

April 2015

2015 AGM REPORT from Bruce Hawken, Stuart House Chairman.

2014 was a turbulent year for the Trust. Last winter ended with some of the stormiest, wettest weather in living memory. Our south facing gable took a battering and needed significant work to repair cracks, stabilise a bulge and prevent water ingress. It has taken all year to decide what to do, tender the work and raise the finance. The last piece of the jigsaw – a £10,000 grant from Sita Cornwall Trust - fell into place on 16th December 2014. The Town Council, Town Forum, Cornwall Councillors and our insurers have also contributed to the project which will cost around £30,000. Because the wall is solid and old, lime mortar must be used which in turn means waiting until the risk of frosts has passed which means work involving mortar will not begin until after Easter 2015. In the meantime we will have to remove as much as possible from the three rooms affected – Surgery, Jane and Tudor - which will be out of action until the project is completed. This will affect the start of the craft shop and the letting of the Jane room. In spite of these distractions we have managed to continue with improvements to the House. There are new outside signs and a revamped entrance porch together with new internal signs. On the top floor Eileen Crouch and George Vaughan-Ellis have put together a permanent exhibition depicting the work of Henry Rice in the Rowse room. Taken together these changes have significantly improved the presentation of the House and have been well received.

The Sunday concerts and evening lectures as well as art and craft exhibitions continued to give pleasure, raise money and draw people to the House. The Craft shop ran for 6 months building on last year's success and will continue – albeit with a later start because of the wall repairs. The shop did not generate as much profit as last year but has proved its value in the way it contributes to the presentation of the House as a whole. The café had another record year and the garden increases in popularity. 2014 was also the year the nation commemorated the start of the First World War – we were privileged to host Tony Ball's exhibition commemorating those from the area who were involved – some losing their lives - as well as other fascinating facts about the town at that time.

Tony Wood and Roger Catchpole stepped down as trustees. We wish them well and are delighted they will continue to support the Trust's activities when other commitments permit. Jo Hoskin was a newly elected trustee with the following re-elected:

Bruce Hawken (chairman),
Bob Hollingdale (vice chairman),
Tony Britton (treasurer),
Sue Glencross (secretary)
Rachel Bennett, Victor Briggs, John Gliddon, Dave Howard, Val Moore (trustees).

continued on p.2.....

..... Chairman's AGM report, continued from p,1

Financially the Trust had a good year. The overall inflow of funds was mainly due to the receipts which are ring fenced for the repair of the south gable wall. These project funds will be greatly reduced when repairs are finished. The improved position in our unrestricted funds will be a help as we will lose income during the wall repair. A copy of the full Report and Accounts is held in the office should any member wish to see them.

	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Project Funds	Total Funds
Opening Balances 01-Jan-13	2780	12816		15596
Movement in year	-744	1710	20304	21270
Closing Balances	2036	14526	20304	36866

As you will have read in the AGM report, TONY WOOD has stood down from the committee of Stuart House. Eileen Crouch, a past Chairman, pays tribute to him on our behalf .

It was announced at the recent A.G.M. that Tony Wood is to stand down from the Committee, having been a Trustee for thirty years. This tribute to him comes with very warm thanks. A lot of new members have joined the Trust during these years so this is to note the tremendous contribution Tony had made. It is by no means a definitive list, but it gives some idea of the extent of his commitment to the house.

He was a driving force in setting up the Trust and arranging Charity status, in raising funds to purchase the property and then working with the Architect and English Heritage to plan the restoration of the house. The restoration was carried out over fourteen years in a number of phases, each requiring new funding, which was a major achievement.

The garden was transformed from a concrete tennis court to the present layout that was designed by Nigel Mathews of Cornwall Garden Trust, and carried out by Tony and his helpers. With help from others over the years, this labour of love has matured and is now very much appreciated by everyone who discovers our hidden garden.

Tony's culinary talents were appreciated when he and Jane were occasional hosts at our dining-in nights, serving excellent meals produced at their home and ferried to the house.

His knowledge and enthusiasm for history has been used in the house and the town, adding to everyone's appreciation of our local heritage. Awarded the MBE and becoming a Bard of the Cornish Gorsedh indicate the wide respect in which he is held.

I joined the Trust just as the restoration work was being completed and found myself on the Committee, with the remit of making the best possible use of this lovely restored building, to bring in revenue. Tony's enthusiasm was infectious – I appreciated his support for my own efforts - something he gave unreservedly to all members.



On behalf of all Stuart House members, I should like to say a very big THANK YOU !
Eileen Crouch

At the recent AGM the Chairman also reported that **John Batey** had now withdrawn from the Trust. John moved closer to Launceston than to Liskeard three years ago, but had kept up his support by coming in to serve coffee on Thursday mornings. He had been one of the most active members of the Trust for the last 14 years and had been Chairman in 2011-13.

Amongst other things, John had run two very successful auctions, manhandling much of the furniture himself. He had exhibited his own art work and his collection of old implements and had organised both an Art competition and the Bo Foaks Youth Music event, but perhaps his greatest contribution was to develop the system of volunteers serving refreshments, until it covered every day of the week and became the main source of income for the Trust. We are all extremely grateful for his many years of committed service and will also miss his practical skills around the house.

I am sad to report the death of one of our most supportive members. **Sarah Foot** both served on the committee in the 1990s and was then our President for many years. Sarah was a member of the Foot family, daughter of Lord Caradon, the last Governor of Cyprus, and niece to Michael Foot, the Labour Party leader in the 1980s. Born in Jamaica, she developed early a sympathy for the poor and worked most of her life for organisations which helped the less fortunate.

Her enthusiasm for the purchase and restoration of Stuart House sprang from a different aspect of her character. She loved Cornwall and had a fine sense of place. Her book on the river Fowey was followed by a television documentary on it which caught the public imagination. She saw Stuart House as a building of great historic significance in Cornwall but also as a house with a great sense of 'place', an atmosphere worth maintaining.

Sadly she spent several years supporting her husband, damaged by his service in Northern Ireland during the troubles, and then, after his death, herself suffered mental decline and spent her last two years in a Nursing Home.

As a result, her connection to us had faded some years ago, but she had made a great contribution and some of us still remember a delightful tea party she threw for us at her then home near Ince Castle.

Tony Wood



Some notes on the Committee Meeting of 16.3.15 by the ed. as emergency minute-taker..

March's Trustees' Meeting preceded the AGM, but Hon Sec Sue was prevented from attending it after a domestic plumbing emergency.

As well as the usual issues connected with the smooth running of the House, such as cistern repairs, exhaustive liaison with BT, cake supplies and the shortage of volunteers especially in the café (several regulars are doing multiple shifts) there were major items connected with the South Wall repairs ...

.... well, not so much the repairs themselves, but scaffolding and access (needing liaison now with Wetherspoons who are about to purchase the site next door) and getting the rooms which will be affected cleared and secure whilst keeping as much access to the House as possible. Also, the extent of work needed on the King's Room floor needs to be considered again – the aside that 'arguments had been flawed' was not minuted!

We also discussed the costs of getting one of the new What's On notice boards moved to face up the Parade and thus be more noticeable – but the curved railings there are a significant problem. The balance between the need to advertise events and yet to respect the House's presentation (quite apart from 'legal' issues) is an ongoing concern at our meetings

From our Garden's Overseer..

It's nearly mid-spring already, and gardens and hedgerows are suddenly and reassuringly abundant with flowers. In addition to the snowdrops at Stuart House garden, dwarf narcissi, pansies and helebore add to the welcoming sight. Depending on the weather, the wonderful magnolia tree will soon be resplendent – keep an eye out from April onwards.

My mention of knot gardens in the last newsletter prompted the question of whether these had anything to do with the once-fashionable habit of cultivating Japanese knotweed. No, no, absolutely knot! Knot gardens, with their interlacing geometrical patterns were developed from Italian Renaissance designs, and first appeared here in early Tudor times, reaching their height of popularity under Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. True knot gardens are usually square, and totally symmetrical. The designs often had a meaning: there was a lovers' knot, some were designed to mirror a family crest or the patterns found on fabric and jewellery, whilst others were complicated puzzles that wove in and out. The spaces within were filled with the



scented herbs and flowers popular at the time, especially roses, violets, marigolds, and dianthus. These gardens also emphasized colour, and during the darker months of the year coloured gravel or sand might be used to make up for the lack of flowers in bloom. The small clipped box hedges that we associate with creating the pattern of such gardens were not introduced until later: at first twigs, wooden lattice or various other sorts of hedging was used. Stuart House's edging hedges comprise box, (kept neatly trimmed by Barbara Turvey). Despite his tyrannical tendencies, Henry VIII is known to have taken a keen interest in gardening, as seen in the beautiful designs at Nonsuch Palace Surrey, (pulled down in 1683 by Charles II's mistress, also called Barbara, who sold off the building materials to pay gambling debts); and at Whitehall Palace (destroyed by fire in 1698).

By contrast, Japanese Knotweed was not introduced here until 1825. Widely admired and recommended at first, it took about fifty years for its true and terrifying triffid-like

nature to be realised. This brute now has the distinction of a personal mention in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, and whilst it's not illegal to have it in your garden, woe-betide if it escapes.



Just some of the garden's volunteer team - Malcolm hopes to get the others in a picture a.s.a.p.

As well as the flowers, weeds are emerging in fine form too. Hairy bittercress, *Cardamine hirsute*, an extremely hardy annual, is a plague of paths, cracks, lawns,

bare soil, and is one of the first in flower, especially loving the shelter and damp fertile soils, just what we have at Stuart House. An individual plant can go through many generations in a season, each throwing off around a myriad more seeds. Herbal manuals tell us that the leaves and flowers are edible, and that it was much in demand in Medieval times, especially at the end of winter, for its sharp flavouring.

Thanks to everyone who has donated tools – these are gratefully received and will be well cared for.

Topical tip: Many flowers and vegetables can be started from Easter time in cold greenhouses / frames and windowsills. Wait for another few weeks before sowing anything outdoors to allow the soil to warm up.

Malcolm Mort

In the first week of March, Trustee Val Moore and tireless volunteer Nancy Briggs held a plant sale to help with raising funds towards replacing some of the garden furniture at Stuart House. This was very successful and raised over £130 (including some donations) - not bad for so early in the year, botanically speaking!

Many thanks to Val and Nancy and also Eileen and Linda L. and the garden's overseer Malcolm Mort - without them, the sale would not have been possible.

We hope to hold more such sales during the year 'though because of the effect of House repairs on available space, we can't say when yet but do watch out for details in the Newsletter or contact Val on 01579-208396.

Please save and nurture cuttings or seedlings which might be surplus to your own requirements. If you have anything in flower or otherwise 'ready' before a sale in the House can be arranged, please take them in and leave with Sioux in the Office – Nancy and Victor will take them and sell from their home, in aid of the Trust.



MOORSWATER CIRCULAR WALK

Victorian industrial hub and lost village.

You are invited join us on a circular walk leaving Stuart House, Barras Street, Liskeard at 10am on Saturday 4th April in remembrance of Bo Foakes, who generously supported the Trust. The walk will take in Ladye Park, Moorswater, Coombe etc. and was an area Bo was particularly interested in. There will be some very steep ups and downs and it will be muddy, so good walking footwear and suitable clothing are a must. There will also be an unique opportunity for you to have a light lunch (needs to be booked in advance) back in Stuart House after the walk. If you wish to come on the walk, but avoid the trek down and back, please meet us under the A38 overpass in Moorswater at 10:30am, you will though still need good clothing and footwear.

To book a lunch please contact Sioux on
01579 347347 info@stuarthouse.org.uk

The Bo Foaks Memorial Walk and Lunch - Saturday 4th April

We are pleased to announce our Bo Foaks Memorial Walk and Lunch. This year come and join us on a circular walk leaving Stuart House, Barras Street, Liskeard at 10am on Saturday 4th April (Easter Saturday) in remembrance of Bo Foaks, who generously supported the Trust. This will be circular walk which will take in Ladye Park, Moorswater, Coombe etc. and was an area Bo was particularly interested in. There will be some very steep ups and downs and it will be muddy, so good walking footwear and suitable clothing will be a must. There will also be an unique opportunity for you to have a light lunch back in Stuart House after the walk (approx. 1pm), but you will need to book this in advance please with Sioux. Call 01579 347347 or email her on: info@stuarthouse.org.uk
If you wish to come on the walk, but avoid the trek down and back, please meet us under the A38 overpass in Moorswater at 10:30am, you will though still need good clothing and footwear and need to book your lunch with Sioux please.

Alison Smith plays classical guitar on Sunday 22nd March the first performance in the 2015 Stuart House Music Programme.

The 2015 Stuart House music programme began with a classical guitar recital by Alison Smith. There was a large and enthusiastic audience who were enchanted by her mellifluous tones and consummate technique. She demonstrated through her varied program the range of music and styles that can be played on the classical guitar. She started with variations on Handel's theme known as the '*Harmonious Blacksmith*'. She played a beautiful *Andante* and fiery *Allegro* from a Bach sonata. Alison then took us on a journey through exquisite and ethereal Gaelic musings by Gary Ryan, a Fantasia on themes from *La Traviata* and four delightful *Incantations* written by the contemporary composer, William Lovelady, drawn from such disparate sources as jazz and West African rhythms. She finished with an atmospheric and highly romantic *Hungarian Fantasy* by J K Mertz.



Alison demonstrated her ability to relate to and connect with her audience by her introductions and fascinating account of some of the techniques of playing the classical guitar. People were fascinated to hear about guitarists' combined use of fingertip and nail to produce the sound and the constant battle to keep the finger nails in perfect condition. Everyone was amazed at the lengths guitarists have to go to if they break a nail, carrying round extensive repair kits and Ping-Pong balls as the nearest thing to the texture of actual nails!

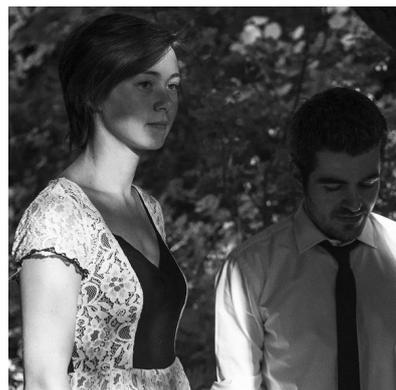
Upon request, Alison played an encore of the haunting and beautiful '*A Day in November*' by Leo Brouwer. We look forward to a return performance by Alison in the future.

The whole experience was enhanced by being surrounded by Jane Wood's wonderful exhibition of pictures created on her iPad.

Angela Wunnam. (the concert series organizer, seen left with Alison)



The next performance will be on **Sunday 26th April by Gareth Lee and Annie Baylis, the popular Cornish folk duo**. Come and be warmed and delighted by their rhythm, singing and variety of instruments.





Special Music Event: Saturday 6th June, 7.30pm

Harpichordist, Caroline Bergius returns to Stuart House with the world renowned violinist, Rebekka Hartmann and her Stradivarius.

Their programme will include works from Corelli, Handel, Biber and Bach.

Make a note in your diary as this is an event not to be missed!
Look out for more details and further publicity.



Jane Wood's exhibition 'Digital Diary ; A New Way of Drawing' in the Gallery from March 16th attracted lots of interest and admiration. She demonstrated how the iPad drawings were built up using an App called Brushes, and the varied images displayed were beautiful and evocative.

Fund-raising event for Stuart House
POETRY & ART Exhibition : 1-13 June 2015
INFO FOR EXHIBITORS

Invitation

to Artists, Photographers, Crafters, Needleworkers, Musicians, etc.
Eileen Crouch welcomes you all to use your talents to illustrate some of the poetry in a
new book of her collected poems
PAINTING WITH WORDS IN CORNWALL.

Exhibits to be appropriately presented for sale, with a modest commission payable to
Stuart House for its Garden Fund – to purchase new garden furniture.
Looseleaf copies of the poems, from which to choose, are in the Cafe. Please take your
chosen poem, and make a note on the sheet provided of your name, title of poem and the
medium you will be using. Eileen will provide a copy of the relevant poem to exhibit
beside each entry.

Entry Form should be completed, well before 1st June, and handed to the House Manager
together with entry fee of £2.00. The entry fee will cover the main exhibit plus any cards
or related items for sale (on commission).

Exhibits to be handed in prior to 1st June. Exhibition to be hung on 31st May.

There will be a preview on Monday evening, 1st June.

*The poems include inspirational Cornwall, Liskeard's heritage and events, gardens and the weather, so
you may already have work that will relate to one.*



The clay poppy from the 2014 *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* installation at the Tower of London, currently on display in the Jane Room, together with a photograph and information on Frank Morcom, resident of Stuart House, killed in action in 1917 (see the article in the last Review). It will be on display elsewhere in the House during the restoration work.

ON THE HENRY RICE TRAIL – Visit to Pendean – No.38 on the Map

Architect for Pendean was Henry Rice – built for Albert C.L. Glubb during the 1850's - a gift from his father, Peter Glubb, owner of the Westbourne estate.

Subsequent generations made some changes including extensions to the sitting room, library and kitchen. Recent owners of the property, Cornwall Council, used it as a children's home for a number of years. During 2014 it was sold and the new owner is restoring it for family occupation and has shared his enthusiasm with us.

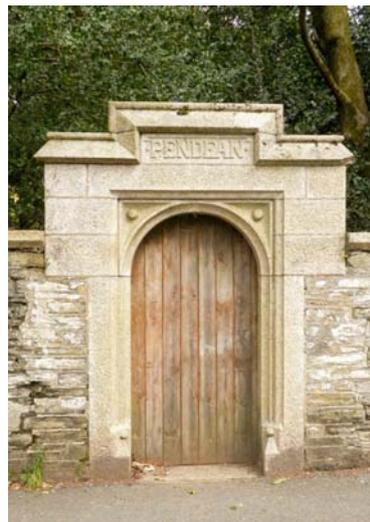
Leader of the Henry Rice Project, George Vaughan-Ellis, was invited to bring a group to see the work now in progress. This revealed that many original features remain, such as fireplaces, bookcases and carved wood panelling in the hall and on the staircase. The wood carving is the work of A deC Glubb, who has included his and his wife's initials in the carvings.

Some of the work being undertaken particularly took our interest. In the sitting room two glazed arched doors have been re-fitted, having been discovered in the cellar. Removal of the partitions at the side of the stairs and on the landing returned the staircase to its original state, with the impressive wood carvings now fully displayed. Room dividers in the bedrooms have been removed, revealing their spacious proportions. Overgrown shrubs and trees have been cut back making it possible to imagine a lovely garden – in due course.

We are very pleased that this part of the town's architectural heritage has been saved from possible demolition and redevelopment and thank Mr Browning for enabling us to follow this important restoration work on the Henry Rice Trail.

Eileen Crouch

NOTE: The Henry Rice Trail Map and our Album "The Life and Work of Henry Rice" are available from Reception.



PAST TIMES : ('though not from past minutes this time..)

We are indebted to Jackie Jenkins for finding this interesting piece from the Cornish Times of 4th June 1904.

Stuart House is one of the most ancient and interesting houses in Liskeard and, as the name indicates, has historical association with the stirring times of the Restoration when King Charles is understood to have stayed there. In the bright June sunshine the old place was gay on Thursday for the wedding of Miss Beatrice Hammond and the interesting fact has been recalled that this is the first wedding that has taken place from Stuart House for the last 70 years.

Wedding at Liskeard
Benson—Hammond

The Parish church was filled on Thursday with a large and fashionable congregation on the occasion of the marriage of Mr. Robert Benson, the youngest son of the late John Benson of Tavistock and Miss Frances Beatrice Hammond, daughter of Mr (*Dr?*) and Mrs Hammond of Stuart House, Liskeard,. Both the bride and groom were well known locally, Miss Hammond having interested herself in Church and especially as a Sunday School teacher, and Mr. Benson has resided in the town for a number of years as one of the stewards of the Duchy of Cornwall. The wedding consequently held a great deal of interest among the townfolk and residents of the neighbourhood, and whilst the nave of the church was filled with a number of invited guests, the remaining portions were occupied by many interested spectators, while others lined the path from the Lychgate to await the arrival and departure of the bridal party. Throughout this service the path was laid with crimson carpet which was continued through the chancel to the east end.

(Note, even in 1904 they could make errors confusing which King Charles stayed at the house).

And a few 'you might miss it' notes.....



The **South Wall** – soon the projecting gable wall will be shrouded in scaffolding ready for the repairs to begin. There may be new neighbours too – and the end of the green hoarding.

The Arts, Crafts and Gift Shop will have to close after Easter Saturday because the Doctor's Surgery needs to be cleared for the South Wall repair work. We hope to re-open in June, and run through to St Matthew's Fair Day on Saturday 3rd October as usual.

The photo shows the **House Administrator, Sioux** in the Shop. She was thanked at the AGM for her 10 years' service.

Sioux's 'lose a stone in 6 weeks' effort has been successful and she thanks all those who sponsored her – please could any monies due (to be split between Stuart House funds and the soccer scholarship scheme for her daughter) be handed in to her. More contributions are very welcome!



These **bins** are now screened (STOP PRESS!) – thank you Malcolm. The **garden door** will be painted in 'house blue' as soon as Victor has the opportunity.



Harpers Bizarre & Con Brio

7.30 pm on Saturday 28th **MARCH**
Sterts Studio.

Booking online www.sterts.co.uk or by phone 01579
362382

Don't dawdle or blink,
or you'll miss them!

Not until (or unless) you
reach Heaven might you
hear their likes again.



A privileged elder son, and stammeringly shy, Harry Cane has followed convention at every step. Even the beginnings of an illicit, dangerous affair do little to shake the foundations of his muted existence - until the shock of discovery and the threat of arrest cost him everything. Forced to abandon his wife and child, Harry signs up for emigration to the newly colonized Canadian prairies. Remote and unforgiving, his allotted homestead in a place called Winter is a world away from the golden suburbs of turn-of-the-century Edwardian England

Saturday 4th April 6.30pm

and, Saturday 11th April
7.30pm Sterts Singers

Full details and bookings -
www.sterts.co.uk

Diary of Events

April 2015



ALL MONTH – parts of the House will be closed from 7 th April for the repairs of the South Wall	HOWEVER, except for Good Friday (3 rd) and Easter Monday (6 th), the House - including the café and garden and permanent Henry Rice exhibition and the Research hub and Linda Maynard's studio off the King's Room - remains OPEN. Only the Tudor Room, the Jane Room and the Doctor's Surgery are directly affected by the repairs. Do call in.
Until Easter Saturday	The Stuart House Arts. Crafts and Gift Shop will be open 9.30 am to 3.30 pm. (see p.10)
Every Thursday	"Knit n' Knatter" 10.30am to 1.30 pm. They will meet somewhere in the House, even if the Jane Room is out of action.
April 4th	Moorswater walk in memory of Bo Fouks leaves Stuart House at 10am. Light lunch available afterwards but needs advance booking with Sioux. (see p.5)
Monday 13 th .	Liskeard Poetry group meets in the café.
Sunday 26th	2.30 pm. Concert in the Gallery with complimentary tea and biscuits and a chance to meet the performers afterwards. Gareth Lee and Annie Bayliss – folk duo from the south of Cornwall. (see p.6)
COMING IN MAY	Wed 6 th – talk on The Great Evacuation of World War II by Eileen Crouch. Sales and exhibitions should resume, dependent on the progress of the repairs – check in Stuart House.

*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 2 pm.*

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