

education
otherwise



1989

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1st September 1989

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

This Newsletter contains 18,693 words and 108,652 characters and was produced using 'nroff' and a Canon Laser Printer.

1. Editorial

Greetings from Devon - please excuse the straw between the pages!



We are Jonathan, Belinda, Judith(5), Ruth(2 & 3/4) and Naomi (5 mths) Allen, an independent, socially unacceptable, professional, alternative, vegetarian family, although the last is only of a few months standing. We run a number of small back-bedroom businesses in between changing nappies, changing nappies and changing nappies. We do sometimes answer the telephone just for a change!

Our eldest daughter has been educating at home for the last five years, and although this has met with a certain amount of grand-parental opposition over the last 18 months, we are going to continue in the same vein now she has reached the official education age. Belinda is also a member of La Leche League, and home education seems the natural extension from their principle of attachment parenting.

On the whole we (have tried to) follow a semi-structured approach for Judith. This means that when she is prepared to do some 'work', we use a workbook, and when she doesn't we don't! We have, on the other hand, had great success with Ginn Maths, and she sometimes enjoys "Peter and Jane" by Ladybird (although very dated). There is a great temptation to turn everything into a "learning situation", but fortunately she doesn't let us, and we are starting to get the message. We suspect that Ruth and Naomi will have a rather easier time of it. We made the mistake of taking Glen Doman seriously when Judith was younger, and tried to teach her to read like that, but won't do that again. Perhaps things would be different for other families, but we felt a great pressure to prove to our criticisers that we could educate our children out of school (before we reached the necessity of a formal decision), even by their standards. That too is gone, unless we get 'had' again later!

It has been a real pleasure to read and include some of the contributions which have been sent in for this newsletter. We feel particularly empathy with Karen Ham-Ying after her "School Visit", and anybody having doubts should read this several times. Jill Mahoney's letter made interesting reading, and the letter from the Skeens family should provoke some good responses in the next newsletter - we'd like to know what to say too. Several contributions underline the anxiety that we too have also felt as the five year old threshold is reached by the first child - I think it is worst before their birthdays, and somehow the physical passage of time, coupled by the fact that the Inspector wasn't knocking on the door the following day has mellowed the rebellion against the social norm. There are several useful book reviews - thanks to Barbara Christie for the one on Ginn Science, we have changed our minds on that and will give it a go. The regions all seem busy, except the West Country - there never seems to be anything for Cornwall, Devon, Somerset or Dorset ... it must be the air (or the straw !!).

One of our 'bedroom' businesses is a mail-order book business. We supply a school, tourist attractions and local businesses, and even occasionally members of the public. Books can be very expensive, and we might find it difficult to have as many as we do if we weren't "in the trade". The trouble is that the prices of most books (called Net books) are fixed by the publishers under a

legalised restrictive trade practice and we would get our fingers chopped off if we (or any other bookshop) sold books at less than that price except (again) "in the trade". We have come up with an idea to allow us to let fellow members of EO buy books at an effective discount of 10%. All 'school'-type books are not included in the 'Net' arrangements (such as Ginn Maths & Science) and if anybody wants to buy them from us they are welcome to 10% straight discount. If you buy 'Net' books (almost anything will do) from us we will give you a voucher worth 10% of the full price you pay. When you have enough for another book you want, simply send back the vouchers and get a free book.

Nobody warned us the editing would be this strenuous, as we write it's another midnight touch - still we haven't got to be up for school in the morning!



2. News from the Regions

KENT

In May we visited the Nuclear Power Station at Dungeness. We were given a warm welcome - free drinks, a video and a guided tour. Everyone found it very interesting. Afterwards we went to the lighthouse, and the energetic ones went to the top! In June we visited the Eurotunnel Exhibition centre. This was also an enjoyable trip - despite thunder storms - and it was nice to see some new faces. Please try and come to our next visits - we look forward to meeting you.

August 11th - Whitbread Hop Farm, Beltring, Paddock Wood
Lots to see - shire horses, hop gardens, museums, craft shop, childrens farm animals, adventure playground, lakes, nature trails and picnic areas. Refreshments available. Bring a picnic lunch. Meet in car park at 12 noon.

September 6th - The Historic Dockyard, Chatham
A working museum - see rope, sails and flags being made. Climb aboard the 'Gannet'. Steam centre, heavy horses, and LOTS MORE. Meet in car park adjacent to visitors' centre inside dockyard at 11.30 am

Glenys Mitchell-Bennett has offered to have 'Open House' one day - See next newsletter for details of this and future meetings

Pam, Lois and Mike Stevenson

Norfolk Diary Dates

Aug 12	Evening Family Walk
Aug 18	Outing - walk, returning by steam train
Sep 08	Outing - Sandringham walk/play/picnic
Sep 21	Hindolveston Workshop

All enquiries to Lin Chilvers, 6 Thorpeland Close, Runcton Holme, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE33 0AG Telephone: 0553 810438

Hampshire

Hello, Hampshire here at last. I've been co-ordinator for nearly a year but due to ill health not a lot of co-ordinating has been done. However, I'm up and about now and would like to apologise to any new members I have not yet written to.

I would like to arrange some family gatherings, visits (parks, museums), and maybe some workshops. If there is anyone interested in coming or has ideas for any of the above, please let me know so I can arrange within a budget as halls can be expensive if only two families turn up!

Sophie Harrington-Ellsmore, 11 The Grove, Penton Grafton, Andover, Hampshire SP11 0RS

GAMING

Our Midsummer gathering in Gamlingay proved very enjoyable, with many new families getting together and the children having fun. Thankyou all for coming along. One of the parents suggested her father, a master potter, would be happy to arrange a pottery workshop sometime in the near future. If your children would be interested in attending, please let me know by letter giving childrens' ages as soon as possible.

The Cambridgeshire EO Directory is still in need of more response to make it worthwhile. Please tell me of places to go, odd resources others may not know about. When the Directory is compiled we can all benefit from it.

Hope you are all enjoying the summer holiday.

Regards, Jo Rust

Shropshire EO Events September - November 1989

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

September 9th - Japanese afternoon at Stephanie's and Yoshi's house. Meet at 1.30 pm.

September - Camping at Aberdovey. Few tourists, miles of beaches, interesting towns, beautiful hills and lakes, narrow gauge railway, ruined castle and the Centre for Alternative Technology. Telephone now for details and to book.

October 14th - Natasha will run a music workshop, especially for the musically illiterate. Bring any instruments that you have, from spoons to cymbals, and musical edibles for tea. 1.30 pm at Don and Mandy's house.

October 23rd (MONDAY) - Acton Scott in the autumn: blacksmithing and metalwork demonstration.

November 20th (monday) - a trip to Jodrell Bank which will include a dramatised presentation, "Once around the Sun", by theatre group Bandersnatch, suitable for children of 5 years and up. The venue includes a tree park and a "hands-on" museum. Approximate cost £2 - BOOKING NOW - please telephone.

For further details please contact Don and Mandy Patter, The Lindens, Broseley, Telford 0952-882780

South Yorkshire

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Aug 12 | Candlemaking at Terri Shoosmith's house |
| Sep 23 | Visit to Riber Castle (contact Dineke de Jong) |
| Sep 27 | 8pm planned meeting at Janet Ford's house |
| Sep 28 | Harvest Festival at Mary O'Connel's house (contact Mary) |

Dineke de Jong, 91 Osborne Road, Sheffield S11 9BA



South London Meetings

For EO parents and children from any area. It's very informal, we all bring some food to share, and usually the parents talk to each other and the children play.

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Sat 26 Aug | The Child & Parent Centre, The Albany, Douglas Way SE8,
from 11 am - 3.30 pm |
| Sun 24 Sep | Norwood Children's Centre, St Luke's Chambers,
2-8 Norwood High Street SE27, from 1 pm - 5 pm |
| Sat 21 Oct | Albany as above |
| Sun 26 Nov | Norwood as above |

For more details, telephone Rachel (582 3949) or Dorothy (469 0413)

Apologies to anyone who turned up at the Albany on the 29th of July - we had to change the date to the 22nd after the details has gone into the newsletter. SORRY! It is a good idea to ring and confirm as the arrangements do have to be made such a long time in advance.

North London Parents' and Childrens' Group

We meet at Swiss Cottage Community Centre, 19 Winchester Road NW3, close to Swiss Cottage tube, on the first Sunday of every month. EO members from all areas, or anyone else with an interest in otherwise education, are welcome at these meetings. Please bring food or drink to share for lunch.

Because of the necessity for us to cover our costs at every meeting (we have to hire the premises), we are asking regular attenders to support these meetings by becoming subscribers: for £4.50 you and your family can come for a year without further payment - the 'on-the-door' contribution is now 75p.

Our previous regular schedule of Sunday activities has now to some extent been superceded by the Craft Days (a weekday programme of events), but we will still have occasional special events during these Sunday meetings, the next one being:

EO SUMMER FAIR - Sunday 3rd September, 12am - 2pm

This is intended primarily as a fun event for the children to run, rather than as a fund-raising exercise. If you'd like to take an active part, get in touch - everyone will be very welcome to join in. Otherwise, JUST COME - bringing all your friends, relations ... Inspectors ... etc.

If you have any queries about these meetings, ring Andrea Granville (328-4138) or Leslie Barson (969-0893).



East Suffolk

An informal summer gathering has been arranged for Thursday August the 10th, from 12 noon onwards, at Westleton Village Hall, Saxmundham, Suffolk.

The main aim of the gathering is to meet other EO families who would be interested in further contact and perhaps organising future activities in the East Suffolk area, but all EO'ers are welcome. If weather permits we can go out from the hall for a walk, picnic, games, kite-flying etc.

Please bring food as a contribution towards a 'shared' picnic. Drinks will be provided. Also your own kites, balls or other games. A contribution of 50p per family towards the hiring of the hall would also be appreciated.

For those who want to stay on in the area camping is possible locally, but being summer holiday time, sites are likely to be booked up in advance, although it's worth a try! There are lots of walks, Heritage Coast, Minsmere Bird Reserve, Framlingham and Orford castles, Otter Trust etc. Two sites are: Cliff House, Dunwich (072873 282) and Lakeside, Saxmundham (072873 3344).

It would be helpful to know how many people are likely to come to the meeting, so please contact: Charlotte Keith (Westleton 650) or Jacqui Cawkwell (Blythburgh 281).

Dyfed

All Dyfed homeschoolers are invited to Cwmrhaffan, Sarnau, for Saturday the 16th of September. We have plenty of space for tents if anyone would like to camp, and/or stay the weekend. We are one mile from Penbryn and Tresaith beaches.

Please contact Emma & Julian Orbach, Sally & John Hargreaves (0239-811118) if you would like to come.

South Manchester

We have now had two informal meetings in members' homes with a mixture of pre-school and school-age children making new friends.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday the 13th September, 10.30 am - 3.00 pm (bring a packed lunch) at the address below - telephone for directions.

Anne Nesbit, 17 Tewksbury Close, Poynton, Stockport, Cheshire (0625-871718)

West Yorkshire

September 18th, Sarah Cooke, 41 St George Avenue, Leeds 7 0532-629557

November 13th, Alison Tribe, 4 Penistone Road, Birds Edge, Huddersfield 0422-606618

August 20th, possibility of a stall at Huddersfield Green Fair. Anyone interested telephone Alison Tribe, please

Week Beginning September 11th, possible Batik workshop at Pauline Woodhead's, telephone for details - Halifax 248529

October 3rd, visit to Undercliffe Cemetery, Bradford. Various activities, meet at the Undercliffe Lane entrance 10.30 am. Bring a picnic lunch.

Leicestershire

We are still meeting at Beaumont Leys Pool (Leicester) for lunch and a SWIM on the second Wednesday of each month - come along anytime after 12.30pm.

The CYCLE meeting at Rutland Water was so much fun that we have decided to go again once the schools have gone back. Ring early September for more details.

Next meeting is at Lucy and Keith Charlton's home, Newton Harcourt, Leics. on Saturday 12th August. Please ring them for details and directions: Great Glen 2118

Liz and Gordon Ramsay 0509-856604



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of EDUCATION OTHERWISE Ltd.

Saturday 23rd September 1989 at 2.30pm at Featherstone Castle.

AGENDA

1. Quorum - at least 20 signed-up members must be present.
2. Apologies
3. Minutes
4. Matters Arising
5. Rotation of Officers and Resignations
6. Consideration of Accounts
7. Reports of Officers and Groups
 - a. Membership Secretary
 - b. Enquiries Secretary
 - c. Co-ordinators Secretary
 - d. Publicity Secretary
 - e. Publications Secretary
 - f. Steering Committee
 - g. Research Group
 - h. Legal Group
 - i. Family Support Fund
 - j. Rolling Fund
8. Any Other Business



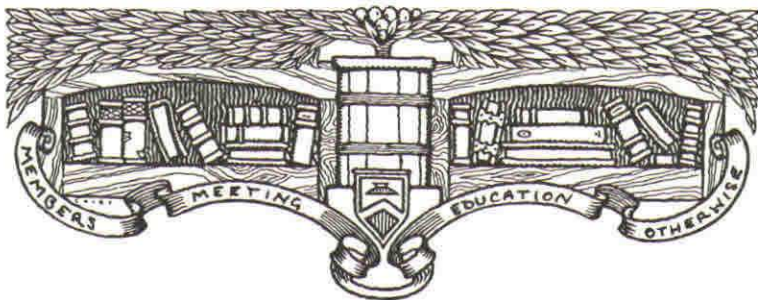
Members Meeting

Saturday 23rd September 1989 at 10.00am at Featherstone Castle.

Provisional Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes
3. Matters Arising
4. Rotation of Officers
5. GCSE Update
6. Recycled Paper
7. New Co-ordinators
8. Steering Committee Update
9. Appointments System
10. Newsletter Guidelines
11. Campaigning Workshop Report
12. SINC - Children's Bill Update

Any additions, amendments, etc. to this agenda to be sent to Acting General Secretary Pam Stevenson 25, Wyndham Road, Dover, Kent CT17 0BH to arrive no later than September 4th.



Chairwomans Report - Unstone Grange

Twenty of us met at Unstone Grange on Sunday 18th June. As the weather was so idyllic we met outside under the spreading oak tree. It was good to see old friends and to have the enthusiasm of new members and their families to keep the meeting going.

Jean Lovius and Julie Lyons tendered their resignations as General and Assistant General Secretary respectively. Pam Stevenson of Kent offered to act as General Secretary until the AGM when the position will be formalised. Our acting treasurer would also like to resign at the AGM and Mike Cook of Kent offered to consider taking over.

Our current account stands at around £5,500 and we are up to date with VAT payments. Our outstanding VAT has been covered by donations - Well Done EO members. It was recommended we finally close the Barclays account - who out there is still paying into it?? However we decided to check the statement before final closure.

Our membership as usual hovers around the 2,000 mark. We have new stocks of "Teach Your Own" and "School's Out", both of which are selling well.

Our Publicity Officer is working well and at Unstone her husband, with the help of various children and adults prepared a promotional video to provide information for Press, TV and Radio.

We have had some complaints about the standard of newsletter. As some of our new members pointed out, this is often a members-only view of EO, and as such was an important subject. It was agreed to hold a Publications Meeting at Featherstone (all welcome) and report to Members Meeting with a review of guidelines for editors.

We need more help from local co-ordinators and experienced members to support individual families with legal problems - any offers? One LEA has responded positively to Legal Group's suggestions and David Deutsch is working with them to produce a standard letter which could be used as a model for other LEA's.

Joan Hoare has had clear, written confirmation from the DES that FE Colleges can admit under-age students.

Our co-ordinators network is working reasonably well, although we have no-one in Ireland. Claire Weber was thanked for all her past work there.

Rachel Sanger was asked to investigate the use of re-cycled paper for newsletters etc.

Betty Ball reported on the proposed ending of External status for the GCSE. It appears that non-school students may experience difficulties in arranging for assessment of coursework by external moderators although S.E.G and L.E.A.G. are considering a London-based assessment centre for their non-school candidates. It was agreed to send a letter to the Joint Council of GCSE Boards to register our feelings and ensure EO children are not overlooked in the arrangements for non-school candidates. Jo Rust of Cambridgeshire offered to do this and co-ordinate information.

Membership cards will hopefully be available soon. Will Rust of Dutter Cottage, 8 Church End, Gamlingay nr Sandy Bedfordshire SG19 3EP has offered to produce

membership cards for EO children who send him a SAE.

Rachel Pinney (Creative Listening) has offered to come to Featherstone to demonstrate her technique. After much discussion we decide we need more information before coming to a decision.

Various venues for future meeting were discussed: Mablethorpe for Winter 1990 - Unstone for Spring and a Lakes Youth Hostel for Autumn 1990 AGM. Any suggestions of places and offers to run these events much appreciated. We need large, cheap places with spaces to hold meetings and for kids to play indoors and out. Look out for a place near you PLEASE!!

Other points discussed: Leicester LEA are under the impression that the National Curriculum will apply to EO families and have asked EO for help in drawing up guidelines. Liz Ramsey will help educate them and also said that EO has been invited to talk about School Phobia with the Educational Psychology Service.

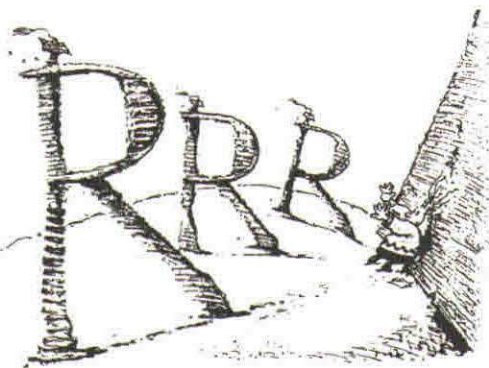
Jo Rust suggested that EO might benefit from a patron/figurehead - any ideas for or against the subject would be appreciated.

A suggestion was also made that E J Arnold could be asked to sponsor a year's EO meetings.

Thanks were given to June and Ian Grant for organising a splendid weekend.

Any comments, ideas or thoughts on points raised would be most appreciated and can be sent to the Chairwoman, Jennie White, Wensley Mill, Wensley, Leyburn, N Yorkshire DL8 4HR. Full copies of the minutes can be obtained by sending a large SAE to Julie Lyons, 56 Newtown Avenue, Royston, Barnsley S71 4HB.

EDUCATION *for* FREEDOM



A DAY CONFERENCE

**VAUGHAN COLLEGE
ST. NICHOLAS CIRCLE,
LEICESTER.**

Sat 28th Oct, from 10am

Further information

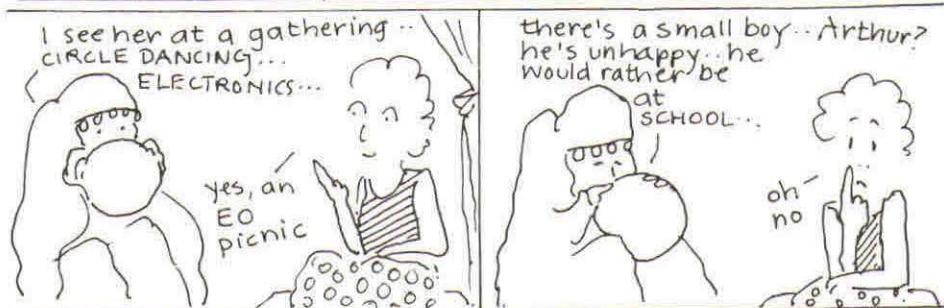
Further information, extra booking forms and so on, may be obtained from us by writing to:

**L/b ED, The Cottage, The Green, Leire, Leicester,
LE17 5HL.**

or 'phone: (0455) 209029 or (0272) 241380 (after 1/9/89)

EDUCATING ARCHIE

BY SEQ



8/89

4. Notices

EXCHANGE VISIT

I have received a letter from Nancy Cisar who lives in Madison, Wisconsin, USA. She was intending to visit England this year, but now finds that this is not possible at the moment. However, she tells me that her daughter would very much like a pen-pal. She is eight years old, and her name (and their address) is:

KATJUSA CISAR
2510 Kendall
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Her birthday is on the 14th of August, and she is interested in piano, singing in a choir for children, birds, and finding bits of pottery, ceramics and old bones for clues of the past.

Nancy is the editor of a parent support group newsletter in her area and she has offered to pass on letters of any EO'ers who would like pen-pals if you would like to write to her.

Exchange Visit Secretary

Having been exchange visit secretary for a couple of years now, I have decided that it is time to let someone else have a go. The job is not difficult or time-consuming - in fact I have not had many visits to arrange. Basically all I do is keep a list of EO families who have said they are happy to have foreign visitors to stay and when I get requests for addresses I pass on the list and visitors contact the families direct to make their own arrangements.

If anyone out there is interested in taking on the job either write to me, or telephone.

Carol Adams, 14 The Grove, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton WV11 1RW, Tel: 0902-732958

Ponds and Wildlife

If you send a large SAE (A4 or 12 x 9) size with a 50p stamp to the Wild Fowl Trust, Slimbridge, Gloucester, they will send you a 'Pond Watch Pack' free. It contains a questionnaire for you to fill in about a local pond you have studied, plus posters and lots of information on ponds and pond-life plus lots of references.

Hilary Forster, 3 Hendrick Drive, Sedbury, Chepstow, Gwent

RNLI StormForce

Storm Force is the RNLI's club for under 16's. On joining, each member receives a certificate, badge, stickers, poster and Storm Force News. Storm Force News is published quarterly. Each newspaper contains up-to-date facts about lifeboats and lifeboat crews, competitions, puzzles, a letters page and an exciting picture store of a real life rescue - and is posted directly to members. As members of the 8,000-strong club, the children can join in events throughout the country, buy special Storm Force tee-shirts, badges and sports



bags, and learn about the work of lifeboatmen and women.

It costs £3 per head for a year, and you get in touch with: Storm Force Headquarters RNLi, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset BH15 1HZ

Jonathan & Belinda Allen, 4 Ashleigh Road, Barnstaple, Devon

A Scottish 'SCHOOL IS NOT COMPULSORY' ?

It has been suggested that a Scottish version of "School is not Compulsory" would be helpful to members in Scotland. If you'd be interested in working on this with me, or have anything you feel may be of assistance/interest to Scottish members please get in touch. I would imagine that a pamphlet or supplement would be sufficient.

Let me have your thoughts, suggestions and OFFERS TO HELP!

Christine Wallace

South London - Morley College

A reminder for anyone who is interested that the new Morley College prospectus for 1989-90 is out now. You can enrol by post or telephone (for the first time ever) from 31st July.

For those who have never been there, Morley College is in Westminster Bridge Road, SE1, near Lambeth North tube. This year, they have a series of Family Concerts and the following Family Classes which are for adults and children of all ages:

Machine Knitting	Arts & Crafts	Pottery
Natural History	French	Spanish
German	Music-making	Gamelan afternoon
Bengali/Arabic (for Bengali heritage families)		



LEA's Associate Membership of EO

Cornwall LEA has recently joined EO as an "associate member". They have purchased "School Is Not Compulsory", which should help them adjust their approaches to those exercising their 'education otherwise' rights.

Practising or prospective EO families in Cornwall (or anywhere else) should not fear that their anonymity (or anything else) will be abused as "associate membership" excludes the LEA from being furnished with a Contact List.

The newsletter will be sent to them (specifically to an officer in the Special Education Department), however, but please contribute, SW EO'ers; just ask for your surname or address to be omitted if necessary. Any doubts or difficulties - contact me (I'm the SW Membership Secretary).

It should be EO's chance and to our advantage to continue to 'educate' Cornwall LEA as to the nature of our responsible EO'ing.

Maggie Swatridge, 32 Carey Park, Polperro PL13 2JP, Tel: 0503-72087

IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE?

We are a young(ish) couple with a two-and-a-half year old son looking to correspond with and meet people of like minds. We are pro-EO, fans of A S Neill and John Holt, can't abide Dobson, but are committed Christians, though not of the fundamentalist variety. We are also into music, literature, astronomy (recent) and the great outdoors. Are we alone? If not, please write to us.

Nick and Leda Skeens, 55 Chapel Road, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex CMO 8JD, Telephone: 0621-784889

HOUSE FOR SALE

Ardfern, Argyll, rebuilt house of character in beautiful secluded setting, 3 acres, barn with outline planning permission, uniquely situated one mile from popular yachting and holiday village. Offers over £130,000.

We come under Strathclyde region which we have found helpful towards home education. There are excellent resource centres at both primary and secondary schools in Lochgilpead which is 18 miles away where we have always been welcome, no limit on the number of books or the length of time we have them out for.

Val Springthorpe, Ardlarach, Ardfarn, Argyll, Tel: 085-25-614

[Ed: I couldn't include any of the photographs since they don't re-produce at all well, but the place is magnificent !]

Stamps at 10% Discount

Anybody out there want to pay less for their stamps? Because of one of our businesses we buy mint but un gummed stamps at a discount. These are philatelic material and quite legal with the Post Office. You only need a quick dab of Pritt or Uhu to stick them on. We have lots of 19p and 14p stamps, but can get other things too. If you're interested give us ring.

Jonathan and Belinda Allen, 4 Ashleigh Road, Barnstaple, Devon, Telephone 0271-79023



FEATHERSTONE '89

Tues Sept 19th - Mon Sept 25th
AGM Sept 23rd



Just a reminder of the EO week in the Northumbrian borders. There's plenty of space left ('cos all the forms I sent out haven't been sent back yet!)

Come and meet other people who don't go, or send their kids, to school, share ideas, dreams, worries etc! and it's cheap too! just £8 a day for adults over



14 and £4.50 for kids under 14, that includes breakfast, lunch, dinner and bed! Where else could you get such value!

For booking forms send SAE to: (you might get some more information as well)

Rachel White, Wensley Mill, Wensley, Leyburn, N Yorkshire DL8 4HR, Tel: 0969-23544

MEMBERSHIP CARDS for EO CHILDREN

In the last Newsletter, Alexandra Smith from Lancashire suggested cards be issued to home educated children so that they can show them to people who may believe they are truanting from school. At Unstone Grange this was discussed and felt to be a good idea. William Rust agreed to design one and distribute it. If YOU are home educated and would like one, then please send a Stamped Addressed Envelope to: William Rust, 8 Church End, Gamlingay, Near Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 3EP. We ask that you only use this card when you are being home educated. These cards will only serve a useful purpose if you use them honestly.

	
This is to certify that	

is receiving education at home, according to the provision made in the 1944 Education Act.	
Parents Signature _____	

CO-ORDINATOR NEEDED IN GRAMPIAN

Grampian Region need a co-ordinator. If you are interested please get in touch with Bruce and Christine Wallace (Highland). We are prepared to continue supporting families having difficulties with the education authorities if you don't feel willing to do this side of the 'job'. If you think another member would make a good co-ordinator try to persuade them to take it on. Some discussion between members in Grampian would be a good idea too. So please get in touch soon.

Bruce and Christine Wallace

WANTED

Is there anyone out there who has LEGO TECHNIC that they no longer want? We would be happy to buy it at a reasonable price if you're able to part with it.

Carly, Ned, Minna and Amy Ramsay, 1 Stanford Hills Cottages, Stanford on Soar, Nr Loughborough, Leicestershire LE12 5QL, Telephone: 0509-856604

The new Contact List has our new address, but our old telephone number.

Nick and Leda Skeens - Maldon (0621) 784889



5. Second Editorial

Having given considerable thought to whether I have the courage to open my mouth on such a contentious subject, I have reluctantly decided that some effort needs to be made in order to pull back from a potential split in the EO ranks.

As you will be aware from the extract minutes of the Members Meeting at Unstone, and the agenda for the AGM at Featherstone, EO as an organisation is going to formally prepare guidelines for future editors of the newsletter. A large amount of material, both for and against a religious standpoint has been published in recent newsletters, and there is a fair dose in this one too. This is both to be expected and reasonable in that Editors have no control over the letters they are sent for publication, only over the ones they publish. As a first-time Editor I was amazed that the number of letters and articles which mentioned either explicitly or in a covering letter that they were written by Christians outweigh those which did not by 4 or 5 to 1.

There is a clear (and I hope in this matter alone) barrier between Christians and those who either hold no religious belief or are actively atheists. Christians know that they are right and that everybody else is destined for the fires of Hell, the atheists denounce the arrogance and insufferable pride of people who not only think that they are right but seek to indoctrinate everybody else against their will, whilst those who hold no strong views either way simply sit in the middle and wish both parties would go away and argue somewhere else.

It has to be said that, on the issue of special creation *versus* evolution, both sides have a certain amount of right on their side - viewed from an independent position. The creationists maintain (apart from their specific religious answer to the question of origins) that evolution is an inconsistent and (as yet) unproven theory. As a logical scientist I am obliged to agree that the various hypotheses that comprise the Theory of Evolution are still only hypotheses and not proven fact. There remain a large number of documented archeological/geological discoveries that are completely incompatible with the evolutionary theories as currently presented. The evolutionists argue (apart from any any religious beliefs that they may or may not hold) that there is far too much circumstantial evidence in favour of the evolutionary process having taken place in the past, and can be shown to be occurring now, to accept any alternative theories. Which then brings you down to the question of religious belief: if you are a fundamentalist believer in any religion then you are self-obliged to accept the whole package; if you are a committed atheist then you are self-obliged to reject anything which smacks of religion - consequently *both* parties are locked into head-on dispute.

I disagree with those who feel that the newsletter is not the place for such discussions to take place. EO is all about freedom and diversity, and many parents have spoken both in the newsletter and in such formal publications as "School Is Not Compulsory" about the discovery and learning process which *both* parents and home educated children are engaged upon. It is only as these matters are debated and openly considered that people are free to learn. A

closed mind, or a mind which dismisses everything which they disagree with as religious or atheist propoganda, will learn nothing. It is also true to say that a religious or an a-religious philosophy lies beneath many parents' reasons for home educating their children, and thus expression of that philosophy is both inevitable and necessary.

However, I fear that all people are currently learning is how to argue and split up EO. Many of the recent contributions have been rather over the top, and surely it is time to stop. From (again, I hope) a detached point of view, the Christians have been a bit too up-front, whilst the non-Christians have been far too aggressive. Both parties have indulged in provocative writing, and both parties should know better. Nobody needs to be treated as a child and spoon-fed a bit of ideology, or have it slipped in covertly. This insults everybody's intelligence.

Lastly, we need to consider the meaning of the word *tolerance*, and what it means in this context. Tolerance to me means the following:

1. both of us, you and me, are allowed to hold and express our different viewpoints
2. both of us, you and me, are allowed to disagree - if necessary, strongly - provided that there is no attempt to censure each others right to think and live as we believe, and that we are not hurting each other or our children
3. both of us, you and me, would be prepared to defend each other's right to that freedom of expression, even if we disagreed with the specific subject matter or philosophy
4. neither of us, you or me, will lie in fact or reported word about the other, and will not mis-represent each others' position to a third party - in particular to any children
5. neither of us, you or me, will belittle or demean the view of the other, or suggest that the other is short of mental ability in holding such views

It takes a lot to live up to that, (in fact I have failed myself many times in the past) but that does not alter the truth of it. It also requires a certain level of maturity to recognise that such behaviour is not only necessary for the survival of such groups as EO, but is an essential quality for their future lives which our children can only learn from us by experience.

Can I encourage the members who have indulged in the newsletter wrangles recently to grow up and behave like sensible adults. Let's have no more of this childish squabbling and get back to what EO is all about. I have published some of the contributions which touch on this subject, although severely cut where necessary - could I ask all future editors to act with similar discretion, and perhaps omit those which deviate from the principles above.

May I suggest a series of serious articles, each newsletter carrying a pair, to show both sides of any argument. The articles should be limited to, say, a maximum of 3 pages each and should be written by different people, using the principles quoted above. This would greatly enhance the externally perceived quality and educational content of the newsletter, and would allow all members to learn about others' views and positions. Since it has been the reason for the recent debates, perhaps Evolution/Creation should be the first one, followed by Meat/Vegetarian, Multi/Unilateral Disarmament and any other topics that

members feel need to be explained and shared in a serious way. I am happy to start the ball rolling in the next newsletter - could any interested debaters ring Leslie Kilbride (the Publications Secretary) to check this out and make the necessary arrangements.

6. Secondary Age Children in Scotland

In Scotland the new examination system makes provision for the non-academic child with a non-external exam "Standard Grade Course in Social and Vocational Skills" which guidelines would appear to provide a suitable framework of 'study' for a home-educated child of secondary age not wishing to take examinations.

It's official title is "1984 Social and Vocational Skills Arrangements" produced by the Scottish Education Department. I have not got this or the proposed reviewed arrangements. The information came from a pamphlet produced by Grampian for parents in the area and the following is taken directly from this source.

Summary of the Proposed Arrangements for Social and Vocational Skills (S&VS) The following notes summarise some of the main features of S&VS - one of the multi-disciplinary Standard Grade Courses.

RATIONALE: S&VS seeks to identify and develop the range of life and social skills necessary for pupils to make their way in society, while the vocational content is to foster those skills and attributes which will make a pupil more readily employable. At one and the same time the course is rooted in practical work and the realities of economic survival, yet ascends to touch our humanity at higher levels: self-assurance, ability to collaborate, caring for others. (1984 S&VS Arrangements)

AIMS OF THE COURSE?

- A. *to develop practical, social and vocational skills necessary to adult life. These include competence in the management of time, money and other resources, and of basic equipment and machines. Also required is achievement of competence in communication skills and interpersonal skills, particularly relating to family and home, work, self-employment and leisure. In the process of developing these skills, relevant knowledge should also be acquired.*
- B. *to provide pupils with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a variety of relevant social and vocational circumstances, personal life, the family, the wider community, the world of work, self-employment and leisure. This enables schools to recognise the processes and effects of a constantly and rapidly changing world and help the pupils prepare themselves for leaving school and entering further education, employment and training or whatever other prospect their future holds.*
- C. *to develop an awareness of the needs of others in the community by recognising that different sections of the community have their own needs and by knowledge of the agencies which exist to help meet these needs. Pupils should come to appreciate the extent to which they themselves have a contribution to make in helping others in the community.*
- D. *to enhance personal qualities such as self-awareness, self-respect, confidence and initiative, so that pupils develop their abilities in respect*

of self-assessment and self-evaluation, making reasoned judgements and drawing reasoned conclusions, and coping with day-to-day situations.

- E. *to foster a positive attitude to teamwork, whereby pupils accept the need for appropriate behaviour in different situations. This, for example, requires a pupil to accept that on occasion, individual interests and preferences come second to demands of the group.*

THE COURSE PLAN

Although the courses in S&VS encompass these aims, there is no stereo-type for a course. Individual teachers and pupils in different schools place varying emphases on different aspects. Some see the need for a fair amount of factual information - about citizens' rights, obtaining employment, etc; others attach more importance to practical skills; for example, in the production of artifacts. Some emphasise the role of interpersonal skills, and of attitudes and more general personal attributes such as self-respect and initiative; others concentrate more on 'coping' skills such as reading time-tables and maps, using telephones, form-filling, etc. Furthermore, the imagination of teachers and pupils must interact and must both be extended in the moulding of the learning programme. The arrangements for S&VS, along with those of other Standard Grade Courses, is presently under review. However, it is envisaged that in the revised structure the course will cover the themes of Home, Work and Community by way of a number of pupil experiences.

Within the course experience each pupil is required to contribute to a group working together for the achievement of specific tasks. Schools can devise experiences which they feel best serve the needs of their pupils as long as these are in accord with the aims of the course.

It is anticipated that during the experiences a number of activities will arise naturally. The list of learning activities below forms a useful checklist for course design and also a basis for the external examination paper. (Note: this is at General and Credit levels)

It should be noted that the list is neither prescriptive or definitive.

1. write and post a letter
2. use the telephone
3. complete a form
4. take appropriate action to contact emergency services
5. take appropriate action in household emergencies: gas, water or electric
6. determine lengths, weights or quantities including meter reading and calculating amounts used
7. prepare a meal
8. use common domestic appliances
9. use handtools in the range of household tasks: electrical, plumbing, decorating, and DIY

10. keep a record of money received and money spent including, where appropriate, banking facilities
11. apply for a job
12. take part in an interview
13. use a map
14. plan a journey using public transport
15. shop for the family or school using cash
16. carry out value-for-money comparisons

As you can see it should be possible to fit anything your child is doing into one of these categories and therefore satisfy the authorities that suitable education is taking place.

If anyone in Scotland is interested in looking into this further then I shall be delighted!

Christine Wallace



7. School Refusal

Research carried out into the effects of treatment on school phobic children who were treated by psychiatrists has resulted in about 30% of the children developing severe psychiatric disorder, and a similar large percentage developing mild neurotic troubles.

Since the method used by Ian Berg, in Leeds, was to place children in a psychiatric unit for seven months, and that used by Eisendburg and Waller, in the States, was to force the children to school using threats, harassment and assault, this is scarcely surprising. What is surprising, and extremely disturbing, is that these disastrous results have been classed as successful.

I am attempting to follow up 100 school phobic children who have been home educated for three years following the school crisis, effectively as a control to Berg's study. (Neither of the research studies has a control, which makes them pretty useless).

I have now managed to follow up 30 such children and, thankfully, there is no mental illness at all. A couple of the children are still frightened of people three years after the school crisis, as a result of the treatment they received in school before they started home education, so I class those as neurotic, a far lower percentage than that in either of the research studies mentioned above.

If your child has had a school refusal crisis, three or more years ago, and has subsequently been educated at home for all or part of the time, please let me know.

Patricia Knox, Pen Lllywenan, Bodedern, Holyhead, Gwynedd LL65 4TS, Telephone: 0407-740767

8. Home Educating Experience in Cornwall

After home educating for more than six years, I am vain enough to regard myself as a minor authority on the matter. None of my children have ever been to school.

My eldest son will be eleven in September and he had the greatest difficulty in learning to read and write. I tried every method under the sun, had some pretty bad times with the LEA with vague ultimatums ending with me in tears (after they'd gone!) and feeling extremely anxious. This stressful situation transmitted to my son, setting up a state of urgency between us and consequently a bad relationship in the learning situation.

Obviously his failure to learn was attributed to my inadequacies as a teacher, whereas if he had had the same difficulties at school the failure would have been considered his. Otherwise, interestingly enough, if your child learns well at home the LEA immediately label the child "bright" or "gifted", and perhaps shouldn't be denied the opportunity of achieving their full potential at school, so they say. No, parents! You just can't win - it's not you who did it, this time it's the child.

Of course I see the LEA's point of view - the only way they have of assessing the child's home education is by looking at the evidence provided by the child. Then in the end it all boils down to the individual advisor's feelings about you the parent, and plain blind trust on their part that your intentions are honourable and you are doing your best. It seems to me that if we sound in deadly earnest and keep it up without wavering, we stand a chance of being accepted.

Anyway, at nine-and-a-half my son eventually succeeded in reading three-letter words taught phonetically - the only way he could do it. Then he progressed smoothly on to become a more competent reader than his school-educated contemporaries.

I concluded that the reason for the delay was not due to absence of intellectual ability on his part, but simply that he was far too dominated by emotional drives to be able to concentrate, and that his reflective ability had not yet developed, something which appears to be an important ingredient in learning to read. On consideration it seems unfair to insist on inflicting reading on children who have no time for it, as I believe schools do.

Yet it was I who felt a prisoner of the system, me who had to try and make him read when I knew he couldn't, wouldn't concentrate. Totally against what I had originally intended I found myself thrusting information down his throat. Why? Because I was afraid the LEA would make him go to school if I didn't. I can never make out how some of you parents out there talk about "leaving the child to find their own pace", "not teaching at all" as such. How are you all

escaping the trap I fell into? Of course some words echo my own. When my son was 4 or 5, I was full of good intentions: I'd do it this way or that - I never foresaw the fact that children don't always fit the bill.

Since he learned to read the LEA have eased up on us - they are actually increasingly pleasant. I am forgiven! Or is it that since the new Education Bill came in they don't know where they stand anymore, their criteria for judging has been swept away, are they being judged themselves?

Every year when an LEA visit is pending it is like a reign of terror, panic, dread, nagging, tears - have we enough material prepared to show them? Of course all those hours of blackboard work and undocumented lessons count for nothing, yet he did best at that. I don't think the last two advisors really deserve blame, though the children found fault with them too. "Mum, I did all that to show her, and she hardly looked at it" - the cry of my seven year old son; he found that hurtful - he's a tryer, he likes impressing favourably and works hard at it.

There was one thing I didn't like, though, and the children felt embarrassed and belittled by it too: the patronising manner - they are totally unused to it. We speak "man to man" here; the children aren't "them" and ourselves "us". Due to this they also present themselves badly for observation, recoiling from questions. Despite all this, I think the advisor was doing her very best to be agreeable in her own mode.

Would you believe that after the work we had to do on my son's behalf to fend off the LEA, and their at last apparent acceptance of our system, my son no longer worries (even if I do, being aware of consequences which he is certainly not). No, he no longer worries, and therefore bothers little (if at all) with lessons, formal or otherwise - he's dropped out! What do I do now???

Then the penny dropped, I realised what is going on. Because I am his mother he is asserting himself, looking for greater independence from me in a perfectly normal way. The only problem is I am also his teacher, and he can't assert himself from his teacher, can he? He will accept his father teaching him but, alas, he has no time as an over-busy self-employed man and a small-holding to take care of in his spare time. Please can I have EO'ers suggestions, remedies on this one?

My son has long expressed an interest in minerology, geology and archeology, which he wants to do for a living one day. This sounds like the necessity of University - how can I set him on the right course?

As an afterthought I will give some general information about our teaching system. Over the years I found it necessary to give formal lessons. I think children who are withdrawn from school don't present this problem as they are well versed in the system's expectations and would find most of the home school methods a gentler affair and therefore be more willing to apply themselves under their own steam. I found that without some formal lessons the children make insufficient progress even in my estimation.

These lessons last from one hour to three hours, five days a week, depending on their inclination and mine, and the weather. If it's a fine summer day I let them run free in the sunshine, or if they are too restless it is a waste of time keeping them in. Besides, it seems an odd notion to keep children in behind a desk five or more hours a day, and even odder to expect them to apply themselves at a young age to serious lessons all that time. It seems a bit Victorian to

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM: A NOTE ON THE LEGAL POSITION

The framework of the National Curriculum is laid down in the first four sections of the Education Reform Act 1988. Section 1 of the Act makes it very clear that the National Curriculum applies to state schools only:

It shall be the duty (a) of the Secretary of State as respects every maintained school; (b) of every local education authority as respects every school maintained by them; and (c) of every governing body or head teacher of a maintained school as respects that school; to exercise their functions ... with a view to securing that the curriculum for the school satisfies the requirements of this section.

This has been corroborated by the DES in their replies to letters from home educators. ("The Government has no intention of changing the status of those children who are educated at home.")

Inevitably the National Curriculum will have an effect on the general educational climate in this country, and to that extent it may influence the views of LEAs (and possibly courts of law) on what constitutes education. Nevertheless, any LEA officer who insists that home educating parents must follow the National Curriculum is mistaken, and should be told so at the first opportunity. If any LEA persists in taking this line when challenged, we should be interested to hear about it.

Anne & Rob Wade (West London)

EO legal group

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

I would like to thank the Legal Group for clarifying those points on the Law relating to Home Education and the National Curriculum. However I felt that it was important that we as a group knew something about how the National Curriculum was working. As I go to more meetings of EO I am struck by just how many children are in school for part of the time and then out again, for them it will be important to know what is going on. Also I feel that we mainly deal with the Authorities as individuals and can be put under pressure if we do not feel confident about what the other side is referring to. You don't argue well at a disadvantage of information. There are also times that we feel unsure about a subject that our children wish to do and it may be that a look at the subject's manual might be reassuring - either by giving information or by doing the opposite and reassuring us that the system doesn't know where it's going either. Also there is a possibility that the assessment system within the National Curriculum could take over from the GCSE in the future - this is not a hot tip just part of the great uncertainty as nobody knows what is going to happen next. I am not professing to have any answers just saying I am prepared to start the ball rolling with a very simple introduction to the topic. I would be very happy for someone else to take it up from there. Rona Allery, a Physics specialist has agreed to look at the Science Curriculum and give her comments on that.

Starting in September 1989 the Mathematics and Science sections of the National Curriculum are being introduced for 5 year olds and 11 year olds, the documents having been published only in Spring 1989. These pupils will then continue to work to the National Curriculum in these subjects and in the following year the new 5 and 11 year olds and the 7 year olds will join in at their level. Eventually these will work through until all pupils are doing the National Curriculum. The first part of the English curriculum for infants

has also just come out but the rest is delayed due to controversy over the teaching of Grammar. Other subjects will be phased in over the next few years eg. English for 5 year olds Sept 1989, for 7 and 11 year olds in Sept 1990; Design and Technology will come in for 5, 7 and 11 year olds in Sept 1990. Provisional dates for Geography and History are 1991 for 5, 7 and 11 year olds. Similarly modern languages, music, art and physical education are planned to come in from Autumn 1992 for 5, 7 and 11 year olds. These will clearly take some years to work through to age 16 and GCSE, subjects reaching National Curriculum status on these by Summer 1994 for Maths and Science and 1997 for Modern Languages, etc.

THE JARGON EXPLAINED. (and abbreviations used here)

There are four key stages 1 to 4 which approximate to the existing school organisation for compulsory school age children (not sixth form):

Abbreviation	Key Stage	Approx age	School Section
KS1	1	up to 7	Infants
KS2	2	7 to 11	Juniors
KS3	3	11 to 14	Lower secondary
KS4	4	14 to 16	Upper secondary

The ages of the average child at the end of each Key stage relate to the ages for reported assessments of 7, 11, 14 and 16.

The document for each subject contains the Attainment Targets (ATs) for that subject which cover the range of knowledge, skills and understanding which the pupils should be expected to master as they progress through school. To clarify this subjects will be broken down into parallel ATs each of which has levels from 1 to 10 (L1 to L10) to be achieved like climbing up a ladder of achievement, 1 at the bottom. Pupils will achieve these levels at different ages and in fact the average pupil will reach levels 6 to 7 not level 10. Hence in Mathematics there are 14 ATs covering four on number, three on algebra, one on measurement, two on shape and space, three on handling data and two general ones on using and applying mathematics. A closer look at AT8: Measures shows the ten levels within that target, some of which are:

AT8	Statement of Attainment	Example
L1	compare and order objects without measuring, and use appropriate language.	long, longer than, longest tall, heavy, light, before after, hot, cold.
L6	understand and use compound measures recognise that measurement is approx and choose degree of accuracy for a particular purpose.	work out mean speed (dist/time), or density (mass/volume).

Hence the child will work towards achieving all the ATs at L1 then progress up the ladder to a new set of 14 ATs at L2. However if one or more of the ATs takes longer for a particular child they may be say mainly on L2 with one AT already on L3 and perhaps a couple still on L1. The child would be assessed by having 14 levels combined to give an average level of working in the subject. At the end of each KS these levels would be assessed to see what the child, the class and the school had achieved.

The child's programme of study in a subject comes from putting the 14 targets at which ever level they are working together so that a pupil at L2 throughout would accumulate its work on number as below:

LEVEL 2	STATEMENTS OF ATTAINMENT	EXAMPLE
AT2: NUMBER	read, write and order numbers to at least 100; use the knowledge that the tens-digit indicates the number of tens. understand the meaning of 'a half' and 'a quarter'.	know that 37 means 3 tens and 7 units; know that three 10p coins and four 1p coins give 34p. Find a quarter of a piece of string; know that half of 8 is 4.
AT3: NUMBER	know and use addition and subtraction facts up to 10. compare two numbers to find the difference. solve whole number problems involving addition and subtraction, including money.	Know that if 6 pencils are taken from a box of 10, there will be 4 left. Find the difference between 7 and 3. Work out the change from 20p when two biscuits costing 5p and 7p are bought.
AT4: NUMBER	make a sensible estimate of a number of objects up to 20.	Estimate the number of coats on the coat pegs.
AT5: NUMBER/ ALGEBRA	explore and use the patterns in addition and subtraction facts up to 10. distinguish between odd and even numbers.	Use counters to make various combinations to given totals. $5 + 0 = 5$ $4 + 1 = 5$ $3 + 2 = 5$ $5 = 3 + 1 + 1$

It will be noted that of the three ATs pertaining to number AT2 is number notation, AT3 is number operations and calculation and AT4 is number estimation and approximation. So the programme of work is built up of a series of these from different ATs all at the same level. Mathematics and Science which have been chosen first are probably the most obvious to form a logical progression of learning. In many cases you have to be able to deal with numbers to 10 before numbers to 100, etc. however I feel that there are discrepancies particularly in the Science. The Nat Curriculum imposes this progression and there seems to be no way around a brick wall of a topic that a pupil cannot or will not get over when a more achievable fence, for them, lies ahead. I await to see how this is dealt with in History or Music.

Both Rona Allery and I feel that these documents as suggestion lists of areas to cover could be a useful resource to dip into for home educators without blindly following them through or adhering too strongly to an 'order of doing things'. You may find a friendly teacher who might let you have a look at one over the weekend.

Alternatively the two documents are available from HMSO Bookshops. "Science in the National Curriculum" costs £6.95 and "Mathematics in the National Curriculum" costs £5.95. Of general interest and free to teachers is the Department of Education and Science booklet, "National Curriculum - From Policy to Practice" from Publications Despatch Centre, DES, Honeypot Lane, Canon's Park, STANMORE, HA7 1AZ.

The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) Ltd, of 18 Victoria Park Square, Bethnal Green, London E2 9PB who did such a good introductory leaflet on GCSE previously, report that they will be publishing an information sheet on the National Curriculum shortly (that was at the beginning of June so it could be out now). Even though I haven't seen it I would expect it to be worth looking at. They refer us to the National Curriculum Council, 15-17 New Street, York YO1 2RA (0904 622533) for much free information. Also they recommend the Association for Science Education, College Lane, Hatfield, Herts AL1 0AA for useful information.

SCIENCE IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM (N.C.)

The words N.C. imply something accurate and definitive but it seems to be more a set of outlines or pointers to guide the teacher.

Generally looking through the N.C. I was surprised by the lack of Chemistry. It is the one science which is not touched on until after 7 years old as it starts at L4. Physics and Biology are quite well covered, and Geography where it relates to science, e.g. "Earth and Atmosphere" is introduced. There is also "Human Influences on the Earth" so I think the spectrum is quite good. However, the statements in each level can be interpreted to any depth, e.g. L1 "Know that human activities produce a wide range of waste products" or L3 (Processes of Life) "be able to describe the main stages in the human life cycle". However, perhaps if L3 is to be repeated at KS2 and KS3, then this could be studied at increasing depth as the students mature.

There are times that I think the order is wrong, e.g. (Human influences on the earth) L2 "be able to keep a diary in a variety of forms of change over time". I think few 7 year olds would manage this unless it was done for them by their parent/teacher, whereas they would be able to manage (L4) - "Know that some waste materials can be recycled" or in Sound and Music (L4) - "Know that it takes time for sound to travel". These seem to be easier than requiring that they be capable of giving an explanation of Sound generation and travel (L3). I do not think that provision is made for teachers to miss a level temporarily and move on.

At the higher levels I think that for anyone studying for a GCSE, a syllabus from the Board is still required rather than relying on the N.C. where the cryptic statements do not give an indication of the depth of the subject and the content is not full enough. Also, the order is odd, e.g. in "Electricity and Magnetism" at L8 simple circuits are required, but also "be able to explain how electricity is distributed on a national scale" which to me, a physicist, requires an understanding of A.C. generators and transformers, yet the N.C. doesn't mention these at all. I find this most illogical, even more so when, in "Energy", electricity generation is mentioned in relation to fuels. I therefore wonder if I were a biologist I would find similar illogicalities in, say, "Genetics and Evolution".

Looking at L1 to L3 I felt that they may give parents a few ideas for what to explain/show to younger children, e.g. having discussed the weather and seasonal variations, perhaps they haven't looked at weathering on buildings and landscapes.

In general the N.C. can be considered to be a very broad-based document which attempts to draw the sciences together. However, there remains no necessity to work systematically through "the attainment targets" as there is no definite order, so that if a child moves school he may miss certain ATs at some levels. Further, the levels in each target are stated in very woolly terms and, here again, the order is questionable.

Finally, I feel there should be examples by the side of the syllabus as there are in the mathematics, although some suggestions for study are made later on in "the programme for study".

me.

Anyway, I teach the alphabet initially in large and small letters in name and phonetically, then grouped letter sounds eg: th, sh, br, bl etc. until we have encompassed the entire range. From this they soon read without faltering and the most complicated words and good spelling too. It seems to take longer teaching this way, but the end results are good. Incidentally, my younger son (just seven) is just reading now, not having had the troubles his brother had, which included writing every reversible letter backwards. Rings a bell, I remember a teacher keeping me behind after class at twelve years old in a desperate bid to correct my backwards letters. Her face looked desperate too, and the results were nil - I eventually overcame it myself.

It seems to me that we parents have the greatest vested interest in seeing our children do well, and those who cast their children off to school to be amongst total strangers should be regarded with suspicion and not we home educators.

PS - My apologies to those people too uninformed or afraid in the past who have sent their children to school because of this.

Mrs Jill Mahoney, White Stiles, High Lanes, Praze, Nr Camborne, Cornwall



9. School Visit

Yesterday my daughters Leyan(6), Kimberley(3 & 1/2) and I went to visit a local infant school.

What were we doing there? It's quite a long story - but suffice it to say that I was curious to see how the school operated. A teacher at the school had told us that the philosophy would match our own - no learning at desks or from books etc - but guarded, discovery learning and an emphasis on the individual and on practical experiences. She had also hinted at the possibility of a part-time teaching post, which would mean that I could teach at the school for two days a week and even have my children with me in the classes I'd teach. It all sounded so very tempting - at a time when one income (my husband's) is stretched to its fullest limit (I think many families will know exactly what I mean).

The school was in a beautiful setting, surrounded by lush, green meadows and lots and lots of open space. I was instantly impressed. The atmosphere was lively and friendly and it was really a pleasant place to be ... and yet I left two hours later feeling more assured than ever before that home education is a far, far more superior method than school education. I know without a shadow of a doubt that my children - and all our children are the most fortunate and are at a greater advantage than any child who attends school.

With all the obvious advantages of that local school, there was one thing that was missing - and such a vital thing. It was the lack of parental contact. Of course they encourage local mums to help - and a few (one or two to be precise) were there - but somebody else takes over ... I really find it difficult to express the feeling of emptiness that I could sense coming from those children - particularly the youngest ones (4 - 6 years). They were all clamouring for attention and they need to be accepted and appreciated. The teachers were lovely people - but with all the will in the world could not give enough love and personal attention to all of those 25 children. It's an impossible

situation - and my heart went out to them. They were happy - but I guess it's because they know no other way. I was filled with dread at the thought of pushing my children into such a system.

I am convinced more than ever that young children need their homes constantly. They need attentive and loving parents all the time - not just in the evenings and at weekends! It makes them much more secure and better adjusted to our society - quite the contrary to the popular myth which insists that children need children to become social beings.

I hope I haven't bored you with our experience; I felt I wanted to share it with you - particularly anyone who is contemplating giving up on EO. Think again - long and hard.

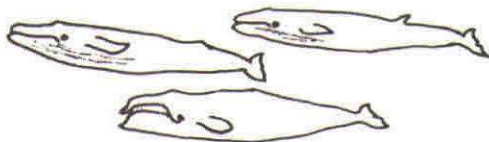
If you're an EO family you're giving your child the very best that you can give - yourself. Don't let mis-informed or narrow-minded people pressure you into thinking any other way. Don't fail your child/children by sending them to school (particularly in the primary 'school' years). That could be your biggest mistake. If you're the type of family that worries about academic achievement (not a bad thing), meet up with families in your area and help each others' children from time to time. There's lots of help and support available within EO itself. Schools can never be the best answer for children 5 - 10 years! And we must give the best to our children.

There may be something to be said in favour of very, very small 'schools' or groups after age 10 - but that's another discussion altogether ...

If any Christian EO families are interested in helping to establish small Home schools (for children whose parents cannot stay at home) where the emphasis will be on building characters and on individual growth and co-operation rather than on academic achievement and competition, we long to hear from you.

If anybody wants to respond, please drop me a line.

Karen Ham-Ying, 5 Thackeray Avenue, Tilbury, Essex RM18 8HS, Telephone: 0375-856089



10. Its all Up to Us

Whales are the Most Amazing Creatures:

The blue whale is the largest animal ever to have lived. It can grow up to 100 feet long, and weigh up to 100 tons. His heart is as big as a dumper truck, and it pumps 10 tons of blood through arteries and veins you could crawl through.

Despite its gigantic size, the blue whale eats one of the tiniest creatures of the sea - small shrimps, called krill, which swim together in millions. It is thought (by our tiny brains) that the "blue" swallows a ton of krill in one mouthful.

The blue whale makes the loudest sounds in the animal kingdom. Its voice can travel over 200 miles under water and is so loud that it would shatter every window in your home.

Whales, like humans, are air-breathing mammals; most live in family groups called 'schools' where they care for their young and other group members. It is thought that any sick member is helped by the others to the surface to breathe. This is why many whales sometimes get stranded on beaches or in shallow water and die by accident, they will not leave a sick group member by itself.

A sperm whale has the largest brain of any animal in the world. A sperm whale can dive to great depths - up to 2 miles - and hold its breath for up to an hour.

The songs of humpback whales reached number one in the record charts when first released in the 1970's, the only non-humans ever to have a hit! The whales sing their songs together, each year changing a verse which they all learn.

But Humans Kill Whales

Humans kill whales with harpoons. A harpoon is fired from a cannon at high speed into the whale's body where it explodes - but the whale doesn't die at once. It may still be alive, but in great pain, half-an-hour later or sometimes longer.

About 2 million whales have been killed by humans in the 20th century. That's an average of 60 every single day for the past eighty-nine years. Today, all the great whales are "endangered" because of the greed of the whaling industry for their meat and other products.

Iceland and Whaling

For the last three years, there has been an international ban on the killing of whales for profit. Yet some countries are determined to continue the killing. Last year Iceland slaughtered 80 highly endangered fin and sei whales, saying it was for "scientific" research. This year they want to do the same.

Greenpeace says there is no need for the killing and is putting pressure on the whalers to stop. If you are concerned and would like to help, contact Liz and family, 20 Tabor Avenue, Braintree, Essex CM7 7SX, Telephone 0376-40123, or Greenpeace direct.

11. Legal News

Letters from LEA's



What's the best way of improving the attitude of LEA's to home educators? Do you campaign for the DES to issue guidelines? Or, do you keep a low profile and work away at LEA's one by one, as the need arises.

This is a question which has been taxing EO for many years. The problem with the second approach is that it demands a lot of effort over an indefinite period. It can, and does, lead to isolated successes, but do these add up to overall progress?

But if we raise the stakes by making a noise nationally, will we end up with what we really want? Somehow I doubt it. The DES maintain there is little they can do about of subtleties of tone and attitudes displayed by LEA's. If they were to issue a circular on the subject it may well turn out to be detrimental to our interests. Their view is that it would be better for us to deal with individual LEA's in an amicable way, using examples of good practice by other authorities.

Legal group members have complained to the DES about misleading information from LEA's. Another organistaion involved in this problem lodged a complaint with the Parliamentary Ombudsman alleging that the DES had been guilty of delays and rudeness in dealing with their representations. The DES asked whether EO was a party to this complaint. The answer is "no". Following the decision from the Steering Committee we have formally disassociated ourselves from it. We feel that an over aggressive approach runs the risk of being counter-productive.

Meanwhile, in EO, co-ordinators and other experienced members are working on individual LEA's. In particular, Gwynedd got in touch with David Deutsch (Oxford) as a result of his article in ACE Bulletin (July 1987). They have now produced a very friendly draft document titled "Education Otherwise than at School: Notes for Guidance". With a little more revision we hope to be able to use it as a model when negotiating with other LEA's. If enough people join in, we may really be able to improve LEA attitudes by working in this way.

Flexischooling

We wrote to the DES on this at their invitation. Our letter (which was substantially the same as an earlier one) dealt mainly with part-time registration, pro-rata capitation and de-registration upon request. It remains to be seen whether we get a reply. As at the 20th April our letter was "receiving attention". For all we know we may still be exerting some influence. To be fair to the DES, they have quite a lot of other things to attend to at the moment. We did at least hear that their library was buying a copy of Roland Meighan's book on the subject!

College Enrolment

John Hoare (S Yorks) has elicited a very clear letter from the DES that under-sixteens can attend Colleges of Further Education if their presence will not prejudice the education of other students.

Centre for Educational Choice

This is an umbrella group trying to persuade the Government to agree to voluntary aiding for alternative schools. Several EO members attended a meeting which they held in London. Roland Meighan spoke about EO, democratic schools, flexischooling, mini and small schools. He argued that the National Curriculum is wrong, on the grounds that our society obviously hasn't got all the answers about how to educate children and should therefore go for diversity. Anne Wade also spoke about EO, mentioning the points mentioned under 'Flexischooling' above. The DES are generally hostile to voluntary aiding but negotiations are in progress with Kenneth Baker.

Anti-Bullying Campaign

This group was set up recently following a program on London Weekend Television. We are working with them. Their conference in June had to be postponed because

of a public transport strike, and will now take place on the 17th October.

Education Supervision Orders

Many members will have had letters on this topic from Pip and John Rupik, for the Children's Homebased Education Association. Under the Childrens Bill, which is due to be enacted soon, it will no longer be possible to make a care order on educational grounds. Instead, LEA's will be able to deal with truancy by applying for an Educational Supervision Order. An Education Welfare Officer would be assigned to the family as supervisor. The EWO's remit would be limited to seeing that the child got to school. (This contrasts with the responsibility of the Social Worker to oversee general welfare in the case of an ordinary supervision order). Once an ESO has been made, Sections 36, 39 and 76 of the 1944 Act would be suspended. This is logical enough, but it would mean that a family could not start home educating without the EWO's consent, unless they went back to court and got permission. If it came to that, we could cite the Perry appeal (R versus Gwent County Council ex parte Perry, CA 10 July 1985). We might be able to use this to avoid an actual court appearance by pressuring the EWO and the LEA.

A family of a truanting child who did not at first know their rights might thus find it more difficult to start home educating than at present, though if they were firm and had support it could be done. Solicitors we have discussed this with feel there is no problem, though some families would be reluctant to go back to court.

A family with a registered child who were home educating would actually be in a stronger position, as they would have the right to defend themselves in the ground that they were educating the child, a defence which is not available to them now.

A family with a deregistered child who were home educating and knew their rights should not let this situation develop this far without seeking support. There is no reason to suppose that such a case would get to court, as we would expect to deal with it, as now, before it reached that point.

The Children's Legal Centre have been very helpful in keeping us informed about the situation in the Standing Committee, and in clarifying as much as is yet known about how ESO's will be put into practice. David Deutsch has identified three points in the Bill which could be usefully amended in the interests of EO, and has been making telephone calls and writing letters to this end. The best defence against ESO's is to publicise EO so that everyone knows their rights.

* * *

If you need more background information to make sense of all this, why not ring your co-ordinator to discuss it? Likewise, co-ordinators are welcome to ring us if they need to. We continue to support individual families who have problems with LEA's, as do co-ordinators and others. Ring your co-ordinator first, then us if necessary. Let us know about successes too! And recommendations from solicitors, Ed. Psychologists etc are always welcome.

Anne and Rob Wade, West London



12. Book Reviews



Titles: The Young Geographer Investigates ...
Our Universe, The Earth
Author: Terry Jennings
Publ: Oxford
Price: £2.95

I can highly recommend these two books to anyone who wants a clear, simple introduction to these topics. The books are beautifully illustrated with many photographs, maps and diagrams and interesting text. The review questions and experiments and follow-up ideas are good fun to do.

Hilary Forster, 3 Hendrick Drive, Sedbury, Chepstow, Gwent NP6 7EL

Title: Letters Home
Author: Britt Barker
Price: £5

What a relief to pick up this little book and read about a fulfilled and capable home-educated child who has not gone through the academic mill. Britt Barker's life at home revolved around the workings of the busy family small-holding in rural Ohio, while developing her own loves - notably, music, biology and nature studies. At 16, Britt moved out into the world, to travel and study with naturalists across Canada, later going round Europe initially, on an Earthwatch project to study wolves in the Appenines, but also to stay with friends and contacts in various countries.

These letters, written originally for her local paper, are full of Britt's many experiences, her confident and happy way of dealing with new and foreign situations. She writes well and vividly, but most important for EO readers, she shows that it is possible to develop in the most creative, original and clear-thinking way without, so far, feeling the need to take exams or follow a college course. It's a significantly alternative vision, and one we do well to remind ourselves of, in these days of anxiety about GCSE's and the National Curriculum.

LETTERS HOME can be ordered from Britt Barker, Route Three, Millersburg, Ohio 44654 USA, enclosing an international money order for £5, to cover postage.

Title: Read with Me: An Apprenticeship Approach to Reading
Author: Liz Waterland
Publ: Thimble Press

I've just found this very readable booklet that would give anyone confidence in their belief that children can and do learn to read by themselves.

The author is a teacher who noticed that children being taught to read often don't read fluently, or make sense of what they read (they may, for example, read *they went into the horse!*) and often they don't read for pleasure, only to please the teacher or to finish the book.

Basically, what Liz Waterland advocates, is that the parent reads to their children and in time the children will begin to memorise odd words or sentences; then the child will begin to take over more and more of the reading until they can actually read the whole book. With this method, it is obvious that the

child may well be able to read one book, but need to go through the same process of shared reading again and again, until he/she is able to pick up a new book and read it.

The author sees the parent as vitally important in the process! She likens reading to learning any skill, from talking to carpentry - the apprentice is shown the method and gradually given more and more responsibility until they actually have the skill. They stress that they are never failing, and even looking at books is *reading*, and the children don't learn a sense of failure - they always behave as *readers*.

She also says you are reading with the child, not to the child (or hearing the child read) - as with all things, they learn by example and so to see adults reading is, of course, invaluable.

I thoroughly recommend this book.

Valeri Gommon, 19 New Road, Castlethorpe, Milton Keynes

Title: Earth, Water, Fire and Air
Author: Walter Kraul
Publ: Floris Books
Price: £5.95 Net



Packed with ideas for creative investigations for five/six year-olds upwards

Liz and family, 20 Tabor Avenue, Barintree, Essex 0376-40123

Title: Ginn Science Course
Publ: Ginn & Co

During the many years we have been home educating, we have done few structured activities which would go under the name of science. Nor do we have many science books lying about the house; those we do have don't seem to be terribly enticing. We had reached the point where we had decided we ought to be doing a bit more than country walks and beach visits when I came upon the Ginn Science brochure advertising their Primary Level Science programme. It is a programme in seven levels, for ages five to twelve; only the first three levels have been published so far, although level four will be out in the autumn and the next three at six-monthly intervals.

We got level three and found it to be very good for us - that is, for people with no science training, who felt they would like something clear and structured as a teaching aid. The starter pack contains a "resource file": large ring-binder filled with 198 pages of activity notes, activity support sheets and some assessment notes. In addition, there are ten 24 page pupils' books and a large "group discussion" book ... basically a large photograph book with pictures relating to the various subject covered.

The programme is very much activity based, teaching both the content and skills of science by practical activities. The skills they stress are observing, investigating, interpreting, hypothesising and applying ... and the content Ginn divide into five strands: Ourselves and Healthy Living, Other Animals and Plants, Energy and Forces, Materials and their Uses, Earth and Space. It

develops these strands through all seven levels.

Whilst the programme is structured, it is also quite flexible in the way you use it. Though level three is aimed at the seven year old, we don't actually have one of those at the moment! But our six year old and eight year old and ten year old have all enjoyed it, even our two year old loves getting his hands and feet into anything going. The pupils books are very popular; colourfully illustrated and well written, they contain not only much information, but further activities, poems and stories and accounts of famous scientists.

There are a couple of drawbacks to the programme for the home educator. A minor one is that many activities call for group work, but most could be done by an individual - the only time we found this to be a problem so far, was in an activity discussing our "changing bodies". The children were supposed to measure heights and weights of a whole class the same sage and compare the results. Even this, of course, only calls for a bit of improvising, so no problem really.

The other drawback is the usual one of price. The level three starter pack costs £55, and though I think its quality, compared to other books and other educational series, merits the price, that doesn't help much if you can't afford it. Of course families could go together and buy it to share.

Anyway, for those for whom the price isn't too high, who have children of the appropriate ages, and who like us, like the idea of a structure yet flexible science programme, Ginn Science might well be worth looking at.

Barbara Christie, Partridge Cottage, Dereham Road, Colkirk, Fakenham, Norfolk

Title: Ginn Mathematics Course
Publ: Ginn & Co



We have been using the first level of the Ginn Maths Course during the last year, and although I am totally useless at even basic maths, this is an extremely good course. Each level (of seven) comes with a teachers' resource book containing notes on the material itself and how to go about presenting it, enrichment and follow-up activities, and (most important to me !) all the answers.

Each level was originally designed to cover one year's work in a primary school, and is composed of the teacher's resource book, work-books/text-books (depending on the level), supplementary work/text-books. If used in schools, the work/text books come in large packs, and there is also a "Big Book" which is used to show examples to the whole class - extremely expensive and (to our mind) largely superfluous in a home situation.

This series treats the child as a thinking person, rather than a forgetful moron, and whilst illustrated rather grossly, rapidly takes you through the basic concepts to maths with a purpose.

The main drawback we have found is that the lowest level workbook is just a bit too repetitive for our oldest child, but this may not prove to be so for our other children.

The cost is not insignificant, although we have bought the evaluation packs, which contains one teachers' book and one pupils' book and NOT the "Big Book" or the assessment stuff. There is an evaluation pack for each level, buyable independently, and workbooks may be bought separately as well for additional children.

I would recommend this course in preference to the others we have investigated.

Belinda Allen, 4 Ashleigh Road, Barnstaple, Devon

13. Pen Pals



Dear EO,

I really would like a pen pal, I am 10 and I like writing and computers. I have 4 computers: Spectrum+(48k), Spectrum(16k), Sinclair ZX81(16k) and an Amstrad pcw(8256).

Harry Hunt, Brentwood House, 15 Wilton Rise, Holgate Road, YORK YO2 4BT

Dear EO,

My name is Becky and I am twelve years old. I would really like a pen-friend of about my own age. My interests are music (I play the flute, piano, guitar and recorder), animals, cycling, sewing, art, horse-riding, gardening, reading, drama, tennis and I'm a Girl Guide! I live on a small-holding in the country and I own two pigmy goats. Please enclose a photo with your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Becky Marshall, South Kerrow, Blisland, Bodmin, Cornwall

14. Education through the Press

... compiled by SUSAN FERRIGNO, teacher and EO sympathiser. Contributions from Jamie Owen, Andy Axten and others.

Everyone is an "expert" on education - I have yet to meet anyone who does not have passionate views on what be done. That there is need of change, improvement, reform etc. no-one will deny, but the area is so vast, where to start?

First quote from "The National Curriculum from Policy to Practice". Copies available [free to all maintained school teachers and students] from:

Department of Education and Science,
Honeypot Lane,
Stanmore
Middlesex HA7 1AZ



The Education Act entitles every pupil ... to a curriculum which:

- a. *promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society [and of society ??? SF] and*

b. prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life

There is a great deal of high-sounding waffle floating around, as in the Telegraph (18Apr89). Paul Maiston, Education Correspondent, talking about computers:

As pupils, and teachers, become more familiar with information technology, the nature of much schoolwork is likely to be radically changed. Compared with current practice there is likely to be increasing emphasis on the quality of communication, and greater stress on high level thinking and creative expression ...

Maybe it's unfair to call it waffle - but it is so unlike my 25 years in many and varied schools as a supply teacher. I just cannot believe it possible ... if they could only just leave primary school being able to read! If the average reading age in the country was higher than 10, if people could understand longer words than in the "SUN" ... it does get depressing ... here's a good one:

Parents are best tutors for reading (John Clare, Education Editor, Telegraph 12May89)

The first vital step is to allow the child to choose what he or she wants to read.

A five year study of more than 2,000 seven-year olds in Kirklees, West Yorkshire, showed that those who spent at least five minutes a day reading with their parents made progress at three or four times the normal rate.

That is a better quote to end on than:

Tower Hamlets is losing one third of its teachers this year ... the insidious nature of the underlying crisis ... (Independent 21Jun89)

Obviously too much for them, poor things. I do feel an sympathy. There are no easy answers, we all get lost in a fog of doubt from time to time. Idealism versus realism (whatever that is). We have to ask "is this a good thing, long term, for the children???" and then follow our instincts and not be too swayed by what we read in the papers and guide books.

Meanwhile, things are looking shaky even in rural Devon ...

Patience is running out at a North Devon school which has been waiting for proper buildings for a quarter of a century.

Landkey village was promised that when its numbers reached 120, the new school would be built. That magic figure has now been reached. Two fields bought 25 years ago are ready and waiting, but the pupils, aged 5 to 11, are still all housed in temporary classrooms. Dinners are served in three sittings.

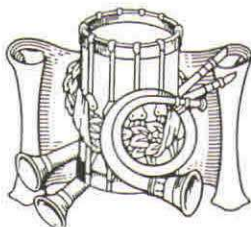
The classrooms are seperated by almost 200 yards, so in bad weather the children eat surrounded by soggy coats hung on the walls. Emergency jacking has to be used when one classroom threatened to split in the middle and chairs began to go through the floor.

"We could end up with a further 40 to 100 children now the coming of the link-road has released land for building," said headmaster Nigel Gillett. A county

spokesman could hold out little hope this week ... "They do need a new school," he said. "We regularly put in a bid to County Hall for the money, but nothing has been programmed as yet"

North Devon Gazette, June 1989

15. Publicity Matters



First of all I must thank all those members who continue to keep me posted on the press coverage they have secured for EO, and also those who let me know about articles referring to Schooling being compulsory, which I can then contact to set the record straight. Radio and TV coverage is still happening at a steady rate, with two children's BBC programmes scheduled for the Autumn to include details about EO and home education. Please keep the information coming in, I really do appreciate it.

UNSTONE GRANGE, June 1989

PUBLICITY FOR EO

During the business meeting at Unstone I suggested to those members present an idea that was originally voiced by a parent in a Newsletter some time ago - the possibility of EO having a famous person as Patron or Figurehead.

The general opinion at Unstone was that some members may not agree with the views of this "person" and therefore dislike the idea; others felt that it wasn't really necessary for us to have someone "up front". As a result it was suggested that I ask for response from EO members at large.

Having thought more on the matter, one way of avoiding the personality problem of having just one famous person as a figurehead, perhaps it might be better to give honorary membership to a small group of "famous people" all of whom have either been largely educated at home, or who have voiced their opinions on the values of home education.

Why do we need famous people connected with EO? Personally I believe that such a move would give us instant credibility with the media. Of course not everyone in EO is interested in the media, and what it thinks of us, but as Publicity Officer I have to address myself to the issue. I also feel I should point out that any publicity we get is not purely for selfish reasons, as a pat on the back for EO. More importantly it draws attention to legalities of home education to those parents in need of such an alternative, and also to those officials we may at some time have to deal with. With a higher profile we would then be more secure as a group and more instantly recognisable in society.

At the next EO meeting at Featherstone this matter will be discussed again. Please write to me, or 'phone, if you think the idea is worth pursuing.

SPONSORSHIP FOR EO MEETINGS

There was much talk at Unstone about finding venues for EO gatherings at reasonable cost, where families can afford to get together nationally.

Having listened to the problem I suggested that EO might consider asking, for example, an Educational Supplier like E J Arnold for £1,000 annual sponsorship to offset the increased costs of finding a suitable venue for families.

This amount of money would considerably ease EO's financial problem of subsidising weekends, and yet at the same time be a very small amount of money for such a company to donate.

I am prepared to investigate any such deal with such a company, if members feel this would be valuable. Members at Unstone were wary that such a deal would not be in EO's interests, in that the connection of commercialism with EO was undesirable.

What do you think? Please let me know if you think it's an idea worth investigating, or not.

I look forward to meeting more EO families at Featherstone.

Jo Rust, Publicity Officer, 8 Church End, Gamlingay, Nr Sandy Bedfordshire SG19 3EP, Telephone: 0767-50032

WHERE TO GET WHAT

The following publications are available from Christine Wallace, 25 Diabaig, Achnasheen, Ross-shire IV22 2HE. Prices are for members and cheques should be made payable to "Education Otherwise".

SCHOOL IS NOT COMPULSORY (SINC) - a guide to your rights	£2.50
EARLY YEARS - learning suggestions for the under 12's	£2.50
LATER YEARS - ditto for older children, plus GCSE	£2.50
TEACH YOUR OWN - John Holt, philosophy of home education	£3.85
TROUBLED CHILDREN - Pat Knox, a fresh look at school phobia	£3.75
SCHOOLS OUT - Jean Bendell, a good 'why and how' book by an EO member and long term home educator	£3.75
EO NEWSLETTER - back copies for '88 and '89	£1.00
EO NEWSLETTER - 'bargain basement', any 4 copies (our selection) from '82 to '87	£1.20
HOME EDUCATION AND THE LAW - Woolf and Deutsch, the law in England and Wales with regard to children who are already 'de-registered'	£2.00

Available from Jill Gillings, Ballaglonny Farm, Quayles Orchard, Ronague, Castletown, Isle of Man

GROWING WITHOUT SCHOOLING - the newsletter of EO's parallel organisation in the USA. One years subscription, starts March, 6 issues

£10.00

Available from Lucy Charlton, 2 Whiston Lane, Newton Harcourt, Leicestershire LE8 0FT

MEMBERSHIP FORMS, introductory leaflets and handbills



Available from June Grant, 25 Chipperfield Road, The Manor, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP3 0AH

STATIONARY and RE-USE LABELS

100 for £1.50

16. Letters

Dear EO,

In answer to Mrs V Phillips query as to whether she is legally bound to enter her son for GCSE. The short answer is 'no'. Section 28(1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 states that *pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents* and Section 30 *It shall be the duty of the parent ... to provide sufficient education for him suitable to his age, ability and aptitude.* No mention anywhere of exams, syllabii etc.

Christine Wallace

Dear EO'ers (especially followers of Electronics Corner),

Due to the excessive amount of paperwork that I am now having to process as part of my electronics teaching in school, there are just not enough hours in the day to keep up the peripheral activities - clubs, articles etc.

I am in the process of trying to computerise it, which will make it easier, but certainly for the moment I am having to curtail the series of Electronics articles.

I am sorry for any disappointments, and hope those who have shown an interest will continue their work - the following book is an EXCELLENT practical next-stage.

Electronics, by R A Sparks, Hutchinson, ISBN 0 09 132431 9

You can build the projects on the "wood-boards"

Yours sincerely, Michael Thompson, 6 Parkdale Road, Plumstead, London SE18 1RG

Dear EO'ers,

Please could anyone provide me with observations of their children's spontaneous words and activities for my book "The Joy of Natural Learning"? I'm planning it mainly for parents of 0-6 year olds, with a chapter on home education.

I'd like anything on almost any subject which is not initiated or directed by an adult, including:

Signs of natural confidence and self-worth,
The pure joy of living of the self-directed child,
Care for others and comfort they can give at times of stress,
The beautiful words and expressions of very young children,
Natural interest in reading and writing,
Bright ideas and intelligent questions,
Unique solutions to problems or their own discoveries of old solutions,
Imaginative use of materials,
Imaginary situations in their play,
Determination to puzzle things out or to master a skill, and the joy of satisfaction when they do,
Enthusiasm in pursuing interests of their own choice,
The remarkable change in children freed from compulsory teaching

In fact, anything that shows how children thrive when given the freedom and encouragement to do so.

Please contact me as soon as possible if you would like to help. All contributions will be acknowledged and names changed if required.

Making such notes is an ideal way of satisfying education officers.

Sue Woodhouse, 29 Heywood Road, Diss, Norfolk IP22 3DJ

Dear EO and Alexandra,

Although the suggestion of some sort of card stating that legally the child does not go to school is a good idea, EO has no way of knowing who is or isn't home educated. The person who really knows is your parent, so I would suggest that he/she writes you a note to carry stating that you are home educated and you are where you are as part of your education and with your parents' knowledge and approval - and don't abuse it!

Christine Wallace



Dear EO,

We have recently become home educators because our three oldest children have so much trouble at school. We run Bible clubs for primary children, some of whom when going on to comprehensive school have totally rejected the Bible (which is their choice), but then made life very difficult for our children at that school.

Now that we are more able to travel, we can offer christian EO'ers our team to run christian holiday Bible clubs, as week-long missions to their neighbourhood.

Whilst writing, could EO produce their own regional sat exam, perhaps based on the old 'O' levels or similar, with lower grades available?

Yours, Richard and Joy Blunt, 82 Oakland Road, Buckland, Newton Abbot, Devon
0626-53302

Dear EO,

Some time ago there was a book review of "For the Children's Sake" by Susan Schaeffer-Macauley. It is based on Charlotte Mason's writings and work in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

I've been able to obtain quite a few copies at a greatly reduced price, so if anyone would like a copy they can have one for £1.90 plus 40p postage - instead of £4.95.

I've found it very refreshing and helpful, both as a teacher in a secondary school and parent of children being home educated.

Sincerely, Martin Evans, 16 Thistle House, Dee Street, London E14 OPD

Dear EO,

We are approaching that anxiety producing time - my son will soon be five and will not be going to school in September.

I very much want to establish a regular weekly meeting in the West Sussex area. We have attended some of the East Sussex meetings, and have enjoyed them very much, but they are too far away to provide regular support.

Please contact me if you live in West Sussex, or near the Sussex/Hampshire border, and if you would like to help set up a regular weekly get-together, venues to be negotiated.

I definitely feel the need of this kind of support and encouragement in order to home educate my son. He is lively, bright and gregarious and I do not wish to isolate him too much, or to give him the impression that he is the only one who doesn't attend school!

Collette Bradley and Seth, West Sussex Co-ordinator, 2 Church Lane, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex 0243-532814

Dear EO,

Anyone want a cheap educational holiday or weekend-break in our North Yorkshire organic small-holding? I say holiday, but the bonus for us would be a bit of help with the farm, weeding strawberries, collecting eggs or whatever else is going on.

Facilities are very basic. We have ten acres - pasture for goats and sheep, soft fruit, orchard/hens and loads of wild plants and (in the furthest corner) bees. We live in a hut without running water (although plenty of water available), accomodation would be a mattress on the floor or a tent. We have quite a few visitors and children usually enjoy themselves. Ours are three and

a half, and six months, and love company. There are numerous beaches nearby. Older children would probably be able to join in farm tasks and learn about care of animals, producing honey etc.

We'd also be glad of ideas about developing the education potential of the farm. Just write or telephone if you'd like to come - best before it gets too wet, say up to the end of September or after Easter next year.

Best Wishes, Gill Westcott, Thornybeck Farm, Rudda Lane, Stamtondale, North Yorks 0723-871031

Dear EO,

Could any EO'ers please get in touch with me if they have had experience of taking their kids out of school after attending only a term or so - about what you may face with LEA's and de-schooling them. My daughter wants to go to school next January when she is five, mainly because all her friends at the moment are in school or will be going in September. She feels left-out and wants to do the sort of thing that kids of her age and ability are doing in school!

I wish I could say to her "No, you're not going!" but I feel that this wouldn't be the answer, and would only make her totally against Home Education with me.

If there is anyone in a similar circumstance, or who has experienced this with their kids, please get in touch. Any ideas welcome!

Josie Lloyd, 7 Northam Walk, Whitmore Reans, Wolverhampton 0902-26462

Dear EO,



WANTED - PENPALS/LEARNING COMPANIONS

Hello, we're the Barnden family. Alan and Faye, children Elanor and Olivia, from Spaldwick (in Cambridgeshire, but situated near the borders of Northampton and Bedfordshire). Huntingdon is about 8 miles to the east of us; Peterborough, Cambridge, Bedford, Northampton our nearest larger towns each about 30 miles away. We are home educating our daughter, Elanor - aged 12 in July - because of a long illness which necessitated too frequent absences from school and produced a need for her education to be "tailor made". Her younger sister, Olivia (9) still attends school.

Elanor would like to meet other home schoolers near to her in age and share with them her interests, both in studying and leisure situations. Her interests are varied but she is particularly fond of wildlife and conservation topics. She would especially value the companionship of a friend to study with sometimes.

Faye can offer tuition in English and would be willing to guide another child learning along with Elanor, in the study of other topics which might come loosely under the headings of geography, history or general studies.

Elanor is making a gradual recovery from Myalgic Encephalomyelitis - a post-viral condition which affects the central nervous system causing a variety of symptoms which make keeping up the everyday pace of life difficult. Chief of these is generalised and local muscle fatigue, tenderness and weakness after

effort - physical or mental. Lack of mental energy; immense fatigue and general malaise and, frequently, pains in joints and limbs comprise some of the other symptoms. Although Elanor is now well enough to be an active 'normal' child for much of the time, extra rest is still necessary to bring about full health. Home education is ideally suited to accomodating her needs together with the fluctuations inherent in M.E. We hope that both WELL children AND other children with health difficulties, and their families, will contact us.

As a family we would like to meet other EO families - a further starting point for contact might be that we have a home-made adventure playground in the garden and are working on expanding the natural pond and wildlife area.

Our method is part directed, part self-directed study. Just to add my pen'orth to the debate currently and interestingly running through recent newsletters (on religious and educational philosophy) I believe that none of us should impose our philosophies upon our children. It may be that within a family some need or prefer more 'direction' and tuition than others - we must be open to each child's needs and tolerant of other points of view from Christians to aetheists to all other religions and philosophies. We might learn something! Something of great value to ourselves and our children. We need faith in ourselves as home educators, faith in God if that is our philosophy, and faith in our own methods. But we must not let this faith take on the mantle of arrogance, assuming that our religious, educational and lifestyle philosophies are the right ones. Let's rejoice in the rich diversity of EO philosophies of which there are as many as there are members and which is its strength - the strength of home education. The roots of Christ's wisdom and strength lay in his faith, tolerance and humility - a lead both Christians and non-Christians can follow.

Faye Barnden, 5 Thrapston Road, Spaldwick, Nr Huntingdon, Cambridge 0480-890977

Dear Christians in EO,



A weekend in Herefordshire

It's clear from various newsletters that there are quite a few of you out there, and it would be nice to meet some of you. So - we have been inspired (at least, I hope we have) with the idea of having a Summer Camp for Christian EO'ers here on August 19th & 20th. We have space for camping, fields all around, and plenty to do locally. We've even got a large shed if the weather turns nasty (concrete floor, so bring something soft to lie on!).

We'll plan a weekend of activities and times of fellowship, prayer and worship. (Of course all EO'ers will be perfectly welcome, but we would expect to have specifically Christian meetings, so any non-Christians might find it a bit heavy going - after all, you'd be fair game!) Let us know as soon as you can if you are interested.

Ian and Christine Murray-Watson, The Slade, Peterchurch, Herefordshire 0981-550568

Dear EO,

I notice that there has been continued debate about the issues which John Lazarus, Roger Downie and I first raised in the December 1988 newsletter. [...] The opinion has been expressed that I was intolerant. Perhaps I could clarify

my position.

Firstly, I respect Edwina Theunissen's right to hold whatever views she chooses. What I do object to is [...] *the use of the newsletter as a religious propoganda tool* - the newsletter is simply not the place for this, as it would not be the place for party political propoganda. [...]

If our newsletter is [...] deliberately or by default [...] converted into something akin to the house-journal of a religious outfit I see absolutely no virtue in that. There is no sense in being totally accepting of an increasing proportion of [...] *material* in the newsletter which, apart from being off-putting to potential members, will influence present members to resign or let their memberships lapse. [...]

I'm certainly not alone in noticing [...] *religious material* [...] appearing in the newsletter. If EO is to change [...] then let that change be achieved openly and democratically. If such change is what the majority of the membership desires then so be it and let the dissenting members accept the new set-up or leave.

EO may become increasingly vulnerable to being intellectually dismissed and eventually legislated against if we are perceived as a band of people who *abuse* our precious freedom [...]

EO is about freedom and openness in education. [...] I propose that we declare, on the backs of our newsletters, the fact that we are a non-political, non-religious, non-elitist organisation. Let us also formulate a clear policy on [...] EO's unique and vital medium of communication, the newsletter.

There is no reason why the EO members should not use the contact list, which is, after all, precisely for such purposes, to get in touch with their co-religionists and co-ideologists.[...]

It is a pity to have to make negative observations when, in other ways, the newsletter is so healthy and progressive. The science supplement in the June 89 newsletter, for instance, was superb. The approach - which assumed that we adults and children have open, lively, curious minds and are willing to use them - is refreshing and respects our intelligence. May I thank those responsible for it and look forward to more of the same.

[...]

Rajan Naidu, 21 Hilltop House, 117 Hornsey Lane, London N6 5NW

Ed: I have cut the above letter quite severely, for which I make no apology. The symbol [...] indicates where the cuts took place, and the words in italics indicate where I have paraphrased the original.

Dear EO,

Could anybody offer a good answer to the following question -- one which we're repeatedly asked, and still find difficult to respond to convincingly.

"Won't your children, by being educated at home, miss out on the social aspects of school? For eight hours a day all their friends will be at school while your kids are stuck at home with no-one to play with."

Many answers spring to mind, of course, but few of them are completely convincing. The answer that socialising at school is generally restricted to playground fights, unpleasant competitiveness and bullying, is met with considerable doubt, and often countered with "if your child is from a love-filled, psychologically-stable background, he will be better equipped than most to handle the rough-and-tumble of school, and it won't do him any harm -- in fact he'll be in an excellent position to benefit from the good aspects of the school."

Many people we've spoken to simply don't have appalling memories of school, and, it must be said, not all schools are so socially disastrous.

The answer that brothers and sisters don't need school-time friends because they can play with each other at home, is met with objections that such a play environment is too cloistered, and can be unhealthy. And the answer that school-children don't get much opportunity at school to play with each other is also met with doubt.

Those who object to EO often seem to do so on the grounds that if their children were educated at home, they'd risk growing up with few if any friends, and are likely to become outsiders among their peers in their home towns. They'd risk the stigma of being the odd ones out, and few parents want that for their children.

We are new to the ideas of EO and we would dearly love some guidance on these points. We are attracted to EO because, as ex-teachers, we are fully aware of the terrible damage a school environment can do to a child. But we have also seen some of the good it can do, too.

Yours, Nick and Leda Skeens, 55 Chapel Road, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex CMO 8JD
0621-784889



Dear EO,

Is 1989 the last year of Education Otherwise? The following is an extract from the Children Bill, Sch 3, Part I:

2.-(1) A Supervision order may require the supervised child to comply with any directions given from time to time by the supervisor which require him to do all or any of the following things:-

- (a) to live at a place or places specified in the directions for a period or periods so specified*
- (b) ... to present himself to a person or persons specified in the directions at a place or places and on a day or days specified*
- (c) ... to participate in activities specified in the directions on a day or days specified*

IS THIS WHAT YOU WANT ?

DO YOU KNOW WHO TO CONTACT ABOUT THIS BILL ?

I had expected a lot more information about the Children Bill to be blazoned across the first pages of the last newsletter ... if there is not enough finance for EO officials to be monitoring this important legal move and to keep

us informed, then there is nothing more vital than they let us know that.

The Education Supervision Order will strike through all that EO has tried to do, as it overrides the sections of the 1944 Education Act which are the very stuff from which EO was created.

Chris and Chris Park, Salt Pye, Hillside, Thurlstone, Sheffield

Dear EO,

We've enclosed an A5 advert [*Ed: see the display advert for 'Hawthorn Education'*] for our Advisory Service for parents, which we set up 2 years ago to help parents struggling through primary school.

Although we have sent our two children through the school system (they are now at secondary) we've been very much "on the fringe" of that system. For a variety of reasons, we did not take them out of school, but have always regarded the work we did with them at home, during the primary school, as helping them more than was ever achieved at school. We were members of EO for a number of years whilst they ploughed through primary school.

Since we set up the means to help other parents, throughout the country, we have rejoined EO and would like to help EO parents, particularly those who continue to send their children to school. As regards costs to parents, our aim is to merely cover our expenses.

Yours sincerely,

Rod and Elizabeth Holt, 17 Guillemot Close, Hythe, Via Southampton, Hampshire, Telephone: Hythe 847201

Dear EO,

I am writing to you to let you know how our alternative education group is progressing. The setting up of this group was reported in a recent newsletter and we have had a good response from EO children. We have decided to call the group 'AZIMUTH' - adventure and education afloat, so that we are distinct from the French group Ecole en Bateau. We are working in association with them.

We have recruited a group of six boys, unfortunately no girls, but we would welcome enquiries from both girls and boys. Our own children, Bevis 4, and Siobhan 8, will be sailing with us on this summer expedition. We are planning to leave for Spain or Ireland for a seven week project, depending on the weather conditions.

We have published a magazine, Sea-born, and I enclose a copy. You are very welcome to publish any items from the magazine for your newsletter. [*Ed: 7 or 8 A4 pages, subscription £5 for a year, some extracts below*]

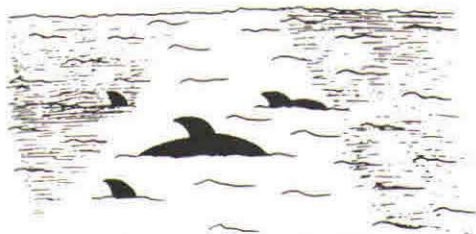
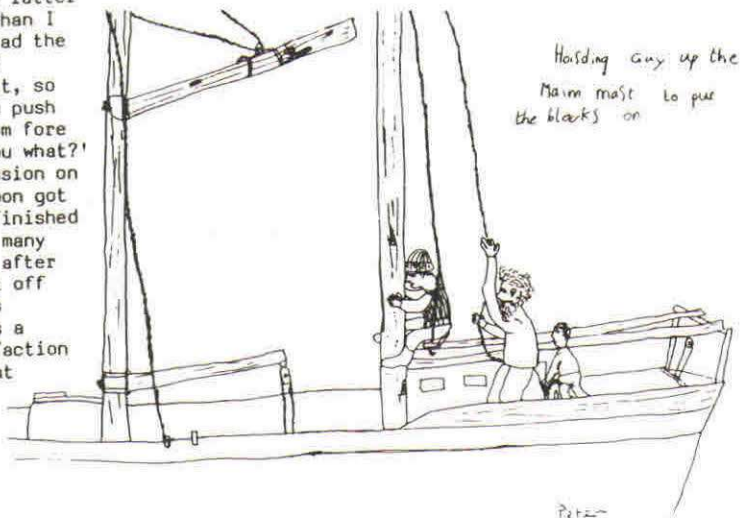
We would still like to hear from parents and children who are interested in our group and what we are doing.

Yours sincerely, Elizabeth Johnson, 6 Bodinnick Heights, Bodinnick-by-Fowey, Cornwall PL23 1LX

AZIMUTH ~

PREPARATIONS

THE LAST FEW MONTHS there has been a frantic rush to get the boat ready, off the beach, and on its mooring. One of the first jobs I was given was to sand the blocks down. This slow and laborious job did not particularly increase my longing to go sailing. But during the next few months I saw the various jobs being done and crossed them off the list: de-fouling the hull, varnishing, painting, scrubbing and cleaning, replacing old parts and then being hoisted up the foremast to put the blocks up. The latter was more difficult than I thought, because I had the minimalist amount of knowledge of the boat, so when Mike said, 'You push the rope through from fore to aft, he got a 'You what?' and a puzzled expression on my behalf. But I soon got the hang of it and finished the job without too many mishaps. Not long after that we had the boat off the beach and on its mooring. There was a great deal of satisfaction in looking at the boat from the quay.



SWIMMING WITH A DOLPHIN

WHEN WE GOT TO ETEL we met the mayor of the town. He told us about a friendly dolphin who lived in a bay near the RAZ de Sein called La Baie de Trepasses. When we got to the bay there was no sign of the dolphin. Suddenly there she was, we played with her. She was diving under the bobstay, touching a boy's feet with her nose, diving under the boat and blowing bubbles. I went swimming with her. I went in on a rope because I cannot get out of the water on my own. She was lovely and soft. Then we said goodbye and the dolphin followed us out of the bay and then she did a big jump to say goodbye.

Siobhan



Hawthorn Education

- For growing minds -

17, Guillelot Close, Hythe, Hampshire, SO4 6GJ, Telephone: 0703 847201.

- ADVISORY SERVICE FOR PARENTS -

HAWTHORN EDUCATION OFFERS THE FOLLOWING SERVICES FOR PARENTS OF
PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN :

- HAWTHORN BOOKS - a series of concise, helpful Handbooks for Parents giving lots of practical advice on helping your child at primary school, and preparing for it.
- HAWTHORN HELP - an educational consultancy service for parents;
- Enquiry Help - The Answering Service **
- Counselling Help - The Discussion Service ** III
- Assessment Help - The Information Service ** III
- Consultancy Help - The Action Service ** III
- Hawthorn Special Advisory Service. ** III
- HAWTHORN TUTORS - offer qualified and experienced tutors to help your pre-school or primary school child in any subject or area that you feel necessary. **
- HAWTHORN SOFT - educational computer software and advice for most 'home' computers used with children. **

All of the above are available by post. In addition, the services marked III are also available as a 'home-visit' service, if you live within 40 miles of Hythe.

** Please note that these services are designed to be fully relevant to parents of children who do not attend a school, full-time.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A FREE COPY OF OUR 'PARENTS GUIDE' WHICH SETS OUT THE BOOKS AND SERVICES IN MORE DETAIL, PLEASE WRITE OR TELEPHONE AT ANY TIME.

WE OFFER A 20% DISCOUNT ON OUR BOOKS AND SERVICES
TO ALL FELLOW MEMBERS OF E.O.

We believe that if you are sending your child to primary school, or intend to, then you need to view the experience as a 'PARTNERSHIP' between yourselves and the school, with each sharing the responsibility. We would like to offer our experience and expertise, to help your child get the most out of the 'system'.

- Helping you to help your child - now -

Rodney P. Holt, B.A.(Hons.), Cert.Ed., Elizabeth A. Holt, B.A.(Hons.), Dip.Lib.

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EDUCATION OTHERWISE OFFICERS

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

Our principal aims are to:

encourage learning outside the school system

re-affirm that parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility by educating them out of school

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

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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

.....