Dorset Humanists

August 2012

A PARTNER OF THE BRITISH HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

Forthcoming events…

■ **Thursday 23rd August 7.30pm**

Moordown Community Centre, Coronation Avenue, BH9 1TW

Filmosophy II

Following our lively and enjoyable 'Filmosophy' discussion evening last Summer, Dorset Humanist **Mat Coussell** presents another selection of moral dilemmas arising from the world of film. Don't worry if you're not a movie buff, as Mat's prepared a set of handy plot summaries to ensure we can all join in. Don't miss this opportunity to debate these dilemmas from the big screen and find out how your views compare with those of fellow Humanists.

Summer Lunch Events

We're expecting a good crowd on **Thursday 16th August** for an excellent-value carvery lunch at the Bridge House, Longham. Jane and Dennis Bannister, Lyn Glass, Richard Scutt, Ken Fagg, Paul Beckett and others are planning to be there so you'll be in good company. Venue: The Bridge House, 2 Ringwood Road, Longham, BH22 9AN. Midday for a £5.00 carvery lunch followed by an optional walk, weather permitting. We shall book a table inside for all those who contact Ken by the 11th August. Parking is spacious and free.

☎ Contact Ken by 11th August on 01202 700885 or email him on ken.fagg@btinternet.com

Secular Europe Campaign – Protest March and Rally – 15 September 2012. Assemble 1.30pm Storey's Gate, Parliament Square, London.

For those of you who prefer a social event at the weekend and a drive into the glorious Dorset countryside, we've also been warmly invited to join forces with South Somerset Humanists at the Sun Inn, Burton, nr Dorchester on **Saturday 11th August.** The Sun Inn is well known for excellent food including a carvery. Past meetings with South Somerset Humanists have been very enjoyable with good food and a lively exchange of ideas followed by an optional riverside stroll towards Dorchester. Please phone Jane on 01202 428506 if you can offer a lift or would like a lift.

■ **Saturday 8th September 2.00pm**

Moordown Community Centre,
Coronation Avenue, BH9 1TW

Creating a Better World for Animals and People

John Berry from the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) will provide an overview of the organisation's work, focusing on three projects in Southern Africa and India. IFAW works to improve the welfare of animals throughout the world by reducing commercial exploitation, protecting wildlife habitats, and assisting animals in distress. The group also seeks to motivate the public to prevent cruelty, and to promote animal welfare and conservation policies that advance the well-being of both animals and people.

Dorset Humanists Slogan

There will be an Extraordinary General Meeting after our talk on Saturday 8th September for members to vote on a slogan for Dorset Humanists. 3.45pm. The shortlist is:

1. Humanity and reason without religion
2. An ethical approach to life without religion
3. An approach to life without religion
4. For a good life without religion
5. Thinking for ourselves – mindful of others
6. Atheists and Agnostics for a better world
7. None of the above

■ **25-26th August**

Ancestor's Trail

Ancestor's Trail is a walk over the Quantocks, this year on the Bank Holiday 25-26th August. Inspired by Richard Dawkins' "The Ancestor's Tale" the walk rewinds the history of our species and many others back to our shared origins 3.7 billion years ago. **Richard Dawkins** is the evening speaker. For details of how to book and pay visit http://ancestorstrail.net/

One Life

An informative and enjoyable six-week course exploring Humanism and Atheism

1. What do Humanists believe?
2. Humanism past and present
3. Secularism and religious privilege
4. Ethics and morality without religion
5. Meaning, purpose and happiness
6. A Humanist vision of the future

Tuesdays from 2nd October. All sessions 7.30pm – 9.30pm at Moordown Community Centre, Coronation Avenue, Bournemouth, BH9 1TW

£15 non-members £12 members £2 off before 14th Sept £5 for students

Cheques payable to Dorset Humanists

Book early to avoid disappointment – limited number of places

Tutor: David Warden – Chair of Dorset Humanists. David has given talks to a number of Humanist groups on ethics, the history of Humanism, the psychology of happiness, the science of climate change, how the Bible was written and many more topics. He has almost twenty years experience as a business trainer.

💻 chairman@dorsethumanists.co.uk

☎ 07910 886629

Can you help?

The Barnabas Project day centre in Manor Avenue, Tower Park offers a range of activities aimed at developing skills for people with physical and associated disabilities including music, horse riding, computing, and numeracy and literacy skills. The centre also works with the local community to help encourage community interaction. They have approached us to see if we can help simply by going along and chatting with service users. Would anyone be interested in following this up? If so, please contact Jane Bannister on 01202 428506.

A Humanist Manifesto

At our lively July event we generated an interesting, and sometimes contradictory, array of Humanist policy suggestions including the following:

Education

- Abolish private schools
- Private/public schools must take 20% of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to quality for charitable status
- Abolish state-funded faith schools
- One curriculum for all children rather than a proliferation of free schools
- Equality is the wrong way of getting the best for every children – children have individual needs
- Make law and order, morals and ethics part of the compulsory education curriculum
- Maximum class size – 20
- More vocational education – less university education
- More apprenticeships
- Education for life and a just society

Reducing inequality

- Move away from money as the motivation and symbol of success
- A maximum wage as well as a minimum wage, or a 'pay cap' as in Germany
- Abolish private health care
- Ensure that wealthy people pay tax – remove all tax loopholes
- Increase corporation tax as profits increase
- Affordable housing
- State ownership of land as in Norway

Secularism

- Abolish bishops in the House of Lords
- No vicars at big public events
- No state funding for anything with a religious agenda
- Disestablishment of the church
- Separation of church and state

Environment

- Respect for animals
- Valuing humanity and the environment
- Action on overpopulation – "remove incentives to procreate"

Rights

- Freedom of belief and enquiry
- Assisted dying
- Everyone has a right to a decent home

Democracy

- Freedom of information – open and transparent government
- Equality under law eg for gay people
- Reform the legal system including rights – rebalance of rights between individual and society

Jane Bannister suggested we should launch a Humanist Party. We wouldn't get elected but we'd generate lots of publicity for Humanism. See *Chairman's View*.

SECULAR europe CAMPAIGN

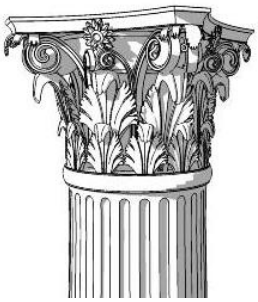
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

MARCH & RALLY

15 September 2012

Dorset Humanists went along to this event last year. Please let us know if you are thinking of attending and if you could be a contact point.

http://secular-europe-campaign.org/march-rally/



THE COLUMN

Write to Dorset Humanists, 58a R L Stevenson Avenue Bournemouth BH4 8EG or email chairman @dorsethumanists.co.uk

From Conor Burns MP

Thank you for your recent email attaching a copy of a letter from Dorset Humanists to the Indonesian Ambassador about the case of Alexander Aan who has been imprisoned on charges of blasphemy and atheism. I note the concern of Amnesty International about the case. I think the most appropriate action I can take is to write to the Foreign Office to ask the Minister what diplomatic pressure can be brought on the Indonesian Government to release Mr Aan. I will be in touch as soon as I receive a reply.

To the Indonesian Ambassador from Carol-Mary Fraser

Dear Mr Ambassador,

I have just learned of the imprisonment in Sumatra of Alexander Aan, a young civil servant sentenced for two and a half years – or possibly more – on charges of atheism and blasphemy.

I am writing to express my deep disquiet about this miscarriage of justice, and know that I am not alone in these feelings. Amnesty International states the jailing of Mr Aan contravenes international law which protects the individual's right to freedom of expression. He has been designated a prisoner of conscience.

An article in last month's Jakarta Globe claims the charges cast 'a blight on Indonesia's democratic credentials.'

Surely all but fanatics and unthinking bigots recognise that freedom in matters of personal belief, and the freedom to express them, constitute a cardinal human right. Harsh laws such as have been applied in Mr Aan's case unfortunately play into the hands of those who favour the primitive justice of fists and weapons. This cannot be good, either for people like Alexander Aan, or Indonesia itself.

By virtue of your office, you are uniquely placed to bring pressure to bear on the Indonesian authorities concerned in this discrediting affair. Please will you use it to ensure the swift and unconditional release of Mr Aan.

■ *Dorset Humanists David and Elaine Stott have also written to the Indonesian Ambassador*

From Marilyn Mason, Humanists for a Better World

I attend Stop Climate Chaos meetings on behalf of the BHA and Humanists for a Better World, and at yesterday's meeting we were asked to pass on this request for help from a small environment group in Wiltshire to our various networks. (You may have some far-flung members in Wiltshire.)

'Climate Friendly Bradford on Avon' members are very busy campaigning in support of wind turbines in their area, working to combat some of the myths and negative publicity put about by the powerful fossil fuel energy companies and the NIMBYs in their area, and they would welcome more support and more local letter-writers. Wind is something we have plenty of, especially in exposed parts of the UK and its seas, and wind power is one of the better options if we want secure sustainable energy, so some humanists in the area might like to support it, either individually or collectively. I hope you can pass on their request to your membership and networks.

With best wishes and thanks in advance for any help you can give on this.
💻 climatechampions@gmail.com
☎ 07507 782523