



## Autumn 2024 Programme

### **Design Challenges of Iconic Buildings and Bridges NEW!**

10 meetings each of 2 hours from Monday 9 September 2024 2.00pm to 4.00pm  
Function Room, Plough and Harrow Tutor: Tim Parrot

This fascinating course explores the design and construction challenges associated with some of the world's most beautiful buildings. Examples include The Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque in Istanbul, The Pantheon in Rome and, the modern challenge of The Pompidou Centre, Paris. Before their beauty and grandeur could be admired, they had first to stand firmly on the ground. We will go on to look at some of the most awe-inspiring bridges, including masterpieces by Telford, Brunel and Stephenson. Dramatic stories of human endeavour are woven into the constructional challenges faced by these engineers.

Understanding the basic principles of engineering and construction will give us a fresh and exciting perspective on familiar ancient, medieval and modern structures.

## Music Appreciation: Britain - Land of Song

10 meetings each of 2 hours from Tuesday 10 September 2024 10.00am to 12.00 Noon  
Function Room, Plough & Harrow Tutor: John Winter

Wales is often called “the land of song”, but this course will show how vocal and choral music is part of the heritage of the whole of the United Kingdom. Singing (whether sacred or secular) was an important part of the Tudor courts of England but the Scottish culture – obviously different also produced much fine music. It will show how solo song and larger choral works – from Medieval times to the present day – became part of the British tradition of anthems, cantatas and oratorios; and will also include the music of such composers as Handel, Mendelssohn and others who settled here, making a contribution to our culture.

## British Poetry of the 20th Century

10 meetings each of 2 hours from Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024 2pm to 4pm  
Function Room, Plough and Harrow Tutor: Michael King

The aim of this course is to explore and consider a wide range of important poets and poetry in the 20th century. We will look at a variety of both traditional and modernist verse which often reflects and is reflective of social and historical changes, as well as changes in poetic practice, across the last century.

Poets will include Thomas Hardy, Edward Thomas, Wilfred Owen, T.S Eliot, W.H.Auden, Dylan Thomas, Philip Larkin, Elizabeth Jennings, Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath and Seamus Heaney. Although Sylvia Plath was American, her mature work was mainly written while resident in the UK.

## 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Art – The Great Bardfield Artists (Short Course)

5 meetings each of 2 hours from Wednesday 11 September 2024 10.30am to 12.30pm  
Randall Room, Harpenden Trust Centre Tutor: Rosanna Eckersley

The Great Bardfield Artists included, among others, Eric Ravilious, Edward Bawden and Marianne Staub. These 20th century British artists ignored divisions between ‘art’ and ‘craft’. They painted, made prints, designed wallpaper and fabrics, decorated furniture and ceramics. Their art was bold, modern, never straightforwardly naturalistic, and rarely abstract. They sometimes worked together, even competed, choosing this rural spot in Essex for congeniality and affordability. This wasn’t a tight community or artistic ‘School’ (some did their best work away from Bardfield) and our course’s structure reflects differences between style, medium and content.

## **Great British Comic Artists, 1697 to 1903 (Short Course)**

5 meetings each of 2 hours from Wednesday 23 October 2024 10.00am to 12.00 noon  
Randall Room, Harpenden Trust Centre Tutor: Martin Attridge

Martin will be focusing on four celebrated, but stylistically different, British comic artists, all of whom resided in London and depicted the times and moral code in which they lived. William Hogarth (1697-1764) – over two sessions, we will explore how Hogarth created a genre of popular, innovative commercial art followed by other successful satirists. James Gillray (1756-1814) – a scathing caricaturist without peer in his day. George Cruikshank (1792-1878) – a prolific illustrator with a long career, from cutting satire to superb magazine and book illustrations, such as those used for Grimm's Fairy Tales. Phil May (1864–1903) from tough beginnings, May became a major contributor to Punch, depicting everyday life as he saw it.

## **The English Country House: From Tudor Times to 1900**

10 meetings each of 2 hours from Wednesday 11 September 2024 2.00pm to 4.00pm  
Randall Room, Harpenden Trust Centre Tutor: Adam Smith

Country houses are visited by many millions of people each year but how were these buildings created and what are the stories behind those who lived and worked in them? This course looks at both the architectural development of the English country house and its social and economic history.

## **Current Affairs / Talking Politics**

10 meetings each of 1½ hours from Wednesday 11 September 2024 2.00pm to 3.30pm  
Renwick Room, Harpenden Trust Centre Tutor: Virginia Brisco

This class, led by an experienced and popular tutor, is a lively discussion about contemporary issues. The participants hold varying views and are encouraged to put them forward in a friendly, non-confrontational environment, although some prefer just to listen. There is a great deal to talk about right now. It is good to learn from others, and have the chance to express your own views.

## **Victorian Social History: Mending Bodies, Saving Souls**

10 meetings each of 2 hours from Thursday 12 September 2024 10.00am to 12 noon  
Function Room, Plough & Harrow Tutor: Ian Waller

Birth and death have always been certainties in life, but one's health and well being was far less so in Victorian times than it is today. People would have suffered from a variety of ailments, illness and disease. Injuries acquired through military service, agricultural or industrial work would have posed serious risk to life. Childhood diseases were commonplace and epidemics often devastated whole communities.

The course will examine the history and effects of evolving medical practices and advances, hospital systems and military medical care. We will see how these developments influenced the outcomes of common diseases, epidemics, hereditary conditions, workplace accidents and mental illness.

## **English Literature : The Celtic Contribution (Part 1)**

10 meetings each of 2 hours from Thursday 19th September 2024 2.00pm to 4.00pm  
Southdown Methodist Halls Tutor: Michael King

Some of the finest writing in English over the past century, or so, has come from writers of Celtic birth or origin. This course will examine a variety of texts, in fiction, poetry and drama from Wales, Scotland and Ireland, exploring ideas of the Celtic experience, for their own intrinsic value and also for what they articulate about identity and nationhood, within the context of the United Kingdom.

Writers to be considered will range from early 20<sup>th</sup> century figures such as W. B. Yeats, James Joyce and Lewis Grassic Gibbon, through R.S and Dylan Thomas, Edna O'Brien and Seamus Heaney, to contemporary writers such as Ali Smith and Clare Keegan.

**If you have any further questions please email us at:**

**[info@harpendenlearningforleisure.org.uk](mailto:info@harpendenlearningforleisure.org.uk)**

**Or visit**

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## Spring 2025 Programme

### Introduction to Opera **NEW!**

10 meetings each of 2 hours from Monday 13 January 2025 2.00pm to 4.00pm  
Function Room, Plough and Harrow Tutor: John Winter

The term 'Opera' covers a wealth of styles: tragic or comic, epic or intimate, historical (usually inaccurate!), many singers or just a few, lengthy or short, with or without spoken words and much more. This course will trace the history and development of opera from its early days of Monteverdi (1608) through the works of Handel, Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, Puccini, Richard Strauss and others.

Samuel Johnson called opera "exotic and irrational" (often true), an American sports writer coined the phrase "it ain't over 'til the fat lady sings" (unfair and untrue), while Maria Callas said "opera stays part of my life long after I've left the opera house". See if you agree... Come and share the drama, the tender moments, the sheer fun and of course some great tunes!

## **Music Appreciation: Music in France 1830 to 1960**

10 meetings each of 2 hours from Tuesday 14 January 2025 10.00am to 12 noon  
Function Room, Plough and Harrow Tutor: John Winter

Following our popular course on French musical miniature, we will be listening to larger scale pieces of music written for France but not necessarily by French composers. We will concentrate on ballets, operas, orchestral music and choral works. We will consider the glories of the Paris Opera, the arguments of the Paris Conservatoire, Impressionism, the scandals of Diaghilev's ballets and the student-like humour of Les Six in the 1920s.

## **An Introduction to Viking Age England (Short Course)**

5 meetings each of 2 hours from Wednesday 15 January 2025 10.00am to 12.00 noon  
Randall Room, Harpenden Trust Centre Tutor: Dr Alexander Thomas

This course introduces students to the study of Viking Age England. It will cover the chronology of the period, the key events and the use of archaeological and historical sources. The course will explore the identity of the Vikings, the establishment and structure of Danelaw and its impact. The invasion of Swein Forkbeard in the early 11<sup>th</sup> Century and its impact will also be discussed

## **The English Country House: Changes in Fortune 1900 to 2000**

10 meetings each of 2 hours from Wednesday 15 January 2025 2.00pm to 12pm  
Randall Room, Harpenden Trust Centre Tutor: Adam Smith

In this term, we will see the changing fortunes in the country house. The great houses of England were symbols of the aristocracy's wealth and power in 1900 but declined to become white elephants by the middle of the century, only to be resurrected by 2000. The course will chart the story of these changes in fortune.

## Current Affairs / Talking Politics

10 meetings each of 1½ hours from Wednesday 15 January 2025 2.00pm to 3.30pm  
Renwick Room, Harpenden Trust Centre Tutor: Virginia Brisco

This class, led by an experienced and popular tutor, is a lively discussion about contemporary issues. The participants hold varying views and are encouraged to put them forward in a friendly, non-confrontational environment, although some prefer just to listen. There is a great deal to talk about right now. It is good to learn from others, and have the chance to express your own views.

## The “Real” First World War

10 meetings each of 2 hours from Thursday 16 January 2025 10.00am to 12 noon  
Function Room, Plough and Harrow Tutor: Ian Waller

Most people’s knowledge of the First World War is through the plethora of official records generated by the government and the military. But there is a real side to the war as seen through the eyes of those who served in the military and navy, as well as those left on the home front. We do not really appreciate how people’s everyday lives were affected, or the sufferings and boredom of those on the various fronts – the real war. In the sessions we will examine: The real beginnings of the war from both the British and German perspectives. Over by Christmas – was this a joke? Fervour of recruitment. Real life and sufferings in the trenches. Letter home – the wartime postal service. The home front – those left back in England. The war at sea and in the air. What the intelligence summaries (war diaries and trench maps) never revealed. Demobilisation, repatriation and the Spanish Flu – the realities of post war Britain. Those who did not return home...

## **English Literature: The Celtic Contribution (Part 2)**

10 meetings each of 2 hours from Thursday 16 January 2025  
Methodist Hall, Harpenden Trust Centre

2.00pm to 4.00pm  
Tutor: Michael King

Some of the finest writing in English over the past century, or so, has come from writers of Celtic birth or origin. The course will examine a variety of texts, in fiction, poetry and drama from Wales, Scotland and Ireland, exploring ideas of the Celtic experience, for their own intrinsic value and also for what they articulate about identity and nationhood, within the context of the United Kingdom.

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