

The Lockdown Lighthouse

THE INTERIM NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRIENDS OF STANDEN ESTATE:

NUTS ABOUT STANDEN
and missing it loads



No 22 - 19th November 2020

In this edition of The Lockdown Lighthouse:

COVID POEM ANSWERS

MEMORIES OF STANDEN

A HISTORY LESSON

STANDEN SEED BANK

HOW NOT TO GIVE ADVICE AND OTHER GEMS

GARDEN GIFTS

WHATEVER THE WEATHER

AND FINALLY...

Covid literary challenge

I promised last week to give you the allusions I had found in Tim's Covid poem. If I've missed any, please let me know. I suspect many of us have either recited or sung many of these in our youth.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree - William Butler Yeats

Sea Fever - John Masefield

I wandered Lonely as a cloud - William Wordsworth

The green eye of the little yellow god - J Milton Hayes

Mandalay - Rudyard Kipling

Skye Boat Song - Sir Harold Bolton

The Rolling English Road - G K Chesterton

A Shropshire Lad - A E Houseman

On first looking into Chapman's Homer - John Keats

Milford Haven - Michael Drayton

A Midsummer Night's Dream - Shakespeare

When we were volunteers...

The days when
the various
garden groups
met up and
worked together
in the gardens at
Standen seem a
long time ago at
the moment, but

Martin has looked out some photos of those
halcyon days for you to enjoy.

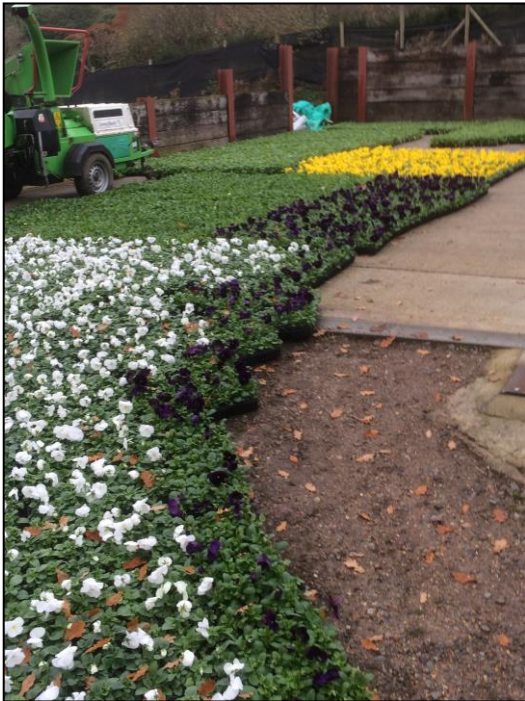




Of course, all that beautiful display wasn't achieved without a certain amount of hard work, where we spent much of our time like this:



And it wasn't just bulbs. I seem to remember quite a lot of bedding plants. No wonder there were times when the team decided it was time for a break.



It's a good job Darielle was still hard at it.

Give a man an electric wheelbarrow and he's happy all day. Just as well we didn't have to put the barrow - those pumpkins were heavy.





Given that we have just passed Remembrance Day once again, it seemed appropriate too to publish a reminder of the lovely poppy display which graced the gardens in November 2018.



Good times, all. Let's hope it won't be too long before we are all back complaining about our aching backs and knees. Mind you, it won't be quite the same without Ben Wiles, seen here sitting on the stool he'd just fashioned with his chain saw.

Count your Blessings

Reading Pat Jilk's latest story, I found myself grateful, in spite of everything, to be living now, rather than in the 16th century. This story, called, *As far as we know*, combines her love of the cosmos with her knowledge of history.

Giordano looked down at the crowd surrounding him. They were waiting silently and he had their full attention. He had always loved to get attention but perhaps, on this occasion, he could wish that he was not the recipient of such searching and intense eyeballing as he was now receiving from so many people.

He looked around to see what sort of people they were who had come to see him. There were a lot of rough-looking people in the crowd which was what he would have expected but also, there were a fair number of well-dressed and obviously well-educated persons. Those persons though, had their own section and some even had seats set high so that they could get a good view of the proceedings.

He saw a young lad in the crowd who was about 13, the same age as he had been in 1561, when he was at the monastery school and his mind went back to that time. He had always been in trouble because he was always disagreeing with what he was taught.

'Giordano!' said the voice of the tutor monk in his memory.

'Have you been listening at all? Repeat what I have just said.'

Giordano had been listening with half his brain so repeated it correctly.

'The earth is at the centre of the Universe' he said, 'Because that is how God created it.'

He muttered under his breath 'As far as we know,' but not quietly enough because a cane whacked him across his hands painfully.

It had been like that all his life. So much rubbish was taught to people. Were they stupid or what? Was he the only one with vision of how much more interesting and complex the Universe was than the theory taught by the Church?

Well, later on, he found that no, he was not the only one. There was this man Copernicus who had also disagreed with the teaching of the Church and postulated that it was the Sun that was at the centre, not of the whole thing, but our neighbourhood. He had been a wise man though and only allowed the book on his theories to be published when he was on his death-bed.

As he grew up, Giordano realised that, indeed, the Universe was much, much larger than just our sun and its planets. He began to visualise that those points of light that so bewildered him at first and which he could not believe were just lights surrounding the earth as he was taught, were like our sun but so distant that they looked very small. If they were each a sun, those thousands of lights in the sky, then why should they not have planets around them and why should not some of those planets have life on them, even life such as that found on the earth.

As he got older, his views, expressed in a number of books but also openly and loudly, were not approved of in his own country of Italy. He had had to leave somewhat quickly to avoid imprisonment or worse. He had travelled first to France, where a man was much more free to express different theories, even if they did not agree with the church teachings. Then he visited that wet and cold country of England where he met their Queen Elizabeth. He was awed and impressed by her but got the feeling that she did not like him very much. He knew it was true that he was considered to be much too blunt and outspoken in his speech, even rude but, he thought, compared to him, these English people were crude and primitive.

As the years went on he missed his own country and longed to return. His thought that it would now be safe was confirmed when he received an invitation to do so by a young man who was willing to give him accommodation and a welcome.

'Trust nobody,' he now thought, looking down at the crowd who were still silently waiting. This so-called friend had brought charges against him and he had spent the next six years in a dungeon. Unpleasant things had happened to him and were followed by even worse in the form of another two years imprisoned and constant interrogation by the Inquisition.

Giordano was very proud that he had stuck to his guns and refused to recant. Not like that wimp Galileo who had recanted. No, he had been made of sterner stuff although it had been tempting at times with the promise of a complete pardon if he had done so but he would not. They must surely see their folly and realise that, if there was a God, he would not have provided his people with imagination and brains if he wished them to behave like stupid sheep and not search after the truth.

'Heretic. Recant now and save your soul,' shouted the representative of the church in a final effort.

Giordano replied with a retort that made the church spokesperson wince and the crowd cheered and laughed.

They drove a metal spike through his tongue then, so that he could speak no further.

'So be it then. Burn here and in the hereafter.'

The flames crept higher and the burning hurt more than Giordano could have ever imagined.

He looked down at the crowd who were now howling with approval and saw the young boy looking up at him in horror. Giordano wanted to shout out a message to him but could only try to convey it with his eyes.

'Remember whatever they tell you is only as far as we know,' he shouted out mentally in his anguish and pain.

'And we know nothing. Nothing at all!'

Giordano Bruno. Born 1548, burnt at the stake 17th February 1600 for, amongst other 'heresies', daring to speculate that the stars were suns like ours, perhaps with planets that contained life.

Germinate, please germinate...

Last week's edition showed some of the seeds which will hopefully grow into sturdy plants to fill the Lower Terrace next year. Here is a selection as preview. More to follow in the weeks to come.



Echinops banaticus Star Frost and Echinops tienschanicum, are both varieties of Globe Thistle. These have already germinated and been potted on in the cool greenhouse.



There may be a bit of a wait for this one: Ornithogalum pyrenaicum, also known as Bath or sometime Prussian Asparagus, as it will be three years before it has grown a bulb big enough to flower, but it's so pretty it will be worth the wait. Ornithogalums are members of the Hyacinth family. Another common name for this is Star of Bethlehem.





This is *Heliopsis helianthoides* var *scabra* 'New Hybrid' mixed Ox-Eye Sunflower. It can be temperamental about germinating, and may need a period of cold to kick it into life.

This delicate Prairie Cone-flower has a name to be reckoned with - if you can get your



tongue round it. It is *Ratibida columnifera* f. *pulcherrima* 'Red Midget'. The word *pulcherrima* means beautiful, which does sum it up.

Time to smile

Today's first item is definitely a 'Men are from Mars...' moment. I was so busy laughing when I read it that I forgot to note who had sent it to me.

Why men shouldn't write advice columns

Dear John,

I hope you can help me. The other day, I set off for work, leaving my husband in the house watching TV. My car stalled, and then it broke down about a mile down the road, and I had to walk back to get my husband's help. When I got home, I couldn't believe my eyes. He was in our bedroom with the neighbor's daughter!

I am 32, my husband is 34 and the neighbor's daughter is 19. We have been married for 10 years. When I confronted him, he broke down and admitted they had been having an affair for the past six months. He won't go to counseling, and I'm afraid I am a wreck and need advice urgently. Can you please help?

Sincerely, Sheila

Dear Sheila,

A car stalling after being driven a short distance can be caused by a variety of faults with the engine. Start by checking that there is no debris in the fuel line. If it is clear, check the vacuum pipes and hoses on the intake manifold and also check all grounding wires. If none of these approaches solves the problem, it could be that the fuel pump itself is faulty, causing low delivery pressure to the injectors.

I hope this helps,
John

— Forwarded by Steve Sanderson,
Gilbert, S.C.

A few Youtube videos worth watching. Anne found this one:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VTp-UFxEHA which sums up the feelings of over half the US voting population. However, I have been a bit hard on Donald Trump recently, so in the interests of balance, here's a video that James found: <https://youtu.be/kn-h78tuNiU>

If you've had enough of politics, take a look at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrxBB_zv7IU which shows that there is nothing new about assisted parking. There's also a video attachment with this edition, which should perhaps be entitled, 'Gentlemen beware'. Both these came from Anne, as did this selection of 'Things children say':

Having many wives is called polygamy. Having one is called monotony.

The population of London is very dense.

Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefield.

A skeleton is a man with his inside out and his outside off.

A herbaceous border is a lodger who is fond of greens.

The moon is far more useful than the sun, for it gives us light at night when we really need it, whereas the sun gives us light during the day when we don't need it.

They gave the Duke of Wellington a lovely funeral. It took six men to carry the beer.

Actually, Homer was not written by Homer but by another man of that name.

The climate of the Sahara Desert is so harsh that the inhabitants here live elsewhere.

When schoolchildren were asked to correct the sentence, "The toast was drank in silence" this was one child's response - "The toast was eat in silence".

There's more to Nancy's garden than plants

Since the garden is pretty much the same as before, wet, I thought that I might say something about some of the inanimate objects that occupy different areas. These were mostly bought by my grandchildren. The trend was started some years ago by Thomas my 5th Grandson, who is now 12 years old. I myself had never particularly thought about buying such things, although I know many people like garden gnomes!

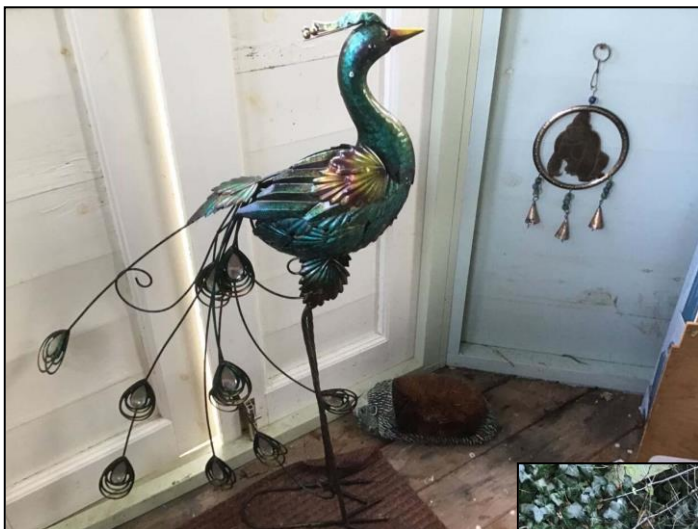


The first picture is of the latest acquisition, Fredo the Frog, bought by the aforementioned Thomas for my recent 75th birthday. He is rather splendid but hasn't ventured outside yet, preferring the warmth of the greenhouse

where he matches rather well with the variegated geranium! Also abiding in the warmth is a robin, in the form of a watering can. There is no way you could put water inside as it would rust! However it makes a reasonable container for dried flowers.



The rather lovely peacock in the summerhouse actually belongs to my husband. It was given by one of our granddaughters. John is rather



protective of it and it is rarely allowed outside in case it is damaged. You might also notice the wind chimes hanging from the window frame, Guy the Gorilla, bought quite recently at London Zoo. The hedgehog boot scraper has been around for ages, I can't remember where it came from.

The monkey was bought as part of a set of 'The Three Wise Monkeys', the other two were given as gifts to John's oldest friends. This one 'speak no evil' abides on top of the plinth once belonging to an old bird table that was here when we purchased the house.



Unfortunately the top was damaged beyond repair but the plinth is lovely, although quite worn. There is a mouse climbing up amongst the ivy and another down below together with a couple of frogs and a butterfly.



There seem to be a few frogs in the garden, (there are several real ones as well) this one sitting rather disconsolately on a stone bench, has been removed from his usual abode near the bog garden pond, as I am in the throes of re-doing that area. So he is languishing amongst the water plants and other paraphernalia waiting to return home.

The sleeping dragon is quite fun. He sleeps on top of an old stone plinth amongst the foliage in an area of the garden that I leave mostly to its own devices. He has been of interest to the grandchildren over the years. Mainly, the younger ones who have wanted to know if he will wake up! I tell them not for about 100



years. As they have got older they realise, of course, that the awakening is not going to happen. My youngest grandchild Oscar, who is 5 years, still looks with some trepidation at the dragon to make sure that the 100 years isn't up yet!



The terracotta head, in the same part of the garden, has featured before in my 'ramblings'. The head was my one and only foray into sculpture. It in no way resembles the sitter, who was a lovely Italian girl! Nevertheless she has adapted quite well to her situation and the greenery has clothed her quite beautifully.

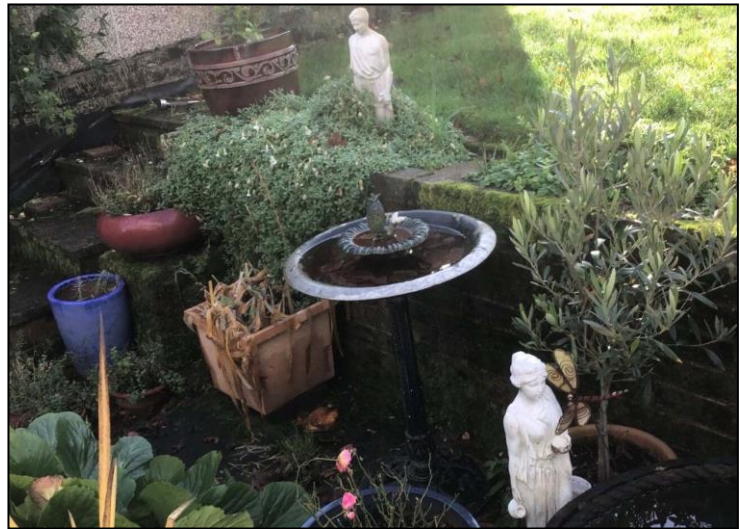


Buddha is just serene and peaceful, the largest of these features, he was bought by us some years ago. We have been lucky enough to visit several countries where Buddha is worshiped and are happy to have his calming presence in our garden.

There are several different objects on the patio. A solar lamp in the shape of a frog which changes colours and is very pretty;

a gnome fishing nearby, another one of Thomas' gifts together with the 2 moles standing on top of the steps. These were not bought together, Tom just forgot that he had already purchased one the year before. I just think he rather liked them, they are quite jolly fellows.

The Roman lady and her gentleman friend are the oldest of these features in the garden. They were bought about 25 years ago by my middle daughter. They are made of resin and so have weathered very little and are only now beginning to show the signs of some age. They have rather 'grown into' their place and I have become quite fond of them.



On a completely different tack, I thought the picture of the parsnips might amuse! I dug them up a day or two ago. They were planted at exactly the same time and have been treated just the same i.e. just left to get on with it! The large one weighs 1lb 8ozs and the smallest $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. I am looking forward to digging up the rest.

One more thing, quite unexpected. One of my granddaughters,

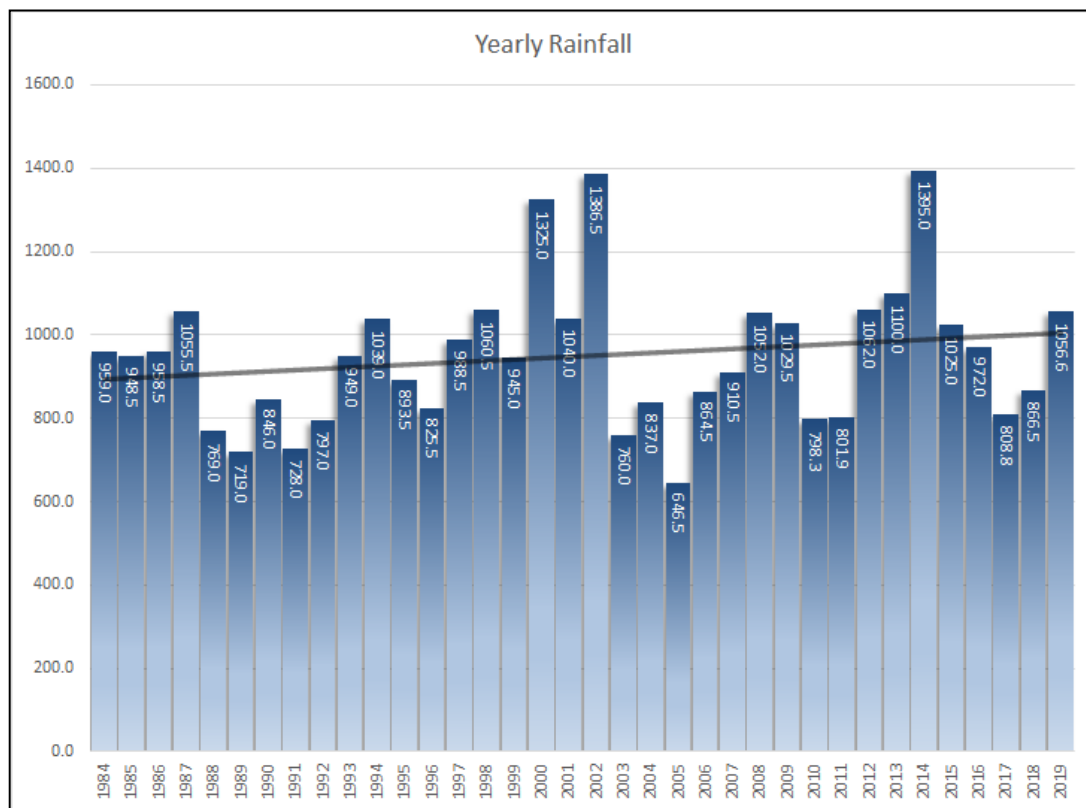
Sophia, was standing, very socially distanced, on the patio the other day looking into one of the barrel ponds. She suddenly got very excited; she had

counted 3 baby fish! There have been 2 lovely Shubunkins in the pond for about 4 years, so they must have finally found out what to do to pass the time!

Nancy

Wet, wet, wet

The above does seem to sum things up at the moment, although we have had some glorious autumn days as well. James has been keeping track of the rainfall since 1984, first at Nymans, and, since 2000, at Standen. It does show that our neck of the woods is wetter than it used to be, despite the rumour of - and periods of - drought that we have experienced recently.



It would just be nice if the weather gods could space it out, so that we get some rain in the summer as well as in the winter!

...it was all worthwhile

There was a time when heather became almost a dirty word at Standen. Up on the top terrace, many volunteers nearly sank into the mud while planting them initially, and then there were endless Thursdays - and probably other days - when volunteers and staff spent hours on their knees trying to get the weeds under control. Couch, brambles, and even bluebells had had their own way in that space for a long time, and were not keen to give up their domain. All that hard work has now paid off though, as Martin's picture of the heathers in bloom there shows.



Now, the gaps in the Drive have also been filled. Nearly 200 heathers, lovingly nurtured from original cuttings taken about three years ago, have been put in. This final batch was a blend

of *December Red*, *Katia*, *Saskia*, and *Winter Rubin*.

So we look forward to a spectacular winter approach to Standen in a couple of years' time.

