

Newsletter *Dec. 2019/Jan. 2020*

A Message from our Chair ...



... and ivy too – decorating was still underway as this went to print, but the House will look beautiful again – do call in. (ed.)

Deck the halls with !

Yes, it's that time of year and indeed as I write, the House is once again being transformed into a celebration for and of the festive season. No doubt the mince pies and clotted cream will be readily available in the café!

As Christmas approaches and bonhomie abounds amongst the hustle and bustle of everyday life it is perhaps an appropriate time to reflect on what has been achieved in this last year in respect of Stuart House.

If I were to simply list all the exhibitions, concerts and special occasions that the House has hosted in 2019 it would not do them justice. If I were to write in detail about each and every one I would be burning the midnight oil for some considerable time. Sufficient to say that we have seen in recent months a staggering variety of events in the House, events of high quality which have captured the imagination and which have been very well supported. We have seen local people visiting who had never ventured through our doors before. We are reaping the benefits of social networking through our quite excellent Facebook account. The café continues to be a major source of income, the award-winning garden is still our "hidden gem"; the newsletter is a monthly "must read" being interesting, informative and very well produced. The House is playing an ever-increasing role in the community with involvement in major town events.

So, aren't we doing well!!

The dangers of being self-congratulatory are obvious. In reality there is still much to be accomplished in the pursuit of excellence with challenges to be met on a regular basis. A busy House demands more time, more maintenance and of course more income. If involved in any way, shape or form with Stuart House then I hope we can continue to count on your invaluable support in 2020. The House needs you!

For the present however **I, and the other trustees, offer our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.**

Bob Hollingdale

Nadelik Lyskerrys 2019 : if you receive and read this Newsletter in time, a reminder that Liskeard 'Lights Up' is on Saturday 30th November. There is a lot on that day, and Stuart House is the starting point for the Family Trail (although you don't have to be a family to take part!).

Another reminder: Stuart House will close on Saturday 21st December and re-open for 2020 on Monday 13th January. No major works are being undertaken while we are shut this year, but there will be repairs and re-decoration - any volunteers please contact House Manager Sioux.

.....and another reminder for those Friends of Stuart House who renew annually:
2020 SUBSCRIPTIONS are due in January. Still only £10 minimum, but it is an important source of funding as well as a way of showing the support there is for maintaining the House and its activities.
 We are so grateful to all our Friends.



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ROGER HOLMES 1945-2019



We were saddened by the death, in October, of Roger Holmes. Although he was directly involved with the Museum and Old Cornwall Society, rather than Stuart House, he was very supportive and actively contributed to our Heritage Group's – and other's - events and exhibitions, especially those concerned with local mining. He was at one time Museum representative on the collaborative and mutually supportive South East Cornwall Museums' Forum (where this photo was taken in 2006), alongside Stuart House's representation, and was involved in planning the town's Heritage Trail and signposting: again collaborative ventures. Many of us will have gained a great deal from his knowledge of things Cornish and his enthusiasm, and from his work on Liskeard's town-twinning with Quimperle in Brittany and the development of the inter-Celtic festival in Lorient. (ed.)

Eileen Crouch writes of the commemoration of his life:

On Monday 18th November the Public Hall was full of people from all over Cornwall who had come together to celebrate the life of Roger Holmes at an event organised by Liskeard Town Council. Roger was a long-time Councillor and twice mayor, and a Bard of Kernow Gorsedh. The afternoon's arrival music was Cornish, played by Ilow Splann. The Mayor of Liskeard, Rachel Brooks, welcomed us all and then introduced Councillor Bert Biscoe. Having known Roger for many years (both being Councillors and Bards of Kernow Gorsedh) his eulogy revealed Rogers' many talents and contributions to Cornwall, and was beautifully delivered.

Several further tributes were paid, and finally Councillor Andrew Long led the singing of "Cornwall my Home" and "Trelawney", which brought the event to a rousing end. Donations in Roger's memory can still be made to Liskeard and District Museum, for the promotion of local Cornish language and culture.

We shall miss Roger very much.

EXHIBITIONS LAST MONTH

Matt Thornhill's 'Phonetography' ran in the Jane Room for the first week of November, and was greatly appreciated. All the photographs were taken on a phone, and, as he wrote in the excellent Exhibition Guide, the exhibition was 'the antithesis to social media culture no-one takes time to sit back and look at the image any more, to interpret the nuances, the detail, the life, the art, to show the 'insta' photo can still be beautiful and can still tell a much more interesting story'. Great images, including a dragonfly emerging from its nymph stage, people young and old, a lobster pot, and much more. (ed.)



What does the Liskeard Old Cornwall Society DO? ran in the Max Lock Gallery from 11th to 23rd.



The exhibition was fascinating and wide ranging, as the many comments in the visitor's book showed. The Liskeard OCS clearly does a great deal, including preserving buildings and structures, keeping Cornish customs alive, collecting all sorts of archives including thousands of photographs and making scrap-books

of newspaper cuttings (several of which were out for browsing through), holding regular talks, cataloguing the collections, and assisting people with their research interests and enquiries.

Their room on the top floor of Stuart House is generally open on Wednesdays, all newly redecorated after a leak from the boiler pipes earlier in the year, which, fortunately, was spotted before it could do significant damage.

The photograph right shows our OCS President, Brian Oldham, with (centre) archivist Jackie Jenkins and enquirer Lily.



For information: the winner of the People's Prize in the Liskeard Arts' October exhibition of the work of GCSE Art students was Jack Stevens of Looe Academy. Prizes were presented at Liskeard Art's Meeting on 12th November.

December's Thoughts from our Garden's Overseer

It always seems that as soon as the clocks go back, winter descends on gardens. At Stuart House, the pink blooms of Schizostylis in the lawn borders usually manage to struggle on until mid-November, as do the fibrous begonias in the pots and planters. The yellow tuberous begonias in the large tubs opposite the garden door which have flowered so prolifically for months have also finally come to a sudden halt. The tubers will be cleaned, covered with straw, and stored in my greenhouse to prevent rot and frost damage, then brought back to life (in the airing cupboard) in late February. The rose bush in the rear garden that reliably produces the last blooms of the year is Birthday Girl, and this year is no exception – see photograph.

Research shows colour vision tends to fade as we get older. Yellow is the colour that stays brightest for longest, so in gardens frequented by older folk (I include myself) dark reds and blues are best avoided. Flowers of this colour are easily lost in the shadows in any case. Stuart House's garden has many dark pockets, so next year we'll try to enliven these areas with more yellow and white.

Packets of seeds of Honesty and yellow Hollyhock harvested from plants in the garden are now available in the café, each with growing instructions.



Nature delights in variation, and so the Hollyhock seed might well produce flowers in a range of colours. Honesty flowers, usually mauve, can sometimes be white or dark purple, though the seed heads are always attractive silvery white.

Hybridisation (mixing up of genes) frequently occurs in the wild and is a main driver of natural selection and of the ability of plants to adapt to changes in their environments. In his excellent little book "Roses, a Practical and Inspiring Guide to Growing this Beautiful Flower", David Squire tell us that although there are some

three thousand different species of rose, "only" about a hundred and fifty are used for cross breeding. Until the end of the 18th century, the main roses found in British gardens were the wild species of Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*), the Sweet Briar or Eglantine Rose (*Rosa rubiginosa*) and the French Rose (*Rosa gallica*). So-called "Old Roses" are simply crosses between these three, or sports (mutations) which naturally occur. These would have been the roses familiar to Stuart and Tudor gardeners.

Different rose species are found to inter-breed very easily, and modern rose breeding began in earnest when new species began to be brought back from across the world, especially from China. The roses that are familiar to us – Hybrid China roses, Noisettes, Bourbons, Hybrid Perpetuals, Hybrid Teas and Bush Floribundas - date only from more recent times. In the Stuart House rose bed, the two "heritage" bushes nearest the porch door are densely covered in prickly thorns but never flower, no matter how carefully they are pruned. Therefore they need to be replaced. Suggestions are welcomed for a rose that does well in a shady location, flowers over many months, has good fragrance, a bright colour and ideally is

thornless. Can such a wonder exist? Winter and early Spring are the times to prune all roses, except for the wandering ramblers that flower just once, usually in May. The *Rosa lutea* that scrambles over the porch roof is such a rose and should ideally be pruned in June so that the following year's flowers will be on the previous season's growth. Our rose grows exceptionally vigorously, and so its long flailing shoots will need to be tamed somewhat in the winter tidy up.



More recent research (University of Sussex) alarmingly draws our attention once again to the rapid decrease and extinction of a wide range of insect species, vital components of the natural world. A good excuse, then, especially at this time of year, not to worry too much about leaving a few scruffy corners in the garden, and to scatter fallen leaves around the bases of trees and shrubs, rather than removing them.



Three of us help to look after the garden – Lynette, Jeff and myself. So best winter wishes from us, and many thanks to those of you who have contributed plants, feedback, suggestions and garden gratitude this past year.

Malcolm Mort

OUR GARDEN is on LISKEARD RADIO

Malcolm has been asked to talk about our garden on Liskeard Radio, Friday December 6th at about 2pm. He will also have a question and answer session during the December series of features.

Our garden is beautiful now, and has a fascinating history, originally covering the land on which both the Library and Wetherspoons now sit, with orchards, greenhouses and outbuildings and later a tennis court too. When the Trust took it over in 1988 it was the same size as now, but very different, and we have Tony Wood in particular to thank for creating the garden which has been looked after by several volunteers, some linked with the U3A group, and is now tended and developed so wonderfully by Malcolm and his team.

STUART HOUSE GARDEN CLUB

will start again in February.
Look out for details in the next Newsletter.

MUSIC at STUART HOUSE

Ross Morris Classical Guitar

17th November 2019



Classical guitarist Ross Morris captured and transported a rapt, capacity, audience with the sensitivity and technical prowess of his playing. He started with two pieces by John Dowland from the late 1600's. The beauty of his notes and expressive phrasing brought out the bass and counterpoint melodies of these two evocative pieces.

Ross then performed five preludes by the 20th century Brazilian composer, Heitor Villa-Lobos. Each prelude was dedicated to a particular theme ranging from Bach to celebrating the Brazilian Country Dweller. Villa-Lobos had an amazing understanding of how to compose for the classical guitar, a very non-linear instrument. Ross interpreted each prelude with great awareness of the emotional impact as well as the technical requirements. The singing melodies on the lower strings contrasted with the percussive higher parts and bell-like harmonics interspersed with overlapping and even flamboyant arpeggios and chords. Altogether he created feelings of

yearning and nostalgia contrasted with ranges of emotion.

In the Catalan folk songs, arranged by Miguel Llobet, Ross was beautifully able to balance the dying notes of the accompaniment with the exquisite and nostalgic melodies of these haunting pieces. It was as though he could suspend time and hold the melody for a magical moment.

Finally, Ross went on to play *The Cathedral*, a piece with three movements by the Paraguayan guitarist and composer Augustin Barrios. One of the movements comprises a very difficult tremolo which, of course, Ross played apparently effortlessly. In fact, Barrios is one of the most difficult composers to play as he had very large hands. It requires considerable technical development for almost anyone to be able to perform his compositions!

It is very unusual to have a performer, still at a young age, who has not only already developed very considerable technical prowess but also shows an extraordinary sensitivity in the interpretation of his music. As you can see, I and the audience were extremely impressed and moved by Ross's performance. We very much look forward to his return.



Please look out for the 2020
Music Programme starting on
Sunday 23rd February
2.30pm
with
Valley Voices

Angela Wunnam, concert series co-ordinator

COMING in DECEMBER



from Tuesday 25th November until close-down
CHRISTMAS FAYRE in the Max Lock Gallery
and
CHRISTMAS SHOP in the Surgery



Thursday 12th to Saturday 14th
Jane Room

JO MARCH

returns to Stuart House
..... original art, prints, cards

Jo's work will be familiar from many galleries and shows in Cornwall and further afield, as well as from Stuart House exhibitions where the most recent was last November together with Jenny Bruand (where this photo was taken). Jo was brought up in Darite, and the local area has been a strong influence on her choice of subject and the depiction of landscape. Inspiration for Jo's paintings is often drawn from the environment and the people of her childhood. She has an abiding fascination with the eccentricities which exist just below the surface of rural life and in particular the characters whom she observed around her whilst growing up.



Willow Hearts & Stars
Workshop
at Stuart House, Liskeard
Thursday 12th December at 10am and
12.30pm, £25 per person
To book a place go to our Facebook page Tamar
Crafting Workshops and click on our "Events"
call Toni on 07863 117630
email toni@tamarcrafting.co.uk



Holly Wreath Workshop
at Stuart House, Liskeard
Thursday 19th December
10am and 1pm £25 per person
To book go to Facebook Tamar Crafting
Workshops and click on our events
Ring Toni on 07863 117630
email toni@tamarcrafting.co.uk

Thursday 12th December
Thursday 19th December

Two workshops run by Toni Dunmow in Stuart House. Her last ones, on lampshade making and beeswax food wrappers, were very enthusiastically received.

and COMING IN JANUARY →

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES

The Final Frame

an exhibition of photographs, equipment
and memorabilia
of the late Irene and Terry Dunster



20th to 25th January
Max Lock Gallery

Diary of Events

December 2019/January 2020



DECEMBER 2019	
continues until 21 st	Christmas Fayre in the Gallery
Continues until 21 st	Christmas Shop in the Surgery
Tuesdays 3 rd & 17 th	Liskeard Writers' Group meet 2 – 4.30pm.
every Thursday	Craft Club: all welcome 12 noon to 3pm.
Monday 9 th	Liskeard Poetry Group meet 4 to 6.30pm.
Thursday 12 th to Saturday 14 th	Jo March, artist – originals, prints and cards in the Jane Room (see p.7)
Thursday 12 th	Wicker Hearts and Stars Workshop with Toni Dunmow (see p.7)
Thursday Dec 19 th	Wreath Making Workshop with Toni Dunmow (see p.7)
Saturday 21 st	Last day of opening before Christmas shut-down HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL
JANUARY 2020	
Monday 13 th	House re-opens: HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL
Monday 13 th	Liskeard Poetry Group meet 4 to 6.30pm.
every Thursday	Craft Club: all welcome 12 noon to 3pm
Monday 20 th to Sat 25 th	'Photographic Memories: the Final Frame' : photographs, equipment and memorabilia of the late Irene and Terry Dunster (see p.7)
Tuesday 21 st	Liskeard Writers' Group meet 2 – 4.30pm.
Coming in February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concert : Valley Voices (<i>Sunday 23rd</i>) • All our regular events and more – look out for details

*The House, Garden, Old Kitchen Café and (check first) Computer Research Facility 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.*

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