

# education otherwise



Newsletter Summer 2013

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***Deadline for the Autumn issue is 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013***

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### Co-ordinatorial

*"Having exhausted the possibilities of the slugs, we would hunt for new shells for my collection, or hold long discussions on the other fauna we had found; George would suddenly realise that all this, though most enjoyable, could hardly be described as education in the strictest sense of the word, so we would drift back to the shallows and lie there. The lesson then proceeded, while the shoals of little fish would gather about us and nibble gently at our legs."* From 'My Family and Other Animals', Gerald Durrell's homage to outdoor learning

Dear readers,

Welcome to June's EO newsletter, our second, and second last as Alice is going unexpectedly early to university in October.

This issue's theme, we decided, is Outdoor Learning. To many involved in the schooling of children, this sounds like an oxymoron: outdoor play and learning are seen as two entirely separate and distinct phenomena. This is the major justification for insisting on the incarceration of children between the four walls of a classroom. School is thought to be the best place for learning about the world outside of school. You might as well say that prison is the best place for the rehabilitation of offenders. Of course children are innocent of any crime, so the adults in their lives conspire to persuade them that learning and schooling are one and the same thing. A lot of damage ensues, and much re-acclimatisation is required for life afterwards.

This month's issue contains several articles about the value of access to the outdoors in children's development. As well as pieces written by us, we have included articles that explore both urban and rural landscapes in search of unique outdoor learning opportunities: from the banks of the river Thames to the Yorkshire Dales.

Look out for the notice about Public Liability Insurance for Local Groups on page 24. You may also be interested in the piece on useful lists and websites for home educators, and the latest SEND news. Your articles, poems, book reviews or pictures are all welcome. Please do send contributions for the next issue!

Best wishes,

*Barry O'Donovan and  
Alice Troy-Donovan  
June 2013*

## Home Education Around the World: Austria

Home education regulations seem to be pretty straightforward in Austria: it is legal in all 9 Austrian provinces, the only requirement being that children have to pass a test each year. This exam has to be applied for in advance and can be sat anywhere in Austria, irrespective of your place of residence. Its only purpose is to prove that children have mastered the respective stage of the curriculum. If they fail the test, they will need to attend a state school and repeat the last year. The same applies if the education is for some reason "not equivalent" to that of a public school, a decision which parents may appeal against in court.

Home education (called "Häuslicher Unterricht" = domestic teaching) needs to be approved by the local school authority before the start of the school year. Some regions make the state curriculum compulsory. Books can be obtained from local state schools, if desired, with families only paying the compulsory 10 % that all parents need to pay. There is no other funding available, and public transport is not free, unlike for school children. A few hundred families are probably home educating in the region Steiermark alone, according to a newspaper article (see below). The "Informationszentrum Leben ohne Schule" estimates that there are a total of 2,200 pupils being taught at home. The ease of the process and the missing language barrier make Austria a safe haven for German home educators fleeing prosecution in their country. In 2008, the state changed the laws for foreign pupils, requiring them to follow the national curriculum and be tested in German, even if it is not their mother tongue. Before, hundreds of children were allowed to sit the exam in the English-speaking private American School in Vienna each year. Some families are currently appealing against this unfair treatment (watch the HSLDA website for the latest news on this case).



Websites and sources:

- <http://www.bildungzuhause.ch/en/links.html> (there is a collection of links about Austria here as well)
- <http://stmv1.orf.at/stories/171356> (newspaper article about Steiermark)
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeschooling\\_international\\_status\\_and\\_statistics#Austria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeschooling_international_status_and_statistics#Austria) (not much info here)
- <http://www.hslda.org/hs/international/Austria/default.asp> (for legal issues, latest news)
- [leben-ohne-schule.de/europa\\_oesterreich.html](http://leben-ohne-schule.de/europa_oesterreich.html) (numbers, some German links)
- <http://leben-ohne-schule.jimdo.com/links.php> (English summary only)

Groups:

- Yahoo group: [http://de.groups.yahoo.com/group/homeschooling\\_austria/](http://de.groups.yahoo.com/group/homeschooling_austria/) (English and German, members only); the new address does not seem to be working, try here: <http://www.freilerner.at>

*Corinna, currently in China*

## The Urban Outdoors

Drivers might have been bewildered at the sight of three non-uniformed children sitting, pen and paper in hand, by a busy London road on a Monday morning. What could be interesting, let alone educational, about the South Circular? Perched on the bus stop bench, studying the mid-week cars as they sped by, we conducted our 'survey'. The focus would often change: sometimes we were counting all of the red cars that passed, sometimes the number of passengers, or the number of Ford Transit vans. Often our findings would lead to discussions about the popularity of certain car makes, or the madness of having so many vehicles each carrying just one passenger. In a city 'outdoor' learning can take any number of forms, sometimes leading you nearer to grey main roads than vibrant green fields. But on this occasion we turned to the great urban outdoors for interest, not beauty.

Unlike for most schoolchildren, how and when we interacted with the great outdoors in our daily lives was a matter of our own choice. The weather, as opposed to arbitrary timetables, tended to steer us either inwards or outwards. 'Going out' became one with learning, so that the usual school week/weekend division melted away to be replaced by a never-ending educational stream where 'half term' meant nothing more than the appearance of crowds at our local swimming pool. Outdoors wasn't for us an escape from an oppressive education, a place where the dull reality of the school day could be forgotten till Monday morning. Instead, it was everything that made up our education. Even now it's hard to unpick what was learnt on each outing, since subjects seamlessly intertwined. I used to think that I knew nothing of 'school' subjects like Geography; I

now realise that Geography lessons were taking place all the time. Walking down the road we might discuss an unusually shaped cloud hanging in an ominous sky, or the various types of rain that had at one time or another driven us to shelter; we'd unconsciously study the flow of water in a river whilst playing pooh sticks; globalisation and migration could be experienced first-hand whilst perusing exotic fruit in Lewisham's multi-cultural market; a hoard of Japanese couples with cameras might make us wonder why London is so full of tourists. Or one day the sighting of a solar panel would bring up the issue of climate change and, coming full circle, Dad would explain why it really was that we were cycling, and not driving, through torrential rain.

*Alice (17), London SE*

### **Supply Demands**

Today I'm teaching in a Reception class—that's children aged 4 and 5. I arrive to find most of the walls of the classroom bare, which is normal as the end of half term draws near. The room looks uninviting. There are sheets of paper on the tables—one for each child—with numbers for them to copy out, a sand tray with a few toys in it, and a small imaginative play area set out as a shop. The TAs (Teaching Assistants) are happy to put out paint when I ask them, and to supply me with paper for making story books with the children. They also enjoy playing with my guitar, which I don't mind as long as they're gentle with it, take turns, and don't twist the knobs (the last is a request too far, but it's not the end of the world). It's a wet morning, so when the sun appears, I tell the TAs "Let's take the children outside while the weather is warmer" - "Oh", says one, "Normally we talk to the two neighbouring classes and one of the teachers makes a risk assessment, because the ground is slippery after rain. And the parents worry about their children hurting themselves", she adds as I suggest that a wet playground surface is unlikely to have a serious detrimental effect. This reminds me of a recent conversation I had with a couple of teachers in the staffroom of another school. One of them told me of a talk she's been to, given by a leading local headteacher. "Even if it's snowing outside", he told the audience of primary school teachers, "your job is to keep the children's attention on the subject you're trying to teach them." The topic came up because the children in the class I had that day—5 to 6 year-olds—had shown a lot of interest in the pouring rain outside the window. So we took them out to the playground, where we stood for 15 minutes under the shelter and watched, smelt, listened to, and felt the rain-drops as they bounced on the roof and the tarmac and the puddles. The children talked about where the rain came from and where it went using poetic language to describe it and sang songs about it. Ideally we could have let them run around and dance in the rain, but we didn't have 25 changes of clothes. To keep children's heads stuck in books when there's something momentous happening outside the window is to deny that we are supposed to be teaching them about the world, and nature, that we are a part of.

*Barry, London SE*

## Foreshore for sure

First published in *Choice in Education*, November 2002

If we lived in the country there would be walks over hills and dales, if we lived by the sea there would be bracing walks along the prom or cliffs. But where do you go when you live a mile from the centre of London and it's an hour's drive to reach green fields. Escape for Bobby (8) and me, is the foreshore of the Thames, a largely deserted, infinitely varied and fascinating landscape.

Imagine your favourite walk but each time you go a large hand has strewn new interesting objects for you to find and investigate. If I were a teacher I would now write that walking the foreshore covers all areas of the national curriculum; history, biology, physics, geography etc. Well it does but that's not quite the way Bobby and I used to go about it. On one trip Bobby spent the whole time smashing up a computer, removing the mother boards one by one, I can't pretend that at the end of it he understood how a computer works, however, he definitely got something out of his system. There are not many places where children can be so creatively destructive.

Our methods have developed over the years. Once we were happy to casually walk to the river and if we found the tide out we'd walk along the line of drift wood/plastic where many interesting objects can be found. Using this method we have found three messages in bottles, very thrilling to open but alas from nowhere more exotic than Richmond. Then came a startling discovery which was to change our approach to beach combing forever. We met up with several home-educating mates on the one day in the year that the beach in front of the Tower of London was opened to the general public. Armed with trowels we proceeded to dig randomly along the waterfront having received some good tips from experienced amateur archaeologists; the main one being work along the edge of the receding tide. After a couple of hours picking up the usual bones, medieval shards and Victorian jetsam I noticed a small huddle around Paul and went to investigate. In his hand was a perfect silver groat from the reign of Henry the Second (circa 1460) and on his face was the biggest grin I've ever seen. The coin was later valued at £600.

Well, after that tennis balls and pot handles lost their appeal. We now research the tide charts for exceptionally low tides, we have armed ourselves with a variety of home made tools, kitted ourselves out with wellies and rubber gloves, and we look a lot harder. Bobby is developing an eye for interesting objects but still occasionally wanders off to smash things up. A recent trip turned up some live 2nd World War rifle bullets, dated 1943, a Jamaican penny, a musket ball and, going back to old habits, a large piece of sculptural driftwood. We usually spend half an hour at home cleaning things and examining with a magnifying glass. Excitingly the find of a lifetime is still to happen.

Shaun Packham, South London

## Playing out

One day last year I saw what I thought looked like a very good idea in the Guardian newspaper. Two women in Bristol, bemoaning the lack of opportunities for their children to play out on their street, as they themselves had done in their youth, started a campaign to form a play street. The idea caught on, so now their street is closed to all but walking-paced, residents' and visitors' vehicles for one afternoon a week. The movement spread, and by now another street in Bristol, as well as a few others in West Country towns, have children running up and down the road in play street times, drawing with chalk on the road surface, skipping, roller-skating, playing tennis and so on.

By the time I finally got around to starting a campaign to bring the phenomenon to my street, just off the South Circular road in Lewisham, South East London, there were others in progress in up to a dozen different London boroughs. So I met Paul, the man from London Play, and he gave me lots of facts and figures, including under what legislation we could ask the council to sanction the street closure. In spite of parents' anxieties about allowing their children to play out nowadays, Paul informed me that children are more likely to be killed by a television falling on their head than from outdoor play activities.

My first task was to knock on all doors on the street to gauge the opinions of residents, and I was enthused by the fact that three quarters seemed to be in favour, and many strongly so. Typical responses were "that's a very good idea, children need opportunities to play out—and it will be good for adults as well." There were dissenting voices, and by the time we had our first meeting to discuss the play street plan, these had grown more shrill. You're in danger, warned one, of causing upset and bad feeling on this street, of setting people at loggerheads. Why don't people just bring their children up to the local (newly-restored) park ten minutes' walk away? This being a common refrain among the opponents of the play street, I started to think about what it meant. Our lives are now segmented and compartmentalised. Roads are for cars, and parks are for playing in. And of course learning happens only in schools.

When my children were younger they did play in the park but they also liked to play on the street, kicking their football across the road. The front of our house was the goal. They felt safer on the street than in the park, traffic notwithstanding, due to occasional intimidation by older boys in the park, and I didn't always have time to go with them. An elderly neighbour complained to me about the danger his flowers were in, so I instructed the children to always direct their kicks towards our house, opposite the old man's, and to always stop before 8 o'clock, even on summer evenings.

The second play street meeting, in the church around the corner, drew out twenty residents, most of them seemingly enticed by the letters from a couple of residents who seemed to believe that a play street period would imply an invitation to all the rough

children from neighbouring streets to cause havoc, damage the cars and bring about general lawlessness. As for those originally in favour, it seems that something new and attractive is met with much more alacrity if it appears to be presented as a *fait accompli*. But when it turns out that what is desired must be struggled for, there are few willing to sign up. Of those that initially said yes, perhaps following their own instinct, many were easily frightened into opposition by the scaremongering



and paranoia of one or two who wrote of their fears and posted them to all residents on the street. An observer of the meeting could be forgiven for thinking that our street was surrounded by hoards of young thugs just waiting for a chance to damage cars and houses, break into homes and cause general mayhem on the street. What was interesting was that amongst the half a dozen or so other organisers of play streets, the objections tended to be identical to those I encountered.

One woman—the head teacher of a school in a deprived area—spoke up for the children. It's no use to us as a community, or society in general, if we shut our eyes, ears and hearts to all but our own children. All children, she continued, are the responsibility of all adults. There were some sneers at this suggestion, and I knew the game was up when one of the residents brought out a *Daily Mail* with a front page headline claiming that there is a major national problem with primary school teachers being attacked by pupils. But as so often with such pieces, it told less than half the story.

So that was that, and we'll all retreat behind our doors and bemoan the lack of community spirit in today's world. We'll send our children back to their rooms to play on their computers while we watch *Eastenders*, or even *Neighbours*.

### *Playing out in Hackney*

Following this disappointment, I wanted to see what a play street would look like in action, so we decided to visit one in Hackney, East London.

We arrive at the street with the time approaching two o'clock on a Sunday afternoon in April and are just in time to catch the first of many families trickling out on to the streets. I ask the mother, who is accompanied by her three children, for Vanessa, with whom I have an arrangement to meet and talk about her experience of co-ordinating a play street. As we walk along the street—a pleasant one, flat with a slight bend, and lined with typical Victorian era two-storey, three-bedroom terraced houses—more children

and parents emerge, all greeting each other warmly. Two adults wearing yellow fluorescent singlets put up barricades at either end of the street, or at least about 300 Yards of it, using a combination of dustbins and official signs provided by the council.

By the time we reach Vanessa, she is already engaged in conversation with several other adults, in the middle of the street. Her daughter, about six, comes and asks her for something and then goes away pushing a doll in a pram. Near her a few children are drawing with chalk on the tarmacadam surface of the road. A bit further along, there is a vigorous game of football, involving several children, and a father who is chastised by one of the other adults for getting carried away and kicking the ball too high. It's a proper football, so I ask about damage to cars or other property. No, Vanessa tells me, in the three months since this play street has started, there has not been one incidence of damage. One or two people did suggest insurance but the majority rejected the idea, saying that they were confident they'd manage to resolve any case of damage without recourse to the law or insurance. She knows of several other play streets, and none has had any problem with property damage.

As we walk back along the street, we come upon a small cluster of adults chatting to each other, and then a group of half a dozen youngsters on scooters involved in a race along a stretch of the road of about 150 yards. At the end, close to one of the barriers, they have drawn a score chart with chalk on the road. Vanessa tells us that the children on the street during play street sessions are never told what they should do. That would defeat the object. The adults merely respond when asked for equipment, for example chalk or ropes or balls, and remind the children if and when necessary to consider others during their play—for example avoiding damage to flowers etc. I ask Vanessa later about how it all started. She tells me that she too had read the article in the Guardian. We joke about play streets being full of Guardian-reading, left-leaning hippy types. Vanessa and her partner are very interested in home education. When asked what it's like, I suggest it is analogous to an extended play street session. Parental interference is minimal and the children, instinctively it seems, know exactly what to do.

*Barry, London SE*



## Outdoor learning—it's in our nature

What is beautiful, enriching, inspiring and health-giving about this green and pleasant land we live in? Its nature, of course. From the Lake District to the White Cliffs, and other stunningly scenic places too numerous to mention, it is what helps us to accept the wet weather and the often grey skies. Children embrace nature, indeed are one with it, when we let them. Not for them the long face at a few drops of rain.



No, they're happy to sing and dance in it, when we let them, turn their heads up and feel the drops falling on their faces, their tongue, and the squelching of the water in their shoes, with not a thought for how their waterlogged shoes might be dried. Trees are for climbing, walls for walking on, and puddles for jumping in to.

Then school happens and children are protected from all but the most benign weather. Rain, hail, snow, frost, thunder and lightening, all are deemed unsuitable conditions for children to play in. Even the weather forecasters tell us of the 'risk' of showers. There was a time, of course, when children walked or cycled to school, getting exercise, fresh air and a chance to socialise and feel a sense of connectedness, of belonging to their district that is obviously not possible whilst being ferried to and from school in a people carrier. And there was also a time when children could at least look out through the classroom windows and see the upper branches of a tree when looking for inspiration as they wrote. Nowadays however, they are more often prevented from seeing anything through the windows due to the blinds being drawn to make it easier to see the interactive whiteboard. It reminds you of a blinkered horse.

Access to outdoors during school time is limited to the official play-times, and these tend to be very short — usually ten minutes in the morning and however much is left after eating during the lunch break. Even these short periods of free outdoor play are circumscribed by the disorganisation of a teacher who doesn't manage to finish the previous lesson in time, or a teacher who insists on the children standing in military-style, straight lines, in register order, thus eating needlessly into children's already restricted opportunities to play freely. Often the children who find it hardest to sit still in the classroom are deprived of their playtime altogether by an overly punitive class teacher or the headteacher. The assumption is that children can control their behaviour so that they can channel their energy into proper activities at the right time. But many children can manage no such thing, through no fault of their own.

Anybody who passes near a school during playtime can hear the din of screeching and squealing from afar and will want to hurry past. But it is also a very stressful situation for the children themselves, and they have no option but to remain amidst the noise. We

are very concerned about the stress caused to fowl kept in large sheds who are so stressed that they peck each other's feathers off, but we seem less concerned about children. During school times parks tend to be very quiet, with just the odd person walking through, perhaps accompanied by a dog. But children must be kept safe in playgrounds surrounded by high walls and fences. A phenomenon known as Wet Play, when children are required to remain in the classroom during playtime due to rain outside, regularly occurs in our climate. In our risk-averse society, schools are afraid of being blamed when children catch colds.

Yet there is a nursery in Scotland—featured in the Times Educational Supplement last year—where the children spend all of the time outdoors. They only ever go inside—to a shed—in order to fetch equipment. There is no increase in illness here compared to other schools where the children are kept inside all the time. Outdoor schools are popular in Scandinavia, and can also be found in other countries such as Switzerland, and there is evidence, not surprisingly, suggesting that their children have a much greater understanding of, and appreciation for, nature. Here in London the last ten years has seen a huge growth in popularity of what are known as forest schools—timetabled sessions in which children go out into nature and learn about how plants and trees grow etc. They are very popular with children.

There is the phenomenon known as Parkour, or Free Running, which originated in the suburbs of Paris and is now popular here among adolescents, in which young people use the built environment around them to exercise their desire for running, climbing, jumping etc. It is a mostly healthy alternative to computer games although nerve-racking at times to watch. I once saw some boys vaulting and somersaulting on to a roundabout at a busy intersection in South London, and others jumping from the embankment on to the sand by the Thames at London's South Bank.

Much has been written—and many studies undertaken—into the effect of access to green spaces for adults: from Clare Balding's Radio 4 programme *Ramblings*, to the research that showed increased speed of recuperation from illness among those who had a view of nature. But it is as if children are a different species who don't have the same needs as adults, perhaps because they will put up with more.

Finally, there was a study a few years ago in which two groups of GCSE students were given extra crash courses. One of the groups was just given the academic material whereas the other was allowed to intersperse their academic study with sessions of ball games such as football, cricket and basketball. The latter group, of course, significantly outperformed the former.

The wonderful thing about the educational freedom granted to home educators is that they can interact with nature whenever they want.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

*[This article first appeared in an EONL in the early '80s]*

### AVOIDING THE BULL (by Martin)

The village school had 35 pupils aged 5-15 years, who, at break, covered the village green – straight out of James Herriot's Yorkshire – with games and sherbet packets. The schoolroom had a huge brown curtain separating the big from the little class, and ink pellets used to fly over it. We didn't go in wintertime, lambing time, hay time ... and no one ever passed the 11 plus. To this day I think of God as 'Our Father Witchart'.

The kindly old teacher left and the prickly vicar's wife took over. Our days were numbered – being Quakers – my parents having run an alternative school nearby in the war and still 'strangers' to the dale (you're a foreigner for ten years, then a stranger). My brother and I, persecuted, became so unhappy that we left, to spend three carefree years roaming the fields, valleys and woods of the high dales. We explored potholes, caves and tarns with enchanted cities beneath, lead mines for geology and fossils, hedgerow for birds, plants and flowers, our farm for animals and agriculture.

There was some 'school'. My mother got hold of the P.N.E.U. syllabus as a rough guide, sat my brother and myself at opposite ends of the table to stop us quarrelling, and we did our sums, wrote our stories, filled in our "Farmers' Weekly Country Spotters Notebook" (the source of many a book token), painted, drew and made things. We had our 'museums' of fossils, our flower books (there were 'rare' flowers in the valley, like Dee Orchids), our birds nest catalogue of where birds nested and our pictures.

There was always the farm – finding secret hoards of chickens' eggs in the barn, milking the cows, feeding stock, taking sheep to market at Hawes, catching lambs, avoiding the bull and making hay. This latter activity involved forking hay around old stone barns amid heat and dust. Or sometimes, getting hay dry in small rows three times only to be drenched yet again. The seasons and nature were a living being for us and life hinged on the weather.

Usually we did 'school work' in the mornings and did creative things like painting in the afternoon, or occupied ourselves exploring the valley. The seasons brought things to look forward to – the ice-palaces on the waterfalls, the first snowdrops, lambing, cuckoos, shearing time, summer and tickling trout, harvest festivals, autumn all green and golden and the crisp days of Mischief Night. Best was Christmas or birthday parties, when the barns made ideal places for kiss chases or sardines with local friends. And whilst we wrote and painted, so did my mother, who covered the house with watercolours of the valley. We had to be careful in the local fair's painting competitions in case the judges thought she had painted our pictures. We absorbed like blotting paper the arts, crafts and literary tastes of our mother, and practical mechanical farming bent of our father. It was a three years well spent – creative, lively, free, I think a little lonely, though this was anyway true of life in those valleys. A real education otherwise.

## POETS' CORNER

*William Blake (from Songs of Innocence, 1789)*

William Blake was staunchly opposed to most institutions—whether religious, political or, indeed, educational. Like many of the Romantics, he was fascinated by the particular imaginative and creative powers of children. This poem shows how even Blake, writing over two hundred years ago, recognised the unnatural and potentially damaging effects of a schooling that cuts children off from the outdoors. The poet suggests that replacing outdoor interaction with nature with indoor study actually stunts children's development and, ironically, stops them from learning.

### The Schoolboy

I love to rise in the summer morn,  
When the birds sing on every tree;  
The distant huntsman winds his horn,  
And the skylark sings with me.  
O! what sweet company.

But to go to school in a summer morn,  
O! it drives all joy away;  
Under a cruel eye outworn,  
The little ones spend the day  
In sighing and dismay.

Ah! then at times I drooping sit,  
And spend many an anxious hour,  
Nor in my book can I take delight,  
Nor in learning's bower,  
Worn through with the dreary shower.

How can the bird that is born for joy  
Sit in a cage and sing?  
How can a child when fears annoy  
But droop his tender wing,  
And forget his youthful spring?

O father and mother! if buds are nipped,  
And blossoms blown away,  
And if the tender plants are stripped  
Of their joy in the springing day,  
By sorrow and cares dismay,

How shall the summer arise in joy,  
Or the summer fruits appear?  
Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy,  
Or bless the mellowing year,  
When the blasts of winter appear?

*Allan Ahlberg (from the collection 'Heard it in the Playground', Puffin 1991)*

### **The Ghost Teacher**

The school is closed, the children gone,  
But the ghost of a teacher lingers on.  
As the daylight fades, as the daytime ends,  
As the night draws in and the dark descends,  
She stands in the classroom, as clear as glass,  
And calls the names of her absent class.

The school is shut, the children grown,  
But the ghost of the teacher, all alone,  
Puts the date on the board and moves about  
(As the night draws on and the stars come out)  
Between the desks—a glow in the gloom—  
And calls for quiet in the silent room.

The school is a ruin, the children fled,  
But the ghost of the teacher, long-time dead,  
As the moon comes up and the first owls glide,  
Puts on her coat and steps outside.  
In the moonlit playground, shadow-free,  
She stands on duty with a cup of tea.

The school is forgotten, children forget—  
But the ghost of a teacher lingers yet.  
As the night creeps up to the edge of the day,  
She tidies the Plasticine away;  
Counts the scissors—a shiver of glass—  
And says, 'off you go!' to her absent class.

She utters the words that no one hears,  
Picks up her bag...

and

disappears.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Counter Challenge

Counter Challenge is a highly motivating, practical educational game of maths and tactics developed around elements of chess, draughts and basic numerical skills. It is available for PCs and Android phones from the following website: [www.counterchallenge.com](http://www.counterchallenge.com). We had several families review the game and it was thumbs up all round.

### Review 1

Counter challenge is a very good computer game where you have pieces on a board like in a game of draughts. It involves taking pieces by moving them over your opponent's piece and then answering 3 maths questions to score points. It might seem easy but the fact that you can only move in straight lines on plain squares and on the diagonal on patterned squares complicates it a bit. Fun for both adults and children alike it is a brilliant game of strategy and maths. There are 3 game modes: addition where you multiply 2 sets of numbers together and then add the results, subtraction where you multiply the first two and then subtract the results and there is division which is 2 multiplications and 1 division. I have only played the first one but I enjoyed it a lot as it is mainly a tactical game which is the sort of game that I really like. If I were to give it a rating for difficulty then I would give it a 3.5 with 10 being most difficult and 1 being easy. If I used the same scale for how much I enjoyed it then I would give it a 9. This is a really good game and I would recommend it to anyone that asked.

Reviewed by Daniel aged 12

### Review 2

We've had a go with counter challenge but hit a few problems. My two really enjoyed playing it but every time we opened the game our anti-virus program detected 'harmful' files and sent them to the vault. We found that we could not change the setting to just the addition version of the game (whether this was because of the affected files I'm not sure) so we had to play the higher level version - which is way beyond my two but fun for me!! Overall we liked the game and will use it again - it will prove very useful!

Reviewed by J&P and their mother

### So What's Wrong with School

Author: Jessica Mwanzia

Format: PDF and paperback

Availability: [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) (paperback) and PDF from: [jmwanzia@phonecoop.coop](mailto:jmwanzia@phonecoop.coop)

ISBN: 9781291326376

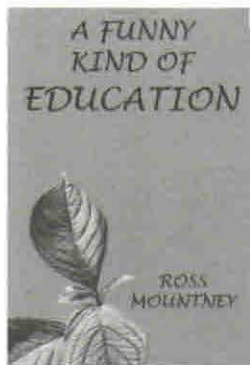
Price: £13.86 paperback, £2.40 PDF

Jessica Mwanzia, a fellow home educator, has just published a thought provoking and extensively researched book, So What's Wrong with School. In the book she seeks to

demonstrate why mainstream schooling is failing most children and her underlying premise is that mainstream schools are not only not conducive to learning but that in the long run they can damage children more than they help them. She postulates that there are 125 reasons why mainstream school is not the best place to children to learn and sets out to look at each reason in depth. She has clearly done a great deal of research on the subject and is able to call on academic and other sources to back up her arguments. It was an interesting read and will make the reader stop and think about education and the role that schools play in society. This book is an essential reading both for anyone considering home education and for home educators alike. It is also the perfect book to give friends and family who are skeptical about the benefits of home education.

If you and your family have enjoyed a book why not share it with other EO members by sending in a book review. Please send all reviews to: [bookreviews@educationotherwise.org](mailto:bookreviews@educationotherwise.org). Happy Reading!

### BOOK REVIEW by Alice – ‘A Funny Kind of Education’



*“Well into the summer term I decided that ‘home’ education was completely the wrong title. ‘Out-and-about’ education better described it. The term ‘home’ tended to give folks a false impression. It created an image of poor, sad, isolated wretches whose parents kept them trapped in the house all day when in reality the opposite was true.”*

Ross Mountney’s diary-like account of her family’s experiences outside of the school system, ‘A Funny Kind of Education’, offers a warm, honest, self-effacing account of the everyday reality of home education. Her book shows both the joys—seeing her two daughters rekindle their interest in learning after being taken out of school—and the challenges, from the LA to sceptical relatives, of home education. Mountney’s style is certainly not scientific or analytical, but her book makes entertaining and accessible reading—especially for those who are new to home education. Her experiences as a teacher provide her account with extra force since she is able to draw a sharp contrast between the kind of education offered in a classroom and the alternative on the outside. ‘A Funny Kind of Education’ is a reassuring and optimistic book that expels myths about home education without idealising it.

## Q&A



*Ross Mounthey, author of 'A Funny Kind of Education', tells us how home education and writing about it has shaped her and her family.*

### **What made you decide to write about home education and how will your books help?**

When we first started home educating in 1999 there was very little info out about it, we weren't hooked up to the web and the only contact with anyone we had was through EO! It was so helpful to read of others' experiences so I decided to contribute too and that's how I started the articles in the EO newsletter: 'The Diary of a Home Educating Nobody'. It then struck me that parents wanting to home educate could do with a guide so I went on to write 'Learning Without School. Home Education'. By the time our children were grown I thought a realistic family story of what home education is like might help raise awareness and understanding within a wider audience which is why I wrote 'A Funny Kind of Education'. Books about education can be very dry so I really wanted to produce some that were readable, entertaining and helpful to people to form their own ideas.

### **How have your educational principles changed through your experiences of home education?**

I started my educational life in teaching and soon became thoroughly disillusioned with what I was expected to do to children under the guise of educating them. It wasn't educating them—it was just pushing them towards outcomes that benefited schools! By the time our own children came along some years later I thought maybe I was wrong and maybe things had changed, so we gave school a go. They had changed—they'd got worse. Being a teacher I thought children needed to be taught. I now know that not to be true. They need stimulation, encouragement, support—not necessarily teaching—and they learn anyway! I also believe now that education is about the development of a rounded *individual*, not the sole pursuit of grades. And schools disregard something important: *children want to learn*.

### **How has home educating, and writing about it, changed you as a person?**

The whole experience of home educating was an absolute delight. It cemented our family unit. It allowed our children to be who they needed to be and find their strengths. It certainly helped us grow as parents, because part of education I believe is

to question. We questioned what education was really for and realised it was for personal development and enhancement of individual lives and this is how we promoted it to the children—as something that they could *enjoy* throughout the whole of their lives. It was partly writing about it that made me refine that understanding. Education can seem so daunting and complicated, but in actual fact it is really quite simple—something I hadn't realised before: it is simply about equipping young people with what they need to live in the real world. You don't find the 'real world' inside a school either educationally, socially or employability-wise.

### **How different would your family be if you hadn't chosen the path of home education?**

When our children were in school they became unhappy, totally switched off to learning—when they'd been so fascinated in everything before—and they were prone to endless infections. This all stopped when we home educated and we got our happy, healthy, vibrant children back. My two young people are only at the start of their adult lives really and so they don't as yet have a mature perspective on their home education. But when I asked them what they thought of it the eldest said that she didn't think she would have been able to pursue her passions or achieved as much as she did has she been in school. And the youngest said that it suited the way she needed to be taught because it wasn't forced. It's interesting to note that they both feel that the experience of university was more of a 'processing' than a true education! For us home educating was a most uplifting part of our family life and I don't think there is anything we would do differently, except perhaps to do it sooner! And it was a decision that we *never* once regretted.

## **EO SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) News**

### **Taking Advantage Of Technology**

For some of us, using the latest gadgets as learning tools is a dilemma we are lucky to have. However, for some children, modern technology can be the only option with regards to an education.

Children with challenging conditions like Cerebral Palsy can have great difficulties accessing any type of learning device. Their vocal communication can be limited, and wheelchair use may be essential (due to restrictive use in arms and legs). They can be defined as blind because of glaucoma and cataract so require text to be increased ten fold. Finding suitable learning equipment may seem impossible.

With guidance from those who can help (therapists, consultants, or friends in a similar position), options can be found which assist children in gaining access to equipment, that others may take for granted.

For some medical conditions, where hand and wrist movement can be limited, a standard type mouse would be difficult to use, as it could be easily dislodged from the work area. The solution to this problem was found by using a 1/4 inch thick sticky backed foam strip, stuck around a mouse pad. This helped to give the user a tangible reminder of where the boundaries were when using the mouse. As the action is perfected, the foam strips could be removed. Keyboards with large keys are another example of new ideas and technology helping children connect to their learning equipment.

An example of the choices now available include:

AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) devices: Picture/ symbol-making software; electronic/battery operated talking devices (e.g. Supertalker) and computers.

Help with the printed word: Voice recognition software; predictive text (e.g. Wordsmith); easy-to-use, robust word processors (e.g. AlphaSmart).

Resources for visual learners: Software such as 'Two wise owls' (mnemonics); Mind Mapping (e.g. Kidspiration).

Easy access: Switches, joysticks, large format keyboards and keyboard covers; touch screens, touch monitors.

A database of more than 20,000 assistive devices for people with disabilities:  
<http://www.abledata.com/>

There are some different options to choose from with funding the equipment. Grants can be found in 'The Guide to Educational Grants 2013/14', in the local library. Many nationwide, regional charities and educational trusts provide grants. Grants UK can also be of use. Second hand equipment is also a perfectly viable option, sometimes with a good supply and a wide range of choices.

Being able to connect to learning equipment can help to: motivate a child, increase their inclusion, give access to the curriculum if needed, create independence, help with socialising and, overall, improve the child's well being.

References:

<http://www.teachingexpertise.com/e-bulletins/technology-and-sen-7680>

<http://www.4teachers.org/testimony/hughes/>

<http://www.disability-grants.org/grants-for-education.html>

If you would like to contribute to EO SEND, please contact Edwina:  
[e.theunissen@educationotherwise.org](mailto:e.theunissen@educationotherwise.org)

## CHILDREN'S PAGE

Calling all younger EO members - please help to make this section a success, by sending in your letters, poems, Penpal requests (there are none this time, but you can still reply to those in earlier issues) and maybe drawings (though we might not be able to print all those). Address inside front cover.

Here are some Jokes and Facts sent by Miles and Curtis:

### Jokes

Q. *Why did the man put his money in the freezer?*

A. He wanted cold hard cash

Q. *What do you get from a pampered cow?*

A. Spoiled Milk

Q. *Why don't skeletons fight each other?*

A. They don't have the guts

Q. *Why do seagulls fly over the sea?*

A. Because if they flew over the bay they would be bagels.

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### Unbelievable Facts

Did You Know?

In Belgium there is a museum just for strawberries.

An average person laughs about 15 times a day.

A baseball will go further in hot temperatures than in cold temperatures.

Apples are part of the rose family.

India has the most post offices in the world.

A honey bee has four wings

It takes 7 seconds for food to reach your stomach.

The longest distance a deepwater lobster has been recorded to travel is 225 miles

No piece of paper can be folded in half more than 7 times

Venus is the only planet that rotates clockwise

## **EO BUSINESS/NOTICES**

### **HOW WILL EO CELEBRATE OUR RUBY ANNIVERSARY?**

Education Otherwise will be 40 years old in 2016 – but is it still relevant is it to home educators now? At a recent face-to-face Council Meeting, Trustees had a frank and wide-ranging discussion about the role of EO in the light of other sources of information and support that have sprung up, especially over the last few years. We came to the conclusion that EO can offer services that are not available elsewhere. We still provide personal contact via the Helpline and the Local Contact network. Printed paper newsletter and contact list were popular with members, and the Public Liability Insurance for Local Groups is valuable.

### **NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION**

EO Trustees feel that the experiment of having the newsletter mainly online (started in order to save costs while EO was run from the Sheffield Office) has not worked – despite several changes of format. Our impression is that it reaches only a minority of members. We have therefore decided that it would be a good idea to reinstate a paper Newsletter for all members; which we have done for this issue. If you know anyone who doesn't receive one, please ask them to contact us with their current contact details. This will not involve an immediate increase in membership fees, and those who already pay for a paper copy will be recompensed accordingly. We hope this will be of benefit to members.

### **TRUSTEE NOMINATIONS**

Although the number of trustees will reduce in line with the Special Resolution passed at the last AGM, the volume of work has not diminished! We still need more active and committed members to step forward and help keep EO running. Several current trustees will reach the end of their term of office in November, and we need new volunteers to carry on organising the services to members – and perhaps moving EO into the realms of Facebook etc. as younger members are suggesting ... So please, if you know someone who would be prepared to take this on, let us know!

### **EO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2013 + SCIENCE EDUCATION/PLAY—A GRAND DAY OUT!**

Saturday 16th November, at Snibston Museum [About 30 miles NE of Birmingham; 15 miles NW of Leicester; 5 miles from J22 of M1 + access to public transport]. This has fantastic science-based educational/play exhibitions around the meeting room, and we're trying to negotiate a reduction in entry fees for members who want to explore that as well as attend the (brief!) meeting.

More information from their website: [http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/leisure\\_tourism/museums/snibston/snibston\\_explore/snibston\\_explore\\_galleries.htm](http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/leisure_tourism/museums/snibston/snibston_explore/snibston_explore_galleries.htm)

## CONTACT LIST

By popular demand, we are going to look again at the possibility of compiling a Contact List to be printed as a paper booklet and distributed to all members with a later issue of the newsletter. This will be a time-consuming project as most of the original information was lost in 2010. There are also some data protection issues, so this will be on an 'opt in' basis.

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## VOLUNTEER VACANCIES

### Helpline Telephone Volunteers

We are always in need of further volunteers for the Helpline rota, which is a vital part of EO's charitable outreach remit. We need members who have experience of home education and can tell prospective home educators of the scope and variety of home education, give general information on law and LA procedures, and support with concerns. Volunteers do a week at a time (from home) as frequently or infrequently as they wish. Knowledge of the basic legal aspects of home education is necessary, but backup is always available. Please contact Edwina (Enquiries Co-ordinator): [e.theunissen@educationotherwise.org](mailto:e.theunissen@educationotherwise.org) Tel: 01978 661882

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### SEN Telephone contact

Surely there's someone out there who would be prepared to give this a go? Email queries are dealt with separately, but we really need someone who can answer the occasional telephone call from someone without email access. The right person will have experience and knowledge of SEN and disabilities beyond that of their own children, knowledge of the SEN Code of Practice, knowledge of how local authorities, including social care, and preferably experience or training in telephone counselling. Please contact Edwina on [<enquiries@educationotherwise.org>](mailto:enquiries@educationotherwise.org)

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### Updating website information

It's like the Forth Bridge, this one – no sooner has our information been revised, than something changes and it needs doing again. So we need volunteers to keep an eye on each of the downloadable leaflets, check out that links and other contact details still work, keep up with new developments/defunct areas, etc. Have a look at the website [[www.educationotherwise.net](http://www.educationotherwise.net)] and choose your interest – or if you notice a topic that isn't there but would be useful to other home educators, compile the information and send it in. Please contact EO Publications Secretary Anne Rix [<arix@educationotherwise.org>](mailto:<arix@educationotherwise.org>) Tel: 01760 441810

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### Concessions Co-ordinator/Team

We already have a Concessions Contact, but need one or more people to seek additional Concessions for EO members; receive and action requests from organisations (or referrals from members) to join the list. Also a Co-ordinator: one super-efficient person to impose some order – check existing Concessions and set up Microsoft Access database (or XL spreadsheet); provide the complete Concessions List annually and

update Concessions listing and codes on EO website whenever necessary, via its online content management system (no HTML skills required). Good IT skills are essential, but instructions on updating website can be provided.  
Contact trustees@educationotherwise.org

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### Local Contact Volunteers

The primary role of the LC is to welcome new HE families to EO and to provide contact with their local HE community, information about local activities and who organises them, encouragement to be confident in their ability to home educate in whatever way seems right for them, and non-judgemental listening. It's also valuable if the LC can offer information about deregistration and the usual procedures and policies of their Local Authority, with support in the family's interactions with the LA. If there is no LC in your area, and you have some experience of home education, please consider volunteering to provide this valuable connection. For more information, please contact the LC Co-ordinator, Lei Ashe <lcco-ordinator@educationotherwise.org>

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## **PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR LOCAL GROUP MEETINGS**

### ***RENEWAL DUE IN AUGUST – DON'T MISS OUT THIS YEAR!***

Members had requested this service for some time, but uptake has been much slower than expected. Therefore the cost of the bulk premium paid by EO (i.e. subsidised by all members) has so far not been covered by the payments (£10 per year) made by Local Groups. We will be re-negotiating the terms with the provider before the renewal date (now 31<sup>st</sup> August) but unless more groups take advantage of the deal it will mean that the cost to each group will need to increase.

Local Group organisers can still join the scheme now until 31<sup>st</sup> August, for just £5. But if your group is thinking of taking it up for the following year, it would be very helpful if you could let us know **NOW** so that we are better informed in our dealings with the insurance provider.

Policy documents, detailed guidance and an application form are available to download from the Member Home area of the EO website. Also available by email from the Local Groups Insurance Co-ordinator <lgin@educationotherwise.org>. If necessary, you can request a copy by post: please mark your envelope very clearly 'EO Insurance' and enclose a stamped s.a.e. Send to: EO Insurance, P.O. Box 3761 Swindon, Wilts SN2 9GT.

## What's the difference between the EO website, the Member Forum, and the Yahoo! groups?

### Website

The website is accessed here: <http://www.education-otherwise.net>

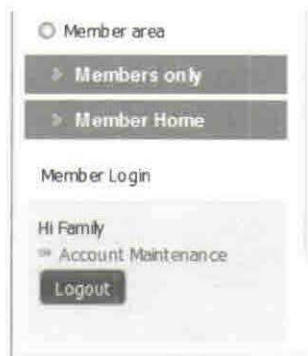
It looks like this:



The website is mainly a repository for information, though it does also function as an online shop. Some pages (the ones with the green and orange colour scheme) are accessible to the public.

As well as the public pages, there are some pages that can be accessed only by EO's members. To reach these pages, members must log in via the box on the site's home page (see picture above, where it is shown bottom left).

After the member has successfully logged in, a new 'Member Home' item appears in the 'Member area' menu.



Clicking the 'Member Home' item takes the user to the members-only home page:

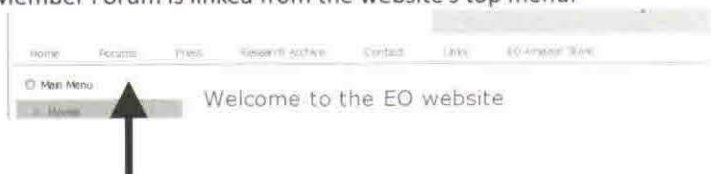


The menu to the left of the members-only pages includes links to the concessions list, contact list, events listings, LC list, and other items available only to members.

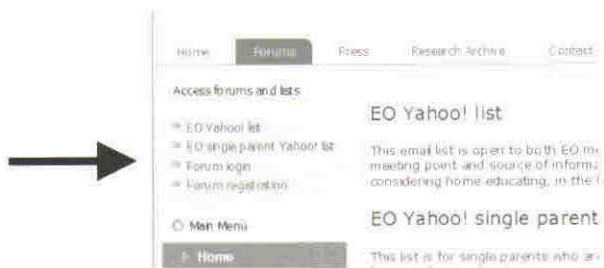
Please note that you cannot log into the members-only pages using your Member or Trustee Forum password. You must use the username and password that you chose when you registered with the new website (you did this via the 'Existing member' form linked from the public home page).

## Member Forum

The Member Forum is linked from the website's top menu:



That link will take you to the 'Online Community' page, where you can choose the 'Forum login' link to access the forum itself:



Though it is linked from this menu, the forum is not a part of the website – it's a completely separate software package, and currently resides on a different server. The 'Forum login' link opens a new window to the Forum login page, leaving the 'Online communities' page open under a separate tab.



Here, you can log into the Member Forum using the username and password you were given when you first registered there. **This has not changed.**

Forums (or 'bulletin boards'), are designed to facilitate discussion. They are not intended as information repositories, and they don't function well in that capacity. Because it was easier to update than the old website, the EO member forum has been used in the past to deliver the newsletter, local groups lists and other information to members. These functions are being transferred to the new website, which is easier to update than the old one and can present the information in a more accessible way. Once all the members are established in the online database, the forum will be integrated with the website and will share its login – but for the moment it is a completely separate entity, linked from the website only in the way that any other external site might be.

### Yahoo! groups

EO owns several Yahoo! groups, otherwise known as email lists. Like the forum, these groups are designed to facilitate discussion – but they do so in a different way. In essence, an email list is just a means of sending the same email to everyone in a group, and of receiving all emails sent by them to the group (though some members prefer to go 'no mail', and read all of the emails online instead of receiving them to their inboxes).

Like a forum, an email list is good for getting breaking news to other members, but not good for storing information that will need to be accessed longer term: only the latest posts are easy to find, and they soon get submerged by newer ones. However, Yahoo! groups do have a database facility, which enables the storage of some data. This data is not emailed to members – they have to visit the site to view it.

EO's main Yahoo! group's home page looks like this:



In practice, however, most members rarely visit the group itself, preferring to post via their email client.

The Yahoo! groups are again completely separate from the main EO website, and from the forum. Website and forum logins won't work there.

So:

- Website (green and orange) – stores information for easy access, sells memberships, includes members-only area (blue and brown).
- Member Forum (blue) – provides for online discussion organised into threads.
- Yahoo! groups (delivers to inbox) – allows each member to communicate with all other members by sending a single email.

I hope this helps!

Sarah

## LOCAL HOME EDUCATION GROUPS

**HERs** – Please contact the group organiser for full details and to check that activities are ongoing. Note also that groups are not always run by EO members. Further information on the groups listed below is available via the Local HE Groups area of the EO website. **If you know of a group that's not listed, please ask the organiser to enter it at [www.educationotherwise.net](http://www.educationotherwise.net)**

**Group organisers** – please remember when giving details of events, that this list (both in Newsletter and on main area of website) may be seen by people who are not members of Education Otherwise, and adjust your information accordingly. Please also notify us promptly of contact & other changes via the Local Groups Co-ordinator: [eolg@educationotherwise.org](mailto:eolg@educationotherwise.org)

### England

#### Bedfordshire

**Christian Home Ed** – Scott and Rachel, [scottandrachel@ntiworld.com](mailto:scottandrachel@ntiworld.com)  
**Busy B-Hes** – Weekly drop-in offering chats and support; activities.  
Pauline 01234 720819 / 07976 026167 [p.curl28@btinternet.com](mailto:p.curl28@btinternet.com).

**BedHed** – An informal group of home educating families in and around Bedford <http://bedhed.org.uk>

#### Berkshire

**Berkshire Home Educators** – for HE families in & adjoining Berkshire  
<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/groups/berkshirehomeeducators/>

**Expanding Horizons**: trips, activities, regular meet ups and information for other Local groups. [www.expandinghorizonsuk.com](http://www.expandinghorizonsuk.com) - Rebecca 01494 882484, [expandinghorizonsuk@gmail.com](mailto:expandinghorizonsuk@gmail.com)

#### Bristol

**Bristol Home Education** – A local support group Bristol area. <http://www.bristolhomeeducation.org.uk/>

**Bristol Home Education Learn Place (HELP)** Carla 01179 354389  
[carla-maria@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:carla-maria@blueyonder.co.uk)

**Bristol Home Education Co-op** – central contact point for all HE activities in Bristol. E.g. music, Spanish, English and art classes, climbing sessions, special workshops, days out, and a FREE weekly Co-op meet up with crafts, activities & socialising. Yahoo group for event details, information & support: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BristolHEC/>  
Contact: [BristolHEC-owner@yahooagroups.com](mailto:BristolHEC-owner@yahooagroups.com) Or 0117 9553582

#### Buckinghamshire

**Free Range Education** – range of educational events and activities in Milton Keynes & North Bucks Sarah: 07725 039981  
[www.freerangeeducation.org](http://www.freerangeeducation.org)

**High Wycombe Home Educators** – for HERs in & around High Wycombe  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/highwycombehomeeducators/>

**Home Education Milton Keynes** – informal non-hierarchical group for HERs in Milton Keynes & surrounding areas. <http://www.he-mk.org.uk>  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MadCows-MK/join>

**Milton Keynes Home Educators Network (MKHEN)** – Educational and social activities and events, online support groups, mentoring and an active relationship with the LA. <http://www.mkhen.org.uk>  
Georgeanne 01908 662256 [sienna-swift7@powernet.co.uk](mailto:sienna-swift7@powernet.co.uk)

**MK-CHEF** – HE support group for Milton Keynes. Affiliated to Home Sense but you do not need to be a Christian to join. <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/mk-chef>

**South Bucks Home Educators** – (& surrounding areas) <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/southbuckshomeed>  
Expanding Horizons, (see Berkshire).

#### Cambridgeshire

**Cambridgeshire Home Educators** – A website all about home educating in Cambridgeshire including local groups and how to contact them.  
[www.cambshomeed.co.uk](http://www.cambshomeed.co.uk) Jane: [cambshomeed@gmail.com](mailto:cambshomeed@gmail.com)

**Cambridge Home Educating Families (CHEF)** – for parents/carers who HE or considering HE. <http://www.cambridgehomeeducators.org.uk/>  
Morag: 01223 464918 [morag2000@hotmail.com](mailto:morag2000@hotmail.com)

**Cambridge Home Educating Community Activity List** – summary of sessions and regular groups in Cambridge [www.educationchoice.org.uk](http://www.educationchoice.org.uk)  
Karen: 01223 573220 [karen@karenrodgers.co.uk](mailto:karen@karenrodgers.co.uk)

#### Cheshire

**Mid Cheshire Home Educators** – Bi-monthly meetings and regular outings. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mche>

**South Cheshire Home Educators** – Jacqui, [southcheshirehe@gmail.com](mailto:southcheshirehe@gmail.com)  
<http://www.southcheshirehe.btck.co.uk/>

#### Cornwall

**Home Grown** – S E Cornwall HEGroup – Alternate Mondays in Liskeard: classes in drawing & draughtsmanship / drama For ages 8-15. £6 per session. : Kath 01579 340591

**PZ Home Ed** Meets Monday pm for workshop during term time. Ruth 01736 350887 [ruthboulton@phonecoop.coop](mailto:ruthboulton@phonecoop.coop)

#### Cumbria

**Cumbria Home Educators** – Meets fortnightly near Kendal and in Penrith, Trips and interesting activities around Cumbria and further afield  
<http://www.comuniqate.co.uk/lakes/cumbriahomeed/>

**West Cumbria Home Educators** – (including Keswick). Mutual support for HERs in West Cumbria: [WestCumbriaHomeEd@gmail.com](mailto:WestCumbriaHomeEd@gmail.com)

#### Derbyshire

**Derby Home Education Group (DHEG)** – Weekly, Gym Club at sports centre with instructor. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/derbyhe/>

**Home Ed Buxton Area** – Local meetings/activities for HERs and those considering HE <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/homeedbuxtonarea>

**Matlock HE** – [as Buxton] <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/matlockhe>

#### Devon

**Buckfastleigh Wildspace** – Nature study and gardening group based at Buckfastleigh Town hall. Welcomes HE families.

<http://www.hogco-devonrcc.org.uk/index.asp?pageid=279900>

**Dart Valley Home Ed Network** – Out and about visits: nature history, history photography and more. Members-only internet group. Hannah and Gordon 01803 762788 [lindnich@tesco.net](mailto:lindnich@tesco.net)

**Exeter Home Education Community** Wednesday drop-in; GCSE; green, woodwork, permaculture, pottery & more. [nbedford@btinternet.com](mailto:nbedford@btinternet.com)

<http://exeterhomeeducationcommunity.co.uk> Neil 01363 82314

**Freedom Fields EHE** – Weekly social group, for HE children and young people with parents. Tuesdays 11am – 2pm, at Freedom Fields in Plymouth [http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/PlymouthUK\\_HomeEd/](http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/PlymouthUK_HomeEd/)

**Home Grown Kids** – Website activities forum and newsletters HE/ flexischools (or interested) <http://homegrownkids.wetpaint.com/>

**Stover HE Group** – Longstanding HE community based around Stover/ Newton Abbot. Informal educational and social meets in local and surrounding areas. [stoverhegroup@gmail.com](mailto:stoverhegroup@gmail.com)

**Teignbridge and Torbay Home Educators** – Social events and educational visits. <http://www.teignbridgeandtorbayhe.co.uk>  
Julia 07905 293223 [Julia@classroomfree.co.uk](mailto:Julia@classroomfree.co.uk)

**Dartmoor and SW Home Education Group**. Based in S Dartmoor, HE events locally and in many parts of the SW.

<http://dartmoor-sw-he-group.yolasite.com/>

Contact: [dartmoor.sw.he.group@gmail.com](mailto:dartmoor.sw.he.group@gmail.com)

**South Devon Home Education Group** – <http://www.southdevonhomeeducation.co.uk/>

Helen 01803 390639 [helenlloyd-hoare@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:helenlloyd-hoare@blueyonder.co.uk)

**FLAGS Home Education Group** – Exeter, every Friday - socialising, craft activities, free-play etc. A friendly welcoming group for families with children of all ages. Lisa 07969299543 or Sue [su.gold777@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:su.gold777@yahoo.co.uk)

## Dorset

**Home Educators of East Dorset** – (covers all Dorset) Website with details of various groups meeting in Dorset. <http://www.he-ed.org.uk>

**Bournemouth HEED** – Weekly Monday meetings Carol 01202 677066 [carolstone@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:carolstone@yahoo.co.uk)

**HERA** – friendly group based in Creekmoor Poole. Weekly workshops and activities + outings and events. [www.heradorset.shutterstock.com](http://www.heradorset.shutterstock.com)  
Sarah 01202 600065 [sarahandthai@aol.co.uk](mailto:sarahandthai@aol.co.uk)

**Bournemouth and Poole Home Educators** – Bournemouth/Poole area for play dates and visits to places of interest/museums/etc.

[http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/Bournemouth\\_and\\_PooleHomeEducators/?yguid=419936795](http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/Bournemouth_and_PooleHomeEducators/?yguid=419936795), Emma: [bmth.home.ed@gmail.com](mailto:bmth.home.ed@gmail.com)

## Durham

**Durham HE** – Yahoo group. Get-togethers arranged between members in various areas of County <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/County-durham-homeed>

## Essex

**A Different Class Home Education Group** – Southend-on-Sea, Non-profit weekly meetings regular outings: [www.adifferentclass.org](http://www.adifferentclass.org)

**Haverhill HE group** – Covering South Suffolk/North Essex.  
Eve 01440 788228 or 07768 763913 [wixde@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wixde@yahoo.co.uk)

**WIGWAM Epping Forest** – A weekly informal drop-in group. Eleanor Stapleton 07866 701442 [elmajose2@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:elmajose2@yahoo.co.uk)

**Southend HE Group** – Meets weekly. Lots of outings and activities. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/southendhomeeducation/southend-homeeducation@yahoo.co.uk>

## Gloucestershire

**GlosHE.org.uk** – HE links and local resources in and around Gloucestershire. <http://www.gloshe.org.uk/>

**Glos Otherwise Club** Fiona 01684 290087 [brookesfam@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:brookesfam@tiscali.co.uk)

**Forest of Dean HE group** – Bridge and dam building, river clearance, fire building, woodland walks etc. Roxy [cdsnhf@googlemail.com](mailto:cdsnhf@googlemail.com)

**Stroud email list** Nick 01453 840036 [nick.weir@localfood.org.uk](mailto:nick.weir@localfood.org.uk)

**Cirencester and Cotswold group** – Meetings plus will answer HE queries. Pam 01285 721008 [pamela.perryman@gmail.com](mailto:pamela.perryman@gmail.com)

## Hampshire

**Hampshire FRHEBEEES** – Free Range & Home Educated Bees. West Hampshire area and borders to arrange meet ups and activities. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FRHEBees/>

**North Hampshire HE Group** – Regular activities and meetings organised suitable for all ages <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/NH-HE/>

Jaki 07731 805323 [jakimpersons@gmail.com](mailto:jakimpersons@gmail.com)

**Portsmouth Home Education Group** – HE or interested in HE <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/portsmouthhomeed/>

**SEEDS** – Meets every term time afternoon for sports/play + weekly full day activity. Southampton. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/seeds1/>

## Herefordshire

**Hereford Home Education** – Indoor and outdoor facilities ages 3-15. [herefordhe@gmail.com](mailto:herefordhe@gmail.com)

**Monmouth and Herefordshire Home Educators** – Local meets and events Yahoo! group. Roxy 07765 058 777 <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HerefordshireHE/>

## Hertfordshire

**Herts Home Educators** – Yahoo! group for Hertfordshire home educators. [newhomeeducators@gmail.com](mailto:newhomeeducators@gmail.com)

## Isle of Wight

**Isle of Wight Learning Zone** – A network of HE families <http://www.iwlearningzone.co.uk/>

**IW Home Ed** – Facebook group & yahoo group for any and all home educators on IoW. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IWHomeEd/>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IWHomeEd/>  
Karen: [Karen@curvespace.com](mailto:Karen@curvespace.com) or 01983 568516

## Kent

**Dragonfly Kidz HE Group** – (Canterbury & Thanet) meets socially for learning activities swimming bowling days out etc. in a wide range of locations around Canterbury Thanet Whitstable etc. All Welcome! Step for more info: [stephgate@rocketmail.com](mailto:stephgate@rocketmail.com) 01304 814362.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dragonflykidzhomeeducationgroup/>

**Home Education Network for Autism in Kent** – Meets fortnightly for parents home-educated children on the autism spectrum. [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Home\\_Education\\_Network\\_for\\_Autism\\_in\\_Kent/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Home_Education_Network_for_Autism_in_Kent/)

**Kent ASD Home Ed** – For parents/carers of ASD/Aspergers children who are educating their 'otherwise'. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/asd-home-ed-medway>

**Medway and Maidstone HE activity group - HE OMEGA** – A group of home educating families in Medway and Kent. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HE-omega/>

Tracey 07947 301327 [chaggasbug@gmail.com](mailto:chaggasbug@gmail.com)

**SATHE Supporting Autism Through Home Education** – West Kent group open to all parents/carers HE/flexi-schooling or considering EO for children with autism/ sensitivities or learning difficulties.

Denise 07554 386844 [S-A-T-H-E@yahoogroups.co.uk](mailto:S-A-T-H-E@yahoogroups.co.uk)  
<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/S-A-T-H-E/>

**South East Home Educators** – (Kent/Sussex) Meet regularly for trips, hall meets, swimming etc. To join Yahoo! group email: [southeasthomeeducators-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:southeasthomeeducators-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

Or contact: Lesley Herriot [lesley294@aol.com](mailto:lesley294@aol.com) 07828193668

<http://www.southeast-home-educators.co.uk>

**Wealden Home Educators' Network** – active network of home educating families in SE England. We offer help and support, information, activities, events and camps for home educators. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wealdenhomeeducatorsnetwork/>

## Lancashire

**LEAD Home Education** – swap ideas, share stories and arrange local social gatherings. [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lead\\_he/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lead_he/)

**Boneheds** – Help support advice and friendship to all families who are home educating (or considering HE) in Bolton Lancashire and surrounding districts. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/boneheds/>

**Home Ed Leyland** – Friendship help support and advice for all families who are home-educating (or considering HE) in Leyland and surrounding districts <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/he-1-lo/>

**Leicestershire**

**Leicestershire Christian Home Educators** – monthly meet up every 3rd Tuesday 10am-3pm at Oak Farm Park CV13 0JD. Free play opportunity in a safe and fun place. Home Ed Off-Peak Pass available: £1.50 per child £5 per family free drinks. All welcome! Anne-Marie Marshall: [mrsamarshall@googlemail.com](mailto:mrsamarshall@googlemail.com)

**Charnwood & Melton Yahoo Group** – many home ed groups, gatherings and Events. Vikki, [wikkiamartin@googlemail.com](mailto:wikkiamartin@googlemail.com)

**HE-AL message board** – details of HE Events in Leicestershire. Site run by local HE groups, but open to all HERS in the Leicestershire area <http://he-al.weebly.com/index.html>

## Lincolnshire

**Lincolnshire HE** – <http://www.home-ed.ukf.net/index.htm>

**Home Ed Lincs** – Yahoo news/group coordinating HE activities in Lincolnshire. [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/home\\_ed\\_lincs/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/home_ed_lincs/)

**North Hykeham HE Group** – Thurs 10-11.30ish. Primarily for toddlers. 07870 787328 [debi-crow@googlemail.com](mailto:debi-crow@googlemail.com)

**Homeschool Lincolnshire** – active and supportive group, 40 + families incl. plenty of teenagers. Monthly events and activities list: Elaine 01507 328688. [homeschool.lincolnshire@outlook.com](mailto:homeschool.lincolnshire@outlook.com)

## London

**The Otherwise Club (NW)** – A community centre for HE families. Leslie 0208 969 0893

**Brandam Readers** – Weekly meetings in term time. [rubbyradburn@hotmail.com](mailto:rubbyradburn@hotmail.com)

**Adventures with Education (Hackney)** – A home education group based

**Haringey Home Education Club** – meetings and other events <http://www.hhec.org.uk/> @hhec.org.uk

**Maggie Home Educators (East London)** – Phil 0208 500 1053  
**Home Study Groups** – small group of HE families pooling resources for tutored home study groups. Ingie 0203 566 8706 [iberritt@gmail.com](mailto:iberritt@gmail.com)  
**WIGWAM** Jubilee Park N9. Informal drop-in group for families with children of any age. Eleanor Stapleton 07866 701442 [elma-jose2@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:elma-jose2@yahoo.co.uk)

## Norfolk

**Home Educating in Norfolk (HENS)** – A group for HE families in Norfolk. Those on the borders also welcome. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/homeeducatorsnorfolk/>

**West Norfolk Home Educators** – A meeting place for home educators and families interested in home education. <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/WestNorfolkHomeEducators/>

**The Barefoot Learners** – Games and activities for all ages. Be Coffin 07814 592 290 or 01263 73 99 83

**Kings Lynn HE** – Weekly get-together. Kirsten 01485 540724 [murray-beers@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:murray-beers@yahoo.co.uk)

## Northamptonshire

**Northants HE** – Informal group meets regularly for various activities <http://www.northantshe.org.uk/>

**iFlow** – weekly HE community group in NW Northants. Aiming to provide continuity of support and friendships parent and professionally led educational activities. A wide range of resources in a large community space with sports facilities and outdoor play  
[www.iflow-he.org](http://www.iflow-he.org) Email: [welcometoflow@gmail.com](mailto:welcometoflow@gmail.com)

## Nottinghamshire

**Notts Sheep Special** – Online support group for HE parents of special needs/differently-abled children in Nottinghamshire & bordering counties. [http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/Notts\\_Sheep-Special/](http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/Notts_Sheep-Special/)

## Oxfordshire

**Oxfordshire Home Educators** – A group for all home educators living in Oxfordshire but those in neighbouring counties also welcome to join. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OxonHE/>

**OHED** – Website with information about HE in Oxfordshire [www.ohed.org.uk](http://www.ohed.org.uk) Louisa; [louisa.southey@gmail.com](mailto:louisa.southey@gmail.com) or 01865 735705  
Expanding Horizons, (See Berkshire).

## Shropshire

**Rushbury/Stretton HE Group** – Parent and child-led activities as well as people from the wider community Beverley 01743 718429

**Telford area HE** – activities for times and dates of skating football and drama sessions. Denise 07866 888879

**Shropshire Home Education** – For HEs in Shropshire area to chat arrange meets etc. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/shed>

**Otherwise Engaged** – Online diary of group activities cultural events workshops resources and projects for Shrops and West Mids based HE families. <http://www.otherwise-engaged.org.uk/home-education.html>

## Somerset

**Taunton Home Education Group** – Free play, arts & crafts, games, etc. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tauntonhomeeducation/> <http://tauntonhomeed.blogspot.com/>

**Taunton Free Range home ed.** friendly laid back group of HE families from Somerset, meeting every Monday for socialisation and optional craft/experiment/activity. Contact Natanya on 01823 257929 or email [tauntonfreerangekids@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tauntonfreerangekids@yahoo.co.uk)

**HEY Yeovil** – All HE families welcome. Lyn Crocker 01963 23669 [heyevail@hotmail.com](mailto:heyevail@hotmail.com)

**Wells Swimming Group** – Weekly swimming Wells Leisure Centre term time only. Lesley 01749 689241 [mumfordturner@hotmail.com](mailto:mumfordturner@hotmail.com)

**Oake HE Group** – Monthly meetings and regular outings. Maggie 01984 624651

**North Somerset HE Group** – Weekly children's gym walks outings etc. Yahoo! group for members. Vicky 01275 848425 [victoria.preston@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:victoria.preston@yahoo.co.uk)

**Bath HE Yahoo! Group** – <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/BathHomeEducation/>

**FAB Home Ed Group** – Meets fortnightly at Shepton Mallet Scout Hut. Also FAB Times (local email newsletter) Mandy 01749 347799

## Suffolk

**Dennington HE Group** – Wide range of activities all ages welcome. Janet 01728 638795 [janetlomas@ymail.com](mailto:janetlomas@ymail.com)

**Haverhill HE group** – Covering South Suffolk/North Essex. Eve 01440 788228 or 07768 763913 [wixde@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wixde@yahoo.co.uk)

**Ipswich HE** Wednesdays Shared lunch and activities. Emma [emma@nattyem.co.uk](mailto:emma@nattyem.co.uk)

**Ipswich town centre group + Book Club** – Lisa 07538 102322 [llw\\_llg@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:llw_llg@yahoo.co.uk)

**Tostock HE Group** – All families welcome to this very friendly group. Jan 01359 251184 [angusto@btinternet.com](mailto:angusto@btinternet.com)

## Surrey

**SW Surrey Home Ed** – Weekly gatherings Farnham or Godalming. <http://www.swsurrey-home-ed.co.uk/index.php>

**Sutton/Epsom HE group** – Meets weekly and also monthly for outings. Paul 07506 781796 [pauldmsn@hotmail.com](mailto:pauldmsn@hotmail.com)

<http://epsomandsuttonhomeed.blogspot.com/>

**Leatherhead Home Education Group** – Leatherhead and surrounding area regular day trips and activities. Chrissie Thorpe 07840285703

[christabelthorpe@hotmail.com](mailto:christabelthorpe@hotmail.com) <http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/313168112059023/>

**Parents and Children Together (PACT)** – Guildford & surrounding areas newsletter for one-off events and regular weekly activities. <http://www.pact-he.org.uk/>

**Home Educators Learning Project** – Aims to bring together Surrey based home educators for educational support social and educational outings. <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/HELearningProject/>

**Godalming HE Group** – A group for HE families based in South West Surrey and surrounding area. <http://swsurrey-home-ed.co.uk>

## Sussex

**ActiveHE** HE Group W Sussex and Hants (see Hampshire)

**HEDGE Home Ed Group** – Hastings/St. Leonards weekly social meetings + trips etc. [www.hedge-education.btck.co.uk](http://www.hedge-education.btck.co.uk) Beshlie 01424 812870

**South Eastern Home Educators** – (Kent/Sussex) See Kent for details.

**Forest Row HE Group** – regular monthly meetings + many other fun & learning <http://www.facebook.com/groups/forestrowhomeeducators>

**Eastbourne EO Group** – Regular gatherings & activities. <http://www.shinies.org.uk/>

**Brighton and Hove Home Educators** – Information on HE events and groups in the area. <http://bhhe.wordpress.com/> <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bhhe/>

**Hastings & Rother Home Educators (HARHE)** – small number of families; activities include Forest School, cycling, daytrips, bowling and swimming. Check out our website and us or come along to an activity [www.harhe.btck.co.uk](http://www.harhe.btck.co.uk) Catherine: 01424 812213

**Wealden Home Educators' Network (WHEN)** (SE England) see Kent.

## Warwickshire

**Creative Youth Adventure Club (Coventry)** – For over 11s working towards Arts Awards. Sarah [sarah@nellyb.co.uk](mailto:sarah@nellyb.co.uk)

**Worcestershire Home Educators Network** – Meetings usually at least weekly throughout term time at various locations round the county. <http://www.worcestershire-home-educators.co.uk/>

**Warwick District HE** Primarily for children 0-11 though all welcome. Warwick and Leamington, Allison 07782 299181 <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/warwickhe>

## Wiltshire

**The Outpost Education Centre** – meet near Chippenham Tuesdays term time. <http://www.theoutpost.org.uk/> [info@theoutpost.org.uk](mailto:info@theoutpost.org.uk)

**Salisbury Plain Home Education Circle** – Parents who use the National Curriculum as guidance, but believe that best education comes from experience. Dee: [dee.dilloway@yahoo.com](mailto:dee.dilloway@yahoo.com), 07753 260317

## Worcestershire

**Bewdley HE Group** – Weekly meetings, social/activities etc. all welcome. Sophie 01299 405669, [sophiebutcher29@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sophiebutcher29@yahoo.co.uk)  
**Worcestershire Home Ed** Yahoo Group Email list for Worcs HERS <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/worcestershirehome-ed/>

## Yorkshire

**DHE** Doncaster home educators Yahoo group for families in the Doncaster and surrounding areas. Cheryl Moy on 07825 914340 [cheryl0407@aol.com](mailto:cheryl0407@aol.com) <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/DHE/>  
**HENNEY (Home Education Network North East Yorkshire)** Regular meet ups around the Scarborough and East coast area. Lisa Riley [lisa\\_riley@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:lisa_riley@tiscali.co.uk) [henney-owner@yahoooogroups.com](mailto:henney-owner@yahoooogroups.com)

**Huddersfield Art Workshops** – Monthly 8yrs plus. Jane 01484 645034  
**Huddersfield Book Group** Monthly Marsden library. Jane 01484 645034  
**Huddersfield Home Educators** – Monthly themed meetings. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wyhec/> Mandy 01484 460026 [meand-chi7@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:meand-chi7@yahoo.co.uk)

**Yorkshire Home Edders Yahoo! group** – A friendly group for home educators throughout the Yorkshire region. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/yorkshirehomedders/>

**NYHEC (group for HE parents)** – for parents HEing in North Yorkshire. [nyhecowner@yahoooogroups.com](mailto:nyhecowner@yahoooogroups.com)

**North + West HE Group** – Meets Skipton monthly and Bradford Gym Club weekly. Regular meetings and outings. Judith 01756 791356

**Rotherham Home Education** – friendly informal group for HERS in & around S. Yorkshire. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RothHE/>  
Pauline 077764 06409 [collicecandydog123@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:collicecandydog123@yahoo.co.uk)

**SYHEC – Yahoo!** group for parents HEing in South Yorkshire. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/syhec/>

**Wakefield District Home Education Group** – New Group 2013. Currently regular Bowling & Ice skating. Will be organising more trips and visits as numbers increase. Contact Tracey: [wakefieldHE-owner@yahoooogroups.com](mailto:wakefieldHE-owner@yahoooogroups.com)

## Regional – East of England

**East Anglian Home Ed Network** – <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/East-Anglian-Home-Ed-Network/>

## Regional – East Midlands

**East Midlands Home Ed** – forum to help inform and support HE families in the East Midlands. <http://groups.yahoo.com/oup/emhe>

## Regional – South East

**FLAGS (Kent/Surrey/Sussex)** – Active group (Kent/Surrey/Sussex) meeting weekly during term time <http://www.flags-education.org> Karen 01732 864524 [karenlow@uwclub.net](mailto:karenlow@uwclub.net)

**ActiveEO** HE Group based in West Sussex and Hampshire  
Contact number 01243 552780 <http://www.activeo.co.uk/index.html>

**South Hants Home Ed** – A support group for home educators <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/southhantshomeed/>

**FAREGOS Home Education Group** – HE group/email list covering Fareham Gosport and South Hants. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FareGosHE/>

**Home-EASE (Home Education for all South East)** – Group of HE families in South-East England 0753 1677 083 [homeeducationmum@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:homeeducationmum@yahoo.co.uk)

**South East Home Educators** – (Kent/Sussex) See Kent for details.

**Wealden Home Educators' Network (WHEN)** (SE England) see Kent.

## Regional – South West

**Home Education Centre (Devon/Dorset/Somerset)** – Meets two days a week. Workshops sports activities and support. <http://www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk>

**HERs and Events SW** – A HE network for the SW specifically set up to support new HERS or those new to the area. New input welcomed.

<http://hecontactsandeventssw.yolasite.com>  
[southdveonlc@gmail.com](mailto:southdveonlc@gmail.com)

## Regional – West Midlands

**Birmingham Home Ed** – and events for HE families. <http://>

[www.homeeducationbirmingham.org.uk](http://www.homeeducationbirmingham.org.uk)

## Isle of Man

**Home Educating Network - Isle of Man** – informal group of parents HEing on the Isle of Man. Yvonne, [isleofmanlc@educationotherwise.org](mailto:isleofmanlc@educationotherwise.org) <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/hen-iom/>

## Wales

### Carmarthenshire

**Carmarthen HE Group** – Regular meetings in Johnstown Carmarthen [caroline.milburn@aol.com](mailto:caroline.milburn@aol.com)

**North Carmarthen HE Group** – meetings for friendship & play. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ncarmarthenhomeed>

### Denbighshire

**Froncysyllte HE group** – Fortnightly group meets 10-4pm. Social play and chat. [vivodsam@gmail.com](mailto:vivodsam@gmail.com)

### Flintshire

**Flintshire Home Education** – Regular meet ups activities & support. [flintshirehomeeducation@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:flintshirehomeeducation@yahoo.co.uk)

### Glamorgan

**New Foundations HE** – Meets Cardiff Thursdays 10-4. All activities free. <http://www.newfoundationshe.com> 02920216502 [newfoundationshe@virginmedia.com](mailto:newfoundationshe@virginmedia.com)

**Bridgend Home Educators**. free play, GCSE classes, Arts Award, outside speakers, activities, etc. See [www.bridgendhomeeducators.org](http://www.bridgendhomeeducators.org) or [emailinfo@bridgendhomeeducators.org](mailto:emailinfo@bridgendhomeeducators.org)

**Newport Home Education Group** – Group Rogerstone 1-4pm E4/family. Fiona [fionataylor910@btinternet.com](mailto:fionataylor910@btinternet.com)

### Gwynedd

**Langower HE Group** – Weekly meetings. [rowenna73@hotmail.com](mailto:rowenna73@hotmail.com)

**Creative Learning and Support** – Now meet every Wed. pm in Bangor. Julie on 01286 678181 or Sarah on 01248 355182 <http://www.creativelearningandsupport.co.uk>

### Monmouthshire

**South Wales Home Educators Network** – Email list for Home Educators in and around S Wales to arrange get-togethers /event, share ideas & news and offer support. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/swhen/>

**Usk Home Education** – Monthly (Thurs) meet other HERS in the area for fun and games and cups of tea. Roxie: [cdsnhf@gmail.com](mailto:cdsnhf@gmail.com) or 01989 768 128 <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HerefordshireHE/>

### Montgomeryshire

**Shiny Happy Children** – Regular meetings in Llanfyllin and surrounding areas. Katie [llanfyllinHE@gmail.com](mailto:llanfyllinHE@gmail.com)

### Neath Port Talbot

**Wise Up Community HE Group** (Port Talbot) – Support and information for home educating families and those considering home education. <http://www.zoneseven.co.uk/ianna.violet@hotmail.com>

### Powys

**New Leaf HE Group** (Newtown) – Occasional meetings for varied activities all ages. [sioxcatsy@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sioxcatsy@yahoo.co.uk)

**Wrexham and Surrounds Home Education (WASHE)** – Activities around Wrexham area. <http://washe.co.uk/>

### Regional

**Elective Home Education Wales** – Linking HE families across Wales. <http://www.ehow.co.uk>

**Monmouth/Hereford/Gloucester** – for information about group activities in the Monmouth/Hereford/Gloucester area local EO member Roxie 01989 768128 [cdsnhf@googlemail.com](mailto:cdsnhf@googlemail.com)

**New Foundations** – HE group and charity offering social & educational activities and support in Cardiff and South Wales. Every Mon 10am - 3pm. All HE families welcome. [www.newfoundationshe.com](http://www.newfoundationshe.com) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/329840653796249/>  
Jayne: [newfoundationshe@virginmedia.com](mailto:newfoundationshe@virginmedia.com) Or 02920216502

## Channel Islands

**Home Education Jersey** – New home education group. Jess:

[homeeducationjersey@gmail.com](mailto:homeeducationjersey@gmail.com)

**Guernsey Home Educators** – Fledgling group of home educators and those sympathetic to home education in Guernsey. Yvonne Burford on 01481 264776 or [Atplir@hotmail.com](mailto:Atplir@hotmail.com)

## International (UK based)

**HE-DS (Home Educating a child with Down's syndrome)** – Linking families who are home educating a child with Down's syndrome:

<http://www.oakwellbarns.co.uk> Yahoo group (private, by invitation) Anita Kolaczynska 01686 413502 [anitakolaczynska@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:anitakolaczynska@yahoo.co.uk)

[sk@yaho.co.uk](mailto:sk@yaho.co.uk)

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## USEFUL LISTS/WEBSITES FOR HOME EDUCATORS

Below are some of the email lists which home educators find useful. Many new home educators are not sure how to begin home education or where to find other local families, so the emailing lists play an important part in reassuring and supporting them. The Helpline often receives calls for those wanting information and support on specific aspects of home education and some of the various internet groups or websites which have been found useful are listed below. Most of the titles are self-explanatory.

### SUPPORT

There are various general lists for home educators which provide support, information, discussion, home education experiences, resource links and contacts locally.

The Education Otherwise support list is here:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eo-he-support/>

### DEBATE

Education Otherwise also has a list for debate:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eo-he-debate/>

This list is for those who wish to pursue a subject in more depth and for issues which may be controversial but of interest to many.

There are also specialist lists/websites:-

### AUTONOMOUS EDUCATION

[http://www.schome.ac.uk/wiki/Autonomous\\_education](http://www.schome.ac.uk/wiki/Autonomous_education)

### GCSE/EXAMS

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HE-Exams-GCSE-A AS Levels-OU-Others/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HE-Exams-GCSE-A_AS_Levels-OU-Others/)

### **Facts about taking exams**

[http://www.nwilts-he.org.uk/he\\_exams\\_wiki/index.php/FAQs\\_about\\_taking\\_exams\\_as\\_an\\_EHEer](http://www.nwilts-he.org.uk/he_exams_wiki/index.php/FAQs_about_taking_exams_as_an_EHEer)

### **GIFTED & TALENTED**

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/gifted-home-ed-uk/>

### **SCHOOL REFUSAL**

[School-Refusal@yahoogroups.com](mailto:School-Refusal@yahoogroups.com)

### **SINGLE PARENTS**

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/EO-SingleParent/join>  
[EO-SingleParent-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:EO-SingleParent-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

### **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITY**

<http://www.he-special.org.uk>

### **Autism**

(a website not a list)

<http://www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/education/primary-and-secondary-school/education-home-educating-your-child.aspx>

### **Children with hemiplegia**

<http://www.lsoft.com/scripts/wl.exe?SL1=HEMI-KIDS&H=LISTSERV.ICORS.ORG>

### **STRUCTURED EDUCATION**

Child centred, project based and cross curricular learning (website, blog)

<http://alittlebitofstructure.webs.com/>

Links to some of the above, as well as many others, including legal guidelines, resources, and events, are to be found under the "links" section of the Education Otherwise website.

Edwina Theunissen

## Who does What in EO

### Current Trustees [Council Members]

**Lei Ashe** (Local Contacts Co-ord)

lashe@educationotherwise.org

**Beverley Cameron-Young** (Treasurer)

bcameron-young@educationotherwise.org

**Shena Deuchars** (Membership Sec.)

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**Bryony McDonagh**

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**Carol Stone**

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**Andries Theunissen**

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**Edwina Theunissen**

e.theunissen@educationotherwise.org

**Kathleen Thompson**

kthompson@educationotherwise.org

**Margaret Wells**

mwells@educationotherwise.org

N.B. Email to

***trustees@educationotherwise.org***

goes to all trustees

Address for correspondence by letter:

Education Otherwise

P.O. Box 3761

SWINDON

SN2 9GT

AND NEW WEBSITE:

***www.educationotherwise.net***

N.B. THIS IS SEPARATE FROM THE EO EMAILS AND FORUMS, WHICH ARE STILL BASED ON THE OLD URL: educationotherwise.org

### Membership

Membership enquiries, address changes, membership cards, new member admin: please contact the Membership Secretary:

*membership@educationotherwise.org*

or PO Box 3761, Swindon, SN2 9GT

### Other Useful Contacts

Anti-Bullying Contact: **Kathleen Thompson**

01942 89 77 79

College/GCSE Contact: **Roger Scaife** 08445 003 708

GCSEs at Home: **Louise** 08445 003 688

OU GCSE equivalents: **Wendy** 08445 003 691

GCSE/EXAMS email list:

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HE-Exams-GCSE-A\\_AS\\_Levels-OU-Others/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HE-Exams-GCSE-A_AS_Levels-OU-Others/)

Concessions Contact: **Lynsey Scott**

*concessions@educationotherwise.org*

Concessions Co-ordinator: **Vacant**

Enquiries Secretary: **Edwina Theunissen**

01978 661 882 *e.theunissen@educationotherwise.org*

Flexi-schooling: **Alison Sauer** *Alison@sauer.demon.co.uk*  
01282 85 47 19

Local Contacts Co-ordinator: **Lei Ashe**

*lcco-ordinator@educationotherwise.org*

Local Group Insurance: **Fe Mukwamba-Sendall**

*lgic@educationotherwise.org*

Local Groups Listings: **Kennell Family**

*eolg@educationotherwise.org*

Newsletter Coordinator: **Barry O'Donovan (Acting)**

*<bigbirdbarry@hotmail.com>*

Publications Secretary: **Anne Rix**

*<arix@educationotherwise.org>* 01760 44 18 10

School Anxiety Support: **Jayne Owen** 08445 00 84 69

Single Parent Contact: **Sam Kruger** 08445 00 37 94

*denbighshire-1c@educationotherwise.org*

Social Services Support: **Sinead** 08445 003 697

Special Needs: **Denice** *send@educationotherwise.org*  
[08455 003887]

SEND email list via: <http://www.he-special.org.uk/>

Volunteer Co-ordinator: **Wendy Knight**

*vol-coordinator@educationotherwise.org*

Webmasters: **Louisa and Charles**

*webmaster@educationotherwise.org*

# 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 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;
- promote knowledge, understanding and acceptance of education otherwise than at school in the world at large.

For further information send an A5 s.s.a.e. to:

P.O. BOX 3761  
SWINDON, SN2 9GT

Helpline 0845 4786 345

Web Site: <http://www.educationotherwise.net>

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