

# education otherwise



Newsletter Spring 2013

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Please mark material '**for publication**' and include your name, address, phone number and email as we may need to contact you to discuss your contribution (though details may be withheld from publication on request). Email contributions will be acknowledged within a few days. If you require a postal acknowledgement please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. If no acknowledgement is received, or in case of queries, please contact the NL co-ordinator (see below). *Please also ensure your EO membership is up to date before submission.*

**Deadline for the *Summer* issue is *1<sup>st</sup> May 2013***

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### Co-ordinatorial

*'Avoid compulsion and let your children play'*  
*Plato*

Dear readers,

We are Barry and Alice, father and daughter, and we are the new EO Newsletter coordinators. I, Barry, have been working as a supply teacher in London primary schools for most of the past twenty years whilst home educating – jointly with their mother, Clare – my three children, Max, Killian and Alice. My one-foot-in-two-camps position has provided me with an unusual viewpoint on how children learn. It has become more and more apparent to me over the years that, whether a child goes to school or not, it is the family that provides the education. It is hardly surprising that a teacher with thirty children, all aged within one year of each other, cannot match the quality of experience provided by a well-motivated parent or carer with children of various ages. For schools to survive they must exert control over children whereas home educated children can themselves be in control. The most valuable discipline is self-discipline, and that comes naturally with opportunity and practice.

I, Alice, am also in a position to compare educational experiences in and out of school. I was home educated until I was nearly sixteen when I started at a school sixth-form. This transition has made me realise how much more natural and enjoyable my home-based learning has been compared with what goes on in schools. I hope that I can bring some insight into the value of home education now that I have experienced the alternative and found it far less fulfilling.

In this spring issue, we focus mainly on the importance of play: from the less optimal play opportunities in a typical inner-London Nursery class, to the centrality of play in a home-based education. We've included a piece about toys from 1944, which highlights the importance of imagination and creativity in a child's development and still resonates in our digital age. There's also a beautiful piece from the archive about how a father facilitates and appreciates his daughter's learning.

Readers may be interested in the SEND developments, as well as the fantastic deal on Public Liability Insurance for Local Groups. Also, apologies for the absence of the children's newsletter this time due to lack of contributions. Children please do send your contributions for the next issue!

Best wishes,  
*Barry O'Donovan and  
Alice Troy-Donovan,  
February 2013*

## The Un-schooled Life

For fifteen years, I was home educated (or rather museum-, park-, garden-educated). Looking back at these years now that I have entered the school system for the first time, I realise that my education was never linear. Not once was I told to learn something because it would lead to some all-important ultimate goal, some abstract finishing line at the end of a long sprint. My education did not follow a straight path leading me through learning objectives and assessments to the Holy Grail of all learning: the exam. Rather, its path was uneven and disjointed, allowing me to move fluently from one subject to another without even realising that I was crossing the arbitrary barrier between Maths and Science, or English and History. Play, even, was often if not always indistinguishable from learning. Each intermingled with the others, complementing one another in a holistic manner, so much so that the line dividing 'play' and 'work', or 'English' and 'Drama' was blurred and, quite frankly, irrelevant.

Learning was about finding out things that interested me – which meant that it felt natural to combine learning about wild animals with writing stories, or drawing pictures with science. Far from the linear structure of learning adopted in schools, my education was often circular: I would revisit or recreate stories or pictures over and over again, finding or adding something new each time. Not being in school allowed me to spend exactly how long I needed to on a story or drawing, sometimes even to write the same thing over and over again without being told that I had to move on to the next step that would lead me towards a goal set by someone else with no relation to my own educational needs or personal wants. There were no clearly defined objectives or finishing points – unless they were self-created, like when I decided to 'pretend' (although the whole point was that I wanted it to be real) to be an art student for a week, with a specific task planned for each day.

It's been fascinating to enter a school sixth-form and to see that even at this age students find it hard to find motivation or to organise their own tasks or ideas without the assistance of a teacher. School has made them reliant on some external educational authority – so when it comes to independent learning or self-appointed tasks, most find it difficult to know what to do. They are not used to following their own initiative, so they look to a teacher instead of to themselves for reassurance that they are doing it 'right'. Since school fosters the belief that education is something that is thrust upon you from an often unwanted external source, when students are told to look inside for ideas or motivation, the task inevitably proves challenging. Exams, moreover, rarely measure in a coherent and accurate manner a student's ability to control and internalise their own learning – most often, they measure a student's ability to reproduce something that has come from an external source and thus is likely to be very similar if not identical to many other students' work. Paradoxically, school creates the problem by suppressing self-initiated, self-controlled learning, and then demands later on (when in most cases it is too late to change life-long habits) that students be 'independent learners'.

I often find it almost impossible to explain to people who have always gone to school what form my education took for the first fifteen years of my life: perhaps because my learning really had nothing at all to do with school. It was jumbled, disjointed and circular, and a lot of it happened unconsciously when we played: at home, in the garden, with neighbours on the street, or on the 'beach' by the Thames. I think the reason I find it hard to pinpoint what and how and where I learned is that such unnatural barriers simply didn't exist. Like the divisions between different subjects, those fifteen years appear blurred and mixed up in my mind, so I'm not quite sure where the 'learning' stopped and the 'play' began.

*Alice (17), London SE*

## Supply Demands

I'm wanted in the Nursery today. The teacher I'm replacing is out on some course. I like Nursery for the way in which you don't have to control the children too much. In a good Nursery there is a lot of flexibility. Socialisation is the main area of emphasis – helping the children to get along with each other and with the adults. All right it is circumscribed: they start and stop when we tell them, but in between they have lots more freedom than they do when they're older. It's the very thin end of a very thick institutional wedge.

There are lots of sweet little children here: there's the Chinese boy without a word of English, who chats to me in Mandarin and insists on holding my hand like I'm an old friend, the mixed-race girl who asks me who I am and if I'll be here tomorrow (she's on the ball) and the African boy who's inviting all and sundry to his home. "You'll have to be good when you come to my house. Don't break anything."

And then there are the 'screamers': I'm sitting at a table with a group of four to six children, all enjoying a matching game. Each player has a board with photographs of about eight animals, each in its own square. I supervise as each child turns over, one by one, the stack of cards that match the animals on their boards. We talk about the animals – what they eat, where they live, etc. – until the crescendo of screaming from a trio of boys in the building blocks area reaches such a pitch that we can't hear each other. I excuse myself, walk calmly over, and tell the screamers (I love the fact that you can do this in Nurseries) that they *can* scream, but only outside. I was sure this would do the trick and they'd either stop or go outside, but I was wrong. To judge by their reaction, you'd think I'd told them to scream louder. Luckily for me, a Nursery nurse came over just then and managed to calm down the ringleader, while explaining to me that he was on the Autistic spectrum. There is another child on the Autistic spectrum, and even though they tell me the worst behaved one is sick ("He's got chicken pox, Hurray aren't we wicked!"), by the end of the day I feel like screaming too.

Sometimes it seems to me that teachers in schools make the situation worse by setting children up to misbehave. Halfway through the morning they're rounded up, told to stand

in a line and then brought into the foyer where they have to sit on narrow benches over which their coats hang down from hooks. Some of the children find it difficult to make themselves comfortable among the coats, but they're chastised if they don't sit before being offered a piece of fruit or vegetable – today it's carrot – followed by another glass of water or milk, whether they want them or not, even if they'd rather be still running around outside.

The most popular objects outside today – and the subject of much upset, conflict and tension – are the tricycles. It's not just any of the trikes they want: they have their favourites, and there's much sulking when some children have to wait for their heart's desire, and more when they have to relinquish it after a too short time in three-wheel heaven. I suppose there's learning there for the children: to wait, to consider others' needs and wants, to resolve conflict. But in the meantime it's very wearing for the adults.

Four o'clock arrives after what's felt like two days and my time is up once I've tidied and set up a bit for the next day. I sympathise with the staff and wonder how they do it day after day, before I bound out with my timesheet to claim payment for the day, before drawing a deep breath of fresh air outside the school gates and hurrying to the nearest cosy cafe. Free at last, till tomorrow.

*Barry, London SE*



*'Play is training for the unexpected'*  
*Marc Bekoff*

## **Home Education Around the World: Switzerland**

Home education is officially legal in Switzerland, with education being sanctioned in general by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Education Directors, or EDK. However, the actual approach differs widely between the various cantons. There are 26 of these states in the confederation, and some actually forbid home education altogether (e. g. Ticino), while others place heavy restrictions on the parents, in requiring for example the possession of a teaching diploma. On the other hand, some states seem to be very tolerant towards the entire approach. As the information on the Internet is not always up to date and the cantons frequently change their educational laws and guidelines without giving any notice, the system is very volatile, and parents are strongly advised to consult with their local department of education before starting on the journey.

According to HSLDA (Home School Legal Defence Association) and the Home Education Association of Switzerland, a volunteer-led membership group, 200 to 500 families are currently home educating in the country. This data is however pure guesswork as all the cantons are very strict about data protection and do not give out numbers.

Books and resources can be ordered by parents via the educational publishers, and some cantons actually provide them to home educators for free. These books are almost regarded as curricula by the teachers, so it is easy to stick to the current one by working through the books. Curricula can also be downloaded for free from most cantons' websites. The Home Education Association advises parents to consult with other home educating families or even contact local teachers for help regarding exams.

#### Websites and sources:

- <http://www.homeschool.ch> (invaluable website of the official home ed organisation, a veritable treasure chest of information; available in English (<http://www.bildungzu Hause.ch/en/home.html>), but brochures only in German so far. Membership list on joining; activities organised)
- The same website provides a lot of very useful links sorted by teaching aids, subjects and publishers: <http://www.bildungzu Hause.ch/en/practical-info/teaching-aids.html>
- <http://wghe.wetpaint.com/page/Switzerland> (detailed questionnaire by a home ed parent)
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeschooling\\_international\\_status\\_and\\_statistics#Switzerland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeschooling_international_status_and_statistics#Switzerland) (not much info here)
- <http://www.hslda.org/hs/international/Switzerland/default.asp> (for legal issues, latest news)

#### Groups:

- local group in Geneva/Genf: <http://heng.nyonweb.ch> (English website available, membership necessary, lots of valuable links)
- Yahoo group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/homeschoolingch/> (English and German, members only)

*Corinna, currently in China*



## About Toys

*From I Can't Help Laughing, by John D. Sheridan, Talbot Press, Dublin 1944*

One of the favourite toys in the big family in which I was reared was an extra leaf for the dining-room table. It was kept up in the attic, where it served as a shop counter, a teacher's desk, and even as a small and very unsatisfactory stage for amateur theatricals. It was a dancing board for a succession of tin clowns, pathetic spinning dervishes which after a few days of crowded life could manage no more than a couple of whirls at each winding: after that they would buzz themselves out in the prone position.

I do not imagine that the modern child would see any possibilities in an extra leaf for the dining-room table, for fashions in toys have changed since I was a boy and the child of today moves on wheels as soon as he is able to walk. The suburbs are full of bicycles, tricycles, pedal cars, and skates: the old toys are out of favour, and the spotted rocking horse is no longer a vehicle within the meaning of the Act.



But it was the toy-makers and not the children who brought about this change: and I am not so sure that the children approve of it. The other day I saw a little boy playing on his garden path with a contraption made from a piece of wood and the chassis of a discarded go-car [pushchair], and looking over the fence at him, in envy and wonder, was another little boy who was standing on the bonnet of a most realistic pedal motor car. It was far too realistic – that was the trouble. It needed no re-modelling in the workshop of imagination: it wasn't licensed for the land of make-believe. The plank and chassis, on the other hand, was anything its owner liked to call it. It was a bus, an ambulance, a Post Office van, a fire engine – even a pedal motor car. But it wasn't *only* a pedal motor car. That was the whole point of the business. It could change its form and function as easily as a swallow changes direction, as quickly as a child changes his mind. The motor car couldn't: it was fixed, static, unchangeable: in being a motor car it had exhausted all its possibilities.

Children like elaborate, realistic toys, but they tire of them quickly. They see in them the thing that annoys them most – the interference of parents. The child wants to go his own way, to stand on his own feet, to lace his own boots, to water the flowers, to chop sticks, to make rhubarb tarts. The world is his oyster, and he wants to open it without adult supervision. When you try to do for him the things he wants to do for himself, when you try to lay down not only how but with what he should play, he does what all adults do in similar circumstances – he rebels.

One of our most foolish adult axioms about children runs something like this: the more you do for them the less grateful they are. Paddy gets a whole clatter of toys on his birthday, but that same afternoon he is up on a charge of spitting at the cook, and when he is admonished he kicks and screams and says he doesn't want any rotten toys. His parents then turn their eyes to heaven and pray for strength, when they should pray for sense. Paddy likes toys. Paddy wants toys. But if he gets too many he feels that the grown-ups about him are trying to dominate his life completely, to put a lien on his play, to squelch his self-activity. He can't put this feeling into words, for it is

instinctive rather than rational, but he gives expression to it in deeds. He tells you and your toys to go to the devil. Even the youngest children display this amazing and God-given insubordination. They can be won over with marvels, but not completely, for the wonder without is nothing to the wonder within – the wonder of thinking and planning, the unending wonder of finding out. Make no mistake about it, every child knows that nothing like himself was ever on earth before, that he is unique, that he has the right to express himself in his own way. Every child senses that great metaphysical problem – the riddle of personality. He knows that God has made him to a formula that has never been used before and will never be used again. That is why he is so sure of himself.

And he is sure of himself almost from the very beginning. A child of eighteen months will beam all over when you bring him home an enormous toy dog, but the beam won't last very long. He will realise after the first fifteen minutes that the toy is an insult, a trap, an attempt to cheat him of the thrill of choosing his own amusements: that it was given to him to keep him quiet, and that it has the crowning disadvantage of not being forbidden. Having realised all this in a flash he will hand over the toy to his mother ("such a generous child!") and go back to the kitchen to continue his investigations into the noise-making properties of saucepan lids.

*'Today, children are aware of the global threats to the environment but their physical contact, their intimacy with nature, is fading. That's exactly the opposite of how it was when I was a child'*

*Richard Louv*



## **EO SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) News**

The SEN green paper saga carries on, bringing with it implications for all home educators as it develops. We have had new Ministers (latest is Edward Timpson) and pathfinders extended (September 2014 seems to be the most recent deadline) to try and bring it to an eventual conclusion. There are concerns that pathfinder families have not been found for specific areas, which could lead to legislation being brought in prematurely before the trials have been completed. The government's radical shake-up of England's system for children with special educational needs (SEN) is facing mounting criticism from charities, teachers' unions and pressure groups, who say pilot schemes set up eight months ago to test the proposals have yet to begin, and are not being allowed enough time before legislation is introduced.

Clauses 4 and 34 of the draft bill have been highlighted as of concern for home educators. Clauses 1-4 cover which children and young people the provisions relate to, what is meant by special educational provision (SEN), and when a local authority is responsible for a child or young person with SEN. The definition of SEN remains the same as that currently contained in Education Act 1996, section 312. Clauses 34-38 set out the local

authority's powers and duties in relation to arranging and/or funding special educational provision for individual children or young people outside schools, post-16 institutions or providers of early years education in England and in specialist institutions inside England and Wales; supplying goods and services to others to help them make special educational provision; and accessing schools and other institutions to monitor education and training provided for children or young people with Education, Health and Care Plans.

A barrister regarded highly by the home education community expressed disapproval of the wording of the draft bill, as it seems to state that the authority is responsible for a child's education, instead of the parents (section 319 Education Act 1996).

319 Special educational provision otherwise than in schools:

(1) Where a local education authority is satisfied that it would be inappropriate for-

(a) the special educational provision which a learning difficulty of a child in their area calls for, or

(b) any part of any such provision,

to be made in a school, they may arrange for the provision (or, as the case may be, for that part of it) to be made otherwise than in a school.

(2) Before making an arrangement under this section, a local education authority shall consult the child's parent.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part/IV>



If the local education authority does become responsible for children with SEN, this could change the way local authorities handle all home educated children, as they may assess all for any special needs.

Because of the changes, it seems there will be a new simplified SEN code of practice: a new Code of Practice, Mr Timpson said, would be a document that parents can easily access and that it would be clear what their rights are and what the process is for their child's journey. It would include information about the EHCP (Essential Health Care Package), Local Offer and Personal Budgets but he didn't want it to be labyrinthine. It must be effective, he said, and that was why the pathfinders were important in informing that.

EO SEND are looking for volunteers to help with different roles, including telephone help-line and Works and Benefits enquiries.

If you are interested, contact: [e.theunissen@educationotherwise.org](mailto:e.theunissen@educationotherwise.org)

Please feel free to send us any contributions regarding special needs and home education.

**An update on GCSEs from Roger Scaife, EO's College Contact** (email: roger.scaife@gmail.com)

Changes are being made on an almost daily basis. Some of these will have significant influence on the pathways that home educated students will be able to take when seeking to take GCSE courses.

AQA have produced a subject by subject information e-document on the following link:

<http://web.aqa.org.uk/support/changes-to-GCSEs/> I am answering individual members and think this link would help.

Whereas the introduction of controlled assessment limited the range of subjects available to private candidates at GCSE, some new IGCSEs are coming online. (Those GCSE subjects available without controlled assessment remain the same as in my article last year). If members can find a centre to host the exam, a number of subjects are already available. Members have already taken English, and I know that History and Science are being introduced next June. Modern Languages are also available in 2014 with AQA and already available with Edexcel.

English required the candidates to produce a video for the speaking test with a tutor asking questions about their prepared subject. This video was verified by the exams officer at the centre and marked externally. I expect a similar method for Modern Languages.

AQA advise private candidates to obtain the supplementary guidelines for private candidates.

The latest information is that GCSE English papers taken in January will not be graded until June 2013 and centres are invited to withdraw candidates if they wish to.

If you have specific questions I am very willing and interested in researching and responding. The answers to questions raised by private candidates are not always available and I need to raise the issues with subject officers who may have understandably missed the implications for private candidates.

I am horrified that the whims of one education minister can be enacted within a few days without any thought of the implications for exam boards, candidates and centres. I am assuming that the link I have included is publicly available. With all its internal links it provides a comprehensive overview of the story up to December 2012.

By following the links to qualifications on the top tabs of the AQA link, members will find AQA certificates which are the IGCSE qualifications. In ALL subject specifications there are three possible statements about private candidates:

1. NOT AVAILABLE to PRIVATE CAND.
2. Available.
3. Only available if the centre is willing to engage with the private candidate in their internal controlled assessment procedure.

The same information is available from the websites of the other boards - as long as they still exist!

In the last few weeks changes have again been made. These have been as a result of strong criticism from both parliamentary and user groups. (Feb 2013)  
Controlled Assessment will be phased out, GCSEs will remain but with extensive revision to content in the key subjects.

Most GCSEs will be linear. As yet the details are sparse but there could well be a significant gain for EO students as linear exams should be available to private candidates. Having already worked to introduce new exams for 2015 to satisfy the Secretary of State, exam boards now have to start again to accommodate his latest announcement.

If this seems confusing to EO members outside of the mainstream state education, it is causing utter chaos and confusion within the system. Examination Officers and teachers, who need to plan well in advance for changes, find themselves unable to clearly advise students entering examination courses.

As the situation becomes clearer new and revised examinations will become available online.

Before you embark on any course of study please check with the exam boards that the exam will still be available in the year that you wish to take the final exam.

[http://web.aqa.org.uk/admin/p\\_private.php](http://web.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_private.php)

<http://www.edexcel.com/i-am-a/student/private-candidates/Pages/default.aspx>

[http://www.ocr.org.uk/download/learners/ocr\\_39366\\_learn\\_private\\_cand\\_guide.pdf](http://www.ocr.org.uk/download/learners/ocr_39366_learn_private_cand_guide.pdf)

I am happy for you to email me for advice on subjects available and, just as important, I need to be informed of any issues, problems and solutions you have encountered as you find your way through this maze as it will help me to help others.

Finally, I would urge you to find an examination centre that will accept you as a private candidate BEFORE embarking on GCSE or GCE courses. Ensure that you check specific details of the subject, syllabus, board, and special practical requirements and arrangements, especially in Science and Languages. If you are taking more than one exam, the subjects/boards available at a centre may well influence your choice.

All the best,  
Roger.

## Beach Combing

[EONL December 2002]

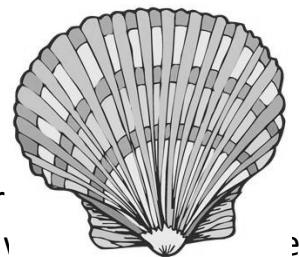
'Home Education' has always been a slightly misleading term because much of what happens takes place well away from home. It can also conjure up various images for non-home educators which may be pejorative: a lone child sitting looking bored at home, kept away from the world and with no friends; or a house full of wild children creating mayhem and a distraught parent trying to cope. As home educators know, neither is the case.

Perhaps a metaphor, inspired by the memories of the summer, might prove insightful. For my family, home education is quite like beachcombing. Imagine, what I hope is a familiar scene for many, a small child playing on a beach. Their curiosity, sense of fun and desire to explore leads them quite naturally to know what to do on this big beach. They run and jump, draw pictures in the sand, poke about in rock pools, run in and out of the water, fly kites, build sand-castles and look under rocks.

When my daughter's playing on the beach, she's connected to the world with all her senses. What she learns comes naturally and at her own pace. Some days she wants to pick up rocks and find out what's underneath. On other days picture-making is the subject, or playing with other children and working out the rules of the game. She learns through all her activities because **experiencing** the world is the natural way to develop understanding.

### Looking under rocks

While at the beach, my daughter often picks up rocks to see if anything interesting is underneath. As we explore the pools and rocky coves, we turn over rocks and shout to each other to 'come see ...'. Sometimes the things under my rocks I find really interesting, but she will give it a quick glance and move on, and vice versa. Other times she and I will study what's revealed, trying to figure out what it is and why it's there. My greater experience and knowledge can be useful in providing explanations of what's under the rocks but sometimes it's new to me, so together we talk about the characteristics it has, and sometimes we come up for it. She often spots things that I don't because I'm too busy trying to remember the names of things and looking at the world with tired eyes. Her fresh eyes don't have the expectations, filters, and need to explain which mine do, so she can actually see what's there, not just what's 'supposed' to be there.



The beach offers many different rocks to look under. My daughter isn't constrained to look under only the rocks that I think are important or interesting. I can say "*In my experience this type of rock often has great things under it*" and she will often give me the benefit and come and look. Sometimes she agrees with me and sometimes she says,

*“What’s so great about that?”*

Of course while we’re at the beach we’re not confined to looking under rocks. We can do all the things that make beaches such wonderful places. And all the time she’s learning. If I were to insist that we keep looking under rocks all day, she would get bored, stop listening and not turn any of her own rocks over.

### **Schools Aren’t Beaches**

In contrast with the beach, schools are funny places. In the past, someone, somewhere decided which rocks everyone should look under and, equally, which ones they shouldn’t. However, rather than go to the beach and look under them, it is much more efficient to bring the rocks to a central place - the school. Unfortunately, this means that children are now stuck with looking under old rocks, collected a long time ago by someone else, which aren’t in their natural place and so lack their normal relationship to the wider world. They have little left on their undersides: most of the interesting stuff was left behind at the beach when they were collected. From these rocks the children are told to imagine the vibrant world outside.

If the child asks why they must study these old rocks, they will be told that this is important ‘learning’, that it will make them clever and successful. Some children find it hard to understand how turning over rocks they haven’t chosen, in which they have little interest, which are old and have bits on, will be useful in their lives to come. If they persist in this questioning they will be disciplined and quickly labelled a troublemaker. So they have to be compelled to attend school where they are sentenced to many years of ‘hard labour’ amidst the dusty rocks. To be fair, schools do try and smarten up their collection of rocks, even getting new ones in, or using audio/visual techniques to show what they look like in their natural setting. However, simply using better, more interesting rocks still leaves many other problems, and it’s a long way from actually being on the beach with the wind in your hair and sand between your toes.

Many children stare longingly out of the classroom window, while the teacher at the front talks on and on about the stuff which they believe is under that lesson’s particular rock. The child remembers the great times - the fun, the joy, the kites and the sand-castles, the sea and the sun - of the last holiday, when they went to the beach. Life was full of excitement, rich with experience, and much was learnt.

### **Lots of ways to play at the beach**

Whilst some children are at their enforced rock-turning in schools, the home educators are at the beach. Whatever the weather there’s usually something to see and do and most days the ‘beach-combers’ come down to enjoy the ever-changing scene the real world offers.

Because people are different, beachcombers have a variety of styles they employ when

they're at the beach. Some parents feel they (and their children) need some structure for at least some of the day. You will see them diligently at work with their kids, turning over a succession of rocks. Others will have a particular interest in one area of the beach, or a specific activity and encourage their kids to enjoy and explore their passions with them. Others are more relaxed and see their role as simply getting everyone to the beach with the basics (challenge enough sometimes!). Once there, it's over to the kids to sort out what's on the programme today. However, after some serious relaxation they are always ready to join in a game of catch, to help launch a kite, to explore the pools and turn over some rocks when they are asked to.

As an adult I have experience of beaches and know some things about them that I'm keen to point out and share with my daughter. Together we explore, finding new things, old things, and washed-up things. At times I make suggestions about where to go on the beach where interesting things may be found. Mostly though, we explore together, with my daughter leading the way. Of course my partner and I are seen as responsible for making sure we have drinks, food, buckets, spades, kites, surf boards, frizzbees, balls etc. etc. available as required!

Often the best times, when most fun and interaction occurs, are when there's not much structure or too many restrictions. And it's great when we meet others and develop the world's best game of frizzbee or cricket, or play together in the sea.

Whatever the different ways of playing at the beach, most beachcombers will always find time to simply enjoy being there. The children will have time to explore as they desire and to meet and chat with the other folk on the beach that day. Learning becomes an on-going activity that applies to most things; it's not a discrete process that only takes place in one location, in one way and for a set time. It's fun, exciting, and rewarding, encouraging children to explore and question their world, to turn over the rocks that take their fancy and seek to explain what they find. The learning is based on actual experience and observation, and firmly rooted in the real world. On occasion the beachcombers take time-out away from the beach to experience other environments. Some days a cliff walk takes them further afield, on others the fog rolls in or the rain pelts down and it's good to stay warm indoors, watching the school-children from the house next-door struggling off to the bus-stop to spend the day at their labours.

Life's a beach: a rich and wonderful environment full of opportunities to play and learn – to experience, and thus to know. Who wants to go to school when you can go to the beach instead! Don't call me a 'home educator'; call me a beachcomber! (Anyone for another ice cream?)



*Martin, Kendall*

# **POETS' CORNER**

*Gervase Phinn (from the collection 'The Day Our Teacher Went Batty', Puffin 2002)*

## **Less Able**

He could not describe the beauty that surrounded him  
The soft green dale and craggy hills.  
He could not spell the names  
Of those mysterious places that he knew so well  
But he could snare a rabbit, ride a horse,  
Repair a fence and dig a dike,  
Drive a tractor, plough a field,  
Milk a cow and lamb a yew,  
Name a bird with a faded feather,  
Smell the seasons and predict the weather,  
That less able child could.

## **The Inspector Calls**

The room was cold and dingy  
And the windows far from clean.  
No sand or clay, no wall display,  
Not a book was to be seen.

'I am sure you have a lot of fun,'  
The school inspector said,  
To the rows of nervous children  
Who sat in silent dread.

'I am sure you have a lot of fun,'  
The visitor repeated,  
And the children nodded obediently,  
'Oh yes sir', they all bleated.

But at the back sat David,  
And he shook his little head.  
'Well I don't have a lot of fun,'  
The little infant said.

'Of course you do!' the teacher snapped,  
And fixed him with a glare.  
'We're always having lots of fun!'  
In a voice that said 'Beware!'

But David shook his head again,  
And they heard the infant say:  
'Well, I do not remember it –  
I must have been away that day!'

*from* **The Teacher**

The teacher (yes, I hear you sigh)  
Does not use words like you and I.  
In training for his tough profession  
He learns each teacher-like expression:  
'Stop fiddling boy, and pay attention  
Or you will join me in detention!  
'I really don't know why I bother,  
In one ear and out the other...'  
'I'm waiting, Class...' 'My, my, you're slow...'  
'I'm not here for my health, you know!'  
'Now settle down and look this way,'  
'And you, girl, put that thing away!'  
'Take out your books...' 'What did I just say?'

**Last Word**

'Every time I open my mouth,'  
Shouted the teacher,  
'Some idiot speaks!'

***Allen Ahlberg (from the collection 'Heard it in the Playground', Puffin 1991)***

**The Question**

The child stands facing the teacher  
(This happens every day);  
A small, embarrassed creature  
Who can't think what to say.

He gazes up at the ceiling,  
He stares down at the floor,  
With a hot and flustered feeling  
And a question he can't ignore.

He stands there like the stump of a tree  
With a forest of arms around.  
'It's easy, Sir!' 'Ask me!' 'Ask me!'  
The answer, it seems, is found.

The child sits down with a lump in his throat  
(This happens everywhere),  
And brushes his eyes with the sleeve of his coat  
And huddles in his chair.

### **Billy McBone**

Billy McBone  
Had a mind of his own,  
Which he mostly kept under his hat.  
The teachers all thought  
That he couldn't be taught  
But Bill didn't seem to mind that.

Billy McBone  
Had a mind of his own,  
Which the teachers had searched for for years.  
Trying test after test,  
They still never guessed  
It was hidden between his ears.

Billy McBone  
Had a mind of his own,  
Which only his friends ever saw.  
When the teacher said 'Bill,  
Whereabouts is Brazil?'  
He just shuffled and stared at the floor.

Billy McBone  
Had a mind of his own  
Which he kept under lock and key.  
While the teachers in vain  
Tried to burgle his brain,  
Bill's thoughts were off wandering free.

## BOOK REVIEWS—by Tammy



### **65 More Short Mysteries You Solve with Science**

Author: Eric and Natalie Yoder

Price: £6.35

ISBN 10: 1-9384920-0-5

If like me your child loves solving mysteries and doing science then they will love this book. Father and daughter team Eric and Natalie Yoder have managed to combine both in a way that challenges and engages the reader from the very first page. The book is divided into 4 main areas of science – Life Science, Earth and Space Science, Physical and Chemical Science and General Science, making it easy for the reader to

choose the area that interests them most. Each story is a page long, with the solution to the mystery on the back of the page. The book is aimed at 8-12 year olds but children and parents of all ages will enjoy the challenge of solving the mysteries! Overall a thoroughly enjoyable book recommended for anyone who loves science!

To win a copy of the book email [bookreviews@educationotherwise.org](mailto:bookreviews@educationotherwise.org) with your name and details. The prize draw closes on March 31st.



### **Magic Wool Fruit Children**

Author: Christine Schafer

Price: £12.99

ISBN: 978-086315-950-3

Christine Schafer has taken felting to a new level. In her most recent book, Magic Wool Fruit Children, she shows the reader how to make the most amazing creations of woodland fairies and their environment. This beautifully

illustrated full colour book has detailed step by step instructions on how to make felted fairy children and a variety of felted fruits. The instructions are very detailed, making the creations accessible to both beginner and expert crafters.

We would love to hear from you with reviews of your favourite books and home ed resources. Please send your reviews to [bookreviews@educationotherwise.org](mailto:bookreviews@educationotherwise.org)

## **PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR LOCAL GROUP MEETINGS EXTENSION TO AUGUST AT HALF ANNUAL COST**

Due to the long delay in finalising appropriate wording for the policy endorsements with the insurance company, many Local Groups were unable to take advantage of this scheme until late autumn – and the renewal date is 28<sup>th</sup> February. We have therefore negotiated with the insurance company for a six-month extension to our existing policy.

**This means that Local Group organisers can renew or join the scheme NOW until 31<sup>st</sup> August, for just £5.**

A brief outline follows, but it is essential that Local Group organisers should read the policy documents carefully, to ensure that they are aware of the conditions and that the policy is suitable for their requirements, BEFORE applying for the insurance.

The cost to Local Groups (from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2013) is £10 per year or part year, payable by cheque. Cover will not commence until your payment has cleared and your application has been processed. You will then receive (normally by email) confirmation of acceptance on to the scheme and a copy of the Insurance Certificate.

EO's Local Group Insurance is provided as a service to members, and available only to groups organised by EO Members; THREE members (from different families) need to be named as Local Group organisers, to ensure continuity. It is essential that group organisers keep their EO family membership up to date, and ensure that they fully understand the conditions of the cover as set out in the schedule, relating to low risk activities, etc. which must be adhered to if the cover is to be effective, and have made all participating families aware of these. EO cannot be responsible for loss of cover where the conditions are not strictly adhered to, and in no circumstances can EO accept liability for events occurring at Local Group meetings.

Policy documents, detailed guidance and an application form are available to download from the Member Home area of the EO website or by email from Fe (the Local Groups Insurance Co-ordinator) <[lgic@educationotherwise.org](mailto:lgic@educationotherwise.org)>. If you are unable to access this online, you can request a copy by post. Please mark your envelope very clearly 'EO Insurance' and enclose a stamped s.a.e. Send to: EO Insurance, P.O. Box 3761 Swindon, Wilts SN2 9GT. However, you should be aware that this method is likely to involve some forwarding delays.

*'We don't stop playing because we grow old;  
we grow old because we stop playing'*  
*George Bernard Shaw*



## LOCAL CONTACT UPDATE

Many thanks to LCs in adjacent areas who have offered to extend their area of operation, and to new volunteers. It would be very helpful if LCs would please find a replacement & contact LCCO when stepping down.

We currently have vacancies for Local Contacts for the following areas:-

### ENGLAND

Cambridgeshire

Cheshire

Gloucestershire

Hampshire

Herefordshire

Lancashire

Leicestershire

Manchester & Stockport

Northamptonshire

Rutland

Shropshire

Suffolk

Wiltshire

### WALES

Anglesey

Ceredigion

Pembrokeshire

Powys

If there's no Local Contact in your county why not volunteer to be the one? The job can be as much or as little as you make it. Some Local Contacts are content just to phone the new member and welcome them to EO, telling them of local meetings. Others organise local meetings or outings and many are willing to give help and support to local members in their dealings with the LA. Local Contacts also receive referrals via the EO Helpline, from parents in their area who are considering home education. Many of these aspects can be shared by local members rather than being the responsibility of the Local Contact.

For more information and to volunteer (N.B. all EO volunteers are eligible for a reduced membership subscription, and receive a complimentary paper copy of the newsletter), please contact Lei Ashe, our Local Contact Co-ordinator  
<lcco-ordinator@educationotherwise.org>

## EO BUSINESS/NOTICES

### GATHERING OR NOT?

It seemed a good idea to reinstate gatherings as a means of getting enough Signed-Up Members together to form a quorum for the AGM. However, at both the 2012 gatherings (February and November) attendance was extremely low and we did not manage to achieve a quorum. This means that trustees had to reconvene the AGM a week later, and also implies that most members do not want to take advantage of the social aspects of a gathering, or the subsidised accommodation for a long weekend break. A good deal of time and effort, as well as members' money, goes into arranging a gathering, so we may have to reconsider this for 2013.

The alternative is to have a one-day meeting for the AGM (probably in November) at somewhere we can reasonably hope to attract enough members for a quorum. Any member who holds a named post as an EO Volunteer, may apply to have their (reasonable!) travelling expenses paid in order to attend the AGM – of course, you also need to be a SUM ...

education otherwise  
needs you!

**Please let us know your views on gatherings and suggestions for AGM venues**

trustees@educationotherwise.org

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### Membership /renewal letters & Contact

We apologise again for the continuing delays in issuing membership cards, and thank those who are waiting for your patience. ***As a partial recompense, your subscription date is being adjusted so that you will have a year from processing, rather than from when you sent your payment.*** We hope that members will be able to find most of the information they require in the 'member home' area of the website.

It has not been possible to recreate the database for the printed Contact List, and we hope that more use will be made of the online 'member directory' where you can put information about your family so that others may contact you. This is in the private 'member home' area of the website, so can be accessed only by EO family members, for security reasons.

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### WORLD BOOK DAY - 7th March 2013

Tokens for £1 books available free of charge for all children, including home educated. Book Token redemption period is: Mon 25th February – Sun 24th March 2013 (inclusive). See website <http://www.worldbookday.com/>. To apply, supply your details, including the number of children in your care and they will be dispatched to you by the WBD Helpline. Contact by **Email** [wbd@education.co.uk](mailto:wbd@education.co.uk) **Phone** 01634 729810 or **Fax** 01634 290175

## LOCAL HOME EDUCATION GROUPS

**HERs – Please contact the group organiser** for full details and to check that activities are ongoing. Note also that groups are not always run by EO members. Further information on the groups listed below is available via the Local HE Groups area of the EO website. **If you know of a group** that's not listed, please ask the organiser to enter it at [www.educationotherwise.net](http://www.educationotherwise.net)

**Group organisers – please remember** when giving details of events, that this list (both in Newsletter and on main area of website) may be seen by people who are not members of Education Otherwise, and adjust your information accordingly. Please also notify us promptly of contact & other changes via the Local Groups Co-ordinator: [lgco@educationotherwise.org](mailto:lgco@educationotherwise.org)

### England

#### Bedfordshire

**Christian Home Ed** – Scott and Rachel, [scottandrachel@ntlworld.com](mailto:scottandrachel@ntlworld.com)

**Busy B-Hes** – Weekly drop-in offering chats and support; activities.

Pauline 07791 850545 [pauline@kc2001.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:pauline@kc2001.fsnet.co.uk)

**BedHed** – An informal group of home educating families in and around Bedford <http://bedhed.org.uk>

#### Berkshire

**Berkshire Home Educators** – for HE families in & adjoining Berkshire <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/groups/berkshirehomeeducators/>

#### Bristol

**Bristol Home Education** – A local support group Bristol area. <http://www.bristolhomeeducation.org.uk/>

**Bristol Home Education Learn Place (HELP)** Carla 01179 354389 [carla-maria@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:carla-maria@blueyonder.co.uk)

#### Buckinghamshire

**Free Range Education** – range of educational events and activities in Milton Keynes & North Bucks Sarah: 07725 039981 [www.freerangeeducation.org](http://www.freerangeeducation.org)

**High Wycombe Home Educators** – for HERs in & around High Wycombe <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/highwycombehomeeducators/>

**Home Education Milton Keynes** – informal non-hierarchical group for HERs in Milton Keynes & surrounding areas. <http://www.he-mk.org.uk> <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MadCows-MK/join>

**Milton Keynes Home Educators Network (MKHEN)** – Educational and social activities and events, online support groups, mentoring and an active relationship with the LA. <http://www.mkhen.org.uk>

Georgeanne 01908 662256 [sienna-swift7@powernet.co.uk](mailto:sienna-swift7@powernet.co.uk)

**MK-CHEF** – HE support group for Milton Keynes. Affiliated to Home Service but you do not need to be a Christian to join. <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/mk-chef>

**South Bucks Home Educators** – (& surrounding areas) <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/southbuckshomeed>

#### Cambridgeshire

**Cambridgeshire Home Educators** – A website all about home educating in Cambridgeshire including local groups and how to contact them. [www.cambshomeed.co.uk](http://www.cambshomeed.co.uk) Jane: [cambshomeed@gmail.com](mailto:cambshomeed@gmail.com)

**Cambridge Home Educating Families (CHEF)** – for parents/carers who HE or considering HE. <http://www.cambridgehomeeducators.org.uk/> Morag: 01223 464918 [morag2000@hotmail.com](mailto:morag2000@hotmail.com)

**Cambridge Home Educating Community Activity List** – summary of sessions and regular groups in Cambridge [www.educationchoice.org.uk](http://www.educationchoice.org.uk) Karen: 01223 573220 [ka-ren@karenrodgers.co.uk](mailto:ka-ren@karenrodgers.co.uk)

#### Cheshire

**Mid Cheshire Home Educators** – Bi-monthly meetings and regular outings. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mche>

**South Cheshire Home Educators** – Jacqui, [southcheshire-he@gmail.com](mailto:southcheshire-he@gmail.com) <http://www.southcheshirehe.btck.co.uk/>

#### Cornwall

**Home Grown** – S E Cornwall HEGroup - Drama & Spanish, nr. Liskeard. Katherine Revell 01752 851091

**PZ Home Ed** Meets Monday pm for workshop during term time. Ruth 01736 350887 [ruthboulton@phonecoop.coop](mailto:ruthboulton@phonecoop.coop)

#### Cumbria

**Cumbria Home Educators** – Meets fortnightly near Kendal and in Penrith. Trips and interesting activities around Cumbria and further afield <http://www.communicate.co.uk/lakes/cumbriahomeed/>  
**West Cumbria Home Educators** – (including Keswick). Mutual support for HERs in West Cumbria : [WestCumbriaHomeEd@gmail.com](mailto:WestCumbriaHomeEd@gmail.com)

#### Derbyshire

**Derby Home Education Group (DHEG)** – Weekly. Gym Club at sports centre with instructor. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/derbyhe/>  
**Home Ed Buxton Area** – Local meetings/activities for HERs and those considering HE <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/homeedbuxtonarea>  
**Matlock HE** – [as Buxton] <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/matlockhe>

#### Devon

**Buckfastleigh Wildspace** – Nature study and gardening group based at Buckfastleigh Town hall. Welcomes HE families.

<http://www.hogco-devonrcc.org.uk/index.asp?pageid=279900>

**Dart Valley Home Ed Network** – Out and about visits: natural history history photography and more. Members-only internet group. Hannah and Gordon 01803 762788 [lindnich@tesco.net](mailto:lindnich@tesco.net)

**Exeter Home Education Community** Wednesday drop-in; GCSE; green woodwork permaculture pottery & more. [nbedford@btinternet.com](mailto:nbedford@btinternet.com) <http://exeterhomeeducationcommunity.co.uk> Neil 01363 82314

**Freedom Fields EHE** – Weekly social group, for HE children and young people with parents. Tuesdays 11am -2pm.at Freedom Fields in Plymouth [http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/PlymouthUK\\_HomeEd/](http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/PlymouthUK_HomeEd/)

**Home Grown Kids** – Website activities forum and newsletters HE/ flexischools (or interested) <http://homegrownkids.wetpaint.com/>

**Stover HE Group** – Longstanding HE community based around Stover/ Newton Abbot. Informal educational and social meets in local and surrounding areas. [stoverhegroup@gmail.com](mailto:stoverhegroup@gmail.com)

**Teignbridge and Torbay Home Educators** – Social events and educational visits. <http://www.teignbridgeandtorbayhe.co.uk> Julia 07905 293223 [Julia@classroomfree.co.uk](mailto:Julia@classroomfree.co.uk)

**Dartmoor and SW Home Education Group**. Based in S Dartmoor, HE events locally and in many parts of the SW.

<http://dartmoor-sw-he-group.yolasite.com/>

Contact: [dartmoor.sw.he.group@gmail.com](mailto:dartmoor.sw.he.group@gmail.com)

**South Devon Home Education Group** – <http://www.southdevonhomeeducation.co.uk/>

Helen 01803 390639 [helenlloyd-hoare@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:helenlloyd-hoare@blueyonder.co.uk)

#### Dorset

**Home Educators of East Dorset** – (covers all Dorset) Website with details of various groups meeting in Dorset. <http://www.he-ed.org.uk>

**Bournemouth HEED** – Weekly Monday meetings Carol 01202 677066 [carolstone@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:carolstone@yahoo.co.uk)

**HERA** – friendly group based in Creekmoor Poole. Weekly workshops and activities + outings and events. [www.heradorset.shutterfly.com](http://www.heradorset.shutterfly.com) Sarah 01202 600065 [sarahandthai@aol.co.uk](mailto:sarahandthai@aol.co.uk)

**Bournemouth and Poole Home Educators** – Bournemouth/Poole area for play dates and visits to places of interest/museums/etc.

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

[Bournemouth and PooleHomeEducators/?yguid=419936795](http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/Bournemouth_and_PooleHomeEducators/?yguid=419936795). Emma: [bmth.home.ed@gmail.com](mailto:bmth.home.ed@gmail.com)

#### Durham

**Durham HE** – Yahoo group. Get-togethers arranged between members in various areas of County <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/County-durham-homeed>

## Essex

**A Different Class Home Education Group** – Southeind-on-Sea. Non-profit weekly meetings regular outings. [www.adifferentclass.org](http://www.adifferentclass.org)  
**Haverhill HE group** – Covering South Suffolk/North Essex. Eve 01440 788228 or 07768 763913 [wixde@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wixde@yahoo.co.uk)  
**WIGWAM Epping Forest** – A weekly informal drop-in group. Eleanor Stapleton 07866 701442 [elmajose2@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:elmajose2@yahoo.co.uk)  
**Southend HE Group** – Meets weekly. Lots of outings and activities. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/southendhomeeducation/southendhomeeducation@yahoo.co.uk>

## Gloucestershire

**GlosHE.org.uk** – HE links and local resources in and around Gloucestershire. <http://www.gloshe.org.uk/>  
**Glas Otherwise Club** Fiona 01684 290087 [brookesfam@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:brookesfam@tiscali.co.uk)  
**Forest of Dean HE group** – Bridge and dam building river clearance fire building woodland walks etc. Roxy [cdsnhf@googlemail.com](mailto:cdsnhf@googlemail.com)  
**Stroud email list** Nick 01453 840036 [nick.weir@localfood.org.uk](mailto:nick.weir@localfood.org.uk)  
**Cirencester and Cotswold group** – Meetings plus will answer HE queries. Pam 01285 721008 [pamela.perryman@gmail.com](mailto:pamela.perryman@gmail.com)

## Hampshire

**Hampshire FRHEBEES** – Free Range & Home Educated Bees. West Hampshire area and borders to arrange meet ups and activities. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FRHEBees/>  
**North Hampshire HE Group** – Regular activities and meetings organised suitable for all ages <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/NH-HE/> Jaki 07731 805323 [jakimparsons@gmail.com](mailto:jakimparsons@gmail.com)  
**Portsmouth Home Education Group** – HE or interested in HE <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/portsmouthhomeed/>  
**SEEDS** – Meets every term time afternoon for sports/play + weekly full day activity. Southampton. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/seeds1/>

## Herefordshire

**Hereford Home Education** – Indoor and outdoor facilities ages 3-15. [herefordhe@gmail.com](mailto:herefordhe@gmail.com)  
**Monmouth and Herefordshire Home Educators** – Local meets and events Yahoo! group. Roxy 01989 768128 <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HerefordshireHE/>

## Hertfordshire

**Herts Home Educators** – Yahoo! group for Hertfordshire home educators. [newhomeeducators@gmail.com](mailto:newhomeeducators@gmail.com)

## Isle of Wight

**Isle of Wight Learning Zone** – A network of HE families <http://www.iwlearningzone.co.uk/>  
**IW Home Ed** - Facebook group & yahoo group for any and all home educators on IoW. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IWHomeEd/> <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IWHomeEd/>  
Karen@curvespace.com or 01983 568516

## Kent

**Dragonfly Kidz HE Group** – (Canterbury & Thanet) meets socially for learning activities swimming bowling days out etc. in a wide range of locations around Canterbury Thanet Whitstable etc. All Welcome! Steph for more info: [stephqaater@rocketmail.com](mailto:stephqaater@rocketmail.com) 01304 814362. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dragonflykidzhomeeducationgroup/>  
**Home Education Network for Autism in Kent** – Meets fortnightly for parents home-educated children on the autism spectrum. [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Home\\_Education\\_Network\\_for\\_Autism\\_in\\_Kent/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Home_Education_Network_for_Autism_in_Kent/)  
**Kent ASD Home Ed** – For parents/carers of ASD/Aspergers children who are educating them 'otherwise'. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/asd-home-ed-medway>  
**Medway and Maidstone HE activity group - HE OMEGA** – A group of home educating families in Medway and Kent. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HE-omega/>  
Tracey 07947 301327 [chaggasbug@gmail.com](mailto:chaggasbug@gmail.com)

**SATHE Supporting Autism Through Home Education** – West Kent group open to all parents/carers HE/flexi-schooling or considering EO for children with autism/ sensitivities or learning difficulties. Denise 07554 386844 [S-A-T-H-E@yahoogroups.co.uk](mailto:S-A-T-H-E@yahoogroups.co.uk) <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/S-A-T-H-E/>  
**South East Home Educators** – (Kent/Sussex) Meet regularly for trips, hall meets, swimming etc. To join Yahoo! group email: [south-easthomeeducators-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:south-easthomeeducators-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)  
Or contact: Lesley Herriot [lesley294@aol.com](mailto:lesley294@aol.com) 07828193668 <http://www.southeast-home-educators.co.uk>  
**Wealden Home Educators' Network** – active network of home educating families in SE England. We offer help and support, information, activities, events and camps for home educators. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wealdenhomeeducatorsnetwork/>

## Lancashire

**LEAD Home Education** – swap ideas, share stories and arrange local social gatherings. [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lead\\_he/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lead_he/)  
**Boneheds** – Help support advice and friendship to all families who are home educating (or considering HE) in Bolton Lancashire and surrounding districts. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/boneheds/>  
**Home Ed Leyland** – Friendship help support and advice for all families who are home-educating (or considering HE) in Leyland and surrounding districts <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/he-l-lo/>

## Leicestershire

**Leicestershire Christian Home Educators** – monthly meet up every 3rd Tuesday 10am-3pm at Oak Farm Park CV13 0JD. Free play opportunity in a safe and fun place. Home Ed Off-Peak Pass available: £1.50 per child £5 per family free drinks. All welcome! Anne-Marie Marshall: [mrsamarshall@googlemail.com](mailto:mrsamarshall@googlemail.com)  
**Syston HE** – A fun and lively group for the under 10s. Vikki [vikki-andmartin@googlemail.com](mailto:vikki-andmartin@googlemail.com)

## Lincolnshire

**Lincolnshire HE** – <http://www.home-ed.ukf.net/index.htm>  
**Home Ed Lincs** – Yahoo newsgroup coordinating HE activities in Lincolnshire. [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/home\\_ed\\_lincs/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/home_ed_lincs/)  
**North Hykeham HE Group** – Thurs 10-11.30ish. Primarily for toddlers. 07870 787328 [debi-crow@googlemail.com](mailto:debi-crow@googlemail.com)

## London

**The Otherwise Club (NW)** – A community centre for HE families. Leslie 0208 969 0893  
**Brandram Roaders** – Weekly meetings in term time. [rubbyradburn@hotmail.com](mailto:rubbyradburn@hotmail.com)  
**Adventures with Education (Hackney)** – A home education group based in Hackney London. <http://awe.gn.apc.org/>  
**Haringey Home Education Club** – meetings and other events <http://www.hhec.org.uk/> @hhec.org.uk  
**Maggie Home Educators (East London)** – Phil 0208 500 1053  
**Home Study Groups** – small group of HE families pooling resources for tutored home study groups. Ingie 0203 566 8706 [iber-ritt@gmail.com](mailto:iber-ritt@gmail.com)  
**WIGWAM** Jubilee Park N9 . Informal drop-in group for families with children of any age. Eleanor Stapleton 07866 701442 [elmajose2@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:elmajose2@yahoo.co.uk)

## Norfolk

**Home Education in Norfolk (HENs)** – A group for HE families in Norfolk. Those on the borders also welcome. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/homeeducatorsnorfolk/>  
**West Norfolk Home Educators** – A meeting place for home educators and families interested in home educating. <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/WestNorfolkHomeEducators/>  
**The Barefoot Learners** – Games and activities for all ages. Be Coffin 07814 592 290 or 01263 73 99 83  
**Kings Lynn HE** – Weekly get-together. Kirsten 01485 540724 [murraybeers@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:murraybeers@yahoo.co.uk)

## Northamptonshire

**Northants HE** – Informal group meets regularly for various activities  
<http://www.northantshe.org.uk/>

**iFlow** – weekly HE community group in NW Northants. Aiming to provide continuity of support and friendships parent and professionally led educational activities. A wide range of resources in a large community space with sports facilities and outdoor play  
[www.iflow-he.org](http://www.iflow-he.org) Email: [welcomEIFlow@gmail.com](mailto:welcomEIFlow@gmail.com)

## Nottinghamshire

**Notts Sheep Special** – Online support group for HE parents of special needs/differently-abled children in Nottinghamshire & bordering counties. [http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/Notts\\_Sheep-Special/](http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/Notts_Sheep-Special/)

## Oxfordshire

**Oxfordshire Home Educators** – A group for all home educators living in Oxfordshire but those in neighbouring counties also welcome to join. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OxonHE/>

**OHED** – Website with information about HE in Oxfordshire  
[www.ohed.org.uk](http://www.ohed.org.uk) Louisa: [louisa.southey@gmail.com](mailto:louisa.southey@gmail.com) or 01865 735705

## Shropshire

**Rushbury/Stretton HE Group** – Parent and child-led activities as well as people from the wider community Beverley 01743 718429

**Telford area HE** – activities For times and dates of skating football and drama sessions. Denise 07866 888879

**Shropshire Home Education** – For HErs in Shropshire area to chat arrange meets etc. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/shed>

**Otherwise Engaged** – Online diary of group activities cultural events workshops resources and projects for Shrops and West Mids based HE families. <http://www.otherwise-engaged.org.uk/home-education.html>

## Somerset

**Taunton Home Education Group** – Free play, arts & crafts, games, etc. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tauntonhomeeducation/> [taunton-homeeducation@yahoo.com](mailto:taunton-homeeducation@yahoo.com) <http://tauntonhomeed.blogspot.com/>

**Taunton Free Range home ed.** friendly laid back group of HE families from Somerset, meeting every Monday for socialisation and optional craft/experiment/activity. Contact Natanya on 01823 257929 or email [tauntonfreerangekids@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tauntonfreerangekids@yahoo.co.uk)

**HEY Yeovil** – All HE families welcome. Lyn Crocker 01963 23669 [heyevovil@hotmail.com](mailto:heyevovil@hotmail.com)

**Wells Swimming Group** – Weekly swimming Wells Leisure Centre term time only. Lesley 01749 689241 [mumfordturner@hotmail.com](mailto:mumfordturner@hotmail.com)

**Oake HE Group** – Monthly meetings and regular outings. Maggie 01984 624651

**North Somerset HE Group** – Weekly children's gym walks outings etc. Yahoo! group for members. Vicky 01275 848425 [victoria.preston@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:victoria.preston@yahoo.co.uk)

**Bath HE Yahoo! Group** – <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/BathHomeEducation/>

**FAB Home Ed Group** – Meets fortnightly at Shepton Mallet Scout Hut. Also FAB Times (local email newsletter) Mandy 01749 347799

## Suffolk

**Dennington HE Group** – Wide range of activities all ages welcome. Janet 01728 638795 [janetlomas@ymail.com](mailto:janetlomas@ymail.com)

**Haverhill HE group** – Covering South Suffolk/North Essex. Eve 01440 788228 or 07768 763913 [wixde@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wixde@yahoo.co.uk)

**Ipswich HE** Wednesdays Shared lunch and activities. Emma [emma@nattyem.co.uk](mailto:emma@nattyem.co.uk)

**Ipswich town centre group + Book Club** – Lisa 07538 102322 [llw\\_llg@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:llw_llg@yahoo.co.uk)

**Tostock HE Group** – All families welcome to this very friendly group. Jan 01359 251184 [angusto@btinternet.com](mailto:angusto@btinternet.com)

## Surrey

**SW Surrey Home Ed** – Weekly gatherings Farnham or Godalming. <http://www.swsurrey-home-ed.co.uk/index.php>

**Sutton/Epsom HE group** – Meets weekly and also monthly for outings. Paul 07506 781796 [pauldmsn@hotmail.com](mailto:pauldmsn@hotmail.com) <http://epsomandsuttonhomeed.blogspot.com/>

**Leatherhead Home Education Group** – Leatherhead and surrounding area regular day trips and activities. Chrissie Thorpe 07840285703 [christabelthorpe@hotmail.com](mailto:christabelthorpe@hotmail.com) <http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/313168112059023/>

**Parents and Children Together (PACT)** – Guildford & surrounding areas newsletter for one-off events and regular weekly activities. <http://www.pact-he.org.uk/>

**Home Educators Learning Project** – Aims to bring together Surrey based home educators for educational support social and educational outings. <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/HELearningProject/>

**Godalming HE Group** – A group for HE families based in South West Surrey and surrounding area. <http://swsurrey-home-ed.co.uk>

## Sussex

**ActivEO** HE Group W Sussex and Hants (see Hampshire)

**HEDGE Home Ed Group** – Hastings/St. Leonards weekly social meetings + trips etc. [www.hedge-education.btck.co.uk](http://www.hedge-education.btck.co.uk) Beshlie 01424 812870

**South Eastern Home Educators** – (Kent/Sussex) See Kent for details.

**Forest Row HE Group** – regular monthly meetings + many other fun & learning <http://www.facebook.com/groups/forestrowhomeeducators>.

**Eastbourne EO Group** – Regular gatherings & activities. <http://www.shinies.org.uk/>

**Brighton and Hove Home Educators** – Information on HE events and groups in the area. <http://bhhe.wordpress.com/> <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bhhe/>

**Hastings & Rother Home Educators (HARHE)** – small number of families; activities include Forest School, cycling, daytrips, bowling and swimming. Check out our website and us or come along to an activity [www.harhe.btck.co.uk](http://www.harhe.btck.co.uk) Catherine: 01424 812213

**Wealden Home Educators' Network (WHEN)** (SE England) see Kent.

## Warwickshire

**Creative Youth Adventure Club (Coventry)** – For over 11s working towards Arts Awards. Sarah [sarah@nellyb.co.uk](mailto:sarah@nellyb.co.uk)

**Worcestershire Home Educators Network** – Meetings usually at least weekly throughout term time at various locations round the county. <http://www.worcestershire-home-educators.co.uk/>

**Warwick District HE** Primarily for children 0-11 though all welcome. Warwick and Leamington, Alison 07782 299181 <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/warwickhe>

## Wiltshire

**The Outpost Education Centre** – meet near Chippenham Tuesdays term time. <http://www.theoutpost.org.uk/> [info@theoutpost.org.uk](mailto:info@theoutpost.org.uk)

## Worcestershire

**Bewdley HE Group** – Weekly meetings all welcome.

Sophie 01299 405669 [sophie.butcher34@yahoo.com](mailto:sophie.butcher34@yahoo.com)

**Worcestershire Home Ed** Yahoo Group Email list for Worcs HErs <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/worcestershirehome-ed/>

**Forest School Bodenham Arboretum Kidderminster** – For all HE families. Sophie 01299 405669 [sophie.butcher34@yahoo.com](mailto:sophie.butcher34@yahoo.com)

## Yorkshire

**DHE** Doncaster home educators Yahoo group for families in the Doncaster and surrounding areas. Cheryl Moy on 07825 914340 [cheryl0407@aol.com](mailto:cheryl0407@aol.com) <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/DHE/>

**HENNEY (Home Education Network North East Yorkshire)** Regular meet ups around the Scarborough and East coast area. Lisa Riley [li-sa\\_riley@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:li-sa_riley@tiscali.co.uk) [henney-owner@yahooagroups.com](http://henney-owner@yahooagroups.com)

**Huddersfield Art Workshops** – Monthly 8yrs plus. Jane 01484 645034

**Huddersfield Book Group** Monthly Marsden library. Jane 01484 645034

**Huddersfield Home Educators** – Monthly themed meetings. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wyhec/> Mandy 01484 460026 [me-andchi7@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:me-andchi7@yahoo.co.uk)

**Yorkshire Home Edders Yahoo! group** – A friendly group for home educators throughout the Yorkshire region. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/yorkshirehomedders/>  
**NYHEC (group for HE parents)** – for parents HEing in North Yorkshire. [nyhecowner@yahoo.com](mailto:nyhecowner@yahoo.com)  
**North + West HE Group** – Meets Skipton monthly and Bradford Gym Club weekly. Regular meetings and outings. Judith 01756 791356  
**Rotherham Home Education** – friendly informal group for HErs in & around S.Yorkshire. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RothHE/> Pauline 077764 06409 [collicandydog123@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:collicandydog123@yahoo.co.uk)  
**SYHEC – Yahoo!** group for parents HEing in South Yorkshire. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/syhec/>  
**Wakefield District Home Education Group** – New Group 2013. Currently regular Bowling & Ice skating. Will be organising more trips and visits as numbers increase. Contact Tracey: [wakefieldHE-owner@yahoo.com](mailto:wakefieldHE-owner@yahoo.com)

### Regional – East of England

**East Anglian Home Ed Network** – <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/East-Anglian-Home-Ed-Network/>

### Regional – East Midlands

**East Midlands Home Ed** – forum to help inform and support HE families in the East Midlands. <http://groups.yahoo.com/oup/emhe>

### Regional – South East

**FLAGS (Kent/Surrey/Sussex)** – Active group (Kent/Surrey/Sussex) meeting weekly during term time <http://www.flags-education.org> Karen 01732 864524 [karenlow@uwclub.net](mailto:karenlow@uwclub.net)

**ActiveEO** HE Group based in West Sussex and Hampshire Contact number 01243 552780 <http://www.activeo.co.uk/index.html>

**South Hants Home Ed** – A support group for home educators <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/southhantshomeed/>

**FAREGOS Home Education Group** – HE group/email list covering Fareham Gosport and South Hants. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FareGosHE/>

**Home-EASE (Home Education for all South East)** – Group of HE families in South-East England 0753 1677 083 [homeeducating-mum@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:homeeducating-mum@yahoo.co.uk)

**South East Home Educators** – (Kent/Sussex) See Kent for details.

**Wealden Home Educators' Network (WHEN)** (SE England) see Kent.

### Regional – South West

**Home Education Centre (Devon/Dorset/Somerset)** – Meets two days a week. Workshops sports activities and support. <http://www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk>

**HErs and Events SW** – A HE network for the SW specifically set up to support new HErs or those new to the area. New input welcomed. <http://hecontactssandeventssw.yolasite.com> [south-devonlc@gmail.com](mailto:south-devonlc@gmail.com)

### Regional – West Midlands

**Birmingham Home Ed** – and events for HE families. <http://www.homeeducationbirmingham.org.uk>

### Isle of Man

**Home Educating Network - Isle of Man** – informal group of parents HEing on the Isle of Man. Yvonne, [isleof-manlc@educationotherwise.org](mailto:isleof-manlc@educationotherwise.org) <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/hen-iom/>

## Wales

### Carmarthenshire

**Camarthen HE Group** – Regular meetings in Johnstown Carmarthen [caroline.milburn@yahoo.com](mailto:caroline.milburn@yahoo.com)

**North Carmarthen HE Group** – meetings for friendship & play. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ncarmarthenhomeed>

### Denbighshire

**Froncysyllte HE group** – Fortnightly group meets 10-4pm. Social play and chat. [vivodsam@gmail.com](mailto:vivodsam@gmail.com)

### Flintshire

**Flintshire Home Education** – Regular meet ups activities & support. [flintshirehomeeducation@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:flintshirehomeeducation@yahoo.co.uk)

### Glamorgan

**New Foundations HE** – Meets Cardiff Thursdays 10-4. All activities free. <http://www.newfoundationshe.com> 02920216502 [newfoundationshe@virginmedia.com](mailto:newfoundationshe@virginmedia.com)

**Bridgend Home Educators**. free play, GCSE classes, Arts Award, outside speakers, activities, etc. See [www.bridgendhomeeducators.org](http://www.bridgendhomeeducators.org) or .email [info@bridgendhomeeducators.org](mailto:info@bridgendhomeeducators.org)

**Newport Home Education Group** – Group Rogerstone 1-4pm £4/ family. Fiona [fionataylor910@btinternet.com](mailto:fionataylor910@btinternet.com)

### Gwynedd

**Langower HE Group** – Weekly meetings. [rowenna73@hotmail.com](mailto:rowenna73@hotmail.com)  
**Tregarth Creative Learning and Support** – Regular meetings free weekly newsletter of events via email. [jdchapmanmaurice@aol.com](mailto:jdchapmanmaurice@aol.com) <http://www.creativelearningandsupport.co.uk> Julie 01286 678181

### Monmouthshire

**South Wales Home Educators Network** – Email list for Home Educators in and around S Wales to arrange get-togethers /event, share ideas & news and offer support. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/swhen/>

**Usk Home Education** – Monthly (Thurs) meet other HErs in the area for fun and games and cups of tea. Roxy: [cdsnhf@gmail.com](mailto:cdsnhf@gmail.com) or 01989 768 128 <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HerefordshireHE/>

### Montgomeryshire

**Shiny Happy Children** – Regular meetings in Llanfyllin and surrounding areas. Katie [llanfyllinHE@gmail.com](mailto:llanfyllinHE@gmail.com)

### Neath Port Talbot

**Wise Up Community HE Group** (Port Talbot) – Support and information for home educating families and those considering home education. <http://www.zoneseven.co.uk> [ianna.violet@hotmail.com](mailto:ianna.violet@hotmail.com)

### Powys

**New Leaf HE Group** (Newtown) – Occasional meetings for varied activities all ages. [siouxcatsy@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:siouxcatsy@yahoo.co.uk)

**Wrexham and Surrounds Home Education (WASHE)** – Activities around Wrexham area. <http://washe.co.uk/>

### Regional

**Elective Home Education Wales** – Linking HE families across Wales. <http://www.ehew.co.uk>

**Monmouth/Hereford/Gloucester** – for information about group activities in the Monmouth/Hereford/Gloucester area local EO member Roxy 01989 768128 [cdsnhf@googlemail.com](mailto:cdsnhf@googlemail.com)

## Channel Islands

**Home Education Jersey** – New home education group. Jess: [homeeducationjersey@gmail.com](mailto:homeeducationjersey@gmail.com)

**Guernsey Home Educators** – Fledgling group of home educators and those sympathetic to home education in Guernsey. Yvonne Burford on 01481 264776 or [Atplir@hotmail.com](mailto:Atplir@hotmail.com)

## International (UK based)

**HE-DS (Home Educating a child with Down's syndrome)** – Linking families who are home educating a child with Down's syndrome. <http://www.oakwellbarns.co.uk> Yahoo group (private, by invitation) Anita Kolaczynska 01686 413502 [anitakolaczynska@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:anitakolaczynska@yahoo.co.uk)

# Who does What in EO

## Current Trustees [Council Members]

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AND NEW WEBSITE:

***www.educationotherwise.net***

N.B. THIS IS **SEPARATE** FROM THE EO EMAILS AND  
FORUMS, WHICH ARE STILL BASED ON THE OLD URL:  
educationotherwise.org

## Membership

Membership enquiries, address changes, membership  
cards, new member admin: please contact the Mem-  
bership Secretary:

*membership@educationotherwise.org*  
or PO Box 3761, Swindon, SN2 9GT

## Other Useful Contacts

Anti-Bullying Contact: **Kathleen Thompson**  
01942 89 77 79

College/GCSE Contact: **Roger Scaife** 08445 003  
708

GCSEs at Home: **Louise** 08445 003 688  
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01282 85 47 19

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