

education
otherwise



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No 70

NOT JUST ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL

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Contributions for the next edition should be sent to the editor by the deadline date, and materials intended as such should be clearly marked "FOR PUBLICATION". Contributors should be sure to include their full name, address, and telephone number. And beat the deadline.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

Supplement Editors are desperately needed after December.

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Welcome

to this issue, edited in Rottingdean, near Brighton. We are: Lyndon Pugh, from Wales, Sachiko Torii, from Japan, son Gyto (born 15/10/83) and daughter Iree (born 28/6/87). At the moment, Gyto is happily attending the nearest school, which could raise questions concerning my suitability as editor of the EO newsletter. Not at all!

I joined EO several years ago, out of my conviction that mass education (especially as exemplified in Britain and Japan) cannot possibly be helpful to the full realisation of human potential. It might have seemed a good idea a hundred years ago, when there was more information available inside a schoolroom than outside it, particularly in small rural communities with few literate people. It might still be a good idea in Third World countries. But in modern societies, the outside world teems with learning opportunities; the schoolroom has been turned inside out, and some parents (not all) are much better educated and equipped than some (not all) teachers.

MONO!

Our children were born in Japan; Gyto was just 5 when we moved here in November 1988. His knowledge of Japanese language and culture was entirely normal for a 5-yr-old in Japan, but his English was very limited, and his knowledge of British culture negligible.

Had we stayed in Japan, he would have been saddled with the identity of a monolingual, monocultural kid, albeit with a funny "foreign" face (which Japanese people would never, ever, let him forget!) and a "foreign" dad.

STEREO!

So, once in Britain, to school! There, we reasoned, the sheer environment would give him an intensive course in both language and way of life, and he would become bilingual, a result he could not have achieved by staying at home. And that is exactly what has happened. Now we must find a way to save him from going too far in the other direction - prolonged schooling would make of him a mono-British kid (with a "foreign" mum!), in addition to its other deleterious effects, well-known to EO members.

RESOURCES

We have a pragmatic attitude to schools, not an automatic one. We neither accept them without demur as one of the great myths (children must go to school), nor dogmatically reject them outright. We see them as resources, to complement a way of life, not a way of life which must be accepted or rejected in totum. And, as we know, the world is packed solid with resources (mainly other than, but not excluding, schools) for a person who is self-controlled, self-directed.

OPTIONS

So here is a point of view which may be of interest to you, and I suppose there must be other EO families in similar circumstances who have arrived at this position.

In any case, of course, many families choose home-schooling principally in order to reduce the amount of influence the mainstream has upon the development of their children, and here we see the "micro-multiculturalism" that exists in our society. And this is the reason why I'm a supporter of EO - because I support the *option* to home-school, the *freedom to choose* rather than the path chosen. A nation (a family, too) which offers such freedom of choice seems to me entirely more civilized than one without it. This freedom must be defended, and developed.

"SICK AND TIRED OF THE '-ISM SCHISM'"

(name that song!)

I'm sure we would find, if we canvassed every member family's rationale for not sending their children to school, responses such as:

The schools teach: too much Christianity; not enough Christianity; the wrong version of Christianity; not enough tolerance/interest in other faiths; too much tolerance/interest in other faiths.

Schools would be regarded by different EO members as imposing: too much regimentation (kids are repressed, over-controlled); not enough regimentation (the kids run wild). Sometimes the same schools!

Tolerance? Some people automatically grant others their right to their own belief and lifestyle; others grudgingly tolerate; yet others wish Britain could be cleansed of every tendency (even skin colour) but their own. Still others appreciate, nay, exult in the multicultural nature of society, of the

neighbourhood, even of one's own family.

If all of the above tendencies are present in our society, how could they not exist in EO, an organisation composed precisely of people jealous of their identity, willing to take the initiative, often in the face of considerable pressure, for what they believe is the good of their children? EO is bound to contain all kinds of minds, open and closed to different degrees and in different directions. And is it not (albeit unfairly) incumbent upon the tolerant to tolerate even the intolerant?

It's impossible to separate one's own religion or ideology from educational issues. One's religion or ideology influences even the choice of washing powders ('eco-friendly' versus 'who cares?')! It becomes interesting to search for universals in this babel of contradictions.

How about the health of one's children, and their access to medical assistance? Surely this will be agreed by all? We read of a case in Japan, where Japanese converts to a Western religious group (under the general umbrella of Christianity) provoked astonishment and horror among the generally non-religious Japanese by preventing doctors from giving a life-saving blood transfusion to their child, an act which resulted in the child's death. Would you defend that family's triumph over the power of the state, the system, the outside world?

Certainly the classroom is a perfect set-up for people on power-trips, for people who wish to impose their control on other people, but so is the home.

So it is no wonder that controversy is part of the EO newsletter, an organisation in which members are essentially united only in their preference for a non-schooled education for their children?

As a practical point, however, we might just recognise that EO has an *invaluable role to play in the develop-*

ment of education in this country, and also that irritated members of EO are likely to leave it. This would certainly lead to a weakening of the organisation's role, a development which would be bad for us all.

Great restraint is in order; difficult, I admit, in a culture where many people are brought up to be individualistic, even contentious. I'm a prime example!

But I wonder, and I have my own dark suspicions, why anyone would want to explicitly inform others of his/her religion, or politics. "*Got to put aside/them dee-nominations/or there won't never be/no love at all.*" (Name that song!)

In any case, why does anyone have to read it? You have it in your power to skip this page, any time! At worst, such irritations will cause one to roll up one's eyes and turn the page. But don't drop out of EO, since the newsletter is a good source of useful, even vital, information and support. If it isn't good enough for you, *swamp* future editors with undeniably practical material, crowd out the soapboxers! *It's your newsletter; improve it.*

Participants in all debates or arguments could well read the first book on the following list, for how most debates/arguments are *unfairly waged*, and as well as de Bono on 'logic bubbles' for why *neither party can actually hear the other.*



ITEMS FOUND USEFUL:

Straight and Crooked Thinking. (author & publisher not to hand) A guide to clarity and honesty in thought. Useful for anyone wishing to spot manipulative language in others, and avoid using it themselves.

Be Your Child's Natural Teacher, by Geraldine Page, publ: Practical ideas. Mainly 3 R's. Meant as a supplement to school, but well worth a look from EO'ers. **IN PENGUIN BOOKS.**

Anything by Edward de Bono, most available in Penguin. Clear suggestions for improving skills in that most basic of areas: thinking, both methodical and creative (not philosophical!).

For hands-on (minds-on?) practical training, **CORT Thinking** lessons, from Pergamon. **Easy, fun, and effective** for anyone from, say, 6 to 98. (CORT stands for Cognitive Research Trust). I've taught this to groups - it's great.

How To Talk So Kids Will Listen, & Listen So Kids Will Talk, by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish, published by Avon (in US). The Los Angeles Times says: "*Designed to bring adults to the level of children, and children to the level of adults, so that this happy meeting ground can truly make for harmony in the home.*" It works.

Good reads, for older children, teenagers, or adults:

The Neverending Story, by Michael Ende. The book is infinitely better than the film, which, nevertheless, our (then) 4 yr-old son loved. By the same author: **Momo**, another splendid story.

E.H. White's The Once and Future King, storytelling tour-de-force based on our heritage of old British myth & historical legend - Arthur, Lancelot, Merlin, Robin Hood, etc. Purists may cavil, while humans enjoy and learn.

A Video

Flight of Dragons, (Channel 5) good animation, valuable story, Ages 5-12?

HUMAN RIGHTS DEPT.

THE GERMAN HOMESCHOOL MOVEMENT

already exists, and now we spread our activities like the strong and refreshing summer winds.

Many of us have heretofore been brutally persecuted by the German Government, many of us have had to pay high penalty fees and we all are constantly being frightened with the idea of going into jail or that the Government takes our kids away from us.

This year we want to achieve that homeschooling shall be no longer criminalised and illegal within West Germany. You cannot imagine what hardships German Homeschoolers already had to bear! Some parents could do nothing but hide together with their kids.

Indeed, more and more German families are emigrating, leaving their homeland, they cannot raise their kids here naturally, what is, what they want to.

You all are very welcome to write supporting letters to us and to contact us. Here are our addresses:

Renata Leuffen, Herzogstr. 14, 4000 Düsseldorf 1, West Germany.

Bernhard Bartmann, Hofgut Ahlersbach e.V., 6490 Schlüchtern, West Germany.

Amnesty International has a section (The Working Group for Children, with some 500 members throughout Britain) which specifically addresses the question of the human rights of children, a section of the population regularly victimised by repressive regimes. All can help to move the mountain of ignorance and cruelty, if only a stone at a time.

Many children & parents write Urgent Action Letters; older children can join Young Amnesty, receive its magazine New Release, taking part in its global campaign for human rights. They also have an Education Pack, which you can buy wholly or in parts. Here are some addresses for those interested:

Amnesty International,
British Section, WGC,
99-119 Rosebery Ave
London EC1R 4RE

Defence for Children International
Memorial School
Mount Street
Taunton,
Somerset
TA1 3QB

*founded 1979, members in over 50 countries,
non-governmental, non-religious, non-political, non-profit. Small group in UK...*

UNICEF-UK
55 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London WC2A 3NB

currently running a petition due to be handed to the PM in Dec., asking the British Government to sign & ratify the new draft Convention on the Rights of the Child, due to come before the UN later this year. Copies still available.

You can see how many seeds are in the apple, but not how many apples are in the seed.



My name is **Laura Thomson** and I'm eleven in October. I go to Wigan Christian Fellowship and I have three brothers: Joshua (aged 8), Oliver (aged 5) and Ashley (aged 2 months). I enjoy art and music. I play the recorder and cornet. I would like a penfriend who's about my own age,

Love, Laura XXX.

Laura Thomson
16 Kenyon Road
Wigan, Lancashire
WN1 2OQ.

*I would like
more penfriends. I am six.
I like drawing, animals, and
bikes. I learn at home and go to
Woodcraft Folk.*

*Love,
Jessica Sains,
6, Rutland St,
Mansfield,
Notts, NG18 4AW.*

My name is
Rosie Raymond, age 9.
I like ponies, snails, dogs,
cats, Jason Donovan and
Kylie Minogue, Neighbours,
Nature.

Rosie Raymond
Four Seasons
Coneyhurst, West Sussex
RH14 9DG.

Pen Pals

My name is **Rosy**, and I am 13 years old. I would like a boy or girl penfriend, preferably but not necessarily around my own age. I like art of any description, roller skating, and I have access to 4 different computers which I enjoy using. My other interests are D&D books and games; and I play the piano.

I do go to school at the moment, but I hope to get out again soon. (I have attended school since I was 10).

Anyone who writes to me can rely on a reply, but bear in mind that since I have 4 other penfriends to write to, it may come a little delayed!

Yours sincerely,

Rosy Hunt,
Brentwood
15 Wilton Rise
Holgate Road
York,
YO2 4BT.

Letters

SOCIAL ISOLATION?

Dear Nick and Leda Sheene,

I am glad that our children miss out on the social aspects of school, it was one of our reasons for de-schooling.

No harmonious society 'cloisters' so many children with so few adults, separated from everyday life and real experience. It is an entirely artificial social group. When, in adult life, do we spend 8 hours a day with 30 others of the same age, with one older person in authority? (The Army.) Stuck at home? Children are stuck at school; confined, restricted and regulated.

Humans are social beings and our children satisfy their social needs, given security and freedom, quite naturally and efficiently themselves. The amount of company and number of friends actually enjoyed and needed varies considerably from individual to individual, and from day to day. And when has quantity ever equalled quality?

Schools are constantly trying to break classes down into small groups. Who can really learn in a crowd? The basic social group is family, friends, and neighbours. Children form their first relationships here. As they are ready they gradually extend their social range, meeting their friends' friends perhaps, and through such group activities as swimming, music, gym, etc. And local EO family gatherings.

There is plenty of scope for socialising and friendships based on shared values and common interests. The family group remains central and there is no destructive separation into gender stereotypes and peer groups, where siblings are not friends and girls & boys cease playing together, which seems to happen once they start school.

National EO gatherings supply a wider social network and links are formed with families all over the country. These friendships give our children a special confidence and many opportunities.

Later, of course, they join clubs & societies and meet a still wider range of people. And always the initiative is theirs, they are not passively swallowed up daily by a large group.

As for being the odd one out, quite the reverse is true. In the natural situations I have outlined, children operate without stress or pressure. I believe that their friends who go to school find it a relief to come to us, as they do daily at 4pm, and all day on 'Baker Days' and other times when they are not at school.

They have friends ranging in age from 2 to 92, and many of them.

My 11-year-old, who did go to school for 2 years, has a long-standing friendship with a boy from whom he was separated when at school - they were a bad influence on each other! Seven years later they still have a lovely relationship and only influence each other for the good.

I feel very strongly on this subject. *The social isolation of children who do not go to school is a complete myth of which I would really like to see the end.*

Jane Wolfe, Liverpool.

EDUCATING ARCHIE

AFTER THE HOLS

by SEB

I can PROVE I am TAUGHT AT HOME NOW, MUM



Yes but if only it proved you were EDUCATED Archie



But I learned a LOT this summer, MUM ... I got stung by that JELLY FISH!



Human
BIOLOGY?
ECOLOGY?



I learned not to waste any more money on TELESCOPES



Economics?
Science?
Logic?



I got into a fight with that boy on the beach



Politics?
Sociology?
Drama?



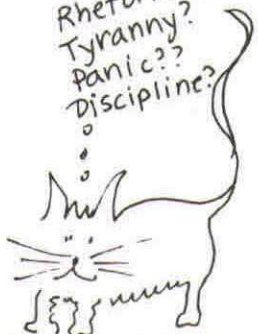
and then you made me look up the names of all those SHELLS... and that SEAWEEED



ah OF COURSE, yes =



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Tyranny??
Panic??
Discipline??



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Letters

ROLE OF THE NEWSLETTER

(This is the full text of the letter by Rajan Naidu, which was severely cut in the August Newsletter. I feel obliged to print it in full only because I feel it was quite wrong to cut a letter without consulting its writer - it amounts to misrepresentation. I talked to Mr Naidu on the telephone, and he consented to a slight modification. If I were a permanent editor, I would consider this correspondence closed.)

Dear EO,

In the Aug 89 NL a letter I'd sent to the editor was printed with so many omissions and alterations as, in effect, not to have been my letter at all. To censor a fellow EO member's work like that is, to say the least, not right. To have done so without consulting the author constitutes a misrepresentation. It was inexcusable. It is not up to any individual member to suppress any open debate they may not find to their taste or in their favour. Democracy is there for us all to use. Please let's use it. May I be afforded as redress, in these exceptional circumstances, the opportunity to say what I had to say, in my own words. People can make up their own minds:

I notice there has been continued debate about the issues which John Lazarus, Roger Downie and I first raised in the Dec 88 NL, following Edwina Theunissen's use of the Oct 88 NL to propagate her religious fundamentalist views. We referred to the deliberate misrepresentation and dishonesty of proponents of the doctrine of creationism. These proponents, in essence, present the creation myth of the book of Genesis in the Bible as approximating literal truth. The opinion has been expressed that I'd been 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 her, or anyone else's, using the NL as a propaganda tool for their religious group. The NL is simply not the place for this, as it would not be the place either for party political propaganda. These groups, presumably, already have their own newsletters and networks in which their adherents could contact one another.

If our NL is subverted, deliberately or by default, by such narrow sectarian interests and 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 reactionary material in the NL which, apart from being off-putting to potential members, will influence present members to resign or let their memberships lapse. I can't see, either, any persuasive reason passively to tolerate the insidious corruption and ruin of something which I and many other people value.

I'm certainly not alone in noticing the new trend of religious fundamentalism and miscellaneous religiosity creeping subtly and not so subtly into the NL. If EO is to change its nature dramatically from an organisation whose basis and reason for existence are education to one which deals in indoctrination and brazen evasion of reason then let that change be achieved openly and democratically. If such change is what a majority of the membership desires then so be it and let dissenting members either accept the new set-up or leave.

Letters

EO may become increasingly vulnerable to being intellectually dismissed and eventually legislated against if we are perceived as a band of people who use our precious freedom to indoctrinate our children with ideas not appropriate to the society and times we live in. We must be aware of the possibility of unhappy consequences for EO if our association with certain doctrinal ideologies stigmatizes our organisation as one of sectarian narrowness.

EO is about freedom and openness in education. It has nothing to do with promoting or turning a blind eye to indoctrination. I propose that we declare, on the backs of our NLs, the fact that we are a non-political, non-religious, non-elitist organisation. Let us also formulate a clear policy on attempts, premeditated or opportunistic, at religious or political infiltration or usurpation of EO's unique and vital medium of communication, the newsletter.

There is no reason why 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. The NL could then be freed for matters more relevant to EO.

It is a pity to have to make negative observations when, in other ways, the NL is so healthy and progressive. The science supplement in the June 89 NL, 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 material of this quality.

Lastly, to return to the main purpose of my letter, we are all perfectly capable, I imagine, of obtaining our own copies of Qurans, Talmuds, Bibles, Vedas, political manifestos, etc, in whose precepts, admonitions and amazing revelations we may submerge ourselves to our hearts' content, if we feel that is the way to wisdom. We really do not need to be led to any organized religions or party political philosophies by proselytizing zealots, least of all in our newsletters.

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

SCHOOLS OUT APOLOGY

Please note that the price given in the August newsletter for SCHOOLS OUT was a mis-print and should have read £5-95. It is still available from Christine Wallace at 25 Diabaig Achnasheen Ross-shire, as are all other publications (see Aug N/L for prices).

Letters

NEWCOMERS DISAPPOINTED

Dear EO,

Having just joined EO, we would like to introduce ourselves: we are Bob, Sarah, and Lulie, accountant, psychologist (non-practising), and small person (born 22/06/89) respectively. Our reason for joining was that we intend to educate our children outside the school system and thus feel the need for contact with others in this situation. Our interests are many and varied, currently including photography, computing, wine tasting, African wildlife, Rational Emotive Therapy, developmental psychology and children's human rights, weight training and squash, music, and I (Sarah) have learnt, and am continuing to learn, another language. We would love to hear from anyone and everyone, whether you have much in common with us or not!

As very new members of EO we are very disappointed to find that rather than concentrating on ideas about, and experiences of, otherwise education, the newsletter seems to contain a certain amount of bickering and proselytising. Whilst we are interested to hear of the reasons people home educate, whatever those reasons, we do not believe that the newsletter is the right place for religious or political debate, not because we have closed minds, but because space is obviously limited. We can debate issues other than education anywhere; surely the newsletter of Education Otherwise should confine itself to discussion about just that?

Our first impression of EO - that it is full of cliques and in-fighting - is extremely off-putting. Are we alone?

Bob & Sarah Taylor,
23 Whitley Rd,
London, N17 6RJ
Tel: 01 808 3200.

(I have received several letters expressing irritation with letters,

announcements, etc, in the newsletter, in which the writers overtly define themselves as members of this or that faith. It seems to be the opinion of all those who wrote to me that the newsletter is no place for any kind of religious or ideological propaganda. Of course, one's religion or ideology is implicit in all of our behaviour, or should be, if we are not to be hypocrites. It is the explicit that is objected to, and the objectors have been Christians, witches, and others who did not identify their religious position. And I am entirely in sympathy with them.

I believe that much more good will is generated, and infinitely more learned, by **people who are willing to meet other people across the sectarian, racial, national, cultural "frontiers" that divide us, rather than constantly assert them. United we stand.** Ed.)

RELIGION OTHERWISE

Dear EO,

The 'religion discussion' brings back memories to me going back 17 years. My E.O. son, then 7, asked me, "Mum, who is God?"

I said, "To some people he's a man in the sky, to others he's money, and there are lots of views between these two. One day you will come and tell me who or what God is to you."

A few weeks later he called me as he lay in the bath, and said, "Mum, I know what God is. I stood under the oak tree today and I know that God is the oak tree and life in everything."

Another gem from him shortly afterwards. His sister lay reading and he asked me, "Mum, why does AJ read other people's thoughts when she could think her own?"

I learnt more from my children than they ever learnt from me.

Iris Harrison.
Tenbury Wells, Worcs WR15 8SH.

THE RIGHTS OF PLANTS

Dear EO,

I am writing about the June newsletter; the pink page on Science around us. I didn't like the idea of children being asked to deliberately leave plants to die for lack of water as an experiment. I like to think that my own children would refuse to do such a thing. Any plant can be seen to droop when dry. Surely it is not necessary to let them die. It inculcates a callous attitude to life. Plants and animals are not just objects for our use, but living things with rights not to be abused. There is enough thoughtless exploitation without us adding to it.

Thank you,

Ann Isted,

"Wedgewood", 13, Benns Lane, Terrington St. Clement

Kings Lynn, Norfolk,

PE34 4LL.

THE CHILDREN BILL

Dear EO,

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the Children's Home Based Education Association has been campaigning against certain aspects of the **Children Bill** with relevance to home education and also the protection of the parent's basic human right to direct their child's education.

The Bill will come to report stage after 7th October and several MPs have said that they will table amendments on our behalf at this stage. In order to secure these amendments within the Bill, *it would be helpful if as many people as possible could persuade their MP to support these amendments in the house.* At the present time we are waiting to hear which of our proposed amendments will be tabled, so if anyone would like to contact us we should hear in the very near future. Please enclose a S.A.E. if writing. Those who have already contacted us will be receiving a standard letter from us shortly. May we take this opportunity to thank the many EO members who have joined with C.H.E.A. in this campaign to date?

Pip & John Rupik, Children's Home Based Education Association,

14, Basil Ave.,

Armthorpe,

Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN3 2AT.

Tel: 0302 833596.

Dear EO,

I wrote to my MP, Denzil Davies, regarding the Children Bill, as a result of the 'Rupik Initiative'.

Quite honestly I expected very little in the way of response - however, Mr Davies has confounded my cynicism and furnished me with information that might be of interest to all EO members.

Accordingly I forward a copy of the relevant letter for inclusion in the next Newsletter.*

Regards,

Aileni Calonyddaeear, 75 Ynyslas, Llanelli, Dyfed, SA14 9BU.

* reprinted overleaf.

Y SWYDDFA GYMREIG
GWYDYR HOUSE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER
Tel. 01-270 3000 (Switsfwrdd)
01-270 (Linell Union)

Oddi wrth yr Is-Ysgrifennydd Seneddol



IAN GRIST MP

WELSH OFFICE
GWYDYR HOUSE
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2ER
Tel. 01-270 3000 (Switchboard)
01-270 (Direct Line)

From The Parliamentary Under-Secretary

PUSS/829/89

2 August 1989

Dear Denzil,

I am replying to your letter of 5 July to Kenneth Baker (as Secretary of State for Education) with which you enclosed this one from Mr and Mrs Calonyddaeear of 75 Ynys-las, Cefncaeau, Llanelli, about the Children Bill.

The fears expressed by Mr and Mrs Calonyddaeear - that the provisions of the Bill, now at Report Stage, will limit the rights of parents wishing to educate their children at home - appear to be based on several misunderstandings.

Section 36 of the Education Act 1944, to which they refer and which requires parents to secure the efficient education of their children at school or otherwise, remains unchanged. Clause 33(3) of the Bill makes it quite clear that a court can only make an education supervision order if it is satisfied that a child is not being properly educated. Clause 33(4) goes on to define proper education for a child as "full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and any special educational need he may have". This definition is the same as that used in Section 36 of the 1944 Act.

Mr and Mrs Calonyddaeear would I am sure agree that every child is entitled to an adequate education as defined by the law. If parents are providing such education at home they need not be anxious about education supervision orders. The Bill does not say that school attendance is the only means of providing education. We are, however, looking carefully at paragraph 12(2) of Schedule 3 to see whether there could be any misunderstanding on this point.

/One of the

The Rt Hon Denzil Davies MP
House of Commons
LONDON



One of the changes the Bill introduces is that it will no longer be possible for a court to make a care or supervision order on the grounds that a child is not being properly educated. A court will only be able to make such an order if it is satisfied that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm and that this is attributable to a lack of parental care or control and that an order would be the best way to secure the child's welfare.

In some cases an educational problem may be a symptom of wider family problems but in others it is not. A local education authority is not in the best position to make a complete assessment of a child's family and social circumstances, and it is now generally recognised that placing children in care on educational grounds alone is inappropriate. Under the Children Bill a local education authority would no longer be able to apply for a care order. Instead they would be able to apply for an education supervision order, having first consulted the appropriate social services authority to make sure that the child's problems are specifically educational. If the two authorities decide that wider social problems are involved it will be open to the local social services authority to apply for a care or supervision order, if that seems appropriate in the circumstances.

Schedule 3 of the Bill refers to two kinds of order, supervision orders and education supervision orders. A supervision order made in care proceedings is administered by a local social services authority or a probation officer and is intended to secure the welfare of the child. The supervisor has powers, largely brought forward from existing legislation, to deal with the widely varying situations which may need to be addressed. An education supervision order, administered by a local education authority, has one specific purpose, to secure the child's proper education and the powers of the supervisor are correspondingly limited.

Paragraph 16 of Schedule 3 to the Bill does provide for a child's parent to apply to the court for the discharge of an education supervision order, while under paragraph 17 rules of court may make provision with respect to those who are to be made parties to proceedings on an education supervision order and for rights of appeal in connection with such orders.

I trust that your constituents will find this information both helpful and reassuring.

Yours ever,

Jan

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Letters

FROM CORNWALL

Dear EO,

Cornwall is alive and thriving! Just over 2 months ago I withdrew my 15 year old daughter from school after years of worry over her education, or rather lack of it. We had reached the point where she was lying awake all night with concern over the work and the pressure she had to endure every day in school and was making herself ill with it all. Socially she mixed very well with her peers, but academically she has never been a great achiever. Throughout her school career I don't recall her ever completing a whole week of school attendance. When we moved to Cornwall last year I thought a new school may help to ease the situation, but my hopes were soon dashed. There was no change.

During the last visit by our local Education Welfare Officer, necessitated by her constant absences from school, we discussed with her the reasons for her apparent school phobia. Her feelings were that she knew that she was not above average in her work, and that she was not working as hard as she knew she should in order to keep up and to attain any exam passes. Apparently the sarcasm of the teachers were not inspiring her to work harder, but quite the reverse!

To my astonishment the EWO suggested that I could educate her at home. How I regret not knowing of this years earlier. Until this time I had always thought she had to receive lessons from a qualified teacher. He soon cor-

rected me and was very supportive over my decision to take on the responsibility myself. He also informed me that Cornwall has about 100 families doing this, although it would seem that they have not joined EO! And so I applied to the LEA.

This week we had our first visit from an Inspector. He was charming and seemed satisfied with my reasons and with my proposed education programme. However only time will tell if he truly agreed or if this was just to put me at my ease! It was obvious that he was not entirely au fait with my rights under the Law and was quick to suggest that we work to a time structure resembling that of a school timetable, i.e. working 9 to 3.30 with short breaks. Also that we should be studying almost the same subjects as Catherine was taking at school. I did not disabuse him of this idea as being new to EO I was not entirely sure what I could and couldn't do and did not want to "put his back up". I could only assure him that I want Catherine to receive an education fitted to her own abilities and interests and to help her cope with life "After School" in the real world. Being a widow with a very small secretarial business run from home I am able to give her a great deal of time and attention and we are both quite used to working to a deadline and structuring our time as effectively as possible.

I was therefore extremely encouraged to read in the latest EO magazine that Cornwall has become an associate member, and hope this will achieve the desired objective towards educating the LEA.

Trying to re-locate a business in

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YES, A FEW OF US ARE DOING NOTHING

Dear EO,

Thanks to those people who contacted me in response to my article in the June Newsletter (*Is anybody out there doing nothing?*). I got 10 replies by letter and phone (all but one supporting my article). I would like to reply to each one personally, but I probably won't have time.

Several known sympathisers also spoke to me in person, which I appreciated. I was also especially pleased to get encouragement from Iris Harrison, whose children have now all successfully grown up having weathered years of persecution by the LEA. I hope we'll be able to visit her and her family some time this year.

I was disappointed to get such a small number of replies. I'm obviously in an even smaller minority than I suspected. I still hold fast my lifelong conviction that the number of people who hold a belief does not affect its validity. I just wish it didn't make me feel quite so lonely. It would be pleasant to be with the majority occasionally.

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

Dear EO,

I'd like to share some thoughts about what it's like being a parent, how we can make the job of parenting easier and what we can do to make our relationships with our

a new area is not easy and I had considered returning to temping work for a while, but in the event my child's health and education is far more important. The need to earn a living is also critical but there are after all 24 hours in a day and if I have to work at 3 in the morning I am prepared to do so! I shall only know if we took the right decision when I see the results of our hard work in a about a year from now. We think the decision is the right one, but it is so nice to know that we are not alone, and that there are so many others just like us out there in the same position. We shall persevere.

Good luck to you all.

Elizabeth Randall

14 Trenant

St. Day

Redruth, Cornwall,

TR16 5NF.

PS: For any of you needing any type of work done on a word processor, e.g. letters, mailshots, thesis, manuscripts, etc: I offer very reasonable rates and a 10% discount to EO members.

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children mutually loving, exciting and fun.

Some of us who have been thinking about the needs of young people have reached a view that differs markedly from the accepted view of children in our society.

The accepted view is that children have to be taught, that their intelligence is somehow incomplete, that they have no sense of right and wrong, that they lack good judgement, that they can't think well, that they can't make decisions, that they need to be told what's right for them, what relationships they should have.

The different view that some of us arrived at is that children are completely intelligent, that they know what's best for them, that they have a good sense of right and wrong, that they are capable of good, clear thinking, of making the right decisions (given correct information), that they know instinctively how to interact socially and are capable of forming their own deeply loving and caring relationships.

Given this view of the way young people really are, it's easy to agree completely with Rachel Sanger's idea of *doing nothing* (June newsletter). Doing nothing means, for me, allowing the child to take the lead, to decide what he or she wants to do, in the full knowledge that that child knows best what is right for her or him. It means never criticising or invalidating (even saying, "Yes, but you should have done it this way," is invalidating and hurtful to a child).

The accepted view is that being with young ones is a chore, a task that we have to put up

with. Those of us who have decided to not allow our children go to school or, as is the case with Lucy and myself, to support our children in their decision not to go to school, are already going against the accepted view to whatever degree. We all know, to some extent, that, in reality, being with young people is FUN. Being parents with children out of school provides us with a wonderful opportunity to enjoy to the full being with our children and to offer them the loving, stimulating, caring environment they need.

So what makes the job of parenting seem so hard? Once again I think it's principally the way our society sees it. We're expected to do it all by ourselves and this isolates us as parents - the sheer volume of work involved in being a parent means that there are, inevitably, little failures, that things are not always as perfect as we'd like them to be. As well as isolating us from possible assistance, these feelings of guilt make us feel like we're not doing the job well enough. How many of us feel like we should be "better" parents?

The third thing that I think makes it hard for parents is confusion - we're trying to do the job under a weight of conflicting information or of misinformation about the needs of our children.

And, last but not least, there's exhaustion. Being a parent is hard work! It's not just that we're expected to do the job of parenting 24 hours a day (that in itself is exhausting enough): we're also expected to run a home and/or work at a paid job.

What can we do about it? Well, one thing we can do to ease the

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isolation is to get together AS PARENTS. To talk to each other about what's hard as well as about our successes. We can exchange children - reach an agreement with other parents to have their children for a time and vice-versa. This gives us a chance to recover a bit from our exhaustion. Take a stab at those guilty feelings by noticing where we're doing well and congratulating each other on how well we're doing. Say something like: "Your children are amazing, how do you do it?" to a parent and you're going a long way towards making that parent feel better. Hit the confusion on the head by remembering that you, as a parent, know better than any other adult what's right for your child (presumably that's one reason we have children out of school) and by trying to trust your children completely and to respect their thinking and their decisions.

As I've said, we inevitably have our disappointments, fears, doubts, and unpleasant feelings as parents. It's important that we have an opportunity to release these stresses. Some of us have found that a simple yet effective tool for this release is LISTENING. Make an agreement with another parent to get together for an agreed period of time at agreed intervals (this might be for 1 hour once a week). The way it works is for the two parents to divide the agreed time so that, for half the time, one listens while the other talks about whatever comes to mind about being a parent, and for the remaining half the roles are swapped. The person who's doing the listening does just that. He/She doesn't offer advice or

sympathy (perhaps a shoulder to cry on), he/she basically listens with full attention on the other parent. It's also important that there's an agreement that everything that's said in these listening times is completely confidential and will never be repeated anywhere to anyone.

Those of us who have been working in this way have found that it is a very effective process for releasing all the little tensions and stresses that we accumulate as parents, freeing us to think more clearly about what we need and what steps we can take to achieve it. With the degree of safety that comes in a continuing "listening agreement" we find that deeper and deeper tensions and feelings come up and can be released to free up our thinking more and more.

Our children also need to be listened to. They too have their disappointments and many little frustrations. Children are, of course, very good at giving some release to their stresses - if they fall, they cry; if they're frustrated they have a tantrum, and so on. The accepted view is that we should stop the crying, that we should not allow tantrums.

Some of us have found that it works much better to allow the child to cry or to tantrum until she decides it's time to finish. If we can stay with the crying or tantruming child, assuring her that she's doing fine, that we love her deeply, giving her our full loving attention, if we can stay there until she decides to stop, we'll see a remarkable change - she will become completely loving towards you, throw her arms around you, be alert, aware, and

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in touch with her own goodness. Those of us who have been working this way with our young ones have come to realise that tantrums and crying are a great opportunity to strengthen and deepen our relationships with our children.

Finally, another very useful thing we can do to help our children to retain their sense of power and of their own importance in the world is to set up a special way of playing with them. We call this "special time" and the way it works is for the parent to allow the child to be completely in charge. The child takes the lead and the parent does whatever the child wishes (within the bounds of personal safety or safety to the environment). It's really a special way for the parent to listen to the child and if it's done regularly the child will come to feel increasingly cherished and will increasingly reveal how he really is. "Special time" can be a very powerful tool in getting our relationships with our children as close, open, loving and caring as we could wish.

I'd love to hear your thinking about all this and your experiences in listening to each other.

**Keith Charlton,
2, Wistow Lane,
Newton Harcourt,
Leics. LE8 0FT.**

BETTER SWIMMING EDUCATION

Dear EO,
I would like to draw attention to the Royal Life Saving Society UK Aquapack. This may be

taught and tested by parents and other interested adults, and would go far towards satisfying education authorities on the physical education side of your children's education. My wife and I consider it far superior to what was offered at school swimming lessons.

Details, including costs, are available from the Society at Mountbatten House, Studley, Warwickshire, B80 7NN, (tel 052 785 3943).

Two notes:

a) 50% of drownings take place within 5 metres of the water's edge. Thus, many drownings could be averted without the rescuer actually getting into the water.

b) The otherwise full inquiry into the drowning of 4 schoolboys at Lands End did not consider the suitability of the school swimming lessons.

Yours faithfully,
**Alan Maddison
3 Heather Rd
London SE12 0VG.**

AZIMUTH

Dear EO'ers,

I am 13 years old, and am educated at home, with my sister and two brothers. In the February issue of the EO magazine I read a notice for Ecole en Bateau (Angleterre), a group being set up to run expeditions in a 47-foot schooner, 'Mary Bryant'. She was built in Fowey by Mike and Liz Johnson, who have room on board for six 11-14 year-olds. The group, now called Azimuth, is run by the youngsters, who share all responsibilities, etc. It is an educational

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and enjoyable experience being involved with it, writing our magazine 'Sea Borne', etc.

I replied to the notice, and went to a 'Stage', a weekend to get to know everybody. I got on well with everyone, and liked the way the group was run, with us all sharing the work and organisation, including cooking, cleaning, and shopping. Over the half-term we got together again to sail to the Scillies and back, and learn how to manage the boat. We were then ready for a two-month expedition over the summer.

We departed from Falmouth on the 18th July, after preparing and victualling the boat. As the wind seemed favourable we made a four-day crossing of Biscay, arriving in Vivero, Galicia. After four weeks in Spain, learning to navigate and sail the boat, speak Spanish, and doing a project on the local fishing boats, we set sail back to France. Three days at sea, then we arrived in Brittany, where we learnt more about sailing and France (and had a good time all round). On the 29th August we returned to Scilly, and on the 31st to the mainland.

There are six of us on board, between 12 and 15, also Mike, Liz, and their two children, Siobhan (8) and Bevis (4). Cameron, Siobhan and I are educated at home. We share all the decisions, and write for the newsletter 'Sea Borne'. We have all learnt a lot about the countries we have been to; Matthew, Cameron, and I have also passed our RYA Day Skipper courses. We are very informal as a group, the expedition has been wonderful fun as well as educational. Matthew, Merlin, Peter and Guy are from Cornwall, but I have

travelled down from Shropshire, and Cameron is from Scotland. Expenses are on a cost-sharing basis, £30 a week.

The experience of sailing 1300 miles and taking responsibility for the ship and its crew have changed me a lot. I am much more confident and self-reliant, and can work better with other people. I found the environment challenging and stimulating, a wonderful compliment to being educated at home.

We are unsure how to continue from here, whether to do more trips like this, a one-year trip, or a combination. Mike is considering giving up his job, and we may also build a bigger boat.

I have really enjoyed and learnt from this expedition, and would like to continue with the group. I am sure many others will have a wonderful time sailing with Azimuth.

Shawn Hargreaves
Flat 1, Styche Hall,
Market Drayton,
Shropshire, TF9 3RB.

THE JOYS...

Dear EO,

My 15 year old daughter, Heather, has been taught at home since the age of 13, after being deregistered from the local comprehensive school. Had she remained at school, she would just be about to enter the 5th year.

She has been using several textbooks and also correspondence course from International Correspondence Schools. The courses are well written and not too hard to keep on top of, but be

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warned, the administration side of things leaves a lot to be desired!

I can recommend the GCSE English Language course, but Heather did not really feel that it was much more helpful than what she had been using beforehand; the same results could be obtained from a good GCSE book, wide reading and plenty of practise in letter writing, etc.

This summer, Heather felt confident enough to enter the GCSE English exam, a year earlier than she would have done at school. She sat the exam in June, at a privately run centre in Cheltenham, where they kindly allowed her to register for the exam without ever attending a lesson. The cost to us was £16.25 exam fees. The exams were conducted over 3 evenings; Heather sat 3 written papers and had an oral exam. The written papers were mainly comprehension tests, descriptive writing and letter writing skills. The oral was conducted on a one-to-one basis and even though Heather was very nervous, the examiner soon put her at her ease. The whole thing was carried out in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere, with coffee served afterwards, and Heather did enjoy the experience.

We had been treating the exam as a "dummy run" for the real thing next year, but to our delight, when the results were announced this week we learned that Heather has gained a grade B, which is quite amazing at her age! Her pals who are still school are astounded.

I can recommend "Approaching GCSE", published by Frame-

work Press, £4.95, for a good source of comprehension tests and directed writing; also the Letts Revise books are helpful. It is important to read a wide variety of books, nothing too heavy is necessary really, but reading is the key to everything else.

We would be interested to hear from anybody else who is taking GCSE's next year.

Yours, Sue Melton,
66, Lamberts Field,
Bourton on the Water,
Cheltenham, Glos.,
GL54 2EH.

...AND STRAINS...

Friends, parents, educators,
lend me your ears!

I'd be very grateful if I could have a bit of space in the newsletter to have a good gripe. Not about religious debate, EO internal politics, LEAs or other lofty issues, but just about the sheer exhausting strain of trying to be a wife, mother, housekeeper, cook, gardener, smallholder, decorator, and, not least, teacher.

Wouldn't it be lovely, I sometimes think, to be an ordinary housewife, with nothing to do but bake a cake for the next coffee-morning, or decide which colour to decorate the spare room. Instead, I'm here in this admittedly pleasant cottage, half a mile from the nearest bus route, guilty because I pollute the atmosphere with the car taking the kids around to various social functions or events - which they usually describe as boring; wanting to develop the smallholding but not having the time; doing satisfying

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things like spinning, bread and wine making because I enjoy them, yet feeling under pressure of too many jobs; and always worrying about, or at least considering, the kids education.

Am I pushing them too hard, or not hard enough? Should they know all their times tables because Jo's friend Christopher knows his? Should I make them practise writing and arithmetic if they find it boring? Are they going to be equipped to take GCSE's or indeed achieve anything else they may want to do? Do all home educators feel the same way, or am I neurotic? And if so, would they be better off in school than at home with a loony?

I share these problems with my partner, Alan, and to an extent with the boys themselves, but ultimately it's me who's here all day and me who's the adult-in-charge, so in the end it's me who has to find a way to cope. If the kids were old enough to take a full share of the responsibility for their education and their lives, we could discuss things fully; however, at just 7 and just 9 they're still emotionally very much children and at times off-puttingly self-centred. Most of the time I can accept them for what they are: normal kids who fight, disagree, get bored and are often just uncooperative. Sometimes, when other things are a strain or I'm under the weather, I find it difficult to be tolerant.

Graham, for instance, hates to get up and needs at least an hour to get himself together. He nitpicks about what clothes to wear: if I choose them, he doesn't want those; if he chooses, he can't find what he wants. Jo takes me to

task for putting their hats and gloves in the wrong bags. I'd found them in a heap on the kitchen floor and put them away. If I'd left them to get lost, *that* would have been wrong; as it was, I put them away wrong. Any request to get the milk, tidy the bedroom, or lay the table is often met with "Do I have to?" Any visit to another child is 'boring', and to spend the day at someone else's house, so that I have a day off, is tantamount to a week in the salt-mines, despite their apparent enjoyment at the time.

All this is a fact of life of having children, and mostly I joke it off, but periodically it's wearing. Educationally, I'd like to sit down and discuss between us what we want to do. In practise, horse riding, swimming, and visiting the Palace Pier in Brighton is all very well, but it doesn't teach the 3 Rs.

I don't feel they'd actually choose to do writing and arithmetic unless I made them, and rightly or wrongly I'd feel uneasy if we didn't spend some time on the basics. We do, as it is, a lot less than Jo's school contemporaries; one of his friends, at nine, has had to drop out of Cubs because he has too much homework.

Often I find that they don't come up with any ideas and it's left to me to make all the suggestions. My ideas are then met with tepid interest and I then have a choice: all right, go and do your own thing, or: we'll do it anyway. Doing their own thing leads to arguments, complaints, tale-telling, and, ultimately, "There's nothing to do." Following my suggestion leads to lack of cooperation, and loss of temper on my part.

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So why go on batting my head against the wall? School works tolerably well for a lot of kids, it's the accepted thing to do, and if they don't like it, well, I didn't either, and I'm none the worse. It's so easy to reason that they'd be just as well off there as with a frazzled, bad-tempered mother, so why not?

It's a good question. Yesterday I got as far as admitting I couldn't cope, and looking the number up in the phone book. So what stopped me?

I think mainly it's because if you take all of the 18 months they've been at home and compare it with the previous 18 months at school, there's no doubt that they've grown more in every way, achieved more academically, socialise better (despite what they say) and enjoy the bulk of their education much more than they did at school. When I'm not exhausted, I can see that in fact we achieve a great deal, and a lot of it is their own input, even if it's not what my inbuilt ideas say is education.

In trying to live a 'green' lifestyle, reject the values of the materialist world and take the responsibility of my children upon myself, I'm flying in the face of almost all my contemporaries. In that light, it's surprising, not that there are problems, but that there are so many successes.

In any relationship where people are thrown together as much as we are there are bound to be strains. A marriage between mature adults has its bad patches - replace one mature adult with two immature children and it would be a miracle if I didn't want to opt out occasionally. Basically, I

believe in what we're doing and I have faith in us. Next week, next month, or even tomorrow, I'll be extolling the virtues of home education again.

Meanwhile I'm down but not out. A domestic help would be nice, a cruise in the Pacific even nicer, but failing that I've got it all off my chest by writing it down, which is, after all, the purpose of EO - to share experiences. I must go now, anyway - Mary's just phoned to ask if I am going to the Thursday get-together at Dineke's tomorrow, and how about making decorated candle-lamps for Christmas. Also it's Up-Helly-Aa, so how about a Viking procession, so I've just got to look for jam jars, black paper, tissue paper, cloaks, cardboard...

Terri Shoosmith
Lower Stainborough Fold Cottage,
Hood Green,
Barnsley, S75 3HQ.

(We wish you strength!)

NEW MEMBER

Hello to everyone at EO,

Is there anyone out there kind enough to offer any advice to me?

I am just about to start home-education for my five-and-a-half year old son, Michael. He has never been to school and I would welcome any correspondence from anybody who would like to pass on tips or maybe make arrangements to meet informally.

I don't know many other parents in my area and thought there may be someone else nearby who feels the same.

I am married, 26 years old and

First of all I have to apologise to Ann Stott, who phoned in June for advice about her daughter's speech problem. I'm afraid I must have written down your phone number incorrectly (70687 !) so I have been unable to get back to you...Will you phone again please?

I hope that Ann and many others will find something useful in this supplement, which deals mainly with...

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Geoff Bookbinder's article: "One Person's Dyslexic Is Another's Poor Reader" ('special needs' supplement No.5 Feb 1989) did not generate the response I expected.

(To re-cap: It is Mr. Bookbinder's belief that 'dyslexia' is "a socially divisive term" because, even where the various signs or criteria for a diagnosis of 'dyslexia' are present, poor readers are usually "denied the 'dyslexic' label" if their IQ is low, or they are "thought to come from an unsatisfactory home" etc; thus resources may be diverted to "the deserving few".)

Several people have told me they found the article interesting and that they agreed wholeheartedly with those opinions.

Joan Morton (Liverpool) doesn't agree. She writes:

I was sad to find a 'dyslexia debate' opened in February's EO newsletter with Geoff Bookbinder's article, as I found it misleading and largely unhelpful. I try to help dyslexic children (or those suspected of having the problem) in my own small way, and have specialised in this area for a number of years, although I cannot claim to be an authority on the subject.

Bookbinder's views seemed largely outdated and misinformed, and accordingly I went to considerable lengths to ferret out published letters which responded to this particular article, which I enclose.

My own views seem to coincide with those of Jean Lovius - over and over again I find 'dyslexics' are interesting, unusual children. Unfortunately the vast majority of them have to cope with the school system, which too often fails them.

'Remedial' help often does not help as much as one might expect, as dyslexics have problems in storing and retrieving information, which shows up when they try to express themselves on paper. Dyslexics, or those with a specific pattern of difficulties, must be taught by someone who is aware of the problem and is therefore able to deal with the child sympathetically. Over and over again one hears stories of children maybe encountering a helpful, understanding teacher one year, who is able to support the child emotionally. Then comes the inevitable move-up, and too often a newly acquired, faltering confidence is completely shattered simply because the problems have not been explained. A child dealt with harshly or unsympathetically over a critical period can give up altogether, even becoming a school phobic.

Of course resources are thin, scandalously so in some cases, as L.E.A.s have varying priorities. Those who are aware of the gaps are bound to look warily at the latest developments. But meanwhile some parents have to look outside the education system for appropriate help, and some take their children out of school altogether, and find at least they gain sympathy and support from both EO and the Dyslexia Association, both I understand existing for the welfare of those children and adults who feel misunderstood and need support of ANY kind - the more helpful the better!

Jean Morton.

I haven't room to include the two letters which Jean went to such trouble to send to me, but here are a few quotes:

"....many of us in ILEA further and adult education service are working with adults who have been failed, throughout their schooling, by professionals who have ascribed their specific language difficulties to some other disadvantage, social, economic, educational, emotional, cultural etc."

"We should not let the scramble for scarce resources divide and rule us....."

Jenny Macwhinnie. Kingsway College and ILEA Learning Difficulties Support Service.

"I counted twenty misrepresentations, mis-statements and mistakes....His complaints appear to be that the identification of dyslexic children depends upon their having high IQs. Nonsense!"

"....other academics have shown that the incidence of dyslexia is independent of both IQ and social background."

"Perhaps we could all co-operate in helping disadvantaged children and those with the different learning difficulties"

Michael Sterne. Executive director, British Dyslexia Assn.

Before reprinting his article I had a long conversation with Geoff Bookbinder. He is a person who understands and cares about the frustrations and heartaches suffered by children and parents as a consequence of learning difficulties of any kind. He and I agreed that 'labelling' is usually harmful - or irrelevant!

Consider the following:

1. Many parents contact me because of their child's reading, writing or spelling problems. Some have been told no extra help can be given until a dyslexia 'diagnosis' is made, others that "it won't make any difference" if their child IS deemed dyslexic as "we can't do anything about it anyway". (Meaning either "We haven't got the resources" or "We wouldn't know what to do")

2. Parents can only "look outside the education system for appropriate help" if they can afford it!

The Division of Educational and Child Psychology of the British Psychological Society is undertaking a national survey into dyslexia. The purpose is "to provide a disinterested and objective report on current policies and practices" and to make recommendations.

You are invited to comment on any of the following aspects:

1. Identification
2. Prevention
3. Teaching methods
4. Provision

'Grind your axes' quickly, as findings to date are already being shaped into a preliminary report for a January Conference.

Write to: Peter D Pumfrey and Rea Reason.

Centre for Educational Guidance and Special Needs,
University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL.

From Margaret Gilbert (London) some hope for parents whose children have a more profound language problem:

MAKATON

When we were told that Kitty had Down's Syndrome we read all we could find on the subject, and decided that the main problem we would probably face was in the area of language.

Down's syndrome seems to be synonymous with poor speech and delayed language, so when we were offered speech therapy for Kitty when she was twelve months old, we leaped at the chance.

It was our speech therapist who first introduced us to Makaton sign language. We all took to it immediately, including Kitty.

Most of the signs are just mimes, so I had been using several with Kitty already, without realising their potential. For example, when we sing "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush", the mimes for 'clean your teeth', 'brush your hair', and 'wash your face' are all Makaton signs!

Kitty soon learned the signs for 'biscuit' and 'eat' and very soon after, the sign for 'book' - the main loves of her life!

Makaton sign language is very easy to learn, as you only sign the key words in a sentence at the same time as you say them. Always sign and speak to reinforce the word.

If I asked Kitty 'Where's the ball?' I would only have to sign 'where' and 'ball' - unlike the signs used by deaf people, which convey the whole sentence. Also, Makaton signs cover only the basic needs of a person - you couldn't argue about evolution using them!

However, they suited us beautifully. Kitty's speech was slow as we had anticipated, and the signs filled the gap between her understanding and need to communicate, from a year old until her speech developed clearly enough to dispense with the signs, when she was about three years old.

At first, Kitty would just sign; then as she developed, she was able to sign and say the word. Eventually she dropped the signs and just spoke.

We have used signs occasionally since then and we now use them as a game: 'What's the sign for cow?' 'What's the sign for red?'

Kitty mastered about 100 signs, including those for gender, colours, sizes and prepositions, so we were able to communicate very well.

I have heard the argument that signing is bad because it stops a child learning to talk. In my opinion that is not the case at all. Anything that helps people express themselves to each other is GOOD! If it prevents frustration in a child trying to communicate, then the speech will develop naturally when (if ever) they are ready.

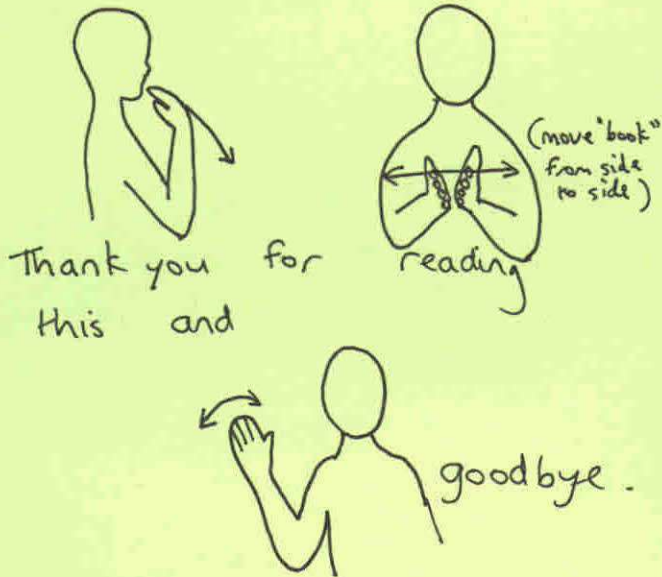
Notes:

1. Makaton was originally developed to be used with adult mentally handicapped patients in institutions.
2. There is a booklet which contains over 300 line drawings:

"Line Drawing. Illustrations for the Revised Makaton Vocabulary".

Available from: Makaton Vocabulary Development Project,
31, Firwood Drive, Camberley, Surrey.

I don't know how much it costs now. A few years ago it cost about £1.60 (inc. p. & p.). Perhaps you should send about £2 plus an A4 s.a.e.



Margaret Gilbert

The next "special needs" supplement will be published in April 1990. Please send contributions NOW whilst it's fresh in your mind! But in any case before 1st. March 1990. Send them to: Sylvia Jeffs. (Address and phone no. on back cover of newsletter.)

also have a 2-month-old baby boy, named Simon. I have only just joined EO and, although determined to educate Michael, fall a little short on the confidence to do so. Having had much more opposition than I thought possible, it would be nice to hear of some positive experiences.

I hope to hear from some 'new friends' soon.

Yours faithfully,
Valerie Cross
8 Fernley Court
Harrow Lane
Maidenhead
Berks, SL6 7NZ.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

- Margaret Mead.

(from

Growing Without Schooling #67)

**Love
is a better teacher than
duty.**

- Albert Einstein.

A Tale

One of those travelling miracle workers once visited a village, and the people gathered around to be amazed. He declared, "I can teach anyone to read just by touching him or her on the forehead!"

Not many people there could read, and one illiterate, well-known as the local buffoon, stepped forward and said, "Teach me, O master!"

Everyone laughed because they all knew that years of schooling had failed to teach this fool to read even his own name.

The travelling miracle worker had been hoping that noone would dare to volunteer for the service. Usually people were content to hear his grand claims, and would give him food and shelter, but now he was forced to perform.

So, with an air of great authority, he commanded the buffoon to kneel before him. Then he recited some mysterious words, and touched him on the forehead. "Now," he said, "go and read!"

The fool raced into the little library, where there were, indeed, a few books. The crowd followed him, eager for the result, while the miracle worker quickly made his exit from the village.

After a few minutes in the library, our brave hero emerged.

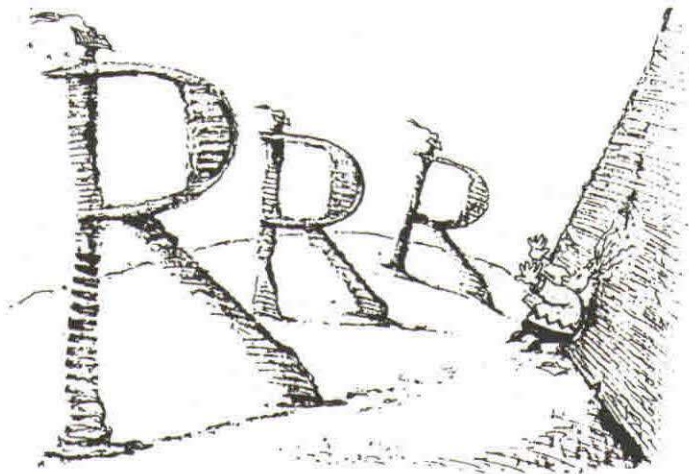
"Where is that rogue?" he shouted.

"Never mind about him," someone replied. "Can you read now, or not?"

"We have to catch and punish that rascal! All travelling miracle workers are frauds! It says so right here in this book!"

A DAY CONFERENCE

EDUCATION
for
FREEDOM



VAUGHAN COLLEGE
ST. NICHOLAS CIRCLE,
LEICESTER.

Sat 28th Oct, from 10am

for further details send a large s.a.e. to:
Lib ED magazine, The Cottage, The Green,
Leire, Leicester, LE17 5HL.

AN APPROACH TO READING

Dear E'Oers,

In response to letters ref. the article on 'Home Education in Cornwall', and recognising that parents have tried methods similar to this unsuccessfully. I have devised this scheme of reading lessons for children with reading difficulties.

It is based on the presumption that the child will be able to understand and (later) write individual letters, and learn to say them phonetically. It is worth therefore expending some time on trying to ensure that the child can do this, beginning first with just the vowels, written large (2" about) and on a blackboard. When you are sure those are remembered continue with the consonants, a few at a time until most are remembered. Use Lexican (letter) or anything you can think of to cheer up learning the letters. My children traced them, drew them, painted them, stuck them on things. Anything just as long as they remembered what they were. Incidentally, be sure to teach in small letters, not capitals.

Once the child has learnt the letters, start writing three-letter words (one at a time) on a blackboard retaining the same letter in the centre and also one of the end letters. Spell it out phonetically, get the child to do it along with you. Do not erase previous words but allow him to see the transitions. Thus:

cat
mat
rat
bat, etc.

Then begin another list of words (still retaining one or two of the first

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list) altering only one letter. Thus:

car
bar
tar
far.

Do only perhaps a couple of blocks of words a day depending on the child's ability to concentrate, and increase the length of the sessions as the weeks progress.

Next, if the child is beginning to see that the letters aren't just isolated meaningless shapes, and begins to guess at a few words himself, you can try the 'yes/no' game. First spend a little time getting him to write 'yes' and 'no', no matter how untidily, as long as it is recognisable. Then fold a sheet of drawing type paper in two (long ways), write 'yes' at the top of one side and 'no' on the other, making two columns. Then explain to him that you will say the names of things he likes and things he doesn't like, and that if he likes the thing he must write 'yes' in the 'yes' column, and 'no' in the 'no' column if he dislikes it. You then say,

**Cream bun
snail sandwich
a bucket of mud
Ice cream
jam sandwich
a bag of sweets**

to tread in a cow pat,

or whatever, and the funnier the better, the more he'll want to do it. My younger son has a dirty mind, and adored playing this, and very quickly learnt to read 'yes' and 'no', which introduced him to the principles of reading. I then branched out to opposites: nasty/nice, big/little, etc. I gave him as much time as he needed on each pair. It should be said that neatness in their writing attempts at this stage was unimportant, as long as it was apparent that they understood and were trying to

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write the words.

Next, if he knows colours, take three or four coloured pens, fill in or outline blocks of colour and write the name of the colour on the block in clear letters in black. Now comes the artistic bit. Draw some balloons or hats, boats, anything with large plain areas, and write the name of the colour he has to fill in on each. Show him how the name on the colour block is the same as the name on (eg) the balloon and that it indicates the colour he must use.

This was a great introduction to reading, and after a while we used more colours and more complicated pictures. You can even use colouring in books, just colouring blocks with their names down the side of the page as a reminder, and writing the names in appropriate sections of the pictures.

Oxford workbooks take this a step further when the child is well able to read the names of the colours.

If you find these lessons unsuccessful it will be necessary to spend a lot more time on the 2" letters on the blackboard, and try two-letter words instead of the three-letter words suggested.

For the child who doesn't understand colours, I taught mine using a handful of coloured pens. Holding them on offer to the child, I would say "Take the red one." If he got it right I would then say "Hurray" or if he got it wrong, I would say "Yuck," or "Na, na, na," or anything funny to hold his attention.

Next, if you can draw, it helps, or cut out pictures from magazines. Write the words down the left side and put the drawings on the right side of a sheet of paper (they should be jumbled up). The object is to get the child to join the picture to its name with a line.

When the child had reached this stage I began teaching pairs of letters such as 'ch', 'sh', 'br', etc., then returned to the blackboard to do four-letter words using these in the way we originally did the three-letter ones.

May this system prove useful to some of you. My poor son Zac had to suffer while I learnt on him, no conventional system worked for him. It always surprises me that children succeed in picking up the subtle changes in words and identify the appropriate sound to make. It always seemed like a maze of meaningless symbols to me when I was a child.

As a final word, may I say that never bothered to correct 'backwards writing', but just casually remarked on it from time to time.

From Jill Mahoney

White Stiles,

High Lanes

Praze,

Nr Camborne, Cornwall.

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM COUNCIL AND THE D.E.S.

Dear Friends,

Congratulations to Betty Ball and others on the excellent material on the National Curriculum in the last newsletter.

We'd like to emphasise and expand on **two sources of FREE material** which she mentioned on page 3 of the green supplement.

1. A number of 'Working Party proposals' and 'Proposals by the

Secretary of State' can be obtained from the National Curriculum Council (Information Service, 15-17 New Street, York, YO1 2RA) as long as stocks last. These proposals contain much of the material (slightly amended) which are being published by HMSO. In particular, they contain very good outlines of work, some background ideas and lots of good info. on programmes of study. All very useful in planning home-based work, or in helping children who go to school, with work at home, or just knowing what is going on at school.

Write to the NCC and ask for copies of:

- a) 'English for 5 to 16' Proposals of Sec. of State, June 1989.
- b) 'Mathematics' NCC Consultation Report, December 1988.
- c) 'Science' NCC Consultation Report, December 1988.
- d) 'Design & Technology for ages 5 to 16' Proposals June 1989.

If they've run out of stock, then (a), (b), and (c) are now covered by the HMSO documents (in ring folders) which Betty Ball mentioned, though we think that they are not so readable.

2. Many Department of Education and Science Circulars to schools and LEA's can be obtained from the Publications Despatch Centre, Honeypot Lane, Stanmore, Middlesex, HA7 1AZ.

For instance, thinking of the debate on Christianity in recent newsletters, you could send for DES Circular 3/89, 'The Educational Reform Act 1988: Religious Education and Collective Worship'.

We would also like to add another source of material:

3. The weekly newspaper 'The Times Educational Supplement' which you may not be familiar with. As well as news on developments in schools and educational methods and ideas, very useful articles on curriculum and many book reviews, you also get news of the latest publications about the National Curriculum, which are obtainable from the above two addresses. A good 65p worth.

DYSLEXIA or SPECIAL LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

The British Dyslexia Association (98 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU) is the umbrella organisation for many local dyslexia associations around Britain. They hold a wide range of inexpensive leaflets and booklets.

During the past year, I worked with 26 six/seven-year-old children in a socially 'average' area of Southampton. These children represented nearly half of the children in that age-group. All of them were at least a year behind their target level, in language.

Over half of my group displayed signs of Dyslexia or Special Learning Difficulty (SLD).

Present understanding of SLD is that, in contrast with most of the population, some children (and adults) do not process most of the language information on the left side of the brain, but a significant amount is processed on the right-hand side as well. Consequently, the two halves of the brain, which are connected by the narrow 'corpus callosum', need to continually swap mes-

EDUCATIONAL

sages. This results, not surprisingly, in confusion and lack of speed as it gets 'clogged up' with a mass of messages.

On my experience, then, in an ordinary situation, probably 25% of the population has SLD to some degree. Many others have cited anything between 6% and 20%. If your child is having difficulty with reading and writing, then **probably** s/he has some SLD.

In addition, the methods that seem to help Dyslexic children - slow steps, lots of phonics, repetition, lack of pressure, confidence building, memory games, etc - also help **most** children who are not getting on well with reading and writing.

Research and practical work on SLD is of benefit to all young children - but especially for children whose parents are actively helping them, either partly or wholly. Dyslexic-aid methods need one-to-one working, which is just what EO parents are skilled at. So:

* Write to the BDA and ask for their booklist and address of the

local association. Then join the local association (generally about £5), run by parents with SLD children, and go to their regular talks and meetings. They have displays of books and materials; arrange local workshops and provide 'summer schools' for children of secondary age.

* Buy or borrow 'Overcoming Dyslexia' by Dr Bevé Hornsby (published by Martin Dunitz, with a foreword by Susan Hampshire). This is a really excellent book filled with advice, help and checklists.

Perhaps the most useful thing that I learnt from my year's experience was that I myself am dyslexic!

If you would like some more advice, from someone who is still learning, please drop me a line. If you fancy doing a correspondence course on dyslexia, then write to the Hornsby Learning Centre, 71 Wandsworth Common, Westside, London SW18 2ED.

Rod Holt
17 Guillemot Close
Hythe, Hampshire, S04 6GJ.

Travellers' Skool Bus Children's Camp

6-15 October.

A self-help, cooperative educational camp for families whose children don't go to school.

Bring activities to share.

North Wales. £5 per.

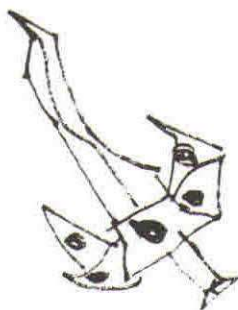
Tel: 0432 352133

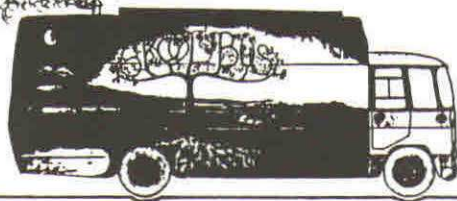
or write:

24 Clive Street

Hereford HR1 2SB

for details & booking





NEEDS YOUR HELP!



After 3 years of dedicated voluntary work we can now offer :

- * A well equipped mobile classroom to visit winter sites and summer gatherings, with a field-worker to assist and advise people using it.
- * Learning materials for parents to use with their children, and a growing network of teachers willing to help.
- * An office to co-ordinate activities, offer help with urgent problems, answer enquiries about teaching and to help organise childrens' camps, festivals and other benefit gigs.

We have the motivation and the framework within which to accomplish all this and more; all that holds us back NOW is the money. To keep the Bus running and well stocked and to run the office, we need to raise about £12,000 every year. (Also we would like to pay our full-time workers!)

We rely on your help to raise this money.
As well as your donation now, we need :

Teachers and volunteers to help on the Skool Bus.

Learning materials and resources.

Advertising space free in magazines etc.

Land for childrens' camps, benefit gigs and festivals and transit sites.

Support groups to raise money through jumble sales, gigs etc and for liason.

Friends of the Skool Bus: for a minimum subscription of £5 you will receive a badge and poster plus regular newsletter to keep you in touch with progress.

If you can offer any of these please phone 0432 352133 or send sae to.:
Richie Cotterill, 24 Clive St., HEREFORD, HR1 2SA.

* FREE (please tick)

* CHEQUES payable to " Skool Bus "

Skool Bus information.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	TAT Benefit D'ble Album....	£7.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education Rights leaflet.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Skool Bus 86-89 Omnibus....	£1.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local support group.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Charity Annual Report.....	£1.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Childrens' Camps.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Festival Eye.....	£1.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education Otherwise info.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Friend of the Skool Bus....	£5min	<input type="checkbox"/>
SITES / LAND wanted, letter...	<input type="checkbox"/>	(Newsletter, badge & poster)		
Travellers' Aid Trust.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	I enclose a donation of....	£	<input type="checkbox"/>
Festival list.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	TOTAL.....	£	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travellers' School Charity... (covenant form)	<input type="checkbox"/>	NAME.....		

ADDRESS.....

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 327731

Resources

Educational Discounts on Computers to Home Learners!

Those of you who read my piece on the External GCSE in the June newsletter will probably recall that our eldest daughter, Olivia, is now 5 years old and home learning begins in earnest for us this September. We have always intended to include the computer among the learning devices available to her and so consequently we set out at the beginning of the year to investigate what was available, whether it indeed had any relevance to us as home learners and to see if the generous educational discounts available to schools would be extended to us in EO.

Well, we are convinced that the computer does indeed have relevance to home learning and that in fact home learners can exploit its potential far beyond what can be achieved in school because we have the time and flexibility. The computer is far more than a 'super' typewriter as we have discovered, although it would be worth having one for this feature alone. Just take another look at your August newsletter if you are sceptical! And take this text for example* hardly Dickens I know, but I was able to draft, re-draft, try out different headings, correct my spelling and punctuation and move the blocks of text around on the screen before I committed it to print. Now consider what an advantage this facility offers to a child. No longer need the content take second place to the mechanics of the writing operation. One doesn't replace the other of course, we still need to do both, but the ideas can flow both before and while the necessary manual skills are learnt. Dyslexic and special needs children in particular have been shown to benefit enormously from word processing on a computer.

The applications that the computer opens up to you are limited only by your imagination (and to some extent your bank balance!). For instance, one step on from word processing is Desk Top Publishing. You could become the Rupert Murdoch of Acacia Avenue and publish your own newspaper! For your news and weather information you would perhaps download through your modem to your computer the very latest data available from the world's newsgathering services, not forgetting all the information provided by the Uosat and Olympus satellites! And being on-line you could communicate cheaply, quickly and effectively with other EOers to include their contributions as well! Using a suitable 'paint' or 'draw' package you could include your own graphics or scan in a photographic or printed image. With a final check on the weather using your short wave receiver for weather ship and ground station reports you are ready to put your newspaper to bed!!

And we haven't even mentioned Three Dimensional Modelling, developing logical thought with LOGO, Control Technology, MIDI Music, Adventure & Problem Solving Games, Conferencing, Data Transfer and all the Databases and Viewdata systems that you can access round the clock without leaving your sitting room. This list is by no means exhaustive, your imagination really is the only limit.

Of course, computers get cheaper and more powerful all the time but I doubt that they will ever be supplied free of charge! And that is where our next item of news comes in.

* This whole newsletter, in fact!

Resources

Educational Discounts : The Good News!

Through Elizabeth's work we were aware that substantial educational discounts were available to schools when buying computers. Of course the computer world is full of cut-price offers and if you search long enough you may well equal or better educational prices. But this is a costly and time consuming exercise and success is far from guaranteed. We decided to buy a computer and we could either bend the rules and order through a friendly school or we could try to establish EO's educational status with the major computer companies so that we could all benefit. Jennie White gave us a go-ahead in January and eight months later we are pleased to announce that EOers can now order a large selection of computer hardware and software through our central ordering set-up called Learning Link.

Why Learning Link and not EO Limited? Firstly, EO Ltd. is indeed very limited. Its set-up leaves little room for a project of this type. We started this whole project under the assumption that EO Ltd. could offer this resource but this was not possible. Nearly all the computer manufacturers asked for some sort of central ordering system so that their discount arrangements would not be open to abuse. We were faced with the prospect of scrapping the project or forming Learning Link. So Learning Link was born! We really had no choice as we feel that a resource of this kind is long overdue within EO. We care enough to have funded the entire project from our own resources.

So how will this new system work? Firstly, you will need a copy of the Learning Link price list. For this please send your name and address with a cheque or postal order for £1.00 to the address below. We will send your list back to you by return post.

Whose products are offered? We do not have the space to list them all but we can supply computers from Acorn, Amstrad, Apple, Atari, Cambridge, Commodore, IBM, Research Machines & others. Printers from dot matrix to laser are available from amongst others Brother, Epson, Kyocera, Mannesmann Tally, Panasonic, & Star. We have modems from Pace & Tandata and floor robots and turtles from Valiant Technology. The list is extensive and comprehensive and being added to all the time. We can even supply a desk for you to put it all on! Special needs children are not forgotten either with Concept keyboards and many different input devices available. Full instructions for ordering (and some products you can order direct yourselves) are in the price list. Perhaps we ought to make it absolutely clear that Learning Link is NOT a business. It is a service from one EO family to other EO members. It is also non-profit making as we are just covering our costs. Of course establishing discounts and setting up an ordering system is only the start. It needs YOUR help, enthusiasm and participation to succeed, whether you are starting out like us or old hands. Perhaps we need a computer supplement or page in the newsletter? We have plans for 'hands-on' demonstration days covering both hardware and software, on themes such as castles and LOGO. Would you support these? We are ideally placed to co-ordinate a computer initiative within EO, let us know what you want or what you can offer. **COMPUTERS ARE FUN!**

Our address: Paul & Elizabeth Bentley, Learning Link, 83 Manor Park, London SE13 5RA. (01-852 1563).

Regions

AVON

NOTICE

Would you please note that I resigned as South West Regional Enquiries Secretary some months ago. I assume this post remains vacant. As from publication of this newsletter I shall also be resigning as Avon co-ordinator. If anyone in the county wishes to take over this job then perhaps they will get in touch with me or the co-ordinators secretary.

Best Wishes,

**Meg Robertson,
The Old Thatched House
Midford Lane
Limpley Stoke
Bath BA3 6JP
Telephone 022 122 3266.**

P.S. I have a number of unused 'Hey Mathematics' workbooks for sale at a nominal sum. If anyone is interested then do give me a ring.

BERKSHIRE

Several families with children ranging in age from 2 to 10 meet regularly either in someone's home, or at a local museum, park, leisure centre, etc. New faces always welcome. For further details of specific date & venues, contact:

**Caroline Brett
Reading (0734) 755375, or
Karen Sternhell
Maidenhead (0628) 32262.**

CLWYD

Some of us with 2- to 3-year-olds have been meeting informally at each others' houses for some months, with the intention of giving them familiar contact with their own age group that will

extend into workshops and other group activities as they get older.

However, as parents of pre-school-aged children, we feel the need to contact EO parents of older children out-of-school to share experiences. (I also find now that many children benefit from groups of mixed ages).

We try to meet on the **first Monday** of each month, but this is flexible to suit as many people as possible. We hope to arrange trips to the 'Discovery Dome' at Bodelwyddan; Grosvenor Museum, Chester; and the Harlequin Puppet Theatre, Colwyn Bay; plus a Christmas Party, in the coming months. (Taking advantage of cheaper group-bookings and shared transport where possible).

If you could join us on any occasion (you don't have to 'attend regularly'!) please do ring or write to: **Jan Miller, Saith Ffynnon, Whitford, Holywell, Clwyd, CH8 9EQ; tel: 0352 714 796.** (EO'ers from nearby Cheshire or Gwynedd, or visitors to the area, are all equally welcome.)

DERBYSHIRE

New Coordinators: Peter Darling and Stephanie Fletcher, 50 Springfield Avenue, Chesterfield. Tel (0246) 239048.

Derbyshire's monthly gatherings have continued through the summer with visits to Chatsworth Park and Elvaston Castle. Next meeting will be on **Sunday 15 October, at CRICH TRAMWAY MUSEUM at 12 noon**, just inside the entrance.

You can come along and meet us there, or, if you have not been to one of our gatherings before and would like us to look out for you, let us know that you are coming.

Regions

For the winter months, we are hoping to arrange **family craft workshops**. Ideas we have had so far include basket weaving and corn dolly making, origami and candle making. For details of these, and to suggest ideas, contact **Steph & Peter Chesterfield (0246) 239048**, or **Lynne & Mike Greenhough Alfreton (0773) 836662**.

First craft workshop will be on **Sat, 18th November**, from 2 to 5pm: **Paperfolding** (bring paper & ideas) at **Alfreton House, Alfreton**. Numbers limited so phone **Lynne & Mike** for details.

We hope to see lots of Derbyshire members at these gatherings.

HERTFORDSHIRE COORDINATOR

Please note that as from August 1989 Frances Howard will be temporarily unable to act as Co-ordinator for this area. In her absence, the acting Co-ordinator will be:
Mrs Jane Lowe
5 Elm Gardens
Welwyn Garden City
Herts, AL8 6RX
tel: 0707 335825.

KENT

In July several families enjoyed a day at **Bewl water**, including a trip on the boat, but by far the most popular meeting of the year was at Margaret Bell's smallholding later in July. We would like to thank Margaret and her family very much for putting up with us all. The weather couldn't have been better, and the children played in the water and

in the cherry orchards, while the mums (and some dads!) sat in the sun and chatted. It really was a lovely day out for everyone.

Our visit to the Whitbread hop farm was not as well supported as we had hoped. This was probably due to bad weather - however, the day brightened up later, and those of us who went enjoyed it again.

Glenys Mitchell-Bennett has offered to open her home to EO families and friends on **Monday 6th November**. This would be a good time to discuss venues for our 1990 gatherings, to please try and come along. Ring **Glenys** on **0634 814610** for more details and directions for travelling etc.

If you would like to make any suggestions re future venues etc, but are unable to get to Glenys's, then please write to

Pam Stevenson,
25, Wyndham Road
Dover, Kent
CT17 0BH, or ring
Lois & Mike Cook
Herne Bay 367059.

We will not be having any more outdoor meetings until next spring, but if anyone else would like to have 'open house' one day during the winter months, then please let us know.

Pam Stevenson.

LANCASHIRE

We have had two informal meetings at the **Draper's** home, **22, Black Bull Lane, Preston**.

Another meeting is planned for **7th October at 2pm**. All are welcome. Bring some food to share. For dates of future meetings phone **Mary Swale, Benson (05242) 62049**.

Regions

NORFOLK

Various outings, Workshops, and Museum Lessons.

For details, telephone Lin: 0553 810438 or Karen: 0263 861045

NORTH LONDON PARENTS AND CHILDREN'S 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 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 75p.)

If you have any queries about these meetings, ring

Andrea Granville (328-4138) or Leslie Barson (969-0893).

SOUTH LONDON MEETINGS

For EO parents and children from any area. It's very informal. Bring some food or drink to share. Usually the parents have a chance to talk to each other and the children play. It helps if you can come fairly often so the children get to know each other. Sometime we have

talks or activities - please suggest anything you would like.

Sun 24th September

Norwood Children's Centre, St Luke's Chambers, 2-8 Norwood High St, SE27, 1pm-5pm.

Sat 21st October

The Child and Parent Centre, The Albany, Douglas Way, SE8, 11am-3.30pm.

Sun 26th November

Norwood as above.

SOUTH LONDON CHRISTMAS PARTY

ADVANCE WARNING

We are planning to have a party on Saturday 23rd December at The Albany, with cooperative games. Parents could bring a small gift to be given out at the party.

See December newsletter for more details.

Enquiries or ideas: phone

Rachel 582 3949 or Dorothy 469 0413.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Christine Park has taken Joan Hoare's place as joint coordinator with Dineke de Jong.

SHROPSHIRE

EO EVENTS DIARY OCT-DEC 1989.

Most of the following events start at 1.30pm and are in the regular SECOND SATURDAY IN THE MONTH slot, but other events are included here. Please check times and venues beforehand.

Regions

SUFFOLK

October 14

Natasha will run a **music workshop**, especially for the musically illiterate. Bring any instrument you have, from spoons to cymbals, and musical edibles for tea. **1.30pm at Don's & Mandy's** house.

October 23, (Monday)

Acton Scott in the autumn: **Blacksmithing**, metalwork demonstration.

November 11

Rachel and Grant will run a **Papua New Guinea afternoon**, featuring slides.

Meet at **1.30pm** and bring something **antipodean** for tea.

November 20, Monday

A trip to **Jodrell Bank** which will include a theatre presentation: "**Once Around the Sun**".

The venue incorporates a tree park and a 'hands-on' museum. **Booking NOW.**

December 9

Variety Show at

Don's & Mandy's house at **1.30pm.**

Please prepare something to entertain us with - comedy routine, puppetry, music, magic, story-telling, impressions, sketches, mime. Bring something **Decemberish** for tea.

Further details from

Don & Mandy Patter,
The Lindens, Broseley.
Phone Telford 882780.

Thank you to all who came to the family gathering at Westleton on August 10th. Your support was much appreciated.

As an outcome we are now organising regular events throughout the winter months. I am concerned, however, that to make all these events worthwhile, EO members should support us regularly in our efforts, not only for our own benefit, but also for the effort of the organisations that are prepared to help us. Most members seem to agree that there is a need for some regular get-togethers. So come on, you Suffolk EO'ers - get moving, give us support and come along and have a good day. We look forward to seeing you!

Bring wellies, waterproofs, warm clothing and a packed lunch to all outdoor meetings.

Please let me know if you are coming, as numbers will affect the content of the day's activities.

Contact: Charlotte Keith, Westleton (072 873) 650.

Wed. Oct. 11th

A guided tour of **MUNSMERE, R.S.B.P. reserve**, Westleton, with the warden. Everyone will have the opportunity to look down a telescope.

From: **10.30am to 1pm.**

Cost: **50p** per adult, **30p** per child. Under 5's **free.**

Meet in reserve car park.

Tues. Oct. 31st

Suffolk Wildlife Trust. **Foxburrow Farm Educational Nature Reserve**, Melton, Woodbridge.

Activity day: Minibeasts in ponds and meadows. Animal tracks and signs. Crafts, games, etc. Suitable for all ages. From: **10.00am to 2.30pm.**

Cost: **£1.75** per child; **£1.50** for 2 children/family. Adults and under 5's free. Numbers & ages of those coming must be known by **Tues. Oct. 24th.**

Regions

Fri. Nov. 17th
10.30am.

SWIM at Crown Pools, Ipswich.
Free Crèche available for 0-5yr-olds from 9am to noon.
Meet at **10.30am** in the foyer.
Followed by lunch.
Car parking: multi-storey behind the pool.

2pm IPSWICH AERODROME

Have an exciting time looking at and inside an aeroplane; visit the control tower, parachute centre, fire appliances, etc.

Meet at **2pm** at Main entrance car park.

Well sign-posted from A12.

Visit should last 1 hr to 90 mins.

Contact **Sandy Howse**, tel. **Ipswich (0473) 712815** for directions to Crown Pools & Aerodrome.

Wed. Nov. 29th

SWT Foxburrow Farm, Melton, Woodbridge.

Woodland Activity Day. Maybe moth trapping.

From: **10.00am to 2.30pm.**

Cost: as above for Oct 31st.

Numbers & ages of those coming must be known by **Nov. 22nd.**

Tues. Dec. 12th.

CHRISTMAS CRAFT ACTIVITY DAY at Wesleton Village Hall, Saxmundham.

Christmas Decorations, badgemaking, percussion instruments, games, etc. Bring your own mince pies to decorate and any other Christmassy craft ideas if you wish.

From: **11am to 3pm.**

Cost: **£1.50 per family.**

SUSSEX

The last couple of issues of the EO magazine contained no information about East Sussex families and activities. This does not mean there were no activities in the county. On the contrary, **there is activity as never before.** This is because a monthly newsletter, started five months ago by EO members, has brought many more people together - to the benefit of children and parents alike. For example, there are regular weekly meetings, monthly visits to Drusillas Zoo, a monthly painting session for all ages, as well as outings to places of interest.

The **Newsletter for Home Educators in Sussex** contains detailed, up to the minute local information and announcements about meetings, resources and activities for parents and children educating at home in the area. People then report on those events and activities in the following issue of the newsletter, so there is quick feedback. From this point of view it seems to meet a local need that the national magazine cannot possibly manage. **And it also creates a strong feeling of local, consistent support, a boost for morales that need boosting!** Another innovation stimulated and made possible through the pages of the newsletter is that a group of Sussex parents started monthly evening meetings to discuss educational subjects. The first two were about reading and maths, and full reports of the discussion, and information engendered, were printed in the following newsletter. More such meetings are scheduled, on storytelling, writing, music, and history.

The newsletter is professionally produced using a desktop publishing system and photocopier. It is paid for by donation and 'car boot sale' type fundraising. It has proved so successful that people in other regions might like to emulate it. If anyone wishes to see copies,

Regions

please send a stamped self-addressed envelope, plus an extra stamp or two to cover the cost of photocopying, to:

Linda Tyrrell, 1, Lovers Meadow, Chalvington, Hailsham, East Sussex, BN27 3TE.

Also:

Sue Petsaft

will have an open day at her house
2, Leylands Manor, Tubwell Lane, Crowborough, Sussex, TN6 3RH, tel (0892) 661319

on the 3rd Tuesday of every month. Next one will be **Oct. 17th** and we will hope to make things for **Halloween**. Bring any materials you can. Also **trampolining**, if it's warm enough, and we might go and look at some **cheesemakers** up the road if people are interested.

LONDON OUTINGS:

Please note new dates. I have changed **Museum** dates to the **last Tuesday** in every month because there are occasional lectures at the museums on Tuesdays. Ring me for latest information. You can get **free passes** for the museums from Anne Wade (19, Perkin Close, London - sorry, we have no post code for her) Send 20p.

Tuesday, Oct. 10th

Ice skating at the **Queens Ice Rink, Queensway, W2**. Nearest Tube Queensway. Kensington Gardens afterwards, if it's warm enough. **Meet 11.15am**, Cost £2.70 adults, £2.30 children, 90p for skates. If party of 20 or more, £2 adults, £1.60 children.

Tuesday, Oct. 24th

Museums: Meet in foyer of Science Museum at **11.15**, or in the picnic area at the Science Museum at **12.30**.

Tuesday, Oct. 31st

Polka Children's Theatre

240, The Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19.

Mister A's Amazing Maze Plays, by Alan Ayckbourn, for 5yr-olds upwards. 2pm performance. Tickets: **£2.70**, must be paid in advance. Please let me know by **Oct. 20th** if you want to come. **Meet 12.45pm in foyer**. Also look at the playground, Toyshop, Pantry, and Link Gallery.

Tuesday, Nov. 14th

Westminster Abbey

15 minute introductory talk, Teachers' Pack available, also brass rubbing. Please ring to book a place. **Meet 11.15** at entrance. St. James's Park is not too far to eat a picnic lunch, or Victoria Tower Gardens. Children **50p**, Adults **£2**. Brass rubbing at 25% discount.

Tuesday, Nov. 29th

Museums as above.

Tuesday, Dec. 5th

Polka Children's Theatre, as above.

The Firebird. **2pm**. Let me know by **Nov. 20th** as tickets have to be paid for in advance. The Firebird is a musical play for all ages, with actors, puppets, and lots of excitement & colour, based on the folktale. **Meet 1.45** in the foyer.

Tuesday, Dec 12th

Planetarium, Marylebone Rd, NW1, nearest Tube Baker St. **Meet 10.45** for a **special lecture**. No facilities here for eating packed lunches, but there is a cafeteria. Regents Park is fairly near.

Tuesday, Jan 9th

Possibly a tour **backstage at the Festival Hall**. Lasts an hour, **£1 each**. Tickets have to be bought one month in advance, but if you want to come we might do something else on that day.

Regions

Tuesday, Jan. 23rd

Polka Children's Theatre, as above.
The Odyssey. 2pm. £2.70. Let me know
by Jan 10th.

Tuesday, Jan. 30th

Museums as above.

* I have provisionally booked a tour
around the **Tower of London**, on **March
13th**. Children £1, Adults £4.50 I think,
but we can get reduced rates of there are
more than 11 of us.

Sue Petszaft,
Crowborough (0892) 661319.

WEST MIDLANDS

As always, members from other regions
are welcome.

Meetings:

Saturday, 21 Oct, 2pm.

Saturday, 2 Dec, 2pm.

Both meetings will be at Harris House,
8, St Agnes Rd, Moseley, Birmingham.
Tel: (021) 706 6460 for details of loca-
tion, bus services, etc. Please try to
come along for a chat and 'bring & buy'
(educational equipment, toys, books,
odds'n'ends).

You are invited to bring food & drink to
share. I shall be selling the visual vari-
ety of low-priced art, craft, stationery
materials, but if you want something
specific or more information, please
phone me.

Suggestions for venues for 1990 meet-
ings very welcome.

**Is anybody willing to take over the
arrangement of our social activities,
please?**

Sylvia Jeffs.

WEST YORKSHIRE

from **Sue Lyon**,
Rainbow Chalet,
6, Parkcliffe Rd,
BRADFORD BD2 4NS
tel: Bfd 638337.

Parents' meetings: 8pm

November 13th

Alison Tribe, 4, Penistone Rd, Bird's
Edge, Huddersfield, tel. 0422 606618.

Family Gatherings:

October 23rd

Visit to **Bretton Country Park** for a
guided walk.

Meet at **10am** and bring a lunch. Fur-
ther details and directions from **Martin
& Carol Chamberlain**, phone 0924
450060.

November 5th

Visit to **Yorkshire Mining Museum** at
11am.

Costs **£3.15** per adult and **£2.90** per
child if we have **15** people.

Only over-5's allowed underground but
there is a lot to do on the surface, too,
and a reduction in price.

Please phone **Martin or Carol 0924
450060** by Oct. 23rd.

November 23rd

Afternoon bread-making session.

Limited space so please phone **Sue Lyon
(0274 638337)** to book your place. Small
charge.

December 12th

Possible winter party, details later.

NEWSLETTER

for home educators in Sussex

Teaching Mathematics at home

A report by Graeme Smith

DURING eight years of teaching mathematics in secondary schools (I have another job now!), I felt that most children under-achieved in mathematics quite considerably. I was trying to overcome attitudes and mental blockages that the children had built up over the years. Seeing my six year old daughter starting down that same path was one factor in our decision to take her out of school.

Children first come across mathematics in a natural, practical way through play - sorting shapes and posting them through holes, number games and rhymes. Mathematics crops up in everyday life, and making it practical and relevant is a great aid in motivation.

Later on there is a need for more formal work. Different branches of mathematics have to be learnt in the correct sequence, and for this I would use a textbook or maths scheme - remembering that it is not necessary to do every single example! Mathematics schemes used in schools, such as Ginn Mathematics and S.P.M.G. (Scottish Primary Mathematics Group) come with workbooks, textbooks and apparatus and tend to be very expensive, though it may be possible to buy teachers' packs. For 5-7 year olds I have found "Time for Maths" published by Schofield and Sims useful. There are a series of six pupils' books at just over £1 each. Similarly priced are the teacher books which contain all the answers and ideas for the important preliminary work with real objects before putting pencil to paper. It is quite possible for much younger children to do this work in a home situation, where the parent can spend a few minutes each day with the child, so that the child isn't expected to read the explanation for himself. (I shall always refer to the child as he, probably because I have four daughters).

As an alternative to an expensive "scheme" for 7-11 year olds, I use a traditional text book first published in 1967 ("*Basic Mathematics*" by A.L. Griffiths published by Oliver and

Boyd). It is rather dated (I don't really think it necessary to know what a "multiplicand" is!) but I haven't had the time to find anything better. To counteract the dry, academic approach of a traditional text book and to help make mathematics interesting and enjoyable use games and activities such as those in "Help Your Child with Maths" (see book review). For an excellent explanation of basic arithmetic and how to teach it to your own child read "Be Your Child's Natural Teacher" by Geraldine Taylor, published by Penguin. This book also covers English in the same way.

When parents can't keep up.

For parents who continue to educate their children at home throughout the years of compulsory education, it is likely that there will come a time when the child will be studying mathematics which the parent has not come across before. There are books and schemes which are designed to be used by children in school working individually, rather than the whole class listening to a teacher's explanation, and these could be useful for a child working at home. It might be interesting for the parent to try studying alongside the child!

If, with the support and encouragement of a sympathetic parent educating at home, the child develops a love of and aptitude for mathematics - I do

believe that an aptitude for mathematics can be developed - and wishes to take his studies to 'A' level or beyond, they will need the help of a specialist either through a correspondence course, private tutor - who may only be required occasionally - or, dare I say it, by joining the sixth form at a school!

Help!

We are only human, and there are likely to be setbacks along the way. Things may seem to be going well, and suddenly he can't get the hang of adding fractions. A child may have been taken out of school hating mathematics and believing he is no good at it. The secret is not to dwell on what he can't do but to go back to what he can do. If adding fractions is causing difficulty it may be that he needs to spend more time talking about fractions such as 1/2, 2/4, 5/10 etc. which are equivalent. For a child who hates mathematics, build confidence by doing lots of practical work at an elementary level before writing things down. Avoid daunting pages of examples by writing a few out specially. This can be particularly useful for an older child who won't feel any better by being given a workbook - for an age group much younger than his. Geraldine Taylor's book would be useful in this situation.

If a situation persists try asking other home educators - use this newsletter! There may be someone at the local school who could help. The L.E.A. advisory service includes specialists in primary and secondary mathematics who may be able to recommend textbooks or maths schemes. Perhaps a local Teachers Centre will have copies which you can have a look at or borrow.

How your Newsletter is produced

A NUMBER of you have asked us how we produce this Newsletter. Very briefly, it is by means of a Desk Top Publishing (DTP) system.

The articles are typed into a software package called *Pagemaker 3* and a master copy of each page output through a laser printer and simply photocopied.

"Why do trees only have one leg Daddy?"
(Eleanor, aged 3.)

EDUCATION THROUGH THE (MEDICAL) PRESS

■ Education through the Press has taken a break with this issue, but will be back with a DECEMBER column. Volunteers still needed to read and select cuttings so please contact the editor: Sarah Guthrie, Field House, Thranston Diss, Norfolk IP21 4BU if you'd like to help.

■ However, we have this item from the *British Medical Journal*, 14th January, 1989. We thank the *British Medical Journal* for their kind permission to reproduce it. Thanks also to Roger Downie for spotting it and gaining permission to print it, along with his reply. I wanted to present it in its original format, but the copy was not quite good enough, so I have retyped it, omitting only the footnotes (consisting of references to learned journals). This is how the experts think - a very educational piece.

School refusal

Usually mild but sometimes severe

■ About one 10th of all school pupils in Britain are absent at any one time, and a fifth of these have no legitimate reason for being away. Those absent without a legitimate reason fall into three main groups: truants, school refusers, and children voluntarily withheld by par-

ents. Hersov compared 50 truants and 50 school refusers and showed that school refusers are more often passive, dependent, and overprotected and tend to come from families with a higher prevalence of neurosis. They generally work and behave well at school and the refusal to go to school is a manifestation of a neurotic disorder in which anxiety and depression are prominent. Truants, in contrast, tend to come from larger families from which the father is often absent and to show a poorer standard of work and evidence of antisocial or delinquent behaviour. School refusal was first described in 1932 by Broadwin and was later labelled 'school phobia', but the term school phobia is now seen as an oversimplification because it pre-empts the question of whether the child is refusing to attend school (with a justifiable reason in a few cases) or refusing to leave home.

■ School refusal has tended to be understood as primarily a consequence of separation anxiety, but Hersov says that "school refusal is not a true clinical entity with a uniform aetiology, psychopathology, course, prognosis, and treatment, but rather a collection of symptoms or a syndrome occurring against the background of a variety of psychiatric disorders." Accepting these limitations, he estimates that about 5% of all children referred for psychiatric help are school refusers. The condition tends to be present in three peaks - at the ages of 5-7, 11 (associated with change of school), and 14 and older.

■ Up to four fifths of all children have difficulties in adjusting to primary school. Reluctance to attend school is thus a common problem



largely dealt with by parents and teachers. Four fifths of general practitioners manage straightforward cases of persistent school non-attendance without referral. Many children present with somatic complaints such as abdominal pain, headache, and vague malaise, which require careful assessment to exclude an organic cause; the history may show precipitating factors such as changes in school or home or loss or illness of an important person.

■ Some children, however, may show such severe school refusal that residential care may be required. Defining school refusal as the association of a neurotic disorder with a reluctance to attend school for at least four weeks, Kolvin found that almost half of cases aged between 9 and 15 showed important depression. Assessment of depression is particularly important in adolescents, and Schaffer's study of 30 successful suicides in children and young adolescents showed that four patients had originally presented with school refusal. There is also a high incidence of depressive and anxiety disorders in first degree relatives of school refusers with severe symptoms - almost half the mothers in one study.

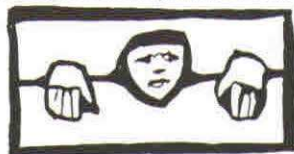
■ Though the importance of the mother-child relationship has long been recognised, treatment is more effective when both parents participate - and increased awareness of the importance of the father has led to a family centred approach. Successful treatment has been described using various approaches including psychoanalysis, behavioural therapy, cognitive-behavioural therapy, and family therapy. It seems important that therapists using different approaches have identified two basic types of school

refusal - a mild form with favourable prognosis and a severe form that is often resistant to treatment and associated with a lack of parental cooperation. The usefulness of drug treatment is still not clear, and it should not be considered in general practice before referral. Generally, a child will return to school if parents and therapists use firmness and pressure, but a successful outcome cannot be equated solely with a return to school. A recent follow up over 15-20 years of 35 school refusers confirmed earlier findings that problems with social relationships persist and that psychiatric referral are common when they are adults.

■ Such studies, however, predate the current use of family therapy, and research is now called for on the effectiveness of this treatment. School refusal therefore remains a challenge, perhaps comparable to an unexplained fever. Though it may resolve spontaneously, it may have serious implications justifying prompt referral and a full investigation with the participation of not only the whole family but also the school and educational authorities.

Jim Watters,

Senior Registrar,
Child and Family Department,
Tavistock Clinic, London NW3.



Overleaf:
REPLY FROM DR J. R. DOWNIE

Dear Sir,

SCHOOL REFUSAL

I find it deeply disturbing that you publish an editorial on School Refusal that simply labels the refusal to attend school as some kind of psychiatric disorder, and does not investigate in any way the legitimacy of the child's action in refusing to attend school. There is a strong liberation education tradition, most trenchantly expressed by Ivan Illich, a writer who should be no stranger to the thinking clinician, which asserts that schools are not particularly successful institutions, because they stifle the enquiring and individual mind.

In this country, there exists a self-help organisation called Education Otherwise which helps parents who wish, for whatever reason, to educate their children outside school. Some parents chose to act in this way out of principle, others because their children have found school attendance traumatic. To me, it smells of the Gulag to label dissent from attending a particular compulsory institute as a psychiatric disorder. Perhaps some of your readers, presented with school refusal cases in the future, may care to refer parents to the Education Otherwise contact address.

J.R. Downie.

*Watters, J. Br. Med. J 1989:298:66 (14 January 1976)

*Illich, I. 'Deschooling Society' London. Calder and Boyars 1971.

*Illich, I. 'Limits to Medicine' London, Boyars.

*Education Otherwise, 25 Common Lane, Hemmingford Abbots, Cambridgeshire, PE18 9AN.

Education in London ENCOURAGING THE HUMAN SCALE APPROACH

A conference for parents & teachers.

Saturday, 18 November

9.30am - 5pm

Argyle School

Tonbridge Street

London WC1

(near Kings Cross)

Organised by London Human
Scale Education Movement.

£10: full fee, including
vegetarian lunch

£7.50: low- or un-waged, including
vegetarian lunch

(Discretionary terms if necessary)

Further details & booking:

Ruth Goffe 01-675 4388

11, Veronica Rd, London, SW17
8QL

Please book in advance!



A SQUIRREL PRESS

Dear E.O.,

We are:

Tony and Sue; Seth (10); Tynan (8); Tansy (6); and Syree(3).

We live in a lovely Hertfordshire village close to the line connecting MOORGATE and HERTFORD NORTH (BR not LT).

Visitors very welcome.

We are also:

d. SQUIRREL PRESS! Producing childrens books, booklets and magazines in dynamic monochrome! All material is original. We are available for your next special event and can provide:

PUPPETS

STORIES

POETRY

PUPPET SHOWS

FACE PAINTING

* all at a reasonable charge. Great distances from home carefully considered! We are putting together a quarterly magazine (one's at the printers; one's being prepared; both probably ready by the time you read this!), which contains stories, a serial, cartoons and poems and we would welcome any contributions, although we cannot guarantee publication. Our experiences of editing are very similar to Kevin Fleischs', April newsletter!!! *

A mail order list and any further information is available from the address below:

Yours faithfully

A J Barton

12 Willow Corner Bayford Herts SG13 8PN Bayford 571
Proprietors: A J Barton & S E Barton

A n n o u n c e m e n t s

CHILDREN'S MAGAZINES

Dear EO,

I would like to produce two simple children's magazines, because it is so difficult to find something for out of school children that covers many subjects. Work books are expensive and on one subject alone. Children's magazines such as "Owl" are also expensive for what they contain.

My idea is to produce two magazines: one for 5-7 years of age and one for those aged 8 and over. My magazine will cover as many subjects as I can cram in, so will provide a good educational range. For example, each month the 5-7 year olds' magazine (which I am calling "Little Elves") will have a step by step guide to playing the recorder; simple French (they are never too young to learn); maths and letter games; simple science, etc. The magazine for the older child will be along similar lines.

The reason why I am writing to you is that I would like to ask your readers what they would like to see in my magazines and what their children would benefit from best, because I want to make my magazine fit the parents and children, not them fit my magazine.

Please could you ask your subscribers to write to me with their comments and ideas? Thank you.

**Rosie Wallis, West Barton Farm
Little Silver, Cadeleig
Tiverton, Devon, EX16 8HJ.**

FOR SALE

Large, detached, stone-built **HOUSE** in quiet position on Portland, Dorset. Four double bedrooms, 28' lounge/diner with wood/coal stove and open fireplace, kitchen, utility room, outhouse, side yard with shed, parking, good-sized organic allotment garden very nearby.

Could suit group or two families.

Price £66,950 (reduced for quick sale).

Linda Lovett, tel: Portland 823859.

BOOKS

If any members are interested in getting **Usborne** books at 5% discount, p&p free, (10% if for fundraising), I am willing to supply them. (Glasgow area only: Free books if you have a book party).

In case anyone hasn't heard of **Usborne**, they produce colourful, information-packed books which are not at all like 'school' books (ie they are interesting, not boring).

List of available titles from

**Emily Matthews,
98 Crofthill Rd,
Glasgow G44 5QQ,
tel 041 637 0664.**

EXTERNAL GCSE UP-DATE

We have now received replies to our letter to the six GCSE examination boards concerning the external GCSE and are, at the time of writing, preparing a photocopied pack of information containing these letters and sundry other items so that those of us within EO who have an interest in the future of GCSE provision for home educated children can evaluate the boards responses and discuss a co-ordinated course of action for EO. The pack runs to 30+ pages and costs £2 including postage.

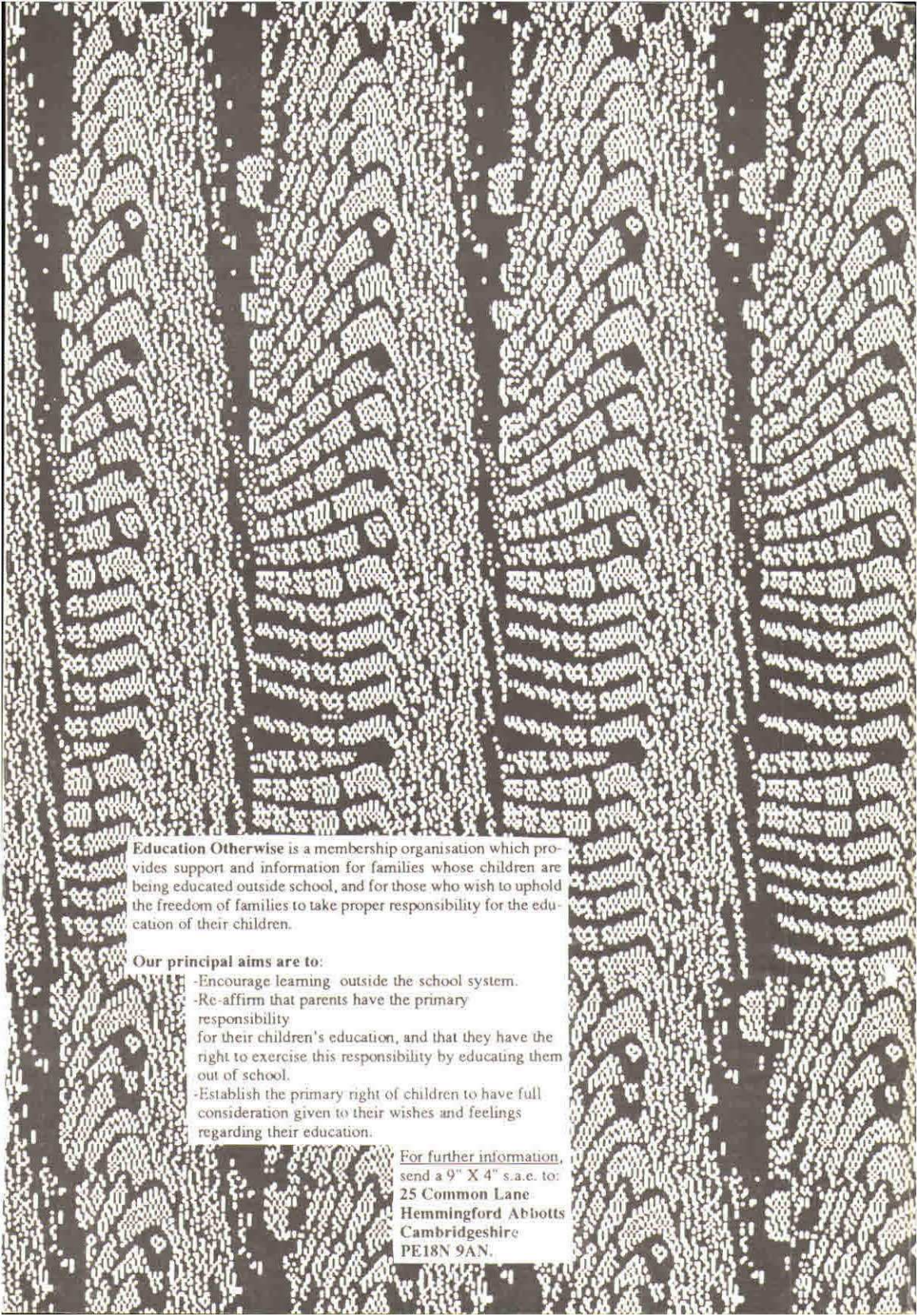
Paul Bentley, 83 Manor Park, Lewisham, London SE13 5RA. (01-852 1563).

- General Enquiries*.....25 Common Lane, Hemingford Abbot,
Cambridgeshire PE18 9AN
Telephone Helpline: 0480 63130
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- | | | |
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| <i>Ireland</i> | Clare Weber, Furness, Newport, Co Mayo | |

EDUCATION OTHERWISE OFFICERS



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 regarding their education.

For further information,
send a 9" X 4" s.a.e. to:
25 Common Lane
Hemmingford Abbotts
Cambridgeshire
PE18N 9AN.