FRIENDS OF





CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This year marks the 25th Anniversary of the formation of the Friends of Stansted Park (following the amalgamation of the Friends of Stansted House and Friends of Stansted Forest) and, as such this special event will be combined with the Summer Party on June Tuesday 27th. Not to be missed!

I am pleased to advise that the Membership continues to grow and the Committee have arranged a number of social gatherings, talks and a visit for 2023. Details of these are included elsewhere within the Newsletter.



Finally, there will be a Memorial Service for Michael (our former Chairman) and Sheila Olding on Monday 20th February at 2.30pm in St Paul's Chapel, to celebrate their lives with particularly emphasis on their time at Stansted. The Service will be conducted by Edward Mynors and refreshments will be held after the service at The Mansion

All are welcome but please, to assist with catering, would you notify the Estate Office if you would like to attend.

Enter via the North Entrance, through the black gates and park in front of the Mansion.

I hope to see as many of you as possible on that day, or at the other organised events.

Nigel Smith

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Estate starts the year in good shape and with a generally positive outlook; however we wait with some trepidation to see what winds will buffet us this year and the measures that we may need to take to mitigate any adverse effects. You do not need me to tell you that the economic future is uncertain and that it is affecting both consumer and business confidence. Although the residential property sector remains strong, there is no doubt that small businesses are having to draw in their horns again. We do have a couple of commercial offices empty and every effort is being made to fill these but it is hard pounding!



Sasha Fardell

On a more optimistic note, I am very pleased to report that we have recruited a new House and Events Manager, Sasha Fardell, who is now completing her Induction Training. Sasha is a graduate of Edinburgh University where she studied politics and has been variously employed as a Policy Analyst and Supervisor at the Bank of England, which included a placement with the FCO in Brussels. Subsequently, she has run her own gym business and acted as a Business Coach. Importantly for the Stansted role, she has managed her own freelance business as the Event Front of House Manager for large scale corporate and fundraising events in London hotels and other venues.

Sasha will be responsible for coordinating and executing the plethora of activities on both the House and Events fronts while keeping her sights firmly on the strategic objective to enhance our offerings and generate income for the Foundation. We all wish her well in her new appointment; it is an extremely busy role but I know that you will welcome her to Stansted Park as a core member of the team and support her as she settles in. She is much looking forward to meeting you all and working closely with the Friends.

I would also like to pay special tribute to Janet Mynors who stepped down in December last year as the lead Volunteer in the Bookshop after 6 years at the helm. It would be an understatement to say that she has completely transformed the operation of this important service

and money-making activity. The Bookshop recorded a total of $\pounds 22,587.62$ for 2022 and a highly impressive $\pounds 65,358.66$ during her tenure. That is a significant amount of money, which we ought to trumpet around the bazaars and indicate those projects, such as the repairs to the Clock Tower or Walled Garden Walls which it has helped/will help to fund. The Foundation is extremely grateful for the herculean efforts of both Janet and her team of Volunteers. It is such a success story.

I am also very grateful for the kind donation by the Friends of nearly £8,000 to install state of the art AV equipment in the Roberte & Mary Bessborough Room. This is a highly important asset to enhance the ability of the Mansion to attract business meetings and lectures as well as to show information to Visitors. The Friends have also pledged to make a significant contribution to the creation of a Visitors' Entrance opposite the Farm Shop.

The House Opening season will fast be upon us and much work continues in the Mansion to develop the Cricket Display in the Servants' Hall and to depict the life of the household staff in the basement corridor.

The House will open on Mothering Sunday, 19th March, and then the season will start in earnest on Easter Sunday, 9th April. I thank everyone in advance for their contribution to what will, hopefully, be a successful and enjoyable year at Stansted Park.

David Bennett

LADY CAROLINE, COUNTESS OF BESSBOROUGH

One of the most celebrated paintings in the Mansion is Jean-Etienne Liotard's portrait of Lady Caroline Ponsonby, later Countess of Bessborough, in Venetian dress. This portrait, together with the companion picture of the Hon. William Ponsonby, later 2nd Earl of Bessborough, in Turkish dress were loaned for the Liotard exhibition organised by the Royal Academy of Arts, London and the National Galleries of Scotland in 2015. William, 2nd Earl (1704-1793) and Caroline, Countess of Bessborough (1719-1760) are buried in Derby Cathedral in what is known as the Cavendish area.



The following inscription appears on her monument:

To the memory of Caroline, Countess of Bessborough and Baroness Ponsonby in England. She was the eldest daughter of William Cavendish, Third Duke of Devonshire. In July 1739 she married at Chatsworth, William Ponsonby, eldest son of Brabazon, late Earl of

The outer part of the Cavendish Burial Vault

Bessborough, by whom she had eleven children, viz. five sons and six daughters. Only three of them whom God preserved are now living: Catharine, married to Aubrey Beauclerk, only son of Vere, Lord Vere Baron of Hanworth in the County of Middlesex.

Charlotte, married to William, Earl Fitzwilliam of Milton in the County of Northamptonshire and Frederick, commonly called, Lord Viscount Duncannon. She died on the 12th January 1760 in the 45th year of her age*. This monument is only to be considered as an endeavour to preserve the memory of a departed friend and as an instance of true affection and tribute paid by her most afflicted husband, William Earl of Bessborough.

It is of interest to note that her son Frederick the future 3rd Earl of Bessborough, married Lady Harriet Spencer in 1780. Harriet's sister, Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire is chiefly remembered today for her extraordinary lifestyle. Angelica Kauffman's portraits of these two sisters can be seen in the Entrance Hall. ***this is in error. The Countess died aged 40 years.**

Michael Olding (his final piece for the Newsletter)

COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILES

Continuing the pen picture profiles of FOSP Committee members. Here is number four.....

FOSP COMMITTEE VISITS & TALKS CO-ORDINATOR - CHRIS FREEBOROUGH



I qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1958 and, after doing my deferred National Service in the Royal Artillery, started my working life.

Over the years from that time, until I retired in 1995, I worked in a number of companies both manufacturing and in the service sector.

In 1963 I married Sue and we have four children, one of whom lives in Fiji.

We both come from the suburbs of South London and, once married, moved into the country. Since then we have moved on four occasions, the Midlands, Petersfield (longest for 17 years) and the Cotswolds. On my retirement, we decided to return to Hampshire and moved to Idsworth, close to Rowlands Castle, where we purchased a range of redundant agricultural buildings and converted them into a home.

I joined the Committee of the Friends in 2010. Since then I have arranged 13 Trips and took over the twice yearly Talks programme from the late Bill Corrigan.

I have enjoyed my time working with the Friends and colleagues on these programmes and being involved in the work of the Committee supporting Stansted.

BATS, SUPERHEROES OF THE NIGHT



Bechstein's bat

The Friends thanked Nik for wonderful creatures! *Robert Godwin*

During November, we had a fascinating, well attended, talk on bats – the only true flying mammal - given by Nik Knight, Recorder and Chairman of the Hampshire Bat Group.

There are, at present, over 1,400 species of bats in the world and more are still being discovered. These creatures account for more than a quarter of the mammal species in the UK and around 20% of all mammal species worldwide. They are truly amazing, charming, useful mammals but, unfortunately, have experienced serious decline in the UK over the past century.

It was really interesting to learn that the Stansted Park Estate has an excellent record in helping with the conservation of these significant components of our natural heritage. An amazing fifteen out of the UK's total of seventeen breeding bat species have been recorded in the area in recent years, making this one of the most special places in the country.

The Friends thanked Nik for his captivating talk and I am sure we all went away with a very different view of these

HEAD FORESTER'S NOTES - SPRING 2023

The planting season has gone very well so far with all of the large areas such as the Wythy Piece and Lordington Copse being finished by the start of January, which is very pleasing. The Forestry Commission is now encouraging all those involved in planting trees to get them in the ground before Christmas, as this gives time for them to develop their root systems which will, hopefully, help mitigate against the cold, dry springs we have been experiencing recently, which has caused such large losses in newly planted trees. This leaves me with a few small areas and some ornamentals to plant as and when the ground is fit enough. The South Downs National Park have generously donated to us 100 disease resistant elm trees of three different varieties as part of their project to get more elms planted in the Downland landscape. As noted in our last newsletter, the ones we have planted so far have done very well, so I have great hopes for these, which will be planted in several sites across the forest and park.

I am hopeful that an application for funding to Southern Water to replace four of our barn owl nesting boxes will be successful as a number are past their best and one has been blown out of the tree by recent high winds. Another project carried out with external funds has been the planting of a new hedge along the drive edge below Rosamond's Hill. This will create a wildlife corridor to link the Orange Grove with Lady's Walk and, in time, reinforce the fencing to create a stock proof barrier. This work was part funded by a sizeable donation from the Garden Show and one generous individual, in memory of her father, who



was a keen beekeeper and was particularly fond of hedges for the blossom they

produce for bees.

Our contractors are drawing towards the end of a large chestnut coppicing programme. We will need some drier ground conditions before the large machinery can extract all the produce but it is a balancing act, as we will not want to run over new shoots as they emerge from the stools in the spring. This season's programme will allow me to improve the ride along the northern edge of Compartment 9. This is a very well used route, despite the fact it has been rutted and wet for many years. The cutting of the coppice here will allow some stools to be removed from one edge, the ditch to be dug out on the other and the surface levelled. Being more open to sun and wind will produce a drier and hopefully grassy surface in time, as has occurred on the previous section widened a few years back.

So far, we have not experienced any really destructive winter storms, although we have had a few very windy periods. The regular tree surveys I carry out identify any major hazards that need dealing with but, of course, cannot find everything. In addition, as most old trees, especially big beech, have some fungi growing in a symbiotic relationship with them for many years, it can be a tough judgement call as to when they potentially start to become a hazard. We recently felled a middle-aged beech on the edge of the Old Carriage Drive, which I have been monitoring for some time. It has had fungal fruiting bodies on the trunk for a number of years but the dramatic decline in crown health towards the end of last year suggested there was major root death and it would have to be felled. As can be seen from the picture, there was little holding it up and, being in an area of high public usage, justified its removal. The rotten butt will be retained in the edge of the wood however, as a decaying wood habitat

and its removal will allow some well-formed younger trees behind it to prosper in a more open habitat. Michael Prior

CHRISTMAS WITH THE PHOENIX SINGERS



Yet another wonderful and entertaining evening was had by FOSP members and guests with the return of the Phoenix Singers. The choir, and the audience, really got into the Christmas spirit, with Carols and songs that brought a delight to all who attended. The usual mulled wine and mince pies were served and enjoyed in the Entrance Hall during the interval....a time for talking and reminiscing with friends. A big thank you

to all the background helpers. Robert Godwin



JUBILEE TREE

There will be a tree planting ceremony in the Arboretum of a redwood purchased on behalf of FOSP Members, commemorating Queen Elizabeth II's Jubilee in due course. Date to be notified.

FOSP Committee

FOSP COFFEE MORNING



In early November, 39 members and their friends gathered for coffee and cake in the Blue Drawing Room. This annual autumn Event brings members together in the splendid setting of The House and, before the rush of Christmas, is always a

real joy. The cakes, baked and supplied by Stansted volunteers were, as usual, delicious. The 'waitresses', in their black and white, took us all back to the 1920s! A big thank you to everyone of the volunteers who made this occasion so special.

Robert Godwin



ST PAUL'S CHAPEL

Midday services take place in St Paul's Chapel on the first Wednesday of each month. Light refreshments are also served after the service – tea/coffee/biscuits. Please contact the Estate Office if you wish to attend in order that you

can be catered for. NOTE: Please check with the Estate Office for updates of services.

A TRAGIC ACCIDENT IN STANSTED PARK



Have you seen this stone memorial in Stansted Park? Well, it is not easy to notice as it is at the foot of the wall behind the maze. The inscription is as follows:

AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF AMY, WIFE OF HENRY ELLIOTT, WHO LOST HER LIFE THROUGH THE FALLING OF A TREE IN STANSTED PARK, MARCH 29TH 1878, AGED 53 YEARS

Henry Elliott was born in 1815 in West Dean and he became an agricultural labourer working on Broad Reed farm. He married Amy Quinnell in 1845 and they lived at Park Cottage on the Stansted Estate. They had 12 children but 4 of

these died at a young age. Amy was killed in 1878 by a falling tree and this tragic accident is recorded by an article in the Horsham, Petworth, Midhurst and Steyning Express, of 9th April 1878, as follows:

SHOCKING ACCIDENT NEAR STANSTED

On Friday last, a shocking accident occurred, near Stansted, to a woman named Amy Elliott, aged 53, wife of Henry Elliott, a carter in the employ of Mr. E B Green, farmer, of Broad Reed Farm in Westdean, Stansted, who was killed by the falling of a tree in Stansted Park. The deceased, it appears, had been in the habit of journeying each morning to Stansted House for the purpose of conveying any letters that may arrive there for Broad Reed Farm or the adjacent cottages. On Friday morning she started for the house at half-past seven, and at a quarter-past eight Mr Green's son went to meet her, but finding she did not return, he proceeded home to breakfast. On going to the deceased's cottage afterwards, he ascertained from inquiries that she had not then returned. Fearing something had happened, he walked towards Stansted House, when he noticed that a large tree had fallen across the footpath in the park. In company with a man named John Chant, Mr Green proceeded to the spot where the tree was lying, and on searching among the branches saw an umbrella, and on further search noticed deceased's head, which was the only part visible, her body being concealed under the branches. Mr Green immediately ran to Stansted House for assistance, which soon arrived; and after removing several sprays of the tree, the body of the unfortunate woman was taken out and conveyed to the cottage. When removed she was quite dead, and death must have been instantaneous, for on examination it was found that her body was crushed, the whole of her ribs being fractured, as was also her back, and one arm and shoulder. There were several wounds on the head, and the scull was fractured. The tree has been measured, and is found to be 107 feet in length, and was completely torn up by the roots, which had not penetrated the earth more than one foot. The wind on that day was blowing a terrible hurricane. The melancholy event has caused much consternation in the neighbourhood. An inquest was held on Saturday, before Mr FJ Mallin, coroner, when a verdict of "Accidental death" was returned

Amy Elliott was buried on 31st March 1878 in the churchyard of Christ Church, Forestside. Her grave is on the North side of the church, near to the church entrance, and is not marked by a memorial. Her husband, Henry Elliott, died at the age of 82 and was buried in the churchyard on 24th July 1895, on the right of the entrance to the churchyard from the road. Other members of the family are also buried in the churchyard.

John Harvey

VISIT TO PARHAM HOUSE—14th June



Parham House is one of the country's finest Elizabethan Houses, set at the foot of the South Downs.

The land on which Parham House stands was granted by King Henry VIII to Robert Palmer of Henfield, and has been a family home since its foundation stone was first laid during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I in 1577. In approx. 1595, Parham was sold to Thomas Bishopp, whose descendants lived there for eleven generations until 1922, when it was sold to the Hon. Clive and Alicia Pearson.



The Pearsons spent more than 40 years renovating Parham and furnishing it with a sensitively chosen collection of furniture, paintings, books, textiles and clocks. The Long Gallery, 48 metres (158ft) long, is the third-longest in a private house in England and runs the entire length of the House.

The Long Gallery The Gardens at Parham consist of seven acres of Pleasure Grounds, laid out in the 18th century, with a lake, spring bulbs, a brick and turf maze and many specimen trees. The old four-acre Walled Garden contains romantic wide herbaceous borders, a rose garden, a cut flower garden, a vegetable garden, an orchard and a 1920s

Wendy House. A splendid Greenhouse, also dating from the 1920s, has a fine display of pelargoniums and other tender plants. The Committee has arranged for a private tour of the House, so please note in your diary this wonderful visit. Details and application forms will be sent out in the near future. *Chris Freeborough*

BOOKSHOP

The funds raised by Stansted Park Foundation's bookshop in the Garden Centre are used by the Trustees for the enhancement of the Estate and the enjoyment of visitors. See also page 1.

A big thank you to all those Friends who have recently donated lots of lovely books.

FOSP Committee

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Major General Sir John Ponsonby Like all at Stansted, we shall miss Michael Olding. When writing the booklet on Charles Dixon some years ago, Michael was a good sounding board on anything Lewis Way or Chapel related. As Chapel stewards, we had many discussions on its iconography, design, visitor comments on translations of texts, Way's ideas, etc. A few weeks ago, just before he died, Michael also donated eight programmes to add to our collection on the Stansted Theatre.

Last year in the Archives, we dealt with various inquiries associated with Civil War, port wine trade, Free French, etc, supported requests from the House and continued to expand the outline and organisation of the Foundation's archive from Major General Sir John Ponsonby (JP). For example, two volumes of letters linked to the Ponsonby and Bathurst families in the early 19th century were itemised. The third is about to be started. One included 130 letters in many handwritings, often time consuming to decipher. Letters by Major General Sir Frederick Ponsonby (JP's grandfather) were all painstakingly written left-handed, after his injuries at Waterloo. Correspondence ranged from the Duke of Wellington's reassurance to Countess Henrietta (Harriet) Bessborough (née Spencer) about her son Frederick's next Army posting; family delight at Frederick's engagement to Lady Emily Bathurst (daughter of Wellington's friend, Earl Bathurst, Secretary of State for War); impressions of Corfu and

Malta; poignant letters with the Spencer family on the death of Frederick's friend, Captain Robert Spencer RN; the death of George IV from one who was there; political comments and social trivia on house parties, personalities and fashion.

This year we shall also be working on JP's collection from his own Army service in Africa, the Boer War and World War One, amongst other items. *Jennie Dolman*

RECOLLECTIONS - RUTH TOMALIN

Maundy Thursday, 2006 - A happily hopeful, and correct forecast took me to Stansted yesterday to see the daffodils again



and I was so interested to see that the old grape hyacinths, daffodils and narcissi are still flowering in the 'new' Lime Grove. Also masses of spring snowflakes (snowdrops) on the grass opposite the Chapel - only two clumps of these in the 1920s!

I'm sending you a copy of 'Long Since', which has an imaginary account of the then Wych Elm Grove bulb planting and the first flowering - pages 60/61 and 69.

29th June 2006 - I was delighted to hear that there are plans to plant bulbs in Lime Grove. It was surprising to find so many of the long ago planting still flowering away in April.

It's good to hear that the weather has allowed you to get on with planting in the Dutch Garden despite having to water everything. I see one newspaper weatherman is predicting a drought as severe as in 1976, but my recollection is that that spring we had little or no rain at all, which hasn't been quite the same this year!

Thank you for your kind remarks about 'Long Since'. I'm fond of that little book as I wrote it from March to June in a rented flat at Graffham, near Midhurst, and enjoyed every minute of the time in that truly rural spot. A thrush used to sing at my window I remember, and cuckoos abounded and yes, the different locations are 'real' memories, chiefly of Stansted, and one (the Old Dairy), a very early memory of Bessborough in Ireland: also the water garden which adjoined our house there.

Thank you especially for the lovely poppies photo - one of my favourite summer flowers. I do hope you have a splendid time in Geneva and that we can meet when you have time to spare.

With very best wishes + love, from Ruth.

PS: Sorry about the faint typing. In fact this is a new ribbon, but such old-world quaint devices aren't easily tracked down or reliable when found. Have you tried to buy blotting paper lately?

These are extracts from letters I received, as Ruth loved talking about what I had been doing and trips she had made to friends or to the theatre, but they were always interesting and mostly focussed on her memories of Stansted. They also revealed at times her gentle sense of humour. Sadly, my copy of 'Long Since' disappeared, either in our move to Tenerife or I lent it to someone, but it's charming and well worth reading if you find one. *(to be continued) Jill Waring*

Extract from Page 69 of 'Long Since' by Ruth Tomalin - It was that moment when, after harsh weather, the great blaze of March sunlight suddenly draws out close-shut buds into new-minted brilliance, still touched with frosty dew. The elms, their grey boughs arching overhead, were covered in pinkish-purple blossom. Far below, the wild garden had come into its first flowering. Rivers of daffodils were shedding their glossy tissue, while the petals, faintly streaked with green, had not yet parted to disclose the pure yellow trumpets. Around the tree-roots grew tiny wild daffodils, blue scillas and grape hyacinths, green and white stars-of-Bethlehem, jonquils and little purple irises.



ONCE AGAIN

Once again the spring is born There's new life all around High in the hills Through woods and fields And covering the ground.

Valerie Godwin



2023 HOUSE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

MARCH Thursday 9th at 7.30 pm in the Music Room 'Los Ladrones' Tickets £15.00 (£10.00 for FOSP members) to include interval refreshments

Sunday 19th Mothering Sunday - House Open

APRIL Sunday 9th - House Opens

Thursday 27th - Music Evening JUNE

Friday 9th to Sunday 11th - The Garden Show

JULY Saturday1st - Picnic Concert 'HMS Pinafore' Gates open 3.30pm to 10.30pm Tickets: Adult - £25, Child - £15 Programmes - £3.50

Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th Summer Festival

For more information please contact the office on 023 9241 2265 or enquiry@stanstedpark.co.uk

https://www.stanstedpark.co.uk/whatson

A discount to FOSP members is available on most Foundation events.

COMMITTEE MEMBER CONTACTS

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Membership:- Paul Bennett friendsofstanstedpark@outlook.com

Newsletter Editor:- Robert Godwin crana.crana@ntlworld.com

For FOSP Membership Enquiries please contact Paul Bennett

FOSP 2023 DATES

FEBRUARY Monday 20th at 2.30pm Michael and Sheila Olding's Memorial Service in St Paul's Chapel. See page 1 for details.

> MARCH Thursday 30th at 10.00am AGM and Coffee Morning (Please book via Estate Office)

APRIL Wednesday 19th at 2.00pm - Head Forester's Walk Meet in the German's Yard, Broad Walk Road

> MAY Thursday 18th FOSP Talk at 2.00pm Antique Collecting by Jim Bischoff (Please book via Estate Office)

Wednesday 24th at 2.00pm Head Forester's Walk Meet in the Main Avenue car park.

JUNE

Wednesday 14th - Outing to Parham House (see page 4) Please use the booking form that will be sent out shortly.

Tuesday 27th - FOSP Summer Party. Do keep this date free to celebrate FOSPs 25th anniversary. More information in the next Newsletter.

PLEASE TELEPHONE 023 9241 2265 TO BOOK YOUR PLACE For talks, coffee mornings, FOSP events etc, in order that we can arrange appropriate seating and

No booking required for Head Forest's Walks

refreshments. Thank you.

For Foundation and FOSP events at the House, use the North Entrance, go through the automatic black gate, and park in front of the House unless otherwise directed.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR THOSE WHO RENEW IN JANUARY

To save on costs from now on, we are not sending out new membership cards to those who renew on the first of January. All we ask is that on last year's card you cross out the expiry date of the 31st January 2023 and make a note that your renewal will be by the 1st January every year.

If you would like to set up a Standing Order, it is quite easy to set up online with your bank, or call into your nearest branch, making the payment for the 1st January each year to: -

Friends of Stansted Park Account Number: 61788627 Sort Code: 60-10-20

(Please use your Membership number as a reference)

Alternatively, you can pay by BACS to the FOSP account, using the details above or by card via Kim at the Stansted Estate Office, giving your name and membership number. You also have the option to pay by cheque, payable to Friends of Stansted Park, and sent to: -Stansted Park Foundation, Stansted Park, Rowlands Castle PO9 6DX

Subscriptions remain the same: Double £25, Single £15 and Family £30

Please, if you have any queries or changes to address or email, then contact the Membership Secretary, Paul Bennett, by email on: - friendsofstanstedpark@outlook.com or call the Estate Office on 023 9241 2265

NEXT FOSP NEWSLETTER COPY DATE FOR ARTICLES

Friday 28th April 2023. NOTE: Hard copies of the Newsletter are available from the Estate Office. Editor

FOSP Newsletter - Designed, produced and edited by Robert and Valerie Godwin - crana.crana@ntlworld.com