

EDUCATION OTHERWISE

April - May 1994



Newsletter #97

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editor or of Education Otherwise as a whole. This newsletter is edited by volunteer members of Education Otherwise and its primary purpose is to provide support and communication between members - please contact the Publications Coordinator (see inside back page).

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REMINDER TO READERS

The E.O. newsletter accepts advertisements, offers of services, articles and notices of social events in good faith and can not be held responsible for the consequences of responding to any of these. Readers are reminded that SENSIBLE CAUTION should be exercised when responding to such items.

NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

Contributions for the next edition should be sent to the appropriate editor (see below) by the deadline date (May 1st 1994) and all material intended as such should be clearly marked to ensure that they include their name and address (and age for contributions for the children's pages). Contributions are more likely to be included if they are concise and it would be helpful if they were typed. Some editors may be able to use a copy on computer disc.

Next editors:	Newsletter:	The Kipling Family 7, The Hamiltons, Torquay Road, Shaldon, Teignmouth, Devon, TQ14 NAY. 0626 873952.
	Supplement:	"Maths For The Timid" Sandie Cootee & Betty Ball 17, South View Road, Rettendon Common, Nr Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 8DX. Telephone: (0268) 733259.
	Children's Pages:	MacGregor Family 40, Trenchard Cres., Chelmsford, Essex. CM1 5FA. Telephone: (0245) 460617.

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EDITORIAL

Firstly, to introduce ourselves, we are Cathie & Robert Hinson and we have two children Joshua (3 years - just) and Guy (5 months).

At present, we don't attend many events etc. but will be stepping up our involvement with our local E.O. group (Solent & Hants), now that Joshua is old enough to appreciate more.

We are also involved in the setting up of a small school/resource centre, which is still at the planning stage but will hopefully become more solid in the near future. For anyone in the Hampshire/Surrey/E. Sussex border area, who may be interested, please contact us for further details.

Despite all the hard work, we have enjoyed editing this newsletter and hopefully you will enjoy reading all the pieces we have elected to include. We had lots of contributions and wish to apologise to all those whose work we have had to leave out this time. We also wish to thank my brother Donald [Hello there!], for without his computer, typing skills and other general help, we would never have managed to get this out on time.

Best wishes to all..

Cathie, Rob and boys.

65, Lion Lane, Haslemere, Surrey. GU27 1JL. Telephone: (0428) 642246.

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'How can I motivate my children to learn?'

Sarah Williams

There are several flaws implicit in this question.

First, it implies that children do not necessarily *want* to learn. Secondly, it suggests a belief in what Popper calls the bucket theory of the mind: that is, the idea that knowledge is poured from above into the bucket of the mind. The questioner may, therefore, view learning as a process of passive acquisition of facts, or things in the bucket.

Most parents accept that any child who has, for example, acquired language, has demonstrated a desire to learn. It has become a truism to say that young children are curious. So why does it appear that some children suddenly lose all desire to learn? This loss of interest may be related to the second error mentioned above. That is, because of their fallacious epistemology, parents mistake lack of interest in the education *they*

are offering, for lack of interest in learning *generally*.

When learning is viewed not as an externally-controlled, transmissive process but as a creative, rational activity on the part of the *learner*, it becomes clear that children are not rejecting rich opportunities for learning in favour of poor ones, but that what is being offered does not address the current interests and problems of the learner. In some cases, parents may try so hard to motivate their children that they inadvertently entrench rejection of all further efforts on their part. The answer in such situations is to withdraw all pressure (in other words, stop trying so hard) and to *listen to the children*. □

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This item first appeared in *Taking Children Seriously* as a 'TCS Opinion' piece.

Taking Children Seriously

Taking Children Seriously (TCS) is a non-profit-making magazine (ISSN 1351-5381) for home educators who are interested in looking more deeply at the issues affecting children. It provides a forum for discussing ideas, often challenging traditional wisdom about how children learn and how they should be treated.

Forthcoming issues of *Taking Children Seriously* will address:

- how the present mess of an education system arose (an article by John Taylor Gatto, author of several books and papers on home education and the school system);
- what home-educators can learn from 'hot-housers';
- Dr Lewis Perelman on his book, *School's Out*, subtitled hyperlearning, the new technology and the end of education;
- home-educated individuals' views;
- is television really that bad?

Subscription rates: £5 (for 3 issues), £9 (for 6 issues) or £11 (for 9 issues). For the *London supplement*, which lists get-togethers and educational visits for home educators in London, please add 50p, £1, or £1.50 respectively. To subscribe, please send a cheque payable to 'Taking Children Seriously' to TCS, No. 494, 23 Whitley Road, London N17 6RJ. Telephone 081 808 3200; electronic mail address TCS@williams.demon.co.uk

Educational resources for home educators

For a copy of the excellent Hogg Laboratory Supplies Catalogue, send an A4 s.a.e. marked 'Hogg' with a 98p stamp to *Taking Children Seriously* at the above address. The catalogue is one used by schools, so in it you will find just about every item of science equipment you could possibly need. Note that Hogg is not permitted to sell chemicals to individuals.

For a free copy of a workbook about coal, send A4 47p s.a.e. marked 'Coal', and stating age of child, to the address above.

For a copy of the invaluable catalogue of books and other resources, *John Holt's Book and Music Store*, send an A4 s.a.e. marked 'John Holt' with a 47p stamp to *Taking Children Seriously* at the above address.

Are the resources of the world available to *your* child? We are preparing an information sheet about how to get personal access to the global network of computer networks, the Internet. If you would like a copy please send a stamped A4 sae, and two 25p stamps to cover copying costs, to 'Net-Info' at TCS, address as above.

Many people, considering it possibly easier to home educate on a fairly remote island (26 miles off Land's End and with a population of only 80), are interested to know how we fare on St.Martin's where, with seven children, we have been educating "otherwise" for eleven years.

The seeming tranquility of the island becomes illusory when you mention the words "home education". What may be a private decision on the mainland, in a small community takes on all manner of social, economic and political implications. At a time when the local school's population is about to plummet to one, the attendance or otherwise of our children can determine that school's very future and the livelihood of the very highly paid teacher in an environment where paid work is hard to come by. The pressure to "toe-the-line" becomes very great and far from impartial or disinterested.

On the positive side, island life offers tremendous freedom to children - there's no traffic, no criminals, no 'citizen anti-truancy patrols' on the loose. Our children are not faced with the social pressures of mainland life, the determination of big business, small business, bureaucracy, friends and family, to make them conform to the norm. We are free to set our own standards, an awesome responsibility. Our farm is the basis of our education. We have a mixed holding of ten acres which the children run as an educational project, growing crops and tending animals. Farming imposes a natural discipline. It's regularity provides stability. It demands responsibility and care of an understandable form. From a very early age our children are each given areas of responsibility, from the very youngest tending his tree nursery, to the oldest who, at 15, is able to do just about anything and everything that needs doing, including servicing tractors and maintaining buildings. This farm education is multi-disciplinary. It embraces biology and science, arts and crafts for, not only do the children keep bees, they also learn to purify wax and make candles. They spin wool and learn about natural dyeing. They have built their own forge to make tools. As well, they organise a farm trail with information boards explaining the history, ecology and economics of farming on our island to others interested in these areas.

Our education is fundamentally practical since we see the theoretical as only a means to an end, not as an end in itself. Hence we would dismiss many subjects as being exercises in the academic. We do, however, fully value the three 'R's in the modern world and deal with these in a traditional and regimented way. The children work through books of Maths and English in a disciplined manner, culminating in GCSEs which will then lead on to 'A' levels. The latter are taken via the National Extension College - not because it would not be possible to do it ourselves, but because NEC tutors give clear written reports. These are invaluable to our confidence. The local educational authority - Scilly has it's own - may spend a fortune bringing educationalists from the mainland over, 4 times a year, to check that we are doing our job, but since their aim is to prove that we are not, it is a useful counterbalance to have our own NEC reports. Essentially we do not believe in "paper qualifications" but invariably the argument is raised - what if the children don't want to stay on the island? Supposing they want to go to university?

Our answer is simple. If they want, they will finish their education with two 'A' levels in Maths and English, which will be sufficient to enable them to enter upon further training. The NEC courses fit in well with our over-all educational scheme, but do not take it over.

We are fortunate in that our lifestyle is varied. Not only do we farm. We also run a small wholefood cafe and make shoes. As they each reach an appropriate age, the children are introduced to these areas and learn many skills. They learn the necessary standards for commercial enterprise and are able to participate in real 'work experience'. Our son, at 15, is sent to quay to despatch flowers, which we export in a small way to the mainland. He works alongside the other island farmers as an equal - this is not a fanciful pretend game. In a similar way our daughter, at 13, will learn to deal with people in our cafe. This brings us to social life. Again we are fortunate in that our business brings us into contact with many people of diverse background. Also, having a small chalet which is let to people interested in an ecological life-style, we always have children around to join us on the farm for our family 'ceilidhs' where we do folk singing, country dancing, skittles and even drama. We don't like crowds, we like our own kind of private life, doing the things we believe in. We do not intend to be bullied into sending our children to school so that they may join their peer groups in their dubious 'peer group activities'. Besides, with seven children, they are their own group.

Next, we come to the question of cultural awareness. Aren't we depriving our children of knowledge of the world around us by hiding away on an island? Well, in a way, yes, quite intentionally. We have a subject in our curriculum - it is called 'Social Awareness' - and it consists of keeping a scrapbook of cuttings from the media. Unashamedly, these cuttings do have a certain bias towards being anti-school, anti-health services, anti-social services - for some reason there seems to be no shortage of such cuttings to choose from. This scrapbook we entitle 'Look What We're Missing!' Yes, hopefully we are saving our children from these things. Should we do otherwise?

On a more positive level we do indulge in current culture through many videos of drama, history and wildlife, choosing to exercise discernment in distinguishing between the excellent and the debilitating.

Finally, in dealing with the LEA, we have found that documentation is all. When you go into a school, what has it done? It has put the best work in the foyer; a miniscule representation in reality of the school's work, but it has taken the time and trouble to put on this display. Whilst it is time-consuming and often irritating to have to set aside time for this task, we have found it the shortest route to a peaceful existence! Utilise the wonders of the colour photocopier to record your work. It shouldn't be necessary, but at least it's your time wasted and not your children's by having to attend school as an alternative. Moving to the extremities of this country is not enough!

Yours Sincerely,
Jenny Morton.

Little Arthur Farm, St.Martin's, Isles of Scilly, Cornwall.

(It sounds wonderful to me!.....Ed.)

BOOK REVIEWS

BRIGHT EYES AND BUBBLES By Christopher Gilmore. Reviewed by Mel Hart (9)

This imaginative and excellent book is written by Christopher Gilmore. My favourite story is Oak Eggs, and you'll have a jolly laugh after you've read the story. I like the bit where Siko says to an oak: "Why do oaks lay eggs? Tell me now, and I'll be Mrs Kemp's favourite for ever!"

Siko is a cat, and Mrs Kemp asks her pets "Why do oaks lay eggs?" That's why Siko says to an oak, "Why do oaks lay eggs?" And of course the oak does not answer. So Siko asks an owl, but the owl is sleepy, and he says, "Om", for that is his name! Siko chooses the word "Om" and Skruff (that's the other pet) chooses the word "Mo". "Copy cat!" spits Siko. "That's Om backwards!" "That's because I'm a god!" woofs Skruff.

When I first read Bright Eyes and Bubbles, I felt a tingle of excitement. I felt a tingle because I could really relax while I was reading the book.

Some stories have a happy ending, like "Blue Bear", and some have a sad ending like "Ernest Amnicorn". But suddenly the story has a happy ending! An amnicorn goes to school, they have to have their horns cut straight, their ears and tails made straight, and their eye lashes ironed flat! Even their spirits are made straight, for the country is called "The Straight States".

Ernest wants to grow a telescope so he asks God. Suddenly a horn sprouts up from his forehead. He has grown a telescope! God has answered him. Now he can see the stars and all the planets.

Whenever a child saw Ernest he laughed, they jeered and they made poems about him.

Ernest sneaked into a nearby library and looked up the word "unicorn". Next he looked up the word "mythical". When he read the meaning of that word, he could not believe his eyes. "ME - not real?" So he decided to phone his parents. But he failed to make contact with them. Then he tried to contact God, and he succeeded!

Do buy this book. You won't be disappointed. And I hope you enjoy it as I did.

BRIGHT EYES AND BUBBLES By Christopher Gilmore. Reviewed by Diana Hart

"Never mind the moral, just enjoy the story." I can't remember who said that but I agree with it. Any story worth its salt should speak for itself. The deeper content, if there is one, will seep gently into the reader's, or listener's, consciousness. Spirit doesn't shout.

In Christopher Gilmore's latest collection of tales, it - spirit, that is - speaks and sings

with a medley of melodies, with wit, wisdom, humour and heartfelt pathos. The whimsical wordplay - Wordplay - is catching. The characters are unforgettable.

There's bankrupt Froggie, whose secret for beating the recession begins with L - and its not the lotus throne he sat on. There's Ben, his Dad, and the Butterfly. There's the widowed Princess who, having lost a husband, learns to use her own crystal and find freedom. There's the dungeon, the dragon dunce - a sort of dragon ugly duckling!

The tales are for reading aloud or listening to on tape. That way you can savour the mantra-like magic of Christopher's language, get to know the characters by listening to their unique voices. Or you can read the stories silently to yourself, and experience their inner-sense that way.

They're for children of all ages, which means young enough or old enough to laugh and love! Mel, age 9, has written his own review of "Bright Eyes", younger people take note.

Book and tape £5.95 each or £9.95 together (plus £1 P&P). Available from: Alma Enterprises, 37 Handcross Road, Luton, UK. LU2 8JG

COORDINATORS WANTED FOR THE FOLLOWING AREAS

- Berkshire
- Central Manchester
- Cumbria
- Wiltshire
- North Ireland
- Avon (Bristol)
- Northamptonshire
- Gwynedd
- North Devon

Please contact: Isabel Bogucki (Coordinators' Secretary).

.....

INTERNATIONAL HOME EDUCATORS' PICNIC IN JUNE 1994

From: Stephen & Jane Heinrichs, 70414,2213

To: Lyndon Pugh, 100016,3150

Topic: UK Picnic Group

Date: Thu, Feb 24, 1994

I gather you are in the UK and have an interest in home schooling or are assisting some home schoolers. We, home schoolers on this forum, are planning a unique picnic. We are all going to have a picnic on one day gathering in regional groups. This is an international event as we already have a Canadian picnic group started as well. I think it would be absolutely wonderful if some home schoolers in the UK could join us in our international picnic!

Could you coordinate it for your location or do you have another party that can check in to this forum to coordinate with the US and Canada?

The date of the picnic will be June 25, 1994 (a Saturday)

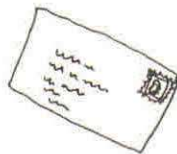
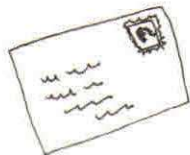
Stephen, California, USA

Dear All,

I got the above note via Compuserve (an American/global computer network) and thought it should be available to the entire nation, so here it is. If anyone wants to call a local picnic to participate in this idea, it could be fun. There have been other notes on getting the press involved in reporting the "international home education picnic".

I am willing to be coordinator between the UK and the US and Canada. I can use Compuserve for very quick communication with those over the water.

Contact me, Lyndon Pugh, at (0273) 400769 (phone & fax). I edit the East Sussex local area newsletter.



LETTERS

We are a Swedish-Hungarian family living in Spain. Our kids are 7 years and 13 years old, and we have been home-schooling for the last 3 years.

About a year ago we were already members of E.O. and G.W.S. in the U.S.A., but we did hardly know any other home-schooling family in Spain. We thought that it must be at least a few others. An issue of the newsletter "Growing Without Schooling" had been translated to Spanish a few years ago by an American woman who once worked at the G.W.S. office in the U.S.A. With the help of her contacts and some ads, we organised the first home-school meeting ever held in Spain. That was in May 1993. A week before the meeting, it looked like it would come to only 5 people, but at the weekend we were actually 40 adults and children, from all parts of Spain!

Apart from just getting to know each other, the legal situation was the main issue. Some families had difficulties to keep their children at home and, sadly enough, some of these children are now back in school. According to the Spanish law the children have the right to schooling, but the parents also have the right to choose the education for their children that is according to their religious and moral beliefs. Basically this is interpreted as that home-schooling is illegal, but it all depends on where you live. Spain is still quite unorganised and lots of families just keep their kids at home and nobody cares.

At the meeting we got to see that, as in England, there are many different motives for home-schooling and many different ways to do it. To the meeting came Fundamentalist Christians, Anarchists, Hippies from the mountains, City people etc., and the question was raised if we really can do anything together with so many different views on life and especially on children. Although according to the law considered equal.

We started a newsletter to share information and last November we had a second meeting in another part of Spain. For the Spring is planned a weekend meeting and a 10 day camp. We are mostly in the stage of finding out where the home-schools are and getting in touch with them. The meetings are organised in different parts of Spain to give the local people a chance to participate; the distances are big here.

Most participants at the meetings have been Spanish, although some other foreigners (from England, Germany, U.S.A., France) living in Spain have participated. We have heard of and believe that there are lots of other foreigners home-schooling in Spain. If any of you read this, please get in touch with us.

We also know that some English families want to escape the British winter for long or short periods, and we can help find a house for you. This is an area where lots of people speak English. We do also have a small guest house that we can offer for a week's stay or so. Also if some older home-schooler would like to come and visit Spain, learn Spanish or just do something different for a while he or she can get in touch with us.

About ourselves: Péter is Hungarian, is working as a psychotherapist, Bippan is Swedish and is a massage therapist and has a home business in natural cosmetics. Lomi (13) likes the Scouts, Aikido and ecology. Tolmi (7) likes all kinds of handicraft. They are both picking up English from all our English speaking friends. Otherwise they speak Hungarian, Swedish and Spanish. We are vegans, like to bicycle and work with ecology.

Bippan, Péter, Tolmi & Lomi Norberg, APDO 41 or 45 ??, E-03580 Alfaz Del Pi, Alicante, Spain. Phone: +34 65 88 8955 Fax: +34 65 88 9452

Dear Education Otherwise,

I am interested in finding out more about a group of people who were setting up a community based on ecological principals in County Durham (Maybe called Rowan Tree?). I read a letter a few issues ago in the E.O. newsletter and there is possibility of us moving North now so if you are looking for new members please contact me:- Sue Atkinson, 8 Lovat Street, Newport Pagnell, Bucks, MK16 0EF, Tel.: 0908-615650.

Dear E.O.ers,

Does anyone else suffer my problem? I read the news letter, get all "fired up" and enthusiastic with lots to say/communicate, and then very quickly become despondent and feel overwhelmed by the enormity of our "outside the system" difficulties. I feel sad that "it" may never change - yet I imagine a quite different society without our present system of enabling/not enabling our citizens to "learn" (obtain information). Suppose education over the age of 12 was voluntary: (my 14 year old says she'd go to school and use the facilities they have, including teachers, but only the "good" ones.) The teachers would be paid by the state only according to the number of "pupil hours" that they accumulated. Teachers with no pupils would be asked if they would like to retrain!

Truancy would cease. Probably most bullying would cease. (Ever met a bully who loves school?) Let's admit something - most people spend time in school "playing mental truant".

Teaching would improve to the point of excellence and who knows? Some teachers might become extremely well-off. Headteachers would no longer be the unquestioned dictators they have become; (ours excludes the BULLIED children so that she can say "no-one is bullied here"!!!) Heads would have to accumulate pupil-hours too. (Ours would be redundant!) Pupils would be asked what they wished to learn and the school would have a legal duty to provide it as long as it was not in itself illegal. Hmm. Dreams!!

All the best,

(Jan Summers. 4, Quarry Cottages, Stone-In-Oxney, Tenterden, Kent. TN30 7HA)

Dear E.O.

We wonder if a publicity campaign both for E.O. as an organisation and home-educating in general might be somewhat overdue!

We have just returned from the luxury of a three week, out-of-season, cheapie holiday abroad and, as our sons were the ONLY children in the hotel, they obviously provoked a lot of interest. One by one our fellow travellers asked the inevitable question "Are you ALLOWED to take them away from school for so long?" and when we explained that we were home-educators and had come equipped with a holdall full of exercise books, the response was one of total disbelief! In fact the only person out of the 30+ we chatted with to realise we were not breaking the law was a retired headteacher! Whilst this did, of course, mean that we had plenty to talk about for the duration of the holiday, it would have been preferable NOT to have begun every new friendship with a monologue on the legal correctness of our life-style!

Nor is our experience confined to holidays. In the 20 or so months that we have been home-educating, we have not come across a single person who already knew that there was a legal alternative to school attendance. It really does become monotonous justifying yourself to everyone from ticket-collectors to shop assistants, all of whom seem to feel the need to ask my sons "And why aren't you at school today?". There have even been days when we've opted to stay cloistered indoors rather than face the inevitable Spanish Inquisition! (On other days when we have had to venture out feeling less inclined to bare our souls, we have been known to answer "We're on our way home - careful, they're highly contagious!" which is a highly effective busy-body stopper!)

As we heard of E.O. through an article in a magazine some 12 years ago, might it be possible to interest one on a feature in E.O. again? Or, perhaps, one of the many breakfast or mid-morning TV shows which reach a really large audience? This should bring publicity at little or no cost.

As a footnote we would just like to mention that on our holiday we were universally congratulated on our sons' politeness and behaviour which our travelling companions (including the retired headteacher) attributed to the fact that the boys didn't attend school.....

(The Flawn Family - 43, Summerfield Road, Cliftonville, Margate, Kent. CT9 3JJ)

Dear E.O.,

A Canadian mum and her two home-schooled sons aged 15 and 12 will be staying with me when they visit England in the Autumn. Doreen would like her sons to visit Ipswich where the older son was born, to see the sights of London, and to go to the Lake District, particularly to see Beatrix Potter's house. Are there any families in those places, or anywhere else, who would like to host them for a few days? Doreen

is an author; her book "The Dancing Puppet Theatre" was reviewed in "Growing Without Schooling" recently. Joel is a science buff and is a volunteer with the Ontario Science Centre in Toronto, and Rowan sings in the Canadian Childrens Opera Chorus, and is fascinated by the Royal Family and castles. They would love to meet other home-schoolers and share experiences. They are happy to pay for food and expenses.

I will be going to Canada to be hosted by her at the beginning of May and would love to be able to take some invitations with me. Please write to:
Pauline Healy.

24, RECTORY ROAD, SUTTON COLDFIELD, WEST MIDS. B75 7AL

(It may interest you to know that another family who are hosting us are Michael and Louise Atfield, who appeared in the E.O. newsletter for hosts when they visited England two years ago. We answered and have become firm friends. Our daughters write to each other regularly too. I hope to put an account of our holiday and our experiences in the newsletter when we return. Thankyou.

(Pauline Healy)

Dear All,

I am on the verge of taking my eldest daughter out of school. As a single parent on Income Support I would be very grateful if anyone could let me know if there are any grants or other monies I can apply for in order to have access to suitable books and other educational aids. My daughter is ten years old.

Looking forward to hearing from someone soon.

Thanking you in anticipation,

(Kim Woodward, 10, BEDFORD CRESCENT, HORFIELD, BRISTOL. BS7 9PP)

Dear E.O.,

I am writing in the hope that there are other parents of 9-10 year old children who are dissatisfied with the State Education System, or how their children adapt to it.

We are trying to open a class for children of this age at the newly opened Alder Bridge Waldorf School, nr. Padworth (A4 Newbury-Reading).

We currently have an eight year old daughter at the school and have been enthralled at how much this style of education has enriched her. She is truly happy! We believe that a Waldorf education, inspired by the work of the renowned Austrian philosopher Dr. Rudolph Steiner, caters more fully and sympathetically to the needs of a child developing in these fraught but exciting times.

If anyone wishes to know more about this venture, please contact:
Jayne Seckington. C/O ALDER BRIDGE SCHOOL, MILL LANE, PADWORTH,
BERKS. Or ring me on 0635 873918. 20, Westfield rd., Thatcham, Berks. RG13 3ES

Dear Sir/Madam,

We would be very interested to find out more about learning outside a school system. We found your address in the New Internationalist magazine.

We are a family with three young school aged children and chose to live close to nature in the Australian Bush, a far more inspiring place to bring up children than any of the schools up here.

Our children are very much in tune with nature, are untouched by peer pressure (but not missing out on social contact as other kids nearby are being taught at home too), respectful for older people and always ready to soak up some of their knowledge and wisdom, and they are way ahead in their musical abilities (playing flute and violin).

I applied to do home-schooling without having to stick with the curriculum of the Education Dept., but was advised that this is only possible if one of the parents has a teaching degree. I find this very disturbing as we know our children, their needs and dispositions and feel ourselves to be capable of educating our children. They are now doing school at home through the School of Distance Education. They send us papers which I, the home tutor, have to follow. I adapt the papers all the time but have to stick with the curriculum and we have to send assignments back and are supervised by teachers.

To me the school curriculum is but a very small part of my children's education and I only use it as a guide, working around it. I'd say the most meaningful things they learn are taught by us outside the papers.

I often disagree with the Education Dept.'s views and find us to be prisoners of the system as it were. To our way of thinking, children get manipulated in their thinking, they are all geared to become a standardised product of our society, ready to serve the materialistic, technological, consumer society we live in.

All children have different dispositions; that's why I don't believe in a compulsory school system. To us it is much more of a priority to have the kids balanced and with inner stability through exposing them to traditional wisdom (e.g. Tao, Sm., Indians and Aboriginal mythology etc.), environmental awareness and the ability to express themselves through art rather than to subjects such as computer programming, business principles, science etc. which only serves to prepare them for a system controlled by commerce and industry.

It is this system which the Education Dept. wants to serve in the first place, rather than having the good of the children at heart.

I would be very grateful to read some information about things happen in your part of the world.

Thankyou for your time.

Sincerely Yours,

Mrs C. De Ridder.

(P.O. BOX 415, RAVENSHOE, QLD. 4872, AUSTRALIA.)

Dear Education Otherwise,
Please note our new address:

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION RESOURCE GROUP , C/O 7 BARTLETT STREET,
MOORABBIN, VIC.3189, AUSTRALIA. Tel. 03 553 4720

We moved out of our old office space in Hawthorn Community House, 39 William St., Hawthorn, in December 1993 and now do work in members houses around Melbourne. Although we no longer have drop-in office hours for home-schoolers on Friday afternoons, we still carry on our other activities, including answering queries, organising excursions and publishing Otherways, our quarterly newsletter.

Thankyou

Jean. L. Johnson. (Secretary)

Dear E.O.,

Are there any other single parents who would be interested in travelling within Europe for one or two months? I've tried it with just my daughter (aged 7), but she really needs company of a similar age to share her discoveries with. It would be on a low budget, possibly camping/hostels. You'll have to write as I'm not on the phone.

Jasmine. 30, STEPNEY GREEN COURT, STEPNEY GREEN, LONDON. E1 3LJ

Thanks.
J.Jones

JULIENNE FROM CALIFORNIA

A LADY FROM CALIFORNIA, CALLED JULIENNE, CONTACTED ME ABOUT FINDING OUT IF ANYONE WAS INTERESTED IN MEETING HER DAUGHTER, ELIZABETH, WHEN SHE COMES TO ENGLAND IN MAY. UNFORTUNATELY I HAD A BIT OF AN ACCIDENT WITH THE PIECE OF PAPER ON WHICH THE NOTE WAS WRITTEN, AND AM UNABLE TO DECIPHER ANY FURTHER DETAILS. WOULD JULIENNE PLEASE CONTACT THE NEXT NEWSLETTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO MAKE SURE THE DETAILS ARE INCLUDED.

THANKS,
CATHIE (ED.)

DEAR E.O.

COULD ANY E.O. MEMBERS LIVING IN CUMBRIA, WHO FEEL THEY COULD OFFER SUPPORT/FRIENDSHIP TO NEW MEMBERS IN THEIR AREA, PLEASE PHONE OR WRITE TO ME. AS ACTING CO-ORDINATOR FOR CUMBRIA, BUT LIVING IN NORTHUMBERLAND, THIS WILL SAVE ME RINGING EVERYONE ON MY LIST WHO IS NOT ON THE CONTACT LIST, TO ASK FOR THEIR PERMISSION TO GIVE OUT THEIR NAMES AND ADDRESSES.

THANKS,
SUSAN TODD.

20 MONTROSE GARDENS, HIGH CHURCH, MORPETH, NORTHUMBERLAND. NE61 2QH
TEL: 0670 503012

Dear EO'ers,

Reading Sue Petszaf's letter (Newsletter 96) and the endeavours of the Otherwise Club to cater for the over 11's I thought members might be interested in a venture that the Hertfordshire local group have been involved in for the past year.

As with many areas, Herts. has had a thriving local group for some time but social contact for the over 10's was sparse. Our aim was to attempt to fill this gap and provide some kind of social contact and cohesion for the 'older' home-educated children and their families.

To cut a very long story short, many ideas were tried over the months until we seem to have come up with a formula that works. We now have a group of families with children of 10 years old and over whose activities are deliberately aimed at satisfying the wishes of those 'older' children. Of course, younger siblings are included whenever possible but the needs/wishes of the 'older' group members take priority. This stance has met with the approval of both parents and children as the needs of the younger ones were already well catered for within the existing group.

The 'older' group plays badminton on a regular basis, pitch 'n' putt, tennis, ice skating, volleyball etc. We also organise a wide variety of 'educational'/interest visits pitched at secondary level e.g. to the Society for Krishna Consciousness, the local Police HQ, a printers, an amateur dramatic group re. theatre productions, a newspaper offices, a patchwork quilt makers, museums, art galleries etc. In fact, anything that anyone in the group cares to suggest and can arrange.

One afternoon a week we run a Club (see Regional Diary) where the youngsters can socialise and do indoor activities and the parents can talk, share problems and resources and generally lend one another support over cups of coffee and tea.

The group, by its very nature, is small - at present 8 families, 10 children - and we have had to acknowledge that this number goes both up and down and the membership is constantly changing. I feel this will remain the case for several reasons:

- (a) there are fewer people home-educating at secondary level
- (b) the age range is more limited i.e. 10-16yrs and we find that most youngsters of 15yrs are already well established in evening activities outside EO which satisfies their social needs.
- (c) many join when already towards the top end of the age range having only just left school and
- (d) some at 14 yrs decide to attend college whilst others find that a return to school is the best solution for them and their families.

This means that many of our activities involve only 2/3 families. This can be disheartening on occasions, especially when only a couple of families turn up at a Club afternoon. However, the prevailing opinion is that large numbers are not important. What matters is the needs of the families that do attend and that the opportunity is available.

For those who feel that group activities are not for them we provide telephone, written and visit support on a one to one family basis. We also run a local contact list giving details of families and their interests. This list is available to all who wish to be involved and enables them to see at a glance those children having similar interests to their own. As with the national Contact List, being on the list is an indication that the family would welcome contact from other members. In this way, individual friendships can be made, even by those who do not attend any of our group activities.

By offering such a variety we hope to provide something for everyone within our local branch of EO and the small but steady growth of the group indicates that we have met with a fair degree of success.

If anyone would like further information or have any suggestions that might be helpful I'd love to hear from you. In the meantime, I would simply like to say a big Thank You to all who have been involved with getting the Herts EO 'Older' Group off the ground.

Lynne Fox Hatfield Herts 0707 271594

Dear Editor,

Avis Greenwell and Pete Millman's article in the Dec/Jan. newsletter has finally prompted me to write down our experience of educating 2 daughters at home and then of sending them to school.

Sarah, now 13, went to school at 4 and stayed for 2 years - an experience which she accepted, but did not enjoy (least of all at the playtimes). Despite this acceptance, it was obvious to us that all the 'light' had gone out of her - she always came out of school dragging her heels and needing a quiet half hour at home before she was ready to play with her friends.

Bethan, now 10, never went to school. When she was 5 we moved to a village with a very small, friendly school and gave her the choice of going. With hindsight, we realise that she was too young to make the decision herself, particularly as she had no knowledge of what school was like. She said that she didn't know what she wanted to do, so we decided to educate her at home with Sarah. It took us 4 years to realise that this was as much the wrong decision for Bethan as it was the right decision for Sarah. Bethan found it very difficult to accept me as teacher - many of our sessions of formal teaching ended in shouting matches. I found it difficult to cope with her inability to amuse herself and with her lack of interest in so many of the activities that I suggested. Things were not made any easier by the birth of Heather a year later.

Having said this, we did have a lot of good times together; we did a lot of work which Bethan initiated and enjoyed, and she made some close and lasting friendships with other EO children.

By the time Bethan was 8, we finally accepted that home education was not the right thing for her. I expected a storm of protest when I told her of our decision to send her to school. But no, she accepted it with equanimity; perhaps she had come to the same conclusion herself but hadn't the courage to disillusion her parents!

It took a full half term before Bethan started to enjoy school. As with Sarah, most of her initial worries and uncertainties were concerned with the social side of things. But after this first half-term, Bethan was very happy at the school and has said many times that she wishes she had gone from age 5. I'm not sure whether she would have felt the same in a larger, more typical Junior school - we are extremely lucky in the school that we have.

But, and I hardly dare say this in an EO newsletter, going to school has had a positively good effect on her. She is happier, more helpful, and more confident. I still have all my original reservations about school - in fact they are stronger now than they were 7 years ago. But I now feel that sometimes the damage done by sending a child to school may be less than the damage done by educating that child at home.

Last September Sarah joined Bethan at the local Middle school - a far less welcoming institution than the village school. Sarah's closest EO friend has decided to go to school and with Bethan at school as well, Sarah was finding things a bit lonely at home. We, and she, were keen that she should take GCSEs and having investigated a few syllabuses I was feeling increasingly unequal to the task of doing them from home.

Sarah has enjoyed the school from day one - in fact she enjoys it more than Bethan, who wants to go back to the village school. She now has no problem coping with the social set-up, enjoys a lot of the work and recognises and is prepared to endure the injustices and time-wasting which are only too prevalent. We feel that she has positively benefitted from the years at home - from the opportunity to develop and mature at her own pace and from the freedom to socialise in groups of her own choice.

So, in conclusion, 'Let every barrel stand on it's own bottom'. We should not have let Sarah's experience at school determine our decision as to what was best for Bethan.

Heather, who is now 4, will go to the village school in September. If it has the same effect as Sarah's first school did on her, then we may be back in the home-education business. If she is happy there then I will breathe a sigh of relief (I'm ready for a bit of personal freedom) and do what I can to make schools better places for educating the children that enjoy them.

P.S.

A big thankyou to EO as an organisation and as a group of mutually supportive families for all the help we have had over the years. We will continue to be members even if Heather likes school and we will continue to spread the word that school is not compulsory....

Best Wishes,
Alison & Chris Tribe,
4 PENISTONE ROAD
BIRDSEDGE,
HUDDERSFIELD,
HD8 8XP

(It's good to know that even if a child goes back to school, they have had the choice - after all, isn't that what we all want - to have the freedom to allow our children to choose! I'm glad everything has worked out for the Tribe family...Ed)

REGIONAL DIARY

BIRMINGHAM: SAT. APRIL 16. TIME: 2.15 P.M. CANNON HILL NATURE CENTRE.
Meet outside entrance.

SAT. MAY 21. TIME: 2.30 P.M. NATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE.
Meet outside. For more information contact Paul & Carol Willis on
021 4559742.

CORNWALL: MEETINGS EVERY THURSDAY EXCEPT APRIL 28 WHEN WE
HAVE A LIVING HISTORY DAY BOOKED. MONDAY APRIL 25.
10 A.M.-3 P.M. IRON AGE VILLAGE. SAVEOCK MIL CHACEWATER,
NR. TRURO with Jaquie Woods. Wear wellies, bring pack lunch (and
donation if possible as it is an educational charity!). Buses will stop
at the end of their lane. Regular meetings have just started, and are at
Anna Wheelers house (Cambrose Farm, Redruth), once a month open
day. Other free events elsewhere and maybe one block-booking paying
event per month. Any ideas welcome. Ring Anna Wheeler for details-
0209 890378.

CUMBRIA: We meet in KENDAL every WEDNESDAY from 1-4 P.M. in the YOUTH
CENTRE, CASTLE STREET. In the Summer we sometimes go on
outings, though, so please phone before you come, to check that we'll
be there. We can also send you our programme of planned activities
for the next few months. Phone Pete & Mary Swale 05242 62049.

DERBYSHIRE:

- APRIL 5 Visit to MOUNTED POLICE near BURNT STUMP PARK,
NOTTS. 1.00 & 2.00 (2 groups of 20) Contact Mary Wells for
more details: 0602 794590
- APRIL 11 (not confirmed) CIRCLE DANCING at CHESTERFIELD
MENCAP CENTRE. 10.00-2.00. B.A.P. Contact Stephanie
Fletcher for details: 0248 239048.
- APRIL 20 (not confirmed) Visit to COFFIN MAKERS. Contact Mary Wells
for details: 0602 794590.
- APRIL 27 Visit to CLOCKMAKERS in DERBY. You must specifically book
for this one. Mary Wells: 0602 794590.
- MAY 4 SWIMMING at WATERMEADOWS POOL, MANSFIELD. 1.P.M.
- MAY 10 WALK ON STANTON MOOR. Contact Mike Greenhough for
details: 0773 836862
- MAY 18 ICE SKATING at NOTTINGHAM ICE RINK. 1.P.M. cost: £1.20
per person.
- MAY 18 Visit to CLOCKMAKERS (second chance) 1.30 Numbers
limited to 15 total. You must book for this one. Contact Kerry
Meek: 0332 662596
- MAY 25 PLANNING MEETING at Shirley Kalk's, 613, NOTTINGHAM
ROAD, CHADDESSEN, DERBY. 11.00 Bring food to share

ANY QUERIES? Contact Kerry Meek (0332 662596) 15, Meadow Close, Spondon, Derby. DE21 7GS. For an up-to-date diary sheet of events, please send an S.A.E. to Kerry Meek or telephone for details. We meet most weeks.

DORSET: The New School has been approached by families in West Dorset with the view to opening a centre for families educating at home. It is early days and nothing is fixed yet, but it is likely that such a centre would open for 2/3 days per week initially. It would provide a place to meet, share ideas and resources, and a teacher could be on site to provide tuition if required. Anyone interested in the scheme, or who has any suggestions, or who would like to offer support should write to The New School, Parkstone Boys and Girls Club, Recreation Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset. BH12 3CA.

An informal discussion group which meets fortnightly in Poole, to discuss many and varied topics. Regular guest speakers attend the meetings. The group offers an opportunity to make new friends and contribute and share in discussions. £2.00 per session incl. refreshments. tel:0202 691824 (Laura Roper) for details. The New School is looking for new premises in the Poole/Bournemouth area - any ideas please contact Laura Roper. tel:0202 691824.

HERTFORDSHIRE

Herts. E.O. Thursday Club meets weekly at St. Ethelreda's Church Hall, Old Hatfield. (5 minutes walk from the railway station) from 1 PM. We begin with a group activity, fortnightly creative dance, alternated with guest speakers or workshops, followed by crafts, fun and games etc. Refreshments available.

We also have another weekly meeting for swimming, walks, Activity World and visits of interest. Bi-monthly Herts. E.O. newsletter and events list. For details, phone Glyn on (0707) 335428.

Herts. E.O. Older Group (children 10 years plus) meet every Friday at St. Ethelreda's from 1 to 4 PM. for table tennis, volleyball, snooker, board games etc. plus the opportunity for parents and children to socialise and share resources. Cost £1.00 per child. Also, we play badminton once a fortnight at the Birchwood Leisure Centre, Longmead, Hatfield. Cost £1.00 per person. Spare rackets available or better ones at 60 pence per hour on hire at the centre. In addition, we organise educational/interest visits. If you are interested in any of these activities, or simply wish to make contact with other members with children in the older age range, please telephone Lyn Fox on (0707) 271594, Margeret Moore on (0992) 551744 or Donna Maskell on (0707) 328635. We would be happy to give what help we can.

HUMBERSIDE

Do any E.O. families in the area want to get together for museum trips, art gallery, ice skating, swimming (other ideas welcome)? So far 2 or 3 families have been getting together every 3 or 4 weeks for this type of thing and it would be lovely if more people were interested in joining in. If you'd like more information, or would like to make a suggestion as to what we could do, then ring either Ann on (0482) 492805 or write to: 78, RYDE AVENUE, HULL. HU5 1QF
Thanks, Ann Maltby.

KENT

APRIL

Thursday 7th - Open house at Cath Coopers. 162 Bush Road, Cuxton.
Tel:0634 715389. 12 noon onwards

Friday - 15th - Upnor Castle, Upnor. Meet at castle entrance at 12 noon. Free entry.

Friday - 22nd - Riverside Country Park, Gillingham. Meet at 12 noon for lunch at the play area next to the car park. An activity relating to the river estuary has been arranged with a ranger at the park later in the afternoon. Free admission.

MAY

Thursday 5th - Open house at Cath Cooper's (see April)

Friday 20th - Broadstairs - meet at Pierrepont park children's playground 12 noon for picnic lunch. We will walk to the beach later in the afternoon.

Friday 27th - Bartley Mill, Bells Yew Green, near Frant. Working mill open to the public. Picnic area, trout lake, farm trail. Entrance fee only to view inside of mill. Approximately £1.50 to adults. Meet twelve noon at picnic area.

JUNE

Thursday 2nd - Open house at Cath Cooper's (see April).

Thursday 9th - Open house at Sue & Bob Tully's, 44 Lower Road, Hextable, Kent. Telephone (0322) 664373. From 12 noon onwards.

Thursday 16th to Sunday 19th. Fourth E.O. Camp in Kent. Come to Headcorn to meet old and new friends. Enjoy four days camping in the Kent countryside. Activities, games, pancake breakfast, tipi, campfires - fun for the child in all of us. Campsite approximately two and a half miles from Headcorn B.R. Station. (lifts from station can be arranged). Hot shower and flushing loo!.

Offers of more activities welcome. For more information/map, please ring Sue or Keith Burchett on (0732) 870344 or Amanda Mackenzie on (0634) 502154. Open house days - please ring in the morning, to check that there are no alterations to arrangements.

If you would like a copy of the next Kent six monthly list (due in April), please send S.A.E. to Sue and Keith Burchett, to: Easterfield Cottages, East Malling, Kent. ME19 6BE.

LEICS

During the next few months, we will be meeting for swimming, gym sessions, a picnic on a hill, visits to a windmill, a reconstructed Roman fort, a canal, museum, an observatory & planetarium and a farm, as well as each other's houses.

Everyone welcome, especially newcomers. For details, send S.A.E. to: Lucy Charlton, Church Lane Cottages, Newton Harcourt. LE8 9FT or phone on (0533) 592118.

GREATER MANCHESTER

Activities at Parrs Wood, Wednesday 30th March and Wednesday 6th April. Whole days, 10 AM till 3 PM. Bring packed lunch. Cost £1.00 per child per day. One session will be silk screen printing, others to be decided. Places limited, so phone Gill on (061) 442 8723 soon to book your place.

Regular social meetings at Friends Meeting House, Stockport. First Tuesday in month, 12:15 to 3:15 pm. Phone Gill to check. Also bring lunch and £1.00 per family.

No art gallery lesson in March. Phone Anne Nesbit on (0625) 871718 about April's lesson.

Trying to run regular monthly evening meetings at varying venues. Phone Gill to find out when next one is, as they are liable to be changed at short notice. New system in place to ensure everyone gets a say (hopefully, chaotic meetings are now a thing of the past!). Watch this space for details of Parrs Wood summer activities.

Put every Wednesday during school holidays in your diaries.

If you are new to the area, can't get to meetings, feel left out, want to get involved, feel we're running things wrongly etc., please do not moan at home, lift the phone and moan at me. I will try to put it right. Gill Wilson, telephone: (061) 442 8723.

NORFOLK

Norfolk E.O. families meet fortnightly at Hindolveston for workshops, approximately monthly in Norwich for museum lessons and occasionally at other locations for outings.

So far, the programme after Easter includes an art workshop (April 15th), stories/drama with visiting story teller Karen Tovell (April 29th) and a visit to Fakenham Gasworks museum.

Further details are available in Norfolk E.O. news (N.E.O.N.), produces termly and obtainable by sending £1.00 and six stamped addressed envelopes to: Karen Key, Field Barn Cottage, Wood Norton, Dereham. NR20 5DH. Telephone (0362) 84781.

EO AND CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS. (NO 15 APRIL 1994)

No-one actually submitted anything for publication this time, and I have been almost overwhelmed with special needs, legal, local and general enquiries during the past month... so I have not had time to settle down to writing much myself. (Let alone clean the house, feed the family, walk the dogs, read a book, or teach the child!)

I had to cut this supplement down to four pages, and even getting this together has been a problem, timewise -as they say.

So.... first a few helpful bits and pieces, followed by three pages of something very different....'a little bit of politics here' as Ben Elton would say! Perhaps when you read it you will think this is not the place for such stuff, but on reflection I'm sure you would agree that "EDUCATION" and "SPECIAL NEEDS" should be regarded in as wide a context as possible.

Eating disorders are becoming more common among school victims and 'school phobics'. The parent of a young anorexic girl recommends the leaflet: "Anorexia and Bullima" published by The Royal College of Psychiatrists. Sorry, I don't know the address, but you will be able to get it from your Library or Citizen's Advice Bureau. Better still, ask for the leaflet at a local Health Clinic and ask them to stock it and put it on display. My informant told me that she was not aware of the wide range of health problems - including epilepsy - that can arise from anorexia.

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SPECIAL NEEDS COMPUTER USERS.

SNUG is a group "dedicated to the positive uses of computers by, and for, those people who have special needs."

It is a voluntary group, financed - like EO - by subscriptions from members. They have a Journal, a newsletter, and a network of contacts (volunteers) who help by putting people in touch with each other. Despite limited resources they have the beginnings of a home loan scheme.

Like EO, SNUG needs people to offer help as well as those who need it. Further details from:

Secretary: Jeff Hughes,
39, eccleston Gardens,
St. Helens WA10 3BJ
Telephone: 0744 24608.

There is an organisation called: The Foundation for Communication for the Disabled. This is a "non profit-making supplier of computers with a wide experience of the special needs of disabled users". They produce booklets covering: Systems to Help Disabled People with Handwriting or other Communication Problems, and a Guide to Information Technology for Blind and Partially Sighted People. They have an information sheet which gives useful addresses to apply to for help with funding. Their address is: 25 High St. Woking Surrey GU21 1BW
Telephone 0483 727848/727844

Some time ago I spoke with one of the Foundation's representatives at their stand at a special needs exhibition. I explained about home education and about the sort of people who might have need of advice about specialist computer peripherals and/or software. I was told that although this isn't their usual field of operation they would try to help.

DO WE NEED PUBLICITY?

=====

There has been discussion - even controversy - within EO recently concerning the need for publicity.

Perhaps the following facts and quotes might be instructive for

Patten calls for 'watch schemes' to catch truants

Ordinary citizens should be mobilized into truancy watch schemes to help stem the rise in school truancy, Education Secretary John Patten has said.

TOO GREAT

He declared that the problem of truancy was now becoming too great for schools to deal with by themselves and suggested that the schemes should operate in a similar way to neighbourhood watch schemes - with willing citizens reporting any child that they suspected of playing truant from school.

He added that if all children wore school uniforms, they would be much easier to spot if they were out of school during school hours.

He added that "although the ultimate responsibility for truancy rests with the parents, both the community and

the Church had a central part to play in the fight against it."

"We must drive home to parents that they have a moral, as well as a legal, duty to ensure that their children go to school - and stay there - but as leaders in the local community, the Church should also give moral guidance about right and wrong to disaffected and truanting youngsters."

Mr Patten praised a scheme already operating in Staffordshire where 'truancy free zones' in city centres and shopping arcades were helping to raise public awareness about truancy.

HELPING POLICE

"The scheme is greatly assisting the local police and educational welfare officers - and there is no reason why similar schemes cannot be set up around the country", he concluded ●

The cutting is from JUNIOR EDUCATION magazine. Details of this and four other education magazines from:

Scholastic Publications Ltd.
Westfield Rd.,
Southam
Leamington Spa,
Warwickshire, CV33 0BR

those who believe we should not spend our money on publicising our existence, or making known the right to educate children out of school

The 9 year old daughter of our own Staffordshire co-ordinator was one of the children challenged under this scheme..... while she was out in town.... WITH HER MOTHER!

The man who accosted them was in plain clothes, was on his own and did not identify himself.

He was severe, rude and unpleasant, and made it plain that he did not believe a word said concerning the right to home educate. He demanded the names of anyone in the LEA "who knows about this" and concluded his cross-examination by threat.... "Well, we've got to verify this, haven't we?"

It was difficult to find out who this man was - both the LEA and the police denied all knowledge of him at first! After many phone calls it

became clear that he was indeed a policeman. Eventually he phoned (presumably because he had been told to apologise) but he was not in the least apologetic. He gave a routine, grudging apology for having caused upset, but followed up by saying: "We have a job to do. It's in the interests of the children."

It was this encounter which led to the issue of a leaflet explaining the legal rights of children when challenged as 'truants'. This was enclosed with a recent newsletter, but I believe that such important information should be available to enquirers and new members.

My role as EO's special needs adviser has brought me into conflict or co-operation with many LEAs and other agencies over the years, and as a result of this I receive many enquiries from around the country. Many callers are in great distress and I hear harrowing stories of the experiences of children and their families. The following extracts are from telephone conversations held during a recent period of just over a fortnight.....

"She's very unhappy because of the bullying. She has been sick and threatening to hang herself...."

"How can they learn? There are 64 children in her class. There are supposed to be 3 teachers but one of them is usually out of the classroom."

(This concerned a 6 year old girl!)

"The Educational Psychologist saw her at the school. She came out really crying and he said 'I'm afraid I have had to be hard on her'. He thought she had school phobia but said that going to school would be the best cure"

"She was being bullied so much and truanting because of it. They sent her to an 'intensive' (psychiatric) unit but there were all sorts of dangerous and undesirable children there,,,,,"

"He threw himself down the stairs...he had been persecuted at school. All our complaints to the school have been useless."

"She's been bullied at three different schools. She's terrified of girls now and frightened to try another school. But none of the schools tried to help at all...they only suggested sending her elsewhere"

"She was bullied so badly that she hasn't been to school since November. We had to take her to see a psychiatrist, who only told her she MUST go back to school. Last week they sent a counsellor from the school. He got very angry and shouted at her: 'You WILL go back to school on MONDAY. It's against the law and you are getting your Mother into trouble. She might have to go to prison!'"

"He was being bullied... we had to go to the school and complain because he was being bullied by two teachers. They picked on him and made comments about God and our religious beliefs."

"She has become so frightened that I couldn't get her out of the house at all last weekend. The school have apologised again and again, but they haven't done anything to help."

"She just COULDN'T go to school. The psychiatrist said she had school phobia and he could cure it.... She could spend 12 weeks in his psychiatric unit and then go back to school."

" He's been getting more and more headaches and illnesses, so I took him to our GP, who was very concerned and sent him for a brain scan. Then I found he'd been having awful trouble from a group of children at school. Now he hasn't been to school since December, but no-one has contacted us or offered any help."

"She knew the names of the colours, all the letters of the alphabet, and could write her name before she went to the special school ... now she is 13 and can't do anything"

"The children say they don't want to touch her books when they have to give them out in class, They hold them by the corner, saying they're covered with germs and need an injection. Everybody laughs. She's a bit overweight and is being called 'Mr Blobby'."

(This 11 year old's teacher tied her to a chair for getting up and down....and her headteacher told her she was very naughty for going home and telling her parents these things as she knows it upsets them. He told her parents that she was only attention-seeking.)

"She tried to drown herself in the bath..." (12 yearold girl)

"He tried to hang himself..." (9 year old boy)

"She became anorexic, which led to epileptic seizures." (12 year old girl)

"He's been attending part-time, but he can't cope with school as he's so frightened. He says he'd be better off dead." (9 year old boy)

"He came home crying every night. Eventually he admitted that at school they had been forcing him into (toilet procedures) which are absolutely forbidden by our religion" (7 yr old at special school)

"She has been bullied because she is overweight. I haven't sent her to school since Christmas, but last week she came out shopping with me... she saw the girl who was the main bully and was absolutely petrified... she was white and shaking..."

"We have been fighting with the LEA for his special needs help. He's Statemented for 6 hours a week but not getting it. We paid for a private Educational Psychologist's report which showed him to be dyslexic... but it hasn't helped. Now he's terrified of school and says the teachers don't understand him."

"She has been having a terrible time... but she's not the sort to think of suicide... she'll run away. I can see that she is very near to doing so."

(13 year old girl)

THESE EXTRACTS ARE, AS I SAID, FROM A FEW OF THE CONVERSATIONS I HAD IN LITTLE MORE THAN TWO WEEKS. THEY ARE NOT THE WORST CASES.

I get quite a few of these comments too:

"I found out about EO and I took him out three weeks ago... and there's SUCH a difference. He's far more relaxed and cheerful." (Dyslexic 13 yr old)

DOES EO NEED PUBLICITY?

=====
Sylvia Jeffs 16 St. Bernards Rd. Solihull West Midlands B92 7BB
021 706 6460

OXON

Since becoming interested in home-education, we have several reasonably successful "themed" days. This summer I'm being a bit more organised about advertising them. Depending on the theme, we would hope to include a variety of craft, art, drama, science, music and games - but please don't expect everything at each event! Our kids are all under six but we reckon to be able to stretch to 10-11 year olds at a push and certainly welcome older siblings who enjoy helping out as we have 21 month old twins. If you enjoy days which comprise of a mixture of organised activities (well, that's the theory) and a chance to meet/talk to or play with other members of the E.O., then please ring up and book a place on the days of your choice. Sorry, but we don't have the facilities to take on all comers. If you have a brilliant idea for an activity for a particular day, then bring it along!

- WHERE? The Malt House, Silver Street, Chacombe, Branbury, Oxon.
Telephone (0295) 711991
- WHEN? Friday 22nd April Theme: St. George.
Friday 6th May Theme: Japanese Boys' Day - Bring a kite
and strong shoes if you can, we might go to
Burton Dassett Hills.
Friday 3rd June Theme: World Environment Day.
Friday 15th July St. Swithin's Day.
- TIME? 10:30 AM to 4:00 PM

SOLENT & HANTS

From March onwards, weekly studies and social days in the studios and grounds of Brick Kiln Farm, the home of the Langingers. The format and content of the days will evolve in line with the group's needs. For dates, details and directions, please contact Kay Day on (0705) 328036. Details of the remaining Solent area's events programme are publicised in our local newsletter, available from: Micheal Tavaier. Telephone: (0243) 373903.

- SUFFOLK Suffolk E.O. meets at Foxburrow Farm, Field Centre, Melton, Woodbridge. The next meetings are on: Tuesday 22nd March, Tuesday 3rd May and Tuesday 28th June. Arrive for 10:00 AM, finish at 2:30 AM. Bring wellies and a packed lunch. For further details, telephone Silvia on (0728) 688484.

WARWICKSHIRE

Everyone is very welcome to join us for the following activities:

- APRIL A visit to the Shugborough Estate, Staffordshire is planned. This is a restored 19th century estate which with re-creations of 19th century servant life, the working farm museum with rare breeds, a restored working corn mill and demonstrations of traditional farming methods. For details, please contact: Lesley Mckenzie on (0203) 318401.
- MAY We hope to visit Brandon Marsh Nature Reserve. For details, phone Sue Cardus on (0203) 543807.
- JUNE A visit to Birmingham Botanical Gardens is proposed. Please contact Lesley Mckenzie on (0203) 318401.

YORKSHIRE

- APRIL Thursday 14th. Visit to Doncaster Dome - swimming and ice-skating, meet at York Station at 10:30 AM. Train in at 10:57. Road travellers, we'll see you there (discount for numbers). Ring Sue on (0439) 70056.
- MAY Tuesday 17th. Visit to R.S.P.B. centre on North Yorkshire coast at Bempton. 1:00 PM start, but meet before that for a picnic. Ring Marit for details on (0653) 658346.
- JUNE Thursday 16th. Visit to Ryedale Folk Museum. (The date is not yet confirmed fully). Picnic in Hutton-Lee-Hole. Contact Gwen on (0904) 421982 to check dates (discount for numbers).

SUSSEX/SURREY: Horsham and Crawley, where we have regular events, are only one hour from Central London. For details of future meetings and the local newsletter, please contact Isobel Bogucki on tel: 0403 261178.

ICE SKATING: Michael, (13), Helen (10) and Martin (7) enjoy skating and would like to meet up with others in GUILDFORD. The new rink there has been highly recommended. Anyone interested? Ring Isobel Bogucki, 0403 261178

REGIONAL DIARY

BEDS & BUCKS

Telephone if you need to know more: June McDonald - Beds (0234) 341375; Joyce Moore - Bucks (0908) 562451.

- Tues 12th April 1.15 p.m. Hazard Alley Safety Centre, Kiln Farm, Milton Keynes. Interactive scenarios for discovering real-life dangers. Please 'phone Joyce IMMEDIATELY if you want to come. Cost £2 each.
- Thur 21st April 10.00 a.m. Guided tour and talk at CROP recycling centre, Colts Holm Road, Old Wolverton, Milton Keynes. Cost approx £1 each.
- Mon 25th April 2-4 p.m. Monthly get-together at Barbara Stamford's house, 156 Highbury Grove, Clapham, Beds. Tel (0234) 215782. Come and chat, meet E.O. children, share worries and experience with new and longer-term members in the region.
- Tues 26th April 2.00 p.m. Guided backstage tour and opportunity to meet staff at Royal Theatre, Guildhall Rd, Northampton. Cost £1 each.
- Mon 6th May 1.30 p.m. Swimming session at Oasis Beach Pool, Bedford. Wave machine, slides, Jacuzzi pools, etc. Cost: adult £1.80, child £1.30, family £4.90
- Wed 11th May 1.45 p.m. Session at "Activity World" in Rollers, Denbigh Centre, Bletchley. Party rate for child £1.50, adult 60p
- Mon 23rd May 2-4 p.m. Monthly get-together as 25th April, but held at June McDonald's house, 10 Reynolds Close, Bedford. Tel (0234) 341375
- Fri 27 May Swimming session at Robinson Pool, Bedford. Meet in entrance hall at 1.30 p.m. for party rate. Non-party rate £1.60 for adult; 80p for child

W OXFORDSHIRE: We meet in Oxford on alternate Wednesdays
10.30 - 2.30, in a hall with good facilities.
£1.50 per family. Everyone welcome. Drinks
provided. Future dates: April 6th, 20th, May
4th, 18th, June 1st, 15th, 29th.

Sunday 1st May - D.I.Y. Mayday celebrations.

Friday 13th May - Cotswold wildlife Park. Meet in carpark
at 11a.m.

Sunday 5th June - Cogges Farm Museum, Witney are holding
a "wood weekend". Family entry £7.00.
Meet in picnic garden between 1p.m. & 2p.m.

Friday 24th June - D.I.Y. excavations and dam building
at Shotover Park, Oxford. Meet at sandpit
at 12 noon.

Details available from Pam Bellinger on tel: 0869 277391.

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CURRICULUM REVIEW: MILLSTRAEM'S WEEKLY NATIONAL CURRICULUM, LESSON BY
LESSON GUIDES.

There are 6 guides, one for each of the primary years. Each covers
the 8 National Curriculum subjects (not P.E. or R.E.), with a useful
Parental Information Section at the front.

The guides were first published as lesson plans for teachers and contain
exactly that; around 20 lessons per week for the 36 weeks of the school
year.

Each lesson has an aim:e.g. to learn the story of the Mayflower; a note
detailing which attainment target it covers; and a selection of activities
for that lesson; plenty to pick and choose from. Preparation will be limited
to ensuring the right storybook or an alternative is available, and any
resources,e.g.1p & 2p coins.

The guides have just been published in an A5 ring binder format for
the parents, so that they know what is being taught and can help,
supplement or reinforce their child's school education.

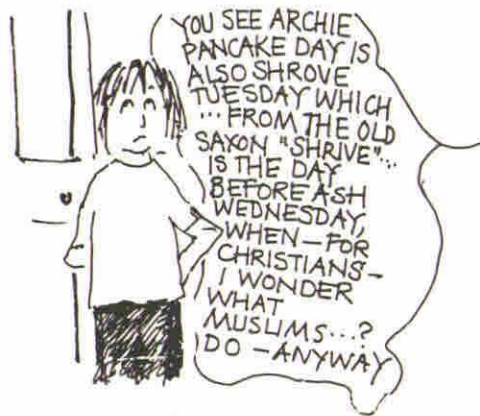
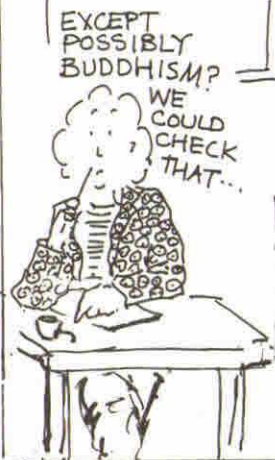
The curriculum is also ideal for E.O. members who want a fairly
structured set-up and can be dipped into, or worked through steadily.

Each guide (state age required) costs £29.50 and total P&P is £2.50
Details from Mr Tom Porter, Millstream Publications, 12 Albany Business
Park, Cabot Lane, Poole, Dorset. BH17 7VX. Tel: 0202 658887.
(Please note advert for this in the Ads Section)

does anyone want the WES core curriculum Year 1 - English, Science, Maths
and some of the required books? Cost £200 new.)

From: Rosemary Clayson
30 Sea View road, Herne Bay, Kent. CT6 6JA. Tel: 0227 360208.

Ask me another!



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by **SEY**

SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

In October 1993 a group was set up to look at how EO handles complaints. The group reported back to the meeting at Gilwell Park - March 1994 where it was decided that the existing ways of dealing with complaints should be stated in the Newsletter.

Complaints are handled by the following people:

Isoble Bogucki - Co-ordinators' Secretary - 0403 261178

Enquiries Secretaries Group - Central Address

Steering Committee - see back page-

This will be reviewed at the next meeting.

This is an extract from the group's report:-

In considering the various situations in which complaints are dealt with the overriding view of those who we consulted was that individuals should not have to bear the brunt of dealing with complaints alone. The inclusion of complaints in the ES group's

work was a move in this direction. An attempt to have complaints handled by one person was tried in 1988/89 but this was not very successful.

We feel that whatever option is adopted the membership should be happy with the mechanisms.

1. Carry on as we are - with various people dealing with complaints and the risk of wearing down individual officers. (We feel that the Secretary and Chair should not have to deal with complaints alone. They are entitled to support and backup).
2. The Steering Committee be given responsibility for dealing with complaints. Jill suggested that SC could deal with complaints until September when they could report whether in their view a separate group is necessary.
3. A complaints group be established to hear complaints, seek information from all parties concerned, and make decisions and/or recommendations to the SC or members meetings for action. This would help spread responsibility and accountability more widely within EO.
4. Consider whether in some circumstances it would be advisable to call in a mediation group.

Recommendation

We utilise some of what we have already and set up a Complaints Group. The Co-ordinators' Secretary should be part of this group. The ES group continue to deal with complaints about ES with the support and backup of the CG. It should be represented on the CG.

Avoiding conflicts which result in personal complaints is somewhat more difficult to handle. Options may include 'codes' of debate which people are reminded of at the beginnings of meetings.

If you have any views on this, please write to a member of the group before the next meeting.

Stephanie Fatcher - Derbyshire
Susan Long - Essex
Jill Gillings - Isle of Man

Susan Long

+ SCIENCE - READING - SPORT - HISTORY - LEAs - ART - MAKING FRIENDS - MUSIC - SMALL SCHOOLS -	COOKING - SCHOOL PHOBIA - VOLUNTARY WORK - LANGUAGES - MATHS -	ONLY CHILDREN - GEOGRAPHY - CDT
	SUPPLEMENT EDITORS WANTED	
	If editing appeals to you but the Newsletter seems a bit daunting, why not write a supplement?	
	Four or eight pages about any subject which would interest EOers.	
	Contact: Sue Hutchin, Newsletter Co-ordinator, 13 East Hill, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6RL. 0580762107	

Fantastic Recipe Book
Compiled By The Otherwise Club on its
First Birthday!
From Our Families to Yours.

Please send a cheque or money order for £3.00 inc. postage
to
The Otherwise Club Recipe Book
1 Croxley Road,
London, W9 3HH

All proceeds go the club to help keep us going!

Dear E.O., I am thinking of educating my two small children, who are currently both under 5. I would like a penfriend who is in a similar situation, or currently home-educating to discuss my views with and help me make up my mind. Please write to: Tina Razzell, 12 Burrough Field, Impington, Cambridge. CB4 4NW.

GILWELL PARK

SUMMARY REPORT

by Sandie Cottee

One of the main reasons for holding these National Gatherings is to hold EO meetings. In any organisation there has to be times when members get together to discuss future plans, problems and to generally deal with the day to day running of the organisation.

As usual this meeting was held on Saturday and started with an hour long Directors Meeting. Although termed as such, these meetings are in fact open to all members, and purely a technical detail.

Brenda Holliday reported on the legal situation in Grampian, a will be preparing a full report for the next newsletter. The meeting then discussed the role and responsibilities of directors and it was agreed that three Directors Meetings would be held each year. These meetings will be open to all members & advertised a year in advance when possible. A financial statement will be presented and other business addressed during the meeting, and as a general rule these meetings will coincide with National Gatherings.

There was a dispute at the AGM held at Beaunor in October, regarding the procedure taken to elect new directors. The position was clarified and discussed at length. It was proposed that because everyone at the meeting did have a clear understanding of what they were doing, and had acted in good faith, that the election should stand. This was seconded and it was suggested a vote be held. This was carried. A second proposal was made for the election of an additional director, but was not carried.

There were a number of post changes. Sue Clare was elected General Secretary following Pam Stevensons resignation. Keith Charlton was elected director and chairman. This followed a discussion and a vote on a resolution to delete the word 'chairperson' from the articles. It was agreed that this role was beneficial, and was not passed.

Isobel Bogucki was appointed Co-ordinators Secretary, following Stephanie Futchers request to resign, and Sarah Martin was appointed the post of Single Parent Support.

Susan Long reported on the findings of a working party, and recommended that a Suggestions and Complaints Group be set up. It was proposed that the steering committee deal with these matters until the next meeting.

Paul Lowe reported on the database progress and has received three offers to take over the post of Membership Renewal Secretary. The meeting asked Paul to pursue this matter and take appropriate action.

Jane Lowe told the meeting that two members had contacted her concerning the role of Research Secretary. In future all enquiries of this nature will be sent on to Susan Todd and Amanda Petree, and not to enquiry secretaries as at present.

The role of publicity officer was discussed, and members were asked whether this post was beneficial to EO. It was agreed it was, and a proposal followed for a motion of confidence. A vote of thanks was given to Jane.

A new Steering Committee was appointed, to include Susan Long, Keith Charlton and Mike Cook. Paul Bently and Jane Lowe to act as back ups.

The next meeting had not been decided, Sue Clare and Jane Lowe will pursue this matter.

If you would like to receive a full copy of the minutes for this meeting please send a SAE to the General Secretary, Isobel Bogucki.

PEN-PALS

Hi! My name is Leah and I am 15 years old. I like all kinds of music apart from heavy metal. I love young children and babies. I like baking, reading, swimming, walking, and I love chocolate, hate the dentist!

I would like a male or female pen-pal about the same age as me. Please write to this address:

40, GREEN LANE, GREETLAND, HALIFAX, WEST YORKSHIRE.

Dear Suffolk E.O.ers,

Hi, my name is Amaryllis Fradley, I am 16 years old, and interested in starting up a team of young adults/responsible teenagers, (who don't mind a bit of hard work!), to help organise events, provide support for families with problems and to generally get things going round here. Even if you are a busy person, 10 or 15 mins of your time could be very helpfull. Can anybody interested contact me at the address below, or phone me, I'm usually in, thankyou,

Yours Hopefully,
Amaryllis.

WOODLANDS, SANDY LANE, IKEN, SUFFOLK. IP12 2EU. Tel. 0728 688 484

Dear E.O.,

My name is Mark, I am 10 years old.

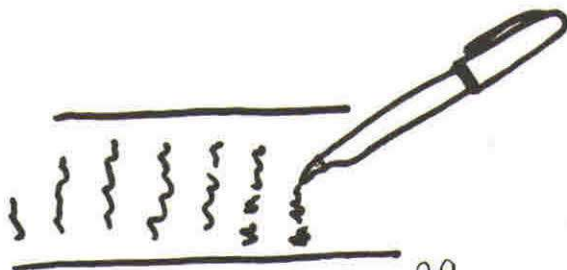
At the moment I still go to school, but I am unhappy there. I am interested in learning at home.

Would any other children already learning at home please write and tell me about it.

Thankyou.

Mark Thomas

TETHERSEND COTTAGE, CRAWICK, SANQUHAR, DUMFRIESSHIRE,
SCOTLAND. DG4 6ET



Dear E.O.,

Thanks for the latest newsletter. I do look forward to getting it. I'd like to advertise for a pen-friend(s). I'd be interested to know if there's anyone out there who has younger children and hasn't started home-education officially yet? My son's two. Also, any single parents? How do you find things on your own? And anyone else who'd like to write.

Many thanks,
Best wishes,

Sue Backhouse
6 ST.ANTHONY ROAD, SHEFFIELD. S10 1SG

Good Day!

Happy New Year! My name is Robin Hawsworth Powell. I am the leader of the Christian Home Educators of South West Oklahoma. We were wondering if any of the families in your organisation would be interested in becoming pen friends with families in our area? We have families with all grade levels and interests. If any of your members have an interest please contact me.

Thankyou.
Robin Hawsworth Powell

626 CROCUS AVENUE, ALTUS, AKLAHOMA, U.S.A. 73521

Dear E.O.,

We are an E.O. family with a 16 years old son, hoping to move to North Devon in the Summer. We would like to make contact with other N. Devon E.O.ers with sons/daughters of a similar age. Please contact us on tel. 0327 860 460 or write to:
Lin & Steve Walmsley.

MILL COTTAGE, MILL LANE, SLAPTON, NR.TOWCESTER, NORTHANTS. NN12 8PE

Dear E.O.,

I would like to hear from any family who's son/daughter is doing a G.C.S.E. course through a college. It would be wonderful to hear from the students themselves, even if their course is not with a college.

My son is 15 and wishes to study for his G.C.S.E. through a college. Because of past school experience, he is a little dubious, although determined to go.

Anyone who would like to contact us may write to me or Jermain; or just give us a call. Thankyou.

Elfreda Golding / Jermain. 100 GLOUCESTER ROAD, LONDON. N17 6JP.
tel. 081 801 9549

Announcing

A Holiday & Camp for Education Otherwise

Organised by Green & Away

July 16 to 23 1994

Crafts, education, workshops, music, dance, home baked bread, (very) hot showers, mostly organic food, all on a beautiful field overlooking the Vale of Evesham. An opportunity for children to be involved in a wide range of activities organised by parents and Green & Away.

- Affordable fees to cover camping and all meals - within reach of public transport - advance bookings only -

For more information rush an SAE to Pam Stevenson,
25 Wyndam Road, Dover, Kent CT17 0BR

*Green & Away is a project of the Centre for Environmental Initiatives,
a registered educational charity.*

A SMALL SCHOOL

A group of us have been discussing the idea of setting up a small school in the Petersfield/Liss area. So far, we have had two meetings, and things are looking quite promising. Many different views are represented, but there should be a way of including all of these. The aims so far are briefly summed up below:

No teacher, school as a resource centre.

Pupils choose what they want to do, teachers act as facilitators, attendance optional.

Conventional lessons, attendance optional.

Academic subjects in morning, free choice in afternoon. More conventional teaching, core GCSE subjects on offer, exams optional.

If you are interested in any of these ideas, or have more to add, then please contact:

MARY HOLLOWAY. Tel: 0730 892 049

NOTICES

Notices are exchanges of information, educational material, requests for information etc. They are free to members. Notices should be sent to the editor.

LES ENFANTS D'ABORD

There will be a meeting of Les Enfants d'Abord in Normandy, from May 11-14. For further details contact: Remy Truchon, 13 bis Impasse Loiseau, 76130 Mont St.Aignan, France. Tel: 01033 35 98 49 91

There will also be a gathering from June 23-30. For further details contact: Josee & Jürgen Engelbrecht, Le Viou, 04300, Forcalquier, France. Tel: 01033 92 75 25 31

QUILT CHAMPIONSHIP

Please note that only the completed entry form and a photo of the quilt (even if it is not finished) need to be submitted by May 2nd. The quilt itself doesn't need to be in until June 26th.

Hannah Bush.

WANTED

Does anyone have any of the following to sell or lend:? We have used English 1&History 1&2 & found them very good. But unfortunately this series is no longer being printed.

Letts Study Aids. Foundation skills for 11-14 year olds.

Physics	1 and 2
Chemistry	1,2 and 3
Geography	2 and 3
English	2 and 3

Please contact Ann Marsh, Heron Barn, Arthog, Gwynedd, LL39 1BQ. Any costs will be refunded.

CAN YOU HELP

We are trying to find out about the colonisation of the 'New World' by Europeans. Could anyone recommend books (fiction or non-fiction) on these subjects and any related ones.

South America	- Inca, Aztecs
North America	- Indians, Settlers, Pilgrim Fathers
Australia	- Aborigines, Convicts
Africa	- Slave-trade
India	

Sue Hutchin, 13 East Hill, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6RL. Tel 0580 762107

PAIRED SCIENCE PACK

Carol Chamberlain has used the "Paired Science Pack" from the University of Dundee and found it very good and easy to use. If you are interested, please contact them at this address: University of Dundee, Psychology, Dundee, Scotland.DD1 4HN tel:0382 23181.

The cost is £20.00 (which I assume includes postage). Please quote ref.KT/LF, 20/7/93, MRS CAROL CHAMBERLAIN. (Taken from their letter).

TALKING SCIENCE

A national database listing experts in every field of science, engineering, technology, and the social sciences. These experts are experienced speakers willing to communicate their knowledge and enthusiasm to the public. Anyone can use this FREE service. Some speakers charge a fee and/or travel expenses. Some give demonstration lectures with audience participation, or informal introductory talks. Some will get involved in hands-on activities, organize or judge problem solving competitions etc. Contact: TALKING SCIENCE BRITISH ASSOCIATION, FORTRESS HOUSE, 23 SAVILE ROW, W1X 1AB, or tel:071 287 0980

STOP PRESS!

FEATHERSTONE CASTLE '94

E.O. teenagers are running Featherstone Castle this year from Thursday 15th September to Thursday 22nd September.

Booking forms will be available from Rachel White at: Bolton House Flat, Market Place, Leyburn, North Yorkshire, DL8 5AS. Further details in next newsletter.

BRITISH TRADES ALPHABET

The British Trades Alphabet is an organisation which supplies schools and colleges with study cards on topics such as: sugar, oil, nuclear fuels, diamonds etc., to name just a few. These cards are FREE. I have been told by the B.T.A. that are E.O.ers are welcome to order and the cards would also be supplied to them free of charge, as long as stocks last. So send for an order form quickly to avoid disappointment. The address is: British Trades Alphabet, P.O. Box 32, Thames View Business Centre, Abington, Oxfordshire, OX14 3LJ.

PEAK CAMP

E.O. camp in the Peak District.

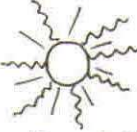
Saturday 11th - 18th June.



Barracks Farm, Beresford Dale, Nr Hartington, Derbyshire (between Buxton and Ashborn). Grid reference 123-586.

The site has toilets, showers, sinks for washing pots, a tuck shop, and milk for sale. You will need 20p pieces for hot water. The river Dove is a quarter of a mile down the lane and the campsite is an excellent base for walking, bird-watching, rock-scrambling, visiting the sites of the Peak District and meeting other E.O. campers.


Further information and directions from Peter Darling on Chesterfield (0246) 239048. Address: 50 Springfield Ave., Chesterfield, S40 H12.



4th E.O. CAMP IN KENT
16th to 19th JUNE

Come to Headcorn to meet old and new friends. Enjoy 4 days camping in the Kent countryside.

- Activities, games, tipi, pancake breakfast and campfires.



Campsite approximately 2 and a half miles from Headcorn BR station (lifts from station can be arranged.) Hot showers and flushing lool

Offers of more activities welcome.
For more information/map, contact Sue & Keith Burchett.
Tel: (0732) 870344

BOOKS

Dear E.O. friends,

Having taught my own children at home, I know the importance of access to good quality information books in the home. Unfortunately, as we all know, the best ones on the market are not as cheap as we would like.

I have found a way of filling my shelves with the excellent Dorling Kindersley range at discount prices and would like to offer home educators the same opportunity.

I have over forty Eyewitness guides which my older children enjoy reading, besides making a lot of use of them for reference in project work. The Science Encyclopedia and Picture Atlas of the World fulfil the same purpose. Incredible Cross-Sections and

Richard's Ultimate Bicycle Book are perused eagerly and regularly, and though there has been no interest in Young Rider by Lucinda Green, I have not been short of little girls appearing at the door announcing gleefully that Mum says can you get a copy for them.

Discount starts at 27% and although there are no minimum order requirements, you may buy them for your own use only. You can do as I have, and start your own business selling to friends, neighbours, other E.O.ers and even your local school (full training and support is given by D.K.). I'm sure you will agree that few other businesses could fit in so well with your educational commitments. Bonuses of 3% to 20% can be earned on top of normal discount. Some E.O. groups may want to get together to buy the new Information Teaching Kits, which are full of resource material and would really impress your Education Welfare Officer.

Write or phone me for more information and I shall be delighted to hear from my old friends in E.O. that I've lost touch with. Although I ended up putting my boys in school, I think about my three year old being educated. Can any of you give me the confidence to try it again?

Best wishes,
Valerie Lighten.

PS: You may have heard about my struggle to have a home birth on "Punters" on Radio Four and Daniel's subsequent birth on air. I'll be happy to offer advice on that subject too. Address: 7 Beech Avenue, Marple, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6 6ER. Telephone: (061) 449 7340.

WEEK-END IN NORTH PENNINES

A second national gathering organised by the EOU people (till we think of a better name)

This one will be at **Alston Penrith** on 27, 28 and 29 May (Bank Holiday) - 3 nights.

We have booked Alston Training and Adventure Centre which is a comfortable, purpose-built Centre overlooking the South Tyne Valley and within easy range of the Lakes and Border Country. The Centre provides a range of activities including canoeing, Gorgewalking, Underground Cave Exploring and Mountain Biking. There will also be the time-honoured ways of EO fun - singing, dancing, making things, sharing interests and skills and, of course, sitting around talking till dawn. (another possible attraction for some is that there will be nothing remotely like an EO business meeting so you won't need a personal copy of the Articles of Attraction, a Guide to Company Law or a pocket solicitor).

For full details, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

Julie Lyons, 56 Newton Avenue, Royston, Nr Barnsley, South Yorkshire. S71 4HB.
Telephone: (0226) 700716

Dear Ed.,

Concerning the "structured v free" learning debate; after 7 years of home educating, i have finally (!) arrived at a system comfortable for us, (Rosemary 13, Elizabeth 8½), which is a sort of cross between the two. We simply allocate a couple of subjects to each day (9am to 3.30pm. I find it's bliss to switch to being an ordinary mum at 3.30 and get a few jobs done or do something just for me.) On Monday, when we're bright-eyed and keen to tackle our most difficult subject, Maths; Wednesday is "Nature Walk" day; and the week ends with swimming and craft on Friday etc. etc. It's satisfying to know that you've had a go at everything necessary during the week, but we feel unpressured, having all day to fit in just a couple of subjects, and Rosemary and Elizabeth suggest related projects. Organised this way, when "free" time comes, their creativity continues and they are usually absorbed in drawing, reading, making up plays or games or writing; or are ready to welcome friends who have just come out of school.

Suzy Griffith

'Lilacs', Love Lane, Rye, E. Sussex. TN31 7NE. Tel*0797 227164

DEAR MEMBERS,

I AM INTENDING TO WRITE A DISSERTATION ABOUT HOME EDUCATION FOR MY ADULT EDUCATION ENGLISH STUDIES COURSE. MY SON HAS STARTED WORK IN THE LAST YEAR, HAVING COMPLETED HIS EDUCATION AT HOME. I HOPE TO HEAR FROM PEOPLE WHO FEEL THAT HOME EDUCATION HAS NOT BEEN THE ANSWER AS WELL AS FROM THOSE FOR WHOM IT HAS BEEN A SUCCESS.

BRIEFLY, THE ASPECTS WHICH I AM MOST INTERESTED IN ARE:

AT WHAT AGE DID HOME EDUCATION BEGIN?

WAS IT THE ADULT'S OR CHILD'S DECISION?

THE MAIN REASONS FOR THE DECISION TO HOME EDUCATE.

IS/WAS IT EASIER OR MORE DIFFICULT THAN VISUALISED?

IF HOME EDUCATION HAS BEEN DISCONTINUED:
WHAT REASONS WERE THERE FOR THIS?
WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

PLEASE TAKE THIS AS A GUIDE ONLY, I AM KEEN TO HEAR EVERY THING THAT ANYONE HAS TO TELL ME.

I HOPE THAT I SHALL HEAR FROM SOME OF THE STUDENTS (AN ENGLISH TASK PERHAPS) AS WELL AS FROM THE EDUCATORS.

I HOPE TO ACKNOWLEDGE ALL REPLIES, BUT PLEASE BE PATIENT!

BEST WISHES, HELEN.C.CROOM
5 ALBERTON ROAD, STAPLETON,
BRISTOL, BS16 1HH
TEL: 0272 652 856

Regional Enquiries

Secretaries

needed for:

North East

London

contact Sue Long

LibED CONFERENCE

"A day conference on education. Freedom in education - rhetoric or reality?"

Address: Friends Meeting House, Queens Road, Leicester.

Date: Saturday May 14th, 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Plus evening entertainment.

Recent years have seen a continued attack on educational freedom with the government pursuing its "back to basics" and laying the blame for "falling educational standards" at the door of the progressives. Despite this hostile environment, alternatives in education continue to pursue and promote educational freedom. But how much of this is rhetoric? How much reality? This is the theme of this year's conference. Organised by LibED.

Informative presentations, interesting stalls, good food, convivial company and lively entertainment in the evening, are all promised for this year's conference.

E.O. will be present, as well as other interesting movements.

Advance bookings to be made by April 14th. Fees for adults £10, unwaged £5. Children £3/2. Please contact: Clive Baldwin, LibED, 170 Bells Road, Bristol, BS4 2AG. Telephone on: (0706) 524933. (Enclose S.A.E.).

PATCHWORK/QUILT CHAMPIONSHIPS

For the first time this year there is an under 16 years category in the National Patchwork Championships to be held at Ascot from June 30th to July 3rd, for individuals or groups. The themes for 1994 are "Memories" and "Racing Colours", although the quilt can be based on any subject you choose, or be an abstract, and need not actually be quilted or patchwork! Max. size 180" or 274cm square; min. size 24" or 61cm square. Also for the first time, there will be an embroidered picture championship, with an under 16 years category. Entries must be in by May 3rd. For details and entry form contact:

"The National Patchwork Association", P.O.Box 300, Hethersett, Norwich, Norfolk. NR93DB.

If you've not tried anything like this before, libraries usually have a section of books on patchwork and applique, but you can invent your own construction techniques. Children would not be expected to stitch everything, and sticking is allowed. It can be fun! Evidently, a boy who worked on a school class quilt last year, when told that he must stop at the end of the lesson had arrived, said "I'd rather die" and took his part home, where he also made a big proportion of the finished quilt! (Perhaps we should enter a E.O. quilt next year, including mums and dads. Anyone interested contact me.) The championship itself is well worth a visit! Contact: Suzy Griffith. "LILACS", LOVE LANE, RYE, E. SUSSEX. TN31 7NE. or tel:0797 227164

ADVERTS

TO SELL

"il etait.....une petite grenouille". Includes 2 cassettes, 1 activity book, 1 teachers handbook, 1 storybook. Cost £45.00, but will sell for £20.00 plus postage. Also for sale- My Tables Box & My Maths Box by Pippin. These are useful games, as they encourage the children to develop visual learning rather than the usual Auditory Route as is the "norm"! We will sell for £7.00 each including postage.

Contact: Marilyn Rodger. SANDYHILL HOUSE, BANFF, SCOTLAND. AB45 1BE,
OR TEL: 0261 815725

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Contact: Alison Tribe on tel: 0484 606618

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SMALL ADS are 10p a word to members and limited to 30 words. They must be of interest to the readers.

BOX ADS will be included if there is space and the rates are as follows:

	Member	Non member
Half page	£50.00	£100.00
Quarter page	£25.00	£50.00
Eighth page	£12.50	£25.00

Copy for all advertisements should be sent, ready for printing, on A4 sized paper by the 1st May to: Sue Hutchin, 13 East Hill, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6RL.
Tel 0580 762107

WHERE TO GET WHAT

E.O. Stationary: Envelope re-use labels £2.00 per 100. Leaflets, handbills, posters, forms and car stickers are freely available for publicity purposes.

All available from Lucy Chatton, Church Lane Cottages, Newton Harcourt, Leicestershire LE8 0FT.

- G.W.S. is available from: Barbara Sheppard, 18 Queen Katherine St., Kendal, Cumbria, LA 9 7QG. Subscriptions run from March-March. No part subs or back issues available. Members £12, Non-members £14. Cheques payable to E.O.

- The following publications are available from: Pat Dixon, 110 Cambridge Street, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, MK12 5AH. Prices quoted are for members only. Please add 10% of total order towards postage to UK addresses. Cheques payable to "Education Otherwise".
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Mike Cook	0227 367059
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HELPLINES: CHILDLINE 0800 1111 KIDSCAPE: 071 488 0488

education otherwise

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

Our principal aims are to:

- encourage learning outside the school system;
- 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 (approx. 6"×8.5") stamped self-addressed envelope to:

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