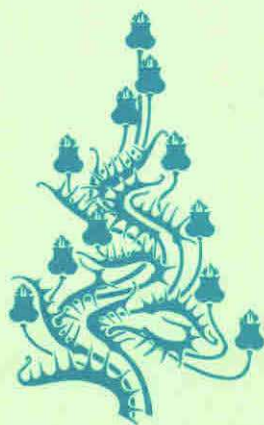


education
otherwise



NO. 66
JUNE 89

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Deadline 1st. July

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

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.

LETTERS

Dear E.O.

Many thanks to everyone who contacted me with information about home teaching. Things are more settled now. Would the localish people who either phoned or wrote please make contact again as I've mislaid a file with my contact info.

PLEASE is there anyone who would like to meet locally for music art etc.? We can't meet on a Sunday but mid-week is OK. We really do need and want to meet with other E.O.ers. We do travel to other areas but I'd like to arrange something for the Herts. folk. Is anyone out there at all interested in meeting at the following places during the summer months? Maybe Wednesdays?

St. Albans - Abbey, park, museum, Roman ruins, swimming pool.

Tring - Natural history museum.

Hatfield - Hatfield House and grounds.

Welwyn Garden City - Stanborough Park boating lake, swimming pool, play park, nature walks?

I am thinking of June, July, August and September. PLEASE PHONE. I would like to book up guided tours for the children and organize work sheets etc.

Also, I would like to arrange an educational trip to London Zoo. The Zoo is willing to talk to just my daughter but would prefer to if others joined us. We will get in slightly cheaper on an organized trip and there might be an opportunity to meet some animals face to face. When we went on our own Helen got to help the elephant keepers!

So please folks, its lonely teaching one child and we both need you. How about it?

Vanessa and Helen Meredith, 9 Allen Close, Wheathampstead, Herts.
Tel: 01-421-1404

Dear E.O.ers,

Re reading fluency compared to writing/spelling ability.

Reading is naturally easier as it presents a concrete 'clue' to work on, whilst writing has to be abstracted from the 'thought in the head'.

But today's 'visual' culture, plus 'look and say', often provides a poor foundation with regard to English sounds - how the sound consists how the sounds are used, how they are represented visually....let alone guidelines. When phonics are introduced, the 'one letter one sound' makes it difficult for children to grasp any coherent patterns in our language.

Romaldo Bishop Spalding and Walter Spalding in 'The Writing Road to Reading' can help bridge the gap. Their process is well worth extracting/adapting. 'An old book - try your library). For beginners a kinesthetic approach links sound to shape (and minimizes incorrect writing 'reversals') but the book shows how to carry an assistance to higher levels and could be a useful tool for 'auditory' dyslexics and poor spellers. (Indeed, I have a feeling it might even prevent some of the transposition problems

as well as giving confidence to many in the matter of spelling). Each sound that a letter or group of letters, can have, is presented, e.g. 'c' can be 'k' or 's', and the circumstances offered - 's' if followed by 'i' or 'e'. Similarly, each sound is designated in its different forms, e.g. the sound 'er' could be 'er', 'ir', 'ur' or even 'ear' and '(w)or'.

A child is not thrown, can begin to see sense in it, build patterns, try the commonest way first before the alternative(s) perhaps. The 'rules' as well as the phonemes, are far more thorough and helpful than usual and are built up sensibly. It is working for my very-reluctant-to-read-or-write-son, and other EOers before us. Add it to your repertoire of resources and encouragement for literacy.

Maggie Swatridge, 32 Carey Park, Polperro, Looe. PL13 "JP.

Dear EOers,

We have two children, Wesley and Donavan (2½, 4½) who we do not wish to send to school. The problem we face, as I'm sure lots of you are aware, is that by educating them at home we will deprive them of a chance to mix with other children on a regular basis. At present we are well caught in the rat race and we plan to sell our house, realize the profit and buy outright in a cheaper area (ideally a smallholding). This would only make the problem of isolation worse. What we therefore propose is to find other people with similar views in similar positions and start a small community. So if you're out there and are interested please contact us as soon as possible.

Mark and Chris Cator, 185 Goldington Road, Bedford. MK40 3KG.

Dear E.O 's,

Firstly may I thank everyone who wrote to me after my last letter was printed. I must say sorry for not replying back to you all. I am afraid that for the past few months I have had to come to terms with the breakdown of my marriage. Anyway, Thank you all.

I am interested in an E.O One Parent Group, and would not mind in the least to start such a section if there is not one already. What about a loaning of books section? A list of one parent families could be compiled and a list of books, exam papers, experts in a certain field etc. This could be used as a guide to send books etc from one member to another on say a monthly basis. Any ideas? Interested? Contact me at 1, Bodiam Close, Enfield, Middx. EN1 3HZ or telephone 01-367-2109.

JAN TAYLOR.

IS ANYBODY OUT THERE DOING NOTHING?

People often ask me what I intend to do about teaching Helen when she's 5 and I say something like "ABSOLUTELY NOTHING - this is the method we've employed for the first 4 years and it seems to be working OK."

When I joined EO I had a vague idea that other people in it would think like me. Of course I quickly learned that there are as many EO philosophies as there are EO members.

I agree with John Holt and many others in what I think of as the great tradition of libertarian anarchist philosophers. Among other things, I believe that people should avoid telling other people what to do. Everyone should be free to make their own decisions, and everyone is innately capable of making much better decisions for themselves than others can make for them. This of course includes children deciding what, when and how they will learn.

My daughter (Helen) is 4. I try not to direct her learning. I try not to order her about. I try not to interfere in her relationships. I try not to talk down to her, or talk about her in the 3rd person when she is present. I try to let her get on with her own life as she sees fit. Of course, I don't succeed, but these are some of my ideals. I try to follow John Holt's advice - "TRUST CHILDREN".

All the stuff people worry about children learning is quite simple and can be learned easily in a short time. The only thing that prevents this is the destruction of the child's self-esteem. Our job is not to teach anything but to allow Helen to grow and develop - to support her in feeling that she's capable of doing or learning anything she chooses, and that her ideas and decisions are good ones.


It does surprise me slightly that so few EO people seem to be following this route. Quite a lot say that they let the children direct their own learning, but closer acquaintance reveals them to be writers of worksheets and initiators of projects.

I puzzle a lot over the best way to put my philosophy into practice. In my ideal world people of all ages would live and learn and work together in a completely integrated community. Meanwhile we struggle to do the best we can for Helen in very different circumstances!

I would love to hear from other EO people who feel like me, and especially from those who have put their ideas into practice over a long period. Please write.

Rachel Sanger, 32 Doddington Grove, SE17 3TT

Dear E.O

I've got an assortment of info. which others might find interesting. Re. dyslexia, there is a series of booklets, which might help, which are designed to help children perceive what they see, including eye exercises to strengthen eye muscles for reading. Available from Perception Publications, Inc. 1814 W. Seldon Lane, Phoenix, Arizona, 85021 USA. Called "Developing the Early Learner", there are 4 booklets, costing 4.95 ea or 19.50 per set, shipping 9% of total. (I just sent a cheque in sterling for a bit more than the dollar equivalent- cheaper than getting a bank order in dollars!) I covered mine with the clear plastic used for covering maps, etc, then they can be used for more than one child, using a dry-wipe pen. Despite the name, they are NOT a "push your child as fast as you can" thing. (A personal thing), I am a fervent believer in the phonics first approach to reading. Maybe I'm wrong, but I believe some Poor reading/dyslexia is a product of the "look-say" method, where the child has to memorise the shape of the whole word (elephant =  shape) Then cot, cat can be confused. If anyone is interested in phonics, an excellent book is "PROFESSOR PHONICS" avail. St. Ursula Academy, 1339 E. McMillan Ave, Cincinnati, Ohio 45206 USA. (Includes no religious stuff) At a total of 7.40 for the basic book and manual, it's good value for money, though they demand payment in US funds. Shipping 1.80. There are other bits and pieces available.

Animals: With regards to expenditure on animal feed, etc, some additional interesting information: Prof. Jean Mair of Harvard Univ. has calculated that 40-50 million people could be fed by the grain used to make alcohol in America alone, and 10 million could be fed by the grain used in Britain alone, annually. It was calculated that in 1977 each person aged 15 or over in Britain spent 128 on alcohol, making a total of 6 thousand million. These figures being for 1977, one can imagine they will only have increased. As an old nature magazine put it, in brewing "the most nourishing part of the barley is lost, or is used for feeding pigs. That is why brewing is called a very wasteful industry." Art: If anyone is interested in teaching their children "famous paintings" there are catalogues available from Art Extension Press, Box 389, Westport, Conn. 06881, USA New York Graphic Society, 95 E. Putnam Ave, Greenwich, Conn, 06830, USA and University Prints, Cambridge, Mass, 02138, USA. (Surely there must be British sources? but I don't know where they are.) ★ FINALLY, I am doing research on television and wonder if EO'ers would help by filling out a questionnaire? (whether they have one, why or why not, how do they use it, etc.)

Thank you,

Yours sincerely,
Emily Matthews
98 Crofthill Rd
Glasgow G44 500

★ I would include an s.a.e.

Dear E.O.

I was reading the April newsletter and was interested in a letter from Kate Weston about her daughter's difficulty with reading and spelling. My son is 11 and is 2 years behind with his reading according to school tests. His writing and spelling seem even worse to me. I did have him tested for dyslexia but it seems he isn't, but he is left-handed and I often wonder if this contributes to his problem. The letter from Ben and Shirley Kalek was on the same problem and I agree with them about the school letting the problem take root. If only I had realized sooner how they were letting him fall behind. Even in Maths he doesn't seem to know the basics that I feel he should have done when he was 7. Now at 11 I am just starting to home educate as we have moved up to the 'wilds' and I hope I can do something with him.

Most of the home educators I read about are teaching young children. I don't see a lot of over 11's but I am trying anyway. If my son had stayed in Leicester he would have gone to Senior school after summer and would have got even further behind. I know he would not have even been put in for GCSE. Would I as a home educator be legally bound to put him in for GCSE? I feel that would be beyond my capabilities anyway.

I find your newsletter very interesting.

Mrs. V. Phillipps, Eagles Hut, Kilchoan, Achanacle, Argyll, Scotland PH36 4LW

I was amazed to read in last magazine editorial that E.O. is not about religion. It seems very presumptuous, and as far as I am concerned, education is about learning to be open-minded and not make such narrow-minded statements. Michelle may not consider religion to be part of education, but lots of others do. I agree that the magazine should not be completely taken over by it, but different views on the study of religion is of interest to many.

Emma Orbach, Cwmrhaffan, Sarnau, Llandysul, Dyfed, S. Wales.

Dear E.O.

As E.O. families we are surely too determined to take our own path educationally to feel threatened by anyone's dogma. As a Pagan and therefore non-proselytizing, I encourage my child to take a keen interest in comparative religion. To us all Gods and Goddesses are One. She loves Christian myths.

Maybe we could have a religious studies supplement featuring as many creation myths, in brief, as possible including the scientific ones. The Norse myth is very dramatic. The Aboriginal and Amerindian ones appeal especially to younger children through the totemic animals.

Meanwhile I am thankful for all our editors whatever their current religious evolutionary state.

Kate Powell, 1 Edith Villas, Llantrisant, Mid. Glamorgan. CF7 8ET.

Dear Parents and Carers
of children who suffer from schoolphobia
of STRESSED children
of children from a minority religion home
of children from a minority culture home
of children who would rather not go to a uniformed school
of vegetarian and vegan children
of children who feel lonely and may benefit from living in a
community (not necessarily in an "under-one-roof" community)
of children who are interested in charitable and fund-raising
activities
of animal-loving children

I'm Ruth's mummy (Hello!). Ruth is nearly 10, and we fall into all these categories. In desperation, I have been seriously thinking about trying to co-form a "Happier School" (small school) to try to help my daughter to overcome these difficulties. As a small family, Ruth and I don't feel personally suited to home education. "Authorities Phobia", not unfounded, is one of the biggest problems that would for us, always stop home-education from happening. I can guess from reading E.O. publications that **we're not** the only family unit caught up in this "category".

But the amount of research that I've done so far, has made it look as if the prospect of starting the small school would be too daunting (scary!) even just from the point of view alone, that we'd be "sitting ducks" for any aggressive factors in the Establishment. I don't feel at all confident about the idea, any more than most of us would.

But - if your child should fall into any of these categories listed above, please read on. I've had the idea, (not a new one I expect), that we could be more likely to realise eventually. I've been "sending round" from the Authorities and other organizations, for addresses of schools (post-primary schools preliminarily), which may be suitable for us to form a PERMANENT, LOVING, mutually-supporting, COMMUNITY around.

So far, my search has been concentrated in the Republic of Ireland, where post-primary education starts later than in Britain, and what's more there is the OPTION of leaving school at 15 there too! Which means only 3 years compulsory post-primary education. Better still, its not unusual to find post-primary schools in Eire with under 200 pupils. I have "discovered" a lovely little school which would be only the next best thing to heaven-sent, (by first impressions) in Co. Sligo, Eire. It has no uniform, only 160 or so pupils, no animal farming or dissection are practised there, and the school brochure indicates that tremendous importance is placed on the feelings and aspiratins of each individual child. Also the establishment is a State school, with no fees at all. Housing in Eire is generally very inexpensive, especially outside the cities. This particular school is at a place called Easkey, by the sea, 20 odd miles west of Sligo Town in Co. Sligo. Irish "welfare benefit" is available to all European citizens including us, as is their family allowance. Does anyone want to contact me about the possibility of moving over there (or perhaps to somewhere else someone may have discovered) to form a loving community, hand-in-hand with this hopeful sounding school? Instead of all the anxiety and stressful expenditure involved in home-educating or small-school educating our children, we could find our resources "freed" (talents, time, spare coppers) to add to, the already provided, quite thoughtful school, which we had chosen to adopt.

as the focus for our community. The possibilities could be so encouraging. We could talk about that together, by post or telephone or at a meeting. Please consider, any single parent families.

A word of warning from someone who found out the hard way. The Republic of Ireland (even N.Ireland, Scotland, Isle of Man, etc.) are different countries, legally speaking, from England and Wales. Even parents with sole custody of their child/children must either get the consent of the other parent to go out of, say, England and Wales (even for a holiday or exploratory visit with the child), or, get the consent of the High Court. Contact a solicitor before you even inquire about accomadation, travelling arrangements etc., or you could get accused of plotting to break the law, (Child Abduction Act), like I did - it makes no difference if the Authorities have kept us totally in the dark about these obscure horrors, the State doesn't hear pleas for "pity", in the same way a loving parent does.

Well, if anyone is interested in writing to me, please contact:

Deborah, Hope Cottage, 39 Woodfields, Stansted, Essex, England. CM24 8AL

Dear EO

I'm glad I didn't write in time for the April Newsletter as I perceive from reading it that my letter would not have been printed since I was going to write and attempt to make contact with other Christians who may be members of EO, having been greatly encouraged by the first two letters which appeared in the February newsletter.

If you do print my letter, I look forward to making contact with any Christians who may be especially interested in Christian schools.

Yours faithfully

Tracy van den Broek (Mrs) Otterhill Farm.Rowtown. Addlestone. Surrey. KT15 1HD

Dear Editor,

A question of tolerance, that's it...Reading the comments in the Dec. NL, on Edwina Theunissen's booklist (that's all it was) and then reading the compliment to Rajan Naidu, as well as the beautiful imagery- though blasphemous words- "holy lord sun", in Feb's NL, has prompted me to write. Now many of you will be reaching for your pens, ready to denounce me as intolerant, or worse. But wait! Tolerance cuts both ways--doesn't it? If I am to tolerate what offends me, surely those who disliked (hated?) the hapless Edwina's booklist ought to tolerate her views. But if they are entitled to express their feelings, then so am I. (Or is tolerance only meant to be one-way?)

Yours sincerely,
Alastair Matthews
98 Crofthill Rd.
Glasgow G44 5QQ

Dear E.O

We too have recently become home schoolers. We wanted to write and let you know, especially those of you that are home schooling because of, or as part of their Christian beliefs. We have been Christians for over four years and attend a church that is preaching the gospel and seeing souls getting saved.

Home schooling was something we had heard about and even seen taking place in another family in church, but John had many doubts. However God had other plans and He began to show us just exactly what was taking place in Paul.

Paul is now six and six months and Leah is three and six months. Paul had attended the nursery school and was in the second year infants. He had never been happy in the infants. He grew angry, loud, nasty, and totally unhappy and it showed in his behaviour. I faced daily complaints off the school staff and had endless discussions with the head-teacher, looking for a solution.

The solution was found in Proverbs 22:6 "Teach your child in the way he should go and he will not depart from it."

Different things took place over a couple of months. God showed us many things and the final straw came and John said "That's it, we will home-school." God is faithful, He does provide. The school system was coming against all the biblical principles Paul was learning. He had a relationship with Jesus and the system was saying "that's alright for Sunday's, but not here and to-day. Those of you that live for God know that it is a daily relationship.

We are committed to God and to our children. It is extremely hard adjusting to having them both home all day and teaching, but I'm so glad this is the way it is. It's looking forward, not behind. Keep going.

If there's anyone, Christian or not who wishes to write, I'll be happy to reply, especially if any are using A.C.E. curriculum or similar.

Faulette and John Staniec,
543, Greenwood Road,
Wythenshawe,
Manchester M22 7RE

by Fritha



Dear E.O.,

I de-registered my son Jo, from school just over six months ago and since then I have been teaching him at home with his younger brother Aran. It has been a great experience for all of us, and I now cannot see us wanting to change this part of our lives except in as much as we want to continue to learn and grow, and fill our days ever more skillfully and harmoniously as we learn the art of living and learning together.

In deciding to take our children's education into our own hands, we faced a large life-choice in the way that we are able to communicate with society, the roles we accept, and how we now function as a family unit.

I was brought up to believe in a different role of wife and mother than I now live - my idea of my life was that I would have a couple of children, look after them in the home until they were school-age, and then I would use my own skills to help support our young family by working part or full-time myself. When our children were very small, my husband followed the path that seemed to have the most heart for him, and for us as a family, - he started a small business. When my eldest, Jo, was in nursery school, I continued along what I believed was one side-road to my original path (that of a trained nursery/infant teacher). I went into the local school and spent happy days there making work-cards and games for the children in my son's class. The joy in it was that I was able to make things for Jo to use, and the other children, to stretch and excite them, trying to judge what would be exactly the right balance and not beyond their needs. I felt I would like to do a lot more of this as I discovered that my skill lay, not in conducting and organizing a large group of children throughout the day, but to work in the background, observing, using my intuition, and exciting the childrens' curiosity visually. Rather like designing a personal birthday card for someone, something that they understand well through your knowledge of them. Now that I teach my children at home, I find that I have an even more intimate knowledge of them, I understand better what motivates them, frightens them, upsets their equilibrium, excites their curiosity, makes them deeply happy, and what makes them want to learn. This I am learning by watching them, listening and talking to them and other close children friends. I can't pretend now to know what motivates an 8, 9 or 10 year old, since I don't know any de-schooled children of those ages closely enough. And although I have never written any childrens' books, I have read hundreds with my two, and learned what they like visually.

I feel that there is a space for a whole bundle of childrens' books, perhaps written by the children themselves and illustrated by them, or written for them by somebody who has taught their children at home and shared a fairly unique experience. Is there a space here, do you think, would somebody who is listening like to write a really attractive book or books for our de-schooled kids? Because if they would, I would like to illustrate it.

Little (and not so little) kids who are de-schooled may live very different lifestyles, - they may live in London or in the middle of Wales - their parents may be wealthy or not, but they all have being taught at home in common, and that is the basis for their world, really.

I would also like to know what other mothers (and fathers, too) about the change they have made in their lifestyles to accommodate teaching their children at home. I know that if I was in a teaching job now, as I originally intended, or even if I had a part-time job within school hours, I would be earning a reasonable salary, able to contribute

to more of the family's material needs and help to support my husband's young (two years old and still teething!) business. As it is, my days are fully taken up with what amounts to a full-time job with overtime, a job which gives me masses of satisfaction, and no salary. To the contrary, despite much happy improvisation, and surprise at what is not needed, we do drain the kitty a bit, with our need for a certain amount of equipment, and joyful expeditions. I am at home most evenings necessarily though, with little ones, and I would like to spend some of the tiny time left drawing. So, somebody write the book. OK?

Blue Yarsley, Pencoed, Llanddewi-Brefi, Tregaron, Dyfed. SY25 6PE.

WOMEN IN HISTORY

First of all I'd like to say many thanks to everyone who wrote to me with their support, opinions and recommendations after my article way back in er - was it October's newsletter !? For those of you who for some reason didn't read that particular newsletter, I wrote a piece about the lack of information and publications about women in History, especially books written for children. With few exceptions, History books always dwell on the achievements and lives of men, with only the occasional Queen or notorious woman popping up to lighten the mood. Even that horrific period of history that saw the witch trials is often written about in a light hearted manner and the deadly seriousness of it with its implications for women then and subsequently seems almost always glossed over. It is interesting to speculate how many women murdered during the witch hunts may have been potential 'famous' scientists or may even have had their ideas and medicinal practices 'stolen' by men. I must say that I am of the mind that we need to delve way back into the past in order to understand why women's lives and achievements have for so long been viewed as inferior to ot less important than men's. At this point I would like to recommend a book called 'The Paradise Papers'(The suppression of Women's Rites) by Merlin Stone. I found the book a real eye-opener. It tells the story of the most ancient of all religions; the religion of the Goddess. She uses a wealth of archaeological, mythological and historical evidence to trace the history of this religion which because of its attitudes, laws and values, women in many communities were able to develop freely to a degree unknown in our culture. She shows how the Goddess religion did not fade naturally away but was the victim of many centuries of continual suppression by the advocates of the much newer Judaeo-Christian ideologies. I am not a follower of any religious ideology but I found the book absolutely fascinating reading. The story of Adam and Eve is placed in perspective - Eve created as an afterthought and then forever blamed for the loss of Paradise. She explains the symbolism of the Fall, the influence it has had on societies accepting it and the destructive effect the tradition has had for centuries on the image and status of women. Some other books on the same issues were recommended to me along with many more on other areas of women's history. I'll mention a few later and if you would like to send me a s.a.e. I'll be happy to send you a full book list compiled from ther people's and my recommendations. The bad news is that many of these books are not the sort that children could read for themselves. There is definitely a gap there. My way round this is to read the books myself and then try to redress the balance with my children whenever

we are talking about or watching or reading about history (or any other subject for that matter). We are proud to have two completely non-sexist boys in our family - even their Lego people have an equal amount of female characters imposed on them in their imaginative games, and not through our suggestion! The Letterbox Library still seems the best bet for non-sexist literature for children and they do seem to be stocking more and more factual books e.g. on science topics and the lives of women in history (yes, there are a few!). I'm happy to supply details.

I feel that perhaps I ought to stop now (I could go on for much longer). Please keep writing to me with more recommendations and views and if you want a booklist maybe you could send an extra stamp or something to cover the photocopying costs. Meanwhile, here are just a few recommendations; I've chosen those recommended for children.

For older children:

1. Maggie's Journeys by Margaret D'Ambrosio. pub. Polygon
The story of a girl living in a Celtic Matrifocal tribe.
2. Lost Goddesses of Early Greece by Charlene Spretnak. pub. Beacon Press

Macdonalds "Women History Makers". These are available through the Letterbox Library.

On a lighter note, "The Tough Princess", a reversal of the Sleeping Beauty.

Elizabeth and Mike Solmon wrote saying that they have some interesting information on a local woman called Mary Bryant, who led a fascinating if tragic life after being transported to Australia. They would be willing to prepare a pack of contemporary source material about her for a small charge to cover photocopying and postage. Their address is: 6 Bodminick Heights, Bodminick-by-Fowey, Cornwall. PL23 1LX

The Open University does a marvellous course called Women in History. Even if you don't mean to study for a degree, the course is well worth following. I recommend it most highly.

Clare Sheaham, 15 Pembroke Street, Gloucester, GL1 4EG. Tel: 0452 422576

Dear E.O.

I would like to suggest a FREE card for every E.O. child saying that they legally do not go to school. Just the other day me and my brother went swimming at the local baths and we were questioned about whether we were truanting from school. I explained to her but she did not believe me. I'm sure many other E.O. children get questioned about things like this

Alexandra Smith, 11 Queens Park Road, Burnley, Lancashire. BB10 3LB

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

SHROPSHIRE E.O. EVENTS MAY - SEPTEMBER 1989

Most of the following events start at 1.30pm and are in the regular SECOND Saturday in the month slot, but other events are included here too. Please check times and venues beforehand.

JUNE 8 - Thursday: Theatre trip to 'The Hobbit' at Birmingham Hippodrome at 2.00pm. Phone nearer the time to confirm transport arrangements.

JUNE 10 With John and Michelle at the Greenwood Trust in Coalbrookdale at 10.30am. Backwooding, and rural crafts with the opportunity to do some tracking. Bring something to barbecue for lunch and picnic tea.

JUNE 21 Thursday at 7.30pm. Open air production of 'The Tempest' at Attingham Park.

JUNE 9 FRIDAY Acton Scott Farm Museum in the early summer: Meet at the entrance at 11.30pm. Wheelwrighting demonstration.

JULY 8 The Lightmoor Project: a new concept in community living. Madhu will take us around the site and show us how it has developed from its inception five years ago. Meet at 1.30pm, bring something for tea.

SEPTEMBER 9 Japanese afternoon at Stephanie's and Yoshi's house. Meet at 1.30pm.

SEPTEMBER Camping at Aberdovey. Few tourists, miles of beaches, interesting towns, beautiful hills and lakes, a narrow-gauge railway, ruined castle and the Centre for Alternative Technology. Details to follow.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER A trip to Jodrell Bank which will include a theatre presentation, 'Once Around The Sun' suitable for children of 5yrs. up. The venue incorporates a tree park and a 'hands-on' museum. Approximate cost £2.00, booking in July.

Further details please contact Don & Mandy Patter, The Lindens, BROSELEY. 0952 882780

GLAMORGAN

Come camping on the Gower from Friday 23rd. June to Monday 26th. June. Jamie and I shall be at Porteynon camp site (the one nearest the Salt House). We'd love to meet as many E.O.ers as we can. So if you can get away for a weekend or an afternoon come along and paddle on the long sandy beach with us. Contact Kate Powell, 1 Edith Villas, Llantrisant, Mid. Glam. CF7 8ET. Phone 0443 227912 for details of this or our regular meetings. Non Glamorganites welcome.

SUFFOLK

An introductory talk was given on April 4th., at Leiston Day Centre, by Gina Heathersprite, Joan Girling and myself, to a group of about 15 people, who braved the freezing weather and winds to come and hear us talk about our own personal experiences of home educating. All three of us had vastly different backgrounds, which made it a stimulating and enjoyable evening chatting to a group who were mostly sympathetic to our views - some of them teachers. Gina, who home educated in a commune for 10 years, with her children now at Summerhill; Joan with Stuart, 12 years old with no school experience, and two adult children who have been through the State system; and myself with 3 children at home 8, 5, and 2 years in a very nuclear family set up.

I think we all had something to offer in the following discussion, and as an outcome two families have benefitted. One is considering changing their child's school, and another is in the process of deschooling their child.

The actual experience of emerging from my cosy hole and stating my beliefs and commitment to home education was very positive and has made me realise that perhaps we do have something to offer other people - at least two families think so anyway. Joan and I would certainly be willing to do it again now that we've taken the plunge, and would definitely encourage others to be more positive about E.O. and maybe try something like this. As feedback from the meeting has been so encouraging, the organisers hope to hold a similar meeting in the Framlingham area in the near future. Anyone who is interested please contact me:

Charlotte Keith, The Old School House, Westleton, Saxmundham, Suffolk.

LINCOLNSHIRE

WANTED- New co-ordinator for this large county. Fairly amenable L.E.A., friendly members etc. We are no longer eligible as Beth has chosen to attend a small school for a while. Please ring 0507 86222 for more information. Lynda and Steve Tooby.

NORTH LONDON

Parents and children's group-Swiss Cottage Meetings
Ring Andrea Granville (01-328-4138) for details.

LONDON

Tues. June 13th. Trip round a London fire station. Ring for details.

Mon. June 26th. Meet in Science Museum foyer at 11.15 or picnic area at 12.30.

Tues. July 11th. National Theatre tour. Limited numbers. Probably £1.30 each.

Mon. 24th. July. Museum as above.

Tues. 8th. Aug. Camley St. Natural Park for pond dipping and possibly joining in activities in their summer playscheme. Meet 11.15. This park is a short walk from King's Cross and St. Pancras stations on the Euston Rd. and easily accessible from Camden through St. Pancras Gardens. It can be reached from Regent's Canal via bridges to the west (Camley St.) and to the east (York Way to Goods Way). Ring Sue Petszaft or Anne Wade for more information.

Sue Petszaft will have open house for any E.O. members on the 3rd. Monday of every month. 2, Leylands Manor, Tubwell Lane, Crowborough. Tel. (0892) 661319

KENT

Please note - Visit to Walmer Castle has been cancelled. Our first meeting this year was at Rochester in April. We toured the castle, had a picnic in the grounds visited the Cathedral and also the museums. A good day out was had by all who came. Please come to our next gatherings and help make them a success. Everyone welcome.

Tues. 27th. June. Eurotunnel Exhibition centre. Nr. Folkestone. Meet near entrance at 12 noon.

Thurs. 13th. July. Bawl Water reservoir, Lamberhurst. Nr. Tunbridge Wells. Boat cruises available. Playgrounds and picnic areas. Nature reserve. Meet in car park at 12 noon.

Mon. 24th. July. Margaret Bell's smallholding. Primrose Cottage, Bredgar, Nr. Sittingbourne. Animals to see, fields to play in and a barn for shelter. Bring a packed lunch. Ring Margaret on Wormshill (062 784) 318 for directions.

Fri. 11th. Aug. Whitbread Hop Farm, Bettring, Paddock Wood. Shire horses, hop gardens, museums, nature trail, craft shops, adventure playground, children's farm animals and much more. Meet in car park at 12 noon.

For more information about the above or future meetings please send a s.a.e. to Pam Stevenson, 25 Wyndham Road, Dover, Kent. CT17 0BH or ring Lois Cook on Herne Bay 367059

MILTON KEYNES (NORTH BUCKS) E.O. GROUP

Well, things have been pretty quiet on the Milton Keynes E.O. front this past few months. Several of our friends have moved on or are now at school. At the end of last year a few of us did visit the ambulance station and a large supermarket which we enjoyed.

We have recently had a new addition to our family, Rosie Ellen who was born on 14th March, and so are pretty busy just now, but ... if you know us well, you'll realise that she won't stop us getting out and about!

We really have run out of ideas for meetings/visits and there doesn't seem to be a lot of interest so we're not planning much at the moment, but if you have any ideas/suggestions, or if you want a chat or any information please do get in touch.

Lastly, we have been looking into the possibility of having a regional meeting - the problem is finding a large, suitable venue I do have a few possibilities, but again if you know of anywhere please let us know.

Valerie and James Gommon

SOUTH LONDON MEETINGS

YOU'RE INVITED.....

These meetings are for EO parents and children from any area. Children attending have generally been under 10, but all ages are very welcome. It's very informal, we all bring some food, the parents talk to each other and the children play. Sometimes there is a talk or an activity organised, which you can participate in if you're interested.

- * Sun 25th June, 1 pm, Norwood - Maggie Newlands (EO member and musician) will do a short music session with the children and will talk about her experience of introducing children to music.
- * Sat 29th July, 11 am, Albany
- * Sat 26th August, 11 am, Albany
- * Sun 24th September, 1 pm, Norwood

ALBANY = the Child and Parent Centre, The Albany, Douglas Way SE8. This is near New Cross Station (tube and BR), lots of bus routes pass nearby, and there is car parking in nearby streets. The entrance is quite hard to find, and you will probably be told that the Child and Parent Centre is closed, but don't be put off! Our meetings at the Albany are on Saturdays from 11 am - 3.30 pm.

NORWOOD = Norwood Children's Centre, St Luke's Chambers, 2-8 Norwood High St, SE27, near West Norwood station. Our meetings here are on Sundays from 1 pm - 5 pm.

At both venues we are responsible for leaving the place clean and tidy, so please help with clearing up at the end. We also need to leave promptly, especially at Norwood where a member of staff comes in especially for us.

For more details phone Rachel 582 3949 or Dorothy 469 0413



Thanks to the few who have responded to the CAMEO document I mailed you in February. It really needs more response though, to know whether there are enough people in Cambs who want organised trips. Please try and let me know. MEANWHILE, Cambridge itself has become organised by a new member Krys Latham who is organising sessions and get together. Further info. can be obtained by ringing Krys on Cambridge 242250. The only other news I have is that I have spoken to someone "high up" in the Cambs. Education Office and received assurance from them that Cambridgeshire is NOT even thinking of imposing the National Curriculum, and associated "testing" on de-registered children. Good for them. However, if you have heard differently then let me know. I am still in the throws of trying to move house, but I expect I will still be in Gamlingay for a while yet, SO I invite you all to a MIDSUMMER GARDEN PARTY at my house on Wednesday 21st June, say from midday onwards. If it is ~~pouring~~ pouring with rain, then ring first as I'm afraid I can't accommodate 54 EO families in our house!

SEE YOU

Jo Rust

DEVON CO-ORDINATOR

Alvena Hillier's new telephone number following her recent move is MODBURY (0548) 830920.

NORFOLK

- June 7th. Dawn walk and breakfast - weather permitting. Venue and time to be confirmed. Tel. Jenny Outred 0553 674473
- June 22nd. Hindolveston workshop - to be confirmed. Ring Karen 0263 861045.
- July 6th. Workshop. Queries to Karen.
- June 6th. 11.00 Norwich Castle - Egyptians (Re-BBC Landmark Programme)
- June 13th. 11.00-1.00 Meet in Rotunda at the Castle. Looking at pictures and drawings.
- June 14th. 11.00 King's Lynn Bus Station Museum, Romans in WEST Norfolk followed by visit to Butterfly Park at Long Sutton on A17, to arrive approx. 2.00. Queries - Jenny (above)
- June 18th. 11.00 Castle. Countryside in summer.

For further information ring Lin Chilvers 0553 810438

CAMPING IN THE ASHDOWN FOREST.

MONDAY JULY 17th - SATURDAY JULY 22nd.

Broadstone Warren is a Scout Camping area which consists of nearly 400 acres of woodland, set in the Ashdown Forest. There are over 90 camp sites; each one out of sight of the others. There are three toilet blocks, and hot showers in the camp Centre Block.

FACILITIES : Self service store, outdoor heated swimming pool, orienteering courses, grass ski slope, archery facilities, and is ideal for backwoods and survival activities. A fee is charged for the hire of equipment and designated adults/leaders are given short instruction about supervision of the activities.

Caravans are accepted, but cars are not allowed on the site apart from at the beginning and end to transport equipment. No camper vans or dogs are allowed.

COST : £1.10 per head per day, plus V.A.T.
Day visit fees (not known).

INDOOR ACCOMMODATION : If enough people are interested we could attempt to book indoor accommodation. There are two buildings - one at £65 per day + V.A.T. which sleeps 38 people + adult/leader accommodation of 4 bunks attached to the building, plus 4 further bunks in an adjacent chalet. Heating is by calor gas heaters, and electric points (paid for by coin-in-the-slot meters). Toilet/ablution block attached + small kitchen.

The other building costs £40 per day + V.A.T. and sleeps 17; adult accommodation in two adjoining 4 bedded rooms. Heating by an Inglenook fire. Small kitchen.

BOOKING FORM

NAMES _____
&
AGES _____

Return to: Sue Petszaft,
2, Leylands Manor,
Tubwell Lane,
Crowborough,
E. Sussex TN6 3RH

ADDRESS _____

I enclose £..... FORPEOPLE for nights. July.....to July.....

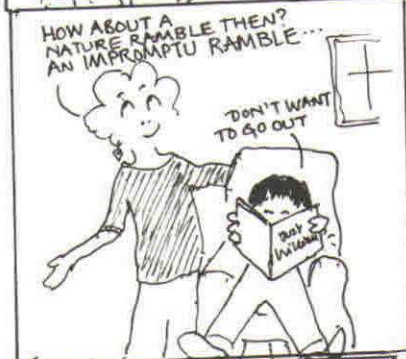
Signed

Please state if you are interested in indoor accommodation, and if so for how many people.

EDUCATING ARCHIE

BY SEQ

P.M.T. OF
PRE-
MIN OF ED.
TENSION



Science for younger children should not be seen as a separate subject to be taught on its own, it is all around us and its effects can be seen in all situations, at home, in the garden, on a walk, all you need is to be aware of it and be ready to answer the questions which arise naturally as you explore the world around you, why can a duck swim but a sparrow cannot? where did the fog come from?

Try doing some projects on different aspects of the natural world, eg. water.

- Drinking water** How did it get to the tap? How much water does a person need in 1 day, how many cups do you drink, how much water is in the soup? If you are really keen to find out, you could find out how much water your body gets rid of in 1 day (you need a big jug and a strong stomach for this one!)
- Household water** What do we use it for? Washing, cooking, loo flushing etc. How could we save water? (They are bound to say they will give up baths and clean clothes). This could lead to a discussion about conservation.
- Water and weather** Make a weather chart for a month and count how many days' rain you had. Find out about the water cycle. Show how water expands when it freezes. Show how a bucket FULL of snow melts down to a tiny amount of water.
- Water in nature** Examine a pond on a walk and see what you can find living there. Show how an insect manages to walk on a pond without falling in by floating a steel pin on the top of a dish of water, this is a good demonstration of surface tension.
- Water in the garden** Show that plants need both water and light to grow with the experiment below. See which plant thrives and which die off.



+



3 identical cuttings in labelled pots.

Cover pot 1 with a cardboard box
water regularly

Water pot 2 regularly

Do not water pot 3 at all.

SCIENCE

Science is not difficult to carry out at home. By following through what you've found interesting and with no time constraints, you should be able to do it really well!

For older children/teenagers

Ideas

- Human Beings:** How are they different, how the same?
Family tree, including details of eye colour, hair, height etc.
Areas of hands, feet, whole body.
Identikit - different noses, ears, eyes, shapes of face.
(look for patterns in them)
Fingerprints - with ink on paper (how many different patterns are there?). With a fine powder (talc.) on shiny surfaces.
Dust different areas of the house with your kit (you need a small paint brush) and find out who's been where!
- Food:** Who eats what in your family? What does food contain? Look at labels, collect and find out some of the weird ingredients in food. (Squirry cream has nitrous oxide, Jif Lemon has sulphur dioxide as a preservative)
- Bacteria:** What are bacteria? What do they do to us and the world around us? Are all the things they do harmful? What would happen if nothing rotted?
- Pollution:** How polluted is your area? What type of pollution is it? Find out how to detect pollution (e.g. some lichens grow in areas of clean air, some water animals only live in clean water)

Some points to bear in mind when experimenting

Fair Test

The idea of a fair test is easy to understand. For example, if I decide to test various washing-up liquids against each other, I must make sure of

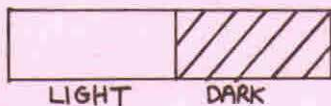
1. the same amount of each washing-up liquid
2. the same temperature water
3. the same amount of water
4. dishes of the same dirtiness
5. same method to wash each dish

This means the only VARIABLE in my experiment will be the different types of washing-up liquids. I can then directly compare my results, and come up with a conclusion. This might be that liquid X gets 15 more dishes clean than liquid Y. If I don't keep all these things the same, I can't come to any direct conclusion. Saying liquid X cleans 15 more dishes than liquid Y, but then liquid Y did get all the ones with dried up egg on is not the same!

A big enough sample

For some experiments, doing the thing once is good enough. For most, a repeat of three is considered fair. But for some, more may be necessary. It is up to you to decide. For example, I want to find out if wood lice have a preference for certain conditions, or could they really not care less?

First, I try light and dark, having already noticed that they do like to hang about under things in the garden. I set up my experiment, put my wood louse in the middle and see what happens.



Use a shallow box, with half covered.

Try other conditions—
different foods, soil
or stones etc.

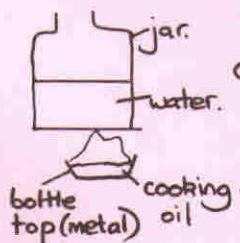
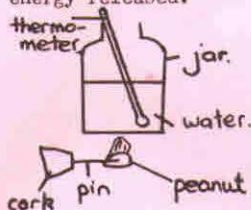
It goes into the dark side. My conclusion - all wood lice in the world like it in the dark more than in the light. Obviously, I may have read a bit too much in to my experiment. But I still think I'm right, so can I prove it? I would need lots more wood lice. Say 20. When I put them in, one at a time, I write down every 30 seconds where the wood louse is, for 5 minutes. From my results, I could fairly write a conclusion about this type of woodlouse. (Remember, all the other conditions must be the same - if it is damp under the cover it is not a fair test. Also be open to comments. What if they go under the cover into the dark because they are scared?)

Errors

In many experiments, it is possible to point out where errors may occur. It is good to think about these errors, whether you can improve on the experimental design and certainly to mention them if you need to write your work up.

For example, food energies.

It is possible to compare the energy available in different foods. A simple way of doing this is to burn the food, and use the energy released to heat up water. By measuring the temperature rise, you have a measure of the heat energy released.



OR SUGAR,
BUTTER
ETC.

(SOME IGNITION
TEMPERATURES
ARE HIGH - TAKE CARE!)

I know enough about fair tests and keeping variables to a minimum to make sure the amount of water used is the same, the container is the same etc. But, from observation I also know that some of the heat is lost into the air. I would need to do the whole experiment in an insulated container to overcome this. I can't, so I decide on a different course. I decide to say that although some heat will be lost and not used to heat up the water, this will be similar amounts for all foods, and can be ignored. It is quite legitimate to do this, but wise to know it exists.

(to compare foods properly, you need to burn a known weight. If you can't weigh one peanut, weigh a known amount, get an average weight, and repeat the experiment 3 or 4 times.)

Units

The International system of units, or S.I. units are used by scientists, but some are not commonly used in everyday life. I'll just mention the ones I feel you may not have seen, and their uses.

Length

micrometres - μm - These are one millionth of a metre or one thousandth of a millimetre. They are used to measure cells. A typical cell will be about $20\mu\text{m}$ long.

nanometres - nm - These are $\frac{1}{1,000,000,000}$ of a metre, or 10^{-9} .

Useful to know in chemistry, to measure the diameters of atoms.

Mass Always confused with weight. Mass is measured in kilograms and grams.

It is the amount of material (atoms and molecules) in an object. It will be the same anywhere, on or off the earth.

Weight Measured in Newtons(N), like all forces. It is the force the object exerts because of the force of gravity. Will be different, for example, one the moon.

Volume Measured in cm^3 . 1000 make up a litre. Sometimes a cubic centimetre will be called a millilitre (ml).

Some people are particularly interested in one science, others view things as a whole. For example, the eye can be viewed as a biological topic. This involves:

1. dissection to find out what each bit looks like.
2. the jobs of the different parts.
3. how it ties in with the brain.

Or the eye can be taken into chemistry, as an example of photochemistry (that is, light setting off a chemical reaction).

Yet again, physics is also involved:

1. With how a lens works
2. Looking at the iris as a shutter, and comparing it to the camera.

Whatever you investigate, you are quite likely to find that all 3 sciences are involved. Because I don't know what anyone else does with Science at home, here are a few ideas on how to do various experiments in science.

Chemistry

Separating Substances

Much of chemistry is concerned with getting a pure substance. This is because you want to find out about the particular substance, and any contamination will mess up results.

Separating substances relies on finding a difference between the substances involved. For example, if I gave you a mixture of talc powder and lead shot, you would quickly think of the fact that one floats, the other doesn't.

Sand and salt.

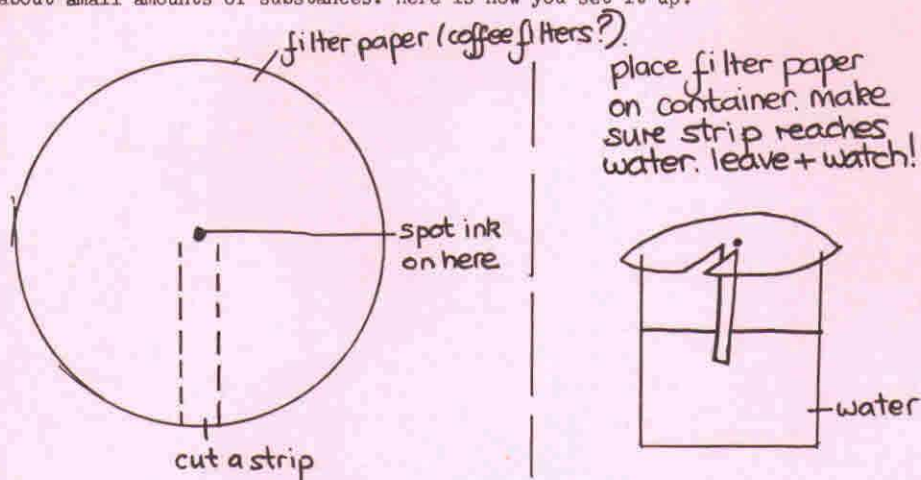
Here, the difference we use is that sand does not dissolve in water, but salt does. Mix with water, filter, and leave the water to evaporate off. Result, dry sand and salt. This method will work for any non soluble substance mixed with a soluble one.

Sea-water. Try this one. You are on a desert island. There is no running water.

You have containers, a plastic sheet, and whatever else you would expect to find! How do you get pure water to drink?

Chromatography

This is another method used to separate substances. This time, we are talking about small amounts of substances. Here is how you set it up:



This method can be used to separate any colours that you think there may be in inks, dyes, grass - in fact any coloured substance you want to investigate. (For grass, grind it with sharp sand. Use ethanol (alcohol) as the solvent.

The solvent is the name given to the liquid it dissolves in. Water is used most often, but think of cleaning brushes with gloss paint on. There, the solvent is meths.)

It works like this. Different substances dissolve at different rates. So, as the water moves up the paper, the substance which dissolves most easily moves with it. Then the one which dissolves second easiest and so on. Watch out! It can go right off the paper.

Thinking about Atoms and Molecules

As we can't see atoms or molecules, it is necessary to use the evidence we have of how substances behave. We use this evidence to try to show that matter must exist as tiny particles. No other explanation fits the evidence!

Orange Squash

If you tip a bottle of orange squash into a swimming pool, what happens? (apart from being banned for life!)

After a short time, you can't see the orange squash. But it can't have disappeared, because you put it in. It must be somewhere! By trying to think of an explanation for this, you come to the conclusion that the orange juice must have been able to split up into bits so small you can't see them. These then must have spread out in the water. In other words, orange juice must be made up of tiny particles.

Salt and Water

Fill up a container with water until it is completely full. Add some salt a bit at a time. What happens? (In other words, what space did the salt fill - there must be spaces around the water molecules)

There are many simple experiments like these. Most ordinary chemistry textbooks have them in. So, it is possible to explore complicated ideas without a lot of equipment.

Boiling Points, Freezing Points

Find the boiling point of water. Add some salt (sodium chloride). What happens to the boiling point? Could this be why people add salt to vegetables when cooking? Find the melting (freezing) point of ice. Add some salt. What happens to the melting/freezing point? Is this why they put salt on the roads in winter? Are these results true only for water and an impurity, or is this a general rule?

Biology

Dissection of a pigs' trotter

For a look at joints, muscle, tendons, and ligaments, a pigs' trotter is very rewarding. From the local butcher, don't cost much, and they don't involve an animal being specially killed for an experiment. Obviously you need to follow hygiene rules- disinfectant, wash hands etc. You also don't need any special guide - it really is self evident.

Stimuli

This experiment helps you to find out if the touch receptors on your skin are equally spaced out or not. You need two pins that you can fix a known distance apart (opened out paper clip). Start on 2 cms. Pick your victim. You are going to touch them on the back of the hand, with one point or two. Don't tell them which it is going to be, and get them to shut their eyes. Ask them how many points they felt. Write the answer down. Do nine more tries, using one point or two, 2cms apart. Write down each answer they give as right or wrong. Repeat on another part of the body, say forehead. Again keep points 2 cm apart. By comparing your answers, you can build up a picture of the most sensitive parts of your skin. The closer the points are together, the more difficult it is to feel them as two separate things. You can do lots of variations on this.

Physics

Forces

To measure forces you need a newton meter, which measures forces in newtons. However, if you just don't happen to have one handy, there is an alternative. The spring balances that fishermen use to weight their catch is the same thing. But - it is calibrated in grams. It shouldn't be, because it is measuring weight, which is a force. But there you are. It is easy to convert because, as we all know 10 newtons are equal to 1 kilogram on earth.

So, we may proceed.

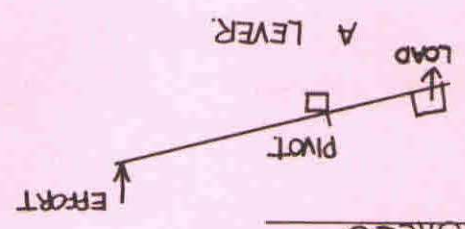
Forces are a particularly relevant topic to do at home, surrounded as we are by bicycles, wheelbarrows, scissors, pliers, door handles etc. etc.

In fact, machines are designed to do only one of two jobs. They are either FORCE MULTIPLIERS - like a lever to get a tyre off, or DISTANCE MULTIPLIERS - like a hand whisk, in which the blades move round faster than the handle.

To measure the force you exert on something, simply pull with the newton meter. You can investigate whether the force you use to do something is the same as, or bigger or smaller than the load you move. Try it out in various systems.

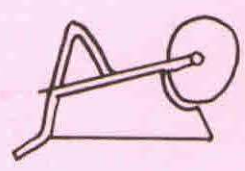
If you find the EFFORT is less than the LOAD, look at the distance you have to move the EFFORT. It will be much more than the distance the LOAD moves. This is very difficult to explain, but if you look at the diagrams and try a few out for yourself, you'll see what I mean.

FORCES



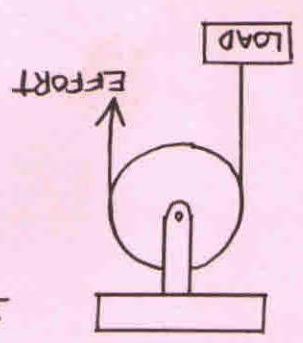
Measure Load and Effort. Move the pivot about, measuring load and effort each time. What do notice!

Where are the load, effort and pivot? Does the load go in the front or back, for best results?



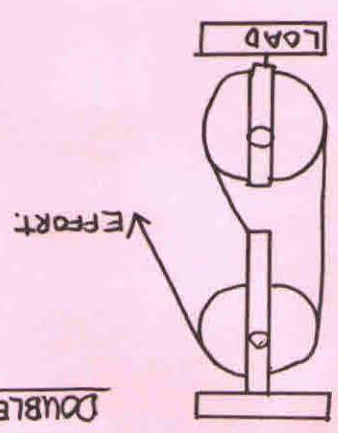
SINGLE PULLEY:

Measure load and effort. Explain what you find! Why do you use a single pulley?



DOUBLE PULLEY:

Does a double pulley make a load easier to lift? Think about how far the effort moves in comparison to the load. How does it work?



Book List and useful information - Janet Shimmin, Ditchling.

1. The British Assoc. for the Advancement of Science, Fortress House, 23, Savile Row, London W1X 1AB. Has a junior branch - the British Assoc. of young Scientists. BAYS club for 11 year olds upwards - magazine, activities meetings etc. For 8-12 year olds, there are 'Young Investigators' club.
2. For enquiring toddlers to say eight, there are the MACDonalds' 'starters' series. There are a lot of science titles with suggested activities.
3. Ladybird 'Junior Science' series on Light, Air Mechanics etc. These give more answers and also have various practical demonstrations, experiments etc.
4. 'Usborne' series. Wonderful books, get a catalogue from Usborne publishing Ltd., 20 Garrick St., London WC2E 9BJ. Most appealing presentation, don't duck the difficult issues.
5. Beaver publish 'How to make square eggs' and 'How to turn water upside down and other zany experiments, by Ralph Levinson. Worth buying because there are such a lot of experiments in them.
6. The best in-depth explanations of the exciting areas of science are by Isaac Asimov. Called something like 'How we found out about ...neutron stars, relativity etc.' Would need a bright and dedicated 11 year old to understand them without guidance.
7. Thomas Salter Science, Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland do a selection of science kits - suitable for under elevens or even older. They do chemistry sets, electricity and magnetism equipment, and are very good at supplying replacement chemicals, test tubes etc.
8. 'Understand Electricity' from Electricity Council, 30 Millbank, London SW1P 4RD. Lists various free and cheap resources - well worth a look.
9. 'Educational Resources' from BP Educational Service, P O Box 5, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS 23 7 EH - cheap wallcharts, booklets etc on a wide range of interesting, practical subjects.
10. British Telecom and British Gas both do similar packages.
11. 'View' published by DTI, Gaywood House, 29 Great Peter St., London SW1P 3LW. Aims to promote liaison between schools and industry. Suitable for 9 years upwards, had pull-out project in centre pages.
12. The adult magazine for secondary school age scientists is New Scientist. Not an easy read for a child, but reasonable jargon-free.
13. Bloomsbury Science Lecture theatre, in spring, for Molecule Discussions. Top notch scientists, don't go unless the child is really interested! For information, Bloomsbury Theatre, 15 Gordon St., London WC1H 0AH.
14. Sorry, there isn't a number 14, I must be getting tired!

All typing mistakes are claimed by me, many thanks to Janet Shimmin and Sue Melton for their contributions. I hope this is of some use to someone somewhere, Jane McKie, 84 Wigginton Road, York YO3 7JG. Tel York 621127.

NOTICES

Michael Thompson regrets that due to pressure of work there will be no Electronics page this newsletter. It should be back next time.

Congratulations to Kay, Tom, Matthew and Guy Johnson on the birth of Elliott in April.

Congratulations to David and Shelagh Buckley on the birth of their daughter on May 1st.

Please give my sincere apologies to all those people who enquired about the Farmers Weekly Spotters book. I sent in the suggestion in good faith not realising that the books were only open to the farming community, and am very sorry for all the inconvenience caused.
Kate J. Wilson, Manor Cottage, Walgrave, Northants.

Pied Piper - Selected cassettes including story-tellers and music.
S.A.E. for list to 39 Fore St., Hartland, Bideford, Devon. EX39 6BE.

Emma and Julian Orbach have moved to:

Cwmrhaffan, Sarnau, Llandysul, Dyfed, S. Wales. Tel: 0239 811118

Ron and Mandy Skinner and children have moved to:

The Old Barn, Hescott Farm, Hartland, Bideford, Devon. EX39 6AN.

Tel: Hartland 780.

KENT MEMBERS

For the past two years, most of us have not been inspected by our LEA. It now appears that this may be changing.

We have heard that the LEA are employing and training new Inspectors. To our knowledge two families received an inspection during April.

Can you let us know if you:
receive notice of an inspection,
an inspection and how it went,
just so that we can keep an eye on the situation.

Mike and Lois Cook & Pam Stevenson.
(addresses in the contact list)

Can anyone sell or lend me the 'Teach Your Baby Maths Kit' by Glenn Doman and/or the 'Teach Your Baby Maths' book. I would like to hear from anyone who is using or has used this method.

Raymond Alexander, 9A Stewarton Road. Dunlop. Ayrshire.

EDUCATION SUPERVISION ORDERS

The Children Bill is likely to become law in the very near future. It will allow an LEA to apply for an education supervision order, which will entitle them to say how a child is to be educated once the court has been satisfied that proper education is not taking place.

This is not likely to be a threat to home educators who know their rights and can get support at the first hint of trouble. It will limit the rights of people who are already in trouble when they become aware of the possibility of home education.

At the time of writing the Bill is being discussed in committee. Please ring us if you want to know how the situation has developed. We are not likely to be able to answer extra letters.

Rob & Anne Wade (West London) 01-904 7155

HOST FAMILIES FOR TEENAGERS

Here is a list of Host Families for teenagers so far. (Very short, I am afraid, so please come forward everyone).

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Mrs. Maggie Swatridge | Family consists of: |
| 32, Carey Park, | Maggie |
| Polperro, | John 9½ |
| Looe | Christopher 7 |
| PL13 2JP | Ebony - Labrador |
| Tel: Polperro (0503) 72087 | |

Willing to take in youngsters for short stay or holiday for the cost of their food. Please phone beforehand to make sure they are at home. Plymouth not too far away with Youth Hostel, another one further west (about 7 miles).
SW coastal footpath, beaches, etc. Sounds great.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 2. Mrs. Sheila Devine | Family consists of: |
| 420, Shirley Road, | Sheila and Ron |
| Acocks Green, | Patrick 14, at home |
| Birmingham | Adam 8, at school |
| B27 7NX | Grandad, Uncle |
| Tel: 021-777-5787 | Plenty of pets. |

Lots to see and do, says Sheila, and lots of E.O.ers! Please contact soon!

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 3. Mrs. Linde Bartram | Family consists of: |
| 61, Mumford Road, | Linde and Ron |
| West Bergholt, | Ronnie 18 |
| Colchester, | Sven 15½ |
| Essex | Ingrid 14 |
| CO6 3BL | |
| Tel: 0205 242164 | |

Please ring beforehand. Plenty to see and do here, Colchester having been the Roman capital of Britain. Castle, museums, good cycling country around, seaside not far away (Walton-on-Naze, Clacton etc.). Our boys are keen on sport (football, cricket, tabletennis, snooker etc.).

Hello!

My name is Olivier. I'll soon be 15 years old. I'm French. I would like to discover Great Britain with friends.

I'm fond of sports, music, drawing and swimming.

I'm looking for a friendly family with teenagers, where to live in August, close to English habits and culture.

If you are interested, I would like to correspond with you, as soon as possible. I'm waiting for your answer.

Olivier Hagenloch, 25 montee Bonafous, 69004 Lyon, France.

PEN - PALS

I am 10, and interested in swimming, pop stars - Jason Donovan and Kylie Minogue, pop music, animals and computer games. Please write to me at: Thekla Roth, 2 Portland Place, Lancaster, Lancs. LA1 1SX

P.S. If anyone has an alto saxophone to sell, please write, or phone my mum (0524) 67432

My name is Hugo. I am nearly ten; my interests are: reading, designing, space, cars, Judo, computers and technology. I promise to reply to anybody who writes to me.

Hugo Chesshire, 5 Westfield Rd., Acocks Green, Birmingham B27 7TN.

My name is David Wood, and I am 6½ years old. I like geography, space and working in the garden. My favourite thing is reading, especially mystery books.

10, Bilberry Close, Leicester. LE3 2JA.

My name is Andrew Wood. I am 4½ years old. I like cartoons, drawing and playing.

10, Bilberry Close, N.R.S., Leicester. LE3 2JA.

Might one of your home learning students (or parents) want to exchange letters about bookes, personal experiences, and ideas with a published American poet, 42, who is considering a career change to teaching?

My interests: walking, Asian philosophy and religion (especially Buddhism), investing, small businesses, art history, Stoicism. Favourite authors are Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, D. Lessing, A.S. Neill, C. Bronte, Thoreau, Emerson, Studs Terkel, Wendell Berry, Sophocles. I admire Castro, Camus, Martha Quest, Martin Luther King, Sartre, Bertrand Russell, Gandhi and Antigone. Write to Ron Richardson, 4003 50th.Ave.SW, Seattle, Washington 98116, U.S.A.

PENPALS (continued)

Robins Croft
87 Liverpool Rd.,
Irlam,
Manchester, M30 6EH

Dear e.o.,

Could I put an ad for a penpal in the next newsletter.
I am a boy, I am nearly 7. I learn at home. I am vegetarian and I
like Lego, crafts, reading, my computer and drawing from Lewis Jackson.

Dear e.o.,

I would love a pen friend. I am a good card player. I
have a sister, she is 5. She would like a pen friend too.

from Katie

P.S. I am 8.

Katie + Bridie Jackson, Pringle House, Farm Cottage,
New Brancepeth, DURHAM, DH7 7HZ.

Dear E.O.,

My name is Adam Turner. I am just turned 15. I have been at
school until three months ago. I would like a pen pal boy or girl who
is roughly the same age. I like air rifle shooting, animals and the
environment.

Adam Turner, 4 Stoneyfield, Edenbridge, Kent. TN8 6DE.

WHERE TO GET WHAT

The following publications are available from the Membership Secretary, Christine
Wallace, 25 Diabaig, Achnasheen, Ross-shire, IV22 2HE.:

School Is Not Compulsory (SINC), Early Years, Later Years, Teach Your Own, (John Holt)
Troubled Children (P.Knox). Schools Out (J.Bendell)

EO Newsletters; back copies for '88 & '89 and 'Bargain Basement' any 4 copies
(OUR SELECTION) from years '82 to 87'

Home Education and The Law (Woolf & Deutsch).

Also available from Jill Gillings, Ballaglonny Farm, Quayles Orchard, Ronague,
Castletown, Isle of Man. 'Growing Without Schooling' (The Newsletter of EOs
parallel organisation in the U.S.A.)

In response to Kate Wilson's letter in the April newsletter I would like to add my thoughts on children's difficulty with spelling and writing.

Yes, I agree it does seem strange that there should be such a large gap between reading and spelling ability in some children, but I think that there are one or two possible explanations. First of all, if Glenn Doman is right and reading is a brain function, like speech, and spelling and writing are skills learned over a period of time by a different area of the brain, then the logical conclusion seems to be that for some children one area of the brain matures far more rapidly than the other. To a greater or lesser extent this is true for all of us of course because we all read far more and far better than we write.

If, however, reading, writing and spelling are all skills to be learnt and practised, then reasons are not so easy to find. However, one possibility is that while reading is something that goes "in", giving pleasure, amusement, satisfying curiosity etc., spelling is something which has to come "out". To produce the correct output in a language which has as many exceptions as rules, is no mean feat. Early errors quickly produce a lack of confidence and subsequently a block to learning which can be hard to remove.

My now nearly 11 year old son has had a similar problem to Kate's daughter. He is an avid and advanced reader, devouring adult travel books and wild-life text books as well as Asterix and Tin-Tin. His ability to retain what he reads is incredible. He can tell it very well but his ability to show what he knows in writing is disappointing and reluctantly carried out.

When he was younger I did give him "spellings" to learn - Collins Spelling Workbooks 1-4 are quite well set out and fun to do. I do think that this helps to a degree providing that its not too long and laboured and that there is far more encouragement for right words than criticism for wrong ones. Lately, however, he has not done this at all but we have encouraged him to continue reading - not that he needs much encouragement. In reading correctly spelt words he is getting them more and more fixed in his thinking.

When it comes to writing a story (I timetable it because he would never choose to do it) we sit down together, I make notes and then we write it together. He dictates what I write and I spell out words he needs when he writes. I hope that he is developing a good feeling about writing because it has become a shared activity with help always to hand rather than something done in painful isolation. He is certainly more relaxed about it.

Above all, I have learnt not to worry. I have to admit that in the past my own anxieties have only added to his problems but the more time goes by the more I see that a relaxed atmosphere with help and encouragement is the best way to help a child with such a large gap between reading and writing skills.

Carol Bennett, The Haven, 25 Lambert Road, Sprowston, Norwich.

CHEESE




SCHOOL PHOBIA

Pip Rubics has written a publication about School Phobia and would be grateful to any E.O. members who have taken their children out of school for this reason, to contact her. She would be glad if they would fill in a questionnaire as she would like more information to back her theories and ideas about dealing with school phobia in the school system. Please send S.A.E. to Pip Rubics, 14 Basil Ave., Armthorpe, Doncaster, DN3 2AT.

BOOK REVIEW - THE POLITICS OF CHILDHOOD, by Martin Hoyles, illustrated by Phil Evans. 127pp, Journeyman Press, £4.95..

Martin Hoyles argues in this book that the idea of childhood as a state of being distinct from that of adulthood is a fairly recent invention developed through the Industrial Revolution. Although he implies that this has been in the interests of the capitalist class he remains somewhat unclear as to what precise pressures brought it about. For example, compulsory schooling had the effect of withdrawing small children from a harsh labour market - was this due to pressure for higher wages from the growing trades union movement for adults? Yet the writer regrets the loss of adult-like experience that was open to children who worked alongside their parents or other adults. The book rightly points out that children as a class have been left largely unaffected by the liberating movements of the 1960's yet offers no analysis as to why such oppression is being perpetuated in today's society.

The writer clearly puts his hope for change in collective action. In an interesting chapter called 'School's Out' he recalls the widespread school strikes of 1911 (not since repeated) as an example of concerted political action by schoolchildren along trades union lines.

The book ends with a list of questions to which no answers are offered by the writer. These questions invite us to imagine a society in which children are liberated, free to enter the labour market, not made to attend school, to have sexual relationships and with full voting rights.

Clearly our own, and the writer responses to these freedoms will be determined by our own ideological standpoints. However I would have liked to have seen the writer recognise that there are people already finding answers to some of these questions. Home-based educators are among them.

Alan Clawley,
26 Taywood Drive
Small Heath
BIRMINGHAM B10 0DB.

EXTERNAL GCSE

In response to Caroline Brett's letter in the April Magazine, I have been asked by Betty Ball to write this up-date on my research and response on behalf of EO to the proposal by the Joint Council of GCSE Boards to discontinue the externally endorsed GCSE examinations from the summer of 1991.

The article by Nick Smith of Wolsey Hall was published in the TES just before Christmas 1988 and I just happened to be the first to spot it and hassle our hierarchy, who hadn't, and got co-opted into drafting EO's response. On reading Nick Smith's article it seemed that examinations for our home educated children were to become a thing of the past after 1991. This isn't quite true. We can theoretically take any syllabus and its exam if we can meet its criteria and in practise this means if we can comply with the coursework element. Now it is the desirability of a coursework element in each syllabus according to the Joint Board that is their justification for discontinuing the externally endorsed papers which haven't a coursework element. Plus, they also use the old chestnut that employers will be inclined to treat an externally endorsed certificate as second-rate. This, rather than coursework, is given as the main reason for the demise of the external exam by Kenneth Baker in a letter I have from him (via Jennie White). Now this 'second rate' argument seems not to be born out by EO experience where home educated children are not discriminated against but sometimes preferred. Also the endorsement appears on the back of the certificate so is quite likely not to be noticed and less than 30% of employers appear to understand the GCSE and its grades anyway. Hence the launch of a GCSE roadshow last October to try to educate the employers! In fact on re-reading the recommendations of the Joint Board I feel they are far more worried that far from being second-rate the endorsed certificate will have an added cachet! Now, with regard to coursework even the exam boards feel that not every subject needs or requires it but most will it seems have a minimum of 20% although this is far from finalised. The problem hinges on whether we, as parents, will be accepted as assessors of our children's coursework. If not we shall have to find a willing teacher for each subject taken and pay them for their time. I believe this is already the case with some EO members doing GCSE this year. This open-ended financial minefield could price us out of GCSE more effectively than any coursework requirements especially if you consider that the exam boards have also decided to require a £100 deposit for appeals against exam results. So, that's the bad news, what can we do? Well quite obviously we have to make some representation to the exam boards, Kenneth Baker and MP's on all sides of the house and get ourselves represented on the boards that are making these decisions that affect us. I am drafting a response now and awaiting answers from the boards to the above questions and more. I have made contact with the NUT who needless to say have not been consulted with regard to dealing with our coursework. EO are now on the mailing list of the SEAC and the SEAC Recorder. I have a full reference set of the GCSE National Criteria and the first five reports of the SEAC's chief examiners on GCSE with more to come. We have the initial report on the GCSE to the secretary of state for education from the SEAC and the recommendations of the Joint Board for GCSE. All parties are now aware that we exist and are not going away! As soon as I have received a response from all concerned I shall complete my draft of EO's response to Kenneth Baker and submit it to the core group and for publication in the newsletter so that additions and subtractions to the text can be discussed. A proper GCSE group within EO should now be formed both to deal with this issue and any future issues that may arise. We really cannot let Betty Ball carry all the responsibility on her shoulders while she tries to cope with her own children's GCSE schedule. If you're concerned about your children's access to examinations, both now and in the future (our eldest daughter is not quite 5) then contact Sue Stephenson to join the GCSE contact list or myself for more information and photocopies of the above reports.

Paul Bentley. 83 Manor Park, London SE13 5RA. 01-852 1563.

(April 1989)

PHEW, WHAT A SCORCHER!

PUBLICITY OFFICER NEWS - APRIL '89

Since becoming PO for EO (!) in February I have dealt with many media enquiries, and I thought members should know what great interest there is out there for the way we chose to bring up our children. So here is a "brief" summary of what's happened in the last two months.

FEBRUARY - The Observer did an article on School Bullying, published on March 19th. I spent about three hours overall helping them with their research, and many kind EO families agreed to talk to the journalist about their experiences. The result in the Observer was a glossy, lots of big, colour photos and very little text, article (typical Sunday Supplement attempt) but NO mention of EO.

I spoke to the journalist concerned and apparently editorial decision precluded the EO contact address and details. However, the journalist was sympathetic and keen to write again on Home Education exclusively. I intend to ensure she does!

HITCHIN GAZETTE made a general enquiry which I referred to local co-ordinator, Frances Howerd.

ITV NETWORK enquiry. Producer David Hines talked with me at great length about home education, for a short documentary called Parent Power to run on ITV's 'This Morning' programme in March. To cut a long story short, the programme was made, including my family, Roland Meighan (EO member and writer of the book Flexischooling), and a couple of Lancashire based Education Officials. I may be biased, but overall I thought the programme was brilliantly edited, and made a very good case for home-education. I hope to work again with David Hines.

LETTER from Fife EO member about how to publicise EO locally. I gave some suggestions, and wonder whether they had any success. Maybe they are still planning their media strategy! (Fiz, it would be nice to hear from you again.)

PRACTICAL HEALTH MAGAZINE enquired about slow learners and EO. Since the journalist lived locally to me she required contacts in Cambs. On phoning round none of us felt we had "slow learners" since taking our children out of school. We felt more that the "slow learners" label was more the result of a condition invested in children in school. Whether she managed to forge an article or not I don't know. I will follow it up.

TV SOUTH "ACTION" programme researcher, Caroline Cullum wanted to find a family who home-educated in the South. I liaised with Jude Ashley-Walker on the Isle of Wight. The result was that Jude and her family and Pearl Kirby and hers made a great impact on TV in the South. Thanks to both of you, and the children who apparently were terrific.

MARCH - Essex/Suffolk Newspaper wanted to run an article on home-ed. Referred the journalist to Sandie Cottee and Sarah Guthrie. Please let me know Sarah or Sandie if anything was printed.

LIVING magazine's family editor, Carol Baker, rang to say they are doing an article on the National Curriculum in the September issue. Thanks to Ann Wade, London, I was able to assure her that children de-registered from school do not have to follow the NC. (If you hear otherwise from your Local Authority then let me know.)

BBC Children's Unit. Katie Forecast (nothing to do with the weather) of the BBC rang to ask advice on a programme they are planning in September, for prime time Children's TV, on being educated out of school. I sent her masses of ideas and information, suggesting perhaps she may chose the angle of who is now famous, yet was for the large part home-educated - e.g. Gerald Durrell, Patrick Moore, Yehudi Menuhin etc.. I thought the BBC might prefer some unusual slant - and they did, but their idea was to feature the programme around a family sailing round the world, or trekking across the Himalayas with GCSE Maths book in the backpack! Could I find these people? No, they are either just south of the Azores or north of Katmandou without a car-phone! (Silly BBC.) Perhaps they will come to their senses, remember their SMALL BBC budget and stick to a family in Hebden Bridge doing more interesting things at their kitchen sink. UNLESS-if you've just come back from the Himalayas... phone me quick, and I'll get you on TV!

FREELANCE JOURNALIST, Durham. Wanted a local family to interview. Since I knew Mick and Jennie White (EO Chair) are NOT north of Katmandou, but just south of Durham, I put them in touch.

APRIL - TIME OUT, London Magazine. They rang to check listing for EO in an annual Parents Guide.

RADIO BEDFORDSHIRE wanted local contacts for inclusion in radio programme.

NURSERY DIRECTORY rang to check a listing for EO.

TODAY newspaper. Why do I start perspiring when I get an enquiry from the tabloid press? (Probably because I once subscribed to Private Eye!) Adam Lebor, the journalist, was a lovely chap, however, and rang four times in one day. He was given a brief by the editor at 9 am to write an article about home-education by 2.30 pm, same day! (We may not trust journalists further than we can throw them, but when you understand the pressure they are under is there any wonder they go for sensationalism?) Janet Everdell, my son William and I helped him out as basically he was clueless. Next day, with disguises on, we went to buy a copy of the paper - only to find it full of some dreadful, national disaster. Adam Lebor insists it will still run, so if anyone spots it please let me know.

BBC 40 MINUTES programme. Thanks to Janet Everdell's response to a Radio Times request for information on School Bullying I managed to get hold of a researcher on the programme and bend her ear. The programme may, or may not, mention the fact that some children are actually deschooled as a result of bullying. I intend to keep in touch with the researcher though as she may be useful to EO at some time. Thanks to any EO members who may have helped her.

APRIL - A STUDENT wrote from Plymouth. She is doing a thesis on home-education and had got hold of a contact list from a relative who is an EO member. She asked permission to use the contact list to mail a questionnaire to members. I'm afraid I refused permission as we state quite clearly in the front of the contact list that it is for MEMBERS ONLY, and even members may not use it for mailing purposes. (It was quite naughty of her relative to even suggest it.) However, so as not to put the poor girl off I suggested she contact the Local co-ordinators in her region and ask their co-operation, it would be up to them whether to tell their members about the questionnaire.

PLEASE DO NOT LEND CONTACT LISTS to non-members for them to use. It's not fair. Anyway, where do you draw the line? I have a cousin in Ladies Corsets...what if HE wanted information on the incidence of hernias in home-educating mothers, and used MY contact list? (Actually, this is a fib, but I'm sure you get my drift!)

FREELANCE JOURNALIST for Women's CORSETS magazines, based in Kent. He is keen to interview local families for national magazines. I put him in touch with the Kent co-ordinators. He seems a nice chap, and perhaps Kent will let me know what transpires.

EARLY TIMES made a gaff by printing that it is against the law not to go to school. Thanks to an EO mum in Tintem, the person responsible rang to find out about EO. As a result my son Will, who is 13, has written an article for ET about EO.

CROYDON ADVERTISER were approached by an EO mum offering information about EO. (I whole-heartedly approve of EO members initiating their own publicity!) I sent them a standard press release, and wish Anita Plommer all the best with her interview.

ITV AFTER 9 programme. I am indebted to Linda Bournell in Middlesex who rang to tell the tale of Clare Rayner (agony aunt of the air-waves) stating that it is impossible to take your child out of school. Linda is going to write, and put her straight. I look forward to educating Clare Rayner!

BROOKSIDE Okay, who has been following the plight of the poor boy taken out of school by his "fussy" mother? Val Gomon certainly has, and wrote both to the TV times and the producers about it. I followed up the EO onslaught by suggesting the scriptwriters use EO as advisors. Since then I have usually missed Brookside (it coincides with bathtime) so what's happened?

Well, that's it on the NEWS FRONT. Not much (she says, totting up the hours and quantity of chips burnt while dealing with this little lot!) I am really pleased with the response I have had from EO members who have written to me since the last Newsletter, and enormously impressed by those who have acted as WATCHDOGS, and kept me informed. Please keep it up. One thing I do find difficult though is when a local co-ordinator has no telephone. Most journalists have a strict deadline, and need to work fast, and this poses enormous problems for me when I have only a name and address to give them. No, I'm not suggesting you get a phone, but if you can work out a way of giving me someone, in your area I can contact who is happy to deal with the press, then please let me know.

Finally, my congratulations go to Ned Ramsay (5) and Olivia Rowe (8) who both won first prizes in a Playwright competition organised by the Unicorn Theatre, London. Both are home-educated and EO members. Perhaps you missed out on being in the TIMES ED. Supplement, but you are in print HERE!

Jo Rust, Publicity Officer, 8 Church End, Gamlingay, Beds, SG19 3EP.
0767 50032

MAXIMS FOR EDUCATORS

I do not offer these as anything more than my own private ideas. I ask only that a few readers think about them and respond in some personal way to them, even if that response is anger or scorn.

1. If you decide on the destination you will also map the roads. If you map the roads you will also set up the milestones. The journey may be absorbing and enjoyable, but it will be yours. Your child will be only your passenger.
2. What you teach is never exactly what they learn.
3. The more you teach the less they understand.
4. Education is thoroughly satisfied curiosity.
5. Learning can be made a duty or a pleasure, never both.
6. A child's questions are the only true and certain picture we can have of what he needs to learn.
7. What your child doesn't do today he may fall in love with tomorrow - as long as you don't make him hate it.
8. The best way of crashing is not to take off.
9. The best place for standards is up flagpoles.
10. Efficiency is the salmonella of good education.
11. Multiplication tables soak up time. That's why they are so popular with teachers.

RELATIONSHIPS

12. Command a slave, instruct a pupil, educate a friend.
13. No conflict is ever entirely unavoidable.
14. If it makes you angry it probably makes your child angry too.
15. Punishment makes children more wary, not more obedient.
16. If you punish a child for what he does, be sure to punish yourself when you do the same thing.
17. You cannot discipline a person who is not your disciple. You can only oppress him.
18. Children are what we say they are; with a word we can make them good or bad, wise or foolish.
19. Maturity is supposed to make one more resilient, better able to handle frustration and disappointment. Yet we always expect children to yield, to accept without question, to forego satisfaction. Are they more mature than us?
20. Only on our deathbed will the truth about our education be known.

Christopher R. Shute

AUDIO-VISUAL RESOURCE MATERIALS

The Somerset Creationist Group have a range of audio-visual material which is suitable for age 10 to adult. The intended age group is indicated on the material. Below is a short sample of the materials available.

Slide/Tape Sets: Running time approx. 25 mins. Age 11 - adult.

2. FLIGHT: Shows that the power of flight could not have evolved.
5. DINOSAURS: A fascinating look at dinosaurs and the puzzle of their extinction. (11+)
8. GUIDE TO THE GALAXY: A trip through the solar system and beyond shows evidence of design and youthfulness.
18. FOSSILS & THE FLOOD: The earth's fossil record reveals evidence of sudden death and catastrophe and shows no transitional forms. Considers the capacity of Noah's Ark. (11+)
24. SOLAR SYSTEM, WONDERS & MYSTERIES: Includes some excellent slides from the Voyager spacecraft and newly-discovered facts which undermine popular theories. (12+)

Sound Strips (Film strips with taped commentaries)

1. CREATION & EVOLUTION: A comparison of two scientific models by the Institute for Creation Research (14+)
5. THE ORIGIN OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM: This impressive film-strip from the Creation-Science Research Centre, California, shows why all the evolutionary theories for the solar system's origin are fatally flawed. (13+)

Videos (VHS only)

6. DINOSAURS & MAN: Dinosaurs did not become extinct millions of years before man appeared on earth.
7. FOSSIL MAN: Little known facts are presented. Shows that fossil remains are either true ape or true man.

Audio Cassette Tapes

- "Science & the Supernatural" - Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones
- "Critique of 'The Blind Watchmaker'" - David C. Watson
- "Has the Ark been Found" - Dr. John Morris
- "Astronomical Evidence for the Flood" - Barry Setterfield

Minimum cost of the loan is postage both ways. For full details:-

Somerset Creationist Group
Mead Farm, Downhead,
West Camel, Yeovil, BA22 7 RQ
(Tel: 0935-850569)

A quarterly magazine called "Creation Ex Nihilo" is published in Australia. For anyone interested the U.K. address is:-

"Creation" Magazine
P.O. Box 14
Penarth, CF4 4XA, UK

Edwina Theunissen, Pum Rhyd, Marchwiell, Wrexham, Clwyd (Lux luceat!)

Towards More Inspiring Teacher Training

by Marietta Birkholtz

A leader is best when people barely know he exists - not so good when people obey and acclaim him, worse when they despise him. But of a good leader, who talks little, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will all say 'We did this ourselves.'

(Lao-Tse c. 600 B.C.)

The word education originates from the Latin *educio* - to lead out. When I consider Europe's established education system, I wonder who is leading whom and to where. The dictionary tells us that "to teach" means to instruct - to impart knowledge. But who is imparting knowledge to whom? What is knowledge?

Four years ago, I had resolved to become a teacher. Now, I feel that I want to be neither a "teacher" nor a "student," but simply to be myself - to be an inspiration to my students. This process - to become less of a "teacher" and more myself - has guided my search for *THE* teacher training course. This odyssey has led me through Germany, England, Denmark, and Scotland. I am certain the journey will continue.

This paper looks at the teacher training courses I've experienced over the past four years. Although I've found none of them totally satisfying, each has led me to discover some ideas towards a more inspiring teacher training course. This paper discusses my experiences at Hamburg University, the Danish Tvind Schools, and the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School.

Hamburg University

My path started rather conventionally at Hamburg University. The schoolteachers under whom I'd studied had painted a rosy picture of university life. According to them, university life meant encounters with interesting people. I'd be free to choose and pursue the subjects of my choice. Oh, and there'd be so much free time to pursue extra, exciting interests besides my normal studies. After 13 years of rigid education, I was primed to learn what I wanted.

Then, reality hit. My courses were incredibly overcrowded. My English teacher tried to teach a class of 60 - not my idea of effective education. The oppressive course load didn't leave much free time for those other, more exciting university activities. More importantly, I found university education to be superficial. Even at the subject level, the central issues were "given" - never "questioned" or "developed."

For example, the professor who lectured on emotional disturbances limited discussion strictly to their classification and diagnosis. I vividly remember the afternoon when I tried to go a bit beyond the normal class scope. What was it that made something an emotional handicap? Who decides what is - and is not - an emotional handicap? Instead of responding with lively, intellectual debate, the professor told me the question was irrelevant for a beginner's class. Devastation! How could the professor fail to see the importance of this question! I felt as if I was watching the wrong film.

It was Carl Rogers - On Becoming A Person and Freedom To Learn - who really expressed my inner thoughts and feelings toward what education really was. I had discovered Rogers in a student-run class on "Anti-Pedagoguery" - to not rule one's students but to MEET them. This started the avalanche. I began to read books on alternative education - and the more radical they were, the more I reveled in them. Did I really prefer spending five years of generally superficial university studies, followed by two years teaching practical, examinations, and then virtually certain unemployment? And - if I survived all this - would I dare become a martyr to fight for change against the stream of conventional schooling? I decided to use my precious time to seek what I believed - after 18 months at Hamburg University, I left.

Bristol Rudolf Steiner Commune

My next experience after university was at Camphill (Steiner) commune for handicapped people in Bristol, England. My goal was to not only improve my English, but to experience - rather than study - handicapped people. More importantly, I came to reconsider my preconceived ideals of communal living. The commune reminded me of Orwell's Animal Farm in that I began to see the "pigs" everywhere. Specifically, I saw the need to examine - both in myself and in the people around me - the latent desire for power and hierarchy. So, communal living demands open and honest communication, something our commune lacked. Living in a Steiner community seemed to exclude revealing and discussing interpersonal conflicts. Again, instead of remaining in the community - to help resolve these difficult problems - I left. After six months, I felt overworked, full of new experiences, but also filled with disillusionment. Once again, I had failed to find the utopia which was possible to find, as I thought then. I withdrew by taking another job, and thought I'd never look at anthroposophy again.

Tvind Schools

A few months later, I sent away for information to the Tvind Schools near Ringkøbing, Denmark. Their reply looked like the fulfillment of my dreams! The Tvind Schools have been offering four-year training courses since 1972. The first year is the international period - three months earning money for a trip to India; three months preparation time, three months of Indian travel, and three months to put the experience into slides and reports to be used for presentations throughout Denmark. The second year is the national period. It consists of work experience, as well as social science studies. This is followed by three months of "doing What One Finds Right." The third and fourth years of training are dedicated to teaching in schools, both in and out of Denmark. The qualifications from the Tvind Schools are

government approved, which meant the usual study and conventional examinations. Although public opinion on Tvind is not always favourable, their graduates do get employed. There are 50 or so Tvind schools that teach from kindergarten through A-levels, and all are affiliated with various third world aid programs. The only requirement for joining the teacher training course is to participate in the program, and to abstain from drugs and alcohol. Most activities are done in groups.

In summer of 1987, I joined a group of two teachers and fifteen students, many of whom were only 18 and had been living in the Tvind Schools for at least three years. We spent two months in Oslo, where we earned money for the planned trip to India. We worked as house painters and decorators. Our living quarters were very close and cramped, as we all shared only a very small house. There never was a moment alone, and we discussed every detail of finance and organisation during twice daily meetings. I was quite impressed with the efficiency and discipline with which the more senior students mastered every problem.

However, there were several facets to life at Tvind which I found objectionable, and which eventually led to my departure. First, the student's worth was attributed to what they did, rather than who they were. Being functioning and hard-working was of paramount importance - to the exclusion of all else. "We are good comrades" was the unofficial school slogan. Not friend, but comrade. Second, there was no individual identity - only a group identity. Spare time was centered about group sporting events. Group banquets were accompanied by speeches that emphasized group comradeship and solidarity. Finally, there was never room for disagreement: the Tvind way was the best and only way. For example, a schoolmate who had refused to participate with the group was forced into participation - too much time alone would lead to "criminal tendencies." When he accused the teachers of Marxist indoctrination, he was brought to "counseling sessions" where he was physically pinned to a bench. I found that these were not isolated examples, but indicative of the school philosophy. Based on these issues, I left the Tvind school after four months.

Rudolf Steiner School

After a brief recovery in Hamburg, I returned to Bristol to do some volunteer work at Bristol Waldorf School, which lead me to attend the Rudolf Steiner Teacher Training Course in Edinburgh, Scotland. Let me briefly describe my curriculum. This two-year course is done part-time with ten other students. During the day, I teach German at the school - viable practice to accompany the theory classes during the evenings. Each class consists of an artistic activity and book study. The course addresses our intellect as well as our intuition. Anthroposophy (the guiding philosophy to all Steiner schools) encourages spiritual self-development. The contact with my fellow students is friendly and enjoyable.

Yet, there are several points to the Steiner Teacher Training which detract from its overall effectiveness. Primarily, I study anthroposophy to the exclusion of other - and possibly insightful - philosophies. I spend much time trying to understand Steiner's works (usually written in his complex style). Since coming to terms with anthroposophy is a lifelong process, I wonder if my time is more effec-

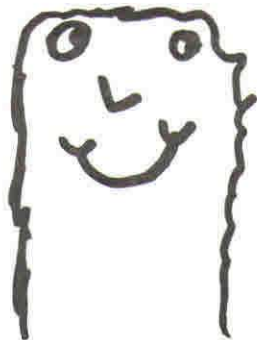
tively used to explore other educational and life philosophies - mine, my fellow students, and other authors like Carl Rogers. By excluding other philosophies, we create a reality that is one-sided. I hear so often "Steiner said" that I have remarked "Yes, Steiner said, but Steiner's dead!" What are YOUR standards, YOUR ideas? What do you think?" If one comes to adopt a belief system where one's experiences confirm and validate the system, then one may grasp its authenticity. But, it is an escape to completely surrender to any organisation or belief without SEARCHING for oneself in the process.

Towards More Inspiring Teacher Training

I have described my past experiences with teacher training courses to bring out their deficiencies and their strengths. What has coalesced in my brain over the past years is a collection of ideas to make teacher training more inspiring. The crux of my personal perspective on teacher training is that the content of the training itself should be chosen by each individual student. What I envision is a school where facilitators and students choose and commit to a long-term curriculum. The students could factor into small groups as dictated by similar interests. These groups could then discuss and eventually create a curriculum which meets their needs, expectations, and orientation. Therefore, a self-made curriculum lies at the heart of more inspiring teacher training.

What is more important than subject knowledge is our knowledge of who we are in the world - our idea of self-worth and what kind of person we want to become. My experience with children in the classroom is that WHAT I teach is secondary. My relationship to them overrides the actual transference of knowledge. Thus, teacher training (and education in general) needs to introduce more exploration. I understand this exploratory element as an assessment of personal development which would HELP to avoid the power element in student/teacher relationships. For the same reason, I suggest replacing professors with facilitators - people who are members of the group rather than a class leader.

Another important characteristic of more inspiring teacher training is choice. If, teachers have had the opportunity to make choices, they will feel more at ease to allow their students to choose for themselves. Students will have the courage to create their own life, instead of conforming to pre-cast solutions which can often lead to dissatisfaction.



Therefore, I can distill my ideas into the following notions:

- o introduce more exploratory aspects to the course. Discussion of questions like "Who am I?", "What are the standards I live by?", "What would I most like to do with this teacher training course - or my life in general?", and "What do I want to learn?"
- o provide the option of omitting professors in favour of facilitators - someone who helps students to learn, not a leader or dominator;
- o instead of imposing obligations on the students, provide them with options. This would include self-assessment rather than imposed examinations, individual subject choice, a curriculum that encompasses a variety of philosophies;
- o school practicals in different countries to develop an educational environment which is less parochial and more open to change, and new ideas;
- o provide students the option for communal living as an additional experience.

Conclusion

Of course there are many unanswered questions this paper has avoided. For example, who pays for this education, who employs the students who decided to not take the examinations. Yet, I feel that we need to examine these crucial educational issues, and to realise them. Education is essentially life's starting point - the foundation upon which we build ourselves. Unless we can provide teacher training that inspires tomorrow's teachers, tomorrow's uninspired students are doomed to repeat the searching that characterised my past four years.

"Myths are always easier to live with than reality because . . . they stop things from changing, even when they really need to do so. Away with them."

(Christopher Shute, Education (otherwise), Oct. 88)

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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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