



Online Talks

January-March 2026

17.30-18.30 (Log on from 17.00)

on Zoom

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One application only per person per talk.

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NB: Two days before the event you will be sent an email with the Zoom joining instructions.

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Further information: Talks.lru3a@gmail.com

<p>January Monday 12th 17.30-18.30 Log on from 17.00</p>	<p>Jane Kershaw: Revealing the origins of the Viking Age through the scientific analysis of silver</p> <p>The Viking Age (c. 800 -1050 AD) is widely recognised as a pivotal episode of cultural expansion in Eurasia, yet its origins remain poorly understood. At present, the Viking Age is seen as 'starting' in the West with the famous raid on Lindisfarne in 793 AD. In this talk, I will discuss the findings of a recent research project (University of Oxford), in which we aimed to challenge this view, through the large-scale geochemical analysis of Viking silver.</p> <p>We analysed over 300 Scandinavian silver rings and ingot, capturing their lead isotopes and trace elements. This enabled us to quantify the relative amounts of eastern, Islamic and western European silver in use during the eighth and ninth centuries. We found a dominance of trade-related Islamic silver in most regions and, for this silver, an earlier date of import than the extant coin record suggests. Together, these results provide strong grounds for situating the origins of the Viking Age not in western Europe as normally assumed, but across the Baltic, in Eastern markets. It was ties with the Islamic Caliphate that hold the key to Viking origins.</p> <p>Dr Jane Kershaw is the first Gad Rausing Associate Professor of Viking-Age Archaeology at the University of Oxford. Her research encompasses gender, artefact and wider historical themes, drawing extensively on the material culture record. In this talk, she will report on the results of a recently-completed 5-year European Research Council project entitled 'Silver and the Origins of the Viking Age'.</p> <p>To book for this talk please Register here</p>
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<p>February Monday 9th 17.30-18.30 Log on from 17.00</p>	<p>Richard Westwood-Brookes: Elgar - The composer you thought you knew Everyone knows something about Elgar - mainly that he wrote Land of Hope and Glory and other music we play on state occasions. But the real Elgar was far from that - a complex and much troubled musical genius who actually never wrote Land of Hope and Glory. This talk reveals the real Elgar – and he’s far from what you thought you knew about him.</p> <p>Richard has written three books on Elgar, with a fourth on the way, as well as articles about him throughout the world. He's also the resident expert at Elgar's Birthplace Museum near Worcester, where he gives regular talks to visitors, based on his lifetime's knowledge of both Elgar the man and his music. Richard is a member of Ludlow u3a.</p> <p>To book for this talk please Register here</p>
<p>March Monday 9th 17.30-18.30 Log on from 17.00</p>	<p>Alan Freeland: Catherine The Great - ruler of Russia 1762-1796 Catherine the Great was such a successful ruler of Russia that even Vladimir Putin, reluctantly, looks up to her. It was she who secured southern Ukraine for Russia. Inspired by the Enlightenment, she did her best to transform Russia from a Medieval to a Renaissance state and established Russia for the first time as a great European political, not just military, power. The history is full of palace coups, conquests and culture, neoclassical architecture, sumptuous banquets, plenty of romance and sex and, not least, political relevance for today.</p> <p>Alan is a fugitive from the world of IT where he spent his career. Post retirement he spends his time discovering the world of Art and History, including Medieval History, and The Silk Roads. A member of Farnham u3a, Alan has run u3a groups focused on The art and science of Communication and, more recently, AI -- he is the Third Age Trust Subject Network lead for AI. Alan also presents for Probus groups, The Watts Gallery, u3a Regional and National events, and several later-life learning groups in Canada.</p> <p>To book for this talk please Register here</p>