



## **Reformation London – A European Divorce**

**Senate House Library marks the 500th anniversary of the Reformation with 'Reformation: Shattered World, New Beginnings'**

On 31 October 1517, Martin Luther nailed 95 theses to the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg, Germany, triggering widespread theological revolution. The subsequent crisis facing the Pope in Rome provided King Henry VIII of England with a politically expedient solution to an affair of the heart – his desire to divorce Queen Katherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn. Henry declared himself head of the Church of England, dissolving the monasteries and divorcing his country from Rome, shattering the power of the Catholic Church in Britain at a stroke.

The Reformation, as it is known 500 years later, was a time of turmoil and the consequences of taking England outside of the family of Catholic states were profound, according to a new major exhibition at the University of London's Senate House Library. The exhibition: ['Reformation: Shattered World, New Beginnings'](#) will run from 26 June until 15 December 2017. It will be part of world-wide celebrations to mark such a momentous event and its impact on England's history, and it will be accompanied by a range of events.

Its comprehensive programme will explore the lives and work inspired by Martin Luther's defiant writing, with reading and performances from a line-up of well-known personalities such as actors Joanna David and Nickolas Grace, bestselling author Philippa Gregory, and historian and television presenter, Suzannah Lipscomb (see programme below). In addition an exclusive musical performance will be provided by star vocal ensemble, I Fagiolini, who on 13<sup>th</sup> July will present a unique, specially selected arrangement exploring the impact of the Reformation on music.

'Reformation: Shattered World, New Beginnings', focuses on London during the 16th and 17th centuries, tracing the impact of the Reformation through the four themes of: culture, society, communications and new world order.

The significance of the Reformation can be seen in the description of the exhibition's 'New World' gallery: 'Henry VIII's decision to take England out of Catholic Europe had dramatic repercussions on its place in the world in terms of trade links, military power, diplomatic influence and within the emerging 'New World'. Nowhere was this more keenly felt than London – the heart of diplomacy and trade.'

To create its own story about the period from the beginning of the Reformation until today, the exhibition will present cultural and literary items, such as a manuscript *Book of Hours*, that was ousted by the Reformation, and items that replaced it. Among the contemporary items to show denominational social rifts at home and abroad, is an early biography portraying Mary, Queen of Scots as an innocent martyr who died for her faith.

Martin Luther's original desire was to encourage academic discussion and the exhibition will amplify this. It speaks to the cornerstone elements of the Reformation and allows Senate House Library to showcase its rich holdings of that tumultuous period in word and print, literature, translation and music, and demonstrate its tremendous value for research and engagement.

**Senate House librarian Jackie Marfleet said:** “Reformation is our flagship exhibition for 2017, we hope that you’ll be inspired by the diversity of material on display and a truly compelling events programme. We are bringing the story of Britain’s theological divorce from Europe to life through the lens of London in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The dramatic decisions that King Henry VIII took changed the course of British culture, communications and society and reordered the map, both spiritually and geographically. This exhibition is a chance to see how our collections tell the tale of the shattering of one world and the beginning of another.”

## Events programme

Listed below are the headline major events with more under development and to be added throughout the season, including free offerings at the Being Human and Bloomsbury Festivals.

- An evening with Joanna David and Nickolas Grace  
Hosted by Professor Tom Healy  
27 June, 7pm, Beveridge Hall, Senate House  
Tickets: £20/Concession £15  
[ref500.uk/friendspresent](http://ref500.uk/friendspresent)
- I Fagiolini - Music in the age of Reformation  
Star vocal ensemble, I Fagiolini, will explore the Reformation’s impact on music with a specially selected arrangement  
13 July, 7 pm, Beveridge Hall, Senate House  
Tickets: £20/Concession £15  
[ref500.uk/music](http://ref500.uk/music)
- Keynote address: historian, author and broadcaster Suzannah Lipscomb, on the four key themes of the exhibition  
24 August, 7 pm, Chancellor’s Hall, Senate House  
Tickets: £20/Concession £15  
[ref500.uk/keynote](http://ref500.uk/keynote)
- In conversation with Philippa Gregory  
28 September, 7 pm, Beveridge Hall, Senate House  
A unique and exciting in-conversation event with the bestselling author talking about her work across the period of the Reformation, with a focus on women’s experiences  
Tickets: £20/Concession £15  
[ref500.uk/philippagregory](http://ref500.uk/philippagregory)
- Symposium: Reformation London  
6 December, 10am, Senate Room, Senate House  
This one day symposium presents the latest research on the Reformation across the four exhibition themes – society, culture, communications and the new world order

-Ends-

## **For further information please contact:**

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**Microsite Resource:** An exclusive microsite created to host an online version of the exhibition and showcase learning resources as they are created throughout the exhibition period. The microsite will feature blogs, digital galleries and links to other useful Reformation learning sites. It will also serve as a digital legacy to the exhibition, enabling it to reach an international audience. Microsite URL: [ref500.uk](http://ref500.uk)

**Save the Date - Media Breakfast and Launch Event:** A media breakfast will be held at 8.30am on 22<sup>nd</sup> June at Senate House. This will offer an opportunity to preview the exhibition, speak with the curator, join a private tour around the iconic library spaces and discover a piece of secret London with a visit to the roof of Senate House. Media breakfast invitations will include an invite to the exhibition launch event at 6.30pm on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, where University of London Vice Chancellor and Senate House Librarian welcome guests to celebrate the exhibition opening with an exclusive preview of the exhibition film, a brief address from historian Suzannah Lipscomb and after hours preview tours. Expressions of interest or RSVP's to [emily.stidston@london.ac.uk](mailto:emily.stidston@london.ac.uk) as above.

## **Photography:**

Images available on request.

## **Notes to editors:**

**Senate House Library (SHL)** is one of the world's most significant collections in the arts, humanities and social sciences. With its partner libraries of the institutes of the School of Advanced Study, it provides services to readers from the School of Advanced Study, the colleges of the federal University of London, and from regional, national and international research communities. All are welcome to join the Library. The Library and its collections have been continuously developed since the 1870s. It now holds more than two million printed books, thousands of printed and electronic journals, and the highest proportion of historic collections of any university library in the UK. Learn more about Senate House Library at <http://senatehouselibrary.ac.uk/>.

**The University of London** is a federal University and is one of the oldest, largest and most diverse universities in the UK. Established by Royal Charter in 1836, the University is recognised globally as a world leader in Higher Education. Its members are 18 self-governing institutions of outstanding reputation, together with a number of prestigious central academic bodies and activities. Learn more about the University of London at <http://www.london.ac.uk>

## **Senate House Library on Social Media**

**Twitter:** [senatehouselib](#), **Facebook:** [SenateHouseLibrary](#), **Instagram:** [senatehouselib](#)