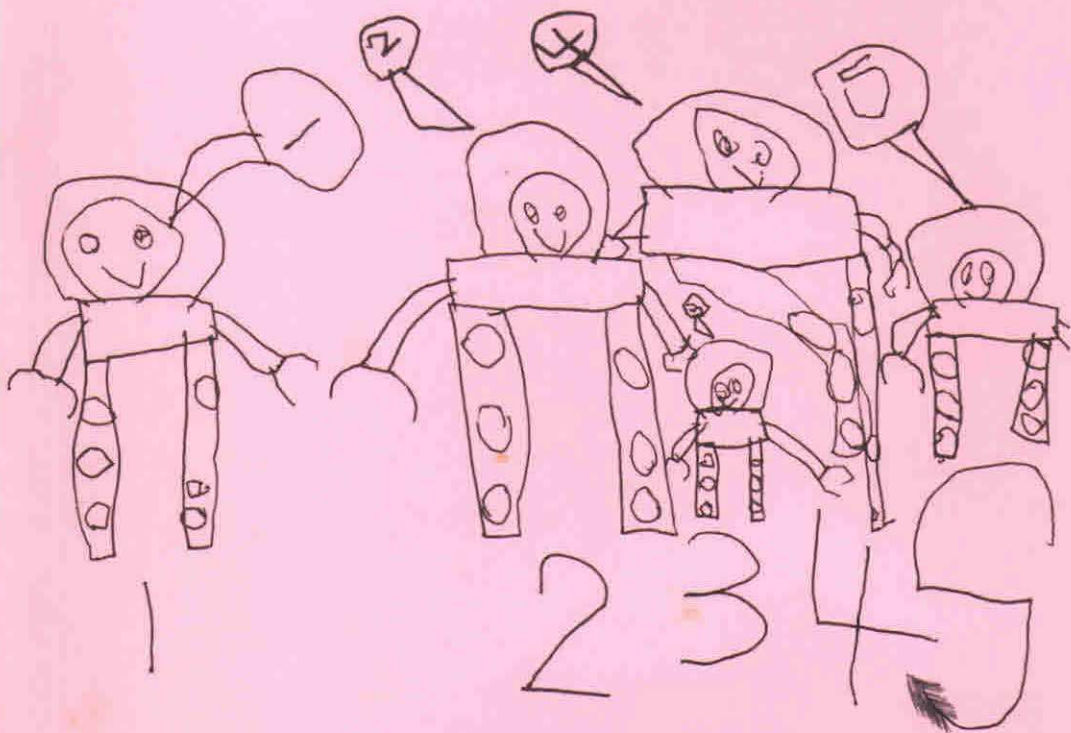


Education Otherwise



NEWSLETTER

October & November 92

Issue No. 88

EDUCATION OTHERWISE NEWSLETTER: no 88
October and November 1992.

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Notes for Contributors.

Contributions for the next issue should be sent to the appropriate editor by 1st November, clearly marked 'For Publication', and include your name and address, and, if possible, telephone number. Late/unused submissions are forwarded to the next editorial team for possible later publication.

Please note that requests for pen-pals are in future to be sent to the Children's Pages Editor, Hannah Bush.

Please write or type clearly and indicate if you do not want any changes made. Otherwise the editor will retype, to make editorial corrections, as well as making minor changes to fit the page, if necessary.

If you refer to a previous article or letter, please indicate the reference by Newsletter number and date.

Contributors should note that any published item may be reprinted in other Home Educating magazines at home and abroad. Please include a note with your submission if you do not want yours reproduced.

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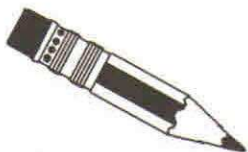
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Advertisements are accepted from members, when space permits, and if they are of interest to E.O. in general, at 10p per word. Make cheques payable to 'Education Otherwise'.

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Editorial



Welcome to the latest E.O. Newsletter, arriving from a very cold and windy hill in Yorkshire. Summer is definitely over with here, and the autumn term at school has just started. As a 'Rising 5' Harry, my eldest son, was due to start school a few days ago. His friends on the street have duly toddled off for a full day of toil but he seems unperturbed and not in the least interested in going. Thank goodness!

He doesn't seem to be missing the long summer days when he and his friends played out all day long, exploring the field, riding bikes, building dens, and generally getting up to all the things kids do. We have plenty of other things to do, and E.O. friends to see. But I wonder how his friends feel? When the glossy novelty of going to 'big school' wears off will they miss their freedom? They have a lot of that here, school must be a big shock to them.

They return each evening with tired faces and bad 'school' habits - fighting, teasing and competing - those things were around before as they are with all children, but now they seem to have taken on a new edge.

We meanwhile still have the freedom to stay in bed late (not that Harry every does so!) and eat breakfast or read or just potter around, without having to rush out of the door at 8.30 am.

Our first visit from the Education Authority looms - I had to inform them, as Harry has told everyone from the milkman to the Health Visitor that he doesn't go to school. But we have been members of E.O. for a few years now and have met so many people who have raised such great kids through E.O. that I no longer feel daunted. Perhaps I'll change my mind when I hear them knock at the door!

There are a number of letters in this issue discussing the possibility of restructuring E.O. or generally improving the organisation as a whole. I think it is important that we do continue to question and improve and build on past work - but at the same time, I hope we won't forget that Education Otherwise is a valuable organisation as it is - personally the support role of E.O. means a lot to me. E.O. was there when I most needed some encouraging words and it still is. But maybe it is time we also moved towards a more campaigning role? If you have strong opinions on the restructuring of E.O. or National Gatherings, now is the time to make them heard and play a part in forging a new future for our organisation.

Thanks to Harry for his drawing of Lego Spacemen on the cover, and to Alan who produced the titles and some of the illustrations on his P.C., they are totally beyond the scope of my old Amstrad (reliable but basic is a kind way of putting it).

Linda Jackson, Alan, Harry and Ben Gordon, 21 Mount Pleasant, Guiseley, Leeds. LS20 9EB.

* * * *

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editor nor those 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.

Thoughts on National Gatherings

Dear Friends,

We read last issue's "On the Subject of National Gatherings" with astonishment and sadness. Do we really need an exposition on where we go wrong with no recognition of the earlier debate?

This is the history...

Increasing Democracy: We have a working party that has been looking at this very issue including alternative structures for E.O. At present the problem is not the participating in meeting which are, or should be, open to everyone but rather the fact that we have a tiered membership: Technically only those who have volunteered to give £10 should E.O. get into financial difficulties are entitled to vote. Let's wait for the working party's report in the newsletter [also: article from Stephanie Fitcher, "Education Otherwise - Restructuring", later in the newsletter - editor] before we go along with Jane Lowe, Sarah Taylor et. al. and say "we should be enabling more members to participate in meetings instead of proposing to spend hundreds of pounds abolishing the present structure" - as yet this is not a proposal.

Business meetings should be held separately from holiday meetings: We had a business only meeting about four years ago at Beaumanor Hall, Leics. It was a weekend meeting (as suggested) and attracted very few members in spite of being advertised in the Newsletter. We "got down to business" very well and whizzed through the agenda. The members who did come were almost all "old stalwarts" and it was DULL! This need not necessarily have been the case but it is the only experience we have.

There should be a variety of different kinds of meeting: We thought there were? From the apparent "squalor" of Featherstone to "smart and uncompromising" Cliff College. We have had meetings in all sorts of places and almost had a national camp this year, but the landowner withdrew his offer at the last minute.

Business meetings should be in various locations: But surely this goes for social gatherings too? My family didn't join E.O. to be involved in running it! We joined to be part of a support network that would widen our circle of E.O. friends, and for FUN.

As it is we have had business meetings in Leicestershire, London, Avon, Northumberland, Derbyshire and Yorkshire. E.O. would hold a meeting wherever it was thought it would work - financially, space-wise and with adequate access. Featherstone was originally booked because it was "half-way south" thus giving the poor (and more isolated) folks up north a chance of getting to a meeting without an overnight stop en-route.

Whilst many of the points raised in the article ring true, we feel we are essentially a support network first and a business second because we have to be. Families must come first. If this means the "disruption" of children at meetings, so be it. At long last a few are interested enough to have started to participate - let's not take the retrograde step of exclusion. Let's try to empower and integrate not just adult members but include our young people more effectively too.

Many families we have spoken to who don't come to National Gatherings actually do not want to. Let's encourage these families to write to the Newsletter and to the General Secretary with any points they want to raise. Let's also try patting ourselves on the back a little for the things we have achieved - National Gatherings have become successful and popular. They attract members from all over the country and all walks of life. It is this very success which has caused the problems we are now confronting.

Finally, do let's have your views, but don't write to us or any other individuals - the Newsletter and the national gatherings must be the forum if we want to be truly open and democratic.

Yours,

Gordon and Liz Ramsey, Anglesey, Gwynedd.



We appreciate the effort Jane Lowe, Sarah Taylor and others have taken in formulating thoughts about national gatherings and coming forward with some proposals. Here are our reactions.

The idea that there should be a variety of meetings is nice and they will certainly happen if enough people want them enough.

The proposal that business meetings should be held in a variety of places seems to us only fair. However, the reason why there are no national gatherings in the south is, we understand, because affordable venues are hard to come by. This leads on to the last proposal which is that business meetings and holiday gatherings should be separated. In this plan the business meetings would be weekend events mainly for individuals. One advantage of this would be that - hopefully - a greater range of smaller and cheaper venues would be available so that business meetings could be held in different parts of the country.

Despite this advantage we are strongly opposed to this proposal since it discriminates against the children of E.O. E.O. membership is for parents and children - it is no more right to discriminate against children being present than it would be to say that certain kinds of adults are discouraged from attending. Moreover whilst having the business meeting completely separate from the holiday gatherings would perhaps give some people who don't attend them now the chance to come, it would also exclude those people (like us) who attend because they are already at the gathering for the holiday but would not necessarily travel to a business meeting. You win some, you lose some.

If there are really no venues in the south suitable for families then maybe we could experiment over the coming year with one business-only meeting (in the south) and two at gatherings. In this way we could see whether having business-only meetings did indeed broaden the number of people involved in the running of E.O. If so then we could continue with this and try harder at the other two 'gathering' meetings to make sure that items raised by children were included on the agenda, and that they were welcome in the meeting itself. In this way we would balance the rights of our children to be involved with E.O. business against the need to enable more members to attend meetings.

Keeping issues that arise from living together for a week out of the business meetings does seem sensible. However, it is often hard to draw this distinction.

Finally we would like to say that, although Cliff College may be more 'civilised', it has certainly been for us more stressful than Featherstone: all those shiny surfaces to clean, breakages to pay for and residents to keep quiet for. Our worst nights at gatherings have been in the tiny, hot bedrooms of Cliff with teenagers gathering in the room next door because there was nowhere else for them to go. And having run painting workshops in both, give us scruffy old Featherstone every time.

With good wishes,

Dineke de Jong & Paul Hodgkin, 48 Montgomery Rd,
Sheffield. S7 1LQ.

It was with mixed feelings that I read the article in the August issue, "On the Subject of National Gatherings". The first was panic that E.O. was to be subject to a take-over bid. The people proposing such changes seemed to be right-wing, anti-children, anti-libertarian and, perhaps worst of all....southerners!

After I'd calmed down and tried to put my prejudices to bed I looked at the proposals.

I'm still not happy with some of them. I don't like the idea of E.O. gatherings where children are not welcomed or are not made part of the process. For me, E.O. is about families and that means children with all their noise, mess and ideas.

I am wary of E.O. becoming more efficient, perhaps run by a small elite group and losing its roots of empowering people, devolving responsibility, questioning the cult of the "expert".

However, I'm aware that we are not being democratic enough. We don't have enough input from our membership. Looking at the world situation we're not the only ones having trouble trying to be democratic so it can't be all due to the squalor of Featherstone!

For some of us, myself included, Featherstone is very important. I meet with members of my tribe, I feel happy and welcomed and at ease. I can discuss, sing and argue and push forward ideas on education, life and the Universe.

In a world in which I feel increasingly alienated Featherstone is a warm haven.

But E.O. is not in the business of soothing my battered ego. We are about informing people of their rights, supporting them as they exercise those rights, listening to children and encouraging learning - or so it says on our literature.

It might be time to try a variety of meetings as proposed. If we can reach and activate more of our membership it will be worthwhile.

If it doesn't work we can try something else - nothing is set in concrete. After all we only have Featherstone because some of us northerners were fed up with all the meetings being held in the south!

From: Jennie White, Leyburn Road, Wensley, Leyburn, N. Yorks. DL8 4HR.



And a youthful viewpoint on the gatherings...

Dear Newsletter,

I'm writing to say that I do not think much of the idea of separate gatherings for the E.O. business meetings because children like me may only be interested in one or two subjects that are being discussed. Therefore, if you had a separate gathering I couldn't just turn up for a bit of the meeting, I would have to sit through all of it or not go at all. Although few children choose to go to the meetings I think it is important to make it possible for us.

From: Carly Ramsay, Smisby, Derbys.

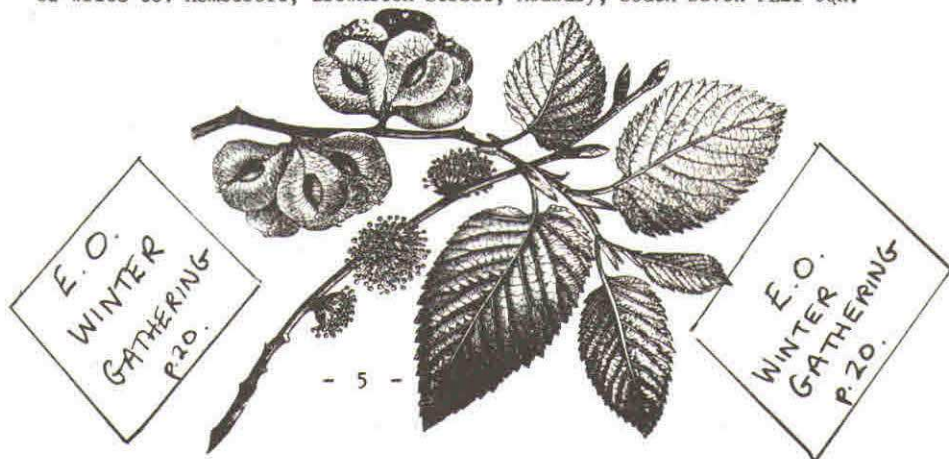
An Autumn Holiday in Wales?

For the next few months we are looking after my parents' cottage and caravan in North Wales at Blackdown Sands near the Isle of Anglesey. By renting it out we hope to pay off some bills. At the same time we hope to let a number of E.O. families have a holiday at a much reduced rate depending on what they can afford to pay. In this way maybe you can have a holiday when otherwise it wouldn't be possible and we can stay afloat over the winter. If you would like to go please give us a ring. Whilst we hope people will pay what they can, we don't want to turn anyone away who would like to go.

So what's available? The cottage has two bedrooms with one double and two single beds. It has a colour TV, an open fire, and is generally quite well fitted out. The caravan is a brand new, three-bedroomed living caravan with 1 double, 2 single and 1 bunk-bed, also with colour TV and well fitted out. Both have got adequate heating. The two are side by side but with enough distance to be private. It is possible that two or maybe three families might like to go together.

The location is about 15 minutes walk from Blackrock Sands. The surrounding countryside is also particularly beautiful in the Autumn.

For more information please telephone Sammy and Nick Vidal-Hall 0548 830716, or write to: Homecroft, Brownston Street, Modbury, South Devon PL21 0QR.





useful bits with him. However, these things can be pursued when we do eventually come to rest again after journey's end. Meantime, there are so many other avenues to explore that none of us is ever bored, or likely to be.

This September we move to north-east Hungary. Next spring should see the hard part of the voyage begin, when we cross into the Ukraine, heading for Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia. It is a very long way we have still to go, but like a snail which also carries its house around, our home is where our horse is...

David Grant.

EO in a Horse-drawn Caravan



I have read some E.O. books and leaflets and I think that home education should be encouraged not discouraged. Quite a lot of families have moved their children to home education and some, if not most, are better off being home educated than if they had gone to school. I believe that home education is better because children can work in their own time, not like at a school where you would have to work in a certain amount of time. I am a twelve year old boy and I have been home educated for almost two years.

I am going around the world by horse-drawn caravan and I have learnt things that I would probably never have known. I think this education is in a way better than the education I would probably be having in Scotland.

I have learnt to speak languages of the countries I have been in. I have made lots of new friends and I have learnt to be more responsible. also I have learnt some cooking and many other things.

I think sitting and studying a book or doing maths in a classroom is boring. Walking around the countryside is educating and fun, even if you are in a town it can still be fun. If I went into a shop I would have to add up prices and count how much money I have. Even that is education. When I am in foreign countries I have to speak a little of the languages to understand what people are saying, or when I have had to ask for something. I meet a lot of people too. If you were travelling like me and my brother and sister, you would do this all the time; for me this is much better than sitting in a classroom studying.

I have learnt something everyday from being home educated, and probably most days at a school but not all. I have seen a lot more of the world, more than I would have seen if I had been in school.



I think the Government should try to encourage more home education because some schools are very over-crowded, with thirty or more to a class, which is a lot. It would help if there were more teachers.

Sometimes it is difficult to do school work everyday because when we are travelling we have to jump off the caravan when we come to a steep hill, or when I have to get water for the horse and us. We also have to go for some shopping now and again.

When we are travelling we do not have such things as holidays. Most days we usually do school work in the morning but we do not have a set time.

In Slovenia we went for about seven months to a school in Dravograd. There we learnt Slovenian, history and some geography. The schooling in Dravograd is pretty primitive compared to most British schools. The chairs and tables are all in rows and they still have old-fashioned blackboards.

It is always interesting to see other schools and what their way of teaching is like, compared with the way I am taught.

So if any of you kids out there think it would be better to have home education ask your Mother and Father about it, you might be better off!

Torcuil Grant.

The Grant family can be contacted through their U.K. contact address: c/o Macdonald, Thorpe Hall, Rudston, Drifffield, East Yorkshire, YO25 OJE.

European Court Rulings on Home Education

Many of you may remember a letter from Renata Leuffen, West Germany, regarding her right to home educate her son. After losing her case in Germany, she took the case to the European Convention on Human Rights. Recently she has written again to let us know the outcome of the case, and to thank all of those E.O. members who wrote or telephoned to offer their support.

Renata has lost her case and is now preparing to take the issue to the UNO in Geneva. She also asks that we support the work of Mr. Stricker of Eurotalent in Strasborg who is currently working on a resolution for the European Council to get an amendment to the European Convention on Human Rights which will guarantee the right to home-education. Monsieur Victor Hugo is willing to bring the resolution into the Council of Europe. Her very long letter urges that European E.O.ers become more vocal in their efforts to protect their right to home-educate their children. Finally she writes: "Though we all feel shocked still we must ask ourselves: Where were we when European education politics was made? Have we done anything to make our standpoint known in the European Parliament? The other side who promote compulsory school attendance is very active.

I will inform you about what the UNO says and hope you will work on. You have what is most important: A Support Group!"

Although the ruling is unlikely to have any immediate repercussions outside Germany, no one can fail to be aware of how close we are to Europe now, and Renata's letter reminds us that this is something we can't afford to ignore. The ruling of the European Commission of Human Rights is several pages long, some of the essential points are shown below.

"... Article 2 of Protocol No 1 provides that:

'No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.'

The Commission notes that the first sentence of Article 2 of Protocol No 1 enshrines the fundamental right of the child to education. This right by its very nature calls for regulation by the State, regulation which may vary in time and place according to the needs and resources of the community and of individuals...

The second sentence of Article 2 recognises the role of the State in education as well as the rights of parents. The provision aims at safeguarding pluralism in education, which is essential for the preservation of the 'democratic society' as conceived by the convention...

In the Commissions's view it follows that Article 2 of Protocol No 1 does not prevent the State from establishing compulsory schooling, be it in State or private schools of satisfactory standard, and that verification and enforcement of educational standards are an integral part of that right...

However, the European Court of Human Rights has held that the convictions of parents must not conflict with the fundamental right of the child to education, the whole of Article 1 being dominated by its first sentence...This means that parents may not refuse the right to education of a child on the basis of their convictions..."

If you would like a full copy of the ruling please send an SAE and a 24p stamp to Linda Jackson, 21 Mount Pleasant, Guiseley, Leeds. LS20 9EB.

Renata Leuffen can be contacted at: Eisenstr. 39, 4000 Dusseldorf 1, West Germany. Tel - 1941-221-787605.

Education Otherwise - Restructuring

Education Otherwise was started in the mid-seventies as a self-help support group for home educating families. It was an unincorporated voluntary organisation. By the mid-eighties the organisation had grown to such an extent that members felt that it needed a legal framework to support it. Questions loomed about responsibility and liability should the organisation become bankrupt or be sued for bad advice. A structure which took corporate responsibility and limited the liability of individuals seemed attractive. Expert advice was sought and bought.

Following this advice two new bodies were set up. One was the Company "Education Otherwise Association Limited" and the other was the Charitable Trust "Education Otherwise Charitable Trust".

For the Company, Articles of Association and a Memorandum of Association were drawn up and duly registered at Companies House. Education Otherwise Association Ltd. has two stated objects. These are not exactly the same as those of the Education Otherwise Membership Organisation stated on the back of each newsletter. They are:

A) To promote, maintain, improve and advance public education, particularly by the provision of information, support and facilities to enable parents to make educational provision for their children otherwise than through full-time state or private educational institutions.



B) In the interests of social welfare to provide, or assist in the provision of, facilities for recreation or other leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life of the persons for whom such facilities are primarily intended being persons who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, poverty or social and economic circumstances provided that nevertheless such facilities shall be available to the members of the public at large.



Since the second object of the Association sounds nothing like the Aims of E.O. I wonder where it came from and can only suppose that it was put in to make the organisation sound "charitable". Other clauses which seem to be more appropriate for a registered charity include one which requires that we submit to the Charity Commissioners any changes we wish to make to the Memorandum or Articles.

Yet we are not a registered charity and have none of the tax advantages. It seems we are not eligible for charity status because we sell literature. And yet I understand that a charity is entitled to sell literature promoting its objects?

There is nothing in the Association's objects about reaffirming parental responsibility or indeed anything about the primary rights of children. Perhaps these aims were thought to be too political if it was hoped to meet the approval of the Charity Commissioners. Yet some of us feel that we should become more of a campaign group.

Education Otherwise Association Ltd. is not the sort of company that has share capital but is limited by guarantee. A hundred of the people involved in E.O. each guaranteed to give £10 should the company be wound up in debt. Thus liability was limited to these people and to this modest sum.

From these individuals or their successors, according to the Articles, a council of management is elected, consisting of a Chairperson, a General Secretary, a Treasurer, a Membership Secretary, a Publications Secretary, an Enquiries Secretary, between eight and ten regional representatives and up to three other members. These are the company directors and they rotate according to rules laid down in the Articles of Association.

The 310 guarantors are called "Paid-up Members" of the Association. The 2000 or so families who belong to E.O., the "Membership Organisation", do not seem to exist legally except as consumers of the service which E.O. Ltd. provides or as subscribers to the newsletter. There is no mention of them in the Memorandum or Articles. Nor at any time has it been made explicit how these people can become involved in the workings of the company.

What happens in practice is roughly this: E.O. members (subscribers) who come to meetings and become known to the existing guarantors (paid-up members) get invited to join the guarantors when they show an interest or when they are needed to replace those who have resigned.

The status of E.O. members is undefined and confused. Officially only paid-up members can vote, and then only at Annual General Meetings or Extraordinary General Meetings and then only on the business that the meeting has been convened to discuss. It is the Council of Management who meet together for the dispatch of business and who manage the company and call E.G.M.s.

The practice of open meetings at which everyone can speak and bring up issues which concern them and at which there is a decision-making by consensus rather than vote is left over from the unincorporated days when a 'Core Group' consisted of everyone present. A legal view might be that 'members meetings' are in fact directors' meetings which the directors choose to hold in an open manner. They are certainly not obliged to do so.

There seem to be many ways in which the structure of E.O., as it is at present incorporated in company law contradicts the ethos and practice of

E.O. as a self-help membership organisation. These are some of the contradictions:

E.O. Membership Organisation	E.O. Company Limited
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unit is the family. 2. Interested in rights of children and responsibilities of parents. 3. 2000+ member families. 4. Open to anyone who pays the subscrip' and accepts principles. 5. Democratic. 6. Responsibility taken by ordinary subscribers, eg co-ordinators and Newsletter editors. 7. People can contribute in many different ways. 8. Empowering. 9. Flexible. 10. Self-help. 11. Practices developed by members. 12. Based on openness and trust. 13. Can use creative decision-making processes, listening, cooperation, lateral thinking, cherishing minority opinions. 14. Main purpose of structure is to help people make contact, build networks. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unit is individual adult. 2. Interested in the social welfare of the public at large, and advancing public education. 3. 100 or so individual members. 4. Open to the invited few. 5. Hierarchical. 6. Responsibility rests with Council of Management. 7. The roles and responsibilities are laid down. 8. Encouraging dependency. 9. Rigid. 10. Few providing service. 11. Rules imposed by outside bodies. 12. Based on company law. 13. Decisions made by majority vote; assumes polarised arguments and capitulation of minorities. 14. Main purpose of structure is efficient running of company.

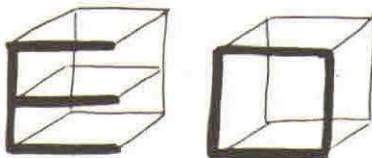
For all these reasons some of us feel that E.O. needs new legal structure that fits more comfortably with its ethos and practice. The arguments against it are that to change will take a lot of effort and may cost money. There are also people who argue that the ethos and practice I describe are too idealistic, unsound or unworkable for an organisation of the size and complexity of E.O.

Now we need to know the views of people who have not already expressed them at meetings or in the newsletter. Those of us who want change and who are prepared to put in work need some encouraging noises from all of you who support Education Otherwise in your many, many different ways.

What do you want of your Association?
Do you think you should have a right to attend meetings, to elect officers, to raise issues, to say how your subscription is spent?

Do you agree with the aims of E.O. expressed on the back of each newsletter? Do you think parental responsibility and the rights of children should have some part on what our organisation is expressly about?

Do you think we should be campaigning to defend our freedom to home educate against political threats, or to extend the rights to the E.C. in



general? Should we have a legal structure which permits this? Or should we try again to frame our constitution so that it is deemed charitable and saves us paying tax on our profits?

Should we register as an Industrial and Provident Society, as a "society for the benefit of the community", so that, provided we comply with their requirement that all our members had equal rights, we could apply directly to the Inland Revenue to be treated as a charity? (This option is likely to be expensive in the short term.)

The simplest change we could make would be to extend the company limited by guarantee to all E.O. members so that everyone becomes a guarantor of, say, £1. The newsletter would have to carry notices of meetings and other official business so that it would reach everyone. It does not solve all the contradictions but would make the organisation more democratic.

Or should E.O. break down with different types of structure for different functions? The newsletter and publications part could operate as now. The gatherings could be run by an E.O. Gatherings Ltd. which would be able to advertise free in the newsletter and stay below VAT level. The Enquiries, Publicity and Legal Advice system including all the co-ordinators could be a separate charitable body.

You may see other imaginative solutions which we have not thought of.

If we do make a major change in the structure of E.O. we want it to be at least a big step in the right direction even if it isn't the perfect answer straight off.

From : Stephanie Fitcher, 50 Springfield Ave, Chesterfield, Derbyshire. S40 1HL.

E.O. Doodles from Sandra Hosler, Horsham.



More on Restructuring from Andy Hill...

...I am a member of a workers co-op, Catalyst Collective Ltd., that registers co-ops and companies and writes rules.

I was asked by several people at Featherstone in '91 to take a look at the E.O. Ltd. Memorandum and Articles of Association and perhaps get involved with a 'legal structure'. Unfortunately my life took a turn for the busier at that point, with a food co-op I was involved in at the time growing in leaps and bounds. The E.O. rules were put to one side.

Now, having just read the rules, and perhaps knowing a lot more now than I did, I can see that any problem about democracy does not originate with the rules.

Education Otherwise Association Ltd.'s rules are not any different to many large Co-ops! In large organisations it is generally accepted that the management has to be carried out by a committee, but that committee is normally elected by the members.

The real problem with E.O., as it stands, is that people pay £12 presuming that they are becoming members of E.O. Ltd., but they are not.

All points raised in the newsletter 87 article ("On the Subject of National Gatherings") are valid, all the more so because E.O. has three tiers. It seems very difficult to become a 'director' of E.O. and even more difficult for the normal membership to have any say in the direction E.O. is moving.

It seems that less than 5% of the membership elect the officers of E.O. This is not democracy, and is made worse by the fact that new members are not informed of the situation. I came to Featherstone thinking I could vote on

important issues within E.O. and yet I can't even partake in the process to decide who should make those decisions for me.

It would not take much to change the practises of E.O. towards more democracy. The main changes would be in the amount of information given to members; there should be an A.G.M. once a year, with all members receiving 21 days notice and an agenda (perhaps in the newsletter). The A.G.M. should deal with the election of the committee (directors of E.O.) and other major decisions, such as changing the rules etc. The auditors have to be invited too, and the committee would make a report.

All the day to day running of E.O. would be done by the committee, who could meet when they want, where they want and make all the minor decisions. If the members, as a majority, were displeased by the directors' decisions they could elect someone else to do the job.

There are a few small alterations to the rules that would need doing, such as increasing the membership from 100.

I would be happy to go through the rules, demystifying them and explaining what changes need to be made (perhaps an article in the newsletter?), this is what we've set up our co-op to do; Catalyst Collective has a specialist knowledge of corporate structures, and have registered co-ops and companies, some of whom wished to include clauses designed to restrict corporate practises either to protect the environment or an ideal.

We find that many people are deterred from registering co-ops, and organisations deterred from getting their corporate structure as their members really want it, because of cost. Some consultants charge £300 a day for this kind of work!! We would be happy with a donation to Catalyst Collective Ltd.

I would like to see E.O. 'open up', please drop me a line if you have any feelings (for or against) about this issue.

Cheers,

Andy Hill, 56 Kingsbench Street, Hull, HU3 2TX.

"Through that short winter day, I lay in my secret place. And my spirit didn't hurt anymore. I was washed clean by the feeling song of the wind and the trees..."

Little Tree on his return to his Cherokee, mountain home after escaping the harsh regime of an orphanage.

From "The Education of Little Tree: The story of a Cherokee boyhood." Forrest Carter. Rider Books. 1976.

WEST MIDLANDS. Meetings have been arranged as follows:

Sat 24th October at 2pm: Birmingham Science Museum.

Sat 28th November at 2pm: Harris House Moseley Birmingham.

For further details contact Carol Willis on 021 455 9742.

EDUCATING Archie

IT'S AUTUMN
ONCE MORE,
AND MRS G
AND ARCHIE ARE
USING THEIR RAIL CARD
TO GO TO AN
IMPORTANT ED
WEEKEND...
IT HAS BEEN
RATHER A
LONG JOURNEY
SO FAR...

some time later...



STOP PRESS... ED. WINTER GATHERING
(see p. 20)

Letters

Hello All,

As we have just joined E.O. and have missed the mailing list, I thought I'd write to the newsletter to tell you all about us - so that we can make contact with other families and young people who share some of our ideas and visions and who we can have fun and excitement with.

We are Lari (12/81), Rosa (4/91), Heather (6/61) and Mark (6/66), Lari has just left school and we don't expect Rosa will ever start.

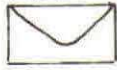
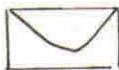
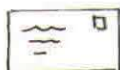
Looking through the list of skills and resources, these are the things that we like/know about/want to do/want you to know: We are a fairly political (feminist, anarchist, socialist!) in a non-organised way, very keen on community building and the environment. We are vegetarian and interested in permaculture. We have a horse, a very tiny house, and very little money, and are keen on having visitors and visiting other people. We are woodcraft folk leaders and pioneers and like camping and being outside in the country. Lari has a physical disability which makes walking long distances difficult, but we usually manage to do most things.

Because Lari has just left school we are very enthusiastic to visit other home-schoolers who are home-schooling because they want freedom for young people. We would like to visit people near enough (we have a car) or stay with others further away (we have a tent), partly to see how other people are 'doing it' and partly to help to break us in gently and to help ease those 'bored' feelings.

Mark has 'circus skills' and we all have a store of games and ideas to share - so invite us to your place or write and tell us what you are doing and how, or come and visit us - we can always squeeze people in. Lari would particularly like to hear from young people about what it's like for them not going to school.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Heather Parker, 70 Wathen Road, Warwick. CV34 5BB.



Dear E.O.,

I've just read an article about E.O. which was sent to me by Mrs Carol Chadwich in Tamworth. I'm a home-schooling parent in Japan and I'm very interested in E.O. due to its unique organisation and activities.

My son Hiroyuki is nine years old and he has never gone to school. Home-schooling is deemed as quite unusual here, even though there are 130,000 high school students who drop out every year and 48,000 children who refuse to adhere to compulsory education. Therefore, like it or not, I find myself fighting against social pressures.

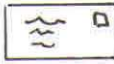
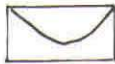
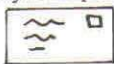
I produce a newsletter for home-schoolers in Japan called 'Homegrown Kids'. This goes out to a small group of thirteen home-educators - it's very difficult to promote home-schooling here. But the necessity of home-

schooling is increasing. How deeply wounded children are in school and schooling society?

I want to set up an organisation like E.O. in Japan, and I'd like to learn more about home-schooling in the UK and E.O. for this purpose. I hope to begin by translating useful E.O. publications into Japanese. I would appreciate details of copyright etc. I'll look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Masonori Nohtomi, 8-107 Central Education Center, 2-24 Iruma-chyo, Chyofu-city. Tokyo. Japan.



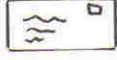
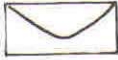
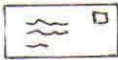
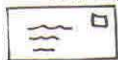
Dear E.O.,

I thought I'd write and let EOers know of a Mencap sponsored scheme in Wales called Echo. It is a befriending scheme for parents of children with learning difficulties. It has been set up relatively recently and is operating enthusiastically in most counties in Wales. Here is a list of contact numbers: Mid & South Glamorgan - 0656 79774 - Sian Morgan; Gwent - 02913 3056 - Sue Sargeant; Dyfed (Llanelli/Dinefwr) - 0269 860706; Clywd - 06903 486 - Beth Flynn.

I have been away from Wales for a couple of months so things may have begun to move in other areas. The befriending scheme aims to complement professional help that may be available by bringing together parents who have successfully faced the challenge of their child having a learning difficulty with parents who may be new to the situation and/or need support.

Cheers,

Rashid Mostafa, 4 Mandalay Court, London Road, Brighton, E. Sussex.
BN1 8QU.



Dear E.O.,

I've just finished my first year of primary school teaching in Tower Hamlets and it's been a difficult and confusing year. I got on well with the kids and parents, but finished up at a different school from the one where I started. (You can draw your own conclusions from that!)

I'd like to write at greater length, but still don't feel able to distance myself sufficiently to write coherently about it. One thing I can say with confidence is that I feel more strongly about home-education than ever, especially for children under seven. I get the impression that many couples join E.O. when their children are babies but get cold feet later on and send them to school anyway. Please have confidence in yourselves; if you did a good job for the first five years, you can easily carry on for two more.

Anyway, I made some good friends, among them Mary Davies, who is training as an educational therapist. We had some very interesting conversations at school; she has a profound understanding of children from

which I learned a lot. As part of her training, some of which takes place at the Tavistock Clinic, Mary needs to do two observations of children in two different families. She is looking for a baby born last September or October and a child aged between three and five. The weekly observations would be for an hour at a time, starting as soon as possible and continuing until July 1993. The purpose of the observations is so Mary can learn more about child development. Obviously there would be no intrusion or interference in family life. Mary just wants to be in an ordinary home and watch the children grow.

This could be an interesting experience for a family. If you live in London, preferably North London, and would like to help, or would like more information before deciding whether you want to help, please ring Mary on 081-348-1443.

Yours sincerely,

Peggy Thomas, 7 Maybourne Close, Springfield Road, London. SE26 6HQ.



Dear E.O.,



The adventure and education afloat group **Azimuth** enjoyed a wonderful reception at the Brest '92 Festival. The 70ft schooner 'Grace O'Malley' will soon be leaving European waters on a two-year expedition which will take her crew of twelve ten-to-fourteen-year-olds and two adults to Mauritania, the Bijagos Islands, French Guyane and the San Blas Islands.

My son Leighton is on board 'Grace O'Malley' at the moment and sends this poem:

Through the middle of the earth is a dividing line
Between light and dark, bad and good, hot and cold,
Big and little, up and down, happy and sad.
The line is straight when the wind is calm.
When it blows it is erratic and bendy,
The Dolphins love to cross the line;
The live above and below it.
But when their noses split it into fragments,
Their tails repair it and leave it as untouched.
Only we can hurt the line, so we must learn to mend it.
We are a beak without the tail, a one without the other.
When we have learned to respect the balance,
Maybe we will feel what they feel as they leap and plunge,
Lost in the Joys of Equality.



Leighton Hargreaves.

From: John Hargreaves, 1 Styche Hall, Market Drayton, Salop. TF9 3RB.

Thanks to everyone who responded to my requests for resources info.

Unusually, I received more than I could fit in, so that I have a basis to build on for next April's supplement. I was almost afraid to say so, as those of you now feeling guilty (for not sending the stuff you intended to send) might relax and think you needn't worry. Don't believe it! Go on worrying 'til you send me something!

First, a request for contact from Mardi Piper of Suffolk:

"I have three children - Laura (9), Ben (6) and Lucy (almost 4). Laura and Ben are at school and are very happy, but Laura has cerebral palsy, epilepsy (which is generally well-controlled) and she is blind (she can see bright light only).

At the moment she attends a 'musical keys' music group on Monday mornings, a physiotherapy playgroup on Tuesday mornings and hydrotherapy on Friday mornings. She also has a session with her physio at home - usually on a Tuesday afternoon - and a visit from a peripatetic teacher twice a term. I also manage to take her to our village playgroup one morning a week.

I feel that our local special school which takes children aged 2 to 19, cannot meet Lucy's needs. It takes all ranges of children, from Down's Syndrome to children with muscular dystrophy as well as children with cerebral palsy. But it has no special visual unit which Lucy needs. I am also very wary of her not being protected against the more mobile children. We have had this problem at our physio playgroup.....and I have been there.

Do you know of any other parents with a child with similar problems to Lucy's, who educate their children at home, whom I could get in touch with?"

Mardi Piper
5, The Street
Beccles, Suffolk, NR34 7PN

Mardi also enclosed some helpful information:

"The Information Exchange" is very inspiring and well worth subscribing to. It's full of ideas for working and playing with multiply handicapped children with sensory impairments. Information is available from Wendy McCracken, Oakes Green, Royal Schools for the Deaf, Stanley Rd, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire.

Also, some great software is available from 'Brilliant Computing' - computing for special needs. They publish a catalogue with details of programmes.

Write to Brilliant Computing, PO Box 142, Bradford BD9 5NF

Heather and Lani Parker have just joined EO after Lani came out of mainstream school. Lani is 10 years old and has cerebral palsy, which affects her mobility.

Dear Sylvia,

The best book I have read is: 'Nothing Special' by Micheline Mason. It is for 7 - 12 year olds and is about a fully integrated school. Even though it is about school I would still highly recommend it for EOers and any groups of children that they are contact with (eg: Woodcraft Folk).

I used to go into Lani's school at the beginning of each year to tell the children about her disability, and do some disability awareness training with the young people and the teachers. This book was a good follow-up reading book. More information from: 'The Integration Alliance', c/o 34a Dafforne Rd, Tooting, London SW17 8TZ. As a Woodcraft Folk leader I am on the National Disability Working Party which, among other things, is compiling a pack around disability that will in due course be available for groups. It will contain much information on camping, games, and activities.

There is also a sheet now attached to the 'Games Games Games' book (THE definitive co-operative games book) about adapting games to suit all children. This is available from The Woodcraft Folk National Office.

Another good book for adults and young people is: 'With wings' edited by Marsha Saxton and Florence Howe, published by Virago. It is an anthology of literature by women with disabilities ... a good way to gain some awareness of real people's lives.

Heather Parker
70 Wathen Rd.
Warwick CV34 5BB Dear EO,

I went to an ordinary school and I think it was because they didn't know anything that they stared at me and asked me why I walked funny. When Heather came in and talked about my disability they began to understand that I was just an ordinary person.

The teachers always used to say: "Can you do this, will you fall over?" and things like that. And the kids used to say that because I was disabled I always got my own way - but that wasn't true because it wasn't my own way I was getting - I was getting mostly the opposite because I didn't want to be treated as if I was stupid or fragile.

My friends at school normally didn't treat me like that and my best friend went off with someone else, but my other friends still treated me OK. I think it will be better for me at home because I won't have to put up with all the stuff that the teachers and other children gave me, because I can choose to be with my friends who do understand.

Lani Parker

Kim Wark (Leeds) has been cautious in dealing with the Health Authority after another EOr had warned that they had caused problems for her. Even so, the family experienced a very distressing visit to a child development doctor - whose adverse comments were prompted by a negative report from an unkind and unsympathetic speech therapist.

Hoping that 'forewarned is forearmed' for other people, she writes:

"Health Authorities are as variable as Education Authorities and some care is needed in dealing with them if you are home-educating your special child, or plan to do so.

We have met with a variety of reactions from health professionals when they know we home educate Matthew (5.1/2). Some are quite positive (usually those with recent experience in special needs provision in local schools!), others 'anti'. The attitude of some people has also changed since we took Samuel (7.1/2 and 'normal') out of school.

The following suggestions arise out of a rather upsetting hospital visit which forced us to re-think some of our attitudes:

SUGGESTIONS FOR DEALING WITH HEALTH AUTHORITIES

1. Find out which visits to doctors, therapists, etc are 'compulsory'. Then decide if the 'optional' visits are really useful and worth the (sometimes considerable) time and energy spent travelling to them. If they are not useful, give them up!
2. Do not take other children to appointments. The last thing you need is people commenting on how they behave - which may be less than perfectly in a hospital/clinic setting that they are not used to!
3. Make sure that ALL appointments are at a suitable time and place. If your child normally sleeps in the afternoon and morning appointments are not available, DON'T GO! I struggled on with afternoon speech therapy sessions for some time when Matthew still slept in the afternoon. He didn't 'perform' very well and neither of us really benefitted from them. I gave up regular speech therapy for this reason, and Matthew's speech improved considerably! Looking back, I should have insisted on morning appointments or a change of venue if that was the only way to achieve this.

Also, is the venue easily accessible? Long journeys to and from hospital or clinic can be wearing.

4. If you have a bad experience with one of your child's 'health professionals', I would suggest refusing to see that person again, and asking to see someone else. This may seem a bit drastic if you have waited a long time for a certain sort of therapy. However, progress depends on trust and good relationships, and if either is missing you shouldn't feel you have to struggle on. Also, remember that the therapist's report(s) will remain in your child's file!

I'm sorry if this sounds rather negative! If you deal with good, sympathetic health professionals - count your blessings!

On a more positive note, our LEA visit went well and we now have LEA approval. The Romanian border guards (who had machine guns and pistols - see newsletter 86 June 1992) were definitely more frightening than the LEA advisers!

The book 'The Discovery of The Child' by Maria Montessori is very helpful for both the boys. There are some excellent reading and number games, as well as a general description of her method - which was first developed for use with special needs children. Many ideas are adaptable for use at home, though you will need to borrow a few more children for some of the games!

It is available from: Montessori St. Nicholas Learning Materials,
23-24 Princes Gate, London SW7 1PT

Kim Wark
21 Drummond Avenue
Leeds LS16 5JZ

Lynda Ruffles (Stockport) has written some notes on resources but points out: "We have a nine-year-old autistic, of above average IQ but strictly non-directable, so our comments - especially about software - will reflect this".

YOU CAN READ video series; (12 titles in the set)
Available as a part work through newsagents at £7.50 per cassette. Comes complete with work book and is a lively mix of songs, stories, mime and packed with action. Highly recommended for all children. W>H>Smith can obtain back copies although it does take some time.

LADYBIRD READING SCHEME

Set of reading books with workbooks available for numbers 1 to 6 and videos. The first six books went down well and we really enjoyed the workbooks, but then the stories became school centred which provoked some resistance. The videos are disappointing.

SOOTY STARTS TO READ and SOOTY NUMBERS videos:

Depends whether your child relates to the little bear with a communication problem, but we found them worthwhile.

SESAME STREET videos:

Now available through W>H>Smith. A good follow-on from the easier Sooty series; they go into greater depth.

LILLE MISSES AND MR MEN books and videos:

Useful not just for learning to read but also for drawing, colouring and explaining emotions - which can be important for communication handicaps. They are also quite easy to model and you may be lucky enough to find the biscuit cutters as well. If your child eats playdough, use roll out icing (paste food colours for deeper shades).

LADYBIRD FUN WITH.....MATHS, ENGLISH, SCIENCE series:

Not entirely helpful as workbooks, but a handy guide for one's own projects and we enjoy colouring the indices to show what we can do.

CASSETTE TAPES AND PERSONAL STEREO

Good choice of tapes available from Early Learning Centre, but the local library permit special needs children to borrow tapes and videos free of charge, so we try everything from Peter and the Wolf to opera and Dire Straits. Quite useful to try something before buying!

LIZZIE WEBB AND JOGGY BEAR video:

Fun and fitness for children broken down into days of the week - which is handy.

CHILDREN'S ARTS AND CRAFTS

Published by Australian Women's Weekly and available through newsagents. Some of the items needed are not available over here but there is usually a good substitute and the book itself is colourful enough for the child to enjoy looking at it.

IKEA PUPPET THEATRE

Lacquered cardboard 133 x 158cm. £7.90

COMPUTER SOFTWARE

If your child is non-directable then Mickey's Runaway Zoo and Donald's Alphabet are worth consideration. The programme will hold and wait for the child, but maintains some activity to stimulate interest. It plays a tune when the key is operated so one can hear if it is being used unobserved.

Fun School series we have not found useful except for the number train. The problem with this, as with Sooty's Numbers and Thomas The Tank Engine is that we have a child who sees no value in repetition. Others may find this an advantage.

Postman Pat game is good for direction finding, but quite tricky for the younger child.

TELEVISION EDUCATION SERVICES

Wide range of programmes: details, schedules and order forms for support material (teacher's and children's books, cassettes, videos, software etc.) from:

ITV Schools, 6 Paul St. London EC2A 4JH Phone 071 247 5206
Programme details also available on ORACLE/4 TEL pages 491 (Primary) 492 (Secondary) 419 (for daily transmissions)

BBC Education Information, White City London W12 7TS or phone their 24-hour service on 081 746 1111.
Full details of schools and other educational programmes on page 618 of CEEFAX. Ceefax sub-titles are available for a number of schools programmes.

[SCHOOLS RADIO PROGRAMMES are included in the BBC literature....Ed]

YOUNG TELEGRAPH

Published with the Daily Telegraph on Saturdays, the centre pages contain useful posters.

[There is also a very useful weekly magazine: 'EC' published with The Guardian on Tuesdays....Ed]

...Continued on page 8

Open
School

TUTAFAX

Fax no. 0803 866576

Park Road, Dartington, Totnes, TQ9 6EQ

Tel: 0803 866542

To: William

From: Collette

Date: 30th June

Q. = question

Next Tuesday at Kevics a man is coming to talk to us about Reptiles.

He will show us slides and also bring snakes, lizards and other reptiles for us to handle.

Q. Which reptile do you like?

Q. Have you handled a reptile?

To collatt

① Snakes

② NO I have not handled a reptile

From
William

WHAT IS TUTAFAX? FIND OUT BY READING THE ARTICLE ON THE NEXT PAGE. OBTAIN FURTHER DETAILS (and your questionnaire!) FROM: LYNETTE GRIBBLE, OPEN SCHOOL, PARK RD. DARTINGTON, TOTNES, DEVON TQ9 6EQ. TELEPHONE 0803 866542.

TELE-TUTORING

Through our TUTAFAX programme we are developing ways of increasing the motivation and self-esteem of children with special needs at the same time as we help to improve their written skills.

Imagine a child at home (or in school) who sees little reason for writing because s/he can easily speak to her parent, friend or teacher. If instead, the child is in communication with her OPEN SCHOOL tutor by means of a fax machine or computer, then there is a real reason to write and despatch the piece of writing complete with graphics.

The potential of TUTAFAX is enormous and we are just at the beginning. We have conducted 3 different trials during the past year with: individuals at home, children in primary schools; and, under the auspices of home tuition services, children temporarily out of school through accident, illness and pregnancy.

At our Devon base (we have a second base in London and a toehold in Birmingham) the tutor for the younger children is Collette Bradley, an E.O. member and former home-schooler.

We have set up a project with some neighbouring primary schools which have fax machines in their offices. We sought children with special needs who would be transferring to their secondary school at the end of the summer, aiming to improve their self-esteem through motivation and increased writing. The fax tutor works through the children's own interests expanding their knowledge and experience personalising her responses to overcome the impersonality of a machine. If she is uncertain about a child's confidence she may make an occasional telephone call. In this particular project there is an extension which gathers the children with learning difficulties at the secondary school once a fortnight to meet their OPEN SCHOOL tutor and to get to know the head of 1st Year and the head of special needs; they also familiarise themselves with the school buildings and above all meet others who could form a mutually supportive group. We shall be following this group with interest.

For those temporarily out of school, the HOMEFAX project allows home tutors to pool their specialisms so a pupil may receive tuition from several different people. This helps to increase the amount of tuition available to any pupil and to break down the isolation of the learner. Schools are also encouraged to keep up a fax correspondence with the absentee so that the return into school is less daunting.

Eventually I hope to create a TELECLASS for children who wish to be in contact with each other. I think that a lot of tutoring could in fact be carried out by other children. This TELEWEB could be accessed via fax, computer, telephone, cassette or correspondence, depending upon materials and convenience. This year will see the tentative creation of the TELEWEB.

OPEN SCHOOL is a charitable trust which relies on grant-making trusts and fund-raising to develop most of its projects. If anyone has access to a fax machine or to a computer, the on-line call charges are not very high (don't be confused by the commercial charges in the high street!) The real expense is the tutor. We could just develop materials and transmit them and work with children's answers to prepared work but I want to see OPEN SCHOOL responsive to an individual's interests and needs. These can only happen if there is direct communication with a tutor or enthusiast.

I should be interested in running a limited trial (initially 10 children) with E.O. members whose children have special needs. If you would like to participate please write in for a questionnaire. (address on page 6)

Recently we had 10 E.O. children from Devon and from London participating in a role-playing MAGUS DAY. Their contributions, advice and suggestions for improvements were much appreciated and we shall be inviting some of them to help to design more days which will take place in the spring and summer at Dartington. There is so much that I could write about Open Learning and flexi-schooling!

Continued from page 5....

WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

Free catalogue available from Publications Unit on 0483 426444.
Their G5 Wild Club ties in with the TV programme of the same title.
PO Box 101 Wetherby Yorkshire LS23 7EE. £6.99 plus £1 p&p.

Lynda Ruffles
56, Ogden Rd.
Bramhall, Stockport SK7 1HN

[Thanks Lynda...sorry I couldn't fit it in without the hiatus!]

SPECIAL NEEDS EXHIBITION AND SEMINARS 1992

Wednesday 4 November - Thursday 5 November
The Cumberland Hotel, Marble Arch, London.

This annual exhibition is organised by the Educational Publishers Council and the National Association for Special Educational Needs. For several years now it has been held in early October, therefore it has usually taken place before the October newsletter reaches you.

So I am very pleased that this year I am able to give you the details in time for you to think about going. If you go, wear comfy shoes, take food or plan to go elsewhere if you are allergic to exorbitant prices and lengthy waits for table space, and be prepared to lug around heavy carrier bags full of information leaflets, catalogues - and a few 'special offer' items if you're lucky!

I quote from the advance publicity:

"The London Special Needs Exhibition is now well established as the largest and most comprehensive annual event in the UK devoted entirely to Special Educational Needs. Admission to the exhibition is FREE and everyone is welcome.

Alongside the free exhibition of educational publishing, equipment and technology for all ages, there is an extensive seminar programme featuring prominent speakers from the field of special education. With a wide range of topics covered - including maths, spelling and handwriting, the teaching of phonics, information technology and the responsibilities of governors - these are the ideal staff development days.

Entrance to seminars is by ticket only, Price £5 each, bookable in advance."

You can obtain full seminar information and a booking form by contacting EPC Exhibitions on 071 580 6321

Don't forget to keep those contributions rolling in!
Send them to: Sylvia Jeffs, 16 St Bernards Rd. Solihull West Midlands.

HELP PLEASE!

We are having problems with a neighbouring family. They are very authoritarian, anti-home-education, and are now interpreting children's innocent games in an outrageous way.

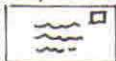
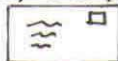
I need other people's views on the best way of producing well-balanced, sexually functioning adults in this modern world. Anecdotes, anonymous if necessary, on what happened in your childhood to illustrate the right and wrong way to go about it would be gratefully received.

Were you sexually abused? Have you as a child or adult used power to abuse anyone else? How can we prevent any form of abuse particularly from adults telling children that their explorative but harmless games are not nice/disgusting etc. by their reaction?

Are too many ordinary children suffering as a result of our increased awareness of some children's exploitation within the family.

I have read "Sex Without Shame" by Alayne Yates, an excellent book but it would probably send our neighbours into paroxysms of horror! Is there a slightly gentler version of the same ideas available?

- Isobel Bogucki, 20 Rusper Road, Horsham, W. Sussex. RH12 4BD.



Dear E.O.

I have just joined E.O. after many years experience with home education because it occurred to me that this experience might be of use to others.

I took my own daughter out of school in 1973. She is now 26 and after successfully completing her A'levels she gained a distinction at Drama School and is just becoming successful as a singer/actress. At the time that I took her out of school E.O. was virtually unheard of but after a fruitless search for some other form of "alternative" education, which didn't seem to exist, I decided to educate her at home. We were gradually joined by other children and parents and grew into a co-operative group of nearly a dozen children, many of whom we educated until they were 16+.

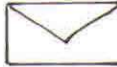
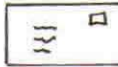
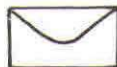
At that stage I wasn't a qualified teacher, but since then I have taken a degree by independent study in the area of Holistic Education at the University of East London (The Independent Study course is a wonderful option for E.O. children looking for a "free choice" in Higher Education.

If anybody needs advice, help or tutorial work I'd be happy to offer my assistance. I would have to charge for regular tutorial work, and this would only be possible in the London area. However, I'd be happy to visit people in other places on an occasional basis. In return I'd like to be able to study your children and their education as part of my M.A. research.

I would also be glad to offer advice/assistance/moral support by phone or letter.

Best wishes,

Carol Martin, 41 Alder House, Maitland Park Villas, London. NW3 2EL.



Dear E.O.,

In response to Valerie Cross's letter in the August '92 issue, I have great sympathy with her. Indeed when I joined E.O. some three years ago it was my hope also that I might find encouragement; encouragement that has to do with a structured approach re. the home education of ones children, Instead it would appear that the initial good intentions of E.O. have been eroded somewhat, by allowing itself to be influenced for the best part, by those who have this primitive attitude, 'that children can teach themselves, without the need for instruction,' that 'the free life is okay man, know what I mean!' Well, having read such irresponsible tones many times amongst your pages and wondering if LEA officers have read the same, it does nothing to reassure one that the Government will forever allow the 1944 Education Act to continue, were such an attitude to prevail.

Ask yourself E.O. would it not be more in the interest of many of your members were you to up and fight for our right to free copies of the National Curriculum, along with other useful educational material? That way the powers that be get to see that both you as an organisation and we as parents are serious about taking (proper) responsibility regarding the education of our children, as is your claim on the back of every Newsletter.

Needless to say Valerie, you are not alone in being disillusioned, indeed more support should be given through E.O. especially to those of us wishing to follow a structured approach, advocating that the local LEA advisor can be a plus and not a minus, but how will this come about I ask, if good co-ordinators are resigning to be replaced by those who live the free life, your guess is as good as mine.

Yours sincerely,

M.R.Ellis, Esq., Orchard Hill Cottage, Bulkworthy, Holsworthy, North Devon. EX22 7UP.

On Children: "How can happiness be bestowed? Mo own answer is: Abolish authority. Let the child be himself. Don't push him around. Don't teach him. Don't lecture him. Don't elevate him. Don't force him to do anything...If you reject my answer, it is incumbent on you to find a better one."

A.S.Neill, from The New Summerhill, By A S Neill, edited and updated by Albert Lamb. Penguin. £7.99.

STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS...



THE E.O. WINTER GATHERING is at
BEAUMANOR HALL, LEICESTERSHIRE
4TH - 7TH FEB. '93

contact: PAT, ALAN and BRENNAN BALFE
10, HIGHFIELDS ROAD, MOUNTSORREL,
LOUGHBOROUGH, LE12 7HH
(0533) 374948 for details

Regional Diary

Avon.

Bath Information re. Small School Project, Flexischool and workshops - Carole Hayes 0225-339419.

Open Learning Group - Zilla 0225-427759.

Seed Circle Education Group - Trudie 0275-333251 for workshops and outings.

Derbyshire.

We meet at Watermeadows swimming pool, Mansfield on the first Wednesday in every month. We are also arranging a number of meetings for the Autumn but have not yet fixed dates. Please phone for details nearer the time.

October 20th Greenpeace Whale Workshop

October half-term (whoops!) - Dyeing workshop at the Greenhoughs (0773 836662).

November 11th - Visit to Trebor Factory for over-7s. Meet at Steps but phone Tina to book (0246 205605).

November - Bowling at Chesterfield. Phone Steph (0246 239048).



~~Also~~ a series of visits to educational activities staged on Derby Museums. Phone Kerry Meek (0332 754793).

Devon:

South Devon.

Plymouth - During the summer months, we have been meeting at outdoor venues for picnics etc. We have been to Mount Edgcombe House and gardens again, beside the sea, and we have had some families from Cornwall join us as well. We have also met twice on Mikhail's house boat. Some of us did rowing and another group went out in the dinghy and looked at submarines. Roger, Mikhail's partner, asked a Navy official if the young people could have a look inside but the official said no.

We will be meeting at Efford Community Centre on the 2nd Tuesday of every month over the winter, from 1.00 - 4.00 pm. Please come and join us. Phone Sammy and Nick - 0548 830716.



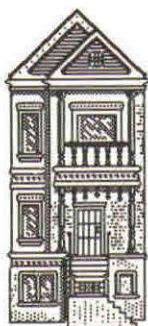
Totnes - We have been meeting every month at Ellie's, just north of Totne's. We had roughly fifty people in last time we met and the young people range from about eighteen months to fifteen years old. We hope to arrange a new meeting place

in Dartington for the winter months. Please contact us for details. Phone Sammy and Nick - 0548 830716.

Some families from around Totnes held a jumble sale in South Brent to raise money for the fund which subsidises outings/events etc. They raised £45.

There will be a dance/movement group commencing in the autumn term, near Dartington. Please telephone us for more information, as above.

Crediton - We have been meeting at Beech Hill Community, near Crediton, but they were very busy with residential courses during August, so Patsy and her family kindly offered their house/garden for a barbecue. Sadly this had to be cancelled because two of her children had chickenpox. We will be meeting again at Beech Hill in the Autumn and the group are also looking for another venue. Phone Sammy and Nick - 0548 830716.



Co-ordinators: Sammy and Nick Vidal-Hall. As always we welcome people contacting us. Homecroft, Brownston Street, Modbury, South Devon PL21 0QR. Tel. as above.

And now there is also Mandy and Ron Skinner who are the new co-ordinators for **NORTH DEVON**. Please contact them with enquiries, ideas for meetings or just to say hello. The Old Barn, Hescott Farm, Hartland, Bideford, North Devon EX39 6AN.

Don't worry if your family is a South Devon or North Devon family. Contact either of the co-ordinators, or both! Of course, everybody is always welcome to all meetings etc. regardless of where they live.

East Sussex:

We have Parents' Evenings once a month, and several activities for families every week. However, details are not usually finalised in time to include in the national magazine. We publish a local newsletter every month which gives full details (subscription £8 a year, cheque payable to E.S.E.O. to Lyndon Pugh, 37 Nevill Road, Rottingdean, Brighton, BN2 7HH. You might prefer to phone Ian Lawes on 0273 55-92-75 or Anne Rix (local co-ordinator) on 0435 86-27-94. As well as visits to museums, historic buildings etc., we meet for swimming, ice-skating, CB orienteering, survival techniques, craft and games activities, wheelies, bonfires ... you name it! Look forward to seeing you.

Hertfordshire;

We are meeting regularly - approximately once a week - in various parts of the county and even North London. Our activities include visits to the Young Designers Centre Exhibition (The Wolf Proof House) in London, to a hands-on History Show at the St. Albans Museum and to the Birds' Hide in Broxbourne and much more.

For further details of our activities, please phone Christine Bassan, on 0442 866640 or send an SAE to 17 Ravens Lane, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4 2DX. New members are families from other areas are welcome.

Greater Manchester and Cheshire:

Parrswood "Summer School" is over for another year - many thanks to Gill Wilson who organised it so well and to all those who ran a session for us, especially Rowena.

By now we will have held our planning meeting and will hopefully have a programme of events for the Autumn/Winter, but at the time of writing only the following have been confirmed:

Monthly daytime meeting at Gill Wilson's house, 20 Brook Road, Heaton Chapel. Phone 061 442 8723 for dates and times.

RESOURCES FOR YOUR PRIMARY CHILD. Members can bring along details and examples of resources they are using and there will be the chance to exchange ideas. **19th October**, 8 pm, Gill Wilson's house (address above).

RESOURCES FOR YOUR SECONDARY CHILD. The same format as the above meeting. **16th November**, 8 pm. Gill Wilson's House (address as above).

Everybody is, of course, welcome at both meetings. If you have not received details of other events please phone Anne Nesbit (0625 871718) or send an SAE to 17 Twekesbury Close, Poynton, Cheshire, SK12 1QJ.

Kent:

October 15th and November 19th: Open House at Cath Coopers. Bring picnic lunch. Lovely big garden - bring bikes - climbing frame. Path joins North Downs Way - beautiful walks. 162 Bush Road, Luxton, Nr. Rochester - close to BR Cuxton.

Ring Cath for details and directions on 0634 715389.

Monday meetings at Friends Meeting House, Maidstone are cancelled. We are hoping to arrange a winter meeting place and outings in Rochester. For further details contact Amanda Mackenzie on 0634 814680 or Sue and Keith Burchett on 0732 870344.



Kent - South East:



October 21st - WALMER CASTLE. Meet at the entrance at 11.00 am. This is a Free Educational Visit, so please come along and support us. An interesting castle, completed in 1540 as part of Henry VIII's defence of the nation. It is a splendid example of Tudor fortification. Part of it was converted to a country home for successive Lord Wardens of the Cinque Ports from the 17th century onwards. It's fine furniture and relics of the Duke of Wellington make it a good place to begin study of Victorian Britain.

For further information and directions phone Pam Stevenson - 0304 210997. Everyone Welcome. Please Come!

North/Inner London;

We meet the first Sunday of every month, these meetings are especially for new members and people thinking about deschooling. We usually arrange a craft activity.

2pm - 4pm at Burghley Road Centre, 231/2 Burghley Road, N8, off Turnpike Lane, nearest tube is Turnpike Lane (piccadilly Line). Bring food and drink, Coffee and tea are provided. We ask for a contribution, if affordable, suggested £2.00 per family.

Everyone interested in E.O. is very welcome. Wheelchair access is good inc. toilets. Contact telephone numbers given below for further details. Please phone if coming for the first time.

Monday Outings.

We generally meet every Monday at about 12pm, usually at a museum, park or ice skating rink. Bring a picnic, often there's a cafe nearby.

Please phone Jo - 081 883 8052, Helen and David - 071 284 2124, Belinda and Alan - 081 343 1061 or Audrey and David 081 806 5393 for details of Monday outings - they are often arranged the week before. Everyone is welcome, especially new people.

Some E.O. families go to Family Craft Workshops at Fleet Community Centre, Agincourt Road, NW3. tel: 071 485 9988; phone for charges. The workshops are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3.30 - 5.30 pm during term-time.

North Yorkshire:

Trial run of GROUP MEETINGS to be held at Priory Street Centre, York on the third Friday of each month starting 18 Sept, 2-4 pm, 16 Oct and 13 Nov. Cafe, table tennis and various other facilities available. Please come to meet us and discuss what you want from your local E.O. group. Further details - Sue Clare 04396 364.

Nottinghamshire:

As I mentioned in the June Newsletter we move to Ireland in the Spring and it would be good to have a volunteer to act as co-ordinator. Please contact me if you would like to do it. Paul Sains - 0623 655050.

Swimming - I am trying to find a day and venue that suits everyone, unsuccessfully so far! I suggest, in the meantime, that we have two sessions: One, combined with Derbyshire, at Watermeadows, Mansfield on the first Wednesday each month; Two, a lunchtime straight swim session at Arnold on a middle Thursday each month.

This gives the following: Oct, 15th, Nov 19th, Dec 10th, Jan 14th, Feb 18th and March 11th at Arnold.

Nov 4th, Dec 2nd, Feb 3rd, Mar 3rd at Watermeadows.

Ice Skating - I suggest the last Friday each month at the rink in Nottingham. 1.30 - 3.30 pm. If people arrive before 1.30 pm we can attempt to get a discount for a group, otherwise people can pay individually.

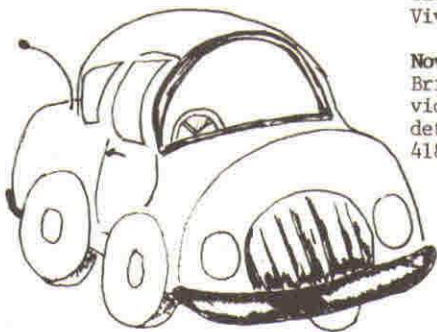
Dates - Oct 30th, Nov 27th, Jan 29th.

Warwickshire:

Everyone is welcome to join us for the following meetings.

October. We hope to visit the Massey Ferguson factory in Coventry. For details please telephone Vivienne Bennett - 0608 641354.

November 2nd. Visit to the Coventry Museum of British Road Transport at 11.00 am. There will be a video on the history of the car. For further details please contact Katharine Savage - 0926 633 418.



West Sussex:

October 22nd: Cherry Lane Adventure Playground in Crawley. Ring Isobel Bogucki - 0403 61178 for details.

October 29th, November 23rd, December 8th: Open days at Isobel Bogucki's, 20 Rusper Road, Horsham. If there is any particular activity you would like please let me know. Phone number as above.

West Yorkshire:

First of all, a big thank you to Kim Wark who has looked after activities with such energy and determination over the past year or so. Thank you too to all the people who have organised workshops.

Where do we go from here? What do you expect/need/want from your local group? Activities, a forum for ideas and ideals, support, socialisation for our children - any of these or none of them? As the wind gathers the seeds from the trees this autumn why don't we shake a few limbs ourselves and get off to the Parent's Evenings at Kim Wark's (October) and Julia Brightbart's (December), to see what new life/energy/renewal we can bring to our group.

Activities.

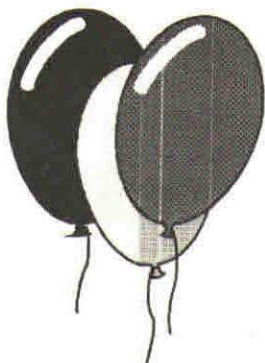
Some people like to follow their own paths; others like to go a little of the way with friends. I thought I'd attempt to please everyone (!) in this column by mentioning places recommended by others and also those our family has found interesting and enjoyable. If you want to ask a friend or even make a group booking, feel free!

EUREKA!, Halifax - Linda Jackson has been here and recommends it highly. She's offered to help organise a group visit. Please ring her (0943 870070) if you're interested.

Archeological Research Centre, York. We visited here in the spring - what an exciting place! The staff, all volunteers, are so eager to talk and explain the many hands-on activities available. Perhaps I'm preaching to the converted but I wonder how many of you have heard of the Young Archeologists Club - family membership (inc. parents) is £7.50 annually. There are three newsletters a year packed with interesting facts and information, not gimmicky and there is news of digs. The local branch at York organises a regular programme of events too.

One of the perks of membership is free entry to the A.R.C., the Yorvik Viking Centre and other museums around the county. I shall bring copies of the newsletters/activities and membership details to December's Parents' meeting.

Cliffe Castle, Keighley. This has a little of everything and is a must for anyone keen on fossils, wildlife and geology. The people there are also very helpful if you want to find out more about any fossils you may have found. There are lavishly furnished rooms on the ground floor all with beautiful chandeliers. On the first floor there are various collections, including musical

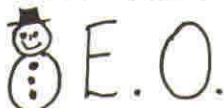


CONT....:

instruments, toys and kitchen equipment. The building is set in a small park - ideal for a picnic or a romp.

There is no charge to this museum. It is closed on Mondays.

STOP PRESS....



WINTER GATHERING

The E.O. Winter
Gathering will
be at

BEAUMANOR HALL,
LEICESTERSHIRE

4TH-7TH FEB 1993

Details/Booking forms
available from:-

Pat + Alan Balfe
10, Highfields Rd,
Mountsorrel,

Loughborough,
LE12 7HH

(0533) 374948

Ideas For Future Activities/Events.

Anyone interested in a car boot/table top sale of sorts, fronted by the children. Do ring me if you're like to be involved. A possible venue could be the North Wing Centre, Bradford.

It is hoped that a Christmas gathering organised for sometime in December will be planned at the October meeting. If you didn't make the meeting but are interested, ring me, Celia Yates 0274 640217, for details.

Parents Meetings.

The next meeting will be at Julia Brightbart's at 8 p.m. on the 2nd December. 6 Leylands Lane, Heaton, Bradford. Tel: 0274 483579. Please ring her for directions and further details of agenda for the meeting. Matters to be discussed, among others, include: Procedure for welcoming new members, educational direction of local group, a local newsletter, a day-time parents' meeting.

Wishing you a fruitful autumn and a magical winter.

From: Celia Yates. 0274 640127.
Activities Co-ordinator.

General Co-ordinator, Alison Tribe - 0484 606618.

"...by grading people the way we grade vegetables - and in a dozen other vile and stupid ways - network schools steal the vitality of communities and replace it with an ugly mechanism. No one survives these places with their humanity intact..."

from: Dumbing us Down. John Taylor Gatto. Available from John Holt's Book and Music Store.



Natural History Museum

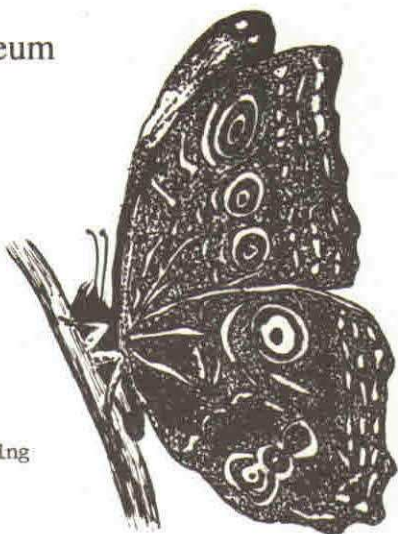
Children should go to the Natural History Museum because it's fun and educational. The one that I recommend is the 'Creepy Crawlies' because it tells you everything you want to know about bugs and arthropods. It also lets you enter no.1 Crawley House, but only if you dare! It also tells you what eats your breakfast and what insects are pests.

Another exhibit well worth visiting is 'Discovering Mammals', which has a life-size blue whale and other mammals like elephants, hippos and rhinos.

In the bird gallery there is a big case full of humming birds which is over a hundred years old. Also there are many other interesting birds on display in closely related groups.

It's a fun, learnable day and there's something for everyone.

Chris Smith, age 11, Canvey Island, Essex.



History Workshop

Rediscovering Ourselves

Lipman Building, Newcastle Upon Tyne Polytechnic

6,7 and 8 November 1992

Including a presentation on home learning

Write to: **History Workshop, 4 Cloth Market,
Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 1EA**
for further details.



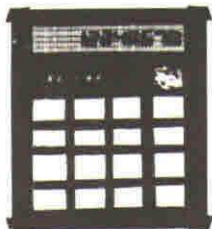
Worksheets & Workbooks

Home educators, especially those new to it, might look with interest at worksheets and workbooks that are on sale. But how can you be sure the material is good? The question of whether to use such materials at all is a far more personal one, and deeper. Here I want to look at workbooks themselves for those who might make some use of them at times.

Workbooks and worksheets must meet certain basic standards to be of any value: sadly many fail to measure up. Firstly, they absolutely must be CORRECT. If they contain wrong spellings, wrong answers or worst of all wrong teaching they are going to do more harm than good. As an illustration, let's

take the "Sainsbury's Home Learning 'Maths Workbook' Level 5". This will exemplify many of my criticisms, although in other respects a nice little publication. For instance, it is widely available, reasonably priced, attractively drawn and written, and specimen children (my own, aged 6 and 8) seem to like it. So what's wrong? It is not correct! Unit 6 asks the child to fill in the missing number in a little sum: $9 + 3 \times ? = 24$. The answer is not 2 as given at the back. You must do multiplication before addition. The answer is therefore 5. $3 \times 5 = 15$ and $9 + 15 = 24$. Please try this on a pocket calculator. You see, all but the feeblest calculators (such as the

ones you get free with Raisin Splitz) "know" that, in maths, multiplication is done first. When you were at school or otherwise, you will have learned to put brackets round numbers thus:
 $9 + (3 \times 2) = 15$. You might have learned the mnemonic BODMAS which remind you to deal first with brackets, then Division and Multiplication and finally to Add and Subtract.



Please try this on your calculator: $6 + 4 - 2 = ?$ Did you get 5 or 8? If you got 5 that particular calculator is not suitable for educational use. Don't panic; you can get a simple but correct Casio or Texas for under £10. Look for one calling itself Scientific or having Log/Sin/Cos/Tan buttons - even if you can't use those just yet. Avoid four function calculators even for the very young. You, like Sainsbury's, will be teaching them incorrectly, and it is very hard to unlearn wrong ideas.

In order to avoid errors in workbooks it's best if two or more people collaborate in the writing. Reputable worksheets will have been tested on a large number of children of the right age-group to reveal any "bugs".

Children are quick to spot silly pictures, such as those portraying an air-filled balloon which actually floats in air, or a vehicle balancing on too few wheels. Such things destroy a child's confidence in the book.

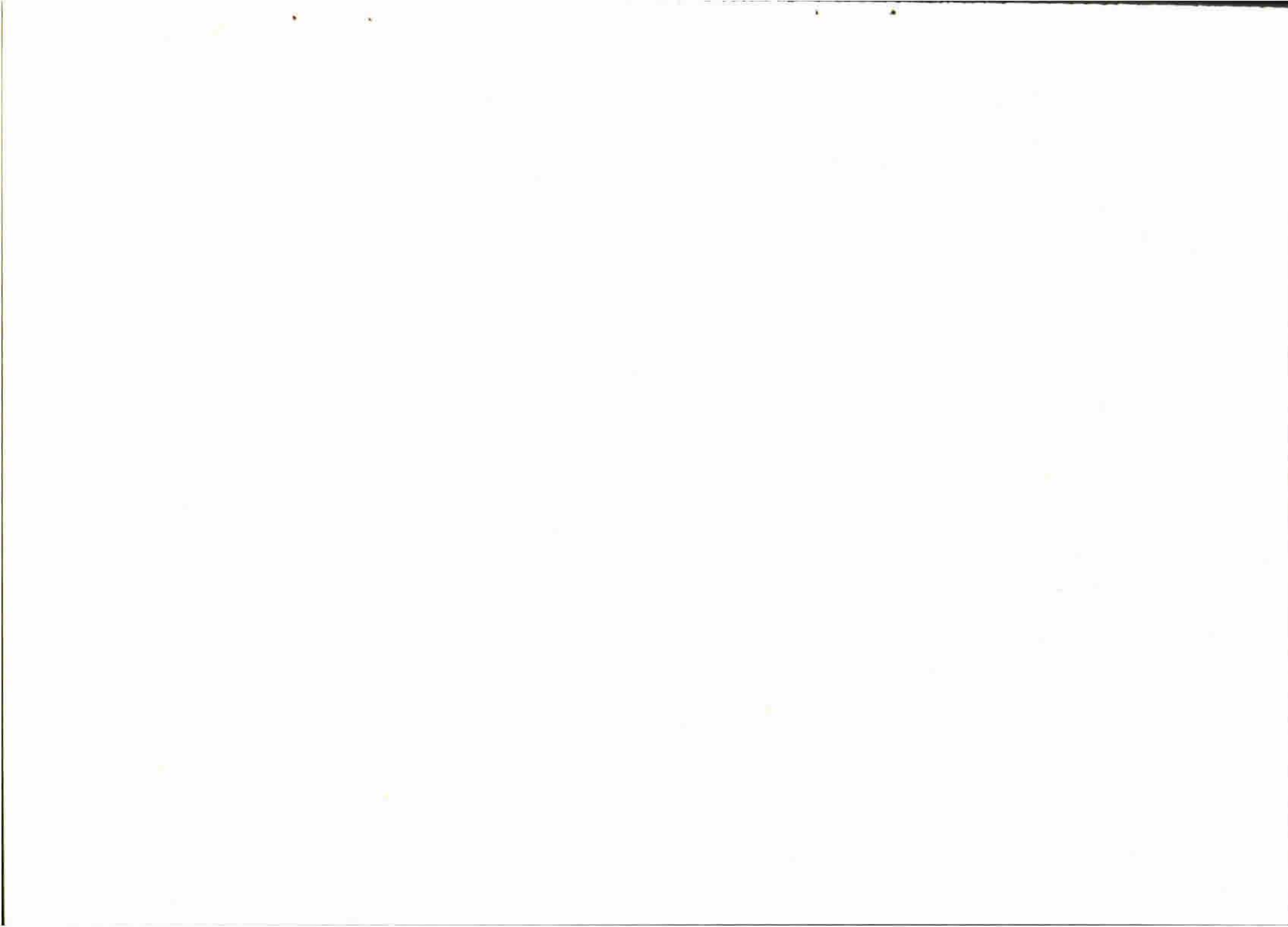
Secondly, workbooks or sheets must be UNAMBIGUOUS. To illustrate again from the Sainsbury's book, the unit on Fractions shows three little bags of sweets and asks the child to "Colour half the sweets in each bag." There are 10, 12 and 16 sweets; the child should colour 5, 6, and 8 sweets. But my child carefully coloured in a half of each and every sweet. Was he wrong? I don't think so.

The wording of questions is crucial, as anyone who's ever tried to design a form or questionnaire will know. You would not want to buy a Geography workbook which asked you to "name the town at the bottom of Lake Victoria", if you wanted your child (for some reason) to have to find out that Mwanza lies immediately south of that lake.

You will need to decide for yourself if the PRICE is right. It is worth paying more only if the quality is higher. However, remember that the format is important. A child will not be happy with a cramped page, lacking pictures or space to write in his answers; that is false economy. Yet glossy full-colour is probably unwanted too. Attractive presentation usually goes along with carefully thought out material.

There may be publishers you know are tried and tested, such as Letts or Macmillan. They can employ highly qualified staff writers who are working close to their own upper limit of expertise. The problem with workbooks for





"Are you really who you are, or are you what people have told you you are."

Leo Buscaglia.

"A human being experiences himself, his thoughts and his feelings, as something separate from the rest - a kind of optical delusion of the mind."

Albert Einstein.

"It is time for you to quit being an extra in someone else's movie, and start being a star in your own."

Alan Cohen.

For a copy of LIFELINES send your name and address with a cheque for £5 payable to Educational Heretics Press to:

113 Arundel Drive, Bramcote Hills, Nottingham NG9 3FQ.

I want to go to school

This may seem an odd headline in an E.O. magazine. However, as someone who has home-educated from time to time, three children, I now find myself working in an area where people can't get their children into school.

One example is a fourteen-year-old from West Africa. The school tested him after his arrival, decided he was not literate (unlike his siblings in the school) and said they didn't want him.

Another child - a recent immigrant from S.E. Asia - was refused a school place, as he told me in fluent English, because he was 15 and it was not worth his going for such a short time.

I had a five-year-old translating for her dad in my office the other day; she was fluent in both languages (I assume): dad could utter 3? words of English. He had managed to get older children into school, not her.

Tower Hamlets Education Campaign has come across hundreds of children (a figure of well over a hundred is admitted by the local authority) of children who can't get school places.

The majority of the children who appear to be unable to get a school place have parents for whom English is a second language. Many of them are not christians.

The admissions policies favour those who can cope well with English-only discussions and documents.

There aren't enough places for all children of school-age. There are problems at both primary and secondary level. The majority of people who have children out of school appear to be those who are homeless, or with families originally from Bangladesh or Somalia.

One arrival from Tottenham, over three miles away, was told that the primary schools could only take two of her three school-age children: the other would have to go to a different school. Attitudes such as this do not appear helpful.

It is also interesting that a legal case to try and get the Secretary of State to accept the rights of parents to have a place in a school within their local authority was not allowed to proceed to full trial.

It is interesting to look at how, on the one hand, those who want to get their children to a school, are denied this possibility, especially, it seems, in London; and how, on the other hand, those who want to save the State/Local Authority resources by home education may also have obstacles put in their way.

Possible home educators worried by "difficult" local authorities could move to areas where there are not enough school places for those who DO want to send their children to school.

Correspondence on this to: Kevin Fleisch, 37 Rushcroft Road, London, E4 8SX; or to Tower Hamlets Education Campaign, Dame Colet House, Ben Jonson Road, Stepney, London E1 3NH.

B.J. Morley writes "...When Strangers ask me about my daughter's education at home, one of the most frequent questions, apart from the usual socialisation 'problems' queries, is about the cost of my time and money. They presume that parental involvement is free with no more parental involvement needed than to take the child to and from school and to attend a few parents' evenings." But, he argues, this is often not the case with schools making a heavy demand on parents financially, and encloses the introduction from a programme for a school fete in which the headmaster writes, in part:

"It used to be said that a Parents' Committee raised money for luxury items. This is just not the case now. The national Curriculum has put heavy demands on teachers who now need much more in the way of good quality resources to support their teaching. Primary schools especially are just not given enough money by Education Authorities to meet this demand. We therefore rely heavily on our parents to give us extra financial support."

An interesting view from within the embattled teaching profession...



Notice Board

CHANGE OF NAME

Vicki Willow from Bristol has changed her name and is now

HABIBA WILLOW

It is a sufi name meaning beloved.



E.O. Family Urgently require unfurnished property to rent. Location immaterial.

Anything considered.

Please Contact: Lavina Feldt

27 Teversal Avenue

Pleasley

Mansfield

Notts.

NG19 7QQ.



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Ideal for children and adults who need help with spelling.

Early Number Games for Young Children to help with sorting, adding and subtraction.

Life Cycle puzzles, showing the development of the ladybird, bee, frog and butterfly.

Please send a large SAE for coloured leaflet and information.

Martin and his wife teach their children at home and run a small business selling educational products.

Martin Evans (EO)

16, Thistle House, Dee Street, London, E14 OPD. (071 515 1797)

LEARNING LINK is a non-profit making E.O family-run resource, which can enable you to purchase Education 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; and Logo, scheme software and books are available from : Learning Link, 83 Manor Park, London, SE13 5RA.

Where have all the Communes gone?

Communal groups have had their heyday in the 60s and early 70s but many perished as in the song "Where have all the Flowers Gone?" The test of reality wore down the original idealism, but it was not snuffed out completely, and has been reborn in many modern forms.

This concept of co-operative living has been brought up to date in many settings. Groups of people with the same aims and values have used their pooled resources to buy property which they could use or adapt to implement their ideas.

One such co-operative is Beech Hill situated in Mid-Devon. It has owned a large old country house, set in attractive grounds, for eight years. The objectives of the co-op include low-cost housing - to buy or rent - and social and ecological projects. The projects include the conversion of out-building into houses on a self-build basis where possible; a residential course centre for various groups of a self-help nature or those which care for people with disabilities; organically-run gardens, vineyard, plant nursery and garden centre.

The co-op is also installing a natural form of sewage treatment based on filtering effluent through beds of sand and gravel in which various reeds and other water plants are grown. The results from other sites have proved excellent at a cost which is a fraction of the normal hi-tech systems and which is attractive and possible to design and build yourself - with a little skilled input.

One unusual aspect of Beech Hill is that residents do not have to be co-op members. They can rent or buy and decide to join at a later stage when their possible contribution becomes clearer. Those who become members take on responsibility for running various projects and have a say in the weightier decisions of the co-op.

To live in the co-op happily and effectively, people need good-will, personal initiative, tolerance and stability. Presently there are some 20 adults and 5 children at Beech Hill. There are usually also some resident volunteers, often from abroad, especially Eastern Europe.

The co-op is still expanding and is always looking for people who are good "All-rounders", interested in living in a situation of give and take, in taking on challenges and who care about what is going on for those less fortunate than themselves. The co-op is not, however, looking for angels who are unbearable to live and work with! Skills are less important than a willingness to learn and a good sense of humour.

If you'd like to know more about any aspects of Beech Hill, contact the co-op on 03673 587 or 228.

Where to Get What

The following publications are available from: Bruce and Christine Wallace, 25b Diabaig, Achnasheen, IV22 2NE. Prices inc. P&P to UK addresses. Please make cheques payable to EDUCATION OTHERWISE.

- School is not Compulsory** (new edition due soon). A guide to your rights. Price £2.50
- Early Years.** Learning suggestions for the under twelves. (edition number 5). Price £2.50
- Later Years.** Learning for older children, plus GCSE. Price £2.50
- Teach Your Own.** John Holt. Philosophy of home education. Price £3.85
- Learning All The Time.** John Holt. A Practical guide covering reading, writing, numbers, science and music, as well as the wider issues of the nature of learning and parental involvement. Price £4.50
- Schools Out.** Jean Bendell. A good why and how book by an E.O member and long-term home-educator. Price £5.95
- E.O Newsletters** - Single Back Copies for 1989-1990. Price £1.00
- E.O Newsletters** - Bargain basement. Any four copies (our selection) from 87-88. Price £1.50
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Growing Without Schooling Price £12.00
The Newsletter of E.O's parallel organisation in the USA.
Six issues per year (starting March).

E.O Stationary. Re-use labels £2 per 100. Leaflets, handbills, posters, forms are freely available for publicity purposes. Headed notepaper for coordinators and office holders from:
Lucy Charlton, Church Lane Cottages, Newton Harcourt, Leicestershire.

E.O Membership/Museum Cards. All members of E.O will automatically receive a membership/museum card when they renew their membership subscription. If you would like a card and your renewal date is some time away, please send an SAE to: Bob Emmett, 148 Gunton Lane, Norwich, Norfolk, NR5 0AQ.

All Prices Quoted are for Members Only.

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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 principal 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:

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