

## U3AC Wednesday Lectures, Spring Term 2012 - with abstracts\_FINAL

- 11<sup>th</sup> January     **Cambridgeppf's Work in and around Cambridge**  
Carolin Göhler, CEO of local environmental charity Cambridge Past, Present and Future.
- Carolin Göhler , CEO of the local environmental charity, highlights achievements and challenges ahead (see [www.cambridgeppf.org](http://www.cambridgeppf.org))*
- 18<sup>th</sup> January     **Searching the genome for malaria's Achilles' heel.**  
Dr Julian Rayner and Dr Steve Scott , Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute.
- In this talk, staff from the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute will provide an introduction to DNA, genes and genomes and how researchers at the Sanger Institute use the information in DNA to understand how genes function in health and disease. In particular we will focus on malaria, discussing what causes the disease and why it is a global problem. Faculty member Julian Rayner will give an overview of his research describing how DNA sequencing technologies and genome research can aid the fight against malaria. This includes providing drug-target lists and possible vaccine candidates, as well as helping researchers to better understand the biology of the parasite that causes the disease and its interactions with its human host. Julian will also discuss the current challenges that face the malaria community in eradicating the disease in the developing world.*
- 25<sup>th</sup> January     **Lives in Fragments - found in medieval documents from the Cairo Synagogue.**  
Dr Esther-Miriam Wagner, Dr Amir Ashur and Dr Gabriele Ferrario, Research Associates at the T-S Genizah Research Unit, University of Cambridge.
- The lives of the famous and the ordinary are laid out in the remarkable medieval fragments from the Cairo Genizah collection. Presented by the Taylor-Schechter Research Unit of the Cambridge University Library, see: <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter/>*
- 1<sup>st</sup> February     **Violins**  
Nigel Brown OBE, violin enthusiast and founder of The Stradivari Trust.
- Since 1986 Nigel Brown has helped more than 30 of the UK's top string players to have the long term use of, and in many instances buy, the instruments of their choice. As these are invariably Italian from the 17th century the sums of money required are considerable reflecting as they do the worldwide demand. In the process Nigel has been able to gratify his desire to learn quite a lot about these extraordinary artefacts and to put this knowledge to good use by helping great artists in their careers. He has played to violin to no very great effect from the age of 7 and it is perhaps surprising that he continues to beat his head against this particular brick wall!!*

- 8<sup>th</sup> February **'Memory at War' in Eastern Europe: the past that doesn't pass.**  
 Judy Brown, Memory at War Project, Department of Slavonic Studies, University of Cambridge.
- This lecture introduces the work of the research group Memory at War ([www.memoryatwar.org](http://www.memoryatwar.org)) which observes that the countries of Eastern Europe are currently engaged in a non-violent but highly aggressive cultural war over how to remember the past of the 20th century. The lecture explores the concept of 'collective' or 'cultural memory' and looks at prominent memory conflicts over events such as 'Katyn' in Poland, 'Holodomor' in Ukraine and 'Stalinist repressions' in Russia. As a special case study, Judy presents her own research on memory conflicts in the Crimea, focusing on history of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, the fate of the Crimean Tatars and the project of Ukrainian statehood. Be warned: the audience will be challenged to reflect on how **WE** have all been taught to remember the past!*
- 15<sup>th</sup> February **Energy policy: how much it costs you and what you get for your money**  
 Michael Pollitt, Reader in Business Economics, Judge Business School, University of Cambridge.
- Energy policy aims to provide affordable, secure and clean energy. However achieving all of these three aims simultaneously is impossible. This talk will examine what lies behind rises in electricity and gas prices in recent years focussing on the impacts of often misguided and conflicting policies.*
- 22<sup>nd</sup> February **The Cosmos and your Place in it**  
 Carolin Crawford, Gresham Professor of Astronomy and Outreach Officer Institute of Astronomy.
- Everyone knows space is big - but where and how do we and the planet we live on fit into the Solar System, or our own Galaxy? Then what lies beyond the Milky Way? This talk will introduce you to the scale, structure and geography of our Universe. Come along and get a new sense of perspective!*
- 29<sup>th</sup> February **Philip Larkin: Funny Man**  
 John White, Emeritus Reader in American History at the University of Hull and Jazz Consultant to the Philip Larkin Society.
- The poet and librarian (at the University of Hull) Philip Larkin once called himself "the thinking man's Eric Morecambe", and began one of his interviews: "I like to think I'm quite funny, and I hope this comes through in my writing". Yet Larkin's detractors have accused him of being humourless, politically incorrect, a misogynist, racist, vulgarian and the self-promoting "Hermit of Hull". After Larkin's death in 1985, his lifelong friend Kingsley Amis remembered: "He was the most enlivening companion I have ever known". Like Amis, those who actually knew Larkin found him inexhaustibly witty and always entertaining, with an extraordinarily wide range of humour (often at his own expense) – from the satiric caricature of Ted Hughes ("like*

*a Christmas present from Easter Island”), to his comment on the social convention of actually buying Christmas presents (“that annual conversion of one’s indifference to others into active hatred”). John White, who knew Larkin for twenty years, and shared his passion for jazz, examines his poetry, prose, published and unpublished letters, and also offers some anecdotal reflections on Philip Larkin - all of which suggest that he was undoubtedly an extremely “funny man” – as well as a great poet.*

7<sup>th</sup> March

***Spencer Perceval: Should he be remembered for more than his murder?***

Hugh Gault, local writer and historian

*Spencer Perceval (1762-1812) was Prime Minister for 2½ years from October 1809 until his assassination in May 1812. These are often the only facts people know about him. Yet he was Chancellor of the Exchequer for over five years from March 1807 and Leader of the House of Commons for the 2½ years before he became PM (as Portland, the nominal PM then, was in the Lords). Previously from 1801 to 1806 he had been Solicitor-General and then Attorney-General in the Addington and Pitt ministries.*

*This was a time of national peril and there are both positive and negative reasons for remembering him. The former include a range of political achievements, such as finding the finance for the Peninsular War, as well as his support for charities and individuals. Among the negative are his resistance to Parliamentary reform and his repugnant views on Catholics. But it is instructive that Liverpool, his successor as PM, continued many of the same policies in the first half of his term.*

*One contemporary said of Perceval that “He only wanted something more of the Devil to be a very good premier”. This talk will cover both the reasons for concurring with this judgement and those for disputing it.*

14<sup>th</sup> March

No Lecture - AGM

Peter Woodsford, Director of Studies – Lectures.

22<sup>nd</sup> January 2012.