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otherwise

NEWSLETTER

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deadline

For the April issue is MARCH 1st. Caroline Grant is the Editor:
Material should be sent to her c/o 18 Eynham Road, London W12.
All material should be clearly marked 'For Publication'

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Letter from the Editor

Hello, good evening and welcome to 1982. The first thing you will notice about our first bi-monthly newsletter - probably with regret - is its comparatively austere appearance after the visual delights of the past three numbers. This austerity is due, not to any economic stringency, but to the fact that we have lost the services of the Bethells. Their resignation, from the editorship and from EO, results in part, I feel, from the overwhelming nature of the task they set themselves in creative editing and design and typing (which took David 8 whole days for the last issue); unfortunately, however, their more important reason was an irreconcilable dispute with the Core Group - whom, incidentally they had never met as a group - over various matters, among them the question of who controls what goes into the newsletter.

Speaking as a member of the Core Group, I maintain that we were justified in our attempts to impose policy decisions that had been freely discussed, making it clear that the newsletter is the voice of EO, not the voice of the editor. But is that what the membership wants? Is the Core Group in fact a 'tiny and unrepresentative part of the membership'? (December issue p3) And are the sins of the previous editor (publishing children's work, printing letters clearly intended Not For Publication, arranging letters in a continuous sequence with no names and addresses) a small price to pay for the lively tone and attractive layout? Now is perhaps the time for members to write in, to me at the official address, saying what they think. Prove to us that Editorial Autocracy is a Good Thing and you shall have it; but prove that you want this to be your magazine, over which you have some control - however remote - and we will redouble our efforts to make it so.

Now is also a good moment to start discussing the related questions of representation. You will see from the Minutes (p.35 item 9.2) that the Core Group, having become dissatisfied with the haphazard structure under which we struggle at the moment, has decided to seek legal status, and has commissioned Bruce Cox and Iris Harrison (who will be consulting Ivan Geffon) to formulate a constitution. It is not inertia that has prevented the group so long from taking this decision; it is an acute awareness of the dangers of bureaucracy and power-struggles implicit in any constitutional structure. Dick Kitto's letter on p22 neatly sums up what the Core Group feels about the 'efficiency/informality' dilemma; what was adequate for a group of 300 to 400 members is becoming inadequate for a group of 500 or more (hopefully nearer 1000 by the end of the year). And dangerous though a constitution might be to the informality and spontaneity of a non-hierarchical group, the danger itself can be creative. Danger, if you are aware of it, makes the adrenalin flow, keeps you on your toes, sharpens your wits, and impels you forward with a keener vision of your goal. Danger stimulates action, and action is what EO needs more of; not the unco-ordinated action of well-meaning individuals, but purposeful group activity, co-ordinated in a well-defined division of responsibility. EO is bursting with bright ideas and humming with energy, waiting only for lift-off; define the tasks, divide them up, portion them out and W H O O S H ! ! !

(Sorry - I got carried away by my own metaphor). What are the tasks, and to whom shall we apportion them? The choice, dear reader, is ultimately yours. In a democratic organization every member has a vote and a voice. Even before organized democracy begins you can use your voice. Let me start the discussion by suggesting that, while the more obvious tasks have already been delegated (and the officers listed inside the back cover of this issue), the gaps that I see first are those that need a general administrator and a policy co-ordinator; then perhaps a fund-raiser? a publications manager? And what about the A.G.M. Should it be always at Trent Park? Why not further North, or West? Perhaps on a roving basis?

Why bother? some have already said; EO doesn't need action except that which arises spontaneously from the needs of its members. I think this view is too insular. I maintain that we have a duty to the thousands of unhappy children in this country's schools, to show them and their parents one possibility of release from their misery; to provide greater and stronger support for those who choose home education; to encourage research into the effectiveness (dare one say 'efficiency'?) of home education; even to campaign for a general acceptance of a parents right to determine their child's education, whether at home or in school. All of which needs time, effort and good organization.

Don't despair - EO is taking action at this very moment. John Holt's visit just after Easter has been a big stimulus; the high spot of his tour will be the Spring Conference in Birmingham on Saturday 17th April (see supplement). He also has confirmed public engagements in London and Portsmouth, with several others in the pipeline, plus a dozen or so lectures, seminars and interviews at various universities, etc. In preparation for this, several areas are holding preliminary meetings to discuss the sort of questions they would like him to answer, which will also point the way forward for EO. Computer-aided learning is one area which we must investigate (an article in the next newsletter will start the ball rolling); another is video-recording - the possibilities are endless. I see this as a much more realistic assessment of 'EO in 1982'.

John Elenor

Footnote:

We apologise to members whose December newsletter arrived very late - the problems of distribution were severely aggravated by the snowfall of early December which prevented David Bethell getting to the post for several weeks. As a result, you may receive a subscription renewal reminder with this issue for a sub. which you have not had time to deal with; or which you have already sent, but after this issue had gone to press. If so, please ignore the reminder.

PS: A special thanks to Bob Lockington: for organizing the typing and
 Lettersetting.

EDUCATION THROUGH



DECLINE AND FALL?

By the time they are 15, many girls find maths hard and enjoy it less than at 11, according to a survey at the Department of Education and Science (GUARDIAN 3.12.81.). Two researchers are investigating reasons for differences in maths performance between teenage boys and girls (GUARDIAN 9.12.81.). They want to know whether, among other things, girls emergent sexuality affects their performance ... the maths report also finds that 11 year olds approach science 'with enthusiasm but little method'.. (GUARDIAN 9.12.81.) ... Keith Joseph has asked local authorities to weed out their worst teachers by next October, when 20,000 must go (GUARDIAN 7.1.82) Sir Keith said he could think of no better way of improving the service to children. "I am legitimately alarmed" he said "by the low standards of education given to a very large number of our children ..." Local authorities are spending less on text books this year (8% less for primaries; 14% for secondaries), despite Government advice to the contrary (GUARDIAN 9.12.81). Explained the Director of the Educational Publishers Council: "A Secretary of State can say this and that, but it does not mean that it will happen" ... Oxford has banned champagne celebrations at the end of exams as the police say it is becoming a nuisance (TELEGRAPH 4.11.81.).

RISE AND SHINE

Ruth Lawrence, the 10 year old maths prodigy educated at home, came top among 530 candidates in an entrance exam for Oxford. She will go up in October, 1983, aged 12 (GUARDIAN December 1981) ... A new 17-plus qualification would be for 'the world of work' said the Government's Education spokesman, and aimed at those who do not take GCE's. It would include car maintenance, catering, engineering as well as communications (TELEGRAPH 3.12.81) Also under consideration are profile records of school leavers, describing their abilities in general areas such as punctuality, neatness and so on

LIFE IN SCHOOL

Compulsory lessons in self-defence are being given to pupils at St Pauls Girls School (TELEGRAPH 11.11.81) ... CND material is to be distributed in Waltham Forest schools (TELEGRAPH 19.11.81) ... Avon Education Authority has approved the idea of 'peace education' on its secondary school timetables this year (TELEGRAPH 10.12.81). The Avon Peace Education Project aims to raise questions about the causes of violence in an attempt to counter 'glamorous' war propaganda. The Chairman of Avon Education Committee said he was concerned at the whole way education was slanted ... A school bully's victim fractured his skull with a cricket bat. In court, the judge said the victim had been provoked beyond endurance and was not to blame (TELEGRAPH 26.11.81) ...

The Schools Council has published a report on record-keeping in schools* in which it cites many examples of distortions of the facts (TELEGRAPH 26.11.81) But ACE claims that the report has 'completely opted out of the most crucial question: whether or not records should be open to parents' (ACE January 1982). Schools are becoming increasingly dirty and dangerous, claims the National Union of Teachers (GUARDIAN 12.1.82) Half the children at a Birmingham primary school caught a hepatitis virus, spread by lack of handwashing facilities.

*Record Keeping in Primary Schools (£7.95) from: The Schools Council.

CASH FLOW

A report drawn up by dons and economists suggests that parents should be paid education allowances of up to £1,540 a year, and given more power in choosing their children's schools (TELEGRAPH 10.12.81). The bulk of educational expenditure (9,000 million a year) should go direct to the parents, they think, to spend on the education of their choice ... Students in Solihull are taking jobs as cleaners to pay for their exam fees (TELEGRAPH 4.11.81) .. there's no job for a third of college teaching students (GUARDIAN 5.1.82) .. state benefit payments encourage children to leave school, claimed an Education Minister at a conference held last December. Speaking at the same conference the under-secretary of Education thought that far too many pupils were truanting (one in four teenagers in city areas). He blamed the lack of relevance of the current curriculum (TELEGRAPH 4.11.81) .. Labour's education plans include paying 16-18 year olds a weekly wage of £20 to stay on at school (TELEGRAPH 11.12.81) .. In a new scheme to draw people back into school for lessons in practical skills as well as academic subjects, three study days a week are the limit if students are not to lose all financial benefit. 'Youngsters are being paid to stay away' said the head of one school in Toxteth (TELEGRAPH 30.11.81).

WAR AND PEACE

The head of a school for deaf boys was bound over for hitting out at pupils with a billiard cue in an attempt to control 'a near riot' (GUARDIAN and TELEGRAPH December 81). The boys had complained that a teacher had been swearing at them ... Commenting on the suspension of 2 teenagers for 'a peck on the cheek' their teacher, Mr Birch, said: 'It must be perfectly apparent to any reasonable parent that we cannot tolerate kissing inside school grounds'. (MIRROR 8.10.81) .. Reviewing the documentary FORTY MINUTES* which featured the Harrison family, Peter Fiddick of the Guardian (November) said "... parental qualities have less to do with (home education) than intelligence and love"...

WHOOFS

The Law Society has had to apologise to 123 law students for mistakenly informing 94 of them that they had failed their finals when in fact they had passed. (TELEGRAPH 20.11.81) "We have spent a lot of time deciding what to do to prevent it recurring..." said a spokesman for the Law Society.

* See also a review by John Elenor on page 20.

EDUCATING ARCHIE

by SEG



- crikey Mum
I've got a
knitting age
of THREE!
according
to this ...

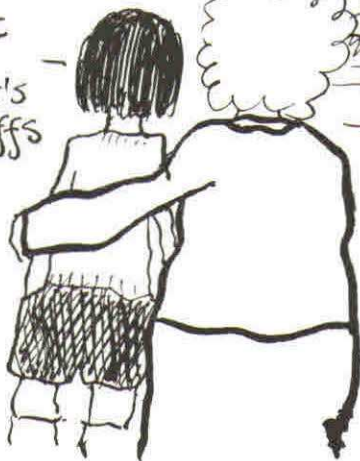


- you should've
flashed
jumper patterns
at me when I
was a baby,
you know



- why didn't I
get needles
with electric
buzzers on
the end, then?
Eh? Mum?

I'm just
one of
society's
cast-offs



To bedtime

- yes dear

Talking about school

"Teachers recruit youngsters by knocking at their doors ... some run away when they see us coming ... the trouble is that some youngsters detest school. They see it as a place that has given them nothing, not even hope, and don't want to come back."

(Headmistress of a Toxteth school - describing a new learning scheme
TELEGRAPH 30.11.81)

"If your child has been beaten so severely at school that bruises or other injuries are visible (and lamentably, there are still cases where this happens), then it is probably a matter for the police."

(PARENTS - September 1981)

From the moment 'O' level literature begins, ... the teacher is intent on transmitting views and responses which are anyone's but the students. Many English teachers are quite unashamed about this and will rehearse essays that "might come up in the exam" ... That is the reality of English teaching, whatever we may claim for it. And it is time we came clean. It is time we honoured the individual's response to literature ... What concerns me is what happens to all those students.

(Gordon Mason, County Inspector for English for Somerset - expressing his own view in the GUARDIAN December 1981)

"At the age of 10 I was busy acquiring important social skills such as eating sweets without moving my jaws, convincing my mother that I needed an index-linked pocket money increase and making cigarettes out of old hedge leaves and laboratory paper ... I don't think my life would have been enhanced by studying for 5 A levels, especially when universities require no more than three."

(Sarah Veale, a teacher on the National Executive of the Students Union - commenting on Ruth Lawrence's success in the TELEGRAPH December 1981)

"He was so dedicated, says Mrs Nunn "every vacation he would spend each day working on his maths. Now its rather sad. He spends his time leafing through the Higher Education Supplement to see if there are any jobs."

(About John Nunn, Britain's previous maths prodigy, SUNDAY TIMES 13.12.81)

"We don't want our sons growing up as fairies and our daughters turning into butch young maids."

(Chairman of Devon Education Committee - on girls doing woodwork and boys home economics, quoted in ACE January 1982)

EO for Moral and Religious Reasons

Annie Wilton-Jones

As usual I have read through the EO Newsletter full of sympathy for parents and children whose experiences of school have been distressing or who are opposed to schools in principle. However, also as usual, I have felt that there is little support for those who, like me, have nothing against the education system either objectively or subjectively but who have moral or religious objections to the content of the lessons.

EO is, I feel, the right answer for children who are unhappy at school for any number of reasons or whose parents disapprove of corporal punishment, a strict syllabus, examinations, etc. When I decided on EO for my children, however, I visualized a school setting in my own home with blackboard and desks, exam-orientated study and a fairly rigid timetable. I was happy at school, saw no reason why my own children should not be, also, and had encouraged my daughter, then three, to look forward to starting school. I believe strongly that a young child should be with his mother so had shunned playgroups and nursery schools but from attendance at the odd Mother and Toddler Meeting, many NCT Open Houses and frequent coffee mornings and from regular visits to numerous friends with youngsters, it was obvious that my children were good mixers. My daughter and younger son showed a great willingness to learn and my older son showed no application but a good level of intelligence. There was no reason to suspect that school would present problems for any of them.

But what school could I send them to? I have strong moral convictions about the teaching of sexual subjects. It's not that I think children should not be taught about such things. Indeed, at three, Clare knew more about "making a baby" than many 10 year olds. It's just that I believe that the moral setting of this subject is of even more importance than the facts taught. Most schools teach this as a straight factual subject. People suggested that I just take my children out of "sex lessons" but this is impractical. While parents have the right to remove their children from Religious Education, no such right exists with Sex Education. It rests with the Headmaster's discretion. Also sexual matters such as premarital sex, contraception, abortion, homosexuality, are often dealt with under other headings, e.g. humanities, social education, general subjects, biology, geography ("over-population") parentcraft and are often discussed in detail by teachers at other times. Children cannot be withdrawn from this pervasive form of sex education.

As I am a Catholic, a Catholic school would seem to have been the answer, but even here teachers often express ambivalent feelings on sexual subjects and, as I am a Traditional Catholic, I am very worried about my children being taught about many of the changes in the Faith which have resulted from the pursuit of Ecumenism.

Education at home seemed the only answer. I came to EO looking, not for support in my decision, but for practical help in finding an exam-orientated syllabus. Here, of course, EO was of little help. What it has done for me is to change a lot of my rigid ideas. I no longer plan to use a strict

timetable, my ideas on discipline have been much modified and I expect my teaching to be based largely on child-led learning. I realize now that this is much more in keeping with my ideas on child-led weaning and natural mothering and I am grateful to EO for its influence in this respect.

One problem, however, EO has not solved is that of social isolation. In fact, most EO literature merely states that this is not usually a problem. As long as I lived in Birmingham with many friends within easy travelling distance, I could agree but I am in the process of moving to an isolated Welsh smallholding with only one child within a radius of two miles. My three children have each other and, I hope, more to come, but is this enough? Would I perhaps not be worried by this if I had different reasons for choosing EO?

Am I the only EO member whose objections to schools are on religious or moral grounds, or can I find support in our ranks?



Home Education in Warrington

Roy & Jean Prescott

We moved to Warrington New Town in April 1980 together with our five children aged two to nine years of age, and from the very start, we were more than dissatisfied with the standard of teaching being given to our children. We complained a great deal, and even changed schools, but we still weren't satisfied that our children were receiving a good standard of education, so we wrote a letter to A.C.E. (Advisory Centre for Education), who put us in touch with Education Otherwise.

It was interesting to discover that so many other parents were as dissatisfied as ourselves, and having read of various battles with the authorities, we decided that we would like to give it a try, so we set about reading of other people's attempts at education at home and the difficulties that they had encountered, particularly with the Local Education Authorities.

We made a set of notes listing our reasons for wanting to withdraw our children from school, together with all the references to the relevant education acts regarding the legal requirements etc., and on October 2, 1981 we took the bull by the horns, and wrote a letter to our local education officer at Warrington asking for his advice on the possibility of us de-registering our children who were attending primary school.

On the 9th October we received a reply from the district education office, making an appointment for 10.30 on Tuesday October 13th. My wife and I waited for October 13th to arrive as though we were going to be shot at dawn on that date. We were both very nervous and eventually the day of our interview arrived.

We attended for our interview with a Mr Barlow not knowing what sort of reception awaited us. We went along, ready to argue logically with this unknown official, using the three pages of facts which we had gathered together to back up our arguments for removing our children from school.

We arrived about five minutes early and it was quite obvious that we were expected. We were shown into Mr Barlow's office straight away and we were greeted by a very pleasant gentleman who shook our hands and invited us to sit down in some very comfortable arm chairs.

Mr Barlow sat opposite us, clasping a bulky volume of 'New Law of Education' with several markers inserted into the pages, and he started the conversation by inviting us to tell him a few details such as which school the children attended and their ages, and what did we object to about their present education.

We listed many points for him, such as lack of supervision by school staff, a dislike for the modern 'open plan' system of classrooms, the low standard of education which now seems to be taught in schools and many other points, which Mr Barlow possibly felt were trivial, but to us as parents they are very important.

Mr Barlow listened patiently whilst all the time making notes and then having listened to us for quite some time, he took up the conversation by referring us to the Education Act, sections 37 and 76 and pointing out, quite rightly, that both the LEA, and we, as parents, had a legal obligation to ensure a proper education for our children. We agreed on this point naturally and he then suggested that maybe we could resolve the matter by changing schools. We said we had already considered this but had decided that we ourselves were capable of giving our children an education better than the LEA could provide.

Mr Barlow then asked what subjects had we considered teaching the children. We had already prepared a list of subjects containing 15 different subjects including sporting activities which we were very confident of teaching and he seemed suitably impressed, except that we hadn't made any mention of ART!!!

Despite this small omission, Mr Barlow seemed reasonably happy about our overall presentation by saying that we had quite obviously given the problems a great deal of thought. He then referred to our original letter to him in which we had asked about de-registration, and told us that he wasn't at all sure what the correct procedure was. He couldn't say whether it was up to us as parents to de-register, or up to the education authority, but he would pass all the details of our interview on to the Director of Education at Chester if we were certain that we still wished to carry on with home education.

In our original letter to Mr Barlow, we had stated our intention of withdrawing the children from school at half term which was in about two weeks time, but Mr Barlow suggested that we should wait until the new year to give the LEA time to assess our programme, and to send round education advisers. This struck us as delaying tactics, so we decided to go ahead with our original plan with or without their blessing, and remove the children from school at the half term break.

We left Mr Barlow's office after 1½ hours, having had what I can only describe as a very friendly and sensible interview. We went home to await the next move of the LEA.

It was October 19th when we received a letter from Mr Barlow again, but it was only a letter confirming our interview on the 13th and stating that details had been passed to the Director of Education at Chester.

On Monday October 26th the children started their half term break, and we commenced educating the children at home so that we could now request de-registration on the grounds that they were actually receiving an alternative education. With this in mind we wrote a letter to their headmaster requesting de-registration, and at the same time we sent a letter to the local education officer Mr Barlow, together with a copy of the letter sent to the headmaster, and a letter to the chief education officer at Chester, and we posted them so that they would arrive on their desks on the first day of the new term.

Wednesday November 4th arrived, three days into the new term, when my wife received a phone call from Mr Barlow our local education officer. She answered it with all sorts of doubts running through her mind, but she had no need to worry because Mr Barlow was ringing to let us know that the director of education at Chester had agreed to our proposals for educating our children at home and that an education adviser, (Mrs Kilburn) would be coming to see us on Wednesday November 11th, merely to check that the children were receiving an education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude.

When the day of her visit arrived, we were both there to meet Mrs Kilburn, who turned out to be a very charming and understanding lady.

The first thing she did, was to assure us, that should we find that we could no longer cope with the task we had set ourselves in educating our children at home, then we only had to contact her and she would make arrangements to get the children back into school again with no trouble at all.

We were able to have a long chat with Mrs Kilburn about the methods we intended to use and the subject matter of our lessons, and she in turn gave us a tremendous amount of information as to where we could obtain suitable text books etc. She examined the work which the children had been doing at home and compared it very favourably with their previous school work which she had taken the trouble to go into school and examine before she had come round to the house.

Mrs Kilburn stayed at our home for about 1½ hours, and arranged to pay us another visit in April. If everything is going alright at that time, she says that we will probably only see her once a year unless of course we need advice from her.

Well, as you can see, we have had magnificent co-operation from the Cheshire County Council education authorities, and we both hope sincerely that our experiences may be an encouragement to other parents in the Cheshire area. If anyone wishes to contact us, they are most welcome to do so. We are of course, like everyone else, still feeling our way along slowly, but we did learn a great deal from the experiences of other people who took the trouble to write into the magazine, so we would like to help other people in the same way.

Home Education in Huddersfield

Ivan Sokolov

We joined EO some two years ago when Adrian (now six) first started school, and took the decision to move on to practising EO twelve months later. For us it had to coincide with a move from the rural area of Lancashire we'd lived in for four years. We knew well both the attitude of the local Educational Welfare Officers and the relevant new headmistress. Moving to Huddersfield in West Yorkshire was not only an escape from the probable legal battle of de-registering Adrian in Ormskirk, but we knew in advance that such a battle would not occur here.

Our reasons for wanting not to send Adrian to school are basically two. The first deals with schools and the 'so-called' education they provide - anyone who needs these spelt out is recommended to John Holt's book 'Instead of Education' (Pelican 1977). The second deals with the total erosion of our son's self confidence and safety over the last two or three years. Though not caused by his time at a conventional school, it was certainly exacerbated by the traumas he experienced there.

We knew from friends in Huddersfield that the LEA would not be automatically against our plans. The same friends could provide us with 'teacher' style practical help if we were to need it with curricula etc. Needless to say we had talked at length over the past year about what we would do and how, though in truth when we set out to plan our boys' education our practices started immediately to reflect what we presumed would be official requirements. We decided to give Adrian and his younger brother Sasha a basic daily structure that would cover the skills they would need as we all progressed alongside each other. Having organised work books and the like that could be produced as evidence of our efficiency we got round to informing the Education Department about us. Personal experience led us to write a short, sharp but polite letter to the very top, telling the Director what we were doing, recognising his department's authority in the matter and offering to work with them as necessary. Six long weeks later we were invited in friendly terms to a meeting with the Deputy Director and an Infant Schools Advisor. With the excuse of no babysitters, we easily persuaded them to visit us at home.

In the meantime Adrian had soon got over the novelty of 'home school' and settled into his own apparently haphazard routine of relentlessly pursuing information, knowledge and understanding through any and every other means he could find. Our routine, simple and short as it was, often failed to fit with him. But we tried to stick to it, sometimes painfully.

The day of the meeting arrived, and to our relief the Deputy Director arrived unaccompanied. We had envisaged that his concern would be the theory whilst the advisor's would be practice. We'd decided that we would volunteer little of our radical ideas and convictions and try and stick to answering his questions. We felt that anyone rising to the post of Deputy Director would be sufficiently convinced in the system to resent our slamming it in his face. Over coffee in the kitchen this view was confirmed. The first of the two hours he stayed didn't go well. It was obvious he thought us foolish and probably incompetent as well - helped by our close-bosom approach. So the time came to open things up a bit and explain the emotional considerations in not sending Adrian to school, still steering more or less clear of the de-schooling theory. The approach worked. It didn't take long to get across to him what he really wanted to know:- (a) we were intelligent, sensible and sensitive parents who had our children's interests at heart rather than solely our beliefs; (b) we were capable and determined to provide for all our children's needs in the future even where this meant exploring new grounds ourselves. Adrian helped sway his last doubts by reading to him, his naturally achieved standard having shot several years ahead in the few months since leaving school. Though still unconvinced of our wisdom, the Deputy Director accepted our course of action with routine warnings about being on our own and not to expect help from the LEA. After which, to our delight, he left with a casual remark about sending an advisor to see us in a year's time.

Free now of the threat of demands for proof of Adrian's progress, our real feelings about Structure and Teaching could emerge. It took a week or two to realise that we had all been suffering from our attempts to mimick a 'good' home-school, since when all artificial structure has vanished. I don't decry the idea completely and accept that each child's situation must be considered on its own merit. Our situation and personal philosophy allows us to put into practice something much closer to John Holt's living education than much of the other out of school situations we have witnessed.

We are both unemployed, share our parental and domestic roles, share a large range of practical life skills as well as academic ones, and are lucky enough to share most of our convictions when it comes to education and the children. Most important of all to us is that we are managing for the moment to share most of our lives with the boys. Our children's needs for space, time, apparent disorder and freedom far exceed our own, and thus our home is almost entirely child centred. Though in a sense that term isn't accurate, as our children have always been equal people to us and not as of a different 'child race.' We are also fortunate enough to have two children who, even after Adrian's five terms at school, have not lost the natural curiosity and resourcefulness all human beings come into the world with. It has helped being unemployed and so without an enforced external direction for our lives, leaving us free much like the boys to live each day as it comes. But that's another story.

Mark and the Media

E.M. Jessop

At an open morning at Play School, four year old Mark and his mother saw the film 'God Bless Mummy and Make Her Good'. This film attempts to illustrate the young child's view of the world around him or her. The world of home and parents, potty training, eating habits, play, sex in a maternal or female form, etc.

What effect did this have on Mark? The next morning at breakfast, he had a boiled egg, without the top sliced off. The intact egg was attacked by Mark with a spoon, having beaten in the top and devoured the egg, he triumphantly exclaimed "I did it just like the boy on the film".

Two days later, Mark went with his mother to town. They went into a high class department store, where Mark disappeared under a dress rack. As his mother searched frantically for him, she heard some one saying "Whose is that child?" There the child was, kneeling on the base of a display. The display was a torso of a female form dressed in pink bra, frilly panties and suspender belt. The child was saying "Look mummy, bosoms, just like the ones in the film" his arm outstretched, finger pointing, to avoid any misunderstanding of his discovery. That was the day Mark's mother used her mature years (40) to say she would find his mother, rather than admit she was his mother.

Suggestions for OU courses

Joan Hoare

- 1/ Elementary physics and chemistry, including experiments and equipment that can be bought from the OU.
- 2/ Geology (with emphasis on the British Isles. You can find most kinds of rocks here).
- 3/ Natural history (not so vital as natural history societies seem to abound).
- 4/ Elementary maths (the Nuffield courses are good but not easy to find one's way around if ignorant)
- 5/ Science courses should include discussions on ethics e.g. science is used for military technology (the Bomb), inhuman technologies. We don't have to do something just because we know how. What is science for?
- 6/ The scientific view is a point of view like any other, even though it is a very powerful tool.
- 7/ Electronics - this suggestion is from Mick & Jen White at Leyburn, N Yorks.
- 8/ The validity of the scientific method. What does it exclude? What is its bias?

That is all I can think of for the time being. I just wonder if any of the OU courses cover any of these things anyway.

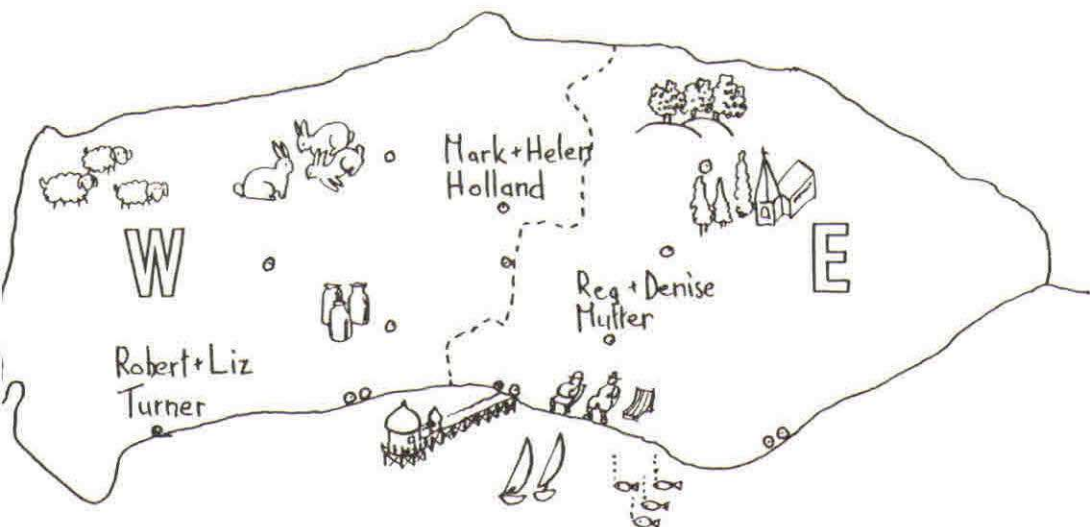
** ** ** ** ** ** ** ** **

* A special word of thanks must go to Ros and Dom Sweetman who have just handed on the job of Membership Secretary after two years of unstinting effort. The job is exceedingly time-consuming and generally invisible to the membership at large; anyone who takes it on deserves a big hurra from everybody. What I enjoyed most about working with them was their unfailing (well almost!) sense of humour and the warmth of their frequent hospitality, both to me personally and to the Core and Publication Groups. We send them our very best wishes.

** ** ** ** ** ** ** ** **

Editor

EO in Sussex



Sussex is bursting with activity, stimulated to ever greater endeavours by the energy and determination of Helen Holland. This is not the place to list all their past activities - films, picnics, country dancing --- what we present here is an extract from the 1981 newsletter, giving one family's experience, followed by an Addendum.

Reg & Denise Mutter

Tabby (5): "I was making shortbread when he came, you had a chat with him in the playroom and when he was just about to go, he came in (to the kitchen) and said 'What are you making?' And then he pointed to something and said 'What does that say?' and I said 'Ingredients' then he said 'What are you putting in it?' and I said 'What it says'. He laughed, and said 'Ask a silly question and you get a silly answer!'

(October 1980)

This is a fairly representative sample of the relationship between the Area Primary Schools Advisor and our children. His predecessor was equally friendly and helpful - as much through his absence as his one visit in 4 years.

Having withdrawn Charles from school just before he was six, and then considered (and rejected) the idea of private school as an alternative, we took initiative and wrote to his headmaster, with a copy to the LEA, explaining that we were intending to abandon school for a while to allow Charles to recover his appetite, good health, enthusiasm for reading and playing the piano, to find his tongue again, and regain his self-confidence and general joie-de-vivre. We didn't phrase the letter in exactly those terms, and I am sure parents with similar experiences can read between the lines without my having to develop this into another EO horror story. We did volunteer a lengthy description of how we intended to continue 'teaching' him at home while ensuring a sufficiency of social contact (which ranks higher in the LEA list of priorities than does academic achievement) with his peers, and team sports. We never received a letter of reply from the headmaster which was disappointing, as we had - despite my retrospective flippancy here - taken him very much into our confidence over the whole business, as well as trying the previous year to sort out the problems within the context of the school. But we were most encouraged and grateful for the answers received from Lionel Green (Area Education Officer at the time): 'I hope very much this will be successful, but am glad to note that you would like the door held open so to speak, in case you wish to reconsider the matter later.' And after a visit by Mr Bravery - unfortunately only the one as he was promoted - '... I have had a detailed report from Mr B. following his visit to you and I am very glad to hear what good progress Charles is making. Mr B. ask me to tell you that he will be in touch with you again from time to time about Charles' education.'

That was in 1976. In fact no one else came, despite my writing another lengthy letter when the time came for Bidy to undertake, officially, full-time education. Only when I wrote to say Tabitha would also be receiving her education at home, and wasn't it time someone called to see us, did we have another visit, the first of Mr Tucker's two visits to date.

I do recommend the long letter approach. Mr Tucker puts these on the file, and regards his visits as mere formalities. I take care to include a detailed report of the progress of each of the children, including the baby, so as not to let anyone lose sight of the idea that education does not begin at five. We have come to feel with Mr Tucker that we are helping to treat our children in a manner approved of by the LEA - extending hospitality to him and volunteering information before it is asked for. I therefore feel free to postpone a visit if we are, say, expecting a baby, or builders - both of which have happened during the last year, and have of course provided an excellent two years' education in themselves.

ADDENDUM

Reading this now - 26.12.81 - we would still offer this advice to the EO beginner who is feeling his or her way into the whole concept of out-of-school education. However, this kind of letter-writing takes a considerable amount of time and effort which, increasingly, we do not have. It seems therefore sensible to try a different approach which, while not obstructing the LEA, does not deprive the children of what should be their time.

Having read John Holt and others, and with the benefit of the Harrisons' experience by proxy, we feel that courtesy and co-operation with the LEA need not compromise the basic belief behind the initial decision to educate out of school - namely, that the methods of organisation and of assessment in schools are not only unnecessary in the small 'learning unit' but may well be undesirable and contrary to the interests of the individual child.

Our eldest child, Charles, will be 12 in February and so comes under the auspices of the Adviser of Secondary Education. The Adviser has asked to 'see the work which Charles has been doing', and this request has led us to re-think our attitude towards the business of assessment (with the Primary Schools Adviser it has up to now been a matter of the children being asked, very nicely, on one or two occasions if they would like to read something).

As the Harrison case has shown, the law is very vague about the questions of what constitutes an education 'suitable' to the age, ability and aptitude of the child, what is meant by 'efficient', and in what way the LEA is to 'satisfy' itself. The Adviser for Secondary Education is on record as saying that home education is 'undesirable' and that East Sussex 'tolerates the practice but doesn't encourage it'; but at an initial meeting (following some correspondence in which we set out our views) he seemed reasonably sympathetic - he appeared, in fact, to give his guarded approval of what we are doing and, by implication, for us as concerned and responsible parents.

Building on this, and on the premise that it is not obligatory to produce a syllabus or to attempt to imitate the timetable and organisation of a conventional school, we feel that a general approval of our sincerity, seriousness and competence - and of our approach to the matter of 'assessment' - should be enough, and that the only remaining necessity for the LEA is to satisfy itself that the situation does not alter with the passage of time.

The Adviser can best do this by putting himself, as far as possible, in the position of a parent - by getting to know the children as individuals in a way that is virtually impossible for even the most dedicated of schoolteachers in the present system. That system's methods of assessment, which are at least in part a function of size and impersonality and of society's alleged need for its members to be labelled and graded, are irrelevant to our own situation. We ourselves do not need 'written work' or 'tests' to assure ourselves that the children are developing according to their abilities and interests - we know this by talking to them and being with them, and if the Adviser accepts our invitation to call informally once or twice a month and have tea with us he will begin to know it too.

We feel very strongly that the competitive element in schooling - the streaming, the constant emphasis on assessment, the sheep-and-goats process of dividing the 'CSE material' from the 'O-level material' - is damaging (even, perhaps, for those who consistently come out 'top'), and that continual demands for the attainment of specific goals distract a child from the real business of learning.

stop

MANCHESTER MEETINGS

press

- A local event : Saturday 27th Feb, from 10.30 to 4, at St Peters House (in University precinct), Oxford Road, Manchester.
details from Andrea Lowe, 319 Rochdale Road, Bury.
- A regional event: Saturday 20th March, from 10.30 to 4, also at St Peters House.
The purpose of this meeting is a preliminary discussion of topics to be raised at the Spring Conference in Birmingham.
details from Peter Jones, 3 Fairfield Court, Daisybank Road, Manchester 14 5GL. phone (061)224 9816.

N

ews from the Regions

SUSSEX

Helen Holland

A pre Christmas get together was held in mid Sussex to coincide with the Core Group meeting on 12th December. We got hold of a village hall and 'a dancing master' and nobbled various musical friends to take turns playing the piano, so that EO members and friends, both adults and children, could learn some folk dances. We met again on the Sunday afternoon to dance with more grace and have time for talk over tea. Unfortunately the blizzards descended so we had to stop early. But thank you, everyone, who made the effort to come.

NB: Sussex members who would like to meet in the Spring (or just be kept informed of goings on) please send a s.a.e. (and suggestions) to me, Helen Holland, Horsgate Farm, Cuckfield, RH17 5AZ.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Malcolm and Julie Duff

The Branch held an informal gathering on 20th November - 14 people came and apologies were received from 6 more. Attitudes ranged from very academic (a mini school set-up) to believing in the free child - and I feel that this prevented really lively discussion due to the fact that almost all the members were strangers and were doubtless wary of 'offending'. However, it was an enjoyable gathering and various members arranged to meet and also to set up activities for the children.

The next meeting was arranged for 8th December when the Harrison family, plus, possibly, other Worcestershire members were to have gathered but sadly snow resulted in a cancellation. (The lanes in the Cotswolds quickly became lethal!)

Five members (who had not received our messages) did come however and a very pleasant evening was had. It was interesting to note that in the small group situation people seemed to feel less vulnerable and far happier about expressing their views.

So - Gloucestershire has 20+ adult members who are keen to get activities off the ground and a newsletter will be circulated to keep people in touch. The future is bright!

!!! STOP PRESS !!!

The Litherland Four Defence Committee, set up in August 1981 to defend four teachers of Litherland High School who were suspended for 'leaking' to the press details of the school's appalling corporal punishment record, has already won one of its battles to reinstate one teacher. The case of two others is to be reviewed soon, but a fourth teacher is still waiting. EO has already supported the committee with a donation, if any member wants to make his own contribution, send it to Simon Langley, 34 St Helens Road, Ormskirk, Lancs.

BOOKS



TWO CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Reviewer:Helen Holland

- . The Story of Ferdinand
by Munro Leaf (Hamish Hamilton)

First published in 1937 The Story of Ferdinand has a moral which should appeal to EO parents. Ferdinand is a little bull who does not want to 'run and jump and butt his head' like the other little bulls. He prefers solitude and his mother 'because she was an understanding mother, even though she was a cow'(!) leaves him in peace. Ferdinand grows up immensely strong and is chosen to fight in the great Bull Fight but his pacifism prevents a nasty ending and he is returned to his favourite spot under a cork tree. The black and white drawings by Robert Lawson are absolutely delightful and convey an impression of the real Spain that has nothing to do with tourists.

- . Mr Tick the Teacher
by Allan Ahlberg and Faith Jacques (Puffin/Kestrel)

This story from the Happy Families series appealed particularly to me because it deals with an almost EO family. Between them the Ticks trick the inspector into allowing their small school, containing only themselves, to remain open. All the stories in this series are designed for those who have just learned to read and whilst playing on the theme of the old fashioned card game ('Master Salt the Sailor's Son') they are nicely non sexist ('Mrs Plug the Plumber').

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Reviewer:Sarah Guthrie

- . HIGHER EDUCATION - Finding your Way: 3-page guide covering degree courses and their alternatives, how to apply, grants, sandwich courses, etc.
HMSO 50p
- . INDEPENDENT TELEVISION FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES 1981-1982. Their annual programme and timetable available from The Education Office, Thames TV Ltd, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL - Free
- . DYSLEXIA REVIEW supplement 1981, from the Dyslexia Institute, 133 Gresham Road, Staines TW18 2AJ - £2.15
- . THE GOOD TOY GUIDE 1982. Independent consumer guide to toys tested over the past 8 years, with appendices on special needs plus names of suppliers. From INTER-ACTION IMPRINT, 15 Wilkin Street, London NW5 3NG - £3.50

TIME CHARTS

. A HISTORY TIME CHART is very helpful and one can make one's own on any long surface (ours is on the wall alongside the stairway). For English History a good one is published by The Daily Telegraph. Over two metres long it stretches from 1000 to the present day and covers six subjects: The Crown, the Making of The Realm, Wars and Weapons, Expanding Frontiers, Many Inventions, and Great Lives! £3.50 + 30p p&p from The Daily Telegraph Ltd., 135 Fleet Street, London ECP4 4BL.

. THE MAP THAT CAME TO LIFE
by H J Deverson (Oxford University Press)

This was reviewed by Janice Owen in the June Newsletter, from a library copy. She has since discovered that the book is out of print, and sends her 'abject apologies' to the reader who wanted to buy it.

Television Review

'THE HARRISONS DON'T GO TO SCHOOL'

(BBC2 : 26.11.81.)

Reviewer: John Elenor

"Instead they potter around their rather unrepresentatively idyllic farmhouse learning to repair car-engines etc". Was this a fair comment by the Time Out TV critic? Certainly the producer had done his best to emphasize the idyllic nature of the opening scene of Newall walking (in long shot) across seemingly endless meadows, accompanied by background music of the sort one associates with films of a faintly unreal paradise. But perhaps the Harrisons are unrepresentative; how many families can offer their children such an acreage for them to roam in undisturbed? And how many families (outside EO of course) can demonstrate the wisdom, concern and affection that we saw in the programme?

The nature of the programme was a tribute to these qualities; it presented a beautifully coherent kaleidoscope of activities, discussions, games and reflections. The one thing that I missed was their infectious sense of fun (though I am assured that this was simply squashed out of them by the number of times they had to rehearse the 'spontaneous' moments; and if you watched the following programme in the series you would have realised how much spontaneity they in fact retained).

The range of activities shown was impressive - beekeeping, breadmaking, car maintenance, carpentry, plumbing, weaving, playing the violin, rearing chickens and goats; all, be it noted, practical things that avoid reliance on books. For this is a family that has a healthy disregard for mere booklearning, an attitude that is disturbingly provocative to those of us whose education has produced a neurotic dependence on the printed word.

It is an attitude, moreover, which is certain to offend any LEA, however enlightened. Not only does autonomous education threaten their authority; the appeal to other human attributes than print-dependency cuts the very ground from under their feet. The educational psychologist gave a very persuasive account of his past successes in teaching dyslexics to read, and could barely conceal his disappointment that he had not been let loose on Newall.

But the Chief Education Officer, regretting the parents 'intransigence', condemned himself out of his own mouth in his total inability to give a logical objection to anything the family was doing. Was the programme perhaps anti-school? I found it significant that the few clips of school we saw emphasized the competitiveness on which they rely to produce any work, and the frenzied noise of the inmates in the exercise yard (compare that with the family and their friends playing rounders - an equal number of decibels, perhaps, but a totally different feeling).

Mine is an impressionistic account of the programme rather than a critical review - partly because it is written long enough after the event that my memories of it are becoming blurred by what I already know of the family. I am similarly unable to imagine what impact the programme would have had on an unsuspecting viewer. But I am convinced that Roland Meighans succinct appraisal of 'autonomous education' together with the Harrisons demonstration of its practical success would have caused at least a few people to question their own assumptions, and even more to begin thinking that home education may have something to offer. The programme was neatly summed up by Ivan Geffan, the solicitor who has guided Iris and Geoff through innumerable legal harassments (and who was recently made an honorary member of EO): "You can't do this sort of thing without the sort of love that inspires this whole family."

TEACH YOUR OWN
by John Holt

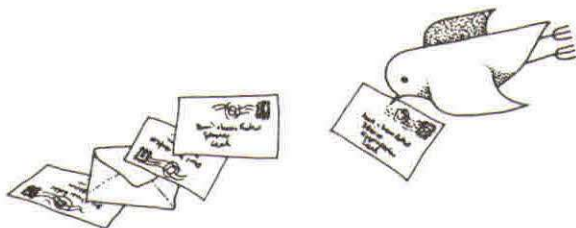
At last! John Holt's book on home education is to be published on April 1st. It is a comprehensive book based on the much greater and more varied experience of 'un-schooling' in America. Essential reading for all EO members, their friends and possible converts.

It is published at £5.95 per copy, but there is a special offer for EO members:

£5.00 postage and packing free
£9.50 for two copies
£14.00 for three copies
(further copies at £4.50 each)

Please order on form enclosed with this newsletter, and you will receive your copy upon publication.

Letters



Dear Editor,

I am writing to reassure members that my health is not failing, as stated in your editorial of NL20. It is correct that I have been quite ill and spent an interesting four weeks in hospital, but I am on the road to recovery and as a matter of fact feel quite full of energy. In any case it is utter nonsense to say that my health was 'undoubtedly undermined in part by the demands of EO'. Undoubtedly? - on the contrary, there is every doubt - in fact the demands made on me by EO recently have been minimal, and generally speaking bring me great pleasure as they keep me in touch with EO families many of whom are or become my friends. A short telephone call would have put you right on this, and I do suggest that in future you check with the people concerned when you wish to make personal statements of this kind.

But this ill-supported gloom about my health seems to be paralleled by an equally ill-supported gloom about the health of EO as a whole. You say: 'It is easy to see why the membership has only gone up a fifth' and the reasons you give are that our co-ordinators and core group are volunteers and therefore 'indecisive and pedantic', 'Energated by compromises that are little short of blackmail' and so forth. Easy? I think this judgement is not easy but facile. There are many possible reasons why we have not achieved the 'sober assessment' of a membership of 10,000, one of which is that in spite of discontent with state schools there aren't 10,000 families willing and in a position to undertake the considerable commitment involved in educating their children out of school; another is that if they are not actually practising EO what do we actually offer our members? Another - that there is a strong non-conformist streak in the sort of people interested in EO and they therefore tend not to join organisations of any sort; another - simply the rising subscription rate and falling incomes. You see, lots of possible reasons, it isn't an 'easy' problem at all, but I can assure you that it is one we are aware of and concerned about.

Of course, we would agree that our core group and publications group are not as efficient as they might be, and there is always room for improvement. In fact we are at present in the process of a complete reassessment of our organisation and operation. I myself am all in favour of more efficiency, but it is not the only goal. As Chairman Mao said 'There is no such thing as a free lunch' - in other words efficiency has its price: it tends towards centralisation, hierarchy, bureaucracy, seeing the organisation as more important than the people it serves, perpetuating a 'them and us' situation that most EO people are reacting against, and so on. Some time ago the then core group definitely opted for a voluntary self-help style of working together, even if it was less efficient, rather than the setting up of a semi-professional centralised secretariat, because it seemed a better way of maintaining grass-roots contacts and was more in accord with our self-help principles. I daresay this decision needs reconsideration in the light of present needs, and it certainly will be reconsidered as part of our general reassessment!

As for compromise, yes, of course we have to compromise because we are trying to be fair to a very wide spectrum of different attitudes and approaches, but can I reassure members that we are not being blackmailed, we are not being driven into failing health, we are not creaking at the seams, we are not enervated; on the whole our meetings are lively and enjoyable, we are quite nice people and we enjoy being and working together, we get quite a lot done, we are optimistic about the future of EO, but we would of course welcome more members willing to make a steady commitment to join us in helping to run the organisation.

Yours sincerely

Dick Kitto
27a Sidney Street
Brightlingsea
Essex

Dear Editor,

It is nice to be remembered - even if its only a mention preceded by 3 queries (Newsletter No 20 p 79) I've truanted from EO, meetings, core groups and all the rest for about 2 years now, ever since I put the membership list together and apart from a nice weekend the next summer in Leics with the Coxs, hardly a contact. Heather wrote an article - never saw it printed - I missed that issue. I used to guiltily pass Ross and Dom Sweetmen on my way along the South Circular but they've now switched to near the A12 and I come up here by train. All the last telly pieces DIDN'T have Dick and a name and address and my shadow never darkened Trent Park. So I've been on the outside and only in vicariously via the Newsletter - it's basically my only contact - and its been a little lonely.

I've let things slip - 'what the hell! Archie, that's what I say, what the hell. C'est la vie, Mehitabel'. and the kids are sometimes at Kirkdale and I've been learning how mucked up I am as a 20th century human, (and they call it a fancy name and, as always someone pays), and relearning how to pray and a number of other things seemingly very far removed from EO.

But to see my name slipped into the end of a Newsletter, it's like getting a registration mark six months after leaving before taking CSE's - though maybe there is a more appropriate analogy - but browsing through actually on Christmas Day a slightly soggy copy that greeted us from the hall floor a few days ago - sleeting snow had scurried in around the edges of the door and through the tarnished flap and settled on the pile of bills and circulars that are our second focus of interest at the beginning of 'Christmas in the Country' - so it's a nice pastime after turkey, pud, stuffin', and the Queen.

Congrats! Jackie and James. Well, well! Heather mentioned a possibility... but...gosh! Now Hugo - fits with Felix; nice. I like hearing about you all via the numerous pages that issue out from Homestead. I'll drop in sometime and we'll all be pleasant, and I see the Coxs climbing the ladder of media notoriety and I feel a little cynical, jealous and lonely and wonder how much of the 84 pages are self-glorification (not that it matters) and how much are what we are really doing which is supporting Each Other.

I know it's only due to an anglophiliac ambiguity and an inexpertly drafted Act, but... I'm in it for support and not feeling alone, and nothing really to do with rights as an issue - though I'm damned glad to have the freedom to choose to do as I please and drift in and out.... of school for my kids, EO, the mainstream, society, the oatmeal cookie jar, ad infinitum.

So what I see and hear behind the bits I'm snide about are a whole number of people finding their own Way ... me included ... and often it's hard ... often it's lonely (and I like being rung up and asked if ...) and so we all - all - struggle, sometimes desperately, we all have a little corner of desperation and if it's not advisors, comprehensives, dyslexia, then its ATV or America and the Bomb or the new power station or whether the people who are going to buy can get a mortgage or whether the goat will kid, or whatever -

and if there's not a nice maternal figure round the corner to dump the kids on and who'll make you a cup of tea with a 'there, there' or another family trying IT down the next village - then there is the newsletter.

But we don't really write of our fears, our panics, our desperations or how actually in hell one copes with a depressed grannie - 2 kids soaking the bathroom - cooking something - talking to a single friend who's just dropped in back from the pub and washing the floor - one just does anyway, but we don't speak of it to Others except as a humorous anecdote and it's not funny - it's part of the Human Struggle we are ALL in. It's been going on for centuries and we know it in our hearts, genes, (reincarnations) souls - we know each other's pain.

I guess it's FEAR of being silly, looked down on, admitting it to myself, not getting help ... But EO does - it's a support group - and I am not alone, and you are not alone and one of those 450 will understand and may even be grateful and might tell you -

And that is where something starts - we've gone a little deeper. We've shared something more than we usually do (it was harder than usual) but I remember it specially - that is what I remember 3 years later when I can't easily remember the name of your second child. That is what I want. That is what helps, heals, and bring us together stronger. I state the obvious - we all know it - but we rarely say it. There is this fear in the way. I don't trust that others will feel, 'Yes something like that happened to me'. 'I know that'. 'It takes me back'. 'Look, they do it that way'. - I am saying - Help. I need friends.

I can hope for a response.

I can and do hope - and then there is the ripple effect ...

and it is all within our capacities - at any time - and it is all that most of us can do that has any real effect on the world (so why don't I do it more often). I, Courtenay, can't help Poland (say) practically one fart, but I can love her a little and not let it get me down - and pray - and speak to Gary's father nicely (He's Polish) even though I've never spoken to him before and he's quite surly and.....

I will have made another step forward out of the fear, the Dark, and I recognise what I'm doing and trust. So thank you for your help and sharing. I like seeing into your lives. It helps me. It really does. Maybe we can support Each Other somehow, I'd like that.

Courtenay Young
14 Lithers Road, London NW3
01.435.0020.

1 Kitchener Road, Leiston, Suffolk.

Dear Editor,

Many thanks for putting the notice of my project in your December Newsletter (p36). This book has grown with a life of its own, aided by many children I have 'tried out' ideas on, and with whom I discuss it.

I feel that your organisation carries out many of the concepts I so strongly advocate in the book, and have taken the following quotation as a 'kick off' point:-

'education in a sense is measured by the effectiveness with which we explain the world to our children'.

My argument is that there is a world in the kitchen which we could all so easily unlock with our children. However, whilst most mothers are happy to point out surroundings, animals, flowers, etc to a child on a walk, very few take the trouble to explain many fascinating mysteries in the kitchen.

Some of the topics I am aiming to cover are:

- . Life with a newborn
- . Diet and nutrition made easy
- . Safety in the kitchen with toddlers
- . Play and learning in the kitchen
- . Waterplay
- . Art - clay modelling and sculpting
- . Fingerpainting, collage, printing
- . Music
- . Gardening)
- . Science) All related to normal kitchen activities. Nothing
- . Mathematics) special to be bought, using only average household items.
- . Reading) Do you draw up experiments after doing them? Could I see any?

Ages and Abilities of Children

Short brief resumés of what you can reasonably expect from each age group.

Cooking with Children

These are not sickly sweet 'kiddie' recipes, but normal household food with areas where a child can help or do the whole job. Methods to use when a child 'wants a job'.

Fantasy Food

Fun ideas for party food, imaginary animals, etc. for small children.

I need illustrations too, of children working, by children, and for children - i.e. recipes graphically drawn.

Cooking is a creative experience that is rewarding in itself - yet teaches participation and co-operation, respect for dangerous tools, clean up skills, develops patience and could be seen as a preparation for a work situation - I could go on and on!

I expect I need hardly tell you all this, but in so doing I hope to trigger off some reply and comment on some of the subjects I listed. If there is anything you could add or contribute, I'd be very grateful. Especially from the children's point of view, questions asked, or activities that were successful. I will gladly give credit to your organisation for any help received.

Yours faithfully

Adrienne Katz
12 Wallside,
Barbican
London EC2Y 8BH

Dear Editor,

Is it perhaps solely environment which determines attitude? We listened recently to an interview with a State-supplied teacher and her lone pupil in the wilds of Sunderland: "If she feels like going outside to look for fairies, then we go outside and look for fairies". Lucky Mary Anne! EO has emerged in the State system!

Compare that comment from a primary school parent on hearing that my children had been 'doing' maths through the medium of 'shove ha'penny': "Well why not? any game which encourages them without realising it helps to consolidate the real learning". (my italics). Clearly, for most people the 'real learning' can only be recognised behind a desk in a classroom. Perhaps we could consider the wider circulation of the EO magazine to school staffrooms where some of us have access? To the editor of the T.E.S. or similar papers? Public libraries?

Yours sincerely

Denise Mutter
Mill House
South Common Chailey
Lewes
Sussex

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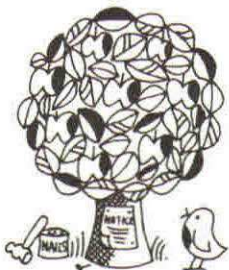
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 Walton, Bill - Co-operative Village Communities (13)14
 Williams, Peter - EO in West Leeds (14)20
 Young, Courtenay - Towards Self-regulation with Children (14)12

NOTICES



CORE GROUP MEETING:

The next meeting will be held on Sunday April 18th, starting at 10.30 and going on for a long time! (probably). The venue is in either Great Barr or Walsall - ring John Elenor (01.749.2199) nearer the time for details. As usual, any member is welcome to attend as observer.

LOWER SHAW FARM:

Long-standing members will remember that this was the birthplace of EO. The community there hires out its facilities to groups with aims sympathetic to its own, and also organises events. Plans for Spring 1982 include:

Feb 12-14	Yoga, meditation and massage
Feb 26-28	Silent retreat
Mar 12-14	Trees and forests
Apr 9-13	Easter exchange - learning and sharing
Apr 30-May 3	May celebration
May 14-16	Writing for life
May 28-31	Womens Bank Holiday weekend

For further details send S.A.E. to Lower Shaw Farm, Shaw, Swindon, Wilts SN5 9PJ or phone (0793) 771080.

THE GREEN GATHERING:

Will gather at Worthy Farm, Pilton, Glastonbury, Som. from Tuesday 28th July to Sunday 2nd August, its aim being to bring together groups involved in radical, alternative or ecological activities., (and don't forget that EO is an alternative movement, however much you may think the label smacks of 'eco-freakery' - Ed.) Details from Richard Oldfield, Green Gathering Collective, 4 Bridge House, St Ives, Huntingdon, Cambs Telephone (0480) 63054.

AMERICAN EXCHANGES

Anybody visiting the U.S.A. this year or interested in welcoming American visitors to this country? We thought of going to the States ourselves last year and would like to have met some EO families there, so the idea of an exchange centre came into my head. I have asked the editors of Growing Without Schooling (our sister publication across the Atlantic - a fascinating read, do subscribe) to tell their members to contact me if they are coming to Britain and want to meet de-schooled families, or alternatively would like to offer hospitality (terms to be arranged between individuals) to such visitors. If EO members here also inform me of their wish to visit or be visited then we're in business!

***** Helen Holland, Horsgate Farm, Cuckfield, Sussex, RH17 5AZ*****

SWEDISH EXCHANGES:

Jane Davies, now teaching English in a delightful little town in Southern Sweden, is willing to offer hospitality to any EO teenager on a short visit; she also hopes that one or two English families might be willing to do the same for a Swedish youngster. If you are interested, (I went there myself just before Christmas and was charmed by the hospitality I was shown by everybody - and they all speak good English! - Ed.) write to her at: Magasinsgatan 24, 57400 Vetlanda, Sweden.

BANKERS ORDERS:

About a dozen members are still paying a subscription of £3.00 by Bankers Order to the old account at Diss. Would they please note that this account is being closed; if they don't make arrangements to pay at the new rate to the new account at Holland Park, we shall reluctantly have to regard their membership as having lapsed.

GROWING WITHOUT SCHOOLING:

The nearest American equivalent to the EO newsletter, edited by John Holt; full of personal experiences from parents involved in home education, words of wisdom from John Holt, and lots of book reviews. Subscriptions for Nos. 19-24 are available at £3.00 (for members) and £3.60 (for non-members). Please write with the money, to:

***** Stephanie Leland, 2 St Edmunds Cottages, Bove Town, Glastonbury, Somerset.

EXPLORERS UNLIMITED:

(Several of whom are EO members) produce a series of magazines for various age-ranges: Mosaic (4-7), Gallimaufry (7-12), Dialogue (12-17), and Hypotenuse (maths for age 12+). The annual subscription is £2.00 for three issues, available from Four Gables, Village Road, Denham Village, Bucks.

EO PUBLICATIONS:

The following are available from the Membership Secretary (Andrea Harrison), The Burntlands, Rochford, Tenbury Wells, Worcs:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| * School Is Not Compulsory | 75p (200) |
| * Early Years | 50p (500) |
| * Newsletters 17-20 | 40p |
| * Digest of Newsletters 1 - 4 (1977) | 50p (50) |

A booklist is available from Geraldine Lockington, 3 Meade Close, Billericay, Essex: Please send A4 s.a.e. with 20p stamp.

Copies of the introductory letter are also available from the Membership Sec.

AN ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY:

is starting in the countryside in Gloucestershire. Its basic aims and ideals are very simple yet radical; it aims to be self-sufficient with a pooling of effort towards education, work, food, life and understanding. Four adults and three children are already committed to its principles and are looking for others to join them. More information can be obtained by sending s.a.e. to ***** Vividus, Buck Farm, Hartpury, Glos.

HAS ANYONE:

in the London/Essex area withdrawn an only child from secondary school, and had communication with their L.E.A.? If so, would you please ring me, as a member in that area would welcome some indication of what L.E.A. reaction might be. Anyone with more than one young teenager would also be welcome for moral support.

***** Dianne Cox, 098.682.315.

CONTACT LIST:

some members have said that they did not receive the September Contact List (the Brown one) with that newsletter. If you did not, please write to the Membership Secretary for one (address inside back cover).

CORE GROUP: (See Minutes p33)

as always any EO member is welcome -

- (a) to submit items for the next agenda (to John Elenor, no later than Monday March 29th)
- (b) to attend the Core Group Meeting as an observer.

EAST ANGLIA E.O. OPEN DAY

at 'Premises', Norwich - Sunday March 28th - Members 12.00 to 5pm
Non Members 2.30 to 4.30pm

Further information - Ring Cherity 032879.470.

****OUR OWN SOLICITOR****

** Ivan Geffan, whose practice is in Walsall, has agreed to become EO's official solicitor. His understanding of EO comes from two sources, his experience from legally acting for EO Members, (including the Harrison family) and from the influence of his dynamic wife, Mary Geffen, who is a Lecturer in Educational Technology and on the staff of the Open University.

** He is no 'ordinary solicitor'. Research was done in the library files of both ATV and BBC and on both occasions he came out as 'A solicitor prepared to fight for the individual with a very high success rate'. When told that it had been decided to make he and his wife Honorary Members of EO he said "That's wonderful as EO is an extension of my own ideals in life and in particular to my support of the NCCL".



JULIA HALLETT has agreed to compile a booklet to provide for the 12+ age-group, an equivalent to Early Years. She has a lot of material already, but would be glad of more ideas from members - particularly their own experiences of teaching this age-group at home, and recommendations for materials to use. Write to Julia at 82 Hatherley Road, Winchester, Hants.

THE FESTIVAL OF BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT held annually at Olympia in June, would be a good place for EO to make its presence felt. In fact for the past two years the Core Group has been planning an appearance, but has been defeated (for different reasons). Is any London member willing to organize it for 1982? It won't need full-time commitment to the Festival since we can simply display our literature on the stall of a larger organisation; but we need someone to make contact with them, collect the items to be displayed, and deliver them to the Festival. If you can do it, write to John Elenor, 18 Eynham Road, London W12.

CO-ORDINATING THE LONDON AREA needs more than the two local co-ordinators that we have at present. Out of the 98 members we could surely find at least another two - is one of them you? The principal job is to keep in touch with members, usually by phone (where possible), and organise the occasional informal meeting. Volunteers should write to John Elenor as above.

Is there a de-schooled teenager in North London who would like to come with me to speak to a group of student-teachers at Middlesex Polytechnic on Friday 5th March from 10 to 12? If so, contact John Elenor on 749 2199.

meeting! meeting

JOHN HOLT IN THE SOUTH

A day conference with John Holt as guest speaker is to be held in Portsmouth on Monday 26th April, 10 am to 5 pm, on 'Helping Your Child to Learn'. Further details and tickets (£3, or £2.50 to EO members, plus optional lunch at £3) from Julia Hallett, 82 Hatherley Road, Winchester, SO22 6RR.

Minutes!

PUBLICATIONS GROUP

11.30am Saturday December 12, 1981 at Horsgate Farm, Cuckfield, Sussex.

Members present: Bruce and Di Cox, Helen Holland, Roy Dunster, John Elenor.

1. APOLOGIES were received from: Stephanie Leland, Geoff and Iris Harrison and Julie Duff (snowbound), David and Irene Bethell, Sarah Guthrie, Ros and Dom Sweetman, Dick Kitto, Julia Hallett, Simon and Caroline Grant (stuck on M4)
2. MINUTES of the previous meeting were read and approved.
3. MATTERS ARISING (not discussed elsewhere)
 - 3.1. Curriculum Debate (ref:3.1.) : Bruce is having difficulty finding a typist who is capable of (a) producing the document to the standard required, and (b) giving it the time it needs.
 - 3.2. Digests of NL 5-8 (ref:3.3.) : this is experiencing the same difficulties
 - 3.3. Index for 1980 and 1981 (ref:3.3.) : These are done, according to NL20, and will appear with the February edition.
 - 3.4. Questionnaire (ref:3.8.) : more copies had been typed and duplicated by Margaret Gilbert, to whom many thanks; completed questionnaires are being processed by the Turners.
 - 3.5. Early Years (ref: 5.2.) : this is being printed at the moment.
4. STICKY LABELS (for re-using envelopes)
 - 4.1. Stephanie had sent a report that 10,000 labels would cost £80.00, making us a profit of £10 if sold at 90p per 100; the run-on price per 10,000 was sufficiently less that on 20,000 we could make £36 and on 30,000 £74.
 - 4.2. It was decided that initially 10,000 would be enough, but they should adopt the new logo (see Core Group item 18.5.) and omit the phone number. Stephanie was asked to liaise with Irene Bethell.
5. POSTER
 - 5.1. Redesign: the group decided -
 - 5.1.2. to accept the reworked triangle (sample submitted)
 - 5.1.2. to word it: School or not?/It's a parent's choice/(Logo)/ Education Otherwise/to find out more send S.A.E. to:-
/18 etc/or:- (leave blank)
 - 5.1.3. to leave the colour scheme to be decided by the designer (Pierre Diamontopolou)
 - 5.1.4. to omit the border
 - 5.2. Distribution: Roy agreed to approach Citizens Advice Bureaux via their head office to see if they will distribute to all their branches.

6. NEWSLETTER

6.1. NL20: Complaints had been received from two members whose private letters had been printed although clearly marked Not For Publication. The group offered its apologies to these members, and confirmed its policy that no material should be printed unless clearly marked For Publication - unclear items should be checked with the sender.

6.2. NL21

6.2.1. In this and future issues, underneath the deadline details should appear the sentence 'All material intended for publication should be clearly marked For Publication'.

6.2.2. To make the magazine easier to handle (and cheaper to post) future issues should be slimmer.

6.2.3. At this point David Bethell phoned (is he psychic?); at his suggestion we agreed that the next issue should consist of 40 pages printed on good quality paper, with a print run of 1,000.

6.2.4. It was agreed to ask the editor to drop 'Name & Address Supplied' and revert to a traditional Letters Page, with name & address printed except where the writer requested anonymity; this would enable members to follow up letters personally, without waiting for the next newsletter.

6.2.5. It was agreed that the nominal price be increased to 75p and printed on the outside back cover.

6.2.6. It was agreed that the official address on the outside back cover should not name John Elenor.

6.3. NL22: The Bethells, willing horses though they are, cannot manage to edit a newsletter every two months. They have agreed to edit alternate issues from no.21 (Feb), so that a new editor is needed for NL22, 24, etc. Bruce agreed to search for an editor; he will also advertize in the Feb NL for volun teers, who should contact him directly.

7.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER. Di agreed to amend this for reprinting (we agreed that 5,000 are needed), and also to contact co-ordinators asking them to amend existing stocks by hand.

8. LOGO REDESIGN This was deferred to the Core Group (item 18.5.)

meeting merged with lunch about 2 pm.

CORE GROUP (Minutes taken by John Elenor)

3.00pm Saturday 12th December 1981 at Horsgate Farm, Cuckfield, Sussex

MEMBERS PRESENT (reading clockwise): Reg Mutter, Roy Dunster, Heidrun Warton, Bruce and Di Cox, Helen Holland, Bob Emmett, Mike Freeman, John Elenor.

1. APOLOGIES : Same as for Publications Group

2. MINUTES of the previous meeting were read and approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1. Family Allowance (ref:3.1.) : it was questioned whether or not this was a general ruling; the feeling was that it was specific to the Harrison family, though it might be used as a precedent.

3.2. Membership for public figures (ref:3.5.) : Roy suggested Gerald Durrell and John Ferguson; he will put these names to Julia Hallett and offer to approach them himself.

- 3.3. London Educational Alternatives Provision (ref:3.6.) : John has made contact and will try to attend their next meeting.
- 3.4. Treasurers Report (ref:4.1.) : nothing has been done, but see 4.1. below.
- 3.5. Resource List (ref:4.2.) : it was agreed that the only way to bring this list up to date was to ask every member to fill in a new questionnaire. (The group reminded itself that it was agreed policy to do this annually) The Turners are prepared to analyse the questionnaires, so it was agreed that the membership secretary should send enough copies to Helen to be enclosed with the February newsletter which she is to print and distribute.
- 3.6. Future Studies (ref:4.3.) : this has been written up in NL20.
- 3.7. Findhorn Foundation (ref:5.) : Stephanie had reported that there was nothing in that edition sufficiently important to be quoted in our NL.
- 3.8. Beauchamp Lodge (ref:6.) : Stephanie has not yet investigated.
- 3.9. Expanded 'School is not compulsory' (ref:8.4.) : Dick had sent a report welcoming the idea and promising suggestions for the next meeting.
- 3.10. New subscription rate (ref:8.4.) : This had been fixed at £10.00 top rate, £8.00 average, £7.50 Bankers Order, and £4.00 unwaged.
- 3.11. Variable debit mandate (ref:8.4.) : until we have 500 takers, the bank is not prepared to operate this system. We keep to Bankers Orders as before.
- 3.12. Alan Corkish Defence Fund (ref:8.5.) : the donation has been sent.

4. REPORTS

- 4.1. Treasurer: Outstanding bills will reduce our current account to zero until the large number of new subscriptions are paid in, together with the 1982 renewals which are beginning to trickle in; there is still £300.00 on deposit in London. There are also rumours (and owing to the inefficiency of various members, notably the treasurer, these remain rumours) that £700.00 plus interest exists on deposit in Diss, together with £407.00 in the current account there which has not yet been transferred. (Slapped wrists all round) The treasurer promised to make a superhuman effort to remedy this.
- 4.2. Membership Secretary: Ros and Dom had sent a report putting the membership at 584, and listing stocks of publications; at the same time they tendered their resignation, with immediate effect (see item 5 below). The meeting accepted the resignation with reluctance, and offered them the warmest thanks for all the valiant (and often unappreciated) work they had done in the past.
- 4.3. Enquiries Secretary: Several enquiries have recently come our way from a mention in the British Medical Journal. Helen agreed to find the article and circulate it to those interested.
- 4.4. Future Studies: Simon had phoned to say that there was nothing to report.

5. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY. Ros and Dom had supplied a job description, which concluded by analysing it into three parts which they said could be separated, though in their opinion it was most satisfactory if one person did all three - the meeting agreed with them. Since Andrea Harrison (a.k.a.A.J.) had offered to do the job, the meeting was very happy to accept the offer. (This was instanced as further proof that David Bethell is psychic, since this information had already been given in the newsletter). Since neither the parties of the first part nor the party of the second part was present, the details of the transfer were not discussed.
6. SPRING CONFERENCE
- 6.1. In the absence of Iris who is conference co-ordinator, John reported the story so far. The date is Saturday 17th April 1982, with the possibility of a preliminary session on Friday evening if accommodation can be provided. The venue is either West Midlands College Walsall or Birmingham University. The plan for Saturday is: 10am, John Holt speaking and answering questions - 12.00 long lunch break (for informal conversation) 2pm OU session on the virtues and vices of audio-visual packaging: 3.30pm tea: 4pm - 6pm panel discussion featuring John Holt, Mary Geffan (of OU), Roland Meighan, ?James Hemming, ? a representative of a Leicestershire Community College.
- 6.2. In discussion it was suggested that, if families had to travel any appreciable distance, they probably could not arrive before 11 - was it possible to put the OU session in the morning and John Holt immediately after lunch? John agreed to put this suggestion to Iris.
7. JOHN HOLT TOUR. John Elenor, who is organising this, reported that JH will be in the UK from 15th to 22nd April; institutions already wanting him to speak include the OU, Birmingham University and Middlesex Polytechnic. Reg suggested Sussex U. which he can contact, and Roy suggested Southampton U. and Portsmouth Poly both of which he can contact. In addition, public meetings will be arranged in various cities including London. John will try to get a preliminary mention in Times Educational Supplement as soon as possible.
8. 'TEACH YOUR OWN'
- 8.1. Mark Holland, co-opted for this item, gave a succinct account of the intricacies of the negotiations in train to find a British publisher for this, the latest John Holt book (already published in the USA). It still remained, however, sufficiently intricate to defeat the note-taking ability of the minuting secretary.
- 8.2. John then read out a letter from Dick Kitto suggesting the possibility that EO, for £1,000.00, might take a stake in publishing the book. He gave it as his personal view as an EO member that this would be too risky; the meeting agreed with him. It was suggested, though, that once the book is published, EO should buy several hundred at cost price to sell to members at a small mark-up.
9. LEGAL STATUS
- 9.1. It was felt that EO is now big enough that it needs some kind of legal status, most likely as a Limited Liability Company, which would also provide a very necessary constitutional framework.
- 9.2. Bruce agreed to liaise with Iris on this matter, in the hope that (with a little help from their friends) they might be able to put a draft constitution before the next meeting.

10. REGIONAL CO-ORDINATORS

10.1. John had tabled a paper suggesting a two-tier system of co-ordination, partly to help with regional growth, and partly to save admin.time in communicating with local co-ordinators. It was eventually agreed that EO is not yet ready for this sort of regional structure which might in fact hinder communication, but that we needed someone to take responsibility for the office-work involved in contacting all co-ordinators. It was suggested that the new membership secretary might feel able to do this; if not, it should be put out to tender.

10.2. Roy suggested that an Addressograph might save time - he will investigate.

10.3. It was agreed that a complete list of co-ordinators, with addresses and phone numbers, should appear in NL21. Bruce will arrange this.

10.4. It was also agreed that the names and addresses and phone numbers of the treasurer, membership secretary and enquiries secretary should appear in every newsletter, on the inside back cover.

11. NEW MEMBERS Several local co-ordinators have asked to be informed immediately of new members in their area. While acknowledging the extra work involved for the membership secretary (as well as the extra postage), it was felt that the well-being of EO depended as much on this immediate personal contact as on anything else, and that we would ask the mem.sec. to undertake it.

12. FREQUENCY OF CORE GROUP MEETINGS

12.1. It was agreed that it was not worth deciding this now, since it would soon depend on the constitution.

12.2. It was suggested that, since many members would have a long distance to travel wherever a meeting was held, we should try a telephone link-up. John agreed to investigate (though Helen was reduced to hysterics at the thought of crossed lines)

12.3. It was also suggested that there might be two types of meeting, one executive (with a minimum of members) and one to discuss policy - perhaps on a regional basis.

13. FREQUENCY OF NATIONAL MEETINGS Agreed that the Trent Park meeting was the only national EO meeting needed (it could eventually include the AGM): The Spring Conference was not solely an EO meeting.

14. SCHOOL REFUSERS

14.1. Di Cox had asked what EO could do to show that it could help teenagers who had become 'school refusers'. The first suggestion was to produce a booklet along the lines of Early Years (called Late Years? Twilight Years?) containing a series of case-histories, a list of where to go for resources, and an article by an educationist such as James Hemming (author of 'Betrayal of Youth'). It was thought that Julia Hallett would be willing to produce this booklet.

14.2. Roy suggested the use of the HMSO syllabi specially designed for under-achievers.

15. UNSATISFACTORY MEMBERS An article in the Guardian (8.10.81.) on The Teachers sparked off the question of how far we could support members whose philosophy or behaviour appeared to contradict the aims of EO. It was eventually agreed that we could not exclude anyone from membership, but we were unable to support members who ignored our advice or indulged (or threatened to indulge) in illegal behaviour.
16. EDUCATION YEARBOOK It was agreed that we should apply for a listing in this and any other appropriate reference book. Bruce agreed to make the contacts.
17. NEXT MEETING Sunday 18th April 1982 (following Spring Conference), somewhere in the West Midlands.
18. A.O.B.
 - 18.1. Obstructive LEAs: Iris had suggested that when we hear of an LEA which is displaying ignorance or attempting to deprive a parent of his rights under Section 36 we should write an official letter explaining the facts. Agreed to ask Iris to organise this.
 - 18.2. Initiating letter to LEA: Roy suggested it would be helpful for EO to produce a standard letter, on headed notepaper, for members to use in their initial contact with the LEA, to supply them with the necessary minimum of detail. Agreed to defer discussion on this until Roy has circulated his first draft.
 - 18.3. Honorary membership was conferred on Ivan and Mary Geffan in recognition of all the help he had given to the Harrison family. It was agreed that there should be a short write-up of the reasons in the newsletter.
 - 18.4. CSE exams: Since these exams are generally school-based, it was considered important to ensure that EO children are not totally excluded from them where they are considered appropriate, particularly when CSE and GCE boards merge. It was also suggested that members should be reminded of other public examining bodies, such as the International Baccalaureat.
 - 18.5. Logo
 - 18.5.1. After years of indecision, it was agreed to adopt as the new logo the design by Irene Bethell which has been delighting members on the front of recent newsletters.
 - 18.5.2. This logo will be phased in as stocks of paper etc are replaced.
 - 18.5.3. In future we will use recycled paper for letter-heads, if it is cheaper.
 - 18.6. National Association for Gifted Children. Julia Hallett had suggested that we could usefully make contact with them nationally. Helen agreed to do this, in particular inviting them to send an observer to the Spring Conference.
 - 18.7. Independent assessment of EO children's work: Roy suggested that LEAs and employers might welcome this; he agreed to work out a scheme.
 - 18.8. Hospitality to US visitors: Helen, having proposed it, agreed to write to GWS inviting their members who might visit the UK to write to her to arrange hospitality.
 - 18.9. A vote of thanks was unanimously passed to the Hollands for their delightful hospitality during the day.

Meeting Closed 6.50pm.

Accounts

For year ending December 31, 1981

EXPENDITURE

Publications:

. Newsletters 17-20	1,030.53	
. School is not Compulsory	159.48	
. Introductory Letter	126.50	
. Posters	<u>73.90</u>	
		1,390.41

Postage on Newsletters 367.23

Expenses:

. Membership secretary	262.60	
. Enquiries secretary	326.21	
. Treasurer	126.83	
. Local co-ordinators	<u>54.30</u>	
		769.94

Meeting expenses 139.62

Puying & Distributing GWS 381.46

Affiliation to NCCL etc 35.50

Miscellaneous 128.68

3,212.84

In hand (31.12.81)

. Current account	180.41	
. Deposit account	<u>300.00</u>	480.41

3,693.25

INCOME

In hand (1.1.81.) 816.79

Subscriptions 2,504.87

Donations 23.52

Sale of Publications 240.27

Subscriptions to GWS 107.80*

3,693.25

* figures incomplete:
some absorbed in 'sale of
publications'

NB: A further £1,000 (approximately) is tied up in the old account
at Diss: this will be transferred as soon as possible.

Local Co-ordinators

ENGLAND

Metropolitan Authorities

London	Barbara Johnson 32 Newbury Close Northolt Middlesex	01.422.5100
	Graham Bell 229 Addington Road Selsdon Croydon	01.657.4706
Greater Manchester	Peter Jones 15 Russell Road Manchester 16	061.860.6422
	Andrea Lowe 319 Rochdale Road Bury Lancs	061.764.6717
Merseyside	WANTED	
South Yorkshire	Joan Hoare 25 Moor Oaks Road Broomhill Sheffield	0742.666605
Tyne and Wear	WANTED	
West Midlands	Alan and Hazel Clawley 73 Cyril Road Birmingham B10 0ST	
West Yorkshire	WANTED	

Metropolitan Counties

Avon	WANTED	
Bedfordshire	Jo and Vince West The Lodge Stockgrove Park School Leighton Buzzard	
Berkshire	WANTED	

Buckinghamshire	Jo and Vince West The Lodge Stockgrove Park School Leighton Buzzard	
Cambridgeshire	Mrs Janet Everdell Heathermead 25 Common Lane Hemingford Abbots Huntingdon	St Ives 63130
Cheshire	WANTED	
Cleveland	Jacque Diduca 42 Whessoe Road Darlington	Darlington 67824
Cornwall	Bob and Collette Mills Trevalour Downs St Dennis St Austell Cornwall	St Austell 823165
Cumbria	Evelyn Marsh 3 Laithes Cottages Laithes Penrith CA11 0AN	
Derbyshire	WANTED	
Devon	Alan and Cardine Wright 7 Kingsway South Molton Exeter E36 4AJ	
Dorset	Sue and Stuart Asman Bridle Cottage 30 Mill Street Fontmell Magna Shaftsbury Dorset SP7 0NU	
Durham	Jacque Diduca 42 Whessoe Road Darlington	Darlington 67824
East Sussex	Helen Holland Horsgate Farm Cuckfield Haywards Heath	Haywards Heath (0444) 54259
Essex	Geraldine Lockington 3 Meade Close Billericay	Billericay 58495

Gloucestershire	Malcolm and Julia Duff Hasfield Court Hasfield Gloucs	Tirley 210
Hampshire	Julia Mallett Armsworth Mill Cottages Alresford Hants	
Hereford & Worcester	Iris and Geoff Harrison The Burntlands. Rochford Tenbury Wells	(058.479) 341
	Gina Rannie Wheatstone Leintwardine Craven Arms Salop	Leintwardine 662
Hertfordshire	Elizabeth and Trevor Sturges 80 Fairview Road Stevenage	0438.52654
Humberside	Anne and Norman Dom 5 Highside North Frodingham North Humberside	Beeford 586
Isle of Wight	Tony and Pat Snow Compton Villa Guyers Road Freshwater Bay I.O.W.	
Kent	Richard and Mary Fryd Beult House Church Walk Headcorn	
Lancashire	Dot Bolan 5 Thorncliffe Drive Darwen Lancashire BB3 3QA	
Leicestershire	Geoff and Jane Edwards 7 Stamford Road Essendine Stamford Lincs	Stamford 54883
Lincolnshire	WANTED (but see Geoff and Jane Edwards, Leicestershire)	

Norfolk	Cherity Laniado Hubbards Barn South Creaake Norfolk	South Creaake 470
Northamptonshire	David and Jane Pairman 106 Northampton Road Brixworth Northampton	Northampton 880867
Northumberland	WANTED	
North Yorkshire	Mick and Jennie White Wensley Mill Wensley Leyburn North Yorks	Wensleydale (0969) 23544
Nottingham	Helen Fletcher 28 Billesdon Drive Heathfield Nottingham NGS INT	Nottingham 621241
Oxfordshire	Simon Grant Pin Farm House South Hinksey Oxford OX1 5BB	0865.736224
Somerset	Mrs Tessa Kelland 37 Portway Frome	Frome 4869
Staffordshire	WANTED	
Suffolk	Sarah Guthrie Field House Thrandeston Diss Suffolk	037.983.678
Surrey	Lorna Bicicchi 5 The Walk Tandridge Surrey	Oxted (088.33) 2804
Warwickshire	Halina McHale 32 Grove Street Leamington Spa	Leamington 312959
West Sussex	Helen Holland Horsgate Farm Cuckfield Haywards Heath	Haywards Heath (0444) 54259
Wiltshire	Dereck and Jill Veale 28 Upham Road Seindon	Swindon 38875

WALES

Mary Evans
 Shamar
 Great Oak Road
 Crickhowell
 Powys

Crickhowell 810374

Co-ordinators are WANTED for other parts of Wales

SCOTLAND

Strathclyde

Leslie and Roger Downie
 30 Hillhead Street
 Glasgow

041.339.694

Jane McFie
 Lower Ettrick Cottage
 Ettrick Bay
 Isle of Bute
 Strathclyde

Rothsey 3342

Central

Alan and Robina Pye
 Dondhu
 Low Town
 Thomhill
 Stirling FK8 3PX

Borders

Lindsay Condry
 Farm Cottages
 Millrig Hall
 Midlem by Selkirk

Co-ordinators are WANTED for Dumfries and Galloway, Fife, Grampian, Highland, Lothian, Orkney, Shetland, Tayside, Western Isles, also for Northern Ireland.

Please send any amendments or additions to this list to Bruce Cox, Grey Row, St Margaret, Sth Elmham, Harleston, Norfolk, IP20 0PL Tele: St Cross 315.

A Note About Local Co-ordinators

Firstly the term local co-ordinators is rather misleading, local contact would perhaps be better for the main job is to be available to offer support and information to local enquirers. This means that the local person should be in at least occasional contact with members in the area, whether they take a more active role is very much a matter of choice. All co-ordinators are supplied with introductory literature by the membership secretary to whom they should write for further supplies.

Growing Without Schooling

These snippets from GWS 21 were compiled by Jane Davies.

*CHILDREN & OLD PEOPLE

An article by Dee Kight in the Jan/Feb 1981 issue of Ours.

.....A close friend of mine told me about watching an interview with a caring, enterprising lady who had helped a home for the elderly in her town become licensed as a day care center! The working mothers found it a great place to leave their children, the children were rocked and read to and listened to to their hearts' content, and the elderly were revitalized and once again able to make a vital contribution to the world around them.....

*THE REAL 'REAL WORLD'

From the Personal Development Letter of Sinetar & Associates

.....People who succeed and stay at the 'top' of their professions in the 1980's and 1990's are those who'll be able to deal with ambiguity, with an unpredictable, changing environment, and live without clear-cut answers for problems. These also happen to be characteristics of a person with high self-esteem.

.....More than ever in history, the one personal characteristic necessary for success today is the ability to adapt, be flexible, 'roll with' a shifting environment....Without high regard for himself/herself a person cannot impose order on chaos. Without high regard for himself/herself, a person cannot distinguish between major trends and minor fluctuations in the environment, cannot trust his own powers of perception, his own value system, his own alternative ways of seeing and doing things. Without high self-esteem we cannot trust ourselves to grow into an unknown set of behaviors required for an unpredictable future.....

From California woman who kept her children out of school:

.....The oldest boy taught himself how to blow glass (furnace style). He was always fascinated with fire and he just naturally became a glass-blower... He doesn't want to teach but the glassblowing classes come to him periodically to be shown what glassblowers can do on their own.

The second son is building his own house and is getting a patent ready to submit on solar heating. Our daughter grows her own plants and has a plant business besides doing beautiful macrame things. I'm bragging about their 'accomplishments' - what I mean to say is that they are unafraid, capable people.

One day I asked my second son how come he always was repairing all the other kids' motorcycles. He said, "They hate to think". That is what school did to them and didn't do to my kids. My kids LOVE to think....

QUOTES

"Blight never does good to a tree... but if it still bear fruit, let none say that the fruit was in consequence of the blight." - William Blake.

"The fatal pedagogical error is to throw answers, like stones, at the heads of those who have not yet asked the questions." - Paul Tillich.

"Marielle has been quite talkative and playful, but over the past two weeks has shown considerable improvement." - On a report card.

"The days that make us happy make us wise." - John Masefield

* For details of subscription to GWS see page 29.

EO in Literature

supplied by Janice Owen

Gilgit, 23 December

At ten o'clock we set off in brilliant sunshine with pockets full of dried apricots to do a little gentle climbing, and by four-thirty we had walked about twelve miles and done a little ungentle climbing organised by Rachel. She is taking to the Himalayas like a camel to sand. "Why don't we go to the top of that?" was her constant refrain. At times I was terrified by her casual approach to the precipitous slopes above 500 feet drops; but small children are naturally sure-footed, like animals, and I insisted on guiding or lifting her only when we were moving across ice. What really made our expedition so worthwhile, for me, was the degree of pleasure she derived from being among these mountains. We came closer today as human beings (never mind the mother-daughter bit) than ever before.

Thowar. 3 January

When we arrived here we let it be known that we wanted to buy a pony, but the jeep era has banished working ponies from most villages within a day's walk of the track. However, this morning Mazhar told us that a pony is on offer in a hamlet high above Gomu, so our next step is to find out by trial - but not I trust by error - if he and Rachel are compatible.

As soon as one embarks on a business deal in the Orient one has to change gear. Today I resigned myself to waiting for the pony-owner's promised appearance, while not allowing myself (or the eager Rachel) to count on it. To get out of Aman's way we spent hours doing sums and reading amidst the black rocks below the Rest House, from where we could see the pony coming if he came - which of course he didn't.

Skardu. 24 January

There seems to be a jinx on our getting to Satpara. This morning, when we were all packed up and ready to go, Hallam began to limp slightly on his rear hind leg. Sadiq Ali thinks he knocked himself against a corner while entering or leaving his "stable" and if this is so he should have recovered by tomorrow. After yesterday's unusually heavy foot-traffic the town's tracks and paths were like skating-rinks today. Bereft of her steed, Rachel was house-bound most of the time, thus wrecking my carefully calculated kerosene supply for Satpara. Entertaining her became something of a problem as she already knows by heart the four books in the junior section of our mobile library. When I went shopping there were many anxious enquiries about my bungo and ghora; some people feared that the latter had run away with the former. I got home to find that the bungo, crazed by boredom, had embarked on War and Peace and grimly battled her way to the top of page six, understanding perhaps half of the words en route.

Kuru. 28 February

When our path turned towards the Khardung La we stopped for a sad farewell look at Khapalu. But not really farewell, I feel. It is impossible that one should come to love a country as much as I love Baltistan and not return. And Rachel - entirely without prompting - announced the other day that this is her favourite place, where she plans to spend her honeymoon.

From 'Where the Indus is Young', Dervla Murphy's fascinating account of a winter spent travelling in Baltistan with her six year old daughter.



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S T O P P R E S S

John Holt will be giving an
open lecture at Sussex
University on April 20th
at 5 p.m.



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education otherwise

Education Otherwise is a membership organization whose principal aim is to provide a support and information network for families whose children are being educated out of school, for those who are contemplating such a step, and for those who wish to support the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of children.

Our principal aims are as follows

- ✧ To encourage the provision of alternative learning situations outside the school system for those children who are not benefitting from school.
- ✧ 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.
- ✧ To establish the primary right of children that full consideration, with due allowance for their age and understanding, shall be given to their wishes and feelings regarding their education.

For further information send a 9" x 4" s.a.e. to:

18 Eynham Road, London W.12