

In a Nutshell

THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRIENDS OF STANDEN ESTATE:

NUTS ABOUT STANDEN!



No 61 March 2022

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AND FINALLY...

FoSE dates
Committee Meeting 27th April
*FoSE BBQ 15th May
*FoSE AGM 18th May

How was it for you?

February was unseasonably stormy, with March winds coming earlier than anticipated. We suffered three storms in quick succession, with the last, Eunice, trying to outdo the 1987 hurricane. I suspect many of us sustained damage to roofs and fences, and Standen was no exception. You will all have seen the pictures of what was left of the roof on the compost bins.



Hopefully insurance will cover at least part of the cost of replacement. However, plants and trees also suffered, and it will cost, James estimates, around £500 to replace what has been lost.

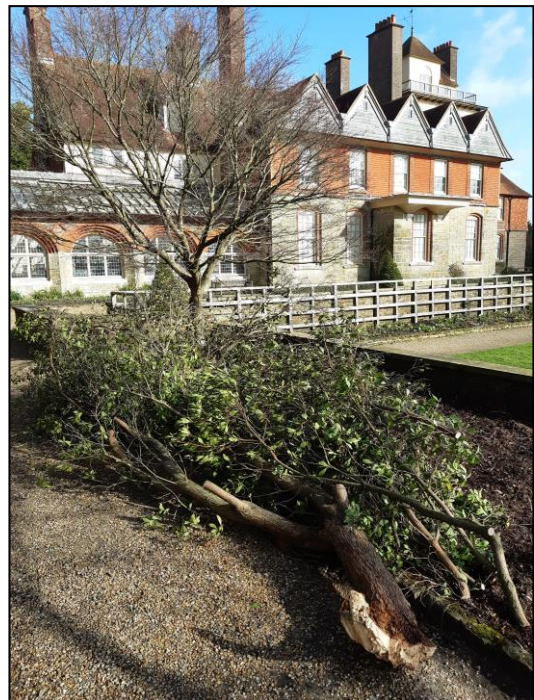


The Snake's bark Acer was one of the biggest casualties in the garden itself. Its stripy bark had provided a talking point for visitors meandering along the lower terrace for years. The tree lost was itself a replacement for the 1987 casualty, and volunteers took cuttings from the fallen acer in the hope that some might root. Even if they do, it will be a long time before any

matures into a full-sized tree.

The Arbutus (Strawberry Tree) opposite the exotic bed also lost a major branch. Looking at the tree from a distance, the damage isn't immediately obvious, but when you see the size of the fallen branch on the ground it's a different story. A lot of time was spent by Tuesday volunteers sawing up the fallen branch and clearing debris from the area.

Above the house, the cages put around newly planted shrubs by the steps leading up to the Bothy look as if they have been screwed up by a giant having a tantrum.



These are just the major casualties. Damage was also caused to many of the smaller shrubs, Rhododendrons, Pieris and the like. Replacements at this level come out at around £20-25 per plant.

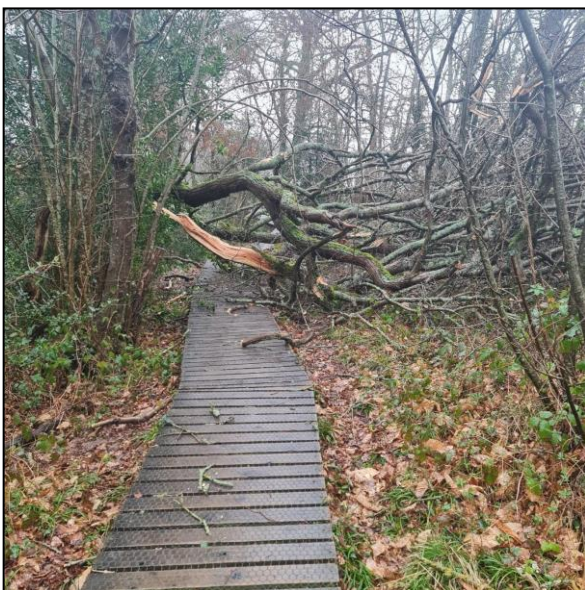


Along the Top Terrace, some of the Scots Pine suffered damage, as did the post and rail fence.

The woodland around the estate fared even worse. The pictures below say it all.

FoSE would like to help fund replacements and repairs following the storm, but at our last meeting, when we looked at

the annual accounts, we realised we had raised no funds at all in the latest financial year as we were all socially distanced and unable to hold events.



We are hoping that Gatwick Airport Community Trust may look favourably on our application for a grant to cover some of the costs of replacing the trees, but

can't count our chickens and don't anticipate that all the costs of replacement would be covered. So once again, we are appealing to your generosity. £500 would cover much of what James needs to do to repair the damage, and every little would help. So if anyone would like to make a donation towards replacements their gift can be put towards a specific plant, giving a sense of ownership in return.

If you would like to contribute, please make a payment into FoSE's Lloyds Bank account - sort code 30-92-92, account number 01856808, account name Friends of Standen Estate. The reference would be Storm Damage Appeal. Alternatively, pop a cheque or some loose change into an envelope marked Storm Damage and leave it in the FoSE tray in the Stable Tea Room.

Back in business

After two years of relative isolation, FoSE is hopeful of returning to a more normal calendar this year. We will be holding our usual annual BBQ at Hollybush Barn on Sunday 15th May. This is open to all FoSE members, their friends and families. So do put the date in your diary. More detail to follow by separate publication, but please see the poster attached to this emailing and feel free to print it off and display it. Three days after the BBQ, on 18th May, we will be holding our AGM in the Barn Café. It is some time since James has given a talk, and in the light of the last two years - managing the garden solo during the first lockdown, dealing with storms, rabbits and badgers, and always planning new delights for the garden - there will be plenty for him to talk about. As usual, the business part of the meeting will be very short, so do come along and hear what James has achieved and now has in store for the garden.



And it was still only February

As the days lengthened, delights started appearing all over the garden, even though it was technically still winter. The snowdrops were the first to appear, with Hydrangea Walk looking particularly attractive. Up above the top terrace a delicate Rhododendron was in full bloom by the middle of the month. The heathers, which were such a pain to weed in their early days, are now mature, providing billowing swathes of winter colour along the top terrace. Elsewhere, daffodils, in all shapes and sizes were already making an appearance even when March was still some way off.

By mid-March, the Magnolias were in full bloom. The one in the Quarry Garden has a branch drooping over the entrance at the moment, allowing us to get up close and personal with the blooms.

2022 membership

A big thank you to those who have already paid your subs for 2022 - over 60 last time I looked, which is pretty good going for mid-March. However, it seems some members have paid but not submitted a new form. Even if details haven't changed, it makes it much easier for Roy to keep tabs on everything if he has a form for each year.

A 2022 membership form is attached to the mailing of this newsletter and there are hard copies in the FoSE tray as well. Bank details are the same as those given above, but the reference is your name and 'subs'. If you prefer not to make a bank transfer, please leave your cheque/cash with the form in an envelope marked with your name and FoSE subs in the FoSE tray. We do both need and appreciate your support.



Reclaiming the Rosery

You've got to hand it to him, Jamie Ball, assistant gardener, certainly likes a challenge. The Rosery, highlight of the garden during the Evening of Summer Sparkle at the end of the garden restoration, has suffered considerable recently, both from deer and lack of manpower. This is how sad it looked just a few weeks ago.



Jamie has taken on the role of restoring this area of the garden. Recently, he received a helping hand from the Nymans Garden team, led by Jo Whelan, and they spent a day chopping down, pruning and tidying. Jamie worked with them and was seen picking the brains of the gardener who was pruning the roses on the pergola.



In the meantime, Jo Whelan and the rest of his team cleared the big beds either side of the

steps.

The area certainly looked better afterwards, but there is still much to do.



And I understand that Jamie has plans, which leads me to the next item.



A Standen Away Day

Many companies arrange away days, in which staff get together somewhere different for a mix of brainstorming and socialising. One of the things that the garden volunteers - and other groups no doubt - have missed recently is the chance to work in a big group. It's so satisfying when there are enough bodies beavering away together to see real progress by the end of the day. And it's a chance to chat and catch up. Given the enormity of Jamie's task, we thought it might be a good idea to hold a FoSE Away Day. The idea is to invite volunteers and staff to a day's work in the Rosery. People can participate from any areas of the staff, or any of the volunteer groups, as long as they have completed the online training and are therefore covered by insurance. There are a number of different areas requiring attention. Jamie has plans for both paths and lawn, and the flower beds, pond area and sloping bank all need work.

The aim is for everyone to bring a picnic, and FoSE will provide drinks and nibbles. As well as working, there will be time set aside for people to chat and catch up with those in other groups. There may also be some new volunteers and it will be a chance for them to meet the old hands. If we can get enough people together, we could make an enormous difference, and have fun at the same time. A day and date have not yet been set, and clearly whatever day of the week we choose will not suit everyone. Jamie normally works at Standen Monday to Friday but would be willing to come in at the weekend if that suits a majority of people who wish to take part. So, if you have a strong preference for a particular day, please let me know as we would like to accommodate as many people as possible.

Jamie would also be interested to have your suggestions for ideas for planting. Who knows, in the future you could point out a part of the rosery which was inspired by you. He is also planning some kind of plaque to commemorate the event. Do let me know your thoughts at newsletter@fose.org.uk and we will let you know once the day has been arranged.

A mushroom mulch mountain

The annual delivery of a very large pile of mushroom compost arrived in the stable yard recently, and I suspect most volunteer teams, as well as all the gardeners, have shovelled a fair bit of it in the past few weeks. The result is a lot of beds, in both formal and kitchen gardens, which look in fine fettle and ready to support spring and summer plant growth.



One area which got a good covering was the newly extended exotic bed. The soil under the tree where the turf had been removed was very poor, so a good thick layer was applied to give the new planting there a fighting chance.

Flower pictures

James has been being artistic again. I'm not sure if this form of art-work has a name; if not, perhaps we should invent one, as the result of putting leaves or flowers together in a square is most attractive. Thank you, James, for sharing these with us.



How wet was this winter?

Everywhere I walked this winter seemed to be awash with Sussex mud. However, according to the records James has been keeping, it was a drier year than normal. Can his rain gauge have a leak?

The Rainfall for December was 120mm, January 38.2mm and February 57mm making it the driest winter here since 1998. Our coldest nights were 6th & 21st January with -2C so not particularly cold. The warmest days were at 13C on several occasions through the three months.

We do indeed seem to have had a mild winter, though I believe snow is now forecast. Let's hope the garden bugs haven't profited from the temperate weather.

Robin on guard

I am sure there must be several robins around the Standen estate. There always seems to be one hopping around my feet wherever I am working. However, the one which caught my eye recently was the one



which had taken up residence on the stump of the cherry tree just inside the entry gates. It was as if he was checking the visitors as they came in. He - or she - flew off from time to time when a car came too close, but rapidly returned to keep an eye on what was going on.