

Biographical Information about Major John Gordon Harvey Corrigan MBE, FRHistS – Gordon Corrigan was commissioned from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 1962 and was an officer of the permanent cadre of the Sixth Gurkha Rifles and then the Royal Gurkha Rifles before leaving the army in 1998. He served mainly in the Far East but also in Cyprus, Berlin, Belize and N Ireland. His last posting was as Commanding Officer of the Gurkha Centre, training recruits for the Brigade of Gurkhas and running courses for the Brigade. He is now a professional historian. He is the author of *Sepoys in the Trenches, The Indian Corps on the Western Front 1914–1915*, (Spellmount, 1999); *Wellington, A Military Life*, (Hambledon & London, 2001); *Mud, Blood and Poppycock: Britain and the First World War* (Cassell & Co, 2003); *Loos 1915, The Unwanted Battle* (Spellmount, 2006); *Blood, Sweat and Arrogance – And The Myths of Churchill’s War* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2006); *The Second World War – A Military History* (Atlantic Books 2010); *A Great and Glorious Adventure – A Military History of the Hundred Years War* (Atlantic Books 2013) and *Waterloo – A New History of the Battle and its Armies* (Atlantic Books 2014) as well as numerous eBooks, his most recent being *The Battle of Poitiers* published in August 2023. His television appearances include *The Gurkhas*, *Napoleon’s Waterloo* and *Battlefield Detectives*, and so far, he has presented five series on various aspects of military history. He has conducted military history study tours in France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Holland, Spain, Portugal, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia and is a regular lecturer on expedition ships and on rail journeys in Central Asia. He has lectured in the United States and Canada and is an honorary research fellow of the Universities of Birmingham and Kent, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, a Member of the British Commission for Military History, and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Farriers.

Summary of the Content of the Four Study Day Sessions

Vladimir Putin – Reformer to Tyrant – Where did it all go wrong? Putin was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth, his father was a labourer and Vladimir was 23 years old before he had a room to himself. He was the first member of his family to go to university and he then joined the KGB as an immigration analyst. With the fall of the Soviet Union he entered local government in Leningrad. He was described by the chairman of Aeroflot as the only civil servant ever to refuse to be bribed. As president he wanted to bring Russia in from the cold and embarked on a programme of reform and liberalisation. The talk will describe his early life and career, his entry into politics, his term as president and asks ‘where did it all go wrong?’

The Ukraine War – Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union Russia has legitimate security concerns, which we in the west have not always recognised, and there is a strong case for saying that the Crimea is Russian rather than Ukrainian. None of this, of course, excuses the invasion of Ukraine on 24th February 2022. Putin, and the generals, thought, or were led to believe, that this would be an affair of two or three days, but it was not to be. The UK was the first to announce unequivocal support for Ukraine, and we are providing them with intelligence, arming them and training their soldiers. Other NATO members have followed suit, some reluctantly. This talk will look at the history of Ukraine, trace the course of the war and lay down some pointers as to what might happen in the future.

British Defence in 2024 – After every war British governments have sought to reduce expenditure by reducing the size and capabilities of its armed forces. But this has rarely been done when war is imminent. There is now a major war in Europe, which may spread, and yet the British Army will shortly be reduced to a size smaller than it was after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. To deter war you need to be strong and to be willing to use that strength. Technology and cyber assets are important, but mass still matters, and currently Britain would be hard pushed to field more than one combat division, and that only for a limited period. We are one of the few NATO members spending the recommended 2% of GDP on defence, and we are still admired worldwide for the quality of our soldiers, sailors and airmen, but while one good one may well beat six bad ones, he will not beat twenty bad ones. This talk looks at Britain’s military capabilities today and asks what should be done to repair the damage inflicted by successive governments since the end of the Cold War. Having looked at Britain’s armed forces as a whole, the fourth lecture might zero in to cover the only part of the British Army that is expanding – the Brigade of Gurkhas.

The Brigade of Gurkhas – Having looked at the British armed forces and British defence policy as a whole, we now look at the only part of the British army that is expanding. Gurkhas are citizens of Nepal, a mountainous landlocked country sandwiched between India and Tibet. It has never been part of the British Empire and is not a member of the Commonwealth, but Gurkhas have been soldiering for Britain for over 200 years. Currently the Brigade of Gurkhas in the British Army consists of two battalions of infantry (Royal Gurkha Rifles), a regiment each of Signals and Engineers, a Logistic regiment and a number of independent infantry companies. Recruiting is carried out in Nepal once a year, and there are anything from 10,000 to 20,000 applicants for 200 places. Recruiting standards are therefore the highest in the army. This talk will look at the Brigade, how it is recruited, trained and deployed and how by any measurable standards of military competence Gurkhas are probably the world’s most effective soldiers.

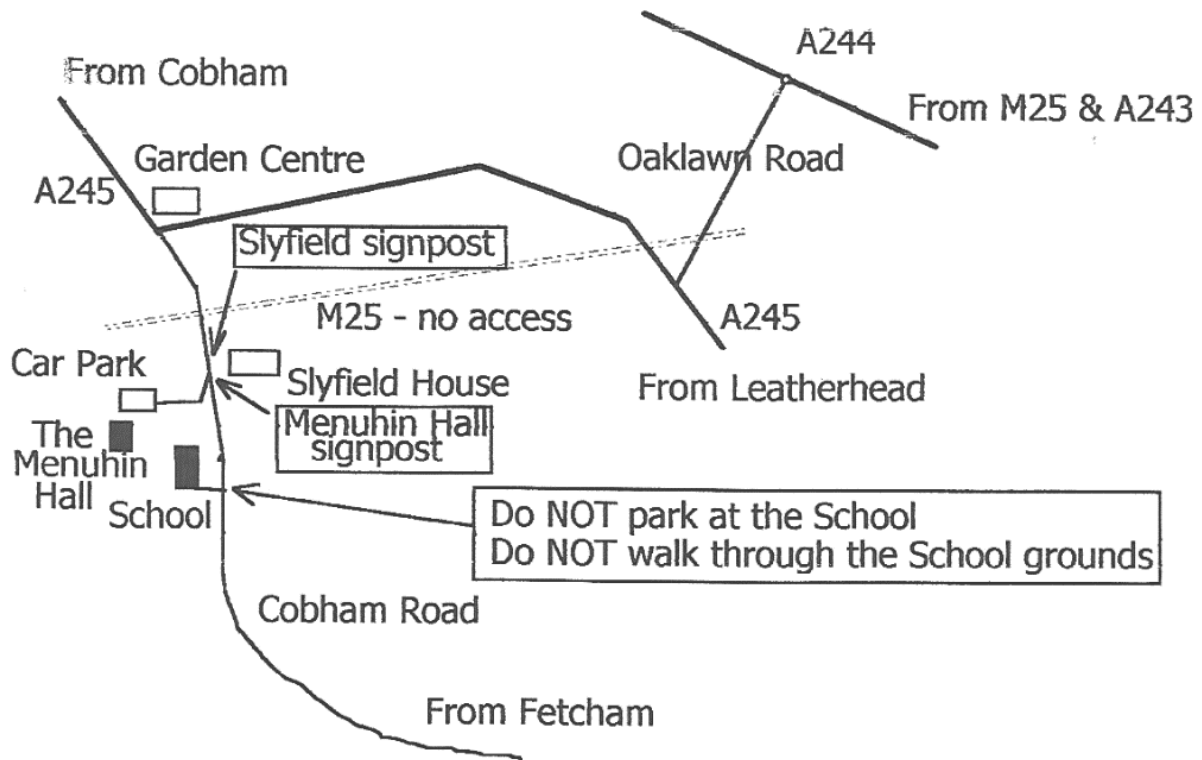
Location & Contact Details for Study Day

The Menuhin Hall, Cobham Road, Stoke d'Abernon, Surrey KT11 3QQ

Map Ref: TQ 132 579 on Landranger 187 & Explorer 146

Telephone 07763 805046 (Emergency - On-Day-Only) or Menuhin Hall Office 08700 842020

There is a Garden Centre (01932 862530), about 800 metres to the north of the Menuhin Hall where light lunches are available. Reservations are not required.



The Menuhin School was founded in 1962 in London and moved to its present site in 1964. It has around eighty pupils learning to play stringed instruments including piano and is financed, in part, by the DfE. Lord Menuhin was born in New York on 22nd April 1916 and died on 12th March 1999 in Berlin. His parents had come from Russia. His first public concert was in March 1924 and his first in Europe, in Paris, in 1927. His performance of Elgar's Violin Concerto was recorded at the Abbey Road Studios in 1932. The Hall, designed by Mark Foley, was conceived as a memorial to Yehudi and was handed over to the school on 5th August 2005. The official opening was on 7th January 2006. Yehudi is buried by the stone pillar in front of the Hall. Nearby is an oak which he planted on his 80th birthday. The Hall was first used for a Surrey Network Study Day on 14th October 2005.

Study Days at the Menuhin Hall

Surrey Network Study Days – After an eighteen-month gap, study days at The Menuhin Hall resumed in September 2021. We welcome members to our study days in the hall, as in the past, while also making it possible to view the study days remotely.

Advertising & Booking – The practice of applying by post or by email will continue, with booking responses being sent as members chose, while payment can be made by cheque or bank transfer. We have discussed using on-line booking and consider that this is our likely next step, but the workload in setting up the programme for 2024 is our first priority. We advertise the study days with full details and booking forms on our website – <http://u3asites.org.uk/surreyu3anetwork/> and circulate the information electronically to all u3as in Surrey Network and surrounding areas. We also electronically circulate a poster suitable for advertising the future programme on display boards or websites.

Nut Allergies – The Menuhin School has pupils who have an allergic reaction to nuts and the staff have taken the decision to make the school and the Menuhin Hall a nut-free environment. Please ensure that your lunch does not contain any trace of nuts.

Disabled Parking – There are six spaces behind the hall and there are more in the main car park. If you have a blue badge and need level access to the hall, then tick Disabled Parking on the booking slip; you will then be allocated a space at the back of the hall and sent a permit. There is a drop-off space where disabled members have level access to the hall.

Wheelchair Spaces – If you need a seat removed in the hall to accommodate a wheelchair then tick Wheelchair on the booking slip.

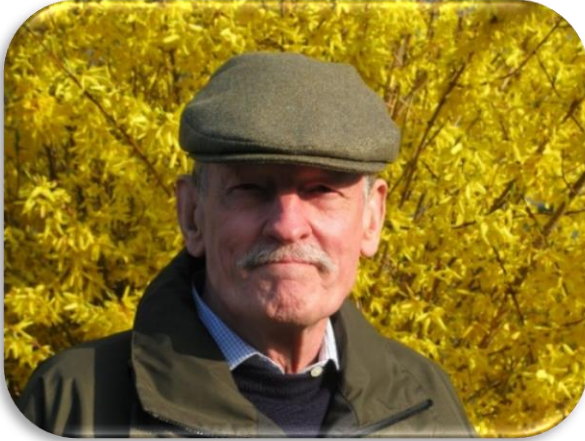
Support for Network Committee – The study days have been running successfully for nineteen years. New volunteers with ideas for the future programme and the commitment to help run future study days will be made very welcome. Our website is based on the u3a software Site Builder, and as a transfer to a new system is required in 2024 some help with the website would be very welcome.

Please contact Surrey Network Chairman, Cher Palmer, on 01293 784313 with offers of help.

Surrey u3a Network

Study Day

Europe at War: Putin's War in Ukraine & the British Commitment



Speaker:
Gordon Corrigan
MBE, FRHistS



The Menuhin Hall, Stoke d'Abernon

Friday 15th March 2024

9.30am Registration - Tea and coffee provided

Member £12 Guest £15

To book Members should send a completed booking slip with a cheque for £12, or £15 for a Guest, payable to Surrey U3A Network, to Denise Dobbs – u3a, 5 Aldridge Rise, New Malden KT3 5RJ, Phone 07964 798791 or make a bank transfer to HSBC Sort Code 40-27-07 Account Number 11519018, Event Reference Mar24, and email information to surreyu3astudyday@outlook.com .