

Newsletter

April 2018

A Sense Of Ownership : The Chairman Casts An Eye To The Future



Trustees L to R: Dave Howard, (Eileen Crouch: Friends' Liaison see p.3), Tony Britton, Bob Hollingdale, Rachel Bennett, Sue Glencross, Victor Briggs, John Gliddon (see p.6 for a reminder of their responsibilities).

At the recent AGM I took the opportunity to talk about the way forward now that Stuart House is classified as a CIO. This will involve all of us, not just trustees, not just stewards and volunteers but all of us, as we are all Friends of Stuart House.

There is still much to be done to ensure that the House continues to be what it truly is - an historic building which offers much as an arts and heritage centre. Reputedly Stuart House is the oldest surviving medieval town house in Cornwall. I envisage a time when visitors will continually enjoy a developed "whole House experience" when each room offers something of special and possibly unique interest.

It would be easy for me to list all that has been done, has to be done, ought to be done, can be done and might be done but I don't think our editor would allow me the column space! However I can place a particular emphasis on one room - the Surgery, a room that in recent times has been used principally as the shop. For some time the trustees have been concerned that Friends (formerly Members) should receive something tangible for all the time, help, energy, money and so forth given to the House. The Surgery has been designated the 'Friends of Stuart House Room', to be used for a variety of purposes by the Friends themselves. The room will also be used at times for meetings. It does need a certain amount of redecoration which I hope the Friends, in the main, will undertake.

We think of our ownership of Stuart House as being a partnership. The trustees are Friends who are entrusted with particular responsibilities, the stewards and volunteers are Friends who give freely of their time, others are Friends simply because they want to support. We all have the best interests of the House at heart.

To conclude:

"Stuart House is about working as a team; it is about fulfilling the dreams and ideas which those who founded the Trust have entrusted us with in a way in which we honestly believe is the right path." **Bob Hollingdale, Chair of Stuart House Trust.**



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Honorary Solicitors to Stuart House Trust

Hon. Sec. Sue Glencross' News of March's AGM



As Trustees we were all pleased with the outcome of the AGM which encouraged exchanges of views and questions. I announced at that meeting that the dates of the next two meetings will be **7 p.m. in each case on 18th June and 17th September**. Let us hope for a record attendance! New 'Friends' of all ages will be welcomed by all.

This would be an opportune time to remind everyone that Trustees are also Friends of Stuart House, as is our House Manager, Sioux.

It is anticipated that long before the June meeting audited accounts for 2017 will be available and copies will be provided. A combination of the AGM being slightly earlier than usual and the fact that rain (or in this case 'snow') stopped play meant that the accountant could not quite deliver in time.

Treasurer Tony delivered a precis of receipts and expenditure for the past year and I would not propose going into detail as all will be there in black and white once the accounts are presented. For the time being, please be content in the knowledge that funds in the Trust's bank account stood at a massively encouraging £31,397. We must not, however, be complacent as moneys have now been set aside for a new gas boiler and new garden furniture, plus other smaller items of proposed expenditure. The new boiler is due to be installed in April.

Tony had anticipated a cash outflow of around £2,800 at the beginning of 2017 but in fact the outcome was that income exceeded expenditure by £10,401. For 2018 he anticipates a small outflow of £1,400. Please let us all use our best fund-raising efforts this year to show Tony next year that (once again!) he was wrong.

We have Victor to thank for his hard work in the café and Nancy for the gallery bookings - both of which contributed enormously to the financial success of 2017.

As I informed those present at the meeting, the Trustees now deal with many matters by email. Not only does this mean that quick decisions can be made, but we also have accurate records of what has been said as all emails are stored electronically. Reports given prior to monthly meetings are stored both electronically and with hard copy. All Trustees are embracing what is now an accepted and expected means of communication and decision-making.

We hope to encourage as many of you as possible who choose the hard black and white copy of the Newsletter (rather than the colour electronic version) to agree to collect it from the House rather than having it posted to you. If you are agreeable, please notify Sioux. It goes without saying that anyone who lives away or who is unable to visit the House can of course continue to have the newsletter posted.

.....'When you've got Friends & Neighbours..... and your house may be tumbling down'.....I know I speak for everyone when congratulating our editor Rachel on her so well documented exhibition depicting (among other things) the restoration of Stuart House over the years. I certainly increased my knowledge of various historical facts. The enormous efforts of others in acquiring the House and restoring it should never be forgotten and serve as a reminder to those of us who were not involved at the time of the dedication of those who were. Now it is up to all of us to continue to raise funds to maintain the House and keep it open as an Arts & Heritage Centre.

Sue Glencross, Hon. Sec.

The Friends of Stuart House

The draft Constitution of the Friends of Stuart House was in the Newsletter of September 2017 and confirmed, with the new charity number added, in February. Just as a reminder, the OBJECTS of The Friends are:

- (i) To support Stuart House CIO Registered No. 1175842 ('the Trust') with the preservation and maintenance for the public benefit the property known as Stuart House, Liskeard ('the House')
- (ii) To meet with the Trustees of Stuart House Trust ('the Trustees') four times each year so that there can be a mutual sharing of views on the day to day running of the House
- (iii) To help with the raising of funds to achieve the ongoing objectives of the Trust
- (iv) To meet socially from time to time; and
- (v) To actively promote the continuance of the House as an Arts & Heritage Centre.

As Hon. Sec. Sue Glencross explained at last year's EGM, and also in the Newsletter of April 2017, Eileen Crouch is acting as 'The Voice of the Friends'. Eileen spoke encouragingly to Friends at the AGM of March 12th, and the following letter from her proposes a first meeting.

Hello **Friends of Stuart House**,

At the AGM on Monday, 12 March, the future became clearer for the Friends and we feel more positive about our role. As Friends, we should aim towards becoming a more integrated team to progress the part we play meeting our aims and objectives. We do not have to start from scratch because there are already areas of responsibility in place upon which we can build.

Please come to the meeting with, if possible (but not obligatory), an idea of a project you would like to commit to – alone or with others. We need to plan well ahead so there will be plenty of time to prepare an event, whether an exhibition, sale, garden party, day trip or anything else! The Max Lock Gallery is already being booked into 2019. If you are able to bring ideas in writing, they can be contained in our "first ideas" report to the Trustees, who of course are also Friends.

"The Surgery" is to become the Friends' Room where meetings can be held, formal and otherwise. Friends will set up the room and present it as another attraction in the house, although we understand that it will also have to be hired out, and is also currently scheduled to have four Friends' Craft Shows a year. All proposals from our meetings will be submitted to the Trustees for approval before action is taken. Our Chair of Trustees expressed a wish to give visitors an increased experience of the story of the House itself and we must consider ways of achieving this, which could include use of material from our archives.

The inaugural meeting of the Friends is booked for **Thursday, 19th April**. In order to try to accommodate everyone who would like to attend, this meeting will take place in "duplicate". One **between 3.30 and 4.30 p.m.** and a further one from **7.00 to 8.00 p.m.** Refreshments will be served. **If you are not able to attend, do please contact me with your ideas via the House. Messages will be passed on.**

These inaugural meetings are being organised by me but, once support has been established, it will be for Friends of all ages to organise themselves. I will be around to offer help, if required.

The invitations to this and to future meetings are also open to our valued **Volunteers/Stewards** who are considered honorary Friends. When they become aware of what else is going on they may wish to become full Friends.

Eileen Crouch, Friends' Liaison and a past Chairman of the Trust

April's Thoughts from Our Garden's Overseer, Malcolm Mort.



During February, the Stuart House garden had started to perk up in readiness for Spring. Fresh leaves and new growth were abundant and even the lawn looked as if it would soon need a feed and a trim. Alas, winter returned with a vengeance on St David's Day, March 1st, the first day of Meteorological Spring (when as a child in Swansea I had to pin a daffodil or leek to my school jumper). This year the early

daffodils and primroses shivered, shrivelled and bent their heads in disbelief at the hard frosted ground, the bitter cold wind and the snow. The luxurious new growth of the Bear's Breeches, *Acanthus mollis*, already over a metre high, was felled in a night. The tubers are hardy down to about -20°C, so hopefully they will have another go. Over a hundred new dwarf narcissi and daffodil bulbs were planted in the autumn, but as yet there is little sign of them, though strangely the tulips are already in bud. By contrast, the daffodils bulbs planted in the beds on The Parade in the town centre were in glorious bloom by the second week of March. Maybe that's because they have more warmth on sunny days whereas our garden is very shaded and doesn't really see much sun until past the Spring Equinox. Let's hope that by mid-April, the jewel beds and borders will have erupted into their normal colour palette. Certainly, masses of glossy bluebells leaves are shooting up, even in places they have no right to be, seemingly oblivious to those east and north winds.

Visitors to the garden will no doubt have been surprised to see a different form of growth which has sprung up. Against the library wall is a great mass of scaffolding needed for repair of their windows; and between our garden and the new Wetherspools site a new weathered-brick boundary wall over 2 metres high is taking shape. Sadly, this has meant that we have to lose the mirror and the cupressus tree near the entrance to the garden, and also a bay tree a little further along. However, the trustees have ambitious plans for redesigning and expanding the sitting area.

This includes new garden furniture, so do watch this space.



The shed was recently given a good clear out, revealing hundreds (yes, literally) of snails, over-wintering in every little quiet nook and cranny. What to do with them all? Personally, I couldn't bear to end their lives so just shooed them away, preferring to try to grow plants that they don't like. But there are so many of them

they must enjoy chomping away at something – I can only hope they prefer the weeds. Perhaps the population will decrease now that the new building next door has covered what, over the years, had become a wild nature reserve.



During the cold weather, both garden ponds were frozen solid, so I wonder what has happened to the water plants, as they show no sign of life. Water gardening is not a subject with which the current gardening volunteers are familiar, so if any readers are knowledgeable in this area and would be keen to advise, please do get in touch.

Gardening is always a battle of sorts: against diseases, creatures and weather. Climate has always changed, sometimes gradually, sometimes suddenly. There is been much scientific talk recently about our icy March, said to be caused by the upper atmosphere of the Arctic being 20°C warmer than usual, so that lower-lying cold air was spun southwards.. It's fascinating to consider at how people long ago selected, cultivated and improved their plants. Did they wonder about the miracle of seed germination, or the beauty of primroses in early Spring? (Flowering plants have been around for 250 million years.) And will those who come after us, thousands of years from now, still grow food and garden the way we do? Will they be plagued by the same weeds? And will they still gaze at simple but beautiful Spring primroses?

Timely Topical Lesson (rather than Tip)

Again this year at the end of February (*yes, February, ed.*) there was gardening advice galore in the press about how it was now time to start sowing vegetables and annuals outdoors. But this will only work if the Spring is warm and even then cloches are needed. Mid-April is early enough for nearly everything. For tender annuals, wait a few weeks longer and don't panic that you've left it too late – things will soon catch up. If you really want early salad crops or annuals, chose very hardy sorts, sow in September, and keep a cloche or two handy. Mustards, spinach, oak-leaf loose lettuce, calendula and cornflower respond really well to this technique.

Photographs of the snowy primroses, garden lattice and reflections in the round pool are Malcolm's, and the editor took the ones of the building work in progress.

Val Moore's Stuart House Garden Club next meets on Monday 30th April, 11.30am. to 1.30pm



*Gardening enthusiasts might like to note that the **Old Cornwall Society's** next talk is by Jo Totterdell on **Daffodils**. Friday 13th April, 2.30pm. Long Room of the Public Hall,*

MUSIC at STUART HOUSE



The Java 5 concert on Sunday 18th March, which had been so looked forward to, became another victim of the weather. With several of the singers, as well as audience, living out in the snowy sticks, the decision was made to cancel, and all those who had bought tickets were informed, with trustee Dave Howard staying in the House in case anyone turned up. We cannot say anything about re-scheduling yet, but will let you know if this can be done.



Ilow Splann Sunday 15th April 2.30pm

The next concert in the Stuart House Concert Series is on Sunday April 15th at 2.30pm, when we welcome a return visit from Ilow Splann. The duo of Carlton Crouch and Maggie Wilmott play a variety of instruments including recorders, violin, drums, guitar, saxophones and keyboards. The programme will be 'an intimate, acoustic recital' (with some use of a sampler and some appropriate amplification), and include more contemporary music (in contrast to their Renaissance and Baroque repertoire) and some Cornish folk tunes and songs, at least one in Cornish. Ilow Splann means 'splendid (or shining) music', and we look forward to a splendid afternoon's entertainment.

www.ilowsplann.co.uk



Bo Foaks Memorial Walk

Saturday 21st April

Moorswater: from a Place of Pilgrimage to East Cornwall's Industrial Powerhouse.

Meet at Stuart House at 9.45am. A joint walk by Iain Rowe and Brian Oldham in memory of the gentle giant who was a generous supporter of Stuart House and its music programme. For those who don't fancy the walk down Old Road and the climb up Lamellion Hill, meet us at the bottom of Old Road, Moorswater at 10.15am. Soup lunch will be available in Stuart House afterwards, which we'll book before setting off. The walk may be muddy!

All Welcome

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Further to page 1: a reminder of the Trustees and their main areas of concern:

Bob Hollingdale – Chair

Dave Howard – Heritage, research

Victor Briggs – Vice-Chair and café

John Gliddon – Buildings & maintenance

Tony Britton - Treasurer

Rachel Bennett – Newsletter, heritage, some publicity

Sue Glencross – Hon. Sec. records of minutes etc., Charity Commission matters.

House Life Recently!



House Manager Sioux has been away poorly for several weeks – an almost unheard-of thing, and we again realise how much she does in and for the House. We wish her a good recovery, and look forward to seeing her back. We thank all those Friends (including Trustees) and other Volunteers who have helped to cover her absence.

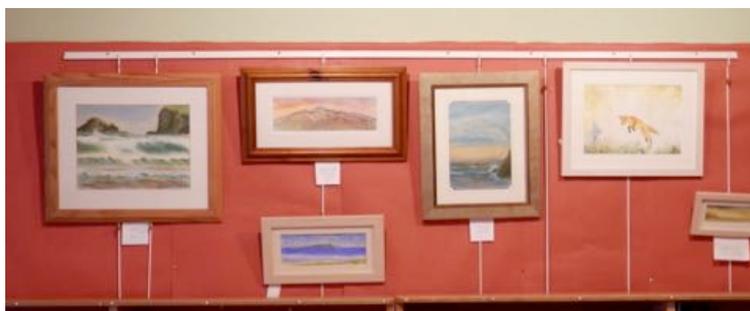
Victor and his team have reported record use of the café recently, and we thank him, and all those involved. We look forward to the garden being accessible to café users again - weather issues aside, we have had to shut it on safety grounds while the Weatherspoons building work on the South and the Library window work on the North goes ahead, both involving scaffolding. Our new high-chair in the café had its first occupant recently.



The extreme weather meant that Stuart House had to close for a couple of days (along with many things in Liskeard!), as we were without water.

Another hiccup was the door to the Surgery deciding to lock itself shut – even Maintenance Trustee John could not get in, but we managed to find other space for the bookings we had in there., and it is now sorted.

The Surgery has seen a new venture in hosting small exhibitions by an 'Artist of the Month'. Alan Kingwell was the first, in February and John Batey - Friend and a past Chairman of the Trust - showed a selection of his watercolours in March (see below). Jayne Wackett will follow in April



Scaffolders bearing poles had to gain access for the Library work through the House which caused some cheerful disruption, and might again!

Gallery Events in the Past Month

The Stuart House and its Next-Door Neighbours: Change and Continuity' exhibition ran from 5th to 17th of March, attracting over 300 visitors. It formed the backdrop to the AGM – see also the photographs on p.1 and



2. Visitors were interested in the time-line showing the changing ownership and development of the House over time in the context of developments in Liskeard and nationally. There were comments on the role women seemed to have played in the ownership of the House, and much interest in the

11 year restoration project, including from those who had been directly involved. Stories were shared, such as first Chairman Geoff Wigham saying that it had been a real struggle to get heritage authority permission to remove the pink bathroom fittings from the King's Room! There was interest too in development of the Passmore Edwards Library (built on the northern garden of the House bought from surgeon William Hammond, then owner, in 1895) and also in the history of the site which Wetherspoons are now building on. Some visitors had assumed the Trust sold this site to the Garage owners, when of course it was the other way round, with the 'pivot' in the history of the House as we know it being 1988, when, after tremendous effort, it was bought by the Trust.

The editor would like to thank all those who helped in the preparation of her exhibition, including Eileen Crouch, Dave Howard, Tony Wood, Jackie Jenkins (Old Cornwall Society) Brian Oldham (Museum and OCS) and Rachel Terrell (Library) and also staff from Wetherspoons and RIO. Nothing has been thrown away!



Nancy and Victor organized another **Mixed Craft Sale** at the start of the month – these always bring in appreciative visitors – and also an **Easter Cards and Gifts Sale** in the Jane Room in the run-up to Easter. The Jane Room looked lovely with this running, and again, interest and sales were excellent.



'Let's Face It' - was a gloriously 'different' exhibition in the week beginning March 19th. Artist Sean Hewitt - an academician with the South West Academy of Fine

and Applied Arts, worked with Bridge Schools and specifically with 7 and 8 year old children from St Cleer Primary school to create wonderfully observed portraits.



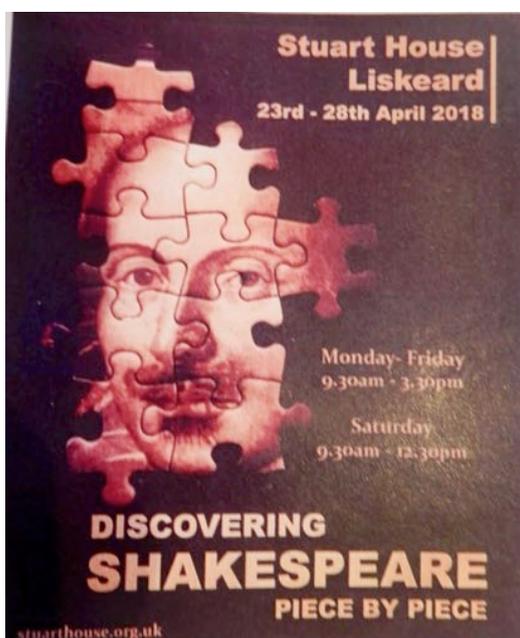
EXHIBITIONS and SALES coming in April



Nancy will co-ordinate another **Mixed Craft Sale** in the Max Lock Gallery from **Monday 9th to Saturday 21st April**. We look forward to an exciting range of crafts, and know that both regular and new visitors will be tempted in.

The first '**Pat's Arts Box**' exhibition of 2018 will run until **Saturday 7th April**.

As the new poster shows, this will be in partnership with other artists, including Richard Jenkins, whose LinoShed has been a regular co-exhibitor. We shall also welcome Alan Kingwell (whose work is of course well known in Stuart House) and Suzy Billing-Mountain, who has recently moved into the area and is now a regular steward at Stuart House. There may be another couple of friends joining too, and we look forward to the whole very much.



The **Discovering Shakespeare Piece by Piece** Exhibition, organised in the Jane Room by Tim Norman, runs from **23rd - 28th April**. Theatre programmes, memorabilia, books, documents and 'other paraphernalia' will be on show, and will help explore how the Bard's changing and expanding world inspired the wealth of poems and plays he created.



Diary of Events

April 2018



Continuing until Saturday 7th	Pat's Art Box with LinoShed and Friends (see p.9)
Monday 2nd	House shut for Easter Monday
Tuesdays 3 rd , 17th	Liskeard Writers' Group meet 2 – 4.30 pm.
Thursdays 5 th , 12 th , 19 th , 26th	Craft Club: all welcome 12 noon to 3pm.
Monday 9 th to Saturday 21st	Mixed Crafts in the Gallery
Monday 9th	Liskeard Poetry Group meet 4 to 6.30pm.
Sunday 15 th	Ilow Splann: concert in the Gallery 2.30 pm. Tickets £7 from reception, include refreshments and a chance to talk with the performers afterwards (see p.6)
Thursday 19th	Friends of Stuart House – first meetings 3.30 to 4.30pm. and another chance 7 to 8 pm. in the Surgery. Refreshments available (see p.3)
Saturday 21st	Fake or Fortune – antiques valuation with Richard Hamm of Bearnes, Hampton & Littlewood. 10am. to 12 noon.
Saturday 21st	Bo Foaks Memorial Walk. Meet in the House 9.45am. (see p.6)
Monday 23 rd to Saturday 28th	Furniture Week with Dave and Wendy (see p.9)
Monday 23 rd to Saturday 28 th	Discovering Shakespeare Piece by Piece. Exhibition in the Jane Room (see p.9)
Monday 30 th to Saturday May 12th	Royal School of Needlework (see p.9)
Monday 30 th	Stuart House Garden Club 11.30am to 1.30pm
Coming in May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal School of Needlework • Arts and Crafts Show • Concert 'Duo Villanesca' • Laurie Scott Originals (arts including sculpture) • Chris Moulder Art – Open Studio • Pat's Art Box

The House, Garden, Old Kitchen Café and Computer Research Suite are open 9.30am – 3.30pm 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. Reception is usually 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