

*February 2016*

## **Heartfelt thanks to all those who have made our essential repair and refurbishment work possible**

You will know from previous Newsletters that last year, Stuart House completed repairs on its ancient South Wall, necessitated by damage done during the winter storms of 2013-14. The main sponsor of that work was Sita Cornwall Trust. However, during that project it was discovered that other rotting window-frames needed urgent maintenance, as did internal plasterwork, and so yet more money was needed. The Trust put together a project with four main strands: window repairs, plaster repairs to the ground floor and subsequent redecoration, secondary glazing where none exists at present and LED lighting. An application was made to Viridor Credits for the bulk of this money (£32,922) which was successful. We are most fortunate to be able to apply to two landfill operators and to fit their eligibility for grants.

To claim this, we needed to raise Third Party Contributions of £3370, roughly 10% of the grant, in order to demonstrate local support for the venture. This was achieved in record time, thanks to the generosity of the many members and friends who made individual donations together with Liskeard Town Council, the Town Forum, Liskeard Lions, Liskeard Town Traders at the Pannier Market who gave a wonderful £1,200 and Cornwall Councillors Roger Holmes and Derris Watson. Thank you all.

The work began in the café on 5<sup>th</sup> January, and we hope it will re-open in early February. The remainder of Stuart House re-opened after its Christmas and New Year break on 11<sup>th</sup> of January. Work will continue in different rooms for several months but will be scheduled so as to cause minimum disruption.

*Bruce Hawken, Chairman*

*Cleared, the café looks very spacious! We shall re-open it as early as possible, and hope that members and friends like the new decoration as well as the lack of flaking plaster. (ed.)*



## Sue's News of the Committee Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016

The Trustees join me in wishing you, the members, all the very best for 2016. Let us hope it is a good year for everyone.

The year has certainly got off to a good start for the House. The timely confirmation of the award of the Viridor grant has meant that the work could start on 5th January. As January is traditionally a quiet time as far as the House is concerned, this could not have been better.

By the time the newsletter 'goes to press' the refurbishment and decoration of the coffee room should be almost a fait accompli. Whilst I am not yet able to confirm an exact date for re-opening, dare I say the beginning of February has been mooted as a possibility. You will find it is a case of 'all change' and the trustees hope you will like the new look which has been achieved.

The plaster in the coffee room and the downstairs wc was in a sorry state and some was hacked off, whereas some simply crumbled away. Members of long standing will recall that this is not a new problem but one which had been encountered in the past. The areas concerned have now been re-plastered and treated. The new-look coffee room will be freshly painted, and the installation of new lighting should produce a very pleasing and tranquil effect.

We are indeed grateful to those who have made this important remedial and decoration work possible.

The design and text of our new leaflet has now been finalized, and a print run of 5,000 ordered.

I am pleased to report that it now seems as if Bob's battling with BT over telephone and broadband bills is now at an end. We all wait with baited breath to see if that is indeed so! In looking through some old records I was reminded that the problems experienced now were the same as those experienced in 2006 on the same issues!

We were all very sorry to hear that Nancy has been so poorly and know that everyone will join us in sending warm and heartfelt best wishes to her and to Victor.

*Sue Glencross, Hon. Sec.*



We thank Malcolm for erecting a temporary wicker screen over the collapsed doors between the garden and the site next door. We have no further news to report at present of Wetherspoon's plans for the site.



Maybe next Christmas this window will look onto a very different scene! We all thank Sioux for making the House look (and smell!) so festive in the run-up to Christmas. (ed.)

## STUART HOUSE AGM

This is planned for Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March, at 7.30pm. in the Gallery.  
Look out for confirmation and more details soon.  
We hope that lots of members will be able to attend.

## 🎵 The 2016 Stuart House Concert Series 🎵

Angela Wunnam, the organizer of the series, promises that we can look forward to another exciting and varied programme including returning performers and others new to Stuart House. Look out for details on the leaflet coming soon.

Concerts are at 2.30 on Sunday afternoons and are followed by refreshments, in the garden if fine, with a chance to talk to the performers. Tickets are available from Reception or at the door, and money raised helps the Stuart House Trust.

- March 20<sup>th</sup> T.B.C.
- April 17<sup>th</sup> We look forward to hearing some members of the chamber choir Valley Voices who will sing a variety of unaccompanied music.
- June 26<sup>th</sup> We shall welcome Ross Morris, a young classical guitarist whose beautiful playing some of will have heard locally.
- September 11<sup>th</sup> Gareth and Annie, the Cornish folk duo who gave a memorable concert at the House last year, will return.
- October 16<sup>th</sup> Musicians from Liskeard School and Community College will give their now traditional yearly concert featuring solo and ensemble music.
- November 20<sup>th</sup> Diabel Cissokho from Senegal will sing and play the kira – a West-African harp.

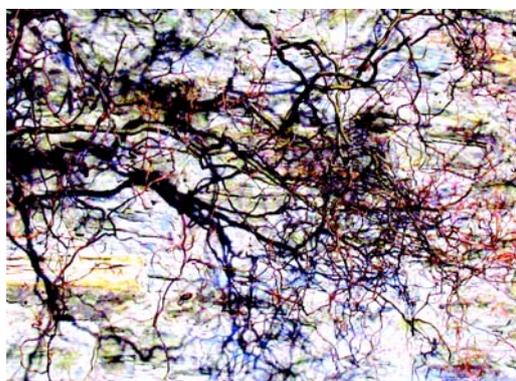


Students from the **Caradon Acorn Academy** held their exhibition in the Gallery in December. Comments in the visitors' book were enthusiastic about the talent and expressiveness of the individual works and the whole display

News of **2016 Art and Heritage Exhibitions** will be coming soon.

## February's Thoughts from our Garden's Overseer

A beautiful delight at Christmas was discovering, in a bag of large sweet chestnuts (labelled "from Turkey") bought for roasting, one that was eager to get going, having already produced a root searching for soil. It was immediately potted up and placed on the kitchen windowsill, where, three weeks later, it now has a stalk nearly 2" high with small soft downy leaves being constructed atop.



Seeds and spores: totally magical survival packages, even the tiny dust-like types, containing complete codes to determine when to germinate, the direction of the sky, how to make and assemble all the parts needed to grow and photosynthesise, and to create the mechanisms for reproduction and dispersal. This shows such faith in the future, and which must be similar to how gardeners also feel at this time of year as the new season beckons. Learning from

previous successes and failures, it's time to try again. Intriguingly, plants can also learn about changes in their environment, gently tweaking the genes they pass on in a recently discovered process called epigenetics to help their offspring cope better.

Another turn-of-the-year nice surprise was Monty Don's excellent BBC series on the history of gardening, starting in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Stuart House garden dates from that time, when formal labyrinths and knot gardens (we were told) were designed to celebrate form and control over nature, sometime with religious overtones – trefoil shapes, for example, depicted the Trinity. However, by the beginning of the 1600's large formal gardens were being introduced to define who you were, your understanding of



design and technique, and your status and wealth. Knot gardens were often replaced by lawns which needed teams of workers to keep the grass short and neat (mechanical mowers were not invented until the 1830's). This, too, was the age of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, when botanical gardens began to be established to catalogue and experiment with plants, including the large numbers being brought back from overseas.



A third surprise turned up in the Cothele floral garland which contained a helichrysum type flower labelled *Xerochrysum Bracteatum*, Dargan Hill Monarch. This is much like the usual annual everlasting

flower, but brighter yellow, bigger and bolder, which holds its shape better, flowers prolifically (so I'm told), and is perennial. An excellent subject, I thought, to add to next year's Christmas decorations at Stuart House. However, my attempts to source seeds have failed (although from a named variety they might not breed true). Cothele

collect their flowers before the seeds have formed properly, and propagate plants from cuttings (sadly not enough to share) taken from their few precious shrubs.

**So a task for you, dear reader:** to help find a source of seed or plants of this variety.

At Stuart House, the Spring bedding plants are all in, including sweet william, forget-me-nots, Canterbury bells, and sweet rocket, and early daffodils and primrose are beginning to provide little sparkles of colour. Work at this time of year centres mostly on shrub trimming and rose pruning, as well as dealing with those weeds that never tire of trying to put on their own show. The wild strawberries go about their creeping ways unseen until you suddenly realise (in dismay) what they've been up to; and green alkanet, that borage look-alike with its innocuous blue flowers in abundance, is in reality a totally thuggish deep-rooted perennial with prickly leaves and a fierce determination to take over all the beds, as well as every nook and cranny in the garden.



**Malcolm Mort**

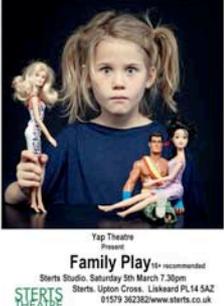
*Sorry, but no room for Malcolm's Topical Tip this month – but it was a VERY early one!. The photos are his : the corkscrew hazel next to the pond, spring flowering plants (mainly Canterbury Bells) quietly biding their time, and a couple of resident birds enjoying the garden's fountain just before Christmas.(ed.)*



## Spring at Sterts







**Claude Bourbon - Medieval & Spanish Blues Guitar**  
**Friday 5th February. Sterts Studio. 7.30pm Tickets £8/6**

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**Poetry by Heart - Schools Poetry Competition**  
**Saturday 27th February. Sterts Studio. From 12 noon**  
This is a free event but space is limited so we can only guarantee admission if you have booked a place by calling or e-mailing Sterts  
**Poetry by Heart is supported by Bodmin Moor Poetry Festival**

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**Family Play by Madam Renard's Theatre**  
**Saturday 5th March. Sterts Studio 7.30pm Tickets £8/6**  
Please note age recommendation of 16+

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**Advance Notice for your diary.**  
 Sterts AGM will take place in the Studio Friday 26th February 7.00pm  
[www.sterts.co.uk](http://www.sterts.co.uk) or 01579 362382 or Box Office 10am-1pm weekdays.  
 Sterts, Upton Cross Liskeard PL14 5AZ  
 Café open for all shows. Booking 07866 292414

← February's Events at our partner, Sterts Theatre.

Do check the website of our partner the Caradon Heritage Partnership too, for news of other local events.

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# Diary of Events

## February 2016



Do remember that although the café – or other rooms in the House – may be temporarily closed for repair and decoration work, the rest of the House will normally be open. Please call in and perhaps re-visit the permanent displays on the top floor. Visitors are still calling in, even in late-January!

Every Thursday	Knit n' Knatter meet from 10.30 am to 1.30 pm. All welcome.
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup>	Liskeard Poetry Group 4 – 6 pm
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup>	Table-top sale with Louise Thomas in the Surgery
Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> – March 5 <sup>th</sup>	“Rummage Returns’ with John Early in the Surgery
<b>COMING IN MARCH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fake or Fortune (antiques valuation) March 1<sup>st</sup></li> <li>• Opening of the Stuart House Art and Craft shop, running until October</li> <li>• The AGM on March 21<sup>st</sup></li> <li>• There is likely to be more, as bookings get back to normal!</li> </ul>

We know that you will understand that until we know when the building and decoration work in the kitchen and café will be completed, we cannot arrange a New Year ‘Bash’ for Members!

Meanwhile, if you have yet to pay your **2016 Subscription**, please do, and gift-aiding it would be appreciated if you are able. Please note that the bank account number should read 00155002 (there is a zero missing on the form).

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

*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.*