



Suffolk Humanist News

APRIL 2008

"You know what the greatest tragedy is in the whole world?" said Ginger, not paying him the least attention. "It's all the people who never find out what it is they really want to do or what it is they're really good at. It's all the sons who become blacksmiths because their fathers were blacksmiths. It's all the people who could be really fantastic flute players who grow old and die without ever seeing a musical instrument, so they become bad ploughmen instead. It's all the people with talents who never even find out. Maybe they are never born in a time when it is possible to find out."

*Terry Pratchett,
Moving Pictures*

Next meeting, Thursday 10th April

Note the different day—not Wednesday but Thursday, due to unavailability of a room on our usual day. We'll be in a different room, Room 3, which is upstairs at Castle Hill Community Centre, Highfield Road, Ipswich. For directions, or to offer or request a lift, get in touch. Tel. 01473 658828.

It will be our **AGM** but we do our best to keep boring business to a minimum. Please note that you cannot vote on any motion or in the election unless you have paid your subscription. Subs can be paid by cash or cheque at the meeting, but we prefer standing orders. Forms will be available at the meeting, or request one through the post. The agenda is overleaf. As far as possible, reports, etc., will be provided in written form to save time.

Two committee members, Derek Mason and Joan Matthews, have said that they won't stand for re-election this year. We're very grateful to Derek and Joan for their input and are sorry to lose them, though they'll continue to be members. Please consider whether you'd be willing to join the committee this year. We don't meet too often and most meetings are by telephone conference call (not complicated or expensive), so you don't need to worry about driving around the county to attend.

For the rest of the meeting we'll have **Ten Minute Topics**. Do you feel strongly about the way Catholic pro-lifers have criticised the Embryology Bill with emotive language like "allowing experiments of Frankenstein proportion"? Do you think that Humanist organisations are too hard on religion, or too soft? Would you like more emphasis on other ethical issues, like climate change? Do you just find someone or something very annoying? Bring your topics, which will go in a hat (or similar receptacle), and we'll give them an airing in random order, ten minutes at a time, unless we're all so fired up that we agree to go on for longer.

A usual, guests and raffle prizes are very welcome and refreshments will be provided.

More news on Humanism in schools

From new member Andrew Morrison—

My partner and I took a walk in Woodbridge and could not help but overhear the conversation of two young girls as they walked past us towards the river. They must have been about twelve years of age.

Girl One: "Are you religious?" Girl Two: "Nope, I don't think I am anyway. What about you?" Girl One: "No. We had a lesson on Humanism this week. I think that's what I'm going to become."



Terry's "embuggerance"

Terry Pratchett, aged 59, a distinguished supporter of the British Humanist Association, has been diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's Disease, which he calls "an embuggerance". Terry, author of the Discworld series of fantasy novels, has donated \$1 million for research into the disease.



SUFFOLK HUMANISTS

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The Suffolk Humanist group was founded in 1991 to promote Humanism and Secularism, and to provide fellowship, education and support for non-believers in Suffolk and North East Essex. We meet in Ipswich and Colchester.

We're affiliated to The British Humanist Association and The National Secular Society.

Sympathetic non-members are welcome, but by joining us you'll help us to raise awareness of Humanism and Secularism, and to challenge the increasing influence of religion in public life, the arts and the media.

The Suffolk Humanist Ceremonies Team has an unblemished record for high standards. We provide non-religious ceremonies for all occasions. For more information, see the contact details above.

Apologies for the brief newsletter. A longer one will follow after the AGM, including reports. Contributions very welcome!

HUMANISM: an ethical approach to life without religion; Humanists think we can be good without God.

SECULARISM: the belief that religion should have no place in civil affairs; that the church and state should be kept separate.

AGM agenda

- 1 Apologies.
- 2 Minutes of last AGM.
- 3 Matters arising.
- 4 Reports:
 - Chairperson.
 - Secretary.
 - Treasurer.
 - Ceremonies.
 - PR, speaking & education.
- 5 Election of committee:
 - Chairperson.
 - Vice-Chairperson.
 - Secretary.
 - Treasurer.
 - 2 committee members.
- 6 Motion:
 - The Suffolk Humanist Group will change its name to "Suffolk Secular Humanists" (see note).
- 7 Suggestions for the programme.
- 8 AOB.

With reference to the suggested change of name, we've had a letter from Terry Sanderson, President of The National Secular Society:

"We have had a lot of phone calls and emails over the last year or so from people wanting to join local secular groups. Some of them are happy to join humanist groups but others are looking for something more inclusively secular. The more multi-religious and multi-cultural our society becomes, the more pressing becomes the need to emphasise the secular aspect. This will foster a more cohesive society and resist the growing encroachment of religious demands compromising equality and freedom of expression.

"We are proposing that local humanist groups might like to change their titles to Secular and Humanist Groups or Humanist and Secular Groups. Based on the enquiries we have received, this would broaden your appeal and therefore increase your membership, while also making the secular presence more accessible in local communities."

Dates for your diary

Please note: the days and rooms will vary over the coming year, due to complications over availability, so please make a note in your diary now. We welcome suggestions for speakers and/or topics for meetings and anyone is welcome to organise a social event.

Thursday 10 April, Room 3 (upstairs) at Castle Hill Community Centre, Ipswich.

Wednesday 14 May, Parnell Room, Quaker Meeting House, Church Street, Colchester.

Wednesday 11 June, Room 1, Castle Hill Community Centre, Ipswich.

No meetings in July or August, though

there may be a pub lunch or two.

Thursday 18 September, Hexagonal Room at the Quaker Meeting House, Colchester.

Wednesday 8 October, The Hall at Castle Hill Community Centre, Ipswich.

Friday 21 November, The Parnell Room at the Quaker Meeting House, Colchester.

Wednesday 10 December, The Hall at Castle Hill Community Centre, Ipswich—**our guest speaker will be Jim Herrick of the Rationalist Association, author of "Humanism: an introduction".**

For directions, phone 01473 658828, or see the website.