



Monthly Talks (October 2020 to September 2021)

Here is a record of our monthly meeting talks in iU3A's seventh year. For more recent talks, go to our web page [here](#). What appears below is almost exactly what appeared on the website immediately after each meeting.

October 2020



74. October — Rosemary drew on facts and figures from international organisations and her own frontline work with refugees and asylum seekers in Greece, Ireland and here in Islington. We were given insight into one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, at a time when mainstream media show little understanding of the complex circumstances of people seeking asylum in the UK. Rosemary is a journalist and avid traveller who specialises in human rights, migration and homelessness. She reminded us about a new iU3A group which will be helping to teach English to refugees. We were asked to support campaigns to honour people's rights, to push for a safe passage to the UK, to support local groups and to volunteer locally. To see the materials connected with this presentation click on [this](#) link. To view the presentation, click on [this](#) link.



75. October — Princess Charlotte: The First People's Princess. This was a fascinating lecture from Anne Stott on Princess Charlotte: no doubt her life story was new to many of us. She was the only child of the Prince of Wales (later King George IV) and Caroline of Brunswick. Their marriage was a disaster and Charlotte was not brought up by them. She was a headstrong child and only calmed down when she eventually fell in love with Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. They married and Charlotte died in childbirth along with her infant son. If she had lived she and Leopold would have reigned and we would not have had Victoria on the throne. A very touching biography enhanced by some beautiful portraits. To see the materials connected with this presentation click on [this](#) link. To view the recording of the presentation, click on [this](#) link.

November



76. November — Rediscovering James Mason. In this very enjoyable talk retired film historian Nick Scudamore gave us an engaging and erudite presentation to suggest that James Mason was more of a character actor than a star. Mason's particular acting skills were well suited to this often overlooked but essential part of film casting. Drawing on clips from five films spanning Mason's long and busy career (his last film was released after his death) Nick gave us an insight into movie-making mores as well as Mason's ability to convince and charm. Did you know, for example, that in films of the post-war years, suicide was only allowed to be referred to discreetly, very rarely shown? So in the final scene of *Odd Man Out* Kathleen Ryan has to shoot at the advancing police to allow her and Mason to be killed by their return fire. To view the recording of the presentation, click on [this](#) link.



77. November — Professor Vassilika took us on a fascinating journey from 1906, when Kha's tomb was discovered, to the present day. Kha was an overseer and builder of royal tombs and was educated and literate. His wife Merit unexpectedly died young and was buried in the tomb which Kha was building for himself. He eventually died in 1350 BC. In 1906 the artefacts were taken to Turin but were not properly curated and cared for. Professor Vassilika as a more recent Director of the Turin Museum oversaw the reorganisation of the exhibition which is now on display and widely admired. No recording available due to copyright restrictions.

December

78. December — Bob Gilbert took us on a fascinating exploration of three of Islington's street

trees. In other hands this would have been overkill, but Bob's enthusiasm for their life story and how it intertwines with London's economic and social history is infectious. Did you know that the bountifully fragrant flowers of a lime tree were administered for shell shock in World War One, or that they give rise to London's standing as a producer of some of the nation's most tasty honey? Next time you view the Bosch painting of a pickpocket, observe that the crowd is absorbed in watching a Linde dance under a lime tree. And what about London's most prolific tree — the Plane? Did you know how radical Bethnal Green Council was being when they planted planes along their local streets? How previously they were found only in the private squares of the wealthy? Would you have guessed the role of the conker in both winning WW1 and prompting the Balfour Declaration about the founding of the State of Israel? Bob has been writing a book with his son about the Biodiverse City, so we hope to invite him back later in the year for another fascinating talk. To hear a recording of Bob's talk click here: [trees](#)

January 2021



79. January — Andy Gardner: The Life and Times of Douglas Adams. Adams lived in Islington during many of his most productive years — a very different Islington in the seventies! Douglas Adams was born in West London but lived in Islington for many years. He was always known as a storyteller and was a pioneer environmentalist. He became an author, scriptwriter and editor for Radio and TV, most famously writing The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy. Andy hopes to get at least a green plaque put up outside the flat where Douglas Adams lived behind

Screen On the Green. Douglas Adams was also a script writer for the Dr Who series. He lived from 1952-2001 and is buried in Highgate Cemetery. To see the recording of Andy's presentation click [here](#).



80. January — One of our own members, Barry Mellor, addressed our monthly meeting on the topic of Captain Cook's First Voyage. He showed us numerous interesting maps, drawings and charts and demonstrated the extraordinary feat of planning, recruitment and logistics involved for this three-year journey. We learned about the crew's encounters with indigenous people and were moved by the extent of the death toll on his men. Barry's knowledge of seafaring is extensive and we were grateful to him for sharing it with us. Having read Chemistry at Oxford Barry

had a career in the chemical industry and in information science. He lived in Australia for some years and became interested in Captain Cook's exploration of the east coast of Australia and in the history of the First Fleet, especially the impact of their arrival on the indigenous peoples. Barry is a small boat sailor, a qualified yachtsman and a Blue Badge Guide. He is interested in Astronomy and is an active member of Islington U3A's Opera and Global History groups. To see the recording of Barry's presentation click [here](#).

February



81. February — Donna Jones's presentation on 'Black Lives Matter — What's That Got to Do with Us' was gripping from the start. We saw a powerful video with clips of recent incidents and protests here and abroad. Some poetry then drew us in further until Donna gave an impassioned account of why this matters to all of us. She put recent events into the historical context of colonialism and slavery with moving accounts of some of her own personal experiences. Donna is Head of Social

Work at London Metropolitan University. Qualified in 1999, she practised as a social worker before entering academia. As her career has developed, Donna has found opportunities to incorporate her arts based research interests and love of live performance and theatre into her teaching. To see the recording of Donna's presentation click [here](#).



82. February — Prof David Nutt: The New Psychedelic Revolution — from Neuroscience to Medical Treatments. What an intriguing thought: that the brilliance of the Ancient Greeks in geometry, philosophy, politics and literature was influenced by their consumption of mind altering drugs! Contemporary art depicts consumption of ergot — from which LSD is derived. How do such drugs work? Professor Nutt explained that our brains, ten times more efficient than any computer ever built, construct for us an approximation of all the information they receive from our eyes

and other sense organs, so that we are not overwhelmed with sensory input. Drugs such as LSD unconstrain the brain so that we see everything afresh. We no longer see a flower as simply a flower but as the multiplicity of colours and shapes that together comprise it. This can lead to break-through insights: two Nobel Laureates (Francis Crick and Kary Mullis) made ground-

breaking discoveries as a result. But Prof Nutt took us through the history of government reactions to such drugs, with the Vietnam War a major factor in attitudes within the influential US government. The hideousness of the war experience fuelled a large resistance, including the 'flower power' movement singing of 'dropping LSD not bombs'. Believing it was the drugs rather than the war causing problems, the government banned the drugs along with almost all research into their use. However, Prof Nutt's research has demonstrated the great value of some of these drugs (such as psilocybin and MDMA) in offering relief from conditions such as depression and PTSD, for which other treatments are often wanting. This was a delightfully rumbustious talk with many interesting questions from iU3A members and is well worth revisiting on the website: to see the recording of David's presentation click [here](#).

March



83. March — Alan Blower: Marvellous Marylebone. In this talk Alan led us on a fascinating one-mile virtual tour of Marylebone from the Sherlock Holmes statue at Baker Street Station to All Souls', Langham Place, the architecturally surprising church by John Nash. We heard stories of the Beatles and their Apple Boutique, Fanny Wilkinson (the first female landscape gardener), Octavia Hill, Florence Nightingale and many others who lived and worked in the area. A selection of historic and contemporary photographs enhanced the presentation and Alan's

commentary was informed and entertaining. To see the recording of Alan's presentation click [here](#). Alan is raising funds for The Prince's Trust. You can donate to his JustGiving page by clicking [here](#). Once you donate, JustGiving will send your money directly to The Prince's Trust.



84. March — Evan Jones: County Lines and the Criminal Exploitation of Children. St Giles Project has been working to help young people since 1962. Their motto is "putting experience to work" as they offer education and training in the community and prison. They use Peer Advisors as much as possible and now have 14 units attached to prisons and 7 in hospitals. The mobile phone has enabled the growth of so-called county lines and has drawn many young people into the world of drugs and violence. They are attracted by a glamorous image of money and cars but often find themselves at risk from drug users, other gangs and senior gang members. The majority are intelligent and aspirational, believing that they cannot succeed in today's world in a legal way. St Giles Project actively teaches them resilience so that they can say no, and it also involves their parents (usually a single mum) as much as possible. Evan's talk was very interesting, enlightening us about a world which is not familiar to most of us. The audience greatly enjoyed it and there were many questions and comments. You can see Evan's slides [here](#) and the recording of the meeting [here](#).

April



85. April — Barry Mellor: The Second Voyage of HMS Beagle. This was a compelling account of the Beagle's five year journey from 1831 to 1836. The young Captain Fitzroy was commissioned to do a hydrographic survey of South America, making charts for the Navy and Commerce. Also, using chronometers he was to verify the longitude of Rio; his third task was to investigate the formation of corals. Darwin came on board as a self-funding passenger and a "gentleman companion" for the captain. He collected specimens, fossils, bones and plants and killed and stuffed many animals and birds. While on the Galapagos he developed his theory of evolution by natural selection. Later he published "On the Origin of Species" and became a celebrity. The epic journey was a success and Captain Fitzroy achieved his goals, and Darwin developed his ideas which changed the world.

You can see the recording of Barry's presentation [here](#).



86. April — **Philip Kenrick: The Romans in Algeria: an under-appreciated heritage.** Philip made a welcome return visit to us when we were taken on a tour

of the historic sites of Algeria, the largest country in Africa. The Greeks, Phoenicians and Romans invaded and immigrated to Algeria over many centuries, followed more recently by the French. We were aided throughout the talk by Philip's excellent slides which showed many extensive Roman remains. The French in the 19th Century demolished some ancient buildings and used the materials for military purposes but the good news is that there are still many sites yet to be fully excavated.

Link to Philip's website and Tours here — click on the image:

Recording of the presentation [here](#).



May

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June

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July

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August

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September 2021

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