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Humanists UK

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IHEU
International
Humanist and
Ethical Union



Dorset Humanists

Atheists and agnostics for a better world

■ **Saturday 12th January 2019 2.00pm**
Moordown Community Centre BH9 1TW

Putting the non-religious into religious education



Luke Donnellan, Head of Education at Humanists UK. The past couple of years have seen greater recognition that religious education should involve more than just teaching about religion, and

humanism is being taught as an example of a non-religious worldview in more schools than ever. However, there is still a long way to go for humanism to be given equal recognition to the world's major religions within the curriculum. Luke Donnellan will discuss the current status of RE in schools, provide suggestions on the best way to deliver good teaching about humanism, and describe both the successes taking place in schools and the work that still needs to be done.

Luke is the Head of Education at Humanists UK, responsible for promoting the understanding of Humanism, especially in formal education settings. He manages Humanists UK's school speakers programme; teacher training and Continuing Professional Development; and the production of educational resources. Before joining Humanists UK, he was a primary school teacher and maths leader. He also worked as a freelance philosophy teacher in both primary and secondary schools.

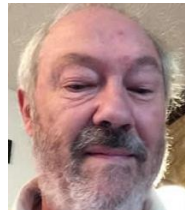
■ **Saturday 12th January 2019 3.50pm**
Moordown Community Centre BH9 1TW

TalkBack

After Luke Donnellan's talk, and after the refreshment break, why not join us for *TalkBack* – an opportunity to do just that.

■ **Wednesday 16th January 2019 7.30pm**
West Dorset Humanists, Dorset Room,
Colliton Club, Dorchester DT1 1XJ

Evolution and Ethics




Another opportunity, this time in the West of the county, to hear this fascinating talk by Greg Atkins.

Where does morality come from? *Homo sapiens* has existed for about 200,000 years, but only for about 10,000 years in civilised society. The rest of the time we existed as hunter gatherers, and the species from which we evolved were also hunter gatherers. Evolutionary characteristics, including ethics, are likely to have been formed long before the rise of civilisation. Some patterns of behaviour are inherited in societies but a large amount of experimental data has now shown that perhaps more than 80 per cent of our basic behaviour patterns are controlled by our genes. Greg Atkins was a Professor of Science (Virology) at Trinity College Dublin until he retired and a founder member of the Humanist Association of Ireland.

Send bulletin updates to chairman@dorsethumanists.co.uk

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■ **Wednesday 23rd January 2019 2.00pm**
Green House Hotel, Grove Road,
Bournemouth, BH1 3AX

A Secular Pilgrimage: Humanist responses to painting

A talk by John Hubbard. In this richly illustrated account of a lifetime's engagement with art John Hubbard explores the pleasures and rewards of looking at paintings from several eras, both sacred and secular and considers how a humanist might respond to different cultural contexts and styles. The talk will also



develop the idea of 'secular pilgrimage' in relation to individual artists, their lives and works, with particular reference to Sisley, Monet, Pissarro and Van

Gogh. These journeys may be seen to embrace both the simply touristic as well as an individual's informal education, providing something deeper than mere cultural capital.

John Hubbard is a retired English teacher and a member of Dorset Humanists. He teaches literature and drama at Bournemouth U3A.

■ **Thursday 7th February 7.30pm** and every first Thursday (except January) at Moon in the Square, Exeter Rd, BH2 5AQ.



Pub socials

Enjoy stimulating conversation over a drink or two at our pub social evening. Look out for the Dorset Humanists signs on the table. We warmly welcome regulars and newcomers.

☎ Dean 07713 858773



Sunday Walks

Sunday 20th January 10.15

Poole and Bournemouth Heathland. About 6 miles exploring the wonderful heaths that used to be the local landscape before Poole and Bournemouth were developed. Exact route still to be decided but will include either Talbot Heath and Turbary Common, or Canford Heath. We will aim to go further afield in February and March, maybe out into the Purbecks or West Dorset.

All walks are between about 6 and 9 miles and usually have an optional short cut. Please check [Meetup](#) for further details and any last minute cancellations due to weather conditions.

☎ Phil 07817 260498



Short Talks

■ **Tuesday 15th January**

7.30pm Green House Hotel, Grove Road, BH1 3AX. £2.00-3.00 donation requested.

Doing Good in the World

Two short talks/presentations on the theme of doing good, one by Angela Joynson and another by Phil Butcher.

Angela's talk is about Results UK. Come and hear what has been achieved so far in the global fight against poverty by campaigners writing to and meeting MPs and other decision makers. Find out what still has to be done to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030, the aim of the Global Goals agreed by world leaders in 2015. During the last year the Poole group of Results UK has been working to ensure marginalised, disabled children get good education, to eradicate TB - the deadliest infectious disease - and to get vulnerable farmers insurance to protect them from the devastating impacts of climate change.

Phil Butcher will present the uncomfortable topic of 'Effective Altruism' by introducing a video talk by Peter Singer. Books that cover this subject are "Effective Altruism" by



William MacAskill and "The Life You Can Save" by Peter Singer. Who would like to give away one of their kidneys?

Each talk/presentation is around 20 minutes followed by questions and discussion. See Meetup for further details.

Calling budding speakers! Do you have a short talk up your sleeve? Contact Phil Butcher if you would like to discuss your idea for a short talk.

✉ ph.butcher@gmail.com

Future dates for your diary...

■ **Saturday 9th February - Lunch at 12.00pm followed by talk at 2.00pm**
Bournemouth International Centre

Darwin Day Celebration

'The Evolution of Human Morality'



Our Darwin Day guest speaker is Diana Fleischman who grew up in in the Southern United States in a religious and conservative area where evolution was not taught in school. At the age of twelve she was called

'monkey girl' for endorsing evolution. Her sceptical perspective on religion was reinforced by attending both church and synagogue. During a formative year at the London School of Economics, shortly after the September 11th attacks, Diana read Richard Dawkins and other evolutionists and this stimulated her interest in atheism and evolutionary psychology. In this talk, Diana will explain that human morality developed in small face-to-face groups in which humans lived for hundreds of thousands of years. Survivors protected themselves against hostile out-groups, butchered animals, prioritized the welfare of themselves and their kin and somehow managed to maintain a moral reputation whilst exploiting opportunities for cheating. Our world is very different. Today we are aware of the suffering of billions of strangers and trillions of animals, our moral

inconsistencies are magnified by surveillance, and we must prevent artificial agents developing a morality completely antithetical to our survival. How does our evolved morality cope with this novel ethical landscape and will we allow ourselves moral enhancement? Diana is an evolutionary psychologist at the University of Portsmouth.

Lunch & Talk Ticket (12.00pm start): £22 Members / £25 non-members including welcoming glass of wine or soft drink, followed by a 2 course Italian buffet lunch & coffee.

Talk only Ticket (2.00pm start): £4.00 includes coffee or tea on arrival.

Bookings: Lyn Glass 01202 767323
lyn.glass@btinternet.com

■ **Wednesday 27th February 7.30pm**
Green House Hotel

The Art of Reality Bending

A talk by James Brown who describes himself as a 'professional opportunist'. He is a magician, pickpocket, hypnotist, lecturer, and corporate trainer.

Other events of interest...

■ **Sunday 27th January 2.00-4.30pm**
Lighthouse, Kingland Road, Poole BH15 1UG

Holocaust Memorial Day

The main speaker will be Holocaust survivor Joanna Millen (birth name Bella Rosenthal) who was orphaned in Terezin concentration camp in 1944 when she was 18 months old. Her mother contracted tuberculosis due to the conditions there, leaving Bela orphaned and alone in the world. She will share with us the story of how she survived.

The event will also commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Kindertransport and the 25th Anniversary of the Rwandan genocide.





Dorset Humanists Choir just before their debut at our Nine Secular Lessons and Carols Concert at Bournemouth Natural Science Society. From left: Mike, John, Pat, Nickie, Simon, Christine, Katie, Carolyn, Claire, Sophy, David, Elaine, Sandra, Phil, David.

Humanist Choir Debut Success

At least seventy people attended our festive event at the Bournemouth Natural Science Society to hear the Dorset Humanists Choir perform for the very first time. Many people have said how much they enjoyed the event and expressed the hope that we will do it again next year.

Songs and carols included Winter Wonderland, We Wish you a Merry Christmas, and secularised versions of Silent Night and O Come All Ye Faithful (changed to 'Thoughtful').

Secular readings included extracts from *Howard's End* by E M Forster, *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, and poems by William Wordsworth and Kalidasa, a 4th century Northern Indian poet, as read by Christine Hawkridge and reproduced opposite.

After the concert, we enjoyed drinks and nibbles in the Museum Room.

Look well to this day!

Look well to this day!

For it is life, the very best of life

In its brief course lie all the realities of existence

The bliss of growth

The glory of action

The splendour of achievement

For yesterday is but a memory

And tomorrow is only a dream

But today, if well lived,

Makes every yesterday a memory of happiness

And every tomorrow a vision of hope

Therefore look well to this day!



Dorset Humanists 'Jane Bannister Winter Appeal'

Votes cast in our poll were Michael House (22), Mosaic (9), Space Youth Project (7), Indian school (5), Ugandan schools (5), Malcolm charity (2), Humanists UK (1). We will therefore divide the appeal between Michael House and Mosaic and we hope you will give generously to these two very worthwhile local charities. Our Winter Appeal has raised thousands of pounds in previous years. The appeal is named in memory of Jane Bannister who was Chair of Dorset Humanists until 2009.



Mosaic is a Dorset-wide charity offering a pathway of support to bereaved children, young people and their families. Mosaic also works with young people who are facing the death of a loved one. The charity provides individual, family and group support. Every child has the opportunity to attend a residential weekend programme to meet others and share experiences. Dorset Humanists' donation last year went specifically to support this wonderful residential weekend at Leeson House near Swanage.

The charity receives 30% Local Authority funding allocated to support for bereaved children in Dorset. All other money has to be raised through applications to The Big Lottery, Children in Need, charitable trust grants, fundraising, corporate sponsorship, individual support, and donations from local groups.

MICHAEL HOUSE

Rebuilding Lives

Michael House is more than just a hostel; it's a home and our mission has always been to help anyone who is vulnerable. It offers supported accommodation to both men and women.

Michael's Mission

- To provide emergency and longer-term accommodation to homeless people and provide related day services.
- To provide encouragement, advice and support to our clients in an environment which enables them to gain a greater sense of self-worth and to move towards a more independent life.
- To work in co-operation and a collaborative way with the relevant statutory agencies and with other voluntary organisations.

£250.00 will provide care and support for one homeless person for one month.

Homelessness has been a major problem in the Bournemouth area over the last twenty years and we always operate to full capacity. Official Rough Sleeper Counts, which tend to minimise the situation, are consistently in double figures. Soup kitchens have been crowded throughout this period. By providing respect, care, and support to all residents, we aim to restore self-esteem, assist with life skills, access further education, facilitate training for employment to enable individuals to rebuild their own lives and reintegrate back into the community. Michael House is a place where our residents feel "safe, warm and inspired".

giftaid it

Please consider gift aiding your donation. Forms available at our meetings or from John 07766 473728.

Please donate at our meetings or send a cheque made payable to 'Dorset Humanists Winter Appeal' to John Kingston, 90 Lowther Road, Bournemouth, BH8 8NS.

■ **Closing date end of February**



Dorset Humanists
Chairman's View
January 2019

At our December 'Out of the Box' dialogue meeting the Old Testament patriarch Noah, his wife, and a flood victim were time-travelled into the 21st century to be interviewed by flamboyant chat show host 'Aaron Showblazer'. Noah was played by an evangelical Christian, Noah's wife by a female Church of England priest, the flood victim by Dorset Humanist Dean Robertson, and I was drafted in at the last minute to play 'God's Press Secretary' (an imaginary non-biblical character). Dean played his role brilliantly and he convincingly portrayed distress about seeing his innocent daughter drowned and anger about the whole Noah story which he was told about on his arrival in the 21st century. I was unsure at first how to play God's Press Secretary but decided to play it straight and to provide a theological justification of the mass drowning of evil humanity. In answer to Mr Showblazer's questions, I argued that the drowning of humanity was not 'genocide' which is the wrong frame of reference. It was more like capital punishment and should be viewed as God's righteous execution of evil people. I was congratulated afterwards by one of the Christians present for this model answer. The event was intended as a bit of light-hearted fun for the festive season but I reflected afterwards on the dark heart of the Biblical message which, if taken literally, means that a sovereign and righteous God can drown human beings because they are wicked and evil. The Noah story, in which a few 'righteous' people are saved in the Ark, is recapitulated in the Christian gospel which, in its evangelical version, claims that all human beings will die for their sinfulness unless they clamber aboard the 'Ark' of the Christian church and accept Jesus as their Saviour. This is the 'offence' of the gospel story, part of which is sanitised and celebrated at Christmas.

Thank goodness then for the humane morality of Humanism and the opportunity to stage our very own Nine Secular Lessons and Carols at the Bournemouth Natural Science Society. I admit I had been a bit nervous about this experimental event but it turned out to be a great success and we have been asked to do it again next year. It was very refreshing to listen to secular readings from E M Forster and Dickens instead of the dreary old reading from the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word". In Greek, however, it reads "In the beginning was the *Logos*" which is the principal of reason and rationality. Perhaps the author of John's Gospel was onto something.

David Warden

