

EDUCATION OTHERWISE



NUMBER 80 JUNE/JULY 1991

**THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED
IN THIS PUBLICATION ARE
THOSE OF THE
CONTRIBUTORS AND NOT
NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE
EDITOR, OR OF EDUCATION
OTHERWISE AS A WHOLE.**

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

The newsletter is edited by a volunteer member of Education Otherwise and its primary purpose is to provide support and communication between members.

**The editor for the August
newsletter is:**

Sue White,
2, Pretoria Villas,
Brome,
Eye,
Suffolk IP23 8AL
Tel: (0379) 870036
Deadline: 1st July 1991

**The supplement editor on sewing
is:**

Lesley Cooper,
255, Station Road,
Market Bosworth,
Nuneaton,
Warwickshire CU13 0PE
Tel: (0455) 291784
Deadline: 1st July 1991

**The childrens' pages are edited
by:**

Hannah Bush,
68 Maesglas,
Pontyates,
Llanelli,
Dyfed,
Wales SA15 5SH
Deadline: 1st July 1991

Further notes for contributors

1. Please submit before the deadline.
2. Please write or type your material clearly and indicate if you do not wish your contribution to be retyped otherwise the editor will retype and make minor corrections of spelling, punctuation etc. Material of the wrong size, faint print etc. may well have to be retyped anyway.
3. If you are referring to a previous article or letter, please indicate reference of newsletter number and date.
4. Feel free to make suggestions about articles you would like to see in the newsletter or supplements.
5. Advertisements are accepted, space permitting, from members if they are of interest to EO in general. 10p per word.

If you would like to edit the newsletter or supplement, contact Lynne Greenhough, 18 Park Street, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE5 7JE Tel: (0773) 836662.

**EDUCATION OTHERWISE IS A
COMPANY LIMITED BY
GUARANTEE AND IS A
CHARITABLE TRUST
CHARITY NUMBER 292029**

Contents

Articles	4
Legal news	13
Treasurer's report	17
Educating Archie	18
Letters	19
Penpals	24
Regional news	26
Notices	31
Reviews	33
Adverts	35
Education through the press	37
Where to get what	38

Re: The Kidscape
Leaflets
which were received
with all newsletters
sent out in April 1991.
At Cliff College in
January 1991 a
decision was taken *by
the meeting* during
the AGM to send out
these leaflets to every
member. This was
reported in the April
1991 issue. The editor
of that newsletter was
not responsible for
the decision and was
not involved in their
posting. If you have
any comments, please
forward them as
contributions to a
future newsletter or
contact the
Publications Co-
ordinator, Lynne
Greenhough.

REMEMBER HELP SPREAD THE WORD...
OCTOBER 19th 1991 is
National Home-education
Day
Book some exhibition space now!

Reporting from the home front

All of us have our own ideas on how best to educate our children. Roger Rich-Smith describes how he and his wife are learning with their daughters.

Meet the children: We have three daughters: Emma, Samantha and Lucy-Anne (aged 11, 9 and 3 respectively). Emma and Samantha attended school until 1989.

Leaving school: The decision we made in 1989 (to withdraw our daughters from school) was based on long term developments and feelings. We did not act on a sudden impulse or over-react to an isolated issue or upset. There were some matters that proved to be *the last straw* but generally these merely reinforced the thinking we already had.

Reasons for leaving: Many and varied. The following came to dominate our perception of schools.

1. Inefficient use of time: not that efficiency is everything, but if you look at travel, breaks, dinner and other distractions there is little time left for learning.
2. Ineffective provision of a suitable environment for learning. Under this heading you could include everything from poor buildings and layout of classrooms to distractions from disruptive pupils, poor teaching styles, physical intimidation and mental stress.
3. Ineffective education!: At the end of the day what is our educational system turning out? Our feelings were that the system was actually

dysfunctional in respect of effective learning. Many of the structures, postures and administration involved in modern education act against effective learning. Children become demotivated and merely "perform for teacher" rather than increasingly enthusiastic and alive with a spirit of adventure and sense of discovery. That precious attitude of "wanting to find out" and explore possibilities seems so often to be replaced by an insidious lethargy of "what's for lessons today?".

The mechanics of educating are there (teachers, schools and facilities) but the dynamics of effective and enjoyable learning are often missing - in spirit and in deed.

We could of course elaborate on a number of specific issues, but sufficient now to say that as parents, we were increasingly concerned and frustrated that the environment, personnel and content (curriculum) of our daughters' education were largely outside our influence. Our conclusion was that home-based education would re-dress many of these problems.

Response from the Authority: Once the decision to remove our daughters from school had been taken there was, of course, the matter of informing both the school and the Education Authority. In this respect, and concerning subsequent responses, I was not at all worried. Membership of Education Otherwise and The Children's Home-based Education Group had already provided me with much useful information on the legal aspects of our decision. Correspondence with other people who had experience of educating other than by attendance at school also provided us with valuable

insights into possible responses from the Authorities.

We had also run our own small pilot project of working at home during a vacation. This gave us a limited, but very clear, idea of not only what could be achieved but how the girls would actually work and respond to the new situation.

The school's response was the most hostile: an EWO was sent round, having been given inaccurate (or misleading?) information by the head. She was sent away never to return and the matter followed up by a firm letter. The Authority responded in a more professional manner and followed their legal duty to satisfy themselves as to the efficiency of the situation by arranging, and then sending, a senior inspector to visit. This was a meeting I taped (just in case of problems) and which proved to be sterile in terms of any hard offers of information or support.

We have had no further communications from the Authority since.

Educating at home: (A delightful experience) Having our daughters at home, and taking responsibility for their education, has proved to be a delightful experience for us all. They do more work in half the time. There is less stress and, so far, no days off with any "illness". The girls have shown themselves to be keen to learn, hard-working and a joy to have about the place. They seem as committed to the idea of home-education as we are (we would not have withdrawn them from school had progress and teaching been better and they had wanted to remain) which makes all the extra work involved well worth the effort.

Education, or learning, should be an enjoyable experience. We try not

to "teach at" our daughters. Rather the aim is to "learn with them" - to encourage, support, guide, stimulate, enthuse and provoke interest.

Schools, of course, would claim to do just the same, but with their expertise and resources do it better. From my own observations and experience though (and I speak as a teacher myself, with many years of experience in a variety of educational environments) the opposite is more often the case. Little of that expertise is available per unit child even if the teacher is good. With a poor teacher (and there are a dozen and one ways to define such) and/or a diverse number of pupils and a host of petty distractions, even less time and expertise are available for "constructive education".

As for the school' resources - what is available anyway? How often is it used? How up-to-date are they? Are they really useful or necessary? Once you really start probing at the educational colossus it rapidly falls apart.

What do we do then? Our current situation may be described as fairly conservative: I work full-time in education and Tina, my wife, organises the home and manages the day to day education programme of our daughters. Our approach is one of partnership. We may both have areas of defined skills and responsibilities, but all decisions about our daughters' learning and education are taken jointly. We also involve our daughters (the two eldest) in those decisions, rather than imposing on them a programme of study or subject they have little interest or enthusiasm for.

Emma and Samantha currently do five mornings a week (Monday to Friday) of what might loosely be

termed academic subject work. All afternoons are devoted to artistic, creative and physical pursuits. No work is given in the evenings as we consider this time of the day should be reserved for family activities, outside interests or just being allowed time to themselves.

On the academic front the girls get through 12 to 20 pieces of work a week (two to four each morning). Subjects currently being worked on include English, History, Geography, Religious Studies and Human Biology (five main ones) with Childcare, Environment and Conservation topics, Community Studies, other Sciences and some Maths. This programme may seem rather structured on the surface - it probably is. There is substantial flexibility within it though - in terms of approach, time and content.

Some recent examples of work will perhaps be useful:

The Gulf Crisis an issue the girls were obviously aware of, so they initiated their own file on The Gulf. A genuinely cross-curricular approach was adopted by us with work on the geography of the region, the history and religion of Islam and the environmental effects of the war. The current plight of the Kurds is being looked at.

Human Biology - the most natural science for young people. It is about themselves. The girls chose this and have only increased in enthusiasm for the subject since they began it a year ago. Interest and progress in this subject will probably mean they will be up to GCSE standard by the age of 14. It is a subject that overlaps with animal and plant biology and may lead into other areas later on.

Maths - I have long held the view that the emphasis, or near obsession

with Mathematics and numeracy within the educational system is not only unnecessary but largely counter-productive. Such an abstract and theoretical subject could better be left till 10 or 12 (or later) before being treated to the intense attention currently lavished on it at all ages. Such a switch in emphasis would not retard pupils - only give more time for "concrete" subjects and largely eliminate the vast numbers of pupils who seem "burnt out" regarding an interest in Maths long before they reach an age when it would or could be of use to them. Needless to say our daughters do less formal Maths than a school would, but in fact approach the subject with a healthy interest. Some recent "back door" approaches to Maths have included looking at and the history of coins, geography work on scales, looking at statistics and charts related to the current national census (a project pack was available from the Census Office) as well as designing and playing their own games involving financial transactions and numbers.

A variety of other links and approaches are planned including those between music, architecture, art perspective and geometry. Who says Maths is boring?

Our daughters afternoon programme includes art, music, pottery (and other crafts) and cooking. Tina's skills in the artistic field dominate here. Frequent "hands on" experience and practice (always with supervision for safety) has led to enormous jumps in skill levels and confidence. Afternoons are about serious enjoyment and fun.

Afternoons may also be about some physical activity: games on the common or walks on the hills. Again the structure and programme are

flexible, and again the girls have a say in what is selected and done.

Supporting this am/pm week are a variety of activities and interests involving the family and others. The Easter vacation for example has seen the girls involved in a three day stay with grandparents, walks and expeditions on the hills, frequent playing sessions with friends on the common, a day visit to an activities camp, obtaining a Red Cross First Aid certificate and various other outings.

Do we have specific aims for our daughters' education?

Yes, is the answer - and not just the more tangible (but distant) one of five, ten or whatever GCSEs.

Academic success in a number of subjects is already on the horizon, and we have no immediate concern in this area. More important is the emotional and spiritual development of our children; that they grow up to be well-balanced, caring and thoughtful young and adult people is paramount in our thinking. Also important is that they be given the chance of a genuinely broad education - not artificially limited by the restrictions of syllabus requirements and politics. In our view, learning takes place all the time - not because "teacher" or an institution says so. Add to that a home environment that fosters opportunities and encourages enquiring and you have a far more effective and more natural learning situation than schools can provide. **Being a Teacher, do I and my wife follow the National Curriculum?** No, is the answer to that - although I am abreast of developments and consider that there is much of worth within the National Curriculum, it is very limiting and prescriptive. In some

respects, the wrong subjects are being taught at the wrong age and in the wrong way. A simplified comment perhaps but still valid.

Whatever current education is, or is becoming, it is (in our view) not what it could be and certainly not going in the right direction.

Are we, as parents, confident we are doing the right thing for our daughters?

Yes, is the answer - and for a variety of reasons. 1. We have seen the changes in our daughters - and they are all for the good. 2. We can structure an informal education programme to individual interests and need. Thus idealistic aims such as those found in official education documents (eg. the '44 Act and the expressed wish to provide education according to age aptitude and ability) have a greater ring of truth in the home situation than they do in many schools. 3. The opportunities for their education are now much more diverse. Access to equipment and resources are not restricted nor progress hindered by the restrictions of lesson time, syllabus, disruptive pupils or teacher's interests. There has probably never been a better time to home educate. The range and quality of resources available to parents is amazing. The problem becomes one of knowing what to select or to budget for - or to find time for. And, of course, the more we work with and observe our daughters the more aware we are that much of the educating is done by them, not us.

**Roger and Tina Rich-Smith,
22, Lygon Bank,
Malvern,
Worcestershire. WR14 2JF**

Travelling in time

Stimulating her daughters interest in geography and history has prompted Frances Howard to compile these two questionnaires.

Time Travel

Some people believe that we have lived before, in other bodies. Can you imagine what it might have been like? Use a book to help you. Choose a person whose life you can read about. Imagine you were that person and find out as many of the answers to the following questions as you can.

- When did you live?
- What was your name?
- Who were your parents?
- What was your education like?
- What was your first job?
- What religion, teaching or philosophy did you follow?
- What were your main aims in life?
- In what ways did you lead other people? (Military, Political, Hereditary, Religious, Exploration, Discovery, Invention, as a monarch, Social Reform).
- What struggles or projects were you involved in?
- What means, weapons or tools did you use?
- What was the result of your efforts?
- What did you most hope for the future?

Blind Travel

Take a globe or world map, turn it round, or twizzle round on it, then point with your eyes shut to a country or island.

- What is its name?
- What latitude are you in?
- What longitude are you in?
- If I telephone you from Britain at 12 noon, what time is it where you are?
- What is the name of the capital city of your country?
- What is the weather like?
- What clothes will you take?
- What kind of money will you need?
- Is English spoken there?
- If you buy a phrase book, what language do you need to understand?
- What food will you eat, if you used food grown in the country where you are?
- What are the mountains called?
- What is the main river or rivers?
- What religious or public buildings will you see?
- Are there any famous ruins or excavations?
- What vegetation is there?
- What presents will you bring back?

DON'T FORGET. 19th OCT.
NATIONAL OCT.
HOME-EDUCATION
DAY
Contact Liz Ramsay
for details
(0509) 856604

Riding the schooling rollercoaster

Writing in response to Raymond and Dorothy Moore's article "When education becomes abuse" Frances Howard shares her family's varied experience of schools and home schooling.

I have had four children, now aged 25, 23, 17, and 12. The first two children each suffered 11 years at school, beginning in 1970 when there was no EO just Dick Kitto writing letters to Peace News. They both fought as hard as they could against going to school until they were well into their third term, and then caved in, feeling that it was unavoidable. My son turned out to be dyslexic and was so alienated from the learning process that he has refused to learn a saleable skill. He has found employment with a home-educating family. My eldest daughter has done a degree and is now unemployed, nearly a year after leaving university.

When the eldest daughter was aged 10-11 I taught her at home for a year. During this year, my middle daughter began school and my youngest daughter was born. I feel the whole family benefited from the experience.

Time moved on. I never felt I had to force my third daughter to attend school, but she never refused for more than a day at a time, the problem having surfaced and sorted itself out. I kept offering to teach her at home, but the time never seemed right to do it. She was quite keen on the idea during her last year at

primary school, but she was really enjoying school too much to want to miss any of it, even on a part-time basis. Meanwhile, my youngest was coming up to her school age. Her sister told her "You'll like school. It's even better than playgroup!" She did like school for the first term, but then all the nice little boys turned into macho horrors, and when she heard that her sister could be educated out of school, she asked if she could be educated at home. So after only two terms, she moved out of school. To begin with, her motivation for reading and writing was nil. Only a horror of the idea of returning to school would make her even appear to try.

My middle daughter continued with school and is now in the sixth form. She is really the ideal school child: sociable, good at book-work, always at or near the top of her class. Yet school has damaged her. The peer group pressure is terrific, and at six she was buying her friendships with sweets. When her pocket money ran out, she stole from other members of the family. I stopped giving her pocket money and she learned she didn't need money to buy friendship. But she suffered exceedingly from not having as much money as her friends and one day she was caught stealing from a shop. Luckily she was only ten, so she wasn't taken to court. She just went back to the shop with me and used her savings to pay for the things she had taken and couldn't give back and returned some articles. After that I gave her pocket money regularly and she used it sensibly. At seventeen she has done very well at school, but peer group pressures have forced her to accept values alien to our family lifestyle. I do not fuss, but

just give her as much love and acceptance as I can.

My home educated youngest daughter has, at age 11, felt it right to go to school. She was a little behind with writing, but otherwise OK. I went to my first parents evening not knowing what to expect. What I heard was gratifying indeed. I was told that she was cheerful, friendly, pleasant to be with; works well in a group; is well motivated; she is creative; enjoys new challenges; is not afraid to answer questions even if she's wrong; she's fast learning the team games she's "missed" at primary school and is in the cross-country running team. She is good to have in the class and they wish there were more like her. One teacher who also teaches her older sister remarked that she speaks confidently in class in a way that her super-confident and efficient older sister is only just beginning to do in the lower sixth form.

I used to wonder whether my middle daughter was right and that I had made a dreadful mistake in withdrawing my youngest from school. Now I know I was right. Primary school is *not* necessarily the best preparation for Secondary school. Home education can be even better. Indeed, primary school can damage your child's personality, even when that child is apparently perfectly happy and well adjusted to school. There is no need to set a time for your child to go to school. Just wait until the child is ready.

So carry on, all you hard-working home-educating parents! Don't give up! It is all very worth while in the end. Schools and employers need people who have been allowed to continue with home education beyond the age when most children go to school, indeed until the time

when they feel themselves ready. There may be no problems about them fitting back into school, because they may fit better than children who have been in school all the time.

Frances Howard
38 Hampden Road, Hitchin,
Herts.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BECKY
AND JOHN ON THE BIRTH OF
THEIR BABY DAUGHTER, DAISY
AND TO SUE AND GARY ON THE
BIRTH OF THEIR BABY SON,
THOMAS FROM ALL THEIR
FRIENDS AT EO.

National
Home-education
Day
What can you do?
* book your library
display space now
* Contact your local
radio/TV/press
* Organise a local
gathering/event
Now read on

The French Connection

Helping your children to speak French is a topical concern of many EO parents. But supposing your own French isn't that fluent? Kim Wark explains how "colonies et centres de vacances" in France may help.

In the last couple of editions of the EO newsletter I have noticed a few articles about learning languages. I wondered if older EOers might be interested in "colonies et centres de vacances" in France. These are holiday centres or camps for children run during the school holidays at Christmas or in February. French school children used to have ten weeks or so of holiday during the summer, when most of their parents had only a month - July or August. So for the other month the children were sent on a "colonie" holiday. I have worked with children as young as five on these holidays, which hardly bears thinking of from my current perspective. However, it does mean that children from big cities get away to the countryside, mountains or seaside for a few weeks, and I can still remember the amazement of some city boys of eight or nine, the first time they saw a cow!

Training course

You can go either as a camper, and chose an activity you enjoy as the theme of your holiday, or, if you are reasonably good at French - nominally A level standard - you can

train to work at one of these "colonies" or "centres de vacances". I trained during the Easter holidays before my A levels, and the training course itself really helped my spoken French. We learnt songs, folk-dances, story telling ideas as well as strategies for entertaining children and young people for up to 18 hours a day, seven days a week - you don't get much time off as an "animateur" or "animatrice" at a "colonie". You also don't get much pay! A number of organisations do repay your training fees - often in two parts, to encourage you to work for them for two years running. You also are fed and watered, usually very well, though sleeping conditions and plumbing are very variable! The best things are speaking French from the moment you wake up until the moment you go to sleep - maybe in your sleep too, who knows! And the company. I learnt a lot about life and children on the four "colonies" I did, as well as a lot about myself.

Interested?

If you are interested, further details can be obtained from:

Central Bureau for Educational
Visits and Exchanges,
Seymour Mews House,
London W1H 9PE

or

3, Bruntsfield Crescent,
Edinburgh EH10 4HD.

I can get hold of some addresses of "colonies" run by various Christian organisations, if anyone is interested, I have lost touch with other contacts, I'm afraid. I have also worked on a musical holiday,

and I know that the French "Poney Club" used to arrange holidays - try the Central Bureau for details. They also have details of other activities in Europe and Worldwide, some possibly more suitable for families.

Kim Wark,
21, Drummond Avenue,
Leeds. LS16 5JZ

Staying with the French theme. We have received this letter from Andree Roberts-Keen of France. She has written to tell us about a fledgling home education association, Apprendre Autrement, and asks "would we like to twin?"

Dear EO,
We are a new association, Apprendre Autrement, concerned with educating our children otherwise. Our aims are to:

Have freedom of choice concerning the education of our children, both for the parents and for the children.

Encourage learning outside the school system.

Inform families that they have the right to home educate.

Ensure that children's wishes and feelings concerning their education are given full consideration.

Encourage and promote contacts and exchanges, at a European and an international level.

Make these aims accepted in European law.

We would welcome the membership of Education Otherwise, a "twinning" of associations with similar aims.

As a member of EO, and also as co-ordinator for the South East region in France I am putting together a list of families interested in contacts and exchanges with families in the UK, and I keep in touch with Alison Mafham, who has made a list of families in the UK.

Apprendre Autrement now has a magazine every two months; anyone interested in receiving the magazine should write to us. We also welcome individual membership of anyone interested in life in France for homeschooling families (and others too!

We look forward to hearing from Education Otherwise, and from members.

Andree Roberts-Keen,
La Radissonne,
Morance.
69480 Anse

.....and finally, more EOers are bound for France....

By the time this newsletter reaches you, we will have moved from Gloucestershire to Brittany, France. We will be in chaos for a while, I'm sure. However, any EO family finding themselves in the area is very welcome to drop in. We have plenty of space for camping if you need an overnight stop. Facilities are very basic!

La famille Hall Davey,
5 Rue du Cozlen,
Locmalo,
56160 Guemene-sur-Scorff,
Brittany, France.

Legal News

A number of families who have been home educating are involved in the Orkney ritual abuse case. Anne and Rob Wade take a look at how the whole thing blew up.

We are continuing to run workshops to share knowledge and experience of the law relating to home education and its effect in practice. We aim to encourage experienced EOers to have the confidence to support members in conflict with their LEA.

We spent a weekend in March with a delightful group of EOers at a gathering superbly organised by Jane and Paul Lowe in Welwyn Garden City. We are doing one for new age travellers, and Sandie Cottee is planning one for Essex and surrounding areas.

It is very heartening to get phone calls from members checking how to handle a case or telling us of conflicts they have dealt with, instead of being inundated with problems. We have a fantasy of developing such a network of informed and supportive members that everyone in trouble is within easy reach of one. It is good to have the feedback too, so that we can collate a picture of what is happening nationally and how it is changing. If all this sounds frightening, remember it is very much a minority of authorities who are prejudiced against home education.

Abuse case

A number of families who are, or have been, home educating are

involved, directly or indirectly, in the *Orkney ritual abuse case*. The problem is not with the education authority, but with social services. Nine children from four families were taken into care for 36 days earlier this year.

Because the case is sub judice the families cannot be identified and there is no public access to knowledge. We have an extensive list of the ways in which the children were denied legal and human rights. This is mostly not in dispute and is not sub judice, but it is too long to give here. We will tell anyone who wishes to ring us about it.

What everyone is really asking is, "If there wasn't any ritual abuse, how did the whole thing blow up? What sparked it off? What's behind it all?"

Collecting evidence

The parents involved had been collecting evidence of maladministration in social workers' treatment of another family, and were about to pass this to the Ombudsman. This was blocked by the court action, since the Ombudsman cannot deal with cases which have gone to court. We have known other cases in which local authorities have tried to pre-empt the Ombudsman in this way.

The accusations originated with children of the family being helped, already in care for other reasons. They seem to be based on such things as circle dancing at a Quaker wedding, the black cloak and shepherd's crook-type walking stick used by the local minister, and a children's bonfire party. The children are supposed to have told social workers that satanic dancing and sexual orgies took place in a

quarry, and then to have said; "You know we're telling lies".

No social workers have visited the island to look at the quarry in question. It has a pool and is a favourite playing place, sheltered on the north and open to the south, in clear view of twenty three homes. There is no privacy on the island for any secret activity outdoors.

Leading questions

The interview was not videotaped, as it should have been, and it is alleged that social workers elicited what they wanted to hear by asking leading questions; that they had recently been alerted to ritual abuse in America and were looking for it; and that they had been influenced by a fundamentalist conference in Aberdeen in November at which a campaigner against ritual abuse had claimed that 4 000 babies are devoured annually in Britain in satanic rites. In this context it is interesting that a Church of Scotland minister's wife who did a study of 16th century witchcraft says that this number of 4 000 babies being eaten keeps appearing since earliest Christian times.

The sheriff dismissed the case mainly because of the malpractice of social services and the temporary children's panel reporter, but also after reading and listening to at least some of the evidence. The previous children's panel reporter, who was suspended 13 months ago for criticising local social workers, has since been reinstated by the Scottish Office.

Judicial inquiry

The trauma is not over - an appeal has gone to the quarter sessions in Edinburgh. Families who have supported those accused have

themselves come under suspicion and have taken their children into hiding. There will be a judicial inquiry when court action is finished.

We can help by giving/pledging financial support against the huge legal costs being incurred, and by writing to our MPs, complaining about the lack of legal and human rights for the children, and pressing for the judicial inquiry to be full, open-ended and as public as possible.

The families involved ask us to spread their thanks for the support they have already received, and for all the postcards to the children. Two thousand were sent in an Amnesty-style flood which must have had an impact on social services; but only a few were given to the children, when they were being sent home. The rest were eventually sent on to their homes. There are regulations about withholding mail in prison, but in many ways children have fewer rights than criminals. The love and care with which the postcards were chosen and written were much appreciated.

Very grateful

The families write: "Dear friends, We do not know how we can thank you adequately at this time. The knowledge that so many of you might care about the theatre of absurd we are caught up in, feel the injustice of it, and perhaps act, is just overwhelming. We are very, very grateful. We especially respect the social workers amongst you who are looking at the case with open minds. Children must never be treated in this way again. Common sense and kindness must be allowed to work hand in hand with efficient

procedure. We pray the law is strong enough to protect us. Our love and thanks to you all, The Orkney Families.

The address to which money and pledges of money can be sent is:

South Ronaldsay Parent's Action Committee,
Quindry,
South Ronaldsay,
Orkney.

Anne & Rob Wade,
West London (081-904 7155)

**National
Home-education
Day**
order your leaflets
and handbills from
Lucy Charlton
(053759) 2118 (leics)
Need help with
publicity material?
contact
Liz Ramsay
1 Stanford Hills Cottis
Stanford on Soar
Loughborough
leics LE12 5OL
(0509) 856604

Camping weekend in Kent

EO members in Kent are holding a gathering from Thursday 27th June to Sunday 30th June at Gloversbridge Farm, Grigg Lane, Headcorn, Near Maidstone, Kent (approx two miles from village centre and BR station)

We will have the use of a five acre secluded field with a cold water tap and festival style toilets (hole in the ground type) with screening. Please bring your own portable loo if required, or potty for small children.

The emphasis of the gathering will be on activities and workshops in which children of all ages and their parents can contribute and participate, with plenty of time for relaxation and socialization. There will be workshops on drama, music and percussion, crafts, arts and sculpture art etc (A tepee will be available for these) plus other activities such as non-competitive games, a ramble and visit to local vineyard.

All EO supporters are very welcome.

There will be a charge of £1.50 per night per adult. Children are free.

Adults £3.50 for three nights if booked in advance. For further details or offers of more workshops please ring Sue and Keith Burchett on West Malling (0732) 870344.

Maps and programmes are available on request. Please send sae to Sue Burchett or Pam Stevenson - see contact list for addresses.

Calling new families! come to the castle!

New families may have been put of coming to Featherstone Castle says Jude Ashley-Walker in her report from the latest gathering there.

Yet again, we set off for Featherstone Castle, looking forward to meeting old friends and greeting new ones. We had an unremarkable journey, as far as Newcastle, where Leila looked out of the window and claimed to have spotted another EO family. I, being a tried and less than perfect parent, disagreed, but said if Leila thought *she was* she should go and ask them. To my surprise, she did, and was proved correct! Yet again, proving parents are often wrong! - This parent anyway! It turned out, we had met this family, some years ago for five or ten minutes, at an Isle of Wight bus stop, when they were on holiday.

So - we travelled the rest of the journey together, which I feel was good, as it meant the *new* family didn't arrive as total strangers (very un-nerving!).

We spent some time during the week, with this and other families, new to national gatherings, and I was yet again reminded of the difficulty many families experience when arriving at a large gathering, not knowing anyone. I feel it might be good to have a contact or contacts to whom new people could go for advice and back up, before or during gatherings.

Several people said they had suggestions to make and questions

to pose but did not know who to approach, or didn't feel able to speak, as they felt like outsiders.

I clearly remember our family's first visit to Featherstone (our first national gathering) and the feeling that everyone knew everyone else, except us. I'm sure this is not just because we're a paranoid bunch - but if we are, I know there are lots more who feel similarly.

There was talk of EO wanting new families to attend gatherings and I feel this problem may prevent them coming. So, any family wanting to attend, but worried about it, is welcome to contact us, if they want to get to know more about it and we'll gladly try to help them to get to know more people when they arrive. Leila and Danny have said they'll happily try and help "first-time" kids to feel welcome and introduce them to their friends.

Jude Ashley Walker,
1, The Firs, Dodpits,
Ningwood, Po41 0TL
Tel: (0983) 78680

Once again we made the long journey to Scotland, where we (EO) hold our annual meeting at Featherstone Castle. On the way, we met an EO family, Heather, the mum, and her two sons, Jude and Curdi, from London. There were six new families altogether. We made friends with Heather and her children, as we know how scary it can be on your first time at Featherstone. It was brilliant at the castle, we went to the Roman army museum and a place called Vindolanda, also a Roman museum, except that it is open air. We also had a camp fire and two birthdays!

I can hardly wait until September, when we have our next one. I hope there will be loads of new people, and all of the old ones. Hope to see you all at Featherstone in September.

Leila Ashley-Walker

TREASURER'S REPORT

Having kept my head down dodging the Flak on VAT and corporation tax, I recently copped a blockbuster in the guise of Publicity Officer - only 'til the next meeting - (that was two meetings ago). Those of you who are asking "where have all the reporters gone?" may well like to volunteer for the job. One read of the job description in NL 79 will give you some idea of why there are few takers. (We expect you to home educate and hold down another job as well!)

Enough of my cynicism - publicity is as diverse as the job description and I am constantly reminded that groups need support in publicising EO at local level. If you have ever experienced the same frustration as me at local gatherings, in not recognising cars of other EOers, then salvation is at hand - EO car stickers. Which, believe it or not, have been debated, deferred, investigated and referred (along with EO pens) since 1988! I've had reasonable quotes so hopefully, one will be sent out with each Aug/Sept NL. Membership Secretaries will be able to supply them to new members. Additional stickers will be available for 50p. I have a stock of EO pens for local events, fetes etc, contact me if you

want some, they may be sold for 50p each; given free on receipt of a donation; given free to Education Welfare Officers, Welfare Officers etc at your discretion (Presentation boxes available).

However, returns will have to be made for accountancy purposes, but costs involved in directly staging events can be deducted.

Which leads me on to the next bit - NO MORE VAT. Yes, thanks to the budget the VAT threshold has been raised to £35K. EO has been deregistered for VAT, but we need to keep our income down (not including donations) to below £33 600 per annum. This may appear easy - but as the school system declines, so our popularity and income increase.


Keeping prices of publications and membership low not only helps spread the word to more people, but keeps our income (and profits) outside the tax threshold. But close financial management is necessary and costs controlled if our income is to be regulated. I trust you agree - if not let me know.

Mike Cook (Treasurer),
34, Beacon Road, Herne Bay,
Kent CT6 6DJ

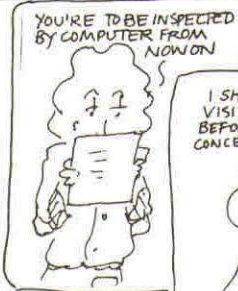
<p>Featherstone Castle Thursday 12-19 September 1991 AGM 14 September EO is having its 6th meeting at Featherstone Castle, Nr. Haltwhistle, Northumberland. -The castle is set in beautiful countryside with interesting places to visit. Accommodation is basic, mainly in dormitories and catering is communal. For more info send sae to Jill Gillings, Ballaglonney, Ronague, Arbory, Isle of Man.</p>
--

«Educating Archie goes here !»

EDUCATING ARCHIE

AN APPLE FOR THE INSPECTOR  BY SEES

1981



Letters

Dear EO,

We are new members to EO and Nicholas is 2 1/2. I feel that it would be an advantage for him to be bi- or even tri- lingual; which leaves me with a problem. My schoolgirl French and German have almost completely deserted me, so that I know that approach didn't work! I feel now that the younger Nicky learns, the easier it will be for him.

We're wondering whether to buy a property in Northern France, where we could go for regular weekends. Problems would include: 1. money (isn't it always?) - but we could manage a ruin and caravan 2. getting to know local families, so we could all learn French together.

We'd love to hear from any EOers who've tried this, or other approaches or are considering various ideas, or who perhaps would like to share a purchase, or borrow ours (covering costs only).

Steve and Rosemary Clayson
5, Baker Close,
Teynham,
Kent ME9 9DW
Tel: (0795) 522181

Dear EO,

Please print this letter which I have received from Marie Cellot-Beaudoin in France. As you can see

she needs accommodation in England during July. I have offered her hospitality for the first and/or second week in July but she needs somewhere to go for the other two (or three weeks) I'm not sure whether she just wants to stay in Bristol or in other places too.

Anna Tully,
455 Portway,
Shirehampton,
Bristol. BS11 9UQ

An extract taken from Marie's letter follows:

This summer I should like to spend a month in Great Britain with two of my children Noemie (9) and Maya (6 1/2) so that we can all learn to speak English. What I'm looking for is families who would be willing to put us up either for a few days or for one week during the month of July. We could bring our own mattresses and sleeping bags, or even a tent if you have a garden.

We don't expect you to show us round or do anything special for us. We'd be more than happy to take in the local scenery, go for walks in the country or around rather than sightseeing and being in town.

Marie Cellot-Beaudoin,
Le Bourg,
69480 Morance,
France.

Dear EO,

An appeal for help, please!
1. We live in an area where just about everybody sends their children to playgroup, but we want to avoid this and need some "ammo"

to counter the expected horrified/uncomprehending reaction from other parents and "authority" figures. Can anybody offer - or point us in the direction of - advice, the voice-of-experience and/or practical suggestions on education otherwise at a pre-school (for want of a better word) level? 2. Has anyone successfully educated children at home bilingually and managed to instil biliteracy? We want to do this but as EO beginners (too new to have made it into this year's Contact List!) have a lot of questions and anxieties - for example, how to help a child learn two different alphabets that go in different directions! (English and Arabic).

Huda Khattab,
45, Tranlands Brigg,
Milton Keynes. MK13 7NU
Tel: (0908) 315161

Dear EO,

I am writing to ask for some advice. My eldest boy is nearly three and all conversations at playgroup seem to be about nursery and school. I would be interested to know if people generally bothered to send their children to playgroups and nurseries if they had no intention of sending them to school, how you introduced the idea to the child (my little boy is very keen to go, thinking it is all football and painting), whether they discussed their plans with non-sympathetic friends or health visitors and at what stage am I obliged to inform the LEA?

I would welcome suggestions for activities and social contact for

young children. I do sometimes worry about making my children isolated and serious by not having enough contact with other children. I could also do with a little moral support as mine and my husband's families are not very keen on the idea, and I have only lukewarm support from my husband. Lastly, any suggestions from anyone out there with twins?

Please write with any experiences or suggestions.

Martine Archer,
9, Moor End Terrace,
Belmont,
Durham. DH1 1BJ

Dear EO,

I am a single parent with two boys aged 6 1/2 and 2.

At present I am living in the suburbs of Manchester in a council flat. I am seeking rented accommodation in a rural area where there is a supportive EO group of families, who have young children. I would also consider sharing a house, or joining a communal group living situation. Can anyone out there help?

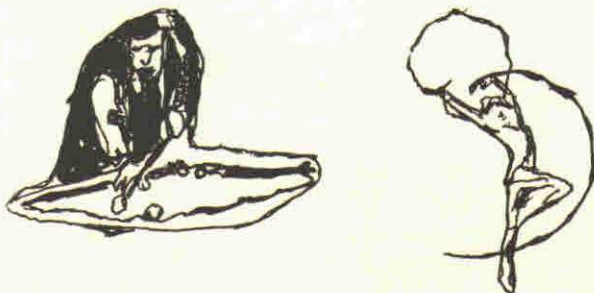
Jan Fawcett,
23, Strathblane Close,
Withington,
Manchester. M20 9F2

WHAT IS SPORT?

You come in out of the pouring rain, freezing cold, wondering whether you have got pneumonia playing a boring game- or rather, standing shivering on the sidelines whilst others kick and hit each other in the mud pit known as the hockey field. Now, in front of total strangers, you have to take your clothes off, and stand under a lukewarm drip known as a shower, whilst your teacher yells at you to get a move on- its your most hated lesson next, there's no time to get properly dry, so you can enjoy the rest of the school day in damp clothing, if the hypothermia lets you live till the final break.

Is that what sport is about in many schools today? Sport is playing games? competition? enjoying yourself? learning, developing, growing? Is dancing a game or a performing art?

The Times Educational Supplement suggested last year that ,in schools, training in sports-such as football- was almost non existent, and (last month) that the shower routine was still present and hated.



There are sex barriers put up in sports, which work both ways: my son's hatrick in a football match went unnoticed; his namesake's had headlines in the paper: that Jody was female!

Most sports, played for fun, by children, can be enjoyed by both sexes: paintball games may be a predominantly male preserve, but don't seem to have affected many children yet!

SPORT AND EDUCATION

Is sport educational: We aren't too sure what sport is, but there are some good performance indicators and competency statements which provide far more 'objective' measurements in many sports than most aspects of the national curriculum.

In swimming, one has to swim a certain series of strokes in a defined time ,tread water for x seconds etc to reach medal stages: clearly showing an attainable(or otherwise) standard easily assessed by anyone. Football includes testing of dribbling, heading certain distances accurately etc, leading to a certificate signed by the England Football manager. In gymnastics, the British Association looks at whether you can turn a somersault in a prescribed manner. Tae Kwon Do looks for learning a pattern of moves, executing them in a particular manner, regular attendance at classes, and a knowledge of Korean. Examinable and educational?

Many sports can be learned by attending classes, often held in sports or leisure centres. There is an opportunity to meet and interact, socialise, with others with a common interest, both within the learning environment/classroom/gym/dojo/hockey field; and through sharing lifts, chatting over a diet coke or turn at the pinball machine. Games usually involve working with others,cooperating in strategies. Much sport is individual: martial arts,athletics, aerobics, step up keep fit and so on. Routines which can be performed individually or with others can be sport: dance routines can have agreed, learned patterns with individual improvisations: I've got the videos to prove it!

"The connection between physical fitness and mental agility has long been established....(a) martial art adds a spiritual element..you are able to positively supply the increased energy in any direction you acquire." (O.Ladeinde, Nigerian Home News,28/2/91),about to open a school based on martial arts training principles.

Children who do not cope with/want/benefit from school experience can attend many classes: mine goes to 5 or 6 hours of football classes(1 examined, including matches& exams): being chosen for the team is a performance indicator);2 hours of dancing (solos indicate competency); 2 hours Tae kwon do (assessed); diving; scouts; badminton: as well as playing snooker,football, swimming etc on his own/with friends. We find that physical breaks from 'academic' work (skipping for dance performance; doing a pattern for Karate exam) is a help to stimulate learning: the socialisation aspect can be important or ignored.

HOW DO WE LEARN

I hear...I forget
I see...I remember
I do...I understand

as Confucious said,may be a good motto for sport: whilst there are mental and spiritual dimensions to most if not all sports,these tend to come into "play" when a certain level of ability has been achieved, and are usually not seen as 'desirable' , initially, by young children.



We learn from the example of others in sport: doing it, being shown how to do it, watching others (live, on tv, on training videos); listening to 'how to do it' or mental training (England's Rugby Union Squad) on audio tape, reading and looking at books.

Most sports have a number of books written about them, at various levels; there are usually magazines, with the more popular sports having these available in most large newsagents; and there are an increasing number of (training) videos, often put out by national associations.

If you want to find about about these, then looking up local clubs/associations; or contacting national bodies ([reference] libraries, leisure/sports clubs& centres or Thomsons' Directories will give you contacts/addresses) can point you towards appropriate literature, videos, coaching schemes etc.

It is usually helpful to have up to date material, and qualified instructors: old fashioned ideas and practices are not helpful.



WHAT DO WE GET/LEARN FROM SPORT?

We can learn lots of things from sport: how to enjoy ourselves, have fun, discipline, foreign languages, rules, organisation, team spirit . We can train to objective standards, improve ourselves physically, mentally, spiritually. We can have a good laugh, and work hard to become Olympic medallists and /or millionaires by our late teens. The hackneyed phrase: what you get out of something reflects what you put into it, is as true for sport as computers: Jody would practice several times a day for a month before a solo dance ; some snooker professionals practice 40 hours a week,48 weeks a year: they actually play - in public- perhaps 6 hours a week,20 weeks a year..

Sport can help to keep you fit physically, mentally alert,emotionally balanced.

We can learn to work ourselves individually to a standard, at home; and/or we can develop the skills needed to work cooperatively with others- handy for working on production lines, management committees, etc.

Sport can help us to recognise people for their commitment, interest, ability, effort in a particular endeavour, rather than looking at their race/religion/sex/size.

EOERS IN SPORTS FOR THE UNDER EIGHTEENS

In schools, the new national curriculum has meant that foundation subjects, like PE, are compulsory, but don't have particular time set aside for them like core subjects.

Governors are now responsible for opening sports facilities in educational establishments to the community. You may find it helpful to contact school governors to look at how facilities can be shared with the community, and with children in particular.

The Sports Council for Wales is trying to increase the usage of sport because it

can improve the health of the next generation- counteracting heart diseases etc

helps energy and enthusiasm to be organised, efficiently directed

gives discipline & skills with life-long usage;

helps to give awareness of cooperative working,

is an active form of learning

gives children the chance to develop abilities and achieve high performance/educational standards



This is the INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SPORT.

The intention is to make everyone aware that taking part in sport is a 'positive and fun way of using our leisure time in a healthy manner'.

The sports minister wants to "promote and encourage fair play and the spirit of sport in competition".

A number of sports are individual rather than competitive, and 'non-competitive 'games' have been the subject of a number of recent 'how-to' books and campaigns (including schools). I ran non competitive games in a community centre with school kids used to "you must win" situations, including football!

SOCIABILITY

One of the many problems which it is falsely assumed EOers have is in having their children make friends, be sociable, play with others. Not all children are sociable, the Alice Springs children getting their education over the Australian air don't seem to suffer, most children live in streets with others, and sport can be a big help: many participants attend classes for friendship as much as anything else, particularly amongst -in my experience- the 13-18 age group.

COST

Cost has to be looked at in different ways:

- 1) cost of class/club attended: Jody's range from 40p-£1.25 per hour.
- 2) Cost of transport to get there, plus anything eaten/drank there (flasks and sandwiches can keep these down)
- 3) Cost of special equipment: gymnastics cost nothing; indoor football needs nothing, swimming costume (£5-10?). Last years dance show cost c.£100 in clothes: most usable afterwards for ordinary wear/dancing; this years has cost £2.65!
- 4) Cost of assessments/shows/demonstrations/ Tae Kwon Do costs £10 for licence, then £15 per 'grading'(4 per year, can cost more), plus attending assessment: travel, eating etc. Friends talk of travelling (with overnight stays) hundreds of miles for skating/ballroom dancing competitions. You don't need to travel/compete/be assessed.

Transport/lifts may be shared(with EOers or others attending: parents make friends as well!); equipment may be provided free or cheaply (Jody's badminton bats & 7 shuttlecocks, cost £3, well used after 2 years; but rackets can cost £30 or more. Second hand skates/football boots/tap shoes/canoes are often available through associations/instructors/children who are a year older than yours! as children grow out of them.

INDIVIDUAL VIEWPOINTS

THE 4 Ss.

"We consider our '4Ss' far more important than the 3Rs! My daughter, Johara, has skied on the local dry ski slope from the age of 5. At 6, she had her own little boat and started sailing with the junior sailing club. I started taking her to the local swimming pool at 3 months and by 4 years she could swim and dive well. We have recently branched out into skating, both ice and roller, though the ice rink is 40 miles away.

These are all sports which can be done without being competitive, though her sailing was nearly spoilt by the teacher encouraging too much of that. The other children come back looking grim if they haven't won, which is all except one, of course!

I consider sport to be more important at an early age, as it is so much easier to learn then. It also develops the muscles and brings confidence. Literacy can be developed later on, inbetween more important activities.

We also join in with any other sports available, like tennis (swing ball is useful in practising alone), and Johara can often be found in a cricket match on the beach, with a variety of ages. Some teenage boys were reluctant to include her last summer but found that they had to work hard to keep up! We are lucky with the area in which we live-Llandudno, N.Wales--so many opportunities and many good friends have been made through them--archery is the latest interest.

Lets face it, E.O. could make us insular so easily, but shared sports can counteract that tendency. I have never been good at games, perhaps because I started too late? Anyway I feel that I have missed a great deal and I am determined that my daughter is not going to.

My cousin criticised the amount of money I spent on these 'luxuries' but I pointed out that we get our clothes from jumble sales and avoid expensive toys or electronic equipment--everyone must choose their own priorities. Anyway, many of these sports are subsidised, the equipment is provided, and they do not cost much.

Johara does sedentary "school" subjects for the first two hours of the morning, including music, and then we are free for the other activities. The hour's drive to the ice rink is used for tables, a little German, and singing.
(from Verity Sykes-Davies)

GYMNASTICS

I'd like to put in a plea for gymnastics. It doesn't cost a lot (at least in Scotland, where clubs are not run for profit), it helps in developing agility and strength, no expensive clothes or shoes are required, and although it can be competitive, competition is not of the essence. My kids love it!
(from Emily Matthews)

CANOEING

Canoeing is the general term used in this country to describe the activity of using a small, portable vessel that is propelled on water by a single or double bladed paddle. The vessel can resemble either the Eskimo kayak or the Red Indian canoe.

The modern sport subdivides into 3 broad categories

1) Competitive, this includes

Canoe polo, which is played in a swimming pool, sprint and marathon racing which is on rivers, slalom and whitewater racing which are on rapids, surfing on breaking waves at the beach, canoe sailing, International 10 metre canoe sailing,, rodeos which are acrobatics in rapids and finally squirting which is like rodeos but in much smaller kayaks.

2) Recreational, this includes

Inland touring, this is shooting rapids, which on the Continent can be miles along,

Placid water touring on canals and gentle rivers, this is a real family activity whilst the children are young,
Surfing for the pure joy of it and the barbecues,
Canadian canoeing, again on rapids or gentle rivers and canals,

Squirting or hot dogging which are the non-competitive side of rodeo and squirting as above,

Sea touring, a very individual branch of canoeing where self-sufficiency is absolute as is the freedom experienced.

OK I admit it, I'm a sea canoeist.

Imagine: its 6am and there is still dew on the grass. You pick up your kayak and carry it gingerly to the water's edge. You step in and fit your spraydeck then paddle slowly and silently down river with two other friends in their kayaks, startled coots and moorhens scatter as your shadow touches, the dawn sun sends dancing patterns of light from your wake. You pass and leave no sign of your passing and take nothing but memories. You make no noise, no damaging wash and nothing is harmed .

To me this is canoeing, this is exploring God's creation without any destruction. I can see my maker in His creation. It is an intensely moving experience on occasion and one I value.

1) Is canoeing safe? yes it is IF you learn how to. There are courses run by qualified instructors all over the country. They will emphasise Safety and Fun, team work and achievement, what to do and what not to do.

2) Is it competitive? only if YOU want it to be, or if you prefer it in the broadest sense because you can try to improve your own skills.

3) Who can do it? anyone, and I mean anyone, physical or mental disability is no reason not to, in fact the governing body, the British canoe Union positively encourages it and runs training courses for its instructors to this end.

4) How do I start? join a local club or get together with some other EOers and hire an Instructor, full details courtesy of BCU

5) How much does it cost? For a second hand kayak, paddle and buoyancy aid, I would expect £80 upwards or the fee to join a club which would have gear for hire at cheap rates.

Why should I/we do it, why not? It can be solitary or family based, the choice is yours. As a physical activity it can help tense parents and children relax together. Your children can really go exploring.

From our point of view there is: history (canals, waterways, locks etc); geography (river morphology, natural history); biology: (wildlife,trees, waterside habitat etc); physical education (skills involved in paddling, effort used to paddle); conservation (erosion, pollution,water state, animals); inter-personal skills(canoeing is a group activity); life skills (first aid, expedition planning, logistics, camping): the list is almost endless and the above is nowhere near definitive. (from Alex Paterson)

SPECTATOR SPORTS

Spectating can be fun: apart from the social side, what greater joy is there than to be stood for 2 hours in deep snow and a force 9 gale watching your son freeze to death whilst losing 18-0 in a football match? At least it is free,whereas a Wembley International match can set you back £20 per head admission. Most childrens activities, leisure centres etc are free to spectators, though some charge 15-40p if you are not a "parent" for admission.



ENDNOTE

I feel that EOers can get from and give a lot to sport.Whether you want to learn the gentle art of yoga in your own living room, or want to be centre forward in American football,start looking tomorrow and get involved by the next day.The best - brilliant-educators of children I have come across are all from N.Wales Sports :Tony Fitzimmon's Gyminis (Tony was last heard of EOing in a campavan); Clinton Boyd's N.Wales Dance Centre (started learning at his mum's feet when she was teaching...);and Martin Williams' Tae Kwon Do classes. If all else fails, come and live in N.Wales:we grow good tutors (& home educated children who gain top marks in ballet, football, martial arts etc). There are plenty of opportunities,and my co-editor will help you learn: he is too busy taking part to write about it- and as it is his hard work at sport which made me offer to be editor, that is an attitude I can hardly complain about! At least he sleeps nights!

Kevin Fleisch

Dear EO,

My name is Leighton Hargreaves. I am writing to you about Azimuth Adventure and Education Afloat.

Azimuth is a group of young people between 11 and 16 years old, who participate in expeditions which are enjoyable and very educational, usually by sea. So far Azimuth has done two long expeditions, in the summers of 1989 and 90, and many short get-togethers.

Azimuth was started, and is generally organised by Mike and Liz Johnson, who own our boat, the Mary Bryant. She is a 41 foot schooner, built 10 years ago by them. She complies with the new DoT safety regulations, and our expeditions are YET approved.

The beauty of Azimuth is that young people are expected to be equally responsible for the welfare and learning of the group as the adults. This quickly increases their reliability and self-confidence.

Azimuth is planning another expedition this year, and a longer two-year expedition starting in 1992. We want to buy a new, bigger boat; as the Mary Bryant can only take six people along with the Johnson family. We have already been given money for equipment and bursaries for poorer children from the Uganda Society, commercial sponsorship, the Sports Council, the local district councils, the James Myatt Foundation and the Vanderstar, Prince's, Walker, Young Explorers, Lokata and Ultimate Trusts. Whew! We still need more funds, though if we are to buy a new boat. We have thought of a scheme where people

give a monthly contribution and are brought up to date with the progress of the group. Because Mike and Liz are working voluntarily for Azimuth, the cost is comparatively low; about £3 per day. Bursaries can also be given.

My brother heard of Azimuth through the EO newsletter and I am pleased that I have been offered a place on this summer's expedition. I wrote for a questionnaire, which is six sheets of cleverly devised questions, to make one actually think what *they* will get out of the expeditions, and what *they* can contribute to the group. I have participated in a meeting on Bodmin Moor, to discuss plans, decide whether I want to go, and finally be told whether there is a place for me.

If you are interested in joining the group, or subscribing to our magazine Seaborn (£8 for three) which is work done entirely by the young people, and which my brother (who is 15) now edits, please write to us.

We would also love to hear from you if you can, or know someone who can help us financially.

Leighton Hargreaves, (Age 12)
Flat One,
Styche Hall,
Market Drayton,
Shropshire. TF9 3RB

Dear EO,

I have just received a great new idea of which I would like to inform all EO members.

"The Green Catalogue working for the environment" is how *The Whole Thing* describes itself.

It has just introduced an Agent's Scheme which you can earn commission on ranging from 7.5 to 12.5% for products you sell from the catalogue.

It sounds like an excellent way of sharing costs of "green" products (on a regular basis) with local EO groups/individuals. It works like this, when you've got together an order of £100+, the agent sends for the order, pays for it and then distributes it.

The Whole Thing's address is now 34, Market Place, Kendal, Cumbria. LA9 4TN. Tel: (0539) 721922.

Jan Gartshore,
Solsgrith House,
Sandale,
Cumbria CA5 1DE

Dear EO,

We enjoy a) the newsletter, b) our local group who have regular meetings thanks to a super co-ordinator (well done Jane!) and the friends we have made - and c) the families whom we have supported in keeping out of school. However, I used to be a teacher in school and this comment is not meant as an attack but as food for thought. Many books I find unreadable and BBC commentaries unlistenable (yuk!) due to the poor standard of English, grammar punctuation and spelling. Our editors have to work hard to produce exceptional newsletters as well as home educating their

children and keeping the spiders and LEAs at bay. I know I am not the only parent who winces at the errors occurring regularly.

My reason for writing and possibly stirring up a hornet's nest is the picture that we present to others. English is our channel of communication. If the rules are not obeyed, then non-English speakers become confused and LEAs, may well doubt our ability to communicate a) the rules, or b) with our children. Some rules are necessary for all parts of society and whether we "teach", "educate", "indoctrinate", or "convey", it is necessary to "communicate". Would a proof reader help or is time at too high a premium? As I say, "Food for thought" NOT a criticism of the editor.

Ann Chiverton-Hunt,
16, Anthony Close,
Watford,
Herts. WD1 4NA
Tel: (0923) 34862

Dear EO,

This is yet another letter on the subject of immunisation.

Whilst many have strong feelings for or against immunisation, surely everyone will accept that it is the right and responsibility of parents alone to make this decision for their children. Logically, parents should be given all the facts to base their decision on, although I don't feel this is the case.

In the December newsletter, Dr Margaret Abbott quoted several facts about whooping cough. Up to

1957 (and the introduction of the vaccine) there were over 100 000 cases a year, out of which 1 in 1 000 children died. Does this figure of 100 000 cases allow for any mild cases which went unreported or unrecognised? If not, it would make unreliable the figure of 1 in 1 000 deaths. How many of those children who died were at greater risk of complications because of other weakening medical conditions? What actually is the proportion of otherwise healthy, normal children who died or were otherwise damaged by whooping cough? How does this compare with the number of normal, healthy children adversely affected by the vaccine?

It is also worth pointing out that the vaccine does not prevent a child catching whooping cough, but in theory makes it less severe. In our own family, only one of our four was vaccinated, and, when three of them caught whooping cough, hers was by far the most severe case. Would she have been better off if not vaccinated, or did the vaccine prevent a much more serious case? I don't know. It is worth pointing out that our youngest child was not vaccinated but did not catch it, even though he slept in the same room as the others.

Secondly there is the rubella vaccine. This is apparently safe (I haven't heard of any serious side effects as with whooping cough) and, in terms of protection it offers unborn children through their mothers, seems to me to be worthwhile. However, at what age and to whom should it be given?

When I was nine weeks pregnant with our last child, one of the boys

caught rubella and was unusually ill with it. I had had it as a child and had my immunity confirmed with each previous pregnancy, so my doctor told me not to worry. If I had known I could be putting my baby at risk, I would have stayed away from home until my son recovered, instead of nursing him as I did. However, some weeks later the hospital, after repeated blood tests, told me I had been infected, there was a 50% chance of the baby being brain-damaged, suffering heart defects, blindness, deafness or other damage, if it lived, and did I want to take this chance and have the baby? As neither Paul or I view abortion as an option, it was not something we considered. As it turned out, I was still immune, had not had rubella and the baby was fine. Whilst very relieved, I was also very angry that no one had told me that rubella immunity can wear off, *however* acquired. All the current media publicity given to the vaccination is very misleading - no warning is given that women should confirm their immunity before or in the early stages of pregnancy, and so it is assumed - as I assumed - that it will be there for life. On the day the hospital offered me a termination, two other women were also told they had rubella. I never found out what happened to their babies. I object strongly to the idea that I was misinformed (with the tragic consequences this could have had) by a medical profession which knew the immunity was not necessarily permanent, but didn't make this public in case it interfered with their current vaccination campaign.

I am not against vaccinations on the whole, and view some as being very beneficial, not statistics that can be

juggled to agree with current medical thinking.

We live in an age where medical advances have been huge and wonderful, but mistakes are still made, and sometimes not discovered for some time. Should we really be expected to accept the word of the medical profession without question when it involves something as important as our childrens' lives or health. Yet if we do ask questions we are treated as a nuisance and given emotional blackmail instead of logical reasons for a particular course of treatment. If current medical thinking on vaccinations or any other treatment is so unarguably right, why is it so hard to find out why?

Sian Wyatt,
6, Queenswood Avenue,
Hounslow,
Middlesex. TW3 4LQ

REMEMBER !
MANY PEOPLE
ARE UNAWARE
THAT
HOME-EDUCATION
IS LEGAL
HELP PUT THIS
RIGHT ON
19TH OCT 1991
NATIONAL
HOME-EDUCATION
DAY

PENPALS

Dear EO,

I am 8. I want girls and boys to write to me please. I like stamp collecting, horse riding, swimming, dancing, and making things. I am a brownie.

Elizabeth Healy,
24, Rectory Road,
Sutton Coldfield,
West Midlands. B75 7AL

Dear EO,

My name is Denyse. I am 15. I would like a penpal aged 14 to 16. My favourite music is MC Hammer, Iron Maiden. Eurythmics plus lots of others. I love dancing (mostly Rock'n'Roll and Disco). I like Kiefer Sutherland and Michael Keaton. If you have similar interests write to me.

Denyse Smith,
55, Malvern Road,
Hampton,
Middlesex. TW12 2LN

Dear EO,

My name is Laura, I am nearly 11 and would like a penpal of similar age. I live in the country near the sea. I love animals, birds and art.

Laura R Murphy,
The Haywain,
Upcott Hill,
Ashford,
Barnstaple,
North Devon.

P.S I am very fond of babies and young children and would be pleased to write to them.

Dear EO,

My name is Hannah. I am 10. I like stamp collecting, and swimming and pottery. I live on a 44 acre farm and 7 adults and 3 children live there. I would like penfriends about the same age.

Hannah,
Glaneirw,
Blaen Porth,
Cardigan,
Dyfed. SA43 2HP

Dear EO,

My name is Julie Clements, and I'm 13 and home educated, I would like to hear from boys or girls 12+, my hobbies are swimming and karate. Please write to:

Julie Clements,
40, Flanshaw Road,
Flanshaw,
Wakefield,
West Yorkshire WF2 9ES

Dear EO,

My name is Michael Surtees. I am 9 years old and I would like anyone (boy or girl) aged 8-11 to write to me as I would love some new friends.

My interests are football, cycling, gardening, drawing, reading,

birdwatching, travelling and computer games.

My two favourite pop stars are MC Hammer and Vanilla Ice.

Michael Surtees,
15 Drayton Road,
Fulwell,
Sunderland.SRG 8HE, Tyne and Wear.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

NORTH-WEST

LIVERPOOL

New Co-Ordinator The Woolfe/Polkowski family is moving to Roussillon, the Eastern Pyrenees, in the autumn. Chris Lloyd has taken over as co-ordinator for Merseyside and is already busy with enquiries and new members. Phone 051-733 3714.

Weekly Swimming Sessions: Meg Faulkner is trying to arrange reduced rates, do join her, 051-928 2680

French fun and games in a weekly group lesson with an experienced teacher (very keen to support EO). £ 1.50 for first child in family, others £ 1. Phone Pam Parkin 051-263 1538.

Mid-June Fun Day with *Bouncy Castle* at my house, games for older children or we can go to the beach. Bring food, I will provide drinks. All welcome. Ring Claire French, Caldby, Wirral; 051-625 1410

Organic Farm proposed visit in July, also phone Claire French

Fords Of Halewood Factory Visit booked for August. Contact J.A. Fowler, 68 Harlow Close, Sutton Heath, St Helens, WA9 5EX. Jo also wants to arrange regular **Riding Lessons** - do contact him if you're interested.

NORTH YORKSHIRE

New Co-Ordinator from 15th June: Sue Clare, Alexandra Cottage, Rievaulx, Helmsley, YORK, YO6 5LB. Phone Bilsdale (043 96) 364

Get Together 28th June 2pm Jane Lininsh welcomes you to her home at 4 East Cottages, Shipton Road, Clifton, York. Phone (0904) 612 825. Opposite Clifton Hospital. Come along if you're free.

Transport I would be happy to share my transport with anyone travelling from York to get-togethers in our region. Please contact Gwen Baldock c/o 6 Villa Grove, Heworth Green, York (0904) 421982

School Facilities A local high school has offered to hire classrooms/facilities to home-schooling families. If anyone is interested or feels able to put on a more technical science morning then please contact Gwen Baldock.

Offers accepted, as ever, for occasional meeting points throughout our area.

WEST YORKSHIRE

25th June Day out at Lotherton Hall, near Leeds. Meet at 11am at the cafe. Bird Garden (free), Art Gallery: Adults £ 1, Children 45p, extensive grounds.

4th July American day at Celia's house, 432 Killinghall Road, Bradford. Phone (0274) 640127 for directions and further details. Please bring ideas, memorabilia, feathers etc.

13th July Parents and children's meeting at Alison Tribe's, 4, Pennistone Road, Bird's Edge, Huddersfield. From 11am, bring your own lunch. Phone (0484) 606618 for directions.

30th September Parents meeting at Jacqui Reed's, 73 Salisbury Road, Armley, Leeds. 8pm. Phone (0532) 798783 for directions.

Celia Yates has suggested a weekend summer camp. Please contact her if you are interested. (0274) 640127.

WALES

DYFED

June 9th Gathering at Glaneirw Community. Bring food to share, and an instrument if you like. We're on the Cardigan/Aberystwyth road, opposite the Goggerddan Arms, between Blaenporth and Tan-y-Groes. Phone (0239) 810548

GREATER MANCHESTER

Celia Beeson (061 225 6882) has volunteered to be "activities co-ordinator". If there is an activity you would like to organise or if you have suggestions for future activities, ring Celia or myself.

We have been experimenting with a monthly meeting at the Friends' Meeting House in Mount Street, Central Manchester. The venue is very well served by bus routes and also quite handy for trains, as we are paying for the hire of the hall, this experiment will only continue for a short while unless you support it!

Birch Band every Saturday, 9-10 am at Birch Community Centre, Brighton Grove, M14. Phone Louise Rhodes on 061-225 3492 for details.

Music Group every other Friday at Celia's house. Phone for details (see above for number).

Pond Dip 30th May, 10am at Reddish Vale Visitor Centre, near Stockport. A repeat of a very successful event held last year. Details from Gill Wilson on 061-442 8723.

Friends' Meeting House (see above) 10th June, 10am-12 noon 50p donation per family.

Stockport Museum 17th June, 10am. We are trying this one out. They are developing their educational activities and plan to open a Museum Club for children. Phone Gill Wilson on 061-442 8723 for more details.

*** CHANGE OF DATE ***

Informal Meeting on *15th July* 1.30 pm-4 pm at Nancy Bailey's, 13 Criccieth Road, Cheadle Heath, Stockport.

Anne Nesbit (0625 871718)

PEAK CAMP

At Hartington, Derbyshire from June 20-27th. Phone Shirley Kelk (0332) 675535

HEREFORD & WORCESTER

We are now meeting regularly. Next meeting is a midsummer picnic on the Malvern Hills, Sunday 23rd June at 11.30. Ring Bev for details (0568) 88473

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Get-Together Sunday 16th June 12 noon in Shipton Oliffe near Cheltenham. bring some food and drink. Ring Hazel on 0242 820204 for directions.

We had a good lunchtime meeting in March at Caroline Ambrose and Mike Tuppen's house and an outing to Stow Fair in May. Apologies to anyone who didn't hear about these events. Let us know if you want to know about future activities. If enough people are interested it would be nice to have a regular date for a monthly meeting.

Rachel Sanger (0594) 60855
Janet Smith (0451) 32186
(New joint co-ordinators for Gloucestershire).

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

We now meet on the first Monday of the month (second if the first is a Bank Holiday) 2-4pm for ice-skating at Sutton-in-Ashfield. We also meet on the last Tuesday at Water Meadows for swimming from 10am onwards. In school holidays time is limited, so come early and bring lunch to adjourn to Titchfield Park or to the Sains house afterwards.

Other events:

Tuesday June 4th Sundown Pet Gardens near Retford. Meet 11:30am at the under-fives playground next to the cafe. Bring a packed lunch.

Thursday July 11th Attenborough Nature Reserve, Nottingham. Meet at the car park at noon. Bring a packed lunch. Please note: there are no public toilets (but plenty of bushes!).

Tuesday August 13th. Greene's Windmill, Sneinton, Nottingham. 1pm. Meet at the play-area.

Thursday September 5th Rufford Park, near Ollerton. Meet at 11 am in the courtyard near the Arts Centre. Bring a packed lunch.

Tuesday 15th October. Visit to Newark. Meet in Castle Grounds at 11 am. Bring a packed lunch.

Would anyone who is prepared to host a monthly meeting at their house over the winter contact Paul Sains on (0623) 655050 with some possible dates by the end of August, for inclusion in the October newsletter.

I have also been arranging block bookings to suitable local theatre productions. If you are interested, and are not already attending such productions, please let me know. Paul Sains (0623) 655050

WEST MIDLANDS

Saturday 22nd June meeting at Cannon Hill Nature Centre at 2 pm. Meet outside the centre. Bring food and drink to share.

Saturday 13th July at Cannon Hill Park at 2 pm. Meet outside the art gallery in the park. Bring food and drink to share.

For details of how to get to the Nature Centre and Park phone Carol Willis on (021-455) 9742

Sorry for any inconvenience caused by April's meeting being switched from Harris House to my house at the last minute - this was beyond our control.

NORFOLK

Various workshops, visits, etc. For details ring Karen on 0263 87 740 or Lin on 0553 810438

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Summer Picnic to be held on Saturday 29th June. Meet for lunch at 12.30 pm at the folly at Wimpole Hall (on A603 west of Cambridge). Please bring food to share. All welcome, including supporters and friends.

Next visit to Upware Field Study Centre near Ely will be on Thursday July 4th from 9.45 am to 3 pm. Only 25p per child. Bring packed lunch and wellies if wet.

For further details of above please phone Jacky Barlow on 0763 838941 or Penny Forster on 0223 870134.

HERTFORDSHIRE

The Herts group is meeting fortnightly on Thursdays for various activities, including museum visits, a

fossil hunt, papier mache, swimming and walks. For further details and programme for June - September please phone Jane Lowe on 0707 335825. Members from other areas are very welcome.

We had a *Legal Workshop* in March in Welwyn Garden City - many thanks to Anne & Rob Wade and Sylvia Jeffs for all their hard work which made the weekend a great success. Thanks too, to all who attended and to those who helped with the meals.

I've been asked to write something about the Legal Workshop for the newsletter but haven't had time so far. I'll do my best to get something ready for the next issue.

LONDON VISITS

Tuesday 11th June Hampton Court Meet at the Trophy Gate 11.15 am. I have to check if we can get in as a group and the cost. Please let me know if you are interested - more later.

Tuesday 24th June Geffrye Museum, Kingsland Road, E2. In the William & Mary Room 11.40am - 1 pm (lunch room booked for 1 pm). Tubes - Liverpool Street (Bishopsgate exit)
- Old Street (Exit 2)
Buses 22a, 22b, 149, 243, 67
Numbers limited - ring to book

Tuesday 27th August National Portrait Gallery
Role-playing about the Life and Death of an Elizabethan Gentleman re-enacted in music, drama and dance. This session uses authentic C16th music and dance steps and

covers domestic life in a grand house with Masques and other ceremonies.

Meet 11.25 downstairs in education area for session for 7-11 year-olds 11.30 - 1 pm. Numbers limited - ring to book. Covent Garden afterwards.

There will also be extra Commonwealth Institute sessions available during the year. If you want up to date information about these, please send some stamped addressed envelopes then I can let you know. Please also write with any suggestions you would like to see incorporated into this visits summary.

Contact Susan Petszaft, 2 Leylands Manor, Tubwell Lane, East Sussex, TN6 3RH Phone 0892 661319

LONDON

SOUTH LONDON

We meet more or less monthly to encourage each other, meet new faces and play. We bring food and drink to share. All welcome.

The meetings at Norwood especially have been very encouraging with at least nine or ten families coming to recent meetings. Unfortunately the Norwood Children's centre has lost its funding so in future we'll have to pay to meet there. They have yet to decide how much!

Sat June 1st 11 am - 3.30 pm at the Child and Parent Centre in the Albany, Douglas Way, SE8

Sun June 30th 1pm - 5pm at Norwood Children's Centre, behind St Luke's Church, 2-8 Norwood High Street, SE27

Sat July 27th at the Albany 11 am - 3.30 pm (see above)

Sun August 18th at Norwood Children's Centre 1 - 5pm (see above)

Sun September 29th at Norwood Children's Centre 1 - 5pm (see above)

For more details phone Nodge or Dorothy on 081-469 0413

NORTH LONDON

Sunday 2nd June at the Friends Meeting House, Church Crescent, Muswell Hill from 2pm - 6pm. (We meet here on the 1st Sunday of each month.) Bring food/drink. It would also help if you could bring playthings to share eg toys, puzzles, craft or writing materials, dressing up clothes, music, etc as we aren't allowed to use their equipment.

Monday 17th June 1.30 - 5.30 at the Log Cabins, Interchange, Wilkin Street, NW5. Kentish Town West BR or Kentish Town tube. Bring food/drink (We normally meet here on the 3rd Monday of each month, but please phone first to check that it is on.)

Sunday 7th July at the Friends Meeting House (see above)

Monday 15th July 1.30 - 5.30 at the Log Cabins (see above)

Sunday 4th August at the Friends Meeting House (see above)

Monday 19th August 1.30 - 5.30 at the Log Cabins (see above)

Phone David & Helen on (081-455)5109 or Belinda & Alan on 081-343 1061 for more details.

SURREY

A new group for the area now meets on Fridays from 2 - 5 pm at Hill House, Bishopsford Road, Morden, Surrey. We meet to talk, mix and socialise. All are welcome. Contact Paul and Sharon Saunders, local co-ordinators on 081-646 7377.

AVON

The Bristol Seed Circle continues to meet several times each week for workshops, outings, play and entertainment. Members from other areas and visitors always welcomed. Phone Julia Hammond on 0272 636081 for further information or to receive mailings send an SAE to Poppy Green, 15 Bellevue, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 1DB

Late additions

WARWICKSHIRE

For summer evenings and get-togethers, phone Alison and Phil Cox (Leamington 613619) Mario, Sue, Andrew and Chris McNamara are going to Cornwall at the end of May. Temporary contact address is 104, Cainscross Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 4HN Goodbye to all E:Oers in Warwickshire.

DERBYSHIRE

Wednesday 22nd May Buxton Micrarium - meet in Pavillion Gardens playground.
Sunday 1st Sept Dovedale walk and picnic. Contact Mike 0773 836662.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Wednesday 12th June Picnic at Willen Lake, Milton Keynes. Meet at adventure play area 11 am. Cycles and boats may be available for hire.

Wednesday 3rd July Picnic at Hunsbury Hill, Northampton. Meet in car park 11 am.

ISLE OF WIGHT

We hope to start weekly swimming again shortly (ring to check).

Suggestions for monthly workshops or outings welcome. So far, suggestions include: maskmaking (again), picnics (again!), poetry day (again!!) non-competitive games day. Let's have lots more and dates. (ring Jude to arrange venue/date) Please let us get going again, lots of people want to do things but it takes a little effort to do!

More late additions may be found on page 36

NOTICES

LEGAL INFORMATION

Any co-ordinator or member who has attended a legal workshop and is doing legal work may obtain a free copy of the revised edition of "Home Education and the Law" and "ACE Special Education Handbook" by writing to Bruce and Christine Wallace, 25 Diabaig, Achnasheen, Ross-shire, IV22 2HE

Are you interested in a **VILLAGE COMMUNITY?**

We are a group of 14 people (8 adults and 6 children) who are looking to buy some land and set up a small Village Community in Ireland (probably in East Clare).

We are aiming to be as self-sufficient as possible by basing our community on Permaculture - a plan for sustainable living, but we don't want to use rural living as an excuse for cutting ourselves off from the rest of the world, and what is happening in it.

Our children range in age from 3 to 11 years (with another on the way). We want them to learn, with us, from our lifestyle, with interactions both inside and outside the community.

If you want to be able to build a future for yourselves and your children through co-operation, sharing and trust then we are looking for people to join us. If you are interested then please write to Neil Foulkes and Sheila Oakes, 28 Victoria Row, Knypersley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs, ST8 7PU

CO-ORDINATORS NEEDED

Co-ordinators needed for Dyfed, Powys, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Cleveland, Lothian, Cheshire.

Anyone interested contact Stephanie Futchter on (0246) 239048

CONTACT LIST
CORRECTIONS

HAMPSHIRE

Tricia-Ann Day has moved from 143 Wych Lane, Gosport, Hants to 11 Seahorse Walk, Gosport Hants, PO12 1BH

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Saltmarshe, Christine
**NICHOLAS ** 9/74
(page 7) ** AMBER ** 10/85

LONDON NORTH AND ENFIELD

Jenkins, Jo & Roy ** AMY ** 7/85
(page 38)

LONDON WEST & MIDDLESEX

Taylor, Tony & Rosemary
** TIMOTHY ** 11/84
(page 44) ** THILI-BETH ** 7/82

MERSEYSIDE

Fillingham, Sister Mary (page 48)
Please do not use the telephone number given in the list

TAYSIDE

Patterson, Jim & Elma
** GEMMA ** 2/74
(page 83) ** NATALIE ** 1/75
** ALASDAIR ** 8/75

CALCULATORS

information from *Martin Evans* of London E14

Exceptionally low prices (from £1.88 plus VAT) for basic, scientific or advanced Casio, Sharp or Texas calculators.

I saw their mailing at a school in which I work and we got ourselves one. For a price list, send an SAE to Oxford Educational Ltd, Blue Barn, Tew Lane, Wootton, Woodstock, OX7 1HA

REVIEWS

EDUCATION FOR BEING-

Wild, Rebeca (sic) (translated from German by Fardijah Freedman) Allborough Press, 1990, ISBN 1 855710072 £7.50

Reviewed by *Angela Vincent*

This book is both a chronicle of an Ecuadorean school's development and experience and a discussion of the practical application of several theoretical strands. Over many years the author and her husband develop a pair of kindergartens then a school all based on "active education": a prepared, incredibly rich environment, with all children free to choose among the materials and people. She writes "The active school's aim is to allow every child to learn according to the rhythm of his own development, through real activity in the real world." In this the environment is not so different from that of many "free" schools in developed countries, or indeed from

those that many of us seek to foster in our own homes. The value of this book lies in its wealth of examples, in its exploration of the relationships between theory and practice (for me the discussion of abstraction as against concrete manipulation was important) in its background in an undeveloped, multi-cultural environment, in its challenges and in its stimuli. I thoroughly recommend it.

Allborough Press take orders of single copies. They're at 8 Nuffield Close, Nuffield Road Industrial Estate, Cambridge, CB4 1SS. Phone 0223 212161. Add 50p p&p.

***FISSION* game**

reviewed by *Bob & Sarah Taylor*

FISSION is an exciting game for two to six players, which teaches how nuclear fission works. Players take turns to throw the intriguing ten-sided die, setting off chain reactions as they move around the board. We particularly liked the fact that it is easy to play, and that a game can be finished in under an hour.

£5.95 inc p&p from Haywood Enterprises, 14 Abbotts Way, St Bees, Cumbria, CA27 0HD Phone 0946 822433

MATHEMATICAL VIDEOS

information from *Peta Grimshare*, Cardiff

Six videos suitable for educational purposes for GCSE students have been made by Carol Vorderman (the mathematics expert from Channel 4's "Countdown"). They are very

clearly explained, each lasts about 90 minutes, and they are available from WH Smith and other shops.

They do seem to be the answer to help with Mathematics in our case, as we have found it difficult to get a tutor in this subject, though we have found someone who can teach English, Geography and History. Mathematics was becoming a problem in case we had the Assessor visiting us soon.

In tracking down the 1st, 2nd and 3rd year tapes for my 14 year old daughter I spoke to Carol Vorderman herself on the phone. She was extremely helpful to me and seemed genuinely concerned when I told her that my daughter has not been to school for nearly 2 years as she has school phobia. I asked if she had been approached by either EO or CHEA - she had not heard of either, but said that if it would be any use we could contact her office.

A GUIDE TO CHILD HEALTH -

Michaela Glockler & Wolfgang

Goebel, Floris £14.95

Reviewed by *Jackie Fearnley*

When asked to review this book I was doubtful whether people would want to pay £14.95 for a book on child health. But this is not a simple medical dictionary - it is written from an anthroposophical point of view evidenced by an index where appendicitis is preceded by archangels, haemorrhage followed by halo, quarrelling in families comes after quarantine, regurgitation precedes reincarnation and scarlet fever is followed by Schiller.

On a practical level there is a very useful description of illnesses and their remedies with instructive illustrations and diagrams where appropriate. Treatment is based as far as possible on natural substances - homeopathic and anthroposophical and herbal remedies, alterations in diet as well as compresses and sitz baths with advice on when a doctor should be called in.

In amongst this practical advice are references to the possible underlying causes of illness - such as the overtaxing of the organism after an experience such as a grown-up's anger or a severe telling off. The section on illnesses of the lower air passages for example has a very useful description of various types of cough and is concluded by a description of breathing as the expression of the soul. The whole meaning and purpose of illness is examined - as affecting different bodily processes and being the body's way of learning, and on a spiritual level being one means by which we gather some experience in our lives through suffering.

Some people will find the advice on such matters as eating and sleeping problems, the use of playpens and breastfeeding rather dogmatic and uncompromising and others may not accept the approaching of sex education and family planning from a spiritual point of view, particularly based on the insights of Rudolf Steiner.

But I can testify to the usefulness of much of the practical advice given after a month of each of the children being ill with something different,

as well as to the value of the First Aid section.

Part II of the book is entitled "Foundations for Healthy Development" with advice on the child's development and social environment and Part III "Education and Upbringing" includes religion, punishment and reward, problems of hyperactivity, left-handedness and dyslexia, dealing with the different temperaments (as well as with one's own) "nervous" problems and problems of modern living such as TV, video, radioactive pollution and alcohol and drug addiction.

The book has a double column layout and is printed in a friendly style which with the line drawings amongst the text make it a pleasing book to consult.

Jude Ashley Walker asks: "Would members like book reviews on specific subjects each newsletter eg. June - Maths, August - History etc? Or a variety each newsletter, please ring me on (0983) 78680 to let me know".

ADVERTS

CARAVAN TO RENT

Comfortable, well-equipped 6-berth caravan on organic smallholding in beautiful County Clare. Fresh farm produce available, fishing, birdwatching, meeting our friendly animals or just relaxing in lovely countryside. For details write to:

Shoosmith, Faha, Dromindoora,
Caher, County Clare, Ireland.

USEFUL BOOKS FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

"Teach Your Child to Read Properly" (124 pages)
"Help Your Child with the New Maths" (188 pages)
"555 Ways to Amuse a Child" (174 pages)
"Boost Your Vocabulary" (128 pages)
Very helpful paperbacks, £1.99 each. Post 50p, subsequent copies 25p each.

"Early Learning" Cassettes:
Multiplication Tables, Alphabet, Counting, Nursery Rhymes/Songs; Primary French; Party Games/Songs; Calendar, Musical Sounds of the Orchestra. £2.75 each. Post 50p, subsequent cassettes 25p each.

Immediate refund if dissatisfied.
SAE for list of other helpful products.
Martin Evans, 16 Thistle House, Dee Street, London, E15 0PD
Phone 071-515 1797

PUBLICATIONS BY PIP RUPIK

"Satisfying Your Education Authority" £1.20
"The External Candidate and GCSE" £1.00
"Up to Ten Choices in Your Child's Education: what they are and how to choose" £1.80
"Coping with School Phobia" £1.50
"The Teacher and School Phobia" £1.80

From Apronstrings Education, 14
Basil Ave., Armthorpe, Doncaster,
DN3 2AT Phone 0302 833 596
Cheques payable to Apronstrings
Education, prices include p&p

**OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
BOOKS** EO members can order
catalogues direct from OUP in
Corby or Oxford. Contact Jude
Ashley Walker (0983) 78680 to
order and obtain 30% discount (
discount not available from OUP
direct).

UPDATE on Paul Daniels language
course. Now 10% discount if you
quote EO when ordering and ask for
your discount.

.....continued from page 31
**More late additions to regional
news**.....

KENT

Cobtree Museum of Kent rural life
Nr Maidstone. Meet on the first
Thursday of each month in the
schools room which has been
booked from 1pm onwards. Bring a
picnic lunch to have inside if wet -
outside if fine. Lots of interesting
displays and animals to see and
plenty of space for children to play.
Craft demonstrations have been
booked. 60p per adult, 30p per child,
under 5s free. Please tell entrance
keeper that you are with EO group.

Dover Castle A free visit has been
booked for Tues 9th July. Meet in
car park 11am. Tell gate keeper you
are with EO. Bring picnic lunch.

Camping weekend in Kent see
page 15 for more details

For more info on Kent activities ring
Pam (0304) 210997

Lois Cook writes

I have details of people offering help
to parents in the form of tutoring.

Mr John Venn,
Nucleus Educational Services,
PO Box 85, Broadstairs,
Kent CT10 3YT

The above helps find tutors, do
educational testing for assessment
and guidance, syllabus design,
recommendation of suitable
textbooks etc.

Mrs Janet Harrow, (0795) 533851
offers Maths tuition, mainly for
secondary age. Fees approx £11 per
hour.

Mr Mahonney, (0227) 265493,
offers help to dyslexic people of all
ages and anyone who has difficulty
with reading and writing and/or has
an enthusiasm for literature. He has
many interests and is happy to share
his enthusiasm free of charge. As he
is not very mobile, pupils would
probably have to go to him in
Whitstable.

If there are any other members who
wish to offer their services please
contact me on (022 73) 67059

EDUCATION THROUGH THE Press

EDITED BY SARAH GUTHRIE WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CAROL CHAMBERLAIN & OTHERS

On the same day the Prince of Wales re-entered the political arena, independent schools informed that, up to a third of secondary schools were not adequately taught the basics of English last year. **Guardian, April 23**

PRINCE CHARLES launched himself once more into political controversy yesterday when he accused the educational establishment of failing children and depriving them of their cultural heritage. He called it almost incredible that one child in seven leaves primary school "functionally illiterate" and that, perhaps most alarming of all, 40 per cent left school with no qualifications. He had harsh words for both the standards of education children attain in England and

Wales, and for the child-centred methods used to teach them. Too much stress on vocational training was leading to neglect of our culture, forcing Shakespeare off the curriculum. "This marginalising of Shakespeare seems to be symptomatic of a general flight from our great literary heritage," he said. Only a third of our 16 to 18 year olds were still in full-time education, he said. "In France the figure is 66 per cent, Japan 77 per cent, United States 79 per cent, and the Netherlands 77 per cent."

Sixth form education, with its rigid specialisation for the more academically-minded pupils heading for polytechnics and universities, frightened off many children and did not do the rest many favours. "Are we sure that mathematicians do not need to learn to write English or speak foreign languages? Or that our historians can survive without an understanding of economics?" Withering away of apprenticeships had meant that most young people at 18 went straight on to the job market or the dole. Other countries did not force children to choose between an academic and a vocational education. He wondered how Britain would survive in Europe after 1992.

(GUARDIAN APRIL 23)

Parents' fears that their children will be hurt in a road accident have led to a dramatic reduction in the number of children making their own way to school. According to a study by the Policy Studies Institute, Dr Mayer Hillman, one of the authors of "One false step", says the robbing children of "an opportunity for autonomy, social development, and for recreational skills". Children are supervised the whole time, he complains. "There is no opportunity for them to learn what happens when they do naughty things and get up to mischief". **TIMES ED. SUPPLEMENT**

Roger Cooper, aged 55, a businessman jailed in Iran for alleged spying, said on his release: "Anyone who has been educated in an English public school and survived in the ranks of the British army feels at home in a third world prison." (GUARDIAN, March 1991)

'No test' boy goes back to school

David Ward, Northern Education Correspondent

THE seven-year-old Leeds boy withdrawn from school because his parents objected to national curriculum tests went back to his lessons yesterday after his father received assurances from the city council that he would not be tested. "I am absolutely delighted," said John Charlton yesterday after meeting Keith Burnley, chairman of Leeds education committee. Mark returned to Brunel

primary school at lunchtime. Mr Charlton, who claims the decision could be a precedent to be used by many other parents, has written to Brudenell's head teacher to request that Mark should be exempted from the national curriculum and his tests under section 19 of the 1988 Education Reform Act. The head has two weeks to reply. The city council has agreed that Mark can attend lessons without being tested during that period. A Department of Education and Science circular explaining

section 19 regulations gives three examples of children likely to be exempted: those who have come from a different education system, spent long periods in hospital, or had severe emotional problems. Mr Charlton is claiming exemption on the grounds that Mark has suffered from pressure and stress and that the tests are a waste of teaching time and do not tell teachers anything they do not already know. While use of the exemption clause may not in itself defeat the tests, it provides a way for

other parents to register their protest. Requests may be turned down but there is an extensive appeals procedure, leading ultimately to the Education Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, with final decisions reached long after the period available for testing has expired. A DES spokesman said last night: "Parental opposition to the tests would not in itself generally be accepted as a sufficient ground for a headteacher to exempt a pupil temporarily from the national curriculum under the section 19 regulations." (Guardian)

WHERE TO GET WHAT

The following publications are available from Bruce and Christine Wallace, 25, Diabaig, Achnasheen, Ross-Shire. IV22 2HE.

School is not compulsory (SINC)
A guide to your rights £2.50.

Early years
Learning suggestions for under 12s
£2.50

Later years
Learning for older children plus
GCSE £2.50

Teach your own by John Holt
Philosophy of home education £3.85

Learning all the time by John Holt
£4.50

Schools out by Jean Bendell
A good why and how book by EO
member and long term home
educator £5.95

EO Newsletters
Back copies for '89 and '90 £1 each
EO Newsletter bargain basement
Any four copies (our selection)
from '87 to '88 £1.20
Newly produced newsletter digest
90 page selection of the best from
'82 to '86 £1.50

Growing without schooling -the
newsletter of EO's parallel
organisation in the USA. £10 for six
issues per year starting March, from
Jill Gillings, Ballaglonny Farm,
Quales Orchard, Ronague,
Castletown, Isle of Man.

**EO stationery, re-use labels,
membership forms, EO leaflets**

and handbills - from Lucy
Charlton, 2, Wistow Lane, Newton
Harcourt, Leics LE8 0FT. Send £2
for 100 reuse labels.

PRICES QUOTED ARE FOR MEMBERS ONLY

EO membership/museum cards

The EO membership card gives you free admission to the Science & Natural History Museums and Kew Gardens (See February/March '91 NL for details) in London. Also, EOers who reside in Norfolk can obtain free admission to the Museums run by the Norfolk Museum Service. Please note that this is for Norfolk residents only and you may be asked for proof of residence in Norfolk. To get your card simply send an sae marked EO card to: Paul Bentley, 83, Manor Park, London SE13 5RA

EO childrens' card

These are personal ID cards to show that you are being legitimately home educated. To get your card send an sae to: William Rust, 8, Church End, Gamlingay, Beds. SG19 3EP

Learning Link

Learning Link is a non-profit making EO family run resource which can enable you to purchase educational computer hardware and software at the educational discount prices available to schools. We have information/price sheets for Acorn, Apple, Cambridge, Commodore, IBM, Research Machines and Tandy computers, Pace modems and Electronic keyboards. Details from: Paul Bentley, 83, Manor Park, London SE13 5RA. Tel: 081 852 1563

Education Otherwise Officers

General Enquiries...36, Kinross Road, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 7EF. Helpline: (0926) 886828

General Secretary...Pam Stevenson, 25, Wyndham Road, Dover, Kent CT17 OBH Tel:(0304) 210997

Director of Publications...Lesley Kilbride, Fearnmore by Shieldag, Strathcarron, Wester Ross IV54 8XX Tel: (052) 05278

Publications Co-ordinator...Lynne Greenhough, 18, Park Street, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE5 7JE. Tel: (0773) 836662

Treasurer...Michael Cook, 34, Beacon Road, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 6DJ. Tel: (02273) 67059

Chairperson...Keith Charlton, Newton Harcourt, Leics. Tel: (053 759) 2118

Special needs...Sylvia Jeffs, 16, St Bernard's Road, Solihull B92 7BB. Tel: (021) 706 6460

One parent family contact...Jenny Blower, 15A, Athelstan Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN35 5JB. Tel: (0424) 722720

Subscription renewals, address changes, membership lists...Bob Emmet, 148 Gunton Lane, Norwich, Norfolk NR5 0AQ. Tel: (0603) 747865.

Publicity Officer...Vacant
Co-ordinators secretary...Stephanie Fatcher, 50, Springfield Avenue, Chesterfield S40 1HL. Tel: (0246) 239048.

Membership Secretaries

Scotland & Northern England...Meryl Cumins, 84, Machanhill, Larkhall, Lanarkshire ML9 2LD. Tel: (0698) 887977.

South East...Valerie Gommon, 19, New Road, Castlethorpe, Milton Keynes MK19 7EH. Tel: (0900) 511247

Wales & Midlands...Gillian Murely, 84, Witney Road, Stafford ST17 0BP. Tel: (0785) 48753

London & Home Counties...David Bettie, 56, Goodwin Road, Ramsgate CT11 OJJ. Tel: (0843) 583260

South West...Maggie Swatridge, 32, Carrey Park, Polperro, Cornwall PL13 2JF. Tel: (0503) 72087

Regional Enquiries Secretaries

East Anglia...Sandie Cottee (0268) 733259

Midlands...Hazel Clawley (021 722) 7165

The North...Mick and Jennie White (0969) 23544

Scotland...Brenda Holliday (0786) 832042

Wales...Miryam Bush (0269) 861069

London...Sarah Taylor (081 808) 3200

HELP LINES

CHILDLINE (0800) 1111

KIDSCAPE (071 488) 0488

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

Our principal aims are to:

encourage learning outside the school system

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

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

For further information

Send a 9 x 4 inch sae to: 36, Kinross Road, Leamington Spa, CV32 7EF



This is printed on 100% recycled paper.

Printed by Argraffdy Arfon,
(0286) 880322