



Coventry and Warwickshire Humanists Newsletter February 2026

Dear Fellow Humanists

Welcome to the February issue of the Coventry & Warwickshire Humanists Newsletter. I hope that you are all managing to cope with the Winter cold. Very little in actual snow and ice, but plenty of torrential rain and wind. A continual reminder of the impact of climate change. Without reminiscing, I can remember harsh winters with snow blizzards, freezing ice and below 0 temperatures. I stand to be corrected, but I cannot remember 'real' snowfall for at least 10 years? Last year, one morning we did have a snowfall, and I remember the 5-year-old girl who lives next door to be squealing and laughing and excited with delight as she rolled and cavorted in the snow. She had never seen this amount of snow before – a real treat. Unfortunately, it soon rained and washed all the snow away. Maybe in years to come, she will remember that morning, and pass it on to her grandchildren, just as I remember the heavy snowfalls I have witnessed throughout my long life. Instead of snow, we do have regular deluges of rain, almost on a daily basis. The result is waterlogged fields, thick muddy footpaths, an excess of road damage and multiple 'potholes' everywhere. It goes without saying that we need to take care of our planet, especially the bits of it that we live in. Unfortunately, I do feel that this problem will continue for several more winters. I hope that little girl in time will tell her grandchildren of the day she saw snow on the ground.

On a brighter note, I have noticed that the buds of the clematis in my garden is starting to bloom. As I am compiling this Newsletter, I have noticed the sunshine and the rise in temperature – Spring is on the way!!

Whatever you are doing for the onset of Spring, I hope that it is enjoyable and fulfilling.

Thank you and very best wishes to you all

Brian Goredema-Braid

Chair of Coventry & Warwickshire Humanists

Meetings:

Thursday 19th February: This was the second of our online meetings this year. We had invited Dominic Cawdell from the Welcome Directory to talk to us about their charity that works to empower communities to offer safe and lasting welcome to prison leavers. The Welcome Directory believes that everybody deserves to belong. Their mission is to build a network of faith or belief communities across England and Wales with the capacity to offer appropriate and safe welcome for supporting people leaving prison. Unfortunately, Dominic had double-booked this date and could not attend. I am hoping to invite Dominic or someone from his team to attend a future meeting. Nevertheless, regardless of being without a main speaker, those of us who did attend had an enjoyable discussion about Humanist School Speaking and Celebrants. This was followed by a

discussion on things that we have read, seen or heard and enjoyed. The meeting finished with the usual quiz.

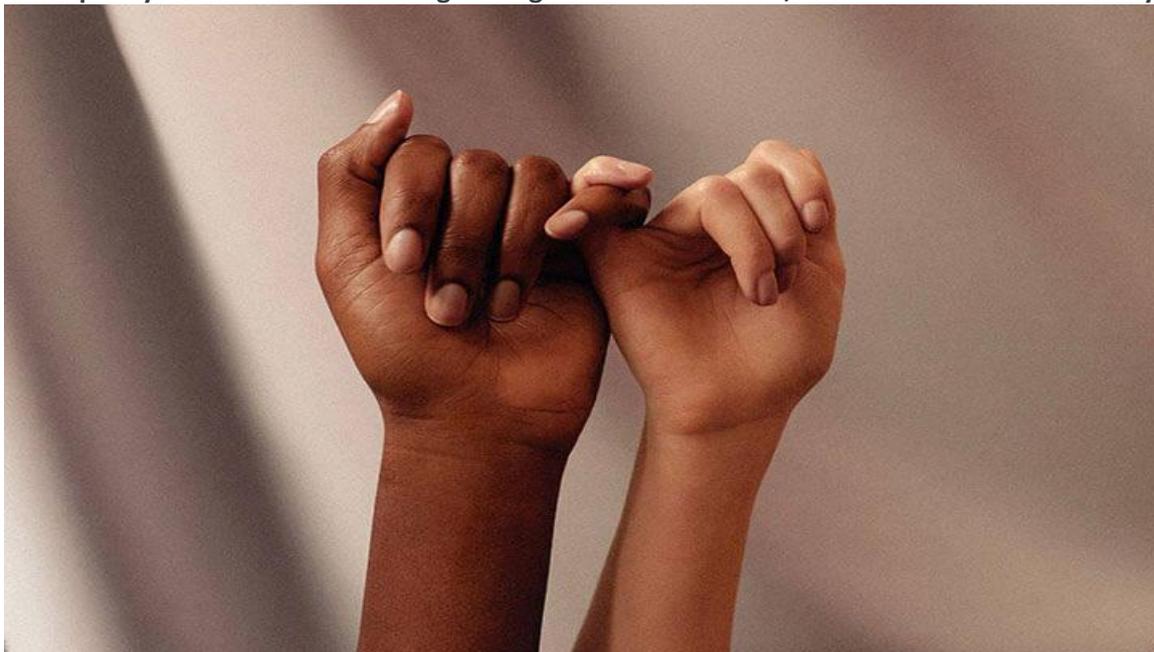
Thursday 19th March: Former Chair of this group Bob Jelley recently attended the recent Humanist UK Darwin Day Lecture – “*The Genetic Age: who shapes evolution now*” from Professor Matthew Cobb. The good news is that he has managed to obtain an early issue of the presentation from Professor Matthew Cobb. This will be the main feature of our online meeting on 19th March. I know that many people were unable to attend this fascinating lecture by Professor Matthew Cobb. Like all species, humans have been inadvertently shaping the genomes of other species – predators and prey – throughout our history. And with the development of agriculture, we began to specifically, deliberately alter plants and animals through selective breeding. But in the second half of the 20th century, that ability has taken on a new form. Not only do we have a far more precise understanding of how selection and heredity interact in agriculture, but the invention of genetic engineering in the 1970s has changed things completely.

We can now change species at will. Not only has this transformed the pharmaceutical industry – allowing the cheap manufacture of drugs like insulin – it has also altered agriculture and now, in the 21st century, threatens to change ecosystems and even humanity itself.

This should be a very interesting meeting and I am grateful to Bob for obtaining a copy of Professor Matthew Cobb’s presentation.

Please note that this meeting will be online through Zoom

The Equality Act is an essential safeguard against discrimination, and it should matter to everyone



Humanists UK is dismayed at Reform UK’s announcement that it intends to repeal the Equality Act 2010 if it were to win the next general election. Humanists UK believes the Equality Act is a vital piece of legislation that supports the fair and equal society that humanists strive to achieve. This includes legal protections against discrimination on the grounds of your religion and belief, which cuts across almost all the campaigning work Humanists UK does.

The Equality Act brings together decades of anti-discrimination law by providing protection against unfair treatment on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Act protects workers from harassment, victimisation, or unfair dismissal on grounds of these protected characteristics. For example, it maintains the rights of disabled people who require reasonable

adjustment to carry out their jobs, and protects service users from being denied access or treated unfairly.

This proposal is the latest in a series of attempts to roll back legislation that promotes a plural, tolerant, and inclusive society. Last year, Nigel Farage announced that Reform would withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) as well as several international human rights agreements if it wins the next election. Conservative Leader Kemi Badenoch also committed to withdrawing from the ECHR, and Labour has called into question how Article 3 (prohibition of torture) and Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) are interpreted in relation to asylum cases. Such moves would weaken human rights protections both at home and abroad.



Humanist UK Policy and Campaigns Manager Laura Newlyn said:

‘The Equality Act is an essential safeguard against discrimination, and it should matter to everyone. Anyone can be subjected to harassment or unfair treatment, but of course, it is the most vulnerable in our society who would be hardest hit by the loss of such a vital piece of legislation. The Equality Act needs to be strengthened, not undermined.’

Reform and Christian Heritage:

As well as proposing to remove the 2010 Equalities Act, it now appears that Reform and other right-wing political organisations are looking to market themselves through the banner of Christianity. This coincides with the growth of Christian Nationalism as reported in the October 2025 Newsletter; and the English Defence League, whose leader Tommy Robinson has apparently recently converted to Christianity? However, what they fail to recognise is that the United Kingdom is a secular state that welcomes ALL religions and none!



Zia Yusuf

In a speech on Monday 23rd February, Reform UK made significant pledges to restore Britain’s “Christian Heritage” if elected to government. The party’s spokesman, Zia Yusuf, **(1)** has emphasised the importance of protecting Britain’s Christian values, **(2)** which he believes are under threat due to mass immigration from ‘low-trust societies.’ **(3)** Yusuf has proposed preventing churches from being converted into mosques and introducing a “patriotic curriculum” in schools to promote Christianity.

The party aims to grant automatic listed status to churches, ensuring their historic character is preserved and preventing changes that could alter their use. **(4)** These measures are part of a broader strategy to renew Britain’s religious faith and cultural identity. **(5)**

- (1)** Yusuf describes himself as a ‘British Muslim Patriot’ – surely a contradiction in terms according to this speech?
- (2)** Didn’t Yusuf temporarily resign from Reform due to the suggestion that some members of Reform wanted a ban on the burqa?
- (3)** What is a ‘low-trust society’ – it would be helpful if Yusuf could provide an example of what is a ‘low-trust society’ and what constitutes it being described as a ‘low-trust society’?
- (4)** Is Yusuf aware that many churches are facing difficulties in maintaining their buildings? Hence the need for many church buildings to diversify their use in order to attract new income?
- (5)** ‘Renewing Britain’s religious faith’? – Regardless that the 2021 Census confirmed that less than 44% of the population considered themselves as Christian

The vice president of Reform UK’s Christian Fellowship, Dan Barker, told *Premier Christian News* he agrees with Yusuf.

"I think most people would agree," he said. "If you asked the man in the street (**obviously not ‘the woman’?**) about Christian values, the public good, the social good that is Christianity, that has declined in recent decades. There’s been a vacuum that has been filled by other ideas, with other

religions – or no religion - or some quite dangerous political ideologies.” ***(Again, it would be helpful if Mr Barker could be more specific of what are those “dangerous ideologies”? And what makes them dangerous? Is having ‘no religion’ such a danger?)***

Barker added that he believes Yusuf is right to object to churches being converted into spaces for other religions. “Some of these buildings have been the centre of our communities for hundreds of years,” Barker said. ***(So are schools, pubs and post offices etc.)*** “They're intrinsically linked to those communities, so for a church to fall into disrepair and then with very little control, to be converted into a mosque or some other Hindu temple, has to be stopped. There's got to be restrictive covenants to say these churches are only for Christian use.” ***(Surely, the change of a church use requires ecclesiastical permission from the local Synod as well as an appropriate by-law within the local government structure? What other restrictions is he proposing?)***

When asked whether Reform UK’s stance on immigration goes against Jesus’ teachings of welcoming the stranger, Barker said: “Jesus talked about nations and about the rule of law and authority. And what we're seeing here with illegal immigration is exactly the opposite of that. It's lawlessness, it's criminality. ***(Personally, I do not remember anything in Matthew, Mark, Luke or John of Jesus talking about nations and the rule of law? Perhaps Mr Barker has conveniently glossed over the bit about the ‘Good Samaritan’?)***

“Christianity has taken a back seat for too long. It’s part of our heritage, it's part of our history, it’s so intrinsic to who we are as a country. We've got so much to be proud of, and so much of that is tied up with our Christian heritage. ***(Maybe Mr Barker has forgotten that the Roman Catholic Church was once part of ‘our’ historical heritage - but not since the 16th Century?)*** I think we need to be talking about it more often and in a more confident way. And I'm glad that's what Zia did today. He's started the conversation.”

Are Christians really that desperate for further representation that they feel that they have to sell their souls and principles and get into bed with a populist political party whose main wish to get rid of our Human Rights Act?

However, I do not believe that most Christians will be on board with Reform and its so-called Christian Heritage choice. I am nevertheless aware that many vicars, priests, Imams and Rabbi’s etc. are doing some good works in difficult and deprived communities, which is far from what Yusuf and Barker are proposing. But what a lot of these so-called British patriots forget as I mentioned above, that the United Kingdom is a secular state that welcomes all religions and none.

Scottish Religious Observance Bill is a major blow to Children’s rights

In a disastrous move, the Scottish Government’s Religious Observance Bill has passed, which will not allow children to opt themselves out of mandatory religious observance.

Humanists UK agrees with Humanist Society Scotland that this legislation is fundamentally broken: it fails to give pupils an independent right to withdraw from religious worship in schools, despite repeated warnings from children’s rights experts, charities, and human rights bodies that Scotland’s current approach is incompatible with children’s rights.

This Bill flies in the face of a recent Supreme Court ruling that an exclusively Christian religious education and collective worship amounted to ‘indoctrination’.

What is the legislation?

The Bill’s formal title is the Children (Withdrawal from Religious Education and Amendment of UNCRC Compatibility Duty) (Scotland) Bill. The Bill passed its third and final vote at the Scottish Parliament on 17 February by 66 votes to 51, with seven abstentions.

Prior to the Bill passing, a parent had the right to withdraw their child from religious observance and religious education. This Bill changed the process by requiring schools to inform pupils when a parent asks to withdraw them, give pupils a chance to express a view, and, crucially, where the pupil disagrees with the parent, the school must follow the pupil’s wishes.

The new law will make it possible for pupils to **opt in** to religious observance against their parents’ wishes, but **does not create a route for pupils to opt out**. Humanists UK is concerned that this could

open the door to further coercion and stigmatisation of non-religious pupils who do not want to take part in acts of worship.

Who is against it and why?

Humanists Society Scotland has said they are ‘extremely disappointed that the Scottish Government’s broken religious observance bill has passed.’ They recently published a report on religious observance in schools, which has catalogued children being forced to pray, schools claiming such assemblies are justified as ‘this is a Christian country’, homophobic speaker visits, and parents and children being denied their rights to opt out. Their Policy and Campaigns Officer Joe Higgins said: ‘[The Scottish] Government is not on the side of children and young people. When challenged by the church establishment, his Ministers fell into line and maintained the right to force school pupils to take part in Christian worship.’

The Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland said they ‘cannot support Part 1 of the Bill in its current form’. Part 1 is the section dealing with withdrawal from religious observance and religious education.



The Scottish Human Rights Commission flagged ‘significant concerns’ about the Bill in evidence to Holyrood last year. Specifically, about Part 1, they said: ‘The blunt prioritisation of the rights of the parent is maintained in these circumstances. The views of the child are not considered at all.’ Together (Scottish Alliance for Children’s Rights) similarly warned ahead of the final vote that, as drafted, the Bill still does not guarantee an independent right to withdraw from religious observance and ‘risks embedding a discriminatory approach into law’.

Why does it open the door for court challenges?

In November 2025, the Supreme Court ruled on a case known as *JR87* that an exclusively Christian religious education and collective worship were ‘indoctrination’. It also found that withdrawal arrangements were not only insufficient to deal with the issue, but also placed an undue burden on families and risked stigmatising children. While the case concerned Northern Ireland, the judgment has profound implications for collective worship in England, Wales, and Scotland.

Humanists Society Scotland has warned that ‘it won’t be long before a family with non-Christian children uses the courts to secure the rights the Scottish government has failed to offer them: freedom of religion and belief for their children.’

In a small piece of good news, an amendment was voted through which will allow ministers to create an opt-out right for pupils in future without creating new primary legislation. This creates a route for the Scottish Government to enact the changes needed to bring its education policy in line with UN and ECHR guidance. They will be able to do this without the need for another bill.

Karen Wright, Director of Human Rights and Advocacy at Humanists UK, said:

‘Humanist Society Scotland is right – the Supreme Court has made it clear that collective worship in schools can breach children’s rights, even where a parental opt-out exists, especially when withdrawal is difficult in practice or risks stigmatisation. Scotland should act now by guaranteeing an independent right for pupils to withdraw.

‘Governments across the UK must urgently review collective worship laws in light of *JR87* – not just simply update guidance – and move to replace them with inclusive assemblies and teaching that respect every child’s freedom of belief.’

Christian evangelising in Scottish schools exposed ahead of Holyrood school worship vote

New data published by Humanist Society Scotland (HSS) just days before the final vote on the Scottish Government’s Religious Observance (RO) Bill, has found widespread Christian evangelising

during RO sessions in Scotland's non-denominational schools. HSS argues the figures show that the Scottish Government's long-standing assurances that RO is 'inclusive, objective, and pluralist' are not borne out in practice, and that MSPs must act now to protect pupils' rights by amending the Bill to give pupils an independent opt-out.

Audit of 280 non-denominational schools

HSS obtained FOI data from 280 non-denominational schools across Scottish Borders, Falkirk, and Highland councils. The audit found that:

- 71% of RO sessions were delivered by Christian representatives
- Across the Borders and Highlands, just two non-Christians led RO events during the whole of 2025

54% of RO was prayer or worship-based and required pupils to affirm belief in God

HSS points out that this is happening in areas where, according to the 2022 Census, 68% of children aged 5–17 have no religion. The findings raise serious concerns that pupils are being pressured to participate in worship or make declarations of belief they do not hold.

Crunch vote on 17 February



The report's release comes ahead of the final Holyrood vote on the Scottish Government's Religious Observance Bill on 17 February. HSS is urging MSPs to amend the Bill so that it gives pupils an independent right to withdraw themselves from religious observance. Currently the Bill only allows pupils to opt back in to RO if they have been withdrawn by parents or guardians.

HSS recently made a major warning that Scottish schools risk 'sleepwalking into legal cases' if the Scottish Government failed to introduce an independent right for pupils to opt out of RO in its Bill. HSS is encouraging people to reach out to their MSP and call on them to guarantee pupils an independent opt-out from school worship.

Collective Worship under the spotlight across the UK

Elsewhere in the UK, Humanists UK campaigns to end the legal requirement for daily collective worship and to replace it with inclusive, educational assemblies suitable for all pupils. Most recently, Humanists UK called on UK and Welsh governments, and the Northern Ireland Executive to review and reform collective worship in response to the 2025 Supreme Court ruling which found that an exclusively Christian religious education and collective worship were 'indoctrination'. The court also found that withdrawal arrangements were not only insufficient to deal with the issue.

While the UK Government has announced that it remains 'committed' to collective worship in schools, it has announced that collective worship guidance for England will be reviewed. Humanists UK has argued that this will not go far enough, and that only a full repeal of collective worship will address the issues raised by the Supreme Court.

Commenting on the report, Humanists UK's Policy and Campaigns Manager Lewis Young, said:

'With the crunch Holyrood vote just days away, MSPs have a real chance to stop pupils being treated as a captive audience for worship. This new report from HSS shows that, despite assurances from the Scottish Government, school worship is overwhelmingly Christian and often prayer-based, despite most school-aged children in these areas having no religion.

'This isn't a Scotland-only issue. The UK Supreme Court's ruling in *JR87* has made clear that compulsory collective worship is indoctrination and that parental right to withdraw doesn't sufficiently deal with the issue. Governments across the UK must now urgently review collective worship laws, and replace this out-dated requirement with inclusive assemblies every young person can benefit from.'

The Science of Fate Rosalind Franklin Lecture 2026 with Dr Hannah Critchlow, chaired by Samira Ahmed - Thursday 5 March, 19:30–21:00 at Conway Hall, London and Online



The Science of Fate

For millennia, humanity has wrestled with the concept of destiny. To the ancients, it was the whim of the gods; to Enlightenment thinkers, it was a superstition to be swept away by the autonomous self. But as we venture further into the 21st century, a new kind of determinism is emerging – not written in the stars, but said to be inscribed in our DNA and our neural wiring.

In this riveting lecture on the science of fate, Dr Hannah Critchlow will invite us to reconsider the 'free will' we cherish, investigating whether, to any degree, it could be an illusion generated by the brain's need for a coherent narrative – and the possible risks of such 'forbidden knowledge'.

Hannah will take us on a journey through the developing, hungry, and caring brain, examining how our lives are shaped by forces set in motion long before our conscious minds take the stage. She will explore how the microscopic methylation of our DNA in the womb and the structural sensitivity of our amygdalae influence and drive our political affiliations, our mental health, and even our romantic choices.

Yet, this is not a counsel of despair. Hannah will demonstrate that by accepting the reality of our biological constraints, we may finally acquire the tools to alter them.

Dr Hannah Critchlow is an internationally acclaimed neuroscientist, broadcaster, and author with a background in neuropsychiatry. She is a Fellow at Magdalene College, University of Cambridge, and has been named a Top 100 UK Scientist by the Science Council for her work in science communication. Hannah is widely known for demystifying the human brain for public audiences, having presented and contributed to numerous television and radio programmes, including BBC Radio 4's *The Life Scientific* and *Tomorrow's World Live*.

Hannah's research and writing focus on the brain's potential and the extent to which our biology dictates our future. In 2019, she published *The Science of Fate*, which received critical acclaim for its accessible approach to complex neuroscience, went on to become a Sunday Times Bestseller, and was translated into eight different languages. In 2022, *Joined-Up Thinking: The Science of Collective Intelligence and its Power to Change Our Lives* was published to critical acclaim, and her next book, *The 21st Century Brain*, will be published later this year.

About Samira Ahmed

Journalist and broadcaster Samira Ahmed presents *Front Row* on Radio 4, *Newswatch* on BBC1 and co-hosts the vintage TV podcast *Through The Square Window*. She writes a column in *New Humanist* and is President of the Twentieth Century Society, which campaigns to protect modern architectural heritage. Samira is a trustee of the Centre for Women's Justice. Her BFI Film Classics book on the Beatles' first film *A Hard Day's Night* is published in April 2026 by Bloomsbury.

Early Bird tickets to attend the **Rosalind Franklin Lecture 2026** are available now – and are running low.

Cinema Film Preview:

(Some are shown on the main cinema circuit, but most are available at the small art cinemas, Warwick Arts Centre, Midland Arts Centre and Leamington Spa Theatre)

The Chronology of Water: A journey through the sensuous and the sensual, Kristen Stewart's film chronicles writer Lidia Yuknavitch's life as she experiences and processes childhood abuse, first love, addiction and grief. Led by a raw and magnetic performance from Imogen Poots.

Peaky Blinders: The Immortal Man: The long-awaited feature film of the popular TV series.

Birmingham, 1940. Amidst the chaos of WWII, the dilemmas for Tommy Shelby with the future of the family and the country at stake, Tommy must face his own demons, and choose whether to confront his legacy, or burn it to the ground. Starring the excellent Cillian Murphy as Shelby.

The Secret Agent: A Brazilian film set during the 1977 notorious military dictatorship is already receiving rave reviews. Marcelo is missing his ID and seeks asylum to be nearer to his young son. Arriving at Recife during a raucous carnival he is enveloped by the corruption and paranoia, especially from the sleazy local police chief and his deputies

Sirat: Described as an 'apocalyptic road movie' A father and his young son scour the Moroccan desert, searching for a lost daughter. Along the way, they join a nomadic community of ravers and are swept into a world of pounding techno, dust storms, and looming conflict.

Wasteman: Set within a claustrophobic and often brutal UK prison, a mild-mannered inmate whose hopes for an early release are jeopardized when his charismatic but menacing new cellmate forces a choice between prison loyalty and freedom. Starring David Jonsson and Tom Blyth

Sound of Falling: A German family farm in a region that saw both world wars and defined Cold War divisions between East and West Germany. As time moves both forwards and backwards, 4 generations of girls each faces her own particular fate. A sombre study of Germany's national trauma, the effects of violent patriarchy and of successive conflicts for young women and girls.

Good Luck, Have Fun, Don't Die: A wildly inventive sci-fi satire of a man claiming to be from the future who storms into a Los Angeles diner looking for volunteers to assist him in fighting against a coming artificial intelligence uprising. Is he crazy or the only sane person in the room? Funny, daring and completely off-the-wall, and some biting things to say about the AI revolution and a world where everyone is glued to their devices.

The Tasters: Based on Italian author Rosella Postorino's bestselling novel *At the Wolf's Table* and inspired by the true story of Margot Wölk, A woman flees Berlin to escape the bombs of World War II, she is recruited to become one of Hitler's food tasters - a group of young women whose sole job is to sample every dish prepared for the Führer and ensure it hasn't been poisoned. She finds herself torn in her loyalties divided between a handsome SS officer and the other food tasters.

The Love That Remains: Set against the sweeping landscapes of southern Iceland, a family facing the end of a marriage must find new ways to connect and create fresh memories - with a little help from moments of surreal fantasy.

Project Hail Mary: Based on the novel by Andy Weir, a science teacher wakes up on a spaceship light years from home with no recollection of who he is or how he got there. He realises he's been sent on a mission to solve the riddle of why the sun is dying out and save Earth from annihilation – but an unexpected friendship means he may not have to do it alone. Starring Ryan Gosling

Broken English: An inventive and soulful portrait of cultural icon Marianne Faithfull. The layered structure on which *Broken English* rests is the fictional 'Ministry of Not Forgetting' who take Marianne on a journey into a rich and event-filled past.

The Bride: A lonely Frankenstein travels to 1930s Chicago to seek the aid in creating a companion for himself. Reinvigorating a murdered young woman is born – but she's beyond what either of them intended, igniting a radical social movement. Starring Christian Bale and Jessie Buckley

Midwinter Break: Based on Bernard MacLaverly's novel, which follows retirees Stella and Gerry on a trip to Amsterdam at a crunch point in their marriage. Their city break has the potential to become

something much more life-changing as the pair reflect on the past, their problems in the present, and consider their future together. Starring Lesley Manville and Ciaran Hinds

Resurrection: Spanning a century, and divided into six chapters, with each taking place in a specific cinematic era and genre. Characters in this time-travelling opus live forever, but often at a high cost.

Joe Lycett – Cinemagoers Welcome: The comedian explores his love/hate relationship with stand-up while welcoming the audience to heckle, play with their phones and walk in and out. Filmed in 3 venues, we see how this experiment panned out in front of different audiences.

Still on the Main Circuit:

Wuthering Heights: Yet another version of the Bronte classic. Described as an epic tale of lust, love and madness. Starring Margot Robbie and Jacob Elordi

If I had Legs I Would Kick You: Described as a white-knuckle comedy. The life of a woman whose life is crashing down. With her husband away, the house floods and her child has a mysterious illness. Very little relief from her long-suffering therapist. Starring Rose Byrne.

All That's Left of You: In the occupied West Bank, a Palestinian teenager is swept into a moment of violence that rocks his family. Spanning 7 decades from 1948, tracing the experiences of one uprooted family and the pain of dispossession and survival.

EPIC: Elvis Presley in Concert: A definite one for Elvis fans! Elvis sings and tells his story like never before. Described as 'one of the most exciting concert films you've ever seen'. Including unseen performance footage covering the latter years of Elvis's greatness.

The Testament of Ann Lee: Maybe not one for atheists? In 18th Century England and America, visionary leader Ann Lee rises from obscurity to forge the Shaker movement. Driven by beliefs in social equality, she gathers followers who come to see her as the female embodiment of Jesus (yes, I know – I did warn you!!). Starring Amanda Seyfried

Send Help: Linda and Bradley are the only survivors of a plane crash and find themselves stranded on a deserted island. Overcoming grievances and working together to survive, but finding themselves in a humorous battle of wills. Starring Rachel McAdams

The President's Cake: A young girl is faced with the challenge of baking a cake for her school's celebration of Saddam Hussein's birthday. Considered by some to be a great honour, but she feels it is an impossible task. She and her grandmother struggle to get by. The girl is determined to find the ingredients. A comic and tragic film through a child's eye view of living in a dictatorship

Avatar: Fire and Ash: A return to the stunning world of Pandora in James Cameron's new visually thrilling adventure. Starring Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana, Oona Chaplin and Stephen Lang

Hamnet: The long-awaited film adaptation of Maggie O'Farrell's bestselling novel features mesmerising performances by Jessie Buckley and Paul Mescal. William Shakespeare and his wife struggle to come to terms with the loss of their only son, Hamnet – the grief driving a wedge between the couple.

The Voice of Hind Rajab: The last recorded words of a 6-year-old girl in Gaza into a vital act of remembrance. The film captures both the unbearable suspense of the complex rescue attempt and the impossible choices faced by first responders, creating a devastating and unforgettable portrait of innocence in the face of unspeakable violence. A definite 'must-see' film

Marty Supreme: It's 1952, and Marty Mauser is stuck selling shoes. Table tennis has become his escape hatch. In post-war USA, table tennis is barely more respected than tiddlywinks. A bold, kinetic portrait of a fast-talking dreamer, hellbent on turning an overlooked sport into his personal springboard to glory. Starring Timothée Chalamet in the title role

No Other Choice: When a paper expert is abruptly laid off, he loses the perfect life he's worked hard for. So, when a new job comes along, he realises a perfect plan – by getting rid of his competition via any available means.

28 Years Later: The Bone Temple: Expanding upon the world created by Danny Boyle and Alex Garland in 28 Years Later - but turning that world on its head. Dr. Kelson (Ralph Fiennes) finds

himself in a shocking new relationship, with consequences that could change the world as they know it, whilst Spike's (Alfie Williams) encounter with Jimmy Crystal (Jack O'Connell) becomes a nightmare he can't escape.

The Screening of Live Theatre Plays from the West End

Othello: Filmed live from Theatre Royal in Haymarket – with David Harewood in the title role and Toby Jones and Caitlan Fitzgerald

All My Sons: Bryan Cranston and Marianne Jean-Baptiste feature in a five-star, triumphantly acclaimed new production of Arthur Miller's classic play, from visionary director Ivo Van Hove

Playboy of the Western World: Nicola Coughlan joins Éanna Hardwicke and Siobhán McSweeney in John Millington Synge's riveting play of youth and self-discovery.

Les Liaisons Dangereuses: Lesley Manville joins Aidan Turner in a striking new staging of Christopher Hampton's celebrated adaptation of the classic novel, where among the glittering salons of the super-rich, one misstep can mean ruin.

Art Exhibitions on Screen:

Caravaggio

Turner and Constable

Frida Kahlo

Also look out for the re-screening of BAFTA Winners and Nominees and Oscar Nominees:

- **One Battle After Another**
- **I Swear**
- **Marty Supreme**
- **Sinners**

TV Programmes and Films:

Friday 27th February:

20.30 – BBC1: Would I lie to You? Hosted by Rob Brydon, this week David Mitchell and Lee Mack are joined by David Morrissey, Holly Willoughby, John Kearns and Montell Douglas.

21.00 – BBC1: Death in Paradise: Another episode of the detective series set in the Caribbean

22.40 – BBC1: The Graham Norton Show: A compilation of highlights from the recent series

23.00 – BBC2: Scrappers: Comedy drama starring Lola Campbell and Harris Dickinson. Since the recent death of her mother, 12-year-old Georgie has fended for herself on her London council estate, selling off stolen bikes while telling elaborate lies to keep social services at bay.

00.20 – BBC2: Relic: Supernatural horror mystery starring Emily Mortimer, Robyn Nevin and Bella Heathcote. An elderly woman is reported missing, her daughter and granddaughter begin searching her large, rural house for clues. But when she emerges, confused and disoriented. Is her dementia getting worse, or is something more sinister going on?

Saturday 28th February:

20.15 – ITV1: The Brit Awards – Jack Whitehall hosts the annual music industry ceremony. Expect to see plenty of musicians and singers etc. **Repeated Tuesday at 22.45 on ITV1**

21.20 – BBC1: The Walsh Sisters – Another episode of the series about 5 Irish women overcoming heartbreak, grudges and chaos

21.20 – BBC4: The Turkish Detective – A welcome repeat of this exceptional crime series set in Istanbul. **Next episode at 22.10**

22.15 – Channel 4: Mission Impossible – Ghost Patrol – Another spy thriller starring Tom Cruise

00.05 – BBC1: Scent of a Woman - Oscar-winning drama starring Al Pacino and Chris O'Donnell.

Student Charlie Simms doesn't realise what he's let himself in for when he takes on a Thanksgiving holiday job looking after blind Lieutenant Colonel Frank Slade.

Sunday 1st March

17.05 – BBC2: Emma – Period comedy drama based on the novel by Jane Austen, starring Anya Taylor-Joy, Johnny Flynn and Josh O'Connor. Emma, handsome, clever and rich, is determined to be the local queen of matchmaking, much to the irritation of her widowed father and neighbour. Stare in amazement at Bill Nighy's suits!!! **Repeated 19.30 on Monday BBC3**

20.00 – BBC1: Call the Midwife – Another episode of the series about midwives in post-war Britain

21.00 – BBC1: Lord of the Flies - Drama based on William Golding's novel about boys stranded on a desert island.

21.00 – ITV1: The Lady – Another episode based on the story of Sarah Ferguson's former royal dresser. Starring Mia McKenna-Bruce and Natalie Doomer

21.00 – BBC3: Point Blank - Action thriller starring Patrick Swayze and Keanu Reeves. Novice FBI agent Johnny Utah is tasked with tracking down a gang of four bank robbers, who carry out their raids wearing masks of former American presidents.

22.00 – BBC2: Misery - Psychological thriller based on the novel by Stephen King, starring James Caan and Kathy Bates. A successful novelist is injured in a car accident and taken in by an ex-nurse, a devoted fan of the novelist and his fictional heroine.

22.15 – ITV1: Bad Boys - Action comedy thriller starring Martin Lawrence and Will Smith. Two Miami drugs squad detectives are assigned to track down a missing \$100-million shipment of heroin.

23.00 – BBC4: The Lady from the Sea - Adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's play that follows a lighthouse-keeper's daughter who is trapped in her marriage and longing for the sea. Starring Irene Worth

23.45 – BBC2: Hounded - Action horror starring Samantha Bond and James Lance. 3 mates are hired to rob a stately home. But the homeowners have something more sinister in mind for the thieves, who are plunged into a battle for survival.

Monday 2nd March

20.30 – BBC2: Mastermind - Another round of the popular quiz

21.00 – BBC2: University Challenge – Another bathe of wits between the university teams

21.00 – BBC1: Silent Witness - Part one of two. The team must navigate complex international tensions as they investigate the apparent suicide of a British-Chinese pro-democracy activist.

21.00 – ITV1: The Lady – Jane now faces trial the court

22.40 – BBC1: Industry – Another episode of the drama of the backstabbing, high pressure, glamorous world of high finance

23.00 – BBC2: LS Lowry: The Unheard Tapes - An insight into the secretive 'matchstick men' painter. His life story in unheard interviews from the end of his life story and the changing north, he captured in his iconic paintings. Lip-synced by actors Ian McKellen and Annabel Smith.

23.45 – BBC1: King of Thieves - Crime drama based on a true story, A former career criminal comes out of retirement for one last job: robbing a jewellery vault in London's Hatton Garden. A galaxy of British film icons including Michael Caine, Jim Broadbent, Tom Courtney, Ray Winstone, Paul Whitehouse and Michael Gambon etc.

00.00 – BBC2: Official Secrets - Fact-based drama about the publication of a leaked GCHQ memo in the run-up to the Iraq war. Starring Keira Knightley Matt Smith

Tuesday 3rd March:

20.00 – BBC2: Digging for Britain - Former Humanist President Alice Roberts visits the north of Britain to look at the most fascinating archaeology uncovered in the region over the course of 2021.

21.00 – BBC1: Silent Witness – The 2nd episode of the forensic investigation team

A Few Cartoons



4th Anniversary of War in Ukraine



Kier Starmer's Future?

A Few Funnies to Finish With:

Me: Have you any books by Shakespeare?

Librarian: Any particular one?

Me: William.....

My son plans to study temperature at university. He hopes to get a degree.

Who ever said, "Out of Sight, Out of Mind," never had a snake disappear in the bedroom.

I always confuse the words "insomnia" and "amnesia", so I can't remember if I'm not able to sleep.

I received a blank text from my wife. When I got in from work I asked: "why did you send me a blank text?" She replied: "Because I'm not talking to you."

I got fed up with my doorbell ringing every five minutes so I had it removed. The chap removing it handed me the bill and told me it was the no-bell peace price.

There's a movie coming out about a mobile home, I just saw the trailer

Why doesn't Head & Shoulders have a body wash called Knees & Toes?

Q. What do you call someone who always states the obvious? A. Someone who always states the obvious.

Went to the Doctors with my blocked ear. The Doctor asked, "What ear is it?" I replied "2026"

The guy who smashed a regional topiary contest failed to advance further, merely leaning on the hedge - his disappointed fans accused him of resting on his laurels.....

I've got a nice side-line reselling England flags that people are littering the streets and hedge rows with, one bloke has rebought the same flag three times.

My daughter wanted a Cinderella themed birthday party. So, I invited all her friends round to do the housework and laundry.

A lot of women say their husband never listened to them. I am proud to say I have never heard my wife say that.

My old dad used to say..." Always be upfront with everyone! " A great man – but a terrible goalkeeper!

Q. My child doesn't want to eat meat. With what can I replace it?

A. A dog, dogs love meat...

First rule of cleaning while listening to music: The toilet brush is NEVER the microphone.