



A PARTNER OF THE  
BRITISH HUMANIST  
ASSOCIATION

national  
secular  
society



# Dorset Humanists

*Atheists and agnostics for a better world*

■ **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 5.30pm for  
5.45pm start**

Dorset Humanists Darwin Day at  
Bournemouth Natural Science Society, 39  
Christchurch Rd, Bournemouth BH1 3NS

**Sold Out!**

## The Difference That Darwin Has Made



Dorset Humanists' Darwin Day celebration with distinguished humanist philosopher A.C. Grayling.

Professor Grayling will explain how Darwin's theory of evolution represented a new paradigm in

human history, radically changing our understanding of our place in the universe, and that Darwin's discoveries continue to have a huge impact on our lives due to their ongoing influence on a multitude of scientific disciplines. His talk will be followed by light refreshments.

This event is sold out. Admittance by paid ticket only.

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

☎ 01202 558763

■ Please note there is no Saturday meeting at Moordown in February.

■ **Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 7.30pm**

Green House Hotel, Grove Road, Bmth

## Navitus Bay Wind Farm

**Navitus Bay Communications Manager  
Sean Parsons**

With ever-increasing global energy consumption, dire warnings of potentially catastrophic climate change, and the UK becoming increasingly reliant on imported energy sources, wind farms offer a potential solution to our energy problems. Sean Parsons will claim that the proposed wind farm situated approximately 10km south of Dorset and the Isle of Wight will help the UK to meet its climate change targets and contribute to security of energy supply, but the controversial project is being vigorously opposed by local councils who fear it will damage our region's tourism-based economy. Wind farms have also been criticised for their intermittent output and need for conventional back up.

■ **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 7.30pm** and every

first Thursday evening of the month at  
Moon in the Square, Exeter Rd, BH2 5AQ

## Social Evening

Enjoy stimulating conversation over a drink or two at our latest pub social evening. There is no fixed agenda so if you have any interesting topics or ideas you want to share and chat about in a friendly atmosphere then this meetup is for you. ☎ Dean 07713 858773

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



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**Dorset Humanists Walk - the first of many!**  
Details below.

■ **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February 10.30am**

Start from Bournemouth Pier approach  
6.5 miles 1½-2hrs

## Chine Circular Walk

The second walk this year takes us along the full length of Bournemouth gardens, through Branksome Chine to the sea, and then following an interesting mix of both wooded chine, cliff path and beach promenade. Bring snacks and a drink. The option of a carvery lunch at the Suncliff Hotel may tempt those who have worked up a healthy appetite (£8.95). Attire: It's still February, so possibly going to be cold. Wear clothes in layers as appropriate, and a windproof jacket for the beach. Boots advised, Branksome Chine will be muddy. You can leave this walk earlier at Branksome (M1 or M2 bus) or at Branksome Chine beach (50 service).

The third walk is on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March 10.30 from Bournemouth Pier following the coast.

**Walks Disclaimer:** Walks are led by Aaron for and on behalf of Dorset Humanists. No liability can be accepted. All persons attend at their own judgement. Full details of the nature of the walk are available so that individuals can assess their own abilities. Walks will often have 'escape' points where you can join for part of the walk, and then leave via bus or other public transport. All walks are for adults.

☎ Aaron 07851 239787 for full details

■ **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March**

Lunch 1.15pm AGM 2.15pm

Moordown Community Centre, Coronation Avenue, BH9 1TW

## Indian-style lunch followed by Annual General Meeting

Join us for a free lunch! Then listen to reports on our activities over the past year and discuss plans and priorities for the year ahead. The AGM provides a great opportunity for all members to influence how Dorset Humanists grows and develops in the future, so please 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 us. There are currently two vacancies on the committee. We welcome nominations from members with skills and time to offer and the ability to work well in a team.

### Other local events of interest...

■ **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015 – 7.30pm**

West Dorset Humanists at the Wessex Royale Hotel 32 High West Street  
Dorchester DT1 1UP

## From Kampala to Kurukshetra

Humanist Schools in Africa and India

A talk by David Warden. Humanists in rich countries such as the UK are helping to transform young lives in Africa and India by supporting schools which respect freedom of thought and expression, rational enquiry and the need to support argument with evidence, human rights, gender and racial equality, and the rights of young people to choose their own personal life stance. The political and religious forces ranged against such schools can seem overwhelming but with friendship and support from the developed world the future of such schools

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can be secured. In this fully-illustrated presentation, David will compare and contrast two humanist school projects in India and Africa, one of which has attracted a lot of attention and funding whilst another continues to struggle against the odds.

Meetings start at 7.30pm but the bar is open from 6.45pm and this, or after the meeting, is always a good time to have a chat with other members. The charge for meetings is £3.00.

☎ 07921 311518

[westdorsethumanists@hotmail.com](mailto:westdorsethumanists@hotmail.com)

### ■ Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 7.30pm

Bournemouth Sceptics in the Pub at The Brunswick, Charminster, BH8 8PX  
Free entry (donations appreciated)

## Is Eating Local Better?

A talk by Sean Beer. There is a growing trend in the food industry to source its food locally, as this is seen to be more environmentally friendly. The assumption is that the shorter the distance food travels, the better. But are we considering all of the relevant variables? What is the evidence for these claims? What is the effect on the overall carbon footprint and do local producers really benefit from the ongoing changes?

Sean Beer is a Senior Lecturer at Bournemouth University. He originally trained as an Agricultural Scientist gaining a BSc in Agriculture from Reading, a DipAgSci. from Massey University in New Zealand and a CertEd from Wolverhampton. His academic work has been backed up with considerable practical experience in agriculture, marketing, the food supply chain and the rural economy in general, gained on the family farm and within associated family businesses and the food industry, local and international.

🌐 [bournemouth.scepticsinthepub.org](http://bournemouth.scepticsinthepub.org)

☎ Chris Street 01425 673477

■ **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 10.30 for 11am**  
Sunday Assembly at the Brunswick Pub,  
Malmesbury Park Rd, Bmth BH8 8PX

## ‘Love The Planet’



In keeping with February's focus on love, this month's meeting will be themed 'love the planet'. Meet 10.30 for coffee/cake. Sunday

Assembly starts at 11am and runs until 12.30 and there will be an opportunity for more coffee, cake and socialising afterwards. All welcome, please just turn up.

<http://bournemouth.sundayassembly.com/>

### ■ Weekend of 19-21 June 2015

## BHA Annual Conference

The 2015 British Humanist Association Annual Conference will be held in the historic city of Bristol. Tickets on sale NOW and they're expected to sell quickly. The BHA Annual Conference is the can't-miss humanist calendar event of the year. The beautiful city of Bristol will play host to 300 happy humanists over a busy weekend of lectures, plenaries, debates, interviews, an awards show, live entertainment, and a gala dinner featuring big names including physicist **Jim Al-Khalili**, anatomist **Alice Roberts**, and historian **Francesca Stravrakopoulou**, and several as-yet-unannounced special guests. £99.00 for BHA members (+ £40 for dining). Dining tickets entitle guests to attend the fantastic Gala dinner event where Alice Roberts will be speaking, and where we will announce the winners of the 2015 BHA Humanist of the Year and Services to Humanism awards. All tickets include a buffet lunch on Saturday. We would urge anyone interested in going to purchase their tickets as early as possible.

🌐 [humanism.org](http://humanism.org)

☎ 020 7324 3060

*Please let David Warden know if you are going.*

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## ■ Weekend of 25-26th April

Palace Hotel, Manchester. £99 for the full weekend (£69 for students and under 18s).



(Question, Explore, Discover) is a science and skepticism convention. Great speakers from the worlds of science and entertainment will be there for a weekend celebration of science, reason and critical thinking. Every ticket entitles the holder to entry the full programmes for Saturday 25th April and Sunday 26th April, including our popular Saturday night entertainment.

Appearing live at QED 2015 for your entertainment and enlightenment will be **A C Grayling** – distinguished humanist philosopher, **Matt Dillahunty** (host of *The Atheist Experience* TV show, former president of The Atheist Community of Austin, Texas, and prolific debater of religious apologetics), **Mitch Benn** – musician, comedian and star of BBC Radio 4's *The Now Show*, **Natalie Haynes** – comedian and writer whose work encompasses lessons from history and humanist philosophy, **Dr Lucie Green** – a physicist and science broadcaster best known for her work on *The Sky At Night* and *Stargazing Live*, **Professor Bruce Hood** – an experimental psychologist and author who has published extensively in the fields of superstition, supernatural belief and cognitive development *and many more*.

If you're not able to make it to the full weekend, Friday 24th April will be a free full-day event, open to all. Further details of this, and other additions to the QED programme, will be announced in due course. So, don't delay – [grab your QED ticket today](#)



**David Warden with Jude Todd, Nightstop Manager. Jude attended our evening meeting at the Green House Hotel to say thank you in person for the 'fantastic' amount (£773.66) raised by Dorset Humanists through our Jane Bannister Winter Appeal. Members have also volunteered to work with NightStop.**

## Dorset Humanists attend NSS AGM

On November 29<sup>th</sup>, DH Committee member Chris Street attended the National Secular Society 2014 AGM. Dorset Humanists became affiliated to the National Secular Society (NSS) last year. The NSS AGM was attended by several hundred members and was very well organised. Barbara Smoker, now 91, spoke about her continuing promotion of Humanism and Secularism – a truly inspirational woman. Maryam Namazie told the conference how she plans to form a new international secularist organisation.

After the AGM Chris spoke with the NSS Executive Director Keith Porteous Wood who looks forward to speaking to Dorset Humanists on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

The NSS works towards a society in which all citizens, regardless of religious belief, or lack of religious belief, can live together fairly and cohesively. The NSS campaigns for a secular democracy with a separation of religion and state, where everyone's human rights are respected equally. Secularism is a principle that involves strict separation of the state from religious institutions and people of different religions and beliefs are equal before the law. The NSS opposes publicly funded faith schools and campaigns for an end to religious

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discrimination in school admissions. They also campaign for an end to compulsory worship in schools and for reform of Religious Education. They campaign against the growing influence of religion on government and the increasing desire of the current government to involve religious bodies and individuals in the decisions of state, often in the name of multiculturalism or the 'Big Society'. NSS campaigned successfully for freedom of speech by removing the term 'insults' from Section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986 from 1st February 2014.

## Dorset Humanist becomes Atheism UK President

Last year Chris Street, who has served on Dorset Humanists Committee for seven years, became President of Atheism UK. Chris joined Atheism UK Council in 2011 attracted by the strapline 'Challenging Religious Belief'.

Atheism UK Principles are that: humans have fabricated religion, God or gods do not exist, morality develops independently of religion and religion inhibits rational thought. Atheism UK has position statements on the Church of England, Equality and Religious Privilege, Faith, Morality and Ritual Slaughter. Atheism UK campaigns for the advancement of atheism, freedom of expression and the abolition of compulsory religious education (except as a branch of anthropology), collective worship and 'faith' schools – on the grounds that they are founded on a falsehood: God exists.

## “Quote... Unquote”

“The terrorist attack in Paris is sickening and utterly wrong. It is an attack on our fundamental and personal freedoms. The political space to be able to ridicule and poke fun comes with the territory of freedom... That is because a free press and individual liberty serve in the end to protect us all.” *Islamic Society of Britain*



## Letters & Emails

*It's your column...*

*From Kasia Manton, Events and Community Fundraising Executive at Refuge*

Congratulations on the great success of your Winter Appeal and for raising £773.66, an amazing amount. Please pass on our heartfelt thanks to all who donated. Your gift will help us to provide vital services, including safe emergency accommodation, individual and group counselling, and community based outreach services, which enable women and children who have experienced the horror of domestic violence to rebuild their lives.

Refuge support over 3000 women and children escape domestic violence in England every day through our national network of services. Without the support that donors such as yourself give, we could not continue to keep the doors to these life-saving and life-changing services open.

The scale of domestic violence in the UK is staggering: one woman in four will experience it at some point in her lifetime, and two women are killed by a current or former partner every week. Refuge saves lives, helping women and children every day to escape violence and build a safe and positive future - and it is gifts such as yours which make this possible.

Thank you once again for your investment in the future of Refuge and your commitment to a world where domestic violence is not tolerated or ignored.

Best wishes,

*From Mark Beard in response to a British Humanist Association 'game'*

I first realised I was a humanist when... I got chatting to David Warden from Dorset Humanists on a stall in Wimborne, several

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years ago. He told me that many people were Humanist without realising it then described what Humanism is. Of course it sounded like a recruiting line to a cynical old git like me, but I went home and looked up the BHA website and saw how right he was. Thank you David! Thank you BHA. You've given real focus to what I thought was just a strange and unusual perspective on ethics and life.

*From Richard Scutt*

I really appreciated the sessions with Steve Hurd and Greg Claeys because they were both concerned with what I call Practical Humanism. By this I mean that in their different ways they were concerned with putting our Humanism to use in the real world.

Steve was inspired to help the children in Uganda and he gave us, I thought, a timely reminder that our aim should be to try to help improve the lot of the human race not to beat the hell out of the religious. His way seems to be to explain what he, as a Humanist, sees as the decent ways of approaching life – many of which can be subscribed to by religious people as well – rather than going head to head with them on differences of belief. I very much like this approach though working with religious people sometimes makes me want to scream with frustration. I think we all know that the need for religion is deeply felt by large numbers of people worldwide and that this will not be overcome any time soon. It therefore behoves us to work with believers as far as possible while making a fuss only about the more extreme and harmful aspects of their activities.

Greg reminded us of some of the issues which we, as Humanists could bring to the attention of candidates for the up-coming election. I was previously thinking about which matters I might discuss with local candidates and found Greg's talk very helpful with regard to both which subjects and which ways to put across our views.

Many thanks to the committee, and Lyn in particular, for bringing these two speakers to us. Thanks for all your hard work.

## “Quote... Unquote”

“Muslims do believe in freedom of speech. And they do respect the right for people to say what they believe to be correct. However, freedom of speech should not be translated in to a duty to offend... We urge governments, civil society and our media to foster a culture of mutual respect and unity, not one of division and disdain.” *Muslim Council of Britain*

“The idea that it is wrong to satirize religion, lends false legitimacy to those who murder in the name of being offended...The idea that “insult” to religion is a crime, is why humanists like Asif Mohiuddin are jailed in Bangladesh, is why secularists like Raif Badawi are being lashed in Saudi Arabia, is why atheists and religious minorities are persecuted in places like Afghanistan, Egypt, Pakistan, Iran, Sudan...” *Sonja Eggerickx, President of the International Humanist and Ethical Union*



## Young Humanists

Dorset Humanists is thinking about starting a Young Humanists Group. We'd like to attract young people who are interested in science, technology and philosophy, who are curious about the world and always asking questions, who believe you can live a good life without believing in God. For the first meeting (date to be confirmed) we could invite Bournemouth Natural Science Society to lead an 'evolutionary detective trail'. Then it's over to the young people themselves to make suggestions. We want to hear about any ideas they might have for activities or speakers related to subjects where young people are challenged to think for themselves. If you know of a young person who might be interested in coming along then please email group secretary Cathy Silman.

[catherinesilman311@btinternet.com](mailto:catherinesilman311@btinternet.com)

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Dorset Humanists  
**Chairman's View**  
February 2015



The humanist response to the Paris shootings has highlighted some tensions. The British Humanist Association and the International Humanist and Ethical Union have launched a global campaign to abolish blasphemy laws in fifty-five countries including countries in the EU such as Greece, Poland, Germany and Ireland whilst the Muslim Council of Britain has stated that 'freedom of speech should not be translated into a duty to offend... We urge governments, civil society and our media to foster a culture of mutual respect and unity, not one of division and disdain'. I want to say 'yes' and 'yes' to both of these positions. On the one hand, it should not be a criminal offence to insult a god or a prophet anymore than a politician or a monarch. But just because we are permitted to insult, mock and ridicule does not mean that insult and mockery need become our primary terms of engagement with religious people. Dorset Humanists prides itself on trying to build friendships across cultural divides at the same time as engaging in rational and moral critique. I think we succeeded in doing this at our recent meeting on Mormonism. Mormonism is ripe with comedic potential with its 'magic underpants' and spirit babies being born on the undiscovered planet Kolob. The Simpsons' video clip of how the Book of Mormon was written was hilarious as well as accurate. Towards the end of the meeting we were surprised to discover that two Mormons were present. They appeared quite relaxed about the tone of the evening and we enjoyed a very friendly and open discussion with them. This is the kind of faith/nonfaith dialogue we try to encourage.

We are planning an event at the end of June provisionally entitled 'Understanding Islam' when we will continue our exploration of this complex religion. It would be good if as many members as possible try to learn as much as they can beforehand so that our discussions will be well-informed.

The Church of England's recent symposium *On Rock or Sand? Firm Foundations for Britain's Future* (2015) is a wide-ranging analysis of the state of Britain and contains many prescriptions for the 'common good' which are thoroughly humanistic. If you ignore the Jesus and God stuff there is much common ground here between Christians and humanists in terms of ethics and values.

*David Warden*

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