

'Order Order'

Great Institutions - The Making of British Civic Life

Britain has become a divided nation over BREXIT. One saving grace is that it has brought into light the very institutions that made Britain a Great and Proud Nation. After years devoted to the merits of private versus public, austerity over public spending, liberalism over socialism, we find ourselves recovering such foundational institutions as Sovereignty; Parliament; 'Order Papers', the Rule of Law; the Judiciary; and concepts like prerogative, prorogation, judicial review, mandates, referendum. Barristers and High Courts are currently debating whether the government itself is acting unconstitutionally.

But these current preoccupations are only the tip of a great iceberg of public institutions, that make us British and preserve our way of life. The theme of this new series of talks beginning on the 16th September 2019 at 14.00 hrs at the Sacred Heart Catholic Hall, Thirsk Road, Northallerton DL6 1PJ, is that public institutions provide the backbone to every civilized society that we are letting decline at our cost. Our complex Constitution and Institutions are a product of the ages, evolved to prevent slides into lawlessness, tyranny, oligarchy, populism, opportunism, injustice and barbarianism.

Here are some institutions we cover that will provoke our conversations: parliaments and councils; parishes, districts and local government; guilds, trade associations and unions; roads and railways; hospitals and health services; transport infrastructure e.g. railways, national grid, mains water and drains; Rescue Services like police, ambulance, fire, RNLI, Air Ambulance; parks, play areas, Commons etc; public gardens and leisure areas; welfare and charities; clubs, societies and associations; museums and galleries; libraries; schools; universities; research centres; security services including the armed services and police; town halls and forums; families and family supports. Today, radical and extremist voices are deploying the languages of civility while threatening the very institutions that maintain it with Judges doing their duty becoming 'Traitors' and MP's labelled 'Saboteurs'.

This course will be of interest to anyone concerned with understanding and preserving our civic life - civilization itself. The course uses a variety of teaching methods: talks, seminars, discussions; learning aids from art history and the media; multi-disciplinary approaches from constitutional, political, legal and social history to philosophy and jurisprudence.

Dr John Gibbins, the course leader, was trained on the British Constitution, has taught jurisprudence, professional ethics, political theory, criminology amongst other things. He is currently a Member of Wolfson College, Cambridge, co-founded an international journal and has a recent publication on 'Knowledge Networks'. Join a vibrant group of engaged adults and share fun, learning and excellent homemade biscuits. To book a place call John on 07811 383755 or mail gibbins900@gmail.com.

Provisional Lecture List September 2019-2020

This course will provide both a historical account of our key institutions, questioning and pointed critiques of its prejudices and inbuilt inequities. Be prepared for informed conversations on the strengths and weaknesses of our embodied way of life, our institutional theories and practices

16/9/19 The Foundations of Civic Life: Strong or Unstable - A Course introduction

23/9/19 Sovereignty - fact or fiction? Who, where and when?

30/9/19 Parliament - Representative and Responsible Government?

7/10/19 - Holding Power and holding power to Account: Legislation and scrutiny

14/10/19 - Democracy - what, when and where? Electoral systems, parties, constituencies, and

21/10/19 The British Constitution - Written and Unwritten Conventions and Precedents

28/10/19 Half Term Break

4/11/19 The Rule of Law and its enforcement. The Separation of Powers

11/11/19 The Judiciary: Guardians of Justice?

18/11/19 Government and Leadership

25/11/19 Anonymous Empires: Special Advisors, Lobbyists, Media

2/12/19 The Executive - the British Civil Service

9/12/19 Strong or Unstable: Mulled Wine and Mince Pies

16/12/19 Lunch Out?