



# Dorset Humanists

## Bulletin – November 2011



### Forthcoming events...

■ **Saturday, 12th November 2.00pm**

Moordown Community Centre,  
Coronation Avenue, BH9 1TW

## Monarchy, Republicanism, and the Church

A talk by author John Strafford



Is our current political system morally bankrupt? The United Kingdom is a long-established democracy

but political author, John Strafford, in his book *Our Fight for Democracy* argues that we now face a huge democratic deficit. In this talk John will explore the compatibility of monarchy, republicanism, and the Church of England with democracy.

Good quality used books will be on sale at the back of the hall to raise funds for the Indian School.

### Members' Meeting

There will be a short meeting after the tea-break to advise members about the concluding BHA Consultation on 'Partnership' status. Members will have the opportunity to vote on this on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December.



**Dorset Humanist Mat stands shoulder-to-shoulder with Stephen Fry as he invites Bournemouth University students to join the new Humanist and Atheist Society (see News)**

■ **Thursday, 24th November 7.30pm**

## Compassionate Eating

Nutritionist Sandra Hood from local charity 'Compassionate Dorset' explains how alternative diets can provide healthy, energy-boosting nutrition at the same time as contributing to our stewardship of the planet. Moordown Community Centre, Coronation Avenue, BH9 1TW

■ **Tuesday 8th November 7.30pm**

Bournemouth Natural Science Society  
39 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth

## Philosophy, Science and the God Debate

*Are science and religion compatible?*

A talk by Chris Jervis, Chaplain at  
Canford School.

☎ 01202 553525 or 07967 350087

📧 [meetup.com/HASSNERS/events/39244732/](https://www.meetup.com/HASSNERS/events/39244732/)

■ **Monday 14th November 7.30pm**

New Milton Humanists at The Rydal  
Arms, 93 Station Road, New Milton

## The Shameful Export of British Arms

*A talk by Sharen Green of the  
Campaign Against the Arms Trade*

Sharen Green will explode some of the  
common myths surrounding this  
subject.

☎ Jane 01202 428506

■ **Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> November 7.30pm**

West Dorset Humanists at the Wessex  
Royale Hotel, 32 High St. West,  
Dorchester DT1 1UP

## Thomas Hardy and the Poetry of Unbelief

John Hubbard, Head of English at  
Bournemouth School, will explore a  
selection of Hardy's verse with  
readings and commentary, trying to  
discover how Hardy made sense of  
the world in which he lived.

Free entry (£2 donation suggested)

☎ 07921 311518

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

■ **Friday 18th November 10.00am**

## Coffee morning

Come and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea  
at the Bournemouth International  
Centre on Friday 18th November  
between 10.00 and 12 noon. Enter  
the BIC main door, turn left past the  
Box Office and find us in the first  
alcove on your left.



**Comedian and Distinguished  
Supporter of Humanism Robin Ince  
will speak at our Darwin Day Lunch**

## Book now for Darwin Day 2012!

On Saturday, 11th February our  
Darwin Day Lunch will be in the  
splendid surroundings of the Bayview  
Suite at the Bournemouth International  
Centre and we're delighted to  
announce that Robin Ince will be our  
very special guest speaker. Winner of  
the *Time Out* Award for Outstanding  
Achievement in Comedy, Robin also  
has a passion for evolutionary science  
and he has just embarked on a sellout  
UK tour entitled *Happiness Through  
Science*. **Dorset Humanists  
members will have priority until 15<sup>th</sup>  
December.** Tickets are strictly limited  
so reserve your place now to avoid  
disappointment. See enclosed booking  
form.

☎ Jane 01202 428506

## Campaigner condemns 'explicit sex education'

*Dorset Humanist Karen Preston went along to the Durley Dene Hotel on 13th October to hear a presentation by Antonia Tully from the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC). This is an abbreviated version of her report.*

This presentation was advertised extensively on local media so it was surprising that only 30 people attended. Antonia Tully, who is a National Co-ordinator for a campaign called 'Safe at School', claims not against sex education in schools as such but is concerned about the resources which are used in Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE). She claimed that these resources promote sexual activity and lead to unwanted pregnancies. She went straight into specific clips from two resources available to schools. The clips were shown out of context and she omitted to comment on the guidance given to schools, the powers of governors to influence resources and presentation, the expectation that schools will work in partnership with parents and the fact that parents can withdraw their children if they are still unhappy. She implied that by using these resources teachers are somehow abusing their positions as educators.

The point was made to Ms Tully that these programmes are part of an extensive PSHE curriculum that looks at sex in the context of loving relationships. The materials are used sensitively by teachers who have the children's wellbeing at heart and know what resources are appropriate for those in their care. Ms Tully condemned the materials for 'breaking down children's natural reserve', 'setting up conflict between home and school' and making 'intimate areas no

longer intimate' but she presented no evidence to support these emotive claims. There was no mention of the follow-up that's provided in schools after these programmes are shown.

The audience's reaction to the resources spoke volumes. They called the images of cartoon people making love 'pornographic' and 'shameful' and referred to masturbation as 'perverse'. The focus seemed to be on adults' own reaction to these images rather than any open discussion on what children may need and benefit from.

Ms Tully's main concern is that if we tell children about sex and discuss contraception then we are, in effect, telling them how to do it and so they will! Yet she had no clear evidence to back up her claims and would not consider that it is inadequate sex education which may be playing a role in our huge teenage pregnancy problem.

## Bournemouth Student Humanists and Atheists Society



On October 1st, Sam Neaves from Bournemouth University and

an enthusiastic team of Dorset Humanists set up a stand at the Freshers' Fair to help launch a new Humanist students' group. They received an encouraging amount of interest, handed out hundreds of leaflets, and gathered a substantial list of contact details. Since then the new group (BSHAS) has held several meetings including a fascinating talk by Bob Mizon, Chair of Wessex Astronomical Society. We send the new group our best wishes and hope to arrange combined events with them in 2012.



## Dorset Humanists at Remembrance Service

Richard Scutt and Humanist celebrant Maggie Pepin will lay a wreath at the Bournemouth War Memorial on 13th November as part of the Remembrance Service. The wreath will state: "From Dorset Humanists on behalf of the United Kingdom Armed Forces Humanist Association. For those who gave their lives for us. We will remember them."



## MEMBERS' COLUMN

Write to Dorset Humanists,  
58a R L Stevenson Avenue  
Bournemouth BH4 8EG or  
email chairman  
[@dorsethumanists.co.uk](mailto:chairman@dorsethumanists.co.uk)

*From Lyn Glass*

I thought Peter Herridge's presentation on 'The Ethics of War' a most stimulating and thought provoking evening. I had expected the subject matter to be rather dry and depressing, but Peter's style of delivery and handling of the topic extracted much considered debate and had me exploring my attitudes about the many facets of this difficult subject for several days afterwards. I have learnt that if I was faced with a confirmed terrorist threatening my loved ones, there is nothing I would not personally resort to in an attempt to protect them – be it torture or death. I would also wish to support our forces in occupying other countries specifically where they were attempting to protect significant numbers of innocent civilians from torture or death. I have always believed that one must stand up to bullies and tyrants, but now I

have discovered that I am becoming increasingly uncomfortable with asking our forces to wage war in areas where we have not been invited, or where many innocent civilians may also be killed, or when the exit strategy is unclear. I also fear that on many occasions our troops may be killing foreign soldiers who are actually innocent victims themselves, fighting on the orders of their controlling regimes on penalty of death in any event if they do not comply. No easy answers here, albeit I have great respect for our armed forces in the difficult role they undertake for our freedoms. Peter cleverly summed up the ethics of war when he stated 'War can be just, but never when waged on innocents'. Thank you Dorset Humanists, yet again, for a thoroughly 'enjoyable' event, if I can use that word for such a serious subject.

*From Josey Loraine*

Peter Herridge in his talk 'The Ethics of War' touched on many aspects of conflict and guided us through a potentially very emotive subject with dignity and integrity which prevented polarisation and was a very skilful way of facilitating meaningful discussion in my view. I thought he was open and honest and gently and subtly questioned many safe viewpoints as by simply listing all the surprisingly many wars England had been involved in since WW2. Of personal interest to me was his inclusion of the emotional aftermath on service families of personnel who have been in action and also mentioning the use of raped women for suicide bombings, again showing how unresolved personal traumas contribute to the bigger picture of war.

The after-meeting discussions seem a good idea as well and another way of including and integrating newcomers.

■ Deadline for contributions to the December bulletin: 26<sup>th</sup> November