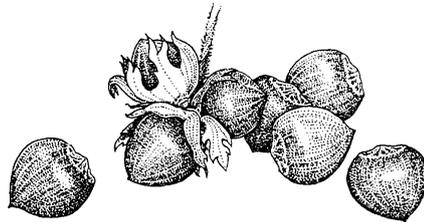


# In a Nutshell

THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRIENDS OF STANDEN ESTATE:

NUTS ABOUT STANDEN!



No 29 November 2015

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In this edition of In a Nutshell:

QUIZ NIGHT REMINDER  
ROCK TOP WALK OPENING  
LEBANESE DELIGHTS  
PLANT OF THE WEEK  
EASY FUNDRAISING  
POSH PAGODA  
AND FINALLY...

## Quizzzy Tuesday

Unlike BBC 2, which has Quizzzy Monday, FoSE's next Quiz Night will take place on a Tuesday - **10<sup>th</sup> November** - in the Barn Café, **7.15** for **7.30**. If you haven't yet booked places, this is your last chance to email [newsletter@fose.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@fose.org.uk) for a space. If you don't have a full team, don't despair; we can probably slot you in with someone, or make up a team of individuals. Hope to see you there.

## The Rock Top Rocks

The following article was written by Elaine Boot, Standen's Plant Propagator.

*On Thursday 15th October 2015 at 10 o'clock, a small group of volunteers and staff gathered to officially open a new area of the Garden...*

*Previously...*

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*Many of you reading this would probably not have realised that there was such a large area of the Garden above the rocks on the Drive and behind the Shelterbelt of trees.*

*I remember on one Thursday Garden volunteer day being taken, as a group, up to see the area. It was very dark and overgrown, with congested, self-sown trees including sycamore, holly and laurel, and we were tripped up by tangles of bramble. A machete would have been a good idea!*

*However, with his usual infectious enthusiasm for a project, James outlined his vision for a new area of the Garden. This section is out of the main listed area of the Garden and had not been developed by the Beales, so he had a free hand (the other contained the machete!) to draw up a plan.*

*James originally thought that the area could house an eco-friendly gardeners' tea room and workshop. But the logistics of getting machinery, utilities and people up there... and down again... meant that this wouldn't have been feasible.*

*So, on to Plan B...*

*After weeks of tree-felling and clearing by the Woods Group and a local tree surgeon, the area was opened out. The trees that remained were chosen for their aesthetic value, positioning and appeal and include Giant Sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) and hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*). The difficult, slippery slope up from the Little Orchard was graded and generous sleeper steps were installed together with a bench on which to rest.*



*A circular walk between the trees has been created using many of the trunks and branches from the felled trees as edging and a surface of wood chippings, again created from surplus wood. The pièces de résistance are the two viewing platforms, designed and built by the Woods volunteers. These, seemingly, teeter on the very edge of the Rocks over the Drive. But, I am assured by Anthony Fisher, one of our Woods volunteers, that they have firm foundations into the bedrock below. A trip to these platforms will reward you with far-reaching views over the High Weald AONB towards Forest Row and intriguing glimpses of St Swithin's church tower in*

*East Grinstead. This appears to have a purpose-built dip in the trees on the left horizon so that it can be seen from the platform.*

*The Rock Top Walk is being planted with many trees, shrubs, perennials and bulbs that have their main season of interest during the Winter and Spring months. We have not had a dedicated Winter Garden at Standen before and this will be of great value now that the Garden is open 363 days of the year.*



*And so, to return to Thursday 15th October 2015...*

*The bright orange ribbon across the bottom of the steps was cut by Phil Marsden, another of the Woods volunteers, who had spent many hours helping to clear and build in this area.*



*We all enjoyed a glass (paper cup, actually!) of warm, mulled cider and took advantage of the basket of biscuits provided by Jo Grange, whilst admiring the views. A couple of visitors wandered through, oblivious to the fact that they were the first of, what we hope to be, many to enjoy this area.*

*So, please try to come along and see this exciting new area of the Garden. Access is via the brick, then sleeper steps from the far end of the Little Orchard, or, for more level access, from the Shelterbelt Path above the Top Terrace. Pause at this end to look down and admire the, previously hidden, view of some original 100 year old Acers that the Beales planted following their World Tour. The old hornbeam is here, too, now revealed in all its splendour. We have just planted a collection of winter-flowering Camellias nearby, so...watch this space!*



*The Garden Team and volunteers all look forward to watching these new plantings mature and further developing on the Winter Garden theme.*

Thanks to Elaine for this delightful account. I wish I had been there for the opening.

## Latest Lebanese Lusciousness

On Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 40 happy punters foregathered on Goose Green to see Ruth Coltofeanu once again demonstrate her culinary wizardry. This time, as well as some old favourites, she



cooked Lamb Koftas and

Felafels, so we all tucked in to a meal which also included Circassian Chicken, hummous, yogurt and tabbouleh, accompanied by Chateau Musar wine. This was followed by coffee and baklava.



Committee members, especially Carolyn, had baked a variety of Lebanese-inspired cakes which were raffled, and then an auction was held, of a range of items, mainly

with eastern connections. This was managed admirably by Keith Nicholson, a friend of Ruth's, Thanks to the generosity of FoSE members and their friends, the auction raised over £200, bringing the grand total for the evening to £594.28.



## Easy fundraising

My plea for more FoSE members to shop through the Easy-Fundraising site has brought in two more people, but as there are over 120 FoSE members in total, I hope you'll forgive me for repeating the plug - especially as Christmas shopping is now in the offing. Full details of how to do this are in the September newsletter, which can be found at

<http://www.fose.org.uk/Newsletters/In%20a%20Nutshell%20-%20Sept%20'15.pdf>

We have raised over £380 on this site, at the cost of virtually no effort to us. If everyone just shopped enough to raise £1 it would bring that total to the equivalent gained at the recent Lebanese evening. So do give it a go. There is a degree of satisfaction gained from making big corporations pay out when we shop!

## Glorious Autumn Colour

Ben submitted the Beech tree as his plant of the week in mid-September, when it was still a brilliant green. Since then, the leaves have turned, making this tree one of the glories of the British countryside at this time of year.

The **Common Beech**, *Fagus Sylvatica*, from the **Fagaceae** family is normally around 25-35m but can grow up to 50m, making it fair to say that its habit is that of a large tree.



The Common or European Beech is a large deciduous tree, native to the UK. Depending on location, beech can have various appearances. In open spaces it will be a shorter more open and spreading tree, whereas in a woodland or forest area the tree will be slimmer and much taller with most of its branches higher up, leaving a characteristic open yet fairly dark 'beech wood look' with very little undergrowth due to lack of light.



Beech has alternate, very simple leaves which are very similar in shape to Hornbeam, although far smoother and shinier. The bark of the Beech is normally very smooth and a light grey, although it can also have a rougher more fissured bark. In the autumn, beech produces a nut; these have slightly prickly hard outsides which often split when they hit the ground, releasing two or three triangular- section seeds.

Beech trees enjoy light well drained soils and as such are often found on the side or top of hills as opposed to in wet valleys.

Beech is quite commonly used as a hedging plant particularly as it tends to hold most of its dead leaves through the winter until new leaves appear. This is more common on younger or clipped trees although some larger trees will also hold some of their lower leaves through the winter too.

Other uses for beech are for general carpentry in non-load bearing situations particularly for furniture and also for hard tools such as mallets. Beech does not

stand up to wet conditions, so must be treated if left outside. Beech is also known as one of the best firewoods.

At Standen there are a few beeches in the woods and garden including some of the 'Copper' (*purpurea*) varieties. However the best place to find good specimens is in the newly cleared Hill-Top Shaw. Here there are a large number of large mature trees some of which are originals from when the house was built, putting them at around 130 years old.

### Other news from the garden

If you have crossed the Croquet Lawn recently, you will no doubt have seen the new pagoda in place, purchased with money from James' sponsored slim. And very fine it looks too. The bases for the new greenhouse are also down, and Ben Wiles is working hard to ensure that everything will be in place for their erection very soon. I think James has something in mind like the barn-raising sequence in the film *Witness*. So get your greenhouse-building muscles in trim.

James is also making plans to buy azaleas to grace the rock face on the curve between stable-yard and drive. Money for these has been raised (£275 to date) by volunteer donations for cake made by Sally Roberson - which we all enjoy from time to time after (or even before) hours of hard grafting in the woods and garden. So it seems fitting that the volunteers should have full view of these as they arrive for work. In Spring these evergreen specimens will be a blaze of colour impossible to miss as visitors come up and down the drive.

Work on Hilltop Shaw is continuing apace, and although the contractors have not yet removed the rubbish, the clearance work carried out by the Woods Group has brought into focus many beautiful tree specimens and views that had previously been invisible. So do go and have a look.

### And finally...

With Christmas coming up, don't forget that Standen cards and coasters are on sale. Please see a member of the committee to make your purchases. Also, **please do your internet shopping through Easyfundraising at [www.fose.org.uk](http://www.fose.org.uk)** - instructions are in the last newsletter, which is also on the website.