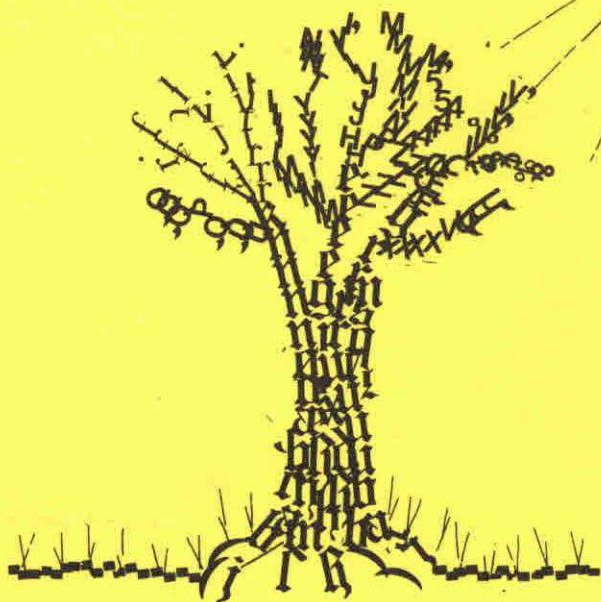


# EO

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Newsletter  
no.39

February  
1985

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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.

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Please send contributions for the April Newsletter to:-

KEVIN FLEISCH, 57 STARTFORTH PARK, BARNARD CASTLE, DURHAM.

- deadline is - 1st March 1985

**DON'T FORGET!**

# Editorial

Lynda has expended so much energy doing all the typing and making nearly all the editorial decisions that she has run out of energy and inspiration, so she has asked me to write this editorial.

Although we have been in EO for less than a year, we have somehow found ourselves editing a newsletter and contributing to the EO LONDON WEEKEND in February.

Perhaps I should introduce the Bailey family. Lynda is a busy housewife and mother to three small children, Sarajeon, Michael and Rosanna, all under 4 years. Although most of the typing has been done while the older two are in bed, Rosie usually wakes up in the evenings and I have spent a lot of time in her company. As I write, she is sitting on my lap and is just going to sleep! For the last half hour she has started crying whenever I tried to pick up the pen! I am a Medical student, and will finish my studies in June. After this we shall be moving around quite a lot, which was one reason we decided, even at this stage to educate at home. We have a number of teachers among our friends, and it is very tempting when talking to them about our plans to knock school education, we are very aware that things are not so black and white. We shall be interested to see how things go when we settle in one place, will the children be uneducable in a school?

We were pleasantly surprised to see a number of contributions from abroad. This has been both interesting and encouraging and we hope it will continue.

This newsletter has been produced as quickly as possible, in time to plug the EO LONDON WEEKEND, 9-10th February. Please could those who are coming bring any of the items mentioned on page 16, these will help with the children's activities.

We look forward to meeting some of you EO'ers out there, in February,

Till then, best wishes for an enlightening year!

David + Lynda

\*\*\*\*\*

## advertising in newsletter

Is your business interested in advertising in this bi-monthly newsletter? The newsletter is distributed to members of Education Otherwise Association Ltd, which is a registered charity, and to those sympathetic to its aims, which are set out on the back cover of this newsletter.

If you or your business is interested in taking advertising space in future newsletters, and would like further details of cost, deadlines etc, please contact:-

Jean Shepherd,  
Advertising Secretary,  
9 Cranborne Gardens,  
Welwyn Garden City,  
Herts AL7 3NF.

DEADLINE FOR APRIL NEWSLETTER IS 24th FEBRUARY 1985

# L E T T E R S



26 Lighthorne Road,  
Solihull,  
West Midlands B91 2BD.

Dear Editor,

I'd just like to say that I think the last newsletter was excellent; the idea of a subject supplement is good (I know it is unfortunate to use separate subjects, but the ideas are very useful!), and with home educators actual experiences included it really does its job.

We need to show that it is possible for each family in its own way to make a good job of helping each of its children to reach its full potential.

Congratulations to those interviewed on 'You and Yours' last Friday (December 7th), they gave a sensible impression which I support.

I find the newsletter very helpful, thank you.

Best wishes,

Catherine Barrett

\*\*\*\*\*

109 Coniston Avenue,  
Upminster,  
Essex RM14 3XL.

Dear Editor,

I have only recently joined Education Otherwise after taking my son out of school this last half-term (Oct.) and having read through the October newsletter I thought you might be interested in an educational game we have invented.

In the spare room we have a large notice board, to which we pin a map, either of Europe, the World or of England etc. We then choose a word from the dictionary which is not well-known to my son, but a word which I think he will come across generally. You take the first letter of the word, and using darts (as in dart board), aim at a country which begins with the letter. E.g. the word "spurious", aim for Spain or Switzerland.

If you manage to dart the right country you can mark off the letter "S". If you also know the capital of that country, you can have another go; otherwise, it is the next person's turn.

We allow ourselves to throw three darts in a row, before it is automatically the next person's go. Each person has their own word; you don't all try to get the same one.

After the game is finished, the words are then painted onto cards with their definition and an example of how they are used in sentence form. The rewards are threefold. You get to know where the different countries are in relation to others, you learn their capitals, and

by pinning the words on cards around the house, the words become part of general vocabulary.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs L. Wales

\*\*\*\*\*

Pollards Cross Cottage,  
Hempstead,  
Saffron Walden,  
Essex CB10 2PA.

Dear Editor,

I am prompted to write after reading the little piece by Jane and Mervyn Giddings on p. 46 of the December newsletter.

After due consideration, when our son Jack was approaching 5, we decided to inform the LEA of our intention to educate him at home. However, on the second day of the term in which he would have started school, there was a knock on the door from a lady from the education department, wondering why he had not been sent to school. We explained the situation and she said OK and she would inform the relevant person. A little while after her visit, we had a letter from the County Inspector asking us to outline in detail our plans for Jack's education. This I did with the help of reference to old EO digests. We didn't hear anything for another 4 months (it was during the summer) and were hoping that we'd been forgotten about. But no such luck.

We had our first visit from Mr X at the beginning of October and although he was superficially very pleasant and didn't bring up a lot of the standard points, e.g. "What about socialization?", we felt distinctly uneasy after his visit, an unpleasant feeling of being watched and expected to come up with something to satisfy him.

During his visit I was asked to put in writing what we were aiming for Jack over the next year. I told him I would not find this very easy to do as we followed Jack's interests at a particular time and could not predict what we would be doing in a years time ( or even next week for that matter). Despite this, he said he would like me do this.

For a few weeks following his visit I wondered whether to just write down anything in order to satisfy him, but found myself unable to do this, so ended up doing nothing.

Then came a letter reminding me that I had agreed to put this in writing. At this point I finally managed to write down something on paper, and sent it off. But I'm sure it wasn't what he wanted to hear, as I didn't feel like lying.

That's the story so far. I'm glad to hear that Jane and Mervyn and some other families are happy with their LEA visits. But personally, I would not recommend anyone to declare themselves to the LEA, and would prefer that we had remained undiscovered.

Actually I would prefer that the visit had been unexpected - as it was, we knew that he was coming for three weeks beforehand, and found this rather nerve racking and also put off some friends who wanted to visit.

Best wishes,

Vicki Willow

\*\*\*\*\*

29 Stockton Road,  
Manchester M21 1FB.

Dear Editor,

3,000 cheers for Leila Berg's lovely article about learning to read. How easy and enjoyable it is if the grown-ups will first give you room to get on with it in your own way, at your own pace. One could say the same about any other skill or area of knowledge. I hope Leila's article will encourage anxious parents learning on 'programmes' and 'syllabuses' to let their children take charge of their own self-teaching. It's so much more effective!

What comes over so clearly, even though Leila doesn't mention it, is that it's not the 'resources', 'methods', 'materials', 'schemes' that are important at all in the self-teaching process. The crucial factor is how the learner feels about herself and the skill she wishes to acquire. If she sees people round her using a skill as a matter of course, and she feels confident in herself and her own energy, she will learn effortlessly. I see our job as parents/teachers as that of not doing anything that damages children's confidence or blocks their energy.

Can I add a P.S. to the history supplement?

Little mention, if any, was made of the history of the Industrial Revolution. I find this absolutely enthralling. So much of it is still there, on the ground, in some cases, even, still in use, in others, derelict and open to the curious explorer. There are also many super museums in the North West.

If any EO families or children able to travel independantly, would like information about places of interest here, or even a guide, I would be happy to help. Happy 1985 to everyone,

Peter Jones

\*\*\*\*\*



THE BUMBLE BEE by Katie (age 3)

Bumble bee,  
I can see you on our kitchen door,  
Bumble bee,  
Buzz, buzz around the house,  
Bumble bee,  
Buzz, buzz around the house,  
You can't catch me!

# NEWS FROM ABROAD

The article I wrote a couple of months ago for the EO newsletter was lost by the then editors. Thank you! It gives me the opportunity of writing about our experience in a more satisfactory way.

Although we've been home educating our two youngest (12 and 14 years) for nearly three years, friends were still horrified that we felt free to leave England last August when the Christian Student Fellowship we work with needed us in Switzerland. "But how can you do this?" was the typical reaction. "What about your children? What about SCHOOL?"

When we'd point out that the children hadn't been in school anyway, we'd be given accusing looks. Somehow, I guess it all seemed more temporary while we were in England. Safer. And probably our friends thought that any minute now "reality" (in the form of exams) would send us to the nearest comprehensive, tail between our legs. Surely this abnormal fad wasn't to be permanent?

It has set me to considering how often, in our school-orientated, society, true educational opportunities have been sacrificed so that the child may live out days of tedious academic fact-learning instead of being free to snap up the wide richness and variety life can bring. This horrified reaction that we were contemplating some form of child abuse by removing them from the 'opportunities' of our local comprehensive, frankly amuses me. Here are two children, with the unusual good fortune (for Hampshire kids) of spending a few years in the Swiss alps. I guess the key lies in the fact that their education, life, and maturing is not testable by an 'official' board. We live in a day where if you can't classify the 'education', it has no value of its own. This is a lie, just as the one where the value of work is dependant on the money paid for the labour.

Even if I think in terms of jobs, later on, and in England, I cannot find a shred of concern. Our local employers in Alton shuddered at the immature, shallow and work-shy youngsters who came in for jobs. Employers are really looking out for DIFFERENT kinds of 'school-leavers'. Our schools really are not producing the goods. The best chance of future employment is a mature, integrated, interested, thinking, determined, imaginative person who has had the time to 'grow up', take a hold on life and is experienced in taking responsibilities.

How has it worked so far, for us, this moving children to another country?

They missed their friends most of all. However, soon a whole new life challenged them to grow, adapt, understand, and be brave and try out a new set of experiences. Learning French is a first priority, and each lesson is immediately pressed into service (like asking the time, getting about on buses and trains, making friends at Guides or ski club training etc, etc). Language for them is about people and being able to do things. We live near a ski resort that trains local children intensively for competitive skiing. What an opportunity! I think our son will live on those slopes, as they are given unlimited access to all

the lifts for £50 for four months, plus weekly expert coaching. Although Fiona is training in skiing, she also is fulfilling a desire to become a good skater. She has weekly coaching, and loves practising all the 'twizzles'. Their formal English school work is easily cared for in four mornings a week. I teach each child for two hours alone, while the other studies on 'homework'. Fiona's schedule, at 14½ is more intensive, and she really works for every minute of those four hours. She wants to train as a nurse, so we are doing six subjects for 'O' levels, and two non-examination subjects. We chose the International Correspondence School courses from G.B. (recommended by another EO family). We are completely satisfied with their materials which include notes and books plus tutoring in the form of work (tests) marked and returned with comment.

R.J. at 12, is still doing 'his own thing'. Our special emphasis is Maths, English and French. We are using the American Calvert school for seventh grade Maths plus some of their formal English. We are also reading their Physics and Art History texts. However, we proceed at our own pace, and we don't send in any work for correction. For History, we are specializing in a 'study' of English history. This consists of my reading aloud 'Set In A Silver Sea' by Sir Arthur Bryant. We look at maps connected with our reading, and R.J. then looks at the 'Oxford Junior History' series, which we also read together. We've also been reading 'Our Island Story' for recreation.

One thing really strikes me. After nearly three years away from school (for R.J., Fiona has been out for two years). I can see the children quietly educating themselves in all sorts of ways that even seem more valuable than the 'lesson'. They read a lot, play games, explore, help other people in work (including helping this working Mum run a house). They meet a variety of people, care for the dogs, and other people's babies. They 'take on' new activities: knitting, electrical repairs, baking. They were even able to pick grapes for a week, and thereby earned about £80 each for ski equipment. Yes, home education 'works'. Let's encourage each other to grab the opportunities of life, and not shut them out with sterile institutional walls!

What about the children? They are fine, thanks. We needn't stay safely home on their account.

Susan Macaulay,  
Chalet Les Melezes,  
Huemoz 1861, Switzerland.

\*\*\*\*\*

Peter Jones, 29 Stockton Road, Manchester 21 1 FB. Telephone: 061 860 6052, is looking for accommodation, that would be available for 6-12 months. Area: North West. He has lots of interests and skills that he would enjoy sharing with children, he is 'domesticated and practical'. References available.

accommodation needed

# EARTHQUAKE

The old farmhouse was split apart by an earthquake on 29th April 1984. Although the humans, sheep, hens, cats and donkey escaped unhurt, we need to build space to be able to continue being an 'open farm community' where anyone can come, anytime.

We'll start in April 1985 with 3 piles: one of stones, one of second-hand telegraphy poles and a huge pile of beautiful seasoned oak in the form of ex-Italian sleepers.

The plan is to produce (with the guidance of a few friends from the trade) a long, low house, similar to those in Guizhou Province, China, with wooden buildings around a big paved court-yard (with a water fountain in the middle and a shady tree, trailing vines overhead - a long table - cool wine - hot spaghetti - open to the stars and .... but that's 1986!)

So we need everyone who feels for this place, who has time and can face living in tents or in the prefab, working in the hot sun sharing the cost of grocery bill (a Max. of £17 per week) and trying to make sense of The Plan.

Anytime between April and October - the longer the better.

We still have to garden, feed the animals and people, make cheese, bandage hurts - so even if you're not dying to build we'd still be happy to see you.

Just turn up - no need to warn us - with a sleeping bag (and a tent if at all possible) plus a copy of these instructions:

PRATALE is between PERUGIA and GUBBIO. There's a bus from Rome leaving PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA (near Termini station) at 4pm and arriving at our stop - LA CIMA DI MENGARA - at about 7pm.

Take the road marked VALDICHIASCO keeping to the right at forks. Count five farmhouses, the fifth is a large white house - the Feliziani's - turn right in front of the house and head down the hill towards the building site

and a very warm welcome! Etain Addey, Martin Lanz et al



*We are especially  
happy to see E.O. people and children, of course!*

# CHOICE OF BOOKS -- and NON--INTERFERENCE

Perhaps other EO parents have found that their great lesson since starting out has been how not to interfere. I find this extremely hard - I can see so many nice points to be made, so many 'good' books to be proffered and so on.

One of the things that most tempts me is to encourage Melissa (who is 8), to read books that I feel have 'literary merit' or 'educational value'.

Gradually, I am relaxing - I see that those books get read too, as long as they are not presented as some sort of deserving category! All those set books of our traditional education - I remember the off-putting air that clung to them until, at some later stage (sometimes straight after the exam!) they suddenly seemed fascinating and inviting - a personal and no longer compulsory discovery.

The latest reassuring episode was during our recent house move - 50 yards up the field from the old farmhouse, which was damaged by an earthquake in April, to the prefab under the olive trees 'like being in a motel!)

I asked Melissa to choose just one small shelf's worth of her books to take up, because we hope to move everything into a new, wooden Chinese-type house next year (see our plea for building helpers, somewhere in this newsletter).

I was too busy to fidget round her making suggestions and using insidious persuasion, and this is what she chose:-

- "Make It With Odds and Ends" - Octopus First Colour Library.
- "Pippi Calzelunghe" - Astrid Lindgren (Italian)
- "Pippi Langstocking" - " " (English)
- "A Book of Monsters" - Manning-Sanders
- "Dobry" - Shannon and Katchamakoff
- "Fiabe Italiene" - Italo Calvino (Italian Folktales)
- "Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz" - L. Frank Baum
- "The Wizard of Oz" - " " "
- "The Marvellous Land of Oz" - " " "
- "Charlotte's Web" - E.B. White
- "Dragons, come home!" - Janet McNeill
- "A Necklace of Raindrops And Other Stories" - J. Aiken
- "Jam for Tea and Other Plays" -Ed. Cyril Swinson
- "A Book of Bosh" - Edward Lear
- "The First Queen Elizabeth" - (Ladybird)
- "The Treasure Seekers" - E. Nesbit (2 copies!)
- "Momo" - Michael Ende (for reading to her)
- "The Pooch Cook Book" - Milne/Stewart
- "Little Women" - Louisa M. Alcott
- "Saturday, Sunday, Monday" - Eduardo de Filippo
- "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats" - T.S. Eliot
- "The Children of the New Forest" - Captain Marryat
- "Storytime from Playschool" - BBC/Piccolo
- "The Littles" - Peterson (an American 'Borrowers!')
- "The Littles Give a Party" - Peterson
- "The Littles To The Rescue" - "
- "The Princess and the Goblin" - George MacDonald
- "Biddy's Talking Pineapple" - Jane Holiday
- "Anne of Green Gables" - L.M. Montgomery
- "Vlad the Drac" - Ann Juugman
- "The Great Escape of Doreen Potts" - Jo Nesbitt
- "Heidi" - Johanna Spyri
- "The Tales of Olga da Polga" - Michael Bond
- "Plays fo Laughs" - Johnny Ball
- "The Fiend Next Door" - Sheila Lavella
- "The Norse Myths - Gods of the Vikings" - Kevin Crossley (Holland)

Note from Editor: Due to lack of space, I have had to edit some of this article, but I hope it gives a clear idea to people on Melissa's selection of books. Etain continues.....

I would like to pick out of Melissa's selection a few books that may not be well known and which are particularly good.

"Dobry" (publisher Henry Woodfield) - is a most beautiful story "about the growing up of a Bulgarian peasant boy in a house where there was plenty of everything: food, work and play, with festivals that brought in the whole village".

"We Are Mesquakie, We Are One" (pub. Sheba) - This book was found for Melissa by a friend who is as concerned as I am to give access to the real experiences of minority groups. It is a children's story based on the real history of the American Indian Mesquakie tribe, who were 'moved' from their beloved Iowa country to a reservation in Kansas, but understood in time the white man's concept of buying and selling land - and collectively bought back a good part of their traditional homeland. This is really an extraordinary book!

"Monkey" (pub. by George Allen and Unwin Ltd) - This is an epic Chinese fairy-tale written around 1550 - a mixture of beauty and absurdity, profundity and nonsense. This abridged version, telling the story of Tripitaka's pilgrimage aided and abetted by Monkey, makes an amazing 'reading aloud' book. It took us a year to read, and when we finished it we all felt at a loss for something as funny and fantastic!

I hope these suggestions will be useful for people. Thank you, folk, in turn for all your suggestions and insights which have often been a great help and encouragement!

*Etain Addey  
Italy.*

\*\*\*\*\*

And from Philippe and Monique Moullan, of 2 Residence Casanova.  
93440 Dugny, Near Paris, FRANCE.

Dear E.O.'ers,

Our children, Arnaud aged of 7 and Florence 4 years old are educated at home but we are associated with other families giving education themselves. We are living near to Paris but we have a garden.

We would like to come into relationship with a EO British family with whom we might organise visits, friendship between parents and children and mutual help in learning languages.

*Many thanks for all.*

*Philippe Moullan.*

# and from Belize .....

B.D.F.L.O.  
c/o British High Commission,  
Belmopan,  
Belize, B.F.P.O. 12.

Dear EO'ers,

Is is lovely to get the newsletter, especially when we are now living over 3,000 miles away. I wonder if others go through the same experience as me, on reading the newsletter. The reinforcement of so many things that I believe in, and the pleasure of feeling closer to kindred spirits. At the same time a yearning to be able to achieve the type of relationships such as Leila Berg and her granddaughter, the Chorleys and their creative days or Ivan Sokolov and his family communication. A kind of disappointment that despite all the good intentions one's own reactions to situations are hard to change out of the rut. But comfort is at hand, there is always someone in the newsletter pointing the way forward for me.

Perhaps you would like to hear a bit about Belize, the country we have come to live in for two years. It is a small backwater of a country, about the size of Wales with a population of only 150,000. It is in Central America just south of Mexico and bordered by Guatemala. It has the second longest barrier reef in the world, and we have been lucky enough to be able to go out goggling to see the wonderworld of fish and coral. It is a truly multiracial society, from the tall lanky African to the tiny Mayan with Mexicans and Europeans thrown in and all the shades in between. They are a very friendly people and everyone seems to get on with everyone else, despite many different religions. The country prides itself on its religious tolerance. Well, you may be saying, why doesn't everyone live there? The answer is: that the climate is unpleasantly hot and humid for about 9 months of the year.

We have a wonderful selection of neighbouring children for our children to play with - Indian, Lebanese and black and white Belizian. No one seems to have minded that my children do not go to school and I have even found two other families, in this capital city of 6,000 people, who have children out of school!! Gavin is farming tarantulas under conch shells in the garden and Helen is busy picking up Creole (the local dialect). I have joined the local choral group and am trying to learn Spanish - though as English is the dominant language here it is all too easy not to try much. In the garden our lemon tree is covered with fruit and our mango tree is flowering profusely. So all in all it is quite an education just being here!

Priscilla Park-Weir

\*\*\*\*\*

Frances Moonwoman, 87-95 Lawrie Park Gardens, LONDON SE26 6HA, telephone 01- 659 0707 - is interested in contact with parents in South London with children ages 7-11, who are educating them out of school, and are sympathetic to A.S. NEILL's ideas on learning. PACHA (9) went to a state school (2 years), a free school (2 years, 1 term) and now of his own choice is trying a state school again. I don't know if he will be happy there, and I want to explore alternatives.

**contact needed!**

# MORE LETTERS...

'Fairview',  
Lower Dunton Road,  
Dunton,  
Brentwood,  
Essex M13 3SN.

Dear Editor,

Our daughter Joanna has now reached the magic age of five and now I guess is officially being taught out of school. Of course, she has been learning and enjoying life since the day she was born and I see no reason for things to change because of her fifth birthday.

One noticeable thing that people have been continually saying to her (that is, people who were unaware of our educational intentions) is, "You'll soon be going to school then". The first time this happened, I was surprised but pleased at her reply - "I'm already at school, our home is our school as well". I then stepped in to explain further, but it is good to know she accepts "our school" as normal.

Fortunately, in our area, we have lots of support and are always involved in EO activities. Thanks Sandie (our excellent co-ordinator), for all the organizing of group activities you do. We all enjoy getting together with our EO friends and are currently looking forward to our Christmas party, which I'm sure will be as successful as last year.

Yours faithfully,

Melanie Nield

\*\*\*\*\*

Pen Llywenan,  
Bodedern,  
Holyhead,  
Gwynedd.

Dear Editor,

When the child psychiatrist saw Rickey, because she was suicidal and not attending school, he assured me that it would be the best thing for her to go back to school, because otherwise she would never learn to socialize. (In fact, she would be so completely unable to socialize that she would never get married!) I can think of many things which might have happened if she had returned to school.

1. She might have carried out her threat.
2. She might have developed a different stress state - a) Anorexia nervosa  
b) Nervous breakdown
3. At the very best, she would be an underachiever because she would be so unhappy.
4. A child with a different temperament might become delinquent or criminal.
5. Perhaps it is children suffering from stress at school who are most likely to become drug addicts.

Following an article in the Sunday Times about drug addiction, I wrote to the Home Office, suggesting that there might be a link between drug addiction and stress in school. My letter was passed first to the Health Department and then to the Department of Education and Science. Eventually I received a reply from the latter.

I was told -

- a) that no follow-up had ever been made of children forced back to school by the authorities after being school phobic or suicidal. The implication of this com-  
placent letter was that no follow-up is needed since it only concerns a very small percentage of children.
- b) that the department was sure that only a very few children suffer from stress at school (According to the Samaritans, suicide is the 2nd biggest killer of the under 25 age group. No one can say that the drug problem is negligible).

So whenever a psychiatrist or educational psychologist uses these arguments to get children back to school, it is based on no knowledge of what happens to such children in the years that follow.

This research is urgently needed, but I have yet to find someone who will do it.

Now to something else.

We took Ali out of school at the age of 7½, confused and frightened about number. After a year of teaching her, using various home-made bits of equipment, she understood much more than she had done at school, but she was still frightened.

I then bought her a set of Cuisenaire rods. On the first day, she worked for 3 hours, following the instructions in the book, and her verdict was - "This is more like playing with my toys than doing school work". Her fear of number has completely evaporated. I would recommend this equipment also for parents who feel a bit shaky about teaching arithmetic. (Obtainable from: Cuisenaire Co., 11 Crown Street, Reading).

Would anyone be interested in joining us in a Youth Hostel in Snowdonia, in perhaps, May, when we could do some practical geography, nature study, etc of a mountainous area?

Yours sincerely,

Patricia Knox

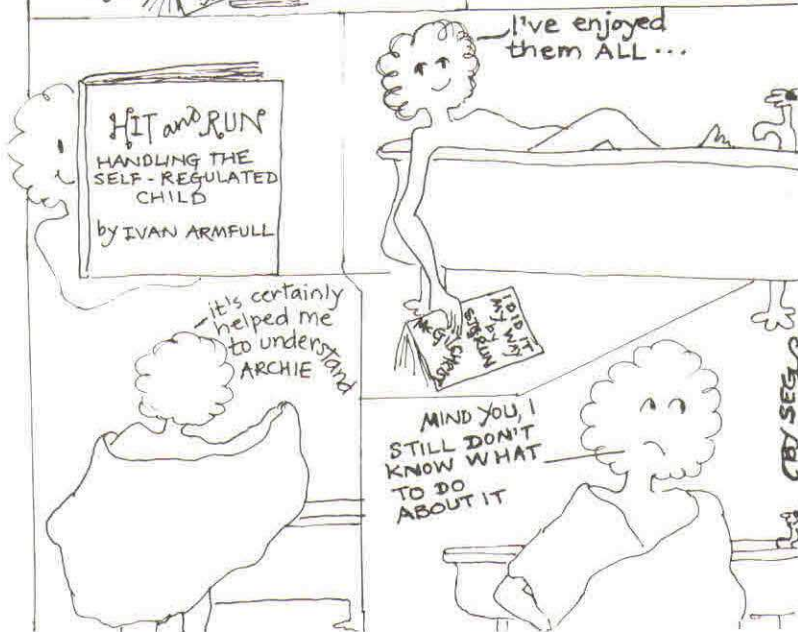
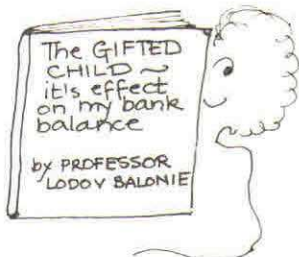
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"...the 7 and 8 year old children were noticeably more lively, and enquiring, than the 9, 10 and 11 year old children. Since they came from a range of schools and backgrounds it seems likely that they lose something of their uniqueness through extended school attendance".

from "Retrospects and prospects: a British View"  
George C. Robb, in Gifted Children: looking to their future ed. Joy Gibson and Prue Chennells. Latimer: New Dimension, 1976.

# EDUCATING ARCHIE <sup>in</sup> 1985

there've certainly been some interesting books on children in 1984...



Dear Editor,

The cartoon accused of being anti-teacher (see LETTERS, December) was in fact of an army sergeant! Through some editorial misunderstanding it had been removed from its original context - a story about potential offenders being 'rehabilitated' by ex-army officers - to the back pages, where it must have baffled everybody. But I don't think teachers, education directors, army sergeants, or anybody is above criticism. That includes cartoonists, of course!

Yours sincerely,  
Sarah Guthrie

# Help Needed For Legal Battles....

During 1984 I made several unsuccessful attempts to get financial aid, from core group and the financial committee, for families suffering legal harassment from their L.E.A.'s. I suspect that I get more affected than most members on this issue as, being both enquiries sec. and responsible for central address, I find myself on the sharp end of problems. Nevertheless, I do make a great effort to remain as emotionally detached as possible, but it really hasn't been easy not to lose some sleep over two particular families who, in my opinion formed over many hours of phone conversations and written correspondence, deserve E.O.'s moral and financial support. A legal committee has now been formed but it still has no power to issue funds nor, it seems, will it be possible for it to get procedure details organised in the fore-seeable future - the democratic wheels of E.O. grind exceedingly slow. So, as an ordinary member of E.O., I've decided to use newsletter space to bring to the notice of all members the brave legal battles of two E.O. families and make a personal appeal on their behalf.

The families concerned are the Perrys in Gwent and the Forsyths in the London Borough of Enfield. John Perry wrote a letter about his problems in the Feb. '84 newsletter (page 16) and the up-to-date situation is that he did get a Judicial Review (with Legal Aid) on November 6th - unfortunately, the Judge found for the L.E.A. John now goes for Appeal, but even with Legal Aid there are a host of expenses that a barrister won't apply for. Namely, phone, post, travel, loss of earnings. This meant that the Perrys couldn't attend the review held in Maidstone due to lack of funds for travelling and overnight expenses. In the past they have had to find considerable sums of money to be represented in magistrates court. They couldn't get Legal Aid and the Green Form Scheme only covers limited amount of help.

If Gwent wins this case the Perrys and I both feel that there will be considerably more parents getting dragged into court under Section 39 (registered and not attending). There appears to be no defence against this section. If your child is registered but not attending you are automatically guilty and you have no legal right to produce your own educational evidence. Victory for Gwent could well mean other L.E.A.'s using Section 39, thus making it virtually impossible to get a registered child de-registered without a protracted legal battle.

Gill Forsyth fights a similarly courageous but lonely battle in Enfield. She too has to fight the one-sided fight under Section 39, which began over a year ago, when her son Leon was not given a place at a secondary school of parental preference. Gill argued that the school designated was not suitable for Leon's aptitude and ability, then turned to E.O. for help and information on home based learning. However, the L.E.A. registered Leon at a school he has never attended, and Gill has been find a derisory £5 (under Section 39) by a sympathetic magistrate. The L.E.A. are now insisting that they have the legal right to demand that Leon receives ten hours qualified tuition a week or returns to school. So, Gill now has to battle for a very important principle namely, paying £60-85 a week

for tutoring is not an alternative for most families - especially wage earners like herself and her husband. I whole-heartedly agree with her and am concerned that she must win this argument if others are not to be treated in the same disgraceful way. (At present Leon is receiving ten hours tutoring a week from a compassionate Methodist Minister for the modest sum of £12). Her parents in the area are awaiting the outcome before they de-school - others are cheating with the connivance of a tutor co-operative - but why should they be reduced to such tactics?

Both families have followed E.O.'s advice to co-operate where possible and reasonable; both have allowed inspectors in to see the children's work and progress; and both have acquired excellent reports from educational psychologists. Both cases have received good coverage in the national press.

Gill isn't eligible for Legal Aid and had to pay £400 to instruct a solicitor. Her case was heard on Nov. 22nd, but adjourned until Jan. 18th 1985, before which time Gill expects to have to pay her solicitor another £400. Again, like John, her extra costs are phone, letters, lost earnings.

Therefore, knowing there is a tremendous amount of goodwill amongst the membership of E.O., I appeal to you to help both families in these very important legal matters. Let's make them feel less alone in their struggle for theirs is only the misfortune of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. We won't be able to ease the psychological strain of the omnipresent care order, but surely, between 1260 families we can club together and ease the financial one?

Please send a message of encouragement and whatever sum you can afford to Gill Forsyth and John Perry at the addresses given below.

*Gill Forsyth*  
*John Perry*

N.B. All the above details were correct at the time of writing.

Gill Forsyth,  
233 Scotland Green Road,  
Ponders End,  
Enfield, Middlesex.

John Perry,  
32 Pillmawr Circle,  
Malpas,  
Newport,  
Gwent, NPT 6WP.

.....

It must be emphasised that this is a personal appeal and does not have the force of an 'official' EO appeal. The responsibility therefore rests with the reader to satisfy him/herself as to the worthiness of the cause. Positive steps are being taken towards the setting-up of a general legal fund.

# ARE you coming to the London Weekend?

On the LONDON WEEKEND 9-10 February 1985, I am hoping to organise a **drama workshop** working towards a performance on the Saturday evening, (the workshop is primarily for children), although adults welcome! On the Sunday we also hope to have a

## spinning and weaving workshop

To enable these events to take place, I am going to need lots of help, enthusiasm plus bits and pieces in materials, that you will find listed below.

The play we shall be attempting, NO!, I shall be so bold as to say PERFORMING! will be the EO's version of THE BEEMAN OF ORN. It will include learning such skills as costume making, puppet making, puppeteering, improvisation, script writing, music making, song writing and maybe, if we really get carried away some dancing!

However, exactly WHAT we do, will depend very much on YOU! what talents you have, and how hard you are prepared to work, to enable the play to come to performance level in one day.....this is no easy thing, but I am confident we will be able to achieve this!

If you find that you can't do some of the practical things like puppet making, don't worry, as I shall be preparing some worksheets for you to take home with you, to look at and hopefully use at your leisure!

As for the Spinning and Weaving.... there will be a couple of wheels available, plus some drop spindles to learn the basics of spinning. In weaving, everyone can learn how to make a bag (of any size you wish), and if you don't finish it on the day, you can always take it home with you!

I hope this gives an idea of what we are hoping to do on both days, and that you will come fully prepared! However, if you want more information before the day, please ring me on 01-684 2286.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Please bring any of the following to the weekend!

Old sheets/curtains or large pieces of cloth.  
Old jewellery.  
Old hats.  
Newspapers/glue/scissors/staplers/staples/staple gun/cellotape.  
Paints/spray paint/stencils/card.  
Wool (all kinds and colours).  
Fleece (any suitable for spinning)  
Spare drop spindles?!

Books on costume/puppets/theatre/spinning/weaving/art and craft.

See **you**, in the Orangery, at **10.15**a.m.

More about the Meetings  
on the next page!

Lynda Bailey

# Meetings!

All Meetings will take place in the Youth Hostel Common Room.

SATURDAY 9th February 1985

10.30am - The Co-ordinators Meeting  
2-4.00pm - The Core Discussion Meeting

SUNDAY 10th February 1985

10-1.00pm - The Core (or Council) Business Meeting  
Sun. Eve. - The Legal Meeting

All meetings with the exception of those of the Legal Group are open meetings, which all members are warmly invited to attend, whether as observers or as participants.

The Core Discussion Meeting on Saturday afternoon is designed for wide ranging discussion of any matters of concern.

The Business Meeting on Sunday morning is intended to be a more disciplined affair with a formal structure at which business is conducted and decisions are taken.

\*\*\*\*\*

## LEGAL GROUP REPORT

The Legal Group met on 18th November. Present were Anne Moss, Anne Wade, Alvena Hillier, Andy Anderson, Simon Grant, Dick Kitto, Bruce Cox and Angela Montfort-Bebb.

We reviewed the cases that we knew of where there was some sort of legal trouble. We noted how difficult it was to assess the problems of each case, and particularly to get to know the children's views. There appears to be little knowledge of the legal position regarding registration, and about what access, if any, the L.E.A. ought to have to E.O. children. We would welcome clarification from any quarter.

We decided on a desirable procedure in cases where a family has legal trouble:

- (1) Get in touch with a co-ordinator, who may be able to sort it out, preferably before backing down or taking on the whole establishment.
- (2) If the co-ordinator is not entirely sure, then contact one of the legal group.
- (3) If our assistance is called for, we may try to liaise with the L.E.A. or in some other way resolve the problem with the least possible legal complication. In some cases, one of our number may be able to visit the family.
- (4) We will try to compile a list of helpful solicitors, educational psychologists etc. as well as information about past and present cases.

A separate legal fund will be set up to help those in need.

We would welcome any offer of help which we will try to put to good use if practical. However, the group itself needs to remain small in order to work together efficiently and respond quickly.

# NOTICES

INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTRE (was Information Library)  
Tel: 0270 664060

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Andy & Diane Anderson, 95 Derrington Ave., Crewe,  
Cheshire CW2 7JA.

AN INFORMATION/ORDER FORM LIST IS AVAILABLE - the lists contain used and recommended books and materials and can be used as a guide to assist those seeking suitable educational material for children of all ages.

MEMBERS ARE OFFERED THE USE OF THE RESOURCE CENTRE - 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.

As we get no funding from any source, would you please ALWAYS include S.A.E. for reply.

WHEN RECOMMENDING ANYTHING - please give as much information as possible and when recommending a book etc, please give title, author, publisher and price if known and a rough idea of the age group it would be useful for.

\*\*\*\*\*

34 Beacon Road,  
Herne Bay,  
Kent CT6 6DJ.

We now urgently seek a copy of NEW ENGLISH THIRD by Rhodri Jones. Published by Heinemann Educational Books. Can anyone help?

Lols and Mick Cook

\*\*\*\*\*

## CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Peter Jones (Manchester) and Sylvia Jeffe (West Midlands) are both keen to continue the work of Julie Duff with respect to children with special needs. Anyone else present at the London Core Weekend in February who has a particular interest or experience in this area is asked to make themselves known.

\*\*\*\*\*

Sue Lewis is willing to be contacted to offer encouragement about ACTIVE BIRTH after a previous Caesarean and to give information about Michel Odent's maternity unit at Pithiviers, France. Sue's address is:- c/o 79 Erith Road, Belvedere, Kent DA17 6HP.

## HOLIDAY ADVERTISING

Many members of EO seek "different" types of holidays - 'adventure', 'learning', 'activity' holidays, working holidays on a farms etc. If your firm is interested in advertising their 'holiday with a difference', in the bi-monthly newsletter, please contact the Advertising Secretary (see inside back cover), for details of rates etc.

THE DEADLINE FOR ADVERTS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE APRIL NEWS-LETTER IS FEBRUARY 24th 1985.

\*\*\*\*\*

### BOOKS:

A most generous gift of several hundred children's books has been received from Leila Berg; it represents the stock from her 'Booksread' that she has now stopped operating. We are very grateful for this gift, and the books have been passed to Andy Anderson to form part of the Information Service.

\*\*\*\*\*

Lower Shaw Farm, Shaw, Near Swindon, Wiltshire SN5 9PJ.  
Telephone: 0793-771080

<u>THE SPRING PROGRAMME</u>	<u>Price</u>
YOGA AND MASSAGE (8-10 February 1985)	£27
WILDLIFE GARDENING (8-10 March 1985)	£27
EASTER WEEKEND (5-8 April 1985)	£30
WHOLEFOOD COOKERY (19-21 April 1985)	£27
MAY CELEBRATION (3-6 May 1985)	£30
WOMEN'S WEEKEND (24-27 May 1985)	£30
CYCLING WEEKEND (21-23 June 1985)	£27

For more information and a booking form, please contact Shaw Farm at the above address, or give them a ring!

\*\*\*\*\*

Caroline Grant will be editing the LANGUAGES SUPPLEMENT in the April newsletter, please can you get your contributions to her by 1st March 1985, her address is as follows:-  
3/4 Tanyrallt Cottages, Llanllyfni, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL54 6RS.

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### WHERE TO GET WHAT?

Enquiries Secretary:	Posters, digests, old Newsletters, handbills.
Membership Secretaries:	Current and Old Newsletters, S.I.N.C., Early Years, Teach Your Own.
General Secretary:	Envelope re-use labels - £1.00 per 100.
Co-ordinators' Secretary:	Stationary, Introductory literature, Membership Forms, Membership Secretaries Address Labels.

# JUST WILLIAM!

I confess to a life long addiction to William. A recent survey of well-known people informs me that I share it with many others; I see this as one of the few signs of hope left for this country. I see a strict connection between EO and William's philosophy of life. Like all the best satirists Richmal Crompton (William's creator) scattered through these books very many truths, in her case, about the lives of children in and out of school. Most importantly she too THE CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW with a seriousness that no educator or psychologist (Apart from maybe A.S. Neill) has ever matched. William should become EO's patron saint. Because William and his friends, the Outlaws, delivered, starting more than fifty years ago, and well before Ivan Illich, John Holt and the rest, the most concise, powerful and enjoyable indictment of school and the many other follies with which adults sour the experiences of children.

When William is asked by a stuffy lady do-gooder if he has any suggestions to improve school-life, he replies with cartesian clarity: 'The abolition of schools'. And the Outlaws often debate this issue and its implications with a sanity that dwarves any similar discussion in the adult world:

"Makes me feel mad", he said, "Miners havin' Trades Unions an' strikes an' things to stop 'em doin' too much work an' us havin' to go on an' on till we're wore out. You'd think Parliament would stop it...."

"...Yes" said Ginger in hearty agreement. "I think that there oughter be a law stoppin' afternoon school...."

And when Henry suggests banning morning school as well, Douglas corrects him: "No, we'll have to keep mornin' school.... schoolmasters'd all starve if we didn't have any school". "Do 'em good", said Ginger bitterly...."

Finally they settle for William's proposal to allow school on wet mornings only! As for homework, this is what the Outlaws wrote after heroic struggles with spelling:

"There ought not to be any homework in school and anyway what there is is too much just think of poor boys coming home from school egg-sausted and weery and then having to do homework latin and sums and french and geography and a lot more just think of it and think what a lot old Markie sets look at our fathers and grone-up borthers they don't have to do homework when they come home from work egg-sausted and weery why should we its getting our brains abslutely wore out homework ought to be put a stop to by law an schoolmasters what set it ought to be put in prison and hung it ought to count same as cruelty thats what I think about homework".

There are many delightful vignettes of the forgotten meaninglessness and absurdity of school situations. The teacher is addressing William's wandering mind:

"What have I just been saying, William?"

William sighed. That was the foolish sort of question that schoolmasters were always asking. They ought to know themselves what they'd just been saying better than anyone.

# Mat hs Supplement

So many people hate maths that I am sure that it causes many E. O. parents to think long and hard before tackling the subject. I used to teach maths at lower secondary level and now see little point in the vast majority of the work which I previously taught. So I have too have been thinking long and hard about what is necessary. Recently I have been looking at maths schemes applicable to 5 year olds and feel that all the early work can easily be covered in everyday activities, and moreover it is better that it should be, as it is from these situations that a child gains the most benefit. Practical opportunities for number use abound in everyday life. Counting things; have we got enough apples for everyone; can we all have two? With a list of places to visit where should we go first, second etc. Examples of simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are all around, and don't need to be taught in an artificial classroom situation. The topic of sets is just a way of classifying things, a set of cars, a set of animals. These can be simple and involve the child in sorting things, comparing and counting them. These topics presented in teaching jargon can appear frightening and complex, but once the subjects are described in 'normal' English they become common sense.

I set the length of this maths supplement at four pages, and then received some late contributions, and so have had to curtail some contributions, and omit others. Apologies to those authors. Many thanks to those who found the time over Xmas to contribute their ideas.

Jill Gillings

## MATHEMATICS FOR SCHOOLS

One of the most oft heard expressions amongst parents contemplating educating their own children would, I think, be that 'I would not know how.' Parents would be aware that mathematics has changed since they were in school; our needs are different. Mere computation (arithmetic) is insufficient. Children need experience in shape, statistics and measurement as well as number. Parents need a mathematics course which is complete and well up to date. A course that assumes the teacher/parent knows very little about maths or how to teach it.

'Mathematics for Schools' published by Addison Wesley is one of the best, if not the best primary maths scheme available. Stage I and II cover 5 to 12 years of age and have an excellent 'teacher's books' which is the most important part of the scheme. Stage I (5 to 7 yrs) has one teacher's book to cover the eight books for children (workbooks). Stage II (7+ to 12+yrs) has a teacher's book for each of the two children's textbooks, which cover each year's work. The teacher's book contains everything that you need; full explanation of the theory, careful plan of the practical activities (using very simple, to hand, items) and lots of helpful hints. There are ten children's books.

For children stage I has workbooks and stage II has textbooks but these are to be used when the children have worked through lots of practical activities and fully understood the ideas. There are also answer books but it is probably best for parents to work a few of the practice consolidation questions out for themselves to understand what difficulties are involved.

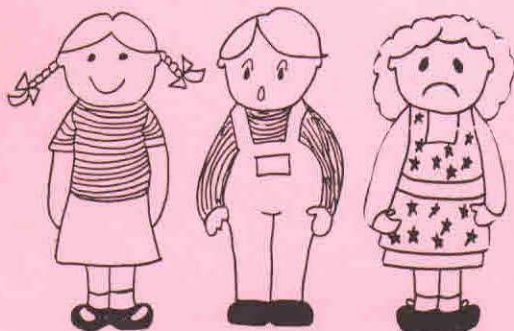
To sum up, 'Mathematics for Schools' is self contained, excellent and guaranteed to improve parents own maths, as well as their child's.

Rodney Holt, Southampton

### ATTRIBUTE SETS AND GAMES

Both our daughters are enjoying everything they learn including maths (they are still quite young 5 years and 2.5 years) but I see no reason for things to change. One sad thing that I am aware of is that so many people say 'I hate maths' and I'm sure that this shouldn't be so. I used to teach maths in a secondary school and people couldn't understand how maths could be enjoyed so much that you could want to teach it. However I tried my best. It seems though that school could be a place that turns people off. So often I found a child had been given pages of sums as a punishment and primary teachers had conveyed an attitude that maths is hard to their very impressionable class.

With our girls we play many games based on mathematical aspects. We have great fun with attribute sets. Most educational suppliers have good sets with shape/colour attributes. We have a home made shape/colour set and also several other sets. One of our favourite sets is with people.



With the help of a copier our people change expression. Then we colour them and stick them on card. Our attributes are new expression / sex / colour of clothes / person. Another set we have made is a footwear set. That was done after watching a Words and Pictures T.V. program where footwear was mentioned. Here the attributes are material / method of fastening / colour.

My youngest daughter's favourite is a set of cards with scarf / hat / glove pictures which change colour. The game we are continuously playing is that we each have six cards and take it in turn to play a card which can either be the same colour or the same article of clothing. When we can't go we pick up a card and the game ends when we've used all our cards. We play the same sort of game with all our sets. The person who is placing a card has to change just one attribute or two, or three etc. depending on the rules which we decide before playing. Any number of people can play but it depends on the number of members in the set. We recently played with our people set and nine of us were playing; it was great fun.

Of course there are lots of other things which can be done with sets like sorting and counting. They can provide fun for hours.

Numbers are something else that we all enjoy. There are only ten digits to learn 0 to 9. My eldest daughter Joanna has been counting things for ever it seems. We started with getting used to the one to one idea of pointing and counting and that's where we are with my youngest daughter now. Again we have lots of home made games which can be used for snap, pairs and just sorting. What ever they are interested in at a particular time is used as pictures. So we have animals, playschool on T.V. characters and currently Christmas items.

I would like to recommend the Peak maths teachers handbook. The pictures they use are in very real colour and they are full of simple ideas. I have not bought the pupils workbooks though as I prefer to make my own sheets for the girls to do.

Melanie Nield, Brentwood

### SCHOOLS MATHEMATICS PROJECT

The beauty of the School Maths Project (S.M.P.) 11 to 16 yrs scheme is that it allows the pupil greater autonomy, choice and dignity than any other I've used. I've used it in the form of a series of booklets, in four subject areas each in four levels of difficulty. A student could choose to follow a topic through increasing levels of difficulty, or (more usually) work up roughly a level at a time. The act of choosing is in itself restoring and confidence giving, and helps learning maths feel less of a bewildering, painful process than is so often the case. (My older two had been completely switched off maths at school but are thawing out using the S.M.P. booklets at home). An ex colleague helped to write the project and I can feel his own relaxed 'laid back' approach helping each booklet be less 'stodge' and more fun than most maths schemes. I recommend it to anyone feeling the need of some form of structure to their maths learning. I expect the feel of the scheme would be in tune with many E Oers overall approach, but as with any scheme, only use it if it does feel right for your family. Though labelled 11 to 16 yrs many younger children could use the early part of the scheme and 'bits of paper' seekers should use a 'heavier' textbook after this scheme, before O levels.

Anne Moss, Hull

### OPEN UNIVERSITY COURSE

I found the Open University course 'Developing Mathematical Thinking' very useful, and thought I would try and set down some of the ideas that seemed important to me. One of the main trends running through the course is how to use active maths, when real things are actually manipulated, and translate this into written or symbolic maths. So often the steps between are inadequate. The course recommends DO, TALK and RECORD. The physical manipulation of objects is the DO part, and when this can be carried out freely the child should be encouraged to TALK his way through what he is doing and again when he can do this clearly the beginning of recording can be attempted, but not before. The first recordings should be in the child's own words or pictures, only gradually shortening or adapting these to more conventional or convenient symbols.

Another theme that runs through the course is the importance of using three or more mediums for each concept trying to be taught. For example in subtraction you might use Cuisenaire rods, counters and real money. These should all be taken through the TALK stage before any recording is done. In subtraction it takes a lot of DOING in different mediums before the similarity of 'the difference between', 'more than, less than', 'take away', 'counting on/back' and the fact that subtraction is the 'reverse of addition' is grasped. As another example take fractions. The course suggests that you start by finding and naming fractions, the three mediums might be a piece of paper folded into  $1/16$ ths, Cuisenaire rods and a pile of counters or a clock face. The child would be asked to find  $1/4$  or  $2/3$  and later shown a fraction of the whole and asked to name it.

The course stresses the importance for the teacher of actually writing down the type of language expressions required to show an understanding of the different aspects of each concept. There is constant emphasis on talking, and its importance in the mastery of maths thinking, so those of us with children at home have a head start anyway!

This is an inadequate synopsis of some of the ideas, but if anyone is interested further, write to Priscilla Park Weir, c/o British High Commission, Belmopan, Belize B.F.P.O.12

## OUR WAY

In order to explain our approach I will divide 'our way' into 3 sections.

### Informal practical activity

Aeisha and Matthew are 7 and 5 years old. Their most important maths learning takes place during their everyday activities. They do needlework, woodwork, cooking, gardening, shopping and many other practical tasks. During these activities they assimilate a whole spectrum of maths concepts.

### Informal concrete / Formal abstract

This section bridges the gap between the practical informal and the abstract. From a very young age both my children have played with cuisinaire rods using them as building blocks and making mosaics. Later on the rods have been given numerical values. The equipment has a multitude of uses and is well worth the investment of approximately £7.50p. We use money to demonstrate hundreds tens and units, counting in twos fives and tens and other home made equipment such as geoboards, shapes and games.

### Formal abstract

We use the Ginn maths scheme for this part of our work. The scheme is attractively produced and appeals to the children. Levels 1 to 3 supply workbooks which my children enjoy. After level 3 the work is from textbooks. Our experience is that the workbooks are discontinued too early. At 7 Aeisha does not have the maturity to use textbooks on her own or enjoy them as she would if the work was set out in workbooks, so we find ourselves for a short period bridging the gap. But overall I would recommend the Ginn scheme. A catalogue may be obtained from Ginn & Co Ltd, Prebendal House, Parsons Fee, Aylesbury, Bucks.

Mary Ann Reed, Liverpool

### \*\*\*\*\* Try this Crossnumber \*\*\*\*\*

You do not need any answers as you will know when you have got it correct.

#### CLUES ACROSS

- 1/ Think along the lines of a T.V.
- 5/ The ninth prime (not counting 1)
- 6/ C in m.p.h.
- 11/ How many noughts in a googol?
- 12/ The house of Mrs T.
- 13/ Three two's
- 15/ All numbers are natural
- 17/ At what did Mr Renier raise steam
- 19/ Easy as pie
- 23/ A dozen less than 17/
- 24/ A prime with a hole in the middle
- 25/ Count the pack ignoring jokes
- 26/ Its sq root is a perfect sq root
- 27/ Bakers count on them
- 29/ no. of squares on chess board x 4
- 30/ When did Willy the conc. conc?



#### CLUES DOWN

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1/ A year after he retired                                    | 10/ Your waters would boil at this   |
| 2/ Nothing taken away from E. O.                              | 14/ What's the next leap after 1,999 |
| 3/ Half a sea   | 16/ 5 x the lowest 3 figured prime   |
| 4/ 3/ and 27/ down  | 18/ Its speed makes a bang           |
| 5/ How Hi is a Chinaman, but how high is the average Everest? | 19/ A normal years worth of days     |
| 7/ 6K   | 20/ MDCCCLXXXVI                      |
| 8/ A basic decimal  | 21/ An elementary total              |
| 9/ Three score without the ten                                | 22/ Mr Clarke's favorite year        |
|   | 27/ James English Scottish numbers   |
|   | 28/ Only a tenth of a whole turn     |

Boredom is William's arch enemy, and most adults around him seem determined to inflict it upon him with merciless educational blindness. So William is inevitably at war with all manner of adults:

"William was very clever at not understanding Compound Interest. He had an excellent repertoire of intelligent questions about Compound Interest. At school he could, for a consideration, 'play' the Mathematics master on Compound Interest for an entire lesson while his friends amused themselves in their own way in the desks behind".

William's unshakable refusal to conform to any adult expectations of what children should be like reveals to the reader the ugly inability of the former to be simply decent and genuine with him and to misinterpret his deeds in the worst possible light. As he bitterly complains:

"They always blame us for everything".

Bland educational reformers fail with him when he detects the notes of unctuous condescension in their manner, and he often uncovers the sheer hostility to real children such people have:

"William was neither quiet nor gentle, nor courteous, nor gentle, nor courteous, nor intellectual - but William was intensely human".

But William responds generously and loyally to any grown-up who retains genuineness, playfulness, humour and a willingness to share their hearts with him. One such is Bob Andrews, a not very hard working lodge-keeper:

"He was never busy, never disapproving, never tidy, never abstracted. He took seriously the really important things in life such as cigarette-card collecting, the top-season, Red Indians, and the finding of bird's nests".

Such qualities he finds more often than not in the 'deviants' of society, rather than in the respectable world of his family: A passing tramp, robbers, an eccentrically fragile and kind woman neighbour, a timid aspiring poet, an aristocrat bored to death by the conventionalism of the local middle-class, an irresistible victorian great-aunt. With such souls he has a natural affinity.

As for his family, William had eminently critical views, shared by his pal Ginger:

"Seems to me that people outside your own family always give you more of a chance to explain what you mean than people in your own family. They don't start bein' mad at you before you've really got to what you want to say like people in your own family do".

Which strikes me as a fair summing-up of a near universal aspect of children's condition.

Some of William's most dreaded adults are precisely those who take an interest in children and think they are very good with them, like the cloying Mrs de Vere Carter:

"Now, girlies dear and laddies dear, what do I expect you to be at these meetings?"

And in answer came a monotonous chant:

"Respectful and reposeful".

"I have a name, children dear".

"Respectful and reposeful, Mrs de Vere Carter".

"That's it, children dear. Respectful and reposeful.

Now, our little new friends (The Outlaws) what do I expect you to be?"

No answer. The Outlaws sat horrified, outraged, shamed.

Nowadays grown-ups are a shade more subtle when patronizing children, yet the change is more in style than in basic attitude.

Certainly William's aunt Lucy is a paradigm of what psychotherapists call the double-bind style of communication: Here is a chilling example:

"William", said aunt Lucy patiently, as he passed. "I don't want to say anything unkind, and I hope you won't remember all your life that you have completely spoiled this Christmas Day for me". Such messages if repeated often enough are supposed to drive children crazy. The fact that William, far from being emotionally crushed, limits himself to reply blankly that he didn't think he would remind us that he is not a real child but a literary hero, able to withstand the arrows and trials of an uncompre hendng world. His refusal to take on the guilt poured at him, thus depriving adults of their favourite weapon, is one of the sources of his greatness.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the William books is their relationship to their author. Because here is this daughter of a vicar, ex-school teacher, paralysed by illness and living a respectable life as a single woman, creating one of the most biting portrayals of middle-class England ever produced, by identifying with the vision of a child who ranges alongside the most radical anarchist in his capacity to bring chaos and life to grown-up staleness. I don't know what her reaction would have been to my attempt to take William 'seriously'. But I would like to believe that, whatever her protests, the most secret part of her would have rejoiced.

The William series is being reedited by Macmillan in hard and paperback with the unforgettable Thomas Henry illustrations. If you want to enjoy the funniest and least sentimental portrayal of childhood every, buy them!

Juan Campos

P.S. There is an incipient William Society which will meet in April. Anybody interested can contact:

D. Swift, 22 Woodnook Close, Leeds LS16 6PQ.

# Yesterday's History

Much of the basic history we do consists of visits to places and books I read aloud to them about a particular time. It can come about as an interest from a place we visit, a book we happen to read or even something seen on television. If it interests us we follow it up.

This summer the D-Day plus 40 celebrations in Normandy probably set off an interest in the Second World War which has lasted now for about six months. Immediately, I read to them 'The Dolphin Crossing' by Jill Paton Walsh, an excellent book. Later in the year we were lucky enough to go camping in Brittany and on our way back visited the Utah Beach and Museum, scene of the American Landings in 1944. The ferry came into Portsmouth with just about the whole British Navy anchored there for a naval exercise, destroyers, aircraft carriers, etc.

We followed this up back home with a day trip to London to the Imperial War Museum. We are lucky in living near to Duxford Airfield also part of the Imperial War Museum, so this was another trip. RAF Cardington near Bedford is also nearby, it has an airship museum only open for group visits so I am persuading a local group to organise a trip so that we can go, but we have already driven by it and seen an airship anchored on the airfield. Meantime we have read 'The Silver Sword', 'Back to the Blitz' and 'The Snow Goose' all adding to the mish-mash feeling for life at that time. A Sunday afternoon showing of 'The Dam Busters' and 'Reach for the Sky' all added to the picture, I only wish 'Dad's Army' had been reshown this year. (The Dam Busters led to interesting follow up discussions on the mathematics of how they used lights to maintain the planes at the correct height and the small model siting device used to get the right distance from the dam towers.)

A small piece in the local paper reported that a man in the next village had made a museum in a shed behind his home which was open to the public in the evenings that week. My husband took the children one evening and they thoroughly enjoyed it. Nothing really spectacular but much of it fitted in with what we had read about - the gas masks, a baby's breathing apparatus, an ARP warden's helmet and car light hoods which fitted over to reduce the light in the blackout to a minimum. My own interest is more about the domestic life of the wars, both in the home and of the soldiers (particularly in the trenches and hospitals of World War I). Most children seem to love seeing tanks, bombers, etc. Hopefully news pictures of wars around the world, discussions we have will give the other side to the glory of war as presented by children's toys.

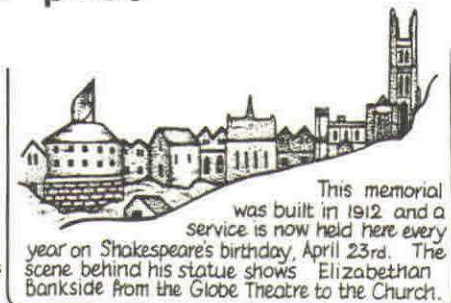
At the Imperial War Museum many beautiful badges were to be seen on the uniforms. One craft activity we did linked to this was very successful. I ironed iron-on interfacing to the back of scraps of green and blue cotton fabric, which we then cut into shield and wings shapes. The children then drew their Army or RAF designs on with laundry markers or permanent pens, then stitched them onto old shirts to become uniforms. These can be invented or authentic designs can be researched at the local library or museum.

We don't use any history textbooks as such although we do use books for reference but we do try to take advantage of all opportunities.

Betty Ball

## Guides to the past

A recent visit to Lincoln Cathedral was brought alive by the excellent children's guide on sale there for only a few pence. Most guides are glossy, expensive and far too wordy to read as you wander around. This guide wasn't. Lots of line drawings of parts of the building and sketches recreate the history which



This memorial was built in 1912 and a service is now held here every year on Shakespeare's birthday, April 23rd. The scene behind his statue shows Elizabethan bankside from the Globe Theatre to the Church.

from 'Look At Southwark Cathedral'

### The Riley Graves

These can be visited if you follow the road towards Hathersage and then take the steeply climbing lane on your left to RILEY FARM.



In the middle of a field, high on the hillside, you can clearly see the group of graves, ringed by a protective stone wall. The graves belong to the Hancock family. Only Mrs Hancock survived the Plague.

What do the metal plaques on either side of the gateway tell you ?

from 'Look At Eyam Village'

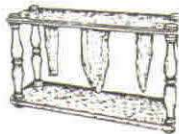
hint at the variety of detail that they contain. I consider that these guides are the best EO resource I have come across. Why don't we all try to get these guides commissioned for our own local areas so that all of us can enjoy our visits around the country so much more. Our thanks to Bessacarr Prints for allowing us to reproduce illustrations here. You can contact Bessacarr Prints at 293 Bawtry Road, Bessacarr, Doncaster DN4 7AL. Telephone (0302) 536426.

Betty Ball

took place there, are each accompanied by just a couple of sentences to explain. A similar guide to a small town, Bawtry near Doncaster, set me on the trail of the producers, Bessacarr Prints. These guides are produced in their spare time by two school teachers for Civic Trusts, Local Authorities, etc and they are keen to cover the country with their excellent guides. Their current list covers sixty venues from Berwick-upon-Tweed to Doone Valley, Exmoor; from Rochester, Kent to Conwy, Gwynedd; and inbetween there is York, Buxton, Colchester and St. Katharine Dock by the Tower of London, to name only a few. The presentation is excellent. The print is handwritten, lower case and large making it easy for children to read. The illustrations here are much reduced, but

### West Corridor

Does this table show us stalactites or stalagmites ?



The Egyptian memorial tablet dates from 2900 B.C. How old is it ? How many sons and daughters were in this family ?

from 'Look At Chatsworth'

# WEEKEND AT UNSTONE GRANGE

Unstone Grange, Crow Lane, Unstone, Sheffield S18 5AL.

Many EO families have now been to Unstone, so if you haven't, why not come and see what a good place it is. There is plenty of space both inside the house and outdoors in the grounds roundabout. There will be the usual sort of activities, resources display and business meetings.

Unstone Grange is very easy to reach by public transport. Just over the road from the train station in Sheffield is the bus station from which you catch a Chesterfield bus - Nos. 202, 203, 204 to Crow Lane, Unstone or No. 201 to Unstone Green (see map). It's half hour bus ride, plus about 15 mins walk from the bus stop to Unstone Grange - just walk from the bus stop to Unstone Grange - just walk along Crow Lane until you get there.

All accomodation is self-catering, so supply your own food. there are shops in Dronfield, the next town along from Unstone towards Sheffield, plus a fish and chip shop and a Chinese takeaway.

There are beds for 41 in the house, plus 2 each in the Apple Room and Stable Room (outhouses). Bring own sleeping bag or sheets and pillow case. Blankets, eiderdowns, pillows provided.

Sleeping on the floor for 14 people. Please bring own sleeping bags, pillows, plus blankets and mattresses if required.

Camping - in the field at the back of the house for 4-6 family groups, depending on size of group. There is no motor access to the field.

Camping in vans for 3-4 family groups, depending on size of vehicle. Would campers please bring their own cooking facilities as the kitchen in the house gets very crowded. There is a cooker and a sink in one of the outhouses.

Day visitors - visitors are welcome for the day or part day. Please bring picnic meals with you as the kitchen gets crowded, but it should be O.K. to make hot drinks. If possible let me know beforehand if you are coming, preferably by filling in the booking form or by phoning me.

Since this is a self-catering weekend we will be expected to clean up after ourselves.

If you wish to come, please fill in the booking form and send to Joan Hoare, 25 Moor Oaks Road, Sheffield S10 1BX. Tel. 0742-666605. If you make an oral booking with me, then please also fill in the form as well as soon as possible. I had to spend a lot of time last year ringing people up to check if they were still coming. If you have any questions, then contact me at the above address.

Charges for Unstone Grange (children under 3 no charge)

Per person per night:

	Adults	Children (3-16 yrs)
Sleeping in beds	£3.00	£2.50
Sleeping on floor	1.50	0.75
Camping (tents)	1.00	0.50
Camping (vans)	1.00	0.50
Day visitors	0.50	-

BOOKING FORM

Names of people attending (with age if under 16)

	<u>Age</u>	<u>Age</u>
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

Address and Telephone Number

.....  
 .....

		<u>Nights</u>	<u>Days only</u>	
Will you be staying for:-	May 3			Please tick
	May 4			
	May 5			

If you are staying overnight, will you be:-

In a camper van	
In the house (beds)	
In the house (on floor)	Please tick
Camping in tents	

I/We can help with children's activities by .....

I/We can help with a workshop (or anything else) .....

Payment

Adults	£ .....
Children (over 3 and under 16)	£ .....
Non-returnable booking fee to cover postage and stationary costs	£ .0.50pence

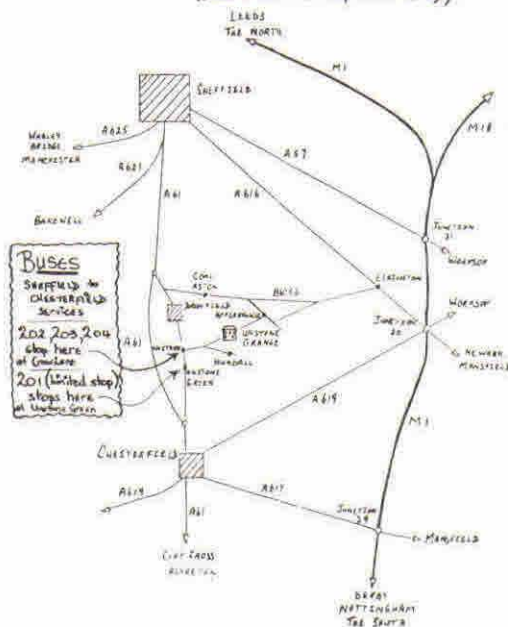
TOTAL £ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make out cheques/postal orders payable to Education  
 Otherwise and send with booking form to Joan Hoare, 25  
 Moor Oaks Road, Sheffield S10 1BX. Tel. 0742-666605.  
 Preference will be given to members who book for the whole  
 weekend to ensure that we cover our costs.

CANCELLATIONS Sorry but we cannot return your money if  
 you cancel less than 2 weeks before the  
 weekend.

how to get to unstone.....

NEAREST RAILWAY STATIONS:- SHEFFIELD & CHESTERFIELD  
(come local from stop at DRONFIELD)



## SMALL ADS

### PLEASE NOTE

FROM NOW ON PLEASE SEND ALL SMALL ADS FOR  
INCLUSION IN THE NEWSLETTER TO:-

Jean Shepherd,  
Advertising Secretary,  
9 Cranborne Gardens,  
Welwyn Garden City,  
Herts AL7 3NF.

Small ads will be charged at the rate of 10p per word.  
The deadline for small ads to appear in the next news-  
letter is February 24th 1985. Please send your payment  
with advert, cheques made payable to "Education Otherwise".

NOTICES should still be sent to the Editor - these will  
still be published at no charge.

# Public Meeting

Home schooling is not big business here in the North East, so we decided to hold a public meeting with speakers to try and make contact with people who may be thinking along EO lines but don't actually belong to the organization. "We" consists of the members of EO in Durham, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear.

A well-known hall was booked, (the Quaker Meeting House) in the centre of Newcastle on a Friday. Advertising was through posters, handbills and any free coverage the press were prepared to give us and the hall was full on a wet and cold November night.

We invited three speakers, John McGuinness, a lecturer in Education from Durham University, Sam Betts from the Steiner school at Bottom, North Yorkshire, and EO co-ordinator from Cheshire Andy Anderson. A chairman made sure that the speakers limited themselves to 15 minutes each, and handled questions from the floor. It was, in fact, a very formal public meeting in the "Any Questions" mould.

The speakers each gave different insights into what is wrong with conventional education and what the alternatives have to offer. Sam Betts offered the concept of "stages" in a child's life and providing an education appropriate to the way the child communicates with the world at any given stage; so a young child would be taught through its sensations but an older child might be expected to respond to verbal stimulus and concepts. Andy Anderson put forward the spontaneity of family life as the ideal learning environment where a child can acquire mechanical skills through dismantling the washing machine.

The need for alternatives was emphasized by John McGuinness who spent most of his allotted quarter of an hour enumerating the failures of the present education system. His mini-lecture was littered with quotables, (current schooling like "a Victorian steamtrain chugging towards the 21st century", a meeting with Sir Keith Joseph "an apology not a boast"), which stick in the mind, but was also a well reasoned critique of the system. It was useful to have our suspicions affirmed by someone who knows the system well and can quote the research which condemns it.

I always thought it was pointless to train young people for jobs which did not exist and to base a whole educational system on academic standards which are irrelevant to most pupils. Here was John McGuinness with chapter and verse proving that "School can damage your children's health".

A few other snippets: The academic ability of the average person of 16 is calculated at grade IV C.S.E.! Those leaving school in 1984 have a TEN times greater chance of spending time in a mental hospital than in a university. In John McGuinness's view, under certain circumstances

it is not only the parent's right but his duty to remove his child from school.

Coming after this description of the monolithic system crushing our young people, Steiner education and EO seemed to have a lot in common: Both Andy Anderson and Sam Betts stressed humanity, love, the development of the individual according to his/her own capacity, education appropriate to the child's needs not to adult aspirations.

Obviously, Steiner education has more organization and theory behind it than anything EO can put forward. But as Andy Anderson was at pains to point out, each EO family has its own way of educating its children and that there can be no doctrinaire methods which apply to all home education.

This seemed to scare some of the audience, the apparent lack of structure was beyond the pale. Questions fell roughly into three groups as those present alligned themselves behind one or the other of the speakers.

Some agreed with the criticisms of the system but had constructive ideas about how to improve it, ("no fail" examinations, parent pressure on schools to provide an education more in keeping with their children's requirements). They were embraced by John McGuiness who does not "want all the good guys to walk out of the state system and leave me alone".

Another group wanted out and had mainly turned up to hear about Steiner schools. They arranged to get together with a view to setting up a Steiner school in the area.

A few brave souls were attracted by the home alternative and actually went so far as to join EO, so from that point of view the meeting was a success.

In terms of publicity for EO we also did quite well: As a result of holding the meeting, one of our members was given a lengthy interview on B.B.C. Radio Newcastle, and another had a substantial article in the Northern Echo.

So, in spite of misgivings and words of discouragement from old-timers who had seen public meetings fail before and couldn't see why ours shouldn't also, we felt it was worthwhile. We have gained a few extra members and have got to know each other better as a result of the regular meetings and 'phone calls needed to arrange the evening.

We slightly overspent the £50 given by EO. As this money will find its way back via subscriptions of new members fairly soon, it strikes me as a very reasonable way for EO to use some of its funds.

Here's a final idea for anyone with lots of energy and missionary zeal; apparently, (says John McGuiness), in Denmark if 20 parents get together to start their own school they can get government funding to help. As this fits in well with Mrs Thatcher's "Do it yourself" philosophy, shouldn't we set up a pressure group to put the case for similar provision in this country?

Andy Jackson

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## On maths....+

4 Coombe Gardens,  
New Malden,  
Surrey KT3 4AA

Bruce and Christine Wallace asked for comments on the quote of an L.E.A. advisor about Mathematics. OK here goes.

The first two sentences say in short that knowledge is gained progressively. Of course. No quarrel here, in fact how can you acquire knowledge any other way? - one thing always builds on another.

The rest of the letter has some questionable assumptions and leaps in logic. "It is possible to develop a home-grown scheme of work...." yes, indeed, and it will be appropriate and relevant to the child concerned. Why should this be "major understanding"? Surely if you follow the child's growing interest and intelligence, it's easy. You need to be responsive and prepared to learn yourself.

Of course, it's a "major understanding" to make a scheme of work that will suit 30 children all at once. (or 300 or 3000)  
Why should a "commercially produced scheme.... be at the heart of the teaching ...."? Who says an impersonal system can do any better? This is a circular argument. A commercial system is deemed to be needed to ensure a correct progression of knowledge. Correct according to whom? Why the commercial system of course! Who decides which topics are relevant? - same answer.

This is not to disparage the hard work and skill of teachers that assemble these systems. But we reserve the right to differ and discover here and now for this child what is best. It need not be decided by someone we don't know, have never met, and at some time in the past.

Yours faithfully,

Joseph O'Connor

E.O. TEENAGERS WEEK

I'm glad to say that some more people have expressed interest and so I feel that it is worth continuing with the idea. Now we need to fix the details - where? when? what? how? Ideas submitted from teenagers include discussions, outdoor activities, disco and lots of opportunity to meet informally and talk about common concerns. Anyone coming to the Feb. core group weekend please try to share ideas then. A planning weekend here in Wales might also be necessary - please let me know (if you haven't already) if any of you teenagers could make this. If all goes well, we could have booking details next issue. The date is obviously subject to the availability of somewhere, but cannot realistically be earlier than late June, and might be easier to arrange later. Oh, and in case anyone was wondering, there won't be any opportunity to go out on the town or indulge in any other unseemly practices!

Simon Grant (3/4 Tanyralit Cottages, Llanllyfni, Caernarfon, Gwynedd).

\*\*\*\*\*

South Korrow,  
Blisland,  
Bodmin,  
Cornwall.

Dear E.O'ers,

My name is Beck Marshall. I am 7½. I will be eight in May. We have just moved to Cornwall. We have 25 sheep, and our first lamb ever born yesterday. We have 67 chickens and 2 cock-birds. We also have a dog called Pooch. I would like a pen-friend if anyone would like to write to me.

From,

Becky.

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SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF.....

Caroline Grant

Note : At present we earn our bread and marg partly by giving private tuition, sometimes here at home. Magdalene is therefore familiar with the idea of 'buying' teaching time.

It is my morning for working and I am sitting at my typewriter. Magdalene is supposedly getting ready to go for a walk with Simon.

M : Teach me something!

me: Not just now. I really need to get this work finished.

M : But I want you to teach me something now.

me: But I thought Simon was waiting for you to go on a walk with him?

M : Well, I will go for a walk later, But I want you to teach me something first.

This goes on for a while (where has Simon got to?) until she suddenly leaves the room in exaggerated exasperation, then marches back in again and slams 22p down on my desk, saying, "There's the money. NOW TEACH ME!" (I can't refuse.)

# THE POTENTIAL TRUST

In every group there are usually one or two individuals who want to pursue a particular topic or skill in greater depth or at greater length than anyone else. As a complete contrast, there may be one or two more who have the same potential for such a high degree of curiosity and persistence but, for a variety of reasons, are not motivated to achieve in any of the activities that officially make up the school day, and for them a large amount of that potential is never likely to be fulfilled.

Either sort of child can become impossible to cater for in a normal school environment in parallel with all the demands of the curriculum, the many commitments of busy teachers, and the needs of all the other pupils. However, the persistence and curiosity of both these sets of individuals still needs to be fostered and catered for in a constructive way. Where there is a large imbalance between high potential and the corresponding opportunities for achievement, frustration and boredom are likely to ensue, causing problems to the child, the family, the school, and eventually society in general.

## The aim of the Trust:

To help children with special needs whose needs arise from a high degree of unfulfilled potential in one or more areas - intellectual, practical, aesthetic, creative, social, personal..... - by complementing the provision already made for such children by parents and schools, in co-operation with other individuals and organisations working in the same field.

Children have a wide variety of special needs, to different degrees and in different combinations. By drawing attention to the particular needs of certain children, we hope we will also contribute to shifting the emphasis back onto the special needs of all children.

Our present plans are to run residential courses, publish magazines, and circulate information as we have already done for a number of years in the name of Explorers Unlimited. From now on, however, we will be working under the name of THE POTENTIAL TRUST..... and QUESTORS.

## What is a Questor?

A Questor is someone who has a high degree of potential in one or more areas - whether or not that potential is in any way fulfilled. This is particularly relevant to those children who have not entirely come to terms with their own potential for achievement, or whose behaviour makes it difficult for others to relate to them in a constructive way.

There is no membership fee or other entry qualification for a child to become a Questor. We do, of course, have to charge minimal course fees and mailing list subscriptions to try and cover our costs, but we hope nevertheless to be able to waive all or part of either in cases of need. Information about QUEST-WEEKS and POTENTIAL PUBLICATIONS is overleaf.....

## Questors in residence

QUEST-WEEKS are open to ANY child who wants an extended opportunity to do whatever-it-is in a fairly intensive sort of way, asking questions and trying to find satisfying answers, in the company of other children with similar motivations and potential. Previously call Residential Explorations, QUEST-WEEKS are run by sympathetic and highly motivated Quest Leaders, experts in many different fields, who work as a team and respond to the individual needs of the children which emerge as the week develops.

Some QUEST-WEEKS have a main topic, with most of the activities related to it in some way; others have a variety of topics and activities, but may well be based on a central theme. And sometimes several QUEST-WEEKS are run concurrently so each Questor can experience something of what the other groups are doing as well as pursuing their own chosen subject to a greater depth.

Because QUEST-WEEKS are residential for adults as well as children, the day rarely ends at the end of the day. Questors become very reluctant to acknowledge that there are only seven times twenty-four hours in the week, and realise that in following their Quest they also discover a great deal about themselves.

We also run PARENTAL APPROXIMATIONS for parents who want to try and get an idea of what it is like to be a Questor on a QUEST-WEEK. In addition, where possible, we will put Questors and their families in touch with any local organisation, individual, or group that may provide them with continuing support and stimulation throughout the rest of the year.

Finally, from time to time we run workshops where our aim is to set up or maintain contact with others involved in organising similar activities so we can all exchange ideas and continually improve the standard of what we are offering. If any local group is interested in running their own QUEST-WEEK - or just a QUEST-WEEKEND to start with - we are very willing to be consulted and to help in any way we can.

NB - QUEST-WEEKS take place in different parts of the country, mostly in the school holidays. The programme will be available in February.

Our first POTENTIAL PUBLICATION is for Questors and their families, with a supplement for local groups running the sort of activities Questors might be interested in. As with the various magazines we have previously produced and distributed on behalf of Explorers Unlimited - the Explorers Newsletter, the Bulletin, Mosaic, Gallimaufry, Hypotenuse (edited by Dr Judita Cofman), and Apotelesmatics - both will include as much information as possible about activities, exhibitions, clubs, books, games, etc, any of which could be a starting point for a new interest or activity .....

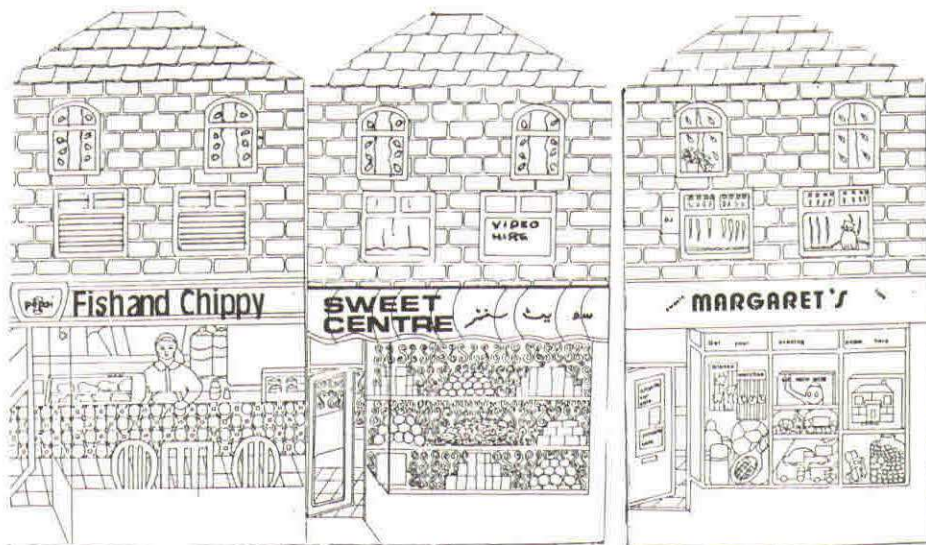
For further information on the POTENTIAL TRUST, the address is as follows:-

THE POTENTIAL TRUST  
Shepherd's Close,  
Kingston Stort,  
Nr Chinnor,  
Oxon OX9 4NL.

Telephone: Kingston Blount (0844) 51666

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Last Saturday at a local crafts fair, I came across some wonderful hand-made jig-saw puzzles of local shops, a garage, delicatessen, bakery etc. Several are 'ethnic' shops of the many communities in Manchester. All the pictures are done in delightful detail and are full of recognisable objects. The pieces 'sit' inside a frame formed by the roof and walls for the buildings and can be put together to form a 'street'. Price £4.50. Postage etc extra. Suitable for 4-7 year olds. From: Fellowfield Jigsaws, 31 Landcross Road, Manchester M14 6LZ. Telephone: 061 225 3759



DESIGNS NOT SHOWN  
Saree House; Stovah's Continental Grocery;  
Trafford Garage; Lucky House Take-Away;  
Ho's Bakery; Titanic Delicatessen; Pet's  
Pantry.

# News from the regions

## LINCOLNSHIRE

In view of possible bad weather making travel difficult in February and March, I decided against arranging venues for getting together before mid-April. So the first meeting will be on Sunday 14th April when Steve, Ella and I invite EO members, particularly those living in Lincolnshire, to our house for the day. Arrive at any time after 10.30am, please bring a contribution towards lunch if you will be here then (we'll provide tea, coffee and juice), and try to bring materials for an activity in case anyone's interested. Please phone or write if you'll be coming, so we'll know whether we should hire the village hall.

Jan Marshall, 24 King Street, West Deeping, Peterborough.  
(King Street is off the A16 Market Deeping to Stamford road, two miles out of Market Deeping).

\*\*\*\*\*

## CORNWALL

Co-ordinator: Sylvia Roskilly,  
2 Ventonleague Hill,  
Hayle,  
Cornwall TR27 4EH. Tel: 754998

A very successful EO gathering took place at Roscallas Farm, Treverva, Nr. Falmouth, last week-end 8-9th December. Thanks to Susan and Brian Gaze, Veronica Cavey and friends.

The weather was kind, the company stimulating and I am sure everyone who attended enjoyed the contact and supportive feeling that comes from being with other people having similar ideas and experiences. The children got along well together too!

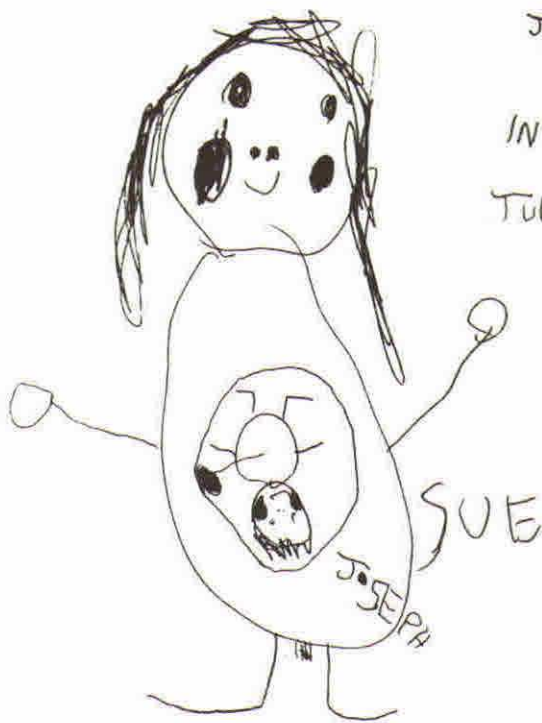
For myself, I hope to contact all our Cornish members during 1985, and look forward to meeting as many of you as possible. Do contact me if you feel I can be of help. Happy New Year!

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## HERTFORDSHIRE

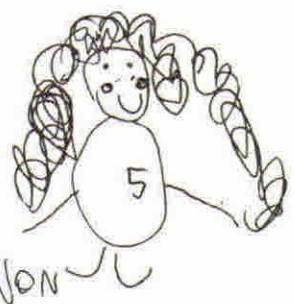
A few of us got together at the meeting in October. Since then we have met regularly in each others homes; visited the zoo and museums; gone swimming; exchanged ideas and information. More Herts members would be most welcome.

The next meeting will be held at Jean Shepherd's house- 9 Cranbourne Gardens, Welwyn Garden City on THURSDAY 14th FEBRUARY from 11am onwards. Please bring own food for lunch. In the afternoon we plan a walk in the woods (please come prepared!) If raining, a trip to Hatfield Swimming Pool instead (don't forget towels!). Contact Jean on 07073 39750. if coming!



JOSEPH  
IN YOUR  
TUMMY

IT WAS BEAUTIFUL  
WATCHING MY BROTHER  
BEING BORN  
RHIANNON



BY RHIANNON AGES 5

# Education thro' the press

Edited by Sarah Guthrie, with contributions from Janice Owen, Bruce Cox.

## THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME?

There have been mixed reactions to the Government's proposed new exams the "AS" level, which would broaden 6th form studies. (TELEGRAPH 6.11.84)

.....The Samaritans are receiving more calls than ever from school children worried and depressed about exams; suicide nationally is the second most common cause of death among young people (TIMES ED SUPPLEMENT 28.12.84)

.....the ILEA plans to give maths lessons a new look in 1985 as part of its anti-racist drive: thus, problems about the length of time it takes three workmen to dig a hole will become problems about the relative earning power of black South Africans to whites, for example. (TELEGRAPH 26.11.84)

....Reading and writing should be taught by traditional methods after all, advises Government inspectors. They would like to see a return to rudiments of grammar, punctuation and spelling, as well as the ability to express oneself. (TELEGRAPH 3.10.84)

.....Oxbridge has had fewer applicants from state schools in 1984 (TELEGRAPH 21.11.84) and Cambridge undergraduates are no longer violently political. (TELEGRAPH 6.11.84) The students have been criticised by their proctors, for their political apathy, means they have no time for political activity....Norfolk is one county that will have to do some hard thinking about its finances if its educational standards are to improve, says an inspectors report (TELEGRAPH 6.11.84); many schools are being kept alive on voluntary contributions, notably from parents....in 1985 a child health study will be launched to question 15,000 teenagers about their lifestyle, health and background - so that they can be advised about jobs, leisure and eventual parenting. (GUARDIAN 31.12.84)

...Sir Keith's Green Paper, calling for more parental participation in schools, is being backed by Mrs Thatcher's Think Tank, the Centre for Policy Studies (TELEGRAPH 24.11.84) The Centre wants to see even greater parent power on school governing bodies. Members of the think tank told Sir Keith that parents alone knew what was best for their children and should be trusted to become the dominant influence in school.... Dissection will no longer be a compulsory feature of Biology 'A' level by 1989. The RSPCA believes that dissection upsets sensitive children and gives less sensitive children a wrong idea of the correct attitude to animals. They say that dissection is not necessary educationally, but is an anachronistic legacy from the Victorian era of 'collect, kill and pickle'. (TELEGRAPH 16.10.84)

The Association for Science Education has warned teachers to watch out for children who decide to take science lessons into their own hands. Some curious children have taken to heating pencil sharpeners in bunsen flames, and these can explode violently if made of magnesium. A spokesman for the ASE said "there's any number of things which, if heated in a Bunsen, could be a hazard". (TIMES ED SUPPLEMENT 18.5.84)

FEAR AND LOATHING IN 1984: The Director General of the Independent Broadcasting Authority said it was absurd to blame TV for crime and violence in society, despite police opinion to the contrary (TELEGRAPH 9.11.84)  
....a Huddersfield psychiatrist believes that videos may help children come to terms with reality, even if disturbing, and could cause no serious illness or breakdown (TIMES ED SUPPLEMENT)  
....an 8 year old boy was mentally shattered after watching a video nasty and had to be referred for clinical treatment (TELEGRAPH 9.11.84) The Child Development Research Unit is now having to treat youngsters suffering extreme anxiety from watching videos.  
....school children feel increasingly anxious and helpless about the possibility of a nuclear war, according to a survey based on 561 comprehensive pupils (TIMES ED SUPPLEMENT Nov. '84)  
....A Penzance primary school has been told to stop inflicting humiliating punishments such as cello taping childrens mouths and tying pupils to chairs (TELEGRAPH 22.11.84)....a book published by the Sheffield Anarchists suggesting 91 ways to sabotage schools was distributed to pupils in South Yorkshire before police confiscated it (TELEGRAPH 19.10.84) The book likens school to a prison, saying it is society's way of forcing youngsters into the system. Sabotage ideas included loosening the wheel nuts of teachers cars, puncturing tyres and making hoax bomb calls....Sir Keith has infuriated teachers with his plans to initiate compulsory assessment for teachers - those who fail the competence tests are to be sacked (TELEGRAPH 2.11.84)

BUT ... to end on a brighter note: two more breakthroughs for science in 1984:

... American journalist Jim Trelease has discovered that children's love of reading can be fostered by parents reading aloud to them. Jim has found that some books are better for reading aloud than others, and one way of telling is whether or not the child is interested in the story. Another measure of success is if the book can be readily understood. Jim is available for lecture tours (TIMES ED SUPPLEMENT, DEC.)

... doctors have discovered that premature babies thrive better for being kept with their mothers than if they are in incubators. By being in touch with their babies, mothers are able to tell directly that they are alive rather than have to check via a monitor. Doctors at Hammersmith Hospital find that babies are less restless when nursed in close contact with mother's skin. "We don't know why the baby is more contented next to the human body. It could be the mother's heartbeat", mused a (male) doctor. (SUNDAY TIMES 23.12.84)

AND... TALKING ABOUT SCHOOLING from 'Growing Without Schooling'

"... When he made little progress at school, his mother inquired and was told by the school teacher that the boy was "addled" His mother, furious, took him out of school. Before he died he had patented nearly 1,300 inventions, a record no other inventor has ever matched". (From a biography of Thomas Edison, by Isaac Asimov).

## AIDE MEMOIRE TO TEACHERS ON CLASS DISCIPLINE

These guidelines are an extract from the Working Party Report entitled 'Help for Difficult Children'. Many other aspects concerning behavioural problems are dealt with else where in that Report, which should be read in conjunction with this Aide Memoire.

- (a) Don't blame the system, the pupils, or the school for you own inadequacies. Face the issue yourself, and do something about it. Don't pretend that, despite the chaos in the classroom, they are still working and have done something useful: you are fooling yourself. Be prepared to admit that the situation has got out of hand, and ask for support or advice.
- (b) If you have experienced great difficulty over class control for a long time, ask yourself if you are in the right job - then do something about it.
- (c) Be realistic in the kind of material you teach. Do not blame the pupils if they become frustrated and a source of trouble if the subject material is quite beyond their understanding or presented in a dull way: it may form part of the syllabus, but take a serious look at what you are trying to teach and how you teach it.
- (d) Make adequate preparations for lesson work, investigate the availability of materials, keep the class busy, show an interest in their work, have additional work to hand if needed, regularly mark and assess their work, and, where appropriate, set and mark homework.
- (e) Be positive about a pupil's work and behaviour. Do not always note what is wrong: look for what is right and build on that.
- (f) Arrive on time - or, better still, be ready in advance, nothing is more calculated to produce a restless class, which may be a nuisance to others, than the persistent lateness of a member of staff. You owe this to your colleagues.
- (g) Do not be deflected by a stream of enquiries at the beginning of the lesson, but insist on getting straight down to work by establishing a known routine from the start.
- (h) Be prepared to separate from each other, pupils who persistently disrupt lesson work.
- (i) Be firm in your attitude and manner when addressing a class - not apologetic. Tell them - quietly, calmly, and politely - what they are expected to do.
- (j) Deal with pupils personally for repeated minor misdemeanours - even if you have to put yourself out to do so. They will soon conform - once they realise that you mean what you say.
- (k) Make sure that a pupil is fully aware of the reason for being punished. If possible, avoid punishing for a first offence. Give fair warning of your intention - and, if you threaten a pupil or class with a particular sanction, be prepared to carry it out: failure to do so is soon exploited by pupils, who quickly realise that you do not mean what you say.

- (l) Be absolutely sure a pupil has transgressed before you act.
- (m) Avoid getting into arguments with pupils who are clearly in the wrong but are trying to excuse themselves at your expense. Deal with the matter firmly and with dispatch.
- (n) Sort out the ringleaders in the classroom, and, if appropriate, see that they are isolated or removed from the class for as long as is deemed necessary; but do not give up the attempt to win their allegiance and respect.
- (o) When a class has a known hooligan element, do not make the mistake of bargaining in exchange for good behaviour. Not only will you be disappointed, but you will expose yourself to further trouble.
- (p) Avoid a shouting match with the class. If necessary, wait for their attention, and then ensure that the time is made up. They will soon catch on.
- (q) When faced with a blatant refusal from a pupil to carry out a reasonable request, send for a senior member of staff. Incidents of this kind must be treated very seriously. Follow up this kind of indiscipline with a view to preventing repetition.
- (r) If a class is persistently noisy next door, approach the teacher concerned - asking if it is possible to reduce the noise level. Be polite but firm, stating that you cannot work in such conditions and that it is not fair to the class. Should the problem persist:
- (i) ask for a change of room; and
  - (ii) tell the teacher concerned of your intention to bring the matter to the attention of the head or a senior member of staff.
- (s) If required to take the class of an absent colleague, check that work has been set- or, if it has not, ask an appropriate member of staff to set work. In any case, always have an emergency piece of work that you can set the class: it will save you a lot of trouble.
- (t) Remember to praise pupils when they behave or work as you would like, so they are aware of what is appropriate in the classroom. Avoid getting into a situation where your only comments to an individual or class are negative ones.

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Footnote: What do you EO'ers think of these principles of discipline?

TREASURER

Alison Mafham  
3 Park Road West  
Curzon Park  
Chester

ASSISTANT TREASURER

(renewa  
Bob Emmett  
8 Queensway  
Liddell Park  
Llandudno  
Gwynedd LL30 1YJ

GENERAL SECRETARY

John Elenor  
31 Anson Road  
London NW2

ADVERTISING SECRETARY

Jean Shepherd  
9 Cranbourne Gardens  
Welwyn Garden City

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARIES

Bruce and Christine Wallace  
25 Diabaig  
Achnasheen  
Ross-shire IV22 2HE  
Tel: 044-581-225

ENQUIRIES SECRETARY

Janet Everdell  
25 Common Lane  
Hemingford Abbots  
Cambs PE18 9AN  
Tel: 0480-63130  
(NOT after 9.30pm)

REVIEWS EDITOR

Helen Holland  
Inholm Farm  
Plumpton Green  
Nr Lewes  
Sussex

CO-ORDINATORS SECRETARY

Andy Anderson  
95 Derrington Avenue  
Crewe  
Cheshire CW2 7JA  
Tel: 0270-664060

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EO is affiliated to:-

N.C.C.L.  
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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 wish to support the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of their 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 childrens 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.