

education otherwise



Newsletter Winter 2012

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Please mark material '**for publication**' and include your name, address, phone number and email as we may need to contact you to discuss your contribution (though details may be withheld from publication on request). Email contributions will be acknowledged within a few days. If you require a postal acknowledgement please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. If no acknowledgement is received, or in case of queries, please contact the NL co-ordinator (see below). *Please also ensure your EO membership is up to date before submission.*

Deadline for the Spring issue is 1st February 2013

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Co-ordinatorial

You'll be getting fed up with my apologies for late/missing newsletters by now – explanation (as before) is that I've got too many EO jobs to do, and some of our longstanding willing volunteers have been unable to give their usual support. Add to that, young grandchildren I'd like to be able to spend more time on, a 'deceptively small' garden in my new house – it's a haven for wildlife but really does need a good deal of attention – and a recent carpal tunnel operation that means my hand hurts if I type much.

For now, we've had to go back to a simpler format – if there's anyone out there who could provide technical input, please shout!

However – it does look as though at last we've found someone to take on the job of Newsletter Co-ordinator (bit of history here – I first had this job ten years ago, and somehow it keeps landing back on my desk). So, please do send your contributions – and they can be in any form you like, so long as it's of interest to EO members and relevant to home education in some way – to Barry

(contact details & deadlines inside cover) in good time for him to get it together for the Spring issue.

This issue covers some serious themes (not intentional – it just happened) of 'in and out of school' as well as 'what the authorities are up to' – which is of course a related issue. As well as Local Authority HE officials, there seems now to be increasing involvement from Social Services (EO has a new team for support in that area).

Then there are the proposals from Wales that echo the 'Badman' plans in England that were dropped a couple of years back. That looked as if HE-sense had carried the argument; but in fact the proposals were discontinued for party political reasons. If the Welsh Assembly plans for compulsory registration and monitoring go ahead, how long will it be before the English government brings similar proposals again? Back in the '80s, when I started home educating, children's names could only be taken off a school register with LA permission – we eventually won the argument for immediate deregistration; but compulsory registration (in effect, requiring LA permission to home educate) would apply to ALL HERs; not just those already 'known' to LAs. I, for one, don't want to go back there...

Back to more homely issues – the list of Local HE Groups, on the EO website and in the newsletter, is attracting entries from what appear to be small alternative schools, rather than HE groups (the criterion being parental control and non-profit). Where should we draw the line? And what about the role of the newsletter itself? The 'archive' article has some views on that – let's hear yours.

Oh – and *'ware dragons!*

Anne Rix December 2012



**WELSH ASSEMBLY
GOVERNMENT
PROPOSALS FOR
REGISTERING AND
MONITORING HOME-
BASED EDUCATION**

In August, the WAG published comprehensive proposals, which, if implemented, would mean that all HERs in Wales would be required to register annually with their Local Authority, have their home education provision assessed and approved before being given permission to begin or continue it, and allow LA officials to interview their children. The proposals would also give the LA the right to decide what a 'suitable' education would comprise. Should parents fail to comply with the requirements, sanctions would include compelling the child to attend school.

While simply being included on a register (or list, or record...) might seem in itself not too onerous, it's clear that what is intended is far more intrusive and controlling. After all, if it were just a question of names on lists, it would be simple enough to include a tick-box for 'home education' on the form that gives parents the option of choosing which school they would like their children to attend. This appears not to have been considered, which indicates that the real aims are far more extensive. That is why EO trustees feel it is important to resist any attempt at compulsory registration.

The 'consultation' process has been deeply flawed: workshops set up by the WAG and promoted as giving children and young people a chance to discuss their views, were poorly advertised and were attended by many LA staff; and the questions on the response form were leading and ambiguous. We await with interest the WAG's analysis of findings, due to be published in the New Year, but it looks as though the 'consultation' was for show.

EO has strongly opposed the move to compulsory registration and monitoring, and we urge all members to make every effort to ensure that both government officials and other HERs appreciate the implications for all home educators of these proposals. There's not space for a full exposition here (more on EO website and various lists and online groups) but some quotations from the EO response to the consultation follow.

EO trustees are strongly opposed to the introduction of a compulsory register, which we view as unnecessary, intrusive and adversarial. We therefore disagree with the imposition of any sanction upon families where parents do not register their children as home educated.

[The proposals are] tantamount to saying that parents must ask permission to home educate. The case law regarding informal enquiries provides ample opportunity for fulfilling the legal duties of LAs with regard to home educated children. We would urge the WAG to ensure that LAs are fully conversant with the relevant existing law and guidance, and to apply these appropriately.

EO trustees would urge the WAG to instruct LAs to ensure that all officers who have dealings with EHE families receive appropriate training.

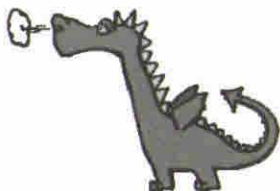
Throughout the proposal document the WAG appear to confuse the issues of welfare and education. ... [welfare] concerns are the remit of Social Services, who have appropriate responsibilities and powers to investigate and deal with them. Home education per se has no bearing on such issues.

My Personal Journey to Home Education

My total amount of time spent in school, apart from College and University, is a span of roughly eight months. My first school, a small infant school on Portland, is remembered fondly. I first went at age four and a half and I do remember jumping up and down on a piece of paper with an 'e' on it in frustration that I didn't understand what it was. This piece of paper went up in the air, was stamped on and even had a chair put on it, so offended was I at this letter that I didn't understand. After weeks of asking my Mum to teach me how to read, she decided to do just that, at home. So began my Home Education.

I went back to school aged seven. I had the best teacher who really cared about all of her students, and yes; I was the child who took her teacher apples, that was how much I loved her. As someone who was (still is) rather chatty, when my work was finished ahead of everyone else, I got to go into the library corner and read, my favourite pastime! On other occasions my amazing teacher would put up a sequence of letters on the blackboard and challenge me to make as many words as possible! Fond memories indeed! When we moved from Portland to Weymouth, I was enrolled in another school where the teacher wasn't so great. She did not enjoy the chatter of children, objected to any involvement from parents and even locked me in the stationery cupboard one day out of sheer frustration. As a confident child, I slipped off to see the Headmaster and told him about my teacher's ability to shout and bully, neglecting to inform him of the stationery cupboard incident.

My Mum's final straw came when my answer to the question, "So what have you been doing in school?" was, "Well, we've mostly been colouring in a Green Dragon all week!"



So began my real Home Education, a decision that I think was for the best. Aged eight I began to read Shakespeare and I love the bard still. At age nine I went to Stratford to see my first Shakespeare performance, Hamlet, and a love of all things theatrical was born. By the age of fourteen, I was writing a dissertation upon the bard and my favourite play. I remember the freedom of being able to concentrate my efforts upon a single subject for days if necessary, whether this was English or Geography or the Classics. Much of the information that I remember to this day was learned at home. For instance, when I was eleven I wanted to learn how to type on a typewriter. Mum and I found one in a charity shop along with a book that taught the art of typing and that was that. For the next fortnight all I did was type and by the end of this time, I could touch type to a faster and more accurate level than my Mother, who went to Secretarial College.

At fifteen years of age I went to Sixth Form College to do my GCSEs, as this was the only affordable way for me to study for my exams. I was warned before starting by the Vice Principal of the College that I would have to 'dumb down' my abilities to do my GCSEs. This was a painful process as my classmates were mainly those who had failed their exams at school and were re-taking them. I was also the youngest person in many of my classes, which also didn't help. I did survive the experience, gained five GCSEs, three A Levels, and went on to get a 2:1 with honours at University in Media Performance. Along the way I also collected a HND Distinction in Performing Arts.

When it came to having children of my own I didn't want to Home Educate. At the time of the birth of my eldest son, I was teaching Art and Drama at Malvern Hills College and hoping to gain my PGCE and teach Drama at Colleges and University. This didn't work out and although by the time my youngest son

was born I was still teaching Drama classes, they were a solo effort and my College course was cut due to budgetary restraints!

When my eldest son was three and half years of age, he wanted to go to school, and although I did not have a yearning to Home Educate, I did have reservations about the EYFS, or 'nappy curriculum' as some have called it. I guess my having been Home Educated meant that my children were brought up slightly differently to most. My son was always listened to, stimulated and imaginative. Vivacious and chatty, always coming up with some new game or imaginary world; he was a delight, never bored and always reasonable. I knew from my childhood experiences what sort of child he was and what potential he had, having met many Home Educated children who had his qualities. They have a quiet confidence in their own abilities and a logical pattern of thinking that is beyond their years and stands them in good stead for coping with life. I thought that these qualities were set, that they would be appreciated at school and that he would quickly fit and enjoy the experience.

That was the naivety, I guess, of not having experienced the system during my youth. My son was bullied, limited and became thoroughly lost within the system. He became a shadow of his former self, no longer offering opinions, screaming when anything didn't go his way. He stopped eating and stopped trusting us. I have later come to learn that this was due to the fact that no one listened when he told them about the bullying. I could have stayed and fought the system, tried to make the changes that were needed to help my son. I did try, but my letters were ignored and my meeting with senior staff fruitless. So I did what my mother had done all those years ago and decided to teach him, and therefore his brother, at home.

So here we are, nearly two years later, still battling the demons of the school experience, still trying to re-establish trust, still nurturing the imagination and creativity. I am beginning to see glimpses of the little boy I knew in the young man before me. He still has a fear of reading, a hang-up from a bad teacher at school and a fear of writing, which is being slowly conquered. He is remembering how to play and how to cope when things go wrong.



He is still never bored, always creating some new game or imaginary world and still chatters on endlessly about his discoveries which include (in one week); not all bulls have horns, giant squid can have tentacles up to 10 feet in length and the first recorded God was the sky God An, from the area of Mesopotamia (Iraq).

I am also on a steep learning curve, researching the ethos behind my belief in Home Education. I know that it works, I am living proof as are many other people around the country, but there has to be research to back this, ethics to be learned and a pathway created and followed. This wasn't my first choice, but equally with my background it was possibly the inevitable choice. I want my children to blossom and grow, not be limited by class times and standing in line. I want them to learn to use their imaginations to their advantage, to be able to create solutions to problems where others do not see them. I want them to be able to survive and be confident in a world that will try its very best at times to strip this away. I want to be able to give them the skills to conquer life that my mother gave me. I don't ever want them to colour in a Green Dragon, but I do want them one day to read Shakespeare.

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Back to School or Badman by the Back Door?

by Ann Czernik

On 8 December 2009, home educators made history when more than 70 Honourable and Right Honourable members presented petitions from more than 120 different constituencies opposing the compulsory registration and monitoring of home educated children proposed in the Badman review of elective home education.

So why are home educators worried that high profile child protection cases are driving an agenda to increase LA powers to monitor and evaluate the health, safety and education of the home educated child?

On 5th September 2012, the Education Committee heard from home educators for the first time since proposals to increase powers to monitor and evaluate home education were thrown out so spectacularly. Badman's recommendations ran into difficulty in their conflation of education and safeguarding and many home educators are watching and waiting to see what happens next.

The death of Khyra Ishaq fuelled concerns that home education should be regulated to meet safeguarding obligations. It was 'assumed' Khyra Ishaq was home educated when Khyra and her siblings stopped attending mainstream provision following arguments between her mother and teaching staff at the school. Home visits by Birmingham City Council to assess home education failed to recognise signs of abuse, Children's Social Care did not follow up a referral, and police concluded that the children were safe during a welfare visit so it's difficult to see how increased powers are likely to address the failings identified in the Serious Case Review and transcript of care proceedings for Khyra's surviving siblings.

The Khyra Ishaq case illustrates an inability of professionals properly to utilise existing powers. Home education carried the can for multiple agency failings despite the fact that, as with Baby P and Victoria Climbié various visits and opportunities to instigate statutory powers were missed.

Education Otherwise issued a statement saying that 'For anyone to blame home education is a red herring designed to distract attention from Birmingham's lamentable child protection record'

Badman investigated suggestions that home education could be used as a cover for child abuse. The recommendations and findings were heavily criticised during a successful campaign by Education Otherwise.

Child Protection is increasingly the means by which zealous councils are gaining access to homes, families and children. For families who find themselves caught in the net of suspicion around home education, they are entering a murky Kafkaesque world where there is accusation without crime, crime without evidence, and trial by committees. Social workers are not required to ensure that 'concerns' are given a fair hearing.

A committee, who will most likely have never met the children, rely upon third party, often contested, accounts from schools, GPs, school nurses, police officers, and social workers make long term and far reaching decision to intervene in family life, causing untold stress, distress and inevitably changes those involved – even if concerns are ultimately dismissed.

In the early stages of child protection – strategy meetings, child protection plans and core assessments – legal aid is not available. Social work has become a discursive practice. Child Protection procedures have the most draconian powers available to the state, the right to separate children from their birth families – but have the lowest burden of proof, and families are consistently warned that to challenge decisions will inevitably lead to cries of non-co-operation.

John Hemming, MP for Birmingham Yardley, campaigned for reform of public family law after he was investigated by Birmingham Social Care. Hemming issued proceedings for harassment but for most people this remedy is too costly. Hemming said, 'One of the problems with child protection assessments

is that parents are asked to prove their "innocence". Because the system is not happy with home educators they often find themselves on the wrong side of a child protection investigation. The case of Khyra Ishaq was a very basic failure that did not require a more aggressive approach from the system, but instead for people to do what they were already supposed to do. Sadly the government have not recognised this and are driving for a more aggressive system."

The question for home educators is who, or what is driving that campaign.



N.B. This article has been abridged for publication. Education Otherwise now has a volunteer team to support families involved with Social Services – see inside back page for contact information. A.Rix (NL Co-ord)



Why Home Education needs to Exist

In the 1970s, a group of parents watching their children struggle within the school system, unable to cope and move forward, decided that there had to be another way and decided to take their children out of school and teach them at home. This was not a new concept as many, many people had been home tutored and home taught before this point, but the authorities took a dislike to their decision and made them fight for their right to Home Educate. They did so and won – won the right for the law to state that there is a legal right for parents to remove their children from state education and choose another path.



When my mother took me out of school, it was because there was no advancement for a bright girl within the system, she did not want me used for teaching other children to read, she did not think that I should spend a week colouring in a green dragon. She opted for the alternative of teaching me at home. She exercised her right, as fought for all those years before.

When my son – bright and intelligent and amazing – went into the system, I watched him limited by the requirements of the system. I saw his personality and confidence disappear and thought, no, I have a choice and I don't have to take this. Thanks to those brave parents, I took him out of school and decided to teach him at home.

None of the children that I grew up with who were also Home Educated are out of work. Most that I have found are married and have jobs and families. None of us cannot read or write. Most of us have completed higher education in one form or another and many of us have University Degrees, or higher. We are the proof that it is not only the school system that can produce active members of society. We are the proof that given our alternative backgrounds and education, we are still adding to society, paying taxes, helping our communities, in short everything that the Government expects of its constituents.

Home Education is needed. For some it is literally a lifesaver. For some, whose children have been so beaten down and broken by bullying, bad teachers and unreasonable timetables, suicide was an option that they were thinking of. Home Education has saved their lives and brought joy and hope into the lives of those who were in the depths of despair, pain and anguish. For some, it is a way to learn when no other way will work. For some with Special Needs such as Autism and all those on the Autistic Spectrum, Home Education means that they can learn in a safe environment that is specifically suited to their requirements, without the distractions of people who don't know them, don't understand them and have no wish to. This is so very important to them. For some Home Education is a way of life, a way of being

able to think and live together in a more harmonious way without the involvement of people who don't know them, possibly wouldn't ever learn their names. To some of us, family is the all-important factor in bringing our children up with a loving and caring environment that caters specifically for their needs and learning requirements.

We are not saying that this is the right choice for everyone. We do not think that all parts of the system are wrong in every area. We do not want a mass closing of all schools and anarchy in the streets. Just as those brave parents who fought for a legal freedom, we want there to be choice within this society of ours. We want to be seen as equals within the community, we don't want to be viewed with immediate suspicion and we do not want the constant accusations of abuse and neglect. In any section of society there will be those who have a general disregard for the safety and welfare of others, but this is no more prevalent with the Home Educating community than in the wider community [*statistics show it to be LESS prevalent – see Briefing paper to Welsh AMs on EO website – Co-ord*]. As I have said we are not idiotic and selfish. Many of us are teachers, carers and educationalists and lecturers of some kind before we begin this journey. We understand the desire to ensure the safety of our children, but we ask that any enquiries be respectful, non-judgmental and made with the utmost care and consideration for all parties involved. Unfortunately the case for most of us is the opposite. We meet with much suspicion before the LA have visited or come to know us individually, which is the uphill battle that we face every day.

Children are individuals and as such have rights along with the rest of society. All the Home Educated community want is the ability to care for our children in the best way, meeting their specific needs as required. As I have said, for some this choice literally saves lives and this is why Home Education needs to exist.

Jai, Herts. 01438 361124

or Email Mammajai@gmx. co. uk or Freedomparents@groups. facebook. com [removing spaces]



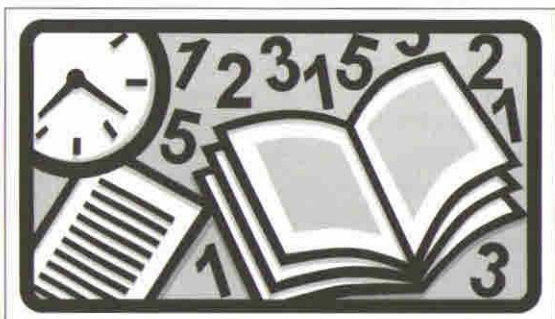
School 'Culture-shock' for HE Teenager!

Unlike most, I was not five but fifteen when I first walked through the gates of a school. Bells that ring incessantly, assemblies, parent evenings and regimented timetables were alien and distant concepts to me. My only experience of these things was second hand – from friends who went to school or conversations overheard from uniformed children on the bus. What it meant to go through the daily school routine was only a vague notion in my mind that somehow didn't fit in with the rest of my identity; having been home-educated along with my two brothers for the whole of my academic life, I was utterly unaccustomed to what really went on in these so-called educational establishments. It wasn't until I decided to start my A-Levels in a school sixth-form that the difference between my education – home-based and driven entirely by my own motivation and interests – and that of my fellow pupils, with eleven odd years of schooling behind them, became a stark contrast.

For people who have always gone to school, it's hard to imagine that home – or rather outside of school – can be the best place for learning. From talking to people in my year, I have realised that, for many, 'education' and 'school' have merged into one, so that any thought of doing much in the way of learning outside of classes and prescribed homework is an unfamiliar and unattractive idea. But who can blame them after years of doing whatever the teacher decides is 'important' to learn, rather than being allowed to take the initiative themselves? Even the brightest students in some of my classes seem happiest when able to make notes from what the teacher writes on the whiteboard. From what I've observed, school little encourages independent thought in the years leading up to A-Level (of course each year always leads to another, inevitably more important stage, with university the sole destination at the end) by leaving little room for personal interest and self-initiated learning, only to demand of its AS and A2

students that they 'think for themselves' and be 'independent learners.' Even this is self-contradictory given that I was told I needed to present my English teacher with a plan of my coursework essay, so that she could make sure I was picking up on all the right things, instead of going about it in my own way: the unwanted assistance was thrust upon me, while I wanted to be an 'independent learner.'

I am often amazed at how the people I have met at school have survived eleven years without being utterly put off learning altogether. Compared with my experiences of home education, in which learning was always an enjoyable end in itself, and a continual process that took us from reading in our bedrooms to the science museum and much playing in between, the kind of education that school would appear to offer has more to do with exams, progress and results than with enjoyment, fulfilment or process. From day one of my courses in September we were reminded of our summer exams and what they would consist of, before we had so much as opened the leaf of a novel, solved an equation or glanced at our new sketchbooks. I have come to realise that although my home education has undoubtedly helped me fit in more readily to the more (though by no means completely) independent study required for A-Levels, it was completely different from what my peers experienced in school. I was never told that anything I learned was required for the passing of an exam – or any other such artificial reward.



For my first fifteen years I never followed one timetable or took any assessment that I hadn't chosen to take myself. It's hard for me to describe a 'typical' day as a home educator, as people who go to school can. Not going to school gave me the time and freedom to write (sometimes extensively), do art, play with my brothers and, later, find an interest in maths. Most important, however, was the fact that I could do these things naturally – none of them were compulsory as they would be in school.

When I did decide to write, paint or play, there was no bell to tell me that the time for writing, painting or playing was over – with the effect that I had enough time to really engage with what I was doing without time restrictions. There was nothing to say that I couldn't spend the whole day making a film with my brothers, or conducting a survey of the numbers of people in their cars driving past the end of our road, or writing a 'novel' about a leopard. Time was no restriction to our learning, and neither was the place we were doing it in – instead of being trapped in a school building all day, our education took place in swimming pools, nature reserves, farms, parks, museums, and our own back garden.

Alice (16), London SE

Home Education Around the World: China (Shanghai, Beijing) and Hong Kong

by Corinna Spellerberg

The official statement (Compulsory Education Law) of the People's Republic of China is that school is compulsory, starting at the age of 6 or 7. Education is then compulsory for nine years in a school licensed by the state. The actual administration of the entire process lies in the hands of the local authorities. To sum up, home schooling is deemed illegal as it is not strictly speaking legalised. However, with China being such a huge country and a large amount of its population constantly on the move as migrant workers, the law can hardly be enforced by the authorities, and there are no checks by government officials in place. In addition, schools are not always free and families may struggle to send their kids for economic reasons.

Home schooling by Chinese citizens is not encouraged, even though there is no punishment if families choose to do so. It seems to be quite rare – there are no numbers and statistics available – and has to be undertaken in secret, partly for fear of the state and partly because it is shunned by society. The large numbers of expats or foreign citizens in the major hub cities (Beijing, Shanghai) do however get away with it, as long as they do not interfere with the education of the Chinese citizens.

In Shanghai, secular home schooling families seem to be a minority, with most people coming from a religious background. There is a monthly meeting of one home ed group, currently on the lookout for a new venue. Overall, you have to be prepared to travel further, spent more money and do without a decent library, compared to the UK.

Hong Kong (with 50 to 100 home educating families) seems to be somewhere in the middle between the Chinese and the British approach. Even though school attendance is compulsory and free, and people have been fined in the past for keeping their kids at home, a school attendance order is not issued in all cases and some home ed families are even known to the authorities (Hong Kong Education Bureau, EDB).

Websites and sources:

<http://www.hslda.org/hs/international/China/default.asp>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ \(remove space\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeschooling_international_status_and_statistics#People.27s_Republic_of_China)

[Homeschooling_international_status_and_statistics#People.27s_Republic_of_China](http://www.hslda.org/hs/international/China/default.asp)

The China Homeschooling Association Website: <http://www.bsxlm.com/portal.php> (in Mandarin)

Distance learning and support facility: <http://www.teach-asia.com/> (Christian)

<http://www.beijing-kids.com/forum/2008/02/29/Homeschooling-in-Beijing>

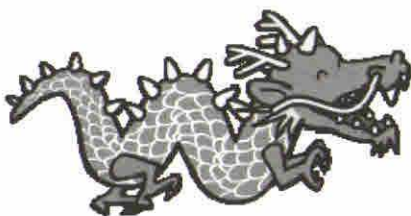
Groups:

Shanghai Yahoo group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Shanghaihomeschoolers/?yguid=356992153>
(a very lively group with strong fluctuations, subscription only)

Private site of a home schooling mother, with lists of other groups and learning coops in Shanghai:
http://mommykitten.senseimichael.com/?page_id=35

Beijing Yahoo group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BJWestsidehomeschool/> (subscription only)

Hong Kong home education group: <http://www.meetup.com/hongkong-homeschool/>



*Corinna has moved to China for a year,
but will still be sending her articles about
Home Education around the World ...
We hope she enjoys the experience!
Anne (NL Co-ord)*

ALE Conference

Serra d'Ador Hostel, Valencia, Spain from 31 August to 4 September 2011

Attended on behalf of Education Otherwise by Shena Deuchars

I travelled by EasyJet and train to this conference, organised by the Spanish home-education organisation Asociación por la Libre Educación (ALE). The conference was held in a very basic hostel where up to six people slept on a platform in concrete huts among the trees. The number of people in my hut kept changing as speakers arrived and left. On the first night, I shared with only one other person; late on the second night a couple with two small children arrived very late and the German delegates shared the bottom platform with me.



The whole camp (over 100 people) ate as a large group three times a day plus snacks. Meals were served to a relaxed Spanish timetable, so dinner was very late in the evening. The content of the meals sometimes left a lot to be desired. The strangest was Friday lunch: rice topped with a fried egg and liberal quantities of ketchup (there was no choice about applying the ketchup).



The toilet facilities were a large communal shed but there was plenty of hot water. The weather was very warm and sunny with an occasional thunderstorm to alleviate the boredom.



The Spanish families took part in the sorts of planned and impromptu activities that we see at HESFes and similar camps: talks about child development, music, yoga, chess, sports and discussions of the practicalities of home education.

I was one of a group of 15–20 invited guests from home-education organisations across Europe and the USA. The original agenda indicated that our presentations would be spread throughout the conference. However, Daragh MacInerney managed to secure funding for a simultaneous English–Spanish interpretation system and so he decided to

have us talk back-to-back throughout the Saturday. This meant that we started on the Thursday morning by working out what the international speakers would do for the first two days. General discussion revealed that there were huge differences in HE in the countries represented, so we decided to share details of the situation (regulatory and practical) in each country:

- UK (Shena Deuchars, Neil Taylor, Mike Fortune-Wood)
- Bulgaria (Peter Porumbachanov)
- France (Agnès Ohlenbusch)
- Germany (Karen Kern, Silke Ohlert and Kelley Schwab)

- Holland (Peter and Bernadette Van Zuidam)
- Italy (Erika Di Martino)
- Poland (Mariusz Dzieciatko)
- Portugal (Claudia Sousa)
- Spain (Daragh MacInerney)
- Sweden (Jonas Himmelstrand)

The UK has the largest community of home educators and is one of the most liberal countries in terms of the law surrounding HE. Bulgaria is an HE paradise – Bulgarians are independent and believe that families raise children, so HEers get left alone. France has seen increasing control from the state since 1998 and families must submit to inspections. Germany has had some high-profile court cases that would have been better not going before the courts. Although everyone knows that HE is illegal in Germany, Kelley Schwab is doing it with the knowledge and blessing of a judge. She and her daughters go into a primary school to do craft with the children. Home education is more or less difficult in different areas of Holland and Belgium and families move around to escape the attention of the authorities. Italy and Portugal have only a handful of home-educating families and the law and authorities are very unclear about it; the culture means that families can easily fly under the radar. The situation in Poland is rather uncertain and unstable with families living with a fear of being found out. Spain has had recent court cases and no-one is quite sure how the situation will play out there. In Sweden, it used to be reasonably easy to fulfill the bureaucratic requirements but things have tightened up recently. Families are fined for home educating but they fight the process to the end, which takes about a year, then they pay the fine in time for the process to start over with the new school year. Although families may treat this as a “tax” on home education, they find it stressful.

After much time spent explaining and clarifying the situations and the words used in different countries for similar concepts, we were ready to start discussing a way forward for united HE across Europe. Most of the country delegates (France and Germany being notable exceptions) were in favour of the involvement of HSLDA in Europe. Mike, Neil and I explained that that would make it unacceptable for many people in the UK. By dinnertime on Friday, we had reached an understanding that we needed some way to communicate across Europe but that US involvement (and specifically involvement by HSLDA) might not be helpful. Mike Donnelly of HSLDA arrived late on the Friday evening to participate in the talks on the Saturday.

It was very interesting to take part in the Saturday session. There were interpreters in a soundproof booth at the back of the room. As the speaker talked, they interpreted into Spanish and it was relayed to wireless headsets worn by the listeners. It was also possible to hear the English channel directly through the headphones. Many people took a headset away and listened to the session from elsewhere on the site while playing with children. Video of the talks is available on [YouTube](#). It was unfortunate that this session did not happen earlier in the conference – the international speakers were approached by parents much more after they had heard the talks but we left the following day.



On the Sunday morning, a final session of the international speakers decided that the best way to move forward would be for the Learning Unlimited Yahoo! group to be re-launched as a way for organisations across Europe to keep in touch, share information and set up meetings. There was also discussion about setting up a website and making it easy for countries in which HE is less developed to point their officials to information that shows the success of HE in countries where it is more established.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Home Education – Warts and All!!!

[First published in EONL December 2002 – slightly abridged]

I recently found diary pages written in the early weeks and months of home-educating. If I hadn't read them, I wouldn't have recalled how tough life was then; a powerful need to prove I could 'do it', and that our 6 year old would be in no way disadvantaged by our decision to remove him from school, and a compulsion to explain and justify ourselves to anyone who would listen. We had been left in no doubt by the school of the gravity of our position and the impossible task we had taken on. The LEA would be keeping a close eye on us as we had committed a major crime. Home education was not fashionable, understood or healthy, we were deviants who officially did not exist. Our children would suffer terribly; they needed professionals not parents. We were on our own.

Unfortunately for me then, the magazine, the initial point of contact for many EO newcomers, only increased the sense of isolation. No-one seemed to feel as I did, everyone else was doing well. The pages were filled with letters from people who were nothing like our family and who had an entirely opposite perception of home-education and child-rearing to me. The local EO group though were supportive, but boys were in very short supply and as a family we did grow increasingly uncomfortable with the inevitable pro-female bias. The effort we made initially to mix with other EO families (the stick together policy), did fade as we gradually realised most 'normal' families also accepted us, even if they did think us strange, provided we also accepted and appreciated their school-orientated lifestyle. Life is far easier now, the children finding their own friends close to home.

Educating at home has been a success for us and we are very happy with how our children are developing, but it hasn't always been easy. Personalities do clash, children are defiant, I have got angry at times and threatened to send them to school, and all relationships can come under intense pressure. I never feel I give any of them enough attention (despite having a husband and not having a job), and at times feel far removed from the idyllic image of home education portrayed in the magazine. Am I really that untypical, despite the fact I've never felt unable to cope with the difficulties that have arisen? Or are others hiding the fact that there are problems because they feel the need to compete, to prove something to the rest of us, or to the outside world?

For us home education was not a 'forever' decision. We didn't know where it would take us. It is a 'now' existence and we are constantly balancing the school and home choices available with the ever changing needs of our children, and with what we believe to be in their best interests. Whilst we understand there can be some children who are completely suited to the HE lifestyle, there are some who may only benefit from it for a shorter period. Is it reasonable to say your child will never go to school? How can you ever know quite what is round the corner, how they will develop, how their needs will change?

My son now appears to be wanting more structure and greater challenges than I can offer at home. A tour round a prospective secondary school has satisfied us that we can no longer compete with what is on offer: specialist teaching, variety of subjects, sports, music, science and technology facilities, other adult influences, especially male etc. He is very keen to try it. Once there he will be able to compare this with home and come to his own conclusions about which path his education will take.

It really is OK for a parent to realise that they cannot be all a child needs to become a healthy, well adjusted adult with a broad education. I haven't failed my child if he ends up in school. I believe

I've done well to come this far although I do accept that there may be faults in my character or approach which may have caused us to run out of steam. (It may be necessary for a child to need to get away from his parents!) I can say though that I have done my best with a great deal of thought and effort. I do not feel a failure. Up to now home education has been the only way for all of us but we do also have the freedom to decide when it is time for a new approach. We are not trapped by any one way of living so we can do our best for each child individually.

There seem to be many in EO who believe they are doing their own thing, that they have freed themselves from the pressures of school. Yet, like it or not, it appears they have escaped from one set of beliefs to another: the EO way of educating the typical EO child. People do like to belong and there is comfort in numbers. No matter how much there is a claim EO accepts every approach (and I have no doubt it does), that diversity, individuality or openness of opinion in some cases, just doesn't exist. Are EO members really of one mind or does the organisation only attract or encourage a certain type of home educator?

As a member of EO originally, I have felt guilty by having a structured approach to some aspects of my children's education, even though it is the only way I can organise them all, produce the 'evidence' required and achieve certain standards I believe are important. I don't have any extraordinary talents or interests which my child can share, unlike many in EO, except a love of the outdoors and sport, so we basically concentrate on the subjects taught at school. It is difficult to believe that there are not more who agree in principle with school, perhaps with how it was 20 or 30 years ago before it became so competitive, who are trying to provide a similar sound basic education and who have annual inspections to bear in mind.

I have also felt guilty for being brought up to believe children need to know where they stand, that there are boundaries. They are not born knowing what's good for them or how to bring themselves up, they often need firm guidelines as well as a good example. School offered us neither. The EO children written about in the magazine are gifted, intelligent, perfect, whereas my own do fall out and hit each other, argue, shout and cry as well as having positive attributes. I do have to dole out punishments to 'offenders' on the occasions when they can't resolve their own differences. That is my family – imperfect, lively, noisy, challenging and happy. It feels perfectly normal to me even though such families don't feature in the magazine.

I've been out of contact with the magazine since 1998, and the general tone is unchanged. I had hoped it would have become better able to inspire and support all families and children turning to EO in desperation as they start out. After all it's those people who need what the magazine contains, it could make all the difference to them. Are there members who no longer feel the need to contribute and discuss their experiences and thoughts?

Does apathy set in after a while once your HE is up and running and do you no longer want to bother entering into debate over issues you have personally resolved, as you have moved on? Are we concerned at all that by not using the magazine as a vehicle for a variety of experience and viewpoints, we are not helping or encouraging those setting out on a difficult, often lonely path?

It is up to all the members who care about the future of EO, to shape the organisation through the magazine so everyone can feel they identify with other home educators. We can either sit back, content we are doing fine, or we can fill the pages with our own individual, honest viewpoints taken from real life. It is our choice!

(Helen, Nottinghamshire)



BOOK REVIEWS – by Tammy

As the nights start drawing in and the weather turns colder it is the ideal time to start thinking about crafty activities. This issue we have two craft books that are bursting with ideas to keep you busy!



Making Soft Toys Author: Karin Neuschutz

Price: £12.99 ISBN: 978-86315-908-4

This colourful new book from Floris is full of beautiful toys to make. There are dolls, puppets, fluffy toys and more. Each toy comes with detailed instructions and patterns. Most require basic sewing skills, and younger children will need help with the projects. All in all there are 6 different types of soft toys to make, including dolls, teddy bears, farm animals and wild animals. The toys that you make using this book are bound to be treasured and loved for many years to come.

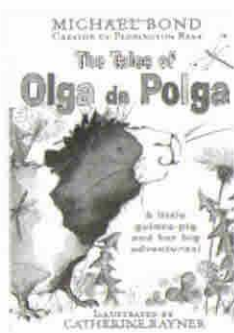
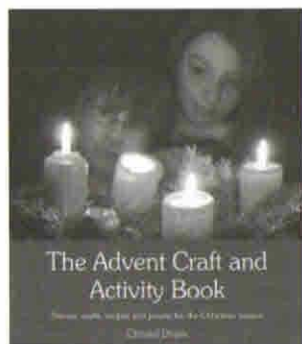
The Advent Craft and Activity Book

Author: Christel Dhom

Price: £12.99 ISBN: 978-086315-912-1

This new book is perfect for getting ready for the holidays. It is fully illustrated and contains creative suggestions for each day from December 1st through to the feast of the Epiphany. Each day has a poem, story or carol and craft or baking idea. It was inspired by German Christmas traditions, and the crafts, activities and stories all have a German flavour. You will learn to bake delicious German cookies and Stollen, make your own advent calendar and Christmas decorations and learn more about the traditions surrounding Christmas.

This is a fantastic resource for getting ready for Christmas and has activities that will appeal to children and adults alike.



The tales of Olga da Polga by Michael Bond

This is a story about a guinea pig called Olga da Polga, who goes to live with the sawdust family. Olga loves to go on adventures, making up stories and meeting new friends; as well as her favourite thing – eating! She has 3 best friends, Noel the cat, Graham the tortoise and Fangio the hedgehog. I loved Olga da Polga because she is an exciting and funny guinea pig; she looks a bit like my guinea pig, Rosie. I really enjoyed Olga's adventures and am looking forward to reading the rest of the books about her. I think all children who love animals would love to read this book; I give it 10 out of 10 stars. *Review by Amélie (Age 7)*

We would love to hear from you with reviews of your favourite books and home ed resources. Please send your reviews to bookreviews@educationotherwise.org

EO BUSINESS/notices

AGM/GATHERING REPORT

The Gathering was again not well attended by EO members, and the AGM on 24th November was not quite quorate. It was therefore reconvened the following week (1st December) and took place in the presence of seven trustees, holding between them a total of 25 proxy votes. The full AGM minutes are in the 'member home' area of the website, and on the members' forum; but in brief:

Accounts for y/e 30th June 2012 and Independent Examiner's Report were accepted – these can now be filed with Companies House well within the time limit, together with the Trustees' Report, and posted on the EO website. Darlington & Co. were again appointed as Independent Examiners.

The two Special Resolutions were unanimously accepted – all trustees approved them, as did those proxies who had given specific instructions. The remaining proxies had given discretion to the Chair or proxy holder, some with no further indication and some with informal instructions such as 'do what you think is best for EO members'. This means that we now need a minimum of 8 trustees, and the quorum for General Meetings is 16 Signed-Up Members personally present (we could just have made that at the gathering)

Discussion took place regarding roles to be taken by current and prospective Council members, and potential retirements due to reduction in minimum required under amendment to M&As (SR1). Trustees currently holding named posts were willing to continue, but as Janet Wilkinson is retiring Celia McDonagh will take on the whole of the Company Secretary role for the time being and ensure EO's compliance is up to date.

All those nominated were elected by majority by the meeting (taking account of proxy votes), to bring the total number of trustees to 13. Our current M&As require a minimum of 14, but this will be replaced by a minimum of 8 once Special Resolutions are formally approved by Charity Commission; hence there should be no need for additional co-option.

Gathering attendance was similar to February, despite longer advance notice. A good deal of time and effort, as well as members' money, goes into arranging a gathering, so we may have to reconsider this.

Please let us know your views on gatherings: trustees@educationotherwise.org



EO SEND TEAM (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities)

Unfortunately Andrew has had to take time off from dealing with enquiries for health reasons, but continues to maintain contact with Denice who is still dealing with email enquiries. Jo (who was taking phone calls) has also had to retire, so we have no one with specialist knowledge to take phone calls now. For the present calls are being directed to Enquiries volunteers and will be signposted to HE-Special Yahoo list. The Kennel family are retaining a co-ordination role and developing a resource bank as a foundation for the team, and new volunteers. **We need a volunteer to take SEND phone calls.**



Membership /renewal letters

The process of reprinting stationery has been fraught with difficulties; without our usual technical support, we have had to redesign the template several times, which has been a major cause of delay in sending out renewal and membership letters. The final version (including pop-out membership cards) is now with the printers, who tell us they should be able to get a batch to us by mid-December. Our membership secretary (Shena) will then have to deal with the backlog, since we ran out of the former letters in September. We appreciate the patience of the many members who have been waiting for their membership cards and hope (this time with some conviction) that you'll have them by Christmas ...



Volunteer Vacancies

As always, we need people who can offer skills, knowledge, and a fairly regular time commitment to help EO run more smoothly. In particular, someone with **IT/publishing skills** would be most welcome; also anyone who has substantial experience of home education and could join the telephone rota for the **Helpline** team. Also someone with knowledge of **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**, who would be willing to take phone calls from parents needing support in this situation. We'll be as flexible as we can – please talk to us!

IT/publishing – contact Anne <arix@educationotherwise.org>

Helpline/SEND – contact Edwina <e.theunissen@educationotherwise.org>

Anything Else – contact Wendy <vol-coordinator@educationotherwise.org>

N.B. all EO volunteers are eligible for a reduced membership subscription, and receive a complimentary paper copy of the newsletter.

Local Contact Update

There are always vacancies for Local Contacts, so please check if there is one in your area, and if not, perhaps you could consider volunteering. It need not be an onerous role, and it would be helpful if other local members would come forward when their own LC needs to retire. Some LCs are covering neighbouring areas, and we are very grateful to them.

We have a new Acting Local Contact for Oxford: Rachel Simpson – thank you Rachel!

We currently have vacancies for Local Contacts for the following counties:-

ENGLAND

Cheshire

Devon (North)

Gloucestershire

Hampshire

Herefordshire

Northamptonshire

Rutland

Shropshire

Somerset

Suffolk

Wiltshire

WALES

Anglesey

Ceredigion

Pembrokeshire

Powys

For more information or to volunteer, please contact Lei Ashe, our Local Contact Co-ordinator

<lcco-ordinator@educationotherwise.org>

LOCAL GROUP PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

Reminder to Local Group Organisers: The insurance policy comes up for renewal in March. EO is making a substantial payment to cover the cost, but Local Groups pay only £10 per year or part year. This was set up because we received many requests, but so far only a few groups have taken advantage of it – meaning that EO members' money is being under-used. Now would be a good time to apply, so that your group can take advantage of a full year's insurance.

EO's Local Group Insurance is provided as a service to members, and available only to groups organised by EO Members; *three* EO family members need to be named as Local Group organisers, to ensure continuity. Group organisers must ensure that they fully understand the conditions of the cover as set out in the schedule, relating to low risk activities, etc., and make all participating families aware of these.

Policy documents, detailed guidance and an application form are available to download from the Member Home area of the EO website or by email from Fe (the Local Groups Insurance Co-ordinator) at <lgic@educationotherwise.org>. It is essential that Local Group organisers should read the policy documents carefully, to ensure that they are aware of the conditions and that the policy is suitable for their requirements, BEFORE applying for the insurance. If you are unable to access this online, 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. However, you should be aware that this method is likely to involve some forwarding delays.

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**

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: lgco@educationotherwise.org

England

Bedfordshire

Christian Home Ed – Scott and Rachel, scottandrachel@ntlworld.com

Busy B-Hes – Weekly drop-in offering chats and support; activities.

Pauline 07791 850545 pauline@kc2001.fsnet.co.uk

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

Berkshire

Berkshire Home Educators – Educators Meetings for families living in Berkshire and adjoining counties.

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/groups/berkshirehomeeducators/>

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

Buckinghamshire

Free Range Education – range of educational events and activities in Milton Keynes & North Bucks Sarah Abbott: 07725 039981

www.freerangeeducation.org

High Wycombe Home Educators – group for all home educators in and around the High Wycombe area.

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

Home Education Milton Keynes – An informal non-hierarchical group for home educators 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>

Georgianne Scott 01908 662256 sienna-swift7@powernet.co.uk

MK-CHEF – HE support group for Milton Keynes. Affiliated to Home Service 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>

Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire Home Educators – A website all about home educating in Cambridgeshire including local groups and how to contact them.

www.camshomeed.co.uk Jane Levicki: camshomeed@gmail.com

Cambridge Home Educating Families (CHEF) – group of parents/carers who HE or are considering HE.

<http://www.cambridgehomeeducators.org.uk/>

Morag Nevay 01223 464918 morag2000@hotmail.com

Cambridge Home Educating Community Activity List – summary of sessions and regular groups in Cambridge www.educationchoice.org.uk

Karen Rodgers 01223 573220 karen@karenrogers.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

<http://www.southcheshirehe.btck.co.uk/>

Cornwall

Home Grown – 5 E Cornwall HE Group - Drama & Spanish, nr. Liskeard. Katherine Revell 01752 851091

PZ Home Ed Meets Monday pm for workshop during term time.

Ruth 01736 350887 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.communigate.co.uk/lakes/cumbriahomeed/>

West Cumbria Home Educators – (including Keswick). Please get in touch if you're home educating in West Cumbria and we'll see how we can support each other: 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 and activities. Also welcome those who are thinking about educating elsewhere than at school <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; natural history history photography and more. Members-only internet group. Hannah and Gordon 01803 762788 lindnich@tesco.net

Exeter Home Education Community Wednesday drop-in; GCSE; green woodwork permaculture pottery & more. nbedford@btinternet.com

<http://exeterhomeeducationcommunity.co.uk> Nell 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/

Home Grown Kids – Website activities forum and newsletters HE/flexischools or interested in home education.

<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

Teignbridge and Torbay Home Educators – Social events and educational visits. <http://www.teignbridgeandtorbayhe.co.uk>

Julia Pollard 07905 293223 Julia@classroomfree.co.uk

Teignbridge HE Group – HE support/social/educational group for Teignbridge and surrounding areas teignbridgec@gmail.com

<http://teignbridgehegroup.yolasite.com/>

South Devon Home Education Group –

<http://www.southdevonhomeeducation.co.uk/>

Helen 01803 390639 helenlloyd-hoare@blueyonder.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

HERA – friendly group based in Creekmoor Poole. Weekly workshops and activities + outings and events. www.heradorset.shutterfly.com

Sarah 01202 600065 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. Emma: bmth.home.ed@gmail.com

Durham

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

Essex

A Different Class Home Education Group – Southeind-on-Sea. Non-profit weekly meetings regular outings. www.adifferentclass.org

Haverhill HE group – Covering South Suffolk/North Essex.
Eve 01440 788228 or 07768 763913 wixde@yahoo.co.uk

WIGWAM Epping Forest – A weekly informal drop-in group. Eleanor Stapleton 07866 701442 elmajose2@yahoo.co.uk

Southend HE Group – Meets weekly. Lots of outings and activities.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/southendhomeeducation/>
southendhomeeducation@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

Forest of Dean HE group – Bridge and dam building river clearance fire building woodland walks etc. Roxy cdsnhf@googlemail.com

Stroud email list Nick 01453 840036 nick.weir@localfood.org.uk

Cirencester and Cotswold group – Meetings plus will answer HE queries. Pam Perryman 01285 721008 pamela.perryman@gmail.com

Hampshire

Hampshire FRHEBEES – 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 akiparsons@yahoo.com

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

SEEDS – Meets every term time afternoon for sports/play and for a full day activity once a week. Southampton.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/seeds1/>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/seeds1/>

Herefordshire

Hereford Home Education – Indoor and outdoor facilities ages 3-15.
hereforthe@gmail.com

Monmouth and Herefordshire Home Educators – Local meets and events Yahoo! group. Roxy 01989 768128

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

Hertfordshire

Herts Home Educators – Yahoo! group for Hertfordshire home educators. 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 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!

Steph for more info: stephgater@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/

Kent ASD Home Ed – For parents/carers of ASD/Aspergers children who are educating them '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

SATHE Supporting Autism Through Home Education – A West Kent group open to all parents/carers either home educating flexi-schooling or considering Education Otherwise for children with autism/sensitivities or learning difficulties.

Denice Cartwright 07554 386844 S-A-T-H-E@yahoogroups.co.uk
<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/S-A-T-H-E/>

Wealden Home Educators' Network – for HE families in SE England.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wealdenhomeeducatorsnetwork/>

Lancashire

Preston and District Home Education Group – weekly Trampolining Sessions for local HERS Jill Taylor (or All) jilltaylorasd@aol.com

LEAD Home Education – swap ideas, share stories and arrange local social gatherings. 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-l-la/>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/he-l-la/>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/he-l-la/>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/he-l-la/>

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:

msammarshall@googlemail.com

Syston HE – A fun and lively group for the under 10s. Vikki

vikkiamartin@googlemail.com

vikkiamartin@googlemail.com

vikkiamartin@googlemail.com

vikkiamartin@googlemail.com

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vikkiamartin@googlemail.com

vikkiamartin@googlemail.com

Kings Lynn HE – Weekly get-together. Kirsten 01485 540724
murraybeers@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 Email: welcmeiflow@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/

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 Louisa: louisa.southey@gmail.com or 01865 735705

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 HErs 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/>
tauntonhomeeducation@yahoo.com <http://tauntonhomeed.blogspot.com/>

HEY Yeovil – All HE families welcome. Lyn Crocker 01963 23669
heyevail@hotmail.com

Wells Swimming Group – Weekly swimming Wells Leisure Centre term time only. Lesley 01749 689241 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

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

Haverhill HE group – Covering South Suffolk/North Essex.

Eve 01440 788228 or 07768 763913 wixde@yahoo.co.uk

Ipswich HE Wednesdays Shared lunch and activities.

Emma emma@nattyem.co.uk

Ipswich town centre group + Book Club – Lisa 07538 102322

llw_llg@yahoo.co.uk

Tostock HE Group – All families welcome to this very friendly group.

Jan 01359 251184 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

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

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

christabelthorpe@hotmail.com

<http://www.facebook.com/#1/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

HEDGE Home Ed Group – Hastings/St. Leonards weekly social meetings + trips etc. www.hedge-education.btck.co.uk Beshlie 01424 812870

South Eastern Home Educators – <http://www.southeast-home-educators.co.uk>

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 Catherine: 01424 812213

Warwickshire

Creative Youth Adventure Club (Coventry) – For over 11s working towards Arts Awards. Sarah 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, Alison 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

Worcestershire

Bewdley HE Group – Weekly meetings all welcome.

Sophie 01299 405669 sophie.butcher34@yahoo.com

Worcestershire Home Ed Yahoo Group Email list for Worcs HErs

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/worcestershirehome-ed/>

Forest School Bodenham Arboretum Kidderminster – For all HE families. Sophie 01299 405669 sophie.butcher34@yahoo.com

Yorkshire

DHNE Doncaster home educators Yahoo group for families in the Doncaster and surrounding areas. Cheryl Moy on 07825 914340

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 henney-owner@yahoo.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

meandchi7@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@yahoo.com

North + West HE Group – Meets Skipton monthly and Bradford Gym Club weekly. Regular meetings and outings. Judith 01756 791356
Rotherham Home Education – This is a friendly informal group for families home educating in South Yorkshire and surrounding area. Pauline Braithwaite 077764 06409 colleecandydog123@yahoo.co.uk
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RothHE/>
SYHEC – Yahoo! group for parents HEing in South Yorkshire.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/syhec/>

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
ActiveEO – Monthly newsletter with weekly events for group members HEing in Chichester Bognor Regis Havant Portsmouth and Petersfield areas. Julie 01243 552472 <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/>
South East Home Educators – (Kent/Sussex) Meet regularly for trips etc. To join Yahoo! group email: southeasthomeeducators-subscribe@yahoo.com
<http://www.southeast-home-educators.co.uk>
Home-EASE (Home Education for all South East) – Group of HE families in South-East England 0753 1677 083
homeeducatingmum@yahoo.co.uk

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://hesandeventssw.yolasite.com> southdevonlc@gmail.com

Regional – West Midlands

Birmingham Home Ed – and events for HE families.
<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
<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/hen-iom/>

Wales

Carmarthenshire

Camarthen HE Group – Regular meetings in Johnstown Carmarthen
caroline.milburn@yahoo.com
North Carmarthen HE Group – meetings for friendship & play.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ncarmarthenhomeed>

Denbighshire

Froncsyllte HE group – Fortnightly group meets 10-4pm. Social play and chat. vivodsam@gmail.com

Flintshire

Flintshire Home Education – Regular meet ups activities & support.
flintshirehomeeducation@yahoo.co.uk

Glamorgan

New Foundations HE – Meets Cardiff Thursdays 10-4. All activities free.
<http://www.newfoundationshe.com> 02920216502
newfoundationshe@virginmedia.com
Bridgend Home Education group – The group is free and families from across South Wales are welcome. Rachel bridgendhomeed@aol.com
<http://www.bridgendhomeeducators.org>
Newport Home Education Group – Group Rogerstone 1-4pm E4/family.
Fiona fionataylor910@btinternet.com

Gwynedd

Langower HE Group – Weekly meetings. rowenna73@hotmail.com
Tregarth Creative Learning and Support – Regular meetings free weekly newsletter of events via email. jdchapmanmaurice@aol.com
<http://www.creativelearningandsupport.co.uk> Julie 01286 678181

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/>
Monmouth Home Educators – Meets at Rockfield Community Centre. Roxy 01989 768128 cdsnhf@googlemail.com
Usk Home Education – Monthly (Thurs) meet other HERs in the area for fun and games and cups of tea. Climbing wall soft mats table tennis tables crafts lots of outdoor space. Roxy: 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

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 (Siwstown) – Occasional meetings for varied activities all ages. siouxcatsy@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.ehew.co.uk>
Monmouth/Hereford/Gloucester – for information about group activities in the Monmouth/Hereford/Gloucester area local EO member Roxy 01989 768128 cdsnhf@googlemail.com

Channel Islands

Home Education Jersey – New home education group. Jess: 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 Atpilr@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

REMINDER TO GROUP ORGANISERS:

Public Liability Insurance (see p. 18) is available at reduced cost to HE Local Groups run by EO members. Full details may be found on the 'member home' area of the EO website or by email from Fe at: lgic@educationotherwise.org

Who does What in EO

Current Trustees [Council Members]

Lei Ashe (Local Contacts Co-ord)

lashe@educationotherwise.org

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bcameron-young@educationotherwise.org

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N.B. Email to

trustees@educationotherwise.org

goes to all trustees

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SWINDON

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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

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 Team:

Cheryl 01302 868 507 or 07825 914 340

Sinead 08445 003 697

Special Needs: **Denice**

send@educationotherwise.org [08455 003887]

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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