



Leisure Learning at the Institute

COURSES
TALKS
DAY TRIPS
& MORE
CAFE AND BAR
READING ROOM
LIBRARY

AUTUMN
2026

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 for 187 years.

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 for 2025 and 2026.

The Institute always welcomes suggestions for future courses and topics.

Please have a look around our site, 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



ENROLMENT DATE

From Monday

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	21st Sept - 30th Nov	26th October	£90.00
	Gabriele Munter to Frank Auerbach: Towards Expressionism	Janis Baker	1.00 - 3.00	7	21st Sept - 9th Nov	19th October	£63.00
	The Establishment of the state of Israel	Dave Halliwell	1.00 - 3.00	9	12th Oct - 7th Dec	N/A	£81.00
	The Six Wives of Henry VIII	Sandra Barrington	10.30-12.30	6	28th Sept - 2nd Nov	N/A	£54.00
	Philosophy : Philosophers on Truth, Knowledge and Post Truth	Bettina Lange	2.30 -4.30	1	21st September	N/A	£10.00
TUESDAYS	Philosophy: What we know	Bettina Lange	2.30 - 4.30	8	5th Oct - 30th Nov	19th October	£72.00
	Thomas Hardy Poems: THE SEQUEL	Dr John Florence	10.30-12.30	3	20th Oct - 3rd Nov	N/A	£27.00
	John Betjeman & Phillip Larkin: Two poets of everyday experience	Dr John Florence	10.30-3.30	4	10th Nov - 1st Dec	N/A	£36.00
	Dickens & Christmas	Dr John Florence	10.30-3.30	1	15th December	N/A	£20.00
	France 1815 - 1915	David Price	10.15 -12.15	10	29th Sept - 8th Dec	20th October	£90.00
Day Course	Arts & Crafts - Painting with Watercolours	Max Astill	10.30 -12.30	6	8th Sept -13th Oct	N/A	£60.00
	Arts & Crafts - Mixed Media Abstract Collage	Max Astill	2.00-4.00	6	8th Sept -13th Oct	N/A	£60.00
	The Archaeology of the Vikings in the Midlands	Olga Maggoula-Barnford	10.30-3.30	1	3rd November	N/A	£20.00
	Medieval de Pompadour: More than a Mistress	Dr Mark Barnard	10.30-11.30	1	10th November	N/A	£6.00
WEDNESDAY	Arts & Crafts - Advanced Drawing	Max Astill	10.30 -12.30	6	9th Sept - 14th Oct	N/A	£60.00
	Arts & Crafts - Painting with Acrylics	Max Astill	2.00 -4.00	6	9th Sept - 14th Oct	N/A	£60.00
	Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot	David Price	10.15-12.15	2	28th Oct - 4th Nov	N/A	£18.00
	Mary Celeste- Real story of the Ship	Bob Massey	10.30-3.30	1	23rd September	N/A	£20.00
	Dick Turpin - Story of the real man and not just the Legend	Bob Massey	10.30-3.30	1	30th September	N/A	£20.00
Day Course	Houdini Highwayman- Story of Jack Sheppard	Bob Massey	10.30-3.30	1	14th October	N/A	£20.00
	Turn Again- Real life story of Dick Whittington	Bob Massey	10.30-3.30	1	21st October	N/A	£20.00

	COURSE	TUTOR	TIME	WEEKS	DATES	HALF TERM/HOLIDAYS	COST
THURSDAY							
	Redcoats & Rebels: How Britain Lost America	Dr Mark Barnard	10.30-12.30	7	3rd Sept - 15th Oct	N/A	£63.00
	Nottinghamshire & World War One	Chris Weir	10.30 - 12.30	4	17th Sept - 8th Oct	N/A	£36.00
	Piers, Bandstands & a Stroll Along the Prom!	Chris Weir	10.00 - 1.00	2	22nd Oct - 29th Oct	N/A	£25.00
	Evolution of Economics	Anita Fernandez	10.30-12.30	5	17th Sept- 15th Oct	N/A	£45.00
	Economics: From Enlightenment to Depression	Anita Fernandez	10.30 - 12.30	5	29th Oct - 26th Nov	N/A	£45.00
	Film Studies John Le Carre: The Work of one writer from page to screen	Anita Fernandez	1.00 - 4.00	5	17th Sept- 15th Oct	N/A	£68.00
	Film Studies: Families on Film	Anita Fernandez	1.00 - 4.00	5	29th Oct - 26th Nov	N/A	£68.00
DAY TALK	The Changing Role of the Poet Laureate	Michael Wilson	10.30-12.30	1	12th November	N/A	£10.00
DAY TALK	Literary Lies, Hoaxes and Impostures	Michael Wilson	10.30-12.30	1	26th November	N/A	£10.00
DAY TALK	Southampton - Gateway to the World	Dr Mark Barnard	10.30-11.30	1	25th October	N/A	£6.00
DAY TALK	Chester - A Poor Man's York?	Dr Mark Barnard	10.30-11.30	1	19th November	N/A	£6.00
FRIDAY							
	Stars of Film Musicals	David Price	10.15-12.15	6	30th Oct - 4th Dec	N/A	£54.00

HISTORY

Nottinghamshire & World War One

Thursdays 10.30-12.30 pm

Starts 17th September

(Chris Weir)

4-Week course £36.00

What impact did the Great War have on Nottinghamshire and its people?

This fascinating course explores how the First World War affected individuals, families and communities across both Nottinghamshire and the city of Nottingham. Using letters, diaries, official records, battlefield maps and other contemporary sources, we will uncover the personal stories behind a conflict that changed lives forever.

We will examine how local men and women experienced the war, both on the front line and at home, and consider the lasting impact of a conflict that touched almost every family and community.

Participants are encouraged to bring along any family records, photographs, letters or other memorabilia they may have, helping to create a richer picture of how this "war to end all wars", as H.G.

Wells described it, left few untouched by tragedy.

An engaging and thought-provoking course that brings Nottinghamshire's wartime history vividly to life.



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HISTORY

Piers, Bandstands and a Stroll Along the Prom!

Thursdays 10.00-1.00 pm

Starts 22nd October

(Chris Weir)

2-Week course £25.00

The British seaside has a long and colourful history. Join us for a nostalgic journey along the promenade as we explore how the seaside became one of Britain's best-loved institutions.

This entertaining course traces the development of the traditional seaside holiday, from humble fishing villages transformed into bustling resorts by the arrival of the railways, to the golden age of piers, promenades and pleasure gardens.

Discover how piers evolved into centres of entertainment, how bandstands, brass bands and floral pavilions became an essential part of the seaside experience, and why generations of holidaymakers flocked to the coast in search of relaxation, recreation and fresh sea air.

Packed with fascinating stories, historic images and seaside nostalgia, this course celebrates a treasured part of Britain's social history.



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HISTORY

Redcoats & Rebels: How Britain 'Lost' America

Thursdays 10.30-12.30 pm

Starts 3rd September

(Dr Mark Barnard)

7-Week course £63.00

As General Cornwallis and his British redcoats went into captivity after surrendering to the American colonists at Yorktown on 19th October 1781, British bands played the popular tune at the time 'The World Turned Upside Down.'

Precursor to one of the world's most formative events whose legacy is still being felt today, its ideals enshrined with the 1776 Declaration of Independence have served as hope, inspiration and disappointment for millions since. But why did such a significant event occur and how did France shape events? Was King George III really an incompetent tyrant as the Americans often portrayed him? Could Britain have prevented the breaking away of the colonies? Did the world really 'turn upside down' for Britain?

From the first shots at Lexington to the surrender at Yorktown, the course covers the main causes, controversies and consequences of the conflict for America, Britain and France.



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HISTORY

19th Century France 1815 - 1915

Tuesdays 10.15-12.15 pm

Starts 29th September

(20th October NO Class Half Term)

(David Price)

10-Week course £90.00

Revolution, Romance and the Belle Époque: France in the 19th Century

Ever wondered about the real events behind *Les Misérables*? Or whether there is any truth behind films such as *Moulin Rouge*!? This fascinating course uncovers the history behind the fiction and explores one of the most colourful periods in French history. Despite revolutions, rebellions and military defeat at the hands of Prussia, 19th-century France remained a powerhouse of artistic, cultural and technological innovation. It gave the world the first photograph, Impressionism, the first public cinema screening, *Carmen*, Art Nouveau and, of course, the cancan—a dance that grew from humble origins in working-class dance halls to become a symbol of the Belle Époque.

Along the way, we will explore Baron Haussmann's dramatic transformation of Paris, the glamorous and scandalous world of the great courtesans, and the political controversy of the Dreyfus Affair. Illustrated throughout with paintings, satirical cartoons, film clips and musical extracts, this entertaining course brings to life the people, events and culture that shaped modern France.



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History

Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot

Wednesdays

28th October & 4th November

10.15-12.15 pm

(David Price)

2-Week course £18.00

Explore the dramatic story of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, when Catholic conspirators attempted to assassinate King James I and Parliament, hoping to replace him with his young daughter, Princess Elizabeth, as a Catholic queen.

We will examine the religious and political tensions of the time, the succession of James I, and the key figures behind the plot, including Thomas Catesby and Guy Fawkes.

Discover how the conspiracy unfolded, how it was uncovered, and why some plotters pressed on despite its failure, leading to their capture and execution.

Finally, we will consider how these events gave rise to the traditions of Bonfire Night still celebrated across Britain today. Illustrated with contemporary images and historical sources, this course brings to life one of Britain's most famous acts of treason.



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**BALFOUR
DECLARATION**
29th NOVEMBER 1917

**PALESTINE
UNDER THE
BRITISH MANDATE**
1920

**THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL**
14 MAY 1948

HISTORY

The Establishment of the State of Israel - From Balfour to Black September Mondays 1.00 - 3.00 pm

Starts 12th October

(Dave Halliwell)

9-Week course £81.00

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 to 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

The Six Wives of Henry VIII

Mondays, 10.30am – 12.30 pm

Starts: 28th September

(Sandra Berrington)

6-Week course: £54.00

We are all familiar with these women, or are we?

Join Sandra as we explore their lives and experiences from their perspective. You will learn all about their lives and discuss and assess whether they were helpless in the hands of ambitious men; or whether they played a significant role in their own destiny. Come along and examine the lives of these very different women and understand why these women continue to fascinate after 500 years.

Subjects covered include:

- **An introduction to 16th Century and the role of women**
- **Find out about the lives of these six women, the families they came from, their education, and their beliefs.**
- **Evaluate the impact the women had on the wider political, social and religious spheres in the world they lived in.**
- **Discover what impact, if any, did the new ideas of the 16th century have on them.**
- **Look at a number of sources, primary and secondary as we examine how they have been portrayed through different mediums through time.**



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History & Music

The Stars of Musicals

Fridays 10.15-12.15 pm

Starts 30th October

(David Price)

6-Week course £54.00

Stars of the Hollywood Musical

Join David Price for 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.



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Leisure Learning at the Institute

Music

Concerts in Focus

Concerts in Focus

Mondays 10.15-12.15 pm

Starts 21st September

26th October is a Holiday

(Mike Wheeler)

10-Week course £90.00

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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Film Studies

John le Carré: The Work of One Writer From Page to Screen

Thursdays, 1:00 - 4:00 PM

Starts: 17th September

(Anita Fernandez)

5-Week course: £68.00

Join us as we explore the life and work of John le Carré, from his career in British intelligence to his emergence as one of the greatest espionage writers of the twentieth century.

Beginning with his early novels and their screen adaptations, including Call for the Dead (A Deadly Affair) and The Spy Who Came in from the Cold, we will follow the development of a writer whose work transformed the spy genre. The course will examine his masterful George Smiley novels, including Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy in both its celebrated television and film versions, the unfilmed The Honourable Schoolboy, and Smiley's People.

We will also explore later adaptations such as The Russia House starring Sean Connery, A Most Wanted Man with Philip Seymour Hoffman, and the darkly satirical The Tailor of Panama. Through a combination of complete films, selected excerpts and discussion, we will trace the evolution of a storyteller whose insight and subtlety extended far beyond conventional espionage fiction.

Who inspired le Carré's writing? How much of his own life found its way into his novels, particularly A Perfect Spy? And what attracted some of the finest actors of their generation—including two former James Bonds—to bring his unforgettable characters to the screen?

An engaging course for readers, film lovers and anyone fascinated by the shadowy world of espionage.



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Film Studies

Families on Film: The American Civil War and the Opening up of the West

Thursdays, 1:00 - 4:00 PM

Starts: 29th October

(Anita Fernandez)

5-Week course: £68.00

How has Hollywood reflected the changing social realities of the United States? In this fascinating five-week course, we will use film to explore American social history from the Civil War to the dawn of the new millennium.

Taking inspiration from Tolstoy's famous observation in *Anna Karenina* that "each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way" (while remembering that "all happy families are alike"), we will examine how filmmakers have used family stories to explore wider questions about American society, identity and change.

Through the work of directors including Sam Mendes, Steven Spielberg, Greta Gerwig and Wes Anderson, we will consider how cinema portrays family relationships, social tensions and national myths. American culture often looks nostalgically to the past as a way of questioning the present, and Hollywood films can provide fascinating insights into the hopes, anxieties, obsessions and neuroses of modern America.

An engaging course that combines film appreciation, social history and cultural analysis.



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ART APPRECIATION

Gabriele Munter to Frank Auerbach

Towards Expressionism

Mondays 1.00 - 3.00 pm

Starts 21st September

(19th October is a Holiday week)

(Janis Baker)

7-Week course £63.00

Expressionist artists believed that art should communicate emotion and experience rather than simply depict the visible world. In this fascinating course, we will explore the diverse and often surprising paths taken by artists as they developed their own distinctive expressive styles.

From Gabriele Münter, Franz Marc and David Bomberg to Egon Schiele, Emil Nolde, Mark Rothko and Frank Auerbach, we will examine a wide range of works and discover how each artist responded to the social, political and cultural influences of their time.

Through discussion, observation and analysis, we will explore how colour, form and technique were used to convey feeling, ideas and personal vision, helping to shape some of the most powerful and influential art of the modern era.

No previous knowledge or experience is required—just curiosity, enthusiasm and an open mind. The course combines illustrated lectures with small-group activities, creating an engaging and enjoyable introduction to the world of Expressionism.



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Economics

From Enlightenment to Depression: Economics from the 1770s to the 1930s

Thursdays, 10.30am – 12.30 pm

Starts: 29th October

Anita Fernandez

5-week course: £45.00

By the 1770s, world trade was expanding rapidly, but much of that prosperity was built on slavery and empire. This fascinating course explores how economic ideas and forces shaped the modern world, from the Industrial Revolution and the Irish Famine to the Railway Age, global communications and the First World War. Along the way, we will examine the economics behind major social and political movements, including the rise of the suffragettes, the Dust Bowl, the Jarrow March and the emergence of Nazism. We will explore competing economic theories such as laissez-faire capitalism, socialism, isolationism and totalitarianism, while asking a fundamental question: how closely are economics and politics connected?

An engaging journey through a period of extraordinary change that helped create the world we know today.



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Economics

The Evolution of Economics

From The Assyrians and Aristotle to Adam Smith

Thursdays, 10.30am – 12.30 pm

Starts: 17th September

Anita Fernandez

5-Week course: £45.00

The Evolution of Economics: From the Assyrians and Aristotle to Adam Smith

Where did the ideas behind trade, money, markets and wealth first come from?

Long before Adam Smith and the Enlightenment, ancient civilisations were grappling with questions of commerce, taxation, prices and power. From the merchants of Mesopotamia to the philosophers of Ancient Greece, economic ideas have shaped societies for thousands of years.

This fascinating short course explores the origins of economic thought, examining the economies of early civilisations, the success of the Hanseatic League, the contribution of Venice to trade and finance, and the ideas that ultimately laid the foundations of modern economics. An engaging journey through the history of trade, wealth and human enterprise.



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Literature

THOMAS HARDY – THE BARD OF WESSEX

Thomas Hardy: Bard of Wessex

THE SEQUEL

Tuesdays 10.30-12.30 pm

Starts 20th October

(Dr John Florance)

3-Week course £27.00

Following on from last term's successful course, this new series is open to everyone—you do not need to have attended the previous course to enjoy it.

Thomas Hardy is best known today as the author of classic novels such as *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Jude the Obscure* and *Far from the Madding Crowd*, as well as the creator of the fictional landscape of Wessex. Yet Hardy himself regarded his poetry as his greatest achievement and continued writing verse throughout his life.

Although his poetic output was vast, this course will focus on some of the finest examples of his work, exploring the themes, ideas and experiences that inspired him. From love and loss to nature, memory and the passage of time, Hardy's poetry offers a rich and often deeply moving perspective on the human condition.

If you know Hardy only through his novels, you may be surprised by the power, originality and accessibility of his poetry—work that deserves to be far better known than it is today.

No previous knowledge is required, and all texts will be provided.



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Literature

John Betjeman & Philip Larkin: Two Poets of Everyday Experience

Tuesdays 10.30-12.30 pm

Starts 10th November

(Dr John Florance)

4-Week course £36.00

Betjeman and Larkin: Two Voices of Modern England

John Betjeman (1906–1984) and Philip Larkin (1922–1985) were friends who greatly admired each other's work. It has often been suggested that they were remarkably similar poets, and there is certainly some truth in that view. Both drew inspiration from the ordinary experiences of everyday life—a visit to a church, a train journey, an ambulance arriving in a quiet street, or a trip to the hospital.

Yet beneath these similarities lie important differences in tone, outlook and poetic vision. Their public reputations can also be misleading. Larkin was far more than simply a poetic pessimist, while Betjeman's work extends well beyond the light verse for which he is often remembered.

This course will explore some of their finest poems, examining how each poet responded to the changing world around them and why their work continues to resonate with readers today. By comparing and contrasting their poetry, we will gain a deeper appreciation of two of the most distinctive and insightful voices in twentieth-century literature.

Both enjoyable and thought-provoking, their poetry offers a rich and rewarding exploration of modern life, memory, faith, love and loss.

No previous knowledge is required, and all texts will be provided.



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PHILOSOPHY

Taster Session

Philosophers on Truth, Knowledge - and 'Post Truth'

Monday 21st September

2.30 -4.30 pm

Bettina Lange

£10.00

Philosophers have always thought about what we can know and what is true. More recently it has been said that we now live in a 'post truth' age - but it is far from clear what this may mean. Join Bettina for this

2 hour session which will introduce you to some important philosophical ideas and issues in relation to knowledge and truth including whether we can tell if what we believe we know is true; different theories of truth; and the meaning(s) of 'post truth' and related terms such as 'bullshit' (yes that is a philosophical term, introduced by Harry Frankfurt).

Knowledge of Philosophy is not expected.

The session will be followed by three 8 week courses on Knowledge and belief (from 5th October); philosophical theories of truth and 'post truth' (after Christmas); and wisdom (after Easter 2027).



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PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy : What we can Know

Mondays 2.30 -4.30 pm

Starts 5th October

(19th October is a Holiday)

Bettina Lange

8 Week Course £72.00

Philosophers have always thought about what we can know and whether what think we know is true. This course offers an overview of influential philosophical ideas regarding knowledge. We will cover how reliable our intuitions are; the key philosophical definition of knowledge as 'justified true belief', whether there are reliable tests of knowledge such as Popper's falsifiability test; different types of knowledge; scientific from experience; abstract; knowledge as pattern or habit; practical knowledge ('knowledge how'); tacit knowledge; moral knowledge; knowledge as wisdom. At the end of the course we will consider two influential philosophical theories of knowledge, scepticism and realism.

Knowledge of philosophy is not expected.

The course will be followed after Christmas by a course on philosophical theories of truth and post-truth.



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Arts and Crafts Water Colours

Tuesdays 10.30 -12.30 pm
Starts 8th September
(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.**

THIS IS A REPEAT COURSE FROM SPRING



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Arts & Crafts

Mixed Media Abstract Art/Collage

Tuesdays 2.00 - 4.00pm

Starts 8th September

(Max Astill)

6-Week Course £60.00

Come along and join Max as she helps you unleash your creativity through the exciting world of mixed media art and collage. Using a wide variety of materials and techniques, you will experiment with Posca pens, acrylic markers, papier-mâché, stamps and an assortment of collage materials to create unique and expressive artworks.

Through guided activities and creative exploration, you will learn how to combine colour, texture, pattern and composition to produce striking abstract pieces that are both personal and visually engaging.

Whether you are a complete beginner or an experienced artist looking to try something new, this fun and supportive course will encourage you to experiment, develop your own style and create beautiful compositions that are truly pleasing to the eye.



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Arts & Crafts

Advanced Drawing

Wednesdays 10.30-12.30pm
Starts 9th September
(Max Astill)
6-Week course £60.00

Join Max as we delve further into the world of drawing in this advanced course, designed for those who wish to develop and refine their existing skills.

Whether you have attended one of Max's previous drawing courses or have prior drawing experience from elsewhere, this course offers the opportunity to build on your knowledge and take your artwork to the next level. Through a range of techniques, exercises and projects, you will develop greater confidence, improve your observational skills and explore new approaches to drawing. This supportive and creative course is ideal for anyone looking to challenge themselves, expand their artistic abilities and produce more accomplished and expressive drawings.

You do not need to have attended previous courses at the Mechanics to join, but some existing drawing knowledge and experience is recommended.

Things to bring along

A small set of sketching pencils

Putty Rubber

A Sketchbook



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Arts & Crafts

Painting with Acrylics

Wednesdays 2.00 - 4.00pm

Starts 9th September

(Max Astill)

6-Week Course £60.00

Join Max in Arts & Crafts this autumn and explore the vibrant and versatile world of acrylic painting.

Suitable for both beginners and those looking to build on existing skills, this relaxed and creative course will introduce you to the use of colour, layering and texture while encouraging experimentation with a variety of painting techniques. Through guided projects and creative exploration, you will develop the skills and confidence to create your own unique artwork.

With support and encouragement throughout, this is an excellent opportunity to discover your personal style, improve your painting techniques and enjoy the creative process in a friendly and welcoming environment.

All materials will be provided—just bring your enthusiasm and be ready to get creative!

THIS IS A REPEAT COURSE FROM SPRING



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DAY COURSE- HISTORY

THE MARY CELESTE

Wednesday 23rd September

10.30-3.30 pm

(Bob Massey)

1 DAY COURSE £20.00

The story of the the Mary Celeste is one of the greatest mysteries in maritime history, but the real story is actually more fascinating than many of the myths that have grown around it.

Come and join Bob as you will discover about the ship itself and it's unlucky early career to the mystery surrounding its journey in November 1872 and what happened to the people on board that trip. Learn about the discovery, the investigation and what probably happened.



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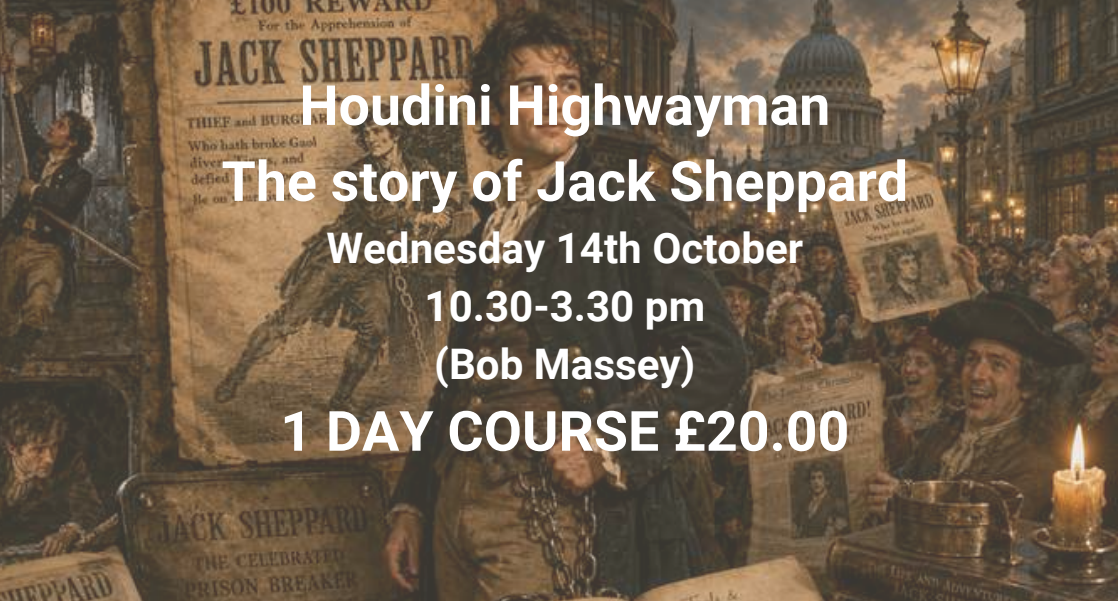
Dick Turpin
Wednesday 30th September
10.30-3.30 pm
(Bob Massey)
1 DAY COURSE £20.00

Few historical figures have been transformed by legend as completely as Dick Turpin. The real man was not the romantic, dashing highwayman of popular imagination, but a violent criminal whose reputation was largely created long after his death.

Join us to learn who was the real man and how his life developed over the years and not just the legendary stories we hear today.



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Houdini Highwayman

The story of Jack Sheppard

Wednesday 14th October

10.30-3.30 pm

(Bob Massey)

1 DAY COURSE £20.00

If Dick Turpin was Britain's greatest criminal myth, then Jack Sheppard was Britain's first celebrity criminal and perhaps the closest thing the 18th century had to Harry Houdini.

Come and join Bob as he will reveal how Jack Sheppard's fame came not from his crimes, which were fairly ordinary burglaries and thefts, but from his extraordinary ability to escape from prison and him becoming a great escapologist.

He had celebrity status in London who became obsessed with him and in many ways became Britain's first media celebrity.



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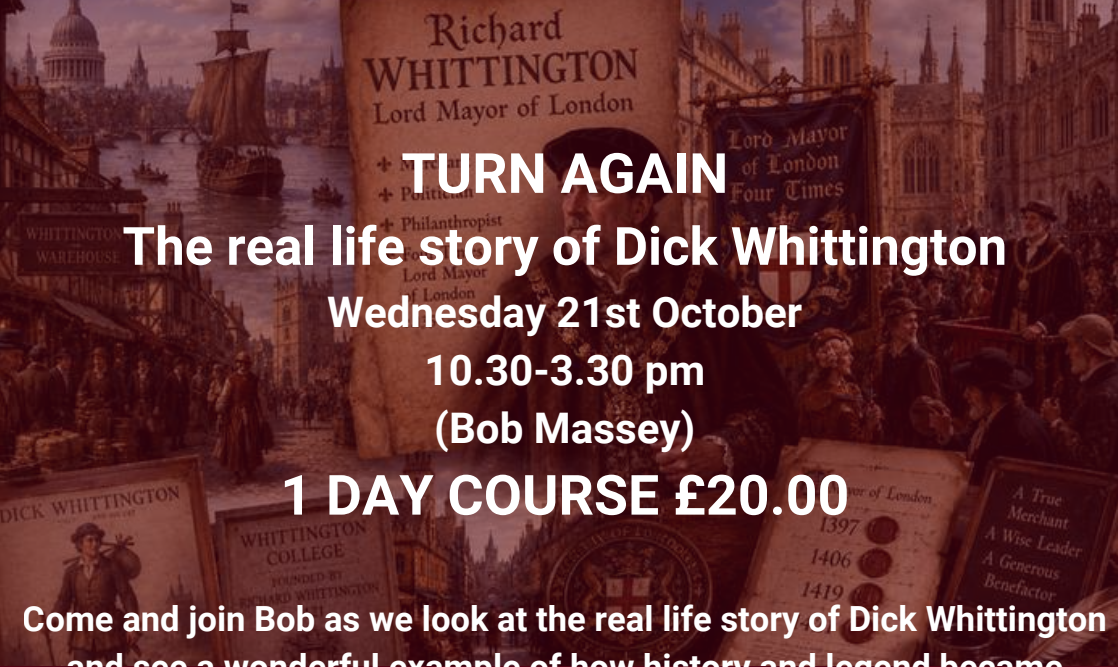
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TURN AGAIN

The real life story of Dick Whittington

Wednesday 21st October

10.30-3.30 pm

(Bob Massey)

1 DAY COURSE £20.00

Come and join Bob as we look at the real life story of Dick Whittington and see a wonderful example of how history and legend became mixed together over hundreds of years.

The real Dick Whittington was actually Richard Whittington, a wealthy medieval merchant and politician who lived between about 1354 and 1423. Far from being a poor orphan boy, he was born into a prosperous family in Gloucestershire and came to London as a young man to make his fortune in trade.

Come along and see how Richard became Lord Mayor of London four times even though popular stories say it was three.

Come along and see hoe in many ways, the real Richard Whittington was more impressive than the legend.

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The Archaeology of the Vikings in the Midlands

Tuesday 3rd November

10.30-3.30 pm

(Olga Magoula-Bamford)

1 DAY COURSE £20.00

Come along and join Olga for this brand-new course exploring the Viking Age through state-of-the-art archaeological research.

Discover the world of the Danelaw and examine what the trowel and spade have revealed over the past century. Step by step, we will explore a series of themes and place them within a clear historical timeline, helping to build a fresh picture of Viking Age England.

The main focus will be on the changes that took place when the Vikings chose to settle in the Midlands, becoming part of local communities as immigrants, farmers, craftspeople and traders.

Drawing on the latest archaeological discoveries and scientific techniques, the course will also consider contemporary written sources, including the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the lives of saints.

From the burials of great warriors at Repton and an ordinary Viking woman at Adwick-le-Street, to the objects discarded by farmers and craftspeople at Cottam, we will uncover the everyday lives of those who lived in the region.

We will also explore the Viking response to Christianity at Bakewell and examine the development of important settlements at Torksey, Aldwark and Viking Lincoln.

Together, these discoveries will help reveal the real world of the Vikings in the Midlands.



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Southampton - Gateway to the World

Thursday 29th October

10.30-11.30 am

(Dr Mark Barnard)

DAY TALK £6.00 PER PERSON

**From the Romans to Jane Austen and Spitfires,
Southampton has been at the forefront of our history.**

**It has served as a conduit to the Continent in peace and
war, being a point of troop embarkation for both World
Wars and of course Cruise Liners for more passive
pursuits.**

**But it has also fostered fascinating legends, such as hero
Sir Bevis and his friend the giant Ascupart.**

Join Dr Barnard to hear more about his University City....



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DAY TALK - HISTORY

Madame de Pompadour: More than a Mistress??

Tuesday 10th November

10.30 -11.30 am

(Dr Mark Barnard)

DAY TALK £6.00 PER PERSON

Jeanne Poisson, better known as the favoured and influential mistress of King Louis XV of France, Madame de Pompadour has become synonymous with mid 18th Century French decadence and extravagant backcombing hair-styles.

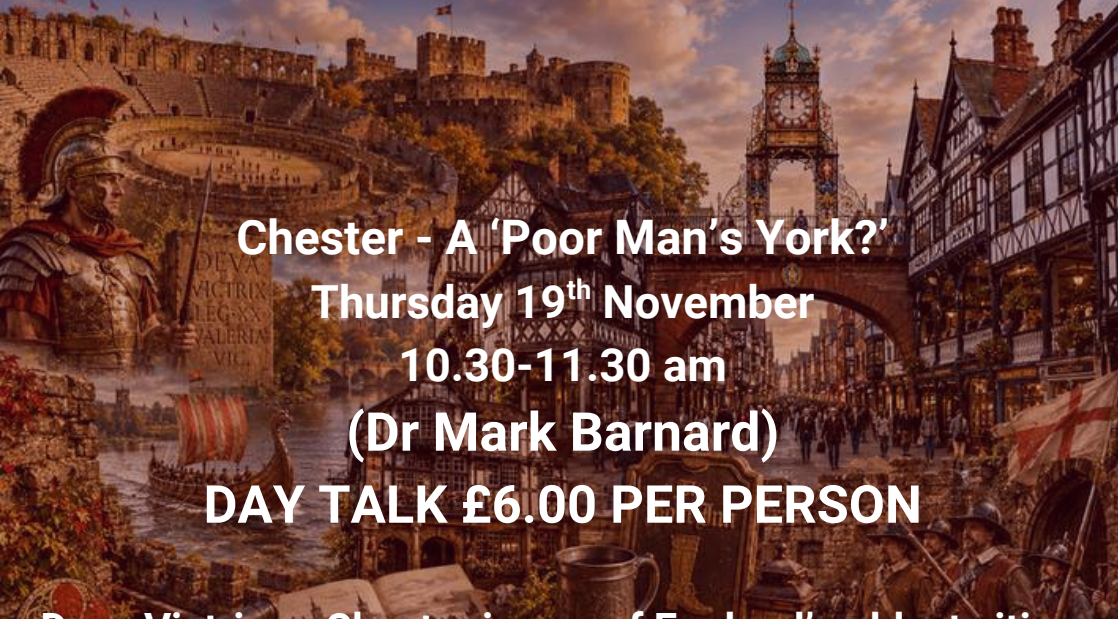
Drawing a deal of criticism, Frederick the Great of Prussia, for instance, remarked she was little more than the 'plaything' of the king. But what was she also renowned for?

Did she have a detrimental or benign political and cultural influence? What was her alleged link with the RAF's 'dam-buster' 617 squadron?

Join Dr Mark Barnard to hear the full legacy of the 'beautiful and adored commoner' who became the King's 'minister of pleasure'.

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Chester - A 'Poor Man's York?'

Thursday 19th November

10.30-11.30 am

(Dr Mark Barnard)

DAY TALK £6.00 PER PERSON

Deva Victrix or Chester is one of England's oldest cities, boasting Britain's largest Roman amphitheatre. Today though it is perhaps more well-known for shopping within its Tudor two-level covered arcades known as The Rows and its race meetings. But it has a surprisingly varied past. Why were the Romans interested in settling here and what are its Viking and Welsh connections? Who built the Castle and who were it's prisoners? What are the alleged stories behind the 'ladies of ill-repute' in The Boot Inn and what happened here during the English Civil War? Join Dr Barnard to hear why Chester is York's historical and perhaps even aesthetic equal.



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The Changing Role of the Poet Laureate

Thursday 12th November

10.30-12.30 pm

(Michael Wilson)

DAY TALK £10.00 PER PERSON

Join Michael for a gentle stroll through four hundred years of English literacy history. We will examine the changing role of the Poet Laureate, from John Dryden to Simon Armitage in the present day. We'll be naming the good poets, shaming the downright Bad, and name-dropping many in between.

We will seek to answer to questions like:

- Which Laureate wrote the immortal words of Dido's Lament for Henry Purcell?
- Of which Laureate did Bryon say oh! cease thy varies song! A bard may chant too often, and too long!?
- Which Laureate said (of the poems he wrote to fulfil his Laureate duty) that 'no other writing that i've undertaken of any kind, has been so difficult...'?
- What does the Poet Laureateship have in common with the Eurovison song contest?

How has the role changed in the last few decades... and where might it be heading next?

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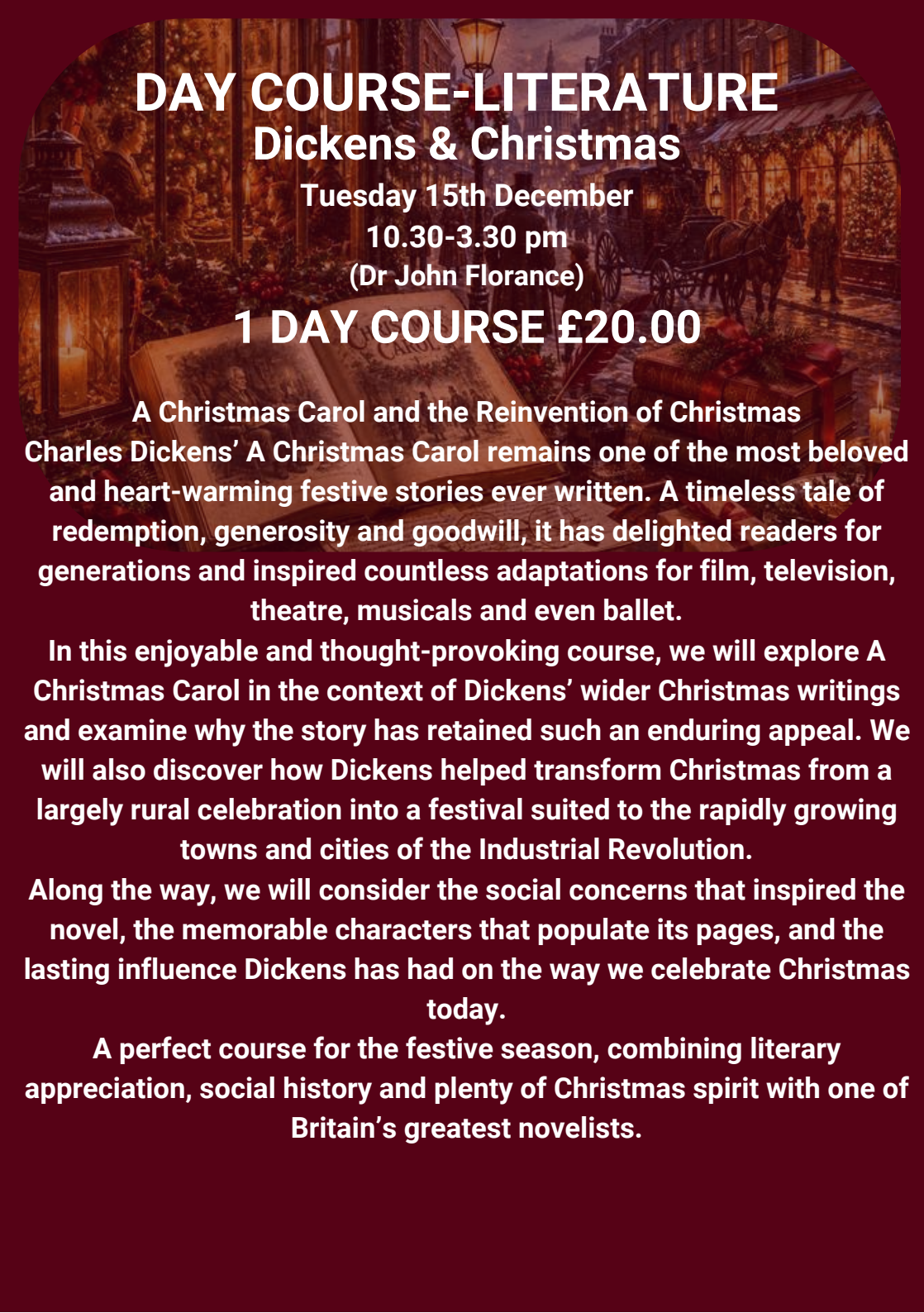
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DAY COURSE-LITERATURE

Dickens & Christmas

Tuesday 15th December

10.30-3.30 pm

(Dr John Florance)

1 DAY COURSE £20.00

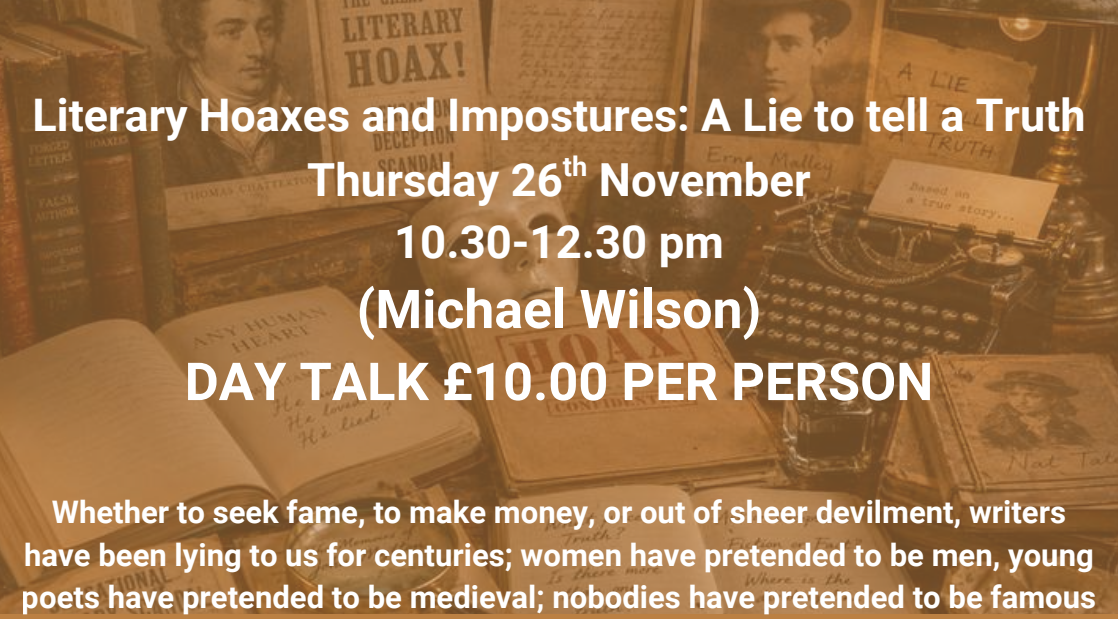
A Christmas Carol and the Reinvention of Christmas

Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol remains one of the most beloved and heart-warming festive stories ever written. A timeless tale of redemption, generosity and goodwill, it has delighted readers for generations and inspired countless adaptations for film, television, theatre, musicals and even ballet.

In this enjoyable and thought-provoking course, we will explore A Christmas Carol in the context of Dickens' wider Christmas writings and examine why the story has retained such an enduring appeal. We will also discover how Dickens helped transform Christmas from a largely rural celebration into a festival suited to the rapidly growing towns and cities of the Industrial Revolution.

Along the way, we will consider the social concerns that inspired the novel, the memorable characters that populate its pages, and the lasting influence Dickens has had on the way we celebrate Christmas today.

A perfect course for the festive season, combining literary appreciation, social history and plenty of Christmas spirit with one of Britain's greatest novelists.



Literary Hoaxes and Impostures: A Lie to tell a Truth

Thursday 26th November
10.30-12.30 pm
(Michael Wilson)
DAY TALK £10.00 PER PERSON

Whether to seek fame, to make money, or out of sheer devilment, writers have been lying to us for centuries; women have pretended to be men, young poets have pretended to be medieval; nobodies have pretended to be famous celebrities.

But why do we mind, when novelists lie to us all the time - quite openly feeding us yarns, tall tales and outright improbable porkies? What price Truth? Why do we value it so much in our reading? What do we expect when we read: based on a true story? Is there more than one truth to be told, in some situations?

We will examine a range of infamous hoaxers - from Thomas Chatterton, James McPherson and the entirely imaginary Australian Poet 'Erne Malley'... to modern writers like Robert Harris (Selling Hitler, a scandal which ruined the cherished reputation of a esteemed academic..), William Boyd (Any Human Heart, Sweet Caress, but especially his biography of the fictional artist Nat Tate). And we will ask: Is it okay to perpetrate a cruel hoax so long as it's for artistic reasons and no money changes hands? And: What is the connection between fiction and story-telling and deception and wishful thinking? Where is the dividing line between Art and Truth and Literature and Lies??

We may not come to any solid conclusions



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