

8th November—Gospel Truth?

At our November meeting Richard Layton plans to explore the origins of Biblical myths, in particular the earliest writings on Jesus (before the Four Gospels) which some scholars claim reveal that the Resurrection was celebrated as a spiritual event—not the physical event that later gospel writers claimed. For venue and time, see overleaf.

The Ipswich Faith and Community Forum (IFCF) inaugural meeting

Following Suffolk Interfaith Resource's closure, a new 'small charity' was launched on 1st October. The Ipswich Faith and Community Forum will take over many of SIFRE's local activities. Charles Jenkin summarised the events leading to the change; the background, the loss of SIFRE's accommodation and funding, and the decision to form three smaller local groups (the others are in Bury St. Edmunds and Waveney). EEFA (East of England Faiths Agency) will continue with the educational work while IFCF would focus on social cohesion.

Over forty attended. Issues raised included what happened to SIFRE's library, which will now be owned by a separate body with its own trustees. SIFRE's residual cash and assets would be held in trust for future interfaith related activities. IFCF's priorities were identified as: Holocaust Memorial Day, hate crime action, UNA day, seminars, film evenings, annual conferences, links with civil organisations (e.g. the police), asylum seekers' support and developing religious intelligence, or educating people about the beliefs and cultures in our society.

The Mayor of Ipswich summarised the issues and successes in the area, especially the Syrian refugee situation and how the town welcomed newcomers. He mentioned the need to address local problems especially that of homelessness.

The ICFC has a website with information, including events—
www.ipswichfaithandcommunityforum.org.uk.

October meeting, on David Hume



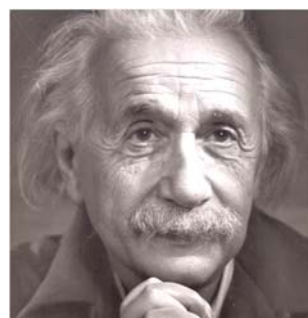
John Mellis talked about Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711 - 1776) at last month's meeting. He began by providing some context, particularly that pertaining in Scotland at the time. It was less than fifteen years before Hume was born that Thomas Aikenhead, an Edinburgh student, had been executed for blasphemy. Hume

took a much more cautious approach. Rather than directly challenge the religious authorities as Aikenhead had done he couched his arguments in a more academic style, particularly exploring ideas about how the mind works. It was this approach that not only helped keep religious objectors at arm's length but generated the wide range of philosophical ideas attributed to him, including utilitarianism, logical positivism and even what today is known as cognitive science. Immanuel Kant famously credited Hume as the spur to his philosophical thought.

Hume's main argument was that the only reliable knowledge was that based upon observation. Unless a statement could be verified by experience, or was true or false by definition, then it was meaningless.

Although his philosophical ideas were often written in a rather convoluted style most were captured succinctly in his many quotes amongst which were "Beauty in things exists in the mind which contemplates them" and "A wise man proportions his belief to the evidence".

Denis Johnston



"Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe."

Albert Einstein



Suffolk Humanists & Secularists

For the good life, without religion

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Founded in 1991, we're affiliated to The British Humanist Association, The National Secular Society, and Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource. 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.

Humanism is an ethical approach to life without religion; humanists think we can be good without God. Secularism is the belief that religion should have no place in civil affairs; that the church and state should be kept separate.

Although our ceremonies team has been disbanded we may still be able to help you. Margaret doesn't drive but can advise you if you're planning a ceremony and occasionally officiates close to home, while Sophie is sometimes available in the Colchester area. Phone 01473 658828.

Newsletter contributions are welcome. Send them to margaret@suffolkhands.org.uk or to Suffolk Humanist News, 5 Hadleigh Road, Elmsett, IP7 6ND.

If you require a large print version, please ask.

"Isn't it nice to think that tomorrow is a new day with no mistakes in it yet?"
L.M. Montgomery

Dates for your diary

Unless otherwise stated, meetings are in the Darwin Room on the 1st floor in Arlington's Brasserie, Museum Street, Ipswich, IP1 1HE. Car parking in one of the nearby car parks. We start at 7.30pm. Guests are always welcome. If you need or can offer a lift, we'll try to help.

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as we have to book a table. Family and friends welcome.

Saturday 26th November—Lunch in the Duke of York on the corner of Ipswich Road and Old Barrack Road, Woodbridge. We meet at noon. Please get in touch by the 22nd if you plan to come,

Friday 9th December at 8pm—Annual UN Celebration of Human Rights—Article 26, the right to education. Venue TBA.

No meeting on Tuesday 13th December.

In Brief...

The NSS has called on British Gymnastics to reverse the two month suspension given to athlete Louis Smith for mocking Islam. "Rather than defending free expression, one of the most precious pillars of our liberal democratic society, you have chosen instead to side with extremists and patronise British Muslims by assuming they will take offence at the trivial actions of these two athletes." Smith has received death threats since the video showing him joking about Islam was aired.

The BHA has raised over 100% of its target of £40,000 to fund a dedicated campaigner against faith schools, Jay Harman.

Despite its appalling human rights record, Saudi Arabia has been re-elected onto the UN Human Rights Council as it had no competition for the place in its regional group. Meanwhile, it's bombing Yemeni civilians.

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www.suffolkhands.org.uk

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