

Glyn Eatock from the Lytham St Annes branch of Amnesty International addressed **LSH's** meeting at Great Eccleston Village Centre on Wednesday 18th January.

Before expanding on the wide ranging activities Amnesty are now involved in Glyn began by explaining how it remains, essentially, an organisation made up of ordinary people from across the world standing up for humanity and human rights. Their purpose is to protect individuals wherever justice, fairness, freedom and truth are denied. Amnesty also 'defends the defenders' supporting courageous individuals who put themselves at risk by standing up for human rights in countries where the authorities do all they can to suppress them.

As is usual at **LSH** meetings Glyn didn't get too far into his subject before he found himself taking questions from the floor and he did very well to get through his prepared address in the time allocated. He also brought along plenty of literature; magazines and pamphlets to support his talk; which he generously left for attendees to take away with them.

Bloody Discipline! That's What They Need.

A military-style school staffed entirely by ex-servicemen is set to open in Greater Manchester!

Leading military figures, including a former defence staff chief and a captain of a counter-insurgency unit in Afghanistan, will be teaching children as young as 11.

The Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) said children may be taught using military-style discipline. Tom Burkard [CPS] said the proposed school would use both qualified and unqualified teachers: "You are told to teach children to manage their own learning. An undergraduate has enough trouble managing their own learning - take an illiterate pupil growing up in an inner-city estate and expect them to do the same is in the realms of fantasy."

Burkard argues that those opposed to military discipline for

young children simply "did not understand it". - He added the plans for establishing the school were necessary as existing schools were not adequately educating children.

The so-called 'Phoenix school' will not open its doors until September 2012 at the earliest as it is still at the pre-proposal stage.

The plans follow government proposals for a discipline crackdown which were announced earlier this year. The government also announced ex-servicemen would be able to apply for a £9,000 bursary to retrain as teachers.

Education secretary Michael Gove has said: "The presence of role models who have experience in taking young men and women and forging them into a cohesive team, and instilling discipline, would be immensely valuable."

The proposals have already proven divisive, but follow the prime

Half-a-Century!

Welcome to our 50th Edition of the **LSH** Newsletter.

Thanks to all who have supported us along the way.

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minister's promise to crack down and adopt a "tough love" approach to disaffected youth.

David Cameron told BBC Radio 4's Today Programme:

"We have got to do better at bringing up our children and instilling discipline in school."



"I expect you all to be independent, innovative, critical thinkers who will do exactly as I say!"



'Catholic Schools Are For Religious Recruitment'

Michael Campbell –
RC Bishop of Lancaster
Source - www.secularism.org.uk

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From
The
Committee
Room

The Catholic bishop of Lancaster confirms that the purpose of Catholic schools is to evangelise. In fact; if schools have mainly non-Catholic pupils, then they have no purpose in the Church's "mission of salvation."

In a pastoral letter, Bishop Campbell said that in the light of falling congregations, the Church have to urgently reassess schools with large numbers of non-Catholic pupils and teachers. "Is it time for us to admit that we can no longer maintain schools that are Catholic in name only?" he wrote. "Faced with fewer priests and smaller congregations, where should Catholic parishes and schools of the future be located?"

Census data from the Catholic Education Service show 30% of pupils at Catholic schools are non-Catholic, rising, in places, to more than half . . . Together with a shortage of specifically Catholic head-teachers and falling numbers of priests, many supposedly Catholic schools are nothing of the kind.

Mgr William Kilgannon, vicar general in the local Diocese (Hallam), said "...schools are an important tool for evangelisation and provide an opportunity for non-Catholic children to become involved in the Catholic community."

Writing in the Catholic magazine the *Tablet*, Brendan Conboy, the headteacher of a Catholic school in the Lancaster diocese, says that in his

Next LSH Committee Meeting 09.30am Sat 1st April 2012
Meeting Room – Great Eccleston Village Centre
All 'paid-up' LSH members welcome

Please submit any items for the agenda [in the usual way] as soon as possible thereby allowing time for those matters to be given fair consideration before the meeting.

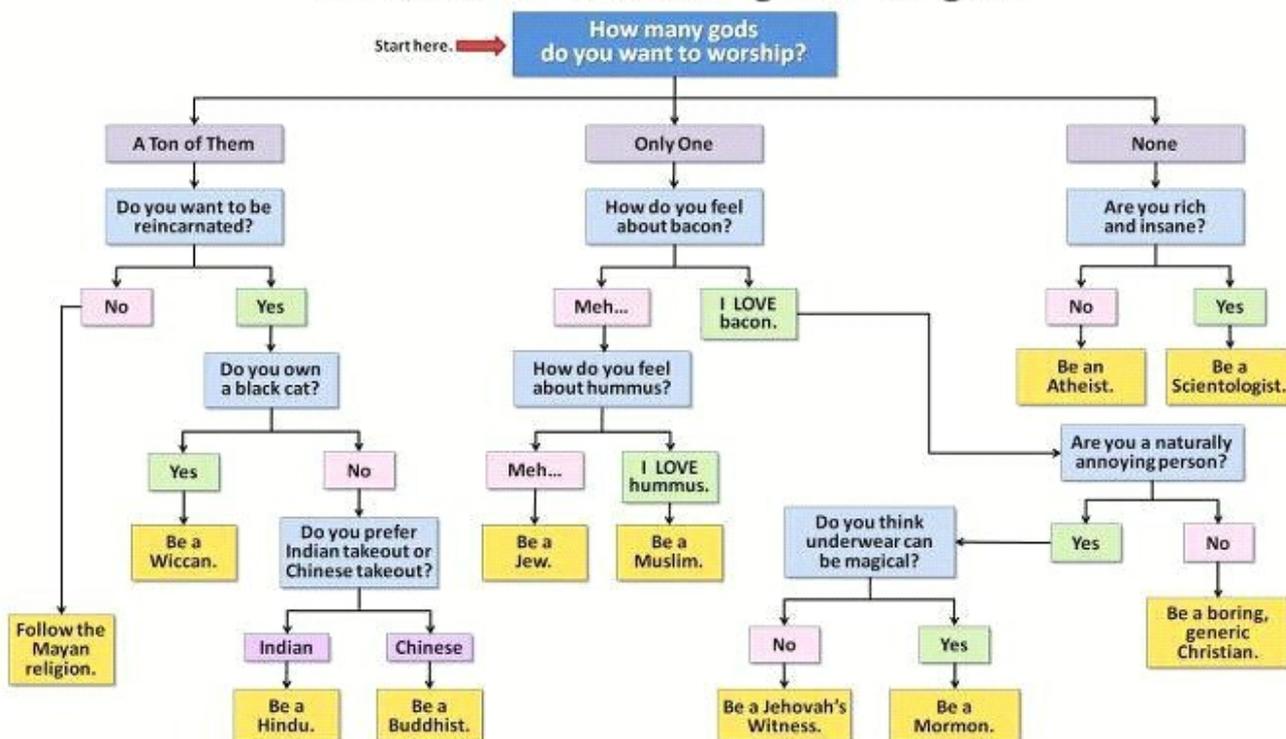
school the number of baptised Catholics is "falling rapidly" and is now less than half. Of the 130 staff he employs, he doesn't imagine that even half of them are Catholics and most of those are non-practising. Nevertheless, the school has a budget of £4.5 million, provided almost entirely by the taxpayer.

Mr Conboy says: "Faith is caught not taught, as the cliché says, and daily witness offered by the staff & students alike is a powerful tool for evangelisation."

There appears to be a degree of self-delusion in this statement as he readily admits that hardly any of the children go to church.

Terry Sanderson, President of the National Secular Society, said: "... We've been saying for years that the primary purpose of religious schools' is the promotion of sectarian religion..."

A Flowchart for Choosing Your Religion



A cut-out-n-keep wall-chart for you ... Just in case you're still undecided

With thanks to LSH member Colin Laidlaw

Truly Unbelievable!

A touring conference: *'The Lepers Amongst Us: Homosexuality and the Life of the Church'* is going ahead in London despite condemnation from community groups where the conference has been previously held, and criticism from professional organisations declaring conversion or reparative therapies', seeking to 'cure' gay people, as harmful.

Naomi Phillips [BHA's Head of Public Affairs] said: *'The Core Issues Trusts state they wish to work with those who 'seek to change from a "gay" lifestyle to a gender-affirming one', however the suggestion that homosexuality is a problem in need of a 'cure' is deeply insulting to lesbian, gay and bisexual people, profoundly objectionable, and wrong.*

Specious claims that someone's sexual orientation can be changed through religion or therapy lack any credible basis, and conversion therapy can prove extremely harmful, especially where vulnerable individuals are being targeted.

These kinds of biblically-inspired attempts to change sexual orientation have been repeatedly denounced by the UK Council for Psychotherapy, the British Medical Association, and the Royal College of Psychiatrists.'

Anglican Double Standards? - Surely Not!

Lancashire based Chaplain to the Queen; Canon Andrew Clitherow has quietly married his third wife, soprano Nicola Howard in a simple ceremony just a year after splitting up with his second wife Rebekah.

He assures us there was no extramarital affair involved in that second marriage ending.

Andrew and second-wife Rebekah married in 2002 [they have four children] he's now 60; she's 35.

They met in the 1990's when Andrew was Choir-master at Rossall School in Fleetwood –Rebekah was a pupil there ... *Do your own sums.*

Andrew met Nicola through music too – at his parish in Lytham St Annes.

Canon Clitherow was appointed to the Queen's Ecclesiastical team in 2009, allowing him to preach to the Queen: he has also had a number of books published on the subject of love and desire within the framework of faith.

In a statement the Bishop of Blackburn said: *"... The Church has long recognised both the strengths and fragilities of human love and seeks to provide encouragement and support for those celebrating new relationships ..."*

When he says *'human love'* are we to assume he means just the heterosexual kind? As we heard last month: despite recent changes in the law; the Anglican Church made it very clear that same-sex relationships – no matter how loyal & committed - will never be sanctified in their churches.

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The Next Meeting of Lancaster Skeptics in the Pub

8pm - Wed 1st February 2012
The Park Hotel; 1 St Oswald St,
Lancaster. LA1 3AS

[How to Point & Laugh at Irrational Nonsense](#)



Crispian Jago is one of the founding members of the Hampshire Skeptic Society, and co-founder & co-organiser of Winchester Skeptics in the Pub.

He was recently longlisted for the 2011 Orwell Prize for his satirical skeptic blog *[Science, Reason and Critical Thinking](#)*, where he "hurls ad hominem attacks at passing woo mongers and takes random pot shot at supernatural, paranormal and pseudo-scientific bullshit."

How to Point and Laugh at Irrational Nonsense will review many of the topics covered in the Science, Reason and Critical Thinking blog over the past couple of years and ponder whether or not ridicule is an appropriate method for sceptical activism.

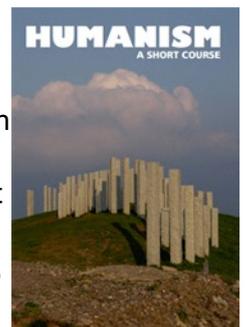
In his day job, Crispian is a freelance IT consultant specialising in the design and management of software test strategies in order to ensure the successful deployment of complex IT systems.

Admission to Skeptics in the Pub meetings is free. Meetings are held in the first floor room - which has a bar - there is a donation jar at the exit to cover room hire and speakers expenses so - nothing to stop you going along and having a good time... why not car-share?

Latest Addition to [LSH](#) Library

'A Short Course on Humanism'

This short course is intended both as an introduction for adults who would like to find out more about Humanism, and also for those who already consider themselves, or think they might be, humanists.



The course covers:

- What is Humanism?
- Making sense of the world
- Where do moral values come from?
- Applying humanist ethics
- Humanism: its history and humanist organisations
- Are you a humanist?

All sections include questions for discussion and suggestions for further reading - and may be photocopied for group study.

Any paid-up [LSH](#) member may borrow any of the books in our virtual library - see Pg 6 for details

Crem-encounters

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Following on from last month's article - 'Rev White and the conveniently vanishing dog-collar' - I've had a couple of conversations about funeral ceremonies with other members of the clergy.

One - a very pleasant Anglican vicar - confessed to being increasingly aware of the feeling that; as he's addressing congregations, he 'knows' half the people present don't believe a word he's saying.

The other - a recently ordained Catholic priest - is convinced most of the people present at ceremonies he conducts are simply going along with the ritual with no thought whatsoever to the words being said or sung because 'that's what you do at funerals'.

They both expressed concerns over diminishing congregations but took the pragmatic view that such trends are only to be expected in a society increasingly resistant to hierarchy and convention.

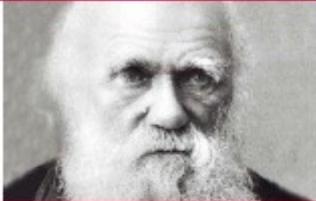
Interestingly they both made unsolicited references to the infamous Rev White's malleable sincerity.

Time For A Quick Quote

"If abuses are destroyed, man must destroy them. If slaves are freed, man must free them. If new truths are discovered, man must discover them. If the naked are clothed; if the hungry are fed; if justice is done; if labour is rewarded; if superstition is driven from the mind; if the defenceless are protected and if the right finally triumphs, all must be the work of man. The grand victories of the future must be won by man, and by man alone."

Robert Ingersoll

Darwin Day Celebration Lecture 2012



School of Psychology



The Evolution of Intelligence in Birds and Apes

by Prof Nicola S Clayton
FRS

University of Cambridge

Darwin Lecture Theatre
13 February, 7.00-9.00pm
(cash bar open from 6.00)

All welcome! For free tickets, visit
<http://darwinday2012.eventsbot.com>



Could it be that corvids (crows, magpies & jays) are as clever as chimpanzees and other primates?

Come and see the results of some truly astonishing experiments!

Let's Celebrate Darwin Day

UCLAN School of Psychology presents their seventh annual Darwin Day Celebration Lecture, delivered this year by Prof Nicky Clayton of Cambridge University.

In "*The Evolution of Intelligence in Birds and Apes*", Prof Clayton will argue that corvids (*members of the crow family including ravens, magpies & jays*) are as clever as chimpanzees and other non-human primates, and that this represents a case of convergence in intelligence in these distantly related animals who shared a common ancestor over 300 Million Years Ago.

Nicky is Professor of Comparative Cognition at Clare College Cambridge, and a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Her research is at the interface between animal behaviour, experimental psychology and neuroscience . . . She is also a keen dancer and is fascinated by the links between science and dance.

UCLAN's Darwin Day Lectures are becoming ever more popular and anticipating this will be very well attended I've secured 12 tickets for **LSH** - get your dibs in quick to be sure of a seat. *I will hold four for those not 'on-line' until Mon 6 Feb - so let me know 'soonest'.*



For more information, visit
www.uclan.ac.uk/darwin



“Why Didn't Someone Grab The Camera ... Or even lock the doors and call the police?” Ah yes! So easy to think of these things when you're not actually there. I wonder how I would have reacted? I guess I would have been shocked and stunned and helpless like everyone else. Anyway – read the story. A talk on sharia and human rights by NSS Council Member Anne Marie Waters at Queen Mary, University of London, was cancelled at the last moment because of an Islamist who made serious threats against everyone there. Ms Waters was due to give a talk on behalf of the One Law for All campaign on 16 January but before it started, a man entered the lecture theatre, stood at the front with a camera and filmed the audience. He then said that he knew who everyone was, where they lived and if he heard anything negative about the Prophet, he would track them down. The man also filmed students in the foyer and threatened to murder them and their families. On leaving the building, he joined a large group of men, apparently there to support him. Students were told by security to stay in the lecture theatre for their own safety

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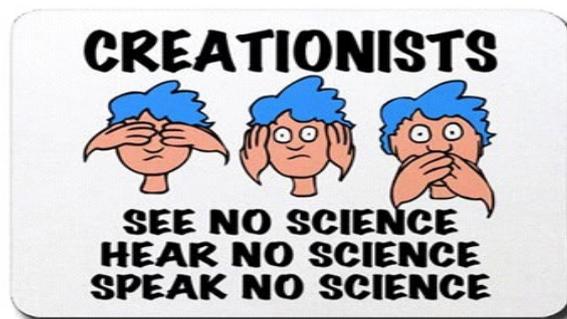
And now we've had Salman Rushdie not only being unable to attend the Jaipur Literature Festival in India in person for fear of losing his life – even his proposed video link had to be abandoned – simply because threats made by similarly outraged Neanderthal retards; with no concept of a post-mediaeval society, are so feared. And why are they so animated? Because Rushdie wrote a piece of fiction which they take exception too. This is contemptible behaviour which has no place in the 20th [let along the 21st] century. These people have to accept that nobody has a right to not be offended. And the solution to this particular trend can only come from the vast majority of intelligent, articulate Islamists. But where are their voices of condemnation? And why are we not hearing leading religious leaders of other faiths denouncing in the strongest possible terms such religious intolerance?

.....

That is so true. How many times do we hear the plea that “most Muslims are not like that” and yet when there is an opportunity for ‘moderate Muslims’ to speak out publicly against extremist acts they either refuse to or are scared to (or maybe, just possibly, some may even agree with the extremists – it's difficult not to assume that). If we want a peaceful world where people of all religions and none can co-exist we must all be prepared to stand up for those human values which we hold in common and speak out against unjust and violent extremism.

.....

It is undeniably true that ‘most Muslims are not like that’. I don't think it's a case of moderates ‘agreeing’ with extremists per se. I think Sam Harris is closer to the mark when he suggests we should actually be worrying more about the ‘moderates’. Main stream ‘moderate’ religion is the loam in which the germs of extremism are sown, nurtured, defended and thrive. Only when it's too late: when activists become radicals and overstep the mark into



At Last! No Creationism in Free Schools

Source . NSS website

The Department for Education (DfE) has amended the framework within which the free schools operate. A statement released by the DfE says:

No school, free or otherwise, will ever be allowed to teach creationism instead of valid and thoroughly evidenced scientific theories.

Stephen Evans; Campaigns Manager - National Secular Society (NSS) commented:

"Last year the DfE gave assurances to the NSS that groups advocating creationism as a scientific theory would have their free school applications turned down. We are naturally very pleased that they have now delivered on their promise. This latest development sends a clear message to all schools that there is no place for the promotion or teaching of creationism or 'intelligent design' in the classroom."

A recent petition called for the Government make clear that creationism and 'intelligent design' are not scientific theories, and to prevent them from being taught as such in publicly-funded schools. Organised by the British Humanist Association, the petition was backed by leading scientists and science educators including Sir David Attenborough, Prof. Richard Dawkins and Prof. Michael Reiss and attracted over 20,000 signatures.

One website for a proposed Christian school stated:

"For a Christian, science is not the study of impersonal chance laws, it is the study of God's created order and design. History is not the examination of random events or the march of progress; for the Christian, history is the unfolding of God's plan. If a school leaves God out of the curriculum the school is making a religious statement, namely that God is not relevant to the majority of life, that life can be interpreted without reference to God."

From the outset, the NSS warned that the Government's "free school" programme could open the doors to extremists.

LSH Bloggersphere ... concluded

... fanaticism; do their former supporters and teachers try to distance themselves from their actions. [Perhaps] their reluctance to condemn has something to do with the fact that they are only too aware that they themselves carry a measure of responsibility. After all; violent aggressive religious fundamentalists don't suddenly emerge out of nowhere; fully formed!

[Want to join in and have your say? ... Visit the LSH Website and follow the 'News' link to the Blog.](#)

Next LSH Meeting

7.30pm – Wednesday 15th February 2012
Great Eccleston Village Centre, 59 High Street,
The Square, Great Eccleston. PR3 0YB

This month is our 'Just For Fun - Charity Quiz Night'

In compliance with a previous committee resolution one night is set aside exclusively in support of our adopted charity – Rosemere Cancer Foundation - a cancer charity raising funds for extra equipment and facilities for cancer patients in Lancashire and South Cumbria.

Rosemere also funds vital local research, helping to provide the very best care possible for patients.

Why not visit the website: www.rosemere.org.uk

As with all our meetings - this is open to everybody.

If you enjoy quizzing - or support Rosemere - or simply like to spend pleasant evenings with an eclectic group of people - this is for you!

Remember - every penny we raise from entrance fees - refreshments and raffle goes to a good cause benefitting the lives of [who knows how many] other people.

So - bring as many friends as you can - join in one of the teams - put your thinking caps on and enjoy!

Just to put your minds at rest - Can I remind you that Ian has been banned from setting the quiz questions [ever again - for life!] so this year's quiz will be set by a guest quiz-setter.

Bishop of Burnley Out Of Step Again!

Not content with being intransigent of matters concerning members of his own church: Bishop John Goddard now wants his own way on matters concerning everybody else!

With not a shred of irony the Bishop of Burnley [who confesses he is against any form of assisted dying] is complaining that the Commission on Assisted Dying was biased.

Only one person on the commission, a priest, stood against the findings.

More than 1,300 gave evidence to the panel which found there is a "strong case" that assisted suicide should be allowed for mentally sound people over 18-years-old who are terminally ill and judged as having less than 12 months to live – having been independently assessed by two doctors.

However Bishop Goddard called for further dialogue embracing all opinions evenly. He said: "We need to be transparent in our discussions.

We need to do it on a principled basis and if it is to be discussed it needs to be in an open way."

The problem is: if his obduracy on the matter of women bishops and gay marriage is anything to go by; Bishop John's concept of a transparent discussion appears to be 'My way - or no way!'

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LSH Library

The **LSH** Library is a 'virtual library' - The premise being: we all have books which interest us as Secular Humanists and would therefore interest others who share our outlook. So - those who are happy to share their books with other **LSH** members simply add the details of their book to our library list.

When anyone wants to borrow a book from the list they contact the Librarian who then contacts the book's owner and asks him/her to bring it to the next meeting for the borrower to collect.

The **LSH** Librarian's job is to maintain the library list and keep track of where each book currently is.

The 'Library' is soon to go 'live' on our website!

Watch this space for details.

What Our Neighbours Friends Are Up To

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

Isle of Man Freethinkers www.iomfreethinkers.co.uk

2pm Sun 12 Feb: 1st floor Java Lounge; 43/45 Duke St, Douglas
Darwin Day presentation - Eleanor Stone, Manx Wildlife Trust:
"Manx Basking Shark Watch"

12noon Thur 16 Feb: Lunch - Alessandro's, Castle St, Douglas

Liverpool Humanists <http://livehum.org>

7.30pm Thur 9 Feb: The Head of Steam; 7 Lime St, L1 1RJ
Nothing Yet Listed - Check Out The Website

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

7pm Wed 8 Feb: Friends Meeting House, Mount St, M2 5NS
Freud and Humanism - talk by David Seddon

South Cheshire And North Staffs Humanists

www.humanists.org.uk

7.30 Mon 6 Feb: Unitarian Meeting Ho. A34 [opp. Lidl (parking)]
& Travelodge, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 1QS
Making moral choices - Phil Malbon - "What is right?"

Humanist Society of West Yorkshire

www.wyhumanists.org.uk

7 Thus 9 Feb: **Swarthmore**, 3-7 Woodhouse Sq, Leeds, LS3 1AD
"How Evolution has differentiated the Sexes - Vive la difference!"

Lytham St Annes & Blackpool Amnesty

www.amnesty.org.uk/lytham

7.30 Mon 2 April: Church Rd Centre; St Annes. FY8 5PX

LSH Meetings - The Small Print

Lancashire Secular Humanists is a group for 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' **