

# North East Humanists

## Monthly Bulletin — June 2022

### RECAP OF RECENT NEH EVENTS

#### The Secret of Life and Where Type 2 Diabetes Fits In

On Thursday, the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, we received a really clear and compelling talk from Professor Roy Taylor of Newcastle University about his groundbreaking research into type 2 diabetes and how that debilitating condition can actually be reversed.

Professor Taylor began by saying this was a story about food and how the body works. There is a lot of information about this in the news, but much of it is misleading. In simple terms, there are 3 macronutrients that give us energy — fats, carbohydrates, and proteins. As far as type 2 diabetes is concerned, the first two of those are the most important. In particular, where do carbohydrates go, and why is fat stored differently? We need glycogen (a carb) to power activity, so a small amount is stored in muscles along with backups in the liver to make us ready for action. Calories in excess of this get stored in different fat reserves.



To test theories about this, Taylor needed a way to track the food we eat and where it goes. In 1989, this was enabled by the development of Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) technologies. As the M implies, this technology can only make images of magnetic compounds, and very little food is like this. But fortunately, some is! About 1% of carbon in

the carbohydrates we eat is made up of the isotope C13, which is magnetic and can therefore be traced as it goes through the body.

Tracking this journey of our food is what Roy Taylor conducted in the [Newcastle Magnetic Resonance Centre](#). It turned out that about 1/3 of our breakfast makes its way to our muscles by lunchtime for most of us. But not everyone is this efficient. For those with insulin resistance, much less gets stored. What happens to the rest? It gets stored as fat, so insulin resistant people store lots of it! When you look at people with type 2 diabetes, their livers are very fat indeed (think foie gras).

Treating all of this had been thought to be very complicated, but we knew from unfortunate events in the world that starvation has wiped out incidences of type 2 diabetes. So, Taylor developed a theory that extreme weight loss could do the same for his patients. Of course, following a very strict diet for such weight loss has two main problems — hunger and the decision-making it takes to maintain a healthy intake of nutrients. To solve these issues, Taylor and his team developed a “Newcastle Diet” composed of simple shakes to fill people with the nutrition they needed, plus fibre from non-starchy vegetables. Despite being just 800 calories per day, patients don’t feel hungry on this diet after the first 36 hours and they rapidly lose weight in a safe and healthy way.

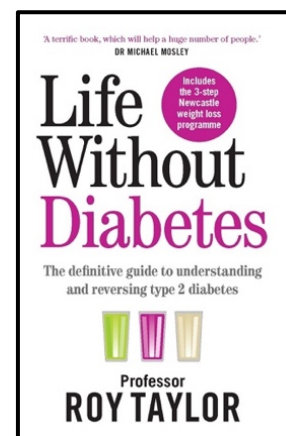
Weight loss is one thing, but what about the type 2 diabetes? Well, all of the volunteers in this first study lost 2.5 stones in a few weeks, and all of their type 2 diabetes issues with sugars and fats went away. The fat levels in their livers went from 36% down to healthy levels below 10%. All of Taylor’s hypotheses were confirmed and he has shown since 2011 that we can reverse type 2 diabetes.

Since then, there has been a slow acceptance of this treatment. For example, it is being quickly adopted in Nordic countries, but it has been almost blocked in the United States where there is little financial incentive to cure patients to the point where they don’t return.

Some other important findings have surfaced as well. Type 2 diabetes isn’t necessarily linked with being obese. People seem to have very personal levels of fat / BMI within which they can happily operate without diabetic issues. For success at weight loss, it’s really important to get your spouse / partner on board. It must be easy to maintain while traveling or engaging in a social life. Exercise is a tough way to achieve weight loss because it’s often counterproductive in terms of hunger and mentality. (“I did all that running, so surely I can have a biscuit or two.”)

Is this a cruel treatment? Surveys of patients show not at all! The most common statement made by people during this is that “I feel 10 years younger.”

For more information, see the website for [Newcastle University — Reversing Type 2 Diabetes](#). There is also a book about this called [Life Without Diabetes](#), and all proceeds from sales of that book go to Diabetes UK. Food plans are also available for purchase at <https://www.shakethatweight.co.uk>.



## Outreach to the Public by Kate Hinton

We took our stall to the Armstrong Bridge in Newcastle on Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. There was the usual monthly food market, which was also billed as part of the Jesmond Festival. Thanks to Liz who arranged our spot, but unfortunately she was unable to be there due to testing positive for Covid. (She has since recovered!) Thanks also to the stalwarts Mike and Moira for their attendance, to Les and Joan who came for an hour, and to Ron who came for a bit and helped to pack up.

We estimate that we spoke to around 20 people, mostly sympathetic to Humanism and with a good range of ages and ethnicities. A long conversation with a young teacher may result in some follow up, and several people were interested in our programme of talks. We recently began producing a flyer with [our programme](#) again, now that Covid uncertainty is mostly behind us, and it was good to have that flyer to hand out.

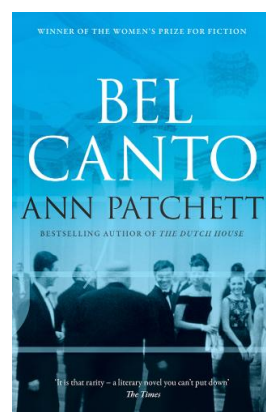
As usual, this activity was labour intensive but it was a nice day outside, there was good food available, coffee, and even some real ale! So, we have spread the message a little bit further.



## NEH Virtual Book Club on Thursday May 24<sup>th</sup> by Jan Mole

An intimate little group of three gathered for our meeting in May when we met to discuss *Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett. A few members, including Diane who had recommended the book, were unable to attend for a variety of reasons. So, ultimately, the three of us felt that to do the book justice, we would leave our discussion about it until next month, when hopefully more of us will be able to attend.

In the meantime, we opted for the forthcoming month to read one of the choices we had previously held in abeyance, which means we will next discuss both *Bel Canto* and *Diary of a Young Naturalist* by Dara McNulty, which won the 2020 Wainwright Prize for nature writing.





The NEH Zoom book club meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM so the next discussion will be on June 28<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in joining, please contact Jan Mole at 0132 535 6029, 0780 466 7390, or [janet.mole@ntlworld.com](mailto:janet.mole@ntlworld.com).

## UPCOMING NEH ACTIVITIES

### Make Votes Matter with David Gallagher, Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup>

We are pleased to welcome David Gallagher for this event. In this short lecture (delivered via Zoom, which you can watch online or with our broadcast at the Irish Centre), David will begin by outlining some of the problems with the current system for electing MPs to the House of Commons. He will then present some of the advantages of an electoral system based on a form of proportional representation. He will then explain how he and likeminded people hope to bring about this reform.

David is a cross party speaker for Make Votes Matter (MVM). MVM is the cross-party campaign for Proportional Representation in the House of Commons. Its mission is to replace First Past the Post with Proportional Representation. MVM doesn't just advocate electoral reform; the campaign aims to make it a reality.



The poster is enclosed in a black rectangular border. At the top, the title 'Electoral Reform: The impact proportional representation will have on UK politics and how you can make it a reality' is written in black. On either side of the title is a green logo of a stylized person with arms raised and a star above their head. In the center, there is a portrait of David Gallagher, a bald man with glasses wearing a dark suit and blue tie. To the right of the portrait is the 'MAKE VOTES MATTER' logo, which consists of the word 'MAKE' in white on a purple background, 'VOTES' in black with a multi-colored dot over the 'O' on a white background, and 'MATTER' in white on a green background. Below the portrait and logo, the text 'A Public Discussion with David Gallagher from Make Votes Matter' is written in bold, followed by '7 to 9 PM, Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup>'.

**Who:** David Gallagher

**When:** Thursday June 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM

**What:** A short talk followed by Q&A

**Joint Watch:** Tyneside Irish Centre, NE1 4SG. Doors open at 6:30. £1 for NEH members. £2 for non-members. This includes tea, coffee, and light refreshments.

**Online:** Zoom opens at 6:45 PM. Register using the Eventbrite link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/electoral-reform-make-votes-matter-tickets-354468162817>

If you prefer not to use Eventbrite, you can send an email to Susan Walker at [northeasthumanist@gmail.com](mailto: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 donation page on our website](#). We suggest £3 for these donations but all amounts are greatly appreciated.

## OTHER NEH NEWS

### Worldviews by Kate Hinton

The Commission on Religious Education (2018) made clear that the curriculum in British schools should include non-religious worldviews, with Humanism given as a major example. So, Humanism is increasingly being built into the requirements of Agreed Syllabuses across the country. To aid in this locally, I and our education committee have put together a brief paper on Worldviews. This is being shared directly with the Newcastle SACRE and has now been made available on [the Education page on our NEH website](#) so it can be widely accessed by teachers.

The 4-page document can be quickly downloaded and read by anyone. It has several short sections including:

- What is Meant by Worldviews
- Personal and Institutionalised Worldviews
- Why Worldviews Now
- How are Worldviews Categorized
- Implications for Curricula
- The Newcastle Agreed Syllabus
- Ofsted Research
- Implications for Teachers
- Sources



## OTHER HUMANIST NEWS

### Success! Government announces how it will shut illegal schools

The UK Government has finally set out how it will take action to close the loopholes that allow illegal faith schools to operate in England. The much-anticipated proposals have been published in the Government's response to the [Regulating independent educational institutions](#) consultation. Humanists UK and over 100 individual humanists [responded to the consultation](#) in 2020 – and many of Humanists UK's recommendations have been taken up.



A significant number of unregistered, illegal schools are operating throughout England, many of which are religious, and at least 6,000 children have been identified as in these schools. In many cases, children are made to study religious texts for up to 12 hours a day, they are often exposed to extremist literature, and many schools operate in environments that are dirty and unsafe. Due to loopholes in the law – for example around the definition of 'full time' education, and [the lack of a home education register](#) – Ofsted's hands are currently tied and they have been unable to seize evidence and shut them down.

The announced plans will, however, tackle these loopholes at last. Humanists UK Education Campaigns Manager Robert Cann said:

“We’re delighted to see these proposals at long last. Since 2014 we have been leading the campaign to shut down illegal faith schools, and while thousands of children have suffered unnecessarily from a narrow religious curriculum and unsafe conditions in the intervening years, this announcement is most certainly better late than never. ... It’s clear from the Government’s response to the consultation that many humanists also took part, and I hope they will feel heartened that their efforts have now clearly had an impact.”

[<<< Click here for more on this announcement from Humanists UK >>>](#)

## **Exclusive Evangelical School in Uganda goes Inclusively Humanist and a New Boys’ Hostel is Named in honour of Barrie Berkley**

*Here is a [report](#) from Peter Kisirinya, Director of the Isaac Newton Humanist Schools in Uganda, on the first term of their new primary school.*

### Background

Isaac Newton has been developing as a Humanist High School since 2005 and we have been ready, for some time, to extend inclusive education based on reason, compassion, and tolerance to local primary-age children. The Covid pandemic, which forced the closure of so many schools, presented an opportunity for us to take over a nearby Pentecostalist school, which had failed for several reasons:

1. It alienated local people by forcing children and their teachers to subscribe to a particularly intolerant form of Christianity.
2. Pupil numbers declined as parents saw indoctrination, mistreatment of their children and generally low standards of education and welfare.
3. Many teachers were unqualified and failed to cooperate with parents in matters concerning the education of their children.
4. The school paid teachers poorly and had built-up long arrears of staff salaries.
5. There was a severe lack of learning space (buildings) and furniture but funds collected from parents to improve resources and facilities appeared to make no difference.

### Changing to a Humanist School

Children who were about to sit their Primary Leaving Examination, were left high and dry when the Evangelical school closed in 2020. The school proprietor advertised the school for sale. Approaches to turn the school into a madrasa led the local community to turn to Isaac Newton Humanist High School, which they trusted, to come to the rescue. Immediately, we provided space where a teacher could work with the children to complete their studies ahead of the November examination. I discussed the situation with Uganda Humanist Schools Trust and they agreed to launch an appeal in the UK to raise funds to buy the failed primary school.

Fortunately, UHST’s supporters responded well to the appeal, and we were able to buy the school in April 2021 and to begin work on its much-needed refurbishment. Buying the school

has meant a lot to the local children, their parents, teachers, and the whole local community. Linked to the High School, the Humanist Primary School now offers:

- Inclusive-secular education to local children from all backgrounds, with high standards of education and welfare.
- All staff have secure employment, feel valued, and are paid in a timely manner.
- While many of the original children stayed with the school, new children have come along now that school is seen to be welcoming to the entire community. Currently we have a total of 276 pupils, 150 girls and 126 boys.
- School fees have been reduced since the school is now run on not-for-profit principles.
- A new kindergarten section has been constructed and we now provide all-important early-age education from the age of 3.
- UHST has already provided two large consignments of textbooks and other learning materials. We now have adequate textbooks, when there were very few in the old school.
- UHST has provided re-usable sanitary towels to all menstruating girls. This was one of the factors that led to many girls dropping out of school.
- We have recruited 8 additional qualified teachers, while retaining those staff who were suitably qualified and willing to accept the new Humanist ethos.
- All decisions are now taken in an open way, with full consultation with teachers, parents and local authorities.
- We have changed the system of discipline from one based on violence to one that emphasises empathy and guidance. Corporal punishment has been banned. We are running workshops to share nonviolent strategies for managing discipline. We are also holding workshops on Humanist School Ethos.
- Adequate and appropriate types of furniture have been made and pupils feel much more comfortable in school.
- UHST has provided funds for a new kitchen and the quality of food has improved greatly.

Children and staff are much happier. Children like coming to school and indeed they say the school is a better place than their home. Many pupils can hardly find enough to eat at home and are pleading for the school to reopen earlier than planned for the second term.

Peter Kisirinya has also sent this new sign for the new boys' hostel, which he has named in honour of long-time NEH member and leader Barrie Berkley.



## Latest Issue of Humanistically Speaking



North East Humanists are affiliated with *Humanistically Speaking*, which is a monthly magazine 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 [May](#) issue focuses on whether Humanists can be spiritual. The issue features interviews with Jeremy Rodell and Steve Banks, plus articles on Mubarak Bala's Sentence, Spirituality: A Humpty Dumpty word?, Complexity and Transcendence, Japanese spirituality, a Neanderthal tale, Abraham Maslow, and Sam Harris.

## 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.

Please consider a membership with us if you do not already have one. You can [join NEH](#) for as little as £6 per year. Our fees are very low, but they really do support so much local grassroots work, as we hope you see in these bulletins. This month, we are excited to welcome new member Clair Vineberg to NEH!

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](mailto: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](http://www.northeast-humanists.org.uk/ceremonies.html).