

Visiting Speaker Series

The Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies is
pleased to present a talk by esteemed academic

The Reverend Stephen Griffith MBE

"Twenty Years of Observing the Tur Abdin Syriac Community"

Wednesday 9 November 2016, 5.15 pm

LT1, IAIS Building, Streatham Campus, Exeter EX4 4ND

Tea & Coffee to be served from 4.30 pm in the Common Room,
Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies.

All are welcome – no registration required.



When he became Anglican Chaplain in Syria in 1997, Stephen was asked to report to the British Council of Churches on the condition of the Syrian Orthodox Community in the Turabdin area of south east Turkey where there had been a drop of population over 20 years of about 90%. He continued covering the area after he left Syria in 2002, and was instrumental in forming the Tur Abdin Focus Group which lobbied for protection for the community until 2015. Set in an overwhelmingly Kurdish context, the Syriac Christians of Turabdin have complex relations with the majority, and often find themselves under

pressure from the Turkish government and various Kurdish factions. This lecture talks about the community, its dynamics and relationships as well as its astonishing survival.

Born and educated in north Wales, Stephen Griffith has worked as a priest in a variety of contexts, including a decade in the Middle East and the Caucasus. He represented the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Heads of the Churches in Lebanon, Syria, Armenia and Georgia. On returning he did post-graduate research at Newcastle University on Gertrude Bell's visit to Tur Abdin in 1909.