

Suffolk Humanists and Secularists

News Bulletin April 2018

"Oryx and Crake"

Next Meeting Tuesday, 10th April: "Oryx and Crake"

Liz and Peter Thompson will explore the many issues, both ethical and practical, raised in Margaret Atwood's trilogy of novels, "The Year of the Flood", "Oryx and Crake" and "Maddaddam". These novels portray a postapocalyptic America, containing the results of generations of genetically manipulated humans and animals. There are intelligent and dangerous pigs, peaceful but naive humanoids, and rampaging gangsters. But the early stages portray a world of scientific manipulators who tinker with the human genome with disastrous results.

You don't need to read all the novels to enjoy a discussion, but it may help to dip into the middle of Oryx and Crake to get a feel for the author's creation of a strange world where clever science has gone badly wrong. We will try to relate this vision of the future to the latest developments today, including test-tube babies, elimination of genetic defects, and the regulation of drugs by government.

7:30 pm at the Co-op/EEFA Meeting Rooms, 47 St Helen's Street, Ipswich, IP4 2JL

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO ALL OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

Most of you receive our Newsletters and Bulletins by email. However on the 25th May 2018 new data protection regulations come into force and *unless you have explicitly agreed* we will not be able to send you any communications by email from that date.

Over the next few weeks I will be sending an email to everybody asking them to give us permission to keep their details. This will be in

the form of a simple form which asks for your name and email address and the necessary approval.

If you wish to remain on our mailing list it is vital that you respond to this before the 25th May deadline.

Our new meeting place

Most of us really enjoyed our regular meetings in the Darwin room at Arlington's but sadly they have now decided not to stay open in the evenings. Fortunately we, along with other groups, have been offered the use of rooms made available by the East of Ipswich Co-op to the East of England Faiths Agency (EEFA). The rooms - one of which is big enough to hold 30 people in a lecture room style - is above the former Co-op Funeral Parlour in St Helen's St. Unfortunately the rooms are upstairs and so far we have not been able to find a way of providing access for those with disabilities.

Entry is via a door at the rear. There is plenty of parking space available at the front. This is accessible from St Helen's St. through a barrier which we can open.

Our first meeting at the new location will be the talk on Tuesday 10th April.

News Bulletin or Newsletter?

I am sure that most of you will have noticed that the March Newsletter was more substantial (and colourful) than usual. The plan is to publish this fuller Newsletter quarterly and continue with a shorter Bulletin - such as this one - in the intervening months. This is mainly to keep the members up to date with local events and meetings.

The price of stamps.

Most of our members receive the Newsletters and Bulletins by email but we still distribute some by post. As the price of stamps has just risen again (to 58p second class) if you are happy to receive future Bulletins and Newsletters by email only please let me know by emailing me at denisjohnston@btinternet.com.

Darwin Day Dinner 2018

We held our annual Darwin Day Dinner at The Swan at Westerfield on February 13th. We didn't quite get round to singing "Happy Birthday Dear Charles" but we enjoyed good food and company. Many thanks to John Mellis for organising.

Meeting with Ipswich Quakers.

A few months back we had a presentation by Ipswich Quakers learning about their background, both local and international, and discovering how much we had in common. At the time we offered to give them an overview of Humanism. This has now been arranged and a couple of us are going along to the Quaker Meeting House to join their meeting on 11th April.

March meeting: Visit to Thomas Paine's house in Thetford

Some time ago we had meeting about the philosopher and politician Thomas Paine who was born in Thetford in 1736. At the time we weren't aware that the Ancient House in Thetford (now a museum) situated just

beside the house where Thomas Paine was born had a section dedicated to his life. So for our March meeting we arranged a visit including a guided tour and talk about Thomas Paine. This was given by Sam Bellotti, one of the curators. Jon Wright of Radio Suffolk had originally intended to join us to provide material for his show but was unable to and instead asked for an interview. This has been downloaded to our website <http://suffolkhands.org.uk/>. Thanks to Sue Hewlett for arranging the visit.

Upcoming meetings

April 10th: The Margaret Atwood trilogy "Oryx and Crake"
May 8th: Bertrand Russell
June 12th: Artificial Intelligence: Ethical issues?
July 10th: BHA or NSS presentation
August 14th: AGM and barbecue
Sept 11th: The ethics of being a vegan
Nov 13th: War poetry
December (date to be advised): United Nations Celebration

Saturday lunchtime meetings

Duke of York last Saturday of each month at 12:00 noon. The next one is April 24th. Let me know if you are attending : denisjohnston@btinternet.com or 01394387462

Contributions for the next Newsletter:

The next Newsletter will be published in June. If you have an article to contribute or ideas for topics to be covered in future editions please let George Bethell know. You can email him at: shands.editor@gmail.com

Suffolk Humanists & Secularists

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