

Newsletter

February 2019



Repairs and Decoration

Over the Christmas and New Year shut-down period there was a great deal of activity inside the House. The Old Kitchen café lime-mortar plastering was redone, and a first coat of lime paint applied. Pipes inside and out were insulated and guttering cleared. The Surgery had a new radiator and was re-painted, and the hallway floor repaired. The Trecarrel Room (Old Cornwall Society) was totally cleared (into the Rowse Room - where the ceiling was repainted!) and re-decorated. Sioux and Gaby painted the Gallery and Jane Room walls and, with volunteer Iris, spent literally days cleaning up afterwards – plaster dust was everywhere. We thank them so much, and trustee John, who organised everything.



Social Events for the Friends

before (left) and after (above) Christmas. More on pages 3 and 7.

Reminder.... 'membership' (friendship?) renewals and donations for 2019 are now due. Thank you, if you have dealt with this.

Hon. Sec. Sue's News

I am pleased to say that I am back in harness again having had a chaotic few months involving both travel and work which inevitably kept me away from Stuart House business. My thanks to Rachel who stepped in to provide the Minutes of the monthly Trustees' meetings which I was unable to attend.

So now it is back to earth again – having returned from faraway places - Kuala Lumpur, Cameron Highlands, Malacca, Singapore, Hong Kong, and, prior to that, the Scottish Highlands. Whilst there is art and heritage everywhere, one little Arts Centre caught my notice. Tucked away in a back street of Oban, in Argyll, we came upon a little building with an 'Arts and Crafts Sale' sign outside. Going inside, I could have been in Stuart House. There was an array of eclectic work, from little hand made cards to paintings, drawings and prints of various sizes showing varying skills, to different craft items. I purchased some cards and had a chat with the two volunteers who were stewarding on behalf of the local Art group. They had numerous bits of paper and had to filter through it all to locate the artist who had made the cards, then log the sales against the artist's name and finally take my money. (Inevitably they did not have enough change so my change was added in as a donation – a good ruse or not?!) All items were modestly priced. The amount of work involved in making one sale was, on the face of it, disproportionate to the profit which they would make. Does all this sound familiar? The net result, however, would be a cumulative swell to their funds. We shared stories – agreeing that such sales, apart from acting as fund-raising, serve to raise the self-esteem of the person who created the work and may not have felt themselves worthy of being included in an exhibition, never mind the fact that someone might actually buy their work. Is that not what it is all about? They also bemoaned the difficulty of finding volunteers to steward. If you are able to volunteer, please let Sioux know. Even if you can only give an hour – that would be very precious to us.

It is also important, of course, to attract top quality professional art into the Gallery Professional artists wishing to exhibit – please contact us!

Trustees have now held our first meeting of the year. It was gratifying to go through the Task List prepared at the beginning of last year and mark off most of the tasks as having been achieved. A good feeling all round! We have now started a new list to enable forward planning on many levels, financial and administrative, leading to formulation of a new business plan. We plan to hold future meetings dedicated solely to these important matters and to reserve our usual monthly meeting for day to day matters.

The Christmas close-down was a time for a programme of substantial re-decoration. Please do pop in and admire our clean and fresh new look! We have not yet quite finished. Many thanks go to Sioux and Gaby who worked tirelessly to clean and scrub so that the House was ready for re-opening. The two of them also painted the Gallery and the Jane Room. Woe betide anyone who as much as mentions the word 'Blu Tack'!!

My good wishes to you all for a prosperous and healthy New Year.

Sue Glencross



Our own Christmas Art and Craft Shop in the Surgery, with Items made by Friends of Stuart House. We thank all stewards, including crafter Lyn shown here, and look forward to other such sales during the coming year.

CHRISTMAS at STUART HOUSE



The House was beautifully decorated for Christmas. The stunning garland over the Old Kitchen café fireplace was made from flowers grown and dried by Friends Liz, Judith and Gill (left, at the Christmas 'thank you' party, see p.1)

Gaby, who now does the day to day House cleaning as well as being a great craftsperson, made the paper stag heads around the House, and, with House Manager Sioux, put together the other decorations with a Cornish theme - and took them all down again later! Our idea was to support the Nadelik Lyskerrys event, with its white stag motif and traditional natural greenery theme – all with a Cornish twist!

We thank Santa's Trees of Liskeard for donating the two beautiful Christmas trees which framed the front arch.



As part of the town's **Nadelik Lyskerrys** events around Liskeard Lights' Up on December 1st, artist Mark Gregory (who has exhibited and sold in Stuart House and plans to again), worked with Blisland School to create this wonderful window display, complete with labels in Cornish. The Family Trail started at Stuart House, bringing over 50 children with families and other adults into the House, including this group from Hillfort School.

February's Thoughts from our Garden's Overseer

A treasured Christmas present this year was "Darwin's Most Wonderful Plants" by Ken Thompson. We learn that one February, Darwin took three tablespoons-full of mud (6¾ oz) from the edge of a little pond, from which over the next six months on his study windowsill he extracted 537 seedlings "of many kinds". Which only goes to show what a fascinating (and exhausting) business gardening is!



On returning to the Stuart House garden after the Christmas break, I was surprised to see that lobelia are still in flower in the tub near the new wall, whilst under the café window campanula (*photo. left*) is blooming. So too, unfortunately, is bittercress that, despite cold dark days, grows wonderful well. For the last few years, The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) has organised a New Year Plant Hunt. The idea is that you count all the different wild plants in flower during a three-hour walk sometime over New

Year and let them know (see their website for interesting results from previous years). Put a note in your diary to try next year, perhaps. A reliable and cheerful plant at the time of year is gorse, gloriously decking local roadsides. It's such a shame though that it's far too spikey to use as a garden plant. Now maybe this is subject for the attention of plant breeders in their quest to produce ever-more spectacularly floriferous garden plants. I do wish, too, they'd have a go at developing some scented bush roses **without thorns** – we'd certainly have some of those at Stuart House.

The weather though December and most of January was comparatively mild, causing a multiplicity of plants in the jewel beds to shoot forth. The Acanthus (Bear's Breeches) has produced vibrant glossy growth, so let's hope that we don't get a re-run of last year's ghastly Beast from the East that caused such dismay and confusion to early buds and blooms. Primroses are also in flower in the rear garden but are being wrecked by the large family of sparrows that live under the fascia boards at the top of the library wall. These birds are a delight to see and to hear – their merry chirruping fills the garden on sunny days, even in the winter. Yet for some reason they have a habit of destroying early primrose blooms. I've written about this in previous years, and one line of thought is that they're getting essential nutrients from the petals. But this year I see simply wanton vandalism – even whole flower-heads ripped off and scattered around! It's definitely not the work of slugs or snails which are all still huddled together in corners, crevices and under the shed, just waiting for April and the chance to attack new growth. Here's a shudderingly dreadful fact: each snail lays up to five hundred eggs in the season. How perplexing it is, then, that so many weed seedlings effortlessly survive the armies of munching molluscs.



Last year, the tubs were planted with Calendula Winter Sun, a new variety which the breeders promised would jolly up our gardens throughout the coldest months. Yes, they were quite pretty, but the flowers open only when feeling warm sunshine on their petals! Some calendula varieties do keep going throughout the winter, but it's a question of getting the right sort sown at the right time (about the end of June). I'll do more trials this year, so maybe next winter we'll have beautifully colourful tubs that the sparrows will want only to admire.

Tudor and Elizabethan gardeners used painted pebbles in their knot gardens to provide colour when no plants were flowering, and of course the Alice in Wonderland gardeners painted roses different colours to avoid upsetting the Queen. So here's an idea I now use in my garden to say goodbye to those muddy brown heads of last year's hydrangea – spray them with car paint, blue or red tinged with white. An excellent way of keeping the colour going, right through to Spring!

Malcolm Mort



Collared dove in the twisted willow in our garden

GARDEN VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Malcolm would appreciate a few garden volunteers for regular specific tasks in the garden including tackling the bindweed! Anyone interested, please speak with him, or with Sioux, our House Manager.

STUART HOUSE GARDENING CLUB

begins its 2019 meetings
on

Monday February 18th
11.30am to 1.30 pm

anyone 'new' is welcome – please contact Val Moore via the House
or on 01579 228518

A private, guided visit to Moyclare Garden is planned for April

Do remember that the Friends of Stuart House are planning a
HERB FESTIVAL
10th to 22nd June.



This should be a wonderful fortnight, with plants, art and craft, talks, produce, get-togethers, exhibitions, food

Volunteers to help put ideas into practice are VERY welcome – please contact Chairman Bob, or Eileen or Jac via the House.



The new 'Wetherspoons' Wall will have new raised planters near it, in which herbs will be grown. This will replace the herb area of the garden (the N.W. corner), where roots from nearby shrubs and trees have now taken over, along with slugs and snails. Malcolm reports that only the marjoram succeeds now.

Malcolm's picture of the 'Scented Garden' March 2017.

EXHIBITIONS IN DECEMBER & JANUARY

Laurie Scott held her exhibition and sale of “**Because I am a cat**” books and paintings together with lovely paintings of local churches in the Jane Room in the first full week of December. A great chance to watch an artist at work too.

www.becauseiamacat.com



This Old House - a review

an exhibition from our exhibition archives of aspects of the history of Stuart House, from sixteenth century family home to twenty-first century Arts and Heritage Centre



Mon. 14th January to Sat. 2nd February 2019

Stuart House Max Lock Gallery
Mondays to Fridays 9.30am to 3.30pm
Saturdays to 12.30pm

FREE ENTRY



Stuart House
Liswaded
PL14 6AD
01579 347247
info@stuarthouse.org.uk



The ‘This Old House: a review’ exhibition, runs until Saturday 2nd February. There is another chance to see the Stuart House timeline which was produced for last March’s “Stuart House and its Next-Door Neighbours” exhibition, which itself drew in part on the 2007 ‘This Old House’ exhibition. The changes in ownership and residents in the House are linked to changes to the building itself and some local and national events. There is a chance to test your knowledge of the “Stuart House Streetscape’ and also use powers of observation and deduction to see if you can arrange eight pictures of the House in chronological order – not easy! One comment in the visitors book registered a family connection with the Carthews, which they had not realized. Susan Carthew lived in the House for some forty years, from before the 1841 census until her death in 1876.



The Stuart House Christmas Fair ran for the three weeks until Christmas close-down. A lovely – and changing – range of crafts was for sale in the beautifully decorated Gallery: again, a perfect place for Christmas presents, many with a Cornish link!

NEW YEAR FRIENDS' PARTY



On Sunday 20th January, a good group of Friends gathered in the Gallery and Jane Room, where there were drinks and a wonderful spread of both sweet and savoury food – thanks to all who contributed. It was a lovely opportunity for Friends to meet each other – the games organized by Chairman Bob helped to see to that! Who would have thought (some!) Friends would be so willing to share amusing stories of embarrassing events - we didn't even get round to the quoits and shove ha-penny! We hope to have more social events – any Friend with ideas, please let Bob or any trustee know. (see also p.1)



COMING IN FEBRUARY

We still need to finalise plans for the Max Lock Gallery in February, but hope to have a craft sale (which will link well with the thoughts raised in 'Sue's News' on page 2!)

All our regular events are back in full swing (see 'the Diary of Events on the back page), and in any case, you are assured of a warm welcome in the House.

The Friend who is '**Artist of the Month**' in the Surgery in February is **Rose Gibbon**, now returned to our area.. We look forward to seeing her, and her work, again.

A request:

Val Moore, who runs the Gardening Club, asks that if anyone has spare single beads she would be pleased to receive them for a coming craft project. Her request led to a happily nostalgic few minutes for some female Friends at January's party, remembering swooping their 'best beads' in Junior School playgrounds!

The Old Cornwall Society, now back (but still sorting out!) in its refurbished Trecarrel room on the top floor, are still open on Wednesdays, and other times by appointment.

Their next talk is at 2.30pm. on Friday February 8th in the Public Hall, when Simon Dell will give a talk on 'The Dartmoor Conchies'.

Diary of Events

February 2019



Continuing until Saturday 2 nd	'This Old House: a review' . Exhibition in the Gallery (see p.6)
from Monday 4 th	See p.7 Artist of the Month in the Surgery is Rose Gibbon.
Tuesdays 5 th , 19 th	Liskeard Writers' Group meet 2 – 4.30 pm.
Every Thursday	Craft Club: all welcome 12 noon to 3pm.
Monday 11 th	Liskeard Poetry Group meet 4 to 6.30pm.
Thursday 14 th	Fake or Fortune – antiques valuation with Richard Hamm of Bearnese, Hampton & Littlewood. 10am. to 12 noon
Monday 18 th	Stuart House Gardening Club 11.30am. to 1.30pm. (see p.5)
Events coming in March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All the regular events!• 'Fake or Fortune' on 14th• Look out for more news in the House and website

*The House, Garden, Old Kitchen Café and Research Facility
(but check availability of this first) 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.*

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