



How the World Eats A Global Food Philosophy Dr Julian Baggini

Saturday 9th November 2.30-4.30pm
West Cliff Hotel, 7 Durley Chine Rd,
Bournemouth BH2 5JS.
Free entry – all welcome

Please RSVP by clicking the image

Please note that the venue for this event is not Moordown Community Centre but the Westcliff Hotel. Don't forget to register your car at reception.

Julian Baggini will talk about his new book which examines how our food choices shape our lives and societies. He will explore diverse global food practices and the urgent challenges facing our food systems today including cutting-edge technologies like GM foods, cultured meat, and the ethics of ultra-processed foods. He advocates a humane global food philosophy to create a more sustainable and equitable food system for the future. Author of 20 books, Julian is a regular visitor to Dorset Humanists.

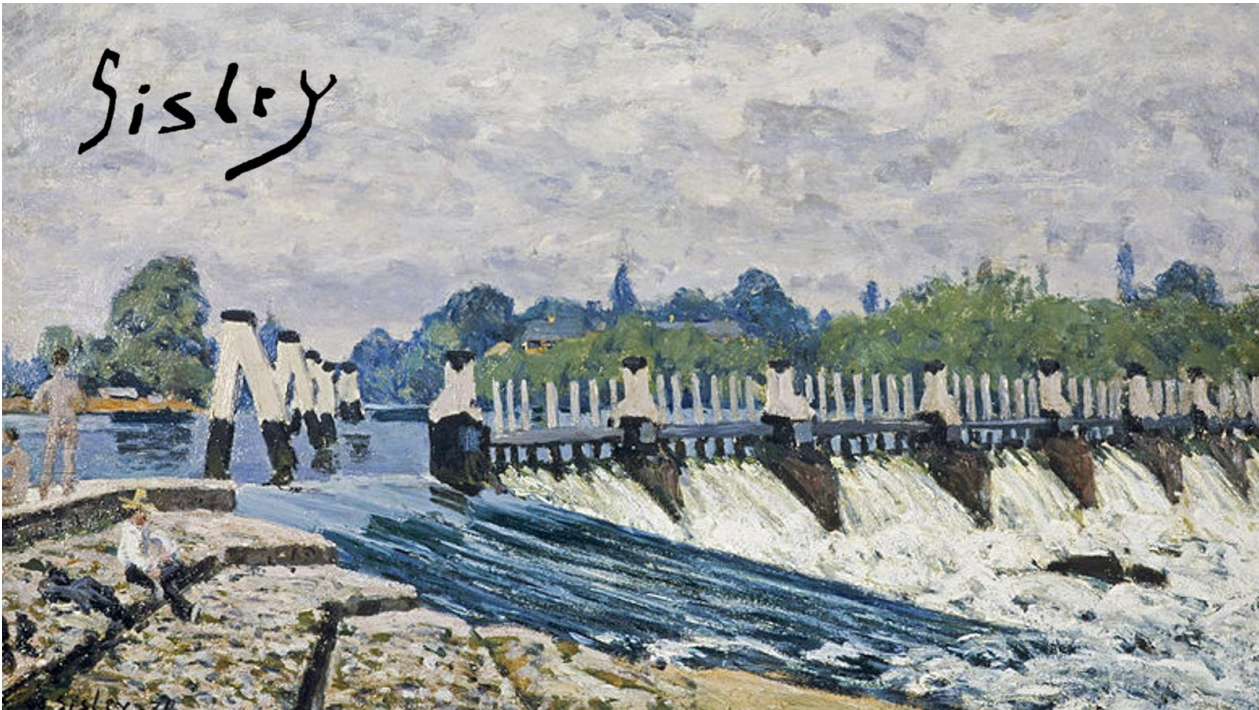


At the Julian Baggini event we will be collecting money for our 2024 Appeal. Julian's talk about food is the perfect opportunity! Please bring cash if you would like to make a donation.

In 2023, we raised £1617 for Hope for Food Foodbank and £993 for the Uganda Humanist Schools. Let's see if we can beat this record!

Click images for more information.





Alfred Sisley: The Place of Light

A talk by John Hubbard on Wednesday 27th November 7.30pm West Cliff Hotel, 7 Durley Chine Rd, BH2 5JS. Free entry – all welcome.

Alfred Sisley, ‘the English impressionist’, died in the picturesque town of Moret-sur-Loing in 1899 at the age of 59. He was dedicated to landscape work in the open air, deftly capturing the moods of the seasons, weather and time of day through his particular attention to qualities of light. His favourite subjects were riverside towns and villages surrounding Paris, but he also produced lively summer studies of the Thames. John will outline Sisley’s biography while chiefly exploring his studies of tranquil urban landscapes in which the particularity of place and the place of light are paramount. John’s talks are meticulously researched and lavishly illustrated.



Dates for your diary

Saturday 9 th November 2.30pm	West Cliff Hotel Pls note venue	How the World Eats: A Global Food Philosophy <i>Dr Julian Baggini</i>
Sunday 10 th November 10.45	War Memorial	David Warden will take part in the Bournemouth Remembrance Service. Please come along if you can.
Wednesday 27 th November 7.30pm	West Cliff Hotel	Alfred Sisley: The Place of Light <i>John Hubbard</i>
Saturday 14 th December 2.00pm	Moordown	The Seven Deadly Sins – a talk by Simon Whipple. Join us for mince pies and mulled wine.
Thursday 19 th December 7.00pm	Marsham Court Hotel	Festive Dinner. Contact Sandra Lucie-Smith on 07779 769108 for details and availability.

Plus other social events and walks which will be announced on Meetup. Please check all events nearer the time in case of any changes.



Quest

*Humanist answers
to life's biggest
questions*



Quest is an exciting and brand new series of tutor-led discussions about the humanist approach to life, taking place over consecutive weeks starting in the New Year. It's the successor to our popular *One Life* course.

Humanism has an impressive pedigree going back thousands of years. It emphasises thinking for yourself... but not by yourself. We can "converse" with all the great thinkers past and present, as well as with each other, as we try to grapple with some of life's biggest questions.

What's wrong with us? What's right with us? Are we "the universe made conscious of itself" or a plague upon the Earth? Will we make it to the end of the 21st century? Will we colonise other planets? Will AI replace us? Meanwhile, how can we experience happiness, connection with others, and a sense of meaning and fulfilment?

"Helped enormously to clarify some of my thinking. Feel more confident to say what a humanist is all about!"

There's no "humanist handbook" which will give us all the answers. But we're not starting from scratch. There's a rich deposit of ancient wisdom and modern science for us to learn from. Humanism is a framework, a starting point. Our focus, therefore, is not humanism itself but our existential quest for love, meaning, understanding, connection and happiness.

"Fascinating – just what we need to introduce people to humanism."

We plan to start *Quest* from Wednesday 22nd January, 7.00-9.00pm at the Westcliff Hotel, continuing for eight consecutive weekly sessions. You can sign up for the whole series, or just the ones that take your fancy. We recommend attending as many as possible to derive the full benefit of the series, which is partly about making new friends and connections.

"I think your course is fantastic. I am so glad to live in Dorset and have access to such superb activities for the non-believing."

You do not have to "identify as a humanist" to attend the series. All humans are welcome!

The series is completely free, but we appreciate any donations you would like to make in support of this venture.

The series will be facilitated by David Warden who is chairman of Dorset Humanists, editor of *Humanistically Speaking* magazine, and a qualified humanistic therapist.

In order to book yourself onto the series, without obligation if you change your mind, email chairman@dorset.humanist.org.uk or text David on 07910 886629.

We'll publish more details about the contents of the series in subsequent bulletins and notifications. We'd love to see you at *Quest*. So let us know you're interested.



Understanding conflicts big and small

Fifty people attended Jon Nicholas's entertaining talk on 'Understanding conflicts big and small, and how to manage them'. Jon has been involved in conflict resolution work in places such as Bosnia, Northern Ireland, the Middle East, Indonesia, and all over the UK. It's taken him into many schools, prisons and communities, often working with people holding extremist views to find solutions.



Jon's approach to conflict resolution is based on the 'human needs model' developed by Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef. It outlines fundamental human needs categorised as universal and unchanging across all cultures. The nine needs are:

1. Subsistence
2. Protection
3. Affection
4. Understanding
5. Participation
6. Leisure
7. Creation
8. Identity
9. Freedom

Max-Neef's human needs model is widely recognised as an approach to conflict resolution, particularly in contexts of post-conflict recovery and community rebuilding. His model emphasizes the importance of addressing fundamental human needs such as security, participation, and identity during peacebuilding processes. By focusing on needs that are universal, it allows conflicting parties to find common ground, helping to de-escalate tensions and build mutual understanding. The model's holistic view of human needs helps practitioners design solutions that foster long-term peace by meeting these needs comprehensively.

You can watch Jon's talk [here](#) or search for Dorset Humanists on YouTube.





Many Faiths Together school visiting team

Multiculturalism & Social Cohesion

A Humanist Approach

David Warden explored this complex and sensitive topic at our Westcliff Hotel event in October. David studied diversity at Bournemouth University in 2002 and he was a diversity trainer at Dorset County Council in 2007/08.

*“A very enlightening and well-composed talk which everyone seemed to enjoy”.
Nigel via Meetup.*

David was motivated to write a talk on this subject because of the effect the August riots had on members of the ‘Many Faiths Together’ school visiting team he belongs to. Sali, a black woman, did not leave her flat for two weeks and she told David that she is fearful of what the English flag represents. And Tama, a Muslim, is often subjected to abuse on the streets of Bournemouth. Lynda, a Jew, is fearful of heightened anti-Semitism since the 7/10 attacks. And James has taken part in protests against Rishi Sunak’s Rwanda deportation policy.

David was also frustrated by the inadequate analysis of the cause of the riots. Misinformation and anti-immigration sentiment on the far right were the obvious immediate causes, but David wanted to understand the deeper issues, such as the alleged link between immigration and violent crime and perceptions of two-tier policing.

In 2010, Angela Merkel declared that attempts to build a multicultural society in Germany had ‘utterly failed’. She was addressing the growing concerns over the integration of immigrants, especially Muslim communities, into German society. She emphasised the importance of immigrants adopting German values. In 2015, she allowed a million, mostly Sunni Muslim, Syrian refugees into Germany. This added to the scale of the challenge of managing cultural differences and led to increased support for the Alternative für Deutschland party.

In 2011, David Cameron expressed similar views, stating that ‘state multiculturalism has failed’. He argued that instead of encouraging people to live together, multiculturalism had allowed different communities to live separate lives, leading to radicalisation and segregation. He called for a stronger national identity and he emphasized the need for immigrants to integrate into British society by embracing its values, such as democracy, freedom, and equality. Yet successive governments have presided over a huge increase in immigration, contributing to a surge in support for the Reform UK party in the 2024 election.

David highlighted the place of Islam in UK society because it is the largest minority religion and because of the contrast between ultra-conservative, fundamentalist interpretations of Islam such as Wahhabism ►

and liberal secular values in modern Britain. The Muslim population of the UK has increased from one to four million in the last 40 years and is expected to reach around 8-10% of the UK population by mid-century. The Muslim population is concentrated in towns and cities such as Luton, Leicester, Birmingham and Bradford. Many Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims do not identify as British, partly because of lasting feelings of antipathy towards the British Empire. Many identify as members of the *Ummah*, an Arabic term which refers to the global Muslim community or nation.

David cited writers and philosophers who have given qualified support to multiculturalism such as the Canadian **Will Kymlicka**. Kymlicka believes that minority cultures should be recognised and accommodated by the state, but he doesn't support cultural isolation or segregation. All citizens, regardless of background, must still engage with the broader political community. **Charles Taylor**, also a Canadian philosopher, argues that humans are inherently social beings, and that a person's cultural community plays a vital role in shaping their identity. However, he sees the task of reconciling multiculturalism and national identity as essential for social cohesion in diverse societies. **Bhikhu Parekh**, Lord Parekh, is a British political theorist who has developed the concept of 'multicultural citizenship' in which individuals have multiple identities—they are citizens of a country, members of cultural communities, and individuals with personal beliefs and values. He argues that citizenship should not require individuals to leave their cultural identities at the door. However, he acknowledges that there must be limits to what can be tolerated and that we need certain shared values necessary for social cohesion. **Kenan Malik** is a British writer who has critiqued multiculturalism for fostering the compartmentalisation of communities which can sometimes foster extremism. **Tariq Modood** is a professor at Bristol University who argues that multiculturalism needs to



Will Kymlicka, a Canadian advocate of multiculturalism

evolve in order to address concerns about social fragmentation and insular communities. He emphasises the need for intercultural dialogue. **Amartya Sen**, an Indian economist and philosopher, believes that multiculturalism, when rigidly interpreted, risks exaggerating cultural differences and can lead to sectarianism. **Christopher Caldwell**, an American journalist and practising Catholic, thinks that multiculturalism has led to parallel societies which can lead to tension and conflict.

David explored the link between multiculturalism and the 'culture wars'. He argued that the 'elite class' follows an ideology he loosely referred to as 'Lennonism' (after John Lennon) in which countries are seen as backward and obsolete. This class is relaxed about open borders and free movement of people and labour, and it leans into global governance in preference to nation-based sovereignty. It's sceptical about, and sometimes hostile towards, Western Civilisation and its sacred symbols and heroes such as Winston Churchill and it denigrates as racist those who complain about its post-national values. David said that the 'resistance' to this elite philosophy comprises 'proper' Conservatives such as Robert Jenrick and Kemi Badenoch, Reform UK and GB News. This class or tribe believes that countries matter and they are inclined towards democracy and Parliamentary sovereignty as well as rootedness and a sense of belonging. David suggested that a class of intellectuals such as Yuval Noah Harari and David Goodhart could act as mediators between these two warring tribes. ►

David also dusted off the 2001 Cattle Report which was commissioned by the Blair government in the wake of the 2001 race riots in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford. Ted Cattle is a supporter of Humanists UK. His report recognised segregation, lack of integration, and the influence of far-right and radical Islamist factions as contributory factors. It encouraged different ethnic and religious groups to interact more frequently, a reduction of segregation in schools and housing, and strategies to counter extremist narratives and promote moderate voices within all communities. The Cattle Report has been influential but David suggested that it needs to be revisited by government.

David concluded by saying that it is possible to reconcile multiculturalism and social cohesion but the dramatic increase in immigration since the Cattle Report is putting social cohesion under enormous strain. He said there is a link between immigration and crime but he put this down mainly to the cohort effect, i.e., young males. He said that race riots on the scale of 2011 and 2024 are rare occurrences. He agreed that far-right racism was a factor in the August riots but that we need to have a more intelligent conversation about cultural change in the UK. He said that we should have a moratorium on non-essential immigration to give the UK a chance to adjust to rapid demographic and cultural change and we should promote liberal values such as equality, democracy, rule of law, toleration, and free thought and speech. Schools should be inclusive and multicultural – not segregated by religion, and we should teach children the good in our national story as well as the bad. Finally, he said that we should promote dialogue.

Comments, Questions and Answers

There was a lively Q&A session. David Rees, a specialist in cultural fluency, said he was disappointed that the talk had not said anything about the positive contribution that immigrants had made to this country and the enriching effects of cultural diversity. Maureen Hamer cautioned against ‘othering’ minority

groups. Aaron Darkwood said that it’s human nature to gravitate towards one’s own ethnic and cultural group.

Further reading

- *The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society* (2007) by Jonathan Sacks. Sacks offers a communitarian approach to multiculturalism, proposing that a society should focus on shared values and collective responsibility, building a sense of togetherness without erasing cultural differences.
- *Multiculturalism Without Culture* (2007) by Anne Phillips. Phillips critiques the way multiculturalism sometimes treats cultures as monolithic and instead argues for a more nuanced understanding of cultural identities. She stresses that individuals should not be defined solely by their cultural backgrounds.
- *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (2000) by Bhikhu Parekh
- *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (1999) by Susan Moller Okin.
- *Multicultural Citizenship* (1995) by Will Kymlicka

Dorset Humanists Library

Have you visited our free lending library recently? It’s always on display when we are at Moordown Community Centre.

We have an excellent collection of books on humanism, atheism, secularism, science, philosophy, and more. If you would like to borrow a book, just write your contact details in the log book. Don't forget to return books in a timely manner so that others can enjoy reading them too.

Email David for the full catalogue.

chairman@dorset.humanist.org.uk



Letters & Emails

It's your column...

From Henri Ruff on 'A very brief history of free thought' with Dr Emma Park

Never having given a moment's thought to free thinking, I attended this session as a 'catch-up' from Ground Zero. With her presentation, powered by her DPhil and her experience as sometime editor of the *Freethinker* magazine, I left the session far more knowledgeable yet still puzzled whether freethinking is as free as all that.

Free thinking appears to be tethered to reason and rationality, and in that sense not entirely free. Where does creative imagination (as opposed to routine imagination running along the tracks of reason and logic) figure in the expanse of free thinking?

I also left the session intrigued to discover, via Google, more of Dr Park's wider range of interests beyond free thinking. They range from art criticism, focussing on glass, to playwriting (the Boat People) and, eye-catchingly, the subject of Pastafarianism.

I'm hoping Dr Park will be invited back to give us another history lesson, this time on the Flying Spaghetti Monsters and how Pastafarians are helping to expose the relationship between religion and the State, with surprisingly serious results.

Brief reply from David Warden: Freethought arose in the 17th and 18th centuries as a reaction to the dogmas of religion. So whilst it's free from religion it's not meant to be free from reason and rationality. Creative imagination can be as free as you like, but knowledge claims should always be tethered to reason and evidence.

From Sheena Nayton

Sorry I don't attend the events that often. I'm out in the sticks in Fordingbridge now, but I always read the bulletin and my heart is with you all. Keep up your good works!

From Aaron Darkwood on plastic film recycling

Flimsy plastic is still not widely recycled. You have to take it to your local supermarket. Since we all go there anyway, having a bag in the kitchen to collect all that flimsy plastic, crisp packets, pet food pouches, chocolate wrappers, microwave meal film, and every other bit of flimsy plastic could avoid needless landfill. Once we bury stuff it's gone forever. That land is then gone forever as you can't build on it, can't use it if it's seeping methane, and once full we need another piece of land the size of Meyrick Park to fill and write off for a dozen generations. We can't keep filling ground up. Every town and city across the land can't write off a Meyrick Park-sized chunk every decade.

Recycling flimsy plastic is an easy win. We can make a difference!





View from the Chair

David Warden

Chairman of Dorset Humanists

One of our members was disappointed that my talk on multiculturalism didn't include stories about the positive contributions that immigrants have made to the UK. An earlier version of the talk had acknowledged the UK's good record of integration – including a Hindu prime minister, the likelihood (now reality) of a black woman becoming the next leader of the Conservative Party, and the fact that the Chairman of Reform UK is a British Muslim. Black and Asian people have been integrated into British media, culture, politics, business and sport for many decades, from newsreader Sir Trevor McDonald and comedian Sir Lenny Henry to footballer Marcus Rashford MBE and sculptor Sir Anish Kapoor. What's really remarkable is the extent to which we've become indifferent to skin colour and ethnic heritage.

The focus of my talk was on trying to understand the deep social problems which lay underneath the summer riots. One of these stems from the natural tendency of humans to form groups and communities with their own kind. Ethnophilia (preference for one's own kind) is programmed into us. This can lead to an archipelago of monocultures rather than an integrated and cohesive multicultural society. Professor Ed Husein provides striking examples of this in his investigative travelogue *Among the Mosques: A Journey Across Muslim Britain* (2021). He describes districts in cities such as Blackburn and Bradford which have been transformed almost into no-go areas for non-Muslims. Many of the Muslim communities he surveys are *caliphist* – which refers to the religious hope that secular states will ultimately be replaced by an Islamic caliphate based on Sharia law. But this is not true of all Muslims. In a recent [interview](#) Husein points out that many Muslims have no problem combining piety, patriotism, and liberal values. Multiple overlapping identities are possible. But we need to be aware of the cultural shifts occurring across the UK and whether these are heading in the direction of integration or separation.

One of the questions I raised in my talk was this: Why has immigration become a taboo topic? In 2010 and 2011, political figures such as Angela Merkel and David Cameron were able to say that multiculturalism (which assumes a flow of immigration) had failed. Mainstream politicians would find it impossible to say that now. In 2016, the Brexit vote became heavily associated with opposition to mass uncontrolled immigration and public debate became polarised. Opposition to mass immigration became stigmatised as racist and xenophobic and now it is almost impossible to have a rational conversation about it. But we do need to talk about it because the ideal of multiculturalism is being put under immense pressure across Europe. Being opposed to mass immigration does not mean scapegoating migrants for all of our problems. It means having due regard for the indigenous culture and a responsible approach to integration and social cohesion. With our commitment to dialogue, humanist groups can play a leading role in facilitating such discussions.