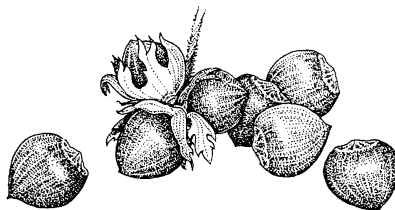


In a Nutshell

THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRIENDS OF STANDEN ESTATE:

NUTS ABOUT STANDEN!



No 84 January 2026

In this edition of In a Nutshell
THE DEMISE OF FOSE
HEAVY HORSES AT STANDEN
ANOTHER ERA ENDS
UPDATE ON AMY
AND FINALLY...

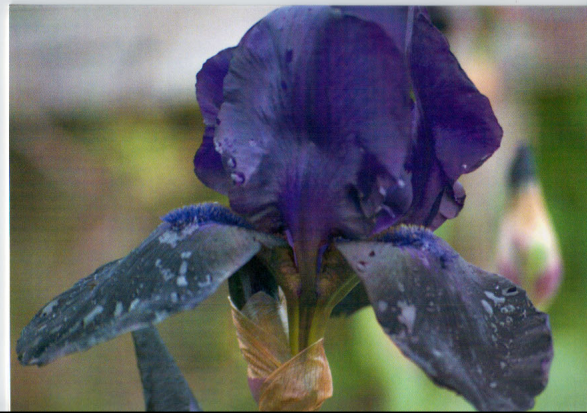
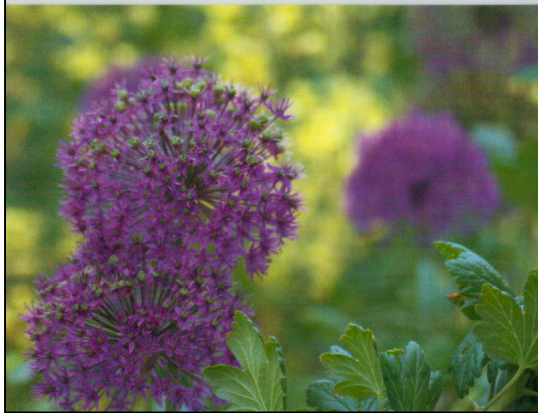
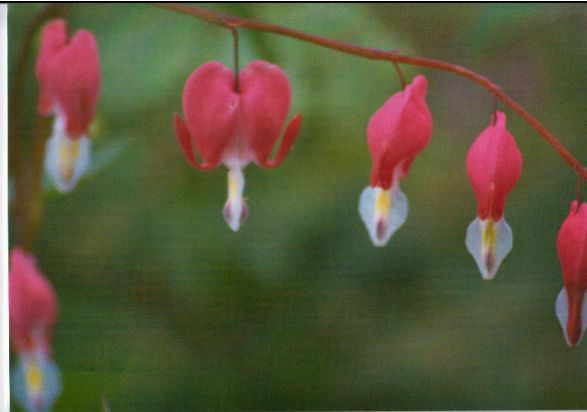
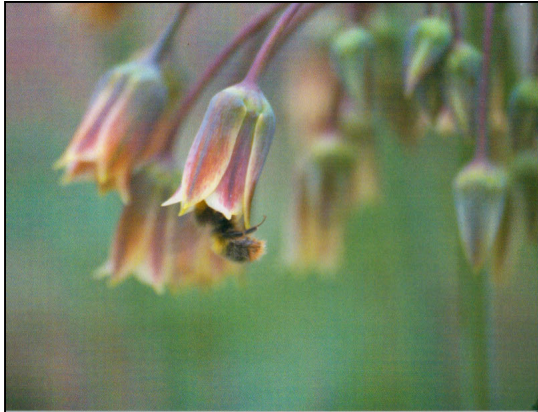
FoSE calendar

A chance for a bargain!

It is with some sadness that I begin this newsletter by announcing that it will be almost the penultimate issue. As you will all know, FoSE has been struggling for some time, particularly since the loss of so many volunteers when Covid lockdown prevented people from coming to Standen. Membership numbers have dropped, and despite the committee's best efforts, we have been unable to persuade anyone to join our ranks. The few committee members remaining have taken the decision that it is time to admit defeat and close FoSE down. We will continue to run and support James until the AGM in May, which will be our last official meeting. **Consequently, we will not be asking for subs this year, and I would like to remind any members who have kindly supported us through direct debit to inform their banks of the change.**

In carrying out the necessary housekeeping attendant on such events, we have discovered some FoSE goodies lurking in storage in the tea room. There are a few items of FoSEwear in various sizes, and also cards depicting some of the lovely flowers grown at Standen, courtesy of James and his camera. There are also drink mats created from photos Phil Marsden took inside the house at Standen. These have not scanned particularly well - the colours are much richer than they appear

here. At this stage of the game, we will accept donations for these items rather than giving them a set price. Every penny made will be spent on the garden.



Frank & Percy visit Rockinghill Woods

On a happier note, Alison Smith sent me this delightful account of heavy horses helping to clear Rockinghill Woods.



some large logs off the slope beside the old badger hide where Andrew has been wielding his chainsaw and the logs are rather too large for manual handling. Having assessed the distance to move the logs and the ground conditions, these two boys may well move around 15 tonnes of timber today.



On a Wednesday in early December, two black shires called Frank & Percy, visited Standen from 'Oakwood Clydesdales' based in Hook, Hampshire with their owner and his daughter. They came to help the Woods team move



Oakwood Clydesdales own seven Clydesdales as well as the two Shires working at



Standen today and originally worked for the Royal Parks (who still use them alongside other London parks) but have been doing this type of woodland management and conservation work for nearly three years, now working with eleven National Trust sites in a c150 mile radius.



Frank & Percy are both 13 years old and weigh about 850kg apiece; a heavy horse will start training as a 3 year-old, will be fully trained by the age of 5 and will work on into their early 20's.

Shire horses are now an endangered species, in the past they were used for traditional agricultural work but today it is largely conservation work, and they can do a bit of haymaking on

the side; they can cut around 10 acres in a day. There used to be a handful of city breweries still using heavy horses to haul deliveries, but they now do mostly show work.

However, in order to preserve these lovely breeds, they NEED to have a proper job, it is what they were bred for. So, this sort of work is ideal for them and for now, people are becoming increasingly willing to use them.

They can access places a tractor would find very difficult if not impossible; they have a gentle footprint and do not compact the ground, and watching them work,

they are remarkably agile and accurate with where they place the logs.



The Shire horse is a traditional British breed that has been around since medieval times. Let's help preserve this heritage and make sure they don't become an extinct species.

The doughty North Sussex Volunteers

James has worked for many a long year with this group of volunteers, but times - it seems - are changing, as this group, too, is disbanding, as James makes clear.

Sunday 4th January saw the last ever meeting of the North Sussex National Trust Volunteer Group after 47 years of existence. A combination of factors meant the group was no longer able to carry on.



Formed in 1979, the North Sussex Young National Trust Volunteers - as they were then known - worked all over Sussex and Surrey, including spending a lot of time at Standen, helping with the opening of Hollybush Wood when the National Trust first acquired it in 1981. The group also used to hold barn dances and AGMs in the barn which is now our Café, sometimes with over 100 people in attendance.

From then the group worked at most National Trust properties in the area and had regular working holidays to NT places all over the country.

By the mid 1990's the numbers in the group had dwindled and only a small number would turn up at work parties - this was when I first worked with them in the woods at



Nymans, trying to restore an area known as Nightingale Woods - since fallen to the widening of the A23. By the time I finished at Nymans, the group only worked with me and no other properties, so they followed me to Standen.



In the last 26 years the group has worked on projects all over Standen, but the three main areas were the creation of the play area in the Plantation (now the Clemmning) including building the stage which was paid for by one of the group; restoring the woodland and ponds in the Pump House Wood and working towards the reopening of the Secret Pond. For many years we also held a summer

camping night at Standen with much fun and spooky stories!



I will sorely miss the monthly work parties with this group, all of whom have become my friends over the years and the work we have done together will remain one of the proudest achievements of my life.

Evidently, it is from working with this elegant group that James has developed his sartorial style.



Or maybe not!

Thanks for this account, James. Looks like Standen, as well as you, will sorely miss their input. They have clearly contributed much in their nearly half century.

Amy in America

Amy Page, as she then was, was an enthusiastic and hard-working part of the Standen Garden team before she left for marriage in America. Tim Roberson has been keeping in contact and sends this update:

Many of you will have fond memories of Amy Page, a gardener at Standen, first as a student volunteer and then as staff.

Post COVID, Amy led a team of volunteers clearing and planting up more of the Top Terrace. I particularly remember the bonfires which created much entertainment for small children and their grandparents.

Amy married Wyatt Napier, an American and fellow Jehovah's Witness, and moved to Kentucky to sell English gardens to the Americans. Some of us met Wyatt on a trip to the UK.



Fundraiser Update

A new update added to A Life Changing Service Dog for Wyatt

Amy's recent posts on Facebook and Instagram show Wyatt hospitalised with recurrent seizures. Amy is crowd-funding for an assistance dog for early detection of seizures. So far \$2,000 raised buys the dog but training costs another \$20,000. Amy's posts refer to gaps in medication created by health insurance in the richest country in the world.

[View update](#)

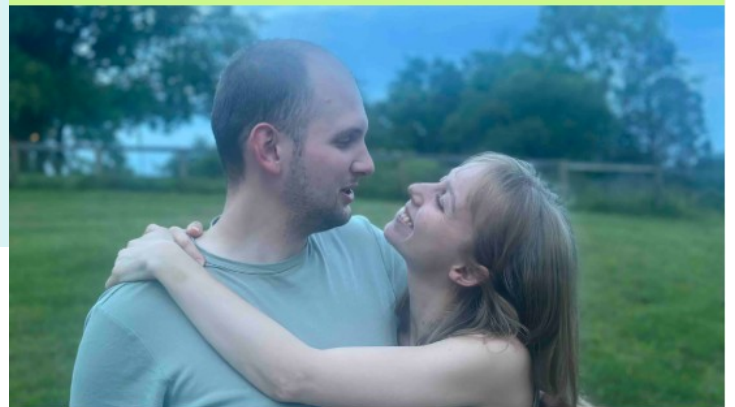


It's official - we own a service dog! Say hello to Tyl Yesterday the litter went through their final assessment. This temperament assessment rated things like social attraction, retrieving, sensitivity, and dominance. This was combined with all the previous assessments like scent responsiveness and 8 weeks of close observation, all with Wyatt in mind to get the pup that will best fit his needs. And this little guy came out on top! His markings as a full standard poodle are called phantom - he's going to be a stunner as well as a highly skilled worker. Thank you so much to you all for making it possible for us to purchase him for \$2500. We'll have more updates when we meet him in person in a few weeks. Now we have the year of focused training which is going to cost \$20,000 so we will continue to fundraiser to support this. Thank you for the peace of mind that we have the first 2 months payments covered. We are so so appreciative of your gifts of support ❤ Wyatt & Amy

It's amazing what animals can detect that we can't. I wish Amy and Wyatt every success in their fund-raising and negotiation of the American health care system. For all its problems, we are lucky to have the NHS.

A Life Changing Service Dog for Wyatt

Organized by
Amy Louise Napier



Amount Raised
\$5,536
of \$25K goal



And finally, ornithology corner

We all know that the Scutt household must have the fattest crows in Crawley, as Anne regularly takes home any chips left over from the Standen Christmas fish and chip lunch. It seems that when Pete decided to tame the local robin, Anne got competitive.



Friendly-looking seagulls they have in Crawley, but Anne, I don't think it's real!

