

## Letter of the President

I hope this message finds you in good health and cheer and that you will enjoy perusing this latest Silver Society of Canada journal. A lot of hard work goes into sourcing articles and producing this and the greatest credit and thanks is reserved for our editor, Dorothea Burstyn without whom this journal would not be possible. A big thanks to our authors as well for their contributions and insights into the subjects that are shared with us.

The society lost one of its founding members and first President, Richard Flensted-Holder (1942-2025) in October. Richard was one of the few specialist silver dealers in Canada and I first got to know him when he used to go to Montreal to do the Bonaventure Antique Show in the 1980s and then again when I moved to Toronto in the early 1990s. He was a fixture in the silver world, many of us would have purchased items from him and would have been mentored by him. Many of the pieces that he had sold have made their way into public collections like the Royal Ontario Museum and private collections across Canada. His keen enthusiasm, expertise and friendship will be truly missed.

We had a very successful 2025 programming year. In February, we had a presentation by Dr. Kate Cooper, Curator of Greek and Roman Art and Conservator Laura Lipcsei of the Royal Ontario Museum on the Greek coin project which took us into the fascinating and artistic world of Ancient Greek numismatics. In March, author and jewellery collector Patricia Gostick gave a talk on the silver jewellery of McClelland Barclay, an American 20th-century artist and designer. Patricia brought examples of his jewellery collection for members to see and handle which was a treat. In April, we went to the Art Gallery of Ontario to learn more about the Thomson Collection of late Mediaeval, Renaissance and Baroque silver with curator Adam Levine. Adam is responsible for European Art before 1700 and is the curator-in-charge of the Thomson Collection. Highlights from this event included 17th-century Continental silver vessels but the star was a late 15th-century German silver reliquary figure of Saint Christopher that was formerly in the collection of Sir Julius Wernher of Luton Hoo.

The month of May saw our first collaboration with the Culinary Historians of Canada. There was a discussion and showing of Georgian and Victorian culinary silver coupled with a talk on a Canadian cookbook from the early 20th-century. Baked treats from 18th and 19th-century period recipes were on hand as members enjoyed these refreshments. Dorothea hosted a delightful summer social for members where there was a delicious spread put to-

gether, which with the wine and company, made for a most pleasant of evenings. In July, the SSC again participated in the annual 1920s Garden Party at Spadina Museum. There, Dorothea and I presented a selection of obscure and obsolete silver, mainly culinary items for guests of the event to guess the purpose of the object. It was a fun afternoon interacting with the public and admiring the various interpretations of 1920s costume. In September, Peter Kaellgren presented his recent research project on Scottish thistle cups. It was intriguing to learn about the origins of these cups and we were treated to several fine and early examples of these that Bill Kime brought from a consignment at Waddington's. October saw us back at the Art Gallery of Ontario with an in-depth examination of the St. Christopher reliquary, this time with Lisa Ellis, Conservator of Sculpture and Decorative Arts. It was a fascinating evening learning about the collaborative work with scientists, historians, anthropologists and conservators that went into taking this reliquary apart and examining the various components and then putting it back together to go on display. An interesting sidebar from this talk is that under examination, the relic contained what is likely a Byzantine electrum cup holding two bone fragments and because they are human remains, have been replaced with 3-D printed models and the originals deposited with the Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto. It was a most interesting evening from a scientific perspective.

For several years now, members of the Silver Society of Canada contributed towards an annual student prize in silversmithing. This year, the prize money went to two students (\$1000 and \$500 respectively for first and second prize) from the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. By doing this, we hope to encourage a new generation of Canadian silversmiths.

Ending the year with our annual holiday Christmas party is always something that we all look forward to, and we welcomed several new members. 2026 promises to be another great year where I hope to build from our successes in 2025.

Best regards,

Philip Cheong

President, SSC