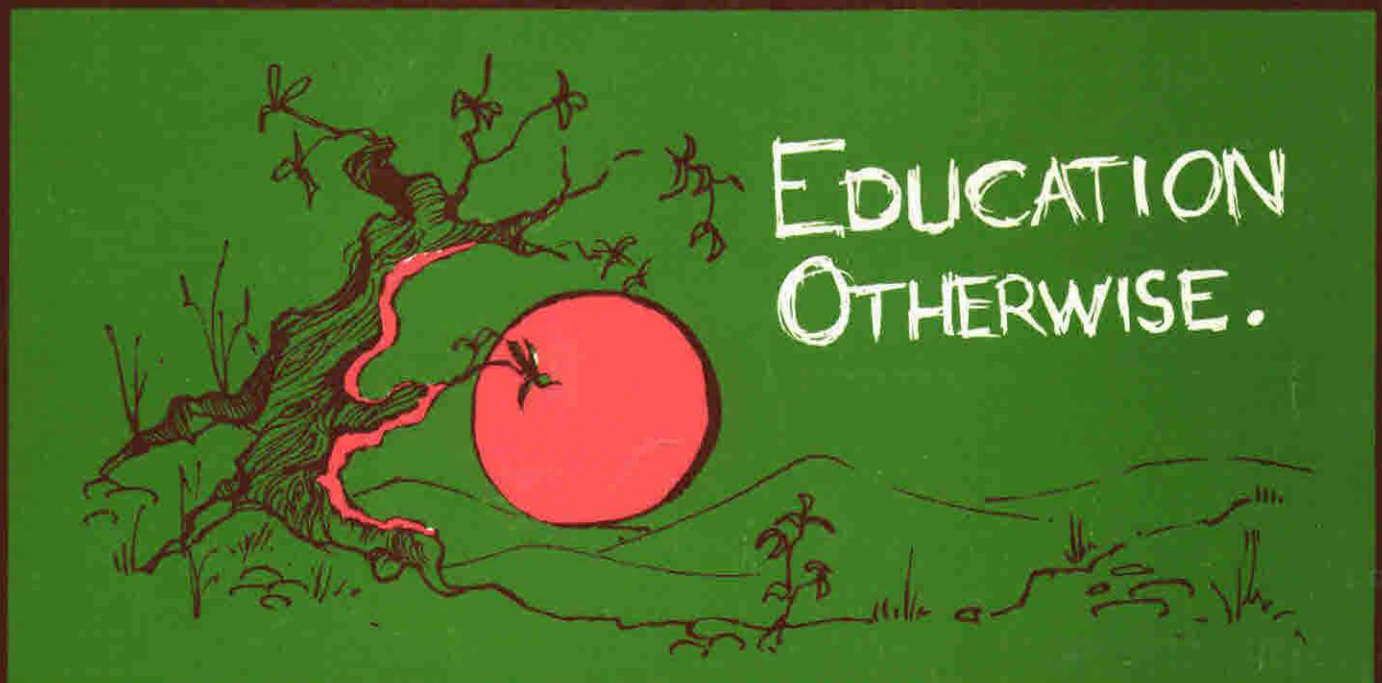


No. 25

EDUCATION OTHERWISE NEWSLETTER

Volume 6 Number 5





E O in Literature

contributed by Janice Owen & Bruce Cox

Then she went to the blackboard and printed the alphabet in enormous square capitals, turned to the class and asked "Does anybody know what these are?" Everybody did; most of the first grade had failed it last year.

I suppose she chose me because she knew my name; as I read the alphabet a faint line appeared between her eyebrows, and after making me read most of 'My First Reader' and the stock-market quotations from 'The Mobile Register' aloud, she discovered that I was literate and looked at me with more than faint distaste. Miss Caroline told me to tell my father not to teach me any more, it would interfere with my reading.

"Teach me?" I said in surprise. "He hasn't taught me anything," Miss Caroline. Atticus ain't got time to teach me anything" I added, when Miss Caroline smiled and shook her head. "Why, he's so tired at night he just sits in the living room and reads."

"If he didn't teach you, who did?" Miss Caroline asked good-naturedly. "Somebody did. You weren't born reading 'The Mobile Register'."

"Jem says I was. He read in a book where I was a Bullfinch

instead of a Finch. Jem says my names really Jean Louise Bullfinch, that I got swapped when I was born and I'm really a --"

Miss Caroline apparently thought I was lying. "Let's not let our imaginations run away with us, dear" she said. "Now you tell your father not to teach you any more. It's best to begin reading with a fresh mind. You tell him I'll take over from here and try to undo the damage - "Ma'am?"

"Your father does not know how to teach. You can have a seat now." I mumbled that I was sorry and retired meditating on my crime. I never deliberately learned to read, but somehow I had been wallowing illicitly in the daily papers. In the long hours of church - was it then I learned? I could not remember not being able to read hymns. Now that I was compelled to think about it, reading was something that just came to me, as learning to fasten the seat of my union suit without looking around, or achieving two bows from a snarl of shoelaces. I could not remember when the lines above Atticus's moving finger separated into words, but I had stared at them all the evenings in my memory, listening to the news of the day, Bills To Be Enacted Into Laws, the diaries of Lorenzo Dow - anything Atticus happened to be reading when I crawled into his

lap every night. Until I feared I would lose it, I never loved to read. One does not love breathing.

(from *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee)

The earliest record of Henry Bradley is singularly characteristic. It was before he was four years old, on the occasion of his being taken for the first time to church - the meeting-house, no doubt, of the Congregational community to which his parents belonged - where he obstinately persisted in holding his book upside down. This eccentricity gave them some anxiety, until it was discovered that the child really could read, but only with the book in that position. Unknown to them he had taught himself during family prayers: while his father, sitting with a great family Bible open on his knees, was reading the lesson aloud, the boy, standing in front of him closely poring over the page, had followed word by word and thus worked out the whole puzzle - and so completely, that long after he had accustomed himself to the normal position he could read equally well either way.

(from *Three Friends* by Robert Bridges, about Henry Bradley [1845-1923] philologist and editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*)

Talking about schooling

compiled by Sarah Guthrie

Joseph Chilton Pearce, author of *The Magical Child*, is quoted in the *BMA News Review* as fearing that the problems he wrote about then have worsened. He believes that "there is total acceptance of the need for early literacy...in our country (USA) we have what almost amounts to a religious conviction that reading and writing is the only way to salvation - to save the child, to save the country." He blames this mainly on what he calls the "monstrous misunderstanding" of childhood. "In the USA last year" says Pearce "there were over a million convictions of parents on a charge of ill-treating their children. This surely indicates a breakdown of the most powerful of all genetic responses; the automatic response of nurturing."

"In the old days no-one was educated in the modern sense aside from learning a trade, listening to their father and doing whatever the old man did. ... One person out of a hundred might learn how to read and write and get some inkling of the thoughts of great human beings... We come to the days of mass public free education where every kid goes to school whether he wants to or not, and has stuff jammed down his

throat whether he wants it or not. It has never worked very well. The problem is that not doing it works even worse... In general, very few of the students will find themselves learning what they want to learn or at the rate they want to learn. So school is a frustrating experience for everybody, and few...people get out of it as much as they would if they just happened to be learning what they wanted to know at the rate they could follow most comfortably... Once we have computerized information... every student can guide his own education. He may still go to school, but school will become a series of signposts indicating what he would like to follow up on his own... By making school as unpleasant as it is...many people are imprinted with a life-long distaste for learning and education. They prefer ignorance"

(Isaac Asimov, *Mensa Journal International*, June 1982)

When I look back on all the crap I learned in high school, It's a wonder I can think at all. But the lack of education hasn't hurt me;

I can read the writing on the wall.
(song lyric by Simon & Garfunkel)

"But I am not a graduate of any sort of nanny's college; I have accumulated my knowledge from many years of experience."

(Barbara Barnes, the Royal Nanny, *TELEGRAPH* 11.5.82)

"I've got a degree in Fine Art, and all you can do with that is to teach someone else how to get one."

(Neil Innes, on *RADIO NORFOLK* 20.5.82)

She wishes she'd had some proper education, but it clearly doesn't bother her very much. "...let's face it, boys need an education while girls can get away without." She scarcely touched down at a school. She was taught a bit in a...caravan on site together with the other Disney kids. "...can't remember anything at all - oh yes, something about Mesopotamia."

(Hayley Mills, interviewed by Polly Toynbee, *GUARDIAN* May 1982)

How can children become experts?

By David Deutch

I agree with Education Otherwise that parents, rather than the state, "have the primary responsibility for their children's education". I also believe that unless children themselves are allowed the greatest possible control over the content of their own education, and the rate at which they learn, their intellectual development will inevitably be impaired.

In school, of course, very little individual freedom of this sort is possible, even in those very rare schools where it is thought desirable. School children are constantly subjected to the abrading experience of being compelled to assimilate facts they do not need while at the same time, being forcibly prevented from learning what seems interesting and relevant to them. Many members of E.O. will know from personal experience how much better children's learning is, both in quality and quantity, when they are free from coercion.

The best place --- the only proper place --- to base a child's education is in the family. There will come a point, sooner or later in the intellectual development of a child, when he wishes to acquire more expertise in his chosen area than is immediately available from his family and friends, books, television, etc. This is the point when he requires direct access to expert practitioners in the area in question. As John Holt reminds us, it is important that these be "do-ers" and most undesirable that they be professional teachers. In the case of some children and some subjects, arranging this presents no great problem. For example, if the child is old enough he may be able to enter his chosen career directly as an apprentice, or he may find a university course he likes. However, the more academic or technological the child's interests are, and the younger he is when he reaches this point, the greater will be his difficulty in adapting to his needs existing educational institutions. He will find that these are geared to systematic coercion and preoccupied with fixed curricula, timetables, examinations and other compulsory diversions from matters relevant to him.

How can opportunities for learning be provided for a child who needs to acquire expert knowledge? Since I am a theoretical physicist, I am led to apply this question to my own field: What happens if a child of (say) 12 acquires a keen interest in fundamental physics?

School will not go far towards meeting such an interest. But even without the impediment of school, if the interest persists he will probably soon begin to exhaust the rewards of learning single-handedly from books and even such things as Open University broadcasts: The point here is not that he will run out of facts to learn; he will not. The point is that factual knowledge from such sources actually constitutes only part of what a physicist needs to know. The more important part is a complex set of attitudes and ideas concerning, for example, the recognition of what constitutes a physics problem, how one goes about solving it, and what might be acceptable as a solution. One can learn such things in students learn physics when they are finally permitted to participate in real research. And this --- research alongside real physicists --- is what I think our hypothetical child should be doing.

This is, if you like, an 'apprenticeship' model of learning, devoid, of course, of the medieval exploitative connotations of that word. How would it work in practice? The guiding principle is that the child should be truly productive from the beginning. He should be working on real problems and not on invented exercises with no purpose other than 'education'. The details would be different in different occupations, but let me again elaborate the example from physics. How would a child begin to participate in my own research?

Remember first that this would be a self-selected child, one who had already been attracted, for reasons of his own, by the idea of such participation. He may have been fascinated by some of the strange assertions of modern physics: That space and time are curved; that the entire universe is continually splitting into many almost identical copies of itself which all continue to exist simultaneously; that one could take a trip to the stars, return and find oneself younger than one's grandchildren. Having read about these theories, he may want to explore them further: What do they mean? Are they really true? Where do they come from? Why do we believe them? How are they connected with everyday experience? Whatever his reasons, he will bring with him a certain set of desires and expectations --- a set of problems if you will, which he believes he can set about solving with my cooperation. He might of course be wrong. He might have had quite the wrong idea of what physics is all about, in which case he would discover this in due course (this would

in itself be a valuable discovery for him) and we would be of no further use to each other. He might find that the matter in which I answered his questions and presented him with further matters of interest did indeed arouse the same fascination and meet the same need inside him which his private study had met previously. In that case he would continue to learn from his association with me.

Quite analogously, I too would have a set of problems to solve: My research topics. What would be in it for me? Well, any complex problem is solved by splitting it into simple subproblems. There would always be tasks integral to my overall problem which did not require a knowledge of physics but only an ability to reason. My capacity to solve the overall problem would be enhanced if I were able to share or delegate such tasks.

Such are the short time benefits for both parties to an 'apprenticeship' arrangement: Each helps to solve the other's immediate problems in exchange for help with his own. But if things went at all well, both parties would soon begin to reap greater benefits. We would find that the 'apprentice's' set of problems was itself changing. He would begin to think like a physicist as he unconsciously assimilated implicit knowledge simply by observing a physicist solving problems. He would begin to enjoy more and more the inner rewards of doing physics. At the same time he would become steadily more useful to me in an ever wider range of subtasks. Factual knowledge would come to him without specific effort, as a side-effect of pursuing his interests. Later he would begin to grasp the details of specific problems which I was working on, and he would begin to find research topics of his own. I would find myself learning increasingly from him, both directly and because one always learns by explaining things to a willing listener. And because we would naturally have many problems and interests in common, he would be a particularly helpful colleague for me. Finally the 'apprentice' would be such no longer, having overtaken his teacher-colleague in knowledge and skill. This is perhaps the greatest long term benefit which would accrue to both parties.

I must stress that I am not thinking of 'child prodigies' in the above example. I am convinced that arrangements such as the one I describe can and ought to be the normal way of entering any profession.

Organisation for self-help

by Cherity Laniado

In March of this year EO members got together in the East Anglian Region. The idea grew from the feeling that members were now thick enough on the ground for it to be possible for small groups to meet for the mutual benefit of swapping skills, ideas and children for short periods of time. This then from the figures would have seemed most likely to have applied to the under-fives. Life is full of surprises - from almost that moment there has been a complete shift of emphasis here, and nearly every enquiry I handle is from secondary-level potential deschoolers. While the needs of younger children can be fairly well accommodated in autonomous family life, it is a little unfair to expect this to be sufficient for the exploring mind of the adolescent. As all parents realize, children grow.

With this added information in mind, we set about constructing an open day that could stimulate families towards using the amazing amount of goodwill and knowledge that exists among us all. There has, as most members are aware, been a national EO skills and resources list published for some time. We decided that if we could get a regional one to function with the added merit of exchange visits this might lead on naturally to people being less inhibited about using the national one. We used the proforma printed below, and hope that it will be updated through the newsletter.

It was also felt it would be helpful for the public who were interested to be able to come along for part of the meeting and see the different ways in which deschooled families were coping. We trailed the event on radio and in the local paper. Here may I please thank all those who put such effort into contributing to the day. I was quite overwhelmed by the support the day received both from those who brought unwieldy items such as potting wheels, model railway equipment, computers, musical instruments etc, and those who made great effort to travel to the event from all over the region. We held it at the arts centre in Norwich - it was full all day! It was

not without strong conviction that so much was put into that day.

I am having to advise worried and anxious parents of secondary age children, and what they most want to know from me is what form of practical support EO can offer them over and above a general moral and legal support. It is a paradox that the need for legal assistance to members in their entanglements with the education authorities become secondary (if not irrelevant) once we are truly able to provide more specific help in areas where parents feel they lack the necessary confidence and knowledge to cope with subjects in which they have little or no experience. If East Anglia is to be taken as any sort of indicator of country-wide potential, there exists already a wealth of diverse talents, both practical and academic, to be tapped. Perhaps even more heart-warming is the overwhelming desire of these same members to share their talents and skills wherever they are needed! What is required above all now is to explore, in ways that are acceptable and easy, the spread of this wealth of information in a way that can stimulate cooperation among EO members at all levels. Our numbers (certainly in this region) are reaching the point where all sorts of possibilities can be investigated.

With these thoughts in mind perhaps we should take a much more positive approach to the newsletter. For example, it is only by chance that I stumbled on the fact that one particularly active group had been meeting regularly to do such varied things as visiting a milk-bottling factory, investigating the pursuits of a forest warden and so on. We'd all be interested to know of these visits. It would give us practical help in exploring our own back yards with equal zeal. Perhaps the children as well could give us their views on such things. They remain a remarkably silent minority/majority among such an articulate group of people.

If pages were allotted in a particular part of the newsletter so that each

region could have a specific place in which to voice their news, views and events, this could well form a useful adjunct to the present national format, especially now it has bi-monthly issues. (I would like to add that it is lovely to see the editorship doing the rounds; it certainly strengthens the links countrywide.) To keep the idea of exchange visits and skill swaps in peoples minds it would be useful to have a tear-off slip which perhaps could be sent to one of our computer buffs if one of them could come up with a bright idea on how best to handle this information and put suitable members in touch with one another.

If the present rate of membership is in any way indicative of future trends (150% increase in Norfolk in the last 12 months) then the thought-provoking possibility of resource centres could become practical reality on the not too far distant horizon. Many of us, I think, would feel that the one thing we can unleash in our children is self-motivation. It is often also one of the areas in which schools do not do well. Envisage then the potential of providing, within one shell, activities as diverse as pottery, joinery, computing & video libraries, music, science labs, lace-making and so on. Places such as these could provide cross-fertilization of ideas and possibilities for individual and shared project work for members of all ages. This is not, it should be stressed, to be seen as a school substitute - rather as a way in which adults and children can interact in a challenging environment, if members feel these are worthwhile aims to work towards.

This would all, of course, require a closer look at our present methods of administration and organization, particularly the workings of the Core Group. It is essential that these problems are solved with some speed so that the broad grass roots of EO can have a firm base from which to operate. Perhaps it could work through a three-tier system:

1. National - jobs here could be permanent with a meetings secretary to see to its efficient running. Much of its work would be administrative; travelling expenses should be paid when required. Anybody with good reasons could attend these meetings, provided the meeting was previously informed.
2. Regional - key coordinators from each region could be appointed (and as we grow bigger, elected) whose job it would be to convey the minutes of regional meetings (which would be open to all regional members) to the national meetings

NAME, ADDRESS & AREA	SKILLS AND FACILITIES		DO YOU WISH TO TAKE PART IN EXCHANGE VISITS?		
	OFFERED	SOUGHT	yes	childrens age & sex	preferred areas (incl. own county)

EO and the bicycle

by Peter Jones

"EO and the what?" I can imagine people saying as they see the title in the index. Yes, the bicycle; two wheels, handlebars and a saddle. It is a beautifully simple invention that has a truly liberating philosophy of its own and which is very relevant to EO members. I know from my own experience, talking to other members, and from reading the newsletter, that transport is a big problem for many hard-up people and their children. Get a bike, and to a large extent the problem is solved. The cheapest bikes for adults cost about £70, and you can get quite a good bike, suitable for long-distance riding, for £120-130. The price of these can be greatly reduced if you 'shop around' carefully.

Children of 6 - 8 can ride about 15 - 20 miles a day on a small bike, and children of 9 - 12 can manage 50 miles a day or more, if they get used to cycling and have a suitable 5- or 10-speed bike. You can imagine how many places of interest this brings within reach for very little cost, once you have bought your bikes. Combine the bike with the train and a family rail-card (which gives you half-price adult fares and flat-rate childrens fares for £1) and your freedom of movement is enormous. If you take your bikes by train (free, except on the new HSTs) you can get about at your destination and explore byways and corners that you would not see by bus or have time for on foot. Also, many really interesting small towns, working museums, National Trust places, archaeological sites, etc, are not accessible by public transport. They will, however, be within cycling distance of a railway station.

A good example of the possibilities is shown by a day trip Ursula & I made to North Wales to see Conwy Castle. It was one of the first we made on our recently acquired tandem. The train journey from Manchester took 2½ hours; we arrived just in time for our picnic lunch. Where else to have it but on a sandy shore? Off we zoomed to find a beach near the Great Orme. Afterwards we had a delightful freezing paddle that made our feet tingle. We dried our glowing legs, brushed the sand off, and turned back towards Conwy, taking a look at the Llandudno sea-front - one of my childhood haunts - on the way. We explored the castle and then wandered around Conwy on foot. We ended up buying two gorgeous Welsh sheepskin rugs from the craft-shop there. They made a bulky but light parcel that easily fitted onto the rear carrier. We could just as easily have gone for a short ride in the countryside. We rode 15-20 miles around Conwy and had a really varied and interesting day.

(A propos the sheepskin rugs: you can carry quite a lot on a bike if it is properly equipped with carriers and panniers or baskets. You can get trailers to carry heavier loads, and one type is even specially designed to carry long loads such as a canoe. Babies up to two or three can ride in special seats, and you can adapt tandems to fit small children until they can ride longer distances independently.)

I think a bike would be most useful

to EO children who are old enough to travel about on their own. A child of 8 or 9 can handle moderate traffic and can even ride safely in heavy urban traffic if she has the chance to practise in the company of a more experienced cyclist. On a bike children are free to go where they like, without having to be taken or needing to spend huge sums on bus fares.

The ultimate joy and fun on a bike is long-distance touring and camping. Bowling along country lanes with your shelter packed behind you; free to stop, explore, and contemplate; you see and know the world in a way no mechanized traveller can. Long-distance bike rides always become major adventures with endless happenings and ups & downs on the way.

In some small way you become a trail-blazing explorer again, a Viking or a Columbus.

Which leads me to my great idea - LETS HAVE AN EO CYCLE CAMPING RIDE! It would give many of us who rarely meet other members a chance to get to know each other, and it would be great fun. We could have a rest day in the middle when EO members in the nearby areas could come along and have an impromptu open-air meeting, picnic, or whatever the mood of the moment inspired. The route would pass between the homes of members who had offered camping-space/accommodation. If we did it this way, the cost of a weeks ride could be as low as £25 per person.

So ... fellow-members, if you want to take part, please send me SAE and let me know

- how far you can ride in a day
- what area you would like to explore
- what sort of bike you have (chopper, single gear, 5/10 speed, etc)
- whether you have a tent or not
- anything else you would like me to consider when I organize the ride.

I shall plan an easy route with short daily distances, so that anyone (particularly younger children) can come. Probable date - early summer 1983.

And ... IF YOU CAN PROVIDE TENT SPACE (or find some near your home) and possibly somewhere to sleep a few people without tents, and would like to COOK A SIMPLE BUT WHOLESOME MEAL & BREAKFAST for 15-30 (?) people, (food paid for, of course) can you please write to me as soon as possible? It would help if you could say something about the terrain within 20 miles of your home. I am willing to do the donkey-work, if people want to do the ride and enough members offer camping space. This ride could be a good chance for members of EO in country places to involve themselves in an activity and meet other EOers. If you want advice about buying a bike, I'd be pleased to help.

Write to me, Peter Jones, at

3 Fairfield Court
Daisybank Road
Manchester 14.
tel: 061.224.9816

(for these trips expenses should be paid). Perhaps they could also be responsible for gathering the regional news for the magazine. It could also be at this level that such things as regional finances could be sorted out in accordance with the needs of the area.

3. County level - it would be the coordinators job to explore the needs and views of people in his/her area that were unable to attend the regional meeting, and also to bring up points such as problems involved when information is required to be passed round a county in a hurry. (I now have 25 families and upwards to contact when this happens - it is both a lot of work and costly to EO as most of my calls are not local. We have just started experimenting with the round-robin idea by giving each member another number which where possible is a local call to them. This has three advantages; first, members get to know each other, particularly if the numbers are changed round from time to time; second, it saves EO a lot of money that can be put to better uses; third, and by no means least, it saves the coordinator work! Sorry for this digression but I felt it was important enough to mention.)

Such a plan would not be without administrative difficulties. Some of them might be eased by the following suggestion, that the national group publish in the newsletter items on their agenda which require general discussion - it would then be the job of the county coordinator to debate these points among his/her members and record a head count of those for and against. This information would then be passed on to the regional coordinators who when they attend the national group meeting would not only pass on the votes but also the points raised in their own region. This system would as previously stated still enable individual members with strong views on certain topics to put them forward at national level although of course they would not get a double vote.

I appreciate that while these ideas look simple on paper, they are going to involve us in a lot of work and thought when it comes to making them operational. Unfortunately if something is not done soon, there is going to be little hope for a peaceful transition to enable us to cope with the results of the present groundswell of dissatisfaction with our education system; and perhaps more importantly we too will have lost the opportunity to provide a potential nucleus of free thinkers to help us solve the problems of the foreseeable years with the knowledge we have now.

Do I now throw this open to the floor?

Calvert can help

by Sue Macaulay

The nine-year-old boy presented a fairly typical picture of a child with learning disabilities. Bright, eager, interested at home, he somehow 'couldn't concentrate', 'couldn't remember' at school. He was always forgetting; not only the times tables, and how to spell 'there', but also the note from school, the wellington boots. By the end of the day extra work brought tears, and 'remedial work' at school meant less playtime twice a week.

I should have known his plight when he was forever not dressed in time for school. But instead, he was prodded, pushed, and had to continue a square

peg in a round hole.

Happily EO came to our attention just as we were agonisingly trying to decide what to do. We had tried deschooling ten years ago. Yes! we removed our first child, a nine-year-old girl, from her primary school. That was '71. We could see the child perk up and thrive, but an inspector came along and told us that we were breaking the law; I wasn't a qualified teacher. The child, her needs and work, nothing mattered. We reluctantly, after a three-month tussle, let her return to a sort of chaotic over-crowded prison-yard.

That had been 11 years ago. We wouldn't have realized that we COULD stand up, and do what was right for our son in 1982, if it hadn't been for the information from EO. So thank you, all of you who give time and energy; one little boy is gladly maturing and enjoying life because it is LEGAL for him to have the education suited to HIS needs.

Some of you may have read the many references in John Holt to the American correspondence school 'Calvert School' which has eight years worth of school-at-home materials. It would interest those who are not against leading their children through a planned curriculum. As GWS newsletters note, as well as the book Teach Your Own, many parents do prefer a road to walk along. I chose this for RJ although he is English; it was because I had used their materials to teach myself at home when I was 13 & 14 years old and didn't go to school! I knew that there would be a manual, with a thought-out structure of work. When the course is purchased, one also

References

Charlotte Mason's books are written for parents educating children at home. They are out of print, but can be obtained through libraries.

'Home and School Education' : The Scrivener Press : Oxford 1953

'Home Education' (for under-9s) : Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co : 1935

Structured course for dyslectic children -

'Alpha to Omega; the A-Z of Teaching Reading, Writing & Spelling' : Beve Hornsby and Frula Shear : Heinemann, London



LISTENING



children's hours

receives all necessary books and materials. At the end of every 20 lessons (once a month) one is able to send in a test, and have it air-mailed back, corrected and with a personal letter of help.

As RJ needs extra help with spelling, we begin the day with about half an hour of working from 'Alpha and Omega', the complete spelling scheme devised by the dyslexia clinic at Barts Hospital. Any child could be helped to spell by mastering this book.

We then proceed to the 'Calvert day' (fourth grade). We do change items a bit, so that the course suits us, and we don't have to suit the course. We can stop if a tree is being chopped down, or if I have to work for an hour. However, for us the structure is satisfying; RJ is enjoying new skills in maths; the World History course is fascinating, and has led to us staggering home from the library with many related books to read at odd times. The science has again helped us focus on the world around us, on the wonders of creation.

The reading has mostly been enjoyable; lovely sessions on the couch, pot of tea, and a reading and then retelling in the *CHILD'S OWN WORDS*. And after all, the structure is there to serve us. We can hurry up or slow down; we have had days when school ends at 11 am, and other lovely days when the pace is broken up with rich life, working at many things - crafts, computer studies, music, gardening, and doing whatever.

Charlotte Mason, the great Christian British educator at the turn of this century, advocated a balance between structure (routine, discipline) which included a rich variety of books, and freedom. She felt that, for tiny children, a 15 minute reading lesson was enough. She advocated really good books being shared with children (reading aloud to them), and until the age of 14 or so she felt that a half day of school-time in the home school-room was ample. The other half should be spent taking walks, playing music, reading, working and being part of the real world out of doors, and in relationship to the family.

This combination still works well. Happy, relaxed, satisfied and interested, a 1982 child is reaping the benefit of several sources of ideas and help. And not least, thank you EO.

Note - The Calvert School costs about half the price of WES.

o many EO parents would not like the formal side of the work, but others do feel their children need a sequence.

o a wide variety of subjects are integrated; poetry and art are introduced; a child gains a sense of the world around him.

o the first grade is for sixes - some English parents would want the beginning-to-read materials earlier.

o the teaching service does not have to be subscribed to; then tests could be adapted to a child's needs.

Many people who receive the E.O. Newsletter have children who attend school. Those who do, may know how difficult it can be to find the time to give attention to such a child.

Dr. Rachel Pinney has spent the last twenty years listening and encouraging other people to listen, especially to children. We publish this introduction to her work to encourage all parents to give their children the priority for the attention they so much need.

During an 'Hour', one adult gives one hour of total attention to one child. The child is invited to engage in any activity that he wishes, whilst the adult takes full responsibility for containing the activity within the limits of danger, damage and impropriety. This undertaking gives the child total freedom to express in play, his inner thoughts and feelings, without being restricted by having to watch his 'behaviour' in adult terms. Also during an 'Hour', the adult is totally non-directive and fully attentive; all three of these skills need to be learnt; none of them are part of usual human behaviour.

During the 'Hour' as here described, a child plays freely within safe boundaries, under the full attention of one adult; play being the natural language of children, the child has the experience of being totally 'listened to', without the intervention of adult views and values. This experience is rarely had by any child, but when it happens, it is a source of growth, removal of tension, and restoration of happiness.

Sometimes a child, who has been deprived of freedom, chooses to explore and travel alone. The attending adult is either present at a distance explaining if necessary the bizarre behaviour of the child to puzzled observers and asking for their tolerance and co-operation; or on other occasions, the attending adult is sitting on a telephone, ready to collect the child from a concerned member of the public who queries the child's capacity to be alone.

For further information: write to Children's Hours, 28 Wallace House, Caledonian Estate, London, N7. Tel: 01-609-5568. From this address the book 'Creative Listening' is available at 90p post free.

Leila Berg's Bookspread

will be at 25 Streatham Common South Side, London SW16 (764.9686) from October 12th - the only childrens bookshop ("books for children, books about children") where mothers can comfortably breastfeed their babies, and where there are two loos, both very attractive. Slightly more soberly, there will be regular story-telling, visits from authors and artists, childrens workshops, films ... and among the books, some you are unlikely to find anywhere else (like "Oh boy - babies!", "...and the children played", "The Family Bed", "The I-Hate-Maths Book"; only the last is a book for children and for adults too). As well as that, it is on the edge of the Common, with playground, paddling pool, woods, gardens ... so you can bring a picnic and make a whole day of it. Open mid-week; Tues & Weds 10.30-5.30, Thurs 10.30-9.30.

I am excited by this, but to tell the truth also fearful, because my faith in human nature has had a shock from which I haven't yet recovered.

"Bookspread" was an idea I'd cherished for a long time; I set it up four years ago, with a lifetimes experience of children and books, and a host of contacts and goodwill in publishing, in childrens work and the arts. My partnership with Judy Hall has been for some months in legal process of dissolving. The name Leila Berg's Bookspread is a legal solution to one part of a staggeringly unpleasant situation. I hope the new centre will thrive in love, joy and celebration. Since it is about children, and people who enjoy children, it should.

The Christmas Childrens Book Bonanza, at Streatham Common South as usual, will be on Saturday November 27th, 3.30-10. The talk on children and childrens books (both old and new ones) will be at 3.30-4.30; books for sale until 10. Lovely Christmas presents!

Some Ideas

by Jacky Mackay

I became a member of E.O. when I seriously considered taking responsibility for Fionn's and Oscar's education. The background is quite commonplace. They liked primary, and at about ten, they both went off school in a big way. Finding reasons for this didn't work. Who's fault it was didn't matter. Nobody concerned liked the process of schooling them. The information imparted to me by E.O. relieved me considerably - namely putting the emphasis on EDUCATION rather than schooling, and handing the responsibility back to me - rather than to professionals and experts.

Being out of agreement with other parents, professional educators, my colleagues at work and with the local authorities daunted me. I kept right on sending them to school - rather sporadically, and I ducked out of doing anything specific - until I read Fionn's report. It was an incredibly blameful document. It ended - 'He generally seems sad, and forlorn, confused and frustrated by his response to school life.'

So I made the decision not to send him back to school - whilst having not the faintest idea as to what to DO.

I found the newsletter to be of value.. There is a great deal of information available, and many ideas to receive or reject as I wish.

It is difficult to differentiate between opinion and fact when talking about education. It seems that almost any method would work even SHOULD work.... I particularly enjoy reading about experiences of things working or not working. I am bored to tears with analysis of why it does or doesn't. I have an idea that

whys and wherefores are on the opinion side and experiences shared are on the fact side.

My only guide is the result in terms of my child's wellbeing. Does he look alive or half dead? Does he radiate energy or not?

From what I can gather, there seems to be a common element amongst the material sent for publication in the E.O. newsletter. Namely a desire to DO something about it. About WHAT is alas not so clear. There's a great deal to be done - true! The Authorities need enlightening as to the law. Parents need to work with children, and share their results. Above all children need to feel that they can enjoy their natural rights as Human Beings. And the washing needs to be done. From airy fairy to nitty gritty... there is a lot to do. I have a dream. I am privileged to have a wonderful small human being or two (or more) to share it with. That the children do not always see it as THEIR dream

is a constant threat to the dream itself.

I see schools as facilities, with the teachers as guides and guardians to the children's wellbeing. I see parents and teachers and the children too, aligning themselves with a common purpose strong enough to override tantrums and bad habits (also common to all)

The purpose being to acquire skills and gain experience through interesting projects, to become aware of the many possibilities open to all, to look at life qualitatively and well as quantitatively with a view to getting more out of life and the best out of life.

I see children leaving school with real knowledge of the principles of fair trading, love, money, community spirit, Truth, creativity and skills appropriate to their special interests - to afford them right livelihood.

The system as it stands (a hierarchy of teachers, teachers' teachers and the bureaucracy) does not work.

I have experienced a transformation from fear, guilt and downright lying about my attitude towards education, to a feeling of courage in that we can make a difference to our lives by our freedom to choose.

'They' would soon enough raise the standards if they found that they had no kids to teach unless they provided schools of the very highest standards.

Meanwhile, what I am doing is as follows:-

I am backing Oscar to stay in his holiday job as an apprentice. He wants to stay so much that he has decided to take 'O' levels at the same time. He doesn't regard his £25 a week wage as an insult! both he and his boss feel great about it.

Fionn wants to acquire skills - too many to do all at once. Shorthand typing, audio and video recording, drawing for cartoons, playing the guitar and keyboards, dancing (he's a mod - not ballet) scrambling on a bicycle, and tailoring. There are some skills I want him to be very expert in - washing up and cooking. He is already an expert laundryman, and still tries to delegate the job to me.

I am finding four more parents who live as locally as possible, to share the hours or five sessions per week for organised events, projects or skills. Each of us will then have a group of children(all ages) to play with to our mutual benefit.

I'm going to try a structure - rather than a programme, within which there is maximum room for spontaneous activity. This will be having a theme and preparing in advance some varied activities.

Learning a skill for its own sake is great. Using it in a project for the project's own sake is the game I play with Fionn. He is reluctant and even fearful of not being like his mates - yet he told me the other day that he felt like he'd just been let out of nick, (I'm sure he got that from the telly!)

Another thing I'm trying out - is encouraging Fionn to teach his skills to others. He is a good rock rhythm guitarist, and he has access to amps and electric and acoustic guitars. He has one pupil - anyone else interested?

To me, education can be represented symbolically as a bowl of fruit... Any offers to draw the next cover?

Fionn is not as enthusiastic as I am about many of my ideas - I usually find though, that if I suggest something in a 'run along and play' tone of voice, he will dismiss even the fun of going interviewing with a microphone and mini-recorder.

He's tried busking, but the money was'n't good enough to overcome the embarrassment of 'begging'.

I am finding a number of individuals who are thrilled to teach Fionn some things that he wants to learn - like keyboards for example - not in a group.

The apprenticeship is great because Oscar is occupied during the day - Fionn doesn't want to earn. At present I meet all his expenses. (pocket money? it's never IN his pocket for long) he is out and about all day long and some evenings, utilising the flat, and visiting places and people.

During school time, I am interested to see how we handle Fionn's day. I am a business woman with long hours, and a single parent. All Fionn's mates will be at school. They have bunked off to be with Fionn during the day, when I've given him days 'off' to deal with his laundry or something. I'll have to watch this one... Me and four other parents should be able to handle it. Fionn does freelance work with me. He is drawing me a strip cartoon of DESMOND (the story of the dirty end of the stick) I pay him, and his out of work mate - hard cash for good drawings. They do them at the office which annoys my colleagues.

And there's another thing I'm doing, I'm helping John edit the newsletter.

I have an idea that the purpose of the E.O. newsletter, is to be an authoritative source of information, innovations, ideas, and to be a platform for people to share their experience along the common theme of education in its true sense. Everyone is doing something, and I am fascinated to hear how what works and for whom.

For eight pounds a year it is a great service. I would like to see the E.O. newsletter in the form of a high quality magazine - paid for at cost on subscription, and contributed to by more members. I would personally like to see less whining. Whining doesn't work any more for me. I cannot forget that it used to...

Justice for children

report by Barbara Clohessy

'Justice For Children' is a campaigning organization to which EO is affiliated, whose aim is to achieve reforms and better legal safeguards in the juvenile justice and child care system. One of the reforms they press for (among many others) is that truancy should not be a valid criterion for state intervention under Temporary Orders for removal of children into care. The organization publishes a number of booklets cheaply, with interesting titles such as 'Offending Youngsters, or is it Offended Youngsters?' and 'What Justice for Children?'; and a newsletter - quite an illusion-shatterer for anyone who had believed that we live in a fair and reasonable system.

Of interest to EO members is the booklet 'Education Cases and the Juvenile Court' by Dr Richard Rathbone JP, rather disappointing in that it attaches little relevance to home education. The author says that "in exceptional cases a child can be educated outside the system with the approval of the LEA" having already stated that "a child must go to school until he or she reaches the school leaving age". To be fair, the booklet is really concerned with the problem of truants, their treatment in the courts, and the options open to the courts. One option is to impose a "care order under which the local authority may remove (the child) from home and send him to a Community Home with Education". These homes are also used for assessment purposes, but "there is evidence to suggest that many children being assessed on remand or Interim Care Orders remain in Community Homes for long periods of time." The author explains the LEA position:

"part of the concern (about school non-attendance) undoubtedly relates to a paternalistic insistence on the 'improving' nature of education and a sincere belief that deprivation of formal education constitutes a form of moral deprivation;... even the deschooling theorists would go along with this thrust"(!)

More interesting quotes from the booklet:

"The care of the State emerges largely from its perceived need to control the population at large".

"The insistence both within the education acts and the Children & Young Persons Act, that children be got back to school at all costs is manifestly in need of rethinking ... Getting children back to some schools is clearly counter-productive ... At present we are in part punishing children for deficiencies in their schools, over which they have no control, and this is unfair ... It seems that the court is not the place to hold such proceedings ... it seems particularly inappropriate".

Newsletter 5 - August 1980

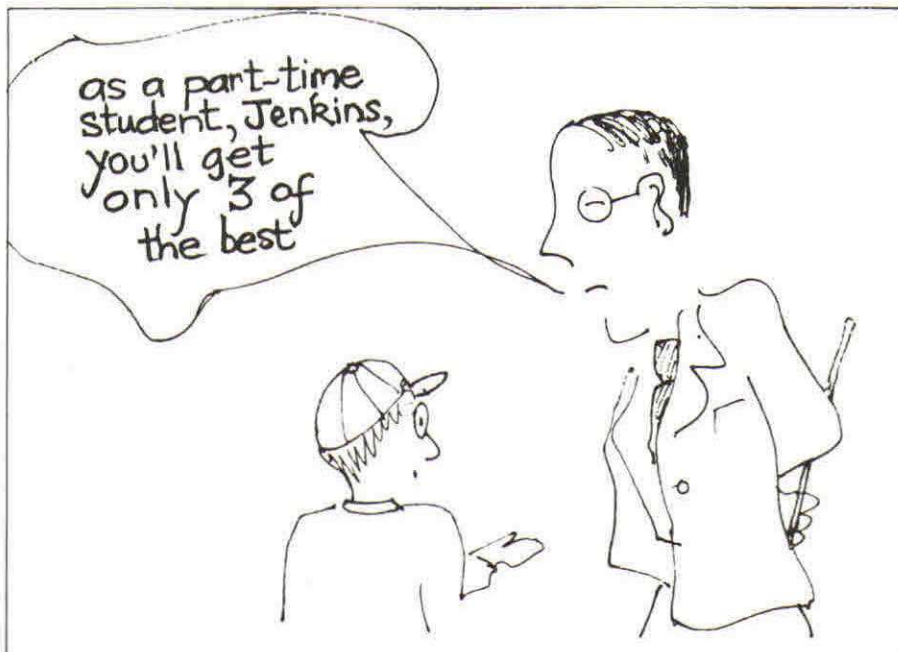
The Black Report "raised once again the vexed question of the status, objectivity and usefulness of the Reports used by courts in sentencing ... Justice for Children has already noted with disquiet the intrusion of hearsay and questionable deductions, let alone inappropriate recommendations in such reportage ... sometimes comment and data, however dubious, become part of the social work "profile" of families ... Less often commented upon are the reports of the education agencies ... From experience, it is from the school report that the most serious challenges to natural justice emerge ... School reports can seem as official as social enquiry or psychological reports. But all too frequently they appear to be based on very slight evidence, partiality

and anger - all of which might be understandable but is hardly fair. For example, persistent truants - who can seldom be seen in school - sometimes attract detailed comment which later transpires to be considerably out of date. Deductions about the parental background of children in trouble are often little more than gossip. And in particular, statements about the child's out-of-school proclivities are written up as though they were more than what a year-head or tutor has learnt from playground tittle-tattle. Even far more obvious breaches of propriety such as the assertion that the child is criminal and has not been detected, that he or she has forthcoming court appearances or that the police have told the school that the child is a 'thoroughly bad lot', do appear far more frequently than they should. The writing of reports within the confines of the 1969 CYP Act has taken on a huge importance in that such reports frequently influence the future of the child in the most vital of respects ... That some of the evidence for .. decisions is drawn up in an all-too-frequently shoddy manner, despite the form of report bearing the local Education Director's mimeographed signature, is a matter of serious concern".

Newsletter 8 - January 1982

In a review of 'Children Out of Court' by F.M.Martin, Sanford J.Fox & Kathleen Murray, (Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh 1981): In considering the Scottish Childrens hearings system, whereby a child who would otherwise appear in court appears before a panel, the authors note that "children are rarely surprised by their committal to list D schools, probably because the decision has virtually been sewn up beforehand between the adults concerned ... A defendants expectation of a list D school committal tends to inhibit their full participation in the hearing ... One sixth of all the referrals to the hearings are for non-school-attendance ... (from a panel chairman): "We all have commitments in life, you know; if you cannot attend school you may end up in a list D school". An added bonus - 11% of panel members were prepared to admit that they were in favour of adding corporal punishment to their small armory of dispositions. reviewer Steve Dolfe

same reviewer: 'Institutional Reactions to Absconding' by John W.Ackland (British Journal of Social Work, vol.11 no.2, Summer 1981) The author interviewed girls and staff in a Community Home with Education about .. inmate absconson ... The dominant response during the study was to lock the captured absconders up in solitary confinement for a week and then impose a further three weeks of restricted privileges like smoking and home leave.



Justice for Children can be contacted at
35 Wellington St, London WC2E 7BN.
tel: 01.836.5917



Classes and Workshops for Children

— a few hints on their organisation

When I first started thinking about my children's education I realised that there were several things I wanted them to learn that I couldn't teach them myself and several that would be more fun if they involved other children, de-schooled or not. Among these were music, maths, art, drama and gym.

So, how to set about this? Well, firstly I wanted excellent tuition and that meant finding the right person who would be not only excellent in his/her field but also good at getting on with children. I could have advertised in local papers and newsagents but in fact just kept asking friends, friends of friends, shopkeepers, anyone with whom I got into conversation. I have also occasionally telephoned local schools and the adult education centre and found one or two good people that way. Instinct rather than formal interviews told me where I'd find the right person and I then set out my proposals which were roughly as follows -

1. The teacher stated when and for how long the classes would take place and the minimum/maximum number of students she wanted; also, how much she wanted to be paid.
2. I took on the role of administrator and did all the work of finding interested children, getting their mothers to pay (for the whole course, in advance), and letting them know if the teacher needed any special equipment or was unable to come on a particular day, etc.

I think it is very important to pay the teacher well (and err on the side of generosity) plus any expenses such as petrol. Then add a pound or so per family per term or course for your own expenses - telephone calls, coffee for waiting mothers, etc. - and you won't feel so cross when your biscuit tin is raided by squawking siblings.

Obviously you and the teacher have to decide what you want taught and how long a course should last. We have had, for example, a year of musical appreciation (3 terms), 10 weeks of maths, 6 afternoons (spread over 2 weeks) of gym. The drama classes which started here really took off - the teacher now has 4 or 5 of these each week in a local hall. With children under 5 the classes can take place at any time. Over 5 and you are confined to after school hours.

If you organise or become involved in such classes then your children will benefit not only from acquiring a new skill or dabbling in a new subject, but also from the chance to meet other children, "to socialize", that dreaded demand of LEA inspectors, but to socialize in a positive way as adults might do at an evening class. And, who knows, other people, seeing your children are not such oddities after all, might want to learn a little more about this peculiar up-bringing and the strange organisation called E.O.

Horsgate Farm, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath,
Sussex.

HELEN HOLLAND

Sparrows

"Sparrows are just like people. The grown-ups are dull as ditchwater, and everything they say sounds as if it came out of a book, but the young have minds of their own."

- opening paragraph of The Little Sparrows
by Maxim Gorky

Wheatstone Comm

a registered cooperative

by Gina Rannie

Wheatstone Community is situated on the edge of Leintwardine village on the border of Shropshire and Herefordshire. There is a basic group of five adults and two children, plus a fluctuating number of working visitors, living here communally. We work mainly on our seven acres of land producing as much of our own food as we are able, growing two acres of vegetables and keeping cows, sheep, pigs, ducks, hens and bees. The surrounding countryside is beautiful and hilly, ideal for walking, fishing and observing wildlife.

The main house consists of nine bedrooms, bathroom, two toilets, shower, large kitchen, kitchenette, study, sitting-room, crafts room and games room. There is also a separate cottage with four bedrooms, a living room and kitchen plus another building which incorporates workshops and more sleeping space. There is a large playing area apart from the gardens and fields.

We eat together, mainly our own vegetable and dairy produce, and we are able to provide wholefood meals for fairly large numbers of people.

There is little formal structure here. The only discipline we impose is self-discipline. The children living here don't go to school; they are left free to follow their living and learning as they wish with stimulation to find new interests and excitements in life. The desire within us all is to be close to each other; to free ourselves of our prejudices such as those of age or sex or race; to be free of possessive, dependent relationships between couples of parents and children; to be non-consumerist and to produce as many as possible of the goods we need. The

Education Otherwise at

We are a small community of eight people, living in two households, and five of us are aged between 10 and 15 years. None of us go to school, and we are all engaged in learning and sharing our skills informally, with each other and with the people who come to stay and explore with us each year. We've been doing this, in many places and with many people, for nearly five years and we've built up a valuable network of cooperation and support with individuals, organizations, and communities in Scotland, England and elsewhere in the world. The contribution of all these people is a continuing element in our efforts to maintain an enveloping and stimulating educational environment, and enriches the everyday experience of the children who live here, and of those who come to share in the activities we can offer.

We welcome your interest and participation if you are practising 'education otherwise', or are think-

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I would like to put in a few thoughts in response to Julia Galvins "Question" in the June newsletter.

On repeated occasions it has been suggested to us that by opting to educate our child(ren) ourselves (or intending to do so) we are being elitist, traitors to socialism, etc. My reply goes something like this: first of all, if I really believe in something, then I will act on that belief, not just talk about it. Second, I see no need to feel guilty about putting my child's well-being before that of others (if that is how they would put it, why don't they take that step too?) - which does not mean that I am complacent about the sufferings of others. But if you take the argument of "What is good enough for theirs is good enough for mine" to one of its logical conclusions then you end up starving your child (and yourself) for the sake of the children in the so-called Third World, for example. Having brought my child into the world in the first place, I feel it is my place to protect her from any unnecessary hurt - I, of all people, must not fail her.

Unfortunately, when it comes to schools I think it will take aeons to get things changed significantly from the inside - certainly many more years than my own child would be at school. I will still try in whatever ways are open to me to challenge/influence those inside the schools, but I will improve the lot of my child now. For that matter, isn't keeping your child out of school one of the strongest ways of showing your objection to "the system", showing that you care that much?

(And why take school as your starting point? Look at it the other way round: a century or two ago, you would have been setting yourself apart precisely by sending your child to school!)

I hope that one or two of these thoughts might be helpful, if you've not had them already, that it.

(signed)
Caroline Grant

3/4 Tanyralit Cottages
Llanllyfni
Caernarfon.

Dear Editor

Have any EO people ever seen a UFO? If so, I would like to know the date, time of day, place and shape.

Please send your answers to:

James Fletcher
28 Billesdon Drive
Heathfield
Nottingham, NG5 1NT.

Dear Editor

Perhaps it was a bad time to read the August newsletter, being in labour, but honestly, I have never had my back put up so far by a single magazine before.

Prior to my moans, let me say I agree wholeheartedly with the letters from the Carters about asking libraries for 'Teach Your Own', and the Robertson-Shoppers about our organic expansion. On the other hand, I feel like apologizing to Mr Lowenstein for the way the editor reduced his generous offer of skill-sharing in psychology to a complete non-event.

We feel we as a family could well benefit from asking him a few questions without having to go through the rigmarole of professional consultations. To imply total complacency on the part of 'most EO parents' as regards their children's psychological development and force Mr L. back into a quasi-professional role dealing only with "labelled" cases is surely not what EOers are about. In particular, with reference to the disclaimer at the foot of p.1 of the newsletter, I object strongly to editors expressing their personal opinions on my/our behalf.

I also found it difficult to understand the relevance of several other editorial comments, and as I see it, editors are at liberty to comment on letters beginning "Dear Editor", but should leave articles well alone, as these are not directed to editors at all.

Anyway - result from the labour ward:- Justin, Evelyn, Rebecca & Verity Marsh are pleased to announce the birth of KESTER on 27.7.82 and to welcome him to our family and to EO - poor kid!

(signed)
Evelyn Marsh

PS: Whoever is hogging the Cumbria newsletter-circular, please send it on NOW!

Gateside Cottage
Coniston
Cumbria.

Dear Editor

As our son Ben is very nearly through his hated compulsory school-days, I would like to thank EO for the support we received when we first kept him at home last October. Although we have not tried to teach him ourselves and had the help of a wonderfully compassionate Tutorial Organization, we were constantly worried that the Law would catch up with us! In fact we have had no communication from our local authority at all and think we may have discovered a loop-hole.

As far as we know, private schools do not have an obligation to let the local authority know about the children on their rolls. Therefore, if you remove your child from maintained school and tell the head teacher you are having him educated privately, there appears to be no way that it can be followed up! Is this so? It might be very helpful to other cowardly parents who haven't got the strength to battle with the Education Department!

These months have not been easy for us. Ben has been very depressed and is only recovering now the end is in sight. School has put him off learning in spite of a very high IQ and we doubt if he will get more than one or two O levels. However, we hope that one day he will rediscover his academic ability and forge ahead -

meanwhile he has a part-time job to look forward to. He probably needs time to lie fallow, his school experiences have been particularly bitter.

We have all three changed and learned a lot in the last unhappy year. We have three older sons who all did well at school and university, and at first it was difficult to understand Ben's problems. We know now that he was terribly lonely when his last brother disappeared to university and we knew he was unhappy at school but we were unprepared for the crisis of school-refusing!

Through ACE, who put us in touch with EO, and through STOPP, we have had wonderful support when we were at our lowest ebb; I doubt if we could have pulled through without your combined help. We have learned a lot about our 'education' system too!

We went to John Holts lecture in London, having read most of his books, and found him most stimulating and encouraging. What a brave man!

Again, we would like to thank you for your help and comfort. Carry on the good work!

(signed)
Doris & Herb Wolff

100 Hayes Road
Bromley
Kent.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

Yes, you do have an educational psychologist in your ranks. Unfortunately most of you live under English law and I am a Scottish psychologist, so your LEAs replies to your queries might be different from those given to an enquirer in Scotland. EAs in Scotland have certain statutory duties to employ psychologists in aspects of assessment of children in the state system who may have special needs. I understand that this is not the case in England and Wales.

In the matter raised in Janets letter, I have to say that no sane psychologist would see a child without first meeting the parents, or at least establishing that they agree to the schools referral. There would be little point in seeing a child, only to be met with a wall of resistance later, when it comes to trying to sort out whatever seems to be the problem. The crux of the problem outlined, I think, is not whether the educational psychologist should or should not see the child, but whether the school and the family have fundamental differences in outlook, of which this is one symptom among many.

It often happens that a head teacher will ask a psychologist, perhaps visiting on other business, for informal advice about a child. In that case, I and those colleagues whose views I know would discuss the problem, perhaps see the class in action, observe the child or look at his work as one of a group, and then advise the head teacher as to whether a formal referral seemed appropriate, after discussion with the parents. In an ideal world, calling in outside assistance from specialists should be the end activity in a long series of joint attempts by school and parents to define the problem and supply remedies. Only when all the steps above are taken would a visiting psychologist see a child individually for assessment.

This is not an ideal world, and the two cases arise - one where the parent wants the psychologists advice and the school does not admit to a problem, and the opposite, as seems to be the case in Janets example. The problem is often a clash of values, and the psychologists role can be to manufacture a compromise between the two sets of mutually disapproving adults, with the poor child playing pig-in-the-middle. My own sympathies tend to lie with whoever makes the first move to me, on the assumption that they feel the problem acutely enough to mention it.

I would be interested to see what your legal adviser says about Janets query, and hope that he knows enough about Scots Law to answer the question for me too.

This note is entirely my own view and not necessarily that of my employing authority, or indeed of any of my colleagues.

(signed)
Helen Harold

Orchy Bheag
Dalmally
Argyll.

Dear Editor

I received a letter from Granada TV re Granada Power Game 1982/3. This is the fourth year for the event, whose aim is "to encourage an interest in design activities". There are four age-ranges: up to 11, 12-14, 15-16, 17-19.

The idea is for each "school" to enter a team of up to three pupils in any or all age groups. (A maximum of two teams per age group). The local authority finals will be held in Jan or Feb to see who goes through to the final.

The project is to make a device to travel along a specified track using a length of rubber etc. Granada have kindly sent EO an application form. So if anyone is interested in getting together to compete, perhaps they could contact me and I will see if there is enough interest to make a team. The application has to be in by October. Write to me or phone (061)764.6717.

(signed)
Andrea Lowe

319 Rochdale Road
Bury
Lancs.

Dear Editor

My brother and I have been de-schooled for two years and are being taught at home by our mother who is a member of EO. I am 13 years old and a keen birdwatcher. The area where I live is in the centre of the Lake District and has a variety of habitats such as mountain and moorland, deciduous and coniferous woodland, and wetland with the sea and estuaries within driving distance. The area is excellent for birds (fifty species can be seen in

a week with a further twenty at the coast).

I would like to know if any other deschooled children, sharing my interest, would like to come for a few days of birdwatching at any time. Write to the address below or ring Grasmere 482.

(signed)
Dominic Kelly

Allanbank
Grasmere
Ambleside
Cumbria, LA22 9QB.

Dear Editor

Since I was given the notoriety of being named in David Pairmans passionate attack on bureaucracy in the June newsletter (p.19), perhaps I could be allowed to reply; or should I say, to voice my agreement?

Like him I have a hearty dislike of bureaucracy and full-time staff, and a great respect for voluntary amateur work - this is, after all, the same distinction as between full-time teachers on the one hand and parents on the other in their role as educators.

I would like to assure anyone who may have similarly misunderstood

my motives, that any initiatives I have taken or 'infrastructure' I may have suggested (although I would not use that word) have as their sole aim the improvement of contact between members who wish to be in contact, precisely so that the work of EO can go on more easily without the need for bureaucracy all the time.

Since I have volunteered to compile contact and resource lists, I do feel it is worth the effort of trying to make them up-to-date. This is why I have asked, and do ask, for peoples help in gathering and checking the facts - and I thank those who have already helped in this. I hope I will be forgiven if in doing

this I have seemed to try to organize those who feel either that they do not need or that they do not want to be organized. I fully realise that some coordinators have been doing an excellent job since long before I joined EO, and no doubt will continue to do so; but how else can I offer my services to those who have actually asked for some guidelines?

If anyone wishes to take up any of these points further, I would be most willing to reply to them individually.

(signed)
Simon Grant

3/4 Tanyralt Cottages
Llanllyfni
Caernarfon.

Education through the press

by Christina Cordingley

with contributions from Janice Owen, Priscilla Park-Weir, Joan Hoare, Eileen Wilson and others.

ACCORDING TO AGE ABILITY & APTITUDE

Government inspectors find that academic standards are falling because of education cuts (TELEGRAPH 6.4.82). They conclude that in primary schools

TRUANCY

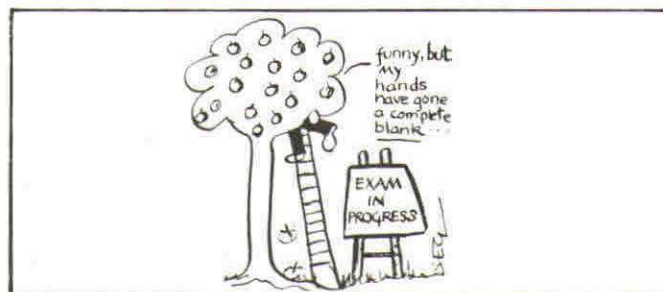
Long-sighted children drop out of school because they cannot read or see the blackboard properly, new research claims (TELEGRAPH 5.4.82) ... Truancy in Brent has risen to four times the national average...

LIFE IN SCHOOL

A pupil blackmailed by a school bully committed suicide (TELEGRAPH 5.5.82) ... The Inspector for Religious & Moral Education in Lincolnshire has been convicted of indecent exposure (TELEGRAPH 2.5.82) ... 600 pupils had to abandon their school in Essex because of toxic gas fumes from wall insulation material (SUNDAY TIMES 16.5.82) ... A four-year-old boy was made to stand in the corner of his nursery class with his nose and fingers sellotaped because he picked his nose (MIRROR 16.7.82) "Is this the way to win the confidence of a child attending his first class?" his mother asks ... A schoolboy was blinded in one eye as a result of a classroom 'prank' during a chemistry lesson (TELEGRAPH 1.5.82) ... Three boys exploded a home-made bomb outside the home of their teacher (GUARDIAN 22.5.82) ... Norfolk County Council has been accused of breaking the law by not providing any education for a 15-year-old boy excluded from school for bad behaviour six months ago (GUARDIAN August) ... Degrees in apple-picking are being sought by some post-graduate students in Leicestershire (TELEGRAPH 2.8.82) Said the course lecturer: "We are not a bunch of airy-fairy academics"

BAD PRESS

This issue it is Nottinghamshire, where a woman teacher ordered a 13-year-old boy to strip to his underpants because he had come to school in jeans; he was in a mixed class (GUARDIAN, May) Said his mother: "I don't see that the wearing of jeans made any difference to his education". She later appealed against a £50 fine and had it reduced to £20. The parents are unemployed, and the mother refuses to pay the fine "as a matter of principle; I would rather go to jail" (EAST STAFFS ADVERTISER 2.5.82).



PARENT POWER

The 1967 Plowden Report should have recommended playgroups, said Lady Plowden in her last speech as President of the Preschool Playgroups Association (TELEGRAPH 3.4.82) The educational value of parents had not then been recognised, she said ... A 34-year-old mongol, told he could not be educated, has had published a 12,000 word book about his youth (TELEGRAPH, March). His parents refused to have him 'put away' and showed dedicated love in educating him. The publication of the book is welcomed by those who believe children with Downs Syndrome can be educated to lead fuller lives ... An 82-year-old has received a BA Hons in English (TELEGRAPH 11.5.82)

A Helpful LEA

edited by Sarah Guthrie

As Heidi was five in December, I was expecting the dreaded visit from the LEA. Having spoken to the head of the LEA on a previous occasion, I was told I could expect a visit from the education officer, an education adviser, then a child psychologist; I don't mind admitting that on hearing all of this I was quite definitely quaking in my shoes. So I prepared myself for a fight if necessary.

The longer I waited, the more I convinced myself I was going to have a hard time. However, I was determined to give a good impression; I kept the house neat and tidy - everything in its right place, the children well groomed, and Heidi's work neatly kept together. But then my mother became ill, my father came down with flu, so did the children, and lastly me.

Then one miserable day, when the house looked like a demolition site, toys and washing in every corner, I felt like something the cat had dragged in, and we were each clutching firmly a handful of tissues and wearing big red noses, there

was a knock at the door and there stood Mrs H. - the education officer. I decided I had to make the best of a bad situation, and on inviting her in, cleared a space for her to sit down.

"So you're going to tackle it at home are you?" she said; "I don't blame you - I think it's a good idea".

Well!! After the mental build-up I had given her over the past few weeks, this was something I hadn't prepared myself for. We chatted for about an hour; she told me how sorry she felt for children at school who come out with a headful of knowledge that they will never use, and yet not properly prepared for life outside school. She said that in her opinion, gypsy children who don't go to school are better educated for coping with life than those who do.

I then brought up the subject of a timetable (which I understood the LEA would require). "Oh no" said Mrs H. "I don't believe in them. It would be impossible to keep a timetable at home anyway."

"Well, about Heidi's social life then" -

I was sure she would require some explanation about this.

"But you have a social life, don't you? I am sure you will see to it that Heidi gets one too. There are very few children who are deprived of a social life. No, I'm not worried about that."

After looking at some of Heidi's work she said "There would be no point in sending Heidi to school just now anyway as she is far more advanced than school-children her age, and it would be a setback for her as she wouldn't learn anything new for some time yet."

Lastly, having in mind the other visitors I had expected, I asked who would be calling next. "No-one" she said. "I see no need for anyone else to come. I'm quite satisfied with what I've seen." She then asked my permission to come sometime in the future to see how we are getting along, and I agreed.

It's good to know that some of THEM are on OUR side, isn't it?

(The LEA in question is Barnsley.-Ed.)

Minutes of Core Group meeting

held on Thursday 5th August at the home of Janet & Nigel Everdell

Hemingford Abbots, Cambs.

present: Bruce Cox (chair), John Elenor (minutes), Janet Everdell (host), Dick Kitto, Simon & Caroline Grant, Betty Ball, John & Pat Maiden, Christine Wood, Cherity Laniado.

apologies from: Helen Holland, Julie Duff, Iris & AJ Harrison, Ivan & Mary Geffen, Stephanie Leland.

1. Minutes were taken as read, and nothing arose that was not already on the agenda.

2. Reports

2.1. Treasurer. Over the last two months our running costs have been around £1150, against an income of £850; with the addition of exceptional items totalling £450 (typewriter, posters, etc), this has reduced our bank balance from £2100 to £1350, with outstanding debts of £572. It was agreed that a) forward planning of expenditure was essential, and b) newsletter printing costs need to be reduced; members of the Steering Committee and the Publications Group will look round for the cheapest suitable printer and send estimates to Caroline Grant.

2.2. Membership Secretary

- 2.2.1. Present membership is 736
- 2.2.2. Stocks† intro letter 1400, Early Years 487, SINC only 88 - agreed that if printer still has plates of this, to ask for 200, otherwise photocopy it.
- 2.2.3. Some coordinators are being slack about amending the Publications Order Form (back of blue membership form) which involves the memsec in a great deal of refunding money sent for out-of-stock items - agreed to make this more obvious in the next NL.
- 2.2.4. Once the next Contact List has been produced it will be possible for subsequent additions to be listed in the newsletter.
- 2.2.5. The photocopier is proving invaluable, but could take another 500 copies per month.

2.3. Legal coordinator

- 2.3.1. Two legal cases have recently been settled satisfactorily, but at least one is still outstanding.
- 2.3.2. Would it be helpful for EO to set up a 'distance school' where children under threat could be registered without having to be physically present?
- 2.3.3. The workload has become too much for Iris, who presented her resignation to the meeting. It was accepted sadly; John Elenor agreed to hold the brief until he could find a successor.

2.4. Enquiries Secretary

- 2.4.1. It has been established that parental agreement is not required before a schoolchild is submitted to a psychological assessment.
- 2.4.2. A member had suggested that anyone over 16 would be better off drawing unemployment benefit than attempting to get family benefit.
- 2.4.3. Another member had warned that a grant for a correspondence course might later jeopardise ones chance of a grant for higher education.
- 2.4.4. Julie Duff is to produce a news-sheet for 'special needs' members; it was suggested that this be written up in SINC.
- 2.4.5. Janet requested that members should not phone her after 9.30 pm.

2.5. Coordinating. Simon Grant is about to write to all coordinators. He suggested that apart from the national skills list (which he is compiling) there should be more comprehensive regional skills lists compiled by groups of coordinators organizing themselves as they found best.

3. Frequency and timing of meetings

- 3.1. The meeting considered a paper from John Elenor, and accepted plan A:- three Core Group meetings a year, in January (West Country), in May (North Country) and September (Trent Park).
- 3.2. The Steering Committee has the responsibility of finding precise venues and dates, and advertising them in the newsletter well in advance.
(NB: the Trent Park jamboree will always be the last weekend in September).
- 3.3. The Steering Committee also has the responsibility of arranging telephone conference-calls in between, if necessary.
- 3.4. The Steering Committee is to formulate proposals regarding membership of the Core Group.

4. Trent Park meeting The following

- 4.1. Chaired meeting to begin at 2.30, finishing around 4 to give time for another activity after tea.
- 4.2. Discussion items to include
 - 4.2.1. Deregistration
 - 4.2.2. The structure of EO (with a paper from the Steering Committee)
- 4.3. To present a role-play (after tea, for those interested) of LEA officials interviewing a parent.

5. Guidelines for newsletter editors

- 5.1. News is essential and should never be omitted.
- 5.2. Editorial comment should be confined to the letters page.
- 5.3. When advertising a Core Group meeting, include as much as possible of the agenda.
- 5.4. Do not reject material, pass it on to the next editor.

6. Logo Suggestions for a new logo are to be printed in the October NL.

7. Payment to members

- 7.1. All requests for reimbursement should itemize amounts - treasurer to give guidelines in the next NL.
- 7.2. Any unusual expenditure to be cleared with the treasurer beforehand.

8. AOB

- 8.1. It was reported that the Computer Subcommittee had self-destructed.
- 8.2. The Trent Park meeting should be asked to suggest a nominee to the NCCL executive.
- 8.3. As an alternative to raising money for equipment, let us look about for firms who might be willing to donate it or hire it for a nominal sum.
- 8.4. It was suggested that coordinators should ring neighbouring coordinators with details of local meetings; perhaps coords should have 'information trees' whereby no-one has to ring more than three other members.

Small Ads

An EO family (mother and three children: Timothy 12½, Samuel 5½, Tamlin 2½) need a communal or supportive country environment with support for growing and learning in or out of school. No capital but lots of enthusiasm and enthusiasm to put into a communal situation. Myself and elder son have lived in a communal environment before, are jacks of all trades with no special qualifications except experience.

Please write to:
Kate O'Donovan
26 Rose Hill
Hampton
Middx.

FOR SALE

unused Montessori apparatus

The cylinders (set of 4)	worth £50
Broad stair	£18.50
Baric tablets	£16
Touch boards	£ 4
Colour boxes 1,2,3	£44
Number rods	£11
Counting tray & spindles	£ 8
Dressing frames	£40
total	£191.50

will accept offers : must sell

Penelope Wiggs
c/o 73 Manor Road
Fratton
Portsmouth.

Are there any EO members who might like to move into our area (North Essex/Suffolk border)? We would like to have another EO family close by for mutual support. At the time of writing (mid-Aug) there are one or two possibilities of places to rent near us, and if anyone is interested we could make enquiries. We have three children: Melanie 11½ who goes to school, Gwydion 3½ and Grace 8 months whom we intend to teach ourselves. We have space for people to stay with us here if they want to visit to see how they like the area/get on with us.

Please write to:
David & Vicki Willow
Pollards Cross Cottage
Church Hill
Hempstead
Saffron Walden
Essex. CB10 2PA.

News from the Regions

Cambridgeshire

Janet Everdell

We were fortunate to be the venue for the Aug. 5th Core Group meeting, thus giving local members a chance to attend. It was a friendly gathering and for me demonstrated the hard work and effort a few members are prepared to put into EO for the rest of us. One family, with a year-old child, travelled all the way from N. Wales via British Rail!

After saying my piece as enquiries secretary I was kept fairly busy for the rest of the meeting supplying fuel for the fires in the form of tea, coffee and sandwiches. I thought help had arrived when my husband returned home from work. He offered to make a last round of tea and when it didn't arrive I discovered he had been waylaid by the considerable female charms of Magdalene Grant (aged one)

As EO Enquiries Secretary and local coordinator I have received only a trickle of enquiries, but as this is the holiday season it is expected to be slow. I am told there will be considerably more cries for help once it is 'Back to School' and all the ramifications that entails.

Our own son Nicholas (who was de-schooled for O levels and gained 7 grade A passes) has applied to Kings College Cambridge for a Maths/Physics course. The amount of paperwork to be studied in order to put in an application was amazing. I am convinced he did more reading for that than he did for O level

Eng. Language. In other words, he deserves an O level for Cambridge Admissions Studies!

My appeal in the last newsletter for information regarding schools forcing psychological examination of children without parental consent was replied to by two helpful members. The resulting letters are printed on the letters pages.

Another enquiry has come in regarding Child Benefit Allowance. One member has successfully appealed to her local tribunal for continuing the allowance after her sons sixteenth birthday. However, the DHSS are to appeal. Therefore, the enquirer asked, has any other member succeeded in keeping the allowance for a child over 16 educated at home? Such information would help against the appeal and to win the case would benefit EO children in future.

As a result of this enquiry, a member attending the Core Group meeting told us that because her son did six months in the army he receives Unemployment Benefit while studying part-time at the local Tech. Also school leavers who have never worked are entitled to Supplementary Benefit which is worth considerably more than CBA. Therefore it is possible EO members could qualify for this benefit - has anyone succeeded? Any information will be welcome as this is a situation that needs to be clarified before the bulk of members children reach sixteen years of age.

SECRETARIAL HELP NEEDED

for overworked treasurer/dogsbody: two visits a week for an hour or so should help me keep my desk clear - mostly chores such as readdressing mail, checking subscriptions and bank statements - some typing if you can.

Offer (any age) to:
John Elenor
18 Eynham Road
London W.12

or 'phone 749 2199

Does anyone know of FREEHOLD PROPERTY FOR SALE?

up to £2,000, the more remote the better; Scotland would be nice, but anywhere in Britain will do.

I will answer all letters and refund stamps.

Jean Whitfield
43 Cliff End
Purley
Surrey. CR2 1BP.

Simon, Caroline & Magdalene Grant would really like to have some EO people living next door to us. The other half of the row of cottages we have recently moved into is still for sale (not by us!), and we think it is a lovely place to live. It is cheap, relatively secluded but not isolated, with beautiful views of Snowdon and the sea, and is reasonably served by public transport. We would be interested in sharing car, phone and music. Anyone interested? Write for further details, and arrange to come and visit us at:

3/4 Tanyralt Cottages
Llanllyfni
Caernarfon
Gwynedd. LL54 6RS.

Jane Davies has recently made arrangements with Faith Products, 52-56 Albion Road, Edinburgh, to sell their soaps, moisturisers, shampoos, etc by mail order. All products are vegetable/vegan based and cause no suffering to animals. She suggests that some enterprising EO youngsters might like to help animals and earn a little money by writing to Rena Jacobs at Faith Products.

Scotland

Robina Pye

Our last meeting was a success with 8 families new to EO or interested in it, and 4 existing members - about 30-40 people in all. The weather was beautiful and it seems to have been appreciated. We will do it two-monthly so that all enquirers can be invited. At the end of August the Open Sky Community at Ardfern are having a kids week (and inviting the parents along). It's not exclusively for EO

families but all Scottish EO members are invited. Our next meeting is in October; we go to Mull in September and are hoping to organize a meeting for all the island members while we are there.

(NB: the Wallaces have now taken over as Scottish regional coordinators. Many thanks to Robina for her hard work in the past. - Ed.)

London Newsletter

Misha Wolf

Hello everyone, especially if you live in or around London. Some of us living in London have decided that we want a London-wide EO newsletter. We hope this will help London EO members - both children and adults - to keep in touch with each other. The newsletter will be sent to EO members whose address has a London postal district and also to those living in Richmond and Middlesex. That is altogether about 100 families. If you are a member living in one of the counties surrounding London and would like

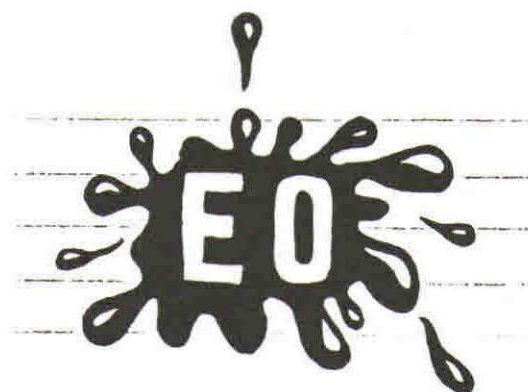
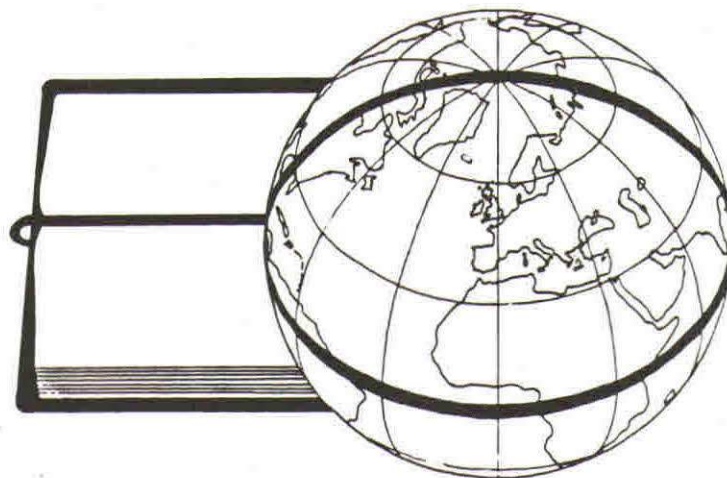
to receive the newsletter then drop me a line or phone me. I've undertaken to produce the first few issues. Send material - whether produced by adult or child - to

Misha Wolf
12 Terrapin Road
London SW17.

My home telephone number is (01)673.0091. If I'm out you can leave a message on the answering machine.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Suggested Logos



New Coordinators

since pink contact list

Berks: JANE CLITHEROE Tel: Upper Basildon 704
Cumbria: (change of address) EVELYN MARSH, now Gateside Cottage, Coniston
Derbys: CLIVE & ALOMA MARSHALL
Hants: also PATRICIA WHARTON Tel: Gosport 29202
Manchester: (change of address) PETER JONES, now 3 Fairfield Court, Daisybank Road, Manchester 14. Tel: 061.224.9816
Northants: Paimans left - new coordinator needed
Oxon: Grants moved to Wales - now COLLEEN GORMAN Tel: Oxford 770721
Somerset: also STEVE FERDINANDO, The Old Vicarage, Queen Camel, Yeovil. Tel: Marston Magna 850210
Staffs: GEORGE & EILEEN WILSON
Tyne & Wear: }
Northumberland: } KATE HARVEY (listed under Cumbria) Tel: Gilsland 397
W.Yorks: also LINDA COOPER
London E: MARGARET SANDERS Tel: 01.989.0408
S: MARGARET GILBERT Tel: 01.947.7706
Wales 1: SIMON & CAROLINE GRANT, 3/4 Tanyralit Cottages, Llanllyfni, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL54 6RS. Tel: Nantlle 868
2: since Mary Evans is leaving, a team of 3 or 4 members would be desirable to work with Simon & Caroline to coordinate Wales as a whole.
Highland: BRUCE & CHRISTINE WALLACE Tel: Diabaig 225
Shetland: KEVIN FLEISCH, Belroc, Newpark, Whalsay, Shetland
Grampian: PRISCILLA PARK-WEIR Tel: Aberdeen 821045

REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

message from the treasurer

- 1) When you send me a claim for money, it would be helpful for book-keeping to itemize it under Postage, Phone, Stationery (inc. photocopying), and Meetings (travel, hire of room, etc)
- 2) The last Core Group agreed that, since we work on the edge of bankruptcy, any exceptional expenditure (ie more than £30) should be cleared with me in advance. Not that we want to deny you the money, simply that I need to ensure that there is enough money in the current account to meet our running costs.

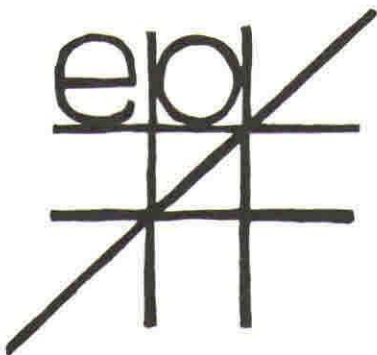
MESSAGE TO ALL COORDINATORS FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

When you send out the introductory letter, please amend the back of the blue form thus:-

against 'School Is Not Compulsory' alter price [non-members] to £1
" 'Early Years' " " " " to £1
under 'Digests of back issues' add '1979 : 9-12' (price) 75p & £1
under GWS delete 'Back copies of GWS as available'

The editor for the next issue (December) is
Caroline Grant
3/4 Tanyralit Cottages, Llanllyfni, Caernarfon,
Gwynedd, LL54 6RS. Tel: Nantlle(028689)868
Deadline for copy is 1st November.
Material intended as such should be clearly
marked 'For Publication',

Uncut black & white photo-booth pictures of EO children and adults are required for the Next Newsletter's cover. The subjects can be of any age, sex or number, so long as they look alive! (The booth curtains can be drawn, or not.) Send as many as you can muster to Jacky Mackay, 263, Acton Lane, London, W.4 as soon as possible.



NOTICES

EO PUBLICATIONS

School Is Not Compulsory	£1.00
Early Years	£1.00
Digest 1-4 (1977)	50p
introductory letter	free

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

Digest 9-12 (1979) 75p (non-members £1)

send money in 124p stamps to Caroline Grant, 3/4 Tanyralit Cottages, Llanllyfni, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL54 6RS.

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 (non-members £3.60) from Stephanie Leland, 2 St Edmunds Cottages, Bove Town, Glastonbury, Somerset; please send money with order (cheques payable to EO).

WEST COUNTRY VENUE

Stephanie Leland would like to know of anyone (preferably in Somerset or Avon) prepared to host the Core Group meeting next January. Offers, no later than 1st Nov, to Stephanie at: 2 St Edmunds Cottages, Bove Town, Glastonbury, Somerset.

CORE GROUP MEETINGS

The next meeting will be in January; date and place (West of England) will be announced in the next Newsletter.

HELPING YOUNG READERS

Roehampton Institute is running an 'open entry' course for 20 weeks of 3 hours per week; they might be able to squeeze in an extra student this year, and they are taking bookings for 1983/4. Write, quoting EO, to Marguerite Kirwan, Digby Stuart College, Roehampton Lane, London SW15; or phone (01)876.8273.

TURNING POINT

is an international network of people who share a feeling that humankind is at a turning point; their current newsletter mentions EO alongside Future Studies Centre, Green Revolution, and similar alternative attitudes to social organization. Details available from: Alison Pritchard, 9 New Road, Ironbridge, Shropshire, TF8 7AU. phone: Ironbridge 2224.

DIGEST 9-12 (1979)

is now available, price 75p (non-members £1) inc.p & p; articles on deregistration, exams, questionnaire report, book reviews, etc. (An excellent read, amazingly good value. - Ed.) Obtainable from Caroline Grant - see under 'EO publications' above.

CHEER UP NOVEMBER!

Come and join our fun book day on Friday 12th November.

The theme is 'the sun' with stories to read to little ones and share with bigger ones; we'll also have drawing & modelling, cooking and music. What can you offer?

We'll cook some sunny things, perhaps learn a French song, paint a sunny face and share some books. Bring some food to share for lunch, feel free to stay for all or part of the day, arrive any time between 11 & 4.

If you have any suggestions or want to join us, please let me know: Maxine Toff, 50 Sackville Gardens, Hove. phone: Brighton (0273)774860.

IN THE MAKING

is an 84-page directory of 'collective, cooperative, community and communal groups all over the UK & Eire', supporting the principles of autonomy and 'equality of decision-making & income'. EO is listed in the 1981 issue; available from ITM, 44 Albion Road, Sutton, Surrey. price £1.

NL EDITORS

Dec: Caroline Grant
Feb: Sarah Guthrie & Dick Kitto
Apr: Julie Duff

offers are rolling in for the rest of 1983, but if you feel the urge to add your name to the list, write to Bruce Cox, Grey Row Cottage, Flixton Road, St Margaret S Elmham, IP20 0PL.

STANDARDS IN MATHS

Andrea Lowe writes:- When the LEA adviser called last week, she left me a photocopy of part of the literature that was sent to teachers with a recommendation of the maths standard children should be up to when they have completed their 3rd year at school (ie age 7). It is 13 pages long so too much for the newsletter, but if anyone is interested I will be pleased to copy it out for them if they can send me an SAE (to 319 Rochdale Road, Bury, Lancs.) It may be of particular interest to anyone having trouble with their LEA or being asked to submit a syllabus etc. It is amazing how many of the things an EO child experiences through living have a fancy six-syllable word invented for them and been introduced as a lesson, to make school indispensable.

MANCHESTER MEETING

Peter Jones & Andrea Lowe are planning an open meeting to publicise EO in the Greater Manchester area. They hope to advertise it really well and make sure lots of people know about it. So they urgently need helpers who would be willing to put posters up around Manchester and also put them in touch with any local individuals or groups who ought to know about the meeting. They would also like to mount an exhibition of material about EO in practice - photographs of children, newspaper cuttings, childrens work, etc. Anything lent will be lovingly looked after and returned. It could also be brought to the Trent Park meeting which they both hope to attend. Hundreds of offers please to: Peter Jones, 3 Fairfield Court, Daisybank Road, Manchester 14. phone: (061)224.9186

MATHS WORKSHOP

Sat.9th October, 2-4 pm at Maxine & Stuart Toff's, 50 Sackville Gardens, Hove.

'Three-Dimensional Solids': Martin Richards will run a workshop for parents and children (age 9-14?); first hour making shapes, then tea, and a discussion about further activities using Martin's skills in this field. Please come and bring scissors, felt-tips, crayons, ruler & ideas.

PRINTING THE NEWSLETTER: how you can help

EOs major regular expenditure is printing the newsletter - currently between £300 & £400 a time. The general feeling at the last Core Group meeting was that we are spending more than necessary on this, and - while we wish to maintain a high standard of printing - we should make a serious effort to cut printing costs.

If, therefore, you know of a likely cheap printer (particularly an 'alternative' one) could you obtain from him an estimate for the following:-

1200 copies of an A5 booklet consisting of 48 sides printed in black on white 80 g/m² paper, plus a coloured card cover printed in both sides in black.

Art-work to be supplied by client; collating etc to be done by printer if possible.

It would also be useful to know:-

i) how much an extra 8, or 16, sides would cost;

ii) how much each extra 100 copies would cost.

It would probably help to take a copy of a newsletter along to give some idea of what is required, but estimates should be calculated according to the above details so that they can be compared.

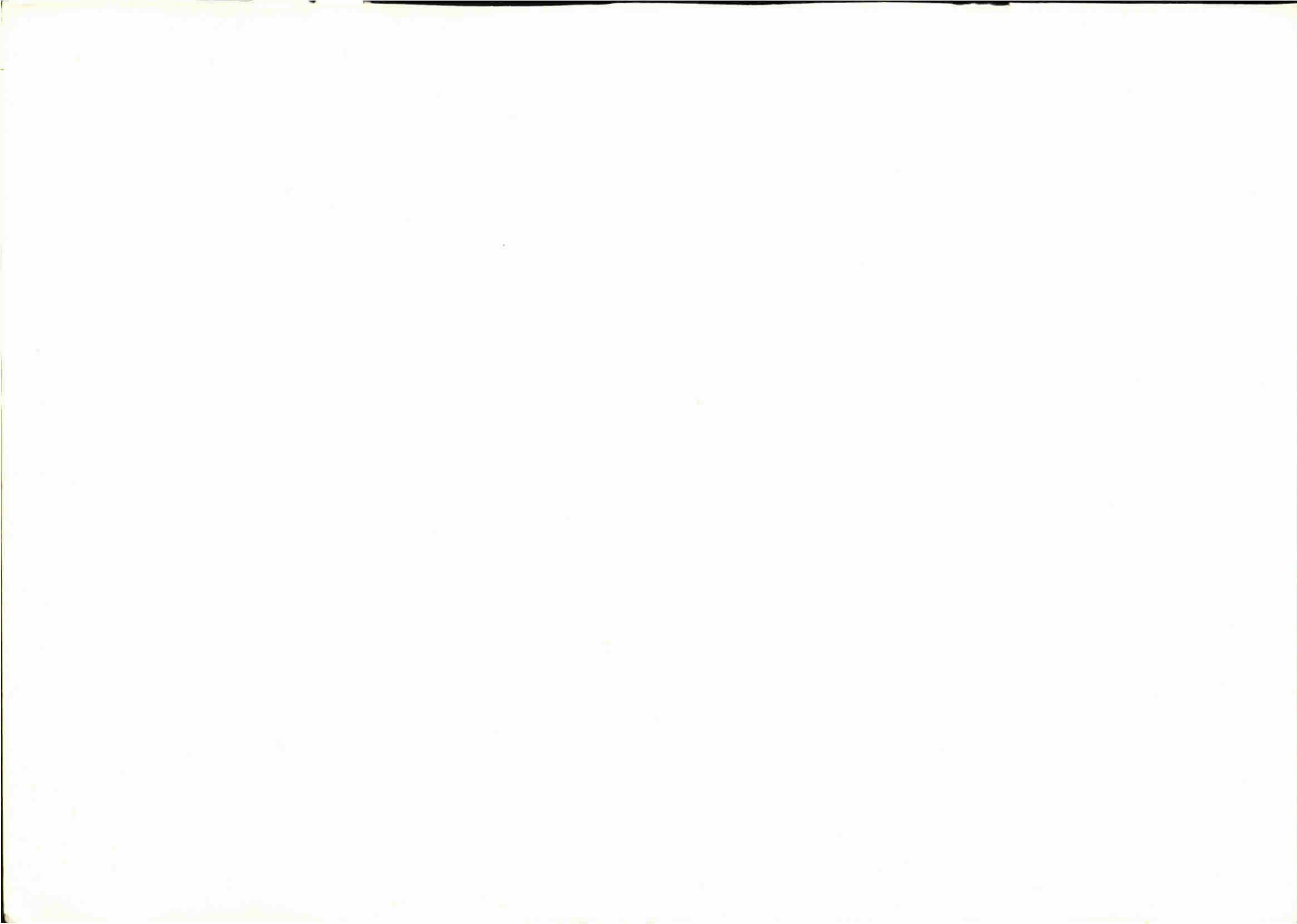
It would also be useful if you could obtain a sample of their work. Excellent work is often done on little lithos (like AB Dick). Someone too may be lucky enough to find an enthusiast printer willing to chip in some ideas and creativity without loading the bill. Please send the results of your enquiries to: Caroline Grant, 3/4 Tanyralit Cottages, Llanllyfni, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL54 6RS.

Education Otherwise

aims and objectives

1. To re-affirm that parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility by educating them out of school.
2. To establish the primary right of children that full consideration, with due allowance to their age and understanding, shall be given to their wishes and feelings regarding education.
3. To support families in which for any good reason a child is being educated out of school, particularly in the following respects:
 - (a) By disseminating information through the medium of a newsletter, booklets and in other ways about
 - (i) people's experience
 - (ii) available resources, and
 - (iii) exchange of skills and resources.
 - (b) By providing advice and, where needed, specific help in
 - (i) presenting their case to the authorities and
 - (ii) the legal aspects of education out of school.
 - (c) By providing advice about
 - (i) educational methods and materials, and
 - (ii) devising programmes of activities.
 - (d) By arranging meetings and by supporting the formation of local groups.
4. To support families where a child is suffering educationally, socially or emotionally from compulsory school attendance, particularly in the following cases:
 - (a) Where the family is being inadequately served or advised by the statutory services.
 - (b) Where the family is in need of legal assistance.
5. It is not the intention of the group to act in conflict with schools or education authorities, and we endorse the legal responsibilities of the authorities in the following respects:
 - (a) As a safeguard for children who might otherwise be deprived of their right to education, and
 - (b) As providers of educational resources and services.

We envisage a situation in which schools and other educational services provide a resource which is freely available to all members of the community, whatever their age.



No. 25

EDUCATION OTHERWISE NEWSLETTER

Volume 6 Number 5

Education Otherwise

is a membership organisation whose principle 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 those who wish to support the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of their children.

Our principle aims are as follows:

to encourage the provision of alternative learning situations outside the school system for those children who are not benefiting from school;

to re-affirm that parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility by educating them out of school;

to establish the primary right of children that full consideration – with due allowance for their age and understanding – shall be given to their wishes and feelings regarding their education.

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

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