

PRESS RELEASE

Friday 23rd November 2018

For immediate use

Retford's Pilgrims Festival parade and event is a great success

Over 300 people, including over 100 scouts, guides and schoolchildren, carried lanterns they had made through Retford on Tuesday 20th November. Also included in the parade were illuminated feature lantern pieces including 'Babworth Church', 'Scrooby Tower', 'the Mayflower', and a bird which appeared to fly all on its own. This was part of the 2018 Pilgrims Festival, marking the countdown to the 400th anniversary in 2020, of the sailing of the Mayflower Pilgrims.

The parade of the children was led by Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Tom Fremantle, accompanied by the Chair of Bassetlaw District Council, Cllr David Challinor, and Mayor of Retford, Cllr Mick Storey. The procession walked along Carolgate to the Market Square and on to St Swithun's Parish Church, where they were joined by Chairman of Nottinghamshire County Council, Cllr Sue Saddington; Vice Chair of Doncaster Council, Cllr Linda Curran; and Chief Executive of Bassetlaw District Council, Neil Taylor. The parade was heralded by a piper from the Retford Pipe and Drums Band.

Once the parade had filled St Swithun's Parish Church, candles were paraded from the Pilgrims Churches: Austerfield, Scrooby, Babworth and Sturton-le-Steeple, joining a Retford candle, and one sent from Provincetown Museum in Massachusetts. The theme this year was the Pilgrim Children and the Retford Elizabethan Academy Drama Group enacted the story of the Pilgrims' journey from their perspective. Interpretative dance group, Made by Katie Green, treated the congregation to the first public performance of their programme 'The Imagination Museum: Mayflower 400', and the Songbirds sang 'Beyond the Horizon' specifically written for Pilgrims events by Jo Freya*. Revd Mark Cantrill inspirationally led the event including getting everyone to sing the song "With Jesus in My Boat" using sign language; he was assisted by Revd Peter Sheasby.

After the event in the church, members of the congregation gathered in the churchyard for the now traditional and ever-popular '400' photograph. Diocesan photographer, Brian Pickering, bravely scaled the steps and climbed ladders onto the church roof to take the photograph.

The parade and event at St Swithun's Parish Church was organised by Bassetlaw Christian Heritage (BCH), and its Chair, Rick Brand, said "The Retford Pilgrims Festival event has been a great success this year, and we are very grateful to the many local volunteers who have worked so hard to make it happen, especially the scouts and guides, the Elizabethan Academy Drama Group, everyone at St Swithun's Parish Church, the Songbirds, Revd Mark Cantrill, and the members of the BCH Steering Group. The support shown by Arts Council England, the Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham, the Rotary Club of Retford, Cllr Carolyn Troop, Retford Civic Society, Pilgrim Roots, Made by Katie Green, and Retford Business Forum has been inspiring."

[*performed by permission of Transported, funded by Arts Council England]

Bassetlaw Christian Heritage (BCH)

BCH focuses on the people and their stories based on faith heritage, with their roots established in and around Bassetlaw, North Nottinghamshire. The region covered is centred on Retford, with a radius of around 30 miles, including parts of Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire.

BCH is keen to work collaboratively with groups and individuals, and if anyone would like to help us in any way, they can reach us at contact@bassetlawchristianheritage.com and: www.bassetlawchristianheritage.com

Note to Editors

For further information, please contact Rick Brand rickbrand@hotmail.com (01427 891376)

Various photographs included – please credit as identified:

- Brian Pickering, Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham
- Electric Egg/Pilgrim Roots/BCH



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