



**The Robert Charleston Memorial Lecture:**  
**Christopher Maxwell:**  
***In Sparkling Company: Glass and the  
Costs of Social Life in Britain during the 1700s***  
**7pm, Tuesday 21 July 2020, on Zoom**



*Portrait of John, Lord Mountstuart, later 4th Earl and 1st Marquess of Bute, (detail), by [Jean-Étienne Liotard](#), Pastel on vellum, 1763, The J. Paul Getty Museum.*

Britain in the 1700s was complex, dynamic, and full of growth, whether industrial, geographical, intellectual or societal. The nation began the century under the leadership of a Dutch king (William III, r. 1689-1702), followed by a dynasty of Germans (the Hanoverians, r. 1714-1837). Its aristocracy was educated on European Grand Tours, and its commercial, political and territorial ambitions stretched from North America to India, and from Africa to China. It was a world that fostered exploration, expansion and exploitation. The British glass industry replaced that of Venice as the global leader during this period but, beyond its presence in dining and drinking rituals, little discussion has hitherto been made of the significance of glass in the lives of the nation's elite during the 1700s.

Christopher (Kit) Maxwell was appointed Curator of European Glass at The Corning Museum of Glass in 2016. A curator and scholar, Maxwell has worked at the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle. In 2005 he became an assistant curator in the ceramics and glass section at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Maxwell left the V&A to pursue his PhD at the University of Glasgow, which he completed in 2014. Maxwell rejoined the Royal Collection as project curator overseeing the BBC Radio 4 series, *The Art of Monarchy*, broadcast in commemoration of The Queen's Diamond Jubilee. He is currently at The Corning Museum of Glass and now holds the position of Curator of Early Modern Glass.

The Corning exhibition *In Sparkling Company: Glass and Social Life in Britain during the 1700s* has been postponed to May 2021, but the catalogue is available from <https://shops.cmog.org/sparkling-company-reflections-glass-18th-century-british-world>.

**To book**, please contact David Willars at [gsocfinancial@gmail.com](mailto:gsocfinancial@gmail.com) Please note, places are limited. You will be sent details of how to join the Zoom meeting before the 19th July.

We hope to resume normal meetings in the Autumn/winter, depending on the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions and availability of venues.