

Editor: Ian Abbott, Wavecrest, Hackensall Rd, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancs FY6 0AZ
Tel: 01253 812308 Mob: 07932 773589 e-mail: ian@lancshumanism.org.uk
Or for more details visit our Website: www.lancshumanism.org.uk

We begin with an apology - for omitting from last month's **LSH Newsletter** details of what our friends were actually doing in the 'What Our Friends Are Doing' article on Pg 6. - *I'd prepared the details I just didn't copy them in!?! :-{*

AGM – Good or Not Good?

... depends on your point of view.

It was certainly well attended - as AGM's go. And those who attended were not backward at coming forward (as my Gran used to say) - we even experienced a unanimous vote

The downside was we allowed some of the discussions to divert the meeting from its main purpose [to receive reports on activities - finances - elect officers etc] and, as a consequence struggled to get through a full agenda in a way which allowed sufficient time to each and every item.

However - there were heartfelt views expressed and a feeling that work was being done at this meeting - ...►

even if this meeting possibly wasn't the place to be doing that work.

I left looking forward to 2011 with optimism; given the enthusiasm for a more pro-active engagement with the community to make as many people as possible aware of our core values.

Much AGM business did get done - thanks to members dragging the meeting back to the job-in-hand. A new Treasurer was elected - a steering group of elected officers and ordinary members was floated - and a brand new post 'On-Line Marketing Officer' was created.

Full minutes will be forwarded to all Members

In This Issue

Page 1. Report on **LSH** AGM
Page 1. **LSH** on I.O.M.
Page 1. Get Your Xmas Cards Here
Page 1. P4C for **LSH**
Page 2. For God's Sake Say So!
Page 2. Learning To Be Human
Page 2. Hitchens v Blair
Page 3. 'In My View' LStA Express
Page 3. Cartoon
Page 3. UKAFHA
Page 4. Integration v Segregation
Pages 5 & 6. Outreach Talk No.5
 'Why I'm A Humanist'
Page 6. What Our Friends Are Doing
Page 7. Pray or Pay your busfare
Page 7. Cartoon
Page 7. Cancer Lecture UCLAN
Page 8. Blasphemy Law Resurrected.
Page 8. Allan Muir
Page 8. Claire Rayner
Page 8. **LSH** Winter Gathering
Page 8. Philosophy / Religion
Page 8. 'No Religion' Lecture

Manx Away-day for LSH Chairman

The Isle-of-Man Freethinkers kindly invited me to address their AGM in Onchan [near Douglas] on Sunday 10th October.

I was made very welcome indeed - transported too and from my ferry - entertained all day with a tour of the island (in a classic American Pontiac no less) and treated very gently by the AGM when I delivered my talk - 'Multi-Faceted Humanism'.

I.O.M. Freethinkers are a diverse group with impressive membership figures which would hold their own [per-capita] with most groups I know of in the UK.

My thanks to Murial, Graham, Roland and all at I.O.M Freethinkers for a great day and considerable 'food for thought' I was able to bring away with me

Xmas Cards?

See Rachel Coupe 1st.

Rachel is a Phoenix Trader and will kindly donate 15% of her profits to **LSH**.

See a current brochure or view online at

www.phoenix-trading.eu/web/rachelcoupe

Or phone 07969 941604

LSH November Meeting.

Great Eccleston Village Centre. 7.30 Wed 17th Nov

SAPERE: the **S**ociety for **A**dvancing **P**hilosophical **E**nquiry and **R**eflection in **E**ducation.

Founded in 1992, SAPERE is the internationally recognised educational charity that brings together a network of people throughout the UK practising and promoting philosophical enquiry for children and communities, often referred to as **P4C**.

Jane Yates has been a SAPERE trustee since October 2008 and is also a member of the Professional Development Committee (PDC). She has been practising P4C for 15 years and is a registered trainer.

She has been involved in training teachers in P4C

... all over UK, Mexico, India and Nepal.

At present Jane is a curriculum leader for P4C and RE at Armthwaite Community Primary School, and works with children across the whole school.

A child-initiated, enquiry based approach to learning is very much embedded across the curriculum.

The school also has a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) where philosophical and other questions are regularly posed on a virtual forum and responses made by members of the local community!

She has recently taken on the role of Cumbria SACRE Humanist Representative.

Alongside her work in school Jane runs Level 1 courses and works as a freelance lecturer for the University of Cumbria in the Outdoor Studies Department.



It's very important that people answer the question on religion, despite the fact that it's an optional one. We understand that people's beliefs may be personal and private and we respect the right of people to refuse to answer the question.

However, we strongly advise people to tick the '**No Religion**' box because:

➤ **It** is important that the Census generates accurate figures. It is used to legitimise resource allocation and policy.

The more people tick the '**No Religion**' box, the less inaccurate 'evidence' there is that government should listen to religious groups and leaders over and above other groups within society.

➤ **There** will be no negative repercussions on you personally if you do.

The Census is not interested in you personally - it is used to find general themes in the population. Although it is not anonymous, personal data will not be traced back to you in any analysis so there should be very limited issues about privacy.

➤ **You** will be affected by negative use of the data. Social policy, services and government action affects everyone.

➤ **This** may be the last Census ever held- if we get inaccurate data we may be stuck with it forever!

➤ **An** increased percentage of non-religious people will mean an increased voice for your issues as a non-religious person in society, particularly in equality work and education.

More information is available on the BHA campaign is available here <http://census-campaign.org.uk>

Learning to be Human

Stuart Herkes gives a personal view on 'Exploring Humanism' course

I had the privilege to engage with some very entertaining and knowledgeable persons during the three week introduction to Humanism course, the notes of which I found very interesting (*Many thanks to a certain Mr Abbott for providing such information, and also for inspiring me to chase up the works of Robert Ingersoll on the internet / amazon - isn't it ironic that a Humanist is called Abbott*).

It was an experimental course as it was originally designed for six weeks and it did feel at times that things were a bit rushed, although perhaps that was

Continued next column ... ►

Learning To Be Human ... Continued

.... due to the level of debate that the participants engaged in!!

It was a joy to listen to the various views as to what Humanism was, although I generally believe that most people select a belief system (whether religious or not) that closely resembles their own personal identity and use cognitive dissonance to justify or ignore bits that don't quite fit that image, although this would appear much less of a problem in Humanism than in some types of religion.

The only part of the course I was not so keen on was one of the tutors reading verbatim that which was already on the printed page, I've always found that tiresome as I felt it detracted from the sessions time that could have been more used for debates.

Although I found the course interesting and enjoyable I had been expecting more of a more recent development / history of humanism from the last 50 years where it has grown.

Only one quibble Russell and Fenner Brockway mentioned regards nuclear disarmament but no mention of the other chappie who was of course religious for an advocator of free speech, credit where credit due, regardless of belief / non-belief, we should not be hoisted by our own petard.

Perhaps more debate may have been raised as to why Humanists disagree about a deity they seem to spend more time talking about it than some religious people, and I'm sure some people joined to get away from that.

Do not get me wrong, this was a good course and courses always evolve and develop and I was delighted to be part of the experiment and if the BHA develop their more in-depth course, I would be happy to further my limited knowledge.

Definitely one for your diary

'Be it resolved, religion is a force of good for the world'

Christopher Hitchens & Tony Blair are to debate the role of faith in developed and developing nations: Not the existence or otherwise of God / Gods but 'is religion a force for peace or conflict in the modern world?'

No prizes for who'll be taking what side but - despite Hitchens' ongoing battle with esophageal cancer this promises to be a 'must see' debate.

Friday November 26th 19.00 EST ([Eastern Standard Time](#))
Toronto, Canada ... You can sign up for a live stream of the debate at www.munkdebates.com for \$4.99 Canadian.

"Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day.
Teach a man to fish and he'll eat for a lifetime.
Give a man religion and he'll die praying for a fish." — Anonymous

John Wayland
Lytham St Annes Express
Thurs 14th October

I went to a friend's funeral recently.

During the course of the Anglican service the minister offered his thanks to God for my friend's life. This set me wondering, not for the first time, what a similar service would say about the life of a notorious psychopath who had spent most of his life in prison for a string of sadistic and violent offences.

It's a fairly safe bet that a discreet veil would be drawn over God's part in the formation of the character of this particular individual, and it's an even safer bet that the minister officiating would not adopt a reproachful tone towards the Almighty, taking him to task for visiting such a dangerous and unpleasant presence on an unsuspecting community.

But why? If we thank someone for the good he does, do we not by the same token remonstrate with him for the bad?

Ah! says the Church, God has given us free will, which allows us to make moral choices unhindered by any external agency. We alone are responsible for the actions we take and will be judged accordingly.

If this is true then the question remains – what exactly are we thanking God for when an individual exercises this gift of free will and thus follows the path of righteousness independently?

I conclude that the minister at my friend's funeral could mean only that God had in some way been responsible for the good things which my friend had done. This supposition implies that the miscreants among us have failed to win God's support and are being left to carry the can on their own . . . Some would say that this is a far from equitable situation.

The concept of free will has been a bone gnawed at by theologians and philosophers for centuries, and latterly by sociologists, psychologists and neuroscientists too.

It is generally accepted that our freedom to act is often influenced heavily by external factors over which we have no control.

We are all free, for example, to practice any religion (or none) we choose, but the religion of our country and of our parents will determine what that religion will be in the overwhelming majority of cases.

Continued next column ... ►

RESCUED MINERS SPEAK



In My View ... Continued

Despite the fact that no coercion need be involved it still remains true that this type of freedom is conditional, largely dependent on the circumstances of our birth and upbringing.

If we wish to offer thanks for a person's life surely those thanks should be directed towards that person or the individuals or institutions whose influence helped to mould him or her.

The difficulty of course is that the people involved are no longer alive, and it seems less than satisfactory to send a personal message into the void . . . That being so, I tentatively suggest that we simply thank goodness (a strictly human attribute) for our friend.

If, further, we can agree that God is an elaborate metaphor for goodness and has no existence other than as a metaphor, I'd go along with that too.



Full of religious references as they are the United Kingdom Armed Forces Humanist Association UKAFHA faces a difficult time every year on Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday.

Even though according to the MoD's own records, almost 23,000 service personnel are registered as 'of no religion' [the largest single group after 'Christian'] there is no specific reference to the 'non-religious' who also gave their lives. And it's statistically probable that 35 of service personnel killed in Afghanistan will have been 'of no religion'. This year we are specifically asked to include a message saying: ... *'This wreath is laid by Lancashire Secular Humanist and also on behalf of the United Kingdom Armed Forces Humanist Association. For those who gave their lives for us. We will remember them'.*



"..a desert practice which belongs to another century .." 4

...[Source - 'Freethinker' Website 4th Oct]

It is claimed that three UK Muslim faith schools are compelling girls as young as 11 to cover their faces with veils.

*All three schools have been approved by education watchdog Ofsted, which inspects private faith schools to ensure they prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and "promote tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions".

One of the schools causing concern is 'Jamea Al Kauthar' in Lancaster

The School allegedly insist that girls travelling to & from school wear the niqab, [a face veil leaving the eyes exposed], or the head-to-toe burka, [which covers the eyes with a mesh screen].

School uniform rules listed on one website have been removed but an earlier version, seen by the Sunday Telegraph, said:

The present uniform conforms to the Islamic Code of dressing. Outside the school, this comprises of the black Burka and Niqab.

Critics claim these policies could damage relations between Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

Ed Husain, co-director of Quilliam, the counter-extremist think-tank, said:

It is absurd that schools are enforcing this outdated ritual – one that which sends out a damaging message that Muslims do not want to fully partake in British society.

The enforcing of the niqab on young girls is not a mainstream Islamic practice – either in Britain or in most Muslim-majority countries.

It is a desert practice which belongs to another century and another world.

Dr Taj Hargey, an imam and chairman of the Muslim Educational Trust of Oxford, said:

This is very disturbing and sets a dangerous precedent. It means that Muslim children are being brainwashed into thinking they must segregate and separate themselves from mainstream society.

Philip Hollobone, the Tory MP who has attempted to bring in a Private Members' Bill to ban wearing of the burka in public, added:

It is very sad in 21st century Britain that three schools are effectively forcing girls as young as 11 to hide their faces. How on earth are these young ladies going to grow up as part of a fully integrated society if they are made to regard themselves as objects at such a young age

On Tues 5th Oct. - the day after this story broke - the 'Jamea Al Kauthar' website carried the following disclaimer:

In response to the articles appearing in several ...

Continued next column ...►

... newspapers regarding the enforcement of the veil upon our students, we would like to clarify that Jamea Al-Kauthar does not force any student to wear the veil. However, we do encourage students to dress modestly.

Delving a little deeper into that School's website is interesting ... On the 'Questions & Answers' page Question 6 is: "What secular education does your college offer?" The 'Answer' (hyperlinked to the relevant page) is: "Go to 'Courses of Study' for information on secular education".

[That \[unabridged\] 'hyperlinked' page is copied here:](#)

Madressa Courses

At Jamea Al Kauthar, we aim to provide you with both Islamic and secular education. The Islamic Theology course is condensed into 5/6 years. Both Urdu and Arabic languages are studied throughout the first three years due to majority of Islamic literature being written in these languages. The final two years consist of an intense study of the Prophet's (PBUH) traditions, along with the study of the Islamic Jurisprudence and Tafseer (commentary of the Qur'an)

Learners: [1 yr] Beginners Urdu and Arabic with explanation in English. Introduction to Islamic jurisprudence, brief study of Islamic History and the biography of the Prophet (pbuh).

1st Year: Arabic Grammar studied at higher level. Introduction to reading / understanding Arabic. Majority of lessons given in Urdu and English as necessary.

2nd Year: Introduction to the study of Ahaadith. Further study of Arabic grammar. Further study of reading and understanding Arabic at a higher level. Introduction to the study of Jurisprudence in the Arabic language.

3rd Year: Study of the Quran with commentary. Study of Jurisprudence and of the four Madhabs. Study and commentary of Ahaadith

4th Year: Intense study of Islamic jurisprudence in all four Madhabs (Al Hidaya). Further study of the Qur'an with commentary (Jalalain). Further study of Ahadith with commentary and brief discussion of the four Madhabs . . . Equivalent to B.A. in Islamic studies.

5th Year: Specialisation in Hadith Studies. Equivalent to M.A. in Islamic Studies. (Sihaa Sitaa).

Continued column 1 pg 5 ...►

Special two year Islamic Studies Course for Post 16's

We also offer an abridged version of the 5/6 year Islamic Theology Course, which runs over a two-year period.

This includes: Tajweed, Qura'anic commentry, Ahadith, everyday Masa'il, Aqaa'id & basic Arabic. This course is delivered in the English medium and can be taken in conjunction with A Level courses.

Tahfeez ul Quran: Jamea Al Kauthar also runs the "Tahfeez ul Quran" programme.

This is committing the whole Quran to memory.

The average duration is three years.

~

[Ed] Where is the 'Secular' education referred to in the first sentence "At Jamea Al Kauthar, we aim to provide you with both Islamic and secular education."?

***It's worth repeating ...**

"Jamea Al Kauthar' School in Lancaster is approved by education watchdog Ofsted, which inspects private faith schools to ensure they prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and 'promote tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions'."

LSH Outreach - Talk No. 5

Why I'm A Humanist

- Rachel Coupe

Given that I don't believe in gods or superstition, 'why', people sometimes ask me, 'do I need to "join something" like the BHA or this local humanist group? ... Why can't I just keep quiet?

Like most British people my age, I grew up knowing only Christianity because it was so entrenched in our culture. Atheism and humanism weren't on the school timetable.

Amazingly, now I've come out of the closet, I find many other people who might be atheists, agnostics or humanists but they've never put a name to it. A primary teacher I know, on being told what a humanist was, replied, "*Yeah, I think I'm one of them; what was it called again?*"

And she is delivering the RE syllabus to 9 year olds.

Religion is only one means of understanding the universe and our place within it.

Having tried it, I much prefer to employ science, experience and evidence to try to find answers, and accept the limitations of our understanding - that keeps life interesting!

Humanism should be recognised as a belief system and explained to children so that no-one

Continued next column ... ►

5 ... has to grow up as confused & guilt-ridden as I was.

I now have two daughters at primary school and I work in one so I am able to see some improvement since I was at school but there are also some worrying plans afoot to allow changes for the worse.

After years of thought and research, I'm raising my children to make moral choices through reasoning, empathy, experience and by drawing on the teachings of many religions ... not just one!

But I'm concerned with the culture our current education system is fostering ... Ignorance and inequality are being perpetuated through three policies:

First, all schools by law must have collective worship of a broadly Christian nature every day, undermining the self-esteem of any child who is sceptical or holds non-Christian beliefs. We need a collective morality; this is not the same thing as belief in a deity. "Faith" is not synonymous with kindness, respect or good manners. I wish I'd spent more time trying to make other people happy than fretting that I was a bad person because I couldn't believe in God.

Secondly, Religious Education receives more curriculum time than history and geography. It is heavily weighted in favour of Christianity. As a sociology graduate, I am fascinated by the role of religion in societies, but this can be taught as part of history and geography.

I'd like RE to focus on examining moral issues, drawing on real experiences as well as myths and fables from all religions and cultures. Pupils could choose to give weight to teachings from religious texts or not, but crucially, they'd be empowered to develop their own moral compass.

Thirdly, most damagingly, our new government intends to continue one of Labour's most unpopular policies, enabling more faith schools. Astonishing when 72% of people believe that state funded schools should not discriminate on grounds of religion or belief* and 64% of people think that the Government should not be funding faith schools of any kind - Sectarian education splits communities, removes parental choice and creates prejudice. It allows discrimination in employment practises that are illegal in any other sector.

To apply for a Teaching Assistant post in a Preston Catholic School, I was sent a 14 page long "Catholic Schools Application Form" on which the first page asked for my religion, advising that "this may be taken into account".

At another school an "essential qualification" of the job was "A committed Christian who will uphold the Catholic ethos of our school".

Continued on page 6 ... ►

'Why I'm A Humanist' [continued]

I applied for neither - their loss I'm sure you'll agree. I would never dream of demanding that my children only be taught by humanists so why can Catholics choose to discount me without even hearing about me let alone meeting me? That's the definition of prejudice.

Supporters of faith schools claim they get better results but in a system where only some institutions are able to select their pupils, those institutions will get better results and become more desirable - because they are elitist.

They claim to teach superior morals. And yet, ironically, 64% of 12 -19 yr olds were not religious in a 2003 survey ... If these young people are rejecting the only system of values they have ever been exposed to, what is going to fill that void? ... If small children are only being good because God is watching them, what motivation do teenagers have for self-discipline when they've stopped believing?

It is argued that faith schools give parents choice within state-funded education - but it is only the Christians who get to choose.

When I chose a school for my daughters I wasn't thinking about religion - like most parents I wanted a good local school which we could get involved with (I was later to chair the PTFA and run their toddler group).

My village has a "choice" of two schools, one Catholic and one C of E.

I opted for the latter as they claimed to be "not too religious" and accepted pupils of all faiths and none. After one year, a new head teacher totally changed the school.

Along with improved results and good Ofsted inspection emerged the suffocating grip of the church on every aspect of school life.

Pupils now go to church once a month and have God and Jesus infiltrating every lesson possible. In PSHE this term, year 5 are looking at quote "*The Christian values of love, truth and justice*". Really? ... And I thought they were humanist values!

The Coalition has pledged to facilitate inclusive admissions policies in as many [faith] schools as possible. Is this good for non-Christians? No.

Firstly any faith school can boast of *being open to all* ... until it becomes oversubscribed when it may invoke the admissions criteria prioritising church attendance.

More importantly, children in church schools from outside that faith face marginalisation and discrimination every day. Not only are they subjected to doctrines they don't subscribe to but if they withdraw from assembly or RE, the alternative ...

... Concluded next column ...

6 ... provision is hit and miss and they may feel ostracized by classmates ... "*What do you expect?*" I get asked, "*You shouldn't have sent them to a church school*".

Really? We should be excluded from a school within walking distance of our home whose running costs are totally state-funded?

The SIX nearest are all Catholic or C of E.

The 7th - is non-faith and I now work there.

It's fantastic and inclusive but three miles away. What if everyone could attend a school founded on their own beliefs? Jewish, Mormon, Pagan or maybe Socialist and Conservative schools (in coalition with the Lib Dems).

It's unthinkable.

For successful social cohesion schools must reflect their wider communities.

State-endorsed segregation of children on the grounds of their parent's religious affiliation is as crazy as to do so on political or racial grounds - and I will continue to campaign against it.

Joining a humanist group helps me to do that.

And it's so reassuring to now know I'm not the only atheist in the village

Next Month ... Talk No. 6 - 'Humanist Ceremonies'

What Our Neighbours Friends Are Up To

Cumbria Humanists www.cumbria-humanists.org.uk

730 Wed 17 Nov: Morton C/unity Centre, Wigton Rd, Carlisle.
Diana Martin [CHG member] "**A Learning Experience**"
... her teaching experiences in Lithuania.

Isle of Man Freethinkers www.ionfreethinkers.co.uk

2.30 Sun 14 Nov - A Philosophy for Freethinkers.
Discussion introduced by Jeff Garland

12.00 Thurs 18 Nov: Lunch Alessandros Restaurant, Douglas
Liverpool Humanists <http://livehum.org>

6pm Thurs 25 Nov: Everyman Bistro 5-9 Hope St, L/pool
Social Evening

Greater Manchester Humanists <http://gmh.humanist.org.uk>

7pm Wed 10 Nov: Friends Meeting Ho, Mount St, M2 5N
World Population Issues:
Roger Martin Optimum Population Trust

South Cheshire And North Staffs Humanists www.humanists.org.uk

7.30 Wed.10 Nov. Congleton Museum, Market Sq. CW12 1ET
To be or not to be? Why I decided to be a Humanist

Humanist Society of West Yorkshire www.wyhumanists.org.uk

7pm Thurs 11 Nov: Swathmore 3-7 Woodhouse Sq. Leeds,
The European Parliament - An Insider's View Mike McGowan,
former MEP for Leeds

Amnesty Preston www.preston.amnesty.org.uk

7.30pm Mon 13 Sept: St Augustines Parish House,
St Augustines Place. Preston

Lytham St Annes & Blackpool Amnesty www.amnesty.org.uk/lytham

7.30pm Mon 4 Sept: Church Rd Centre Methodist Church;
Church Rd, St Annes.

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'

It's All Schools This Month

It's a 'Faith tax' if fares are axed to attend a Faith School ... It was 'Your Own Fault' when they were withheld to avoid one!

A CONTROVERSIAL 'faith tax' on school bus travel was approved, despite last-ditch protests from opposition councillors . . . Free transport to West Lancashire's church schools will be axed under county council cost-cutting plans. From September next year, scores of pupils at denominational schools will have to pay a flat rate of £2 to board buses – £380 per year.

Ahead of the meeting, West Lancs MP Rosie Cooper urged the Education Scrutiny Committee to kick back the divisive proposals. She said:

"It is right that this decision is being reviewed because the impact of this charge will affect many thousands of families across Lancashire. For some parents it will mean they no longer have a choice to send their children to a church school because they cannot afford the travel costs. This is a totally unacceptable situation."

Labour spokesman for Children and Young People, Cllr Clive Grunshaw, added:

"This is a tax too far. Families in Lancashire will now have to dig even deeper to pay for their children to attend school. We oppose this regressive and punitive stealth tax."

A public consultation revealed that just 71 of 4,472 people were in favour of the change to the Discretionary Transport Allowance. Faith schools also voiced concern at scrapping the free travel passes.

Mrs Cooper added:

"In areas like West Lancashire that cover a large geographical area there are many families that live many miles from their nearest suitable church school. This charge will have a major impact on those families."

Currently, children under eight who live two miles from a faith school receive free travel. Pupils over eight must live beyond a three-mile radius. Council bosses say by charging a daily flat rate of £2, the £4m cost of providing the transport service would be halved.

The new fees apply to those who wish to attend a faith school which is not their nearest school. County councillor Susie Charles, cabinet member for children and schools, said the proposals were necessary. ... She said:

"Councils faced with spiraling costs and budget reductions are increasingly having to look at these arrangements and a number of authorities have already either completely withdrawn support, or are asking for a contribution from parents."

As spending cuts deepen, local authorities are cutting the provision of subsidised transport to pupils attending 'faith schools'

... Concluded next column ... ►

7 The latest to show their intention is Bury Council who is starting a consultation on scrapping faith school transport for secondary schools – but retaining it for primary pupils. The council estimates they will save £150,000 per annum.

Similarly Cumbria County Council's ruling cabinet received a report making suggestions to reduce the £16m a year the authority spends on home-to-school transport.

One of the ideas to save cash is to ask faith schools and parents of pupils at faith schools to pay towards the cost of transport, however they will continue to pay for free transport to faith secondary schools for pupils who attended faith primary schools.

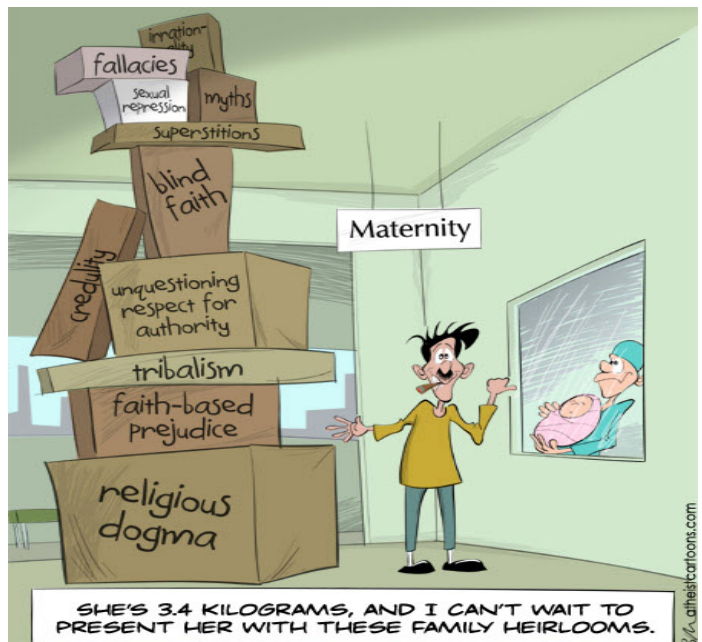
'Pray' or 'Pay'

Flintshire Council is considering an even more discriminatory way of saving money on the school transport bill.

They are proposing to provide it free to those who can prove that they are religious and charge those who can't.

Children who have places at 'faith schools' but are not of that faith will be charged for using the bus: so – there will be children travelling to the same school on the same bus, but those non-religious families will have to pay while those from families who claim /feign religious beliefs will have their fare paid by the taxpayer.

Truly - God moves [children] in mysterious ways,



Inaugural Professorial Lecture

6.30 Thurs 11 Nov.

Harrington Lecture Theatre; University of Central Lancs delivered by Kinta Beaver: ***'It's good to talk: meeting the information needs for people treated for cancer'***

Anyone interested in attending should contact:

Sue Conduit at UCLAN on saconduit@uclan.ac.uk

Or telephone - 01772 893390

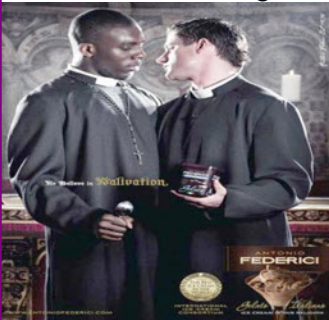
Blasphemy Resurrected by ASA

ASA (Advertising Standards Authority) seems to be reintroducing blasphemy restrictions in Britain.

The fact that this anachronistic law was finally abolished here three years ago seems to have escaped ASA who have now banned three consecutive ads for Antonio Federici ice cream as potentially "offensive to Catholics"; on the strength of a very few complaints [*six in one case*]. In a letter to the communications minister, Ed Vaizey; Terry Sanderson [NSS] said:

"... We have now reached the stage where any reference to religion that is not completely reverential is immediately branded as "offensive" and therefore unacceptable. This is an intolerable threat to freedom of expression that must be challenged..."

Here are the offending Ads



'We believe in Salvation'



'Immaculately Conceived'



'Kiss Temptation'

"Philosophy is questions that may never be answered.

Religion is answers that may never be questioned."

8

"One person is missing and the world is emptied of people"

Lamartine

Sadly Humanism loses not one but two

Allan Muir - Chair of Chester Humanists lost his long battle with cancer last month.

His well attended funeral ceremony; led by humanist celebrant Sue Falder, at Wrexham Crematorium on 26th October was filled with both moving and amusing contributions from his family and friends.

Alan, who once described himself as a Transcendental Atheist, was a great fan of Kurt Vonnegut and one of the many anecdotes shared at Alan's ceremony included this extract from Vonnegut's 2006 work:

'A Man Without a Country':

"... I am, incidentally, Honorary President of the American Humanist Association, having succeeded the late, great science fiction writer Isaac Asimov in that totally functionless capacity.

We had a memorial service for Isaac a few years back, and I spoke and said at one point, "Isaac is up in heaven now."

It was the funniest thing I could have said to an audience of humanists.

I rolled them in the aisles.

It was several minutes before order could be restored.

And if I should ever die, God forbid, I hope you will say "Kurt is up in heaven now."

Claire Rayner, President of the BHA 1999 to 2004, and a Vice-President since.

From knowing little about organised Humanism, she became a vigorous advocate of humanist philosophy and causes.

In a contribution to the BHA's membership leaflet she said:

"I was a humanist without knowing it for many years before I found the Association – when I did, it was like finding a sort of home. Here were people with a range of views that matched mine, who shared my respect for life in all its forms and who, above all, did not in any way try to bully other people to follow their beliefs"

On A Much Lighter Note

Are you coming to our Winter Gathering?

Guy's Court [A.6 just south of Garstang] on the afternoon of Sunday 12th December.

The room holds 60 - has a bar - and is free as long as we have min. 25 booking food and drinking at the bar.

The food options start at £7.50 and include hot food or a cold buffet.

The advantages over our [more usual] seated meal in a restaurant are: its slightly cheaper; we can linger longer and it provides the opportunity mingle however we like rather than fixed at a table.

To express an interest in participating – and obtain a copy of the menu – please contact [LSH](#) in the usual way.

ASAP Please - it's getting late to book for that date now!

Tim Curtis Memorial Lecture 2010

The annual Tim Curtis Memorial Lecture is due to take place on Wed 10 Nov. 7:00pm; Mitchell and Kenyon Cinema within Foster Building at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston.

The guest speaker is Professor Callum Brown from the University of Dundee. The title of the lecture is:

'The rise of the people of no religion in the West since 1950'.

Admission is free. Refreshments will be provided in Scholars Restaurant following the lecture.

We [[LSH](#)] have obtained six tickets –only three left