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Looking at Englishness through the eyes of St George

Posted on Friday 17th May 2013

In the beautiful setting of St George's Church in Edgbaston, more than 100 people - students, staff and alumni of the University along with members of the community – gathered for 'Redcrosse, the secular and the sacred: an evening of performance and presentations on St George and the modern meaning of Englishness.'

The enigmatic Shakespeare Institute Players performed **Redcrosse (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/our/news/items/redcrosse.aspx)**, a poetic liturgy written by **Professor Ewan Fernie (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/shakespeare/fernie-ewan.aspx)** and noted theologian Andrew Shanks working with distinguished poets Andrew Motion, Jo Shapcott and Michael Symmons Roberts. This was followed by thought-provoking presentations from Professor Fernie and University of Birmingham's leading academics **Professor Michael Dobson (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/shakespeare/dobson-michael.aspx)** and **Dr Chris Allen (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/perspective/far-right-allen.aspx)**. The Reverend Julian Francis of St George's Church led the academics and audience in a discussion and the changing face and meaning of 'Englishness'.

One attendee commented 'Last evening at St George's was remarkable - both enjoyable and stimulating.'

The content of the event highlights the ongoing and contemporary conversation which seeks to define 'Englishness' in a rapidly changing society. On this, Reverend Francis commented:

"The conversation on Englishness is a very wide one, and I agree wholeheartedly with the sentiments expressed around the value of having the conversation, and doing so in a 'safe space'. As you will appreciate, as St George's Church, we are committed to attempting to make a positive contribution to the matter, and I intend that there should be future opportunities for continuing exploration, and in different modes and with different partners."

If you attended the event and would like to provide us with your feedback, please either call 0121 414 5511, or e-mail **cal-artsalumni@adf.bham.ac.uk (mailto:cal-artsalumni@adf.bham.ac.uk)**.

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