THE ARTS SOCIETY CAVENDISH

Newsletter No 115
November 2026

Chairman's Notes

Dear Members.



We have started another season with two great lectures: Andy Goldsworthy and A Short History of the Piano. Although there have been some technical problems with Zoom, nevertheless the current venue at the Palace Hotel is meeting most of our needs and will continue until at least May 2027. After that, we hope that the Pavilion Arts Centre may be more conducive to our members and we assure you we will explore all options. We are also delighted that Dominic Marner has agreed to join our committee.

We now have more to look forward to, with a day visit to Wightwick Manor in April and a four-day trip to Oxfordshire in May. If you have not seen the details of this please see them later in this newsletter. Places are limited so if you wish to join us please ask for a booking form as soon as possible.

As you know, we continue to support students from the Royal Northern College of Music, by paying their travelling expenses to and from the monthly Buxton Coffee Concerts at the Pavilion Arts Centre. In addition, we will also continue to support the Buxton International Festival, so look out for the book talk we will sponsor next year.

The Arts Society Cavendish School Art Prize is also important to our local young people and we are delighted that you have all engaged with the selection for the winners this year. See the winners in the article below.

We look forward to welcoming you all to our lectures from January 2027.

All best wishes

Sylvia

Arts Society Cavendish trip to Oxford and Bletchley Park

We are proposing a four day trip to Oxford and Bletchley Park in May 2027.

The trips over the last three years have proved very popular and we hope that many of you would like to join us for this one. Numbers are limited to 34 and I already have 17 expressions of interest (and even booking forms). So, if you would like to join us, please follow this link to download a booking form and send it to me as soon as possible.

LECTURE PROGRAMME 2026

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

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 Desmoiselles d'Avignon 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

LECTURE PROGRAMME 2026

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

25th May

Queens, Consorts and Courtiers: Female Art Patrons in Late Stuart England



In an era when married women's property automatically belonged to their husbands, could women still play a role as patrons of the arts? Female patronage has often been hidden within the historical record, but new research has shown that the patronage of these women has been considerably underestimated. From Queen Catherine of Braganza's patronage of Catholic artists, to the Duchess of Marlborough's politically-charged London mansion, we will look at some of the most important works of art and architecture commissioned by women in late Stuart England, and consider how they used art to carve out their position in society.

Amy Lim

Arts Society Cavendish trip to Suffolk



In May 2026 we arranged a four day trip to Constable Country and Aldburgh. We set off from Buxton in exceptionally hot weather for the time of year, which continued throughout the trip.

Once again we had our lovely driver, Danny, who looked after us throughout the trip. Our first stop on the way to our hotel, was at 78 Derngate in Northampton, where we were given bespoke guided tours of the building and told about the history of its development from a small, terraced house to a stylish 20th century dwelling.

Continued…



Designed and remodelled by Charles Rennie Mackintosh in 1916, 78 Derngate has been meticulously restored and opened to the public. 78 Derngate was the architect's final major commission; his visionary patron, Northampton model engineer, W.J Bassett-Lowke. It is the only place outside Scotland in which Mackintosh's mature architectural and interior style can be seen in their original setting. Famed, not only for its Charles Rennie Mackintosh design but now also as an elegant and special venue.

We then travelled on to our hotel near Colchester where we settled in for three days.

The following day we were welcomed by our dedicated Blue Badge guide. We visited Christchurch Mansion for a guided tour, a fine Tudor building set in an ancient and beautiful park close to the centre of Ipswich. With historic room settings, outstanding paintings and furniture, and the modern Wolsey Art Gallery with changing contemporary exhibitions, it is one of the most important visitor attractions in East Anglia.



We continued to Constable Country, located on the Suffolk and Essex border and renowned as the birthplace of artist John Constable. Our guided tour of East Bergholt took in sights such as John Constable's Studio and St Mary's Church, built in the 15th and 16th centuries and renowned for the absence of a tower or spire to house the bells. We continued to Dedham where our guided tour explored Constable's School and Dedham Parish Church, dedicated to St Mary the Virgin in 1492 when the present building was begun. Finally, we visited the National Trust's Bridge Cottage at Flatford. Located upstream from Flatford Mill, Bridge Cottage houses an exhibition on John Constable, several of whose paintings famously feature this property.



After another restful evening, we went on the following day to Sutton Hoo an Anglo-Saxon royal burial site where the priceless treasure was discovered in a huge ship grave in 1939. Our guide was really helpful in taking us to the actual site of the Anglo-Saxon ship and supported several members who had need of some mobility aids.

We then went on to the picturesque 16th century fishing village of Aldeburgh. Another fabulous day of sunshine, where we were able to enjoy a little cooling time by the seaside, with fish and chips and ice creams to boot.

Finally, we visited Benjamin Brittens Red House. Britten and his partner Peter Peirs lived here for many years, composing, singing and entertaining. The house is beautifully preserved, and the local guides were magnificent in giving us the history of the iconic pair of musicians.



Our return journey was interspersed with a beautiful half day in Cambridge. Once again, we had excellent guides to take us around the colleges and sites of the city. Some went over to (name of house) while one or two of us had a colling and relaxing trip down the river Cam in a punt.

Overall, this was another memorable trip for our society and we hope to have another in 2027.

Sylvia McKenzie

The Society continues to offer an annual grant for art-based visits to our local secondary schools. The following report comes from one of these schools.

Creating Chaos in Conway

Hope Valley College's GCSE Art & Textiles Residential



Over the second weekend in October this year, 29 of our Year 10 and Year 11 GCSE Art and Textiles students had the exciting opportunity to take part in an art and textiles residential in Conway. The weekend provided students with the chance to step outside the classroom, work alongside professional artists and develop their creative skills in an inspiring new environment.

The students took part in one of three specialist workshops, all exploring the theme **"Creating Chaos."** Each workshop offered a different creative approach:



- **Portraiture** – students explored expressive portraiture, experimenting with techniques and ideas to create their own individual portrait pieces.
- **Patterned Textiles** – students investigated pattern, colour, texture and repetition to produce exciting textile outcomes inspired by the idea of chaos.
- **3D Textiles Structures** – students developed their ideas into three-dimensional forms, exploring structure, construction and materials to create sculptural textile pieces.

Working directly with practising artists gave students the opportunity to experience new techniques and approaches that they may not normally encounter within the school environment. They were encouraged to take creative risks, experiment with materials and develop their own ideas independently.



The work produced during the residential will contribute towards the students' **GCSE Art and Textiles NEA coursework**, making the experience not only an exciting enrichment opportunity but also an important part of their qualification.

A particularly important aspect of the residential was the funding from your society that enabled us to **part-fund places for a number of students**. Without this financial support, some of our students would not have been able to attend the residential. The funding therefore played a vital role in ensuring that the opportunity was accessible to all students, regardless of their financial circumstances.



The residential was a fantastic opportunity for our students to develop their creativity, confidence and independence while working collaboratively and learning from professional artists. Most importantly, it allowed every student to see that their ideas and creativity have value and that there are many different directions their skills could take them in the future.

We are incredibly proud of the enthusiasm, creativity and commitment shown by all 29 students throughout the weekend and very grateful for your funding that helped make this experience possible.

Study Day 5th October 2026, The Potting Shed, Chatsworth

Thank you to Bryan McGee one of our members who recommended the visit to Chatsworth.

32 members enjoyed a study day at Chatsworth. After coffee and biscuits, we listened to this lecture.

Elizabeth Gaskell's Visits to Chatsworth with **Fran Baker, Head of Archive & Library**

On 12 September 1857, the writer Elizabeth Gaskell and her daughter arrived at Chatsworth, showing their green admission ticket to gain entry. They were shown around by a housekeeper, but their tour was interrupted by an invitation to luncheon and an announcement that rooms had been prepared for them. They therefore made the fairy-tale transition from tourists to honoured guests of the 6th Duke of Devonshire.

There was a break for lunch and time to visit the garden.

In the afternoon the lecture was

Discovering Lace with **Olivia Housley, Textiles Technician**

Join Textiles Technician Olivia Housley for a fascinating exploration of lace, its history, and its place in the Devonshire Collection. This talk will explore how lace has been represented in paintings within the house, focusing on important pieces from the Devonshire Collection. Olivia will share insights into how we care for our lace collection and discuss her most recent research in this area.

Followed by Tea and biscuits.

A very interesting and informative day