



# THE GLASS CIRCLE

**Andy McConnell:**

***The Scent Bottle, The Jewel of the Glass Crown***

**Thursday, 7 December 2017**



Scent bottles have probably commanded greater designer attention and been lavished with finer craft skills than any other vessel. This inevitably meant that despite their diminutive scale, the best also rank amongst the most prestigious and expensive.

Small glass flasks for scents and oils have been formed for around 3,500 years. The ancients shaped them by coiling molten glass, like hot plasticine, around appropriately formed dung cores. Even using these primitive methods, Middle Eastern and Greek glassmakers achieved extraordinary results. Happily, for both their manufacturers and customers, over 2,000 years have elapsed since the birth of glass-blowing, meaning that bottles longer are no longer formed using desert animal poo.

The shift of the centre of the glassmaking world from Arabia to Europe after the fall of Damascus in 1405 ignited and inspired the European glass industry by boosting local skills. Renaissance miniature, high-end flasks for oils and fragrances in precious metals, rock crystal and glass still gleam with timeless

quality and wealth. Glass remained the exclusive preserve of the mega-rich for centuries, and it wasn't until the 20th that industrialisation democratised its ownership by making it affordable to working people. By the 1960s, even Woolies and the Avon lady sold scent bottles.

This talk traces the stylistic and technological advances that have marked the history of glassmaking and the scent bottle from pre-history, through the 18th century and Victorian eccentricity to the present day.

*Andy McConnell is one of Britain's leading authorities on glassware of all types and his books have covered the subject from 1650 to the present. He was the first-ever glass specialist recruited to the BBC's Antiques Roadshow, for which he has now has contributed to 11 series. He lectures widely on glass and writes for journals as diverse as The Daily Telegraph and Glass Circle News.*

*2017 marks Andy's 40th anniversary in glass. His publications include The Decanter, An Illustrated History [2004] and 20th Century Glass [2006]. He has spent the past three years improving The Decanter by writing 14 new chapters and inserting around 2,000 new images. Its publication next year will allow Andy to resume work on another 500+ page tome, Swedish Glass Design, already a decade in the making.*

**Meeting Place:** The Art Workers' Guild, 6 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AT (Gradidge Room, first floor – please give notice if you need help with mobility)

**Co-Hosts:**

**Time:** The lecture will start promptly at **19.15**. Coffee and light refreshments are provided from 18.30. The meeting will finish by 21.00

**Next Meetings:** Thursday 15 March, Tuesday 17 April

*NB We need to know if you will attend the meeting for numbers restrictions, for catering or unforeseen changes.*

**Please return this slip by Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December to Anne Lutyens-Stobbs, 8 Millers Croft, Gt Baddow, Chelmsford, CM2 8JL, tel. (01245) 604518 or email: [annelh60@hotmail.com](mailto:annelh60@hotmail.com)**

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will attend the lecture by **Andy McConnell** on **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017, at £10 pp.**  
I/we will bring..... Guests (£15.00 each) and enclose a cheque made payable to *The Glass Circle* for £.....  
(If you wish to be a future co-host please tick the box  and enclose a cheque for £15.00).

Contact 'phone/email for queries/emergencies.....

Queen Square lies between Southampton Row and Gt. Ormond St. It can be reached by Underground using either Russell Sq. (Piccadilly) or Holborn (Piccadilly and Central). Buses 68, 91, 168 and 188 run along Southampton Row and 19, 38, 55 and 505 along Theobald's Rd.