

For General Distribution			
Date	Speaker	Subject	Summary
06/01/2025	Martin Firman	Policing of the 1970s and 1980s	Former Detective Inspector Martin Firman will explore perhaps lesser known but intriguing aspects of policing in the 1970s and 80s including his experience of being held hostage at gunpoint.
13/01/2025	*Den Bannister	Alaska, the Last Frontier	A land of majestic beauty, incredible wildlife and international strategic importance; Alaska is often overlooked and misunderstood.
20/01/2025	Stephen Chowns	Escape from occupied France in 1943	This is the story of James Paterson, an RAF navigator shot down near Lyon in August 1943, his concealment by the local Maquis and his eventual escape on foot over the Pyrenees in December 1943. His elder daughter Gillian and I have reconnected with some of those who knew him in those dangerous days. We'll bring a small number of artefacts (his false ID, a model of the Short Stirling bomber, debriefing reports, etc.).
27/01/2025	Robert Toseland	The Schneider Trophy and how it influenced World War aircraft design	The Schneider Trophy is famous for giving birth to the Spitfire, but did it? Yes, but not as directly as you might think. What else did the Schneider Trophy do for World War aviation of other countries? In an hour I'll attempt to give the audience a flavour of the contest and the daring-do of the pilots and influencers of the time.
03/02/2025	Ian Cooper	The 'Other' Michelangelo: The Life and Loves of Caravaggio	Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610) was the foremost religious painter in Rome at the start of the Baroque period. We explore not only his masterpieces found mostly in Italy but also describes a turbulent life of passion, violence and ultimate loss. Although he was a lone artist, his works had a profound influence on many subsequent painters and despite being ignored for several centuries his paintings, particularly of religious subjects have become universally admired in the last 50 years.
10/02/2025	Tim Riley	Sailing the North West Passage – a real adventure!	This is a true story of how a couple of sailors from Newent took their yacht through the ice to become only the 169th sailing vessel to transit the North West Passage since Amundsen in 1906.
17/02/2025		Members Memoirs	Six members gave short talks on topics of their choice.
24/02/2025	Rod Barker	City of London	I've worked in the City of London for 30 years - its history and traditions are fascinating. The talk of a mixture of history, facts about and some of its institutions and anecdote leading up to the present day.
03/03/2025	Pamela Holland	Tales of a Travel Rep	The expression "There's Nowt so Queer as Folk" is known to many, but is rarely proved more true than when working with people in the travel industry. This is about some of the beautiful places I have worked, but more importantly, the people I have met and the experiences! The talk is enhanced by some beautiful slides. **GUESTS ARE INVITED TO THIS TALK**
10/03/2025	Elizabeth Tebby Germaine	Extracts from Accounts of Dangerous Journeys In Burma WW2	This talk relates to my book, STORIES OF SURVIVAL IN BURMA WW2 and begins with background about Myanmar. There are extracts from three striking stories written by very different individuals who escaped to India from the Japanese Invasion of 1941/2. Dr Stanley Farrant Russell, Captain Gribble of the Burma Frontier Force and a missionary, Josephine Chapman (my mother) who wrote a detailed diary about her 700 mile journey, the last 200 miles of which were on foot through dense mountainous jungle to Imphal in India. I include a quick look at the life of General Aung San, (Aung San Suu Kyi's father) an inspiring leader whose life was tragically cut short in 1947.
17/03/2025	Ken Ingamells	Falklands Conflict Pt 1 - War is Total Chaos	Ken was the only member of the Met Office who had the high security clearances necessary and the necessary communications to get the required data. The result was that I worked that conflict 24 hrs per day for whole 74 days on my own, sleeping whenever I could.

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24/03/2025	Kenneth Pinfield	The Last Great Air Race	The Last Great Air Race took place in 1953 and traversed half way across the world from London Heathrow to the newly designated International Airport at Harewood, Christchurch, New Zealand and was designed to put New Zealand on the map for international travel. The RAF saw this as an opportunity to demonstrate its expertise and prove that it was possible to disperse modern jet engined aircraft rapidly around the world in time of emergency and to do it in less than 24hours.
31/03/2025	Nigel Thompson	Pioneers of Aviation	The talk is biographical and well illustrated and features such aviation luminaries as Anthony Fokker, Sir Frederick Handley-Page, Chuck Yeager (First man to break the sound barrier) etc.
	Q2		
07/04/2025	John Reid	Margaret of Anjou, Queen of England	No queen of England has been more reviled than Margaret of Anjou. She was blamed for England's defeat in the Hundred Years War with France, the outbreak and length of the Wars of the Roses, as well as the ultimate collapse of the Lancastrian dynasty. Margaret has had her reputation most irredeemably trashed by William Shakespeare who described her as "She-wolf of France. Is this portrayal of Queen Margaret accurate? Was she indeed a blood-spattered harpy, or was she a tragic heroine who has been unjustly demonized merely for being a woman?"
14/04/2025	Peter Ashburner	Flog it!- antiques & auctioneering	I am an antique and fine art auctioneer and valuer specialising in toys with 45 years experience of working in a Saleroom in Cheshire. I've been on most of the tv antiques programmes and done talks and charity auctions all over UK. **GUESTS ARE INVITED TO THIS TALK**
21/04/2025	Easter Monday	NO MEETING	
28/04/2025	Probus AGM		The AGM will be followed by Members Memoirs, concluding at noon.
05/05/2025	May Day	NO MEETING	
12/05/2025	Ian Johnston	Underwater Photography	The talk starts with a brief explanation of the difficulties associated with photographing underwater and a description of the equipment needed, this is not very deep and is intended as "scene setting". Then a tour of my experiences of about 1000 dives in the UK and around the world. We will explore wrecks, reefs, caves, cold water, tropical water and sharks.
19/05/2025	Richard Chatham	Concorde - The Amazing Icon of Supersonic Passenger Flight.	Concorde has been a passion of mine since July 16th 1969 and Brian Trubshaw and André Turcat provided my wife and I with a personal Flypast the night before we were married. Since that date I have met many of the team that designed, built and maintained her and the Captains and crew who flew her. and even some of the celebrities who were regular passengers.
26/05/2025	Late May Bank Holiday	NO MEETING	
02/06/2025	*John Lee	Per Ardua ad Astra - The Beginnings	John's talk will cover a brief history of military aviation culminating in the formation of the Air Battalion of the Royal Engineers and subsequently the formation of the Royal Flying Corps. It will include details of the aircraft used by the RFC and also some of the pilot's experiences in the early days.
09/06/2025	Dr Timothy Brain	The Duke of Marlborough and the Battle of Blenheim 1704	The battle of Blenheim is one of the most important battles in European history, but after over 300 years it is now largely. Dr Tim Brain will relate the background and story of the great battle that announced the arrival of Great Britain as a world power.
16/06/2025	*Gordon Lee	From the Sea to the Sky	A brief history of Flying Boats of the Short Bros and others. Glen Curtiss developed the first float-plane in 1912, and the aircraft became more militarized due to World War I. Towards the end of the 1930s, forty-two Short Bros' S23 Empire Flying-Boats were built for the British Empire for travel.

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23/06/2025	Bruce Williamson	Some unusual secret operations during the Cold War	Bruce's talk will cover top secret operations - Jiu Jitsu, Project Home Run and Project Dark Gene (Deep penetration flights into the Soviet Union); Operation Chrome Dome (B-52 strategic bombers armed with thermonuclear weapons), and The Vela Incident (an unidentified double flash of light detected by an American Vela satellite).
30/06/2025	Poetry Festival	NO MEETING	
	Q3		
07/07/2025	Poetry Festival	NO MEETING	
14/07/2025	Max Hunt	A.E. Housman, The Worcestershire Lad : Membership can bring guests	Born in Bromsgrove in 1859, Alfred Edward Housman became the outstanding classical scholar of his generation as Kennedy Professor of Latin in the University of Cambridge, but he is remembered today for two slim volumes of poetry and his association with South Shropshire. What drew him to write his <i>Shropshire Lad</i> collection of poems and why have they remained so popular?
21/07/2025	Sue Hickman	Pills, People and Pollution	Many people are aware of the poor state of our rivers, but some sources of pollution are less well known. The good news is we can all do our part to help and help ourselves to good health in the process.
28/07/2025	David Lees (GUY MEETING AND GREETING)	Jerusalem – Whose City?	Jerusalem is one of the oldest cities in the world. Its story goes back to at least Ancient Egyptian times, Holy to three competing Abrahamic Religions. Claimed as a Capital by opposing forces. Destroyed at least twice, besieged over 20 times, captured and recaptured 44 times attacked over 50 times. Why and who should it belong to? This talk shows how its rich and violent history has evolved and also looks at some of the important holy sites of this mesmerising city. I was lucky to have visited Jerusalem both before and after the Six Day War.
04/08/2025	Richard Jeynes FRGS	Foreign Legion Forts and Fortifications in Morocco	Richard's talk gives an overview of the French conquest of Morocco between 1900 and 1926. Whilst providing a general outline of the conquest of Morocco he concentrates on the use of forts and other fortifications built by the French Foreign Legion to secure the territory gained and pacify the areas of operation. He looks at the construction of the outposts and forts, garrison life in them in peace and war, operations in the desert and mountains, and desperate last stands.
11/08/2025	Dr Adrian Padfield (GUY MEETING AND GREETING)	The life of Captain George Smith-Clarke (1884 - 1960)	Captain George Smith-Clarke – retired chief engineer of The Alvis Car and Engineering Company led a team in Coventry during the 1950s polio epidemic to modify the wooden 'Iron Lung' – a large, cumbersome device which saved the life of many patients. Smith-Clarke then designed a radical new version called the Coventry/Alligator iron lung and continued in the field of medical engineering for the rest of his life. In 1956 he was awarded the prestigious James Clayton prize of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.
18/08/2025	Sally Ferrers (GUY MEETING AND GREETING)	Inigo Jones & Sir Anthony van Dyck	This is a talk about a brilliant Architect who changed English architecture. And a sensational artist of King Charles the First and his court. Inigo witnessed Charles' beheading. Both patronized by the art loving monarch and both their lives affected by anti-royalist Oliver Cromwell. Their remarkable talents are legacies of the times in which they lived
25/08/2025	August Bank Holiday	NO MEETING	NO MEETING

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01/09/2025	*David Tombs	The fascinating history of Abbots Lodge	Having moved into an obviously old timber-framed house in Ledbury in 1976 I could discover virtually nothing about its history. My talk will focus on action taken to uncover the fascinating history of Abbots Lodge in Church Lane.
08/09/2025	*Andrew Beech	The Humble Electric Tram	The talk concentrates in particular on the pride and glory of the introduction of these vehicles to our towns and cities in the Edwardian era, and the complex reasons for their almost complete disappearance from our streets only a handful of decades later.
15/09/2025	* Harold Armitage	Asbestos, The silent killer,	
22/09/2025	* Harold Armitage	Gliding -The first way for people to experience controlled flight.	Experiencing gliding is a serene yet exhilarating adventure, as the silent aircraft soars gracefully through the sky, carried only by currents of air. With no engine noise, you feel deeply connected to the vast, open landscape below and the boundless sky above.
29/09/2025	John Butterworth	Egypt - the three sides of the pyramid	Having visited this amazing country many times I speak about its famous past, the renowned historical sites, the beautiful beaches and the dangerous desert – but also the problems Egypt faces today.
	Q4		
06/10/2025	Dr Timothy Brain	Life and works of Vivaldi (Membership can bring guests)	Vivaldi. (Gettysburg next time)
13/10/2025	Keith Edwards	Caves and Potholes of Great Britain	A light-hearted romp through the world beneath our feet. The underground world is full of excitement, but can also be dangerous for the unwary and inexperienced. Adventures abound and there is fun to be had. Abseiling down Britain's deepest natural underground cavity, Titan in Derbyshire, at 450 feet deep (as tall as the London Eye) is the ultimate adrenaline rush and there it is a fantastic feeling knowing that very few people ever go to the places and see the sights that cavers are privileged to witness.
20/10/2025	Robert Toseland	The Wooden Wonders of the Royal Navy	This presentation charts the development of the wooden warships of the Royal Navy from Medieval times up to the introduction of iron hulled ships and steam power. It discusses various famous, and not so famous ships, and why the designs they adopted were so important in the development of the Nav
27/10/2025	Ian Woodward	'(Mis) Adventures of an Expatriate in Asia - From Colonial to Coup (1990-2010)	The story of my 20 year career and the challenges of establishing businesses across the Asian region, the privileged lifestyle of an expatriate at the end of Empire (HK) - with a focus on cultural differences & some of the humorous / bizarre events that took place.
03/11/2025	Mike Warburton	MP's expenses scandal and other skulduggery in high places	For many years I was a tax partner with Grant Thornton and during that period I have helped the national press with investigative reporting. In particular I worked closely with the Daily Telegraph team in their exposure of the MP's expenses scandal in 2009 which forms the basis of this talk
10/11/2025	Nigel Thompson	Brief History of Popular Music Part One: Eric Watson VoT	The first talk in the "musical" series covers the emergence of popular music in the USA, linking the Gospel singers, often African slaves, who, using the rhythms which they used in Africa, created a platform for musical forms such as Ragtime, New Orleans Jazz, Acoustic Blues, Swing and much later Electric Blues, Modern Jazz and Rock and Roll. The talk features lots of live performance, dance etc. and talks about some of the giants of popular music who should be familiar to most of your members. I should say though, that this is my reading of what took place and there will be many others. Usually leads to a lively Question time afterwards

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17/11/2025	Ash Jones MBE	The British Honours System	A 45-minute enrichment lecture about the many interesting facets of the British honours system, including some of the lesser-known awards and some well-known recipients. Also includes advice on how to nominate worthy individuals. Perfect for after dinner/luncheon and general audiences of all ages.
24/11/2025	Alan Gray:	The Two Atomic Missions over Japan: A contrast	There can be very few people, especially of our generation, who do not know about the Manhattan Project and the use of the atomic bomb. However, what is very much less known is the contrast between the first and second missions. This talk covers the preparations, training and techniques involved in delivering the bombs to their targets and what happened to cause a potential disaster to one crew and the overall war effort.
01/12/2025	John Shields	Spitfire Pilot: Air Commodore Geoffrey Stephenson - a Colditz POW and friend of Douglas Bader	This is the remarkable story of a fighter pilot who joined the RAF with Douglas Bader, commanded a Spitfire squadron at Duxford in 1940, crash landed at Dunkirk, spent nearly 5 years as a PoW, and is buried in Alabama following a flying accident in a supersonic fighter.
08/12/2025	John Lee	Christmas Crackers?	
15/12/2025	Max Keen	"Gordon of Khartoum: A Victorian Epic"?	Charles George Gordon - AKA Chinese Gordon, Gordon Pasha, Gordon of Khartoum. A Victorian hero prised from the true Victorian heroic mould! Why was it that a Royal Engineer General, who decided to take over a town in the middle of a desert, became a national hero and brought down a government! Uncover the truth about Gordon of Khartoum and why this crude, insubordinate and untrustworthy junior general would appeal to both the British people and Queen Victoria, in true stiff upper lip style!
22/12/2025	Christmas Holiday	NO MEETING	NO MEETING
29/12/2025	Christmas Holiday	NO MEETING	NO MEETING