



North East Humanists

Monthly Bulletin — January 2022

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We here at North East Humanists hope you all had a great holiday season and are looking forward to the new year ahead. As a gift to you (and ourselves), we'll keep this bulletin short because we know how busy this time of year is. There are plenty of links to keep you entertained and informed, however, if you'd like to read more. As always, thank you for your continued support of NEH through the years.

ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT NEH CHARITY DONATIONS

Until Covid came along, we spent a lot of time each year collecting for a "Charity of the Year". In more recent years, the Trustees have used some of our financial reserves to give lump sums to good causes such as Crisis, Isaac Newton School and Humanists UK.

We now invite NEH members to nominate a Registered Charity to receive a donation of £1000 in 2022. If you have a favourite charity that could benefit from this, please send us a note by email or post before the end of January. The Trustees will shortlist the suggestions at our February meeting and then ask all members to vote for the most deserving proposal. The charity with the most votes will be announced at the AGM in March.

Send your nominations by email to miketurnerhumanist@gmail.com. Alternatively, you can send them by post to Mike Turner, 26 Albury Park Road, North Shields, NE30 2SH.

RECAP OF RECENT NEH EVENTS

A Humanist Talk at Rosebery Park's Secure Psychiatric Unit

—by Jan Mole

For the last five years I have enjoyed volunteering with the multifaith chaplaincy team at HMP Durham where I am treated as a full member, referred to as the 'Humanist Chaplain', and know my contribution is valued. I really enjoy the work which is both rewarding and challenging.

Recently, I was invited by one of the Christian Chaplains at Durham HMP to present a talk at his new place of work, Roseberry Park Psychiatric Hospital, to some of his

patients on the secure wing. This was a request that I was very pleased to receive as I was able to wear both of my Humanist hats at the same time—as a chaplain and as an educational speaker. In addition, I was able to have a tour of the facilities at the hospital and as you might expect there was little comparison between them and the prison at Durham.

The facilities for classroom work and participation at Roseberry Park were excellent and the use of a white board and projector presented lots of opportunities for a lively talk. The group I spoke to were very engaged and interested in Humanism and how it compared to religious beliefs. I used a set of posters that Kate Hinton and the NEH education panel had produced, which are an excellent resource for presenting the main Humanist ideas to school groups and members of the public. I recommend you take a look at these on [the education page of the NEH website](#).

I also used the HUK on-line quiz entitled, “How Humanist are you?” This led to some really interesting debate with lots of ideas and comments but as with most animated discussions we ran out of time and the hour was up. The resources available both on our NEH and HUK websites are excellent and certainly worth a look. They enhance our interactions with the general public and provide a varied and essential set of tools for the education panel. After a catch up with my friend and a cup of tea, we agreed to do it again sometime in the future.

NEH Winter Social

The winter social lunch this year was held on December 12th at the home of Mike and Moira Turner where good food, drink, and conversation were shared by members and guests. There was an optional quiz set by Irene Wilkinson, and a happy three hours were spent in convivial company.

Numbers attending were slightly down on those of previous such occasions, mainly due to Covid concerns, but all reasonable measures were taken to minimise risk including having through ventilation. Fortunately, the weather was mild! Thanks to everyone who came along and made it such an enjoyable time.




UPCOMING NEH ACTIVITIES

Why We Must Oppose the 2021 Health and Care Bill — January 20th


This month's public lecture (online only) will be delivered by Professor Allyson Pollock who is a clinical professor of public health at Newcastle University and an honorary professor at UCL. She was director of Newcastle's Institute of Health & Society, and has set up some of the UK's leading undergraduate and postgraduate teaching in global health. Her research interests include regulatory science, rational medicines use, access to medicines, health service reorganisation, and childhood injuries and the epidemiology of trauma.


Professor Pollock's talk will be about the 2021 Health and Care Bill. This is a 'hands-off' bill, which goes in the wrong direction. It fails to address the serious challenges facing the NHS, public health, and social care. It is unlikely to make any difference to reducing waiting lists and waiting times for services, to reducing staff shortages, or to providing adequate funding to rebuild and restore capacity in public health services. Instead, the Bill:

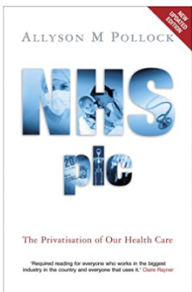
- replaces the principles of universal and comprehensive coverage throughout England with the limited concept of 'core responsibility' for specified groups of people and the conferring of 'discretions' on providers;
- enables further reductions in and closures of services, pushing those who can afford to do so into paying for their health care;
- allows more privatisation and leakage of public money to shareholders with insufficient safeguards over how that money is used;
- will lead to greater variation in provision, access to, and levels of services;
- reduces provision and access to medical services and emergency services;
- further undermines the rights to life and health; and
- conflicts with the NHS constitution.



Why We Must Oppose the 2021 Health and Care Bill







A Public Lecture by Professor Allyson Pollock
7 to 9 PM, Thursday, January 20th

Who: Professor Allyson Pollock

When: Thursday January 20th at 7:00 PM

What: 45-minute lecture plus plenty of time for interactive Q&A afterwards.

How: Zoom opens at 6:45. Register using the Eventbrite link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/why-we-must-oppose-the-2021-health-and-care-bill-tickets-233784364327>

If you have difficulty using the Eventbrite sign-up for the meeting, please sign in directly using the Zoom link that Eventbrite will email to you. If you prefer not to use Eventbrite at all, you can send an email to Susan Walker at northeasthumanist@gmail.com and she will send you a Zoom link directly.

Anyone is welcome to our online events. Whilst we do not charge for joining these, we are a registered charity that you may donate a few pounds to by using [the button at the bottom of our homepage](#). We suggest £3 for these donations but all amounts are greatly appreciated.

OTHER NEH NEWS

If You Believe in a Public NHS, the New Health Care Bill Should Set Off Alarm Bells by Allyson Pollock and Peter Roderick

The speaker for our next public lecture (discussed above) has co-authored an article about her topic for The Guardian. Here is a preview of that essay:

The government is easing the way for the privatisation of the health service – where is the opposition to their plans?

Ten years ago, Andrew Lansley's health and social care bill to reorganise the NHS in England faced [enormous opposition](#). The current [health and care bill](#), which has its second reading in the House of Lords today, has received far less attention. But it is no less significant. The new bill will continue the dismantling of the NHS, this time by adopting more features from the US health system. For anyone who cares about the NHS, this should set off alarm bells.

The proposals mean that for the first time since 1948, parliament will not determine to whom NHS services must be provided. The bill [removes the requirement](#) for emergency services to be provided for everybody present in an area. No explanation has been given for getting rid of it.

Over the past three decades the funding, planning and provision of health services have become disconnected from each other and from people living in local areas. The bill takes this further. It gives a single budget pot to 42 new integrated care boards (ICBs) to commission most health services. These won't serve all people living in a local area, but a "group of people" who can be drawn from anywhere in England. The group will be allocated to the ICB under rules made by [NHS](#) England, without parliamentary process.

[<<< Click here to read the rest of the article at The Guardian >>>](#)

Jesmond Library Installation Using NEH Microgrant Award

As we have mentioned in previous editions of the bulletin, our Community Fund has been awarding microgrants of up to £500 for small projects. One of this year's

awardees — [the Jesmond Library](#) — has finished the installation of their new health and wellness section that was enabled by our grant. See the photos below of this lovely new addition to their library.



Do you know of another community group who could come up with a small project like this? Send them the details from [the Community Fund page on our website](#). But hurry! The fund is closing for review on the 31st of January, 2022.

OTHER HUMANIST NEWS

Top 20 New Humanist Articles of 2021

New Humanist is a quarterly magazine of culture and science, published since 1885. They are published by the Rationalist Association, a registered charity promoting rational inquiry and debate based on evidence rather than belief. Recently, they shared with subscribers a list of their top 20 essays and podcasts from the last year. You can click on the links below to see more about any one of them, or [click here](#) to see short synopses of them all.

1. [Blasphemy in the classroom](#) by Emma Park
2. [How to fix the internet](#): an interview with Chris Bail
3. [Of beasts and men](#) by Julian Baggini
4. [Our national need for grief](#) by Samira Ahmed
5. [Writing and recovery](#): an interview with Michael Rosen
6. [Talking to Ourselves](#) by Jon Moses
7. [Disease and power](#): a Q&A with Kyle Harper
8. [Lying Eyes](#) by Gayan Samarasinghe
9. [Scraping the Barrel](#) by James Robins
10. [The curious mind of a dog](#) by Cal Flyn
11. [A good death](#) by Jem Bartholomew
12. [Inside Diyarbakir, the city of the silenced](#) by Sami Kent

13. [Q&A with A.C. Grayling](#) by J. P. O'Malley
14. [Australia's dance with death](#) by Peter Salmon
15. [The Cosmos & Us](#): an interview with Jo Marchant
16. [Remember me](#) by Laurie Taylor
17. [Q&A with Eimear McBride](#) by J. P. O'Malley
18. [Patron saint of doom](#) by Tom Whyman
19. [Secrets in the soil](#) by Kate Brown
20. [Adult enterprise](#) by Ray Filar

For those of you who don't yet subscribe, maybe consider it for 2022. You get beautiful, thought-provoking magazines delivered to your door, from just £27 a year: newhumanist.org.uk/subscribe.

Collection of 2021 Talks From Humanistically Speaking

Another excellent resource for humanist thought is the new online magazine *Humanistically Speaking*. Every month they put together an information-packed newsletter, which includes a link to a new online interview. If you're like me and you haven't had a chance to watch them all, now's a great chance to catch up. *HS* have gathered all of their 2021 interviews in one place where you can easily get to them.

Just [click here](#) to go to the calendar below, then click on the picture of the person you want to see and enjoy any of the extraordinary interviews that were recorded throughout the year.



In case you were wondering who some of these people are, here's a handy list:

Jan: Andrew Copson – Chief Executive of Humanists UK

Feb: David Warden – Chair of Dorset Humanists

Mar: Maryam Namazie – Spokesperson for The Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain

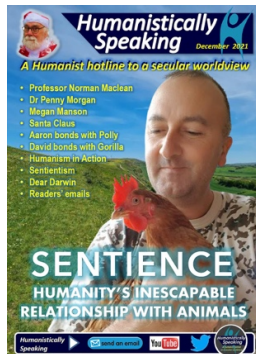
Apr: Professor Anthony Grayling – Author of *The Good State*

May: Professor Chris Stringer – Paleoanthropologist at the Natural History Museum

Jun: Teddy Prout – Retiring Director of Community Relations at Humanists UK

Jul: Leo Igwe – Leading Humanist Activist in Nigeria
Aug: Peter Dawson – Director of the Prison Reform Trust
Sep: Fraser Sutherland – Chief Executive of the Humanist Society of Scotland
Oct: Professor Peter Newell – Climate Consultant and Director of Greenpeace
Nov: Rabbi Jonathan Romain – Representative and activist of secular Jewery
Dec: Megan Manson – Head of Policy and Research at the National Secular Society

Latest Issue of Humanistically Speaking



North East Humanists are affiliated with *Humanistically Speaking*, which is a monthly magazine that has been published since 2019 by members of the South Central England Humanist Network. You can subscribe to this free magazine and view all previous issues at [their website](#). Their latest [December](#) issue focuses on issues of sentience and includes features about Profesor Norman Maclean, Dr. Penny Morgan, Megan Manson, Santa Claus, Aaron bonding with Polly, David bonding with Gorilla, Humanism in Action, Sentientism, Dear Darwin, and Readers' emails.

ALWAYS LEAVE 'EM LAUGHING

Sorry if you didn't get what you wanted for Christmas.



CONTACT US FOR MORE

North East Humanists

All of the latest information about North East Humanists is available on our [website](#). You can also follow us on social media via [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#). Interacting with us there is a great way to help spread the news about Humanism so we can grow and accomplish even more.

Please consider a membership with us if you do not already have one. You can join NEH for as little as £6 per year by visiting [the membership page of our website](#). Our fees are very low, but they really do support so much local grassroots work, as we hope you see in these bulletins.

The monthly bulletin is free for members and supporters of North East Humanists. If that's more of a commitment than you can make, just [sign up to our email list](#). For NEH members without email, the bulletin is printed by Mike and Moira Turner and sent by post. Contact them at 0191 272 8376 to arrange this if you need it.

Durham Humanist Group

This local house group is run by Susan Walker. Contact her at 0191 384 1432 or susan.humanist@gmail.com if you would like to attend events here.

Teesside Humanist Group

If you would like to join this group, please [contact us](#) for more details. You can also follow them on Twitter [@Teeshumanists](#) or like the [Teesside Humanists Facebook Group](#) run by Terry Waites and Ben Collier.

Humanist Funerals, Baby Naming Ceremonies, and Weddings

Anyone who wants advice on how to organise these should contact Les Milne at 0795 267 1533 or go to www.northeast-humanists.org.uk/ceremonies.html.