

# LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY

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Leicester Secular Society is a company limited by guarantee,  
Reg.No.06292639, with its registered office at the address above



The Oldest Secular Society in the World  
Formed in 1851



## WINTER NEWS 2007

### SOCIETY DEBATE ON ABORTION

#### 5th DECEMBER AT LEICESTER UNIVERSITY—YOUR SUPPORT NEEDED

The Society is to hold a major public debate on abortion as a contribution to the national debate now raging in Parliament and the media. We have two leading national speakers: Joanne Hill of "LIFE" opposing further liberalisation of the law and Anne Quesney of "Abortion Rights" arguing for easier access. Local speakers from the two camps will act as seconders, including our own Eleanor Davidson for the pro-choice side, and the audience will get a chance to participate and vote on the motion "This house believes it should be easier to obtain an abortion". The event is to be held in the Belvoir Park Lounge, Charles Wilson Building, University of Leicester on the evening of Wednesday 5th December, entrance £3, concessions £2. Doors open and refreshments provided at 7pm for a prompt 7.30pm start. **Please put this date in your diary to make sure an enlightened secular view is put forward in the debate and use the enclosed poster to promote the event.** Volunteers to help please contact Harry on 01455 823570 or at [harry.perry1@btinternet.com](mailto:harry.perry1@btinternet.com). Thanks.

#### The Surveillance Society (Dave Ray)

Early on Monday 22nd October I set off from the Friends Meeting House in Derby with twenty others to protest at the production of parts for "Trident" at the nuclear facility at Rolls Royce, Derby. I joined a small convoy of three cars. We soon encountered police vehicles with blue lights flashing. Half a mile further on we passed two more. On nearing our destination we were stopped and surrounded by about fifty police. Other traffic was allowed through while we spent an hour and a half being body-searched and our vehicles, too, were thoroughly searched. A Police Inspector informed us both verbally and in written form that we were allowed to demonstrate under S.14 of the Public Order Act 1986 in a specially prepared pound outside the factory. The date on the form showed that they knew I would be demonstrating before I did. I can only conclude I was under the sort of close surveillance supposedly reserved for 'terrorists'. Warning: they could be watching YOU too.

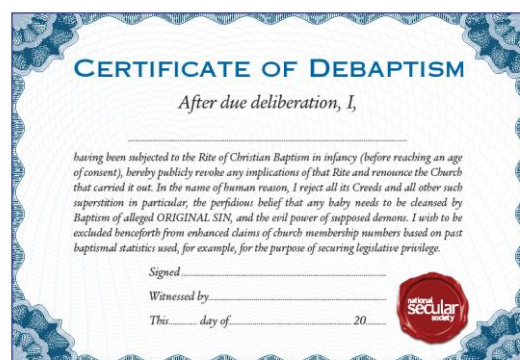
#### Why not stand as a Director?

The AGM is coming up on December 16th so it's time to ask not what Leicester Secular Society can do for you but what you can do for the Society. LSS has been going through a period of growth and increasing activity in the struggle against religious influence. Our membership is now over 140 and we are looking forward with some optimism to the refurbishment of the Hall. But we do need more members to come forward to offer practical help in running the Society and its activities. The more volunteers we have the less each person has to do and the wider the range of activities we can offer. If you would like to volunteer as a Director and need a proposer and seconder or wish to help in some other way do please contact Eleanor the Chair on 0116 292 1964.

We look forward to hearing from you.

#### Did they ask before they baptised you?

If it always irks a bit that others decided to have you baptised into the Christian church before you were even old enough to think then you might like to make your feelings plain by debaptising yourself. The National Secular Society offers a Debaptism Certificate for free download from its website: [www.secularism.org.uk](http://www.secularism.org.uk). Or I can print one off for you in return for a £2 donation to the Society's funds. (Just call Harry on 01455 823570 or email)



## The Racial & Religious Hatred Act 2006 is now in force.

**What you must not do**, s.29B(1): "A person who uses threatening words or behaviour, or displays any written material which is threatening, is guilty of an offence if he intends thereby to stir up religious hatred."

**What you can do**, if you want to challenge religion, is in s.29J: "Nothing in this Part shall be read or given effect in a way which prohibits or restricts discussion, criticism or expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, insult or abuse of particular religions or the beliefs or practices of their adherents, or of any other belief system or the beliefs or practices of its adherents, or proselytising or urging adherents of a different religion or belief system to cease practising their religion or belief system."

A full copy of the Act can be viewed at the Hall or downloaded from the Government website at:  
[www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/2006000](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/2006000)

## IDEAS Group continues to please

"I hadn't been to anything at the Secular Society for ages and so I was pleased to be at the Ideas group discussion on 20th September on "Post-modernism & the Assault on Truth". George Jelliss gave us an overview of the history of thought related to where post-modernism came from. I thought that situated our subject well. We then had a wide-ranging discussion. I was pleased to be part of such an informed group. This topic was particularly of interest to me, having a hard science background and training in psychotherapy where research seems to be couched in post-modern terms." (Grant Denkinson)

Allan Hayes' IDEAS session "BHA Policy on religious education" was attended by 16 members, including 5 female members - a welcome improvement to women's involvement in the Group. The next session is at 7.30pm on Thursday 22nd November and is to be led by Mike Burden speaking on "The Natural Classification of Animals".



## Three for the price of one - not even ASDA does that!

Richard Porson (1759–1808) was debating the Christian doctrine of the "Holy Trinity" with a friend while out walking. A buggy came by with three men in it - "There you are", said the friend, "an illustration of the Trinity" - "No", said Porson, "you must show me one man in three buggies!"

## Are you the missing link?

Ned Newitt and George Jelliss are keen to detail out a complete history of the Society but there are periods where information is very sparse. If you are a long-serving member or have historical documentation on the Society it would be good to hear from you. The period of particular interest is from 1938 onwards. To complete the roster of Presidents we need photos (and biographical details) of Geoff Kirk and Alex Davis for the period 1948 - 1980. We also need records of who the Secretary was and whether it was different from the Vice-President, for instance F. J. Gould in the early 1900s and Harold Hammersley in Peter Miller's time.

If you have personal recollections or documents from that period please do get in touch with Ned and George via the office address or contact Harry on 01455 823570. *Your knowledge may be our only link with our past.*

## Chuckle Time

If you're in need of a bit of light relief type "Pat Condell" into your internet browser search bar and watch a selection of high quality anti-religion rants on U-Tube - each about 5 minutes in length. PC? I think not.

President Lyn Hurst says a big "thank you" to everyone who sent get well soon messages during his recent illness.

## Events Programme Update

**Sunday 9th December 6.30pm at the Hall - Alan Loasby: Documenting our Rights of Way in Leicester.**

For most of the country, footpaths are now documented on 'Definitive Maps' but within the city boundary this is still a work in progress. Alan is Footpath Secretary for the Leicester Group of the Ramblers Association, and over the years has pursued thousands of complaints to ensure that our footpaths remain usable. When Alan spoke to us four years ago, his subject was the long-awaited Right to Roam legislation, and the campaign to achieve it. (Frank Friedmann)

## Poetry Corner

### *Dust*

*I remember in an unfocussed way  
William Blanche, a Fenian miner.*

*His ability to kill was tested by a  
black cockerel, one Christmas  
eve.*

*A rumour of detonators beneath  
his bed seemed proved with that  
knock and two policemen at the  
door.*

*But he died a bronchial death the  
victim of another kind of violence.*

Doug Gray

Frank Friedmann has created an archive on the website. If you have old photos of LSS activities or people please let him copy them to share with other members: 0116 292 1964