



Dorset Humanists

September 2012

A PARTNER OF THE
BRITISH HUMANIST
ASSOCIATION 

Forthcoming events...

■ 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.

■ Saturday 8th September 3.45pm

Dorset Humanists Slogan

After the break there will be a meeting for members to vote for a Dorset Humanists slogan. If you are unable to come to the meeting but would like to vote, please email chairman@dorsethumanists.co.uk or phone 07910 886629.



Dennis Bannister, a leading member of Dorset Humanists, died at home on 22nd August. See inside for more details.

The slogan 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

■ Saturday 15th September, 1.30pm

March for a Secular Europe

Secular Europe Campaign – Protest
March and Rally – 15 September
2012. Assemble 1.30pm Storey's

Gate, Parliament Square, London. 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/>

■ **Thursday 27th September 7.30pm**

Moordown Community Centre

Philosophy Gym for Humanists and Atheists

With ever-increasing scientific knowledge, much of which contradicts historic religious claims, many evangelists have realised that faith alone is no longer enough to attract new converts. In response, a new wave of Christian philosophers are attempting to build a more credible case for Christianity.

David Warden leads a 'post-holiday workout for your grey matter' to consider the logical flaws in the arguments of Christian philosophers and evangelists.

■ **Saturday 13th October 2.00pm**

Moordown Community Centre

Science and Religion: Complementary or Contradictory?

Government scientist David Nunn investigates the age-old debate about whether these apparently conflicting worldviews can be reconciled. Don't miss this opportunity to open your mind to different ways of approaching this often prickly subject. David has been a government scientist for twenty years working on underwater sound. He has been interested in the interaction of science and religion from a very young age.

Dennis Bannister

We are extremely sad to report the death of Dennis Bannister. Dennis died at home in the company of his loving family on Wednesday 22nd August after five weeks in hospital with a heart condition.

Dennis, together with his wife Jane, was a key player in the rebuilding of Dorset Humanists from a low point around ten years ago. He was forthright in his advocacy of Humanism and tireless in his efforts to promote and strengthen Dorset Humanists. Of particular note were his interesting talks on Darwin and twenty-one editions of 'Humanist Comment' which were distributed to members over a number of years. He served on our committee for many years and helped in numerous practical ways to ensure that we had an effective presence at Summer festivals.

Maggie Pepin will celebrate Dennis's life on Thursday 6th September at 10.00am at the Hinton Park Woodland Burial Ground, Wyndham Road, Walkford, Christchurch BH23 7EJ. Everyone is welcome.

Tributes to Dennis

From Geoff Jones, with great sadness

I will always remember Dennis Bannister for his outright enthusiasm for arguing the Humanist cause, his earnestness at representing Dorset Humanists at various festivals and gatherings and above all the very clear outward signs that he cared for people, whatever their ilk. His sad loss will not only be felt deeply by Jane but he will be greatly missed by all of us.

From Richard Scutt

So sad that we have to lose those for whom we care! I was so fond of Dennis Bannister and have valued his acquaintance for some 12 years – along with Jane, of course, since I have always seen them as 'Team

Bannister'. He was passionate about Humanism, and other causes, and inclined to be impatient when we seemed not to be making enough progress. This made committee meetings quite lively at times! He inspired me to try to help promote Dorset Humanists and I loved to hear of his campaigning in his younger days and, indeed, much more recently. Dennis was always friendly and welcoming and I found it just as easy to compare notes with him on putting up sheds as to discuss what the world needed to make it a fairer, happier place for all. Thinking back, I am sure that all our conversations included lots of laughter and thank you, Dennis, for that wonderful gift. I shall miss you sorely.

From Dariusz and Anna

Dennis's departure has left an enormous hole not only within Dorset Humanists but also, and actually most of all, in our hearts. Anna and I terribly miss Dennis's sunny smile, friendly hugs and witty sense of humour, although these were not his finest attributes. Dorset Humanists has lost one of its strongest pillars.

From Swamiji, India

It is really a shocking news for all of us here. All of us including our children, Deviji, Mahadevi and all well wishers here mourn for this great loss of Noble Shriman Dennis Ji. Kindly say our condolence to Noble Shrimati Jane Ji.

From Chris Street

Dennis Bannister was very likeable, charming, humorous and I was very fond of him. A chemist by profession, Dennis maintained his active interest in science – especially Darwinism. Dennis was forthright in his views and I appreciated his often passionate comments and probing questions in the Committee, at talks, at his presentations and debates at Dorset Humanists. I enjoyed his take on current issues in his 'Humanist Comment' pages. I will miss him a lot.

ALMOST FULL!

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 degrees in theology and management and twenty years experience as a business trainer.

 chairman@dorsethumanists.co.uk

 07910 886629

Social Events

Our summer lunch events were well-supported and very enjoyable. If you'd like to keep them going why not offer to 'host' another lunch, maybe in a central location? Or maybe you'd like to organise a Christmas dinner dance, quiz night, wine tasting event, party night or a day trip? Let us know the details so that we can help with advertising and promotion.

Dorset Humanists at Bishop Wordsworth's School

On 13th June, Dorset Humanist **Richard Scutt** visited Bishop Wordsworth's Church of England

School in Salisbury to explain Humanist beliefs and values at the school's 'Multi-faith Day'.

Richard led four one-hour sessions on Humanism, presenting to around fifty 14-15 year old boys in total. Each session began with Richard outlining various definitions of Humanism and detailing our core beliefs and ethics. He went on to discuss how we 'live these beliefs' using reason, empathy, compassion and the Golden Rule. There was so much response and discussion after presenting the basics that Richard almost abandoned the rest of his presentation in order to debate real issues with the boys and their teachers. A wide range of subjects was discussed, including the role of Bishops in the House of Lords, discrimination and prejudice, Halal meat, and, of course, faith schools. Richard explained why Humanists favour inclusive education, but several boys felt parents should have the option of choosing faith schools if they wished. It was encouraging to hear that the boys expressed progressive attitudes on many issues, including declaring themselves against discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation. We were also interested to discover, by a show of hands, that 50% or more of the boys were not religious, which suggests a fair and transparent entrance selection process at this school. Summarising the experience, Richard said, 'I had an excellent time discussing Humanism at the school, and was very impressed by the boys' level of engagement, and their thoughtful questions and responses'.

Multi-faith day is an annual event at Bishop Wordsworth's, and this is the fourth time that Dorset Humanists have taken part, alongside speakers representing Baha'i, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, and various Christian groups.

Bishop Wordsworth's is a Church of England secondary school for boys providing grammar school education.

Dorset Humanists was instrumental in the consultation process that led to the inclusion of secular, non-religious philosophies such as Humanism into local RE syllabuses across Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset.



YOUR COLUMN

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

From Ken Fagg

From time to time humanists get accused of being militant. Immediately the cry goes up "Oh no we're not!" Why not? We are up against evil enemies. The pope's order to ban contraceptives ensures that women remain servile producing large numbers of unwanted children, and the scourge of Aids is allowed to spread. This is evil. We must attack it on all fronts. Other religions also subjugate women, are intolerant, do not allow free speech, and murder opponents.

The religionists are militant. "Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war" is hardly a pacifist peace and love march. David, our Chairman, wants to build bridges with the evil enemy. Why? By all means continue and expand the interesting and useful debates at Bournemouth University. But don't lose sight of our objective – to defeat and convert them, not by invasion but by persuasion. Onward militant Humanists!!

■ See *Chairman's View* for David Warden's response. What are your views? Do you think there's a place for 'militancy' in secularism and Humanism? What do we mean by 'militant' anyway?