

The Nottingham Mechanics Institute
est. 1837

Leisure Learning at the Institute

COURSES
TALKS
DAY TRIPS
& MORE

CAFE AND BAR
READING ROOM
LIBRARY

WINTER
2027

www.nottmleisurelearning.com

Based in the heart of Nottingham

The Nottingham Mechanics Institute has been educating and supporting the social wellbeing of the people of Nottingham since 1837 .

Looking to the future

In 2024, the Institute launched a series of Leisure Learning courses, led by professional tutors and designed to make learning enjoyable, sociable and accessible.

The courses were warmly received and, following feedback from members and visitors, we have continued to add new tutors and new subjects. The Institute always welcomes suggestions for future courses and topics.

Please browse our brochure, and if you need any help, just get in touch.

Call us on 0115 941 7353, email us through our contact page, or better still, pop in and have a chat in person.

We are always 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

ENROL NOW

Booking a course

Please fill in an enquiry form online, visit us, or phone us on 0115 9417353.

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, 8.30am-2.30pm

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	10	Jan 11th - March 22nd	February 15th	£90.00
	Art Appreciation - Cezanne to Hockney: Art & The Landscape	Janis Baker	1.00 - 3.00	7	Jan 25th - 15th March	February 15th	£63.00
	Elizabeth I - Pox, plots, Pirates, Papists and Philip	Dave Halliwell	1.00 - 3.00	8	Feb 1st - 22nd March	N/A	£72.00
	Philosophy - Truth, Post Truth and 'Bullshit'	Bettina Lange	2.30 - 4.30	8	Jan 18th - March 15th	February 15th	£72.00
TUESDAYS							
	Golden Age of Crime Fiction and its Origins	Dr John Florance	10.30-12.30	4	Jan 26th - Feb 16th	N/A	£36.00
	Gilbert & Sullivan: The Victorian Theatre's Odd Couple	Dr John Florance	10.30-12.30	5	Feb 23rd - March 23rd	N/A	£45.00
	The Archaeology of the Early Anglo-Saxons	Olga Magoula-Bamford	10.30-12.30	9	Jan 26th - March 23rd	N/A	£81.00
	Degenerate Art	David Price	10.15 -12.15	5	Feb 23rd - March 23rd	N/A	£45.00
WEDNESDAY							
	Women of the British Civil Wars	Sandra Berrington	10.30 -12.30	5	Jan 20th -17th Feb	N/A	£45.00
	Vanity Fair	Judith Hedley	10.30-12.30	7	Jan 27th -17th March	17th February	£63.00
	Taking to the Air - Flying from the beginning to end of WWI	Bob Massey	10.30-12.30	2	Jan 27th - 3rd Feb	N/A	£18.00
	British Entertainers of the 1930's and 40's	Bob Massey	1.30-3.30	2	Jan 27th - 3rd Feb	N/A	£18.00
	17th-19th Century Times of Violence & Revolt in Nottingham	Bob Massey	10.30-12.30	2	Feb 10th - 17th Feb	N/A	£18.00
	History of Pubs, Inns and Alehouses in Nottingham	Bob Massey	1.30-3.30	2	Feb 10th - 17th Feb	N/A	£18.00
	American History & Politics - Modern Presidents & Scandals	Peter Ling	1.30-3.30	12	Jan 20th - April 21st	24th & 31st March	£108.00

	COURSE	TUTOR	TIME	WEEKS	DATES	HALF TERM/HOLIDAYS	COST
THURSDAY							
	Drama, Tragedy & Intrigue: Stewart Scotland	Dr Mark Barnard	10.30-12.30	4	Jan 14th - 4th Feb	N/A	£36.00
Day Talk	2nd Boer War & Sir Arthur Conan Doyle	Dr Mark Barnard	10.30 -11.30	1	Feb 18th	N/A	£6.00
Day Talk	Peter The Great - Tsar of Russia	Dr Mark Barnard	10.30 -11.30	1	April 15th	N/A	£6.00
Day Talk	Barnard Castle - One of the Great Fortresses of Northern England	Dr Mark Barnard	10.30 -11.30	1	April 22nd	N/A	£6.00
	The People's War & Nottinghamshire	Chris Weir	10.30 -12.30	4	Jan 21st - Feb 11th	N/A	£36.00
Day Talk	In the Groove - My Vinyl Years	Chris Weir	10.30-11.30	1	Feb 18th	N/A	£6.00
Day Workshop	Down The Marshes	Chris Weir	10.00-1.00	1	March 4th	N/A	£15.00
	Economics - Making sense of the Financial System	Anita Fernandez	10.30-12.30	5	Jan 14th -11th Feb	N/A	£45.00
	Economics- Global Economy	Anita Fernandez	10.30-12.30	5	Feb 25th - 25th March	N/A	£45.00
	Film Studies - Screen Queens	Anita Fernandez	1.00-4.00	5	Jan 14th -11th Feb	N/A	£68.00
	Film Studies - Sequence of Spies	Anita Fernandez	1.00-4.00	5	Feb 25th - 25th March	N/A	£68.00
	The Establishment of the state of Israel	Dave Halliwell	1.00-3.00	8	Feb 4th - 25th March	N/A	£72.00
	Gilding the Lily	Michael Wilson	10.15-12.15	3	Feb 25th -11th March	N/A	£27.00
FRIDAY	Stars of Film Musicals - Part 2	David Price	10.15-12.15	6	Feb 5th - 12th March	N/A	£54.00

NOTTINGHAM MECHANICS INSTITUTE MEMBERSHIP 2026/27

Why not Join us for only

£50.00

Per Year

Please see Wes or Ruth

Our membership year runs from August
New memberships purchased after August will be charged on a pro-rata basis.
Thank you for your continued support



HISTORY

The People's War & Nottinghamshire

Thursdays 10.30-12.30 pm

Starts 21st January

(Chris Weir)

4-Week course £36.00

Discover how the Second World War affected everyday life in Nottingham and the towns and villages of Nottinghamshire, as we explore the challenges, sacrifices and remarkable resilience of local communities during this extraordinary period in history.

We will examine the impact of the war on the city and county, from the introduction of Air Raid Precautions (ARP) and civil defence measures to the realities of rationing and the constant demands of the war effort. The course will also explore Nottinghamshire's contribution to munitions production and the vital role played by women, both in factories and on the fields and farms, as they helped keep the country working during wartime.

Along the way, we will discover how ordinary people adapted to extraordinary circumstances, revealing stories of determination, community spirit and everyday life on the Home Front.

And, to capture a little of the humour and entertainment that helped lift spirits during those difficult years, there will even be a song or two from the ever-popular George Formby!

An engaging and nostalgic journey into Nottinghamshire's wartime history, bringing the experiences of local people vividly to life.

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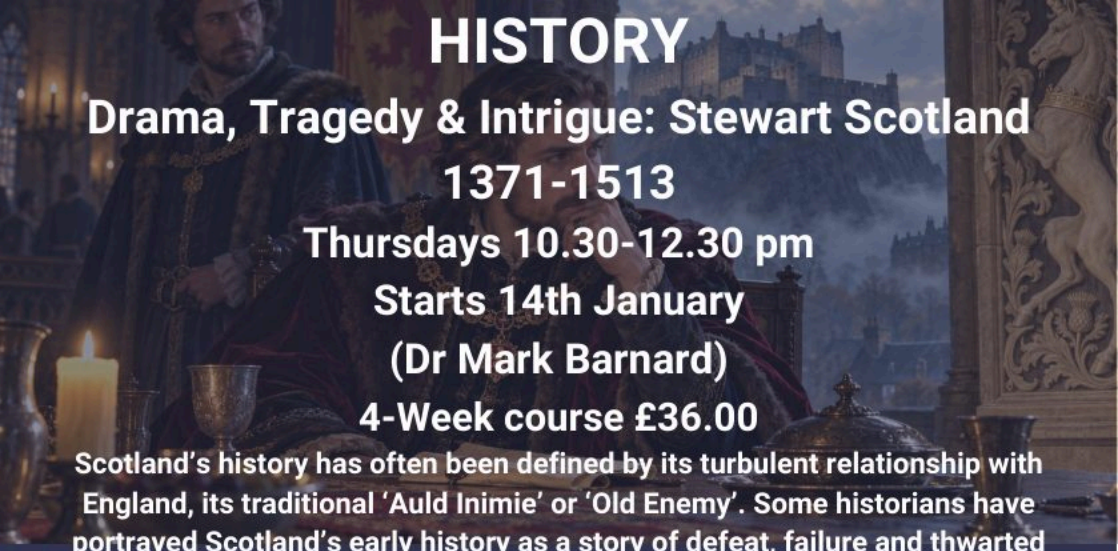

HISTORY

Drama, Tragedy & Intrigue: Stewart Scotland 1371-1513

Thursdays 10.30-12.30 pm

Starts 14th January

(Dr Mark Barnard)

4-Week course £36.00

Scotland's history has often been defined by its turbulent relationship with England, its traditional 'Auld Inimie' or 'Old Enemy'. Some historians have portrayed Scotland's early history as a story of defeat, failure and thwarted ambition, but was the country simply a victim of misfortune, or were its troubles shaped by ambitions closer to home?

Join Dr Mark Barnard as we journey into the fascinating and often turbulent world of Stewart Scotland, exploring the power struggles, political rivalries and royal intrigues that helped shape the nation's destiny.

Was Scotland the victim of English ambitions, or did its own rulers contribute to its difficulties? What threat did the Kingdom of Scotland pose to England, and what was the so-called 'Stewartisation' of Scotland? Along the way, we will encounter colourful and formidable characters such as Archibald 'the Grim' and discover why the unicorn became such an enduring symbol of Scottish identity.

We will also investigate one of the darkest episodes in Scottish royal history: the notorious 'Black Dinner' of 1440 at Edinburgh Castle, when two young Douglas noblemen were betrayed and executed.

Bringing to life the remarkable characters who once walked the corridors of Edinburgh Castle, this engaging course will explore the drama, tragedy, ambition and intrigue of Scotland's most famous royal dynasty, set against the ever-changing relationship between Scotland and England.

A fascinating journey through a turbulent chapter of Scottish history, where loyalty, betrayal and the struggle for power shaped the future of a nation.

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HISTORY

Women of the British Civil Wars

Wednesdays 10.30 - 12.30 pm

Starts 20th January

(Sandra Berrington)

5-Week course £45.00

Women played a far more significant role in the British Civil Wars than is often recognised. From queens and noblewomen to ordinary wives and mothers, many demonstrated remarkable determination, resilience and, as was said at the time, "a courage beyond their sex".

Join us as we uncover the fascinating stories of these extraordinary women and explore the important contributions they made during one of the most turbulent periods in British history.

We will begin by examining the background to the Civil Wars, exploring their causes, the conflicts themselves and their lasting consequences. Along the way, we will discover the many different roles women played, from political influence and religious activism to supporting armies, protecting their homes and defending their beliefs.

Our journey will introduce well-known figures such as Queen Henrietta Maria and Lucy Hutchinson, alongside lesser-known but equally fascinating women, including Jane Whorwood and Katherine Chidley.

Using historical sources, we will also explore what everyday life was like for women in the seventeenth century, considering marriage, childbirth, family responsibilities and the very different experiences of women across the social classes.

An engaging and thought-provoking course that brings to life the often-overlooked women whose courage, determination and actions helped shape this remarkable chapter of British history.

HISTORY

ELIZABETH I

POX, PLOTS, PIRATES, PAPISTS AND PHILIP

Mondays 1-3pm

Starts 1st February

(David Halliwell)

8-week course £72.00

Join us for a fascinating eight-week journey into the life and reign of Elizabeth I, one of England's most remarkable and influential monarchs, whose courage, determination and political skill helped shape the nation's future.

We will explore the immense challenges Elizabeth faced during her reign, from her near-fatal battle with smallpox to the threat of invasion by the mighty Spanish Armada, sent by Philip II of Spain, ruler of one of Europe's most powerful nations.

Discover the dangerous world of religious conflict, Catholic plots and political intrigue surrounding Mary, Queen of Scots, and the Jesuits. We will uncover the secret activities of Elizabeth's formidable spymaster, Sir Francis Walsingham, and her trusted chief minister, William Cecil, as they worked to protect the Queen and her throne.

The course will also examine the extraordinary exploits of seafarers such as Francis Drake, John Hawkins, Walter Raleigh and Martin Frobisher, whose daring voyages challenged Spanish dominance and threatened the treasure fleets returning from the Americas.

Along the way, we will explore their sometimes uneasy relationship with Elizabeth, the foundations of England's growing naval power and the events that ultimately led to the Spanish Armada.

An engaging and revealing exploration of the triumphs, dangers and extraordinary personalities that defined the Elizabethan age and helped shape the course of British history.

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American History & Politics

Modern Presidents and Scandals

Wednesdays 1.30-3.30pm

Starts 20th January

24th & 31st March are Holiday Weeks

(Peter Ling)

12 Week Course -£108.00

From Watergate and presidential resignations to impeachment trials, political scandals and disputed elections, the history of the American presidency is filled with drama, controversy and intrigue.

Join us for this fascinating twelve-week course exploring some of the most significant political scandals and constitutional crises in modern American history, and how they have tested the strength of American democracy.

We begin with the role of the US President before examining the Watergate scandal, Richard Nixon's resignation and subsequent pardon. We then explore the Iran-Contra affair during Ronald Reagan's presidency and the questions it raised about presidential accountability.

The Clinton years bring further controversy, from Whitewater to the Monica Lewinsky scandal and Bill Clinton's impeachment and acquittal. We will also investigate the disputed 2000 presidential election, the Florida recount and the Supreme Court's involvement.

Finally, we turn to Donald Trump's first presidency, examining Russian interference in the 2016 election, the investigations that followed and his two impeachments.

Throughout the course, we will consider how effectively America's constitutional checks and balances limit presidential power and hold those in office accountable.

An engaging and thought-provoking journey through the scandals, personalities and political battles that have shaped the modern American presidency.



The Archaeology of The Early Anglo-Saxons

Tuesdays 10.30- 12.30pm
Starts 26th January
(Olga Magoula-Bamford)
9 week Course £81.00

Step back into the fascinating world of the early Anglo-Saxons and discover how archaeology is transforming our understanding of a period once known as the 'Dark Ages'.

Join us as we explore remarkable discoveries, from the magnificent royal burials at Sutton Hoo and Snape to the extraordinary treasures of the Staffordshire Hoard and Prittlewell.

Combining archaeology, history, science and art, we will uncover everyday Anglo-Saxon life, examining homes, occupations, food, clothing, crafts and social customs. Discover what burial sites, weapons, jewellery and everyday objects reveal about their beliefs and identities.

We will also investigate the arrival of migrant groups, the emergence of kingdoms and the development of trade and early towns, alongside the growing influence of Christianity on art, architecture, literature and society.

Through fascinating archaeological evidence, we will challenge traditional ideas about the 'Dark Ages' and reveal a vibrant, complex and changing society that helped shape medieval Britain.

An engaging journey into the lives, beliefs and achievements of the early Anglo-Saxons, bringing this remarkable chapter of British history vividly to life.

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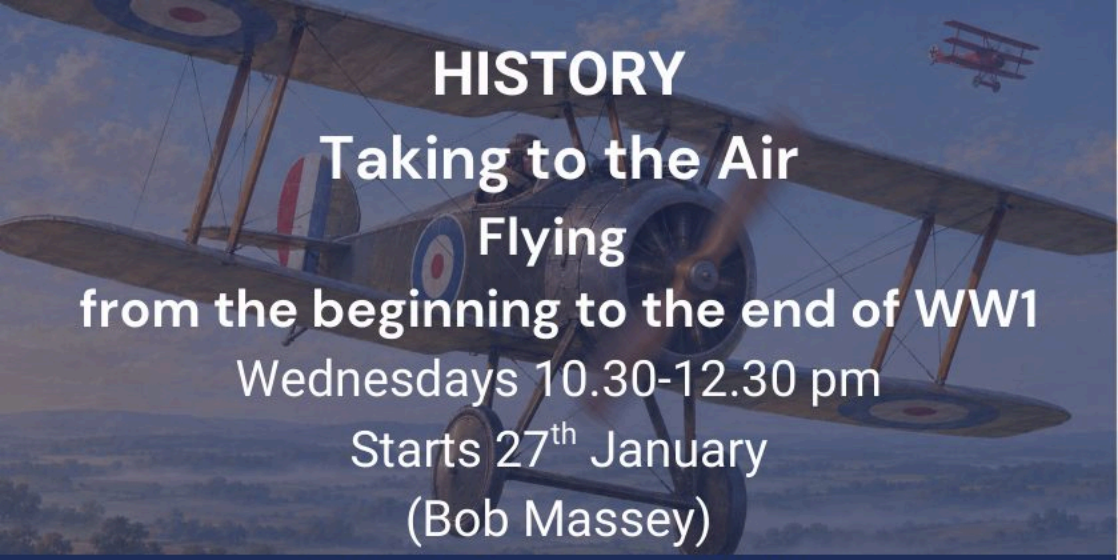

HISTORY

Taking to the Air

Flying

from the beginning to the end of WW1

Wednesdays 10.30-12.30 pm

Starts 27th January

(Bob Massey)

2 Week Course - £18.00

Discover the remarkable story of aviation during the First World War, from the fragile flying machines of 1914 to the increasingly sophisticated aircraft of 1918.

Explore how aircraft developed from simple reconnaissance machines into fighters and bombers, transforming the nature of warfare. Along the way, we will discover the pioneering pilots, famous flying aces and technological innovations that shaped the battle for the skies.

From the daring exploits of the Red Baron and the aerial battles over the Somme to the formation of the Royal Air Force in 1918, this fascinating course explores four extraordinary years that changed the history of aviation forever.

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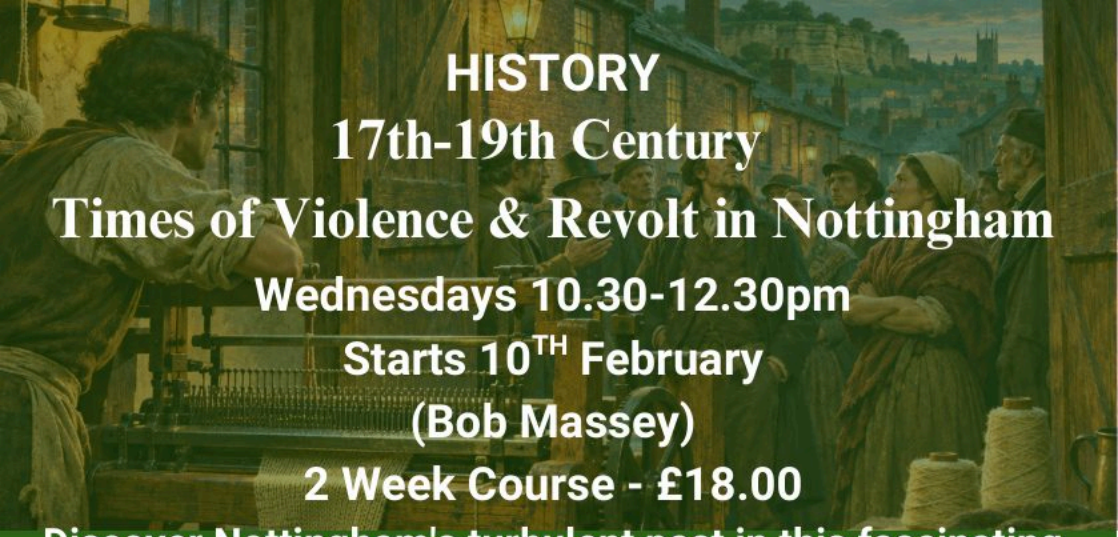

HISTORY

17th-19th Century

Times of Violence & Revolt in Nottingham

Wednesdays 10.30-12.30pm

Starts 10TH February

(Bob Massey)

2 Week Course - £18.00

Discover Nottingham's turbulent past in this fascinating exploration of the riots, rebellions and violent protests that shaped the city between the 17th and 19th centuries. From the Luddite disturbances and protests of the Industrial Revolution to highway robberies on the Forest, Nottingham has a long history of unrest and resistance. Explore the struggles of ordinary people as they fought against political injustice, harsh working conditions and social inequality.

An engaging journey through three centuries of conflict and change, revealing a more rebellious side to Nottingham's rich history.

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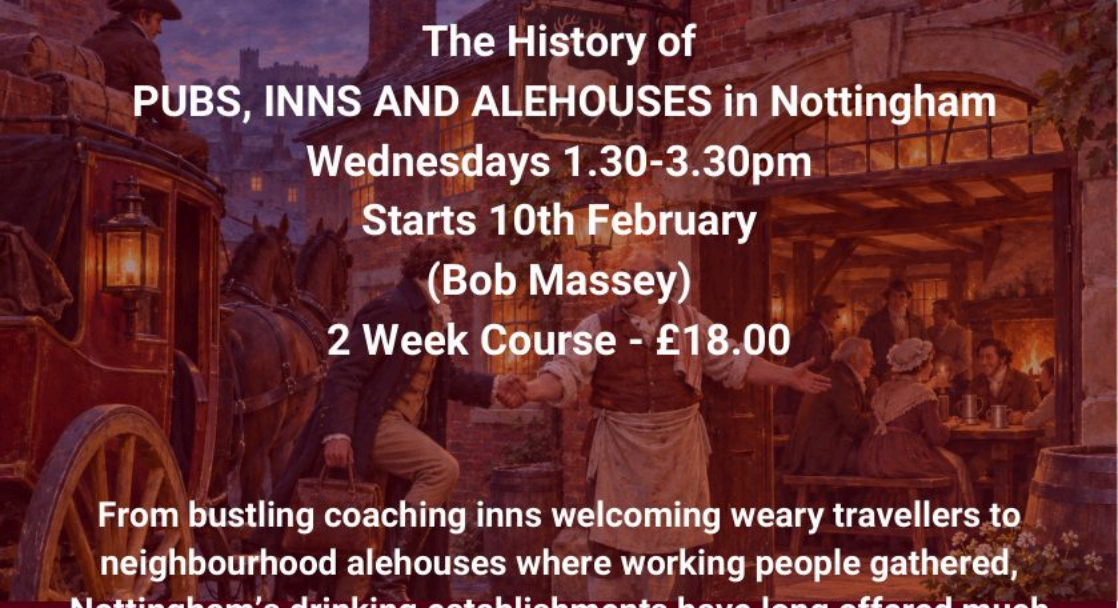

The History of
PUBS, INNS AND ALEHOUSES in Nottingham

Wednesdays 1.30-3.30pm
Starts 10th February
(Bob Massey)
2 Week Course - £18.00

From bustling coaching inns welcoming weary travellers to neighbourhood alehouses where working people gathered, Nottingham's drinking establishments have long offered much more than refreshment.

Join us as we explore their changing role in the life of the town, discovering how they became places to exchange news, conduct business, enjoy entertainment and meet friends.

Along the way, we will consider the differences between pubs, inns and alehouses, the stories behind their names and the people who ran and frequented them. We will also explore how changes in travel, industry and social habits helped shape their fortunes.

From familiar landmarks to long-lost establishments, this course offers a fresh perspective on Nottingham's streets and the gathering places that helped define its communities.

An engaging journey through local history for anyone curious about the characters, customs and stories behind Nottingham's historic pubs.

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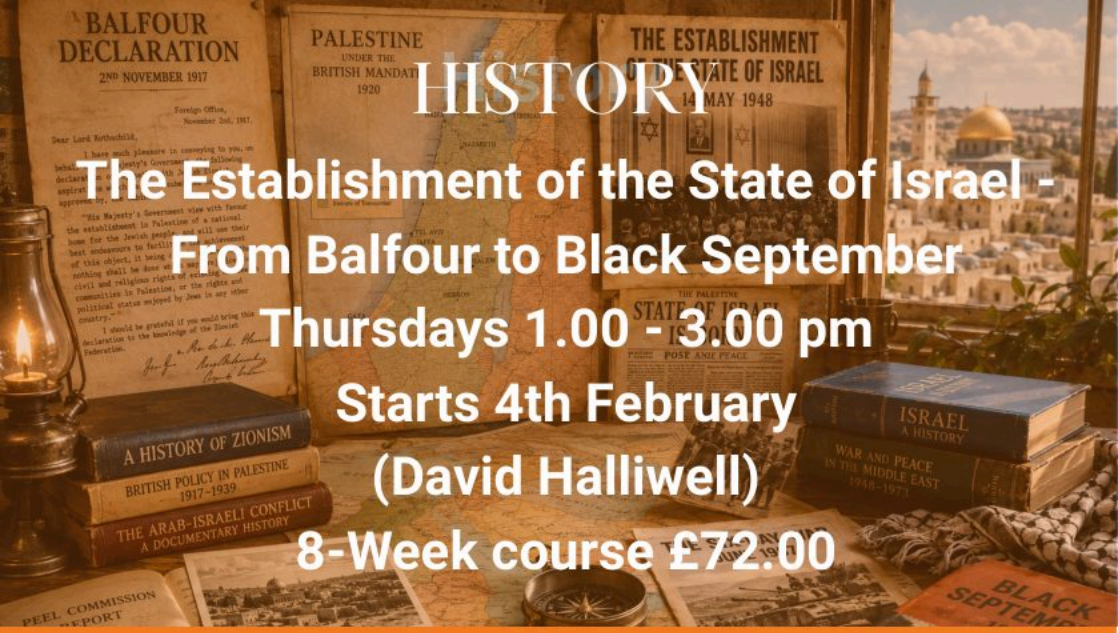

HISTORY

The Establishment of the State of Israel - From Balfour to Black September

Thursdays 1.00 - 3.00 pm

Starts 4th February

(David Halliwell)

8-Week course £72.00

Join Dave as he takes you on a journey and focuses on the conflict in the Middle East through a study of the relationship between Arabs and Jews in Palestine between 1917 and 1972.

During the course the following themes will be considered:

- Competing Claims to Palestine
- The secret diplomacy during WW1 and the Balfour Declaration
- The League of Nations Mandates in the Middle East
- British rule in Palestine 1919 -1939
- How WW2 and the Holocaust influenced Zionism
- The creation of Israel and the 1948 war
- Arab - Israeli wars between 1956 -1967 and the spread of terrorism

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HISTORY MUSIC

BRITISH ENTERTAINERS OF THE 1930'S & 40'S

WEDNESDAYS 1.30-3.30PM
STARTS 27TH JANUARY
(BOB MASSEY)
2 WEEK COURSE - £18.00

STEP BACK INTO THE GOLDEN AGE OF BRITISH ENTERTAINMENT AND DISCOVER THE STARS WHO BROUGHT LAUGHTER, MUSIC AND GLAMOUR TO AUDIENCES DURING THE 1930S AND 1940S. FROM THE MUSIC HALLS AND VARIETY THEATRES TO THE GROWING POPULARITY OF RADIO AND CINEMA, EXPLORE THE CAREERS OF MUCH-LOVED PERFORMERS SUCH AS GRACIE FIELDS, GEORGE FORMBY, SANDY POWELL AND VERA LYNN. DISCOVER HOW THESE ENTERTAINERS CAPTURED THE HEARTS OF THE NATION, PARTICULARLY DURING THE DIFFICULT YEARS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR, WHEN THEIR SONGS, COMEDY AND PERFORMANCES HELPED LIFT SPIRITS AND BOOST MORALE. A NOSTALGIC AND ENTERTAINING JOURNEY THROUGH TWO REMARKABLE DECADES, CELEBRATING THE PERSONALITIES, PERFORMANCES AND UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS OF BRITISH SHOWBUSINESS.



The Stars of Musicals Part 2

Fridays 10.15-12.15 pm

Starts 5th February

(David Price)

6-Week course £54.00

Stars of the Hollywood Musical

Join David Price for Part 2 of a nostalgic journey through the golden age of the Hollywood musical, celebrating the stars who brought music, dance and glamour to cinema screens from the 1930s to the 1960s.

Discover the lives and careers of legendary performers including Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Gene Kelly, Doris Day, Judy Garland, Howard Keel, Kathryn Grayson and Rita Hayworth, alongside some lesser-known talents whose contributions deserve to be remembered.

Featuring memorable film clips and television appearances from later in their careers, this entertaining course offers a fascinating insight into the personalities behind the performances and the films that captivated audiences around the world.

Whether you are a lifelong fan of movie musicals or simply enjoy the stars of Hollywood's golden age, this is a course not to be missed.

You don't have to have attended part 1 to enjoy part 2 so come along and join in.

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Music

Concerts in Focus

Mondays 10.15-12.15 pm

Starts 11th January

15th February is a Holiday

(Mike Wheeler)

10-Week course £90.00

Join us on a fascinating journey into the wonderful world of classical music concerts, exploring how live performances have evolved over the centuries and why they continue to captivate and inspire audiences today.

From the elegant concert halls of the past to the magnificent performances of modern orchestras, we will discover how classical concerts have developed, examining the traditions, performers and venues that have helped shape the concert experience.

We will also take a look behind the scenes at what makes a memorable performance, from the musicians and conductors to the acoustics, lighting and staging that bring the music to life.

Along the way, we will explore the unique atmosphere of a live classical concert, the relationship between performers and audiences, and the extraordinary power of music to move, entertain and bring people together.

An engaging and enjoyable course for anyone with a love of classical music, whether you are a regular concertgoer or simply curious to discover more [illegible] performance.



Opera/Musical Theatre

Gilbert & Sullivan: The Victorian Theatre's Odd Couple

Tuesdays 10.30-12.30pm
Starts 23rd February
(Dr John Florance)
5 Week Course - £45.00

Towards the end of their remarkable partnership, W. S. Gilbert famously declared to Arthur Sullivan, "We are world-known, and as much an institution as Westminster Abbey." It was a bold claim, but one that reflected the enormous popularity of a musical partnership whose influence continued well into the twentieth century. Their wonderful comic operas, including The Mikado, HMS Pinafore, The Pirates of Penzance and The Gondoliers, continue to delight audiences with their memorable music, sparkling wit and humour.

Join us as we explore the extraordinary partnership between Gilbert, the brilliant wordsmith, and Sullivan, the gifted composer, discovering what made their Savoy Operas so successful.

We will examine the stories, satire and social commentary behind their works, placing them within the colourful world of Victorian theatre. Along the way, we will trace the fascinating history of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company and its role in preserving their legacy.

We will also consider how two men with such different personalities and backgrounds managed to create works of such remarkable harmony. Perhaps Lennon and McCartney offer an interesting comparison!

With plenty of opportunities to enjoy their wonderful music and humour, this entertaining course offers something for everyone, whether you are a lifelong enthusiast or completely new to the world of Gilbert and Sullivan.

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Film Studies

Screen Queens: From Elizabeth I To Elizabeth II

Thursdays, 1:00 - 4:00 PM

Starts: 14th January

(Anita Fernandez)

5-Week course: £68.00

From Judi Dench's Oscar-winning portrayal of Queen Elizabeth I in Shakespeare in Love to the acclaimed performances of Helen Mirren, Glenda Jackson and Olivia Colman, Britain's royal women have fascinated audiences on both the big and small screens for generations.

Join us for a fascinating journey through more than four hundred years of British history as we explore how some of our most powerful queens have been portrayed in film, television dramas and documentaries.

Taking a chronological approach, we will examine the lives and reigns of Elizabeth I, Queen Anne and Queen Victoria, before devoting two sessions to the late Queen Elizabeth II. Along the way, we will consider how these royal women navigated the political and social challenges of their times, and how their stories have been interpreted and reimagined for modern audiences.

Through memorable performances, historical dramas and documentaries, we will discover how the lives of these remarkable women continue to capture our imagination and what their portrayals reveal about the changing relationship between the monarchy, history and society.

An entertaining and thought-provoking course combining royal history, outstanding acting and the magic of film and television.

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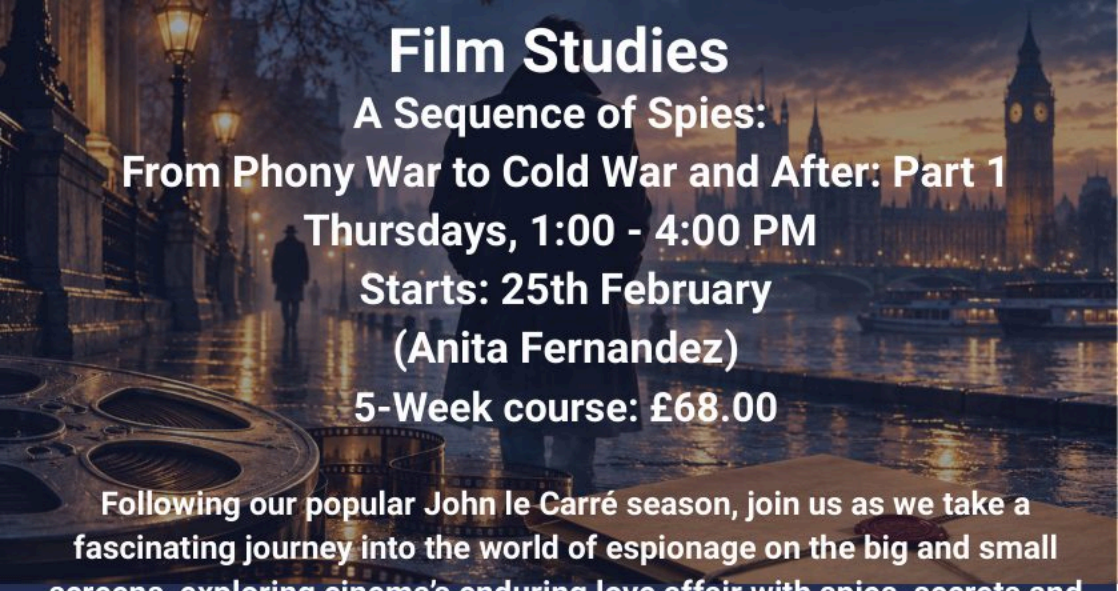

Film Studies

A Sequence of Spies:
From Phony War to Cold War and After: Part 1

Thursdays, 1:00 - 4:00 PM

Starts: 25th February

(Anita Fernandez)

5-Week course: £68.00

Following our popular John le Carré season, join us as we take a fascinating journey into the world of espionage on the big and small screens, exploring cinema's enduring love affair with spies, secrets and intrigue.

From the suspenseful masterpieces of Alfred Hitchcock to the modern-day performances of Tom Hiddleston, and from Joseph Conrad's The Secret Agent to the unforgettable Harry Palmer, we will discover the remarkable variety of stories, styles and stars that have helped make the spy genre so popular.

Through an eclectic selection of memorable films, we will explore how imaginative directors and talented actors have brought the shadowy world of espionage to life. From gritty realism and Cold War tensions to thrilling adventures and futuristic fantasies, the genre has continually reinvented itself to captivate audiences and keep us on the edge of our seats.

Whether you enjoy classic spy thrillers, clever plots, unexpected twists or larger-than-life characters, this entertaining course offers something for every film enthusiast.

This five-week course will be followed by a further five sessions after Easter, giving us even more opportunities to explore the fascinating world of spies on screen.

Art & History
DEGENERATE ART
Tuesdays 10.15-12.15pm
Starts 23rd February
(David Price)
5 Week Course - £45.00

What happens when art challenges political power? During the Nazi era, modern art was condemned as 'degenerate', considered an insult to German culture and subjected to widespread censorship.

In 1937, the Nazi regime staged its notorious Degenerate Art exhibition in Munich, displaying more than 600 works intended to demonstrate what its leaders considered unacceptable art. Many were created by internationally acclaimed artists whose work had been removed from public collections.

Join us as we explore the extraordinary story behind this campaign, examining the artworks targeted by the Nazis and the criticism of modern art that existed long before Hitler came to power.

We will also compare Nazi attitudes with those of the Soviet leadership, discovering how both regimes sought to control artistic expression, while taking very different approaches to modern and experimental art.

Looking beyond painting, we will investigate how political authorities throughout history have attempted to influence or suppress creativity in music, literature and other art forms. Equally, we will discover how artists have used their work to challenge those in power, sometimes openly and sometimes through more subtle forms of protest.

A fascinating and thought-provoking course exploring the complex relationship between art, politics, censorship and freedom of expression, and the enduring power of creativity in the face of political control.

ART APPRECIATION

Cézanne to Hockney: Art & The Landscape

Mondays 1.00 - 3.00 pm

Starts 25th January

(15th February is a Holiday week)

(Janis Baker)

7-Week course £63.00

From Paul Cézanne, Gustav Klimt and the California Six to Lyonel Feininger, Edward Hopper, Georgia O'Keeffe and David Hockney, join us on a fascinating journey through the world of landscape painting. We will explore how these remarkable artists found inspiration in the natural world, capturing its beauty, atmosphere, colours and changing moods in their own distinctive styles.

Discover how they challenged traditional approaches to landscape painting, experimented with new techniques and perspectives, and transformed familiar scenery into bold, imaginative and sometimes unexpected works of art.

Through a wonderful variety of paintings, we will see how artists from different periods and backgrounds have interpreted the world around them, offering fresh ways of looking at landscapes both familiar and unfamiliar.

No previous knowledge or experience is necessary – just curiosity, an open mind and an enthusiasm for discovering the fascinating world of art!

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Economics

Financial Economics: Making Sense of the Financial System

Thursdays, 10.30am – 12.30 pm

Starts: 14th January

(Anita Fernandez)

5-week course: £45.00

Join us for a fascinating journey into the world of finance as we explore how the City of London operates, the institutions that shape it, and the people who influence the financial world.

We will discover how to understand the financial press, interpret market listings and gain an insight into the workings of financial markets. Find out how traders operate, why currencies and commodities are bought and sold, and what drives the decisions that affect economies around the world.

The course will also examine the important role of financial regulators, including the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) and the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), alongside the influence of central banks such as the Bank of England.

We will explore how banking is changing in an increasingly complex financial world before taking a closer look at financial risk management and how understanding risk can help us make more informed decisions.

An engaging and informative course for anyone interested in understanding the financial world, how it works and the impact it has on our everyday lives.

Economics

The Global Economy

Thursdays, 10.30am – 12.30 pm

Starts: 25th February

(Anita Fernandez)

5-Week course: £45.00

What does the World Bank actually do? What is the role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)? These influential institutions regularly feature in the news, but how much do we really understand about their purpose and the impact they have on the global economy?

Join us as we explore the fascinating world of international finance and discover how money moves around the globe at extraordinary speed. We will investigate the murky world of money laundering, examining how illegal funds are disguised as legitimate income, where the money comes from and where it ultimately ends up.

The course will also look at how money circulates within the European Union, the influence of the 'almighty dollar' and the importance of free trade, tariffs and global supply chains.

As we move further into the twenty-first century, we will consider some of the biggest challenges facing the world economy. How important is sustainability, and does it mean the same thing to everyone? How are political uncertainty and international tensions changing the way countries trade and economies operate?

An engaging and thought-provoking course that will help unravel the complexities of the global financial system, challenge our assumptions and encourage us to look at the world economy from a fresh perspective.

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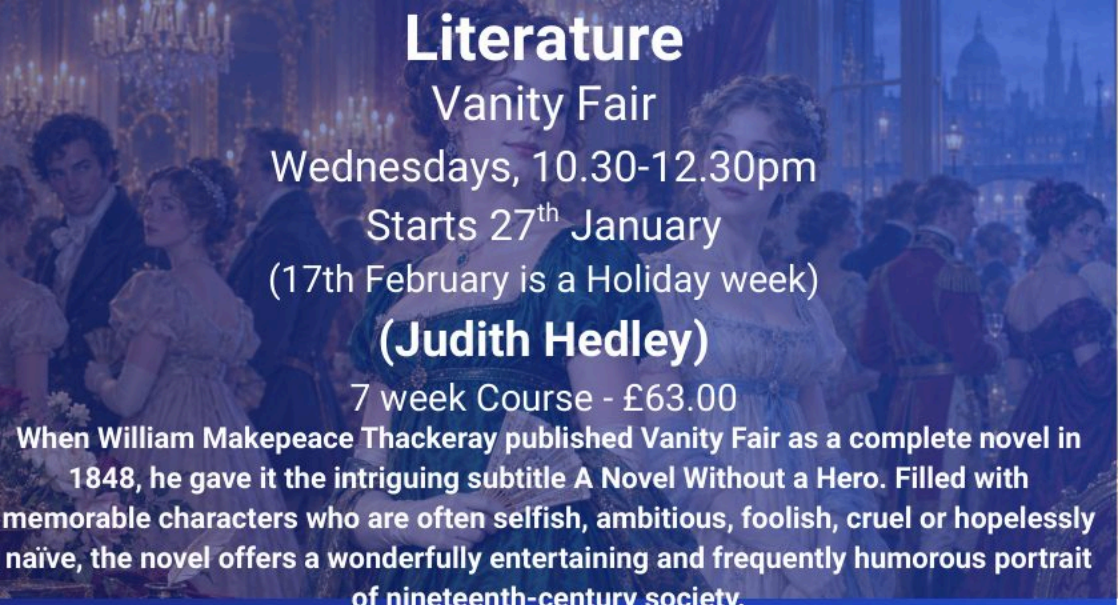

Literature

Vanity Fair

Wednesdays, 10.30-12.30pm

Starts 27th January

(17th February is a Holiday week)

(Judith Hedley)

7 week Course - £63.00

When William Makepeace Thackeray published Vanity Fair as a complete novel in 1848, he gave it the intriguing subtitle A Novel Without a Hero. Filled with memorable characters who are often selfish, ambitious, foolish, cruel or hopelessly naïve, the novel offers a wonderfully entertaining and frequently humorous portrait of nineteenth-century society.

At the heart of the story is one of literature's most unforgettable heroines, the irrepressible Becky Sharp. Clever, ambitious and determined to rise above her humble beginnings, Becky uses her charm, wit and ruthlessness to climb the social ladder from penniless governess to the fashionable heights of Regency society. Her fortunes contrast sharply with those of her gentle friend Amelia Sedley, whose privileged upbringing gives way to hardship and widowhood.

Set against the dramatic backdrop of the Napoleonic Wars, economic uncertainty and scandal among the upper classes, Vanity Fair is a fascinating exploration of ambition, wealth, social mobility and human nature.

Through Thackeray's sharp satire, lively storytelling, amusing observations and distinctive illustrations, we will discover why this remarkable novel remains as entertaining and relevant today as it was nearly two centuries ago.

Join us for an enjoyable and thought-provoking literary journey through the winter months of 2027, with plenty of opportunities for reading, analysis and lively discussion.

Course Information: Any complete, unabridged edition of Vanity Fair will be suitable. Participants are encouraged to read or reread the novel in advance if possible, but we will be studying key extracts in chronological order throughout the course, allowing time to catch up as we go along.

Literature

The Golden Age of Crime Fiction and Its Origins

Tuesdays 10.30-12.30pm

Starts 26th January

(Dr John Florance)

4 week Course - £36.00

The years between the First and Second World Wars are often celebrated as the 'Golden Age' of crime fiction, when ingenious mysteries, clever clues and the irresistible challenge of solving a whodunit captured the imagination of millions of readers.

At the heart of this remarkable era was Agatha Christie, whose extraordinary popularity made her one of the world's best-selling authors. Yet the foundations of modern detective fiction had been laid decades earlier by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and his legendary creation, Sherlock Holmes.

Interestingly, their literary careers overlapped. Christie's first novel, The Mysterious Affair at Styles, appeared in 1920, while Conan Doyle's final Sherlock Holmes collection was published in 1927. Both writers helped shape a genre that continues to entertain readers today.

Join us as we explore the development of popular detective fiction, discovering what makes these two remarkable authors so enduringly popular. We will take a closer look at The Hound of the Baskervilles and Hercule Poirot's Christmas, examining their clever plots, memorable characters and unexpected twists.

An entertaining and intriguing course for anyone who enjoys a good mystery, whether you are a lifelong enthusiast or simply curious to discover the secrets behind the perfect whodunit.

Course Information: Participants are encouraged to read both novels beforehand if possible, although this is not essential.

LITERATURE

GILDING THE LILY

Thursdays 10.15-12.15pm

Starts 25th February

(Michael Wilson)

3 Week Course - £27.00

What happens when poetry and music come together? Can a beautiful poem become even more powerful when set to music, or are some words best left to speak for themselves?

Join us as we explore the fascinating relationship between poetry and song, discovering how music can enhance the meaning, beauty and emotional impact of words. But can it sometimes be unnecessary, even 'gilding the lily'?

Through a wonderful variety of poems and songs, we will consider how words and music complement one another across different styles and traditions, from opera and folk music to protest songs, popular music and the Great American Songbook.

Along the way, we will encounter the works of Shakespeare, Yeats, Byron, Betjeman, Brecht and Brian Patten, among many others, exploring how their words can inspire, entertain and move us.

An enjoyable and thought-provoking course for anyone who loves poetry, music or simply the magic of words.

PHILOSOPHY

Truth, Post-Truth and 'Bullshit'

Mondays 2.30-4.30pm

Starts 18th January

(15th February is a Holiday week)

(Bettina Lange)

8 week course - £72.00

What do we really mean when we say something is 'true'? We use the idea of truth every day to judge information, question claims and decide what to believe, yet rarely stop to consider what truth actually means.

In an age increasingly described as 'post-truth', where misinformation, misleading claims and political controversy dominate public debate, has truth become less important? And how can we distinguish between someone who is deliberately lying and someone who simply has little regard for whether what they say is true?

Join us for a fascinating and thought-provoking exploration of truth, guided by some of the great ideas of philosophy. We will examine how we understand truth in everyday language, explore different philosophical theories and consider what is really meant by the term 'post-truth'.

Along the way, we will investigate the intriguing distinction between lying and 'bullshitting', a concept explored by philosopher Harry Frankfurt, who argued that indifference to truth can be just as significant as deliberate dishonesty.

Through discussion and careful consideration, this course offers an opportunity to look beyond the heated arguments of modern life and explore these important questions in a calm, thoughtful and engaging way.

No previous knowledge of philosophy is required – just curiosity, an open mind and a willingness to question what we think we know.

Join Us This Season for our programme of Winter 2027 Day Talks

Discover fascinating subjects, meet new people, and enjoy learning in friendly company.

DAY CLASS HISTORY

'Down The Marshes'

Thursday 4th March

10.00-1.00 pm

(Chris Weir)

1 Day Workshop £15.00

Few areas of Nottingham city centre have experienced as much change and transformation as Broad Marsh, once known as The Marshes. During Victorian times, the area became one of the most densely populated parts of Nottingham, with overcrowded courts and narrow alleyways, poor sanitation and some of the highest infant mortality rates in the city. Life was often difficult for the families who lived and worked in this bustling neighbourhood.

Major changes came with the slum clearances of the 1920s, which transformed much of the area. Further redevelopment followed, culminating in the opening of the Broad Marsh Shopping Centre in 1975, heralding a new chapter in the area's history.

More recently, the closure and demolition of much of the shopping centre have paved the way for another dramatic transformation, as a new vision for Broad Marsh begins to take shape.

Join us as we journey through the fascinating history of this unique part of Nottingham, discovering the people, buildings and events that shaped its past and exploring how its landscape has continually evolved over the centuries.

An engaging look at one of Nottingham's most remarkable areas, where the city's past, present and future come together.

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DAY TALK - MUSIC

'In the Groove: My Vinyl Years 1962-1973'

Thursday 18th February

10.30-11.30 am

(Chris Weir)

1 DAY Talk £6.00

Take a nostalgic journey back to the golden age of vinyl records, music festivals, rock concerts and, of course, purple flares! Inspired by the speaker's newly self-published book, what began as a simple catalogue of a personal collection of 60 vinyl LPs soon developed into a fascinating trip down memory lane, recalling the music, fashions and unforgettable experiences of a remarkable musical era.

Join us as we revisit the sounds and memories of those exciting years, celebrating the records, concerts and festivals that provided the soundtrack to a generation.

A lively, entertaining and nostalgic talk, full of musical memories, personal recollections and, naturally, plenty of music along the way!

The 2nd Boer War & Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Thursday 18th February

10.30-11.30 am

(Dr Mark Barnard)

DAY TALK £6.00 PER PERSON

The Second Boer War (1899–1902) was one of the most controversial conflicts of the British Empire, stirring fierce debate, patriotic enthusiasm and widespread criticism both at home and abroad. Giving rise to expressions such as 'to maffick' and 'those bloody Boers', the war captured the public imagination and provoked strong reactions from figures ranging from Rudyard Kipling to Kaiser Wilhelm II.

While some, including Sherlock Holmes creator Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, defended Britain's conduct of the war, others condemned its methods, particularly the use of concentration camps, which caused widespread suffering and seriously damaged Britain's international reputation.

But was Britain's conduct of the conflict justified, or was the war, as Kipling famously suggested, 'no end of a lesson'?

Join us as we explore the background to the Second Boer War, examining the political tensions, imperial ambitions and events that led to the outbreak of hostilities. We will consider the contrasting opinions of the time, the controversy surrounding Britain's military tactics and the wider consequences for the British Empire.

The talk will also uncover local connections to the conflict and examine how the war challenged public attitudes towards imperial power, national pride and Britain's place in the world.

A fascinating and thought-provoking exploration of a conflict that exposed the tensions and contradictions of the British Empire at the height of its power.

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DAY TALK - HISTORY

MADMAN OR MODERNIST?

PETER THE GREAT – TSAR OF RUSSIA

Thursday 15th April

10.30 -11.30 am

(Dr Mark Barnard)

DAY TALK £6.00 PER PERSON

Russia is rarely far from the headlines, but more than three centuries ago, one remarkable ruler was already making his mark on the world stage: Peter I, better known as Peter the Great, Russia's first Emperor. Few figures in Russian history have inspired such contrasting opinions. Described variously as an enigma, a visionary, a revolutionary, a reactionary and even the Antichrist, Peter remains one of history's most fascinating and controversial rulers.

But who was the real Peter the Great? Was he an enlightened reformer determined to modernise Russia, or a ruthless autocrat whose ambitions came at an enormous human cost? And what exactly earned him the title 'The Great'?

Join Dr Mark Barnard as he explores the extraordinary life, complex personality and remarkable achievements of this formidable ruler. From his determination to transform Russia into a major European power to the often brutal methods he employed, we will discover how Peter's ambitions reshaped his country and left a lasting legacy.

A fascinating and thought-provoking journey into the life of a ruler whose achievements were immense, whose methods were often disturbing and whose influence continues to shape our understanding of Russia today.

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BARNARD CASTLE
ONE OF THE GREAT FORTRESSES OF NORTHERN ENGLAND

Thursday 22nd April

10.30-11.30 am

(Dr Mark Barnard)

DAY TALK £6.00 PER PERSON

Perched dramatically above the River Tees and overlooking an ancient Roman road, Barnard Castle stands as a reminder of the turbulent history of northern England.

Built in an age of conflict and political intrigue, this formidable fortress witnessed centuries of rivalry, ambition and struggles for power. But what were the troubles that shaped its history? Why did King John become involved, and how did one of its hereditary custodians rise to become King of Scots?

Join Dr Mark Barnard as he brings to life the fascinating characters, dramatic events and political struggles that shaped Barnard Castle's fortunes.

Discover the remarkable story of its rise and eventual decline as one of the great medieval fortresses of the North, and explore its place in the often turbulent relationship between England and Scotland.

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