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LSH Win A GRAM-y!

The **LSH** Website won 'Website-of-the-Year' at the BHA GRAM [Group Representatives Annual Meeting] held in Birmingham on Saturday 27th November.

In the face of stiff competition from some excellent Humanist Group Websites the decision eventually went to **LSH** with the adjudicators citing:

- Simple layout and design - the four distinct boxes on the home page clearly show who we are, what we're trying to achieve and what info is on the website.
- Upcoming events were clear and easy to find.
- The right hand links column - especially the links to Facebook and Twitter, making it easy for people to interact with us.
- But the one simple thing they really liked was the clear "Subscribe to our email newsletter" link. Giving a clear "call to action" for people to get in touch so we can permanently engage with them. Apparently very few of the other groups' websites offer this.

Many congratulations to our Webmaster David Brindley and on-line marketing officer Helen Cullen-Williams for all their efforts in creating **LSH's** 'Award Winning' website

Fortuitously Helen was in attendance - representing **LSH** - and therefore able to receive the award in person. Richly deserved for all the hard work they have put into it - and now [they tell me] they're working on 'Phase II' ... I can hardly wait!

I'm sure everyone joins me in expressing my thanks to them for helping to put **LSH** on the map!

T'is The Season ...

It's that time of the year again - when Christians cleave unto themselves the myths & traditions of virtually any civilisation [well - just the best bits] shamelessly claiming exclusive ownership of them whilst simultaneously haranguing atheists for being hypocrites if they are discovered to be enjoying any seasonal festivities.

But - on the upside - it's also that time of the year when we get to burst those bubbles of duplicity by informing anybody who wants to know the real origins of those 'Christmas' traditions - **Ho Ho Ho!**

The Village Centre, The Square, Great Eccleston PR3 0YB

Wednesday 15th December 7.30pm - 10pm

LSH Members £2 - non-members £3

In This Issue

- Page 1. David & Helen Grab a Grammy
Page 1. Yule enjoy our next meeting
Page 1. Get Your Xmas Cards Here
Page 1. Cartoon
Page 2. For God's Sake Say So!
Page 2. LSH at Remembrance Sunday
Page 3. Humans or Humanity?
Page 3. LSH visit Hospice
Page 3. Our Library & How It Works
Page 4. Cartoon
Page 4. The Rise of The Non-Religious
Page 4. Hitchens v Blair - No Contest
Page 5. Report on B.H.A.'s G.R.A.M.
Page 6 & 8 - Outreach Talk No.6
'Humanist Ceremonies'
Page 6. What Our Friends Are Doing
Page 7 & 8 - Untangling The Web:
#1. Social Networking & Facebook
Page 8. LSH Winter Gathering & Menu.

Xmas Cards?

See Rachel Coupe First.

Rachel is a Phoenix Trader and kindly donates 15% of everything sold through **LSH** back to our group.

To see a current brochure - or view the full range online - go to:

www.phoenix-trading.eu/web/rachelcoupe

Or phone Rachel on 07969 941604



IF YOU'RE NOT RELIGIOUS FOR GOD'S SAKE SAY SO

It is very important that you answer the question on religion! It is important that the Census generates accurate figures. It is used to legitimise resource allocation and policy . . .

The more people who 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.

- **There** will be no negative repercussions on you personally if you do . . . The Census isn't 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>



Bullets & Bombs Don't Discriminate - and Yet ...

I am pleased to say when LSH contacted Royal British Legion [Preston] to participate in Remembrance Sunday by laying a wreath [also] on behalf of UKAFHA [UK Armed Forces Humanist Association] we were met with a much more open-minded attitude than some Humanist Groups elsewhere in the country experienced.

According to the MoD's own figures 12.5% of all service personnel are registered as 'No Religion' – the largest single group after 'Christian' – and yet there is no specific reference to the 'non-religious' who also gave their lives ...



Bombs & Bullets Don't Discriminate ...

Continued

... And put in real terms - it is statistically probable that at least 35 of the service personnel killed in Afghanistan will have been 'of no religion'.

It is because of this LSH were proud to be asked by UKAFHA to seek permission to participate in Remembrance Sunday's solemn occasion by laying a wreath with the message:

"This wreath is laid by Lancashire Secular Humanists and also on behalf of the United Kingdom Armed Forces Humanist Association. For those who gave their lives for us. We will remember them."

British Legion [Preston] is to be congratulated for recognising that the very real and considerable sacrifices made by our service personnel should not in any way be diminished by the religious outlook any of those individuals hold.

What a pity the same couldn't be said of the ceremony itself!

Apart from Colonel Stam; delivering Binyon's moving 'They shall grow not old ...' and John Hughes The Burma Star Association's poignant 'Kohima Epitaph' it was a Vicar – a Priest – a Reverend – and a Deacon delivering the whole of the open air ceremony on Preston's 'Flag Market'.

We had a prayer – a hymn – a bible reading – another prayer [with an outrageously patronising touch 'praying for "... the mentally distressed and for those whose faith in God and humanity has been weakened and destroyed..."'] – two more prayers – the Lord's Prayer – another hymn – an 'Act of Commitment' prayer.

THEN The Last Post – 'Binyon' – two minutes silence – 'Kohima Epitaph' – Reveille. Followed by another prayer – another blessing – and The National Anthem.

THEN the laying of the wreaths and ending with a march past.

It is bad enough: from a Secular Humanist perspective; that, apart from the [frankly] insulting reference mentioned above, there was no acknowledgement of any other than Christian sacrifices even though that very morning BBC Radio Lancashire had been highlighting the fact that – during WW II – more Sikhs took part than all the Scottish, Welsh & Irish combined.

The best we Humanists could do was stand in dignified silence; and remind ourselves that any discomfort we might be feeling was infinitesimal in comparison to the sacrifices we were there to acknowledge ... but also glance around and note with interest the number of uniformed personnel 'not participating' too.

We'll be back next year ... And the next - And the next - Until they remember everybody!

More Humans = Less Humanity

From LSH Member David Hollinshead

On Wednesday 10 November I attended the Manchester Humanist meeting - a talk by Roger Martin chair of the Optimum Population Trust <http://www.optimumpopulation.org/> [patrons include Jonathon Porritt & David Attenborough].

Roger described himself as an “eco-ist” rather than a humanist, as he doesn’t believe we should focus entirely on humans, it is the planet that it is important.

To begin we were shown a diagram of how the population has increased in the last 10,000 years. A slight increase since the invention of agriculture, but the main impact has been since the industrial revolution. In a hundred years the world’s population is expected to be 7 billion - an increase from 4 billion just 80 years ago.

The world cannot sustain this population growth, especially as it is estimated the peak of the world’s oil supply will be reached within the next few years.

Under this projection, the population of Pakistan is due to increase from 108 million next year to one and a half billion in 100 years’ time. [Pakistan was highlighted as its current population was already in severe danger following the flooding there earlier this year] . . . Britain would need 10 cities the size of Birmingham in the next 20 years.

Population increase can only be stopped in two ways - Fewer births and more deaths.

I don’t think Roger is encouraging war or not curing disease, so the only acceptable way to control the population is to have fewer children.

There are religious obstacles to this however. For example; the Catholic Church is against contraception, while Muslims believe Allah will provide so there is no need to concern themselves of such issues.

There are also nationalistic obstacles. Palestinian women are encouraging to breed so they will outnumber their enemies.

Roger bemoaned that out of the foreign aid that is given by our Government, only a small part of it goes to the health of the population. And only a small part of that goes towards family planning.

It is a problem though for rich western governments (usually white men) to be telling black women in Africa not to have children.

The talk ended with the trusts simple objectives:

- Break the taboo, so it’s acceptable not have children
- Encourage families to only have two children
- Persuade political parties to accept the need to reduce the population

And a couple of quotes:

- “Fewer people, better lives”
- “More humans equals less humanity”

St Catherine’s Hospice

3 Ian Abbott, along with Chris & Mike Middleton, representing LSH, accepted an invitation to attend an ‘**Introduction To St Catherine’s Hospice**’ on Fri 19th Nov – part of their 25th Anniversary.

Receiving an information pack, prior to our visit the day’s programme was a series of presentations.

-Introduction: - Rev Ian Dewar; Hospice Chaplain.

-National End of Life Strategy: - Jimmy Brash: Director of Care -Day Therapy and Community Nurse Specialists – Linda Gregory -Lunch, Plenary and tour of the Hospice.concluded on pg 8

“Knowledge is Power”

There’s no excuse for ignorance with exclusive access to the LSH library!

Remember access to the LSH library is one of the benefits you get from LSH membership.

It’s a great resource covering Humanism, Secularism, science, evolution, philosophy, psychology, religions and much more.

An updated library list is now available and will be distributed to members with this newsletter.

Books added recently include:

- “The Art of Cold Reading” by Ian Rowlands – learn how the experts pretend to read minds!

- “God Hates You, Hate Him Back” by C.J.

Werleman – described as “the ultimate case for the claim that the God of the Bible is the most wicked character in the pages of history.”

- “It’s Not Because I Want to Die” by Debbie Purdy - the face of Britain’s right-to-die campaign, and multiple sclerosis sufferer, describes her life and her battle.

We have two copies of “The Atheist’s Guide to Christmas” edited by Ariane Sherine - If you’ve not read this inspirational and entertaining collection of ideas and stories from various writers and celebrities yet, this is the month to do it!

If you’d like to borrow any of the library books, contact LSH’s librarian - Helen Cullen-Williams helen@lancshumanism.org.uk and she’ll arrange for them to be brought to the next meeting.

If you are not on-line contact Ian 01253 812308 or 07932 773589.

If you have any title of your own that you think other members would enjoy, let Helen know and she’ll add it to the list.

You do not relinquish ownership of any books.

We simply ask you to bring it to the next meeting if anybody asks to borrow it.



Report on November's meeting.

Our speaker Jane Yates more than lived up to her billing ahead of addressing a packed LSH meeting at Great Eccleston Village Centre on Wednesday 17th November.

Her talk on **P4C** [Philosophy for Children] was fascinating, informative and very well received by everyone in attendance.

Perhaps an indication of just how she engaged her audience was the fact that, although an hour-and-a-half had elapsed, it seemed to be no time at all before we had run out of time – and just when the questions from the floor were getting their most interesting and some lively exchanges began taking place. [*Isn't it always the case?*]

Jane confided afterwards how much she herself had enjoyed the event and that 'next time' she will pitch her talk slightly differently to accommodate the stimulating audience she encountered.

The [UCLAN] Tim Curtis Memorial Lecture was delivered by Prof. Callum Brown of University of Dundee on Wed 10th Nov.

Professor of Religious & Cultural History he has a special interest in the social and cultural history of religion and secularisation, the social history of modern humanism and the history of community ritual.

For the purposes of his lecture: **'The rise of the people of no religion in the West since 1950'** he presented a fascinating insight into the [almost] exponential rise in the numbers of non-religious

... people in recent history.

Speculation as to why this occurred at all, why 'then' (and its relentless continuation since), touched on education, emancipation of women, equality, radicalism, youth culture, and problems inherent within the Christian Church itself. There was also an increase in other faiths and cultures so; not being Christian became more difficult to denounce ... But; more than considering what people were losing, we also looked at what people were becoming. Those new labels they were increasingly happy to identify themselves with: atheists, secularists, humanists, rationalists, Brights, agnostics (etc).

We heard how, prior to the commencement of this curve, it was very evident that many people were no longer personally religious but nevertheless conformed to societal 'norms' in the outward appearance of how they lived their lives. The word 'Respectability' was a very controlling concept – and what was 'respectable' was often prescribed by 'the church' – the accepted arbiter of 'morality'. As the grip of the Church loosened people less and less felt compelled to conform with standards of behaviour prescribed by people they no longer identified with – and the role women played in this cultural revolution should not be underestimated: evidenced by the number of babies being born outside of marriage.

The knee jerk reaction of the Church was to blame The Pill – the flaw in that argument being 'The Pill' is designed to prevent pregnancy.

One interesting gender 'trend' (it couldn't put stronger than that) was the tendency for men to describe rejecting their religion through practical, evidence based, rationality; whereas women tended to lose theirs either during the rise of feminism or as a consequence of a traumatic personal emotional experience, either theirs or having empathy with others.

Further details of Prof. Brown's work can be found here www.dundee.ac.uk/humanism

The Hitchens / Blair Debate

Friday 26th November's 'Munk Debate on Religion' in Toronto in front of a 2,600 strong audience was: **'Be it resolved. Religion is a force for good in the world'**

What followed was an electric exchange between Tony Blair and Christopher Hitchens.

Prior to the debate, 22% of the audience agreed with the motion: 57% opposed it: 21% were undecided ... An audience vote on the motion at the end of the debate was: 32% were in agreement and 68% opposed – and nobody 'undecided' [an indication perhaps of the quality of debate]

Thanks to David Brindley we've captured the debate and it will soon be available in our Library.

On Saturday 27 November around 50 members of BHA-affiliated groups braved the snowy conditions to meet in Birmingham and share what they've been up to over the last year. I attended on behalf of LSH.

The presentations began with Robin Ginter from Greater Manchester Humanists explaining their training course on Humanism. The other delegates were impressed with what they're doing in Manchester. I felt privileged to have had the opportunity to experience Robin & Anna's course. *See last month's newsletter if you missed the course review by an LSH attendee.*

A substantial part of the morning was given over to Brain Quinn from the Yorkshire & Humber groups, and David Savage from Farnham Humanists, who discussed their experiences of getting involved with local and regional community organisations. Between them they provided many ideas for how Humanists can make their voice heard in the community including via Local Strategic Partnerships, NHS trusts' advisory groups, SACREs, Interfaith groups and faith forums, encouraging community debates, talks to colleges and community groups and much more. Every small success they've achieved adds up to significant in-roads for making secular voices heard. It was inspirational to hear.

Some of the discussion during this session focused on the new Equality Act 2010 which states that *"religion includes any religion. It also includes a lack of religion, in other words employees or job-seekers are protected if they do not follow a certain religion or have no religion at all.... Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief."* Further, *"Humanism is a protected philosophical belief"* within the Act. These are significant changes to our equality law and now is the time to capitalise on them by demanding non-religious voices are heard within our community.

Next up was Philip Veasey from West London Humanists, who discussed his controversial "Secular Moral Code" project. His theory is that religions are more easily able to market themselves by having simple moral codes for followers to remember (such as the Ten Commandments). In his book "The Triax" he proposes a simple-format secular moral code to make being a "good

atheist" more appealing and easier to understand. He is looking for volunteers to be involved in the project. His contact details are included in the presentation slides (*see end of article for more details*).

Julie Crow from Harrow Humanist Society shared their experiences of running a stall to promote Humanism at a local community festival. She concluded that it possibly wasn't worth the effort and expense and would try to be more targeted in the events they attend in future.

South West London Humanist Group have had a big fight on their hands recently in a campaign against a new Catholic secondary school in North Kingston and another proposed in Richmond. Rosemary Taylorson, SW London group member, outlined their campaign. Whilst the results of the bids have not yet been announced, the group gained significant public exposure through the campaign. They also found support from many parents because they focused their arguments on religious privilege and discrimination and were careful not to come across as "anti-religious".

Bob Churchill, BHA Head of Membership & Promotion, ran a session on good communications. He outlined what makes a good website and revealed the shortlist of the best local group sites. Then an exciting moment for me followed, when he revealed that we had won the BHA Website of the Year! [*See pg1 this issue*].

The award is presented for "providing a positive, attractive, useful website for the local humanist community – and providing a local presence for Humanism in general."

Bob continued with suggestions for "dos" and "don'ts" when communicating with supporters through newsletters and emails.

The day concluded with presentations from Andrew Copson, BHA Chief Executive, who presented the BHA's new strategy; and Jeremy Rodell, who is heading up a consultation on how the BHA and local groups can work better together ... Details of the new strategy will be shared further with members in the new year. The consultation details are to be shared with local groups shortly and we are invited to respond by the end of January.

All the slides from these presentations, and the consultation documents, are available on our members' forum at

LSH Outreach - Talk No.6

Humanist Ceremonies - Ian Abbott

As a Humanist Celebrant I am often called upon to conduct Humanist Ceremonies.

Ceremonies have always been used to mark important events in people's lives; making them public for the purpose of sense of reality, significance and credibility to a formal undertaking. Ceremonies provide an opportunity to bring family and friends together in one place to share in a happy event - to witness a solemn undertaking - to impart messages of love and commitment – or to signal empathy; provide sympathy & comfort and offer support.

We conduct many different kinds of ceremonies: Our Funerals ... Weddings [heterosexual and gay] ... Re-affirmation of Vows ... and Baby-Naming Ceremonies may already be known to you. In fact – you name the ceremony and we would probably be able to deliver one.

There is even a 'Divorce Ceremony' ... although I have never conducted one [*I've never met a couple who can stop arguing over the CD's long enough to sort out a ceremony*]. But these are not as bizarre as you may at first assume.

It is more focused on the children of the marriage! In the same way we think it's important for people to witness our promises when we marry; this ceremony is to declare (in front of witnesses) promises we make to our children ... A public declaration to say "we're divorcing each other – not our children!"

Without doubt, Funeral Ceremonies are the most frequent we conduct and our funerals differ in two distinct ways from those many of you will be familiar with.

We have no religious content in our ceremonies; that is because Humanists would call themselves atheists or agnostics and it would therefore be hypocritical for us to lead ceremonies that include hymns and prayers or references to deity or the supernatural ... Having said that, there is nothing in our ceremonies that 'could' offend people of faith; they are not anti-religious ceremonies (they're 'areligious' if you like): we simply want to talk about other things – we think 'better' things ... and that is the second difference.

At funerals we acknowledge that there is nothing we can do about the circumstances that bring us there ... circumstances that are invariably sad and sometimes even tragic ... but we are there – and there we do still have choices! ... We could do (as many funerals do) and use the time to talk about the fact that someone has died ... or ... we could use the time to talk about the fact that they have lived! ... And we choose to talk about their live – their character – their personality – what they have

6 ... enjoyed about living – what other people have enjoyed about them having lived – and the repercussions from their life that will continue into futures beyond our imagination. Even though we have no hymns or prayers we do have music and poetry and prose. And what we select is chosen for its significance to the life we are talking about – or pertinent to the circumstances of their death. What we hope to achieve is, by the end of our ceremonies, people to leave feeling happier that they have known the person we are talking about rather than sad to have lost them. Clearly there is sadness but we want people to add to that "... but haven't we been lucky to have had this person as part of our lives?" But, as I said, we write and conduct many other kinds of ceremonies! The single common thread that runs through all Humanist Ceremonies is the absence of religion ... for the reasons I've already outlined ... but there any similarity ends! With ceremonies such as Weddings; Baby Namings; Re-Affirmations [and 'yes' divorces too] we aspire to make each ceremony unique to the people that ceremony is for.

...Concluded on Pg 8

What Our Neighbours Friends Are Up To

Cumbria Humanists

www.cumbria-humanists.org.uk

7 - 7.30pm Wed 8 Dec - Annual Dinner at The Black Lion, Durdar, Carlisle CA2 4TX. Non-members welcome ... No formal arrangements - usual dining room; members & guests can order and purchase their food from the excellent menu.

Isle of Man Freethinkers

www.iomfreethinkers.co.uk

2.30 Sun 12 Dec - Winter Celebration, Douglas. All members invited. Please bring something for buffet.

12.00 Thurs 16 Dec: Lunch Alessandros Restaurant, Douglas

Liverpool Humanists

<http://livehum.org>

No details posted yet - for update see website

Greater Manchester Humanists

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

7pm Wed 8 Dec: Friends Meeting Ho, Mount St, M2 5N
FMH Social - preceded by Special General Meeting and presentation on Multi-Faith Spaces.

South Cheshire And North Staffs Humanists

www.humanists.org.uk

12.30 Sun.19 Dec. Winter Solstice Party: At home of Anne & Paul - We all contribute some food: to avoid duplication, contact Anne beforehand to let her know what you intend to bring.

Humanist Society of West Yorkshire

www.wyhumanists.org.uk

7pm Thus 19 Dec: Swathmore 3-7 Woodhouse Sq. Leeds, Keith Wark, HSWY member - A Freethinker's View of the New Testament

Amnesty Preston

www.preston.amnesty.org.uk

7.30pm Mon 6 Dec: St Augustines Parish House, St Augustines Place. Preston

Lytham St Annes & Blackpool Amnesty

www.amnesty.org.uk/lytham

7.30pm Mon 6 Dec: Church Rd Centre Methodist Church; St Annes. FY8 5PX

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'

Untangling the Web:

1. Social Networking and Facebook

By Helen Cullen-Williams

You've probably heard 'Facebook', 'Twitter', 'social networking', 'blogs', 'search optimisation' and other internet jargon mentioned in the media in recent years. Even if you're a media recluse and this has passed you by, you may have noticed that here at LSH we're increasingly talking about the World Wide Web and how we want to use it more to our advantage.

At the AGM in October, I was elected to the newly-created committee post of "Online Marketing Officer". In this new series of articles I'm going to attempt to explain some of this exciting / baffling / terrifying / geeky / boring (delete as appropriate) world of the internet ... More importantly, I'll be putting it into the context of LSH: how we're using these tools to our advantage; and why you need an "Online Marketing Officer"!

This month I'll focus on 'social networking' and 'Facebook'.

Social Networking

How do you keep in touch with your friends, acquaintances, work colleagues and family? An annual card? The occasional letter? That phone call you never have enough time for? Catch-ups in the pub? Long lunches out? Gossipy coffee mornings? Chats over the garden fence? Emails? A few years ago, some clever young things realised that the web could be used to aid our basic human need for social interaction. Online social networking makes it easier for people to keep in contact. 'Social networks' are websites where users create a web page about themselves and share information with other people. There are different types of social networking sites: some encourage you to find old acquaintances (e.g. Friends Reunited); some focus on building professional contacts (e.g. LinkedIn); some are preferred by people with particular areas of interest (e.g. My Space is particularly used by the music industry); but most are general networks, where you can find friends and like-minded people.

Facebook

The most widely-used and well-known social network is Facebook.

Users of Facebook create a 'profile' about themselves. They choose what information to put on it and who sees that profile.

7

Most people choose to keep the majority of their information private except to their "Facebook friends". Someone can only become your "friend" if you allow them to. (You've probably heard scare stories about identity thieves finding personal information on sites like Facebook, but actually that is only possible if you choose to make your personal information public for anyone to see.) People then chat with each other. Conversations range from what you're having for dinner that night to the state of the economy and everything in between – just like real life. Conversations grow organically. Someone will start by making a comment and others choose to respond to it (or not). Organisations can also create profiles:

If you're on line have a look at our LSH page. Anyone can join organisation pages. People also create groups about things that interest them. Again, as in life, this can range from a group that gets together to rant about a local issue to a global group with a shared interest. This is where Facebook gets interesting for us. Anyone on Facebook can find our LSH profile and, if they join our page, comment on the things we're saying. And we can comment on other pages and groups.

An example of Facebook in action:

the BHA Census Campaign

The BHA's recently-launched "Census Campaign" is a good example of how this network helps spread information. The BHA announced the campaign on their Facebook page on the day it was launched. We shared the BHA information on our LSH page. I, as an individual, also shared the details of the BHA's Census Campaign with my "Facebook friends". Within a few hours about ten of my friends had joined the Census Campaign page. Some of these were people who don't belong to the BHA or LSH. They may have never heard of Humanism or Secularism. There were people I rarely see: a cousin I see once every five years; an old school friend. The friends of those friends (people I have no connection with) will have seen that those people joined the Census Campaign page. Some of them may have decided to join too... their friends will see this... and so on... The BHA page has over 10,300 followers (and growing daily). If every one of these people shared the campaign information with their friends ...

Continued on Page 8 ... ►

Untangling the Web: ... Continued

... and it continued snowballing as described in the last paragraph... well, you can see the power

The only way of spreading information to that many people in the 'olden days', without costly advertising, was via press coverage – and we all know how much the media love us “aggressive atheists”!

If you have access to the internet, but haven't used Facebook yet, now is the time to give it a go.

Quite a few of us from LSH are already on there, so you've got “friends” ready and waiting for you!

Plus the more people that join our LSH page the better – we need to visibly demonstrate to the world that we have a strong level of support.

You can find the LSH Facebook page by following the links from our website www.lancshumanism.org.uk.

St Catherine's Hospice

...concluded from pg.3

As informative as the morning undeniably was it didn't auger well that, of the nine people gathering in the room ahead of that day's presentation Chris, Mike & Ian were the only ones not wearing dog-collars ... A partition emphasises further when Rev Dewar revealed we were the only 'non-clergy' ever to have attended these seminars ... And that fact was brought into sharp focus during the plenary session when the non-religious among us wanted to know what provision might be made for physician assisted dying; given that each presentation had been encouragingly keen to stress just how much importance is placed on individual patient needs and wants. And there had been an honest admission from Linda that pain-relief is not always successful.

Interestingly it was only then the focus seemed to change from being patient-centric to hospice – centric. “*We don't give up – we keep on trying*” was how Linda put it [... ‘we’ being the hospice.]

“*But what if the patient has had enough? What if they want to give up? What if they don't want to keep on trying? ... Under such circumstances how much autonomy is an individual patient given then?*”

What followed was a predictable demarcation along familiar lines of religious and non-religious viewpoints which led me to conclude that, for the undeniably good work done and the demonstrable care and comfort provided for the vast majority of patients [and their families] nevertheless, for all their laudable declarations that “* ... *Care is given unconditionally to those who need it, regardless of age, culture or religious beliefs*” - at heart - Hospices appear to be religious institutions and, when that religion comes into direct conflict with autonomy, the religious view prevails.

* -from information literature provided by St Catherine's

Humanist Ceremonies ... Concluded.

It should say those things ‘they’ want to say in ways ‘they’ want to say them – using ‘their’ words rather than simply reiterating phrases which are used at every other [similar] ceremony.

‘Their’ ceremony should reflect ‘their’ hopes and aspirations for ‘their’ future.

At the end of each humanist ceremony those people present [family, friends & guests] should be left with a feeling of “... *‘that was just ‘them’ ...*”

The LSH Winter Gathering ...

As we were unable to confirm the requisite 25 attendees necessary to secure the venue at Guy's Court on Sun. 12th Dec we're moving to plan B ... The venue is now:

'Silantro' 2 Wood Street, St Annes. FY8 1QS.

We meet 2pm on Sunday 12th December.

Silantro is licensed cafe - it has a growing reputation for 'being different' - the food is excellent - and we'll have exclusive use of it until (about) 5pm ... *For 'menu' - see below.*

There will be a good selection of hot and cold platters of food - both savory and sweet - and the cost will be £8.50 per head.

Because I have to give them some idea of catering numbers: unless I hear different I'll assume those who originally agreed to Guys will be coming - if the change of venue encourages others to join us - please let me know ASAP.

As with all our activities – if those who're travelling from further afield can let me know - may be able to but you in touch with others so you can arrange car-sharing.

Winter Gathering Menu

Upon Arrival:

Olives & Feta Cheese
Nachos & Salsa
Pisa Mozzarella

Hot and cold platters will be passed around :

Prawns and Seafood Sauce Served on Crispy Baby Leaf
Hot Sage & Apple Sausage
Roast Beef Pinwheels with Caramelised Onion and Orange Chutney
Chicken and Cranberry Bites
Breaded Mushrooms served with Garlic Mayonnaise
Haddock Goujons served with Citrus Mayonnaise

Something Sweet to Finish:

Hot Mini Mince Pies served with Chantilly Cream.

Festive Tipples can be pr-ordered for your arrival:

Christmas Mojito £13.00 per pitcher
Mulled Wine £3.60 per glass
Cava with a Twist £2.75 per glass