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**“Enriching lives  
through the arts”**

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The Great Wave off Kanagawa (cropped)  
by Katsushika Hokusai  
Can be seen at the British Museum, London

**2026  
PROGRAMME**

Lectures are generally held in the Guildhall Sandwich on the first Monday of each month at 7pm (except bank holidays and the July and August break). Refreshments are served from 6.30 pm. Guests are always welcome to attend, £7 payable on the night.

## PROGRAMME OF LECTURES

**12th January**

### **Scott Schiavone - Balenciaga, Dior and Fath: Haute Couture's Holy Trinity.**

Haute Couture is an art form, inseparable from fashion, that achieved some of its finest moments during the years following World War II. Three names became synonymous with luxury, glamour and elegance during haute couture's most exclusive and fertile period - Christian Dior, Cristóbal Balenciaga and Jacques Fath.

**2nd February**

### **Laurie Wickwire - The British Crown Jewels: Every Stone Tells a Story.**

The British Crown Jewels are an unchanging jewelled anchor, whilst all around us changes. Delve into the history & beauty of the Crowns, Sceptre, Orb and other royal jewels used during the coronation ceremony. Secrets & mystery abound within these priceless jewels, seen by millions, worn by one.

**2nd March**

### **Stephen Kershaw - Greek Vase Painting.**

Ancient Greek painted pottery is greatly admired, and with good reason. This talk, lavishly illustrated with both slides and video, will attempt to make the beauty of Greek ceramics more readily accessible and comprehensible.

**13th April**

### **Paula Nuttall - The Renaissance Portrait from Van Eyck to Titian.**

Portraiture is a quintessentially renaissance art form developed in Italy, it evolved in response to new ideas about realism, likeness and posterity. We encounter a host of examples, from the unfamiliar to the iconic, including Van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait, Dürer's Self Portrait as Christ, Holbein's Ambassadors, and the Mona Lisa.

**11th May**

### **Alice White - The History of Colour: Blue.**

Loaded with symbolism, the colour blue creates meaning, provokes emotion and ignites memory on a personal, and a cultural level, throughout the world. Enjoy this rich history of colour via two powerful forces: Impressionism and Japanese Print. When Monet's water-lilies met Hokusai's Great Wave, the values of art changed forever.

**1st June**

### **Hilary Williams - The Bayeux Tapestry: International relations then and now.**

Explore the significance of the Bayeux Tapestry - power struggle, dynastic rivalries, broken promises, diplomatic relations in peril and military prowess. Its conservation has brought new data to light. How important is this piece of history as an object to foster 'entente-cordiale' and to link nations today?

**10th July**

### **SUMMER SUPPER EVENT**

**7th September**

### **Anne Sebba - The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz: A story of survival and music.**

In 1943 the German SS officers in charge of Auschwitz-Birkenau ordered that an orchestra should be formed among the female prisoners. Forty-seven women and girls were drafted into a hurriedly-assembled band. For almost all of the musicians chosen to take part, the orchestra was to save their lives.

**5th October**

### **Jacqui Ansell - Vincent in Ramsgate: Van Gogh in England.**

Van Gogh found himself working in a small school in Ramsgate on the Kent coast, a place where he found happiness - albeit short-lived. From the rich and poetic descriptions in his letters we discover more about this unique corner of England, and how it attracted architects, artists, writers and royalty.

**2nd November**

### **Colin Schindler - Carry on up the Khyber: Movies and the End of the Empire.**

The end of the British Empire, which started with the partition of India in 1947 but increased rapidly in the 1960s as the African colonies disappeared, was immortalised in the very best "Carry On" film ever made. A glorious parody of every imperial film ever made with its upstanding British heroes and stereotypical locals.

**7th December**

### **James Campbell - E H Shepard's Christmas (Illustrator of Winnie-the-Pooh and The Wind in the Willows).**

Much loved illustrator of Winnie-the-Pooh and The Wind in the Willows, E H Shepard loved Christmas. This lecture describes in his own words and illustrations, much of the magic and joy of successive festive seasons, from those of his own childhood to others throughout his long life.

Disclaimer: Due to circumstances outside our control alterations to the programme are possible.