

The ending of our 150th anniversary celebrations marked a new beginning the inaugural Bradlaugh Lecture at Manchester Art Gallery on 9 September marking our 151st anniversary.

Bryan Niblett, author of the definitive biography of NSS founding president Charles Bradlaugh, presented a lecture based on his highly acclaimed book [*Dare to Stand Alone*](#).

Referring to Bradlaugh as "the greatest backbencher of the 19th century", Niblett revealed the key role that Bradlaugh played in the promotion of liberty and freethought in the UK, through championing issues such as access to birth control, republicanism, and of course secularism.

Guests also heard a 'brief history of the NSS' from NSS historian Bob Forder.

The event was timed to coincide with the re-hanging of Walter Sickert's famous portrait of Bradlaugh. It is huge and required the assistance of two abseilers to be hung overlooking the main staircase. This was the first time for generations it had been on view to the general public. It had been gifted to the gallery by the NSS's Manchester Branch in 1911. It was a pleasure to hold the event in a place of such significance to the [history of our organisation](#).

See also

- [Video: An introduction from NSS historian Bob Forder](#)
- [Video: the 2017 lecture by Bryan Niblett](#)
- [Event write up: Charles Bradlaugh: Forgotten Hero?](#)