

# THE BENSINGTON SOCIETY

September Talk - Visitors Welcome

**7 for 7.30 pm, Friday 27th September, Benson Parish Hall**

**Non-Members Entrance Fee £4**

**Supper £5 - Bar Available**

## **"Thames Valley Recusant Families & the English Convents in Exile 1600-1800"**

*The families who sent their daughters to be educated in France*



For two hundred years the English convents drew a steady stream of vocations despite the journey being dangerous and despite the fact it was a criminal offence for English women to become nuns. By their defiance, these daughters of the Thames Valley placed their English families in danger. The women who crossed to Europe came from a wide variety of social backgrounds made the convents hubs for English Catholic culture and learning, commissioning splendid buildings and patronising the arts and female education. By the eighteenth century Protestants would flock to visit the English Convents on the Grand Tour, and although they were not allowed to see the nuns, they could hear their singing.

### **SPEAKER**

Dr Bowden is an Honorary Research Fellow at Queen Mary University London. She has published widely on the English Convents and her studies have revealed new manuscript sources, revealing the range of these women's contributions to the intellectual history as well as some unexpected family connections to the highest level of European society.