

Suffolk Humanists and Secularists

News Bulletin May 2018

"Bertrand Russell"

Next Meeting Tuesday, 8th May: "Bertrand Russell"

George Bethell will be giving a talk about the philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell.



Bertrand Russell in 1907

Described as an "Intellectual Giant" of the 20th Century, he always believed that ideas could change the world. He was closely involved in many of the events that shaped world politics during the first two-thirds of the 20th century. Controversially, he opposed the first world war, and was a prominent peace activist. Come and hear more at 7;30 p.m. on 8th May at

The Co-op/EEFA Meeting Rooms,
47 St Helen's Street,
Ipswich, IP4 2JL
(above the former Co-op funeral parlour)

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO ALL OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

Many thanks to those of our 'post only' members who have already returned their forms indicating that they are happy to receive future communications from us.

If you currently receive information by post and have not yet returned the form another one is enclosed with this Bulletin (if none is enclosed it means we have already heard back from you).

If you receive communications by email you should soon hear from us asking you to confirm that you are happy to receive future bulletins, newsletters etc, that way.

Either way 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.

April Meeting on "Oryx and Crake"

Elisabeth and Peter Thompson gave an overview of Margaret Atwood's novel and highlighted what they considered to be the messages in it. The novel begins with the situation after the human population of Earth has been wiped out by a massive deadly plague. All that remains are a genetically manipulated group of beings (Crakers) who are similar to humans but adapted to the new environment). A central character is Snowman and the first part of the story is given over to his flashbacks to a previous existence. These generate stories which he tells to the Crakers who adopt them and develop them into a

mythology in which someone called Crake is their creator and god. Oryx, a mysterious woman who is their caregiver and creator of all animal life is then built into the story. Raising issues around genetic engineering, climate change and social engineering it provides a dystopian view of the future but leaves the reader with a situation where there might just be hope.

(Another) Meeting with Ipswich Quakers.

In January we had a meeting with the Ipswich Quakers and on the 11th April had a 'return match' where I was invited to give them a talk (or rather a Q&A) about Humanism. At the end we split into two groups with the task of saying exactly what it was that was different between us. Apart from some references to the Quakers 'having faith and spirituality' which couldn't really be pinned down our views do seem seem to overlap considerably.
Denis Johnston

Upcoming meetings

May 8th: Bertrand Russell
June 12th: Artificial Intelligence: Ethical issues?
July 10th: BHA or NSS presentation
August 21st: 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 May 26th.
Let me know if you are attending :
denisjohnston@btinternet.com or 01394387462

Our library

If you would like to learn more about Humanism I have a small library of books which members are welcome to borrow. It includes most of the books by the "usual suspects" e.g. Hitchens, Dawkins etc. but also some that may be more difficult to obtain e.g.

"The Thinker's Guide to Life", edited by Marilyn Mason
"Funerals without God", Jayne Wynne Willson
"Modern Humanism" Alfred Hobson and Neil Jenkins
"Grass Roots Humansim", Margaret Siddall
"The destiny of Man", (Various contributors)
"The moral case against religious belief", R A Sharpe.
Denis Johnston

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

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