

December 2022
&
January 2023

Newsletter

**A MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR
to all our Friends and volunteers**

The House will be shut from Thursday 22nd December until at least Monday 16th January. Depending on the progress of necessary upkeep work on the House it might be a week later.



We hope for a SOCIAL for Friends and Volunteers on Saturday 28th January (afternoon)

**£ 2023 £
DONATIONS**

from Friends
will be very gratefully
received. These annual
donations are a vital
component of the
income necessary to
keep the House going.
A form is included with
this Newsletter.



Seeing – and smelling – the House decorated for Christmas is always wonderful. We thank Sioux, Gaby and the Craft Club who say 'Stuart House Craft Club and Gaby from the Coved Room Stitchery have been very busy sewing panels depicting the 12 Days of Christmas to decorate Stuart House this festive season. Here is just one of them. Come for a visit to see the rest.

At the time of going to press, decorating was still underway.



Leaflet Sponsored by Coodes
Honorary Solicitors to Stuart House Trust

From Sioux, our House Manager – news of recent and future events.

How can it possibly be the last newsletter of the year?!

November saw three exhibitions:-



Lilian Oaktree (*left*) exhibited her wonderfully varied artwork in the first week of November which was appreciated by all who visited.

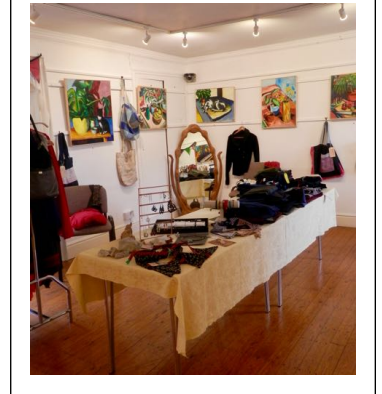
Jenny and Jean worked their magic on the **Poppy and Remembrance Exhibition** (*below*) including lots of information about how the use of the poppy has developed. There was a big selection of photos of Queen Elizabeth laying her wreath throughout her 70 year reign.



Mark Simmons (*below*) was back in the Surgery with his book sale and has booked another week in spring.



The **Cornish Abstract Art** exhibition (*below*) organised by Hannah Whale had some incredible work on display and for sale.



Our annual **Christmas Shop and Christmas Fair** have just started, and Gaby has done a truly remarkable feat in decorating the House.

Mince pies will be appearing on our cafe menu and even mulled fruit juice is threatening to arrive.

Maybe the dog (below) is waiting for it! (ed,)



On Saturday 3rd December we play host to "**The Cornish Christmas Trail**" with maps being handed out from Reception, all followed by a Cakey tea at the Public Hall.

We have not been able to schedule a celebration event this year before our Christmas closedown (*see p. 1*) BUT we have a provisional date of Sat 28th January for a **social event** for our Volunteers and Friends. Details to follow.

I would like to take this time to thank all our volunteers for their sterling work over the year. Without you we really cannot run this beautiful

house. **I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a safe New Year.**

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

2001 continued .. As was the practice in those days there were no August meetings so the next was held on 12th September. It was suggested there should be a key cupboard with a combination lock so that only certain people had access. Tony had spoken to someone who

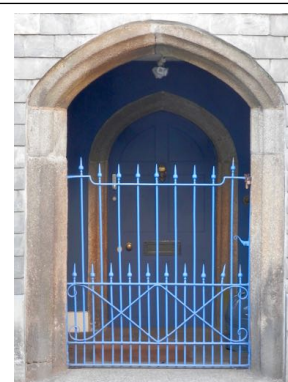
would charge £100 for laying out the garden but Gail had indicated she would do it for nothing – how generous was that! Jean Wills was going to make the Look Out an archive room but it would need shelving. The ramps were beginning to disintegrate and hopefully grant aid could be provided to fund new ones. It was considered it would be a good idea to make the ramps permanent and to trim the doors to enable that to happen. Tony would redecorate the porch front. It was felt the door and railings should both be blue. A covered frame in the porch was suggested so that that our own posters and leaflets could be displayed as the notice boards outside the House were getting damaged.



The design for the Stuart House Garden made by Gail Wolfenden in 2004 – the original copy hangs in the entrance cross-passage of the House. The garden has developed since, but still with the spirit of a 17th century gentleman's garden.

Room which was agreed with Juliette who would prepare it in script. It was agreed that room rates would be increased by £1 per room from the beginning of 2002. The Chairman and the Treasurer would like to stand down at the next AGM. The local National Trust wanted the whole of the House for their Easter Fair in 2003 but the Chairman would see what was meant by 'Fair' as a general jumble sale situation was not wanted. Jean would book the Gallery, Jane Room, and Staircase for 2 weeks in July next year for her 1950s exhibition. The Garden Party had been a success. On the supper evenings it was agreed Len Copley had been a very good speaker and should be booked again. Brenda Moore and Kate would 'do' the January supper club evening. The proposed Art Exhibition 17th to 22nd September had not been well supported but the Camera Club would provide Millennium pictures to help. The Town walk on 14th October was being run by the House. Members would be asked to bring a plate for food for a small buffet and tea and coffee would be served.

to be continued



The now familiar blue paintwork. This photo. was taken before the automatic glass sliding door was installed this year. It conserves heat wonderfully.



The beautiful valance and trims around the four-poster bed, which was originally in the King's Room but is now in the Tudor Room on the top floor. The reproduction bed is constructed authentically – but it now provides a much-needed storage space underneath for the Christmas decorations!

December's Thoughts from our Garden's Overseer



During November, seeds were saved from the white fibrous begonias that have bloomed continuously and so profusely in the Stuart House pots, planters and window boxes for at least six months. Begonia flowers are male or female, the latter easily seen by the pronounced three-winged ovary at the base of the petals and which contain the tiny, tiny seeds – many hundreds in each mature seed capsule. I grow nearly all my plants from saved

seed, which means selecting the best plants, then separating the seed. Seed pod structures vary hugely between different plants, as does the way seed is sent on its way. I like the idea that oak trees know well that squirrels can sometimes be forgetful. The trees produce prolific numbers of acorns that are buried far away by the squirrels in their winter food stores. However, they'll forget where they put some, and these will then germinate to produce new trees. Cunning.

Seed cleaning can be easy (nasturtiums, calendula) or difficult and time consuming. Begonias are quite easy. Just leave the seed pods in a saucer on the kitchen windowsill for a week or so, and the dust-like seed will start to fall out. It's fine enough to be sieved through a tea strainer and stored in a little plastic or glass container - those small jars that jam sometimes comes in are ideal. These will be kept in a cool place and started on their way in late winter. They need warmth and cossetting, and an easy, fail-safe, and very inexpensive way will be revealed in the next newsletter. The begonia plants that one buys in late Spring are probably f1 hybrids. "Seed saved from these plants will not breed true," we are warned, but in my experience there's never a problem.



When one cleans seeds, an array of creatures that have taken shelter in the seed heads often fall out too, from larger ones such as millipedes, earwigs and woodlice, to the tiniest sorts that that are best seen through a magnifying glass. They scurry around wondering what has become of their safe, familiar little worlds. They can be difficult to catch, so what to do with them? I put them outside in a log pile kept for that purpose. Much more of a nuisance are vine weevil grubs, those little white wiggly things about centimetre long. On emptying the begonia tubs, there they always are, hatched from summer eggs laid in the soil, ready to munch roots (and probably creatures much smaller than them) to get them through the winter. They also seem to enjoy devouring the tubers of the large flowered type of begonias. Therefore, before storing, clean them well with a brush and a jet of water then wrap them in newspaper in a cool, frost-free place until Spring. For the last several months I have been cultivating *Primula auricula* plants in a box, for planting in the café windowsill boxes for an early Spring display. However, the plants started to look very unhappy. I turned them out and found a plethora of those wretched vine weevils feasting on the roots. I washed them off, repotted the auriculas in fresh compost, but ... what to do with those bugs? It's not their fault they were born vine weevils! I threw them onto the lawn – they might burrow down and nibble on grass roots, or provide treats for those keen-eyed sparrows that live under the fascias of the library next door.



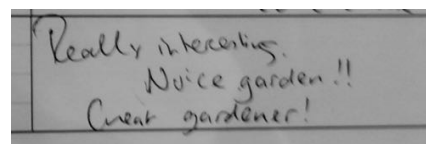
The recent World Wildlife Fund Living Planet report tells us that wildlife populations have declined by an alarming 70% in the last fifty years. Habitat loss, pollution, invasive species, climate change, and soil degradation and loss all play their part. Everything works together, even those pesky (to us) slugs and snails. So we are beholden to keep interconnected, ecological systems as safe as we can. We are told, too, that a teaspoon of soil contains millions (I forget how many) of microscopic creatures and organisms, and that dense fungal networks are essential for healthy plant growth. This means minimum soil disturbance and adding plenty of organic matter. The many leaves from the magnolia, apples, and twisted willow trees in the garden have been collected and spread around the shrubs and rose bushes. Some say that these should be composted first, but they provide soil and creature cover for the winter, and they have always disappeared by late Spring, decayed and pulled down by worms.



During November, the roses in the front garden suddenly decided that they would put on a minor unexpected and welcome late autumn display (see photograph). Yet another recent report informed us that stress-causing changing garden conditions (heat waves and suchlike), evolving pests and fungal disease are ravaging many rose varieties, even newer types, and these therefore have had to be “retired” by growers. Well, I do hope our bushes will show resistance.

In my garden nursery beds at home, wallflowers are growing well, as are sweet williams, viola, white lychnis, and more, all ready to plant in the Stuart House garden next Spring. Something to look forward to!

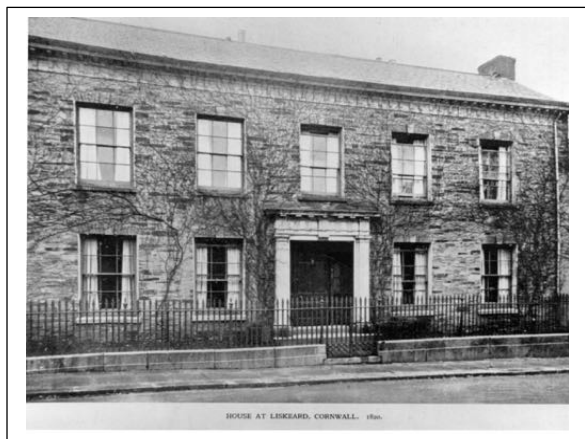
Malcolm Mort



The comment above was in the Visitors' Book in November! Spot one of the great gardeners, Jeff, in the photograph (left), taken by the other great gardener, Malcolm, who, as usual, took the other wonderful garden photographs: pp.1&4 – the garden in November and nasturtiums (Alaska type) p.5 – campanula growing from seed in a crevice without soil, fuchsia by the café window and a fig leaf decaying on a slate.

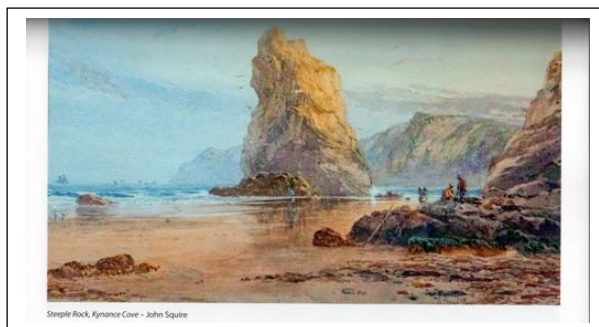
Another snippet from Brian Oldham, President of Liskeard's Old Cornwall Society who have their base in the Trecarell Room on the top floor of Stuart House, open to the public on Tuesdays.

A new book has been donated to the Liskeard & District Museum which has shown me how much more there is to discover of Liskeard's history. It's a biography of John Squire, Musician and Artist (1833-1909), a gentleman I'd not previously been aware of. He was born on January 23rd 1833, and until the age of 15 lived in Dean Street, Liskeard. The Squire family are the



next entry in the 1851 census after Attorney and Magistrate Bernard Anstiss, who we know resided at what is now number 18. Number 20 (*photograph in 1820, left*) would have been ideal to accommodate John's parents and his thirteen siblings. John's father, also John, was one of the earliest employees of the East Cornwall Bank, which eventually became part of Barclays Bank, on the corner of the Parade and Pike Street. John junior started work at the bank, under his father, at the age of 13 and followed that career for a further 48 years at various branches across Southwest England, the next after Liskeard being Bodmin, to where he was transferred aged 15.

How John Squire managed to achieve so much in the arts in addition to rising to managerial positions in banking is quite remarkable. The water colours showing his love of nature, particularly of Cornish land and seascapes, were awarded prizes from the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society and hung alongside the works of professionals by the Fine Arts Academy in their exhibitions in London and the provinces. As a musician he was an accomplished violinist playing in concerts with the Clifton Septet Society, the Bath Quartet Society and the Herefordshire Philharmonic Society, among many others. Many hours in later life were spent teaching, without charge, and encouraging young musicians and artists. Four early members of his sketching club in Swansea became exhibitors of the Royal Academy, and three of his music students held scholarships of the Royal College and the Royal Academy of Music. As a conductor he led performances by the Swansea Bach Choir, the BBC Welsh Chorus, the National Youth Choir of Wales and the Cardiff Polyphonic Choir.



An outstanding career which had its roots in Liskeard 189 years ago.

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Editor's note: From 1833 (the year that John Squire was born) Stuart House entered a time of more stable occupancy than had been the case for the previous century or so. It was united into a single dwelling by the Carthew brothers and lived in by the Carthew family. In 1843 it was made over to Susan Carthew by her brother, John, the document saying 'in consideration of the natural love and affection which he hath and beareth towards the said Susan Carthew his sister' .. (he) .. 'gave the 'Dwelling House' with the Garden, stables, outhouses and premises thereto adjoining' and the 'houses outhouses edifices buildings cellars areas courts courtyards gardens warehouses pumps cisterns sewers gutters drains ways paths passages lights waters watercourses liberties privileges easements profits commodities advantages and emoluments whatsoever to her and her assignees to have and to hold from the next day for sixty years in consideration of Ten Shillings sterling to the said John Carthew paid by the said Susan Carthew and every year a rent of a peppercorn if the same shall be lawfully demanded'. Susan was to live in Stuart House until her death in 1876.

Diary of Events

December 2022

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continuing until Wednesday 21 st December	The Christmas Craft Fair in the Gallery and the Christmas Arts, Crafts and Gift Shop in the Surgery. The House is decorated throughout for Christmas.
every Thursday	Craft Club: all welcome. 12 noon to 3pm.
Saturday 3rd	The House hosts the start of Liskeard's Cornish Christmas Trail – come and collect your maps from 11am to 1pm. A Cakey Tea follows in the Public Hall.
Tuesdays 6 th & 20 th	Liskeard Writers' Group meet 2 to 4.30 pm.
Monday 12 th	Liskeard Poetry Group meet 4 to 6.30pm.
Thursday 22 nd December to Monday 16 th January – maybe a week later	Christmas closedown, when necessary maintenance of the House will take place.
JANUARY 2023	
Tuesday 17 th	Liskeard Writers' Group meet 2 to 4.30 pm
Thursday 19 th and 26 th	Craft Club: all welcome. 12 noon to 3pm.
also in January and coming in February	Our usual events will continue, and other events will be added as they are confirmed. Check by phoning the House, or by looking at the notice boards outside or on the website.

*The House, Garden, Old Kitchen Café and (check first) Computer Research Facility
are open
9.30am – 3.30pm on Monday Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
and whenever possible Saturday 9.30am – 12.30pm.*

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