

# Newsletter

August 2021



**At last:  
Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> August  
THE DOORS WILL BE OPENED!**

For news of things to come, see  
p.3 for opening times  
p.3 and p.8 for exhibitions  
p.1 for Friends' Garden Party



**The  
WELCOME BACK  
GET TOGETHER**

**Sunday September 12<sup>th</sup>  
from 3pm**

**for Friends and their  
Guests**

**Bring Your Own Food**

**Drinks are on Us!**

**Entertainment Provided**

*Please let Sioux know that  
you are coming*

## Let's Get Together!

Here is a special invitation from the trustees and myself to join us to "celebrate" our re-opening with a Garden Party/Get Together on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>. September. Very few of us would have realised just how long the House would be closed due to the pandemic but at last something approaching the "old normality" is returning in our lives. It was in March of 2020 that I promised we would welcome back that normality with a celebration – I even mentioned popping the champagne corks, so who knows! – and we do hope you will be tempted to come and join us. What could be better than good company, good food and good entertainment in the perfect setting of the House's garden! Don't forget to bring family and friends as well. We're looking forward to seeing you there.

*Bob Hollingdale*

**From our chairman, Bob Hollingdale**

## **This is the moment .....**

Yes, in the words of a reasonably well-known song and completely out of context, this is the moment we've been waiting for! The House reopens to the general public on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> August when there will be the first opportunity for almost eighteen months to enjoy the delights of the garden and limited fare in the Old Kitchen Café. Sioux, our House Manager, will in the first instance be manning the House almost entirely on her own and some of the erstwhile social conditions will continue to be requested. The House opening hours will not be quite as they were and all details are to be seen in Sioux's contribution to the newsletter (p.3). From 9<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> August we will be staging The Celtic Celebration Exhibition: arranged and overseen by Sioux and Gaby, with invaluable "consultancy advice" from Eileen, this promises to be the perfect start to a new era. To understand more about what I mean about "a new era" please read my contribution headed "A Matter of Great Concern".

I have previously mentioned the contributions made by a number of individuals during the lockdown. I again pay tribute to my fellow trustees Sue, Tony, John and Dave, who amongst other things, have dealt with the difficult task of making decisions, not always understood, during the long period of lockdown; to Sioux and Gaby who have been giving the House much more than the standard spring clean; to Malcolm and Jeff who have maintained the garden to an award winning standard and who have suffered the frustration of having virtually no-one see it and to Rachel and Tim who have been the first line of communication between the House and the outside world through the medium of newsletter, facebook and website. (Oh dear, this is beginning to read too much like a retirement speech!)

On behalf of all the trustees it is a great relief to be able to write "welcome back – we are looking forward to seeing you again!"

## **A Matter of Great Concern**

The number 392 will probably mean absolutely nothing to you, but it is extremely relevant in the context of what I am writing. Alongside many others, the trustees have had time during the lockdown to dwell on all matters, in their case particularly pertaining to Stuart House. When you look at the here and now the House is in good hands. We have a dedicated group of trustees, a House Manager who frequently goes above and beyond, volunteers giving willingly of their time and Friends contributing in many different ways. Financially the House is on a firm footing thanks to the generous donations received and Government help during the pandemic. Through a personal involvement in Stuart House all have helped to continue to build on the foundations laid by the initial "restoration group".

However, the trustees have ever-increasing concerns that the here and now is in danger of becoming the been and gone. As is the problem for many groups and organisations it is so very, very difficult in the present social climate to attract a younger age-group with a view to being involved, but new blood brings a new form of enthusiasm, new ideas, energy, excitement and so forth. Like it or not, that is what we need in Stuart House and this is why I am asking you, if you can, to undertake a personal recruitment drive. Somewhere in the depths of our community there have to be people who are just what we are looking for. Can you help find them? Can you chat to people without being overly persuasive? Are you actually the person we are looking for?

Individuals who have given so much time and effort over the years cannot be expected to go on for ever. There is a pressing need to ensure the future, to continue to achieve much, to give the Liskeard community something they can be proud of. Believe you me, there is a very real danger of this not happening in its present state. We need to act now, to usher in a new era, to make sure the here and now doesn't become the been and gone, but rather a future on which we can continue to build.

And 392? Well that is the combined age of the present five trustees!!

## House Manager Sioux's August News

**YAY!!!!!! We have lift off!**



*House Manager Sioux stripping the front door ready for repainting and re-opening!*

**Monday 2nd August** is our re-opening day. Things will not be quite the same, as certain changes have needed to be made. We have lost some of our volunteers, for various reasons, and are in dire need of recruiting more.

**As a result, our opening times will be**

**9.30am to 3.30pm  
Monday to Thursday**

*with*

**beverages, biscuits  
and cakes available  
in the cafe**

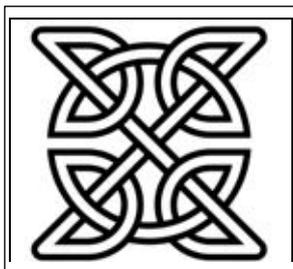
However, we will try to open when we have events booked in the Gallery, so our hirers do not miss out on footfall. Please bear with us whilst we sort things out.

### **Do you have spare time on your hands and enjoy meeting people?**

Are you fed up with being stuck inside the same four walls?  
Do you have an interest in history or arts and crafts?  
Could you assist with stewarding static exhibitions?  
Do you know someone who might be interested in volunteering?

If so, then **PLEASE** get in touch in any of the following ways:  
Telephone 01579 347347, email [info@stuarthouse.org.uk](mailto:info@stuarthouse.org.uk) or  
letterbox in door next to Wetherspoons.

### **Our first event will be the long awaited "Celtic Art 2020" retitled "The Celtic Celebration" 9th-21st August.**



Although we so often think of Scotland, Ireland and Wales as being the Celtic Nations, the Celts spread far and wide. Obviously Cornwall is steeped in Celtic mythology and history: just look at our tartans and Celtic crosses. Lots of European countries have strong connections. There are many examples in Antipodean cultures. Even America has Celtic vibes, with the migration of miners.

Some of you will have already received a letter from me enclosing an entry form. If anyone else would like to be involved please pop in, or email [info@stuarthouse.org.uk](mailto:info@stuarthouse.org.uk), or telephone on 01579 347347.

This Celebration will be a collection of all things Celtic - art, crafts, Gorsedd & Bards, history, music, and so much more.

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



The central pond finally has a few new plants, including one dwarf white waterlily, *Nymphaea odorata minor*, which hopefully means it will be scented and small. Regular readers might remember that last summer the pond was cleaned out completely as it had become a clogged, stagnant, airless mass of water iris roots that continually blocked the pump filter and threatened to topple the central water feature. Since then it has remained unplanted. It's quite a small pond really, just over a metre in diameter, and from now on water

plants will need to be kept within their basket pots rather than be planted into gravel at the bottom - which caused the previous problems.

Water gardening is a new subject to me and so it's meant searching for information among the newspaper articles I save. One, aimed at beginners, helpfully began: "You can make a mini-pond out of anything that holds water. Place it in semi-shade, fill it with water and plant it with suitable aquatics - the right balance will keep the water clear and sweet. Dragonflies and damselflies will be buzzing around in no time." But our pond is in full sun and unmovable; and just what are "suitable" plants? I wondered. The author goes on: "In a small feature, just two or three plants will probably do it," before adding: "Don't forget to throw in" (not literally, surely) "a few oxygenating plants." Mmm, confusion already: do the few oxygen plants count towards the two or three that will "do it"? A few plants were mentioned, and from further research I drew up a list of possibilities. Armed with this, I visited a local aquatic nursery, only to find that **not one** (except the waterlily) was stocked. So I ended up buying two oxygenating plants that apparently are happy sitting at the bottom of the pond, their fronds floating upwards, and two "marginals" that can sit just below the water. But what, I further wondered, if the water evaporates and the level goes down, so leaving them exposed? Would they be forgiving? "Weigh the pots down with pebbles", recommends the writer. Yes, but we're no longer supposed to take pebbles from beaches, and buying them only means that someone else has done this for us. In the end, I made use of a few bricks saved from the reject pile when the new wall between Stuart House and the new neighbours was built. The plant pots stand on the bricks, wedged in with other bricks to stop them falling over or trying to float around: it's surprising how readily they want to do this.

If any readers are knowledgeable in this watery subject, I would be very grateful for ideas and advice. And if anyone can spare a plant or two, then yes please, but definitely nothing invasive, so that probably excludes most irises.

For the second time, nothing came of all the efforts made by the wood pigeons in building a nest, this time inside the large bay bush. The female diligently sat there for over three weeks before abandoning it. Curiously there were no signs of chicks nor even broken shells, neither in the nest nor on the ground. Did any of the locally resident gulls, rats or crows find and attack them? All these will root out and eat other birds' eggs and fledglings - especially the gulls. Next to the pigeons' rather basic nest constructed purely from twisted willow tree twigs, there is an older nest of different shape, beautifully woven from fine grass and securely lodged between crossing branches. Just how do birds know how to do this? They don't watch other birds or go to how-to-make-a-nest classes. It's innate, I hear you say. But just what is innate behaviour, and how on earth can such skill be simply a consequence of the order of chemicals in the birds' genome? There's so much we don't understand.



*The new window boxes with the garden (spot the fountain?) reflected in the café windows.*

Jeff's window boxes made from recycled wood on the café windowsills are looking a picture. They are filled with begonias, raised from the seedlings found growing last summer in the gravel under the tables. In the Stuart House garden, as well as the usual self-sown goat willow and buddleia, woodland trees will occasionally appear, especially ash and sycamore, spun in on the wind. Earlier this year a strongly growing tree with distinct maple-shaped leaves suddenly and most unexpectedly sprang up near the fan-trained cherry on the library

wall. It was carefully dug out and potted, and is doing well. It will need to be planted out in open ground somewhere, so another question: where? Will it like Sungirt Woods? Recent research showed that 50% of oak trees are planted by jays who, as squirrels do, hide acorns away for winter lunch and then forget many of them so they germinate and trees spread far and wide. How clever of oaks to know all about animal forgetfulness.

Many thanks to Val Moore for offering to donate a Duke of Edinburgh rose to the garden. Press reports tell us that this is a new rose recently created to mark what would have been Prince Phillip's 100th birthday on June 10th, 2021 and which was given as a gift to the Queen to plant in the rose garden at Windsor Castle. Yet an internet search states that The Duke of Edinburgh Rose is an Old Rose, introduced in 1868. So can it be that there are now two roses with this name? Surely not, since horticultural convention prevents this. Yet more unknowns. My preferences for roses are: (i) they must be scented, (ii) they must flower for most of the season, (iii) they must have no or few thorns. I'm not sure how the DoE roses comply. A complicating factor is that there is not much space for another rose in the rose bed. Also, a squeezed in new rose might face the problem of rose sickness, a complicated business to do with mycorrhizal fungi (more on this another time). Further discussion needed.

The roses in the front right hand garden flowered magnificently through May and June but then came to a shuddering halt. They've been pruned a little and fed, so hopefully should bloom again in the autumn. The left bed is at present a wildly colourful mix of perennials, including yellow senecio, orange montbretia, blue hebe, pink mallow and valerian, blue vinca and two sorts of hydrangea raised from cuttings. Hydrangeas (see p.6) would no doubt have been known in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Stuart House garden, and are very much back in fashion again. Now is the ideal time to take cuttings of these by the way: snip non-flowering shoots (about 4-6" long) below a node, trim the leaves, and place in a glass of water on a shaded windowsill. Roots should appear in a few weeks.

*Malcolm Mort*



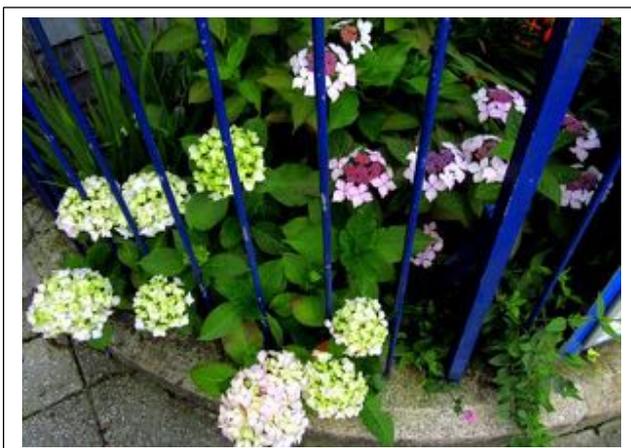
### **OWN SOMETHING FROM STUART HOUSE WALKED ON BY RESIDENTS AND VISITORS FOR AGES!**

Some of the usable sections of the of flooring taken up from the King's Room and elsewhere in the House after the discovery and treatment of woodworm recently will be made into window boxes by Jeff and sold to raise funds for the House.

## Memories from the Minutes from Hon. Sec. Sue Glencross

**1998 continued** ..... Eileen had thoroughly prepared a comprehensive letter outlining the arrangements she had investigated for financing the Celtic Exhibition. The cost of the exhibition was estimated at £1,500 and she had anticipated obtaining that amount from four grant sources – namely Leader II Project, Cornwall County Council, Caradon District Council, and 'Liskeard Millennium Funds'. Sponsorship from local businesses and revenue from sales might also be forthcoming. A logo was to be investigated, with suitable typography, and a co-ordinated image to incorporate all things from letterheads to possible signs in the front ground floor windows. It was felt that the House should provide a welcome and notice boards in the porch and a display table in the Passage should be looked into. At the time there was no physical partition between the parking area which belonged to Taylors' Motors and the Stuart House Garden so it was suggested that a trellis type of screen could be the answer. At no point could the possibility of a Wetherspoons next door and a smart wall dividing the House from the Pub have been foreseen. Oh dear - damp was coming down the chimney into the Dining Room and there appeared to be an outbreak of dry rot to the Passage back door threshold.

8<sup>th</sup> July 1998 and it was hoped that the backfilling of the trench (works carried out on behalf of Miss Lock) would take place within 2 weeks. The railings were being galvanised. It was hoped that the fire alarm could be reactivated. Eileen would investigate whether the building should have a Fire Certificate under the provisions of the Shops & Factories Act. A discussion on finance took place. The Trust's current Lottery Grant Application Certificate had been with the National Heritage Memorial Fund for 2 months and was delayed for some reason. Money was yet to come from the Single Regeneration Budget Fund.



The railings often seem to feature in the minutes.  
Today they form a challenge for the plants behind!

9<sup>th</sup> September 1998 (no August meeting). Services had been installed in the trench and it would soon be backfilled. The railings had been paid for. The fire alarm was not working – apparently due to building dust. NHMF had moved premises twice and had lost the Trust's application, then they had managed to locate it and paid. Bank Holiday displays and exhibitions went well and Jenny Martin had erected an excellent display at the foot of the stairs. Caradon Arts Festival would run from 20<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October.

A programme of decorating and cleaning had been undertaken by volunteers. Tony Wood had been supervising and working with two trainees under the New Deal Scheme. He was also looking into the question of grants for roof insulation and had submitted a grant application to Cornwall Environmental Trust for £2,000 for works relating mostly to decoration and floors including coverings.

Room names were under discussion as was supervision for New Deal trainees; toilet floor coverings post-cards; the selling of members' produce on the premises; single day bookings and table linen etc. It was agreed to try to put on something in relation to the National week of Science & Technology commencing 12<sup>th</sup> March 1999  
*to be continued ....*



*Sioux's recent stripping of the front door shows some of its history.*

## LOCS

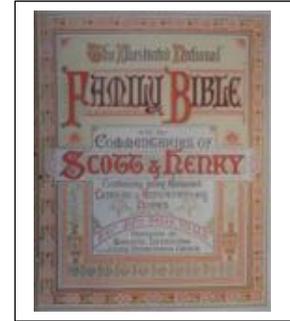


Another snippet from Brian Oldham, President of the Liskeard Old Cornwall Society (and Friend of Stuart House). It links directly to Stuart House

The LOCS have their base in the Trecarrel Room on the top floor of Stuart House, and are usually open to the public on Wednesdays.

## The Roach Family Bible

An Illustrated National Family Bible weighing 12lbs 8oz and measuring 12"x10"x3" with metal clasps can be seen in the Liskeard Old Cornwall Society archive in Stuart House. It contains the message "Mary Elizabeth Mabel Roach from her loving Mother M.E. Roach". By the same hand Edward Roach has been written under the heading "Honour thy Father" and Mary Ellen Roach under "And thy Mother". There is a second entry in different, younger handwriting; Edward Roach again for Father, but just Mary Roach for Mother.



Edward was born in Modbury, Devon in 1861 and married Mary Ellen Millett in 1889. Mary Elizabeth Mabel Roach (known as Mabel) was born in 1892 followed 2 years later by a brother Edward John Roach. 1894 is of course the presentation date in the Family Bible. Tragically, possibly during childbirth, their mother died in March 1894 aged 33.



Edward senior, at 40 and a widower, remarried in September 1900 to Mary Sowden and began employment with the Martyn family at Tremeddan House, Liskeard as Coachman, Groom and Gardener. The family lived nearby at Greenbank Cottages on the Tremeddan estate. In 1901 the family members were Edward (40), Mary (46), Mary E.M. (9), Edward J. (7) and Edward's stepsons John T. Sowden (Groom aged 19) and Fred Sowden (Apprentice Builder aged 18).

Mabel left school at 12 to work as a Tweeny, (a Maid between floors) at Stuart House (now home to her heavyweight Bible). When her cottage was demolished for road widening Mabel was rehoused in one of the many "prefab" houses which were once where Liskeard School Sports Fields are today. Surviving in Liskeard & District Museum are the original certificates to mark Mabel's admission to the National Association Friendly Society on her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and her enrolment to the Civil Defence Corps in 1952. She received a long service medal from the Women's Voluntary Service and was a stalwart of the Darby and Joan Club. Mary Elizabeth Mabel Roach died aged 96 at her home in Melbourne Road in July 1988. (This photo shows her 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday.)



*Mabel's service in Stuart House, from c.1904, was at the time when the Hammond family were owners - William (Medical Practitioner), his wife Frances, 5 daughters and son. There were live-in servants as well as those, like Mabel, who came in. In 1901, living in servants were a parlour maid, a lady's maid, a cook and a nurse. (ed.)*

# Diary of Events

## August 2021



**For the first time in 16 months there are coming events to publicise!**

**House re-opens** Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> August - Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 3.30pm.

**Celtic Celebration** 9<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> August (see p.3)

**The Kingwell Family Exhibition** 23<sup>rd</sup> August to 4<sup>th</sup> September (see below)

**Get Together** for Friends and guests Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September (see p.1)

An Exhibition of  
Paintings and Crafts  
By  
The Kingwell Family  
**STUART HOUSE LISKEARD**



23<sup>rd</sup> Aug till 4<sup>th</sup> Sept  
Open from 10 till 3.30  
Saturday closes at 12.30  
Closed Sunday and Bank Holidays

## CELTIC CELEBRATION

Art  
Craft  
History  
Music  
and more

9<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> August

see p.3

The editor apologises for shortcomings in the presentation of this month's Newsletter partly due to new computer programs to install and learn and working away from home on my lap!

Articles (including memories of events or times at Stuart House), 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. Send to Sioux in the Office or preferably, at present, email to [rachelpbennett59@gmail.com](mailto:rachelpbennett59@gmail.com)