

Newsletter

March 2020



As a fore-runner to the big
SPOTLIGHT

on

CELTIC ART

event which runs from 17th to 29th August, Eileen Crouch ran three Celtic Knotwork Workshops in February. By popular demand, there will be three more in March (see p.3). The Jane Room has rarely been so quiet!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FRANK!



A surprise Birthday Party was held on Frank's 90th Birthday on February 13th. Frank has been an active volunteer and supporter of Stuart House for many years. Members of his family attended, as did Stuart House friends and volunteers, including Tony and Jane Wood, down specially from Okehampton. Java 5 - which includes Stuart House past Chair John Batey who, with

fellow-singer Peter Maslen also ran (and sang in!) our café for some years - gave an impromptu performance as the cake was bought in (see p.6). The photo. on the left shows Frank with his niece Ann and café volunteer Barbara, and on the right is House Manager Sioux, Frank and a cake.



Leaflet Sponsored by Coodes
Honorary Solicitors to Stuart House Trust

SUE'S NEWS

I cannot miss the opportunity to say that I do hope that all our Friends have managed to weather the recent storms. I reported in February that the House was in good repair and decoration and I am pleased to say it has survived the terrible rains and wind - fingers crossed for the remainder of the year. If anything were to go amiss then we know that John, wearing his hat as I/C maintenance and repair, will have any situation well under control.

In the February newsletter I summarised the projects which will be the main focus for the trustees for 2020. These are now very much 'work in progress'.

We currently await news from Cornwall Council as to whether our grant application and also our much hoped-for Listed Building permission for automatic doors, have been successful

On the subject of income and expenditure we do need to increase income from Friends' annual donations and from room hire. So far as donations (the pre-CIO 'subscriptions') are concerned, they have remained static for very many years. We do realize, however, that to implement an increase from the current £10 may result in hardship for those Friends on a very fixed income, and could result in their not renewing. We therefore take the opportunity of reminding Friends that there is a 'minimum donation' policy. I therefore hope that with effect from January 2021 those of you who are able will voluntarily increase your payment to £20. Lots of payments for the current year have already been made by direct debit, standing order, cheque or cash and to those of you who have paid we tender our thanks – and say that if you feel like adding to that payment, we will be grateful! Donations for last year totalled £1,132 – a slight increase over the previous year. If we could increase that figure to £2,000 this year both by increased payments and by new Friends, then our Treasurer would indeed have a smile on his face and his forecast for 2020 of £1200 would be very much exceeded. Go on – surprise us!

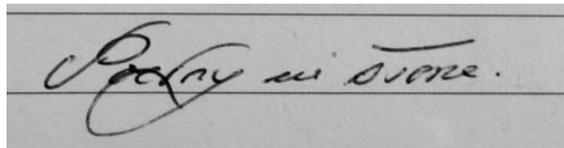
Room hire charges will be discussed at our next meeting. We have to remain competitive. We are reviewing our booking conditions. Do not fear – they will not be draconian but will be worded more simply. We are also preparing a separate leaflet on publicity to help our hirers/exhibitors to get maximum benefit from advance publicity and, of course, this will also result in increased footfall to the House.

Tony has presented to us a summary of income and expenditure for 2019 and we are still digesting those figures in advance of the usual audit. As someone who would not know where to start with figures, I always admire the detailed information which he also presents to us each month.

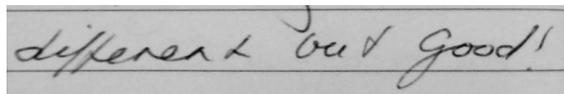
Dave continues to network with SECMF (South East Cornwall Museums Forum) and we have received notification concerning publicity ventures which will include the Trust. Our thanks to him and to Rachel who is very much involved with SECMF and keeps us well informed

We trustees: myself, John, Tony and Dave - are held together under the Chair of Bob whose amusing anecdotes coupled with his skills in the art of the double entendre add a light-hearted touch to our business meetings. Bob has just finished producing the 2020 batch of Stuart House marmalade – 10 varieties, 175 jars. All proceeds to the House.

We would love to have a new face: do any of our Friends have skills which they can bring to the table?



Two of February's comments in our Visitors' Book



Sue Glencross Hon. Sec.



MINING EXHIBITION: As the Max Lock Gallery was not booked in February, ex-Chair Eileen Crouch has taken the opportunity to display some material from past exhibitions of the Stuart House Heritage Group, which included herself and the late and much missed George Vaughan-Ellis. The focus on Mining in our local area reminds us that Liskeard is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape.

COMING in MARCH

The SURGERY will become an Arts, Crafts and Gift Shop throughout March and April. Being on the ground floor, it is easily accessible, and the popularity of this shop means that more are planned for this year, and we thank organizer Sioux and the stewards, as well as the crafters, who make this possible. The Surgery is, when not otherwise let, a place when visitors can relax and browse through our book collection.



From 23rd March for two weeks another **CRAFT FAIR** is planned for the Gallery

Three further Celtic Knot-work classes will be run by Eileen in March (see p.1).



These will repeat the three February classes, and again you do not have to come to all three classes. Those who have already attended in February may tackle some more advanced work. Cost is £2 (includes instruction and 'help' sheets)., Please bring coloured and lead pencils, an eraser and a ruler.

**Tuesdays 3rd, 10th and 17th March,
2pm to 3.30pm.**

February's classes were well attended and inspiring, and did produce inspiration for things that could be included in August's 'Spotlight on Celtic Art' exhibition, sale and other events.

March's Thoughts from Our Garden's Overseer

Tête-à-Tête daffodils in the rear porch at Stuart House have provided a guaranteed



abundance of flower heads to brighten up the doorway to the garden. This dwarf cultivar (this word

now replaces "variety") rarely grows taller than about eight inches and has strong yet flexible stems that resist snapping even in a howling gale. This, along with several similar cultivars such as Minnow, was bred in the 1940's by English nurseryman (and amateur archaeologist) Alec Gray (1895 – 1986) who introduced 110 new cultivars over 60 years. He was appointed manager at Duchy

The magnolia tree which overhangs our garden is already budding up, and should be out during March – do come and see it- it might even be possible to take tea outside! (*ed.*)

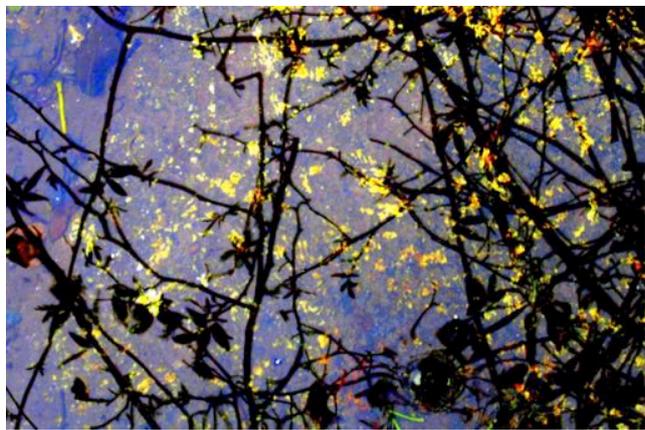
Farm on the Isles of Scilly in 1920 and became interested in the daffodils grown there for the cut flower trade. He began to experiment by crossing different cultivars to try to produce earlier flowering sorts. Tête-à-Tête, derived from a cross with *Narcissus jonquilla*, was almost disregarded as unimpressive, even though it had robust, reliable February flowers. Yet today it is the cultivar most widely grown for the Dutch daffodil bulb trade. Gray later established a large nursery at Treswithian, Camborne, and his collection of bulbs is now held as part of the National Collection at Broadleigh Gardens near Taunton.

I read recently that English Heritage had taken a stand against "non-native species and hybrids" of daffodils. They have embarked, therefore, on major planting of "ancient cultivars and native species" to arrest the national decline, and to ensure that the daffodil celebrated by Wordsworth over 200 years ago can still be enjoyed into the future. Well, this is all very debatable. The daffodil family originate in Southern Europe and North Africa. Those who have researched this subject tell us that the first sorts were brought to Britain in about 300 BCE. The Romans arrived with many more sorts, planted both for decoration and medicinal purposes. Several of the chemicals produced by the stems and bulbs are very poisonous if ingested, though it is interesting to read that some of these are now being investigated for the treatment of Alzheimer's dementia.

All daffodils belong to the *Narcissus* genus, from which (thanks to the Greeks, we are told) the word "narcotic" is derived, as "narcissus" referred to "numbness". In Greek and Roman mythology, the name Narcissus is linked to a youth of that name who fell in love with his own reflection, drowned, and the narcissus plant sprang from where he died. (Maybe there was already a clump of the flowers growing at the waterside, as they do prefer damp places.) The word daffodil in turn is said to be derived from "affodell", a variant of Asphodel. In the ancient Greek underworld mediocre souls were sent to live after death (i.e. buried) in the Asphodel Meadows where it was hoped they would experience happier and more positive times. (Asphodel, a hardy perennial, also grows from bulbs and has yellow and white flowered forms. Maybe we'll try some at Stuart House.)



From their early introductions, the different Narcissi species and cultivars gradually seeded and spread throughout the land. English botanist John Gerard listed 12 species of daffodil in his 1597 "Herball", which means by that time that gardeners were already collecting and hybridising different sorts. It is now accepted that there are some 50 different distinct species of narcissi (the common daffodil being (*N. pseudonarcissus*), but each species has a myriad of cultivars and hybrid crosses, meaning that the subject is very complex and confusing. (And who therefore can possibly say which is the "native" species!) The types we commonly refer to as Narcissi – those with white petals – are mostly derived from the scented *Narcissus poeticus*, whilst those that flower very early (such as paper-whites) have *Narcissus tazetta* parentage somewhere along the line. There are those that have just one flower head per stem and those, such as the dwarf Minnow and the tall, late-flowering Cheerfulness, which have up to half a dozen. Mr Gray was aware of all these types, bringing back many sorts from his European travels to create new crosses.



So, for a winter planting box that will withstand the worst of the weather, a good combination of the plants would be: Tête-à-Tête daffodils, Cyclamen coum (those small, hardy floriferous sorts), variegated ivy, perhaps a flowering heather or two, and maybe a few dwarf shrubs – *Lonicera nitida* Silver Beauty or Golden Glow. I'm sure mediaeval gardeners would have found these delightful, so next winter we'll aim to have some pots of these at Stuart House!

Malcolm Mort

The photographs: daffodils in the garden, the view into the woodland corner of the garden, and reflections in the pond, are all by Malcolm.

STUART HOUSE GARDEN CLUB

At February's meeting the talk was about trees and bulbs, and there were plant swops.

There will not be a meeting in March, but an early April date will be set.

Please contact Val Moore on 01579 228518. There are hopes of a Spring visit to Moyclare Garden.

Any plants for sale are always gratefully received.

Bo Foaks Memorial Walk 9:30 Saturday 4th April:

Liskeard Pub Crawl

Leaders: Brian Oldham & Iain Rowe

Meet in Stuart House, Barras Street, Liskeard PL14 6AB.



Join us for a walk around Liskeard seeking out the former multitude of public houses which served the town in the 19th & 20th centuries. Hear tales of run-ins with the newly formed town Police Force and the problems the Police had keeping the town peaceful when it was full of what Liskeard Historian John Allen called "those rascals by their uncouth manners, abominable dialect and cheating habits have considerably altered the face of society in this town...I do not wish to bear too hard on any class, but truth compels me to assert whatever the cause may be, that a bigger set of scoundrels than the miners never trod this lower world"

Donations to Stuart House please. You can also pre-book a soup and roll at reception on the day for the end of the walk.

Bo Foaks, folk musician, loved Bodmin Moor and the local history heritage and was a great supporter of Stuart House. He wanted to encourage the musical hopes of young people. Tony Piper's photograph is on the infamous 2009 Stuart House Walk on Craddock Moor, just before the fog and rain set in.

MUSIC Valley Voices at Stuart House Sunday 23rd February

Angela Wunnam, our concert Series' organiser, writes:



An appreciative audience enjoyed the concert given by **Valley Voices**, ably conducted by Elizabeth Saudek. The theme was 'Life Long Love' and the audience was quickly drawn in and enraptured. The rousing opening song of Cole Porter's **Let's Fall in Love** demonstrated the control and clear diction, with lots of accompanying 'do dee do' parts seamlessly weaving in and out, that epitomised the excellent performance.

Their delicate phrasing and balance of parts facilitated their madrigal skills in **All Creatures Now**, composed in praise of Queen Elizabeth I. In contrast were the wistful melody in **The Oak and the Ash** supported by a rich accompaniment from the other voices, and Britten's **The Evening Primrose**.

Elizabeth Saudek wove two 'stolen tunes' (**The Shepherd's Theme** by Beethoven and **The Jolly Miller**) into an arrangement for the choir in 6/8 time. Following this Liz turned to work with the audience in a rehearsal of Beethoven's **Ode to Joy**, to be sung at the end of the concert. She seemed pleasurably surprised that we managed to sing quite well and only needed the one rehearsal!

Local composer Ian Marshall wrote **Trelay**, especially to include as many Cornish 'Tre.....' names as possible, including Trewint, Trebartha and Tremar, which the choir clearly enjoyed enunciating with alacrity. A trio from the choir then sang the lovely **O Jesus Christ**.

Tony Bennett, a member of the choir who is also a composer, wrote three delightful songs: **A Red, Red Rose** with words by Robbie Burns; **First Love**, set to the words of poet Hugh MacDiarmid, where the plaintive melody depicts a love which dwindles away; and **The Road Home**, a setting of words he found on a Scottish tombstone. The song had a beautiful humming introduction before the solo tenor voice entered.

In Stainer's **God so Loved the World** the sopranos soared over hymn-like harmonies which had subtle dynamics in each phrase, and after Rheinberger's **Abendlied** sung in German and the **Farewell Shanty**, the concert ended with a rousing **Ode to Joy** by Beethoven with full audience participation.

As the audience clapped so hard and positively at the end, Elizabeth agreed that the choir would do a very short encore - provided, as a *quid pro quo*, that the audience agreed to sing the last verse of the **Ode to Joy** again, so the concert ended in mutual delight, joy and volume!

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The next Sunday afternoon concert at Stuart House will be

Java 5 on 15th March.

Please note the slightly earlier date in the month and do come and hear the amazing performance by this highly professional and much in demand *a capella* group who enjoy performing popular songs from the 1920's through to more recent times.

This photo was taken at Frank's surprise birthday party (see p.1) ed

Alongside our regular events, there are many exhibitions, sales, and other things already booked for 2020

Events booked in so far	Dates
Arts and Crafts Gift Shop in the downstairs 'Surgery'	2 nd March to 2 nd May
Concert ; Java 5	Sunday 15 th March 2.30pm
Arts and Crafts Fair in the Gallery	23 rd March to 4 th April
Concert: Ilow Splann	Sunday 19 th April 2.30pm
Concert: Alison Smith	Sunday 17 th May 2.30pm
Liskeard Camera Club Exhibition	18 th to 23 rd May
Arts and Crafts Fair in the Gallery	26 th May to 6 th June
Val Moore and Friends Arts exhibition and sales	22 nd to 27 th June
Concert: Cellovoce	Sunday 28 th June 2.30pm
'Frayed Edges' Textiles exhibition	29 th June to 4 th July
Arts and Crafts Gift Shop in the downstairs 'Surgery'	1 st July to 15 th August
John Hatfield : original contemporary British painter based in Teeside - Art exhibition	6 th to 25 th July
Railway Exhibition	27 th July to 15 th August
Spotlight on Celtic Art - (includes concert 2.30pm Sunday 23 rd)	17 th to 29 th August
Liskeard's 'Hidden Nature' exhibition as a prelude to 'Liskeard Unlocked'	1 st to 12 th September
Jo March Art exhibition and sales	3 rd to 10 th September
'Mayflower' heritage exhibition	14 th to 26 th September
The Kingwell Family Art and Crafts exhibition and sales	14 th to 26 th September
Concert: tba	Sunday 27 th September 2.30pm
Arts and Crafts Fair in the Gallery	28 th September to 10 th October
The Town Criers' competition in the garden on St Matthew's Fair	Saturday October 3 rd
Concert: Liskeard School Music Department	Sunday 18 th October 2.30pm
Liskeard School Art Exhibition	26 th to 31 st October
Arts and Crafts Gift Shop in the downstairs 'Surgery'	2 nd to 21 st November
Concert: tba	Sunday 15 th November 2.30pm
Marina Hicks Art exhibition	16 th to 21 st November
Stuart House Cornish Christmas Fair, House decorated for Christmas	23 rd November to Christmas close
Nadelik Lyskerrys Family Trail starts from Stuart House	Saturday 28 th November
Arts and Crafts Gift Shop in the downstairs 'Surgery'	30 th November to Christmas close
Jo March Art exhibition and sales	7 th December to t.b.c.



a **tiny** taster of just one of our coming exhibitions – John Hatfield exhibits in July. More details on this, and all events, to come.

Diary of Events

March 2020



Monday 2 nd onwards	Arts and Crafts Gift Shop in the Surgery (throughout March and April)
Tuesday 3 rd	Celtic Knot Art Workshop 2pm to 3.30pm (see p.3)
Tuesdays 3 rd , 17 th	Liskeard Writers Group meet 2 – 4.30pm.
every Thursday	Craft Club: all welcome 12 noon to 3pm. All welcome.
Monday 9 th	Liskeard Poetry Group meet 4 to 6.30pm.
Tuesday 10 th	Celtic Knot Art Workshop 2pm to 3.30pm (see p.3)
Friday 13 th	Fake or Fortune – antiques valuation with Richard Hamm of Bearnas, Hampton & Littlewood. 10am to 12 noon
Sunday 15 th	Java 5 in concert 2.30pm £7 including refreshments (see p.6)
Tuesday 17 th	Celtic Knot Art Workshop 2pm to 3.30pm (see p.3)
Monday 23 rd to April 4 th	Craft Fair in the Gallery
Coming in April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft Fair continues to 4th • Arts and Crafts Gift Shop continues to 2nd May in the Surgery • Bo Foaks Memorial Walk (Saturday 4th – see p.5) • House shut on Good Friday and Easter Monday (10th and 13th) • Ilow Splann in concert Sunday 19th • 'Fake or Fortune' Friday 24th

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