

# Newsletter

March 2023

## Our Chairman, Bob Hollingdale, says 'Let's Celebrate!'

Amidst all the troubles and turmoil in our present world it's always like a huge breath of fresh air when we can find something to celebrate and enjoy.

In Stuart House we have a number of forthcoming events which are for all – Friends of the House, friends of friends, friends of friends of friends, old and young - everyone – and which we hope you will want to support.



**FESTIVE DAY** - Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April (Saturday before Easter) we are having a festive day with an invitation to join in competitions for floral arrangements and Easter bonnets in addition to some fun and games and Easter Egg hunting for the youngsters (of any age!).

**GARDEN AWARD** - On the same day we shall be displaying, with a presentation, the 2022 award given to the House for its outstanding garden – an award so richly deserved by our gardening team. *(The photograph shows our award in 2017)*

**FREE TEA** - In addition if you are a Friend of the House you can enjoy a complimentary cream tea with a selection of home-made preserves/marmalades from the Chairman's larder. If that isn't an enticement, what is?

**CORONATION EXHIBITIONS** - From 24<sup>th</sup> April to 13<sup>th</sup> May we will be staging a dual exhibition as our contribution to the Coronation celebrations. With the twin titles of "Crowns and Coronets" and "Charles, Born to be King" it will explore the history of the coronation in England and look at the life of the King with a special emphasis on his links with Cornwall. Overseeing this quite major undertaking are Jenny, Jean and Sioux. As part of the exhibition will include memories and memorabilia they have asked that anyone who can contribute contacts them at the House. We are looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at these two events.

**NEW TRUSTEES** - We welcome our new Trustees Jean Glynn and Jenny Chester – so our Trustees now number seven, and we are grateful for all that they do. Jean and Jenny have been actively involved in the House for some time, having mounted several exhibitions already, including the wonderful 'Egyptians' and 'Could it be Magic', each with all-age appeal and children's activities, and they help out in the café too. They attend the South-East Cornwall Museums Forum with Rachel (the ed.), which is a very active and supportive group, linked with museum and heritage services in Cornwall and the south-west.



*Leaflet Sponsored by Coodes  
Honorary Solicitors to Stuart House Trust*

## EVENTS IN THE PAST MONTH



**Matt Thomas' Art Exhibition** ran for a week in the Gallery from 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> February. He is a Master's student from Plymouth University, and his exhibition was much appreciated, with its use of colour and different media, including ball-point pens, Posca pens, Sharpie pens, oil pastels and dry pastels.

Matt returns for another exhibition from 15<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> May.

**Photographs of old Liskeard** from the Old Cornwall Society have been on display in the Jane Room.



**The Shop in the Surgery** continued as it will, whenever possible, unless there is another exhibition or event in that room. There will be a change of themes throughout the year. House-Manager Sioux gives the plans and a few ideas but invites crafters to be imaginative and to contact her if they would like to be involved.

EASTER : 6<sup>th</sup> March - 11<sup>th</sup> April

ROYAL SHOP: 24<sup>th</sup> April - 27<sup>th</sup> May - a nod to the Coronation in May.

MALE DEITY: 30<sup>th</sup> May - 24<sup>th</sup> June - Fathers Day items might link to deities from around the world - Egyptians, Norse, Greek and Roman and many more!

SUMMER HOLIDAY: 3<sup>rd</sup> July - 2<sup>nd</sup> September - we opted for the obvious!

AUTUMNAL: 4<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> September - this might be autumnal in colour or things we associate with the Autumn, leaves, nuts, animals.....

HALLOWEEN : 2<sup>nd</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> October- this may end up being a loose interpretation!

REMEMBRANCE-POPPY: 30<sup>th</sup> October - 8<sup>th</sup> November

CHRISTMAS: 27<sup>th</sup> November (earlier if we can after decorating the House) - 21<sup>st</sup> December



## EVENTS COMING SOON

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> to Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April.** Sioux writes:

"We are delighted to be able to host an exhibition of **Wendy Lindesay's exquisite needlework**. Wendy designed the bed hangings for the fourposter bed in the Tudor room, then she and several members of the Trust set about transferring designs into actual panels. There are 33 panels in total, all stitched in red crewel wool on white fabric. (see p.3) The exhibition includes canvas work, crewel work, machine embroidery, cross stitch and working notes for a lot of her work including her City and Guilds courses. (See pp.3,5 & 8) If anyone has any memories of Wendy's time at Stuart House, I would love to hear them and maybe add them to the exhibition. Wendy has been involved with Stuart House since the early days, was on the Committee and Treasurer for several years".



# PASSMORE EDWARDS

An exhibition by the Liskeard Old Cornwall Society

Stuart House Gallery

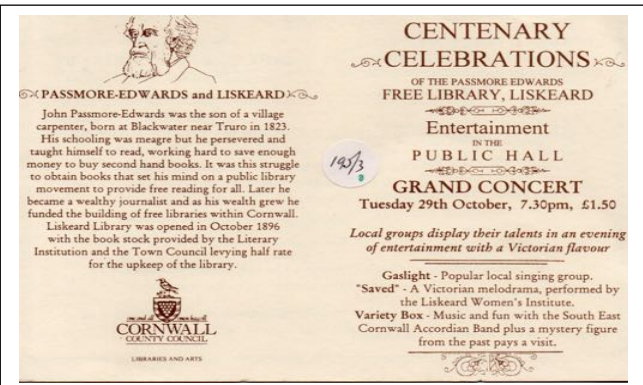
Monday 20<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March

Brian Oldham, President of Liskeard's Old Cornwall Society  
(who have their base in the Trecarrel Room on the top floor of  
Stuart House, open to the public on Tuesdays) writes:

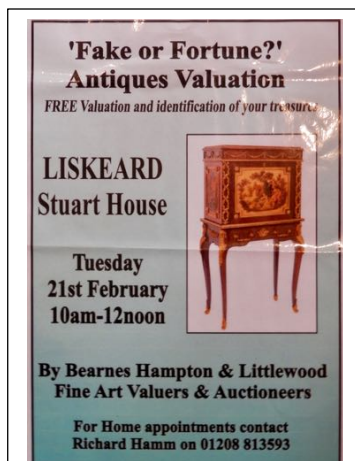
March 24<sup>th</sup> 2023 will be the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the great Cornish philanthropist John Passmore Edwards, and Liskeard Old Cornwall Society will be celebrating his life and good works with an exhibition here in Stuart House, and an evening event in the Public Hall. Liskeard OCS Recorder Jackie Jenkins and her team have been working hard to create the story of the man who funded 70 public buildings across Cornwall, London and South East England. From his humble beginnings in Blackwater, Cornwall, through the lows of bankruptcy and the heights of a successful London publishing house - it's a fascinating journey. As you would expect, the exhibition in the Gallery, from March 20<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> will concentrate on Passmore Edwards' donations to Liskeard: the Free Library and the Cottage Hospital.



The Hospital sandbagged in 1939



Throughout March another exhibition, the product of Dean Evans, author of 'Funding the Ladder, The Passmore Edwards Legacy', will be touring the county. For just one evening it will be on display in the **Public Hall, Liskeard, from 6.30pm on Friday March 17<sup>th</sup>**. On the same evening, at 7.30pm Brian Oldham, President of Liskeard OCS, will present an illustrated talk which looks at the history of both the Library and the Hospital in Liskeard. It's free entry and tea/coffee and biscuits will be provided. Our local mixed voice choir, 'Melodi Liskerret', will round off the evening ending, of course, with Trelawny. There's no need to book, and everyone is welcome to attend.



← Don't forget the monthly  
'Fake or Fortune' sessions.

Do come up to the top floor of the House – sometimes it gets forgotten by regulars. These are the bed-hangings – all 33 panels of them, designed by Wendy Lindesay in the Tudor Room which Sioux refers to on p.2. →



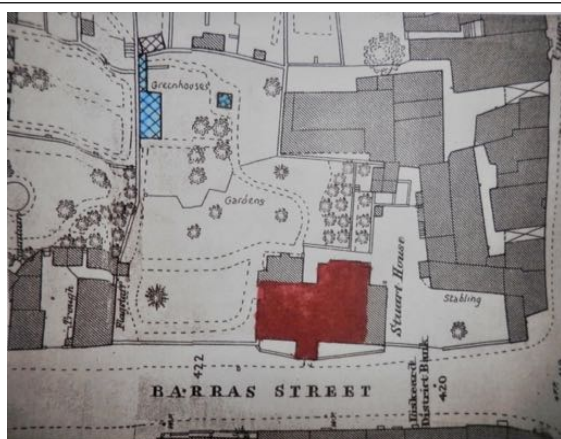
## March Thoughts from our Garden's Overseer



A newly published book, *Medieval Horizons, Why the Middle Ages Matter* (Ian Mortimer) describes how grim daily life could be at around 1000AD. 20% of people in the South-West were slaves, often brutally treated. Virtually all the population were unfree, livelihood was at subsistence level, and barter was the principal mode of exchange. There were twelve years of famine in the first half

of the 11<sup>th</sup> Century alone, and that was before the Little (400 years) Ice Age began. Conditions gradually improved by the time Stuart House was built at around 1500; technological progress was picking up, and clocks invented, resulting in more control over the lives of working people.

I often wonder about the daily lives of those who toiled through those times, trying to produce enough for themselves and for their masters. For a start, what garden and farming tools did they use? Before the Industrial Revolution, although steel was made in small quantities by heating iron ore with charcoal, most would have been poor quality and tools probably did not last very long and were hard to keep sharp. Nowadays we take all our tools for granted and would complain bitterly if we didn't have shears, secateurs and the like. Someone once asked the panel on Radio 4's *Gardener's Question Time*: if you could only have one garden tool, what would it be? Answer at the end.



Remember that Stuart House garden was originally, and until 1895 (when the Library was built), much bigger than it is now, with an orchard and room for food growing. This map is from 1882 and the red is the House as it is now.

Early Spring was the Hungry Gap, when most of the winter provisions had been eaten. Little or no fresh produce was yet available, (potatoes were not brought from South America to Europe until the late 16<sup>th</sup> century), so this could be a frightening time, leading to starvation and death, especially if the harvest had been poor. One reason for Lent fasting was to save on food – it wasn't just religious. Pottage was the common meal. Everything went into the pot: onions, peas, straggly sorts of cabbage, beans, turnips, parsley, fruit that couldn't be stored any longer, and "pot" marigold (*Calendula*). I've mentioned previously that early fast-growing plants that we now call weeds, such as bittercress, were considered valuable. Chard, also

called Swiss chard or leaf beet, had been introduced by the Romans, though its first recorded mention is not until 1596 in botanist John Gerard's famous *Herbal*. (This grows wild in Sicily, and apparently was called Swiss chard by medieval Dutch growers who confused the two places.)





This is an extremely valuable and productive plant, and I grow it under cloches at home. If I had to choose just one crop to grow, this would be it. The young leaves are highly nutritious, can be eaten raw and continually harvested for well over six months and the stems are edible too. Chard is very hardy, easily shrugging off the frosts we have in the South West. Sow in late August for winter cropping, and from March onwards for summer leaves. (The Somerset town Chard has nothing to do with the vegetable, we read. The name is said to be derived from the Saxon word for "chart", the area around the church.)

Cultivated plants in medieval times were far less productive than present cultivars. Plant breeding and selection began in earnest in Tudor / Elizabethan times, and although purists now praise the flavour of low-yielding "heritage" varieties, we should embrace the sorts we have today. The downside is that many modern hybrid varieties do not reliably breed true (and sometimes are even patented), so for seed-saving it's best to grow open-pollinated types.

An interesting piece of gardening news is that the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) is asking everyone to keep an eye out for unusual weeds they may find growing in their gardens or other unexpected places, again as a consequence of a changing climate. Well, there are weeds aplenty forever appearing in the Stuart House garden gravel, so we'll look carefully.

**The GQT one tool answer:** a Spade.

#### Polite Request.

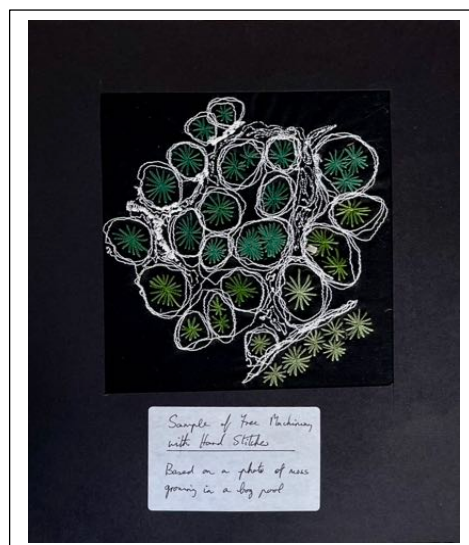
*If anyone has a **swan-necked hoe** they no longer need, we'd be glad of the donation as we don't have one and they are very useful. For some reason, they are difficult to get hold of these days. (We have a multiplicity of the other sorts though, so no need for any of those.)*

*Also, this year we'd like to grow **Agapanthus** in the front garden – they are very floriferous and drought resistant. So if anyone has clumps that have grown out of control and need thinning, please do let Sioux know.*

*Thank you!*

Malcolm Mort,

Malcolm also took the photographs p.4 of the garden in late February and the *Bergenia* in the front garden, and (above) the fungi on the tree stump (*ed.*)



Another of Wendy Lindesay's pieces (see p.2). Plants are inspiring!

# STUART HOUSE and COMING COMMUNITY EVENTS



LISKEARD COUNCIL  
Serving the Town

**Community Fair Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023**  
In the Public Hall, Liskeard  
10am – 1pm

**Are you**

- a not for profit organisation operating in the Liskeard area
- Public sector advice and guidance group
- Organisation providing services to local residents?
- Not a political group

Want to spread the word about **what you do** in a **FUN, FREE** way?

Why not have a free stall at our fantastic Community Fair?

Download the application form from the Notices section of [www.liskeard.gov.uk](http://www.liskeard.gov.uk) and email it to: [assistant@liskeard.gov.uk](mailto:assistant@liskeard.gov.uk), or pop into the Town Council offices at 3-5 West Street and pick up a copy (Closing date for applications 20<sup>th</sup> February)

## STUART HOUSE at the COMMUNITY FAIR Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023

We plan to have a stall at Liskeard's Community Fair. We hope to increase awareness of what Stuart House has to offer, including opportunities for volunteering, particularly as a steward, helping in the Surgery Shop, in the café, or maybe in Reception.

**If anyone can help to set up and supervise the stall, please contact Rachel (the ed.) directly or via the House.**



The photograph above is from last year's Family History Day. For the Community Fair, the emphasis is somewhat different.

## AND A JUNE EVENT

**The 6<sup>th</sup> Grand Family History and Heritage Day**, organised by the South East Cornwall Museums Forum, is on Saturday June 18<sup>th</sup>, in Liskeard's Public Hall.

Stuart House is an active member of this group, and we always have a stand at this event, which has well over twenty different Museums, Heritage Centres, Family History Societies and local history organisations present – and probably some books for sale too.

Our 2022 event was a runner up in the Collaboration Category of Cornwall's Heritage Awards, and we collected a certificate at the Awards Ceremony in February.

**If anyone can help to supervise our stand (or serve refreshments) at this event, please contact Rachel. Put the event in diaries anyway if you might be interested.**



**The CORONATION** – the House plans two exhibitions for this (see p.1)



**LISKEARD UNLOCKED** – Stuart House will be, as always, involved in this event, which is currently being planned focussing on the weekend of 9<sup>th</sup> September. This year's theme for Heritage Open Days is 'Creativity Unwrapped', which gives us plenty of scope for showing our garden, architecture, arts and crafts, and we plan to host another 'Do you know where this is' exhibition of photographs of parts of Liskeard's buildings, with clues!

## MORE MEMORIES FROM THE MINUTES by Hon. Sec. Sue Glencross

The first meeting of 2002 took place on 9<sup>th</sup> January and the possibility of creating a reception/office area in the void at the bottom of the stairs was under discussion as this would free up rooms for rental. The Chairman produced an advertisement for two house stewards which was approved by the committee. Jean Wills reported on her History Group and the forthcoming 50s Exhibition. Gail had some exciting plans for the garden and had some planting ideas. A week would be set aside for redecoration of the Cross Passage, Hall, and toilet walls. Other rooms would be 'patch decorated'.

By the date of the February meeting Tony Wood, John Harvey and Margaret Van Meurs had painted the hall, corridor and toilets. Spotlights were to be considered for the King's Room. Coodes would advise on contracts of employment for the stewards, the posts to be on a job-share basis. Drawings had been made for the provision of a mobile desk unit which were under consideration. BT had been asked to provide a telephone line and the purchase of suitable equipment (2 portable hand-sets which double as intercoms) was discussed.

The G & S concert in Plymouth had been attended by at least 10 members. There would be another bring and buy sale in September. Brenda Moore had hosted a successful Burns Night supper club. A Science Week exhibition was planned but the number of rooms required was as yet unknown. Jean Wills would steward each

morning 10 till 12. Old Cornwall would be making its records available at the next History Group meeting. Rosa Mashiter was a guest at the meeting and had volunteered to attend the Museum meetings to represent the Trust. Wendy confirmed she would make a copy of the Trust's insurance policy available to Sue. Water penetration had stained the wall and ceiling of the Trecarrel Room. This had been caused both by slates slipping and by the flashing around the northern chimney stack having perished. Peter Andrew had put a new hatch in the Duchy Room and temporarily the ingress of water was stopped with a bucket and drain until weather permitted work on the flashing to be undertaken outside.

Jim Salisbury attended the March 2002 meeting as a guest. Funds held were £963 current a/c and £8,158 deposit a/c. Damage to the garden was being caused by the tenants of the flat at the adjoining garage. Interviews had been conducted in respect of the prospective stewards and references were being obtained. Contracts would be drafted. BT would provide a telephone line on the 19<sup>th</sup> and the number would be 347347. Kate Theophilus had a date for the G & S concert – 30<sup>th</sup> November. As many would be attending the House, the Gallery should have an Exhibition. Terry Currell would be asked to design posters. The committee accepted Liskeard in Bloom's offer of wooden sheep and a shepherd to put behind the railings at the front of the House.

*to be continued .....*



*The flat of the adjoining garage, derelict before its demolition in 2017 for the building of Wetherspoons. The view from our garden is very different now,*



# Diary of Events

March 2023



Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> March to 8 <sup>th</sup> April	The Easter Arts, Crafts and Gifts Shop in the downstairs Surgery
Tuesdays 7 <sup>th</sup> & 21 <sup>st</sup>	Liskeard Writers' Group meet 2 – 4.30 pm.
every Thursday	Craft Club: all welcome 12 noon to 3pm.
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Liskeard Poetry Group meet 4 to 6.30pm.
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> to Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup>	Old Cornwall Society exhibition on Passmore Edwards (see p.3)
Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup>	Fake or Fortune – antiques valuation with Richard Hamm of Bearnese, Hampton & Littlewood. 10am. to 12 noon
<b>Coming in April</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> Exhibition of Needlework by Wendy Lindesay (see pp.2 &amp; 3)</li> <li>• 17<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> : Mark Simmons Book Sale in the Surgery</li> <li>• 24<sup>th</sup> April to 13<sup>th</sup> May – Coronation Exhibitions (see p.1)</li> </ul>



*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 only if it is possible)*

Articles, information, notices and photographs for the Stuart House Newsletter to the editor, please (who must reserve the right to edit as necessary), before 25<sup>th</sup> of the month for inclusion in the next newsletter. Leave with Sioux in the Office or email to [rachelpbennett59@gmail.com](mailto:rachelpbennett59@gmail.com)