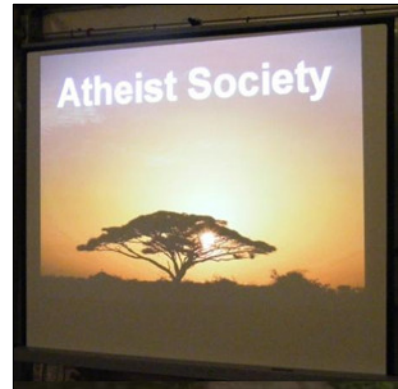


Rationalist Week 2009
AHS Volunteering Brochure



Introduction



With the third year of Rationalist Week quickly approaching, for me, the excitement is starting to build. Sure I love my birthday, Christmas, while in obvious need to re-naming to something more suitable is a nice time to spend with the family and our (in)famous weekend away always provides an exciting trip, I would probably have to say that Rationalist Week currently claims the top spot in my social calendar. It's a chance to promote the great work done by the society to thousands of people and really bring the society together. Our committee, like yours no doubt, is working hard all year to put on great events for our members and it's fantastic to see their work getting the recognition they deserve.

Rationalist Week at Leeds has always been run on a wing and a prayer, something which is especially hard to do when you don't have a god to send that prayer to. We dream big and as I hope this document will show, we're continuing this fine tradition with the amazing event that we are planning this year.

The behind the scenes planning and consultations have already been going on for months in order to ensure that this year's event once again becomes the biggest and best event we have ever run. Now we're offering the chance for everyone to get involved, which is the nice way to put begging people to help out ;). So, see you there, right?

*Chris Worfolk,
Events Secretary*

A rich history

Rationalist Week started only a few months into the society's history when, while the four or five members who had turned up to the meeting were sat round at the table in our meeting room, at the time the Green Action Zone. I entered, sat down and said, "I've had this idea."

Within weeks we had outlined and begun to put into preparation a plan for a huge awareness week with one thing in mind – how could we run more events than the other awareness weeks on campus, make it bigger and better. Of course back then we were severely limited by manpower and funding but never the less managed to throw together a week of exciting events, socials and debating.

For those involved it created lasting memories whether it was in jokes about the amount of twine we ended up using throughout the week or reminiscing about Rich wandering round drunk at 4am on Saturday morning speaking through the megaphone. Or perhaps even the debate with the Christian Union which saw 150 Christians turn up about six atheists.

By 2008 Leeds A-Soc was a rapidly growing and expanding society and our second annual Rationalist Week was a true reflection of this. Expanding the number of events to over 20, increasing the range of our reach and types of events and importantly moving everything into the tent thanks to some much needed expansion and heating solutions, it was an event designed to truly match that of the other faith and cultural societies.

With a packed out tent almost every night and a new more positive message of this being the only life we have so let's make the most of it, Rationalist Week 2008 was a true reflection of the positive message free thinkers are now bringing to the table.



An exciting future

When we first began thinking about Rationalist Week 2009, still half a year away at the time, we were struggling with ideas as to how to top last year's event once again. We had to follow the tradition of dreaming big but how do you expand an event that runs all day every day? The answer is, into the night.

Rationalist Week 2009 will begin Sunday when we begin setting up and open its doors Sunday evening. From that point on the tent will remain open until the event draws to a close on the following Saturday, 24x7 when anyone wants to come in to talk to us or just to get a free hot drink, they can.

All night debate run each Friday of Rationalist Week has always proved popular with people pouring out of the clubs and indeed of a nice hot drink and perhaps even a hot dog too. This year we're extending this to all week so that weary travellers on their way home can grab a much needed coffee and early birds who need to be up for uni in the mornings can share breakfast with us.

We've also massively expanded the amount of events running during the week. While previous years have seen around 15-20 events run throughout the week, we're looking to almost double that this year with events running throughout the day no matter what time someone drops by the tent.

We'll be running a large range of events from our previous favourites such as the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster and Unbaptism to an exciting range of talks and debates including inter-society debates with the Christian Union and others to be confirmed. While it is too early to provide a conclusive list of events, it will certainly be a rich and exciting timetable.



Get involved

The other side to this year's Rationalist Week at Leeds is the potential opened up by the AHS. For this reason we are opening this year's event up to anyone from around the country to get involved with the biggest event of its kind in the United Kingdom. Chances are that's you!

We would like to invite everyone from around the AHS to come to Leeds for the week of April 19th to 26th to get involved with the event. You don't have to come for the whole week and you don't have to help out every day, but whatever time you can spare is much appreciated.

You don't have to worry about the cost of the week as we will be paying for travel costs. We'll also be feeding everyone involved in the event so you don't have to worry about that either.

As for somewhere to stay, we're building a staff area into the tent this year which will provide somewhere for everyone involved to take breaks and grab some sleep and if you're here for a while we can also provide a proper bed and somewhere to grab a shower too. So basically, you don't need to pay for anything!

From the event I hope everyone will gain a lot of experience with regards to running events both in general and large scale events such as Rationalist Week and probably valuable leadership experience too.

The real value to be gained from Rationalist Week though is the lasting memories from being part of such a big, amazing event – the amount of in-jokes and memories that are still brought up literally every week at A-Soc from two years ago is incredible.

So if you are interested in getting involved then get in touch with any questions you may have and we're happy to answer them.



More information

If you have any questions, comments or feedback please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Chris Worfolk

0791 4290476

chris@truesuburbia.com

Leeds Atheist Society

leeds@atheistsoc.org

<http://leeds.atheistsoc.org/>

<http://leeds.atheistsoc.org/rationalistweek>