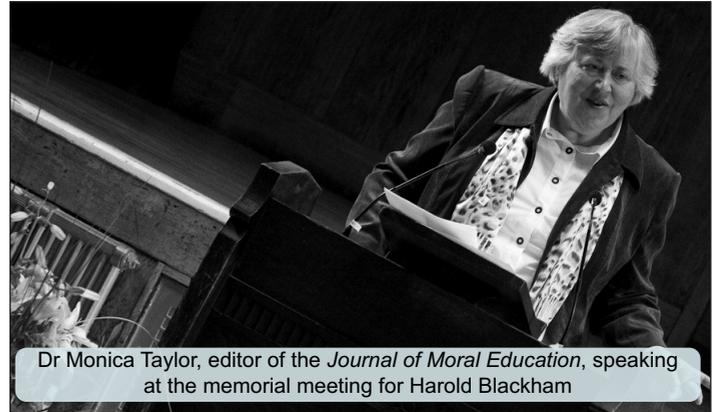


Celebrating the life of Harold Blackham (1903-2009)

Harold Blackham, first executive director and effective founder of the BHA and co-founder of the International Humanist and Ethical Union as well as of the Social Morality Council, the *Journal for Moral Education* and many other educational bodies, died this year a few days shy of his 106th birthday. Obituaries for him appeared in the *Independent*, *Guardian*, *Times* and *Telegraph* and are available online. Readers of Edlines may be particularly interested, however, in the recollections of Dr Monica Taylor, editor of the *Journal of Moral Education*, who published them in that journal and delivered them at the memorial for Harold held in London on 8th June:

'In his role as Secretary of the Campaign for Moral Education and Chair of the Education Committee of the Social Morality Council (SMC) in the UK, [Harold Blackham] was the driving force behind and co-founder of the *Journal of Moral Education* (JME). He was the first Chair of the Editorial Board of JME, from its initial publication by the Rationalist Press Association in October 1971 until May 1977, when, at the age of 74, he also retired from being Chair of the SMC, leaving London for the Wye Valley, Herefordshire. From there he continued to write more books, enjoying gardening, nature and the panoramic countryside view for another 30 years. He, nevertheless, remained actively connected with both the JME and SMC (which owned the journal) throughout the 80s, advising on the development of the journal and its publication arrangements, writing and reviewing papers, in 1983 acting as Guest Editor of the first special issue of JME, and in 1994 becoming an Honorary Associate.

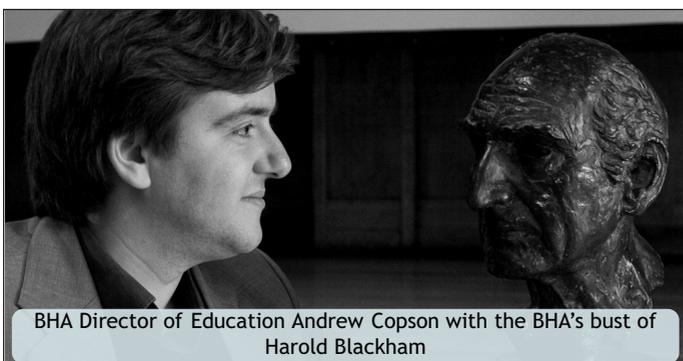
'Harold Blackham's connection with JME was only a small part of a much wider national and international web of intellectual and practical connection, a life of thought, writing, action and commitment to many progressive causes, focusing on Humanism... It was under the auspices of the BHA (today a national charity supporting and



Dr Monica Taylor, editor of the *Journal of Moral Education*, speaking at the memorial meeting for Harold Blackham

representing the non-religious in Britain through its educational and secular civic activities) that JME was first established. Prior to and immediately after the Second World War, Harold was also working with other Freethinkers internationally, particularly in the USA, India and the Netherlands, to build the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), now a worldwide union of over 100 organisations in 40 nations, which continues to develop Humanism internationally. The IHEU was a point of connection for Harold and Lisa Kuhmerker – in 1974 the first female JME Editorial Board member from outside the UK, and from 1976 the founder of the Association for Moral Education in the USA and founder and Editor of Moral Education Forum. Their communication persisted into the mid-80s, with Lisa writing a glowing review of Harold's book, *The fable as literature* (1985, The Athlone Press) in JME (15 (3), 243-4).

'Harold's intellect and practical wisdom were obvious from being in contact with him, as I was from 1974 for over 20 years, first through his contribution on *The Curriculum in Moral Education* to an edited collection *Progress and problems in moral education* (NFER, 1975), and then as Editor of JME... In the 1970-80s in the UK, Harold Blackham's long experience of national and international committees and voluntary organisations was brought to bear on a succession of moral education activities which he led from the SMC and of which JME was a part. The SMC was comprised of representatives of recognised religious traditions of that time in the UK (principally Anglicans, Catholics, members of the Free Churches and Jews) and Humanists, educational professionals, and members of the wider community. Harold Blackham set up working parties to promote dialogue on contemporary ethical issues (such as drug dependence, broadcasting, the



BHA Director of Education Andrew Copson with the BHA's bust of Harold Blackham

relationship of moral and religious education and the preparation of teachers for moral education), with a view to arriving at agreed statements used as leverage for funding and to change the climate of opinion with government, ecumenical and local education authorities (e.g. *Moral and religious education in county schools*, Methuen, 1970). The SMC's first Moral Education Centre was set up at University of London, Goldsmiths' College, and undertook a survey of moral education in the UK, produced a resource list on moral education (National Book League, 1976) and stimulated conferences and reports (e.g. *Moral education*, ULGC, 1978). At this time the aims and teaching of Religious Education, the main curriculum vehicle for moral education, were hotly contested by Humanists (e.g. *Objective, fair and balanced*, BHA, 1975; and Blackham's edited *Moral and religious education in county primary schools*, NFER, 1976). Another dimension of Harold's concern for moral education was manifest in his advocacy for attention to be given to personal development in school, both through pastoral care ('though I don't like the term ... a bit') and counselling, in line with his co-founding of the British Association for Counselling in 1977 and the publication of his *Education for personal autonomy* (Methuen, 1978).

'The 1983 JME Special Issue, *Moral Education, Religious Education and Ethical Theory*, of which Harold was Guest Editor, was motivated by ongoing confusion and uncertainty in curriculum theory and UK pedagogical practice. Harold was persuaded to become involved because of his deep intellectual interest in these themes. As he wrote to me, 'Not that I intend anything controversial, rather I would hope to satisfy all reasonable minds. What a hope!' The Special Issue was followed up with a series of meetings in conjunction with local education authority advisers and teachers to establish new baselines for development in moral education, which resulted in *A Statement - Relations of ME with RE: the Need for Understanding and Cooperation* (JME 14(1), 4-8, January, 1985). In the mid-80s Harold and the SMC were the driving forces behind obtaining some government funding for the establishment of a Moral Education Centre focusing

on teacher education, at Leicester University under the direction of Derek Wright, with David Ingram. There was also enhanced co-operation with the Moral Education Research and Information Centre at the then St Martin's College, Lancaster, under the direction of Brian Gates, with Mike Cross, and other significant regional work was supported by the Chief Education Officers in Devon and Cornwall and in Dudley, West Midlands.

'Even this glimpse of Harold Blackham's moral education endeavours demonstrates that he enabled a Humanist voice to be heard at a time of domination of a Christian religious perspective, but this was together with the hearing of other religious and educational voices. Harold had intellectual force and showed leadership, but he also worked with others, commanding respect and commitment to the process of engagement. He managed to be patient and reasonably optimistic about moving matters forward, willing to pay attention to detail, always concerned with practical arrangements, yet never losing sight of the wider political and educational picture... The passing of Harold Blackham, together with that of James Hemming (in 2008), John Wilson (in 2003) and Derek Wright (in 2006), marks the end of the initial era of British leadership in moral education. Their learning, thinking and experiences led them from their backgrounds and interests in religious sources of morality to seek and promote other secular, rational (including the emotions) and logical approaches to morality and moral education, which linked theory firmly with practice, individual and social needs and the contexts for learning, with recognition of increasing social pluralism. Their visions, drive and endeavours found common expression in founding and sustaining the early years of the JME and their ongoing, active commitment to it during at least its first 25 years. With the growth in the field of moral development and education and the interrelated international and academic role of the Journal, scholars around the world who have published in and who read the JME have reason to be grateful for their foresight and legacy, and Harold's intellectual, strategic and inclusive leadership.'

ARE YOU GLAD WE'RE HERE?

The BHA is an educational charity depending on membership, donations and legacies to fund our work. We do not own property, we do not have wealthy sponsors, and our education work is unlikely ever to be funded by the Government.

We give away a lot of material and advice, because that is what we are here for. If you value our services, please consider making a donation or joining the BHA.

OCR Pilot new GCSE including Humanism

We reported in the last *Edlines* how a decision of the QCA/Ofqual had prevented OCR from including Humanism in a new Religious Studies GCSE and how we would be engaging with QCA, Ofqual and OCR to try to ensure a presence for Humanism in a new GCSE.

We're very pleased at the BHA to welcome the accreditation of a new pilot GCSE: 'Religion and belief in the modern world', which includes extensive study of Humanism. We look forward to working with OCR and schools to support the piloting of this exciting new qualification.

The GCSE will be trialed at pilot centres across England in the coming two years.

Teachers Wanted!

We are looking for two teachers who have made a success of incorporating Humanism into their RE for an exciting new project. Together with the QCA we are hoping to put together case studies online, which will demonstrate ways in which Humanism can be taught in Religious Education lessons.

At this stage, we are looking only for expressions of interest, which should be made by email to education@humanism.org.uk - please indicate in your email what key stage you taught about Humanism at and gives some details of the type of school at which you teach, where it is. Include lesson plans if possible, so that we can see something of the content that was covered.

THREE URGENT EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS: TAKE ACTION TODAY!

There are three important consultations going on at the moment to which the BHA is responding and to which we urge all readers of *Edlines* to also make a response. If you are reading this before the 24th July, then you can still respond to the public consultations, but even if you are reading this after that date, please do check our website at www.humanism.org.uk/reguidance and www.humanism.org.uk/pshe and www.humanism.org.uk/primaryscience for the other ways in which you can help achieve these changes.

New Guidance on Religious Education

The Government has issued new draft guidance on the teaching of Religious Education (RE) in English schools for public consultation (ending on 24 July). The guidance is intended to replace that issued in 1994 (*Circular 1/94*) which was widely believed, even at the time, to represent very poor advice on RE. The BHA was represented on the steering group that helped to produce the new draft and in many ways we believe it represents a considerable advance on previous guidance. However, it fails to address our two principal concerns in RE: that RE should be the study of both religious and non-religious beliefs; that humanists should have the same right to be full members of the local committees writing and overseeing RE syllabuses as religious people have.

PSHE education to become a right for all children

The Government has announced its intention to make PSHE education a part of the National Curriculum in both primary and secondary education. Unfortunately, it is also proposing that governing bodies should retain the right to determine their school's approach to the sex and relationships education (SRE) aspect of PSHE, so that it can be '... delivered in line with the context, values and ethos of the school' and that carers or guardians should

continue to have the right to withdraw their child from SRE.

The BHA warmly welcomes the proposal to make PSHE education part of the National Curriculum, for which we have been campaigning for many years. However, we believe that PSHE, including SRE, should be treated like any other National Curriculum subject – with no parental right of withdrawal, or ability for schools to amend the way in which it is provided.

Primary review

Our main concern with the new primary curriculum is that the 'scientific and technological understanding' area of learning makes no requirement for pupils to learn about and investigate the concepts of natural selection and evolution. We believe that the theory of evolution – arguably the single most important idea underlying the life sciences today – must be included in the primary curriculum.

The wealth of new educational resources on evolution available for children of primary school age demonstrates their ability to grasp the simpler concepts associated with it, and a basic understanding of evolution will help lay the foundation for a surer scientific understanding later in the curriculum.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

FOR THE SECONDARY CLASSROOM

Issues 171: Abortion: Rights and Ethics ed Claire Owen (Independence)

The *Issues* series is an excellent resource for Key Stage 3 Citizenship, PSHE or RE. In *Abortion*, there is material on the subject from religious and humanist perspectives. You can subscribe to the excellent *Issues* series at www.independence.co.uk

Citizenship, Identity and Difference ed. Jane Clements (CCJ): £26.50 from 020 7820 0090

This CD-ROM pack, with teaching materials, aims to 'explore different strands of religious and non-religious traditions in British society today, and stimulates discussion on the nature of identity and citizenship'. The CD-ROM presents five young people from different backgrounds including Hindu, Christian, Jewish and Muslim. One character – Ellie – is from a non-religious background. Each character has three objects in their home which students click on to learn more about the character and their background in the context of beliefs, values and citizenship. Ellie's three objects are a photograph of her dead Gran, which leads into a discussion of a humanist funeral and then to a discussion of humanist beliefs about death and life after death (with a great quote from Bertrand Russell); a picture painted by her father, which leads into a discussion of non-religious meaning and purpose and the awe and wonder of the natural world as well as the appreciation of art and literature; a book of Aesop's fables which leads into a discussion of values and non-religious philanthropy and social action. An excellent resource (as far as the study of the non-religious beliefs and values presented is concerned) for both RE and Citizenship lessons.

Sex and Ethics Joe Jenkins: £26.50 from 020 7820 0090

Four excellent films written and directed by renowned RE specialist Joe Jenkins which offer a refreshingly thoughtful engagement with serious secular ethical philosophies (sometimes with an additional Christian perspective) in a dynamic and classroom friendly way.

The four films explore the four ethical approaches of natural law, situation ethics, utilitarianism and Kant. The transcript of each short film is included on the DVD as are excellent suggested activities, which can certainly be built on by teachers but are also complete in themselves for use as four lessons.

The philosophies discussed are honestly presented and the use of real life ethical dilemmas avoids any abstract theorising which can be a turn off. The films would be equally useful for PSHE lessons as for RE and together comprise a potential short course in sex and ethics that would greatly supplement any curriculum.

FOR THE LIBRARY

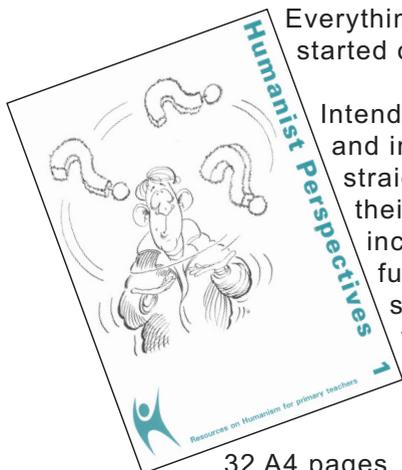
Humanism, Jim Herrick (RPA): £9.99 from the BHA

Jim Herrick's classic introduction to Humanism has now been published in a revised second edition. Chapters include those on humanist history, humanist ethics, humanist organisations, humanism and art and humanism and science. Well-suited to secondary school libraries, you can order copies from the BHA by telephoning 020 7079 3580 or emailing info@humanism.org.uk or online at www.humanism.org.uk/shop

FROM THE BRITISH HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

HUMANIST PERSPECTIVES 1

Resources on Humanism for primary teachers



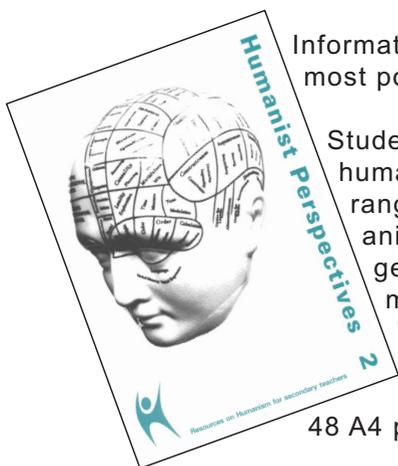
Everything primary teachers need to help include their non-religious pupils and get started on teaching about Humanism.

Intended mainly for absolute beginners, *Humanist Perspectives 1* offers guidance and information for teachers, so that they can absorb some essential but straightforward concepts associated with Humanism to pass on to their pupils in their own way and time, at their own pace, and in the appropriate language. It includes clear and concise accounts of humanist ideas, history and ceremonies, further reading for those who want more, suggestions for class libraries, and some lesson ideas and plans. These resources have been created with advice from primary teachers, and earlier versions have been used for many years in schools.

32 A4 pages, photocopiable, £6.00 + p&p

HUMANIST PERSPECTIVES 2

Resources on Humanism for secondary teachers



Information and guidance for secondary teachers, with concise versions of BHA's most popular ethical and philosophical briefings for students.

Student pages cover humanist history, humanist activities and ceremonies, and humanist perspectives on religious and philosophical questions, ethics and a range of the social / ethical issues often studied in RE. These include: abortion; animal welfare; crime and punishment; discrimination and prejudice; embryo and genetic research; environmental issues; euthanasia; family matters; health matters; human rights; "nature"; suicide; war; world poverty; all come with "learning about" and "learning from" discussion questions.

48 A4 pages, photocopiable, £10.00 + p&p

BOTH BOOKLETS are based on tried and tested BHA resources, which have been extensively revised, updated, supplemented and edited by Marilyn Mason, ex-teacher and former BHA Education Officer. Both refer to the National Framework for RE, with its advice to include "secular philosophies such as humanism" and to Ofsted guidance on "social, moral, spiritual and cultural" education, and encourage teachers and advisers to adapt and select whatever is relevant to their local syllabuses and their pupils' needs. The materials are, of course, particularly relevant to syllabuses that include Humanism and / or advice to include children "of all faiths and none".

Pages are designed to be photocopied, so that an adviser or head of RE can easily make handouts for classes and share information and lesson ideas with colleagues. Every school should have at least one copy.

Both are printed on good quality recycled paper.

Order by phone - 020 7079 3580 - or via our website.



HUMANISM is the belief that we can live good lives without religious or superstitious beliefs. Humanists make sense of the world using reason, experience and shared human values. We seek to make the best of the one life we have by creating meaning and purpose for ourselves. We take responsibility for our actions and work with others for the common good.

The British Humanist Association exists to promote Humanism and represent and support people who seek to live good lives without religious or superstitious beliefs. In education the BHA promotes rational thinking and moral education, offers teaching resources, and campaigns for reform of RE and an end to religious privilege and compulsory worship in schools.