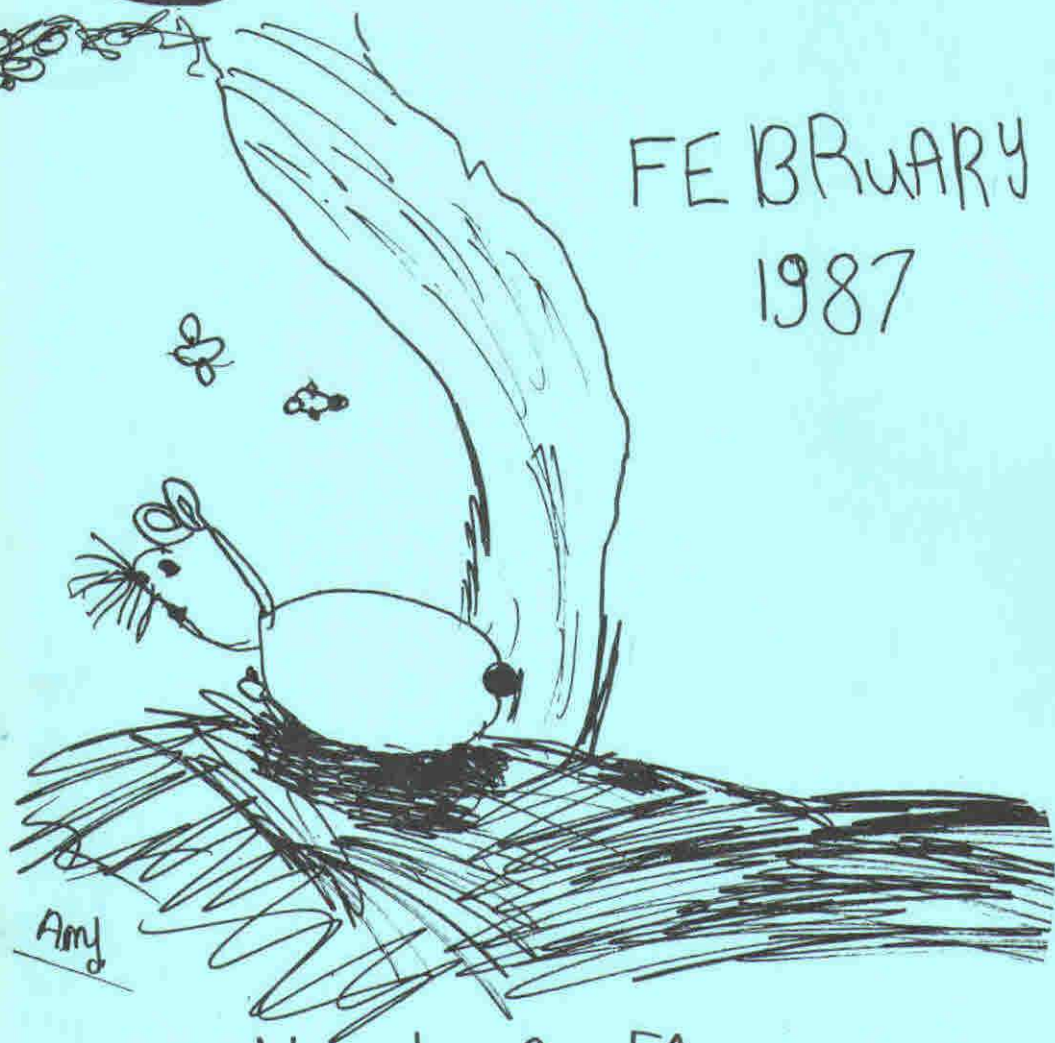


EDUCATION THERWISE

FEBRUARY
1987



Amy

Number 51.

CONTENTS

Editorial	1	
Letters	2 - 8	
Educating Archie	Sarah Guthrie	9
Book Reviews	10 - 13	
Farm Friends Club	Bob & Wade	14
Monkton Wylde Court	15	
Cyclecraft Holidays	15	
The Rambo Factor	Chris Shute	16
Supplement. Special Needs ..	Sylvia Jeffs.....	17 - 24
Access to Personal Files Bill ..	Julie Lyons	25
Informations Resource Centre	25	
Happiness Denied	Janet Everdell	26
Truancy & School Phobia ...	Patricia Knox	28
International Potters Camp	29	
Featherstone Castle	30	
Notices	32	
News From The Regions	34	
Education Through The Press	37	

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

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Supplements will be on Art & Creative Design. In two parts. Part one:- is for age group 0 - 11 years. Part two is for age group 11+.

Contributions for the next edition should be sent to the editor by the deadline date and all material intended as such should be clearly marked 'FOR PUBLICATION'. Contributors are asked to ensure that they include their name and address.

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EDITORIAL

With Christmas, New Year and the SNOW, this newsletter is somewhat lacking in quantity, though not in quality. We thank all contributors for their efforts.

Linda Semp asks if the 'adolescent rebellion' occurs in E.O. families? From our experience, over the past fourteen years, with six children, we would say, NO, instead there has been a gradual self - motivation and independence. It would be interesting to discover if this was the rule.

Maria Parnell asks if anyone else is finding teaching at home hard work and not always satisfying etc., YES, we do. But at the end of the day we know that what we have is precious. Gold is only precious because of the amount of effort needed for it to be mined and refined, and our children are precious to us.

Alexandra Wilson would like ideas etc., on pre - school children. Many of us having had 5 year olds reading and writing know how advantageous this is. Her letter sounds like a good idea, IF you intend to keep them out of school. Otherwise it could be disastrous. Some infant teachers resent parent 'interference' and teach all pupils at the same level. A pre - school taught child in this situation will soon lose heart, become bored and disruptive, causing all sorts of problems, even long term.

Caroline Walker asks where has the R.E. gone? - good point, especially as it's the only compulsory subject under the 1944 Education Act. So let's hear from you, but don't get fanatical and start crucifying one another. Constructive letters only please!

Jean writes to reprove us for swearing in the newsletter. Point taken Jean. Helen Holland (Book Reviews) has the right idea, future editors, please note.

And there's lots more. Chris Shute's 'Rambo Factor' being especially good.

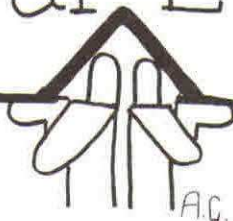
Julie Lyons article on 'Access to Personal Files' needs urgent attention, due to the need to act quickly.

If your letter is not published, don't despair, a lot of thought and consideration is given to each letter and article submitted. Sometimes there is not enough space and your letter is forwarded to the next editor. Contributors should bear in mind the aims of E.O. when submitting their letters or articles.

MIKE & LOIS COOK, 34 BEACON ROAD, HERNE BAY, KENT CT6 6DJ



Dear EO



Dear E.O.,

I always look forward to reading the E.O. magazine, and would like to thank all contributors to this lively and informative Newsletter. A particular 'Thankyou' to those who provide the amusing illustrations - please keep up the good work!

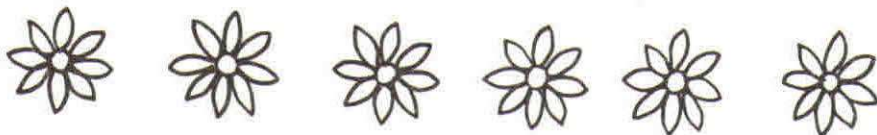
One thing I would very much like to see, as a parent who is fairly new to de - schooling, is articles by adults who were educated wholly, or in part, at home, and their views about how this has affected their personality and lifestyle in adulthood.

Are there many such adults around among our readers? If so, please share your experiences, past and present with us.

I would also like to read letters from children who are having home - schooling, or de - schooling, at present, or in the past, and their views about this. So keep the articles and letters coming in, all you young 'consumers' out there.

I do wonder whether the so - called 'adolescent rebellion' we experience so strongly in our society, and the alienation of children in teen years from their parents - whether this in fact takes place at all, or less strongly, or just the same, in E.O. families. I would be most interested in any response from your readers who have personal experience of this.

LINDA SEMP, 90 BEECHES DRIVE, ERDINGTON, BIRMINGHAM, B24 0DT



Dear Readers,

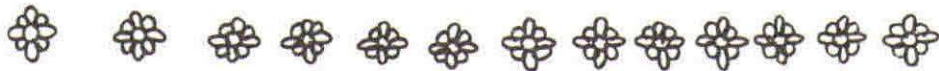
I would like to tell you about my experience with the ILEA. A lady came round when my mum was just checking our luggage because we were going away to Wales to live.

The lady was Mrs B....., she was very nice, and she said she hadn't come to move me to school. And she gave me some advice about measuring. She asked me to read to her. She said I was doing very well. She congratulated my mum, who is a single parent and teaches my little brother as well.

Yours Sincerely,
danny hart

DAN & DYANA HART, BLAENFFOS FARM, BLAENFFOS, CARDIGAN, DYFED.

(would like to have printed your age as well Danny, but you forgot to say. Your letter was beautifully written. Ed.)





Dear E.O.,

Congratulations on the Special Issue Newsletter in December. Not having been members of E.O. for very long, I found it encouraging to hear from people who have been going strong for so much longer.

I find that nearly every issue of the magazine has been interesting and thought provoking, and therefore worth reading.

However, I do think that most comments, if not concerned with pointing out the 'bad influence' of schools, are at least giving out a rosy image of home schooling which I thought I would like to redress.

My nearly 7 year old daughter and 3½ year old son have never attended school. I have no comparison to make as to before and after, school attendance.

I don't need to point out the obvious advantages of home teaching. There are many and we all know them or we wouldn't be doing it.

Even so I have always found home schooling difficult and hard going. To combine the interest of even two children of various ages (and I know many E.O. families are larger than ours) can be very difficult to achieve.

The soul searching questions we ask ourselves so often. Are we achieving enough to satisfy both children, stretch their imaginations enough, provide a comprehensive enough environment to do justice to their intelligence?

I find I have to provide teaching situations to carry out the teaching, albeit in a relaxed home environment without worry about times tables etc. My children don't automatically tell me when they want to be taught, (something which seems to happen in other E.O. families, or so I hear). For us it does not come that easily.

Finding friends for the children - another problem, although we hardly live out in the sticks. It is a tiring day to be around for virtually 24 hours without a break. It would be so much easier to let someone else take over sometimes.

No, it is not at all the wonderful and satisfying achievement it is meant to be. It is terribly hard work.

Is anyone else having the same experience or is it just us?

MARIA PARNELL, 50 ST.JULIANS FARM ROAD, LONDON, SE27 ORS



Dear E.O.,

Thank you for a wonderful four years. To those who gave me personal help and advice, right down to the ordinary members, who, through their subscriptions keep this wonderful little magazine going - thankyou, one and all.

I was advised right from the beginning that it might not be the right thing to do, as my husband was not keen on the children being out of school. He agreed to it to start with, but the pressure has been mounting for them to go back to school. So they both started this September. (1986)

I am sure they have benefited greatly in spirit from their four years out of school. Without the pressure of school they have been better able to develop their own confidence, and have had little trouble coping with the novelty of the school situation. It is comforting to think that if they have trouble with school in the future the alternative of home is always at hand.

PRISCILLA PARK WEIR, 14 BIGGS LANE, ABORFIELD, READING, RG2 9LL.





Dear EO,

I would be interested in hearing from anyone who has had experience of teaching children at home in France and dealing with the French education authorities.

Amanda Petrie, 82 Green Lane North, Liverpool L16 8NL.



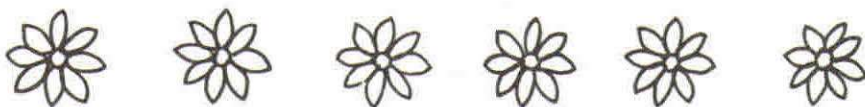
Dear E.O.,

Please, does anyone have experience of E.O. in Sweden; feasibility, advisability etc.?

We are new members of E.O. and our two older children (6 and 8) were de-schooled last October. We are emigrating in March.

Any information to elaborate on the official handouts would be very welcome.

ANNETTE HOWGATE, ROSE COTTAGE, PRIMROSE LANE, PREES, WHITCHURCH, SHROPSHIRE SY13 2EH



Dear E.O.,

Having been a member of E.O. for the last three years, the 10th Anniversary issue of the N/L has finally inspired me to write.

It was interesting to read articles by more experienced members - particularly Sandie Cottee's article, where she states that Marc was only crawling when she made the first decision to educate at home. How glad I was to hear that ! E.O. has mostly struck me as being an organisation full of parents with school - aged children, either educating at home or having problems at school. Yet how many 'silent' members are there who, like us, (with a baby and toddler) are quietly educating our pre-school children, waiting on the sidelines until the magic age of 5 years makes us 'active' members with 'out of school' children?

Bearing all this in mind, I wondered if there are any such members who would be interested in corresponding with us ? I would love to discuss ideas, hopes and ideals with others who have pre - school children, perhaps swap books ? (John Holt and the like), argue ?? To see how our ideas change and adapt as the years go by, and our philosophy and lifestyle forms and develops. Any parents interested ? Please do write if and when you have the time - after all, in another ten years time we will be the parents saying 'he was only a baby when we first decided to ...'

ALEXANDRA WILSON, 25 FITZJOHN CLOSE, MERROW PARK, GUILDFORD, SURREY. GU4 7HB





Dear E.O.,

Everybody else seems to be airing his/her opinions, so why shouldn't I ?

I regard 'Otherwise' as one of the essential safeguards of our open society.

I believe our children are getting a raw deal from our present state system.

I believe that the communications explosion on the one hand, and the disco/ drugs/AIDS factor on the other hand, throw open the whole question of the suitability of schools as places of learning.

I believe that a good home is the best educative influence, and the peer - group pressures have been allowed to get completely out of hand. To be fair, it has to be admitted that there are such things as good schools and bad homes, and the former can become the scapegoat for the sins of the latter.

I have read Holt, Illich, Neill and all the vivid case-histories set out in the N/L's and elsewhere and it all adds up to a formidable case. Residual doubts however, remain. Does it never happen that a child on reaching maturity, turns to its parents and says 'I just wish you had given me the chance to go to school like everybody else'? If so, presumably the parents do not write in to the N/L about it.

My own experience, such as it is, suggests that many children do well in an orderly and (dare I say) authoratative framework. Many adults are profoundly grateful for having been made to learn things which they would never otherwise have learned.

All this is arguable and ultimately unprovable either way. Do we necessarily have to fight to the death over it ? Surely not. What we should be aiming at is maximising possibilities. Let people work things out for themselves individually. This is presumably what E.O. is all about.

If 'letting children find things out for themselves' is really the best form of education, then by all means let us knock down all the schools, for how can they 'find things out for themselves' if they are confined to a classroom all day ?

Having done that, and thrown the whole burden of educating children back on to parents, what might we now expect ? It is possible to imagine all kinds of interesting things happening. Extended families might become stronger. Aunts and grand - parents might be roped in to play active roles. Local initiative would flourish. All sorts of clubs, workshops, study - groups and 'activity centres' would spring up like mushrooms (and live or die according to the needs of the children and the quality of the input.).

There might even be places where suitably Qualified People could offer courses of instruction on various subjects. It might even be found that the most cost - effective unit of instruction turned out to be a roomful (say about 30) of youngsters seated at purpose built items of furniture facing a large flat piece of wood nailed to the wall and painted black, on which the Qualified Person made scratches with a stick of calcareous rock dug out of the ground near Beachy Head. (Hey! Pity we knocked all those schools down, they might have come in handy. Oh well never mind) All this would of course, be voluntary both ways, that is, the Unqualified Person could opt to attend or not to attend, and the Qualified Person could opt to 'lose' anybody who clearly was not seriously interested.

On the other hand there might be all kinds of electronic wizardry with pupil control and interaction, which could enable children to learn almost anything at home with great facility.

No doubt there would also be numberless children who would insist on aquiring their education in their own totally unsystematic way.

All these, and no doubt countless other possibilities, are 'on the cards'. Do we have to make irreversible choices of policy ? Surely not. Let the individuals make the choices. The very facts of having to make the choices and of having to live with the consequences, will be an education in themselves.

Does the state come into this at all ? Yes it does. Citizens not only have rights, they also have duties.





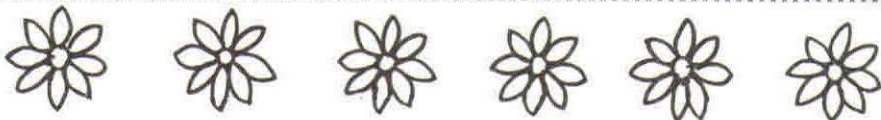
The state - any state - needs a literate, numerate, adaptable and preferably loyal population, simply for the sake of survival. How can it get this ?

A hundred years of state education have left us with a system which is cripplingly expensive and, to put it charitably, not conspicuously effective. Almost anything else could hardly be worse.

My suggestion - and I am fully conscious of the thunderous chorus of outrage it will provoke - is that the stateshould set a core curriculum with annual targets, and pay by results.

Who can suggest anything better ?

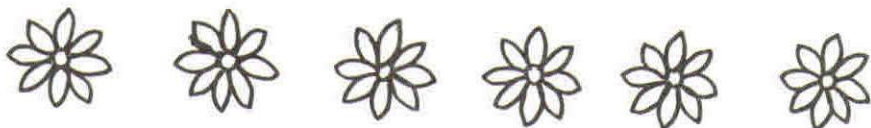
STEWART DEUCHAR, DEAN FARM, SINGLEBOROUGH, MILTON KEYNES, MK17 ORF



PENFRIEND WANTED

I would like a pen-friend. I am fourteen next April.
My interests are; Art & Craft, Botany, Languages (especially french), and walking in the country.

KIRSTY GILMORE, 2 CROMWELL AVENUE, PENYWERN, NEATH .
W. GLAM. SA10 8DU



SOMETHING FROM PEGGY THOMAS 131 MAYOU ROAD, SE26 4HZ :-

I'd just like to share this lovely joke with you, from A DOMINIE'S LOG an early book by A.S. NEILL (1915)
' Here boy,' he (the inspector) fired at a sleepy youth 'who wrote Hamlet ?'
The boy started violently.
'P-please, sir, it wasna me,' he stammered.
That evening the inspector was dining with the local squire.
'Very funny thing happened today,' he said as they lit their cigars.
'I was a little irritated, and I shouted at a boy, "Who wrote Hamlet ?"
The little chap was flustered. "P-please sir, it wasna me" he stuttered.
The squire guffawaed loudly. 'And I suppose the little devil had done it after all ! ' he roared.



Dear Editor,

Whilst recovering from a minor operation, I read through all the E.O. N/L's and publications I've had since joining last year. It was a very pleasant exercise, which reinforced and encouraged my decision on home schooling. There was one thing however, which struck me. In all I read I don't think I found one mention of 'religious instruction' - how to do it, how not to, is it necessary, appropriate, desirable - and this is perhaps all the more striking when R.E. is still, I think, the only compulsory subject in the curriculum of state schools.

So what is the reason for not mentioning the subject? Do we feel that, 'Religion comes into everything'? Or do we feel the same embarrassment and diffidence about discussing spirituality, as used to be felt thirty years ago about sexuality? It seems that in the secular west today, anyone bringing up the subject of spirituality, or the importance of a religious dimension to life, is looked at somewhat disapprovingly and, after an uncomfortable silence, the conversation is steered onto safer ground.

Perhaps many of us were taught R.E. badly in school, so we've dismissed the whole subject from our lives, as being irrelevant and somehow the province of cranks and 'holy rollers'. Perhaps some of us have had mystical experiences - whilst alone in the country, listening to music or during some crisis in our lives - but we don't feel this has anything to do with organised religions. I remember reading, years ago, a piece in New Society about the work of a Religious Experience Research Unit; one of their findings was that regular churchgoers were less likely to report such experiences than those who were 'unchurched'.

It is of course a very difficult subject to discuss. At some point, as Jung pointed out, someone will say, 'I haven't had a religious experience.' And the other will reply, 'Well I have.', and there the conversation must end. For each must discover the truth for themselves and no amount of persuasion or coercion can transform my reality into your reality.

There is another comment of Jung's I find thought provoking, he said that of all the thousands of patients that came to him, not one was released from their suffering until they had discovered a religious outlook on life. This does not mean that the suddenly became pious and faithful members of a particular church - far from it, but that their lives became meaningful to them when they began to develop a relationship with the 'transcendent'.

If you are an atheist, of course none of this is relevant and, if you are a firm believer and member of a religious organisation, you will probably have clear ideas about what your children should learn, and have access to resources.

But many of us, without being committed to any particular path, are surely concerned simply to keep our children's options open on the subject. We want to make them aware of the great variety of religious experience, and to emphasise the need for respect for all that is good in each tradition. The different paths have been compared to the spokes of a wheel, the nearer we are to the Centre, the nearer we are to each other.

In the U.K. now there are, Mosques, Hindu and Sikh temples, Buddhist monasteries and Christian churches. Has any member had experience of using these as learning resources? Can anyone recommend particularly good books of say, Bible stories, Hindu stories, Buddhist stories?

Or would we rather not talk about it, feeling that it is an intensely personal matter, not for public discussion? It would be interesting to know how others feel.

CAROLINE WALKER, VALIPARAI, THUMMAKUNDA P.O., NARAINCHAPURAM (via),
MADURAI DISTRICT, 626 579, SOUTH INDIA.

Dear E.O.,

After a couple of years of being absent from E.O., I have just rejoined. Today, I have received the December Newsletter, and I do not feel happy about it - so for once, I thought I would put my thoughts into writing.

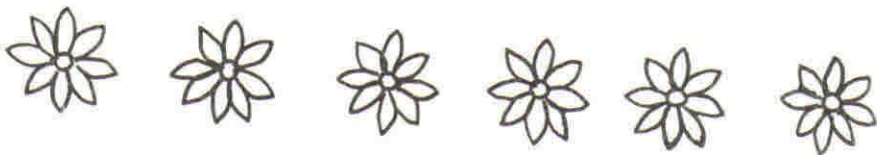
My twelve years old son has been out of school for 4½ years. We all have many reasons for de - schooling our children and one small factor which helps us to come to such a decision is that we do not want our children to be forced to conform to or accept and use, foul language, which, I am certain, is common - place in schools today. Not only in the schools, but on the streets and television at times.

Apart from being very immature and in my opinion, a load of waffle, the article on page 40 of the December newsletter by Dyana Hart, must surely be unworthy of publication by E.O. Was it necessary for us to have to read 'and I needed to shed layers of SHIT accumulated over four decades'. ?

I have survived five decades and oh, the many, many mistakes I have made ! Even so, I do not have to express myself by using a four letter word - neither in writing an article or within my family, and I do not want to read such things in my E.O. newsletter, or for my son to read them, when I am doing my best to bring him up to be a decent, honest and useful person. Don't get me wrong ! I am no prude and, if necessary I could use the same kind of language. Neither am I one of the so - called 'upper class'. In fact I am now a single parent and support myself entirely while educating my youngest son at home - a rather lonely life at times - but I do feel peaceful within myself, knowing that, without a shadow of doubt, I made the right decision to de - school him and help him to change from an unhealthy, miserable, rather backward little boy, to a healthy, intelligent, normal lad who is very knowledgeable about wildlife, is interested in many, many thing - but, above all, is honest and happy and does not have to express himself by using four - letter words. My hopes for him are that, by the time he grows up, he will have had a reasonable all round education both morally and academically - time will tell.

So please contributors to E.O., no more four - letter words in our newsletters. Let's get on with what we are here for - to support each other and help each other to achieve what we all want for our children - the very best we can give them.

Jean





UNSTONE GRANGE SHEFFIELD

A volunteer is needed to receive individual bookings from members for the Unstone Grange weekend on May 22nd-25th. It is not necessary to live near Sheffield. Please contact Joan Hoare, Gen.Sec., if you can do this.

LOST AT WICK COURT

ONE WHITE "TRANSFORMER" CAR

Please contact Geoffrey Common, Milton Keynes (see Contact List, Berks.)



Book Reviews



PLEASE NOTE!

OPINIONS WANTED ! Have any of you come across the Adventure Game Books published by PUFFIN ? New ones arrive each month, and I think they are, (expletive deleted) but, am I alone in this ? I should like to know what those of you who have encountered them, think, before writing to express my dismay to Puffin editors. Are there any good points that I have missed ?

Two books which should have gone direct to potential reviewers, were sent to me instead, and I have no idea who ordered them. Someone out there is waiting to review Rudolf Kutzli 's 'Creative Form Drawing' and 'Freya Jaffke's 'Advent for Children'. Please get in touch with me, HELEN HOLLAND 0273 890405



GEOGRAPHY OF THE BRITISH ISLES by Kenneth B. Stephenson. BLANDFORD PRESS.

A hefty textbook (paperback) which covers the syllabuses (syllabi ?) of all the regional examining boards. This new edition contains everything the O level/GCSE student will need to know. There are plenty of graphs, maps, diagrams and photographs, many in colour. Statistics quoted are recent and there are questions included. Each region is dealt with in turn and Ireland is dealt with too. Altogether, this is a really useful book.



LETT'S FOUNDATION SKILLS, For 11 - 14 year olds.

3 VOLUMES EACH FOR BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, PHYSICS, MATHEMATICS, FRENCH, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY and ENGLISH.

An interesting new series, which would prove useful to any family embarking on this stage of home schooling, for each subject is covered very thoroughly. The text is clearly laid out and well illustrated, the activities and exercises suggested quite imaginative and stimulating. I see these books as a satisfactory base from which to work, reassuring parents (and inspectors !), that all the important areas are being covered - the bread, if you like, on which can be spread the more exciting butter and jam of each child's own interests and discoveries.



FIRST RIGHTS -- A guide to legal rights for young people.
By:- MAGGIE RAE, PATRICIA HEWITT AND BARRY HUGILL.

Published by the NCCL (1986) ISBN 0 946088 15 2 Price £2.95

This guide clearly and lucidly meets its stated aim; to explain in practical terms, how the law treats young people. It contains some very useful information to answer such questions as 'Surely they can't make me do this?'.
There are sections on family relationships, school, employment, money and property, sex and marriage, drugs and the police. There is also a summary of your rights year by year, and a list of useful books and organisations. (Education Otherwise is not included here - a glaring omission!).

The section on school has a rather negative perspective to my mind. 'Otherwise' education is not given as a legal right, only the consequences are given if the LEA considers parents are not providing their children with a proper education, as if all cases of non-attendance at school may be viewed this way. The various orders and penalties that may be served on parents are useful to know however, but one hopes it would not come to this. Perhaps within the brief of the book, with so many topics dealt with, this sort of perspective is inevitable.

I do believe however, that this bias about school attendance is legally disputable, in other words, it is not clear in such cases whether it is up to the parents to convince the LEA that the education they are providing is satisfactory, or whether it is for the LEA to convince the court that the education provided by the parents is not good enough, the latter view is a very good approach for the parent to take who is in conflict with the LEA.

The rest of the section details the rights and obligations of schooling, and makes it clear that the head is in an inordinantly powerful position.

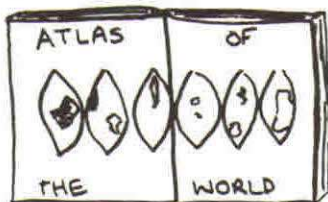
I did not know, for example, that the school has no legal obligation to let you see the school rules. This is very odd to say the least, when they are legally enforceable, not only inside the school building, but in certain cases, outside too. Shades of Kafka! Discipline is imposed on this basis. The U.K. is the only EEC country that still allows teachers to hit children.

Overall a useful and informative book.

JOSEPH O'CONNOR

'First Rights' is available from:-
NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES, 21 TABARD STREET, LONDON SE1 4LA
(Mail Order; p&p is 40p.)





THE PUFFIN REFERENCE ATLAS OF THE WORLD

An atlas for 8 - 13 year olds which attempts to bridge the gap between pictorial children's atlases and the complex adult ones. It is easier to find the names of places and features, than in the adult atlas and there are clear explanations of scale, map projections and symbols. There are gazetteers for some of the larger countries and a detailed index. Altogether an attractive and useful reference book.



CRUISING WITH THE CHILDREN by Glenda Cornell (£12.95 hardback)

PUBLISHED BY ADLARD COLES LTD.

The first part of this fascinating book examines the benefits of sailing with a family. The author draws on her own practical experience gained during a six year voyage round the world with her husband and two young children. In the second part she explores the educational potential of sailing and there is detailed advice on planning 'boat' schooling. I know some E.O. families have already spent time afloat - I feel sure this book will inspire others. It did me !



REASONS FOR WRITING. A comprehensive writing programme for 7 - 12 year olds.

PUBLISHED BY GINN.

The course consists of 4 textbooks, 4 anthologies and 4 teachers handbooks. The idea behind it is to make writing both purposeful and enjoyable. The authors have therefore concentrated on making the task worthwhile, on developing the relationship between reading and writing, and on providing the necessary amount of support. The course books are stimulating, the teachers' books most helpful and I particularly like the anthologies which give examples of all kinds to read, discuss and emulate. Those of you who know the Ginn Maths scheme (also highly recommended) will not be surprised to find this course colourful, exciting and extremely useful.

HELEN HOLLAND



GREAT TALES FROM LONG AGO retold by Catherine Storr and others.

PUBLISHED BY METHUEN CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN ASSOCIATION WITH BELITHA PRESS LTD.

(Hardback £4.95 Paperback £1.95)

Well written and beautifully illustrated famous stories such as - 'Androcles and the Lion', 'The Travels of Marco Polo', 'Theseus and the Minotaur', 'Dick Whittington' all take on a new vivacity in this series. The print is large and clear, the vocabulary relatively simple and there are bright pictures on every page, so these are encouraging books for young children.

HELEN HOLLAND

ALTERNATIVES : New approaches to health, education, energy, the family and the aquarian age. By John Osmond and Angela Graham. Wellingborough : Thorsons, 1984. £3.95. Paperback, 127 pages with photographs.

Several people have been asking about various alternatives - this book makes a good starting point and includes lots of references and sources of further information. Published to accompany an HTV series of the same name. We borrowed it from the library. but there may still be copies around in bookshops and health food/wholefood shops.

BOB & ANNE WADE



BOOK REVIEWS

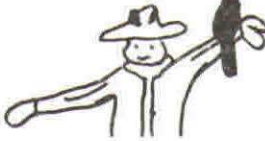
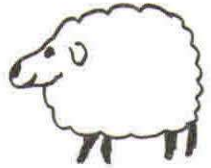
Please send reviews direct to the editor of the next Newsletter. If you wish to review a newly, or shortly to, published book, please write to Helen Holland giving the title, author and name and address of the publisher. Helen will ask the publisher to send you the book, BUT, PLEASE WRITE A REVIEW PROMPTLY, if your request is granted.



HELEN HOLLAND - REVIEWS EDITOR



The farm friends Club



Annual Membership £5.00.

'A club for children interested in what's happening in the countryside'.

Based at Rhos-Ddu Farm and Nature Trail in Pembrokeshire.

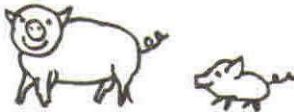
Membership gives you a starter pack of various items in a cardboard wallet, plus four newsletters a year and occasional samples, (e.g. wool, grains). Also concessions on visits to the farm.

'It's not friendly like the E.O. newsletter. It sounds like the Queen's speech, as if they're saying, "Look how good we are. You're bound to be interested in everything we do". They want to organise you and tell you things. I'd love to be there, but only if I could be free to explore and find out things for myself. They sound as if they've got exactly the tone of voice the teachers had'..... FELIX WADE

This was Felix's response when invited by Janet Everdell to review the materials. Possibly another reviewer might have been more sympathetic and charitable. There is clearly a problem involved in identifying your audience and generalising about their ages, interests and inclinations. Perhaps the writer has solved it as well as could be expected. If you would like to find out for yourself, write to :-

JOYCE GWYNN, THE FARM FRIENDS CLUB, RHOS-DDU, CRYMYCH, PEMBROKESHIRE, DYFED. SA41 3RB. Telephone 023973 220

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(Run by E.O. member Peter Jones)

The Rambo Factor



Chris Shute

'Orrible was with me again this Summer, for a fortnight this time. He's a stringy little fellow, all angles and joints, and his personality is growing spiky to match. His obsession with war games is beginning to weaken, largely because he has set his heart on the Army Cadets when he turns 13 next year. When the real thing is in the offing, it is time to put away childish things. I am beginning to hear a lot about discipline, toughness, the winners and the losers, and it saddens me a bit. I know that living in a quiet, relaxed environment doesn't work wonders in a fortnight, but I had hoped that he had absorbed at least a few of my values.

There was no conflict between us, because I tolerated him, stepping back from all the usual, pointless adult - child sparing sessions over table-manners, bed-times and untidiness. It might be worth fighting these battles if there were any certainty that by doing so, we could make a real change for the better in children's behaviour, but we can't. There was however a certain coolness. My failings as a potential father-figure began to be exposed. I am not, by nature or disposition, a buccaneer. Whilst out driving, we came upon a demonstration by some people who wanted a road through their village closed to traffic, because it was dangerous to their children. I turned back, and 'Orrible was disgusted: 'My Dad would have put his foot down and gone through!..' he said. It was so very hard not to point out that his dad is a violent man, heavy-handed and mercurial, not always open to reason and often, difficult to live with. I did not mention that it was precisely my readiness to make room for another point of view, which made his time with me so unstressful. He could not be persuaded. I contented myself with a quotation from the Bible; 'Let your moderation be known to all men'. I made a joke about making the world safe for niceness, but he saw only the fact that I had backed down.

He will probably grow up into a decent chap. Many kids do. You can't plan what a child will make of the experiences you give him. Yet when I see what lunacies are done by adults are done by adults in order to prove their virility or that of their nation, I realise that such corrosive stupidity comes largely from the childhood experience of having to take one's place in the playground pecking order. I have no right to plan his future, and no way of implementing the plan even if I had, but I wish I could break into the cycle which begins when a small child sees that the big, strong adult always gets his own way, and ends when the same child becomes large enough to do unto the younger ones what was done unto him.

It is easy to say, as most people seem to do, that children need to learn the hard lessons of life, and that it is for the strong to rule and the weak to submit. It amazes me to see that the same people who deplore violence and mugging, want strong teachers for their children, and insist on the youngsters learning 'to stand on their own feet', fight their corner and give as good as they get. The usual response when I express this point of view is that I am being 'extremist', 'unbalanced'. To me this is, like most of the commonplaces we use to think about education, a piece of self-deception. It is surely thick-headed to believe that you can bring up children in subjection, teach him to fight, tell him that he should be ruthless in getting what he considers his, and then assume that he will somehow develop a finely-tuned sense of the necessary limits of violence in a just cause. He might, of course, just as many drinkers avoid alcoholism, but only abstinence is a certain bulwark against disaster. As for me, I believe the Christian teaching about turning the other cheek. Whatever 'Orrible may think, God bless him.

CHRIS SHUTE.



E.O. AND CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS. (NO. 2)

During the last six months there has again been a constant stream of calls and correspondence from people requiring help and advice - mainly because of conflict with their LEA. Whatever the problem or measure of help needed, it is true to say that the most comfort usually comes from the knowledge that there are many others who've had the same or similar experiences, that many of us have suffered but survived, and most of us are happily 'E.O.ing'!

Here's some more advice from Maggie Swatridge (Cornwall) on 'how to do it'..

"As many activities as possible should evolve from our child himself. This, experience of the materials, knowledge of the task and understanding of its relevance and pattern increases concentration, performance and self-esteem.

We can frequently allow him/her to gradually require less and less help, and praise efforts to improve self-sufficiency - maybe far more effective than forcing the acquisition of a specific, manipulative, so-called 'skill' on his own as he thus starts by 'failing', often not understanding either.

As life is home-based we can ensure consistency in approach and discipline. Learning and self-expression are increased with loved familiars in the known, secure environment. We can encourage all-round development through so many media, in the home, community and countryside with the added benefit that the experience is being shared and developed by our one-to-one situations.

On the practical side, exploration and self-expression can develop through the plentiful availability of music and 'sound' articles, malleable materials (dough, clay, papier machee, sand water, wools and cloths...), colour and texture in paints and papers, etc. (A basket of contrasting things to handle could heighten awareness and manipulation - feather, smooth satin, fur fabric, nailbrush, sandpaper, pumice-stone, lead dressmaker's weight, smooth pebble and rough rock...). As well as listening to story, rhyme, rhythm, tune, song, and conversation, vocal progress may require resource to blowing and breathing exercise and free access to a basket containing whistles, 'flutes', 'trombone', kazoo, tissue on comb, party novelty 'zooomer', mouth organ, feather and balloon is useful - and later a tape-recorder. A mirror is a versatile tool and colour-coding sounds can also help.

Whole body (total) communication can help to discuss feelings (simple parables may be an aid), so may writing. Thick crayons or pencil grips can enable large, flowing, meaningful messages and play a more useful part in developing language than is usually realised by auditory-biased 'experts'. (NB: assistance of hand on hand is frequently necessary, and is AN AID TO COMMUNICATION not a case of "mother is really doing the writing, the child is passive"!)

Eagerness in communicating ideas is more important than technicalities and gives the chance to learn to correct and develop concepts and abilities him/herself (and thus more soundly). This respect for our child is also vital for personal and social development.

Why should we get school-boundedly rigid in educational procedures or 'medically' inactive and undemanding in therapy? We can use the ones useful, or fit meaningful parallel experience into the kind of lives we want to lead as families, and still be able to 'ba' and really feel attuned to nature and other life relationships.

E.O. means we (parents and children) can get out and about more; unpressurised, be more interested in (and interesting to) each other, seeing, sharing and encouraging daily achievements. Positive roles and relationships will go a long way to relieve the 'burden' of handicap..... But why not try to LINK up with another E.O. family? "

Maggie also offers the following practical advice:

- 1) Be firm in your intent.

- 2) Do not register your child in any school.
- 3) Avoid 'Stamenting'. (Or obtain advice from me - Ed.)
- 4) Obtain ACE handbook. (See below - Ed.)
- 5) As policy - avoid non-helpful personnel, pipe-lines and bureaucracy. (What law says our children should be subject to those 'Paediatric case-conferences' all the time?!)
- 6) Keep in touch with other families in similar situations for support, and voluntary organisations for information, research and specialist resources.

The ACE handbook mentioned above is 'The Special Education Handbook' - which is a summary and explanation of the 1981 Education Act, and is in my opinion indispensable for anyone whose child is or could be deemed as having a 'special educational need'.

To obtain it, send £3 to the Advisory Centre for Education, 18 Victoria Park Square, London E2 9PB. (Mention our name!)

ACE also have other useful publications, notably:

'Summary of 1981 Education Act'	£1.50	
'Under-5's with Special Needs'	£2.50	(This is a guide to the new law for parents and their advisers - in advice agencies, voluntary organisations, health, social services and education authorities. The Appendices argue that under-fives with disabilities can be successfully integrated into pre-school provisions, and highlights successful initiatives.

.....

The Pre-School Playgroups Association has a Special Needs Committee and a sub-committee on handicap. They also have a newsletter going to groups with special needs children. Their research indicates that one group out of every six is helping at least one child with special needs. They say:

"Probably because problems are not easily recognised in babies and toddlers the figures do not show many children with special needs in mother and toddler groups. It is hoped that PPA will be able to encourage groups to actively seek out and involve parents with very young children needing help.

In addition to ordinary playgroups catering for children with a wide range of handicaps, there are about 150 'opportunity' groups which have a large proportion of handicapped children, often well over half. These groups place great emphasis on providing for handicapped and non-handicapped together and on supporting the parents of the handicapped child from its birth. All types of handicap are accepted."

..."For far too long society has tried to solve the problem of dealing with people with special needs by segregating them. If we want to change this attitude we must begin by inviting ALL children into mother and toddler groups, playgroups and family groups. Young children do not have the inhibitions of older people to overcome when relating to their handicapped friends and see them as other children. If children with special needs are welcomed into ordinary mixed pre-school groups and schools, they can learn to cope with many little battles every day' rather than 'one huge battle' at sixteen or nineteen when they leave a special school."

PPA have a number of relevant publications, including:

'Guidelines for playgroups with a handicapped Child'	£1 + 20p. pandp
'The Handicapped child and His Mother in the Playgroup'	30p.
'What is an Opportunity Group?'	Free with S.A.E.

These, or any further information, can be obtained from the headquarters of the PPA, Alford House, Aveline St., LONDON SE11 5DH.

Telephone: 01 582 8871.

Incidentally, playgroup provided a "social contact" 'bridge' for us - (It's often difficult to find 'out-of-school' activities until a child reaches 6 or 7.) David -my son, who has Down's Syndrome - attended our local playgroup until he was 7plus. (It is worth a mention that no child had remained at the playgroup until the age of FOUR previously. We had to take home the 'birthday cake' tin to punch a fourth hole.....and a fifth..and sixth.....and seventh...! In this area your parents are a dreadful failure if you're not at school by three, or four at the latest. I should explain to the uninitiated that the holes were for the candles. I expect you guessed?) We only went one morning a week, and David really enjoyed going, even when we expected him to 'set a good example' because he was older than the others, or complained about his 'leadership' when it led to mischief....(Like the time of the mass escape when lots of little tots were encouraged to crawl under the rhododendron hedge to freedom in the adjoining cemetery!)

Playgroup can also provide a place where, if assessments are to be made, the psychologist or whoever can observe and get to know a child first.

Playgroup leaders may also be willing to provide their views on a child they know as part of the parent's 'representations' for the 'Statementing' procedure. (A parent might need support for their contention that their child has behaved differently from normal because of the stress of examination by a stranger or in strange circumstances.)

The final quote from the PPA literature I heartily endorse:
"Obtaining help..

Because many parents lack confidence when faced by medical or educational problems they tend to follow professional opinion rather than trust their own judgement even when their own knowledge of the child gives them 'expert' status.

Often the best support comes from sharing experiences with other parents in a similar position."

And what about when parents DO 'trust their own judgement'?...

The problem is worst when a parent tries to convince a disdainful or hostile LEA of the validity or worth of their judgement. Such disputes most frequently arise over an assessment of some kind (and usually where that assessment could lead to, or forms part of the formal 'Statementing' procedure, and/or may result in a 'special school' placement.)

Although a parent has the legal right to submit written evidence and/or make representations, and the Authority has a legal duty to take them "into consideration" and to append them to the Statement of Special Educational Needs, many Authorities do not make this clear. In fact it appears from the results of a survey carried out for the Centre for Studies on Integration in Education that despite DES circular 1/83 which says: "Assessment should be a partnership between teachers, other professionals and parents", only 14% of LEAs specifically refer to this partnership.... and only a third tell parents that they have a right to be fully consulted and receive all relevant information.

Most disturbing of all is the number of parents I have spoken to who have been told that their child has been 'Statemented' but have not even received a copy or any details of the Statement!

The above-mentioned survey shows widespread neglect by LEAs in informing parents of their rights, or offering any assistance (even where the Act specifies that assistance must be given.)

For instance, few Authorities tell parents that they have a legal duty to integrate children into ordinary schools (subject to certain conditions). The majority assume that 'Statemented' children will go to special schools or units.

Most LEAs fail in informing parents regarding confidentiality, rights to attend any examinations during assessment, the role of the 'named person',

the timescale for the complex procedures, annual reviews, re-assessment, or the rights of appeal.

When you consider that even where parents are given all the proper information, there is a likelihood of disagreement over any or all of the statutory (medical, educational and psychological) or other assessments, or of dispute over the determination of the child's 'Needs', opposition to the 'Special Educational Provision' deemed suitable to meet those needs, and refusal to accept the suitability of the 'Appropriate school or other Arrangements'.....I won't go into the possibility of problems concerning the 'Additional non-educational Provision' specified!

Is it surprising that we advise: "Avoid Statementing if possible" ?

If you feel aggrieved by the negative nature of the last contribution, I suggest that you are either not faced with the problem, or are one of those rarities - someone who lives in the area of a kind/helpful/sensible/accommodating LEA. I know there are a few - please write to let me know about yours. I am often asked: "Where should we move to if all else fails?"

For information about the Centre For Studies on Integration in Education write to: CSIE, The Spastics Society, 16, Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ. Telephone: 01 387 9571.

The report of their survey is called 'Caught in the Act - What LEAs tell Parents under the 1981 Education Act'. It costs £3.50.

COMPUTERS ...

In an early issue of the new magazine 'Special Children' There was a very interesting article concerning the speed of most computer games, (and consequent frustration for handicapped users), and the way in which a new invention "can slow the speed of events of any program" by turning a dial on a little black box which plugs into the back of your machine.

The author explains how its introduction into a special school has enabled his pupils to successfully use a range of games - including those which are voice-controlled via a Micromike.

The device is called the SLOMO and is marketed by Nidd Valley Micro Products, Stepping House, Thistle Hill, Knaresborough HG5 8JW. I understand that it operates on BBC, Electron, Commodore, and Spectrum micros (if ordering state which because the plug is different for each) and it costs £15.

I have some programs which seem to me to be far too demanding in terms of speed for almost any child of the age for which the 'educational' content is aimed, and this sounds as if it would provide the perfect answer to the problems posed by limited reaction time. In our house for instance the degree of parental help necessary to avoid mass extermination of the little men by the spiders is greatly resented - and so the beautiful princess has, until now, seemed doomed to remain under the evil spell for ever!

Has anyone got a Slomo? Are there any drawbacks? I understand that there is a reduction in screen quality - but that doesn't appear to have detracted much from the value to the writer of the article.

The 'Special Children' magazine costs £16 for 10 issues - from:
SPECIAL CHILDREN, 73, All Saints Rd., Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 7LN.

And now - since the response from you hasn't exactly been overwhelming,

seen

I'm going on an ego-trip! Many of you have already seen the programme of work which I presented to my LEA. For those of you who have been less fortunate (!)... but really to get the ball rolling because I hope to be including YOUR programmes, curricula, etc in future supplements.....

PROGRAMME OF WORK - DAVID JEFFS.

Our aim is as follows: To help him by every possible means to develop a lively enquiring mind in order to facilitate independent learning: for him to become literate, numerate, articulate and physically and socially skilful. (And to enjoy every step of the way.)

We do not believe there is a need to set limited goals or standards (often called 'realistic objectives!') Being aware that low expectations more often than not lead to underachievement, we prefer instead to provide a very stimulating environment to foster interest and a desire for knowledge.

While helping him to overcome difficulties and make full use of his abilities, we try to eliminate 'failure' - thus encouraging the self-confidence necessary for the development of further skills and concepts.

In outlining the methods by which our aims might be realised, I begin with the advice given by the Department of Education and Science (Welsh Office) concerning "The Primary Phase" in their publication: "The School Curriculum":

"These aims cannot be identified with separate subject areas, nor can set amounts of time be assigned to various elements. Often a single activity promotes a variety of skills".

However, in order to record the type of methods and resources available to David, I have listed them under broad subject headings as follows:-

SPEECH/LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Because this is the area of greatest need, the major part of our work in all subjects is oral. Specific language work consists of:

1. Talking/Listening.
2. Discussion of everyday events, interesting topics, the work in hand.
3. Reading aloud to each other.
4. Dramatic play.
5. Attention to comprehension and proper verbal expression.
6. Phonic analysis and synthesis.
7. Learning rhymes and songs.
8. Oral word games. (I-spy, I went to the shops and I bought..)

We also use aids and apparatus:

1. Word/Phonic games - both home-made and commercially produced.
2. Books. (eg: 'Sound sense', Ladybird Keywords 'c' series.) Flashcards.

Workbooks.

3. Toys. (Telephone, tills, constructional toys.)
4. Dressing-up clothes.
5. Small and Large doll play and puppets.
6. Mirror work to aid production of sounds.
7. Tape recorder (recording speech and song. Sound discrimination games.) Pre-recorded song or story tapes are useful and fun.
8. Television and Radio. (Words and Pictures' for example.)
9. Pictures, postcards, photographs. We have a large collection of pictures, posters and other visual aids.
10. Musical activities. Singing, beating time, playing and listening to all sorts of music.
11. We make our own books, which involves a great deal of discussion and 'reading over'.
12. We are often lent useful items by the Speech Therapist.

READING/WRITING.

Reading and writing skills are practiced while working in other 'subject' areas. Obviously there is a particular interrelation with speech/language work.

We have a large range of:

1. Reading schemes and related apparatus (eg: Ladybird Key Words, Happy Venture, Racing to Read, Beachn, and many more!)
2. Relevant games and equipment.

Also we have an enormous number of 'learning' books, story books and poetry. David loves to have people read to him, and we spend a lot of time doing so.

We are frequent visitors to the public libraries. We do not follow any one reading scheme. David delights in a diversity of reading matter, and because of our one-to-one learning situation it is easy to be aware of his progress. It would be easy for him to rush on and improve his 'mechanical' reading level, therefore it is necessary to pay careful attention to comprehension.

WRITING/SPELLING.

....Are more problematic. Speech and spelling difficulties are probably related - and progress is slow.

He enjoys oral alphabet games, and using plastic, card, magnetic letters and stencils - all of which encourage him to spell words for himself.

We do some pattern work, tracing and letter practice - but his writing improves more by actually writing for a purpose.

Useful results ensue from picture-sentence and book making. These have to be related to special interests - current topics, outings, etc. Daily diaries and similar activities quickly become a tiresome chore (for both of us!) and do more harm than good.

I encourage creative writing and story-making as much as possible, but he needs lots of sequencing and cause/effect work to aid him.

Television programmes such as 'You and Me', 'Words and Pictures' and 'Look and Read' are useful in promoting an interest in spelling and of course they are valuable in many other ways too.

Further stimulus to self-expression is provided by music, art and craft, and physical activities, as below:

MUSIC

Listening to a wide variety of music. Singing. Playing piano and other tuned instruments, and percussion. (Not formal instruction)

We make instruments, play musical games, dance, do movement/drama/dressing-up to music, play records and cassette tapes, watch T.V. programmes (children's programmes eg: 'Music Time', also concerts and recitals.)

David has enjoyed his visits to live performances, and we shall go to many more - concerts, recitals, choral works, 'musicals' and, if possible, to ballet and opera.

ART/CRAFT.

We have the resources to do all sorts of drawing, painting and three-dimensional work.

We have a variety of papers and card, fabric, felt, wools and threads, paints, felt-tips, chalks, dyes, inks, clay, playdough, plasticene, plaster of paris, cutting and marking implements and glues.

We are lucky enough to have space to store all sorts of useful material eg: junk boxes, bottle tops, corks, natural objects such as shells, pebbles, pine cones, conkers, etc. (These items find a use for Maths activities too!)

I am a member (registered as "Education Otherwise - Solihull) of the National Playing Field Resource Centre, and therefore have access to a further variety of scrap materials. Also I am able to purchase art materials at a reasonable price.

I buy lots of 'art' and other materials from jumble sales.

David has a set of woodworking tools and his own workshop space to experiment in.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES.

I have two main aims. First - enjoyment.

Secondly, to improve muscle tone and strength, and to help with balance and body control. He has had and does have certain physical problems (heart lesion, talipes, and a legacy

of post-operative muscle atrophy of the right leg. Also a propensity to suffer from constant respiratory infections. Thus he needs plenty of time for natural activities - running, jumping, hopping, skipping, sliding.... He also needs help in thinking about his body movements so as to gain more control and balance, and to improve his physical prowess (jump higher/longer, sustain activity for longer time..)

We play football, sometimes do 'exercises' and yoga, throw, bounce, catch, dance, play games, build and negotiate obstacle courses....

We have a climbing frame and slide, swing, bikes, scooter, roller skates. Also small apparatus: bats, balls, beanbags, hoops, ropes, skittles, boules, cricket and golf sets. (Does the snooker table count?)

He joins in casual and organised games and races, at home and at playgroup.

Future plans include a return to swimming, gym classes with a friend, possibly a dancing class...

MATHEMATICS

Several schemes are useful (especially the 'Nuffield' which does not rely solely on bought equipment or apparatus) to ME as 'direction indicators' and as sources of inspiration. But I do not slavishly follow them, nor do I use the associated pupil's workbooks. I make some worksheets, and we use odd workbooks and puzzle books, but for the most part our number work, measurement etc. is a matter for 'concrete' experience and/or oral work.

I want David to have a very sound understanding of the 'fundamentals' - basic number bonds and relationships - and a proper understanding of mathematical language. I do feel that these aspects are often rushed or neglected in favour of the early introduction of 'discovery methods.

It is important also for David to learn about time and money.

We have a large variety of useful apparatus and games - the commercial kind and homemade ones, and David enjoys playing board games and puzzles - with me, and friends and relatives.

SCIENCE/ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES/GEOGRAPHY/HISTORY.

Investigations of the wonders of the world.....

1. Of our bodies, organs, senses, and functioning (hygiene - diet - cooking.)
2. Air, water, animals, plants (gardening, naturewalks ect.) Minerals, the Earth, Moon, stars, planets, space....
3. Of the geography and topography of our own area, its people and their activities.
Also of other areas which are 'special' to us (Lake District, Devon, London).
4. Of the similarities and differences between those known areas, and of people and places in different parts of the town, county, country, continent, world.....
5. Of people past and present - their cultures (art, artifacts, religions and life-styles), achievements and aspirations.

Resources: Books, newspapers, radio, T.V., Outings and special visits (to historical monuments and buildings, museums, exhibitions, other towns and villages and the countryside). Our daily interaction with people and the real world of shops, garages, public buildings etc.

Please let me know how you feel about the above...has it helped to see what someone else has done? What should I have included? Did you do better? Would YOUR LEA accept this?

I have a book/activities list, largely suitable for pre-school, young or handicapped children. Send an S.A.E. if you'd like it. I am trying to find time now to up-date and add to it. Please let me know what books, ideas, activities etc you have found useful so that I can pass them on.

Margaret Gilbert (South London) has suggested a number of useful addresses - most of them I have mentioned - but this one may be useful:

"Who Can Help?" An A - Z directory of services for children and adults with disabilities in Wandsworth.

It is available free from Wandsworth Social Services Dept., 41/51 Wandsworth High St., London SW18.

Margaret says it's local in some ways but has loads of National addresses and information also.

It may be worthwhile for you to contact the Social Services in your own area too - many authorities now publish some sort of local directory

Egna Edwards (Merseyside) also suggests that you can seek help from the following: Speech therapist - theirs provided a word-maker and sentence-maker from the 'Breakthrough to Literacy' scheme, so that work could continue at home.

Community nurse - theirs worked with Stephen on the Portage Project, following his removal from school.

'Breakthrough to Literacy' is a scheme unlike other reading schemes in that it starts from the child's own language, and uses the word-maker and sentence-maker for the first reading/writing activities.

If you have difficulty (and methods etc. vary from area to area) you could obtain details from the publishers yourself and suggest using it..

The publishers are: Longman Group Ltd, Longman House, Burnt Mill, Harlow, Essex CM202JE.

** 'The Portage Guide to Early Education' Home-based teaching of developmentally delayed children (pre-school age usually) by their parents monitored by Home Visitors, using a range of materials, and developmental checklists.

Portage is only one of a range of "intervention strategies", and there is now a wide range of other developmental checklists (see*below). Information should be available from Child Health Clinics, Under 5's officers at Social Services Depts, Educational Psychology Depts. etc.

Portage began in Wisconsin, USA, and full information could be obtained from: Portage Project, C E S A 12, Box 564, Portage, Wisconsin 53901 USA.

* Developmental checklists:

'Pathways to Independence' Checklists of Self-help Personal and Social Skills. Compiled by Dorothy Jeffree and Sally Cheseldine.

Published by Hodder and Stoughton Educational, Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., Mill Rd., Dunton Green, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Or try the places above-mentioned. {Note that this suggests 'targets' to aim at} rather than 'age-related tasks'.

'Children's Developmental Progress' From birth to 5 Years: The Stycar sequences. By Mary D. Sheridan. Published by National Foundation for Educational Research. NFER Publishing Co. Ltd., Darville House, 2, Oxford Rd. East, Windsor, Berks SL4 1DF.

My own preference is for 'target-based' rather than 'test-based' scales. However I think that all checklists should be used with the cautionary thought that behavioural expectations vary across classes and societies, and from family to family.

More next August.....

ACCESS TO PERSONAL FILES BILL

Archy Kirkwood M.P. is to introduce an Access to Personal Files Bill which will allow individuals to see and correct certain types of records about themselves. Health, education, social work, housing and benefit records are included. The original draft of this Bill listed education records as being those records held by an education authority in respect of anyone who is, has been or has applied to be a member of an educational establishment. This would have precluded records held in respect of home educating families, certainly those who children have never attended or applied to attend school. However, the schedule of records subject to the Act is to be amended to include records held about home educators.

This second reading of the Bill is to take place in the Commons on Friday February 20th 1987. The Bill has considerable all-party support, but in order to ensure that progress is made, it is essential that as many M.P.'s as possible who support the Bill attend the debate on February 20th. It would be very helpful if E.O. members could write to their M.P.'s asking them to support the Bill and attend the debate on February 20th. Archy Kirkwood wrote that 'Constituency interest is likely to play a very important part in determining whether M.P.'s attend'.

Information about the Bill can be obtained from the Campaign for Freedom of Information, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD. Archy Kirkwood would particularly like to hear from anyone who has experience in seeking to obtain or amend their own records.

JULIE LYONS 56 NEWTON AVENUE, BARNSLEY S71 4HB

INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTRE

Andy & Diane Anderson, 95 DERRINGTON AVENUE, CREWE, CHESHIRE. CW2 7JA
TELEPHONE. 0270 664060

AN INFORMATION/ORDER FORM LIST IS AVAILABLE: The list contains 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 queries or problems with regard to what educational materials etc. is available, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time, by phone, letter or visit. What we don't know, we'll try to find out. Please feel free to use us.

As we get no funding from any source, would please, ALWAYS include an SAE for a reply.

WHEN RECOMMENDING ANYTHING - PLEASE GIVE AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE. 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.

HAPPINESS

By Janet

When children enter school for the first time, be it playschool, nursery or primary, they are entering an institution where the covert policy is to instil, what some psychiatrists call, 'approval seeking behaviour'. They leave the freedom of their homes for the thralldom of institutionalised learning. Permission must now be sought to do everything. Nothing spontaneous is allowed. The hidden curriculum begins - the human curriculum is denied. Permission is needed for simple everyday things like going to the lavatory or sitting in a different seat. Instead of learning to think and act for themselves, they are now being conditioned to obey orders without question. Instructions must be followed all day about what paper to use, what book to read, what exercise to do. They are being taught obedience through a hidden curriculum. If they incur anyone's anger or disapproval they are expected to feel shame or guilt. End of term reports will let anxious parents know how much approval their child has gained. If the parents are not approval seekers the child is very fortunate and will suffer less mental and spiritual damage.

Most schools send out prospectuses claiming that the Head and staff believe in the individual development of each pupil, use a curriculum devised to meet the educational needs and ability of each child, and advocate self-motivation, self-awareness, creativity and individuality. But how many schools actually allow pupils to show any signs of self-motivation and individuality? If the question of freedom for the individual is raised by anyone the usual convenient excuses apply; lack of funds, overcrowded classes, not enough time to organise. Pupils who dare show any signs of self-worth or assert themselves because they are not prone to guilt or anxiety, soon get labelled, difficult or disruptive. Many will find themselves legally forced into a special unit for maladjusted children. Even Albert Einstein managed to fall foul of the school system and was expelled for being a disruptive influence.

A school is no place to show signs of independent thinking. Our society demands intelligent, obedient workers to keep its industrial machine running as smoothly as possible. It does not want anyone asking awkward questions. So, in work, as in school, approval seeking is the key to success. Behaving in the approved ways, studying the curriculum someone else has devised ensures success. But, by the time the child leaves school, approval seeking has become both a habit and a need, its self reliance is dead.

The academic high-flyers leave school to go on to college or university and the same pattern continues. Now there are tutors and professors to please, in order to gain the approval-seeking diploma or degree.

The less academic go into the world of work, where jobs have been created for them by others. Self-employment is almost never considered as their answer to the unemployment problem. How can it be when eleven years of conditioning ensures both imagination and initiative are dead?

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535

DENIED

Everdell

After school and colleges, there are other institutions to please. The government is one, the church another and of course, the most damaging - the family unit. If the latter is the case, the children of such a family stand almost no chance of surviving their conditioning without becoming either, neurotic approval-seekers or rebellious adolescents. Their only hope is a chance meeting and acquaintance with a person free of all approval-seeking behaviour on whom they can model themselves.

Our society is now burdened down with both conformers and rebels. Both have to adopt a life-style which includes too much self-destructive behaviour. This behaviour is designed to relieve their unhappiness. Some drink excessively. Some smoke too much. Many do both. Drug taking is another form of relief from unhappiness, be it addiction to illegal drugs or medically prescribed tranquillizers. Others seek temporary relief in sexual permissiveness or violent behaviour, such as vandalism, mugging, sex crimes and even murder. The Samaritans tell us that many more young people are seeking the ultimate relief through suicide. The financial cost to the tax payer is now astronomical. The Health Service, the Welfare and Social Services, the charities, the Police Force and the Prison Service all claim they are being stretched to their limits, dealing with the symptoms of our biggest social disease - unhappiness.

The reforming educationalist A.S.Neill believed 'All crimes, all hatreds, all wars can be reduced to unhappiness'. In his school, Summerhill he practised freedom and love. Most of the children sent to him were cured of their neurotic behaviour. But, our educational institutions still choose to ignore his humanitarian example. Many other psychologists and educationalists, Paul Goodman, Ivan Illich, John Holt, James Hemming, Robin Pedley to name but a few, have also written and lectured most eloquently for radical educational reform, but those in power have refused to listen. They prefer to continue with their systematic destruction of the child's spirit and now our society is suffering from an epidemic of self-destructive behaviour.

When children enter school they are full of life and keen to learn in order to make sense of the world around them. By the time they are eight years old, most of them have had their life-loving curiosity and enthusiasm killed. Learning is just another boring chore. Their spontaneous love of life has been defeated by the overwhelming force of the anti-life conformists. Their birth-right, the right to be happy - has been denied.

JANET EVERDELL

TRUANCY & SCHOOL PHOBIA

by Patricia Knox

In a school population of almost 9 million (England & Wales), approaching 900,000 children do not go to school. The majority of these are truants. The others are school phobic. According to 'experts', school phobia affects between 0.1% and 2% of the school population. This would give the number somewhere between 9,000 and 180,000.

Until recently, home background was blamed in all cases of both truancy and school phobia. It was not until 1985 that Ken Reid carried out research among truants in South Wales (Truancy and School Absenteeism. Hodder & Stoughton) actually questioning the truants themselves to find out their reasons for their absence. The reasons that truants gave for not going to school are chiefly negative aspects of school such as, bullying, intimidation, corporal punishment and the stress of enormous depersonalized schools.

There is a dramatic increase in the incidence of both truancy and school phobia shortly after the transfer to enormous comprehensive schools. Indicating that there are large numbers of children who cannot cope with the environment of such a huge institution.

The shock of bereavement or parental divorce can also precipitate either truancy or school phobia.

Ken Reid however, did not question any school phobic children, believing the theories of 'experts'.

According to the theories of 'experts' in school phobia, the acute anxiety which manifests itself as nervous breakdown, suicidal depression and various psychosomatic illnesses, is due to the fear of the child parting from mother, and is echoed by mother's fear of parting from her child. This is the theory of 'separation anxiety' and has been held for 30 years.

Despite the fact that school phobia occurs in one parent families headed by father, and in families where mother works outside the house on a full time basis, the theory that it is caused by an immature, over-protective mother who wants her child at home all day, for company, has not been revised.

The main centre for research into school phobia by psychiatrists, in this country, is in Leeds. The research is based on the premise that, at all costs, the child should be separated from the 'over protective' mother. In Leeds the research takes two forms. The first is repeated adjournments of court cases in the hope that the child will eventually return to school and, failing that, leading finally to a care order.

The other research concerns treatment in a psychiatric unit. It is bad research. There has been no control group, and negative results have been classed as positive.

100 school phobic children were taken into a psychiatric unit for 7 months. Three years later, 33 children had agoraphobia or severe psychiatric disorder; a further 33 children suffered from mild neurotic trouble. This is 66% DISASTER, but the researchers call it success, presumably so that they can be eligible for a research grant. There should have been too, school phobic children educated out of school, as a control.

The research in Leeds is still continuing. The above is the first report of a 20 year study. (Reported in 'Out of School' by I. Berg & L. Hersov - Wiley, 1981)

Over the next few years I would like to collect information from E.O.'ers about school phobic children educated out of school, 3 years after the crisis, so that I eventually have a list of 100 children, as a counter balance to the Leeds results.

Because the Leeds results are a failure on mental health criteria, I will need to collect data under three headings:-

- a) Mental Health - ie. has it been necessary to consult a psychiatrist, or to be prescribed tranquillisers or anti - depressants ?
- b) Educational.
- c) Social Adjustment. Perhaps co - ordinators will be able to help me collect this.

PATRICIA KNOX, PEN LLYWENAN, BODEDERN, HOLYHEAD, GWYNEDD LL65 4TS

INTERNATIONAL POTTERS CAMP 1987

WANTED 4 People (2 couples) to look after an anticipated 25 - 50 children up to the age of 13, on Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th July 1987.

The volunteers would be expected to organise a programme of events and child care to occupy the children between 9am and 5pm only.

In exchange we can offer 4 free tickets for the above event (£40 each), free camping, facilities and access to the whole weekend, social events, exhibitions etc., when not involved in child care.

We would be responsible for funding any suggested programme and pay for any materials etc.

Aberystwyth Arts Centre, the venue for this International Camp is situated within the University Campus and is surrounded by safe out door, traffic free areas. A large furnished hall has been allocated as a base for the children.

There is excellent Wholefood and Vegetarian food available, and modestly priced accomodation in student halls of residence, both self catering and B/B.

We expect in exchange, E.O. to use the opportunity to publicize their own organisation and ideas. We would credit E.O. on all our publicity at the event and in the press.

We hope there are families interested in the crafts who would like the opportunity to participate with us in the event, with mutual benefit to both organisations.

The emphasis on any proposed programme of events does not necessarily have to be on ceramics, but most children attending will, we are sure, be very familiar with clay.

If you are interested in helping, please write to -:

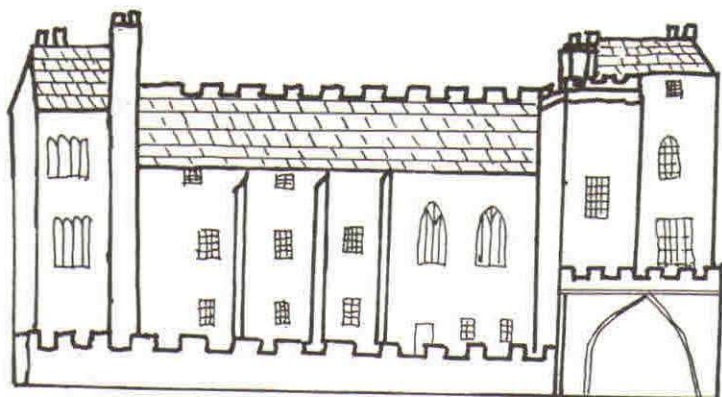
ADRIAN CHILDS, Ffestiniog Pottery, Blaenau Ffestiniog,
Gwynedd, North Wales. LL41 4UT

(Co-ordinator for International Potters Camp 1987) TEL(0766)830601

For details of the event only, please write to:-

Ms. VICKY BUXTON, CERAMIC, 318 ABERGELE ROAD, OLD COLWYN,
CLWYD, NORTH WALES. Tel (0492)- 5188555 (day)

A brochure and booking form, with further information will be sent as soon as possible.



HAVE YOU EVER FANCIED STAYING
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FEATHERSTONE CASTLE

E.O.'s AGM PLUS A HOLIDAY

SEPTEMBER 11TH TO 18TH '87

Featherstone Castle stands in its own Parkland in a beautiful stretch of the South Tyne Valley within easy reach of the Roman Wall at Birdoswald, Walltown (Carvoran), Crag Lough, Housesteads and Vindolanda. Haltwhistle is 4 miles down the valley, Carlisle is 20 miles, Hexham 20 miles and Newcastle 40 miles.

Accommodation is for a maximum of 90 - mostly in dormitories of 10 with some smaller rooms for 4 or 2. Pillows and blankets provided. Please bring your own sheets or sleeping bags and pillow cases.

Camping details in next newsletter.

Catering will need to be communal (the cooking pots are massive), but folks on special diets can do for themselves at a reduction of £1.50 per. night. Vegetarians will be catered for.

CONTACT Betty Ball, 1 Fenton Road, Warboys, Huntingdon if you have any ideas for activities or workshops (all ages). So far we have Treasure Hunt, Music, Orienteering suggested. If you can help or have a skill you think others may be interested in let Betty know.

We are asking for, and trying to encourage, early bookings as we need to give some idea of numbers, for the longer period, because the owner would like to know how many units in the castle we are likely to take up. We have exclusive use for the weekend and it would be good to extend this for the week.

We are offering a reduction for early bookings - so get organised folks and decide now.

Cost of Full Board Per Night

	PRE 1st April booking	POST 1st April booking
Adult	£6.00	£6.50
Child	£3.00	£4.00
Under 5	£2.00	£2.50

Babies free. Reductions negotiable in cases of hardship.

No. of nights ___ dates of nights ___ to ___ inclusive

No. of adults ___ No. of children over 5 ___ under 5 ___

Names of people attending

Address and Telephone Number

Send to Christine Wallace 25 Diabaig, By Torridon, Achnasheen, Ross-Shire IV22 2HE
Deposit of 50% payable to Education Otherwise.

Notices

OUTINGS - MARCH 10th LONDON MUSEUM. Meet at the museum 11am.
Nearest underground, St. Paul's.
APRIL 14th BEAR GARDENS MUSEUM. (1 Bear Gardens, Bankside
Southwark) Meet at museum 11am. Nearest undergrounds,
Cannon St., London Bridge, or Mansion House.
MAY 12th LONDON ZOO, REGENTS PARK. Meet at entrance to
zoo 11am. Nearest underground, Camden Town.
JUNE 9th COVENT GARDEN. Meet at Covent Garden tube 11am.

ALSO:- On the 4th Monday each month, meet at the NATURAL HISTORY MSEM.,
at 11am, with a view to visiting other Museums. DATES. JAN.26th
FEB 23rd, MARCH 23rd, APRIL 27th, MAY 25th, JUNE 22nd.

FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT SUE PETSZAST, OLD SQUASH COURT, BAYHAM ABBEY,
LAMBERHURST. PHONE LAMBERHURST 890624



CORRECTION - - - A slight omission from Para. 3 on page 30 of the last N/L. causes
me to say some ungracious things about the Teaching Profession.

The third sentence of that paragraph should read 'The ignoble course that
education has taken comes NOT from the stupidity or venality of the teaching
profession etc...'

I would criticise the profession for its unwillingness to confront its
failure, but I don't want to insult it. After all, if there is hope, it lies with
the teachers. Thankyou.

CHRIS SHUTE, 7 KILN WAY, POLESWORTH, Nr. TAMWORTH, STAFFORDSHIRE. B78 1JF

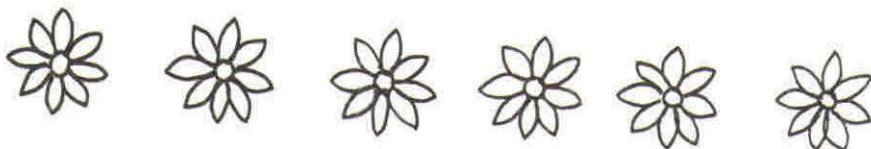


WANTED TO BUY

Lego.

M.STEVENS, 16 THISTLE HOUSE, DEE STREET,
LONDON. E14 OPD





HOME SCHOOLERS VISIT EXCHANGE SECRETARY

I have now taken over the job of Home Schoolers Visit Exchange Secretary from Helen Holland. Many thanks to Helen for doing her share and thanks to all other brave souls who offered to take on the job. I'll keep you all in mind if I need any help.

Right, that's got the crawling and the threats out of the way ! Now for the plea for favours. I am going to compile a new list of members who are prepared to open their homes to other home schoolers, who need somewhere to stay during visits mainly from other countries. All I need is your name and address and what you can offer i.e. floor space, large garden for tents etc. I intend to make out a list of everyone kind enough to offer, then I can pass on the information as required and accommodation arrangements can be made between the people concerned.

Hopefully, I shall get offers from one or two overseas members too, which will enable me to help those of you going abroad for visits etc.

I look forward to being totally swamped by your letters.

CAROL ADAMS, 14 THE GROVE, WEDNESFIELD, WOLVERHAMPTON, WEST MIDLANDS. WV11 1RW



WANTED

Editors for Newsletters. Interested ? If so please contact Lesley Kilbride, Publishing Secretary. Not sure you can handle editing a N/L ? Give Lesley a phone call and talk it over. It is an interesting and challenging job, not at all difficult.



CONTRIBUTORS WANTED

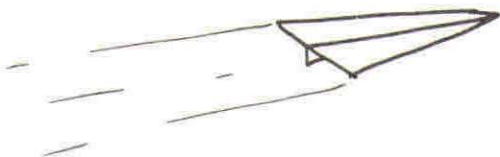
The April & June supplements will be on Art & Creative Design. In two parts; Part 1: Up to 11 years. Part 2: Eleven years & over. Please send your contributions to:- MILLIE STEVENS 'PEGASUS' CASTLE ROAD, VENTOR, ISLE OF WIGHT. TELEPHONE. 0983 854107



NEWS FROM the REGIONS

BEDFORDSHIRE --- Rupert & Teresa wish to offer the position of co-ordinators for Bedfordshire to other local E.O.'ers. Please phone 0234-327839 for details.

TERESA BAINES



LINCOLNSHIRE --- Many things have happened since Jan Marshall last wrote of our activities in the October N/L. She, Steve and Ella have been busy finalising details in preparation for emigrating to New Zealand, and somehow, as a result, we find ourselves as co-ordinators for the area. We wish them every success and happiness in their new home.

During the latter part of the year Jan had organised visits to Pets Garden at Rampton (super and vast adventure playground) and a trip on the Nene Valley Steam Railway (with Santa on board) followed by a party at Jan and Steve's. The proposed Christmas Pantomime outing to Lincoln was re-arranged by popular consent and a group of us went instead to the New Theatre in Hull to see Peter Pan.

Looking back over 1986, there have been several visits and gatherings which would be worth repeating. We know many people have ideas for other venues or activities which sound interesting, so please make the effort to come to the first meeting of the New Year at our house, in order to discuss a programme of events for 1987.

DATE: SUNDAY 15th FEBRUARY

TIME: 11.30 am - 5 pm.

PLACE: KIMBER, NEWBRIDGE LANE, CAVENHAM ST. MARY, NEAR LOUTH. LINCS.

TELEPHONE: FULSTOW (0507 - 86) 222

PLEASE BRING: -

1. Contributions for lunch if you like eating.
2. Wellies.
3. Diary and pencil.
4. Toys/games etc. (To stop Mum & Dad getting fidgety.)

Would you PLEASE let us know in advance if you are coming.

HAPPY NEW YEAR. LYNDA & STEVE TOOBY.

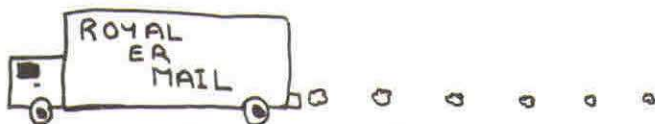


WEST LONDON --- Careful N/L readers will have noticed that Sue Petszaft has been getting us together on the second Tuesday of every month. Here in West London we are grateful to Sue for drawing up her calendar of visits to places of interest in London. These visits have now become established as a regular point of contact. Last month Candy Fawsitt also organised a visit to Launch Pad, the fantastic new collection of six dozen hands-on science and technology exhibits at the Science Museum. As a result we decided to make the South Kensington museums a regular event in their own right, so we should now get the chance to meet up fortnightly. If you can reach London for a day out, you're welcome to join us - make a note in your calendar of Sue's new list, in this issue on page . Let someone know you're coming, and we'll look out for you - and bring a picnic.

Some of our members have been able to get to the South London workshops, and are enthusiastic about them. If you want details, contact Mike and Margaret Gilbert (South London).

We have been contacted by a resource centre with lots of equipment and facilities but not enough people. They like the idea of E.O. and are keen to link up with us. We'll get to know them and perhaps have a get-together there. If you are interested, contact us or them; The Centaur Project, 313-5 Caledonian Road, London N1. 01-609 3328/9639.

ANNE & BOB WADE 01-904 7155



WEST YORKSHIRE --- The most exciting news from our area is that work on our Learning Centre (We prefer this name to Resource Centre), has commenced. This building is a large Victorian chapel situated in the centre of Pudsey, which is between Leeds and Bradford. The building is being converted into two floors: downstairs, a Victorian shopping mall, upstairs, our base, which will double as an Arts Centre. We would like to hear from members in other areas who would like to contribute ideas, for the centre's development.

We were sorry to say goodbye to Ruth and Kevin Cross, who have moved to Dunfermline and we thank them for all the help they have given West Yorkshire E.O. Goodbye also to Lianne and Alan Boyd who have also crossed the border. It was good however, to welcome Margaret Patching and family back from Lincoln. Margaret is one of the small band who have been with us almost from the beginning.

PETER WILLIAMS (0532)568940



Help

The Lovios family had a fire. They are fine, but Kipper was smoked to a cinder

SOS



we lost all X 18 contributions we are very sorry

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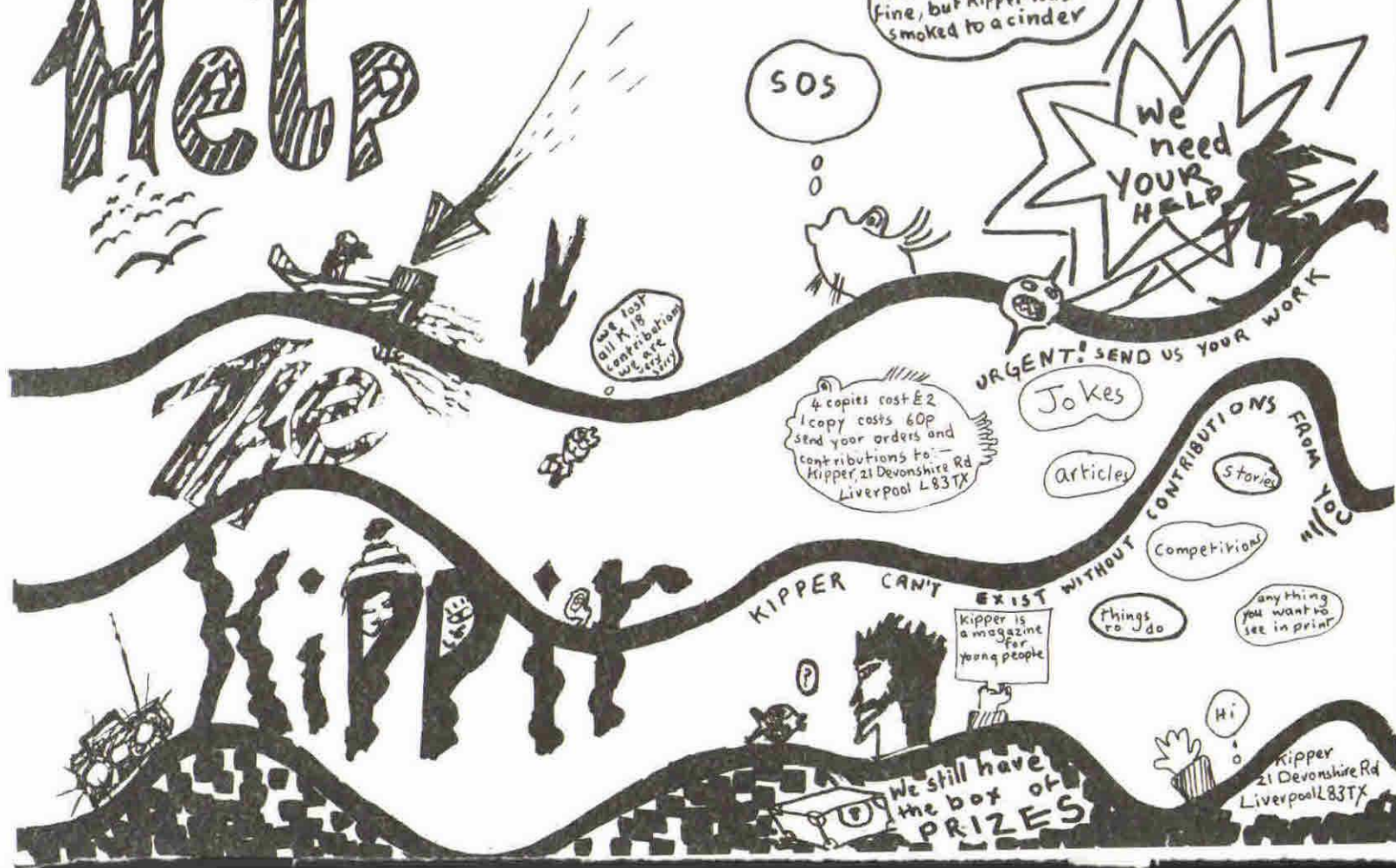
KIPPER CAN'T EXIST WITHOUT

Kipper is a magazine for young people

KIPPER

We still have the box of PRIZES

Hi
Kipper
21 Devonshire Rd
Liverpool L83TX



Schools 'need no longer teach basic maths skills'

DAILY TELEGRAPH

19.11.86

By David Walker, Education Correspondent

SCHOOLCHILDREN need no longer learn long division, addition and subtraction because "a calculator is always available for computation which a person cannot do in his or her head," the Government School Curriculum Development Committee says in a report published yesterday.

The study 'Primary Mathematics Today and Tomorrow' says teachers will find it hard to grasp that the old skills of mental arithmetic are no longer useful.

"The new technology of calculation provides the biggest challenge to the content of school mathematics throughout the whole history of compulsory schooling," it says.

Digital watches

The future of maths in the primary school lies not only with calculators but also with computers. Children should be encouraged to make use of digital watches in order to grasp mathematical concepts.

The new Bill would establish benchmarks as to what a child should be able to read, for example, at nine, 11 and 14, Mr Baker said on LWT's "Week-end World".

"Children don't just go to school to be happy," he said. "Learning requires application. I would like to see a move towards goals."

ON THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM.
DAILY TELEGRAPH
8.12.86 Sarah Thompson

OF COURSE I
KNOW HOW MANY
EGGS MAKE A
DOZEN ... 1200!



"Children should be encouraged to make use of digital watches in order to grasp mathematical concepts....."

Most parents want their children to emerge from school with a disciplined mind and a broad knowledge—happiness comes bottom of the list.

The Options magazine survey gives parents' priorities as: a disciplined mind (29 per cent); a broad knowledge (26 per cent); an understanding of society (18 per cent); good exam passes (18 per cent); work skills (11 per cent); self confidence (3 per cent); and happiness (1 per cent).

A total of 60 per cent said the best teachers were at private schools. Forty five per cent of those questioned sent them there.

While 57 per cent were satisfied about their children's education, 34 per cent were "worried."

EDUCATION THROUGH THE PRESS...
Edited and illustrated by Jo Rest.

DAILY TELEGRAPH 0.11.86

Attitudes have shifted recently, and fast. Denis Lawton is director of the Institute of Education at London University.

His is a voice of the educational consensus that is now broken. In his book "The Politics of the School Curriculum" published in 1980 he said,

baldly, that teachers in this country were right to oppose the idea of a uniform curriculum laid down by a government minister; they were right, moreover, to oppose the idea of a curriculum based on specific behavioural objectives.

Even more, they were right to "resist the view of curriculum as being

determined by the needs of society and especially the needs of industry".

Six years on his conclusions read like the injunctions of a reactionary, or worse, an invitation to teachers to continue tilling their "secret garden". The mood, on both the left and right of politics, no longer tolerates Lawton's faith in professionalism.

DAVID WALKER
DAILY TELEGRAPH

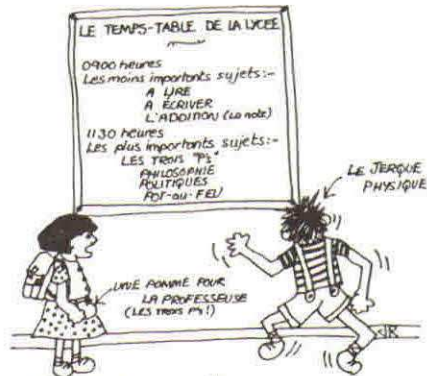
DAILY TELEGRAPH 7.11.86 Chris Tighe



(Note the animation of the carrot.)



"The introduction of Herbie, an animated carrot, into the school dining rooms of North Yorkshire has greatly boosted the popularity of school meals."



"... French school day to begin with 15 minutes compulsory physical jerks, followed by teaching the least important subjects up until 11.30 a.m..."

French lesson

THE French Education Ministry has just received a report claiming that up to 50 per cent of the time children spend in school is wasted—because the school day is badly structured, trying to educate children when physiologically speaking they are at their least receptive.

According to the ministry's expert, Dr Maquon, the school day ought to begin with 15 minutes compulsory physical jerks followed by teaching of the least important subjects up till 11.30 a.m., the nadir of pupils' attentiveness.

Lessons in the most interesting subjects should follow. No lesson should exceed 45 minutes.

Everyone should study on Saturday morning with Monday morning given over to lesser subjects on the grounds that 9 a.m. Monday is "a moment of intense tiredness."

DAILY TELEGRAPH 3.11.86

THE introduction of Herbie, an animated carrot, into the school dining rooms of North Yorkshire has greatly boosted the popularity of school meals.

Meals consumption in the county's school will rise this year by an estimated one million covers as a result of Herbie and other healthy eating innovations.

The thesis that children learn better by finding out in a recreational atmosphere rather than by being taught about what they have seen later in their school lives has stern critics.

Mr Peter Dawson, a former comprehensive school headmaster and now general secretary of the 42,000-membership Professional Association of Teachers, said: "There is no point in taking children out to these experimental centres unless they have the basic skills first, which can only be got by sitting down behind a desk in a classroom, shutting up and doing what they are told. You must start the process with straight teaching and numeracy and literacy.

"Too often, these 'hands-on' experiments take a highly generalised view of children's abilities: a bright child will learn quite well, but a child with limited ability will not know what to make of them."

Professor Gregory, a popular lecturer on the subject among teachers, designed his venture to appeal to both adults and children. But it is the young who have responded: "I think Mr Dawson is under-estimating the nature of children's enthusiasm, and perhaps it is time that that enthusiasm was channelled into the classroom to ginger up the teachers and bring a bit of imagination back."

DAVID WALKER
9.12.86

Defining a national education plan is a job for politicians. Public discontent is over the fact that too long educational purposes have been left to educationists. Yet parents by definition are experts only about their own children, and cannot and in most cases will not construct communal institutions. State education is crying out for firm government, and that is the job of party politicians.

"There is no point taking children to these experimental centres unless they have basic skills first... a child with limited ability will not know what to make of them."



DAILY TELEGRAPH 17.11.86

As for leaving in the morning, it suits the new parent very well if their children grow up fast and learn not to cling. The new childhood begins in the nursery or playgroup with early lessons in separation.

Triumphant success for the new mother is not the lovingly-made mud pie or the Mother's Day card but the useful boast that "he doesn't miss me a bit."

Childhood used to be treated with respect and reticence. Childhood used to demand discipline and sacrifice from adults. By trying to enjoy the fun of childhood without the hard work we are being children ourselves. Of course we must watch over our children's physical safety but the risk of death is statistically minimal. It is their mental and emotional growth which is at risk.

The greatest gift we can give our children is not a television set for their bedroom nor a computer nor a bike but our time and attention. If that means giving up the job promotion, a favourite television programme, a tempting affair, so be it. Our children's childhood is the one chance that never comes again.

LESLEY GARNER
DAILY TELEGRAPH

Public school headmasters at their annual conference last month heard Christopher Everett, chairman of the Headmasters Conference, announce: "Schools could become as obsolete as steam trains or paddle steamers." The impact of new technology, and the immense scope there is for individual learning, are ushering in an era of "dizzying change," he said. As more and more information is available in the home, schools could be forced to change their function. We

are used to getting our education at school and our social life at home. By the end of the century, children could be getting their social life at school, and their education at home.



"Our record of achievement evolved from a perceived need to provide some formal way of recognising a young person's contribution to the life of the school outside the traditional curriculum. It provided recognition for the extraneous activities and personal qualities demonstrated through community service and a range of activities undertaken outside school."

And, using a phrase that well illustrates the promise contained in the certificate, and the reason teachers and educational administrators in the North are giving unstintingly of their time and energy to set them up, he added that it is "the only indication that a pupil had spent five years in secondary school involved in anything productive."

DAVID WALKER on EDUCATION Certificate
DAILY TELEGRAPH 27.10.86

THE new childhood has been shaped by the failure of nerve among adults. The best, as Yeats said, lack all conviction and the worst are full of passionate intensity

Neither of these states is conducive to bringing up whole-hearted, loving and well-mannered children. But that is not the kind we seem to want any more. The Victorian values of duty, honour and obedience are simply not on the average family's agenda.

In a world where adults largely pursue their own ends and where everyone's future is uncertain, we don't need to bring up a generation of disciplined infantry. The times demand infant guerrillas and we seem to be producing them by default.

THE NEW CHILDHOOD, by LESLEY GARNER
D. TELEGRAPH

THANKS TO JANICE OWEN for all cuttings from Daily Telegraph, and to SARAH GUTHRIE FOR OTHER MATERIAL, PUT TOGETHER BY JO RUST.

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Current and Old Newsletters
SINC, Early Years, Teach Your Own. > Membership Secretaries

Stationary, Introductory Lit.,
Envelope re-use labels (£1.50 per 100) > Co-ordinators Secretary
Membership forms, posters, handbills.

Growing Without Schooling. > Jill Gillings, Seacrest, Clayhead,
Baldrine, Isle of Man.

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Education Otherwise is a membership organisation whose principle aim is to provide support and an information network for families whose children are being educated outside school, and 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 children's education, and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility by educating them out of school.
- To: Establish the primary right of children that full consideration, with due allowance for their age and understanding, shall be given to their wishes and feelings regarding their education.

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