

October
1984

Education

Otherwise



Bewsletter
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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editor or Education Otherwise as a whole.

Editorial

Many EO'ers may have read the damning report on the schools in the London borough of Haringey, which publicised the fact that high expenditure on education did not necessarily mean efficient teaching or good exam results. We lived in that borough until July last year and one reason for our move was that we had no intention of sending our son to any school in Tottenham, a part of Haringey. We already knew of the poor standards and poor results. We now live in Welwyn Garden City, which has good schools with efficient teachers with high expectations, caring parents, yet with a smaller educational budget. Despite the move, we have decided that we will still teach our son at home until he is 7 and then let him be involved in the decision with regard to his future schooling then.

Jan-Jorn will be 5 in January and I am constantly being asked how will he socialise if he does not attend school. I just reply that at present he attends piano lessons; goes to Gym Club; swimming; attends the Library story-telling sessions; plays daily with the children in the street; socialises with any children he meets when he is taken on outings; talks with our elderly neighbours and our friends etc. I see no reason for this to change when he is of school age.

I feel I must reply to Mr. Macgilchrist's letter in the August newsletter (Pg. 23). In my opinion, all the EO editors have been good—they, along with the Officers, the Core Group, the Coordinators, the regular contributors and the 'one-off' contributor, make the EO newsletter what it is—an informative, interesting, controversial booklet. The name and address of the editor of the next newsletter is always provided, as it is in this newsletter for the December edition, and as stated in the August editorial, any 'unused' material is always sent on to the next editor to use if he or she so wish. If you are a member of EO, you automatically receive each edition of the newsletter, and although the system may outwardly seem to be lacking in cohesion and communication, it works admirably, each person knowing how and when to make their particular contribution, whether large or small. We have excellent people who help to run EO, and its newsletter on a regular basis, and who provide propoganda for it. Each member of EO provides good publicity for the organisation as soon as he/she says that they are teaching their child at home, and that they belong to EO. Most people ask what EO is. We tell them. Then they know. Further comments on Mr. Macgilchrist's letter are to be found in the Letters section.

In this edition of the newsletter, I have included extracts from an article by John Holt on the benefits of cooperation between home-schoolers and schools. I feel that some children may benefit from attending school voluntarily on a part-time basis, whether to join in craftwork, sports activities or actual lessons. It would be interesting if any EO members whose children attend schools on a part-time basis could write in and tell us how cooperation was achieved with the school concerned; which lessons the children attend; the reception they receive from teachers and other children etc.

Although I have had sole responsibility for the contents and layout of the newsletter, I must thank Vicki Willow

*See Page 43 for article by John Elenor on the advantages of being a registered charity.

for her generous help with the typing.(the bad typing,I hasten to add, is all mine).I must also thank my son,Jan-Jorn,who is 4½,for the picture on the cover,and for some illustrations inside,and for helping me with the numbering of the pages.I think,too, that thanks are overdue to Caroline Grant,who coordinates the printing and distribution of every edition of the newsletter.

EDITORS FOR THE NEXT (DECEMBER)ISSUE ARE:

BRUCE AND CHRISTINE WALLACE,
25,DIABAIG,
ACHNASHEEN,
ROSS-SHIRE,
SCOTLAND IV22 2HE

Entries for the next edition should be forwarded to Bruce and Christine by the 1ST.NOVEMBER,and all material intended as such should be clearly marked "For Publication".

Let Others Share

Let others share your toys,my son,
Do not insist on all the fun.
For if you do it's certain that
You'll grow to be an adult brat.

Duty of the Student

It is the duty of the student
Without exception to be prudent.
If smarter than his teacher,tact
Demands that he conceal the fact.

Advice to small children

Eat no green apples or you'll droop,
Be careful not to get the croup,
Avoid the chicken-pox and such,
And don't fall out of windows much.

Character Building

Spanking is something that must go,
Say some psychologists,although
Character building is a feat
Sometimes accomplished through the seat.

Edward Anthony

(Although these rhymes have serious titles and serious ideas, they are not meant to be taken seriously!).

Contributed by Jean Shepherd

EDUCATION THROUGH THE PRESS

NEWS: A pilot scheme entitled CATCH 'EM YOUNG aims to select 9 year olds who show a 'deep-seated vicious streak' or 'sly and vindictive nature' and send them on a course of rugged outdoor pursuits modelled on Gordonstoun school. (GUARDIAN 15.8.84). The scheme would concentrate on children from deprived inner-city areas who had a negative attitude to school, adults and other children. Closely involved with the outdoor pursuits would be Colonel Eric Lowe, a former director of the army training school in Germany. The 'behaviour modification' of the project would be to teach a child to respect his(sic) own abilities and thus other people's..... Describing his life at Gordonstoun, Prince Edward "casting about for a nice memory, recalls the school play". There is no contribution from Prince Charles. "He hated it", says young Edward. (GUARDIAN 14.8.84)..... Three 6th formers at Stowe planted a fake bomb in the school during a visit from Baroness Airey Neave. Her husband was murdered by a terrorist bomb five years ago. (TELEGRAPH 18.5.84)

REPORTS: Schools should realise that they fail some pupils and that there is no point in blaming this minority for not fitting in. Schools could be made to work for the majority but they had their limitations (Report from the Hargreaves Committee about involving pupils in school, T.E.S. 23.3.84).... A significant minority of primary school children are lacking in social skills when they arrive at school, according to a survey conducted by the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association. On oral skills: "We do feel that parents are not talking to their children as much as they used to and that they just sit them in front of the television or video games and leave them to it." (T.E.S. 15.6.84)..... Children who attend any type of playgroup or nursery for more than five sessions a week are more likely to behave in an anti-social way at home than non-attenders or children who go to fewer sessions, say researchers from Bristol University. (T.E.S. 1.6.84)..... "It is relevant to observe that the Bristol longitudinal study indicates that late-starters at school were found to have better vocabulary scores. Again, a clue that the accepted wisdom of early admission should be questioned.... many of us in the Pre-School Playgroups Association feel concern about the creeping practice of admitting children scarcely past their fourth birthdays to the reception and infant classes of primary schools". (Letter from the Chairwoman of the P.P.A. in T.E.S. 13.7.84.)..... Some of the difficulties of slow learners in secondary schools can be caused by the fuzzy aims, inappropriate teaching methods and management failures of the schools themselves, concluded a report by HM Inspectorate (T.E.S. 27.8.84). Marking, and reports to parents were often crude and superficial, pointing no way forward for pupils, teachers or parents.

Sir Keith once more: Half of Britain's children are 'bored silly' at school because they are taught and educated on a curriculum designed for only 20% of them, said Keith Joseph (T.E.S. 16.7.84). The Professional Association of Teachers rejected overwhelmingly a proposal from Keith Joseph to give parents a majority voice on school governing bodies, set out in the Green Paper-Parental Influence at School. The headmistress of an infant school in Dorset, mover of the motion to reject the proposal said: "Most parents have one key interest in education-their own child. This Green Paper must be sunk without trace." (TELEGRAPH 2.8.84)

Footnote: ILEA's chief inspector Dr. David Hargreaves, thinks parents should be encouraged to take more interest in their children's home-

-work (T.E.S. 27.7.84). Schools should make it clear, he said, that failing to do homework in secondary school could be the equivalent of lacking a whole year's schooling. It was time to take parents seriously, he added, during a conference on how to improve the quality of secondary schools. LEA's have only recently concerned themselves with the curriculum since pressure from central government had forced them to take the area seriously. But the Green Paper was irrelevant to the report he had carried out for the ILEA. He felt that parent governors were not the answer to parental involvement - the real object was to get through to the ordinary mums and dads who were not concerned about running a school.

Afterwards, the Conservative chairman of Bexley L.E.A. told Dr. Hargreaves that if he was working for Bexley he would have given him the sack.

The Future: A vision of the future presented to Mensa members described comprehensives as "...dinosaurs turning out large numbers of illiterate zombies fit for no more than violence on football terraces." Dr. Madsen (sic) Pirie, a free market economist, told his audience that by 2020 these schools will have disappeared and children will be taught in groups of 70 partly by 'intelligent machines' and partly by humans. (TELEGRAPH 2.8.84)..... Professor Tom Stonier (sic) from Bradford University reckons that the home will have replaced school as the primary centre of learning in the next 30 years, by which time there will -he reckons- be two computers for every child in the country. (TIMES 10.8.84) Commented a member of MAPE (Micro Computers and Primary Education): "Personally I find rather comforting the notion of an ongoing revolution, which we are certain to experience in micros. Education should have a dynamic, as should society; if we have been guilty of anything in education it is that we have been too conservative."

Edited by Sarah Guthrie, with contributions from Janice Owen, Janet Everdell, Dick Kitto.



TALKING ABOUT SCHOOL

A special extract this month from Paul Tortelier's autobiography leaves space for just these quotes:

"The best thing about school was getting home afterwards...I don't get to do some things at home but I don't mind - the rounders and stuff like that. But I hated rounders anyway. I didn't like the playground. I prefer to read." (11 year old Sarah Thomas, taught at home, interviewed in CITY LIMITS, Spring 84).

"Our teacher must have been a fan of Western films. One of her least endearing habits...was to aim her penknife...and throw it with unerring precision at the unlucky culprits desk..." (Julia Hagedorn reminiscing in EDUCATION GUARDIAN 7.8.84)

"...the idealism of some of (the) masters in bringing classics to the masses ran alongside a diet of continuous thuggery in the playground". (David Hencke EDUCATION GUARDIAN 31.7.84)

"My education only began after I had started work....." (Vidal Sassoon SUNDAY TIMES June 84)

"I don't honestly think I'd ever want to go back into education." (ex-teacher Brian Samways, now a policeman. TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT 20.7.84)

.....
The following extracts are reprinted with the permission of William Heinemann, from PAUL TORTELIER: A Self-Portrait, by Paul Tortelier and David Blum.

QUESTION: How did you find time to do both your school work and your musical studies?

PAUL TORTELIER: "By leaving school shortly after I started. When I was 9 my parents removed me from the state school and enrolled me in a private school. I left school entirely when I was 11, and that was the end of my institutionalised academic education."

QUESTION: Wasn't school compulsory in France up to a minimum age?

PAUL TORTELIER: "I don't know. For my father,.....nothing was really compulsory. He saw no more the need for school than for military service or vaccination. He was utterly convinced as to the wisdom of my leaving school, as was my mother, she understood that in arranging for me to have private lessons in French, arithmetic and English with a little geography thrown in, I would have enough to make my way in life. Most important of all, she realised that I would save much time by having private tutors."

.....it's true that my formal education was minimal- I received no more than the poorest worker. But I have an intense curiosity about many things, and if there's a will to learn, there's a way. I have been helped by my powers of observation. If you are a keen observer and take the time and trouble to try to understand something, you finally develop. My memory, having been trained by music, is good; that helps too."

QUESTION: One sees too often how natural curiosity can atrophy in educational systems which ignore what is of interest and value to the individual. Perhaps even your seemingly boundless curiosity might have been dampened had you submitted to years of poor institutionalised learning.

PAUL TORTELIER: I think you're right. There are liabilities in force feeding a young mind too much and too early. I don't want to imply that I am opposed to formal education. I've often regretted not having greater knowledge of a particular subject. But I do think that the education which lasts is the one which is inspired by genuine understanding, and genuine understanding only occasionally corresponds to what educational authorities think you ought to be taught at a given time. It's not enough to pass an exam or take a degree and then rest on your laurel. The essential thing is to remain eager to learn for the rest of your life."

=====

STOP PRESS

CONGRATULATIONS to Bruce and Christine Wallace on their new son, Ruari James, born at home on 29th August, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.

" FREEDOM TO LEARN " ?

I have just finished Jonathon Croall' biography of A.S.Neill entitled "Neill of Summerhill,The Permanent Rebel" (pub.by Routledge & Kegan Paul),a book which has tinted the otherwise rosy picture of Summerhill one gains from Neill's own writings and a book which has restored a healthy balance to my own educational thinking.For like many others I started along the EO pathway with the help to be found in A.S.Neill's and John Holt's books amongst others.But now I no longer believe wholeheartedly in their ideas although they do provide me with a significant chunk of theory with which to practice.

The virtues of a non-threatening,informal child-centred learning situation are unassailable and especially for a child hurt by a more rigid system.Indeed I once played jigsaws for 3 months with a child of 8 years who had been sent to me for Maths. tuition having fallen 2 years behind the rest of his junior peers.We also talked a lot about sport.I did confess to his parents the unusual approach I'd taken but they were happy to pay the going rate and were probably amazed as I, when after a further 3 months he was put in the top group of his class.

However,my concern of late is that of growing numbers of young EO'ers,including my own of 5 and 6,who have never been to school and not spoiled by over-exposure to a formal system.I would have thought that they could positively enjoy some formal sessions of teaching.Indeed my heart sinks to ever-increasing depths each time I read of EO gatherings where the children were left to their own devices and had a deliriously happy time.I do not doubt their joy but moan the lost opportunity of a learning situation other than that of a free,seeking child.

Many of us have been inspired by a teacher in love with their subject-for me it was algebraic equations(Do I hear groans?),but a glance at the Contact List will bring many other fields of possible studies.At any EO meeting there is an array of talent,hidden perhaps but nevertheless there,so perhaps we could give the children at least the opportunity to sample this different way of learning.And I think we shall be pleasantly surprised as I am constantly when my daughter rushes to the kitchen table,announcing it is time for "work".This formal session is obviously a pleasant relief from doing all her own thing and because it constitutes only 10% of the week's time she welcomes it.

I know in some areas where there are enough children,parents have swapped skills and organised weekly classes.It would be encouraging to the rest of us to hear of their experiences,so do write in.

Mrs.P.Moffat

" OUR WAY "

My son is 4½ and our days are divided up into formal and informal learning sessions.He knows he has to have a piano practise session every day and never questions that.He then usually wants to play by himself for a while after it,usually with some items or toys I have 'left lying around' deliberately.After a while he tends to get fed up of this and asks if we can do lessons.This usually entails doing reading of some kind,jigsaws,making models,playing with water to discover its properties,cooking-in fact generally 'Active lessons' as I call them as opposed to sedentary lessons.These kind of lessons are tackled sometime in the week and include writing practice,playing with the computer and the typewriter,watching certain T.V. programmes and then discussing what we have just watched.After each formal session he is always given a period for time to himself.Whenever the day is fine we go

out on nature rambles, 'I spy' trips, to look at buildings, museums, animals, in fact anything and everything. Physical recreation is in the form of riding his bike, swimming, attending gymnastic sessions for the under-5's at the local Sports Centre, using the park apparatus, walking and playing with friends. In addition to all this we spend a lot of time talking and at the Library using the books to find out the answers to the never-ending questions which I can't answer!

At weekends and after work Dad plays football, cricket, wrestling, with him as well shows him gardening, car maintenance, D.I.Y. work.

All this combined with visits to friends and doing his own thing make the week a very full and enriching one indeed. In fact, I find it very difficult to understand why some Mums can't wait for their children to start school at the beginning of a new term. They should try to do more with their children instead of just dragging them around the shops and letting them play all day with their peers. I am in agreement with Mrs. Moffat in the article above that at times children do need some adult direction if they are to benefit profitably from the many learning opportunities with which they are presented every day.

Jean Shepherd

.....
A PARENTS' GUIDE TO SCHOOL JARGON.....

This mischievous little glossary is intended to be half serious - choose your own half.....

Expression:

Meaning:

He needs to....

I need him to....

He must....

My self-respect depends on getting him to....

No child will....

God help any child caught....

Respect for adults -

You will hide your feelings for me.

Respect for children -

I will try, against my better judgement, to hide my feelings for you.

School hours -

Arbitrary division of time designed to ensure that teachers work office hours.

Important!

Important to me.

Unimportant -

Important to you but not to me.

Extra-mural (Out-of-School)

Important to both of us.

Professional -

Having to do with corporal punishment or teachers solidarity.

Disruptive -

Too curious to cope with.

Lazy -

Endowed with enough perception to see how pointless some schoolwork is.

Good -

Potential Accountant/clerk/dustman/teacher.

Difficult -

Potential entertainer/record-breaker/demagogue/saint.

Homework -

'Good Schools' have this to imitate 'prep' at Greyfriars or Mallory Towers.

Uniform -

Means of identifying juvenile wrong-doers. Also used to imitate the custom of wearing a blazer at Greyfriars or Mallory Towers.

C.R.Shute.



EDUCATING ARCHIE

BY SEG

WHAT HOLIDAYS??

by Pauline Thomasson.



Denis's statement in the last issue, "WHAT HOLIDAYS!" was certainly right.

Here I am, back at work, and GLAD TO BE for a R E S T.....
Our holidays have been spent on educational visits to local firms, all of whom made us very welcome and showed us some very interesting things.

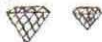
Our first visit was to Piccadilly Radio at Manchester, where we toured the Studios and saw Susie Mathis doing a live broadcast. One of the other D.J.'s, Dave Ward, came out to have a word with us and we left with more knowledge about the Radio broadcasts than when we went in, including how jingles and advertisements are made - nothing is at all believable that you hear over the soundwaves anymore.



Our next visit was to a FISH MARKET - I wanted to duck out of that one, but wasn't let. However, I learned more about fish than I had ever known before and Susan and Paul thoroughly enjoyed seeing their squeemish mum watching fish being gutted and prepared for sale. The same day, we travelled back from Radcliffe to Hampson's Bakery, where we saw all sorts of cakes and fancies being prepared for the shops the next day, and an 18th Birthday cake being iced. That was for the daughter of one of the Directors who wanted something unusual and so they had made it in the shape of a Horseshoe.

We then went on to BROMLEY ART COMPANY where Picture Framing, printing and the making of table mats was taking place. It's so easy to frame a pictureWHEN YOU KNOW HOW!! Our next visit was to Richard Harwoods Cotton Mill, the noise was deafening, but it was well worth the visit. We saw the raw material ready for making into cotton - it is marvellous how each process makes the cotton finer and finer, until it is ready for despatch to the weaving sheds, etc.

PRESTONS...THE DIAMOND CENTRE of the NORTH...was our last port of call. Did you know that the Ruby and the Sapphire are the same stone? Well they are and are both WHITE! They obtain their colour through impurities being introduced. A carat is approximately 1/5th of a gram, and only a diamond can actually cut another diamond, which is pure carbon. A lot of stones, when their natural moisture dries up, actually crack. These are only some of the fascinating facts which we learned on this trip, our time being very well spent.



All the Companies concerned made us most welcome, an exercise of this nature being well worth all the efforts of arranging such visits.

The last week-end of our holidays happened to coincide with the BOLTON FESTIVAL, which is always held on our local park. There are side shows, stalls, organised events and a fair-ground, all finishing on the Sunday night with a fire-work display.

On the Sunday, Mr. Mystery was performing the feat of driving a Mini-Metro around the arena BLINDFOLDED, with several people dotted around as obstacles. When they asked for volunteers to ride in the car with him, I shocked the family by doing just that - volunteering! I reckoned that the SAFEST place was IN the car, not stood around watching until it was driven at you!!

A very good time was had by all, even though we were ready for bed each night!



children's

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THE DAY THE HOUSE BURNT DOWN

Once upon a time there were three children, a baby, a Mummy and a Daddy. One morning the children got up and looked out of the bedroom window. It was a lovely sunny day. The children quickly got dressed and ate their food. Then they rushed outside they played and played. Then Mummy called come in we are going for our rest, while they were fast asleep two boys with logs and matches came up to the house. Then one boy said Shall we light our matches the other boy said yes and then put the fire on the logs. What a good idea said the other boy and then we can burn the house. Yes said the other boy. So while they were asleep the boys put the fire on the house. Then they got up they saw the house was on fire. So they quickly rushed down. Then they went to see the police. They said hello we are having a rest and when we got up the house was on fire. The police said oh. And gave them lots of money and they lived happily ever after.

Claire Wilton-Jones (6)

????????????????????????????????????

Dear EO,

I started school when I was 5 and continued until I was 10. Infants school was okay, but I found junior school far too strict. I got very distressed and worried. Now I am being taught at home, I don't worry at all about school. I am much less bored with my work and I find that I learn a lot more.

I am qualifying with some of my friends for a Kestrel Award certificate. To earn this you have to help wildlife in certain ways. One of the projects that we've carried out is to make a pond and a big garden. I have also made a nest-box and set up a bird-bath.

At first I was only interested in birds, but now I am keen on all areas of wildlife and conservation. I also like riding bikes fast and doing wheelies.

Best Wishes,

Joseph Deimel (10)

????????????????????????????????????

THE EO CAMP 1984

My name is Jason Bryant. I went to the E.O. camp (East Anglian). I went with Cherity and Farid Laniado (foster parents). Their son Tamalaine and two daughters Corri and Nousseene. We left the house at 11.00am. When we got near the camping place I went and saw my ex-foster parents George and Avis Norton. We left there at 12.30pm. When we got to Ed and Ruth Stobbs we put our tents up, Tamalaine and I slept in my blue and orange tent. After we put our tents up we went swimming in a big pond. It was great, we also played ball games to. At lunchtime we had sandwiches, crisps, drink, and cake. After lunch a clown called Derek and his son came and done some shows. The clown brought his donkey called Billy. Their was 14 families there. Ed done some pottery to show how it is done. Tamalaine and I swopped some comics with different people. Me and my mate Jonathon learnt how to ride a unicycle, I fell off loads of times. At 7.00pm we all went to a barbeque, I cooked some sausage for us. Tamalaine swopped his sausage for a piece of chicken. Later on the

clown called Derek done some fire eating. It was a laugh. Tamalaine and I made some friend called Lee. At night time we went for a badger hunt, we didn't see any badgers. When we came back from the walk we went to bed, it was uncomfortable.

Day 2

I got up at 6.00am. The sun was shining. Tamalaine and I went swimming most of the day. Cherity and Farid (Foster parent) Tamalaine, Corri and I got a sun tan. All the children went on a 3 wheeler car. At 11.00am I went on a 3 mile donkey ride with Derek. We had tea there (Ed and Ruth). We left at 8.00pm.

Thanks a lot Ed and Ruth,

By Jason Bryant.

P.S. Thanks everyone who came.

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WHAT I'VE DONE THIS SUMMER

I've been to museums. I've been to parks and I saw swings, roundabouts, castles that you jump on. I saw some BMX bikes. I got a book called Find 50 things by Ponds and River's. Mummy and me went to a lake and we saw fish, ducks and fishermen. I got a postcard from the museum where we went, and we got a water mill to make. First we had to colour it in cos it's very special and it's waterproof if you colour it. If it gets damp it will collapse. We made the water mill, then we needed some water to make it go round. Then we letted it dry out. I got some blackberries from my friend's garden. I made jam with them. I've been helping Daddy in the garden. My potatoes are growing. Daddy's are nearly ready to pick. I've been riding my bike and swimming and I've been seeing Thomas and playing with Carl. I went to Nana's to have a holiday and I went to the seaside with Mummy and Daddy for three nights. I've been doing my jigsaws and I've been doing piano lessons and when Ruth goes on holiday the new piano teacher will teach me. I've been doing some reading and helping Mummy. I went to the swimming pool where the wave machine is and I went to a stall and buyed a car and it went on its own and Daddy gave me some money to buy it. I've been on lots of walks. That's all.

Jan-Jorn Bajwa (4½) -narrated to Mum as she typed!

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TELL YOUR PARENTS!!!

The Touring Exhibition of Young Observer Copydex Competition on the subject of 'Plants and Gardens' will be visiting the following cities:-

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 9-25 October | Central Library, Princess Sq., Newcastle-Upon-Tyne |
| 6-24 Nov | National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth |
| 1-22 Dec | Wrexham Library Arts Centre |
| 12 Jan-9 Feb | City Museum, Drake Circus, Plymouth |
| 27 Feb-1Apr | Oldham Art Gallery, Union St., Oldham |

20 Nov-10Jan Young Observer Dyecrafts Tie-dying and Batik Exhibition to be shown at Styal Cotton Mill and Museum, Styal, Cheshire.

Free leaflets on tie-dying and Batik are available from Shirley Barnett, Dylan International, Lower Sydenham, London SE26 5HD. Send s.a.e.

SCHOOL

by: Susan Thomasson - Age 13.

School is boring, you don't get taught,
Parents should keep them at home they ought.
Schools are for children from five years old,
Where they're expected to be good as gold.
They think we're daft and think they're good,
But I know different, as everyone should.

I think they are vain,
They give me a pain,
If I'd told them to their faces, I'd have got the CANE.
I'm glad I don't go to School!!

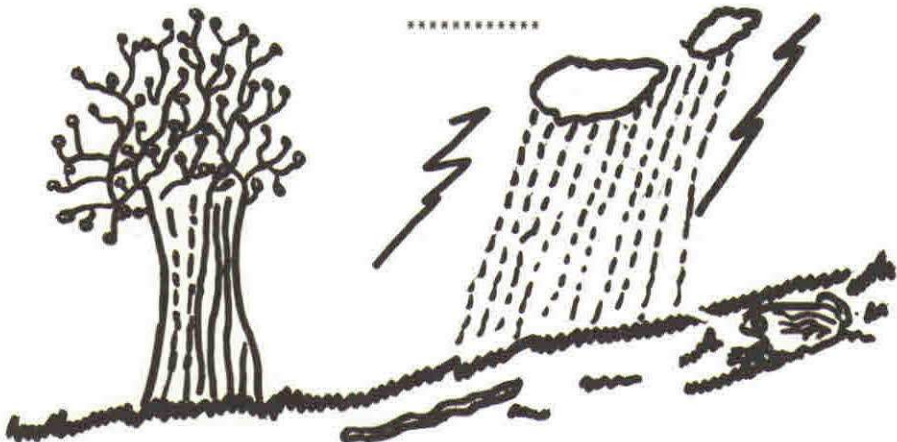
THUNDER AND LIGHTENING

by: Susan Thomasson.

Thunder is frightening and lightening is too,
I wonder if this noise is frightening for you?
The fire will go out if the dampers not down,
It makes my dad shake and it makes my dogs frown.

My dad is so frightened he sends for a car,
He wants to get out of it, he's not bothered how far,
The T.V. goes fuzzy and the lights all go dim,
The noise that we hear makes a terrible din.

The thunder has ceased, the lightening has too,
And dad returns home for a bit of a do.
With holidays nearing, the sun's what we want,
So we can all now get ready and go for a jaunt.



RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOLS

I am a "year old" member of E.O. From a discussion at our last local meeting I thought it might be helpful to some E.O. members if a description of the structure and philosophy of "Steiner Schools" were published in the E.O. newsletter as quite a few members seem quite interested in these schools as "another alternative". So I will try to do this.

There is no headmaster in a Steiner school, the schools are run by a "College of Teachers". There are no head boys/girls and no prefects. Prefectoral duties are carried out by the school's (entire) top class. The schools are totally co-educational - boys and girls learn sewing, metal work etc. together. Children are not streamed at all and are put into their class by chronological age grouping after the Kindergarten.

The parents' involvement in the school is desired and encouraged. There are no internal exams within the Schools. All subjects (arts, sciences, languages) are taught to all the children throughout the school.

The school is divided into three parts, starting with the Kindergarten (4 to 6 years). The children are "vertically grouped" at this stage. No formal education is given here. The children learn to play creatively, to paint, to draw etc. None of the 3R's is taught at this stage. The first foreign language is introduced through singing, games and speech only.

At six years the children enter the "lower school" and meet their class teacher who will teach the class for the next 8 years. The class will progress from year to year as Class I, Class II, Class III.

When the children reach the 9th Class they enter the "Upper School". They now meet their "Class Guardian" (who might change from year to year). They have specialist teachers in the various subjects.

'O' levels are taken a year later than "normal", in class XI, and 'A' levels in Class XII with only one years study (and the pass rate is good).

In Class I writing is introduced, then reading. (It is in this order, i.e. writing first, because writing has to come first in an evolutionary sense.) Also the beginning of counting. Factual knowledge is not the aim of the lower school. The method of teaching is always permeated with the artistic.

The first lesson of the day throughout the lower and upper school is "Main Lesson". This lasts $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours and subjects (e.g. 3R's, history, science, music) are taught in block lessons for $\frac{3}{4}$ weeks. After break the children might meet other teachers (or their own class teacher) for other subjects e.g. singing, games, gym, handwork.

There are over 500 Steiner schools scattered throughout the world. They are by far the biggest international "method" of teaching. Offshoots from this educational impulse are the "Home Schools" for maladjusted/physically/mentally handicapped children - a field in which Steiner schools are better known. In the U.K. there are about 180 private "special" schools and 30 plus are Steiner.

Rudolf Steiner was a "Gestalt philosopher" and his work embraces education, medicine, agriculture; it could be described as "a way of life". Steiner's philosophies are known as "Anthroposophical". Anthroposophic medicines (and other products) are made by Weleda and are often found in health shops! Anthroposophic agriculture is "Biodynamic".

One impression people appear to have of Steiner schools is that they are "religious". I think "spiritual" is a more accurate description. The schools are Christian but are non-denominational. Religion lessons are not compulsory. In response to requests from his followers Rudolf Steiner set up the "Christian Community" but children are not expected to attend, it is for those who want it only.

Steiner wrote several books and the total number of lectures amounts to some six thousand (!?).

If anyone is interested in studying his work further I think "A Modern Art of Education" by Steiner (published by Rudolf Steiner Press) gives a good idea of the "Whole". It is a series of 14 lectures given by Steiner in Ilkley in August 1923. Also "A Child's Work" by Ruth Willig (An Australian publication) gives a helpful description of the Kindergarten work; and "Teaching Children to Write" by Audrey E. McAllen (Downfield Press) I think is excellent.

These books and other Steiner information could be obtained from Rudolf Steiner House, 35 Park Road, London NW1 6XX.

I attended a Steiner School (Michael Hall, Forest Row, Sussex) and I have two children aged 3½ and 5 years. I wish them to have the education I did, so have chosen to educate at home as there is no Steiner school in Essex. I would like to start a Steiner school; if anyone wishes to contact me regarding any of the above, I am:

Margaret English,
41 Eastern Esplanade,
Southend-on-Sea,
Essex.

Tel (0702) 618051

Please do!

THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

Based on a well-known song by Tom Paxton

Chorus -

What did you learn at school today?
What did you learn at school?
What did you learn at school today?
What did you learn at school?

Verse 1

You don't ask questions here my child
We like our children tame not wild
You learn to do just as you're told

Chorus -

That's what I learned at school today
That's what I learned at school

Chorus - Verse 2 - chorus

Rich children get put in top class
They find it easy exams to pass
Teachers love a well dressed lass

Chorus - Verse 3 - chorus

I learned that sugar's good for you
That teeth are made the gum to chew
That all you've told me is not true

Chorus - Verse 4 - chorus

I learned that God is really dead
That girls and boys learn much in bed
To follow my heart and not my head

Chorus - Verse 5 - chorus

I learned that women seldom lead
I learned their duty is to breed
To please a man is all they need

Chorus - Verse 6 - chorus

That to be right you must be strong
That teacher's right and parents wrong
I don't want you to come along

Sent by Frances Howard 38 Hampden Road Hitchin Herts. SG4 0LD Tel 0462-58294

INFORMATION LIBRARY

Andy & Diane Anderson, 95 Derrington Avenue, Crewe, Cheshire, CW2 7JA. Tel: 0270 664060

Members nationally are offered the full use of the Information Library. If anyone has any queries or problems with regard to what educational material etc., is available, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time, either by phone, letter or a visit. What we don't know, we will try and find out for you. Please feel free to use us. In return, would you please let us know of any recommendations, ideas, lists not included etc..... When recommending anything, please give as much information as possible. When recommending a book etc., please give title, author, publisher and price if known.

To help with costs, please enclose a 2nd class stamp for each information list required or equivalent in p.o., or cheque - also, stamp for return postage but please expect to pay extra postage at your end.

Main Educational Publishers & Supplies Addresses.

Pre-school Materials.

Reading Schemes.

Reading Books - 4-7 years }
" " - 7-12 " + } These books complement the project lists.

Book Lists - Pre-school
" " - up to 5 & 6 years
" " - up to 7 & 8 "
" " - " " 9 "
" " - " " 10 "
" " - " " 11 "
" " - " " 12 "
" " - " " 13 "

Books Check List, 9-13. A very useful list which includes the publishers, for anyone building up their own paperback library for the above lists as the titles can be crossed off when obtained or read.

English.

Maths.

History.

Geography.

Science; Biology (Botany & Zoology).

" Chemistry & Physics.

" Astronomy.

Languages.

Music.

Remedial Material.

Remedial Reading Books - please state age group.

Project Material - 4- 7 years

" " - 7-12 " +

Project Books - 4- 7 "

" " - 7-12 " +

Audio Cassettes.

Video Cassettes.

Ideas in Action (this can cover a lot of general things - ideas please).

Charts & Posters.

Clubs, Groups, Associations, etc.

Crafty Ideas (arts & crafts) yet to be put together - your ideas please.

General Information Leaflets, Membership Forms etc. Will send whatever I have on hand.

We are also willing to be used for putting people in touch with each other when they have anything to sell or are trying to obtain something. Please include:-

Your Name, Your Address, Your Telephone Number, Subject Matter, e.g., Maths, English, etc., Type of Material, e.g., Books, Cards, Tapes, etc., Publisher, Author, Rough Age Level, Price and Any Comments.

REVIEWS from the library

Signal Bookguides from The Thimble Press, Lockwood, Station Road, South Woodchester, Stroud, Glos., GL5 5EQ. 01 870 9055.

If anyone is looking for help in deciding which poetry books to obtain as I was, having found it very frustrating to purchase books and then find for some reason or other that they were not what I really wanted, I recommend you to obtain a copy of 'Poetry for Children'. It lists 127 entries and includes the hardback and paperback publishers. This is a book I would not now like to be without.

Another book I would not like to be without, (our interest in plays having been wetted by Shakespeare in cartoon form books reviewed on page 11 of the August newsletter), is 'Plays considered as literature as well as theatre for Young People'.

The books include age guides and more of these useful books are listed below. The prices are inclusive of postage & packing:-

- Poetry for Children, as above - 1.95.
- Plays for Young People, as above - 3.25.
- Learning to Read with Picture Books - 1.85.
- Reaching Out, stories for readers of 6-8 years - 1.50.
- Ways of Knowing, information books for 7-9 years - 1.50.
- Picture Books for Young People, 9-13 years - 1.65.
- The Signal Reviews of Children's Books, 1 - 3.95 & 2, 4.50.
- The Signal Approach to Children's Books - 12.50.
- Signal 42, published 3 times a year at 1.75 each..

Three sheets are available from Thimble Press or the Information Library which give many more details about the above books. Our thanks to them for those books they have donated.

.....

A Verse from "The Child" by Gijubhai

Let the Child Act

The child likes to do things.
Let him wash his own hanky,
Let her fill her own cup,
Let him arrange the flowers,
Let her clean the plate,
Let him pod the peas,
Let her serve the food,
Let the child act,
And act at her own pace,
And act at his own wish.



(The Child is one of my favourite poems, and is here illustrated by my son, Jan-Jorn. Jean Shepherd).

THE ART OF COARSE LANGUAGE-LEARNING

Real communication in any foreign language demands the ability to think in that language, to order one's thoughts so that they emerge in speech according to the special pattern which is unique and special to that language. No-one can accomplish that in 30 minutes a day, in a class of 30, conducted entirely by people who speak their pupils' own language perfectly and have no need to drag them through artificial, often rather silly, mock-French or mock-German exercises.

In short, to teach language properly, so that it works on the emotions and flows naturally, a pupil needs two things: a powerful motive for learning and long periods of intensive exposure to monolingual speakers who will not, under any circumstances speak the pupil's language. I believe that given these conditions any child, however 'backward' can be brought to a position of general ease in speaking a foreign language.

You can usually find a tourist language course on cassettes and that is all you need. School courses are rarely much use to the serious learner because they are a) too compendious - they try to teach everything without discrimination, and without attempting to discern which structures are likely to be used most often, and b) they are too much concerned with writing and reading. Languages are meant to be spoken. If you master speech, writing and reading follow naturally.

Start by listening to as much of your tourist cassette as you can at a sitting. Avoid worrying about the 'odd' sounds. All the while you are listening your mind is absorbing patterns and preparing you to reproduce them. Spend weeks or even months just listening. Don't try to understand. Get used to the flow of the language. Follow the intonation patterns - the 'music' of the language and try to reproduce them using nonsense sounds - lala or a hum will do. See if you can recognise a pattern when another person produces it and try to guess which sentence in the course manual is being imitated. In short, mess about with sounds before you even think of using real words.

If you can, try to speak English with the accent of the language you are trying to learn. This enables you to practise the intonation you are trying to acquire without having to worry about getting your tongue round the strange sounds of the foreign language.

Forget about accuracy. The important thing is to say something which you think expresses an important idea. When you meet your first real life speaker of the language you will easily polish your halting language by listening to his correct, flowing speech. Until then, do your best but don't let the fear of making errors prevent your speaking. Accuracy matters, but only when you are fluent in speech.

Take a sentence, a meaningful phrase - something you might conceivably want to say to a real person. Learn it thoroughly so that you can say it as easily as an utterance in your own language. Say the sentence changing one word. Put 'you' instead of 'I'. Use a different noun, a new adjective, a plural noun instead of a singular. Practise saying the altered sentence until you know it. Make another small change; carry on until you are tired or short of ideas. Do the same with another phrase. Try linking phrases together with 'and', 'but', 'while' etc. Sit down somewhere quiet and secluded and produce foreign language sentences continuously, repeating the same one when can't think of anything new. The main thing is fluency. If you are learning with your family use the language in everyday conversation when you can. Slip from one language to another in mid-sentence. Use English words when you can't think of the foreign ones. We all learned at school that you must not make mistakes. You must always be accurate, at least in written work - we did precious little speaking. Real language learning sets a low premium on accuracy, not because it isn't important, but because it isn't compatible with fluency in the early stages.

The hardest part of using a foreign language isn't speaking, it's understanding. You can pass for a native without saying a word if you can give the impression that you understand what is being said. You can

be a fluent speaker of a foreign language and totally flummoxed because you can ask questions but not understand the answers. The best way to practise passive understanding is to make sure that your chosen cassette is recorded at something like natural speed - the slower the speech the more you hear the small sounds which are lost in normal speech. You need to know how a word sounds at normal speed, so try always to hear it at that speed. It is probably best to avoid looking too long at the written word, because seldom does it have much to do with the sounds of the spoken language. There are exceptions, but they are rare.

You can never hear enough of your chosen language. Track it down on the dial of your radio. Buy and listen to records of songs or poetry in the language. When the television shows a film in it make a point of watching. It doesn't matter if you don't understand a word. How long did it take you to master your own language, or even to begin to understand it? It would be surprising if you took any less time with a foreign language.

Grammar is only a problem if you start to learn it too early. School pupils tend to learn the rules and try to use them to make sentences. The right way is to learn sentences and patterns and allow the structures in them which recur in the same sort of way to emerge into one's consciousness as a growing network of rules which are applied at least partly by one's subconscious. After all, this is how children all over the world learn and use their mother tongue.

High speech and pure diction are fine if you are going to specialise in academic study, but I imagine that most people want to be able to talk to ordinary bods in the market or the cafe.

All this is commonplace, of course, but it's worth mentioning because as educators parents are often afraid of modern languages. They think that learning them requires a lot of expertise. It doesn't. It only needs some recordings of correct language, a note of their meaning and a little bit of determination on the part of the learner. Anyone can do it. The only people who find it hard are the ones who refuse to open their mouths and speak for fear of making fools of themselves. Language-learning only needs a little cheek, a little daring and a little independence. And a Berlitz cassette.

C, Shute.

The following 2 articles stress that education should proceed "at the pace of the child" and that we should "listen to the child" and "learn from the child", something most EO'ers know but may find difficult to put into practice!

A Beginning

I have had to think what I would do if my daughter were going to school and I managed to face it without getting overwrought (it was me quietly thinking on my own). I slowly thought about my objections as they arose and decided that I need not worry a out her having to go (at whoever's insistence and for whatever reason) because in my mind she isn't going.

This realisation has helped me a lot because so many people (to her/me) object to her not attending school. And of course I can now concentrate on the child instead of the worry!

We are having a great time exploring "maths", making up our own examples, biology when the subject arises, the weather, chemistry, etc.; all very basic, but just try to explain complicated concepts in simple language, and listen to those questions, it just shows how a fast young mind works. And note also how the information sticks. If a related topic arises her understanding (and explanation) is waiting for the next stage.

All this is done at the pace of this child and although I accept that children will glean what knowledge they can, I wonder how a school or a class teacher can imagine or hope that it does this sort of immediate fulfilling of the need to learn now in a child? or perhaps it doesn't, because it doesn't see the same need?

C. Barrett

The Heart of a Child

No child asks to be born yet each of us is:
little fingers,
little mouths,
little hearts,
little smiles,
lots of love;
Childish trust which knows no bounds
till we who should know better
lay down the barriers.

Little child
with your heart so large
keep your laughter
keep your smiles
don't let us
who should know better
crush your tiny spirit.

Oh you who think you're wise,
oh you so grown-up, so aloof
with no time to spare
to share a joke, a smile
listen to the child,
Hear the laughter,
see the smile
and learn from the child
with its open heart
that life is precious,
life is beautiful,
a thing of wonder
to embrace with all one's soul.

Oh you who think you're wise
learn from the child
and open your heart
to fill the world with love.

Katherine Helmgren 1982

LATE-LATE EXTRA!!!!!!!!!!

NEWS FROM KENT REGION

Many thanks to Richard and Mary for a highly successful meeting on 21st. July. We had a picnic in their lovely garden, and while the children played with sand, water, balls, tree houses and imagination, the parents managed to chat and compare notes. The weather was hot and temptation present in the form of Usbourne books. Perhaps the high-light of the day were the tractor rides at the end.

Next meeting - 8p.m. 10th. November at 14, Chester Road, Gillingham (Medway 577892). Anyone welcome for coffee and a chat.

Any offers for meetings?

Don't forget a stamped addressed envelope and material (pleas for help, ideas, information, etc.,) for the local newsletter.

Anne Leigh

NOTE

Please will contributors for News from the Regions, Notices, Small Ads, ensure that articles reach the editor by the deadline date. This will enable the editor to lay out the newsletter better and will also ensure that the articles are included.

Schools and Home Schoolers: A fruitful partnership

by John Holt

(Reprinted from the February 1983 Phi Delta Kappan). Extracts as follows:

'I contend that it would be in the interest of schools everywhere to cooperate fully with home schoolers rather than oppose them. My point is that schools would be wise not merely to refrain from opposing home schoolers but to cooperate with them as fully as possible. For one thing, such cooperation might well bring schools some good publicity and that would be a welcome change. But a far more important reason is that it is likely to yield important ideas and methods that might help schools solve many of their most serious and intractable problems. To be sure, some of these problems have their origins outside the schools and can hardly be affected by anything the schools do. But others have their origins in the schools themselves. U.S. schools are burdened by a set of assumptions: first, assumptions about children; second, about learning, and finally, about teaching and the relationship between teaching and learning. These assumptions shape everything the schools do, and I believe them to be the root of the schools' frustrations and failures.

Schools tend to assume that children are not much interested in learning, are not much good at it, and are unlikely to learn anything useful and important unless adults tell them what to learn, tell them when and how to learn it, check up on them to make sure they are learning it, and reward or penalise ("reinforce") them according to whether they seem to be learning it, or not. These assumptions about children are often unconscious, and, indeed, school people often say the very opposite. Moreover, these assumptions are not supported by research or experience. They are rooted in popular Calvinist assumptions about the inherent badness of children and in the deep need of many adults to credit themselves for anything good that children may do. No one with eyes and ears open and a mind in working order can long remain in the company of babies or young children without observing that they are in fact voracious, tireless, and skilful learners and that they create learning out of their experiences in much the same way that scientists create it out of theirs.

Concerning learning, teaching and the relationship between them, schools tend to operate according to the following assumptions:

The act of learning is inherently passive, difficult, painful and dull—mostly memorising uninteresting facts because one is forced or paid to do so.

Learning is and can only be the result of teaching; nothing is learned unless it is first taught; children learn only when (and only because) adults teach them.

Teaching is a mysterious and difficult activity that can best be carried out by specially trained and licensed people.

Teaching consists mainly dividing the material to be learned into the largest possible number of the smallest possible units of information and presenting them to children in a predetermined sequence with an appropriate schedule of rewards and penalties.

When trained and licensed people carry out these procedures and children do not learn (or soon forget what they are taught), it can only mean that something is wrong with the children.

By definition, all problems of learning can only lie in the child, his or her family, social class, etc., none can ever be blamed on the school, its teachers, or its methods.

Therefore, an important part of teaching consists of diagnosing the many neurological, environmental, and psychological disorders of children—the supposed causes of their failure to learn—and prescribing and carrying out various treatments (rarely cures) for these disorders.

Of course, many people in education do not share these assumptions, and some oppose them passionately. Over the years I have met such people, classroom teachers, administrators, professors of education. Yet, even at the height of supposed change in education, they have always felt themselves to be members of a small and hard-pressed minority, usually misunderstood, distrusted, or even despised by most of their colleagues, often in danger of losing their jobs. Never, anywhere, have such people said to me, "Around here WE are in charge." Instead, they talk mostly in terms of surviving. The effective and controlling assumptions of education everywhere are the ones I have named.

..... However, many small-scale experiences in homes and schools have shown that, when children are allowed to decide when they will begin the exciting task of learning to read and are allowed to work out for themselves the problems of doing so (with no more help or checking than they ask for), the great majority of them learn enthusiastically, and efficiently than most children in conventional schools.... Similarly, many experiences in homes and schools have shown that, when children who can read at least a little are given access to a large and varied selection of books, told to read what they like, and given plenty of time without interruption, checking, testing, or competitive grading, not only does their reading skill improve, but they come to love reading.

..... But the home-schooling movement provides more than just encouragement to those who seek change in the schools; it also provides much useful information. There is a great deal of internal communication within the home-school movement. As people who teach their own children discover new ways to help their children learn they tell this to others. When home-schoolers have problems, they ask other home-schoolers for help; when they solve their own problems, they share their solutions. If they live near enough to each other, they usually meet informally, sometimes as often as once a month. At these gatherings, home schoolers and their children get acquainted, share ideas, and experiences, and often plan and carry out group projects. Since the bond between them is a strong one, many home-schoolers become close friends; indeed, many people in the home-schooling movement liken it to being a member of a very large but close family.

.... Whatever educators may think of the content of the home-schooling publications, they do offer a rough model of a kind of network of communication and mutual support that, once established, could prove very useful to the public system.'

On the question of home-schoolers using the facilities of the schools, part-time and voluntarily, John Holt writes:

'These part-time students can also work to the benefit of the schools.... Their presence in the schools will say to the other students that some things taking place there are so interesting or so useful that people actually choose to do them. They will bring to the schools considerable energy, enthusiasm, intelligence, self-motivation, independence, and a wide range of interests.... These part time voluntary students will give schools and teachers feedback about the attractiveness of their offerings of a kind rarely available from regular students, who are often too concerned about staying out of trouble to say much of what they truly think.

..... I will close by saying that, since the schools have as much to gain by supporting home-schoolers as they have to lose by opposing them. I hope they will hasten to set their feet on the path of cooperation.

Letters

Dear EO,

Our oldest child has turned 5 this summer holidays and we are educating her at home this year(just as we've been doing since her birth,of course!)

It would be nice to hear from anyone with a girl(or boy)of similar age with whom we might share ideas,organise visits, create mutual support/friendship.

Jan Gartshore 15,Greyrigg Ave.,
Cockermouth
Cumbria ca
CA13 9EJ

^ ^ ^ ^ ^

Dear Pauline,(previous editor)

Thank you for a very neat issue and a lively editorial,which I enjoyed reading.

I also enjoyed reading Sigrun Macgilchrist's letter.(See Aug. newsletter Pg.23)I was embarassed by your apologetic and damning introduction to it.Each of us is an individual,and surely it is by allowing free expression of ideas from all sides that we are able to develop and refine our own understanding of life,of EO.,whatever.

I am aware that the primary purpose of the newsletter is to provide support and information for members;but there are many people who may not know that there is an alternative to school.I first heard about E.O. through a poster in the window of an alternative bookshop in Oxford("School is not compulsory")-perhaps such shops could carry copies Perhaps it would be good for us to keep an open mind to input from "outsiders".Sometimes things look clearer from a distance.

Cathy Sunshine 5,Spenlows Rd.,
Bletchley,
Milton Keynes

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

I read Sigrun Macgilchrist's letter with interest.I am not sure what is meant by making the newsletter independent-it will after all always cost money to produce.As for selling the newsletter in bookshops etc.,well,has Sigrun ever tried to persuade a bookshop to sell it?They honestly don't want to know because home educators are such a small minority and because the newsletter consists of items of interest only to EO members,and not to the public at large.

If Sigrun is worried about whether he will miss an issue of the newsletter then he should join EO and he will automatically get sent one.I don't think he understands what is meant when a group becomes a charity,(which he objected to in his letter).In our context it has nothing to do with complacent Victorian do-gooding to the so-called deserving.It means that a group acquires a legal identity under which it can trade or make its point of view known and which also protects its activists(i.e.the members who do the work to make the group function)from possible financial liabilities,should the worst happen. I personally think this is quite reasonable.There are also financial advantages in becoming a charity.

Sigrun approves of David Bethell's editorship(in September and December 1981).Although these newsletters were well illustrated and witty,they were the work of one person and were too much of an ego trip for my taste.A finished,high definition product does not invite participation.In newsletters I think we should aim for accessibility without being totally tatty,which is just as off putting in its way as

high gloss. I think the roving editorship works well, and I always find it quite clear who the next editor is.

Your friend sincerely,
Joan Hoare 25, Moor Oaks Rd.,
Broomhill,
Sheffield S10 1BX

Dear EOMembers,

As Christians, my wife and I were faced with the problem of finding a suitable education for our child, Ann. We did not want her cut off from society, yet, when Ann reached eight years, the poor standards of discipline and language at school (a state school) were beginning to show their effects on her behaviour and we felt something must be done.

We were both working at the time and our only alternative to the state system was private education. So we started Ann at a smallish private school and, since then, have seen her standards steadily improve. Now Ann is twelve, without any prompting she does her homework and, during exams, works until past midnight. At first she did not like the private school and the extra work which she was set; now she is convinced that she is in the right school and does not want to return to state education. We got a bit involved with an EO group once and Ann was worried about missing her friends. Her sister Jane (now seven) started private school at five and is perfectly happy and making satisfactory progress.

Many of you will say that private education is much too expensive and has many faults. Yes, of course, there are faults and some problems but we discuss these as a family and they are soon reduced and sorted out. Also we help our children at home when we can and believe strongly that their education is a combination of what we can teach them and what their school can teach them. Without 'back up' from their parents children obviously cannot get far. So that we can afford the school fees we live in a smaller house and have shorter holidays than would otherwise be possible.

Now, as we have arrived at a suitable solution for our children's education, we find we have also solved a problem which existed for ourselves and one that perhaps others have puzzled over.

As an intending Christian you are faced with so many choices between this church and that church, all with different approaches to God. Being faced with all these choices can be very confusing and eventually we realised that you've got to find the answer for yourself. If you keep on looking the answer will be given. This independent approach is similar to that required to find the right way to educate our children and so we find ourselves, now, not only practising a form of Education Otherwise but also very involved in a way of life which I, remembering EO's principles, call 'Christianity Otherwise!'

Briefly, we believe that Christianity can be followed quite independently. Though contact with other larger groups is sometimes useful and is not avoided, it is essential to realise that what you do and believe personally is what's important. "The only way to the Father is through me", said Jesus. No priest or group practice gets you to God. You've got to do it yourself by faith in Jesus, in what He is and what He did.

We would be very grateful to hear from anyone who has faced similar problems to ours and to learn how they have tackled them.

Are there any more "Otherwise Christians" out there who have developed their own answers to the problems of education and life?

John Broadhead 34, St. Martin's Grove
Leeds

♦♦ ♦♦ ♦♦ ♦♦

In the August newsletter (Pg.6) Hazel Clawley asked members how they would answer questions such as "Why did you withdraw your child from school?"; "How will they mix with others?" etc. The following letter supplies some of a member's answers:-

Dear Hazel,

I think it might be useful to draw up a list of people (as long as possible-it can be added to continually) who have been educated out of school (Patrick Moore of Night Sky springs to mind). Lots of famous people who have obviously made it. From memory I think such people keep being mentioned in EO newsletters (or it might be press cuttings or the radio). Quick reference to such a list I believe would answer these questions quickly:-

I don't believe that these people missed out on vital social experience (do you?).

I believe that these people learned to mix reasonably well with large groups of all kinds (don't you?).

These people didn't go through this experience and I believe that they coped (cope) with life in our society without such preparation (don't you?).

These people seem to cope with their own problems and have made a success of their life.

Teaching children out of school isn't new! I think if someone has the ability to do a little research to make a list of such people and find out as much as possible of their background (were their parents teachers etc.,) then the case should be proven. If it's not then maybe we should all pack in. You would then be able to talk about what interests you.

Brian Sharkey 35, Portland St.,
Lancaster LA1 1SY

“ ”

Dear Alison Mafham,

I would like to make a couple of suggestions regarding our "excess cash". First, couldn't we spend some of it on advertising ourselves. I don't mean classifieds or TV advertising (!) but making sure our literature is available where it should be i.e. Citizen's Advice Bureau, Council for Voluntary Services, Lea's (even!) etc. I thought it may be possible to contact such organisations centrally and distribute literature nationwide through them.

My second idea might be a little controversial, but I think it's worth consideration. A competition!!! -as follows:- Every region puts forward an idea of how they would use an amount of cash (pre-set or not, whichever) for the benefit of its members. The region with the best idea (judged by a panel, perhaps) wins' the cash to put their idea into action. I know it sounds a bit rash but although I couldn't think of many ways in which every member, nationally, could benefit I can think of lots of specific uses for a bit of extra money. I think it might be better for one region to benefit tremendously rather than a much-diluted spreading of benefits.

Linda Cooper "The Poplars",
37, Meynell Ave.,
Rothwell, Leeds LS26 0NY

o o

Editorial comment on previous letter:-I think Linda's second suggestion is somewhat biased towards those regions which have an active group life,meetings,outing etc.I am hoping to start a group in Herts.,but there are many EO members who do not wish to join such a regional group but which,nevertheless,want the support and benefit of EO as an organisation.A spread of financial benefits,however diluted,I think,should take place nationwide and not regionally.This is my personal opinion, other ideas and suggestions by members are most welcome.

.. ..

**Note from Editor

I had a letter from an EO member(name and address supplied)complaining of a recent EO camping weekend where there was adult nudity.She requests that if future weekends are to encompass nudity that the organisers should state this,so that members who disagree with nudity or are embarrassed by it can decide whether or not they wish to attend.I do not know to which weekend the member was referring,but perhaps others who attended may wish to reply.Perhaps separate weekends could be arranged for naturists.

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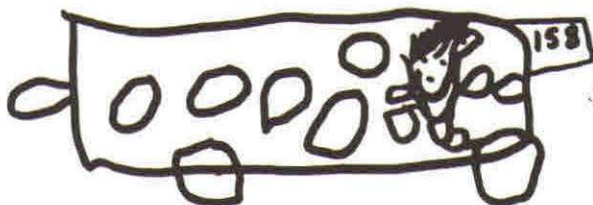
THE ACE SURVEY 1983 -Dealing with Non-attendance

Towards the end of 1983 ACE sent a questionnaire to every English and Welsh LEA asking for information about their policies and arrangements for dealing with non-attendance.Here is an extract from that report which is of relevance to EO.Under the heading "Home Education" was written :-

"Although parents have the right to educate their children at home the LEA must satisfy itself that the education provided is satisfactory.All our respondents who had cases of this sort in their area discharged their duties through their advisory staff or inspectors. The rigourousness of their supervision seems to vary,however.Lea's which appeared to have more systematic procedures were-Berkshire,which carries out termly reviews and aims at 'reintegration' into school;Cleveland;Derbyshire,which produces a termly report following inspection and is preparing guidance for parents;Gloucestershire, where the Area Education Officer and Chief Inspector visit initially and advice is given,books provided and progress examined;Gwent,where the Education Committee considers advisers' report;Staffordshire,where parents must submit timetables etc.;Bradford,where details of teachers and education are required;St.Helens,which requires written reports from parents;Walsall,which requires curriculum details;Hillingdon,the most systematic,where details are required about teacher qualifications, the teaching venue,the hours and organisation of teaching,learning materials,and subject content;Enfield."

Jean Shepherd

.....



Jan-Jorn Bajwa (aged 4 1/2)

apus

WRITING WITH A PURPOSE

We have recently arranged to exchange newsletters with a group of homeschoolers in New Zealand. The following article, by Nan Fry, is reprinted from issue no. 9 of their newsletter, which is entitled PRUNES.

One problem we have had since we started home schooling 12 months ago is the amount of written expression the children have been doing, or rather what they have not been doing. Sitting them down for an hour and telling them to get on with it just did not work. I decided that I would have to be a bit more ingenious than that. So off I went to the Library to see how the experts dealt with this problem. After days spent learning how easy it is, I gave up and went home. It seemed to me that there must be a reason why my two were so reluctant to put pen to paper, and after a while I came to the conclusion that this reluctance was because they could see no purpose in sitting down and writing simply because I told them to. My next objective was to find a purpose for their writing, and after many trials the following are what I have found to be most successful.

Newspaper Reporting

Twice a week both children find a story in the newspaper that interests them. We read it through and listen also if there is a radio report on the topic they have chosen. Then they write the item in their own words. We use any relevant pictures in the paper and then we put the article on our newspaper board. As the weeks go by they end up in a folder. Eventually we are going to have an attempt of making a newspaper of our own of the years events. The children get a lot of satisfaction from this and are quite keen to do follow up items if the topic they chose continues to be newsworthy.

Daily Diary

The children and I all started keeping a daily diary about 2 months ago. We do this first thing every morning. When we started I only made two rules. One, that they had to write at least three lines every day, and two, it had to be neat and tidy. They were both very pleased when they realised that their diary was private and they did not have to show me what they had written. To start with they wrote as little as possible, but as the weeks have gone by I have found that instead of spending only 3 or 4 minutes writing, the writing time can be up to 20 minutes. Fiona can get quite carried away and can be found writing in her diary at all hours of the day or night. One thing that I think has helped is that I sit down and write at the same time as they do.

Writing Stories

This is the best way to get a bad response from my two. Just the words "write me a story" seem to trigger a negative response. One day in desperation I asked them to write down how they made their beds. They had to pretend that I did not know anything about it and go through every stage. This started off our "How to" stories. We have had great success and they do them very well. I think they find it easier to write down what they know than have to use their imagination. I feel that this work is important as most adults do not write for pleasure but many have to write reports in some form in their studies or work. As they have become more confident they have become better at deciding what facts are important and in setting out their ideas in order.

Story Books

Although they were coping well in the areas above, I still felt that if I could, I would like them to write something fictional. Rodney had been very impressed when he had seen Seamus Harris's story books and thought that he might like to try the same. We covered some scrapbooks with contact and then they both sat down to decide what their books would be about. Fiona decided she did not want to write just one story and thought that a book of short stories is what

she would like. She made it as much like a real book as possible with a publishers information page and a contents page. As she loves to decorate her writing, I let her do this after she had completed her story. It may take her three days to complete her story as she writes it on pad paper and it is not until she is pleased with her final copy that we stick it into her book.

Rodney decided he wanted to write one long story. After he decided that it was to be a space story he spent some time in deciding what characters he would have. He also spent what I thought to be an enormous amount of time in decorating the front page. I am pleased now that I sat back and did not try to hurry him along. He has spent literally hours in writing his story and drawing his characters. It is the first time he has been so enthusiastic about writing. For Rodney to sit until 10 p.m. doing this sort of work is unbelievable. I think the best thing I did was that once I gave them the basic idea I let them carry on and do what they wanted.

After all the difficulties we have had over writing I feel that we as parents have to do some basic work before the children can start. None of us like doing something just because we are told to and our children are the same. I think if we can show them a reason for writing they will surprise us.

Contributed by Caroline Grant

Nan Fry

From "My Early Life" by Sir Winston Churchill

"My stay in the Royal Military College formed an intermediate period in my life. It brought to a close nearly 12 years of school. Thirty-six terms each of many weeks (interspersed with all-too-short holidays) during the whole of which I had enjoyed few gleams of success, in which I had hardly ever been asked to learn anything which seemed of the slightest use or interest, or allowed to play any game which was amusing. In retrospect these years form not only the least agreeable, but the only barren and unhappy period of my life. I was happy as a child with my toys in my nursery. I have been happier every year since I became a man. But this interlude of school makes a sombre grey patch upon the chart of my journey. It was an unending spell of worries that did not then seem petty, and of toil uncheered by fruition; a time of discomfort, restriction and purposeless monotony.

.....Harrow was a very good school, and a high standard of personal service prevailed among its masters..... I can only record the fact that, no doubt through my own shortcomings, I was an exception. I would far rather have been apprenticed as a bricklayer's mate, or run errands as a messenger boy, or helped my father to dress the front windows of a grocer's shop. It would have been real; it would have been natural; it would have taught me more; and I should have done it much better.....

Certainly the prolonged education indispensable to the progress of Society is not natural to mankind. It cuts against the grain. A boy would like to follow his father in pursuit of food or prey. He would like to be doing serviceable things so far as his utmost strength allowed. He would like to be earning wages however small to help to keep up the home. He would like to have some leisure of his own to use or misuse as he pleased. He would ask little more than the right to work or starve. And then perhaps in the evenings a real love of learning would come to those who were worthy - and why try to stuff it into those who are not? - and knowledge and thought would open the "magic caseements" of the mind.

Contributor unknown

Brews

from
the

Regions:

ESSEX

A pleasant day was recently spent at Southend. Margaret English had offered to play host, but fine weather drew us onto the beach. The children had a lovely time collect

ing shells and building castles. On another occasion Melanie Nield invited us to her home; we had planned to go to the nearby Country Park after lunch, but it turned out to be one of those hot lazy days and the children informed us they were quite happy in the garden, painting and playing in the sand. Meetings over the next few weeks include a visit to a farm and country park, a camping weekend in Dorset where we hope to collect some interesting fossils. We are planning a "computer day" and have booked the "Pitman Room" for a few extra meetings. We have a number of meetings arranged during October and Nov., members from Essex and surrounding areas are very welcome to come along:

Sunday 7th. October -UPMINSTER TYTHE BARN AND AGRICULTURAL FOLK MUSEUM.
Hall Lane, Upminster. Meet 1.30pm (admission free).
Sunday 21st. October -NORSEY WOOD, BILLERICAY. Open Day with Woodland Craft displays. Meet 11am by the Warden's Office (near the main car park)
Wed. 31st. October - PITMAN ROOM, BICKNACRE MEMORIAL VILLAGE HALL, BICKNACRE NR. DANBURY. 1pm to 6pm.

Each family is asked to contribute 50p towards the cost of hiring the room - since it is Hallowe'en it seems a good opportunity to celebrate. Bring along what you can - pumpkins, swede, witches costumes (or make it there, just bring materials). Instruments, ideas for games etc., and don't forget your broomsticks!

Sunday 4th. Nov

Wed. 28th. Nov

- GUY FAWKES CELEBRATIONS

- PITMAN ROOM, BICKNACRE MEMORIAL VILLAGE HALL, BICKNACRE, NR. DANBURY. 1PM TO 6PM

For a Christmas workshop in Crafts. Please bring along materials that you might have to share and anyone wishing to organise an activity is more than welcome. e.g. gift tags, decorations and cards, gifts etc.

Please ring me if you'd like to know more - Sandie, Basildon 554968

SOUTH LONDON NEWS

Any E.O. members are invited to an open-house at Helen and Mike Thompson's 6, PARKDALE ROAD, PLUMSTEAD, LONDON SE18 1RS on SUNDAY OCTOBER 14th. during the afternoon. Refreshments available. Tel. 854 6278

Please drop a line or phone if coming.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE E.O. GROUP

There will be a meeting at 25, MOOR OAKS RD., SHEFFIELD S10 1BX, tel. 666605, on 25th OCTOBER at 8pm. to listen to the tape of Ivan Geffen's talk on the legalities of home education. The tape lasts over an hour. It would help if you rang me beforehand to say if you are coming - Joan Hoare

WEST YORKSHIRE

In June we were invited to join a two day Greengathering at Bradford University and so we did! A painting, cutting and sticking table attracted children and a stand of E.O. literature and information attracted the parents. An exhibition of EO children's work attracted everybody. On the second day Peter Williams, our gym teacher, organised a display by Pudsey

Gymnastics and by the end of it the whole building knew who we were. A lot of interest was generated and I feel sure it has spread the word. On a personal level I found it a superb experience and my children just lapped up the lovely sociable atmosphere. We made lots of new friends among the stallholders.

About two dozen of us visited the new Viking Centre in York in July. The visit comprised a tour in a 'time car' around a reproduction of a Viking settlement. After that there is a display section showing some of the incredibly old finds from the Coppergate dig. The whole centre is built on the site of the original dig and one can see a mock-up of the dig inside.

Our next outing was to Temple Newsam where three of our families enjoyed a picnic and a Treasure Hunt for the children. The weather was glorious and we all had a marvellous time—the youngest member of the party, one year old Alison Pickles enjoyed the pebbles most of all (to eat, that is).

Things are looking up with one of our Lea's—I have had two referrals from them recently which can't be bad. Prompted by this civilised behaviour I have sent literature to all our Lea's and a letter suggesting our supportive side might be useful.

I have produced a Local Information Guide which I intend to send to new enquirers. It answers 10 most often asked questions about Home Education

and gives details of our local activities and facilities. I have included two appendices—the first lists places for physical activities and the second gives recommended suppliers of educational materials and equipment with discounts available. If any W. Yorks. members would like copies of these lists please send me an s.a.e.—Linda Cooper, "The Poplars"

37, Meynell Ave., Rothwell, Leeds LS26 0NY.

ISLE OF WIGHT OPEN DAY

August 11th proved to be a perfect day for outdoor activities by the sea, so we set sail for the island—courtesy of Red Funnel—and Mandy and John's fisherman's cottage.

I'm so glad we did, the day was long and warm and pleasurable. Not the least of the pleasures was to meet so many members for the first time. All afternoon the garden overflowed with children and adults. Activities ranged from eating; clay-modelling, swimming—for the more hardy or is it fool-hardy; more eating; pass the parcel and birthday cake, since coincidentally, 3 youngsters there had a birthday on that weekend. John generously spent much of the afternoon taking the children out on their speedboat—the height of Adam's day, whilst a friend of Mandy's spent the day in the kitchen making tofu.

Impromptu activities included face paints, turning into body paints and Dave became a walking totem pole. Water play resulting in some soaked but happy kids and not least the kite caused a great deal of excitement and honour. The kite handle was accidentally dropped down by the shore and the kite flew off into the sea. The only hope of reclaiming it was for John to chase after it in the speedboat, which he did successfully. Throughout the day members arrived from the road and from the sea, and I think Mandy, John and Orion are to be congratulated on a totally successful day. Thank you (Mandy Griffith)

HERTFORDSHIRE

All EO members living in Hertfordshire are welcome to visit us on THURSDAY, 25th. OCTOBER anytime after 12 noon. Our house is only small, but has a large garden so please bring warm clothing for the children to play outside if dry. (If wet, we'll squeeze indoors somehow!) We will provide drinks but please bring your own food if you want to.

We hope many Herts. EO'ers will turn up so that we can organise future group outings for the children to various places—swimming, sports, farms, factories, museums, films etc, and for an interchange of ideas and mutual help and problem-solving. Our son, Jan-Jorn is 4½ and will be educated at home. All ages are welcome and we look forward to seeing you. Please phone or write to say if you are coming.—Jean Shepherd and Mo Bajwa, →

9, Cranborne Gardens, Welwyn Garden City Tel. Welwyn Garden 39750
(Cranborne Gardens is off Knella Road and is near Ludwick Way)

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INFORMATION

Where to get what?

Membership Secretaries -Current and old Newsletters; S.I.N.C., Early Years,
Teach Your Own

General Secretary -Envelope Re-use labels -£1 per 100

Co-ordinators Secretary -Stationery; Introductory literature; Membership
Forms; Membership Secretaries address labels;
Posters; Digests; Handbills

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Growing without schooling

With Madge Whitelegg off to India we, the Wallaces, are distributing this
years GWS (issues 37-42), which have just started to arrive. The poor exchange
rate plus an actual increase in the price of GWS make it more expensive.
The new prices are £5 to EO members and £7 to non-members. This is a
subsidised price for EO'ers and despite the increase we feel very good
value for money. There is a limited of copies available and there will be a
strictly first come, first served situation. Address for orders to:-

B. and C. Wallace,
25, Diabaig,
Achnasheen,
Ross-shire IV22 2HE

Could everyone with membership forms please alter the cost of GWS to the
new prices mentioned above.

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Curriculum for Home Education for Middle and Secondary Age Children

West Yorkshire Region's Curriculum for Home Education (which one of their
members compiled for them) has been selling like 'hot cakes'. As mentioned
in the June Newsletter, any member can be supplied with a copy on receipt of
£1 towards copying costs and an s.a.e. Since June two of their Lea's have
had sight of it and were very impressed, so it might be a good document to
flash around even if you don't feel you need to follow a curriculum.

Contact Linda Cooper, "The Poplars",
37, Meynell Ave.,
Rothwell,
Leeds LS26 0NY

NOTICES

NOTICES

NOTICES

NOTICES

WANTED-SOMEWHERE TO RENT.

We are wanting to move from where we are now, to somewhere where there is more of a community of EO people than where we are at present. The sort of thing described by Lynne on Pg.36 of the April newsletter sounds ideal, except that we want to rent somewhere, not buy it.

We would like to hear from anyone who knows of somewhere to rent in that kind of situation. We would consider living in a caravan on someone's land, to get ourselves established in the area.

A few areas we're particularly interested in are Brighton, Milton Keynes, and King's Langley/Watford. But we'll consider anything. Please write if you can help to :-

David and Vicki Willow, Pollards Cross Cottage,
Church Hill,
Hempstead,
Saffron Waldon,
Essex, CB10 2PA

PRAYER FOR EO

Many of us doing EO are quite isolated. We would like to hear from any members who would be interested in forming a prayer link for mutual support.

We would also like to be in touch with anyone who would be interested in forming an EO community based on a life of prayer. Write to :-

Richard and Margaret Deimel,
54, Dalwood Street,
London SE5 7DU

HOUSE SHARING

We would like to share our house with another EO family. We are two adults and three children (6½ yrs, 3 yrs, 1 yr). Please write for more details to Mandy and Ron Skinner, 3, Village Cottages,

Bishops Tawton,
Barnstaple,
Devon, EX32 0DB

RURAL RESETTLEMENT HANDBOOK

"An essential reference book for all rural dwellers, aspiring smallholders, armchair resettlers and everyone concerned with the countryside."

Chapters on 'Children in the countryside' and 'Rural Health' and several contributions from members of E.O.

Order your copy now, sent post free, price £4.95, from Lighthouse Books, 27a Sydney Street, Brightlingsea, Essex CO7 0BG.

REMEDIAL TEACHING

Remedial reading

To teach a single child to read at the age of about 6 or 7 is not a skilled job. The skill which requires a trained teacher is to teach a whole class to read. Not all teachers succeed in this task and we are faced with the problem of children who cannot read after 3, 4, 5 or more years in school.

The teachers call them "late developers" or "underachievers" and blame the children or their parents. If the parents had been educating the children at home, no adviser from the education office would let parents get away with not teaching their children to read after several years. They would be taken to court for not educating their children. But teachers in state schools get away with it.

Remedial teaching requires skill and patience but an E.O. parent will probably be able to learn if it concerns his or her own child.

Now to the task of teaching your child to read. First check that there is no vision or hearing loss. Your child should have an eye test and a hearing test.

Your child will have lost his confidence. It is most important to build up confidence either before you embark on the reading or simultaneously with it. The confidence building may be anything:—cooking, needlework, swimming, painting, woodwork. Any area where the child feels he is achieving.

Whatever has happened at school, your child will be bored to tears with simple reading books which he has been faced with day after day, possibly for years. (I have recently come across a 12 year old whose school reading book was suitable for a 6 year old. I would certainly not expect a self-respecting 12 year old to learn to read with a book like that).

Find your child's interest, something which makes his eyes light up as he talks about it. As he talks, write it down in his own words. In the evening, when you are alone, write it out in neat printing or type it out.

At the next session with your child, he can start making a book. Read the typewritten passages to him and then let him cut them out and stick them in a scrapbook. While he draws a picture to illustrate his story, read an interesting book to him (I find Roald Dahl a very good author for children aged 7 - 12).

When the picture is completed and has been stuck in position near the text, see if he can read the passage. Since it is his own composition the chances are that he will be able to, but this will be counteracted by lack of confidence.

If your child has many years of failure behind him, progress may be very slow, but persevere. Do not let yourself get impatient as your child will pick up negative feelings and become tense and insecure.

When your child is reading reasonably well, encourage him to read lots of story books until he reads really fluently.

If you feel no progress has been made in about 4 weeks, it would probably be best to contact the Dyslexia Society.

British Dyslexia Association, 18 The Circus, Bath, Avon.

Remedial writing

Some teachers at school have not taught creative writing. It is always "Copy from the blackboard".

Children often feel that they are unable to write their own stories. The method I have used quite successfully is to read a couple of chapters of a book to the children and then ask them to write about it, with a picture as well if they wish. Any spelling they ask for is given and mistakes in spelling are ignored at first so as not to undermine confidence.

When writing is flowing, then is the time to attend to spelling. Some children write very neatly and want to make sure their spelling is correct as they go along. Others prefer to write rapidly and not bother about spelling or neatness. Then, after it has been corrected, they make a neat copy.

In my experience, confidence about spelling and punctuation is built up in this way.






"Look and read" is a very good T.V. programme to help with both reading and spelling. The stories and presentation are suitable for 12 year olds needing remedial work as well as for 7 and 8 year olds.

Remedial arithmetic

When Ali came out of school at the age of $7\frac{1}{2}$, she could add and subtract to 10. That was all! After 3 years! All the rest of number was confusion in her mind. When this happens it is necessary to go right back to the beginning in arithmetic. A confusion early on can make the whole of maths difficult right up to 'O' level stage. A bad feeling about maths can stem from early primary school when sums are marked wrong.

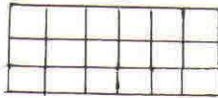
In addition to going step by step through all the stages of arithmetic to find out where your child has a mental block, there are plenty of practical ways a child can get used to number in a more interesting way. Weighing, measuring, length, measuring liquids, using a protractor to measure angles, using compasses to draw circles, hexagons, etc. and other simple geometry, graphs and of course number games such as Monopoly. Build up your child's interest and confidence, then find out where the difficulty lies.

1. Check the understanding of addition and subtraction facts.
2. Check the understanding of the concept of building up tens and units into teens. I use squared paper from a printed arithmetic exercise book. These are much cheaper than maths equipment such as is used in primary schools. It can be just as effective and, if pasted in a scrap book, can be kept as a record.

e.g. 14 is one ten     
and 4 units



3. Show multiplication facts, again by using squared paper, e.g.



6 x 3

Do not try to teach division until the idea of multiplication is firmly grasped.

4. A bar of chocolate is good for teaching division. There is a prize at the end.
Multiplication tables can be shown, again using squared paper. Any significant pattern can be pointed out to your child.
Thus, $3x$:-

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

5. Tens and units addition. Practice is needed without carrying figures before introducing the idea of carrying ten. Use of a calculator to check the answers can make these more interesting. Once this is understood, hundreds can be introduced.
6. Tens and units subtraction. Again, practice is needed without the complication of borrowing ten, before this idea is introduced. I think perhaps it might be useful to go back to squared paper for this one, or perhaps use 10p and 1p coins. Every time ten is borrowed from the tens column by the units column, a 10p coin can be converted into 1p coins. Again, using a calculator to check answers can be an encouragement.
7. Tens and units, multiplying. The principle of the carrying figure is the same as with addition. This is as far as my own experience goes. Division of larger numbers, fractions and decimals are the other areas of primary school arithmetic that I have not yet had experience with.

If you find a mental block at one of these stages, you will need to spend a great deal of time explaining it, demonstrating it in as many different practical ways as possible. Ali has had a mental block at no. 2. Stages 3,4,5 and 6 she has grasped reasonably well but it took almost six months to grasp 2. I hope that once she has overcome this hurdle she will lose her fear of number, and be able to progress more rapidly. She is still very hesitant.

There are several T.V. programmes for schools which are good for learning maths, both on BBC2 and ITV.

I have outlined the work that should have been covered in the Primary School. The more I think of it, the more inefficient the system seems. Six or seven years to learn just this! And then some of the children fail; some or many lose confidence and creative spontaneity.

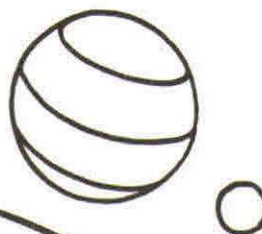
Remedial work can be really time-consuming overcoming difficulties caused by indifferent teaching, but if the child is taught at home, none of these should develop into difficulties and there will be so much time to learn other important things.

Patricia Knox (a teacher of remedial children)
Pen Llywenon
Bodedern
Holyhead
Gwynedd



SEG

Village

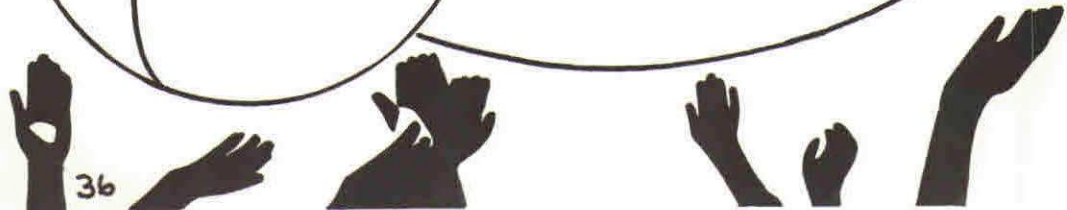
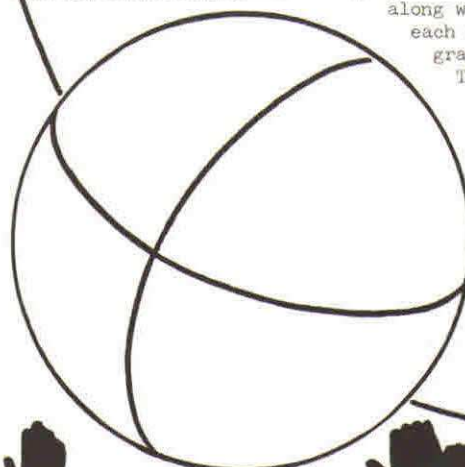


In June 1983 a group of people met at Hood Fair in Totnes, Devon. We came together as parents who shared ideas about educating our children. We wanted them to have the freedom to make their own choices and to be responsible for their own lives. We felt school was not necessarily the best place for children to learn and grow but that they needed the company of other children and of affirming, caring adults in a stimulating, non-coercive, non-competitive environment. We were therefore seeking to live more closely with like minded people in some kind of community.

As the group has grown we have realised that we are more than just a group of people concerned with their children's education. We also share a vision of how people could live co-operatively together, changing and growing in a caring, open environment which is supportive to each individual's needs. We are therefore open to any sympathetic people - old, young, couples or single people with or without children.

By the beginning of 1984 there was potential for more than one community to evolve from our meetings. People were seeking varying degrees of communality ranging from the income sharing commune to families wanting to live just "down the road" from other like minded people. Accommodation might include several large houses, or a farm with converted outbuildings and nearby cottages bought or rented. To move into an area some people could perhaps do council house swaps while others could live in caravans or tipis. We would also like to have some kind of central meeting place/resource centre as well as some co-operatively run workshops. Some people felt they would like to be involved in home-based co-operative work projects for at least part of their time while others wanted to continue working for outside employers. It was from out of all this that the idea of "a village" arose, as it seemed to allow everyone to find a living situation that suited their individual needs.

The group as a whole has no formal structure but rather relies on individuals taking responsibility. We have avoided conventional structures due to our concern that the group process enables everyone to take initiatives in their own way but we are still learning how to do this whilst continuing to move forward with various projects. Our large gatherings act mainly as meeting places for people and ideas, where we can talk and play together. These along with a contact list, circular letters and visits to each others homes, enable us to form friendships and gravitate to various groupings where we feel an affinity. These can move off to begin projects while retaining communication with the rest of the group. The matching of needs of where people want to live, how and with whom is a difficult and potentially painful process. We have no easy formulas for doing this but a commitment to mutual support and communication should help us through, so that as people go off in this way setting up various projects, hopefully others will come in seeking to do similar things and eventually a whole network of co-operating villages could gradually evolve.



Sept
84

As well as initiatives from within the group, during the last year the group has been in contact with lots of other people, many of whom are involved with projects in their own local areas. Below is printed the current situation in just seven of them. Obviously there are many different approaches, needs to satisfy and available facilities, but what

is so exciting is the potential of a network of people who are all working together.

network

We have been educating our 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ yr. old daughter for nearly 2 years now and we have a son of 3. We would like to be part of a group sharing skills, resources and offering mutual support in Bath. I am currently running workshops for children in pottery and drama. A Village, (Bath), 15, New King St., Bath, Avon.

Two families and a single person have taken long term lets in the Totnes area, thereby complementing other local families whose children are learning at home. Much research has been done as to the potential for obtaining a range of winter let accommodation, and so far three families have taken this up and at least another five families are hoping to move nearby soon.

We very much want to use the next six months as an opportunity for coming closer together to work at ways of developing A Village in South Devon. Contact A Village, (Totnes), Myrtle Cottage, Flood St., Stoke Gabriel, Devon. TQ9 6QL.

The Wells group sprang out of the Glastonbury Education Project and consists of 4 or 5 families who have been getting together on Mondays and Tuesdays. We've had lots of fun just getting together, enjoying painting, printing, shaping clay, tadpole hunts, regular swimming, tree climbing and exploring the cathedral of this lovely old town. There's still not enough regular parental energy to form a rota, but the younger children are often helped by the older ones. We are in a fertile EO area, with active groups in a 20 mile radius. Cheers, Marion (0749) 4272 or Graeme (0458) 50737.

Since leaving Holme Place community in October 1983, like some of you I have been looking for somewhere else to live, in my case another community, and look as I might I only seemed to confirm that I was not OK because I was unable to find anywhere. It was only when I stopped my desperate search that I do believe I found what I sought. I am as confirmed a believer in community living as before, but I'm not rushing - I'm putting a lot of energies into a group centred near Glastonbury that is working towards racial equality and for me that feels good. I hope it may lead to my living in or helping to set up a community that expresses humanity more globally and one that is committed to challenging racism in ourselves and our society.

Pauline Freeman, 113, Staplegrove Road, Taunton, Somerset.

We are two families in the Tewkesbury/Evesham area with children of just 4. We hope to let them learn without going to school and would like to meet others in the area with children aged 3, 4 or 5 who plan the same.

Mary and Michael, 76 Main St., Sedgeberrow, Evesham.

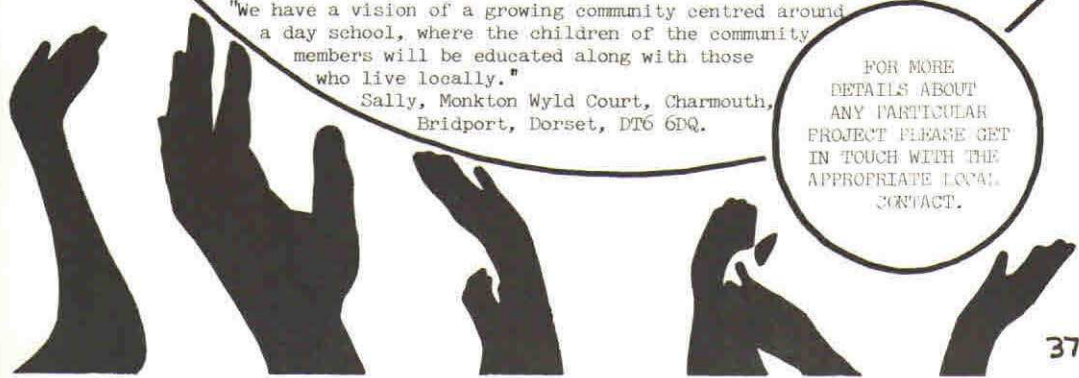
Person looking for other people:- dedicated to self development, non-competitive intuitive living, and deepening awareness of the effects of the environment- to talk to, and play with.

A Village, c/o Flat 2, 128 Richmond Hill, Richmond, Surrey.

"We have a vision of a growing community centred around a day school, where the children of the community members will be educated along with those who live locally."

Sally, Monkton Wyld Court, Charmouth, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6DQ.

FOR MORE
DETAILS ABOUT
ANY PARTICULAR
PROJECT PLEASE GET
IN TOUCH WITH THE
APPROPRIATE LOCAL
CONTACT.



THE TIDDLEY SCHOOL MOVEMENT

SATURATION PROCEDURE :An existing practising member of EO puts up about 50 'Willingly to school' posters in her immediate area.(For a start this would be in cities for density reasons.)When she gets about half a dozen mothers prepared to join the group then they set up aTiddley School and of course run it how they please.The existing member will have all the EO advice booklets so it would be unnecessary for the others to join EO.But we would hope to be informed of the numbers involved.If a bigger response is received then obviously further arrangements must be made.

The advantages are that EO members are no longer isolated.That the children are actually attending a school and that the group can help each other.Further,one parent can easily cope with six or seven self-motivated children thus freeing others.At Brighton I saw one adult easily coping with about sixty children for long periods with no trouble whatsoever.

Once established the group would have to pay EO for the posters.However,a secondary booklet is essential before procedure could take place.This has been six years in the offing.

POSTER

WILLINGLY TO SCHOOL

Small is beautiful.Bring your child to a Tiddley School.Any age.Any ability.We achieve far better educational results.No state support or control.Absolutely no corporal punishment.Our aim is no punishment at all(The Christian Way).With us self-discipline is developed.Our children love to learn.Autonomous methods used.Allow your child to grow up stable,unmaterialistic and individualistic.No fees to fee.
The snags.You will have to put some time in,not teaching but being a resource.You will have to pay for teaching materials and allow your house to be used from time to time.

Contact:

If there is interest I am prepared to produce the posters and co-ordinate the scheme.

Nigel Everdell
25,Common Lane,
Hemingford Abbots,
Cams.

PEANUTS

Contributed by Miranda Shuttieworth

by Schulz



Games

It's been some time now since any original ideas for games have appeared in the newsletter so I thought I'd send a few of our favourites. Over the years I have made many games for Marc (8) and Emma (6), many based on the familiar snap, dominos and ludo but with various subjects - time, adding, subtraction, alphabet and so on. With a little planning some of these games can be interwoven, for example, for a young child two sets of cards could be made each with a letter of the alphabet. These can be used for matching, playing pairs, and snap. Another version would use one set of alphabet cards with a set of picture cards, each picture showing a first letter of the alphabet (apple, ball etc. - to be original!) These again can be used for matching, playing pairs, snap, and the same cards could also be used for playing lotto. These are just a couple of very basic ideas, but it is amazing how many variations on a similar theme can evolve.

One game which has proved very popular is "Wordly Wizard". I originally made the board when Marc was learning to read, and the basic idea is to throw the dice and move your counter along a path towards "Wordly Wizard's" cave. However, on the way you meet various hazards, such as dragons, swamps, castles, where you can be imprisoned etc. If your dice lands on a hazard you have to ask "Wordly Wizard" for help. Our original version had cards with words on that Marc was familiar with, and in order for "Wordly Wizard" to give help, you have to choose a card and correctly read the word. You can use this same board for many different games, for the very young you could have colour cards or numbers, or for children with a little more reading ability, simple sentences, "jump three times" etc. We have also used this game in learning french, having picture cards and speaking in french. The board is brightly coloured and covered in clear film (as are most of our games) and this not only makes them look attractive but helps them wear well. Another set of games are based on "Patience". Again we have various versions, but to give you an idea here is one basic board:

GOOD FRIENDS				
ch	st	oo	sh	th

You also have a set of cards, five or so for each group, and depending on the ability of the player you could have the same letters for matching, or pictures. For example, for "ch" you could have one or more cards with "ch" written on, or pictures such as church, chocolate, chips, chicken

and chair. To make it a little more difficult you could use the letters at the end of the word, as in witch, but that's the nice thing about making your own games, you can suit them to your individual needs. For those not familiar with the rules of Patience, the cards are shuffled and you then share them out along the bottom row. You start by taking a card off the "ch" pile, let's say it's a picture of a ship. You put this card under "sh" and take the next card from the "sh" pile. You continue in this way until you are unable to move. Using the same set of cards I made another game on the reverse side of the board. Divide the board into squares (or rectangles) so that each card will fit in. You can make a square for each card if you wish, but I used 15. You then write the word in each square:

sheep	teeth	chocolate	ghost	cheese
stamp	moon	strawberry	thimble	feather
fish	books	stones	bath	thermometer

Again there are several ways you can play, as a basic matching game where the child matches each picture to the word, or for a slightly more difficult version where you need dice. You can choose to play top line only, or come to that, any line or combination. You set aside the cards relevant to the lines you are playing and turn them face down. The idea is to select a card and put it down in sequence (sheep, teeth, chocolate, ghost and cheese etc.). In this game you can have one to three players (each choosing a line) and by choosing a card you cover the word on the board, providing it is in sequence. If the wrong card is chosen (somebody else's line or out of sequence) it is shown to the other players and then laid face down again. Players try to memorize where the card is placed for future turns.

In the third version, players throw a dice and lay their card accordingly - if a three is thrown the player covers the third word along (chocolate if the top line is played). Again this can be played by one to three people, and in the one-player version (for those who really like to test their patience!) all 15 cards can be used with 2 dice. To add another element, the dice can be added, subtracted, divided or multiplied - the score used however the player decides; remembering that you also have to choose from memory the correct card to be placed!

You can use this same board for lotto, bingo, or the cards for snap (sheep/ship etc.). Incidentally, I also used this same idea for making a "vowel" version using pictures that included a,e,i,o,u. This can be as easy (or difficult) as you like and some cards from the original set can also be used if liked, such as sheep and ship. There are many, many more possibilities (fr, tr, pr, sr, or and so on) but I'll leave you to think of those!

A different type of game I made stemmed from a wild life project we were doing. One simple game used just a few pictures of wild animals (in our case, all British, but that can change according to needs). One person volunteered to be "the animal" and the picture was pinned to his/her back without seeing it. This person then had to ask questions (we agreed on 10 guesses) and tried to determine what animal he/she was. The rest of the players could only answer "yes", "no" or "maybe" and it was interesting to find the questions developing from a pure guess "am I a swan?" to "do I have webbed feet?" etc. It was a simple game but the children enjoyed it and became aware of words such as omnivorous, herbivore and so on.

Since the interest in wild life continued I went on to make other games also. One basic set of cards proved valuable for a host of different games, half having a picture (drawn or cut from magazines etc.) of wild life and half having a matching written word. We started off with pictures of about 20 forms of wild life (ladybird, fox, deer, spider and so on) but as the games progressed we added one or two plants and seeds also - all will become clear presently. These basic cards proved useful for the usual snap, lotto, bingo and matching type games.

A few extra cards were also included suggesting different attributes:

feathers

fly

nocturnal/swim/herbivore/webbed feet and so on. These were used for sorting the animals into various groups using the animal picture (or word) cards. Some of the information we had to look up during play, but these games encouraged the children to look at animal and wild life with new understanding. No longer was a fox just that - it was omnivorous, a mammal, and so on.

As we learnt more and more about wild life we discussed food chains and another game evolved. In fact, several, still using the original cards. In one game the cards would be shared equally among the players and someone would start off laying a card of his choice. The next player would lay a card, the idea being to form a food chain. As an example (an easy choice!) if your first card showed a fox the food chain

could include fox, grass snake, shrew, beetle, caterpillar (and you could go on

Another game included a board and dice. There were four animals (a fox, deer, badger and blue tit) each with foot prints showing a track to their 'home' - badgers set, blue tits nest box etc. Let's assume you chose to be the blue tit. You'd throw the dice and follow the foot prints along (they crossed the other animals incidently, so you had to make sure you followed your own set of tracks). If you landed on a blank space it meant you were hungry and to move again you had to turn over a card (from the original set). If the blue tit could eat whatever animal shown, then on the next throw of the dice you could continue to play. Otherwise, you would have to miss a turn and hope that the next turn of a card showed something edible! It didn't take the children too long to realise you had better chances of getting home with some of the animals than you did with the others. To keep up with the level of learning, and to keep the game interesting, you can continue to add more cards (and new elements) as you go along. If you are including herbivores in your card collection it is important to add some plants, acorns, berries etc. to your set and these add yet another dimension. Still that's the great thing about making your own games, one thing seems to lead to another. Now then, where's those scissors and card?.....

Sandie Cottee

THE ORIGINS OF ENGLISH INDIVIDUALISM?

One of the attractions of E.O. has been it's commitment to the quality of family life and the challenge it offers to other approaches in the U.K. Little did I realise how traditional were some of the other styles. In his economic assessment of the "Origins of English Individualism" pub. Basil Blackwell 1978, Alan Macfarlane quotes from the "Relation, or rather a true account, of the island of England" written by Andrea Trevisano, ambassador to the court of King Henry VII, 1497.

Trevisano was especially interested in the personality and social character of the English. "Combined with their self-confidence and arrogance went a mutual suspiciousness; each individual was out for himself and trusted no one else. As compared to Italian society, it seemed that the English had no 'sincere and solid friendships amongst themselves, insomuch that they do not trust each other to discuss either public or private affairs together, in the confidential manner we do in Italy. This lack of trust was shown, and we might suggest partly caused by, the family system and upbringing which the visitor found so odd. He remarked that 'the want of affection in the English is strongly manifested towards their children; for after having kept them at home till they arrive at the age of 7 or 9 years at the utmost, they put them out, both males and females, to hard service in the houses of other people, binding them generally for another 7 to 9 years. And these are called apprentices.... The author dismissed the native's explanation that it was 'in order that their children might learn better manners', believing that it was because the parents 'like to enjoy all their comforts themselves, and that they are better served by strangers than they would be by their own children.... if they had their own children at home, they would be obliged to give them the same food they made use of for themselves.'"

600 years is some pedigree!

George Moffat

READING WRITING AND SPELLING WITH EWAN

Ewan is nearly 10 and has been able to read well for some years. He has an insatiable appetite for a wide range of books and stories from "Tintin" to "The Lord of the Rings" and information books on almost anything. When he came out of school at the age of 7 he was really "screwed up" about writing. After 9 months, we were working abroad and he wanted to write home. He would sit down to copy his own words from my writing and I could see the tension mount in him. He would sit clenching the pencil and say "I can't do it. When I sit down to write I feel like I'm going to have to write and write and write like I had to at school."

So we would talk about his feelings and I would try to encourage him to do just a little and then we would leave off writing for months. His writing and spelling were awful and I can't pretend I wasn't worried but I kept telling myself that he would get there. At his request, over the last 18 months he has had occasional writing practice, typing and spelling, and once or twice he has spontaneously written notices for his room or angry notes to me, but I have refused to push him feeling instinctively that it would set him back. Maturation is a large part of the process of gaining fine control of the fingers and I reassured myself that he did do other things with his hands. After a month of not writing, he surprised himself by being able to write much more easily with less physical effort. However he still lacked confidence to try on his own and I felt that he was self critical of his own efforts. "Is his ability to read inhibiting his writing", I asked myself, "Surely a child who reads as he does must know what words look like and be able to recognise when a familiar word is wrongly spelt. Perhaps if he could gain confidence with spelling, confidence with writing would follow."

So one day when he was making a poster on seal culling and asked me a word, I suggested he try the word out in as many different ways as he could think of and pick the one that looked right to him. After 6 tries he delighted himself by finding the right one. From this small step forward we tried spelling by trial and error using Scrabble letters. This seemed less of a threat than writing words down. And now when he writes notices for a game, he is confident enough to guess at the spelling or to experiment on a scrap of paper to find the word he needs. Recently a notice appeared which said "beware of the snake" and I found a scrap which said "snact snacke shacke snace snake".

Ewan is now keen to learn to spell verbally and we have been working through a box of spelling cards I borrowed from the local Teachers Centre. I feel he has impressed himself by getting through the cards with ease and at the same time (much to my relief) he is becoming relaxed about writing.

All this may seem like small stuff to other people, but I feel we have made a breakthrough. With guesswork, guidance and trust, Ewan is overcoming his writing problem himself and feeling a sense of achievement as a result.

Lesley Downie

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON 'PUBLIC SPEAKING'

I was interested to read of Hazel Clawley's experiences of 'public speaking'. I have been asked to talk twice this year about the home education of my two children, once to third year B.Ed. students at Plymouth's teacher training college, and secondly to a group of trainee health visitors at Plymouth's teaching hospital. I may say that I enjoyed the second occasion rather more than the first. I found that half the student teachers were resentful and hostile, quick to point out all the usual drawbacks (as if I wasn't aware of these and more), while the remainder were sympathetic and more than willing to answer their colleagues' questions with little help from me. The health visitors were rather older and some had children. Their training takes them into schools and they had a different aspect on education from the teachers

in that they were concerned with children's overall welfare. On the whole their questions showed a greater comprehension of the reasons why I had withdrawn my children from school.

In response to Hazel's request for answers to the questions she quoted, I think that these are a typical selection of standard questions, most or all of which deschoolers will have been asked at some time. However, the answers cannot be standard, for one of the many things I have discovered since withdrawing my children is that we have all taken this step for a wide variety of reasons and our responses to the problems engendered by this decision will be very different.

There have been many studies undertaken which show the effects of traditional school on such issues as sexual inequality, racial prejudice and the reinforcement of social class, and I feel that it is an advantage at times like this to be armed with this information and refer questioners to the appropriate articles.

I sympathise with Hazel's feeling of frustration about not having the opportunity to discuss what really interested her, that is, children's ability to be 'independent self-directed learners'. However, education being carried out anywhere but at school comes as such a shock to some people that a whole session like the one Hazel attended may often be spent in explanation and reassurance, rather than as a sounding board for new ideas which was the original intention of the conference.

I agree with Hazel's final comment - next time she intends to take charge of the proceedings and talk about the positive aspects of home schooling, rather than allowing it to be treated as 'an unfortunate second-best when all else fails'.

Alvena Hillier

CHARITY BEGINS WITH THE CHARITY COMMISSIONERS.

By the time you read this, EO will have disappeared and been re--placed by The Education Otherwise Association Ltd., plus The Education Otherwise Charitable Trust. This is our most controversial action to date since it brings us within the scope of Company Law with its attendant restrictions, though its purpose is to strengthen our position by making us a legal entity which can claim protection and benefit from the same Company Law. This is no longer the place to discuss the possibilities that were open to us; we have opted for charitable status as a limited liability company. These are the advantages:-

- 1) We can ask for money from large charitable bodies (Rowntree Trust, Hambros Bank, etc.,) who would not give to us if we were not a registered charity.
- 2) We can obtain certain tax benefits.
- 3) Members of the Limited Company are no longer liable personally for any debts that EO may incur that we don't have the funds to meet; each members' liability is limited to a nominal sum.

The disadvantages (which I consider are slight) stem from the constitutional restrictions placed on us by the various Companies Acts. These were designed on the premise that human beings are naturally deceitful and need to be protected from each other; however, it has been possible to write a constitution around these restrictions that gives us the kind of latitude we have always enjoyed, whilst making it clearer who is responsible for what aspects of running the organisation.

The constitution will be printed (either full or precis-ed) in the December newsletter, along with the report of the first A.G.M. This article is simply a follow-up to the Core Group minutes which were published in August.

John Elenor

NORTH LONDON EO

In recent months there have been a number of shock/horror reports in local newspapers regarding the state of education in Haringey, however, EO members can rest assured that whatever the situation inside schools the prospects for out-of-school education remain excellent.

There are a number of sports centres in the borough and a Haringey Sports Pass allows parents on a low income to accompany their children free of charge. In Hornsey we have indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a warm teaching pool for babies and young children and reasonably priced lessons available. At the Edison Centre and at the Haringey Club (recently changed from Haringey Boys Club thanks to efforts towards more equal opportunity for girls) are facilities for indoor sports, dancing, music practice etc.

For those interested in natural history the Parkland Walk, a 2½ mile stretch of reclaimed railway line, provides a potential nature reserve and only a short bus or tube ride away in neighbouring Camden the Camley Street Natural Park is due to open in September and is still looking for volunteer children to take part in ecological projects. There are vacant allotments available at very reasonable rents for those who prefer more strenuous involvement with the soil. City 'farms' are within easy reach for anyone who has a nostalgia for that particular aspect of the countryside and an active animal liberation group for those who don't.

Haringey is well equipped with libraries of books and records and only a short travelling distance from the museums, art galleries, theatres and music centres of London, as well as the usual tourist attractions which are free of crowds on weekdays during the winter. For those interested in learning particular subjects or taking exams there is a very comprehensive range of courses offered by Haringey and adjoining boroughs. The fact that over 100 languages are spoken by children in the borough may be regarded by schools as a problem but it provides an invaluable resource for out-of-school educators as do the cultural events put on by the various ethnic groups. Other local features of educational interest include a Historical Society, a Theatre School and Highgate Cemetery.

The main problem for one family has been the difficulty of using bicycles as a means of transport. The exhaust fume rules on the roads of Haringey (and increasingly on the pavements) but improvements are on the way with plans to impose penalties for pavement parking and parents with prams, pushchairs or toddlers will no doubt breathe a sigh of relief when these actually come into force.

Information on educational activity in other areas of North London would be appreciated by the co-ordinator.

Genevieve Bridgeman

E.O. Officers

Treasurer:

Alison Mafham,
3, Park Road West,
Curzon Park,
Chester.

Membership Secretaries:

Bruce & Christine Wallace,
25, Diabaig,
Achnasheen,
Ross-shire,
Scotland,
IV22 2HE

Tel: 044581 225

Assistant Treasurer:
(Renewals)

Bob Emmett,
8, Queensway,
Liddell Park,
Llandudno,
Gwynedd,
LL30 1YJ

Enquiries Secretary:

Janet Everdell,
25, Common Lane,
Hemingford Abbots,
Cams.
PE18 9AN

Tel: 0480 63130
(NOT after 9.30 p.m.)

General Secretary:

John Elenor,
31, Anson Road,
London, NW2.

Reviews Editor:

Helen Holland,
Inholms Farm,
Plumpton Green,
Nr. Lewes,
Sussex.

Co-Ordinators' Secretary:

Andy Anderson,
95, Derrington Avenue,
Crewe,
CW2 7JA

Tel: 0270 664060

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E.O. is affiliated to:

N.C.C.L.,
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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.e. to
25 Common Lane, Hemingford Abbots, Cambs. PE18 9AN