

PRESS RELEASE

**Wednesday 8th January 2020
For immediate use**

Freedom & Tolerance Forum

**Saturday 7th March 2020 between 10.00am and 1.00pm.
The Well, Hospital Road, Retford, DN22 7BD**

This event is free and open to all, and everyone is welcome.

Freedom and Tolerance is as important today as it was 400 years ago – in the anniversary year of the Mayflower Pilgrims, let's see what history can teach us about journeys, rebellion, and things we take for granted.

Speakers include:

Lord Beith - Member of the House of Lords Constitution Committee and the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House. MP for Berwick upon Tweed, 1973-2015

Subject: Methodist Heritage and its significance today

Lord Beith will refer to the heritage of one of the three elements that make up the Methodist church, the United Methodists, who were the most independent-minded and authority-challenging of Methodists, relating this to the significance of religious freedom and toleration.

Professor Elizabeth Tingle - Professor of Early Modern European History at De Montfort University, Leicester. Previously she taught at Plymouth University and the University of Northampton.

Subject: Irish Catholic Refugees in Europe in the early 1600s

Professor Tingle specialises in the history of the French Wars of Religion and in the European Catholic/Counter Reformations. She has just completed a project on long-distance pilgrimage in north-west Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Professor Tingle is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society, a member of the Royal Archaeological Institute and an officer of the Ecclesiastical History Society of Great Britain.

Revd Dr Stuart Jennings - Certificate coordinator for Historical studies at the Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Warwick, where he had also served across the university as a chaplain from 2006-2017. Specialist in Nottinghamshire history, Warwick University

Subject: Faith and Fighting in Nottinghamshire during the Civil War

Revd Dr Jennings received his doctorate from Nottingham Trent University for his work on Puritanism and Protestant Nonconformity in Nottinghamshire, 1600-1700. His book on Newark in the Civil War won the Aland Ball national prize for Local history and he is also the author of 2 books, 17 academic articles and a chapter in three collaborative volumes. He continues to serve as an academic advisor to the National Civil War centre at Newark

Mr John Pontiflex - Head of Press & Information for Aid to the Church in Need (UK).

Subject: Has Religious Freedom become an Orphaned Right?

In his 17 years with the Catholic charity for persecuted and other suffering Christians, John has travelled widely in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. He has investigated human rights violations relating to Christians and other faith minorities. He has visited locations where persecution has taken place, interviewing survivors and Church leaders.

John has acted as Editor-in-Chief of ACN's Religious Freedom in the World, (latest report launched in the House of Lords in November 2018). The report examines the degree to which religious freedom is upheld in 196 countries around the globe. John is a regular media contributor, internationally, on the topic of persecuted Christians.

The first Retford Religious Tolerance Forum was held in 2016 to commemorate the death, in 1616, of Thomas Helwys, the first Baptist martyr, and co-founder, and original advocate of religious tolerance between Christians, Jews, Muslims, and those with no faith. Thomas Helwys was born in Gainsborough, but his family moved to Broxtowe Hall in Bilborough parish, which later became a centre for radical dissenting activism.

This event has been renamed "Freedom & Tolerance" to broaden the scope and better reflect issues of today. **This will be the fifth annual Tolerance Forum to be held in Retford.** It provides a unique opportunity for the subject to be discussed in an open forum.

Previous speakers have included Baroness Elizabeth Berridge (International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief), John Mann MP, Prof. John Coffey (University of Leicester), Rev Tony Peck (General Secretary of the European Baptist Federation), Imam Bakhtyar Pirzada (Eaton Hall), Dr David Appleby (University of Nottingham), Mr Phil Lyons (CEO National Holocaust Centre) Prof. Larry Kreitzer (Oxford University), Dr Martin Parsons (Barnabas Fund), and Dr Calum Miller (Oxford University).



Bassetlaw Christian Heritage (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 in any way, they can reach BCH at contact@bassetlawchristianheritage.com . Website at: www.bassetlawchristianheritage.com

Note to Editors

Photographs of speakers attached:

Lord Beith
Professor Tingle
Revd Dr Jennings
Mr John Pontiflex

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