

December 2015 and January 2016

An innocent enquiry leads to a thorough investigation

At a recent Trustees' meeting I (Bob Hollingdale) enquired as to the state of membership of the Trust. Following discussion, my fellow Trustees volunteered me to carry out some form of statistical analysis of our membership.

The results are somewhat predictable but nonetheless interesting and informative. In brief : we have 127 paid-up members with 58 whose membership has lapsed or who have not paid a due subscription.

Age groupings are approximately:

Under 50	12%
50-60	20%
60-70	38%
70+	30%

Involvement of members in addition to a subscription was much more difficult to assess but, to a greater or lesser degree, 60% of membership play an active role of some sort in the Trust, whilst 40% might be described as passive.

In the light of this analysis the Trustees have asked me to chair a small sub-committee to review the whole state, or condition, of membership. To help enable this to be done we will be contacting a cross-section of members for what will, no doubt, be a considerable variety of viewpoints.

All members are also invited to make any relevant comment to a member of the sub-committee.

The sub-committee intends to report back to the full Trustees meeting early in the New Year and in the fullness of time make a final report with recommendations. Sub-committee members are Rachel Bennett, Tony Britton, Victor Briggs and myself.

★★★★★★

A 2016 Subscription form is included with this Newsletter. Prompt returns are appreciated, as is Gift Aiding when possible and, of course, any donations (ed.)

Sue's News of November's Committee Meeting

A lot has happened since my article for the September newsletter.

The new leaflet has been prepared and 5,000 will be printed. It is proposed to roll these out to bed & breakfast establishments; railway stations; hotels; holiday parks, etc. No formal system of distribution has yet been discussed, but if you are willing to undertake distribution to establishments in your area please let Sioux in the office know. A massive thanks to Jo and Rachel for their hard work!

Bruce has been a busy bee and rather impressively (with help from others) met the deadline for the Viridor grant application. We are now all keeping our fingers crossed as to what the outcome will be. Obviously if substantial work is to be undertaken on the House, there will again be disruption and until the outcome of the grant application is known, no forward planning can take place. **(but see below!!)**

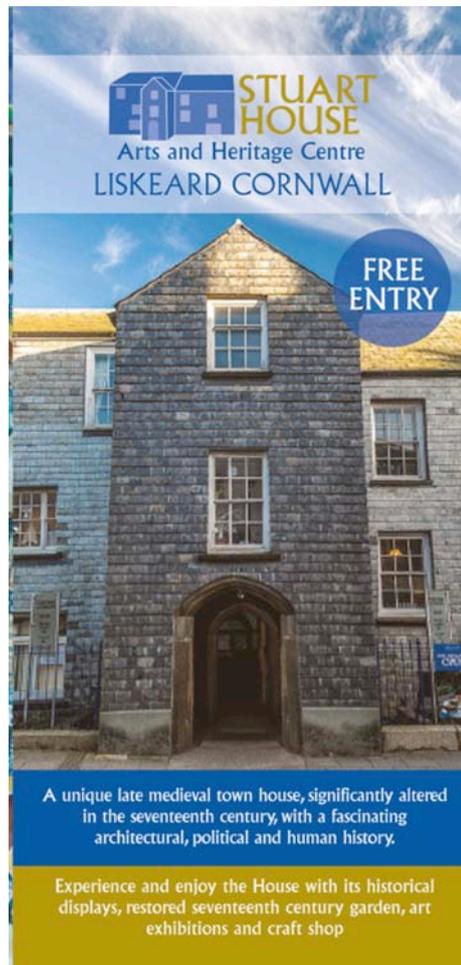
Usually at this time of the year we would be planning our Members' New Year's party. The proverbial jury is out at the moment due to a possible programme of remedial work, so watch this space next year for news of a 'Re-opening Bash'. Please do not assume the entire House will be closed whilst work is undertaken. It will not be! It is important that you keep visiting and supporting café, shop and events as we need the money as well as your presence to bring life to the House!

A Festive menu is planned for the coffee room, with mince pies replacing the usual cream teas. Sioux will be responsible for overseeing the decoration of the House so gifts of foliage and 'natural' items of décor will be welcome, as will assistance. If you are able to help – please let her know.

Bob has been undertaking a membership survey as a result of which a membership drive is planned and a sub-committee has been formed for that purpose (see p.1). Of course it would be wonderful if each of our existing members could introduce a friend in 2016. Please consider who could be press-ganged – or interested!!

Sue Glencross, Hon. Sec.

Please look on the back 'What's On' page for an explanation of our uncertainty about re-opening dates in January (ed.).



STOP PRESS!!!

We heard on 25th November that we've been awarded £32,922 from Viridor – wonderful! We need £3,370.39 from Third Party Contributions. Essential repairs can now go ahead, so look out for news of planning and progress.

A Reminiscence

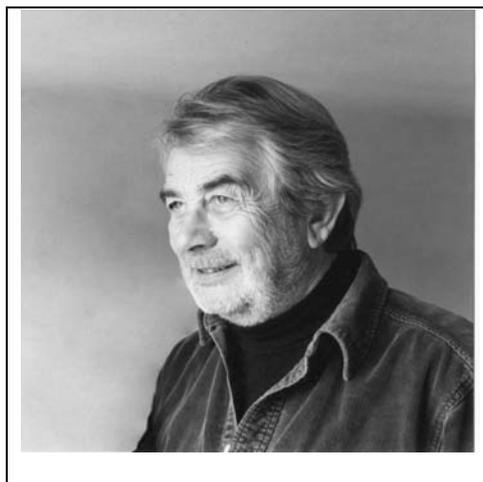
In the early 1980s three local projects were proposed simultaneously and independently. This was embarrassing for all three who were each taken by surprise. Such is Liskeard's resilience and enthusiasm that remarkably all three survived and came to fruition. They were the ECHO Centre, Stuart House and Sterts Open Air Theatre.

The first was and remains a day centre for those in need of special support and is funded jointly by Cornwall Council and a locally based Charity, Echo Cornwall. The other two were entirely privately funded projects. Both were essentially 'arts' projects and thus potentially less appealing than ones concerned with human welfare. Whilst the Stuart House Trust was eager to buy and then restore this very old and important house and to establish an Arts and Heritage Centre, Sterts appealed more to those interested in Drama but was also anxious to promote the visual arts too. There might well have been a conflict and defensive stances taken but, thanks to the personalities involved, this was avoided and both projects ran in parallel, aware of and appreciative of the other's efforts.

Whilst Stuart House was a small team effort, Sterts, initially at least, was a one man show, or rather, a one man and one woman show. Ewart Sturrock was a remarkable man who had a dream and, fully supported by his wife Anne, carried it through against all odds (planners, local neighbours, apathy and costs). The recent sad news of his death brought to mind the sheer slog and effort they put into creating the outstanding achievement which is now Sterts.

Ewart and I used to meet and compare progress. There was never any sense of rivalry or resentment even though we might be targeting the same sources of grants or income. We respected each other's vision and enthusiasm without jealousy or sense of threat. Both projects recruited and held supporters, ours was more heritage and town centred, his more for those enthused by theatre from both the villages and the town. I held Ewart in great respect and am very conscious of his loss both personally and to the community. I am pleased that both projects are now mutually supportive. We should all salute his memory and be grateful for what he and Anne achieved.

Tony Wood





Autumn 2015 in Sterts Studio

Sunday 29th November
10.00-4.00pm at Sterts



Crafts for Christmas
Entertainment & Charity Raffle with exciting prizes
Sterts Studio, Sterts Theatre, Upton Cross,
Liskeard, PL14 5AZ
01579 362382 www.sterts.co.uk

Autumn 2015
Studio Season



**Rain
Falling
Upwards**
by Celia Catterall
Jared Winner

Boomtown
by James Taylor
Jared Winner

Sterts One Act Play Competition Winners Night.
Saturday 5th December 2015. 7.30pm. Sterts Studio.
Sterts Theatre, Upton Cross, Liskeard Cornwall PL14 5AZ
01579 362382 www.sterts.co.uk



**Candlelit
Christmas
Celebration**
Tuesday
22nd December

Wrap up, Warm up and join Sterts Singers & Friends
for a Christmas Celebration.
Our Box & Gift will be open and hot food and mulled
wine will be on site in the theatre.
7.00 - 8.00pm Sterts Theatre Upton Cross & Sterts
Theatre 01579 362382 www.sterts.co.uk

Crafts for Christmas.
Sunday 29th November. 10.00-16.00

Sterts One Act Play Competition Winners Night
Saturday 5th December. 19.30

Candlelit Christmas with Sterts Singers and friends
Featuring Emma Ronchetti and Liskeard School Jazz Band
Tuesday 22nd December. 19.00
Dress up warm, this is in the theatre.

Full details of all shows. www.sterts.co.uk
01579 362382

Box Office 10am-4pm weekdays 10am-1pm Saturdays.
Sterts, Upton Cross Liskeard PL14 5AZ
Sterts Kitchen bookings 07866 292414

December and January thoughts from our Garden's Overseer

This time of the year is full of reflections, especially in the garden: what worked this season and what didn't, and hopes and plans for next year. And of course in the rainy season that has now descended on us, there are interesting reflections everywhere: at Stuart House in the little puddle outside the back door, through the multitude of sparkling raindrops decorating bare twigs, and in the large slightly

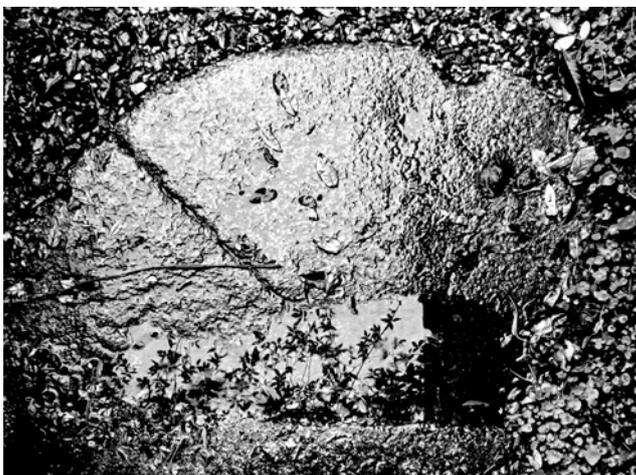


imperfect mirror opposite the rear porch. They provide novel distortions of the garden depending on one's viewpoint (a philosophical reflection, perhaps).

After the continued periods of warm sunny weather throughout the autumn, and when it seemed just possible that sunshine and colour might go on and on, all at once, as always happens, it's winter. The Kaffir lilies in the borders were again reliably and gloriously colourful throughout October: they're almost too easy to grow, surreptitiously multiplying and creeping up between the gaps in the brick edging that separates the borders from the lawn. However, the heavy rain and winds at the start of November saw the end of these, and suddenly the twisted willow tree, the magnolia, roses, fruit trees and wisteria had lost most of their leaves, taking on their winter forms.

Eddying and bunched up piles of dead leaves, old bleached flower stems and winter weeds: what to do with them at this time? To some, they look picturesque and give a reflective structure to the winter garden. Others prefer the clean and tidy look. Well, just as in gardens at this time of year, there are various shades of grey in these positions. Nature abhors bare soil, and in mediaeval times it seems that soil was never left uncovered, at least not where food crops were grown. Leaves and mulch protect the soil, inhibit the germination of weeds, and allow beneficial insects to overwinter.

Most gardens until the 16th century were full of plants needed for daily life – food, herbs, flavourings, medicines, to make soaps, to repel indoor pests, and such like. It



wasn't until the start of Tudor times that formal decorative gardens became more fashionable. Henry VIII was passionate about garden design, and following the dissolution of the monasteries and distribution of their huge lands (one-sixth of England) largely to the gentry and to those with disposable incomes, formal decorative gardening became established. This too was the age of discovery and the rapid introduction of plants from overseas, and the

beginning of capitalism when for instance, in an expanding London, nurserymen set up to sell many of the newly introduced flowers. Plant breeding to produce new flower forms was taken seriously, and for the first time garden manuals appeared written in English. This too was the age of the European Renaissance with the flowering of the arts, music, literature, design and also gardening, and so by the end of the Tudor period under Elizabeth I's reign, flowers and formal gardens were everywhere.

These gardens were undoubtedly kept to perfection, so there were probably no longer any messy piles of leaves in the corners. Wealth paid for gardeners, lots of them, whilst Stuart House has only volunteers with limited time. So for us it's back to that principle I mentioned a little while ago: good enough gardening. Most of the leaves are swept up, those under the trees and shrubs are left to rot down and provide winter shelter for small creatures, and the battle with the more obvious weeds continues.

Gardening over the next couple of months will be busy. There are still bulbs to plant, together with an array of flowers for the Spring and early Summer: sweet williams, wallflowers, Canterbury bells, foxgloves, sweet rocket, forget-me-nots, calendulas, anemones, and *Tanacetum niveum*. This last mentioned is a relative of the common feverfew but with a taller, more open habit and leaves of a beautiful calm green, which will grow anywhere, and which self-seeds gently, so once established it will always return to delight.

One of the surprises this last season is how well the little white fibrous begonias performed in the 4" clay pots on the garden tables. Each of the plants has continued in bloom for about six months, always covered in flowers whatever the weather. I'm sure that if these had been available in Elizabethan times, they would have been a sensation!

Many thanks to all who have toiled hard in the garden this year, and also to the many who have expressed their appreciation of how good the garden has looked and what a sudden and unexpected oasis of calm it provides. The volunteers really appreciate that.

Malcolm Mort

Help us raise much-needed funds for Stuart House by joining in

***A Murder Mystery Evening
Sunday 31st January
At 7.00pm***



"A rare opportunity to be a super sleuth and enjoy a superb three-course meal at the same time."

*The venue for this 1920's themed evening is Tapenades Bistro,
Liskeard.*

The cost is £35 per person.

*There are only thirty places available so book now to avoid
disappointment!*

*Ticket and more details from Bob Hollingdale (01579-
346085/07760781087) or Sioux Dunster at Stuart House.*

LISKEARD REMEMBERS 1915 : Tony Ball, who organized the Exhibition, writes ...



Once again thanks are due to the Stuart House Trustees for allowing us to use the Max Lock Gallery for our Exhibition. The comments and observations made by the 200 or so visitors suggests that our efforts were well received. It is always a regret that we fail to attract our leading citizens to a timely reminder of the sacrifices made by our Town during the Great War.

This year we concentrated on the year 1915. The Roll of Honour in the Council Chamber lists the names of 326 men and two women serving in HM Forces in the early days of the War. The Mayor, John Lewis Rapson, observed at the time that this represented 8% of the population. This in itself was a significant contribution but it did not prevent further local efforts to recruit even more to enlist. Eventually (in 1916) conscription became inevitable. The names of 42 men were recorded as aged 17 during the year on the list produced under the provisions of the National Registration Act.

Tragically nearly 30 men gave their lives during the year. Most, but not all, are listed on the War Memorial in Castle Park. Information on each was available together with material on four past Mayors of the Town who fought in the war – Arthur Snell, Stanley Maggs, Edwin Samuel Vosper and Edwin Spurway. The contribution made by Doctor Brian Metcalfe, a well respected and local GP, was especially appreciated.

It is obvious that people are drawn to visit exhibitions for a variety of reasons. the main being an interest in the subject matter, but other factors also come into play. We had a traveller who simply wanted to eat his pasty in the warm and dry, a young lady who practiced her Italian on Paul, a man who is responsible for organising the school trips to the WW1 battlefields and someone who felt they might be related to two men listed on the displays. Perhaps the most moving were two ladies who arrived independently on Saturday morning following the events in Paris. Both remarked how very little seems to have been learned from history and how grateful we should be to those who fought in both Wars

Next November, Tony (first left in the photograph) will organize, with great help from Jackie and Paul (on the right above), an exhibition focussing on 1916. Should you have any relevant information or photographs, please contact him. I know that I speak for many when we thank Tony, Paul and Jackie not only for mounting the exhibition but also for welcoming visitors through it, explaining more about what happened and where the information came from. (ed.)



Dave Howard's Exhibition on Women as Poets and Nurses in the First World War, concentrating on Vera Brittain, Eva Dobell and Liskeard's Dorothy Foster, ran throughout November, attracting much interest.



Stuart House mounted a small exhibition at the Public Hall on November 6th, when the film 'Testament of Youth' was shown, Liskeard Silver Band played and several local groups showed what they had done so far to mark the centenary of the First World War. Our display included the three files with details of those listed on the town's War Memorial (from the then-running 1915 Exhibition), which were perused by many with great fascination and resulted in some people then visiting the exhibitions in Stuart House.

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We are sorry that the eagerly anticipated exhibition and sale of seascapes by Jack Carberry-Todd has been postponed owing, Jack said, to the success of his exhibition at the Devonport Dockyard, which means he unable to fill our Gallery! He intends to return to Stuart House early next year.

Congratulations to Liskeard School and Community College Art Department, who have exhibited at Stuart House in the past, on being awarded the Gold Mark from the Arts Council. This is an outstanding achievement.

Jonathan Delbridge Piano Recital - 22nd November.

A capacity audience filled the room for Jonathan's performance and created a warm and responsive atmosphere. Jonathan played a wide-ranging programme starting with Bach and ending with the romanticism of Chopin.



He started with two of Bach's preludes and fugues from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, demonstrating both the major and minor moods. Jonathan excellently showed the incredible precision of Bach with the endless variety of counterpoint and different fugal voices. Then he played a very different kind of *Prelude and Fugue* composed by Alwyn in 1945 but only published in 2014. It was an amazing experience to hear the same form as Bach but used to create a romantic

and emotional mood. This prelude and fugue now forms part of the Grade 8 piano set pieces for the Associated Board.

Then we moved on to hear an early Sonata in C by Mozart. Apparently he wrote these early pieces to demonstrate his own playing ability. Although Jonathan was not wearing a wig, as Mozart would have done, he also showed his very considerable musical and technical abilities in this performance.

Next came six *Lyric Pieces* by Grieg. These delightful pieces descriptively represented their individual titles, such as *Sommerfugl* (Butterfly), *Ensom Vandrer* (Solitary Traveller) and *Ti Varen* (To the Spring). The romantic diversity of Grieg's compositional ability was clearly shown in Jonathan's interpretation.

He ended the performance with a dazzling version of Chopin's spectacular *Scherzo in B Minor*. This piece is not to be tackled by anyone without a virtuosic ability as it dramatically covers the whole keyboard with combinations of massive chords, dramatic runs and lyrical sections. The audience's clear appreciation of the quality of the afternoon's performance was demonstrated by the loud and extended applause, as a result of which Jonathan was lured back in to play a calming and gentle encore.



A large number of contented audience members then enjoyed the afternoon tea, coffee and biscuits provided afterwards by Stuart House.

This was altogether a highly successful finale to this year's series of concerts. Although Jonathan has now moved away from Cornwall to South Somerset, we are delighted and grateful that he still plans to return to Cornwall to give concerts a few times a year.

Angela Wunnam

♪ 2016 ♪

Stuart House Sunday Afternoon Concert Series

We shall hold concerts at 2.30pm on the following Sunday afternoons

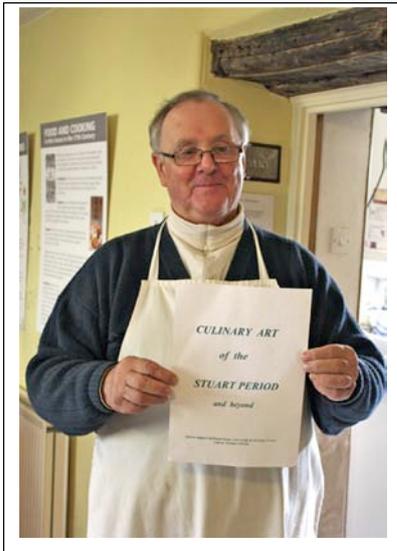
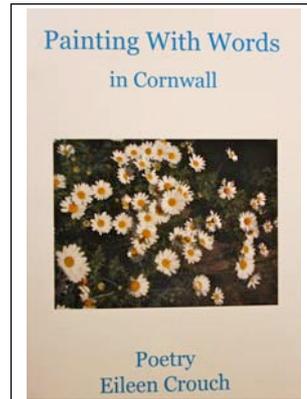
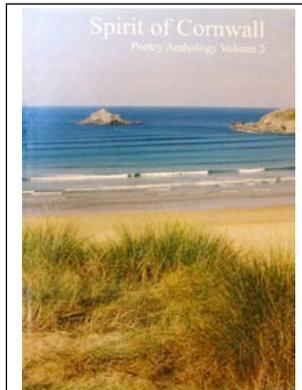
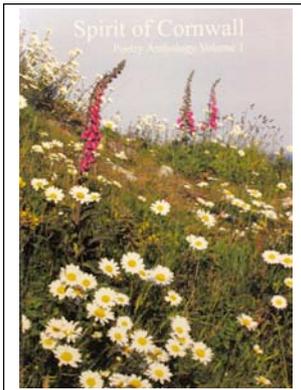
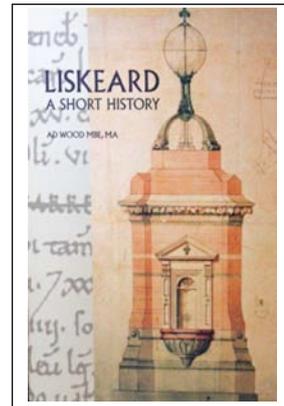
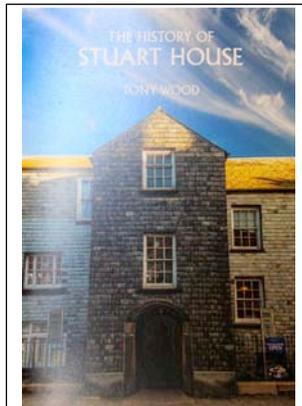
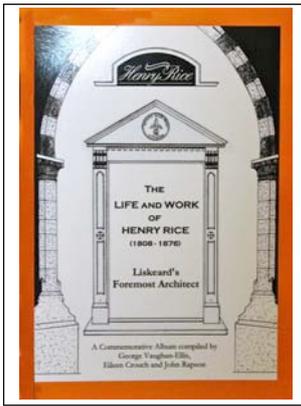
March 20th
April 17th
(May 22nd *)
June 26th
September 11th
October 16th
November 20th

* May 22nd is the Festival of Youth Music, set up in memory of Bo Foaks which will be in the evening at the Public Hall

Performers are being confirmed. Look out in the New Year for details in the Newsletter, on the website, on the Music Leaflet and on posters.



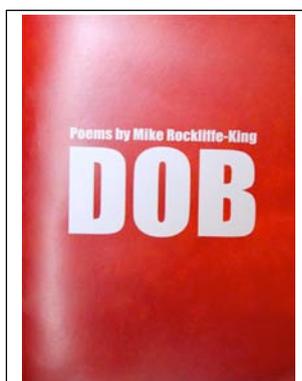
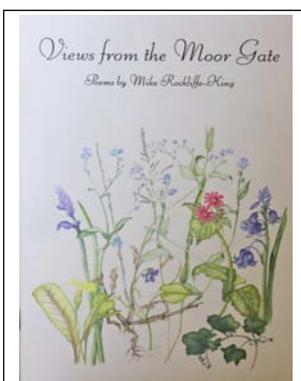
Part of the capacity audience for Jonathan Delbridge's concert. Angela Wunnam, the Concert Series Co-ordinator (who we thank again for all her work), speaking. It would be great to get full houses again next year!



For PRESENTS or to TREAT YOURSELF!

Stuart House has published several booklets, all on sale at Reception

- ❖ Tony Wood's History of Stuart House
 - ❖ Tony Wood's History of Liskeard
 - ❖ Henry Rice's buildings by George Vaughan-Ellis, Eileen Crouch and John Rapson
 - ❖ 3 volumes of poetry by Eileen Crouch
 - ❖ 3 volumes of poetry by Mike Rockliffe-King
- and to come in time for Christmas.....
- ❖ Stuart Culinary Art by Victor Briggs and The Stuart House Members' Cook Book by Nancy Briggs.



The Gallery currently hosts 'Christmas is Coming' : a sale of crafts. Nancy Briggs has organized it along with David (shown here working on his furniture) who was also responsible for the refurbishment of our old garden furniture earlier this year, and others.



There will be more Christmas crafts in the House in the run-up to Christmas. See the back 'What's On' page for details. It's a great place for buying gifts for Christmas and other occasions, and is now beautifully decorated for Christmas.



Stuart House has also hosts table-top sales in the Doctor's Surgery. The picture above shows John Early's twice-yearly 'Rummage Returns'.

FAKE or FORTUNE?

Antiques Valuation Days run by Bearnas, Hampton & Littlewood, expert fine art auctioneers based in Exeter, are usually held monthly in Stuart House. Richard Hamm, their Cornish representative with 42 years' experience, gives free identification and valuation of 'attic treasure and family heirlooms', and follows this up with advice as appropriate and will undertake home visits too. Richard tells a fascinating account of a small 1810 sketch 'Landscape with Horses' by John Constable being found (although not in Liskeard) which after painstaking research and authentication, was sold at auction for £252,000!

Do look out for the dates and come in – you never know.....!!

Diary of Events

Dec. 2015 - Jan 2016



Every Thursday	Knit n' Knatter meet from 10.30 am to 1.30 pm. All welcome.
December Fridays	The House and café will remain open until 6pm to support Liskeard's late-night shopping.
Until 5 th Dec.	Nancy's 'Christmas is Coming' craft sale in the Gallery (see p.11)
Until 19 th Dec	Christmas Shop in the Doctor's Surgery
7 th - 11 th Dec	Caradon Acorn Academy - exhibition of Students' work. All welcome (postponed from September)
14 th - 19 th Dec	Christmas Fayre in the Gallery
Dec 19th	.Stuart House closes for Christmas
JANUARY	We are not sure when we shall be able to re-open : it will depend on maintenance work and the subsequent re-decoration, which will put the café and some other rooms out of action for a while in January. Check the web-site or notices outside the House, or phone or call in.
COMING IN FEBRUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We should be back to normal in terms of opening!• There should be a late New Year's Bash for Members!• Expect more!!

MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR
to all our
MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

The House, Garden, Old Kitchen Café and Computer Research Suite are open 9.30 am - 3.30 pm each weekday and until 12.30 pm (café 12 noon) on Saturdays. The House is open at these times for all events unless stated otherwise. The Office is open every weekday until at least 2pm.

Articles, information, notices and photographs for the Stuart House Newsletter to the editor please (who must reserve the right to edit as necessary) before 25th of the month for inclusion in the next newsletter. Leave with Sioux in the Office or email to rachelpbennett59@gmail.com

I wish to support the work of **Stuart House Trust** and enclose my subscription/standing order for the current year.

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

..... Post Code

SIGNATURE DATE

TELEPHONE e-mail

Suggested minimum donation for membership 2016

ADULT £10 JUNIOR £5 LIFE £140 GROUP £25

Please tick if you would like further information on how the Trust might claim 26 pence in every pound that is donated in your name, through the GIFT AID scheme

Please send completed form with payment/standing order mandate to:
House Manager, Stuart House, Barras Street, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 6AB

To make your payment by standing order please fill in the following:
AUTHORITY 12 (1978) Standing Order Mandate

TO (Bank)

ADDRESS.....

.....

Please pay Lloyds Bank, Liskeard, sort code 30-95-08
For the credit of Stuart House Trust Account no. 0155002

The sum of £..... Amount in words

Commencing (date of first payment)
and thereafter every 2nd January until further notice.

Quoting reference (member's name)
and debit my account accordingly.
ACCOUNT TO BE DEBITED

ACCOUNT NUMBER

SIGNATURE..... DATE