

## Your Christmas Gift from Don Hatch

By Duncan Watterworth

*This Month in Elgin, December, 2020*

On the day he died, last September 24, Don Hatch read the news, did the crossword, corresponded with friends and one of his children, and worked on an article he was writing. Then, a heart attack, and he was gone.

Don was 90 years old, and still a voracious reader and writer.

He had recently written, "Sitting in my La-Z-Boy chair in my ninety-first year, I sometimes cogitate about just how lucky I am ... I have complete peace of mind, believing that my short time on this earth is the only life I will ever live, and that sometime in the future, my body will return to the earth."

I met Don when I joined the Humanist Association of London and Area, a group that believes people "can be good without god," and sees no evidence for the supernatural, or religious beliefs.

Don was a sweet, old gentleman, but energetic. For 15 years he had been the editor of the association's monthly journal, "The Enlightenment," and some months almost filled the thing with his own prodigious output of articles on science, philosophy, history and religion.

I didn't know Don well, but connected with him through some articles I had submitted. Some of the information here is from his obituary, and tributes from friends.

When the London chapter of the Humanist Association folded in December 2019, Don decided to continue the monthly Enlightenment journal by himself. He also decided to publish excerpts from back issues in "An Enlightenment Compendium." It came in at 158 pages, and was completed on July 7.

To lighten the fare in the compendium, Don included quotes from famous individuals, poetry, song, and humour. Page one contains the lyrics of John Lennon's uplifting anthem "Imagine":

Imagine there's no heaven, it's easy if you try.  
No hell below us, above us only sky ...  
Imagine all the people living life in peace.

Don says in the introduction that those inspiring words “describe, in a nutshell, what this compilation is all about.”

Don was an optimist. In the addendum to the book, he says he hopes that the COVID pandemic will cause a change in thinking, and put compassion ahead of greed. He also hopes that the Black Lives Matter protests will present an opportunity for improving race relations.

And Don’s gift to you? The book can be downloaded free. Go to [humanists-london.org](http://humanists-london.org) and scroll down half a page. Also available at the site are 15 years of the journal.

The articles in the book are in bite-sized chunks – generally one to three pages – but tackle the big questions of human existence that we all face. Well-known international authors as well as local Humanist Association members penned them. Chapters include Humanism, Secularism, Science, Philosophy, Religions, Ethics and Morality, Book Reviews, and Death and Dying.

Don was always keen to showcase the amazing realities of nature and science. In one article he tries to consolidate the history of our planet, and humanity, into six pages, managing to fit in that he is “the chance result of untold numbers of copulations.”

In one essay Dr. Rod Martin, a retired psychology professor from Western University, attempts to describe Humanism: With no existing evidence of god or the supernatural, “Humanism affirms the possibility of the good life here and now. It is an exuberant, joyful response to questions about the meaning of life. It urges us to face the struggles of life with courage and joy, striving to create a better world based on reason and ideals of freedom and progress.”

That sounds like a description of Don Hatch.