

The Lockdown Lighthouse

THE INTERIM NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRIENDS OF STANDEN ESTATE:

NUTS ABOUT STANDEN
and missing it loads



No 1 - 2nd April 2020

In this edition of The Lockdown Lighthouse:

INTRODUCTION

BLOOMING LOVELY

SUITABLE ENTERTAINMENT

A BIT OF TRUMPET BLOWING

THE LATEST 'MUST HAVE' CROP

A POEM FROM NEW ZEALAND

AND FINALLY...

A word from the self-appointed editor

I've no idea how or whether this is going to take off, but as I said in the March edition of *In a Nutshell*, Standen is a community, and we need to keep in touch even if we can't get anywhere near our favourite house and garden. This first edition of *The Lockdown Lighthouse* comes just a week after the 'proper' newsletter, but a week in lockdown can seem like a long time to some, and I wanted to trial the format and see if I can encourage more people to contribute.

This will be a somewhat eclectic offering, but will hopefully bring a smile to your face in these 'u-p-e-e-e-t-d' times. I'll leave you to fill the gaps in what must currently be the most overworked word in the English language.

A welcome ray of sunshine

Martin Tasker was the first person to submit a picture from his garden. His Forsythia is in full bloom. It's always a cheerful harbinger of spring, this plant, with its branches covered in bright yellow flowers. It is actually a member of the olive family, with eleven species, mainly hailing from eastern Asia, although one is native to south-eastern Europe. It is also known as the Easter tree, though these days it is often in flower well before that. The genus was named after one William Forsyth, a Scottish botanist who was both head gardener for and founding member of the Royal Horticultural Society. Other posts he held included being curator of the Chelsea Apothecaries Garden and gardener to George III at St James' and Kensington Palaces.



Titles for the times

Bob Felden offered this list of entertainments, with some input, apparently, from Andy. I also slipped in one or two myself:

Song titles

This town is coming like a ghost town - The Specials
When will I see you again? - The 3 Degrees
Wake me up when September ends - Green Day
Don't Stand Too Close to Me - The Police
Working 9 to 5 (well, more like 7 to 1, then half 5 to 7) - Dolly Parton
Gardening by Night - REM
It's the end of the world as we know it - REM
We'll meet again - Vera Lynn
Staying Alive - Bee Gees
You'll never walk alone - Gerry and the Pacemakers
Wake me up when it's all over - Avicii

Film titles

Groundhog Day
Apocalypse Now
The Constant Gardener

The Longest Day
Stir Crazy
Saturday Night Fever

TV titles

Not going out
All (or should that be no-one) round to Mrs Brown's

Play Titles

All's well that ends well (hopefully)
Saved
And for all those battling with having the kids home all day long:
Mother Courage and her Children

If anyone can come up with any others, please send them in for the next edition. Bob also suggested creating a series of cryptic clues for us to solve around Standen place names. For example, 'I'm just going out; I maybe some time,' for Grandfather's walk. If you think of any examples, please let me know and I'll include a group of them next time.

In competition



If I'm not allowed to garden at Standen, I'll have to garden at home and go into competition. Mind you, as sole gardener on my plot, I've considerably less acreage to cope with than James. However, I have been quite proud of the tubs and brick beds in my front garden this year. They have made a welcome splash of

colour. I've also had time to do things properly, so whereas the leaves from the wisteria usually get swept up just from below the vine, last week I spent a whole morning laboriously picking the dead leaves out from between the branches - a job which required the skills of a contortionist. However, I removed an awful lot of detritus, and Nick



would have been proud of my pernickety approach.

I've also resurrected my mini-greenhouse, which has sat mouldering in the shed for years. The box says 'Multi-grow 2000' and it probably hasn't been used for at least ten years as I've tended to be away too much to focus on raising things from seed. This year, though it is full of trays of salad and bedding plant seedlings, which hopefully will grow into healthy plants to feed both body and soul by the summer. The utility room is also gradually filling up with trays of vegetable seedlings as well. Pity you can't grow toilet rolls - or can you?



Grow your own

Anne Scutt sent me a video clip for the newsletter. It came with the enquiry, 'Does anyone know where these are planted?' The video icon won't work in a pdf format, so I'll send it as an attachment alongside this newsletter. So hopefully you will be able to access it that way. It's worth the effort.



She also sent in a photo of her standing on her allotment with stakes which she liberated a while back from Standen. We volunteers do well out of the estate's cast-offs - (the stakes being cast off, that is, not Anne).

In addition, she sent me the following message, complete with accompanying picture:



Who else knew that The National Trust have to physically move the stone circles of Avebury and Stonehenge twice a year to make the Spring and Autumn Equinox match the sun shining through the right gaps in the stones?

Amazing !

Given that Off Licences have been deemed essential enough to stay open at the moment, I suspect her final offering may strike the biggest chord, though:

JUST STARTING TO CLEAR OUT.

Heard a Doctor on TV say to get through the boredom of self-isolation we should finish things we start and thus have more calm in our lives. So I looked through the house to find all the things I've started but hadn't finished...so I finished off a bottle of Merlot, a bottle of Chardonnay, a bottle of Jock Danielas, a bottle of wum, the remainder of Valiumun scriptuns, and a box of chocletz. Yu haf no idr how feckin fablus I feel rite now. Sned this to all who need inner piece. An telum u luvum.

It's the same the world over

My thanks to Pat Jilks' cousin in New Zealand, who sent her this poem. Author unknown, but sentiment felt by all of us, I suspect:

I'm normally a social girl
I love to meet my mates
But lately with the virus here
We can't go out the gates.

You see, we are the 'oldies' now
We need to stay inside
If they haven't seen us for a while
They'll think we've upped and died.

They'll never know the things we did
Before we got this old

There wasn't any Facebook
So not everything was told.

We may seem sweet old ladies
Who would never be uncouth
But we grew up in the 60s -
If you only knew the truth!

There was sex and drugs and rock 'n roll
The pill and miniskirts
We smoked, we drank, we partied
And were quite outrageous flirts.

Then we settled down, got married
And turned into someone's mum,
Somebody's wife, then nana,
Who on earth did we become?

We didn't mind the change of pace
Because our lives were full
But to bury us before we're dead
Is like red rag to a bull!

So here you find me stuck inside
For 4 weeks, maybe more
I finally found myself again
Then I had to close the door!

It didn't really bother me
I'd while away the hour
I'd bake for all the family
But I've got no bloody flour!

Now Netflix is just wonderful
I like a gutsy thriller
I'm swooning over Idris
Or some random sexy killer.

At least I've got a stash of booze
For when I'm being idle
There's wine and whiskey, even gin
If I'm feeling suicidal!

So let's all drink to lockdown
To recovery and health
And hope this bloody virus
Doesn't decimate our wealth.

We'll all get through the crisis
And be back to join our mates
Just hoping I'm not far too wide
To fit through the flaming gates!

Some links worth following

Comedy emails have been flying round the internet in the last week or so, as we recognise that laughter is the best medicine. Many of these will have 'gone viral' - pardon the expression - but in case you missed them, here are two that I have received.

https://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~jac22/The_Ladybird_Book_of_COVID-19.pdf

This is a spoof Ladybird book; it's amazing how well the old pictures meld with our current situation with a bit of clever text.

https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/mar/30/astrophysicist-gets-magnets-stuck-up-nose-while-inventing-coronavirus-device?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other&fbclid=IwAR0V8MsYQDfu7py-lc40UJ1N_RCbWCw2VcfylxPLEFA3gUb99U_3ukMxeyU

This is a *Guardian* story rather than a spoof, but, sorry as I was for the protagonist, it still made me laugh.

Finally, the most uplifting thing I've seen was the Marsh family from Kent - you may have seen this on Breakfast TV. I missed it, but my son sent me the link:

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/faversham/news/amp/familys-viral-les-mis-lockdown-success-224818/>

As well as being blown away by their talent and courage, I loved the fact that they left in the bit at the beginning with the kids squabbling. Even the super-talented are not above niggling at each other, it seems.

I can't tell you when the next interim newsletter will be; it rather depends on all of you. If no-one sends me anything, I'll know not to do another one, but if you've enjoyed reading this, let me know what you are doing. Alison Smith, for example, has joined an on-line community choir. It's amazing how tech-savvy we're all suddenly becoming. In the meantime, stay safe.