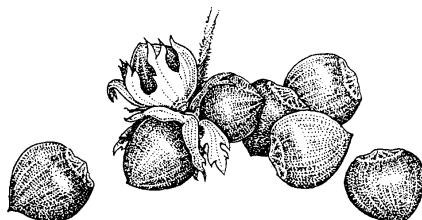


In a Nutshell

THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRIENDS OF STANDEN ESTATE:

NUTS ABOUT STANDEN!



No 64 September 2022

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AND FINALLY...

Goodbye Sussex; hello Dorset

It's a good job that recently departed gardeners have had a good reason for leaving, or the volunteers might be feeling unloved. The latest to go is the much-missed Jamie Ball. He had only been at Standen for about a year but had quickly become a valued member of staff and someone we all enjoyed working with. However, the end of a lease in Brighton, combined with the chance of owning a home in Dorset - with stairs that go up, not down - persuaded Jamie and his partner Vicky to go in search of pastures new.

As his departure came rather suddenly, his 'leaving do' was a fairly low-key affair, but



James was able to present him with tokens to buy the gardening tools he will need if and when he starts his own gardening business. In thanks, he sent everyone a card, in which he quoted Pippin's song from *Lord of the Rings*:

Home is behind; the world ahead
And there are many paths to tread
Through shadow to the edge of night,
Until the stars are all alight,
Mist and shadow; cloud and shade,
All shall fade; all shall fade.

I think it will be some time before the memory of Jamie will fade from Standen, and I think he feels the same as his card thanked all the staff and volunteers for 'the acceptance and love' he felt he'd been given.

Martin has been in touch with him already, and in the reply he received, Jamie reiterated how much Standen had meant to him:



Standen and the people in it are very dear to me and I'll carry that with me with pride. It certainly did help my confidence and my ability to talk with people, after working with you for a year how could it not?... Leaving Standen was one of the hardest decisions I've ever had to make and I will often think of you all fondly.

Not everything to do with the move went totally to plan. Both Jamie and Vicky went down with colds as soon as they got to Dorset. Can we hope that the climate doesn't agree with them and that they'll be back? Jamie is also apparently having to acclimatise to not getting up at 6 o'clock to drive to Standen. Now that he probably won't miss.

We wish Jamie and Vicky well in their new life.

How to lose volunteers

Congratulations to all the volunteers who managed to negotiate their way through the Trust's mandatory training. It has been a topic of conversation for some time

now. Not everybody managed it successfully, however, and I received an email from one ex-volunteer who has had to leave because of it:

I really enjoyed my 8 years with the other 50 or so Woodland lot under Trudie and James Masters. They were both so easy to volunteer with, as was Bleau the artist who was a real asset to the NT. I will be forever sad that I was unable to select the correct, mostly ambiguous ticks for the 25 page test we all had to undergo.

Fortunately, he has found somewhere else to volunteer and use his horticultural talents, but it seems a shame that Standen is losing volunteers when there has already been a cull of those who didn't return after lock-down. It seems to me that there is plenty of work to be done, and a few pairs of extra hands wouldn't come amiss. So if you know anyone who would like to join one of the volunteer teams at Standen, do speak up.

South Downs volunteers at work

Trudie may no longer be seen in Hollybush Wood, but clearly has maintained connections with Standen's outlier at Selsfield Common. It looks like they had their work cut out with the bracken. Rather them than me.



The other Sunday the South Downs NT volunteers helped Richard remove Bracken from around the bilberry on Selsfield Common. It was the first visit for several months although (mainly) Richard does check the area regularly, we hadn't been able to get a work party organised. This meant the Bracken had really

grown and was once again shading out the lower ground plants including the bilberry.

We noted that since we have been pulling, yes each



frond pulled out of the ground by hand, the bilberry is really spreading across the common. Unfortunately, this method of removal doesn't seem to be weakening the Bracken though, but I've not heard of any method that does.

This job has a second advantage as the pulled Bracken can be composted into mulch which is great for around the Maples, etc., in the garden, especially in these days of water retention and no bonfires.

Anything which allows bilberries to grow and fruit is fine by me, though being so tiny, it can take quite some time to pick enough to fill a pie.

As Trudie put it so succinctly:

Lovely bilberry freed for another year.



After the rain

There have been days this summer when we all probably wondered if our own gardens would recover from the prolonged drought. Standen exemplifies how resilient much of our planting has been, and even on a dull September day showed off much which was vibrant or delicate. On the Farm Track, a shy clump of Cyclamen Hederifolium Album was glowing



at the bottom of the steps onto the sloping lawn.

Hidden in the Quarry Garden was a more exotic variety, one of several varieties planted a few



years back in the hope that they would hybridise.

Much more outgoing, the helleniums planted in the exotic bed (and recently lovingly weeded by Bill and Terry) almost shouted to be noticed.



Behind the exotic bed, the Vitex and the Fucshia together also made a colourful splash.



Autumn colour is also appearing in the berries - looks like it may be a bumper year. At the top of the garden, in the shelter belt, the Pyracantha was living up to its common name of Firethorn.



Also at the top of the garden was a good crop of fungus. So all in all, it's fair to say there is a lot to see - and that's before the Acers

have turned.

The way it was

We all look on James as a pretty special gardener, but it seems that driving a mower in a totally straight line is not one of his fortes:



the grass when Robert Ludman, the gardener at the time went on holiday. I thought I was pretty good at grass cutting, having 'practiced my lines' on the lawns at Nymans for quite a few years.



I may have told many of you the story from before I started at Standen when I used to come to Standen from Nymans - where I worked at the time - to cut



And Robert left me some beers next to the mower as a thank-you. However... it turned out that my lines were not straight enough for Standen, and he asked for the beers back!! I had drunk them by then though!!

We don't stripe our lawns anymore and we let them grow a little wilder - both for the benefits to wildlife and also the look we have is much more in keeping with the Arts and Crafts ethos of the property.

Here are some pictures of the lawns in 1984 (taken by Janet & Anthony Mottram) which show how they used to look - they even featured on a lawn seed company's calendar in the early 80's which I have a copy of somewhere...

Perhaps he should have saved the beers until after he had cut the grass.

Return of an old friend

Some while ago, the lovely glass sculpture FoSE commissioned to commemorate the garden restoration was damaged. During attempts to get it out of its frame for repair, further cracks occurred, and then the poor thing languished in the stableyard while the committee tried glass restorers near and far in the hope of having it mended. No-one offered to attempt repairs, and for a while it looked as if we would have to give up. Then, Martin wondered if the Trust might be able to put us in touch with someone who could help. After quite a long email chain, involving several people, I was put in contact with the lovely Sarah Jarron. Sarah is a glass conservator par excellence, having worked in this country on establishments like Highcliffe Castle as well as for the Trust. She has also worked extensively in Europe.



FoSE seemed very small fry for someone with Sarah's expertise, but she greeted the project with enthusiasm, and arranged to come on a site visit. At Standen, she took templates of the frame, wrapped the glass sections in bubble-wrap and took them away to work on. On 17th September, she returned, having carefully matched the colours for the

damaged panes and replacing the damaged lead surround.

By then Roger had removed the wooden frame from its base and set it up ready in the stable yard for Sarah to re-install the glass. The following photos show the process of reinstalling the glass. To begin with, while Sarah worked on the smaller section, Roger painstakingly removed all the silicone which had previously held the glass - probably somewhat too rigidly - in place.

Instead of silicone, Sarah used putty, which is more flexible, carefully inserting it around the frame before bedding the glass onto it.



Soon, the smaller of the two glass 'leaves' was puttied, pinned and smoothed into place.



Then it was time to tackle the large leaf. First it was offered up to check the fit.



Unfortunately, a crack had developed in the frame, meaning that one side wouldn't quite slot into place. Sarah marked the points where the glass wouldn't go in, and carefully took the leaf off the frame.



Then Roger got to work with the router, and carefully shaved off the excess wood.



Once more, the leaf was carefully lifted into place, and this time it fitted perfectly.

So, more putty was placed, and more pins were carefully hammered in to make everything doubly secure.





The lead was smoothed and the putty neatly trimmed.



And then it was time for a final polish of the glass. Look at the blue reflected on Sarah's trousers!



The finished sculpture will need to be left to cure for a few days, but then it can be reinstalled in a safer part of the garden, up on the top terrace, where hopefully it can be enjoyed by staff, volunteers and visitors alike.

Good news indeed

You may remember that, back in the spring, a storm caused considerable damage at Standen, knocking out several mature trees, including the much-admired Snake bark Acer. FoSE applied for help to replace this and other victims of the storm to Gatwick Airport Communities Trust, but without success. However, **Waitrose** has now come up



trumps. They no longer run their token scheme but take a themed approach. The current theme is *Nature and the Environment*, and so we were invited to apply. Just before going to press, I heard that Waitrose has awarded us £500 towards replacing the Acer and other planting affected by the storm. So many thanks to Waitrose for their generosity. It's not the first time they have contributed to Standen's welfare. Clearly, they take their community involvement seriously.

And finally...

It seems that visitors are no longer in danger of having the Kitchen Garden fruit cages collapsing on top of them, something that Glynn Jones,



Kitchen Garden volunteer, feared was a real risk.



The fruit cage in the Kitchen Garden has seen better days. Looking rather like the leaning tower of Pisa, it is due to be replaced. While we wait for budget, some wooden supports, scrounged from a builder's skip (with permission!) and installed by our always-willing volunteers, made it look a whole lot better, not to mention a whole lot more stable.

Come autumn storms, do your worst.....

Or hopefully not; we can't ask Waitrose again....