

Newsletter

November 2022



The regional Town Criers' competition was held in the Stuart House garden on St Matthew's Fayre day, 1st October. Some people came specially, and others were happily surprised to hear and see the unusual background to their Saturday morning tea and cake.

Liskeard in Bloom - readers might remember that the judges in July had lunch in the Stuart House garden. They were so impressed that they awarded the 17th century Gentleman's Garden a **Level 5: Outstanding**. Thanks to Malcolm and Jeff for all their work keeping the garden so lovely.

Apologies for an error on p.1 of the hard copy of the October Newsletter – the visit of the then Prince Charles to Stuart House was in 2002, not 2009.

As usual, there will be a **single Newsletter for December 2022 and January 2023**, so please get any copy to the editor in time.



EVENTS IN THE PAST MONTH

Ilow Splann at Stuart House



It was lovely to have music back in the House on a Sunday afternoon. On 9th October we welcomed Carlton and Maggie again, for a programme of tunes played on combination of recorders, violin, acoustic guitar and spinet, and songs: all 'Cornish' in some way. Some were from the Morval Songbook (discovered at Antony House) with a spinet added to the single line of the tune. Others were arranged by the duo in the Cornish dance tradition of repeating the melody and its chord sequence with different melodies and counter-melodies, and some were new pieces written by both

Carlton and Maggie (sometimes with challenging time-signatures – 7/4 took a lot of counting, I found!) and included several world premieres! The audience joined in the chorus of 'A Maid in Bedlam' and quickly picked up the tune for 'Toiling in the Fields of Widegates' - a sort of spoof folk-song including 'he has strum and I have raken' (more poetic than just using a strimmer and rake!) and we were all were confident with 'Cornish Harvest' as it was set to the Furry Dance tune. There was a happy variety – some light, some slow, gentle, and meditative, some foot-tapping.

Afterwards, the audience moved downstairs for refreshments including biscuits and apple-cake made by Maggie. Ilow Splann were pleased to sell a couple of their CDs too. I attach again the link to some of their music with some accompanying images which we also saw in this performance : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z53hY7vNU5g> A link to 'Mis Est' (the 7/4 tune) is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQWJAKmkWDY>

Rachel Bennett

A Word from House-Manager Sioux

(with an un-asked for addition from the editor!)

We had a fabulous start to the month, playing host to the Town Criers' competition in the garden. They were appreciative of the warm soup and buffet that followed the proceedings. The House was full of colour with all criers having their escorts with them, the outfits were quite spectacular.

We thank Sioux for making the soup for this occasion and for the SECMF group (see p.3) and getting it safely to the upper floors! Our House-Manager does so much for the House.

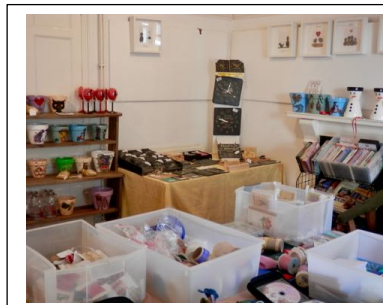
Our Craft Fair was well attended, and it was lovely to see a couple of new crafters this time.

Ilow Splann took over our Gallery on Sunday 9th and the whole event went really well.

The photographs brought in by Jack Ryder were stunning with a hugely enlightening look at the social experience of the times. Lots of visitors, some from the other side of Exeter and from the Lizard. The donation box added just under £70 to the House funds which was a huge boost.

Could It Be Magic was a real eye opener in many ways and thoroughly enjoyable.

We look forward to everything coming in November and to welcoming all visitors, exhibitors and volunteers – including any new ones!



Our House Manager Sioux, with Gaby from the Coved Room Stitchery, organised the Craft Fair which ran

until October 8th. Some items from this were then moved across to the Jane Room, where sales continued. Other crafts are in the shop in the accessible downstairs surgery. The Christmas Craft Fair starts on 28th November.

October's Events continued

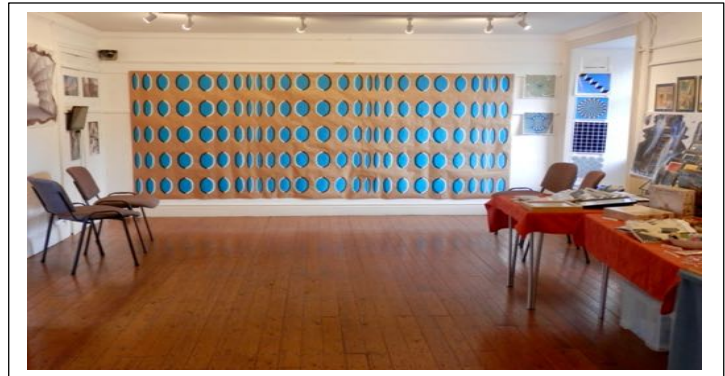
RARE EARLY PHOTOGRAPHS



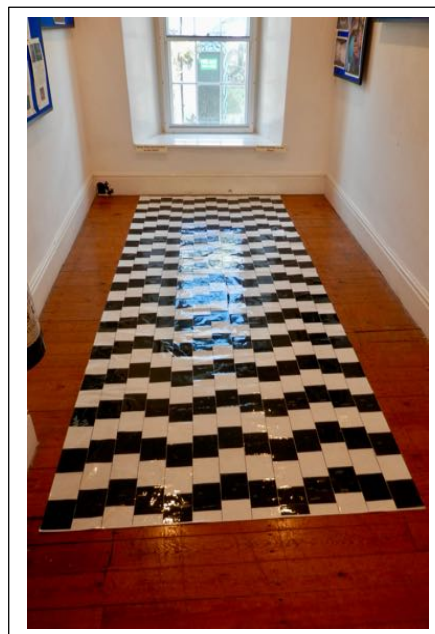
Jack Ryder's wonderful exhibition ran from October 10th to 22nd and attracted many visitors, including quite a few who had travelled a considerable distance after seeing Jack's 'Spotlight' interview. Many spent a long time with the photographs, and there has been much follow-up interest since. It was a stunning collection from British photographers including Lewis Carroll, George Ruff, Frances Smith, and Julia Margaret



Cameron and Americans Dorothea Lange, Lewis Wickes Hines, Jack Delano and John Vachon. It was a joy to steward the exhibition, to learn and to have time to look properly and somehow to relate to the images. Personally, I found Margaret Cameron's image of a girl deeply moving – very modern looking, yet taken in 1867. The audience at the Ilow Splann concert had a sneak preview (see p.2).
Rachel Bennett



The South East Cornwall Museums' Forum held its late September meeting and training session in the Trussed Room. The South West Museums Conservation Development Officer gave a talk about making the best of old display cabinets, using ours as an example. We learned a lot about light, how objects (and the cases) deteriorate, safety, security, presentation and much more. To get 15 of us in the room, including for a soup lunch, we needed to move the pikeman, but he's safely back now!



COULD IT BE MAGIC?

This exhibition, full of illusions and information, is run by Jenny and Jean and is running from October 24th to 29th so there will be more about it (including the magician's visit!) in December's Newsletter. Being half-term week, it's been lovely to welcome children.

NOVEMBER THOUGHTS FROM OUR GARDEN'S OVERSEER

Well, it was just as we'd thought. The builders working on the library renovation next door confirmed that water from our "lion head" pond has indeed been gradually seeping through the wall. So with great gusto, Jeff immediately set to work to pump out the water and remove the sludge (*see photo. p.7*). There are two places where the water might have been draining, so the concrete lining will need to be chipped off and replaced, incorporating a waterproof sealant. In the meantime, the pond irises and some of the pickerel water weed are standing in large bowls under the apple tree.



The builders will also need to paint and renew guttering and fix the leaking library roof, which means that the high wall on the pond side will be covered in scaffolding during the winter. It will be tricky to protect the established plants and shrubs, so let's hope they don't suffer too much. Some of the twisted willow branches will need to be cut back too. In the last newsletter I'd asked for suggestions for a tree that might

replace this willow when the time comes. Maggie and Phil, frequent visitors to the garden, suggested a birch, the sort that has a columnar form and white bark. That's an excellent idea.

The garden has looked positively summery throughout October, the anemones and dahlias flowering with exuberance. Several visitors have said this year that, very unusually, their dahlias did not produce flowers, just leaves. This is attributed to the drought, because although dahlias enjoy sunshine and warmth, they don't at all like bone-dry soil.



Gladly, the yellow dahlias in our garden have flowered all summer. This is because the garden has shade and they've regularly been given buckets of water containing organic plant food. These dahlias were dug from my own garden, though I confess I don't know the name – there are a huge number of yellow sorts that look similar. This variety is very tough, able to be left in the ground all winter, faithfully returning in late Spring. Their tender new shoots are always a major attraction to slugs and snails though by the time June comes the stems suddenly shoot upwards, out of reach of predators. Some varieties are more frost tolerant than others so can be left in the ground, but if in doubt cover them with straw, compost, leaves, whatever is to hand. Digging up and storing the tubers is such hard work and so very tedious! Newly bought bare tubers are best started in a coldframe or cold greenhouse. Use a box or crate (the plastic sorts thrown out by greengrocers are ideal), line it with plastic (an opened out compost bag is good), pack in the tubers and cover with compost. Then, when the plants start shooting, pot them up individually before planting them out in mid summer. (Dahlias, by the way, are natural inhabitants of Mexico, where they have long been cultivated for their edible tubers and flowers. They are named after Andreas Dahl, 18th Century Swedish scientist and environmentalist, and are now the national flower of Mexico.)

It's another royal event next year, 6th May, Coronation day. What celebratory plants should gardeners grow? Early May is tulip time, so purists might want lilac and gold tulips, which do exist but are probably difficult to source now. Still available, though, are the more common red and white tulips, which can be grown alongside bluebells, to produce the common bunting colours of red, white and blue. *(continued p.5)*

Tulips can safely be planted in November, but best to keep them in frame or cold greenhouse, away from severe cold, and then bring them on in April. And for those wanting to continue the theme into the summer, I can think of nothing more suitable than pots of the red and blue white-starred petunias we've had in the garden this summer (see photo.)



Under the seats and tables in the Stuart House garden, in the cracks and crannies, little ferns forever try to establish themselves. They'll be doing it in your garden too if you look closely, just as they do in mine. A few years ago I carefully removed and potted up a couple of dozen to see how they would look when they were more mature. Surprisingly, no two were alike. Different sized and shaped fronds; some keeping their fronds through the winter, some dying right back; some spreading, some upright; some smaller, some taller. I composted those that looked as if they could be bracken (but were they really?) in favour of the more delicate sorts. Ferns produce many thousands of spores from just one frond, so it's not surprising that there is so much variation. Try it and see for yourself, it's easy and really interesting!

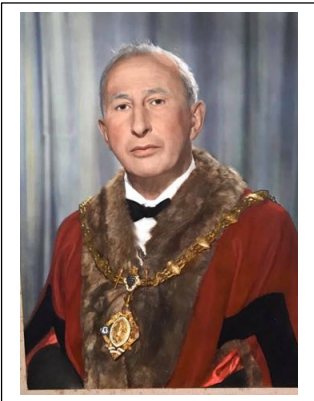
Malcolm Mort

(thanks to Malcolm for all the garden photographs pp.4-5, that of the Town Criers on p.1 and Jeff in the Fountain on p.7. ed.)

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Another snippet from Brian Oldham, President of the Liskeard Old Cornwall Society, who have their base in the Trecarrel Room on the top floor of Stuart House, open on Tuesdays. This piece is a shortened version of one which is due to appear in Brian's new book, working title 'Another Peek into Liskeard's Past', due out next year.

'Jack' Bice, Mayor and Cornish Wrestling Champion



John Patrick St Britius Bice was born in St Dennis on July 31st 1904. The 1937 Liskeard Trade Directory confirms that 'Jack' and his wife Winifred were in business as JP & WF Bice in Fore Street, selling confectionery, fancy goods, newspapers and tobacco products. 'Jack' also traded from his home, Woodonga, in Old Road where he had an agency for Watkins, Rosevere Tractors Ltd and bred award winning bantams.



At a talk in the Methodist Church recently I heard about one of the best kept secrets of WWII, it concerned what was unofficially known as 'Churchill's Secret Army'. Units of usually six men were trained in

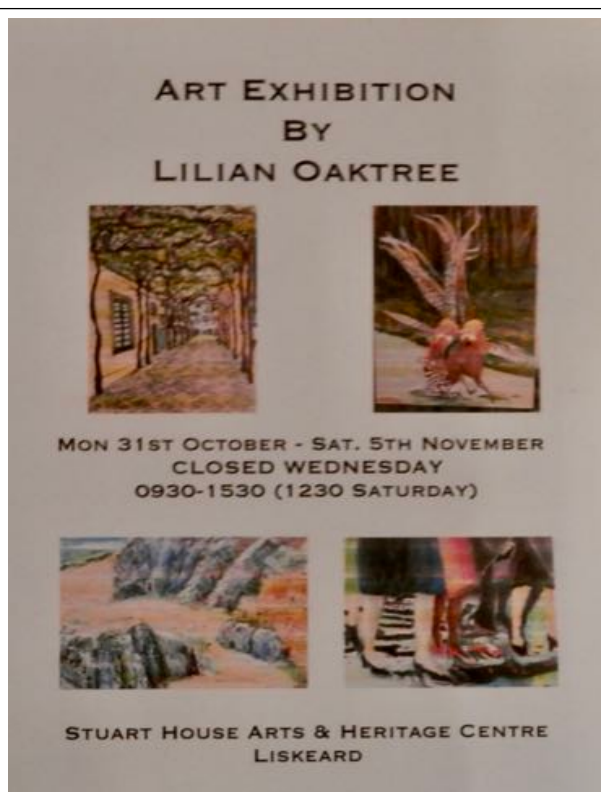
explosives, firearms and night manoeuvres, in secret locations across the country, including Liskeard. Their remit was that in the event of a German invasion they would permanently and without informing a soul, leave their homes and workplaces for an underground bunker equipped with food, bedding and clothing. A member of Liskeard 137 Group 6 of the Cornwall Area Auxiliary Unit, its full title, was 'Jack' Bice. Fortunately they were never called upon to put their training into practice.

'Jack' was first elected to Liskeard Town Council in 1948, became a County Councillor in 1955, and served as Mayor of Liskeard in 1957 and 1958. He was well known in the wrestling community, being undefeated middle-weight champion of Cornwall, and representing the county at international tournaments in Brittany.

At only 58 years of age, 'Jack' died in September 1962. The Cornish Times reported that 'the town has lost one of its most revered citizens' and 'the high esteem in which Mr. Bice was held was echoed by the large attendance which crowded St. Martin's Parish Church on Monday for the civic service'.

(In 1937, Stuart House was sold to the Truscott family and was thereafter associated with the garage on the now Wetherspoons site, which then belonged to the House. ed.)

EVENTS COMING IN NOVEMBER



REMEMBRANCE

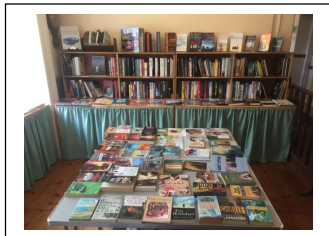
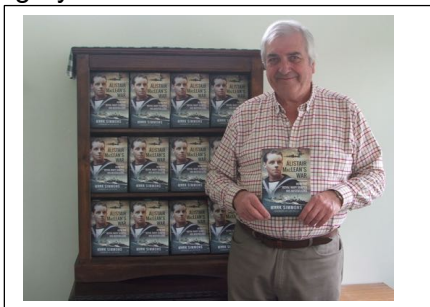
7th to 12 November



Jenny and Jean are mounting an exhibition in the Jane Room, building on the 'Poppies' exhibition which they organised last year. There will be information about the origin and development of the poppy as a symbol of remembrance, some displays of Queen Elizabeth II's link with Remembrance Day, and also material about evacuees to Liskeard and their memories.

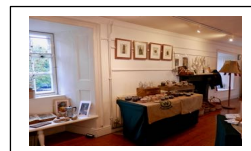
BOOK SALE

Mark Simmons, who promised to return to Stuart House after his successful two-day sale last June, is returning from 7th to 12th November with a sale of books – his own and others – in the Surgery.



ABSTRACT ART

Hannah Whale, who exhibited at Stuart House last November, is returning
14th – 19th November



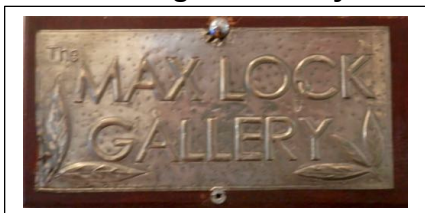
Hannah writes: it's time again for The Cornish Abstract annual Xmas Fair at Stuart House, Liskeard!!! This year we're pleased to have some guests joining us: expressionist painter Reuben Kramer with his gorgeous, brightly coloured still life paintings - a must on a miserable day, also Sandra Gilbride with her very lovely Sari and Rag bunting. Some of you will remember Sandra from Bittersweet Clothing. There will be the usual mix of art and craft work as well as some footwear and clothing. Jewellery, ceramics, original paintings, cards, textiles, clothing and footwear. What's not to love?!

CHRISTMAS ART CRAFT and GIFT FAIR : 28th November to 21st December

The house will be decorated for Christmas from the week of 22nd November. Sioux and Gaby's theme this year will be 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'. We look forward to it.

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

Meeting of 11th July 2001 – the pewter plates had been affixed to the doors. The previous screw holes would be dealt with in the Autumn (*why, I ask myself?! - maybe there was due to be decoration at that point?*)



Terry Currell had attempted to fit the cupboard/shelving to the Gallery but there had been an exhibition in the Gallery every time he tried. (*I should mention here that Terry Currell was a friend of mine – at the time an Art Teacher at Plymouth College – who proved to be a great supporter of the Trust and would help with*

all manner of tasks.) Terry had kindly presented the Trust with a donations box with padlock and appreciation was expressed. *The box was unfortunately much later stolen, together with its contents.*)

The G & S concert had to be postponed until Spring as Loveny Male Voice Choir had organised a concert for roughly the same time. A considerable amount of background work had already been undertaken so this would form a good basis for the proposed Spring event.

The Trust had £1,137 in the current account and £6,831 in the deposit account. The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments had made a donation of £35.

The gardener had done a splendid job and maintenance would be required for four hours per month from April to September so a budget of £250 for the year was agreed. *How fortunate we are nowadays and we must never underestimate the vast number of hours given so freely by Malcolm and Jeff and others – many more than 4 per month.*

John Rapson had brought in a glass cabinet and would have it reconditioned and a lock fitted. Five new members



Current garden volunteer Jeff in the emptied wall-pond, October 2022 (see p.4)



Current town-crier Chris Smirthwaite on St Matthews Fayre Day 2022 (see p.1)

were announced. Jacqueline Currell had made a donation of £50 following her exhibition. (*Jacqueline was the sister-in-law of Terry Currell. She formerly taught at PCAD and latterly lived in Derbyshire. Her lino cuts provided an exhibition visited and admired by many.*)

The Trust had been asked to host a pasty lunch for St Matthews Fayre for the Town Criers. Jean Wills reported she had now received over 250 visitors to the House on Fridays and would soon start tours of the House. The question of future Charity sales was under discussion as concern was raised about the fabric of the House. The Gallery would not be used for future sales and future charity sales would not be booked until they had been discussed and agreed by the Chair and at least two committee members. Eileen reported on forthcoming exhibitions and the difficulty of hanging in the Gallery. The Henry Rice Exhibition would follow on from the Flowers and Gardens Exhibition. Arrangements for the Garden Fete were discussed.

The Chairman asked whether it would be open to the Trust to apply for grant aid to fund a craft centre which could render the House open all the time. Tony said the Trust's tax-free status for community charge would be lost. It

would be better to have workshops and to try to have more events ourselves in the next 12 months. Phyllis queried the cost of tickets for the 'speaker only' side of the supper clubs. It was felt to be reasonable, given the fact that coffee/tea would be provided, to increase the cost to £6

to be continued.....

Diary of Events

November 2022



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| Monday 31 st October to Saturday 5 th November | Art Exhibition by Lilian Oaktree (<i>see p.6</i>) |
| Tuesdays 1 st & 15 th | Liskeard Writers' Group meet 2 – 4.30 pm. |
| Every Thursday | Craft Club: all welcome 12 noon to 3pm. |
| Monday 7 th to Saturday 12 th | Mark Simmons Booksale in the Surgery (<i>see p.6</i>) |
| Monday 7 th to Saturday 12 th | 'Remembrance' Exhibition in the Jane Room (<i>see p.6</i>) |
| Tuesday 8 th | Fake or Fortune – antiques valuation with Richard Hamm of Bearnese, Hampton & Littlewood. 10am. to 12 noon |
| Monday 14 th | Liskeard Poetry Group meet 4 to 6.30pm. |
| Monday 14 th to Saturday 19 th | 'Abstract Art' exhibition with Hannah Whale and others (<i>see p.6</i>) |
| Monday 28 th to Wednesday 21 st December | Christmas Arts, Crafts and Gift Fair in the Max Lock Gallery, with the House decorated for Christmas. |
| Coming in December | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Christmas Fair continues, with the House welcoming and decorated for Christmas. |

*The House, Garden, Old Kitchen Café and (check first) Computer Research Facility
are open*

*9.30am – 3.30pm on Monday Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
(other days too if there is a special exhibition 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

**NOTE: The next Newsletter is for December and January,
so please get any January copy in by November 25th!**