



Atheists and Agnostics for a Better World

Dorset Humanists

February 2014

A PARTNER OF THE
BRITISH HUMANIST
ASSOCIATION

■ Saturday 8th February 12.00 noon

Bayview Suite, Bournemouth International Centre, BH2 5BH

Darwin Day Lunch with Crispian Jago

The irreverent and irrepressible Crispian Jago is co-founder and co-organiser of the Hampshire Skeptics Society and Winchester Skeptics in the Pub. In his talk entitled 'How to point and laugh at irrational nonsense' he will argue that whilst it is important to respect a person's right to hold whatever beliefs they like, ridicule of those beliefs (not the person) is not off-limits and indeed can be one of many effective ways to highlight and combat irrational thought. He writes the satirical skeptical blog 'Science, Reason & Critical Thinking' and describes himself as a 'failed bassist, ex-hippy, science-loving and music-loving godless Cornish git'.

Talk only £5 (including coffee) 1.50pm. Inclusive lunch booking now closed but contact Lyn Glass before 6th February for possible space. (£20 to include 12 noon welcome drink, 2-course lunch and coffee followed by talk).

✉ lyn.glass@btinternet.com

☎ 01202 558763

🌐 <http://crispian-jago.blogspot.co.uk/>

Volunteer required

A vacancy has arisen on the Bournemouth SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education). Please help us fill this vital role to ensure continuity of Humanist representation. Contact details below.



Crispian Jago - our special guest speaker for Darwin Day

■ Wednesday 26th February 7.30pm

Green House Hotel 4 Grove Road
Bournemouth BH1 3AX

Belief Formation and Creating Empowering Beliefs

In this thought-provoking and entertaining presentation, management development trainer, NLP speaker, and hypnotherapist Harvey Taylor will be explaining how we form our beliefs and what effect they have upon us. Why, for example, is there a correlation between religious belief and certain health and psychological benefits in some contexts? Is a belief in our oneness with or separateness from the universe simply a neurological artefact of early attachment experience, and how do the

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placebo and nocebo effects work? Most importantly, how can we use the process of belief formation to enjoy a more positive and productive (and potentially longer) existence on planet Earth?

■ **Wednesday 12th February 7.30pm**

Bakers Arms, 77-79 Commercial Rd,
Bournemouth, BH2 5RT

Dorset Humanists Social evening



Our next social evening will be at a new venue. It's still in the town centre (very close to previous venues) and will be in the cellar bar of the Bakers Arms. It's just past the pedestrianised area on the way to the Triangle. Please come along if you can make it. We have been getting a good crowd and it seems to be working well. Have an interesting chat over a drink or two and get to know other like-minded people. The landlord is letting us have the room for free so if we can get a good crowd and put some money in his till that would be great. See you there! *Dean*

■ **Saturday 8th March 12.30 for 2.00pm**

Moordown Community Centre, Coronation Avenue, BH9 1TW

Informal Lunch & Annual General Meeting

Join us for a simple lunch at 12.30pm prior to this year's AGM. The AGM is always an enjoyable meeting when members and visitors can get stuck into debates about our aims and objectives. This year we will make a significant decision about whether or not to affiliate to the National Secular Society, founded in 1866 and still vigorously campaigning for a secular society. Please see Chris Street's article in this Bulletin. The AGM provides a great opportunity for all members to influence how Dorset Humanists grows and develops in the

future, so please do come along and have your say. If you wish to propose a motion for debate and vote at the AGM, or nominate yourself or another member for a committee position, please contact David Warden (contact details below) before the end of February. Lunch is free but if you want to drink alcohol please bring a bottle to share. If you have special dietary requirements please phone Cathy Silman on 01202 740550.

■ **Wednesday 26th March 7.30pm**

Green House Hotel

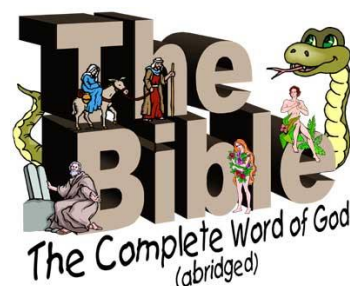
Sigmund Freud

A talk by David Croman (more details next Bulletin)

Other local events of interest...

■ **Saturday 22nd Feb 8.00pm** at

Bournemouth Little Theatre



Written by Reduced Shakespeare Company and initially banned in Northern Ireland as blasphemous, three performers will take a total of 93 minutes to resolve all the great theological questions. An irreverent, roller-coaster ride from Genesis to Revelation.

☎ 07528 536899

info@arena-theatre.co.uk

■ **Wednesday 12th March 2014 7.30pm**

Brunswick pub, Charminster, BH8 8PX

Simon Singh: The Simpsons and their Mathematical Secrets

Inaugural meeting of Bournemouth Skeptics in the Pub. Tickets £3 or £2 for students with NUS card.

<http://bournemouth.skepticsinthepub.org/Event.aspx/1936/Simon-Singh--the-Simpsons-and-their-MathematicalSECRETS>

☎ Chris 01425 673477

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Dorset Humanists raise £1727* for our Jane Bannister Winter Appeal



From Jude Todd, Nightstop Coordinator, who experienced two years on the streets herself at age sixteen

Thank you so much for the wonderful amount raised through your Winter Appeal in

memory of Jane Bannister. I am so sorry to hear about her passing as we had had several lovely conversations in the latter part of 2012 as she had so thoughtfully asked for gifts at her husband Dennis' funeral to go to New Forest Nightstop. I pass my sincere condolences to you all.

New Forest Nightstop is the only provider of emergency accommodation in the New Forest for young people age 16-24, who find themselves suffering homelessness and this is all done through the homes of trained and approved volunteers. There is absolutely no other emergency provision, hostels or shelters, in the New Forest. The first thing people usually say to me is 'Are there really people homeless in the New Forest?' Unfortunately, this is a reality that people are very much unaware of. The forest is mainly an affluent area with a very rural spread. This means that homelessness, as people usually understand it, goes very much unnoticed. The young people we help are not the street-hardened rough sleepers people typically think of in regards to homelessness but everyday teenagers, suffering a crisis, in need of help and protection.

The main causes of youth homelessness are family breakdown but also it can be through unemployment of the young person or the parent, which can then cause a loss of home or the need to downsize and subsequently they have to downsize family. It can be illness in a family that causes stresses and conflict or an inability to look after other family members. It could be fleeing violence or abuse. 80,000 young people will be homeless in the UK this year; 86% are forced to leave home. Being on the

streets brings its own problems though, having experienced 2 years on the streets myself at 16, I am extremely aware of the dangers and the long term impact this can have on a young person's life. A homeless person is 11 times more likely to suffer mental health problems, 13 times more likely to be a victim of violence or abuse and a third get so low they attempt suicide.

Through our team of 26 volunteers, Nightstop provides free emergency overnight accommodation, meals, laundry, baths, travel costs, toiletries, start-up furniture, food parcel referrals, start-up home energy costs, practical support with benefit claims, housing forms and the progression of their housing case through housing panels, with a multi-agency approach to the best outcomes with the means we have. But Nightstop offers much more than this to a young person, it's so much more than a B&B. A listening ear, a sense of belonging and trust, a future, protection from rape, drugs, abuse, increased employability, offering security to not only the young person but their education; 69% of young people who stayed in the last year were in education, training or employment.

New Forest Nightstop has just entered its 12th year and in that time we have provided over 2000 nights of safety to vulnerable young people from our local communities. Our aim is to save them from reaching the streets and becoming victims there. We are hard at work trying to bring an awareness of Nightstop and the tragedies it prevents to the communities around us. Thank you for your interest, particularly as you are also an organisation whose mission is about saving young people from the streets and its dangers. Please follow the link below to visit our website for a real insight into our work and activities. You can read stories from the young people that have been supported by Nightstop, experiences of our volunteers and even watch our short film about homelessness in the New Forest.

*£1727.23 was divided equally between New Forest Nightstop and Refuge for women and children fleeing domestic violence.

newforestnightstop.org.uk/aboutus.html

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Should Dorset Humanists affiliate to the NSS?

Dorset Humanists committee member Chris Street will propose at our AGM in March that Dorset Humanists should affiliate to the National Secular Society in addition to our Partnership with the British Humanist Association. Members will have the opportunity to debate and vote on this important proposal.

The NSS was established in 1866 and today champions human rights above religious demands accepting that religion has a place in society for those who want it, but in terms of equality, not privilege. The NSS Secular Charter “campaigns for the separation of religion and state and promotes secularism as the best means to create a society in which people of all religions or none can live together fairly and cohesively. The NSS sees secularism – the position that the state should be separate from religion – as an essential element in promoting equality between all citizens.”



The NSS has campaigns for Religion in Schools including opposing publicly funded faith schools, an end to religious discrimination in school admissions, an end to compulsory worship in schools and reform of RE.

The NSS Religion and State campaigns for the disestablishment of the Church of England, removal of the bishops in the House of Lords and campaigns against the growing influence of religion on Government.

NSS Equality and Human Rights campaigns for justice to be based on equality, respect for human rights and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

The NSS Freedom of Expression campaigns challenge religious threats to free expression. The NSS's 140-year campaign to abolish the blasphemy law in England succeeded in 2008. NSS resists blasphemy laws in other parts of the world where conviction can carry the death penalty. NSS campaigns to remove the word 'insulting' from UK law. NSS opposes modification of the United Nations Human Rights Charter by Islamic nations that would render it ineffective in the area of free speech.

The NSS has campaigns against Child Abuse by members of the Catholic Church.

NSS Healthcare campaigns oppose religious influences in Medicine and are against NHS funding of hospital chaplains.

New members must agree to NSS General Principles:-

- The NSS asserts that people of different religions and beliefs and none should be equal before the law, and that a secular state is the best guarantor of this equality.
- The NSS demands the complete separation of Church and State and the abolition of all privileges granted to religious organisations.
- The NSS affirms that freedom of expression and the free criticism of institutions and ideas are fundamental human rights essential to a civilised State.
- Affirming that morality is social in origin and application, the National Secular Society aims to promote the happiness and well-being of humanity.

If Dorset Humanists affiliated to NSS we would help to promote secularism and NSS aims. By being one of 40 Humanist groups that affiliate to NSS, we could grow Dorset Humanists' membership.

Affiliate group membership to NSS would cost Dorset Humanists £29 per annum.

www.secularism.org.uk

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World Humanist Congress 2014

Oxford, United Kingdom
8-10th August, 2014

*Freedom of Thought and Expression:
Forging a 21st Century Enlightenment
8 - 10 August 2014, Oxford*

SELLING OUT FAST

This year is your chance to take an active part in the international humanist community. The World Humanist Congress only comes around every three years and is a unique event bringing together humanists from over forty countries under the auspices of the International Humanist and Ethical Union.

Focussing on the theme of *Freedom of Thought and Expression* the organisers are assembling an all-star line up of thinkers, philosophers, scientists, technologists, performers, activists and experts for three packed days covering everything from history and human rights to emerging issues and how, together, we will build an Enlightenment for the 21st century.

Join BHA President Jim Al-Khalili; journalist and television presenter Joan Bakewell; evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins; UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief Heiner Bielefeldt; Nobel Prize winning Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka; Humanist philosopher AC Grayling; Professor of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Religion Francesca Stavrakopoulou; UK Director of Reporters Without Borders Heather Blake; Cybersecurity and digital evidence specialist Peter Sommer; and many, many more for our biggest event yet.

The World Humanist Congress will feature:


- Three days of plenary sessions in the Sheldonian Theatre, where generations of Oxford graduates have received their degrees since the 17th century, and workshops, talks, and panel discussions in the 19th century Oxford University Examination Schools

- Three sit-down 'English picnic' style lunches and a Gala Dinner in the high Gothic surroundings of the Examination Schools, with special guest speakers
- A private viewing of the unique and eclectic collection of the Ashmolean Museum, the first university museum in the modern world, at an evening reception with special guest speakers

All this as well as the opportunity to meet fellow humanists from all around the world make the World Humanist Congress 2014 an unmissable event.

Tickets cost £299

 <https://humanism.org.uk/whc2014/tickets/>
 <http://whc2014.org.uk/>

 020 7324 3060 (BHA)




Car Sharing


Can you help, or would you like help?

Please let us know if you can offer someone a lift to our meetings. We know of someone in the Wimborne area who cannot get to meetings without a lift.

Family Day

We've been considering having a family or young persons' day at the end of the summer holidays – to include a choice of science, art, and 'philosophy for kids' type of activities. Please contact Cathy for more information.

 01202 740550

 catherinesilman311@btinternet.com

Dorset Humanists Schools Project

This group meets regularly to plan our strategy for assisting RE teachers to teach Humanism as an important non-religious worldview. David Warden will lead a Humanist assembly at Poole Grammar School in March for boys 12-14 years.

 chair@dhsep.org

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Dorset Humanists
Chairman's View
February 2014



Holocaust Memorial Day at the Lighthouse was another moving and memorable event. We heard the story of Henry Schachter who was born in Berlin in 1939 and only survived because of the kindness and bravery of a Christian family who kept him as a 'hidden child'. If there was an unrecognised knock at the door he would have to hide in a specially-designed cupboard. Both of his parents perished in the death camps. Henry will visit Dorset Humanists later this year.

As well as Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, black and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and political prisoners, more than 100,000 gay men were arrested by the Nazis. Second World War experts estimate that up to 15,000 of these men were sent to concentration camps. Some were beaten to death. Others were used for target practice by SS soldiers, who aimed at the pink triangles that gay men were forced to wear. The persecution of



homosexuals by the Nazis remained little known for decades, and it wasn't until 2002 that the German government apologized to the gay community. In 2005, the European Parliament approved a resolution on the Holocaust that finally acknowledged the persecution of gay men. A pink triangle monument honouring gay men and lesbians persecuted by the Nazis was unveiled in central Tel Aviv, Israel, in January 2014.

Nigeria has just passed a new law against homosexuality. Under the new law, any gay couple who gets married will be punished by up to 14 years prison and wedding guests will be jailed for 10 years. Anyone who provides services to a gay



person will be imprisoned for up to five years. George Broadhead, secretary of the Humanist charity the *Pink Triangle Trust*, said 'This draconian legislation is almost as bad as that already in place in Islamic theocracies like Iran and Saudi Arabia. It harks back to the anti-gay legislation enacted in Nazi Germany... The Nigerian Humanist Movement has defended LGBT rights in the country and its former executive director, Leo Igwe, deserves much credit for courageously speaking up for these rights in the country's parliament'. The *Pink Triangle Trust* is a member of the International Humanist and Ethical Union whose World Humanist Congress will be held in August in Oxford. Do please register as soon as possible or contact me if you need assistance.

David Warden