



Atheists and Agnostics for a Better World

# Dorset Humanists

## August 2013

A PARTNER OF THE  
BRITISH HUMANIST  
ASSOCIATION

## Jane Bannister

After a six-month battle with cancer, Jane Bannister died peacefully at home with her children on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July.



Until very recently, Jane was Vice-Chair of Dorset Humanists and had been Chair until 2009. Jane and her husband Dennis, who died last summer, were the backbone of Dorset Humanists for many years. In large measure it was their joint dedication and commitment which enabled Dorset Humanists to flourish. Geoff Jones wrote: 'Jane was a stalwart supporter of Dorset

Humanists who gave so much of her energy for its advancement, both recently and in the past. She'll truly be a sad loss and will be very difficult to replace. I truly admired her hard work and tenacity as well as her compassion for others. I'll miss her hugely.'

■ The funeral is on **Friday August 2nd** at 10am at Hinton Woodland Burial Ground, Walkford, BH23 7EJ. All are welcome for refreshments afterwards at 63 Carbery Avenue, Southbourne, BH6 3LW. *Sally Bannister writes:* There is no need to wear black – wear any colours. Just family will provide flowers so if anyone was wanting to buy flowers we think Mum would have preferred money to go to charity instead as with Dad's funeral. We have selected 'Cavendish Cancer Care' (cheques can be made payable to that name and will have a tray at funeral for them).

*From Richard Scutt*

Having known and admired Jane for some thirteen years I miss her dreadfully already - though I am very grateful for the opportunities I had to work with her in Dorset Humanists. This very special lady was a joy to know and she was inspiring and tireless in her building of the group, ably assisted by Dennis, of course. We shall miss them both hugely but I hope we can redouble our efforts to continue the work they began. Sincere condolences to Jane's family.

*From Swami  
Manavatavani, India*

All of us including our 112 children, Deviji, all our associates and sympathizers feel deep sorrow to get this



Send bulletin updates to chairman [@dorsethumanists.co.uk](mailto:@dorsethumanists.co.uk) or phone 07910 886629

[dorsethumanists.co.uk](http://dorsethumanists.co.uk) [facebook.com/DorsetHumanists](https://www.facebook.com/DorsetHumanists) [facebook.com/groups/dorsethumanists](https://www.facebook.com/groups/dorsethumanists)  
[@dorsethumanists](https://twitter.com/dorsethumanists)

heartbreaking news. Noble Shrimati Jane Ji's and Noble Shriman Dennis Ji's demise in one year is a great loss for all of us. Kindly convey our deep felt condolence to their children. We shall have a condolence meeting during the Children's Congress to have deep thinking in our hearts for their children to be bold enough to be capable of bearing these irreparable losses for them. Kindly convey our condolence to everyone in Dorset Humanists and we wish them to be strong enough to bear this great loss for DH, for the Humanist Community of the World and the entire Humanity.



**Jane Bannister with Jonathan Miller, 2008**

*From Dariusz and Anna Andersen*

Anna and I loved and admired Jane. It feels to us like we have lost a beloved family member with her departure. She was a great person, a perfect example to follow, an amazing friend. Brave and strong, she faced an uneven battle with cancer, defending humanism until very end. We shall try and do our best to be anywhere near like her. We miss her terribly, especially our little daughter, who was pretty close to Jane, and keeps on asking, 'When will we go and see Jane again?' Those were wonderful, unforgettable years, when Jane was with us.

*From Mary Ray, Humanists and Freethinkers of Cape Fear, North Carolina*

That news is a surprise, and a sad one. I only met Jane twice but I knew right away that she was a very special person. She and Dennis made us so welcome when they invited me, as well as my brother and sister, for coffee several years ago. We have exchanged e-mails a few times and were definitely on the same wavelength!

*From Phil Mayer*

I first got to know Jane when she became Chairman in 2001; at that time we had about 20 members. The big increase in numbers - and activity - since then has been in no small part due to her enthusiasm and unceasing efforts. We shall all miss her.

*From Jo Adams, West Dorset Humanists*

I have such fond memories of Jane and Dennis - they were my first contact with DH when I was considering setting up a group over here. They were over in Devon for a holiday and we met up for coffee in Bridport when they were en route home and they were immensely helpful, thoughtful, practical in their advice and generous with their time in helping me think through the first stages.

## Jane's last booksale

Just ten days before she died, Jane Bannister's last booksale raised £151.30 for our Indian Fund and Macmillan Cancer Support. Thank you to everyone who participated and who gave so generously. We raised an additional £55.49 at our Cream Tea on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July, making a total of £206.79.



■ Saturday 10th August 12 noon

## Beach Picnic

Happy Humanist Beach Picnic! Bring your own picnic to meet on the sand opposite The Offshore Cafe just to the right of Bournemouth Pier (behind the Beach Guard stand) from 12 noon (inside café if wet). All welcome but it would be handy to hear if you definitely intend to be there so that I spread a large enough rug to baggy the space! *Lyn Glass*

☎ 01202 558763

💻 [lyn.glass@btinternet.com](mailto:lyn.glass@btinternet.com)

■ **Wednesday 28th August 7.30pm**  
Green House Hotel, Grove Road,  
Bournemouth BH1 3AX



## **Dawkins, Hitchens and the Hidden Treasures of YouTube**

Presented by Dorset Humanists committee member Dean Robertson. If you thought YouTube was just a collection of candid camera style clips and music videos, think again! Dean Robertson will present an eclectic selection of entertaining and enlightening clips from the vast archive of atheist, rationalist, humanist and sceptical lectures and discussions which are now available on YouTube. A stimulating and enjoyable evening is guaranteed!

*Our evening meetings end at around 9.15pm. Members and visitors are very welcome to stay on afterwards to chat over drinks in the hotel bar.*

## **Committee vacancies**

Currently we have two vacancies on the Dorset Humanists Committee. Jane Bannister was, until recently, Vice Chair and Joanna Cole has stepped down after many years' loyal service in a variety of roles including programme organiser and Secretary. We extend our grateful thanks to Joanna who will be greatly missed at our monthly meetings.

We are looking for a person (or persons) to fill the role of membership secretary. Please ask David Warden for a role description. There is also a possibility of creating a 'pastoral care' role. Women are currently under-represented on the committee but we welcome nominations from anyone regardless of gender, age and other irrelevant factors.

✉ chairman@dorsethumanists.co.uk

☎ 07910 886629



# **One Life**

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

1 **Humanist beliefs and history** Monday  
September 30<sup>th</sup> 2013

2 **Why Humanists don't believe in God**  
Monday Oct 7<sup>th</sup> 2013

3 **Secularism and religious privilege**  
Monday October 14<sup>th</sup> 2013

4 **Ethics & morality without religion**  
Monday October 21<sup>st</sup> 2013

5 **Meaning, purpose & happiness**  
Monday November 4<sup>th</sup> 2013

6 **A Humanist vision of the future**  
Monday November 11<sup>th</sup> 2013

All sessions 7.30pm – 9.30pm at Green House Hotel, Grove Road, Bournemouth BH1 3AX. *No meeting 28<sup>th</sup> October.*

£15 non-members £12 members £2 off before 15<sup>th</sup> Sept

£5 for students Cheques to Dorset Humanists Covers all 6 sessions

*Book early to avoid disappointment – limited number of places*

*"Just what we need to introduce people to Humanism" – Jane Bannister*

*"An amazing course – it's been fantastic!"*

Tutor: David Warden, Chair of Dorset Humanists.

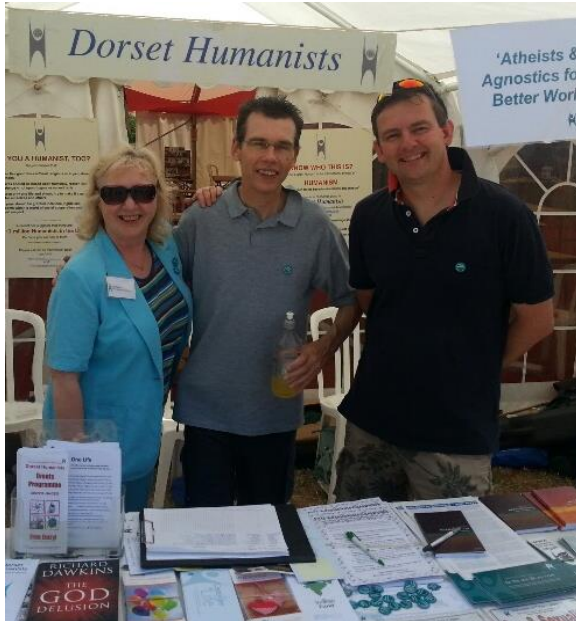
✉ chairman@dorsethumanists.co.uk

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## **Mahadevi**

Mahadevi, who was a student teacher at the Humanist mission school in Kurukshetra, India, appeared in the High Court in Chandigarh following her apparent abduction by a Maoist group and forced marriage. It appears that the court has been powerless to secure her rescue from this group. David is in contact with Swami Manavatavadi to see what action, if any, can now be taken.

# Dorset Humanists at Tolpuddle



Lyn Glass, Dave, and Dean Robertson

Dorset Humanists had another successful weekend at the Tolpuddle Festival. It was a great team effort and not too sweltering. We interacted with a good number of folk including people interested in getting their own local groups started. We didn't give out a huge number of Dorset Humanists programmes as most visitors weren't located close enough to our main venues. But many people wanted to know if there were Humanist groups in Bristol, Salisbury, Brighton, London etc., and we referred them to the BHA website for details. Our prominently displayed copy of *The God Delusion* generated a lot of feedback, with people expressing quite polarised views on Dawkins's involvement with the Humanist movement. It's a good conversation starter. Our 'Humanist Celebrities' sheet also generated a fair amount of additional discussion. The badges were popular as always, with 'Good without God' proving much more popular than 'Happy Humanist' logos at this event, a significant change from usual! It was interesting that several parents came up asking for information to give to their children to counter school doctrine. We need to carry more child-friendly leaflets

next time. It seems that we didn't have any major interactions with 'diehard' Christians but we did have a couple of discussions with people with some pretty bizarre worldviews. We collected around a dozen email addresses. We could have collected more if we'd been more methodical but we made good interactions with people our main priority. Our pull-up banner generated a lot of leads because we could say 'hello' and begin interacting with people who were taking the time to read it, even when they still seemed a little reticent about approaching the stand without prompting. So yes, a successful weekend for Dorset Humanists but would we be saying the same thing if it was pouring with rain and we were surrounded by mud? Many thanks to main organizer Simon Whitlock and volunteers Geoff Jones, Lyn Glass, Matt Coussell, Dean Robertson, Dariusz Andersen, Scott Thompson, Richard Scutt and Dave E.

■ Saturday 13th July 10.30am-17.15pm

## British Humanist Association AGM

Simon Whitlock represented us at the BHA Annual General Meeting in London. The day included forums on public affairs, education, and ceremonies, and the meeting gave members the opportunity to find out more about the work of the BHA and to suggest ideas for developing projects and campaigns further. The Presidential Address by Jim Al-Khalili was a particular highlight and is available on YouTube <http://youtu.be/YAJpFsfbYQA>. Pavan, Head of Public Affairs, focussed on her success with marriage reform and the campaign to give legal recognition to **humanist marriages**. Faith Schools Campaigner Richy spoke of his work with the **Fair Admissions Campaign**, which calls for all state-funded schools in England and Wales to be open equally to all children, without regard to religion or belief. Sara, Head of Education and Promotion, spoke about her work developing a training course for volunteers who want to work with teachers in planning lessons on Humanism and humanist beliefs

and values. She also spoke of the continued successful relationship between the BHA and local humanist groups. Isabel, Head of Ceremonies, focussed on the recruitment and training of humanist celebrants, the function of the celebrant network, and the promotion of **humanist ceremonies** to ensure we reach all those who would wish to have a non-religious ceremony.

Chief Executive Andrew Copson said, 'I am very proud of the accomplishments of the BHA. Our members are very engaged and keen to share their expertise to help direct our work, and our staff members are keen to take forward their views. We are very happy with the progress made this year and we look forward to building on this in the year to come.'



## Letters & Emails

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

*From Terry Milton*

On the beach with my grandchildren a couple of days ago a girl of about 10 years old, with her mother, came up to me and told me she had heard me talk to the pupils at Baden Powell School two weeks before. She told me that afterwards she and 4 or 5 of her friends at the school had "decided to become humanists. So what do we have to do?" I reminded her to be kind to others, to be tolerant and to question things that don't seem right. There was a slight pause and then she thanked me.

Obviously I couldn't recommend going along to our Humanist meetings which consist exclusively of adults but I had the impression she was hoping to be told about some kind of Girl Guides or similar fraternity to which they could belong. As our pupil audiences increase and hopefully more and more youngsters are won over to a humanist approach to life it seems a shame

that this enthusiasm risks being dissipated without some kind of follow up support. I don't know the answer but perhaps someone does.

*From Chris Jenord, Taunton Humanists*

Once again I would like to invite Dorset Humanists to this year's Ancestor's Trail. Richard Dawkins is coming again, but we also have several other excellent science speakers including Prof Mark Thomas and Dr Copley exploring human evolution and hydrothermal vents respectively. On the art side we have a one man drama piece on Wallace (on his centenary), Jonny Berliner, a soprano, two pianists, more body painting and some collaborative art - oh and some dancing. Several Dorset Humanists have attended the Trail in previous years.

**Ancestors Trail** - a pilgrimage to the dawn of life - Saturday 24 - Monday 26 August 2013 Bank Holiday.

 [Ancestorstrail.net](http://Ancestorstrail.net)

## Fair Admissions Campaign

The BHA has announced its participation in the Fair Admissions Campaign – a new campaign aiming to end religious selection by state funded schools. It cannot be right that children are turned away from their local school because their parents are of the wrong religion or of no religion, and the BHA is delighted to be working with others such as the Accord Coalition, Professor Ted Cattle, and both the Labour and Liberal Democrat education associations, in order to try and do something about this.

The BHA would like as many of us as possible to get involved in the Campaign so do take a look at the range of actions on the website, follow the Campaign on Twitter, and 'like' the Campaign on Facebook.

Support the Fair Admissions Campaign at <http://fairadmissions.org.uk/>



**David Warden and Jane Bannister**

Dorset Humanists  
**Chairman's View**  
August 2013



**W**e've lost both Dennis and Jane Bannister in less than a year. Their dedication to Humanism made Dorset Humanists what it is today. Jane was Chair of Dorset Humanists from about 2001 until 2009. We often planned the annual programme of speakers together and for many years Jane organised splendid Darwin Day lunches and produced our monthly Bulletin. She gently encouraged committee members to take on more responsibilities. I remember her asking me to become a member of Bournemouth SACRE (the body which determines the local religious education syllabus). "It'll only be three meetings a year" she reassured me. Needless to say, the actual number of meetings multiplied beyond this original estimate! I was not there on the famous night when Jane, Dennis and others sheltered inside a flimsy gazebo in Christchurch whilst wind and rain hampered efforts to tell the locals about Humanism. I think Jemma may remember that one! Jane and Dennis kindly supported me in London when I gave a lecture in Conway Hall Library on the question "Does Humanism Have a Future?". Somehow this lecture ended up on the website of the New Zealand Humanists. We know that Humanism did, at least, have a future beyond the date of that event, ten years ago. One of Jane's endearing habits was to leave messages on our answer phone, announcing herself as 'Jane of the Humanists'. When she caught me at home, she would say 'Just a few things...' and I knew the call would last thirty minutes or so. At committee meetings I used to dread asking people if there was 'Any Other Business'. Jane would often produce a slip of paper detailing a dozen new ideas and initiatives! (I'm only slightly exaggerating!) Even when she was ill, Jane was able to envision a Dorset Humanists Fête for World Humanist Day. We'll get there one day. Both Jane and Dennis were frustrated that the word 'Humanism' was so little known. They would both be very pleased to know that our schools education project is getting off the ground. Perhaps Jane's greatest strength was in tirelessly maintaining personal relationships. The value of this aspect of her character is incalculable. We will never forget them and we send our very best wishes to their three surviving children - Sally, Claire and Adrian who surrounded Jane with love for her last few months.

*David Warden*