

notices

TO ALL COORDINATORS from John Elenor: In the past I have opened all EO mail before passing enquiries on to coordinators; from now on, in order to save myself time and EO money, I shall redirect everything that looks like an enquiry according to the postmark. However, this will very occasionally result in a mis-direction - please accept my apologies in advance, and pass the letter on to the appropriate quarter.

VENUES FOR MEETINGS: Unstone Grange provided the setting last May for one of the most pleasurable and inspiring weekends we have ever run, at a very low cost (in relation to comfort and space). We certainly intend to use it again, but we also need to know of similar venues in other parts of the country for other meetings. Experience has confirmed that residential venues are by far the most successful. If you know of anywhere suitable, write to John Elenor, 31 Anson Road London NW2.

E:O LIMITED!

Yes, the London meeting (our unincorporated equivalent of the AGM) gave its assent to the draft constitutions for EO Ltd., and the EO Trust, having decided that (with minor amendments worked out by the Core Group next day - see minutes) it was a workable combination of our present flexibility with the statutory requirements of the Companies Acts. The C.G. instructed John Elenor and the subcommittee to press ahead with registration - no details yet available on the time-scale.

One important requirement is that the annual accounts should be audited by a qualified auditor. It is possible to find an auditor who is prepared to do this for a nominal fee, but it would be more in keeping with the spirit of EO if we had a suitably qualified member who would undertake this straightforward task. Offers, please, to John Elenor at 31 Anson Road London NW2



NOTICES...

E.O. T-shirts for sale, 50% cotton, 50% acrylic. £2.95.
 Adult sizes only (at present)
 Small/Medium/Large, in light blue or light grey.

All with Education Otherwise in red capitals across front.

Available by post from
 Colin & Anne Moss,
 98, Victoria Avenue,
 HULL, HU5 3DS (Tel. 445728)

HOMESCHOOLED COMMUNITY

Since the last newsletter there have been two well attended meetings, organised at Wheatstone Community by Dave and Lorna, and at Monkton Wyld by Bob and Gwen. As well as a core group of families who first met at the Totnes Hood Fair in June, several new families have enjoyed games and dancing sessions, face paints and puppets, and a Halloween celebration with bonfire, toffee apples and sparklers.

We've also discussed in more detail some of the practicalities of setting up a homeschooled community, with a number of families agreeing to do more research before the next meeting. Various ideas are developing which may well lead to the formation of several new projects with a lot of common ground for co-operation.

BOOK-COVERING in see-through plastics; quotations given for all different sizes. Contact Helen J. Webb of 13 Hill May Road, Matron, Gloucester GL4 9LS, tel. 0452 417696. Pictures protected too.

WANTED: A penfriend (boy or girl) age 9-11 in another part of the British Isles, home-educated, to correspond with Rochelle Lear (age 9) at the following address:- 24, Ridgehurst Avenue, Leavesden, Watford, Herts. If any parent of a home-educated child living in Watford or the neighbouring vicinity would like to get together to form a group for meetings, discussions, etc., would they please write to Maria Lear at the above address.

LATEST SPECIAL CHILDREN NEWSLETTER (which appears twice yearly) is available to members, with Special children - please send s.a.e. to Julie Duff, Hasfield Court, Hasfield, Gloucestershire, for your copy.

WEST MIDLANDS. There will be a meeting at 2.00p.m. on Saturday 28th January at the Lockleys', 9 Eagle St., Penn Fields, Wolverhampton. Tel. Wolverhampton 343299. All welcome.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE EO GROUP

South Yorkshire members please note that the meeting planned for 12th January 1984 has been cancelled. The next meeting is on Thursday 16th February 1984 at 25 Moor Oaks Road, Sheffield S10 1BX at 8.00 pm.

Joan Hoare

ESSEX

The Essex Group plan to visit the Bethnal Green Toy Museum in the New Year. This will probably be on Wednesday 18th January 1984. If any London members, or anyone else, is interested in joining us on this visit, please contact Sandie Cottee for confirmation of date and time to meet. Sandie Cottee, 24 Deneway, Vange, Basildon, Essex. Tel. Basildon 554968

VOLUNTEER required to take over from Julie Duff the job of handling advertising in the Newsletter. As Julie says, it is not a difficult task, but new brains have new ideas. Get in touch with Julie at Hasfield Court, Hasfield, Gloucestershire for further information. Remember, E.O. is a co-operative venture. THIS COULD BE YOUR CONTRIBUTION.

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fortunately not too bitter, but she was anxious that other parents who use the orthodox medical services should make sure that their children didn't miss out by getting their G.P. to do the relevant checks, jabs, etc. at the appropriate age.

Now for the Old Girls' section! Three of the people I visited were E.O. originals, one of the purposes of the thing being to find out what E.O. kids do as adults. I'm sure some of you will remember them and be interested so I'll tell you about them. Theresa Redding went to a further education college (as did a majority of the older teenagers I talked to) and got secretarial qualifications as well as various O-levels with which she got a job in a travel agency and the opportunity of discount fares in the first ever package tour from this country to Cuba. Alison Head had just finished a drama degree at Hull University and was involved in various community music and drama projects, and writing poetry and novels. Daisy Chaudhuri, whose mother Jane spoke on the B.E.C./O.U. programme about E.O. has gone back to school part-time to do chemistry, maths. and history O-levels. She finds a lot of time is wasted hanging around at school between lessons and is doing the history there really because it fitted in well with the timetable for the other two, which she found hard to do at home. If you're wondering how this victory for the flexischoolers was negotiated it appears that the headmistress saw it as a way of enticing her back into the school system.

A plea to end with: I would very much like to find some more over-14 year olds educated at home in communes. If anyone knows somebody in this position (apart from Mandy Freeman whom I've talked to) I would be most grateful for their name and address as this seems to me a really interesting but frustratingly un-get-at-able aspect of E.O.

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



RECRUITMENT

What percentage of the population knows about EO? How many of them favour the idea? And how many of those would have the courage to deschool their children if you approached them to talk about your experience and inspire them to join EO? Ans: I have no idea. But I do feel that every member should set themselves the goal of recruiting two other members during the next twelve months. This would not quite treble our numbers - we have an annual drop-out rate of around 16% - but according to my calculations we could reach the figure of 2500 paid-up members by the end of 1984. Apart from its vitalizing effect on the organization of EO it would also have an exponential effect on future recruitment by providing more numerous contact for any potential member who was worried about the isolating effects of home education. Preliminary research has revealed that word-of-mouth is by far the most common way for new members to hear of EO - so get those mouths working and support yourself by supporting two more families to join!

John Elenor

14 EO RESEARCH

Julie Webb has been working as a part-time student with the Open University, finding out what happens to home-educated children after their 'official' period of education is finished at 16. Here are some of her findings so far....

I thought others might be interested to hear about my first year's research into home education. From the paragraph in the April '82 Newsletter I had only 3 replies from people willing to be interviewed, indicating perhaps how few of us are actively enthusiastic about a publicity role for E.O.? Forty or so more, though, agreed when I wrote to them individually asking whether they'd like to take part and so far I've visited seventeen families in different parts of the country. Not all were E.O. members: some I found via word of mouth or a letter in the T.E.S.

Our visit to Pam and Kevin Fleisch and their children (not to mention hens, sheep and cats) when Erlend and I were the lone passengers on a January storm-tossed (well, rolling a bit anyway!) inter island ferry in Shetland was the most exciting, but everywhere we've received a very warm welcome and had some fascinating discussions.

There are problems though about trying to talk to someone for two or three hours accompanied by a lively four year old and I am very grateful for the tolerance of all those whose trains of thought were constantly derailed by interruptions of the 'Mummy, look at this' variety.

A number of interesting points have cropped up in the interviews and as they're all unrelated I'll take them at random. One is that ten of the seventeen families have at least one parent who is a trained teacher. If this proportion were to be reflected among home educators in general, would it imply a) that teachers have greater confidence than 'unqualified' parents in their own educational powers, despite E.O.'s attempts to reassure the latter? b) that their experience of schooling through direct involvement as adults is more disillusioning? c) that they may be more sensitive to their own children's educational difficulties? I'd be interested to have other people's views on this. (Actually I suspect it means that teachers are for some reason more willing to talk to me about their experiences.)

Another intriguing thing is the 'one out, all out' syndrome i.e. how often it happens that the deschooling of one child in a family for a reason specific to that child, for instance the refusal of a Head in the Midlands to allow a Scottish boy to wear the kilt to school (this was before the recent turban case) precipitates the deschooling of all the other children in the family. It's as though the whole school system is suddenly seen without its clothes as a result of the exposure of one chink in its armour (sorry about these mixed up clothing metaphors: I got rather carried away by the kilt).

Reassuring for the 'what about their social life' brigade were the varied social contacts of almost all the children I talked to. Even Mark Fleisch, living in a very isolated place with no public transport, was out practically every night, walking over the peat bog from their stone croft in the howling wind, if not rain, to the road where he'd hopefully hitch a lift to a friend's house to spend the evening with the very same teenagers he hadn't got on with at school (and what does that say about school as a context for a happy social life?).

One last, smallish point from a mother involved in the 'Welfare State' touring theatre company who for a long time educated their children on the move. By taking a child out of school you remove him or her from a community health care programme which includes various routine checks. This mother learnt by experience (rather ironically considering the name of the company!),

DEAR READER...

Jean Lovius (mother of 'Kipper') has sent in this idea for an agony column. Is there a budding Marje Proops out there who can answer, using as few words as Marje would, one or all of these questions? Send in your answers for the next issue.

I HAVE FOUR CHILDREN AND BELIEVE very much in Holt's ideas but do find it difficult to give them attention without everyone wanting to do the same thing and they don't always appreciate everyone descending and doing the same thing with them. I don't seem to have tolerant children although I think I am tolerant.

I AM FIGHTING FOR PART TIME EDUCATION for my children in secondary school. Has anyone any useful information?

I HAVE A DOWNES SYNDROME CHILD WITHDRAWN officially from school and would like to know of others. Is there anyone could help me teach him?

MY CHILD HAS DYSLEXIA. I DO NOT like his specialist teacher. Will he ever learn if he does not do the Alpha Omega book because it drives us both round the bend.

WHEN MY TWO CHILDREN WERE LITTLE I never told them off at all. Now they are bigger I am very tired and bad tempered and this has changed their attitude to me and started a vicious circle I can't get out of.

MY CHILDREN HAVE GOT OUT OF SCHOOL but when I try to work with a colleague at home they get very rowdy, fight and really are dreadful. I do give them adequate attention but they seem to need attention very badly in these situations - what do I do? - I do not have a private room so I have to have their co-operation. By ourselves we get on very well.

?

I WANT TO TAKE A FOSTER CHILD OUT of school. Have any E.O. parents managed this?

I FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO MAKE my little girl of 8 sit down and do lessons for an hour each day. The advisor says she ought to do at least 3 hours and I must produce a time table. I don't know how to do this and don't really want to. Will I have to send her back to school?

(This last question has been asked by parents of 6, 8, 12 and 15½ year old children!)

the research studies how far the teachers trained in these attitudes were randomly or self-selected, so the question of whether all teachers could learn to be this way remains an open one.

Carl Rogers accepts that the climate he believes important cannot be imposed on teachers. Like other forms of learning, such attitudes have to come from within. But, he says,

teachers can be helped to develop them in various ways if they want to. There is no magic. They can be helped to be more open and effective with their students. They can learn to be free.

"Freedom to Learn for the Eighties"
by Carl Rogers published by Charles Merrill 1983.

(Bruce Cox, who drew our attention to this article, said he cheered at the end of every paragraph!)



HOLME PLACE COMMUNITY now has a viable group but more members are still needed. £8,000 minimum capital required per adult. Sorry, we feel we have enough under fives at present. Please send SAE for details to:
Holme Place, Oakford, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 9EW.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS — JOAN HOARE

In view of Janet Everdell's request for more EO members willing to be interviewed by the media, I thought that perhaps people might be interested in hearing about what it's like to be interviewed on local radio. I have now been interviewed twice about EO and have lived to tell the tale - the first time was about two years ago and the second about a month ago. The interviews lasted about seven minutes so it was really quite painless although it was live. My main aim was to get across the fact that it's legal to educate out of the school system and that I could be contacted by enquirers. It is most important to make sure that you give your name, address and telephone number during the interview, so that you can be contacted. I have found that the interviewer cannot be relied upon to give this information as they are often too busy being 'devil's advocate' in order to promote an argument about deschooling. This is the great pitfall of interviews with the media and one should be continuously aware of it.

The great advantage to me of radio interviews is that it doesn't directly involve our children who adamantly refuse to have anything to do with the media. The interview doesn't take long, the publicity is free and you reach a lot of people. So don't refuse radio interviews either out of modesty or because you fear sensational publicity - it's really all quite low key.

THE YOUNG PUFFIN BOOK OF CROSSWORDS
Mavis Cavendish ISBN 014 03.0885 7

Clear, step-by-step introduction to crosswords, from picture clues to anagrams. Perhaps too simple(?) for older beginners, but superb for Becky 5 years. Especially if one waives the instruction to use capital letters (technically correct but not necessary) when the object is FUN as well as literacy.

Evelyn Marsh

For nearly 20 years the National Consortium for Humanizing Education in the United States has been looking at the results achieved by teachers applying these principles, in the US and in seven other countries. According to a section in "Freedom to Learn" written by David Aspy and Flora Roebuck, this work covers more than 2,000 teachers and 20,000 students at every level of education from kindergarten to university and shows "students learn more and behave better when they receive high levels of understanding, caring and genuineness than when they are given low levels of them".

The level of teachers' empathy, positive regard and genuineness were usually assessed by trained observers working from tape recordings of the teacher in action. Checks were made to ensure that different observers made similar assessments about the same teachers.

In one study involving 600 teachers and about 10,000 students from kindergarten to grade 12 (sixth-form level) the pupils of teachers trained to apply these principles were compared with the students of untrained teachers who scored low in such attitudes. The students of the trained teachers were found to have made significantly greater gains in maths and reading, to present fewer discipline problems, to have made greater improvements in IQ scores, to ask more questions and make more verbal contributions, to use higher levels of thinking and to have more confidence and self-respect, than the other students.

The 3,000 pupils with teachers rated low in empathy were absent, on average, for nine days a year. Pupils with teachers who were more understanding averaged only five days' absence a year.

Aspy and Roebuck were "horrified" to find that part of the difference in self-image that developed between the two groups of pupils as they progressed through the school was due to the fact that many of the students of teachers

judged low in empathy and caring seemed to learn to like themselves less.

These results were not just true for middle-class or high achieving pupils. When Aspy and Roebuck looked at pupils from 75 classes who were experiencing learning difficulties they found better attendance, and greater improvements in IQ self-concept and academic achievement scores among those with "person-centred" teachers. In fact, among these "educationally handicapped" pupils the teacher's level of interpersonal skills was found to be the single most important factor in the gains made by the children and more important than children's IQ level, race, sex or social class.

Other NCHE studies conclude that where parents of primary school children were trained in interpersonal skills, their children talked to them more about school experiences, and voluntarily read more at home and school. Pregnant teenagers taught about contraception learnt more and became more confident, and boys with VD were twice as likely to return after treatment for their test-of-cure when their counsellors or original interviewers had been trained in this approach.

"It pays to treat students as sensitive and aware human beings," Aspy and Roebuck say.

The person-centred approach has not been without its disappointments. Carl Rogers describes in the book some attempts to introduce his principles into schools and colleges without success, sometimes because they were flawed but often because of external pressures.

"Educational administrators are the most difficult group I have ever worked with", he says. "I find all kinds of other professional groups much more open-minded."

Not surprisingly, some teachers find his idea that they should abandon their hard-won status and authority rather threatening. It is not clear from

doesn't know what it wants to do with young people. It doesn't want to give them a job or give them any particular role to play and they feel increasingly rejected."

Not that the portents are good for the person-centred approach. "It seems to me", he says, "education is becoming more and more authoritarian. There is a strong urge to get back to the basics, to the old ways and the standardized curriculum. That seems to be a message to young people that older people know best what you should think or learn."

That is no way, he maintains, to prepare them for the major decisions they will soon be called upon to participate in; the future of family life, the nuclear question, how advanced society makes intelligent use of all its citizens, and avoids the tendency to become more impersonal and dehumanized.

"The person-centred approach swims against the current of today's life. It expects young people to make more decisions, it expects them to be capable of self-directed learning."

"Facilitators" do not ask what their pupils should be learning. Such questions are for the pupils to answer. They ask instead how they can help the child find the necessary resources for learning; how to create a psychological climate in which the child will feel free to be curious, to make mistakes, to learn from the environment and from fellow students and to recapture the excitement of learning natural in infancy?

Carl Rogers is not the first to advocate such self-direction by any means, but what he believes he has done is to identify some of the crucial ingredients of the psychological climate that helps to free children to learn, and to grow into confident, responsible, self-respecting human beings.

"The beautiful thing is that we now have very solid research backing for

this. The person-centred approach leads to accelerated academic learning, a problem solving orientation, better morale and less absenteeism. We no longer have to be apologetic or worry about being regarded as soft-headed."

The research evidence summarized in "Freedom to Learn" suggests this approach can improve student learning at any age, from infant to university level, in full classes of 30 or more with one teacher and not just in terms of social gains - though there are some - but in improved academic scores in English and maths.

In his psychotherapy and counselling work Rogers found the most important thing was not what particular school of psychiatry the therapist belonged to but whether he or she had certain personal attitudes and values. Rogers identified three important aspects which he believed were the most important in enabling one person to help another - or to help another to help himself. He has described these attributes in various ways and believes they are fundamental to any educational or helping relationship.

“The person centred approach leads to accelerated academic learning, a problem solving orientation, better morale and less absenteeism.”

The most basic requirement, he maintains, is that "facilitators" be genuine; that they are real persons in their own right, knowing and able to communicate their own feelings. Then, he suggests, they need to be able to show they care for, accept and prize the other person in a non-possessive way. And thirdly, they need to be able to demonstrate an empathetic understanding of the other's point of view.

taught is almost completely irrelevant to their lives", he writes in his latest book, "Freedom to Learn for the Eighties".

Teachers, or the best of the traditional ones, Rogers says, ask themselves questions like, what should I teach a child this age or that level of competence? How do I motivate them to learn? He calls it the mug and jug approach in which the teacher is trying to get the mug to stand still while the teacher fills it from the jug of facts that curriculum planners think important.

“... traditional teaching is an almost completely futile, wasteful, overrated function . . . it is successful mostly at giving children a sense of failure.”

Rogers wants to shift the focus from teaching to learning; and to learning, not just "from the neck up", as one might bone up the kings and queens of England, but learning that involves and concerns the whole person. Much of what schools expect pupils to learn, he maintains, is like the lists of meaningless syllables psychologists sometimes use in learning experiments.

"For the student, it has the same perplexing, meaningless quality. This is especially true for the underprivileged child whose background provides no context for the material with which he is confronted"

Such education involves no feelings or personal meanings and has no relevance for the whole person.

"In contrast", he writes, "there is such a things as significant, meaningful, experiential learning. When the toddler touches the warm radiator, she learns for herself the meaning of a word 'hot'; she learns

a future caution in regard to all similar radiators; and she has taken in these learnings in a significant, involved way that will not soon be forgotten. Likewise the child who has memorized 'two plus two equals four' may one day in her play with blocks or marbles suddenly realize, 'Two and two do make four!' She has discovered something significant for herself in a way that involves both her thoughts and feelings. Or the child who has laboriously acquired 'reading skills' is caught up one day in a printed story, whether a comic book or an adventure tale, and realizes that words can have a magic power which lifts her out of herself into another world. She has now 'really' learned to read"

Experiential learning has to be self-initiated. "Even when the stimulus comes from outside, the sense of discovery, of reaching out of grasping and comprehending comes from within." And it is the learner who is best placed to evaluate that learning, to know "whether it illuminates the dark area of ignorance she is experiencing"

Education has traditionally been concerned with logical, linear, step-by-step ideas and concepts which Rogers says are associated with the left hemisphere of the brain. "The right hemisphere functions in a quite different way...It is intuitive. It grasps the essence before it understands the details...It operates in metaphors. It is aesthetic rather than logical.

"The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn, the man who has realized no knowledge is secure...a reliance on process rather than static knowledge is the only thing that makes sense as a goal for education in the modern world."

Rogers is convinced, too, that it is the only goal that will make sense to the underemployed young, whether they live in deprived ghettos or aimless affluence. "I am concerned about the increasing alienation among young people in my country. Society

LEARNING TO BE FREE

For decades the American psychologist Carl Rogers has been preaching that it is not what teachers know that is important but whether they are human and caring with their pupils and give them a chance to decide what and how they should learn. Now he believes there is sufficient evidence to prove his person centred approach works better than traditional teaching and that it holds the best hope for the alienated in an increasingly dehumanized world. Bob Doe meets the 81 year-old pioneer of the encounter group and counselling movement and looks at his latest book.

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If Carl Rogers was granted one wish in education it would be that teachers everywhere should forget everything they ever knew about teaching. He doesn't have a magic wand and hates to be regarded as a guru or a mystic, but he does seem able to work a certain kind of magic with people, and it is that which he wishes to share with teachers.

To meet Carl Rogers is to love him. He seems able to make whole rooms full of people cherish and feel cherished in return.

Which is, perhaps, just as well because coming cold upon some of the more jargonistic accoutrements of what he used to call the "non-directive" and now calls the "person-centred approach" can be off-putting, to say the least. Nobody just tells anyone anything in the person-centred approach; they "just want to share with you" certain thoughts or experiences. Teachers are no longer teachers but "facilitators of learning".

What Rogers proposes is nothing short of a total revolution in education. It makes creative leaps. It is the way of the artist, of the creative scientist.

"Significant learning combines the logical and the intuitive, the intellect and the feeling, the concept and the experience, the idea and the meaning. When we learn in that way we are whole..."

Teaching in the sense of imparting knowledge makes sense only in an unchanging environment. In a continually and rapidly changing world the only certain thing is that anything taught now will rapidly become out of date.

"I deeply believe that traditional teaching is an almost completely futile, wasteful, overrated function in today's changing world. It is successful mostly at giving children who can't grasp the material, a sense of failure. It also succeeds in persuading students to drop out when they realise the material

nothing else to do, and that going from school to College to school did not fit them for the job they had to do; (said very quietly and reasonably I may add). Nearly everyone agreed with her!

Brenda Holliday

SOUTH EAST WALES

On 9 April 1983 Geoff and Iris Harrison very kindly came to talk to us at their own expense. As the experience of EO within the Group ranges from "thinking about it" to one year's practice, it was of great value to all of us to discuss the advantages and disadvantages with a couple who have had experience at all stages of the compulsory education years.

Iris and Geoff were also able to give help and encouragement to a member family faced with prosecution, their own experience being, once again, of assistance. The court case has since been adjourned, and then dropped.

In addition to dealing with EO problems, Iris was able to inform us about developments outside the organisation. These seem very exciting and of great relevance to all deschoolers. Rather than steal Iris's thunder, I'll leave it to her to explain but I recommend you contact her for details.

Our next meeting is to be a barbecue and picnic on a member's smallholding - weather permitting!

P.S. Following a much publicized Education Committee meeting at which EO was discussed in detail, the LEA has declined to send representatives to one of our meetings. Most of the councillors were totally opposed to EO and displayed a poor understanding of otherwise education and of EO's aims. One councillor did think that the LEA should meet us which was encouraging.

Our summer picnic meeting was attended by 8 adults and 11 children (it unfortunately clashed with a rock meeting!) and the weather was sunny, hot and windless. The peaceful riverside smallholding of a member family was a perfect setting for this social get-together. After a very short business meeting, we all settled to the serious side of things - the barbecue. Next we all adjourned to a field beside the river - the cows had been kept away from it for a week - how's that for consideration? The water was icy but the children all stripped off and paddled happily for the rest of the afternoon.

The adults showed less courage! It took quite an effort to gather one's family and belongings and depart - especially when one had to return to an evening's digging!

Contact Ian & Annie Wilton-Jones
0875-831182 for future events.

SUSSEX

We had a very successful weekend of activities at the beginning of May despite cold blustery winds trying to blow away the campers' tents and even our marquee. Actually the first day was fine so that adults could idle in the sunshine whilst children dashed from games in French to music making, jumping off hay bales to clashes with computers. Their energy never flagged at that evening's barn dance either! Over the next two days the Cafe des Vaches in the cowstalls did good business selling hot drinks whilst painting, macrame, carpentry, music and games continued. We also had two meetings - one to discuss future events for L.E. in Sussex and one to debate the merits of the Curriculum. It is all a satisfactory occasion - thanks to those who helped to make it so.

Helen Holland

6 ESSEX

The group continues to meet every three weeks or so. One visit was to a local museum, which despite bad weather, was well attended. Several families had made long journeys by public transport, and as well as two new members, there were several families whom we'd not seen for the past year or so, so it was nice to see so many people. We were the only people at the museum during our visit, and the usual peace and quiet was soon broken as we entered. Upstairs houses many birds and animals and the children soon headed for this area. They looked for the "biggest bird" and the "smallest bird" and generally enthused over the exhibits. One curator, obviously not accustomed to young children, stood casually reading a newspaper - his eyes peering over the top! However, the children were very well behaved and the rest of the staff seemed to enjoy our visit. One lady was quite entranced by Grace Willow, who having recently learned to walk was in her element up and down the corridors and stairways! Another member of staff, seeing some of the boys showing an interest in the swords, got one out so that they could look at it closely and hold it. He also showed the various medals and spoke about them. During a break in the rain we managed to go out in the grounds for our ritual game of hide and seek, and to let the children run off surplus energy before heading home.

Another visit was to the Aklowa African Heritage Centre near Bishops Stortford, Herts. I wrote to the Herts co-ordinator, and to a family near the centre, and invited them to meet us for the day. Elizabeth Sturges phoned saying she'd be there, and so we hoped for good weather, since most of the activities are outdoors. On arrival at the centre we were given a short talk about African culture, this was followed by a session of drum playing and African dance. This proved more amusing than artistic, but everyone enjoyed themselves and were quite hungry when we made our way over to the "village". Here we all helped with the cooking, and the smell of roasting peanuts whetted our appetites even more. Everyone enjoyed the African meal, many people asked for recipes and we finally finished the morning on the edge of a lagoon. Here, we could learn the art of canoeing in a traditional African craft. For safety, only those who could swim were allowed to go in the canoe, but the other children were quite happy just to watch, or went off to play. We decided to spend the rest of the afternoon at nearby Hatfield Forest, and how we should spend our time was soon decided! Somebody spotted tadpoles in the lake, and the children lost no time finding containers in which to catch them. It made a lovely picture, a long line of children, all face down and thoroughly engrossed. Some of the younger ones were rather enthusiastic and occasionally had to be restrained from actually climbing into the lake, but generally speaking the children behaved very sensibly and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. So ended a very pleasant day and we went our different ways, taking with us our tadpoles, as a reminder. Sandie Cottee

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The sun shone out of a clear blue sky, the lake glistened, the green woods beckoned, rabbits frolicked in a corner of the field. Sounds idyllic doesn't it? Unfortunately nobody came; but Erlend and I appreciated the peacefulness and beauty of the campsite and we would like to thank Jo and Vin West for all the hard work they put in.

Our afternoon meetings have gone on happening every few months in each others' homes: new members have come along to chat and we've been very pleased to meet some longstanding ones for the first time. We've also been having interesting letters from the Laurences, a local family who are E.O.ing in Norway for a year. (Ed.-see the letters pages)

Julie Webb

**NEWS FROM THE REGIONS - HAMPSHIRE - SCOTLAND - SOUTH-EAST
WALES - SUSSEX - BUCKINGHAMSHIRE - ESSEX**

HAMPSHIRE

At a meeting at the Queen Elizabeth Country Park on the 25th June (thank you to Julia Hallett for organising the barbecue, those who attended enjoyed themselves very much) it was decided by the majority of those E.O. members attending that with such a huge increase in membership over the last two years (from a dozen members to well over forty now) there must be a re-think as to our organisation. Julia Hallett felt that her role as co-ordinator had been outgrown and offered herself as Enquiries Secretary at local level. It was decided to start a newsletter to help solve our communication and co-ordinating problem at a local level. This newsletter was later named 'Wessex Exchange' and the first edition came out on August 1st. The idea is that it is not restricted to any one county but anyone who sends £2.00 for the initial 6 issues (bi-monthly) will have one sent to them. It will then be up to all of us to organise events, swap skills and resources and generally to communicate with other interested people in this part of the world. We hope that this local newsletter will complement the national newsletter and, like the national newsletter, we hope that each edition will be put together by a different family. If you would like to be added to the mailing list please send £2 to Les Mitchell Hynd, 55 Hursley Road, Chandler's Ford, Hampshire, SO5 2FS.

Other news: Patricia Wharton has decided to resign as co-ordinator for Hampshire as her son Colin is nearly 17. In a letter Julia Hallett sent to all members in Hampshire and Dorset following our meeting in June, she thanked Patricia on our behalf for all her work for Hampshire E.O. since moving to the area.

Pam Johnson volunteered to be the new Membership Secretary for Hampshire and Jean Parr who also kindly volunteered to help, is going to keep local supplies of posters, publications etc.

Christina Fancy volunteered to be the Membership Secretary for Dorset.
P.S. PLEASE - if anyone has any objections to anything that we propose, will they make their feelings known as we have no wish to upset anyone.

SCOTLAND

I know that news from Scotland is rather sparse, but we are all beavering away quietly. I think our main problem is isolation due to the distances between us. In Central Region we are hampered by a hostile LEA, and so some of us keep a low profile. At the moment John (my husband) and I are conducting some sort of correspondence with our LEA in an effort to get a grant for Laura's Wolsey Hall fees. I think the likelihood of us getting one is remote but we are trying anyway. Their policy seems to be not to answer until after the date we have stipulated by which we would like a reply, and then as briefly and unco-operatively as possible. Their last letter said "I refer to your letter dated 22nd April 1983 and would refer you to my letter dated 22nd April 1983 replying to your letters of 1st and 15th April 1983".

Robina (Pye) was invited along to a meeting of a group of ladies affiliated to the National Housewives Register to talk to them about EO, and I went along. It was an interesting evening. The women were sometimes quite hostile, but a surprising number of teachers who were there were sympathetic. One teacher was quite adamant that only in schools could you get the expertise you needed to teach children properly in any given subject. Robina (very bravely I thought), replied that in her view most teachers were teachers because they could think of

Mr Peter Parry, head of Ranworth Square School in Liverpool, told a head teacher's conference that there were many cases of intruders "bent on violence coming to schools, to cause physical harm to the head or teachers". He had been forced to rewrite his speech because the original has been destroyed by intruders.

Leaders of Britain's largest head teacher organisation said they would be in favour of the abolition of corporal punishment. "There must be other solutions" said Mr David Hart, general secretary. "We cannot be the only country in Europe which holds out against abolition."..... The European Commission of Human Rights is now faced with the prospect of considering at least 32 cases brought by British opponents of corporal punishment....

TALKING ABOUT SCHOOL...

"...My children only went to school to learn the Irish. In those days you couldn't get a decent job without the Irish, but I have no doubt that they could have survived on my tuition alone. Those early years with one's children are vital." (Maire Mullarney, author of ANYTHING SCHOOL CAN DO YOU CAN DO BETTER, published by Marion Boyars; talking in the OBSERVER magazine 11.9.83).

Remembering his East Anglian grammar school, where he was deeply unhappy and in his teacher's eyes a total failure, he was surprised to discover how little the system had changed. There was still the violence, official and unofficial, which he experienced then, and still the obsession with paper qualifications which had led one exasperated teacher to hold him up by the arm in front of the class and denounce him as a specimen "who would never be able to work in a bank." (Maureen O'Conner interviewing David Leland in the GUARDIAN, 28.7.83).

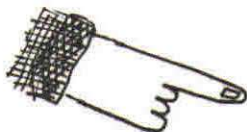
"We expect our children to be doing three and four step arithmetic by the time they are eighteen months and by the age of four they should be able to read from any book in any section of the library. And I mean any section of the adult library." (Director of publications for the Better Baby Institute, in TV TIMES, 22-28 October 83).



"We're straitjacketed by O and A level requirements - there's some scope for innovation within them but we've got to deliver the goods" (Head of Abbotsholme School)... "We're stuck in the straitjacket of exam performance"...we're increasingly forced to do things that are anti-educational" (Chris Evans, Countesthorpe school).... "Most parents are put in a position of extreme dilemma by the awful constraints that society now makes on schools" (Patrick Nobes, former head of science and now head of Weymouth Grammar School) - all from the TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT 16.9.83.

"I think they (schoolchildren) have too much to do in a scholastic way. Unless we are careful, we are robbing them of their childhood. I did not go to school and I had a lovely free childhood. I learnt to love all God's work, looking at the world and the sky...." (Catherine Bramwell Booth, granddaughter of the founder of the Salvation Army, who celebrated her 100th birthday this summer, interviewed in the TELEGRAPH, 18.7.83)

"Explain the truth of the matter as accurately as you can within the framework of his present understanding. Try, 'but every boy and girl in the whole country has to go to school, because the Queen says so'. (Childcare 'expert' Brenda Crowe, writing about first days at school in Woman's Realm, 10.9.83)



Computers:

Educationalists and computer manufacturers are worried because girls are not interested in computers and find data processing boring, reports the OBSERVER. Commented Peter Simple (TELEGRAPH 20.7.83) "the thought of all these gadget-crazed people being worried pleases me inordinately. The more worried they are, the better for the human race.".....Professor Seymour Papert from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, called the 'guru of childhood computing', addressed a British conference on computing in September. Children could now get all sorts of knowledge at a very early age, he said. But he warned: "The dependence of children on their parents and their siblings for knowledge is probably integral to their emotional and social development. Fooling about with that link is, I think, very, very dangerous...I think we could easily turn up a generation of psychotic children... parents with computers would see a chance for babysitting, manufacturers would see a vast market, some psychologists would condone it on the grounds that "The more they are stimulated the better"It is up to all of us to see that this force is used positively" (TIMES EDUCATIONAL 16.9.83)

Rebels:

Ruth Lawrence passed Physics, Grade A, and started her first term at St Hughes College, Oxford as an Open Scholar (GUARDIAN/TELEGRAPH etc. October 83)....A persistent truant whose parents had been fined for his non-attendance, had 'turned over a new leaf' following his move to another school (W SUSSEX COUNTY TIMES 7.10.83) His parents had been warned that if the boy did not go to school a care order would be issued.

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SUPPLEMENT of extracts from recent TIMES ED SUPPS brought to us by Bruce Cox!! No extra charge!

Teachers report that the employment situation is having a dispiriting and demotivating effect on children of average and below average ability....Dr. Walter Roy, Chairman of the N.U.T. Education Committee, claims that the education service is facing a new, dark age. In his book TEACHING UNDER ATTACK, he says that successive expenditure cuts have produced a depressing state of affairs in thousands of schools: tattered textbooks shared by more and more classes of children; shortages of essential equipment affecting the quality of teaching in all types of schools, worn-out furniture with no hope of replacement; shabby buildings in need of repair and redecoration, but still holding thousands of oversized classes....falling rolls and rising fees are hitting independent schools. The number of children at private schools dropped by 3,000 this year, slightly less than last year's drop. Fees rose 10% up to January 1983, twice the rise in prices.... Research has shown that in an average lesson boys received 70% of the teacher's attention and that most teachers admitted a preference for teaching boys. When boys needed help they tended to demand it or become disruptive, while girls tended to retire into sulky boredom....

EDUCATION THRO' THE PRESS

Edited by Sarah Guthrie with contributions from Janice Gwen, Helen Holland and others.

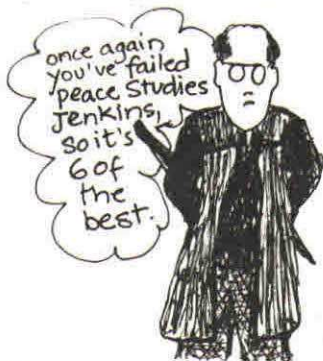
Quote of the month****

"The Romantic age is over in education. For us, it died in the confusion of last term."
(Maurice Ash, Chairman of Dartington Trust, talking in The TIMES, 16.9.83)

Schooling:

Academic institutes are "brilliantly designed to make people feel inadequate" said Prince Philip on a recent visit to Canada (TELEGRAPH 7.7.83). He said that schools neglect the artistic and emotional skills controlled by the right side of the brain.....Hypnosis sessions have improved the memory and confidence of a group of teenage pupils, some doing better in exams (TELEGRAPH 23.9.83)....Head teachers are often so poorly selected that millions of pounds are wasted - on average 10% of heads are 'duds' (TELEGRAPH 4.7.83)Birmingham City Council has been sued for negligence because a 13 year old gymnast was 'very inadequately prepared' for a somersault on a trampoline which broke her neck (TELEGRAPH 11.10.83)

....A nursery teacher and member of Teachers for Peace claimed that the good and peaceful climate of nursery schools is destroyed as the child moves up, and learns "moral lessons that are totally destructive" (TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT 23.9.83).... A child is beaten every 19 seconds in the schools of England and Wales, with mid-Glamorgan the 'beating capital' (TELEGRAPH 3.8.83)....The Government is to introduce legislation giving parents the right to opt out of having their child physically punished (TELEGRAPH 21.7.83). STOPP says the new plan is 'barmy'.....Comprehensives should equip children for life by bringing in 'fringe' subjects such as politics and health education, an educational conference heard (TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT, Sept 1983)....a report from the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum in Scotland claimed that fringe subjects are overcrowding school timetables (TELEGRAPH 7.9.83)the school attended by two of the Beatles has been criticised by Inspectors for its 'useless' music department (TELEGRAPH 21.7.83)



TV:

BBC Childrens TV was to "concentrate on laughs" this autumn, says its head (TELEGRAPH 8.9.83)....BBC TV is to cut out needless screen violence, following a review which admits that "...especially the immature and the mentally unstable may imitate what they see..." (Head of BBC TV Documentary features, OBSERVER 25.9.83)

EDITORIAL

1

Recent Editors of the E.O. Newsletter have been restricted to 28-page issues due to E.O.'s financial problems. Consequently much news and many articles have had to be held over. Now we are back to a 40-page edition and this issue contains news and comments from the regions and from other E.O. sources covering the past six months. Not 'stale news', we hope, but a lively 6-months' journal of E.O. events, activities, opinions and experiments.

We feel that actual accounts of E.O. in practice, in families and larger groupings, should form the central content of the Newsletter, and this has been our chief editorial criterion.

An important innovation in this issue is Jean Lovius' introduction of an Agony Column. Home education is not without its problems, and sometimes E.O. parents dare not admit this for fear of calling into question the whole business of deschooling, considered by many to be wayward, perverse downright wicked. Since 'flexischooling' is still not much more than a gleam in Roland Meighan's eye, we have come to regard school and E.O. in terms of packages. We ask ourselves 'Does the total package of school, good-and-bad, carry with it more or fewer problems for our children than the total package of deschooling?' In our case, so far, the problems of schooling have always seemed heavier in every way. Let the Newsletter be a place where the genuine problems of home education can be aired, discussed, even solved - without for one moment obscuring the fact that for most E.O.ers deschooling spells a glorious freedom which is well worth a few minor drawbacks.

Finally, although we are the Editors of this issue, and as such bear the responsibility for the choice of contents and the layout, most of the typing - the real hard graft - has been done impeccably by Vicki Willow, with several pages also by Maureen Browning. Without them we could not have produced this Newsletter.

EDITORS OF THIS ISSUE - ALAN & HAZEL CLAWLEY, BIRMINGHAM

Hazel, 43, unpaid full-time otherwise educator since November 1979 when Jonathan, now 11, left school - the local R.C. Junior and Infants - at the age of 7. Tiggy, now 8, made her mind up on otherwise education at age 5. Alan, 39, brings in a below-average income by working for the City Council in the Urban Renewal and Housing section. Both parents have been through the education mill, Hazel emerging as a Batchelor of Divinity and post-graduate of L.S.E., Alan not quite emerging as a fully-fledged architect and local planner. The inner city has been our home since we met in 1972, as well as the setting for most of our work, play and voluntary activities. Our present home in Small Heath, newly built on land once crowded with Victorian slums, is owned by a Tenants' Co-operative of which we are members. We all share (more or less) a liking for the countryside, especially mountains, local politics and community action, Return of the Jedi, Paul Simon, cats, books and Spiderman. Hazel has been West Midlands E.O. Co-ordinator for the past two years.

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COVER PICTURE BASED ON EXCEL COMPUTER GRAPHIC DESIGN BY JONATHAN CLAWLEY.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of E.O. as a whole.

NEXT EDITOR

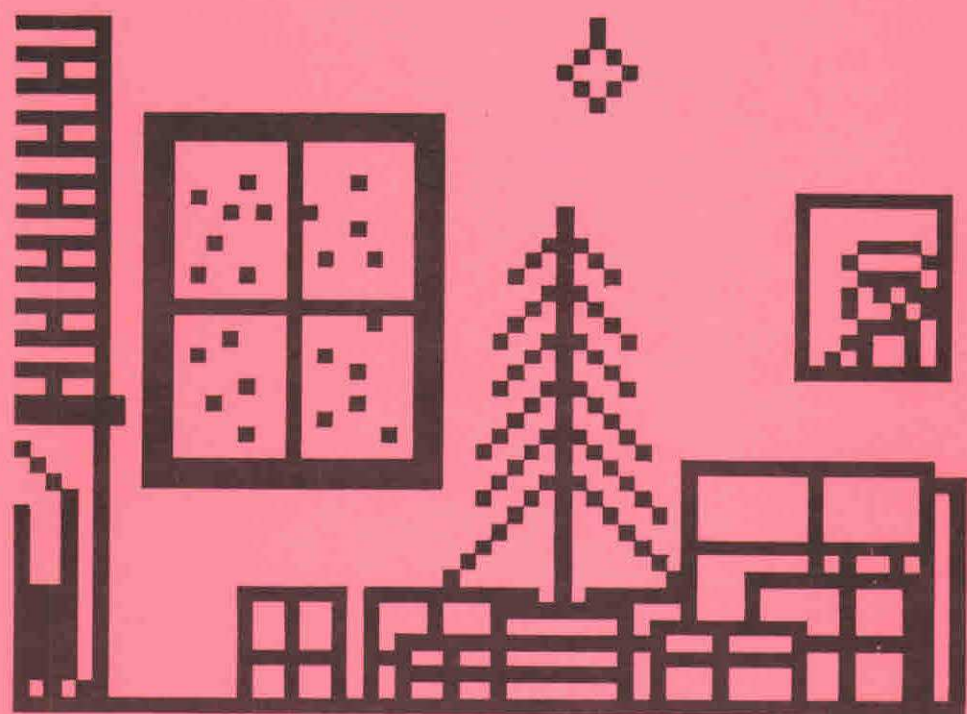
The next issue (February) is to be edited by Heidron Warton, Little Wylties, Teaks Lane, Cuckfield, West Sussex, RH17 5JB. Please send contributions to this address by January 6th. All material intended as such should be clearly marked 'for publication'.

E.O. CORE GROUP & GENERAL MEETING

The next Core Group and General Meeting will be on February 25th and 26th at the Y.M.C.A. in Marmion Road, Hove, Sussex. It's got excellent facilities (gym, etc.) and Sussex members look forward to providing a feast of activities for children and adults.

Those in the area who can offer accommodation and those from outside who would like to stay with a local family for the week-end please get in touch (enclosing s.a.e.) with Maxine Toff at 50 Sackville Gardens, Hove.

EDUCATION OTHERWISE



DECEMBER 1982

NEWS-LETTER-02

MONKTON WYLDE COURT. We have organised a Spring Programme of courses and workshops, some of which we thought might be of interest to E.O. members. The following is not the complete programme and for further details please contact us at Monkton Wyld Court, Charmouth, Dorset. Tel Charmouth 60742.

March 2-9: Children and Parents Week: come and sample the delights of sharing in the life of a rural community.

March 26-April 1: A Week for Parents and Mentally-Handicapped Children.

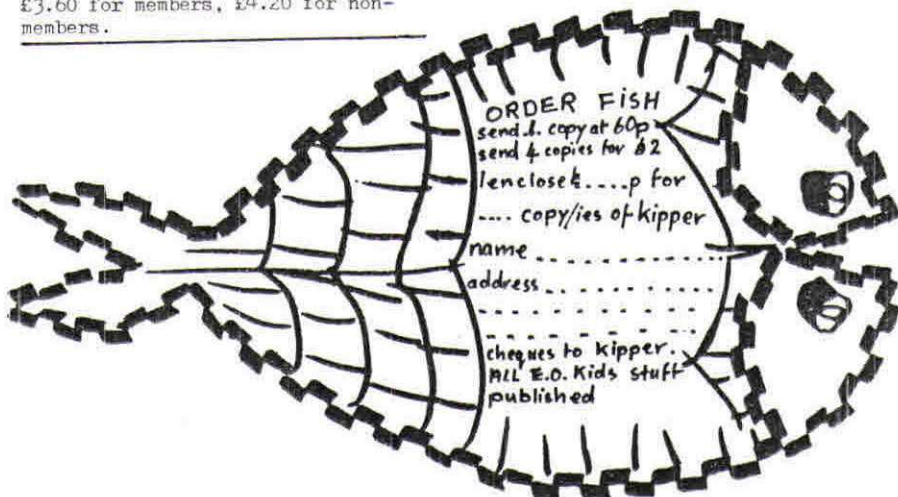
Feb. 17-24 and March 11-16: Two weeks of 'Alternatives': These weeks are designed to give people the opportunity to meet others interested in alternative education and community living, discuss their ideas and sample a whole range of activities within the context of the community here. March 11-16 is for adults only. But Feb. 17-24 (the week of half term) is for families and may, therefore, be of particular interest to E.O. members. - David Donaldson.

GROWING WITHOUT SCHOOLING 31-36 available from Midge Whitelegg, 53, Derwent Road, Lancaster LA1 3ES. £3.60 for members, £4.20 for non-members.

LETTERBOX LIBRARY is a new non-sexist childrens book club. We issue quarterly catalogues illustrated in full colour. There are up to 20 titles, fully described, in each, ranging from picture books for the very young to fiction for teenagers. There are good discounts on hard cover books and a selection of cheap paperbacks.

The books show resourceful, independent females and caring, unaggressive males, reflect multi-ethnic societies and the variety of family settings and environments in which children live. Not all are completely free of stereotyping, but all are a step in the right direction. Our selections are well written and illustrated. Details from Gillian Harris and Iven Spencer, 42 Newick Road, London E5 0RR. Tel. 01-985 2884.

EDUCATING FOR HARMONY AND WHOLENESS presented by Universal Education Association at Burgh House, New End Square, London NW3. Sat. 3rd December '83 (note change of date). Registration and enquiries to: Diana Haydon, 2 Langton Street, London SW10. ph. 351 1811.





EDUCATION OTHERWISE
PRESENTS

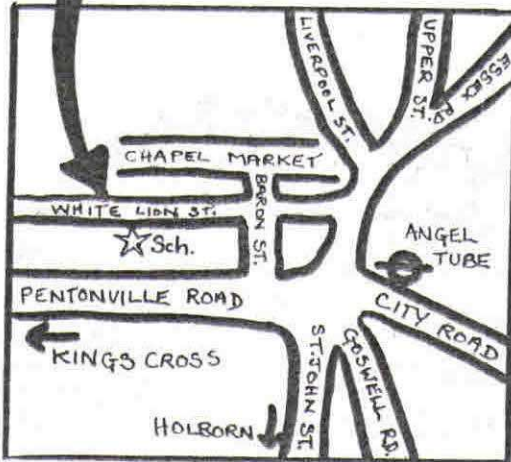
CHRISTMAS PARTY

★ **TIME** : 17th. DECEMBER 2pm-5pm.

★ **PLACE** : WHITE LION YOUTH CENTRE,

WHITE LION ST., LONDON, N.1.

★ **QUERIES** : 01-254 1328



★ **BUSES** (277, 4, 171, 279, 19, 38, 73, 30, 43, 104, 214)
AND TUBE GO TO THE ANGEL

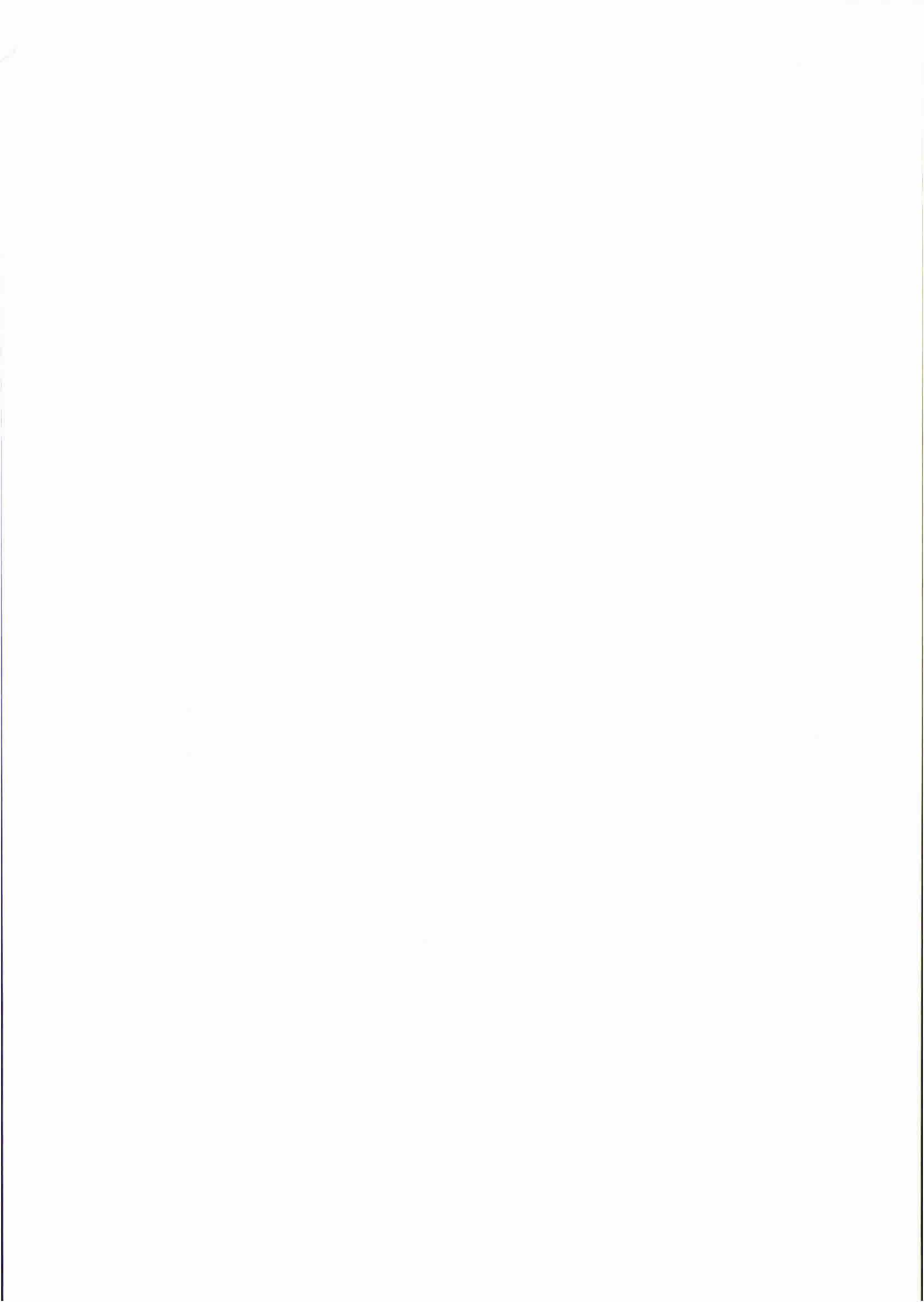
★ **TICKETS**: AT THE DOOR
£1.50 per child
ADULTS FREE

★ **PLEASE BRING FOOD**: DRINKS WILL BE AVAILABLE

★ **PLEASE BRING SMALL NAMED PRESENT/S** FOR YOUR CHILD/REN
TO GO IN SANTA'S SACK

★ **FANCY DRESS WELCOME** (SMALL PRIZE)







LETTERS ...

Dear Editor,

In his article 'The Reason Why' (October issue) A.M. Nimmo accounts for the contemporary educational scene as being the fault of

- 1) Educational psychologists, especially PIAGET.
- 2) Sociologists
- 3) Primary school teachers.

He should note that

- 1) The educational system was not set up be any of these groups.
- 2) Piaget is heavily critiqued and

does not constitute an iron law of educational practice.

3) Sociologists of Education pose questions of the educational system and its processes which is exactly what any E.O. supporter would want and has done.

4) Primary school teachers however enlightened are constrained by the sheer bureaucratic logistics of Primary Schooling, not helped by recent Government policies. Yet such constraint is far less than any of their foreign counterparts that I have met.

The danger of E.O. is the senseless ridiculing of schooling and professional teacher education. For some children schooling is the only haven of consistent, humane stimulation that they experience. Not every child would do better at home.

Mr. Nimmo is as guilty of over-generalisation as those he tries to debunk in the educational system, and those who ridicule E.O. and the excellent job it does for some children.

Doug Springate
Parent of two E.O. members
Senior Lecturer in Education

74 Birkbeck Road
Sidcup
Kent

25 Rathcoole Avenue,
London N8 9LY

October 28, 1983

Dear Editors,

I am hoping there may be space in the EO newsletter to introduce a group project initiated by an EO family and called the Green Children. Our name comes from the folk tale of the green children who appeared in England and other parts of the world several hundred years ago. Our initial aim is to bring into being a publication through which children can express and share their feelings about nuclear weapons and all the other environmental issues which affect their world and about which we know they feel strongly.



LETTERS ...

What we need to do at the moment is contact children via their parents, teachers etc. and ask them to contribute material in the form of stories, pictures, cartoons, jokes, poems or just their thoughts about anything that concerns them. When we have enough material we shall proceed to the next step which will be to find out how one goes about getting things into print. As we are unfunded we have to ask that anyone who sends us material and wanting acknowledgment please send an SAE.

Our address is:
The Green Children,
c/o 25, Rathcoole Avenue,
LONDON N8 9LY

With Best Wishes,
Genevieve Bridgeman

Mr. & Mrs. G. Thomson,
'Jesus Saves',
Burntisland,
Scotland
KY3 0ES

14 October 1983

Hi there!

P. 13, Oct. E.O. Newsletter. We have 6 kids, 3 at school, one E.O. and 2 not "school" age yet. We have endless battles with the High School here and are seriously considering de-schooling Timothy (almost 13 years). However, we realise our inadequacies to "educate" ourselves. Personally, I'd de-school them all, but my hubby keeps hoping the system will change and so the kids remain in the 'school mould' meantime.

We were thrilled to read in the Press of Nick Everdell! GREAT. We'd gladly be available for any publicity that E.O. may get on our part (tho' any means). We've not deschooled (yet), but Nathanael (who was 6 years yesterday) is technically P2 and doing well. Hopefully he won't ever

need to see the inside of a school and nor will our other two as they'll not be enrolled either. SO - over to you. Send us the media-men and we'll EO them all!! As far as I'm concerned it's time we EO'ers were seen by the nation and get the Britons tuned in to real education.

By the way! There are 19 schools in Britain that are run by Christians using A.C.E. Stuff (Accelerated Christian Education). This method gives kids individual attention (in school) and each kid works at their own pace. It's not teacher/pupil set up. There's an adult for a class, but the kids basically learn themselves and the adult goes from kid to kid assisting them.

Look forward to hearing from you (and the media!)
Yours in Jesus, Fiz Thomson

Dear EO,

We are one of your overseas families. We would be happy to have visits from EO families and/or children.

Keep up the good work. I was lucky enough to attend a John Holt lecture recently which was inspiring. His whole theme seems to be let the kids be kids, do what they want to when they want to and definitely no pressure of any sort.

I'm trying to bring Rupert up this way but at age 6 am finding him overly demanding for friends. I do my utmost to satisfy his requests, but am now extremely worried as we are moving again very shortly, and he will be losing his very best buddy. Have other parents experienced this problem and have they solved it? And at what age does this strong desire for constant company diminish? Thanks for any advice.

Best Wishes,
Gabrielle Harwood,
c/o 2192 Crestview Drive,
Laguna Beach,
California 92651
U.S.A.

24 LETTERS ...

72 Beaconsfield Villas,
BRIGHTON
BN1 6HE
(0273) 561982

15 October 1983

Dear Editor,

I was rather upset to read in the last newsletter the piece "Beware" by Catherine Neale (anonymously). It obviously referred to me and was recognised as such by several people. Unfortunately it only told a part of the truth. First, Rachel Neale is at school and although at first I thought she would be E.O. it turned out that Catherine would be using part of her capital to send Rachel to boarding school. Second, after staying with me (free) Catherine wrote that she would like to move to Brighton but didn't want to live communally and could I find her a 2-bedroom flat within 2 weeks. This I did, which wasn't easy. When I phoned Catherine and told her that I had found a flat (within her price range) she said that she couldn't afford it and could she live in my house while she found something cheaper. I said yes but as she was not going to be educating Rachel at home she could pay just like any other lodger. First she said she wanted a double room which I said would be £31 p.w. This included use of kitchen, bathroom, lounge, dining room and all bills except food. Then she said she wanted another room because she didn't want to share with Rachel. I only had one single room empty, so I offered her the double room and single room for £48 p.w. which is £6 less than I usually let them for. Up to that point our communication had been friendly. Catherine declined the two rooms and continued to advertise in the Brighton paper for a flat, obviously without success. Then, out of the blue, I had a fairly angry letter from her and a newspaper cutting about

exploitative landlords. This didn't bother me because I charge a very reasonable rent for Brighton but the piece in the newsletter does bother me. I think it is wrong for a personal attack to be printed without even contacting me to hear my side of the story.

Finally, thank you to Colin and Anne Room for writing (entirely unsolicited) to support me. I quote from their letter, "We do hope this misguided article (Beware) wasn't aimed at you and if it was we would be perfectly prepared to put pen to paper in recognition of our very pleasant dealings with you".

I enclose copies of letters from Catherine Neale to me for the editor to read.

Linda Pilgrim

25 Common Lane
Hemingford Abbots
Cams. PE18 9AN
St. Ives 63130

27th Oct. 1983

I would like to take exception to the editorial in the last newsletter. The hard unpaid work put in by the same few members is regarded as a waste of time and called 'organisational trappings'. Those families who indulge in publicity in order to publicise EO are, it appears, ego tripping as the editorial accuses them of 'starlike activities'.

The editorial goes on 'all this and much more is fair exchange for' being members of EO. It must be very encouraging for our workers and the publicists to know that they are to be tolerated and endured as just another of life's nasty afflictions.

Nigel Everdell

346 Wootton Road
Kings Lynn
Norfolk
PE30 3ET

Other EO members may like to know that Hestair Hopes is a large

LETTERS ...

educational supplier, serving schools and playgroups throughout the country. They are happy to send their large and comprehensive catalogue free on request and arrangements have been made to offer a cash card, representing a 20% discount to any EO members. Carriage on any items ordered is also free.

For anyone living near Oldham, their showroom is fun to go to, as the children can try out the "totally soft play environment" apparatus while you may find bargains amongst the discontinued lines etc. and look in the large educational bookshop.

The address to which requests should be sent is:- Susan Hartley,
The Marketing Dept.,
Hestair Hope Ltd.,
St. Philips Drive,
Royton, OLDHAM
OL2 6AG

It may also be of interest to those who do not have bookshops within reach that Usborne now sell books to homes - details from:

Usborne Books at Home,
221a Banbury Road,
OXFORD OX2 7HQ

Yours, Jenny Outred



We are an EO family with two deschooled children, Naomi 5 and Julien 7. Our home is at 'The Boot, Chearsley, Bucks, but as you can see, we are in Norway for a while. Arrived here in April and plan to stay a year or so. Your newsletter is reaching us safely via The Boot.

Schooling is compulsory here in Norway and there are hardly any private schools available. The State system seems to be moaned about a lot by parents. We don't like what they seem to be producing, either. But as guests here we, naturally, criticize amongst 'good' friends only and in general keep very quiet about what we are doing in the hope of "getting away" with it by being foreigners. Should we encounter problems about schooling Julien ourselves, that would be the time to head off home again.

Why I'm writing is this. I have never liked the 'logo' adopted by E.O. I find it boring and somewhat aggressive. I can't see it as an eye-catcher or appealing. Since joining E.O. I've been trying to be constructive about that criticism and find something to "put forward" in it's place.

Dear Editor,

Although it shouldn't be necessary I think E.O. requires another guideline for inclusion in the Guidelines for Newsletter Editors: No spiteful or disparaging comments allowed in the Editorial.

JANET EVERDELL
25 Common Lane
Hemingford Abbots
Cambs.
PE 18 9AN

Dear E.O.,

We are a community called Land and Natural Development. Our aim is to live off the land to the highest degree possible. People have to a large extent lost their natural contact with nature to the detriment of their physical, emotional and mental health.

We are looking for new members so if you are interested please send a stamped addressed envelope.

LAND AND NATURAL DEVELOPMENT
Highwood Hill
Roman Bank
Rushy
Church Stretton
Salop.
Tel. Longville 342.

Skogbrynet 13E
OSLO 2 Norway

26 LETTERS ...

Here in Scandinavia the Heart is used a lot (on fabrics, loo paper etc.) as a symbol of love and generosity. The symbol I've cut out and pasted at the top of the letter is being used in a local political campaign whose aim is to improve 'the lot' of children i.e. build more playgroups and create 'courses' on parentcraft etc.

The buses here in Oslo have a similar 'logo' on their back windscreens. It's a large red heart. Inside it are two 'matchstick' children holding a teddybear between them. Underneath is the sentence 'Children are our responsibility.'

I'd love to know whether other members are happy with the present logo, and whether what I've put forward is of any interest - to be built on. It seems a 'gentler' alternative. The present logo just seems to associate us too much with fighting the schools. I feel I just want to protect my children, take responsibility for them, surround them with love. Hopefully that 'generosity' of spirit radiates and infects others. So, that is why I find the symbol enclosed says what I feel.

Yours sincerely,

I.J. Lawrence

45 Rossett Road,
Crosby, Liverpool
L23 3AN

14th October 1983

Dear E.O.,

At the beginning of this year, you printed a story about our daughter Jane. She had been school phobic for several months and was becoming almost suicidal, all the 'professional' help that was offered to her at that time was designed towards forcing her to return to school, we were threatened with court action several times but we stuck it out and she never returned.

She is 17 this month and the change in her is quite remarkable. She is more relaxed and happy than she ever was at school. She is taking O-levels through the National Extension College and enjoying every minute of it.

We are now trying to de-school Robert who is 12 years old and has been at the local Comp. for one year. We feel more confident now to tackle the L.E.A. and have informed them of our decision. They are insisting on 'qualified teachers', 'set time tables', '4 hours minimum per day' etc. etc. but we refuse to be intimidated by them and intend to see it through no matter what.

Two weeks ago we had a phone call from a parent of a teenage girl who was school refusing, she had rung an EO family in Blackpool, they had moved to Cornwall, so she rang them there, they gave her the number of a family in Lancaster who gave her a number in Liverpool and she was then given our number in Crosby. We live only 4 miles away! This lady needed an awful lot of support, having already been prosecuted and fined last January for non school attendance. Her daughter is on tranquilisers from the doctor, she is so depressed and, like our daughter, she has threatened suicide. The L.E.A. advisor "dropped" in on her yesterday and has broken all the confidence that we have given her over the last two weeks.

He says QUOTE:

1. The work she is doing is not acceptable.
2. She (The Mum) has a young baby and cannot cope with him while trying to teach her daughter at home. (This is not true as the mum is quite capable)
3. Qualified teachers must be used.
4. He would be returning next week with an E.W.O. and she must, by law, allow them in.

LETTERS ...

This poor woman was so distressed when she rang us last night, we told her to see the L.E.A. by appointment only and to ring us, and we'll be there with her. We also advised her to see a solicitor as the advisor implied that a "care order" was not unusual in cases like this!

We are only able to offer her help and support because of all the help we had from E.O. last year with Jane. The sad thing is that she knew nothing about us in January when maybe we could have kept it out of court.

How can we help families like this to find out where they can get the necessary information? We don't want to encourage parents to take their children out of school, merely to help those that do. Any ideas?

Yours sincerely, Ann Greenop (tel; 051 931 4747)

Innisfree Island,
Burtonport,
Co. Donegal,
Eire.

My children, Robert aged 7 and Kirsten aged 9 have now been de-schooled for an academic year partly through choice and partly through necessity. Here there is no school other than one a mile away over a stretch of sea which is sometimes uncrossable. Before coming here my children enjoyed school but were often bored as they learnt quickly and had to wait for others to catch up. Additionally I felt frustrated when government cut-backs meant that the school library was reduced, tracing-paper and many other art/craft materials were no longer available and parents were asked to buy books. I helped voluntarily at the school and felt frustrated myself when each child was given an allotted five minutes reading aloud time when many needed much more for any real interest to be developed. Thirty or more children to one teacher plus one assistant is far too many for any child to achieve anything near his/her potential.

My children always brought their reading books and project work home and we shared many hobbies but their school-work was forced to be confined to the limits of their peer groups which was often frustrating.

Now, after initial difficulty in adjusting, we do some mathematics and english every day (mainly secondary school level) and we go really into depth. If we can't understand why something is done a certain way we don't just leave it at that, instead we puzzle out why so that we understand, rather than know only 'parrot fashion rules'. The rest of the time we devote to craft, nature-study, history, geography, science, games. Kirsten and Robert need little sleep which is as well as our days often go on till 11 p.m. We have no tv but we have no spare time anyway. We listen to the radio a lot and get involved in local issues and I feel as Irish as the Irish though I'm English by birth. We have many Irish friends, a french friend, a few german friends and a Scottish one.

Since coming here we have learnt how to make lobster pots, handle a boat, garden, do household repairs, i.e. glass-cutting, cementing, turf-cutting, how to bake bread without an oven, make cakes in a frying-pan, cope without electricity. In other words we have learnt how to do what many academics (my former self included) never do - learnt to use common sense and ingenuity to tackle life. This past year has been the hardest of our lives but certainly the most rewarding as we are all so much wiser and more self-confident than in the past. As a result our lives are so rich and full that we feel, rather than 'drop-outs from society' we are very much a vital part of it as local people, shop-keepers, publicans etc. all find time to chat to us and make us feel very welcome.

Katherine Holmgren

Now Mrs G even though
 Sonny Jim here
 doesn't go to school, I
 don't see why he
 shouldn't
 have a free
 trial of our
 home
 computer....

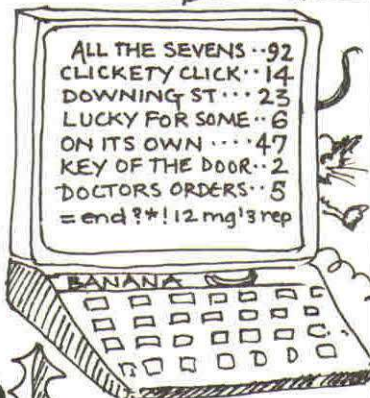
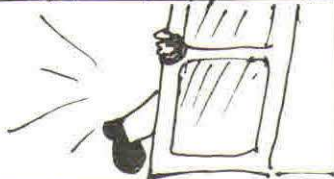


fun for all the
 family and a
 LEARNING EXPERIENCE
 even on CHRISTMAS DAY



OK son, you can get
 stuck in to a nice
 game of
 BINGO....

READY?



ALL THE SEVENS .. 92
 CLICKETY CLICK .. 14
 DOWNING ST ... 23
 LUCKY FOR SOME .. 6
 ON ITS OWN ... 4.7
 KEY OF THE DOOR .. 2
 DOCTORS ORDERS .. 5
 = end ?*! 12 mg's rep

EDUCATING ARCHIE at CHRISTMAS

— by SEG —

BOOKS



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FLORIS BOOKS (21 Napier St., Edinburgh) have published a book all about Advent called ADVENT FOR CHILDREN (£3.95), about making different kinds of Advent calendars, transparencies, stars and all the exciting ideas that make the time leading up to Christmas truly satisfying in itself. - Sarah Guthrie.



HOW TO BE KIND by Joyce Lambert. The Handbook of the Kindness Club. Teaches reverence for life. Age 6-12. Stories, songs quizzes etc. for 12 meetings. £2.50

KINDNESS COLORING BOOK by Charlotte B. Montgomery; pictures by Hope Sawyer Buyukmihci. Animals to color, and each with a little harmlessness message. Age 3-9 £1.50

"WE'RE VEGETARIAN TOO!" by Val Freeman; pictures by Charles W. J. Smith. Official North American Vegetarian Society coloring book of some of the North American natural vegetarian animals; gentle vegetarian message. Age 5-9 35c or £3 per dozen

MUCH ADO ABOUT ALDO by Johanna Hurwitz. Reaction to a classroom experiment makes a veggie of a little boy. Nicely done; a good gift for a child. Hard cover. £7.50

THE WHALE FRIENDS

A Greenpeace coloring storybook with anti-whaling theme and verse. £2.95
Order from NORTH AMERICAN VEGETARIAN SOCIETY, P.O. Box 72, Dolgeville NY 13329
IMPROVE YOUR MIND, BODY and WAY OF LIFE WITH THE BEST

ORDER BY MAIL - Please add £ postage/handling on book orders under £5. All orders £5 or more are sent postpaid.
Allow 2 to 3 months delivery time in Britain.

I can personally recommend the first three books although the Kindness Colouring Book contains animals only seen in zoos in Britain e.g. beavers. Barclays have the cheapest money orders, £1.00 per order.

Frances Howard

THE LIVE CLASSROOM

George Isaacs Brown (ed.)

A book many E.O. people may have read, now sadly out of print, concerning CONFLUENT EDUCATION. The details would be difficult to explain, but basically this is an approach to education based on Gestalt and Psycho-synthesis, about educating feelings as well as the intellect: balancing cognitive and affective learning. In Confluent Education the self is seen as a legitimate subject for learning (though not just in a formal or abstract way) and teachers must be learners as much as their students.

The emphasis on awareness and response-ability (responsibility for oneself), make this theory of education one that many E.O. people will find interesting and useful.

Work on developing Confluent Education continues, largely in the US of A, and this book deserves reprinting. If anyone has a copy they would be prepared to part with - name your price!

Evelyn Marsh

MEMORIES OF SUMMER - impressions of the E.O. Week in Wales.

We came from all over the country, all ages and backgrounds, but for one reason - the education of our children!...Many of the children had already been deschooled, but other parents needed support. The week's events, outings and workshops ranged from computer and calculator games to drama and following your family tree. The first event of the week was to fold all those raffle tickets!...We all watched David Leland's play about a family who were prosecuted for educating their children at home. This started off very well, but the ending left us cold, although it upset quite a few present...

It all added up to a really enjoyable week.

However, as this was the first E.O. week, several problems occurred, and here are a few suggestions for future E.O. weeks:-

1. Keep E.O. activities separate from other organisations unless they come as informal activities and take second place.
2. Go into a huddle soon after arrival and work out a time table (to suit as many as possible) for the various workshops and activities.
3. Some of the children (ours included) seemed more interested in playing than in attending workshops. More parental encouragement and participation needed!

Can we have another E.O. week next year, please? Lance and Sue Nixon

After lunch on Tuesday, some adults played with the younger children, games like "grannies footsteps", "what's the time Mr. Wolf" etc. A group of musicians arrived and played accordions and we all danced together outside. (All ages took part - from 3 months to 60 years). The musicians stayed for supper and their children joined in with the puppet-making. On Wednesday we all met at the Ffestiniog Pottery and Adrian, the owner, gave all the children a chance to "throw a pot". It was obvious that the children enjoyed it, and Adrian will fire all the efforts and have them sent on to us. Some people visited the Slate Quarries, as we were in that area. Most people enjoyed seeing the huge caverns, although some people were disappointed. Dave took Eleanor round the shops, while I stayed with Phillip and played with Adrian's daughters, Molly and Maris. The house was very child-centred with colourful paintings, a wooden medieval-style wendy house (made by their mother), a swing hanging from a beam, lots of toys, and a chance to bounce on the beds. The E. O., children certainly had a lovely day. In the evening there was a maths workshop, which had lots of ideas for children's maths games...

It was a happy eventful holiday and quite a few children were reluctant to leave. It was lovely to see such a variety of age groups playing together so enthusiastically. How nice it was to experience a real social gathering which embraces three generations. The food was fresh, varied, mainly vegetarian and delicious, all cooked by E.O. ers on a daily rota basis.

The holiday was organised by Caroline Grant who lives near the Centre. She also has a lively 2 year old and massive repairs to do to her cottage, so many thanks go to her for giving us all an unforgettablely happy holiday.

Pam Johnson

The children's comments:

I enjoyed meeting the other children and the pottery. (Naomi Nixon, aged 10)
 I enjoyed playing with Ali and making a par cark - sorry, car park - with Jack. (Noah Nixon, aged 4)

NEWS & VIEWS

THRO' CENTRAL OFFICE - JANET EVERDELL

In July '82 I took over as Enquiries Secretary from Di Cox and things were very quiet indeed. I had very little to do as most of the enquiries went to 18 Eynham Road or the Burntlands. Now the story is a very different and exciting one for me and one that I feel should be shared with all the membership.

Those who have read the minutes of the last two Core Group meetings will be aware that my home address is now E.O. central office and for the six months from February to August I did the Membership Secretary work. These changes have made me aware just how alive and kicking our organisation is and therefore I am anxious to share the knowledge with the rest of the members.

Once we were into calm waters following the instant resignation of the Harrisons, and the time taken to do the Membership Secretary job was clearly not worth regionalising, I decided to offer it to someone else. The very first person I mentioned this to said he would like to take it over. So, with the approval of the Core Group, Bruce and Christine Wallace relieved me of the enrolling task. This important change did get a mention of sorts on the bottom of page 19 (or was it 79?) of the August Newsletter - more about that later - and I am very pleased to report that everything is still running smoothly on that front.

In the first three weeks of August we have received over 100 enquiries. Many of these were prompted by a 'Daily Express' E.O. success story featuring the Everdell and Wallace families. However, the bulk of enquiries are still coming to us through the many agencies and directories that carry our address.

The newspaper article did create more interest from the media with three T.V. companies and many local papers asking for names of E.O. families and co-ordinators in their areas so I hope there will be some knock on from these.

Two members have sent in copies of articles from local newspapers reporting E.O. families practising home education and John Elenor has been successful in getting us into the national press. Joan Hoare and Ann Wilton-Jones wrote pieces on home education for Christian Initiatives in Community Education.

When the Core Group vetoed the Treasurer's suggestion that we miss a Newsletter to help funds I was greatly relieved as I am often told that it gives members a much needed contact and confidence. But when it finally arrived in August I wish we had missed it!!! Now we have it and I've learned to live with it - I could not be consoled by its cheap cost to produce - hoping against hope that no other editor will ever be satisfied with such an illegible, thrown together, misspelt and inaccurate issue again. Others have voiced similar opinions via phone or letter. One member declared it a right b---s up; another thought he'd received a smaller edition of Kipper; a third wanted to know why Central Address was in Wester Ross and where was it anyway? It is surely regrettable that we lowered the standard just as firms like Wolsey Hall were pre-

32 NEWS & VIEWS...

pared to advertise with us; more so when I know that they were shown the February issue as an example of our usual standard!! The one thing we need - like it or not - in order to impress L.E.A.s is an image of high standards and organisational ability. There are now many hours of extra work involved, for the next two months, putting right all the gobbledegook on the back pages which could have been avoided had the editor concerned bothered to read the minutes.

An Edinburgh film maker rang me two weeks ago (an August Sunday morning during preparations for lunch) and voiced the idea of making an hour long film about 'ordinary' E.O. families. For him ordinary means not trendy, not rich but folk just doing a mundane job to earn their living whilst educating their children at home. I made encouraging noises and told him about the recent screening of David Leland's film for Central T.V. 'Flying Into The Wind'. For those who missed it it was the loosely based story of the Harrison family. I personally welcome the idea of the majority of E.O. members, who do not have any legal hassle, being represented for a change. One member told me if she had seen the film (in which a child who cannot read is forced back into school) she would never have fought her L.E.A. However she did fight, was taken to court and won the right to keep her daughter at home. The film did not bring us many enquiries (about a dozen) despite the fact that Central issued an information pack on home education.

We are now getting more enquiries about setting up E.O. group learning situations. I refer them to the White Lion Street School booklet 'How to Set Up A Free School'. This is a healthy development and will help with the criticism of social isolation I get so tired of hearing.

Another healthy development is the partial devolution of Hampshire's members. (See 'News from the Regions' - Ed.) Let's hope they find time to write up their experiences for the rest of us in the Newsletter.

'Living' magazine are doing a two and a half thousand word article with pictures of E.O. children and families in their November issue so look out for it on supermarket counters. It has a threequarters of a million circulation and we still get mentions of it from enquirers although they haven't done anything on E.O. for over two years.

Finally I'd like to suggest a new column for the Newsletter based on a similar one in that erudite publication 'The Listener'. Theirs is called Out Takes and although it is humorous I thought we could do a similar thing for you (although not necessarily humorous) based on statements (to remain anonymous) made in the many letters and membership form questionnaires we receive. I have called it E.O. OUT TAKES, until someone comes up with a better title. Hope you enjoy this month's selection, if enjoy is the right word to use!! Contributions for consideration welcome from all other members.

Would the previous Editor (and the Editors of 'Kipper'!) like to reply? - Eds.



” E.O. OUT-TAKES ”

Despite the fact she could already read and write my daughter was made to trace over T's until she was bored stiff. But because they were untidy at the bottom of the page she was not allowed to go on to the U's.

Our daughter started school in January '83 able to read well and write well for her age, only to be told to trace over words written by Miss and not to read.

She is learning to conform nicely. (From a school report)

...unless it is within my capabilities to bring up a child outside the school environment, then I feel I will have to forbear having children. I do know that I certainly do not want a child of mine going through state education.

But surely bullying is part of growing up? (B.B.C. Radio Cambridgeshire presenter to Nick Everdell)

Many people will think you're a crank. (B.B.C. Radio One Newsbeat presenter to Janet Everdell)

”

We had simultaneously thought of a similar idea, to be called 'E.O. ONE-LINERS'. Here are a couple extracted from a phone conversation with the mother of an 11-year-old E.O.er. - Editors.

He's learnt most of his computer-programming at Dixon's and Curry's.

Meeting other children? A bike solved the problem.

E.O IN LITERATURE — VICKI WILLOW

Willie was a good deal more than 9 years of age before he could read a single word. It was not that he was stupid, as we shall soon see, but that he had not learned the good of reading, and therefore had not been taught to read; and his father had unusual ideas about how he ought to be educated. He said he would no more think of making Willie learn to read before he wished to be taught than he would make him eat if he wasn't hungry. The gift of reading, he said, was too good a thing to give him before he wished to have it, or knew the value of it. "Would you give him a watch," he would say, "before he cares to know whether the sun rises in the east or the west, or at what hour dinner will be ready?"

From "Watta-Percha Willie" by George MacDonald.

EDUCATION OTHERWISE IN THE 1920'S

VERA BOYLE

I was born 1914. In 1915 my parents went abroad to Italy and later to France. My father followed various professions, at the time of my birth he was running a tutoring establishment in Norfolk, he had about six resident students he was coaching for university entrance. On the outbreak of war his students all joined up. In Italy he taught my brother (four years older than I was), while my mother taught me on a modified Montessori method. My mother had another baby when I was a year and a half, and later my father had a pupil who came out from England and lived with us. So I was taught rather spasmodically, when my mother had time. My younger brother died when he was four. And shortly after this we moved to France. My father did fairly well, teaching English and American boys, some of whom stayed with us. My father did not believe in class teaching, only on a one to one basis. My mother was busy again, we had a large piece of wild hillside and I spent most of my time looking after the goats, chickens, rabbits etc. I did not learn to read until I was nine. Partly because my mother gave me books that were too young for me, and I had no particular interest in them. When the breakthrough came, I read my father's books, Victor Hugo, and Blake's poetry. My father died when I was just eleven. My brother continued his education by correspondence, and having passed matriculation, entered London University, reading Zoology. He later obtained a first class degree and Doctorate of Science. He was professor of Genetics at Melbourne University and was awarded an F.R.S.

My mother's problems were considerable at this time. She was not allowed, by French law, to sell our house and land, until I was 21. She therefore continued to teach me. When I was about 13 she sent me to a small school, run by an English lady who had about 10 pupils. Finally she let the house and we returned to England. I started school on my fifteenth birthday, at the City of London School for Girls. When I was just 18, I passed matric in seven subjects. My teacher told me I had obtained about 68% in each subject.

As I have said, I took a long time to learn to read because of the intermittent way I was taught, and because I was bored by what I was given. But once I had learnt I loved books and reading, particularly poetry. In the years after my father died, when my brother was away, I became very lonely and bored, my one delight was to attend Guide meetings which were run by an

SOCIALLY DEPRIVED?

MANDY HAMMERSLEY-CLARK

After being a member of E.O. for quite a while, it became apparent to me that the major worry concerning either de-schooling or educating permanently at home, was the lack of social contact that E.O. children may 'suffer' (?) from. For quite some time this was a worry I shared also.

It was only when I began to analyse exactly what schools had to offer in the way of social contact, that my worries were dissolved, and my intentions to teach our children at home were infinitely endorsed.

There are many things wrong with the social contact to which children are subjected in the school system. The main fault I believe, is the splitting up of children into two distinct groups - relying only on their genital sex, not upon their suitability as personalities - to be lumped together.

This is of course blatant sex discrimination. People are people firstly and male or female only secondarily. In dividing our children up by means of their sex, we are placing a barrier between them as people, and we receive ensuing prejudices such as, "I hate boys, they're too rough and noisy", or alternatively, "I can't stand girls, they're so soppy". Are then all boys rough and noisy, purely because they are boys - and girls vice versa? I have met some very unruly girls and some very gentle boys, who despite being labelled with the discrimination, boy or girl, from birth, have managed to grow up as individuals, not clones (of a particular sex role). Schools do nothing to ease the feeling of alienation between the sexes, by treating them equally, in fact they employ quite the reverse methods, and reinforce the gap between the sexes, by constantly and uniformly using the sex role as a yardstick for division and grouping e.g.

1. "All the boys on the left hand side, all the girls on the right, now lead in boys".
 2. "I need four strong boys to help me with this box".
 3. "All the girls to be fairies, and the boys can be monsters".
- The list of examples is in-exhaustive and endless.

Another major fault is in the peer grouping. Matching children of similar intelligence and aptitude can be beneficial, but to match children together purely on the basis of age is ludicrous. Children develop at different rates, age is no indication to a child's intelligence and maturity. Children are a part of society, and society is not divided up into peer groups, so children have to learn to adapt to life in a much wider sense, when they emerge at 16 plus, out of the false society of school. They are at a disadvantage in that they find it difficult to mix with both younger (they feel superior to youngsters, and tend to be assertive and dominant towards them), and older (they feel inferior to their elders and tend to be subordinate and allow themselves to be patronised). People are people whatever their age, from the cradle to the grave, and schools should not enforce a doctrine of division based upon age.

The social environment in schools tends to extract all the major faults of society at large and condenses them into a much more concentrated form. This appears to be an inevitable and apparently (?) acceptable part of the school system structure. There is therefore a great atmosphere of competition which pervades all aspects of school life, and is heightened within social contact. The child feels forced to compete with his/her contemporaries, and

to come up to the standards expected of him/her. Teachers exacerbate this by instilling in the child the need to achieve, to attain greater and greater things, constantly pressuring the child to pass exams, gain good marks, stay in top stream, etc., etc..... I acknowledge that there is also pressure applied in outside society when we leave school, but as I have previously stated, school contains a more pungent concoction of competition, sometimes too much for the child. We have all heard of the child who takes his/her life in exasperation and bitter disappointment at failing academically or socially to be what was expected of them.

The need to conform is also especially strong in schools, and is in fact a major part of the discipline process. If members did not conform, the school (due to its large pupil-staff ratio), would become chaotic and control could be lost. Children are subjected to conformity largely through social contact. There are fashions that have to be followed, e.g.

"But everyone at school's got a ra-ra skirt, why can't I have one too?"

Trends that have to be adhered to, e.g.

"Ugh, you like Adam Ant, anyone who's anyone likes Duran Duran".

Habits and social customs that make you feel grown up, e.g.

1. "Oh, go on try a cigarette, we've all been smoking for ages, it's really good",
2. "Look at goody-goody, doesn't swear then eh?",
3. "You don't want to wear brown eye-shadow, try my blue one, it'll make your eyes stand out more",
4. "It was great last night, we even got into a pub, and had a couple of drinks, with the lads!".

How many of us ourselves can admit to:- starting smoking, wearing make-up, buying certain clothes, having our hair cut in certain styles, seeking certain social activities out of school, e.g. 4., because of pressure to socially conform, being applied under more penetrating and influential conditions whilst attending school. I myself will admit that that was the case with me.

Class and race cultures, are also overtly apparent in school, and prejudices run high. Is this a desirable form of social contact for our children?

If we want to, we can become friends with and to our children and share experiences with them. They need not be deprived socially by not attending school, but be saved from the often ugliness of social deprivation, which our school system cannot and has not tried, to stamp out.



From "Bedside Manners" by Richard Gordon:-

EDUCATION

A waste of time.

The school-entering age must be raised to the present school-leaving one. All modern maths, netball, French, sex education, religious instruction, Nature study, handicrafts and free expression can be absorbed by the young ADULT brain in a couple of terms. Education is only a system of progressively removing children from their parents' company, without over-maltreating them. Academically, there is nothing to it. 'An education,' said Professor Stephen Leacock of McGill University, 'when all written out on foolscap, covers nearly ten sheets.'

(Submitted by Irene Harris.)

38 CORE GROUP MINUTES



Minutes of EO Core Group Meeting held at 31 Anson Road, London NW2 on Sunday September 25th 1983.

Present: John Elenor, Bruce Cox, Ivan Sokolov, Joan Hoare, Helen Holland, Rob and Ann Wade, Bruce and Christine Wallace, Nigel and Janet Everdell, Caroline Grant, Anne Moss.

Apologies: Alison Mafham, Peter Jones, Dick Kitto.

- 1) Minutes of last meeting accepted.
- 2) Matters arising Alison Mafham to continue to get either sale or return electric typewriter from Iris Harrison. Ivan Sokolov offered to collect it if necessary. Janet Everdell requested use of it should it be returned due to the large amount of typing needed at Central Address.
 - 2.2. Bruce Wallace to contact Midge Whitelegg regarding the distribution of G.W.S. as nothing has been heard of this since she took over from Stephanie Leland and some members haven't received a copy for a long time.
 - 2.3. S.I.N.C. Draft revision of this is still proceeding albeit very slowly and Ivan Sokolov is to edit it when he receives all the material. Six members were asked to revise the present edition. They are Bruce Wallace, Janet Everdell, Bruce Cox, Caroline Grant, John Elenor and Ann Wade who have promised to return revised copies in two weeks. Draft edition is to go for approval to Ivan's choice of members. Caroline Grant to work on possible reduction of print and size of the booklet.
 - 2.4. Charitable Status and Company Limited by Guarantee. A vote was taken showing members still favour of pursuing this objective.
 - 2.5. Research Committee had little to report.

OFFICERS REPORTS

3.1. Treasurer

John Elenor read the treasurer's written report which told of a very healthy state of affairs. The balance in E.O.'s current account was £1602.40 at close of business on 19th Sept. £1000 is to be transferred to the deposit account which already stands at £124.62. In the last three months revenue from enrolments and publication sales has amounted to £745.89. Advertising in the newsletter has produced £120. Only £100 has come from the appeal for members to renew their subscriptions early. The April and June newsletters cost about £500 each, the August issue cost £220.45. Expenses claims are still to be met as E.O. officers have refrained from putting in their claims over the last 4 months because of financial uncertainty. These claims can now be met and are expected to

CORE GROUP MINUTES . . .

be about £400. There could be expenses of up to £300 involved in E.O.'s change of status. As there has been no success in obtaining this kind of sum from other charities the amount ought to be kept available in case required. About £200 ought to be kept available to cover any extraordinary printing costs during the next three months. Estimated expenditure for the rest of the year £2100. The report concluded that the rest of the year should be plain sailing so long as waste is avoided. Alison apologised to members for having spread unnecessary alarm and despondency earlier in the year but hoped we would think that she had erred on the right side. All those present expressed admiration at the way the report was presented and said it was a pity it had to be precisised for the minutes. Members also wished to put forward a vote of thanks to Alison for her efforts on E.O.'s behalf along with Betty Ball's excellent fund-raising draw and Julie Duff's advertising sales.

3.2. Membership Secretary

Bruce reported a membership total for mid September of 1064 with a further few to add since then. There was still no way of telling how many members were actually practising home education. Nearly all new members were enrolled at the full subscription rate.

3.5. Publication Secretary

S.I.N.C. had needed to be photocopied again to tide us over until the revised edition is ready for printing. Midge Whitelegg was editing the October issue of the newsletter and due to the increased membership it would be necessary to print 1400 this time. Caroline offered to write to a firm called Lifespan regarding printing of the newsletter.

3.3a Helen Holland will appeal in the Sussex newsletter for a member to edit the Feb. newsletter.3.4. Enquiries Secretary

Enquiries during August numbered over thirty a week and were up for the first three weeks of Sept. following success publicity through the media. The Everdells have given four radio interviews and three T.V. interviews since August 23rd when an E.O. success article appeared in the Daily Express. There was very little response after the screening of David Leland's film on I.T.V. Called Flying into the Wind, it told the story of a boy who couldn't read forced back to school. It would appear the public want success stories not ones of defeat.

A new area of enquiry has arisen from the Kent and Essex parents who have not been given their parental choice of school. They appear to want to use option 36 as a stick to beat the L.E.A.s with.

We have received enquiries from many well known and respected institutions all interested in our aims and objectives.

Living magazine are to publish a two and a half thousand word article in the November issue. This should boost membership as it has a three quarter million circulation and we still receive enquiries from an article they did over two years ago.

4. Steering Committee It was decided to continue with this body until the new management council of Education Otherwise Ltd. is brought into being. Ann Wade and Joan Hoare volunteered and as a third member was still required Janet Everdell offered her services.

education otherwise officers

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Members with suspensions should restrict their contributions to the first magazine.

REVIEWS EDITOR

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Publishers please send copies for review to this address.

education otherwise

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

Our principal aims are as follows

To encourage the provision of alternative learning situations outside the school system.

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.s. to

25 Common Lane, Hemingford Abbots, Cambs. CB23 7JN

