

In a Nutshell

THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRIENDS OF STANDEN ESTATE:

NUTS ABOUT STANDEN!



No 71 November 2023

In this edition of In a Nutshell

FoSE calendar

TOOLS FOR THE BOYS...

COMPASS GARDEN

OH DEER!

STANDEN'S BEE SURVEY

TREE PLANTING

AUTUMN COLOUR AT STANDEN

BAKERS' DELIGHTS

AND FINALLY -

...and girls of course

At a recent committee meeting it was agreed to award The Woods Group £200 to buy some much-needed new tools. In the event, Roger Ohison decided that second hand ones were better value and managed to pick up some bargains at the Bentley Wood Fair. These included a draw knife which will be used amongst things for stripping the bark off chestnut. This will then be processed for fencing around the estate. He also acquired a froe, a tool which is used to split the trunk into quarters so it can be used as fence rails. There was some money left over.

Anthony Fisher recently tracked down a suitable wood-burning stove (something he's been trying to source for the group for some time), also at a bargain price, so it looked like the Woods Group would be able to benefit from a bit of warmth as well. However, there seems to be a management hold up on accepting this at the moment, so watch this space.

A busy man

Gareth Rees clearly doesn't like to sit around doing nothing. When he's not gardening at Standen, or working on behalf of FoSE, he can be found moonlighting for the *Compass Garden* beside Mount Noddy playground in East Grinstead. Recently, he let slip that the garden had received a number of prestigious awards, and we thought that FoSE members might like to hear a bit more about it.



Forming part of the Mount Noddy recreation area in the heart of East Grinstead, the Compass Garden is a community garden which offers East Grinstead residents and other visitors a place they can come to enjoy peace and quiet in a beautiful garden environment.

The garden is wholly maintained by a small group of local volunteers who come together every week -

often a couple of times a week - throughout the year to look after the flowerbeds, plants, and lawns that make up the garden.

Funding for the garden is really very limited, and we rely heavily on donations from local businesses; local councils; and residents - all of whom have been endlessly kind in offering us plants and



other material and yes we have picked up donations of plants and bulbs no longer needed at Standen.

We as volunteers (some of us at least) have become rather good at growing from seed and growing on young immature plants. We also have Gordon, who is our very own 'Bob the Builder', and just like Bob, Gordon really can fix just about anything.



For a few years, the Compass Garden has been part of East Grinstead in Bloom, and we have put the garden up to be assessed as part of the South East in Bloom - 'in your neighbourhood' programme. For the last 3 years we have received the highest level of Bloom award 'Outstanding'.



2023 has been an exceptional year for us. At an awards event at RHS Wisley in September, the garden was commended as 'Outstanding'. The garden was also awarded a 'National Certificate of Distinction', a rare - fewer than 10 a year UK -wide - certificate presented by National Bloom. Linda, our principal organiser, also received a personal and hugely well-deserved award as Bloom Community Champion. As you will

imagine, we are all very proud of these awards, though we know the bar is now set very high, and we need to stay there.

If you would like to know more about the garden, you can find us at the garden pretty much any Sunday morning between 10:00 and 12:00 (ish). You'll normally find us knee-deep in plants or soil or weeds, though we do break for a cup of coffee and a biscuit or piece of cake - we're very partial to a piece of cake! We'd love to see you, so come and have a chat.

And finally, you may wonder why it's called the Compass Garden. The garden lies on the Greenwich Meridian Line, and the 4 main flowerbeds are laid out in the shape of a compass with the beds facing the 4 ordinal points of North, South, East and West. Really quite clever and nothing to do with me!

The whole *Compass Garden* team is definitely to be congratulated. I walked past it the other day and watched a toddler, totally entranced, make his way round the flower beds with a huge grin on his face.

With apologies for the awful pun

Lurking under James' fleece is a deer which got trapped in a fence at Standen recently.

Apparently, he and Carolyn were down in the Marlings (the car park field) when a walker went past on the other side of the fence. About a minute later there was a funny screaming sound. The walker came back to tell them that there was a deer stuck in the fence further along. They tried to free it, but it was



very wedged in the gap (ironically in the deer fence). James put his fleece over its head to calm it down, and eventually the RSPCA came and jacked the posts apart so the deer could escape. Apparently, it seemed to suffer no ill effects. Richard has blocked the gap now so this won't happen again!

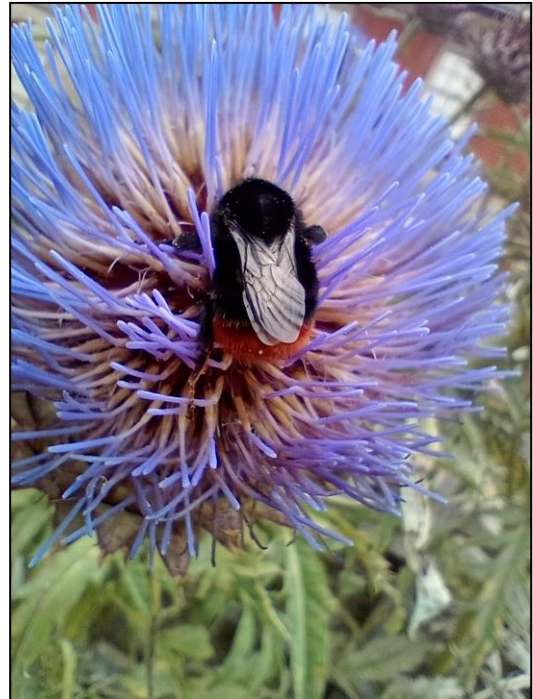
To read the extended story and see more pictures, go to [Photos show deer trapped between two posts at National Trust property in West Sussex: RSPCA rescues animal in trouble \(yahoo.com\)](#)

Who knew there were so many kinds of bee?

Not me, certainly. I knew they were critical to our own existence though, so when Carolyn asked me to join the bee survey team I was happy to do so. She can explain the background to this project.

In August I attended a Gardening for Biodiversity workshop at Batemans. We looked at how we can improve the planting in our gardens to help bumblebees, learnt how to identify the different bumblebee species, and how we can manage our lawns for pollinators.

When I got back I registered and set up our own Bee Walk through the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. This is a set route around the garden which you walk at a steady pace recording the species of bumblebees, if they are



queens, workers or males, how many of them there are, and the plants they are feeding on. You then walk the route once a month between March and September.



The route I have set up starts in the Little Orchard, then goes into the House Courtyard, then Cottage Garden, Goose Green, Kitchen Garden, Lavender lawn, Lower Terrace, the wildflower

meadow on the Sloping lawn, and finishes on the House Terrace. I have recruited Anne, Pam, Kevin and Frank from the Thursday garden group to help me.



So if you see us walking around with nets catching bees and looking at them in sample pots through a lens, that is what we are doing! It's really important though to only keep the bee in the sample pot for a few minutes to stop the bee from overheating. It took us about two hours to do but hopefully we will get quicker with practice, although lots of visitors stopped to chat to us too.

Hopefully the Bee Walk will allow us to see if there are gaps in the nectar sources for the bees at certain times of the year and can help us plan any future planting accordingly. Different bumblebee species have different tongue lengths - divided into 'short' and 'long' groups - and they will forage on different plants. However, some short-tongued species cheat and bite into the base of the flowers to rob the nectar from long tubular flowers that their tongues can't reach into. The top plants we found for bumblebees were Salvia, Fuchsia, Aconitum, Aster, Helenium, Cosmos and Tithonia.

There are 24 species of bumblebee in the UK, but only eight of those that are more commonly seen. So far at Standen I have seen Common Carder Bees, Buff-Tailed bumblebees and Red-tailed bumblebees.



The new team managed one trial walk in September, before the bees disappeared for the winter. It took us a long time to complete the route as we were all on a very steep learning curve. However, it was a fascinating experience, and after initial reticence in fear of being stung, we were all happily catching bees in the net and transferring them to sample pots for examination. Perhaps the trickiest part of the operation was counting them. I have the feeling that we may have caught and counted some of the bees several times, as they refused to stay still or fly out of reach once we had released them.

Here is a selection of pictures of the new team at work.



New tree in new home

Some of you may recall the newsletter photo about 18 months ago of a robin sitting on the top of the cherry tree at the entrance to the property. Well, this tree, a *Prunus Serrula* has now been joined by another donated by Margaret May in memory of her husband. The newly planted tree was photographed after planting by the team responsible.

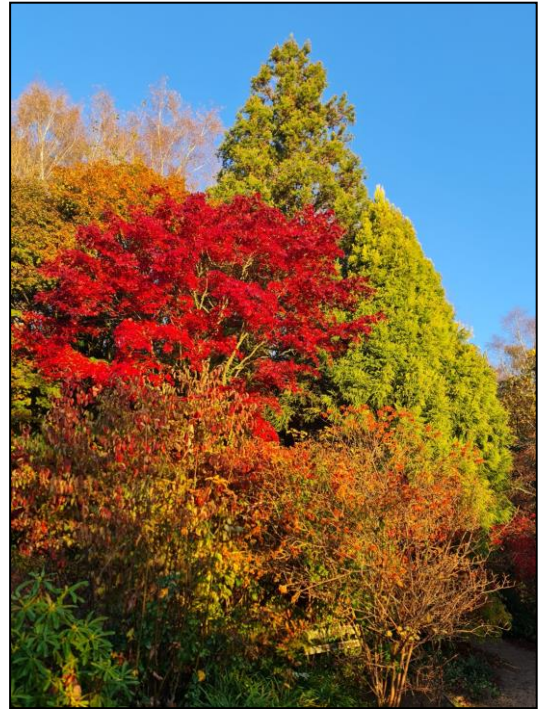
One more cherry, of the five ordered from the RHS, has been delivered, but they are out of stock for the other four, all of which will ultimately be planted in the same area. The money for these five comes from our recent Waitrose grant. The rest of it will go to replacing the Snake bark Acer, but that too is proving difficult to source currently.



All aglow

With the recent wind and rain, you could forgive the trees for just dropping their leaves in a fit of pique and refusing to put on a show of Autumn colour. However, the Standen trees are made of sterner stuff. The collage which follows speaks for itself. Thanks to James for sharing it with us.







It looks like being a good year for berries as well. Back in October, the Pyracantha on the top terrace was already laden with fruit and living up to its common name of Firethorn.

Let them eat cake!

For a number of years now, Sally Roberson has been providing cake for some of the outdoor volunteers to enjoy. Its delivery by husband Tim is always eagerly awaited. One of the most popular recipes is *Lemon Drizzle Cake* and Sally has generously agreed to share the recipe with FoSE readers so that they can try their own version. Sally commented that:

this is a modified version of the recipe I was given by Caroline Heath many years ago when we were teaching at the same school & running Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme training weekends.

As you can imagine, what with wet weather, muddy (& grumbling) teenage girls, ditto colleagues, uncomfortable tents, Caroline & I realised that cakes would keep at least our colleagues happy. The girls were there to fend for themselves.

Here is the recipe:

Ingredients:

cake:-	7 oz: margarine
	7 oz: caster sugar
	7 oz: plain flour sifted with 1.5 tsp: baking powder
	2 eggs
	rind of 2 lemons
	2-3 Tbs: hot water
icing:-	3 Tbs: caster sugar
	juice of 2 lemons

Method:

- line a 2lb: loaf tin with a silicone paper liner
- cream fat & caster sugar till soft
- gradually beat in eggs, one at a time, adding 1Tbs: flour per egg
- add rest of flour & lemon **rind** to creamed fat, sugar & egg mix
- beat in hot water thoroughly
- tip mixture into loaf tin
- place in a **COLD** oven

- turn to **Mk: 4*** & cook for ~**55 minutes**
- while still hot, mix lemon **juice** & sugar
- pour over cake as soon as it comes out of the oven
- leave cake to cool in tin

* Mk: 4 = 350°F = 180°C = 140°C fan oven; tsp: = tea-spoon' Tbs: = table-spoon

Given that the days are short and frequently grey, this is a good time of year for baking, so here is another recipe to try - this one from Ruth Coltofeanu, whose culinary skills you may recall from the Lebanese Cookery Evenings held a few years ago.

Malt Loaf:

1 mug of All Bran
 1 mug milk
 1 mug raisins
 1 mug cold tea
 1/2 cup brown sugar
 1 mug self raising flour
 1 tablespoon of barley malt (Holland and Barrett).
 1 tablespoon Cinnamon

Soak All Bran in large bowl with milk overnight.

Soak raisins in cold tea overnight and then drain.

Add all ingredients to all bran and milk.

Mix well and transfer to loaf tin.

Cook on 180 for 45 minutes. Freezes well.



And finally - is it Christmas already?

And it's only November. However, Christmas decorations are already going up at Standen. Last time I was there, two of the Plane trees on Goose Green were already bedecked and beribboned. With one fat and one thin, I was somehow reminded of Laurel and Hardy.