

# Education Otherwise



October 1988  
Newsletter No. 62

C O N T E N T S

		Page
In the Wake of the Cleveland Report	Patricia Knox	2
Calling All Co-ordinators	Dot Bolan	3
Education Through the Press	A.R. Axten	4
Where are the Ladies?	Sheahan Family	9
Regional News		10
Little Bob	Andy Blackburn	14
The History of Life	Edwina Theunissen	15
The Problem of Violence	Laurie & Ron Watson	19
Legal Group News	Anne & Rob Wade	21
Pen Friends		22
For the Kid's Sake, Amateurise!	Christopher Shute	23
G.C.S.E. Further News (Supplement)	Betty Ball	24
Alternative Education in Ireland	Clare Weber	29
Education Archie	Sarah Guthrie	30
Autonomous Education & Primary Maths	Anne Wade	31
Electronics Corner	Christopher Thompson	36
Polydron	Kris Harris	37
Talking about School	Sarah Guthrie	37
Nctices		38
Down with the Mythocracy!	Christopher Shute	39
Archie Postcards	Sarah Guthrie	41
Letters		42
One Family's Experience	A. & E. Axten	46
Book Reviews		49
Boxbeaters	Pam Stevenson	51
A Skill Sharing Week	Valerie Gannon	51

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N E X T E D I T O R  
(December 1988)

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DEADLINE 1st NOVEMBER 1988

Contributions for the next edition should be sent to the editors by the deadline date and all material intended as such should be marked "For Publication". Contributors are asked to ensure they include their name and address.

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

# EDITORIAL



This is the first time I've edited anything and I've been full of apprehension all the time until nearly the end when I began to enjoy it.

I'm always interested to read about the editor's background, but now it's my turn I must admit to a certain reluctance. It's one thing doing the education but quite another putting it into words. Anyway ....

We live on a ramshackle farm, where I grew up. My father does the farming and my husband, Andries, repairs and sells bicycles, relief milks, dehorned calves, etc. I look after the garden (organic) and, of course, the house, which is also ramshackle. The children have responsibilities such as feeding and watering the hens, collecting the eggs, feeding their rabbits, feeding calves, dog, cats and a bit of housework (they seem able to disappear into the woodwork at the crucial moment).

More than 6 years ago, after two awful LEA visits, I wrote an anguished letter to EO pleading for advice. My letter was printed in the newsletter and many kind folk wrote offering comfort and advice. I was quite overwhelmed - and comforted. Naturally I've calmed down since then although the LEA is no friendlier. The Birmingham conference helped; meeting John Holt and the Harrisons.

Our education is informal and at present we use few books, although we have accumulated a fair few for future use. Our main textbook is the Bible, which teaches history (leading to geography), prophesy, law, poetry and wisdom. Ah, wisdom! Would that our children would grow in wisdom. There is so much knowledge about today and so little wisdom, particularly among our rulers.

We are grippingly interested in history, particularly that of the Protestant Reformers and the Celtic Church. Are there any Reformers out there?

In conclusion, I must apologise for the lateness of your newsletter, due mostly to the postal strike, and ask you to overlook the mistakes and awful typing. Please note Sarah Guthrie's revival of "Talking about School", David Bettie's plea for a new Treasurer and Lesley Kilbride's request for more editors. Many thanks to all those who wished me well.

Edwina Theunissen, Pum Rhyd,  
Marchwiell, Wrexham, Clwyd.



## IN THE WAKE OF THE CLEVELAND REPORT

In the wake of the Cleveland report, the Minister, Tony Newton, said that it was obvious that children had been "inappropriately removed from their parents" and that it should "never happen again" and that it had caused "pain, suffering and distress".

In the next session of Parliament, the Child Care Acts are to be reconsidered and restructured.

Please will all E0ers write to your MP's saying that there is another group of children who are "inappropriately removed from their parents" and placed in care and other residential institutions. These are children who fail to go to school, and who may be removed into such institutions without the parents being aware that there is the option of home education under Section 36 of the Education Act. This is both dishonest and inhumane.

Suggest that your M.P. reads my book "Troubled Children: A Fresh Look at School Phobia", which describes in detail the psychiatrists' theories behind the removal of a child from the family, and exposes the bad research on which these theories are based. In the research studies, no control group was used and negative results were counted as positive. (My book is available through bookshops and there is a copy in the House of Commons Library.)

Future amendments of the Child Care Acts should include the duty of informing parents of any child who does not go to school of their right to home education, thus preventing the "pain, suffering and distress" caused by removal of a child from caring parents.

Patricia Knox, Pen Llywenan, Bodedern, Holyhead, Ynys Mon.

-o0o-

## EDUCATIONAL KINESIOLOGY

I have just heard of a branch of "In touch for health" called educational kinesiology" or brain gym. A practitioner of "brain gym" will be in the north in September to hold a two day course. The cost will be about £15 and places are limited to fifteen. The aim of brain gym is to help children with reading/writing, numbers/movement, etc. Children will be able to take part with their parents. Please contact me as soon as possible to get your name on the list.

Dot Bolan, 89 Manor Road, Darwen, Lancs. BB3 2SN Tel: 0254-772506

## Calling All Co-ordinators !

It's nine fifty at the Bolan residence and Pat Knox, Keith and I are just having a final brew before we hit the hay. What a day it's been! Very hectic but great fun! Three weeks ago I sent five local radio stations and two big local papers the pamphlets about Pat's book along with one of the EO info sheets and a slip of paper announcing Patricia Knox's promotional tour of Lancs. THREE radio stations were very interested and booked her for interview, one local paper got in touch with a Manchester family whose child is now in care and they have Pat's number so can refer to her direct.

Pat travelled up from Holyhead on Sunday evening. We all turned in at ten p.m. as we had to be up early to begin the rounds of the radio stations. At seven a.m. this morning we left Darwen for Manchester; we'd to be there for 8.30 a.m. for live interview at 8.40. We got there with half an hour to spare so went and sold five of her books in a bookshop nearby. At nine we left Manchester for Darwen, quick brew and then into Blackburn for interview on Radio Lancs at 11 am. (This should have been live but was recorded owing to a royal visit in Preston.) Then back to Darwen with just enough time to make some butts up and get back in the car to head off to Liverpool for a 2 p.m. interview with Radio Merseyside. During the recording who should walk into reception but Jean Lovius with the very welcome suggestion of nipping back to her house for a cup of tea! An hour or so to unwind and let the kids play in the garden did us all a power of good. After fish and chips at my mother-in-law's we hit the trail again for the last time today! Tomorrow we're going to try selling a few more books.

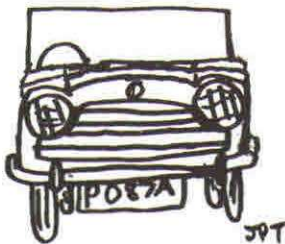
If each co-ordinator would arrange a similar tour we could cover the whole country with publicity! It needn't be the co-ordinators either! Anyone with a car, telephone and a spare bed to put Pat up would do. It's simple enough to write out the details and send them along with the pamphlets and EO sheets. Set a date, after consultation with Pat, for about three weeks hence, then sit back and wait for the response. A week before the date ring up the stations to remind them or make final arrangements and the hardest part will be trying to fit in three stations on one day!

Let's work hard at this and get plenty of publicity for this book, after all Pat has put in a lot of hard work in between researching and writing it so it's the least we can do!

Good luck to all those who decide to act as "agent" for a month! Right, I'm off to bed now! Sorry for all the mistakes, seventeen hours awake and one hundred and eighty miles of driving tends to make me soporific.

Very best wishes,

Dot Bolan  
89 Manor Road, Darwen, Lancs. BB3 2SN



## EDUCATION THROUGH THE PRESS

It seems like a good idea to begin with some pleasant news. This first item comes from a welcome contribution from Scotland:

"A Highland school is set to make educational history today when it becomes what is believed to be the first private school in Scotland to receive financial support from its LEA.

Glaswegian Mr. Martin Jones takes up his post as full-time teacher today at Scoraig Secondary School in Wester Ross. Parents set up the school themselves last year on the remote Scoraig Peninsular, because of travel and accommodation problems involved in sending their children to secondary school at Ullapool.

After a year of teaching the pupils themselves, parents have managed to persuade Highland Regional Council to give them a grant of £8,000 a year, to help to pay Mr Jones' salary.

Mr. Jones said he was excited by the prospect of living *and* working on Scoraig and was full of praise for the efforts of the parents in taking the school this far. The school is small enough to handle and I think a lot of parents would love to do the same."

And a 15 year old pupil, Melanie Brudenell "admitted that while facilities in the wooden school hut were not as good as those at her previous school in Ullapool, she believed the standard of education was just as high. It's a closer relationship with the teachers and they've got more time for you."

The grant will supplement the school's fee - £2 per pupil per week.

[Glasgow Herald 15.8.88]

Elsewhere in Scotland, Glasgow seems to have problems, as the "letters" page reveals:-

"(A previous letter) .... should be studied by everyone involved in education. He has articulated with a passion what most parents, myself included, feel about the present set-up - that is, that it is a shambles."

Another letter from the father of two primary school children ends sadly "What chance do my children have?"

The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth forth foolishness.

Proverbs 15.2

And one from their M.P.:-

"The children and parents of Paisley have had enough. The time has more than come for the Secretary of State to defy his mistress, meet Strathclyde region and work out a solution for the area."

[Glasgow Herald 20.7.88]

The correspondence was sparked off by a teacher who said that " ...all he asked from the educational system was for children to behave reasonably, want to learn and to be presented for exams which required some ability to pass."

Further opinion from another teacher was:

"Comprehensive education and standard grade do not provide any of these things."

[Glasgow Herald 27.7.88]

While this goes on the Government has asked Scottish Authorities to provide greater priority to teaching of foreign languages.

Generally the school rolls go on falling,

1977 - 84 10% down

1986 - 87 3% further down, with girls coming out better qualified than boys.

[Glasgow Herald]

Leaving the Glasgow Herald in a monopolistic position regards Scotland's press (cries: 'Where are you Edinburgh?' and 'What happened to the Record?') we fly to Japan to learn that "one Tokyo secondary school has a 28 page Rule Book covering a record 284 different areas. In this way uniformity is assured in the number of pleats on girls' skirts (24), the colour of their underwear (white) and the length of toilet paper that may be used (11.8 inches)."

"When a pupil is addressed by a teacher of the opposite sex, the distance should exceed 8 inches."

"If a pupil wishes to have a chat with a schoolmate of the opposite sex, an application form must be filled out."

[Independent 31.5.88]

Were I a cartoonist, I'd be working on that.

Briefly to Russia where, following an outburst in the Government newspaper 'Izvestia', end of term history exams have been cancelled:-

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:  
and the knowledge of the holy is understanding

Proverbs 9.10

"It said that the move, which affects pupils aged 6 to 16, was a bold and honourable decision and called for the urgent preparation of new history texts.

It suggested that if full textbooks could not be prepared by September, intellectuals whose recent writings had broken with the previous official version of Soviet history, should compile collections of articles and documents for class room use."

[via Daily Telegraph 11.6.88]

In America an experimental schooling system called "homebase" is meeting with some success. The dedicated staff believe that "home is still the most important thing in the kids' lives, however broken it is .

A "homebase" teacher would be readily recognised by any veteran of a British grammar or public school as a form master, the teacher who co-ordinates the academic courses and looks out for the pupils' moral development and general welfare. The teachers, as well as gathering their homebase groups of 20 pupils at the beginning and end of each day, visit their charges at home, get to know the parents and regularly mediate in domestic disputes.

Teacher feel that in modern schooling 'devotion to students' choice had killed the "form" with which every child could identify, so that every class was a specialist one, with a different set of faces for each subject."

[Daily Telegraph 31.5.88]

"Britain's first parent organiser has been employed by a secondary school (Westminster City School for Boys). 'My role is to enable parents to come into school', she says. 'Secondary schools are quite intimidating places and it takes quite a lot of courage to walk in.'"

[Daily Telegraph 4.7.88]

On the Education Reform Bill"-

"the whole shift will now be to make quite sure that the national curriculum gets agreed and established; that we have systems of assessment and testing ..."

"Mr. Baker believes the measure of any system of education is how well it serves the average and below average child, because above average children will always do well whatever the schools serve up."

[Daily Telegraph 20.6.88]

"Violence in schools is now so serious that a record number of claims for compensation is being pursued by head teachers who were victims of assault.

[Daily Telegraph 1.6.88]

"On Monday the National Union of Teachers released an opinion poll showing that one teacher in three had suffered serious classroom disruption."

[Daily Telegraph 15.6.88]

The Higginson Committee on 'A' level reform:-

"Each subject syllabus should focus more sharply on making sense of the facts."

"It means removing altogether the temporary committal to memory of inessential and inconsequential information."

[Daily Telegraph 8.6.88]

A dyslexic schoolboy of 16 is to be allowed to use a word processor to answer his GCSE questions. His parents have battled for two years for this concession. The pupil says that "My peers have been amazed by the standard of work I can now produce." His I.Q. is 130 and he will sit nine subjects.

[Guardian 13.6.88]

"Head teachers have called for an investigation into the running of the new GCSE examination which, they allege, is placing intolerable burdens on pupils and school resources. Mr. John Graham, a Birmingham head, said: 'the balance between testing and teaching has gone wrong somewhere.'"

[Daily Telegraph 4.6.88]

Late papers:-

"Eighty fifth form pupils at Dover Grammar School for Boys had to endure a nine hour wait before they could sit their exam in GCSE Geography, when papers failed to arrive on time. The pupils assembled at their desks at 9 a.m. only to be told there were no papers. They had to be kept in isolation until they finally sat their exam at 5.10 p.m."

[Daily Telegraph 14.6.88]

"Last week more than 50,000 pupils sitting the Southern Examining Groups GCSE Geography paper found that a mistake in the paper made it impossible to answer the first question."

[Daily Telegraph 14.6.88]

Happy is the man that findeth  
wisdom, and the man that getteth  
understanding.

Proverbs 3.13

#### Late results:

"300 pupils are affected by the delay locally, The problem - a missing mark in the English exams - may have affected a total of 16,000 pupils nationwide.

Mr. Peter Senior, head teacher at Chantry High School, Ipswich, said, 'We have received no English results at all, either for Literature or Language. It is very worrying because youngsters are now at a time when they are trying to decide what to do, whether to go to the Suffolk College or into the sixth form, for example. It is very difficult to confirm places without a full set of results.... If the results do not arrive soon we will have to start confirming 6th form places based on estimates of what we think the pupils exam results will be.

The Midland Examining Group said the English results were 'to follow' but we have heard nothing very meaningful from the exam board.' M.E.G. spokesman said that the problem was that one of the English exam marks was missing. 'It is probably the course work mark, although I cannot confirm this definitely.'

[East Anglian Daily Times 31.8.88]

#### What's the problem?

"Where there is persistent poor behaviour it is most often associated with the central issue of poor relationships, inappropriate curriculum and inadequate teaching methods."

[Education Observed, 5]

#### "Four Factors Most Often Associated with Good Behaviour:

- 1) good relationships with mutual respect between teachers and pupils;
- 2) teachers high expectations of their pupils academic and social abilities;
- 3) curriculum and teaching methods well matched to pupils needs;
- 4) the nurturing of pupils growing maturity and self esteem."

[Education Observed, 5]

Compiled by A.R. Axton, The Firs, Magpie Green, Wortham  
Diss, Norfolk

## WHERE ARE THE LADIES?

Our 2 older children, Richard 8 and Thomas 5 are developing a fascination for the past - how people lived, worked, what they wore and ate, etc. and we often take them out (sometimes with other EO families in Gloucestershire) on days where we explore the local area, looking for clues to the past in our surroundings. Living in Gloucester, we are lucky not to have to look too far! Richard, for a long while, and Thomas, more recently, have started to ask questions about who lived before who - the Vikings before the Celts, the Romans before the Normans? Our area is rich in remains of past civilization, e.g. long barrows, hill forts, Roman ruins, Medieval castles and cathedrals, etc. and recently we had a "Roman Day" - visiting Caerleon and Caerwent. A fascinating day with everyone learning something new from the ruins and the museums. However, as the day went on it became more and more obvious to me just what we were not seeing, in museums especially. There was hardly any evidence of the women who lived during these times. Alright, Caerleon was a military settlement but these must have been women present. Who were they, where did they live and what did they think and feel?

We, of course, tried to redress the balance a little by talking about Roman women but all the evidence the children were seeing was almost exclusively about men. A quick look at some of our history books at home tells the same story - very few women and those that are present usually in chapters about fashion or food!

We are determined not to let our children grow up accepting this very sexist view of history as normal but where are the books and the museums to help us? Please is anyone can recommend books, days out, museums, etc. that give women their rightful place in history can they let us know - either through the EO Newsletter or by writing to us. Of course we're very aware that women are also missing from many other areas such as science, music and art. They were there so let's hear about them! What about a booklist? We would be happy to compile one (gulp, what have I just written?!) so please start looking.

By the way, a reminder about the Letterbox Library - an excellent book club specialising in non-sexist and non-racist books. Only £2-50 to join and no pressure to buy. Also a very interesting quarterly newsletter. I'm the co-ordinator for Gloucester so would be happy to provide more details.

Clare, Peter, Richard, Thomas & Madeleine (5 months!)  
Sheahan

15 Pembroke Street  
Gloucester  
GL1 4EG

Tel: (0452 422576)



# REGIONAL NEWS

## CAMBRIDGE

From: Sharon Blaukopf, 28 Harvey Goodwin Avenue, Cambridge.

After being co-ordinator for just over a year, I am pleased to announce that Jo Rust [8/10 Church End, Gamlingay, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 3EP (0767 50032)] is now co-ordinator and is much more dynamic than me in organising meetings.

My only regret about Ben (13) and Dan (12)'s home education is that I wish they had not wasted five years at school first. However, we have enjoyed the last three years and now they are looking forward ..... to something completely different. In September they are due to go to the local independent school (uniform and rugby twice a week).

If anyone feels I should resign completely because my sons are at school, do say so I'll happily comply. I do feel I can still be of some help to "new" parents.

## DERBYSHIRE

From: Mrs. J. Hazel, The Lilacs, off Grange Street, Alfreton, DE5 7HJ.

Any members interested in a large get together - could you please ring Mrs J. Hazel: 0773 835088 or Lynne Greenough: 0773 836662.

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE

From: Lisa Hall Davy, Judgement Cottage, Leddington, Dymock

Please forgive me for not replying to any letters you have sent me recently. I feel very guilty about failing in my duties as a co-ordinator and we are a nice friendly group really.

We are trying to get together a simple puppet workshop/party, probably on Sunday 30th October 1988. If you would like to come please contact me on Dymock (053 185) 640. Any EO-er near enough to attend will be very welcome.

## HAMPSHIRE

From: Wendy Davis, 8 Hartland Place, Farnborough.

Sophie Harrington-Ellsmore is now co-ordinator for Hampshire. Her address is:-

11 The Grove  
Penton Grafton  
Andover  
Hants. SP11 0RS

Tel: Weyhill 3308

NORTH LONDON

From: Yvonne Muckle, 10 Warner Road, N.8 (01-341-0621)

If anyone would like to join me on the following dates, please 'phone nearer the time for more details.

Wednesday 5nd October : Swimming - Park Road Pool, 11 am.

Wednesday 12th October : Swimming as above

Wednesday 19th October : Museum of London 11 am.

Wednesday 2nd November: Geological Museum 11 am. (To get in free get EO pass from Ann Wade)

Wednesday 9th November: Swimming as above

Wednesday 16th November: Swimming as above

Also, is anyone interested in an EO Christmas party? If so please 'phone Yvonne on 01-341-0621.

NORTH LONDON PARENTS AND CHILDREN'S GROUP

We are meeting at Swiss Cottage Community Centre, 19 Winchester Road, NW3, close to Swiss Cottage tube, on the first Sunday of every month. (Please note the only exception - 8th January 1989.)

| <u>Date</u>       | <u>Time</u>       | <u>Activity</u>               |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Sunday 2 October  | 11.30am - 2.30 pm | Simple Doll's House Furniture |
| Sunday 6 November | "                 | Music                         |
| Sunday 4 December | "                 | Christmas Card Making         |
| Sunday 8 January  | "                 | Kitchen Table Science         |
| Sunday 5 February | "                 | Co-operative Games            |

EO members from all areas, or anyone else with an interest in otherwise education are welcome at these meetings. Please bring food or drink to share for lunch. There is a charge of 50p per family to help cover the cost of hiring the premises.

We try to gear activities so as to offer something of interest to all ages, from the very youngest up to adults. For further information about North London activities, contact Jeffrey Bengé (883-7906) or (for Swiss Cottage meetings only) Andrea Granville (328-4138).

SOUTH LONDON

All EO members or people interested in EO, with children of any age, are welcome. Please bring food and drink to share for lunch. For more details 'phone Rachel Sanger on 582-3949 or Dorothy Norris on 469-0413.

SUNDAY 25th September from 1 pm to 5 pm at Norwood Children's Centre, St. Luke's Chambers, 2-8 Norwood High Street, SE27 (round the back of the church at the north end of Norwood High St.). Nearest station: BR West Norwood or buses 22B 68 196.

SATURDAY 22nd October: 11 am to 3.30 at the Child and Parent Centre, the Albany, Douglas Way, SE8 4AG. Nearest station (BR and Tube) is New Cross or buses 21 36 47 53 70 171 177 199 208.

SUNDAY 20th November 1 pm to 5pm at Norwood Children's Centre.

Christmas meeting - not yet confirmed. Probably 18th December at the Albany. Ring nearer the time for more details.

Our meetings have been going well in the last few months with a good mixture of "regulars" and new members.

We had a good session playing co-operative games with Clive Baulch and Lisa Geary and their parachute. We're hoping to repeat it some time next year and this time to include more information from Clive and Lisa about the philosophy behind co-operative games and how other people are using them around the world.

Michael Thompson did an excellent electronics workshop (for parents) to back up his regular electronics page in the newsletter.

Let us know if you have any ideas for activities or talks at future meetings.

#### MIDLANDS

SUNDAY 23rd OCTOBER - BLISTS HILL OPEN AIR MUSEUM, IRONBRIDGE

Put the clock back and step back in time with a visit to this Victorian working life museum. Enjoy a gaslit evening of special period events, including stalls, morris dancing and band music, culminating in a firework display at 8 pm.

Meet in main car park outside ticket office at 5.30 pm.

Please contact Margaret and Peter Brown, 19 Lugtrout Lane, Solihull, West Midlands B91 2SB, Tel: 021-705-6132 by 17th October so that we can confirm numbers for party ticket. Please, also, bring a torch with you!

Cost - adults £3 Children over 5 £2-20 (pay on day)

#### SOUTH WEST REGION

I have been local co-ordinator for some years and more recently regional co-ordinator. During that time I have dealt with numerous telephone enquiries, fought and won a couple of battles with LEA's and met a few nice families. This is as much, and one often feels more than enough, as I am capable of doing.

There is probably a great deal of scope for more activities in the region, gets-together, etc., but I have neither the time nor inclination to organise such events.

If there is anyone in the region who would like to share my present load, remove it completely or offer something totally different perhaps they would like to get in touch with me. Locally, it would also make a lot of sense to have a joint Avon co-ordinator who lives in Bristol or that side of the county - any offers?

Please telephone Meg Robertson - 022 122 3266

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

From: Dineke de John, 91 Osborne Road, Sheffield S11 9 BA

At our last meeting we were very efficient and managed to fix dates for meetings up to Christmas. The first one will have taken place by the time this newsletter appears - at the Green Fair in Sheffield, where we will have an EO stall.

Further meetings:-

19th October - collage making at the house of Christine and Chris Park

5th November - bonfire in the garden of Terri and Alan Shoosmith

17th December - Christmas decoration making at my house.

For the times of these meetings please ring Dineke on Sheffield 553836.

SUSSEX

From: Susan Petszaft, 2 Leylands Manor, Tubwell Lane, Crowborough,  
E. Sussex (Tel: Crowborough 661319)

London Outings

Tuesday 11th October - Globe Theatre, Bear Gardens, Bankside, London Bridge, Southwark. Meet 11.15 am. This is a reconstruction of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. Nearest underground Mansion House or Cannon Street.

Monday 24th October - Museums. Meet in foyer of Science Museum at 11.15 am or in picnic area on the first floor at 12.30 pm.

Tuesday 8th November - Covent Garden. Meet outside Covent Garden tube station at 11.15 am.

Monday 28th November - Museums as above.

Monday 12th December - The London Planetarium. Meet 10.45 am for 11 am lecture for 7, 13 year olds on Night Skies in Britain. The lecture lasts 50 mins. Under 5's are not allowed in the Planetarium. Group booking fee for parties of 10 or more £3.70 adults and £2.20 children.

Monday 26th December - Museums as above.

Please ring Sue Petszaft or Anne Wade to check last minute details.

Sussex Outings

Monday 3rd October - Meet 11.30 am at the glass cage outside Drusilla's Zoo, Alfriston. Or in the Adventure Playground for lunch at 1.00 pm.

Monday 17th October - Bewl Bridge Reservoir, Lamberhurst. Meet at 2 pm at the Adventure Playground. I will check about hiring boats and whether we can have a tour of the Water Treatment Works.

Monday 7th November - Drusilla's Zoo as above.

Monday 21st November - Jungle Tumble, The Patio, Old Town, Hastings. Soft Play area for little ones and indoor venture play for 4-12's. Reduction for parties. £1-25 children, 25p adults.

Monday 5th December - Drusilla's Zoo as above.

Monday 19th December - British Engineerium, off Nevill Road, Hove. Meet 2 pm at entrance. Adults £1-80, children £1.

BRIC A BRAC AND OTHER ITEMS wanted to sell at Boot Sales in aid of EO, South East. Please bring anything you have to a meeting or ring Sue Petszaft or Erica Richardson.

-oOo-

#### LITTLE BOB

Little Bob was good as gold,  
Always did as he was told,  
Never once did he do bad,  
He was the perfect little lad.  
But was his life to carry on  
In such bliss with nothing wrong?  
I fear not, my reader, no  
For off to school he was to go

So not to differ from the norm,  
He took his innocent little form  
To the massive building, dark and grey,  
Where he was to spend many a miserable day.  
The first day was fine but then it got worse,  
Until going to school became a curse!

The teacher loomed, large and fat,  
Over the seat where little Bob sat.  
Bob cried and squirmed in his little wooden chair,  
But he couldn't avoid the teacher's stare.  
"You've got it wrong again, you horrid little lad.  
How long will it take for you to learn how to add?"  
That night in detention he looked out from his box  
At the terrible concrete, railings and locks.  
An overwhelming blanket of sorrow  
Descended, and he realised that he couldn't face tomorrow.  
But then came an angel from the dark and cloudy skies  
And sang about a miracle - Education Otherwise.

The sky seemed bluer and the grass deliciously cool,  
Now that he was freed from the horror of the school.

By Andy Blackburn (15)

15 Boringdon Terrace  
Turnchapel  
Plymouth

## THE HISTORY OF LIFE

Some years ago I was amazed to learn that there was an alternative to the theory of evolution and it occurred to me that as home educators we ought to be conversant with some of the issues involved e.g. the age of the Earth, fossils, natural selection, and so on. It may be of value to investigate why evolutionism caught on as it did. Charles Darwin, author of "The Origin of Species", when old, spoke about his theories in this way, "I was a young man with unformed ideas. I threw out queries, suggestions, wondering all the time over everything, and to my astonishment the ideas took like wildfire. People made a religion of them."

Below is a short list of books/articles I've come across which I've found most helpful. I'm not claiming to have read the first two, but they're included as a point of reference.

The Origin of Species by Charles Darwin 1859  
means of Natural Selection

Theory that natural mutations lead to new species.

The Descent of Man Charles Darwin 1871

Deals more precisely with man's place in the evolutionary scheme.

Extract from an article entitled "Alternatives to Evolutionism"  
in the "School Science Review" Vo.61 No.214 1979 by G.H. Harper

"Where a theory antagonistic to evolutionism is offered to pupils, it is generally "Special Creationism", which postulates the direct creation of species by a supernatural act of God, who thus intervenes in the otherwise law-regulated processes of nature. The theory is usually dismissed by science teachers on the grounds that it is not scientific or that it involves supernatural causes. However, I don't think anyone would seriously argue that it can be shown to be false. Even if metaphysical it might be true. The usual reason for its dismissal is that it conflicts with the outlook which supposes that all phenomena are the result of solely natural causes. But this view is not itself scientific (it certainly is not testable); at the least it is a methodological assumption, and very often it is also a belief. The conflict between evolutionism and special creationism usually boils down to the conflict between rival metaphysical beliefs, and at least in this respect evolutionism and special creationism are of comparable status."

The article goes on to give an explanation of the "Steady State Theory of Species". If you'd like a copy of Mr. Harper's article, please send me a s.a.e.

MYTHS & MIRACLES David C.C. Watson 1976  
A new approach to Genesis 1-11  
Published by H.E. Walter Ltd., Worthing Sussex

"Distilling the essence of many larger books which, since 1960 have firmly established Creation as a viable scientific theory, he proposes that:-

- a) nothing in these ancient records is contrary to proven facts;
- b) many facts of science and history agree better with a creation dated only thousands of years ago, followed by a world-wide flood, than with the hypotheses and aeons of Evolution.



**HEIDELBERG MAN**

Built from a jaw bone that was conceded by many to be quite human.



**NEBRASKA MAN**

Scientifically built up from one tooth and later found to be the tooth of an extinct pig.



**PILTDOWN MAN**

The jawbone turned out to belong to a modern ape.



**PEKING MAN**

500,000 years old. All evidence has disappeared.

The language is non-technical and Brian Newton's illustrations make this a book to be enjoyed by parents, teachers and children alike."

The "aeons of Evolution" above, refer to the millions of years required for evolution to take place. Much hinges, therefore, on accurately measuring the age of the Earth. This subject is examined very thoroughly in the next book on my list.

WHAT ABOUT ORIGINS?

Dr. A.J. Monty White

3 Church Terrace, Cardiff CF2 5AW

"Dr. White's analysis of the scientific evidence from the fields of Cosmology, Biochemistry, Geochronology, Biology, Paelontology and Astronomy exposes fallacies and weaknesses in evolutionary theory and demonstrates the superiority of Direct Special Creation as an explanation for the origins of the World and the living things it contains."

This is a very readable and scientific book. An interesting point is that on the chart which compares various methods of measuring the age of the Earth, this varies from 60 million years when measuring expanding interstellar gas to 4 000 when measuring the decay of Carbon 4 in pre-Cambrian wood.

BONE OF CONTENTION

Sylvia Baker

1976

Publisher: E.P., 16-18 High Street, Welwyn, Herts.

"Bone of contention - that is what the theory of evolution has been for over a century, In March 1861 Charles Darwin wrote that he believed the theory but acknowledged that he could not 'prove in any single case that (natural selection) has changed one species into another'. Yet the unproved theory came to be treated and taught as fact.

But is it true? That is the question which Sylvia Baker examines here. A biology graduate of the University of Sussex she accepted and imbibed the evolutionary theory put to her at school and university .... until the sheer pressure of evidence forced her to rethink the whole question. Here in a fresh and clear style that avoids unnecessary technical terms, she sets out the evidence and her conclusions."



**NEANDERTHAL MAN**

At the Int'l. Congress of Zoology (1958) Dr. A. J. E. Cave said his examination showed that the famous Neanderthal skeleton found in France over 50 years ago is that of an old man who suffered from arthritis.



**NEW GUINEA MAN**

Dates away back to 1970. This species has been found in the region just north of Australia.



**CRO-MAGNON MAN**

One of the earliest and best established fossils is at least equal in physique and brain capacity to modern man. . . . so what's the difference?



**MODERN MAN**

This genius thinks we came from a monkey.

Professing themselves to be wise they became fools.  
Romans 1:22

IS EVOLUTION SCIENTIFIC? Prof. E.H. Andrews  
Publisher: E.P., 16-18 High Street, Welwyn, Herts.

"The theory of evolution is all but universally accepted in the Western world today as an explanation of the origin of life. Claiming support from a variety of sciences, those who press the claims of evolution assert that the matter is 'scientifically proven as far as events not witnessed by man can ever be'.

There are, however, scientists of various disciplines who maintain that many aspects of the theory of evolution offend the canons of rigorous science. They recognise that the mechanism by which the evolution of life and biological species is said to have occurred are, at best, unproven hypotheses and, at worst, contradictions of experimental facts. Professor Andrews is one such scientist. In this book he examines the nature of genuine theory and applies the principles so established to the theory of evolution to see whether it does in fact pass muster as 'scientific' in the best sense of the word."

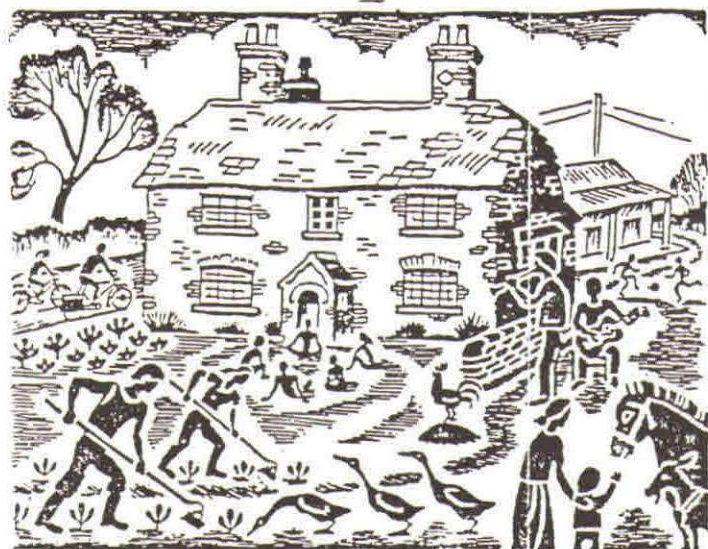
SOMERSET CREATIONIST GROUP - produce a newsletter for children  
which is published 4 times a year. Details from:-

Geoff Chapman  
Mead Farm, Downhead, West Carmel,  
Yeovil, Somerset BA22 7RQ  
Tel: (0935) 850569

I will let Mr. Harper have the last word -

"It is frequently claimed that Darwinism is central to modern biology: on the contrary, if all references to Darwinism suddenly disappeared, biology would remain substantially unchanged. It would merely have lost a little colour. Grandiose doctrines in science are like some occupants of high office; they sound very important but have in fact been promoted to a position of ineffectuality."

Edwina Theunissen, Clwyd



# LOWER SHAW FARM

AUTUMN 1988  
WEEKENDS

- 30 Sept - 2 Oct FUNGUS - Marvel, myth & medicine  
Fungus forays in woodland and meadow - plus uses of fungus.
- 7 - 9 Oct FINDING THE BALANCE with Sue Harding  
A chance to look at stress and distress. Meditation, relaxation, massage.
- 14 - 16 Oct WALKING & CIRCLE DANCE FOR WOMEN  
Visiting sacred sites on the Ridgeway.
- 28 - 30 Oct BUILD YOUR OWN HOUSE  
How to get started - a beginners guide.
- 11 - 13 Nov DREAMS with Moira Adams  
Explore your dreams.
- 2 - 4 Dec MUSIC  
Songs, music, rounds, voice workshops...
- 30 Dec. 1 Jan NEW YEAR CELEBRATION  
Arrive in 1988. Depart in 1989! Celebrate New Year at Lower Shaw Farm.

PLEASE NOTE = Subject to alteration. Full prog. available August.



Fresh eggs  
& goat's milk



Wholefood  
meals

For further details and booking form, SAE please to  
LOWER SHAW FARM, SHAW nr. SWINDON, Wilts (0193-771080)

## THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE

I cannot recall ever reading anything in the Newsletter about how members deal with the problem of violence. We cannot be the only home educators living in an area where being different can be a real problem for the children.

All the local children know that ours do not attend school and while most are friendly and interested, some are extremely hostile. Unfortunately, they express their hostility in a violent manner with stone throwing and physical attack. When the other children are in school, our children can wander freely, but when school is out we fear for their safety if they venture out alone. Yet how can they grow and develop fully without expanding their horizons and exploring their environment? Even within the confines of the garden they are not always safe and the presence of an adult is no guarantee of safety where a gang is concerned.

We deal with the problem as best we can. Firstly we always try to reason with the children involved. This rarely is successful if they are in a gang but can be quite successful if they can be approached individually and spoken to quietly and reasonably. Frequently, however, tempers are raging at the time of an incident and it is extremely difficult (and sometimes impossible) when the children are in danger, to stay calm and reasonable.

If reasoning does not work, mainly I suspect because it is looked on as weakness, then we try an approach to the parents. This can be downright risky with certain families. We have known parents who have immediately, on hearing of their child's misconduct, assaulted the offender for bringing trouble to their door, and yet others who scream abuse and threaten violence to us for daring to accuse their child. We have found the most sensible approach to be the female (preferably with baby in arms) knocking at the offender's door. This is usually quite disarming, except with the most aggressive. Sometimes the parents just don't care and say so.

Threats are rarely successful when dealing with these kids but occasionally the Police have to be called if only to try to diffuse the situation.

What do our children learn from this? Increasingly, we fear, they accept violence as the norm. My oldest child now argues that perhaps non-violence is not always appropriate and that sometimes violence is necessary for survival. It is becoming increasingly difficult to persuade them that taking the law into their own hands is wrong when they can so plainly see no other way of ensuring justice or peace. Sometimes a swift punch on the nose can work wonders with a persistent bully.

It is funny now to think of how we used to worry that our kids would never learn to socialise if they did not attend school, and now we worry that they mix too well and might adopt the ways of their peers. But we are not an island and have no wish to isolate the kids. After all, violence is not just a local issue but a world-wide problem that we must all learn to deal with, with no easy answers. We can only hope, as most parents do, that the home environment will prevail.

Laurie and Ron Watson, 23 Beaulieu Avenue, Dundee, Scotland

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NOTICE

From: Sue Stephenson, 1 College Road, Barrow-on-Humber, South Humberside

DN19 7ED

1. GCSE Contact List

John Mims of Thwaite Common, Erpingham - you didn't enclose an S.A.E. and your address looked too meagre to entrust a letter to, so please try again for your copy of the contact list!

2. Will Jennifer Doe(?) of Laceby near Grimsby please get in touch again with me on Barrow-on-Humber 30792.

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A NOT-VERY-SERIOUS "CURSE OF PARADOX"

by G.K. Chesterton

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"I curse Paradox -  
Those who dogmatise about the folly of dogma;  
Those who moralise about the non-existence of morals;  
Those who say people are too stupid to educate their children  
But not too stupid to educate other's: ..... "

Sent in by Norman & Judy Allan, 36 Thornly Park Drive, Paisley, Scotland

-000-

Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of the high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man. O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.

Proverbs 8.1-5

Deregistration (again)

Pip & John Rupik have a nice argument (August 1988, p. 24): that ceasing to attend school is unavoidable when starting home education, and that this enables one to fulfil the first condition of Pupils' Registration Regulation 4(a)(iii) (that the child should have ceased to attend school) without conflict with s.39 of the 1944 Act (that (s)he should attend regularly unless there is an unavoidable cause). However, it is unnecessary to pursue this line (which has never been tested in court), since the ruling in the Perry case makes it mandatory for an LEA to allow a child to leave school and for the parents to have a reasonable time to set up their home education (April 1988, p. 41).

LEAs do have the power to refuse deregistration, on the grounds that they are not satisfied with the home education. They have the right to bring a prosecution under s.39 without further warning, and initially they would almost certainly win. This is because there is no legal requirement to allow the argument that the child is receiving efficient education: it would be enough for the LEA to prove that the child had failed to attend school.

If the family were both strong and on legal aid, this might be a good thing. They could ask for a judicial review or appeal, and further useful rulings would be likely to emerge, e.g. that they should be entitled to give evidence as to their educational provision in court. Some families, though, cannot withstand this pressure - we had one recently who pleaded guilty because the LEA "nobbled" their solicitor. The solicitor advised them that if they contested the case, the LEA would inform the DHSS of a minor irregularity, and they would be summonsed for that. This is the only s.39 case which has come to court among the families we have helped since the legal group was set up 3½ years ago. We have stopped several other cases from reaching court. It usually takes more work than stopping a summons under s.37 (i.e. where a child is not registered and the LEA is not satisfied). Only under s.37 is the LEA obliged to convince "the reasonable man" that the child is not being educated.

Scots law is altogether simpler on this point. In the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 there is no explicit mention of registered pupils, but the education authority's consent to withdrawal of a child from school "shall not be unreasonably withheld" (s.35(1)). On the other hand, there are fewer safeguards where the authority is not satisfied with the education provided (s.37).

We are sorry if anyone understood us to imply that they could be summonsed under s.39 after years of home schooling: obviously we would reject it as absurd if an LEA should try it. But if your child's name has been illegally kept "on roll", you may find that after being left in peace for several years you suddenly receive a great deal of attention at the time of changeover to secondary education, when the school reminds the LEA of your child's existence. Alternatively you may resent hundreds of pounds being paid to a school which failed your child, while you get no financial help for putting the mess right. Where the LEA is being unreasonable in other ways, failure to deregister might form part of the basis for a complaint to the local ombudsman.

Education Welfare Officers

In order to save money some LEAs are using EWOs instead of advisers for routine visits to EO families. Up to now, members have been advised to insist on visits from inspectors/advisers rather than EWOs, so as to differentiate clearly between home education and welfare/truancy. However, where the

EO is aware of the law, and is sent out specifically to visit EOers, members are often very happy with them. We suggest that EO should be more flexible about this.

### Social Services Departments

In one area social services were threatening care for a school phobic girl, and her social worker was angry when she "escaped" into home education. She rang the home daily demanding details of curriculum, timetable, etc, trying to convince the mother that she could not do it. This went on until we complained about the pressure.

In another area the LEA were trying to justify being "not satisfied" with a family, and asked social services to back them up. Not only did they refuse to consider a care order, but since the family is remote from other experienced EOers, they sent a senior member of the department to support the family during LEA interviews, until better relations can be established.

As always, the moral is: don't generalise.

### Standard letters from LEAs

Berkshire LEA send a warning letter to parents of registered pupils who fail to attend school regularly. This letter refers to the duty of parents to secure their children's education "by regular attendance at school".

Monica Parsons has persuaded them to change the wording of their letter by inserting the words "or otherwise". She has also written an article on the change of wording for her local newspaper, in which she gives an explanation of "otherwise".

Several other people are working to change the wording of standard LEA letters. Please watch out for those which need changing and let us have copies.

Let us know if you feel able to bring the point up with your LEA, but don't do so without first discussing it with other local EOers in case they already have the matter in hand.

Lynette Cameron is no longer part of the legal group. We enjoyed working with her and are sorry she left us.

### Anna & Rob Wade

West London

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PEN FRIENDS .... PEN FRIENDS .... PEN FRIENDS .... PEN FRIENDS

My name is Ronnie Robertson. I am 12 years old. My interests are coins, reading, writing, swimming, drawing and computing.

I have just begun home educating and would like a pen pal of similar age.

22 Nethergate, Crail, Fife.

\*\*\*\*\*

Patrick Daly is 7 years old. He has recently been de-schooled and would like to hear from other EO children. He likes dancing, roller skating, Lego building and dinosaurs. His address is:-

Verrier House, 4a Northolme,  
Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 2JD

FOR THE KIDS' SAKE, AMATEURISE

I have never left anyone in doubt about what I am against. My friends - I still have a few - know what it is dangerous to talk about when I am of the company. I suppose you might call me an iconoclast without a delicate sense of the fine differences which some folk see between one icon and another. To me, if a thing has been chuntering on for a century, resisting radical change, as the school industry has, and if it appears to do more harm than good, the best place for it is the scrapyard. It probably has plenty of usable spare parts which might help a youngster to find his way in life, but they will be of no use unless he can get at them. For that, the system has to be pulled apart; deprived of its stifling coherence, its relentless preoccupation with predictability and assessment.

But am I in favour of anything, apart from bomb-throwing? Yes, I am for education, children, happiness, life and freedom - in no particular order. That is why I oppose schooling.

I honour the people in Education who want children to have a better life than their parents did. That is noble. It is the methods they use which spoil everything. Educators have spent 100 years fighting for professional respectability, for a place between the charmed parentheses now occupied by doctors, lawyers, accountants and architects. To achieve that good end they have had to evolve an expertise, to dignify the drilling and jawing, the thwarting and manipulation which teaching boils down to, with the name and quality of a science. We laughed when rat-catchers insisted on being called rodent management consultants, yet we solemnly accept teaching as a profession - even though we only pay decent wages to those within it who hardly ever practise.

The Jews, I feel, had the right idea. Until recent years, in the traditional communities of Europe (a tear for them) the "melamed" or teacher was a drunken, dissolute scoundrel whose only function was to take the odd few children whose fathers could not prepare them for their adult duty of reading the Law, and hammer literacy into them with whatever blunt instrument lay to hand. Like teachers today, they were poorly paid and despised, but unlike their modern counterparts no-one suggested that they constitute themselves masters of a sacred mystery. In a literate society, as Jewry was, everyone could teach and most parents made it their duty to do so to their own children. Only the fringe families needed teachers and a man who had no practical trade and could only earn his keep by selling his scraps of knowledge was, rightly, classed with the beggars.

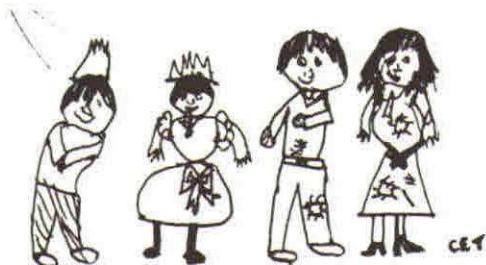
Good education cannot concern itself with programming or achieving a fixed goal. If you want to build a house, call in an architect and trust him with the plans. If you are ill, consult the doctor and let him use his skill to cure you. But if you want your child to grow up intelligent and resourceful you must abandon belief in professionals. Instead you must answer his questions and approve of his actions, only protecting him and others when the need arises. You must try, as far as possible to find out what makes him happy and let him do it. You must accept cheerfully his going a way which is not yours, following a belief or an interest which you reject. You must surround him with real love, not the cheap dishonest sort of love which can say "I am going to hurt you, frustrate you, insult you, for your own good, because I know that if I don't something awful will happen to you later". Unless that awful thing is certain death or injury, you are lying if you say this because you know nothing at all about your child's future; you haven't to live in it and you cannot be responsible for it if it is bad. Only the child can. This is common sense and it is so easy and pleasant to put into practice that no-one in his right mind would pay a person a living wage for doing it.

I suppose, in the end, I want to make the child the professional in the process of education. He or she is capable of learning to speak one or more languages unaided before the age of five. Surely he/she can handle the rest without our interference. I am for things which allow a child to become more competent. I oppose anything aimed at making him more competent when he/she doesn't want or need to be. Teachers, tutors and the like are wrong educationally when they do not offer information to the curious but only a series of tasks and memorisations followed by testing. Education ought not to be assessed by what it makes the child do or say during its course, but by what he/she does after it for the rest of his/her life.

I am only in favour of education which consistently produces happiness, competence and sociability from youth to old age.

The present system doesn't, so away with it!

Christopher R. Shute, 7 Kiln Way, Polesworth, Staffs. B78 1JF.



# GCSE NEWS

It seemed to me that the thing you would most like to know is how did the first people in EO to take the new exams get on this summer.

Sam Stephenson of Humberside took GCSE BIOLOGY this summer and his mother Sue writes:

Sam was keen to sit for an exam. Our friend who was teaching him Biology felt that his knowledge and understanding was well up to the fifth year level of pupils he had taught in school and was very interested to see how someone equivalent to only third year would do. So to enter him for GCSE Biology for June 1988 looked like an interesting experiment - we also wanted to see how the exam system worked for us before it became too important.

We opted to enter him with our 'home board' (for us Northern Examining Assoc.) so that he would be able to sit the exam at the local secondary school rather than have to travel to a centre far away, for instance, the nearest LEAG centre was a good one and a half hours away. The practical test he had to take to replace the continuous assessment of laboratory and experimental work was an unknown quantity. At the time of entering (February) the Board had no information to give about when where and what form this additional test would take and it wasn't till late May that they rang up to say it would be in Liverpool - a three hour journey! apparently of only 7 external candidates 5 lived in Liverpool. At least it was in the afternoon and we were able to drive him there and back in the same day.

Sam looked very calm compared to how I felt on the day of the first paper, seemingly as concerned about his sartorial image (there would be quite a few kids he knew in the exam room) as about answering the questions right! Luckily it was raining and he decided against wearing his homemade tropical fruit patterned Bermudas! The school were friendly and courteous, and the invigilators at the practical were helpful when some of the laboratory equipment did not work as it should have. Sam enjoyed the experience and got a grade 'D' not brilliant, but he has learnt a lot about what exams are like and how he may need to take things a little more seriously to get grades that reflect his knowledge more accurately.

What we hapless parents have learned is inconclusive. We still don't know how to choose which board. The SEG on the face of it well equipped to deal with external candidates but apparently only choosing centres AFTER they have had all the entries, so a fair bit of travelling maybe, for 2 or 3 papers in each of several subjects. Our home board? convenient for written papers but will we have to make a three hour trip for the extra paper each time?

One useful bit of info from the NEA we received only when we had requested an entry form despite quite a number of letters and phone calls all related to our interest in syllabuses, exams, specimen papers, etc. was a list of all the subjects available broken down so that it was for the first time quite easy to see which were the easiest for external candidates i.e. all exam papers and which were the hardest 100% coursework.

Alvena Hillier of Kingsbridge, Devon writes

"The results of GCSE have been satisfactory as far as we are concerned. We didn't receive the syllabi until Christmas 1987, but at that time my son didn't actually want to sit the exam, so that didn't matter as I was only planning to use them as a structure for study.

In February this year he suddenly decided he would attempt a couple of subjects, and we chose what we thought would be the least complicated; English Literature, English Language and British Government and Politics (Law wasn't ready in time). His main interest is Politics and as it is the subject of my degree I thought I could help him with that; and a friend of mine (ex-teacher from Scotland) was already helping him with English. I couldn't find any local schools who were using London for any of these subjects; Southern was 100% coursework so all schools had opted for this Board. It was interesting that one local authority knew exactly which school in its area was sitting what subject with which board and another LEA had no idea.

Someone eventually suggested Plymouth College of Further Education, and we had no problem from then on - my son could not have taken the exam at a younger age, he had to be 16 (his birthday was in the middle of the exams!). The College obviously deals with other Boards besides the ones used by its own lecturers, as our registration went so smoothly. We registered on the final day - £12.50 per subject plus £5 centre fee. The Registration Officer said he would try to put my son in a room where the other candidates were taking an exam of similar duration so that any disturbance would be minimal, and he apologised in advance if there was mild disturbance as candidates filed out quietly. In fact there was no problem. The Computer timetable for the exams came through in good time.

The English Language exam now has an oral element, and the College rang us to ask when it would be convenient for my son to attend. We said Tuesday was a good day and they telephoned back to make a date for that day at 6 pm. According to the information from London this oral would take place in a group and I thought we would have to travel to a centre, but this did not happen and my son had the exam on a one-to-one basis - a prepared talk (from notes if required) of about 5 minutes, and then a general chat. Quite a pleasant experience for my son and it was his first exam since he left primary school. He gained a Grade 1 pass.

His first written exam was English Language. I felt the papers were more difficult than the specimen papers, and my son didn't enjoy the exams, mainly I think because they were the first, and nerves combined with unfamiliarity, and he felt he hadn't done particularly well. Of course, he had nothing to gauge his performance by, and my friend who was helping him also felt very much in the dark. He gained a 'C' grade for this subject. He had to do some concentrated work for Literature. He had already read some of the books on the extremely comprehensive reading list, but hadn't touched any drama or poetry. He only had 3 months to 'do' Macbeth; some poetry appreciation and learn to answer exam questions at the required length. London allows candidates to take in the texts, but my son found he didn't have time to consult any, although he took them in. I thought the papers were fair, and the questions certainly general enough that they could be answered on

many levels, and a well read candidate could have a good chance to show well. My son used all the books he had studied in detail - 2 drama, 3 novels (all science fiction so he could compare, and two by the same author, George Orwell) and one short story. My son didn't feel he had done very well as he 'waffled' but he still achieved a 'B' grade.

He was looking forward to the Politics exam. These papers were most like the specimen papers and in fact a couple of questions were identical. He enjoyed these papers and got a 'B' grade. What he found very hard was getting back into the way of analysing material so that he could answer specific questions - the exam technique, in fact. I will not make the same mistake with my daughter, and will give her plenty of time to develop this skill. Robert's exam results reflect the fact that he got better as he went on!

He has now enrolled at the College of Further Education as a full-time student, to do 4 'A' levels - two the first year and another two the second year. These courses are usually reserved for 17+ year olds with 5 good 'O' level passes, but because he was home educated my son has been accepted as a special case - it is assumed that he can study and organise his time on his own. He is very keen to become a student at college - to join the student's union and talk modern music and politics, and it is the right time for him after five years at home. He hopes that it will be like a University course, with much discussion - time will tell. Although he could have pursued his studies at home, financially it would have been a burden, and I need to spend more time with my twelve year old daughter and two year old son, who have missed out these past hectic few months.

Although we didn't need textbooks for the 3 subjects we chose (we borrowed or bought the texts for English, all easily available, and a 'good' daily newspaper was almost all required for Politics backed by my own knowledge of the institutions). But for the other subjects for which I obtained the exam syllabuses, there was a lack of recommended books. In fact, some of the contact addresses given in the European Studies booklet were incorrect. It is in this area where I feel we are at a disadvantage. I am sure all the schools were bombarded with booklists by the educational book publishers, and I expect the teachers were able to discuss the relevant merits of specific books at their training days and agree to use the same ones. We at home who have less time have to spend more of it hunting around for books and we don't really know if we have the right ones until the exams come round! A centralisation of information in this area would be helpful. We know that the taking of exams has little value as a learning aid, but this was brought home to me during those three months of GCSE study when everything else went by the board and all the learning stopped. My son is attempting two more GCSEs this time as an internal candidate so there will be coursework involved. It will be interesting to compare the two different ways.

\* \* \* \* \*  
PHYSICS PRACTICAL CONFESSION  
In the GCSE Supplement of October 1987 I made at least one serious error - apologies. At Midland Examination Group (MEG) I said that all the Science subjects had alternative papers to the Practical Test for External candidates. While this appears to be true for Biology and Chemistry, for Physics at MEG you have to do a Practical Exam in a Laboratory.

#### FIND A CENTRE EARLY!

In February of this year I had many phone calls from people having difficulty at the last minute in finding centres which would accept them. This was partly due to the newness of the situation but I would urge that people get informed about this as early as possible. Contact all local places likely to be centres, colleges, evening institutes, schools, at the beginning of taking an exam course. Ask if they take external candidates, for what exam boards, and if for all subjects. On the basis of that you may decide to change syllabus at the beginning. If having trouble contact the examining boards and ask for help. Could those people who were having trouble last year please let us know how they got on.

#### TEXTBOOK AVAILABILITY

I have found that finding textbooks to choose from is quite a problem, you need a very good bookshop to get any choice at all. Most shops are like W H Smiths and have very little choice except in Revision Aids which could seem like textbooks till you get them home. The 'Work Out' series by Macmillan looks complete but in the introduction of some of them is a reference to a parallel series also by Macmillan (not so readily available) called the 'Mastering' series which has more comprehensive detail. E.g. in 'Work Out Statistics' it states that 'This book should be read in conjunction with 'Mastering Statistics''. However if you have say an 'O' level text not too out of date for the subject already the 'Workout' series might be enough to convert to the ideas of GCSE and give the extra support and because of high sales they seem to be relatively cheap and widely available. I have actually been able to borrow several of these from my local library. Examination Boards are not keen to recommend textbooks although some syllabuses have bibliographies, correspondence courses often are useful in recommending textbooks but it is still a very subjective thing and some correspondence course users are unhappy with the textbook recommended which they have invested money in and bought. The problem with ordering one through the Library is that you need a description of the book to order it first. One possible booklist which might be of some help is done by 'Books for Students Ltd' who publish a catalogue of paperbacks for school use called the 'Examinations Catalogue'. They supply books to schools by post and I don't know if they would accept orders from individuals but even just getting the catalogue might help as a booklist to order from the library etc. Address to send to for this is Books for Students Ltd, 58-64 Berrington Road, Sydenham Estate, LEAMINGTON SPA, Warwickshire, CV31 1BR.

#### MUSEUM SUPPORT

The Geological Museum in London has a series of about six booklets in topic form aimed at GCSE level loosely connected to Geology. The one I saw cost £1.50 and is Unit 5: Waste and the hole-in-the-ground problem. It is described as 'a problem solving exercise concerning the filling of abandoned brick pits, waste disposal being one of the options considered in detail' of particular interest to me as such a solution is being considered in my own village. It's intended use is for GCSE Science, Geology and Environmental Studies; and has links with Geography. Worth keeping an eye on Museum publications.

### I DON'T WANT TO GO INTO SCHOOL

I don't want to go into school today, Mum,  
I don't feel like schoolwork today.  
Oh, don't make me go into school today, Mum,  
Oh, please let me stay home and play.

But you must go to school, my cherub, my lamb.  
If you don't it will be a disaster.  
How would they manage without you, my sweet?  
After all, you are the headmaster!

- by Colin McNaughton

from a very good book called "THERE'S AN AWFUL LOT OF WEIRDOS IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD" and subtitled "A Book of Rather Silly Verse and Pictures".

Submitted by Mandy Skinner, Lavender Lodge, Old Rydon Lane, Exeter

-oOo-

### ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION IN IRELAND

Dara Mulloy organised a successful conference on the Alternatives in Education during his annual protest against the exam. system. One of the highlights was a Home Education Day. Many families gathered expressing the usual doubts and fears - but a good few were into "schools" of one shape or form. Nevertheless, most people and children enjoyed it and found it worthwhile. We gratefully acknowledge the £10 EO donated towards publicising the event.

Members in Ireland might like to know that the court case here in Mayo is going to the Supreme Court for a definition of "suitable education".

Now, I no longer feel representative of EO members here so please would someone else volunteer to take over as co-ordinator? I am still prepared to help with legal problems but want to devote more time to our family.

Clare Weber - Co-ordinator  
for Ireland. Furnace, Newport, Co. Mayo.

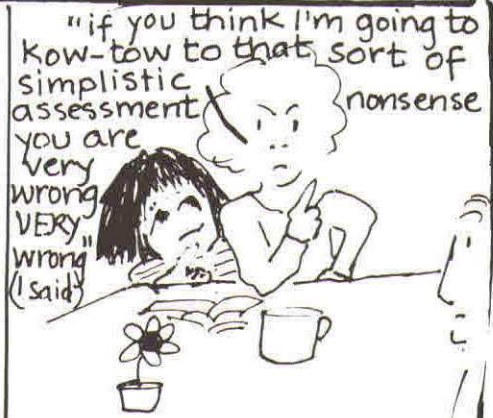
-oOo-

For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

Proverbs 8.11

# EDUCATING ARCHIE by **SEG**

Telling it How it Was ~



In the last newsletter I wrote something of how Felix has learned primary maths without any coercion. I could only give snatches of what went on, culled from notes and reports at the time, but it looked easy, and in one sense it has been. There have been no battles of will, no tantrums and upsets, our tempers and blood pressure stayed calm, and we all enjoyed what we did. Autonomous learning is about children only learning what they want and when they want, trusting them to know their own needs, but I don't think it's about parents sitting back and doing no more than they feel like. It's selling children short if maths is only going shopping and weighing out ingredients in the kitchen.

To make choices, children have to know what is available. Parents have to think ahead so that they are aware of what is possible, and they have to be sensitive to what it might be appropriate to offer at a specific moment. It takes a lot of effort occasionally, but it's effort that is very enjoyable and rewarding. At some point most families will need the support of a maths course, but the education doesn't have to stop being free. A course can still be used flexibly, with supplements and digressions, omissions and elaborations, to suit the child.

"But if I don't make them do it, what if they never get around to it?"

If a child is young and has not had maths spoiled by bad experiences, it is usually a matter of presenting it differently, tackling a different area, and above all considering your own attitude. No small child is going to refuse to blow bubbles with you, and see how many different things can be used to do so. I don't like to differentiate between work and play, or ever to make them feel it's time they stopped playing and learned to work. When Felix told his teacher that school didn't leave him enough time to play, she was very scathing, told him he was lazy and that it was about time he realised that he was growing up and that that meant hard work. Other children in reception classes have the opposite complaint, that it's boring because it's all play. Children learn through play, and work hard at their play, but they have to have access to the right activity for them at that moment.

If you try to get numberwork in on the sly, you're telling them it's something nasty to avoid. It can just be offered openly like everything else. If you take delight in the three year old who wants to count everything, and help them do it their way, even if it makes supper late, if maths is important to you and pulls you from the kitchen sink and makes you forget bedtime, a child is likely to enjoy it as a way of relating to you. All learning is emotionally charged. If there's no emotion, there's no learning. That's how so many children manage to learn so little in school, and how children who are free can learn so much with so little effort - as long as it is at the right time for that child.

There can be other difficulties at an early age though. For one mother, maths was a source of anxiety, a subject she would never have touched if she hadn't felt she should help her children. (There was a book on maths phobia a year or two ago - can anyone give the reference?) A child will usually pick up this dislike, however well disguised, but she avoided spoiling maths for the children, and helped herself. She admitted that this was something she didn't know much about, restricted herself rigidly to the level of the two very young children so as to disassociate maths from her traumatic school experiences, and learned together with them. She went step by step, usually behind rather than in front of the children, supplying the equipment and the clear spaces of time. They enjoyed her company and

attention, the total lack of pressure, and drew her along in their explorations until gradually she grew through the damage that had been done to her. Caring for a child can get us to face all sorts of things.

Another mother got a full maths scheme for her children, as she did not feel she had been well enough taught to help them, and they are all enjoying it. Her children like to stick exactly to the instructions, and stop and do every suggested activity as they go along. One of them has got up early on occasion to get on with it, and the little one is racing through it to try and catch up with the bigger ones. Although she was weak on maths (less so now), her strong point is her overflowing enthusiasm and delight in home education, and watching how her children are thriving in this situation.

Several EO families report that a lot of "spontaneous" maths occurs when it is suggested that children might wash, wash up, tidy their rooms or go to bed.

Although school children are expected to sit and work through maths books independently, very few home educated children are happy to do so, and some parents feel guilty over this. They feel their child ought to have reached this stage, since it is expected in school, and that the child is playing up, exploiting the easier situation, and failing to become sufficiently independent - a frequent worry because a frequent accusation from outsiders. Or the parents may feel they are to blame for failing to provide the right guidance.

This is yet another area in which I feel children are pressured to perform too early. Some children love writing and doing sums, especially if they are copying older siblings, and some children like to work independently at an early age, but the majority do not, and I do not feel they should be expected to. We make demands on them which schools do not: that they should be responsible for their learning, in essence, though we do not burden them with a conscious awareness of this at primary age. We should be available for support in areas where they want it, for as long as they feel they need it. Workbooks are useful where a parent does not feel confident to tackle an area unaided, but they should not deprive a child of a parent's company and teaching. I do not think that writing necessarily reinforces learning - it can often block it, especially where a child dislikes writing and resents the assignment as a chore. I prefer to work orally, so that it all seems easier to the child and they feel they are getting through it. Writing is so laborious to many of them, and progress seems so slow. If a child has difficulty grasping a point, there is no virtue in slowing them down by adding the difficulty of writing. It is better to slow them down with related concrete activities until they are quite at home in that topic. It is often better still just to leave it for a few weeks or months, and then reintroduce it in a more imaginative way.

Some families seem to have a problem with maths similar to dyslexia, and possibly in combination with it. The problem is likely to be with calculation rather than with concepts, though there may be other areas of difficulty such as mapwork and logical sequencing. Some people believe in training such children systematically from an early age, to compensate for an apparent inborn cognitive deficit. Others prefer to avoid formal work, with all the difficulty and failure associated with it for these children, until their neural pathways have matured enough to make it easier for them. Still others refuse to accept it as a neurological problem, but consider it to be just the result of bad teaching or a family tradition that "we can't do maths". Usually, by the time such a problem is obvious, it has been complicated by several factors. If the child is young, I see no great philosophical difficulty - just continue the play activities, practical work and talking until they are ready to transfer it to paper, probably at a rather late age. This might entail extra effort from the parents in record-

keeping and writing reports to keep an LEA happy. Outside help might be useful if the parents both had these difficulties themselves, but I am wary of maths tutors - even if they are more skilled than you are, they are not likely to be as tuned in to your child, especially if you have an awkward, sensitive or particularly individual child. If you have a willing friend, it can be more useful to have a regular discussion with them, going over what you did last month, what worked and what didn't, and what you might offer during the coming month. (Having said that, I have just heard of a boy, very good at maths, who has found a marvellous tutor, a lecturer who is completely on his wavelength; like the boy, the tutor suffered for years from school phobia, and is determined to give him all the help he needs.)

It may be useful to separate the formation of numbers from written work, and tackle it earlier, almost as an art form. If a child has to write down a phone number or a price, and does so in illegible and immature figures, it is likely to call forth critical comments from adults with whom they come into contact, and this can create further negative emotion around maths. We did a series of number boards with a huge number in the middle of each. All around the outside we stuck pictures of sets of things, anything associated with the number, and different forms of the number. A child might be encouraged to take an interest in design and typography, and to cut out and draw different styles of numbers and stick the best on such boards. A good hand will provide late developers with protective camouflage and give them a chance to mature without pressure.

I said that for us maths has, in one sense, been easy. It has also been demanding though, and it certainly hasn't all been plain sailing. There were several points at which maths could have been seriously blocked for Felix, and he is not unusually sensitive. Apart from the initial decision to withdraw him from school, it was mainly a combination of luck and non-action which enabled each problem to dissolve. The thing which helped him most was letting him set the pace, with lots of play, drama, music and gymnastics. Sometimes, usually when cuddled up securely in bed with us, he would whizz through a topic, and I would wonder if he should slow down, give himself time to digest it and consolidate, but he would resist that and go on eagerly to the next thing. At other times I would be frustrated because he was so slow, as he sang or acted out an answer, climbed around or stood on his head while he thought about something (but still wanted my attention, which seemed to help him concentrate), or branched out into yet another discussion which might or more likely might not be relevant to what I had in mind. It was hard work not to be impatient and single minded, and to keep on giving him attention in the non-active way he often wanted, instead of sliding out of the situation and picking up a book of my own, or switching off and thinking my own thoughts.

Some children, though, especially older ones taken out of school in distress, hate maths. There may also be some who, despite appropriate stimulation, just have no taste for the subject and find no pleasure in these ideas. Maths should not be forced on people. Although it is at the heart of life, and civilisation is so dependent on it, most of it is as useful to ordinary people as Latin: an intellectual game, a cultural asset, an academic foundation, but not one of everyday life's essentials.

If they are not forced to do maths, they may come round to tolerating it, but if they are forced they certainly won't, and you may not succeed in instilling the bare essentials. If they are encouraged to develop their abilities in other areas, calculation may come more easily later, especially if there is some innate difficulty and developmental delay. There is a minimum which is useful for survival, and when they have had time to get over school damage most of them will grit their teeth and struggle through it. They will value your support in helping them to persevere, but the

responsibility for deciding to do it must be theirs, even though you help them to face up to it and understand what is involved. They don't have to be competent by any particular age, as long as it's by the time they leave home. They may not do it until they're sixteen, and free of school pressure. Sometimes the LEA is a factor which helps them face up to reality, but sometimes their threats are another complication and burden. Sometimes an inspector is understanding and helpful.

One person still loathes maths, after several years out of school, despite an obvious ability for that type of thinking. He has decided to do enough work to pass GCSE, but most of his intellectual activity of that sort goes into musical theory. In the same way, another person rejects art and music and puts all his creativity into maths. No-one has time to do everything, and these seem to be reasonable choices. It is heartbreaking, though, when bright children close their minds against all intellectual activity because of the harm done in school. What do you offer to a girl who loves craftwork but walks out of the room where her friend is curve stitching, because she perceives the mathematical content?

This particular girl was blocked like this for several years without being conscious of the cause of the problem. Recently, though, she told her mother of an episode at school. She had been forced to kneel for a long time on a cold stone floor at the front of the class, and to write her sums on a low table. She was afraid to ask to leave the room, and eventually wet herself. Her mother helped her to understand, and to let go of the associations between maths and her shame and anger. She is now able to do a little work herself, and helps her young brother who constantly pesters "Mum, do maff" with great enthusiasm. As he is a year or two younger than she was at the time of the trauma, he can take her back to her pre-school confidence, and hopefully she will grow out of the problem along with him.

In conclusion, here is our personal booklist:

Teach your baby maths, by Glen Doman.

Let's play maths, by Michael Holt and Zoltan Dienes. Penguin, 1973. I've often seen this recommended in booklists, but have only just read it and regret not having done so earlier. It really is good.

Humphrey the number horse, by Rodney Peppe. Methuen, 1978. Meant for very young children. Gives an insight into multiplication tables, especially if you read it to children at the stage when they want a book over and over again. (But don't try and get them to learn the tables, at least at this point.) Published with board covers and also in paperback.

How did we find out about numbers? by Isaac Asimov.  
A first history of maths.

Usborne introduction to maths [and many other titles].  
Love them or hate them. Catalogue from Usborne Publications Ltd,  
20 Garrick Street, London WC2E 9BJ.

Anno's hat tricks and Anno's three little pigs, both by Anno Mitsumasa and Akihiro Nozaki.  
Picture books on logic and combinatorial analysis respectively. Expensive but good.

"Investigating" series (shapes, sets, volume, area, etc), by Ed Catherall.  
Wayland, 1982 and 1983.  
Typical of good topic and project books.

Mathematics, by Irene Fekete and Jasmin Denyer. Orbis, 1984.  
Typical of an expensive, lavishly illustrated background book you might borrow from a library.

Bubbles, by Bernie Zubrowski. Boston : Little, Brown & Co., 1979.  
Exciting ideas with bubbles.

Kubic bubbles. Not a book, but a kit you can get in toy shops. Straws and connectors to make geometric frames which you can make bubbles on. Made by Cochrane Ltd of Oxford.

The Beaver book of brain ticklers, by Charles Booth-Jones.  
A first book of easy brain teasers.

Mathematical puzzles and diversions, by Martin Gardner. Penguin, 1965  
From the column in Scientific American. Many sequels. Try any of them.

Think of a number, by Johnny Ball. BBC, 1979.

The book of the TV series. All his TV programmes are fun.

Make shapes and Mathematical curiosities. Tarquin.  
Two series, each of three booklets. Mathematical models to copy or cut out and glue. Tarquin Publications are at Stradbroke, Diss, Norfolk.

Paper engineering, by Mark Hiner. Tarquin, 1985.  
Working models of ten pop-up book mechanisms to make. Applied geometry?

Polyhedron models, by Magnus J. Wenninger. Cambridge U.P., 1971.  
A catalogue of 119 geometrical solids with instructions on how to make them, together with a useful introduction. For those who want to take them seriously. About £10 in paperback.

The graphic work of M.C. Escher. Pan, 1975.  
Reproduction with notes by the artist.

M.C. Escher kaleidocycles, by Doris Schattschneider and Wallace Walker. Tarquin, 1982.  
Models to cut out and make up, based on Escher's designs. Some of them rotate like hexaflexagons.

Adventures with impossible shapes, by Bruno Ernst. Tarquin, 1986.

Gödel, Escher Bach. 1979 and Metamagical themas. 1985, both by Douglas R. Hofstadter.

The mind's I, edited by Hofstadter and Daniel C. Dennett. 1981.  
Not exactly what you'd call primary, and not exactly limited to maths. Expensive. Borrow from library until convinced.

Images of infinity By Ray Hemmings and Dick Tahta. Leapfrogs, 1984.  
Second of a series which "aims to enable people to get inside different areas of maths". £6.95 paperback.

Back to basics, by Michael Nathenson. Fontana, 1985.  
A book of maths and English tests. £2.95.

Tables trail, by Charles Cuff. Longman  
Workbook with various exercises and games.

Maths counts and Make it count. BBC  
Both books of the series, the first aimed at semi-numerate teenagers, the second at innumerate adults.

Various schemes and teacher's resource books. (Ask to see them in your Teachers' Centre.) E.g.

Mathematics for schools, by Howell, Walker & Fletcher. Addison-Wesley

Peak maths scheme. Nelson

School Mathematics Project. Cambridge U.P.

# ELECTRONICS CORNER...

FILE + COLLECT

NUMBER 4 IN A SERIES

## HOW TO MAKE A NOISE...

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED...

(IN ADDITION TO PARTS AND COMPONENTS ITEMIZED IN PT'S 1, 2 & 3.)

- (A) SMALL SPEAKER (IMPEDANCE 8Ω SUITABLE BUT YOU CAN EXPERIMENT) \_\_\_\_\_ x 1
- (B) RESISTOR (AT LEAST 1/3 WATT) 1KΩ \_\_\_\_\_ x 1  
(BROWN · BLACK · RED)
- (C) CAPACITORS (ELECTROLYTIC OR NON-ELECTROLYTIC WILL DO) 0.1 μF \_\_\_\_\_ x 2  
'MICROFARAD'

(NOTE... EXTEND LEGS / TERMINALS OF (A) + (C) WITH 100 MM OF INSULATED WIRE.)

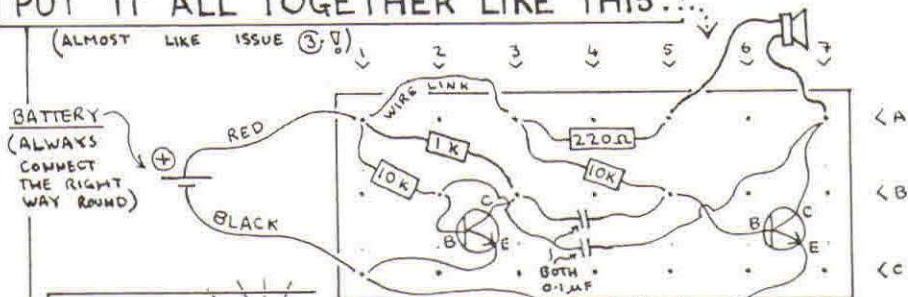
NON-ELECTROLYTIC CAPACITORS... ISSUES (1) + (3) REFERRED ONLY TO 'ELECTROLYTIC' CAPACITORS, - USUALLY USED WHERE HIGHER CHARGES ARE BEING STORED. TO STORE SMALLER CHARGES WE USUALLY USE NON-ELECTROLYTIC TYPES...

SYMBOL

TYPICAL APPEARANCE (CONNECT LEGS ANY WAY ROUND)

### PUT IT ALL TOGETHER LIKE THIS...

(ALMOST LIKE ISSUE (3) !)



CHEQUE FOR £1.25p TO CHRISTOPHER THOMPSON (W/ 6, PARKDALE ROAD, PLUMSTEAD, LONDON SE18 1R)

### SPEAKERS...

SYMBOL

TYPICAL APPEARANCE

(CONNECT ANY WAY ROUND)

NEXT TIME...

HOW TO MAKE IT...

LIGHT SENSITIVE!

WILL DELIVER ALL EXTRA PARTS WITH MODIFICATIONS DONE

## POLYDRON - 3-D GEOMETRIC CONSTRUCTION TOY

I'd like to write recommending a product I've just come across. It's a 3-D geometric construction toy called Polydron. Younger children enjoy playing with it and making their own shapes. Even my 2 year old is adept at making simple shapes like pyramids and cubes. The 5 year old makes quite complex shapes and Dad enjoys putting together stellated icosahedrons, so I'd say it has a wide interest range!

Apart from the pleasure the polydron set gives the children (they play with it most days, far more than anything else) it also is a really useful Maths aid. It can be used to teach tessellations, nets, making 3-D shapes, symmetry, Euler's formula and I'm sure many other things. The basic sets have just triangles and squares and can be bought from Early Learning. Pentagons are available from E. J. Arnold. Their main U.K. distributor is Mr. Peter Berglas, Gonis U.K. Ltd, Imperial House, Willoughby Lane, London N17 0SP.

I believe hexagons and 2 different rhombus shapes will be available later this year. They won the 1985 Design Award and I'd really recommend this toy. They have teachers' notes available too, which have some good ideas.

Kris Harris, 454 Green Lane, New Eltham, London SE9 3TG

-c00-

## TALKING ABOUT SCHOOL

"Most teaching prevents learning" - BRIAN BEHAN, talking on Radio 4, 20th May 1988

"Most schools talked me out of everything I wanted to do - the system destroys the talent." - ROLF HARRIS, ditto

"I suppose I disliked most of it ... We learned competitiveness, to fear authority, to realise that to beat the system you have to join it." - MARC BOXER, BBC documentary, 24.8.88

"It's ruined at least 3 years of my life."

"It really creates bitterness in you if you're a poet or an artist."

- current 6th Form pupils at Berkhamstead School, BBC TV, 24th August 1988.

Sarah Guthrie, Diss, Norfolk

# Notices

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## NEW TREASURER?

The appointed auditors for this year's accounts have informed me that by virtue of our income, EO needs to be registered for VAT almost immediately. This will initially include the preparation of quarterly accounts in addition to our present annual one, and hence an increased workload on the Treasurer.

Despite taking on the position only since March of this year, I feel that this extra burden of work is more than either my family or I can bear. I therefore wish to resign at the earliest opportunity and request that anyone who feels able to fill the post will please contact me as soon as possible. Subject to his/her approval by the Steering Committee, VAT registration can then be effected with his/her involvement and the accounts handed over.

David Bettie, 56 Goodwin Road, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 0JJ. Tel. 0842-583260

\*\*\*\*\*

We are an EO vipassana family living in south Suffolk and interested to contact and meet other like families.

Lindsey & Michael Green  
27 Fair Green Cottages  
Glensford, Suffolk  
Tel. Sudbury 281253

Jon & Cheryl Freeman have moved from Weymouth to 98 Wykes Road, Exeter, Devon EX1 2UD. Tel: 30451. They would welcome contact with EOers. Their children are Rouben (3½) and Alysa (2). Jon and Cheryl are both gardeners and their interests include spinning/weaving, painting and sociology/politics.

## ACCOMMODATION OFFERED

### HELP!

We are looking for a home to rent in a more understanding neighbourhood. Malcolm (9) and Stuart (15) are both EO and need space to expand. We will consider anything that is reasonably priced. Husband disabled. However, could give support in return if required.

Sandy & Rosemary Harvey  
8 Barningham Road  
Newsham, Richmond  
N.Yorkshire DL11 7QT  
Tel. 0833-21419

Accommodation offered by EO family with four children, from Winter 1988, in large house in the beautiful North Devon village of Hartland. Own large bedroom and share the rest of the house. Would suit single parent with one or two children. Non-smoker essential and no dogs.

Telephone Topsham 7576 if you are interested.

At 3½ Amy is losing most of her friends to schools next term. As we intend to "EO", this is an ideal opportunity to make EO friends in the Ipswich area. Anyone interested please contact:-

Sandy Howse - Ipswich 712815

## DOWN WITH THE MYTHOCRACY!

I started to write one of my usual articles, all high style and propaganda, when I saw quite clearly that people don't read that sort of thing. I want to speak to more than the occasional reader, because I am afraid for the youngsters whose minds our schools are ruining. Therefore I set about trying to put down something important in simple terms.

I decided to look at the myths of modern education. I mean the ideas which almost everybody in the school industry thinks are "right" or "progressive". Many of them really are right and progressive; nevertheless, the way we use them often turns them into myths.

The trouble with education is, I believe, that the people who run it want society to treat them as "professionals". That means, in crude terms, that they want the world outside schools to think that there is a special knowledge which only teachers have. The truth is that education is just thoroughly satisfied curiosity and treating children as we want them to treat us., but no-one would pay a professional salary to a person for working out that idea.

In short, teachers want education to be like medicine, an exact science, with special principles and methods which only certain people know.

This is wrong. Good education has been going on outside schools and without the professionals since mankind began. I would even argue that it is compulsory schooling which has spoiled the natural goodness and decency of ordinary folk and made so many young parents hate their children to the point of wanting to beat or kill them. God made us all able to educate our children. We all have a natural instinct which teaches us how to make life good for our children, if we only listen to our hearts instead of our rule-books.

What are the myths of modern education? And how have the professionals created them?

The myth of mixture is a very strong one. It amounts to this: it is always better to merge things which ordinary people tend to keep apart. School mix together boys and girls without trying to discover whether they want to be mixed. It is simply more "modern" to put both the sexes into the same classroom: therefore it must be good for them. Some schools mix ages too. They say it helps to develop a sense of responsibility towards their younger classmates. It might, but unless the children accept and understand the reason for it, it only annoys those children who are still at an age when they want to be with their own sex. Mixture only "works" in the way we intend it to if the children know what it is for and are happy with it. Unfortunately we never ask them.

We use the same myth of mixture when we think about the subjects we teach and the ability of the children. We have come to believe that we should rub put the dividing lines between subjects, and mix all levels of "ability" in the classroom. Personally, I have no doubt that rigid

.../ subjects and streaming are often bad for the pupils. I'm not complaining about these ideas as ideas. What I do say is that none of them are good just because we, the clever ones, feel that they are. They only work if the children like them and feel comfortable about them. If children are intimidated by seeing their friends succeeding where they have failed, they would be better off in a "streamed" class. If they are struggling with one set of simple ideas it does not necessarily help them if we bang on over their heads about "integration".

Another potent myth is that doing things together is better than working alone. The professionals say that children "need" to learn how to "co-operate" and that being forced into large working groups is a good way to make them do so. It is true to say that a child who cannot bear to live and work with others may have an unhappy life. Yet any teacher who thinks honestly about his own pupils will admit that being in a large group does not usually make that kind of child any more sociable. In fact, it often locks them more firmly into a state of chronic apprehension.

Worse still, the myth of groups is an absurdity in the average school because of the contrary myth that a good teacher is one who can stop his pupils communicating with each other. Classes, groups and sets are not, and cannot be good places in which to learn free, humane co-operation. In the end, the teacher's need to survive decides everything else in the classroom. Children learn to co-operate outside. Their ancient traditions teach them what no professional ever can. Watch young children playing the old, old games by complex rules with elaborate traditional checks and balances if you don't believe me. Our children already learn to co-operate without our help. It just takes time and maturation. We need to be patient and tolerant of their growth problems. For that the myths of the professionals are useless.

There is another myth, widespread and damnable. It says that if there is a problem in society - drugs, promiscuity or violence, say - all we need to do is get the professionals to run school courses on it. Despite the fact that there is not one crumb of evidence that this method works we still hold to it. This suggests to me that many people think of schools in a semi-religious way. Just as idol-worshippers felt they had to go on praying even when nothing happened, because they thought prayer ought to work if they were fervent enough about it. So our society puts its trust in teaching because, even if it doesn't make one iota of difference to what really happens, it looks as if it might, if only we could do it for long enough and with the right amount of determination.

This sort of thinking is subversive and dangerous, of course. It leads to such questions as these:-

- a) Can it be right to send children to nursery schools; after all, by doing so you are putting them into a large group of socially incompetent people who cannot speak their language properly? Surely at nursery age children need to be with a very small, safe group of people who can help them to speak well by giving them plenty of accurate speech to listen to - in other words, their family and especially their parents!

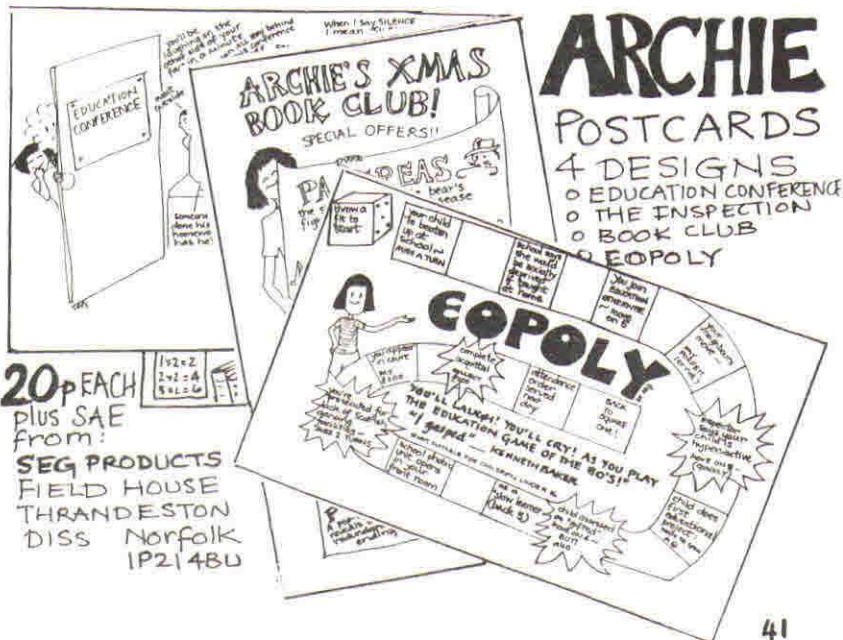
- b) If some children prefer single-sex grammar schools because they happen to want to study the traditional curriculum in the company of their own sex, should we not let them? (I wanted this desperately and enjoyed it immensely.)
- c) We want our children to be enthusiastic and happy in their learning so that they will go on doing it when we have finished "educating" them. Why, then, must we spend so much time and energy in making them do things which they don't like and which give them no pleasure at all?

Myths are always easier to live with than reality because they sound right, and they save us from the ticklish duty of thinking for ourselves. They stop things from changing, even when they really need to do so. Away with them!

Christopher R. Shute, Staffordshire

KENT & SUSSEX RESOURCE FUND

- It is the aim of Kent and Sussex co-ordinators to have a resource fund to help pay for:- a resource centre, regional and local gatherings, hiring tents at such gatherings where necessary, a combined Kent and Sussex Newsletter etc. But we need your help.
- We intend to raise the funds by going to boot fairs.
- Do you have any bric-a-brac, unwanted items? Could you donate any for us to sell at the boot fairs? Would you be willing to go to a boot fair?
- If you can help in any way, contact: Sue Petszart - Crowborough(0892)661319  
or Lois Cook - Herne Bay (0227) 367059



# Letters

Dear EO,

For several years we lived in Southend. My husband went to work, I stayed home to teach the children. The children would sometimes get together with other children when they came home from school and during holidays. Our lives have changed a lot since December. We now live in a lovely village and we run a shop that is open seven days a week. It is not easy to run a shop and teach the children but we manage.

There is however a slight problem. There are very few children in our village. I do not drive, so cannot get to meetings. Before you mention public transport, the nearest train station is eight miles away and buses only one an hour. Therefore we would like to offer an open invitation for anybody that would like to visit us, for an hour or a whole day. Meals can be provided. Our children are Richard aged 13 and George aged 11. We have two dogs and a budgie. There is a children's park to the back of us, with swings, etc. We can walk through the woods or over the downs. We have two gardens. Or if so wished we could stay in the house. So please ring if you would care to visit us.

Mrs. P.A. Ivings, Forge Stores, 170 The Forge, West Dean,  
Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0RX Tel: Singleton 259

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Dear EO,

This will be my third attempt at getting published a huge "Hello!" and "Thank you" to the Beagley family for their wonderful rendition of Burglar Bill on the second day of their tour back in April. We loved Melissa's drawing of our gypsy caravan and our family increased by three a few weeks ago when some of the stick insect eggs Melissa and Saffron gave us hatched out!

Also an equally big "Hello!" to the Slippery Fish Puppet Theatre, alias the Hargreaves family - Sally and John with "kids" Claudie and Anna - who are travelling the country in their beautiful bow-top gypsy caravan pulled by Cleo the mare with companion Hazel the goat. Once heading for Scotland, now heading south along the quieter roads of England, stopping occasionally to give puppet shows from their caravan. Look out for them. They like meeting other EO families and are an extremely thought-provoking and lovely family.

Lisa Hall Davy, Judgement Cottage, Leddington, Dymock, Glos.

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25 Wyndham Road  
Dover  
Kent CT17 0BH

Dear E.O.,

I have now been EOing with my son Matthew, who is 13 years old, for 18 months, and have attended EO National Gatherings at Milton Keynes and Unstone Grange, so I felt it was time I made a contribution to the newsletter.

EO is the best thing which has ever happened to us. After suffering for many miserable years in school, Matthew now follows a home-schools programme. It wouldn't suit everyone in EO, but it is working well for us, and it has given us the confidence we needed to go ahead with EO. He also likes playing on his computer, playing the guitar, and going swimming. He goes to woodwork class one evening a week, where he has made several wooden bowls and a tray, as well as joints and learning how to use the various tools and equipment.

We are great animal lovers and have quite a vast collection of pets. Now that Matthew doesn't go to school he can spend more time with them. We also love the countryside and appreciate having more time to take the dogs for long country walks.

I do not need to tell readers of this newsletter how much pleasure can be had by spending time with your children. Childhood passes all too quickly. When my children were younger, I used to spend a lot of time reading to them. Using a different voice for each character in the story makes reading and listening more interesting. Try a light, soft voice for a fairy or a little girl and adjust it for men's deeper voices. When your children reach five or six, play a game of reading one paragraph or sentence each, stressing that you don't speak in a flat monotone, but that the voice rises and falls. They'll find it fun, and you won't get bored with the monotonous tone that some teachers seem to accept.

Attending an EO National gathering was quite a new experience for us. Milton Keynes was our first one, so I think from all accounts, that we jumped in at the deep end! Nevertheless, we both thoroughly enjoyed that weekend, as well as the one at Unstone Grange. I would like to say 'Thankyou' to everyone who put so much effort into making those weekends a success, and thank you Kay for showing me how to do my hair - it's much better now! We are looking forward to meeting all our EO friends at Featherstone Castle in September.

Best wishes and happy EOing,

Pam Stevenson 25 Wyndham Road, Dover, Kent CT17 0BH

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Dear EO,

The Education Information Assistant from the BBC has written to me to say that the decision to package the publications in packs of 5 was taken by BBC Enterprises Ltd. and that he had passed my letter on to them. When I hadn't had a reply after four or five weeks I wrote again and this same gentleman rang me up to say that he was concerned that a number of people teaching their children at home had the same problem. He also said that it was too late to do anything about it this year but if enough people wrote asking for single booklets to be made available, this policy may be changed next year.

If you want to write to the BBC about this, here is the address to use - BBC Enterprises Ltd., Woodlands, 80 Wood Lane, London W12 0TT, for the attention of the Schools Publications Manager.

Jan Miller, Saith Ffynnon, Downing Road, Whitford, Holywell, Clwyd

Dear EO,

I joined EO some years ago with my teenage daughter who was having problems tolerating the secondary school system after growing up in New Zealand, where she went to alternative schools (based on A.S. Neill's ideas). At that time we were also suffering two years in a bed and breakfast hotel before we finally got a council flat in Portslade, Brighton, where we spent a year struggling with the dismal vibes of the surroundings and trying to be as self-sufficient as possible, growing as much as we could on an allotment and making our own bread, etc. in order to afford ballet classes. However, when Jo turned 16 she also opted out of ballet and we came to Glastonbury to have a good break from our depressing existence. And we have been here since, almost a year now.

Jo quickly became very independent and I met someone rather special, in an alternative Krishna house here. We had a growing problem there as I had a somewhat liberating influence on Michael instead of becoming a devotee myself, until we were finally thrown out. This happened at a particularly difficult time though, when I was about one month pregnant and suffering rather badly from lack of energy.

We have been living in a tent since then, at present in a friend's back garden where we have been for some time. Glastonbury must be one of the most difficult places to find somewhere to live and the council would only put us in a bed and breakfast hotel in Warminster and not house us till after the baby is born (Christmas - New Year), so we decided to look elsewhere, Wales or North perhaps.

We are vegans and very health conscious, and really want to grow food and live closer to nature. We are quite happy to live communally as long as we can have a quiet space and some privacy and no religious trips.

If anyone can help us please contact us c/o Paola Brocca, 37 Selwood Road, Glastonbury. Tel: 35094.

Marianne George and Michael Morgan

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Sitting here sipping my coffee looking over the way to the nuclear power station clearly visible today, like some temple of the gods as compared to some homeless families but of course it's concealing fires of hell under its respectable facade (reminds me of the LEA here).

I was wondering about being privileged as I am here books and software and hardware are donated to me. Have you any idea of the poverty that surrounds you those of you who are eager to charge more for being part of E.O? Couldn't costs be reduced instead? On D.H.S.S. we don't eat a decent meal a day as it is.

Ranald

Dear EO,

We are new members of EO, living at present here in Scotland. Actually, we have been considering home education since our eldest child, Priya was born (she is now almost six). This was mostly due to our own negative experiences of the school system (mine in a Dublin convent and my husband's in a Glasgow comprehensive).

When we moved to Scotland last September we decided to let Priya try school for herself and see how she got on. Earlier this year we came to the conclusion that if things went on she might end up illiterate. She went in confident and mature, able to read and understand basic maths and she was turning out self-conscious and aggressive, and had seriously regressed in her speech and her artwork, which had always been her strong point.

We joined EO some months ago and informed the school and LEA of our intentions. To cut a long story short, we have now received permission to let Priya receive her education at home. I have Montessori training and I plan to follow Priya's natural interests as I feel that generally the school atmosphere is stagnant and very little real learning goes on there, considering the amount of time spent in the classroom.

I would be glad to hear from anyone who is using home education for this age group and also if anyone in this area is considering it I could provide them with the details of the process I had to go through, as I was sent detailed notes of the meetings with the advisor and educational psychologist. Our interests are home education, vegetarianism, the study and practice of the vedas, sanskrit, yoga, etc. I appreciate the help and support of EO. Brenda Holliday provided me with reassuring advice while I was waiting for the meeting with the relevant authorities.

Cloagh Anne Logan, 54 Eastside, Kirkintilloch, Strathkelvin

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Dear Editor,

In the August newsletter, the Sheahan family ask for historical material which gives women their rightful place in our past.

I have just read a review of a book called "The Women's History of the World" by Rosalind Miles, published by Michael Joseph, price £12-95. The review says "History has never been this witty, sharply-observed, accessible and overdue .... (It) is written with a strong journalistic panache, it is a delight to read and succeeds in setting the record of history straight."

It's, unfortunately, not a children's book, but it sounds very interesting, I think. I'm certainly going to try and get my hands on it as soon as I can!

Marie Knowles, Mariners, Penwerris Lane, Falmouth, Cornwall.



## ONE FAMILY'S EO EXPERIENCE

Joining EO brought quite a revolution for us. Up until we joined the organisation, "E.O." was a cry at the dinner table to children who were less than perfectly posed (elbows off!). The cry had to go to avoid confusion as EO (proper) came into chit-chat more and more. The elbows are still there where they shouldn't be. cursory revolution, you may quip; much more significant ones followed and still do.

By the time this letter is published we shall have been EO-ing for about a year. Our children came out of school singly. First was "H", 10 years, followed by "A", 12, then "L" 6. If you are trying to find some reason in that, then stop, for there isn't any. "A" should have come out long ago and I doubt now really whether any of them should ever

At the Suffolk group we are very fortunate in having arranged for us by our co-ordinator an informal gathering place available, Mondays at 09.30, and it was at this venue that we first presented ourselves. As with the timetables exhibited by one of this country's more renowned Railway Companies of long ago, we discovered that the quoted time was more of an aim than anything else and should probably have been prefixed by "approximately". However, meeting at a place other than a member's home was probably instrumental in seeing that we actually went along to see what "everyone else" was up to. Without being introduced to another member (and we knew none) we may not have gone along. It was very pleasing to find that we were accepted into the group so freely and since then both ourselves and the children have found many new friends. Which brings us to one of our first discoveries regarding EO people. My wife went in strongly with many preconceived ideas as to how we would find things and ideals, which she was sure would be the rule. (Or perhaps she just thought about it more than I did.) She was anxious that our own children should find as many EO children to mix among as possible, for they were sure to be an improvement on some we knew previously. I wasn't so sure. Humans are humans after all and belonging to a club doesn't alter nature. I pondered that we might travel miles to a telephone-arranged meet only to be confronted by some monster of a child who we wish we had never known about, let alone gone out of our way to meet. Happily, that has not happened, quite the reverse in fact. The EO children we now know are generally way ahead of the schoolchildren of a similar age, whom we knew previously, that is locally. This shows mostly in the knowledge possessed by them (regardless of subject), their understanding of a subject, which is so very important and their general manner.

It is difficult to believe that some of the children are as young as they are. Yet I do not believe that these children have been intensively schooled to produce this noticeable result, and it is apparent that they are enjoying their childhood. And well they should, for children being forced to grow up too quickly is one of our dislikes. They're only young once. Or are they?

Point number two. My wife was quite sure before we joined EO that the parentl we would meet would all unquestionably be "our type of people". I kept an open mind on that, my own view being that we are members of a group solely for the purpose of practising EO. Our other views may well be in direct contradiction to some other members views and wholesale agreement within any group composed of more than two members seems highly unlikely, even less so as such a group view becomes more radical. The only disappointment I have felt with EO is that at one stage the Newsletter seemed full of conflicting views re. religion, language censorship, etc. I hope these specialised views within our group will never divide any members. Strength in numbers is desirable and I would hope that anyone who feels hurt by some other member's comment will never let that weaken their EO togetherness. I have never discovered any such feelings locally, or have they not been aired maybe. But that is how it should be, after all we are all non-conformists in Education, so we are bound to have strongly committed views elsewhere. There are many people with different ways of going about EO, not all of which would work for us, but regardless of that or any other specialist views they have, I would not ignore them to the detriment of EO in general.

After twelve months as members and practising EOers I am very pleased with the results. The children are much improved people, particularly "A", the eldest, who having been relieved of the pressure school put on her, has changed from a person who was becoming difficult to live with, into a happy and relaxed individual. And she is still learning. This would not have happened had there not been an organisation to cater for us. (If it had, the path would not have been easy.)

Here are a few experiences with the children, particularly "A" and her negative attitude at school due to various things. Maths was a major problem as she could not remember how to do a particular thing from one week to the next. Five months break and she was ready to start again and informed me that she thought she ought to do a page of Maths a day from the textbook. Running a small jewellery business with an EO friend has helped tremendously as of course money was involved and buying certain quantities of things, etc. Her Maths book is neatly arranged, very opposite to her school workbook, when even the ½ hr. a week homework was a struggle to get through. She now quite often romps through two pages! Sleeping habits have also changed regarding two of the children and they sleep far more peacefully and relaxedly than previously.

Patience in "A" has improved tremendously - being naturally slow at working she became short-tempered and impatient because of "time" pressure. She has recently sat down to make a very special birthday card and taken one and a half hours to produce something. She was not happy with the result but merely came downstairs and stated the fact. No loss of temper or moodiness about it, just accepted it and also accepted some advice and help to create what she wanted.

The following is a typical day's work. Obviously some days we do more and some less, the pattern varies tremendously. The children are now 13, 11 and 7. They all generally start off by writing a diary. This provokes thought on what's been done, left undone, weather, personal thoughts, etc. It also makes sure "H" does some writing of some sort as he hates writing! The other one thing they each do in the morning as soon as possible is musical practice. "A" piano, "H" trumpet, "L" piano and recorder. They also each wash up after meals in the day, "L" sticking to breakfast as there is less to do.

Then off we go!

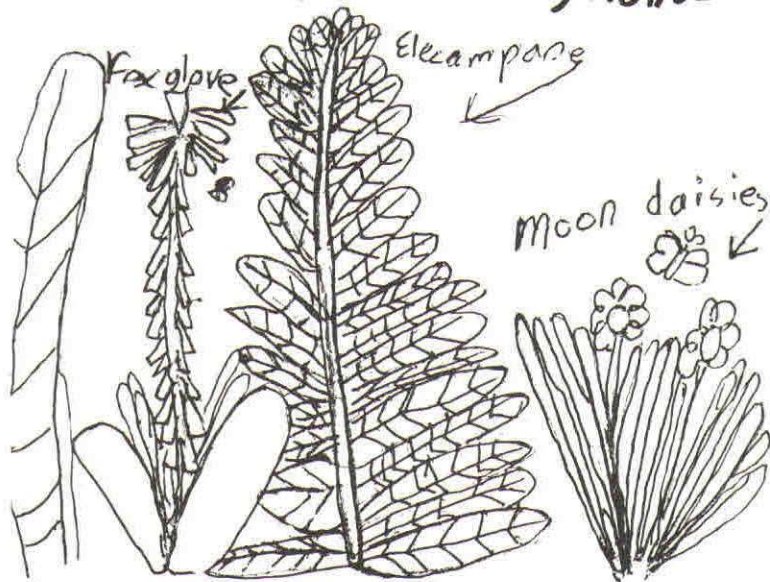
- A Maths  
H Intelligence Test (puzzles he calls them)  
L Read, draw and write card. (Series of card with awful pinmen pictures which she draws, in a book, more 'real' looking. These involve reading the sentences which practically tell a story, as the pictures do also but both pictures and text have to be made "whole" then she counts the words. These are donkey years old!!)
- A & H Discussion with mother about Nuclear Power and pollution.  
A Potting up plants for EO jumble sale, memorising names and particular features of same.  
H Weaving, on his own home-made loom.
- L & A Cartwheels, head-over heels, handstands, etc. outdoors.  
L Using electric mower (with guidance!)
- H & L Making a soft toy "cart" from plastic nuts and bolts set.  
H Worked out and assembled electric switching and fixed whole onto a battery vehicle.
- A Typing up personal notes - this is a book about herself, her thoughts, wishes, likes, dislikes, etc.
- A Wrote a long essay on "How to Save the World" (feasible too!)
- H & L Mother read some of "Winnie the Pooh" to them.  
Discussion with all three about:-  
Vertibrates and invertibrates  
Turkey - use of Atlas and mainly industrial produce discussed.  
Antartic expeditions.  
These are encyclopaedia "dips". We also do dictionary "dips" at odd times.

This is what I call a reasonably "good" day - we have our "off" days!

Thank you EO members all.

Andy & Estella Axten, The Firs, Magpie Green, Wortham, Diss, Norfolk.

### my grandpa's garden by elena



# Book Reviews

The Bear Necessities Directory

by B. Spowart

Price £2.95  
(ISBN 1 870477057)

- Pandora Publishing, 74 Sellons Ave., London NW10 4HH

This is an incredibly comprehensive directory, listing names, addresses and objectives of just about every organisation a parent with young children would need, from the more commonplace such as Mothercare, to the more obscure or minority interest groups.

The book has comprehensive listings of groups covering all aspects of pregnancy and birth, mail order toys, clothes and equipment. The education section (which includes Education Otherwise) has several useful ideas, i.e. bookclubs, educational packs and specialist groups. There is a section of ideas for parents and lastly an extensive section covering support groups for many specific problems.

Reviewed by Valerie Gommon, 19 New Road, Castlethorpe, Milton Keynes,

For Younger Children: This Month

Merry-Ma-Tanze by Moira Miller (Methuen Childrens Books)

This is a delightful collection of stories and poems for each of the seasons of the year. There are clear bright pictures and a host of suggestions for different activities. The recipes are for real food not junk and the activities do not require complicated materials. Any family with children aged up to eight would find plenty to interest them here.

All About Me by Melanie and Chris Rice (Kingfisher, £5.95)

A book which explains with a simple text (nice large clear print) and cheerful pictures much that a small child might want to know about him/herself and her/his body and whats going on around them. Each double page spread deals with a different topic and could at the same time act as the stimulus for further discovery.

Singing in the Sun: Poems chosen by Jill Bennett (Viking Kesterl, £5.95)

This mixture of poems old and new seems to concentrate on ones that take especial delight in playing with words. The result is magical, amusing and evrything poems should be-an excellent introduction that may well inspire young writers to have a go at versifying themselves.

Collins Gem Guides: Insects )  
Butterflies and Moths )

Price £2.25

These two pocket books are very good for reference on walks. Well illustrated with information on each insect. Very good value.

The Usborne Book of World Geography

Publisher: Usborne Publishing Ltd.

Price £4.95 p.b.

This book is crammed with information and illustrations, and covers the earth, the sea, peoples of the world, houses around the world and maps of the world, in five sections. Much of the content seems too abstract for children under eleven, and I feel that the sections on people and houses would have brought home the reality of how other people live if there had been more photographs. The drawings do not bring home the same feeling of empathy with other cultures. However, this is a useful and interesting book for reference and is very good value for money.

The Usborne Nature Trail Book of Rocks and Fossils

Price £2.75

This is a good introduction to geology for the older child and adult. Despite the busyness of each page, there are good sections on crystals and how to grow them, and on identifying minerals. There are several experiments which can be done at home. I would recommend this together with a photographic reference book with which to identify your finds.

Rocks and Minerals- Eyewitness Guides

Price £6.95

Dorling Kindersley in ass. with Natural History Museum.

Beautifully illustrated with colour photographs on each page. A feast for the eyes, very inspiring. Not much about rock formation.

The Usborne Nature Trail Book of Insect Watching

Price £2.75

I think this book is one of the best in this series. The illustrations are very clear and detailed and the information on the lives and habits of insects is fascinating. There is a good section on identification. I particularly liked the bit on how ants and bees live. A good buy.

- Helen Holland

Please 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 giving the title, author and name and address of the publisher. Helen will ask the publisher to send you the book, but PLEASE WRITE A REVIEW PROMPTLY if your request is granted. Please enclose a stamped and addressed envelope (9x4) for each publisher you wish approached, plus a self addressed stamped envelope. Thank you.

Helen Holland, Inholmes Farm, Plumpton Green, Plumpton, Sussex BN7 5DE

## 'BOXBEATERS'

Did you read the article 'Boxbeaters' in the Sunday Mirror dated 17th April 1988? Mr. Kenneth Baker, the Minister for Education, is concerned that children spend so much time watching TV and suggests the following books to beat the 'box':-

- Ages 4 - 8
1. Nursery rhymes, then Brothers Grimm fairy tales.
  2. The Very Hungry Caterpillar - by Eric Carl.
  3. Peter Pan - by J.M.Barrie.
  4. Thomas The Tank Engine.
  5. Dogger - by Shirley Hughes.
  6. The Just So Stories - by Rudyard Kipling.

- Ages 8 - 11
1. Now We Are Six - by A.A.Milne.
  2. Nessie The Mannerless Monster - by Ted Hughes.
  3. Alice In Wonderland - by Lewis Carroll.
  4. Lucy And Tom Go To School - by Shirley Hughes
  5. Treasure Island - by Robert Louis Stevenson.
  6. Black Beauty - by Anna Sewell

Paul Callan, the author of the article in the Sunday Mirror had the following tips to offer:-

1. Start them young, when they are about three, plonk them on your knee and read nursery rhymes.
2. Let your toddlers guess the key words that relate to the pictures.
3. Play games - using words that rhyme, like bun, run and gun, pointing out each initial letter.
4. Make learning to read fun. Be patient.
5. Let them read comics. Most will go on to books.
6. Talk to your child as much as possible. Merely speaking in a civilised way can lead to an enquiring mind.
7. Don't allow them to be afraid of words. Deliberately introduce a new word into the conversation."

Contributed by Pam Stevenson - 25 Wyndham Road, Dover, Kent CT17 0BH.

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### A Skill Sharing Week

I'd like to tell you of a lovely week I had recently at a "Skill Sharing Week" at the New University Project in Birmingham. An EO friend told me of the week and another EO family were there, much to my delight.

I arrived amid warm welcomes and the children immediately set off to explore the house and garden. The week was very informal, in fact very much like our own EO weekends, except that there were more adults and the workshops were more adult-centred - that's not to say that the children were neglected; they had a wonderful time candle-making, playing in the adventure playground and painting - everyone was so kind and sympathetic.

The workshops themselves were very varied. Anyone could put on a workshop. There was a dream-analysis workshop, an EO workshop, circle dancing, knitting, fertility awareness/natural family planning, organic gardening, gestalt therapy, yoga, massage, meditation and many more.

It really was a wonderful week. I came back feeling renewed and invigorated.

The New University runs several similar events and have a newsletter that is available for £6 waged, £3 unwaged (cheques to New University Educational Trust), The New University Project, 24 South Road, Hockley, Birmingham B18.

Valerie Gomon, 19 New Road, Castlethorpe, Milton Keynes

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#### SCIENCE MUSEUM

Bob Powell (South London) has advised us that the Science Museum, London (where he works) will be charging an entrance fee from 3rd October 1988. EO members with the pass from Anne Wade will still be admitted free, since they will technically be group visitors who still have free admission. However, from September 1989 all visitors will be charged. In case of any difficulty at the Museum, ask for Bob or Dr. Anthony Wilson, Head of Education.

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#### A.C.E.

Readers may be interested in knowing about Accelerated Christian Education, This is a Bible-based programme of education, originating in America, where there are A.C.E. schools and colleges, but now anglicised. It covers education from pre-school age to college in the following subjects - Maths, English, Social Studies, Science, Word Building. Other subjects are available.

Learning is by means of the pace/self pac which is a self-contained, self-instruction unit of academic work. Twelve PACES/self-pacs are equal to one year in school. A.C.E emphasises character building and morality.

The Home Schooling programme is a little expensive, I thought, being £175 for a family service agreement, which includes training of both parents, diagnosing (sic) of all children, all academic record keeping, an annual visit by the ACE consultant. However, one has the security of structured learning, which is easier on the nerves in the early days of home educating.

More details can be obtained from Accelerated Christian Education, Hebron Hall, Dinas Powys, South Glamorgan CF6 4YB (0222) 512691

\*\*\*\*\* Edwina Theunissen, Clwyd \*\*\*\*\*

#### EDITORS WANTED

AN EDITOR IS REQUIRED FOR THE FEBRUARY NEWLETTER due to someone having to back out. EDITORS ARE ALSO NEEDED FOR SUBSEQUENT EDITIONS. LESLEY KILBRIDE will be pleased to hear from anyone willing to be an editor.

Her address is: Fearnmore By Sheildaig, Strathcarron, Wester Ross IV54 8XX Tel: 052 05 278

Train up a child in the way he should go:  
and when he is old, he will not depart  
from it.

Proverbs 22.6

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| Special Needs                              | Sylvia Jeffs<br>16 St. Bernards Road<br>Solihull B92 7BB<br>Tel: 021 706 6460                                                                                                                        |                            |
| Regional Enquiries Secretaries             |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                            |
| South West                                 | Meg Robertson                                                                                                                                                                                        | 022 122 3266               |
| South East                                 | Jude Ashley-Walker                                                                                                                                                                                   | 0983 78680                 |
| East Anglia                                | Sandie Cottee                                                                                                                                                                                        | 0268 733259                |
| Midlands                                   | Hazel Clawley                                                                                                                                                                                        | 021 772 7165               |
| The North                                  | Mick & Jennie White                                                                                                                                                                                  | 0969 23544                 |
| Scotland                                   | Brenda Holliday                                                                                                                                                                                      | 0786 832042                |
| Ireland                                    | Clare Weber                                                                                                                                                                                          | Furness, Newport, Co. Mayo |
| Wales                                      | Miryam Bush                                                                                                                                                                                          | 0269 861 069               |
| London                                     | Genevieve Bridgeman                                                                                                                                                                                  | 01 341 0751                |

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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  
Hemingford Abbots  
Cambridgeshire  
PE18 9AN

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*Di Hooley*  
THE OLD VICARAGE,  
QUEEN CAMEL,  
NR. YEOVIL,  
SOMERSET. ✓