



Atheists and Agnostics for a Better World

Dorset Humanists

June 2013

A PARTNER OF THE
BRITISH HUMANIST
ASSOCIATION

Forthcoming events...

■ Saturday 1st June 2013

Moordown Community Centre, Coronation Avenue, BH9 1TW

A Parting Gift

Donating Your Body to Medical Science

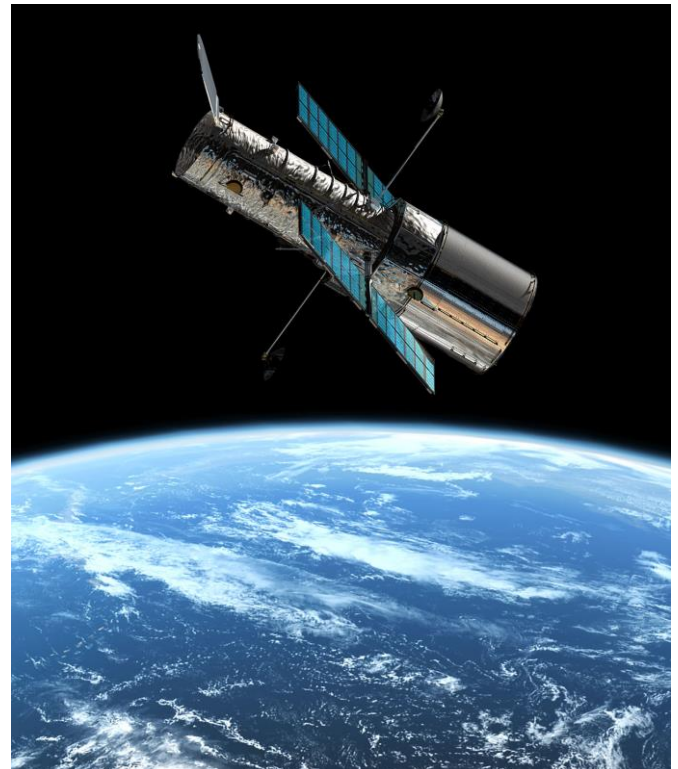
A talk by Dr Jenny Skidmore, Director of the Centre for Learning Anatomical Sciences at Southampton University

Donating your body to science can play a critical role in teaching trainee doctors, assists medical research and helps save millions of lives, yet we currently face a serious shortage of donors. In this fascinating presentation, Jenny will take us through the practicalities of leaving your body to science, explain how medical students learn anatomy, and outline what happens after the anatomical examination of your body is complete. Join us to discover how we can benefit medical research, and help future doctors and surgeons learn their life-saving skills.

★ Part Two meeting

3.50-4.30pm

After the main meeting we will have a discussion about whether we want to have Humanist 'celebrations of life' in addition to



Hubble Space Telescope – see details for our next evening meeting at the Green House Hotel

our regular programme of talks and discussions and, if so, what form they might take. Come along and have your say.

■ Friday 21st June 7.20pm

Carlton Hotel, East Cliff, Bournemouth

World Humanist Day

Come raise a glass to World Humanist Day with fellow Humanists and friends within the comfortable confines of the Carlton Hotel bar. Meet from 7.20pm. We might even be able to gather on the balcony if a fine evening!

Send bulletin updates to chairman @dorsethumanists.co.uk or phone 07910 886629

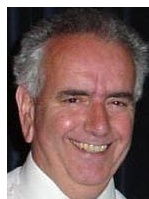
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■ **Wednesday 26th June 7.30pm**

Green House Hotel, Grove Road,
Bournemouth BH1 3AX

Images of the Unimaginable

The Hubble Space Telescope Gallery



*A talk by Bob Mizon MBE
FRAS*

Since 1990, the Hubble Space Telescope has been revealing aspects of the near and far universe in awe-inspiring detail. In "Images of the Unimaginable", astronomer Bob Mizon takes us on a tour of the cosmos as seen through the eye of this revolutionary instrument, and examines the nature of the great range of objects - galaxies, nebulae, comets - which it has explored. Bob is the coordinator of the British Astronomical Association's Campaign for Dark Skies, writes for the astronomical press, and translates books on astronomy and meteorology from French to English.

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.

■ **Thursday June 27th 7.30pm**

West Dorset Humanists at the Wessex
Royale Hotel, 32 High St. West, Dorchester
DT1 1UP



The Rise of Humanism

*A talk by Andrew
Copson, Chief Executive of the
British Humanist Association*

Free entry but £2 donation appreciated

✉ westdorsethumanists@hotmail.com

☎ 07921 311518

■ **Saturday 13th July 2.00pm**

Moordown Community Centre, Coronation
Avenue, BH9 1TW

Altered States

*A talk by Harvey Taylor on the Uses and
Abuses of NLP*

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) is an alternative approach to communication, personal development, and psychotherapy. Its originators and practitioners assert a connection between neurological processes, language, and learned behaviours, claiming they can be changed to improve the way we think, feel and behave, but skeptics accuse them of making exaggerated claims and lacking supporting evidence from controlled trials. We've invited management development trainer, NLP speaker, and hypnotherapist Harvey Taylor to share his views on the facts and fiction of NLP and demonstrate some of the techniques. Harvey says 'one of the few things we have any significant control over is our state of mind', and claims he can 'show us how to generate states of confidence, happiness and many other states'. We're expecting this highly interactive session to be both informative and entertaining.

Dorset Humanists at VE Day peace ceremony

On 8th May, David Warden took part in a 'Time for Peace' ceremony to mark VE Day. The event took place in Borough Gardens, Dorchester and was attended by the Mayor, the British Legion, and members of the public. The ceremony was organised by the Chair of 'Churches Together' in Dorchester, Revd Catherine Dearlove, who leads the inclusive River of Life church in Dorchester. There were no prayers or hymns during this simple, secular ceremony. David read edited extracts on the topic of peace from *Celebration: A Ceremonial and Philosophic Guide for Humanists and Humanistic Jews* (2003) by Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine. Rabbi Wine founded Humanistic Judaism in 1963 to provide a home for 'humanistic, secular, and cultural Jews'.



Stef Kling Review and responses

In a fascinating and alarming presentation at our May 11 meeting, financial expert Stef Kling argued that our current financial system requires continuous growth otherwise it will collapse. This growth is largely fuelled by an artificial and exponential growth in the money supply and debt. He said that to grow the economy we need to produce more stuff which requires more resources and energy. But fossil-based energy can't grow and environmental resources are in decline therefore the economy must decline. But with our current system the economy cannot decline without catastrophic collapse. He contrasted the economic woes of Greece with the possible collapse of the US economy – now groaning under a national debt of \$16 trillion. If the US goes bankrupt it's 'game over' he said. So we need to move to a new economic system of managed decline. Stef's proposed solutions include the following:

1. Stop banks creating new money. Only the Bank of England should be able to create new money.
2. Move your money to an ethical bank such as the Co-op bank or Nationwide
3. Measure GNH (Gross National Happiness) instead of GDP (Gross Domestic Product)
4. Evaluate activities by how much 'real value' is added, rather than financial profit

His book recommendations include:

Prosperity without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet (2011) Tim Jackson; *The End of Growth: Adapting to Our New Economic Reality* (2001) Richard Heinberg; *The Story of Stuff: How Our Obsession with Stuff is Trashing the Planet, Our Communities, and Our Health* (2010) Anne Leonard; and *The New Economics* (2009) Andrew Simms and David Boyle.

A response from Douglas Lock, former economics tutor for the Open University and Principal Lecturer at Bournemouth University

The premise of Stef Kling's talk is flawed. We cannot consider debt = money as the whole story. For any debt there will an asset. Most of these assets will be real assets and many will be productive whether represented by consumer purchases of houses, businesses purchasing plant, premises and raw materials or governments investing in the infrastructure. The toxic assets which fall in value as bubbles burst will diminish the asset base of the banks and create the credit crisis but this is not a fault in the entire system of assets and liabilities.

It is also important to distinguish between real and nominal values when considering the size of the debt. The ratio of debt to GDP will rise and fall when either or both the debt total changes and when the GDP changes. Brief explanations of the complex money and financial system are not sufficient to explain the flaws in the system. We need to look at a wider picture of the economic ideology which lies behind the crisis. Deregulation of the banking system in the US and the UK enabled the asset reserve ratios to become fraught. The rationale for packaged debt bundles was flawed so the investments in derivatives created an exposure of banks and financial institutions around the world. The crash in the mortgage market in the US set off a series of collapses and difficulties for the banking system. The Government bailouts of the banks and the credit crunch together created the increase in Government debt and brought about a situation where the debt-to-GDP ratios were outside the normal range.

For the Republicans in the US and the rightwing politicians in Europe this was a golden opportunity to condemn the governments who appeared to have created debt levels which were unsustainable and enabled them to talk of profligacy and waste, financial irresponsibility and the need for tough decisions. Not tough decisions about the uncontrolled banks but tough decisions about the level of welfare spending.

The solutions to unsustainable growth are all sensible but in a political climate where inequality is rising, where deregulation is the order of the day and where public goods are privatised and the green economy abandoned they begin to appear a bit unattainable. An approach which rests on austerity and deleveraging will not restore the level of growth needed to sustain a level of real income for the growing population.

Of course we should all do what we can to live a greener life, there is no problem with such well meant prescriptions but I fear that they will never be sufficient. A government committed to the green economy, ready to regulate to prevent the failures of a market-driven economy and prepared to do something to prevent the ever wider inequality in society is the only solution. Without this change in the basic ideology of government I do believe that the UK will continue to slide down in terms of all those things which provide the basis of a happy life for all.

A response from Ken Fagg, author of 'They've Got It All Wrong'

Stef Kling said that the modern economy depended on growth. In particular it depended on people borrowing money from banks and later borrowing even more money to repay the loan plus interest. He said that only 8% of loans were for productive purposes, i.e. to invest in businesses that would create extra growth to enable them to repay the loans plus interest out of extra profits. He never mentioned repayment out of wages/income.

A large chunk of loans from banks and building societies are for mortgages on houses and for commercial goods. The loan enables the borrower to have the property and goods now rather than later. This is fully sustainable if the loans are repaid out of wages/income.

Only a comparatively small amount of money is lent to people or firms that can never repay in full. As such loans rapidly increase (with more and more interest being added to the loan), the lenders increasingly fear that they won't get their money back and charge ever higher interest rates. This makes it even harder for the borrower to get out of this vicious spiral. The borrower soon

goes bankrupt, ensuring that this group remains a relatively small minority.

The modern economy does not **DEPEND** on growth. Growth is good and it enables us all to get richer and have a higher standard of living. But it is not essential.

Stef also said that the US and UK were bankrupt – that liabilities exceeded assets. Complete nonsense! Both countries are currently spending more than they are earning. But countries like Saudi Arabia, Russia, Germany and China, with trade surpluses are investing this surplus in loans to us and in buying property, companies and goods. We have done this in the past and have massive assets invested in other countries. Just look at the value of all UK assets (property, companies and goods). The value of property in London alone must exceed many trillions of pounds. And in assessing bankruptcy, we must include all future income.

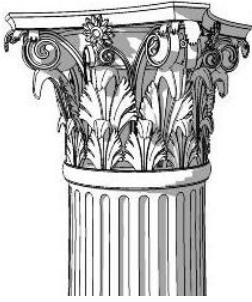
Too many people spread scare stories. I have tried to counter some of these in my book *They've Got It All Wrong*. Anyone interested in facts may like to know that the second edition is now available through Amazon Kindle and will be on sale on 18th June for 24 hours only at the special price of £1 per book. Follow this link:

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Theyve-Got-All-Wrong-ebook/dp/B00CIR90PO>

Teaching Humanism to Children

Chris Street reports

For several years, Bishop Wordsworth's CofE faith school in Salisbury has invited Dorset Humanists to talk about Humanism at their annual Multi-Faith-and-Belief Day. On 22 May Chris Street and Terry Milton each taught Humanism to thirty 15 year old boys over two 75 minute lessons. Chris showed several BHA videos and students discussed humanism and the ethics of euthanasia and war. Terry taught about Atheism and Humanism referring to Hegel and Schopenhauer. To Terry's question 'What would make the world a better place?' several students replied 'No wars and ... no religion!'



LETTERS & EMAILS

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

To Swami Manavatavadi from David and Elaine Stott

We hear from David Warden of our Humanist Group that Mahadevi, who is a teacher at your school, has apparently been abducted and forced into marriage, against her will. We can understand the distress that this is causing to you and also to the pupils at the school, where she has been a valued teacher. We hope that you are able to support the pupils at this difficult time and our thoughts are with you. David has told us that you have contacted the police and other Authorities so that they can assist in finding Mahadevi. In matters concerning relationships she should be able to make her own decisions.

From so far away we cannot help practically but you know that we are wanting to know that she is safe, returned to those she loves and is in control of her life.

From Swami Manavatavadi to David and Elaine Stott

So kind of you for your sympathetic letter for Mahadevi's missing and about the wellbeing of our children. Of course our children are missing their Mahadevi Didi and are passing through a great mental trauma. We are doing our best to rescue our children from these traumatic conditions. Deviji is doing her best. Mahadevi's brother who is preparing for his Diploma Engineering Admission has accepted and arrived here to help us in rescuing Mahadevi and also teaching children.

Just now we are preparing to go to the District Courts to draft an application for the police to lodge an FIR [First Information Report] to rescue her from a house arrest and abduction and put in her 6th Semester Examination which has started just

yesterday. Kindly don't worry about our children. They are bravely coping up with us and their education and computer class is smoothly marching ahead.

Kindly convey our Humblest Namaskars to Noble Shriman Devendra Ji (Mr. David Warden) and all our sympathizers there in Dorset Humanists, BHA and all others.

From Richard Dyer-Smith

I just wanted to say how much I enjoy reading the Bulletin. It is a quality publication - always interesting and very informative. You clearly put a great deal of thought and effort into putting the Bulletin together and I very much appreciate what you do. Does the Bulletin get circulation much beyond the members of Dorset Humanists? It seems to me that it could be an excellent vehicle for the 'promotion' of Humanism.

■ The Bulletin is distributed to approx 350 addresses (postal and email).

CofE in decline or not?

A spokesman for the Church of England



has said that average weekly attendances have 'stabilised'. However, the report* on which these figures are based also states that 'Sunday attendance has

declined over the decade 2001-11, and this is particularly noticeable with child attendance.' Over the long term, 'usual Sunday attendance' has dropped from 1.5 million in 1970 to 800,000 in 2011.

BHA Chief Executive Andrew Copson commented: 'It's about time the legal position caught up with the social reality and the privileged place of Anglicanism and Anglicans was brought to an end.'

■ Andrew Copson is speaking at West Dorset Humanists on Thursday June 27th 7.30pm on 'The Rise of Humanism'.

**Statistics for Mission 2011* (published 2013) Church of England



Dorset Humanists
Chairman's View
June 2013



My reading at the VE Day peace ceremony in Dorchester may be thought trite and inadequate following the brutal killing in London last week. I'm reproducing it here, however, because this horrific event reminds us that, as British citizens, we are all involved in the wars we are fighting overseas and we all have some responsibility for making the world a more peaceful place. I was proud to be able to represent Humanists in this small way.

'Peace is a human achievement. There are no laws of history that will guarantee its arrival and no divine power that will give it to us for nothing. Peace is hard work. We have to work for peace in the same way that we work for a living.

Peace begins with respect. As human beings we're all entitled to be the masters of our own lives and the planners of our own destiny. When others seek to take that right away from us and impose upon us their vision of the good life then rebellion will surely follow. If we cannot abide a world of human difference we will never enjoy a world of peace.

Peace needs co-operation. If we realise that most of what we desire cannot be secured by ourselves alone we will cultivate friendship and we will become more trustworthy. Nations are like individuals. When they are arrogant enough to believe that they can fend for themselves and that they have nothing to fear from other nations they will take as much power as they can seize. But independence is an illusion and co-operation is a global necessity. If we don't work together, we may die together.

Peace needs trust. If we divide the world into good and evil, if we ascribe all noble sentiments and moral behaviour to our own team, and all wicked thoughts and criminal action to our opponents, we will widen the gulf of mistrust. But if we are willing to see our own faults, if we can restrain the need to humiliate our opponents, then the bridges of faith and trust can be rebuilt.

Peace needs hope but utopian fantasies are dangerous. If we demand the impossible, we will always live with disappointment. But some dreams are not foolish. Armies can be made smaller. Weapons can be reduced in number. Disputes can be resolved through talking. We need to climb our steps one by one.

Peace needs compromise. It needs a willingness to tolerate a world that is less than perfect. Life is give and take, and endless negotiation. People who want the world to be perfect make revolution and wars. Peaceful people settle for less.

If we must fight, let us fight poverty and disease. There are many real foes to face.

So let our tribute to those who have suffered and died in conflict be our resolve to work for peace through respect, co-operation, trust, and hope.'

David Warden