



# **Harry Stopes-Roe Archive**

## **(STOPES-ROE)**

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**Harry Stopes Roe**

**1925-2012**

**Name of Creator:** Stopes-Roe, Harry Verdon (1924-2014) philosopher and humanist

**Extent:** 44 Boxes

**Administrative/Biographical History:** Harry Stopes- Roe was born in London in 1924. He was the son of Marie Stopes, the women's rights and family planning pioneer, and Humphrey Verdon Roe. He started his career as a physicist, and received a BSc and MSc in physics from Imperial College, London. Thanks to studying physics he was exempt from military call-up during the Second World War. Once he graduated, his mother used her contacts to ensure he was offered a job in the University, and his exemption from serving was therefore continued. He then went to Cambridge University, and took a PhD in philosophy.

Stopes-Roe became a lecturer in Science Studies at Birmingham University, bringing together physics with philosophy. His work led him to seek a non-religious basis for morality in Humanism, and he became Chair of the British Humanist Association as well as having an active role in the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU).

In the 1970s, he was largely responsible for developing the BHA's policy on education, covering both religious and non-religious life stances. Stopes-Roe invented and popularised the term "life stance", initially in the context of debates over the controversial content of the City of Birmingham's Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in 1975, which referred to "non-religious stances for living", as did the subsequent British Humanist Association (BHA) booklet "Objective, Fair and Balanced" which he and David Pollock produced later in the same year. In the late 1980s, he initiated a successful campaign for the adoption of the term by the IHEU and other organisations. He represented the BHA on the Religious Education Council and he led the Values Education Council for many years. He was also president of Birmingham Humanists prior to his death. In 1986, along with Barbara Smoker, he became one of the last two Appointed Lecturers at the South Place Ethical Society, a position he retained until his death, though the Conway Hall Sunday Lectures have not been given by Appointed Lecturers for many years.

He died at the age of 90 on 11 May 2014.

**Custodial History:** Donated to Bishopsgate Institute by Mary Stopes-Roe, September 2014

**Scope and Content:** Papers of humanist philosopher, Harry Stopes-Roe (1924-2014), including minutes and papers on Religious Education [RE] and British Humanist Association [BHA] Committee, 1973-1988; reports, submissions, minutes and papers on the BHA, 1971-2009; minutes and papers on United World College of the Atlantic meetings, 1983; minutes and

papers on Schools Council meetings and religious education, 1973-1992; minutes and papers on Religious Education Council [REC] and Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education [SACRE], 1976-2012; reports and papers on Indian Rationalist Association, 1993-1998; correspondence with multiple individuals regarding humanism, morality and religious education, 1958-2003; publications regarding the energy industry, 1976-1981; publications on housing, 1975-1999; publications and papers on philosophy of education, 1988; papers and correspondence on Humanist ceremonies, 1973-2009; papers and records on the Agnostic Society, 1964-1984; papers and records on International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), 2000-2002; papers, records, minutes and publications on Birmingham Humanist Group [BHG], 1970-1989; papers and records on physics, 1940-1966; minutes and papers on Social Morality Council, 1975; photographs of the World Atheist Conference, 1990; publications, reports, drafts and other papers on marriage and relationships, 1925-1985, world population, 1974, medical ethics and bio-ethics, 1970-1995, science and education, 1970-1989, sexual education, 1967-1975; minutes and reports on Royal College of Obstetricians Committee, 1983; drafts, research materials and papers gathered for lectures on premnology, 1979-1991, ethics, 1956-1991, morality, 1968-2005, religion and theology, 1961-2004, religious education, 1969-2000, secularism, 2000-2005, humanism, 1961-2005, naturalism, 1982-1990, chreology, 1982-1990, freethought, 1998-2000, rationalism, 1998-2000, atheism, 1998-2000, stance of living, 1971-1987, epistemology, 1974-1982, AIDS and LGBT, 1990-1992, fundamentalism, 1985-2004, propensity, 2002-2004.

**System of Arrangement:** The Harry Stopes-Roe Archive has not been hierarchically arranged.

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English

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