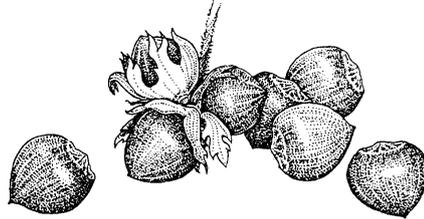


In a Nutshell

THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRIENDS OF STANDEN ESTATE:

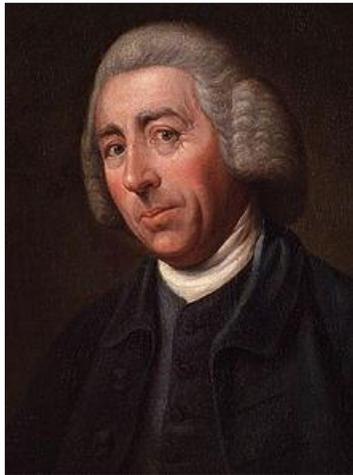
NUTS ABOUT STANDEN!



No 32 May 2016

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INTRODUCING WILL SHANNON
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An AGM with Capability



This year we decided to bring the timing of the AGM forward a little, as James is hoping for a large task force during the day to help make sure the garden is looking its absolute best for the Summer Festival. FoSE is planning on supplying hot-dogs, ice cream and crisps for the workers to eat before the meeting begins at **6.30** on **Thursday 26th May** in the **Barn Café**. As usual, the business part of the meeting will be as brief as we can make it, and then at **7 o'clock** we are delighted that **Mark Lamey**, the Trust's **Capability Brown Tercentenary Project Manager** has agreed to come and give us a talk about the great man. I had a flier through recently from the Workers' Education Association, advertising a similar talk, for a price, but I'm happy to say that ours will be free - there will be no fee!

Capability Brown was actually christened Lancelot. He was born in Harle-Kirk in Northumberland in 1715 or 16. Sources on the internet differ; no doubt Mark will

give us the definitive answer. The *Dictionary of National Biography* says he started work as a kitchen gardener employed by Lord Cobham at Stowe. Another source says he served an apprenticeship with Sir William Loraine, a local Northumbrian baronet. However, by 1739 he was in Buckinghamshire, and by 1741 was at Stowe. Here he had opportunities for studying Vanbrugh and William Kent, an experience which gave him the skills to practice as an architect as well as design landscapes, although he apparently called himself a 'place maker' rather than a landscape gardener. In 1764 he was appointed Master Gardener at Hampton Court, where he was responsible for planting the Great Vine.



Humphrey Repton, himself no slouch when it comes to landscape gardening, saw Brown as the founder of the English style of landscape gardening. Having made a fortune 'making over' the gardens of the aristocracy, and obtained the rank of a country gentleman, Capability Brown became High Sheriff of Huntingdonshire in 1770 and bought the manor of Fenstanton. He died in February 1783 and was buried at Fenstanton.



We owe many of our best-loved gardens to this man. We will all recognise Sheffield Park, just down the road, but the list includes Blenheim Palace, Burleigh House in Lincolnshire, Holkham Hall in Norfolk, Ickworth House and Park in Suffolk, Harewood House Garden in Yorkshire, Broadlands in Hampshire and many others. Capability Brown travelled far and wide, and

there is no doubt that what we think of as the quintessentially English country estate would be very different without him. So, come along and find out more about this well-travelled and indefatigable man.

Where were the dragons when we needed them?

FoSE members and their guests could be forgiven for thinking that someone up there didn't love them on the day of the BBQ. After the glorious sunshine and spring warmth earlier in the week, the Sunday was a return to winter with a vengeance. The morning began with sleet, and although this had stopped by the time everything was set up, a chilly wind meant that only those nearest to the BBQ

flames or beside the tea brazier had any chance of staying warm. We really could have done with a couple of fire-breathing dragons on site.

Nevertheless, with true British grit, everyone managed to have a good time, and we welcomed many visitors who had come to see Standen as well as the 'usual crowd'. The BBQ food sold out before the end of the day - a first. Quantities of cake were also sold, along with plants and craft work. We were very pleased to welcome bee keepers and turners, and to see cake decorating and bronze-casting demonstrations. So despite the weather, the event was another FoSE success, and we raised £581. Some of the money made will go towards getting the bee-keeping project up and running, which will, in turn, have a positive effect on the health of the garden as a whole.

A radical view

On Wednesday 23rd March, James introduced a small Barn Café audience to Will Shannon, who is going to build a bothy at Standen. Many of us there had heard James and Nick getting very excited at the thought of this project in the last few months and were keen to hear more.

Will is coming to Standen under the auspices of the National Trust's *Trust New Art* programme. For Standen, taking part in this initiative satisfies three aims: to encourage visitors to come at times which would normally be quieter on the property; to encourage artists in creating innovative work; and perhaps most importantly, to challenge the preconception that Arts and Crafts is maybe a little bit twee. In fact, when William Morris and his friends began the movement, it was seen as a radical departure from the style and ethos which had been in vogue.



Examples of Will's work

This is a three year programme - beginning in the garden in 2016. The following year will see new art in the house and in 2018 there will be another project in the garden. Around twenty design projects were offered, but of the short-list of four, it was always Will Shannon's which seemed to be the talking point.

Will's main interest is in design, and making things either from recycled or natural materials which he has resourced himself, and making sure that the end product tells a story. His designs are eye-catching and unusual;

the bright blue hoarding placed around the Olympic Park during construction was recycled later into delightfully quirky furniture for nearby cafés, and for a bird hide. Used to the colour from its days as hoarding, the birds weren't concerned by

the vivid blue and it served its purpose brilliantly. Most recently, Will has worked with *Assemble* - the group which won this year's *Turner Prize*.

Like many a visitor, when he first came to Standen, Will was blown away by the rock face on the drive, and resolved that, should his application be successful, he would choose to work with materials like the sandstone on display there. He has now sourced Douglas Fir wood, tiles - or at least the clay to make them - sandstone and Freshfield bricks from suppliers within a 20 mile radius of Standen. Consequently, the bothy, when built, will be a product of its environment.

The building he envisioned will stand in the loop created for the Rock Top Walk, and will no doubt encourage visitors to explore areas in the garden which are further away from the house. Will is to begin building in September, finishing on the 19th. Dimensions will be relatively small, 2 x 2.5 metres at ground level, but jettying out another metre higher up. There will be walls made of sandstone, wooden cladding, brick steps and a tiled roof. The *pièce de résistance*, though, will be a long, horizontal window, made of panes of stained glass, which will glow in the evening sunlight. The building will be created essentially by one person, although volunteers with particular expertise are invited to take part. As James said, the range of Standen volunteers is such that there is always someone who has whatever skill is needed.



The end product will be in some ways a direct contrast to the structure of Standen, but at the same time will be a contemporary interpretation of the ways in which the house was built. Ideas are still developing for the interior; Will wants it to tell a story, and maybe show connections to an artisan of some kind. He would welcome any suggestions on this score.

The trail leading up to the bothy will show the various elements used in its construction, for example, outcrops of sandstone and Douglas Fir trees. All in all, this is an exciting project, which will engage all who come to Standen both as it is being built and afterwards, when the space can be used in whichever ways our imagination takes us. You can find out more about Will Shannon and his work on the Craft Council's website at <http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/articles/spotlight-on-will-shannon-build-your-own/>

New Greenhouses for old

It's been a bit like musical chairs at Standen since the new greenhouses went up. Elaine has moved in very happily to her nice big spaces, Carolyn has taken over the greenhouse on the





drive, and her old one in what used to be the Tenants' garden has gone to a good new home. Looking at the Kitchen Garden extension, it's difficult to remember the space as it was before. Three years' hard graft by Carolyn and her team have transformed it utterly. If you've forgotten how shaggy and uncared for it used to be, take a good look at the 'before' picture.

During the restoration period an awful lot of digging was done, which nearly broke Carolyn on more than one occasion. Eventually, though, all the new beds were double dug and manured ready for planting. By the following spring, though, the weeds had taken over, and yet more gruelling work ensued. Eventually, it seemed that the invaders realised they had met their match, and order began to develop out of what had been chaos.



	Zinnia elegans, 'Queen Red Lime'		Bupleurum longifolium [Perennial]
	Bupleurum rotundifolium 'Griffiti'		Coreopsis grandiflora 'Golden Globe' [Perennial]
	Zinnia elegans 'Benary's Giant Lime'		Sunflowers 'Ikarus' & 'Soraya'
	Zinnia elegans, 'Benary's Giant Golden Yellow'		Antirrhinum majus 'Appleblossom'
	Orange annual mix (e.g. Calendula & Tagetes)		Lathyrus odoratus 'Chiltern Seeds Flamingo Flamenco Mix'
	Zinnia elegans, 'Super Yoga, Dark Red'		
	Scabiosa atropurpurea 'Black Knight'		Verbena hastata 'Blue Spires' [Perennial]
	Nigella hispanica 'Midnight' & White Nigella		Lathyrus odoratus 'Chiltern Seeds Mulberry Mix'
	Chrysanthemum carinatum, 'Cockade' & Helipterum roseum 'Pierrot'		

Visitors now find it hard to believe that this part of the Kitchen Garden has only been established for a few years, and the removal and clearance of the old greenhouse is allowing Carolyn to move on to the next phase of the project. The

pictures above show the dismantling of the greenhouse and the difference it makes to the space, and the table shows prospecting planting. Carolyn sums up the experience and outlines her future plans for a new flower bed on the site as follows:

After nearly a decade of good service the old Aluminium greenhouse in the kitchen garden was finally removed on the 11th of April, just over two years since the area first opened up to the public. Since then a small but determined number of Kitchen Garden volunteers has been breaking up the concrete base and removing the hard core. This is to be recycled for use in the new compost area.

Half of the area (where the cold frames used to be) has already been dug over, rotovated, mulched with leaf mould, and prepared ready for a new bed. The rest will be done once the hard core has been removed and will be completed with new oak edging. A new grass path is also being established. The plan is for a mix of annual and hardy perennial cut flowers which will be planted by colour, starting with lime greens and ending with purples.

It should all look fantastic.

And finally....

Does anyone have a bee suit they no longer need? If so, the new bee-keeping group would be able to make use of it. Please email newsletter@fose.org.uk if you can help.