The Nottingham Mechanics Institute

est. 1837

# Leisure Learning at the Institute

COURSES

TALKS

DAY TRIPS

& MORE

CAFE AND BAR

READING ROOM

LIBRARY

SPRING 2026

**www.nottmleisurelearning.com**

# Based in the heart of Nottingham

**The Nottingham Mechanics Institute has been educating and improving the social wellbeing of the people of Nottingham for 187 years.**

**Looking to the future**

**In 2024 The Institute decided to start a series of Leisure Learning courses,
run by professional tutors, with the aim of learning and enjoying the topics with old friends and new.
The courses were well received and using feedback from several areas we have added new tutors for the courses in 2025 and 2026.
The institute welcomes input from visitors on courses they would like to see in the future.**

**Please have a look around our site if you're stuck on anything**

**Give us a ring on 01159417353
or email us from our contact page**

**Better still pop in and have a chat in person we are here to help.**

# Enrolment information
# Timetable and Prices
# History
# Languages and Culture
# Economics
# Film Studies
# Literature
# Music
# Philosophy & Politics
# Art & Crafts
# Day Courses/Talks
# Members Interest Groups
# Still to Come
# Outside Groups

# ENROLMENT DATE

# From Monday 2nd MARCH

Booking a course

Please fill in an enquiry form online, visit us, or phone us on 01159417353.

You **can start booking right away**

To see all our courses and other information, please visit

www.nottmleisurelearning.com

If you wish to pay by cheque, please make cheques payable to New Mechanics Ltd

with your name and chosen course details included on the reverse.

In person: Nottingham Mechanics Institute

3 North Sherwood St NG1 4EZ

Bookings taken

Mon-Fri, 8.30 AM-2.30 PM

Terms & Conditions for course and event booking, which include our policy on cancellations and refunds are available on our website. Please ask at Reception if you require a paper copy.

| | COURSE | TUTOR | TIME | WEEKS | DATES | HALF TERM/HOLIDAYS | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MONDAY | | | | | | | |
| | Concerts in Focus | Mike Wheeler | 10.15-12.15 | 8 | 13th April -15th Jue | 4th & 25th May | £72.00 |
| | Philosophy and Politics : Philosophy and the Environment | Bettina Lange | 2.30-4.30 | 8 | 13th April - 29th June | 4th & 25th May & 15th & 22nd June | £72.00 |
| | From Nuremberg to Nemesis | David Halliwell | 1.00 -3.00 | 7 | 11th May - 29th June | 25th May | £63.00 |
| Day Course | The Olympic, Bitanic, Titanic & White Star Line | Bob Massey | 10.30-3.30 | 1 | 20th April | N/A | £20.00 |
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| TUESDAYS | | | | | | | |
| Day Course | Pygmalion and My Fair Lady | Dr John Florance | 10.30-3.30 | 1 | 12th May | N/A | £20.00 |
| | Thomas Hardy: Bard of Wessex | Dr John Florance | 10.30-12.30 | 4 | 26th May - 16th June | N/A | £36.00 |
| | Arts & Crafts - Modelling & Creating with Air Dry Clay | Max Astill | 10.30-12.30 | 6 | 14th April -19th May | N/A | £62.50 |
| | Arts & Crafts - Painting with Acrylics | Max Astill | 2.00-4.00 | 6 | 14th April -19th May | N/A | £60.00 |
| Day Course | 18th Century Nottingham - Part 2 | Bob Massey | 10.30-3.30 | 1 | 21st April | N/A | £20.00 |
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| | | | | | | | |
| WEDNESDAY | | | | | | | |
| | Sisters, Spouses & Shadows | Judith Hedley | 10.30-12.30 | 5 | 22nd April - 20th May | N/A | £45.00 |
| | Poetry: Poetry for Spring and Early Summer | Judith Hedley | 1.30-3.00 | 5 | 22nd April - 20th May | N/A | £45.00 |
| | The Infamous Production Code (the Hays Code) | David Price | 10.15-12.15 | 6 | 15th April - 20th May | N/A | £54.00 |
| | Arts & Crafts - Drawing | Max Astill | 10.30-12.30 | 6 | 15th April -20th May | N/A | £60.00 |
| | Arts & Crafts - Watercolours | Max Astill | 2.00-4.00 | 6 | 15th April -20th May | N/A | £60.00 |
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| | COURSE | TUTOR | TIME | WEEKS | DATES | HALF TERM/HOLIDAYS | COST |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| THURSDAY | | | | | | | |
| | Four Battles that Shaped Britain | Dr Mark Barnard | 10.30-12.30 | 4 | 9th April - 30th April | N/A | £36.00 |
| | Exploring Nottinghamshire Villages | Chris Weir | 10.30-12.30 | 4 | 23rd April - 14th May | N/A | £36.00 |
| DAY TALK | The Castles of the Midlands | Dr Mark Barnard | 10.30-11.30 | 1 | 14th May | N/A` | £5.00 |
| DAY TALK | Savage Beyond Reason? The Vikings | Dr Mark Barnard | 10.30 -11.30 | 1 | 4th June | N/A | £5.00 |
| DAY TALK | Awful, unlucky or a Scapegoat? ' Bad' King John | Dr Mark Barnard | 10.30-11.30 | 1 | 2nd July | N/A | £5.00 |
| | New Directions in Economics | Anita Fernandez | 10.30-12.30 | 5 | 16th April - 14th May | N/A | £45.00 |
| Day Course | The Global Financial crisis of 2007-8: Causes & Consequences | Anita Fernandez | 10.30-4.30 | 1 | 4th June | N/A | £25.00 |
| | The Psychological Thriller | Anita Fernandez | 1.00-4.00 | 5 | 16th April - 14th May | N/A | £68.00 |
| Day Course | Billy Wilder and Some Like it Hot | Anita Fernandez | 10.30-4.30 | 1 | 11th June | N/A | £25.00 |
| Day Course | Big Bands of 30's & 40's | Bob Massey | 10.30-3.30 | 1 | 30th April | N/A | £20.00 |
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| FRIDAY | | | | | | | |
| | Japanese Writing & Conversation | Takae Gale | 10.30-12.00 | 6 | 24th April - 29th May | N/A | £54.00 |
| Day Course | William Herbert Higginbottom | Bob Massey | 10.30-3.30 | 1 | 24th April | N/A | £20.00 |
| | Bizets Carmen - and why it was originally rejected | David Price | 10.15-12.15 | 2 | 24th April -1st May | N/A | £18.00 |

Leisure Learning at the Institute

EXPLORING
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S VILLAGES

# Nottingham History

**Join Chris Weir**
**on Thursdays**
**Starts 23rd April**
**10.30 -12.30 pm**
**4 Week Course £36.00**

## Exploring Nottinghamshire's Villages

**Nottinghamshire has a rich heritage of historic villages and diverse landscapes. Arthur Mee, in his book on Nottinghamshire in the King's England series, wrote that "scores of villages must be seen by those who know how captivating the county can be."**

**This course offers an introduction to local village landscapes, using maps, documents, photographs and evidence from the landscape itself to piece together how villages evolved — and how their character has been shaped by agriculture, industry, religion, architectural styles and the country gentry.**

**Along the way, you'll uncover surprising stories, including links between Ralph Cromwell, Lord Treasurer of England, and the village of Lambley; how children were transported from London in the 18th century to work in a worsted mill in Norton Cuckney; and how coal mining transformed once-rural communities.**

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# HISTORY

## Four Battles that shaped Britain

**Thursdays 10.30-12.30**

**Starts 9th April**

**(Dr Mark Barnard)**

**4 Week course £36.00**

**Join Dr Mark Barnard as we explore four pivotal conflicts that helped shape British history.**
**From Neville's Cross (1346) and its impact on Anglo-Scottish relations, to the dramatic Battle of Flodden Field in 1513, where Scotland's "Renaissance King" James IV met his fate. We'll then move to 1642, when King Charles I raised the Royal Standard near Nottingham, marking the start of the English Civil War, and examine the first major clash at Edgehill.**
**Finally, we'll look at the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, when Charles Edward Stuart — the Young Pretender — came close to the throne before his defeat at Culloden,**
**the last major battle fought on British soil.**

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# From Nuremberg to Nemesis

## History

**From Nuremberg to Nemesis**

**Mondays 1-3pm**

**Starts 11th May**

**25th May is a Holiday - Bank Holiday**

**(David Halliwell)**

**7 Week course £63.00**

**This course explores the aftermath of the Second World War and the pursuit of justice for Nazi war crimes. Beginning with the Nuremberg Trials, we examine how leading figures of the Third Reich were brought to account and how these landmark proceedings helped establish modern principles of international law.**

**We then follow the story through to Operation Nemesis, the covert campaign to track down and punish those who escaped justice. Along the way, we'll consider questions of morality, revenge and accountability, and reflect on how societies seek closure after unimaginable atrocities.**

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# HISTORY & FILM

## The infamous Production Code (the Hays Code)

**and how it affected the contents of Film in Hollywood's Golden Age**

**Wednesdays 10.15-12.15pm**

**Starts 15th April**

**(David Price)**

**6 Week course £54.00**

**The Motion Picture Production Code was Hollywood's system of self-censorship, enforced from 1934 to curb violence, sexual imagery and "indecent" dialogue.**

**This course explores its origins in early American cinema, when growing public pressure led studios to adopt a national set of rules. Real power arrived in 1934 with the creation of an approval office led by Joseph Breen, overseen by Will Hays.**

**We'll look at the boundary-pushing "pre-code" era, the changes that followed enforcement, and amusing examples of scenes the censors tried to ban — from revealing musical numbers to increasingly graphic violence.**

**Finally, we'll ask whether the Code was a restriction… or a surprising force for creativity during one of Hollywood's greatest periods.**

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# History & Music

## Bizets Carmen

## Why Carmen was rejected by the Parisians public when it was first performed.

## Fridays 10.15-12.15pm

## Starts 24th April

## (David Price)

## 2 Week course £18.00

**Carmen is today one of the most popular operas in the repertoire but when it was first performed it was panned by the critics and hated by the audience who watched it at the Opera Comique theatre in 1875.**

**Bizet thought he had written something that people would love - and indeed he had, but he died not long after that first performance and the critics then hypocritically "changed their minds" and decided to praise his work to the rafters.**

**The main reason the opera was not accepted by the public was that they thought the story was immoral - the upper middle-class Parisians who regularly attended the opera expected something suitable for a family audience, and as far as they were concerned Carmen just wasn't it. It had a heroine who apparently completely lacked morality and the final Act descended into bloody violence, when most people expected a tuneful and colourful chorus to bring the opera to satisfying conclusions. We'll look at the bourgeoisie as a class in Paris and how their tastes became paramount after the French Revolution, when Napoleon encouraged them to take the place of the aristocracy, which had traditionally dominated opera audiences. We will also look at the bloodshed that brought Paris Commune to an end and how that affected the mood in Paris when Carmen was first performed just four years later. It will also have musical extracts in the course.**

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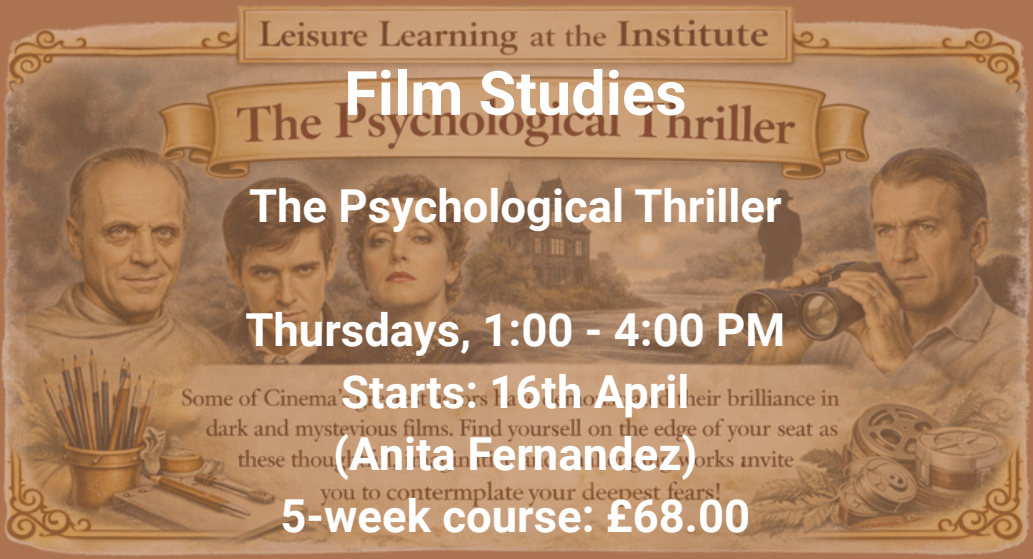


# Film Studies

## The Psychological Thriller

## Thursdays, 1:00 - 4:00 PM
## Starts: 16th April
## (Anita Fernandez)
## 5-week course: £68.00

**Some of cinema's most iconic actors have revealed their brilliance in films steeped in darkness and mystery. Prepare to be gripped as these powerful, atmospheric works unfold — drawing you into stories of tension, uncertainty and hidden truths.**

**From shadow-filled streets to psychologically charged interiors, these films explore obsession, deception and the fragile line between truth and illusion. Rich in mood and masterful performance, they challenge audiences not only to follow the plot, but to question what lies beneath it.**

**At Leisure Learning at the Institute, we'll explore these haunting and thought-provoking works together — sharing insights, unpicking themes and reflecting on the performances that make them unforgettable. These are films that linger long after the credits roll, inviting lively discussion and fresh perspectives in good company.**

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Leisure Learning at the Institute

Concerts in Focus

# Music

## Concerts in Focus

**Mondays 10.15-12.15pm**

**Starts 13th April**

**4th & 25th May are Holidays**

**(Mike Wheeler)**

## 8 Week course £72.00

**Join us on a welcoming journey into the world of live music. From the early days of concert performances to today's exciting production techniques, this course explores how concerts have evolved and why they continue to bring people together.**

**We'll look behind the scenes at what makes a great live show — from the performers and venues to lighting, sound and staging — while also celebrating the shared atmosphere that only a concert can create. Discover the magic behind the music, the energy of the crowd, and the special moments that turn performances into lasting memories.**

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New Directions in Economics

# Economics

## New Directions in Economics
## Thursdays, 10.30am – 12.30pm
## Starts: 16th April
## Anita Fernandez
## 5-week course: £45.00

**Over the past decade, the discipline of Economics has undergone significant change — and the next ten years promise even more transformation. In this thought-provoking course, we will explore where economics stands today and where it may be heading in an increasingly uncertain global landscape.**

**What are the major challenges facing modern economies? Whose voices are shaping policy and debate? And what can economics truly offer a world grappling with climate change, technological disruption and financial instability?**

**Together, we will examine key developments including Behavioural Economics, Environmental Economics, and evolving approaches within Banking, Insurance and Retail Economics.**

**A stimulating opportunity to understand how economic thinking is adapting — and why it matters more than ever.**

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# Literature

## Sisters, Spouses & Shadows

Wednesdays 10.30-12.30 pm
Starts 22nd April
(Judith Hedley)

## 5 Week course £45.00

The recent success of 'Hamnet' suggests it's time to put the spotlight not only on Shakespeare's wife but on other women who played walk-on parts in literary history. Some are sisters to women of genius - Claire Clairmont shared Mary Shelley's elopement and exile, Cassandra Austen was Jane's closest confidante - while wives Catherine Dickens and Emma Hardy nursed ambitions of their own while enduring more than the usual trials and tribulations of Victorian marriage.

An interest in these lives is all you need to join us on this short course; any reading will be provided in booklet form week by week.

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Poetry for Spring and Early Summer

# Literature

**Poetry for Spring and Early Summer**
**Wednesdays 1.30-3.00pm**
**Starts 22nd April**
**(Judith Hedley)**
**5 Week course £45.00**

**At this time of year, as the sap rises and we feel the sun on our faces at last, it's great to celebrate by sharing poems that fit the mood. The five weeks of our course include not only longer evenings, trees coming into leaf and the arrival of swallows, but also Cuckoo Day, Shakespeare's birthday, World Bee Day and Whitsun - a cornucopia of inspiration. Class members are encouraged to suggest work from any era of literature. Whether you already love and appreciate poetry, or have always wanted to find out why others do,**
**you will be welcome on this friendly course.**

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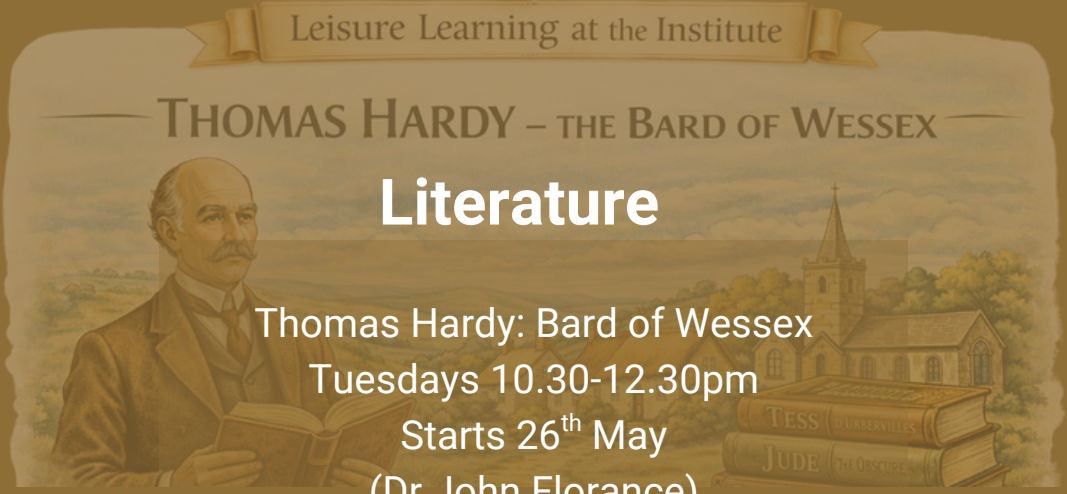


# Literature

Thomas Hardy: Bard of Wessex
Tuesdays 10.30-12.30pm
Starts 26th May
(Dr John Florance)
4 Week course £36.00

Thomas Hardy is best known for such novels as Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Jude the Obscure and Far from the Madding Crowd. But it is less well known that he was a prolific poet. His collected Poems extends to over 900 pages and a great many of them are marvellous! At it's best, his verse is moving, thought provoking and deeply personal. We shall be discussing poems some of which might be familiar, others relatively unexplored. The range of work in this field is far reaching. We shall be discussing poems delving into the themes of love, religion, nature, personal loss and much else. His poetry is extremely rewarding and stimulating.

No knowledge will be assumed and texts will be provided.

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# Languages & Culture

## Japanese Writing & Conversation

**Fridays 10:30-12pm**
**Starts 24th April**
**(Takae Gale)**

## 6 Week course £54.00

**Discover the beauty of the Japanese language in this friendly and welcoming course led by Takae.**
**Perfect for beginners and enthusiastic learners alike, this class introduces basic conversation, hiragana writing, everyday expressions, and cultural insights to help you build confidence in both spoken and written Japanese.**
**Across six enjoyable sessions you will learn how to:**
**Write and recognise key Japanese characters**
**Use practical phrases for real-life situations**
**Develop clear pronunciation and listening skills**
**Gain cultural understanding to enhance communication**
**Whether you're learning for travel, personal interest, or simply to try something new, this course offers a relaxed and supportive environment to enjoy the Japanese language and culture.**

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LEISURE LEARNING at the INSTITUTE

# Philosophy and the Environment

## PHILOSOPHY

**Join Bettina**
**Mondays 2.30 -4.30 pm**
**Starts 13th April**
**4th May, 25th May, 15th June & 22nd June are Holidays**
**8 Week Course £72.00**

Environmental issues have become wide-ranging and more serious. They include the causes and consequences of climate change; biodiversity loss and ecosystem fragility; and pollution including air pollution, water pollution and microplastics. Lifestyle changes can help address environmental issues - driving less for example or eating less meat. But the complexity, scale and urgency of the issues require political solutions. What those solutions are considered to be depends largely on what the problem is thought to be. Different philosophies understand the problems in different ways. For example,
an eco-socialist analysis locates the problems in the dynamics of the global capitalist economy, whereas 'in deep ecology' it is regarded as a key issue that we (humans) have lost our spiritual connection with nature. This course gives you the opportunity to explore how different philosophies analyse the problems and what solutions they propose. It will cover some key ideas from 'ecological modernisation' ; conversation; green liberalism; eco-anarchism; green socialism; and deep ecology. Knowledge of Philosophy is not expected.

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# Arts & Crafts - Modelling and Creating with Air Dry Clay

## 6 Week Course £62.50
## Tuesdays 10.30-12.30pm
## Starts 14th April
## (Max Astill)

**Join Max for a brand NEW Block in Arts & Crafts this Spring.! Discover the creative possibilities of air-dry clay in this hands-on and enjoyable course. Whether you're a complete beginner or someone who loves working with your hands, you'll learn how to shape, sculpt and bring your ideas to life. From simple decorative pieces to more detailed designs, you'll explore techniques such as forming, joining, texturing and finishing. The course offers a relaxed and supportive environment where you can experiment, develop confidence and enjoy the process of making something truly unique. All materials will be provided — just come along ready to get creative.**

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# Arts & Crafts

# Painting with Acrylics

## Tuesdays 2.00 - 4.00pm

## Starts 14th April

## (Max Astill)

## 6 Week Course £60.00

**Join Max for a brand NEW Block in Arts & Crafts this Spring.! Explore the vibrant world of acrylic painting in this relaxed and creative session, suitable for beginners and those looking to build on existing skills. You'll learn how to work with colour, layering and texture while experimenting with different techniques to create your own artwork.**

**With guidance and encouragement throughout, this is a great opportunity to develop confidence, discover your personal style, and enjoy the process of painting in a supportive environment. All materials will be provided — just come along ready to get creative.**

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# Arts & Crafts

## Arts & Crafts- Drawing

Wednesdays 10.30-12.30pm

Starts 15th April

(Max Astill)

6 Week course £60.00 or £70.00 with materials

**Ever wished you could draw but don't know where to start?**
**Join our 6- week drawing course following on from the previous 3 week taster course and discover the joy of putting pencil to paper:**
**Over six fun, relaxed sessions, you'll learn the fundamentals of drawing, including mastering the ones already learnt whilst also looking at NEW different techniques.**
**No experience needed - just curiosity and enthusiasm!**
**You will leave the course with a solid foundation, a sketchbook full of progress, and the skills to keep developing your art.**

**Things to bring along**

**A small set of sketching pencils**
**Putty Rubber**
**A Sketchbook**

**If you would like to purchase any of these from Max please let us know when booking.**

**Sketching pencil set £3.50,Putty Rubber £2.00 each**
**A5 Sketchbook £5.00**
**Full set £10.00**

**p.s you can still attend even if you didn't attend the taster sessions before**

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# Arts & Crafts Watercolour Painting

## Wednesdays 2.00 -4.00 pm
## Starts 15th April
## (Max Astill)
## 6 Week course £60.00

**Come and join Max for an engaging introduction to watercolours. Whether you are a complete beginner taking your first steps, or someone with experience looking for fresh ideas and new techniques, this friendly and supportive session is designed to help you build confidence and develop your own creative style.**

**Max will guide you through the basics of colour, brushwork and composition, offering practical tips and encouragement along the way. It's a relaxed and enjoyable class where you can learn at your own pace and enjoy the creative process.**

**Paints and palettes will be provided**
**just bring your enthusiasm and get ready to explore**
**the beautiful world of watercolour.**

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# Please join us for our Seasonal Day Talks for Spring 2026

Leisure Learning at the Institute

# DAY COURSE - ECONOMICS

## The Global Financial Crisis of 2007–8: Causes and Consequences

Thursday 4th June

10.30am – 4.30pm

Anita Fernandez

£25.00

A detailed and accessible exploration of the global economic landscape in 2007, and how a series of financial pressures and policy decisions evolved into the most severe economic crisis since the Great Depression.

We will examine the build-up to the crash, the key institutions and individuals involved, and the responses taken by governments and central banks around the world. From collapsing banks to international bailouts, we will trace how events unfolded and why their consequences were felt so widely.

Whose fault was it? Were there any winners — or only losers? And could it happen again, or have the lessons truly been learned?

A thought-provoking day designed to deepen understanding of an event that continues to shape the economic world we live in today.

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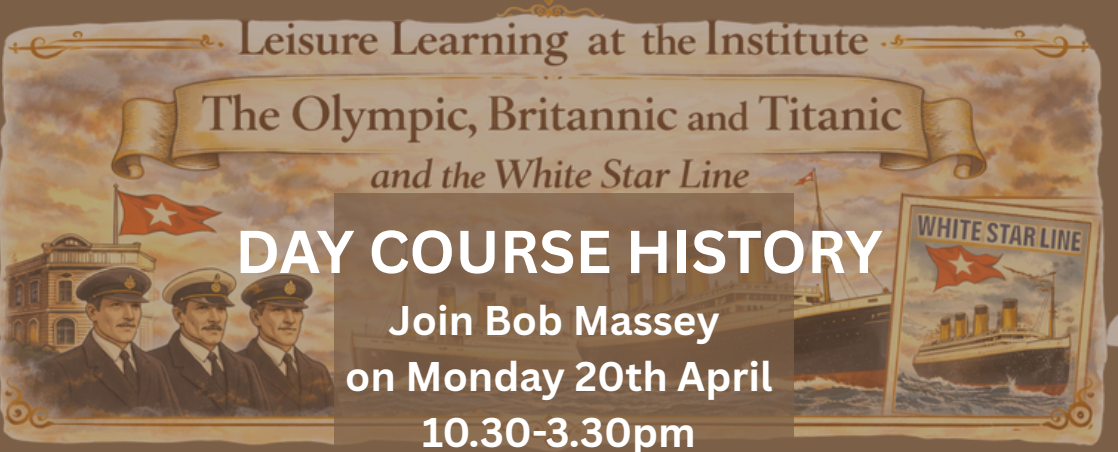


# DAY COURSE HISTORY

**Join Bob Massey**
**on Monday 20th April**
**10.30-3.30pm**
**£20.00**

The Olympic, Britannic & Titanic – and the White Star Line
Discover the fascinating story of the three great sister ships
RMS Olympic, RMS Titanic and HMHS Britannic
and the company that built them, the White Star Line.
From Edwardian luxury and cutting-edge engineering to tragedy and wartime service, this illustrated talk looks beyond Titanic's famous sinking to explore Olympic's long career and Britannic's lesser-known fate. We'll also examine life on board, rivalry between shipping lines, and how global events shaped these remarkable vessels.
A compelling journey through ambition, innovation and loss an absorbing glimpse into one of Britain's most iconic maritime stories.

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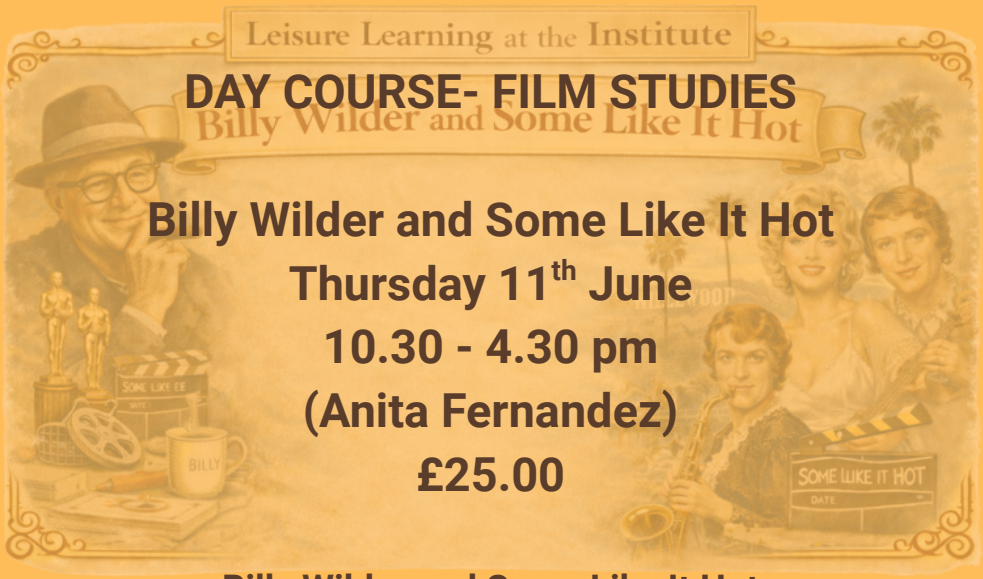


# DAY COURSE- FILM STUDIES

## Billy Wilder and Some Like It Hot

**Thursday 11th June**

**10.30 - 4.30 pm**

**(Anita Fernandez)**

**£25.00**

**Billy Wilder and Some Like It Hot**

**An exploration of the remarkable career of Billy Wilder, one of Hollywood's most celebrated writer-directors, and how his life experiences shaped his work. From his early years in Europe to his success in America, we will consider how displacement, wit and sharp social observation influenced his filmmaking voice. The session will include a screening of Some Like It Hot, followed by a wide-ranging discussion examining its themes, performances and enduring appeal. Together we will explore the cultural influences woven into the film — from European sensibilities and satire to Hollywood glamour and post-war attitudes — revealing how deeper values and ideas are embedded within this iconic screen classic.**

**A chance to revisit (or discover) one of cinema's most beloved comedies and uncover the layers beneath its sparkling surface.**

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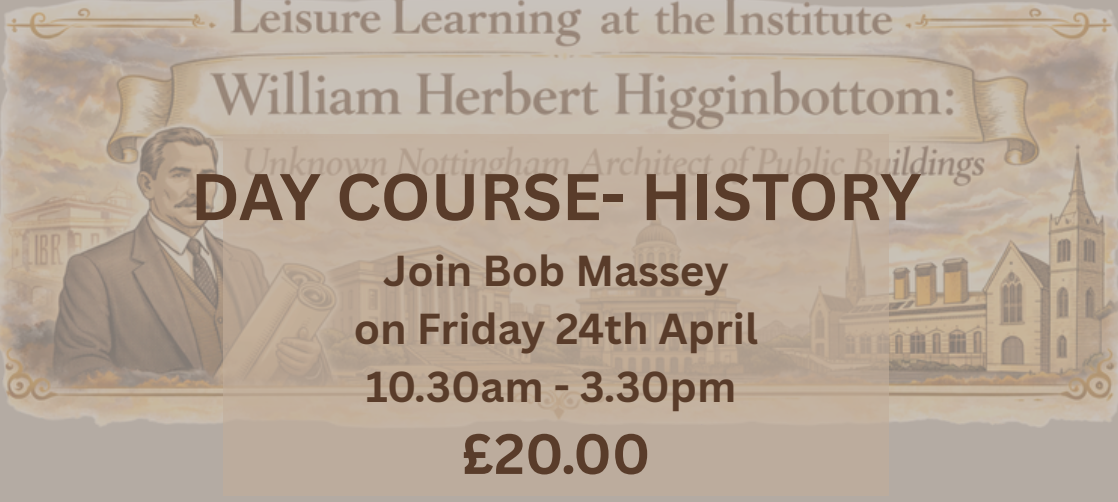


# DAY COURSE- HISTORY

## Join Bob Massey
## on Friday 24th April
## 10.30am - 3.30pm
## £20.00

William Herbert Higginbottom – Nottingham's Unknown Architect of Public Buildings

Discover the overlooked story of William Herbert Higginbottom, a little-known Nottingham architect whose work helped shape the city's public landscape in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras. Although rarely credited today, Higginbottom played a significant role in designing and influencing buildings used for civic, social and community life. This illustrated talk explores his career, surviving buildings, and the wider architectural context of a rapidly changing Nottingham. Through photographs, plans and local history, we uncover how his quiet legacy still forms part of the city we walk through every day.

A fascinating insight into Nottingham's built heritage and one of its forgotten designers.

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Castles of the Midlands

# DAY TALK - HISTORY
# The Castles of the Midlands

**10.30-11.30am**
**Thursday 14th May**
**(Dr Mark Barnard)**

## DAY TALK £5.00 Per Person

**Across years of war and struggles, castles have been built, defended and destroyed. Some have been lost, discernible only by ridges left on the land. But many remain and are full of stories. Perhaps some of us for instance have visited Nottingham or Newark Castles? But why exactly were they built and who played a formative role in their stories? What truth lies behind the myths and legends? How did Nottingham - a favourite of King John's and Dudley castles feature in national events? From Nottingham to Peveril, join Dr Mark Barnard to hear their role in this fascinating part of our history...**

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Big Bands of the 1930s and Forties

# DAY COURSE - HISTORY-MUSIC

## Big Bands of the 30s & 40s

**Thursday 30th April**

**10.30 am - 3.30 pm**

**(Bob Massey)**

# £20.00

**The big bands of the 20s to 40s were the main forms of entertainment in the dance halls and on the radio during the depression, and war years. They provided an escape from the riggers of war and the desperation of the depression. Many romance's and marriages were made on these dance floors. We will look at the style of music and how it changed over the period from formal regulated dance tunes to swing, Jazz and onwards through to what became Rock and Roll. Dance Halls were packed and records sold in the millions, come along and see which were made famous along the way.**

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# DAY TALK - HISTORY

Savage beyond Reason?

The Vikings and their Legacy in England

Thursday 4th June

10.30-11.30am

(Dr Mark Barnard)

DAY TALK £5.00 PER PERSON

**Most of us have heard of the Vikings — raiders who swept across Britain in longships, striking fear into monasteries and kingdoms alike. But did they really wear horned helmets, and were they truly "savage beyond reason"? What exactly was the infamous Blood Eagle? And beyond the legends, what did these warriors, traders and settlers actually look like — and how did they change the communities they encountered?**

**In this fascinating reassessment, Mark Barnard separates myth from reality, exploring how the Vikings have been portrayed over the centuries and why their reputation became so fearsome. We'll examine the evidence behind their raids, their beliefs and culture, and their lasting impact on England — from language and law to place names and power structures.**

**Far from being one-dimensional barbarians, the Vikings were complex and adaptable people whose legacy still shapes the world around us. Join Mark to uncover the truth behind the legend and discover the real story of these remarkable seafarers.**

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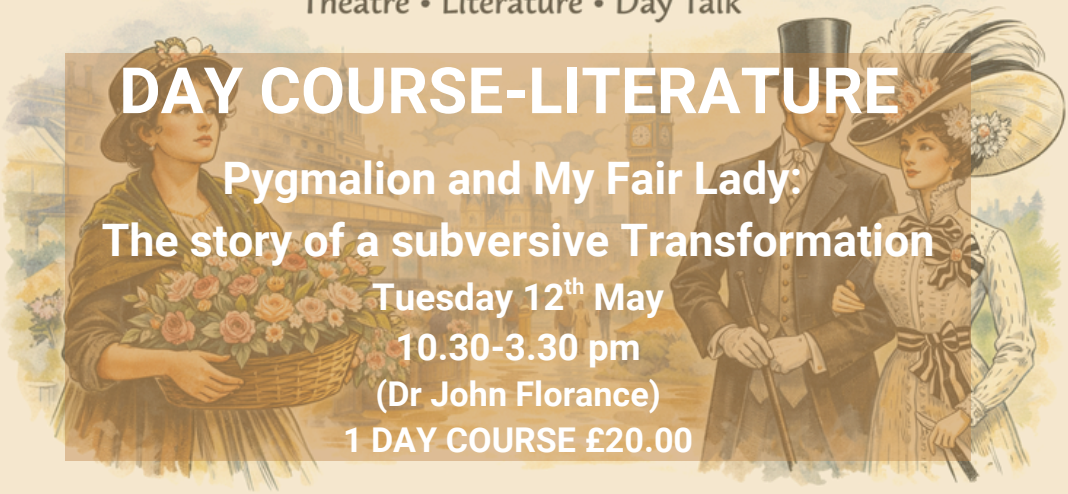
# PYGMALION & MY FAIR LADY

Theatre • Literature • Day Talk



## DAY COURSE-LITERATURE

### Pygmalion and My Fair Lady:
### The story of a subversive Transformation

**Tuesday 12th May**
**10.30-3.30 pm**
**(Dr John Florance)**
**1 DAY COURSE £20.00**

**Pygmalion (1914) is perhaps Bernard Shaw's best known play. This is largely because the great musical My Fair Lady, with a book and lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner and music by Frederick Lowe (1956) is based on the original play and the screenplay Shaw wrote for the 1938 film which starred Leslie Howard and Wendy Hiller. Interestingly, the musical transforms the meaning of the original play into something which subverts Shaw's radical vision. ( This is not to diminish the genius of the musical which is a masterpiece.) But it does beg the question why and how this is the case.**

**We will be looking at the play and it's original production (a story in itself!), the pre war film and how Lerner and Lowe came to write a musical which, given the nature of Shaw's play, many thought was impossible.**

**This story is fascinating and very entertaining. Whether you like musicals ( or indeed Bernard Shaw) or not this is a course for you.**

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18th Century Nottingham

Part Two – The Weather, Battles & Rebellions

# DAY COURSE - HISTORY

## Join Bob Massey
## on Tuesday April 21st
## 10.30-3.30pm
## £20.00

## 18th Century Nottingham –
## Part Two: Weather, Battles & Rebellions

**The 18th century was a time of upheaval for Nottingham, shaped not only by national conflict but also by the forces of nature and local unrest. Periods of extreme weather brought hardship, affecting harvests, trade and everyday life, while wars and political tensions created uncertainty both at home and abroad. This session explores how these pressures sparked protest and rebellion, revealing how ordinary people responded to rising prices, economic strain and shifting political loyalties. By examining local events alongside the wider national picture, we'll see how climate, conflict and popular resistance combined to leave a lasting mark on Nottingham's development.**

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# DAY TALK- HISTORY

**Awful, Unlucky or a Scapegoat?**
**'Bad' King John**
**Thursday 2nd July**
**10.30-11.30am**
**(Mark Barnard)**

## DAY TALK £5.00 Per Person

**Forever overshadowed by his heroic brother, Richard the Lionheart, the so-called "diabolical" King John of England has gone down in history as England's worst monarch — weak, cruel, and ultimately responsible for the humiliation of Magna Carta.**

**But was John truly a villain… or has he been unfairly condemned by centuries of hostile propaganda?**

**In this compelling reassessment, Mark Barnard explores King John's turbulent reign, uncovering his often-overlooked connections to Nottingham and Newark-on-Trent. From political intrigue and rebellion to power struggles and personal failings, this talk digs beneath the legend to reveal a far more complex ruler.**

**Join Dr Mark as he challenges the traditional narrative and asks whether King John deserves his dark reputation — or whether history has been too harsh.**

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