



Pete enthalls **LSH** members and guests

BADAS speaks to LSH

Pete Franklin; Vice-chair & Publicity Officer for **BADAS** [Blackpool And District Astronomical Society (*great mnemonic btw**)] provided some incredible deep space photographs taken from his own personal back-garden observatory in Blackpool during a truly fascinating talk to **LSH** on Wednesday 18th May.

Pete began by introducing his audience to his particular Society then talked about his own interest in astronomy and his increasingly sophisticated equipment accumulated over the years – including the most amazing ‘garden shed’ I’ve ever seen.

Saving the best till last he then treated us to some mesmerizing pictures of the moon; planets; galaxies and nebulae, containing in excess of a trillion stars ... All taken by himself - a demonstration of just what can be achieved by amateur astronomers. Adding just how much the global community of amateur astronomers contribute to the wealth of knowledge amassed by the professionals.

This well attended meeting was made up of **LSH** members - guests - regular visitors and an encouraging number of ‘new faces’: and humanists being humanists there was no shortage of questions fired at him from the audience – all of which he answered comprehensively and [at times] patiently.

I’m sure I’m not alone in promising to treat myself to a visit to one of BADAS’s forthcoming meetings which take place on 1st Wednesday of each month at St Kentigern’s Parish Centre, Newton Dv, Blackpool Lancs. FY3 8BT [beginning at 7.30] - or perhaps one of their ‘Star Parties’ at Lane-End’s, Pilling: chosen for its very limited light pollution.

Further details can be obtained from their impressive web-site:
www.blackpoolastronomy.org.uk

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... ***And speaking** of mnemonics - BADAS’s led the ‘post-meeting meeting’ to discuss possible alternatives for ‘**LSH**’ as we gathered in the lounge of The Black Bull for our [now] regular wind-down libations.

One suggestion was Lancashire Union of Secular Humanists - giving us ‘**LUSH**’ - some thought that was very fitting!

There was some concern raised about the class of attendee’s we might attract if we went for Lancashire Association of Secular Humanists - or ‘**LASH**!’ ‘**LESH**’ sounded too much like a speech impediment.

By the time ‘**LISH**’ and ‘**LOSH**’ were being bandied about some of us suspected libation overload and thought it wise to make our excuses and leave.

... We’re probably better off sticking with **LSH** after all!

Crem-encounters

Being a humanist celebrant is undeniably a rewarding undertaking ... *But there are times ...*

.....
I'd just finished a funeral and, at my car, I spotted a small, meek-looking elderly lady bearing down on me with an air of determination about her.

"Hello" she said "... *this is the second time I've attended one of your ceremonies and I have to tell you that you are wrong. One day you'll find out [too late] that there is a God - and that he is a vengeful God!* (a touch triumphantly) *I'm sorry but the Lord just spoke to me and told me to tell you that!*"

"And he couldn't tell me that himself?" I replied.

"He told me I must tell you that you are wrong"

"Really! Well if he calls again tell him I said 'tell him to mind his own business!'"

.....
Ask any humanist celebrant and [s]he will tell you just how much work is involved in preparing each individual funeral ceremony.

There's the family to visit (arranging a time when as many of them can be present) so as to learn as much as you can about the life of the deceased - discuss how they want the ceremony to be handled - what music they want - whether the curtains are to be closed or left open - does anybody else want to participate - how that will be managed (& so on).

Then the ceremony has to be written, incorporating any requirements expressed by the family.

A day or two before the ceremony the family are e-mailed [or phoned] to review the proposed draft and invited to make amendments if there are any aspect of it they're not entirely comfortable with.

A presentable copy of the [agreed] transcript is then printed; to be given to the family after the ceremony - and another copy is prepared for the celebrant to deliver the ceremony ... including details of what other speakers intend to say [because some of them 'will' forget to bring their notes - or decide on the last minute they're unable to speak after all].

And on top of all that there is occasionally a degree of enmity to contend with from clergy at the Crem: ranging from openly hostile to thinly veiled sarcasm.

Then going into the chapel to set up for your ceremony you discover those very same minister's 'notes' from a preceding funeral - Often it's one handwritten sheet of paper with scant details of the deceased's family / hobbies and interests - On occasions it is a torn off corner of an envelope with "Dog 'Toby' - liked bingo - enjoyed Coronation St" - hurriedly scribbled on the back - dictated to the minister at the doors of the Crem chapel.

A couple of times it's been the 'Obituary' notice hastily torn out of the local newspaper - because it has the names of the deceased's family.

Got to love those 'professionals' Eh?!

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From
The
Committee
Room

Next **LSH** Committee Meeting 09.30am Sat 2nd July 2011
Meeting Room - Great Eccleston Village Centre
All 'paid-up' **LSH** members welcome

Quick Quote

"First they ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they fight you, then you win."

- Mahatma Gandhi



30th May
to
5th June

from Sara Passmore's article BHA's [30th May] e-bulletin

We humanists are sometimes faced with questions about how we value our families; how we celebrate special events, relationships and mark people's lives when they die.

Sometimes we're criticised for rejecting social norms and for speaking out against religious privilege.

A big part of what the British Humanist Association do is campaigning on issues of importance to humanists and our education work: this sometimes means that our other important work isn't promoted in the same way, such as through the media.

Most of us want to mark important events in our lives such as births, marriages and partnerships, as well as to commemorate people we have loved when they die. For those with no religious belief it's important that we can mark these occasions with honesty, warmth and affection, using words and music that are personal and appropriate to the lives and the people involved.

Humanist Ceremonies do just that, and it is the work of the humanist celebrants that enable us to commemorate and share our lives with our friends and family.

May 30th - June 5th is National Family Week - the largest annual celebration of families and family life in the UK, and rather than feeling excluded from celebrating, it is a time to celebrate how great our own huge, extended family is.

Bit Of A Damp Squib?

Don't worry if you're reading this ... the End of The World still happened ... just not in the way you imagined it would. Oh it occurred alright but it turned out to be more spiritual than corporeal!

So it's your mistake not crackpot Harold Camping's. NOW he tells us the end of the world he predicted was always intended to be in two-parts – not one and the Rapture scheduled for 6pm Saturday followed by total planetary inhalation is simply put on hold for a few months.

God [in his infinite mercy] decided at the last minute to just hold back for a few months before destroying all but a select few.

Apparently it's now going to be a 'for one night only' spectacular with not one but two (count 'em –TWO) almighty demonstrations of omnipotent petulance.

An earth-shattering quake 'AND' the apocalypse occurring – simultaneously - On 21st October ... Guaranteed!!!

So you've only got five months to get some serious sucking-up in to make sure you get in the Rapture queue.

And for everybody else? ... Well you can read all about that in November's Newsletter.



Almighty Conundrum

Being a bit of a late developer I only discover this question just a few days ago.

On investigation it seems it's been around for quite a while – but I still enjoyed it – and hope it tickles some of you too – with apologies to those for whom it's old news.

'Is it possible for an omnipotent being to create a rock so heavy [s]he himself would not be able to lift it?'

Spiritual Care Forum - Anyone?

Peter Tarelton [Chaplain of Southport & Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust] is setting up a '**Spiritual Care Forum**'; the purpose of which is to give guidance to the Chaplaincy and the Trust on matters relating to expression of faith – care of patients with no faith – and those frightened by the prospect of death.

He's keen for his Chaplaincy to be as inclusive as possible - '*not only of all faiths, but of those without any belief system*'; and for that reason he has specifically invited a 'Humanist' voice to participate.

The Forum will meet 3-times-a-year and the initial meeting is 10^{am}-12^{noon} Mon 27th June at Southport Hospital [PR8 6PN] - If any LSH member living closer to Southport / Ormskirk would like to be, part of this Forum - contact me [Ed] for further details.

We have a similar representative with Preston Hospital Trust; therefore guidance and support is available.

Just two – so far!

Come on LSH'ers – sign up and support us.

In our March Newsletter we published details of how – simply by using your computer search engine – *as you have always done* – you can raise funds for LSH.

Even though there are now just two LSH members who have set 'easysearch' as their home-page we have already raised **£13.11p** for LSH funds

We have around 50 paid up LSH members – and many [many] more LSH supporters.

If just 20 replicated what two have done we would have raised **£131.10p** by now!

By using 'easysearch' instead of Google or any other search engine, you can make a real difference.

'easysearch' is completely FREE and by making just 10 searches a day, each individual could raise around £20 a year for LSH.

As well as raising funds, easysearch also gives you the best search results available on web.

Today, the Internet is so big that different search engines often deliver different results for the same search.

So, by combining the strengths of several search engines together - Yahoo!, Bing, MIVA, and many more - you get the very best results in terms of accuracy and relevance, which means you'll find what you're looking for quickly and easily every time - all in one 'easy' search!

Simply go to <http://easysearch.org.uk/> and register as an LSH supporter!

And - *to raise even more* - once you've done that follow the link to 'easyfundraising' then every on-line purchase you make generates more money ... and the best bit - **it won't cost you a penny!**

BHA Conference

17 - 19 June 2011

From ... <http://bhaconference.org.uk>

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The British Humanist Association is proud to announce the return of the annual BHA residential conference.

The 2011 BHA conference is on the theme of **"The Meaning of Life"** and will run from the evening of Friday 17 June to midday Sunday 19 June at The Hilton, Deansgate in Manchester.

The question of the "meaning of life" is often described as unanswerable.

But in fact answers abound, from thinkers: like Plato (*the answer is that we should attain the ideal of the Good*) through Mill (*that we should adopt the "greatest happiness principle"*), to Douglas Adams ("42").

But the question has also been said to have no answer, many answers, or to be nonsense anyway. Friends and Distinguished Supporters of the British Humanist Association will help to unravel the mess that humanity has made of what may (or may not) be the most important question ever asked.

And we'll be addressing many other questions as well, just in case we discover early in the weekend that "the meaning of life" is just a massive category mistake.

The BHA's revived annual conference includes talks, conversations and open discussion with contributors Peter Atkins - Julian Baggini - Chris French - A C Grayling - Natalie Haynes - Stephen Law - Richard Norman - Phillip Pullman - and BHA President Polly Toynbee.

Entertainment on the Friday night features comedian Robin Ince and "Egghead" C J De Mooi.

A gala dinner on the Saturday evening will include the presentation of an award for services to Humanism.

The conference is a chance to meet fellow humanists and discover more about life, the universe and everything from a number of humanist perspectives.

The programme is packed.

Accessible to all levels of interest, delegates will hear scientists and writers, philosophers and entertainers as they wrangle with such subjects as boundlessly optimistic science, the meanings in our lives, bizarre beliefs and cognitive deficiencies, classical wisdom, secular narrative, and improbably, the virtues of religion!

Tickets available from BHA online

www.humanism.org.uk

**or by card payment on 020 7079 3580
from 9am-5pm Mon-Fri.**



The Hilton, Deansgate, Manchester

And - On The Subject of Conferences

Lancashire Secular Humanists [LSH] –
Greater Manchester Humanists [GMH] &
Liverpool Humanist Group [LHG]
are currently developing a brand new initiative:

The Northwest Regional 'Autumn' Conference

The conference objectives are:

- to enrich the knowledge and commitment of new & existing members.
- to develop links between local Humanist groups, particularly those in the Northwest.
- to develop links with other like-minded groups, particularly those in the Northwest
- to help participants move forward in living their lives as Humanists.
- to enthuse participants with the message that we have something really worthwhile to offer.
- to help promulgate the value of Humanism to a wider public.

Our target participants are:

- members of NW Humanist groups - Chester - GMH - IofM - LHG - LSH - SCANS.
- members of other local groups - especially those nearby - Sheffield - Shropshire - West Yorkshire.
- Members of other Humanist groups - Universities - UKAFHA - Burnley Humanists etc.
- supporters of NW groups who are not paid up members.
- other BHA members, supporters, e-bulletin recipients ... Especially those based in the NW.
- participants of other groups such as Skeptics-in-Pubs, Café Scientifique, Philosophy-in-Pubs, Secularists etc.

This Conference is to be an annual event staged at a different venue around the Northwest each year.

The first is in Manchester Sat 8th - Sun 9th October.

Watch This Space for regular updates.

Creationism In Schools

The National Secular Society has backed the launch of the **CrISIS** Campaign:

Creationism In Schools Isn't Science

The campaign was started by Laura Horner, a parent of pupils of St Peter's state secondary school in Exeter after a creationist was introduced to the children as a scientist and allowed to "teach" for an hour and a half.

When challenged by Mrs Horner, the school insisted that it had done nothing wrong within the current guidelines, despite presenting creationism on equal terms with scientific evidence.

The Department of Education guidance on the teaching of creationism is clearly not working and the CrISIS campaign is calling for the Department for Education to tighten up the national guidelines.

NSS Senior Campaigns Officer Tessa Kendall said:

"State-funded schools must not sell children short by allowing beliefs to be promoted as 'facts' of equal value with scientific evidence.

It should be made clear that science is not an 'alternative' and that there are not other 'truths' of equal value.

Believers who dismiss evolution as 'just a theory' don't know the difference between a theory and a hypothesis."

CrISIS have written an open letter to the Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove signed by both eminent scientists and theologians, as well as the British Centre for Science Education (BCSE), religious think tank Ekklesia and the NSS.

Coming To A School Near You!

Exclusive Christian Brethren are to take over a School in Hornby [Lancaster] in September.

This will not be used by local children – but children of Brethren members.

The Brethren believe the modern world is the domain of the Devil and children should be taught in safe places away from evil influences.

They see TV, computers and some fiction as corrupting influences on children. Pupils cannot use computers because they are seen as 'damaging to the proper development of children's minds'.

Pupils are taught Bible studies rather than religious education.

Members of the sect live in tight-knit communities based around the traditional married family, and do not mix with outsiders - neither do they vote.

There are several reports of ex-members seeking psychiatric help because of mental problems.

Interestingly - the sect has their own website and some leaders are allowed to use laptops.

However, computers are seen as potentially corrupting to the young and 'ordinary' members are not allowed access to them.

Scientology and the Exclusive Brethren 10 things they have in common

- 1 – They are both considered by many to be bona fide cults
- 2 – They both have had to have the word 'church' added to their official names
- 3 – Scientology borrows the Christian Cross, the Exclusive Brethren have to insert the word 'Christian'
- 4 – Both have extraordinarily wealthy leaders obsessed with security – David Miscavige (Scientology) and Bruce Hales (Exclusive Brethren).
- 5 – Both teach that if you leave the group, you are eternally lost.
- 6 – Both retain lawyers to attempt the silencing of perceived opposition through the use of frivolous lawsuits.
"Beware of attorneys who tell you not to sue ... the purpose of the suit is to harass and discourage rather than to win." – **Ron Hubbard** (Scientology)
"Sue the bastards" – **James Symington** (Exclusive Brethren)
- 7 – Leaving either requires complete separation from the group.
 - Scientology calls this '*Disconnection*'.
 - The Exclusive Brethren call it '*Withdrawal*'.
 The remaining members will then shun the former member.
- 8 – Both have their own schools where the curriculum is carefully monitored and where the students are directed toward their unique beliefs.
- 9 – Allegations of abuse have been laid against both groups and in the Australian Parliament, senators have demanded full inquiries.
- 10 – Scientology and the Exclusive Brethren share the same Public Relations firm - Jackson Wells, Sydney, Australia.



The Creationists Museum

June 2011

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World Humanist Day is June 21st

Humanism Week is 20th – 26th June

Consequently **LSH**'s activity for June is traditionally designated our 'Outreach' Event! ... A way for us to raise public awareness about Humanism and Humanists.

This year will be no different in that regard however we're going to try something slightly unusual.

Instead of **LSH** going 'on the road' we'll be holding a series of three simultaneous presentations - on one night - centered around our main assets.

The three subjects we will be focusing on are:

Humanist Campaigns

Humanist Community

Humanist Ceremonies

Under the heading - '**Everything You Wanted To Know About Humanism But Were Afraid To Ask**' we aim to inform people about:

- **The** type of campaigns we have been [and are currently] involved in.

- **The** community aspect of belonging to **LSH**.

Not just the camaraderie engendered by getting to know like minded individuals; the social functions we enjoy; the wide variety of subjects we discuss; the guest speakers we attract and the knowledge gained ... but also the mutual support provided simply by sharing experiences with each other.

- **The** ceremonies we provide. As well as outlining the essentials of what humanist ceremonies are there will be anecdotes and experiences of real celebrants dealing with real ceremonies ... Some funny - some not!

Wednesday 15th June
Meet at 7.30pm for 8pm start.
Great Eccleston Village Centre
59 High Street
The Square
Great Eccleston.
PR3 0YB

Don't forget - there's additional parking on The Farmers Arms Pub car park, Halsell Sq. Gt Eccleston. PR3 0YE. - just a three minute walk away. From High St drive up Chappel St and turn left at the top: or drive up Barrows Ln and turn right at the top. You Can't Miss It!

Quick Quote

We must question the story logic of having an all-knowing all-powerful God, who creates faulty Humans, and then blames them for his own mistakes."

Gene Roddenberry – Creator of 'Star Trek'



Atheists - The Original 'Ghost-Busters'

What Our Neighbours Friends Are Up To

Cumbria Humanists e-mail - oldcodger2@btinternet.com
Sadly Cumbria Humanists is currently disbanded enquiries can be directed to George Weston at the above e-mail address.

Isle of Man Freethinkers www.iomfreethinkers.co.uk

12noon Thurs 16th June - Just 'Lunch' this month
Alessandros, Castle Street, Douglas

Liverpool Humanists <http://livehum.org>

No details posted yet - for update see website

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

7pm Wed 8th June: Friends Meeting House, Mount St, M2 5
Helen Middleton-Price [Director, Nowgen]
Death Row in Louisiana – DNA & innocence

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

Meetings start at 7.30pm - Details of March's meeting not yet posted - see website for further info.

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

7pm Thus 9th June: Swathmore 3-7 Woodhouse Sq. Leeds,
'Creationism and Intelligent Design'
-Brian Layfield, member HSWY

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

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

LSH Meetings - The Small Print

Lancashire Secular Humanists is a group of free-thinking individuals living lives informed by **Logic, Science & Humanity**

All **LSH** meetings are 'open' meetings. Anyone is invited to join in our discussions regardless of whether they are humanist – secularist – religious – undecided – or [just] interested.

We are people who enjoy participating in intelligent discourse between ourselves and with others about wide ranging subjects on the understanding that the only common denominator will be that nobody resorts to dogma in defence of a contention.

Being freethinkers there are many things we secular humanists will not agree on between ourselves, but there are matters on which we do take a firm and unanimous stand ...

We do not condone discrimination of any sort - nor do we hate religious people ... Such views are entirely contrary to any humanist philosophy and we reserve the right to exclude any person promoting them!

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'