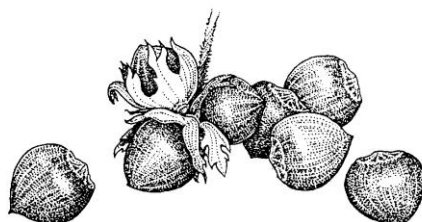


In a Nutshell

THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRIENDS OF STANDEN ESTATE:

NUTS ABOUT STANDEN!



No 52 September 2019

In this edition of In a Nutshell:
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QUIZ TIME AGAIN*
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NEW PLAY AREA FOR CHILDREN...
AND FINALLY...

FoSE calendar:
Quiz - 5th November

...And Happy Anniversary

As reported in the last edition, James reached his 25th anniversary at Standen in August, an event which coincided with his birthday. So it was that the Garden Group arrived one morning to find the stable block area swathed in bunting and balloons - the latter all thoughtfully inscribed by Bleau with garden-relevant quotations. Two cakes had been provided - which



was just as well as there were several volunteers in that day. One of them had been baked by Nancy Watkins, who had decorated the top with an image of James the gardener - complete with hallmark colourful trousers.

Expect fireworks...

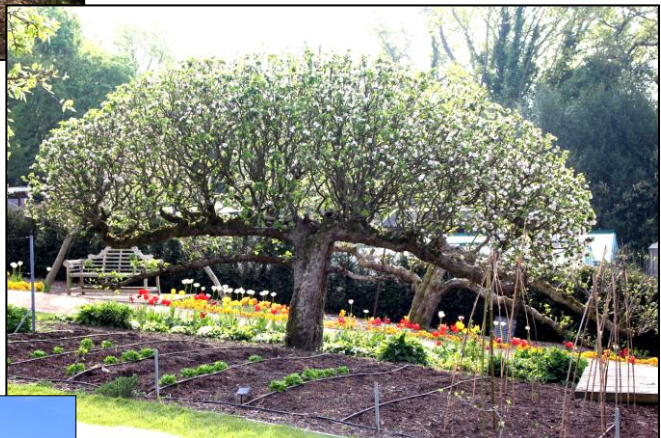
...but not the combustible kind. Just the fireworks you get when a team doesn't agree with the answer given by the quiz master. Once again, it's time to book your seat(s) for Standen's annual quiz night, which will take place in the Barn Café on **5th November**, at **7 for 7.30**. Entry is £3 or £4 for non-FoSE participants; pay on the door. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served in the interval, but feel free to also bring your own drinks and nibbles. There will of course be a raffle as usual. Susan Hodgson will take your bookings, and you can book as an individual or for a team (maximum of six). You can either email her at susanhodgson16@aol.com or phone her on 01342 327452. Don't leave it too long, as it is a popular event. Keith and Caroline will host as usual, and Keith has promised to find quiz questions which won't prove too challenging.

Fall of a Beale original



The second weekend in August saw winds which would more normally be associated with the autumn equinox. Unfortunately they proved too much for one of the beautiful old apple trees in the Kitchen Garden. This and its pair were planted in 1893, while the house was being built, and

had already been trained as espaliers, so must be nearly 130 years old. Debate has long raged over what variety they were; the old head gardener had seen a label saying Bismark, while Brodgale proclaimed Bramley.



Either way, the twisting action of the wind caused the trunk to split, and the majority of one of the trees fell a few days later. There is some live growth left, and the garden team are nursing what remains in the hope of

saving it, and adding protection to its twin.



Fortunately, remedial action had already been taken, about 5 years ago - in the form of cuttings grafted on to new rootstock - from several of the older trees. These were planted along the borders of the kitchen garden beds and are being trained as espaliers. The felled tree's twin has been carefully pruned to remove excess weight, in the hope of avoiding a similar fate. Three long twigs have been left on, and will be

grafted to make new trees shortly. Carolyn hopes to have some of the older specimens DNA tested in the spring, so as to be able to name them definitively.



Roger Ohlson explained what is happening to the wood salvaged from the damaged tree:

Following the disaster of the collapsed apple tree, the woodland volunteers were asked to cut up the remaining fallen section into pieces that may be worked into products that can be reused. The side section was cut up into pieces from which it is hoped that some bowls etc. can be made, this will take some time

as the wood will have to be spilt and dried before it can be used.

The old trunk was taken down to the barn and all the dead wood and "livestock" were removed and as a result it was agreed that this could be



turned into a nice piece of sculpture so work will be done to complete the cleaning up of the trunk which will be mounted on a base which Ben hopefully can source. Then hopefully somewhere can be found to display it.

Already this incipient sculpture is a tactile thing of beauty, with a rich mix of textures and colours. We look forward to seeing it on display once it is ready.

Food for bees - and humans

Once again, mid-August saw the volunteers cutting the lavender to encourage a late flowering when the bees would otherwise be short of food. As in the past, bunches were then sold in aid of FoSE to any visitor who wanted to take a bundle home. This year, this netted £30.10. In addition, Anne Scutt took some home and returned the following week with delicious lavender biscuits, which were scoffed happily by the Garden Group. In case anyone would like to make their own, here is the recipe she used:



Lavender Biscuits Makes 24



110g butter
56g caster sugar
2 teasp fresh lavender flowers
170 g plain flour
10 g icing sugar to dust
Prep:10min > Cook:12min > Extra time:30min cooling
> Ready in:52min
Preheat the oven to 180 C / Gas 4.
In a mixing bowl cream together butter and sugar until pale and fluffy.

Sprinkle the lavender flowers into the bowl and add the flour.

Mix to a soft dough then wrap in cling film and chill for 30 minutes.

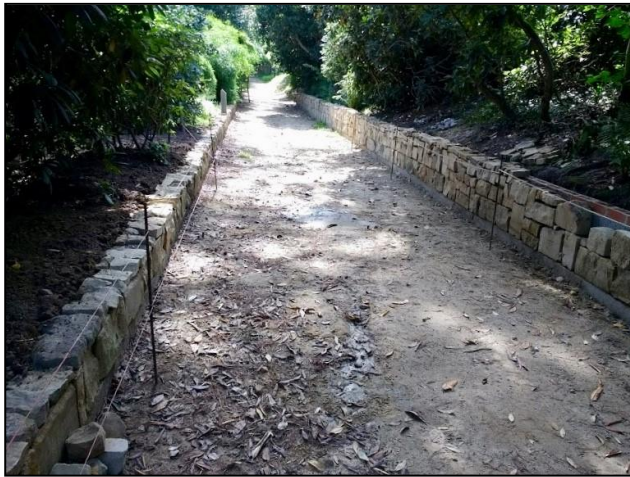
Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface and cut into 18 to 24 biscuits. Put the biscuits on a baking tray.

Bake for 10 to 12 minutes until browned. Remove the cooked biscuits from the oven and allow to cool a little on the baking tray before transferring to a cooling rack.

The Farm Track - It's all in the numbers

My thanks to Graham Parkes for this update on the sterling work currently being undertaken by the Wall Builders. Strangely, my back ached by the time I'd finished reading it too. The statistics quoted are impressive, and indicative of a huge number of man-hours expended. I can't think of a group more deserving of sustaining tea and cake.

The project to bring the Farm Track back to life has been underway now for five months and is progressing steadily. Initial work involved installing new drainage and brickwork at the top end near the Kitchen Garden to deal with the perennial problem of surface water running down the track. Once completed the next tasks were to cut back the edges along the Track where years of accumulated soil, brick, tile and plant debris had built up and then build a couple of solid foundation bases and supporting blockwork walls. These will serve to both keep back the soil and provide a solid base for the new sandstone walls. Finally, work started on building



the walls in late June using sandstone from the nearby West Hoathly Quarry, the same seam of rock that was used in the original walling. Additional drainage pipes are also being installed in the new wall on the south side of the Track and brick channels will eventually be incorporated in the finished surface as an additional aid to the drainage problem.

During a recent tea break we worked out some rough numbers; they were surprising and give an indication of how much work is involved in a project of this magnitude. It also explains why my back aches on a Thursday evening!

Soil moved in preparing the ground = 23 metric tonnes

Ballast to build foundations = 6 tonnes

Compressed blocks in supporting walls = 398

Sandstone wall material = 7 tonnes (to date)

Bags of cement = ca30 (to date)

Building sand = 5 tonnes (to date)

Length of new pipework = 35 metres

Cups of tea drunk = ca120 (to date)

Slices of cake consumed = ca120 (to date)

Standen attracts all sorts

Nancy Watkins is still encountering visitors from all walks of life in her role as a garden steward. My thanks to her for sharing her experiences:

'My Husband is a member of The Master Gardeners Association of the USA,' was the rather worrying statement from the lady I was chatting with the other day. She and her husband were an English couple who had lived in America for 20 years and were here for a family occasion. Apparently the Association is a program offered through universities in USA and Canada that provides intensive horticultural training to individuals, who then volunteer as Master Gardeners in their communities, by creating gardens, giving lectures, conducting research etc., to help with the often hostile conditions found in many states due to numerous different pests and diseases. Most states have an Association and 'Volunteers' do receive a salary, if they have the relevant certificate.

My other chat was with a lovely French lady who was looking for English plants to take home with her to France. She had planted an English cottage garden, much to the dismay of her neighbours, who couldn't understand the concept of this rather 'untidy' approach to gardening. Many French gardens still have quite a formal style, as in the beautiful Chateau gardens in the Loire Valley. This lady, however, loved the English style and had no intention of changing.

Dolly the dog made another appearance and received a lot of attention from visitors and me!

... not to mention adults!

The new play area beside the overflow carpark is steadily taking shape. Once again, I am indebted to Roger Ohlson for information about the new slide:

Following a trip to an Arboricultural show earlier in the year Ben came up with the idea of a tree slide in the new natural children's playground.

After searching for a suitable tree he found one in Hollybush wood, The tree was cut down and when it was down it was found that it was dead at the top and would have needed to be felled anyway as it was close to one of the main paths.



After the woodland volunteers had cleared up all the branches, Ben cut the tree to a suitable length that gave the best shape for the slide, and then split it. He had several attempts then to bring the tree back to the playground and on the final attempt managed to get it to move where he wanted it.

Once back at the playground he removed some of the timber. The rest was removed with an adze and a bit of mechanical help. Once the shape was made the slide was sanded, though this will have to be done again before being sealed and varnished over the next few weeks.

The slide was then lifted / pulled into place on the bank. Ben said that after some research he discovered that approximately 30 degrees was the right angle, so once the slide was in position some large sections of log were placed to form the steps. And of course it had to be tried out by Ben first, followed by several woods volunteers and apart from getting a bit dusty going down no splinters were picked up!

A tunnel has been constructed under the mound housing the slide. Of course, this could become muddy after time, so one of the woods' volunteers - Geoff Hill - has constructed a special Standen Pipe Brush, which allows a doormat, fixed on a hemispherical frame the same dimensions as the tunnel, to be pulled through from time to time - genius.



And finally...

On a serious note for once. *In a Nutshell* regularly prints photos of volunteers at work, or guests at FoSE events. If you would prefer not to be shown, please email newsletter@fose.org.uk, and I will endeavour to ensure that your image does not appear. Alternatively - or even better - please make it clear that you do not wish to be in a photo about to be taken.