



THE ARTS
SOCIETY
CAVENDISH

Newsletter No 114
May 2026

Chairman's Notes

Dear Members.

It has been a very interesting few months for ASC. The lectures this season have been fascinating, giving us a wealth of visual treats as well as information to enhance our interest in the arts. We still have much to look forward to, including Creativity and Originality in the Age of AI.

The winter study day was a revelation. Instead of lectures we had a master class in painting arranged by Joan Matthews and led by Pam Smart a renowned local artist. This gave members the opportunity to use their own ideas and develop skills to produce a painting. We anticipate further study days during the autumn and welcome any ideas you may have.



Our current venue

Jan Hardy, our Young Arts member, devised an Art Prize. This encouraged students from Buxton Community College to enter their GCSE and A level artwork. The prize (£100) was won by Georgina Cummings for her piece entitled 'The Colour of Music'. This was also short listed in the National Arts Society Art Competition. The runners-up (£50) were Thomas Gilliver (Textured Landscape) and Amber Hall (Fighting Fish). The Art Prize excited members who voted for the winners. We hope to be able to continue this initiative next year.

Jean Dugmore arranged a fabulous visit to Wedgwood in March. The day was beautiful and the new V&A collection proved to be a real treat. Other visits are planned for the autumn and may include a guided tour of the Joseph Wright of Derby exhibition at Derby Museum.

As well as supporting the Buxton International Festival, we feel we should really be encouraging young artist, musicians or writers to develop their careers. To this end, Louise Potter arranged a very fruitful discussion with the Royal Northern College of Music. This has resulted in us agreeing to support those young musicians who come to Buxton to perform at the monthly Coffee Concerts, held in the Pavilion Arts Centre. We have agreed to cover the travel expenses of these students, who are all on Student Loans, to help with their development. We hope this partnership will blossom and I encourage you all to look out for, and attend, these concerts.

Our long-standing association with the Pavilion Arts Centre became severely strained during the early part of our 2025/2026 season. As you know, renovations are taking place there which impacted adversely on our arrangements. Furthermore, the potential closure of the PAC meant that we had to find alternative accommodation with a matter of urgency. We are now meeting at the Palace Hotel, which we hope will prove to be a good move. Inevitable tweaks are required to make this satisfactory. (Incidentally, I have now been informed that the PAC WILL close between January and March 2027, so there seems little advantage in re-negotiating that as our venue, until after the renovations are completed).

I would like to thank all the committee of volunteers who have worked so hard to bring you outstanding lectures, study days and visits; and a special congratulations to Louise Potter who was awarded an MBE at St James' Palace in March.

Finally, thank you to all of you. Without your interest and support, the Arts Society Cavendish would not exist.

Sylvia McKenzie
Chair



LECTURE PROGRAMME 2026

2nd June (at 10:30)

“Imagine If You Will...”: creativity and originality in the age of Artificial Intelligence

Synthesising recent research into the nature of human creativity and current concerns about the impact of machine learning on originality, this very topical lecture focuses on how original thought and innovation are affected by the growing application of Artificial Intelligence across all academic disciplines. Justin considers how AI offers great advantages as a tool in scientific and medical research, for social scientists, and also perhaps for many working in the humanities, with exciting applications in painting, sculpture, architecture, video gaming and film. It concludes with a consideration as to whether AI and machine learning are making humans redundant in the creative process.

Justin Reay



29th September



Andy Goldsworthy - revealing the beauty of nature

Andy Goldsworthy is one of the most interesting and innovative landscape artists working in Britain today. He mostly works in the open air, using natural materials such as leaves, ice, stones or trees to make exquisitely beautiful but usually ephemeral images in the great Romantic landscape tradition. Fortunately, although most of his works eventually disintegrate, melt away or fall over, they are all carefully photographed and included in extremely desirable and lavish 'coffee-table' books.

Frank Woodgate

27th October

Tickling the Ivories: a Short History of the Piano (Music)



Both a mark of social status and an indicator of cultural interest, the piano, and its predecessors, was a fixture in most homes for nearly five centuries. It served to entertain and to edify in equal measure and to act as the work-horse for musicians throughout that period. But the instrument that we know and love today, and the music written for it, was slow in its genesis and grew from very humble beginnings. The clavichord, spinet, harpsichord, fortepiano, pianola and reproducing piano were all important milestones in the journey that the modern pianoforte took. Using carefully selected sound examples, film clips and other performance artefacts, this lecture will chart the rise of the piano and explore some of the approaches that great artists took when coming to terms with it.

Raymond Holden

17th November

Going to the Ball - Fashion to impress

During the Victorian Era, magnificent fancy dress balls became one of the grandest and most fashionable ways for a society hostess to make her mark. These balls were reported in newspapers and magazines in great detail.

Importantly, who was there, what they were wearing, who designed their gown and the historical figure they represented. Today's social media and influencers would literally have had a ball. No expense was spared and these balls became the elite event of the year. Queen Victoria was a great fan along with Daisy, The Countess of Warwick and the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire whose 700 invitations to their ball in 1897 summoned guests to appear “in a historical costume dated earlier than 1820”. What an open field and the guests dressed to impress!



Jacqueline Hyman

LECTURE PROGRAMME 2026

26th January

The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Midlands



Many people are familiar with the national designers of the 19th century Arts and Crafts Movement such as William Morris and Charles Ashbee. But the Midlands made a huge contribution to the movement as well. Designers at The Bromsgrove Guild of Handicrafts for example produced the exquisite wrought iron gates for Buckingham Palace. This lecture sets the work of these Midlands designers in the context of the national Arts and Crafts Movement using examples of jewellery made by Arthur and Georgina Gaskin, stained glass by Florence Camm, ceramics from the Ruskin Pottery and more. It also reveals the best locations in the region to see examples of local Arts and Crafts Movement design.

Sally Hoban

23rd February

Art Deco Jewellery: The Glamour Revolution

The Art Deco movement was a time when fashion and jewellery were the calling cards of the time. At the start of the 'roaring '20's, people were exhausted by the ravages of the First World War, there was an appetite for change and Art Deco was the popular design movement that answered that call. The talk Art Deco Jewellery: The Glamour Revolution explores this design movement through the jewellery, fashion, architecture and automobiles of that era.



Nicholas Merchant

23rd March

Gertrude Stein and her Circle - 1900s-1920s



Gertrude Stein was an American Jewish intellectual and writer, whose heart was in Paris. Her sister-in-law, Sarah and brothers, Leo and Michael, also supported highly contentious artists by buying works such as Matisse's *Woman in a Hat* from the first exhibition of

the Fauves in 1905, and Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. Version O)* from his studio in 1907. Gertrude Stein's relationship with Picasso is legendary, as is his Cubist portrait of her. But the real richness of her story is found in the fascinating human stories, the fights, relationships and scandals. These are all 'told' by Gertrude Stein's life-time lover, friend and companion Alice B Toklas in her fake biography.

Hilary Guise

27th April

The Changing Face of Contemporary Glass Art

An in-depth introduction to the work of three very different artists, American Dale Chihuly, English James Maskrey and Ghanaian Anthony Amoako Attah. Chihuly made the headlines in London with the V&A chandelier (2001) and his enormous boundary-pushing outdoor glass sculpture installation in Kew Gardens (2019). Maskrey not only works with artists in other disciplines but also produces outstanding work in his own right. Ghanaian-born Amoako-Attah is inspired by Ghanaian Kente textiles which he recreates using the medium of screen-printed glass. In 2022 he was Artist of the Fair at Collect, London.



Susan Wood

Arts Society Cavendish Art Prize

Buxton Students Shine in Arts Society Cavendish Art Prize.



Young artists from Buxton Community School have been celebrating their success in this year's Arts Society Cavendish Art Prize.

Nineteen GCSE and A-level students had their artwork displayed in an online exhibition during December, giving members of the Arts Society the chance to browse the work and vote for their favourites. The exhibition showcased an impressive range of styles, techniques and ideas, highlighting the creativity and talent of local students.

Members who voted also shared lots of encouraging comments, saying how much they enjoyed looking through the artwork and how difficult it was to choose between the entries because the standard was so high. In fact, every student who entered received at least one vote – a great achievement for everyone involved.

First prize went to Georgina Cummings for her painting *Colour of Music*, an oil on canvas that caught voters' attention with its vibrant colours and imaginative interpretation of sound and rhythm.

There were also two runner-up prizes. Thomas Gilliver was recognised for his *Textured Landscape*, a mixed-media piece on a wood panel admired for its depth and interesting surface detail. Amber Hall also received a runner-up award for *Fighting Fish*, a coloured pencil drawing that created a bold and dynamic image.

Prizes and certificates were presented after the Arts Society Cavendish January lecture by Chair Sylvia McKenzie, Young Arts Coordinator Jan Hardy, and Michael Moore, Head of Art at Buxton Community School, (with photos taken by member Margaret Cook.) It was a lovely moment for the winning students to be recognised in front of society members and fellow sixth-form students who had come along to the lecture.

Sylvia and Jan also visited Buxton Community School afterwards to meet the winners and take photos with the students. Georgina and Thomas were away at university at the time of the January meeting, so it was nice to catch up with them later.

The Buxton Schools Art Prize is a great example of how Arts Society Cavendish continues to support and encourage young artistic talent in the local community.



Photo by Margaret Cook

The Arts Society Cavendish Art Class

At the end of October 2025, Joan Matthews arranged a fantastic art study day attended by about 20 members. The day was led by well-known local artist Pam Smart.

Whilst studying graphic design at University Pam won the Royal Society of Arts Student Design Award, which included a work placement in the design department at John Lewis in London and a travel bursary to explore arts and crafts in India! After travelling India, Pam trained as a specialist teacher of art and design, working at schools in Manchester, Stafford and Chesterfield, completing her 24 year career as Head of Art at Chapel High School in Derbyshire.



Pam Smart Derbyshire Artist

Pam is now a full-time artist working from her home studio in Buxton. She is a member of the highly regarded Peak District Artisans and High Peak Artists and exhibits regularly with both groups. She had the honour of representing Buxton in a European touring art exhibition where eight of her paintings were selected and exhibited in Germany, France and Belgium and London.



How fortunate we were to have such an experienced and well-regarded artist, to guide us through a day of creating art works, based on designs from local architecture. Pam prepared all the materials in advance so that we required no previous painting skills or experience. Using her templates of Solomons Temple and Buxton Opera House, we were each able to create our own picture, with unique colours and interpretations.

We had a lot of fun adding texture and colour to the original designs, with enormous support and guidance from Pam.

The art card used was of the highest quality, and Pam had prepared each sheet with a basic colour scheme, which we were able to follow to our own choice. For example, some sheets were in shades of peach and yellow, allowing the student to create a personal interpretation of the subject.

Everyone had their own ideas of how their individual work should look and Pam used all her skills as an experienced teacher to encourage and assist in the development of our work.

Each member created a very personal interpretation of their chosen image. Some of these are shown here. They are not named, but each person who joined the day, will recognise their own work.



At the end of the day, Pam provided mounts for us to display our work.

We rarely have study days that involve us in being creative and this was exactly what we wanted after the long hot summer without the Arts Society. It was the most enjoyable day, and every member felt they had achieved something worthwhile.

Our thanks to Joan for organising the event and to Pam for being such a patient and enthusiastic tutor.

Sylvia Mckenzie

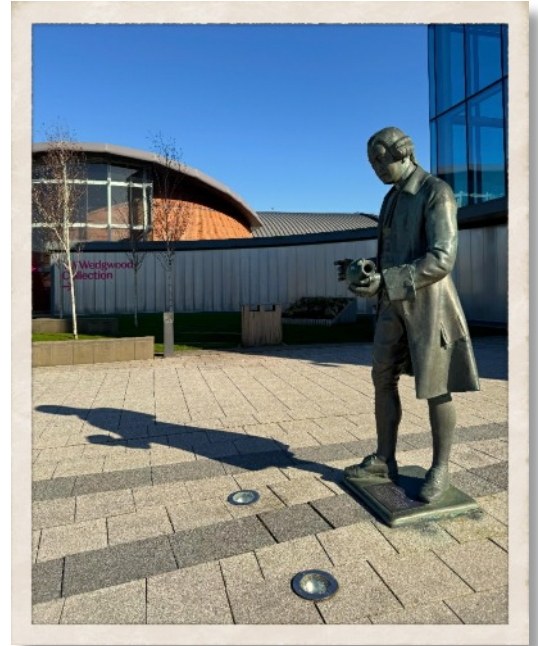
A visit to The World of Wedgwood

We were able to enjoy an inspiring day out by coach without travelling too far afield by visiting The World of Wedgwood near Stoke on Trent. Twenty three members and friends met at Buxton Market Place to enjoy the sunny drive across the Staffordshire moorlands before disembarking at Wedgwood to find coffee in one of the several refreshment areas on site before taking an easy and level access tour of the museum.

The combination of science, industry, craftsmanship and beauty create a museum of outstanding quality and interest outlining the history of Wedgwood china for over 250 years. The displays include examples from every era including many experimental pieces Josiah Wedgwood made in his quest for the perfect clay, glaze and firing temperature, all available for examination at close quarters by visitors to this free museum.

Josiah's portrait hangs beside that of his wife in one of the galleries reached through others lined with well lit glass cases filled with wonderful examples of the extraordinary work which has come out of the factory since the 18th century.

The V&A Wedgwood Collection of the museum takes the visitor to other areas of design associated with the factory as does the Wedgwood copy of The Portland Vase.



The current factory site has been working since 1938 and was redeveloped about 20 years ago. It is thoroughly modern, fuelled by electricity and has only 26 permanent staff. Only three of the staff actually know the formulas for the clay and firing processes. Unfortunately, our tour of the factory was cancelled at short notice, but Sylvia went this week and found it a fascinating insight to the wonderful craftsmanship that goes into each individual piece. All are still handmade and decorated, which perhaps explains the prices!

Examples of contemporary tableware and decorative items which may be in our own homes today are shown as are pieces of the vast sets of tableware commissioned by Royal families throughout the world to decorate their palaces.

Jean Dugmore



A Member's Trip to Cambodia



Cambodia is a destination for those trying to understand the inspiring and forgiving nature of the local people after the destruction and genocide of recent past.

During the 1960s and 1970s civil war erupted involving Vietnamese, Chinese and American forces. American B52 Bombers unloaded approximately 1,100,000 tons on the Ho Chi Minh forest trails.

Between April 1975 and January 1979, The Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot massacred approximately 25% of the population of Cambodia, with Chinese and Russian weapons.

A generation of educated elderly grandparents, educated parents and also very young children who could not work in the fields were wiped out.



Now Good News. www.phareps.org was formed in 1994 by 9 young men returning home from refugee camps. They were greatly helped by an art teacher using drawing classes and therapy and wanted to share this new skill among the poor, socially deprived and troubled youngsters of Battambang.

They founded an Art School and a Public School to offer free education and board and lodging. A Music School and Theatre School were next and finally for children who wanted more, a Circus School.

Today more than 1,200 pupils attend the public school and 500 the alternative schools. They discover and develop their skills at Phare Ponleu Selpak a nonprofit school. They are able to earn a good living, gain self-respect and move into other jobs or further education. The Artists create and perform stories based on their own life experiences, drawing from Folklore, Drama, Dance, Circus Arts and Live music on traditional instruments. In this way they share a part of their past with paying audiences of tourists and locals, and people living in poor and remote villages, also gaining more students. They have even travelled to New York and performed there.

“Creation from Destruction” is the slogan of another initiative called the Rajana Association.

www.humankindslo.org

They transform old bomb cases and bullet shells into jewellery and other designs. They employ and train artisans who transform the unfortunate reminder of the past into something beautiful, creating jobs. They see this as a statement of Peace that the people have discovered since the fall of the Khmer Rouge.

Diana Kenning



Miscellany

Proposed visit to Joseph Wright of Derby Exhibition 'From The Shadows' At the Derby Museum & Art Gallery



Joseph Wright's work is renowned for depicting dramatic contrasts between darkness and light, particularly the significant series of paintings by candlelight.

This exhibition of twenty of Joseph Wright's most famous works, is presently exhibited at the National Gallery in London but is moving to Derby Museum and Art Gallery in June, opening on June 13th.

I have visited the Art Gallery and have discussed the possibility of an Art Society Cavendish guided tour of the exhibition to take place on Tuesday 15th September at 11a.m. at the cost of £9 per person.

The group of people attending is limited to 20, the maximum number allowed by the Gallery.

There is a very nice café and 20 places can be reserved for the group if required.

- Toilets are on the first and second floors.
- There are lifts to all floors.
- Car parking on the street outside the Gallery is limited but there is a large car park in Bold Street (one minute's walk from the entrance to the Gallery) and car parking cost for several hours stay is only £2.70 if you take the plastic card given to you from the barrier machine as you enter to the Museum shop counter for verification.

Joan Matthews

Potential Study Day on 5th October.

We are proposing two talks on Discovering Lace, Textiles Technician by Olivia Housley and Elizabeth Gaskell's Visit to Chatsworth by Fran Baker. The talks would be given in The Old Potting Shed Learning Centre which is in the Garden of Chatsworth House. The talks would include tea, coffee and biscuits. The Old Potting Shed has toilet facilities, coat rails and a kitchen area for drinks. The cost will depend on how many members wish to come, 40 = £20 per head, 30 = £27 per head or 25 = £32 per head.

Threadmill Textile Exhibition - 3 June to 25 July at Macclesfield Silk Museum A celebration of the Silk Museum's pattern book archive.

This exhibition explores the relationship between time and place through work inspired by Macclesfield Silk Museum's pattern book archive. Reinterpreting historic designs in fresh and sometimes unexpected ways, the artists combine personal narrative with shared history, using fabric and thread both as material and as a lens through which to reconsider the original patterns. The exhibition celebrates the legacy of the archive while revealing its continuing relevance to contemporary textile practice. Our aim is to invite visitors to encounter these remarkable pattern books from a new perspective.

Threadmill is a group of North West artist-makers from different creative disciplines who collaborate and exhibit across the region. United by a shared commitment to textile-based practice, we create new work in response to themes shaped by each venue, producing exhibitions that connect place, process and contemporary making.