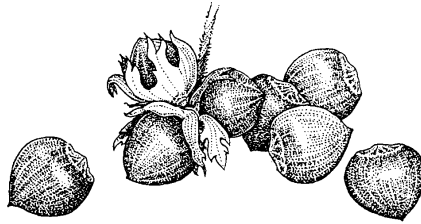


In a Nutshell

THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRIENDS OF STANDEN ESTATE:

NUTS ABOUT STANDEN!



No 48 January 2019

In this edition of In a Nutshell:

BEDDING, BEDDING, BEDDING
MEMBERSHIP THOUGHTS
MURDER MYSTERY NEWS*
STANDEN VOICE
VOLUNTEER VOICE
SNOWDROPS GALORE
WOODS GROUP FESTIVITIES
AND FINALLY...

FoSE calendar

FoSE Committee 18th march
FoSE AGM 16th May
Murder Mystery 13th July*

Oh, our aching knees and wrists

In October, following a special delivery, the garden volunteers created a human chain to decant



some 14,000 bulbs from truck to cellar. These comprised tulips, narcissi, hyacinths, iris reticulata and crocus, which were stored there until it was time to plant them. A month later, Standen took delivery of 17,500 spring bedding plants: wallflowers, violas, bellis, myosotis

and aubretia. Laid out in the back stage area, they made a daunting sight.

And so it was that, from early November until mid-December, the staff and volunteers spent most of their time in a crouched or kneeling position somewhere around the garden. James was clearly aiming



at some kind of carpet bedding effect, as by the time the violas and bellis had been planted in the terrace bed, there was nowhere to put your feet to plant the forget-me-nots. Jokes were made about

levitation, and at least one volunteer rolled out of the flower bed in a very ungainly fashion while attempting to exit without standing on anything precious.

Tempers frayed and embrocation ran out; but in spite of this, there was much laughter and humour and something of a sense of the Dunkirk spirit prevailed. The day the last forget-me-not was squeezed into a non-



existing space on the house terrace, a kind of euphoria took over; indeed, some people got quite hysterical.

The slugs, of course, are having a whale of a time, but in spite of them, there was already colour showing at the beginning of January. In a month or so, it should all look fantastic.

A bargain, or what?

FoSE membership has stood at 141 this year, a testament to the support staff and volunteers in all areas have given us, and, on Standen's behalf, we are grateful for your support. Since the beginning, membership has cost a mere £2, but in actuality, many people donate much more. Without wishing to price anyone out of the market, we have decided that, when membership falls due at the end of March, we will raise subs to £3. Please speak to a committee member if you feel this is likely to deter you from re-joining. Membership forms will be attached to the March edition of *In a Nutshell* and will also be available in the Stable Tea Room.

One of the perks of being part of FoSE is entry into the quarterly prize draw. The December winner was Glynn Jones, who joins Susan Hunter, Ena Sharratt, and John Spencer as the 'lucky ones' in 2018. Between them they received cards, jam and biscuits, a BBQ voucher and Standen mugs.

It is amazing what FoSE is able to achieve as a small organisation. We are still in negotiation for a powered wheelbarrow. At a cost of over £2,000, it is a pricey item, and we couldn't begin to consider the purchase without the support of our members.

Be ready to dress up!

Plans are already well underway for our Murder Mystery event in July. This time the performance is entitled *Keep Calm and Come Die with Me* and has a World War II theme. So this is your chance to dig out the black market nylons and red lipstick, or dress as a land girl or RAF officer, or even a Spiv. Once again, *Money Penny Productions* will delight and challenge you, so do put 13th July in your diaries now.



You can see what other people thought of it at <https://www.moneypennyproductions.co.uk/event-description/> . Or you can talk to those who came last time, who will, I'm sure, tell you how much fun they had. As

before, we will be providing a meal, but would stress that we cannot cater for allergies and specific dietary requirements beyond simple vegetarian. If this is a problem for you, we suggest that you ask for an entertainment ticket only (at a reduced price of course) and bring suitable food to the event yourself.



Don't let your ideas go unheard

Quite often, as volunteers are chatting, someone will come up with a good idea for a project for Standen. It might be a good place to put a bench, or a planting idea, or a suggestion for tools to make life easier. All too frequently, these ideas get forgotten during the day's chores, but James would like to hear about them. If inspiration takes you, please write your idea on a post-it note (to be found in a tin beside the stable-yard lap-top) and place it onto the lap-top. James will collect and collate these and, where feasible, use the ideas to make Standen even more beautiful and user-friendly, giving you something to crow about in the process.

Take it further

While James wants to hear local views, Tim Roberson has been involved with a project listening to Trust volunteers nationally, called **Volunteer Voice**. Here are his thoughts from the pilot scheme:

Volunteer Voice consists of over an initial 1,000 National Trust volunteers ready to share their thoughts and views on different topics. It has been live since October 2018 as a 6-month pilot. More detail can be found on My-Volunteering at [volunteer-voice-hub](#) and [Volunteer-Voice-Report-Oct-2018](#)

The National Trust's stated aims of Volunteer voice are:

- To better understand the day-to-day lives and experiences of National Trust volunteers.*
- To trial the use of an online community to gain regular feedback from our volunteers.*
- To get in depth qualitative feedback on a range of topics.*

In the first month the key insights identified by the Volunteer Voice team were:

- Volunteers are keen to share their thoughts with a high volume of detailed responses and a willingness to share honest feedback. There is a high expectation for their feedback to be used to have some influence on decisions around National Trust volunteering.*
- Overall, volunteers enjoy the people they meet and the variety of activities/roles they can get involved with. However, they did raise some areas for improvement.*
- There was a desire for more consistency in the volunteering experience at different properties.*
- Whilst some volunteers could only praise the staff they worked with, some felt under-utilised or under-valued by those they work with or found a high turnover of staff led to constant change.*
- Higher visitor numbers and longer opening times left some volunteers feeling stretched. Volunteers were keen to share their thoughts on how the National Trust could recruit more volunteers, particularly from younger generations, to help with this.*
- Recognition is important to volunteers, from larger things like the existing Volunteer Awards, to smaller things like their role being included on the Volunteer Survey.*

(My reading of the responses was that volunteers did not want more formal recognition as this would be seen as box ticking. Rather they wanted thanks from local managers and better use of their skills, but see further questions, below - TR).

From the first round a number of potential discussion areas for the future are:

- **Volunteers feeling valued and recognised:** What helps volunteers to feel valued, and what can the Trust do to recognise its volunteers (even more)?*
- **Working with National Trust staff:** What can be done (by staff and volunteers) to improve the working relationship? What can be done to help volunteers if there is high turnover of staff?*
- **Making the most of their skills:** What can be done to get the most out of the skills that volunteers can offer? What training and skills-sharing programmes could be in place and at what kind of level (property, regional, national)?*

- **Recruiting volunteers:** How do volunteers think the National Trust should go about recruiting more volunteers? What kind of messages, and through which channels, should the National Trust be promoting opportunities?
- **myvolunteering:** What works well with the current system, what doesn't work so well, and what would volunteers like to see improved?

Tim Roberson tim.roberson.nt@gmail.com would welcome your views on any of the above or indeed on other topics for further discussion.

First signs of Spring



Although they are really a winter flower, there is something about snowdrops which feels like a sign of better days to come. Elaine has been spearheading a project to see these lovely flowers all around Standen:

In Jan/Feb Fose will, again, be buying 2000 snowdrops. This is the 4th year of the 10 year project to increase numbers of Galanthus nivalis (the common single snowdrop) throughout the garden. The bulbs are bought 'in the green' which means that they are in full leaf when we receive them. Snowdrops rarely succeed from dried bulbs as they like to be moist all year round, unlike tulips, which like to be baked over the summer. When you consider that snowdrops are found in woodlands and tulips are from hot, Turkish mountain slopes, this makes sense.

In previous years, snowdrops have been planted along the Drive, down the Camellia steps and around Goose Green. Many of these are beginning to multiply, year on year, and by 2025 there will be well over 20000 snowdrops around the garden, making Standen a Galanthophile destination!

So, watch out for their little white heads poking through the soil and enjoy this harbinger of Spring.

The current plan is to plant this year's allocation in the bed behind the trellis next to the gong house and on the bank above the orchard where the bees are.

Snowdrops are a good source of early food for the bees.

Christmas in the Woods

Every Wednesday the Woods Group is hard at work in the more natural part of the estate, outside the more formal garden areas. They harvest wood for charcoal, create and maintain boardwalks, collect pea sticks, and generally do all the jobs needed to keep the woodland



areas in good heart.

As Christmas approached, once again Ben showed that he could turn his hand to anything, including a novel way of warming up mince pies; and



then everyone down-tooled for the festivities. Seems like they all had a good time.



....Life gets back to normal

After all the planting out, it looks like Rachel was pleased to be mulching instead!