



# Dorset Humanists

*Bulletin – November 2009*

## **Forthcoming events...**

■ **Saturday 14th November 2009**  
**2.00pm**

Moordown Community Centre,  
Coronation Avenue,  
Moordown BH9 1TW

*The Kindly Heart - Humanity  
and Humour in 'A Room with  
a View' by E. M. Forster*



A talk by John  
Hubbard, Head of  
English at  
Bournemouth  
School.

In this brilliant piece  
of social comedy,  
Forster is concerned  
with one of his

favourite themes: the 'undeveloped heart' of the English middle classes, represented by a group of tourists and expats in Florence. Lucy Honeychurch, the main character, is torn between lingering Victorian proprieties, both social and sexual, and the spontaneous promptings of her heart. She becomes engaged to the pretentious and domineering Cecil, but her bold piano playing suggests that she is destined for a more passionate life. The Emersons, free-thinking and truth-loving people, are her liberators.

E M Forster was President of  
Cambridge Humanists in the 1950s.



Cambridge Humanist E M Forster

■ **Saturday 28th November 2009**  
**2.00pm**

New Milton Health and Leisure, Gore  
Road, New Milton, BH25 6RR.

New Milton Humanists present:

*Godless Morality: An  
exploration of Humanist ethics*

A talk by David Warden.

■ **Saturday 12th December 2009**  
**2.00pm**

*The Humanist School Trust in  
Uganda*

A talk by Steve Hurd.

Send bulletin updates to [david\\_warden2000@yahoo.com](mailto:david_warden2000@yahoo.com) or phone 01202 768212

[www.dorsethumanists.co.uk](http://www.dorsethumanists.co.uk)

■ **Saturday 21st November 2009**

Dorchester Town Hall, North Square,  
Dorchester 10.00am – 4.00pm

*Crossing the Divide –  
Interfaith Day Conference*

Ever wondered what other faith traditions believe? Why we can't all work together? Why do we focus on difference? Come to this conference to explore faith traditions and how we can all work together in the future to cross the divide.

David Warden will be leading a workshop on Humanism.

Hosted by River of Life Metropolitan Community Church in Dorchester.

This event is free. Email [admin@river-of-life.org.uk](mailto:admin@river-of-life.org.uk) or phone 07870 805404 to get a registration form. Pre-booking is required for catering purposes.

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

Our next discussion meeting is at the Commodore Hotel, Southbourne Overcliffe Drive Southbourne, Bournemouth, BH6 3TD. Topic: "Why Humanism is not religious". Come along and have your say. Everyone welcome. Enquiries 01202 428506.

**News roundup...**

■ **Richard Scutt**

After many years of unstinting service, Richard Scutt has decided, for personal reasons, to stand down from the Dorset Humanists committee. Richard has been a hugely effective member of the committee, brimming with ideas and practical solutions, and enthusiastic about schools work, outdoor events and media contact. Hundreds of children in Dorset have heard about Humanism because of his educational work alongside other Dorset Humanists. Richard will be a huge loss to the team, but he will

continue to be a supportive member of Dorset Humanists.

■ **Anita Mason**

We are most grateful to Anita Mason for leaving us a generous legacy of £500 in her Will.

■ **The Alpha Course Exposed!**

On 21st October Dorset Humanists made an impact on uncharted territory. At a meeting at the Black Bear Hotel in Wareham, David Warden gave his talk 'The Alpha Course Exposed' to a new and eager audience of some 45 people ranging from an Alpha Course tutor through lapsed Christians to avowed atheists. After a light-hearted introduction by Wareham writer and humanist John Barclay, David began by posing questions to the audience and continued to allow people to give their views and recount their experiences. As a result everyone was involved from the start while by the end in no doubt of the Humanist position. A limited consensus emerged that the stark message of the Alpha Course as prescribed was unacceptable in today's world. The discussion continued in a friendly spirit long after the formal part of the meeting closed.

The turn-out for this first meeting in Wareham, the interest generated and the number who asked to be informed of further events show the demand for a forum for public discussion of serious matters and suggest that Purbeck deserves another visit from us. *John Barclay*

■ **New Milton Humanists**

New Milton Humanists have had some lively Sunday afternoon discussions on such subjects as 'What does Humanism mean to you?' and 'Can Humanism be a source of inspiration for finding happiness?'. These bi-monthly meetings are held at a member's house, therefore seats are limited to 8-10 people. 01425 638296

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### ■ Bournemouth Day for Older People

In October, Dorset Humanists raised the profile of Humanism with a table of our leaflets at the Littledown Centre, to help highlight activities available as part of Bournemouth Day for Older People.

### ■ Open to Question

David Warden led a discussion on Humanism for the Broadstone 'Open to Question' group. This is a house group of ex-Methodists and seekers.

### ■ The Big Green Bus

Dorset Humanists sent a donation of £300 to the Big Green Idea Charity. Brigit Strawbridge and her team take the Big Green Bus around the country to show how easy it is to lower your carbon footprint and to encourage people to value the planet, whilst ensuring that those who produce our consumables receive fair treatment. The bus tries to visit as many schools as possible. The money was raised by book sales (all books donated by Dorset Humanist members), raffles and a generous gift. In thanking us, Brigit said the money will be used to take the bus to an organisation in the Worcestershire area that cannot afford the full booking fee. Brigit says she will make sure that the organisation knows that the bus's visit was funded by Dorset Humanists and she will let us know where and when it happens.

### ■ Can you help Dorset Humanists?

We still have a vacancy on the committee for a press and publicity officer. Without this vital post being filled by an enthusiastic volunteer (or volunteers) Dorset Humanists won't be as well-known in the area as it might be. Please consider what skills, ideas and enthusiasm you could contribute. Joining the team is great fun but it does require a commitment to monthly team meetings.

### ■ Dorset Humanists involved in launch of South West Equality Network

Chris Street and Jane Bannister attended the launch of the South West Religion and Belief Equality Network in Taunton on 2nd November.

Humanism was mentioned throughout the day and several key participants said that they were Humanists. Chris and Jane had ample opportunity to put their viewpoints across at the workshops and were even able to hand out some leaflets in the lunch break. Humanism had a greater coverage than they had ever known it, outside of Humanist meetings, and they came away full of enthusiasm for future ways that Dorset Humanists might be involved in the Equality Network.

### ■ Mummification: Donate your body to science and have it preserved for thousands of years

In a unique scientific project, leading academic scientists have been studying how the Ancient Egyptians mastered the process of mummification which has long been a mystery. This project is also the subject of a long running television documentary. They need a volunteer: someone with a terminal illness prepared to donate their body after their death. The Egyptians' success at mummifying their dead is renowned through history but these scientists now think they have finally solved the secrets of the process. If they have, it is likely to have other significant benefits for modern medical science. The volunteer would be given a unique insight into both the science and the Egyptian history involved. Their body would be preserved - potentially for hundreds or even thousands of years.

If this interests you please contact Joanna Service on 0203 372 8521 or email [Joanna@fulcrumtv.com](mailto:Joanna@fulcrumtv.com). We appreciate that this is a delicate matter. By contacting this number

there is no obligation to take part in the film. All calls will be treated with discretion.

### News from India

*Swamiji writes:*

On October 23, 2009 we celebrated Indian Philosopher and Psychiatrist Dr. G. Kohli's 23rd Death Anniversary as our 'Dedicated To Children' function. Most of our children were previously street children and untouchables. Fifteen children presented their talks and all ninety-three children received study materials paid for by Dorset Humanists. About 450 people, most of whom were women from different villages and distant places, attended the function with all happiness and pleasure. Our country style simple Community Lunch always had been a thing of appreciation by the attendees. On September 29, 2009 we cast the roof of the Basement Hall as part of the Kids' Kingdom Building. The function was arranged on the roof.

It would be a great pleasure if any Humanists would visit us. All our children are slum dwellers and 10 are Kashmir Earthquake victim Orphans now who are placed in Shrinagar to avoid the Brahmin's threat to kidnap and kill them.

#### ■ British Humanist Association

Dennis and Jane Bannister recently attended the AGM of the British Humanist Association. Please consider joining the BHA if you are not already a member. 020 7079 3580

#### ■ Quote...Unquote

"When I started reading Dawkins's *The Selfish Gene* I was a Christian. When I finished, I wasn't. I can pinpoint my loss of faith to a single paragraph about religion as a meme. It was a kind of Damascene moment."

*Jeremy P*, BBC discussion thread.

## Letters & Emails



*From Joanna*

Thank you for the October Bulletin. Congratulations on producing such a full and interesting document. Your Chairman's Letter is good too down to the part where you talk about the Bishop of Winchester Academy, which almost contradicts what goes before. It may well be that some of the sponsors' declared values are admirable and acceptable to Humanists, but they hold their values because of their belief system, ie, the existence and omnipotence of god, and the importance of organised worship. The values derive from the religion – the one does not come without the other. Surely, as Humanists we have to hold strongly to the view that our values are valid without a religious derivation. I am one of those who is dogmatic about the unacceptability of a religious wrapper, because inevitably the wrapper taints the contents.

*From Jane*

The sponsors of the proposed Bishop of Winchester Academy, the Diocese of Winchester and Anglican-founded University of Winchester declare their 'determination to be non-discriminatory and inclusive'. I am fascinated to know how two organisations built on discrimination and exclusivity will approach this. Whose version of 'truth' will be the acceptable one? Is the Christian version acceptable to Muslim, Buddhist or Secular pupils? I think it is a bit thick accusing Humanists, who protest at the obvious desire of the faith organisations to widen their influence, of being dogmatic. If the religious aren't dogmatic, what are they?

■ Letters and emails may be edited.



### ■ International Angel Day

12th September was International Angel Day. Hundreds of angel therapists held events simultaneously across the world. Apparently, you can bring more peace, joy and love into your life with the help of angels.

If you go into any large bookshop you will find a dozen books on angels and witchcraft and probably none, or maybe just one, on Humanism. We've got our work cut out to hold back this tidal wave of nonsense!

### ■ Join the 100 Club and win £50!

Join our new **100 Club** and you could win a cash prize of up to £50!

This fundraising venture will be fun for everyone who participates. For just £1 a month you will be allocated a number between 1 and 100, which you will retain for the whole year. There's no rule that would restrict you to a single number – you can have two or three numbers if you wish. (Don't worry if you forget your number – we'll record it for you.) Every month at our Moordown meeting the winning number will be drawn randomly from a container. The winner will receive exactly half of the monthly amount contributed by all members in that specific month. If there are 60 members in that month the winner receives £30, if there are 85 members of the club the winner receives £42.50, etc, etc. The more people who join in the greater the winning amount would be. You can pay an annual lump sum of £12 if you wish or £1 every month. After prize payouts, all surplus money will go into group funds, in particular to help us build up the effectiveness of our publicity.

Betty Mileham and Brian Scotford are organising the 100 Club and will be available to explain more at our next Moordown meeting. Good luck!

### ■ Humanist Constitution of India

“It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform.”

Article 51A (h) Part IVA -  
Fundamental Duties, Constitution of India.

### ■ In fact...

- There are 1,000 mosques in England
- In Poland, more than 70% of the population go to Church
- Kingsway International Christian Centre in London has up to 12,000 people in attendance every Sunday.
- ■ **Humanist Chaplain**
- Barry Klassel has become the first Humanist chaplain at Rutgers University, New Jersey – one of just four Humanist chaplains in the US university system.