Physicist, author, and broadcaster Jim Al-Khalili has been appointed as the next President of the British Humanist Association. He succeeds journalist, broadcaster, and social justice campaigner Polly Toynbee to take up the position from January 2013 and will serve a three-year term as the Association’s 11th president.

The son of an English practising-Christian mother and Muslim father, Jim was born and raised in Iraq, but left the country with his family in 1979 to come to England at the age of 16. His academic career has been in theoretical physics but he is best known publically as a popular and accomplished science communicator, whose books have been translated into over 20 languages. In spite of his parentage and his descent from an Iraqi Ayatollah, Jim has been a humanist since his teenage years.

Welcoming Jim’s appointment, our Chief Executive Andrew Copson said, ‘As well as being an academic scientist at the forefront of humanity’s quest to know the universe, Jim is also a brilliant communicator. His popular broadcasts and books have made some of the most cutting-edge and complex scientific advances accessible to millions. It is this capacity in particular that makes him a perfect choice to speak to the millions of British people who share a humanist approach to life. We look forward to his time as president enormously.’

Welcoming her successor, outgoing President Polly Toynbee said, ‘It has been a joy to be president at a time of such prominent activity and unprecedented growth for the Association. From the Atheist Bus Campaign, to the massive increase in our education and ceremonies work and our increasingly dynamic advocacy work, we have gone from strength to strength. I know that Jim will enjoy a period of equal growth and success and hope he enjoys his time as President of such a wonderful and sorely needed institution.’

Jim Al-Khalili, accepting the appointment, said, ‘I am excited to be the BHA’s next President. It’s a real honour and I hope I can do the position justice, especially when I look back on some of its illustrious past Presidents. Following from Polly Toynbee is a particularly daunting prospect as she has been such an influential and respected voice in British intellectual life over several decades. Her uncompromising stance on secularism and social democracy have been exemplary and I know she leaves the post with the BHA stronger than it has ever been in its 116-year history.’

‘My scientific training has given me a privileged rationalist view of the world and I have dedicated my life to trying to understand the workings of nature and our place in the universe using scientific reason. This has engendered in me a strong sense of awe and wonder in the world, which my cells are so fleetingly a part of, that goes far deeper than anything religious faith can offer.’

**Case on religious discrimination in new school dismissed**

In November, we joined Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign (RISC) in taking to the High Court the first ever legal challenge against proposed new schools on the grounds of religious discrimination. This unprecedented stand was complicated when the Government decided to intervene; disappointingly, the case was subsequently dismissed.

The case centred on two highly discriminatory Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic schools which the Diocese of Westminster proposed to set up in Richmond-upon-Thames. Sometimes schools are proposed in a process whereby different organisations compete to run a school and one of these proposals is accepted. However, in this case the Diocese proposed to set up the schools without competition. From the start the Council collaborated with the Diocese to bring the plans to fruition, spending £10 million on the site which the schools are to be located. In May the Council approved the plans.

We judicially reviewed the decision because a new law says that if a Council thinks a school is needed, it must seek proposals for a more inclusive type of school through a form of competition.

The Council repeatedly said the schools were needed, launching a consultation by providing ‘a full background as to why a Catholic secondary school is necessary in this borough’.

In September, Education Secretary Michael Gove intervened, arguing that if the Council thought Catholic schools were needed it would not have to follow the law on competition.

The judge ruled in favour of the Council and Mr Gove and once the judgement is published we will decide our next steps.

However, a new ComRes survey showed that the British public opposes religious discrimination in school admissions by over four to one. We believe that such unilateral establishment of more faith-based schools is wrong; we will continue to fight to end this practice.
Inequality: The Enemy Between Us

Kate Pickett, Professor of Epidemiology at the University of York and Distinguished Supporter of the BHA, is co-author of *The Spirit Level: Why Equality Is Better for Everyone*. In October she presented the fourth annual Holyoake Lecture in Manchester on the theme of *Inequality: The Enemy Between Us*.

Professor Pickett’s lecture attracted a record audience of over 150 attendees and presented the findings of her research undertaken with Richard Wilkinson. Focusing on the effects of inequality and the far-reaching impact it has on everyone, regardless of wealth or status, the event was both informative and sobering.

The lecture presented data showing that more equal countries (those with less of a gap between the richest 20% compared to the poorest 20%) do better in measurements like life expectancy, welfare, education, working hours, mental illness, and feelings of trust.

Their research stressed the negative impact of an unequal society: for example, imprisonment rates, social mobility, and homicide rates all correlate to inequality levels, leading Professor Pickett to quip that “if you want the ‘American Dream’ you should move to Denmark.”

Key findings presented during the lecture made for uncomfortable listening. For example, in the UK the richest 20% are 7.2 times richer than the poorest 20%; in Sweden, they are four times richer. While this may not seem an important statistic, research starkly highlighted some shocking effects this seems to have. For example, in the UNICEF index of child well-being measured against income inequality, the UK ranked bottom among wealthy countries.

The 2012 Holyoake Lecture is available on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/BritishHumanists.

Initiatives for Change Celebrants’ Conference

The BHA Humanist Ceremonies Network Annual Conference 2012 took place in Warwickshire in October. Focussing on *Initiatives for Change - the Next 5 Years*, the two-day conference included workshops and master classes on a range of topics and themes. It attracted Humanist Celebrants from across the UK, and some from even further afield.

Topics addressed over the weekend included an update on trends in funerals and marketing for weddings and namings, as well as workshops on presentation and voice skills. Training was also offered on making the most of interviews with the family, and how to use Humanism as a competitive strength.

The conference also gave celebrants the opportunity to talk about assisted dying, out-of-the-ordinary Humanist Ceremonies, and coping with difficult ceremonies.

For All Who Serve - we won’t give up!

With humanists yet again not being given representation at the Cenotaph at this year’s Remembrance Ceremony, our campaign to rectify this is far from over. Hundreds of you have written to your MPs; and a number of Peers from the All Party Parliamentary Humanist Group (APPHG) have tabled questions on this issue. We have been receiving pretty standard replies, some supportive and some rather offensive. One of the most common reasons given for not including the United Kingdom Armed Forces Humanist Association (UKAFHA) at the ceremony is along the lines of:

“We do get representations from time to time from a range of groups, but actual representation at the ceremony is severely restricted by constraints on space, so it is, regrettably, not possible to include additional representation. Any change to the current representation would require the agreement of the Royal Household and other stakeholders.’

This argument is particularly weak, as we know that an addition to this year’s ceremony was a representative of the Zoroastrian community, another group which had previously been excluded, and a group representing a much smaller number of service people than UKAFHA.

We were pleased to have been contacted by the family of the late Major Sidney Excell, a committed atheist best known as the man who arrested Head of the Gestapo Heinrich Himmler. His family is appalled at the government refusal to include a humanist at the wreath laying ceremony on Remembrance Day. Their public statement said:

‘It is devastating to know that a man who played not a small role in history not be [appropriately] remembered by the country he so loved. It is disgusting that the Government has consistently denied requests for a humanist representative to be placed with religious representatives. We call for an end to this blatant discrimination — and that is what it is. It is denying all secular service men and women, past and present, a representative when, if they had been religious they would have been allowed one. All who serve should be remembered: secular, undecided, unaffiliated, or religious. This is not a request for anything more than that we be included.’

We will be following the campaign up with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, as well as relevant ministers.
News in brief

Humanist Jacob Bronowski honoured with blue plaque

Humanist, scientist, and broadcaster Jacob Bronowski has been honoured with a blue plaque in Hull, the city where he once taught. The unveiling of the plaque follows a campaign by the Hull and East Riding Humanist Group to celebrate Dr Bronowski’s achievements.

Dr Bronowski is best known for presenting the 1973 acclaimed BBC TV series The Ascent of Man. Born in Poland in 1908 to Jewish parents, his family moved to Germany during the First World War, and then to England in 1920. His intellectual interests ranged widely, straddling the divide between the sciences and the humanities.

Religious Education Council subject review

An extensive review of the National Curriculum is taking place. Changes in curriculum and assessment arrangements for many other subjects have implications for Religious Education (RE). As part of its Strategic Plan, the RE Council (REC) has undertaken to carry out a review of RE, following a similar pattern to that adopted by the National Curriculum Review. The REC is a founding member of the REC; we are delighted to be involved in the subject review, which has gained support from the Department for Education (DfE), in that Ministers affirmed that the REC is ‘well placed’ to carry out such a review.

Giant’s Causeway Victory

The National Trust have removed the part of their Giant’s Causeway exhibit which appeared to endorse creationism, following our letter-writing campaign on the issue: Thank you to everyone who wrote in. The exhibit now states that ‘the National Trust supports the scientific view of the formation of the Giant’s Causeway’.

Reading University Atheist, Secularist and Humanist Society removed from Freshers’ Fayre

To promote an upcoming event on the topic Should we respect religion? the Reading University Atheist, Humanist, and Secularist Society (RAHS) at October’s Freshers’ Fayre displayed a pineapple with the label Mohammed on it to encourage discussion about blasphemy. Following complaints to the Fayre organisers, they were made to leave the venue.

Cameron’s controversial speech on faith and the ‘Big Society’

We have raised concerns over a recent speech by Prime Minister David Cameron, in which he suggested that faith-based charities could take over public services.

We have pointed out that this policy creates the risk of discrimination against public service users and employees, and undermines the secular nature of the welfare state.

Four student groups awarded grants

Since the last newsletter four university student groups — Durham, Edinburgh, Goldsmiths, and Liverpool — have been awarded grants to support them to promote their activities from the National Federation of Atheist, Humanist, and Secular Student Societies (AHSS). The AHS supports over 40 student societies across the UK; it aims to have an atheist, humanist, and secular student group in every university.

If your local university does not have a member group you can find instructions on how to set one up on the AHS website: www.ahsstudents.org.uk.

The BHA at The Battle of Ideas

In October, we sponsored and participated in The Battle of Ideas, the annual weekend festival of political, cultural and social debate at London’s Barbican Centre. Our Chief Executive Andrew Copson spoke in a panel session titled Religious or Spiritual or Neither, with writer and philosopher, Dr Piers Benn; associate fellow of the Institute of Ideas, Dolan Cummings; director of Theos, Elizabeth Hunter; and professor of sociology of religion, Linda Woodhead. Meanwhile, our Head of Public Affairs, Pavan Dhaliwal, spoke on a panel discussing the Myth and Reality of Free Schools.

Ritual slaughter consultation

In October we responded to a Defra consultation on Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing, in which we urged the Government to ban ritual slaughter without pre-stunning, with no exemptions for religious groups.

Without pre-stunning, animals experience considerable additional pain and distress at the time of slaughter.

Accord Coalition holds event on inclusivity in schools

The Accord Coalition, of which we are a founding member, held a parliamentary event in November on Faith, Inclusivity and Segregation in Schools: Problems and Solutions. Speakers included Professor Ted Cantle of the Institute of Community Cohesion, the Director of the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, and a former Director of the Runnymede Trust.

The event included groups from across the religion and belief spectrum, as well as trades unions, educationalists, and human rights organisations.
Take Action! As ‘Holy Redundant’ as ever — campaign to abolish privilege

TAKE ACTION! Write again to your MP today to oppose reserved seats for Bishops in the House of Lords.

In response to public demand, we have reactivated the Holy Redundant campaign. Following the Church of England’s 20 November vote not to allow women bishops, we urge people to email their MPs against there being reserved places for Bishops in the House of Lords.

Lee Chalmers, equality campaigner and board member of the Fawcett Society, led the arguments, stating that the Church has chosen to be a sexist organisation by refusing women the right to hold the highest leadership positions; it therefore should not be allowed automatic seats in the House of Lords, as this clearly does not comply with the spirit of UK equality law. An online petition has been set up, calling for a debate in Parliament on this issue. While we wholly support the online petition we still argue for the reserved places to be abolished whether women are allowed to be bishops or not. Its latest decision yet again highlights how unrepresentative and archaic the church is.

During the short-lived passage of the House of Lords Reform Bill, thousands of people wrote to their MPs through the Holy Redundant site and ensured that the issue of Bishops was high on the agenda.

Mark Harper MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Cabinet Office, revealed on 23 May that, of all the letters received by the Government on Lords Reform, the majority had concerned the abolition of the Bishops. The Government’s intention of retaining the Bishops was also heavily criticised during Parliamentary debate in July, with one in every five speakers referring to ending the role of the Lords Spiritual in a reformed House.

Visit www.holyredundant.org.uk to take action.

SACRE Reps and GRAM

Annual meetings for humanist representatives on Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACRES) and of the local humanist group representatives took place in November. These meetings provide training and development opportunities for humanist representatives, as well as the chance to share experiences and examples of best practice.

The SACRE Reps’ meeting highlighted that about two-thirds of SACRES (173 in total) have a humanist member or a humanist applying to join. Chaired by BHA Trustee (and Camden SACRE representative) Alice Fuller, the guest speaker this year was RE consultant Roger Butler, who provided a fascinating overview of the history of religious education in England.

The Group Representatives Annual Meeting (GRAM) was attended by over 50 representatives. The day-long meeting had a packed agenda. Topics included: effective campaigning (using the recent Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign as an example); and debating (covering whether we should and what we aim to get out of it). The meeting also launched the BHA Local Representatives project, which will extend the work of our local development volunteers’ programme.

We appreciate the work of everyone involved in our networks and groups. To find out details of your local group or for information on how to set one up please visit www.humanism.org.uk/groups. If you are interested in becoming a SACRE Representative please email Richy Thompson at richy@humanism.org.uk.

Community dialogue, Humanism, and local groups

Our community dialogue volunteer, Rory Fenton, has been working with Local Humanist Groups to ensure that Humanism is well represented in local government, equality committees, and faith and belief networks across the UK.

It is by no means a small task to ensure that a humanist voice is heard; many humanists have been making steady inroads into interfaith and belief groups, networks, forums, and committees. With the help of Rory we are now better able to ensure that we have representation on these groups and work with them to ensure that all faiths and beliefs, including Humanism, are considered when advising and making decision that affect the whole community. To find out more about this work email Rory at dialogue-officer@humanism.org.uk.
Non-Prophet week 2012

The National Federation of Atheist, Humanist, and Secularist Student Societies (AHS) organised its third Non-Prophet Week (NPW). The week of fundraising for humanitarian causes is an opportunity to show that, just like many driven by religious motivation, atheists, humanists, and secularists also often support charitable work.

Every year, AHS student societies around the country are given a chance to support their own or the AHS’s chosen charity, by raising money through whatever means they feel summarises who we are and why we want people to donate. This year, NPW has raised over £1,700 for many good causes, including Survivors’ Voice Europe, a group that fights for the recognition and well-being of victims of the Catholic Church’s institutionalised child abuse.

BHA Annual Conference: Tickets now on sale!

Tickets are now available for our 2013 Annual Conference taking place at Hilton Leeds City Hotel from Friday 7 — Sunday 9 June 2013. We have lined up internationally-renowned speakers and performers, with more still to be announced.

Join us to explore through the lens of Humanism how human imagination extended the boundaries of creation and our impact on the world around us.

Humanist volunteers for schools – how you can get involved

We are developing a training course for volunteers who want to work with teachers in schools: both to increase students’ understanding of Humanism, and have an impact on how teachers deliver Social, Moral, Cultural, and Spiritual development for young people. This is linked to both Religious Education, Citizenship, and to Personal, Social, Health, and Economic education (PSHE).

In February, we will run pilot courses in London and Manchester. We plan then to roll out training to local humanist groups in preparation for the 2013/14 academic year. It is an ambitious task, and we need help from local humanist groups and members to ensure that the programme is successful.

For more information about how you can get involved in the programme visit www.humanism.org.uk/schoolvolunteers.

New ceremonies leaflets available

We have produced new ceremonies’ marketing leaflets, in consultation with our newly established Humanist Ceremonies Marketing Committee.

With the aim of highlighting non-religious, highly personalised ceremonies, the new leaflets promote the highly professional service provided by humanist celebrants.

The leaflets are available from our office and a stock of them have been sent to Local Humanist Groups for giving out at meetings and events.

If you would like any additional leaflets or flyers please email info@humanism.org.uk.

Donate

Donate today to help us achieve our aims for 2013

Spending cuts and sympathetic politicians are making it easier for evangelical groups to influence our schools, our public services, and even our legal system.

Our work to fight religious discrimination is more important than ever.

We don’t receive any funding from government and are wholly reliant on our supporters to fund our work.

Every single donation we receive is vital.

If you’d like to support us, please send your donations to:
BHA, 1 Gower Street, London WC1E 6HD (making cheques out to ‘BHA’). Or you can donate with a credit or debit card by telephoning 020 7079 3580 or going to:

www.humanism.org.uk/donate

I enclose a donation of £___________

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Your Name:_____________________
Address:_______________________
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www.humanism.org.uk/donate

[ ] I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 28p of tax on every £1 that I give up to 5 April 2008 and will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6 April 2008.

Using Gift Aid means that for every £1 of your donation, we can claim an extra 23p from the Inland Revenue. All you need to do is complete this form — we do the rest and it costs you nothing!
Galha - the LGBT section of the British Humanist Association conference

This year has been momentous for both the Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association (Galha) and the British Humanist Association. Having worked closely together for the last thirty years, we are proud that Galha has become the LGBT section of the BHA, forming a unified voice for Humanism.

The 2012 Galha Conference took place over a weekend in October in historic Manchester, a historic city with a long history of involvement in the gay movement. The conference also celebrated the birth centenary of the late mathematician and humanist Alan Turing, a pivotal figure in computer science and one of Manchester University’s most famous figures, but whose homosexuality in an intolerant society was probably a major factor leading to his suicide.

As well as commemorating the past, the conference also looked to the future, as Galha enters a new era as part of the BHA. And the future does indeed look good. The attendance for this year’s Galha’s conference was fantastic, and bodes well for our ambitions to spread the word of Humanism. Following a speech by our Chief Executive, Andrew Copson, the conference goers moved on to Manchester University and its Alan Turing exhibition. Here we were offered private glimpses inside the University where Turing worked. The dinner that night had as its guest speaker Councillor Paul Fairweather, a prominent figure in Manchester gay rights. On the last day there was a guided walk, exploring some of the gay history of Manchester.

Party Conference Round-up

At all three party conferences this year we hosted lively fringe events that attracted hundreds of delegates and tackled important current issues for humanists.

The Liberal Democrat conference, our joint event with the Humanist and Secularist Liberal Democrats, was on the subject A Place for Bishops in a Reformed House of Lords? It featured our Chief Executive Andrew Copson, on a panel with Dr Evan Harris and Lord Palmer, chaired by Councillor Arnie Gibbons; all argued against the presence of the Bishops in Parliament.

Our No Prayer Breakfast at the Labour conference was held with Labour Humanists on the theme of Militant Secularism, and addressed topics such as ‘faith’ schools and the need to keep public services secular. The event featured Andrew Copson, with our President Polly Toynbee, journalist Sunny Hundal, Kelvin Hopkins MP, and Angela Eagle MP, with Naomi Phillips of Labour Humanists as the chair.

Our discussion at the Conservative conference was on the question Is Britain a Christian Country? It was chaired by Henry Bonsu of Colourful Radio, with Andrew Copson, Lord Sheikh of the Conservative Muslim Forum, and Christian commentator Anne Atkins as speakers. Andrew argued that Britain is not a Christian country because only a minority of British people now identify as Christian. Lord Sheikh argued the opposite case, on the grounds that the Queen is both head of state and head of the church. Anne Atkins then claimed that it is not possible for any nation to be defined as a Christian country, because the concept is contradictory.

The party conferences gave opportunities for much lobbying and enabled us to extend our links with politicians. We are continually trying to strengthen the All Party Parliamentary Humanism Group (APPHG): do contact your MPs to encourage them to join!

BHA People

A regular feature introducing some of our staff, volunteers, and Distinguished Supporters.

Carol Armstrong

UK Armed Forces Humanist Association Volunteer Membership Secretary

What interested you about volunteering for UKAFHA?

The non-religious do not have a voice in the Armed Forces. I see UKAFHA as one way to provide a voice for them. In my retirement from the Army I have a bit of time to offer and I hope that my small supporting role assists current serving members of the Armed Forces who are not religious to be treated with the same recognition and respect as those who hold religious beliefs.

How has being a humanist influenced your life?

I came to Humanism as an organisation very late in life but have probably lived my life on humanist principles, even when I was a doubting church-goer. Without really realising it at the time Humanism has helped me come to terms with bereavements in my family in a way which religion could never have done. I have an acceptance that we all only have one chance at this life and it must be lived in the best way possible.

What do you think is the most important thing about being a humanist?

There is no dogma! I am allowed to think for myself and make my own mind up on issues. I loved it when someone asked, ‘What is the humanist line on ....?’ There is no humanist line, we all think for ourselves.

www.armedforceshumanists.org.uk
From the Chair

As we draw towards the end of 2012 and I review the BHA’s year, I have realised that this has been a very challenging year, in which there have been some key successes, but also continuing concerns over government approaches to many of our campaigns on humanist principles.

The economic environment has made things a challenge financially; the government has intervened directly in our key campaign for the rule of law and equality in schools’ set-up rules; changes in staff have meant increased workloads across the BHA team. But challenges, according to Nassim Taleb, author of The Black Swan, are what make us stronger; we need them to make us ‘antifragile’, or survivors in the face of uncertainty and random events, as Taleb claims in his new book, To Live in a World We Don’t Understand**. Humanism is, by definition, about reality rather than fantasy, and so the challenges of reality are what we must relish and engage with, using the principles of science, evidence, and openness to achieve solutions for the good of all. We are the stronger for the challenges, acknowledging them and dealing with them, as individuals and as an organisation.

On the other side, there have been challenges addressed and dealt with successfully. The Board is positive about the changes in the organisation and structure in the BHA Ceremonies Network and local groups during 2012. We are very comfortable with the financial control and policies implemented by the management team, while our internal processes and systems are becoming stronger all the time, as confirmed by our auditor’s annual reviews.

Despite various types of challenge to our fundraising activities, we now understand how we need to operate and programme our income to meet the needs of the campaigns and activities in furtherance of our strategic aims for Humanism. The Board, which has itself grown stronger over the past few years, has been developing processes for looking at the range of skills and expertise we need from Trustees, to make sure there are no areas that are not covered. One other relatively recent change has been having distinguished supporter Martin Rowson on the Board. This has prompted us to start working on other activities to strengthen the links between the various stakeholders in our humanist project — working towards a more coherent whole and building stronger links so everyone feels that they are involved and working together.

So, despite the continuing challenges I am looking forward to 2013 with some optimism that it will see the BHA continuing to achieve growing recognition for itself and Humanism. I hope that you have an enjoyable and refreshing holiday, whatever you call it, and challenges in 2013 that you will meet and make you stronger.

** Note that Taleb’s book is not without its critics, see The Guardian review by David Runciman, on 21st November.

— Robert Ashby

James Hemming Essay Prize Announced

The James Hemming Essay Prize for 2013 has been announced and we would like to encourage all secondary schools and colleges to get involved.

The question for 2013 invites a discussion of the quote from the renowned humanist, philosopher and mathematician, Bertrand Russell, that ‘A good world needs knowledge, kindliness and courage. It does not need a regretful hankering after the past or a fettering of the free intelligence by the words uttered long ago by ignorant men’.

The deadline for submissions is 1st April 2013. Entries should be no more than 1,500 words long. Submissions are welcomed from young people under the age of 19 on 1st April.

Details can be found on the website at www.hemmingprize.org.uk.

Local Groups round up

North Yorkshire Humanists

North Yorkshire Humanist Group recently hosted an event focussing on the work of the Uganda Humanist Schools Trust, which helps a number of schools in Uganda who are working to offer liberal, humanist education to needy children. Founded by Ugandan Humanists and run as charities, the schools are inclusive and do not discriminate on grounds of religion, social, or ethnic background. Please visit www.ugandahumanistschoolstrust.org for more information.

Taunton Humanists

Taunton Humanists are arranging a humanist exhibition at Taunton Library on 4-8 February 2013, to highlight human discovery, art, invention, and progress. The group aims to accumulate appropriate tracts, articles, models, and artefacts. If any group or individual has anything to lend Taunton Humanists this would help considerably. Please contact John Watts on 01934834664 or by email on tickenham0505@btinternet.com.

North Devon Humanists

In October, North Devon Humanists Chairman Keith Denby gave a presentation, tracing the origins of Humanist philosophy from Confucius and the Ancient Greeks through to the Age of Enlightenment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During the event he explained the influence of later philosophers such as Jeremy Bentham and the effect of the nineteenth century Counter-Enlightenment. He contrasted this with the ideas of reason, experience, and shared human values.

The James Hemming Essay Prize

WIN £1000

and valuable books for your school or college by writing a captivating essay around the topic of: ‘A good world needs knowledge, kindliness and courage. It does not need a regretful hankering after the past or a fettering of the free intelligence by the words uttered long ago by ignorant men.’

— Bertrand Russell

Runners-up will receive prizes of £500 and £250, plus free one year subscription to New Humanist.

To enter you must be aged 19 or under and studying at A2, AS level or equivalent on the entry deadline of 1st April 2013.

Find out more and print out your entry form at: www.hemmingprize.org.uk
The British Humanist Association is the national charity working on behalf of non-religious people who seek to live ethical and fulfilling lives on the basis of reason and humanity.

First issue edited and designed by Sara Passmore and staff editorial team.
Please send contributions for the next issue — news, views, quotes, and cuttings of interest to other humanists — marked ‘For publication’ — to editor@humanism.org.uk or ‘The Editor, BHA’ by 11 February 2013.

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STAFF
Andrew Copson (Chief Executive)
020 7079 3584 chiefexec@humanism.org.uk
Cynthia Scott-Clark
(Chief of Staff)
020 7079 3584 cynthia@humanism.org.uk
Pavan Dhillon (Head of Public Affairs)
020 7079 3585 pavan@humanism.org.uk
Richy Thompson (Faith Schools Campaigns)
020 7462 4993 richy@humanism.org.uk
Ceremonies Training
020 7462 4991 training@humanism.org.uk
Vanessa Ashbee (Ceremonies Assistant)
020 7079 3582 vanessa@humanism.org.uk
Sara Passmore
(Head of Education & Promotion)
020 7079 3586 sara@humanism.org.uk
Bernard Halter (Head of Operations)
020 7079 3587 bernard@humanism.org.uk
Andrew West
(IT, Web and Database Officer)
020 7462 4995 awest@humanism.org.uk
Tamsin Van Dyken & Blakeley Nixon
(General enquiries and orders)
020 7079 3580 info@humanism.org.uk

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DISCLAIMER: Humanists do not agree about everything and some readers will disagree with some views expressed in this newsletter. The opinions of individual humanists are always interesting but are not, of course, necessarily BHA policy. On occasion we include inserts with BHA News. Many of these are part of reciprocal arrangements that allow us to send our leaflets to other organisations’ subscribers. We only accept inserts we think may be of interest to some of our readers, and will not include material promoting causes we oppose. Please do not assume that inserts imply BHA involvement with the cause or campaign, unless otherwise stated.

Win! Win! Win!
We have a signed copy of The Spirit Level by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, to give away to the first person drawn out of a hat who correctly answers the question:

Who are the founders of the Equality Trust?

Email your answer to editor@humanism.org.uk or post to ‘Editor, BHA News’, 1 Gower Street, London WC1E 6HD by 11 February 2013.

BHA news

Give the gift of reason this Christmas
Honest Boys! Drinking Honey. Spot the Difference. You Don’t Exist!

Enlighten your loved one (or parish vicar) this year with a gift subscription to New Humanist
Six issues direct to their door for just £27 (UK)
To purchase a gift subscription simply visit newhumanist.org.uk/subscribe or call 01371 851 881

Find your nearest Humanist group or start one up

Local Humanist Groups
Meet new people, learn something new.

The British Humanist Association is the national charity working on behalf of non-religious people who seek to live ethical and fulfilling lives on the basis of reason and humanity.

British Humanist Association
1 Gower Street, London WC1E 6HD
Telephone: 020 7079 3580
Fax: 020 7079 3588
www.humanism.org.uk
Registered Charity
No 285987