

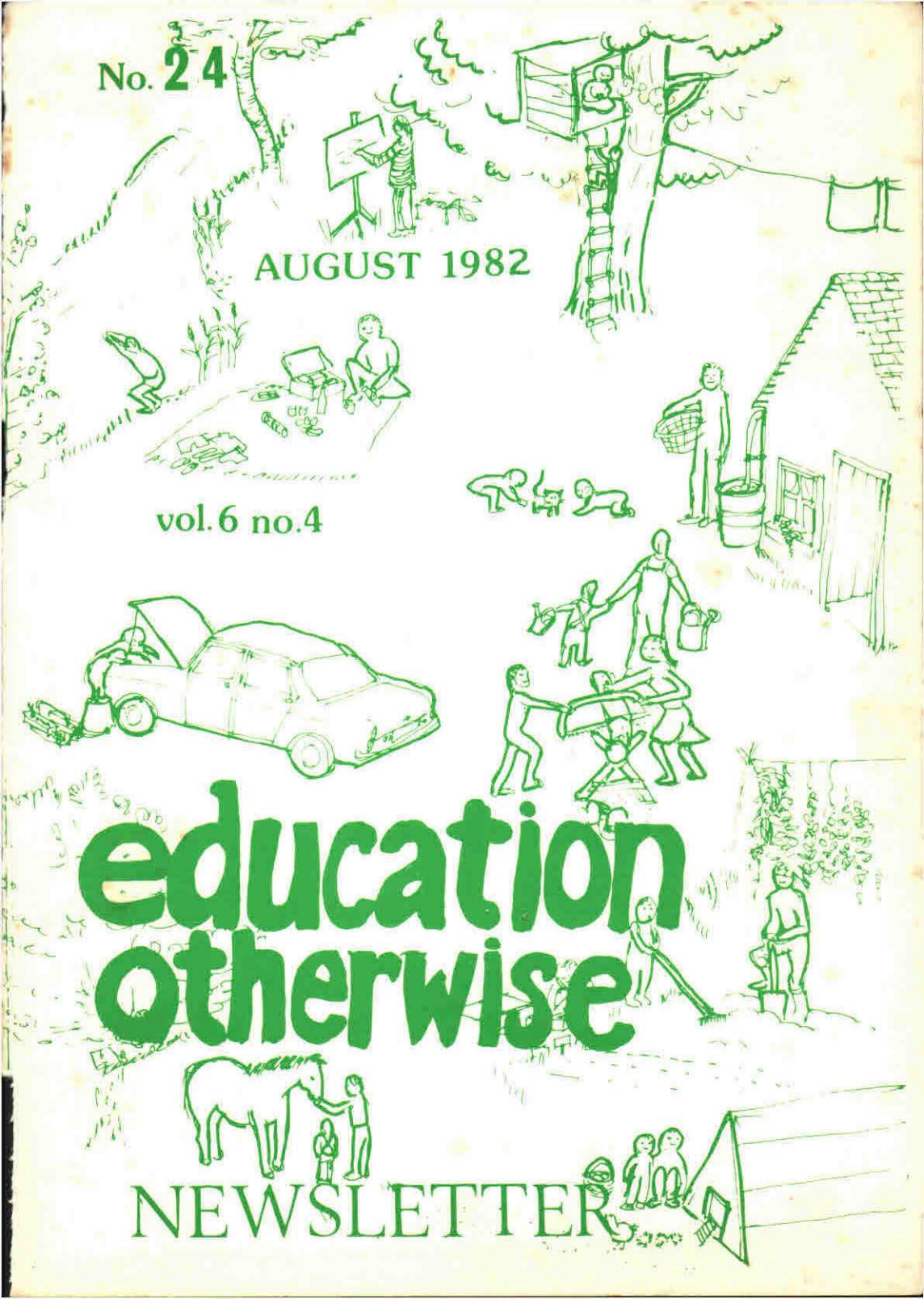
No. 24

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education otherwise

NEWSLETTER



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Your editor for the October issue
is John Elenor, 18 Eynsham Road,
London, W.12. Tel. 01-749-2199.
Deadline: August 31st.

EDITORIAL



My three-year old daughter was fingering the letters of our road name sign to herself and making up and singing a number song. As she sometimes asks me to name the letters while touching them, I began to do this. With a sudden gesture of annoyance and discouragement she burst out:

"Don't make me wrong!"

In short this is what our children are pleading. "Don't judge my activities to be worthless! Let me find out for myself! Don't tell me the answers unless I ask you. Let me decide what is worth doing and learning."

In the same way, Education Otherwise does not judge parents who want to educate their children at home. Some parents have a lot to learn may be. Usually their children quickly teach them a great deal. May be E.O. helpers risk aiding and abetting a domineering parent to tighten a grip on a child - but parents are not the only ones who are domineering. Education Otherwise does not classify parents as authoritarian, liberal or libertarian. Parents are blamed for all sorts of things. In any dispute with authority, it is usually assumed that it is the parents who are wrong. Education Otherwise reassures parents. "Yes, You are right to care about your children's freedom and happiness." They not only want these things, they need them if they are to develop their full potential. They are worth fighting for and we will do all we can to help you.

I apologise for any shortcomings in this issue - please forgive us. Our typist, Sheila Ponsonby, is beginning to work after raising a family and I have never given work to a typist before. She and I have been learning as we go along.

I am very sorry that there is not the space for all your wonderful contributions. We cannot include them all. Of those we missed out, those which are the most suitable and relevant will be passed onto the next editor for inclusion in the October Newsletter.

Please note that we are all individuals. The expression of an opinion in the Newsletter does not mean that this is the opinion of the Editor, the Core Group or of the E.O. membership in general. We aim to express as many opinions as possible.

YOUR EDITOR

For this issue you have an editor who is not actually practising home education with her "school age" children.

I have a sixteen-year-old boy, Russell. Although attending college 'full-time', he has a lot of free time at home of which he makes full use.

I have a fourteen-year-old girl, Sophia, who attends secondary school. She is very successful at school, but has little time to pursue her own interests. She had her last 'primary' year at home with me. This was mainly so that I could give her some individual attention, while her older brother and younger sister were at school. During this year with Sophia our fourth child was born.

I have an eight-year-old girl, Sylvia at primary school. She likes school and does not wish to leave because she has friends there - but it has been agreed, between her and me and her headmistress, that she will have her last primary year at home like Sophia.

I have a three-year-old girl, Wendy Rose, at home. She has been attending playgroup five mornings a week for about a term, but she has now stopped because she feels pushed around by the boys. She might attend again soon.

Last, but not least, I have a dear husband, Frieden. His many good qualities make him absolutely indispensable - but he most emphatically and determinedly does NOT believe in letting children do as they like all the time.

When I had Sophia at home, she had lessons - but she found them very much more satisfactory than the lessons at school. She greatly appreciated being at home with me but without her brother and sister who usually claimed all my spare time. She has been much happier ever since. Although it was a tiring year for me, combining nappy washing with learning with Sophia - it was the most satisfying thing I have ever done. Frieden gave me his unstinting support.

I mention these personal matters because I believe that there may be many E.O. members who have their children in school because their parents are not united or whole-hearted about having them out.

The secret of success is for both parents to be certain of their aims and objects in educating their children out of school. If they deal firmly with the authorities, they will have much less trouble than if they waver, being uncertain of themselves.

Sometimes, if parents disagree irreconcilably about children's education, separation of the parents is the best answer but bear in mind the children's feelings. They may strongly prefer their parents to be together even though conflicts exist and their own lives are made more difficult thereby. Children's wishes should come first.

Mary Frances Howard

PART TIME SCHOOL

Some time ago I appealed for members' experiences with part-time school education. I had no response so I assume that it has been very little tried. Perhaps members would like to know about our experience.

Samuel (8) and Angelo (5) have been attending school on a part-time basis since June 1981, except for two months of the autumn term while we were waiting for the L.E.A. to decide as to whether part-time education is actually legal! A local adviser gave us verbal permission to continue until the Surrey C.A. formulates a policy on the question, but meanwhile the children are not covered by the school's insurance policy and attend as visitors. Thus the L.E.A. disclaims any responsibility but we get what we want - a compromise in fact.

We were first approached by the headmistress of our village first school, offering part-time attendance to the children on social grounds. She believes the school is for the use of all local children, even if they attend private schools elsewhere. There are 45 children at the school, split between 2½ teachers and numerous parent/helpers. It is a very friendly school with kindness and consideration emphasised and plenty of cuddles when needed. It is the sort of school I would choose for my children if, by some misfortune, they were compelled to attend full-time. I think of it as the least of all the evils.

Samuel and Angelo attend on Monday and Tuesday afternoons, wandering in during the midday playtime. Samuel goes in the top class and has a choice of chess club, science club (a fancy name for Nuffield Science) and Logic. Angelo goes into the first class (taught by the headmistress) and does whatever activity is available. Both of the children do P.E. or Music and Movement and they listen to stories, make pictures or models and do any bits of maths that happen to crop up. Unfortunately, they also watch a short T.V. programme on both afternoons which I consider a waste of time. We chose these afternoons as the activities pursued are more social than academic and give the children a chance to work in pairs or small groups and to benefit from the interchange of ideas and discussion while at the same time coping with a large group for limited periods.

We moved to this village last year and have found it difficult to make contact with other children. We did not have this problem at our previous address and so would not have resorted to using the school as a glorified play-centre. I do not expect the children to learn anything tangible at school as most of what they do there seems to be repeating what we have already done at home. If their knowledge is furthered then I accept it as a happy coincidence. However, they are not yet bored and Samuel particularly enjoys the company, although he was never hungry for it before.

Both of the children love playing in the playground though Angelo nearly always plays with Samuel's group. Of the two children, Angelo likes school least although he had previously said he might go to school when he was five and seemed the more confident and extrovert child. I think he has found school very limiting. He is very independent of mind and likes to do his own thing in his own time and dislikes being organized. For example, he finds it annoying at school to have to stop doing a picture because it is playtime. Samuel has fitted into school perfectly as he does not mind being led and is always sociable and adaptable. I would be afraid that daily school would remove any initiative and confidence that he has slowly developed by being in a normal environment.

One can look on going to school on this basis as another of life's experiences. At least the children will know what it is really like now. And there is always the chance that one day they may have to go to school full-time because of unforeseen circumstances arising. At least they will have had some preparation.

There are, of course, several things about the school that I find annoying and which are inherent in the system. Samuel and Angelo have started questioning some of the petty regulations and their result:-

"Why do we have to line up to go in or out every time, why can't we just walk in?" (Samuel)

"Why do the children keep talking when the teacher wants them to listen?" (Samuel)

"Why, when a few children are naughty coming in to the classroom, do we all have to go outside and line up again? It wasn't me being naughty".
(Angelo)

I'm glad they do not accept it all unquestioningly. We discuss the queries and try to sort it all out.

I stay at the school on Monday afternoons to take a group out for "Environmental Studies" so I am well placed to observe both the good and the bad.

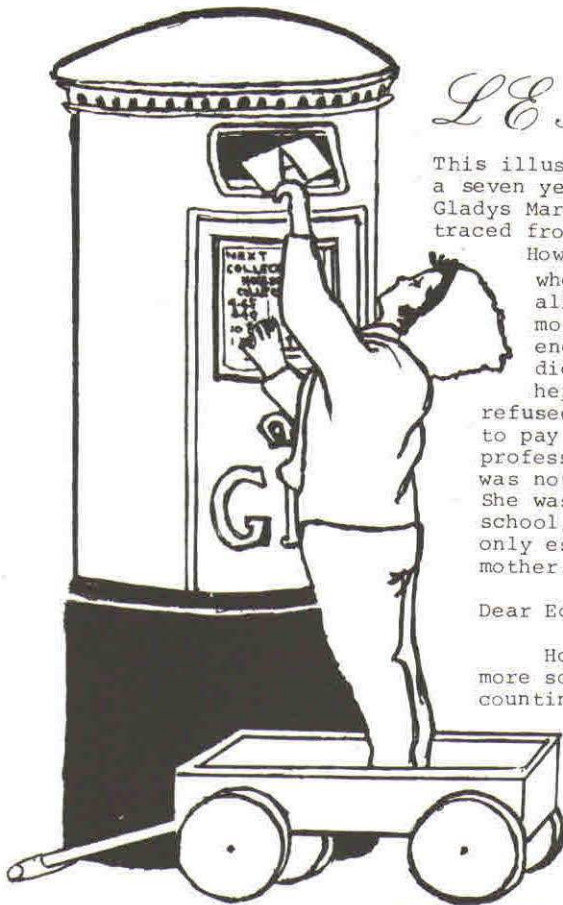
The main disadvantage is that now Samuel and Angelo complain they have not so many whole days to themselves to pursue their own interests, so my conscience is pricked - am I stealing their time? I would certainly not let them go more often as then the school influence may become stronger than the home influence and we might start seeing some of the negative attitudes so common among school children.

If, after a time the children become bored with the meaninglessness of some of it or disillusioned and wish to stop going, I should still count it as having been a worthwhile experience if only because they will have had their curiosity satisfied.

It may be that we reduce their attendance to one afternoon a week or alternatively, they may stop going altogether, especially in the summer if school interferes too much with the children's predominantly outdoor life. Perhaps part-time schooling is suitable only for the winter months. If I thought that the schooling were seriously interfering with Samuel and Angelo's education I would stop it without hesitation. At the moment, however, the benefits outweigh the disadvantages, but I accept that the scales could be tipped the other way sometime in the future.

LORNA BIUCCHI

Ed. - Part-time school would seem to be a good idea in some ways, provided that the school staff and pupils agree with it. But often children who are being compelled to attend school unwillingly resent other children who are "let off" school while they themselves have to be in school. This can lead to a lot of nastiness so be very careful before letting your children attend school part-time.



LETTERS

This illustration was done by a seven year old child in 1916, Gladys Margaret Thorne. It was traced from her painting by Russell Howard age 10. The artist, who is still very much alive, tells me that her mother gave her no encouragement. Not only did she fail to recognise her talent, she also refused the offer by a relative, to pay to have her trained professionally. Her father was not consulted in the matter. She was glad that she went to school, because this was her only escape from a domineering mother.

Dear Editor

18.6.82

How exciting to learn a more sophisticated method of counting on fingers, it's about time this age-old method was brought out from under the desk and updated! It's very encouraging to see children with special learning difficulties coming with E.O. All my children are now grown up and out of the school scene. E.O. was a little late for us, so using hands for

THE FIRST LETTER.

My youngest daughter is profoundly deaf so using hands for speech as well as counting is especially familiar and dear to me. And I thought some of the little ones may enjoy learning finger spelling which I'm enclosing. It's always seemed most unjust to me that although many children are taught a variety of languages which they may never use, very few ever learn sign language which would do much to bridge the awful gap of communication between the world of the deaf, that of the hearing.

20 Charlotte St., (SIGNED)
BATH.
Avon

Sincerely,
MRS. MAUREN MACDONALD

Ed. Some children may be interested to learn that. If they are interested in helping play with and entertain deaf children, they will teach you the sign language.

Dear E.O.,

15th June, 1982.

I noticed the interest in computers in the last Newsletters, but Sean Phillips was quicker off the mark than me.

I've got about a dozen programs for the Sinclair 2 x 81 (using a maximum of 1K) that are based on simple arithmetic and algebra. They can be used as games or (with the aid of a parent teacher) taken more seriously.

The programs are adaptable to a wide range of uses because by changing a few lines, the program will do something different (possibly using a different range of numbers.)

With the program (which could be on cassette) I've produced a 'listing' and explained how to use it.

I have easy access to B.B.C. Acorn Atoms and, if any interest is expressed, will write programs 'to order' for this machine. When the ZX Spectrum gets onto the market, I will write programs for that too.

The best way that I can pass on programs is to supply 'flow diagrams' which are not based on any language. But these will need interpreting into the particular language dialect required.

Secondly, if parents have ideas for programs I will be happy to try writing a flow diagram for them, and if anyone wants to see a B.B.C. computer (to find out what it can do), I'll try to arrange that too.

35 Cromwell Road,
HOVE.
Sussex

(SIGNED) M.RICHARDS

Ed. Some children may be interested and it seems a good idea to try and understand computers as it is something many employers want their workers to know about.

Dear Editor,

6/4/82

I am a qualified teacher of the deaf, and after many years of teaching classes of deaf children numbering no more than 7, I realise the importance and benefit of one-to-one education. We, therefore, decided that when Jan-Jorn was five, I would either go back to teaching and pay for him to attend public school or teach him myself. We decided that his education "our way" was preferable to education "their way". Why should I spend my time earning money to give to other people when I can do the job myself, hopefully better than they can?

Kindly an offer of help and a request for it:-

(1) Are there any music specialists who could offer hints, books to read, people to contact, give advice? I'd be grateful.

(2) I am willing to advise any E.O. member with a handicapped child. I have ta ught deaf, partially-hearing, physically handicapped (all types).

21 Ashdowne Court, (SIGNED) JEAN SHEPHERD
Lansdowne Rd.,
Tottenham,
LONDON, N.17 ('Phone: 01 801 1357)

Dear Fellow Home Educators,

I am writing this open letter as both a plea for help and an offer of help to others. I have two sons aged seven and nearly five, both out of school. I am a single parent without major ties and thus we are free to travel as cash and opportunities allow. What I am looking for via this letter is more opportunities.

I would like to be able to take my sons off to meet new people in new environments, particularly other children out of school. Life in Huddersfield is a little limiting. It would be nice for the boys to experience life in the country, perhaps on a farm, a market garden, by the sea, working in cottage industries etc. etc. even in a big city with access to decent museums, galleries and the like.

What can we offer anyone interested in helping us? I have a variety of skills to share with adults and children. I have done a lot of building work, am a competent plumber and electrician; I am a pretty good mechanic (petrol and diesel), can weld, fit and repair boats, caravans etc.; I could share the theoretical aspects of such skills with children as well as the practical. I make shoes, simple clothes and furniture. I can fell and cut up trees, build wood burning stoves; I have run my own business, run a local charity, organised community events, fund-raising, festivals etc.; I am currently about to finish training as a White Cross massage therapist, studying homeopathy, and have been involved in various aspects of the human potential movement for a couple of years. I am in a sense a Jack of all trades, and though not a master of any one I'll freely admit to my own limitations.

So what are we after? Is there anyone out there who could make use of my help through skill sharing or simple labour, in'

return for putting up the three of us for a while. We take up little room and come adequately equipped, being used to a basic standard of living and an air of adventure. If there is anyone interested for now or perhaps in the future, please write to me and Adrian and Sasha.

12 Dorset Street,
Birkby,
HUDDERSFIELD. HD1 5HF

(SIGNED) IVAN SOKOLOV

Dear Editor,

This question of what to do with EO goes on and on. It always seems very strange to us that apparently sane humans want to club together into larger and larger groups. This desperate attempt to 'improve' things, make them bigger and better etc.

People want to use new toys. The species has been around for millions of years without having to resort to computers. If EO can't carry on without management structures, computers, full time office staff that are so overworked that they end up wrangling with each other then there is something wrong with E.O.

As it wasn't like this in the past and the only thing that has really changed is the size of the group then the size of the group is where the problem lies.

When a family of elephants get to an unmanageable size the elephants don't start inventing computers to remember the names of everyone or set up an office in a two-storey treetop to record the every movement of everyone, a group will go off and start another family.

Surely the answer is the same for us? The thing to do is to split EO into smaller autonomous regional units and if these groups get too big then split them again and again until we are all neighbours and our children can play and we the 'adults' become redundant. What a wonderful day that would be.

The aim of any HEALTHY group should not to become large and powerful (like a spanish onion) but to become eventually obsolete. Each region could have its own resource list if they felt it necessary and could send copies to other groups. Also they could have their own manageable newsletter. An annual (or Bi-) picnic would be all that was necessary for groups across the land to meet, co-ordinate policy and trade news. We could play together under the sun and sit at night around fires under the stars and talk. Far away from electricity cables and the robots that they feed.

Sorry to go on like this but we have had enough of bigger and better things, bigger and better schools/nations/cities/

supermarkets/armies/bombs/religions/factory farms/
power stations/mass food and mass minds. Surely that
is what we are trying to get away from?

All that stuff is just games that cloud our minds and
close our hearts to what is real and what is really
important.

2 Lyndhurst Place,
Thomas Street,
BATH. BA1 5NP

(SIGNED) DAVID & MEG
ROBERTON-SHOPPER

Ed. E.O. certainly does not need computers but since some
children are interested in them it seems right to use the
newsletter to put them in touch with each other.

There is already a healthy amount of activity in the
region. Devon E.O. has its own newsletter. We need more
volunteer helpers for this.

It would be nice to meet in the country but this
usually excludes people who do not own and drive cars, and
have to depend on public transport. Getting to meetings
is a bind and takes us away from our family homes, but how
else can we get to share each other's strength and spread
the word?

Dear Mr. Elenor,

I read with interest about your work in Education
Otherwise. Incidentally, one of your members who represents
Hampshire is on my teaching staff. We are a small
therapeutic community and I enclose some information about
us. We are more like a family than a school although we are
obviously, at least in part, a school for teaching children.
A number of parents have removed their children from the
ordinary system of education and have placed them with us in
order to provide them with the home environment as well as
the schooling which we provide.

As Former Chief Educational Psychologist for Hampshire,
I would like to support your work and if there is anything
I can do, please let me know. I could, for instance provide
you with "How Psychologists can provide help and advice" to
parents who may be working in isolation except for your
organisation.

My main reason for writing however is to congratulate
you and your members on your endeavour to provide something
which is better than most ordinary schools can provide in
the form of care or education and I hope that you will continue
with what you are doing.

Allington Manor,
Fair Oak,
HAMPSHIRE
SO5 7DE

With best wishes,
Sincerely,
(SIGNED) D. L. LOWENSTEIN

Ed. Most E.O. parents will probably have sufficient confidence in their understanding of whatever problems their children may have - not to need professional advice. However, there may be parents with children classified as 'dyslexic' or "educationally subnormal" who are having trouble in taking and keeping their children out of school. State-employed educational psychologists might well advise that the child be in school. It could be helpful in such a situation to have the help of an educational psychologist sympathetic to home education.

Dear Editor,

One enquiry is exercising my mind and that is the question of school psychologists. The parent concerned wanted to know if his child could be forced to see a psychologist against the parents wishes. Do we have any educational psychologists in our ranks? If so, I would be pleased to hear from you concerning this matter. I'm sure the question will come up again and having taken over from Di Cox as enquiries secretary, I am anxious to know the answer. As a member of the Society of Teachers opposed to Physical Punishment I know the recent European Commission of Human Rights stipulated,

'....the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their religious and philosophical convictions.' Therefore, I feel the parent should have the right to deny any special treatment but I suspect anyone trying would meet severe opposition as usual! Have any members tried? I would be interested to know how you were treated.

(SIGNED) JANET EVERDELL

Dear EO,

We are considering holding an EO summer camp on our farm on St Martin's (Isles of Scilly) this September - an opportunity to get together for a fortnight which we feel could serve a number of useful purposes:

1. Allow members, especially those from more remote areas who do not usually get a chance to attend EO functions, to meet.
2. Would be living 'proof' of how EO children are not being socially isolated but, on the contrary, are meeting children from more diverse backgrounds - geographically and socially - than would be encountered in school.
3. Offers an excellent 'learning' environment. This island is a mecca for ornithologists and botanists - a wonderful field study centre for all aspects of natural history with a plethora of flora and fauna not encountered elsewhere in the country; a seal colony; dozens of uninhabited islands

to explore- many remains from earlier civilisations; also boat trips to see the Bishop Rock Lighthouse, the famous Scillanian gig races between the islands and the abbey and sub-tropical gardens of Tresco. Also opportunities for boating, swimming, fishing and sailing as St. Martin's has its own tiny sailing school.

4. A chance to indulge in activities where a few extra people might be an advantage - sports, beach barbecues, evenings of folk music and country dancing.

5. Skills Exchange - an opportunity for EO members with particular skills to be able to hold 'workshops' to fire the enthusiasm of other EO members, adults and children.

6. A chance for children from non rural areas to spend a fortnight on a farm. Ours is run on ecological, organic principles, aiming at self sufficiency, with lots of different animals and opportunities in helping with everything from butter making to collecting wood with the donkey cart and going potting for crabs and lobsters.

7. Provides a rest from all that heavy responsibility of teaching your own - you can always spend the entire fortnight stretched out on the beach.

We intend to provide a very secluded campsite and to provide main meals leaving the day free for all the other activities. Anyone interested, please contact us, Dick and Jenny Morton, Little Arthur, St. Martin's, Isles of Scilly, An SAE would be helpful.

Dear Editor,

15th June 1982.

Contrary to the extract of my letter, published in the June newsletter, I do not believe that our newsletter could be published in the same way as "Popular Gardening" i.e. by relying on sales and advertising for revenue. It so obviously would not work as a commercial venture (let alone one's moral objections to advertising) that I would appear a fool to suggest it.

The extract was quote completely out of context, where it was given as an example of the ways that special interest groups publish their media of communication. The letter itself was just a typical moan about the policy-making role of the Core Group, a plea for true democracy, and an objection to the attitude that had brought about the resignation of the Bethells.

I recognise the right of Editors to edit, but could they please ensure that such extracts convey a little of the sense of the original.

14 Collier Close,
EASTBOURNE.
East Sussex
BN22 8SU

(SIGNED)

Yours
BOB EMMETT

Ed. I came in on this argument as temporary editor, not really knowing what it was all about. I am very sorry to hear that there have been upsets, and that we have lost valuable members and workers. It happens in all organizations, but some handle it more discreetly than others.

Personally, I am most grateful to those who prepared to deny their own children time, attention and energy in order to encourage other parents to give their children more freedom and attention. I know they enjoy these contacts with other parents but they need our thanks, not our criticism. Adults, like children, thrive on praise but wilt on blame.

The hub of Bob Emmett's argument is that the core group should be purely administrative leaving policy decision making to the general membership e.g. who should be expelled who given honorary membership - who E.O. should affiliate with etc.

How can a net-work like E.O. be democratic? The core group proceedings are published in the newsletter - so anybody can write - but what proportion actually do? The idea of a ballot could be tried but I doubt if more than a quarter of the membership would respond. A lot would depend on the points of view expressed in the newsletter so that people could have sufficient information to make up their minds. The whole process would certainly be very slow - but it might be worth a try.

Alternatively anyone is free to attend a core group meeting and express their point of view. It may, however, take a lot of determination to get together the money for the journey and fit the family in around the arrangement. Some members even feel it is wrong to let meetings about your family's time and resources in this way - so few members actually attend core group meetings.

In this temporary editor's opinion - E.O. cannot be democratic in the same way as a village and has to rely on the decisions of a few devoted workers. The members giving them as much practical support as they are able. I am doing my bit by editing one issue of the Newsletter. Other members can all find jobs to do, if they want - as organisers of the regional groups which we so much need - but please let's give as much positive appreciation and approval to each other as we try to give to our children. LeLeche League can do this for their leaders - so can we.

Ed. We also received a letter complaining about lack of facilities at the E.O. Conference for children. Where there's a will, there's a way. I, too, had this problem. At the last moment I managed to get a friend to look after my children and went to the conference and took responsibility for the children's room. Lots of people ignored the request and brought their children. The place was alive with them. The lecturers just had to shout over the hububb.

Dear Editor,

We would like to have a holiday seeing the sights of London. Would anyone in London like to do a house swap, for up to one week in late summer or autumn. We can offer a Suffolk Farm House in rural setting. Anyone interested should contact, Andrew and Vivien Aikman: Tel. 098-682-375, Springs Farm, St. Cross, Nr. Harleston IP20 ONZ

Dear Editor,

14th June, 1982.

I have been intending to write a letter on the subject of "Why Editorial Autocracy is a Bad Thing". I am sure you must have been inundated with letters on this subject so let me just add a "Hear Hear!" to your Editor's letter printed in February. Having been such an inactive member myself, though, I don't feel justified in criticizing someone who had obviously given up a lot of his time for E.O. We feel it would be a pity, however, if E.O. looked as if it was becoming an organization for just one kind of member. From the contact we have with other members, it seems to us that there is a healthy diversity of backgrounds and approaches to education.

61 Cotswold Rd.,
BATH
VA2 2DL

(SIGNED) JEAN MONOT PERSCHLEY

Dear Editor,

FINGER COUNTING

I have a sheet giving details of finger calculation - and I would be happy to photocopy it for anyone sending me a self-stamped and addressed envelope and a 15p postal order or cheque!

Hasfield Court,
HASFIELD,
Gloucestershire

(SIGNED) JULIE DUPT

Dear Editor,

We are writing from Monkton Wyld, which is a small progressive boarding school likely to close, as such, this summer, and become more of a community based project. We are very keen to make links with E.O. and so are suggesting that it could be used in part as a resource centre E.O. families could visit for a few days. There are all the usual facilities and equipment and also our own garden and farm. We are very near the sea.

We will write something in more detail for the next issue.
Contact:- Ruth Shompan, Monkton Wyld School, Charmough, Dorset.
Or David Donaldson Tel. Charmough (0297) 60876.

Local co-ordinator for Cumbria change of address:-

EVELYN MARSH
(and Justin, Becky and Verity of course)
Gateside Cottage,
CONISTON,
Cumbria

NEWS FROM T' REGIONS

BUCKS. BEDS. OXON. Local E.O. Meetings

Two meetings have been held in the homes of members to the satisfaction of all concerned. It's nice to know you're not the only crank around and meet other people practising home education. Our meetings are very informal and conversation spills over onto many other subjects as well, alternative and otherwise. For the children too it is reassuring to know that they're not the only ones who don't go to school.

Apart from these meetings we held a local group birdwatch/picnic in Stockgrove Country Park. Turnout was somewhat low but we raised about £30 for the RSPB and the woodland is quite delightful to wander in.

The Lodge, Stockgrove Park School,
Leighton Buzzard, Beds.

JO & VINCE WEST

E.O. Alive and Well in Cambridgeshire

The past three years have seen a big increase in the membership of E.O. in our county. When we de-schooled Nicholas in 1978 we were alone, especially as he was secondary age. Now Cambridge is one of the "big twelve" with fourteen families, half of whom practise home education.

As local co-ordinator I find myself answering a steady trickle of enquiries and getting involved in more E.O. activities. These have increased since Nicholas sat and passed his 'O' levels. Since Christmas we have been interviewed by Alan Corbett of the Sunday Times (no result yet) and attended the National Conference at Birmingham where we answered questions on examinations, syllabus, curriculum and personal experiences.

In March, Christine Orton of BBC 'Look East' asked permission to quote from my article in December's newsletter for a piece she was writing for the Guardian (result unknown). At the same time she requested names of families practising E.O. who were not "too trendy" - to take part in a film for Look East advertising the East Anglian gathering at Norwich. Christine Parker kindly offered her services and I offered her my moral support for the day. The resulting film had a satisfactory outcome, thanks to Christine's insistence that the children were filmed as informally as possible otherwise it would look like formal lessons in a lounge! The children enjoyed and benefitted from the experience. John Kiddey, the reporter, admitted being impressed and took away some E.O. literature.

Our latest enquiry concerns a question which often arises. "How do home study children manage science practicals?" An inspector for science for the I.L.E.A. writes to ask "How they are able to build up such concepts as acidity photosynthesis and momentum in a scientific way in the home without access to fairly sophisticated measuring apparatus, chemicals and so on." I showed the letter to Nick who was amused by it. We have come to the conclusion that science inspectors have a vested interest in making simple science appear difficult! Nevertheless, he has received an invitation to come and interview the boy who managed very well without sophisticated equipment.

Finally, a couple of thoughts for those still doubtful about practising E.O. taken from a marvellous little book called "Your Erroneous Zones" by Dr. W.W. Dyer, a Sphere paperback 95p.

"Two roads diverged in a wood, - I took the
less travelled by and that has made all the
difference" by ROBERT FROST

and my favourite

"Failure is simply someone else's opinion
of how a certain act should have been
completed!"

Following an active time in April when the T.V. careers visited us, May also proved no less exciting. Once again, the B.B.C. descended, this time to the Everdell family and Nicholas in particular. May 7th saw the arrival of the production team (five in all) to take six minutes of film (to be cut to three) for our regional programme called 'Weekend'. To agree to such an occurrence is like offering a tornado a visit!! 1½ hours of constant chat and activity punctuated by visits to the loo, sincere apologies for the inconvenience and rushed incomplete jobs and lots of coffee all round. Nevertheless not an opportunity to be missed for enthusiastic and curious children to learn how these snippets are made. Nicholas thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it and we have now seen a neighbour's video recording four times for the benefit of relatives who had better things to do on 'THE NIGHT'!!

On May 17th, I did a telephone interview for Herewood radio which was badly cut about when presented, so did not do the subject credit, a risk we all take when dealing with the media I suppose.

North London

....Yes, there really is a North London group, that meets informally and shares activities. If you're interested phone Yvonne and Malcolm Muckle (806 7285) for details.

139 Brook Rd. Stoke Newington, N16 7RP. YVONNE & MALCOLM MUCKLE

Sussex Maths Workshop and Spring Picnic

This unlikely combination took place on Saturday, 8th May at Horsgate Farm, Cuckfield, and in fact was remarkably successful. Undaunted by a 'class' of twenty-four children whose ages ranged from 3 to 15 and their interested parents. Martin Richards, a de-schooled maths teacher, talked for a short while about maths outside the curriculum and all the challenge that offered, then set about kite-making as a practical example. Within minutes every child was off into the fields with its own straw and paper kite and, despite the lack of strong wind, the air was full of these darting white paper birds. But that was not all - Martin had brought a computer with him and, with his listeners perched before him on bales of hay, showed us how to 'teach' the computer a game and then play it.

Meanwhile other families were arriving with their picnics - in all about 100 people came, including the Fryds from Kent and the Riches from the Isle of Wight - and settling down for an afternoon of talk and lolling in the sunshine whilst the children played in sandpit and on climbing frame, organised ball and tag, petted the lambs and stared at the geese.

But that was not all! Mark hitched up a trailer to his old Fordson Major tractor and bore a load of children off to the woods. Vic Ellis turned into a one-man band and amazed us all with the multiplicity of his instruments, not to mention delighted us with a host of cheerful tunes whilst Maggie Grimsdell performed wonders with her dancing dolls. We even danced Strip the Willow. And those who stayed to the bitter end were rewarded with kickipeg, a sophisticated version of hide and seek, or - clearing up my kitchen!

Thank you everyone who came. I hope you all enjoyed yourselves as much as we did.

Horsgate Farm, Cuckfield,
Haywards' Heath, Sussex.

HELEN HOLLAND

Account of the EO Meeting held at Premises Art Centre, Norwich

We found St. Benedicts Street with little effort and eventually found Premises laying back off the road. We found a large and empty car park a little further on, and soon bumped into another EO family who were looking for the entrance to the meeting. This established, we found ourselves in a small room where we signed our name in a book, and attached badges, giving our name and locality to anyone who might be interested.

Premises Art Centre turned out to be a large, dark hall lined with tables on which were displayed examples of work and talents of some members. All around were clusters of people, some talking, many eating, others just looking. After a few hello's and introductions we settled down to eat. Thus fulfilled, we browsed at the

exhibits, then it was time for Cherity Laniado to say a few words. It was Cherity who thought up the idea, and put the meeting into motivation; people drew up their chairs and for about half an hour even the children sat quietly. We then made our way out onto a grass area at the back of the hall where there was to be a talk and demonstration of Suzuki music. As it turned out, it was more a personal account of music for under 5's, as against Suzuki in practice, but none the less it was an interesting discussion and followed by a sing-along session with guitar accompaniment. The afternoon was growing quite chilly by now so we returned to the hall. People were still talking and we took the opportunity to renew old acquaintances and make a few new ones. Slowly people began to take their leave, a small band of children (including Emma) amused themselves on the stage and behind the curtains, and finally we decided to make our departure. There were new faces to look for at future meetings, new ideas to try out, and the reassurance that EO is getting bigger and stronger all the time.

24 Deneway, Vange, Sussex.

SANDIE & BRIAN COTTEE

West Yorkshire - Taylor Hill Children's Centre,
Huddersfield

Fifteen adults and twenty-five children turned up to our first local meeting in Huddersfield on Saturday, 20th March. It was held in a centre for pre-school children that provided just the right atmosphere of child-centred freedom. The children present fairly rapidly took over the main hall showing a level of rowdy spontaneity and lack of parental interference that contrasted amusingly with the scenes there during a normal weekday. I would think that next time the slight lack of respect occasionally shown for the equipment would be less likely to crop up, the novelty having worn off a little. Most of those present had children out of school but there were several families there to learn what it could be like. After a slow almost nervous start several ideas and suggestions were put forward and talked around to some degree. These included:- joint acquisition of scrap and surplus materials by tapping the growing number of Community Play Resource Centres around the country; joint purchasing of equipment and materials; combining subsequent meetings with workshops to pass on skills to parents and children; producing an extensive local skills list to include where possible people not into EO but willing to extend the occasional helping hand; possibility of a weekend together rather than one day and even a week in a residential holiday centre in the middle of a Lancashire forest. We left the day mostly charged with enthusiasm and energy, committed to having meetings every two months and with (I hope) a sense of the need to contribute to other events/ideas and not just follow one or two people's leads.

12 Dorset St. Birkby, Huddersfield, Yorks. IVAN SOKOLOV

LLL National Conference
E.O. Discussion Group MILTON KEYNES

LLL = La Leche (Layshay) League - "La Leche" is spanish for "the milk".

Vin and I recently led a discussion group at this conference in Milton Keynes. It was an ideal opportunity to discuss home education and several people took home introductory literature and bought our booklets etc. Many LLL members feel I think, as we do that home education follows on from the philosophies of LLL.

JO AND VINCE WEST

Basically, LLL gives information and support about breastfeeding to women who wish to breastfeed their babies. Its information service about breastfeeding i.e. detailed leaflets, books and quick access to 'experts' to find answers to esoterre questions is absolutely the best there is. It's also hot on training its counsellors (or group leaders) in human relations i.e. how to help people make their own decisions, how not to give advice à la typical health visitor. (Ed. - it also gives valuable insights into caring for children long after weaning).

Leaders run regular discussion meetings covering breastfeeding, birth, family life, nutrition and weaning. They also hold a library of books and leaflets and do telephone or letter counselling.

Where LLL overlaps with E.O. is in its philosophy of parenting. All Leaders have to agree with and demonstrate in their lives the LLL philosophy. This basically involves seeing children as people who grow best when their needs are met unstintingly and when they are allowed to grow in their own time, not pushed to become 'independent' early. In practice this means that natural childbirth, unrestricted breastfeeding for as long as the baby or child shows a need; sleeping with the baby at night or at least close enough to answer any night-time cries; 'discipline' without physical or verbal violence; wholefood healthy eating; relaxed potty non-training etc. are encouraged - indeed, for Leaders, mandatory i.e. if you occasionally lose your temper and slap your child you can become an LLL Leader; but if you believe slapping is a good and necessary part of child-rearing, you can't. Early pre-schools before the child is clearly ready and eager are discouraged - as is any form of mother - child separation unless the child is clearly ready for it i.e. no crèches.

However, having said all that, LLL really centres on the very young child and also manages to combine this well worked out philosophy with a policy of supporting no 'cause' other than breastfeeding. This is because they want women of all beliefs etc. to feel able to come for breastfeeding help. This certainly works - a more hotch-potch mix you'll never come across. However, it means that though there is a substantial overlap between LLL membership and the membership of organisations supporting e.g. home birth and home schooling (particularly in the U.S. where LLL started and is very big) the organisation will never come out and say it 'recommends' either of these ideas. Books on "Montessori in the home" and "Home birth" are, however, part of most group libraries. (Ed. Also - "Your Child's Self Esteem", "Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin", "The Continuum Concept", "The Child under 6" and other treasures).

15 Bradwell Rd. Milton Keynes, MK13 7AX. JO PATON

Sheffield

Every year there is a local show/fete, the Broomhill Show, part of the Broomhill Festival. This year I decided to have a stall for E.O. A new member and her children came over from Thrybergh near Rotherham to lend a hand, which was very welcome. To sell, we had copies of John Holt's "Teach Your Own", obtained from Dick Kitto, and copies of the April Newsletter, "School is not Compulsory" and "Early Years", obtained from Andrea Harrison. We found it useful for someone to hand out leaflets - we used the new poster, 5½" x 8½", headed "School or Not? It's a parents' choice". A stall with books doesn't look very interesting, so you need to try and grasp people's attention by handing out leaflets, otherwise people will just swirl past your stall to the home-made cakes and jam, hand-made shoes and macramé etc. I subsequently had an inquiry by 'phone from a woman whose husband had been given a leaflet.

We only sold three booklets in the end. People were obviously saving their money for the cakes and macramé! The weather was also outstandingly dismal. However we had many interesting conversations and handed out lots of inquiry letters and membership forms, on which I'd written my name and address as local contact. I'd never done anything like this before but I enjoyed talking to people (including two 14 year-old school boys who declared roundly that they wanted to go to school and told me that I ought to send Mark and Robin, whom they knew, to school as well!) I thought it was definitely worthwhile and we shall certainly do it again next year. Cast your bread upon the waters, folks.

25 Moor Oaks Rd. Broomhill, Sheffield, Yorks. JOAN HOARE

CORE MEETING

The Core Meeting on 13th June was a rather improvised affair. Delays in the printing of the Newsletter (for which we apologise) meant that the meeting was not properly publicised. Several regulars had sent in their apologies prior to the meeting so that finally it was clear that the full meeting would have to be cancelled. It was replaced by a 6-way telephone 'conference call' between John Elenor, Iris Harrison, Poland Meighan, Helen Holland, Simon Grant and Bruce Cox. The usual three-hour meeting with a full set of minutes was beyond us but we did deal with some current business. The following is simply a record of our decisions.

1. The following proposal was unanimously agreed:

that a Steering Committee of three members, be elected for one year, with full powers to make decisions between Core Group Meetings, providing that decisions are unanimous and that they are reported to the next Core Group Meeting. Any member may stand who has attended two Core Group Meetings in the last twelve months. Anyone may vote who has attended one Core Group Meeting in the last twelve months. Anyone may vote who has attended one Core Group Meeting in the last twelve months.

It was decided that one of the first tasks of this Committee will be to write out proposals for devolution of power to the regions and representation of the regions in a systematic way on the Core Group.

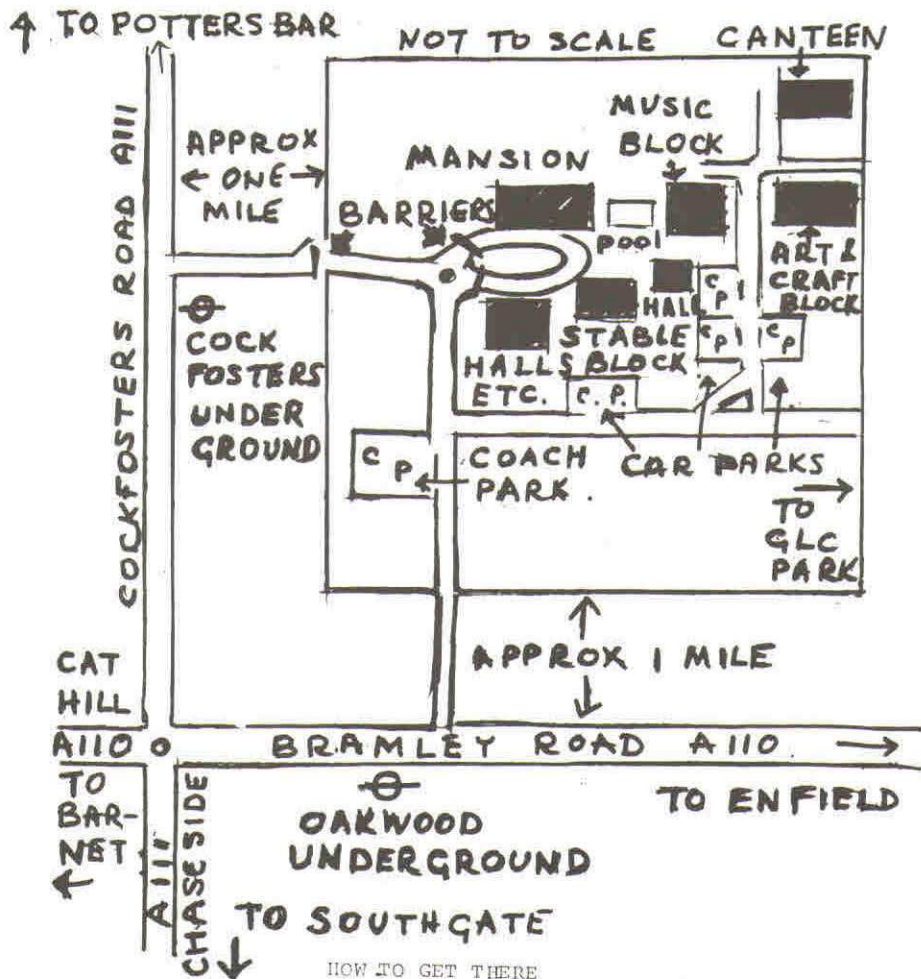
Essentially the Steering Committee was seen as a way of getting decisions made more quickly and clearly, where this is necessary. This committee has now been appointed and consists of Helen Holland, Caroline Grant and Bruce Cox. There were three candidates and so an election was not necessary.

2. It was agreed that the setting up of a linked but autonomous section in Scotland was to be welcomed.
3. It was agreed that Logo designs be printed in the Newsletter to help members to choose a suitable one.
4. It was agreed that the price of "School is Not Compulsory" to non members be raised to £1.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- Thursday, August 5th 2.00 p.m. CORE GROUP MEETING at Janet and Nigel Everdells, Heathermead, 25 Common Lane, Hemingford Abbots, Huntingdon. Tel. St. Ives 63130. Please let Janet know if you are coming. Meeting begins at 2.00 p.m. Any E.O. member may attend.
- Saturday, Sept. 18th 2-5 p.m. PLAYGROUPS AND BEYOND a seminar at 201 Wightman Rd., London, N.8
Contact Pep Nov 01-343-7409
Workshop on Early Childhood Education. We are a group of parents and other adults interested in researching how children learn best and become self-reliant. For this seminar, we propose to discuss the following questions:-
How do children learn to communicate to take responsibility and to handle competition playfully? What is the role of positive authority and self-government in education? How can various art for us, dance, painting, theatre and role-play be used in early education? How can adults continue their own learning process to become better role-models?
The seminar will include a lecture, film, and discussion. After this meeting, we will be setting up a study group to begin plans to open an Early Learning Centre for children, 2-4 years old.
- Saturday Sept. 25th 12.00 noon TRENT PARK E.O. NATIONAL MEETING
At Cockfosters, North London in the Trent Park site of Middlesex Polytechnic.
You can explore the park in the morning, picnic in the college grounds, enjoy music-making in the afternoon, visit the display of books and resources meet fellow members and discuss problems.
(Helpers available to look after children.)
Time-table 12.00 assemble in or near the music block and move off for picnic by the lake.
2.00 General forum in the music block beginning with a report from the core group. If you have a topic you would like discussed, please send it in advance to John Elenor, 18 Eynham Rd., London, W.12.
- Accommodation Travellers - Do you want it?
Londoners - Can you offer it? If so, contact John Elenor at the above address.
- Sunday 26th Sept. CORE GROUP MEETING
chez Malcolm & Yvonne Muckle, 130 Brooke Road, Stoke Newington, London, N.16. Agenda items to be submitted to Bruce Cox not later than 13th September. Please notify Posts if you want to come.

TRENT PARK



1. by car and by coach from all directions. Use Oakwood entrance on the A 110 Promley Road and follow signs to CAR PARKS and BLOCKS.
N.B. Coaches MUST use coach park.
2. On foot from the north Bus 299 to Cockfosters or Local Train to New Barnet and bus 107 to Oakwood Station
3. On foot from elsewhere
Piccadilly Line Underground (or bus 107) to Oakwood Station
N.B. At Oakwood Station use entrance marked "Middlesex Polytechnic Private" since the entrance marked "Trent Park" leads to G.L.C. Park only.

E.O. PUBLICATIONS

1. Back numbers of "Education Otherwise" Newsletter Nos. 21 (Feb.), 22 (Apr.), and 23 (June). 75p. post free from The Harrison family, The Burntlands, Rochford, Tenbury Wells, Worcs.
Kipper - Occasional Magazine by and for children - from The Kipper Office, Stable block, Langley Priory, Diseworth, Derby DE 7 2QQ
3. "Creative Listening" by Dr. Rachel Pinney 90p.
From 28 Wallace House, Caledonian Estate, London N7
4. "Libertarian Education" occasional magazine mainly for and by teachers. No. 31 out autumn 1982. Back Nos. 20 to 30 and some earlier still available 55p. each from 6 Beaconsfield Road, Leicester.
5. "La Leche League International Newsletter" and "La Leche League Great Britain Newsletter". Sent to members of La Leche League sub.£5.50 per year. Enquiries RM 3424 London, W.C.1 6XX. This is a marvellous organisation encouraging breast-feeding and good parenting Very informative.
6. "Association of Breast-feeding Mothers Newsletter"
This is the national alternative to La Leche League. It is independent of La Leche League and so is able to express more controversial points of view. Subscriptions £3.00 for 10 issues to E.O. members. Complimentary copies free to E.O. members in return for large s.a.e. sent to:-
71 Hall Drive, London S.E.26 6XL
7. Dove - A Direct Action Movement on the side of the child. Explanatory booklet from:- 428 Staines Road, Bedfont, Middlesex, United Kingdom.

John Holt's TEACH YOUR OWN

E.O. members will have, we hope, by now acquired and read John Holt's Teach Your Own, and have been suitably impressed by the sincere and sound advice. We feel this book ought now to be more generally accessible to members of the public, and probably the best way to achieve this would be for E.O. members to order the book through their local library, even though they have their own copy, as indeed we intend to do. Quoting title, Author and Publisher \$5.95 Lighthouse Books, 27a Sydney Street, etc.

If it can be introduced into the library service, and we see no reason why not, it would serve 3 useful purposes, spreading the word around, which can only be to our benefit, publicity for E.O. since we are mentioned, and generally increase the sales of the book.

TED AND MARY CARTER

Snippets from

GROWING *without* SCHOOLING

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. 25 - 30 are available at £3 (EO members) or £3.60 (non-members); please write with the money (cheques payable to Education Otherwise) to:

Stephanie Leland, 2 St. Edmunds Cottages, Rove Town, Glastonbury, Somerset.

(NB: there are no back numbers available at the moment - please watch this space.)

There is really only one way to preserve the legal rights which you have acquired. Quite simply, you must seek out your natural allies - other parents who educate their children at home - and work to develop an effective organization capable of lobbying in the legislature.

From: WOODY JENKINS
MEMBER, LOUISIANA HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES, U.S.A.

I had a very interesting comment made to me this morning about Daniel, my five-year-old...His Sunday School teacher said she was concerned about him. She was afraid that he wasn't getting the socialization he needed with us keeping him at home rather than having him go to school with other children his age. Her reason for concern was that Daniel is very quiet in class and she doesn't have the discipline problems with him that she has with the rest of the class! In fact, she said she usually has him sit between the two worst ones to keep them separated! She doesn't feel it's normal for a boy his age to act that way. I guess she would feel better about him socially if he were loud and ill-mannered.

And then in the same breath she tells me that Daniel is the only child in the class she can call on to give an opening or closing prayer that she doesn't have to help and tell what to say. I can't understand a teacher that worries about a child who is well-mannered and behaves as he's been taught to in church. Why doesn't she go to the other parents and tell them she's concerned about their children?...

From: DONNA BROCK, UTAH, U.S.A.

E.O IN THE MEDIA

"Family Circle" a magazine sold at super-market check-outs featured an article "Education: Know your new rights" in their June issue.

In this they stated - "According to law, parents have every right to educate their own children, provided they can prove that the curriculum they intend to cover is similar to that offered at an ordinary school. Education Otherwise is the organisation to contact for help and support in this area." (Ed. Actually the parents are not obliged to prove anything about a curriculum although some local education authorities seem to like them.)

Radio 4, 23rd June, Midday News reported that Tracey White at secondary school in Ipswich had been denied the chance to take a maths 'O' level because she wore red shoes not black or brown as stated in school rules. Her year-master, Mr. Cheadle, stopped her from entering for her second maths 'O' level paper. When she said she had no other shoes to wear, he told her to go and buy some. The Deputy Headmaster speaking to the reporters backed up Mr. Cheadle. Tracey said it is quite 'ridiculous'.

Can Nobility be taught ?

During the third of his new series of "The Levin Interviews" on P.P.C. 2, Bernard Levin asked Dr. Jones Salk, discoverer of the Salk polio vaccine, can nobility be taught, as reading, writing, arithmetic and biology can be taught?

Salk answered:-

Yes, I think it can - by example, and by experience. I don't think it can be taught passively. It must be taught actively - in the same way as we speak of active immunisation as distinct from passive immunisation. A passive immunisation would be to transfer antibodies from one person to another; active immunisation is to form your own antibodies. And that's the image that I have in mind when I raise the question about teaching nobility in the sense of evoking it, educating it. You see I think that man is noble, that nobility is genetically inscribed if you will, but it needs to be evoked. The potential for all that has emerged in the course of evolution must have pre-existed. It needed merely to be evoked by circumstances. Reality, in a sense, is what will bring out the greater potential that exists in man for solving problems that will be threatening to him.

Taken from "The Listener" 17th June, 1982.

E. O. IN LITERATURE

Frances Hodgson Burnett's story of the seven-year-old Cedric Errol was published in 1886. It was not considered abnormal in those days for children to be educated at home. The Act making education "free and compulsory" was enacted in 1870, but parents who could afford it continued to hire tutors and governesses for their children.

Cedric Errol was educated by his mother who was helped by her servant; all gentle female influence. His father, who died when Cedric was a baby, was the youngest son of an earl. The Earl had been enraged when his son had married an American. The Cedric family lived quietly in America until a stern lawyer brought news that Cedric was next in line for the earldom. He was to be educated by the old earl who was bad-tempered and loved by no one. Cedric's home education and free-flowering personality saved the situation. He believed the earl to be the best and kindest person in the world. The earl was flattered by the child's faith in him and he had to try and live up to the child's image.

Cedric Errol is anathema to many people today because he does not fit in with the current image of boyhood, but his story helps to show how a loving home environment can prepare a child for the future - whatever that future might bring.

The characters of Cedric and Mrs. Errol have been criticised as being over idealised but through La-Leche League I have met and know of many such kind, loving, gentle American women. Any child in their constant company and care could respond and develop in a way similar to Cedric.

The quotations in the following item illustrate the points made by Dr. Salk. opposite

He had never heard an unkind or uncourteous word spoken at home, he had always been loved and caressed and treated tenderly, and so his childish soul was full of kindness and innocent warm feeling. He had always heard his mamma called by pretty loving names, and so he used them himself when he spoke to her; he had always seen that his papa watched over her and took great care of her, and so he learned, too, to be careful of her

As he grew older, he had a great many quaint little ways which amused and interested people greatly. He was so much of a companion for his mother that she scarcely cared for any other. They used to walk together and talk together and play together. When he was quite a little fellow he learned to read; and after that he used to lie on the hearth-rug, in the evening, and read aloud - sometimes stories, and sometimes big books such as older people read, and sometimes even the newspaper; and often at such times Mary, in the kitchen, would hear Mrs. Errol laughing with delight at the quaint things he said

Cedric did not know he was being observed, and he only behaved himself in his ordinary manner. He shook hands with Mr. Havisham in his friendly way when they were introduced to each other, and he answered all his questions with the unhesitating readiness with which he answered Mr. Hobbs. He was neither shy nor bold, and when Mr. Havisham was talking to his mother, the lawyer noticed that he listened to the conversation with as much interest as if he had been quite grown up.

"He seems to be a very mature little fellow," Mr. Havisham said to the mother.

"I think he is, in some things," she answered. "He has always been very quick to learn, and he has lived a great deal with grown-up people. He has a funny little habit of using long words and expressions he has read in books, or has heard others use, but he is very fond of childish play. I think he is rather clever, but he is a very boyish little boy, sometimes."

The whole world seemed beautiful to him.

There was some one else who was happy too, - an old man, who, though he had been rich and noble all his life, had not often been very honestly happy. Perhaps, indeed, I shall tell you that I think it was because he was rather better than he had been that he was rather happier. He had not, indeed, suddenly become as good as Fauntleroy thought him; but, at least, he had begun to love something, and he had several times found a sort of pleasure in doing the kind things which the innocent, kind little heart of a child had suggested, - and that was a beginning. And every day he had been more pleased with his son's wife. It was true, as the people said, that he was beginning to like her too. He liked to hear her sweet voice and to see her sweet face; and as he sat in his armchair, he used to watch her and listen as she talked to her boy; and he heard loving, gentle words which were new to him, and he began to see why the little fellow who had lived in a New York side street, and known grocery-men and made friends with boot-blacks, was still so well-bred and manly a little fellow that he made no one ashamed of him, even when fortune changed him into the heir to an English earldom, living in an English castle.

It was really a very simple thing, after all - it was only that he had lived near a kind and gentle heart, and had been taught to think kind thoughts always and to care for others. It is a very little thing, perhaps, but it is the best thing of all. He knew nothing of earls and castles; he was quite ignorant of all grand and splendid things; but he was always lovable because he was simple and loving. To be so is like being born a king.

Extracts from "The Little Lord Fauntleroy" by Frances Hodgson Purnett first published 1886.

to my month-old daughter on the conditions of greatness



you're great. you're great
just because you are. just
because you exist that is.
you are great for drawing
breath, for turning your
head and beginning to
see the world, for taking
nourishment, for moving,
for being, for that
inarticulate burble &
that involuntary smile.
you are great, for your
cry is the quintessential
poetry of all anguish.
you are great, for your

innocence is a shorthand for the innocence in us all
your grandeur is no delusion. for many thousands of
years you have been a religion. strangers welcome you,
billions of wise men and fools. there are those who do not
but they are in a minority, those who are disturbed
by your piercing poetry, whom it makes nervous.
there are even those who may belittle your beauty
in the name of your excrement which you yourself
take for granted with that magnanimous neutrality
which has neither discovered revulsion nor the need
to know that this is a building block of living. the precise
meaning of my words is exquisitely irrelevant to you.
you are the ideal poetry audience, for all you care about
is the warmth of the sound & you have your own urgencies
that transcend even that. you're great. you're beautiful,
you're beautiful for just being. you always will be
& just because you grow up and people foolishly
withdraw the welcome which you accepted in the
best of faith ... well, hear this now. you're great
and don't you ever forget it.

jacob bush.

BIRTH otherwise

I watched with great interest a film recently on Natural Childbirth showing how Dr. Odent, a French doctor, used methods to help a woman through her labour which worked with her natural ability to cope with birth, in that a caring and relaxed environment was provided. Each woman chose her own position for childbirth, received no painkiller, as the human brain is capable of manufacturing its own and was encouraged to move around as she wished in the early stages, rather than being flat on her back where her condition, and that of the baby could be monitored. This hospital has an excellent safety record for mothers and babies. Also the babies are successfully breastfed as the mothers are encouraged to feed them on demand and there is no post-natal depression. These women have started motherhood the right way their natural instincts telling them what to do and not having them suppressed by doctors and midwives' current fads about the proper way to do things.

Childbirth may not seem to some particularly relevant to education but to me it is the beginning. One's instincts for coping with this and breastfeeding are healthy and vital to the future relationship of mother and child. Education is part of the development that follows on from there. I believe most parents have the ability to cope naturally with this as well. Unfortunately we're always being told by the experts that it's not safe for mothers to have babies at home; babies need feeding every four hours; young children are deprived if they haven't the company of about twenty children in their peer group; and every child should be reading at five. The essence is listen to your child's needs, his wants and needs are usually the same thing.

J. WEST

Welcome to Baby

To David and Meg Robertson-Shopper.
A new addition to the family on 22nd April,
Mary Kathryn. A further culmination of our
love, born at home in dim warm light and
peace, a child of innate grace and beauty,
blessed by the fairies and welcome in our
home.

UNDER -FIVES



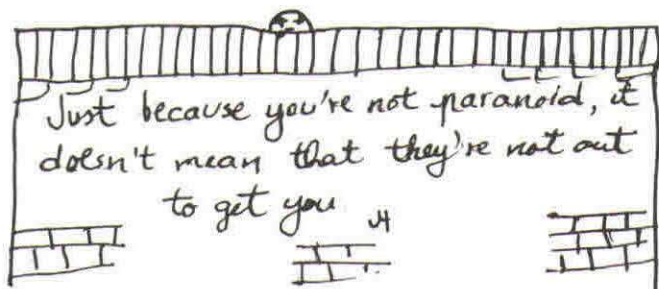
The realisation that school is optional, not compulsory, as a way of educating children, puts an entirely different light on our whole approach to bringing up children. School dominates a child's life from the moment of birth. The new-born is not put to sleep with the mother, but is placed in a cot where the mother cannot be touched, so that it can learn to be alone. At home the mother often trains her child to spend long hours alone in a bedroom so that the child gets used to the mother not being there. The mother believes that the child is happy because he smiles when she comes into the room and relieves the boredom. The child is weaned as soon as possible, usually within three months. After all, what are you going to do, if a child still wants to be breastfed when he has to go to school? As soon as the child is old enough, the child is taken to a creche, not because the child desires the company of other children, but to "get him used to being with them and away from the mother". Similarly, parents become very anxious that their children should settle in playgroup at the age of three. Health visitors even sometimes pressure mothers to send their children to playgroup, and education departments subsidise mothers who cannot afford it. The reason they give is that it helps to prepare a child for school. I agree that playgroups are a good idea, but only when they are run for the benefit of children and not as a compulsory preparation for compulsory school. By the age of five, children feel that school is an inevitable part of life, just like eating and going to bed at night.

At this point, even the most loving parents, who have not pushed their child away at every opportunity, face a severe separation from the child. The constant companionship and spontaneous learning is interrupted. The child gradually but inevitably grows away from the parents. The school obviously cannot share all the aspirations of the parents for the child. Even the best-loved child will eventually show undeniable behaviour changes after some time at school. These may be tenseness, secretiveness, irritability, irresponsibility, unhelpfulness, demanding attention, escapism, timidity, teasing and so on. Parents who have taught their children

everything they know for the first five years of their lives, are suddenly faced with being cut off from the learning process. How many parents on enquiring about the child's school day are told by the child "You ask too many questions" or "I'm not telling you" in other words, that is not your business. School replace the parents' natural gentle authority which leaves the child free to develop in its own way at its own pace, with the rigid and artificial rules of schools which force all children to develop in the same way. For example, children who can read fluently are made to go through the schools graded reading programme. Parents are usually unwilling to upset the school by objecting. Children educated at home do not have to waste time in this and many other ways.

Schools need to change. They have much to learn from parents who educate their children at home. If parents regard school as an option for the child, it is likely that the child will derive far more benefit from school than if it is presented to them as inevitable. It is liberating to get used to the idea that children do not have to go to school at age five, seven, eleven, thirteen, sixteen, eighteen or any age. They can go if and when they are ready to benefit from it. School should be a place where children go, because they want to go, and learn what they want to learn and can ask the questions they want answered, where they can learn to take the initiative. This sort of education helps develop the kind of people who are most valuable as adults in any kind of society.

(SIGNED) FRANCES HOWARD



To Organise or not to Organise

Joan Hoare

I think there has been some over-reaction to the suggestion that E.O. should become more organised, both for and against the idea. Personally I think that E.O. needs to be better organised so that as many people as possible realise that schooling is not compulsory, and that it is quite feasible to teach your own children yourself. To provide a network of information and support, we also need to know where fellow-deschoolers are. So E.O. as an organised association of people is definitely necessary.

We should realise that an organisation does not have to be hierarchical. Anyone who has been to a Core Group meeting would realise that the idea of it being the top pinnacle of command and decision is extremely comical! What the Core Group attempts to do is provide information for a loose network of people, and finds volunteers to do necessary, centralised jobs such as treasurer, membership and inquiry secretaries. These centralised jobs are definitely necessary; if they weren't done, there would be no E.O. and it would consequently be very difficult for de-schoolers to find each other. Your LEA certainly won't tell you where they are! I feel it is quite unrealistic to expect that an association of people, formed for whatever reason, will magically and spontaneously run itself without centrally collecting membership subscriptions and centrally keeping a list of the membership, which can be circulated to all members. This may be bureaucratic but it is necessary and I think it is being unduly paranoid to suggest that because of it, E.O. is becoming some kind of 1984 Big Brother.

I certainly look forward to the day when regional organisation in E.O. will be stronger, but at the moment in some regions of the country there are very few members, so there isn't actually much to organise. Publicity is what is needed. I would like to suggest that all local co-ordinators are automatically informed when and where Core Group meetings are held, are sent an agenda and are encouraged to attend the meeting if possible, even if only once a year. I realise, of course, how difficult it is to attend distant meetings,

My mail contained a steady flow of enquiries following all the above events and the 'phone kept ringing for the same reason. However, the last two weeks have been quiet ones, the publicity having died down for the moment,

particularly if you are teaching your children yourself or are in business or whatever, so attendance at Core Group meetings by local co-ordinators should not, of course, be obligatory. But if local co-ordinators could attend, ideas discussed there and decisions made there can be passed onto other local members for further discussion. I see this process as a chain of discussion rather than direction from the top. I am against the idea of voting for regional representatives to go to the Core Group. Would anyone bother to vote? Would the representative be known to members? Probably not. I think the whole exercise could easily become an empty and time consuming farce. I think the present system of having volunteers to take on necessary tasks is satisfactory. Striving for some abstract idea of democracy is just a red herring as this would become more important than what has actually got to be done. What we need to build up are channels of consultation. Democracy is not the nadir of social organisation.

I notice from the Minutes of the Core Group (NL23) that meetings are to be held bi-monthly. Would it be possible to arrange these meetings say 6 months in advance and publish the dates in the newsletter, plus an address and 'phone number for inquiries about Core Group meetings? (I volunteer my address and 'phone number.) So often by the time the newsletter arrives it's too late to go to the advertised Core Group meeting, or you've arranged to do something else. If dates of meetings were published in advance, then more people I hope would be enabled to attend.

I think the simple suggestions I have made would help to strengthen the channels of consultation and discussion which already exist, and would encourage greater participation in the affairs of E.O. I hope other members will also give their minds to how we might improve the organisation of E.O. but without creating a hierarchy. Please write to me if you have any suggestions:- Joan Hoare, 25 Moor Oaks Road, Broomhill, SHEFFIELD S10 1 BX.

P.S. I would like to make clear that the foregoing ideas are entirely my own and I have not in any way been directed by the Core Group, God or anybody else.

The Address for Po! and Irene STEAD from July 1982 till July 1984 will be:-

c/o PRISTOW HELICOPTER MALASIA
Sdu Bhd.
KUALA TRENGGANU AIRPORT
KUALA TRENGGANU
WEST MALASIA

E. O.'S SPECIAL CHILDREN

Firstly, a sincere thank you to all the people who wrote to me following the Core Group decision to form a support group for those members who have children with special needs.

A great many of you have written raising interesting points - all of which will be compiled into a contact list and information sheet to be included in the October Newsletter. Malcolm is in the process of producing a summary of the Education Act (for England and Wales) 1981 - which updates the Law for the education of children with special educational needs and gives new rights to their parents. As far as I can tell, it would appear that this Act is due to come into effect in January 1983.

Briefly (taken from a D.E.S. press notice)

The Act amends the law broadly in line with the concept of special educational needs proposed by the Warnoch Committee on the education of handicapped children and young people. The Committee considered that as many as 20 per cent of the school population might have special educational needs at some time during their school lives.

The new act repeals Section 33 and 34 of the Education Act 1944 whereby local education authorities placed children with difficulties into one of ten statutory categories of pupils needing "special educational treatment". In future, medical, educational and psychological factors will have to be taken into account when assessing children and the Act emphasises the need to identify children under five who have, or may develop, special educational needs.

L.E.A's must ensure that parents of children with special educational needs are involved from the earliest stages of assessment and consult them about special provisions to be made for their children's needs. Parents must be given a formal statement of the assessment of their children's needs and have access to experts for further information.

All assessments must be multi-professional i.e. that L.E.A's must seek medical, psychological and educational advice - and parents who disagree with any aspect of the assessment may have discussions with the professionals.

Section 7 (Statement of Child's Special Educational Needs.)

Step 1. "Where an assessment has been made under Section 5, the L.E.A. who are responsible for the child shall if they are of the opinion that they should determine the special educational provision that should be made for him make a statement in such a manner as they

consider appropriate".

"It is then the duty of the L.E.A. to arrange that the special educational provision specified in the statement is made for him UNLESS HIS PARENT HAS MADE SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS."

Whilst, as with most of the law, this quote from Section 7 is probably justified elsewhere in the act - it still seems a pretty clear invitation to 'Otherwise' education - the words "suitable arrangements" being open to wide interpretation.

We have contacted several organisations and by the time this Newsletter goes to Press - hope to have had discussions with a solicitor on his views of the New Act and our 'rights'.

Interestingly, in America - if your child has any handicaps it would be much easier to become a home-educator, as it is considered that 'special' children need ever more parental and family love, closeness and attention than other kinds - VERY SENSIBLE! (Mind you my non-handicapped son doesn't agree - he needs that much attention too!) Perhaps E.O. should gently tell the L.E.A.'s! I am quite sure that it is all too common for mothers (fathers?) to be given tranquillizers for their children to "calm them down" (less trouble to 'professionals?') when they say that they or their children dislike a special school. My daughter was miserable and visibly regressed. One parent commented to me on how "special schools" take over the children - often parents are made to feel really inadequate and yet I've never met a parent of a handicapped child who didn't know a good deal more about their child than the professionals! Sad to say that these comments also apply to many E.O. parents, with children who are not handicapped.

One thing that came through from the forms and letters I have received is a sense of desperation and isolation - certainly a lot of parents see themselves as isolated even WITHIN E.O. and I hope that through the Newsletter I can appeal to all members to take these families into your hearts - include them in all activities - handicapped children have so much to offer if not being continually asked to be what they are not and being accepted for what they are.

Lastly, let's not be guilty of isolating ourselves! Each month there will be a page devoted to "Special Children" so why not write an article about your problems and successes - I know there are lots.

As far as being able to help new members - it would seem best for me to act as "Enquiries Secretary for Special Children" and I will pass on enquiries where possible to "Special Children Co-ordinators". Edna and Vic Edwards of Merseyside have already offered to deal with families with Mongol Children and I was able to refer a new member to them (who had been in hiding for two years with her de-schooled Mongol son) the relief this family felt at 'contact' with E.O. - makes it all worthwhile.

Tessa Forrester of Cornwall has mentioned Foster Children (handicapped or not) and anyone with interest in this subject might like to write an article for us (and/or get in touch with Tessa). I seem to remember an article by a member who worked on a "Fostering" Department. All articles should be headed "Special Children" - to enable the Editor to know where to put them (no facetious suggestions - thank you!).

We hope to get up to Yorkshire this summer and look forward to meeting some families personally - but in the meantime hope that lots of you will be able to come up to Trent Park - where we can find a corner to get together. Thank you so much to all of you who have offered help and I hope I will have written taking up your offers by the time you receive this Newsletter! I look forward to publishing the compiled details, so that you can all get in touch with each other.

Finally, I have to pop in our own little success story - Sian had a Speech Therapy assessment two weeks ago and the speech therapist (who had been very disapproving of us de-schooling Sian) was amazed at the improvement. In 1½ years (since home educating but that could be a happy coincidence!) Sian's visual memory has improved by 4 years a huge leap! I like to think it is due to a happier Sian - and far less pressure! The Speech Therapist said that she did not believe Sian would have made such a big leap had she not been at home! This is of course, the area which affects reading and writing - (when she said it was due to the hard 'teaching' we had been putting in, in these areas - I just smiled but didn't say a word! - I believe it was due to E.O.)

Julie Duff

BIRMINGHAM 1982 CONFERENCE ACCOUNTS

<u>Expenditure</u>		<u>Income</u>	
Stationery and printing	180.65	Fees by post	815.50
Postage	50.57	Fees at door	132.50
Phone	170.50		<u>948.00</u>
Travel	74.05	Less refunds	31.20
Catering	408.38		
Creche materials	8.57		
Hire of sound system	62.10		916.80
Gratuities to cleaners	20.00	Sale of cakes	46.04
Miscellaneous	20.38		<u>962.84</u>
	<u>995.20</u>	Net loss	32.36
			<u>995.20</u>



Original cartoon from "Libertarian Education No.30" - an occasional magazine. No.31 is due out soon from 6 Beaconsfield Road, Leicester, England. Tel. (0533) 552085.

The Threat of Schooling; at Home or in Class

The libertarian resistance to a school education centres on the authoritarian relationships inherent in such a system, whatever its current guise. The hierarchy of the western model was influenced largely by the hierarchy of the church, deriving from a time when the possessor-purveyors of learning were very closely identified with the possessor-purveyors of spiritual salvation. (The organization of the school has also been much influenced by the organization of the army and the state.) Living conditions have been transformed so radically that - even if one could justify such relationships in the past - for education and learning to progress today, teacher and pupil clearly cannot continue to "go on meeting like this." These relationships are central to the many defects of the schooling system, some of which have already been discussed. As a result many free-thinking people (not necessarily libertarians) are drawn favourably to home education for children. This can be a libertarian alternative, but is not necessarily so. The objections which libertarians pose to schooling are based on their objections to fundamentally doctrinaire principles and authoritarian relationships and practices, and the myth of the neatly and diametrically opposed roles of teacher and learner. Such principles, practices, roles and relationships ("anti-life" values: Neill) are exemplified in, but not exclusive to, the school system. Many home relationships are just as bad or worse. Some pupils look upon school as an escape from the 'pressures' at home, yet while at school yearn to leave it as well. (Hence the appeal of a genuine alternative like truancy.)

The promise and possibilities of free schools have also been hampered by their being treated as 'sin bins' for 'problem' children by conventional schooling. So if home education is to be any alternative to schooling, at least four basic considerations have to be met. Firstly, productive or "pro-life" relationships need to be engendered and promoted at home, and no ageist presumptions or authoritarianism should be entertained. Secondly,

the child's natural desire to explore and learn should be encouraged, perhaps even provoked and so brought into play, but not hampered by any adult devices such as a curriculum, however muted or hidden. The parent-as-teacher is no more bountiful, than the teacher-as-parent, and the offspring-as-pupil is no more liberated than the pupil-as-offspring. (Remember that the meaning of the term Alma Mater itself is derived from maternal connotations.) Thirdly, as the aims of libertarian education are concerned with working towards fundamental structural change in existing society, it is necessary to conceive of the objectives of an manouvres for change from first principles politically. The aim is not to make occasional repairs to the ailing body of the prevailing polity, but to trade it in for a new social order. This leads to, fourthly, a strongly critical and dialectical approach to perception and analysis; it is a matter of cultivating a necessary style of approach, not of instilling people with new ideas and information through the old approach. So the spectre of the school is not in the building or the grounds, or even the members of staff, necessarily; it is internalized in dehumanized relationships, which are both limiting and diversionary.

FROM: LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION NO.30
Article "Liberal or Libertarian" by Bunn Nagarā.

Local Education Authorities

One family's experience with their L.E.A.

I first heard about and joined E.O. a few months before Heath was to start school. The contacts I had been given were for one reason or another not around so the idea was shelved and Heath went to school. Just as he started, I was contacted by someone whose child had been at school for half a year and was in the same position as me - dithering on the verge. It's amazing what a difference it makes to have someone to sound out your doubts on. After that I found out about other E.O. families, practising or dithering. It took Heath and myself a year and a term to take the plunge, and this is now our second term of E.O. Before making the move I tried to find out how other people had found Bury L.E.A. (it's on its own). I had a few bad examples, no good. I decided to go ahead anyway and fight to the end.

I wrote the standard letter to the headmaster to arrive on the first day of the new term (he was new that term) and a letter to the Chief Education Officer with a copy of Head's letter. I also decided to take the bull by the horns and wrote to the advisors enclosing copies of both letters and asking for an appointment to discuss same. I heard nothing from the advisors but got a 'phone call from the headmaster asking for Heath's new school so that he could pass on his records. I was taken unawares and said it wouldn't be necessary as I had informed the L.E.A. He was persistent so I told him Heath was being educated privately at home. As a result of this conversation, the Welfare Officer arrived at the front door (I asked him in thinking he was someone I was expecting for an estimate.) He asked why I'd not been sending Heath to school. I went and got my notes, of which there must have been a dozen pages. I told him of my complaints about the teacher and the school and the system. He said I should consider another school before it went too far. I said I would like to see an advisor. He asked if I was a qualified teacher and that I had to be approved by the Ministry of Science in London. He said what I was doing was against the law and I would find myself with an attendance order slapped on me. I was writing down what he said. Then I quoted the relevant acts etc. at him, and asked where he got his facts from. He then started hedging and said I was making it difficult for him as I obviously knew the laws and he was wary of saying anything if I was going to write it down and possibly quote him. He said his concern was welfare not the law, but that I was getting myself into deep water although he appreciated my intentions were good. I said I wanted to see an advisor again so he said he would arrange it as he couldn't stop me if I asked but he would like me to try another school. I didn't hear any further until almost the end of that term, during which time I had been extremely conscience of getting school type work as evidence. Then one day the friendly neighbourhood welfare officer appeared again with Heath's attendance record from school marked absent all term. I said why had his name not been removed from the register as I had requested

and was a little more assertive this time. He said he didn't know why the advisors had not been and what work was I doing with Heath. I said I would be pleased to show him if he could make an appointment as it would take about two hours and I was about to go out. He said well it really wasn't his job and he would get an advisor to call. Obviously with all this I was expecting the worst. The advisor phoned to come the week after the end of term. I had all the work laid out ready and all my notes. I had even kept a diary with every single thing we did each day. I contemplated taping our conversation but didn't go through with that. When she arrived, she was the exact opposite of the Welfare Officer. She agreed with a lot of my complaints. She offered helpful suggestions. No question of allowing me to go ahead, it was a fact and she was here as an advisor not an examiner. She even said that on a 1 to 1 basis we needn't do as much paper work. She asked if it said how often she should come in any E.O. literature. But said she would come once a term. I've not heard from her this term and there's only two days to go. But after I'd met her, there was a weight lifted off me that I'd no idea I'd been carrying around for so long. I am still a little conscious of a feeling that I've got to keep parallel to school work to some extent, which I hope will pass in time.

(SIGNED) ANDREA LOWE

L E A Access Is it legal ?

Approximately three years ago, Mick wrote an article for E.O. along very similar lines to the article, in the June Newsletter with the title above.

As with Ted and Mary Carter, careful reading of the Education Act convinced us (me, only after much worry!) that the L.E.A's were acting outside their jurisdiction. (L.E.A. means Local Education Authority.)

Our daughter, Rachel, had never attended school and we were becoming increasingly concerned at the idea of 'control' through visiting exercised by the L.E.A.

So, we denied them access to Rachel. Two advisers then came to see us - we talked and discussed the matter for some time without reaching agreement. Thereafter we had approximately three to four such meetings. These seemed to revolve around the problem of how could the authorities know Rachel was receiving an education if we did not allow them access to check up on it.

Eventually, we reached a compromise. A friend of a friend (a teacher!) gave Rachel, then aged eight a standard maths. and reading test. Two social worker friends then did a short 'social report'. I wrote a glowing (of course) report of all the activities we had done in the last eight years.

These were all sent to the L.E.A. as evidence of education.

One more visit by advisors then took place - they would still like to see Rachel - this was politely refused as usual.

All this took place approximately three years ago. Rachel is now eleven and we have had no dealings at all, since then with our L.E.A.

The relief is enormous. We can get on with education as, when and how we like. We are not forever worrying about visits and authorities attitudes - the Sword of Damocles has been lifted!

We want to educate our child our way - the L.E.A's are not authorities on the subject - they have only assumed that role. I feel we give them that authority by acquiescing to their demands for access.

Quote 'Section 36 it shall be the duty of the parent to cause him to receive efficient full-time education. N.B. it is the duty of the parent - not that of the L.E.A's.

Wensley Mill,

Wensley,

LEYBURN

N. Yorkshire Tel. 0969 23544

(SIGNED) JENNIE WHITE

Local Co-Ordinator of

N. Yorkshire

Ed. I know a would-be E.O. member, with children under 5, who was forced by the courts to take his children into hospital as he was unintentionally starving them by 'purifying' their diet. His wife eventually had to leave him to get the children out of his control. I am glad E.O. was not involved in this scandal. Perhaps social workers should be able to see a child to ensure that the child is as healthy and happy at home as they could be at school. We don't want E.O. to be involved in any child ill-treatment scandal. This is not really a matter for the Local Education Authorities but for the social services and health visitors.

DOVE



DOVE Delegation Opposed to Violent Education

This is a scheme to help children who are threatened by schools or courts. The help offered is self protection by:-

1. Registration - A child is given a code number on a talisman.
2. Postcards - A child is given 4 postcards a year to send on each quarter day or whenever a threatening incident occurs involving officials from outside the home.
3. A search and investigation will be set up if cards fail to arrive within a week of expected date.
4. If needed, children will be offered appropriate advice and legal aid and protection, including secret accommodation where authorities cannot find them.

Children who could most benefit from this scheme are those from broken homes, battered children, children in care, boarding schools or children who are deschooled or wishing to be deschooled.

What are the possible catches?

Children must be able to read, use a callendar, buy postage stamps. The children most in need of protection are those least likely to hear about it and most conditioned not to complain. The organiser of Dove does not say what staff funds or accommodation is available. Many of Dove's proposals would require legislation. Perhaps it is hoped that DOVE action groups will be formed to monitor schools and courts, raise funds, care for children and lobby parliament.

If any E.O. children, in school or out, feel they would like to try using this scheme, write to DOVE - 428 Staines Road, BEDFONT. Middlesex. I do not know whether DOVE wants to be paid. Such a service must cost money if it is to be effective. Probably donations would be accepted. An explanatory booklet and postcards are available - but do not expect too much.

FUTURE EDITORS NEEDED

E.O., like all voluntary groups relies heavily on a few volunteer workers. If you want to help spread the workload, perhaps you can help. Editors ~~for~~ future issues are still needed. Have a fascinating and exciting month editing the bi-monthly newsletter. E.O. pays editors their expenses, if you can give your time. If you would like to edit an issue, write or 'phone Bruce and Dianne Cox, Grey Row Cottage, Flixton Road, St. Margaret S. Elsham, Harleston IP20 0FL
Tel. St. Cross (098682) 315.

Ten forty-three. In exactly
TWO MINUTES I'll ring the
FIRST BELL and they'll all
stand still! All that is, except
your potential DEVIATE!
Your FLEDGLING REBEL!
Your incipient BOAT-ROCKER!
THEY'LL try to move all right!
THEY'LL have to learn the hard
way not to move!



So I'll SCREAM at 'em and
take their NAMES and give
them FIVE DETENTIONS and
and EXTRA HOMEWORK!
NEXT TIME they won't move
after the first bell! Because when
they've learned not to question
the FIRST BELL, they'll learn not
to question their TEXTS! Their
TEACHERS! Their COURSES!
EXAMINATIONS!



They'll grow up to accept TAXES!
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT!
INSURANCE! WAR! MEN ON THE
MOON! BOOZE! LAWS! POLITICAL
SPEECHES! PARKING METERS!
TELEVISION! FUNERALS!
Non-movement after the first bell
is the backbone of Western
Civilisation!



Reprinted by courtesy of
Peace News.

The following article is extracted from a longer article entitled "skoolin for peece" by Brenda Thomson in Peace News. It represents a point of view which may not be shared by all E.O. members - but which clearly show many advantages of home education over school education.

PEACE EDUCATION

A recent National Union of Teachers statement showed that peace education is already with us "inextricably linked" with questions of "education for the global community and education for development... human rights, European and international studies and multi-cultural education". It is present in co-operative and experiential learning methods that celebrate emotional as well as rational being, develop self-respect through trust. Its textbook is the community, peace action and peace research directing curriculum content.

Different times and different places provide different topics for peace education. In Britain in the seventies it was about race. Now the nuclear issue is coming to the fore. The topics are linked in capitalism and imperialism and speak of inhumanity, fear and greed. The difference today is that it may become a "subject" for schooling-topic, discipline, career structure. If so, how wise are teachers going to be in holding together the caring, inquiring, listening and doing that will breathe creativity into peace education? How profound is our "love for the world to make peace in which our children will flourish?" The essence of peace education is change - to a future which as yet only exists in our hopes.

The role and practice of the parent in peace education would seem to me to be of prime importance. Peace education commences at birth, and the process learned through family relationships will probably dominate future possibilities. The need for early training for peace action seems to be understood most clearly in communities fraught with open violence.

Dave Hicks sees "peace education" in part as a process - not merely what is taught but how it is taught, with the medium as the message. The medium he proffers is:

"respect for children as people, the acceptance of their own ideas as real and meaningful, the mutual investigation of problems."

He would hope to promote co-operation and trust in the classroom, with the teacher/learner relationship one of enablement and empowerment. This is training for action.

What if the pupils do decide to act on their own meaningful ideas - cut class and sit down on the local railway line to stop a nuclear waste train coming through - what then?

Make no mistake, the authority of the teacher in school cannot so easily be shared with the child, the person. Principle and practice are being worked out in an institution designed to other norms.

Teachers at the secondary stage of education are more concerned with the information content of the curriculum. Peter suggests that this should be learner, rather than teacher, directed from a research base, using resources provided in a cross-curriculum initiative, offering a wide spectrum of opinion and varied presentation of facts, thus:

"the development of sound opinion and philosophical truth will result from informed debate rather than obsessive proselytising."

The teacher's "opinion" is just one entry into the debate. As with Dave's "process", Peter is posing an idyll of equality of status between teacher and learner where none exists. This will be more acutely apparent at the secondary level where "teacher" is required by established convention to veto or examine the pupil's opinion. The convention itself, it could be argued, is part of militaristic thinking, and certainly part of an hierarchical social structure. Strategies, towards such an equality of status will need to take into consideration the examination system, school structure and conventional teacher empowerment.

In the schooling of children for peace, we could be accused of expecting from the young things we don't expect of ourselves:

"No child is equipped to create the bridge between a perfectly alien point of view and his society. Such bridges can only be built slowly, patiently by the exceptionally gifted. The cultivation in children of traits, attitudes, habits foreign to their cultures, is not the way to make over the world. Every new religion, every new political doctrine, has had first to make adult converts, to create a small nuclear culture within whose girding walls its children will flourish."

One need not be surprised, then, that the kind of peace education that George Kent is articulating is seen to be happening most clearly in the adult and community

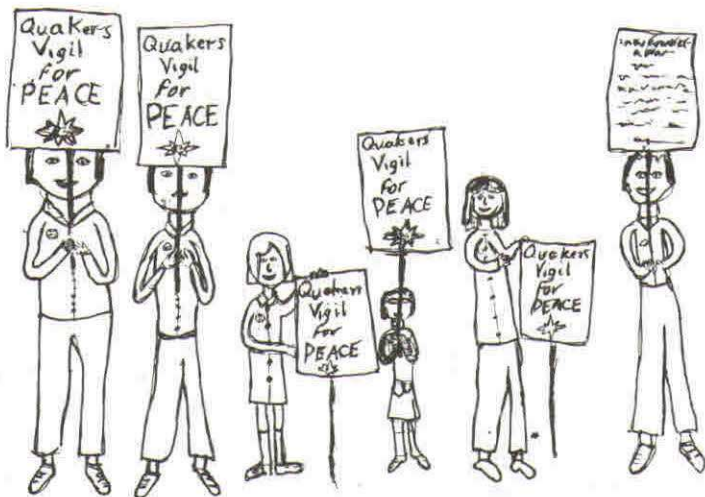
education that James McCarthy describes. Not only is there more equality of status between teacher and learner, since the learner brings a wider experience of working our survival in the society under scrutiny, but also the learning may be directly "work" rather than "curriculum" related. Personal responsibility for change can be assessed with more clarity.

Peace education begins with adults. It is mediated informally by them through relationships in the home.

BRENDA THOMSON

For further information contact

Colin Reid, St.Christopher School, Letchworth, Herts.



Vanessa Kemp (10) drew this picture of Canterbury Friends the Sunday after they had held a vigil in Longmarket. She is the third from the left.

Reprinted from the Oct. 61 issue of The Junior Friend with permission of the Artist.

HOME STUDY COURSES

Ages

0-3 Course of 4 months meetings for mothers (and other interested people) on breast-feeding and mothering. Highly recommended. Enquire by post to:-BM 3424 London, W.C.1 6XX. Telephone counselling available.

3-5 A postal pack of educational TOYS and records etc. once a month for 12 months £2.45 a month. Details from MacDonald, 3/4/5 Nursery Course, FREEPOST, London, E.C.2B 2AN

5-14 Most active E.O. families want to get away from lessons and curriculums but some families may be hesitating on the brink - unable to face giving their children total freedom or design their own programme with E.O's help. It may help such families to deschool their children to have a correspondence course - initially at least. The World Education Service, Murray House, Vandon Street, Buckingham Gate, London, S.W. H 2AJ Tel. 61-222-7181/2 - run a correspondence course equivalent to state education. They are not in principle in favour of deschooling, but in practice they do accept deschooled children. The course is designed for children who cannot attend school by reason of distance or disablement. All their pupils are expected to attend school at 14 for C.S.E. and 'O' level courses. For an annual fee one gets books for the year. A postal or telephone tutorial service if required - and - a termly assessment at work if desired. It helps parents to gain confidence in their powers to help their children learn.

14-15 No course available unless you pretend to be over 16.

16+ Many correspondence Courses available e.g. two below:-

1. Wolsey Hall, Oxford, correspondence course leading to 'O' and 'A' levels ' degrees and diplomas. 0865 54231
2. National Extension College 18 Brooklands Ave., Cambridge. CB2 2HN Tel. 0223 -63465 correspondence courses in 'O' and 'A' levels Open University courses and others.

World Education Service, mentioned above, has fees as follows.

Age 5-7	£230 per year
Age 8-10	£250 per year
Age 11-13	£300 per year

The second child in a family is charged less. These fees may seem exhorbitant at first sight for just £50 or so worth of books and a few encouraging letters of advice etc. But the World Education Service (WES) is not making big profits - in return for all its services to all its clients. For instance, they have set up schools on construction sites abroad for expatriate children. They send letters by air-mail to distant countries to encourage families to stay together and avoid separation for the sake of education in boarding school. Compare WES fees less than £1 per day with cost of tuition in piano-dancing-carate etc. for only an hour a week. One can easily spend £200 or £300 in a year just on Piano Lessons.

E. O.

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Will MEMBERS please contact their co-ordinator, where possible, with enquiries. Co-ordinators can then phone D1 if necessary, and in this way they will be able to help subsequent enquiries with the same need.

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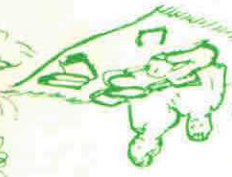
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wishes and feelings regarding their education.
Full consideration, with due allowance for their
age and understanding, shall be given to their
To establish the primary right of children that
responsibility for their children's education and
that they have the right to exercise this
responsibility by educating them out of school.

To re-affirm that parents have the primary
children who are not benefitting from school.
To encourage the provision of alternative learning
situations outside the school system for those
Our principal aims are as follows

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



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