

Speakers for Weston Turville u3a General Meetings August 2023 – November 2024

24 August 2023 – Rugby Club

The Life of Edward VIII – Paul Robbins

Eighty-Five years after his abdication, an event that shook Britain to its core, King Edward VIII still generates controversy and debate. Did Britain have a lucky escape when he decided to give up the throne because he couldn't make Wallis Simpson, a divorced American, his Queen? Or was Britain deprived of a King whom some of his supporters believed would have reached an arrangement with Germany thus avoiding the horrors of the Second World War? Paul Robbins reveals much about the complex character that was Edward, Prince, King, Emperor and finally Duke. The talk explains his early life, the strained relationship Edward had with his father, his quest for a purpose in life, and his often-disastrous personal life. Was he a Nazi sympathiser and would he have regained the throne had Germany won the war? This is an enthralling talk that has as its backdrop a crisis that threatened the very existence of Britain's Royal family.

28 September 2023 – Rugby Club

Mad, Bad and Dangerous – Kathryn Harkup

Scientists sometimes get stereotyped. Why are scientists depicted as chronically shy, slightly odd and carrying out crazy experiments to try and take over the world? Of course it's only Bond villains who are plotting to take over the world and most scientists are lovely sociable people. But the stereotype has to come from somewhere...

26 October 2023 – Rugby Club

The History of Photography and Kodak – Tony Earle

Tony Earle spent 40 years at Kodak working as a scientist. This talk covers the early years of photography and the founding of Kodak in the 1880's. Light hearted with audience participation.

23 November 2023 – Rugby Club

The Bob and Dot Show: A Christmas Entertainment – Graham Harrison

A feast of anecdotes and music on a seasonal theme. Christmas songs from the Golden Age of Hollywood musicals combine with humorous tales about the artistes. We also look at the origins of some of our Christmas traditions and how one of them was (and still could be) illegal.

23 December – NO MEETING

2024

25 January 2024

The History of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane – Pete Allen

The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane has provided entertainment for every monarch since the Charles II. This talk takes a personal journey through the history of one of the most famous theatres in the world with tales of being the body double for the man who wrote 'My Fair Lady' and almost being shot by the Queen Mother's security detail...all because of Ken Dodd.

22 February 2024

The Sky at Night – Gordon Rogers

Gordon Rogers says he is privileged to say that Sir Patrick Moore was his proposer for membership of the Royal Astronomical Society having filmed an entire "Sky at Night" Programme at the Crendon Observatory. The talk describes the imaging of Deep Space from the observatory and is regularly updated with recent astronomical discoveries. Gordon recounts the achievements of several amazingly gifted British amateurs where this in one area of science in which the sheer enthusiast gives great aid to the professional. Discoveries by these amateurs command the deployment of major observatories such as Hubble. Many things in astronomy go wrong and he recites some of them!

28 March 2024

The Secret Art in the Passport – How we use it to fox the forger – Martin Lloyd

From the wax seal to the microchip, man has exploited the skill of the artist and artisan in his attempt to manufacture a forgery-proof document. Taking you through three centuries of passport design, this lecture explains the overt and uncovers the covert to illustrate the defences built in to the passport and the tricks the forger uses to defeat them. You will never see your passport in the same light again!

25 April 2024

The Island of Crabs – John Tyler

Christmas Island, a remote speck in the Indian Ocean beyond Java, has for millions of years remained out of reach for most mammals. Instead, it is dominated by a vast number and variety of crabs, which rule virtually every habitat on the island. This talk looks at the crabs and other wildlife of Christmas Island, many of which are found nowhere else, and follows the spectacular annual migration of crabs from the forests down to the sea.

23 May 2024

AGM + Jenner and his vaccine – Steve Bacon

Steve is a retired Primary School teacher, whose initial specialism was science, however, he has for many years developed a passion for history. The story of the development of vaccination is more complicated than you may think. He explains how Jenner developed the technique and how he got it accepted by society.

27 June 2024

The Sea Route to India – Fran Sandham

The extraordinary story of how the 15th century Portuguese explorers braved everything, from natural disasters to superstitious dread, in order to discover a sea route around Africa, to reach the rich spice markets of the East. How their journeys were originally inspired not so much by commerce but by the quest to find the mythical Christian emperor Prester John.

25 July 2024

Social Event – no speaker

22 August 2024

Utterly Immoral – Robert Keable and his scandalous novel – Simon Keable-Elliott

Robert Keable was a Chaplain in WW1, who after the war wrote a novel called "Simon Called Peter", which shone a light on life behind the front lines during the war. The central story centred on an affair between a chaplain and a nurse. The book was considered to be so "utterly immoral" by F Scott Fitzgerald, that he mocked it in *The Great Gatsby*. It became a huge international bestseller and despite being banned in parts of America, it went on to spawn a Broadway play and the sequel became a Hollywood movie. The author's life was truly extraordinary. As a child he was an evangelical preacher. He won a scholarship to Cambridge, became a priest, worked in Zanzibar as a missionary and wrote devotional books. He left the church after a year as a teacher and an affair with a lorry driver; fled to live in Tahiti and 'married' a Tahitian princess.

26 September 2024

A journey through Rock'n'Roll sound – John Wilsford

His book is an autobiography of his life on the road and with the bands, musicians and celebrities he met along the way and what it was like working with them. It traces his 30 years from 1965 to 1995 working as a roadie, sound engineer, tour manager and production manager. It tells what happens on stage, off-stage, back-stage, at sound checks and rehearsals, on the tour bus and in the hotels. He will tell what really happens on those live television shows and in the recording studios. The road crews, stage crews and people he has met along the way and the liggers he wishes he hadn't!

24 October 2024

TBC

28 November 2024

TBC