

# UN Human Rights Council compromised by religious demands

KEITH PORTEOUS WOOD describes frustrations in influencing the debate at the United Nations

**I**ncreasing concern at the encroachment of Islamic demands into the debate about human rights at the UN took me to Geneva. I wanted to help make the case for reaffirming the universal, inalienable, individual Human Rights that religious interests are so determined to weaken.

I was representing our affiliate organisation, the International Humanist and Ethical Union. As the hours passed, I realised just how difficult it would be for an NGO such as ours to secure an opportunity to speak. After several spirited attempts over several days, we managed to make our contributions. We drew attention to attempts to silence legitimate concerns over the rise of Islamic extremism by branding them "Islamophobic" and spoke out against the alarming momentum building from Islamic delegates for an international "Combating Defamation of

Religions" super-blasphemy law.

Former IHEU president Roy Brown's dogged persistence in such situations is to be greatly admired. It was obvious that other speakers with nothing worthwhile to say were deliberately chosen to fill up the time: this obstacle course is created to obstruct those few non-Governmental organisations who want to "tell it like it is".

The meeting also provided an opportunity for me to develop our arguments in a parallel session with diplomats. UN Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief, Mrs Asma Jahangir, attended this. I contended that organised religion is the biggest threat to Human Rights jurisprudence. The reaction was one of resigned acceptance, as it had been when I made the same point in a Council of Europe conference.

## Where are Human Rights going?

The longer I observed the proceedings, the clearer it became that the battle lines on so many topics were drawn along a secular-theocratic divide. There are so many

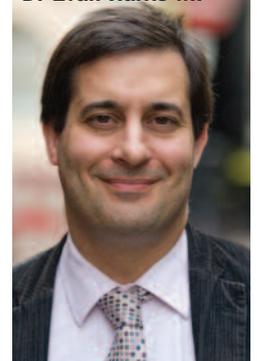
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# Blasphemy law: is our 140 year battle nearing its end?

**T**he English blasphemy laws, against which the NSS has been doing battle for 140 years, are almost certainly on the brink of being abolished. Credit must go to Honorary Associate Dr Evan Harris MP, who spotted an opportunity to call for an end to the law by tabling a Commons Amendment to the Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill.

Evan and Keith (Porteous Wood) worked throughout the Christmas break, doing copious research on previous calls for abolition stretching over several decades to ensure the case Evan made was as compelling as possible. Crucially, they also garnered support from both prominent celebrities and fellow MPs. Their efforts were rewarded with a star-studded letter in *The Daily Telegraph* supported by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, artists and comedians and a large number of Honorary Associates.

Dr Evan Harris MP



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### 3 AGM 2007

New members elected at the best-attended AGM for decades

### 4 Scout Association

"Scouting for all" slogan seems not to be quite that

### 5 Equal Opportunities

Employment Forum launched to campaign for workplace rights

## Midsummer party

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## ◀ “UN” continued

theocratic states; more than 50 in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) alone.

This voting bloc is swollen by countries such as India and Cuba in what looks like some mutual co-operation pact. They were generally seeking to undermine what they consider to be the western concept of Human Rights.

There were some spirited attempts to resist the theocratic onslaught from countries such as Canada and some secular European countries, but with little result. Overall, the secular states, even the



The Human Rights Council at work

potentially influential United States, seem to have retired from the fight.

The OIC is working to superimpose its Cairo Declaration, declared to be based on Shariah law, over the Universal Declaration. Yet it is the people in theocratic countries who most need the protection of the Declaration. The OICs next port of call is the Inter-Parliamentary Union’s meeting in South Africa in April. We have alerted parliamentarians to this.

We congratulate the British ambassador on his active support for Mrs Jahangir. I discussed the general situation with him and other diplomats; I heard no ideas for a resolution of this “clash of ideologies” impasse.

The Human Rights Council took over from the utterly discredited Commission for Human Rights, but is faring little better. How long will it be before the crucial “universal” is removed from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? I have never more hoped that my pessimism is unfounded.

The NSS made the need to actively support and protect the Declaration the subject of its New Year message [www.secularism.org.uk/makethedefenceofhumanrightsyourn.html](http://www.secularism.org.uk/makethedefenceofhumanrightsyourn.html)

## ◀ “Blasphemy Law” continued

Evan Harris did a superb job persuading a significant number of fellow MPs to back the amendment.

### Government forced to make concessions

On the day of the vote it became clear the Government was seriously concerned we might win, and in doing so cause embarrassment to both it and the Established Church. Keith Porteous Wood was in Parliament at Dr Harris’s side while the Government was negotiating. The opening deal was that, provided we withdrew our amendment, the Government *would hope* to put forward its own amendment and put its majority behind abolishing blasphemy when the Bill reached the House of Lords, a later stage in the Bill’s progress to becoming law.

We were not happy to withdraw without a more watertight guarantee. Negotiations continued throughout the day right up to the moment Evan Harris stood to speak to his amendment. Only then did the

Government strengthen its offer to being a commitment, subject only to a “short and sharp” consultation with the Church of England. Despite the deal, Evan was determined to argue the merits of our case on the floor of the House. He did so with his usual good humour, even when heckled by Catholic convert Ann Widdecombe. But rather than call for the vote, he acknowledged the Government’s offer and withdrew the motion, while making clear that he would table it again if the Government did not live up to its word.

The Joint Committee on Human Rights has come out in favour of abolition.

The greatest danger is that the Church will try to negotiate for some new law that will be an even tighter constraint on freedom of speech. We are keeping on with the campaigning, determined that having got so far we will not let victory slip through the net.

We put on record our gratitude to NSS researchers, particularly Barry Thorpe and Des Langford, for their hard work.

Those with computers may prefer to read the *Bulletin* on the NSS website (click on ‘Bulletins’) as the links shown are live. We can send the text of these items to members who do not have computers.

## European conference: Non-believers alienated from political process

The Society was invited to speak at a meeting in the European Parliament on *Religion and Politics in the New Europe* sponsored by Catholics for Choice, a liberal religious group with whom the Society co-operates over issues of common interest. The theme of Keith’s speech was that Europeans who have no religion or are not practising one are increasing in number but are increasingly disadvantaged in the political process.

[www.secularism.org.uk/europesrapidlygrowingbandofnon-r.html](http://www.secularism.org.uk/europesrapidlygrowingbandofnon-r.html)



Keith Porteous Wood on the platform at the European Parliament

# AGM 2007

At the best-attended AGM yet, **Terry Sanderson** and **Anna Behan** were re-elected President and Vice-President almost unanimously. Three new Council members were elected and have already been hard at work for us. We are delighted to welcome:

**Carla Revere**, a barrister specialising in employment and discrimination cases.

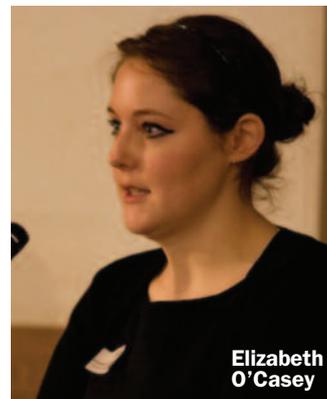
**Elizabeth O'Casey** who lives in Brussels and is ideally placed to work for us

in the European Parliament. This will help to cut down the number of visits there by UK-based staff or Council.

**Jim Nugent** who takes over as Treasurer from Afonso Reis e Sousa, who remains on the Council. Jim, who lives in Manchester, has continued important work started before his election to review and streamline our accounting records to enable them to cope efficiently with ever-increasing volumes. His



Carla Revere



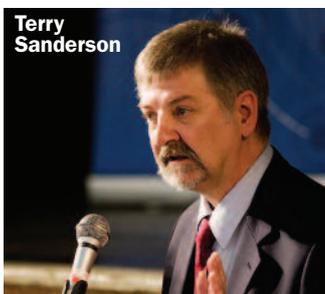
Elizabeth O'Casey

appointment has enabled Keith to relinquish more of his administration workload, and so to spend more time campaigning.

**Jim Herrick** and **Afonso Reis e Sousa** stood down as Vice-President and Treasurer but were elected to stay on Council.

**Malcolm Trahearn** retired from Council by rotation but did not offer himself for re-election. We thank Malcolm for his five years of wise counsel and assistance with administration and photography.

**The Council** is now at its maximum permitted number of 13. Under the Articles of Association rules, two or three Council members are required to retire at each AGM, but are eligible to stand again. If the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies, retiring candidates will be competing with new candidates. The positions of President, Vice President and Treasurer are for a one year term and therefore subject to election at each AGM.



Terry Sanderson



Anna Behan



Jim Nugent

## NSS leads Oxford Union debate to victory

**Keith Porteous Wood led the motion *This House Believes that the Ideal State is a Secular State*. Here's his view from the front bench:**

The debate in January was dedicated to Pakistan's assassinated Presidential candidate, Benazir Bhutto, President of the Oxford Union thirty years previously. Her son and chosen successor, Bilawal, was there to see the outcome.

Our record of success at the Union on theological arguments has been thin; the Christian Unions and other religious groups turn out in force and usually win.

The opposition team was formidable. Its leader and my opponent was the Bishop of Worcester, wearing a huge silver cross. He was aided by a co-founder of the Christian Institute, Rev David Holloway and former president of the Young Muslims Association, Zahid Amin.

Supporting me in proposing the motion were Simon Walker, an ex-President of the Union who invited Bhutto to debate this motion exactly 30 years ago, and Peter Hughes, the President of Oxford Secular Society. Simon Walker is religious, but passionate about the importance of complete separation of Church and State.

I took Human Rights adherence as my measure of countries, and mentioned the handful of states, all Muslim dominated, where both apostasy and homosexuality are capital offences. The audience was shocked to discover there is neither civil marriage nor

civil divorce in Israel. While I was revealing some truths about the Vatican, a heckler demanded to know what was wrong with bishops exercising temporal power. I referred to the November YouGov poll showing their Vatican-compliant position on abortion law was shared by only a quarter of Catholics and just a seventh of the overall UK population. It is clear the bishops' position on contraception and homosexuality is even more isolated.

I am pleased to report we won by around 56% in favour to 44% against.

■ *In November, Keith also gave a talk to Oxford Secular Society on the threat to Human Rights posed by organised religion.*



Keith Porteous Wood speaking from the dispatch box at Oxford Union

# Scouts' top brass still determined to exclude the non-religious

**L**ocal Scout Groups do excellent youth work. But the Scout Association, with its many offshoots, is not the equal opportunities organisation many believe it to be. Its ban on non-believers remains obdurately in place.

An NSS member suggested that we take up this issue and we did, jointly with the BHA. We sent the Scout Association a comprehensive submission making an incontestable case for equality. Many months and some reminders later, we were offered a meeting at UK Scout HQ, but their top brass showed no recognition of any need to change this policy. They claim their right to freedom of association permits them to admit only "people of faith" – making nonsense of "Scouting for All".

Keith Porteous Wood offered funding for a membership survey to ascertain whether members want to continue discriminating against the non-religious. The leaders dismissed this offer out of hand, which perhaps suggests that they had no confidence their members would back their discriminatory stance.

The Government has colluded with the Scouts by

## Scouts 'discriminate against atheists'

By Jonathan Petre  
Religion Correspondent

THE Scout Association was reported to the equality watchdog yesterday for discriminating against atheists. The National Secular Society

Front page of *The Telegraph* 1/2/2008

supporting a religious exemption to the Equality Bill specifically to permit this discrimination to continue. It allows only existing organisations, not new ones, to

retain a "religious promise". This clearly shows the Government realises the exception they shamelessly permitted runs counter to the principle of equality.

Keith has raised this matter with the new Equality Commission at a high level and with Secretary of State Hazel Blears. Scouts Chief Executive Derek Twine and Keith were locked in a lively debate on Radio 5 Live over the oath. Keith definitely came out on top.

### Action you can take

We would like you to publicise our position paper [www.secularism.org.uk/uploads/3547a0623e9142d307919993.pdf](http://www.secularism.org.uk/uploads/3547a0623e9142d307919993.pdf) and ask your local or county authorities what grants, rent-free or subsidised facilities they offer to the Scouts. Please enquire if they are aware the Scouts discriminate against non-religious entrants by excluding those honest enough to admit their non-belief. The non-religious form a substantial proportion of young people – as high as two thirds by some measures. **So, why not point out that Scout rules exclude the majority of young people.**

Here is a case study to which you can refer [http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/equalitiesreview/upload/assets/www.theequalitiesreview.org.uk/equalities\\_review\\_walking\\_in\\_my\\_shoes.pdf](http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/equalitiesreview/upload/assets/www.theequalitiesreview.org.uk/equalities_review_walking_in_my_shoes.pdf)

## NSS tries to get answers about West Midlands Police's pursuit of Channel 4

**L**ast January, Channel 4 screened a programme called *Undercover Mosque* as part of its Dispatches series. It showed extremist clerics—filmed with hidden cameras—preaching inflammatory sermons in Birmingham mosques. West Midlands Police seemed not to be concerned about this. Instead, they sought, but failed, to find any basis for prosecuting Channel 4 for inciting religious hatred against the Muslim community. Undeterred, they proceeded to submit a series of complaints to media regulator, OFCOM, with the public backing of

their Police Authority and the independent Crown Prosecution Service. OFCOM rejected all of their complaints. The NSS complained to West Midlands Police about their "shoot the messenger" actions against Channel 4. Our complaint was deemed inadmissible because we were not a directly interested party as defined in relevant legislation. Appeals to the Police Authority and the Police Complaints Authority were similarly rejected. We pursued them as we believe this to be a major issue of principle and we want to discourage recurrences.

Our complaints did however generate publicity and several awkward parliamentary questions – kindly asked by Honorary Associates Evan Harris and Paul Holmes. We are particularly encouraged to have received strong support off the record from senior personnel in relevant national authorities and a private assurance in Parliament that complaints have been made to the police at a high political level; any similar activities will be jumped on "like a ton of bricks". It is likely this will prove much more effective than a nominal victory at a lower level.

# Teachers' Unions are hostile to faith schools

The NSS fielded a speaker at two teachers' conferences about so-called "faith schools" in November. One was a consultancy conference of the NUT, the other a round-table conference of senior representatives of unions and campaigning groups involved in education. Keith attacked the unfairness of faith schools, pointing out that the already-difficult task of community schools is made near-impossible because aspirant pupils are creamed off by over-subscribed church schools. He drew attention to the Government's move to further reduce the protection for non-religious teachers and support staff, allowing a dwindling number of religious teachers privileged access to an ever larger pool of jobs. This takes us even further

from the principle of fair selection. Surely, Keith argued, this is what unions should be fighting for. And he gave a whole raft of reasons why minority faith schools were even worse for society at large than church schools.

It was clear that the vast majority of delegates were on his side, although the executive seemed less so. The warmth of Keith's reception was in marked contrast to that for the Anglican and Catholic speakers, one of whom seemed likely at one point to be booed off the stage.

Education Minister Ed Balls was less enthusiastic in his defence of religious schools than his predecessors when giving evidence before the Parliamentary Select Committee in a January hearing attended by Keith.

# Preacher should be expelled from equality body

**The Society called on the Government to rescind the appointment of the leader of the Evangelical Alliance, Rev Joel Edwards, as a commissioner for the new Equality and Human Rights Commission. The following quote from the *Daily Telegraph*, made before his appointment was envisaged, demonstrates his denigration of Human Rights: "Forgiveness, respect, hope and trust are all rooted in Christian faith and they are an antidote to a culture that is being railroaded into an individualistic, rights-orientated mentality." Mr Edwards accused us of intolerance when we asserted that he had "made a career out of opposing the rights of homosexuals". Yet even a cursory review of newspaper archives or the Alliance website supports our contention.**

**Provided religious people unreservedly support Human Rights principles, we are of course perfectly happy for them to be appointed to Human Rights bodies. But when they do not, such appointments place them in a powerful position to undermine the fragile edifice of Human Rights. There have been examples in the European Parliament of people diametrically opposing Human Rights seeking high office in Human Rights forums or enforcement bodies, presumably to neutralise their effectiveness. Fortunately, the most blatant attempts have been thwarted, but we must remain vigilant and be prepared to fight against such infiltration.**



Keith Porteous Wood addresses the NUT to a warm reception

Photograph © Carlos Guardia (WWW.X365682)

## Equal Opportunities Employment Forum launched

The Equal Opportunities Employment Forum has been launched to campaign for equal employment rights, especially on grounds of religion or belief. It will also consider the implications of the increasing involvement of religion in the workplace.

The launch was prompted by Section 37 of the Education and Inspections Act last year, which reduced protection for those of the 'wrong' religion or none in church schools. Forum members will be senior representatives of unions, who have already reacted positively, and others with professional experience in employment and employment law.

Work has already started in earnest after a productive

meeting with unions, parliamentarians and employment specialists in the House of Commons in January, arranged by Keith.

If you would like to assist the Forum, or if you would like to share your personal experience of Employment Equality legislation for the purposes of informing the Forum of its impact on the ground in your employment area, please contact Executive Director, Keith Porteous Wood or Council member Carla Revere, who is a barrister specialising in employment matters, via the NSS office.

The National Secular Society, which was responsible for "blowing the whistle" on Section 37, will act as the secretariat.

# NSS in the media

**T**he NSS has scored some significant media coups over the past few months, largely thanks to the constant hard work of Terry Sanderson both behind the scenes and in public, along with Keith.

On the domestic front, the NSS was extremely prominent over the holiday season, commenting on the usual non-stories about the de-Christianisation of Christmas. This included spots on BBC Breakfast TV and GMTV. Later, we talked again on Breakfast TV and Radio about the Sikh demands to carry the ceremonial dagger even through security checks. We spoke about Tony Blair's conversion to Catholicism, a top item on Channel 4 news and on several radio programmes.

There was widespread coverage of our complaint about the appointment of Rev Joel Edwards of the Evangelical Alliance to the



Terry Sanderson (pictured) quoted in the 10/1/2008 edition of *The Guardian*

Terry Sanderson of the National Secular Society said the blasphemy law was harsher now than when one of his predecessors was jailed for the offence in 1921. "In a multicultural society no one should have the right not to be offended; we should protect people, not beliefs," he said.

Equality and Human Rights Commission, given he has derided Human Rights.

We have also been featured numerous times on Sky News, ITV (including leading the secular side of debates) and Radio 5 Live. We have spoken several times on Welsh radio, Northern Ireland radio, the Asian network and many local stations, plus LBC and even Premier Christian Radio. We did a podcast for Classic fm and were quoted several times on BBC Online.

## NSS profile continues to rise

The NSS was mentioned frequently in *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Observer* and *The Times*. Stories including us also appeared in *The Daily Mail* and *The Daily Express*. We notched up some specialist titles, such as *Christian Today*, the *Catholic Herald*, *Children & Young People Now* and *Candis* magazine.

Alistair McBay continued to keep the Scottish (and some English) newspapers editors on their toes with his marvellously incisive and witty letters.

We have also been highly visible on the international stage. Our comments on the excision of anti-religious sentiment from the film version of Phillip Pullman's book *The Golden Compass* were quoted in *Entertainment Weekly* – America's première showbiz magazine – and endless blogs as well as newspapers around the world including the USA, Australia and even the USSR.

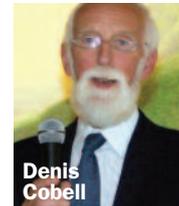
We have been regular guests on Irish radio and have done several programmes on Muslim TV, BBC World and even one debate on threats to French secularism on France24.tv. We have appeared on CNN, Brazilian and Dutch TV as well as in a documentary made by South Korean TV.

Terry and Keith have been the spokespeople for most of these broadcasts while Denis Cobell was on BBC1's *Politics Show* and Carla Revere spoke on Radio 5 Live.

# NSS Council at Large

In late October, Council member **Denis Cobell** spoke in a debate at Trinity College Oxford

– *Is Freedom of Speech at Odds with the Ideal Secular State?* He also took part in a Christianophobia debate on the BBC1



*Politics Show* in December. In January, **Norman Bacrac** spoke for the opposition in the debate at Westminster University Politics Society, *This house believes that god does exist*. **Carla Revere** has been advising on the Sikh bangle case and on equalities issues in employment law. **Elizabeth O'Casey** attended a Catholics for Choice forum with Keith and Anna Behan on Religion & Politics in the New Europe and a hearing in the EU Parliament on Cultural Diversity, Religions and Dialogue, making comments from the floor at both. She has also attended the Working Group meetings on Separation of Religion and Politics in Brussels. **Dr Anna Behan** continues her important and onerous work with the Religion and Belief Consultation Group and the fast-evolving Human Rights structures. She has written several submissions and is also leading our liaison with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, assisted by Keith.

**E**meritus Professor Colin Gallagher spoke for us at the – very religious – Durham Union in January to propose the motion 'This House has no faith in organised religion'. Also speaking for the motion was another long-standing member, Jack Jeffery, who was speaking as Vice President of the International Humanist and Ethical Union. We are assured that our side won the argument, but the formal winners there are determined by the volume of applause, not always the most reliable method.

# Secular Medical Forum

Dr Michael Irwin has handed over the running of the SMF to Dr Anthony Lempert and London-based medical student Alex Romain. We thank them for taking over the reins.

We would also like to express our gratitude to Dr Irwin for starting the group and building it up in its first year, and wish him well. The Forum is now open to all healthcare professionals, who can find out about joining at [www.secularmedicalforum.org.uk](http://www.secularmedicalforum.org.uk).

## Diary Dates

■ Our Scottish representative Alastair McBay will be giving a talk at the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in **Glasgow** on **Sunday, 17 February** on *Secularism – A New Religion?* – followed by a panel discussion.

■ If you'd like to meet other NSS members in an informal setting and let your secular hair down, we are having a lunchtime **Midsummer Party** at a central **London** venue on **Saturday, 21 June**. There will be a buffet and entertainment too, for **£20** a head **and £10 for students**. Tickets can be bought now from the NSS online shop or by cheque to the office. Tickets will be despatched in early April. We expect this to be a sell-out so make sure you book early to join in the fun!

■ **The next AGM will be on Saturday, 29 November, 2008.**

## NSS online

Our weekly email newsletter *Newsline*, researched and compiled by Terry Sanderson, continues to provide our members, and the media, with up-to-date information about secular issues and NSS activities. It also provides a platform for members to share opinions or advertise events and meetings. If you are having any difficulty receiving it, or would like a printed version, please contact the office. We are pleased to note that both Facebook and Myspace have *Friends of the National Secular Society* pages which appear to be flourishing, especially with students.

friends of the  
**NSS**

## Donations

We would particularly like to thank all members who have monthly Standing Orders as these are a much-valued source of reliable income allowing us to plan ahead and expand our campaigning. If you would like to start one or to increase the amount, forms are available from the office.

**Once again, our special thanks go to members for their large donations to support our work.**

**We have recently received three anonymous donations of £20,000, £5,000 and £1,000.**

If you would like to donate to the NSS, you can do it online on the [Join Now](#) page where there is a section for donations.

And if you would like to remember us in your will so that our work can carry on into the future, the NSS office can send you a legacy leaflet, or you can call us for information.

## Subscription increase

The following subscription increases were approved to take effect from 1 January 2008 – the current renewal:

- Ordinary** members, associate members and affiliated groups **£29** pa
- Unwaged** members **£17** pa
- Two members sharing the same address and receiving **joint** mailings **£45** pa jointly
- Life** members **£600**, £300 for those aged 65 or over.

A generous donor has agreed that part of their donation can be applied to subsidising **students'** membership subscriptions, which will now be **£9 per annum** until further notice.

The subscriptions year runs from 1 January to 31

December. Everyone's subscription is therefore now due, unless:

- They are life members or contribute £5 per month or more by standing order,
- They have already paid their annual subscription for 2008, or
- They joined in the last quarter of 2007 and by concession their next subscription is not due until 1 January 2009.

**If your subscription is due please pay it today. Not doing so ties up staff time and money that could be better spent on campaigning. If you do not have a monthly standing order, please consider setting one up. This avoids your need to remember to pay and we receive a regular income.**

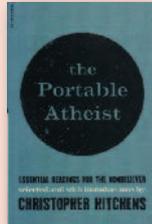
# THE NSS SHOP

A visit to the NSS's on-line bookshop has become essential for the thinking non-believer. We have accumulated a great collection of writing for you to buy on-line or by post from the office. Many titles are uniquely available from the NSS in this country.

## Portable Atheist

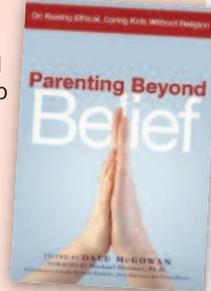
Christopher Hitchens

From NSS Honorary Associate and best-selling author of *God Is Not Great*, a provocative and entertaining guided tour of atheist and agnostic thought through the ages. Whatever your position, this will speak to you and engage you every step of the way. Hardback £10.99 plus £2 p&p



## Parenting Beyond Belief – On Raising Ethical, Caring Kids Without Religion

*Parenting Beyond Belief* is for loving and thoughtful parents who wish to raise their children without religion. Includes essays by Richard Dawkins, Penn Jillette (of Penn and Teller), Mark Twain, Jim Herrick (of the NSS) and nearly thirty other doctors, educators, psychologists, and secular parents. £10.99 plus £2 p&p

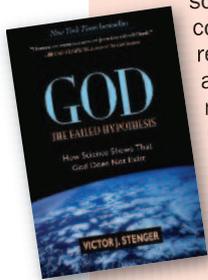


## God – The Failed Hypothesis

Victor J. Stenger

This thoughtful book examines claims for the existence of God from a scientific perspective. He concludes that beyond a reasonable doubt the universe and life appear exactly as we might expect if there were no God.

"I learned an enormous amount from this splendid book" – Richard Dawkins  
Hardback £16.99 plus £2 p&p



## The Atheist's Bible – An Illustrious Collection of Irreverent Thoughts

"All thinking men are atheists," Ernest Hemingway famously wrote. Here is a great collection of quips, quotes and questions from a distinguished assortment of geniuses and jokers, giving readers a chance to decide for themselves.

Hardback £8.99 (Plus £1.50 P&P)

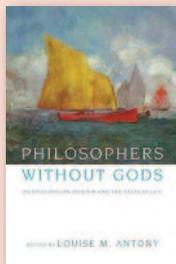
## The Happy Heretic

Judith Hayes

Judith Hayes has the unique ability to raise serious points while making us laugh as she throws buckets of cold water on the irrational beliefs and maddening inconsistencies that often characterise popular religion. By turns funny, provocative, and touching. Hardback £12.99 plus £2 p&p

## Philosophers without Gods: Meditations on Atheism and the Secular Life

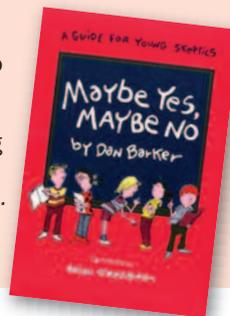
Atheists are frequently demonised as arrogant intellectuals, antagonistic to religion, devoid of moral sentiments, advocates of an "anything goes" lifestyle. Now, in this revealing volume, nineteen leading philosophers explore the inner life of atheism, shattering common stereotypes. Hardback £15.99 (plus £2 P&P)



## Maybe Yes, Maybe No – A Guide For Young Skeptics

Dan Barker

A children's introduction to healthy scepticism. This book teaches the essentials of critical thinking - "Check it out," "Repeat the experiment," "Try to prove it wrong," "It has to make sense" – illustrating each of these rules with clear examples. £8.99 (Plus £1 P&P)



# Volunteers

The NSS values the hard work done by our volunteers and we would particularly like to thank:

BRAD DAVIS of WhiteLight who designs the *Bulletin* and Annual Report with great skill

SEAN CLARK and ANTHONY DICKENS at cuttlefish.com for hosting and servicing our website, and sending out *Newsline*

BARRY THORPE, TIM BOYCE and DES LANGFORD for important research work and recent volunteer researcher JOE GLADSTONE for some ground-breaking educational research

ANDY HEDGECOCK and MALCOLM TRAHEARN for meticulous proof reading, also (for Malcolm) great assistance with photography

PAUL CHRISTOPHER OF EXESIGHT for his excellent photography at Secularist of the Year and the AGM NICK LANSLEY and TONY BOSTON for their visual and sound services at our events

STEWART WARE for continuing to advise and consult

CLAUDINE BAXTER for her much valued work in the membership department

ALASTAIR BANTON for his help in the office.

We would also like to thank everyone who helped out at the AGM, particularly STEWART WARE, COLIN SPENSELY, CLAUDINE and BOB BAXTER, MURIEL FRASER, ALASTAIR BANTON, MARTIN DOYLE and ALAN STURROCK.

national secular **Bulletin** society

Issue 38 Spring 2008

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## CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

You can join in the fight for a Secular Britain in your workplace, college, local library or meeting places with our NSS posters (two for £1.50) and leaflets (20 for £1.50) as well as back copies of the Annual Report or *Bulletins* – all available from the shop. These prices are simply to cover P&P.