



CSG SIXTH FORM MASTERCLASSES



Autumn 2025 Programme

CSG Sixth Form Masterclasses

No exams.

No grades.

Just interesting speakers and stimulating discussions.

- Masterclasses are extra-curricular lessons delivered by teachers from CSG or visiting experts in various fields.
- Each masterclass will either provide an introduction to a subject which is not taught at A Level – or explore a new aspect of a subject you are familiar with - taking you beyond the confines of the A Level syllabus.
- Most sessions should be accessible and of interest to students who study the subject in question, as well as those who do not. We hope that a student who is studying sciences would still be interested in poetry and music, and a student of the arts would be interested in scientific questions.
- Hopefully attendance will encourage students to read further and perhaps inspire some to pursue a subject at university.
- Aim to arrive at S5 (Sixth Form Hall) soon after 3.30pm – usually there will be tea, coffee and biscuits – the session will begin at about 3.40pm and finish by 5pm at the latest - **but watch out for occasional exceptions.**

Unfortunately, due to government cuts to the funding of state education since 2010 (and particularly of post-16 state education), it is with regret that we have to make a charge for certain extra-curricular opportunities such as these.

- **Attendance is free for students on bursaries or free school meals.**
- For students who are not on free school meals or a bursary the cost is £10 for a 'season ticket' to attend as many masterclasses as you like in one term – so if you come to all 10 that is only £1 per session!
- Parents/guardians will be sent an invitation to pay through ParentPay by email.

Parents and friends are also welcome to attend masterclasses - one off tickets for a session are £10 (this will be used to subsidise the participation of bursary students in the History of Ideas residential trip at the end of the year) - **please email jstubbings@csg.school to register your interest.**

We hope that you will find something of interest in these masterclasses - and that you enjoy them as much as we enjoy preparing and delivering them.

Jon Stubbings

CSG Masterclasses Coordinator

Thursday 6th November - 3.30pm - S5



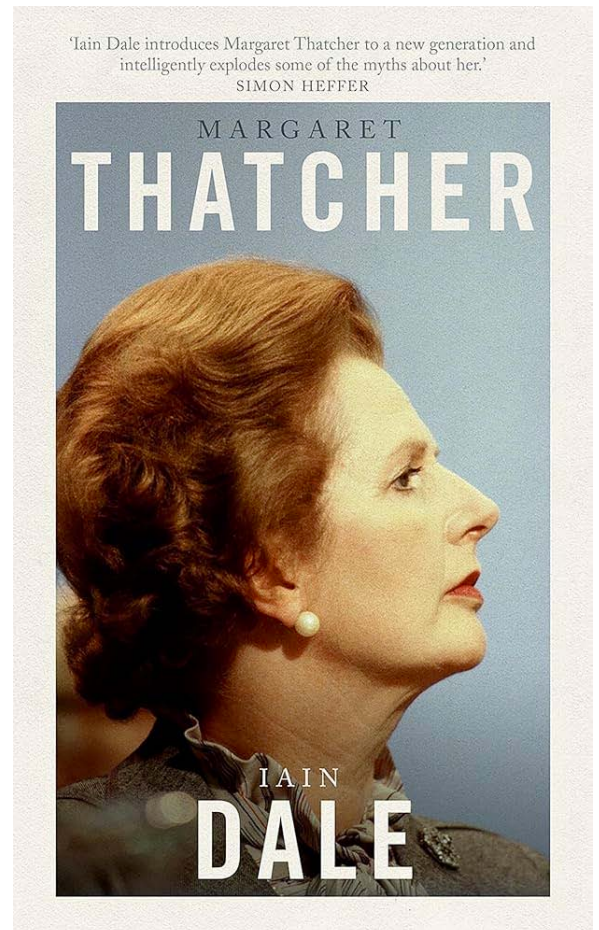
George Orwell and 1984 with D.J. Taylor

Biographer, novelist and critic D.J. Taylor is currently the most eminent man of letters from the fine city of Norwich. When it comes to George Orwell, and in particular his most famous novel *1984*, Taylor is the undisputed big brother. In this masterclass he will talk about his most recent book on the subject, *Who Is Big Brother? A Reader's Guide to George Orwell* and answer your questions. Although there will be no electric shock treatment administered in this session, anyone suspected of committing a thought crime will be sent to Room 101 for re-education (aka History of Ideas in S5 with Mr Stubbings).

Wednesday 12th November - 3.00pm - S5

Margaret Thatcher - Career and Legacy with Iain Dale

Britain's first ever female Prime Minister was born 100 years ago this October and she still divides opinion, to put it mildly. For many middle-class feminists of the CSG variety, her achievements as a female politician are less important than the views and policies which they disapprove of. In this masterclass Iain Dale - LBC presenter, political writer and author of a new book on Thatcher - will reassess her career in politics, her beliefs, her record in government, and her legacy. He claims to have written a 'reasonably balanced account' which nonetheless seeks to challenge some of the myths that have grown up about her over the years - so come along with an open mind (and plenty of questions) to find out what he has to say.



Thursday 13th November - 3.30pm - S5

Politics Q&A

with Jeremy Corbyn

Former leader of the Labour Party, and now an Independent MP for North Islington in the process of setting up a new party, Jeremy Corbyn has been one of the best known and most controversial figures in British politics over the last few decades. In this session he will answer questions from students about his life in politics, his beliefs, and the policies his new party might adopt.

This session will be one of several similar political Q&As this year in which politicians from all of the main parties will be interviewed by students about their views and policies.



Monday 17th November - 3.30pm - S5

Spacetime and the Philosophy of Physics with Eleanor Knox

Eleanor Knox is Professor of Philosophy at King's College London. Much of her work focuses on the philosophical foundations of spacetime physics. She advocates a view called *Spacetime Functionalism*, which aims to solve problems in classical spacetime theories as well as dealing with challenges raised by emergent spacetime structure in theories of quantum gravity. If that all sounds a bit mindbending and confusing then come to this masterclass to hear a proper explanation of the way in which special relativity alters our understanding of time.



Thursday 20th November - 3.30pm - S5



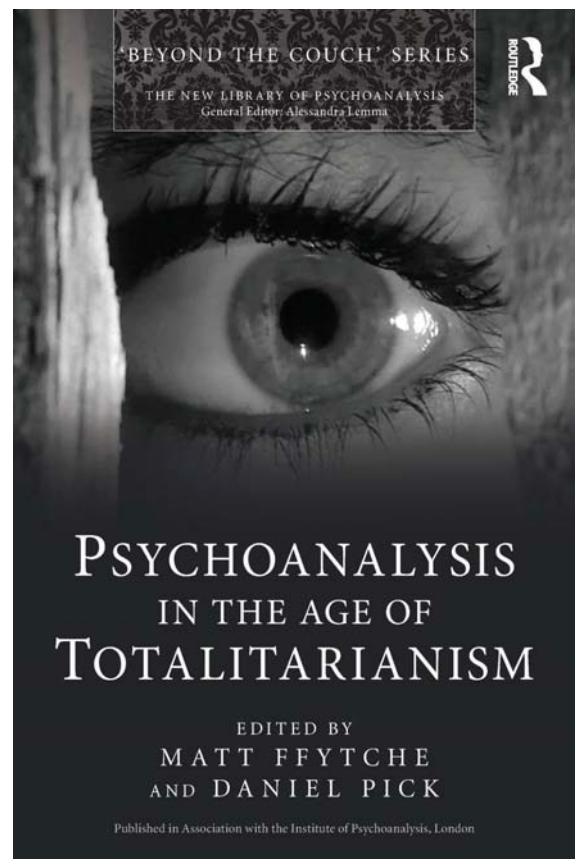
Plastic Pollution and the Oceans with Karen McVeigh

Plastic waste is set to triple by 2060, causing a danger to humans and planetary health, scientists say. Karen McVeigh is a senior reporter at The Guardian - working on the Seascope series covering the state of the world's oceans. In this masterclass she will tell us about her work on the shocking and depressing extent of plastic pollution today - as a climate polluter, as 'waste colonialism', and in terms of the implications for marine wildlife. She will talk us through how journalism can help highlight this sad state of affairs, to hopefully inform policy on issues such as international trade, human health and environmental protections.

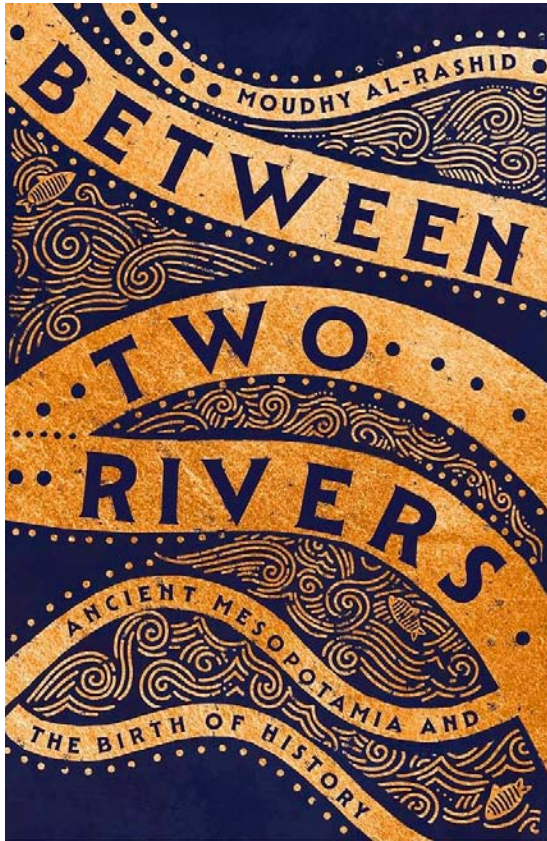
Monday 24th November - 3.30pm - S5

Psychoanalysis and Totalitarianism with Matt Ffychte

Psychoanalysis, and the work of Sigmund Freud, is often associated with 'internal' areas of the mind (dreams, fantasies, and unconscious desires), and a clinical practice centred on individual and personal problems. From early on however, psychoanalysts were also interested in how unconscious processes might shape social life, and when Freud and other Jewish psychoanalysts faced rising antisemitic persecution, many turned their minds to analysing the structures of authoritarian and totalitarian states. How and why did such political systems gain power, often against people's best interests? What were the unconscious dimensions of colluding with fascism and communism? Come to this masterclass to find out.



Thursday 27th November - 3:30pm - S5



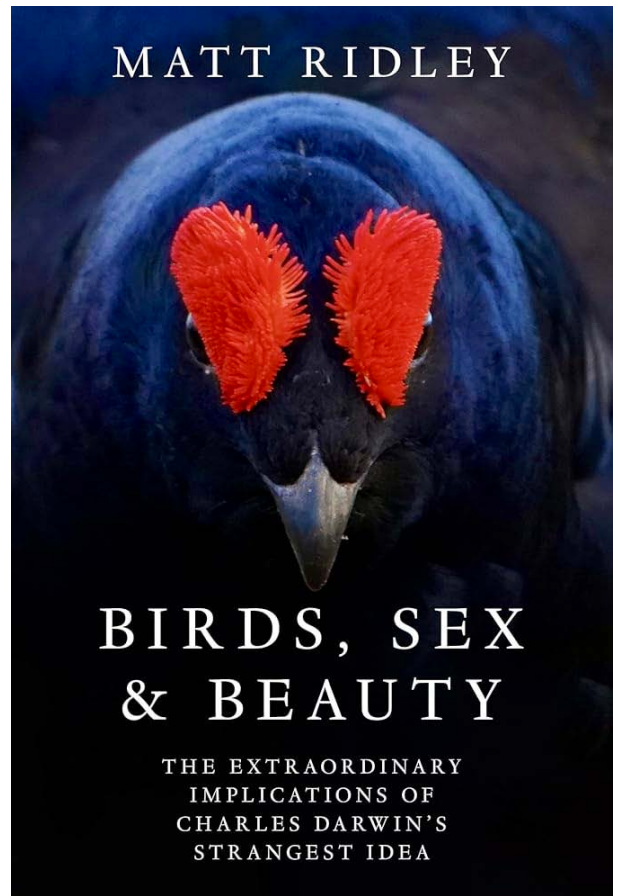
Ancient Mesopotamia and the Birth of History with Moudhy Al-Rashid

Just over 5000 years ago, in the land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (present day Southern Iraq), the first human civilisation flourished - producing inventions such as the wheel, organised religion, taxation to fund public works, schools, mathematics, as well as armies and empires. How do we know so much about it? Because they were the first humans to invent writing, perhaps at first to record business transactions, but then to preserve poetry and literature. In this masterclass Moudhy Al-Rashid, Assyriologist at Wolfson College (Oxford) and author of *Between Two Rivers - Ancient Mesopotamia and the Birth of History* will bring this fascinating period in human development to life.

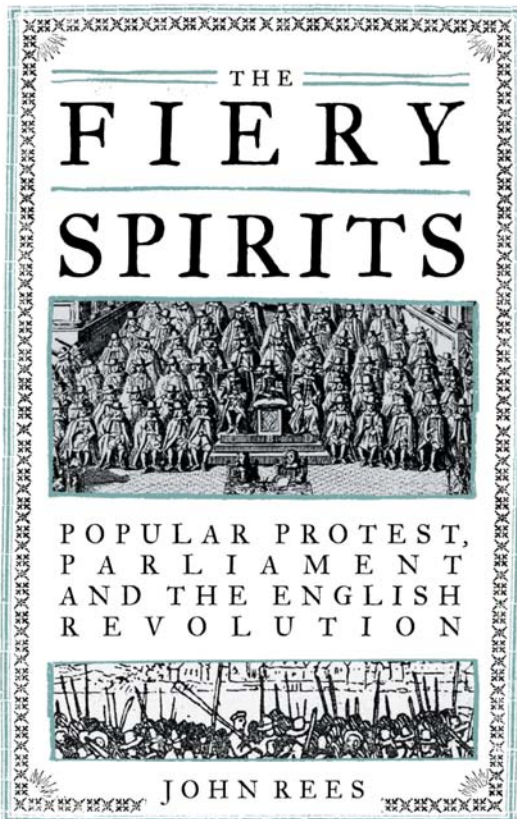
Monday 1st December - 3.30pm - S5

Birds, Sex and Beauty with Matt Ridley

Animals rarely treat sex as a simple or mutually beneficial transaction. Choosing a mate is often a transcendent event to be approached with reverence, suspicion, angst and quite a bit of violence; nowhere is this more acute than in birds. In this masterclass renowned science writer and journalist Matt Ridley (also formerly chairman of Northern Rock Bank and elected member of the House of Lords) will explore recent evolutionary discoveries building on Darwin's theory of sexual selection - as set out in his new book, *Birds, Sex and Beauty* - showing not only how mate choice has shaped the natural world, including humans, but how the song and plumage of birds can be thrillingly, breathtakingly beautiful.



Thursday 4th December - 3.30pm - S5



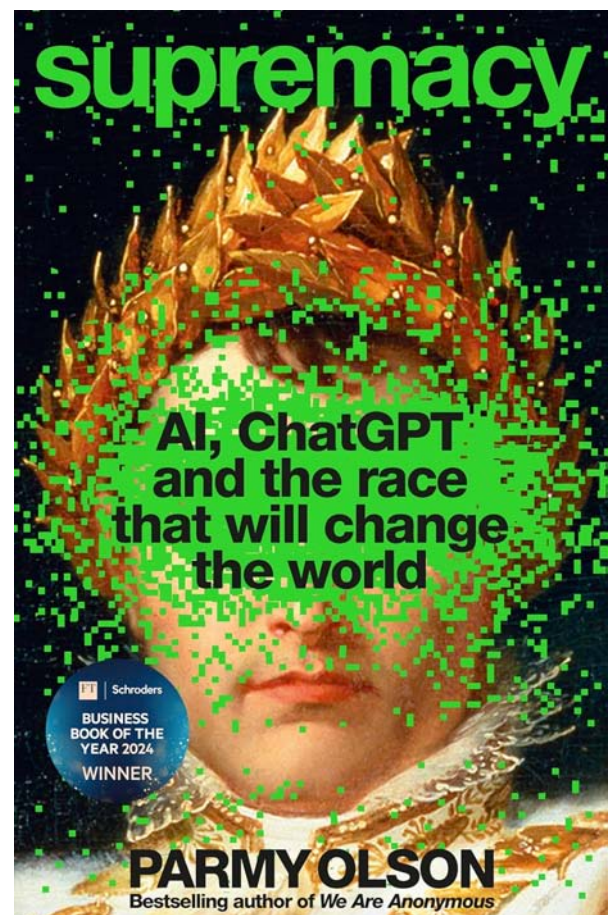
The English Revolution with John Rees

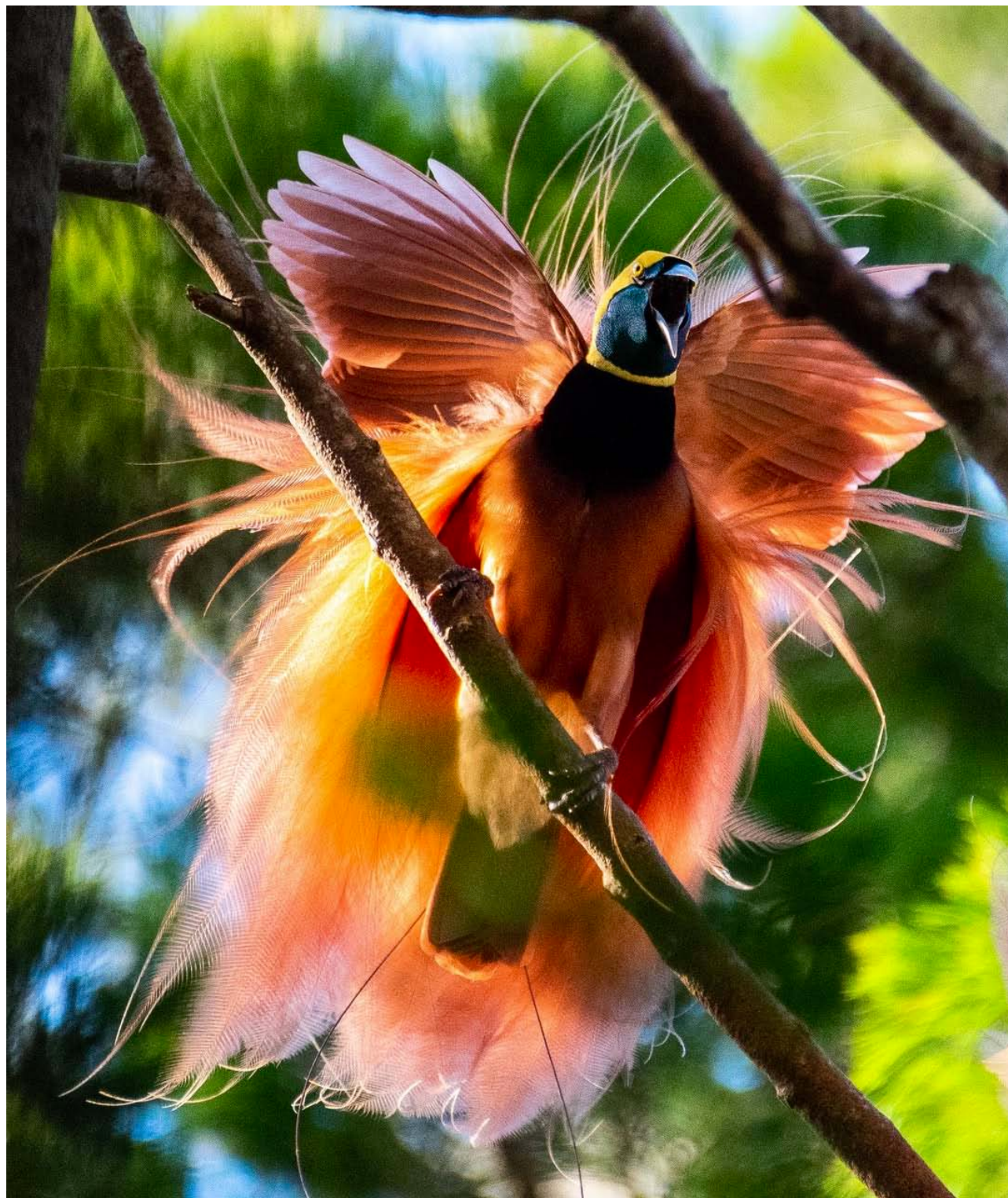
John Rees is a Marxist campaigner, writer and historian who is very much in favour of revolutions, both in the past, and presumably (if his activism is ultimately successful), in the future. In his new book *The Fiery Spirits* he tells the story of the radical MPs in parliament and the protestors in the streets who played a pivotal role in the English Civil Wars of the mid 17th century. Through their stories he will set out the 'hidden history' of the republicans who brought England to the brink of revolution, paving the way for the execution of King Charles I in 1649 and the puritan protectorate/dictatorship of Oliver Cromwell.

Thursday 11th December - 3.30pm - S5

ChatGPT and the race to control AI with Parmy Olson

In her new award winning book (Financial Times Business Book of the Year 2024) *Supremacy - AI, ChatGPT and the race that will change the world* - journalist Parmy Olson tells the astonishing story of the people fighting to control the future of generative artificial intelligence – and, arguably, the future of humanity. Two titans of Silicon Valley, Microsoft and Google, rushed to embrace artificial intelligence. Microsoft entered a strategic partnership with OpenAI, creator of ChatGPT. Google acquired DeepMind. Together, they now had the resources of the two leading AI companies in the world – and, with it, the potential for unlimited riches. But what will be the cost of this arms race for the rest of humanity?





THE CAMDEN
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
SIXTH FORM