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## A Site For Sore Eyes

All the uncountable number of hours of hard work put in by David Brindley & Helen Cullen-Williams come to fruition this month when our fantastic new web-site goes live!



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



Be sure to visit us – take the quiz – have your say on our Blog – add your comments to our Facebook page - find us on Twitter – join in with one of the many discussions on our Forum [*hosted by [www.thinkhumanism.com](http://www.thinkhumanism.com)*] – subscribe to our e-mail list - see us on You-tube - check out the books and pamphlets!

Find out more about us - catch up with our news - our events - our campaigns ... Even review back-copies of our Newsletter!

## It 'Is' Big and It 'Is' Clever

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### Valuable Dry Run

What a good plan it was to use part of our May meeting as a dry run for the 'Five Short Talks On Humanism' which will be the theme of our Thursday Evening event .....▶▶▶▶▶

Being able to deliver the talks to a live audience identified several unanticipated problems and [*guided by constructive comments from the floor*] allowed Ken - the speakers [Ian, Rachel, Kath, John & Darren] - and Julie (Chair) to re-think & re-schedule several aspects of the presentation.

There is no doubt this exercise will go a long way to ensuring the real event [on Thurs 24<sup>th</sup>] is delivered in the best possible manner ... **Thanks everyone!**

### Humanist Week 2010 21st-27th June

**L.S.H.**'s long anticipated Outreach Event is here at last. In order to coincide with National Humanist Week – **and for June only** - our normal '3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month at Gt Eccleston Village Centre' is deferred.

Instead we will be in Preston - **TWICE!** –

All day Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June ... *then* ...

The evening of Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June.

*Our poster for the event is on page 2 of this issue.*

We had a great response from volunteers to staff 'CitizenZone' throughout the day on Wednesday [*thanks to everyone*].

But it is really important to get as many people as possible to come along and support our Thursday evening event too.

If every **LSH** member and 'Friend of **LSH**' [*who can*] were to come along we'd present a very positive image to newcomers and opponents alike.

Put it in your diary now! –  
Tell as many people as you can! –  
Bring a friend!

**Special thanks to Julie Humphrey for all her efforts arranging this!**



Lancashire  
Secular  
Humanists

A group for free-thinking individuals living lives informed by Logic Science & Humanity

## Everything You Want To Know About Humanism

**Preston Flag Market**  
10am - 4pm Wednesday 23 June

Members of Lancashire Secular Humanists will be at the 'CitizenZone' vehicle.  
Call in - Pick up literature - Learn about Humanist ceremonies -  
Ask questions - Take the 'Are You A Humanist?' quiz.

**Preston Town Hall**  
7.30pm Thursday 24 June

There will be five short talks on Humanism in Room 'A' Theatre  
- explaining various aspects of Secular Humanism:

Who - What - When - Where - Why

The audience will be encouraged to participate with questions.  
We guarantee that - by the end of the evening - you will leave understanding  
more about Humanism than when you arrived!

Find out more at [www.lancshumanism.org.uk](http://www.lancshumanism.org.uk)  
or find us on Facebook or Twitter

### If You Like Us – You May Like Them

The Amnesty International Preston branch  
[ <http://preston.amnesty.org.uk> ] meets on the second  
Monday of each month at St Augustine's Church  
House, St Augustine's Place, Preston.

If you'd like to join, support or just find out more  
about Amnesty International Preston branch  
contact Stewart Turner [ [turner\\_sw@talktalk.net](mailto:turner_sw@talktalk.net) ]

### [Thanks to Scarlett for sending in this]

The children are lined up in the cafeteria of a  
Catholic elementary school for lunch.

At the head of the table was a pile of apples and  
the nun had made a note and placed it on the  
apple tray:

"Take ONLY one, God is watching"

Further down the line was a pile of chocolate chip  
cookies and a child had written,

"Take as many as you want,  
God is watching the apples!"

### Quick Quote

"No man ever believes that the Bible means  
what it says; he is always convinced that it says  
what he means." – George Bernard Shaw

## Paused Paws



Due to circumstances beyond our control  
the PAWs meeting scheduled for Thursday 6<sup>th</sup>  
May had to be called off at short notice.

It was decided that – in future – these meetings  
should be fixed as the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each  
month consequently the next PAWs was to be  
7.30 Tuesday 1st June.

However - that same Tuesday evening has been  
earmarked for a re-run of the 'five short talks'  
planned for our Outreach Event - just to try out  
some of the suggested improvements.

So - check out the PAWs thread on our Forum  
for details of past meetings, current campaigns  
and the venue for future meetings.

### Have You Been A Victim Of Catholic Child Abuse?

The NSS is planning a series of events in protest  
at the presence of the Pope in Britain in  
September. They are looking for people who  
have been victims of abuse by the Catholic  
Church who are prepared to speak about their  
experiences to journalists and in public.

If you are a survivor and want to tell your story,  
you can either contact us here at **LSH**  
[info@lancshumanism.org.uk](mailto:info@lancshumanism.org.uk) or speak directly to the  
**NSS** [tas@secularism.org.uk](mailto:tas@secularism.org.uk)



## Playing Fast And Loose With Equality

The British Humanist Association [BHA] condemns the Department for Communities and Local Government [DCLG] paper – ‘Ensuring a level playing field: funding faith-based organisations to provide publicly funded services.’

It shows no understanding of the genuine and legitimate concerns shared by humanists, secularists, trade unions, equality bodies and many local authorities, and does not inform local authorities of the risks to equality standards and service provision that contracting with religious organisations may entail.

Extracts:

*“We know that religious organisations can and do use service provision as a means to proselytise when delivering services when they fund themselves: there is nothing to stop the same organisations continuing this practice if they win contracts to run public services. After all, many religious organisations have a stated primary aim of converting others.”*

*“... if religious groups are to be given contracts, they must operate in an inclusive, secular manner, not making any use of the various exemptions they enjoy from equality and non-discrimination laws.”*

*“Religious service providers can discriminate legally in ways that would be illegal for secular service providers.”*

*“... the rights of people running a local authority service that is subsequently contracted to a religious organisation may find their prospects of promotion or continued employment affected.*

*We know of at least one Christian organisation that took over a service and its staff from a local authority and then announced that only evangelical Christians would be promoted.”*

*“ ... we are not convinced that religious organisations are well placed to deliver services for the many reasons stated in our report and in this response.”*

[Go to <http://www.humanism.org.uk/news/view/524> to read the report in greater detail.]

### Theology = Nowt

*... perhaps Thomas Paine puts it a little more eloquently: “The study of theology, as it stands in the Christian churches, is the study of nothing; it is founded on nothing; it rests on no principles; it proceeds by no authority; it has no data; it can demonstrate nothing; and it admits of no conclusion.”*

## Sanity Scuppers Sanctimony

*‘Religious cases should be heard by judges with special religious sensitivity’*  
[Lord Carey - former Archbishop of Canterbury]

*‘Rubbish’*

[Lord Justice Laws in the High Court]

Or – to quote His Lordship more accurately –

*“Lord Carey’s observations are misplaced. The judges have never, so far as I know, sought to equate the condemnation by some Christians of homosexuality on religious grounds with homophobia, or to regard that position as “disreputable”.*

*Nor have they likened Christians to bigots. They administer the law in accordance with the judicial oath: without fear or favour, affection or ill-will . . .*

*The precepts of any one religion – any belief system – cannot, by force of their religious origins, sound any louder in the general law than the precepts of any other’ and [he said] if they did, then we would be ‘on the way to a theocracy.”*

## And While We’re At It ... Hansard: - well worth a read!

Debate: *British Humanist Association: Reports Quality and Equality: Human Rights, Public Services and Religious Organisations.*

**Lord Taverne: -**

(on Bishops)

*“... the constitutional role [of Bishops in The House of Lords] is indefensible ... with the decline of religious belief in this country... [their] constitutional position is a glaring anomaly.”*

(on Faith Schools)

*“For schools to teach children faith or belief is a basic contradiction of what education should aim to achieve ... the role of schools is to teach children to think, to question and not to accept unquestioningly what their teachers, or the press, or the Government, or their church, may ask them to believe.”*

Read complete debate:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100318-0003.htm> . . . (From ... 11.57)

local services 7



## World Cup fever at Your YMCA

If you are getting into the spirit of things and also want to burn some calories for summer, head down to your local YMCA health and fitness centre.

YMCA Members and non-members can take part in the World Cup Road Trip where every calorie you burn is the equivalent to a mile traveled and a mile closer to Johannesburg and the World Cup!

It's free and easy to take part and you could also win yourself an England shirt or Love 2 Shop vouchers in the free prize draw. Simply travel from Blackpool to Johannesburg via the map

and landmarks on the game card by taking part in any form of physical activity you like. Brisk walking, jogging, a workout in the gym, swimming, badminton or your favourite fitness class! It really is that easy and anyone can participate.

For more information visit the reception of your nearest YMCA centre or call Poulton YMCA on 01253 891629 or Thornton YMCA on 01253 824108.

Poulton YMCA and Thornton YMCA are also showing many of the World Cup games including England matches from June 11th. Visit the centres for more details or call Poulton YMCA on 01253 891629 or Thornton YMCA on 01253 824108.

## Fitness Festival is back for 2010!

Yes it's back. The best summer fitness offer around is available throughout June and July this year offering unbeatable value – a 2 month no strings membership for just £50!

\*£40 for students.

This amazing summer offer promises access to all Fylde Coast YMCA health and leisure facilities at anytime day or night, 7 days a week for 2 months. Join anytime in June and July to qualify for 2 months access to 6 gyms, 4 pools, fitness classes, racquet sports, weights areas and much more!

Visit your nearest YMCA reception for details or contact Poulton YMCA on 01253 891629 or Thornton YMCA on 01253 824108.

Thornton YMCA 01253 824108	Garstang YMCA 01995 605410	Poulton YMCA 01253 891629	Fleetwood YMCA 01253 771505
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Disclaimer: Any similarity to Preston is coincidental and unintended [Ed]

## You'd Never Know It ...

### ... But This Is [Y]ours!

The advert [above] is copied from the latest edition of 'Local Services' – a free magazine delivered to every household throughout Wyre & Fylde.

Read it carefully – you'd never know that the health and leisure facilities advertised here are owned and maintained by Wyre (and Fylde) Borough Councils – and therefore every council-tax payer in these areas.

I challenge anybody to glean from this advertisement [even] the slightest hint that these facilities are anything other than facilities provided entirely by this particular Christian organisation.

As regular readers of this Newsletter are already aware; the YMCA are [currently] awarded the contract to manage these facilities on behalf of the local authorities and therefore for the benefit of all.

I suggest anybody reading this promotion and ignorant of the full facts, would assume the invitation to join is an invitation to join the YMCA – rather than an invitation to take advantage of municipally funded facilities.

Ken Hayes' ongoing efforts [on behalf of LSH] to extract detailed facts of Wyre (and Fylde) Borough Councils relationship with the YMCA is continually being stymied by their increasingly labyrinthine procedures and what should have been a perfectly simple and straightforward application under the Freedom of Information Act for detailed records is frustrated time and again by [what can only be interpreted as] deliberate obfuscation.

This is Ken's latest update on the saga ... ►►►►

## YMCA - Update

From Ken Hayes

### By email on May 11, 2010:

Wyre BC told me that a decision to extend the YMCA's current management contract by a further 15 years from 2011 had been made in June 2009 and that this was made explicit in a Cabinet report at that time.

The Fol officer provided a weblink.

### My reply on May 2, 2010:

I told him that the web-link he provided is a misdirection and that he is wrong to say a decision on contract extension was made explicit at that time.

A different Cabinet report at that time made clear that it was a recommendation, not a decision, and it was subject to negotiations on terms and conditions.

Wyre BC's May 11 email actually reveals that those negotiations had still not been concluded last month - more than 10 months later. The contract remained unsigned then and may still be so (the council had not responded by May 31 to my May 24 reply).

After commenting on this and making various other points about my attempts to obtain information, I concluded my May 24 reply by asking the Fol officer to answer my requests without further obfuscation, misinformation or delay.

- You shouldn't have to tell a local authority to obey the law, should you?

## Get 'em while they're hot!

There are a few vacant 'posts' at LSH HQ. Could you find time in your busy schedule to help out? Each post [in and of itself] is not particularly onerous but: piled one on top of the other they're proving to be a bit burdensome. I'm not saying they can't continue to be done but having one dedicated person for one function will mean each individual function will be carried out much more effectively than it is being at present . . . [Full training and continual support will be given to the successful applicant]

**Do** you have any experience in accounting? – Could you be our Treasurer?

**Will** you take on the role of Events Secretary – which is just a grand way of saying “once we've decided [at the AGM] our programme for the year – book the speakers”.

**Can** you be our Librarian? It's a virtual library so there are no books to handle. Just publish an updated Library list once every three months.

**A** Membership Secretary is needed to keep track of our growing membership.

[If you can help out with any of these tasks – please contact Ian at LSH HQ.](#)



### Lancashire Pagan Police

*From Blackpool Citizen*

The continuing fragmentation and sub-dividing of groups of people continues apace.

This latest revelation is not such a great surprise – indeed you could say it was inevitable.

In similar ways Jewish – Muslim – Hindu – Sikh and Christian officers are accommodated with consideration being given to special holidays and dietary requirements Police officers in Lancashire will be able to take days off to celebrate Pagan festivals following a new ruling.

The Pagan Police Association has just been officially recognised as a 'diversity staff support organisation' by the Home Office.

It means chief constables cannot refuse pagan officers' requests to take official 'religious holidays', which will be given the same respect as other religions' festivals such as Christmas, Ramadan and Passover.

These are set to include Hallowe'en and the summer solstice.

Paganism followers can include witches and druids who believe in a spiritual way of life rooted in nature.

A spokesman for Lancashire Constabulary said embracing diversity was crucial to policing'.

*“Lancashire Constabulary recognises that in order to effectively deliver policing services, the make-up of our staff needs to be fully representative of the communities we police” [he said] “... religious needs and beliefs should where possible be accommodated in order to satisfy individual requirements.”*

Definitely one for our Blog I think [Ed]

### Quick Quote

" ... the trouble with theocracy is that everyone wants to be Theo."

*... James Dunn*

### Free Computer Support For Disabled People

*From LSH member - Neville Bramhall*

Disabled\*? - Got a computer problem?

Then free help is at hand.

Just phone 'AbilityNet's' Client Helpline free-phone number 0800 269545 and ask for help from an IT Can Help volunteer.

'IT Can Help', founded in 1994 and a programme of the British Computer Society, is a nationwide network of volunteers providing FREE computer support to disabled people usually in their own homes or residential homes.

There are no formalities and all volunteers are CRB checked.

In addition to identifying and, if possible, solving problems which arise 'IT Can Help' volunteers also help by providing impartial advice on computer hardware and software - installing new equipment and software - connecting to the internet - use of email - and generally by helping the client to get the most out of their computer and software.

'IT Can Help' volunteers cannot however provide training over an extended period nor conduct assessments for specialist access devices but can suggest organisations which may be able to help.

*\*Disability includes medical conditions in addition to long term impairment.*

**“... punishing the children for the sin of the fathers ...”** . . . Exodus 20:5

It's all very well - and perfectly understandable - for parents who care about their child's education to want the best for them. But be in no doubt - creating more academies also creates more sink schools - schools with pupils from families who won't be bothered about getting their children into successful schools.

Who'll give-a-damn about the kids whose parents don't give-a-damn about education?

Or is it their own fault for having not chosen their parents carefully enough?

Up to 90 Lancashire schools will be offered a chance to become academies under new rules unveiled by David Cameron in The Queen's Speech.

In a major shift to reforms first introduced by New Labour, all schools, including primaries and special schools, will be able to opt out of local authority approval.

Those currently judged “outstanding” by Ofsted will be given automatic “pre-approval” by the government to break free from council control.

Lancashire currently has 16 Outstanding high schools and around 70 at primary level and it is understood that County Hall officials have already had a number of “tentative” inquiries.

This county is unique in having less than half its Schools under the control of the local authority and the largest number of faith schools in the country,

Under the new legislation schools will be able to become city academies without the need for local authority approval ...faith schools will need diocesan consent!

Susie Charles, Lancashire County Council's cabinet member for children and schools said: *“We have a lot of diversity in our school provision and I think some of those wanting to become academies will want to form federations.*

*It [the academy plan] has only just been announced but our officers have put the feelers out and at the moment the interest is probably in single figures.*

*The idea has been well received.”*

Preston head-teacher David Fann: the National Association of Headteachers' spokesman on primary education; said:

*“Generally we would welcome the greater freedom for schools but we would need to see more detail.*

*While we would welcome de-regulation we would be concerned about the top slicing of schools. For instance, we wouldn't want to end up with a two-tier system. As the head of an outstanding school I would face a dilemma, and I think other heads will be the same, because parents generally have a wide spectrum of choice here. Lancashire is a good education authority and we are very well supported. I know that's not the case everywhere. I would like to see the devil in the detail.”*

Preston City Councillor (and member of the national Anti Academy Alliance) Michael Lavalette warned the scheme was:

*“...an early indication of the Government's plans to divide welfare services.”*

Both the Association of Teachers and Lecturers and the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers have condemned the plan. Why is it [I wonder] that successive Governments continually ignore the views of those who actually teach!

### [What Our Neighbours Friends Are Up To](#)

#### **Cumbria Humanists**

[www.cumbria-humanists.org.uk](http://www.cumbria-humanists.org.uk)

7.30 Wed 15 June -Morton Community Ctre Wigton Rd Carlisle  
*“Where do we go from here?” As CHG membership increases and our range of activities widens, we invite members to share their views on the future of the Group. We'll be circulating a [questionnaire](#) and will have the results in time for the meeting.*

#### **Isle of Man Freethinkers**

[www.iomfreethinkers.co.uk](http://www.iomfreethinkers.co.uk)

7.30 Sun 12 June: **No Meeting.**

12.00 Thurs 17 June: **Lunch** Alessandros Restaurant, Douglas

#### **Liverpool Humanists**

<http://livehum.org>

7.30 Wed 9 June: **No Activity Scheduled [Yet!]**

#### **Greater Manchester Humanists**

<http://gmh.humanist.org.uk>

7pm Wed 9 June Friends Meeting House, Mount St, M2 5NS  
International Humanism - Talk by Jim Herrick

#### **South Cheshire And North Staffs Humanists**

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

7.30 Thurs 24 June?: **No Activity Scheduled [Yet!]**

#### **Humanist Society of West Yorkshire**

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

7pm Thurs 10 June: Swarthmore, 3-7 Woodhouse Sq, Leeds LS3 1AD

**No Activity Scheduled [Yet!]**

#### **Amnesty Preston**

[www.preston.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.preston.amnesty.org.uk)

7.30pm Mon 14 June: St Augustines Parish House,  
St Augustines Place. Preston  
**No Activity Scheduled / visit website**

**Don't Forget - If you have trouble parking at Great Eccleston- for our meetings you can use The Farmers Arms Car Park**

*\* With apologies - the [hyperlinks](#) are for those reading this 'on-line'\**