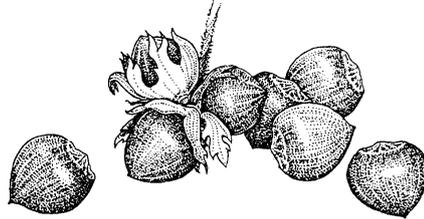


In a Nutshell

THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRIENDS OF STANDEN ESTATE:

NUTS ABOUT STANDEN!



No 25 March 2015

In this edition of In a Nutshell:

BLUEBELL BBQ

PRIZE DRAW

PLANT OF THE WEEK

HILLTOP SHAW

AGM TREAT

SURVEY FORMS

AND FINALLY... membership forms

Best ever barbecue

There will be a new look to this year's Bluebell BBQ. As well as the usual range of burgers, cakes and liquid refreshments, tombola, plants, fose-wear and gifts to buy, this year we are organising a series of **craft demonstrations**. In woodcraft these will include work on the pole lathe and shave horse, and chain-saw

carving - remember the

Christmas tree? In

textiles there will be

demonstrations of

crochet work and dying,

and there will also be a

chance to see how sugar-craft work is done. With a

bit of luck, someone may also be on hand to

demonstrate wood-turning and bronze-casting.



The BBQ will take place at **Hollybush Barn** on **Sunday 26th April** from **11.00 - 3.30**. We would urge you to come along and bring your friends and family. We would particularly like to welcome more house volunteers this year, so if you are a FoSE member and have friends working in the house, do encourage them to attend. We need to know numbers by **12th April** for catering purposes, so please email rsvp@fose.org.uk with your numbers and preferences for meat or veggie before that date.

FOSE Invites you **to the annual**

Including for your delight: **And for Sale:**

Bluebell BBQ

On Sunday 26th April 2015 - from 11.00 to 15.30 @ Hollybush Barn

Craft Demonstrations Tombola Plant & Gift sales BBQ Food cooked by our Top Chef !!

Tea / Coffee / soft drinks & Cakes

Please let us know if you are coming by emailing rsvp@fose.org.uk
 Responses required by Sunday 12th April (to ensure we have enough food!!).
 Please indicate if you would prefer meat or vegetarian option from the BBQ.
 If you are not on email you can contact a member of the outdoor team.

Look out for posters like this in the coming weeks, and book your places. With your help, this could indeed be the 'best ever barbecue'.

FoSE Perks



One of the things often asked by potential new members, is: 'What do I get out of being part of FoSE?' In the past, the answer has been: 'Just the warm glow of doing something extra to help Standen's outdoor team'. This year, we have decided to trial the idea of a **Prize Draw** as a means of saying thank you for your support. Each FoSE member will be allocated a number when they renew or take out their membership, and four times a year, a number will be drawn at random, and a prize allocated. The first prize - drawn at the end of March - will be a BBQ voucher, entitling the winner to a free burger, cake

and a cuppa, and two tombola tickets. Future prizes may include plants, for example a *Crinodendron* - that lovely shrub with lantern-shaped flowers which can be seen at Standen near the entrance to the Quarry Garden - or a cream tea for two in the Barn Café.

Two to view

I think the garden team must have exhausted their winter favourites in last year's haul, as there are only two plants of the week to share this time. Ben opted for a plant that we have all encountered - and probably also cursed - at some time, the **Stinging or Common Nettle**, *Urtica Dioica*, which is a member of the *Urticaceae* family.



The Stinging Nettle is a very common native species found throughout the UK in grassland, woods, heaths, and gardens, often prevalent in neglected areas or wasteland and on roadside verges, and often on old bonfire sites. The Nettle appears in a variety of structures ranging from low creeping forms through tangled bushes to tall single stem plants measuring up to 2 metres in height. It has an angular stem and can have relatively large (3-15cm) serrated arrow shaped leaves in a mid-green. Nettles will have many rhizomes and stolons (creeping roots) which will knit a mat around their base, often forming a fairly solid clump.

Despite being an annoying stinging weed it is very useful and important ecologically as a food plant for several species of butterfly. It can also be consumed by humans in soup or tea form. And it also has many different (some unproven) medical uses such as a treatment for arthritis. At Standen, Stinging Nettle can be found throughout the estate and some areas of the garden, often in the damper areas.

Elaine chose ***Vinca minor***, the **Lesser Periwinkle** from the *Apocynaceae* family which also includes *Trachelospermum* - a beautifully scented climber - and *Nerium*, Oleander.

Vinca minor is a native of central and southern Europe; there are many cultivated varieties. It is a low growing 'ground cover' plant that spreads widely by long arching stems that root as they go along and has evergreen, shiny, light-reflecting leaves. It a very useful plant for filling spaces under trees and shrubs to combat

weeds. It will thrive in quite deep shade although it flowers better with some sun. during part of the day.

The flowers, white, mauve, dark purple or any shade in between, appear at any time from Spring and through the Summer. Some types have narrow petals that emphasise the twist in them and resemble propellers. There is also a double-flowered form and a form with cream-edged leaves. It is ideal for covering difficult banks as it can be left to 'do its own thing'. No pruning is necessary but it can be cut back in autumn if it outgrows its space. It is extremely hardy and generally pest free and should not be confused with *Vinca major* which is a real thug!



At Standen it can be found under the Eucryphias in the bed between the Croquet Lawn and the Rosery (Bamboo Garden), and also along the edge of the Top Path above the Sloping Lawn. Soon it will carpet the ground underneath many new Rhododendrons that will be planted on the bank in the car park.

Go Trudie!

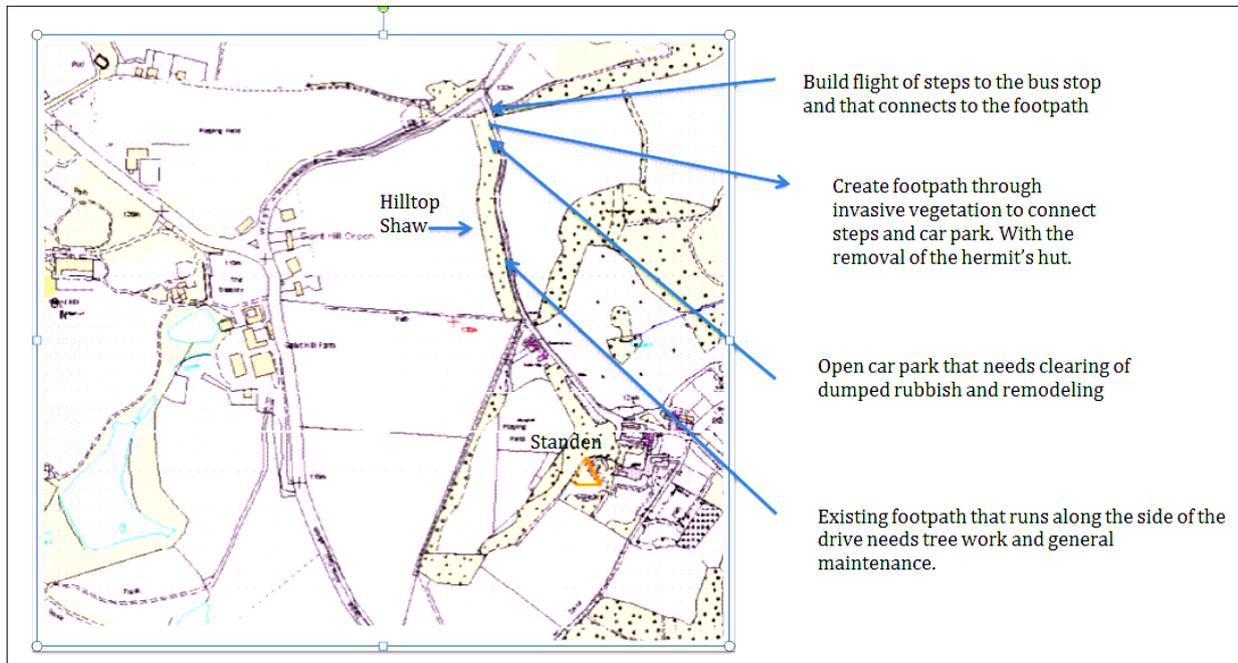
After 9 months of negotiation and endless dealings with lawyers, the transfer of ownership of **Hilltop Shaw** from St. Anthony's Trust to the National Trust has finally taken place. Many visitors - and probably many volunteers as well - were under the impression that the Trust already owned the land, though I can't believe that they thought the Standen staff would have left it in its current uncared for and unloved state. This two acre strip of land alongside the drive was originally owned by the Beales, who kept it as semi-natural woodland but also planted beech trees, some of which were lost in the 1987 'hurricane'. Phillip Barnes has issued a statement about the area saying:

As part of the first impression visitors have of Standen our aim is to ensure the area remains a safe place for locals and visitors to enjoy. Over the next few months we will clear rubbish and non-native plant species, managing the woodland to a Site of Special Scientific Interest, which will in turn benefit wildlife.

In order to protect the area, a gate will be put in which will be closed at night to prevent any further fly-tipping or possible inappropriate behaviour, but in the day-time the area will be open as usual for all to enjoy.

Now that the deal has gone through, work can begin on creating steps from the bus stop in West Hoathly Road and a path through Hilltop Shaw as far as the

cottages. A National Trust omega sign will be placed at the cottages end of the path to highlight the new ownership and there will also be an information board. This spring, Trudie and the Woods Group can begin to fulfil her vision of an area which will make an attractive and much safer pedestrian access to Standen. Eventually there will hopefully be woodland trails to complement the new footpath.



Trudie is convinced that the work to be undertaken will increase bio-diversity and be good for the wildlife already in residence. She plans to carry out regular ecology surveys during the natural regeneration period once diseased trees and non-native species have been removed.

Provided that enough funding can be secured to remove all the rubbish, work which will be begun this spring should be completed by the summer. In July, the National Trust South Downs Volunteers will come for a camping weekend, and Trudie already had plans to co-opt them into helping on this project. The generous grant from the East Grinstead Common Good Trust will pay for materials needed, and we are hoping to receive funding for rubbish removal via two other grant requests currently in the pipe-line. We wish the Woods Group every success in what is clearly going to be a major endeavour.

Aberglasney Gardens at the AGM

Aberglasney has been described as a garden "lost in time", as both the house and garden lay abandoned for over 50 years, falling slowly into ruin. The Aberglasney Restoration Trust swung into action in 1995 and had completed their restoration of the gardens by early 2000. Their website will tell you that 'Aberglasney continues to be at the forefront of training horticulturalists of the future'.



Standen was fortunate enough to net one of their protégés in the form of Harry Green, our Restoration gardener, who took part in RHS trials of *Thalictrum* during his time there. Harry has kindly agreed to give a talk on Aberglasney at our **Annual General Meeting** which will take place on **Thursday 21st May at 7.30** in the **Barn Café**. Please do

put this date in your diary and come along to hear Harry speak. The business part of the meeting is very short, and I am sure that what follows will more than make up for it.



We are also looking to attract new members onto the committee this year, so if you are interested personally, or know of someone whose talents we could use, please speak to a member of the committee. It's not an onerous task - just 6 fairly short meetings in the convivial atmosphere of the Dunnings Mill, and a bit of time organising events.

Please have your say

Following the cancellation of the Beetle Drive, we decided to try and find out what kind of social events Standen volunteers prefer. To this end, there are brief survey forms available (A5 size), in both tea-rooms. Once completed, these can be returned to the FoSE tray in the stable tea room, left as directed in the house tea-room or given to any committee member. I know surveys are seen as a perennial nuisance - you can't buy anything these days without being bombarded with questionnaires - but we would like to have your views. If you really can't bear to tick a few boxes, please give your opinions orally to someone on the committee. Results so far are proving very helpful and informative.

And finally....

Thank you to all those who have returned your membership forms already. Can I remind those who haven't yet done so that they need to renew before the last day of April or their membership will be deemed to have lapsed. If you want to be part of the first draw, you need to renew before the end of March.