

Newsletter

March 2022

Stuart House 2021 Financial Year-End Report from our treasurer, Tony Britton



The House in late February - much to look forward to (see p.2), but significant concerns too, as our Treasurer explains.

The Chinese year of the Ox (2021) was a year of two halves from our financial viewpoint.

The first, from January to July saw the House still closed due to the continuing covid restrictions. As a result, we were unable to generate any income from our usual sources but regrettably the bills still came rolling in.

However, during this period our bank balance actually improved from £29,777 at the start of the year to £33,595 at the end of July, a net inflow of £3,818. If we look behind these figures, we find that Government grants for small businesses and job retention brought in £18,836. Other income totalled £6,221 which includes Friends' subs. and donations of £5,761 for which we are enormously grateful.

Total outgoings were £21,240 which included almost £9,500 spent on repairs and maintenance. The rest was spent on day-to-day operating costs.

The House re-opened in August on a limited basis, and we started to welcome Friends and visitors into the House again. As a result, income began to flow again but not enough just yet to cover all of the costs of running and maintaining the House.

During the five months August to December income totalled £7,398 with £1,984 from Friends' subs. and donations plus £554 from Gift Aid. The remainder was from activities within the House for which we say a BIG thank you to everyone who helped make this possible.

Expenditure in the same period was £19,747 of which £6,840 was for the new glass doors and £3,744 for insurance. The remainder was for repairs and maintenance and general running costs. All of this resulted in the year-end bank balance reducing to £21,246, which means that expenditure in 2021 exceeded income by £8,532.

Turning to the current year, clearly we cannot go on spending more that we get in and the Trustees will be searching their little grey cells for ways to ensure the survival of Stuart House. Although the last couple of years has shown that financial forecasting is more an art than a science, I still like to prepare a forecast for the year ahead and regret to say that my current prediction for the Chinese year of the Tiger (2022) is for a further cash outflow of around £10,000. I sincerely hope that I am proved wrong and that the Stuart House Tiger comes roaring back.

News from House Manager Sioux Dunster

Wow! I hope you all managed to “Batten Down the Hatches” over the last week, and didn't incur too much damage from storms Dudley, Eunice and Franklin.

We are starting to see signs of spring now with the hedgerows displaying snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils, which always lifts the spirits. With that in mind we are having the first of our Craft



Fairs in the Gallery from Monday 14th to Tuesday 29th March, I look forward to seeing all you artists and crafters booking tables! We will also have our Easter Art Crafts and Gift Shop open from Thursday 31st March to Easter Saturday 16th April. Anyone interested please get in touch with me for more details and entry forms.

There will be at least two more craft fairs before Christmas (ouch did I really just mention that word?!) and the Arts, Crafts and Gift Shop will also be making appearances through the year. More details to follow.



The Liskeard Old Cornwall Society will be exhibiting in the Jane Room for the Platinum Jubilee from Monday 30th May to Saturday 11th June. We look forward to what promises to be an informative, fun exhibition.

Really exciting news on the upcoming Ancient Egyptians Exhibition - it will run for three weeks from Monday 4th to Friday 22nd April. It is closed both Bank Holidays Friday 15th and Monday 18th, but open on Saturdays. There will also be three Craft sessions over the course of the event

and from Chairman Bob Hollingdale: Back To The Future

So many times in recent weeks I have heard people talk about the “lost two years” as thankfully a sense of normality returns in our everyday lives. As for so many it has been a difficult time for Stuart House but now there should be a real sense of optimism that we can move forward with renewed vigour and energy and once again fill the House with events, exhibitions and most of all, visitors.

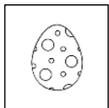
I am delighted to be able to highlight a number of the events which are scheduled for later in what is a very special Platinum Jubilee year and which the Trustees and I hope you will be able to support fully.

The Spring Craft Fair in March will give customers a welcome opportunity to view and purchase quality gifts. On 28th March the traditional Easter Art/Craft Gift Shop will open in the Surgery until 16th April. During the period the shop is open in the Surgery there will also be a



major event in the Gallery. The Ancient Egyptian Exhibition is being organised and created by two of our new volunteers and friends, Jean and Jenny. A glimpse of some of the preparatory work being done suggests this is definitely one you cannot afford to miss!

In addition, Brian Oldham (Liskeard Old Cornwall Society) will be in the House on Saturday 9th April with a pop-up exhibition and to sign copies of his new book about Liskeard (see p.5), and we eagerly look forward to the O.C.S.'s exhibition for the Queen's Jubilee in May-June.



In what promises to be a busy Easter time we are also having an Easter Egg Hunt based in the House and Garden. This is primarily for children but no doubt some parents will want to turn it into a family affair – and why not! We are hoping this will become an annual event. More details soon!



Finally to the July – August period. In a change to our original plans we are now mounting a major exhibition recognising the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. This exhibition will display all the Royal Mail stamps issued during the seventy years of the Queen's reign. This includes all definitive (including regional), high value, special (sometimes called commemorative) issues, miniature sheets, post and go stamps, a selection of booklets and more. Also on display will be a selection of stamps from the reigns of Victoria, Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII (the uncrowned king) and George VI. If you have anything “postal” which you might like to see exhibited do let me know. More details of this event will be available shortly.

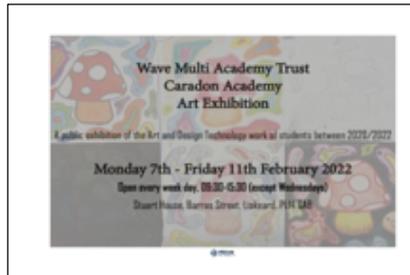
So there we are – plenty to look forward to and plenty of opportunities to help.

My fellow trustees and I are looking forward to what lies ahead; yes, let's put the lost years behind us and get back to the future!

EVENTS in STUART HOUSE (see also Chairman Bob's piece p.2)

February's Wave Academy Exhibition

The poster reminds us of the exciting and thought-provoking exhibition of the work of Year 11 students which actually ran for over two weeks in the Max Lock Gallery.



COMING IN MARCH

Stuart House
SPRING
ARTS and CRAFTS FAIR
Monday 14th – Tuesday 29th March



and
COMING IN APRIL

The Old Cornwall Society's pop-up exhibition and Book signing (see p.5)

and



Ancient Egyptians Coming to Stuart House

Monday April 4th – Friday April 22nd
Open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9.30 – 3.30

An exhibition that explains simply everything you need to know about mummies and pyramids, gods and pharaohs and much, much more.

Free entry. Come and enjoy.

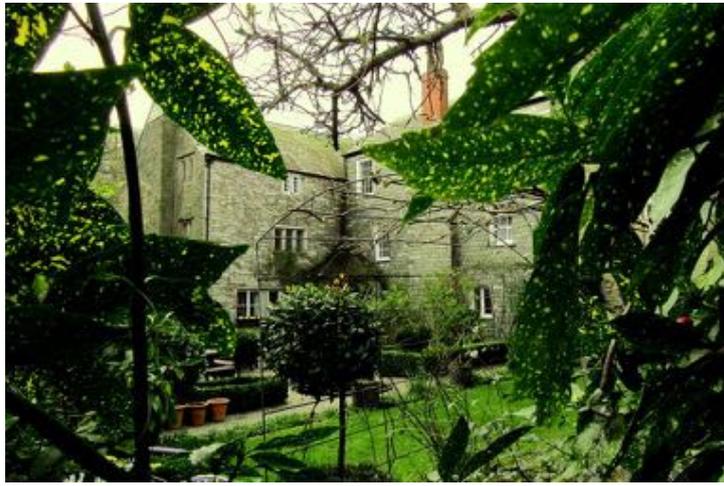


Egyptian Craft Sessions
Tuesday 12th and Thursday 14th April and another t.b.a.
10.30 to 12.30
For children aged 7-11 years
£2.50 and includes a drink and a biscuit
Parents can take the opportunity to look around Stuart House and Garden and visit the Café for homemade cakes.
Limited places available so please book to guarantee a place at Reception or by phone:
01579 347347



Jenny and Jean, organisers of the Egyptians Exhibition, and café volunteers.

March's Thoughts from our Garden's Overseer



So, what flowers to grow for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee? On the face of it the answer seems straightforward: flowers that have the celebratory colours of platinum (70 years on the throne) and purple/lilac to match the Coronation Gown. (See separate article on how purple become the colour of nobility, on p.7)

However, this is not easy. Platinum is a silvery off-

white colour, which can be reflected only in the leaves of Senecio and trailing helichrysum. As for purple, well... despite the huge number of flowering plants available, there are only a **tiny** number that will flower for months on end without constant dead-heading and which therefore are those most commonly used in bedding displays. Geraniums, Fuchsias, Impatiens, Verbena and Petunia (and its Calibrachoa cousin) produce purple and lilac flowers. Personally, I feel that such colours are very drab, and easily disappear into the shadows. I much prefer the sunshine colours of yellows, whites and pinks which readily stand out and can be seen from a distance.

Luckily, Cornwall Council have ridden to the rescue: towns and parishes have been asked to grow only red white and blue flowering plants, and Cormac has been instructed to use these colours in the wild flower verges appearing everywhere. This makes life somewhat easier. I've bought seeds of red and blue petunia varieties with white hooped edges and centre stars - see photos from the Mole's Seeds catalogue. In the large regal clay pots that we have at Stuart House, these should look grand. Petunia seed is sometimes tricky to get going though. Each is no bigger than a speck of dust (as are begonia), so it's best to use pelleted seed where the teeny seeds are coated with a layer of clay to make them visible and easier to handle. (I wonder how they do this?) They also need warmth and light, which means sowing on a kitchen windowsill or in a greenhouse at the end of March, and then it's ten to twelve weeks before having flowering plants, which takes us up to the middle / end of June.



However, the celebratory weekend is at the beginning of June. Therefore, to make sure we have flowers at that time, I raised a large number of Sweet William plants last year which should flower from May onwards. (Sweet Williams, being biennial, are sown in July for flowering in early Summer the following year.) I have already filled the herb planters with them: mint overtook everything, necessitating a good clear out. Just in case the weather turns cold, I'll also bring some along in pots in the greenhouse at home. (*The planters are at the far end of the Pots against the Wetherspoon's Wall in ed.'s photo. left*)



The large pot of fibrous begonias left outside in the corner between the café and rear porch doors has been totally untouched by frost and is starting to produce flowers again (*see the ed.'s photo left*). What tough little plants these are if given some protection in the winter.

Also reliable are the hellebores in the rear garden, now in bloom. However, these are very easily missed because most of them are purple – and they look down! To photograph them, the camera needs to be placed on the ground. (What a good invention self-focussing is.) The white hellebore often on sale in January and February is commonly called the Christmas Rose. Confusingly its botanical name is *Helleborus niger*, the black hellebore, derived from the colour of its roots. It's a very poisonous perennial: potions are said to have been used by the ancients to treat insanity, melancholy, gout and epilepsy. We are also told us that hellebores dislike being moved or even divided once established, but given the right conditions will happily self-seed. I thought a collection of the white sort would look good in the Stuart House café window boxes next Spring, so was tempted to buy seed. However, I have now discovered that they can take *ages* to germinate, possibly two years. They've done nine months so far, and not a sign. Seedlings of the purple sort do appear from time to time in the Stuart House gravel paths, so maybe that's the answer: scatter seeds in a shady gritty area and be very patient. Perhaps hellebores are like primroses, where germination occurs wonderfully quickly from seed collected from ripe pods and sown immediately. Ever hopeful, I bought a flowering white hellebore plant and will try this. In case nothing happens, I've also got *Primula auricula* seedlings coming along which will also look good in those window boxes. (Surface sow on fine compost in mid-winter, and keep on a windowsill in an unheated room).



In the last newsletter I mentioned how the front left hand garden bed had become overwhelmed by Greater Periwinkle (*Vinca major*) and currently it doesn't look its best. This has now been cut back to ground level to give some of the other plants breathing space. The *Virbinum tinus* which Eileen donated a few years ago will be taken out of its tub and planted into the bed, together with a variegated *Euonymus* shrub. These are both evergreen and will happily grow almost anywhere. (In Mediaeval times *Euonymus* bushes were called Spindle trees because the wood was good for making spinning wheel spindles.) A holly tree will be added too, to match the one that appeared all on its own at the end of the right hand bed: it is doing really well, and looks Just Right.

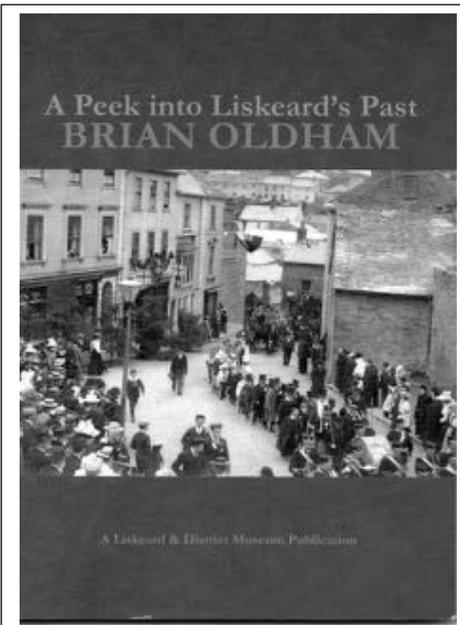
Malcolm Mort

On Saturday April 9th, in the Surgery Room on the ground floor of Stuart House, Liskeard Old Cornwall Society will be displaying an array of photographs of old Liskeard and District. They will arrive from the OCS archive for a free, one day only, pop up exhibition from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

The exhibition, entitled 'A Peek into Liskeard's Past' will complement a book signing morning by local author and President of Liskeard OCS, Brian Oldham. His recently launched book, also entitled 'A Peek into Liskeard's Past', contains forty true stories of the struggles and successes of Liskeard's little-known residents, with over eighty images.

The book is available in the Stuart House shop for £9.99, helping to raise funds towards the running of the House, and Brian will be available to discuss the background to the stories and sign your copy. The garden and café will be open on the day, with the added attraction of the Easter Craft Fair.

Pop-up Exhibition and Brian Oldham's Book for sale!



More Memories from the Minutes by Sue Glencross, Hon. Sec.

13 October 1999 continued....

Work was continuing to the slate hearth and rotten lintels in the King's Room. Some members had viewed the furniture which was being made for that room. Remedial works were in hand on the roof and lateral chimney stack. The proposed glazed screen and door for the Cross Passage had proved to be impractical. Engineers had confirmed to the architect that the south wall was now stable. A new fire alarm system had been installed.

There had been a trip to Colyton Fishacre and costs were covered. Group Captain Robins was to speak on 20th October and the Loewendahl Family would perform a concert before Christmas. A visit to Richard Mudge's Castle Hill Farmhouse in Bodmin was mooted. The Old Cornwall Society and the Cornish Association of Local Historians had expressed interest in taking rooms in the House.



The furniture made for the King's Room is now on display in the Tudor Room on the top floor, following a later decision to move the permanent exhibitions to the top floor. The hangings and mattress will be mentioned in the next instalment of 'Memories'.

By 10th November Mrs Harvey, Mrs Van Meurs and Mr Wood were painting and cleaning the King's Chamber. The furniture was finished and would be delivered the following week. Mark Fursman was decorating external joinery and David Lewis had been instructed to make and fit a door between the Cross Passage and stairwell. The roof and chimney repairs were complete. A notice banning dogs from the kitchen and servery was to be displayed, but blind dogs would be excepted. Eileen Crouch would address the Chamber of Commerce on the subject of the Celtic Art Exhibition and Louise Kidd was to design the banners for the Exhibition. Oh – great excitement! At this point I am mentioned in despatches for the first time! Apparently I had donated the proceeds of 'a talk given elsewhere' to the Trust. I do believe that was a talk given to the WI on the subject of Wills and Powers of Attorney! Tim Smit was to give a talk about the Eden Project during Science Week, Bernadette Fallon and Mark Johnson to speak on being 'House Detectives'. Captain Robins' talk had raised £79. Both front door keys had been mislaid and a new lock would be fitted!

The last meeting of 1999 took place on 8th December. O.C.S. would pay an annual 'rental' of £20 for the use of a room and would move in in January. The Minutes outlined progress made during the year. Tim Smit was busy but the Trust were given 25 complimentary tickets to visit the Eden Project. Guideline sheets had been produced for 'House Rules' and 'Donations Tariff'. A Christmas tree and decorations were to be put up at the weekend. An auction was proposed as a means of raising money. Subscriptions would be increased.

The meeting which had been planned for 12th January had been cancelled, so the first meeting of the year 2000 took place on 9th February. At that point the Trust had funds amounting to £551 in the current account and £4,245 in the deposit account. £5,000 had been received from Heritage Lottery Fund which was paid back to the District Council. A further £7,000 was due from HLF.



The Trecarrel Room on the top floor of the House, now home to the Liskeard branch of the Old Cornwall Society. However, their first home in Stuart House was in the Tudor Room, which now houses the furniture made for the Kings Room!

to be continued

How did purple become the noble colour?

Further thoughts from Malcolm following from his Garden article pp. 4-5)



Purple hellebores in the garden, photo by Malcolm.

Purple symbolizes wisdom, royalty, power, spirituality, luxury, and wealth.

The reason for purple's regal reputation comes down to a simple case of supply and demand. In ancient times, the purple dye trade was centred in the ancient Phoenician city of Tyre (in modern day Lebanon). "Tyrian purple" was obtained from a species of sea snail and was so exceedingly rare that it became worth its weight in silver. To harvest it, dye-makers had to crack open the snail's shell, extract the purple-producing mucus and expose it to sunlight for a precise amount of time. Historians tell us that it took as many as 250,000 poor snails to yield just one ounce of usable dye, which was

a vibrant and long-lasting shade of purple.

As a result, clothes made from the dye were exorbitantly expensive so they naturally became associated with the rich and powerful. Those who wore this colour were said to have divine connotations. Persian rulers adopted purple tunics, and their children were described as being "born in the purple". Romans, also, soon took a fancy to the dye and called it purpurea. It was still those sea snails that were being hunted. Purple became the colour associated with Roman emperors and magistrates, and later with the Catholic Church. If ordinary citizens were found wearing purple they could be tried for treason, for which penalty was death.

These were the first of the Sumptuary (Consumption) Laws, enacted throughout the centuries in many countries.

Edward III introduced the 1363 English Sumptuary Act to regulate the consumption of fabrics based on social class. In the late 1500s, Queen Elizabeth updated the rulings: only royal family members and close relatives could wear purple. Gold, crimson, deep indigo, violet, and purest black or white could only be worn by the highest nobility. Those found to be dressed inappropriately could be fined, ridiculed, or have their careers ruined. After all, if you couldn't tell a milkmaid from a countess at a glance, well, the very fabric of society might unravel...



From the 'Birth of a Baby' display boards in the Tudor Room. By the 1640s most of the (by then ineffective) sumptuary laws had been repealed, so colour in as you wish!

Purple is rare in nature because compounds that absorb in the requisite range of electromagnetic spectrum are extremely rare and difficult to produce biologically. Throughout the ages, people experimented with red cabbage leaves, beetroot, grapes, blueberries and plums trying to produce purple, but found it difficult to fix and stabilise the solutions to permanently colour fabrics. (Boiled red cabbage plus vinegar or lemon juice is a favoured recipe.) In 1856, 18 year old William Henry Perkin was experimenting with various chemicals and ended up producing a dirty brown sludge. When his beakers were cleaned out with alcohol, the sludge turned a bright, rich fuchsia-purple substance that permanently stained clothes. This was the first discovery of a synthetic dye, which Perkin named "mauveine."

In consultation with the Royal Collection Trust, the purple used in the final Platinum Jubilee emblem is the shade which most closely corresponds to the purple in the Queen's Robe of Estate and Coronation Gown. It's classified as Pantone 3515C, in case you'd like to order some to make your own celebration clothes. This is no longer a treasonable offence – apparently.



Last month this photo illustrated the hall panelling, but this month the focus is on the purple coat of our House Manager!

Diary of Events

March 2022



Tuesdays 1 st & 15 th	Liskeard Writers' Group meet 2 – 4.30pm.
every Thursday	Craft Club: all welcome 12 noon to 3pm.
Monday 14 th	Liskeard Poetry Group meet 4 to 6.30pm.
Monday 14 th to Tuesday 29 th	Spring Craft Fair
Thursday 31 st to Sat. 16 th April	Art and Craft Gift Shop in the Surgery
Tuesday 22 nd	Fake or Fortune – antiques valuation with Richard Hamm of Bearnas, Hampton & Littlewood. 10am. to 12 noon
Coming in April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All our usual events continue • 4th - 22nd – Ancient Egyptians Exhibition and classes (see p.2&3) • Saturday 9th – Book signing and O.C.S. pop-up Exhibition (see p.5) • House Shut on Good Friday 15th April and Easter Monday 18th April



Tete a Tete daffodils in the garden two years ago and still there.

*The House, Garden, Old Kitchen Café and (check first) Computer Research Facility are currently open
9.30am – 3.30pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
(closed Wednesday and Saturday unless there is a special exhibition or event on)*

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