⁸ section 17 Children Act 1989

⁹ *ibid.* section 47

¹⁰ *ibid.* sections 43 and 44, police have power to take such children into protective custody, see section 46

¹¹ *ibid.* section 31

services it is considered that the child needs are delivered through school.

The unification of children's services into one children's trust has blurred the boundary between welfare and child protection. Practitioners have rightly always been under a duty to report if they suspected that a child was at risk of significant harm. Now, however, they are under a duty to report any 'concern' they might have about a child's welfare. This is no longer limited to abuse and harm but includes the belief that a child needs services. Many practitioners have little or no knowledge or understanding of home education and too many appear to consider that, in itself, it is a cause for concern.

'Concern' is now expressed if a child is not attaining the '5 outcomes' (be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic well-being)¹², for instance, if it is believed a child is overweight, or said to be at risk of future criminality, substance abuse or teenage pregnancy.

Local authorities appear recently to have resorted to resolve any perceived conflict with home educating parents by using powers formerly restricted to social services departments thus taking the matter out of the hands of officers with training in education. The lack of understanding of home education, and the persistence of common myths about it, have led, especially if the home educated child has special educational needs, to the child being placed on the 'at-risk' register or, worse, to the institution of care proceedings.

Additionally, increasingly government policy is being developed and actions are being taken in respect of children without a realisation of, or any apparent concern for, the impact upon those who are home educated.

As anyone who might have been forced to listen to me over the years might know, I have long

pressed for the requirement that anyone dealing with home education should be trained in the law and practice of it. It is not sufficient to regard that person as able to 'assess' home education simply because they have had training and experience in a school-based model of education. It may well be a matter of 'concern' to practitioners accustomed to a that model, that a home educator has no teaching qualifications and provides no 'broad and balanced curriculum', no forward plan with clear objectives and has no structured learning environment - in fact anything that does not look like a school may cause 'concern' simply because what they are seeing is completely out of the practitioner's experience.

An appreciation and understanding of the wide range of models of home education is, in my view, essential, and needs to be the stock-in-trade, of all practitioners who come into contact with a home educating family where each has the capacity to cause the family a considerable amount of completely unnecessary anxiety. It seems to me that the task that each of us has to fulfil to educate the public, as well as our children, needs to be taken over by those who train practitioners.

I would also venture to suggest that proper training would mean that local authority resources were used fruitfully, instead of, as has in my experience happened several times, pursuing and prosecuting parents who are educating their children perfectly satisfactorily.

Many consider that an aspect of the increase in government involvement in the upbringing of children, is the diminution of the role of parents. Whilst the government makes statements that parents, not the state, bring up children, not all policies appear to reflect this. The ECM agenda has effectively taken responsibility for a child's 'outcomes' away from parents and given it to local authorities by imposing upon them a raft of PSA targets and key indicators.¹³ Increasingly information is

¹² identified in the Every Child Matters green paper, see <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/aims/outcomes/>

¹³ Public Service Agreements, for example see <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/health/>

taken from children at school without the knowledge of parents; for example what children are given to eat and how their family behaves.

Although organisations such as ARCH, FIPR, No2ID and Liberty have been seeking to highlight this, the public and press has expressed little interest and opposition has been virtually non-existent. Thus emboldened, the march to measure and regulate our children has gone on apace. The lack of opposition can be put down partly to apathy, or perhaps a stoic failure to understand what is happening, and partly because the government plays the 'child protection card' which has the effect of stifling any debate. As I hope I have demonstrated above, the ECM agenda is not about child protection, though many still believe that it is. Home educators have been slow to see the inevitability of the effect upon them and might now regret not going to the assistance of parents of schooled children, when now the state comes for their children.

Sticking my head above the parapet, if I have not done so already, it is my personal view that the general public, having little knowledge of home education, will afford little support or indeed sympathy to any cause mounted on its behalf. There seems to have been an acceptance, however unwitting, that all children need to be watched to make sure they are safe and that parents in general cannot be trusted; indeed many parents look to the state to supply education to their children and complain when it does not do so. Are they not more likely to take the view that if regulation applies to their children, why should it not apply to home educated children? In any event, does experience of this government indicate it will be likely to listen to the views expressed by the public when once it has its mind set on a course of action?

Without doubt, the time has long passed for a line to be drawn in the sand, the interest government is taking in our children is too detailed and their lives are becoming too regulated and parents are becoming

marginalised. Which brings me back to the Home Education Review.

Home educating parents are more likely to resist the government's agenda and to want to stand and say simply and clearly, "hands off and leave us alone to bring up our children" but is that going to be the most effective method of combatting what might be in store for us? Perhaps non-co-operation is fine for those who are prepared actively to resist, but is everyone prepared for civil disobedience and its consequences? Is it better to take account of an estimation of the mood of the times and, perhaps fearing a worse evil, to seek to moderate what is likely to be done? Who can tell? I am aware of several parents who, when faced with fighting authority have felt unequal to the task and given in and sent their children to school. Does not some compromise need to be negotiated on behalf of the less combative?

I do not think I am alone in believing that these are difficult questions and that everyone will have their own answers. Home educators have perhaps one thing in common, that they are each different. Argument is to be expected, however, I should have hoped that discussion would have been sober, respectful and productive. One of the problems, to which I do not believe has been given adequate regard, is that we have not been granted any time, let alone sufficient time, for consideration of the issues before the Review commenced to take evidence. We all have our hands full without this. The idea that an invitation to see Mr Badman could have been passed up as it had not been sorted out what should be said to him is a difficult one to comprehend. He was given a May deadline by the government and needed the earliest steer so that he approached his enquiries of others, including local authorities, in the full knowledge of the difficulties faced by home educators. The alternative was that he proceed in ignorance of our concerns.

This article grows in length and cannot deal with a full discussion of what has been advanced to the Review. I hope it will suffice if I say that

principally it has been argued that local authorities and all practitioners who deal with home educators should have a sufficient appreciation of what home education is, that it is not of itself a problem and that it is a perfectly ordinary way of educating. To this end, training needs to be provided and an awareness of home education needs to be promoted throughout our society from Parliament to the local library or swimming pool via hospitals and courts. Central and local government should cease to attach home education to the 'problems-in-education-department' as this encourages a negative view from the outset. If these reforms were made and models of good practice were promoted to local authorities, many supposed concerns would melt away.

Returning to what I said at the outset, I do not believe that the issue of child protection is an easy one to resolve, and the welfare issue risks shattering annoyance levels.

There is, of course, a continual tension between the rights of a child, the rights of her parents and the duty of the state in appropriate cases to step in between children and their parents. At the extreme, there is no problem, if a child is known to be suffering significant harm, someone has to stop that, and the state, in the form of a local authority must surely do so.

However, this presents a question, how can it be known that a child is at risk of significant harm? As I have said government policy has moved from taking action when children are at risk of significant harm to wanting to know and take action when children are at risk of being at such risk. The number of children estimated to be abused within their own homes may be larger numerically than is acceptable, but as a proportion of all children it is still very small. Unfortunately, it has to be acknowledged that some of those children who suffer abuse at the hands of their parents or carers are educated at home. It is impossible to identify when this happens, unless the details are known personally,

as restrictions on reporting such cases are imposed to protect the children involved.

High profile cases are sometimes reported and there are two which are generally known which concern home education. The more serious concerns the death of 7 year old Khyra Ishaq on 17th May 2008. Between 8 and 10 weeks before this, it would seem from the scant details made public, Khyra was withdrawn from school and home educated. Her mother is alleged to have turned away a local authority visit some 2 weeks later without them seeing Khyra, it appears that no follow up visit was attempted. Khyra was found at home in an allegedly emaciated state with her 5 siblings who were taken into care. Khyra's mother, Angela Gordon and her partner, Junaid Abuhamza, have been charged with causing or allowing her death. Little more is known about the case as their trial is not due to start until some time in June this year and only after that will it be possible to know the full details.

The other case, by contrast concerns a home educator who was well-known to and visited regularly, it would seem, by her local authority. Eunice Spry, had been a foster-carer for Gloucestershire County Council and was home educating 3 children. She was convicted after a trial in which it was alleged that she had severely abused them over 19 years. She was sent to prison for 14 years, although that was varied to 12 years on appeal. *'The Independent'* reported, in an article about the Review, that "Child welfare agencies say one or two other such cases are in the pipeline."¹⁴ Whether that is true, I do not know.

It might be argued that these cases demonstrate the need for some external observation of the children to prevent what happened to the children. However, the Eunice Spry case perhaps also demonstrates that abuse

¹⁴ *'The Independent'* 26th February 2009, "Is the Government right to be concerned about home-schooling <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/schools/is-the-government-right-to-be-concerned-about-homeschooling-1631969.html> (a pity their research did not enable them to understand that the term used in England is home educating)

is sometimes hard to spot as it was not brought to notice during the local authority visits made to inspect her educational provision and fostering arrangements.

These are both cases where it must be accepted that the children concerned were suffering abuse and thus state intervention was entirely justified. I would suggest that the position is entirely different where welfare matters are concerned as opposed to child protection. It is really important in my view to re-affirm the difference in approach between child protection and the delivery of services. This is particularly so in the case of home educating families.

Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities¹⁵ to make arrangements with a view to improving the well-being of children relating to their physical and mental health and emotional well-being, protection from harm and neglect, education, training and recreation, the contribution made by them to society and social and economic well-being. In making the arrangements the local authority must have regard not only to guidance issued by the government¹⁶ but also and crucially "to the importance of parents and other persons caring for children"¹⁷.

Is it possible to consider that parents with children at local authority schools have acquiesced in the assumption of responsibility for the welfare of their children by the schools and local authority in pursuance of the government's ECM agenda (ie guidance)? In which case should there be different considerations for home educating parents because they have not delegated the care of their children to the state? If, for example, their objection to the local authority's interest is ignored, that would appear to be paying only lip-service to the "importance of parents".

If a home educating parent or a child asks for services, the local authority will have to complete a booklet of questions called a 'common assessment framework' (a CAF or e-CAF) which will seek answers to a wide variety of questions including some very personal information about every aspect of the child's and the family's life; this includes the mental and physical health of the child and family members, all aspects of the child's development, and assessments of how the parents are bringing up the child. No stone is left unturned and many of the questions involve the subjective judgment of the practitioner completing the form who is required to assess whether the behaviour of the child and the parents is 'appropriate'.

The government maintains that this form can only be completed with consent and that it is voluntary. Experience has shown that if you want the service you have to fill in the form, and not just the part that is relevant to the service sought, but all of it, as service providers are likely to reject a partially completed form. A very real fear is that once people understand the extent of the confidential information they are asked for, they will be deterred from asking for the service, or put off asking until the situation has become so bad they are forced to do so. Neither is helpful in securing the meeting of a need in a timely way before a crisis is reached.

With all these matters in mind, I have a series of questions which time has allowed to have passed through some form of crystallisation and to which I should be really interested in any answers people would like to volunteer. I have sought to ask as wide questions as possible and, just because I ask, please do not try to guess my view (or even if some questions are a little tongue in cheek). Some of the questions are not much different from others but I still think it is worth asking them all. If you would prefer to deal with the issues in your own way, please use my questions in the thought-provoking spirit in which they are intended. I look forward to reading your views in whatever way you might

¹⁵ local authorities are more correctly referred to in the Children Act 2004 as 'children's services authorities'

¹⁶ section 11(3) Children Act 2004

¹⁷ *ibid.* section 10(3)

choose to respond. My thanks in advance to anyone who replies (courteously, I should add).

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Questions

The NSPCC, after carrying out national research into people's views is of the view that "Child abuse can take four forms, all of which can cause long term damage to a child: physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and child sexual abuse. Bullying and domestic violence are also forms of child abuse." Do you agree? Are there any other forms of abuse, in your view?

There is concern that a child who is not registered at a school may suffer abuse from a carer. Is it accepted or not that might happen?

If it happens, is it accepted that the child should be able to disclose the abuse with a view to ensuring the abuse stops?

If the child is abused, is it possible that the child is unable to tell anyone about this (eg because the child does not realise the abuse exists, believes it is not abuse, believes no one can stop the abuse, is too ashamed or embarrassed to tell anyone, fears the consequences (for the child or the carer) of disclosure of the abuse, fears that no-one will believe the disclosure, fears that the abuse will increase)? Is it possible, if the child is being abused, that the child might be kept away from people when there is a risk of disclosure? In either case, or both cases, should there be some provision of an opportunity for the child to be able to disclose the abuse?

What would that opportunity be; how would it be arranged for there to be such an opportunity?

Is it sufficient that there be an opportunity for the child to disclose or should there be some

opportunity for the abuse to be discovered? What would that opportunity be; how would it be arranged for there to be such an opportunity?

Should there be someone outside the carers who can afford the possibility of disclosure or discovery of the abuse? Who could that be? How could that be provided?

Should someone 'see' that child to afford an opportunity for disclosure and/or discovery of the abuse?

Or, should the position be taken that as there is some evidence that

- a. 2 or 3 children in every class in school are suffering or have suffered abuse at the hands of their carers which goes undetected at the moment, and
- b. local authority inspection of home that no system that can be devised of some sort of 'seeing the child' and that therefore nothing should be done as nothing effective can be done?

Or, if the child is abused, is there no need for something to be done about it?

If there is a need for something to be done, is the current system perfectly OK, or sufficient or adequate? If it is not, should something else be done, and what should that be?

As it might be said that it cannot be known to people other than the carer whether the child is suffering abuse, should any system developed to maximise the opportunity for disclosure or discovery of abuse, be offered to all children?

If it should be offered to all children, is the offer sufficient, in the case of children who attend at a school, simply by virtue of their attendance at school?

If it should be offered to all children, should it be offered to children who do not attend at school?

If it can be said that children who attend at school are automatically ensured of such an offer, should there be some provision to ensure that the same quality of offer is provided to children who are not registered at a school? Should it be mandatory that every child have that opportunity? How would the opportunity be provided?

Rather than any compulsory system, should a voluntary system of 'seeing' or having 'contact' with every child be encouraged? Would that suffice? Or, would that not reach the child who needs to be reached?

If local authority staff were trained in and exhibited a full appreciation of the law and practice of home education, would home educators be more or less likely to engage in voluntary contact with their local authority?

Is there a balance to be struck between offering the possibility of disclosure or discovery of abuse to a child and the sanctity of family life? Or is there an absolute right to family privacy? Is there an absolute right to raise children as a carer sees fit?

If there is an absolute right to raise children as the carer sees fit, should nothing be offered to a child who is suffering abuse at the hands of the carer?

Is it thought possible that a child might be being abused by someone other than a carer but that the child might not feel able to disclose this to the carer? Should this child be afforded the opportunity to disclose the abuse to another person? Should another person than the carer have an opportunity to discover the abuse? How could these opportunities be arranged?

Do you consider that there is sufficient concern that a home educated child might be abused by a carer to necessitate that all home educated children should be 'seen'? Or do you consider that any such action should only be taken when there has been a report of a suspicion that the

child is at risk of significant harm? If a 'safe and well' check for all home educated children was established to be completely separate from any educational assessment, would your view differ? If such a check was formally introduced for all children, would your view differ?

Would your answers be any different if the concern of the local authority is not to establish whether children are safe but whether the aims of the ECM agenda are being achieved?

Would you be more, or less, likely to ask your local authority for services to assist your children if by doing so, the local authority or service provider will complete a common assessment framework?

How can the DCSF and its ministers be convinced that they will not be adversely criticised in the press and by the general public if there is a child, who is of compulsory school age but who is not registered at a school, who is abused?

In this situation, are they more or less likely to be adversely criticised if there is a compulsory system that ensures every child is 'inspected'? Are they more or less likely to be criticised if the status quo persists?

If they believe that they are more likely than not to be adversely criticised if the status quo exists, are they likely to accept that? Or are they likely to want to bring in greater regulation of home education?

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Experience teaches me to assert ownership of this article, but I am happy for anyone to quote from it as long as quotes are attributed to me



I hope everyone is beginning to enjoy the slightly better weather.

Having been the EO contact for structured support now for a few months and spoken to a few new EO members about a structured approach to home education I have begun to realise that a lot of people want to have a specific scheme for each subject with lessons all organised. I have found this aspect of support quite difficult as I plan out all our lessons and have never followed a specific scheme. (e.g.: Singapore Maths)

I have begun to wonder if I am the only person who plans out what we will do each week, month or even term, with ideas coming from books, internet and other sources. I will even use different books for each child, one child really liked using the MEP books for some maths while another loves mental arithmetic so used to happily answer questions all day. The end result was still to get to sitting GCSE Maths, which two of my children are sitting this month. But it still involved me looking at books etc and deciding which the best were for each of my kids.

For example I was reading an article a few weeks ago in the Time magazine about species on the verge of extinction and thought that could be a really good idea for my youngest (age 11) to work on while I am focussed on GCSE's. With a bit of effort

we managed to get together some ideas and worksheets, questions and plans of what to do (various sites had worksheets, ideas and information). He has managed to incorporate Maths (percentages, graphing, use of data), ICT (pie graphs, scanning images, creating a poster), English (writing poetry, letter to an MP, letter to the editor of a newspaper), citizenship (surveyed 30 people with a list of 15 species nearing extinction and asked which would you save and looked at whether females and males chose animals in a different way) and even Art with watercolours and origami and has filled 3 presentation folders of work. He has worked very quietly and independently while I have worked through any queries with my older children and has learnt a great deal. He used the folders as a way of showing the LA when they came to visit what he could do. His day was very structured but maybe not in a traditional way.

A structured approach to home education obviously means very different things to many people. It would probably be useful if someone who uses any of the most popular structures could be an additional contact for new members. (e.g.: Steiner Waldorf, Montessori)

Hope the good weather continues and we all manage to enjoy teaching outdoors.

Jennie

Happy Spring! Hope all this lovely weather finds you outdoors enjoying a good book. Contributions are always welcome, from reviewers of all ages so after you finish a fantastic book please take a few minutes to pen a review and send it to bookreviews@education-otherwise.org by July 1st.

Next issue I would like to do a feature on HE Book Groups, if you run one or are a member of one please contact me on the above email address. I would also like to compile a database of HE Book Groups to share with our readers so if you would like to publicise your group please get in touch.

Spore

A computer game by EA

£17-30 depending on the merchant but the best deals are to be found on line.

System requirements: Windows XP or Vista or Mac OS X 10.5.3 Leopard or higher.



In Spore there are five stages: Cell, Creature, Tribe, Civilization and Space. In each level you have a creature that you can customize. The object of the game is to get to the space age. Throughout the game you are being set challenges

and once you have completed them you can move up to the next age. I recommend the game for 8+ because there is quite a lot of destroying in the game. It is a fun game and I like playing it. Reviewed by Sam aged 8

Editor's Note: The official age rating for the game is 12+, probably due to the fact that there is mild violence in the game. In order to evolve, especially if you are a carnivore you must hunt other creatures. The whole premise of the game is to evolve your creature from cell stage up to galactic god. There are plenty of opportunities to make friends and allies along the way. If you want to learn more, the website for the game is: www.spore.com.

Are You Sad, Little Bear?: A book about learning how to say goodbye

by Rachel Rivett

ISBN:978-0-7459-6137-8 Price: £6.99 Available from all good book retailers including Amazon.co.uk.

In this story Grandmother bear has gone away forever and little bear feels sad. He explores the wild wood asking questions and looking for answers to comfort himself. The book is beautifully illustrated and has very cute characters. The story is set in the woods allowing death to connotate with nature. The author does not directly mention dying, but portrays saying goodbye in a positive way. I think that it is a lovely story to share with children when trying to help them come to terms with saying goodbye.



Review by Catherine and Caitlin (aged 4)

A Brief Bio on Rachel Rivett

After studying drama at Bretton Hall Arts College, Rachel ran a touring drama group for young people and worked in schools with children at risk of being thrown out. She now writes and unschools with her husband and four children.

An interview with Rachel Rivett the author of "Are you Sad, Little Bear?"

Have you always wanted to be a writer?

As a child I loved writing stories but somehow it got lost in the education system which seemed to have less and less room for creative writing the older you got. It wasn't really until we started unschooling that I rediscovered it. Our aim is to enable our children to joyfully follow their passions and enthusiasms and we've found it does us all good if that's true for us as parents as well.

You have written two lovely children's books, what is your next project and do you think you will ever write adult fiction?

Thank you for saying so! I've just finished a psychological fantasy novel for teenagers and am beginning the tricky business of finding a publisher. There's such a wealth of staggeringly good children's and young adult fiction: Catherine Fisher's *Corbenic* and *Darkhenge*, and her *Oracle* series; Kevin Crossley-Holland's *Arthur* trilogy and *Gatty's Tale*; the books of David Almond and Diana Wynne-Jones. It's children's books that inspire me.

How do you manage to fit in writing around home educating?

It's tricky. I write when I can, in the spaces in-between. Sometimes I don't write for ages because I'm stuck or too tired or I'm growing a story inside me. I think a lot of writing is staring into space: wondering, dreaming, listening. One thing that works well for us is to go and make a base camp in the woods or by the river and while the children are off exploring I write a scene or two. If I haven't collapsed in a heap, I type up and edit in the evening when they're asleep.

Do your children give you ideas for stories?

Yes. I wrote *Are You Sad, Little Bear* when my 4 year old asked about death. It was autumn and the whole earth seemed to be responding to his question when we looked and listened.

What do you love most about writing?

So many things. I love the way time runs

differently when I'm writing. I love words: so sweet and sharp and slippery; the way they ring and sing. I love the discovery of characters, the breathless thrill of rising tension, of wondering what will happen next...

Any advice for all the budding authors out there?

Play with your writing, surprise yourself. Write to music and in silence. Write in cafes and graveyards and trees. Carry a notebook. And read. Read the sorts of stories you would like to write. So much can be absorbed that way. For teenage writers who want focused input it might be worth looking at Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones* and Ursula Le Guin's *Steering The Craft*. Both full of excellent challenging and practical suggestions.

IDEA The story gift: Ask someone very nicely to buy you a small, cheap, interesting object from a charity shop. Ask them to wrap it. When you feel like writing your story unwrap your story gift. Look at it. Sit with it. Imagine the place it lives: a shed or garden or mansion or hovel. Write a few lines to describe the sights and sounds and smells of that place. Now, someone walks into the place, to the object. Who is it? What are their fears, longings, deepest secrets? Listen...let the story take you by the hand...

The winner of last month's prize draw is Joseph Chester -congratulations and enjoy "Evolution Revolution".

This month's giveaway is an autographed copy of "Are you Sad, Little Bear?" by Rachel Rivett. If you would like to enter the draw please email your details to bookreviews@education-otherwise.org by July 1st.

EO Special Needs Contact Meets Volunteers from the National Autistic Society

By Christine Waterman

EO were asked by the National Autistic Society if someone could talk to a group of NAS workers and volunteers about home education. As I have so many phone calls from people wanting to take children who are on the spectrum out of school, I saw this as a good opportunity to let their helpline staff know what a positive option for children with special needs home education can be, and to give them clear information about the legalities, and to pass on contact information for anything more complicated.

They also asked to talk about the review if there was time, and as a representative from the NAS is on the panel, this also seemed like a good opportunity. There were about 25 people there, who seemed to range in knowledge from people who

thought we all sat around out kitchen tables with workbooks all day, to people who were considering home educating their own child if the school situation got any worse, and people who worked on helplines and had a certain amount of knowledge but had specific legal questions.

I decided to break up the legal part of the talk with slides showing a selection of photographs of my son involved in his various activities. For example, I had a caption "don't you get bored sitting at home all day?" accompanied by pictures of my son kayaking, sailing, rock-climbing etc. I think this had more impact than just telling them that we don't all sit at home all the time, and it opened up discussion about what was available to home educated children, how some children choose not to go out much, and how densely populated areas tended to have more going on, but that it wasn't, on the whole,

anywhere near as isolated and lonely being a home educated child as they had thought.

Using the caption "Don't you have to go to school to make friends?" I had photographs of other activities, community classes, holiday courses, Cadets, and voluntary work and this led to a discussion about socialising with different age groups including adults, and how different an adult social life was from a school based one, and how we all choose different styles of social life in adulthood, with some people happy to stay in with close family, or just to see one or two friends infrequently, whilst others wanted to be out all the time.

We also talked about learning through play, how following an interest could turn into a learning experience, how a household project such as assembling furniture, or gardening or cooking could be used to learn new skills, and how much was learned through casual conversation rather than pages of writing.

I was very interested in their reaction to the review. Like much of the general public, they thought it would be a good thing if we were all seen, and raised the familiar point of "isn't it worth it, even if it only saves one life?"

We discussed my reservations about the likelihood of annual, or even four times a year visits being effective when it seems that the tragic cases in the press, such as Baby P, were seen so very often and yet their plight was not recognised. But what did get people thinking a little was saying that if people HAVE to be monitored, then there is a possibility that they will have someone coming into their home who might really be pushing them towards a style of education that they already know didn't work for their child. It seemed the NAS staff could imagine this situation, being aware that there are people in education who don't understand autism, but won't be told.

I pointed out that at present, if this is the case, people can refuse visits, but if monitoring is compulsory, then there will be no escaping that pressure, causing parents to be in a constant battle with authority, or to teach and parent in a way that they don't like, or to give in and put their child back in school, even if they were very unhappy there.

I mentioned how worrying that would be for some children who were possibly going to break down in that situation - and the newspapers often carry stories of children who take their

lives because they can't cope at school. I would want to weigh up the risk to this group, as well as to the children who might be hidden from society and at risk of harm. There was a lot of nodding at this point, and I think people were beginning to understand why some of us are not happy about monitoring.

I was pleased that they all had so many questions and kept talking all over lunch time which gives me hope that they were seeing home education as a positive option that could bring a good quality of life, rather than a lonely last resort.

What Is Happening With the Home Education Review in England

An Update from EO Government Policy Group and EO Disability Group

At the time of writing in early May, we have been given several indications which suggest that Graham Badman may publish his Review Report in early June. Education Otherwise Government Policy Group and EO Disability Group have now had two meetings with Graham Badman and Liz Green of the DCSF Independent Home Education Review team. The second meeting was at the end of March, which was too late to report in the April newsletter. We have retained home educating barrister Ian Dowty who attended both meetings as did the libertarian peer, Lord Lucas who has been very sympathetic and helpful and has asked a number of questions in parliament on our behalf.

Expert Panel

In mid April Graham Badman's Review team sent EO the details of the Expert Panel. We obtained permission to publish the information on the EO campaign website and you can read our article here

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

EO was told that "the Group will act as a 'critical friend' to the Review team. It will be used to cross check the interpretation of evidence and gain expert insight into key issues, such as the operation of current processes and practice within LAs; child development and the outcomes

of home educated children; and child protection for example. It will also act as a sounding board for emerging findings and recommendations, ensuring they are based on firm evidence, are workable and will actively improve outcomes for children.

The group will not be asked to comment on drafts of the review report but may be invited to check specific parts of it, for example, aspects of the report that are pertinent to their area of expertise."

EO is talking to several Panel members including Professor James Conroy and Paul Ennals of the National Children's Bureau.

March 2009 Meeting with Graham Badman: Report Now Available Online

You can also read a report of the March 2009 meeting online here.

<http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/eogb0309.htm>

The main themes of the second meeting were:

- Feedback from NSPCC meeting (EO met in the morning with Phillip Noyes from NSPCC to discuss the prejudice against home education and the misunderstandings around safeguarding issues)
- Models from other countries
- Training/standards/clarity across Children's Workforce
- Special needs
- Home educated children are seen in the community and would be seen more if home education was more widely known as legal and acceptable
- Recommendations from home educators please
- Good Practice
- Common Factors identified by Education Otherwise where there is good practice
- Common factors where practice is less than good
- What is the direction of travel?
- Impact Assessment

Further Meeting With Barrister Ian Dowty

Following the meeting with the Review team, Education Otherwise Government Policy Group and Education Otherwise Disability Group organised an all-day meeting with our barrister Ian Dowty in London to bring together all the points members have been making to us about the appalling prejudice and lack of understanding about home education at all levels, the barriers to being able to access qualifications as private exam candidates, the unfairness of home educated young people in England not getting Education Maintenance Allowance and so on.

Prospectus for Improving Support to Home Education Families

We submitted a Prospectus for Improving Support to Home Educating Families where we put forward a number of positive ideas including conferences, workshops, awareness-raising and training. We said we believed there must be more dialogue, more understanding of the others' perspective, and we also said the Review team should continue to look at models of good practice.

You can view the entire Prospectus online here <http://www.prospectus.education-otherwise.co.uk/index.htm>

Risk Factors and Protective Factors

We continued to object to the Government's view of "safeguarding". As our barrister Ian Dowty said to the Review team: "Government tends to treat children as objects not as subjects, and that "safeguarding" is viewed as an end in itself - something to be done to children or for children rather than as a process, a means of empowering children to protect themselves."

We pointed out that when home education is known and accepted, home educated children are able to be out and about in the community without being ostracised or intimidated. We said this was a strong protective factor for home-educated children and young people because home educated children are not isolated within their families.

Authorities Need to Offer Non-Judgemental Support

We argued that the Government and local authorities can only start to discover the complex reasons behind non-engagement if they try to understand the perspective of the family and are able to listen in a non-judgemental way and to take time to reflect on what they might learn from these conversations.

We also said that the Government needs to consider the wider implications of local authority officers visiting the family home. If a family chooses to provide information by allowing a home visit, they should be reminded that they are entitled to have an advocate present and the local authority official may want to take advice on the safety of visiting a home unaccompanied. Up to date CRB checks should also be available to view on request.

Home Education Ignored at National Policy Level

We pointed out that home education is not recognised when Government policies are being drafted. This alienates the home education



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(Guarantor Declaration)

N.B. Please Complete Form in BLOCK CAPITALS

I (Print Name)

wish to become a member of Education Otherwise Association Limited and confirm that I am over the age of 18. In the event of the Association being wound up I agree to contribute up to £10 in payment of any debts and liabilities it may have incurred.

I understand that the details I give on this form will be entered onto the Company's Register of Members and that under the Companies Act 2006, it is possible for someone to request sight of or a copy of this Register for a "proper purpose". Education Otherwise may then have to disclose my personal data.

I have enclosed proof of my name and address along with an sae and loose stamps to the value of £1.50 to enable Education Otherwise to return these documents to me by first class recorded delivery. The latest version of this SUM form is available by post from Education Otherwise or can be downloaded from the members area of the Education Otherwise forum at <http://forum.educationotherwise.org/viewtopic.php?f=60&t=215>

EO Membership Number (if known):

Home Address (print in full):

Signature of Member:

Date:

This form should be returned to: Education Otherwise, SUMs, PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW.

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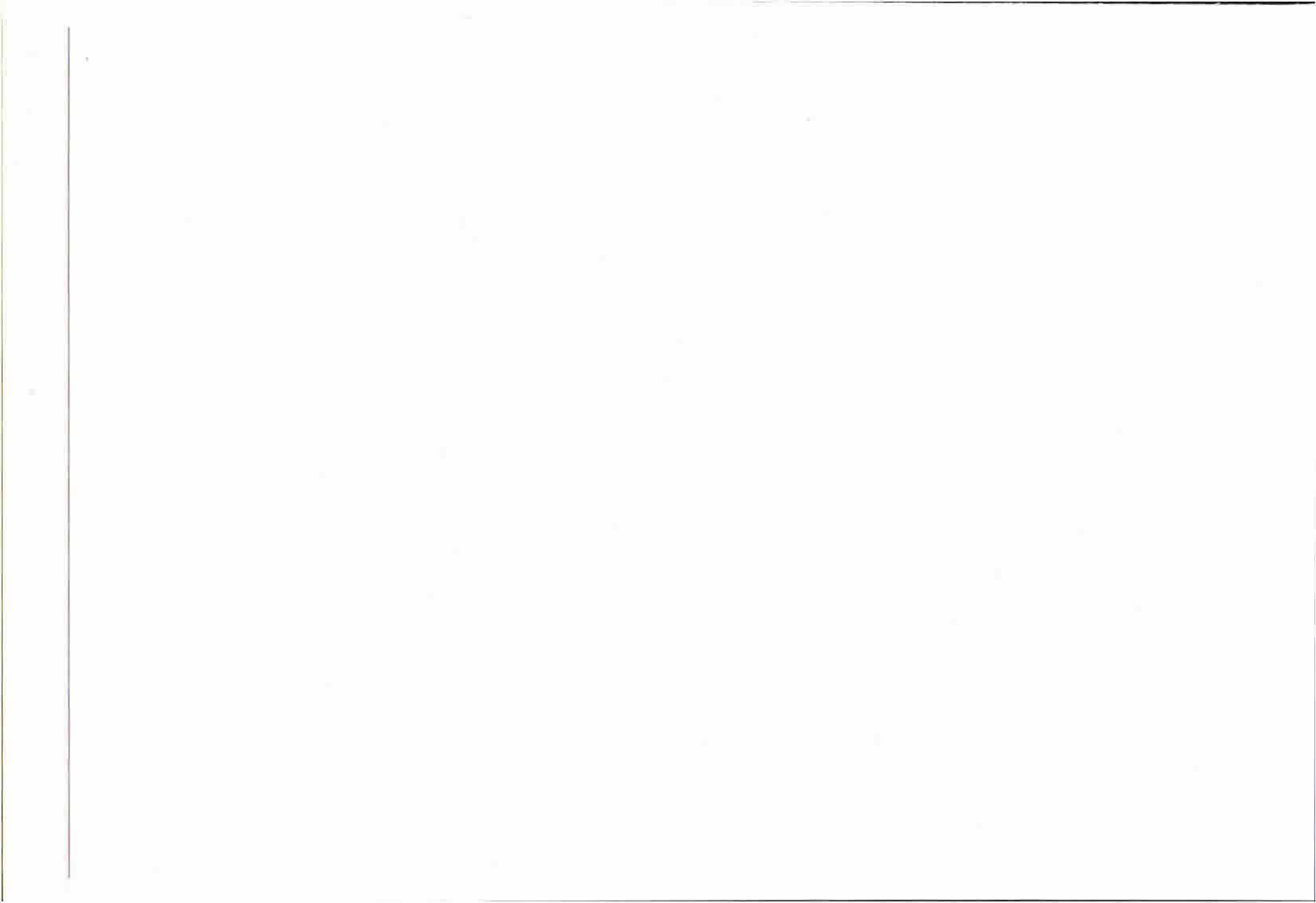
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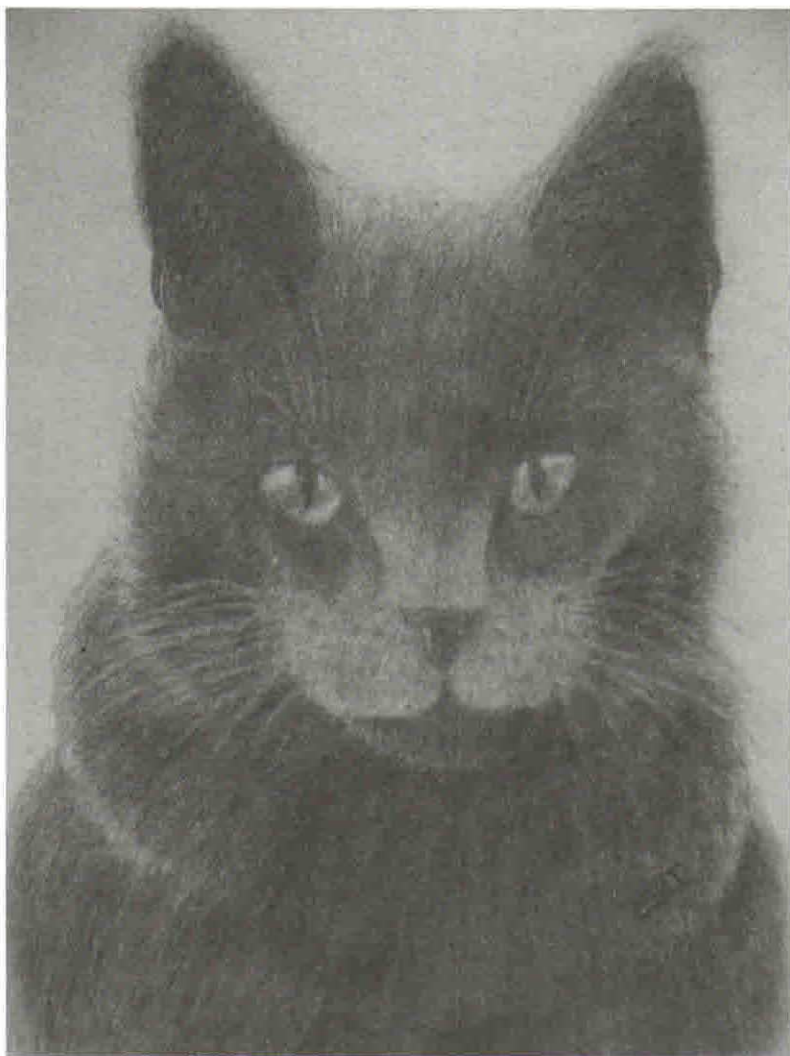
- documentation should be less than six months old



EO Teen Pages

Issue no. 1 – June 2009

Contributions for the next issue must be received by the 20th June



Welcome to the EO Teen Pages!

Picture by Eloise Trett

Hello everybody and welcome to the Teen Pages! Freya, Leila, Joe and myself, Eloise are your new editors. We have been extremely busy over the last couple of months and hope that you like what we have compiled for you!

We would love to hear from you about what **you** want to see in the Teen Pages as we plan to include far more in the future. For this first issue we have included sections on some of the things that interest us...

- Page 1 Featured article on the Summer Solstice (by Leila) – Learn more about this fascinating time of year!
- Page 2 Reviews (by Leila and Joe) – Here you can read our critics latest opinions of what's good to read and watch this summer!
- Page 3 Eloise's Art Page – Where I share with you a little of my knowledge on how to draw cats!
- Page 4 Mini Monkeys comic strip (by Freya) – Find out what the mischievous pirate primates have been getting up to!

Note:

Please send your contributions and suggestions for the next issue to teenteam@education-otherwise.org. Drawings etc should be in black and white and include your full name, address and membership number.

Summer Solstice

WHAT IS THE SUMMER SOLSTICE?

The Earth is like a spinning top, moving in an orbit around the sun. As it spins, the Earth leans over in its orbit, always tilting the same way. When the Earth is on one side of the sun, the tilt leans the Northern Hemisphere towards the sun.



When the sun is at its most Northerly point and hovering over the Tropic Of Cancer – this is the Summer Solstice.

DEFINITION

Solstice ("*sol*" meaning *sun*, and "*sistere*," to *cause to stand still* in Latin) – the sun is at its most powerful and appears to standstill.

SPIRITUAL MEANING

The power of the sun is celebrated in many traditions at the summer solstice, and for thousands of years this time has had a spiritual significance. It is a time to celebrate the Earth and the living natural world when it is at its most productive.

In England many people go to ancient religious sites such as *Stonehenge* and *Avebury* to see the sun rising on the first morning of

Stonehenge © Photobucket



summer. Other countries, especially further north where there is nearly 24 hr daylight, hold parades, festivals and picnics and even national holidays. After the Solstice, the days begin to slowly shorten towards the Autumn Equinox, when the days and nights are equal again.

By Leila Mezni

REVIEWS



WARRIORS by Erin Hunter – Book Series

Warriors is an ongoing series which tells the story of four clans of wild cats (ThunderClan, WindClan, RiverClan and ShadowClan) trying to survive in their forest homes. It currently consists of three mini-series, with a fourth soon to come, each containing six books. Each book is shown from the point of view of a ThunderClan cat, although the main characters vary depending on the series. I like the way there is a mystery solved in each book, but there is always another to be solved in the next. The books themselves are fast-paced, exciting and action-packed, and get somewhat darker as the series progress. I think the only flaw is that it is quite difficult to remember who all the characters are and how they are related, because there are so many. The latest instalment, Sunrise, stars the three young warriors Jayfeather, Hollyleaf and Lionblaze and follow them as they try to uncover the truth behind a fellow warrior's murder, and the shocking secret of their true parentage.

Verdict: 9/10

Reviewed by Leila Mezni



INKHEART – Film

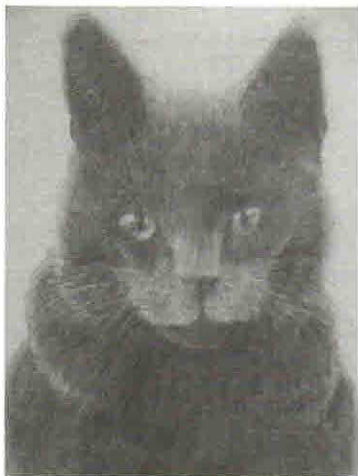
Inkheart is a fantasy film adaptation of the book of the same name by Cornelia Funke, starring Brendan Fraser and Paul Bettany among others. It tells the tale of Mortimer, who can make things come to life from within books by reading them, and his quest to find his wife, who he unfortunately read into a book, called Inkheart, at some point in the past, along the way encountering various characters such as Dustfinger, and the villain Capricorn who are both from the same Inkheart book. The film started off well with an intriguing set up, however as the story progressed I found myself losing interest in the characters and plot. The film makers seemed to put too much focus on the effects and monsters that have come out of these books than development of the character's and story, leading to a lot of instances throughout the film where it was frankly uninteresting, even the action sequences.

The acting was fine, although there weren't any stand out performances, and the special effects are well done throughout. Inkheart isn't a bad film, on all accounts its a fine film, its just a bit disposable, and pales in comparison to some other similar fantasy adventure films. I had looked forward to seeing Inkheart, and the potential for a great film was there, but it never really shone out as I had hoped and I was fairly disappointed, still, younger viewers will probably enjoy it, and you might as well watch it at least once.

Verdict: 6.5/10 Reviewed by Joe Coyle

Eloise's Art Page

Hello! My name is Eloise and I am going to be creating the Art Pages for the 'Teen Pages' newsletter. I don't claim to be an expert at art, however, I am eager to share with you what knowledge and skills I have. I am presently completing my Gold Arts Award and would love to one day do an art course at college. I hope you like this issue's art page. If you have any comments or suggestions about what you would like to see in this section in the future please email teenteam@education-otherwise.org. I would also love to see some of **your** artwork! Send me any contributions via the same email address above and I will try my hardest to include them. Enjoy!



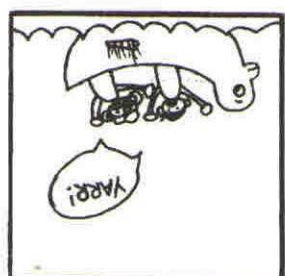
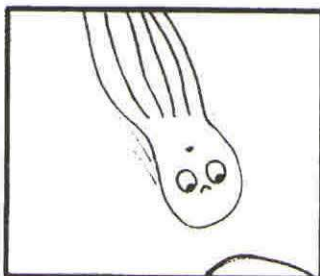
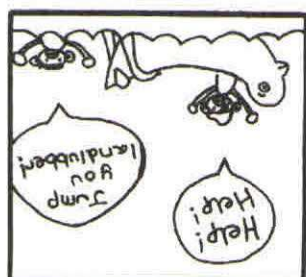
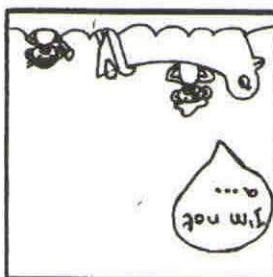
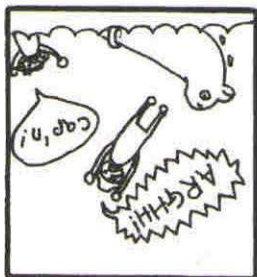
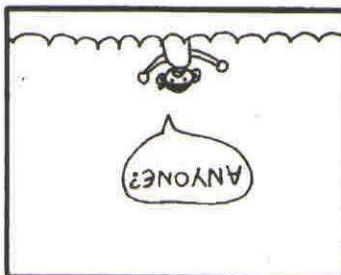
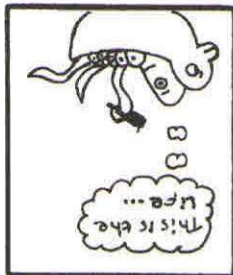
I have decided, for this issue, to focus on drawing cats. Left you can see an example of how I have tackled drawing this interesting and often quite difficult subject matter.

This drawing, which I titled 'Smokey', is one of my more detailed studies of a cat. I love drawing animals and have experimented with many different mediums to try and get the effect that I wanted. I created this drawing using 3B and 4B pencils. The reason I chose to use these was that they are soft enough to create shading with a lot of depth to it but also firm enough to be able to add in fine detail. Sketching pencils can get a lot harder and softer. However, I feel that 3B and 4B are just about right for the style of drawing that I like to create. Although you wouldn't necessarily think it 'Staedtler Tradition' pencils are a very good medium to work in when drawing animals and I have used them many a time. Another useful addition to any would-be artist's pencil case is a putty rubber. Putty rubbers can be moulded into almost any shape and can be used to carefully

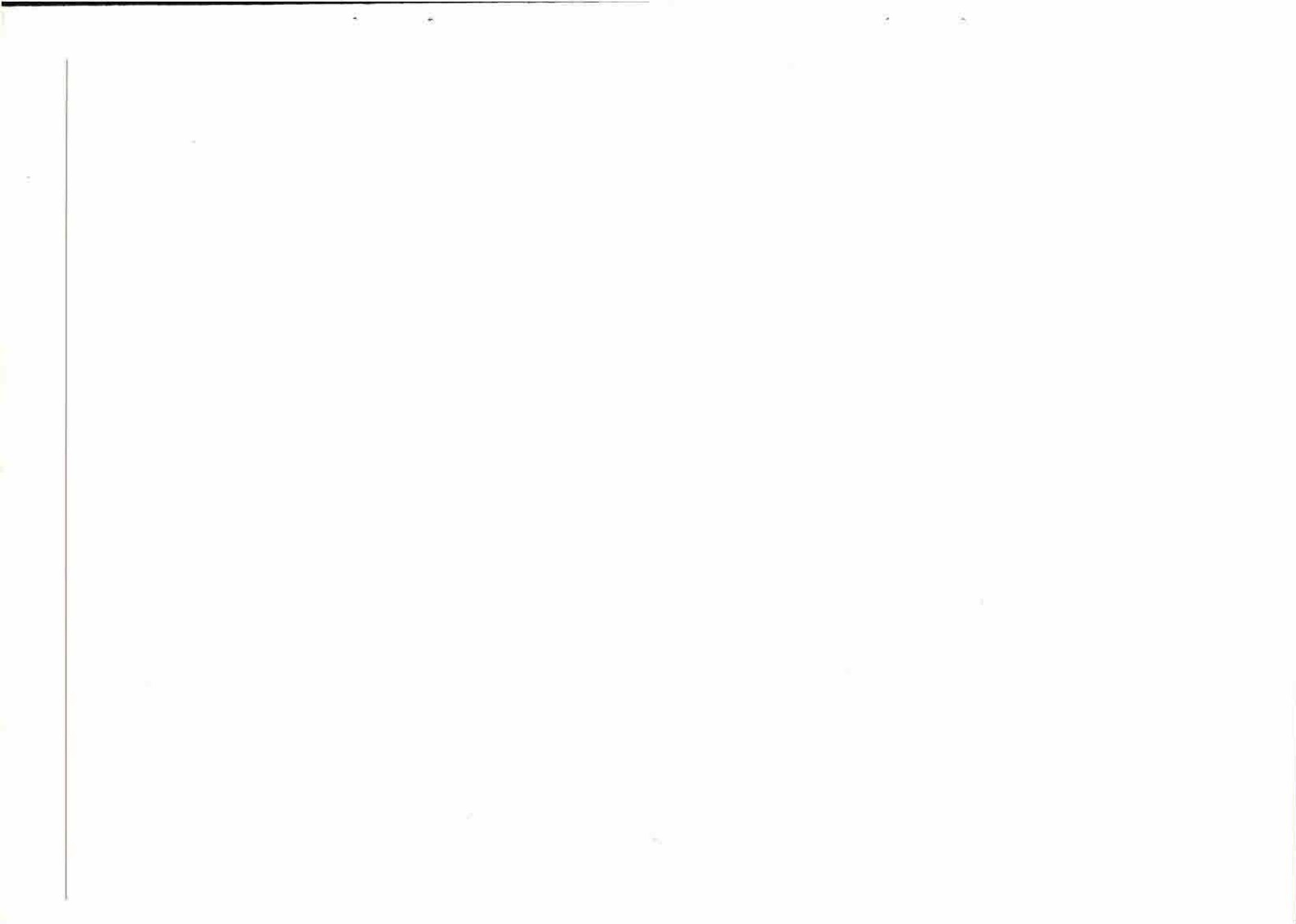
remove fine detail from pencil drawings. If you look closely at 'Smokey' you can see that I used a putty rubber to create the cat's whiskers and some of the highlights in its fur. Alternatively, if you don't want to work in black and white, pastel pencils can give a lovely soft finish to your cat's fur. I have worked with these quite a lot before and (as long as you don't mind getting messy!) you can achieve some brilliant results.

A drawing like this may seem like a huge undertaking but not if you break it down into stages. Before I start working on any of the shading and detail I always find it's best to measure and sketch out the rough outlines and proportions of my drawing. Breaking the picture into basic shapes and lines e.g. rounded triangles for the cat's ears makes things a lot easier. I usually start doing the shading and details after this, working out from the eyes. I personally find it best to draw from photographs. Drawing from life is ok but your subject will probably move before you've finished. Plus you won't be able to get much detail into your drawing for the short amount of time that the animal is still.

I would like to point out that whilst I have recommended certain materials in this issue I am in no way saying that they are all you should ever use. I feel that to learn what materials you truly like (and suit your style) you must experiment with as many different mediums as possible. I myself have only worked these things out through trial and error. Most importantly with art you must enjoy yourself. When you start out on a project don't worry too much about your picture being absolutely perfect – some of the best pieces of artwork happen by accident!



By FREYA BRIGHAM





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(Guarantor Declaration)

N.B. Please Complete Form in BLOCK CAPITALS

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community, produces unworkable policies and procedures and contributes to an adversarial relationship between local and national government and home educators.

A Place Where Local Home Educators Can Meet With Local Authorities And Representatives From Government Departments

We put forward recommendations for a Home Education Committee where representatives from home education support organisations could meet on a regular basis with local authorities and with representatives from Government Departments.

We know that the Government will talk to a variety of bodies such as Barnardos, NSPCC, the London Safeguarding Board and others about home based education provision, so we felt it was important that there would be a place for home educators to have some input at this level as home educators are the only people who really know about home education - hence the recommendation for a committee.

This is NOT the same as the Tasmanian model, where home educators are charged with overseeing other home educators. We have made it plain to Graham Badman that we are completely against any proposal for individual home educators or a board of home educators to assess the educational provision of other home educating families.

Annual Home Education Conference

We offered to work with other interested parties to organise an annual Home Education Conference. The purpose would be to celebrate home education and to raise awareness of home education issues. Amongst other discussion themes, the conference may wish to explore the issue of safeguarding within community-based education, where the child is the subject and not the object.

We complained about the fact that home education tends to be regulated by people who deal with problems, such as school attendance, behavioural issues, education welfare or vulnerable children. We said this was unhelpful

and recommended that "home education" should simply become a subset of "education" within Children's Trusts.

Need For Training In Wider Children's Workforce And The Legal Profession

We announced plans for a series of regional home education workshops covering the most frequently asked questions such as what is the law on home education, how do home educators take exams, how do home educators meet. We said we would be asking local home educators for recommendations on whom we should invite from local authorities.

We told the Review Team that we know of many instances where social workers, paediatricians, Health Visitors and other members of the Children's Workforce try to control or dominate the home education process and also exert pressure on the family to get children back into school, including threatening to issue School Attendance Orders.

We said that being a single parent is a risk factor for this type of pressure as is low family income or having a child with special educational needs. We said we believed that this level of prejudice is unacceptable and that it stems from a lack of awareness and understanding about law, practice and positive outcomes in home education.

We also tackled the issue of ignorance of home education at all levels of the legal profession. We know that many parents, particularly lone parents, have been told by solicitors that it is neither legal nor desirable for children to be educated at home. We also told the Review team that there were too many solicitors who mistakenly believe that home education necessarily means "school at home" and who are conspicuously unaware of the diversity of learning styles and educational provision within home education. We recommended a programme of training and awareness raising and offered to meet with DCSF legal team to assist with drafting expert information on the law and home education.

Services to Home Educating Families

We said we found it regrettable that some councils still prioritised "inspection" or "assessment" over "support", but we said we were aware that some local authorities offer access to exam centres at Pupil Referral Units or will take up the exam centre issue with local schools, some have careers advice and guidance sessions, some publish a termly newsletter for home educators, some have virtual learning or other online curriculum resources, some run drop-in sessions, some provide references for college, some are able to assist with work experience, some pass on information about special needs support services, some have information about Gifted and Talented schemes, some will assist with the Child Benefit Office for post 16 CB entitlement.

We requested more drop-in facilities for home educating families. We said that this would break down barriers to communication between the authority and the home education community and it would provide social and networking opportunities for home educating families. We have already given the Review team and the DCSF several models of good practice in North Yorkshire and Milton Keynes.

We said we will be contacting local authorities, offering to publicise and raise awareness about services the authority offers to home educators in their local area. We added that we knew local authorities were very restricted in what they can make available to home educators because of funding constraints.

Models Of Good Practice/The Benefits of Voluntary Co-operation

We stated that there were huge benefits to voluntary relationships between the home educating family and the local authority. Where families feel respected and valued, they are far more likely to want to engage in dialogue with the authority. We have recommended to the DCSF a number of models of good practice that we believe illustrate this thesis.

Ian Dowty, home educating barrister has stated categorically to the Review Team that "*there is no need or justification for reversing the burden of proof.*"

On the other hand, where families feel attacked or undermined, they will react defensively and an adversarial position is likely to become entrenched on both sides.

We said that Education Otherwise believes that any move towards greater compulsion would not improve the situation in hard cases and would adversely affect the majority. The law is a blunt instrument and compulsion would not empower children or promote children's rights.

At present there is no funding for home education and funding does not follow the child. However, it has recently been stated in the House of Lords that:

"If the LA has financial responsibility and makes exceptional provision for the pupil to be home educated then the LA could claim the GUF [Guaranteed Unit of Funding per pupil or per capita funding]. This is, however, likely to be a very exceptional circumstance as Section 19(2B) makes it clear that LAs can set up pupil referral units which are schools specially organised to provide education for children referred to in Section 19(1) [of the Education Act 1996]"

We indicated that Clacton Council has recently given a grant of £10,000 to a group of home educating parents to pay for a private tutor, which we have written about elsewhere in the newsletter.

We told the Review team that EO receives many enquiries about flexischooling and it would appear that many headteachers are unaware that flexischooling is a legal option. We said that parents and local authorities would welcome

clear signposting to the relevant Government guidance.

Exams and Qualifications

We suggested there should be discussions with exam regulators, awarding bodies, LSC and new regional funding and commissioning bodies to examine the impact of 14-19 reforms for home educated young people particularly in the area of modular learning.

We reminded the Review team that Education Otherwise and the Home Education Advisory Service have been working in partnership with the Independent Schools Council to raise awareness of home educated young people's difficulty in finding somewhere to sit exams. We are hoping that the ISC will be able to encourage member schools to offer services to home educating families, many of whom are on a reduced income. We have written about our work with the Independent Schools Council elsewhere in the newsletter.

We said that many home educated young people wish to take courses at college but are consistently turned away because there is no funding from the local authority. In a very few local authorities we understand there is some discretion over managing funds but there is no consistent national policy.

We challenged the Review team over lack of entitlement to free eye tests and NHS vouchers on a child's 16th birthday if the child is not attending a registered educational institution.

We pointed out the injustice that Education Maintenance Allowance is not available for home educated young people in England. We said that EO had attempted to raise this with the Schools Minister Jim Knight. We were referred to the Learning and Skills Council and had a reasonably positive meeting in 2008, where it was suggested that individual parents might be able to gain accreditation as learning providers. We asserted that it was clearly discriminatory when home educated young people are engaged in full-time education with defined learning goals and yet are still unable to claim EMA.

Special Educational Needs

We hesitated over whether to have a separate section on SEN, since the aim of home education is to put the child first and to meet the needs of the child. However, we said we were aware of additional obstacles faced by families where a child has special needs, difficulty or disability where every aspect of the family's life becomes the subject of intrusive monitoring and surveillance with the ultimate threat that the child could be forced into school or could be removed from the family.

We reminded the Review team that Statements of special educational needs are not designed for the home education environment and the Special Education Code of Practice was not drafted with home education in mind. We said some local authorities appear to believe that the provisions in the statement apply specifically to education in the home provided by parents whereas in fact the Government has stated:

"The term "suitable arrangements" does not mean having to specify exact arrangements in the child's statement. However, the authority must satisfy itself that the arrangements put in place by the parents are suitable to meet the needs of the child. Where that is the case, the authority is relieved of its duty to arrange for provision as specified. If, however, the arrangements fall short, then the authority is not absolved of its responsibility. However, the authority could, for example, itself make some provision to help the parents to put in place suitable arrangements. Furthermore, even where authorities are satisfied that arrangements are suitable, they will still have a duty to maintain the child's statement and to review it annually."

We said that home educating parents with disabled and special educational needs children want contact with people who respect their values and expertise. We told the Review team that parents who educate their children at home have made a decision to care for their children at home. In very many instances the family has evidence that the children were not safe in schools and their needs were not being met in schools.

Conclusion

At the time of writing in early May we expect the Review Report to be published in early June. We will give full details in the August newsletter. Meanwhile the best way to keep up with what EO is doing between newsletters and to catch up with the latest home education news is to sign up for our campaign site updates and to check out our new Education Otherwise Twitter feed.

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

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

<http://twitter.com/EdOtherwise>

Update from Wales

I'd like to take this opportunity to update our Welsh members on the current situation with the Welsh Assembly Government's National Behaviour and Attendance Review (NBAR).

With the DSCF's review currently being conducted in England, there has been concern in Wales that our Government would adopt a similar approach. It seems at this point however that WAG (Welsh Assembly Gov't) has no plans for such a review. I spoke again to WAG's Jo Richards, and she assured me that, at least for the foreseeable future, WAG does not intend to follow in England's footsteps. Jo has thus far seemed very open and honest with me, and in addition she is sympathetic to (and understanding of) home education.

At the moment WAG is in the process of speaking with the local councils throughout the country to try to assess how they view/handle Elective Home Education, and once those reports have all returned (I've been told it will be several months) Jo and her team will decide how to proceed. She has offered to keep me informed of new developments as and when they happen, and has said that if and when it comes time to make any actual decisions, she will include representatives of the HE community in this process. Jo also emphasised to me several times that they have no desire to create enmity between home educators and the Government, and that they don't want to frighten or bully anyone.

We spoke at length about the desperate need for there to be some true co-operation and mutual understanding between local authorities and the home education community, and perhaps this is something we can work towards in future.

I will continue to keep you all posted, but in the meantime the situation for us here in Wales looks to be positive, or at least not negative!

Have a lovely summer!

Kira Patefield-Smith
Welsh Government Liaison, EO GPG

CAPE Safeguarding Conference, March 2009 by Fiona Nicholson

In March I ran a workshop on home education at the CAPE child protection conference. One of the themes of the conference was about safeguarding in settings outside school. I spoke about home education, the law and the practice with many practical examples from my own experience. I also addressed the clear fact that many children were absolutely NOT safe in schools.

I set out some of the protective factors for home educated children and young people in terms of being out and about in the community,

I explained about our self-help networks, with local groups and events and busy local and national internet lists. As an example I listed some of the things home educated children and young people were doing in my local area, Sheffield.

In policy terms for EO, I gave information about EO's Independent Designated Safeguarding Children Person (see inside back pages of newsletter for Jim's contact details). I talked about the work EO had been doing with the NSPCC and with our IDSCP in terms of drawing up our own Safeguarding Children Policy and how we hoped in time to repair the breach with the NSPCC following prejudicial statements made by their policy spokesperson on the launch of the Home Education Review.

<http://www.cape.org.uk/events.php>

As it says on their website:

"CAPE is a professional network for those engaged in supporting schools in their child protection responsibilities. Its geographical base is in the north of England, though it has members from further afield.

CAPE can claim to speak for highly experienced and well-informed child protection trainers and officers. Members include LA Advisers, Principal Education Welfare Officers, DfES Investigating Officers, NSPCC Education Officers, and freelance trainers. Some are designated LA child protection officers and many sit on Area Child Protection Committees."

I found the delegates to have very diverse views. Some were very open to the idea of home education and wanted to learn more. Ruth Hannah, the North Yorkshire Elective Home Education Advisor whom I had previously met on a joint field trip with the DCSF was very sympathetic to home education and was able to dispel some myths. With other delegates I felt it would take a lot more time to allay their fears and to question some of their more damaging

stereotypes, but I am reasonably confident that we have made a start.

Delegates were surprised to hear that some home educators found home visits threatening and unpleasant and professed themselves incredulous that anyone visiting a home would be judgemental and intrusive. However in the next breath I was asked did I not think it was inappropriate for a single mum with mental health issues to home educate because she was clearly meeting her own needs and not putting her child first.

I was reassured that other delegates wanted to distance themselves from this point of view.

Several people got in touch with me after the conference and thanked me for giving a personal hands-on view of home education, they said they hadn't really thought about a lot of the issues before.

Head of the Royal Grammar School defends home education in the Guardian

Dr Bernard Trafford, head of the Royal grammar school, Newcastle upon Tyne, and chairman of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, wrote the following in the Guardian at the end of March

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/mar/31/home-schooling>

It is commonplace now to talk about the surveillance society. One agency after another becomes part of the mechanism, so we should not be surprised that schools are the latest instrument for checking up on families.

Bowing to pressure after the succession of child abuse cases that has the media screaming for action, and policymakers devising ever more layers of safeguarding procedures, the government has asked Graham Badman - chair of Haringey's safeguarding children board,

replacing Sharon Shoesmith, sacked after the Baby P inquiry - to review the safeguarding and support of home-educated children. A recent article in the Independent quoted the children's minister, Delyth Morgan: "If there are problems, we have to look at the evidence. Home-education is a small but important part of keeping children properly safe."

In the storm of outrage that followed the tragedy of Baby P, fingers were bound to be pointed. Inexplicably, they are now being pointed at home-educators. The estimated 20,000 parents who choose to educate their children themselves currently stand accused of motives that are suspect at best and abusive at worst.

Why they are suddenly a target is unclear. Outrageous allegations are made, and apparently accepted, without proper examination. The Independent described authorities' fears that parents home-educate to mask truancy, or to hide forced marriages or children babysitting younger siblings. An NSPCC spokesperson observed: "We have no view about home-education, but we do know that to find out about abuse someone has to know about the child." The inference is made. Mud sticks.

The suggestion is that only if children are in schools can we be sure that their parents are not abusing them, but the smug moralising is unjust and inaccurate. Victoria Climbié was not in school at the time of her death, but she was not being home-educated. Eunice Spry was jailed after abusing her foster children for 19 years: no one noticed the children's bruises because, it is said, they were home-educated. But they were fostered. Where were the social workers?

Home-educators deserve better treatment. I know, because I've been one. Between 1991 and 1996, when I was a newly appointed secondary school head, my wife taught our two daughters at home. Those five years were some of the happiest we have known, full of the joy of discovery and learning. The girls went back into the system for the secondary phase (their

choice) and are now happy, self-confident, well-qualified young adults with jobs.

It worked for us, but we were regarded as odd. Some friends and colleagues were profoundly uncomfortable with our decision. People are wary of difference, but parents often turn to home-education precisely because their children are different and are bullied in school as a result. Others do it on principle or, as we did, because they reckon they can offer something better. For us, the issue was the national curriculum, which we felt had blitzed primary education.

The image often painted of a secretive approach is misleading: most home-educators do it openly and network widely. I guess some do hide their children away; there are religious fundamentalists among them, too. I don't like either approach, but I claim no right to ban them. Perhaps a tiny minority of home-educators is abusive. Statistically, a minute percentage of judges, politicians, doctors, lawyers, church leaders, teachers, and even social workers must also abuse children, but we don't proscribe those jobs. And remember, home-educators are already inspected.

Paranoia about systemic failure in safeguarding is leading society to demonise a few free spirits. We should not be surprised. We inhabit a world where we are filmed on CCTV wherever we go. Amid the hysterical reaction to abject failures in child protection, the rights of a few families on the fringes will be seen as an acceptable sacrifice on the altar of obsessive security.

Essex Council Paid Home Education Parents £10,000 For A Tutor

Essex County Council made a one-off payment to six families for a total of six children aged between 11 and 12.

It is believed to be the first time an education authority has provided funds to families who opt out of traditional school.

<http://www.talkcarswell.com/default.aspx?date=200904>

The payment was described by the council as 'exceptional', but it may encourage others in similar circumstances to apply for State funding.

The offer of financial help came after the parents had a meeting at the House of Lords with the council's Conservative leader Lord Hanningfield.

At a further meeting with director of education Terry Reynolds, they were told that if they looked into starting up their own school they could be given a cash payment.

However, so far the parents have not indicated that they want to set up a school. What they want is for their children to be accepted at their first choice school and not be sent to a school which they regard as failing.

The families said the money would pay for the four boys and two girls' lessons until the end of term after which they hope to get into one of the four local schools they had initially applied for.

The Mail on Sunday reported :

"Essex County Council said: 'The payment followed an initial discussion around parents establishing their own school and we are pleased to be in a position to assist.

'We have always considered and will continue to consider any requests from parents for financial support on their merits.'"

More information here:

<http://tinyurl.com/d7vuam> and

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/essex/7989254.stm> (includes short film clip)

The MP for Clacton wrote on his blog:

"Just done a BBC interview ...

... about Essex council's glorious decision to give mums and dads freedom to use "their share" of local authority funding to self-commission their children's education. This brave decision has established a new precedent, and shows why we so desperately need more independent academies - and the kind of freedom mums and dads now have in Sweden.
<http://www.talkcarswell.com/default.aspx?date=200904>

"But what if every parent in Essex starts to demand the same?" asks one reader of this blog <http://www.talkcarswell.com/default.aspx?date=200904>. Um. Then there would be something called choice.

"It'd mean anarchy!" rants another. Anarchy? Like there is when we let folk decide what food to eat, or where to go on holiday, or where to live, you mean? Perhaps you think government should start to ration those too?

The days of having people like Jacqui Smith or Ed Balls or Ken Boston pretending to oversee your child's education are coming to an end.

If we left it to these sort of people to run supermarkets, there'd be catchment areas for breakfast cereals and waiting lists for fruit and veg. So why accept a government monopoly on deciding our children's future? In Essex, the monopoly is starting to crack.

Posted on 8 April 2009 by Douglas Carswell

<http://www.talkcarswell.com/default.aspx?date=200904>

Access To Exam Centres in Private Schools

EO has been invited to speak at the Independent Schools Council Annual Conference in a session on the theme of Public Benefit. Fiona Nicholson from EO Government Policy Group will be encouraging more schools to open up their exam centre facilities to home educated private candidates.

EO will be giving positive examples from a recent field trip to Sidcot School in Somerset and Mayville School in Portsmouth. We are working in partnership with the ISC and with Jane Lowe, Trustee of the Home Education Advisory Service who will also be on hand to answer schools' questions about GCSEs and IGCSEs.

Other speakers will include David Lyscom Chief Executive of the ISC; Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas, Chair, Vicky Tuck; Vice Chair, Kate Hoey, MP; Schools Minister Sarah McCarthy-Fry MP; Anastasia de Waal from Civitas think tank; Shadow Ministers Nick Gibb and Annette Brooke; Sir Roger Singleton, author of the Singleton report into safeguarding children; and Lord Puttnam.

The event will be an opportunity to raise awareness of home education and to give a walkthrough for schools who may now wish to demonstrate public benefit by sharing school facilities and enabling home educated young people from lower income families to sit exams as private candidates.

This initiative is strongly supported by the ISC and we are told that the Chair of the ISC has taken a personal interest in supporting home educated young people.

We hope to publish a follow-up report in the August newsletter.

Home Educators Speak Out at 21st Century School Conference

In December DCSF told us that the government wants schools to grow beyond centres of learning and become central to everyday community life."

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2008_0278

21st Century Schools were also an issue raised by Graham Badman as significant for children and young people, where the school assumes greater responsibility for wellbeing in the wider community.

At the beginning of April, two EO members went to the Government's Westminster conference on 21st Century Schools to find out what this might mean for us.

At the close of the conference, home educators put some points to Secretary of State, Ed Balls.

"Pam stated that home educated young people were more likely to be prepared for the 21st century economy because of the flexible nature of their learning and their ability to use medium of all types. So perhaps Government could learn from home educators.

Pam and Roxy also explained that monitoring and assessment is intrusive, irrelevant and counter-productive and talked again about how home educated children went on to achieve success in later life.

Pam also said that when it comes to true accountability, home educating parents take their duties very seriously and don't delegate this to the state. In this regard, home educators are held to far higher account and this would surely solve the problem of accountability for the state."

We now await the publication of the Government White Paper on 21st Century schools.

Laming Report - Government Response Launch

On May 6th Annette Taberner from Education Otherwise Government Policy Group attended the launch of the Government's Response to the Laming Review on Safeguarding at Westminster.

You can read more about the Review here
<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding>

The launch of the response document provided an opportunity to remind Ministers about home education.

Addressing the meeting, Ed Balls said that in the last few difficult months (following the baby P case) it would have been easy to rush into making changes, changing the law and restructuring the delivery system. In fact the law is ok. What was needed and what they are addressing, is the need for better delivery systems.

At question time Annette raised the following points:

- home education is a safeguarding measure where children are withdrawn from abusive situations in schools to be home educated
- the Department's press release at the beginning of the Independent Review had angered and saddened home educators. This was most unhelpful
- it does not promote safeguarding where those charged with helping families act inappropriately eg leaving a child in A&E unattended whilst professionals interrogate parents on the legality of their educational choices and their qualifications
- there is a balance to be struck between acting to safeguard children without alienating families from accessing the services they need
- at the Time to Talk event in Leeds parents had said - "stop policing us and start helping us"
- invitation again given to Ministers to attend a home education group meeting

In response to Annette, Ed Balls said that the right to home educate was important and there were no plans to change this. He said it was not a choice he would make for his own children. We note that many home educating families may

once have felt like that but that a Government minister is likely to have many more choices than most families in a difficult situation before resorting to home education.

Mr Balls felt that the Independent Review should be viewed as an opportunity for home educating families and organisations to put forward their views.

He said that Ministers would be looking carefully at the report from Mr Badman.

This report covers the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, representing EO's financial year.

Over this period the Trustees worked on plans to take EO forward, to strengthen EO's management and organisation, and to introduce clear policies and procedures to clarify volunteers' roles and improve EO's support for home educators. In addition we continued to improve the content, layout and readability of the newsletter and started making plans to update the website.

The trustees are working to modernise the charity and to improve organisational structure. EO has grown in 20 years but still retained informal structures from its early days and lacked written policies and procedures. Education Otherwise has around 4000 member families. We have a large turnover in the membership with around the same number of new families joining as those who don't renew.

We have been making progress with introducing policies, procedures, job descriptions, codes of conduct, and volunteer agreements. In future, there will be policies for every aspect of EO's work, as recommended by the Charities Commission.

Further, Trustees have been working to introduce an understanding of modern data protection and safeguarding children practices amongst volunteers, and have been looking at training and induction programmes for volunteers.

Trustees continued to work on updating the Memorandum of Association and Articles for the company, following recommendations from the Charities Commission and from our legal advisors.

There were five open council meetings during this period, plus an open brainstorming meeting. We committed to making sure the meetings were accessible for all and there was a crèche at each meeting. We changed the format of the AGM and had a day of celebrating home

education with speakers, workshops and stalls. A presentation on the proposed management structure changes was made to members on the day of the AGM. We had a Trustee and Management Workshop looking at different management structures. From February 2008, we introduced proxy voting for all general meetings. This system enables voting members to appoint a proxy to appoint a proxy to cast a vote on their behalf, which means that members can still have a say even if they don't attend meetings.

After liaising with insurance companies in the summer of 2007, we decided that regrettably EO would no longer be able to hold gatherings as insurance companies were not prepared to insure unregulated get-togethers. They raised issues such as children not being allowed in the kitchen or around any cooking equipment and children not being allowed unsupervised access to camp fires.

We created a Children's Forum, with advice from Kidsmart and Child Exploitation & Online Protection Centre to make sure we followed best practice in this field. This enabled us to facilitate a safe place where children can communicate with each other. There are 3 main message boards for different age groups e.g.

up to 11 years, up to 16 years and 16 to 18 years. There are also other supplementary boards for topics such as role-playing which have been requested by the children. If your children wish to chat with others and make new friends, they can register at this url:

<http://forum.education-otherwise.org/ucp.php?mode=register>

We now have an independent Designated Safeguarding Children Person (DSCP). EO trustees attended a safeguarding awareness training day with the NSPCC and with the advice of the NSPCC and the new DSCP have developed a safeguarding children plan, including

procedures and a policy. All trustees had enhanced CRB checks.

Education Otherwise continued to offer support to members and the wider public via our website, Local Contact volunteers and the Enquiries helpline. In addition we looked at expanding the team of specialist volunteers to support Education Otherwise members. They are listed in the back of the newsletter.

EO became a member of the Telephone Helpline Association and two of our trustees did their Support and Supervision Course. We reviewed all aspects of our helpline and looked at how to find funding for a new phone system. A collection of case law and relevant legislation has been built up, and support and information is available in specialised areas such as school anxiety, dyslexia and special needs.

We continued to improve the procedures for our Complaints Group and worked on a new policy. Two members of the group were trained in mediation. We reviewed our email support lists and decided to move some to our Members Only Forum on the website.

We have changed our bank from Triodos to Unity Trust Bank, as Unity Bank is an ethical bank and runs a more efficient system, including online banking. Trustees reviewed the insurance cover and found a more economical and suitable policy.

We supplied all volunteers with a copy of School Is Not Compulsory. We designed new membership forms. We sent out Local Contact directories to all LCs. We spent time collating the answers from the questionnaires sent by EO to all members with the newsletter with a view to giving feedback in the newsletter.

We updated and improved systems for issuing grants for new local home education groups.

We reviewed fair processing of volunteers' and members' data and changed some documents and procedures to ensure compliance. We reviewed the Children's pages and altered how we produce and organise them.

We have a new Accountant who has specialist knowledge of charities, VAT and Gift Aid. We investigated the financial position with regard to VAT and Gift Aid. We also looked at the large and increasing loan outstanding from our subsidiary trading company and took advice from our Accountant and the Charities Commission with a view to minimising the loss for Education Otherwise. In discussions with the Accountant we researched our options with regard to computerising our accounting and bookkeeping records.

Education Otherwise Small Groups - July 2007 to June 2008

Education Otherwise Government Policy Group and Education Otherwise Disability Group made many representations to government during this period in furthering the charitable aims of the organisation namely:

1. To encourage learning outside the school system
2. To re-affirm that parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility by educating them out of school
3. To establish the primary right of children to have full consideration given to their wishes and feelings about their education.
4. To promote knowledge, understanding and acceptance of education otherwise than at school in the world at large.

The main strategies involved networking at focus groups such as the DCSF "Time to Talk" events and thereby also talking informally with Ministers and civil servants, meeting with the Independent Schools Council to discuss partnership working over access to examination centres for private candidates and submitting the consultation responses across a number of Government departments.

The policy groups also worked closely with the Media Co-ordinator to promote knowledge

understanding and acceptance of alternative approaches to education.

The Time to Talk events were particularly significant since they enabled Education Otherwise parents and teenagers to raise awareness of home education issues at regional and national level.

In June 2007, Education Otherwise tackled the issue of raising the participation age in education. The original proposals in this consultation took no account of home education as a valid legal option, instead mandating full-time attendance at school or college post 16. Education Otherwise made a full written consultation response and also corresponded directly with civil servants. In September and November 2007 members of EO Government Policy Group attended several policy events and asked Secretary of State Ed Balls for his comments on the draft policy. We were pleased to see that the final document confirmed the legality of education otherwise than at school.

The major event in July 2007 was the final submission to the DCSF Home Education Guidelines consultation. Education Otherwise retained barrister Ian Dowty to work on this consultation. The revised guidelines, incorporating references to the Children Act 2004 and the Education and Inspection Act 2006, were finally published in November 2007, following Education Otherwise draft guidelines proposals at a number of points.

In September of 2007, Education Otherwise began lobbying on curriculum reforms and raising awareness of the difficulties which would be faced by home educated private candidates undertaking GCSEs under the new system. The dialogue with DCSF and with the examinations regulators is ongoing to 2009.

Also in September Education Otherwise made a substantial representation to the Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Government consultation on codes of practice for consultations, including a detailed written

response and attending consultation seminars which subsequently offered good networking opportunities.

In October 2007 Education Otherwise participated in a further consultation on the definition of an independent school, since we recognised that regulation in this area could adversely affect home education tuition groups and other forms of alternative learning.

The early Autumn of 2007 was also taken up with raising awareness of the issue of home educating single parents on Income Support and making a big contribution to the consultation run by the Department of Work and Pensions, not only in terms of the EO response but also in terms of facilitating many individual home educators to make their voice heard.

In January 2008, Education Otherwise made a submission to the Bercow Speech and Language Review. In common with many other responses, EO described a postcode lottery with additional problems for members accessing services outside the school system. As part of this review process EO also sent a delegate to the Westminster Forum Seminar.

In February 2008, EO lobbied the Ministry of Justice and the Information Commissioner in a Review on data sharing. Also in February 2008, EO participated in the Department of Innovations Universities and Skills and exhorted Government to think outside the box and to look at natural innovators such as those in the home education community.

In March 2008 EO participated in a consultation designed to improve services to disabled children and their families. The EO response focused on the need to remember home educated children and young people in these plans and to understand the families' needs and priorities.

Also in March EO made representations to the Department of Health, responding to a consultation on transition to adult services for

young people with learning? difficulties and disabilities. The EO response queried whether the families of home educated young people would receive sufficient information about services if they were outside the system and offered the Disability Group as a point of contact.

Late Spring/early Summer continued to be a busy time for Education Otherwise. In June 2008 EO raised a number of questions about the implications for home educators of abolishing the Learning and Skills Council. EO Government Policy Group also attended a regional consultation event organised jointly by DCSF/DIUS.

In May and June 2008, EO was in regular contact with the Social Security Advisory Committee to discuss Government plans to move single parents from Income Support to Jobseeker's Allowance. EO made a comprehensive response to the SSAC consultation. The EO response was highly critical of the proposed re-structuring of the benefits system and drew particular attention to the serious implications for lone parents who are home educating and for lone parents who have children with disabilities and special educational needs. As part of the consultation process, EO had discussions with other stakeholders such as One Parent Families and also had a meeting with the Head of the Parent Employment Unit at DWP.

Adjourned AGM

The Adjourned AGM will be held on Saturday 4 July 2009 in the afternoon. The meeting is to lay the accounts and the accountants report to 30 June 2008 before the members of the Company. The full accounts will subsequently be available online at Companies House and a link will be given in the next newsletter.

Notice of the AGM will be sent by post to Signed up Members (SUMS) which will include notification of special business, if any. Further details were not available as the newsletter went to print.

The meeting will be held in the:

Community Room in Springbourne Library,
Holdenhurst Road, Springbourne, Bournemouth,
BH8 8BX.

It's off the A338, Wessex Way and less than a mile from Bournemouth train station. Street parking is available on roads around the library.
<http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/Residents/Libraries/Info/springbourne2.asp>

For further enquiries and to confirm attendance, please contact:
agm@educationotherwise.org or write to
Education Otherwise AGM, PO Box 325, St Germans, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

Local Contact Update

New local contacts

Dawn and Derek Sewell are new LCs for the Isle of Man. isleofman-lc@education-otherwise.org Tel. 08445 003949.

Local Contact for Cheshire Congleton/Crewe & Nantwich and North Staffordshire: Sue Davies staffordshirenorth-lc@education-otherwise.org
Tel: 08445 003781 or Tel: 08445 003682

Staffordshire Moorlands: Anne Bailey staffs1-lc@education-otherwise.org Tel: 08445 008461

Mid Staffordshire: Astrid Brand staffssouth-lc@education-otherwise.org abrand@uwclub.net
Tel: 08445 003963

If you would be like to consider being a Local Contact please contact Carla tel 0117 9354389, All Local Contacts will be CRB checked. Even if your area has a Local Contact, please consider volunteering to job share with the current post holder.

The following areas are without Local Contacts or the current post holder has given notice that they wish to resign when some one has volunteered to replace them.

New vacancies

Aberdeenshire
Cheshire Vale Royal (East)
Durham
Leicester City
Manchester
Nottingham
Northern Ireland
Staffordshire South

Merseyside
Norfolk West
Oxfordshire
Staffordshire South
Surrey
West Midlands - Dudley
Yorkshire West -Leeds, Calderdale and Kirklees
Yorkshire East-Hull
Yorkshire North

England

Bedfordshire
Birmingham and Solihull
Buckinghamshire
Essex: both Barking and Dagenham and South East
South Gloucester
Gloucestershire
Herefordshire
Kent South East
Lancaster Bolton
Leicestershire
London - North West
London - Richmond and Kingston
Manchester

Scotland.

Dunfries and Galloway
Angus, Dundee, Perth and Kinross,
Argyll and Bute
Edinburgh and Lothians
Inverclyde and The Ayrshires
Glasgow
Fife

Wales

Mid Glamorgan
West Glamorgan
Vale of Glamorgan

Looking for Volunteers for the Helpline

We are looking to recruit new volunteers for the Helpline. If you have ever thought about giving a few hours of your time to help others who are thinking about home educating then please do get in touch. As the option of home education becomes more widely known, more and more parents are turning to EO for information and support. Many get information from the website; but personal support is still in great demand. We are currently making some changes to the helpline in line with best practice. EO is now an associate member of the Telephone Helpline Association. The THA will be providing Level 1 helpline training during a day in September or October in the Midlands which will be paid for by EO.

We ask that all our volunteers take this training unless they can show that they have training in something equivalent. Every Volunteer will have supervision and support and a place to offload after challenging phone calls. This is to ensure that all volunteers receive professional support in order to carry out this role and also to look after themselves. We are intending to be more flexible about the hours per helpline shift, so if you only have one or two half-days a week, don't let this prevent you from volunteering. If you're interested and would like to find out more or have any questions then please contact:

Jo Berry, Tel: 08445 868821,
jberry@education-otherwise.org
Or Pauline Butterworth, Tel: 08445 868826
pbutterworth@education-otherwise.org

Single Parent Family Contacts

Do you have experience of home educating as a single parent? Could you be available to provide information and/or support? Education Otherwise Government Policy Group provides additional legal backup information about welfare rights legislation and the EO Helpline also takes general calls and email enquiries and could refer individual queries to the Single Parent Contact. In addition the volunteer for

this post could get queries from members who see the contact details in the Newsletter. Volunteers are allocated an EO Flextel phone number and EO email address and personal details are not in the public domain. From the point of view of the volunteer if you have Caller Display you also know when you are getting a "work call". This job can be shared.

Please contact Jo Berry by emailing enquirysecretary@education-otherwise.org or tel. 08445 883539 for more information.

Regional Diary Co-ordinator

Person needed to co-ordinate the Regional Diary, contact Nikki Haxell (Newsletter Co-ordinator) for details: 01302 863195 or nlco-ordinator@education-otherwise.org

EO Monthly Volunteer Update Co-ordinator

This post would suit someone who has good organisational skills and who could give up to 6 hours time per month. The job requires co-ordinating EO information needed for the bulletin, putting it together, typing it up and then sending it on to all volunteers on the mailing list. You would need easy access to the internet in order to retrieve the information. The update is sent to volunteers in between Newsletters.

To find out more about this volunteer post please contact Fiona Nicholson:
fnicholson@education-otherwise.org

Media team vacancy

We have vacancies for area media contacts. Home education is more and more in the news and it is more important than ever that we have regional contacts across the country.

For information about what the role entails, and the support available, please contact the Media Spokesperson, Ann Newstead. Email: mediaspokesperson@education-otherwise.org
Tel: 08445 868839.



Catherine Mooney's IGCSE English Language Course for home-educators

"My 14yr old son loves the way it is set out, he actually enjoys doing it!!" S.H.
"It's nice to meet an examiner with a good mind and a kind heart..."

AQA Report on Catherine Mooney, June 2008

I'm a home-educating mum, a writer, OU tutor and AQA examiner. I wanted a friendly, colourful, approachable course that's fun to use as well as preparing you for the exam. I've got a great bunch of kids doing the course and they each get:

- Unlimited phone and email support *from myself*.
- An audio CD and paper version of the course.
- 10 tutor-marked assignments, with very detailed feedback.
- Free worksheets for extra practice.
- Yahoo group membership, for chat and learning fun with other students.

The course is suitable for 12+ and it doesn't assume prior knowledge. To see if it's for you, check my web-site at www.catherinemooneytutoring.co.uk Here you'll find course samples and an application form; or you can phone me on (01952) 605865



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Regular customer voucher system, with extra points for EO members

www.Shop4Education.co.uk

Contact Claire@Shop4Education.co.uk or **0845 527 4639**

Little Arthur Independent School

Visit our new website at

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Tel. 01720 422457

Education Otherwise does not endorse or recommend services or products advertised in this newsletter. Use of tutors remains the responsibility of the parent.

Advertisements must be pre-paid by the 1st of the preceding month that the Newsletter is published. The deadline for August 2009 issue is July 1st. Please send your advertisements in either text or jpg format to: advertising@education-otherwise.org For flyers contact same e-mail for further information.

Learnpremium

This is an online educational service owned by the Guardian newspaper. EO pays Learnpremium a lump sum and is making a small charge to each user to cover this cost. Subscription: £17 until 19th October 2009.

There are around 130,000 pages of online lessons and resources on a wide range of subjects including English to Design & Technology or Physical Education. It offers interactive lessons, Guardian lesson packs, whiteboard activities, randomly generated tests, a daily news service for 9 - 14 year old and covers the primary and secondary curriculum.

For more info or a free trial to see if it will suit you and your family, contact Lynda.

Email: learnpremium@education-otherwise.org
Tel: 08445 867541

TENTH STUDLAND BAY CAMP, DORSET

Friday 17th to Friday 24th July 2009

Chrystia & Keith warmly welcome all Home Educating families.*

- A wild and beautiful area - pine forest, lowland heath
- 4 miles to sea, dunes & bird sanctuary
- Dorset steam Railway nearby - to beach at Swanage.
- Free outings to Corfe Castle.
- Cycleways and paths thru woods to sea.
- Camping in large field backed by pine woods, stream;
- Access to facilities at adjoining Burnbake campsite.
- We bring canoes, cargonet, ropeswings, craft materials
- Marquee, fire barrel.
- Bring bikes, drums, instruments.
- Morning ~ acapella / gospel / taize singing

Cost for whole camp £110 a family
(Concessions and daily rate available)

Teenagers welcome, with families only.

Information & booking: Chrystia & Keith,
75 Kent House Rd, Sydenham, London SE26 5LJ
020 8776 8597

2nd Broadoak Friends and Family Camp, Dorset

*Extra- Continue the fun at a family camp near Bridport Friday 24th -Sat 1st Aug.

Home-educators join land co-op families in a beautiful field ringed with hills. Dew pond, plenty of wood for building & open fires, compost loos, wood-fired shower trips to sea, morning meeting and singing, gardening, crafts. Come from Studland camp, or direct from home.

This West Dorset camp was great fun last year, and is in addition to the August bank holiday Friends & Family Camp.

Cost is £7 per family per night by donation

Information & Booking: as above.

This field may be hired for 1/2 weeks mid August.

To Group Organisers: please remember when giving details of events that the EO newsletter can be read by people who are not EO members. If you would like your group to have a listing or if you have any changes to make to your existing entry you will need to complete and return a permission form. You can obtain a permission form by sending an aae to Education Otherwise Regional Diary, PO Box 325, St Germans, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW, by emailing regionaldiary@education-otherwise.org or by downloading one from the Official EO Forms board of the members forum on the new EO website.

Each adult whose contact details are listed for your group needs to complete a permission form before we can add their details to your entry, so if someone new wants to be added to your groups listing as contact, they will need to ask us for one of these forms before we can add their name and number or email address to the Regional Diary? Can group organisers please let the RD organiser know of any changes to venues, days and times or contact details for the group. Please call the group before attending to make sure it is happening, and if not please let me know. Not all groups listed are EO groups.

England

AVON

Bath Home Education Group,
Meets fortnightly in term times.
Free play. Activities and lunch.
1030-1pm. Plus theatre trips and
days out. Maria, 01761 420771:

Email: yoga.maria@yahoo.co.uk

BEDFORDSHIRE

EOLC: Pauline, 08445 868894 : beds-1c@education-otherwise.org

Bedfordshire Christian Home Ed :

scottandrachel@ntlworld.com

Busy B-HE's. Weekly drop in session offering chats and support and weekly activities, including art & play, cooking, indoor games plus other outdoor events and activities. Tel: Pauline 07791 850545 or Pauline@kc2001.fsnet.co.uk

BERKSHIRE

EOLC: Lynn, 08445 868842 : berkshire-1c@education-otherwise.org

Berkshire Home Educators, email list for home educators in Berkshire and surrounding areas:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/BerkshireHomeEducators>

Heroes Education Centre, group for home-ed young, 4 days/wk, workshops, lessons, activities.
Dawn, 01628 783107: www.homeeducators.co.uk

BRISTOL

EOLC: Ian, Tel: 08445 003756 : bristol-1c@education-otherwise.org

Bristol Home Education Learn Place (HELP),
meeting Monday & Friday, Carla: 0117 9354389 :
carla-maria@blueyonder.co.uk

Contacts & Events SW. An information network for families thinking of home educating, or moving into the area. Local groups/contacts/HEs are invited to send any new details which they would like to be passed on. Contact:
andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

EOLC: Georgeanna, 08445 003763 : bucks-1c@education-otherwise.org

MKHEN, Milton Keynes Home Educators

Network extends a warm welcome to all. Activities, social events and support. Also has an excellent relationship with LA.
www.mkhen.org.uk : Georgeanne : sienna-swift7@powernet.co.uk : www.mkhen.org.uk

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE - SOUTH

EOLC: Georgeanna - as above

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

EOLC: Sarah, 08445 003769 : camb-1c@education-otherwise.org

Peterborough Home Educators, friendly group meeting twice weekly for activities including art, crafts, science, ice skating, bowling, cooking and lots more, Sarah : sarah.lambert7@ntlworld.com : 07784 169260

CHESHIRE

Cheshire-South EOLC: Sue, 08445 003781 : cheshire-1c1@education-otherwise.org

Cheshire-Macclesfield EOLC: Debbie, 08445 003832 : macclesfield-1c@education-otherwise.org

Mid Cheshire Home Educators, bi-monthly meetings and regular outings, Ange :
che@talktalk.net :

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

SCANS-HEAG. Regular activities, meetings and trips for all ages. Separate teen activities.

Carrie, 01782 786720 : scans.heag@yahoo.co.uk

CLEVELAND EOLC: Pauline, 08445 868897 :

cleveland-lc@education-otherwise.org

CORNWALL

EOLC: Natasha, 08445 868849 : cornwall-

lc@education-otherwise.org

Contacts & Events SW. See Bristol for more info. Contact andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

Cornwall Home Educators meet every Thursday.

For a copy of local newsletter contact Michelle.

Newsletter also covers other home ed events in

Cornwall: dickson.michelle@sky.com: 01326

250298

Menheniot nr Liskeard, Small School, Mondays

term-times. Activities aimed at 5-11

years, 10.30am-1.30pm followed by time for

playing, Tania, 01822 835902

Penzance, PZ Home Ed, Monday pm for

workshop during term-time, Ruth, 01736

350887

Pentiddy Woods, family group get-together in

the woods with games and woodland skills

activities. Ele, 01579 363775 :

ele@pentiddy.co.uk or Ruth, 0845 4560247

CUMBRIA EOLC: Jayne, 08445 003793 :

cumbria-lc@education-otherwise.org

South Cumbria Home Educators Yahoo Group,

we have a yahoo group to keep in touch and meet

up in various places in the area, to find out more

please email Jayne : jaynewoodbank@yahoo.co.uk

DERBYSHIRE - DERBY CITY EOLC: Karen,

08445 003796 : derby-lc@education-

otherwise.org

Derby Group, AHEAD :

ahead.derbygroup@yahoo.com

DEVON

All Devon details available from :

southdevongroup@googlemail.com

East Devon & Exeter EOLC : Kate 08445

003798 : eastdevon-lc@education-otherwise.org

Contacts & Events SW. See Bristol entry for

details. Contact: andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

Exeter, Free Range Learning, Pottery sessions

weekly in well equipped studio. Neil, 01363

82314

Exeter Free Range Learning, meets

Wednesdays, social group for all ages, Annie,

01392 434167

Exeter Free Range Learning Youth, Youth and

Social group every Tuesday, Erinn, 01392

434167

DEVON-NORTH EOLC: Jo, 08445 868843 :

northdevon-lc@education-otherwise.org

North Devon, Home Grown Kids, Twice weekly

meetings and events. **Swimbridge**, Weds 1.30-

4.30pm **Barnstaple**, Fridays, Funderzone Term

time only, Jo, EO Local Contact North Devon

: 08445 868843

DEVON-SOUTH EOLC: Bridget, 08445 003804

: devons-lc@education-otherwise.org

Buckfastleigh, Wildspace. Nature study and

gardening group based at Buckfastleigh Town

Hall. Also Devon Home Education Newsletter.

A free monthly email newsletter listing events

throughout Devon. Also available by post for a

small subscription. Tel: Lucinda 01364 644556

or email: l.guy@dartington.ac.uk

South Devon Home Education Group meets;

Monday + Friday for swimming; Wednesday,

Social and Educational meeting; Thursday for

workshops. For all these meetings, Bridget,

08445 003804 : devons-lc@education-

otherwise.org or Lucinda Tel: 01364 644556

Email: l.guy@dartington.ac.uk

South Devon Home Education Group, meet at

Harberton Parish Hall, near Totnes. Lucinda :

southdevongroup@googlemail.com Tel: 01364

644556

Dartmoor Home Education Group, New Group to

support growing home-ed network on Dartmoor!!

We welcome home-ed families, flexi-schoolers,

and part-timers. Social and educational

meetings on Thursdays in North Bovey/Chagford

area. Emma Tel: 1647 440443 Email:

emmabradypicone@gmail.com

Dart Valley Home Ed Network, Out and about

visits: Natural History, History and Photography

and more. Members only internet group. Hannah

& Gordon, 01803 762788 : lindnich@tesco.net

DEVON/DORSET/SOMERSET BORDERS

Home Education Centre, 2 days/week.

Workshops, sports, activities and support.

www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk : Karen, 01460

30461 : karen@homeeducationcentre.org.uk : or Louise, 01460 61325

DORSET

Dorset-North EOLC: Sharon, 08445 003807 : ndorset-lc@education-otherwise.org

Dorset-East (Bournemouth) EOLC: Vicki, 08445 003726 : Bournemouth-lc@education-otherwise.org

Dorset-East (Poole) EOLC: Carol, 08445 003848 :

poole-lc@education-otherwise.org

Contacts & Events SW. See Cornwall entry for more info. Contact andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

North Dorset, HEOND (Home Educators of North Dorset), Friendly group, meeting weekly in Sturminster Newton, June, 01258 471949 : bugchick@mac.com

Bournemouth, HEED, weekly Monday meetings, Carol, 01202 677066 :

carolstonehe@yahoo.co.uk : www.he-ed.org.uk

DURHAM

EOLC: Karen, 08445 868841 : durham-lc@education-otherwise.org

Roots Day 2nd Thursday of the month. Co-operative games, crafts, nature studies. All held outside on smallholding near Durham City Tel: 0771 9530 472

French, Mondays 1230. Durham City. Tel: 0771 9530 472

ESSEX

EOLC: Corinne, 08445 003808 : essex-lc@education-otherwise.org

Chelmsford, monthly meetings, 3rd Thursday, 2 - 4pm. Sarah, tower@tesco.net: Lena, choccyfudge-go@yahoo.co.uk

Leigh on Sea, Thames Kids Club, meetings held Fridays from 11am to 3pm in Leigh on Sea. £3 per family. thameskidsclub@googlemail.com : Roxy, 01702 334521: Raquel, 07958 045885 : Thea, 01702 309869

Essex Home Educators, meetings monthly in Chelmsford, Colchester and Tiptree, and weekly in Southend. There are also regular meetings for swimming, bowling and ice skating, etc., and at least two trips out around the county each month. Details of all these in Essex Epicycle Newsletter available by email, Corinne : epicycle@wavy.org

Clacton Home Education: social group meets regularly in and around Clacton-on-Sea. Also a teen gathering bi-monthly in Little Clacton. Tel: Shirley 01255 862182
Email: indigoshirl@gmail.com

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Cirencester and Cotswold Meetings. Will answer queries about home education in general and offer information about local groups and activities. Pam: pjp@ragingbull.com : 01285 721008

Stroud, email group keeps families in touch, anyone can arrange an activity or get together. Nick, 01453 840036 : nick.weir@localfood.org.uk

Forest of Dean, meet monthly on a Thursday, 12.15 - 16.00, for bridge and damn building, river clearance, fire building, woodland walks, indoor and outdoor games, raft building. Roxy : cdsnhf@googlemail.com

Glos-based Otherwise Club. Yearly camp at Biblins, Symonds Yat. Information about local events, meetings, outings. Fiona Brookes - Email: brookesfam@tiscali.co.uk

Gloucestershire, Beverley, 01242 524091

HAMPSHIRE

Southampton and area, SEEDS, for children age 3+, home educators in Southampton and area, Lyn: www.groups.yahoo.com/group/seeds1

Havant area, ActivEO, meetings most weekdays : www.activeo.org.uk : Julie, 01243 552472

North Hampshire, NHEO. Open to all home educators in North Hants & surrounding areas. Regular meetings in Basingstoke, ice skating & other activities.

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/NHEO/>: Jaki, 07731 805323 : jakiparsons@yahoo.co.uk

Hampshire, FRHEBEEs, Friendly informative group covering the New Forest, West Hampshire, South Wiltshire area, Karen, 01425 656856 : karence@btinternet.com

Hampshire West, Fordingbridge and Ringwood Home Educators, FRHEBees- owner@yahoogroups.com
Hampshire & Surrey Farnham Home Ed Group, friendly social group, meeting fortnightly on Thursdays. Serving Farnham, Aldershot and surrounding areas. Paul, 01252 316497 : paula.oakley@talk21.com

HEREFORDSHIRE (+ Monmouthshire)

Monmouth Home Educators, meetings on Tuesdays at Rockfield Community Centre for fun and friendship, arts, crafts, games and sports - football, hockey, rounders, cricket. All ages welcome. Check for dates and times. Roxy, 01989 768128 : cdsnhf@googlemail.com

HERTFORDSHIRE

EOLC: Maya, 08445 003816 : herts-lc@education-otherwise.org

Herts Home Educators Yahoo Group for events and friendship. To join please email Karen: karenbartlett@btinternet.com

ISLE OF MAN

EOLC: 08445 003949 : isleofman-lc@education-otherwise.org

ISLE OF WIGHT

EOLC: Shara, 08445 003819 : iow-lc@education-otherwise.org

KENT

North West, EOLC: Ann, 08445 868839 : kent-lc@education-otherwise.org

UK Home Educators, fortnightly meetings in Chatham, regular park days and monthly activities. Ann: kent-lc@education-otherwise.org: 08445 868839

Dragonfly Group, fortnightly meetings for all ages. We are a fun social group who also meet up midweek for outings and events. Tel: Andrea 01304 619112 or 07737 806478

Hayes Group, meet alternate Fridays, 11am to 2pm, Debbie, 07730 955395

Kent, Sussex & Surrey (on the border of all 3 counties) F.L.A.G.S, active group meeting weekly during termtime for hall activities, sports and outings. Karen, 01732 864524 :

karenlow@uwclub.net : www.flags-education.org

Kent, Sussex, Surrey, www.southeast-home-educators.co.uk South East Home Educators & Wealden Home Education Network. Group who try to meet regularly for trips out. Bowling, swimming, workshops and museums. Meet fortnightly in Tonbridge Wells for adults and children to get together. Lizelle, 01732 883850 : lizelle@lizellefdb.com or Bo, 07853 945206

LANCASHIRE

Joint EOLC: Pam, 08445 868908 : lancs-lc1@education-otherwise.org

Joint EOLC: Kath, 08445 868829 : lancs-lc2@education-otherwise.org

LEICESTERSHIRE

EOLC: Sharan, 08445 868847 : leics-lc1@education-otherwise.org

Syston HE. A fun and lively group for the under 10s. We meet twice a month and each session has a theme - with art and science activities to help explore the topic.

Tammy, mathamsam@btinternet.com :

Vikki, martinvikki@aol.com :

Christine, christine_wells@yahoo.com

Leicestershire, HE-AL, <http://www.he-al.org.uk/index.html>=

LINCOLNSHIRE

EOLC: Janet, 08445 868862 : lincs-lc@education-otherwise.org

North Hykeham Home Education Group, meet every Thursday 10-1130ish primarily for toddlers. Phone/text 07870 787328 Email: debi-crow@googlemail.com

LINCOLNSHIRE SOUTH

EOLC: Susanna, 08445 003861 : southlincs-lc@education-otherwise.org

LONDON

London, Brandram Roaders, Meet 11-1pm Thursdays during term time at Brandram Road Community Centre, SE13 5RT (off Lee High Road) Then to nearby park. Ages mostly 0-12 yrs. All welcome. Subs £2 per family. Joolz, 020 8289 5026 : teachyourown@hotmail.com

London, Fulham HE. Fridays from 11am, age 5+ (siblings welcome). Tennis, basketball lessons. Open house, play in park and some field trips. Kellan, 020 7384 3332 or 07796 687029

East London, Forest Group, meets on alternating fortnightly Wednesdays and Thursdays, 1-4pm at Quaker Meeting House, Bush Road, Leytonstone, London E11: Helen, 020 8553 0015 : h_long@sky.com : Ola Gasson 020 8520 0648 : olaglasson@googlemail.com

UK Home Educators, London/Kent, meetings in Bromley and Orpington. Outings and group events monthly. Ann: kent-lc@education-otherwise.org : 08445 868839

London-NW, The Otherwise Club. A community centre for families choosing to educate their children out of school, Leslie, 020 8969 0893

Dulwich, Woodland Club, age 8-teen. Science, Maths, various speakers, social afternoon. Idyllic venue. Gina, 020 8299 1135

Woodlands Study Group, 11yr old and over: English, Maths and Science classes every Monday, term time in Dulwich SE22 : deniseriddy@aol.com

East London, Magpie Home Educators. Meet every Friday, 1-3pm for social activities. All ages welcome. Corner Forest Lane and Magpie Close, Forest Gate. Annalise, 020 8500 1053 : annalise@tesco.net

Haringey Home Education Club. Group meets alternate Weds 12-4pm. See www.hhec.org.uk for details. Gaby, 020 8881 9463 : contact@hhec.org.uk

Hackney, Adventures with Education. Hackney group meets weekly in term time, Tuesdays 11am-3pm, Chris Swift 020 7254 4988 **London Local**

East EOLC: Stephen, 08445 003821 : londoneast-lc@education-otherwise.org

Enfield EOLC: Tina, 08445 868836 : enfield-lc@education-otherwise.org

North, EOLC: Tina, Tel: 08445 003823 Email: londonnorth-lc@education-otherwise.org

North West EOLC: Tina, 08445 003826 : londonnw-lc@education-otherwise.org

S.E. EOLC: Keith & Chrystia, 08445 003827 : londonse-lc@education-otherwise.org

SW Joint EOLC: Rehena, 08445 003828 : londonsw-lc@education-otherwise.org

SW Joint EOLC: Lei, 08445 003829 : londonsw-lc@education-otherwise.org

Waltham Forest EOLC: Jo & Jerry, 08445 003867 : walthamforest-lc@education-otherwise.org

West EOLC: Betsy, 08445 003831 : londonwest-lc@education-otherwise.org

Middlesex EOLC: Betsy, 08445 003834 : middlesex-lc@education-otherwise.org

Central EOLC: Tina, 08445 853876 : londoncentral-lc@education-otherwise.org

N. IRELAND

EOLC: Shevaun, 08445 003842 : nireland-lc@education-otherwise.org

NORFOLK

EOLC: Gita 08445 003836 : norfolk-lc@education-otherwise.org

Thetford, swimming and indoor sports/play. Waterworld Leisure Centre, Thetford, Term-time Thurs 2.30-4.30pm, but weeks can vary so please ring first. Faye, 01953 681785

NORFOLK - WEST

EOLC: Desiree, 08445 853878 : norfolkwest-lc@education-otherwise.org

West Norfolk Home Educators, email list for home educators in West Norfolk: <http://groups.yahoo.com/WestNorfolkHomeEducators>

Kings Lynn H.E. Weekly Monday Get-together 1-3pm in Kings Lynn. Kirsten: 01485 540724 or murraybeers@yahoo.co.uk

NORFOLK - SOUTH

EOLC: Anne, 08445 868904 : norfolksouth-lc@education-otherwise.org

NORFOLK - BRECKLAND

EOLC: Hannah, Tel: 08445 003998 : norfolkbreckland-lc@education-otherwise.org

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

EOLC: Imogen, 08445 003841 : northants-lc@education-otherwise.org

Northants HE. Informal Group meets regularly for various activities www.northantshe.org.uk : info@northantshe.org.uk

iFLOW (It's fun learning our way). Co-operative group meeting weekly Thursdays in Brixworth. Fun and engaging activities according to children's interest. www.iflow.org.uk or email: secretary@iflow.org.uk or Tel: Juno 01604 505977

NORTHUMBERLAND - North

EOLC: Mink, 08445 003843 : northumberlandnorth-lc@education-otherwise.org

NORTHUMBERLAND - West

EOLC: Liz, 08445 003844 : northumberlandwest-lc@education-otherwise.org

NOTTINGHAM CITY

EOLC: Damian, 08445 003846 : nottinghamcity-lc@education-otherwise.org

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

EOLC: Jenifer, 08445 003961 : notts-lc@education-otherwise.org

OXFORDSHIRE

EOLC: Louisa, 08445 868873 : oxfordshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

RUTLAND

EOLC: Iain & Jacqueline, 08445 003853 :

rutland-lc@education-otherwise.org

SHROPSHIRE

Newport, Nr Telford, Newport Home

Education Group, meetings 1st and 3rd Friday

every month. Outings on other Fridays, from

12.30pm, for all ages. Julieann, 01952 401571,

weshalllook@aol.com

SOMERSET

EOLC: Vivian, 08445 003858 : somerset-

lc@education-otherwise.org

Contacts & Events SW. See Bristol entry for more info. Contact andrew.denise@hotmail.co.uk

Wells Swimming Group, meets weekly for swimming at Wells Leisure Centre - term time only. Lesley, 01749 689241 :

mumfordturner@hotmail.com

FAB Times (local Somerset email newsletter), to subscribe for this free monthly e-newsletter, email Nicola: fab@phonecoop.coop

Wiveliscombe/Taunton area group, monthly meetings on 1st Tuesday of month at Oake Village Hall, & regular outings. Maggie, 01984 624651

Somerset/Dorset/Devon borders, Home Education Centre, 2 days/week. Workshops, sports, activities and support. New group starting Yeovil area Fri Mornings.

www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk : Karen, 01460 30461 : karen@homeeducationcentre.org.uk : or Louise, 01460 61325

Yeovil: lyn@homeeducationcentre.org.uk

North Somerset Home Education Group, weekly childrens gym, walks, outings etc, Vicky, 01275 848425 : victoria.preston@yahoo.co.uk

Shepton Mallet, FAB Home Education Group Social Meeting - Fortnightly on Tuesdays from 1.30-3.30pm at Shepton Mallet Scout Hut, Old Wells Road. £2.50 per family to cover refreshments and hire of hall. Mandy 01749 347799 : Jojo 01458 443674

Bath Home Education Group, a new group still in it's early stages consisting of children ages 3-7 years and a couple of 2 year olds. Maria, 01761 420771 : yoga.maria@yahoo.co.uk

STAFFORDSHIRE

EOLC: Carrie, 08445 003862 :

staffordshirenorth-lc@education-otherwise.org

SCANS-HEAG. Regular activities, meetings and trips for all ages. Separate teen activities. Carrie, 01782 786720 : scans.heag@yahoo.co.uk
Stafford HESEO (Home Educators Supporting Each Other) Meeting 2nd and 4th Wednesday each month, 12-3pm, bring lunch. Karen, 01543 422577 : karen@karisto.co.uk

SUFFOLK

EOLC: Sue, 08445 868913 : suffolk-lc@education-otherwise.org

Wetherden, meetings, 3rd Friday of the month 10.30am till 3pm, Wendy, 01449 614772 :

welyn@talktalk.net

Dennington, 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 1030-130pm.

Wide range of activities, all ages welcome.

Janet: 01728 638795 or Meraylah 01986 785302.

SURREY

EOLC: Claire, Tel: 08445 003964 : surrey-lc@education-otherwise.org

Godalming Group, meets alternate Mondays. Serves South West Surrey and surrounding area. Ruth: www.swsurrey-home-ed.co.uk

Sutton/Epsom HE Group, all ages welcome, currently mainly under 10s. Liz:

julysea@yahoo.co.uk or Paul:

paulmsn@hotmail.com Tel: 07506 781796

SUSSEX & SURREY & KENT (on the border of all 3 counties)

F.L.A.G.S. active group meeting weekly during term time for hall activities, sports and outings. Karen, 01732 864524 : karenlow@uwclub.net :

www.flags-education.org

SUSSEX-EAST

EOLC: Winnie, 08445 003863 : sussexeast-lc@education-otherwise.org

HEDGE based in Hastings, meet every Friday : www.hedge-education-org: Catherine, 01424 812213

Forest Row, regular social gatherings and tutorial groups. Winnie, 01342 826087 : artofchange@msn.com

SUSSEX-WEST,

Chichester area, ActiveEO, meetings most weekdays : www.activeo.org.uk : Julie 01243 552472

Sussex - Home Educating in West Sussex Facebook Group. A group for home educators and the home educated in West Sussex. Events

most weeks all organised on Facebook. Look up Katie Pybus on Facebook or

roger.katie@virgin.net or Tel: 01798 875071

TYNE & WEAR(NEWCASTLE):

EOLC: Rosemary, 08445 003866 : tynewear-lc@education-otherwise.org

WARWICKSHIRE EOLC: June, 08445 003869 : warks-lc@education-otherwise.org

WARWICKSHIRE - COVENTRY

EOLC: Sarah, 08445 003792 : coventry-lc@education-otherwise.org

Coventry and Warwickshire Home Educators, monthly meetings held at various locations, plus monthly outings and activities. Full details in HELM (West Midlands)

Coventry meetings 4th Tuesday 1pm to 4pm : sarah@nellyb.co.uk **Wolston meetings** 2nd Thursday : lloyd@dash20.fsnet.co.uk

WARWICKSHIRE - RUGBY

EOLC: Fay, 08445 003852 : rugby-lc@education-otherwise.org

WEST MIDLANDS

Wolverhampton & Walsall EOLC: Debbie, 08445 003871 : wolverhampton-lc@education-otherwise.org

Sandwell EOLC: Andrea, 08445 003856 : sandwell-lc@education-otherwise.org

Birmingham EOLC: Stuart, 08445 003967 : Birmingham-lc@education-otherwise.org

HELM Newsletter, HE related articles and events throughout the West Midlands and surrounding areas.

helmeditor2112@blueyonder.co.uk : Jane, 01562 720046 : Andrew, 07709 468140

WILTSHIRE

EOLC: Shena, 08445 868907 : wilts-lc@education-otherwise.org

Salisbury, social group meets Monday, fortnightly, 1-4pm. Large hall, skate park, play park, football pitch, basketball. Inside we have games, pool and table-tennis. We have a real mix of ages including teenagers. Very friendly and new faces welcome. Ally, 01722 710525

WORCESTERSHIRE

EOLC: Sue, 08445 868846 : worcs-lc@education-otherwise.org

North Worcestershire/Kidderminster meetings, please see Worcs newsletter or contact Gail, 01562 822034 : gail@1921.net

YORKSHIRE EAST

EOLC: Alison, 08445 003874 : yorkshireeast-lc@education-otherwise.org

Withernsea LC: Linda, 08445 003873 : withernsea-lc@education-otherwise.org

YORKSHIRE NORTH + EAST

near Malton, meets weekly, Mondays, 12-4pm, viv@flamangoes.co.uk : 01904 788374 (York and surrounding area) or tess@chrisgeall.com: 01947 825772 (East N Yorks)

YORKSHIRE NORTH

EOLC: Denise, 08445 868852 : yorkshirenorth-lc@education-otherwise.org

Harrogate Home Ed Group. Meetings held on 1st and 3rd Thursday each month. 13.30 to 15.30 Great Ouseburn Village Hall, between York and Harrogate. Kate: eldival@googlemail.com : 07724 065091

YORKSHIRE NORTH+WEST

N/W Home Ed Group, meets Skipton monthly and Bradford Gym Club - Meets weekly. Regular meetings and outings. Judith, 01756 791356

YORKSHIRE SOUTH

Barnsley EOLC: Amanda, 08445 868854 : barnsley-lc@education-otherwise.org

Doncaster EOLC: Nicola, 08445 003806 : doncaster-lc@education-otherwise.org

Rotherham EOLC: Jayne, 08445 003851 : rotherham-lc@education-otherwise.org

Sheffield EOLC: Fiona, 08445 003857 or Alison, 08445 008458 : sheffield-lc@education-otherwise.org

YORKSHIRE WEST

Bradford EOLC: Gillian, 08445 853891 : bradford-lc@education-otherwise.org

Wakefield EOLC: Nicole, 08445 868874 : wakefield-lc@education-otherwise.org

Huddersfield, Book Group, Monday, monthly, 2-3pm. Marsden Library - age range 6-12 yrs. Jane, 01484 645034

Huddersfield Home Educators, Monthly themed meetings with crafts, games etc. Weds Monthly 1030-3 Paddock Scout Hall. Tel: Helen 01484 841041

Huddersfield, Art Workshops, Thursday, monthly, 10-11am, ages up to 8yrs. £1.30-3.30pm, ages 8+. Huddersfield Art Gallery. Mandy, 01484 460026: Jane, 01484 645034

Huddersfield Group - Lunch and Chat, Thursday, monthly, 11.30 to 1.30pm, Mandy, 01484 460026

Wales

ANGLESEY

EOLC: Nick, 08445 003713 anglesey-lc@education-otherwise.org

CONWY

EOLC: Dawn, 08445 003791 : conwy-lc@education-otherwise.org

DENBIGHSHIRE

Joint EOLC: Sam, 08445 003794 : denbighshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

Joint EOLC: Julie, 08445 868916 : denbighshire-lc1@education-otherwise.org

FLINTSHIRE

EOLC: Sarah, 08445 868851 : flintshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

Cardiff Home Ed Group, we meet every Wednesday from 12noon to efa.rosina@yahoo.co.uk

GWENT EOLC: Bronwen, 08445 003812 : gwent-lc@education-otherwise.org

GWYNEDD

Joint EOLC: Nick, 08445 003813 : Gwynedd-lc@education-otherwise.org

Joint EOLC: Julie, 08445 008547 : Gwynedd-lc2@education-otherwise.org

Tregarth, Creative Learning and Support, meet every Wednesday 12 - 5pm. Free weekly newsletter of events via email. Active website at: www.creativelearningandsupport.co.uk Nick - 01407 811049 : Julie, 01286 678181: jdchapmanmaurice@aol.com

North West Wales. CLAS - Creative Learning and Support. CLAS was born during 2005 and is the name of a group collective of like-minded parents and children living predominantly in North West Wales who believe in the ethos of home learning and education. www.creativelearningandsupport.co.uk

MONMOUTHSHIRE (+ HEREFORDSHIRE)

Monmouth Home Educators, meetings on Tuesdays at Rockfield Community Centre for fun and friendship, arts, crafts, games and sports - football, hockey, rounders, cricket. Check for

dates and times. Roxy: cdsnhf@googlemail.com : 01989 768128

PEMBS EOLC: Yvette, 08445 003847 :

pembrookshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

POWYS EOLC: David, 08445 003849 : powys-lc@education-otherwise.org

Newtown, New Leaf Group. Fortnightly meetings for all ages, for activities, socialisation and play : siouxcatsy@yahoo.co.uk

Powys Yahooogroup, advertising home-ed activities in Powys for home educating families : siouxcatsy@yahoo.co.uk

NE WALES/BORDERS,

WREXHAM EOLC: Sam, 08445 003872 :

wrexham-lc@education-otherwise.org

Froncsyllte, **HENWOS**, fortnightly group meets 10-4pm. Social play and chat. Monthly newsletter for NE Wales area activities and events: kruger37@tiscali.co.uk

Scotland

Angus, Dundee, Perth & Kinross EOLC:

Marley, 08445 868896: dundee-lc@education-otherwise.org

Borders EOLC: Jane, 08445 003716 : borders-lc@education-otherwise.org

Aberdeenshire EOLC: Fiona, 08445 003712 : aberdeenshire-lc@education-otherwise.org

Highland & Isles EOLC: Lesley, 08445 003817 : highlandislands-lc@education-otherwise.org

Clacks, Falkirk, N Lanarks & Stirling EOLC: Janice, 08445 003789 : stirling-lc@education-otherwise.org

Other Areas: scotlandenquiry@education-otherwise.org

Overseas

Australasia: Nicky, Email: australasia-lc@education-otherwise.org

Americas: Sandy, 08445 853873 : americas-lc@education-otherwise.org

Please contact regionaldiary@education-otherwise.org with any changes to your Regional Diary entry.

New volunteers for any of the groups or other vacancies most welcome, with expertise or just an interest. For more information email the group, write to EO's PO Box address or contact one of the Trustees listed (in italics). If you would prefer to volunteer for infrequent or small tasks please contact Lynda: database@education-otherwise.org or Tel: 08445 867541

Small Groups:

- **Finance Group** Tel: 08445 003986
(financegroup@education-otherwise.org):
Fiona Nicholson, Roarke Newstead,
Lynda Hitchman
- **Govt. Policy Group** Tel: 08445 003987
(governmentpolicy@education-otherwise.org):
Fiona Nicholson, Annette Taberner, Ann Newstead, Jo Berry, Kira Patefield-Smith,
Julie Bunker
- **Disability Group**: Tel: 08445 003984
(disabilityawareness@education-otherwise.org)
Fiona Nicholson, Julie Bunker, Christine Waterman, Celia McDonagh
- **Scotland Group**: Tel: 08445 003989
(scotlandenquiry@education-otherwise.org)
Fiona Chaff, Rebecca Kail, Jane Bathgate,
Jan Atkinson
- **Website and Publications Editorial Committee (WPEC)**: (wpec@education-otherwise.org) Tel: 08445 003991
Fiona Nicholson, Lynda Hitchman

Complaints:

Email: complaints@education-otherwise.org Write:
PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

- *Jo Berry* ~ 08445 884596
- *Pauline Butterworth* ~ 08445 884597
- *Lynda Hitchman* ~ 08445 884598

EO Yahoogroups:

EO runs a general list and single parent list with Yahoogroups. They're open to all, members and non-members.

To join the general list go to:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eo>

To join the single parent list, go to:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EO-SingleParent/>

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 Spokesperson:** *Ann Newstead,*
08445 867548 media-spokesperson@education-otherwise.org
- Northern Ireland:** Marion Kenny,
08445 884528 ni@education-otherwise.org
- North East:** Eva O'Rourke, Wilsden
08445 884529 northeast@education-otherwise.org
- Wales (S):** *Celia McDonagh,* Cardiff,
08445 884531 wales1@education-otherwise.org
- Wales(N):** Edwina Theunissen, Wrexham, 08445 884532 wales2@education-otherwise.org
- South West (Acting):** Kay & Simon Smith, 08445 884533 southwest@education-otherwise.org
- South East:** *Ann Newstead,* Kent 08445 003978
southeast@education-otherwise.org
- London:** Winnie Durdant-Hollamby, 08445 884534
london2@education-otherwise.org
- Isle of Wight:** Shara Ouston, Ryde, 08445 884569
iow@education-otherwise.org

EO E-mail Lists & Forums

There is a Members Forum on the EO website, with discussion and support forums for members to chat and get information about home education etc., as well as EO business, and lots of other info (eg past NL articles, minutes of OTMs, etc). There are separate forums for EO Volunteers and Local Contacts and a new forum where EO children can chat together - a recent addition is a roleplaying board. To join the member's forum, register using the form at this url on EO's site: <http://forum.education-otherwise.org/index.php>

To join the children's forum, both you and your child need to register from the above link and you need to complete the permission form that will be emailed to your child's email address and return it to us at: childrensforum@education-otherwise.org Do email if you have problems joining and we'll try and help.

Who Does What in EO

Trustees - Email: trustees@education-otherwise.org

Letters to: Education Otherwise, PO Box 325, St Germans, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW

Leslie Barson (London) ~ 08445 868817

lbarson@education-otherwise.org

Jo Berry, (Cheshire) ~ 08445 868821

jberry@education-otherwise.org (Enquiries Secretary)

Pauline Butterworth (Cleveland) ~ 08445 868826

pbutterworth@education-otherwise.org (Treasurer)

Nicola Haxell (S Yorks) ~ 08445 868824

nhaxell@education-otherwise.org (NL Coordinator)

Celia McDonagh (Glamorganshire) ~ 08445 883514 ~

cmcdonagh@education-otherwise.org

Ann Newstead (Kent) ~ 08445 853899 ~

anewstead@education-otherwise.org

Roarke Newstead (Kent) ~ 08445 868813

rroarke@education-otherwise.org

Fiona Nicholson (S Yorks) ~ 08445 868831

fnicholson@education-otherwise.org

Vicki Skinner (Dorset) ~ 08445 883513

vskinner@education-otherwise.org

Valerie Sauve (London) ~ 08445 853896

vsauve@education-otherwise.org

Annette Taberner (S Yorks) ~ 08445 003992

ataberner@education-otherwise.org

Henrietta Turnbull (Kent) ~ 08445 003897

hturnbull@education-otherwise.org

Judi Wilson (London) ~ 08445 853897

jwilson@education-otherwise.org

Colin Wilson (London) ~ 08445 008462

cwilson@education-otherwise.org

Memberships

Membership and newsletter subscription enquiries, address changes, membership cards, new member admin, other queries or missing newsletters contact: ~ Lynda Hitchman ~ Education Otherwise, PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW ~ 08445 867541 database@education-otherwise.org

Stationery

Leaflets, posters, compliment slips, membership forms, car stickers etc: free (donations toward postage welcome). 08445 867549 ~ c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW ~ stationery@education-otherwise.org

Data Protection/Confidentiality/Privacy

Data Protection Officer ~ Joss Nowell ~ 08445 003706 dataprotectionofficer@education-otherwise.org
Lynda Hitchman ~ 08445 867541 database@education-otherwise.org

Useful Contacts

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.

Anti Bullying Support ~ Juno Charlett ~ 08445 003692
anti-bullying@education-otherwise.org

Autonomous Education Support: Maya Lucas ~ 08445 003697
c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

Campaign Team Contact: Fiona Nicholson ~ 08445 884593
c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW
governmentpolicy@education-otherwise.org

College Contact: (Acting) Roger Scaife ~ 08445 868918
c/o PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW
~ collegecontact@education-otherwise.org

Concessions: VOLUNTEER NEEDED - Lucinda Smart ~ 08445 003698
concessions@education-otherwise.org

Designated Person: Jim Clossick ~ 08445 869091 ~ For EO members to call if they have concerns about a home educated child and are unsure about phoning the NSPCC.

Enquiries Secretary: Jo Berry ~ 08445 883539
enquirysecretary@education-otherwise.org

GCSE Contacts: Contact names to follow shortly ~ 08445 003708
gcsecontact@education-otherwise.org

LA Liaison Volunteer: Julie Beviss ~ 08445 003709
laliaison@education-otherwise.org

LearnPremium & EO Members Forum Admin: Lynda Hitchman
08445 867541 learnpremium@education-otherwise.org or
forums@education-otherwise.org

Local Contacts Co-ordinator: Carla MacGregor ~ 08445 003876
lcco-ordinator@education-otherwise.org

Membership Secretary: 08445 003879
membershipsecretary@education-otherwise.org

Newsletter Coordinator: Nicola Haxell ~ 08445 883532
nlco-ordinator@education-otherwise.org

Publications Secretary: 08445 003886
pubssecretary@education-otherwise.org

Research Contact: Contact details for the new Research Volunteer will be announced in next Newsletter. Meanwhile please contact: governmentpolicy@education-otherwise.org

School Anxiety Support: Jayne Owen ~ 08445 008469
anxiety-support@education-otherwise.org

Single Parent Family Contact: ~ 08445 884527

Special Needs: Christine Waterman ~ 08445 003887

Structured Support: Jennifer Simmons ~ 08445 003996
structured-ed@education-otherwise.org

Treasurer: Pauline Butterworth ~ 08445 003889
treasurer@education-otherwise.org

education otherwise

Education Otherwise is a membership organisation that 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:
Education Otherwise, PO Box 325
St Germans, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE34 3XW

Helpline 0845 478 6345

Information can also be found on the Education Otherwise website:

<http://www.education-otherwise.org>

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