

House of Lords' prayers and Establishment challenged

After a question was raised in the House of Lords about the feasibility of introducing "multi-faith prayers" instead of the exclusively Christian ones at the start of daily business, the NSS drafted a letter to the House of Lords Procedure Committee calling for the prayers to be stopped altogether.

The letter, addressed to the Chair of Committees, Lord Brabazon of Tara, was countersigned by Lord Avebury and Honorary Associates Lord Desai, Lord McIntosh of Haringey, Lord (Dick) Taverne and Baroness Turner of Camden.

Although the signatories were united on dropping prayers, Lord Avebury was adamant that there should be no replacement whatsoever, while Lord McIntosh preferred (or perhaps thought there would be a better chance of success) if there were instead to be a short period of silent reflection, as is the case in the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Scottish Parliament has a rota which includes humanist contributions. In Westminster, prayers are of course read by a representative of the Established Church – the duty bishop in the Lords and the Speaker's Chaplain in the Commons.

The Church had no alternative but to respond to the reports. Clearly it was not very pleased to have to do so, or about another of the Executive Director's initiatives in



PIC: PETER SEARLE

Lord Desai

which we invited Honorary Associate Lord Desai, a Labour peer, to speak out in favour of disestablishment. The Press Association broadcast the story far and wide, and even included a question about it in a news quiz.

The Government's deference to the Church of England is so great that it refuses to legislate on disestablishment without the Church's permission, which it will never give because the advantages of establishment are so huge.

Until now, the Government's obsequiousness to the Church has persisted even though attendance continues to decline and it is disturbingly susceptible to very strong influence by misogynistic and homophobic fundamentalists in

continues on page 2, col 1 ►

Wood joins influential EU Human Rights panel

NSS Executive Director Keith Porteous Wood has become one of an interim panel of nine on an EU advisory body to help with the planning of the newly-formed Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA).

Keith was asked by the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) to represent them on the panel which will submit proposals about areas the FRA might include in their future work plan.

He attended a meeting in Vienna in October 2008 where a group of some sixty organisations from civil society around Europe exchanged ideas about the direction of the FRA Work Programme 2009.

The NSS produced a major report, the dominant theme of which was the way in which religious leaders and the religiously orthodox discriminate against the non-religious, the religiously unconcerned and even religious liberals generally.

Keith took a prominent part in the conference and chaired an intense session collecting and prioritising suggestions for the FRA Work Programme from delegates.

He said: "We complain so much about the non-religious being excluded from consultation and

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Human Rights, justice and cohesion – all under attack from religion Pages 4, 5, 6 & 7

◀ “Lords’ prayers” continued

Nigeria and farther afield.

And the Church certainly expects its cosy relationship with the Government to continue. It tells the press at every opportunity, almost as if it is trying to convince itself, that the Government has ‘repeatedly’ stressed the value it places on the establishment of the Church of England.

Church and State at loggerheads

Yet the “respect” that the Government trumpets for the Church doesn’t seem to be reciprocated. Over the Christmas period several CofE bishops launched what was considered to be a concerted attack on the Government’s economic policy. They said it was “morally corrupt” and that the Prime Minister had been “beguiled by money”.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, publicly dismissed the economic rescue plan as “the addict returning to the drug”. This prompted Mr Brown to invoke the Bible to slap down the archbishop. Quoting the parable of the Good Samaritan, Brown argued that the Government, “would not walk by on the other side” while families suffered. Williams retorted by inviting a comparison between what he saw as Brown’s stubborn attachment to ideology and Nazi Germany.

Even the Church’s representative in the Commons, Sir Stuart Bell, (although admittedly also a Labour MP) went so far as to denounce the Bishops’ comments as “nonsense”. He and Keith Porteous Wood were on BBC Radio Five Live for a half hour debate on this. Normally, Sir Stuart and Keith are fierce opponents, so Keith described it as a surreal experience for them both to be on national radio united in tearing to shreds bishops of the Church that Sir Stuart represents.

In December, several Labour MPs, including three former cabinet members, said they wanted the Government to press ahead with disestablishment of the Church.

The attacks are unprecedented and are clear evidence of a serious deterioration in the relationship between Church and State, although we are still not expecting any major secularizing moves any time soon.

◀ “Human Rights Panel” continued

involvement in EU institutions that we simply had to grasp this opportunity with enthusiasm.”

He will take full advantage of the opportunities of being a civil society representative to continue to fight for Human Rights for all and raise the neglected issue of discrimination against the non-religious. He also formally requested that freedom of expression be added as a formal area of concern.

Sonja Eggerickx, President of IHEU added: “It is great news that Keith has become one of nine Civil Society members of the new Agency. I congratulate him on his report to the Agency and on having been invited to take such a prominent part at the top table in Vienna”.



Sonja Eggerickx,
President of IHEU



Carla Revere, Chair of the LSS

Lawyers Secular Society launch new website

The Lawyers Secular Society is about to launch its website at www.lawyerssecularsociety.org. The Society can be contacted at admin@lawyerssecularsociety.org

The LSS welcomes lawyers or those studying law who would like to add their voice to making sure our laws remain secular. The Society is currently examining the implications of the growing pressure for Sharia law to gain official status. We would also welcome lawyers to help in cases involving discrimination against the non-religious or against religious privilege.

NSS seeks to influence EHRC agenda

The Equalities and Human Rights Commission held a conference on 5 October at London’s Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre to discuss their forward strategy.

Keith took the opportunity of a plenary session to point out that excessive religious exemptions had plagued equality legislation, and were even being extended. He reminded delegates that this happened in 2006, when the Government allowed Voluntary Aided “faith schools” to appoint the Head Teacher on the basis of his or her religion. This in effect permitted them to use public money to practise religious discrimination.

He called for the EHRC to assist in both limiting such religious exemptions in the forthcoming Equality Bill and in protecting the vulnerable from Sharia law. He expressed grave concern about the growing and unquestioning acceptance of Sharia law in the UK. His comments drew warm applause and several people, including a Commissioner, came up to him afterwards to express their support.

AGM most popular ever

We were pleased to see so many members at the NSS's 2008 AGM – in fact, the biggest attendance that anyone can remember.

This was fortunate as, for the first time in many years, we had a competitive election for seats around the Council table. Members were able to express their democratic will and hold the Council to account.

As usual, the AGM was followed by a social gathering where members from around the country were able to network and meet friends old and new.

The annual report was presented by the President, Terry Sanderson; it earned warm applause and many compliments. Members paid tribute to Executive Director Keith Porteous Wood for a very successful campaigning year and felt that the Society had punched well above its weight. The Honorary Treasurer then presented his Report on the Financial Statements, and he was thanked by members for his extensive work on the accounts and particularly for his hard work in sourcing and implementing a new accounting system which will make the administration of the Society much more efficient.

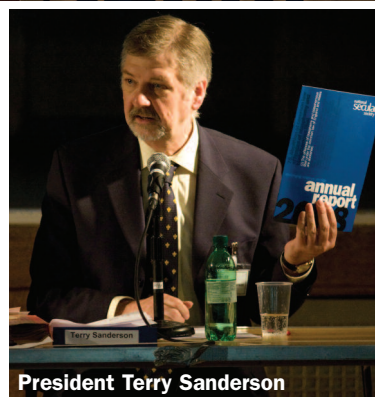
Thanks were offered to vice President Anna Behan, who chaired the AGM with efficiency and good humour. The senior office staff



Afonso Reis e Sousa, Anna Behan, Keith Porteous Wood



Peter Vlachos



President Terry Sanderson



New Council member Martin Perry

were also thanked for the organisation of the event – particularly for our first use of audio-visual link ups that had allowed two prospective council members to speak to the AGM live, even though they were unable to

attend because of illness or family commitments.

The formal minutes, subject to approval by the 2009 AGM, are available to members on request. They contain the details of motions and votes.

Headlines from the AGM

The officers of the Society comprise a President, up to two vice Presidents and a Treasurer. They are elected for a one year term, so there are elections for them all every year.

- All the sitting officers were re-elected either unanimously or with near unanimity. They are President (Terry Sanderson), vice President (Anna Behan) and Treasurer (Jim Nugent).
- Council member Carla Revere was promoted to vice President.
- Martin Perry was elected to Council. He has a background in

investment management, an area in which expertise is especially welcome. Martin does not intend that his contributions will be restricted to this aspect, though.

- Norman Bacrac did not secure sufficient votes to retain his seat on Council. The AGM formally thanked Norman for his many years as a Council member.
- Council's proposal for a purely semantic clarification of the objectives was approved.
- A member's motion calling on Council to join the Humanist Liaison Group was defeated.

Honorary Associates

The NSS is pleased to welcome its newest honorary associate, **Glenys Kinnock, Labour MEP for Wales**. More details will appear in the next *Bulletin*.



Glenys Kinnock MEP

Do human rights lose out to

60th anniversary of Declaration of HR marked at Lancaster

The Prime Minister was the keynote speaker at a reception given by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to mark the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It was entirely appropriate that the Prime Minister paid [tribute](#) to the vision of Eleanor Roosevelt, one of the authors of the Declaration.

But what is happening in Britain sixty years later? The NSS is, sadly, more inclined to the view of Lord Lester of Herne Hill QC, that the Government does not take Human Rights nearly as seriously as it should. He quit his post as a government advisor on Human Rights, labelling Gordon Brown's track record on the issue as "dismal".

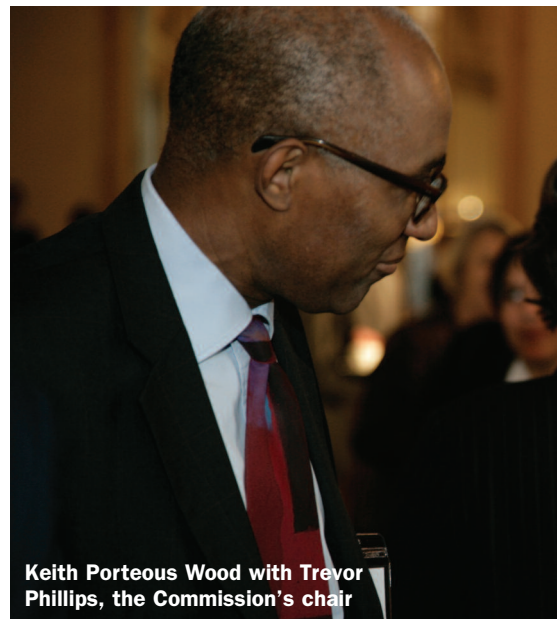
The NSS has seen this at first hand. When we tried to make it legal for older pupils to opt themselves out of religious education and more pupils to opt themselves out of collective worship – and our move was supported by the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Human Rights – the Government would have none of it. They are determined to

continue requiring children to worship in the knowledge that, particularly in the case of older children, this is generally a breach of their Human Rights.

We can only conclude that the Government will not entertain Human Rights obligations that might impact adversely on privileges enjoyed by religions. It suggests that some areas of legislation about which the Church is sensitive are completely ring-fenced. This appears to apply to religious aspects of education, bishops in the Lords and disestablishment. Indeed, without the clever political manoeuvring from some of our parliamentary supporters, it is unlikely that the blasphemy laws would have been abolished last year. The Church was not happy with it, but accepted the political reality of the situation. It will clearly fight any other encroachment on its privileges, and this is a conflict that the Government doesn't want.

The future

Human Rights law in the UK and European Union are soon to be re-codified, ostensibly in the name of



Keith Porteous Wood with Trevor Phillips, the Commission's chair

advancing Human Rights. The new Equality Act will consolidate existing equality laws into one instrument. The so-called "horizontal directive" will do so similarly for the EU.

Such consolidation carries significant risks from a secularist perspective. A "one size fits all" approach risks, for example, conflating race and religion and treating them identically, with

Against all the evidence, the Prime Minister assures us faith is very much alive and well

For a telling demonstration of the Government's attitude to religion, we need look no further than what the Prime Minister has written in the Foreword to a publication entitled *Faith in the Nation*, a collection of essays by "senior faith leaders". In it he claims: "... faith in Britain today is very much alive and well. At the last (2001) Census, more than three-quarters of the population said they belonged to a faith".

But both of these claims are factually wrong. How well can faith be doing when church attendance has been in decline for sixty years to the point that Christian Research forecasts fewer than a hundred thousand will be in an Anglican church in Britain on an average Sunday in 2050, and with an average age approaching 70?

The Census question did not mention "belonging". It was "What is your religion?" Many of those who never go to church, know little about the religion they were brought up in and don't agree with the Church's

teachings ticked the "Christian" box. It is a cultural identity as much as a religious one, and yet religious leaders claim to be speaking for everyone, including non-believers.

There are figures about 'belonging' from the Office of National Statistics (ONS); they show that only 53%, not three-quarters, said they belonged to a religion in 2006. This is down three percentage points over ten years, providing yet further evidence to contradict Gordon Brown's assertion that "faith in Britain today is very much alive and well".

The largest single group in the ONS survey is the 46% who belong to "no religion", up by three percentage points over the decade – clearly something the Prime Minister would prefer not to acknowledge. An article we originated on this is referred to in Media (page 5). More statistical fables playing up the 'importance' of religion are provided in [Newslines](#).

o religion?

House reception



potentially serious implications for ratcheting up religious privilege, especially over freedom of expression.

These major rewrites of equality law also open up to debate the extent of religious exemptions, which we are convinced are already far too wide. The religious will be pushing for their 'conscience' to override all equality legislation, and there are many legislators only too willing to listen and give them everything they want.

We will, of course, be doing all we can to point out the dangers and encourage resistance. We have similar concerns about a possible Bill of Rights being floated by the Government, which could well dilute, rather than strengthen, Human Rights.

It is too early yet to see how even-handedly the two newer bodies on the scene, the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, will cope with the conflict between religion and Human Rights/Equality. We will continue to make the case forcefully against the privileging of religion in their areas of competence. It is too early to say how successful we will be, but even the continual raising of awareness of the issues will have some restraining effect.

MEDIA

It has been another busy period in the media.

Our main coup was an article we placed with the *Observer* which made the front page. It was headlined "Church attendance to fall by 90%". It drew attention to forecasts by Christian statisticians that only 87,800 would be attending Anglican services on an average Sunday in 2050 and two erroneous statements made by the Prime Minister (reported on page 4). The Church was once more forced to respond defensively to our challenge.

Another *Observer* article we originated drew attention to yet more grossly pro-religious bias, this time by the BBC in completely editing out an interviewee's religious scepticism, as the same programme also did with Terry Sanderson. A further *Observer* article critically examined religion in prisons. The *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Telegraph* reported our calls for disestablishment and to abandon prayers in the Lords.

We have been on numerous BBC programmes – national, regional and local channels, and the World Service. Keith had a no-holds-barred debate with Rev Steve Chalke about discrimination against the non-religious in BBC Radio 4's *The Learning Curve*. Other electronic media where we have contributed have included *Sky News*, *Virgin*, *Islam Channel*, *Teachers TV* and *Press Association Video*.

A number of our stories made the Press Association's newswire, so attained worldwide coverage. Terry wrote some very popular Comment is Free articles for the *Guardian*. We also originated articles or were quoted in the broadsheets and tabloids, over a hundred local papers and the *American Spectator* (on the push for international blasphemy laws protecting Islam). Subjects included: School entry requirements, creationism in schools/Reiss case, atheist bus, disestablishment and Sharia law.

Church attendance 'to fall by 90%'

by **Jamie Doward**
Home Affairs Editor

IN ONE of the most holy weeks in the Christian calendar, a report says that in just over a generation the number of people attending Church of England Sunday services will fall to less than a tenth of what they are now.

Christian Research, the statistical arm of the Bible Society, claimed that by 2050 Sunday attendance will fall below 88,000, compared with just under a million now.

The forecast, based on a "snapshot"

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census of church attendances, has been seized upon by secular groups as proof that the established church is in decline. But the Church of England has rejected the figures, saying they ignored new ways of worshipping outside the conventional church network.

According to Dr Peter Brierley, former executive director of Christian Research, by 2030 just under

419,000 people will attend an Anglican Sunday service. By 2040 the number will be down to 217,200, falling to 153,800 five years later. By 2050, if the trend prediction is correct, only 87,800 will be attending.

The figures stand in contrast to the picture of faith described by the prime minister this month. In a preface to a new report, *Faith in the Nation*, Gordon Brown said: "Faith in Britain today is very much alive and well. At the last census, more than three-quarters of the population said they belonged to a faith... people's

Our festive cheer on the front page of the *Observer*, 21 December 2008

Secular Medical Forum

Dr Antony Lempert, SMF co-ordinator, was recently twice quoted in the *British Medical Journal* discussing GMC guidance and conscientious objection. In response to a parliamentary consultation, the SMF argued that NHS chaplains should be funded by the religious bodies they represent, ending the current discrimination against people with no religious belief.

Responding to the Care and Support White Paper, the Forum called on the Government to protect vulnerable people from proselytising influences. Some of the Forum's views were adopted by the Royal College of GPs who explicitly highlighted health risks faced by 'children in schools of a religious character' in the context of receiving adequate sex education irrespective of their parents' religion.

For more information about the SMF, for speaker requests, or if you are a health care professional and would like to join, please contact Dr Antony Lempert, at www.secularmedicalforum.org.uk, or antony@secularmedicalforum.org.uk or telephone the NSS office.

Sharia law: opposition is vital

The NSS is supporting the “One Law for All Campaign” launched at the House of Lords in December, at which vice President Carla Revere and Keith Porteous Wood [spoke](#).

Our support was prompted by the apparent propaganda campaign to insinuate Sharia law into accepted legal practice through numerous high profile lectures and debates, often in prestige venues. They are addressed by establishment figures who noticeably refrain from raising awkward questions such as how real is the consent of those who

submit to Sharia, and why anyone should abandon being judged by laws formulated by democratic process and subject to Human Rights obligations.

Britain’s first so-called official Sharia courts have been launched and The Muslim Arbitration Tribunals [website](#) says they “provide a viable alternative for the Muslim community seeking to resolve disputes in accordance with Islamic Sacred Law and without having to resort to costly and time consuming litigation”.

Case against ‘faith’ schools goes to Europe

Keith Porteous Wood spoke at a seminar on Religion and Education hosted by the European Parliament’s Separation of Politics and Religion Working Party.

He made a case against religious schools, not only because the State has no business being an instrument of proselytisation, but pragmatically because of the disastrous threats to community cohesion posed by minority faith schools.

While Keith supported the fight to limit the discriminatory aspects of such schools and to oppose confessional teaching, he was adamant that this was not enough. Surveys showed that between two thirds and 90% of the UK population agree that separating children in school by religion is wrong. Removing discrimination but retaining the segregation does not engage with the most serious problem of all, social cohesion. It would not matter whether a quota of 20% or even 50% of those of other faiths or none were imposed on “faith schools”, particularly minority “faith schools”; in reality few children from outside the faith would be enrolled.

Several of the MEPs present asked for a copy of Keith’s well-received speech.

Standing up for free speech and evolution

The NSS lodged two formal [complaints](#) with the EU Enlargement Commissioner about Professor Richard Dawkins’ website being banned by a Turkish court, with the kind assistance of Lord Avebury and Sophie in ’t Veld MEP. The Commissioner submits an annual report on the suitability of states seeking accession to the EU, taking into account freedom of expression and censorship.

A complaint to the Turkish court which prompted the banning was made by Turkish billionaire Adnan Oktar who, under the pseudonym

Hurun Yahya, wrote the creationist book *Atlas of Creation* which is distributed widely to schools across Europe; he is also actively campaigning to have any reference to evolution removed from Turkish education, to the concern of the [Council of Europe](#).

Professor Dawkins spoke about both of these issues at the first international conference of the Council for Ex-Muslims of Britain in October 2008 where Keith Porteous Wood chaired a panel on Creationism, Religious Education and Faith Schools.

Another attempt to promote secular education in Brussels

Council member Elizabeth O’Casey represented the NSS at a conference of the European Parliament entitled *Religion in Education: a contribution to dialogue or a factor of conflict in transforming societies of European countries*.

She described it as “another conference for the religiously like-minded of the European Parliament”. It was to discuss research, heavily funded by the EU, which had concluded that religious education is necessary for social cohesion and should be



taught in all schools across Europe.

Elizabeth held her ground and pointed out that students should be educated in an informative and secular (i.e. neutral) environment; one that develops the relevant skills of analysis and judgement in order for young people to make a fully-informed choice about the value system by which they choose to live. She added that students (and their parents) should have a choice in whether they take religious classes at all.

We are grateful for her flying the flag in such a hostile environment.

School admissions consultation

The Society responded to a consultation on schools admissions. Among our [recommendations](#) were:

- all religious tests for admission should be abolished, and that in all schools the needs of non-religious children are adequately met.
- schools should no longer be their own admissions authority. This is where many abuses have been concentrated, and they are mostly faith schools.
- a statutory declaration should be required of every head teacher for each admissions round that the (hopefully revised) code has been followed, with breaches being punishable by hefty fines on the school and the individual.

Human Rights ignored in education to appease the religious

The Executive Director arranged for a series of amendments to be tabled over the last few months to the Education and Skills Bill, building on our successes in 2006 permitting sixth formers in England to opt out of collective worship in their own right, as opposed to only with their parents' permission.

STOP PRESS: WALES

Sixth form pupils in state schools in Wales are now to be given the same right to make their own decision to opt out of collective worship without needing the permission of their parents. This development follows a similar one in England which the NSS initiated.

Honorary Associate Lorraine Barrett AM commented: "young people aged 16 years are well able to decide for themselves if they want to take part in such activities as they do in other aspects of their lives".

We attempted to extend to pupils in England recognised in law to have sufficient maturity (probably around 15) the ability to opt themselves out

of Collective Worship and also RE. Despite unambiguous support from the Joint Human Rights Select Committee (JCHR) our amendments were turned down twice, the second time by a minister who we understand was not personally opposed to it. A last ditch attempt to achieve something less ambitious: the removal of the offensive and completely unjustifiable requirement that pupils "take part in" worship, rather than simply attend, similarly failed.

This leads us to the conclusion that it has been decided at the very highest level of Government not to do anything of which the Church might disapprove, regardless of whether or not it is in breach of Human Rights.

We are greatly indebted for help from the JCHR, the Liberal Democrats front bench – and in particular Dr Evan Harris, MP.



Dr Evan Harris MP

SCOTLAND

Alistair McBay has been busy, as usual, both north and south of the Border.

He has written to the *Scotsman* and the *Herald* on assisted suicide, *Scotland on Sunday* on Islamic extremism and the *Courier* on exorcism. He has also given *The Times* the benefit of his expertise on secularism.

Alistair spoke on the Edinburgh radio station Talk 107 about religion in prison, and on LBC on Creationism in schools.

He also represented the Society at the Equalities and Human Rights Commission's Scotland consultation in Aberdeen in November.

WALES

Christian Voice have scored another of the own goals for which they are so famous, this time in Wales. They had pressurized Waterstones bookshop in Cardiff into cancelling a reading of a poem by Welsh poet Patrick Jones. But far from being a victory for the fundamentalists, it led directly to a reading by Jones being arranged in the Welsh Assembly (Senedd). One of the organisers of the event was our own Lorraine Barrett AM who, despite being subjected to obnoxious hate mail for supporting the reading, stood firm for free speech.



Above: Lorraine Barrett AM



Left: Poet Patrick Jones

Convincing debate victory for NSS on faith schools

We won a resounding victory in a debate on faith schools at University College London on 10 November. The motion Keith proposed to a full house was "State funding should be withdrawn from faith schools". The opposition seemed incapable of engaging with the audience, despite one being a former world champion student debater. Our biggest challenge came from those claiming grammar schools were the best way forward and church schools were the nearest to them in most parts of the country. We won, thanks also to our co-proposer Jeffrey Peel and some excellent student speakers, by 72% to 28%.



University College London

Other activities by Council

Vice President **Anna Behan** is continuing her invaluable work on the Religion and Belief Consultative Group, an equality body which meets monthly with alternate meetings held jointly with the EHRC.



Vice President
Anna Behan

The meeting before Christmas at the EHRC to discuss the new Equalities Bill was attended by recently-appointed Minister Sadiq Khan MP. Keith stood in for Anna and said that the objections raised by the European Commission to the UK's Employment Regulations should be taken into account in the new Bill.

We are aware of these because the Commission has written to tell us about them following our own complaint to them in Brussels, drawn up by Anna. She has also compiled a complaint alleging that some Roman Catholic Sixth Form Colleges are in breach of the Employment Regulations in respect of vocational training and we have formally requested that the Equalities and Human Rights Commission pursue this under the powers vested in them.

Dan Bye took part in a lively debate in Coventry on faith schools at the Liberal Democrat Policy Forum. His opponent was Joseph Quigley, National Religious Education Adviser for the Catholic Education Service.

Council member **Denis Cobell** spoke to Welsh Marches Secularists & Humanists in October on *Secularism Today* and to the Brighton & Hove Humanist Society in November on *The Churches & War*. Both meetings were well attended.

Carla Revere and the Executive Director turned out to support Women against Fundamentalism's meeting at the House of Commons. Top of the bill was the secular-leaning Southall Black Sisters whose leader spoke of their victory against Ealing Council who had tried to stop their funding and give it instead to faith groups.

This was not a celebration of victory, however, because similar moves to fund religiously-dominated groups in place of secular self-help groups are occurring throughout the country. This removes an invaluable source of support for vulnerable women fleeing intimidation and violence. Religious groups are much more inclined to reinforce patriarchal oppression.

DONATIONS

Our thanks go to all of our members who have made donations in the last few months, particularly the joint members who gave us £5,000 and two donors who gave £1,000. The NSS was also especially grateful to receive a legacy of nearly £30,000.

We very much appreciate your standing orders as this allows us to plan ahead based on a reliable income.

If you would like to make a donation, you can do it online at the **Join Now** page, where there is a section for donations. The NSS office can send you a leaflet on the practical details of making a legacy to the Society, which would help ensure that the NSS can carry on its increasingly important work in the future and despite what may well be leaner times. The office staff will be happy to send standing order forms if you would like to start one or increase your current amount.

The Council and Executive Director are grateful for members' generosity.

VOLUNTEERS

The NSS would like to thank all of the volunteers who give us their time and talents. In particular:

BRAD DAVIS of WhiteLight, designer of the *Bulletin* and Annual Report

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

DES LANGFORD for his research
CLAUDINE BAXTER and ALISTAIR BANTON for their much-appreciated work in the membership and merchandise departments

STEWART WARE for his work on the new membership database

BARRY THORPE for his invaluable assistance with major submissions

NICK LANSLEY for recording our events for posterity

PAUL CHRISTOPHER of Exesight for his excellent photography

Everyone who worked hard to make such a successful AGM.

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Marlene strides the stage again – for the benefit of the NSS

NSS President Terry Sanderson is reprising his popular and entertaining tribute to Marlene Dietrich, "the world's most glamorous atheist" as a fundraiser for the NSS. It's an evening of surprising revelations about this great entertainer and her medal-winning anti-Nazi activities in World War II. It includes a full showing – on a big screen – of her fabulous one-

woman show, filmed in Sweden and accompanied by Burt Bacharach and his orchestra. Friday 20 February, 7.30pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Tickets £10. More details and booking at www.secularism.org.uk/marlene.html or send a cheque payable to "NSS" to NSS (Marlene), 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. All proceeds to the NSS.