

Lectures List for April 2026 – March 2027

15 April <i>Benedict Morrison</i>	The Eccentric World of Agatha Christie Agatha Christie is one of the most adapted writers of all time. These adaptations, however, have often been critiqued as nothing more than gentle exercises in period nostalgia. If this is the case, it raises the question of why have they attracted some of the most brilliant actors of all time? This lecture goes on a trip through decades of Christie adaptations, exploring how the performances of John Gielgud, Maggie Smith, Albert Finney (to name but a few) help to express the uniquely eccentric world of Christie's work.
20 May <i>Alison Bevan</i>	An Introduction to the Newlyn School 1880-1910 In the 1880s, the fishing village of Newlyn in the far West of Cornwall became a mecca for rural realist painters, who documented the lives of the local community in their beautiful and moving paintings. This lecture will outline the key characteristics of this famous art movement.
17 June <i>Carole Petipher</i>	The collections of Napoleon and Josephine at Chateau de Malmaison The Chateau de Malmaison estate was bought by Napoleon and Josephine as their private retreat, and was made into a National Museum in 1905, amassing a huge collection of their possessions. Paintings, personal objects, complete room layouts, and some magnificent pieces of porcelain will be explored in this lecture by Carole.
15 July <i>Arantxa Sardina</i>	The Art of Witchcraft Discover the mysterious and enchanting world of witchcraft through captivating artworks that reveal the hidden stories and symbols of ancient and not so ancient practices. You will be transported to a realm where art and magic intertwine, leaving you spellbound and eager for more.
16 September <i>Sandy Burnett</i>	The Age of Jazz Sandy's lecture covers the early years of jazz up to the Second World War and touches on the disparate influences which lay behind the emergence of jazz. Musical illustrations range from the blues, ragtime and the very first jazz recordings through to classics by Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and the dawn of the Swing Era
21 October <i>Amina Wright</i>	Nature Sits to Mr Gainsborough Although Thomas Gainsborough often complained about the tedium of painting one portrait after another, his delight in depicting animals radiates from his work. In landscapes, portraits and sketches, Gainsborough's animals are beautifully and affectionately observed. As Ellis Waterhouse commented: "the number of dogs which diversify his human portraits is surprisingly large and many of them are more memorable than their masters!

18 November <i>Peter Ross</i>	Insatiable Appetites: Eating Out in Georgian London Georgians of all classes dined out in pubs, coaching inns, French ordinaries and confectioners. They also ate all kinds of street food and had an almost insatiable appetite for buns. On a journey through London, we will discover the early morning drinks consumed on the street before dawn, 'nunchions' served at coaching inns, Billingsgate dinners, confectioners' cakes, syllabubs and ices, the proverbially thin ham dished up to diners at Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, as well as the Jewish takeaway foods of the East End and even London's first 'Indian' restaurant.
	9 December Christmas Lunch and Talk
2027	
20 January <i>James Vaux</i>	Reimagining the 19th Century Danish Landscapes James' lecture considers the breakthrough of the landscape genre, the change in painting styles over the century, the creation of new iconic Danish scenes, the incorporation of Jutland into the genre, and the importance of agricultural motifs. We'll look at the dilemma between painting the truth versus a beautiful lie. James also introduces recent theories on how to interpret landscapes in art and reflects on how these historical works are interpreted in Denmark today.
10 February <i>Rosamund Bartlett</i>	Faberge and the Firebird: Russian Art Under the Last Tsar By the beginning of the twentieth century, Russian culture had come of age. The reign of Nicholas II saw a creative explosion during which Russian creativity flourished as never before and was for the first time recognised abroad. Carl Fabergé opened a branch of his Petersburg jewellery business in London, Rachmaninoff performed in New York, Chagall exhibited in Berlin, and Diaghilev's long crusade to win recognition for Russian culture abroad culminated in the creation of the Ballets Russes in Paris. Rosamund's lecture covers all this and more!
17 March <i>Gerri Parlby</i>	Fiction, Fallacy and Fake News, Spin and Propaganda in Art Fake News has been around since the time of the Egyptian pharaohs and art has always been one of its favourite media. In this talk Gerri will be uncovering the subtle art of spin and propaganda in art from the glories of Ancient Mesopotamia to the Norman Conquest and then onto Elizabethan England and the dark days of Nazi Germany. Every picture tells a story - whether it is true or not is an entirely different matter.