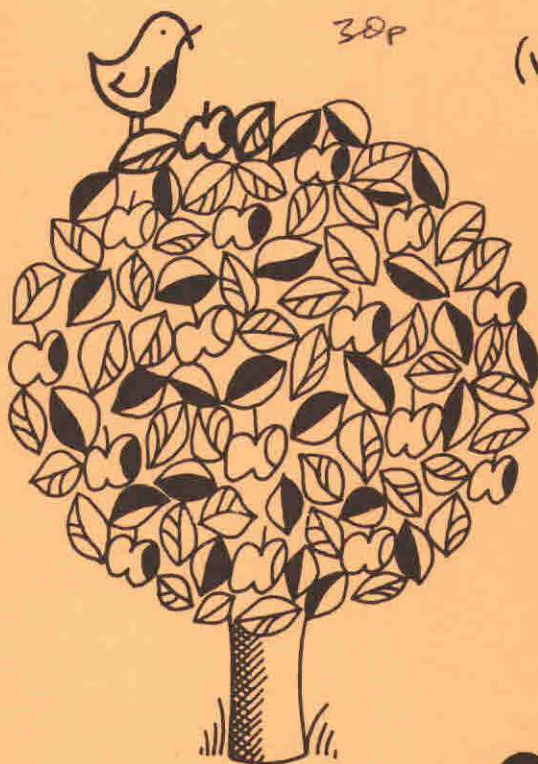


APRIL 1982

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education
otherwise

NEWSLETTER

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deadline

The Editors for the next (June) issue are Reen & Terry Charles. All copy should reach them at 3 Langridge Road, Paignton, Devon by May 12th. Material intended as such should be clearly marked 'For Publication'.

Editor's Preface

The editorial pen (and Letraset) has fallen into my hands for this issue and I've enjoyed having custody. For the next issue it passes on to Reen and Terry Charles. Please don't be put off by the resultant changes in the editorial address; material inadvertently sent to an out-of-date editor should find its way to the right one in the end. On the whole, I think the idea of a revolving editorship, for a while at least, is a positive one and hope that the newsletter will benefit from these regular injections of fresh enthusiasm and energy (nothing like a good bit of competition and all that).

My only previous claim to fame in the editing world is having edited a school magazine many moons ago (well, not that many, actually)... I haven't set out to revolutionise the newsletter; this issue contains plenty of stimuli for debate without me sticking my oar in, so I hope I've avoided committing too many gross editorial misdemeanours - they're not intentional at any rate. But I would like to say that I see no harm in the occasional bit of polemic, if you know who it comes from: if it stimulates a lively response, then that's a good thing.

I should, of course, apologise on behalf of various people (nothing to do with me) to all those (everyone?) who did not receive their last newsletter until after the deadline for this one... This was due to the inevitable unforeseen complications and delays due to post, printers etc. and John Elinor rampaging around the South of England engaged in a fruitless search for somewhere that did photo-reductions. The questionnaires which were to have been included with that newsletter did in fact get consumed by the GPO; some new ones will appear in due course. As you might imagine, the deadline for the present issue had to be extended somewhat although this issue still follows on quite soon after the last since it contains last minute details for the Birmingham Conference. I trust that not too many people were deterred from sending in contributions. Anything that did arrive too late will be held over to the June issue.

It has been a job at times guarding lovingly prepared pages and other precious EO documents from marauding cats and babies, but I think all's here that should be! Included with this newsletter should be a new Contact List. It has proved virtually impossible in some instances to decipher handwriting, and typing out so many names and dates gets somewhat befuddling too, so: apologies for any errors, and please send corrections to the Membership Secretary, either direct or via your local co-ordinator, so that we get it right next time. Also, incorporated into the newsletter is an index for 1981. This can be pulled out and kept separately if you prefer. The prospected article on computers has snowballed into a whole feature on computers and videos. There is also talk of an EO resources day (see p.17). What are your views on the possible roles of these resources in education? Join in the debate by writing in to the next newsletter.

I am sad that the Core Group has come in for such stick recently and feel that its operations need to be demythologised. May I here reiterate that any member is welcome (nay, encouraged - we need one or two more to spread the load) to invite themselves to a Core Group meeting and so come to play a part in the more remote workings of EO. I unsuspectingly wandered off to a meeting at the Harrisons' last summer and look where I've ended up (take that as you will). There should be plenty of opportunity on the day

following the Birmingham Conference to meet current Core Group members and see what ordinary harmless citizens we are after all (are we?). We hope that as many of you as possible will be able to make it to Birmingham, to what promises to be a very full and lively weekend and certainly a milestone in the life of EC. There is an enormous amount of work going on in preparation for the Conference, shouldered largely by Iris Harrison and Julie Duff, who are to be congratulated wholeheartedly on their efforts. While constructive suggestions for possible improvements in organisation are welcomed, please do bear in mind the difficulties you might face in organising such an event (we're not all that much more experienced really). If you can do it better, then come forward or go ahead and arrange your event and we'll support you (proposals via the Core Group, please, to avoid total confusion).

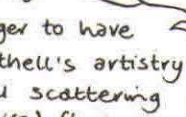
A happy Easter to all.

Caroline Grant


P.S. I have not sent personal acknowledgements for all contributions to the newsletter. May I take this opportunity of thanking all who have contributed. I also have Gillian Wilson-Dickson to thank for designing some borders for me, and Simon Grant for reorganising and typing the contact list - not an enviable task!

STOP PRESS

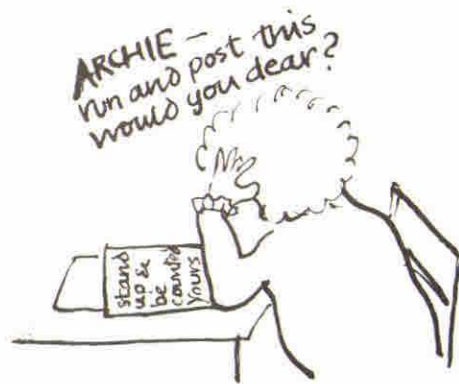
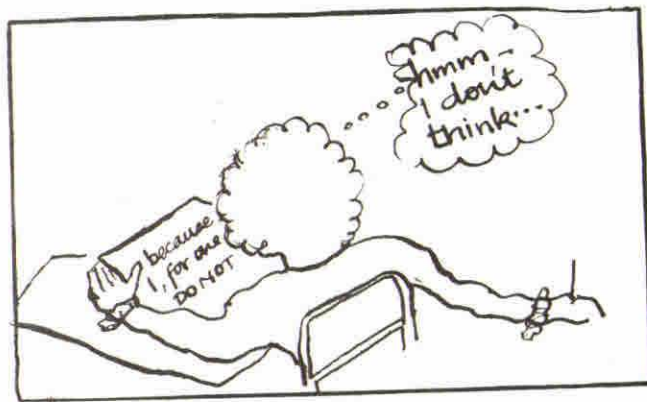
It appears that a few people did not receive the drop-out programme and booking form for the Birmingham conference. If you have been so cursed by fate, then ring Iris Harrison (Newnham Bridge 341) immediately if you want to come.



We are sorry no longer to have access to Irene Bethell's artistry - hence the liberal scattering of somewhat uninspired flower designs as last minute fillers (at least there should be some hint of Spring by the time you receive this!)



If anyone feels inspired to design some headings (for the Letters page etc.), send them to the current Editor (at any stage).



EDUCATING ARCHIE

BY SEG

EDUCATION THROUGH THE PRESS

VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

Since news stories about alleged violence in school have predominated over the last couple of months, this issue's column is - exceptionally - devoted to them.

TRENDS OF VIOLENCE?

According to the ILEA, there is a decline in all types of school violence since the mid-70s, coinciding, many believe, with the phasing out of corporal punishment in ILEA schools in 1978. (SUNDAY TIMES 24.1.82). The TELEGRAPH claims that the number of teachers assaulted by their pupils has - according to the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers - risen steeply over the past ten years. Their idea of 'assault' includes the tantrum of a 6 year old boy who smashed his plate of food during the lunch break and then hurled himself at any teacher who came near him. (TELEGRAPH 25.2.82). The National Union of Teachers, easily the biggest union, maintains that there is no clear trend either way (SUNDAY TIMES 24.1.82)...

RIOTS CLOSE SCHOOL

Meanwhile, rioting in St. Saviour's School, Toxteth (Liverpool) forced it to close temporarily (TELEGRAPH and GUARDIAN 23.2.82). Children aged between 7 and 11 had carried out a series of attacks on teachers and property, caused, some pupils claimed, by a gang of about 8 who bullied all the others. "It is like a mini-Mafia" said one teacher (GUARDIAN 23.2.82). The Chairman of Liverpool's Education Committee blamed the Toxteth riots of last summer (TELEGRAPH 23.2.82). The school had seen a high turnover of staff, some of whom were brought to near breaking point by the school. St. Saviour's headmaster opted for early retirement and the school re-opened with a new headmaster to start with 'a clean slate' (TELEGRAPH 2.3.82). The Prime Minister expressed her concern about the school to the House of Commons. "Parents and all citizens have a duty both to teach the principles of law and order and to see that it is upheld." (GUARDIAN 25.2.82). Reports of pupil violence at the school had, it was claimed, been grossly exaggerated and the chairman of St. Saviour's governors said, "Whoever leaked this to the Press wants his backside kicking"...

MOTHERS WIN

The European Court of Human Rights at Strasbourg has upheld the protests of two Scottish mothers against the use of the tawse on their sons (TELEGRAPH 26.2.82). The judges ruled that the use of the tawse (leather strap) violated the European Convention on Human Rights, on the basis that parents have the right to educate their children in accordance with their philosophical convictions. But despite the judgement of the European Court, the Union of Head Teachers is advising its members to carry on caning (TELEGRAPH 1.3.82). Said its general secretary: "There is no cause for panic among heads who believe in the right to retain the use of the cane." But the Government had to pay £1,200 to the mother of a 14 year old girl who was beaten severely with a cane. It will now remind all local authorities that corporal punishment could contravene the European Convention of Human Rights (TELEGRAPH 27.2.82)...

TAWSE GOES

And in Scotland, Strathclyde and Lothian have both decided to do away with the tawse. Writing in the SUNDAY STANDARD (31.1.82), Ludovic Kennedy applauds this move, and recalls memories of his own beatings at prep school and at Eton. He points out that a survey carried out in Scottish schools where the belt is no longer used reveals a greater sharing of information and responsibility. Not one school was contemplating bringing back the belt.

DEFINING CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

LANCS BAN SHOCK HORROR Lancashire education authority has now banned corporal punishment in the county's primary schools (TELEGRAPH 28.12.81), much to the annoyance of its head teachers. Lancashire's spokesman for the Head Teachers Union said, "Teachers have never considered the parental smack on the hand, arm or leg of a child as corporal punishment. Yet even this form of chastisement has been banned." Councillor Fred Long, chairman of Durham County Education Committee, said, "Personally I agree with the use of the cane but I don't like to hear it referred to as corporal punishment - that makes it sound brutal." (THE DURHAM ADVERTISER 29.1.82).

CONTROL

Dudley (West Midlands) council is to consider a £250,000 a year scheme to contain aggressive and disruptive behaviour in its secondary schools. The scheme involves segregating trouble-makers and teaching them in isolation (GUARDIAN 25.1.82). Three schools in County Durham now have police officers on their staff in an attempt to cut juvenile crime and vandalism (GUARDIAN 19.1.82).

ASSAULTS

A London junior school teacher who was hit by a parent was told by the presiding magistrate that she could expect to be hit "at least 6 times in the next 20 years" (SUNDAY TIMES 24.1.82)... A 15 year old boy, expelled from class for causing trouble, punched a woman teacher, knocking her unconscious (GUARDIAN 11.2.82)... A 15 year old half-caste boy, suspended after a row caused by the National Front magazine, stabbed his headmaster (TELEGRAPH 13.2.82)... Parents in Cornwall have withdrawn their daughter from a primary school where a 9 year old epileptic girl was beaten across the knuckles with a piece of wood for whispering in class. Instead, they have sent her to a free school run in a converted caravan by a woman ex-teacher from the school (TELEGRAPH 27.2.82).

PHOBIC TEACHER

An assistant principal teacher of English at a Glasgow school, who admits to a 'phobia' about schools, has been put on the reserved teaching list of Strathclyde Regional Council because he refused to submit to a medical assessment by the region to judge his fitness to teach. He has been on sick leave since March last year, and says that he has been suffering from "learned helplessness akin to that of prisoners in concentration camps". (TES 12.3.82).

LITHERLAND - LOST APPEAL

Alan Corkish, a teacher who gave information about 1,895 incidents of corporal punishment at Litherland High School, has lost his appeal against dismissal (TELEGRAPH 20.8.82). Of his sympathetic colleagues, one has been reinstated and is being paid but not allowed to teach at the school, another is on 'exceptional leave' (again being paid but not allowed to teach) while a third is still under suspension.

WHO SAID?

"Distrust all those in whom the urge to punish is strong."
(Goethe, quoted by Ludovic Kennedy in the SUNDAY STANDARD 31.1.82).

FINAL WORDS

According to Dr. Rhodes Boyson, Education Under Secretary, the angle at which children hold their heads over their desks indicates their behaviour. Heads at a 45° angle from desks show that normal teaching is going on. Lower forward, and the children were likely to be asleep. Further back, and the children were probably 'in revolt'. (TELEGRAPH 1.82).

Edited by Sarah Guthrie with contributions from Heather Mitchell, Janice Owen, Lorna Biccichi and John Elenor. Please send cuttings to Sarah at Field House, Mellis Road, Thrandeston, Diss, Norfolk.



Talking about School

Mrs. Thatcher returned to her old school at Grantham in February to unveil a plaque to herself (GUARDIAN 19.2.82). She told of sitting for an examination and concentrating so hard that she had not heard a terrible thunderstorm overhead. "For the first time", said Mrs. Thatcher, "I realised that you can concentrate so much that you notice nothing else."

And Mrs. Thatcher again (speaking on ITN News at Ten, 12.2.82): "I've never said that I think school days are the best days of your life because I think that life holds much more for you after you've left."

"Ruined ma billiards, screwed up ma eyes
I'm going back to school days to put them right."
Singer Graham Parker on his album 'Howlin' Wind'.

I thought other members might like to share our amusement to lighten up the often serious debates!

Returning indoors from the exciting task of hanging out the washing, I found a note:

MUM, IN END BEDROOM PLAYING EO!

Ever since then I've been wondering if we're doing it right!

JULIE DUFF

SPRING CONFERENCE

Birmingham, April 17th

There are still some seats available ; contact Julie Duff immediately if you still have not booked.

More offers of accomodation are needed from anyone within easy striking distance of Birmingham. Again, contact Julie Duff as soon as possible.

Babies and toddlers are obviously not going to be banned from the lecture halls, but we do ask that any present should be discouraged from making a noise and running around. John Holt's talk will be relayed to the foyer over loud speakers so that parents who have to leave the room with their children will be able to keep in touch.

Also, of course, no-one is obliged to spend a whole hour over lunch. If you want to grab a bite in 2 minutes flat or do without altogether, that's up to you. There will, however, be some exhibitions, including computers and a book stall, which people might like to wander around during their lunch break.

It is estimated that EO will just about break even, financially, with the conference (in fact, if all the tickets were bought up by members we would probably be out of pocket) . Any extra monetary contributions on the day would of course be most welcome!

EO is planning to produce a book on the conference, and also a small conference handbook for sale to members after the conference, with summaries written on each of the sessions and, we hope, a transcript of John's talk.

TV cameras will be present throughout the day - there is talk of a documentary sometime next year.

It is hoped that someone at each session will be able to report the main points covered to the final session. In this way everyone will get some idea at least of what went on in all the sessions.

A note on the Sunday meetings : *Venues - am Friends Meeting House ; CG at the Geffens' in Walsau*

Agendas for meetings will be posted up on the Saturday. Anyone is welcome to turn up at the Core Group meeting, but we ask you to read the minutes of the past few meetings first (to avoid retreading old ground etc.) and to bear in mind that the CG is a working group, and those who attend will be asked to do something at some stage!

JOHN HOLT PUBLIC MEETINGS

Apart from the two conferences (Birmingham 17th April and Portsmouth 26th April) John Holt will be speaking in public in -

- | | |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| GLASGOW | Thursday 15th April at 7.30 p.m.
in the Boyd Orr Building, Glasgow University
Admission free. |
| LONDON | Monday 19th April at 7.30 p.m.
in the Institute of Education, Malet Street, WC1
Admission £1, unwaged 50p, at the door. |
| BRIGHTON | Tuesday 20th April at 5 p.m.
in the Education Lecture Theatre, Education
Development Building, University of Sussex
Admission free. |

THE CORE CURRICULUM

The most important Subject of any 'curriculum' is the Self. Some readers will reject this statement out of hand, others will find themselves elaborating it and looking for arguments for and against. But another way of 'processing' it is to hold it steadily in the mind and to quietly ponder its significance. The more frequently you undertake this method, the more you will experience it for yourself. How you use this knowledge will undoubtedly affect your approach to education and the relationships involved.

Colleen Eorman



over 14?

Having been a fascinated reader of the EO newsletter for two years, and although my own practice of 'otherwise' education is only at the planning stage as my son is not yet three, I have become very interested in what home-educated children do after their 'official' period of education is finished at 16. The Open University has taken me on as a part-time student to pursue this question and Roland Meighan has kindly agreed to be my external supervisor.

I am looking for willing participants; families containing one or more children aged 14 or over who have been out of school at some stage in their educational career. If you would be interested in taking part, probably through interviews by 'phone or in person, please get in touch with me. (I will refund your postage in my reply.)

Julie Webb, The Thatches, 28 Churchway, Haddenham, Bucks. HP17 8AA.

Our children - what future?

JACKIE FEARNLEY

A friend wrote soon after Hugo's birth mentioning the problem of whether or not one should have several children when their future seemed so uncertain.

The same day, Rose (8) said to me, "I'm glad we live now when there are no wars". Lillah (5) then said, "Yes, but there are nuclear power stations".

I guess similar thoughts must have gone through the minds of many E.O. parents, especially when thinking about the sort of education they should provide for their children and what sort of future they are preparing them for.

I don't pretend to have the answer and it is something I hate having to think about, yet I feel if I face it and am clear about it then I can forget about it again for a while.

I suppose it is becoming more and more clear that some kind of an upheaval is bound to occur (is occurring?) in our society. I would describe the situation as an inevitable outcome of the way we treat each other and the earth we live on. Opinions would vary as to when the rot set in - ranging from Adam and Eve to the First World War.

Sometimes I wish we'd been born at a different time and then I remind myself that it's no good seeing it all as someone else's fault. We are all part of the whole picture and need to realize the ways in which we contribute - for example, by expecting all the benefits of a technologically based society without examining the consequences.

Secondly, I feel that although we are faced with a very depressing situation there are also some very good things happening - in the way of people deciding to live more simply and less violently, trying to co-operate more with each other and take more responsibility for their own lives, trying to bring up their children in a more loving way, seeking values other than purely materialistic ones - all of which must affect events - and probably in a bigger way than we realize.

Thirdly, being somewhat of a mystic, I don't feel it's entirely up to us to choose whether or not, and when, our children should be born. It is probably just the right time for them. When one of mine says something like, "When I grow up I shall let my cats have as many kittens as they want and not put them out at night", I mentally say, "If you grow up", and find myself growing rather maudlin and bitter. Yet when you think of it, in most ages people have had to face up to a possible early death from over-work, violence or disease. If we can face up to this possibility in a positive way, it should enhance our lives and will certainly affect the way we view 'education' - i.e. not putting all our investment into some way-off, uncertain future but to some extent living "each day as 'twere our last".

It is easy to feel when faced with the possibility of, say, a nuclear disaster that there is nothing we can do. James and I often refer to our belief that there must be some reason for us living just at this time and to the importance of trying to find out what it is we should be doing. If one is functioning properly, the future and what might happen diminishes in importance. It is an exciting time to live in too and helps put in proportion problems such as the mortgage repayments and whether or not the children will pass the right exams.

It becomes increasingly clear that if you have an urge to live in a bus, go to New Zealand, learn to play the cello, sleep all in one bed, get rid of all the furniture, change the way you earn your living or write a great novel - now is the time to do it. This doesn't mean being totally selfish, as through such an action one is likely to create links with others and so contribute positively to the forces working for good.

NEWS from the regions

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Julie Duff

The Gloucestershire group of EO met again during February when about 20 members came along - several others telephoned with apologies, so overall Malcolm and I felt very pleased with the 'turn-out'. The meeting appeared to be a great success and I think it reasonable to say that everyone present much enjoyed themselves! The meeting was our third and by now people are beginning to know each other which, I imagine, helps a lot - certainly, conversation was wide ranging and relaxed. Interestingly, those members with children still in school seemed to feel able to ask lots of questions about the 'magic of de-schooling!' Geoff and Iris Harrison came down to join us and added greatly to the enjoyment of the gathering and Andrea, who is as you all know EO's new Membership Secretary, came with them - I am sure it was helpful to Andrea to be able to put faces to the names on her lists! Mention must be made here of how hard Andrea is working on behalf of EO and I am sure my thanks will be echoed by all other members.

SUSSEX

Helen Holland

A barn picnic is to be held at Horsgate Farm on Sat. May 8th. Sussex members will be receiving further details in their local news-sheet, but members from other areas are welcome and should ring Helen (Haywards Heath 54259) for more information.

MANCHESTER

Details of Feb. meeting lost in the post?



babies!

CONGRATULATIONS!

to David and Betty Ball on the birth of **SETH ADAM** on 11.2.82
and to Daniel and Helen Denno on the birth of **JUSTIN** on 10.2.82

William Topaz M^cGonagall was there

On the Bonny Banks of Loch Lomond in November 1981
The Scottish Education Otherwise weekend had just begun
The road was narrow and winding and an owl swooped by
As we arrived under the star-studded sky.

The University Field Station so welcoming to see
With its lights on and surrounded by many a tree
We needed many jerseys on to stop us sneezing
As the heating had only just been put on and to begin with it was freezing.

Not everyone arrived without any hitch
One family from Bo'ness even drove into a ditch
The people from the Borders went up the West Bank
When they realised they had to turn back their hearts sank.

Another family coming from Bonnie Stirlingshire
Were late arriving because they burst a tyre
Seven families stayed from Friday night till Sunday afternoon
And the visiting folk said they were sorry they had to leave so soon.

Thirty children and thirty adults came to the gathering all told
Which is pretty good for Scotland, if I might be so bold.

Of the eight EO member families that came
Only four have their children out of school (which I think is a shame)
But we agreed that regular meetings would be good
On a Monday once a month or once a fortnight if we could.

The mornings in gentle recreation were spent
To explore the woods and beautiful loch everyone was content
We played and learned about chemistry and fire
Nature, clay, paint and music, what more could heart desire.

The time has come, the adults said, for things to be discussed
Of schools and self and social change, non-violence and trust
We talked about so many things it isn't easy to remember
But we were up till the wee sma' hours that weekend in November.

By Sunday afternoon most people had departed
But in the hailstones and the dark the Downies' car had difficulty
getting started
And we had to ask the caretaker to push to get it going
And we thanked him very much and said we were glad it wasn't snowing.

In the pitch black dark we eventually did get away
And vowed we would return to bonny Loch Lomond again another day.

Lesley Downie (with apologies to William McGonagall and
Lewis Carroll)

Video Publishing & Education

JACQUELINE MACKAY

Publishing as we know it means making available to a wide audience reproductions of communications - be they ideas, plays, stories, or songs.

Throughout history certain dramatic landmarks in communication have taken place. The first of these was printing, from which arose publishing. The bias of the improved communications was educational; the dissemination of knowledge had begun in earnest.

Photography and cine photography were the next and, because no skill was required to understand the message, it brought publishing to an even wider audience with pictures and movies. A picture is worth how many words? As reproduction improved, magazine publishing was possible, which depended upon the constant regeneration of new material, events - news. The movie industry became popular enough to move into the home.

Magnetic tape has been transforming music publishing along with vinyl for some time, but has not been a dramatic social innovation in itself until the invention of video. On a par with the printing press, the social implications of video upon societies internationally is only just beginning to be recognised.

The publishing industry has sprung up around the mass production of print, photography, vinyl, and of course magnetic tape.

The ways in which the different media have published are varied. The book trade has always presumed upon the desire, even desperation, of the author to be published, and authors have traditionally carried the risk factor in publishing by being the last in the queue for the cash. There are obviously exceptions; however, this attitude is also prevalent in the music and film industries.

With books and films the production and manufacture, packaging and distribution costs are high. In order to make a profit it is necessary to mass produce sufficiently to lower the unit cost, thus inducing more people to buy and more money to be created. Passing the hat for a performance or a piece of art over thousands - even millions - in this way has been the crux of publishing. Part of publishing therefore is publicising and gaining attention for the work from the public with the desired effect for more works to be sold.

Publishing as a trade, even profession, has always held a glamour in the element of gamble - a desire to know what the fickle public wants, so that providing it will provide for the publisher more revenue to gamble on more new talent. The "bestseller", the "hit", "big box office", have a ring to them that has stirred many an entrepreneur and even many a staid businessman to foot the bills of talented people who could turn out to be capricious with mere flair!

Apart from gambling (stocks and shares, football pools etc.) no other industry is renowned for generating as much, as quickly, as the entertainment industry. The rags to riches story is commonplace in the book trade, the film industry, and the music business. In order to ensure a good return on what often turns out to be a considerable cash investment, it is necessary for a publisher to manufacture large quantities of books, records or magazines in order to lower the unit cost. This means in turn that the publisher will have to be convinced that the public will buy in sufficient number to make the venture commercially viable.

Music, books, films, programmes, photographs, articles and magazines all have different methods of publishing, distribution and syndication. They also have different traditions, even laws, concerning copyright and artist returns. The advent of video and information technology has caused many committees in many institutional and legal bodies to stop and rethink fair trading in the mass reproduction and sale of talent.

The advent of video is also bringing with it tremendous question marks around many other social issues including censorship, pirating, international communications, advertising and sponsoring, and most importantly ethics and responsibility around the teaching profession.

The Video Publishing Company

So far, no video publishing company exists. The companies that specialise in video software have sprung from various trades such as magazine publishing, the film and music industries, and most recently the book trade, each of which regards video as an ancillary to its own business. The special attributes of the video medium have not been utilised. The ability to repeat at will (to freeze and examine the tape in part), the enormous speed of turnaround in manufacturing of tapes, the accessibility of the audio-visual medium to the public in both recording and viewing, have long been recognised but not exploited.

Apart from this, video is different from every other means of reproducing talent in that the unit cost of a video cassette is high and stays high even when bulk purchased. Unlike almost every other commodity, mass production does not lower the cost of blank video cassette appreciably, nor does it lower the unit cost of duplicating a work - because it is done in real time. For the first time therefore it is commercially viable to test market new talent and to produce specialist subjects in limited numbers. For the first time it is possible to assemble and integrate newly discovered facts and have them viewable by schools and by the public within a week. It is possible to see therefore how the advent of video will revolutionise communications to an even greater degree than the printing press.

The most revolutionary aspect of video is bound to lie in the field of education. The ability to specialise, the high-speed turnaround, and the option of viewing when convenient are singularly well suited to the educational market. It is clear by now that this market is not only an institutional matter but penetrates the family and the hearth as more and more parents are becoming aware of the responsibility and concern for their children's education.

Just as Japan is the centre of the video hardware industry, Britain excels at all the components of video software, which include film and TV programming, photography, popular music, serious writing and journalism, and theatre and dance; British legal and banking systems have been the foundation of many international statutes and have influenced most countries, hence Britain is at the forefront of business training; finally, Britain has led the world in education for many centuries and has been the home of internationally famous schools and universities which have produced many fine scientists and philosophers.

The demand for new programmes and new talent specifically for the video medium will, over the next few years, largely be sourced in Britain and internationally distributed by publishing companies who have the courage to use the video medium for its prime use in society - the dissemination of knowledge.

COMPUTERS : issues & prospects

SIMON GRANT

I am not a computer expert. Far from it : I know very little, but I have thought from time to time about their uses and drawbacks. I suspect that many people see their use as controversial (like much new technology). What are the issues? What is at stake? It is a very important matter, if only because schools are getting into computers in a big way, and people argue that unless children are educated about their use, they will be at a disadvantage in the future as computers become more and more prominent throughout our society.

Computers can perform any logical task as long as they have sufficient information (or "data") and space to handle it. They are not truly creative and do not have a mind of their own. Mathematics is a strongpoint - including complex calculations such as working out how to get to the moon and back. Keeping files, updating them, searching for information and printing it out can be very fast. Games like the dreaded 'space invaders' are run by little computers.

But there are some less straightforward and innocent uses, quite apart from the inadequate programming which leads us to blame the computer for various silly bureaucratic mistakes. The police and other such people have computers which can process an enormous volume of data - the Thames Valley one at Kidlington is notorious in this respect - and this can mean that many ordinary innocent citizens can have unchecked secret files kept on their activities and interests.

Then there is the problem of automation of jobs. In a limitless world no doubt this could mean more goods for everyone rather than the unemployment that is now the consequence.

The other problem that I see is the rigidity of computer-controlled teaching and information systems. The 'teletext' services provide what the 'general public' want to know : this does not take account of the very specific evolving interest of an intelligent individual (nor do encyclopaedias ultimately). The same will unfortunately be true of any computer based teaching system : one will have to take what is on offer, rather than charting one's own path. Any attempt to provide centrally all possible desired learning or information would, I believe, drown the individual in an ocean of choice.

On the positive side, computers can, and I think should, be used as tools, just as we unquestioningly use typewriters, telephones, saws etc. to do more effectively what we wish to do. EO's files, for example, have in the past been kept with the aid of a computer, and perhaps will be again. We could also use a word processing system to help with the compilation, revision and printout of all the publications and lists - but I imagine this would be too expensive for the moment. If EO became a much larger organisation, answering enquiries would be greatly assisted by computer operated files.

The other positive aspect of computers is their creative use, for which one must be able to program them. People often wonder, "What could I do once I knew how to program it?" Of course, if one has any problems with any even vaguely mathematical content, then one should be able to get some benefit from the machine. But to me the most appealing use is the invention of games. I may go into the subject of creative games at a later date : for the moment suffice it to say that their educational potential is enormous, let alone their recreational value. But as for what exists at the moment, the TES "Schools and computers" extra of 5/3/82 has to say this : "Countless educational games, thinly disguised drill-and-practice programs as well as video games designed to entertain but seen to have educational value, simulate some aspects of warfare, revolving around endless variations of the "shot-or-be-shot" theme.

"Aggressive militaristic values are continually reinforced by this chip manifestation, a development which has its roots in electronic warfare. There is scant software to balance these aggressive values being reinforced".

Well, what do you think? Should EO families go out and buy, or better share, computers? Or are they a mere distraction, irrelevant to the business of living and doomed to ultimate destruction along with the rest of exploitative capitalist society?

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Seymour Papert, writing in the same section of the TES, believes that computers could have a profound effect on education, particularly in schools. After describing his experiences of introducing a large number of computers into one school, he goes on :

Nothing enrages me more than when people criticise my criticism of school by telling me that schools are not just places to learn maths and spelling, they are places where children learn a vaguely defined thing called socialization.

I know. I think schools generally do an effective and terribly damaging job of teaching children to be infantile, dependent, intellectually dishonest, passive and disrespectful to their own developmental capacities. I think that the examples I have given of learning in a computational environment provide a glimpse of a context for learning in which socialization would be based on a potentiation of the individual, an empowering sense of one's own ability to learn anything one wants to know, conditioned by deep understanding of how these abilities are amplified by belonging to cultures and communities.

Precisely these criticisms have often been made by humanists. If they have failed to put schools right what can a "technologist" do? This ; take away the cause of the problem. The anti-social nature of school undoubtedly has roots in the class structure of society and in the nature of the Freudian unconscious. As long as important bodies of knowledge (such as school mathematics and the written language) are not rooted in the desires and the life experience of children schools will have to teach them artificially and by force.

If the kinds of computer experience we have seen at Lamplighter and New York penetrate into everyday life, children will learn the kernel of these bodies of knowledge in the same natural way as they now learn the spoken language (in its colloquial dialects). Then school, defined as a place where the three R's are imposed by force (or by the kind of subterfuge called "motivation" which is just as bad), will no longer be necessary. Society will be able to face the task of inventing environments in which children can develop as social, loving, honest human beings without distorting this goal by the crudely technical one of stuffing the multiplication tables into their heads.

home computing

DAVE WOOLLANDS

In response to the request in the December newsletter, I would like to offer my help to anyone who requires it with regard to home computing.

I am a computer consultant by profession and also have a home computer on which Tim(S) and I have hours of fun. So, if you have a question to ask or would just like a chat, don't hesitate to phone. I don't guarantee a comprehensive answer, but would hope to point you in the right direction at least.

The July and August '81 issues of Which? contained articles on home computing. The first explains a bit about what they can and cannot do and where to find more information. The second gives test results and verdicts on 13 of them which were available in Dec. '80. Both articles would be very useful reading for anybody thinking of buying. However, the market changes very quickly and magazines like Practical Computing (a monthly) help their readers to keep up to date by reviewing computers, books, programmes etc.

Home computers come in all shapes and sizes (and prices) and this can leave the prospective purchaser feeling totally confused as to which is the best buy for him/her. I have given some indication earlier that this need not remain a problem.

The other main question is probably, "What about programming it?" The people who ask this question probably fall into one of two groups, i.e.

- i) Those who think that all computer programming must be difficult.
- ii) Those who are confident about starting but who feel that there may come a stage when they need external help.

To the first group I would say, "don't worry". Most computers (and I think all home computers) support a programming language called BASIC. This language is so easy to learn that I find it hard to imagine that anybody able to read this article could not learn to construct a working program within a very short space of time (a few hours).

The second group certainly have a good point, but again this need not be a problem. There are now a number of User Groups and Computer Clubs in Great Britain which always have members willing to help others.

I have a TRS-80 computer (made by Tandy) and am a member of the National TRS-80 Users Group. Every month I receive a newsletter which is full of useful hints, programs etc. There are workshops and weekend courses held in various parts of the country. There is a library which contains programs written by other members, copies of which may be obtained free of charge. There is also an Education Sub-Group with its own library of programs for use in education. In addition, there are always people willing to help with problems over the phone. There is really no excuse for having a problem for long! I can't speak for the facilities offered by other groups, but there are certainly a lot of them around

The BBC have recently shown a series of ten 25 minute programmes (repeated twice to date) called The Computer Programme. This series explained some of the principles and applications of computing. The BBC have specified the requirements for a microcomputer used in the series and this is now available (although there seem to be some problems in coping with demand). It seems to be a very well thought out micro and reasonably priced too. Among the 'extras' which may be bought for it are adaptors for Prestel and Teletext which would enable users to receive the two services and any computer programmes which may be transmitted by them.

I would be very interested to hear from other EO members who have home computers too. The swapping of ideas and programs should be very worthwhile.

Whilst on the subject of swapping programs within the group, this is very easy if everyone has the same computer (usually done by storing programs onto a cassette which the receiving person can read in using his own computer). This would be an ideal situation which is, unfortunately, unlikely to occur. However, this need not be discouraging as programs can very often be easily transferred to different makes of computer by typing in the program from a listing provided, with changes to accommodate the differences between the two machines (this mainly applies to programs written in BASIC).

I hope that I have shown people who had doubts, that computing is not a difficult subject in which to get started and it is a good aid to teaching other subjects too. Computer programs are a resource easily shared by EO members and, perhaps the greatest consideration of all, it's FUN.

I am hoping to have one or two home computers in attendance at the conference in Birmingham on April 17th for people to see and use.

If you have any ideas, or can help in any way, please phone me on 08894 4726.

• RESOURCES • DAY •

It has been proposed that EO hold a RESOURCES day (in September?) with speakers from BBC radio, Acorn computers and a video company, amongst others. Is anyone interested in co-ordinating or helping to organise this? And what about suggestions as to possible venues? If interested, get in touch with Cherity and Farid Laniado (Hubbards Barn, South Creake, Fakenham, Norfolk Tel. South Creake (032 879) 470) or Iris Harrison.

• RESOURCES • DAY •

DISCOVERIES

Antonia Young

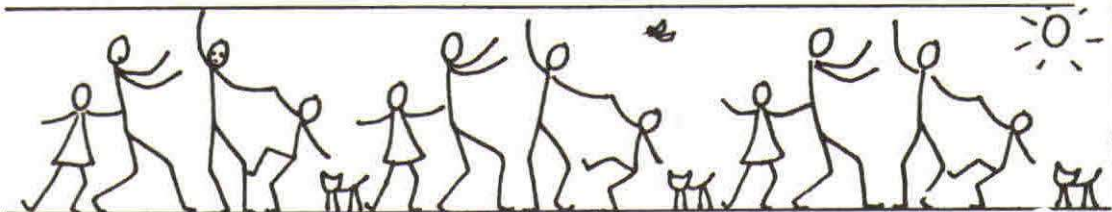
There are two discoveries that I've made which I think may be of benefit to a lot of other members:

We attribute Ursula's enthusiasm for reading to have been awakened when she started on Sheila McCullagh's "One, Two, Three and Away" series of readers. She brought these home from school each day (until her teacher forbade it, claiming that there was competition being set up in her infant class: she did manage to finish the series, gradually, at school).

It was last July when we made our decision (urged by Ursula) to educate her ourselves. I immediately started sorting through what we wanted to work on with her. I knew she would want to continue with Sheila McCullagh's next series of readers, the Hummingbirds, which are mostly imaginative fairy tales with pleasing and varied illustrations, so I went to order them from our local library. They did not stock them, but said they'd obtain them for us. All through the summer I enquired about them, and it was late October before they came up with any: only four out of the series of twelve - these had been donated to the library by the publishers following the library's enquiries. The library at that point made the decision not to purchase the rest, since it is apparently not the policy of North Yorkshire to purchase "school books". For the same reason they could not obtain them from other branches. Ursula read the first two books immediately, but we had to save the other two since they were from towards the end of the scheme, and considerably harder to read. Ursula wrote to the author (and received a very friendly reply, suggesting we ask our library to help); I approached our Advisor and he said he would bring some of the titles the following week. Several weeks went by. Ursula telephoned the Education Authority, asked for our Advisor, left a message for him. Thus summonsed, he came round the following day, only to tell us that the books are so popular that all within the area are in full use.

We wrote to the publishers, who told us to order through a bookshop. At £1.55 each, I only ordered two - these took six weeks to arrive and were read in two days.

But today I've struck the real luck that I'd like to advise others of: I went to Bradford Library (25 miles away). It was the Children's Librarian there who helpfully advised me, firstly, that as a home educator I am entitled to the special facilities open to teachers, and secondly, that from their Education Department on the 7th floor, teachers could obtain books which are not available to the general public. On reaching the 7th floor, my arrival was welcomed by a waiting librarian who took me straight to their shelf of Hummingbird books. She asked no documentation from me, not even a library card, but regretted that I could only take out 30 books at a time, and only for a term at a time (though these could be renewed by phone). It feels as though I've discovered a goldmine!



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Compiled by Hazel Clawley

Letters



The death of the man who put the 'otherwise' in education cannot pass without praise by Education Otherwise. We are grateful to Lord Butler for his liberal thinking when inserting that wisest of clauses in the 1944 Education Act. I wonder what that act would have looked like if drafted by members of the present government.

Their attitude towards the one asset that we need to treasure and nurture is plainly lacking Lord Butler's wisdom. I have just read in 'Where' (Advisory Centre of Education magazine) of the closure of the 'Children's Committee' set up in 1978, and felt so sad that these dedicated people working on behalf of the child's view should be so shabbily treated, their findings having to be withheld due to differing views held by the DHSS. The tactics used by the government to make the Committee's life impossibly limited leave me to conclude that 'they' don't really care about the growth and true welfare of children. I feel shocked and angry.

If this is the respect that is given to education in its proper sense, then how easy it is for them to listen to those advisors who don't approve of home education and quietly try to take away our freedom.

How fragile those precious words of 1944 seem in 1982.

Kate Freeman
Southview Cottage
Wick Lane
Devizes
Wilts.

Speaking as the editor of the Association of Breastfeeding Mothers Newsletter, I would like to point out that a good editor must have a free hand and plenty of elbow room in order to do a good job. In my experience, people do not join voluntary associations for the chance to participate in a mini democracy, but for the services they offer. In other words, if the train runs on time, your members will be happy.

I have to confess that I do not know, nor am I desperate to learn, what the Core Group is. I subscribe to your newsletter for the continued reassurance that children educated at home do not become permanent misfits and also ideas for what to do for one's children at home. It certainly meets these needs. I also joined in the hope of finding other South London parents with six year olds at home but so far have not managed this. Perhaps you could consider putting an asterisk, on your contact list, by the name of the children actually at home?

Peggy Thomas
131 Mayow Rd.
SE26 4HZ.

Dear EO,

I would like a pen friend. I am nearly seven I do not go to school. I like horses, swimming racing with my friends. I like dancing gymnastics riding my bike cooking and being quiet.

from Claire Jean Clohessy
25 Fourth Ave.
Rainworth
Notts.
NG21 0BZ.

After reading "EO 1982" (December) I'd like to say this: Hold your horses! Propaganda alone will never convince the majority of British people to educate their children themselves. Many of the mums around here can see that their children are unhappy at school. They want to see them be happier, but they don't know how to go about it.

Any housewife gets showered with advice about how to feed and clean the baby, but nobody talks about the baby's spiritual and mental needs. And as long as that is not common routine and until it becomes common knowledge, people (or should I say mothers?) will not be able to educate their children happily at home.

Sigrun Macgilchrist
35 Mayfield Ave.
Stranraer.

As Annie Wilton-Jones pointed out in the February newsletter, most EO literature states that social isolation is not usually a problem. However, as this is the aspect that most concerns me I should be interested to hear how other members coped with it.

We have one child, Jon, who is nearly three, and we live in a small community with few neighbouring children. We do see other children several times a week, those being friends whom we travel to visit, but I am not sure how that situation would change once they go to school.

I should love to hear from anybody, but perhaps particularly from anyone who has been in a similar situation.

Jill Gillings
Creg-dy-Shee
Cooil
Bradden
Isle of Man.

By its very existence, EO emphasises the importance of family togetherness and the responsibility of parents for caring for their children. It would seem inappropriate, therefore, for the EO conference to offer only "restricted facilities for children". The conference may not be "seen as a

'domestic' meeting of families" but at least two of the subjects covered are of especial interest to the parents who are about to embark on EO and who are likely to have a young family.

I am sure that I am not alone among EO members in believing that a young child's place is with his parents yet, with 400 or more adults expected, facilities are to be provided for only a small number of young children from 2 years old upwards. The child of under 2 particularly needs his mother's presence for emotional and, if breastfeeding, practical reasons and yet no provision at all seems to have been made for these babies and toddlers.

I appreciate that the lack of facilities is partly because of the venue but I consider that the provision of facilities for children should be given priority. If necessary the venue should be changed, even if this results in higher costs.

I would suggest that, for the next conference, availability of the following facilities should be considered:

- 1) Changing room for babies.
- 2) Playroom for toddlers and youngsters.
- 3) Quiet room for naps.
- 4) Closed circuit TV to allow parents to keep in touch with the conference while looking after their children.

It would seem to be much more in keeping with the ideals of an organisation so much concerned with meeting children's needs to offer such facilities.

As a postscript, while I don't wish to get involved in any controversy about editorial policy, I very much enjoyed seeing children's work included in the newsletter and hope this will continue to appear in future editions.

Annie Wilton-Jones
c/o 50 Rock Rd.
Olton
Solihull
West Midlands.

[Please see note about children on page 7 - Ed.]

Re. February's editorial: After two years on the national management committee of a Play charity, and longer involved with other national voluntary bodies, I have a fear of constitutionally organised 'democratic' bodies. The idea of EO growing to fight for alternative education wherever there is an unhappy child in school is appealing. It is a shame that at the moment the examples set by practising EO families are not readily known and available to people concerned for the lives of their children. But is striking out for a possible membership up in the thousands, large selected committees, central administration and policy making etc. the right way to go? For me there are inevitable strings attached to that kind and size of development. For instance, EO gets so big that we need immediately available public faces, full-time contacts, an office that press, government offices etc. can relate to and the budget and fund-raising that goes with it. It would be eminently feasible to set up such an organisation and find £5,000 a year to run it... for a few years. Then, as often happens, the staff and one or two officers become more important than the organisation as a whole, and just when that actually seems to work OK, the money dries up.

It doesn't actually matter what the scale is, I have experienced it happening with small local groups that have gone that way. A few years of MSC or grant finance have sent them delightfully growing like wild, at the same time killing off the grass roots involvement and ending up with a central democratic structure no-one actually participates in democratically. When things get tight there are no volunteers left to pick up the pieces and take over when salaries run out.

It struck me lately as being really good that Iris Harrison and her daughter Andrea are actually involved in 'officer positions'. What better way to educate your children than have them participate in the running of real things working ultimately for them? I am interested and concerned now about

the running of EO because my life has recently become more child-oriented. But grand university conferences where I am encouraged not to bring my children, and a formal charitable or otherwise structure that would prevent my children's eventual involvement in the group require me to alter the lifestyle I have come to feel as important for my family. I spent three years participating in worthwhile organisations that dealt with the welfare of children - all the time leaving my two to suffer in school or, just as bad, my wife to suffer unaided with their upbringing. Now I have two children out of school, a separation from my wife, and a commitment to find some way to participate in an organisation that really could have power from the bottom up rather than the annual token voting for effectively ruling officers as we have to suffer under in our suspect parliamentary system.

However laudable the idea of our duty to the thousands of unhappy children in this country's schools, we have to work with what this organisation is about. To me, that centres around families, be they nuclear, communal, extended or whatever, and the children in them. It might be possible to fit within that the kind of organisation your editorial envisages without losing the radical outlook on life that every practising member of EO has by nature of what they do (even if they aren't all as politically radical as me!): dangerous it would certainly be - wise? I am not sure.

Ivan Sokolov
12 Dorset St.
Birkby
Huddersfield
West Yorks.
HD1 5HF.



The hard way

Edwina Theunissen

Dear Friends, Fellow EOers and anyone who'll help,

I've wanted to write for ages but time is so limited. Herewith our story.

Jacob is 6½. He started school at 5 and was there for a year. It was a village school with 42 pupils. He used to come home like a colled spring and run from one end of the house to the other. He seemed terribly frustrated but we were never able to discover why, except that we thought that it might be because he couldn't (and still can't) read. In fact, he CAN read but doesn't want to, so since he's been at home we've not tried much reading. He is beginning to write, though, and there's no mental block about writing. We de-schooled him last September and we've found it very satisfying. It's a bit awkward trying to 'teach' his sister as well (Louisa, 5) but we are definitely making progress, albeit slowly. I do believe that they will teach themselves to read in time - with my guidance, of course. I was very heartened to read Jackie Fearnley's experiences with Rose and her lovely casual and patient attitude. My husband, Andy, and I have panicked more than once over all this but I do feel we're doing the right thing at the moment for Jacob. He learns much better when left alone to get on with it, than being bombarded with 'pre-reading schemes' etc.

I am not a teacher and am learning to teach the hard way - and enjoying it too. However, we live in a large, time-consuming farmhouse, and we unexpectedly produced another daughter (Cornelia, 25/3/81) last year and I feel permanently guilty that I'm not giving enough time to their schooling. This is underlined by the last visit we had from reps of the LEA.

The first visit was in October. The Nursery Advisor/Inspector was new at the job and was accompanied by a most reasonable man who was presumably showing her the ropes. Although she (Eiddwen Jones by name) seemed reserved and mildly disapproving, she made helpful suggestions, and didn't question why Jacob had been de-schooled or whether I was 'qualified'.

Mrs. Jones came again last week but this time she was accompanied by Edgar Lewis, Area Education Officer, whose mind is locked shut. He demanded examples of the children's work and by sheer luck I had some of Jacob's writing (letters dictated by me - he can't yet write words himself) and a drawing or two of Louisa's. Eventually he said that he would like to be frank and that this "wasn't good enough". He went on to compare Jacob's standard of writing with the hypothetical standard of children his age in school and ended by saying, in effect, that Jacob must be reading fluently by July or he must go back to school.

I was lulled into complacency by the first visit and was unprepared for this approach. I murmured on about being satisfied with progress but I was too taken aback by his hostility and didn't demolish him as I should have done. I've reread 'First Steps' and see that Mr. Lewis is not entitled to set such standards. So I must do better next time (April 20th). They both said that I must keep every single example of their (Jacob's and Louisa's) 'work' - every cardboard box, everything. It makes one very self-conscious and tends to take the joy out of things. I am trying to keep a diary of doings but without fabrications it looks quite dreary. Should I draw up a diary of false events to please them, or what?

I freely admit to being disorganised and my guilt is not helping my dealings with the LEA. If I was sure I was doing all that is necessary I'd flatten them both, but if I have one chink in my armour I'll collapse at the first criticism. I should think organisation should improve as Cornelia gets older but I've got to keep the LEA at bay till then.

Could someone please give me a vague idea of what I ought to be doing with my day, and then perhaps I could see if I'm going wrong and if so, how far. I may even be on the right course and things are very hit and miss at present. It had been fun till the visitation but now I need to be sure of my ground.

I've been using Fletcher's 'Mathematics for Schools' but there's quite a bit of reading in the fourth book so we're using 'The Old Fashioned Adding Up Book' at the moment. Maths is not a problem. Jacob knows most of his letters and to try and interest him in words I've drawn his attention to words which rhyme. He understands this and can now write 'hat', 'cat' etc. by himself, which is a great stride forward for us but I couldn't get E. Lewis to see that. I've ordered 'Teaching Montessori in the Home' and am hanging all my hopes on that.

It's so lovely watching them learn and I'm not giving up without a fight. My husband is all for it but hasn't much time for teaching, although they do learn about animals with him and other farm things and mechanical matters.

I hope you can make sense of this and can find someone who might understand and/or help.

Edwina Theunissen, Pum Rhyd, Marchwiel, Wrexham, Clwyd.



Let them play

Karen and Dudley Walter

We have three sons, Abie aged 7, Barnaby aged 5 and Jesse aged one. Barnaby has never been to a school of any sort and Abie was taken away after one term. Our reasons for doing this are many, the main one being that we do not feel that school is a very suitable place for our children to grow and learn in. At home the boys spend most of the day playing, and fighting, as boys do. Over the past couple of years we have realised that to leave children to play is probably the best way for them to learn. Getting down to reading and writing and simple sums, it seems that the boys are picking these up without any pushing or shoving from us. Indeed, this was one of the main things that put us off schools, the fact that children are pressurised into reading and writing by a certain age. Admittedly, we have gone through spells of panic and wondered whether we should be 'teaching' the children more formally. It is obvious, though, that this is not necessary and it is much more important to let the children enjoy themselves and do things at their own pace. As far as the argument goes for school being a good place to make friends, we have no worries. For a start, we are lucky to be living on a nice, old, council estate and although there are not many young children around we are surrounded by relations. So the children, even though they have completely different personalities (Abie being quiet and contented, Barnaby very fiery and boisterous), they are both very sociable and very open, friendly children. For ourselves, we have been greatly helped by reading other EO members' letters, and although it is not always easy being the minority we feel more and more sure that we are doing the best for our children.

reviews



Books and other publications

OXFORD JUNIOR HISTORY SERIES, books 1-5

by Roy Burrell

£1.50 each

Reviewer: Julie Duff (together with the enthusiasm of Sian and Andrew Duff)

We stumbled upon this excellent series quite by accident - when browsing. Intended for 'schools', they will probably need ordering, but they are well worth the time and trouble. Clear short stories on the events of the past, together with really beautiful pictures, make these the best history books I have ever seen. Andrew loves the pictures of famous battles in particular! We use them as pleasure reading (although there are set exercises if you wished to make use of them), each story being short enough to supply facts and excitement in about 5-10 minutes of reading time. My two have not had their heads out of them since we bought them - superb value at £1.50, as each book is large (28cm x 22cm) and thick.

The five books are:

1. The Invaders
2. The Middle Ages
3. The Tudors and Stuarts
4. Britain becomes a Great Power
5. The Modern Age

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THE CHILDREN?

by Catherine Kiddle

published by Spindlegood, 70 Lynhurst Ave., Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 2HY. 1981.

£2.35

Reviewer: Julie Webb

An account of the travels, work and home (in this case caravan)-education of a group of actor/artists and their children over a five year period. The approaches to education that were tried and experiences shared by the group make fascinating reading, and there is an interesting look at gypsy social life, work and education of which the author, herself a parent and part of the performing group, had personal experience as a teacher.

SOURCES OF REVIEWS OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Submitted by Valerie Stone

SCHOOL LIBRARIAN (Journal of the School Library Association): resumes of recently published books with age groups and publication details.

THE HORN MAGAZINE (about books for Children and Young People): reviews and resumes under subjects.

GROWING POINT: reviews and resumes.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN (and Children's TV Reviews): the Winter 1981 issue reviewed pre-recorded story cassettes.

The above should be found in the reference section of children's libraries.

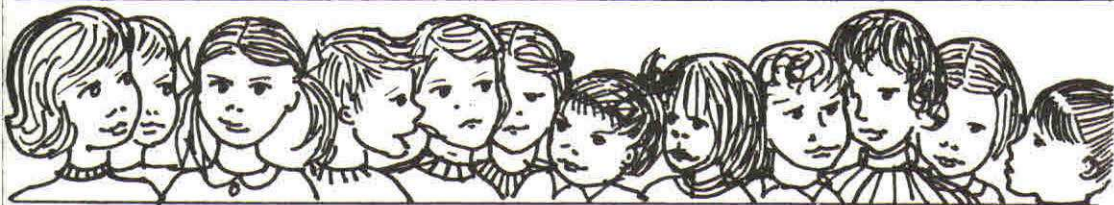
WORLD STUDIES 8-13

A curriculum project funded jointly by the Schools Council and the Rowntree Charitable Trust.

Reviewer: Caroline Grant

Combining aspects of the human sciences and some counselling techniques, this is perhaps the sort of thing that might nowadays fill the slot called R.E. in schools. While many of the activities suggested are best suited to groups, the project should nevertheless provide plenty of stimulating and imaginative material for those learning at home. The aim of the project is "to help children between the age of 8 and 13 to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills which are relevant to living in a multi-cultural society which itself forms part of an independent world". It attempts to foster a sensitivity towards other cultures in the belief that this will free people to pursue their own interests wisely and without harming the legitimate interests of others. A variety of games and activities (over 70) are suggested with a view to developing the skills (if that is the right word) of reasoning, enquiry, a critical approach to information, empathy, justice and fairness and the like, and topics introduced include peace and conflict, trade and development, environment and the future. The project covers an enormous amount of ground, is extremely well thought out, and I found the whole thing very exciting. There is also an excellent bibliography.

Further details can be obtained from: Simon Fisher, World Studies Project, 12 Fairfield Road, Bedminster, Bristol BS3 1LG.



HOME MADE TOYS AND GAMES FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

A booklet produced by the Newbury & Wantage branch of the National Childbirth Trust

available from Newbury & Wantage branch/NCT, c/o 18 Essex St. Newbury, Berks. 70p plus 25p p.&p.

Reviewer: Caroline Grant

At last, a use for all those yoghurt cartons, milk bottle tops, rubber bands, sacks of sawdust and odd socks you've been saving up for rainy days for the past ten years! The booklet contains suggestions for a wide variety of toys and games, some old, some new, but all relatively easy to execute and guaranteed to impress your friends as well as your infants. It is also written with a sense of humour which I found appealing.

TV and Radio

LEAVE ME ALONE

by John Challen (Radio 4, Fri. 15th Jan., 3.05 p.m.)

Reviewer: Julie Webb

As you might deduce from the title, this play was about a child withdrawn from school because she experienced a lot of teasing and found it hard to concentrate in noisy and overcrowded conditions.

Good propaganda for E.O., I thought; parents' legal rights were clearly emphasized, as were some of the benefits of home education (one-to-one attention, competition against oneself only and a certain amount of learning from life, albeit in a very structured situation). Possible problems were also given an airing: lack of companionship, neighbourhood gossip and ostracization, and disruption of domestic routine.

Inevitably the villain of the piece appeared in the form of a very plausible L.E.A. inspector who discussed deschooling at length with the parents and, goaded by the aggression of a hot-tempered father, finally threatened court cases, E.W.O.s and care orders, suggesting at last that they send their daughter to another school where she would be away from her previous relationship problems.

The parents, for reasons that weren't properly gone into (unless I missed them in the noise of 'coal' being dumped on the kitchen floor!), decided to take his advice, and our heroine was subjected to even worse taunting at the new school due to rumours that she had been expelled from the last one.

Moral (I suppose): stick to your guns!

STARTING SCHOOL

Open University Series: Childhood 5-10 (BBC 2, Thurs. 11th Feb., 12.15 p.m.)

Reviewer: Caroline Grant

I thought it worth writing something on this programme, since it contained some real gems, or are they chestnuts?

Just in case one might be wondering what happens in the first year at school, the programme began by asking: what do 5 year olds do in school? Any guesses? The main thing seemed to be to learn how to fit into the school system.

There was then a scene showing the headmaster meeting with parents of pupils-to-be, and assuring them in a jocular fashion that there is no need for concern if their children come home and say, in response to being asked what they have done at school, "nothing"...

Then on to the children in their first term at school. There is a lot to learn in these first weeks - where the toilets are, where to line up in the playground...

And what does the teacher have to say? - Some children come to school thinking that they can do as they like, but they have to learn to do as they're told.

We then had a view of conversation time. - "Note how the teacher guides the children in what they say", i.e. drawing out what she wants and suppressing anything she deems to be irrelevant.

The teacher's life is very busy and demanding, and not made any easier by such things as children who have difficulty in finding their own clothes when getting changed after gym - hardly surprising when they are all wearing the same grey uniform.

The odd interesting exchange took place between child and teacher, e.g. Child: "I can't do that myself"; Teacher: "Yes you can, you're a big girl". Or again, Child: "I don't want any milk"; Teacher: "But I think mummy'd like you to have some... I'll have to see mummy then."

A term later, we are pleased to hear(?), the children should be more disciplined and able to concentrate.

NOTICES



CORE GROUP

The next meeting will be held on Sunday April 18th from 10.30 a.m. See page 7 for further details.

EO PUBLICATIONS

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

School Is Not Compulsory	75p
Early Years	50p
Newsletter 21 (vol.6 no.1)	75p
Digest of Newsletters 1-4 (1977)	50p

Copies of the new INTRODUCTORY LITERATURE with membership form are also available from the Membership Secretary, or they can be picked up from the Birmingham conference.

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

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 (EO members) or £3.60 (non-members). Please write, with the money, to: Stephanie Leland, 2 St. Edmund's Cottages, Bove Town, Glastonbury, Somerset.

CONTACT LIST

You should have received the new one with this newsletter. If you haven't, please contact the Membership Secretary.

TYPewriter

The Membership Secretary is in desperate need of a (cheap) electric typewriter. Any offers to The Burntlands please.

TYPISTS

Needed to help with producing digests of back copies of the Newsletter. Please contact Di Cox if you might be able to offer your services.

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTION

Please note that the subscription for overseas members has now been set at £2.50 above the UK rate to cover postage. For those outside Europe this covers surface mail only.

REVIEWS EDITOR

Helen Holland is acting as Reviews Editor, i.e. she is receiving books for review from publishers. Actual book reviews for publication in the Newsletter should be sent to the Newsletter Editor as usual.

BOOKS FOR SALE/EXCHANGE

If you have any books which you would like to sell or exchange with other members, please send details to the Editor.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS / BIRTHS

Please keep the Membership Secretary informed of changes of address and new additions, possibly via your local co-ordinator. Such things might get a mention in the newsletter so that other members can amend their Contact List.

MEMBERS OF THE NCT, PPA, HOUSEWIVES REGISTER

- and the like: have you thought of offering to give a talk about EO to your local group or writing a piece for your local newsletter? Mention the central address, and encourage enquirers to send a s.a.e.!

CO-ORDS' CORNER

An open letter to co-ordinators

Simon Grant

Dear Co-ordinator,

Thankyou for your services that you have given, whatever they are. From personal experience and talking to many co-ordinators, I know that there are different possible approaches to co-ordinating (or whatever you like to call it). Some people may not have decided what is the best way for them to function as co-ordinators, and there may be others who might volunteer to act as co-ordinators if they had a few more ideas about what could be done. To both of these groups especially I offer these thoughts.

I think we all agree that the one vital job is to initiate contact with and between local members, and to keep in touch. Beyond this it is a matter of taste : but some co-ordinators have done things like arranging local meetings, getting articles in local papers or interviews on local radio, having stalls at fairs and other events, and trying to get the posters seen in public places. All of these are worthwhile, and some bring in more local members. Helping local members with difficulties can be rewarding or at least eye-opening (how many problems do you know about?), and producing local newsletters can help to keep members feeling in touch.

There is a vast quantity of knowledge, experience, resources and services, which EO members wish to offer to other members, which I suspect goes very largely untapped, probably because the information is not easily to hand (and possibly completely inaccessible). I have volunteered to take over the role of co-ordinating co-ordinators from Bruce Cox, having in mind the task of establishing, with the help of co-ordinators, more effective ways of collecting the desired information and distributing it to where it is wanted.

When a new member joins, ideally a local co-ordinator would be informed of them and their interests, and he or she would tell the new member about other local members and their resources, etc., and about any other people in the region with particularly similar interests. When an established member wants to develop a new interest, or project, or whatever, they should be able to refer quickly to some up-to-date source of information and get in touch with likely people. If such knowledge was at people's fingertips, ideally someone with spare time to offer could find out who was asking for help of some kind, and perhaps give some.

An important step towards this is to provide more information to co-ordinators. I hope to be able to send members' completed questionnaires on to their local co-ordinator, after looking at them myself. This is because there is a lot of information of them which is relevant to local interests rather than national ones, and it would be a hopeless task trying to pass on all of it to everyone in the country. When this is done, I hope co-ordinators will be able to fill in gaps, check and keep information up to date, and check what information the members wish to have circulated, and which not. The present contact list is an example of needing this sort of checking : the inevitable transcription errors ensure that there are many mistakes or omissions. These can be rectified by the individual writing to the membership secretary (Andrea Harrison) or myself, but I hope you will agree that it would be preferable for the correction to be passed on via the local co-ordinator, as long as it does get through in the end.

For the next contact list I would like to provide, by people's names, a very short coded list indicating a few of the more obvious types of resources, skills etc. This may make the contact list more useful and interesting, but there is still room for national resource lists (of some kind), and also more detailed resource lists, which could contain all sorts of information and be extremely useful. The regions could well be larger than just one county, because I am sure that there are many people who would be prepared to travel to a neighbouring county to meet someone of particular shared interest.

Also it is hoped, at some stage, to provide co-ordinators with access to people across the country who could help in very specific situations or difficulties beyond the resources of the particular co-ordinator. This needs care, to avoid unfortunate individuals being deluged with requests for help.

We met with a few other co-ordinators recently and I found the discussion interesting and helpful. One point to discuss in such a meeting is covering (temporarily) any areas without a current co-ordinator. Also you may well find that different people are interested in different tasks. One may like to send out introductory literature; another may be keen on publicity and keeping in touch with the media; another may like to keep regional information such as I have outlined above. And you may find that you can offer complementary help to members; one knowing more about the law maybe; another knowing about and dealing with LEAs; etc.

Even where an area is covered reasonably by co-ordinators, I think there is often room for other members to volunteer, even if not as regular co-ordinators, to help with such tasks (and there must be more that I have not thought of). The main condition is that everyone in an area works together in close co-operation. I feel that it is the quality of this co-operation which will determine the local strength of EO as a whole.

Please do discuss these matters with each other, and let me know of your thoughts/decisions; and if you can arrange a meeting of co-ordinators in your region, please let me know so that someone who is active nationally can come and meet you.

When discussing information one ought to mention privacy. While collecting as much information as possible, it is very important that member's wishes regarding confidentiality are respected. Can I then ask YOU (ALL CO-ORDINATORS) to do these things: check the accuracy of all the entries on the contact list; check members' telephone numbers; discover which children are out of school; and ask whether members wish these details to be published on the contact list next time. (Ooh! And Postcodes!)

Please let me know what you think/feel about all this when you send me the information I have requested above, soon if possible.

Looking forward to hearing for you,

Good luck and best wishes.

Simon Grant

Pin Farm House
South Hinksey
OXFORD OX1 5BB

(Probably moving soon....)

New Co-ordinators

The following are changes and additions to the list of local co-ordinators which appeared in the Feb. newsletter; see contact list for addresses.

Avon	New co-ord. Meg & David Robertson-Shopper
Bucks.	Julie Webb is joining the Wests who have been acting as co-ords for Bucks. as well as Beds.
N. Cheshire	New co-ord. Roy Prescott
S. Cheshire	New co-ord. Andy Anderson
Cleveland	New co-ord. Christopher Addison
Cornwall	WANTED (Bob & Collette Mills have moved from the area)
Leicestersh.	Gillian Wilson-Dickson is joining Jeff Edwards in Leics. to deal with Leicester city and West Leics.
Liverpool	New co-ord. Jean Lovius
Wilts.	Kate Freeman replaces the Veales
W. Yorks	New co-ord. Ivan Sokolov

Thanks to all the above for services rendered or to be rendered!
 If you are a new co-ordinator and have not yet received your pack of introductory literature etc., please let the Membership Secretary know.
 We trust that all offers to co-ordinate have been properly acknowledged!

Co-ordinators are still WANTED for :

Berkshire	Derbyshire	Northumberland
Shropshire	Staffordshire	Tyne & Wear
Wales generally!	and much of Scotland.	

Anyone interested contact Simon Grant.


Co-ordinators please note

NOTICE RE. MEMBERSHIP FORMS

Before parting with any of your introductory literature, please complete the 'indicate here' column as follows:

	Currently available:		
Newsletter digests.....	NONE		
Back issues of newsletter.....	21	22	
GWS.....	19	20	21
	22	23	24

available from:



The Kipper Office
 Stable Back
 Langley Priory
 DISEWORTH
 Derby DE7 2QA



Island Zipangu

a fairy tale submitted by Sigrun Macgilchrist

Once upon a time, a king had a son who did not learn. All the best tutors in the kingdom were asked to teach him. They were learned scholars and they tried their best to lecture him when all he did was to look out of the window at the sun and the butterflies. He liked to wander through town and countryside and everyone liked him, because he was very friendly.

When he was sixteen, his father became very angry with him for his lack of knowledge. He sent his son to the island Zipangu. It was uninhabited, but it was warm all year round and had fruit trees and a river. A boat brought him provisions once in a while, but the crew weren't supposed to talk to him.

He wept bitterly and regretted his carefree days. But after a few days, a storm broke out and a shipwrecked man was swept ashore. He was starving, as he had had nothing to eat for a few days. He had thought that he had clung to a box of provisions, but when he opened it he found that it was full of books! How he cursed his bad luck! The prince, however, was pleased to be able to talk to someone and he soon told the stranger about himself. The stranger in turn told him about his travels and the prince was astonished at his friend's knowledge. He discovered that learning could be fun. With his friend's help, he read all the books and asked for more study material which duly arrived along with his other provisions.

When the prince was twenty, the king announced that he would hold an examination in a year's time. The person with the highest marks would succeed him on the throne. The year passed and many young people gathered on the appointed day. One person appeared wearing a hood. He asked if he could remain unknown should he fail. The wish was granted. Everyone started to write and continued for about an hour, and then one after the other had to stop until everyone was looking at the hooded stranger who was still busy. When the papers were read, his was the best - and, of course, it was the prince who inherited the kingdom...

minutes

OF CORE GROUP MEETING

Held on Thurs. 1st April 1982, 10.30 a.m., at party headquarters.
Minutes written by John Elenor.

1. MINUTES of the previous meeting were read and disproved.
2. MATTERS ARISING
 - 2.1. Membership for public figures (ref:3.2). Agreed to invite Rhodes Boyson, Prof. Cox (no relation) and Lord Denning to become Honorary Members.
 - 2.2. Spring Conference (ref:6). As a result of requests from various members, it had been agreed that a more lively format was needed. Consequently the afternoon panel session is being replaced by a guest appearance of punk group The Strugglers playing hits from their latest album 'E-O-addy-1
 - 2.3. 'Teach Your Own' (ref:8). It was reported that John Holt is rewriting the book in comic-strip for the UK market; negotiations are proceeding with Beano and Dandy, and cereal rights have been acquired by Kellogs.
 - 2.4. Unsatisfactory members (ref:15). The Disciplinary Committee reported that three members had been expelled for throwing bricks through the local Education Office windows, two had been severely reprimanded for not snarling at a picture of Sir Keith Dozeth, and one had been reported to NCCCL for calling another member 'middle-class'.
3. REPORTS
 - 3.1. Mem. Sec. There was no report since membership records had inadvertently been eaten by an adventurous goat. It was thought that, owing to rail strikes and postal delays, there had been a temporary hiccup in the figures; the goat has subsequently died.
 - 3.2. Enquiries Sec. ? ?
 - 3.3. Treasurer. The (former) treasurer had sent his report from the Bahamas, stating that there was very little money left in the current account but he was hoping to improve the situation by means of intensive local recruitment.
4. EO PRODUCTIONS
 - 4.1. Lapel badge. A design had been submitted that featured several children guiltily attempting to repair a triangle they had broken. It was agreed after much discussion to defer a decision until we had consulted members.
 - 4.2. Car sticker. A design had been submitted bearing the legend 'Autonomous Education Rules OK'. It was agreed after much discussion to defer a decision until we had consulted members.
 - 4.3. Shopping bag. A design had been submitted which featured an Eeoh tree being stripped of its assets by a flock of birds. It was agreed after much discussion to defer a decision until we had consulted members.
 - 4.4. Uniform. A design had been submitted featuring trees, birds, triangles and gold stars. There was considerable discussion as to whether the pocket badge should be integral to the blazer or available separately; but it was eventually agreed to defer a decision, as a prelude to forgetting the whole idea.
5. EXAMINATIONS It was felt that, in order to maintain standards of Otherwise education, EO should institute its own 16+ examination. Members agreed that there should be compulsory papers in Autonomy, Conservationism and Ecology, with options to include Basket-weaving, Bee-keeping, Carpentry, Car Maintenance, Pottery, Lottery and Provocative Editorialism. The examination should be called 'EO level'.
6. AOB - deferred to next meeting.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING Since the Core Group was set to self-destruct at the end of the present meeting, no further date was fixed.

meeting evaporated at 12 noon.

!!
! HELP !
! needed ! !

NEWSLETTER EDITORS

If you fancy trying your hand at editing an issue of the newsletter, contact Bruce Cox (Grey Row Cottage, Flixton Road, St. Margaret s. Elmham, Harleston, IP20 0PL, Tel. (098682) 315.

CO-ORDINATORS

For those areas not yet covered (see list of co-ords. in last issue and additions/amendments in this). Anyone interested should contact Simon Grant, Pin Farm House, South Hinksey, Oxford, OX1 5BB, Tel. (0865) 736224.

TYPISTS

If you can help with typing out digests of back newsletters, contact Dianne Cox (address as above).

small ads

Family in their second year of educating 13 year old twin boys at home would like another family doing - or thinking of doing - the same (preferably with child/children of a similar age) to share very large rented house with extensive gardens overlooking Grasmere Lake in the centre of the Lake District. For more information phone GILLIAN KELLY 096 65 482.

Does anyone know of a cottage to rent anywhere? If so, please contact Sue, Stuart, Hollie and Heidi Asman, 'Bridle Cottage', 30 Mill St., Fontmell Magna, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 0NU.

Snippets from Growing Without Schooling & Rosedale School Newsletter

The following snippets were culled by Jane Davies from GWS 22.

Leopold Kohr, perhaps the first modern philosopher to write about why small institutions are generally better than big, writes in his interesting book 'The Breakdown of Nations' that E.F. Schumacher, when someone called him a crank, replied, "Some people call me a crank. I don't mind at all. A crank is a low-cast, low-capital tool. It can be used on a moderate small scale. It is non-violent. And it makes revolutions."

Says John Holt, "I think the activity of home-schooling will tend to be both self-selecting and self-correcting. The people who choose to do it are likely to be the ones best fitted to do it; once doing it, they will tend either to get better at it or to give it up."

John Holt again: "For children reading (or adults for that matter), the most important thing is not that they should understand all of what they read. No-one does; what we get out of a piece of reading depends in large part on the experience we bring to it. What is important is that children should enjoy their reading enough to want to read more. The other thing that is important is that they should become better and better at getting meaning from context, for that is the supreme skill of a good reader. The trouble with telling children what words mean, or asking them to ask the dictionary to tell them, is that they don't get a chance to figure out the meaning of the word. Figuring out what you don't know or aren't sure of is the greatest intellectual skill of all."

From a cutting from the New York Times 20 or so years ago: Four youths appeared in General Sessions Court in connection with a series of break-ins. Judge Frank Epps, learning that they had quit school, gave them the choice of returning to school or going on the chain gang. Without hesitation, all four chose the chain gang.

The remaining snippets were culled by Caroline Grant from Rosedale School Newsletter 9.

By the time S. had been at school a year he had learned nothing - in fact he had gone backwards. We were told not to worry about his high intelligence that was not being challenged; the important thing was that he was being 'socialised'. This socialising seemed to take the form of other children hitting him and stealing his lunch. Apparently this experience is supposed to be 'character building' for the young. It seemed that to remove him from school would rob him of this important socialising aspect of his childhood.

People are always asking me if I feel 'confined' because I spend so much of my time with the children. Funny when you think that a job as a check out lady at Foodtown is supposed to be more liberating and challenging than caring for the growth of one's own children!

Growing Without Schooling is EO's sibling organisation in the USA. For details of subscription to GWS see page 31.

The Rosedale School 'Newsletter about alternatives in education' comes from New Zealand.

po in literature

Janice Owen

I don't know what will become of the boy: he's no good at school and no good at games. It isn't as if he even had any hobbies." So that indomitable woman, my mother, frequently addressed my father: in my hearing, of course. I can see how right she was. From my ninth to my fourteenth birthday my worried parents, despite increasing financial difficulties, showered me with fretwork sets, carpentering tools, painting materials, magic lantern, plasticine modelling sets, stamp albums etc. and I can see myself opening these parcels in my nursery, looking at them with lack-lustre eyes, breathing the while through my mouth, for I was adenoidal, and quietly and patiently stuffing the bewildering impedimenta out of sight.

But looking back, I can honestly say that I cannot remember when I could not play the piano. I dislike the term 'at the piano', so often used on posters and programmes to designate the accompanist, yet in my case the term is not inappropriate for it seems to me that as soon as I could toddle I was seized and flung, literally, at the piano. I had my first lessons when I was six or seven. Whatever proficiency I may now have is due entirely to the determination of my mother, for my approach, as usual, was lackadaisical. How I ever learned anything I cannot imagine for I was as obstinate as a mule when it came to practising. My mother, bless her heart, stood over me and I dug away with pretended diligence or I should have been knocked off the stool. My Nunc Dimittis from these painful sessions - the light at the end of the tunnel - came in sight when I was commanded to "play that page once more and breathe through your nose".

.....
My parents were never the ones to do things by halves; they withdrew me from my employment so that I might devote myself to the piano. I can see now that this sacrifice on their part was unjustified for I made only a pretence of practising. I still had to be coaxed to the piano. I look back now, having turned sixty, and realize that if I had really worked in those days I might have become a good pianist. When I think of boy prodigies like Heifetz, Elman, Menuhin, Josef Hoffman, Solomon, who had the passion, resolution and concentration to work and work and work away at their instruments, I come much nearer to understanding the expression 'born musician'. I was most certainly not in this category. Michael Hambourg was in despair, and with good reason! He could not force the horse to drink.

.....
So far as my music is concerned I am still something of a mystery even to myself. Dragged by his mother to the keyboard, the unwilling, snivelling child was found to have talent. Why? None of my family were musical at all, and I scarcely ever approached the piano as a boy unless I were driven to it. I did not absorb music into my being until my middle twenties, this time driven on by John Coates: a retarded development. Out of this unpromising start a good musician - for I must concede myself that qualification - has emerged. Music is my be-all and end-all. I cannot imagine living any other kind of life than that which I have lived. But I wish I had come to grips with it earlier.

from: "Am I Too Loud", the memoirs of Gerald Moore, the most famous of accompanists.



meet the editor...

Caroline Grant

So who am I? Difficult to say in a paragraph, even if I knew, but I could toss out one or two harmless something-or-others to set the scene. I belong to that portion of the membership who do not yet have children of school age but who have basic ideological objections to schools as they now are and would prefer never to send their children there in the first place. Brought up in a singularly uninspiring town in North Wales, I attended school (the local comprehensive still vamped out as a sec. mod.) faithfully, if reluctantly, until sixth form days when I eventually managed to convince people that I could get through more 'work' if I stayed at home. (A few prolonged spells of being ill proved useful at this stage.) And when I think of my disastrous first year at school, when I was sick every morning and sometimes brought home by the crossing lady only to be taken back again, I feel so glad that my own child won't be made to go through such anxiety and frustration. University suited me better, despite occasional attacks of existential uncertainty as to the value of what I was doing, and I spent many blissful days in the Bodleian library absorbed in weighty tomes of medieval romances. Having not been tempted by the possibilities of an exciting career in the EEC or whatever, I'm now enjoying life with a small baby (and Simon), leading what is perhaps an even more tenuous existence than that of the Bethells in the small and cramped, but deliciously peaceful, attic of an ancient, not-quite-dilapidated farmhouse in a quaint and undiscovered little village just outside Oxford (perhaps I ought to write a guidebook). Having made various abortive attempts at joining communities, we are about to pack up our belongings and head back to Wales to buy the cheapest house we can find (does anyone know of one?). From there, we have vague plans to launch a journal called Prognoses (Simon's brainchild), amongst other things, and to continue our search for other people with whom we can form a community. And, of course, there are so many things yet to learn - shall I have a go at the fiddle or learn computing or teach Simon Welsh? - The future is open and I'm glad.



the final word...

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By Magdalene Grant, age 7 months, who has recently passed her 'EO' level in Creativity and hopes to be world-famous by the time she is $2\frac{1}{2}$.

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Will MEMBERS please contact their co-ordinator, where possible, with enquiries. Co-ordinators can then phone Di if necessary, and in this way they will be able to help subsequent enquirers with the same need.

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Publishers: please send copies for review to this address.

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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:

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