

THE NEW GLADSTONE REVIEW

Issue No. 13

September 2021

an occasional e-journal

*Informal commentary, opinions, reviews, news, illustrations and poetry
for bookish people of philanthropic inclination*

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Editorial

This issue is being published later than originally planned, although it is described above as ‘an occasional e-journal’ – and the delay is due to changing domestic arrangements which I am sure most people are also experiencing, in one way or another, in the current pandemonium.

An important reason for my pulling out the stops to get it distributed this month is to announce that I shall be having a stand at the Nottinghamshire Book Fair, to be held at the Patchings Art Centre on October 3rd (2) – which I trust will demonstrate that, after a prolonged hibernation, Gladstone Books is still alive and ‘hobbling’ (rather than kicking). I hope recipients of this email who live in the area will be able to attend – after the long gap since the last fair was held -then at Farndon.

Assuming that the worst of Coved19 is now coming to an end, I remind readers that my book room is now open for browsing following a phone call to book a visit (4).

I’m also glad to announce the return of The Book Guide (8) an internet guide to second hand book shops, arranged by county, which closed down a couple of years ago. It’s an invaluable resource when travelling to unfamiliar regions.

Usually issues of this Review carry at least one substantial article from a guest contributor. I have found it difficult to arrange that this time. As for the articles, I have put together a typically eclectic trio – Victorian speculations about life on other planets (3), a curious Lincolnshire monument (7), and an article on veganism (6.) – which has recently been attracting increased attention. There are also a couple of pieces (5 and 9) intended to provide light relief. Readers comments are always welcome.

BM

**Gladstone Books
will have a stand at the**

**Nottinghamshire Book Fair
at Patchings Art Centre**

Sunday 3 October 2021 - 10am to 4pm



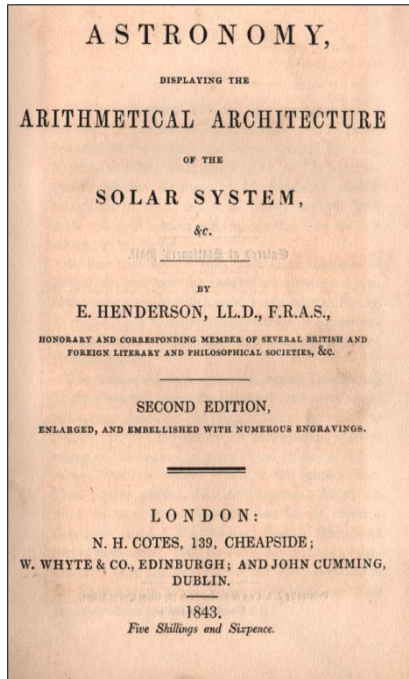
**Patchings Art Centre
Oxton Road, Calverton
Nottingham
NG14 6NU**

tel: 0115 9653 479
www.patchingsartcentre.co.uk

**ENTRANCE IS FREE
AMPLE CAR PARKING SPACE**

3. On a Plurality of Worlds

Among the layer upon layer of gloom-ridden news to which some of us, perhaps out of a misplaced sense of duty, regularly subject ourselves in reading newspapers and listening to broadcast bulletins, news editors usually manage to slip in an item to amuse, distract or educate us – a sweet confection



after the stomach-churning main course. Popular are scientific snippets about cosmology or astronomy – the significance of which will probably prove of much greater significance than the relentless waves of depressing, slippery news.

A few days ago, there was a BBC item: *Astronomers have captured some of the most detailed images ever seen of galaxies in deep space. Many of the images could yield insights into the role of black holes in star and planet formation.* The discoverer declared: *"I walked around with a huge smile on my face .. because I felt so proud that I was able see something nobody had ever seen before."*

I couldn't help reflecting that, at the same time that she was so elated, some of our fellow humans were experiencing the hellish chaos unfolding in Afghanistan. Cosmology often delights, while politics usually leaves us dejected – and utterly impotent. And, if we're honest, we know that which of these we experience is largely a matter of luck.

The same day, probably influenced by the above, I picked off my shelves the book, published in 1843, (shown here) which I couldn't remember having opened before. (I have a large library). But, written almost 180 years ago, the '99p' I bought it for proved to be well-spent! One chapter relates the author's excitement as he unfolds his theory of 'other life in the universe' – a question which continues to fascinate many people, like the astronomer mentioned above, up to the present time.

He begins the chapter: *It is a prevailing idea with those unacquainted with the science of Astronomy, that the stars are very small luminous points ... and that they were created for no other purpose than the lighting up and adornment of our firmament.* But, bringing simple common-sense to bear, he proceeds: *But they cannot have been created merely to light up our nights ... for on average during the year, the stars in our latitude are only visible to advantage about 50 evenings out of the 365. Another moon would have been of greater benefit.*

Then, to emphasise the point, he brings forward evidence from use of the telescope, by which it has been discovered that, instead of the approximately 1100 stars visible to the naked eye (on a good night), *instantly millions become visible! Of what use to the earth can those stars be which the eye cannot perceive and which telescopes can scarcely detect.* The author doesn't mince words – to him the traditional ideas are obviously childish – and in a jocular poem he jeers at those who have so naive a view of the importance of humanity to the very existence of the universe. *Stars*, he deduces, *must, therefore have been created for a far nobler purpose than for the use of the Earth.*

Having demolished the old idea, a new explanation is not hard to discern. *The great probability is, that every star is a SUN far surpassing ours in magnitude and splendour: they all shine by their own native light.* Then, illustrating the arithmetical skills that are advertised in the book's title, he declares that *'the apparently little star Vega' (because so distant from us) is 53,977 times larger than our Sun!*

If all stars are suns, he feels sure that, like our Sun, each is surrounded by several planets; from which it follows that there must be a *plurality of worlds*.

Perhaps conscious that, as both a scientist and a lawyer, he should curb his enthusiasm and not get 'carried away,' he poses a rhetorical question: *is it probable that such worlds are inhabited, and if so by what order of intelligences?* But the caution was short-lived, because in the very next paragraph he opines: *That the innumerable worlds throughout the regions of the universe are inhabited by intellectual intelligences is a probability so strong that it admits almost of direct demonstration.*

I'm not sure how widely, at that time, was the belief that the universe was 'peopled' by countless other *intellectual intelligences* (his emphasis), but for a historian of science it is a demonstration that he was, justifiably, not restrained in dismissing earlier ideas which he considered untenable. The major flaw in his argument was strict adherence to the theory of 'intelligent design.' This was most famously propounded by professor of moral philosophy William Paley in 1802 (my 1825 edition is shown here), who argued as follows:

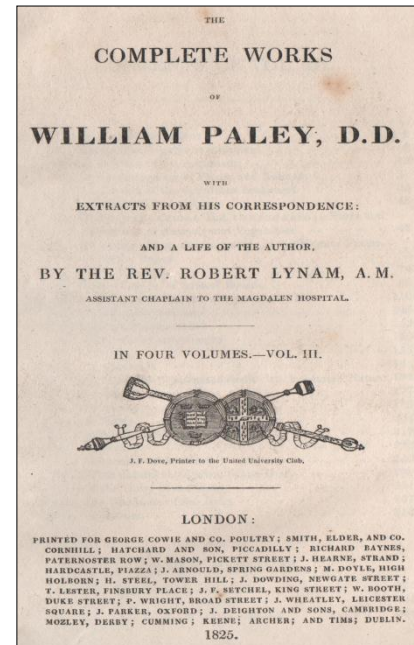
In crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a stone, and were asked how the stone came to be there; I might possibly answer, that, for any thing I knew to the contrary, it had lain there for ever. ... But suppose I had found a watch upon the ground, and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place; I should hardly think of the answer which I had before given, that, for any thing I knew, the watch might have always been there. Yet why should not this answer serve for the watch as well as for the stone? why is it not as admissible in the second case, as in the first?

*For this reason, and for no other, viz. that, when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive (what we could not discover in the stone) that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose, e. g. that they are so formed and adjusted as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day; that, if the different parts had been differently shaped from what they are, of a different size from what they are, or placed after any other manner, or in any other order, than that in which they are placed, either no motion at all would have been carried on in the machine, or none which would have answered the use that is now served by it. ... The inference, we think, is inevitable, that the watch must have had a **maker** ... who formed it for the purpose which we find it actually to answer; who comprehended its construction, and designed its use (my emphasis).*

Clearly the watch maker – God- was, by inference, invoked as necessary for all creation- the universe, humanity and all living things. So, in advancing his hypothesis of multiple worlds, and intelligences, Henderson unquestioningly adopted Paley's intelligent design' thesis, as did almost all scientists and intellectuals of that time.

The hypothesis was, of course, challenged by Darwin in his *Origin of Species* of 1859 – but since it cannot be categorically disproved, it cannot be definitively denied. We don't know what we don't know.

Footnote: In his autobiography, Darwin confessed that as a young man he had been impressed by Paley, writing: *The old argument from design in nature, as given by Paley, which formerly seemed to me so conclusive, fails, now that the law of natural selection has been discovered.* (p. 87)



4. Viewing Gladstone Books

To view the ~2500 books on sale (with more in stock) you need to make an appointment to visit the Book Room (a comfortable converted outbuilding) near the centre of Southwell. Notts. This is a private residence, so when you are given it please do not *advertise* the address, as I don't want to encourage people to call in uninvited. *Bona fide* potential customers are welcome to make a personal request to visit by telephoning me on:

Tel: 01636 813601- (or Email: info@gladstonebooks.co.uk)

The removal of the book stock back to Southwell, where I earlier rented a shop in Bull Yard for two years, has several advantages. For example, for visitors:

- browsing is now possible over more flexible time periods, e.g. on most days of the week, during daylight hours
- advance booking allows potential customers plenty of time to browse, as there will be *at least* two hours between successive bookings
- a maximum of two people (closely related or in a 'bubble') are allowed to browse together – a consideration which might well remain prudent for some time
- I shall be on-hand to help e.g. giving advice, reaching books on higher shelves, or receiving payments – in prompt response to a pressed button in the book room

My own time will also be used more efficiently, and not having to pay high rents will allow me to acquire more good quality stock and continue to make books available at very modest prices, because I regard this enterprise more as a service than a business.

At Bull Yard, I built up a regular clientele, and received several appreciative reviews (see *Recommendations* on the website www.gladstonebooks.co.uk). But I had to relinquish the shop for family reasons. I hope that the former congenial conversations with customers can now be resumed and extended. I usually offer a discount if two or more purchases are made.

Practical considerations

- ❖ On first booking an appointment, please supply (in confidence) your name, address, 'phone and email address for security reasons. It's assumed that visitors will be potential *bona fide* customers – but I appreciate that some people will not want to make any purchases
- ❖ Hand sanitizer is provided, but you may also want to use your own disposable gloves
- ❖ When the weather is fine, you may like to deal with the book transfers and payment in a private area of the garden, over a free cup of tea or coffee
- ❖ A torch available in the room may help you to read some feint titles on older book spines
- ❖ An electric convector heater will be in use when required
- ❖ A radio can be used if you like background music (perhaps, suitably on Radio 3?)

I earnestly hope that this, probably, last chapter of the Gladstone Books venture will prove to be a success, and that, along with the Gladstone Review, it will keep going for some time yet.

Ben Mephram

5. *The Odd, the Bad and the Ugly* *a polemic on English as she is spoke*

One of the things that tend to irk some older people (and I write as one in his 80s) is the way language has changed so that words that had perfectly clear meanings have often been corrupted, and distorted to mean something quite different. For example take *cool*, *gay*, *awesome* and *legend*. The first used to refer to a temperature less than warm, the second to a person exuding a warm and joyous mood, the third to 'inducing an overwhelming feeling of reverence' and the last to 'a famous story probably dating from some ancient era.' As I understand them now, to younger generations, *cool* means 'popular or stylish,' *gay* implies 'homosexual,' *awesome* simply means 'very good' and *legend* is a rather scaled-down 'amazing.'

Of course, language and pronunciation do evolve, so that while I was taught that the word *medicine* should be pronounced 'med-sun,' it is rare to find anyone, including BBC newsreaders and announcers, who doesn't sound the first 'i.' I suspect we have to thank Mary Poppins' rendering of *Just a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down in a most delightful way* – for popularising that.

Latterly, there has been an insidious spread of lax grammar into English as it was spoken. I guess that at least ninety per cent of people use the word *data* as if it were singular, as in the sentence: '*The data shows that the vast majority of UK graduates make grammatical mistakes.*' *Data* is the plural of 'datum.'

Then there are the neologisms which seem to have been coined on the spur of the moment, without considering how rapidly their *faux pas* would be uncritically adopted. At the time of its first use, I could not understand why the name *mobile phone* had caught on. Unless I am unaware of other varieties, that are capable of autonomous movement, they are surely more accurately described as *portable* or *pocket* 'phones.

Undoubtedly, users of the computer (if it's still called that) must be held responsible for many new words and redefinitions of words. Tweets, blogs, i pads, i pods – they signify a world I have no inclination to enter. But I find email a boon, and the internet a wonderful resource, if used prudently.

But the latest announcement of a notable change in spoken English was recently revealed by a news item on a paper in the journal *Text and Talk* by Dr Robbie Love, a Lecturer in English Language at Aston University. He reported that there had been a 27% drop in swearing over the last twenty years and that the *f-word* and *shit* have replaced *bloody* as the nation's favourite swearword. He proceeded *There is no doubting the fact that these words and their derivatives are pliable enough in format to suit almost all occasions and allow for imaginative usage, whereas bloody is just an adjective.*

I suspect most people swear, at least a bit and perhaps mostly in private, but it does seem regrettable that the act of sexual congress, which for many, though they wouldn't talk about it, is probably the deepest, most loving form of intimacy they experience, should be employed as a term of abuse and disgust, as in a certain politician's reported '*F Business* !' It's a crude word, but it surely can be used and performed respectfully.

(But I was rather astounded to learn that, according to the Guardian report, Dr Love said: "Overall the data suggests "....). Even lecturers in English Language get it wrong!

BM

This might sound like something written by the, probably fictitious Times correspondent 'Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells' - but I, a Guardian reader, hail from downtown Newport.

6. VEGANISM: ETHICAL EATING or FASHIONABLE FAD?

An opinion piece

Veganism emerged, as an ideology distinct from Vegetarianism, in the 20th century. As it clearly shares much with the latter, but is more stringent in its practice, it is worthwhile considering vegetarianism first.

Early Christians were persuaded by the first chapter of Genesis to *‘Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.’* This was for long regarded as granting theological justification for meat-eating, such that in the 18th century it was widely believed that animals had been designed for specific human purposes. Thus, it was claimed that *Apes and parrots have been ordained for man’s mirth, and singing birds on purpose to entertain and delight mankind,*



while cattle and sheep were given life so as to keep their meat fresh till we have need to eat them. It is difficult to avoid a wry smile at the presumption that God had provided humanity with the equivalent of walking ‘fridges!

But, in the same period, such time-honoured beliefs were coming under attack from prominent philosophers and theologians, of whom Dr George Cheyne (1671-1743) was, reputedly, *‘the most influential vegetarian in 18th century Britain.’* A Scot, living in London, Cheyne regularly visited local taverns to build a rapport with potential patients. But this led to an intemperate consumption of food and drink, that caused him to become both excessively obese and very unhealthy. Realizing that he needed to mend his ways, and deeply

influenced by the experiences of a Dr Taylor, who he had first encountered *‘at home, at his full quart of Cow’s Milk (which was all his Dinner)’*, he adopted a meat-free diet, consuming only milk and vegetables. He subsequently stuck to this diet for the rest of his life, and strongly recommended vegetarianism for everyone suffering from obesity. Cheyne (shown here) was thus an early exponent of *lacto-vegetarianism* – which was based on utilitarian grounds, in that avoiding animal flesh but drinking milk were conducive to his improved health.

Another prominent lacto-vegetarian was Jean – Jacques Rousseau, for whom consuming animal milk was, like women breastfeeding, integral to the ‘natural life.’ This was a view reinforced by the close proximity in which people and farm animals then often lived. Rousseau’s vegetarianism was thus adopted on what seemed ‘natural’ grounds. A boost to the growing sympathy for vegetarianism in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries was provided by the reports of Hindu practices by travellers returning from India, who had observed the widespread adoption of *ahimsa*, i.e. the avoidance of harm to others, including animals, which portrayed Hindus as outstanding exemplars of charity.

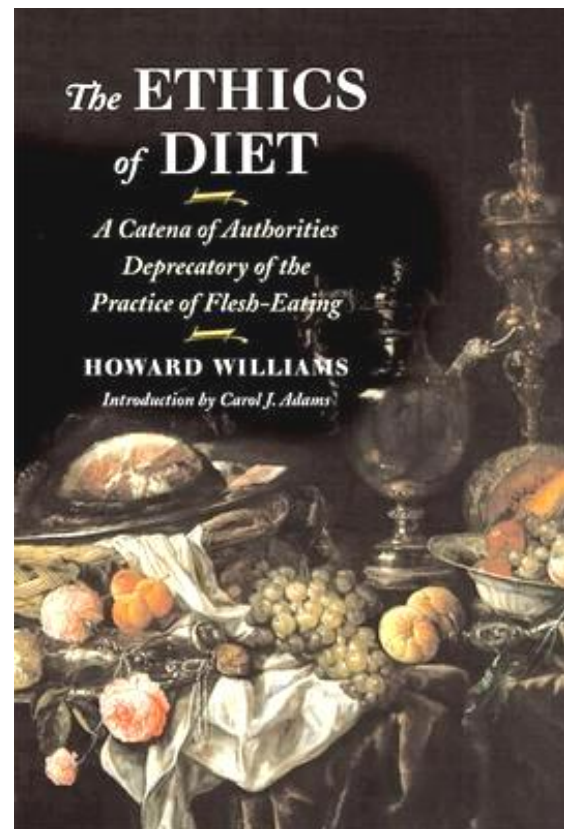
Vegetarians nowadays usually claim a more rational, ideological basis for their practice. Many may not like the *taste* of meat, but it is the harm done to animals (branding, castrating, mutilating, caging etc), and the means employed in killing them, that they consider ethically unacceptable. Because consuming eggs, milk and dairy products do not inflict serious harm, *lacto-ovo vegetarianism* is a generally-recognised ethical dietary choice. There is, however, a serious flaw in that claim, because

eventually the animals are killed (e.g. dairy cattle and laying hens because they cease to be profitable suppliers of milk and eggs, respectively) and their meat is used in food products. In a sense, although vegetarians don't eat meat, other people do so for them.

In the early 20th century, an important anthology of vegetarian writings, *The Ethics of Diet*, was assembled and edited by Howard Williams (first published, I believe, in 1907 – the date of my copy). In his autobiography, Mahatma Gandhi, who had visited Williams, acknowledged his influence in developing Gandhi's own ideas on vegetarianism. In August 1944, several members of the *Vegetarian Society* asked for a section of its newsletter to be devoted to non-dairy vegetarianism. When the request was rejected, Donald Watson, secretary of the Leicester branch, set up a new quarterly newsletter called *The Vegan News*. The new *Vegan Society* held its first meeting in London, with George Bernard Shaw one of those attending. The Society rejected the use of animals for any purpose, not only in diets. In 1947, Watson stated that *The vegan renounces it as superstitious that human life depends upon the exploitation of these creatures whose feelings are much the same as our own*.

In recent decades, advocates of animal rights have advanced principled opinions of the status of all animals, which clearly have uncompromising impacts on their use in food production. Their views have provided some memorable phrases. For example, for Prof Tom Regan: *Farm animals have a life of their own, of importance to them apart from their utility to us. They have a biography not just a biology, they are somebody not something*. But the trouble with such absolutist views is that they often lead to problematical consequences. For not only have farm animals become, whether we like it or not, dependent on human care (so that most could not survive 'in the wild') but, in the *best* circumstances on farms, they live healthy lives, protected from predators and adverse weather, and treated by vets skilled in preserving their health, which they would not otherwise experience. This is, of course, much more commonly the case in organic farming than in intensive systems.

In academia, a range of interpretations is evident. I recently reviewed a book based on a debate between a professor of law in the USA and a professor of politics in the UK, both of whom were vegans. The lawyer argued that bringing about a paradigm shift in our relationship with animals would be best achieved by a programme of *clear, unequivocal, non-violent education targeted at abolishing all animal use*, while his disputant claimed it *was important to distinguish between what is prescribed by ethics and what is achievable politically or strategically, because any viable moral discourse must take into account more than rationalistic ethical principles*. For me, the tact of the latter was far more persuasive than the strident intransigence of the former person.



In fact, to be at all consistent, vegans are forced to adopt some arbitrary ethical positions. If the vegan's objective is to avoid animal suffering then there would seem to be no reason in principle to confine this to farm animals, or those animals otherwise under human care. But if individual wild animals were considered to have ethical standing (which the lawyer believed), there would seem to be an ethical obligation to protect the prey from its predator, which would, even in the unlikely event that

it could be achieved, inevitably have adverse effects on the well-being and survival of the predator. So even the most rigorous observance of veganism seemingly turns a blind eye to the extensive animal suffering that occurs in the wild. Perhaps then, an ethical position consistent with the ‘facts of nature’ must acknowledge that somewhat arbitrary dividing lines need to be drawn, and these are necessary even with respect to the animals in human care.

The Vegan Society now defines veganism thus: *Veganism is a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude – as far as possible and practicable – all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose; and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of animals, humans and the environment. In dietary terms it denotes the practice of dispensing with all products derived wholly or partly from animals.*

It is clear that this is not as prescriptive as some vegans would prefer, for ‘as far as possible and practicable’ introduces considerable wiggle-room. Even so, the tenor of the definition is that it is a statement that seeks to describe an ideology – a commitment to a set of reasoned beliefs. An important question is: Is that how veganism is popularly conceived?

According to Rich Hobday, film director and vegan entrepreneur: *It may not always be morality driving the vegan explosion. He proceeded: From Tesco and Greggs to Waterstones and McDonalds, it seems that an increasing number of our favourite brands are monetising the vegan movement to an unprecedented degree. The meat-free food market is worth almost £600 million in the UK, a figure that’s set to rise to nearly £700 million by 2021. In 2019, the UK launched more vegan products than any other nation – and we’ve seen an increase in the financial rewards of supplying products that cater for the biggest current growth market.*

And it’s not only food and drink businesses that benefit from sales of plant-based diets. Spin-off markets are growing faster than ever before, e.g. in 2019, Waterstones had, for sale, 2058 titles with the word ‘vegan’ in them, compared with 994 in late 2018. The impact of veganism on businesses exemplifies the domino effect.

It all seems to have started in 1956, when the Vegan Society’s vice-president, Leslie Cross, founded the Plantmilk Society; and later as *Plamil Foods*, it began production of one of the first widely distributed soy milks in the Western world. In the UK, in 2012, the tofu and mock-meats market was worth £786.5million.

According to Hobday: *It’s a smart decision for businesses to embrace the vegan trend: as more consider a plant-based diet the industry is being led by entrepreneurs creating vegan media channels, vending machines, snack box deliveries and more. Vegan businesses are sprouting up across the UK: between 2012 and 2016 there was a 185% increase in the number of vegan products launched. Vegan enterprises should undoubtedly utilise the growing number of vegan bloggers and influencers –social media is (sic) a powerful force behind the trend.*

It’s hardly surprising that the ‘ethical’ basis of these startling developments is highly questionable, with some sceptics fearing that veganism is replacing one sort industrialised system with another. Apart from concerns mentioned, given that many components of vegan foods are imported from less developed countries, it is important take account of the rights and interests of people at the level of personal health and wellbeing, in societies whose economies, cultures and, in some cases survival, depend on a symbiotic relationship with animals.

Moreover, both at home and abroad, there are adverse effects on wild animals of practices employed in arable farming, on which most vegan diets are necessarily dependent, e.g. pest control, which not only kills insects but also sentient mammals like rabbits and mice. Surely, veganism requires that they also are protected from harm.

The logical end-point of fully extending the concern for human rights and wellbeing to animals is that all non-human sentient animals should cease to exist. Even if the current limited application were to be applied only to those *used* by humans, e.g. farm animals, pets, laboratory animals, those in zoos and ‘working ‘ animals, a ‘blind eye’ (as now) would be turned to the unaccounted millions of animals ‘in the wild.’ The universal success of veganism, which it can only be assumed is the sincere aim of committed vegans, would result in a society devoid of any sight of, let alone contact with, animals. (The law professor referred to above argued that we should *stop bringing animals into existence*, claiming that ‘sterilisation is consistent with abolitionist programs.’)

For most people, indeed virtually all, this would surely be totally unacceptable. For human relationships with animals are a vital ingredient of human culture, which has deeply influenced how people see life – giving society its *worldview*. As animal scientist John Hodges put it, *We are enough like animals to be kept humble; we are different enough from animals to be aware of our unique responsibility as ‘husbandmen ‘of the natural world*. Of course, a great deal is wrong with the way animals are used and treated, but abandoning them is no answer. Surely the ethically soundest course of action is to aim to eliminate all the neglect and abuses that many animals currently suffer.

One way the interests of animals can be ensured (as they would often not be in the ‘wild’) is for humans to agree to be bound by an ‘unwritten contract’ with animals in our care. It would be unwritten only for the reason that the animals could not read or sign up to it. But the same applies to our care for other people – such as young children and elderly people suffering from dementia. For example, the terms of this contract with dairy cows would take the form: *In exchange for the benefits in regularly yielding milk for human carers, we the carers undertake to provide cows with a good life and a gentle death*. The quality of the ‘good’ life’ might be provided by ensuring that the *Five Freedoms* (the standard criteria used for humane treatment of agricultural animals, see Table) are fully observed, and a ‘gentle death’ enacted by fulfilling improved criteria for their being culled.

<p style="text-align: center;">The Five Freedoms</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Animals should be free:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from hunger and thirst • from discomfort - by providing an appropriate environment • from pain, injury or disease - by prevention or rapid treatment • to express (most) normal behaviour - by sufficient space etc • from fear and distress - by avoiding mental suffering.
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The rigour with which committed vegans attempt to lead lives according to the strict observance of ethical principles is often regarded as exemplary, and vegan philosophy certainly represents a significant challenge to long-established norms of behaviour. But if the aim of ethics is to choose the right, or best, course of action in specific circumstances ‘all things considered’, it is arguable that adherence to such an absolutist agenda is simplistic and open to serious self-contradictions.

The latest fad for vegan meals has a very different objective, which those attracted to it ought to question if their motives are basically ethical. The speed with which veganism seems to have taken off appears to be (as admitted by the vegan entrepreneur quoted) largely about capitalising on a popular, fashionable, dietary wave which is fuelled by *vegan bloggers and influencers, and the social media*.

Main sources. Thomas K (1983) *Man and the Natural World*, Penguin; Stuart T (2006) *The Bloodless Revolution*. Harper Press; Williams H (1907) *The Ethics of Diet*; Hobday R (2020): website *Vegan food and living*; Mephram B (2008) *A notional ethical contract with farm animals in a sustainable global food system*. In *Sustainable Farmland Management ed. R Fish et al*. CABI; Mephram B (2005) *Bioethics* Oxford University Press 2nd edition. Mephram B (2011) *The animal rights debate: abolition or regulation?* *Animals* 1, 200-204.

7. Enormous tower found in book!

It has often struck me that in books written in the Victorian era illustrations of buildings generally depict them as much larger and more impressive than they currently appear. Clearly, there are exceptions when they continue to perform important roles, for example, like the Albert Hall, but many are put in the shade, literally and metaphorically, by taller, smarter modern buildings – or because, like many old churches and chapels, their original purpose has been desecrated by their use as cut-price shops or storage depositories.



But sometimes you come across evidence that the characterless present-day structure really was impressive in its day. This observation was prompted by coming across a reference to the *Dunston Pillar* in Arthur Mee's book on Lincolnshire, when looking for something else. Today, as shown, it has few charms as you drive past it on a B road about six miles south of Lincoln. Was it perhaps the remains of a planned church that was never completed? An elaborate water tower or some eccentric aristocrat's folly? The truth

was not difficult to find, and much more interesting as an insight into what would nowadays hardly be thought of as the *wilds* of Lincolnshire.

Notable in being the only *land lighthouse* in Britain, it was commissioned by Sir Francis Dashwood (a seemingly appropriate name for the founder of the *Hellfire Club*) in 1751, as a gift to his wife Sarah (Ellys) Dashwood, who feared crossing the dark heath near her childhood home in neighbouring Nocton. More generally, its purpose was to act as a 'navigational aid' to make the heath land surrounding Dunston and Nocton safer for travellers, as this was a notorious area in the 18th century for the many attacks by highwaymen, including, it was alleged, Dick Turpin. In fact, according to W F Rawnsley in *Highways and Byways in Lincolnshire* (1926): *This was a lonely tract, where inhabitants had not only been murdered by highwaymen but had even been lost in the storms and snow drifts on the desolate and roadless moor.*

The pillar originally stood 92 feet high, and was surmounted by a large octagonal lantern. The lantern was regularly lit until 1788,



but when improvements in the local roads had made the area much safer, it was used for the last time in 1808. In fact, in that year the lantern was destroyed in a storm and was promptly replaced with a statue of King George III, by the Earl of Buckinghamshire, to celebrate fifty years of the king's reign.

Sir Francis landscaped the base of Dunston Pillar with a plantation of trees and a bowling green. It became a popular gathering place for picnics, tea parties, quoits and cards, and a two-storey dining hall was later added. For those who had experienced the urban thrills of London, it became known as the *Vauxhall* of Lincolnshire, and the Lincoln Club was formed to arrange entertainments there.

So despite ceasing to serve its original role, it is clear, as shown above, that the pillar embellished a tree'd recreational area, which must subsequently have been appreciated as a pleasant walking and resting place for over 130 years.



But, as often happens, the attractions of the past, become the inconveniences of the present. In 1940, the risk to low flying aircraft approaching the nearby RAF base at Waddington, led to the pillar being drastically (*monstrously*, according to the Henry Thorold in the *Shell Guide to Lincolnshire*) reduced in height. This entailed lowering the height by 30 feet, including removing the bust of George III (shown here) – which was transported to the grounds of Lincoln castle, where it still stands.

Often, when following a literary trail, some unexpected references lead to surprising branch lines. Puzzled by the *Hellfire Club*, I sought out what it might have been. The first thing discovered was that this club had, in fact, used a number of other names, such as the *Brotherhood of St. Francis of Wy*, *Order of Knights of West Wycombe*, *The Order of the Friars of St Francis of Wycombe*, and later, after moving their meetings to Medmenham Abbey, they became the *Monks* or *Friars of Medmenham*. Of the names, the *Hellfire Club* was certainly the most accurate, for the records subsequently discovered showed that its members performed *obscene parodies of religious rites*.

According to Horace Walpole, historian, man of letters and son of the former prime minister Sir Robert Walpole, *the members' practice was rigorously pagan: Bacchus and Venus were the deities to whom they almost publicly sacrificed; and the nymphs and the hogsheads that were laid in against the festivals of this new church, sufficiently informed the neighbourhood of the complexion of those hermits.*

Legends of Black Masses and Satan or demon worship have subsequently become associated with the club, beginning in the late nineteenth century. Rumours were that members of the royalty and aristocracy were often present and that female *guests* (a euphemism for prostitutes) were referred to as *Nuns*. Dashwood's club meetings often included mock rituals, items of a pornographic nature, much drinking, wenching and opulent banqueting. Are we surprised?

Sources of reference

Arthur Mee *Lincolnshire* in the Kings England series
W F Rawnsley *Highways and Byways of Lincolnshire* (1926) Macmillan
H Thorold *The Shell Guide to Lincolnshire*
Wikipedia on Hellfire Club

8. The Book Guide Website has now Reopened

<https://www.thebookguide.info/bookshops>

It gives details of all known second hand book dealers, listed by county, and provides the opportunity for clients to make comments. The entry for Gladstone Books is reproduced here.

Gladstone Books▲

New Entry in the Book Guide:

<https://www.thebookguide.info/bookshops/central/nottinghamshire.html>

Near the town centre, phone for details SOUTHWELL NG25 0AY

Phone: 01636 813601 to make appointment to view books

e-mail info@gladstonebooks.co.uk

web: www.gladstonebooks.co.uk

Open: By prior telephone appointment only most days 10.00 - 5.00

About 2,500 modestly-priced books on display: second hand, antiquarian, rare and some brand new - with many more in stock. Specialisms: history, classical fiction, biographies, essays, poetry, sociology, theology, food, transport, local studies, natural history, arts, crafts, reference. Also substantial collections of academic books on philosophy, biological and physical sciences and medicine. Easy free parking. Cash only; ATM nearby.

E mailed comments

A recent find in much loved Southwell. If you are visiting this delightful town and like me love books, do not miss this little gem. The owner is charming, well informed and helpful and there are many treasures waiting to be found. Well stocked and well laid out, I could happily have spent an hour or so just browsing. I will definitely be back.

Incredibly well stocked bookshop with an excellent variety of books. Very peaceful and welcoming shop and the books are excellent prices and very good condition etc. Definitely worth a stop to support an independent book shop.

Great to find this gem of a bookshop, full of books to make you think, across a range of topics. I appreciate the newsletter with its recommendations which are right up my street.

A wonderful shop with a very astute and knowledgeable owner. An inviting selection of books to browse and enjoy. A particularly good range of philosophy books. Well worth a visit.

1. Quiet and comfortable atmosphere where you can browse without interruption. 2. A well selected and wide range of books. But the added pleasure is that the book seller really knows his stock and may introduce items you might otherwise have missed. -

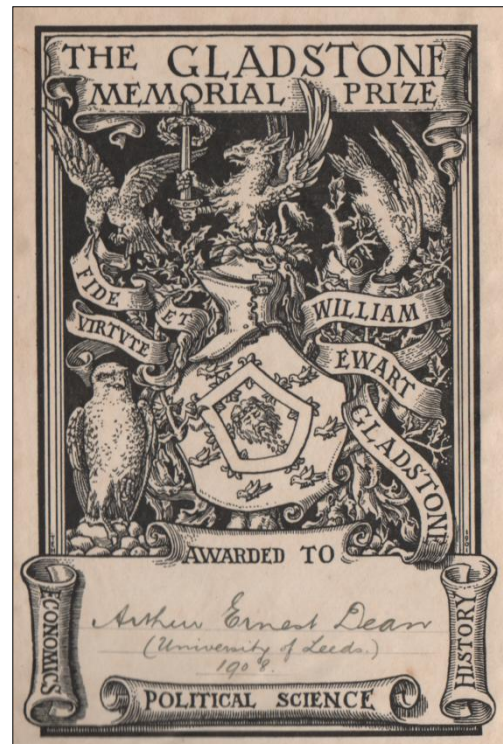
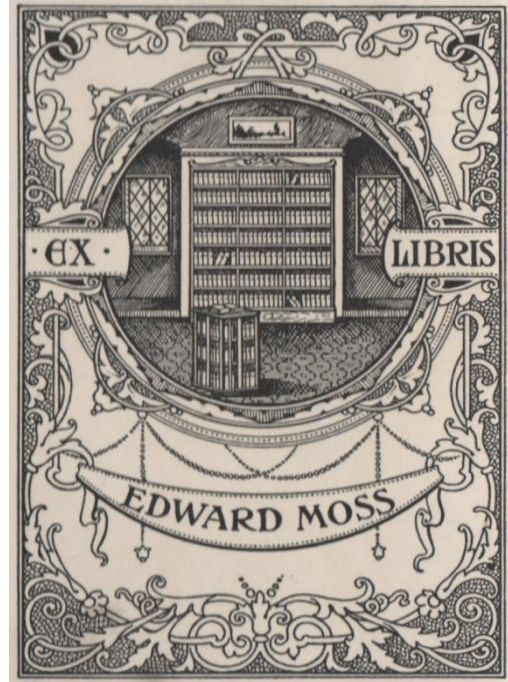
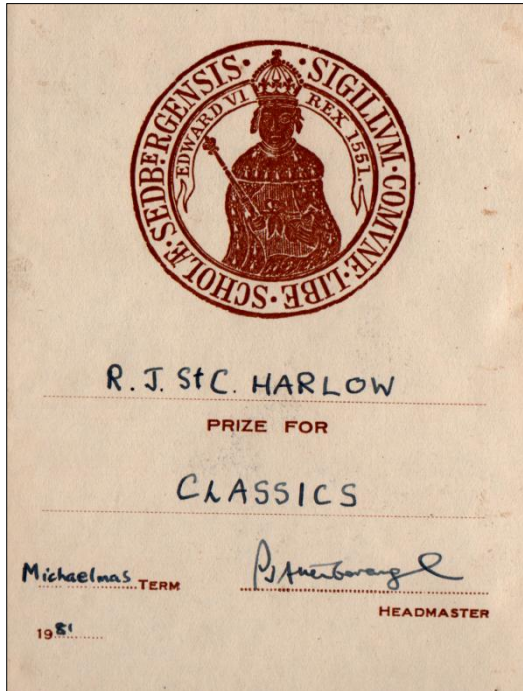
Serendipity brought me here as I fondly remember Prof. Mephams shop in Lincoln. Seek out Bull Yard and browse, you will be well rewarded.

This is a literary oasis located in a quiet lane close to the Minster. It is small but well organised with a catholic selection of books with something to please almost everyone! The owner is knowledgeable and helpful but also willing to leave browsers alone.

Small shop but every space well filled and no filler. Organised and a pleasure to browse. Excellent stock, mostly non-fiction. Friendly chap running it who will leave you alone or chat depending on your preference. Great prices. WAD.

9 A small selection of Bookplates from my Library

These often add to the interest and pleasure of owning old books, but are only rarely used these days



Clockwise from top left, they grace copies of: *The Oxford Book of Latin Verse* (1952); Hilaire Belloc's *This and That* (1912); John Ruskin's *Lectures on Art* (1906); and *Historical Works of Giraldus Cambrensis* (1894). (None currently for sale.)