

Education

Otherwise

Danny 5 yrs old



by Danny Ashley-Walker - Isle Of Wight

Newsletter 56

December 1987

by Amy Cook - Kent

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DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS = 1st JANUARY (Please write clearly or type contributions)

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Supp. is on MUSIC - DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS - 1st JANUARY

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!~*!

89 MANOR ROAD
DARWEN
LANCASHIRE BB3 2SN

Dear Education Otherwise,

Many people who have been members of EO for eight or nine years will remember Mike Hammersley, he used to be in the Core Group. He lived in my area Lancashire. When his name failed to appear on my contact list, I assumed that he and his family had moved away. Alas this was not so! His children are in care, his wife is seriously ill, as is his father and he has served a prison sentence for loving his children.

He has now contacted me and we are trying very hard to bring pressure to bear to discover what has happened to the children, where they are living and when he can have them back again. If you knew him in the past, please write offering your support. This family needs you now! If it's happened to Mike it can happen to others!

We will keep you informed of progress as we go along. If you write, please send mail to my address and I will pass this on. Mike does not wish his new address to be known as yet.

Best wishes,

Dot Bolan

!~*!

EDITORIAL

My thanks to the many who contributed to the newsletter, (I was spoilt for choice!), to my husband who kept me sane and our children who kept their patience. Lots of apologies to those whose contributions had to be edited and those whose items have been sent to the next editor.

Could co-ordinators please take special note of IMPORTANT NOTICE TO CO-ORDINATORS' on page 43.

Hope you all enjoy this issue of the N/L. Best wishes to you all.

Lis Cook

PEN - PAL

PAGE

GEMMA SCHULZ is 4½. She has lots of pets, my little ponies and loves to get her own letters. Her address is:-
55 LEAMINGTON ROAD
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA
ESSEX SS1 2SW

.....

JASMINE GUILLARD is 5. She would like to write to someone aged 7-8. Her interests include outdoor activities, lego technique, anything related to motors, music and reading. Write to her at:-
RUE DE LA GARE
50490 ST SAUVENS
LENDELIN
FRANCE

.....

RACHEL BANNER is 6. She enjoys skipping and reading. Write to her at:-
151 JERVOISE ROAD
WEOLEY CASTLE
BIRMINGHAM B29 5QT

.....

AMY COOK is 7. She enjoys playing computer games, riding her bike, reading, playing cars, getting letters, drawing, dogs and budgies. Write to her at:-
34 BEACON ROAD
HERNE BAY
KENT CT6 6DJ

.....

ERLAND D. WEBB is 8. He likes drama, riding, swimming and canoeing. His address is:-
28 CHURCHWAY
HADDENHAM
BUCKS HP17 8AA

.....

CHARLOTTE AUCKLAND is 12. Is there anyone who is starting on, or knows a little Italian, who would like to write?
5b LINOM ROAD
CLAPHAM
LONDON SW4 7PB

.....

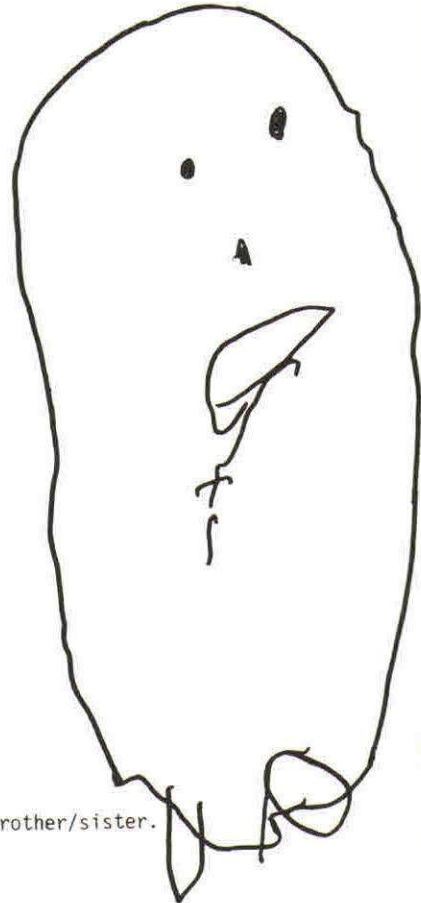
This picture was drawn by Kayti Graham aged 3½.
It is her impression of her, ~~yet to be~~ born baby brother/sister.

MICHAEL SOLOMON is 13½. He enjoys music, fishing and swimming. He would like to hear from boys and girls in Britain and abroad. His address:-
17 WEMBLEY ROAD
HAMPTON
MIDDLESEX TW12 2QE

.....

NAOMI is 14. She likes drawing, printing and most things arty. She likes dying her hair lots of colours, wearing lots of earrings, bangles and rings and black. Write to her at:-
MONKTON WYLDE COURT
CHARMOUTH
BRIDPORT
DORSET DT6 6DQ

.....



Dear E.O.,

Hi,

It's been a long time since I either wrote to EO or attended any of the meetings outside of Essex. Trudie left school 4 years ago as a very unhappy 7 year old. After a struggle at home for a few years, with tears every time writing was mentioned, Trudie was diagnosed as dyslexic. During the last 4 years I have watched her growing and changing, we've had some really good times and a few bad ones, but at no time has it been easy. Now Trudie is 11 and is now longer a little girl, but a young lady as tall as I am, with changing ideas and attitudes. At the beginning of this year she wasn't as happy at home as she had been, she needed something of her own apart from us.

To me this seemed to be a very normal part of growing up, so we suggested school again and left her to make up her own mind. The local village school is good and the teacher that Trudie's class had, was very caring, keen on practical work, with two teenage daughters of her own. After a couple of weeks indecision Trudie decided to give it a try. So one Monday, off she went, very confident and not a bit bothered. I...sat,...worrying all day. She had a lovely term and a half. Her teacher had been a bit apprehensive at having a child in her class, who hadn't been to school for 4 years, was amazed at how normal she was. After the first day, it was as if she had been in the class the whole time. The other children were all pleased to have her back and have helped her when her dyslexia held her back. Most important of all to Trudie, she was given the part of the Pied Piper in the school play.

This morning Trudie has started secondary school, not in the local one where all her friends are, but, again her own choice, a smaller comprehensive with an experimental or progressive reputation. Perhaps because of the size of the school, it seems to be less impersonal than the other comprehensive.

...I dropped her off in front of the school, again I was the one concerned that she didn't know a soul or where to go etc. Her response was, 'I'll just ask someone, see you tonight.'

To me, this is what her 4 years at home have done, given her confidence and put school into perspective. She knows if it ever gets too much, she can learn at home. She has learnt to accept that spelling and writing will never show a true measure of her ability and it is likely that on paper she will come bottom at a lot of things. Luckily she is not at all competitive and doesn't mind too much. As long as she does her best, keeps her self-respect and is happy, that is all we want. If we had left her unhappy at school for those 4 years, I think I would be telling a different story. We still have Kerry, our 8 year old at home, so we are still home schoolers, but it's different without Trudie and we are only just getting used to it.

Keep your chin up if you are faltering and don't let outside criticism get you down. If you can do what you feel is right, it is worth doing, whether it is taking them out of the system or, as we've just done, putting them back in.

Hello, to all the people we knowin EO and we will try to get to some meetings to see everyone again.

(PS. Trudie has now done half a term, and is very happy.)

Veronica and Peter Gibbs 21 Peartree Lane, Danbury, Essex CM34 LS

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BASES

Tom Marshall wrote in Oct. N/L that we only use base 10, except in computers. This is untrue; we use many bases daily in Imperial measurement and weight, time and the use of fractions. For example, remember £.s.d. ? Think of all the bases involved there - no wonder we went decimal!

Geraldine Bennett 24 Oakdale Road, Herne Bay, Kent.

Dear EO,

May we, through the N/L, say 'Thankyou' to all the well-wishers who wrote in our support. The letters we received helped more than words can say and certainly demonstrated the inner strength of EO.

For those who wondered what happened to our son Mark, we can take pleasure in informing you that he did not go to the Comp.,even better, he made the decision for himself.

It will probably horrify some to know that he works to a timetable and that he covers a fairly normal curriculum, but again, he laid down that this was how he wanted to work. It may also amuse others to hear that one of his friends from the Comp. comes round as is helped by Mark to do his homework - when staff remember (or bother) to set it.

There seems to have been mutterings in the N/L as to whether the day should be structured or casual. Surely everything must depend on the needs of the child and the ability of the tutor. As a consequence the programme you decide upon must be to individual tastes. There can be no right - and no wrong. That surely is the beauty of EO.

Buddy and Margaret Lawrence 6 Michaelstow Close, Ramsey, Harwich, Essex CO12 5ES

Dear EO,

As a fairly new member I want to say how much I have enjoyed all the publications I have received so far. I have read and re-read them as they are packed with so much information.

My two daughters are not yet of school age, Kayti is 3½ and Kylee is just 2, but I am so glad that I found out about EO before they ever entered the clutches of the State Education System. I actually read about EO in a letter from a member in 'Parents' magazine - perhaps more of us should write to publications in order to spread the word.

I am also grateful to EO, as we have just moved here from Folkstone, Kent and it is through another Barrow EO'er that we now know several people with young children, solving our socialisation problem (I was particularly worried about this aspect of EO as I am naturally shy and reserved).

...I can only say 'carry on the good work' and I look forward to many years years as an EO'er and the challenge ahead.

Helen Graham 46 Salthouse Road, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria.

Dear EO,

I am writing in reply to the letter from Collette Bradley. My daughter is 3½ and already she is 'different' from other children on the island, as the vast majority of under fives in Guernsey attend playgroup. Emily does not want to go to playgroup and she shows very little interest in school, much to my relief, but she is most concerned that we should do 'school work' and likes to have a special place to do this.

When Emily was 18 months old, I ran a playgroup 5 mornings a week, for up to 30 children. This experience reinforced my view that these places are wonderful for those children whose parents have no time for them, but for the vast majority of children, they do a great deal of harm.

Thankyou EO for everything you have done for me so far, I think the N/L's are wonderful, they inspire me and give me confidence.

If anyone visits Guernsey, please get in touch. We would really like to meet other people whose children don't go to school.

Sally Le Couteur Les Jardins, Rocquaine, St. Peters, Guernsey.

Dear EO,

In answer to Collette Bradley's letter in the Oct. issue of the N/L, I would like to share the experience I had with my daughter Lara, when she was 5 and wanted to go to school.

I had always felt, from before her birth, the home-educating was the only way I would feel right with. I also hoped she would share my enthusiasm for the idea. We live on a small council estate. Lara, being a very lively, sociable girl, soon made friends with many children living near. When these children reached school age and suddenly weren't there during the day, I think Lara thought she was missing something exciting. She kept saying that she wanted to go to school, complaining that she didn't have anyone to play with.

I agonised over this state of affairs for a few weeks, then finally decided to let her go to school as well....So off she went, very excited, without so much as a backward glance!

For the first couple of days she seemed to enjoy it, although she said it was too 'noisy'. But after that, every day when I brought her home, her behaviour changed drastically. She would regularly have a total 'freak out' on the floor, screaming and kicking. She still seemed to feel OK about going to school, although her enthusiasm was waning.

Then she got a really bad cough which wouldn't go away and got progressively worse, until she developed a hernia in her groin....Up until then, she had hardly had an ill day in her life, apart from a few colds. Eventually, after she had been at school for a term, I asked her if she wanted to stop going, she agreed. Immediately, her health returned to normal, the tantrums stopped and she was back to her old self, but more contented because she had tried school and realised it wasn't for her.

She has been out of school now for over a year and never complains about not having her friends around during school hours (they play together in the afternoon and evening) and has never asked to try school again.

I am sure it was right to let her try school and it was right to let her leave. She is a very individually minded, independent child, who doesn't like to conform unless she sees a good reason for it. I feel sure that she felt totally frustrated and 'taken over' by the classroom scene.

I feel it is very important that we encourage children to make their own decisions about their lives, as far as possible and allow them to learn from their own mistakes. This will undoubtedly give them confidence and help them to develop self-reliance, responsibility for their own actions, and to become wiser more mature adults, which is what it's all about really.

Sue Van Der Ende 72 Plain Pond, Wiveliscombe, Taunton, Somerset. TA4 2LG

.....
Eds. Comment. Sadly school and society try and suppress these qualities in children, then expect them to 'naturally' acquire them when they are adults! No wonder adolescents feel confused.
.....

In reply to Collette Bradley:-

The largest age group of children in EO are under 5 years, so your son need not lack contact with others not planning to send their children to school. If you have not already done so, do get acquainted with other EO members locally and when possible attend a weekend gathering. These happy occasions provide encouragement and support for parents and a real moral boost to the children. It is heartening for them to meet children of all ages who are out of school and helps to promote a positive attitude to what we are doing.

At the age of 4 or 5 many EO children disappear into the 'system'. There is a relentless progression that one must consciously resist - and I believe play-groups to be a significant part of it. Parent and toddler groups are different, here the children enjoy a natural social experience in the presence of their parents.

My children and I have made many lasting friendships in such groups. There was no convenient one when my youngest son was 2 years old; so three other mothers, thier children and George and I started meeting one morning a week in each others houses. The 'Thursday' group is thriving 4 years later and has an age range of 87 years to before birth. Perhaps your informal playgroup will be similar. In our group I am a lone EO'er but an example that has had a little influence. At least one 4 year old was kept at home for another year because of this. Another is about to be withdrawn for a year at least, after a miserable first ½ term.

However the conventional playgroup where many children are left with few adults are neither more nor less than a direct preparation for school, with all that entails - including organised group visits to the lavatory and even bullying. The spurious independence that adjusting to large groups of their peers and all the noise and confusion involved, is not something I hope my children will attain. Also the notion that children and parents must be separated as soon as possible, so that both can do more interesting and enjoyable things separately, should be refuted by us all. Otherwise EO principles will be compromised.

I fully expected that George would ask to go to school with his friends. But he accepts their absence until 4pm. with equanimity. From the age of 3½ years he announced to all and sundry that he was not going to school, because his mother didn't want him to. He has an older brother at home and the company of local EO friends and is, at rising 6 years, confidant, happy and extremely sociable.

Jane Woolfe Liverpool

Dear EO,

I've just come to the end of my first year of educating Samantha 13 and Caroline 10, at home. It has been as exhausting but extremely rewarding year and we firmly intend to carry on.

I have found the need for formal lessons, otherwise I would not feel they were being taught at all. So Samantha is going through the 'Letts' textbooks on English, History, French, Maths, Biology and Geography. She also does cookery and writes about healthy eating, the digestive system etc. Caroline uses the Peak Mathematics, Better English textbooks and also the 'Letts' for French. For other subjects we all go to the library.

The children go swimming at weekends and sometimes biking. They mix well with children and adults alike and seem to have more self-confidence than they had at school.

We had our first visits from the Advisors only a fortnight ago. We were pleased that they were doing formal lessons, as the Advisors (particularly the one who came to see Samantha) expected it. In fact Samantha's Advisor said there were 'gaps' and suggested she should be doing General studies and computer work. Also she should be watching plays at the theatre and coming home to write about them! Samantha was bored with her computer, but now we've set it up again. The Advisor was pleasant and we didn't want a row, but if things get too demanding we may have to dig our heels in. I spoke to a friend of Samantha's whose class she used to be in, and she said they were neither doing computer work or going to plays. I must confess the visit did unsettle us for a few days.

Caroline's Advisor was very encouraging. She didn't find it hard to compliment Caroline on her work and even sent us a list of helpful books. Though she did ask Caroline to read to her. She reads quite well so was happy to oblige. I hope I did the right thing in allowing her. Anyway, I'd like to thank EO for encouraging remarks and letters in the N/L which we always look forward to receiving. Thanks to individual members we've contacted and Karen Hazel our co-ordinator. So, here's to another year.....

Jean Bailey 178 Cromford Road, Langley Mill, Notts NG16 4EX

Dear EO,

We have a so called gifted child who has been reading French and English since the age of three. Precocity which in itself is no problem, becomes one when one has to confront school. My husband and I are both teachers and we know that the majority of teachers will not listen and have not got the knowledge about such children.

We decided to try out school but before, we went to see a top specialist who confirmed our daughter was really reading and discovered she could calculate. He gave us a letter for the headmistress explaining how she should handle the child and advising her to put her in a class two years ahead of her age. She refused to listen. We tried for a few days in a class with children of her own age. In less than a week she could no longer read or calculate and was utterly miserable. During the second week she slept at school and was awake at night wanting to do Lego etc.. So that was that for school....

Now, two years later we have a very happy child, who is most sociable and able to communicate with people of all ages. She meets quite a few children as I take her with me to my piano pupils and she plays with others while I'm giving my lessons.

She loves school at home and we've includedcomputing and electronics. She goes to a gym class once a week and also dancing. We're going to try to give the broadest education we can and are trying to avoid going too far too soon, although I don't think we'll manage. We do everything bilingually hoping it will act as a brake. We're coming round gradually to the idea that we are going to have to let her go at her own pace, because she seems to be happy like that.

Many 'gifted' children refuse to show their abilities at school because they wouldn't have friends otherwise. They have to fit into the group, but this leads to all sorts of psychological problems.

We think that home education is excellent because it enables them to pursue their intellectual interests AND have friends, because the others don't know what they are up to. Many children who show themselves to be gifted at school end up with no friends. I have a friend whose son underwent a nightmare at school. He was doing complicated calculations at the age of 5. At school he was bullied and treated as a dirty intellectual. He had no friends and spent playtime kneeling under a washbasin. My friend continued school and now at 16 this boy has no future and is under average. This is certainly no advertisement for school.

Take the leap EO is there to prevent children from suffering from solitude. Education should have nothing to do with politics and no child's future should depend on an ideal.

Jenny and Alain Guillard Rue De La Gare, 50490 St. Sauvens, Lendelin, France.

.....

Dear EO,

Having been at the EO week at Featherstone, I would like to make a public Thank you to Bruce and Christine Wallace for arranging the whole thing. I hope they've recovered their health and strength now. From my point of view the opportunity to spend a whole week in such a lovely situation and in such congenial company, was a great bonus. A lot of EO'ers maybe don't feel the need as I do, to be in company which accepts without question the naturalness of not sending a child to school. Or perhaps people don't know that they can get help with expenses if they are going to make a working contribution to an EO gathering.

It was great for Justin to play so freely and cement some friendships previously made - and probably the same for me. I was also interested to talk to other people's children - and find the EO children talk to adults as if they were real people - and was impressed by their individuality and character.

For anyone who wasn't there - Featherstone is in a lovely situation surrounded by the wonders of Northumberland, which we hadn't properly seen before. We had visits to Hadrian's Wall and Vindeland and have since got engrossed in 'Eagle of the Ninth' and learnt more about the Romans than I've ever learnt before. We also had a trip to Beamish, which is a vast open air museum - very

exhausting in a force 9 gale with a dog who wasn't particularly interested in history, but certainly well worthwhile.

As far as I am concerned the more residential get-togethers the better, and I hope to try and arrange a camp down South sometime - so if anyone is interested in a camping holiday by a reservoir, please let me know.

Sue Petszaft The Old Squash Court, Bayham Abbey, Lamberhurst, Kent TN3 8BG

Dear EO,

There have been questions asked about what members get from EO. You only have to be a co-ordinator for a while to appreciate the strength of this organisation.

We are now reaping the benefits of years of bravery, tenacity and hard work put in by the pioneers of the home education movement. As a result we have fewer individual battles to fight.

We have an identity which is recognised by most LEA's, the teaching profession and increasingly, the public. EO is acknowledged as an alternative but legal way of educating children.

When I de-schooled my son, then aged 11, 4 years ago, I wasted much time and energy looking for courses, ideas etc., for his age group. Everything I needed then is now contained in 'Later Years' an excellent sequel to 'Early Years'. Other publications such as 'SINC' and more recently, 'Home Education and the Law' and articles about school phobia (the last two by EO members) are invaluable for the information they contain.

The network of co-ordinators, the Legal Group, experts on Special Education, School Phobia and Child Benefit have evolved in response to the needs of members.

There are many parents, myself included, to whom EO was a port in the storm. First it was the support of members which saw me through and although this is still all important, it is now the organisation of EO which provides those facilities already mentioned. It gives the co-ordinators the confidence and expertise to help parents and children in trouble, knowing that the back-up of experience and knowledge is there, within the organisation.

Alvena Hillier 8 Church Park, Kingston, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 4QB
(Devon co-ordinator)

Dear EO,

I was interested to read the letter from Anthea Franklin in the Oct. N/L, regarding a structured education. Our working morning is structured, but I do not usually tell EO'ers this, as it usually invokes sympathetic smiles of the 'Poor woman, she doesn't know what she is doing' type.

....My two daughters, Emma 7 and Alice 5 have got used to getting up at the same time every day (making it in time for Popeye - 7.25 am - softens the blow). Afterwards Emma has 40 mins. piano practice and Alice 10 mins. This is usually followed by breakfast and play until about 9am. We do not have a strict timetable, but always work until about 11.30 am. Sometimes we work from books. For example, Emma is using Ginn Maths textbook 4 and Alice has nearly completed level 2. We use the library a lot and do many practical activities, especially in Maths :eg drawing a plan of the garden (Emma & Alice) measuring and transferring it onto squared paper to scale (Emma); string patterns with nails (skills involved, co-ordination, precision, artistic appreciation).

The children love practical science experiments, some of which they write up, some they do not. Kept fluid in this way, they do not lose interest by thinking, 'I suppose I'll have to write about it'. Writing if made enjoyable, need not be a chore. Having a special pen, pencil, typewriter or even a word processor all help to make writing more exciting, as does having someone special to write to.

About 6 months ago, we made our own 'newspaper' (3 A4 sheets). This involved planning and designing the pages, writing articles, measuring columns, typing, re-arranging, sticking and finally photo-copying the finished product. Finished copies were distributed to relatives by post, which the girls organised.

I try to make work, where-ever possible, interesting and enjoyable. More often than not, the work the children are doing they see as play; eg. making our own lemonade (is fun) = the observation of chemical reactions (is educational).

I leave them very much to their own devices in the afternoons, as I think it is important that they develop their own initiatives and interests.

I write objectives for each child for the term; eg. a) be able to estimate a distance, b) be able to measure a distance accurately in centimetres. In this way, particularly where maths is concerned, I can see that progress is being made, and that no gaps in their education are developing and I can see where any problems may be occurring. This also makes the learning experience systematic and developmental, particularly important when laying the foundation for independent learning. How can any child become an independent learner unless they have **acquired** the basic skills? At the end of each term, I look through the objectives (they are not slavishly followed throughout the term). Further ones are then made for the following term, bearing in mind how the children are developing and their interests and expectations.

I have two children who are confident in their abilities and in themselves, who readily mix with adults and children of all ages, who like to learn and who enjoy being stretched academically.

To paraphrase 'Hunter' - 'It works for us'.

Geraldine Bennett 24 Oakdale Road, Herne Bay, Kent.

Dear EO,

After spending hours on the phone giving advice, sympathy and confidence to a parent with an unhappy child, having explained the advantages, joys and difficulties of home education to the best of our ability, we are told, 'I don't see how any of this actually helps me much'.

You see what the person on the other end of the phone usually wants is not sympathy or ideology, although they usually soak this up as part of the service. What they actually want is a curriculum, book list, tutor's network, (preferably free or very cheap), ready-made social agenda for their potentially de-socialized child. What they want, in other words, is for someone else to do it all for them. What they learn if they go ahead and take their child out of school, is that home education is about doing it for yourself.

Recent N/L's seem to have been full of correspondence from members who do not yet understand this and seem to expect from EO more than it is reasonably able to give. As a family who have a lot of ourselves (though much less than many others), to help EO run as efficiently as time and limited expertise will allow, we find this 'come on EO, give us members what we really want' attitude highly offensive.

Quite simply, if EO is not offering a service you feel it ought, then get involved and start to provide that service yourself. It will then exist in the future for others who feel like you do.

Sue and Andy Jackson Pringle House Farm Cottage, New Brancepeth, Durham DH7 7HZ

Eds. comment...Fair comment, but when people find themselves in the kind of situation where they feel the need to take their children from school, they are generally feeling battered and bruised by the system and very unsure of what to do. Being in that state means they cannot think straight and need another person, not directly involved, to take away some of the worry. That is what being a co-ordinator is about. We have (should have) the experience and willingness to stand these people up straight, after that they can 'do it themselves'.

Dear EO,

I was interested and delighted to see Anthea Franklin's letter (Oct.N/L), concerning the seemingly taboo subjects of structured education and examinations.Each N/L seems to contain articles by parents who are pleased that their children have grown up without gaining a single written qualification.

I don't like the formal education system of the western world, where a person's worth is measured by the number of pieces of paper awarded to him/her; moreover, I detest the insolent presumption by the State that it knows what is best for my children. However, it is a sad but unavoidable fact of life that, without formal qualifications, my children will have very limited options when it comes to selecting a career.

Those who choose to ignore this hard fact would do well to consider whether they are sacrificing their children's future for the sake of idealism.

Ian McDonald 15 Queensway, Dymchurch, Romney Marsh, Kent TN29 ONB

Eds. comment... A lot of us de-schooled our children for reasons other than idealism and therefore look to EO as an alternative.

If your children flourish and succeed at school, then your argument may be valid. However, showing how children can and do succeed outside the school system gives hope and encouragement to those who have little choice.

THERE IS LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

Mark, our eldest son is now 19 and was home educated from 9yrs to 16yrs. Our younger son Robin, is 13 and has never been to school. Altogether we have been home-educating for about 10 years. So I would like to write a few thoughts on home education up to 16 years.

Mark is now working as a second commis chef in a well known hotel in Scotland. He's been there since July '87 and is now in charge of the afternoon tea corner of the kitchen. He trained as a chef at Granville Further Education College in Sheffield. The catering dept. there is highly regarded nationally and locally. Histraining there was excellent and he worked very hard. He had never found being home-educated a disadvantage - it made his application form to college stand out. We didn't do exams from home, so Mark offered to do a test in English & Maths in lieu of the GCE's and CSE's required by the catering course.

Don't be put off by formal requirements for a training course (or job even). If you are sure you can demonstrate competence and interest, then you should go ahead and apply. After all, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain. As far as I can tell, the main difference between Mark and his fellow students is that he chose to train as a chef, whereas a lot of teenagers go to college under pressure from their parents and school. The other students often felt jaded after years of pressure and over-organisation at schools and were unable to get either their work done or to pursue their interests without outside pressure and organisation. Mark was quite used to organising his own time and interests.

When other students discovered he was home-educated, their reaction was 'lucky you'. There was no antagonism from them. Mark says he was tired for the first 2 or 3 weeks of starting college, as he was not used to turning out from home every day, but that soon passed. He also worked as a waiter at weekends while at college. The catering exams he did at college were City & Guilds plus a City & Guilds in Communication Studies (ie. written, spoken and media English). He says he never suffered from exam nerves.

We are all pleased that Mark is happy in his work and good at it. When he refused to go to school at 9 years old and we started home education, relatives said that Richard (my husband) would go to prison and Mark would end up roaming the streets, an idle delinquent. At the time we thought such attitudes absurd and are now glad to have proved them wrong.

I am not trying to suggest that there have been no problems, disagreements or doubts on my part as to my ability to carry on our kind of home education, when children of neighbours and relatives are busy doing exams (or truanting). Our problems have been solvable since we have control over how we live our lives. Nor did we have an institution, school or exam system coming between us, the parents, and our two children. We are able to state our positions and go on from there.

...There is a current of opinion which suggests that children should be free of authority and constraints. I think this is misguided. Firstly, it is an illusion to imagine that anyone is free of constraints and secondly, I think it is an abnegation of responsibility not to accept that one has authority over one's children. It is the exercise of the authority, not the actual having of it, which is subject to negotiation; this negotiation can be done far more rationally in a home education setting, than at school. If we get something wrong, the results tell us so and we can stop doing it. This requires patience, time and insight, which on the whole our schools don't have. In our type of education the emphasis is on process, not product; our means should be our ends. We are learning how to learn in as self-determining a way as possible. Although my own learning interests are not always the same as Robin's (still at home), I feel that the learning process we go through is much the same.

The main conclusion I've come to is that not only is home education good for children, it is also good for parents! There has been and is, a continuity both in the development of our children and in the relationship between us all as a family, which would not have been there if they had gone to school.

As home educators I think we have more control over our lives as a family. Robin has a great deal of control over his own education and the way he lives his life. This builds up a great deal of confidence all round, both in parents and children. Since I had a dislocated childhood, I value this continuity and confidence building aspect of home education greatly, that and our freedom to modify our relationships to each other as our needs and situations vary.

Joan Hoare 25 Moor Oaks Road, Broomhill, Sheffield S10 1BX

Eds. comment. Good point about 'formal requirements'. If you've got what it takes, go for it. Most employers don't know what they want until they get it. If you're still reticent start with adverts that say, 'You should' as opposed to 'must' have the qualifications stated. Which indicates room for negotiation.

.....

THE E.O. FAMILY SUPPORT FUND

This fund exists to give assistance to home educating families who have suffered, or are suffering financial hardship because of disputes with LEA's, DHSS, Dept. of Education etc.

We are prepared to consider requests from any members who feel they have a valid claim on the fund's resources, and will treat all correspondence in confidence.

For information, contact your local co-ordinator, any member of the Legal Group, or write direct to Andy Jackson, Pringle House Farm Cottage, New Brancepeth, Durham. DH7 7HZ.

.....

FIZ THOMSON says about the 'Religious Debate'..."It may be a good idea for people who WANT such debates (or to air controversial views), to advertise that desire ...As a Christian I'd be willing to correspond with anyone willing to hear both sides...."

Fiz Thomson 'Jesus Saves', Burntisland, KY3 0ES

Dear EO,

What a good newsletter October's was!

Thankyou Betty Ball for the excellent GCSE supplement, Robbie Bowser and Rachel Sanger for their sane and intelligent comments on the 'Religious Debate', and Christopher Wilson for a lovely editorial -

Yes, EO is about freedom, diversity and tolerance. Its up to us as individual members to help shape EO in positive ways.

Anthea Franklin is not alone in valuing structured learning and wanting more factual information in the N/L - perhaps a sort of alternative TES page? (I think we're part of the way there already.) But who is to provide all this if not members themselves: so take a break and put pen to paper with your tips and information. Perhaps we could have volunteers to co-ordinate information on different subjects/age groups, for the newsletter?

By the way, has she tried the Information Resource Centre ? (address in the N/L.) I found them a real help and full of good suggestions - and the more members contribute to them with their own lists of contacts and resources, the more comprehensive they'll be.

Like Chris and Christine Park, I can't often get to the meetings and rely on the N/L for information, news and moral support. So thank you to all those who've contributed their own experiences to the N/L - they always make interesting and often encouraging reading.

What's all this about an EO library? I'd like to know more about it too.

Anat Kamenka 62 Guthrum Place, Aycliffe, Co. Durham DL5 4QD

Dear EO'ers,

I was recently sent a blank timetable on which to detail my younger (5½) son's curriculum. A nice concession to EO was the addition of Saturday and Sunday 'lessons'. A letter alongside seemed also subtly designed to give the impression the EO parents are required to fulfil similar obligations to LEA schools and that, EO children would be unable to get exam qualifications.

So it was with considerable interest that I heard Kenneth Baker (Ch.4 News programme) upholding that it was the LEA maintained schools who would be bound by law to strictly adhere to the compulsory curriculum; private establishments need not (though their registration as legitimate may take such standards into account). In addition, Mr Baker surprisingly allowed more flexibility than expected over the percentage of time allocated to core and foundation subjects. Let's hope these statements will enable honest EO'ers to help each other to avoid trouble and reassure the intending newcomer that such edicts, do not make it impossible for us to stick to our child-initiated principles and practise.

Principles seem to be sadly lacking on the estate where we live (so we 'stick out' for that too) and repeatedly I have to help children to understand and adjust to the many insensitive hurts and let-downs imposed on them, and allow them to ask their own questions or just 'talk'. Led on by slightly older children, peer group effects are seen to be equally horrendous on many occasions. I'm sure other EO'ers also find themselves spending a lot of time picking up bits (not to mention repairing bikes and other things vandalised). Can we join to face Educationalists about their obsessions with daily, unsolicited peer group contacts (ie.en masse)? A couple of good relationships with other persons based on shared activity and interest, leading to respect and cooperation, are not only sufficient but far better for nurturing the development of a sound social being. Home education doesn't isolate children from life.

Unfortunate peer 'one upmanship' and undoubted verbal skill and superiority in sequencing and rhyming memory usage, led my Christopher to think that his friend could read and spell, and to get a 'block' about his own ability to learn to read. Home education meant I was able to raise a little interest through the 'Writing Road to Reading' (R.B. Spalding) which uses the writing of sounds and

have since proved to him that he can use this approach to work out words, ie. to read. And it's so 'different' that comparisons of 'progress' can be avoided. (A well thought out sound basis for learning our written language and understanding its relationship with the spoken; of increasing benefit as you go on, especially with spelling, though may appear slower at first than 'Look and Say' with its individually ingested 'whole word' learning. Christopher has some sequencing memory difficulties, including auditory ones; I'd recommend considering this approach to help either type of dyslexia and where remedial work is needed, too, as it's excellent for consolidating the link between sound and shape, utilizing most of the senses, and introduces naturally many 'rules' to help recognition).

Finally, I say 'hurray' for the last N/L contributors in their response for more positive statements about EO and education (thanks for the GCSE supp.), to educate ourselves to stand up for our principles, and to present suggestions that have worked for us, or anecdotes to cheer. Our situation is probably so peculiar that I can offer little (bar on the subject of 'handicap') except to advocate the use of 'wonder' and very open questions, such as 'What're thinking ...?' and the picture of large black labrador joining in 'Let's Move' (Radio 4 Schools. Mons. 11.20-40) with considerably more success than the one frozen statue (John) and one gallumping elephant (Chris) that 'Mum' hotly tries to orchestrate. (I also at 40, found myself having to demonstrate some gymnastic techniques the other day, following the showing of some World Championship highlights!).

Good luck everyone, Maggie Swatridge
32 Carey Park, Killigarth, Polperro, Looe, Cornwall PL13 2PJ

.....
Views Of Featherstone Castle
.....

There must surely be great interest for all EO members in listening to the thoughts of new members regarding their first experience of the organisation, so for the record let me set down my impressions and assessment (if you would want to use such a word), of the week we spent at Featherstone Castle in September.

It might be worthwhile sketching in some background first of all. We have a daughter of 5 (her birthday was at the start of Oct.), who is highly sociable and whose appetite for meeting other children we constantly attempt to satisfy. As neither Alison nor I 'work', our situation is in part responsible for this: Laurie has always had a great deal of attention. It was therefore a particularly difficult decision to educate her in our own home (more precisely : not to send her into the unsteady and harmful environment of a school), as we feel certain she would have enjoyed getting to meet and know other children of her own age. The 'social(ising)' issue is one of the thorniest for home educators.

Given all this our first encounter with EO girls, boys, women and men was a welcome event and we thoroughly enjoyed our stay. Most of all it was a pleasure to meet adults of like mind and for Laurie to be around children who, for a change, were like her. We entirely approved of the way children were not excluded from any event or meeting, and of the consideration they seemed to be given at every turn - especially at 'bed times' and 'good behaviour'. The decision, in effect, to not restrict the movements of the children is very important (although in point of fact some regulations essential to the sleep and peace of people retiring early were agreed on and implemented), and for me this added greatly to my feeling of confidence in the people we were living among for the duration.

There was also opportunities to discuss and converse and gossip with other parents about the trials/joys of being with our children all day every day. (About the attitudes of relatives.....suspicion?....opposition?....support?....or just plain fear....?)

On our return home, to routine isolation and funny looks from our neighbours, we began to realise just how supportive EO is and how much we wanted to ensure our attendance at future gatherings, be they weekends, weeks or locally organised

days out. We hope to keep in touch with all the friends and helpers who came to know us during the week in September.

Finally I want to say, that I wholly approve of the ideas some people were coming up with at the end of the week regarding welcoming new members in perhaps a more deliberate fashion.

Thanks to you all for a great week.

Jack

(also now, a quick word from Alison)

It wasn't 'til we were home again - amongst our suspicious, threatened neighbours and family disapproval - that we realised just how valuable our week at Featherstone Castle had been for us. We wanted to make an immediate retreat!

I want to pass onto other EO'ers who are perhaps hesitating about coming to one of the week. ends or who are feeling isolated, just what a tremendous support it was for us. To spend a whole week among others from such diverse ways of life who were nevertheless of like mind! It really lifted us and gave us so much support and increased our confidence in home-schooling Laurie. In fact I didn't talk much to folk there about home-schooling as such, just getting to know people was enough for me first time. Be prepared to be inundated next time!

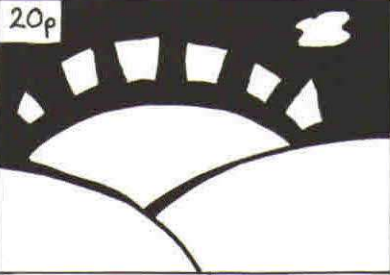
Laurie is an only child-so far! - and we have been very keenly feeling her isolation. Our previously mentioned neighbours seem to spend a lot of time avoiding our straight-speaking, confident daughter - we have few friends with children of similar age, and there are only two other practicing EO families in Edinburgh. This is not to underestimate the tremendous support and friendship we get from the Edwards family here.

Socialising is our biggest problem - we expend a lot of time and energy thinking about it! So contact with so many other families was just brilliant for us. Thanks to everyone at Featherstone for simply being there - we now feel really part of EO and will do our best to come to all the get-togethers. We really had a great time. Laurie keeps asking when she's going to get to see all her friends again - hello to Bradley, Geoffrey and Jake, Siona and Kirsten, Hannah and Leila (not forgetting an all-purpose, all-weather dog's body, Matthew).

We put our Education Otherwise T-shirts on the washing line with pride! - I only wish we'd had it printed on a sweatshirt for her to wear all winter!

Alison

Alison Orr & Jack Fuller 26 Fountainhall Road, Edinburgh EH9 2LW

<p>At Last! - A magazine that recognises that children have a mind of their own!</p> <p>SCOPE IS EDITED BY CHILDREN AND CONTAINS:-</p> <p>Interesting, thought-provoking articles, a free gift in every issue, and covers a wide range of subjects and ideas</p> <p>SCOPE IS HUMOROUS + FUN and is only 20p.</p> <p>DON'T MISS IT!</p>	<p>20p</p>  <p>NAME.....</p> <p>ADDRESS.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>Send off for the latest issue (no.6) or for a pack of 4 (issues nos, 3,4,5+6). Simply fill in your name + address. And send to- 42 Southend Road, East Ham, London E6 2AA</p>	<p>I enclose 3 - 2nd class stamps for no.6 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>I enclose 1 book of 2nd class stamps for a pack of 4 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please tick appropriate box.</p>

MY WEEK AT FEATHERSTONE CASTLE

by Leila Ashley-Walker - aged 9

When I first arrived at Featherstone Castle, I felt a bit nervous, because I did not know anybody there. I often lost my way, because I had not explored the castle yet! Fortunately though, the next day I made my first friend, Cassandra. She is very nice. Next I made Rowena Edwards my friend. I met her when I wanted to run about in T-shirt and pants!

One day I was playing with Cassie, when I suddenly ran up to my dormitory! What was this plot I was thinking out? I ran downstairs again, Cassie gaped at me. I was in T-shirt and pants! Cassie suddenly started to chase me shouting, 'Maniac maniac!' How embarrassed I was. Soon everyone was joining in! I was getting hooked up with hula-hoops and snatched up by arms. There was Joss (a french boy), Wenny, Cassie and Kirsty (Bruce and Christine Wallace's daughter). Eventually we all agreed that if I got dressed we could all play sardines.

Then I met Ali Knox. On the train to Haltwhistle, a lady and her daughter got on the train. Mum got talking to the lady. The girl's name is Alexander. She is quite nice. There were trips to places. One place I went to was Vinderlander, a Roman Fort. There was a stream at Vinderlander and we paddled in the stream. It was freezing!

Another place I went to was Hadrian's Wall. We climbed up hills and trod in bogs! I went to Hadrian's Wall with Ali Knox.

I would like to give an extra special thanks to Bruce and Christine Wallace. They have been especially kind to us. I have had a lovely time and thank all of those at the castle again and again. I wish all EO'ers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Especially Bruce and Christine Wallace.

Love from Leila (Isle of Wight)

.....

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

by Jude Ashley-Walker

Having taught my children at home for 4½ years, we have thought about attending a national gathering. For the first couple of years I thought they were only for the 'Core Group', whatever or whoever they were. After becoming co-ordinator, I discovered they were for any members who wished to attend.

We finally settled on Featherstone Castle for our first gathering.

The journey took us over 13 hrs., during which time we speculated on what it would be like to spend a week living in a castle, with about 100 people, whom we had never met. It was quite a daunting prospect. Suppose we didn't like anyone? Suppose no-one liked us? Suppose we hated it all? ...We came up with more positive speculations than negative, but these were the worrying ones.

We arrived at Carlisle and took the local train to ...Halt-whistle. Once on this last leg of a quite difficult journey, the excitement was at a peak. We were in a strange territory, it was all so exciting. A woman and her daughter got on the train and asked if we were going to Featherstone - we'd been spotted as EO'ers. We all arrived at Halt - whistle and left the station, to be greeted by a smiling, warmly welcoming Christine Wallace, there to drive us to the castle. We all climbed into the van and felt completely at home.

On arrival at the castle we were shown our dormitory and introduced to a few people. We unpacked, went to have supper and met a few more people. Then Leila and Danny went to bed, Matty stayed to settle them down and I headed towards the kitchen, (which quickly established itself as a relaxed meeting place), to get a cup of herb tea.

I seemed to be in the midst of a sea of people, who all knew each other. Most seemed friendly enough, but did not introduce themselves, they seemed to

assume that everyone knew everyone else - I didn't.

It got later, (around 10pm) and there were still kids racing around yelling and screaming. I was so worried as there seemed to be no adults concerned about this. Maybe the stories I'd heard, (and dismissed), about some EO kids being the total rulers (tyrants?) of the family, having parents who never raise their voice, or speak a word of criticism for fear of damaging a young ego, were true. If so, how could I cope with a whole week of this? How would my children cope? Would they turn into tyrants? HELP!!

I saw a woman who looked as if she was more used to being at EO gatherings than I. I asked if the children were likely to be racing through the castle ALL night, every night. She said the first night was always the worst, as most of the children had spent hours cooped up in cars and so had excess energy. Also, they were excited at seeing friends they only saw a few times a year. She assured me it would simmer down. I felt relieved a little.

Next day at breakfast, we got talking to other people and Leila made her first friend. Matty got talking to others of a similar age to him and Dan stayed very close to me - he was quite intimidated by so many children running around. Throughout the day, we attended a meeting to discuss/decide rules/guidelines for the week. I was so relieved to find the majority of people felt as I did and it was agreed that parents had the responsibility to ensure their children did not behave inconsiderately towards the other residents, also, parents must not go off to bed leaving their children up, unsupervised.

During the following days, we attended meetings, workshops and played games. Each member of our family, even Danny, independently made new friends.

There were visits to Vinderlander - a Roman Fort, Beamish Museum - a collection of houses, shops, coal mine etc., furnished and equipped as in the late 1800's, early 1900's; a walk along Hadrian's Wall, a walk up Cold Fell and endless playing, talking and fun. On the last night, there was a concert - classical pianists, folk singers and even a spoon player! Kids told jokes, we all sang along; it was a beautiful warm togetherness.

I will never forget our first EO National Gathering and I'm sure my children won't - nearly two months on and it is mentioned most days in our house. We have vowed to go to as many National gatherings as we can get to. We all look forward to the next one.

Any members who have not attended a National gathering should really make the effort to go. It is an experience unlike any other.

I'm sure I speak for all the members who attended Featherstone, when I say an enormous 'THANKYOU' to Bruce and Christine Wallace. They worked hard to organise a wonderful week and received some sort of flu' bug....hope they recovered quickly.

Thankyou also to all the people who cooked the meals, washed up and kept things going smoothly. Thankyou to Gordon Rasmey for dispensing homeopathic remedies to my boys....Betty Ball, for calculator workshop and occupying Danny when I felt unwell....Jane who helped Danny feel confident....Alice, for the super birthday cake for her brother Josh....THANKYOU to everyone we met, you made our week unforgettable and we look forward to our next meeting.

Till than, Happy EO'ing, Love Jude

(Isle of Wight co-ordinator)

'TROUBLED CHILDREN: A FRESH LOOK AT SCHOOL PHOBIA'

by Patricia Knox

To be published early in 1988. Price £3.00 plus post and packing.
Copies are available from Patricia Knox. PEN LLYWENAN, BODEDERN, HOLYHEAD
GWYNEDD LL65 4TS

Please send me copies of 'Troubled Children: A Fresh Look At School Phobia'
I enclose £..... Name:
Address:

NOT THE CORE GROUP MINUTES

This is an informal report of an informal meeting held over several hours and in different locations at Featherstone Castle.

From it four ideas emerged that were sufficiently attractive to try out at Milton Keynes.

First that there should be only one formal meeting held on Sunday morning; that will be the 'Members Meeting' (see mins. of Core Group as was).

The other ideas were all wrapped up in a great deal of concern about how to encourage more members to attend national get-togethers and of how to make them feel welcome.

The second idea is an extension of the introductory meeting at Featherstone; where people could get to know who's who and what is likely to be happening.

The next idea was to assign newcomers with a 'host' who would look after them - this, like everything else in EO would not be compulsory!

The final idea actually took up most of the time. It was decided to hold discussion groups to air problems or specific topics of interest. To the end a timetable was produced. (Goodness what is EO coming to!)

Saturday Morning.

Discussion group: Child centred learning, led by Jean Lovius. OR Practical workshop: Glove puppets from odd socks, led by Liz Ramsey. OR Outdoor games.

Saturday Afternoon.

Discussion Group: coping with disapproval, led by Stephanie Fitcher and Jane Woolfe. OR Practical workshop: Maths games and activities, led by Betty Ball. OR Walk.

Saturday Evening (will this never end)

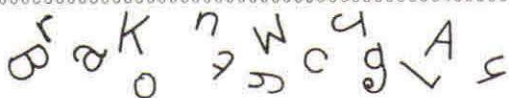
Singing and percussion with Sue Petschaft. OR Story telling with Gordon Ramsey.

Now we all know what a diverse group EO is and that you can't please all of the people all of the time BUT, this is an attempt to try a few new ideas, to see if they are appreciated. You never know what anarchy may reign supreme. However, let's give it a try!

Jill Gillings

FUN WITH LETTERS

contributed by Anat Kamenka



Give child large brush, strong colour paint and lots and lots of paper. Newspaper will do. Show him/her some chinese writing and suggest making 'chinese' letters and all sorts of shapes and squiggles. NOT english letters. If child shows interest, continue and hang up the best.

Reading:- Chiang Yee 'Chinese Calligraphy' published London 1938, obtainable at local libraries by reservation. (don't expect proper calligraphy from a child)

Older children could go on to sophisticated calligraphy, or try collecting interesting letter shapes (in english this time) from newspapers, magazines etc., and making a folder on different letter forms. This can lead on to work on typography and graphics.

Reading:- The Art Of Lettering - by - Nicolette Gray - pub. Phaidon
The Letraset Catalogue of Type Faces.
The Usborne Book of Graphic Design - pub. Usborne Publishing Ltd
The Decorated Letter - by JGG Alexander - pub. Thames & Hudson

There are of course many others.

WINTER GATHERING IN

MILTON KEYNES - JAN 29th, 30th + 31st.

We shall be meeting in Bradwell, an old village within the new city of Milton Keynes. Accommodated at a Youth Hostel with a garden. It is immediately opposite the village hall which we will be using as our centre for activities.

The Youth Hostel has a kitchen with limited cooking facilities ie. Grills & burner rings only. So apart from the Friday night which will be solely self-catering, we are organising communal food, vegetarian and easy to prepare & share. The bedrooms are dormitory style, please bring your own sheet, sleeping bags or sheets and pillowcases. There is also a lounge. It will not be necessary to join the YHA to stay here.

Due to the last gathering here being heavily over-subscribed we have managed to hire a small heated church hall nearby as well. Unfortunately it is floor space only, which will probably not be suitable for everyone. ALL your own bedding will be needed for this. Please state on the booking form whether you would be able to use this extra accommodation or not.

Different workshops are being planned this weekend as well as a Members Meeting on Sunday morning. All welcome to attend. Please send s.a.e. with the booking form so that we can send further details. We look forward to seeing you there.

WINTER GATHERING 1988 BOOKING FORM

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

ACCOMMODATION

FRIDAY NIGHT

NO. OF ADULTS NO. OF CHILDREN (over 3yrs) NO. OF CHILDREN (under 3 yrs)

SAT. NIGHT.

NO. OF ADULTS NO. OF CHILDREN (over 3 yrs) NO. OF CHILDREN (under 3 yrs.)

CAMPER VANS £1. per night SAT. SUN.

DAY VISITORS Adults £1. (Towards cost of church hall)

WE WOULD BE ABLE TO SLEEP IN CHURCH HALL (+tick if applicable)

WE ARE NEW TO EO/EO GATHERINGS

WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO SHOW PEOPLE AROUND

COST. Accommodation

Adults.....£6. per night.
Children.....£3. per night (over 3yrs)
Children under 3yrs no charge
Camper vans..£1. per night.
Day visitors.£1. (towards hire of hall)
Day visiting children no charge.

Meals

Adults.....60p per meal
Children.....30p per meal
Children under 3 years no charge.

Please return the booking form as soon as possible with S.A.E. + cheque/P.O. made payable to Education Otherwise, to:
Teresa Baines, 59 The Crescent, Amptill, Bedfordshire. MK45 2QS Tel.0525-405979

EDUCATING ARCHIE at CHRISTMAS

by SEB

It's Christmas Eve and all is peaceful. Mrs G is quietly soaking lentils in the kitchen when —



Mum, why did God make life?



undaunted, Mrs G recalls recent EO newsletters

ALWAYS tell the child... NEVER mention that... BE SURE you are REALLY... IF YOU CANNOT...



well, umm... it was to... um, er... the BIBLE says — oops, no, the..



— in fact... REALLY he, um, I mean, He...



— it, um well because, ACTUALLY...



— Mum, why aren't these lights working??



— PHEW =



We have six children. All have been taught, or are being taught, at home, at some time during the past 15 years. Our experiences have shown us that it must be extremely difficult for the schools to cater for such a rich variety of children and give EACH of those children an education suitable for their needs.

We started with PNEU/WES, it was well worth it for the first two years, as it gave us, the parents, a foundation on which to build. To start with we must admit to being overly strict. That was mainly due to the worry about pleasing the authorities. Everyone must feel frightened at some time about their LEA's.

Eventually we all settled down. It was found impossible to tackle each subject in exactly the same way with each child. Words had to vary, tone of voice and also what was expected of them.

Take reading for example - we used the Happy Venture Reading Scheme. Now for Brian (the eldest) that was hard work. He would wriggle and fidget, then end up on the floor under the table. We tried sitting him on our laps, he would go to sleep. But, he did learn to read. What helped was buying books on subjects he was interested in and getting him to read them to us.

Our two eldest girls, Julie and Amanda, were totally different. In between 'reading lessons' they would be on the floor somewhere, doing their workbooks, learning the new words on their own. So what took Brian 3½ years to wade through, took the girls 18 months.

We read them stories. Mike would read Bible stories, by request, over and over (it wore two books out). I would read nursery rhymes, nonsense rhymes, fairy tales and things like; Teddy Robinson, Yours Ever Sam Pig, D'Anny Fox, Mr Men tales, and everyone's favourite, The Owl Who Was Afraid Of The Dark.

Now I had always thought that children should all sit down quietly and pay attention when someone was reading to them. Ours never did. When they were small they all reacted differently to stories. One would sit and listen, one would try and pull the faces the character was pulling, one would act it out as I went, another would draw or wander around the room. Even in later years when we read, My Family and Other Animals (to name one book) they would walk about or draw.

Maths couldn't be taught the same way to them all either. Brian only had to be told once and he understood, as a result he raced through his maths textbooks. We were told when he was 13 that he had the mathematical brain of a 16½ year old. The others varied from having things explained twice, to having things done step by step at least a dozen times or more before they understood.

Most of them are now teenagers and the differences in their aptitudes and abilities is far greater now and still growing. An English course we bought for Julie, didn't appeal to Amanda and bogged Valerie down. That meant getting hold of more English books. The same thing happened with History, Geography, the Sciences and of course Maths. It has become a habit of ours to look for more educational books whenever we go to the bookshops. Our house is full of books and the pile is still growing.

The schemes and courses were all we needed to aid us, we thought, until it came to James. Now he is different again. School destroyed his self-confidence. We spent a year working hard, helping him regain his confidence. Then he had an accident. It put him back 3 years as his memory failed to recall things learnt during those three years. Thankfully, after a very worrying year, Geraldine Bennett joined EO and suggested project work for him. Sometimes it needs someone away from the problem to come up with a simple solution.

James chose to do the Fire Services. When he began, he was very shy, and would not speak to anyone outside the family. Now, because he's developed a keen interest in his project, he visits various Fire Stations, talks with the men and takes photographs of everything. He has really come out of his shell.

It is surprising how many subject can be covered in a project; History,

geography, science, ecology, to name a few. We'll always be grateful to Geraldine for the help she gave. (If you are reading this Geraldine -THANKS)

We do not sit at home all the time, we have been known to brave the roads of Kent and visit a few castles and other places of interest. Joining English Heritage has proved most useful, as you don't have to pay for each visit. They have Medieval Tournaments and things like that, all over Britain, mainly during the summer months, which bring history to life. We all thoroughly enjoyed going to those.

The thing is with our children, we can only give them a start, the rest of their education comes from them. There is an old saying 'You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink.' This is very true with education. If children don't see a need to learn something they won't even try. As parents, we have to help them find the reasons why a thing has to be learnt. We try to encourage our children to be independent, enquiring people. So far it seems to be working. Our son Brian (18), after a years YTS (he has no qualifications) is now working happily as Assistant to Stationery Manager in a local Office Equipment firm. Julie (17) has chosen to continue with her studies and Amanda (16) runs her own Domestic Services business. Valerie (15) has become a very independent person, James (12) is quietly creating a model town in his room, with no help from us and Amy (7) has a very enquiring mind.

We have never seen the need to push our children. Each stage of a child's development should be allowed to progress at the child's pace and they should never feel the need to compete with others. Someone asked us a little while ago if we felt we had forced our children to grow up too quickly, the short answer to that is no. They have grown up at their own pace, force doesn't come into it anyway. Also we realised that our children have thoughts of their own, and they won't always agree with us. You cannot impose your thoughts and ideals on them indefinitely and expect them to develop an enquiring mind, so necessary in this rapidly changing world.

Mike and Lois Cook - Herne Bay - Kent

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From Jo-Anne Beime - of Australia - via 'GWS'

Home schooling is a lot of things to a lot of people. It often includes home-birthing, health consciousness, fathers working as close to the home as possible. But it can mean only one or none of the above also. My personal interest is to maintain a relationship between all homeschool groups. I hate division on religious or political grounds. We have a real problem with very structured and very unstructured people wanting to argue about methods.

Personally I see the educating system as encouraging and emphasizing this kind of rivalry. It neatly divides all of us into 'winners' and 'losers' and we have to carry that jealousy, selfishness, lack of freedom forevermore. If only the homeschooling movement could avoid, or at least defuse these competitive attitudes.

Contributed by Bruce and Christine Wallace

BY Jane Woolfe

There was a contingent of about 8 families at the recent Libertarian Education conference at Conntelthorpe College, Leics. Plus several prospective members and many showing interest.

The EO bookstall run by Val and James Gommon provided a focus of interest and information, and was well attended.

We all enjoyed our EO workshop and found it really satisfying. We had enough time to discuss every topic raised by each participant - the subject of play-groups came up too! New and prospective EO members said it was both encouraging and constructive.

I strongly believe that there should be an EO workshop and bookstall at events like this conference. We should be giving our alternative to institution-alised education a higher profile generally and especially where one expects this to be sympathetically received.

We have much to offer Libertarian Educators, particularly our optimism. I met many well meaning, but weary people who are expending tremendous energy attempting to move the immovable - our Educational Institution. It was a gloriously sunny day and yet depression and anxiety were in the air. Many of those who seemed the most frustrated were the political activists. They were also the least sympathetic to EO. They do not as yet realise that taking personal responsibility for the education of your own children is a profoundly political act.

I attended 2 other workshops of which liberating science was very interesting, and reassuring - our kitchen science seemed much more satisfactory.

The Play for Life stall was also well worth a visit - but that is another article!

Jane Woolfe Liverpool

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ANYTHING THEY CAN DO....
Alison Mafham

More than once I have heard it claimed by advocates of home-education that 'anything schools can do you can do better!'

I imagine that a large number of EO members would regard that statement as being without relevance, since they are not attempting to do any of the things that schools are trying to do. However, from some of the recent letters to editors it is apparent that there are members of EO who, whilst possibly choosing a different route and employing different methods to those employed by the schools, are aiming, amongst other things, for at least some of the ends that schools aim for, and it is to encourage these people that the following facts are here relayed.

Two members of EO, neither of whom has ever had the 'benefit' of schooling, have this summer gained grade A passes in 'O' level maths whilst under 13 years of age. A place at a Public school of no mean standing has been offered to a 12 yr. old child who has only had one years schooling, and that at the age of 6! This offer was made after a day of rigorous examinations and interviews in which he competed with 8 other candidates (all of whom had had the 'benefit' of 7-8 yrs. at school) for one available place!

Luckily at this point in the tale, the old adage about the swallow and the summer springs to mind, just in time to prevent me from drawing the false conclusion that these particular facts prove the validity of the general statement quoted at the beginning ('anything schools can do you can do better!') Of course they cannot do that. But they can and do disprove any claim that anything you can do schools can do better!

All those who plan schedules for their children's education at home will almost certainly experience in doing so, the feeling that there is so much to do for which there can never possibly be enough time. There seems to be an endless queue of subjects and projects of all kinds waiting to be explored, and what is more, the broaching of any of these invariably spawns half a dozen others all ready and eager to join the end of the line, or to push in at the front, so that the queue needs constant reshuffling and gets steadily longer!

To speak of this is to speak of the joy and frustration of home-education, but is not the object of this article.

Just occasionally the waiting projects get quite unruly and no amount of shuffling and re-shuffling can impel them into satisfactory order. The only thing to do in such circumstances is to shut the door on them all and walk away for a while. Then one has the rare experience of making a deliberate effort to track down a new topic.

A member who finds him/herself in this position might welcome the 'Pitman Chess Teaching Scheme' called simply 'Learn Chess.

The teachers book costs £4.95 and contains all the lessons together with the answers to the questions asked in each plus some advice on how to approach the subject as a whole.

The systematic approach which the course adopts is instructive in itself. All the lessons are valuable as exercises in comprehension as much as instructions in the art of playing chess. The algebraic notation for chess moves, which is introduced early in the course and employed thereafter, provides excellent practice in the general understanding of grids as well as in the skills of relating language to action. Like the language of Mathematics or computer programming, algebraic notation contains a limited number of symbols which are employed in a precise and wholly unambiguous manner. But the number of symbols in algebraic notation is more limited, and the rules governing their manipulation much simpler than is the case either in maths, or in basic and of course, there is always present the physical analogue of the chess board. So that for the child for whom maths is too abstract and computer-programming too inclined to produce frustration, working with algebraic notation can provide an alternative form of practice in clear thinking and precise statement.

The course would permit of some pencil and paper work if this were desired.

Hitherto I have always assumed that the only way to teach chess to children is by the haphazard method of allowing them to play and pointing out mistakes or suggesting possibilities as the game progresses. Having followed the course I am now entirely convinced of the justice of Emmanuel Tasker's claim, quoted in 'Learn Chess' that:

'Properly taught, a student of chess can learn more in a few hours than he would in ten years of untutored trial and error.'

Quote From John Holt

'It's not that I feel that school is a good idea gone wrong, but a wrong idea from the word go. It's a nutty notion that we can have a place where nothing but learning happens, cut off from the rest of life.'

Contributed by Bruce and Christine Wallace

BOOK REVIEWS



Please send reviews direct to the next editor of the N/L. If you wish to review a newly, or shortly to be 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. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope (9x4) for each publisher you wish approached. PLUS, one SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE. Thankyou.

HELEN HOLLAND INHOLMES FARM, PLUMPTON GREEN, PLUMPTON, SUSSEX BN7 3DE



SCHOOL'S OUT

Educating Your Child At Home

By Jean Bendell

Published by Ashgrove Press, Bath

Jean Bendell is a member of EO who has written this book, as she says in her introduction, to encourage other parents who are contemplating home education or wondering whether they have the means to cope - 'you don't have to be highly qualified, well-to-do or living an alternative lifestyle' she says, but 'you do need to care.' By discussing her own approach with her two small daughters, Jean explains how she and her husband Victor discovered the 'benefits and possibilities of learning in a family environment'.

The book is very informative and positive in its approach, with ten chapters explaining how the Bendell family first decided on home education and then set about putting their ideas into practice. Jean goes through her reasons - practical, political and poetical - talks about obstacles, objections and the law, then discusses different approaches and finally how this had all worked out for them.

There are three Appendices: A History Of Home Education, Education Otherwise and Resources. I was surprised to see that the latter did not contain the addresses of the useful organisations and suppliers listed - a puzzling and irritating omission. However, the historical section was fascinating with its references to such characters as William Cobbett and Jane Austen.

I found it very interesting to follow a sustained account of one family's home schooling history. Some of Jean's quotes are extremely telling and serve to remind us exactly why we embark on such an adventure. For example, she refers to an article in the TES by a headmaster who says,

'Most children start school as enthusiastic, curious, active and imaginative beings. Too often our school system deliberately stamps out these sparks of vitality.' And I was much enheartened by the quote from E.M. Forster which exactly mirrors my experience:

'School was the unhappiest time of my life and the worst trick it ever played on me, was to pretend it was the world in miniature. For it hindered me from discovering how lovely and delightful and kind the world can be and how much of it is intelligible.'

Jean's own remarks are very pertinent too:

'Many of the processes children go through in school are only necessary because they are in school. They need to be taught largely because they are denied the opportunity to learn for themselves.'

It is very pleasing to have such a book from within EO, not only to encourage us, but also to show to interested onlookers and those who might even, thus inspired, take the plunge.

Helen Holland

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Now a short word from Jean ...

" I have written a book about home education. It will be published on the 16th November 1987, by Ashgrove Press. The price will be, £4.95 paperback and £8.95 hardback. It will also be available in the USA.

We have been EO members for 7-8 years, including two periods in the past as Avon's co-ordinators. We have three children, Hosanna 11, Fiorin nearly 6, and Taliesin 5 months.

The book is partly about our own experiences and reasons, and partly a consideration of wider aspects of learning at home. It includes accounts from other EO families. It gives information about the law, EO and dealing with the LEA's. As well as arguments for and against home education, it also considers the education -at home - of sundry well known 'bods in history'.

Could I take this opportunity to thank all those who so patiently bore with my requests for information, particularly those families whose experiences I quote from.

Best wishes to you all, Jean Bendell "

Now for some more book reviews :

Here are the Bebb family's recommended 'reading aloud to older children books.

1) 'The BFG' By Roald Dahl

'One of the funniest books ever written.....'

2) 'Never-ending Story' By Michael Ende

'.....more exciting and much longer than the film.'

'....also 'Momo' by the same author.... more thoughtful and very moving.'

3) 'The Weirstone of Brisingamen' By Alan Garner

'....a superb adventure story.'

4) 'The Indian In the Cupboard' By Lynne Reid Banks

'A....sensitive book about a young boy who...discovers a magic cupboard....'

5) 'The Silver Sword' By Ian Serraillier

'...moving story of three Polish children in Post-War Europe as they search for their mother.'

6) 'The Sheep-Pig' By Dick King-Smith

'...cheerful tale about a pig who thinks he is a sheep....'

7) 'Pippi Longstocking' By Astrid Lind

'....stories about an....independent, imaginative little girl....DOES NOT GO TO SCHOOL.'

8) 'Journey To Jo'burg' By Beverly Naidoo

'Two black South African children travel....to find their mother....very informative....at times unbearably sad. This had us all in tears.'

9) 'Mrs Frisby and the Rats of Nimh' By Robert C. O'Brien

'....a highly entertaining story....fascinating reflection on how self-destructive human society can be.'

10) 'Stig of the Dump' By Clive King

'....about a boy who makes friends with a boy from pre-historic times, or does he just imagine it?'

Happy reading! Kay Bebb 1 Knowsley Road, Liverpool L19 0PE

'Fun Movers' By Michael Grater, Pub. Macdonald. Price £2.95 paperback.

A brightly illustrated book of models to make out of 'junk' materials....

'All About Time' By Janine Amos, Pub. Beehive Books. Price £4.95 hardback

...Beautifully illustrated in bright colours with games....experiments.... ideas for activities. A very useful book.

'The Weather' By Francis Wilson. Pub. Purnell. Price £7.95

....pop-up book on the weather....lots of diagrams to explain various aspects of the weather....with a pop-up globe and satellite....well constructed....clear information and well worth the money.

Reviewed by Hilary Forster 3 Hendrick Dr. Chepstow, Gwent. NP6 7EL

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'Pickles' by Linda Yeatman pub. Piccadilly Press £4.95

Charming story written for the Riding for the Disabled Association, demonstrating the love and respect that develops between the pony Pickles and his young owners Sarah and Frances. When Sarah becomes paralysed due to a road accident, Pickles help rebuild her shattered life.

'Wild Life Tales' - by - Josephine Poole - pub. Hutchinson £6.95

A collection of animal stories with detailed descriptions of the delights and traumas of life in the wild, through the changing seasons of the year.

'The Secret Life Of An Oakwood' - a Photographic Essay by Stephen Dalton
pub. Century Hutchinson £14.95

A beautiful glossy book - the photographs of the wild life to be found in an English Oak wood are guaranteed to inspire a delight for nature in both young and old.

'Sounds, Patterns and Words' - books 1-4 - pub. Holmes McDougal Educational £1.25 each

These work books show the structure, meaning and pronunciation of words. Although aimed at 7-10 year olds, Helen aged 6 has found them challenging enough to keep her interest. She has enjoyed the jolly caterpillar on each page and also the crossword incorporating each new set of word sounds.

Reviewed by Kate Wilson

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'Anna's Secret Friend' - by - Yoriko Tsutsui - pub. Vicking Kestrel - £5.95
ISBN 0-670-81670-1

This is an excellent book - a breeze of fresh air amidst the welter of 'samey' children's books with their emphasis on fantasy creatures and adventure.

Both author and illustrator are Japanese. The story tells of a little girl (about 4 yrs old) who moves to a new home near the mountains. Just after moving in she receives small gifts, (a bunch of violets, three yellow dandelions, a letter and a beautiful paper doll) through the letterbox, and of course wonders who they are from. At last she finds out - another little girl about her own age who wants to be friends. The last two illustrations show the new friends riding their bikes and playing together happily in the countryside.

Apart from encouraging children to be thoughtful and kind to each other, it's a welcome change from the so-called sophisticated and 'grown-up' things which children get up to in many other books.

Asuperb book, not cheap at £5.95 (The illustrations alone are worth this) but one which I'm sure will be a real pleasure for adults and children.

Reviewed by Martin Wilson - 16 Thistle House, Dee Street, London, E14 0PD

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The Parent And Child Programme - Pub Octopus Publishing Group

Activities books £1.75 - Praticce books 99p

A very bright and colourful set of 24 books on maths and language. They cover the age range 3yrs - 9yrs. The books contain games and exercises which are really good fun for the children. Highly recommended.

Reviewed by Lois Cook

NEED BOOKS AND RESOURCES ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT, THE THIRD WORLD AND CONSERVATION?
IS THERE A DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION CENTRE NEAR YOU?

The Harambee Centre in Cambridge is my local DEC and I'm very excited to have accidentally found it. It has a resource lending library of books, videos, simulations, slides, magazines, articles and posters. It carries the output of the World Wildlife Fund, Christian Aid, Oxfam, etc. It's such an obvious idea I wonder why nobody thought of it before - if you want to get education to people and books, materials are expensive, then provide them on loan - all the things your local library hasn't got.

The Harambee Centre, located in an Oxfam shop, cost me £4 per year to join. (£8 per year for schools, £2 concessionary) I can borrow up to 5 books and 10 articles for three weeks. Items are also available for sale if you decide you can't afford to be without them. I have also attended a free two hour course on Rain Forests, which they arranged mainly for teachers.

There are 45 centres around the country with a variety of names like, World Development Centre, One World Centre, Centre For Development And Peace etc. London has 5 centres. Write with an SAE to:-

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEVELOPMENT CENTRES,
6 ENDSLEIGH STREET,
LONDON WC1H 0DX or Tel: 01-388-2670

To find your local centre.

SOME BOOKS YOU CAN EXPECT TO FIND IN YOUR DEVELOPMENT CENTRE OR GOOD BOOKSHOP ARE:

EARTHRIGHTS - EDUCATION AS IF THE PLANET REALLY MATTERED
World Wildlife Fund/ Kogan Page £4.95

A look at the relationship between people and nature and the way we 'care' for the Earth.

(Produced by the Centre For Global Education at the University of York for WWF)

WWF is behind much excellent and exciting educational material being produced at the moment. Materials on English, Drama, Art & Craft, Sciences as well as the expected Biology and Ecology. Send for the list of 'MATERIALS FOR TEACHERS' to:

WWF- UK, PANDA HOUSE, 11-13 OCKFORD ROAD,
GODALMING, SURREY GU7 1QU (including an SAE)

THE GAIA ATLAS OF PLANET MANAGEMENT - FOR TODAY'S CARETAKERS OF TOMORROW'S WORLD
Pan Books £7.95

An Atlas with a difference. It looks at the whole world, its resources, the land, evolution and people. How we could manage the Earth for all, once we understand the complex ecosphere and the interdependence of all things. A wealth of data (statisticians will love it), beautiful illustrations and fascinating text.

WORLD STUDIES 8-13
Oliver & Boyd £5.95

A book for using active learning as an approach to World Studies. Good starting point.

and many more. My main problem at the moment is the height of the pile of books by my bed waiting to be read. Quote to leave you with that keeps coming back to me by Edmund Burke.

'Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little'.

EXHIBITIONS OF EDUCATIONAL BOOKS 1988

The Publishers Association, Educational Publishers Council, 19 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HJ, have provided the following list of exhibitions of educational books. Please contact them for further information.

- JAN 2-3 Historical Association Conference / Exhibition
Regent's College, Regent's Park. London.
- JAN 2-5 ASE Conference / Exhibition. Nottingham University
- JAN 27-28 Sussex Schoolbook Exhibition. Brighton Exhibition Centre.
- FEB 1-2 Multi-Cultural/Education & Development Exhibition
London University, Institute of Education
- FEB 8-9 Grampian Schoolbook & Equipment Exhibition
Aberdeen Conference & Exhibition Centre
Lothian Schoolbook & Equipment Exhibition
The Meadowbank Sports Centre, Edinburgh.
(Both organised by EPC open to BEEA members)
- MARCH 2-3 The London Schoolbook Exhibition
The Cumberland Hotel, Marble Arch, London W1
- MARCH 8-9 Durham Schoolbook & Equipment Exhibition
- MARCH 11 North of the Tyne Exhibition
Gosforth High School, Newcastle.
- MARCH 14 North West Schoolbook Exhibition
Civic Centre, Wythenshawe
- MARCH 16-17 North West Schoolbook Exhibition
Pembroke Halls, Worsley
- MARCH 22-23 Essex Special Needs Exhibition
- MARCH 26-28 JCLA Conference/Exhibition
University of Warwick
- APRIL 5-6 NATE Conference/Exhibition
University of York
- APRIL 7-8 Maths Association Conference/Exhibition
University of Birmingham
- APRIL 7-8 Geographical Association Conference/Exhibition
- JUNE 1-2 NAHT Conference/Exhibition
Congress Theatre, Eastbourne
- JUNE 24 Cheshire NUT Refresher Course/Exhibition
South Cheshire College of Education
- JULY 26-27 UKRA
University of Leicester
- SEPTEMBER 21-22 Special Educational Needs Exhibition
The Cumberland Hotel, Marble Arch London W1
- OCTOBER 15 Festival of Languages
University of Warwick

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ii) we are doing the LEAG syllabus and have been told by the Examination Officer at Clacton County High School, that coursework will be marked by the teacher at the school where they are sitting the exam. So, in fact, we ourselves are not considering the centre. (that was one of the points mentioned at the end of the article)

iii) Re: Core Curriculum; We are not having it used against us now, but had that point put across to us very firmly 2½ years ago when our first son came out of school! All eight subject areas had to be covered and if we wanted to take German or Conservation or whatever extra, that was our lookout. So in effect the boys have been doing about 10 different subjects all along. Fortunately we agree with a broad curriculum anyway, but it might have posed a problem if we didn't.

Comments from A. Kamenka C. Durham:

I've just read the GCSE supplement - it's excellent and much of what it says on MEG agrees with what I know about LEAG. LEAG only have schools GCSE Regulations and syllabuses available (3 volumes - £5.00). Lengthy correspondence has found the following list of subjects available to external candidates:

Arabic, Accounting, Art & Design, Bengali, Biology A & B syll., Biology (human), British Government & politics, Business Studies, Chemistry A syl., Chinese, Commerce, English, English Literature, Economics, France - Language & Culture, French, German, German - Language & Culture, Geology, Greek, Geography A syl., Gujerati, History A, B & C syl., Italian, Latin (non-coursework option), Modern Greek, Mathematics A & SMP syl., Physics A syl., Religious Studies A & B syl., Science, Social Studies, Sociology.

For LEAG external GCSE there is no coursework. It is replaced by an additional exam paper. Some subjects (modern languages and Maths) have no coursework element in the standard GCSE - so the external GCSE is exactly the same as the standard internal GCSE in these subjects. For English Language, external candidates do take the same oral exam as internal candidates and arrangements are made for this as part of exam entry. The same applies to modern languages.

I am still awaiting fuller details of the additional papers to replace coursework. Eventually specimen exam papers for the external candidates are supposed to be available, similarly a full set of external syllabuses.

General comments much in agreement, but below a few subject comments: Science & Maths seem least changed from 'O' levels - but knowledge of practical industrial applications of scientific processes now gets space, also electronics and atomic theory.

Biology now includes ecology, has more emphasis on experiments & how to design design useful experiments.

History (as MEG) is now only Modern. A lot of options are available & more opportunity to do social history 'topic' work.

English is much changed from 'O' level.

Geography - new syllabus involves real change. Themes and principles of geography help clarify and organise selected examples worldwide. English geography essential, Development & Third World Studies also important. No more disparate chunks from different countries and a little less emphasis on physical and land use in isolation, Comparison, evaluation and data response questions an important part of GCSE. Study of human geography now more sophisticated (urban place theory, settlement patterns, planning options, etc.) Geography textbooks geared to changes essential.

A. Lamenka has offered to act as the LEAG Co-ordinator, contact at:
62 Guthrum Place, Aycliffe, Co. Durham DL5 4QD Tel. 0325-310109

Next newsletter will include a look at GCSE Correspondence Courses

EDUCATION LAW

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND OTHER MATTERS

In its forthcoming education legislation, the Government proposes to introduce a national core curriculum, with testing of children in schools at ages 7, 11, & 14. On the face of it, this should not affect families educating their children at home. In practice though, there is a real danger that LEA's may be influenced by the new law in their attitudes to home educating families.

Fiona & Alan Dix (Yorks North) wrote to Kenneth Baker last August. They asked for an assurance that the law would be worded in such a way as to prevent LEA's from imposing the national curriculum and/or testing on EO families. The reply they received was not entirely encouraging:

'There is no intention to change the law as it relates to...pupils (educated otherwise than at school), and the national curriculum will not be imposed upon them by statute. We cannot prevent any local education authority from quoting as evidence for its interpretation of an "efficient" education the Governments expressed curriculum policy, whether enshrined in statute or (as at present) only a matter of guidance as in the White Paper "Better Schools". But in this particular context our new proposals will have no greater legal force than our earlier guidance.'

This is exactly what we were afraid of. With respect to EO, the national curriculum will not be legally enforceable, but could be another source of harassment.

At the beginning of Oct. we wrote to Kenneth Baker ourselves on behalf of EO, with the agreement of the Meeting at Featherstone Castle. We explained at some length why we value our freedom from constraints of school-based education. We went on to ask that the law should explicitly exclude home educated children. At the same time, we put proposals from EO on a number of other issues:

1. Deregistration

The relevant regulation should be changed so that instead of having to satisfy the LEA that suitable education is being provided, the parent must simply inform the LEA of this in writing. This would remove the present anomaly which discriminates against parents attempting to withdraw their child from a state school in order to home educate.

2. Part Time Attendance

Schools should be entitled to register pupils on a part-time basis, with pro-rata capitation.

3. Information On The Right To Home Educate.

LEA's should be obliged to inform parents of their right to home educate before applying coercive methods to school refusers.

We sent another copy of our letter to the DES department dealing with responses to the national curriculum proposals. We have had a routine acknowledgement promising that our points will be considered. (This is not bad in itself, since according to the Times Educational Supplement, the DES received 5000 written responses during the course of a single week).

By the time you read this, the new Education Bill should have been published. It gets its second reading in December and goes to committee between about Christmas and Easter. It then goes back to the Commons for its third reading, and passes to the House of Lords about May. To our knowledge, David Deutsch (Oxford) and Lynette Cameron (Berks) have both been active in representing EO's point of view. We hope that everyone will now approach their local MP either at a local surgery or by letter, in order to put our point on the national curriculum, perhaps together with one or more of the other points. Send us an SAE if you would like a copy of the full letter, either to make use of or to pass on with a short covering note.

Anne & Rob Wade - Legal Group

(If you would like something else for the price of the same stamp, see our piece on the Natural History Museum.)

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM: FREE ADMISSION FOR EO MEMBERS

Last April the Natural History Museum and Geological Museum in South Kensington introduced charges for admission. Since then the trustees have considered our request for exemption, and have agreed to admit us free of charge on production of a membership card. (This applies to both museums) As there is no such thing as an EO membership card, we have taken it upon ourselves as co-ordinators for West London, to manufacture something suitable. If you are a current member and would like one, please send us an SAE. The cards (to be more accurate, bits of paper) are made out in the name of the member family and are valid for one year. (see also end of piece on national curriculum)

Other people have shown interest in arranging similar concessions in their own areas. We can supply a copy of the letter we sent to the museum if it's any help. Make sure you check with your co-ordinator to avoid duplication. We have fantasies of so many people negotiating free or reduced admissions that EO has to issue a national membership card and no member can afford to leave home without it. Rob & Anne Wade

REGIONALISATION OF EO?

Regionalisation has long been envisaged for certain functions of EO as we grow larger. The alternative would be an increasingly overloaded central administration, and eventually paid staff, which would alter the whole feeling of the organisation.

At national Members' Meetings (formerly known Core Group) we have talked about regional co-ordinators and what they could do. We are reluctant to assign counties to regions or impose regional co-ordinators upon them. Some areas still barely function in terms of EO - it is difficult to find local co-ordinators, let alone a regional one. However, some regions have evolved and seem to be ready to become more autonomous.

It was decided that it was not necessary to regionalise everything everywhere at once, nor to define the regional co-ordinator's role. Three experienced co-ordinators who had expressed an interest in taking a wider responsibility were asked to test out the role of regional co-ord. for one year and report back to Members' Meeting. They are Meg Robertson (Wilts), Lynette Cameron (Berks) and Sandie Cottee (Essex). They each have different preferences and ideas about what they want to do.

There are various jobs which could appropriately be tackled at a regional level, which the regional co-ord. might co-ordinate but would not necessarily carry out in person. In EO the tradition is always to spread the work as much as possible, partly so that power never accumulates in one person and partly so that people don't get exhausted and give up altogether. Telephone enq. (through the recorded messages on the national number) can be dealt with regionally, and perhaps eventually membership administration. Each region will hopefully have a member of the legal group, who may or may not be the co-ordinator. It may well have a N/L and a resource centre. It could experiment with various types of regional meetings and activities. Would these be self-financed but underwritten by EO?

A regional co-ordinator should be experienced enough to support local co-ordinators, and to facilitate them in getting together and supporting each other. Another local co-ordinator or member may be equally or complementarily experienced: should we have joint or assistant regional co-ordinators, in the same way as we encourage joint co-ordinators at a local level? If a region sets up a resource centre and borrows money from the rolling fund, they have to set up a local committee with a separate bank account to administer it. Is that the appropriate model?

If an area needs a co-ordinator, the regional co-ordinator would be in a good position to phone local members and find out who is willing and who is acceptable - it is not easy to do this at national level. If local members are dissatisfied with their co-ordinator, the regional co-ordinator should help

them to replace him/her - what powers should a regional co-ordinator have in this situation?

Would regional co-ordinators be appointed or elected? For what period of time? What control should the national Members' Meeting have eg. for sacking a regional co-ordinator who became too autocratic or idiosyncratic? It is not enough to tell a region it is up to them, as they by then have become too disintegrated or split off from the rest of us to do anything about it.

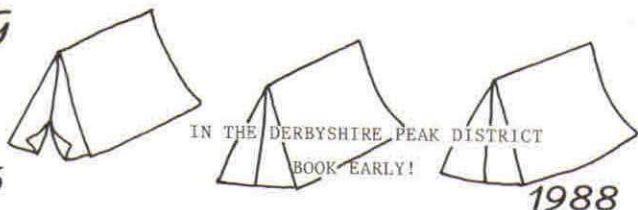
We were agreed that regional co-ordinators could not have children in school and should attend Member's Meetings regularly. They would have considerable experience as local co-ordinators, would be well known through Meeting and the N/L and would have lots of EO contacts for support and information. A telephone is essential - sorry, but it's been too difficult when co-ordinators haven't had one. What about a car - or is that getting too elitist? What expenses would be paid? How do we decentralise but maintain unity? How do we achieve democracy, rather than autocracy or bureaucracy? As with EO as a whole, that probably boils down to the integrity of the individuals doing the work and the willingness of a large proportion of the members to share the work and keep an eye on how it's all panning out; but the structure we set up can help or hinder this.

By the end of the trial year we expect to hear of problems and possibilities which were not apparent until the general idea was put into practice, not only from the three co-ordinators but also from members in those regions. In the meantime we want responses to all of this from everyone. Can you define your region? Are local co-ordinators beginning to work together? Are you putting on events at a regional level? How do you want it all to develop?

Anne Wade.

CAMPING WEEKEND

June 24-26



We have booked a camping field at Barracks Farm, Beresford Dale, Hartington. (grid ref. SK 124 587) For last weekend in June 1988 for an EO camp.

There is room for up to 30 tents or camper-vans. The facilities, which we will be sharing with other campers include showers, flush toilets, piped water, and an emptying point for chemical toilets. There is no washing machine or indoor drying area. Bring all your own equipment, food and plenty of 10p's for hot water. We will order milk in advance.

Beresford Dale is near the head of Dovedale in the limestone White Peak District on the borders of Derbyshire and Staffordshire. There are beautiful walks over the hills or by the river; rocks and caves; birds; and cream teas in Hartington. Nearby are the Manifold Valley with its disappearing river; Arbor Low stone circle; Tissington Trail footpath and cycle track.

If anyone has a large tent or knows where to borrow one we would like to have one as a central meeting place and undercover play area.

Book by writing to us, Peter Darling and Stephanie Fitcher, 50 SPRINGFIELD AV., CHESTERFIELD, DERBYSHIRE. (new address) with your fee: - 60p per adult, 40p per child and 40p per vehicle per night, for a maximum of two nights (Friday & Saturday). We will send you further information.

The nearest railway stations are Buxton & Cromford. There are buses from Buxton and Ashbourne, but we will need 1988 timetables before we can give any details. As Hartington is difficult to reach by public transport, let us know if you are coming by train and wish to be met.

NOTICES

THE SUPPLEMENT

After a recent discussion at Featherstone Castle, the following suggestions were made for ideas for the supplement in the near future.

1. Physics/Chemistry (in the home and for GCSE)
2. Gardening
3. Cooking ('Kitchen Maths')
4. Physical Activities (Gym)
5. 'Animals in Education'
6. Natural History (Nature in the City)

Is there anyone out there who would like to have a go at editing/writing one of these Supplements? The Supplements already booked until Dec. 1988 are:-

Music	Feb '88 John Elenor
T.V. & Radio	April '88 Sylvia Jeffs
Special Needs	June '88 Sylvia Jeffs
Crafts	Aug. '88 Millie Stevens
G.C.S.E. (Further News)	Oct. '88 Betty Ball
Story Writing	Dec. '88 Gordon Ramsey

So start thinking now - can you contribute in any way to the Supplements already booked? The names and addresses of these editors/writers appear in the inside front cover of the preceeding newsletter, that gives you plenty of time to contribute before the deadline. Or - are you interested in the new suggestions above, maybe you would like to edit/write one of these yourself or perhaps make your own suggestions? If so, please contact me - Lesley Kilbride (Publishing Sec.) Fearnmore, By Sheildaig, Strathcarron W. Ross. IV54 8XX Tel. 05205 278
ANY OFFERS OF HELP WOULD BE MUCH APPRECIATED.

.....
WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO SOME WORK FOR EO, WHICH IS NOT VERY DEMANDING IN TERMS OF TIME, BUT DOES INVOLVE TAKING SOME RESPONSIBILITY?

EO's Treasurer is hoping to retire in January and a successor is being sought. No previous experience of accounts is necessary - just a willingness to take the job seriously. If you think you might be interested in taking on this task and would like to know more about it, please contact:

ALISON MAFHAM Flat 2 'ELMHURST', CAVENDISH ROAD EAST, THE PARK, NOTTINGHAM NG7 1BB
Tel. Nottingham (0602) 481093
.....

WANT TO BE INTERVIEWED BY THE PRESS?

If there are any EO'ers in the Strathclyde/Ayrshire area interested in being interviewed by the Press, then please contact :- CARLY SMITH, CHIEF REPORTER, IRVINE TIMES, 43 BANK STREET, IRVINE. Tel. Irvine (0294) 73421. Carly Smith has declared herself to be very interested in writing a favourable article on home-education and would appreciate any contact locally with EO.

Laurie Watson
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CADBURY'S NATIONAL EXHIBITION OF CHILDREN'S ART

Home Educators whose children enter the Cadbury's National Exhibition of Children's Art, might be interested to know that in future, they are to be treated in the same category as schools. This means that any EO child whose work is highly commended and chosen for exhibition will receive £20 and the parents will receive £50 for art materials. This award was formerly only given to the school the child attended.

Cadbury's request that any Home Educators entering for the Exhibition state clearly, both in the accompanying letter and on the back of the entry, that the children are Home Educated. The address for anyone wishing an entry form is: NATIONAL EXHIBITION OF CHILDREN'S ART, GRANBY MARKETING SERVICES LTD., DUNHAM MASSEY, ALTRINGHAM, CHESHIRE WA14 5SZ
.....

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO LOCAL CO-ORDINATORS

Due to the resignation of the co-ordinators secretary Andy Anderson, it has been decided that the job be shared between the Regional Enquiries Secretaries. Therefore, in future will co-ordinators please let their relevant Reg. Enq. Sec. know of resignations, changes or additions. The areas are listed below. Also will either the Reg. Enq. Sec. or the co-ordinator concerned let Joan Hoare know of changes or additional co-ords. for insurance purposes. Intro. Lit. and Memb. Forms will now be available from the Reg. Enq. Sec. (The North will please apply to Central address for their needs.) Stationary will be available from Joan Hoare.

Our grateful thanks is extended to all 9 Reg. Enq. Secs. for so willingly taking on this extra workload.

Janet Everdell

REGIONAL ENQUIRIES SECRETARIES AREAS

Miryam Bush	WALES
Brenda Holliday	SCOTLAND
Clare Weber	IRELAND
Genevieve Bridgemon	LONDON
Jennie White	NORTH :- Northumberland, Durham, Cumbria, Lancs, Gtr. Manchester, Merseyside, W,N & S Yorks, Humberside, Isle of Man.
Hazel Clawley	MIDLANDS :- Hereford & Worcs, Warks, Northants, Leics, West Midlands, Lincs, Notts, Staffs, Derbyshire, Cheshire, Shropshire.
Jude Ashley-Walker	SOUTH-EAST :- Berks, Hants, Surrey, Kent, E & W Sussex
Meg Robertson	SOUTH-WEST :- Avon, Glos, Wilts, Oxon, Dorset, Devon, Cornwall, Somerset
Sandie Cottee	EAST ANGLIA :- Bucks, Beds, Cambs, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Herts.

WHERE TO GET WHAT

Stationary, Envelope Re-use Labels -(1.50 per 100), Posters & Hanbills from :-
JOAN HOARE 25 MOOR OAK ROAD, SHEFFIELD, SOUTH YORKSHIRE Tel. 0742 666605
Early Years, (now also) Later Years, SINC - all at £1.50; Education & The Law £2,
Teach Your Own, Current & old Newsletters - available from :-
CHRISTINE WALLACE (membership secretary) address on back page.
Growing Without Schooling - Subscriptions for 1988 now due - £10 for 6 issues. From:-
JILL GILLINGS BALLAGLONNEY FARM, QUAYLE'S ORCHARD, RONAGUE, ISLE OF MAN.
(cheques payable to Education Otherwise)

USEFUL ADDRESSES & PHONE NUMBERS

Child Benefit Representative - LYNETTE CAMERON -
79 Whiteknights Road, Reading, Berkshire RG6 2BB 0734-661656-(tel)
EO Family Support Fund - Andy Jackson -
Pringle House Farm Cottage, New Brancepeth, Durham DH7 7HZ Tel: 0384 730772
GCSE - BETTY BALL -
1 Fenton Road, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambridge Tel. 0487-822083
GCSE - LEAG Co-ordinator - A. KAMENKA -
62 Guthrum Place, Aycliffe, Co. Durham DL5 4QD Tel: 0325-310109
Information Resource Centre - Andy & Diane Anderson - Tel: 0270-664060
95 Derrington Avenue, Crewe, Cheshire CW2 7JA (please enclose s.a.e.)
Legal Group - ANN WADE -
19 Perkin Close, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 2LY Tel: 01-904-7155 (Phone first please)
Special Needs - SYLVIA JEFFS -
16 St. Bernards Road, Solihull B92 7BB Tel: 021-706-6460

PATRICIA KNOX is still collecting information on school phobic children educated at home for three years or more, after being withdrawn from school.

This follows research carried out in Leeds, where 66% of school phobic children moved to a psychiatric unit suffered long term mental problems such as agoraphobia or neurosis.

If you can help, (it doesn't matter if your child later chose to return to school), your letters will be of great help. Write to her (address on page 16).

SCHOOL PHOBIA - Judy Whetton is researching into school absenteeism, under Derbyshire County Council, as part of her study for an Advanced Diploma in Education. She would like some information about school phobia and asks if any parents of school phobic children would like to contact her. If you can help write to her at:- Swanwick hall School, Swanwick, Derby DE5 6EJ

MUSIC MAKING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN - In January 1988 I shall be starting a weekly music class for children under 5. Please telephone if you would like to know more. MAGGIE NEWLANDS, 141 CROFTON PARK ROAD, LONDON SE4 1AJ Tel: 01-690-4014

LEILA BERG LIBRARY

This is a diverse collection of adult & children's books donated by Leila Berg to EO.

The collection has been split up and small boxes of books have been given to various co-ordinators, around the country.

The bulk of the books is based with me. This collection is taken to each National Meeting where people can browse, borrow & return. (Anyone is welcome to call at our house to browse, borrow & return books.)

PLEASE ALL BORROWERS try and remember to bring your books back to the Milton Keynes Meeting.

JENNIE WHITE, WENSLEY MILL, WENSLEY, LEYBURN, WENSLEYDALE, NR. YORKS. DL8 4HR

HELP PLEASE!! - Does anyone know of a good basic starter course (or books) in Italian. I am 12 years old and don't have any knowledge of the language. CHARLOTTE AUCKLAND, 5b, LINOM ROAD, CLAPHAM, LONDON SW4 7PB

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION - anyone interested in forming a co-operative with a view to setting up an alternative school, please contact BERNIE DAVIS, EXETER 31520

LODGINGS AVAILABLE - for woman with/without children, in EO family home, with large garden. Very quiet, no car access, yet within easy reach of village/public transport. Reasonable terms/meals by arrangement. Write to:- WENDY HEATH, CAE MAWR, TALYSARN, CAERNARFON, GWYNEDD, N. WALES.

SMALLHOLDING IN NORTH WALES - comprising 5 bedrooomed farmhouse, barns, stable, caravan, 10 acres. 2 immediate neighbours educate own children. 8 miles Caernarfon, Snowdon. Freehold £63,000. PHONE 08043-3016 FOR DETAILS

WE ARE AN ENGLISH FAMILY, LIVING NEAR LYON - our children do not go to school. We would love to open our home to visitors. For more details phone or write to:- ANDREW & ANDREE ROBERTS, LA RADISSONNE, MORANCE, 69480 ANSE, FRANCE
Tel:- (7) 843-08-57

GLOUCESTERSHIRE We've recently become co-ordinators for Glos. and like the idea of trying to arrange a pre Xmas get-together/tea/games/chat etc for Glos. members and any others who live in neighbouring areas, who would like to join us. We think that Sun. Dec.15th might be a good date. If more people than can fit into our humble little house are interested in coming, we'll book a local village hall. Please phone DYMOCCK (053 185) 640 - if you'd like to join us and help us with any good ideas for a 'fun family afternoon'. (Time, venue & details won't be known until nearer the time).

LISA HALL DAVEY - co-ordinator

.....
IRELAND Would Irish members who have written to me for legal advice, please be so courteous as to reply and let me know how you got on. It is only by knowing these things that I can continue to help and advise others in the future. THANKYOU....CLARE WEBER - co-ordinator

.....
ISLE OF WIGHT Danny and Leila would like to thank all the people who came to their birthday parties in July & August. We are having a Christmas party on either 6th or 13th December. It will be £1 per child (to go towards prezzies). If any one in EO has a Santa outfit we could borrow, it would be much appreciated, and returned by post or person immediately after the party. Please ring if you can help. If any member would like to arrange a venue for a 1988 gathering, I'd like you to ring me so that we can arrange something.

JUDE ASHLEY-WALKER - co-ordinator

.....
KENT We would like to arrange a get-together for those who are interested. But, we need somewhere to hold it! It would be either Jan.17th or Feb. 7th. So - if there is anyone out there who can help, or is interested in coming along, please contact us. Herne Bay 367059

MIKE & LOIS COOK - co-ordinators

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LINCOLNSHIRE Another year over and in spite of going to all but one gathering this summer, we still have only met 3 families. All we can assume from the lack of interest is that you don't want contact with other families. Is this the case? If not, what would it take to get people together? You have our address and phone number - please let us know your views as soon as possible. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all - wherever you are.

STEVE & LYNDA TOOBY - co-ordinators - KIMBER, NEWBRIDGE LANE, COVENHAM ST. MARY, LOUTH, LINCS LN11 0PQ Tel: FULSTOW 222

.....
LONDON - NORTH We hold meetings which are open to everyone, and are very informal. These are generally held at the Burghley Road Under 5's Centre, 23½ Burghley Road, N8. (off Turnpike Lane) The centre is purpose built for under 5's, but parents and children of any age are welcome to the meetings. There is a lot of play equipment, kitchen & changing facilities. Anyone interested in coming, please contact me. No dates for the Jan & Feb. meetings set as yet, could people ring me for details. They'll probably be on a Sun. at 2pm. Could people also let me know when they could have meetings at their homes, as it may not always be possible to hold meetings at Burghley Rd. Is anyone interested in extending the activities of the group? I would welcome some assistance and ideas about this from anyone.

JEFFREY BENGE - co-ordinator - 17 NELSON MANDELA CLOSE, COPPETTS ROAD, MUSWELL HILL, LONDON N10 1LA Tel: 883-7906

.....
LONDON - WEST We are still meeting at the South Kensington Museums (tube: Sth. Kensington) on the 4th Monday of every month. You can get your membership 'card' there, if you ring to make sure one of us is coming. We meet in the Foyer of the Science Museum or inside Launch Pad (adjacent to foyer) at about 11am. (Adms. to

Science Msm. free) Some stay and gossip, others go off in different directions, but we meet up for lunch at 1pm in the picnic area at the top of the 1st escalator. (or on East lawn of Nat. Hist. Msm. when warm) Sue Petsaft (E. Sussex Co-ord.) also organises outings to other London venues on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. She's always looking for ideas, let her know if you have any suggestions. Please ring Sue or us for confirmation the night before a meeting of either sort. (see p.38 Oct. N/L for current calendar). If you want to host a meeting, contact us to check the date doesn't clash with anything else, and allow plenty of time for a mention in the N/L.

ANNE & ROB WADE - co-ordinators

SOUTH EAST - LONDON TRIPSThe trip to Cranley Street Natural Park NW1 on Tues. 8th March 1988, is cancelled. I will try to book an outing to a city farm, but please contact me for further details.

SUE PETSZAFT - THE OLD SQUASH COURT, BAYHAM ABBEY, LAMBERHURST, KENT. TN3 8BG
Tel. Lamberhurst 0893 890624

EDUCATION THROUGH THE PRESS

Edited by Ros Normandale with contributions from Sarah Guthrie & Janice Owen.

A survey commissioned by the Manpower Services Commission states that three school-leavers out of five, feel their education did little to prepare them for the real world. 59% of both working and unemployed youngsters, questioned a year after leaving school, said lessons had been of little value in later life. 52% of those still in full-time education held the same view. More than half of those questioned admitted to playing truant in the fifth year, for the odd day or longer. - Newcastle Chronicle 13-10-86

'It is a shocking fact that today, over half of our children leave school without any nationally recognised qualifications. Regrettably, many comprehensive schools have updated neither their curriculum, which is academically biased, nor their teaching methods....It is not, therefore, surprising that many 15 and 16 year olds, bored by irrelevant teaching, simply opt out, often playing truant, waiting for an uncertain future, which for many will be the dole queue.'

Telegraph 17-8-87

The ILEA continued in their innovatory mood with their setting up of a Freedom of Information Inquiry. Recommendations include 'access to, and confidentiality of, school records; the right of parents to observe governors' meetings; the establishment and proper use of parents' rooms and notice boards; clearer and more detailed school information books for parents. There is also a suggestion - echoing that made in the Hargreaves report in 1984 - that each parent should have a termly 15 minute period of one-to-one parent/teacher contact. These draft recommendations would, if adopted and enforced, make a radical and positive contribution to home-school relations.' ACE Bulletin Sept/Oct 1987

Perhaps a leaf should be taken from Jean-Paul Sartre's book; when teaching he '....used no discipline, no punitive sanctions, no attendance rosters, no grades, no exams; he discouraged competition, note-taking and rote-learning; and yet, at the baccalaureat, his students were as successful as those of his colleagues.'

Observer 11-10-87

'Testing children in mathematics on a national basis - as proposed by Kenneth Baker - will not work', claim a Government sponsored group of researchers from King's College. One of the experts, Dr. Margaret Brown, said, 'Written tests handed down nationally on a single day would encourage teachers to spend too much time teaching narrowly to meet the demands of the examination.'

Telegraph 7-9-87

Dr Chris Kyruacou of York University told an educational conference in Birmingham that 'prolonged exposure to problems in the classroom, trying to motivate children, poor working conditions and low pay, has led to cases of "teacher burn-out", a state of exhaustion resulting in diminishing enthusiasm for the job.' Telegraph 12-9-87

Britain's youngest maths genius, John Adams, who gained a maths 'A' level at the age of nine years and seven months, is coached each night after school by his father, who is a maths teacher. His parents have said they don't want him to go to university until he is thirteen. Telegraph 14-8-87

Devika Khanna has become the youngest girl to pass an 'A' level in Hindi. At nine years old, she was anxious to learn Hindi in order to talk to friends on visits to Delhi. Telegraph 26-8-87

'The Government has given a £150,000 cash boost to a revolutionary hi-tech teaching scheme for Northumberland sixth-formers. The self-study group scheme with mobile tutors has been devised to cope with falling pupil numbers. The new teaching methods, using videos, computers and other study aids, are being devised with the help of experts from the Open University. Work started on the development of the courses last month. Teachers master-minding the scheme are working on the development of courses in minority 'A' level subjects which schools, because of falling roles, are unable to provide on a standard basis. The scheme is due to start next September.' Newcastle Journal 12-10-87

A survey commissioned by the Book Marketing Council revealed that children spend on average only a tenth of their spare time reading for pleasure - compared with half their free time watching TV and playing sport. The survey, which charted the reading habits of over 2,000 families, claims that reading is more than three times as popular among girls than boys. A spokesman for the DES said research showed encouragement and reading allowed by parents to be the single most important factor in teaching children to read.' Telegraph 4-8-87

A survey by the National Foundation of Educational Research of the reading habits of 10 & 11 year olds in Wales, claims that Enid Blyton books, despite criticism for their sexist, racist content, remain a favourite among school children. The Top Ten Books, in order of pref. are: 1. The Famous Five Series; 2. Charlie & The Chocolate Factory; 3. The Secret Seven; 4. Black Beauty; 5. The Bean; 6. Wind In The Willows; 7. Treasure Island; 8. Little Women; 9. Charlotte's Webb; 10. The Hobbit/James & the Giant Peach (joint) Telegraph 24-8-87

The US National Commission on Excellence in Education has published a report stating - 'For the first time in the history of America, the educational skills of one generation will not surpass, will not equal, will not even approach, those of their parents.' The Plain Truth Oct. 87

"Education has been called the engine of society...and education occurs everywhere, not just in the classroom...Today's high schools often do look like crisis centres rather than educational institutions...at the university level is confusion over educational goals, a divided faculty loyalty, isolation of social and academic areas, absence of a desire to learn or teach, a gap between the college and the world at large, disjointed curriculum, disagreement on how to govern the college. When we think of a 'system of education' we must include the society beyond the classroom. The home must rank as the primary source of education... The school cannot be the sole educating instrument of society - nor even its major one...Education is a process that begins at birth...Parents, not schools and governments, are fundamentally responsible for the education of their children." The Plain Truth October 1987

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF EDUCATION OTHERWISE ASSOCIATION LTD.

FEATHERSTONE CASTLE, Saturday 12th September 1987 at 2.30 pm.

PRESENT:- Jennie White, Mick White, Stephanie Fletcher, Patricia Knox, Alison Orr, Dave Bettie, June Grant, Bob Bogucki, Jill Gillings, Robert Gillings, Bruce Cox, Lynette Cameron, John Cameron, Brenda Holliday, Valerie Common, Nadine Edwards, Christine Wallace, Rob Wade, Anne Wade, Rena Laslett, Gordon Ramsey, Liz Ramsey, Alison Mafham, Jean Lovius, Joan Hoare, Bruce Wallace, Felix Polkowski, Thomas Kilbride, Julie Lyons, Anne Clark, Miryam Bush, Barry Lovius, Betty Ball, Jack Fuller, Rosey Pretnam, Jude Ashley-Walker.

1) At least 20 signed up members of Education Otherwise Association Ltd. were present. We therefore had the necessary quorum.

2) Apologies were received from:- Caroline Bithell, Rosie Walton, Meg Robertson, Sharon Baukopf.

3) The minutes of the last AGM at Wick Court 27th Sept. 1986 were approved and signed.

4a) Bruce Cox resigned as Chairman and as a member of Core Group, Rob Wade resigned as Vice-Chairman. Bruce Wallace was elected as Chairman and Jennie White as Vice-Chairman.

b) JOAN HOARE resigned as Gen. Sec. Jean Lovius & Julie Lyons were elected Gen. Sec. & Ass. Gen. Sec. respectively. Jean will prepare agendas and receive reports, Julie will take minutes.

c) ANDY ANDERSON resigned as Co-ords. Sec. prior to the meeting. He has also resigned as a member of Core Group and as a signed up member of EO Assoc. Ltd. He remains an associate member. Anne Wade suggested that because of the complexity of the task there was need for further discussion before anyone was elected, Bruce Cox agreed that there was a need for re-definition of the role of Co-ords. Sec. It was felt that following discussion, the task could become a more restricted one. It was agreed that this matter be passed to Core Group for further discussion.

d) ROTATION of Core Group members:- Jean Lovius, Anne Wade & Ken Mafham stood down as Core Group members and were re-elected. Lynette Cameron & Pat Knox were also elected to the Core Group.

5) THE ACCOUNTS were approved by the meeting. Alison Mafham suggested that we should consider an increase in the subscription in the near future if we wish to avoid using our reserves for routine expenditure. (Reserves in Charitable Trust Fund - £8,152.98p on 30/6/87) Income over expenditure this year was £599. which is a low surplus in view of rising running costs. Bruce Wallace suggested that money be raised from other sources if possible. The meeting agree to appoint the same auditor for next years accounts.

6) REPORTS OF OFFICERS & GROUPS

a) MEMBERSHIP SECRETARIES - Bruce and Christine Wallace, Val and James Common.

CRISTINE REPORTED that membership stood at 1,840 families and was escalating again. There are 1,081 pre-school membs. 1,321 prim. age membs. of whom 622 are listed as out of school & 599 second. age membs. of whom 362 are listed as out of school. The steady loss of existing members accounts for the slow increase. Val & James Common, the Memb. Secs. for S.E. England have increased their area and are now taking about a third of the work. Bruce Wallace said there was need for another Reg. Memb. Sec. to take a further third of the work. There is an adequate stock of publications. Old N/L's are being sold off at 4 for £1.

b) ENQUIRIES SECRETARY - Janet Everdell

JANET EVERDELL'S report was read to the meeting. There were 3,368 enquiries in the yr. '86-'87. Because of continuing difficulties with answering machine Janet felt there was need for good quality machine. Alison Mafham proposed a new machine be bought. This was agreed. Felix Polkowski said he could get one at trade price.

Membership Forms are being printed with regional addresses. Janet felt that the Reg. Enq. Secs. could do the work of Co-ords. Sec. in their own regions. Anne Wade was concerned at the possible overlap between the roles of Reg. Co-ords. & Reg. Co-ords. Secs. It was agreed to pass this matter on to Core Group.

c) CO-ORDINATORS' SECRETARY

THERE WAS NO report since Andy Anderson has resigned. Joan Hoare offered to take responsibility for distributing stationary. Information about this will be published in the N/L.

d) STEERING COMMITTEE- Joan Hoare, Janet Everdell, Alison Mafham.

ALISON MAFHAM reported that our tax affairs have been passed to the auditor. The filing cabinet approved for purchase at the meeting in May had been bought, also a storage system was bought for use by Val & James Common, Memb. Secs. for S.E. England. Rob & Anne Wade had contacted the steering Committee about need to underwrite legal fees, since Family Support Fund not able to make quick decisions.

e) PRESS SECRETARY - Joe O'Connor

JOE HAD NOTHING to report except that an EO family will appear on 'Saturday Superstore' later this year. He would like to know of other families willing to be interviewed and involved in publicity, & asked for anyone involved in publicising EO contact him to let him know details.

f] PUBLICATIONS SECRETARY - Lesley Kilbride

LESLEY REPORTED that there are sufficient N/L eds. up to Oct. '88, but more Supp. eds. are needed. It was suggested that there should be some celebration in the N/L of Dick Kitto's 70th birthday. (Oct. 4th) Sarah Guthrie to be approached and asked if she is able to produce something for this. Dick Kitto is the initiator of Education Otherwise.

g] RESEARCH GROUP - Anne Wade

ANNE WADE READ Barbara Hooley's report on the results so far of her research into reasons why people leave EO. Barbara has produced a questionnaire and approached 50 former members. She has received 26 replies. Of these, 13 left as their children had returned to school. Three families forgot to renew membership, 3 couldn't afford to renew, 3 moved house, 1 lapsed due to bank forgetting Bankers Order & 1 left because of 'squabbling and biased, cranky Hippy types writing in the N/L'. The questionnaire asked if former members would recommend EO to others, most who replied said yes. Another 50 members will be sent the questionnaire.

Christine Wallace read out a typical letter from a resigning member which stated that the family no longer need EO since their children had returned to school, but expressed appreciation for the support given.

h] LEGAL GROUP - Anne Wade

AS A RESULT OF the Access to Personal Files Bill, the DES is to draft regulations relating to the keeping and disclosure of education records. A consultative document will be issued later this year and EO will be able to make representations and hopefully ensure that records relating to home educating families are included in the regulations.

The proposed National Curriculum could have implications for EO families in that the DES may encourage LEA's to try to standardise home education. Although it is clearly established in the law that home educating families do not need to meet any pre-set standards or curriculum, it is nonetheless open to the DES to pressurise LEA's and recent policy statements indicate this possibility. Anne suggested that this be discussed at Core Group and that we look at ways of obtaining written acknowledgement from the DES of our statutory right to provide education which in no way resembles school education.

Anne reported on the ruling in the Perry Judicial Review which established that an LEA must allow a family reasonable time to make arrangements for home education. This means that an LEA cannot insist that a child attends school until such time as the arrangements for home education have been approved by the LEA. Some LEA's have threatened Section 39 prosecutions if a child is withdrawn from school during the period the family is setting up home education.

Anne asked for more experienced local members and Co-ords. to be prepared to offer support to their own local families with legal difficulties. She is able to supply back-up information for anyone prepared to help in this way. Most difficulties were being resolved by helping families to stand up for their rights and avoid tactical errors. Anne pointed out that anyone referring legal problems to her must contact her by phone to discuss matters first rather than send a letter. Documents etc. can always be sent by post after discussion.

i] FAMILY SUPPORT FUND - Peter Gibbs

BRUCE WALLACE READ the report from the Family Support Fund. The procedures for applying to the fund had now been finalised. Only one family had applied for funds during the yr. & were paid £250.

k] ROLLING FUND - Bruce Wallace

BRUCE REPORTED THAT the Rolling Fund had a quiet year. The Norwich group made the 1st repayment off the £400 loaned to them for setting up a Local Resource Centre. Alison Mafham proposed that the guidelines be amended to require that groups receiving funds should organise an audit of their accounts by June 30th each year. This was agreed & Norwich group are to be asked to audit their accounts this year.

7] A.O.B.

BETTY BALL SUGGESTED a contact list of G.C.S.E. candidates in view of the complexity of the arrangements for external candidates. The 5 examining groups are working independently and interpreting the rules differently. Sue Stephenson of Humberside has volunteered to be the co-ord. for a contact list and there is a need for regional contacts to assist families. It was agreed that the co-ordinator and regional contacts could claim expenses. Felix Polkowski offered to pass on information about R.S.A. and City & Guild exams.

Lynette Cameron reported on developments in respect of Child Benefit for EO'ers over 16 yrs. old. There is to be a 2 day Hearing on 28th & 29th Oct. this year and Pat Knox, Susan Thomson and Lynette are to represent EO at the Hearing. The purpose is to establish whether Susan Thompson's home, which is recognised as an educational establishment for other children, should not also be

recognised as an educational establishment for her own children.

8]VOICES OF THANKS

WE GAVE OUR THANKS to Bruce Cox, Joan Hoare and Andy Anderson in appreciation of their hard work as EO officers. We also expressed our thanks to Bruce and Christine Wallace for organising this 1st EO week.

THE MEETING WAS CLOSED

* MEMBERS MEETING OF EDUCATION OTHERWISE ASSOCIATION LTD. (* See item 5)

FEATHERSTONE CASTLE, Sunday September 13th 1987 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT:- Nadine Edwards, Miryam Bush, Alison Orr, Julie Lyons, Joan Hoare, Bruce Wallace, Jean Lovius, Pat Knox, Jennie White, Mick White, Hannah Bush, Lesley Kilbride, Gordon Ramsey, Thomas Kilbride, Liz Ramsey, Lynette Cameron, John Cameron, Rob Wade, Anne Wade, Stephanie Fletcher, Valerie Gomon, Jack Fuller, Bruce Cox, Peter Darling, Christine Wallace, June Grant, Alison Mafham, Jill Gillings, Isobel Bogucki, Anne Clarke, Barry Lovius, Jude Ashley-Walker, Felix Polkowski.

1]APOLOGIES WERE received from:- Martyn Chillmaid, Meg Robertson, Caroline Bithell, Sharon Blaukopf.

2]THE MINUTES of the last Core Group meeting were amended, approved and signed.

3]GUIDELINES FOR CO-ORDINATORS

THE MEETING DECIDED that the existing guidelines are adequate but there is a need for some minor revision. It was felt by some that any problem relating to a Co-ord. should be dealt with as a local problem & it was not necessary or desirable to seek to remedy any such problem by adjusting the national guidelines. However it was recognised that local members needed to be aware that they could refer difficulties to the national meetings. Felix Polkowski pointed out that local members must have some channel to air their problems and that the meeting had a responsibility to consider matters referred to it.

It was suggested that Co-ords. should be elected for one yr. at a time and should stand for re-election each yr. they wished to continue as co-ord. June Grant suggested that if Co-ords. names were submitted to the AQM each yr. they could be automatically re-appointed unless objections from local members were received or alternative names proposed. It was felt that this might be a cumbersome process, but it was recognised that further discussion of this matter would be needed in the future.

Lynette Cameron felt that members expected their local Co-ords. to be actively engaged in home education and that some prospective members could be dissuaded by finding that a Co-ords. children were in school. It was decided that this issue should be thought about further and placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

June Grant proposed that each area be encouraged to appoint at least 2 Co-ords. and that information about this be published in the N/L. The meeting agreed to this proposal and also accepted Christine Wallace's suggestion that members be reminded of their right to remove a local Co-ordinator.

4]ROLE OF REGIONAL CO-ORDINATORS AND CO-ORDINATORS SECRETARIES.

ANNE WADE REPORTED on a suggestion from Janet Everdell that there should be a co-ordinating role for Reg. Enq. Secs. It is envisaged that the work of the Co-ords. Sec. could be split into regions. Three people have already agreed to act as Reg. Co-ords. and Anne suggested that they do this as an experimental role for a year and report back to the Members Meeting. This was agreed. It was seen as essential to the smooth-running of the regions that there is adequate regional representation at meetings.

5]DO WE NEED A FORMAL CHANNEL FOR APPOINTING PEOPLE TO DO RESPONSIBLE TASKS, SUCH AS LOCAL CO-ORDS ?

IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED that the meeting discuss the possibility of establishing a formal channel for appointing people to responsible tasks rather than relying on whoever happened to volunteer. Bruce Wallace expressed his misgivings about this, suggesting it was not consistent with the nature of EO. Felix Polkowski suggested that a separate meeting be convened to discuss this issue in view of the Core Group's legal responsibility to EO. This was agreed.

Arising from this issue the name of the national meetings was discussed. It was unanimously agreed that the name 'Core Group Meeting' should be changed to 'Members Meeting', in order to emphasise that these meetings are open to all members and are not exclusively Core Group. It was accepted that the title 'Core Group Meeting' was misleading and it was essential that members understood they could attend, contribute and make decisions at meetings. It was also emphasised that members be made aware that they could place matters on the agenda for discussion and could send a report to the General Sec. if they did not attend the meeting to make a personal report.

6] FUND RAISING - Bruce Cox and Fund Raising Group.

BRUCE COX REPORTED that the Group had not been able to meet and that no suggestions for fund raising had been made. The Group still exists as a body to which suggestions can be made.

7] COVENANTS - June Grant.

JUNE GRANT REPORTED that this is a complex matter and is still being investigated. The collection of subscriptions would need to be re-structured to gain full advantage from a covenanting scheme. The meeting felt that the scheme was a good idea but would need to be done at a time when the subscriptions are due to be re-structured.

8] LATER YEARS AND DIGEST - Bruce Cox

BRUCE COX REPORTED that Later Years is now available and that the Digest has been forwarded for urgent printing. It was proposed that new members should be given the option of receiving either Early Years or Later Years free, if they wanted both they would need to pay £1.50 extra. This was agreed. It was also agreed that Later Years be sold to existing members for £1.50 inclusive of post and packing. Co-ordinators will be sent a free copy.

9] WAVENEY COMMUNITY SCHOOL - JOAN HOARE

JOAN HOARE READ A LETTER from Rose Titchener which stated she no longer wished to apply for funding from EO.

10] INSURANCE - Joan Hoare

JOAN HOARE HAS BEEN investigating the possible need for EO to have Professional Indemnity Insurance. EO already has Public Liability Insurance and Insurance for the publications. The purpose of Professional Indemnity Insurance is to insure EO against legal action in cases of alleged negligence or bad advice by anyone acting on behalf of EO. Because of the number and variety of EO publications we cannot be covered for libel and cannot take advantage of the cheap scheme for voluntary organisations. Joan stressed the importance of EO being covered in view of the legal advice offered to members. She and Bruce Wallace are to investigate further.

Felix Polkowski proposed that we obtain the necessary insurance unless Joan and Bruce discover on further investigation that it is unnecessary or unless any other problems arise. Alison Maffham expressed confidence in the ability of Joan and Bruce to obtain correct information and complete matters, the meeting endorsed this. It was agreed that Felix's proposal be accepted and that there will be a further review of the financial implications at the next meeting.

11] RE-WRITING THE BACK PAGE OF THE NEWSLETTER - Brian Guthrie

LESLEY KILBRIDE PASSED around Brian Guthrie's suggestions for amendments to the back page of the N/L. It was agreed that the back page be amended in line with Brian's suggestions, with further amendment to final paragraph.

12] SCHOOL PHOBIA - Patricia Knox

PATRICIA KNOX REPORTED that her book on School Phobia has been returned by 2 publishers. She is now considering publishing the book herself. She had been asked to write 2 articles on school phobia, one for ACE and one for 'Midwife, Health Visitor and Community Nurse' publication. The ACE article aroused considerable press interest but Pat felt that nothing had been achieved. Bruce Cox suggested that publicity in the Times Educational Supp. could attract a publisher.

13] REQUEST FOR PURCHASE OF GOOD QUALITY ANSWERING MACHINE - Janet Everdell

THIS MATTER WAS dealt with at the AGM.

14] CAN EO PAY CORE GROUP MEMBERS FOR TASKS DOWN ?

JANET EVERDELL HAS BEEN investigating the question of whether the Constitution prohibits EO from paying Core Group members for particular tasks. Joan Hoare quoted the Constitution on this point, it was agreed that such payments to Core Group members are prohibited. Joan explained the legal difference between Associate members, Signed-up members and Council (Core Group) members.

15] FUTURE VENUES

THE YOUTH HOSTEL AT MILTON KEYNES is to be booked for the winter meeting for the weekend 29-31st Jan '88. UNSTONE GRANGE near Sheffield has been booked for the last weekend in May. Ian Grant has offered to do the bookings again.

The venue for the September '88 meeting has not been decided yet.

Stephanie Fitcher has booked a campsite in Derbyshire for June 24-26. There will be places for up to 30 tents or caravans. Details to be published in the N/L.

16] A.O.B.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - Anne Wade reported that arrangements had been made for EO members to go in free. It is not clear whether this applies to EO members in a group or as individual families. Membership cards have been made which can be signed by Co-ordinators to prove membership of EO.

It is hoped that free entrance for EO can be negotiated with the National Geological Museum.

HOME EDUCATION AND THE LAW by D. Deutch and K. Woolf - it was agreed that EO buy 100 copies, at the reduced price. A copy will be sent to every Co-ord. Members will be able to buy a copy through EO.

ASSISTANT TREASURER (Renewals etc.)

MICHAEL AND CAROL ADAMS FROM Wolverhampton have offered to do this task and the offer was gratefully accepted. The meeting expressed sincere thanks to Bob and Tess Emmett for their hard work over the last 6 years.

NATIONAL CURRICULUM - Anne Wade read a letter from an EO family in York to the Secretary of State seeking acknowledgement of the rights of EO families in view of the proposed national curriculum. It was agreed that since new legislation is being prepared we should take the opportunity of establishing our position with the DES.

Bruce Cox was authorised to write to the DES on behalf of EO to lobby for the right to part-time registration at school and pro-rata capitation allowances for schools. It was agreed that the right to use schools as resources by registering for part-time attendance is a popular idea with many EO members and would be of particular assistance to low-income families. Most members agreed that such lobbying would be consistent with EO's aims since it increased choice for children & parents.

Bruce Cox has also been authorised to write on behalf of EO to the Darrington School Feasibility Study. EO has been invited to make suggestions as to how the school could be utilised to be of benefit to home educating families. Bruce has suggestions to make including using the school as a distance learning centre with 'Summer School' facilities. Bruce will publish details in the N/L.
THE MEETING WAS CLOSED

* ! * ! * ! * ! * LATE NOTICES * ! * ! * ! * ! *

JULIE & TOBY LYONS AND THE T.E.S.

Last October, an article in the Times Educational Supplement was illustrated with a photograph of Julie Lyons and her son Toby. The photograph had been commissioned for a different article on Julie's dispute with Barnsley, which was not, in the event, published. The article with which the photograph actually appeared was derogatory about home tuition with regard to GCSE, dyslexia and remedial teaching. In this context the caption implied that Julie was a tutor, and that Toby was dyslexic and in need of remedial teaching. The TES on representations from the legal group, have paid Julie £500 and printed an apology. Julie has kindly donated £50 of this to EO.
Rob Wade for Legal Group.

Dear EO members,

Can I enlist your help? I am at present working on a study of EO for my degree and would appreciate some information from you. Could you please let me have your reasons for deciding to educate your children at home.

Please write as soon as possible to:- Maj-Len Houston, 20 Oakley Road, Bromham, Beds. MK 43 8HY

WE ARE HOPING TO HAVE A DISCUSSION GROUP -at the next EO weekend at Milton Keynes, with regard to the newsletter, & what people want from it. We've had several letters of complaint with regard to the content & feel in some sympathy with the complainers. It would be most helpful if anyone with any thought on this matter, could write to us, as the more suggestions the better. We've also been in touch with the editors of GWS. & await (hopefully) a helpful reply.

Thanks in anticipation, BRUCE AND CHRISTINE WALLACE.
(address on back page)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS - From 1st November 1987 - Candida Fawsitt and Pippin, Poppy Green and 'New Education Directory' can be contacted at -
15 Bellevue, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1DB - Tel. 0272 735091

THE END (phew!)

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South East	Jude Ashley-Walker	0983 78680
East Anglia	Sandie Cottee	0268 733259
Midlands	Hazel Clawley	021 772 7165
The North	Mick & Jennie White	0969 23544
Scotland	Brenda Holliday	0786 832042
Wales	Miryam Bush	0269 861069
Ireland	Clare Weber	Furness, Newport, Co. Mayo.

P52 Mayor P20 ready to children
P31 John Holt quote
P32 make - school's out
P42 Treasurer

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Education Otherwise is a membership Organisation which provides support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school, and for those who wish to uphold the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of their children.

Our principal aims are to:

encourage learning outside the school system

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

establish the primary right of children to have full consideration given to their wishes and feelings about their education

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Send a 9" x 4" s.a.e. to:- 25 Common Lane
Hemmingford Abbots
Cambridgeshire
PE18 9AN

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