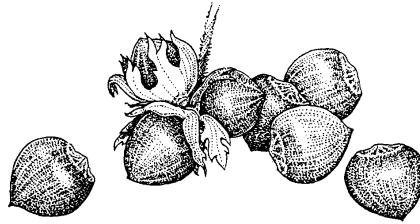


# In a Nutshell

THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRIENDS OF STANDEN ESTATE:

NUTS ABOUT STANDEN!



No 86 May 2026

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In this edition of In a Nutshell  
RETROSPECTIVE  
DOWN MEMORY LANE  
FOSE FIGURES  
PARTING GIFTS  
AGM  
AND FINALLY...

FoSE calendar

So, it's goodbye FoSE



After almost exactly 20 years of supporting Standen, the *Friends of Standen Estate* has come to the end of the road. Following the AGM this evening, technically, the organisation ceased to exist, but I felt our loyal members deserved one final newsletter – the 75<sup>th</sup> I have written! I took over the role from Tim Roberson, who wrote the first eleven editions of *In a Nutshell*.

Over the years, FoSE has sought, and gained, numerous grants to help Standen. One of the first was from the Co-op Community Dividend Fund which, in 2007, provided the wherewithal for Woods Volunteers to train to use a shave horse and pole lathe. They later funded beehives and bee-keeping equipment. Other funding bids

we have successfully made are too numerous to mention, but Gatwick Airport Communities Trust, Waitrose Community Matters Initiative, West Sussex Big Society Fund, East Grinstead Common Good Trust and Sussex Lund deserve a particular mention for their generosity over the years.



*FoSE* was begun in 2006 when the then volunteers asked themselves what they could do to support James and the estate. This picture shows the founders signing the original constitution.

Over the years, the committee has run a number of fund-raising and publicity

events, from hosting a stall at the East Grinstead May Fair, to Bluebell BBQs, Quiz Nights, Cookery Demonstrations and Murder Mystery evenings. All of these helped to swell the coffers and allowed *FoSE* to achieve goals which were often thought impossible.



Many of the early volunteers at Standen remained members of *FoSE* over the whole period of its existence. How many faces can **you** recognise in the photo below, and how many are still involved at Standen?



(\*Some answers from James at the end of the newsletter if you are stuck.)

One of the founder members of *FoSE* who went on to Chair the committee for a number of years was Susan Hodgson, seen here receiving the President's award from James in 2014.



Another long-serving committee member is Anne Scutt, pictured here with a cheque for £500 from Waitrose. Anne has kept the accounts in order as *FoSE*'s treasurer for as many years as Roy Page - seen here in costume for the Murder Mystery evening - has been membership secretary. It's possible I have missed someone who has served longer than these three - and if so, I apologise. *FoSE* owes a debt to all those who gave up their time to be on the committee.



At the end of the Garden Restoration Programme

*FoSE* funded a glass sculpture to commemorate the five years' intensive work done by both staff and volunteers. It now stands proudly on the top terrace, where the morning light is reflected through the many colours of Standen as a fitting tribute to the project.

Of course there were more horticultural purchases: plants and seeds, including about 12,000 snowdrops; wheelbarrows and other tools; a cage to keep the squirrels out; propagating benches and lights; timber for

various purposes, the greenhouses, the fruit cage - the list is endless, and Standen will be the poorer without *FoSE*'s contributions.



## Memories from James' photo album



## Didn't we do well!

No-one keeps financial records for ever, so I have no figures on what FoSE donated to the estate in the first five years of existence. However, the total amount of income that FoSE has generated for Standen since 2011 is a staggering **£57,331.35**. This includes income from subs, grants, donations and fund-raising events. Extrapolating from that, I imagine the total for the whole 20 years of FoSE's existence must be somewhere close to **£80,000**. Not a bad outcome from a decision taken by a small group of volunteers to see what more could be done to help James.

## Final FoSE spend



It was important to empty the bank account before closure. Carolyn wanted, and was given, funding for stakes for the step-over apple trees in the Kitchen Garden - and very smart they look. The Woods Group couldn't think of anything they needed within the budget offered, and so most of the remaining moneys have gone to purchase a smart seat to be placed on the boardwalk round the Yew tree. It is exactly the same style as the

metal seats on the terrace - which will hopefully join the new one - so fits in with Standen style. A plaque fitted to it will commemorate *FoSE's* 20 years of service to the estate.

Any moneys left over will be put to a garden voucher for James so that he can use it to buy suitable plants for the garden.

## AGM

It was good to see many faithful *FoSE* members at the AGM, although clearly, it was a sad event, marking, as it did, the closure of the *Friends of Standen Estate*. After welcoming everyone, Gareth made a point of thanking all those who have contributed so much over the years to the running of the organisation and therefore to Standen. He said that James had run a terrific organisation and that he feels a strong sense of frustration that the *Friends* can no longer support Standen in the way that we would want. These sentiments were agreed and expressed by all the officers on the committee who spoke.

James reminisced about how he had begun working with volunteers at Nymans back in 1997, and that he has taken inspiration from working with all the various groups he has set up, and from FoSE's support and expertise. With their help, Standen's garden changed from an unknown property into a National Trust exemplar, medium-sized garden, which led to the estate being awarded half a million pounds for the

garden restoration. His proudest volunteer achievement, though, was the barn, built by volunteers and opened by Nicholas Soames when he was the local M.P.

All the other committee members who spoke reiterated their thanks to all the people who have helped *FoSE* run successfully for nearly 20 years. We can be justly proud of what the organisation has achieved for Standen.

And then, with no other business to discuss, Gareth pronounced the meeting, and with it the *Friends of Standen Estate*, closed.

### And finally...

James was clearly so outraged at the thought of *FoSE* running out on him that he took it out on a poor, unsuspecting picnic table.

I'm sure that's not what front loaders are really meant for!



\*Anthony, Caroline, Angela, Tina, Sheila, Tim, Susan, Margaret & Jackie who all have still volunteered at Standen this year.