

# Newsletter

February 2020



Friends Judith and Liz arranging their dried-flower garland over the kitchen mantelpiece. For the stunning finished result, and more on the decorations, see p.2.



On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November Stuart House was the starting point for the Family Trail, run as part of Nadelik Lyskerrys linked to Liskeard Lights Up. Well over 50 children, with family, carers and friends came to try a few words of Cornish and take a trail sheet. The photograph shows part of a big group from Hillfort school.

## **HAPPY 2020 – and a ‘subscription’ reminder!**

Friends are reminded that unless they have Standing Order arrangements or are Life Friends, subscription donations are due at the start of January. A form is included with this Newsletter, and can be returned to Stuart House electronically, in the post or personally. The minimum donation remains £10 a year.



*Leaflet Sponsored by Coodes*  
*Honorary Solicitors to Stuart House Trust*

## Sue's News

Although the Festive Season is now far away from us, I must nonetheless wish you all, from myself and the Trustees, a very Happy New Year . I hope that it proves to be an excellent and healthy year for you and yours.

I do not know how many of you will have visited the House since it re-opened on the 13<sup>th</sup>, but I am sure that those of you who have will have noticed that our café and other areas downstairs have been re-decorated and look wonderfully fresh. A problem with leaking in the downstairs loo has been sourced and sorted. We are therefore moving forward through 2020 in a good place insofar as maintenance/decoration of the House is concerned.

Forward planning is now necessary and our first meeting of the year concentrated on what we now need to achieve.

I can summarise the points on which we are focusing as follows:

- The need to maximise income coupled with the need to minimise expenditure
- Possible up-grade of our fire alarm system
- Re-print of our promotional brochures
- Purchase of a new garden shed – Cornwall Council Community Chest is being approached in that regard – fingers crossed!
- Investigation of the provision of sliding doors within the porch to help to prevent heat loss
- Necessity to appoint additional trustee/trustees
- Desire to attract more Friends and more visitors to the House

The quality of exhibitions, concerts and events which were held in the House during 2019 was excellent and we look forward to maintaining that quality in 2020. We are pleased with bookings thus far and are thrilled with exhibitors' reaction to the House. The number of people who re-book is a testimony to the success which they have enjoyed. We have to keep up the momentum and standards.

Here's to another successful year!

*Sue Glencross, Hon. Sec.*



### **Some reminders of the Festive Season:**

Stuart House was beautifully and imaginatively decorated for Christmas, and we thank Gaby and Sioux for all their ideas, time and work. For more on the garland-makers, see p.1.

# CELTIC KNOTWORK WORKSHOPS



**Eileen Crouch is running three workshops in February**

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> 2pm to 3.30pm  
Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> 2pm to 3.30pm  
Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> 2pm to 3.30 pm

This is not a single course, although those who attend all three workshops will build up skills. You do not need to come to all three sessions – beginners are welcome at each of them. Three different knots will be taught.

If you can, please bring coloured pencils, an eraser and a ruler.

There will be books and other resources available.

Cost is £2 a session.

Work from these classes can be exhibited at the coming summer's exhibition, but it's not compulsory!



## SPOTLIGHT on CELTIC ART

17<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> August

All Friends of Stuart House and any other creative friends are welcome to submit work for display.

This exhibition comes 20 years after Eileen organized the first Celtic Arts exhibition at Stuart House.

There will be needlework, photography, calligraphy, music and much more.

Anyone wishing to find out more or to show their interest, please contact Eileen via the House, or our House-Manager Sioux.



Eileen gave a talk to an audience of some 100 members of U3A at the Millennium Community Centre in Pensilva on January 8<sup>th</sup>. Her illustrated talk was on 'My Discovered Connections at Stuart House'. Some Friends might remember her 'Connections' exhibition in June 2016, which explored people, events and places in some way linked to Stuart House. There was a lot of interest in the House and its events, including Eileen's own Celtic Knot Workshops.

Thanks to Frances Foulkes for the photograph.

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

On returning to the Stuart House garden in mid-January after a break of three (wild weather) weeks, my attention was immediately drawn to those plants providing small splashes of colour: Calendula in the tubs, and frilly-petalled Pansies in pots on the café windowsill. Captivating, too, were the intriguing monochrome reflections of the magnolia branches, shimmering in the wet tabletops.



In newsletters over the years I've often mentioned Calendula, which were greatly appreciated by Mediaeval gardeners and which can flower in all seasons as they are not daylength dependent. I've found that they produce best results if sown outdoors from mid-July to September on poor, very free-draining soil. They produce a mass of fibrous roots that anchor into the soil, and which do **not** appreciate being waterlogged. In a sheltered position they will start flowering in late autumn and carry on right through until the following summer.

Pansies and violas were also favourites in Elizabethan gardens, and there are now bewildering arrays of cultivars. Those bought in garden centres are nearly all F1 hybrids, which means that they will not reliably breed true from saved seed. Yet, despite all the breeders' efforts, those bought in the autumn for winter flowering succumb easily to fungal infections. Just as one is looking forward to the promised displays, black spots appear on the leaves and soon they look a ghastly shrivelled mess. However, those frilly pansies (so enjoyed by Victorian gardeners) seem to be far more resilient, so I will save some seeds and report back.

For reliable, bright, January colour, there is a Daffodil called Early Sensation. (A glorious stand of this can be seen on the railway bridge at Doublebois.) Next autumn we'll get some for Stuart House, as well as bulbs of the closely following February Gold, to brighten up the dark days.



And now: the results of the experiment about whether common Montbretia (Crocsmia) propagates itself from seeds. I'd previously mentioned that gardening books tell us that this plant does not produce viable seeds, propagating only through new corms produced on spreading roots. There are two main clumps at Stuart House, and I've noticed that plants will sometimes appear in other areas, such as the rose bed, where they've not been planted. So in October I sowed some of the seeds in a tray and have kept them in a coldframe. They are sprouting! Two lessons here. Firstly, don't believe all you read in gardening books and magazines. Secondly, don't throw montbretia flower heads on your compost heap!

The mixture of small trees and shrubs growing in pots along the new wall between our garden and Wetherspoons include a crab apple, hydrangea, fig, and a goat willow (rescued from the old garage site.) If you have grown large plants in pots, you will probably have wondered how often the compost should be replaced. This can be a back-breaking process and an annual chore. Kew Gardens folk have done research on this because in their Temperate house they grow a huge number of trees, all in pots, and don't want to be

frequently re-potting these. It is found that the following potting mix works and lasts well: equal parts of loam (regular garden soil), grit, sand, and composted bark. The limited content of organic matter (25%) is rich enough to retain water and to support a healthy bacterial and fungal community. The gardening journalist James Wong (who also has Kew connections) wrote in The Observer that the Kew mix can be heavy, especially if you want to lug it up to a balcony or roof garden. Therefore the grit can be replaced with expanded clay pellets, and the sand with perlite.



*Winter rose in the garden. All the photographs are by Malcolm.*

By this time next year, we'll hopefully have some winter-flowering shrub additions growing in pots by the wall. Mahonia, Viburnum, Chimonanthus (Winter Sweet), Sarcococca (Winter Box) and Hamamelis (Witch Hazel) are all excellent possibilities to be considered.

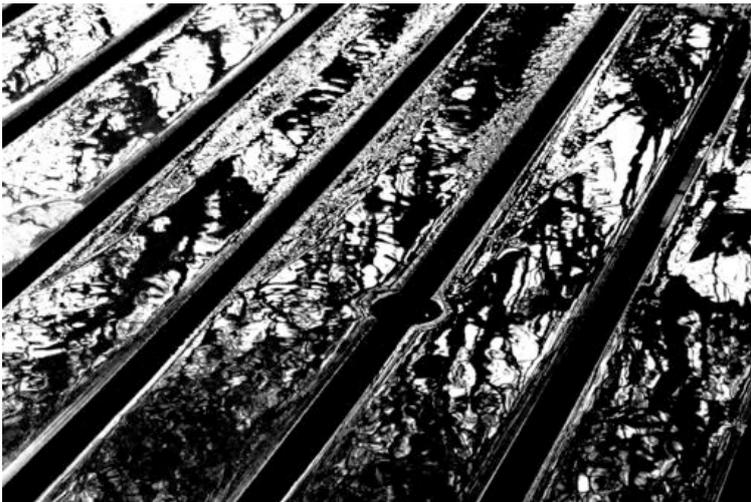
*Malcolm Mort*

## **STUART HOUSE GARDEN CLUB**

resumes meetings after its winter break.

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February**  
11.30am to 1.30pm

New members welcome - please contact Val Moore on 012579 228518



Another of Malcolm's photographs taken in the Stuart House garden – can you identify what it is? (answer in paragraph 1)

# MUSIC at STUART HOUSE

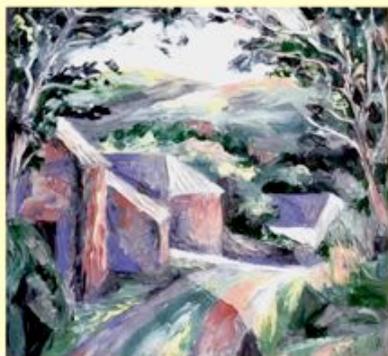
## VALLEY VOICES

Local chamber choir conducted by  
Elizabeth Saudek

presents a concert of choral music in a variety of  
styles and periods on the theme of

### LIFELONG LOVE

Sunday 23rd February 2020 2.30pm



Stuart House  
Barras Street Liskeard PL14 6AB

Tickets £7 with refreshments  
contact Sioux Dunster at Stuart House  
01579 347347

The Stuart House 2020 Concert Series, organized by Angela Wunnam, begins on 23<sup>rd</sup> February with a concert by Valley Voices. Their conductor (and Stuart House Friend) Liz Saudek writes:

'We are very pleased to be invited back for a third time to give a concert in Stuart House. Our concert is entitled "Lifelong Love" and it is centred on three settings of Scottish texts composed for our choir by Stuart House Friend (and husband of our editor) Tony Bennett. Tony has given us beautiful melodies to sing, but also has provided challenges in both rhythm and harmony, thus making three original pieces which we are very proud to offer you.

The rest of the programme, in our usual range of styles and periods, also explores the theme of Lifelong Love, whether it be of people, home, God and so on. We shall finish by inviting the audience to join us in singing Beethoven's best-known tune, to mark and celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth'.



*Photograph shows Valley Voices practising recently for the Stuart House and other concerts.*

## STUART HOUSE CONCERT SERIES Spring 2020

All concerts on Sundays at 2.30pm in the Gallery.  
Tickets remain at £7, available from Reception or at the door and include refreshments and a chance to talk with the performers afterwards.

Sunday February 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Valley Voices</b>
Sunday March 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Java 5</b>
Sunday April 19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Ilow Splann</b>

## EVENTS IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY

In addition to the Nadelik Lyskerrys event linked to Liskeard Lights Up (see p.1), and the House being decorated for Christmas (see pp.1 and 2), there were other happenings in the House.

The trustees hosted a very happy **party for volunteers** before the Christmas close-down. There were some twenty-five volunteers present, and they were thanked for all they do in helping to make Stuart House the welcoming place it is. Sorry there are no photographs (*ed.*).

The **Wicker Hearts and the Wreath making workshops** run by Toni Dunmow were very successful, and we hope to host yet more of her excellent workshops.



**The Christmas Art and Craft Fair in the Gallery** was a great success, with many of the crafters stewarding too. We thank Sioux for all the organization. It was an excellent place to buy some Christmas presents and decorations.

**The Christmas Shop in the Surgery** ran during December, selling crafts, art and gifts. Again, it was very successful, with a changing range of crafters' work.

**The shop in the Surgery has been so appreciated – being on the ground floor it is easily accessible to all our visitors - that it will be run more often, including for the whole of March and April, with a changing range of things for sale.**

Highly renowned local artist **Jo March** held an exhibition and sale in the Jane Room from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> December. Many visitors came to look and to buy, and we are delighted that Jo is showing again at the House from April 16<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>.

We are sorry that the exhibition 'Photographic Memories – The Final Frame' could not be presented as hoped in February, but we look forward to it when it becomes possible.



# Diary of Events

## February 2020



Tuesdays 4 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup>	Liskeard Writers Group meet 2pm – 4.30pm
every Thursday	Craft Club: all welcome 12 noon to 3pm
Monday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Liskeard Poetry Group meet 4pm to 6.30pm
Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Celtic Knot Art Workshop 2pm to 3.30pm ( <i>see p.3</i> )
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Fake or Fortune – antiques valuation with Richard Hamm of Bearnas, Hampton & Littlewood. 10am to 12 noon
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Celtic Knot Art Workshop 2pm to 3.30pm ( <i>see p.3</i> )
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Valley Voices – concert 2.30pm £7 including refreshments ( <i>see p.6</i> )
Monday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Garden Club 11.30am to 1.30pm ( <i>see p.5</i> )
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Celtic Knot Art Workshop 2pm to 3.30pm ( <i>see p.3</i> )
<b>Coming in March</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts and Crafts Gift Shop in the Surgery (throughout March and April)</li> <li>• Java 5 in concert on March 15<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>

*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 25<sup>th</sup> of the month for inclusion in the next newsletter. Leave with Sioux in the Office or email to [rachelpbennett59@gmail.com](mailto:rachelpbennett59@gmail.com)