

AUGUST
1994

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No 96
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EDUCATION
OTHERWISE

NEWSLETTER

"With an eternal mission to boldly do what no man has done before, to seek out new civilisations, to guide and bring together all home-teachers and home-taught, the Starship EO now takes another giant leap for mankind!"

Issue no. 98 August and September 1994

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DISCLAIMER

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. Volunteer editors are always wanted - please contact the Newsletter Coordinator (see back page).

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REMINDER TO READERS

The EO 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 (1 September 1994) and all material intended as such should be clearly marked "for publication". Contributors are asked to ensure they include their name and address (and age for contributions to 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:	Simon Price Lionesse Northfield Sommerton Somerset Tel 0458 273914
Supplement:	"Special Needs" Sylvia Jeffs (see inside back cover)
Children's Pages:	Catriona Furniss 74 Range Road Shawheath Stockport SK3 8EE

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EDITORIAL

Greetings from the Black Isle in the Highlands of Scotland. "Ciamar a tha sibh?" Or, "How are you?", as is said in Gaelic. We live across the Firth from Inverness and daily, in summer, are privileged to see Bottlenosed Dolphins. We are also close to much beautiful scenery, which is spoilt by only the rain and the midgies!

I've enjoyed editing the newsletter. Its importance as a disseminator of information will increase now that national meetings are becoming shorter and therefore more inaccessible to those of us who live far away. I wonder if the time has come for important issues to be voted on postally?

As the newsletter is the only way many of us come into contact with each other, I decided to interfere as little as possible with that process. On the whole, items were published on a first received, first included basis and I cut nothing out of people's work.

Thanks must go to Alan for sorting out the printer's programmes, Eric for the illustrations and Clare for being patient. I hope EO can retain its strength with continued unity.

Jane Arnold, Craiggard, Craigton, North Kessock, Ross-shire, IV1 1YG.

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CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT OF THE EGM AT YORK,
HELD ON SATURDAY 2 JULY 1994

The EGM was held in the Youth Hostel in York, providing an opportunity for the older children to explore York. At first there was a Directors' meeting where a working party was set up to look at EO's financial structure. The Child Protection Policy was discussed and an interim policy has been accepted. The working party on this will continue to communicate and keep us informed.

At the members' meeting there were 20 signed up members present and we made our quorum. It was good to meet some members who had not been able to make it to a meeting before. A general apology was made to a member of the steering committee, as she was treated badly at the last meeting and is now back on the steering committee. This committee now has seven members instead of five. Marc Cottee is the successful applicant to run the database and Paul Lowe was given a big thank you for setting it up and for all his hard work. The donations enable Marc to start on a new computer. A legal workshop is planned for Scotland later this year. The Truancy Watch Scheme is being monitored, but very few reports of incidents have come back to the meeting.

There was then a long discussion on future venues and it was agreed that they should be planned and notified a year ahead and spread out over the different parts of the country - one for a day, one a weekend (residential) and one a longer gathering, so they will cater for different members' needs. With mixed feelings and a comprehensive discussion about the Featherstone Gathering in September, it was decided that individual officers should not agree to unlimited financial underwriting of the whole Featherstone Gathering. The decision was made to hold the AGM in November at an additional weekend gathering to be arranged.

Gill Murley gave an impressive report on the membership secretaries' job description and an agreement was reached that enquiries secretaries and membership secretaries and coordinators would liaise in an effort to improve the way members receive information from each of these officers. It was a busy and productive day and it was a pleasure to chair such an impressive, hard working group of people. Keep up the good work!

Anyone who would like a copy of the minutes please send an A5 SAE to Sue Clare, General Secretary (address on back page).

Pien Maltz-Klaar

EO DIRECTORS WANTED!!

At the AGM later this year approximately one third of the current directors will resign. This works on a rota basis of first in, first out, and ensures maximum time as a director of three years. These long standing directors may stand for re-election or there may be new directors elected. If you have an interest in serving

EO in this way please let me know.

If you send an A5 SAE I will send a copy of "Duties and Responsibilities of Directors" to enable you to consider.

Sue Clare, General Secretary (address on back page).

FEATHERSTONE CASTLE

The Extraordinary General Meeting on July 2nd took the unprecedented decision to withdraw financial support for the gathering at Featherstone Castle in September.

This decision has caused a lot of bad feeling among people who have attended national gatherings at Featherstone over the past eight years. Meetings there always made a profit, and the organisers - a group of young people - feel particularly let down by a change of policy at such a late stage.

However, the meeting felt that it had no choice but to withdraw unlimited financial underwriting because of the uncertainty surrounding this gathering. Members of Education Otherwise Unlimited had apparently threatened to boycott the meeting if the AGM were held there, and the probability of a low turn out and a hostile environment seemed high to them. EO funds are always stretched, and there seemed too great a risk of making a large loss.

The meeting was unaware of the unbroken history of EO support for gatherings at Featherstone and attempted to act in the best interests of the organisation.

Misunderstandings and misinformation often cause conflict within EO. This statement is an attempt to clarify recent events and prevent the situation escalating.

The gathering at Featherstone will go ahead. The AGM will be held in November.

Whatever each member's view on the decision may be, it is important that we all work together and take steps to prevent anything similar occurring again.

HANNAH BUSH
Featherstone Organiser

SUE CLARE
General Secretary

COORDINATORS UPDATE

The following areas need coordinators and have NOT been advertised:

DERBYSHIRE	LONDON WEST	WEST YORKSHIRE
DYFED	LONDON SOUTH EAST	NORTH YORKSHIRE
BEDFORDSHIRE	TAYSIDE	

The following areas STILL need coordinators:

AVON	CUMBRIA	MANCHESTER SOUTH
BERKSHIRE	DEVON NORTH	NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

The following people have agreed to be acting coordinators. BUT this should not prevent anyone else volunteering for these areas.

Isabel Adonis	Gwynedd
Beverly Young	Lancashire
Sandra Hancock	North Yorkshire
Shane Allen	West London
Louise Blackledge	West London
Chrystia Hertogs	South East London
Sue Wilson	South East London
Lorna Brown	Strathclyde

Thank you for all the feed back on the role of coordinators. One thing is very clear - the growth of EO has led to an increase in the work load in some areas and two named coordinators, with a back up of helpers is increasingly needed. We do need a spread of members, NOT necessarily coordinators, who are willing to become familiar with the law as it affects home educators and can become confident in responding to LEA communications which, in so many cases, seem to be deliberately intimidating. Ann and Rob Wade ran a vey enjoyable workshop in York - contact them if you would like one in your area.

Please send any further thoughts on the role of coordinators soon. I will be rewriting the guidelines to be discussed at the next national meeting.

Isobel Bogocki, Coordinators' Secretary.

TREASURER'S BIT

The computer appeal fund, thanks to the generosity of members AND others, has now reached £1.2K. Still short of our target, but enough to purchase the computer and software. A laser printer is still needed.

Unfortunately the Dept of Education has upset our cart with "The Updated Parent's Charter", causing much concern and confusion. So much so that EO has committed funds (which we ain't got) in taking legal action to reaffirm parents' rights and the bill has already reached £2.75K. Those who thought a computer an extravagance, might consider this a noble cause to support and all donations would be welcome. It has been argued that EO should have reserves for such eventualities - we have. It IS the membership.

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

THE
FEATHERSTONE CASTLE
GATHERING

Information + booking
forms NOW from: IS ON 15-22 Sept

HANNAH BUSH, c/- 48 Montgomery Rd,
Sheffield, S7 1LQ Tel 0742 553836.
Send a SAE

THE PLEASURES OF NATIONAL GATHERINGS

National gatherings offer an opportunity to meet and talk to lots of other families from different parts of the country, with a variety of lifestyles, different numbers and ages of children and adults, but with one vital thing in common - WE ALL HOME EDUCATE.

We may have differing approaches and philosophies, but we are all doing what we think is BEST for OUR children in a society where it is unusual for young people NOT to go to school. National gatherings provide a powerful antidote to the feelings of isolation and the doubts which can creep in for us all at times, especially those who don't have a local group to meet up with. It can seem a bit daunting to come to a strange place with maybe 100 people whom you have never met before, but EOers tend to be a friendly bunch and half the others will probably be new to it too! It is also the place where the business of keeping EO going as an organisation takes place and you can have your say if you want (though, of course, there's no compulsion to attend the meeting!)

The next national EO gathering is in a beautiful part of the country, at Featherstone Castle, Northumberland in September (see notice in last N/L). It is a great place, with lots of space outside in the valley of the South Tyne, a bit rough and ready inside, but there's a big, warm kitchen and two other rooms with open fires and even the dormitories/bedrooms will have background central heating this year. It can seem a bit chaotic, but there's the chance for walks from the castle and outings to places of interest in the area - Hadrian's Wall, Beamish Open Air Museum, Allem Gorge to name but a few. Various workshops, candles, kites, masks, puppets, papier mache, welding, music, circle dancing and Scottish country dancing, friendship bands, paper making, scavenger hunts, canoeing, fell walking and birdwatching are among some of the things that have happened in past years, it all depends on who comes and what they can offer. Come prepared to share in the food preparation and cooking, the cleaning, washing up, wood chopping and activities - there's always plenty of time to chat, have fun and relax together with stories and songs. Lots of time for old and young to get to know each other as people.

COME AND FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF
AND MAKE SOME NEW FRIENDS

Lucy Charlton, Leicestershire.

EO MEETINGS ARE NOT COMPULSORY?

I am so glad that Sue Clare wrote in the June/July NL about the Changing Face of EO, opening to the general membership the problems over the last few meetings to which she referred. Sue's description of the original EO as being holistic was wonderful. Truly for me it has become a way of life and I have found it invaluable to meet like-minded people. Thirteen years ago I was the first and for a time, the only member on the Isle of Man. Briefly, this lifestyle started with the words of John Holt "TRUST CHILDREN" and continued with trying to put that into practice. I still need the moral support of others to achieve this and so have continued to attend national gatherings whenever possible, not the 10 hour sort that Sue mentioned, but the ones with the camaraderie, the sharing, the staying and learning together that has gone on since longer gatherings were established 8 years ago.

I don't know what Sue meant by a lack of support for national gatherings, as the many I have been to have always been well attended. However I'm not sure one day meetings will engender the same support. Personally, it costs me so much to travel over the sea, that it's not worth it for just one day.

I also heartily agree that EO has achieved a great deal in 17 years and I think credit should be given the individuals who have made that happen, many of those who are now being scorned for objecting to change. However as Sue also points out, there have been disagreements recently. Perhaps I can try to summarise them:

Original EO Ethos

Decisions were reached by consensus, everyone had an equal voice
No exclusive meetings

EO people got together from all over the country for discussion & to share ideas, chance to examine lifestyle, outlook etc.

Moral support was intrinsic
Children welcome and integral to proceedings

Present Structure

Directors hold meetings, at which "non-directors should not really interrupt the proceedings"*

Limited Company Status - said to be needed for protection against legal action

Single day meetings
Adult meetings only

As a consequence of these different attitudes which very sadly seem to be divergent, a group of us gave notice in the Oct/Nov NL under the name of EOU. We feel that the type of gatherings with the original EO ethos are really important and we wish to continue to hold such gatherings several times a year for ourselves and others who think along the same lines. Sue's article suggests that EO is no longer interested in holding social gatherings so we will not clash with The Changing Face of EO, but will provide a much needed service for some, like myself, for whom MEETINGS ARE COMPULSORY!

Jill Gillings, Ballagionney, Ronague, Arbory, Isle of Man, IM9 4HG.
(supported through the years by many wonderful EO people)

* Minutes of the directors meeting, 19 March 1994, Gilwell Park, Chingford

THE PARENT'S CHARTER

As soon as the Parent's Charter began to land on the doormats of EO families many of them were quick to spot the mistake on page 9, which reads: "You have a duty to make sure that your child goes to school until he or she is 16." EOers are sick and tired of correcting this error which crops up in many places, so it was with great dismay that we realised that this document containing "essential information for everyone" had got it wrong. My phone rang incessantly during the time when the Charter was being delivered, and I know that other EO volunteers had also had expressions of concern from many families. Some of these families were very angry, and there was strong feeling from everyone that EO should do something about it.

The Parent's Charter is bound to mislead people, and it is tragic that some parents who are considering home education may think that their children will have to stay in school as a result of this crass error. Ultimately it is the children who will be penalised, and many of them have suffered too much already in school. It will make EO's work more difficult, as most of us find that many members of the public are still unaware that home education is legal. It may well have an effect on zealous truancy-watchers if their prejudices are confirmed by the authoritative tone of the Charter. We do need to intensify our efforts to publicise home education to try to offset some of the damage which has been done, and each one of us can do our bit by writing to our local paper or asking libraries and other public places to display our posters and leaflets. EO has members all over the country, and if each family were to make one effort to draw attention to EO in some way we would raise our profile dramatically!

As word spread and the matter was discussed, it became clear that we should take action as an organisation. An EO member who is a solicitor provided valuable advice, and the decision was taken that EO should instruct Peter Liell to look into the issue. Peter is a practising solicitor who is an expert in education law, and he acted swiftly to arrange a conference with James Goudie QC who is a specialist in the area of judicial review proceedings. I attended this conference with Susan Long on 24th. June and we had the opportunity to discuss the various options which are open to EO. Time was not on our side as so many copies of the Charter had been delivered, but James Goudie advised us that it would be reasonable to consider an application for a mandatory order which would oblige the DfE to put correction slips in the remaining copies and also to correct their mistake through the medium of newspaper advertisements.

Our existence as a company limited by guarantee and the existence of the charitable trust gave us sufficient *locus standi* to take action; in other words, we were deemed to have sufficient interest in the matter to be eligible to proceed. The lawyers decided that an individual family would not be able to take a test case to court as they could not be said to have a sufficient interest in the problems which might be encountered by other families. It's interesting to note that when our lawyers became aware of the charitable trust they undertook to keep the fees as low as they possibly could.

At the end of the conference we agreed that "letters before action" should be sent by Peter to the Welsh Office (whose version of the Charter is due in August) and to John Patten. The Welsh Office made the same mistake in the first edition, but the prompt action of Clwyd coordinator Edwina Theunissen secured an apology in writing and an undertaking to ensure that the next edition would carry the correct information. The letter to the Welsh Office asked

them to quote the text of the new edition, giving a deadline of noon on Tuesday 5th. July for their response. The last paragraph of the letter to Mr. Patten is as follows:

"Please write to me, preferably by fax, so that your reply reaches me by 12 noon on Tuesday 5th. July, stating whether you undertake to ensure (1) that all future copies of the Updated Parent's Charter will contain a *corrigendum* slip; (2) that the *corrigendum* slip will be in the terms specified above [replacing "goes to school" with "gets an education" in page 9]; (3) that the *corrigendum* slip will be stapled to page 9."

These "letters before action" do not commit us to legal proceedings but they are the first stage of legal action. At the time of writing the deadline is tomorrow, so we will have to wait and see what the response will be. Already there has been some useful publicity in the Guardian and the Times Educational Supplement, and also on Teletext. There will be a further opportunity when we know the response. It is not certain what will happen next, as both Peter and James Goudie stressed that they cannot speculate at this stage.

Liberal Democrat MP Don Foster asked a parliamentary question today about the blunder, and he will let us know the details of Mr. Patten's response. This matter follows hard on the heels of his embarrassing defeat by Professor Tim Brighouse in his recent action for slander, so we hope that he will be reasonable!

Further news will be available in the next issue of the newsletter, but if you feel that you can help in some way with publicity please do get in touch.

Jane Lowe
5 Elm Gardens
Welwyn Garden City
Herts.
AL8 6RX
(0707 335825/390070)

CONFERENCE - EDUCATION NOW

"Democratic Education and Education for Democracy"

This conference is being held on Saturday 22 October 1994 at Bilston Community College.

For further information contact:

Education Now,
Arundel Drive,
Bramcote hills,
Nottingham, NG9 3FQ

CAMPING AT REDFIELD, BUCKS

2-4 September 1994

Self-catering, barbecue area, 17 acres of gardens and woodland, tennis court, volleyball. Small charge. For details, send SAE to Diana Keegan, Redfield, Buckingham Road, Winslow, Bucks. MK18 3L2

IPSEA - CHANGE OF ADDRESS

(Independent Panel for Special Education)
IPSEA provides independent advice and expert second opinions for parents of children who come within the scope of the Education Act 1981.

For parents wanting advice phone: 0394 382814 or write to:

IPSEA, 22 Warren Hill Road Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 4DU.

For information on IPSEA'S newsletter "Special Edition", write to: Katy Simmons, 84 Sevmour Park, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 3EW or phone 0628 478986.

EDUCATING ARCHIE *on your bike!*



FOR BRUNN © 1994
E. Thanks Michael Tines



REGIONAL DIARY

ENGLAND



AVON

STAND-IN COORDINATOR: Poppy Green 0272 735091.

Bath: Twice weekly meetings/workshops, contact Andy Hannen and Jo Ball on 0225 335118.

Bristol: Regular workshops, outings and skating lessons, contact Kathy Nott on 0272 688265.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Friday 2 September: Ark Sheep Dairy Farm, Tiffield, Towcester. Guided tour including milking and product tasting. 2pm or 1pm to picnic first. Approx £2 per head.

Wednesday 7 September: Wendover Woods between Wendover and Tring. Picnic near the children's play area at 12.30. £1 per car.

Thursday 22 September: Middleton swimming pool, Tickfield Street, Newport Pagnell at 12.00 noon. £1.25 adults, 75p children over 5.

Tuesday 27 September: Activity World, Denbigh Leisure Centre, Milton Keynes at 2.00pm. £1.50 children, 60p adults.

Monday 3 October: Chiltern Open Air Museum, Gorelands Lane, Chalfont St Giles. Harvest Activity day: gathering, hand-flailing, winnowing, grinding and baking wheat at 11.00am. £2.50 per child, adults free.

For details, or to check that events are going ahead, telephone Joyce Moore on 0908 562451.

CAMPING at Redfield, Bucks. 2-4 September 1994.
See full details at end of "Parent's Charter" article.

KENT

August

Thursday 4 Open house - Sue and Keith Burchett's, 2 Easterfield Cottages, East Malling, Kent, tel 0732 870344. 12 noon onwards.

Thursday 18 Open house - Cath Cooper's, 162 Bush Road, Cuxton, tel 0634 715389. 12 noon onwards.

September

Thursday 1 Open house, Cath Cooper's - as August.

Friday 16 West Malling country park - meet 12 noon for picnic lunch close to the adventure playground behind the car park.

Friday 30 Reculver - field trip to Reculver country park. Meet at 12 noon for lunch at picnic area. Activity - exploring the seashore at low tide booked for 2pm. There will be a charge of approx £1 to £1.50 per person (depends on numbers). Reculver country park

is situated 3 miles east of Herne Bay, follow brown country park signs from Thanet Way, A299.

October

Thursday 6 Open house, Cath Cooper's - as August.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANY EVENT ring Sue and Keith Burchett - 0732 870344 or Amanda MacKenzie 0634 402154.

OPEN HOUSE DAYS - Please ring family concerned in the morning to check that there are no alterations to arrangements.

LEICESTERSHIRE

We will be meeting regularly over the next few months for various visits, activities and social get togethers.

For more information send SAE to Keith and Lucy Charlton, Church Lane, Cottages, Newton Harcourt, Leics, LE8 0FT or phone 0533 592118. Everyone welcome.

LONDON



LEGAL WORKSHOP FOR THE LONDON AREA

1 October 1994, 10.00am to 5.00pm at Wandsworth, South London for coordinators (and for anyone who is willing to help support members) in the London area.

Maximum 20 places, so book early! Bring food to share for lunch - tea and coffee provided.

The day will be intensive, requiring your full attention to gain maximum benefit from the workshop. Some facilities will be available if it is necessary for you to bring your children.

Further details and to book - phone Louise Blackledge 081 568 0371 or Shane Allen 081 840 3064.

LONDON SUMMER PICNIC

Friday 2 September at Regents Park, 12.00.

Meet at the Clarence Gate Bridge, near Baker Street Tube entrance. We will move over to the bandstand area to eat at 1.00pm.

Everyone is invited - old and new members, children in school or out.

Further details from Jo Jenkins 081 883 8052 or Veronica Griffin 081 452 4909.

LONDON: NORTH : SOUTH : EAST : WEST.



The Otherwise Club is a bi-weekly venue for non-schoolers. It offers a place for children and adults to socialise and play. There are parent-run workshops as well as fee-paying workshops with specialist teachers for those skills we do not have. Visitors welcome.

As we are currently changing premises please ring LIZ RODGERS on 071 603 7401 for further information.

More details will follow in next month's listing.

LONDON NORTH

We meet on alternate Mondays (term time only) at Alexandra Palace ice skating rink, 12.30-1.30, £1.50 per child, followed by cooperative games in the grounds if it's fine or at a nearby community centre if wet. The first meeting of the Autumn term will be on Monday 12 September. For more details of these or any other outings that have been arranged

please ring Jo Jenkins on 081 883 8052.

LONDON NORTH

There is a possibility that we can have the use of a scout hut in Edmonton N9, every Friday, from October, for a charge. This has three large rooms and a kitchen, enabling a number of different activities to happen simultaneously.

A small group of us have met and some suggestions have been put forward for activities. A creative dance class, which has been going for three years in other premises, might transfer to here. Storytelling, drama, karate, Scottish, Mexican and circle dance, crafts, computer, a club for teenagers, could also be available.

All, however, depends on the input of the families involved. If you are interested in any aspect of this project, please contact Rosario Seaward, tel 081 884 0898.

LONDON SOUTH EAST

WEEKLY large, energetic social gathering on Thursdays 12-4pm at St Nicholas Church hall and gardens, Deptford. Bring lunch. Term time only. Ring Nodge 081 469 0413.

FORTNIGHTLY outings, Wed/Fri to a city farm, museum, park etc. Small groups, exchanges, writing group.

Ring Susan 081 858 8714.

MONTHLY SWIMMING at Croyden Water Palace on Fridays.

Ring Cathy 081 693 1258.

MONTHLY PLAY, up to sevens and mutual encouragement of parents! Tuesday mornings at Greenwich.

Ring Caterina 081 853 4024.

GENERAL INFO, social contact, EO and other camps. ??Possibility of a group meeting in Bromley? If interested please ring Chrystia and Keith on 081 776 8597.



NEW COORDINATORS FOR SE LONDON: Susan and Simon Wilson, 77 Mycenae Road, Blackheath, London, SE3, tel 081 858 8714.

Chrystia and Keith Hertogs, 75 Kent House Road, Sydenham, London, SE26 5LJ, tel 081 776 8597.

OXFORDSHIRE

Alternate Wednesday meetings at St Margaret's Institute, Polstead Road: August 10, 24, 31; September 14, 28; October 12, 26. £1.50 per family. 10.30-2.30. These meetings are now rounded off with a swim at the Ferry pool in Summertown, 3.00 - 4.30. £1.50 adult/75p child.

Other goings on:

Sunday 7 August Punting from Cherwell Boathouse, 11am to pub, followed by rounders in University Parks.

Late August (not finalised) Great Bog Day. Visit to Banbury sewage plant and then on to Banbury museum's privy exhibition.

Details available from Pam Bellinger on 0869 277391.

SOMERSET

I have arranged several outings, usually on the last Friday of the month

for August, September, October and November. Destinations include Taunton Ambulance Station and Exeter Airport. Contact me for further details, Mary 0823 330199.

SUFFOLK

Our meetings, one every three weeks, start again on 9 September. Phone Sarah Guthrie on 0379 783678 for details.

SURREY

Fortnightly "get-together".

Re-starting on Friday 2 September, 2.30 - 4.30pm at Burpham Village Hall, Guildford.

£2 per family towards rent and refreshments (less if lots of people come). Ideas welcome.

Please ring Lynne Ryan 0483 503971 or Penny Meader 0483 481882 for further details.

YORKSHIRE WEST

We have booked two rooms, a playroom and adjoining office/lounge, offered free of charge by the LEA for the last Thursday of every month, between 11am and 1.30pm. This is at the Child Guidance Centre, next to the Community Charge, rates etc paying office, at Huddersfield Civic Centre, only 2 minutes walk from the bus station. Six of us, plus children came to the June meeting. The children played happily whilst the parents talked. We decided to continue the arrangement. Next meetings: August 25, September 29, October 27.

We discussed the possibility of outings on the 2nd Tuesday of each month - any ideas?

First one: 13 September Meet at Bradford Photographic Museum, arranging group rates for IMAX cinema. Phone 0484 846946 by 5 September.

SCOTLAND



LEGAL WORKSHOP IN SCOTLAND

Brenda Holiday is going to hold, on Wednesday 21 September, a legal workshop in Scotland to explain worrying interpretations of the law. Legal counsel has supported, she feels incorrectly, 'some LEAs' beliefs that they have a right to ascertain whether a child is getting a fit education.

For more information and if you're keen to go, contact Brenda at Chalton Road, Bridge of Allan, tel 0786 832042

WALES



DYFED

Equinox gathering at Cwmrhaffau on 18 September, near Aberporth. Lunches to share, cart rides, songs, walks to the beach and stories too. Tel 0239 811118.

🕒 COMPETITION 🕒

DESIGN THE ALL COLOUR 100TH EDITION NEWSLETTER COVER

Children and adults are welcome to submit an A4, full colour cover which must include the words "EDUCATION OTHERWISE", "NEWSLETTER 100" "OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 94".

After that, it's up to you.

Send your cover design, unfolded, well packaged (with an SAE if you want it back) to Sue Hutchin,
Newsletter Coordinator,

13 East Hill,

Tenterden,

Kent,

TN30 6RL.

Closing date 31 August 1994.

BOOK REVIEWS

Green Technology 1 is the first publication by Green Teacher Resources and is suitable for children aged 9-12. Each unit of work is organised in five sections:- challenge; things to think about; designing; making and testing; evaluation.

The subjects covered are: energy conservation; wind power; water power; and solar power. It fulfils the requirements of the National curriculum and is very suitable for home educators.

Available from the Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, Powys, Wales. Price £12

Book review by Patricia Knox.

The Dancing Puppet Theatre by Doreen D'Eath. This book is unique! It is not just your usual "How-to" book. It is about creative and resourceful thinking ... pure hands-on and self discovery for children and adults. It can help us connect with some of the very special creativity and feelings that are within all of us. The book encourages using only non toxic and environmentally sound materials. It is a gem of a book which delivers just the right amount of inspiration and how-to that can turn ordinary materials into extraordinary theatrical experiences.

Copies will be available in England in September. Enquiries to Pauline Healy, 021 355 1545.

Book review by Pauline Healy.

The Tripods Trilogy consisting of: "The White Mountains", "The City of Gold and Lead" and "The Pool of Fire", also with a preliminary book "When the Tripods came". The story tells of how the Tripods (huge metal monsters with three legs) conquered the earth by gaining control of the minds of every human on earth ... or almost every man. There still remained a small group of people with free minds. These people have the huge task of freeing the human world from the power of the Tripods. Definitely a highly absorbing, interesting and exciting book that really makes you think.

Author: John Christopher. Publisher: Puffin. "The Tripods Trilogy" (three books in one), 1984 and "When the Tripods came", 1990.

Book review by Eric Skea.

CHILDREN NEED STRUCTURED EDUCATION - NATURALLY

Whilst confessing to having had too little time to follow the discussion on structured v unstructured education, I have been aware of the intermittent debate, over the years, in EO. To me this debate is purely representative of our - as individuals and society - lack of direction and the general loss of meaning in our lives.

People have become disassociated with what one might call the "natural" life, not in the sense that individually we are not deployed in rural pursuits, but that our whole society no longer recognises natural patterns and therefore natural structure. Food is purchased from California. Our own climate or season is immaterial. Work is in offices and factories, centrally heated and air-conditioned. We travel around in cars and buses, totally cocooned. Does the computer print-out register summer, winter, night or day? Carried through to education, operating in a seeming void and dealing with only the inanimate, the national "mean-child", the need for structure, discipline, organisation becomes arbitrary and open to debate. There are no natural criteria, no rules outside of man.

On a personal level we are part of that group that home educates for philosophical reasons - a fundamental disagreement with the aims and means of state-education. We do not believe that man can safely disassociate himself from the natural world and have, ourselves, positively sought a reconnection, painful though this may be. We have perhaps been fairly radical in our decision and moved physically out of mainstream society to a peripheral area of the country where life, of physical necessity, has to be more governed by nature. Beyond that, we have made a small farm the cornerstone of our education because, once you have something tangible to hold onto, problems and answers manifest themselves in a more comprehensible way.

Children faced, as ours are, with tending animals and growing crops, come to accept structure and discipline as a natural part of life. Animals respond to regularity - the same feeding and milking times each day (every day - these are no classroom hamsters forgotten at weekends and holidays). Crops have to be planted at the appropriate time and tended, not simply as and when one feels inclined. Life acquires purpose and through purpose, an appreciation of the need for structure. Results and consequences of a failure to abide by the structure are clearly visible.

In turn, once you have set down your farm routine, the time you have to spend on strictly academic subjects, or on crafts, or arts, becomes obvious. The days and weeks take on a form, priorities emerge. Certainly time becomes more limited, so one is less likely to waste it. One has to become more discerning about the things for which one will or won't allocate time. This whole aspect is absent from a school education. Point and purpose, application to real life and real work are missing. Standards are arbitrary. In real life an animal lives or dies, an artefact does or doesn't do the job, a tool is adequate or it breaks. Children learn these lessons in a hard but understandable way. It is life that judges, not the teacher. This is the danger of school - it segregates children from real life and real standards.

The need for structure has long been acknowledged. Man divided his year, highlighted the coming of new seasons with festivals to emphasise

this structure because, without structure, man tends to loose his way. In the modern world this is more true than ever. As a family, we celebrate the seasons and make them very much a part of our children's education. To decorate the house with rosehips and bracken, blackberry sprays and pumpkin lanterns as Autumn comes; in spring to deck the room with ropes of daffodils and bluebells, these activities provide focus and a sense of progress through the year.

Structure should not be an artificial contrivance - the discipline of school is mere drill and so distanced from real life as to be meaningless. Our structure is based on an appreciation of the need for self-discipline, for an acceptance of the routine and perseverance that is necessary in real life. Whilst our life revolves around the farm, we also earn a livelihood from a home-based business - we make shoes and run a small wholefood cafe. That the children see the necessity here again to operate with regularity, to maintain consistent standards, is essential to their upbringing.

In our society, of course, there is no need to become a responsible adult. One is encouraged to remain child-like. The central aim is self-fulfilment and duties and responsibilities are tossed aside with disregard and general applause. But, it doesn't alter their existence.

In electing to home-educate we are choosing to recognise these responsibilities and inculcate a sense of moral obligation in our children. To accept structure is merely part of accepting reality and becoming an adult.

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

A QUESTION OF INTEREST

Education is perennially marked and corrupted by adult convenience. We have grown used to telling children that they must study this or that because we "know" it will be useful to them, when in reality we know no such thing. Our entire school system bases everything it does on the assumption that the subjects it has teachers capable of teaching are the only things worth giving time to, and that any child who doesn't agree has something wrong with him. When I was teaching I accepted that idea as good sense. I could hardly do otherwise, since I made my living out of it. Now I don't.

I have taken responsibility for part of several children's education. I meet them in their homes, on their native soil, as it were. I am on their ground and I have to play by their rules. For the first time since I strutted out of my training college and into an Old Established Grammar School I have to find out what interests my pupils and do that, instead of paying out my knowledge and scaring it into them by dint of marks and test papers. This has forced me to accept that it

is "impossible - I repeat, impossible - to "teach" anything of value to a child if he has not given his mind to it because it grips his interest. You may persuade him to "learn" it by telling him that he will get a gold star if he does, or extra work if he doesn't. You may even cozen him into passing exams in it by telling him that he will have more of a chance to get a job later on if he has qualifications. But he will only take it with him when he becomes an adult and use it to enrich his life if it happens to be something he finds worth studying for his own, special reasons.

When I first realised this truth, and tried to make working sense of its implications I despaired, because however hard I tried, the school I was working in was intractably committed to the opposite idea: that children can be made to "learn" anything if you "structure" it rightly and "make it interesting". I began to accept that the price of my freedom to chop away at the foundations of schooling was to play a full part in the very nonsense I was trying to blow away. It made life very difficult.

Quite often a child would ask the very proper question: "Why do we have to do this work?" The normal answer is something along the lines of: "Because it's important, because we think it will benefit you in later life, because the Government says you have to learn it, and (the ultimate authoritarian cop-out) because I'll punish you if you don't." I tried giving those answers, or a selection of them, and realised that I could not get away with it. Children would tell me candidly that they weren't interested in what I was trying to teach them, and saw no chance of becoming so. Perhaps I was just an infuriatingly bad teacher, the only one in the school who was unable to make French verbs enthralling: the possibility has to be faced, and I am probably the worst person to suggest otherwise. Nonetheless, I had pupils who told me they enjoyed my lessons, so I must have been doing something right. I will take the risk implicit in suggesting that the fault lay not with me but with the whole concept from which the school drew its basic flavour: that children's interests obstruct their education, unless they happen to coincide directly with whatever the teacher is talking about.

I have come to believe that this nonsense, this crass, unforgivable, cynical self-delusion ought to justify us in expelling from the community of educators anyone who holds to it. Since I left teaching and began real education I have had the opportunity to watch how, when we allow them to, children use their minds efficiently, boldly, victoriously, to seize hold of the world around them and make it their unique possession. They do not, it goes without saying, go after the knowledge we value most and want them to take in. Not at first, anyway: their programme is more about testing and surviving the immediate world in which we make them live than it is concerned with learning adult things. Our greatest mistake, and the most damnable crime we commit against children's minds, is that we refuse to acknowledge their right to work out their own commerce with the world, and see it through before they give any attention at all to our knowledge.

I can hear some readers - all good, honest folk with whom I don't wish to fight - saying: "We must structure our work. Whatever you say, when we have finished with them our children have to compete for jobs, get

places in higher education, live, alongside ordinary people who have been through the system and know how it works. We can't afford to take chances with their education. Even though we have taken them out of school, to protect them from social and academic pressure, we want the same things for them as school does. If we just stand back and let them do what they feel like doing they may not (in fact, as far as we are concerned they will not) learn vital skills. We might one day have to hear them say: 'Why didn't you make us learn these things, which everyone else knows and we don't?'

That attitude is easy to understand, and not entirely senseless, but it deserves to be tested by comparison with what actually happens in the real world. It would not be unfair to say that a good proportion - Keith Joseph estimated it at 40% - of school children go through the whole sentence from finger painting to GCSE, without gaining any bankable benefit from schooling. That means, in even simpler terms, that if they know anything, these pupils learned it somewhere other than in school. I rarely line myself up with Government spokesmen on education (the blind leading the partially sighted), but just this once I shall because my observation of the results of schooling makes me think that if anything Joseph was over-generous in his estimate. After years of compulsory culture most people read tabloids, watch dross on television, listen to nothing but pop music, and never think again, in all their lives, of anything they struggled to learn when they were at school.

In that perspective it is hard to understand people's enthusiasm for structured, prescribed learning. Why do we find it so hard to accept that a child, like any other type of person, knows how he feels, and will only learn thoroughly and well things which grip his mind? Why, against all the evidence, do we go on treating children as if they know nothing unless we tell it to them, and have no control over the shape of their intellect until we come along and chisel it to fit a mould which we have made? What lethal draught do we all take when we grow up which makes us forget how vitally we were involved, even as very young children, in directing as much of our intellectual life as the grownups around us would let us?

I realise that, like any polemic piece, this is longer on brow-beating than deep argument, but I really want answers to these questions, because I am being forced, by everything I see in the children I help to educate out of school, to conclude that it is as dangerous and stupid to insist on making a child learn what interests you but not him as it would be to put the roof on a house when the walls were only half built and the mortar still wet. As A.S. Neill discovered, if they are given the chance children often spend years following their interests, using games and activities to build a strong, self-confident working mind. Then, when they mature into the next stage of their development they quickly and easily learn the things they need to know as adults.

I'd like to have a National No-Teaching week, during which even those of us who feel we have to give lessons to our children would stop doing it, and instead give our children complete, unconditional freedom to do whatever they want to do, so long as it is safe for them and does no harm to any other person. I suspect that both sides might enjoy it so much that they might want to continue with it for the duration. Those parents who trusted their children and valued their human uniqueness certainly would. Those who believe that children are basically imperfect, needing moulding and control would not.

Anyone who puts their children into my hands should be aware that I belong to the first group. I think that how children spend their time is their own damn business, and they know far better than I do what they should learn. If anyone needs help to defend that position I am more than ready to give it. Our children's sanity and self-esteem is far more important to me than whether they know blocks of facts and "skills" which most of them will never use for any serious purpose again.

Christopher R. Shute, 7 Kiln Way, Polesworth, Staffs, B78 1JF.

DYSLEXIA AND HOME SCHOOLING : THE BEST OPTION

The author of this article, Donald Payne, is a retired Social Worker who, among other things, has been teaching dyslexic children since the early 1960's and runs a phone HELpline for parents of dyslexic children and has had dealings with over a 1,000 families offering advice and support.

People have been talking about a thing called "word blindness" for well over a hundred years now. The word dyslexia has come into use more recently and come from the Greek and is roughly translated as "difficulty with words". A good deal of progress has been made during the last decade or so leading to a better understanding of this condition and we have learned that dyslexic individuals can be helped by appropriate teaching to overcome their difficulties to a considerable extent. Most of this progress has been made as a result of the efforts of people with specialist expertise working mostly outside the state educational system. It is sadly still the case that within our educational establishment there is still a great deal of ignorance and very little appropriate provision for meeting the needs of these children, many of whom are very bright and capable of doing very well if their particular problems are recognised and properly dealt with. Parents of dyslexic children will know from experience how difficult it is to get the right sort of help from their school and will have found that if it is a very frustrating business getting their Local Education Authority to recognise that there is a problem. I have often been asked to advise parents who find themselves in this situation and my experience over a number of years in dealing with many hundreds of families leaves me in no doubt that it would be presumptuous of me to offer "advice" to any parent facing this very difficult situation. All I can do is to point out the options open to them and to leave them to decide which of the available options suits their particular circumstances best. As I see it, the parents of a dyslexic child wishing to give their child the best possible opportunity in life will have four options open to them and they are:

1. To find some way to persuade their Local Education Authority, wherever they may be living, to make the right sort of provision which will meet the needs of their child. Parents who have embarked upon this course of action have, more often than not, found it a daunting task and most give up the struggle sooner or later. Some fall at the first hurdle, others go on with grim determination, involving themselves in considerable expenditure and facing an ever increasing degree of frustration. There are occasional reports in the media of parents who have gone on to take action in the High Court; this is not a prospect that appeals to most parents and certainly not to those of limited means and without experience of this sort of procedure. This way can hardly ever succeed for the

average family because most LEAs are not making proper and effective provision for meeting the needs of dyslexic children and so, if the provision is not already in place, no amount of pressure can produce something out of a hat to meet the needs of the child. And so ... if that fails ... we consider the next option which is:

2. To move house into the area of another LEA where provision is better. For many people this is not a realistic option. Uprooting the whole family and finding a new house and fresh employment is not an easy matter for other than a small minority. For those who are sufficiently mobile to consider this as a possibility there is a further problem. Where do you find a LEA making provision that is better than the one where you are at present? Some LEAs are better than others but my experience is that the differences are marginal and few if any LEAs are making the sort of provision that would make such a move worthwhile. ... and so let's consider

3. Private Education. (For those who can afford it.) Most private schools can offer smaller classes and may provide a higher standard of education in general terms but may not be able to offer the very specialist help that a dyslexic child requires. However there are some excellent schools for dyslexic children and some schools with a very good dyslexic unit making the right sort of provision. These are run by people with specialist expertise and often considerable experience. Not only is the right sort of teaching provided but the whole of the school is geared to understand and meet the needs of the dyslexic child. From the purely educational point of view this is by far the best option and pupils are able to fulfil their potential - but there are snags. The first is cost. Most of these schools (apart from a few in London) are residential, consequently fees are high and beyond the means of parents other than those in a high income bracket. Furthermore many parents do not want their child to go to a residential school and feel it important that their children should grow up within the family home. ... very few parents ever get round to considering -

4. Home schooling. Many parents do not feel confident about being able to teach their child at home but in my experience for the dyslexic child it is not only the best option but may well be the only option for providing the sort of help the child needs. If we look at the basic needs more effectively within the home than at school. Every dyslexic child a. the right sort of teaching b. understanding c. a flexible time-table.

Teaching: Dyslexic children need to be taught on a highly specialised programme, on a one to one basis and the child needs to be able to give a good deal of time to it. This specialised teaching may be available from a suitably qualified teacher coming in the home at the parent's expense. However most parents are perfectly capable of giving the child the help he/she needs if they are able to acquire the necessary skills and become familiar with the programme and technique which works so well for dyslexic children. The necessary expertise is not all that easy to come by but it can be done and as the child needs to start at the very beginning and go on learning step by step, it is not too difficult for the parent to keep one step ahead of the child.

Understanding: I became aware many years ago that you do not meet the needs of a dyslexic child just by teaching him to read. It is just as important, perhaps even more important, that the child's problems should be understood and sympathetically handled by every teacher taking him for any subject and of course by his parents and family too. So much

Computer *Supplement*

Welcome to the new-look computer section. Previous readers will remember this as C.A.C.S.. However, you may notice a number of changes, particularly in the design of this supplement: gone is the scrawly handwriting, thanks to modern technology, and in its place comes a more preferable computer-designed layout.

We've also decided to take a more mature approach to the supplement, and that's why you'll find *serious* products reviewed and compared - not just games. For example, we have a guide to computers: with so many computers around, it's hard knowing which one you should buy,

and that's why we've got a special feature comparing the top three serious systems available. We hope this will help you decide which computer is the most adequate for your requirements.

Anything else? Well, the title's changed, as you can see, to fit with the rest of the supplement. Oh, and the accolade you see below is our award for software or hardware that is of exceptional quality.

I don't think there's much more to add, other than enjoy the supplement.



NEWS

Integrex Systems has just launched a new colour ink-jet printer by the name of Colourjet 600. The printer provides HP DeskJet 500C emulation and can print up to two pages per minute. It has a maximum resolution of 300 x 600 dots per inch in colour (which produces fine results) and 300 x 300 DPI in mono. Best of all, though, has to be the price. At £259, Canon and HP may have to drop the prices of their ink/bubble-jets in order to compete. Contact Integrex on 0283-550880.

E.O. member Christine Hodson would like to recommend *Vintage One Direct* - a company who offer

huge discounts (up to 30%) on Archimedes and BBC educational, serious and games titles. You can purchase *Sim City*, for example, at the reduced price of £25 Inc. VAT (a saving of £10), and the company has regular sales (some games can be bought for as little as £6). Delivery is also within the week. For more information, 'phone 0532-374000 or fax 0532-423289. If you would like to recommend a particular company or service, write to:

Nathan White,
3 New Street, Chase
Terrace, Walsall, W.
Midlands WS7 8BT
(Tel. 0543-275546)

Professional DTP users who require a powerful scanner may be interested in Epson's GT6500 colour flatbed scanner. (For new computer users, a scanner is a peripheral which connects up to your computer and enables you to scan pictures and photographs into the computer for use with word-processors, art packages and DTP software.) The GT6500 is an updated version of the GT6000, and includes more advanced features, along with a more reasonable price-tag. If you hunt around, you may be able to pick up the GT6500 for as little as £600. Bear in mind, however, that you will need a driver module to use the scanner. (If you own a PC or Mac, try *Adobe Photoshop*, or if you have an Amiga, *Art Department Professional* is probably your best bet.) Tel. Epson UK on 0442-61144 for more information.

Real 3D v2 is a ray-tracing title Amiga owners will be familiar with. It is probably the most powerful ray-tracing graphics application around, and now it's available for the PC. We haven't seen the PC version yet, but Realsoft, the developers, say it's about on par with the Amiga version. We wonder, however, if the PC version will be more cumbersome to work with, seeing as it lacks the powerful multi-tasking environment of the Amiga version.

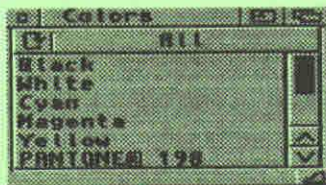
Meanwhile, we can exclusively reveal that *Real 3D version 3* is in development. Realsoft can't comment on any of the new features as yet, but there will possibly be an enhanced particle/physics editor, and maybe even more animation facilities. Look out for a review in a future *CS*.

PREVIEW - PAGESSTREAM 3 (Amiga)

"With *PageStream 3*, the Amiga now leads all other platforms in desktop publishing innovation."

These are the words of a Soft-Logik spokesperson. As you can tell from this comment, Soft-Logik, the developers of *PageStream*, clearly believe that version 3 of their brilliant desktop publishing package will firmly establish the Amiga as the leading DTP system.

Although, admittedly, any company can say wonderful things about their products, having received a comparison list straight from Soft-Logik's US headquarters, I believe they



are 100% correct in stating that *PageStream 3* will be the best DTP title on any computer.

In a feature comparison list with *XPress 3.3* and *PageMaker 5* on the Mac and PC, *PageStream 3* displayed its superiority with over 50 exclusive features not present in either *XPress* or *PageMaker*. Among these include a tool-bar for common menu commands, chapter numbering, smart dashes, object style tags, optical alignment, regular polygons and stars, pen and freehand tools (*PageStream 3* has excellent structured drawing facilities), custom printer drivers, recordable macros (a time-saving ARExx option that records your actions and enables you to replay them at any time) and an unlimited undo function.

One major plus point with *PageStream 3* is its user-environment. Firstly, it conforms completely to Commodore's Workbench 3 style guidelines, which means that all the function buttons are in multi-tasking windows (which can be resized and dragged around the screen). Secondly, it has full ARexx support. This means that you can program your own macros and combinations (there are also plenty of useful preprogrammed macro scripts included with the package), assign macros to keys, and, as previously mentioned, record your own macros. The program's user-interface also looks extremely professional and streamline.

Another advantage with the latest version of *PageStream* is that while other DTP packages won't allow more than, say, 2000 pages in a

document, *PageStream 3* will permit an unlimited number of open documents, document views, master pages, tabs, pages, and undo/redo levels.

The program comes with over 50 fonts, clip-art and a powerful text editor - and is priced at £299.

If you are thinking of setting up, or already own, a desktop publishing business, or even if you are just interested in *PageStream 3*, send an A4 S.A.E. to me at the usual address (printed on page 2 of this supplement), and I will send you some *free* further information on what looks set to make desktop publishing more user-friendly and flexible than ever before.



COMPUTER COMPARISON

If you are thinking about buying a home or business computer set-up, you may just be tempted to walk into your local computer specialist shop and ask which system is the cheapest they've got.

This wouldn't exactly be a wise decision, because you may get lumbered with a machine with limited software support or a machine which doesn't run what you require.

To make your job easier, we have compiled a table comprising a list of different types of software, and awarded each of the three selected machines points depending on how well it performs in each category. If, for example, a computer is best at word-processing, it will be given two points, whilst the machine with the

worst word-processing software will be awarded no points. (A - Amiga, M - Mac, PC - PC compatible.)

<u>Computer</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>PC</u>
Operating System	2	0	1
Word-processing	1	1	1
Desktop publishing	2	1	0
Database	1½	0	1½
Spreadsheet	½	½	2
Graphics	2	1	0
Sound	2	½	½
Multimedia	2	½	½
Overall (/16)	13	4½	6½

Remember that a high-spec. Amiga, although faster, more powerful, and more expandable, will cost more than a high-spec. Mac or PC, but also bear in mind that PC and Macintosh applications are vastly more expensive than Amiga titles (e.g., the superior *PageStream 3* costs £299, whereas Mac and PC *XPress* costs over £500).

REVIEW - PC1204/8 (Amiga 1200)

Power Computing's hardware has always been renowned for reliability and good value. I am pleased to report that their memory expansion more than lives up to their reputation.

Installation is relatively painless - just carefully slot the board into the trap-door slot and away you go.

The only difference between the PC1204 and the slightly

more expensive PC1208 is that the PC1208 uses more flexible SIMM modules, and can go up to 8-megabyte compared to the PC1204's 4.

The PC1204/8 actually doubles the A1200's speed, but if that's not fast enough, you can buy the board with an FPU fitted.

Rating: 92%
Tel. Power
Computing on
0234 273000



We would like to start a letters and Q&A section; so if you have any comments on the computer industry or this *Computer Supplement*, you can write a letter to me at the following address:

3 New Street, Chase
Terrace, Walsall,
W. Midlands WS7 8BT

If you have a technical question or questions, write to the same address with your envelope marked 'Q&A'. If we can't help you, we will put your question in the Q&A section anyway, in the hope that other readers can help you out. An S.A.E. is required for a personal reply to a letter or question.

damage is done in our schools by teachers failing to understand the nature of the child's difficulties which prevent him from learning in the way other children learn. Dyslexic children in our schools are constantly being reprimanded and often punished for things they cannot help, like bad spelling and I have lost count of the number of children who have been kept in "to finish their work" by teachers who do not understand, or will not accept, that there are very good reasons why a dyslexic child takes longer to complete a given amount of written work than his classmates. This problem need not and should not arise within the family. Another reason why Home Schooling is best.

Flexible timetable: It is not an easy matter for schools to arrange for a child to work on an individualised timetable and many schools are unwilling even to consider making any exceptions. EO children do not have to face this problem. They can give as much time as they need to do any subject that is important to them at any one time and never need to waste time on any subject that is too difficult, useless or just plain boring. On all counts Home Education is the best option.

I would be pleased to advise any parent of a dyslexic child considering teaching their child at home. Stamped addressed envelope please to: Donald Payne, "Sunnyside", Main Street, East Haddon, Northampton, NN6 8BU or ring 0604 770059.

DYSLEXIA - NOT WAVING, BUT DROWNING.

Information, support, swap knowledge etc. Anyone out there teaching children who they know have, or suspect they have, dyslexia - how about sharing experiences, ideas, problems. What's your attitude to statementing and involving the local authority? Problems with schools/education bureaucrats? Do you know about specialist teaching schemes? How is the child coping/not coping? Are you coping or not coping?

Phone or write to: Jonathan Rutherford, 40 Thorpedale Road, London, N4 3BL, tel 071 272 4756.

EO AT BRITISH ASSOC OF SCIENCE FESTIVAL

Loughborough University, Monday 5 - Friday 9 September.

All strands of science vie for attention with their own lectures, demonstrations, research news and exhibitions throughout the week.

PLUS, Tuesday - Thursday "HANDS ON" workshops, theatre etc for children.

Some free tickets available for the hands-on activities.

Join us camping (or floor space indoors) at an Eder's place and qualify to enter as locals at £10 per person for everything!

To find out how - contact Frances Ryan on 0533 302355

OVERSEAS SECTION

DEAR FRIENDS

I'm writing to you as a member of group of people all over Spain who is in favour of de-schooling society, which we practise with our own children, if they require us to do so.

I suppose you're concerned with this topic as well - if not, please help us in getting in touch with a like-minded group in England by forwarding this letter.

My idea consist in getting and giving some sort of practical support to each other, experience with children, authorities etc with a view to social and political change in our own lives and that of our societies.

In Spain there are ample possibilities to practise keeping the kids out of schools, although there's little consciousness-raising and almost no literature about it. Of course we know J Illich, A S Neill, John Holt etc, but they are difficult to use as a practical help in today's given situation.

I'm investigation the German point of view as well: they seem to be very tough on getting the kids to school. In France legislation at least appears somehow more relaxed.

Another consideration are the instructions we can offer our kids: are we able to stay with them at home full time? Are there sufficient resources for extracting knowledge that can be called upon?

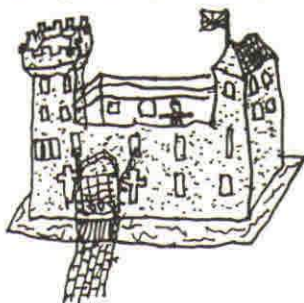
Last not least: friends and playmates. Our children don't get channelled by the melting pot "school" into the society in an automatic fashion. So we parents have to draw closer to facilitate playing between our offsprings, friendships. Are we prepared to do that? Or will bi-monthly meetings be sufficient to satisfy the need for emotional bonds?

Anyway, do tell us your ideas, problems ...

Wilfred Albuquerque-ruiz, C. Rio Tajo, Bloque C.6, 2.12DA, 3006 Murcia, Espana.

CONTACT WITH LEDA

is SHOSHA
16 Rue de la Revolution
34200 Sete
FRANCE
new phone number: 67510464

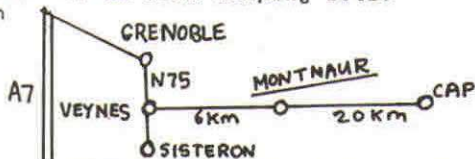


LES ENFANTS D'ABORD (LEDA)
(French Association of Unschooling Families)

Our next general assembly will be held in the French Alps
from August 24 to August 31, 1994. The fees are:

2 people + car: 42FF (£5)	small house (2 people): 80FF (£9.50)
extra person : 13FF (£1.50)	caravan (week) 2/3 people: 750FF (£89)
child under 7 : 5FF (£0.60)	4 people: 900FF (£106)
leaded dog : 5FF (£0.60)	5 people: 1100FF (£130)
power : (£1.40/2.10)	(+gaz + electricity for above)
extra car : 6FF (£0.70)	
hot shower : 2FF (£0.25)	

Access by rail : Veynes (6 km from camping site)
by road : Lyon



Reservations : CAMPING ECOLOGIQUE "MON REPOS"
(05) MONTNAUR phone 92 58 03 14 (meal time)

(altitude 900 metres ; touristic area, trout fishing, biking, hiking,
spring water bathing, pure air ...)

ADVICE and HELP WANTED from HOME SCHOOLING FAMILIES

We are an Italian-English, home schooling family with 4 children aged 3 to 9, presently living in Italy. We are seriously considering the possibility of relocating in the UK. Could you help us by writing to us and sending us some advice on the matter?

The topics that interest us at the moment are:

- 1) Home schooling climate in the UK. How to go about it (Legal aspects, what to expect, etc.).
- 2) Possibility of employment (Husband is a professional technical translator, but willing to try his hand at quite a wide variety of occupations.)
- 3) Possibility of getting Income Support, Housing and/or other benefits for the first period in the UK.
- 4) Housing (renting preferred), expected costs and availability.
- 5) Any other comments you may think about that may be useful or just interesting. How do you do it?

We would greatly appreciate your help in this. All letters will be answered immediately.
Our address is:

L. Martinelli
CP 1423
I-16100 Genova
Italy



LETTERS

DO YOU WANT TO LEARN ABOUT GARDENING?

One subject noticeable by its absence in state schools is gardening, specifically vegetable and fruit growing. I have a passion for growing things, especially vegetables and fruit, but also other "useful" vegetation - useful to people, eg basket willow and useful to wildlife, eg native species of hedgerow trees and bushes.

It could be argued that after the three Rs, kitchen gardening is the most valuable interest one could instil in a child. Firstly of course the end product is, to say the least, useful. Along the way, many other desirable concepts, ideas and practical skills can flow from gardening.

Although it does not provide a complete or balanced form of exercise, in that one is fairly static for much of the time and a good deal of bending and squatting is unavoidable, at least gardening is done outside in the fresh air. Very young children, of two, three and four can be very enthusiastic in wanting to try to do jobs that their parents are doing. I have some wonderful photographs of my son Henry filling in his potato trench using a full size hoe, having actually placed the potatoes in the trench himself. He was just two years and ten months old. The following year ('93) I was amazed that he planted all his onion sets in the little holes I had made. This must have taken at least half an hour, a very long attention span for a three year old. His total crop weighed 39 lbs, which I made up into three strings and hung from nails on his bedroom wall. His onions were bigger than mine, probably because they had more fertilizer: he does his wee into a beaker and during the winter, delighted in throwing the contents on to his garden. As the future onion bed was nearest the house, that tended to get most doses! Three lessons there: a basic horticultural principle, pollution control and recycling/conservation of resources. Children can derive much pleasure and satisfaction from seeing and with gardening, also eating, the products of their labour, much assisted though this may have been. Gardening involves a wide range of disciplines, not least discipline itself - self discipline, the need to get on with a job when it needs doing. The seasons and nature do not wait for you. Maths can obviously be much involved. A plot of ground can be surveyed, the garden designed on paper and then laid out on the ground. A scale plan, annually photocopied, can be used to keep a record of each year's crops. Trials can be done to determine optimum spacing of crops. Vegetables can be interesting things to draw and paint. Transverse or longitudinal section can form the basis of fascinating graphical patterns. Basic botany can be taught using vegetables and fruit. As the inevitable pests arrive, it is useful to know their life cycles in order to be able to deal with them; and so on. Then there are the more general and indirect lessons that arise from kitchen gardening. Environmental:- The more that is grown in gardens or allotments the less that has to be grown commercially, involving a saving in transport, packaging and the use of artificial fertilizers and toxic chemicals. Social/political:- If a child takes to gardening it can become a way of life, and can help to "keep them out of mischief"! Working with the soil and growing things increases one's affinity with and understanding of the natural environment generally, increasing the desire to see it preserved and damage minimised. Briefly, the more gardeners there are the more political pressure there will be towards more sensible environmental policies, locally and

nationally. Economic:- As a great deal of fruit and vegetables is imported the more that is home grown the less will need to be imported, saving on the balance of payments. Jobs that may be lost in transport, packaging and marketing are therefore unnecessary jobs. Money saved on these things will be spent elsewhere and could therefore create other jobs making some of the plethora of goods currently imported; but here we get on to problems of labour costs, health and safety, environmental laws, consumer greed in buying the cheapest - scope for education there!

I would very much like to be involved somehow with teaching gardening, but there seems to be no chance of this in the state sector. Would any EO members be interested in learning more about kitchen gardening? There are a number of ways in which this could be done. I would welcome casual visitors. I would make a charge of £1 per adult. (I know from having the garden open in the past on particular days for charity that an hour or two can be spent talking to interested visitors.) If members would like to contact me perhaps a date to suit most could be arranged to make a day of it. Late July or early August is the time the garden looks at its best I suppose. But it could be before the end of term to avoid crowded camp sites etc. I have run a couple of week-end courses and have available the text for that. It is aimed at adults, but parents could use it for whatever level is required. It is in eight parts, titles and prices on request. If there were enough demand I suppose I could write a children's version of the two day course. Anyway I would welcome any comments and suggestions.

The above-mentioned Henry has just started school. I was against this, but have been obliged to come to terms with it, simply because we are so isolated here and do not have a car. He would have no one to play/learn with and I do not know of any other home educators in the area. I only hope that his innocent enthusiasm and individuality are not destroyed in the way that his older sister's seems to have been in her anxiety to be like the others in embracing popular culture. She has not set foot into the vegetable garden for years and takes no interest in her surroundings. So far as I can tell neither does the school. So much for choice and schools catering for local conditions or need. But forewarned is forearmed; I hope to be able to maintain Henry's varied interests.

Robert Milne, Pedwardine Cottage, Brampton Bryan, Bucknell, Shropshire, SY7 0DW, tel 056886 489.

HELP AVAILABLE FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN THE LEEDS AREA -
ADOPT, ADAPT AND IMPROVE

A personal introduction from a New Member

My significant background stems from an unusual and unusually enlightened, small private boarding-school, originally because I had had a lot of time off school with "exma". Like everything else, it had its problems and disadvantages, (I was middling bright and it was not over academic, and there was, perhaps inevitably, a certain amount of bullying, not always from other children!) But whatever else and to its lasting credit, it taught me to use my hands as well as my brain, the value and happiness to be had from books (and maps) beyond fiction and why wet feet and muddy shorts were less important than the knowledge, even fun, gained from an expedition. I left there "for exams" in my late teens,

but did not do particularly well at that time; I never really took conventional schooling. Later, an unusually caring and helpful Headmaster encouraged me to take up Primary Teaching, basically, one class for almost everything. At about the same time I founded what later became "Youngsters Out Of Doors", incorporating more than a trace of Forest School Camps and owing even more to the works of Arthur Ransome. My Class Expeditions became renowned for the "unusual",... like cooking dinners on spotless shining Primus stoves that we had just learned about (Science), while following Ancient Trackways (History), and early canal and railways (Transport), then striving to cope with the sheer exuberance of trying to get it all down (English) before we "lost" it, or the next one overtook us! "I can't draw" was usually replaced with "No, neither can I ... but let's try", whereupon, of course, we both found that we could! (That's called "Art"). Happy Days. But you couldn't do it now, - the over prescriptive National Curriculum would see to that! I have also done several periods in residential "Special" Schools, (now, I really was on the other side of the fence!) where academic achievement was, quite rightly, considered secondary to helping many disadvantaged youngsters to regain some form of equilibrium and happiness from shattered lives. Some of my successes haunt me still (I am proud to say), but for a variety of reasons, I eventually left "formal" education to those who believed in the way it was going - I patently did not. "Youngsters" continued and thrived, and kept me in touch, (thankfully at arm's length!), with the "developments" in our educational "system".

I subsequently joined a friend in the founding of a small bus and coach company, with expectations of a new career in transport management, but, yet again circumstances conspired against me and upon his death and subsequent take-over of the company, I was eventually made redundant. Since then, I have had a strange and fascinating mixture of part time jobs in transport, wholefoods, conservation work, small group teaching, writing and "mending" things. And most of them seem to involve helping other people, both children and adults, along the way at some point. And yes, I enjoy it.

I think I first heard of EO some years ago, possibly via the Right Honourable James Young on radio 2, on one of his "Specials", and I felt then that, one day, I would like to offer some form of help and become involved. Subsequently and much more recently, one of "my" parents, who has had difficulties with her youngsters (which, she kindly suggests, I helped to mitigate), suggested that perhaps others might be glad of a little encouragement and moral support and that an Article of Explanation might help. So here I am and here it is!

I envisage the help I might be able to offer in two separate ways. It is for parents to consider which, if either, they might like to follow up, and whether or not they might be combined at some stage if they so wished, into the occasional Educational Expedition.

I would be very happy to assist anyone within reasonable travelling distance of Leeds in West Yorkshire, or even a small group, with anything that is within my knowledge - but with one important caveat! My Maths is out of the Ark! I am totally computer illiterate and have never physically touched one in my life. While I readily acknowledge that they have their place, in taking over the drudgery of monotonous calculation and above all in speeding the process up, I deeply resent the way they have and are, taking over the decision making process more properly administered by a thinking, caring, human being. Worse, they

are now beginning to monopolize children's leisure time as well and it is a crying shame that something so potentially worthwhile has been hi-jacked by a non-stop outpouring of ever more violent "games". They are supposed to encourage our competitive instincts! Like bashing one another's brains to bits? ARE there any non-violent ones? One day, I suppose, some youngster might teach me the value of a computer! Until then, I'll keep hoping the craze passes, or sanity prevails.

Secondly, parents are free to contact me if they feel that their children (roughly 6-15, but flexible), might gain something worthwhile from our small adventure group. I will gladly supply addresses and phone numbers of supportive and satisfied parents if asked, to reassure you. Most participants are perfectly ordinary youngsters from a wide variety of backgrounds, varying from one or two quite well-to-do, to a significant minority "disadvantaged" in some way or other, with most somewhere in the middle. We have something on most term time weekends from before Easter to mid November, often on both days, radiating outwards from Leeds. School holiday expeditions (thus, "Higspeditions") cover most of the rest of the country at various times and this year, for instance, will include Essex, North Wales and the Isle of Man, with several other possibilities in mind. Many parents have complimented me on the change of attitude that often comes about when youngsters get tangled up with us even if, at the same time, passing caustic comment upon the (unusual,...surprising...?) quantity of washing I seem to generate! As one tearful 12 year old was last heard bellowing to his Dad, who had just forbidden him to come again, "You reserve your right to get "plastered"... so why can't I. An' I know which costs less! ... Ouch". Like my much-loved steam engines, we all need a safety valve. Perhaps I can provide it? We have, over the years, had several school phobics, one or two victims of severe bullying and many real independently minded characters whose only crime appeared to be that they didn't move with the herd. Some simply seek an escape, for no matter how short a time, from a rigid or over zealous regime. But (almost) all of them seem to go home with happy (if not exactly pristine!) smiling faces, improbable tales to tell and a rich satisfaction for all to see. New faces, wild places, strange "happenings" and lots of wet socks, sometimes combine to unlock all sorts of buried treasure.

As we say in Yorkshire, "Now think on and come by".

Please feel free to contact David D Higgins (Super Hig), 72 Street Lane, Roundhay, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS8 2AL.

HAS ANYONE GOT SPACE FOR A BUS?

We are Helen, Paul, Zakary (3) and Evangeline (3 months). In the near future we intend to go "on the road" for a year in a bus. This adventure has been prompted partly as a means of keeping our heads above water financially, as we intend to find tenants for our farmhouse and use the rent to pay our mortgage and live on and partly as a means of avoiding Helen, an experienced primary school teacher, having to go back to work full time whilst Paul, a graphic designer, is unemployed. Going on the road seems to be the only feasible way we can be together with our children all the time. Neither of our children has reached school age but we are members of EO as we are very pro home education and hope that we will be able to take that path when the time comes. We are writing this letter to see if there are any home educating families out

there with a little space to spare to park our bus (single decker - 30ft long and 7ft 6in wide) for a negotiable length of time. We have all basic amenities on board and would be self sufficient. We merely need to find a temporary plot - it could be for days or weeks, whatever would suit you. In return we would be very willing to share our skills. I (Helen) have teaching experience across the general primary curriculum, although I genuinely believe that many EOers have much more experience than I have as facilitators of learning and development in a much broader range of subjects and age ranges than that tackled in the average school! Paul, as well as being an experienced graphic designer, has a particular interest in renovating old houses (he has successfully renovated 8 houses over the past 20 years and he is experienced in the skills this involves eg carpentry, brickwork and plastering). We would like to travel to any part of rural England, Wales, Scotland or Ireland and are considering travelling throughout Europe too. We are an easy going family who would be happy either to "muck in" and get involved or just park up and keep out of your way, whichever you preferred. If you think you might be able to find space for our bus, please contact us as soon as you can. The date we can set off depends partly on finding a tenant for our house and partly on Evangeline's health and development, but will probably not be until 1995. Eva was born more than 10 weeks prematurely and has a health problem related to her prematurity for which she needs to stay near our local hospital in Norwich until it is resolved. On the subject of premature babies, if any EOers or anyone known to you has a prem baby and needs to talk to someone who has been through a similar experience please contact Helen and a wonderfully helpful group called "Action for Sick Children" who offer support to families with sick children of any age. Helen has recently emerged from a battle with hospital authorities to enable her to stay with Eva whilst she was in hospital. (Parents are expected to leave their babies and go home.) Helen's campaign involved the local press and "Action for Sick Children" supported her and she did in fact remain with Eva throughout her 2 months in hospital. Any EO parent, even if their children are currently fit as fiddles, might like to know in case the situation arises that they have an absolute right to remain with a sick baby or child whatever the hospital authorities might say. Helen was threatened with eviction and court orders etc. Sick children need parents so never be bullied into leaving them!

We are looking forward to hearing from any EOers who could offer a space for our bus.

Helen, Paul, Zakary and Evangeline, Moat Farm, Bedingham, Bungay, Suffolk, NR35 2AT, Tel 0508 482554.

DEAR EO

I thought it would be nice to share some ideas we have had, for days when we get together.

GEOGRAPHY DAY - We got together and marked different countries onto blank maps. It was a learning experience for all of us. We all found places that we thought were somewhere else. We also marked on mountain ranges, rivers and deserts. It is surprising how much we all don't know about the world. We could also have looked at oceans/seas, capital cities, continents, the possibilities are almost endless.

JEWELLERY DAY - We all got together and looked at different things that jewellery can be made from and we made lots of jewellery. Even the boys went away happy with something for mum or gran etc

COUNTRY DAY - Pick a country, watch a video on wildlife or life in that country. Dress in clothes from there, eat food from that country, look at fashions, schools/education, houses, pets (?), hair-styles. You need to get into the spirit of the day, but it's good fun, especially the food! RESOURCES DAY - All get together with educational stuff you don't use anymore, ie books, toys, etc and either swap or sell to one another for much reduced price.

There are endless ideas.

SCIENCE DAY - lots of experiments.

TEXTILE DAY - knitting machines, sewing machines, embroidery, cross stitch, macrame, glass engraving etc.

VOLCANO DAY - where are they, what happens when they erupt, experiments with baking powder (or it could be bi-carb), even make volcano cakes.

I'm sure you can think of lots yourselves, so get together and have fun. Remember if its fun, children learn more.

D. Roach, 40 Edward Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 6DY.

DEAR ED

As brand new members we are eager to get in touch with others in a similar position to ourselves and to get a few issues off our chests.

Among the inevitable responses to our "coming out" with our intention to home educate our 18 month old son has been the assertion that, "You've got a long way to go yet", (meaning, we might change our minds, or education doesn't start until 4, 5, 6 years!)

We believe education begins at birth or even before birth. That's not talking about hot-housing, but what ordinary parents do when they interact with their baby.

We would hope that ED includes in its remit the education of the very young, not the least because here in South Wales, children as young as 3 years old can be offered a full-time place in school.

We have stopped attending Parent and Toddler groups due to the aggression encouraged in the other children. I have experience of playgroups in my work and have found that children have been discouraged from talking to other children and are regimented in such a way as to prepare them for school, including having to say prayers. We would like to get in touch with anyone in the Glamorgans interested in forming an alternative Parents and Toddlers/ Early Years group - with older children welcome too. Also anyone else interested in meeting or corresponding.

Alix Duce and Jim Maynard, 3 Park Lane, Trecynon, Aberdare, Mid Glamorgan, Wales, CF44 8HN, tel 0685 878296.

DEAR EO

Thank you to everyone who has written to me in response to my letter in the last newsletter. I will be in touch with every one who wrote to me as soon as I can.

Rebecca is still in school this term, although she is becoming increasingly distressed. This term she is due to see the Educational Psychologist and hopefully we can find out what the problems are. I believe Rebecca to be dyslexic. It would be very expensive to have Rebecca assessed privately, which is why she is still in school.

Once again, thank you to everyone who responded and for making me feel you care. I'll be in touch.

Kim Woodward, 10 Bedford Cres,
Horfield, Bristol, BS7 9PP.

DEAR EO

I have been putting off this letter for some time, while I struggled with my conscience.

Our children, aged 9 and 10, have just gone back into the school system, after four and a half years at home - actually, Chris the younger one, had never been to school, so it has been quite an experience for him.

Andrew will be 11 this summer and had expressed an ambition to get to university to study design. We looked at the options of home, school, 6th form college, evening classes etc and he felt that going through secondary school would be best. The local schools are not huge - we've opted for the smallest, with only 600 odd pupils. I was concerned that, having left school at just 6, he would be way out of his depth come September, so we trawled

round the local primary schools, to get him "acclimatised". Rather limited choice here, two of the nearby ones could not take him through lack of space, but the village school here came up trumps

Both the boys started in February; I wasn't going to have one in and one out (being purely selfish and wanting some time to myself, which I would not get with just one at home). Socially, they've been fine, the headmistress was very sympathetic about my total contempt for the National Curriculum and testing and the boys know that they can choose to stay home in the future if school doesn't provide what they want.

It has been strange and strained sometimes, fitting in with the system, doing spelling lists and trying to get the boys to remember PE kit, reading books, bringing letters home, having clean uniforms for Mondays The benefits include giving them, especially Chris, more confidence, giving them space away from each other, teaching them to be more independent and responsible for their own things (we'd never got that one together at home!), as well as the obvious six hours of time I get to myself most days - although the 9 till 3 day is not very helpful for afternoons.

While they are happy, I'm happy to let them go; I would not have chosen to send them, but they know they can choose and as one of our friends pointed out, if they have a choice, it doesn't have to be the one we would make for them!

By the way, when I last had a letter in the newsletter, not long after the boys came out of school/nursery, I mentioned that Chris was a bit annoyed at missing out on school dinners - now he's had half a term to experiment and quite enjoys them, mostly - but

he's avoided the dreaded semolina so far!

Thanks to EO for existing and to all who have helped, supported and become friends over the years - we're not leaving the country we'll stay in touch.

Sue McNamara, 1 Trevince Villas, Newlyn, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 5NX.

DEAR EO

I recently read the letter from Alison and Chris Tribe (April/May Newsletter) concerning their decision to send their daughters to school and it really struck a chord.

We have 1 son and 3 daughters, ages 14, 12, 9 and 2 years respectively and until a year ago we had not seriously considered home education. In fact we only found out about this option 18 months ago. Our eldest had always found the social side of school difficult and was frequently bullied. Things came to a head when he was so badly beaten up that he was on medication for a week with internal bruising. Although the teachers were extremely concerned and dealt with the immediate problem there appeared to be little they could do to prevent future occurrences, consequently our son chose to continue his education at home. In view of his age, 13 at the time, we decided to pursue the rather costly option of GCSE correspondence courses and next month he begins his examinations a year ahead of schedule. His self confidence has returned and he now has absolutely no problems socially, having been removed from the offending environment.

Our 12 year old daughter and her sister (9) are both seriously

considering the option of home education, initially they found the idea very attractive but after weighing up the pros and cons they decided they would miss the social side and the team sports (the very things my son hated!). They have chosen to remain at school. The 9 year old however, is a little unsure about secondary school, (having seen her brother's plight) so we have agreed to review the situation when the time comes. It has helped her considerably to know that she does have a choice.

We have yet to make a decision concerning our youngest, but thank fully have a couple of years yet.

The conclusion we have reached is that it would not necessarily suit everyone. We are not anti-school but neither do we feel the system, as it now stands, suits everyone.

I feel very grateful to live in a country which allows us to have a choice in this matter. My only regret is that we were not aware of the option of home education when our son was much younger. Without the EO organisation we would not have been able to transition our son from school to home education so easily. Many thanks for publishing such a diverse selection of opinions and for your support as an organisation.

Diane and Keith Rowe, 10 Arundel Crescent, Eynesbury, St Neots, Cambs, PE19 2SL.

DEAR EO

Just felt compelled to write to thank EO for it's invaluable support since we became members a few months ago. We took our two children, Thomas aged 7 and Amy aged 6, out of school just before Easter and had it not been for EO I'm sure the whole process wouldnt have gone nearly so smoothly. As

it is, we have got off to a wonderful start and, to date, have been very impressed by the attitude of our LEA, who even enclosed an EO leaflet with our initial correspondence. We have no doubt that we have "done the right thing", as it's something we've been considering since Thomas first started school. My relationship with my children has improved dramatically and we are all noticeably happier as a result. I look back on their school days and can only wonder at why we tolerated such an unsatisfactory lifestyle for so long!

Many thanks to all EO members - and keep up the good work!

Teresa and Michael Tucker,
Langton Lodge, Mayton Lane,
Broad Oak, Canterbury, Kent,
CT2 0QW.

DEAR EO

In response to my letter requesting pen-friends, published in issue 31, my daughters, Alison and Ruby and myself were lucky to receive over 60 replies. This was truly amazing and far more than we ever expected. While we had intended to try and keep up a correspondence with everyone who wrote, this has just not been possible. At present, the girls each write to 12 people and I have had to cut down my own correspondence dramatically. As you can imagine, after helping my youngest to write her replies and supervising the eldest, then writing my own, there's been little time for very much else, I've tried to write individually to people to explain and apologise, but I feel, after writing in the newsletter that we'd answer all letters, I should eat humble pie. Honestly, it's exhausting. Many thanks to

all those who wrote. Please don't be put off writing to others.

May I also just add that we received a letter in March from a little girl called Laura, who didn't give her address, so she will have been especially disappointed. Sorry Laura.

Yours apologetically

Carol Griffiths, 3 Maescilgwyn,
Newchapel, Boncath, Dyfed,
SA37 0EH.

DEAR EO

Why did I ever worry? A quick resumé of one who was home educated, DOB, 11 June 1976.

From when he was a baby, I knew that, unless he wanted to, he would not be going to school, (already home educating three others). So why, when he was 14, did I start to worry about his future? I wanted him to take an exam, just for the experience of being in an examination room.

At 16 he had a job for 9 months and was then made redundant. Out of work for a week, he went to an agency who found him employment on a packing line. Not keen on this, he made himself useful by helping to keep the lines running and so became a machine minder. He has now progressed to engineer in this factory.

I am certainly happy with his attitude to life, as it is one of "I will not go on the dole", and am happy with his willingness and ability to adapt and change to situations.

He did the usual things a child does, or does not do. Did not read - had no interest for it. Took no exams - not necessary. Did do the important things in

life like constantly being in a greasy/oily state from repairing various sorts of bikes, either with or without motors. Rode and drove as soon as he was eligible and now, on permanent nights, uses our car, not his - more comfortable.

That this work would not secure his future did not come into my thinking as, after all, how many jobs are there these days which offer security in the terms that they used to.

Then something happened. We saw a business opportunity which can give fantastic financial security. You have to be willing to put in some effort to make this work. It is so simple anyone can do it but not everyone will. However, there's one here who's going to. His aim is to become one of the top 5% earners in the country and with the help and support of this particular organisation, he will do it. He is in touch with others who fall into this 5% category. They are helping him to achieve what they have already achieved, ie, to be time and money free. He can accomplish this by helping others realise their dreams and goals.

A few short years to become wealthy and hopefully, many, many, years to enjoy his dreams. This business is to a job what home education is to school.

Why did I ever worry?

As a postscript, Cheshire had been without its own co-ordinator for quite some time and signing into this business opportunity gave me such a much more positive attitude towards life, that I decided to take on the role of co-ordinator for the last couple of my home educating years with our last child.

Diane Anderson, 8 Nessina Grove,
Wistaston, Crewe, CW2 8EL.
Tel 0270 664060.
NEW CO-ORDINATOR FOR CHESHIRE

DEAR ED

I have given my name, address and phone number to the local Education Department and the local Education Welfare Department as someone in the area willing to give help to families considering educating their children at home.

About three times a year I get a phone call from a parent who has been given my number. Usually they expect me to tell them exactly what to do when educating at home and how to set about it - though in reality all I can tell them is what some of their options are and where they can get more help. Mostly it is reassuring for them to talk to someone local about their problems and someone who has had children out of school, even though it was a number of years ago. Usually I can go and visit them and lend books (which I have to be persistent about getting back!) Although I have offered to be there if they had a visit from the Education Inspectors and offered any other help, I have never been asked for anything further.

I hope more members will consider doing this as an active way to help (and educate) the Education Department and give some local support to potential home educators.

Priscilla Park Weir, 212 Gordon Avenue, Camberley, Surrey,
GU15 2NT.

DEAR EO

We are writing in response to the letters about publicity for home education. Our local council has forty notice boards around the area, where we can display forty EO posters free of charge, posters which have been speedily dispatched by Jane Lowe, so go on EOers, give it a try. Just one in the local library or town hall will help. I get the impression that many EOers feel like members of an underground resistance group, who must not be found out. We put a poster in the front window of our house, which enables the locals to read it and make up their own minds. It's not fair to the children to have to try and explain to everyone. We managed a stall at our local music festival last year, which we hope to repeat this year. We met a lot of people and found a lot out. The local Free ad papers are useful. Put an advert in the pram or children's clothes section. A cheap way of spreading the word. BBC Radio Solent have been very helpful and positive.

Being on the dole does give us more time to publicise EO, but less money. We just have to look for the cheapest way. Go on everybody, give it a whirl. It might seem daunting, but you might help and unhappy child.

By the way, thank-you Patricia Knox for your books, they are in Gosport Library.

Bryan, Sue, Amy, Tom and Natalie Lawrence, 115 Magennis Close, Rowner, Gosport, PO13 9PR

DEAR EO

Two years ago we answered an appeal in the Newsletter to host a Canadian home-schooling family

who were touring England. We became friends and were invited to stay with them if we were ever able to visit Canada. They suggested that if we wanted to find other families we should consult the members directory in "Growing without Schooling"-members willing to host travellers have an "H" after their name. This we did and found families in New York, Montreal, Toronto and Paisley. We qualified for a third off flights by shopping at Sainsburys and bought Greyhound bus passes, then planned our route.

We received the warmest of welcomes from all the families, they introduced us to local food and took us to many interesting places, from a traditional log cabin to a toastmasters meeting, from an American Shopping Mall to a yard sale. We passed through the most beautiful scenery and saw many wild animals:- coyotes, racoons, a skunk, ground hogs and a snapping turtle. We were lucky enough to see Trilliums in bloom (the Ontario flower) which have a very short season. We were there on Victoria Day, a bank holiday and saw a spectacular fireworks display in Toronto. We also visited Niagara Falls, three of Great Lakes, an Indian village museum and a Pioneer Village. A highlight was a chance to see "Arms and the Man" during the Shaw festival at Niagara on the Lake.

Elizabeth (aged 11) was involved in the planning and the costing and wrote letters and exchanged photos with all the children we were to visit, she has had experiences she will never forget and made some lasting friendships.

I strongly recommend travel this way. It provides the opportunity

to find out how people live and with home schooling a common interest, there is plenty to talk about. Three families told us that although they had been in the directory for years, this was the first time they had been asked to host. They assured us that they enjoyed the experience too and look forward to having more visitors.

The D'Eath family from Toronto will be staying with us during September, we hope we shall be able to give them as much pleasure as we received. Doreen gives puppet plays for children's parties and she will be willing to do puppet workshops during her visit. Anyone within reach of Sutton Coldfield, West Mids who would be interested, please contact me. Doreen has also written a book reviewed elsewhere.

Pauline Healy, 24 Rectory Road,
Sutton Coldfield, West Mids,
B75 7AL, tel 021 355 1545.

DEAR EO

HELP! We are Anne, Ted, Thomas (12), Roberta (9), Sally (7) and Philip (3). Although currently at school the three older children have been educated at home in the past and may well be so again. We are desperate to escape the urban rat-race and return to our rural roots and are looking for low-cost accommodation in a rural area on a long term basis. In return we can offer help with children, animals, small holdings etc and have a variety of skills we would be willing to share. Anne trained as a primary school teacher, has studied textile crafts and can build drystone walls! Ted is a computing professional with green fingers and a talent for fixing machinery -

anything from kettles to cars to traction engines!

If we could help you and you could help us please contact us: Anne and Ted Cholewa, 21 Welbeck Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, WN4 8AR, tel 0942 711155.

DEAR EO

I would like to draw attention to the letter from Lynne Fox in the June issue in which she expresses the need to draw attention to the problems faced by parents.

In the EO newsletter I read many success stories which leave me feeling guilty. Despite my radical views in favour of alternative education, there are times when I feel ready to give up. My 9 year old dyslexic daughter is not very motivated! Due to many demands on my time I feel unable to provide her with an interesting, varied "education" to the extent that I wish. The attempts that I do make often end up in tears from my daughter and despair in me. Whilst I never expected EO to be easy, I did not expect to feel guilty quite so often.

Since leaving school my daughter is happier, more self confident and her skills are improving. I, however have many more grey hairs!!

It could, of course, be argued that in taking the decision to teach your child at home, you must accept the increase in responsibility, but that does not make it any easier. I would really like to hear from parents who have experienced similar difficulties and despair.

Beverley Poole, 9 St Marys Road,
Great Eccleston, Lancashire,
PR3 0YJ.

DEAR EO

We have been home-educating members of Education Otherwise for just over one year now and are very appreciative of your services.

1. What are the laws regarding home-education in the other member states of the European Union?
Has anyone done a country by country survey?

Thank you for your reply by mail and possibly in upcoming newsletters. Thanks, too, for all your help generally. Especially appreciated are your book reviews and teaching material offers.

Angelika Carlson, 41 Barnes Way,
Iver, Bucks, SLO 9LZ.

JAPAN

EO has been invited to send a representative to a home education symposium in Japan in September.

Two home-educators from Japan will be here from 14th - 19th August.

Any one interested in meeting or hosting the visitors contact Sue Long 0245 421496

DEAR EO

Our 13 year old son Tom is hyperactive, suffers from Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

and mild autism. Hyperactivity is a medical condition which can be treated successfully by dietary and nutritional therapies - which can also benefit children suffering with dyslexia and other learning difficulties. Over the years we have worked closely with the "Hyperactive Children's Support Group" (HACSG) and Tom has greatly benefitted from regular allergy treatment strengthening his Immune and Central Nervous Systems.

Up until recently, he coped in mainstream education as we were able to work closely with his Infant and Junior School teachers. However, last year in October, we decided to remove Tom from school after 18 months in High School, as teachers there were unable to cope with his lack of concentration and disinterest in National Curriculum lessons. He found the routine "boring", lessons irrelevant and social pressures - including aggression and bullying - far too stressful. We must say that the staff at Tom's school did try hard to understand his condition but as the school was understaffed and underfunded they couldn't hope to cater for his needs.

It's taken a while for Tom to settle into his new routine. But now that he's relieved of the strain of a structured day geared around the clock, he is much calmer and more relaxed, working on whatever projects he has chosen, at whatever time of the day he wishes, which suits his temperament. This was a surprise in itself - knowing that usually Tom, like most hyperactive children, needed structure and routine in the day in order to feel secure, we expected that he would prefer a time-tabled daily schedule, which we spent some time preparing. And yet we found that actually Tom needed

flexibility and the freedom to choose how, when and on what to work to suit his particular abilities and energies, which are very different day to day.

Now Tom concentrates on the subjects he loves best - computers, science, art, natural history, electronics, photograph and reading. All at his own pace and all his own choice. It's what suits Tom now. Maybe next week, next month, next year will be different, more structured, but we know we can be as flexible as we want and always alter and adapt to suit Tom's educational and emotional needs. It makes a very welcome change from last year's tears and daily anguish when he felt that he could not compete with his peers, that all his school work was "rubbish" and his self-esteem so low.

As he adores computers, we approached our local College to ask if Tom could be accepted on to their RSA CLAIT Computer course for adult learners. And the Principal agreed - far quicker than we expected! - to accept Tom for a probationary term, to assess his skills. We hope that he'll be able to work towards a City and Guilds course in the near future. College staff also suggested that, as Tom finds written work a strain, he should consider using the computer for GCSE work and exams, when he felt ready for them. This has been a very positive step forward for Tom, who can now see all sorts of possibilities ahead!

If any parents wish to know more about hyperactivity and dietary/nutritional therapies for this and other associated conditions - including learning difficulties - please contact us on 0924 469892. Or write to the "Hyperactive Children's Support Group", Secretary - Sally Bunday,

71 Whyke Lane, Chichester,
W Sussex, PO19 2LD, enclosing
a SAE.

There are regular meetings and conferences around the country, including the Annual HACSG Conference, to be held in Manchester in October. Please enquire if you would like further details.

Nicky and John Simmons, 40 Ravens
Crescent, Dewsbury, W Yorks,
WF13 3QG. Tel 0924 469892.

DEAR EO

I agree whole heartedly with Lynne Fox's letter in EO News-letter 98, June 1994. I too have a twelve year old son who has no self-motivation for any subjects unless you can count Hitchcock movies and cuddling the cats.

Gavin has not attended school for any length of time longer than a week for 5 years. So I know that it is not the school system that is to blame.

The LEA has told me that he needs to go to school to help him find the encouragement he needs to learn effectively. Gavin agrees to attend and then goes off the idea once he's attended for a few days.

He wasn't able to cope with a week at Butlins. He said that was "boring" and the other children didn't like him.

I have now accepted that he isn't going to be a child who likes to have others around, but how do I convince the the LEA of this? Like Lynne Fox I don't have the conviction that EO is the way forward, to keep me going.

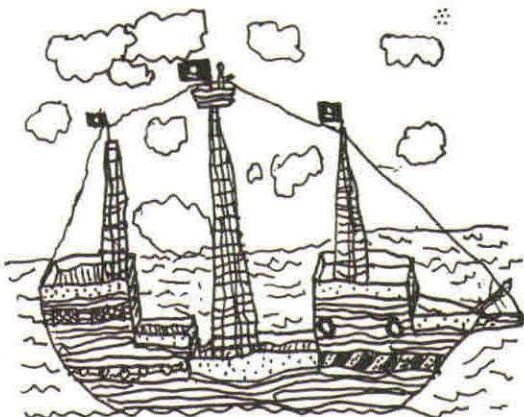
Perhaps we need a sub-group
(another one) for worn down,

stressed out parents who would much rather their children wanted to go to school than have them home, always wondering if they did the right thing.

My daughter often says she doesn't want to go to school but I send her anyway. I only wish it was that easy to do with Gavin.

Yours sincerely, enjoying my one hour break while Gavin is with his tutor.

Tricia-Ann Day, 11 Seahorse Walk, Gosport, Hans, PO12 1BH.



NOTICES

WELCOME TO BEN,
a new member of the Chariton family, born at home on 28 June. Alex, Sam, Hazel, Levine, Lucy and Keith are delighted.

FOUND - HALINA DISC CAMERA.
If you lost this camera at the Kent camp and would like it back contact: Sue and Keith Burchett, 2 Eassterfield Cottages, East Malling, Kent ME19 6B3.



WANTED - RECIPROCAL CHILDCARE
My son is 4 years old and we need 2 days childcare weekly to allow home education and the time to work and support ourselves to continue. Is anyone in South East London (I live in Penge) in a similar position? I am a single mother who works 15 hours weekly. We are interested in music, life and love. Please contact: Tansy Hall 081 402 8172.

"Drawing with Children"

At least a year ago a supplement was printed, giving the address in America for Mona Brooke's book "Drawing with Children". Please, has anyone still got the address? Please contact Claire Young, 3 Wyvis Place, Middleton Park, Irvine, KA11 1NA, tel 0294 218562

Does anyone have any "Bangers and Mash" Phonic Reading Scheme Books which I could beg, borrow or buy? Please contact Penny Meader, Woking, Surrey, GU24 0JG. tel 0483 481882.

LEGAL WORKSHOPS

Legal workshops are going to be held in LONDON and SCOTLAND, see the "Regional Diary".

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Jane Sheffield 797164

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12cm x 8cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ page)	£50	£100	16cm x 12cm
6cm x 8cm ($\frac{1}{4}$ page)	£25	£50	8cm x 12cm
6cm x 4cm ($\frac{1}{8}$ page)	£12.50	£25	8cm x 6cm

Please note that copy for Box Adverts should be larger than the published ad. All adverts should be sent with a cheque made out to 'Education Otherwise' to Sue Hutchin, 13 East Hill, Tenterden, Kent. TN30 6RL
0580 762448.

Deadline 1st September

NOTICES are non profit making exchanges of educational material and information, requests for help etc. These are free to members and should be sent to the EDITOR.

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WHERE TO GET WHAT

1 EO STATIONARY

Envelope re-use labels £2.00 for 100. Leaflets, handbills, posters, forms, and car stickers are freely available for publicity purposes. Contributions towards postage welcome. Cheques to EO. Available from Lucy Charlton, Church Lane Cottages, Newton Harcourt, Leicestershire, LE8 0FT.

2 "GROWING WITHOUT SCHOOLING"

This American home educating magazine is available from Barbara Sheppard, 18 Queen Katherine Street, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 7QG. Subscriptions run from March to March. No part subs or back issues available. Members £12, non-members £14. Cheques payable to EO.

3 OTHER PUBLICATIONS

The following publications are available from Pat Dixon, 110 Cambridge Street, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, MK12 5AH. Prices quoted are for members only. Please add £1 towards postage. Cheques payable to "Education Otherwise".

0908 316555

School Is Not Compulsory. A guide to your rights. £3.00. Supplement detailing changes to the law as a result of the 1993 Education Act available to those who already have a copy. Send SAE to Pat Dixon.

Early Years. Learning suggestions for under-twelves. £2.50.

The Teenage Liberation Handbook. New from USA, £10.95.

Teach Your Own by John Holt. The philosophy of home education. Staggeringly good value for money! £4.50

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Learning From Home-Based Education - edited by Roland Meighan. Personal experiences and opinions. £3.00.

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Sam psych. Esther House
Mike Hoar *sensible*
 EDUCATION OTHERWISE OFFICERS *with sp. needs*

- General Enquiries:** Send SAE for membership and other information to Education Otherwise, PO Box 120, Leamington Spa, CV32 7ER. For recorded telephone message phone 0926 886828.
- Chair:** Keith Charlton, Church Lane Cottages, Newton Harcourt, Leicestershire, LE8 0FT. Tel 0533 592118.
- Publications Director:** Lucy Charlton, Church Lane Cottages, Newton Harcourt, Leicestershire, LE8 0FT.
- Newsletter Coordinator:** Sue Hutchin, 13 East Hill, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6RL. Tel 0580 762448.
- General Secretary:** Sue Clare, 6 Elm~~ac~~ Road, Helmsley, York, YO6 5AP. Tel 0439 770056.
- Treasurer:** Mike Cook, 34 Beacon Road, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 6DJ. Tel 0227 367059.
- Publicity Officer:** Jane Lowe, 5 Elm Gardens, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6RX. Tel 0707 390070.
- Single Parent Family Contact:** Sarah Martin, Rose Cottage, Three Holes Bridge, Norfolk, PE14 9JR. Tel 0945 772336.
- Special Needs:** Sylvia Jeffs, 16 St Bernards Road, Sollihull, West Midlands, B92 7BB. Tel 021 706 6460.
- Coordinators' Secretary:** Isobel Bogucki, 20 Rusper Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 4BD. Tel 0403 261178.
- School Phobia Helpline:** Pam Stevenson, 0304 210997.
- School Phobia Young People's Support:** Angela White, 30a Field View Close, Coventry, West Midlands, CV7 9BJ. Tel 0203 312461.
- Subscription Renewals:** Address changes and membership renewals to Paul Lowe, 5 Elm Gardens, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6RX. Tel 0707 335825.

Regional Enquiries Secretaries

Orkney, Shetlands & Scotland	Jasmine O'Sullivan	0595 6562
Midlands & North	Gillian Brown	0922 41 4286
Wales	Miryam Bush	0742 553836
East Anglia	Sandie Cottee	0286 733259
South	Jude Ashley-Walker	0983 7 680
London	Susan Long	0245 421496

531680

Regional Membership Secretaries

Scotland	Lorna Brown, 130 Greenock Road, Bishopton, Renfrewshire, Scotland, PA7 5AS.
NE England	Doreen Wicks, 7 Lowell Park, Wheldrake, York, YO4 6BS.
NW England	Jenny Paddon, 63 Doyle Road, Bolton, Lancashire, BL3 4SA.
Wales & Midlands	Gillian Murley, 84 Witney Road, Stafford, ST17 0BP.
E Anglia & Home Counties	Donette Stidwell, 1 Michaelstowe Close, Ramsey, Harwich, Essex, CO12 5ES.
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South West	Maggie Swatridge, 32 Carey Park, Polperro, Looe, Cornwall.

Steering Group (urgent decisions, suggestions or complaints)

Mike Cook	0227 367059
Sue Long	0245 421496
Keith Charlton	0533 592118

HELPLINES; ChildLine 0800 1111 (free) 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"x8.5") stamped self-addressed envelope to:

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