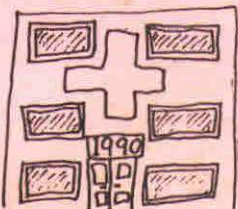
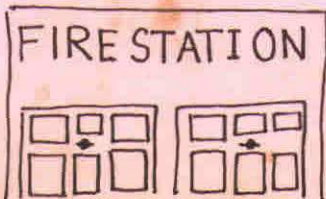
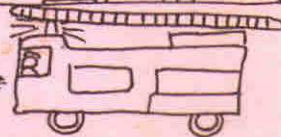
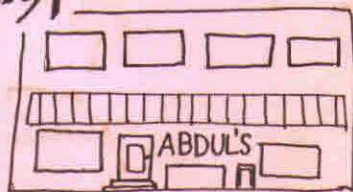


education
otherwise

newsletter

no. 77 december '90-91



Contents

Editorial	1
Education through the Press	2
State education and home education	3
National Curriculum	6
i'm doing nothing/London with a twist	8
Letters	9
Reviews	14
Grandparents	16
Single parents	17
Freedom at last	18
Immunisation	20
Education on two wheels	22
Shopping Otherwise	24
Penpals	25
News from the Regions	26
Coordinators update/Educating Archie	32
AGM	33
Winter gathering	34
Featherstone Report	35
Matters arising	39

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER:

Editor: Michelle Rocke, 25 Southgate, Sutton Hill, Telford. Shropshire
TF7 4HD Tel: 0952 587420 Deadline January 1st

SUPPLEMENT on Maths

Editor: Dr. Brian Williamson, 46 Wellington Road, New Brighton L45 2NG
Tel: 051 639 8744 Deadline January 1st

Children's pages are edited by:

Ken Beagley, "Oranges", St. Clement's Terrace, Harbeton, Totnes, Devon
TQ9 5SN. Please send ALL children's contributions to this address.

Contributions for the next edition should be sent to the editor by the deadline date and all materials intended as such, should be clearly marked 'For Publication'. Contributors are asked to ensure that they include their name and address written legibly. If you are referring to a previous article, please include the page and newsletter number and date.

Advertisements are accepted (when space permits) from members, if they are of interest to EO in general, at 10p per word

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributor and not necessarily those of the editor or of Education Otherwise as a whole. This newsletter is edited by a volunteer member of Education Otherwise and its primary purpose is to provide support and communication between members

Education Otherwise is a company limited by guarantee and is a Charitable trust. Charity No. 292029

Editorial

Editing the newsletter coincided with attempts to pack up our house ready for a year in Canada. We hope to make contact with like-minded home educators there and maybe report back to you on our experiences.

Thanks for all your contributions. I ended up with enough to fill two newsletters (though most copy arrived after the deadline). It is more crowded and with less illustrations than I originally envisaged but I hope you like the result anyway.

This issue of the newsletter continues the debate about the National Curriculum (NC) and the negative trends seen in it, looks at some difficulties faced by single parent EOers (and the joys of having grandparents involved), and reports on the events at Featherstone Castle.

There is justifiable anxiety both about the NC itself, and the chances that a Labour government would extend its reach to cover home educators. This debate must go on. But don't let us allow our opposition to the NC as a strait-jacket deflect attention from much that is worthwhile in it as a *guide* - to methods of learning, project work and the practical approaches to subjects like French or biology for instance.

Support in doing home education is a perennial problem. Not only sympathetic grandparents, but other relatives, friends and local EO households are a vital help. However, we have always taken the view that cooperation with the LEA should be another means of finding support. In Bradford, advisors have usually been a model of encouragement for us. Whatever other dilemmas they are in, each contact they have with non-adversarial EOers makes things better for others.

Lastly, Featherstone. We weren't there this year. But as you will see, new challenges were thrown up relating to organisational structure and to how sensitive matters are handled. We do not have it all together, clearly.

Perhaps we should reconsider the message of Advent in relation to EO as well as to the crisis in the Gulf. Hope of peace-on-earth was achieved by Jesus through commitment to humility, truth, love and self-sacrifice.

Best wishes to all,
Sue Lyon

p.s. Don't miss Rutland group's glow-in-the-dark visit to Sellafield!

MURRY CHRISTMAS



HEADS 203 TURN

Min
Dina

Josh

Education through the Press



END OF THE YEAR QUOTES

"Never offer home tuition. If you do that, they never get back to school."
(Dr Taitz, Sheffield paediatrician.)

"It is important that every pupil knows and understands what wealth creation is about and develops entrepreneurial skills."
(Duncan Graham, National Curriculum chairman/Daily Telegraph May 90)

"People learn when they have a reason to learn; they do it through participation, not formal instruction. They have to be given the opportunity to participate in science."
(Prof Robert Pritchard of Leicester University/Telegraph April 90)

"I do not want to see mass flogging, but there is no punishment now in school of which children are afraid. They leave school thinking they can do exactly what they want and the whole of our society is under threat."
(Sir Rhodes Boyson, MP for Brent North/Telegraph May 90)

"I feel I had taught nothing worth teaching and I was pretty sure that the pupils had taken on board very little worth learning. I hadn't been teaching I had been baby sitting."
(Former Headmaster John Sanders/Evening Standard Feb 90)

"I sometimes think that if I hadn't been taught at all until I was about 12 or 13 I could have been quite brilliant, because I do have incredible application. But it just messed me up sending me to school so early. I began to educate myself after I left school."
(Terence Stamp/Times Saturday Review Sept 90)

"Each child is a unique balance of abilities and needs and parents are experts on their own children."
(Pip Rupik, Children's Home Based Education Association/Edn Guardian Oct 90)

"Parents who choose to cast aside the most significant educational resource of all take on a daunting responsibilityfew can cover the diversity of subjects demanded by the National Curriculum. Should their children be allowed to settle for less?"
(David Stanley, Principal Education Officer for Hereford & Worcester/ ibid)

"Yes, it is legal. No, my parents aren't teachers. Yes, I do know the facts of life."
(Sophie May, explaining her ten years or so home education to school peers. Education Guardian, Oct 90)

"...we have decided to think very hard about introducing a provision to bind over parents to prevent their children truanting"
(John Patten, Home Office Minister of State/Guardian Oct 90)

Edited by Sarah Guthrie, with contributions from Janice Owen, Jill Smith, Priscilla Park-Weir, Cordelia Middleton and others.

State Education: a strait-jacket?

My daughter, now 16, began to lose interest at school as the 'continuous assessment' era began to take over. She was often graded C/D in her previously strong subjects, while achieving B in weaker subjects. Once 'pigeon-holed' thus, it proved difficult for her to make further progress. Teachers tended to award marks according to what pigeon-hole the child was in.

Finally, after a lot of upset, she left, half-way through her GCSE course. I undertook teaching her in French, English Language and English Literature. She took the exams externally in London and gained B,B,A respectively. L.E.A.G. were tremendously helpful. Unfortunately, they seem to have become privatised and it is proving difficult to arrange further GCSEs through them. How much more freedom of choice are we going to have snatched from us? What about house-bound adults, who cannot attend colleges for continuous assessment purposes? (Most people with any sense realise that continuous assessment is open to abuse in all sorts of ways.)

Arranging Maths and Biology tuition was difficult. A local college offered her a part-time place, but a gentleman in a lofty position at our LEA prevented her from taking this up. He told me that if she did it, everyone would want to! (A very good reason, in my opinion, for shaking up the L.E.A.s altogether.) Consequently, my daughter is having to take Maths and Biology GCSEs this year, while continuing to study for A-level French and English with me. We have also begun Latin which she loves. How many of our children these days are given the chance to try out minority subjects? Try finding a college of further education which offers Roman civilisation, Latin, Ancient history - let alone Ancient Greek! What's happened to our education?

The catch-phrase seems to be 'preparing children for society'. This should not mean that, as with TV programmes, they are reduced to the lowest common denominator. Who says that a technological society is particularly desirable anyway? Perhaps if we brought back the humanities, with children learning about people and civilisations, instead of machines, we'd restore some of the decency and moral and ethical standards that have been so sadly eroded.

Barbara Vine-Lott, The Pink Cottage, Shroud Farm Rd, Holyport Berks SL6 2LH



① Santa's grotto



② Under the tree

please specify design wanted

The M.E. Association are launching a survey. We need comments from children and parents on their experiences with regard to the effect that M.E. has had on their education. If you home-educate because of this or want to be in the survey, please contact:
Faye Barnden, 5 Thrapston Road,
Spaldwick, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 0TA
** M.E. is an illness affecting the muscles and central nervous system, usually contracted following viral illness. Symptoms commonly include: intense fatigue (often seriously limits normal lifestyle and education), muscle pain/tenderness and neurological features - lack of concentration, emotional fluctuations and a wide range of other symptoms.

ARCHIE CARDS

25p & sae: SARAH GUTHRIE

FIELD HOUSE THRANDESTON DISS NORFOLK IP21 4BU
FOR RUSH ORDERS PHONE! TEL: 037 983 678

A letter to the Labour Party



We are writing to you and all Labour front bench spokespersons on education concerning the Party's policy towards home educated children.

We are both longstanding and active members of the Party. One of us (GA) is a sponsor and the other (AA) has stood at local council elections. We are committed socialists and scientists by profession. For the past seven years we have educated our own children at home.

We understand, with great dismay, that the Labour Party, when it comes to power, intends to extend the National Curriculum so that it is compulsory for home educated children.

We would have very strong objections to such a policy and we have outlined these in the attached document. As you will see from this, it is our socialist views which have led us to educate our children ourselves.

Because home educators are very much a minority group we cannot hope to influence Party policy through the normal CLP-Party conference channel and it is for this reason we are appealing directly to you.

We have studied the National Curriculum publications and we have come to the conclusion that the scheme is unsuitable for all children. Furthermore it is particularly inappropriate for those children who are educated at home from a philosophical viewpoint which is totally opposed to testing, measuring and constantly pressuring children.

We are not 'well-off' parents who employ expensive tutors. Like most parents educating their own children we choose to give up a second income in order to do what we believe is best for our children.

Please would you consider the position of home educators and revise the Party's policy so that parents do not lose the basic freedom to educate their own children.

Yours sincerely, Grahame & Anne Ainge 115 North Road, Hertford, Herts. SG14 2BU.

(Note: EO members could send a letter like this to their Labour MP. Ed)

Socialism & home education

The socialist roots of home education.

We believe that only socialism can give the equal opportunity to all in a society to fulfil their talents without being exploited and without having to live in poverty. We also believe that the security socialism brings should enable people to be free to find their own way to self fulfilment. And we believe that process starts with education.

It was socialists who brought about education for all and the opportunities for all in higher education. These were the pioneers of the last century and the first half of this century. And their ideals were achieved. But the present system is not the end of the road for education. Improvements in opportunities are still needed. It is doubtful if the improvements can come from tinkering with what goes on in schools, but they may well arise from the work of more recent pioneers such as AS Neil and John Holt. They showed not only how so many children fail in education but how they could all succeed. They showed how natural it is for children to use their minds in an inquiring and critical fashion and how the acquisition of both intellectual and practical skills is a natural, enjoyable process which can easily be damaged by the conventional processes of schooling. Their love of children, their ideas and ideals are uppermost in the minds of many parents who educate their own children.

We find therefore no conflict between socialism and home education. Like the Rochdale Pioneers, parents educating their own children are doing something different, not in an elitist way, but because they believe it's right.

Reasons for home education

There are at least several hundred parents in the UK who educate their children at home. Most of them have fundamental reasons for home educating. These reasons are based on philosophical and moral objections to conventional schooling. They have a philosophy of education based on the child being free to choose what they learn and the pace at which they proceed.

Schools fail many children. They are institutions with inherent problems such as peer pressure, bullying and authoritarianism. Children are pressurised by testing and the expectations of teachers. In extreme cases children are so traumatised by the school environment that they are labelled "school phobic".

Home educators believe that children only fail when they are expected to perform to certain rules over which they have no control or understanding. When that expectation and pressure is removed children can begin to succeed and truly learn.

A major characteristic of our culture is a lack of respect for children. It is as marked in schools as elsewhere. We believe that the education system as it stands fails to allow most children to develop a sense of their own value and until children are respected by teachers they cannot achieve any measure of self-respect. Such a state-of-affairs results in large numbers of children leaving school who take their values from a daily dose of the Sun newspaper and vote for a political party which exploits them.

There are many everyday ways in which school failure is perpetuated. For example, history is studied solely from a capitalist interpretation of historical events. Schools are preoccupied with the wearing of school uniforms, obedience and the observation of petty, illogical rules.

Those parents who feel strongly about such matters are, at present, able to provide their children with an alternative to school. To undertake the education of your own children requires a commitment of time, energy and money. It is not the activity of well-off "middle-class" parents, nor is it undertaken lightly. Parents who educate their own children do so for valid philosophical, moral and educational reasons.

The National Curriculum - why it conflicts with home education

The National Curriculum increases pressures and expectations made on children by continually testing and measuring their performance against some outside criteria. Most home education is concerned with removing these pressures from children.

The National Curriculum seriously undermines the degree to which children are treated as individuals. Children do not learn to walk at the same age, they talk at different times. The timing of developmental stages, in the absence of pathology, is irrelevant. Yet once they reach the age of five, they are expected to conform to a set timetable of achievement on a set National Curriculum.

We consider the National Curriculum to be a copy of the American "grades" system with the main objective of training a compliant, uncritical workforce rather than providing a proper education.

Human rights and home education

It is a fundamental human right embodied in both the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention that children's education should conform to the philosophical conviction of the parents. At present, home educated children can like any children take GCSE examinations and no conflict exists between parents educating their own children and fundamental human rights.

We do not advocate home education for all children. It would clearly be unrealistic to do so. But we do wish to have the freedom to educate our children in accordance with our principles. Socialism has always been on the side of human rights and on the side of high principle and philosophical and moral conviction.

National Curriculum: Debate

Unlike Susan Melton (Oct/Nov newsletter page 29) I am worried about the Labour party's plans to extend the National Curriculum to home-educating families.

Before the National Curriculum, individual schools, with some guidance and/or direction from LEAs made the decision about what 'the right topics' were for the children in their care. Now the decision has been removed from them and the 'right topics' and the 'right levels' for children of different ages have been enshrined in law. But who decided what these right topics and right levels were to be? Is there a group of people who really know what, out of the vast total of human knowledge, all children of a certain age need to know? I don't think so.

The committees of experts set up to decide the content of the National Curriculum for each subject have had some deep and well-published differences of opinion; even they, hand-picked as many of them were, by the government, have not been able to agree. It is not a simple matter to decide what children should know. Is it, for instance, more important for children growing up in the 1990's to know about early British History or about Islamic History? Is it more important for them to be able to use a calculator or to do long division on paper? It is no good saying that everything is important because there just is not enough time for any educator, whether a teacher in school or a home-educating parent to cover everything. Much, most things in fact, have to be omitted. I do not believe that there is an identifiable body of knowledge which is the right thing for all children.

When it comes to the question of whom I trust to decide what my children need to know - government-appointed committees, head-teachers and teachers or myself - I prefer to trust myself, turning to other sources such as education books and documents for ideas and guidance but always in the end taking responsibility myself for the decisions. That is why I want to home-educate my children. If I was happy to turn over responsibility for what and how they learn to other people I would send them to school.

Susan Wilson, 13 Trenchard St., Greenwich, London. SE10 9PA.

...Vouchers?

The National Curriculum is intended, I suspect, to pave the way for a voucher scheme.

For the Government the main problem with this sort of scheme, whereby parents would 'pay' for schooling with government-issued vouchers, was that of how to recognise schools suitable to receive and cash the vouchers. The National Curriculum may provide a basis on which to conduct this process of recognition.

Without something like the National Curriculum a voucher scheme would open what must seem to the Government like a can of worms, all sorts of strange and wonderful schools claiming they should be able to cash the vouchers. With the National Curriculum, however, and a re-elected Conservative Government, the prospect may be that EOers will be able to qualify to cash the vouchers by conforming to the requirements of the National Curriculum.

I would hesitate to join the queue for such cash, but if our approach to home-education happens to be consistent with the National Curriculum requirements I might be tempted to apply for recognition as a 'National Curriculum school'. I hope that if our approach and the National Curriculum start to diverge I will not be tempted to conform, irrespective of the educational needs of my children, to keep the money.

Readers will gather from the above that I do not approve of Labour plans for compulsory state training and indoctrination, which is what a compulsory National Curriculum would tend to be. Neither, however, do I approve of a two-tier system in which most children are subjected to state indoctrination and others, whose parents are more independent, are not.

A voucher scheme, we should be well aware, would extend state control of education into that part of the currently independent sector which would seek to cash in on the scheme.

Rather than vouchers I would prefer a substantial increase in child benefit coupled with legislation to enable LEAs to charge fees in line with the benefit increases. Most parties, however, including, probably, my own Green Party, will not want to even contemplate opening that can of worms.

Laurence Thompson, 44 Tiverton Way, Chessington, Surrey. KT9 2QS

LEGAL WORKSHOP IN HERTFORDSHIRE.

Rob and Anne Wade have kindly agreed to hold a legal workshop in Welwyn Garden City on the 2nd-3rd March 1991 (as outlined on page 25 of the Aug newsletter). There will be three three-hour sessions (or possibly four, if Sylvia Jeffs is able to come) during Saturday and Sunday.

THE WEEKEND IS A MUST FOR COORDINATORS AND FOR ALL WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO HELP OTHERS WITH LEGAL PROBLEMS.

The cost of the weekend is dependent on numbers, but the maximum cost will be:

Self-catering: £5 per adult per night
£2.50 per child per night (under 12), free for under 2.
Full board: £10 per adult per night
£5 per child per night (under 12), under 2 negotiable
(Vegetarian/wholefood menu)

Day visitors (self-catering): £5 for the weekend includes tea/coffee
WE NEED DEFINITE BOOKINGS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (3 JAN. 1991 AT THE LATEST) IN ORDER TO PRESENT THE COSTS TO THE AGM ON 10 JAN., AS EO IS SUBSIDISING THIS.

All enquiries and firm bookings (please send S.A.B.) to:

Mrs. Jane Lowe
5 Elm Gardens
Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL8 6RX (tel. 0707 335825)

We will confirm your booking as soon as poss. after the AGM with exact price.
P.S. Sandie Cottee is planning to organise a workshop in East Essex later in 1991 - further details not yet available.

i'm doing nothing

I am a 15 year old. My name is Anthea Axten, i have a brother called Hamish, he is 13. I also have a sister called Leonie she is 9. I came out of school when i was 12. For about a year i did no work at all, we just used to play. Mum got us to do work (after a year!) like maths, a subject I hate, and as far as i'm concerned i always will. We did English as well. I love geography i'm doing a lot on my own at the moment. I'm also learning German - a choice of my own.

My view on EO....

It's a very good thing, because you can do anything you like. You can also go deeper into the subject if you want to. Also you can learn useful things like how to cook a meal. You become closer to your family because you have to live with them every day. You get used to their odd habits....eventually! One still has plenty of time for hobbies and stuff. Seeing people can be difficult. We are lucky because we have some very good friends who live quite near to us. But you can go to local do's, clubs and discos. No-one can stop you. If you're near my age (not under 13 please) i would like to hear from you. Being at home and learning is more fun than.....slogging away at school!!!

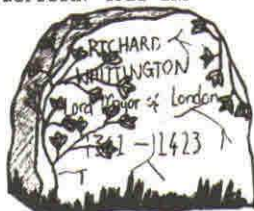
We play lots of games. They're not educational but we enjoy them. So do people who come over.

I think i'll explain about 'doing nothing'. It can be done. Here's how.. when you're asked "what are you doing?" You can safely reply "i'm doing nothing" and because you said "nothing" its something. I hope you get what i mean. I found this out while reading Tao-ism, they used pooh bear as an example.

Anyhow i hope this letter will make other people write. I think its interesting to hear from young people. My interests are writing, biking, skateboarding, reading, horses (i never go riding though) and almost anything else!

My address is: "The Firs", Magpie Green, Wortham, Diss, Norfolk. IP22 1RF
or phone Diss 898568

London with a twist...



While visiting relations down south, Helen and I embarked on an unusual tour of London: we went to find the Whittington stone in Highgate (the interest was sparked off by a book she'd read). Once we reached Highgate village we had to ask directions. The woman we asked said she was going that way and would take us AND were we in EO? (What is the mathematical likelihood of meeting a fellow EOer like that?)

She had taught her two eldest at home but had had to give up EO due to ill-health. She showed us the stone and the nearby mural, then in saying goodbye said she envied us still doing EO, and left. (Isn't it terrible that I didn't think to ask her name!)

After leaving the stone, Helen and I went to the Bank of England museum, St. Paul's cathedral (all the way to the top gallery) and to Westminster to hear Big Ben, before going back to my sister-in-law's. But for me, the highlight was meeting my unknown friend; it really cheered me up.

Emily Matthews, 98 Crofthill Road, Giasgow G44 5QQ

Letters

Dear E.O.

I just had to write to say how much the October/November newsletter cheered me up.

Having just had a visit from the LEA advisor I was feeling a bit inadequate. The 'statements' - questions for advisors-teachers and "You don't have to tell the LEA but if they ask.." gave me back my confidence to continue to teach Stuart, age 12, at home. The advisor was very pleasant - new to the job. He was an ex-headmaster of a primary school and didn't know much about EO but he had prepared a 'speech' about the duties of the LEA and how much he felt the system could offer Stuart. He was very sincere about this. The social aspects of education are still put forward as the advantage of school. The temptation to "shoot down in flames" was resisted with difficulty but we managed.

My husband was at home for the visit as he works from home. So we discussed how we felt about our 'system' for the kind of life we lead and the kind of person we want Stuart to be. We have a son of 25 and daughter of 24 who went through the system and we were not impressed with the results.

Many times I have written to EO and not posted the letters but realising how other people's letters have helped me I thought I'd let you know. I have helped two other friends to begin home education as they were at their wit's end with school and had not realised there was an alternative. They have joined our happy band of EOers and have found your information of great help too.

Yours,

Pauline M Cann, The Smiddy Cott, Ballendrick, Bridge of Cam, Perth



I would love to hear from other Jehovah's Witnesses, who home-teach, especially from divided homes with an absent father sharing custody of a child with school-induced anxiety.

I have care and control of Gavin who is 9 years old and I wish to carry on home-teaching as it suits him so well. My ex-husband agrees with the LEA's idea that Gavin should attend a local school for children with emotional problems. Gavin has health problems too. He and I both suffer from M.E. and Gavin has diabetes so I feel that on health grounds Gavin will continue to improve emotionally as well as in many other ways if his education is home-based.

Gavin loves to write letters and would like to hear from other children who don't go to school as it helps him to feel less 'different'. I look forward to hearing from lots of you soon.

Tricia-Ann Miller, 143 Wych Lane, Bridgemary, Gosport Hants. PO13 0TB



Dear E.O.

I thought you might be interested in the WATCH holiday my daughter went on in the summer. She had wonderful time, and I enclose a letter she wrote to WATCH magazine (Ed: see next page). Details of the organisation can be obtained from your local Wildlife Trust branch of the Royal Society for Nature Conservation or write to;

WATCH

The Green, Witham Park, Lincoln. LN5 7JR

Yours sincerely,

Kate J. Wilson, Manor Cottage, Walgrave, Northants. NN6 9PH

Manor Cottage
Walgrave
Northampton

Dear Watch

I went on a Watch Sunship study station week. We did lots of exciting activities, my favourite was when you had a circle of string and in your circle you had to show the seven secrets of life which are energy flow, cycles, Diversity, communities, Inter-relationships, changes and adaptation. The important formula was ECDCICA. In the evenings we had sing songs and crafts which included tie dyeing and weaving. One night we went on a midnight walk, some people saw a shooting star, Everything looked weird, familiar things looked unfamiliar and strange. One day we went to King Snoid's kingdom, King Snoid did not believe that any thing depended on any thing else, he had a Henchman on the way back to our base we got ambushed by the Henchman. He shouted that nothing depended on any thing else so we shouted examples like beetles depended on rotting wood and you depend on trees and so on. We went see Mother Nature and she told us that it can take 200 years to make one inch of soil. We collected bits of wood, leaves and hammered it with mallets to try and create 200 years in five minutes, but we did not succeed. I enjoyed it very much and I will go again.

Yours Sincerely
Helen Wilson

letters about reading

Dear E.O.

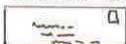
My family and I are new to Education Otherwise. We joined as Zoe who is 14 took exception to being bullied and then ignored by her so-called class-mates. I was really grateful when a TV programme on school phobia shed some light on the problem. Zoe has been working at home for five months now. Her written work is virtually zero! and at the moment books are best used for propping things up!! She tries to read but gets no pleasure from it, apart from the Horse and Pony magazine. I set her work, if she can do it within ten minutes it's alright.

I wrote to about three names on the contact list. One, a very nice lady, wrote back but her daughter being a genius made Zoe feel very awkward only because she wants to be one. I have to admit at times I despair. I have two sons aged 13 and 11 who also need my support (they go to school). Zoe would like my sole individual attention. Her favourite saying is "I cannot do it!" I love reading the newsletter and Zoe actually joined in this month. She did you a wordsearch and is asking for a penfriend, that is immense progress.

If you publish my letter is there a possibility someone might write to me on a friendship basis? I would also appreciate any advice on how to make a genuine breakthrough with books. I read and enjoy it. Thanks for listening.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Jill Thompson, 26, Orchard Close, Meppershall, Beds SG17 5LW



Many thanks to all who phoned and wrote to me with suggestions for helping my reluctant reader (Newsletter April 1990 page 19). It's good to know I'm not alone and after reading all your letters and the September supplement I have come to the conclusion that if all children were given the chance to read when they felt ready many would leave it to a later age.

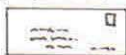
It was interesting to hear how many children began reading with humorous and joke books. So armed with my list of recommended books we set off to the library

Aurin is finally regaining his confidence with reading books after losing it in his only year at school. This has taken four years to renew so we really are pleased with our progress and grateful to everyone who wrote.

If anyone lives near or is passing by, call in for a cuppa and a chat.

Many thanks,

Polly Craft, 42 Brynhyfryd Tce, Waunlwyd, Ebbw Vale, Gwent NP3 6TW



Members of EO with small children may be interested in my experience of teaching my son, now age nearly seven, to read.

From early on he showed an interest in writing, in that when I wrote a letter he would sit with a sheet of paper for as long as half an hour drawing curls. Alphabet letters and magnetic numbers were always readily available as toys and at two and a half he was asking about them. We played games using the Glenn Doman flash cards from the "Teach Your Baby to Read" set and we experimented with "a" says "a for apple". By the time he was three and a half he was reading the early "Peter and Jane" books. By four and a half he had worked his way through all of them as well as many other books of similar levels from the library and my book club.

The conclusion that I draw from this is that it does not matter which method is used to help a child read. The two most important ingredients are his/her interest and a variety of ways to suit the individual child to keep the interest going. We seem to have employed three methods at once!

from Ann Hasler, 6 Sanross Close, Hill Head, Fareham, Hants. PO14 3NH

Help: Can anyone offer guidance/advice on children and long-term sailing AND WES courses please? Lori Russell, Duthy Hall, Gt. Gilford St., London SE1 OES



Resource Centre Who'd like a place for children to play and a cafe to sustain a library. We need premises and volunteers. If interested please contact:
Leslie Barson, 1 Croxley Rd., London W9 3HH phone 081-969-0893



I'd like to say a big thank you to the Ramseys, Charltons and Wallaces who so skillfully organised 'Featherstone' in September and to all the contributors to that highly productive week, which means just about everyone!

EOing at home is a good life but gatherings on a more national scale really add spice - such as a formative sense of belonging to and for a purpose, and seeing 'the proof of the pudding'. Not everyone can squash into everything, even by camping, but I'd like to encourage more people to widen their EO horizons and take part in furthering our aims, at regional and grass roots levels, too.

Besides, 'Featherstone', etc. are great social events especially for us kids! John Swatridge, 32 Carrey Park, Polperro, Cornwall. PL13 2JF



I have been an EO member for 3 years and have been surprised not to see anybody recommending the Scout and Guide movement for EO children. As a Brownie Guider I feel that to be a member would complement home education perfectly, for several reasons:-

- 1) EO children still need to have friends from backgrounds which differ from their own. Brownies come from all kinds of families and from all kinds of schools.
- 2) Any religion, denomination or creed is welcome in the Guide and Scout movement and things like dress and diet needs can be catered for while retaining a sense of belonging to a group.
- 3) Interest badges are not compulsory so each child can choose to work for the badges he/she is interested in, be it Art, computers, nature study or whatever. Brownies can choose from over 30 different badges.
- 4) Because the accent is on learning through fun and games, there is not the same pressure on a child who perhaps has difficulty with school work. We 'teach' by bringing learning activities into enjoyable games and so the children think they are "just playing".
- 5) Home education makes it difficult to provide activities in groups, so the chance to play team games, go on outings, take part in entertainments and plays etc., does fill a gap.

I'd be interested to hear from any other members of the movement who are also EOers.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Susan Melton, 66 Lambert's Field, Bourton on the Water,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. GL54 2EH



I should like to give a vote of thanks to EO's retiring officers. Christine and Bruce Wallace and Jude Ashley-Walker have given sterling service over many years. Maggie Swatridge, 32 Carrey Park, Polperro, Cornwall. PL13 2JF

Dear Editor,

I notice on receipt of my membership list, that our LEA at Taunton has joined EO and will therefore receive our publications! I wonder if this has happened in any other areas? I am sure that most letters and articles are written to the newsletter on the assumption that they will not be read by the LEA.

I would like to suggest that there is some discussion about this in the magazine and possibly at a core group meeting.

Yours,

Di Hooley, The Old Vicarage, Queen Camel, Nr. Yeovil, Somerset.

fact-pack

I am coordinating the collection of material for a home-education "fact-pack". This will be a set of loose-leaf information sheets (held in a folder) covering a variety of topics relevant to home education. The sheets will be made available singly as well as in sets. The idea came from a need for materials for in-service training days for teachers/LEA employees so whilst the pack is unlikely to be of interest to homeschoolers and potential homeschoolers we see it primarily as a means of educating the "professionals" and providing basic information on specific issues as and when requested by both the educationalists and media people. We've had several offers of "pages" (or several pages) and many have already been completed. The areas covered so far are:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| *Exams | *Who? Why? How? | *Socialising |
| *Quotes and extracts | *The Law | *Educating Emotions |
| *School Phobia | *Computers and Technology | *Special Needs |
| *Other agencies | *Lost potential | *Learning to read |
| *The curriculum/National Curriculum | | |

There are many other areas that have been suggested which as yet have no "authors". Very likely someone out there has an interest in/special knowledge of one or more of these - so, if you feel able to write an A4 (or more) on one of these do please get in touch as soon as possible. Also, we are open to new ideas - you may see glaring omissions in the list. Please write or phone to let me know.

We are also going to need good quality photographs for use in the pack so if you can share anything visually interesting and relevant (print, negative or slide) please send those along too!

The areas suggested that no one has yet offered are:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| *Maths | *Correspondence courses |
| *Suggested Reading | *P.E. Provision |
| *Single Parents | *Good LEA Practice |
| *Science at home | *Home education on a low income |
| *Famous Homeschoolers/What happens after? | |
| *How do you cope?/Making time for adults | |
| *What the educationalists say (Dick Kitto? Roland Meighan? John Holt?) | |

We hope to have the majority of the pack in draft form for the January meeting but don't let that put you off if that date seems to close - please try to help if you can.

Liz Ramsay, 1 Stanford Hill Cott., Stanford-on-Soar, Loughborough,
Leics. LE12 5QL Tel: 0509 856604

P.S. A page or two of children's thoughts on home education would surely be relevant. Children's contributions (however small) would be appreciated - thanks!

Reviews

Sent in by Jude Ashley-Walker

Please mention Education Otherwise when ordering any of these items.

Also note that OUP books can be ordered through me at 30% discount. Get your catalogue direct from OUP or through me (SAE).

RESOURCE PACKS in zip-top plastic wallets, great for storage
from: Crosslinks, The Bat, Falmouth Street, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 0LE.
0638 - 664186

Countdown to Christmas price £ 7.95

This pack consists of about 60 sheets (some on card, some on paper), providing several board games including one called 'School Mystery', (based on a well-known mystery game), where players, by a process of elimination, solve the mystery. There are many maths games, science experiments, etc. This is a bumper pack full of ideas for Christmas fun and activities which children will return to again, and again, adapting them for other seasons. A very worthwhile, and I'm sure acceptable, present with equal emphasis on fun and maths.

Leila (12) says "Definitely on my list for Santa! Brilliant!"

All Change price £ 4.95

"A varied pack containing use of technology, function machines, shape, area, transformations, rotation, and reflection, directions, points of the compass, time changes - old to new, local heritage, growth and sounds." This pack consists of 38 sheets dealing with changes of all sorts - colours, sounds, etc.. It covers science, maths, history, geography and nature. A very good "cross-curricular" resource. Meets National Curriculum requirements and is fun.

Leila's comment A good variety, very interesting. I particularly like the old/new section and the science experiments on colour changes and the 'changing pictures' which are very good for making greetings cards.

Courage to heal - A guide for women survivors of sexual abuse.

by Ellen Bass & Laura Davis

Price: £ 5.99

Pub. : Cedar (Mandarin Paperback), Octopus Pub. Group
81 Fulham Rd.
London SW3 6RB Tel: 071-581-9393

This is a book like no other. One of the authors is a survivor, the other a counsellor. The stories therein are familiar to some of us, unheard of by others. This book is one that everyone who is/maybe involved with abused/abusers should read - That means each one of us - Especially anyone who intends to attend the workshop in January. I have been asked by several people to do this review. I would like to see a copy in every local library.

VIDEO TAPES

If you are "Starting to Read" or studying for GCSE

I can supply a range of VHS tapes that may help

(Plus Films and Cartoons too!) All with special prices for EO members.

For the latest list write to:

Duncan Moran
PO Box 503, Colwyn Bay
Clwyd. LL29 8RW

I will BUY unwanted Records/CDs/Videos

Children learning at home, by Julie Webb.
Published by Falmer Press in 1990.
This book, developed out of work for a PhD,
provides a review of the historical and
theoretical background to home education in
Britain. The author inter-viewed a small
sample of home educators and their children
(members of EO) in 1982, and followed their
progress for several years.

Questions addressed include:

Why do people home-educate? Why do many
qualified teachers educate their children
at home? What form does the home education
take? How have relationships with the LEAs
affected families? How did home education
affect the socialisation of the children
and their ability to find work?

My only criticism is that it seems to me
that things have changed considerably since
the main body of the research was carried
out, so that the book could give the
slightly inaccurate impression to the
student-teachers and so on who will read
it. The aim of establishing that home edu-
cated people function quite adequately in
the adult world is, I think, a good one and
I hope that further research will follow.

For further information, contact
Sarah Taylor on 081 808 3200



I am in the ongoing process of
compiling a list of potentially
useful books. It has occurred to me
that other EOers might also be
interested in this, and that there
are probably lots of wonderful books
which I have not yet come across.
Therefore if you send me a list of
the books (including publisher and
date of publication) you have found
useful (and perhaps a list of those
you would not recommend) preferably
including brief reviews and a SAE, I
will send you a copy of the initial
list.

The aim is to build up a compre-
hensive list, covering books on
everything from home education
itself to advanced mathematical
theory. There should be some-thing
for every age/level in as many
different subjects as possible. This
is no easy task so any help, in the
form of recommendations/reviews,
giving some idea of the level of
each book, would be very much
appreciated.

Sarah Taylor
23 Whitley Road
London N17 6RJ

Publications by Pip Rupik

"Satisfying Your Education Authority"

Rights and duties, what authorities expect and can demand, tackling letters
and forms, ideas to help satisfy your authority, increasing the "evidence",
a specimen curriculum/syllabus. £1.20 incl. P&P

"The External Candidate and GCSE"

Looks at the new procedures involved after Summer 1991, what this will mean
to the candidate, differences between examining boards, some options for
study. £1.00 incl. P&P

Cheques payable to Apronstrings Education.

Send to: Dept E, Apronstrings Education,
14 Basil Ave., Armthorpe, Doncaster. DN3 2AT Tel: 0302 833596

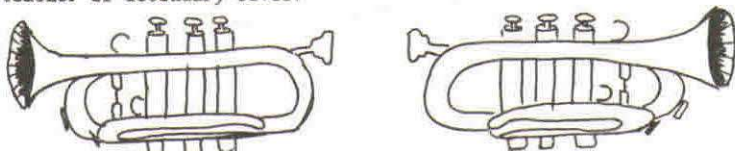
Grandparents

Somewhere ago someone asked if any 80 children's grandparents were a help towards their education. As no-one has replied, I assume either that there is no help or that parents have no time or inclination to write of this lovely relationship which evolves through learning from them.

My parents were aghast when we first took our three children out of school, but two years ago decided they could offer some very positive help on certain things.

My mother is a mainly self-taught pianist/musician up to degree standard and she decided she could help our eldest daughter in this field and did so with lots of enthusiasm and super results, including teaching her harmony and general composition which Anthea turned out to be very good at. My mother had lots of experience having had pupils for piano as long as I can ever remember and longer.

My father took on our son Hamish whom he taught woodwork, technical drawing and also useful metalwork - repairing brass musical instruments. He is a retired crafts teacher of secondary level.



Both children thoroughly enjoyed their time with the grandparents and their relationships with them are far deeper and more loving I am sure than they would have been. It has been a lovely time for us all.

Sadly things have not worked out as we'd have liked though as grandfather will not be with us much longer due to cancer. So things will have to come to a halt and we just go to see him as often as possible but the children I am sure have benefitted enormously from the close and loving association. It is sad that time has been so short for them all but it was also such fun as well.

Estella Axten, The Firs, Magpie Green, Wortham, Diss, Norfolk. IP22 1RF

P.S. We seem to have an almost entirely practical education system here apart from the books of which there always seems to be plenty being read. And please anyway - how do you get your children to do academic work? Maths is nil for daughter and son, ages 15 and 13 years but the youngest daughter will do some. Our son does nothing academic but Anthea is writing a book - a children's adventure story - and also is working through a geography book, both of her own accord and mainly on her own, only asking for help when she is stuck.

Notice from Publications Secretary
Lesley Kilbride - Will the person
who telephoned at the beginning of
September and spoke to my husband
offering to edit the Newsletter
please make contact again as your
address has been mislaid - Sorry!

A BEKA BOOKS
Anyone who is interested
in these may like to know
they are now available from
Metropolitan Tabernacle Bookroom
Elephant and Castle,
London SE1 6SD

Single Parents

I phoned a number of people in the E.O. newsletter to ask if there was a single parent contact number. There isn't! We had a chat, and it was suggested that I write in. She must be joking, I thought. Write what, how, when?

Well, this morning, my ten-year-old has taken over the kitchen table for his latest model kit, and the tape recorder. Oh no, not the 'Goon Show' again! That's it, off to the front room with a jug of coffee and the Oct/Nov newsletter for inspiration.

Just re-read James Gammon, 'A Father's Viewpoint'. How lovely it must be to have a caring person take over when you've had it. Not that I'm actively seeking a partner, but just occasionally, the responsibility of home-education can seem a little daunting. What have I done, I ask myself. Trying to dredge up some information for an exciting project (what are they?) when I've woken up bleary-eyed again. My own fault, because I stay up too late, endeavouring to catch up on washing, baking bread, or maybe just reading a good book. Bliss! Time alone is precious, and once Tim is asleep, exhausted though I usually am, I rarely go to bed early, preferring those hours of semi-wakefulness. ("Sometimes I sits and thinks, sometimes I just sits") Yes, I know I should be working out activities, planning schedules, timetables, projects. (Aaargh, it's that word again!)

I think of ease in a two-parent home, when one wants to go off to an aerobic workout, and evening class, even a trip to the bank, alone. How different it is for the single parent! One of my loves is to go running, but the organisation it involves is sometimes quite crazy. And a weekly evening class is all - who did I ask last time? How long will it take to walk there? It usually means an overnight stay for Tim - does he mind? What shall he take? Tons of preparation. Every trip to the bank, shops, etc., my son has to accompany me. Lugging home backpacks full of shopping, finding you've already spent half the housekeeping and it's only Monday. Remember to put money aside for a piano lesson. Can we afford to go roller-skating or swimming this week? Fantasise about finding £20 so you could take a trip to London and visit a museum.

But on the plus side, before this gets too dreary. I have wonderful parents who totally support home-education. They constantly remind me how bright and intelligent their lovely grandson is. Some good friends who happily have Tim to visit and to stay. Best of all, I have a beautiful caring 10 year old son, who is very forgiving of his sometimes silly old mother. Whether he becomes a dustman or a rockstar, I know, deep down, it really doesn't matter.

I'm very fortunate in my family and friends, and the support they give me, but still feel strongly that a single-parent contact or helpline within EO is important. Unless you have been a single parent, it is impossible to understand just what it is like, and I wonder how many there are out there who feel similarly.

Please feel free to ring or write, Tel: Hastings 439517
Jenny Blower, 8a Linton Crescent, Hastings TN34 1TJ Sussex

NOTICE
The Garner Greens
have moved to:
CwmRhaifau,
Sarnau,
LLandysul
Dyfed
Wales
SA44 6QZ

USBORNE BOOKS -
small selection
20% off, no p&p,
immediate shipping
For list contact:
Emily Matthews
98 Crofthill Rd.,
Glasgow, G44 5QQ

Freedom at last!

Last week Cara went off to the local sixth form college after four years at home. Freedom at last! for me and for her the chore of commuting, the excitement of a larger social group and the novelty of qualified teachers.

She takes with her good grades in six academic GCSEs, a Duke of Edinburgh Bronze medal, Red Cross First Aid certificate, various Army Cadet county and regional sports trophies and rank as (3 star) Corporal, a friendly disposition and the ability to work on her own. These I suppose are the bare bones of the four years spent at home. I also feel I know her far better than if, as I have often longed to, I had been able to pack her off to boarding-school - for the experts to produce a nice well-educated child.

It has been hard work, it has stopped me pursuing my own career (if any) and when we started I would never have thought we could do it. But now its finished I'm very proud of her achievement and my contribution to it.

Many thanks to countless EDerS for contact, advice, help and to the organisation (however imperfect) for protecting children's and parent's rights and for the back-up of knowing several thousand other people were out there somewhere facing similar problems. We could never have gone it alone.

My advice to others? All depends on a good relationship with your child, because it will be strenuously tested. Don't waste your time being anti-LEA - just get on with making your home-education as good as possible. We ended up using GCSE textbooks (lack of money for postal tuition) and would have appreciated up-to-date advice and recommendations (perhaps an EO pamphlet more detailed than Later Years). Sorting out good books and making sense of GCSE requirements took a lot of time for me. I usually felt far more like a hard-pressed administrator than an enthusiastically and inspirationally involved teacher/co-learner. I have wondered whether it would be easier a second time round, but (perhaps luckily) only had one child to educate at home.

I would thoroughly recommend SMP (CUP numbered books 1-5 or the self-study pack from NEC) and the occasional series of science broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 as well as BBC Radio Education broadcasts particularly on geography which we thought were very well put together.

Cara has grown up without a television, without peer-group pressure to be part of a pop commercial culture, with the freedom to study when she wanted to and to go out into the surrounding countryside and explore. She hasn't been institutionalised, she's now a competent cook, can manage her own budget and is already partly self-financing on a part-time job.

Two things EO hasn't produced: Apart from knowing she wanted to go to college or university which she had decided when we started, she isn't sure of any definite self-fulfilling vocation. She is doing A-level Maths, Physics, Chemistry and may go on to engineering, something medical or maybe some time in the army. And the other thing? She still can't keep her bedroom tidy.

What am I left with after 4 years EO? I know a lot more about GCSE, brushed up my own knowledge of O-levels taken many years ago, found the subjects that I knew most about - history, french, english and art - were those I was most reluctant to teach. The most interesting were those I hadn't ever studied or had forgotten

- like physics and maths. On the whole I was conscious of the terrific responsibility of trying to make available a really stimulating and exciting educational background at home. I don't think I succeeded nearly as much as might be possible and on the whole I do now feel glad to hand over a large part of that responsibility to the sixth form college and to Cara herself.

Although it wasn't easy (and perhaps others will write in to tell us what a doddle educating their teenagers was) I am sure EO was the right decision for us, and if its right for your family I would recommend sticking to it.

Anar Kamenka,
62 Guthrum Place,
Aycliffe, Co. Durham DL5 4QD

Research Projects

Neither the Contact List, local Coordinators nor individual members should be used as the means of obtaining information for research projects or for dissertations without prior consultation and agreement from our Research Coordinator(s).

This very necessary arrangement exists to save repeated loads falling on the same few families (often asked the same questions, too), removing from individuals the pressure to comply, and providing liason should intercession be required between concerned parties. It also fulfils the wish/need, where appropriate, for EO to feel that the reasons for the investigation, and their format, are in keeping with EO's philosophy and practice and to encourage feedback should it be useful to us. Informed discussion initially would benefit researchers and interviewees by enabling ideas to be collated and thus stimulate more varied and less superficial interests than are often offered to members.

This post is another EO job awaiting a new claimant! Ann and Rob Wade are ably caretaking meanwhile, it forms but a minor part of their great contribution to EO. So please step forward, all ye who are interested. (Some knowledge of simple research would be useful to help inexperienced students.)

We ask all members to note and spread this information so that the situation is improved - and the integrity of the Contact List is protected. (That prohibition will be printed on the front page of the next Contact List.)

Maggie Swatridge

Bullying

News from Lancaster;

Philippa Linklater, a mother of 14 and 10 year old girls, has been conscious for years of the size of the bullying problem in schools.

Last June, she attended a conference on bullying run by Kidscape, the child safety charity. It helped her to find others at last, who felt the same way.

Now she plans to form a local family network and support group for people anxious about bullying.

Please phone her on: 0542 (Bentham) 61125 for more information.
or write to her at Riversdale, Wenning Bridge, High Bentham, LA2 7LU

Immunisation



I write to add a medical viewpoint to the immunisation debate in the last three issues of your magazine. The diseases we immunise against have all been chosen for reduction or eradication because of their serious long-term effects. Many children may suffer these diseases in a mild form, but a significant number do not. I cannot agree that "after experiencing any of these diseases, many children make leaps forward in their physical, emotional, or intellectual development".

Taking whooping cough as an example: before the introduction of whooping cough vaccination in 1957, there were over 100,000 cases a year in the UK, and over 1 in 1000 of these died of the disease. By 1973, when 80% of children had been vaccinated, the annual number of cases was just over 2,000. The illness is often distressing, with coughing and vomiting lasting up to 2-3 months, as well as possible complications of broncho-pneumonia and brain damage, especially in babies under 6 months of age.

It has been claimed that the incidence of whooping cough is decreasing naturally. When the vaccination rate fell to 30% in 1975, however, major epidemics followed in 1977/79 and 1981/83.

I am not claiming that vaccination is a risk-free choice. In the case of whooping cough, the best estimate of risk to an infant of suffering a neurological reaction such as a prolonged febrile convulsion is about 1 in 100,000 injections. Almost all of these reactions occur without permanent or long term consequences.

The rationale behind the earlier vaccination against rubella has been questioned. The aim of this is to stop pregnant women catching the illness from the age group amongst which it is most prevalent - young children. Rubella may be a mild illness for children, but infection of a woman in the first 8-10 weeks of pregnancy results in foetal damage in 90% of infants. Multiple defects - especially mental handicap, blindness, deafness and congenital heart disease - are common in these affected infants.

Over 300 pregnant women have rubella confirmed each year and still 20 babies a year with multiple handicaps due to rubella are born. The vaccine was first given in 1970 and its protection lasts at least 20 years in most cases and probably much longer - time will tell how long.

Measles vaccination was mentioned as possibly causing long term chronic illness (leukaemia, multiple sclerosis etc). All the illnesses listed however, are those where the causes are unknown or uncertain. To link all these with the measles vaccine is scaremongering, with no scientific basis at present.

No immunisation will protect every individual 100% against a disease, and who can calculate the exact risk of anyone catching an illness? There are always risks to be balanced - those of the disease against those of the vaccination.

In the majority of cases, the consequences of the diseases are far more serious than those of the vaccination. I would urge all parents to consider this issue carefully and discuss it with their general practitioners and health visitors before deciding against immunisation.

Dr Margaret Abbott MBChB, MRCP., Sneinton Health Centre, Beaumont Street,
Sneinton, Nottingham. Tel: 0602 505426

I have read with interest your latest letter about immunisation. I'm afraid I can't agree with your correspondent.

Seventeen years ago, my husband and I adopted a lovely little West Indian boy, Stephen. I had him immunised against whooping cough with no adverse effect. He was done against all except measles as I'd heard it was dangerous. For nearly four years we were a very happy family. Just before his 4th birthday we went to see a friend whose son had measles. Stephen never lived to see his birthday - he caught measles. Unknown to us he had sickle-cell anaemia. This and the measles virus killed him.

I don't blame anyone for what happened but I do caution people to think very carefully before you decide for or against.

We now have another child, Andrew. He's had all his injections with no ill effect. There may be some children they harm, but in the Third World they save lives.

Ruth Hemming, 9 Valley Crescent, Wokingham, Berkshire. RG11 1NP

Help your Children with their early learning

Professionally produced audio-cassettes: Multiplication Tables; Counting; The Alphabet; The Calendar; Telling the Time; Primary French; The Orchestra Nursery Songs/Rhymes; Party Games. £2.45 each + 45p p&p.

Wooden Alphabet letters: capital or lower-case sets £3.50 + 45p p&p

Plastic alphabet tiles: (slightly larger than "Scrabble" letters). Capital or lower case. Very useful for Word-building, spelling or word-games. Tub of 86 letters: £4.95 plus 70p postage.

Hand-made, colourful wooden jigsaws: for age 3-5 years. Size 180cm x 180cm. Choice of monkey, polar bear, doll, fish, tiger, clown, lion, or car. £1.95 each (postage 45p). Buy four and get one free!

Immediate refund if not satisfied. Why not send a S.A.E. for lists of interesting products including reading games?

Martin Evans (EO) 16 Thistle House, Dee Street, London E14 OPD
(071-515-1797)



The Travellers School is a registered charity formed four years ago to provide projects for and with New Age Traveller Children. Rachel, a project worker, has contacted the newsletter, asking if anyone would be interested in becoming a Friend of the Travellers - willing to give (not just) money, but to share ideas and skills. Those wanting to know more, contact: Rachel Auckland, 206 Lawford Road, RUGBY V21 2AS

Education on two wheels



The humble bicycle is a wonderful extension of human capacities. Cycling makes more efficient use of our muscle power than walking. But it is also an excellent aid to learning. The bike can help to open up new worlds in exciting and relevant ways, appropriate to a range of ages and abilities. It can be as important to mental as to physical fitness.

Biking: a vehicle for education?

On one five-day bike ride, our young children counted no less than 57 hedgehogs slaughtered by the roadside! Whether on short rides or long, routine or varied, being on a bike is a great aid to *observation*. That is, it can be if we let it. Riders on the Tour de France see little more than their own front wheel and the countryside blurring past. But I am thinking of a somewhat more upright and leisurely mode where seeing, not speeding, is part of the point of cycling.

From a car, it is very hard to appreciate the passing sights, let alone sounds and smells of what is outside the metal-and-glass travel cage. On foot, all these are much more apparent and immediate. But the disadvantage of walking, apart from the extra effort required, is that it sometimes seems a bit too slow for children. On a bike, you can both take in the features of the landscape and feel you are getting somewhere!

Our family bike rides have often taken us fairly near home (Bradford) to the Yorkshire Dales, but also to the Vosges and the Bourgogne areas of France. We will often plan in advance, so that each child feels they can contribute to the venture, and also write up different aspects of the trip when it's over. On our most recent outing, a weekend in October 1990, we rode coast-to-coast from the Solway Firth to Seaton Sluice, near Newcastle. What we learned ranged from 1,900 year old history to the plight of Mosquita Indians in Honduras!

Before we set off, Min (7) found out about the Romans and why the emperor Hadrian had needed a wall. We knew we would be riding alongside sections of the wall and past numerous Roman remains. Josh (10) tied in the trip with his current transport project and discovered all about the importance of the Roman roads to maintaining their empire. He also looked at changes in road-building technique since Roman times. This also got us asking questions about rubber tyres on tarmacadam and about toll roads.

Abi (13) drew a neat map of the Tyne gap which showed the way that river valleys had made a route across England, between the Pennines and the Cheviots, used by rail and road transport. When we crossed or accompanied rivers on our bikes, we could tell better which they were and where they were going. As a warning of what to expect, Tim (15) took this idea further and made a contour profile of our route from the Ordnance Survey maps. Some of the hills looked so fearsome on this scale that we drew in someone hauling cyclists up the gradients with a rope!

You may wonder how the Indians came into it! Well, we decided after watching a TEAR Fund filmstrip about the threat to the hardwood trees and the Mosquita way of life that we would make ours a sponsored "Ride for the Rainforest". So we had the added incentive - of £300 in sponsor money - to complete the ride, and learned more about the rainforests into the bargain.

The rational curriculum



In that one ride we not only had a lot of fun and adventure, but also an integrated and rounded curriculum! In subject terms there was history (Roman), geography (human and physical), maths (the gradient profile), English (writing about different aspects), environmental studies (land use both in the Lyne gap and in Honduras!), natural history (seeing heron, pheasant etc) and so on.

Other rides have taught other things. On the beautiful disused railway trails of the Peak district we have been fascinated by industrial archeology - on the Cromford railway trains were hauled up one incline with a fixed engine because the designer was more used to working on canals! In the Dales we have thought about changes to the environment since the mechanisation of farming and the rise of tourism. In France we had the chance to polish up our French but also to see how they cope differently with the same kinds of problems that we encounter in Britain. There's much more chance to learn through stopping-and-talking when you're on a bike.

Of course, the bike itself is an educational theme. Social and technological history abounds - we are currently celebrating 150 years since the first pedal bicycle was invented by the Scottish blacksmith MacMillan! But in CDT terms, the bike is also a rich resource. We may learn about gears and ratios, wheels and tyres, steering and transmission, braking and lighting. Physics, engineering, ergonomics - you name it, the bike is a good place to start. CIBA-Geigy produced a delightful bike pack during 1990, and sent it to all primary schools and advisors. It contains many brilliant ideas for learning through the bicycle theme. So try to persuade your advisor or local school to lend you one!

It may not have occurred to you, but social development is also fostered by group riding with friends or families. Planning and preparing involve cooperation and teamwork, both for the rides themselves and for hostelling or camping en route. You also find that some tend to ride faster than others, so a pace to suit everyone has to be found. Negotiating that certainly demands social skills on everyone's part! Younger children may need special help on rides, but there's as much sense of achievement in providing that as getting there yourself.

What you need



Once you have made the initial outlay on some good bikes, the rest costs very little. It's a green way to travel. Advice on what to get may be found in *New Cyclist* or from the Cyclists' Touring Club. Neither will recommend lots of high-tech consumerist gadgets that are cluttering some of today's bikes. For smaller children you may wish to look at ride-on trailers that hitch to adult bikes, or bike or trike seats for the very young. Though it's controversial, we also believe helmets are a good idea for safety.

There is tremendous joy in learning from travelling by bike, especially with family and friends. We hope you'll discover the same.



Janid Lyon

Shopping Otherwise

One of the things that often crops up in EO newsletters, is the hassle of shopping: with a growing, expanding, EO family in the mid 80's, I discovered the availability of bulk-buying wholefoods direct to my door from wholesale suppliers, with the added convenience of single packs of many items such as vitamins, homeopathic remedies, toiletries and household cleaners.

The two companies that I have personal experiences of, both insist on minimum orders of £100, which could mean cases of some items, such as juices, oil, washing powders etc. being stored under the stairs or in the out-buildings. However by food sharing, bulk-buying can become enjoyable and educational, as well as overcoming any difficulties of finding the cash or storage problems.

First, I made contact with local E.O.ers, swapped ideas for buying together and splitting bulk packs etc.


Second, I chose from the catalogues, comparing and working out individual prices. This means learning about totalling, applying VAT to relevant items, collating orders, cross referencing, working with code numbers, etc.... Then the delivery days! The front room turned into a temporary warehouse/shop (my 6 children ages 1-13 all love this!). We were checking items against invoices, weighing, sharing out, relating maths to people, getting more visits with food sharing friends, as well as the added bonus of everyone benefitting from wholesale prices.

From a minimal order once every couple of months, we have grown into an informal co-operative, with another E.O. member utilizing her computer to issue monthly pricelists/newsletters with friendly ads, meeting notices, and messages. Seventeen families "foodshared" this month, ranging from a few people buying just a box of washing powder or so, to families ordering all of their main food and household requirements.

For details of wholesalers, or people in the Bedford area wishing to find out more,
Tel: Teresa on 0525 405979 or Karen on 0525 718785.




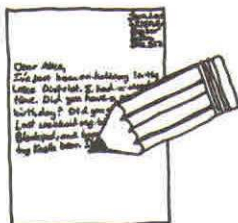
Pen-Pals

Dear E.O,
My name is Imogen Tompsett
my hobbies are swimming,
writing, riding and stamp
collecting. I also like 
walking, climbing, cooking
and reading.

I am 10 years old and I have
got 1 pony, 2 kittens, 1 cat,
2 fish, 2 cockerels and 7 chickens.

Drove Barn, Whitsbury,
Nr. Fordingbridge, Hants. SP6 3PE

Hello. I'm Tara Nye. I'm 14 and would like pen-
pals age 14+. I am interested in animals (esp. and
dogs and horses) astrology, psychology, good
books, good food, good films and good music. 
Please write to me at: 41 Sir David's Park,
Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. TN4 0JF

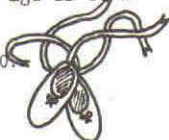




Dear ED,

I am 10 years old nearly 11 and I am looking for a girl pen-pal the age of 10 or
11. I like horses, drawing, ballet, and reading.

Would you be able to put the details in your magazine please:
Ilsa Barton, 31 Sharp St, Newtown, Geelong, Victoria, Australia 3220.

Please write if you are interested!
Love from Ilsa Barton.



Dear E.O,
My name is Kate Wilby. I am twelve
years old and educated at home. I
enjoy watching football on the t.v.,
flying my kite, playing badminton,
going to the cinema, cooking and any
crafts. I like Paul Gascoigne and
New Kids on The Block.  
I would like a new girl penpal about
my age who has similar interests.
Please write to me at:
8 Slaney Rd, Staplehurst,
Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 0SE.



Flat G8,
Woodchurch Road,
West Hampstead,
NW6 3PN

Any boy or girl
please write to
Eden Uddin.
Age nearly 8
Interests:
Nature and
the environment.

Dear E.O.

Please could you find me a pen-friend. My name is Zoe Thompson and I am 14 years
old. I love HORSES. I am saving for one. I have a dog, cat, hamster, rabbit,
guineapig, 2 goldfish and a budgie.
I would like a pen-friend aged 12-14 either girl or boy. I have been with E.O.
for 5 months.

Thanks. Yours sincerely,

Miss Z.F. Thompson, 26 Orchard Close, Meppershall, Beds. SG17 5LW
P.S. I have just bought a pony.



Regional News and Events



Avon

The Avon Seed Circle is now meeting three times a week for workshops and outings and at other times for play and entertainment. Members from Somerset & Gloucester and visitors always welcomed.

To receive mailings send a SAE to Poppy Green,
15 Bellevue, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1DB (0272-735091)
for further information phone Julia Hammond 0272-636081

Birmingham

Sat 19 Jan 1991 1.30pm.

Dear all, we are hoping to hold regular meetings, so old and new members, come along to our first of many. All areas welcome; a chance to make and renew friendships. Please bring food/drink to share.

First meeting at: Harris House, 8 St. Agnes Rd, Moseley

For details/directions etc. please phone Carol Willis on 021-455-9742

Dyfed

Meri and Aileni Calonyddaear have left Llanelli for the wilds of Inishfree, leaving us all very conscious of how valuable they have been to all EO members in Dyfed, and how much they and the children will be missed. Our September equinox meeting at Cwm Rhaffau happily coincided with Aileni's return trip and many of us were able to say goodbye and wish them well in their adventure.

On Twelfth Night, Sunday January 6th, all Dyfed members are invited to celebrate at Cwm Rhaffau. Bring food to share and please let us know if you are coming - from: Lindsay, Michael, Roger, Sally, Julian, Emma and John.

Grampian

Come on Grampian EO'ers! Where are you?

Only two families turned up at our last meeting on Oct. 20th. Maybe you didn't see the notice in the newsletter. It was only our second meeting but if we are to have meetings on a regular basis you need to check the Regional News. We also need to present a united front in the light of the problems that members are experiencing with the LEA.

Please ring me on Buckie 31261 for details of the next meeting and to tell me your ideas. Petra Cortis, School Hill, Drybridge, Buckie, Banffshire AB56 2JD

Hertfordshire

We now have a thriving group with children under ten who meet regularly in Herts. During the summer we had a playground morning in St. Albans and four gatherings in different houses with toys, breadmaking, garden fun and playdough. By the time that this is in print we should also have met in Broxborough, Watford and Welwyn Garden City. We aim to arrange gatherings in different parts of the county to make it easier for those without transport.

In response to the questionnaire earlier this year only one family with a young person over 10 expressed an interest in social activities, so I can only assume

that the rest of you have all got your heads down and are too busy studying! However, I'm willing to get a "senior" group going if there is a demand, so contact me if you missed the questionnaire and are interested in meetings.

Some areas find that parents-only meetings at weekends/evenings are helpful. Would you like to have these in Herts.? LET ME KNOW WHAT YOU THINK.

Please contact me if you would like to be on the mailing list.
Jane Lowe, 5 Elm Gardens, Welwyn G.C. Tel: 0707 335825

Isle of Wight

We have had weekly swim sessions until the winter bus service prevented this. We had monthly picnics through the summer and now launch our winter programme. We recently had a mask-making day attended by 15 people - real fun! We hope to have a Christmas party in December, maybe a pantomime visit in January and a Valentine's poetry day in February.

All are welcome - ring Jude to check the details.

Kent

Tuesday 29th Jan. 10.00am - 4.00pm. 'Open House' at Val Caplin's, 277 St. Radigunds Road, Dover. Paper and card provided for children's workshops - please bring pens, crayons, glue and ideas. If coming for the day, please bring a packed lunch - drinks provided. Lots of pets to see. For more information and directions please ring Val on (0304) - 211029

Saturday 2nd Feb. Japanese Day at Adult Education Centre, St. Faith's Street, Maidstone, to celebrate Japanese New Year. Open all day - lots to see and sample. Please make an EO badge to help identify yourself to other members, who will arrive at different times throughout the day.

Anyone in the Thanet area wishing to attend either of the above, who would be interested in travelling on a 'petrol-sharing' basis, please ring David Bettie on (0843) 583260, who will make the arrangements. If anyone in other areas would like to make similar arrangements, please let me know, as this would, no doubt, enable more members to attend gatherings.

Also - more offers of 'open-house' are needed and also suggestions of venues for spring and summer gatherings. Please write to - Pam Stevenson, 25 Wyndham Rd., Dover CT17 0BH.

Leicestershire (neighbouring counties welcome too!)

Dec. 12th	Swimming (2nd Wed. of month - a regular activity) at Beaumont Leys, Leicester 12.30 onwards.
Dec 15th	Gathering at Gordon and Liz's (0509) 856604 to make clove oranges etc. Noon onwards.
Dec ?	Probably we will have another winter party as we did last year (with the usual ritual sacrifices!) Please phone Lucy or Keith, Great Glen 2118 or Liz and Gordon for details. Bring a goat!?
Jan 9th	Swimming at Beaumont Leys (as above)
Jan ?	Trip out somewhere - suggestions welcome.
Feb 9th	Get-together at Alison's house (0509) 415497. Noon onwards.
Feb 13th	Swimming (as above).

In the last few months we've been cycling, swimming, abseiling and canoeing and have visited Elvaston Castle, the Gas Museum and the theatre as well as meeting in people's homes (usually people we know!) Do come and join us!

London (East)

Welcome to all new members. Thanks to those people who attended the summer activities. Any ideas for forthcoming events? Our local newsletter has just made its first appearance. Anyone not on the mailing list contact the co-ordinators.

In view of the statement from Unstone, the co-ordinators feel that it would be useful to have someone who has children out of school, especially secondary age, to help in this job. If anyone is interested, would they please contact Toni Cushman, tel: 081-534-3320 or Sue Eldred 081-555-6593

North London Meetings

We meet the first Sunday of every month from 11.30 to 2.30 pm.
Venue : Swiss Cottage Community Centre Winchester Road NW3. This venue is now permanently booked for the 1st Sunday of each month. The building and toilets are fully wheelchair accessible, apart from some swing doors at the entrance. Bring some food to share or buy some in the cafeteria, tea and coffee provided. No activities have been arranged but any one is welcome to organise arts & crafts or musical events. We ask for a contribution of +/- £1.50. Meetings are very informal, adults often chat in a circle and children play inside and out. Telephone David or Helen Michael 071 284 2124 or Lesley Barson 081 969 0893.

Outings are also arranged during the week, usually Mondays. Please phone Belinda Reid 081 343 1061 for details. The North London group is trying to organise a camping/caravan trip in March. Phone if interested.

London Outings from Sue Petschaft, 0892-661319

Tues Dec 11 National Portrait Gallery, St Martins Place WC2. Meet 11.20 am for

talk at 11.30 on Charles 1st and Civil War (7-11 year olds) Phone to book

Tues Jan 8 Ice skating, Queens Ice Skating Club, QUEENSWAY, W2 (Next to Queensway underground). Fee: £3.00 adults, £2.40 children, £1.00 skate hire. Session is booked from 11am to 4.30. Cafe facilities. Meet at 11am

Tues Jan 29 The Science Museum Meet in foyer at 11.15 or picnic area at 12.30.

Tues Feb 12 Museum of the Moving Image

Meet at 11.15am I hope we will have a talk. Phone for further details.

Tues Feb 26 Museum visit.

Anyone interested in any of the following please ring me:

- 1)The Polka Theatre Production of 'A tale of Christmas Past'? It is about Charles Dickens and his childhood (for 6+ years) On until Sat 2 Feb. Commonwealth Instit.
- 2)Chinese New Year Celebrations in Jan. and in February a steel band workshop.
- 3)Trips to Royal Britain (an exhibition about British kings and queens), Hampton Court, Telecom Showcase, or H.M.S. Belfast. OR send a S.A.E. for list of events.

Mrs. Beresford, of Finchhorn, I have lost your address but the address of the Steiner Correspondence School is Oak Meadow School, PO Box G, Qjai, CA 93023, USA

South London

We meet monthly to encourage each other, meet new faces and play. Bring food and drink to share. All welcome. More details phone Nodge or Dorothy 081-469-0413

Sun. Dec 16 XMAS PARTY at Norwood Children's Centre, behind St. Luke's Church, 2-8 Norwood High St, SE27, 1pm - 5pm. Please bring festive food to share and a labelled gift for Santa's sack, value under £2, for each child you bring.

Sun Jan. 27 At Worwood 1-5pm (see above)

Sat Feb 23 Child and Parent Centre in the Albany, Douglas Way, SE8, 11am-3.30pm

West London

Every Wednesday at 11a.m., as many as eight homeschooling families of West London gather informally at Ravenscourt Park in Hammersmith. The children play, we parents have a chance to talk and we all eat lunch together. While the weather permits we will continue to meet at the park but we also have plans for inclement weather. For more details, contact Mary on 081-995-9854 or Candis on 081-994-6327

Norfolk

Jan 8th - Stranger's Hall Norwich at 11.00. Topic: 18th-19th century costume.

February 5th - Castle Museum at 11.00 "Spirit of the letter" - calligraphy

HindoWeston - Lots more workshops fortnightly and monthly adult meetings - phone Karen Key 0263 87 740. PS. Our raised money bought 2 acres of rainforest in Belize

Rutland

Highspot of the summer was our long awaited visit to Sellafield on 21st June, the summer solstice (Peace and Moon's idea). We gathered early in Thrandeston Higley, a merry throng of EO families clutching our Sellafield school packs, our vocal enthusiasm catching the attention of many a villager! We set off in Mick and Sue's mini-van, stopping half way to allow Jane to swop places with Alan whose arm was getting tired holding the door on. The day was plainly going to be what some of our smaller newspapers call a "scorcher" and when we arrived at Sellafield we ate our sandwiches in the shade of Atom Stack Three overlooking the glorious Cumbrian countryside. The tour itself was a great success, with the children finding plenty to interest them. Young Jake (aged 6) and Mulberry (aged 8) - unbeknown to us adults- led a reconnaissance team into the control room where apparently the sign saying "strictly no admittance" had fallen off. This gave Martin (11), our physicist "whizz", an ideal opportunity to teach the others about atomic biparticularisation. His enthusiasm, however, was not enough for Clarissa and Swan (3 and 4) who preferred pressing the pretty rows of coloured buttons! Imagine our surprise when, in the middle of an interesting talk about safety (from a lady who I'm sure I recognised as an air hostess from my holiday flight to Spain) an enormous geyser of hot water erupted from the top of a tank not thirty feet away! The hostess assured us it was all perfectly normal and was in fact part of the display put on especially for visitors. It really was most dramatic but unfortunately we never got to see the whole of it as we were moved briskly on and only had time to admire the flashing overhead lights that looked for all the world like a short circuit but was (the lady told us as we rushed away) just another part of the display. No sooner had we met up with the children (breathless with excitement!) than our visit was all too soon over, and we were ushered out to the carpark and assisted into our van by a host of Sellafield staff. What nice people; and what a lot of fire engines Jake counted as we drove away. Our next visit will be to the London Stock Exchange sometime over the winter - do get in touch if you'd like to come. Marjorie Oakbroom

Shropshire

December 8th Whatever happened to the Oral Tradition?

An attempt to prove that we can still entertain ourselves story-telling

January 12th YOU can make pictures move at the Linden's animation workshop

February 9th Explore what is left of the Amazon rainforest with Alex, a friend of the earth at the Lindens.
In addition we meet at the Lindens once a week on Mondays for a variety of activities - all welcome. Further details please contact Don & Mandy Patter, The Lindens, Broseley, Telford (0952) 882780

Somerset

I have been co-ordinator for Somerset for a long time and I wonder if there is anyone out there who would like to take over? I will always be happy to give advice or help in anyway. My son, who did not go to school until he was ten is now about to take eight GCSEs at a local comprehensive - so I have experience both in and out of school. Any volunteers contact Di Hooley 0935-850210

Sussex (East & West)

Things are quite busy round here! We had a talk on animal movement and another on colour as a camouflage by the head zoo-keeper at Drusilla's, a junk and collage-making afternoon in Newhaven, swam at Eastbourne and held a week-long workshop at the Upper Dicker Village Hall where children acted out a story, made dragons, did weaving and sewing, made bread and biscuits and enjoyed a Polish birthday party to name but a few of the activities. More events are planned for November and a Christmas party for December. Please phone Linda Tyrrell on Ripe (032 183) 358 if you would like further information or to get a copy of our monthly newsletter.

Tyne & Wear and Northumberland

We will be having our Christmas get-together on Sunday 16th Dec., from 12:00 at Kay and Tom's, 1 South View, Mickley Square, Nr. Stocksfield, Northumberland 0661- 843809 Please bring food and drink contributions for lunch and/or tea. Yvette Halmes, 172 Doncaster Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE2 1RB

Warwickshire

Family get-togethers - all welcome bring food and drink to share.

December 8th Christmas decorations. DIY session from 2 pm onwards at Mario and Sue's house, Leamington.

January 5th Epiphany party at Philip and Alison's house, Harbury, 2-5pm
Ideas for cooperative games welcome.

February 2nd Candlemas, so we will be making/decorating candles. Please bring useful things like moulds, wax, stearin, overall.
phone Alison (613619) to check venue. Time: 11-4pm.

Way-into-the-future meetings planned are trips to Birmingham Science Museum, a 'weather-day', an architectural explore around Warwick ... Please phone Alison Cox or Sue McNamara (Leamington 338199) for details.

South Yorkshire

Nov 13 A session with somebody from Theatre in Education, in The Crucible in Sheffield. 10-12am. Phone Dineke for details

Nov 27 Weston Park Museum. 10am. Session on Victorian Domestic Life.

Nov 30 St. Andrew's Day celebration at Mary and Stuart's - phone them for details (883955)

Dec 4 Mary's friend Jackie will do a "drawing cartoons" session at Mary's house at 10.30am. Phone Mary.

Dec 20 Candelmaking at Dineke's house at 10.30am

Jan 14 "Natural dyes" at Mary's (phone first). Bring onion skin, bark, etc Every Thursday a number of families meet at Dineke's house from about 10.30am.

Everybody is welcome. Do phone first to make sure it's on because very occasionally it gets cancelled.

Dineke de Jong, 48 Montgomery Road, Sheffield, S7 1LG. 0742-553836

West Yorkshire

Jan 16th Parents meeting at Bob and Celia's, 423 Killinghall Road, Bradford at 8pm. Phone 640127

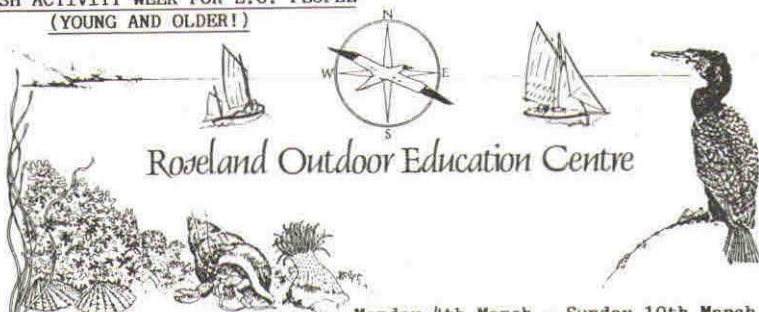
Jan 17th Evening visit to the RSPCA in Halifax. Phone Alison Tribe Hudds 606618

Weds 23 Jan Visit to Thwaites Mill - a working water mill and an industrial museum. Meet at 11am. Cost 90p adults, 45p children over 5.

Feb 12th Pancake Party from 11am at Sue Hart's. Phone Hudds. (0484) 537865
Beverly Wilson is arranging regular swimming sessions from January. Phone her on Leeds 509588 for details.

Details/other ideas for meetings contact Kim Wark, 21 Drummond Ave., Leeds 757473

CORNISH ACTIVITY WEEK FOR E.O. PEOPLE (YOUNG AND OLDER!)



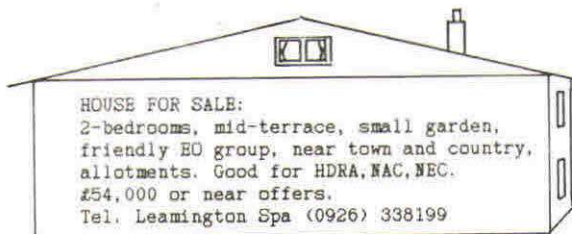
Monday 4th March - Sunday 10th March, 1991

A varied programme of adventure, environmental projects and exploring the beautiful Fal estuary by land and by water.

Family groups or unaccompanied young people both equally welcome, but all will share equally in activities. This will include sailing, canoeing, problem-solving, environmental awareness and creative projects and much much more. Interested? Then contact Mike Johnson:-

Roseland Outdoor Education Centre
c/o Pondhu House, Penwinnick Road,
St. Austell. PL25 5DP Tel: St. Austell (0726) 75751/65952

for details and booking form, giving details of number and age of your group.
Costs: £3.30 per head per day for use of the centre + £3.00 each for communally prepared food.



HOUSE FOR SALE:

2-bedrooms, mid-terrace, small garden,
friendly EO group, near town and country,
allotments. Good for HDRA, NAC, NEC.

£54,000 or near offers.

Tel. Leamington Spa (0926) 338199

Coordinators Update

since April 1990 Contact List:

New Acting Coordinators

Berkshire
Barbara Vinelot
The Pink Cottage
Stroud Farm Road
Holyport, Maidenhead
0628-36490

Cornwall
Ann Huggett
Little Keasts
Draynes, Lisbeard
0579-20645

Kent
Pat and Paul Holroyd
11 Saxon Place
Horton Kirby
Dartford
0322-863564

Manchester
Anne Nesbit
17 Tewkesbury Close
Poynton, Stockport
0625-871718

New Coordinators

Norfolk
Karen Kay
1 Beeches Cottage
Corpusty
Norwich
026387 740

North Yorkshire
Gwen and Andrew Baldock
31 The Limes
Stockton-on-the-Forest
York. 0904-400173

Nottinghamshire
Paul Sains
6 Rutland Street
Mansfield
0623-653694

Ireland
Robert and Shona Love
41 Landsdowne Road
Belfast. N. Ireland
0232-777432

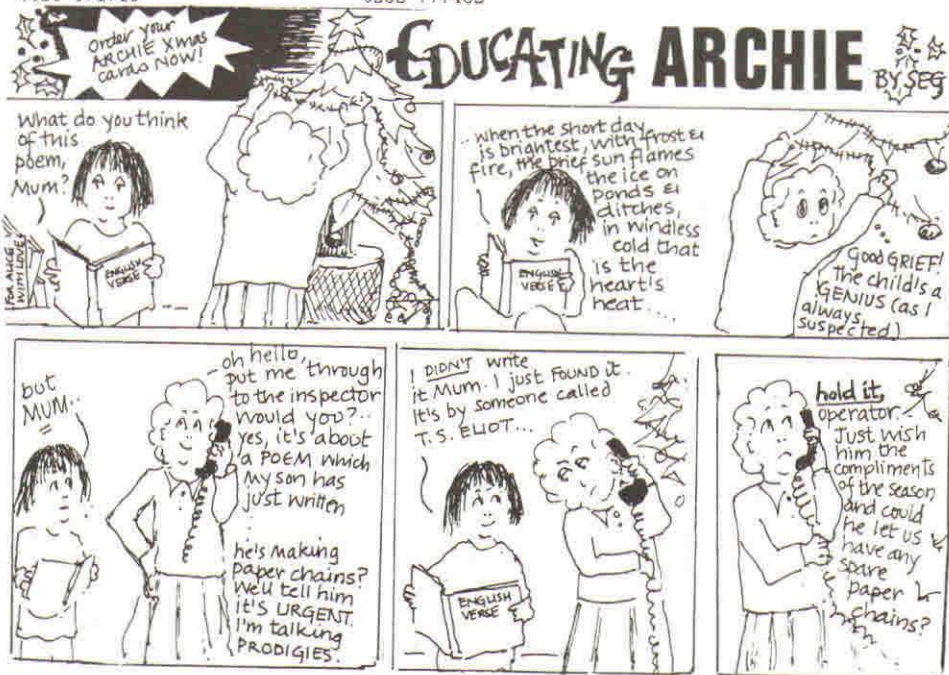
New Telephones

Staffordshire
Eileen Wilson
Tel: 0283-32547

Tayside
Rosalind and Kevin

Coordinators Needed
Avon-Bath district
Cleveland
Dyfed
Humberside
Lincolnshire
Lothian
South Yorkshire
West Yorkshire

Queries and applications
to: Stephanie Fitcher
50, Springfield Ave
Chesterfield
S40 1HL



a. g. m.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF EDUCATION OTHERWISE ASSOCIATION LIMITED (By
25 Common Lane, Hemingford, Abbots, Cambs. PE18 9AN Guarantee)

NOTICE is hereby given that the fifth ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the members of the above named Association will be held on Saturday 12th January 1991 at Cliff College, Calver, near Sheffield commencing at 10am for the following purposes:

1. To receive and consider the Income and Expenditure Accounts and Balance Sheet for the 12 months ending 30th June 1990 and the Council of Managements' and Auditors' reports thereon.
2. To receive reports from Officers.
3. To elect Members of Council of Management.
4. To elect Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.
5. To confirm the appointment of Messrs. Reeve and Naylan Chartered Accountants, who continue in office as the Association's Auditors.

Dated this 31st day of October 1990. On behalf of The Council of Management.
Pam Stevenson.....General Secretary

NOTICES OF MOTION

Notices of Motion (Proposals) for consideration at the Association AGM, appropriately endorsed by not less than one-twentieth of the total membership entitled to vote (signed up members), as required under the Companies Act, should be submitted in writing to the General Secretary by not later than December 31st 1990.

ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Members are reminded that nominations for the above mentioned Offices should be lodged with the Secretary not later than December 31st 1990. All such nominations will require the approval of the Council of Management before being submitted to the Association AGM.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT

The number of members permitted on the Council of Management under the Articles of Association is no less than 13 and no more than 19. Nominations for membership of the Council of Management (with the written consent of the Nominee) should be submitted in writing to the Secretary no less than four days nor more than 28 days prior to the date of the AGM.

MEMBERS MEETING

Members Meeting will follow immediately after the completion of the formal business of the AGM when members will be able to raise any matter with the Council of Management. In order that a timetable and Agenda may be prepared, and so that necessary research can be carried out, members are requested to send to the Secretary, not later than the 12th December 1990, any items they wish to have discussed at the Members Meeting. Any member putting an item on the agenda, must attend in person, or send a detailed request with their request.

For further details and a booking form for all attending Cliff College send SAE to:

Stephanie Fitcher	OR	Lynne Greenhough
50 Springfield Ave.,		18 Park St.
Chesterfield, S40 1HL		Alfreton, DE 7JE

E.O. Winter Gathering

to be held at Cliff College, Calver, Nr. Sheffield. S30 1XG
Evening of Thurs. 10/1/91 to late afternoon of Sun. 13/1/91

Cliff College is set in beautiful Peak district countryside. The block we have booked is new and central heated. Accommodation is generally of a higher standard than either Featherstone or Unstone but the place and the organisation both seem to be robust enough to withstand an EO gathering!

(Booking Form - see loose sheet)

Children's Activities

We can use a very large hall and smaller rooms for activities. We have booked a bouncy castle, badge making machine, a parachute and table tennis. We need people to volunteer to put on workshops and to supervise children's activities - especially during EO workshops and the AGM.

Cliff College is in beautiful countryside with lots of very good walks locally. There are also many places of interest quite close by (Blue John Caverns, Darley Dale museum, Eyam Village - associated with the great plague.)

NOTICE: Cliff College is a Methodist institution. No alcohol is allowed on the premises. They also request that no pets are brought onto the grounds.

Programme will include:

1) A workshop on Child Abuse to cover some of the questions raised at Featherstone both for EO as an organisation and for parents. This workshop will be run by Michelle Elliot of Kidscape who is an experienced group leader in this subject. It is an adults only workshop.

2) Workshop on Organisational Change: led by Kay Day. 3 Hours max.

Due to the success of EO increasing its membership and enabling those members to participate actively in the organisation, we now face the exciting key issue of how to develop a structure which will accommodate the burgeoning potential of that membership.

We already know that, amongst us, we have differing views about how that development and structure might proceed. We are also aware that our few national meetings each year are so over-crowded with business, that discussions about development become both fragmented and protracted. Additionally, the sheer volume of people attending meetings makes it difficult to give everyone sufficient time to contribute fully to the debate.

This workshop then proposes to begin addressing the general issue of the organisational growth of EO. The workshop will be divided into smaller groups (with a maximum of 12 people in each) to allow the greatest participation. Each group will be asked to meet certain objectives to aid feedback in plenary with the whole workshop. Each group will have a facilitator to aid this process.

It may well be that groups choose to consider organisational growth from different viewpoints. For example, hierarchical, non-hierarchical and devolutionist models that have been suggested need to be explored. There will be a choice about which small group you attend.

The overall aim of the workshop will be to start the process of organisational development. We should expect it to trigger ideas, suggest further research, promote activity, etc.. But those attending should not expect profound decisions or concrete conclusions to be made during this preliminary phase.

Saturday AGM. - followed by members' meeting. If the business is not finished by 6.00pm this could be reconvened on Sunday morning leaving Saturday evening free for social activities.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The two main issues in the past few months have been the Education Otherwise meeting at Featherstone Castle, Northumberland, and some difficulties that arose as a result of an allegation having been made against an E.O. subscriber and these having to be dealt with appropriately. The Featherstone meeting was judged by all and sundry, I think, to have been a great success. The weather was, in the main, glorious, the organisation was excellent, good quality food was in abundant supply and there were numerous workshops, outings, and other activities on offer for both adults and children. The main formal and public business of the Association was conducted in the Directors' Meeting on the morning of Saturday, 15 September and the Members' Meeting in the afternoon. As two Directors had resigned Keith Charlton and Valerie Gommon were elected to hold office until the A.G.M. in January. The draft accounts for the year ended 30 June 1990 were considered. Mike Cook, Treasurer, reporting that there had been an increase in income for the year mainly due to full subscriptions being paid and to an increase in the sale of publications. Membership has stayed about the same. Expenditure has increased due to the updating of publications S.I.N.C., Early Years and Later Years and the Newsletter - Digest, and also administration fees. Accounting and auditing fees had been considerably more expensive than previous years, there was some discussion about this and ways of reducing these fees were considered. Co-ordinators expenses were down for the year and Mike Cook intimated that he hoped Co-ordinators would become more active now that they knew they were able to claim legitimate expenses.

The Members' Meeting was attended by in excess of 30 people, the minutes of that meeting were amended, agreed and signed. (One of the difficulties in arriving at decisions was understanding the status of this meeting. It has become clear to me that structurally there are within the organisation, subscribers, ie. everybody who joins E.O. Association Limited and pays the annual subscription, signed-up members, ie. people who being proposed and seconded by two other signed-up members agree to guarantee the Organisation, ie. the Limited Company, as I understand it, by agreeing to pay a nominal sum - £5 or £10 - should the Company have to be wound up. In addition there are the Directors who are elected into certain posts at the Annual General Meeting. It became clear during the meeting and during the week, and the time before when we had to deal with some very difficult issues that our structure was ambiguous. Formerly structurally a loose egalitarian Association, a number of years ago we differentiated out into a Limited Company and Charitable Trust structures, we have since been in conflict as to whether to continue to try and operate in the old fairly informal way, denying the existence of the new structures or to fully take them on board and to work with them).

MATTERS ARISING

Christine Wallace, one of the three Trustees of the Charitable Trust, indicated that she thought that the Association owed £2600 to the Charitable Trust. There was generally discussion about this and it was agreed that Mike Cook, Treasurer of E.O. Association Limited, would write to the Charity Commission requesting clarification. Rob and Anne Wade discovered that though it was agreed they could be paid for updating S.I.N.C. at the last meeting, as they are Directors they cannot be paid. They will however to continue to do the work unpaid. Val Gommon brought up the issue of Les Enfants D'Abord - an E.O. like Association in France and after discussion it was agreed that liaison with this group could be valuable and that the Steering Committee be authorised to authorise the payment of one person's travelling expenses to a meeting in France. The Trustees to see if this could be paid from the Charitable Trust funds.

A point of order was brought up by June Grant regarding the attendance at the Residential Meeting of a freelance writer and a photographer. At the previous meeting this issue had been raised but in the pressure of business, had not been resolved and it was decided that it should be discussed further at the next meeting when a decision would have to be made, which would then be abided by (some people feel concerned about not being able to be themselves to discuss openly their issues if Reporters/Photographers are reporting on the meeting).

ROTATION OF OFFICERS

Mention was made of Keith Charlton and Valerie Gommon taking the place of Jude Ashley-Walker and Stephanie Fatcher who recently resigned until the A.G.M. Christine Wallace and Bruce Wallace resigned both as Directors and as signed-up members and a vote of thanks was given to them for all of their support and hard-work for the Organisation over the years and for their different roles. Lois Cook and Lucy Charlton will replace them until the A.G.M.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

As Christine Wallace has resigned from this post, Valerie Gommon, on the recommendation of the Membership Secretary support group, was elected to this post.

PUBLICATIONS SECRETARY

As Lesley Kilbride has resigned, Lynn Greenhough was offered the post on the recommendation of the Publications Secretary support group. As she did not wish to become a Director, Lesley Kilbride agreed to continue pro tem in that capacity.

CHAIRPERSON

Peter Edwards, Vice Chairperson, is acting Chairperson but the post remains vacant. It was agreed that the Chair support group continue to search for a person.

REGIONAL ENQUIRIES SECRETARY

As Jude Ashley-Walker had resigned it was proposed that Hazel Crawley would cover the telephone enquiries for the extra area until the next meeting and that postal enquiries would be shared out between all the people dealing with them. Miryam Bush and Maggie Swatridge offered to help if needed. A support group will be set up at the next meeting to search for a suitable applicant for this post.

CENTRAL ADDRESS

Mary and Andrew Babbs from Leamington Spa were offered this upon the recommendation of the support group.

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

Mention was made of a letter received from Unstone Grange listing damages during our stay, even though the rooms had been checked and seemed to be in good order. It was felt that the complaints were unfounded but nevertheless it was proposed that we pay the £60 claimed as a gesture of goodwill but also explain to the Warden that we did not agree.

Mention was also made of the issue of knives and it was agreed to remove knives should they be used inappropriately at Featherstone until the end of the gathering.

The next more difficult issue concerned a report that an allegation had once been made, approximately ten years ago, against an E.O. Member of alleged sexual misconduct towards a child. This allegation was allegedly withdrawn. The Steering Group had felt unable to make a fair judgement into the truth of the allegation despite much effort. E.O. received a booking from this Member for Featherstone Castle and following serious considerations as to the implications of the safety of the children, the Steering Group decided that the booking could not in fairness be refused. Both before and during our

stay at Featherstone Castle the Group struggled with the question of appraising E.O. Members resident there of the situation. This was discussed with those (Directors) present at the Castle who had also received information of the allegation. Although many and varied views were expressed, the final analysis the dominant feeling of the Group was that to call a residents' meeting to discuss the issue further would not be productive and could potentially be damaging. This statement was read out and engendered a lot of discussion. The issues seemed to centre on two main issues: one was whether the booking should have been accepted and whether there was any potential danger to any children at Featherstone. The point had to be made quite strongly that this was only a distant allegation, there was no evidence of sustain it, and it was pointed out that in a Group of the size of the group at Featherstone, there could likely to be one or two people who had engaged in misconduct towards children and it was well for people to be aware of this irrespective of these particular allegations. The point was also made that in the Featherstone setting, which was a very public one with many adults - in fact all parents of children present - this was not likely to be an easy ground for someone with abusive intentions towards children to operate. Some members felt strongly that everybody should have been informed that the allegations had been made whilst others agreed that this would have been difficult, would have cast suspicions on everybody at Featherstone, particularly the men present, and was unlikely to serve a positive purpose.

The consensus quite clearly was that the Steering Group had handled a difficult situation fairly and well although one (Director) had felt so strongly about this that she had resigned during the week when a meeting of the Directors decided not to make the allegations public.

URGENT REPORTS FROM OFFICERS

Publicity Officer Jo Rust was unable to be present but sent in a written report which indicated there was a high level of interest in E.O. from newspapers and magazines. There had been a number of programmes and quite a lot of information put out about E.O. She intimated that her two years in office were coming to an end at the next meeting and that she would be unlikely to be offering herself for re-election.

Directors' Meeting Report - Consideration of Draft Accounts : as mentioned above Mike Cook reported on the finances and of the difficulty that had arisen between E.O. Association Limited and the E.O. Charitable Trust regarding ownership of money in the Trust and the use to which it could be put.

HOME EDUCATION PACKS FOR LEAS

Liz Ramsay reported the fact packs are being worked on for the LEAS libraries, etc.

TEACH YOUR OWN APPENDIX and LEARNING ALL THE TIME

Teach Your Own - Pam Stevenson explained that she had been contacted by Dick Kitto regarding the updating of the Appendix on E.O. in this publication and was authorised to go ahead and update numbers, prices, and central address, etc.

Learning All The Time - This is a new publication by John Holt. It was agreed to take some of these on board for sale to Members. Similarly Patricia Knox's book - Troubled Children - A Fresh Look At School - is now available in a new format. Agreed to order 100 of these for onward sale to members.

S.I.N.C.

It was clarified that written off copies of this publication would be given away to new members but not to be included as part of the membership pack. Copies can still be sold to non-members.

CARING FOR LIFE INTERNATIONAL

Kim Wark has put an article in the October issue concerning this. She asked if regional co-ordinators or designation persons could be asked to collect items from members in their areas and store them until a representative from C.F.L.I. could collect them. See newsletter for details.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Sue Lyon has made an E.O. display of pictures and writing on laminated board which can be made available for use in all areas as well as her own. She wanted funding for this. It was decided to ask for more information. No decision was made. Mike Greenhough asked for a way of enabling the structure of E.O. to be clarified to members as there was uncertainty among some regarding the steering committee officers, directors, signed-up members and subscribers, etc. There was discussion about this but no firm decision taken.

At the end of the meeting a Regional Enquiries Secretary having resigned over the child misconduct allegations and the way it had been handled, the issue was returned to and opened up and there was a suggestion made that the person about whom the allegation had been made would be requested not to attend the next meeting. A vote was forced, all present voting and it was overwhelmingly rejected, the proposal was made that at the next gathering there should be two workshops: one on child abuse and one on how to handle major issues as and when they arise, and this was agreed.

So, this was a difficult issue to handle, being highly emotive and threatening to an organisation like E.O. whose membership is committed to providing support, safety and optimal learning conditions for children. One rather worrying aspect of it for me was how normally quite rational people on hearing that there had been an allegation about an allegation seemed to be incapable of discriminating between this and proven fact and were prepared to take action, including arbitrary exclusion, as if a mere whiff of an allegation was sufficient and the facts did not matter. Fortunately, this tendency was checked. In my view at the end of the day, good sense prevailed and I think that a reasonable middle way was found between under and over disclosure and in-action and over-reaction. What a contentious issue like this did do was to bring into focus the current ambiguous nature of our organisation i.e. an organisation which has not really resolved a conflict between the collectivists destructuralists among us who have little time for internal structure and the hierarchy that this creates and want everything dealt with on a totally open non-hierarchical and on the other hand the fact that Education Otherwise is a large and fairly complex organisation and has taken on board a limited company structure and therefore have people in positions of responsibility. In my view by not taking this on board and accepting it and working with it we have at present the worst of both worlds, a kind of muddle produced by denial. My view is that we need to educate ourselves as to what our constitution and procedural rules are and to operate it as openly and efficiently as we are able.

Peter Edwards
Vice-Chair Acting Chair

STOP PRESS.....NATIONAL HOME EDUCATION DAY - Proposed date: October 19th. 1991.

(To be confirmed at the January meeting)

Would anybody interested in participating please make provisional bookings (in libraries etc) for display space.

Liz Ramsay.

law and money

A reply to Bruce and Christine Wallace (issue 76 page 36)

- 1) Does EO's public liability insurance cover local events? If so, can you include the insurance details in a newsletter, please?
- 2) I'm still not sure what the argument is for having a two-tiered structure i.e. unelected directors (signed up members) and non-directors.
- 3) Many voluntary organisations avoid VAT by being made up of smaller constituent organisations, each of which has a turnover below the £25,4000 VAT threshold. EO regions are ideal for this. Customs & Exise produce a booklet for clubs and associations which suggests that practice.
- 4) There are two ways of avoiding corporation tax. One is not to make a profit - making a profit may mean overcharging. Any float of a few thousand carried over from year to year could be called a members' loan. The second way is to have a charitable constitution in which each member has one vote - charities do not pay corporation tax. EO's publications are deemed charitable according to the legal officer at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations NCVO.
- 5) There are important differences between a charitable trust and a charitable association. The former is governed by a trust deed and its trustees have absolute control and are only accountable to the charity commissioners. The latter is governed by a constitution. Its trustees, board of governors or management committee are elected by the membership and are accountable only to them. General meetings have absolute power only when quorate. This information has also been checked with NCVO.
- 6) I know the amount of time Christine and Bruce spend helping EO is considerable. I hope my comments, from someone new to national gatherings but a member for 5 years, are taken as constructive.

David Michael, 147 Constantine Road, London NW3

resignation

Dear friends in E.O.

In September I resigned my position as a director of E.O. Association Limited. At the time I did not set down my reasons as I was not ready to express them clearly. Now I feel in a position to do this, and would like to share my concerns.

I am very unhappy that most members of E.O. are not aware how the organisation is run and that the organisation is not democratic in that there is no legal framework for the participation of ordinary members in the decision making process.

When an individual fills in a membership form and pays a membership fee, the term 'membership' implies participation. The fee is not merely a subscription - a part of it goes to support the work of E.O. generally. Yet ordinary members have no legal right to a say in how the work is carried out.

Even worse, local co-ordinators who are, in my opinion, the mainstay in the promotion and consolidation of E.O.'s work have no legal say in the running of

the organisation, unless they are invited to become 'paid-up members'. They work hard and caringly, often to the detriment of their own family lives, without any pay. They have to be trustworthy. Yet, they are not legally entitled to participate in the workings of the Association.

This situation has arisen, I believe, because it is hard for the people in positions of authority in E.O. to face up to the fact that the organisation is not democratic. E.O. is about empowerment, reaffirming the responsibility of the individual, but its structure is strictly hierarchical, concentrating power and responsibility in the few. Attempts to democratize the running of the organisation, open meetings, freedom of speech in the newsletter, sharing tasks come out of a genuine desire to include everyone.

While the legal structure remains as it is, these attempts are futile, and even dishonest. When the crunch comes, ordinary E.O. 'subscribers' (as they are then referred to) count for nothing, 'paid-up members' merely have voting rights at certain meetings and it is the 'directors' who really make the decisions.

I do not want to be part of this self-deception. Let us look at the structure honestly, and ask if it really expresses the ethos of E.O. and if it doesn't then let us all participate in the building of a more appropriate structure.

Yours sincerely,

Stephanie Fitcher

sensitive information

I'd like to comment on one of the issues that arose at the Featherstone Castle meeting in September - What to do with sensitive information given to an EO member? I would answer that three ways:

- a) If the information is a criminal accusation or allegation then it should be reported to any EO member concerned, both to any accused and to any victims and if the information still appears criminal in nature then it should be reported to the Police immediately.
- b) If the information is personal opinions about another EO member which may be hurtful, then it should be sent back to the originator or not listened to.
- c) If the information is undisputed fact then it may be broadcast or published if its usefulness outweighs any potential hurtfulness.

No EO members are vetted. As a parent I make my own judgements about which adult and children are safe and trustworthy. I regard it as immoral for any EO member to spread unsubstantiated and hurtful information with the supposed aim of protecting our children. That type of thinking implies that if we know who the bad guys are then everyone else is trustworthy and good. It's called scapegoating. It can hurt the scapegoat and more dangerously can allow us to not take responsibility for our families.

David Michael, 147 Constantine Rd., London. NW3

There is a marvellous shop:
ANYTHING LEFT HANDED
65 Beak Street
London W1R 3LF
Tel: 071 437 3910



STOP PRESS
Will the person who sent in an article on the dangers of early schooling please contact the next editor so we could check copyright (I lost your details - Ed.)



EDUCATION OTHERWISE OFFICERS

General Enquiries	25 Common Lane, Hemingford Abbot; Cambridgeshire PE18 9AN Telephone Helpline: 0480 63130	
General Secretary	Pam Stevenson, 25 Wyndham Road Dover, Kent. CT17 0BH	
<u>Membership Secretaries</u>		
Scotland and Northern England	Meryl Cumins, 131 John Street, Larkhall, Lanarkshire ML9 2EU Telephone 0698 887977	
South East	Valerie Common, 19 New Road, Castlethorpe, Milton Keynes MK19 7EH Telephone: 0908 511247	
Wales and Midlands	Gillian Murely, 84 Witney Road, Stafford ST17 0BP Telephone: Stafford 48753	
London and Home Counties	Lois Cook, 34 Beacon Road, Herne Bay Kent CT6 6DJ Telephone: 02273 67059	
South West	Maggie Swatridge, 32 Carrey Park, Polperro, Cornwall PL13 2JF Telephone: 0503 72087	
Director of Publications	Lesley Kilbride, Fearmore by Shieldag Strathcarron, Wester Ross IV54 8XX Tel: 052 05278	
Publications Coordinator	Lynne Greenhough, 18 Park Street Alfreton DE5 7JE Telephone: 0773 836662	
Treasurer	Michael Cook, 34 Beacon Road, Herne Bay Kent CT6 6DJ Telephone: 02273 67059	
Chairperson	Vacant	
Special Needs	Sylvia Jeffs, 16 St. Bernard's Road Solihull B92 7BB Telephone: 021 706 6460	
Subscription Renewals, Address Changes, Membership List.	Bob Emmett, 12 Taylor Avenue, Dolgarrog, Conway, Gwynedd LL32 8JN Telephone: 0492 69355	
Publicity Officer	Jo Rust, 8 Church End, Gamlingay, Nr. Sandy Bedfordshire SG19 3EP Telephone 0767 50032	
Coordinators Secretary	Stephanie Fatcher, 50 Springfield Avenue Chesterfield S40 1HL Tel: 0246 239048	
<u>Regional Secretaries</u>		
East Anglia	Sandie Cottee	0268 733259
Midlands	Hazel Clawley	021 722 7165
The North	Mick & Jennie White	0969 23544
Scotland	Brenda Holliday	0786 832042
Wales	Miryam Bush	0269 861069
London	Genevieve Bridgman	081 341 0751

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 principle aims are to:

Encourage learning outside the school system.

Reaffirm that parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility of educating them out of school.

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION,

send a 9" x 4" S.A.E. to:

EDUCATION OTHERWISE
25 Common Lane,
Hemmingford Abbots,
Cambridgeshire,
PE18 9AN