

Newsletter

August 2020

There can be no firm plans for re-opening yet

Our Trustees meet on Tuesday August 18th to consider the current position, and whether any partial re-opening might be safely possible. The hope is that our House Manager, Sioux, currently furloughed, returns part-time in September, in order to do essential administrative work, but this does not mean that the House or garden will be open. Sioux's news is on p.3.

The two events which had been planned for August have been postponed.

Chairman Bob's **Railway exhibition** (planned for 27th July to 15th August) on the Liskeard-Looe Railway will be re-scheduled and Bob plans a 'taster' article for a future Newsletter.



The big in-house exhibition '**Spotlight on Celtic Art**', co-ordinated by Eileen Crouch with Sioux, and originally planned for 17th to 29th August, with sales



and linked events including a concert, is already firmly re-booked for the same time in 2021. See also p.8.

'Liskeard Unlocked' : the Heritage Open Days in mid-September, which for the past three years have seen Stuart House open and providing a 'Do you know where it is?' photographic exhibition (remember the Liskeard's Doors, Windows and Date-stones?) and other linked events, will take place again, but in a very different way.



Planning is currently underway. The theme this year is 'Hidden Nature' It is planned that the Stuart House garden will be the starting point for walks which Brian Oldham will lead on Saturday 12th and possibly Sunday 13th. The House will not be open. We hope that there will also be a small exhibition about the Stuart House garden as part of a wider-ranging exhibition in the Public Hall, and there may be other things too.



September's Newsletter (and our website and Facebook page) will have more details, and the Visit Liskeard website www.VisitLiskeard.co.uk will have details about all planned events in the town – electronic and in-person (mainly outside) - and how to book etc.

Assorted Memories of 2001 from our Hon. Sec., Sue Glencross

In my article for the June newsletter, I mentioned the time we had a display of motor cycles in what is now our reception room. I have located a photograph which only shows a few of the exhibits. As you can see the floor was well protected. The display brought in members of various vintage motor cycle clubs who had been unable to hold their usual rallies in 2001 due to the Foot & Mouth disease precautions which forbade public access to agricultural land and moorland. I well remember the late Peggy Stewart entering the Hall and the look on her face when she saw an AJS motor cycle identical to the one which she used to drive so very many years ago! Also her face when she was allowed to sit on the bike!



Ironically, in 2001 Liskeard was the chosen venue for the Market Towns Convention when a large number of representatives from all over the country amassed in Liskeard, so at that point Liskeard (as with other Towns) was a market town without a market. How many of you remember the 'Liskeard Sheep'? As there had been no cattle markets held in Liskeard due to the national Foot & Mouth outbreak, Liskeard in Bloom obtained funding from the Town Council for materials with which to make sheep-shaped planters. The sheep were life-size (or rather sheep-size), constructed by two parallel cut out shapes of sheep with a box between to house plants. They were designed and made by the late Terry Currell, a teacher and artist who taught at Plymouth College. They were duly planted and brought out at dead of night and placed in strategic venues all over town (including Stuart House) so that on the day the delegates for the convention were being shown around Liskeard, they provided a welcome addition to the usual planting. They were billed by the Press and local television as the only sheep to appear in a town during the outbreak. Stuart House owned one of the sheep for many years, but sadly all sheep eventually went to the great field in the sky.

I have been looking through the Minute book for 2001 and particularly noted the following:

- January - Our application to S.W. Arts for funding to pay a part-time administrator was refused.
- February - Tony Wood reported that the feather mattress for the King's bed was in place, as was Peggy's quilt.
- April - The 17th AGM. It was reported that the 'Green Welly Fund' had raised £51. Does anyone know exactly what this was?!?
- May - we had asked Alliance & Leicester (who had loaned us some rope barriers) whether those barriers could be retained on permanent loan. The response was that we could keep them! (We still have them!)
- July - The pewter plates had been affixed to the doors.
- September - the colour of the front door and railings was under discussion. At that time the door was green and railings blue. Apparently the reason given by the late John Harvey was that the green was a heritage colour. It was subsequently agreed both should be blue.
- October - in view of the proposed visit by the Prince of Wales in 2002 limited bookings were to be taken for May /June 2002 and definitely not for jumble sales!
- November - Eileen chaired a planning meeting and suggested that a 'Red Hat' association of female members be formed!

Great memories, eh?

A message from House-Manager Sioux.

I hope you are all keeping safe whilst managing to get out and about a bit, with the relaxing of restrictions. In our beautiful County we have so many places we can go and maintain a social distance.

Whilst being furloughed I have managed to get a lot of things done around the cabin, including decorating a couple of rooms and continuing the 'spring clean' started at the beginning of April. The pile of craft projects is slowly getting smaller. As we will not be open in August and the decision was taken to postpone the Celtic event to the same fortnight in 2021, my stock of shrugs and all things Celtic has been put into 'storage' for the rest of the year, and I will pick up designing and making for it over the Christmas period. BUT that now means I can start on the Christmas projects, ready for the Christmas events that usually start in mid-November. It would be great to be able to open for our Christmas craft fair and Christmas Fayre around the Liskeard Lights up time, so I have fingers, arms and legs crossed for any good news in that respect.

I was getting withdrawal symptoms from lack of baking, so I had a mad rush to the head and spent a day last week baking all sorts of cakes and soup making, then realised there are only two of us in the household, so ended up going round the farm dropping off goodies to the rest of the tenants here. Hey Ho.

I am so looking forward to getting back into Stuart House, and seeing people again. I am not sure when that will be yet, but, no doubt it will be as soon as humanly possible. In the meantime enjoy what freedom you are able to. Keep safe and see you on the other side of this strange time.



Sioux's cross-stitch panel 'While Shepherds Watched', recently completed.

Eileen Crouch, active Friend and a past chair of the Trust, gives us these thoughts and a poem

For many years Cornwall has inspired people in their art, writing, photography, music and dance, and also in researching and exhibiting our history, some of which Stuart House has been proud to display. Long may this continue – and eventually be seen again in our Arts & Heritage Centre. Here is a brief reminder of where some of our inspiration is derived from.

CORNWALL'S NATURAL HERITAGE

WATER

Seas around Cornwall for ages have been the highway for traders, especially for tin; its waves lap the beaches where families play in the warm summer sunshine when on holiday

ROCKS

Colourful rocks can be seen on the shore – they change very noticeably up on the moor where granite appeals to the stonemason's heart and his skill fashions rock into fine works of art

MOORS

Signs of our history – the circles of stones, copper mine ruins, and derelict homes; moorland grows wild and provides perfect cover for insects and animals there to discover.

Eileen Crouch ©

August's Thoughts from our Garden's Overseer



From time to time in these articles I have touched on what it is about the Stuart House garden that makes it feel so inviting. I've previously mentioned design, proportions, materials, and plant combinations as being important, but it recently occurred to me that there's another factor: the feeling of shelter and security. A common instinct across the Animal Kingdom is the desire to hide away somewhere safe, whilst being able to peep out

to espy dangers. I'm sure that this is why children like playing hiding games, why we find peering out of tents and camper vans so appealing, and why we love sheds and wild log cabins so much – especially those with a tin roof when the rain beats down! In the Stuart House garden there are several places that generate a sense of shelter and cosiness. For instance, when one enters the garden from the rear porch blanketed in evergreen Rose lutea, a sense of depth but safety is immediately generated. Then there are the two arches, that in the far corner (a blissfully peaceful place) covered a tangled mixture of wisteria, roses and ever hopeful (but constantly thwarted) bindweed. At this time of year, too, the twisted willow tree droops its protective new growth around the seat next to the wall pond. Another such site, no longer in the garden but not forgotten, was previously created each summer by the wild, rampant growth of buddleia and goat willow in what is now the outdoor sitting area of new pub next door, arching over the fence. A lesson in garden design there.

The first flush of roses in both front and rear gardens had come and gone by mid-July. The Duchess of Cornwall bush roses in the front were quite wonderful all though May and June, giving rise to much positive comment from passers-by. Luckily (for rose blooms) there was very little rain during this time, and so no problem this year (except for some of the old roses in the main garden) caused by the dreaded disorder of rose balling. This happens when the outer petals of perfectly formed flower buds become saturated with water and fuse together as they dry out. This results in a soggy mess which then becomes crispy when dry weather returns. There's very little that can be done to prevent this: just cut off the buds above a pair of healthy leaves. Roses with dense flower structure suffer most from this condition. The blooms of



Birthday Girl in the rear garden have fewer petals, so do not succumb to this problem. It also flowers from late Spring to mid-Autumn. But... if only it had more scent, for (to paraphrase Wonderland Alice) what's the point of rose without any fragrance? Oh well, perfection in anything is very rarely reached.



The Hollyhock in the bed near the pond, now in its second year, has started to produce its deep yellow blooms again, although it won't make eight feet high this year as it did last summer because the main stem was nibbled though by a snail and collapsed. However, several shorter stems have appeared, so there should be a mass of flowers through August and September. This plant is an Antwerp hollyhock (*Alcea ficifolia*), which has fig-shaped

leaves and is far less prone to fungal leaf-rust that usually afflicts in a quite ghastly way the more common sort (*Alcea acaulis*). For those readers who bought a packet of seeds saved from this plant but have not got around to sowing them yet, there's still time – I've just sown some myself and they germinate fine. Hollyhocks have very long taproots and are one of those welcome group of plants which once established do not need any watering. There's still time too, to sow the Honesty seeds also saved from a plant in our garden. Sow in a tray, pot them up when big enough, grown on in a sheltered place, and plant out in the Autumn.

I see that the solitary leaf-cutter bees (important pollinators) have been at work in the garden again, delicately and attractively sculpting leaves. They seem to prefer rose leaves, and the leaves and flowers of hydrangeas (see photos). They use the chewed product to make little cells in hide-away places such as decaying wood, where they lay their eggs, add some pollen for the hatched larvae to eat, and seal the chambers in the same way.



One of enduring attractions of gardening is the watching and observing: whether it's bees, bindweed, the huge variety of plants that with great determination start growing in every nook and cranny, or the differences between seedlings in a seed-tray. Some are off and away almost immediately, whilst others are late developers and easy to overlook – though of course they may eventually have the attributes we would most admire or seek. The common feverfew,



for instance (long used as a herbal remedy, especially for headaches) seeds wildly if you allow it, and the resulting progeny can have very different sizes and flower forms. Some flowers will be larger and double, and over the years I have saved seed from these "better" sorts, a plant of which I added to the herb collection in the garden (see photo.) These larger and more double sorts fortunately tend to breed consistently. I will save and packet some, which will be

available at Stuart House in the future.

Malcolm Mort

The Liskeard Granite Water Troughs.

The article on the next page (p.6) is by Malcolm, who, with his links with Liskeard in Bloom, planted up the troughs at the railway station and outside the church. Malcolm is also responsible for the gardens and tubs at the railway station. ed.)



The Liskeard Granite Water Troughs



In Liskeard town centre there are three matching granite troughs (Grade II historical importance), planted with flowers: at the railway station, outside St Martin's Church, and next to The Fountain on The Parade. Each has the same inscription: ***Presented to the Borough by a Lover of Animals, 1893.*** Who is this Lover of Animals?

The story is interesting and involves the Hermon family of London. Records from the 18th and early 19th century show that the Hermons were

a wealthy and well-connected family, operating partnerships in the building, glazing and plumbing industries, and with links to the developing cotton, tea, and rubber industries overseas. This enabled them to build or procure properties in desirable areas of London, including Westminster and Kensington. One of the family was Edward Hermon (1822-1881) who at a young age joined the London Branch of cotton manufacturer Horrocks, Miller and Co. He was said to have outstanding business foresight and eventually became sole proprietor of the business in 1865. In 1868 he was elected M.P. for Preston, being by then one of England's wealthiest men and a lavish art collector. He commissioned the construction of Wyfold Court at Rotherfield Peppard, near Reading, a huge building in lavish French Gothic style. (In 1932 this was sold to the Government, renamed Borocourt Hospital for Mental Defectives. This closed in 1992 and by 2000 was fully restored to its original condition and name.)

Edward's marriage to Emily Udny produced a daughter (who married and remained at Wyfold Court) and a son, George Edward Hermon. The link to the troughs we have in Liskeard came through George. George was born 15.09.1852 at the family home, 22 King Street, Kensington, and married Mary May Hewson on 21.09.1875 in St George's Church, Hanover Square, Mayfair (still a sought-after setting for society weddings). He gained his M.A. from Christ College Oxford, became a student of the Inner Temple in London and was called to the bar on 29.06.1881. However, this did not seem to be an appealing career prospect, neither did continuing in his father's footsteps in the cotton industry. Instead George took Holy Orders, and he and Mary moved to Doublebois.

Doublebois was probably chosen because at that time there was nearby a GWR mainline railway station which provided very easy access to family in Reading and London. Also, the vicar of St Neot (from 1875 – 1902) was Richard Corker Meade M.A, D.D. who was probably known to the Hermon family – indeed, several of the extensive Hermon family had made church careers. There was probably a connection, too, with the wealthy Grylls family in this area.

George and Mary bought land (from the Grylls family?) at Doublebois, and commissioned the building of Doublebois House (built 1883-5, extended in 1896), a very much scaled down version of Wyfold Court. The Reverend George was a curate at St Neot Church, and funded the building of the Church Institute in the village. He also had an "iron mission church", St Agatha's, built at Draynes, which opened in February 1887, where he was officiating minister. It had seating for 120 people and contained a large amount of stained glass ("spirituality and beauty go hand in hand") which was moved some years ago to St Cleer Church when St Agatha's was demolished.

In 1893, Mary, the Lover of Animals, commissioned five stone water troughs to be presented to the Borough of Liskeard. Three are in the town, two in private ownership in the area.

Rev. Hermon died on 11.10.1911, and his wife Mary May on 14.05.1926. The granite grave which they share is on the north side of St Neot Church. Their names and dates of birth and death are marked on the grave in the same lettering and style as those on the troughs. They appear to have had no children.

Malcolm Mort 09.06.2020

Brian Oldham, President of Liskeard's Old Cornwall Society (who have their base in the Trecarrel Room on the top floor of Stuart House), hopes that this will interest readers.

Edward Bawden CBE, RA, RDI (1903-1989)

When Tony Wood, former Trustee, Chair and an essential founder of the Stuart House Trust, left Liskeard he gave me his collection of Royal Institution of Cornwall journals. The 1990 issue gave some interesting local connections with the celebrated artist Edward Bawden.

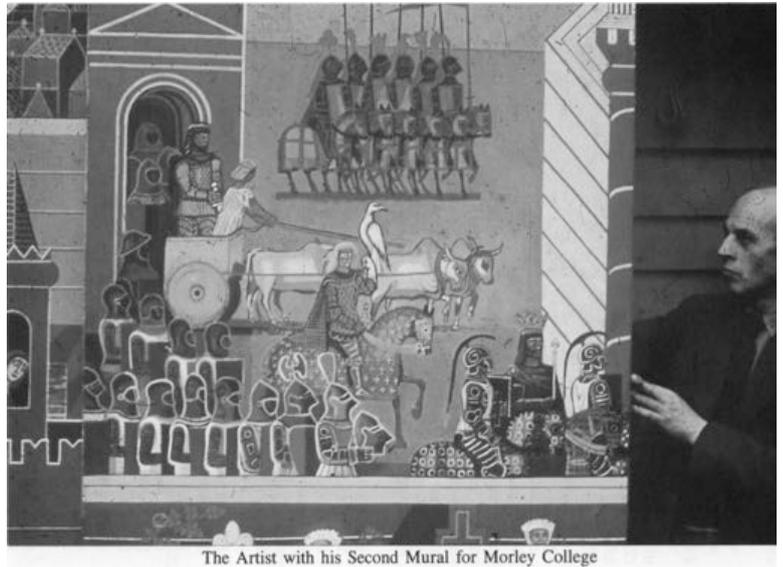
In 1930 Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin unveiled 2 murals by Bawden in London's Morley College; the early planning for these murals took place while holidaying in the cottage of the Foreman at Cheesewring Quarry.

The 1946 edition of "Penguin Modern Painters" contains 32 Bawden watercolours. A copy is held at Kresen Kernow. As part of the 1951 Festival of Britain Bawden produced a mural for the Lion and Unicorn Pavilion on London's South Bank.

During a 1955 painting holiday in Minions Bawden visited and painted at St Neot, Goldiggings Quarry and many old mine buildings on Bodmin Moor.

A series of watercolours painted around De Lank Quarry was shown in the 1960/61 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. Their exhibitions, and those of the Fine Art Society Gallery, in the 1970s and 1980s featured watercolours by Bawden of the Gardens of Heligan, China Clay country and the Caerhays Castle estate.

Bawden's great-grandfather, also Edward, was a West Cornwall lead miner who arrived in Liskeard's Higher Lux Street in the 1840s to work in the lead/silver mines of Menheniot. His grandfather, another Edward, was a copper miner at one of the



The Artist with his Second Mural for Morley College



Heligan from the north-west, by E. Bawden



South Caradon Mine

Caradon mines; by 1861 he had married and was living at Addington Place. Bawden's father, yet another Edward, was born in 1871 at Ashpark Villa, Station Road, the new family home where his grandmother

Elizabeth ran a Lodging House. Although Bawden's grandparents saw out their days in Liskeard, Elizabeth as a widow in Windsor Cottage, behind no.7 Russell Street, his father pursued a career in ironmongery in Honiton, Bury St Edmunds and Braintree, Essex, where the artist himself was born in 1903.



Ashpark Terrace, Station Road 1940

Bawden never forgot his Cornish roots which featured regularly in his paintings and murals throughout his illustrious career.

Diary of Events

August 2020



As the House must remain closed (see p.1) none of the events which were planned for August or September are listed, but do check the website for any news of possible Autumn opening.

Ilow Splann – not in concert in person, but an opportunity to see and hear them! *(a first for the Newsletter, I think! ed.)*



Had things gone as planned, August would have seen the **'Spotlight on Celtic Art'** exhibition (*now rescheduled, see p.1*). On Sunday 23rd, Ilow Splann would have given a concert, choosing relevant music from their repertoire, some of which they performed in 2019 at the ***Festival Interceltique de Lorient***, which is an annual event in Brittany celebrating Celtic music from countries around the world.

Ilow Splann were also booked to give the Stuart House Concert Series concert in April, so we have missed two opportunities to hear the duo of Carlton Crouch and Maggie Willmott singing and playing their range of instruments, including recorders, violin, guitar, bouzouki, spinet and bodhran, with a focus on Cornish and Renaissance music

Carlton writes:

"I've posted a video of our arrangement of traditional Cornish tune "Begone From My Window" (with

additions by Frances Bennett and Ilow Splann) to youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjIG9DZhCdw>

The Ilow Splann video is posted on my Youtube Channel: "Carlton's Music" which I started in lock down. There are recordings of other Cornish tunes plus slideshows of scenic Cornwall to go with some of the recordings."

Carlton goes on to say:

"I'd like to thank the Trustees for their success in maintaining the House and in running a very enjoyable (from my point of view) Arts and Heritage Centre. Additional "thank yous" to Sioux, Angela and Rachel for your particular inputs re: music and publicity and to Eileen Crouch for her exhibitions and concert organisation. Thanks also to our Stuart House audience. Linda has even bought a ticket when she can't make a concert! Good wishes for the future!"

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. Please email to the editor, not to the House rachelpbennett59@gmail.com

Any short memories of times of events in the House or linked to it, photographs or other contributions are very welcome, especially at this time when 'news' will be limited.