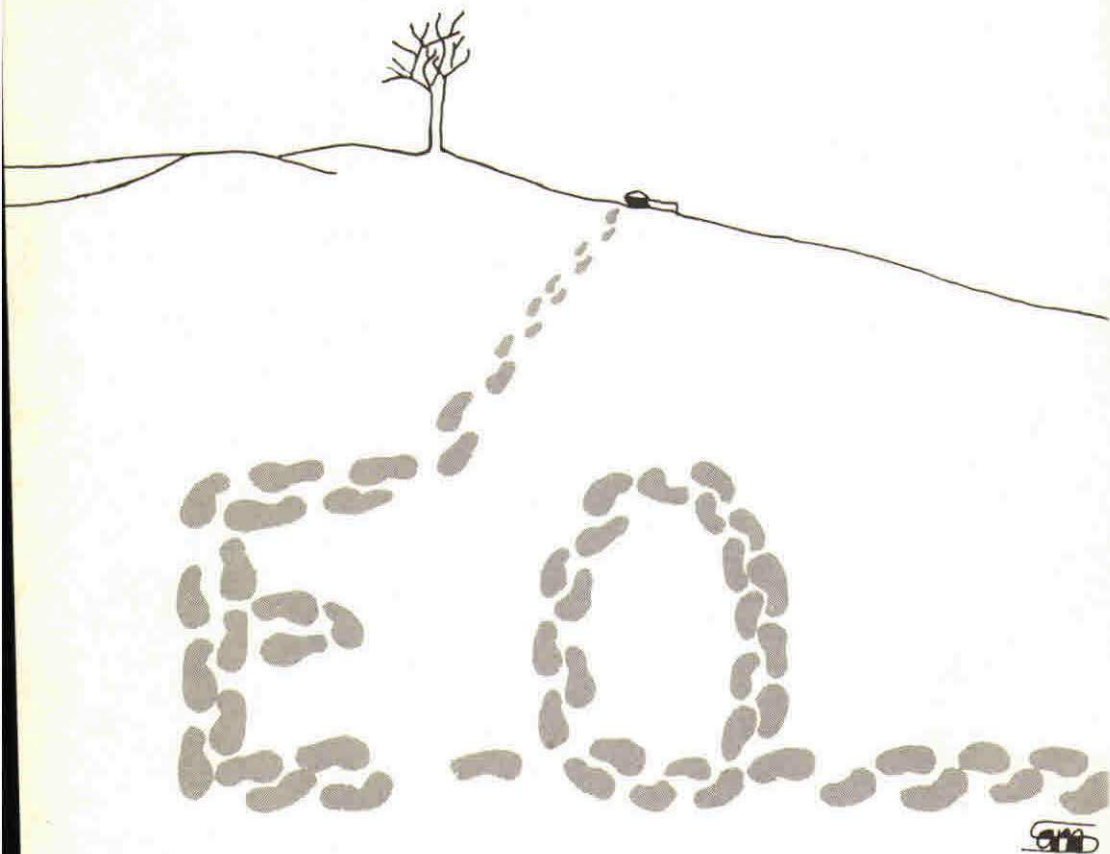


P18 Good Enough Parent

P39 Alison Skallimans P35 school refusal



Newsletter 57  
February 1988

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April Newsletter ~ DEADLINE: 1st March

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Supplement ~ TV and RADIO  
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Contributions for the next edition should be sent to the editor by the deadline date and all material intended as such should be marked "For Publication". Contributors are asked to be sure they include their name and address.

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

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# Editorial

I hope you enjoy your February Newsletter. I enjoyed editing it. It is a little long on "theoretical" articles and a little short on the practical "how-to-do-it" articles we all crave now and then. But I make no apologies. First, an editor can only print what what she's given - so if you want to see more personal experiences, prime the pump by writing an account yourself, or write with your questions people will often respond directly rather than through the pages of the Newsletter. Second, I think that, now and again, background information is necessary to keep us in touch with the organisation as it grows and evolves.

Our own approach to home schooling has evolved since we first started 2½ years ago with Sam when he finished primary school, Rosie following suit a year later. Like any method of bringing up children it is impossible to judge whether the changes one sees in them are due to being home educated or their own inherent character and development, but they do seem to be growing into the independent, thoughtful people we hoped it was possible for them to be.

However, I must admit to complete failure when it comes to getting the children interested in doing projects! How I long for us to have folders, like everyone else, of drawings and well researched articles on matters of deep interest to them, but it's not to be! Rosie has just gone off to count the rings on a favourite tree recently felled and if she brings back a rubbing we may discuss the relative thickness of the bands and ponder on the effects of weather but there will be no record. . . . perhaps my children are like goats browsing in the way they treat information - a mouthful here a mouthful there but well nourished non-the-less, and nimble.

I'd like to thank our local Council for Voluntary Service office for the help with typing and photocopying. If you have E.O. events or newsletters to organise it may be worth getting in touch with your local CVS. They mostly charge very reasonable rates and if you join E.O. immediately becomes more widely known about in your area.

A request from a new member that contributors explain any abbreviations they use like W.E.S (World Education Service) and P.N.E.U. (P N Educational Union?) and give addresses where possible. Please remember there's someone for whom each issue is the first one they've received.

The illustrations I've used are from a book published in 1927 "A Day With Betty Ann ~ Small Stories for Small Children and their Mothers" that used to be my mother's.

Sue Stephenson  
1 College Road  
Barnon-on-Humber  
South Humberside



## Letters

Dear E.O....

We've been getting the N/L for a year now, and in that time I've never seen any comment on what is quite my favourite among a lot of excellent features, the splendid "Educating Archie" cartoons.

The humour is gentle and self-depreciatory, but always absolutely spot-on. It's all so instantly familiar, especially the Christmas number, from the lentil-soaking onwards! "Flaming June" has been up on our noticeboard since it appeared, where it has been seen and enjoyed by many of our non-EO friends, and the most recent episode is now prominent among our Christmas decorations. I have even (apologies and thanks to SEG!) photocopied it and made it into a Christmas card for my mother, a lady not at all convinced by otherwise-education arguments, but as susceptible to humour as the next person.

I really think that any booklet intended as an introduction to the subject for members of the general public, should be liberally embellished with these wonderful cartoons: humour wins friends and opens ears where more direct methods sometimes provoke resistance.

But primarily it's my own enjoyment I'm thinking about when I say: Long may "Archie" and his mum continue!

Andrea Granville, 12A Priory Road, London, NW6 4SG.



Dear E.O...

We (six of us, 2 adults, four children) came to Ireland five years ago. The children had been out of school in England and we had had all the usual hassle with the authorities. We have had no hassle whatsoever with the authorities here. I suspect not only because of the Irish Constitution (excerpts added), but also, as we are foreigners, the Irish simply aren't all that interested in us. Anyway, for whatever reasons, we have found Ireland good for EO, as have lots of other English exiles.

### EXTRACTS FROM THE IRISH CONSTITUTION

- Article 42.1. The State...guarantees to respect the inalienable right...of parents to provide...for the...education of their children.
2. Parents shall be free to provide this education in their homes.
  3. The State shall not oblige parents...to send their children to schools established by the State.....

Jim Woolridge, c/o John Anderson, 67 Island Road, Garston, Liverpool 19.  
Tel: 051-427-0229

Dear E.O...

In the October Newsletter I wrote regarding some problems facing entrants for external G.C.S.E., in particular Mathematics, whereby a pupil of high ability could end up ungraded whereby another not so well versed in the subject could receive a grade to indicate a pass.

This I see as an anomaly and believe representation should be made, by a body, to see if grading should cover the whole spectrum, that is only one exam instead of three.

Furthermore, I feel, as I indicated, that steps should be taken to amend the syllabus to cut out irrelevant sections, that is sections that may only be of use to a modicum of people. At one time S.M.P. was thrust upon the profession and teachers, with much subservience, began to teach it from books, often with no understanding of why. To some extent I feel this still obtains. I questioned 'Matrices', 'Transformations' and made a comment on number bases.

Can we not examine the need for these and, if there is general agreement, ask for a review of the syllabus? It may be that there is some remote reason for their inclusion but I feel not and see these items as reducing the time being taken on a good basic maths syllabus.

So far I have received one letter and note a comment in December EO from Geraldine Bennett, re: my remark on bases other than 10 being used only in computing. Even here there is only base 2 and base 16 and I have never heard of any maths department teaching the latter - much more difficult than bases up to 10.

Miss Bennett refers to Imperial weight, time and £.s.d. as being number bases. I have actually heard teachers remark along these lines to justify teaching of bases. However, may I respectfully point out there are no 1 true bases, merely tables of quantities.

EO is a body of people interested in Education and as such should surely be prepared to debate issues, even through Newsletters, and make representation to the Minister if felt necessary. Teachers usually teach as told - their unions only making their presence felt on working conditions. Why should EO suffer?

Tom Marshall, 5 Cairndow Way, Swindon.



Dear E.O...

In response to the article "Education Law - The National Curriculum And Other Matters" in the December '87 issue, we have two points that may be useful to members.

1) National Curriculum

We had foreseen that LEAs may see the National Curriculum as a stick to beat home educators, and so wrote in June to clarify the matter.

We have a letter from the Department of Education and Science which states that the Government has no intention of changing the status of home taught children and is fully aware and recognises that parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

There is no reference to LEAs using the Curriculum as evidence for its interpretation of "efficient" (why give them ideas?) and I'm sure it will serve to stop many LEAs exerting pressure in this area.

If any member would like a copy of this letter please send 10 pence to cover photocopying plus a s.a.e. to us at the above address.

## 2) Deregistration

It has always seemed to us at odds with the rest of the law that LEAs could take legal action under section 39 of the 1944 Education Act on the grounds that a child is not attending at the school at which he is registered, even though educated at home. We have recently done some research into this with the help of David Deutsch and Kolya Wolf and have come to the conclusion that such action would not succeed if handled properly. We have written an article that shows that deregistration is not a problem in home education any more than it is in moving to a private school or to a different school because of moving house, and that there is in fact no "legal dilemma". If anyone would like a copy of the article which also points out ways to "disarm" any such tactics by an LEA would they send us 20 pence to cover photocopying plus a s.a.e.

Pip & John Rupik, 14 Basil Avenue, Armthorpe, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN3 2AT.  
Tel: 0302 833596



Dear E.O....

We have two children; a son MacKenzie who's 8 and a daughter Charlotte who's 5. At the moment both children attend school but eventually we hope to educate both at home.

Charlotte has hearing problems and it's now been decided that she must have a hearing aid. Does any member of E.O. have experience of educating a hard of hearing child at home?

We would be grateful for any help from any E.O. member. Thanks.

Mike and Carole Staton, 23 Nelson Street, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 4BS.



Dear E.O.

May I say thank you to all those hard working people who make EO operate so successfully. As a member for only six months I have gained masses of confidence and knowledge which have enabled me to cheerfully accept the responsibility for my daughter's education. With the backing of EO we look forward to the years ahead together.

Kate Wilson, Manor Cottage, Walgrave, Northampton, NN6 9PH.  
Tel: 0604 781497



Dick Kitto

The article Kate Freeman was hoping to write to celebrate founder Dick Kitto's 70th birthday will appear before he reaches 70½, if all goes well. Illness in Kate's family prevented it being ready for this issue of the newsletter.

# Pen Pal Page

Andrew Tong writes:-

"I am aged 5. I have a cat and a rabbit. I like playing with my cat, watching cartoons and making and playing games."

His address is:

5 Otter Road,  
Clevedon,  
Avon, BS21 6LQ.

Felix Jackson writes:-

"I am 5 years old. I would like a pen friend who is interested in history and aeroplanes."

His address is:

The Mount, Gt. Bardfield Road,  
Shalford, Braintree,  
Essex, CM7 5HU.

Leila Cutler writes:-

"I am 6½. I like skipping, riding bikes, computers, cooking, writing, reading, swimming and making things."

Her address is:

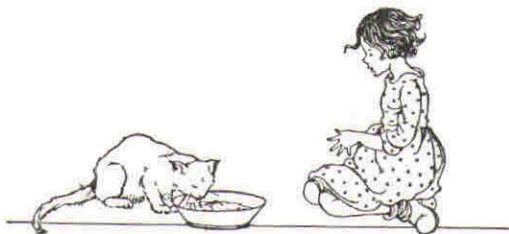
94 Waverley Road,  
Plumstead, London, SE18 7TS.

Jolene Homer writes:-

"I am 11. I have been home educated for 4 years and loved every minute of it. My interests are dancing, reading and cooking. I like playing with my rubber dinghy in the summer but in the winter, the lake I use is drained, so I cannot use it. I have two sisters aged 12 and 2. We have lots of pets. I will reply to all letters I receive."

Her address is:

27 Westbourne Avenue,  
Rhyl, Clwyd,  
North Wales, LL18 1EG.



Word is getting round.....

## Can I teach my child at home?

MY DAUGHTER is eight and although she has always disliked school she is now really hating it and we have terrible battles trying to get her there. We have decided that it would be better for her if I educated her at home myself. Is there anywhere we could get advice?

IF YOU send a large SAE to Education Otherwise at 25, Common Lane, Hemmingford Abbots, Cambridge PE18 9AN they should be able to help you get started.

spotted by Val Yates in the Eastern Daily Press.

# How E.O. Works

*All you ever wanted to know about Education Otherwise  
but didn't know who to ask*

This is an overview of how EO works from the vantage point of a recently retired General Secretary. It refers to the current situation and can of course change. EO became a Charitable Trust for the purposes of fund raising and a Company Limited by Guarantee mainly for the financial protection of EO's officers.

## What is a charity?

Generally speaking charities are allowed to advance education and religion, to alleviate poverty and to pursue any other purposes beneficial to the community. There are the four "heads" of charity. Charities are not allowed to campaign for changes in the law; nor is it sufficient for an organisation merely to give advice or to do something it regards as worthwhile in order to be accepted as a charity, by the Charity Commissioners in England and Wales or by the Inland Revenue in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The organisation must fulfil some or all of the four heads of charity already mentioned. EO educates the public, provides facilities for recreation through national and local meetings, and provides support and information for parents wishing to educate their children otherwise than at school, all of which are charitable purposes, but we also campaign for changes in the law, which is not charitable, e.g. changes such as, that children over 16 years of age educated otherwise than at school can receive child benefit, that children educated otherwise should be specifically excluded in any new legislation about the national curriculum and testing.

The legal format that EO has adopted is the very common one of being both a Charitable Trust and a Company Limited by Guarantee, so that we can reap the financial advantages of being a charity and can also campaign to change the law. So there are two parts to our legal body.

### 1) Education Otherwise Charitable Trust

This Trust has charitable status and is therefore exempt from income and corporation tax as long as its money is applied for charitable purposes. In practice this means that any spare money from subscriptions to EO is kept in the Charitable Trust bank account where it is exempt from tax and is withdrawn from the account and donated to Education Otherwise Association Ltd. (see below), when required. Any money donated to EO from other charities or trusts (none so far) would go into this account.

The trustees are the Chairperson, Treasurer, General Secretary, Membership Secretary, Enquiries Secretary and Publications Secretary for the time being of Education Otherwise Association Ltd. Copies of the Trust Deed are obtainable from Lesley Kilbride, the Publications Secretary.

### 2) Education Otherwise Association Ltd. (EOA Ltd.)

This a company limited by guarantee. The other most well known form of a company is a commercial company limited by shares, where the liability for debts incurred by the company is limited to the face value of the paid up shares held by the shareholders. There are no shareholders in a company limited by guarantee but the members agree to pay any debts of the company, upon liquidation, up to a stated limit, in EOA Ltd.'s case up to £10 each. It is felt that officers making financial transactions on behalf of EO need this protection.

It should be noted that one doesn't incur this liability of £10 merely by sub-

scribing to EO. The subscription entitles one to receive and to contribute to newsletters, the Contact List and various other publications, the right to attend local and national gatherings and to seek advice and support from other members on home education.

The company is allowed to campaign for changes in the law.

#### Signed up members of EOA Ltd.

We call members who have agreed to accept the liability of £10 signed up members, since they sign a little form agreeing to accept the liability. We are allowed up to 100 of these members and currently have 29. We have tried to keep the numbers of signed up members fairly low for administrative convenience. There is no particular virtue in having a large number of signed up members.

Signed up members also have the duty to attend the AGM if at all possible (lucky people!). They have voting rights at the AGM and at any other Special General Meeting. Please note however that in EO we try to avoid voting on issues, preferring to obtain consensus through discussion, although this can take a long time. Special General Meetings other than the AGM have never occurred. A full copy of the constitution of EOA Ltd. is available from Lesley Kilbride, the Publications Secretary.

#### Associate Members of EOA Ltd.

Any subscribing member who is not a signed up member is an associate member, and has the right to attend the AGM, any Special General Meetings, and Members Meetings (formerly Core Group Meetings), to contribute to discussions and to put matters on the agenda, the latter being done through the General Secretary.

#### Core Group

EOA Ltd. is required by law to have directors, who are responsible for the proper legal running of the company, i.e. seeing that proper accounts are kept, debts are paid, that an AGM is held according to the rules laid down by the Companies Act. These directors have always been referred to as the Core Group. There are currently 19 of them and they have to be registered with Companies House, which keeps a record of all companies, whether limited by shares or guarantee.

#### Members' Meetings (formerly Core Group Meetings)

This is the main business meeting of EOA Ltd. of which there are three a year. They are open to all subscribing members of EO, not just Core Group members (or directors). Companies House is not concerned with the detail of how we run EO; they just wish to know who is responsible for it, that the AGM is properly conducted and the accounts audited.

#### Annual General Meeting (AGM)

We are legally required to hold this meeting, mainly for the consideration of the accounts which have to be audited. Resignations of officers are received and new ones elected. Reports are received from officers and groups.

#### Steering Committee

This is a sub-committee of three Core Group members who are empowered to take decisions (usually of a financial nature) between Members' Meetings. These decisions are reported back at the next Members' Meeting.

### Local Co-ordinators

Roughly speaking each county has one or two co-ordinators who are available for advice on the legal aspects of home education, and the ins and outs of actually educating children at home. They might also organise local meetings. Any member can of course organise meetings.

### Local Resource Groups

A recent development in EO has been the setting up of local resource groups to lend out books or educational equipment to local members, or to arrange access to educational equipment for local members. As far as I know there are groups in Norwich, Lancashire and South Yorkshire. Money may be borrowed from the Rolling Fund. (See list of other groups.)

### EO Library (Jennie White, N. Yorkshire)

This consists mainly of a gift of books from Leila Berg. The books are brought to national gatherings by Jennie for the use of members. A small selection of the books has been given to various co-ordinators around the country. Please contact Jennie for further information.

### Other groups in EO

Besides Core Group and local groups there are other groups in EO. I shall name contact person(s) for each. These groups are:-

#### Legal Group (Anne & Rob Wade, London West)

The Legal Group aims to acquire and disseminate information and expertise about the legal situation in home education and to support members with legal problems which cannot be resolved locally.

#### Research Group (Anne & Rob Wade, London West)

This group co-ordinates any research within EO, e.g. on why people drop out of EO.

#### Family Support Fund (Andy Jackson, Co. Durham)

This fund is set up 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. It is unlikely that the fund will ever have sufficient resources to pay legal fees and it is prevented by law from paying fines, but can help in incidental expenses. Please ask if you want further information.

#### Rolling Fund (Bruce Wallace, Ross-shire)

This is a loan fund set up to help local groups. The money is lent but is interest free.

#### Fund Raising Group (Bruce Cox, Suffolk)

This group exists to raise funds by appeal to other charities and trusts. Trusts and charities will naturally only give money to well thought out and costed schemes, none of which have so far materialised. However, this might not always be the case in future.

Single Parents (Julie Webb, Buckinghamshire)

This group supports the interests of single parents within EO.

Children with Special Needs (Sylvia Jeffs, West Midlands)

A supplement on the home education of children with special needs is published regularly in the newsletter. The group can offer advice on the legal aspects of the home education of special needs children, such as how to deal with statements of special needs.

In the 11 years that it has existed, EO has grown a lot, mainly by a process of cell division. Local groups are becoming larger and more important, and I'm sure that in the future our organisation will be much more regional. Over the years I have gained a lot both from the home education of our children and from membership of EO, which is full of such a large variety of people, for whose friendship and support I am very grateful.

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



Poetry ~ to encourage an interest in  
this subject try leaving a volume in the  
loo... shorter poems rather than epic verse!



and ... E.O. working in another way .....

Dear Editor,

I recently used "education otherwise" as a lever to exert pressure upon my local education authority who were refusing to provide a suitable school for my daughter. The attached report gives details of the battle, which ended in victory for the parents. Both Suzy and I enjoyed the experience of home education but in the end school was the preferred option; however, the use made of home education as a tool in dealing with a recalcitrant l.e.a. may be of interest to members.

Yours sincerely,

M. J. Pelling,  
3 Avenue Road,  
Forest Gate,  
London, E7 0LA.

## EDUCATION: SUZY R. PELLING & LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM

### 1). Summary

Suzy R. Pelling was born 11 September 1980 and proved to be an intelligent child who completed her infant education at schools in the London Borough of Newham in a period of 2 years Sept. 1985 - July 1987. She was placed in a top infant class for the school year 1986/87. However, the Borough's policy as Education Authority is that pupils should only progress to Junior School if they attain the age of 7 years prior to 1st September in the school year in question, and therefore refused to allow Suzy to transfer to Junior School in September 1987. The parents' request for accelerated placement was refused in July 1987 but the parents decided to fight the matter out with the Authority on the grounds that not only was it stupid to make an intelligent child repeat a year unnecessarily in infant school but also unlawful in that the Authority was in breach of its statutory duty to provide schools for children suited to their age, ability and aptitude (s.8 Education Act 1944). The Authority was making age the sole criterion to the exclusion of ability and aptitude.

Accordingly the parents withdrew Suzy from school on 1st September 1987 and she began education at home with her father, a former University Lecturer. Solicitors (Mr J. Rabinowicz of Teacher Stern Selby, 37 Bedford Row, WC1) were also instructed, after which the Authority agreed to assess Suzy's abilities by their Principal Educational Psychologist. His report was favourable since it transpired that Suzy had an IQ of 134, putting her in the top 1% of ability range. After receiving this report in October the Authority finally agreed in November to admit Suzy to a Junior School and she began at the Godwin Junior School, Forest Gate E7 on 11 November 1987 having been educated at home for 9% weeks excluding breaks. The total cost to the parents in provision of educational materials was approx. £400 and the total cost of private tuition by the father in his professional capacity was valued at approx. £1600 - a grand total of £2000 which is not (realistically) recoverable.

### 2). Further details and comments.

(a) A Head Teacher's report in October 1986 recommended commencement of Junior schooling in September 1987 but the Authority ignored this. The parents made their formal application in January 1987 but the Authority delayed a decision until July 1987 when they first refused accelerated placement.

(b) All except 2 children beside Suzy in her final infant class transferred to Junior school in September 1987.

(c) It may be considered a matter of public concern that parents had to withdraw their child from school and instruct Solicitors before the Authority was prepared to take their application seriously and give the parents the right to have their child educated in a school suited to her age ability and aptitude as required by the Education Act. The Authority's attitude throughout has been one of rigid procrastination; one of the Authority's Assistant Directors of Education even accused the father, Dr Pelling, of being eccentric, which seems rather a sad commentary on Newham's attitude to parents who want a good and suitable education for their children.

(d) Quotes from a report prepared by Newham's Education Committee in 1985:

"Examination results obtained by school-leavers in Newham do not compare well with those obtained elsewhere. On a variety of measures, Newham came at or near the bottom of the order of achievement".

"Over the last 10 years Newham has consistently been among the bottom 3 of the 104 English & Welsh LEAs for 18 and 19 year olds going on to advanced further education, university or teacher training".

"All pupils must have the opportunity to achieve academic success".

(e) There must be many bright children in Newham whose educational prospects have been blighted at early age by the Authority's policy (whatever they may profess) of ignoring ability and aptitude. As Suzy's case illustrates it just is not true in general that children in Newham have the opportunity to achieve the academic success they are capable of and this is borne out by the quotes.

Angels Otherwise

Pope Gregory saw the Angles  
Chained in the market place  
And said "Call them Angels!"  
Otherwise  
They were a pretty grubby-looking bunch.

Let's take one of our own Angels Otherwise,  
Poking his nose, scratching his bottom  
Like all the little Angels must have done.

He was conceived courtesy of alternative birth control.  
That's the one where you use thermometers  
And plot graphs  
And abstain periodically, until  
"Give me chastity and continence, but not now"  
And you've got yourself a little Angel.  
The method is natural and healthy.  
No E numbers.  
It meant this baby really wanted to happen.  
Call it birth control otherwise.

The birth comes, too, in its own full time  
To its own sweet sweating, toiling tune  
Unhindered by shaves, enemas, I/V drips  
Monitors, dopplers, laser-levellers, ray-guns, star wars.  
The birth is a star war otherwise.

Now he's grounded. Bonded. Mother and Baby.  
Father, too.  
Call him Nother Other Wise.

He's fed with a cheap, hygienic, ready-mixed  
Easy-to-store  
Perfectly-balanced-nutritionally  
Instantly-available-at-the-right-temperature product  
Which has never been patented.  
The method is natural and healthy.  
No E numbers.  
No allergies, no salmonella.  
Call it the best food for babies.  
Gtherwise  
You're lying.

When it comes to transport he's got the sling  
Front-pack or back-pack.  
Bodily contact  
Warmth and reassurance  
Heartbeat, breathing, calming voice  
Closeness. Presence.  
Call it perambulation otherwise.

We can move along quicker, you're getting hold of the concept.  
Nightmares wake him at night? You bring him into the family bed.  
No E numbers.  
Lullabies otherwise.  
Sickness strikes the home? You stimulate the natural defences.  
Homeopathic self-diagnosis  
A Bach-flower remedy.  
No side effects  
No E numbers.  
It pacifies otherwise.  
Too many E numbers?  
You bake your own bread  
Make your own yoghurt  
Grow your own vegetables  
But wash them well!  
Slugs otherwise...

And so he grows.  
Feed the body, feed the mind.  
Early learning, Rudolf Steiner  
Feed the mind, feed the soul  
Creative visualization for a world  
Without E numbers, E thoughts, E feelings.

It is an infancy otherwise  
And one day it comes to an end.  
One day when he has attained the unquestionably advanced age,  
For his age,  
Of about four-and-a-half,  
You send him off to school  
Where he does as he's told  
"Stand up! Sit down!"  
"Yes, Miss. No, Miss."  
Time to pray.  
"Hold your hands like this!"  
And suddenly he's chained in the market place  
Waiting for Pope Gregory Otherwise.

John Hargreaves  
1 Skye Hall, Market Drayton, Salop



# Why do people leave E.O.?

A report on research conducted by Barbara Hooley

Questionnaires were sent to 100 former members of EO who had not renewed their subscriptions. The response was quite good: 44 replies were received, and information about a further four families was obtained by other means. (Several more questionnaires were returned uncompleted because of changes of address.)

Of these 48 families, seven had never actually embarked on home education. Of the remaining 41, there were 15 with children who were currently being educated at home, and 29 with children who had been home educated but had subsequently stopped. (These figures do not add up because three families had children falling into both categories.)

Why did seven families never home educate? Various explanations were given or implied, sometimes more than one by the same respondent: dissatisfaction with a particular school was resolved by changing to another one; the children were not felt to be being stretched enough, but this was overcome by extra work at home; in the event the parents didn't feel competent to educate at secondary level; lack of social contact was seen as a problem; cooperative arrangements fell through, or in another case a group situation would have been preferred if it could have been organised. In one reply, "education authority's ruling" was given as a reason, and in another a child was actually taken into care as the outcome of proceedings already in progress. The decision not to home educate can be seen in itself as a reason for leaving EO; but where the respondents gave further reasons these are included below.

Why did 29 families stop home educating? The most straightforward reason is that the child reached school leaving age, and this was given in five cases. In a further four cases the child went to school on moving to another area; in two the child eventually went to school to study for exams; and in one the child went to sixth form college. In four cases the problem was lack of money and/or the breakup of the family, and in another case the separated father's disapproval was the main factor. These reasons, alone or in combination, were given in 16 responses altogether.

Various other explanations were given for the lack of success of home education. These included lack of time, space and local support, and particularly the demands of new babies and younger children. Hyperactivity was also given as the main factor in one case. In four responses social isolation was named as a problem. In three of these four, and in five others where social contact was not mentioned explicitly, the child asked to go back to school; so it seems from this that pressure from the child may be fairly common. In every case where no child was still being educated at home, this was predictably the main reason for leaving EO.

What about the 15 families where children were still being home educated? This is perhaps the group which is of most concern to EO, although with such a small sample it is difficult to draw any firm conclusion. In two cases no reason was given for non-renewal, and in a third it was accidental, although this respondent also indicated that several years' membership had been of no benefit. Various specific reasons for non-renewal were given by the remaining 12 home educators, and also by two of the families who had never home educated at all.

Two home educators felt they were doing well and no longer needed support. One was too busy with other things and intended to renew later. Another respondent was using tutors, one provided by the LEA, and felt no need for EO.

Five respondents said they had not renewed because of the cost of the subscription, and for three of these this was the only reason given. One current home educator added "family upsets" as a second reason, and a non-home educator felt there had been little benefit from the cost of membership. It may be worth mentioning here that members can generally get a reduction if they feel they are unable to pay the full subscription.

The other main causes of dissatisfaction were the newsletter and a lack of affinity with other members. Five respondents mentioned one or both of these. Three thought the newsletter was repetitive or biased or both. One of them said it was "heavily biased towards the non-structured ideas of core group individuals". Another, who had decided against home education, felt there were "too many cranky hippy types" with blinkered and dogmatic views, that "the squabbling was childish and the total outlook introspective", and that "the organisation as a whole should grow up". Two more current home educators felt they "didn't fit". One of these expressed concern about "the number of people supporting an 'alternative' lifestyle, the number of parents who were not married, and the number of single women with wrong attitudes to motherhood".

What changes would people have liked to see in EO? There was another comment here about "petty letters from members", and a couple of complaints about an "anti-school" mentality. Several people felt a lack of practical information on aspects of education such as methods, resources, suppliers, and ideas for projects. One wanted information on child development and another wanted more book reviews. One respondent wanted more legal help and local support in dealing with the LEA, and another wanted a "telephone call service where you could get advice". Obviously those of us with the experience have not always been as available and effective as we would like to be.

Three people said they would have liked more gatherings, and there were two or three comments about the quantity and quality of local contact. One person wanted more local members (don't we all?), another wished she had been made to feel less isolated, and a third (apparently as a result of a bad experience) felt other members should be more friendly.

Finally, three people said in different words that we could do with more media publicity, and another felt that we should simply have "more power". And one respondent thought we should develop links with the Ecology Party.

What did people feel they had gained from membership? Four explicitly said "little" or "nothing"; the rest were mostly very positive and enthusiastic. One or two specifically mentioned ideas (of the philosophical sort); others cited information, knowledge of their rights, and help in dealing with LEAs. The most well-used word was "support", followed by "confidence" and "contact". More than half of those responding seemed glad to have a feeling of solidarity and to know that they were not alone.

In answer to the blatantly leading question "Would you recommend membership of EO to others considering home education?", all but one of our respondents said yes. Perhaps it would be unwise to read too much into this, although it should be said that one or two indicated genuine enthusiasm by adding exclamation marks and further comments.

We will resist the temptation to interpret these results any further, except to say that whilst there is no evidence of widespread disillusion with the association, there are no grounds for complacency either. It would be silly to suppose that EO Association could ever suit everybody, but those of us who are most active should bear in mind such criticisms as are made, and should try to ensure that no point of view is excluded within the framework of our stated aims. And perhaps the rest of us should become more active.

Those ex-members who were kind enough to fill in and return questionnaires are unlikely to be reading this. Nevertheless we should like to thank them for responding in such a helpful way. Finally, many thanks to Barbara for taking on the project.

Rob & Anne Wade

19 Perkin Close, Wembley, Middx.



# EDUCATING ARCHIE into 1988

by SEG



88/IT

# Learning with joy

In September 1987, I attended a two-day workshop called "Learning with Joy". There were four other people, a teacher in a small private school, a student of homeopathy, a mother of a baby, and a mother of a home-educated child and myself. I am teaching one of my children at home. The Workshop was led by Rainbow Rosenbloom. He is not a parent, but he has set up and run a home school for a group of families. He is trained in Steiner (Waldorf) methods and has taught for twelve years in Waldorf schools. However, he feels there is room for further development of Steiner, Montessori, and other ways of helping children learn.

Firstly, we were allowed time to talk about ourselves and our needs. After listening to this, Rainbow decided that what we most needed was to get in touch with how children think and feel, by remembering our own childhood and acting the role of a child during the workshop. In order to help us to remember what it is like to be a child, we did lots of things that children enjoy doing, such as singing, colouring, playing games. Some of these helped us to relate to nature and to get rid of negative feelings. This is very important for adults who are often very cut off from nature, and full of negative emotions.

At last, Rainbow felt we were ready for the most difficult and rewarding part of the workshop, that is, analysing what the "Hidden Curriculum" is and designing guidelines for counteracting it, and so help us to create a learning framework for children aged six to twelve. First of all we all thought and made suggestions about the harmful things that schools teach children without intending to, the hidden curriculum. I found that the hidden curriculum formed part of my own basic assumptions and beliefs about education, which I learned myself, unconsciously, when I was at school. So I saw Rainbow's point about the importance of looking again at education from a child's point of view, and the need to spend time in what he called "finding one's child" within one's adult self. I still feel I need to think about this in my daily life and experience things in a child-like way in order to see what I need to do, so that I can make learning less of a drag and more enjoyable. Some people do this easily, but I am not one of these. It will take time, but at least I feel I am going in the right direction.

Lastly, we discussed how the hidden curriculum could be counteracted. We were rather short of time for this. We could have gone on for weeks, and indeed, since I have been home, I have been sorting out my thoughts, and writing out notes on what I learned, so that I will not forget it again, and will have something to remind me of the very important things which I learned. I will not write in this account exactly what it was that we learned because what someone else would learn from it would be different. We only sketched out the general principles of what not to do, and what one needs to do to truly "educate" or bring out the best in a child, and that is different for every family and every child, in practical particulars.

How has the course helped me?

Well, I have decided not to give my daughter anything to do which I would not be prepared to do myself. If I test her on sums, I must let her test me on my sums. If I give her dictation, and correct her writing, I must let her dictate to me and criticise me. If I find an activity a waste of time, it is likely to be boring for her.

I have changed my priorities, although our activities are in many cases the same as before. I more often start the day with giving thanks to the seen and unseen beings who help us with singing, music and stories and creative work, instead of leaving all this to the afternoon as a "luxury" activity after the doing what I felt to be the "essential but dull" three R's. Having done the creative work first, we are getting through the three R's much quicker, and leaving more time for other things we enjoy doing together.

We are enjoying each other's company more. My husband and I decided to follow our daughter's fondest wish and allow her to keep pets. We are somewhat disapproving of pet keeping but our animals are rescued animals from an animal shelter. Our two younger children aged nine and thirteen do most of the work of caring for them. I hope that this will help the children to appreciate all animals. David Bellamy started his interest in nature through a furry cuddly pet. Handled rightly, pets form a vital link between humans and the rest of creation.

Caring for the animals regularly, the departure of our thirteen-year old and all the neighbour's children to school, and my husband going off to work, gives our day a structure. The return of the neighbour's children from school marks the end of Wendy's activities with me, until the time for bedtime story.

The "Learning with Joy" course has not told me many things I did not know, but it did help me to speak out and emphasise what I felt was wrong with what I was doing and find practical ways to change it, and it gave me confidence to follow my own intuitions and do what I feel I need to do to help Wendy to enjoy learning.

How privileged are the home educating parents to be able to educate our own children! We are amongst the very few who are free to do as we feel best for our children. All school teachers, even Head teachers, are extremely limited by their conditions of employment as to what changes they can make. Home educating families can blaze new trails in education.


Rainbow Rosenboom hopes to do more workshops in Britain next spring. The cost may seem a lot, but the privilege of working with Rainbow is very valuable. I am sure he will use the money we gave him to inspire more people to teach creatively. Obviously, he could not impart the skills he had acquired in twelve years of teaching in only two days, but he did share his insights with us and gave us much greatly needed inspiration. One can easily spend an equivalent sum of money on something else and yet not gain as much as an intensive workshop of this kind can give.

At first, when I saw what the course fees were, I decided I could not possibly afford to go, but having received a recommendation from a friend, I thought again and my husband and I decided that it would be worthwhile making the sacrifice. The decision to educate a child at home costs a great deal in freedom, energy, time and money. It is important that these resources should not be frittered away or wasted in doing things the wrong way, ineffectively or in a dull uninspired manner.

As this course has helped Wendy and I to enjoy our precious time together more, I would like to recommend it to other home educating families.

Frances Howard,  
38 Hampden Road,  
Hitchin,  
Herts.

Tel: 0462-56294

  
"Education through the press....." sorry! its not to be this month .... Sarah Guthrie is looking for some one else to edit this feature... volunteers please contact Lesley Kilbride, publications secretary.....

# Book Reviews

A Good Enough Parent by Bruno Bettelheim published by Thames & Hudson at £12.95

Although this book is subtitled The Guide to Bringing up Your Child it is not so much a handbook in the style of Leach and Jolly as a set of philosophical essays grouped under three headings - parent and child, developing selfhood, and family, child, community. Throughout them all runs the theme that is central to Dr. Bettelheim's work - the child must be allowed to develop into the person he or she wishes to be and the parents can help the child to achieve this by attempting to see the world from the child's point of view. Thus a good enough parent will not attempt to follow arbitrary rules, but consider the individual child and respond accordingly. Discerning and sensitive, Dr. Bettelheim writes lucidly and sympathetically of every aspect of a child's upbringing and encourages the parent to see his role as that of a creative artist who must never force his material. This is a book I shall cherish and often return to.

The Greek World by Anton Powell and The Roman World by Mike Corbishley both published by Kingfisher Books at £6.95 each.

These two fascinating books explain clearly how much we owe to the Greeks and Romans. The authors go to great pains to make their subject come alive and every aspect of life in the Ancient World is covered. There are excellent illustrations - photographs, maps, diagrams and pictures - and the text is most informative. The Roman World has an interesting chapter on archaeology whilst The Greek World describes how informative Greek literature has been in teaching us about the past. For anyone studying Greek or Latin these books would provide admirable background information.

Passport to France by Dominique Norbrook and Passport to Great Britain by Andrew Langley both published by Franklin Watts at £6.95 each.

These books are part of a series which will cover all major countries of the world. With plenty of photographs to illustrate the simple text they provide information about not only the land itself and the people, but also such subjects as home life, trade and industry, government and culture. It was interesting to compare notes on the differences between the two countries. 55% of the French entertain or visit friends at least once a month whilst only 20% of the British do so!

Investigations, Games and Puzzles, Levels 4, 5, 6 & 7 - Ginn Extension Mathematics published by Ginn.

These books can be used independently or alongside any primary maths course to stimulate and enthuse a child's interest in what I call mathematics as an art. Not all the games require more than one player but they are all fascinating and challenging and should keep children aged between 8 and 12 (and their parents) happily puzzling for hours.

French for Beginners/German for Beginners published by Usborne at £2.95 (paperback) and £4.95 (hardback)

Two bright and colourful introductions for young children that attempt to give a basic grounding in each language with the help of amusing illustrations and simple explanations of the grammar involved. In only 48 pages they clearly cannot go far but what they do teach is useful and might well inspire interest in more serious study.

Atlas of Today, the World Behind the News by Jon Snow  
published by Kingfisher Books at £6.95.

The author, who is a television journalist, aims with the help of maps, diagrams and photographs to explain some of the background to today's international problems. He discussed world resources and religions, women's rights and pollution, famine and education, and a dozen other subjects of importance in such a way as to clarify some of the issues. The result is a book of absorbing interest to younger readers who are concerned about world affairs.

Kitten Kids - 4 board books by Tomie de Paola  
published by Methcen at £2.25 each.

There is something special about Tomie de Paola's illustrations and in these books for the very young they are enhanced by a simple but definite story. The result is a highly satisfactory and much needed improvement on the average board book.

H.H.

Bright Ideas - Resources Handbook published by Scholastic at £6.95.

This is a very useful, comprehensive handbook giving details of places to visit. Set out on a regional basis, it lists all relevant information, i.e. telephone numbers, opening times, cost and a brief resumé of what one could expect to find.

There is also a section called 'Organisations' - listing topics and organisations willing to speak to groups on those topics, again with addresses, telephone numbers and relevant information.

Next comes a list of 'Educational Publishers and Suppliers', followed by 'Free Material'; a number of pages giving details of resource material available free of charge (usually from large organisations, i.e. British Gas and The General Dental Council).

The last section is entitled 'Project Resources' and takes a theme, i.e. Farming and lists several useful addresses or book publishers.

At the back of the book is a selection of money-off vouchers - aimed at teachers taking school parties, but I hope to be able to make use of some of these!

In all a very welcome addition to our bookshelf - a compact but very accessible handbook.

Bright Ideas - History published by Scholastic at £5.45.

Another book in the Bright Ideas series, giving lots of practical ideas for making and doing to bring history alive. The book also has ideas for costume, drama and music and suggests ways of using original records.

The book includes chapters on: The Ancient World (Greek & Egyptian), Roman to Medieval, Tudor to Victorian and the Twentieth Century.

The book covers a fair range although some areas could have been covered in more depth.

Ideas - Suitable for 8-12 year olds.

*Valerie Gommor*  
19 New Road, Castlethorpe, Milton Keynes

Some People Don't Eat Meat: Jane Inglis, illus. Henny Lees. £2.20 incl. postage, from Oakroyd Press, 9 Oakroyd Avenue, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, EN6 2EH. (recycled paper)

Shortly before reading this book my middle child, a vegetarian all her life (all 5½ years of it) chose to start eating meat. However she did enjoy reading the book - approved by the Youth Education Officer of the Vegetarian Society.

The cover is a little garish, but the pamphlet-like appearance should not put children off. I read it to Lesley, but an older child should manage it easily. It suggests that a twelve year old would enjoy it, but it may be a little twee for that age group - in fact one twelve year old I asked to look at it assumed that it was aimed at 5-10 year olds. There are illustrations on every page, very suitable for colouring, plus suggestions for activities, simple questions, many useful addresses, and a few easy recipes.

As a meat eater I was a little taken aback by the single page on meat eating. The words were in a thick black box, and the only illustration a small chicken in a small battery cage. My (meat eating) seven year old felt the passages on acreage (one field of grain for one food animal, or twenty people) were more convincing arguments than the simple meat is a dead animal one.

If you want to bring a wavering child down on the side of vegetarianism, this book will help. I suspect it will be of more use to the committed vegetarian child who has difficulty in expressing reasons for that decision.

Choosing and Using Books with Children: a Guide for Parents: Jane Inglis. £2.00 incl. postage, from Oakroyd Press (as above) recycled paper.

I have three out-of-school children, keen bibliophiles who visit the library regularly, and ask for books at the same level as toys when considering presents. This book can have nothing to teach me, I thought, and put off reading it until I had a spare half hour in a protracted house move. I was wrong. Some of the advice merely confirms what I already know, but the listing of review magazines, and book clubs (including a straightforward summary of style and competence) has been more than useful. This, and a good deal of advice on the use of public libraries (much praised) make up the first third of the book. The author reveals that she has been 'many years' a childrens librarian, in school and public libraries, which explains her knowledge of review magazines.

She mentions some authors, and books, specifically, to illustrate the advice which follows. These were almost disappointingly familiar. She devotes several pages to teenage readers, often neglected. However, she lost my interest when she advised parents to offer no reading tuition, either before school (five being her ideal age to begin reading) or during it. Like most people she assumes that all children are taught in school, and further that all parents comply totally with the wishes of the teachers.

In short, the book is an ideal reference book, for useful addresses (which are not that difficult to find, but are here presented together), and for advice on what to expect from book clubs - possibly saving costly mistakes. However, the rest of the book is quite likely to raise the blood pressure of EOers, with its implication that we are 'doing it wrong'.

Religious Education 5-12: Derek Bastide. £7.50 pb £14.95 hb. Falmer Press, Rankine Road, Basingstoke, Hants., RG24 0PR.

This book is aimed at teachers in Primary schools, and much of it is not applicable to EO parents. It is, despite the title, primarily about teaching Christianity. This is no problem to me, I am a practising Christian, but I am not so arrogant as to presume that all people mean Christianity when they say religion. Of 17 chapters, two involve 'other' religions; one is the introduction; two try to outline the aims of the RE teacher; one is a list of resources (quite useful but basic), and one is on putting your belief into action. The other chapters are either 'extended topics' or fragmented ones.

The approach is very similar to that which the various teaching material available to me as a teacher in the local church group offers. However I suspect that it is very different to that which school teachers usually use. It is a book of 'how to' for teachers, rather than a 'why'. This means of course that it is full of suggestions for groups of children of the same age and ability, which is presumably what a class is supposed to be, rather than individual work, or mixed groups. The chapter devoted to 'Children and Religion: Age and understanding' deserves special mention. On the basis of interviews with 200 children, aged 6-15+, five different ages of understanding are defined. (Ronald Goldman's work, not his own). These are described in great detail, with examples. Although he stresses that these are mental ages, (but not how they are determined) he uses them as the basis for the teaching topics outlined for various age groups - loosely given, but real not mental. My experience of teaching religious topics, to a group of 8-11 year olds, and my own children, aged 3, 6 and 7, is that ability to comprehend does not correlate to general intelligence or age. Not surprising since an amount of belief is involved, and this varies as much in children as in adults.

Unfortunately this is not the book to end the discussion on how to present religion to EO children.

*Julie A. Turnbull*  
48 Front Street, Cockfield, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham.

The Family Guide to England and Wales. 800 places to visit.  
Published by Jarrold, the White Horse Series.

Britain for Free. 1000 places to go. Published by the Automobile Association.

We have found both these books packed with places to visit to suit all ages and tastes.

Piccolo Learn Together Series. Work books with smiling reward stickers.

For 4 to 7 years, Number Work and Reading and Writing, Books 1 to 4.

For 7 to 9 years, Junior Maths and Junior Language, Books 1 and 2.

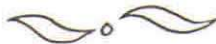
Helen age 6 is working on the Junior Maths, using Cuisenaire colour rods, and has regained her interest, having been put off Maths by boring repetitive work books at school.

I believe there are more titles in preparation.

*Kate Wilson*

*Want to review a book? send reviews direct to the next editor of the newsletter. If you wish to review a newly, or shortly to be, published book, please write to Helen Holland (Reviews Editor) giving 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 address envelope (9x4) for each publisher you wish approached. PLUS one SELF ADDRESSED ENVELOPE.*

*Helen's address is on the back page.*





## *Australian Bicentennial*

A series of programmes on BBC Radio (Education) (address in last August Newsletter) about Australia - past and present.

Education Material available also from Australian High Commission, Australian State Government Officers, and the Britain-Australia Bicentennial Committee, The Arthur Phillip Room, The Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Avenue, London WC2 5BJ  
Tel: 01-930-7529 or 01-930-6733 Ext. 316.

A wealth of well produced material available from all these different sources.

Reading: (adult) *The Fatal Shore* by Robert Hughes.

Very thoroughly researched and graphic account of the early days of convict settlement, which does not gloss over the appalling brutality of the system, and makes some interesting points about both British and Australian society.

Anat Kamenka  
62 Guthrum Place, Aycliffe, Co. Durham.

## MUSIC SUPPLEMENT

Music - one of the most profound endeavours of humankind, and one of the most easily accessible - should play a prominent part in everyone's education, particularly at home. To begin with, all children possess musical ability; some (perhaps) possess more than average, some can demonstrate it at an earlier age than others (and thus get themselves labelled 'talented'), but all have an ability to appreciate and respond to musical sounds, and an ability to create their own music with only a minimum of encouragement. How far this music-making will extend is determined by interest and teaching.

SINGING is a child's first musical activity, just as (so far as we can tell) it was mankind's first musical activity - possibly the precursor of speech. As such it has enormous psychological value for a child, and any attempt to disparage or suppress it will work lasting damage to self-esteem.\* Don't worry if your child's first attempts at singing are 'toneless'; this is a common experience with small children, which should be no more surprising than the 'inexplicability' of their first pictures. If you are happy (as an enlightened parent should be) to allow your children's daubs and wattles to mature into recognizable pictures, then you should be equally happy to allow their singing to mature similarly - provided always that you accept it as having meaning for them, and that you sing with them as often as seems natural. In this way they will begin, at their own pace, to make the connection between the sounds they hear in their head and what comes out of their throat; some will do this aged 4 or 5, others not until 7 or 8.

If you want to train a child to progress more quickly to singing in tune, always bear in mind (what most teachers forget) that a small child's voice has a limited range of pitch **centred somewhere near middle C**. Thus the written pitch of most songs in most songbooks is too high for most children, at least until they have had some specific training. Listen to the notes your child produces naturally and work with those; it will mean transposing most of the songs you take from books, which will also produce difficulties for anyone wanting to accompany them on an instrument - but at least you can avoid the caterwauling usually produced by infants classes on Open Day! Nursery rhymes are the obvious material for early singing - you have probably been singing them to your child since his birth. After that you must use your discretion in introducing new songs; the range of suitable ones is vast, and I decline to pontificate on what is 'suitable' - only you can tell that. The song-books listed at the end of this article are only a beginning.

\*Baldly stated, this argument is more than a little contentious; research has been done to support it (even though I can't quote chapter and verse) but sympathetic consideration will probably satisfy your intuition that the statement is correct.

One of the best ways to extend musical experience through singing is to join a choir - the difficulty of finding opportunities for ensemble music-making if you don't belong to a school is one of the drawbacks of home education. However, there are still churches which have a choir that includes children, and with any luck the choirmaster will include some general musical training along with teaching the specific music needed for services. The standard of these choirs and choirmasters varies enormously - you will need to shop around. Once the church choir has provided all the training it can, the next step is the choral society; this may not be available to those still considered to be 'children', and a young person may have to wait until adolescence before he can join.

PLAYING a musical instrument is less daunting than many musicians make out (professionals like to keep up the mystique). At an elementary stage some types of instrument - notably percussion - will provide an instant response with almost no playing technique. It may take considerable stamina to accept the noise of banging drums and clashing cymbals as a genuinely musical experience, but persevere! Before long your child will have begun to discriminate between the different types of sound available from any instrument, and will be developing - however unconscious the process - an awareness of such concepts as 'high/low', 'loud/soft', 'long/short' etc. If you want to assist this process, ask questions about what he is doing, eg: "What sounds will you get if you (scrape it/blow on it/shake it/etc)?" "What's the (highest/loudest/shortest/etc) sound you can get?", "Can you get a similar sound on another instrument?" etc.

Drums are probably the most ubiquitous of first instruments, followed by toy glockenspiels. But don't be limited by what you see in shops - explore the sounds you find around you. Rice or dried peas in a jar/yoghurt pot/Fairy Liquid container/or similar will provide useful sources; anything wooden and hollow will simulate a drum (beating the table with spoons is probably a meal-time ritual already!); hollow metal objects will produce a contrasting noise; let your imagination run riot. And don't forget the possibility of vocal imitation of everyday sounds - the hum of the fridge, the roar of the vacuum cleaner, police sirens, animal noises, etc. This kind of mimicry is common to all children; if you encourage and extend it it will increase musical awareness.

You will need, however, to be more circumspect when introducing concepts of pitch - household items tend not to be tuned in tones and semitones! I would even steer clear of toy glockenspiels, mini-pianos, etc unless they are exceptionally well-made (and therefore expensive); although it is possible to derive value from any source, it is not possible to develop an ear for accepted tuning if you are not surrounded by correctly tuned instruments. You will also find that, for instance, jam-jar shakers lose their appeal (and their rice-grains!) after a while, as the more discriminating ear demands a quality of sound that can only be satisfied with a purpose-built pair of maracas - at this point you must accept that serious music-making is a costly (but worthwhile) business.

Anyone who wants to pursue music-making further will probably take up the recorder and/or the piano. The advantages of the recorder are - 1) it is the cheapest of the "proper" instruments, 2) it is easily portable and comparatively robust, and 3) the blowing and fingering are straightforward. When you first buy one a fingering chart should be included which will give you enough basic instruction to enable you to play a few simple tunes acceptably. A tutor (of the printed kind) will get you quite a bit further, but do look out for more experienced players who will be able to advise you on those topics that cannot be conveyed in words, such as tonguing and phrasing. Always be aware, though, that you only get the quality that you pay for; cheap recorders make a coarse sound which is bearable in a solo performance, but becomes progressively more shrill the more of these instruments there are playing together - and as for a plastic recorder band, I cannot imagine a better imitation of hell on earth! Please don't read this as a condemnation of cheap recorders; they serve their purpose more than adequately as an introduction to the delights of instrumental performance, alone and in groups. Just use your ears to let you know when you are ready for a more mellifluous instrument.

The principal disadvantage of the recorder is its limited range of volume and tone-quality; while it blends well enough with other sizes of recorder, it cannot hold its own with anything else. At this stage the player must decide whether to progress to an orchestral instrument. I can offer no advice here. You will need to consult a musician in person who can hear you play, talk to you about what you want to do, what your musical interests are, whether you have met any problems in recorder-playing, and so on. The only advice I would offer is always to seek out other players to play with - don't be a solitary musician.

A piano, of course, has different advantages. If you own or have regular access to a piano, then it makes sense for your child to start by learning on it. Again, anyone can make a certain amount of progress without paid tuition, but in many ways the piano is a more difficult instrument to play musically, which makes it all the more important to find a professional teacher. Choosing the teacher is a matter for careful search and advice from knowledgeable friends; as always, the most effective teacher is one who teaches music via the piano (rather than teaching piano technique and taking musical sensitivity for granted).

Any instrumental skill must be practised if you want to make progress. This creates the biggest single problem in learning music and has produced more heartache and broken careers than anything else. "I was forced to practise in a cold front room when all my friends were outside enjoying themselves" is a familiar cry from many an adult who now regrets having given up the instrument. But how far is any adult justified in forcing a child to practise for his own good? And how can the matter be made easier? First of all, heating the front room (or wherever) will help to create a conducive environment; intelligent questions about the state of the skills/pieces to be practised will give the impression that you care about it; setting aside a regular time of day for practice will help develop a habit (especially if it is a time when not much else is happening to provide distraction). Ultimately you must depend on the inspiration provided by the teacher and the strength of the relationship that

develops. Sometimes a change of teacher will help.

Let me here elaborate the advice I gave above, to find other musicians to play with. Informal contact should be easy and will soon produce duets, trios, etc. The experience of playing in small groups will be immediately beneficial, and will probably give you a taste for something larger, meaning an orchestra. This will be harder to find, especially for anyone not at school (though plenty of schools don't offer that sort of musical experience). Look through the local paper for mentions of amateur orchestral concerts, and try all the education institutions within reach. If nothing exists and you feel there is a need, set about starting one yourself! (after taking plenty of advice).

READING music is a skill which fills many people (including many musicians!) with horror and despair. I blame this on an attitude that treats written music as the real thing and attempts to teach the reading of it in isolation from the understanding of it. We have all heard of the teachers who object to their pupils playing "by ear" because the pupil is not thus learning to read notation. What nonsense! Music is sound, and the notation is a feeble attempt to convey on the page the sounds the composer wants. The only successful way to learn music is to play by ear; once you have developed a sensitivity to musical sounds and acquired a vocabulary of concepts (see above) you will be ready to understand the ways in which the dots on the page represent the sounds you already have in your head. It may be possible to learn music reading on your own, but I think it is unlikely that you would be successful. If you don't have regular music lessons, at least consult more experienced musicians as often as you can. Avoid in particular the sort of musician (pianists are the worst) who treats playing as a matter of merely pressing the right buttons to produce the right noises; they will produce the letter but miss the spirit.

COMPOSING music should be a continuous activity of any musician. Since composing simply means arranging sounds in an acceptable order (without defining 'acceptable!') you will find that what your child has been doing from the beginning of his musical experience constitutes 'composing' in this sense. It may be less directed and conventional than what Mozart was composing at that age, but you can be sure that even Mozart began with apparently random banging etc. It is important that children's efforts at composing music should be treated with the same respect as their attempts at composing stories; since the truest musical expression is what comes directly from the heart of the performer, it stands to reason that a performer with the experience of a composer will be better placed to interpret the music of other composers. Your compositions do not have to rival those of 'established' composers in order to be worthwhile, but they are an essential part of learning to be a musician which present-day attitudes to music teaching often discourage.

When I began this section I changed the head word from 'writing' in order to make it clear that composing is **not** a written activity until you come to write it - it can only come from improvising on your

instrument/voice as an expression of your musical experience, which can then be written down if you wish and if you know how (or if you want to invent a notation that serves your purpose). An exception to this is the writing activity of young children (4-6 years) when the writing seems to fulfil their fantasies of being real writers; it is admittedly disconcerting to be presented with a series of scribbles and the request "What does this say/sound like?" but I am sure it is an important part of the learning process, even if it makes no sense to me. (But then, how often do I make sense to children?)

LISTENING is an art that needs to be nurtured, especially in these days of instant aural wallpaper. Every type of music is potentially suitable for a child to listen to - don't presume to know in advance what a child will like and respond to. I have known 7-year-olds who were delighted with a piece of abstract percussion music by Varese that would frighten off all but the most dedicated of adults. One advantage these children had was my invitation to them to respond to the music by moving about the room (actually a large classroom). This sort of free movement is probably the most direct response to music that human beings have; both activities are expressions of emotion which cannot be put into words.

With young children particularly I would encourage this kind of response in preference to a "sit-down-and-be-quiet" approach, though not, of course, denying those moments when it is natural to sit down and concentrate on the music. Above all I would avoid giving any instructions or even hints for the kind of movement that might be appropriate; discussion of what was appropriate and why will follow from a first attempt, and it will be up to your discretion to decide whether the child would learn anything from revising his movements to the same piece played again. My quarrel with the Music and Movement schools broadcasts is that the listeners are given the instructions first, in such a way as to make the music redundant (yet more aural wallpaper).

The older the child, the closer should be his attention to the music. In this way he will build up an analytical awareness of what he listens to, such that he will naturally increase his ability to appreciate more and more complex pieces. The analysis implied here is the unconscious process which every listener employs on pieces that he likes, regardless of whether he can correctly apply the labels that some analysts think is the only way of analysing. The brain spends its whole time analysing the signals it receives in order to make sense of the universe; this is what I mean here by musical analysis - the labels could be useful later on, but only when you understand the music intuitively.

Concert-going will depend on the opportunities available, which will vary widely according to your circumstances. The bigger towns often promote special Childrens Concerts, at which a certain indulgence is exercised in regard to unprovoked audience participation (!); but don't assume that any other type of concert will be unsuitable. There is no 'right' age at which to start taking children to concerts etc. Use your knowledge of your child's likely attention span and declared interests, and experiment - on the understanding that you may miss what you regard as enjoyable items

if he cannot stand the strain of sitting quietly. If you have both previously listened together to recordings of the concert items, that will help.

GENERAL MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE is the least important aspect of the subject, which is why I have left it to the end. As with any practical subject, the only valuable knowledge is what you acquire in the course of your experience, though the more inquisitive you are the more valuable knowledge you will acquire. For instance, biographies of composers studied in abstract will probably not help you to play their music any better, nor to gain more enjoyment from listening to it. But once you have played or listened to (and enjoyed) a piece, then learning something about the composer and his place in history will have meaning.

Be inquisitive also about titles of pieces. Some tell you very little (Andante in D major), some will give clues as to the mood the composer intended (Dreaming, Minstrels), and yet others will describe the formal outlines of the piece which will help to link it to other pieces of the same form (Sonata, Symphony, Concerto). To begin with, read the articles in a good encyclopaedia; only when you want to know more is it wise to proceed to whole books on the subject - start with those recommended at the end of the encyclopaedia article. Remember always that music is a series of sounds appealing directly to the feelings and emotions, bypassing the rational part of the brain. This makes it impossible to describe music in words (although that does not stop anyone from trying!), and leads to endless arguments between one commentator and another as to what any piece of music means. Treat all such commentaries with a pinch of salt, compare the words with your own experience of the music, and believe what you want. Above all, never forget that music is created for the enjoyment and spiritual refreshment of mankind.

TONE-DEAFNESS - a footnote: True tone-deafness is a physiological defect of the hearing mechanism which leaves the victim unable to hear any difference between high and low sounds, and thus unable to recognize even the simplest popular tune. This condition affects an infinitesimal percentage of the population; you, the reader, are almost certainly not tone-deaf in this sense, neither are your children. However, the word is commonly used to describe people who don't have (or don't show) the ability to sing in tune, the assumption being that there is something wrong with them since singing in tune appears to be natural to so many other people. This is false. There is no reason why an ability natural to one person cannot be learned by another; it needs encouragement and persistence. You may feel it is too late for you to learn what you should have been taught as a child, but that is no reason to assume that you cannot give your children valuable support in their music learning. They might eventually teach you something!

## EXAMINATIONS

Graded examinations in musical performance, and what is known as Theory, are offered by various bodies, the best-known and most prestigious of which (probably the most reliable as well) is

The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music  
14 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3JG.

Their grades go from 1 (beginners) to 8 (the last grade before a diploma), and cover virtually every orchestral instrument plus piano, recorder and voice. Theory exams are also graded 1-8; a pass at grade 5 is necessary before you can take practical grades 6-8. Many musicians look down on the knowledge required for Theory exams as stultifying and often outdated; this does not necessarily invalidate the exams, but suggests that you need to be very clear why you are taking them.

I will not weary you with repeating the arguments for and (mostly) against exams of any sort, simply point out that these graded exams are intended merely as an independent validation of your achievements to date and can be usefully employed as such. Beware of the teacher who offers you no musical experience that is not dictated by the syllabus; this is what gets exams a bad name. One advantage of the Assoc.Board exams is that they will accept entries from parents as easily as from teachers; entry forms are available by post from the address given above. Exams are held at local centres which are chosen so that no-one needs to travel unreasonable distances.

I believe that all the Boards offer Music as a subject at GCSE and A levels. Again the usefulness of the exam depends on the use you make of it. A pass at grade 5 Practical and Theory used to be accepted as the equivalent of an O level in Music and may well apply to GCSE.

Further study and exams will depend on what your musical interests are and how far you want to make a career in music. In an article such as this I can't give much practical advice. The two principal avenues are the conservatoires (Royal Academy, Royal College, Guildhall School, etc) and the universities/polytechnics. In the past it was accepted that a performer would go to a conservatoire and someone more bookish to university (with polys for the also-rans). But that is changing with changes in higher education, and with the broader requirements of the big orchestras; at present the conservatoires, with their concentration on technique apparently at the expense of all else, are being left behind, and the expansion of horizons in the universities - prompted by similar moves in the more enlightened polytechnics - is bringing them into the forefront of higher musical education. Given the rapid pace of change in institutional education generally, my comments will go equally rapidly out of date; so - as usual - take nothing for granted, ask lots of questions, and trust your intuition.

## BOOKLIST

(very brief)

### SONGBOOKS

"Apuskidu" contains a wide mixture of songs that will appeal to younger children, with easy piano accompaniments. The same publisher has produced one or two sequels.

"Something to Sing" edited by Geoffrey Brace (Cambridge University Press) is a series of songbooks designed for secondary schools with the intention of getting away from the stuffy atmosphere of old-fashioned singing lessons. You can buy either a melody/guitar-chords edition or one with full piano accompaniment.

Roy Palmer has edited a whole series of folksong collections, each related to one topic (e.g. sailing, ploughing).

"The New National Songbook", despite the boredom it has produced at the hands of unimaginative music teachers in the past, contains a useful mixture of folk- and art-songs.

### ABOUT TEACHING

"Ear Cleaning" and "The Rhinoceros in the Classroom" by Murray Schafer take a radical and amusing look at what is ideally involved in teaching music, whether in a schoolroom or elsewhere.

"Sound and Silence" and "Hear and Now" by Paynter and Aston, though designed for classroom groups, contain many useful hints that can be applied equally well to small groups at home.

### ENCYCLOPAEDIAS

"Everymans" (Dent) and Collins are two of the best shorter ones. "The Harvard Dictionary" goes into more detail and is very good at potted history, but it does not list composers as such. If you want to know more or less everything about anything, consult "The New Grove's Dictionary".

This supplement was written by John Elenor who has now left the country! (but only until May). Any comments or questions to 7 Leigh Gardens, London NW10 5HN; 01-968-3024.

## Things to Do

### Stained Glass ~

Last Autumn some South London E.O. families got together and arranged a Stained Glass Workshop by June Standing, a craft teacher specializing in stained glass.

Our children were relatively young, between the ages of 6-8, and we were not quite sure how much to expect from them. We should not have worried.

June is an extraordinarily warm and enthusiastic person eminently qualified to bring out the very best in everyone - even in the adults attending.

The children learned to handle glass safely, to cut glass and arrange it artistically and to solder. They also learned to concentrate on a project over a lengthy period and came away with very impressive masterpieces, which can be treasured forever.

Everyone had a lovely time and we certainly want to repeat the experience this year.

Thank you very much June, for your expertise and patience. We really enjoyed ourselves immensely!

Anyone interested in a Stained Glass Workshop don't hesitate to contact June Standing. She lives in North London but is very willing to travel. Her 'phone number is 01-435 8029.

You won't regret it!

Maria Parnell, 67 Leas Road, Warmingham, Surrey.

### Theatre Trips ~

Are you interested in taking your family to the theatre in London?

Sue Petszaft asks for anyone interested to get in touch as there can be good reductions for groups but arrangements have to be fairly last minute.

The Old Squash Court  
Bayham Abbey  
Lamberhurst  
Kent TN3 8BG.



# Correspondence Courses

for  
G.C.S.E.

Why use a Correspondence Course? Some EO members choose these for some or all the following reasons. It will help you organise your work and give you tutorial backup. It will recommend a textbook and/or background reading. It will suggest activities and methods. It will not, at this time, enable you to do the coursework section of GCSE by marking it although you should develop some of the general skills to help you to do this alone. However it will cost you money!

## National Extension College

If you have looked at NEC courses and rejected them on cost £112.50 (or £125 by installments - £40 deposit) then there is better news now available. The cost above is for study materials, allocation of a tutor to mark and comment of around 15 assignments and give support, plus an examination handbook to help you enrol and prepare for the exam. NEC have now brought out as an alternative that you can buy a package of just the study materials (no tutor, no exam handbook), at a cost of £27.50 (£33 for Maths (two packs also for Maths)) including post and packing. The study materials consist of around 50 four-page A4 study activities (Maths and Physics are longer units). There does not appear to be an essential textbook to buy but you would need access, I think, to other books - the further reading list. The examination handbook relates courses to exams with NEA, SEG, LEAG and MEG. Subjects available from NEC at GCSE are Accounting, Business Studies, Economics, English, English Literature, History, Human Biology, Law, Maths, Physics and Sociology. If you want a course for French, German, Biology or Chemistry you are asked to contact them at Customer Services. NEC are favouring the SEG exam where coursework is avoided for external. Write to National Extension College, 18 Brooklands Ave, Cambridge CB2 2HN. Phone: 0223-316644.

I have seen only a few activities from a few courses but the following thoughts might help to see what you get.

### Example NEC English Literature

Pack contains 54 activities as follows: Poetry 17, Plays 18, Prose 18. All the activities are designed so that the student can use them regardless of which set books they choose. Additionally there is a short booklet on choosing a play or novel to help you choose from your syllabus. They develop skills which are then practised on the chosen novel, play or poem. This leaves you free to choose but might mean the help is too general - I don't know, however remember that part of GCSE is to look at wider reading than the set book list anyway. The activities I saw were Plays 9, Speech - which looked at how dialogue, silence and imagery were used in example plays, and Prose 16, Studying a Novel or Short Story with suggestions for how to summarise a novel, investigate the setting, the characters and the theme. It looked simple but helpful to me. You would need to provide copies of the set books chosen by you.

### Example NEC Human Biology

Pack contains 50 activities, 10 on introductory skills, 40 on areas of the GCSE syllabus. There is no textbook but a guide to further reading. The two activities I saw are on 'Mammals and Human Evolution' and on 'Dietary Requirements: Teeth'. Each is a complete piece of work but asks questions which would require you to do quite a bit of finding out and reading around. However it doesn't tell you where to find out and what to read unless this is elsewhere in the course. If you manage to find out you may have developed valuable research skills.

## Wolsey Hall

The approach and costs involved with Wolsey Hall are rather different so it would be useful to look at the two together. Costs of these are £95 with full tuition (£120 for Maths) or £63 with self tuition (£80 Maths) installments are available. Full tuition includes a personal tutor to support you and mark assignments with a free followup teaching if you fail but had completed the course. Again preparation is mainly for SEG and LEAG and if you want to take other Groups exams you would need to carefully research the differences and supplement them. Lesson notes are not so selfcontained as NEC but work in conjunction with a textbook and notes are interspersed with the need to read specific passages, very clearly defined, from the textbook. Probably more directed but messy.

### Example Wolsey Biology

28 lesson booklets and main textbook used is 'GCSE Biology' by D.G. MacKean which you have to provide. A study of a woodland or pond is included which you choose and gain access to locally. Introduction lists for each lesson section of textbook to read. I have seen the first three lessons which include advice for practical work, background to maths, physics and chemistry required. There is practical advice on how to proceed without a laboratory, e.g. a magnifying glass, simple child's microscope plus slides, and a child's chemistry set is useful. Household equivalents will be suggested where appropriate. Reassuring I would think.

### Example Wolsey English Literature

I have seen the lessons which look at the play 'Educating Rita', you would need to provide a copy of the play and other set books. Ed. Rita is a set book for SEG and LEAG and the dependence on these set books would probably mean it was no use for other Groups set list. Lesson notes have suggestions on what you need to do to answer the assignments. People might find it helpful to concentrate on the set books but I don't know how well they would prepare you for the wider reading element or whether this is also covered. You take your choice from two very different approaches.

### Example Wolsey British, Social and Economic History

Comes as 21 lessons and follows the textbook by John Wilkes, 'United Kingdom - a Social and Economic History of Modern Britain'. At a superficial look you might need to select from the lessons and interrelate them to satisfy either LEAG or SEG, but there is some advice on this. Notes and textbook references as mentioned, activities with suggested answer notes also. Each lesson has a summary diagram which looks very useful. There are then revision selftests and tests for your tutor to mark and comment on.

I have only been able to see a small sample of the study materials for a small selection of the courses. Perhaps someone who has the whole of a course and is working on it could comment on whether they feel the back up has been valuable and whether it is the study materials or the distant presence of a tutor which is so valuable or the combination of both is essential.

Wolsey Hall do courses for Principles of Accounting, Biology, Chemistry, Commerce, Economics, English Language, English literature, Geography, History, Maths and Physics for SEG and LEAG plus Law (SEG only).

Contact them at Wolsey Hall, 66 Banbury Rd, Oxford OX2 6PR.

Phone 0865-52200

Betty Ball



## G.C.S.E. Update

M.E.G. have, as a result of my request, relaxed their restriction on Coursework marking. The normal external procedure will be that you find someone at your local centre where you take the exam to mark your coursework and make an arrangement to pay them direct. Now if this arrangement is not convenient, the following is an alternative:

- a) you enter for the exam via the Open Centre at Cambridge (not through a local centre).
- b) they will arrange for someone to mark your coursework - you pay £10 per subject extra for this marking.
- c) you will sit the exam at Cambridge. (However, they may be able to arrange for you to sit the paper elsewhere if not possible.)
- d) you should contact Mrs. Sneezby at the Open Centre, Midland Examining Group, 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, Tel. 0223-61111, as early as possible to clarify these matters. She is very helpful and pleasant to deal with.

This is not a perfect solution but shows that the Groups will consider our suggestions and act upon them if possible. This will apply if you still wish to do coursework where there is an alternative external paper as well. If in doubt, ask.

*Betty Ball*

The Northern Examining Board are producing a pamphlet (at present at the printers) for private external candidates. There is no charge and it may be obtained from The Northern Examining Association, 31-33 Springfield Avenue, Harrogate, HG1 2HW.

Candidates in the N.E.A. area should also note that GCSE English Language can now only be taken via syllabus C. Syllabuses change yearly so it is a good idea to keep checking yours is up to date. In any event a moderator will be appointed to each candidate two years previous to the exam who will give advice and guidance, although work will not need to be submitted in most subjects until the April of the year of the exam. A point also to remember is that subjects will have to be set on the level the candidate is registered at initially. Therefore if a candidate registers at a lower level two years previous and yet improves over the two years he/she will still be assessed at the level initially registered. External candidates need not register until the year previous.

*Pip and John Rupik*



# Notice Board

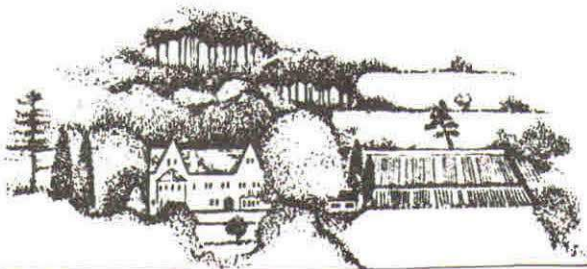


Peele House School, Tucker Street, Cromer  
Norfolk NR27 9HA Cromer (0263) 511344

For the past ten years we have been working on basically individual courses. Part of the reason for this is so as to be ready and equipped to help with needs such as those of Education. Otherwise parents and students. We are providing education full-time, part-time - by the day or by the hour - and by correspondence and distance teaching (the latter when students can occasionally attend the school). Knowing your needs we are also very happy to arrange Examination entries whether or not any tuition has taken place in the school. We are a Centre for Southern Examination Group GCSE - including External and Mature syllabuses, Pitman Examinations, Royal Society of Arts Examinations, Associated Examining Board Basic and Proficiency Tests, and Cambridge Information Technology Modules and Certificate. If you would like any help or advice do not hesitate to contact us.

*Sent in by Val Yates, 2 Meadow Close, Mundesley, Norfolk, who says this would be a good exam centre for anyone in the area having difficulty finding one.*

..oOo..



## MONKTON WYLD COURT

Charmouth  
Bridport  
Dorset  
DT6 6DQ

Tel: Charmouth (0297) 60342

May 1-6

mainstream schooling.

This is our third event for young people aged 11-16 being educated out of A. Monkton Wyld Court is a community of ten adults and seven children living in a large house set in extensive grounds on the Dorset/Devon border. We have a small farm, a walled vegetable garden, play areas, woods and a stream, and are three miles from the fossil beaches of Charmouth and Lyme Regis.

We also have a pottery, arts and craft facilities, a woodwork room, dark room, and large rooms for group happenings. On previous events, activities have included circle-dancing, play-readings, poetry and writing workshops, walks, puppet and mask-making, sculpture, pottery and games. We hope it will be a time for making and renewing friendships and having fun. We look forward to seeing you.

To book send us a £10 deposit. For more information write to Monkton Wyld Court Charmouth Bridport, Dorset DT6 6DQ. Telephone 0297 60342.

WE ARE AN E.O. FAMILY WITH TWO CHILDREN (9+6½ YRS)  
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22nd - 28th  
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13th - 21st  
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22nd - 25th  
MAY

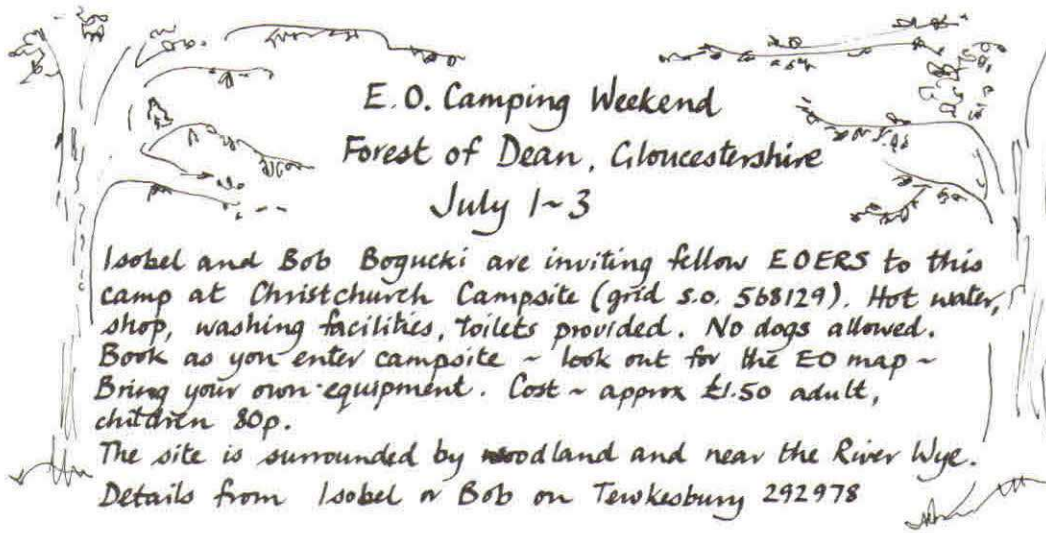
WE ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN  
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LIKE TO PERFORM OUR NEW PUPPET SHOW TO  
LOCAL E.O. GROUPS, ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS,  
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PLAYGROUPS, IN FRONT ROOMS, VILLAGE HALLS,  
OR ART/COMMUNITY CENTRES ETC.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE OUR PUPPET  
SHOW OR ARE ABLE TO HELP ORGANISE  
A VENUE OR DISTRIBUTE POSTERS  
OR ACCOMMODATE US,

PLEASE CONTACT

KEN, JILL, MELISSA + SAFFRON BEAGLEY  
AT ORANGES, ST CLEMENTS TERRACE,  
HARBERTON, TOTNES, DEVON TQ9 5SN.

OR PHONE US ON TOTNES (0803) 867140.



E.O. Camping Weekend  
Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire  
July 1-3

Isobel and Bob Bogucki are inviting fellow EOERS to this camp at Christchurch Campsite (grid s.o. 568129). Hot water, shop, washing facilities, toilets provided. No dogs allowed. Book as you enter campsite - look out for the EO map - Bring your own equipment. Cost ~ approx £1.50 adult, children 80p.

The site is surrounded by woodland and near the River Wye.  
Details from Isobel or Bob on Tewkesbury 292978

Lewisham Free School

A group of parents and teachers are campaigning to set up a free school in Lewisham and seek support for this venture.

Contact: Lin or Adrian Blakelock 01 690 9122  
120 Algernon Road, Lewisham, S.E.13

All assistants at Sherratt & Hughes bookshops have weekly training sessions where they may discuss the best text for a Shakespeare play or the relative merits of the new home reading schemes. They will also try and find out which examination boards are being used by local schools and which books are likely to be needed well in advance of the pupils' arrival in the bookshop.

Tim Hughes maintains that it is the duty of the bookshop to exercise some kind of judgement in the selection of educational books on offer. It is not helpful to the buyer, he says, to be confronted with such a massive choice that they do not know where to begin. This is particularly true of the many home study aids on the market. He also has his personal favourite amongst the reading schemes that have been flooding out of the big publishers.

## SHERRATT & HUGHES

This is what the Guardian had to say about this expanding chain of book sellers.

Has anyone an experience of buying books from them? If they are as good as they hope to be, E.O parents may find them very useful.

Regional Meeting  
to be held in

ESSEX

Sunday 13th March 11-5 pm ~

at the

WAT TYLER COUNTRY PARK

Pitsea, Nr Basildon

The country park consists of shrub and open land bordered by estuary and salt marshes. A good spot for bird-watching, there are a number of hides for those interested. I am hoping to arrange a guided tour with the warden. Within the park are craft workshops refreshment shop and a boat museum (admission free).

We will have indoor cover in a large meeting room and I hope to arrange some activities for the children. Any games or ideas you can bring along will be appreciated.

How to get there?

By train: Fenchurch Street (London) - Southend/Shoeburyness line.

Get off at PITSEA (next stop after Basildon). Turn left and continue walking along the road. This leads direct to the park. You will pass the Boat Museum, the meeting room is near the herb garden and information centre... about a 10 minute walk from the station.

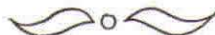
By car: Reach PITSEA on the A13 (Look out for Tesco superstore a good landmark). At the A13 flyover, take the roundabout exit to the station. Wat Tyler Park is also shown. Continue along the road past the station and boat museum till you come to the information centre and car park.

Each family will be asked to contribute £1 towards the cost of the room. Please contact me for further details enclosing a SAE. I hope to obtain some information leaflets and maps about the park and shall have more details about childrens activities nearer the time. One idea is a treasure hunt, if I can find someone to organise it; another is a music workshop: Bring your instruments or make your own there... again I am looking for someone to organise this, but hopefully the details will be arranged by the time this goes into print.

Anyone and everyone is welcome to join us. Hope to see you on the 13th!

Sandie Cottee

17 South View Road, Rettendon, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 8DX. 0268 733259



# Vat on Books

I SAY NO TO VAT ON BOOKS

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Name..... (Block cps)

Address.....

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Order form available for posters, car stickers, badges, bookmarks. From:- Booksellers Association Service House Ltd., 154 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9TZ Tel. 01-730-8214/5/6

The European Commission wants all European Community countries to put VAT on books and other publications.

It's plans are now being considered by the Council of Ministers the European Parliament and by National Governments and Parliaments.

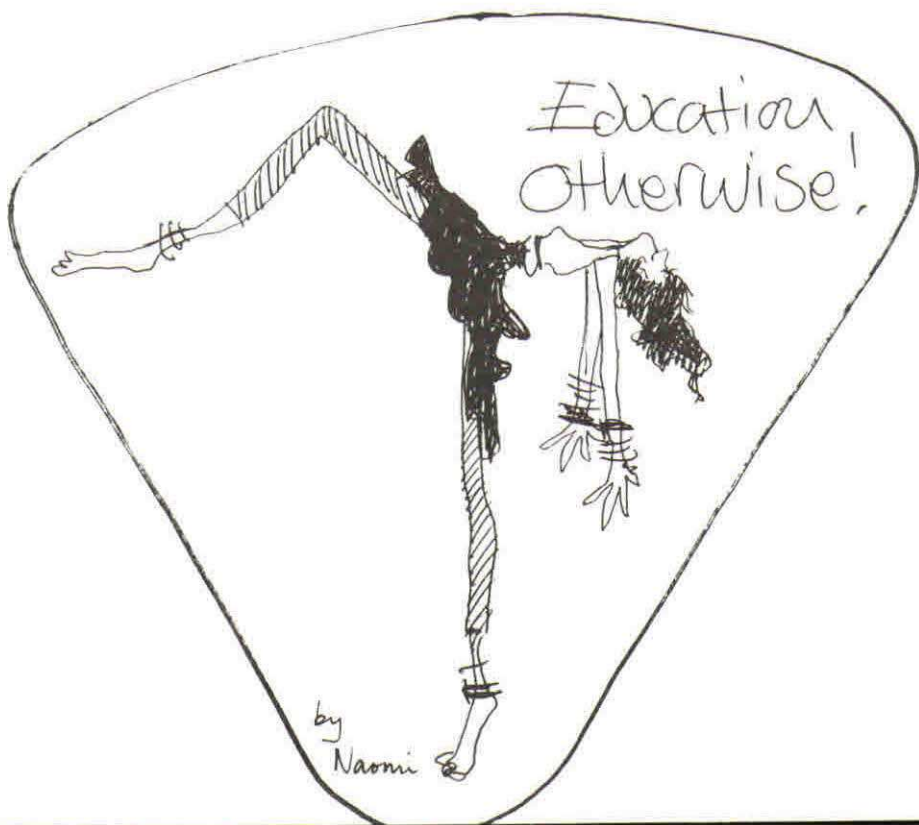
Many countries around the world and in Europe firmly reject the idea of taxing books as a tax on knowledge, education, ideas and reading.

Any tax puts up book prices. ...by nearly double the tax rate. The Commission's plans will directly affect the public's use of books for learning and stimulation...

In future a tax on books would be compulsory. European Community countries would no longer be able to decide not to tax books, whatever harm the tax does.

A tax on books hurts every one who loves, uses and relies on books. Every man, woman and child.

SAY NO TO VAT ON BOOKS. WRITE TO YOUR MP, MEP, TO THE COMMISSION, TO YOUR LOCAL AND NATIONAL NEWS-PAPERS. YOUR BOOKSHOP OR LIBRARY WILL HELP. SIGN THIS SLIP & SEND IT TO :- European Committee Against Taxing Books, c/o 19 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HJ



# Never Explain, Never Apologise

Many EO parents seem occasionally to get worn down by insidious criticism of their choice of home education.

Don't allow people to put you on the defensive, don't feel you have to justify EO. Instead, turn the debate round. Ask critics to talk about their children's experience of school. You will soon find that they want to discuss problems, difficulties, or merits of their educational choice. Criticism of EO is often strongest from those who are worried or insecure about their choice of school education. But be fair - schools have some merits, EO has some disadvantages. By adopting this form of discussion one can have really helpful exchanges of views.

Above all one avoids the impossible task of proving that EO is perfect. Your and your children's relaxed attitudes and real achievements will speak louder than words.

Anat Kamenka



## A Question of Children

Here are some ideas about children. Put a tick or a cross against the ones with which you agree or disagree:

- 1) Children teach themselves to speak at least one language competently without any kind of systematic teaching.
- 2) Children cannot be allowed to decide what and how they will learn. Without the help of adults they would waste their time and be useless to society.
- 3) Children quickly learn to move, take up positions, throw, catch, handle and manipulate better than the most sophisticated computer. Indeed it is unlikely that any machine will ever be able to adapt itself to as wide a range of activities as a ten-year-old performs every day without even thinking.
- 4) Children are clumsy, slap dash and ill-coordinated. If we don't supervise them and force them to work accurately they will never learn to carry out any worthwhile task.
- 5) Children are us. The difference between us and them is chronological, not intellectual. They will become what we are now. We were once what they are today.
- 6) Children are other. They are dangerous to us. We need protection from them. We must never treat with them as equals because they are inferior to us.
- 7) Children have successfully transmitted a tradition of rhymes, games, tricks and jokes some of which can be seen in ancient pictures and sculptures, or read in texts which date from Greek and Roman times.
- 8) Children learn whatever cultural notions they have from adults. Left to themselves they would never listen to anything more demanding than pop music.

- 9) When a misunderstanding arises between a child and an adult it is natural that the adult should take the most difficult steps and show the greatest forbearance in trying to resolve it. After all, the adult has the greater amount of experience and maturity to base his actions on.
- 10) When a misunderstanding arises between a child and an adult it is natural that the child should give way and accept that the adult is right. After all, the adult is the important, responsible one. It is wrong to give children the idea that their opinions matter.
- 11) Education should be judged not by what is taught or even by what is successfully learned, but rather by the breadth of interests a person willingly follows when he is an adult and free to choose.
- 12) Education is only good if it results in high test scores and hard work. Adult life is hard and disagreeable and education should prepare a child for it by setting him tasks and not allowing him to avoid them.
- 13) A life of submission is no preparation for the freedom and heavy responsibility of adult life: after all, our Society is controlled, but it is not supervised.
- 14) Children must learn to do as they are told otherwise they will not obey the law when they are grown up.
- 15) Children are as serious as adults. Although they have high voices and their use of language is less efficient than an adults, they have the same right as older people to be listened to and believed. Particularly, they are entitled to be taken seriously when they tell of crimes committed against them.
- 16) Children are innately frivolous and light-minded. You should never take them seriously because they can't tell fact from fiction. If they tell you a story in which they are bullied or attacked you must not listen too sympathetically because they are only angling for attention and trying to get you to fight their battles for them. They need to learn that the world is a hard place, etc., etc.

: : : : : : : : : :

If you agreed with most of the odd-numbered statements you probably know enough about children to be able to educate them. If you mainly ticked the even-numbered statements you may find home-education a stressful business.

I should be surprised if anyone failed to divine my purpose in offering this questionnaire. However, I hope that you will think about all these statements. The curse of education today is the assumption that there is only one possible way to look at children and their behaviour.

Christopher R. Shute  
 7 Kiln Way, Polesworth, Nr Tamworth.



Who are we?

<u>England</u>	Lynette Cameron (Berks)	Reading (0734) 661656
	Alvena Hillier (Devon)	Bigbury-on-Sea (054 881) 592
	Meg Robertson (Wilts)	Limpley Stoke (022 122) 3266
	Rob & Anne Wade (London W.)	01-904 7155
<u>Wales</u>	Miryam Bush (Dyfed)	Pontyates (0269) 861069
<u>Scotland</u>	Brenda Holliday (Central)	Bridge of Allan (0786) 832042
<u>Ireland</u>	Clare Weber	(98) 41203
<u>Special needs</u>	Sylvia Jeffs (West Midlands)	021-706 6460

Problems with LEAs

Are you in conflict with your local education authority? If so, the first thing you should do is get in touch with your local coordinator. If the coordinator is unable to help (try and find out why), ring a member of the legal group. We prefer you to ring if at all possible (cheap rate if you like). You can only get a limited amount of information into a letter, and we may need to ask questions. We can do a lot of work in an hour or two on the phone, but the same amount of communication in writing is out of the question. (Christmas was cancelled here this year while we tried to catch up: if we have overlooked your letter, please forgive us and ring up about it.) It may help if you can send us copies of any correspondence afterwards.

Local coordinators

Are you a coordinator? If you are already working on problems of this kind, please keep us informed so we have an overall picture of what difficulties are arising and can exchange information. If you are willing but only lack confidence, and are reasonably competent at letter writing, we would rather help you to help members, even if it takes just as long the first few times. You may of course prefer not to do this sort of work at all (perhaps because you are not known to the LEA, or letter writing is not your strong point, or you want to concentrate on other things such as linking members with common interests, organising meetings, running a local newsletter, resource centre and so on). In this case, the solution is to find an experienced member who would be good in this area, and coopt them as joint coordinator. (Please keep your regional enquiries secretary informed. See Dec. newsletter, p. 43.)

Relations with LEAs

Our aim is to prevent legal problems from developing if at all possible. Most LEAs want to be examples of good practice; and provided they have genuine goodwill, respect the parent's right to home educate and are only concerned that the child should not be deprived, we can often succeed just by communicating effectively and reassuring them that the family has support. Where someone influential at the LEA is hostile to the whole idea of home education, we have to work much harder, but we can still avoid the possibility of prosecution provided we are involved early enough and education is genuinely taking place.

Most problems still seem to involve unreasonable harassment of families who are doing a good job of educating their children. LEAs we have had trouble with recently include ILEA 8, Barking, Enfield, Barnsley, Hants, Herts, Humberside, Lincs, Northants, Suffolk and Grampian. In many cases, though, it would be unfair to condemn the whole LEA; sometimes it is divided

into districts, and these vary; sometimes trouble comes from only one inspector, and if you have a different one you may consider your LEA to be reasonable. Often the Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) or Education Social Workers (ESWs) are the source of the problem; but sometimes they are well-trained and courteous. In a small number of LEAs there seem to be a few people in senior positions who are only concerned with getting their own way: they do not answer letters effectively and are inaccessible by phone or in person; their aim seems to be to wear families down by bullying or deceit until they are tidied up into school. To get anywhere with these LEAs we need families who not only educate well but can stand up to long-term pressure, sometimes with threats of care for the children and/or financial threats if summonsed. Fortunately these LEAs are in the minority.

One example of the last category is the conflict between Enfield LEA and the Forsyth family. The Forsyths have now won their case conclusively. Since our last report in April, Enfield have been refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords and told that they have wasted enough of their ratepayers' money already. We are all delighted for Tom, Gill and Leon. Another family, however, have recently been taken to court and pressured into pleading guilty by very devious means, although they had a good case.

### School refusal

The largest group among families with problems is that of school refusers. The parents have often been told that their child is unique, that no-one else has this problem, and of course that it is all their fault. We have helped to keep several of these children out of psychiatric and special units. If you are home educating as a result of school refusal, please keep in touch with us and with Patricia Knox (Holyhead (0407) 740767), as we are collecting statistics to show that EO is not only a more humane way of dealing with these children but also a more successful one. We are interested in how they get on, how quickly they improve, and any problems which arise.

### Inspectors' reports

When an inspector/adviser has written a report of a home visit, some LEAs routinely send a copy to the family, while others treat it as too confidential. In our view the second attitude is difficult to justify. The situation should not be an adversarial one: the parties should be working together for the good of the child, and this aim is best achieved if everything is in the open. Since the LEA cannot insist on home visits for deregistered children (see Home education and the law), some parents have successfully been making these visits conditional on receiving a full copy of the report.

### Identifying LEA personnel

Two publications, Education yearbook and Education authorities directory give information about LEAs, including the names of current holders of senior posts. They should be available at reference libraries, and it may be possible to photocopy the relevant section. (In addition, libraries may hold more detailed information about their own authorities.)

### GCE & GCSE: signature of head

Some families have had trouble entering for exams because the LEA has refused to sign their forms. According to London, the boards only want to be assured that they're not annoying heads by letting their pupils sit extra exams without their approval. If they want confirmation that a child is home educated, a coordinator's signature to that effect should suffice. We think some boards do not ask for this signature anyway.

### Work experience

A child was withdrawn from school after a work experience placement had been arranged. The parents then wished to go ahead with the arrangements, but the LEA refused. (Actually the story is more complicated than that, but it would take up too much space to go into the details in this issue.) Does anyone have any information on how school work experience placements work in practice? Has anyone arranged work experience as part of home education?

### Jehovah's Witnesses doing field service

We have been told there is doubt over the acceptability of home educated Jehovah's Witnesses doing field service work "during school hours". Section 25(5) of the 1944 Act provides for children to be withdrawn from school for alternative religious instruction, but we do not see how this can be relevant to home education. The real issue concerns the status of field service as an educational activity, and we are not personally qualified to express an opinion on this. "School hours" of course do not have to correspond with those kept by the LEA. Either field service is part of an acceptably balanced educational programme; or else it is not included in the programme at all, and education takes place at some other time. One way or the other, there shouldn't be any risk of breaking the law, although a certain amount of effort might need to be invested in educating LEAs on this point. Does anyone know of school-educated Witnesses being withdrawn from classes to do field service with the consent of the LEA? This would resolve the matter beyond doubt, but we must admit it sounds most unlikely to us. As we see things, though, the only real problem would arise if field service took up so much time that it appeared to interfere with general educational provision (or, indeed, the child's general welfare). We assume there is no danger of this. If you are in conflict with your LEA over this issue, please let us know.

### Education Reform Bill

A few people have sent SAEs for copies of our letter to Kenneth Baker on behalf of EO, and we hope they have approached their MPs. By the time you read this it will probably be in committee. Is anyone out there experienced in lobbying? If so, please get in touch with us. If anyone else would like a copy of the letter, please send an SAE.

### ...And finally, some statistics

Over the last two years we have had about 80 serious problems involving conflict with LEAs. Some of them have not yet been resolved. In our view the family were being harassed unreasonably in most of these cases. Some problems can be resolved quite quickly, but typically they may take several months. They normally entail phone calls and often correspondence, both with the family and sometimes also direct with the LEA. Sometimes a representative of EO also has to attend a home visit, interview, meeting or court hearing.

Two children have been tricked back into school without our being consulted, but we don't think anyone else has been forced back into school where the family have been genuinely home educating. Many school attendance orders have been withdrawn. Two prosecutions have been withdrawn, one under s.37 and one under s.39. Of three cases coming to court, two under s.37 have been won on appeal. In the other case, the parent pleaded guilty to a charge under s.39 but the child remained at home.

Anne & Rob Wade

# Dartington Conference - Proposals from E.O.

Many members of E.O. will know that Dartington School, the famous progressive boarding school near Totnes in Devon, has closed down. The Trustees have been looking for an alternative use for the facilities the school possesses.

E.O. was invited to give its views to a weekend conference on the future of the former school. I believe that existing and potential home educating families, particularly those with older children, would be helped enormously by access to a range of resources and facilities that it would be beyond the capacity of E.O. ever to provide. This was, therefore, not an opportunity to be missed. Whether anything will come of it is another matter. One can but try! The paper I prepared for the conference is printed below. I would be interested to hear comments on it. If Dartington does not take up the ideas contained in it, perhaps others will.

## Our Experience

E.O. is currently receiving 3,000 enquiries per annum at its central address alone. This number is increasing. Most are from parents of older children (11+). Their children are failing, unhappy and in some cases suicidal because of the failings of their schools. This number is only the tip of an iceberg. Many children with similar problems do not have parents who know of E.O. or would consider the possibility of education out of school. As the trends which have made the task of teachers more and more difficult are likely to continue, more children are likely to fail - emotionally or academically - to meet the demands of schools. Most of those parents and children have nowhere to turn where their needs will be adequately met. Private schools are too expensive or remote or are rejected on principle; distance-learning-centres are designed with adults in mind or are too costly or narrow in scope; part-time education is beset with legal and practical difficulties. Home-based education is a possible route for some but is at present the heroic option as the structures of resources and guidance to support such learning are as yet insufficiently developed.

The introduction of the G.C.S.E. has offered fuller opportunities and improved methods of assessment but has erected bureaucratic obstacles for those who do not wish to use schools.

Children and families cannot wait patiently for educational reforms to bear fruit, if indeed they will; they need immediate help if what is offered by the state is too inflexible or inefficient to satisfy their needs.

Our experience, therefore, identifies an unmet need; a need which could be met in part by an "open school". Such a school would meet not only the needs of those children who are unhappy and failing at school, it would also offer another mode of education to all children, whether in or out of school.

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## PROPOSALS

1. Set up a national distance-learning centre initially aimed at eleven to sixteen year-olds - an open school.
2. Provide a full range of first-rate educational resources, tutoring and counselling for parents and children - a service that can be tailored precisely to the needs of students.

3. Organise residential courses for the use of students, and possibly parents, where high-quality tuition will be available.
4. Seek out individuals and institutions who will offer facilities and help to students locally - such as flexi-schooling, tuition, work-experience, etc.
5. Stimulate the growth of local groups.
6. Set up a centre giving help and advice on examinations (in particular the GCSE). This would involve the offering of advice on the selection of syllabuses and the monitoring of course-work and projects.
7. Lobby for changes in the law (where these are necessary) to enable state funds to come to open schools and to facilitate part-time attendance at state schools.
8. Raise funds - in the absence of state support - to ensure that registration at the open school is open to all children who wish to enroll.

Note: Although these proposals are submitted by Education Otherwise, we do not envisage them as only being of benefit to children outside schools. We look forward to a time when children will be able to spend part of their time in school and part outside, according to their special needs. We hope that this will weaken the confusion that exists between attendance and learning.

These ideas seem to us ones that could gain widespread support, for they increase parental and child choice and have the potential for raising educational standards all at a relatively modest cost! We hope they will not be regarded as left wing, right wing, anti-school or 'alternative' but merely pro-children.

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#### Two Legal Problems

Two legal changes would certainly help in the success of this plan, although they are not essential to it.

1. The right to part-time registration at a school so that pupils may attend part-time whilst the school receives pro-rata capitation. This would enable pupils to receive part of their education at an ordinary school and part outside. At present - unless an l.e.a. bends the rules - pupils either attend school full-time or not at all.
2. Parents should be given the right to register a child at an open school with that school then receiving appropriate capitation.

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Bruce Cox  
Grey Row  
St. Margarets  
South Elmham  
Harleston  
Norfolk.

## The Peckham Centre

The Peckham Biologists were a small group who spent a great part of their lives pondering on the nature of health and, between 1935 and '50, creating the conditions that people need in order to cultivate health in themselves. Through their insight and their success in creating the experimental conditions in which their theories could be tested, modified and worked out in detail. They made - among other things - a very important contribution to the understanding of how and why children learn.

Health, to the directors of the Peckham Experiment meant the full development of a person's potential human powers and individuality. They held that a healthy person, child or adult, is a growing person, when growth stops, dying begins and that babies are born with an urge to do what they need to do, in order to grow; they are born with the ability to choose the precise bit of mental, emotional and functional 'food', in the form of activity or experience, that they need at the moment for the growth of their faculties and their knowledge of their surroundings and of their own powers. The faculty to choose according to one's needs is inborn. But, just as a muscle that is not used will wither, so the faculty to know what one needs to do at any moment in order to grow, must be exercised; if it is insufficiently used it may be lost forever. It survives only if the child's surroundings consistently contain suitable opportunities for activity and experience and if they allow him/her, freedom to select from them. If, from birth, children have enjoyed this kind of environment, what they want to do will tend to be what they need to do for their healthy growth and development.

It is likely that members of Education Otherwise will share these insights, but will be glad to know that evidence of their truth has been observed and described by scientists specialising in human ecology.

In the nineteen thirties also, Jean Piaget was trying to solve the problem of how children learn, the problem of how and why the totally helpless and ignorant newborn becomes a capable two year old. The answer he came up with was exactly the same as that of the Peckham Biologists. It is to be found in his ORIGIN OF INTELLIGENCE IN THE CHILD, one of his lesser known works. He says that a baby builds a body of knowledge of his surroundings and of how he may affect them through a process of active 'assimilation and accomodation'. This is the same as the process described by the theorist of the Peckham Biologists, Dr. G. Scott Williamson, as 'growth through synthesis' - subjective creative synthesis of experience.

Williamson and Piaget were both biologists in outlook: they took their inspiration from the world of living organisms; and they were always aware of the continuous interaction of a person with his/her environment. A group of people, such as a family or a community of neighbours, who are individually growing, acting spontaneously in awareness of the whole and developing their unique selves, each add newness to the environment, shared and composed of by others in the group, and, as a result, this environment offers the individuals in the group a greater diversity of 'nourishment' (Piaget uses the same word) from which to choose. Scott Williamson called this a process of mutual synthesis of part and whole - of organism and environment. This he wrote, was the nearest he could get to a definition of health.

First a whole is necessary - or several wholes, one within the other. Then the individuals comprising the whole must be free to act spontaneously according to their growth needs, only constrained by any need they feel to maintain the existence and welfare of the whole on which they depend for the experiences they need for growth.

The architypal social whole is the family, and beyond it, the local community. To be healthy as a social institution, the small modern family needs to be a part of a larger social whole. The opportunity for this was provided by the Peckham Biologists in their Pioneer Health Centre in Peckham.

Very small children can be observed exercising mutual synthesis with a whole and responsibility for that whole. For example - two children are playing a game of 'mothers and fathers', because (I believe) they want to know how it feels to be a mother or a baby; they are in a 'free choice' playgroup for under fives, where there is a variety of the sort of things children enjoy doing available to them at all times. Therefore, in order to maintain the game, both the 'mother' and the 'baby' have to be aware of and take account of, what the other wants from the game because, otherwise, he or she may, at any time, walk off and find a more attractive occupation. Or, in a similar playgroup, a dozen or more children can be climbing, jumping, sliding, painting, modelling, building, being 'lions' or 'pussycats', without collision or tiffs: they weave their individual purposes into a harmonious whole. This ability children have, was to be observed at the Peckham 'Centre', in the gymnasium that was given over to the children under five, for free play.

At the centre, no-one selected a child's occupation for him/her and no-one asked him 'what would you like to do?' making him self-conscious and inhibiting his awareness and spontaneity. The children were free to do nothing - wandering about and watching, sitting and chatting or just thinking. It was found that when children are free to choose quite spontaneously from moment to moment what they will do, from among a diversity of activities, of a kind in which children in general find lasting enjoyment, (things that give skill rather than a short lived thrill) and no-one is expecting them to do this, or the other, or to attain any standard, (but their own individual ones) they will do what they need to do in order to develop their human competence - including responsibility for themselves and their surroundings, which Scott Williamson said is of the essence of health.

It was evident that at every age and stage, the Centre children chose to do what would develop their sensory-motor and social faculties, their control of their limbs and actions, their knowledge and understanding of people, young and old, and their ability to be creative parts of a harmonious whole, (to maintain an enjoyable play situation, for example.). They learned too by watching and imitating, choosing their models for themselves. This happened in the supervised nurseries for the under-fives and throughout the rest of the building, where adults and children mixed freely, the latter would sometimes ask an older person, whose skill they admired, for some instruction or advice. Because they were able to learn precisely what they had an 'appetite' for, they learned quickly. Successful learning-activity sharpened their appetite for learning-activity. It also their serenity and purposefulness. Their friendliness and unselfconscious confidence was commented on by visitors to the Centre.

Alison Stallibrass Turkey Island Corner, East Harting, Petersfield, Hants.

(The Peckham Experiment is written by Innes Pearse and Lucy Crocker. First published in 1943 by - George Allen and Unwin - it is still available in paperback from bookshops.)

(Alison Stallibrass worked for 3 years as a student member of the staff, of the Pioneer Health Centre and afterwards ran a 'free-choice' playgroup for under-fives, in her own house for fourteen years. Her book - The Self-Respecting Child, was published in 1974. It is at present out of print, hopefully not for long. She has just finished writing a book about the Peckham Centre and the ideas on which it was based, and which arose out of it. She is now looking for a publisher, does anyone have any advice on where to go?)

Eds.comment. May I suggest buying a copy of Writers & Artists Yearbook 1988. It contains a long list of publishers, agents, etc. £5.95 at the bookshop.



# News from the Regions

## CO-ORDINATOR/S WANTED FOR BEDFORDSHIRE

Unfortunately, Teresa and Rupert Baines are unable to continue as Beds. co-ordinators and shall be resigning as from January. We are, therefore, looking for someone to continue this work which need not take up too much time or effort. If you would be interested in finding out more (without obligation) please contact Teresa or myself.

Sandie Cottee, 17 South View Road, Rettendon, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 8DX.  
Tel: 0268 733259

## SOUTH LONDON

Education Otherwise members in South London are meeting regularly, please contact me for details:

Rachel Sanger, 32 Doddington Grove, London SE17 3TT,  
phone 01-582 3949.

All EO members with children of any age are welcome.

## SOUTH YORKSHIRE

In September, Joan Hoare and I took over as local co-ordinators from Pip and John Rupik. We have since had two meetings at my house. At the first meeting, there were 16 parents and 20 children. At the second one there were even more!

Both meetings were very successful. There was a nice relaxed atmosphere - various people had brought lovely biscuits and cakes - children were playing all over the house and garden and the adults had a chance to talk and get to know each other.

We decided to hold these meetings regularly. The next one will be on 20th February at my house and thereafter on the second Saturday of every month.

To find out the venue of future meetings, please give me a call.

Dineke de Jong, 15B Collegiate Crescent, Sheffield. Tel: 660777

Some time in March, I will move to 91 Osborne Road, Sheffield. Tel: 553836.

WEST YORKSHIRE Our next meeting for parents is on Monday 22 February at 8.00 p.m. Meet at my home: 2 Kent Avenue, Pudsey. During the evening we may well take a trip up the road to our Resource Centre which is due to open in May. Telephone Pudsey 568940 for details, and give us a ring if you are coming.

The Co-ordinator's job will now be shared in West Yorkshire. Sue Lyon from Bradford will take responsibility for parents' meetings and get-togethers for the children. I will deal with enquiries, problems, and the leas.

Dates for your diary. Grown-ups meetings in 1988:  
Wednesday 13 April (Bradford), Monday 13 June (Huddersfield), Wednesday 14 September (Wakefield), Monday 21 November (Halifax).

Peter Williams  
Sue Lyon

Co-ordinators

It has been lovely to see so many members at recent meetings - 29 at the "Chinese" day where the children made kites, cut up travel brochures and cooked a stir fry. We also enjoyed a visit to the Queens Theatre where we were given a backstage tour. The children were fascinated to see the props ... the "Giants" boots which were actually taller than some of our younger members, and the scenery-making department. Thank you to everyone for their contributions to the Christmas party, Father Christmas paid his annual visit and for a change we tried some country dancing - to Greek music! There is talk of hiring a children's entertainer for next year's party, but between now and then are our regular meetings.

The New Year gets off to a good start with 15 of us going to see "Get The Message" a Molecule Theatre of Science production. Also in January we shall be hiring the Pitman Room for an "Australian" day, as an introduction to the Bicentenary. Other meetings are as follows:

Wednesday 17th FEBRUARY At the home of the Roberts family, The Old Convent, Moor Hall Lane, East Hanningfield, nr. Chelmsford. We shall be meeting there between 11-3 p.m. for a CRAFT WORKSHOP. Bring a packed lunch and, if possible, any materials which may be useful (paper, wool, fabric, etc.). Anyone actually wishing to organise an activity is more than welcome - please call me for more details.

Wednesday 2nd MARCH Nothing arranged at this stage. Any suggestions?

Sunday 13th MARCH Regional Meeting at Wat Tyler Country Park, Pitsea. Full details appear elsewhere in this newsletter.

Wednesday 6th APRIL At the home of Denise Craft, 17 Park Crescent, Hornchurch. Meet there from 11 a.m. and please bring a packed lunch. Incidentally, Denise has kindly invited us to her home for a meeting but I have been unable to contact her to arrange the date. So, please contact Denise beforehand to confirm this meeting is possible, and for directions. Tel: 0708 764655. If there is any problem, call me for alternative arrangements.

Wednesday 27th APRIL To be arranged - please call me with suggestions or offers.

I apologise for the vagueness of these details, but in order to include meetings in the newsletter plans have to be made up to five months in advance ... proving inconvenient and sometimes impractical. However, this does at least advise you of dates for our meetings, and the Essex newsletter gives full details of meetings and local news. Incidentally, I have two volunteers to edit the next editions of the Essex Epicycle, so I thank Deborah Snook and Angela & Freda Jackson in advance. Editors will be wanted for future copies, so please let me know if you fancy wearing an 'editors' hat, and as always, please send all contributions to me.

If you do not already receive the Essex newsletter, and you would like your name on the mailing list, please send £2 to me to cover postage and printing.

Finally, in addition to the dates given here, there are often meetings and outings arranged in between. Since some of these meetings are arranged at short notice, members who wish to be kept informed are advised to keep in touch with me.

Best wishes for 1988, and look forward to seeing you!

Sandie Cottee, 17 South View Road, Rettendon, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 8DX.  
Telephone: 0268 733259

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

Stationery, Envelope Re-use Labels - (1.50 per 100), Posters and Handbills 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.  
**Back Issues of the Newsletter, not previously available, can now be obtained from**

Christine Wallace - address on back page.

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 - Contact List - SUE STEPHENSON  
 1 College Road, Barrow-on-Humber, South Humberside, DN19 7ED. Tel: 0469 30792

GCSE - LEAG CO-ordinator - A. KAMENKA -  
 62 Guthrum Place, Aycliffe, Co. Durham, DL5 4QD. Tel: 0325-310109

GCSE - SEG Co-ordinator - VAL YATES  
 2 Meadow Close, Mundesley, Norfolk, NR11 8LW. Tel: 0263 720677.

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 HAO 2LY. Tel: 01-904-7155 (Phone first please)

Special Needs - SYLVIA JEFFS -  
 16 St. Bernards Road, Solihull B92 7BB. Tel: 021-706-6460

Changes of address: BOB EMMETT  
 12 Taylor Avenue, Dolgellau, Conwy, Gwynedd, LL32 8JW

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

### Information Resource Centre

Tel 0270 664060

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

An information/order form is available. The list contains used and recommended books and materials and can be used as a guide to assist those seeking suitable educational material for children of all ages.

Members are offered the use of the Resource Centre - if anyone has any queries or problems with regard to what educational material etc. is available please do not hesitate to contact us at any time, either by phone, letter or a visit. What we don't know we will try to find out. Please feel free to use us.

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

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

### Change of Address

Please notify Bob Emmett ~ address on inside back cover ~ of your changes of address.

Meanwhile ~ Sue Winchester has moved from 41 Rowan Ave to 38 Lindfield Road, Eastborne, E. Sussex BN22 0AJ

### Situations Vacant

#### Newsletter Editors Wanted

Editors required for future newsletters, particularly OCTOBER 1988.

Previous experience not necessary. 'Training', encouragement + support available to interested members. Please contact Lesley Kilbride, publishing secretary (address inside back cover) who will give more details of how easy it is to anyone who wants to know more.

EDUCATION OTHERWISE OFFICERS

GENERAL SECRETARY .....Jean Lovius  
21 Devonshire Road  
Liverpool L8 3TX

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARIES.....Christine Wallace  
25 Diabiag, Achnasheen  
Ross-shire IV22 2HE  
Tel: 044581 225

Valerie Common (SE England)  
19 New Road, Castlethorpe  
Milton Keynes MK19 7EH  
Tel: 0908 511247

ENQUIRIES SECRETARY.....Janet Everdell  
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Abbot, Cambs PE18 9AN  
Telephone Helpline:  
0480 63130

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Tel: 01-942 0286

PUBLISHING SECRETARY.....Lesley Kilbride  
Fearnmore By Shaildaig  
Strathcarron  
Wester Ross IV54 8XX  
Tel: 052 05 278

TREASURER .....Alison Mafham  
2 Elmhurst  
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Nottingham NG7 1BB  
Tel: 0602 481093

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS & .....Bob Emmett  
MEMBERSHIP LIST 12 Taylor Avenue, Dolgarrog  
Conway, Gwynedd LL32 8JN  
Tel: 049269 355

REVIEWS SECRETARY .....Helen Holland  
Inholm Farm, Plumpton Green  
Near Lewes, Sussex  
Tel: 0273 890405

REGIONAL ENQUIRIES SECRETARIES

South West	Meg Robertson	022 122 3266
South East	Jude Ashley-Walker	0983 78680
East Anglia	Sandie Cortee	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.

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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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