

Suffolk Humanists Monthly Bulletin

February 2021

Happy Darwin Day

For obvious reasons we will not have our usual Darwin Day celebration. However if you do feel the need to engage in a Darwin Day Event there are quite a few on-line lectures available.

1. From Humanists UK

Morality Explained: the new science of right and wrong with Oliver Scott Curry, chaired by Alice Roberts

Friday 12 February, 19:00–20:30

Online event (via Zoom).

You need to book tickets from the Humanists UK web site.

2. Greater Manchester Humanists have also arranged one on-line and as you can see there is an open invitation if you are interested.

Darwin Day Celebration 2021
February the 10th at 7.15 PM.
Patricia Churchland will give an
online presentation to GMH
members and friends entitled:

**"THE ORIGINS OF MORAL
INTUITION - HOW DO WE
DETERMINE RIGHT
FROM WRONG?"**

**Churchland is a distinguished
Canadian American analytic
philosopher noted for her
contributions to neurophilosophy.**

All are welcome to join. Please share this invitation with anyone who may be interested.

The meeting will open from 7.15 to meet and greet for a 7.30 start. It should end around 9.00 PM.

See their website for details

From the chair

Despite (another) lockdown time seems to fly by at the moment and since the last bulletin we have seen the resurgence of the Covid virus, the appointment of a new president in the USA.

However perhaps the most important event for most of us has been the development of the new vaccines.

They will only be successful if enough people are immunised and the number of people reluctant to have the vaccine remains worryingly high. The number of those who are active 'anti-vaxxers' is actually very small and the vast majority of those resisting do so for much more mundane reasons. About 10% of the population have an extreme degree of needle-phobia (Trypanophobia) which for them is greater than the fear of getting the virus.

In the past many religious groups have opposed vaccinations. Some because they were derived from cells that originated in aborted fetuses (Roman Catholics and some protestant sects), some because they contained traces of pork derived gelatine (Jews and Moslems) and some because they originated from cowpox (Hindus).

Fortunately, at least in the UK, there seem to be concerted efforts within these groups to encourage vaccination throughout their communities.

The most difficult group to convince however are those who simply think 'it won't happen to me'. Such a belief in exceptionality is very difficult to challenge.

Five people I have known personally have died from Covid so I am totally convinced of the reality.

Could you be a humanist chaplain?

I've had a request from University of Suffolk for a humanist chaplain to join the team there. I know that most of us baulk at the term 'chaplain' with its religious overtones but in this case the role is simply to provide a Humanist perspective for those students who want it. That can be anybody who just wants a friendly chat, education about humanism, or discuss more difficult issues.

At the moment contact activity is restricted to telephone/video calls. Let me know you are interested.

“True faith belongs to a symbolic representation of timelessness”

If you feel drawn to further explore the deep and profound meaning of that heading and so come to realise that “experiential truth is a reflection of the door of acceptance” you really need to acquaint yourself with Deepak Chopra.

Or rather with <http://www.wisdomofchopra.com/>

For this is a computer programme producing quotes from a list of words that can be found in Deepak Chopra's Twitter stream randomly stuck together in a sentence. A leading figure in alternative medicine he has amassed a fortune estimated at \$150 million promoting his idea of 'quantum healing' and a great deal more best described as psychobabble.

But with the help of the above website you too can create 'profound gibberish' indistinguishable from the real thing with the click of a button.

HMD 2021: "Be the light in the darkness"

January 27th was Holocaust Memorial Day and this year the local Suffolk event took the form of a pre-recorded video made by Ipswich Faith and Community Forum. It is available to view on the Suffolk County Council YouTube channel.

Future events

Hopefully in a few months time we will emerge from lockdown and while things are unlikely to be the same as before the pandemic (or Brexit) we will be able to get about a bit and meet face to face.

However for many who have lost friends, lost jobs and livelihoods there will be no 'going back to normal'. What the 'new normal' will be is anyone's guess but while there will be early euphoria the economic outlook could soon turn to resentment and misplaced blame.

There will be interesting challenges ahead.

In the meantime, a belated Happy New Year to you all and keep safe.

Denis

Suffolk Humanists

23 Ipswich Road, Woodbridge, IP12 4BS
01394 383122
elisabeth.thompson90@gmail.com (secretary)

www.suffolkhumanists.org.uk ,
www:suffolkhumanists.org.uk
email: denisjohnston@btinternet.com (chair)
www.facebook.com/suffolkhands
Twitter (@suffolkhands)