

Charles Bradlaugh nominated for a “People’s Plaque” in Tower Hamlets

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The founder of the National Secular Society, Charles Bradlaugh, has been [shortlisted](#) by Tower Hamlets Borough Council in London for commemoration with a Blue Plaque.

The council has compiled a shortlist of seventeen notable figures and events from its past — including film director Alfred Hitchcock and herbalist Thomas Culpepper — and will honour seven of them with Blue "People's Plaques" at suitable sites. The Government's own Blue Plaque scheme was scrapped on grounds of expense.

Charles Bradlaugh (1833-1891) was a social reformer who spent his early life in Bethnal Green. He was a famous atheist and freethinker who challenged the grip that religion had in Victorian society. He was elected to Parliament to represent Northampton in 1880 but was prevented from taking his seat until 1886. He had questioned that since affirmation was already legal in courts of law, whether the same freedom of choice extended to Parliament, as he would rather not take the religious oath. However, this being ruled out, he agreed to swear the oath in order to take his elected seat – only to have that solution refused because of his known atheism. His campaigning brought about a change in the law, giving all MPs the right to affirm. He founded the National Secular Society in 1866.

The council is inviting residents of the borough (only residents may participate, being entitled to one vote each) to complete the [online form](#) by 8 December.

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