

Suffolk Humanists Monthly Bulletin

Our next event:

"Great Thinkers: Guess who I am?"

Next event "Great Thinkers" : 9th July

For our next event (next Tuesday) we are going to try something different.

Here is the plan: Everybody willing to take part comes along with the name and background of someone they consider a "Great Thinker".

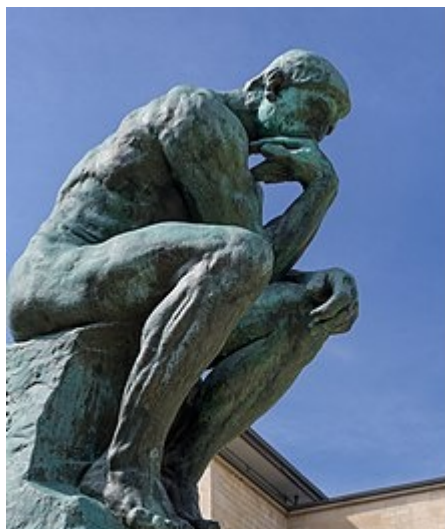
In turn each gives a short anonymous description and see if the others can guess who they are talking about. Obviously this should be a person others are likely to have heard about.

Once the identity is discovered (or revealed if we give up) the originator gives a short (5 minutes) overview of the "Great Thinker" and says why they chose them.

At the end we can pool what we all know about the "Great thinker".

Time: 7.30 pm

Place: Thomas Wolsey pub, Silent Street Ipswich (upstairs).



The Thinker by Rodin

June Talk: Update from Humanists UK

At our June event we welcomed Teddy Prout from Humanists UK.

In a highly animated and enthusiastic talk he covered some of the recent developments and campaigns. The growth of faith schools was still a major issue as some groups, especially the Church of England were clearly attempting to take over schools by stealth. More positively the impressive increase in the number of humanist marriages in Scotland was very encouraging and there was now a great demand for humanist 'Chaplains' in the armed forces and to provide pastoral support in prisons and across the NHS.

He talked about the celebrants network highlighting that one of the interesting changes taking place was the increasing frequency of 'direct cremations'. Here there was no funeral but the remains were transferred to the crematorium immediately after death. There would then be a memorial event some time later - possibly associated with the ashes.

Talking further about this led to the subject of assisted dying where he was able to recount some personal experience as his father, suffering from an incurable disease, had chosen to travel to Switzerland to end his own life.

Finally he spoke about the partnership agreements and how various groups had been working alongside HUK.

Needless to say throughout the talk there were many questions.

Humanism at the SACRE conference

A few weeks ago I took part in the annual Suffolk RE Teachers Conference which is organised by the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). This was held in the extremely comfortable Cathedral premises in Bury St Edmunds and about 40 teachers attended.

Few of these (possibly none) were specialist RE teachers. Most were primary school teachers or teaching assistants and much of the day was given over to increasing their knowledge and confidence.

I was involved in two sessions in the first of which I, billed as the "Happy Humanist", was talking to breakout group of a dozen or so. This was essentially a half hour Q&A session. What was very encouraging was that several teachers were already including humanism in their schools and wanted to find out more. Those who had already tried it were supportive saying that children responded extremely well.

The second session was "Speed Faithing" - here the 40 teachers were split into 6 groups which moved round the hall to hear 'soapbox fashion' from a Christian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, Sikh and me. Each session lasted 7 minutes. In the end it was just a blur!

The HUK website was very highly recommended as a teaching resource and it was mentioned very favourably several times by other speakers. Moreover several teachers had completed the HUK course on humanism

At the same time it was clear that some teachers had never even heard of humanism - but they have now. I had several inquiries concerning having a humanist visit schools - one arranged now for next week.

Denis Johnston

Annual General Meeting

This will be held on Tuesday August 13th. As the Thomas Wolsey has proved to be such a convivial location we plan to hold it there and follow on with a drink and a chat.

Please let the secretary or chair know of any proposed motions by July 21st.

If you would like to help by joining the committee for the coming year, don't be shy, please let us know.

Future talks and events:

Tuesday 9th July: "Guess who I am: Great Thinkers"

Saturday 27th July: Lunchtime get-together at the Duke of York Woodbridge (12.00 noon)

Tuesday 13th August: AGM at the Thomas Wolsey

Saturday 31st August: Pub lunch, Duke of York

September: Lines of sight: On the trail of W.G.Sebold at the Norwich Museum

October 8th: Ethics of punishment

November: 12th Evolution of art in war

December: Ancient Winter traditions

We are also planning some other visits in the autumn - Down House and the Orwell Observatory.

Suffolk Humanists & Secularists

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