

Education: addressing the real problem

Our fight continues for the dismantling of the publicly-funded religious schools system. Not only are these schools discriminatory and unjust, they pose a severe and growing threat to the unity of the nation.

Their privileged entry requirements give priority to those who are, or claim to be, religious. Scandalously, schools are also permitted to discriminate against employees of a different faith or none – or even those considered insufficiently pious. Furthermore, all maintained schools require pupils “to take part in” worship, even if this is against their own conscience.

The NSS Council has unanimously backed President Terry Sanderson’s policy. The Council is adamant that the discrimination referred to above is only a symptom of wider religious privilege, and we should not restrict our opposition to symptoms alone.

Since the NSS was founded in 1866, we have consistently held and campaigned that it is wrong in principle for the State to facilitate religious proselytising in schools: it should not be party to the promotion of any religion, especially to “captive” children. For

the State to misuse public funds to do so is inexcusable. Our objections to religious schools are not just ones of principle. They are bolstered by powerful pragmatic arguments.

Independent forecasts confirm that the long-term decline in church attendance will continue. Despite this, Christian schools are being opened in ever greater numbers under the dishonest pretext that this is a response to local demand. The greater the number of religious



Keith Porteous Wood on BBC One’s *Politics Show* opposing “faith schools”

schools, and the greater their admission privileges, the more cherry-picking of pupils there will be, and the more over-burdened community schools will suffer from losing gifted pupils. It will also be harder for those not claiming to be

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UN: Freedom of speech advance

In recent years, the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) – a coalition of 57 Islamic countries – has been successful in having several motions calling for defamation of religions legislation passed at the United Nations Human Rights Council. But the latest attempt to do so failed, much to the relief of secularists and those concerned with the protection of free speech.

The International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) and the NSS feared that the defamation laws envisaged would turn out to be like blasphemy laws, but with an international reach and far greater scope and power. Now, the hope is that any legislation will focus on religious hatred rather than defamation of religion. But, as we discovered during the debates in Westminster over our own Racial and Religious Hatred Bill, even that is a minefield.

Much of the credit for this historic reverse belongs to NSS life member Roy Brown (who was speaking on behalf of IHEU) at the UNHRC at Geneva, and also of a major push to raise awareness of what was happening with Western governments.

The NSS has also played a key role in this latter respect, raising the issue with politicians and diplomats internationally (Spring *Bulletin* Page 1 and Summer *Bulletin* page 3). Keith Porteous Wood has since spoken about the problem to UK

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◀ “Education” continued

Christian to secure places in schools of their choice. Community schools will lose out financially as the education budget is diverted into paying the rapidly-growing subsidies to religious schools, for example through the waiving of academy sponsors’ fees.

The Government’s policy is to expand significantly the number of minority faith schools. In practice these will have largely mono-cultural and mono-ethnic intakes that will reduce the social cohesion and cultural diversity in surrounding schools. The proportion of the population identifying with a minority religion is expected to double before 2040. So, while actively ignoring overwhelming evidence to the contrary, the Government is claiming shamelessly that its schools policy aids cohesion, but the reality is that it is engineering educational apartheid, the negative results of which will be suffered by generations to come.

Our pragmatic arguments against so-called “faith schools” are lent even more weight because Britain is already one of the most religiously diverse, and – paradoxically – also one of least religious countries in the world. That diversity continues to grow as does the decline of religion, at least of Christianity.

We will continue to fight against religious schools, broadcast our objections as widely as possible and work with others who oppose faith schools. Removing discrimination alone will not ultimately solve the problem.

We may be the only organisation with an unambiguous and core commitment to this policy, but we take seriously our responsibilities to the two thirds, or more, of the population at large who have made clear in surveys that they believe segregating children by religion in school is wrong.

The NSS believes that R.E. being taught in schools is proselytising in nature and needs fundamental reform. We also object to clerics of any religion conducting worship or R.E. on school premises.

◀ “Freedom” continued

Foreign Office Minister Lord Malloch Brown, formerly Deputy Secretary General to the UN, as well as MPs, MEPs, a senior figure at the European Commission and our counterpart organisation in the US, Americans United.

The international community is now much more aware of this issue than it was even a year ago, and is starting to engage with it more

actively. Votes by Western and Latin American countries were crucial to check the march of the OIC.

On the 19th September we won a small battle in a very big war. We do not expect the OIC to give up its powerful and well-funded campaign. Nevertheless, this first sign of a serious fight back is an important psychological boost, on which we hope it will be possible to build.

Lawyers Secular Society launched

The new group for lawyers launched by NSS Council member and barrister Carla Revere has already helped in the case of Sarah Desrosiers, a London hairdresser. She was sued by a Muslim woman who, because she said she would not remove her headscarf at work, was refused a job at Ms Desrosiers’ salon. Although we were pleased that Ms Desrosiers was cleared of any direct discrimination, she was ordered to pay £4,000 compensation to the claimant for hurt feelings.

Carla attended a Symposium on Law and Religion, part of the Temple 2008 Festival, on behalf of the NSS. She commented: “In the light of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s remarks about sharia law, the evening stimulated much debate.”

Members of the legal profession and students who would like to be involved in the Lawyers Secular Society, founded to provide a counterbalance to the growing influence of religion in law, are invited to find out more from the NSS while the LSS website is under construction.



Liberal Democrat Education Policy

The NSS made a written submission on the educational challenges to the Liberal Democrat education policy body and presented it to the Shadow Education Minister, David Laws, MP and colleagues at a meeting in the House of Commons.

When asked what the greatest problem with the Government’s education policy was, Keith Porteous Wood was unequivocal that it was the Government’s misguided policy on opening a raft of minority faith schools. He complimented the Liberal Democrats on already including in their policy the elimination of discrimination in admissions and employment and expressed his gratitude for the Party’s support in Parliament of our proposals on allowing older pupils to exclude themselves from Collective Worship and Religious Education. He invited the Liberal Democrats to distinguish themselves from the other main parties by not supporting the rush to allow sponsors (sometimes with questionable motives) to set up schools under the mistaken idea that this offered choice. He suggested that the plethora of choice offered would generally in practice deny choice to those not fortunate enough to be enrolled in them.

There is more education news from Parliament in the centre page spread.

UN Special Rapporteur formally addresses European Parliament following introduction by NSS

We were delighted that Mrs Asma Jahangir, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, formally addressed the European Parliament on 18 June.

Mrs Jahangir called for intercultural dialogue to include the silent majority and the non-religious. It was not helped by any religion claiming superiority. She stressed the importance of freedom of expression. Her speech earned her a standing ovation.

This historic address followed directly from the NSS bringing together Mrs Jahangir and NSS

Honorary Associate Sophie in 't Veld MEP last year in Geneva. (Front page Autumn Bulletin 2007).

Sophie has been complaining for years that neither women nor non-religious groups were represented



Asma Jahangir



Sophie in 't Veld

in the list of invitees to address the European Parliament. It was through frustration about this that she engineered the invitation for Mrs Jahangir to speak. We congratulate Sophie on her historic achievement. Sophie later criticised the President of the European Parliament: "Curiously, on the day Mrs Jahangir spoke, Mr Poettering had other things to do. It is a matter of courtesy. If she is invited to speak, he can at least show the courtesy of being present in plenary. I am offended, as a politician and as a woman."

BBC top brass grilled

Vice president Anna Behan and Executive Director Keith Porteous Wood were invited to a launch of the BBC's annual report at Broadcasting House's Council Chamber in London. Keith challenged the Director General and Chair of the BBC about the excessive amount of religious broadcasting by the Corporation. He said it sidelined the non-religious and even abused them in a way that would not be acceptable for any other group.

The Chair of the BBC Trust appeared to accept the criticism, but Director General Mark Thompson would not be deflected from his conviction that audiences were "really interested" in religious programming, despite us pointing to surveys indicating the contrary.

We cited an Ofcom survey that asked viewers which genres of programmes were important to them and their family; religious programmes were ranked last but one out of 20 categories. Another survey showed that viewers "virtually abandon" terrestrial channels when they are showing religious programmes.

Discrimination against teachers is worsening

In 2006, the NSS initiated debates in both Houses of Parliament to oppose legislation widening the discrimination permitted on religious grounds against staff in religious schools. Unfortunately, the Government ignored our compelling arguments and the legislation was passed.

Anna Behan and Keith Porteous Wood followed this up in discussions with the Minister of State for Education and his senior staff, arguing for transitional provisions.

We sought to mitigate the disadvantage to the careers of those staff already employed in schools who do not fulfil the religious criteria that might now be required of them. Probably as a result, the Government recently launched a consultation process on the transitional arrangements. The categories of staff involved were:



Anna Behan

1. non-teaching staff at Voluntary-

Aided (church controlled) schools, where the transitional provisions were slightly better than the bare minimum, and

2. headteachers at Voluntary-Controlled (LEA-controlled) schools, where no transitional arrangements of substance were offered. Those hoping for promotion to headteacher jobs, but whose religion is not that of the school or whose piety or whose private lives do not satisfy the religious standard required by the school, will in some cases now be blocked from the promotion that they have worked towards for many years.

The Society spent a great deal of time seeking to minimise this injustice with unions and in a closely-argued submission to the Ministry. In its usual intransigent way, the Government disregarded the objections raised in the submissions.

Consultation on proposals relating to the commencement of section 37 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Keith's lobbying diary

The NSS Executive Director has been busy on your behalf in Westminster

Collective Worship and Religious Education

We have brought back to Parliament the fight for older pupils to opt themselves out of Collective Worship and Religious Education in schools. An NSS initiative has already won the statutory right for sixth formers to opt out of Collective Worship. We are now pushing to extend this right – plus the right to opt out of religious education – to all “pupils of sufficient maturity, intelligence and understanding”. We are also pressing for the statutory rights of withdrawal to apply for the first time to academies.

Pupils would have already sat through around ten years of assemblies and RE lessons before attaining our proposed right for them to opt out themselves.

I was watching the reaction of Schools Minister, Lord Adonis, in the Chamber when our amendments were raised. He hurriedly asked his officials for a copy of the formal recommendations by the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights (JCHR), on which we were basing our request. It soon became clear, though, that he was not prepared to act on the JCHR's recommendations, even though their advice was that these opt-outs were needed to respect pupils' Human Rights.

The Conservatives also opposed the measure, partly on practical grounds, and I have since proposed an alternative which would make the implementation of our proposals even more practical.

Not many peers were in the Chamber because it was immediately before the recess. We gave notice of our intention to bring the amendments back at the next stage of the debate for reconsideration, after the recess. Next time, we hope to have more support on hand in the Lords, and we have [written to the JCHR](#) to point

out the paucity of the Government's arguments and seeking further support.

The amendment was put down with a great deal of help from NSS Honorary Associate Dr Evan Harris MP (for which we are most grateful) and the amendments were jointly drafted by Evan and me. Baroness Walmsley of the Liberal Democrats kindly moved the amendment.

Equality and Human Rights Commission

In response to the Government announcement of its intention to introduce a Single Equality Bill, the Equality and Human Rights Commission presented the Commission's formal response to these proposals at an event in Westminster for key stakeholders. Vice President, Anna Behan, and I were invited to represent the NSS. Anna leads on Equality issues and is our representative on the Religion and Belief Consultative Group. She works hard to stand up against intense pressure from ambitious religious interests, not least because we are so outnumbered by them. On Council, we are all grateful to her for sticking with this demanding task – in which she is assisted by Council member Peter Vlachos.

[The Equality and Human Rights Commission's formal response document.](#)

The response sets out what the Commission would like to see in the new Equality Bill, for example a complete overhaul of Britain's equality laws and a new contract with the public on fairness. In theory, this could place power in the hands of citizens and not remote bureaucracies.

Both Anna and I directed probing questions about different aspects

of publicly-funded faith-based welfare and discrimination to the EHRC's head of strategy and to Trevor Phillips. As soon as I raised the topic of faith-based welfare, the negative reaction from the audience showed just how much opposition there is to it.

The Government's “framework for partnership in our multi faith society”

Faith-based welfare was at the forefront of my mind because I had just come from another presentation about Government policy, this time by the Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. She was launching her Department's “Face-to-Face and Side-by-Side: A framework for partnership in our multi faith society”.

This document gives a disturbing insight into the Government's obsession with the so-called “faith communities”. It gives the impression that all religious activity is good and that religious people in the country do such disproportionate amounts of good work that they need to be uniquely cherished and encouraged, often with significant amounts of cash. The document gives sparse and token references to the efforts and energies of non-religious volunteers

and community activists. We are really non-citizens as far as this document goes, a point I had made to Hazel Blears earlier in my transatlantic radio debate with her from Washington.

The stated justification for all this is that religion is an effective way to access hard-to-reach, and by implication, disadvantaged communities. Another clear intention is to fight extremism.

We generally maintain that those most likely to attend interfaith events such as these are much more moderate than those people the Government really needs to engage with. I was shocked, therefore, to overhear a conversation among others present at this launch along the lines of "I am not sure I understand Bin Laden's extremism, but you have to admire him for standing up for what he believes in." The companion responded "absolutely". You couldn't make it up, and unfortunately we haven't.

The Parliamentary Humanist Group

The Parliamentary Humanist Group held a meeting to discuss *Moral but no Compass*, a report commissioned by the Church of England that claimed the Government was hostile to religious groups who tried to provide faith-based welfare.

We were especially pleased that the NSS was invited to give its perspective, as the Society was disparagingly referred to several times in the report. These broadsides from the Church were neither fair nor accurate. One seemed to be that because the NSS's income (which it substantially under-estimated) was less than religious bodies, its voice should be ignored. This seems somewhat ironic given that Christian bodies, when it suits them, characterise the love of money as a root of "evil" and laud

their iconic figures for their poverty.

These criticisms provide further evidence that the NSS has the power to get under the skin of the hierarchy of the Church – an organisation that isn't yet used to being challenged quite so vigorously.

Whatever organisations run faith-based welfare, the dangers are of them discriminating in service delivery and employment. We also expect that religious organisations will be enriched in the process through reimbursements far beyond the marginal costs of service delivery.

Submissions

Evidence was submitted to members of The House of Lords Ad Hoc Committee on Intergovernmental Organisations on how effectively the global spread of communicable diseases is being controlled through action by intergovernmental organisations. This may seem an unlikely target for secularist input, but we highlighted the breathtakingly malign influence of some religious organisations in restricting condom distribution and therefore AIDS prevention.

The Society also submitted evidence in response to the Community Cohesion and Migration Inquiry by the Communities and Local Government Committee.

EU Parliamentary Working Group

The NSS continues to play an active role at the European Union's All Party Working Group on the Separation of Religion and Politics. The May meeting, for example, was attended by Council member Elizabeth O'Casey, when the topic under discussion was the EU's external policy and women's rights. Elizabeth raised the topic of the repressive treatment of women in Muslim countries, and by patriarchal religions generally. The NSS works closely with the Group's Chair, Honorary Associate Sophie in 't Veld, MEP.



Putting the FUN into fundraising

President Terry Sanderson will present an NSS benefit evening of vintage comedy at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 on Friday 24 October at 7.30pm. Terry says that the selection of sketches, stand ups and clips of the very best comedians of yesteryear will demonstrate how well they've stood the test of time. The cast includes Laurel & Hardy, Lucille Ball, The Three Stooges, The Marx Brothers, W.C. Fields and many more.

Tickets cost £10 and can be booked in advance from www.secularism.org.uk/ribticklers.html or from Ribticklers, NSS, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL (Please make cheques payable to NSS, which will receive the entire proceeds.)

Census 2011

We are keeping up our pressure on both the Equality and Human Rights Commission to introduce, and the Scottish Parliament to retain, a fairly-worded question on religion in the 2011 census.



NSS opposes plans to give hospital chaplains equivalent status to doctors

An all-party parliamentary chaplaincy group has launched a consultation on the role of chaplains in hospitals. Needless to say, only the views of the religious were directly sought. One of the proposals was to make the chaplaincy “a commissioned service” on the same basis as medical services.

The NSS argued that the chaplaincy services should not be financed from the public purse; local churches and mosques etc should make clerics available to visit on a call-out basis at their own expense. We urged the committee to commission research into what value patients really place on the chaplaincy service.

The NSS is conducting its own research into how much is being spent on chaplains after the Government revealed that it did not collect figures, and left the provision and financing of the service to individual Trusts.

[All-party consultation on the provision of chaplaincy and spiritual care within the NHS.](#)

The Secular Medical Forum (SMF) also made a detailed and well-argued submission. If you would like to know more about the SMF, which is open to all health-care professionals, see their website www.secularmedicalforum.org.uk or call the office.

The NSS took a prominent role at the three-yearly congress of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), the worldwide umbrella organisation to which the NSS is affiliated. This year it was held in Washington DC with the American Humanist Association (AHA) as the co-host. AHA are to be congratulated on an impressive, well-organised event in which their members played a significant part.

The NSS sent just one representative, Keith Porteous Wood. Terry Sanderson also attended in a private capacity. They were both taken aback by the number of times the NSS was singled out for praise. Our media profile was particularly envied by other groups, and we were seen as an exemplar for others to follow.

Keith gave a talk to an audience of several hundred on the religious approaches to the control of HIV/AIDS in the developing world – particularly opposition to the distribution of condoms. Keith spoke of the misleading, even dishonest, information disseminated by religious groups about condoms and abstinence.

Keith made another presentation jointly with Roy Brown about the severe problems with the United Nations Human Rights Council, the efforts being made to mitigate these and raise awareness about them (see

story on page 1 for the latest information). We were delighted that Roy was given an award by IHEU, recognising his outstanding service, especially in this area of protecting free expression.

Terry Sanderson spoke about the abolition of the blasphemy laws in England and how we had campaigned to bring it about. There was much interest in this because versions of blasphemy and attempts to restrict free speech by religious groups are springing up all over the world.

Two of our honorary associates, Christopher Hitchens and Philip Pullman, also gave talks which earned them standing ovations.

While in Washington, Keith also arranged meetings with other organisations with headquarters there. He and Terry Sanderson made a formal visit to Americans United for Separation of Church and State – an organisation with very similar aims to that of the NSS – and held talks with the Director, Barry Lynn. NSS members can have a copy of the Americans United DVD about separation, which tells much more about the organisation and how it campaigns. (See offer on page 7).

While in Washington, Keith was summoned to the BBC’s Washington studio to take part in a transatlantic debate with Hazel Blears, the community secretary, in London. It was prompted by the Church of England’s report *Moral but no Compass*, in which the Church boasted about its capacity to deliver faith-based welfare. Keith took the opportunity to launch a broadside at faith-based welfare and complained that the Government seemed keen to please citizens identified as religious but ignore those who weren’t. Keith



and Terry took part in radio and TV programmes in Washington and New York.

In New York, Keith met Amnesty’s UN representative at the United Nations for a warm and constructive discussion about our perspective on problems at the UNHRC. We provided helpful information and explored ways in which Amnesty and IHEU could work together for mutual benefit.

Police and CPS urged to protect free speech

The NSS was invited to talk at a seminar of police and the Crown Prosecution Service in September on the Racial and Religious Hatred Act. Keith spoke about the importance of free expression, particularly in the light of recent attacks on it from religious groups. The police and the CPS should make a point of being secular institutions and have a duty to ensure that the rights of religious believers do not extend to their being able to silence criticism.

We were particularly critical about the pursuit by the West Midlands Police of Channel Four over its *Dispatches: Undercover Mosque* programme. Having found no way to prosecute C4, the WM Police and

the CPS joined forces to bring a complaint against the programme-makers with the media regulator Ofcom. This too failed. After C4 and the programme makers sued, the Police and CPS unreservedly apologised and paid out a six-figure sum in settlement.

The NSS urged the police never again to take such a partisan approach and the CPS to keep a clear separation between itself and the police force. While community relations are important, and the police are in a difficult position (particularly with the over-sensitive nature of some religious people), they still had a duty to ensure that they did not use their powers to silence legitimate criticism.

Honorary Associates

We are pleased to announce three new Honorary Associates.

Ricky Gervais graduated from London University with a degree in philosophy, then worked as entertainment manager for the Students Union and at XFM radio, where he developed material for hit series *The Office*. His second BBC sitcom *Extras* starred Ben Stiller, Samuel L. Jackson, Patrick Stewart and Kate Winslet. He has had three sell-out live tours in the UK and one this summer in the US. He has also co-written and featured in an episode of *The Simpsons*.



Photo: Ray Burniston

Johann Hari, the award-winning journalist and *Independent* columnist. In 2007 he was named Newspaper Journalist of the Year by Amnesty International for his reporting on the war in the D.R. of Congo. He was also nominated for Secularist of the Year in 2007 and for Columnist of the Year at the British Press Awards.



Mary Honeyball, MEP. Mary Honeyball has a strong commitment to women's rights and acts as Labour spokesperson in the European Parliament's Women's Rights Committee. Earlier this year, she came under attack for being "anti-Catholic" when she wrote an article in *The Guardian* about the growing political ambitions of the Vatican. The NSS came to her defence with a supportive letter in the *New Statesman*.



DVDs on offer to NSS members



Sir Ian McKellen

The NSS has two films available on DVD, exclusively for members. The first is a recording of our *Bye Bye Blasphemy* party held in June to commemorate the end of the blasphemy laws. It includes an entertaining, specially-compiled film about the history of blasphemy and some of its victims, and a performance by Sir Ian McKellen of the last written work to be prosecuted for blasphemy in the 1970s.

We also have *Everything you ever wanted to know about separation of church and state* made by Americans United for the Separation of Church and State. It is a two-hour programme explaining the ways in which religion is challenging the US constitution's separation clause.

To obtain either or both of these DVDs, please send a padded 42p stamped addressed envelope to NSS DVD Offer, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. Please state which of the films you want; a small donation to cover costs would be appreciated.

Please note that these DVDs are made available only to members of the NSS for their personal use. They must not be copied, distributed or posted on the internet in whole or part. By taking up this offer, you will be deemed to have formally accepted these conditions.

DONATIONS

In the last few months, we have received donations of £500, £3,000 and £10,000 from members, as well as a legacy of £10,000. We greatly appreciate these donors, along with the growing number of members who support our work through regular standing orders. These give us a stable income and allow us to plan ahead. If you do not yet have one, please consider starting one. Details from the office or the website.

Secularist of the Year and Darwin's Birthday Party – tickets now on sale

Who will walk away with the next £5,000 Irwin Prize for Secularist of the Year? Find out on Saturday, 7 February 2009 when the next presentation takes place. The winner will also be presented with the first "Golden Ammonite" (pictured) as a souvenir of his or her achievement.



We've moved the event to February to coincide with the 200th birthday of Charles Darwin and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of Species*. So, it will be very much Charles' party – with lots of surprises.

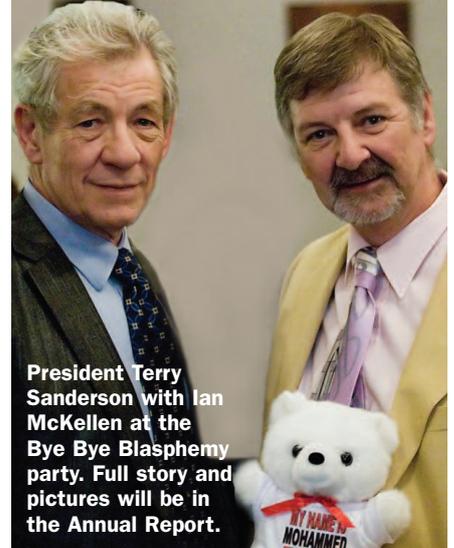
After a superior three-course lunch, entertainment will include a reconstruction of the famous knock-out battle of wits between Thomas Huxley and the Bishop of Oxford, 'Soapy Sam' Wilberforce, which took place at the British Association in Oxford on 30 June, 1860. Reason

versus religion – and you'll be expected to take sides!

In previous years all places have been taken well in advance, so we have moved again to an even larger Central London venue, but still expect it to be sold out. Book your tickets today. They cost £45 each to include lunch, a celebratory glass of sparkling wine and all entertainment. (There is a special rate for full-time students of £15; student identification will be required on the door.)

You can purchase tickets online at www.secularism.org.uk (Click on Shop) or by post and cheque from NSS, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. Please state the names of everyone in the party and whether anyone needs a vegetarian meal; these will be available only to those informing us when their ticket is bought.

Bye Bye Blasphemy...



President Terry Sanderson with Ian McKellen at the Bye Bye Blasphemy party. Full story and pictures will be in the Annual Report.

VOLUNTEERS

The NSS would like to thank its growing band of volunteers for their time and efforts contributing to our campaigns and administration:

BRAD DAVIS of WhiteLight for his consistently fine design on the *Bulletin* and Annual Report

SEAN CLARK and ANTHONY DICKENS at cuttlefish.com for hosting and serving our website and distributing *Newsline*

BARRY THORPE and DES LANGFORD for their high-quality research work, with Barry helping with major submissions

MALCOLM TRAHEARN for attentive proof reading

NICK LANSLEY and PAUL CHRISTOPHER FROM EXESIGHT for their spectacular sound and visual services at our events

PAUL & MARIE STEVENSON for meticulous editing of films

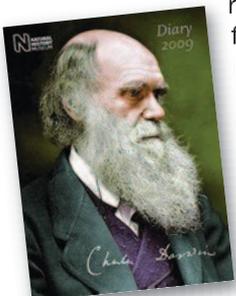
STEWART WARE for help with new systems implementation and in the office

CLAUDINE BAXTER and ALISTAIR BANTON for their sterling work in the office

SHAUN JOYNSON for assistance with event organisation

The Darwin Diary 2009

This superb, hard-bound desk diary is on offer to NSS members for £9.99 plus £2 p&p. Sumptuously illustrated with a colour picture each week relating to Darwin's life and science and a week-to-view format. So as well as being a thing of beauty – and it really is – you'll have a practical use for it all year round.



Order them for yourself or as festive gifts at our on-line shop at www.secularism.org.uk or by post from NSS, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL.

And while you are thinking of seasonal gifts, don't forget that our perennially popular booklet *Did Christians Steal Christmas?* by Robert Stovold is also available.

And our elegant secular seasonal cards are now available at bargain prices. Sets from the Natural History Museum, The V&A and Kew Gardens – all produced to a very high standard – can be purchased from our on-line shop or you can order by post.

The sets are £5 each and contain six beautifully produced cards, each individually cellophane wrapped. Remember, these cards are available elsewhere at £2.99 each!

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