

Lectures

by
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Each lecture is 45–60 minutes in duration (or can be tailored to requirements of group making the booking).

British / European History

‘The Wisest Fool’: The Reign of James I, 1603–1625

The first of the Stuart kings of Britain and Ireland is also probably the most neglected, compared to his son, Charles I, and grandsons, Charles II and James II. Yet his reign is significant in setting many of the trends which were to become more pronounced in the reigns of his successors – from the fractious relationship with Parliament to the controversial liberalising approach towards religious affairs, both at home and abroad.

Britain’s Religious Wars 1638–1649

While the term ‘English Civil War’ is a familiar one, it is also misleading, for the conflict that occurred in the middle of the seventeenth century touched all parts of the British Isles. Beginning in Scotland, and then engulfing Ireland and England, this war, or wars, was above all about religion, and not unconnected to the religious struggle of the Thirty Years War, then raging on the continent.

The Phoney Peace: Europe between the Wars, 1919–1939

Was World War II a war that could have been avoided, as Winston Churchill argued? This lecture charts the path to war in the 20 years between the signing of the Versailles Treaty and Hitler’s invasion of Poland to assess whether conflict was inevitable or if it was simply allowed to happen through a combination of misjudgement and circumstance.

Bitter Roots: The Hidden Origins of the Holocaust

This lecture focuses on the historical legacy of anti-Semitism and persecution of the Jewish people bequeathed to Hitler, from the Middle Ages to the modern era, which was the foundation for the Holocaust.

Britain Alone: Fighting On in 1940

As Niall Ferguson has remarked, ‘When faced with the choice between appeasing and fighting the worst empires in all history, the British Empire had done the right thing ... In 1940, under Churchill’s inspired, indomitable, incomparable leadership, the Empire had stood alone against the truly evil imperialism of Hitler.’ Churchill himself described it as Britain’s ‘finest hour’, fighting on after the fall of France. Seventy years on, this lecture tells the story of that fateful year.

Ulster / Irish History

Foundations of Empire: Ulster and Virginia in the Seventeenth Century

A comparative study of Britain’s earliest colonising ventures on both sides of the Atlantic, when plantations were begun – and consolidated – in Ulster and Virginia.

Reform to Rebellion, Ireland 1775–1800

The last quarter of the eighteenth century witnessed some of the most profound developments in Irish history, from the achievement of 'legislative independence' by the Patriot–Volunteer alliance in 1782 to rebellion by the United Irishmen in 1798 and the passing of the Act of Union in 1800.

Ireland or Empire?

This lecture takes a different perspective on the Home Rule crisis of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, setting it in the context of the contemporary debate about the future of the British Empire and the place of Ulster in that empire.

Ulster-American History

Crossing the Atlantic: The Ulster Emigration Experience in the Eighteenth Century

Using contemporary sources, this lecture seeks to explain why and how the mass exodus of Ulster people to the American colonies occurred between 1715 and 1775.

Land of the Free: Ulster and the American Revolution

An exploration of the critical role played by the Ulster-American community in both the field of battle and the political arena during the turbulent years of birth of the American nation.

The Highest Call: Ulster and the American Presidency

One in four of America's presidents trace their heritage to Northern Ireland, while America's only three first-generation presidents were all born to Ulster parents. This lecture supplies the details.

The People's President: Andrew Jackson

Andrew Jackson was born into humble surroundings in colonial America as the son of an immigrant family from Carrickfergus. He went on to become one of the biggest names in the history of the United States, victor of the Battle of New Orleans, father of the Democratic party and president of his country.

The Life and Times of Ulysses S Grant: Ulster-American Hero

Rising from obscurity, Grant became the saviour of the Union in the great Civil War. This talk follows the life of Grant all the way to the White House and traces his ancestral roots back to south Tyrone.

Woodrow Wilson: A Presbyterian President

Arguably the first world leader and America's greatest president, Woodrow Wilson was also the grandson of James Wilson from Strabane and was brought up in a strict Ulster-American Presbyterian home. This lecture looks at both sides of the man.

The GIs in Ulster, 1942–1945

Almost 300,000 American service personnel passed through Ulster during World War Two – this is their story. The lecture includes a film made at the time that provides a nostalgic glimpse of Northern Ireland 60 years ago.

US History

Too Close to Call: The 1960 American Presidential Election

A study of one of the most fascinating elections in American history, featuring, as it did, the two men who, more than any other, defined the era in which they lived – John Kennedy and Richard Nixon.

To the Brink: Berlin, Cuba and the Threat of World War Three

This lecture recalls the dramatic events of 1961–62 when the Cold War threatened to turn hot with the erection of the Berlin Wall and the placing of Soviet missiles in Cuba. West and East went eyeball to eyeball and the Russians blinked first.

Into the Abyss: LBJ and Vietnam

Lyndon Johnson achieved much as president of the United States, particularly in the passing of his landmark Civil Rights legislation, but he was undone by Vietnam. This lecture attempts to explain why and how that happened.

A Safer World: The Foreign Policy of Richard Nixon

A panorama of Richard Nixon's groundbreaking international strategy, encompassing the opening to China, détente with the USSR and the extrication of the United States from the Vietnam quagmire.

'Star Wars': How Ronald Reagan won the Cold War

An account of how, through a combination of inspired leadership and unwavering determination, Ronald Reagan restored freedom to Eastern Europe and ended the march of Russian Communism.

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Title.....Date/Time.....

Name of Organisation/Group.....

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.....Telephone No.....

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