

16 September 2026 Arts Hidden Secrets – Tony Rawlins

Tony's lecture *Art's Hidden Secrets* is about the messages, codes, and self-portraits found in famous works of art. In Rembrandt's *Night Watch*, why is a little girl in the picture, wearing a party dress with a dead chicken hanging from her waist?

21 October The Art of the Baltics: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – Rosamund Bartlett

What has been the role of the arts in forging the distinct cultural identities of the Baltic Countries? In this lecture Rosamund looks at the songs that sustained these countries during years of occupation, the careers of Baltic artists and photographers, and the Estonian composer Arvo Part.



18 November A Photographic Odyssey, Shackleton's Endurance Expedition captured on camera – Mark Cottle. On Shackleton's third Antarctic expedition in 1914, his ship, the *Endurance*, was trapped in the pack ice. After camping for five months, Shackleton's men rowed to the remote Elephant Island then sailed for help to South Georgia over 800 miles away. (*Carried forward from April 2026*)

16 December The Art of the Christmas Cartoon – Harry Venning

Harry Venning has been a professional cartoonist for thirty years, during which time he has provided cartoons for several high-profile UK publications (*The Guardian*, *Radio Times*) as well as more obscure titles (*British Journal of Wound Care*). Harry will be adapting his lecture on the Art of the Cartoon for the Christmas season.



20 January 2027 Victoria and Albert, Art and Love – Barbara Askew Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were first cousins, born just three months apart in 1819. Their shared enthusiasm for art and music endured throughout the 22 years of their marriage. In this lecture Barbara will demonstrate their love through the works of art and jewellery they gave each other for birthdays, Christmases and anniversaries.

17 February Persepolis, art, architecture and ideology of the Persian Empire – James Renshaw. The Persian empire exploded into life during the middle of the 6th BC and was the largest empire in the world for the next two centuries. In around 515 BC, its third Great King, Darius I, commissioned the building of a new city, Persepolis. In this talk we will learn what Darius's city and its art can tell us about the ideology of this extraordinary and influential empire.



17 March Neo Impressionism, how the Painted Dot communicated light and colour – Joshua White

The Neo-Impressionists are arguably the first international modern art movement. We learn how Georges Seurat created a new form of art by constructing an image with thousands of dots, enabling the eye to blend colours in the eye and the mind, heightening the visual experience and achieving a new radiance on the canvas.



21 April What to see (or not see) on the Grand Tour, an itinerary for Eighteenth Century Europe – Dr Sarah Pearson

The Grand Tour was an 18th century phenomenon in which young men completed their education by absorbing the art and culture of mainland Europe. This lecture brings the tour to life, highlights the typical itinerary but also illuminates the more exotic possibilities available to travellers.

19 May Original and Poetic: Thomas Gainsborough's Morning Walk – Matthew Morgan

Within a few days of the 300th anniversary of Thomas Gainsborough's birth in 1727, Matthew will look at the artist's life and technique with special reference to one of his most admired paintings, *Mr and Mrs Hallett, or the Morning Walk* as it has become known.



16 June A trip along the River Thames in 1749 – Peter Ross

Using the extraordinary 14 ft printed panorama of the north bank of the Thames created by the Buck brothers in 1749, this lecture will take us on a journey along the Georgian river from Westminster to the Tower of London. On the way we shall encounter wharves, warehouses, watermen and water closets, dukes, criminals, cranes and churches, and even a lost palace or two.

SPECIAL INTEREST EVENTS - Two one-hour lectures with a buffet lunch between.

14 October 2026 The Sound of the Silents - Christopher Budd

- i. The Art of the Movie Poster
- ii. Fashion Designers on Film

25 February 2027 Britain at War: Artists on the Home Front, 1940-45 - Chris Owen

- i. Barrage Balloons and Breech Rings: Artists on the Home Front
- ii. Henry Moore: Drawing in the Dark

VISITS

9 September 2026 Maritime Museum & Queens House at Greenwich.

TBA April 2027 Boughton House, near Kettering.

