

THE ARTS SOCIETY STAFFORD

LECTURE PROGRAMME APRIL 2026 - MARCH 2027



April 21st 2026

The nature of the Beast! Understanding Fabulous Animals in Medieval Art.

Jonathan Foyle



Medieval bestiaries are wondrously colourful worlds, blending fact with fiction, morality with mythology. They represent an understanding of the physical world.

May 19th 2026

Icons and the Art of Byzantium

Christopher Newlands



The religious art of the Eastern Church has become beloved as objects of veneration by people of faith, as well as being admired as fine works of art.

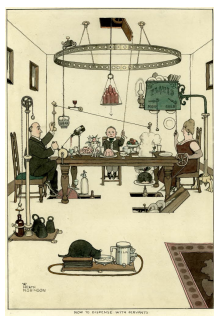
June 23rd 2026

Cartoons and Contraptions! The wonderful world of W Heath Robinson

Barry Venning

For over a century Heath Robinson has been famous for drawing rickety devices that carry out the simplest of tasks, like potato peeling and pancake making etc..

NOTE Change of venue - Beaconside Conference Centre



July 21st 2026

The Enigma of Edward Elgar

Roger Askew



One of our greatest composers, Edward Elgar was an extraordinary man. Completely self-taught, evidence of the strong determination behind this unique genius.

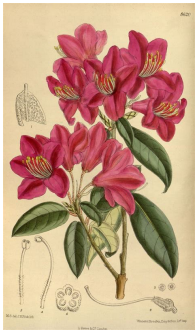
September 15th 2026

The Antiquities Market and Problem of Provenance.

Francesca Runciman



An overview of the current commercial market for Antiquities and how scandals, bad actors and shifting ethics have caused changes to the legality of this market.



October 20th 2026

Beauty in Truth - the past, present and future of Botanical Illustration.

Timothy Walker

This lecture looks at the history of botanical illustration from the early herbals, 1500 years ago to the present day, taking in the lives of the artists and the plants in the artworks.



November 3rd 2026 Luncheon at the Moat House

Bottoms Up. The Story of Alcohol in Art

Ian Swankie

Since the early Romans and Greeks, alcohol has been an important subject for artists.



November 17th 2026 AGM followed by

Pantomime - When the Fairy's over Fifty.

Tyler Butterworth

A revealing look at professional pantomime from someone who was born into it. The bouquets and the brickbats, the famous names, the greatest Dames and the old routines.



January 19th 2027

From Downton to Gatsby. Jewellery and Fashion from 1890 to 1929.

Andrew Prince

For the series and film Downton Abbey, Andrew was commissioned to make many jewels for the main characters. This inspired him to create a talk based on this unique period.



February 16th 2027

Sicily! Cultural Crossroads.

Richard Whincop

Before the Normans invaded, Sicily had been colonised by Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Visigoths and Islamic tribes. We look at Sicily as the crossroads between Europe, Africa and the Middle East!



March 16th 2027

John Singer Sargent, The Private Radical.

Gavin Plumley

Sargent was high society's leading portraitist. This talk charts the artist's life and his prolific output, like the era he came to represent, Sargent was always on the cusp of change.