



Surrey Network

The Asian Century?

A Study Day on Friday 16th May 2025 at The Menuhin Hall, Stoke d'Abernon

Speaker – Steve Bird

Introduction – Somewhere around 1880 ‘Pax Britannica’ started to give way to an extra-long ‘American Century’. However, for the past forty years or so the West has sensed a similar passing of the baton. This time the shift is not to another variant of the European culture which has been so dominant since the sixteenth century. Rather, we appear to be on the brink of an Asian century with wholly different cultures, outlooks and attitudes, not the least being a resentment of Europe and America. [See next page for full versions of Introduction and Programme.]

Programme

- 9.30 Registration – Water available but not Coffee / Tea
- 10.00 **China – where did that come from?** In 1421 Beijing was inaugurated as a planned city with carefully designed tax credits to encourage growth. 21 heads of state were in attendance. Although the countries of Europe were known to the Chinese, their leaders were not regarded as important enough to be invited....
- 11.00 Coffee / Tea
- 11.30 **Japan – the one that got away** Some forty years ago the west was almost as terrified by the seemingly unstoppable industrial threat that was Japan. It seemed that the West had no answer to the discipline and wider cultural attributes of ‘the Land of the Rising Sun’....
- 12.30 Lunch – Bring-Your-Own – Tea / Coffee available
- 1.30 **India – on the brink of breakthrough?** One in ten of the world population are Indians under the age of 30. That statistic alone suggests both the potential of, and the problem for, the Indian state. . We look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.....
- 2.30 Tea / Coffee
- 3.00 **Modern Seapower – why is it of increasing importance?** 90% of all trade is carried by sea, mostly in 17m containers. 95% of all internet traffic travels on 232 underwater cables. These statistics alone justify why we should consider the importance of seapower.....
- 4.00 Departure

To Book – Send the slip below by 13th May with a cheque for Member £12, Guest £15, Online £7, payable to Surrey u3a Network, to Denise Dobbs – u3a, 5 Aldridge Rise, New Malden KT3 5RJ, Phone 07964 798791. Enclose an SAE or an email address for confirmation. **Or make a bank transfer** to HSBC Account No. 11519018 Sort Code 40-27-07, Event Ref. May2025, and send an email to surreyu3astudyday@outlook.com with the booking information below. **Or on day pay at door £15.**

ASIAN CENTURY Member £12 Guest £15 At Door £15 Online £7 **16th May 2025**

Please Tick – Attend Hall or Online ; Email or SAE ; Cheque or BankTrsf .

TitleFirst Name Surname Name of u3a

House Number/Name. Post Code Phone.

E-mail Address

If you need disabled parking, tick and give a car registration number

If you need a wheelchair space in the hall, tick or a step-free seat, tick .

If you would like to receive details about future study days by email, please tick here .

The Asian Century? – Full version of text of Introduction & Programme

Introduction – Somewhere around 1880 ‘Pax Britannica’ started to give way to an extra-long ‘American Century’. However, for the past forty years or so the West has sensed a similar passing of the baton. This time the shift is not to another variant of the European culture which has been so dominant since the sixteenth century. Rather, we appear to be on the brink of an Asian century with wholly different cultures, outlooks and attitudes, not the least being a resentment of Europe and America.

First came the threat of a resurgent Japan, with its industrial power base fuelled by such concepts as ‘continuous improvement,’ ‘Just in time’ and ‘lifetime employment.’ That has faded, to be replaced by the far greater threat to the old-world order represented by President Xi’s China. In the 1980s one of the big questions was which country would emerge the dominant power: China or India? China has left India far behind but is India now beginning to awaken and once again take on the challenge?

Underlying all these considerations is the ongoing importance of seapower. Whether it is the threat of Pacific conflict represented by the rapid growth and aggressive tactics of the Chinese navy; the vulnerability of China to its seaborne oil supplies being interrupted; or the risk that interruptions to undersea internet cabling will have a devastating effect on world trade and communications.

Programme

China – where did that come from? In 1421 Beijing was inaugurated as a planned city with carefully designed tax credits to encourage growth. 21 heads of state were in attendance. Although the countries of Europe were known to the Chinese, their leaders were not regarded as important enough to be invited to the event. To the Chinese, the last three hundred years have been a humiliating blip which they are now on the brink of reversing to reestablish what they see as their rightful place as ‘the central kingdom.’ America now sees China as its primary strategic threat militarily, commercially, and politically. We look at how all this has happened.

Japan – the one that got away Some forty years ago the west was almost as terrified by the seemingly unstoppable industrial threat that was Japan. It seemed that the West had no answer to the discipline and wider cultural attributes of ‘the Land of the Rising Sun’ whilst railing at their unfair and uncompetitive business practices. However, for the last few decades that threat has disappeared, and Japan has languished in a seemingly endless depression. How did the Japanese manage to recover from 1945 but in so doing sow the seeds of their own failure?

India – on the brink of breakthrough? One in ten of the world population are Indians under the age of 30. That statistic alone suggests both the potential of, and the problem for, the Indian state. We look at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing India as it attempts to fulfil its promise as set out by Nehru at the moment of independence and the success, or otherwise of the efforts that India has made in the last 70 years since the British left.

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Modern Seapower – why is it of increasing importance? 90% of all trade is carried by sea, mostly in 17m containers. 95% of all internet traffic travels on 232 underwater cables. These statistics alone justify why we should consider the importance of seapower to the modern world and especially as we transition to the Asia Century with the vast distances that this will involve. How does international law protect these vital routes and to what extent is it followed? How else might it be protected?

Biographical Information about our Speaker

Steve Bird started adult life as an army officer in NATO's rapid reaction force. On leaving the army, Steve embarked on an international career with companies such as Ford, Glaxo, NatWest, Australia's Lend Lease and finally with Denmark's A.P. Moller-Maersk, where he was responsible for HR and Strategy in their 64 ports worldwide. Travelling and working extensively, especially in Asia, Steve has seen at first hand the developments and issues set out in 'The Asian Century.'

Focusing primarily on military history and current affairs, in the last ten years Steve has talked extensively to U3A, Probus, Rotary and WI across the country and in Europe and America as well as a number of Leisure Learning, Historical and Military Study Groups, earning a reputation as an entertaining and very clear speaker.

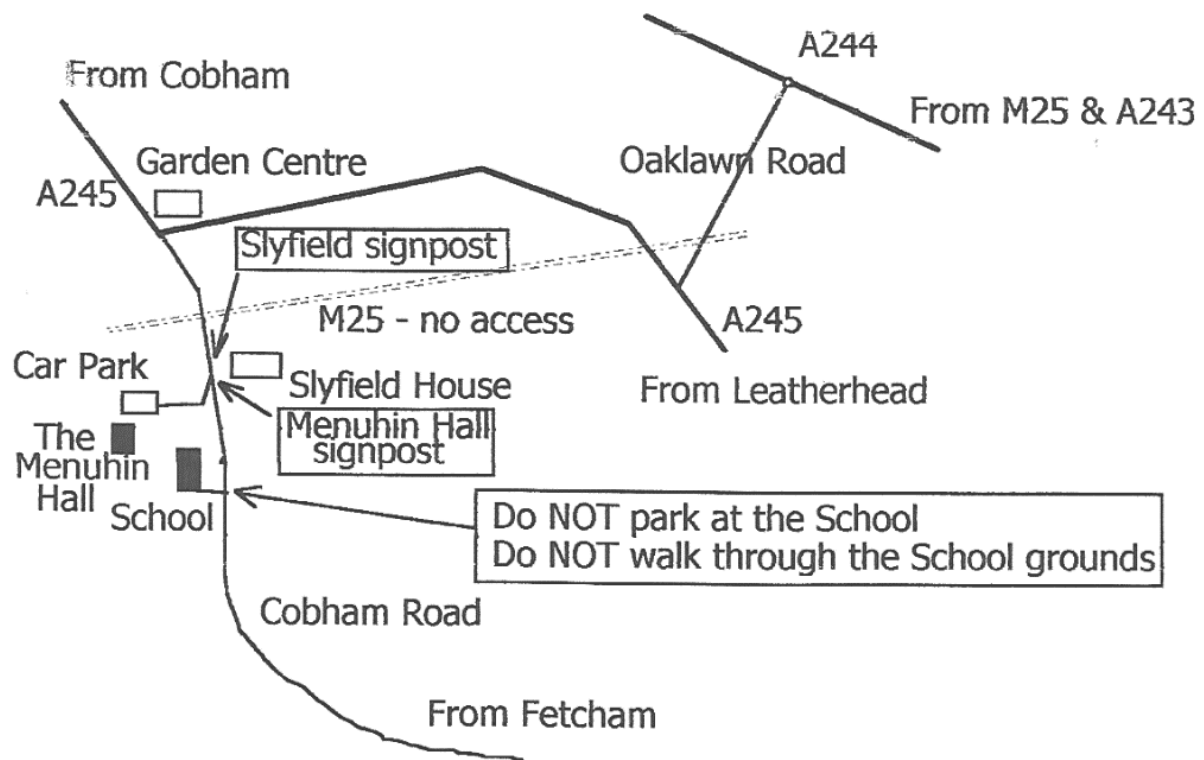
Location & Contact Details for Study Day

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

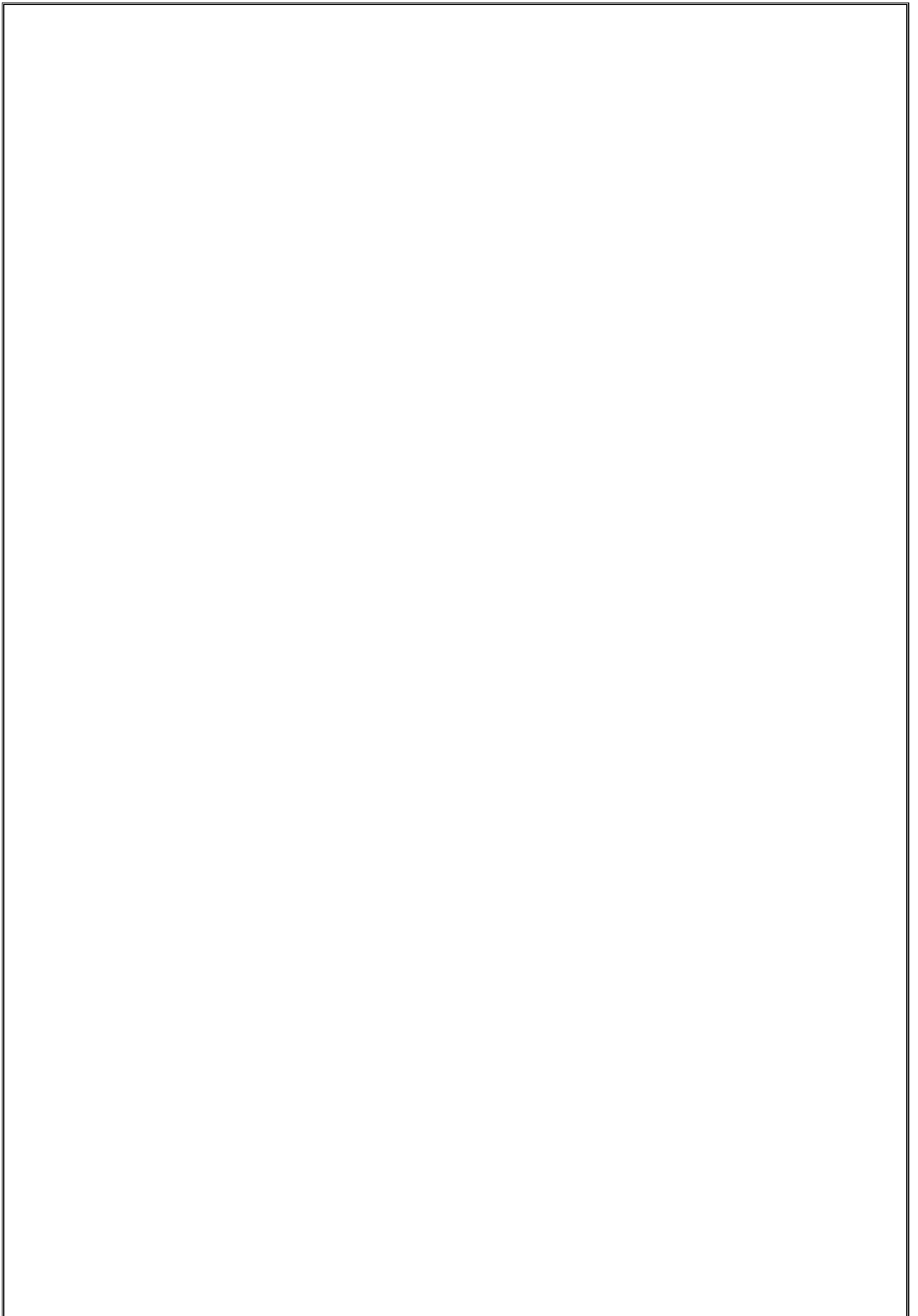
Map Ref: TQ 132 579 on Landranger 187 & Explorer 146

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 1963 in London and moved to its present site in 1964. It has around ninety pupils studying 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.





Surrey Network

Study Days at the Menuhin Hall

Surrey Network Study Days – We welcome members and guests to our study days in the Menuhin Hall, while since the pandemic also making it possible to view the study days remotely.

Advertising & Booking – The practice of applying by post or by email continues, with booking responses being sent as members chose, while payment can be made by cheque or bank transfer. 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 twenty years. New volunteers with ideas for the future programme and the commitment to help run future study days will be made very welcome. Please contact Surrey Network Chairman, Mike Brigden, on 07766 331642 with offers of help.

Surrey u3a Network Study Day

The Asian Century?

Presented by Steve Bird



The Menuhin Hall, Stoke d'Abernon on Friday 16th May 2025

9.30am Registration for 10am Start

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