

FRIENDS OF



IN MEMORIAM

I am saddened to report the deaths of three long standing members of the Friends of Stansted.

DR DUNCAN WALTERS will be remembered as a selfless man who devoted three decades of his life to the Rowans Hospice. Under his inspired leadership, the facilities and services of the Rowans expanded to support local families of Portsmouth and South East Hampshire.

MRS ANN RICHARDS, Melita Cooper's mother, had been a member of the Friends since its inception in 1998. Ann maintained a keen interest and commitment to the Foundation over the years, giving James (and Mel) invaluable support, including working for a number of years in the Estate Office.

MRS JOAN WATSON had a strong Christian commitment to charity fundraising and was much involved with the Emsworth Afternoon Flower Club which often used Stansted's St Paul's Chapel to raise funds for named charities. She was also an excellent speaker and gave two fascinating presentations to the Friends when we used to have our talks in the former theatre.

Such loyalty to the Friends should never be taken for granted. We owe the families of Duncan, Ann and Joan so much, including our condolences to the families and grateful thanks for their achievements.

Michael Olding

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

It has been very good to see the House and Grounds open the public once more, even though it was a relatively short season this year. All visitors enjoyed the highly impressive re-ordering of the Mansion with the new displays in the Waterloo and Victoria Room and the Boudoir forming the centrepieces.

The House Stewards have had to rekindle their skills in explaining the history of the house and the Ponsonby family after a significant gap and it has been really good to see them back in full flow.

Although group visits have been fewer than previous years, the overall numbers visiting the House have been very encouraging. It has also been very good to see the members of the Art Society return to the fray and there is much for them to do to keep the chattels looking their best.

We are also highly indebted to the Garden Volunteers, who have helped to keep the grounds in glorious splendour over the summer, especially the Dutch and Well Head Gardens and the South East Quadrant of the Walled Garden.

The Bookshop has performed beyond anyone's wildest expectations with receipts being quite dazzling; the hard work of the volunteers in dealing with the vast quantity of books which they have been inundated with is certainly paying off.

Although there still persists, naturally, an element of Covid caution, the events at Stansted Park have been well supported with a production of Gilbert and Sullivan's 'The Mikado' in July. The stage was built out from the front steps of the West Portico with a wonderful performance on the most beautiful evening of the entire summer.

The Tribute Band and the Proms Concerts were a great success, with spectacular Spitfire, parachute and firework displays. These popular events have now firmly established themselves in the Stansted calendar. We are now looking forward to events over Halloween and Christmas, with Peter Auty joining us again in December. Our Christmas offerings will show off the House to best effect in a traditional setting.



On the wider Estate, residential properties remain much in demand. Although we have seen quite a turnover in commercial offices, the desire to move away from home working and set up in a rural location remains high as people seek a special environment in which to work.

As you would expect, we are faced with the ever present demands of maintaining the fabric of our heritage assets. We completed work on the Cupola earlier this year and then immediately embarked on the restoration of the Clock Tower above the Estate office whose columns had become rotten. Skilled craftsmanship will ensure that, although an expensive operation, we will not need to revisit this for another 30 years or so.

All in all, we finish the year in quite good shape; there has been much to keep us challenged but slowly life is returning to normal and we can now concentrate on how we can do things differently and better in the future. As ever, the Foundation is hugely appreciative for all the kind, generous and wholehearted support that we receive from the Friends and we look towards to moving forward to even greater sunlit uplands next year as we emerge from Covid and seek to enjoy ourselves once more!

David Bennett (Photographs David Bennett and Skiddle.com)



FESTIVITIES

A holly bough, some mistletoe,
Maybe just a hint of snow,
Carols, mince pies, tinsel trees,
Christmas time festivities.

Valerie Godwin



The Chairman and Committee wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

HEAD FORESTER'S NOTES - AUTUMN 2021



Large Douglas Fir after Felling



To the Sawmill

The late summer and early autumn period has seen a major felling operation take place in Firtree Piece, where a high percentage of the large Douglas fir has been harvested. I have had a felling licence in place for some time on this area as part of the long-term plan and, as prices for timber were the highest I have known for a long time, I decided to take advantage of these trees that were planted by my predecessor in 1955. It was a complex operation, requiring very careful felling if the remaining trees were not to be severely damaged. I had decided not to thin the beech at the same time as the firewood market is glutted at present by ash and we will need this supply in a couple of years time. Powell Forestry, our contractors, did an excellent and very professional job in felling this very big timber, many of which needed to be winched to get them in the correct place or because they were next to the road. An added problem for them was the few people who, although it is a no access area, decided to ignore the Estate's signs asking them not to enter and the contractors signs, which plainly informed them there was a danger of death and walk through whilst work was taking place!

As planned, the majority of the extraction was carried out in perfect conditions to limit ground damage but, due to the sudden fuel crisis, the winch tractor could not be brought over from East Sussex when first planned as the lorry to move it was not available. This has led to a late finish and some ride damage which we will have to address in the spring. The lack of vehicles for haulage is still having an effect on getting the considerable amount of stacked timber away.

It is planned for this area to be re-generated by natural seeding and, after the beech is thinned, I hope that we will have the correct light levels to allow both beech, Douglas fir and other nearby trees to seed the forest floor. Certainly, the evidence from a nearby plantation shows this should happen as some of the planted trees there are surrounded by natural regeneration, mostly of fir but some larch, chestnut and beech. Of course, this latter area is deer fenced but I am looking at various methods of limiting deer damage in the area in question.

The Countryside Ranger Team of the South Downs National Park and their volunteers have been very helpful in spending a number of days working in Pond Meadow cutting herbage, clearing bramble and pollarding willows. This is a small jewel of wet grassland known for two plants, the Pepper Saxifrage and Sneezewort, both of which are uncommon in the county. We are trying to create more open grassland here for their benefit by this work, ably assisted by the mischievous Highland cattle who love damaging trees and shrubs, which in this case is to be welcomed. I am hoping in time to get a small volunteer team of our own together that could take forward this work next year with occasional help and training from the National Park. **Michael Prior**



Timber being Removed

FOSP WALK - SEPTEMBER



In pleasant autumn weather on September 7th, twelve FOSP Members joined The Head Forester at German's Yard for a walk to look at work in encouraging natural re-generation in the Northern Forest.

We first stopped to be informed of the new planting area with a variety of various trees, coastal redwood, and eucalyptus being some. Michael pointed out a tree stump some twenty feet tall which had been damaged several years back. This stump is now a habitat for some species of beetles and other grubs, which is a festive table for birds.

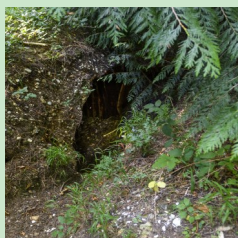
As we wandered deeper into the plantation, Michael spoke about the planting of Japanese cedar which has put on a spectacular growth since the introduction a couple of years ago. Many experiments by previous Head Foresters have come to fruition for this is the nature of forestry it takes time to develop.

After a slight detour away from the main path, hidden from view, Michael took us to a World War Two Secret Bunker operated by the Stansted Patrol. These bunkers were the brainchild of Winston Churchill and the British War Cabinet who approved the creation of Auxiliary Units, which would serve as an anti-invasion force trained by the military to use guerrilla tactics against enemy forces. Each unit of eight or so men had its own operational base, often constructed with the help of the Royal Engineers.

*The Stansted Patrol was the most westerly sited unit in West Sussex and consisted of six members. The Patrol Leader was Bill Wolfries, the head keeper for Stansted Forest. The other members were George Huxham, a farmer at Pitlands Farm, Up Marden; Ronald Peel, a farmer at Lodge Farm, Forest Side; Jim Rousell, a driver from the Rowlands Castle area and Mr Butler, a gamekeeper from the Lordington Estate. The patrol's hideout was sited in a shallow chalk pit in the north-eastern end of Stansted Forest. The bunker, which is in a very poor state, consisted of wood and corrugated iron with one small entrance hatch and an emergency exit tunnel which ran out to the bottom face of the chalk pit. About 400 yards to the west of the hideout, the patrol had a small underground lookout. Both were connected by a direct telephone line and constructed by the Royal Engineers. The lookout commanded a good view of the main Stansted road. **Stewart Angell. Published by Middleton Press ISBN 1873793820***

A truly fascinating aspect of Stansted history.

Michael continued the walk and showed us areas where deer had stripped the bark of many trees. This is a constant problem not only at Stansted but all over the country and the cost in lost forest is astronomical. Yet another successful and informative afternoon stroll. Thank you Michael. **Robert Godwin (Photographs Michael Parry)**



Entrance to the Underground Bunker

STANSTED STILL STANDS

The leaves have blown away. The Roman pavement is no longer there. Yet the place in the forest remains - the place and forest too. The Earls of Arundel and the Lumleys may be forgotten. Dunkaro and Marianne are only pages in an old copy of *Town and Country Magazine* - dim memories at Dury Lane. The Indian Nabob sleeps in his tomb at Westbourne; and Lewis Way has still not set out for the Promised Land. But John Keats and his verse remain. The *Eve of St Mark* is still remembered. Stansted stands. The place abides and we can return to it. **From Return to the Forest - The Earl of Bessborough (Fredrick the 10th Earl)**

FROM THE ARCHIVES

When Guards officers, the Lieutenant Colonels, Henry Ponsonby and his brother, Arthur, sons of Waterloo hero, Major General Sir Frederick Ponsonby, served in the Crimea, they kept an illustrated journal with candid political and military comment, descriptions of engagements and daily life. Here are some winter extracts:



December 10th 1855 'I am afraid the General will have great difficulties this winter, the chief being getting the (new) Transport Corps into order, as of course our Campaign in Spring, depends entirely upon that Corps.' Highly paid recruits from England know nothing of riding, driving or caring for horses or mules, Tartars and Turkish recruits speak no English and expensive mules have been bought mainly from Spain.

Dec 21st 1855. 'We have fine bright weather but desperately cold - some cases of frost-bite. Theatricals, concerts and Dinners are preparing in the different Divisions for Christmas.'

January 10th 1856 'We have each given a day's pay to Miss Nightingale, it is grudged generally if it was to give anything to Miss Nightingale, all very well, but to build a Hospital and School for Nurses, we rather think nonsense.' Pelissier (French commander) has been sent a Plum-Pudding from England hermetically sealed in a tin case. The English Royal Arms on the tin pleases him so much he has it on display.

Jan 19th 'A ship arrived bringing a curious cargo; 3 billiard tables and 50 tomb stones.'

February 9th 1856 'The uncertainty (about peace) is very tiresome. The Roman Catholics of the Army, say we kick up a great fuss about Miss Nightingale when amongst the Sisters of Charity there are many like her who have been nursing people in every disease for a long time without it being thought so wonderful.'

February 17th 1856 'We are fuming about ... the debate saying the Army were lions, led by Jackapes. The opinion out here is the House of Commons were a set of Jackapes led by a Lion (Palmerston). The wish here is we could put the Queen and a few others in a safe place then it would do them all the good in the world, a 13 inch shell crashing through the roof of the House of Commons. I heard an Irish officer describing Balaklava as it was last winter 'A place alive with dead horses and Cows'

Both brothers survived the war. Arthur was later to die in a cholera outbreak whilst serving in India. He was noted for the care he took of his men during the outbreak. Henry became a Major General, appointed Queen Victoria's Private Secretary and was knighted. Of Henry's three sons, Arthur was an author (including a succinct account of 19th century wars and treaties, available on line) and politician, becoming one of the first Labour peers. His brother, Frederick (Fritz), served in the Guards, was Private Secretary to Queen Victoria, Edward VII and George V and also received a peerage. John, like his father and grandfather, was knighted and rose to the rank of Major General: it is through his collection of family records that Stansted Park Foundation obtained the unique Crimea journal.

Jennie Dolman (Nothing in politics seems to have changed! - Editor)

VISIT TO POLESDEN LACEY



Alan Cox's winning photograph of Polesden Lacey
Courtesy Surrey Live

After many delays and postponements, and in spite of everything the dreaded Covid could throw at us, we at last had our day trip to Polesden Lacey, in mid-September. We assembled early at Stansted but, initially, no coach – it was waiting for us at another Garden Centre! A little later than planned, we set off.

On arrival, we headed for some refreshment and then divided up – one group had a tour of the House, and the other wandered in the extensive gardens and grounds, or browsed in the shop, swapping groups later. The weather was a typical lovely English summer day – warm and bright with a bit of intermittent cloud.

The House tour was led by an extremely knowledgeable guide who told us about the life of Maggie Greville and her family and the history of the House that she created as it is today, for entertaining royalty and her many wealthy influential friends. We also heard that, to aid the war effort, she paid for a Spitfire fighter plane, total cost £5,000!

Thank you Chris and your team, for organising the trip

and sorting out the many problems. Everyone was enthusiastic about their day – the House and its fascinating history, the gardens and the grounds with the stunning trees and many delightful walks.

Anne Burton

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2021



Michael with The Totties

FOSP CREAM TEA 2ND SEPTEMBER WITH 'THE TOTTIES'

What a great afternoon tea we all had, with scones, cream, jam and homemade cakes and *The Totties* as entertainment.

The selection of songs and music reminded us all of an afternoon at the London Ritz Hotel. From popular tunes to musicals, it was certainly a feast for the ears.

A big thanks to all the waitress helpers and to those who supplied the scrumptious homemade cakes.

Robert Godwin



CHRISTMAS EVE 1943

A lovely sunny day. Went over to Middle Lodge with sunflower heads for fowls. Yesterday heard carol singers in Westbourne with a flashlight and accompanied by a melodeon. Rode home by Aldsworth, two miles, not a soul on the road. All morning the bombers have gone out. I thought - 'Poor boys . . . on Christmas Eve.' Some Canadian soldiers said, "What a Christmas for some one".

Listened to 'Scrooge' on the wireless. Very lonely here. Shades of long ago! It is like the ghost of Christmas past - only our kitchen as usual looks 'stirred up with a stick.' Tom doing the crossword and I knitting socks for Tony. I wonder of course where all the boys are and what they are doing?

I have made a cake and iced it. Marzipan made of soya flour, sugar, lots of almond essence. White icing made of milk powder and sugar. Some violet petals and shreds of pre-war angelica. We have a goose so are lucky.

Elsbeth Tomalin from the Garden House Diaries by Ruth Tomlin

NEWS FROM THE HOUSE

The 2021 season went like a flash but, despite Covid, the total number of visitors to the House (including Stansted Unlocked) was 2,075 which was pretty similar to the figures for the same period in 2019. Unfortunately, our Group Visit numbers were lower than in previous years, but that was to be expected. On the upside, the telephone has been ringing more frequently with bookings for next year, so fingers crossed things might be returning to normal. Two important groups we have been able to welcome have been from BLESMA, the military charity for limbless veterans, who had a stand here at Stansted Unlocked. Their retired veterans and widows groups enjoyed tours of the House and lunch here in September and were able to share some of their fascinating stories as well as hearing ours!

I promise you we are not all sitting with our feet up now that we are closed to the public! We have been busy preparing events for Christmas and welcoming companies hiring rooms for training and potential wedding couples. We hope that you will join us for one of our Christmas celebrations, where you can enjoy the festive decorations around the House and hear some of our Christmas stories. From a retelling of 'A Christmas Carol' to the beautiful voice of Peter Auty, we have a great programme for you to enjoy, including wreath making, day time tours complete with mulled wine and mince pies at £5.00 for FOSP members. Take a look at the website to find out more and book your tickets. Friends can mention the code **FOSPXMAS** when ordering tickets over the telephone for the Peter Auty Concert on our usual telephone number for a discount.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, our Trustee, Yanni Petsopoulos, has been finishing his research and adding to the displays in the Waterloo and Victoria room, so that when you visit next season you will be able learn more about the many interesting characters from the Ponsonby family. We have also installed a small projection screen in the Boudoir, where we will be able to show the BBC documentary on the lives of the servants here at Stansted, which features interviews with the 10th Earl, one of the gardeners and other household staff.

The hard working Art Society Team have recommenced their weekly visits to assist us with the less glamorous conservation tasks, such as vacuuming curtains to curtail any moth infestations and polishing door handles. Their help is essential. Over the years they have helped catalogue the Library and cleaned and conserved each and every book in it, among many other tasks. We owe them a huge debt of thanks for their continued support. We hope that you will join us for our Festive Celebrations and look forward to sharing a glass or two of fizz or mulled wine soon! **Celia Hodges House Steward Coordinator**

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR THE YEAR STARTING JANUARY 2022

It's good to be able to report that we are thriving, and have a growing membership of Friends of Stansted Park, so now is the time of year to be thinking about renewing your Membership for 2022 and to enjoy the many benefits of membership.

Many of the Friends do this by Standing Order, in which case no action is required but, for those of you paying annually, we do urge you to renew your membership and continue to support the wonderful Stansted Estate.

Subscriptions remain the same: Double £25; Single £15; Family £30, and there are several options for payment:

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

Friends of Stansted Park Account Number: 61788627, Sort Code 60-10-20
using your name and Membership number as a reference

Alternatively, you can pay by **BACS** to the FOSP account, using the details as above. This year we are offering renewal by **card payment** 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

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.

Stansted Park and Foundation is a charitable organisation with no Government Funding and is very grateful for the generous fundraising achieved by the Friends over the years. We look forward to hearing from you. **Paul Bennett**

HARRY JAMES DODSON (11th September 1919 - 25th July 2005)



Harry Dodson's father died when he was six years old and he went with his mother to live with his grandparents on the Selborne Estate at Blackmore, Hampshire. There, his uncle, Fred Norris, was head gardener to the Earl and Countess of Selborne.

Dodson's horticultural talents were recognised by his school, which made him Head Garden boy; he was subsequently employed by the local Rector for two years before custom required his wages to rise!

He was then taken on as the Kitchen Garden boy on the Earl of Bessborough's Estate at Stansted Park, where he lived, as most unmarried gardeners did, in a 'no-frills' bothy. The one at Stansted was in the yard near to an enormous garden boiler where, every morning, the Head bothy boy would ring a bell on the boiler stoke hole chimney. At this sound, all the gardeners had to be out of the bothy and waiting in the bell yard for the Head Gardener, Mr Tomalin, for whom Dodson had a great respect. Tomalin helped him two years later with his next career move to Ashburnham Place in Sussex.

He became a journeyman in what he described as... *'its enormous and very old garden.'* Here he learned much about fruit culture and decorative work with flowering plants and hoped that his next move would be to the gardens at Windsor but, as he put it, *'Hitler had other things in mind and before I knew where I was, I was in The Royal Sussex Regiment serving in France.'*

Dodson took to army life, putting it down to the strict regime of working under Head Gardeners, so *'the old sergeant shouting'* wasn't any different. Ill-health meant he was discharged and he did war work as a foreman in the gardens of Leigh Park which, at the time, was in the hands of the Admiralty. He grew produce for the canteen, which served 1,000 people a day.

His next employment was at Lord Harcourt's estate in Oxfordshire, as General Garden foreman - one step below Head Gardener. During his engagement to his future wife, Kathleen, he advertised for a job as Head Gardener which would provide him with a house. He beat 26 other candidates for the Head Gardenership at Chilton Foliat in Wiltshire. It was 1947 and Dodson was 27, a young age to be responsible for a staff of nine gardeners and grounds with vinerias, peach, nectarine, melon and fig houses, as well as supplying pot plants and cut flowers to the mansion. In that year he exhibited vegetables at the RHS show for the first time. Such displays were a spectacular 30ft x 8ft deep (10m x 3m) and might feature up to 100 varieties of 36 vegetables. By the 1960s, when they stopped exhibiting, Colonel Ward, owner of Chilton, had stepped forward to receive a gold medal on 10 occasions, equalling the record set in 1934 by Edwin Becket, a doyen of Edwardian horticulture. This joint record has not been bettered - and is unlikely to be, for the era when private gardens had the capacity to stage such exhibits is long gone!

In 1956, the RHS asked Dodson to join its fruit and vegetable committee. He also became a judge at RHS shows and sat on the committee of the Gardener's Royal Benevolent Society.

In 1987, when he was 68, he became a television personality in the BBC series *'The Victorian Kitchen Garden'*, demonstrating Victorian methods of running a walled kitchen garden. His skill, easy manner of speaking, capable Head Gardener's hands and brown boots, soon became cult viewing and the first series was soon followed by several more over the ensuing decade. He captivated audiences not only in Britain but in continental Europe, North America and Australia. He contributed to the books which accompanied the TV series, wrote a regular column in the *Field* magazine and, in 1992, wrote his own book on practical kitchen gardening.

He died at Chilton Foliat on 25th July 2005, aged 85. His ashes were interred alongside his mother's remains at St Matthew's Church, Blackmoor, on 19th June 2017.

The video of Harry's funeral may be seen on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMVG31tm2Hs>

In a letter Ruth Tomalin wrote to me in November 2005, she told me that Andrew Grant, our then Chairman, had written to say the Friends had agreed that she should become an Honorary Member. Having suffered a nasty bout of flu, Ruth indicated that this delightful surprise was even more beneficial than her course of antibiotics!

She also added that, because of her biography of WH Hudson, the naturalist, she had received a similar honour in faraway Buenos Aires, his birthplace, and both gave her enormous pleasure.

In her letter was included the 6th August Times obituary for Harry Dodson, whom she had known as a girl growing up in the Garden House, and for which she provided some information, plus editing the copy she sent me - ever the writer perfectionist and her friendship much missed by myself.

The reopening of Stansted and the excellent reporting in the previous newsletter made for nostalgic reading and the wish to have enjoyed it with you all. It is a great tribute to Robert and Valerie that so many now contribute articles of great interest.

To all those involved with the beautiful Stansted Estate, Tony and I would like to extend our very best wishes for a happy and peaceful end to another slightly less trying year and every hope for a promising 2022.

Jill Waring

LIFE AND LOVE BELOW STAIRS AT STANSTED HOUSE - BY MOLLIE PLUMMER

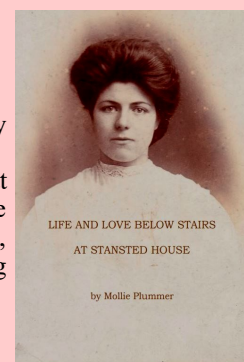
Our very own FOSP member, Elaine Bevis, has finally published her grandmother's memories of Stansted in the early 1920s.

Members may remember the serialisation of Mollie's time at Stansted, published in this Newsletter a couple of years ago. Elaine took advice, and the memoirs have now been published, in book form, price £3.00 from FOSP Garden Centre bookshop or, £7.50 including postage, direct from Elaine. Contact: elainebevis@aol.com

Robert Godwin



Elaine Bevis



2021 HOUSE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

NOVEMBER

Friday 26th to Saturday 27th - 'A Christmas Carol'
Immersive Theatre in Stansted House. £15.00 per adult.

DECEMBER

Thursday 2nd to Sunday 19th
Christmas at Stansted Park

Wreath Making Workshops - £40.00 per session.

3rd December 2.00pm - 4.00pm

4th December 10.00am - 12.00 Noon

4th December 1.30pm - 3.30pm

Celebrate Christmas with a little piece of Stansted Park to decorate your dining table or front door! Enjoy a glass of fizz while you create your own festive wreath in the beautiful surroundings of our historic Blue Drawing Room.

Festive House Tours

5th to 7th December 2021 from £15.00

£5.00 FOSP Members

(use FOSPXMAS discount code when booking online)

A warm welcome awaits you at Stansted House this Christmas. Hear some of the festive tales from Stansted Park from our knowledgeable guides and enjoy the beautiful festive decorations around the House, with our first daytime Christmas House tours. Guests will be offered a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie, which is included in the ticket price.

Friday 10th - Musical Evening with Peter Auty
Tickets £30.00

(Please use the discount code **FOSPXMAS** when ordering tickets over the telephone for the Peter Auty Concert).

Thursday 16th - at 4.00pm
Christmas Carol Service in The Chapel with mulled wine and mince pies afterwards.

Booking recommended - Everyone is welcome.

**For more information please contact the office
on**

023 9241 2265 or enquiry@stanstedpark.co.uk

Please Support Stansted House

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For FOSP Membership Enquiries please contact Paul Bennett

NEXT FOSP NEWSLETTER COPY DATE

Friday 28th January 2022

AN EVENING WITH PETER AUTY



Peter Auty is established as one of Britain's leading tenors but is probably best known for being the original voice in the cartoon film, 'The Snowman', singing 'We're walking in the air'. He made his professional debut at Opera North in 1998 and was a company principal of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden from 1999 until 2002 where he covered several major roles and had the opportunity of working with many of the world's leading conductors.

On the concert platform, Peter has worked with the London Symphony Orchestra (Sir Colin Davies), the Halle (Sir Mark Elder), and the London Philharmonic Orchestra (Neemi Jarvi, Vladimir Jurowsky) as well as performing all over Europe.

During the 2011 Proms season, he performed the tenor solo in Havergal Brian's Symphony No.1, 'The Gothic', at the Royal Albert Hall with combined forces of over a 1000 musicians, now released on the Hyperion label.

Recently, Peter played the title role in the world premiere of 'Pushkin' at Grange Park Opera with the Novaya company from Moscow.

We are thrilled to welcome Peter and his wife to Stansted House this Christmas. The festive programme will include a selection of well-known tenor songs and arias, such as O Sole Mio, Funiculi Funicula, La Mattinata, Sorrento, You Are My Heart's Delight and Nessun Dorma as well as a feast of Christmas favourites - think White Christmas, O little Town, and O holy Night - and, of course, 'We're walking in the air'...

Guests will enjoy a 45 minute performance in the private Chapel of St Paul followed by a sparkling wine and canape reception in the Mansion House. The Main Hall and Music Room will be beautifully decorated with a large Christmas tree, garlands and twinkling lights to add to the festive atmosphere. **£30 per adult**

(FOSP Members should remember to use **FOSPXMAS** for their discount when booking over the telephone)

First performance 5.30pm (doors open 5.15pm)

Second performance 7.15pm (doors open at 7pm)

WEDNESDAY 8TH DECEMBER 7PM TO 9PM

TINSEL TIME WITH THE TOTTIES



Carolyn and Paul return to Stansted House with their Christmas show 'Tinsel Time with The Totties'. A glamorous evening of warmth, wit and laughter, a sleigh ride of seasonal favourites sprinkled with a few of their own witty parodies, mulled wine, mince pies and a song sheet. Let the festive fun and laughter begin.

As you may recall the FOSP Summer Party was cancelled this year so the traditional raffle will now take place at the Christmas Event. A strip of numbers will be £1 on the night and prizes will include gift vouchers for The Pavilion Tea Room, The Garden Centre, The Farm Shop and Simon (Hot Chocolate & Ice Cream Man).

Please boost the raffle by bringing a gift!

We expect this to be a popular event with a capacity limited to seventy. The cost is **£10 for members and £15 for non-members**, including refreshments, so please put this date in your diary!

Nigel Smith