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Notes for Contributors:

The deadline for submissions for the next issue is May 1st 1992. Please send your contributions to the appropriate editor marked clearly 'for publication' and include your full name, address and phone number. Please submit BEFORE the deadline. 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 to spelling, punctuation, etc. Material which is the wrong size (ie, not A4) or with faint print may have to be retyped anyway. If you are referring to a previous article or letter, please indicate reference to the Newsletter number and date.

Feel free to make suggestions about articles you would like to see in the newsletter or supplements.

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

editorial

Dear EO Members - GREETINGS FROM CORNWALL!

For those who don't know us, we are Mario, Sue, Andrew and Chris McNamara. Since August last year we have been living near Penzance, and we have been home-educating for nearly 3 years. Apart from Andrew trying out the local Steiner school for a day last week, both boys are happy to stay at home. (We did wonder whether it was the experience of both parents spending every spare evening typing and most mornings opening mail for the last 3 weeks that drove Andrew to school, but the novelty was short-lived.)

Many thanks to all the contributors to this issue, and apologies to everyone we couldn't include because of space and time restrictions - it will all be passed on though, so hopefully will appear in a future newsletter. The main problem has been that we had only 32 pages available, and about eight of those were 'booked' for committee reports, EO info, Archie, etc. before we were let loose!

Anyway, we hope there is something for everyone in this issue. We decided to give emphasis to how people cope with home-education, and to people looking for help/contacts. To us, this sort of mutual support is vital. The debate on whether the Labour Party will impose the National Curriculum on home-ed families continues - though maybe by the time you get your newsletter, the General Election will have been and gone and decided that particular bit of our fate.

Mario wanted to say thanks to Sue for doing virtually all the typing (OK, all the mistakes are mine too!) and Sue says thanks to Mario for the endless supply of tea and most of the letra-set titles. The boys have been very patient in putting up with all this, so we let them do the cover by way of compensation. It's hard work doing the newsletter, but fun too!

P.S. In case you're 3 feet deep in snow, and the roof's been lost in the gales, let me assure you it's cold, wet, wild and windy down here too- we've got horizontal daffodils to grace the garden.

F.F.S. We did this on our portable typewriter, so you don't need wonderful state of the art word processors to be an editor, just a gallon or so of Tippex.

Right, now I can get on with my breakfast, get dressed and put this in the post.

A BIG HELLO TO - everyone at Gwm Rhaffau, the Smiths in Stowon-the-Wold, the Cox family in Warwickshire, the Shoosmiths in Ireland, the Jacksons in Manchester who called in to see us last week, Paul, Rose & boys in Devon, and all the EOers in Cornwall who've been so friendly!

* * * * *

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

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How do you cope with EOing?

Do you cope with EOing?

This was the title of a discussion that took place between a group of people at the EO gathering at Cliff College recently. It happened as a result of various conversations that took place over the weekend, to the tune of "What do you do?" "Do you feel isolated?"... etc.

What came up in the discussion was that we all experience varying degrees of frustration, isolation within our situations being at home with our children. Whilst we are committed and confident that we are doing the right thing, it is HARD to swim against the tide, and for some of us there is very little support.

We discussed various practicalities (and the dreams... an EO village) and decided that most of the support must usually come via mutual friendships, although the idea of a telephone 'crisis line' was mooted.

We also decided that 'feelings' meetings are important, and that we should aim to have one at the start of every EO gathering as for several people the weekend in itself had felt unsupportive. We felt it important to write a report so that if you too have negative feelings you will know that you are not alone.

We need to make EO more supportive, so if you have any ideas, suggestions, or feel able to organise/participate in a telephone helpline, please get in touch with us.

Valerie Common
19 New Road
Castlethorpe
Milton Keynes
MK19 7EH

Sarah Taylor
23 Whitley Road
Tottenham
London
N17 6RJ

* * * * *

The following letter, from Isobel Bogucki, arose from the same meeting.....

Because of problems with family and moving house, we had not been to a National Meeting for a long time. It was lovely to see so many familiar faces - the children had grown taller and more mature but the adults looked just the same and the organisation had not changed either! We met many new interesting people but had no idea who was new to EO or National Meetings; it took a long while to find out.

Although we were self-catering I was very aware of the excellent organisation of the food for communal meals, so why have we not yet improved the catering for our emotional needs? It was not until the last few hours due to Val's suggested discussion topic that some of us revealed our feelings.

I have sometimes left National Meetings feeling more lonely than when arriving, but I had no idea that others felt the same. I have looked around and seen people apparently full of confidence and close to lots of others, and have felt isolated - was there anyone who cared about me enough to accept my failings and feelings? How can we improve our communications with each other - if I cannot relate effectively, how can I help my children to become more successful?

Two simple and practical suggestions:

1. If a polaroid camera was available to take family photos, as happened at

Featherstone, we could add a paragraph about ourselves and our current needs and concerns to act as a springboard for more meaningful contact.

2. A discussion on the first evening/morning to add to the above paragraph or mention things that we may not want to commit to paper would help to break down the barriers.

We hope to reach the Lake District in September along with all my feelings of failure etc. Any advice or constructive criticism will be gratefully received. With warm memories of everyone I met at Cliff College, love,
Isobel Bogucki, 20 Rusper Road, Horsham, RH12 4BD.

Still on the subject of mutual support.....

Dear EO members,
Although my son, Joshua, is only 12 months old, my husband and I have already decided that if possible, he will be educated by us at home. Most of my friends with young children have started talking about and sending them to nursery school (something we won't be doing!) and I feel that Joshua and I are becoming increasingly isolated.
Is there anybody else in a similar situation, or with older children who are being educated at home, who would be interested in meeting every week or fortnight for a cup of tea, chat, outings etc? If so, I'd love to hear from you. Here's hoping!
Cathie Hinson, 65 Lion Lane, Haslemere, Surrey, GU27 1JL.
Tel:(0428) 642246.

Dear EO-ers,
I would like to get in touch with other families who have pre-teenage children. I have a 10-year-old and am finding that there is a need for more activities independent of me. I feel that this is quite a crucial stage, where children often feel the need for more than home can offer. In Sussex we are starting a group doing activities in woodcraft/survival in the darker recesses of our garden. Anyone is welcome to come and join us and I would be interested to hear of any other groups who are having similar activities. What about trying to form a group for these children to be part of and enable them to make contacts with others?
Sue Fetszajt, 2 Leylands Manor, Tubwell Lane, Crowborough, E.Sussex TN6 3RH.

Hello everyone,
I, Judith, home-educate my son Lee, aged 10 and am hoping to do the same for Matthew (3½) and baby Charlotte.
• We are hoping that there are other EO families in the Doncaster area
• who would like to contact us, with a view, maybe, to setting up regular
• get-togethers. We look forward to hearing from you all. Best wishes -
• Judith Gibson,
• 10 Cheltenham Road,
Intake,
• Doncaster,
South Yorkshire,
DN2 6JE
Tel:(0302) 322739

"We have recently moved to Uckfield where we are renting whilst we sell our house in the Midlands. Rebecca is 3 1/4 and I'm fed up with being the odd-one out with regard to my alternative views on child-rearing, education and life-style. I would like to contact and meet other EO-ers for some moral support and company. I'm nervous about the responsibility of home-educating,
• although I can't imagine sending Becca to school and would appreciate hearing
• other peoples' ideas and experiences of home-education.
• We will be moving to Devon-Dartmoor
• area within the next 18 months - peoples' experiences of the LEA and the local support network/groups there would be helpful."
Lynda Hitchman,
28 Goldcrest Drive, Ridgewood,
Uckfield, East Sussex. TN22 5QG.

Teenagers at home.....

Dear EO,

We've read the Newsletter with interest for two years now and it seems about time we wrote and contributed to the general information that gets passed around and is so much help to us all. Who are we? Well there's Tony who works full time outside the home and then there's me who works time and a half here. After that: Esther who is 15, Julian who is 14 and Joel who is 12 and a half.

The children decided to leave (supposedly good) schools two years ago because of all the usual reasons (impossibility of progressing fast enough, being bullied for trying to, awesome cruelty from supposed friends etc etc). They've worked and played hard and thrived ever since - and have a small band of local friends ranging from 12 to 16 who all go to school. They seem happy to see my children of an evening and socialise more with them than their school friends. A change hurts nobody!

Anyway, I'd like to encourage everyone with teenagers or near-teens to persevere and not send them to school on account of approaching GCSEs. If we've cracked it, anyone can. Apart from two things we're no different from anyone else in tackling this. The two things are: the children are very close in age and can do some subjects together and benefit from group work; I own a photocopier which means we can use worksheets or amalgamations from various sources (for variety) which tailor the material to suit us.

Apart from this, our experience might help anyone in similar circumstances. Our basic premise is that they want qualifications and I cannot do 9 exam subjects with each child all at once. So - we tackle an exam in an appropriate subject whenever we feel like it and just study a range of other subjects all the time, tackling topics that seem necessary. It's important to only take an early GCSE in a subject the child is good at and knows quite a bit about already. In this way we took eight last summer (5,2 and 1 respectively) and got good grades in all. That encouraged us to do likewise this year - but we're now on our second-best subjects!!

I use mostly the NEA and the SEG for boards - this ensures we get into their way of thinking and marking, limit the cost of ordering materials and establish relationships with people at the other end. Most people are very helpful. You need to study the rules for external candidates in case an age limit or a rule applies about attending a centre for the course. Usually there is an alternative option. (LEAG had no external exams on offer last year.) The coursework which is mostly compulsory this year is no real obstacle and certainly removes some of the possible stress. You just have to read the marking schemes constantly and check which aims are being tested - and make sure the evidence is there in clearly labelled paragraphs.

The children take a full part in this procedure once I've located the information - it makes them very responsible for their work and the additional option of being allowed to wordprocess certain subjects makes it possible for them to produce very satisfying results.

Needless to say, all this covers most of the skills needed for English - so why do English as a 'subject' every day? Skills needed for one subject are the same as for another quite often: reading graphs, extracting information etc.

Recommendations for children who seem suitable candidates are:

- NEA Child Development (12 visits to a child over 3 months, 2 papers)
- NEA French (No coursework - various levels)
- NEA Geography Syllabus B Scheme 2 (tells you exactly what to study, 2 papers + an enquiry)
- NEA Religious Studies Syllabus A (2 religions/options - coursework for each, 2 exams)
- SEG English External and Literature External
- SEG Mathematics
- SEG Human Biology or Physics (1 or 2 papers plus a short paper in lieu of a practical, based on experiments which have been carried out.

Esther attended a local college for three weeks but found the students childish (!) and Julian has done both LEAG Astronomy and SEG Computer Studies via an evening class who welcomed him. Joel has done the same exam as a private candidate from home, so either method works.

Even if you are not ready for top level maths, sending for some level 1 and 2 back papers (grades DEFG) can provide something easier and interesting for children who like maths to have a go at. This is beginning to ramble so I'll stop. I just wanted to whet your appetite for the joys to come if you have children approaching this age range. It really is stimulating and challenging for all of us - and totally without the rigours and stress of school. Our most commonly used phrase is still "Well..let's do it tomorrow instead" - and off we go up to the moors!!

If anyone wants a specific reply to a specific request ("Can you give me the address of..", "What could I do with a 12 year old for history?", "Do you know a good book for xxx?") then I'll be pleased to help if I can, and if I can't, well, it'll be nice to hear from you! The inspector came for the first time last week and was pleased - which is what has given me the confidence to write.

Eleanor Patrick 37 Gledhow Wood Avenue Leeds LSB 1NY 0532 661727

teenagers & resources

Dear E.O.,

I have been meaning to write to the newsletter for years... so finally..... Pete for some four and a half years now, off and on, has been paid part-time to teach children at home by the local education authority. Some of these children are ill, some are school refusers and some have been excluded. Pete goes into their homes two hours a day to teach them English, Maths, etc. I think that it's true that more and more children are now being excluded from schools, as head teachers seek to improve their 'averages' by eliminating what they see as their " worst problems ". Our son is at home doing 2 GCSE this year and we have found Pete's experience of dealing with external candidates from his job invaluable; the rules are very complicated in certain aspects. (It may be of use to other members to learn that it is possible to get a teacher paid by the LEA at home under certain circumstances.)

The main reason for my letter, tho' is to say I think EO needs some kind of national library facility. Educating at home, especially when children are older, is expensive, and it is also time consuming to find the appropriate materials to use with your child. It is also completely daft one family buying a complete 2nd year French course, say, or maths books for a particular stage and then those books just sitting on a bookshelf or being passed to a child who maybe is not specifically interested at information put quite that way, or at quite that level. Can I propose some sort of resource - maybe a listing rather than a physical collection - where collections of books and materials to be passed on (and they could just as well have

been made at home for a specific purpose) are described in **detail** - ages used with, special features , any bias, problems used for, weight for postage, etc. etc. with some sort of pricing system so that each family using the equipment (or EO if it is decided that EO funds should be spent on materials) contributes, but also can recoup some of their costs, fairly, if and when they return the materials (properly taken care of) to the system, (perhaps there could be a standard percentage resale price or some other kind of reimbursement). What do other people think? I remember being very disheartened to learn that materials couldn't be taken out of the old resource centre - surely we can organise something?

Can I recommend the following books: How to Survive School (this probably sounds an extraordinarily inappropriate title for EO) by Greg Shaw... who must really have been a secret member. It is very very funny..... helped our son (who has been in twice and out twice) to put all the rubbish in perspective... there are sections on how to avoid compulsory games and PE (e.g. by being absolutely useless), how to get teachers off the point, how to cope with team spirit, decoding Teacherspeak. (e.g. Right, that's your very last warning... decoding.. "I haven't a clue how to control this little so and so and there's still twenty minutes till the end of the lesson!" and Teacher "Types" e.g. the Register Fanatic, the Do-Gooder, and dealing with teachers control techniques like the "Fear Technique" (e.g. sarcasm) "the Open your Books at Page 96 Technique", and so on.. I think the author is a teacher and he has all the ridiculousness and all the cruelty spot-on. It may now be out of print. Beaver Books 1987.

I would also like to recommend Lets Cook it Together, by Peggy Brusseau, an American Cookbook where they have had the good sense to divide the tasks into those for grown-ups (shown labelled with glasses) and those for children. There are lots of very imaginative food ideas... all vegetarian.. with excrutiating (and very popular) names like Squash Racket, Big Yawn Soup, Fruity Goop, Minnehaha Splash, etc. We have also had a lot of enjoyment out of Festivals Family and Food by D. Carey and J. Large (which has been recommended in the Newsletter a couple of times before.)

Can I also recommend the National Association for Environmental Education, which have several very good fact packs (it's an organisation for teachers to get info from) they can be contacted at Wolverhampton Polytechnic, Walsall Campus, Gorway, Walsall, WS1 3BD.

My son is currently taking GCSE courses. We have been very delighted to find that the teachers from his old school (which he left because of bullying) are being extraordinarily helpful with his GCSE syllabus, and his old English teacher has come round, entirely voluntarily to invigilate some of his coursework. They have also given advice and I am amazed that they are so dedicated, particularly to a child who has decided (it was his decision) to leave them. I think we should all be aware that there are some selfless and enthusiastic teachers around!

Avis Greenwell, Pete Jim and Sarah Millman

155 Castle Way,
Dale,
Haverfordwest,
SA62 3RN

PEN-PALS PAGE

Hello, my name is Emily. I like swimming, cats, reading, Brownies and painting. I am nearly nine and I would like some girls around my own age for pen-pals. Emily Chester, 40 St. Richard's Road, Crowborough, East Sussex. TN6 3AT

Dear EO,
My name is Emma Hansford. I am 11. I like: stamp collecting, cooking acting, walking, swimming and camping. I would like a pen-pal aged 7+. So write to: Emma Hansford, 25 Victoria Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 3NF.

Hi, I'm called Mark and I am looking for a pen-pal. I'm 10 yrs old. I like watching films, drawing pictures, computers and lots of other things. Please write soon to this address: Mark Matthews, Torway, Hall Bank Lane, Mytholmroyd, West Yorkshire, HX7 5HQ.

I am ten years old. My name is Lee. I am looking for a boy pen-pal about the same age as me. I like swimming, table-tennis, golf and learning the French language. I have been educated at home for 6 months. I will reply to all letters. Please write soon. My address is:
Lee Gibson,
10 Cheltenham Road,
Intake,
Doncaster,
South Yorkshire. DN2 6JE

*MORE on
the next
page!*

My name is Josh and I am 5 years old. I will be 6 on the 16th June. I would like a pen-friend to write to. I live in Wales in the countryside by the sea. I have a big sister Jessica, she is sixteen, and I have a baby brother Jerome, he is only 15 months old. I am learning to read. I like doing magic tricks, playing with my Ghostbusters and watching Thunderbirds on the telly. We have a dog called Beauty and 4 cats called Jacko Charlie, Garfield and Chappati. We have 4 chickens and a tortoise and some tadpoles. I will write back to anyone who writes to me. Bye for now, Joshua Fring-Ellis, 1 Briscwm Cottages, St. Dogmaels Cardigan, Dyfed. SA43 3DS.

Hi, my name is Tommy and I will be 13 in June. I am looking for pen-pals around the same age. I like walking, cycling and playing computer games. I also like music, but don't buy many records. I enjoy home education and have been at work at home since June '91. Will reply to every letter received. Write to: Thomas Carroll, 3 Elletson Street, Foulton-le-fylde, nr. Blackpool, Lancs. FY6 7AE.

I am a 42 year old mother of 3. I would like some pen-friends please. My name is Bernie. I am happily married to Syd and we have lived in Wales for 6 years. We were both born in Birmingham but don't miss the city one little bit! I like walking, reading, most music and I love entering competitions. I have a 16 year old daughter who is doing her GCSE at our local comprehensive - she was Home Educated for 5 years. My son Josh is 5 and he is being home educated and he's a very happy little boy. I would like to hear from anyone, anywhere and I will answer all letters. Bernie Fring-Ellis, 1 Briscwm Cottages, St. Dogmaels, Cardigan, Dyfed SA43 3DS.

Getting Together

Calling all people interested in becoming involved in a prospective rural-based 'Housing Co-op - Green Living Project'.
Our ideas include permaculture, organic land use, home education, individual living areas and alternative energy production.
A gathering of interested people is being held in beautiful Snowdonia, 24-27th April '92.
Contact: Coryn, Bryn Hyfryd, Parc Bel, Cilgwyn, Caernarfon, Gwynedd.
Tel: 0286 880179.

EO HOLIDAY WEEK AND MEETING - SEPTEMBER 10 - 17th 1992

This is an advance notice of the above week to be held at High Close Youth Hostel, Ambleside, The Lake District which is a new venue for EO meetings.
Would anyone interested in helping to organise this weekend please contact Valerie Common, 19 New Road, Castlethorpe, Milton Keynes MK19 7EH.
Tel: 0908 511247.

2nd. KENT EO GATHERING 18-22nd JUNE

Secluded site in the Kent Countryside. Gloversbridge Farm, Grigg Lane, Headcom. Activities (any offers?) and evening camp fires. Village and BR station 2½ miles. For further details ring Keith & Sue (0732) 870344.

ANNUAL PEAK CAMP FRIDAY JUNE 12 - THURSDAY JUNE 18

At Barracks Farm near the village of Hartington, between Buxton and Ashbourne. Please contact Ben & Shirley Kelk, 613 Nottingham Road, Chaddesden, Derby DE2 6RU. Tel: 0332 675535.

My name is Jody. I am a 7½ year old boy. I have three brothers and a sister. I have been going to a German school for three hours each morning, for the last six months.

I would like lots of pen-pals to write to me. I like computers, collecting stickers, skiing in winter, riding my mountain bike, drawing pictures and writing. Thankyou.

Jody Bowman,
Amselrain Str 50
Oberderdingen
7519
Germany.

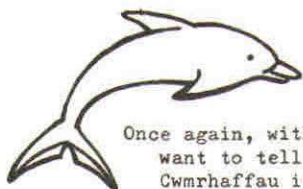
More Pen-pals!

If you would prefer us not to print your full name and address, please mention this in your correspondence to the editor.

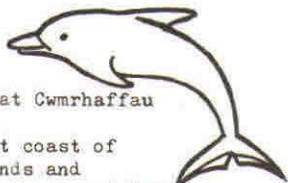
Publications Co-ordinator
Lynne Greenhough will be happy to receive mail at her address on your behalf, and send it on to you.

MARINA BROWN,
130 GREENOCK ROAD,
BISHOPTON,
STRATHCLYDE,
SCOTLAND PA7 5AS

Hi, my name is Marina, and I am 11 in April. I am looking for a penpal, boy or girl, around 9-13 (but your age doesn't matter that much). My hobbies are reading, writing, drawing, painting and acting. I can play the piano and the violin and I'm learning to speak French. I would like a penpal who writes regularly, especially one from a different country, but it would be nice to hear from people living near me. I promise to reply to every letter.



Cwmrhaffau



Once again, with the approaching summer, we at Cwmrhaffau want to tell you of the space we have.

Cwmrhaffau is an old farmhouse on the west coast of Wales, surrounded by fields and woods, ponds and streams, Cleo the horse, cats, ducks, goats, hens, doves and bees.

We are within walking distance of beautiful sandy beaches, cliff walks and caves, and not far from Cardigan and the Preseli hills. Cardigan Bay is one of the two last places in Britain where dolphins are regularly sighted.

In amongst all these delights we have a self-contained small, but 6-bedded flat which we offer for the use of EO members, and for which we make a modest charge on a sliding scale. We also have plenty of space for camping.

Our small community (at the time of writing this) has 5 children ranging in age from 4-12 years old, all home-educated, so we welcome other families with home-educated school-age children.

An important part of our life here as a community is our meditation, when we sit together for half an hour each morning. Visitors are always welcome to join us.

Spring Camp - 5-8 June

Following our last two Spring Camps, we are having another one, but this time in June.

We sing, dance, talk around the fire and make things. This year someone has offered rag-rug making - so bring rags, ideas, skills, games or anything else you can think of.

Please book early as there are limits on numbers.

Sally, John, Julian and Emma,
Cwmrhaffau, Sarnau,
Llandysul, Dyfed, SA44 6QZ.
Tel: 0239 811118



A letter from Canada....

My family and I will be travelling to England sometime in the spring. While there we would like to get in contact with other home-educators and maybe visit those who might be interested in meeting homeschoolers from another country. We are a family of six; my husband Michael is from England although he has lived in Canada for 25 years. I am French Canadian. Julian is nearly 7, Marika is 9, Phillip is 11 and Alex is 13 years old - he attends school of his own choice. All the children are involved in Beavers, Brownies and Scouts, and we all love swimming, camping and the outdoors, and especially bell-ringing. I am looking forward to meeting some people who have, like us, made the choice of educating their children in a different way. Thankyou.....

Louise Atfield, P.O. Box 413, Deep River, Ontario K0J 1P0 Canada.

The above is an extract from a longer letter, but we were pushed for space, so only the main details have been put in!

REGIONAL DIARY

CO-ORDINATORS NEEDED IN EAST LONDON, CLEVELAND, CHESHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE, DEVON, GWYNEDD AND SCOTLAND.

There are many parts of Scotland without a co-ordinator, or with a co-ordinator wishing to resign. Is there anyone in Scotland who would like to help with EO co-ordinating? Every little helps.

If you are interested, please get in touch with Stephanie Fitcher, Co-ordinator's Secretary, 50 Springfield Avenue, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S40 1HL.

Telephone: 0246 239048.

REGIONAL DIARY: REGIONAL DIARY: REGIONAL DIARY: REGIONAL DIARY: REGIONAL DIARY:

NORTHERN ENGLAND:

North Yorkshire:

Meeting at Alexandra Cottage, Rievaulx, Wednesday 13 May, 12 o'clock onwards. Bring lunch and ring me if it's raining. Sue Clare. Tel:04396 364

South Yorkshire:

April 2: Session with Theatre in Education at Lyceum Theatre in Sheffield. (Phone Dinx for info,553836)
April 8: Visit to Kelham Island Industrial Museum.(Phone Mary, 883955)
April 12:Matlock Mining Museum.(Phone Janet, 348451)
May 7: Visit to RSPCA. (Phone Mary, 883955)
May 12: Visit to Chestnut Centre, wildlife sanctuary near Castleton. (Phone Jan, 749156)
May 24: Circle dancing at Paul & Dinx's. (Bring food to share, phone 553836)
June 28: Planning meeting at Janet & Phil's house.

Greater Manchester:

Following the success of last year's workshops at Parrswood Rural Studies Centre, we are in the process of arranging further workshops for the Easter and summer holidays. The series in the summer is likely to consist of 6 one day workshops, with two activities per day, and cost in the region of £5. At Easter we shall run a mini-version. Dates have not yet been finalised. If you are interested in either event, please send a SAE for details to: Gill Wilson, 20 Brook Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport SK4 2RL.

If you are interested in taking part in events in Manchester then do keep in touch, as many events are organised without details being published. Either send a SAE or phone Anne Nesbit (0625 871718). Finally, a reminder to read the details in the last newsletter about WEEKLY and MONTHLY meetings!

West Yorkshire:

April 9: Easter workshop at Sue Hart's, 284 Halifax Old Road, Huddersfield. 10.30am - 2.30pm. Bring lunch. Tel: 0484 537865 for details/directions.
May 1: May Day fun and activity session at Kim Wark's house, 21 Drummond Avenue, Leeds 16. From 10.30 onwards, bring lunch. Tel: 0532 757473 for details and directions.
May 11: Parents' evening at Celia Yates', 432 Killinghall Road, Bradford. Tel: 0274 640127 for directions, Meet from 8pm onwards.

The sessions at Bradford Library are continuing on the first Friday of each month. Phone Linda Mercan (0274 640127) for details. Myrtle may be arranging further workshops - tel: 0274 64061 (daytime) to check.

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LONDON AND SOUTH EAST ENGLAND:

West Sussex:

- April 11: Parents' discussion evening, 8pm at Isobel
(Sat.) Bogucki's. Come along and discuss anything
that you need to, from teaching maths to the
Advisor's visit, feeling isolated to criticism
from friends/ relatives.
- April 29: Visit to Post Office sorting Dept., Horsham. The
(Wed.) manager seems to be very enthusiastic - he will
give us the chance to try out some of the
machines during lunch-break (bring a letter for
the franking machine). We can then watch the
sorting and examine various vehicles. He would
like some idea of numbers, so please let me know
about 10 days before if you hope to come. Phone
for details (0403 61178).
- May 27:) 'At home' days, 11am onwards.
June 18:) ring or see local newsletter for details.
July 23:)

Looking forward to seeing all local members soon, Isobel.

Kent:

- April 13: Friends Meeting House, Union Street, Maidstone.
(Mon.) 12-4 pm, bring lunch, drinks available. £2/family
- April 16: The Historic Dockyard, Chatham. Open 10-6pm.
(Thu.) Meet for packed lunch in outdoor or covered
picnic area, 12.30. A whole day's visit is
recommended as there is so much to see and do.
EO group entrance fee £1.50 each.
- April 27: Friends Meeting House, Maidstone, details as
(Mon.) above.
- May 7: Cobtree Museum of Rural Life, Sandling. Displays
(Thu.) on hop farming, bygone rural life, agricultural
tools and machinery, farmyard animals etc. Lots
of space to explore. Bring packed lunch, meet
in basement room 12.30. Craft demonstration at
2.30. Entrance fee 60p/30p, tell desk you are
with EO group. Just off M20 junction 6, or
cruise on the river Medway from Maidstone -
phone 0622 753740 to check timetable.
- May 11:) Friends Meeting House, Maidstone, as above.
May 18:)
- May 30: Barbeque at Whitstable beach. Arrive early to
(Sat.) enjoy the water, high tide at mid-day. Cooking
from 4 till late. Bring own food for cooking,
salads and bread provided. Bring a bottle, or
there is a pub on the beach and a shop nearby.
Some floor space available for overnighters,
camping needs booking: £2 per adult, £1 per child.
All profits to Maidstone and Area Home Education
Group. Warm welcome to all areas, phone or write
for directions. 84 Island Wall, Whitstable,
Kent, CT5 1EL. Tel: 0227 265583

Seasonal activities have been arranged for the Monday
meetings. For further details of any of the above, or
additional outings, please phone Joy Lyon (0795 530499)
or Sue and Keith Burchett (0732 870344)

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South London:

At present, we are without a regular meeting place, though members are investigating possible venues in Greenwich and Eltham. However, each month, details are being circulated of outings that families are planning so that others can join them if they wish. If you'd like to be on the mailing list contact Anita Flommer on 081-684 8096. (A supply of stamps would be appreciated).

JOB VACANCY - MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY FOR SOUTH EAST ENGLAND.

Having been a membership secretary for some years now, I feel that it is time to pass the job on.

Briefly, I am the person that new members send their membership form to. I hold stocks of all EO publications and make up their order and post it back along with a standard letter or a brief note if required.

I keep a post-book and send monthly sales figures to our treasurer along with the paying-in slip after banking the cheques.

Finally I send the membership forms off to Bob Emmett who holds the membership details on a computer.

The job is not a difficult or particularly time-consuming one, it can be done at one's convenience and it is good to feel that I have been able to contribute to the running of the organisation.

If you feel you might be able to help and you would like to discuss the job further please contact me.

Valerie Common, 19 New Road, Castlethorpe, Milton Keynes MK19 7EH.
Tel: 0908 511247.

North/Inner London:

We meet the first Sunday of every month, i.e: April 5th, May 3rd, June 7th, July 5th etc.
PLACE: Friends Meeting House, Church Crescent, Muswell Hill, N10. Nearest tube Highgate (Northern Line - 10 minutes walk). TIMES: 2pm - 6pm.
BRING: Food and drink. We aren't allowed to use their equipment so bring playthings to share, eg toys, arts and crafts, writing material, dressing-up clothes, music etc.
COST: We ask for a contribution, if affordable, suggested £1.50 per family.
WELCOME: Everyone interested in EO is very welcome. Wheelchair access is not easy but possible via a slope in the garden; toilets are not fully accessible.
Monday outings: We generally meet every Monday at about 12pm, usually at a museum or park. Bring a picnic, sometimes there's a cafe nearby. Please phone Jo & Roy 081 883 8052; Belinda & Alan, 081 343 1061; Helen & David 071284 2124 or Audrey & David 081 306 5393 for details of Monday outings - they are often only arranged the week before. Everyone is welcome especially new people.

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London: Tues. 23 April: National Army Museum, looking at the English Civil War tactics with handling of artefacts. 11.00-12.30. Afterwards at National Portrait Gallery 1.30-3.00pm doing a role play 'For King or Parliament?' Involves writing, drawing and discussion. Also looks at portraits of the principle characters. We need to know something about the Civil War to get as much as we can out of this.

Thurs. 16 August: National Portrait Gallery 1.30-3.30pm: Colour. A talk for 6-11 year-olds showing how to make different paints using various materials.

Please ring to book a place and check about last minute changes. I have not arranged any outings for the summer but will continue in September. Please send sae for list. Sue Petschaft (0892 661319) 2 Leylands Manor, Tubwell Lane, Crowborough, E.Sussex TN6 3RH.

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SOUTH WEST:

Cornwall: April: Saturday 18th (Easter) Stream Dip and barbecue at Jacqui Wood's house near Truro, from 11.30am. Bring nets, wellies and food. Phone (0872) 560315 for directions.
May: Saturday 2nd. Maypole Dancing at Claudine Lawrence's house near Camborne, from 11am. Bring Food and musical instruments. Phone (0209) 718688 for directions.
June: Saturday 6th. Trereife Farm Park/Gipsy Museum near Penzance. Romany lore, caravans. Eleven people or more get in at a reduced rate. Bring food (cafe on site) and wellies, meet 2pm. Phone (0209) 890378 for directions.
July: Neolithic Day at Chysauster (Iron Age village) nr. Penzance.
August: Moorland Walk in north Cornwall.
September: Beach barbecue in mid-Cornwall.
October: Wheal Martyn China Clay Pit Museum near St. Austell. Phone Maggie Parks for details. (0726) 65992.
November: Bonfire Party - any offers for a site?
December: Music and Mincepies - with more music this time- at Anna Wheeler's house near Redruth. Sunday 13th at 2pm. Bring food and musical instruments. Phone (0209) 890378 for info.

For more details on dates, times and meeting places, or any further offers or suggestions for outings or events this year, please contact Anna Wheeler on 0209 890378 or send sae to her at Cambrose Farm, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 4HT. A host family who is willing to have people around to their house after meetings and to arrange meeting and/or car-parking space if the event is in their area, really rounds off the day. Please contact Anna if you are interested in contributing in this way. Hosts are needed for June, July, August, September, November.

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SOUTH WEST & SOUTH ENGLAND:

Hampshire: Calling all members within reach of Southampton.
We will be at the swings/paddling pool on Southampton Common from 11am on May 26th. Bring a picnic and join us for a chat and play.
Phone Debbie Francis (0703) 893632 or
Julie Harvey (0703) 849633 for details.

Devon: We have been meeting at Dartington, near Totnes, and hope to continue, though there might be problems with the venue. We welcome new members so please telephone if you're interested to join us.
We are also hoping to organise a new and regular meeting in Plymouth - again telephone if you can join us. Perhaps families in Cornwall might also be interested in this. Anybody who would like to meet near Crediton please phone and tell us because we've been offered a lovely venue for a monthly meeting - space in a large house with garden and even open-air swimming pool for the warmer months.
The South Devon Educational Resource group (EO S. Devon) are members of the Childrens' Scrap Project, Union Street, Plymouth. Membership entitles you to buy all sorts of scrap, ie. sequin waste, plastic tubes, perspex strips, colourful net, etc. etc. which our children make into pictures and sculptures - we made net decorations for our Christmas tree last year.
Membership (£12 per year) is paid for by the group's funds and each individual pays for what they choose.
If you want to know more about the Scrap Project, membership number etc., or details of meetings and outings, please telephone Sammy and Nick Vidal-Hall.(0548 830716)

DEVON CO-ORDINATOR - JOB VACANCY:

I have been co-ordinator for Devon since 1984, and have enjoyed every minute of it. I started educating my daughter at home in 1982 and have been involved in home education since that time. In January this year, my youngest, now 6, decided he wanted to go to school and he seems to be quite happy there for the time being. I hope that at some point he will wish to be taught at home again. In the meantime, perhaps this is an appropriate time for me to ask other Devon members if any would like to become co-ordinator? It is an interesting job, and likely to become more so after the General Election! I will be pleased to share responsibility should any new co-ordinator want support, either initially or permanently. Any one interested should contact Stephanie Fletcher, Co-ordinators' Secretary.

Alvena Hillier, Devon Co-ordinator.

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IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ THE BACK PAGE

Many thanks for the response to the appeals (in the October 1991 supplement) for help and support for two families. One reply was written as a general offer of help, so I have reproduced this below.

Sadly, I received only one reply for the family whose son is disturbed and has many and complex needs...so if you meant to write but didn't get round to it, please do so now - it isn't too late.

While I'm on the subject of 'getting round to it', can I ask;

- a) the people who offered to write something for this supplement
- b) anyone who has considered contributing their ideas or advice

but didn't do it in time, not to forget the idea! I shall continue to do special needs supplements every six months until the service is (or I am) no longer required!

Begin it now! Send it soon! It would be a pleasure to be overwhelmed with articles, thoughts, tips, advice about books, resources, helpful agencies, software, etc.

Barbara Millet, prompted by Gloria Harrison's request for advice for her friends whose child has cerebral palsy, writes of her family's experiences and offers advice of various kinds:

"When Alex was diagnosed as suffering from cerebral palsy, I was given the bottom line - he may not be able to walk, he may not talk. I did reject most of the "expert's" predictions for him ... He was eleven weeks old, and as he lay in his cot 'talking' to a furry animal which was pinned to the bars, I couldn't accept that there was that much wrong with him.

We saw the therapists and consultants who were as helpful as they knew how, but MY help came from the local toy library - established for handicapped children - where I was able to share my emotions and thoughts about Alex with others in the same position.

The therapists must have assumed I knew as much as they did about Alex's condition. I did follow their instructions about his daily exercises; but not until I read: "Handling the Young Cerebral Palsied Child at Home" by Nancie Finnie, did I realise I was in fact doing some things incorrectly: eg. feeding him in a baby-relax chair - not at all good for him.

I would recommend everybody with a child suffering from cerebral palsy to read this book, which has 400 illustrations, and is published by William Heinemann Medical books Ltd. I obtained it through my local library.

Alex was late in talking - though he communicated very well with only one or two words. He would say: "Mum", then point his finger to where I kept ice-cream cones, then lick his finger furiously... Who could fail to know what he was 'saying'? And he was only 2 1/2!

We went to speech therapy because they were worried - not me. I had watched Alex struggle to roll over when he was about seven months old... it was like Robert Bruce watching the spider... he made it eventually! I bought him a telephone (you used to be able to get old ones from the Post Office for £1) and he enjoyed chatting on it. I suppose he was about 3 when he spoke at length... I had to pretend I didn't understand what he was trying to tell me unless he actually spoke. He used to get very cross because he knew perfectly well I understood his 'language'. Anyway, the experts seemed concerned about his lateness in using conventional language, so I went along with their suggestions.

He walked at 18 months. He has done everything at his own pace. Most people don't realise that those who have cerebral palsy tire much more quickly than others. We obtained a tricycle through the NHS because walking to school and back - some 4 miles a day - was tiring. After several trials with bicycles with stabilisers, which proved to be too unsafe, he was actually found a tricycle which had been designed by the parent of a handicapped child. It was very stable... but Alex got more tired using it than he did if he walked! I felt it was very heavy, and told his occupational therapist about his tiredness. "Well", she said, "Alex will get tired - that tricycle was designed for a child with spina bifida, and they don't tire nearly as easily as children with Alex's handicap". We now have an adult tricycle!

Alex has hayfever for most of the Spring and Summer. He has to keep on with his PIRITON long after others have finished using it. He also has to have five tablets each day to control his epilepsy, so I really shouldn't expect him not to get tired easily, but I'm afraid I do lose sight of the fact that he has all these difficulties because he does cope so well, for the most part.

He enjoyed nursery school and infant school, but became very stressed at junior school because of bullying and name-calling... he was probably less able to cope with it because of the tiring nature of his disability. Also, I found the staff unable to cope with his needs. So I removed him from school just before he was ten, and he has enjoyed learning at home... and that, I feel, is the least I can do for him.

The most difficult task was to repair the emotional damage done to him by the name-calling... he demanded to know what 'spastic' and 'Joey' meant. I wanted to show him that because you were spastic it didn't mean that you were unintelligent, so one of the first books we read together was Christy Brown's "My Left Foot". This is another book I'd recommend every parent to read. Christy Brown's mother never gave up on him despite all the experts who suggested she should do just that. I think he was eight before he could communicate at all in the conventional way - by holding chalk in his left foot (the only limb he could control at all) and scrawling "C" on the floor.

Another book you should read is the story of Joey Deacon, written by himself and three friends about his life in institutions. It was adapted into a television play and ought to be repeated.

My message to Gloria Harrison is that the parents of this little girl should have faith in themselves - nobody is going to put in so much love and effort as they do - and however small the achievements are, they are all bonus after the prognosis that has been given.

I have given love and a lot of time to my son, but the love and joy he has given me are immeasurable. Don't let your friends miss out on all of that.

Don't give up! Although you will probably encounter all sorts of other problems... It seems unfair that children with handicaps always seem to have other problems as well - allergies, etc. Alex had an eye problem too [see supplement No.8 October 1990...Ed.] but that is quite common in children with cerebral palsy, I learned, and that has been put right now.

Do read the Christy Brown book, if nothing else. Despite dreadful physical handicaps he led a very full life, and it is an inspiration to all.

Do feel free to get in touch if you want to."

Barbara Millett 35, Canuden Rd.
Beechenlea, Chelmsford, Essex.

I have been receiving newsletters from an American organisation known as: NATHHAN (National Handicapped Homeschoolers Associated Network). It was 'born' two years ago as a "network of Christian families who homeschool their challenged children" and aims to be a national (and international) parents' support group offering shared experiences and counselling through letters and personal contact.

They keep a Directory similar to EO's contact list, and if you want to add your name to their mailing list, write to Diane Macbeth & Ron and Kathy Salars, HC 31 51-N-91, MIDLAND, TEXAS 79707. They would appreciate a small donation to cover the mailing costs.

They do have a resources list (which costs about \$5) which is updated regularly via the "NATHHAN News". The list includes special curriculae and curriculum consultants, advisors, medical/therapy sources, home-schooling tips, adaptive computer products and software, testing, speech and communications, legal news and legal defence [American laws are more restrictive than ours currently are...Ed.], publishers, recommended books, special education materials, etc.

Obviously, much of that information would not be relevant to home education in the UK, but I am pleased to announce that help is now at hand! That is, we are about to gather together all those bits and pieces of information which I have been dispensing haphazardly for years, together with lots of information gathered from various sources such as other people's resource lists as above (!) and from special needs/educational/computer exhibitions, items received from small independent publishers and suppliers, AND FROM YOU!

So PLEASE start sending everything you can think of which was/is useful to you, or that you think may be helpful to others. Or tell us about all those items or books which you have now found and wish you had come across earlier! You will be glad to know that although your contributions should be sent to me for the time being, the organisa-

tion of this information no longer depends on me!

Watch the next couple of newsletters for further information.

Items from the NATHHAN newsletter

The state of Texas is appealing to the Texas Supreme Court after the Court of Appeals of Texas recently confirmed a lower court ruling, saying that the Texas Education Agency: "deprived the home school parents of equal protection under the law" because their home schools were discriminated against on the sole basis of location in the home. The Court found no evidence that home schoolers were not educating their children. Having noted that home schooling had always been a legitimate form of education in Texas, it upheld the lower court's permanent injunction which prohibits: "all school officers from initiating prosecutions" under the compulsory attendance law or juvenile code against home schooling families.

The editor writes:

"We know the state will continue to desire to control our home schools. In fact ... (the Texas Home School Coalition) quoted a woman from the Texas State Teachers Association '...home schooling is a form of child abuse because you are isolating children from human interaction.'none of us are immune to these kinds of statements from so-called knowledgeable professionals."

Well, all that has a sort of familiar ring to it!

But it was an item sent in to the newsletter by a homeschooling parent (whose seven month old child has Down's Syndrome) which particularly disturbed me, and I have included it virtually in full and as written in order to avoid indulging my own prejudices by selection. I believe that many of you will be equally perturbed, especially if you have concerns about such things as the imposition of the National Curriculum on home educators or, like me, about the possible implications (hidden agenda?) of "a nursery school placement for every three-year-old":

" In a recent letter from a ministry called 'Bread for Children' we were informed of a program entitled 'Parents as Teachers', which originated in Missouri in the early 1980's but is now pending as H.R. 520 before the U.S. Congress.

...the implementation of the program constitutes a danger to personal and family liberties and threatens to legislate even more intervention into our lives by the government at all levels.

H.R. 520 is currently in the U.S. house subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education and carries 27 co-sponsors. The cost will be \$20 million per year for the next four fiscal years to assist states which implement a programme based upon and affiliated with the Missouri 'Parents as Teachers' national centre.

PAT was implemented by the Missouri legislature in 1981 as a volunteer program when the legislators were told that it would assist "disadvantaged children" by screening for developmental

delays and provide training for assistance to parents to prepare the children for public school.

In 1985 Missouri made PAT mandatory. Final implementation is planned for 1995. Missouri now employs a force of social workers and volunteers in an aggressive "recruitment" programme aimed at intercepting pregnant women in prenatal clinics, doctor's offices, and other public places.

Families already entangled in state and/or federal programs such as WIC, Head-Start, AFDC, pre-school and daycare programs, etc., are easily located and lassoed into the new PAT formula. New mothers are shown video tapes in hospitals and arrangements are then made for home visits by a social worker/ change agent. This social worker, the 'parent educator', has the responsibility to 'bond' herself to the family through frequent home visits so they will become comfortable with leaving the young child(ren) in her care at designated centres.

By intervening in the parent-child relationship through a supply of free medical care, free nutritional programs, free foodstuffs, free mental health services and so forth (all paid for by our tax dollars) the 'parent educators' begin to lay the groundwork for yet more intervention. Gradually, as the child gets older, services such as free daycare, free overnight care, and free camps, followed by free public education - by the age of three for 'at-risk' and not later than five for 'normal' children.

This whole idea of 'early intervention' has been predicated on two basic groups; the 'socially disadvantaged' and the 'handicapped/learning disabled'. We participated briefly in a local early childhood intervention program provided 'free' and funded by a combination of federal, state and foundation monies. What we discovered was that the program was a 'funnel' for getting parents and the at-risk child ready for placement in a public school facility by the age of three years.

I heard fathers in the program 'brag' about how they learned to let their three-year-old brain-damaged child get on the bus at 7.00 each morning and how the child came to 'love' his participation in the program.

A growing number of studies indicate that 'normal' children not only do NOT receive long-term benefits from out-of-the-home daycare and early childhood intervention programs, but the majority suffer considerable emotional disorganisation which can erupt into 'learning disorders' from such early separation from their mothers.

Remember, prior to the post-World War II growth in daycare programs, ADD [attention deficit disorder...Ed], hyperactivity, dyslexia, and other learning disorders were actually unknown. The growth of such disorders can be paralleled to the increased reliance of parents on such daycare and ECI programming.

It is our concern that parents who feel they are 'doing their best' for their handicapped infant by involving themselves with every description of ECI program may be doing a grave disservice to the child. I can imagine nothing in God's creation to be a satisfactory substitute for a loving mother with her tender care and

nurturance. In my opinion no amount of 'trained specialist' effort will draw from the child what God-given loving kindness can bring forth in abundance.

Since the social workers are responsible to the state they are under threat of both fines and imprisonment if they fail to report anything which might be construed by their superiors as child abuse or neglect. This 'child abuse' may be nothing more than sound scriptural chastening and correction. The 'neglect' may be simply the expressed unwillingness of parents to comply with PAT program guidelines. For example: a child may be determined by 'professionals' to be 'hyperactive' or 'suffering from ADD'. Without solicitation of the parent(s)' advice or consent, the PAT 'professionals' may prescribe drug treatment or therapy for such a 'disorder' and parents who refuse to permit the drugs to be administered can be deemed to be 'neglectful' of their children.

Once the spectre of the abuse/neglect charge is raised, violation of the 14th Amendment (Due Process) is almost a certainty. It will become the parent's burden to 'prove' their innocence rather than the state's responsibility to prove the abuse/neglect charge. After all, the state has the testimony of 'trained professionals' on the side of its charge against the parents!

In addition to the funding from our tax dollars, several major foundations, such as the Carnegie, Ford, Rockefeller, New World, Monsanto, and others have opted to fund PAT programs as 'early childhood intervention' and/or 'child abuse prevention' methods - participating in one or more states. Another source of funding is a state income tax 'check-off' for the Children's Trust Fund or from existing state programs such as county extension programs or university systems.

PAT has been tied in to education reforms under the umbrella of the 'America 2000' plan. This program has found broad acceptance both in the legislative and education communities, so we must be constantly vigilant. "

In respect of the above, the NATHAN editor offers various pieces of advice, some of which are sensible precautionary measures equally applicable in this country:

- * Learn to rely on your own network of family, trusted friends, and closely-allied neighbours for help and advice.
- * Keep social workers, educators and counsellors out of your homes and lives.
- * Be ever vigilant of encroachments on our precious liberties through pending legislation, bureaucratic regulation, government 'assistance' programs, or legislative or judicial 're-defining' of the term 'family'.

Don't think: "It couldn't happen here"! I can see plenty of evidence to show it could - that conditions exist which could foster the growth of today's unsupported dogmas into tomorrow's enforced orthodoxy.

1. Over the past few years the Government has carried out educational 'reforms' which were unwanted by the professionals and some of which many of their own supporters in Parliament would like to have seen

dropped or defeated.

2. There is growing pressure for the provision of child-care for the under-threes, and 'proper nursery placement' for three-to-five year olds (to enable mothers to 'go back to work')
3. 'Handicapped families' are being identified and put on databases. ostensibly in the interests of 'provision of services'. The fact that you use no services and do not intend to do so is irrelevant. Consent is not required. Refusal is not countenanced. (Here you may have detected an element of personal paranoia!)
4. Families are suffering because of action taken against them or are under threat of action due to the false assumptions or sheer ignorance or wrongheadedness of the 'knowledgeable professionals'.

For example, last Autumn I was asked by a family to help secure the release of their 14 year old daughter who had been put into a residential care home in August 1991.

Her first appearance before the juvenile court (rushed in before the implementation in October of the Children Act would preclude such action) was because of non-attendance at school, but it was quickly decided by 'knowledgeable professionals' (several social workers and education welfare officers and a psychiatrist), that, for various reasons, living at home was 'hindering her emotional development'.

Unable to justify their basest assumptions, their case came to rest largely on assertions such as "she spent hours alone in her bedroom" (a teenager with an artistic bent and some younger siblings!), and "there were lots of arguments with her father" (any parent of a 14 year old amazed by that?). After 8 appearances in court she remains in the 'place of safety' (where she has been sexually attacked by a young male resident) despite police (and family) requests for her removal.

Her bad situation is made much worse by the limitation of contact with her family. She was told by magistrates 'You are not in care because you did anything wrong' - But the one sympathetic lawyer told me that the contact allowed (two 15 minute phone calls from Mum, an hour's visit from Mum and an hour on Sunday with any three members of her family) is less than she would get if she were in a remand home.

I also attach blame to the other professionals involved in this case; the lawyers, the magistrates, and the dispensers of legal aid - who first denied, and then delayed permission to obtain independent expert witness ('unnecessary', as the court can rely on the professional judgement of the original experts!)

These are, of course, the very bare bones of a case in which the family's circumstances are undeniably unusual. Of those LEAs which might have considered litigation in such a case, few would have gone direct to the juvenile court - particularly when they ought at that time to be acting within the spirit of an Act of Parliament which would disallow such action for non-attendance at school).

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It seems that most of the queries I receive are prefaced by: "I know you lose your rights if you have them Statedented...." Or: "The LEA have told me that even if I take him out they have the right to say how/what he's taught, because he's Statedented...."

It is obvious that many people are still getting the wrong information about 'Statedenting'.

Therefore many other people are still GIVING the wrong information.

* STATEMENTING DOES NOT AFFECT THE LEGAL RIGHT TO HOME EDUCATE *

The 1981 Education Act:

..arose out of a vision that every child with special needs should be properly catered for - as far as possible in 'ordinary' schools.

..introduced Statements of Special Educational Need so that sufficient information could be obtained to determine a child's exact 'special' needs and to specify the provision LEAs should make to meet them.

BUT: They were not intended to be used as any sort THREAT.
Nor as a way of preventing a family from choosing home education.

By amending Section 36 of the 1944 Education Act, the 1981 Act made it quite obvious that parents of children with special needs have the same legal duty as any other parent:

"it shall be the duty of the parentto cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability, and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have....."

Section 7(2) of the 1981 Act makes it clear that parent's rights are unaffected:

"...It shall be the duty of the authority to arrange that the special provision specified in the statement is made for him unless his parent has made suitable arrangements.

Some LEAs certainly have missed the point!

Professionals built the Titanic - amateurs built the Ark.....Anon

Many people still seem to be unaware that you are entitled to milk tokens if you educate a handicapped child at home. Local DSS officers often deny this, saying "only if you are on income support". Not true - you should ask them to obtain form FW 20 for you.

Don't forget that if your "special" child continues home education after the age of sixteen you are still entitled to child benefit.

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Editor: SYLVIA JEFFS 16 ST.BERNARDS RD. SOLIHULL WEST MIDS B92 7BB
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MIDLANDS:

Cambridgeshire:

Our group has undergone several changes recently as several families have moved away. All EO members who are interested in meeting regularly for workshops/outings etc. are invited to come to our house on Thursday 9 April 1.30 - 4pm. Activities will be arranged for children. Anyone who is unable to attend but who is interested in meeting with our group, please let me know. Rosie Alderson, co-ordinator, tel: (0223) 210384.

Oxfordshire:

Several families meet most Mondays at Ferry Pool, Marson Ferry Road, Summertown at 1.30pm. Please join us. Planned outings are
April 16: Cogges Farm Museum, 11am.
May 15: Cotswold Wildlife Park, 11am.
May 29: Shotover Park, 11am.
June 6: Punting from Wolfson College, 1.45pm.
Ring Alison (0865 513499) to confirm it's on, and for info.

HERTFORDSHIRE

As the Herts group keeps on growing quite rapidly, we have now started to meet more frequently - approximately once a week. One of our recent meetings included 38 people (15 adults and 23 children). We've been visiting a Birds' Hide in Broxbourne, a hands-on exhibition of rocks, fossiles and clays in St. Albans Museum, Activity World in Hatfield, had two Pottery-making sessions and various walks in different parts of the county. For details of our activities, please phone Christine Bassan on 0442 866640. New members and families from other areas are welcome.

Warwickshire:

All welcome to join us for the following events...
April: Visit to Coombe Abbey to see the heronry. Date not yet fixed. Please phone Lesley McKenzie, (0203 318401) for details.
May 27: Planning meeting to arrange future visits. Meet at the Cox's at 10.30am. Phone (0926 613619) if further details are required.

Leicestershire: April: Tues 7th. 'Dawn of the Dinosaurs' Exhibition. Meet 11.30 outside New Walk Museum, Leicester for free entry. Picnic afterwards if fine. Phone Lucy (592118) to book.
Wed. 8th. Swimming at Leicester Leys Leisure Centre-flume, wave machine, poolside seating. Midday onwards. Bring lunch. EO discount.
May: Thurs 7th: Ashby-de-la-Zouch Castle - impressive ruins of late Medieval castle with 80ft tower & tunnel. Meet 10.30 am. Free EO admission. Ring Lucy.
Wed. 13th. Swimming - see April.
Fri. 22nd- Tues. 26th: Standing Camp at Beaumanor. Tents provided for up to 40. Wind experiments, building a windmill etc. Canoeing, abseiling and orienteering. Ceilidh on Sunday. Day visitors welcome. Ring Liz for more info/booking - (0530 560460)

REGIONAL DIARY: REGIONAL DIARY: REGIONAL DIARY: REGIONAL DIARY: REGIONAL DIARY:

Leicestershire: June: Weds. 10 : Swimming - see April.

Sun. 14th: Meeting at the Charltons' house (Newton Harcourt) from 12.30. Bring food to share. Visit to Framework Knitting Museum 2.30pm.

Mon. 22nd: Canoeing followed by bonfire/Barbecue at Beaumanor - bring appropriate food. Meet 10am.

Sun. 28th: Moira Furnace - 19th century blast furnace and Industrial History trail. Free. Meet 2pm. Afterwards to Ramsays' house.

July: Thurs 2nd: Tropical Bird Garden, Desford. Ring Liz.

Wed. 8th: Swimming -see April.

Thurs 16th: Tour of Loughborough Bell Foundry and museum, ring Lucy.

August: Sun 2nd: Abseiling - short drop am, long drop pm. Followed by bonfire/barbecue at Beaumanor. Those not wishing to abseil pm can get fire going etc.

We are also planning to go dry-skiing. Anyone interested (Leics. or surrounding areas) contact Liz.

REGIONAL DIARY: REGIONAL DIARY: REGIONAL DIARY: REGIONAL DIARY: REGIONAL DIARY:

Bath: New co-ordinator Carole Hayes (0225 339419). Open Learning Group, workshops, Resource Centre Group, Zilla (0225 427759).

Bristol: Seed Circle Education Group continues to meet regularly for workshops and outings. Visitors always welcome. For mailings, send stamps to Julia Hammond, 25 Dean Lane, Bristol, BS3 1DB.

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Sleaford
Lincs.
NG34 ORR

Telephone: Swaton 218

GEOGRAPHICAL ASSOCIATION

I have been given a number of publications and leaflets which may be of interest to some members. If interested send 9" x 5" S.A.E. to
VAL PARKER, 6 Birchover Rise, Chaddesden, Derby
DE2 4QG

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

On 13th. February at 11.30 a group from EO met Hilary Armstrong MP, Labour's Front Bench spokesperson for home educators, at the House of Commons. Originally four of us (Liz Ramsey, Malcolm Hornsby, Keith Charlton and Jane Lowe) had an appointment to meet Hilary Armstrong but when she saw our crowd of supporters she arranged for us all to meet in a committee room upstairs. It was good that everybody had the opportunity to contribute to the discussion, which was a civilised affair although it was clear that some people were passionately concerned about Labour's proposals.

We covered much the same ground as we had done with Paul Corrigan and in essence the response which we had from Hilary Armstrong (hereinafter known as HA) was very similar. To begin the discussion we raised the question of the right of parents to determine their own curriculum. HA was quick to emphasise that the child has a right to a broad and balanced curriculum covering a common core of subjects and groups of skills which are required by all members of society. We pointed out that EO parents want the best for their children and we emphasised that no-one would deny their child the opportunity to acquire these skills. The entire concept of a National Curriculum presupposes that someone in authority shall decide what is essential for our children to learn. But who decides? The Government?

Labour's defence of the educational rights of the child is questionable because children themselves would have no right to opt out of subjects which they did not wish to study. On several occasions HA referred to the child's right to have access to the subjects of the National Curriculum, and this was the term which she used instead of Paul Corrigan's "confronted with knowledge". When pressed HA admitted that the notion of "access" did not imply any element of choice for the child, as the access would be compulsory. It seemed to me that we were not really talking about the right of the child, but rather the right of the Government to impose its own system of values upon the child.

We moved on to the subject of autonomous education and expressed our concern that a pattern of learning which appeared to be unbalanced in the short term (but not in the longer term) could not fit in with the demands of the National Curriculum and its testing. HA appeared to be uncomfortable with the concept of autonomous learning as she attached great importance to the conventional role of the teacher, and I was left with the overwhelming impression that she has very little understanding of methods of education which are not part of the standard classroom approach. Later in the discussion we learnt that HA has no children herself and also that she has never read any of John Holt's books, and I felt that these two factors would be likely to give her a perspective that is different from ours.

On the subject of testing, we pointed out that the diagnosis of children's strengths and weaknesses may be necessary in a class of thirty but it is irrelevant in the home. Parents who are partners in their children's learning are well aware of any problems and they

take appropriate action. We suggested that it would be helpful to leave the existing system of LEA inspections as it is, and we asked her to consider the possibility of adding the inspection procedure to the "battery of accepted assessment techniques" proposed by Labour. She did not dismiss this and added that home educators would be involved in the setting-up of these testing procedures.

Despite our best efforts on two occasions we have not succeeded in finding out any more about the proposed content of Labour's curriculum, although much was said about "subject frameworks" and flexibility. Does "Maths" mean any maths? I can't believe that we would all be allowed to study different things within the compulsory subjects because it would only be possible to administer standard tests if pupils' knowledge were restricted to certain areas.

We expressed our concern that school phobic children and others who had failed at school would find that the pressures of the National Curriculum were intolerable, but HA did not accept that this would be a problem. She felt strongly that all subjects should be available to everyone, and remarked upon the degree of resentment among some older people who had been deemed unfit to study certain subjects at school. She saw the study of the whole curriculum as an enabling experience for children with special needs, and she presented it as a means of boosting the self-esteem of those who had failed. I was astonished at the sheer lack of realism in these comments. By all means let children have access to the full range of subjects - but what can possibly be gained from forcing a child to study something which they loathe? How can you boost the self-confidence of a child by compelling them to study a foreign language when they are struggling to improve their grasp of English? The notion of compulsory subjects for all reminds me of the attitudes of past generations of parents to feeding their children. How many of today's parents still force children to eat up their cabbage because it will do them good? If a child doesn't like cabbage, forcing them to eat it is likely to cause a life-long aversion to the vegetable. The same principle holds good for education. Motivation is the most critical factor in all learning, and a child's interest cannot be awakened by force.

It was clear that HA has no real understanding of school phobia either. As an example of language teaching aimed at the least able, she told us about a visit that she had made to a school for children who were not able to cope with mainstream education. She described the children's French-style bar and she related how the children had greeted her in French. We were quick to explain that the children to whom we were referring are so shattered that they are not capable of even attending a unit of this type. She made no response.

HA stated that it is up to the imagination of teachers of damaged children to present subjects in an interesting and non-threatening way. When pressed on the matter of children who would find science and a foreign language an impossible burden HA said that we should be able to present what we do with them in terms of the National Curriculum. For example, talking about our bodies and looking at plants would be classed as the study of Science, and she accepted that some children would not progress beyond Level 1 in this subject. I took this to be a hint that there may be ways of

satisfying the NC criteria on a minimal level, but I imagine that it could be hard to satisfy the LEA if the test results for children with problems did not come up to national standards.

We concluded with a discussion of the situation of parents who may have deeply-felt objections on moral grounds to parts of the NC. We stated that parents had a fundamental human right to educate according to their own religious and philosophical convictions, and we referred to groups who have chosen to live according to their own values as do the Amish community. HA's answer portrayed Labour as the champion of the child's right to information and she insisted that the children of such communities should be given information as a means of escape from them. We pointed out that even in a closed community it was impossible for any child to remain in total ignorance of the rest of society, so the present system respects the right of parents to live according to their convictions and transmit to their children the ideas which they value.

In my view the meeting revealed that HA has no real understanding of the theories and practices of home education despite the fact that she said that she has friends who educate their children at home. The overriding concern seems to be to "fit home education into a framework" whereas all who know anything about it realise that it owes its very existence precisely to the fact that it does not fit into any framework. Home education should be assessed by criteria which are separate from those which are applied to schools because it bears no resemblance to the school system.

* * * * *

Quite a number of members have contacted their prospective Labour Party candidates and some of these have expressed their support for our opposition to the National Curriculum plans. PLEASE KEEP UP THE PRESSURE - WRITE NOW IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO ALREADY! Many thanks to all who have written.

* * * * *

A final thought from Colin Hodgetts (of the Small School, Hartland): "It is my argument that the nature of education is such that there never has, never can, and so never will be agreement on what its content is, or how it is best carried out; that what is called the child-centred approach has an impressive history; that poor motivation hinders learning more than anything else and therefore the teacher needs the freedom to choose the method and content most likely to improve it...Any attempt to impose a single approach or system does violence to the values and wishes of a significant section of society." (From his lecture "As if children matter...Schools for Tomorrow")

Jane Lowe, 5 Elm Gardens, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6RX 0707 390070

- ADVERTS -

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Large SAE to Jenny Morton,
Little Arthur Green Farm,
St. Martin's, Isles of Scilly,
Cornwall TR25 0QL



My Tables Box

Frustrated by the effort required to teach my own children their multiplication and division tables I produced My Tables Box. It proved so successful with my family and friends that I am now selling it commercially. It is a fun learning kit based on self-correcting sum cards stored in a tray, which enables the user to concentrate solely on the sums that have not yet been mastered. The RRP is £8.99 and My Tables Box is now available from John Lewis and WH Smith stores or by mail order from Avanti Books, Stevenage (0438 350155). For further information and stockists contact Jane Farry on 0462 311485.

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Alan & Terri, Faha, Caher,
Co. Clare, Ireland.
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HOUSE FOR SALE:

We are an EO family and our neighbours are selling their house, an old keeper's cottage, just down the road. We have absolutely no financial interest in the sale but we wondered if there might be another family, (especially if they have children anywhere near 2 years and 6 years old!) who were considering moving to Hampshire. If so, please call us and we can give further details.

Julian and Elizabeth Langinger,
Tel: 0730 829600.

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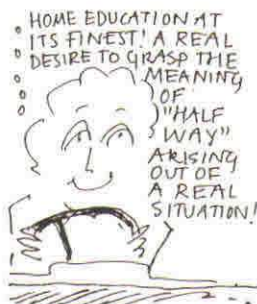
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Does anyone have this who wants to sell it - or can give us any feedback about using it please. Contact Sue, 31 Silvergate, Blickling, Norfolk, NR11 6NN. Tel: 0263 733630

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BY SEG
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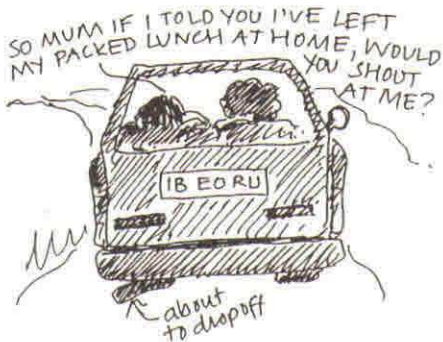
MRS G
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ARCHIE
TO AN ED
WORKSHOP
SOMEWHERE
IN THE
WILDS OF
NORFOLK



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PROBABLY, DEAR (THINKS:
SPONTANEOUS CALCULATION -
IF ONLY KENNETH CLARKE
COULD SEE THIS - HE'D AGREE
I WAS RIGHT NEVER TO
BOTHR WITH MATHS LESSONS)



MORE ADS.....

Cottage to rent in South West France (Lot) in the most beautiful Cele Valley; on organic farm run by vegetarian EO family. Holiday lets or longer stays, more info. from: Edie & Chrissie Wagstaff, Tel: 65.40.73.41

HELP YOUR CHILD WITH HANDWRITING:

A parents guide and childrens workbook to help with cursive writing. Suitable for beginners and those changing from print to cursive.

£3.95 plus 50p postage.

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

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OR: Does anyone know of private rented accomodation available with reasonable rent in the same areas?

Please help - I want to move closer to my family.

Telephone: 0888 62827

- I'll phone you back! -

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Multiplication Tables; The Alphabet; Counting; Primary French; Musical Sounds of the Orchestra; Nursery Rhymes/Songs; The Calendar; Party Games/Songs; Adventures of Gumdrops.

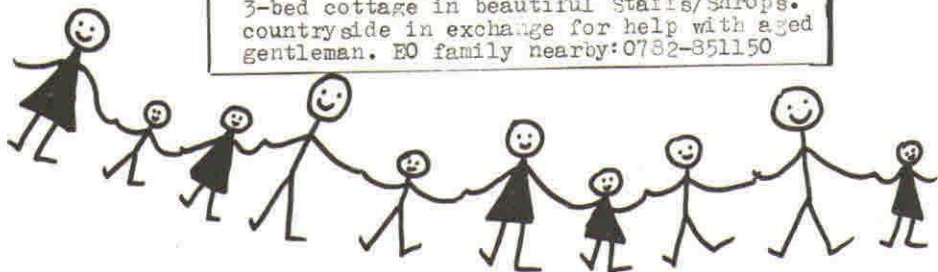
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TO LET

3-bed cottage in beautiful Staffs/Shrops. countryside in exchange for help with aged gentleman. EO family nearby: 0782-851150



This letter came in from Sue Nixon, in Newquay, Cornwall: DOGWHELK SURVEY 1992:
Since 1986 the Marine Conservation Society and the Institute of Biology, with Department of the Environment funding have been monitoring the dogwhelk population of the UK.

This has been undertaken by volunteers to assess the extent of the Nucella Papillus (dogwhelk) populations and to determine their population structure.

The survey showed the effect of TBT (Tributyl tin - used in anti-fouling paints on boats) contamination on dogwhelks. Although of no commercial value, the dogwhelks are useful as pollution indicators, because they stay on one area of shore all their life. They are very sensitive to TBT and there has been a dramatic decrease in their numbers on certain shores.

We volunteered last year to take part in this survey; it was very interesting and helped with many skills - OS map reading, tidal observations, measuring and observing the dogwhelks and recording the information.

More volunteers are needed for the 1992 survey, so if you live around the coast and would like to take part please contact:

Cait Laretto, Marine Conservation Society, 9 Gloucester Road, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5BU.

They will be sending out details of the 1992 survey during May.

SCHOOL PHOBIA:

Dear EO Reader,

I have been a member of EO for over five years and am now studying Education at Middlesex Polytechnic in North London. For this, my final year, I have decided to do a thesis on School Phobia. I feel very strongly about this subject as I have witnessed the suffering my brother had to go through before he was taken out of school in 1986.

I urgently need to hear of other members' experiences, either directly as sufferers of school phobia themselves, or indirectly through a family member. If anyone would be willing to help me by filling in a questionnaire, I would be very grateful; complete anonymity will be ensured.

Please ring one of the following numbers so that I can post the questionnaire to you. All postage costs will be covered by me.

Thankyou for your co-operation,
Victoria Pitt.

0902 750745 West Midlands.
081 882 5467 London.

EDUCATION AT HOME...



BOOKS

Learning from home-based education, an Education Now special report, edited by Roland Meighan, 1992, ISBN 1-871526-06-X, is a collection of interesting articles, some of which were written by E.O. members. I particularly liked Roland's own article, *Never too late to learn to educate*, which contains some powerful answers to the question, "Does it work?", and lists the lessons learned from researching home-based education. This book is well worth reading, and if it were £3.00 I'd buy copies to send to all my friends, but at £5.00 for just 50 pages, I hesitate. Pity about the large number of typographical errors.

Books wanted

Second-hand -

Ladybird: Addition Made Easy
Division Made Easy

Everyday Writing, Ruth Fagg, all volumes.

Christina Eastwood, 27 Ruthin Road,
Bwlchgwyn, Nr. Wrexham, Clwyd.
LL11 5UT

Ginn Reading Scheme Books,
Cuisenaire Rods - for sale or lend if anyone has any.

Please contact: Agnes Lygate,
Flat 1, 116 Oakfield Road, Penge,
London SE20.

Suggestion

Do other EOers find, like me, that often the books they want are out of print? Would it be a good idea if we had a spot in the newsletter where we could advertise for sale or exchange any books we've finished with, or where we could advertise our wants?
Christina Eastwood.

Books and Resources: further to the supplement...

1. The magazine *Talk About Learning* will no longer be published after one last issue, however, Earl Stevens is writing a book, which should be worth waiting for. If you would like to obtain a copy of *T.A.L.*, do write direct to the address in the supplement.

2. Helen Hegener, publisher of *Home Education Magazine*, has written to say that the yearly subscription for E.O. members is now \$42 instead of \$48, and that if we wish to take out a joint subscription to reduce postal costs, it could be even cheaper. Let me know if you are interested.

3. Ted Wade, editor of *Home School Manual*, says, "I think you could have misread my statements about parents' limitations... I had in mind most university courses (topics) and some high school courses. People can and do learn in these areas without professional teachers, but, in my opinion, not efficiently. Books or correspondence courses are partial exceptions, of course."

4. Due to the amount of interest in *How to write a low cost/no cost curriculum for your home school child*, I have ordered some copies from the publisher. If you would like to obtain one, contact me. *The three R's at home*, by H. and S. Richman is available from me until July.

5. There will be another supplement on books and other resources soon, so please send me your recommendations and brief reviews a.s.a.p!

Sarah Taylor, 23 Whitley Road,
London, N17 6RJ, Tel: 061 808 3200

Chairperson's Report

Annual General Meeting held at Cliff College Derbyshire on Saturday 1st February 1992.

Treasurer's Report:

Mike Cook reported that income for the year 1990/91 was up on previous years. This facilitated the funding of National Home Education Day in October, the subsidising of national gatherings and the resourcing of publicity. However, Mike advised caution in the light of these expenditures and the recession.

Publicity Officer:

Jane Lowe has discovered from her MEP that the European Parliament has no powers to interfere in the education policies of member states, indicating that rumours of home education being illegalised throughout the European Community were unfounded.

Other organisations are mobilising to work against the Labour Party's plans to impose the National Curriculum across the board. The Human Scale Education Movement is considering a link-up campaign between interested parties, including the small school in Hartland and Education Now as well as EO. Jane reported on the success of publicity for EO through newspapers, freelance journalists, local and national radio and television.

She feels a need for specially designed publicity material, specifically aimed at the media, that could be faxed.

Jane has asked for information on EO to be included in the Parents' Charter; the DES has not yet replied.

Membership Secretary:

Valerie Common told us that EO's membership has increased by more than a hundred in the past year to 2,278 member families.

The breakdown of numbers of young people is as follows: 323 'pre-school' age; 1042 'infant' age of whom 329 are declared home-educated; 1162 primary school age, 514 declared at home; 1039 secondary school age, 533 declared at home.

The meeting agreed that a standard letter be sent to new members to reduce the workload of membership secretaries.

Valerie informed us that she would like to pass on the job of Membership Secretary. Contact her if you are interested.

Co-ordinators' Secretary:

Stephanie Fitcher reported that Cleveland, Cheshire and Lincolnshire are without co-ordinators and that Devon and Gwynedd may soon be in the same position. Scotland is full of holes.

Stephanie expressed her appreciation of the good work that co-ordinators are doing - getting well-informed and acting on their own thinking and judgements.

Publications Co-ordinator:

Lynne Greenhough reported that we are currently distributing 2,500 newsletters per issue at a cost of £2001 to print and £600 to post.

Lynne told us of a disturbing event regarding the pen-pals section of the Newsletter. Some young people who have given information about themselves in asking for pen-pals have received telephone calls from a man seeking contact with them. The meeting agreed that letters could be sent via Lynne, and forwarded where this was requested.

Enquiries Secretary:

Sarah Taylor reported a considerable increase in the number of enquiries, an indication of the Publicity Officer's effectiveness.

Legal Group:

Rob Wade reported that increasing numbers of members are prepared to deal with

LEAs, though he and Anne still get routine enquiries, even from experienced co-ordinators.
Two Legal Workshops were held in 1991, one in Welwyn Garden City and one for New Age Travellers. Two workshops are planned for 1992, one in Essex (organiser Sandie Cottie) and one in the East Midlands (organiser Lucy Charlton).

Rotation of Directors:

Lesley Kilbride and Rob Wade resigned as directors. Mike Cook, Liz Ramsay, Gordon Ramsay and Pam Stevenson stood down and were re-elected. Sarah Taylor was elected as a director.

Concern was expressed about the eligibility of directors who do not attend meetings and are not involved in the running of EO.

Lucy Charlton has replaced Lesley Kilbride as Publications Director for a period of one year while the situation of Publications Co-ordinator/Director is reviewed.

Rotation of Steering Committee:

Mike Cook resigned from the Steering Committee and Eleanor Stapleton was elected. The Steering Committee now comprises Liz Ramsay, Eleanor Stapleton and Keith Charlton, with Jane Lowe and Peter Edwards (vice-chairperson) as back-ups.

Appointment of Auditors:

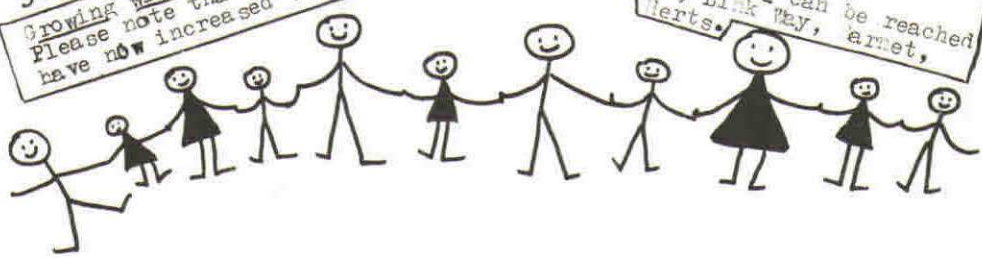
Mike Cook spoke of his dissatisfaction with Reeves and Neylan and the meeting authorised him to find new auditors.

CONTACT LIST...

It was decided at the Members Meeting on 1st. Feb. '92 to postpone publishing the 1992 Contact List until June. This is partly because of a large stock of the 1991 edition and partly to postpone the large payment involved to a little later in the year.

Could everyone PLEASE check their entries and update with Bob Emmett (see inside back cover of any newsletter for his Norwich address). There was also discussion concerning the listing of names in the Contact List. A decision is to be made at the next meeting (April 25th) whether to revert to the original system of simple alphabetical listing. If you have strong views on the subject do write to me as soon as possible. Another controversial subject was the exclusion of non-home educating families from the Contact List. Bruce Wallace, 25 Diabeg, Achnasheen, Ross-shire.

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Members' meeting of Education Otherwise Assn.Ltd.

To be held at Featherstone Castle, Northumberland, on Saturday 25th April at 10am.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA:

1. Quorum.
2. Apologies.
3. Minutes.
4. Matters arising.
5. Childrens' Pages.
6. Steering Committee Report.
7. Future Venues.

AOB

Any member wishing to add an item to the above agenda should do so by writing to the General Secretary as soon as possible. Anyone doing so should either attend the meeting, or send as much information as possible, to enable the item to be discussed in their absence. Any members unable to attend the meeting, who would like to express their opinions on any items on the agenda, may do so by writing to the General Secretary.

Copies of the minutes of all meetings are available on request from the General Secretary: Pam Stevenson, 25 Wyndham Road, Dover, Kent CT17 0BH.
Tel: 0304 210997.

members' meeting held at Cliff College on Saturday February 1st.

Structure of Education Otherwise:

Lucy Charlton reported that committee set up to look into possible alternative structures for EO have been gathering information but cannot yet offer concrete proposals. Stephanie Fitcher suggested that the research so far had led to four options: a) to stay as we are; b) to stay as a Limited Company but have every member a signed-up member; c) to scrap what we've got and become a different body, eg an Industrial and Provident Society; or d) to stay as a Limited Company but obtain Charitable Status.

The general feeling of the meeting seemed to be that whichever option we eventually decide on must ensure equal membership and equal voting rights for all EO subscribers and must accomodate the diversity and interests of all members.

Other views were that the present structure works well enough and that the present structure was hastily established when EO was a much smaller organisation and that we have outgrown it.

The Committee will report fully in the Newsletter.

Future Venues:

Featherstone Castle 23rd-30th April.

High Close Youth Hostel, Lake District 10th-17th September.

Volunteers are needed to organise a winter gathering. Suggested venues are Cliff College (Derbyshire) or Beaumanor Hall (Leicestershire).

Lib Ed:

The meeting agreed on a donation of £50 to Lib Ed to assist the publication of two new books.

Fact Packs:

Liz Ramsay reported on the usefulness of Fact Packs in publicity for National Home Education Day. They work well in their present format as specific material can be selected and easily displayed.

The meeting was unable to determine how many Fact Packs will be needed in the future. We shall therefore continue to photocopy them as the need arises.

Contd. on next page...

EO Publications:

Bruce Wallace reported that SINC is in short supply but that the revised issue will be ready soon. There are sufficient stocks of Early Years. Malcolm Hornsby and Julie Lyons have agreed to work on a revised and updated edition of Later Years.

Membership Cards:

Concern was expressed that Membership Cards (which give reduced or free admission to certain museums etc.) are used by EO families whose children are in school and that these cards should benefit only those out of school. On the other hand it was argued that the cards should benefit all EO members, including those who are educated in the system, as this is the only benefit these families get from their membership. It was pointed out that there are families with children both in and out of school. The final decision was that implementing a card scheme that excludes children in school would be impractical.

Politics and Campaigns:

The meeting agreed that EO's views should be made known to those involved in the European Parliament's discussions about education. A sample letter has been prepared to guide members who wish to write to their MEP. A similar letter has been prepared for members to write to Labour Party Parliamentary candidates to voice our concerns about the imposition of the National Curriculum.

GCSE Survey:

Jane Lowe has been asked for information about the numbers of EO children taking GCSE and said that she felt such information might be useful for publicity.

Several people volubly expressed their concern at any suggestion that exam passes are the primary measure of success in education. At the same time it was accepted that success in formal qualifications proves that being educated at home does not prevent young people from passing exams.

Jane assured the meeting that she would exercise great caution in dealing with requests for this information and would always emphasise that the success of education depends on many things not connected with exams or qualifications.

Voice Mail:

EO has been offered a Voice Mail machine. Nobody, it seemed, was quite sure what this is, but the little information we have suggests that it's a glorified answering machine. The meeting agreed to accept the offer and then discover the possibilities of the machine.

Contact List:

Many members have been unhappy about the format of the Contact List. It was agreed to return to a straightforward alphabetical listing with members listed according to their LEA rather than their county.

It was also agreed that the new Contact List be delayed until June to allow for updates and to save costs.

Copies of the Minutes of the AGM and of the Members' Meeting are available from the General Secretary.

Keith Charlton.



MUSEUM CARD UPDATE

IMPORTANT! IF YOU USE A MUSEUM CARD READ THIS: Free admission for EO members to Museums and Heritage sites has been negotiated and granted on the basis that we are 'home-educating' and that our children have no access to these facilities through school. It has therefore been decided that from now on Museum Cards will only be issued to families with children who are educated out of school. With this new ruling it is vital that you make sure that your membership details are up-to-date and that children who are being home-educated are shown as such. **CHECK YOUR CONTACT LIST DETAILS NOW!** If your details need updating, send your amendments as soon as possible to: Bob Emmett, 148 Gunton Lane, Norwich, Norfolk, NR5 0AQ.

If your family is eligible for a Museum Card and you would like one, please send a sae to Bob at the above address. There is no need to enclose a note, just mark the top left hand corner of your envelope 'Museum Card'. Likewise, when you renew your subscription (or when your yearly standing order payment is due) send Bob an sae to receive your card.

On presentation of the EO Museum Card you can obtain free admission to the following museums:

The Science Museum, Exhibition Road, London SW7 2DD. Tel: 071-938-8222.

(Present your card at any admission point.)

The National Railway Museum, Leeman Road, York, YO2 4XJ. Tel: 0904621261.

(Present your card at admission point.)

The Natural History/Geology Museums, Cromwell Road, London SW7. Tel: 071-938-9123

(Present your card at the information desk and sign in.)

You also need to present your EO Museum Card for free access to:

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB. Tel: 081-940-1171.

However, they also have other admissions procedures that you must use. These are:

1) If you know in advance when you are going to visit Kew you should write into or phone the Enquiry Unit to arrange for a voucher to pick up at an appropriate gate on the morning of your arrival. On arriving at the gate in question you should show your membership card and receive the free entry voucher.

2) If you decide on the day that you are visiting Kew, you should phone the Enquiry Unit (ext.4623) and advise them. They will prepare a voucher that you will be able to pick up from 37 The Green (just before the Main Gate) and enter the gardens.

By using the official educational visit forms and pre-booking, EO families can obtain free admission to the sites operated by the following Heritage Organisations:

CADW Welsh Historic Monuments, Brunel House, Cardiff CF2 1UY. Tel: 0222 465511.

(For information on the CADW sites, a copy of their letter granting EO free educational access and a booking form please send 40p to cover photo-copying and a SAE to the address at the bottom of this article.)

English Heritage, Keysign House, 429 Oxford Street, London W1R 2HD. Tel: 071-973-3000

(For a copy of English Heritage's 'Information for Teachers' booklet which has full details of their sites and a booking form write to: Ken Glen, the Education Service Administrator at the above address.)

Historic Scotland, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh, EH3 5RA. Tel: 031-244 3037.

For information on the Historic Scotland sites and a booking form send 30p and a SAE to the address at the end of this article.

NORFOLK RESIDENTS ONLY: EO children (and one accompanying adult) who reside in Norfolk can obtain free admission to the sites operated by Norfolk Museums Service. Send 10p and an sae for details.

Information sheets are available from: Paul Bentley, 83 Manor Park, London SE13 5RA. Tel: 081-852 1563.

Where to get what.

The following publications are available from: Bruce and Christine Wallace, 25b Diabeg, Achnasheen, IV22 2NE. Prices include p&p to UK. Please make cheques or postal orders payable to 'Education Otherwise'.

- * School is not Compulsory (new edition due soon) £2.50
A guide to your rights.
- * Early Years (edition no. 5) £2.50
Learning suggestions for the under- twelves.
- * Later Years. £2.50
Learning for older children, plus GCSE.
- * Teach Your Own, by John Holt. £3.85
Philosophy of Home Education.
- * Learning all the Time, by John Holt. £4.50
A practical guide covering reading, writing, numbers, science and music,
as well as the wider issues of the nature of learning and parental
involvement.
- * School's out, by Jean Bendell. £5.95
A good how and why book by an EO member and long-term Home Educator.
- * EO newsletters: Back copies from 1989-1990. each:£1.00
- * EO newsletters: Bargain Basement - our selection of any **four** copies
from 1987-1988. £1.50
- * Newsletter Digest: £1.50
A ninety-page selection of the best from 1982-1986.
- * Growing without Schooling - the newsletter of EO's parallel organisation
in the USA. Six issues per year (starting March). From Barbara Sheppard,
18 Queen Katherine Street, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 7OG £ 12.00
- * EO Stationary: note-paper, re-use labels, forms, leaflets and handbills
from Lucy Charlton, 2 Wistow Lane, Newton Harcourt, Leics. LE8 0FT.
- * EO Childrens' cards: these are personal ID cards to show that you are being
legitimately home-educated. To get your card, send a SAE to William Rust,
8 Church End, Gamlingay, Beds. SG19 3EP.

LEARNING LINK is a non-profit-making EO family run resource which can enable you to purchase Educational Computer hardware at discount prices available to Schools. The latest catalogue which includes Acorn, Apple, Atari, Cambridge, Commodore, IBM computers, Research Machines, Modems from Pace; electronic musical instruments from Casio, Yamaha and Roland; Logo, scheme software and books are available from: LEARNING LINK, 83 Manor Park, London SE13 5RA. Catalogue price: £1.50.

ALL PRICES QUOTED ARE FOR MEMBERS ONLY

WANTED: Newsletter & Supplement

Supplements can be on the practicalities of a curriculum subject or on a much wider/looser subject that you feel might be of interest to members. Please contact Lynne Greenhough, Publications Co-ordinator, 18 Park Street, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE5 7JE.

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LONDON & HOME COUNTIES: David Bettie 0843 583260

HELPLINES

CHILDLINE: 0800 1111

KIDSCAPE: 071 4880488



education otherwise

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

Our principle aims are to:

- ◆ encourage learning outside the school system;
- ◆ reaffirm that parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility 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 an A5 s.a.e. to:

Education Otherwise
36 Kinross Road,
Leamington Spa,
Warwickshire,
CV32 7EF

