

The Lockdown Lighthouse

THE INTERIM NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRIENDS OF STANDEN ESTATE:

NUTS ABOUT STANDEN
and missing it loads



No 21 – 12th November 2020

In this edition of The Lockdown Lighthouse:

A COVID POEM

NANCY'S GARDEN RAMBLINGS

A GLUT OF TOMATOES

COMEDY CORNER

SEEDLINGS FOR STANDEN

EAST GRINSTEAD LIVESTOCK

AND FINALLY...

A poetic quiz, maybe

Tim Roberson found and sent in this gem of a poem, which, with its lockdown theme is bang up to date, and can be enjoyed just for that, as it bemoans our loss of freedom and spontaneity in the weeks ahead. However, the more literary-minded among you may gain some fun from spotting the literary allusions. I'll give the answers I found in the next edition.

A COVID LOCKDOWN POEM – Author unknown

I won't arise now, and go to Innisfree
I'll sanitise the doorknob and make a cup of tea.
I won't go down to the sea again; I won't go out at all,
I'll wander lonely as a cloud from the kitchen to the hall.
There's a green-eyed yellow monster to the north of Kathmandu
But I shan't be seeing him just yet, and nor I think will you.
While the dawn comes up like thunder on the road to Mandalay
I'll make my bit of supper and eat it off a tray.
I shall not speed my bonnie boat across the sea to Skye,

Or take the rolling English road from Birmingham to Rye.
About the woodland, just right now, I am not free to go
To see the Keep Out posters and the cherry hung with snow.
And no, I won't be travelling much, within the realms of gold,
Or get me to Milford Haven. All that's been put on hold.
Give me your hands, I shan't request, albeit we are friends
Nor come within a mile of you, until this virus ends.

More Autumn glory



Hi,

The garden is awash! Bulbs coming up, things flowering late. Lots of leaves too, which John has been collecting with his new Leaf Blower. Really good, as it collects and chops as well, great for making leaf mould. He is a happy bunny!

As I haven't done a lot in the garden during this wet period, I thought that I would concentrate on the autumn colour.

We are lucky to have a few Acers, not quite Standen quality but lovely just the same. The

specimen in the front garden, perhaps an 'Acer Rubrum' is spectacular at the moment and has grown at a rate of knots! Amazing since it is beside the road but the fumes from traffic don't seem to bother it at all or the various other shrubs along the row. I have had to photograph the Acer from my bedroom window, as it is difficult to do so from ground level.





In the back garden there is a fabulous Acer (*Acer Palmatum Shindishojo* - I think!) in the main flower bed, together with one of three Witch Hazels we have, this one is a red Hamamelis, they make a beautiful show. The shrub in the middle is a white Hibiscus which has been lovely this year. It is really in the wrong place in the bed as it does become quite large but I just keep cutting it back. I will

move it one day, maybe!

The Acer behind my shed has suffered rather over the years. There used to be, until recently, a rather beautiful *Rhododendron*. Alas it died earlier this year. This did, however benefit this rather straggly Acer. Another problem was the 30' conifer in my neighbour's garden! A beautiful tree that unfortunately took most of



the light from that part of our garden and was generous with the distribution of its needles! The tree was planted about 30 years ago by a previous neighbour. During the strong winds last week, it fell down, demolishing my neighbour's shed - but missing mine - also managing to avoid the overhead power cables by about 4"! On the one hand it was sad to see

such a spectacular tree come down but on the other 'now we have light'. The Acer is happy.



One of the plants still flowering is the *Viburnum Tomentosum Mariesii*, there is another Acer behind. Unfortunately, most of the labels have been lost over the years so I am guessing the varieties!

Some roses still flower on, the

patio roses have been especially good, as has the standard rose 'Peachy' and the climber 'Compassion'.

The four roses that I saved after the deer had annihilated them are doing well in pots and have all flowered again.

The purple berries of the Callicarpa came early and are beginning to disappear already, maybe the birds have taken them, although they tend to leave them until



other berries are finished. The tiny clusters of Nandina berries are just beginning to colour up now. There are some beautiful Crab Apples too. Together with various other ground cover, trees and shrubs that still retain their leaves, there has been an array of different shades to cheer us up.

I have put all my Pelargoniums in the greenhouse now where they continue to flower, as does the

little rose that abides there all year round. I do keep my cactus and some succulents under glass all year too. As you can see, I like to use unusual containers, there are some succulents sitting quite happily in an old wok! Others have been outside but are now under cover. My greenhouse is unheated except for bubble wrap but I think that because of its situation, the heat seems to build up inside rather well during the winter months.

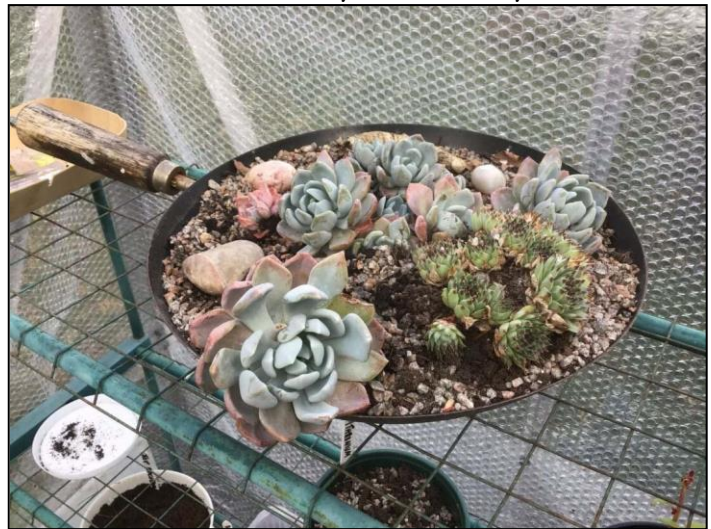




*purple, lilac and grey -
oddmments left from a
blanket project.*

*I also have an unopened
jigsaw..... Nancy*

Indoors, having finished my big crochet projects, I am now concentrating on the smaller ones! Using up some of the odds and ends of wool that have accumulated in my stash, I have begun to make some slippers for myself. I try to make some new every winter, as they are always so much more comfortable and warm than any that I buy. There have been some weird and wonderful colour combinations over the years. This year's are



Before social distancing

Here's another story from the imagination of Pat Jilks. It's called *A Glut of Tomatoes*.

It was Saturday morning and a beautiful sunny day with the promise of the good weather continuing throughout the weekend.

Mrs Henderson cooked the Saturday breakfast as she sang cheerfully to herself. They always had a fry-up on Saturday and Sunday mornings, never during the week, even though her husband had been retired a few years now. Bill came in now, laughing with a bucket in his hand. The bucket was half full of tomatoes.

'Well, it was worth trying this new hybrid,' he said. 'I wasn't sure about it, didn't really believe the claims made by the seed merchant but it was true. I suppose it has been a good summer as well to help them along, but those few plants are producing more fruit than I can cope with. We've already given the Souths a lot and will have to give more away soon.'

Mary smiled as she looked at the glut of tomatoes.

'Lucky we both love them,' she said. 'You're getting them for breakfast, lunch and dinner at the moment and I've made tomato sauce. Next thing I suppose, will be pickle.'

They sat down to enjoy the fry-up, commenting on the wonderful flavour of this new tomato that had been so successful.

They could see Mr and Mrs South come out of their house, arms entwined around each other. They were soon to be celebrating their golden wedding anniversary as well but to look at them, you would think they had only just met and fallen in love. It was not just for show either because, from shy comments Mrs South had made, their sex life was apparently marvellous. Mary envied them that - it was the one regret in her present life but she supposed that increasing age had made this normal even though the Souths seemed to have no problems with said age.

'Thanks for the tomatoes,' called out Mrs South through the open window, 'They're the best ones we've ever tasted,' and off they went down the street, entwined together.

They had decided on a picnic today, so Mary packed a lunch box, including of course, tomato sandwiches, and they set off to a local beauty spot. They sat on the hill after their lunch, then lay back on the grass peacefully.

Well, perhaps not so peacefully. Suddenly Bill sat up, gave a loud whoop and fell on her. This somewhat surprised Mary but after the initial shock found that the same youthful lust that had obviously entered Bill had also affected her.

After a while they sat up, beaming at each other. The rest of the day was spent in harmony and joy and they returned to the house happy, if a little exhausted. As the car pulled up, Mary looked over the road and gasped. She could not believe her eyes.

*'Surely not!' she exclaimed. "Not in the **front** garden!" and pulled Bill into the house, away from the offending sight. They stood in the kitchen and laughed and laughed. The Souths were decent now and gave them a happy wave as they disappeared back into the house with their arms entwined.*

Next morning, they both went shopping and, everywhere they looked, couples were kissing and cuddling. What on earth was going on?

A tough and rough looking young man approached. He was well known locally to be a troublemaker, always looking for a fight, proud of his masculinity and fighting as many other males as he could to prove it. This time, something had changed. Another young man approached, the sort that the rough one would have usually immediately taunted and bullied. Now, though, they both stopped abruptly and gazed into each other's eyes then, unbelievably, rough-house gave the other a kiss on the cheek and they walked off happily, arms circling each other.

Everywhere around them, except for a few individuals, people were getting together and pairing off.

During the next few days, despite the personal benefits that the new wave of love had brought them, the Hendersons had to admit that everything was going to pot. Parliamentary procedure had ground to a halt when a well-known politician stopped in the middle of a rant to comment on the attractive outfit being worn by a feminine member of the opposition.

It was even hard to get attention from the check-out staff at the supermarket because they were inclined to be distracted by the charms of their customers. Business in the town and indeed, throughout the country, virtually ceased.

There were that few who seemed unaffected and it must have been one of those who investigated the strange phenomenon and discovered that the cause of the new wave of love for each other was not due to a new morality (although there was not a lot of morality as such about it), but due to the new hybrid of tomato.

'Pomme d'amour', the French used to call it, or, in good old Anglo-saxon, 'love apple'. The humble tomato had, in the past, been reputed to have aphrodisiac qualities. Mild and even almost absent as the quality had been in the usual garden variety, apparently, the new hybrid had it in abundance. Only the people who did not eat tomatoes had been immune to its amorous effects. Even some pigs who had been given a heap of surplus tomatoes had been observed to be going it somewhat after their meal.

Sadly, despite the undisputed improvement in human relationships caused by the new fecund and multiplying variety of tomato, it was promptly withdrawn from the market. Some people welcomed this return to what they regarded as the cold normality but there were others who - well, we all know that hybrids don't reproduce from their own seeds but there's no harm in trying.

Mary thought it doubtful that the hybrids would be fruitful, so to speak but, just in case it was a useless hope, she did make rather a lot of pickle for the future.

To make you smile - in spite of everything

This story was sent in by Martin, as was the nativity announcement which follows:

An old lady handed her bank card to a bank teller and said, 'I would like to withdraw £10.'

The teller told her, 'For withdrawals less than £100 please use the ATM'.

The old lady wanted to know why...

The teller returned her bank card and irritably told her, 'These are the rules. Please leave if there is no other matter. There is a queue behind you.'

The old lady remained silent for a few seconds, then handed the card back to the teller and said, 'Please help me withdraw all the money I have'.

The teller was astonished when she checked the account balance. She nodded her head, leaned down and respectfully told her, you have £30,000 in your account and the bank doesn't have that much cash currently. Could you make an appointment and come again tomorrow?'

The old lady then asked how much she could withdraw immediately. The teller told her any amount up to £3,000.

'Well, please let me have £3,000, now,' she said. The teller then handed it very friendly and respectfully to her.

The old lady put £10 into her bag and asked the teller to deposit £2,990 back into her account.

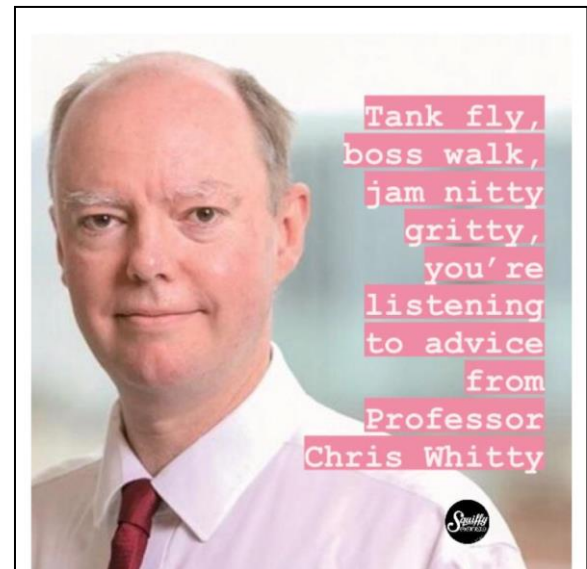
The moral of this tale ...

Don't be difficult with old people; they spent a lifetime learning the skills.

No Nativity this year because the 3 Wise Men face a travel ban. The shepherds have been furloughed. The Inn keeper has shut under tier 3 regulations and had a slump in bookings. Santa won't be working as he would break the rule of 6 with Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Donner and Blitzen. As for Rudolph, with that red nose, he should be isolating and taking a test. 😂😂

The following is also Covid-related, and although I think the scientists advising the government are doing their best, this did raise a smile.

The rest all relate to that gripping soap opera we've all been addicted to this last week, the American election. Although it seems mean to kick a man when he's down, Trump's refusal to accept the inevitable has prompted some hilarious comic moments.



Before the results were known, two videos were sent to me, the second being more prophetic than we could have imagined. Take a look at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S65jqrHQi_c

and even better,

https://videos.rennrad-news.de/2252/preview_of_what_could_happen_in_november_if

This was sent to me as a video clip. I found it on Youtube eventually, but only on a German site. The sound is, though, in English. I wonder if Laura Kuenssberg realised quite how prophetic she was being four years ago when she said that they would have to prise President Trump's teeth out of the Oval Office desk at the end of his term.

Sowing seeds for Standen

As there is no money to buy plants at the moment, James used a gift to buy seeds to provide colour for the Lower Terrace next summer. He chose a variety of different colours, textures and growing conditions. Half of the seeds have been sown in the last month and several batches are already germinating well. Some



required quite special attention - soaking in warm water for 12 hours, for example, or having their seed coats sand-papered

before sowing. Some needed to be kept in the dark or the fridge to begin with, some in the warm greenhouse, some in the cool and some in a cold frame. Here's hoping they all grow on strongly and will provide a burst of colour and scent next year.

A long way from home

Continuing last week's wildlife theme, on a recent local walk on the south-east side of East Grinstead, we came across a small herd of Water Buffalo. Normally, you would expect to find these in tropical or sub-tropical regions of the world, where their extra-wide hooves prevent them from sinking in the ponds and swamps which form their usual habitat.





Given that by that point in the walk, the accumulated mud on my walking boots made them look like snow shoes, I suspect that this

element of their anatomy helps them to cope with life in a muddy Sussex field.



And finally....



Rumour has it that Cyril Ridley is an ace at planting trees - or so he says. Here he is on the drive trying to prove the point, and putting his planting partner in the shade.

There will be trouble if it doesn't grow, Cyril!