

FRIENDS OF



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Annual General Meeting was again very well attended and, this year, featured a 'pop up' Bookshop by the Foundation. After conducting the formal business, including the election of the Committee, Sasha Fardell gave a talk on the forthcoming events at the House which was both interesting and informative. Following the meeting, there was the usual Coffee Morning with homemade cakes and this was enjoyed by all. I pass on my thanks to everyone involved in making this a successful event.

The House, Chapel and Maze are now open for the Season and I would encourage you all to visit with friends and family and to make use of the benefits of your membership.

The weather so far this year has, yet again, been a big disappointment but held fine for the first Foresters Walk of 2024, which took place on Wednesday 17th April and was attended by 28 Friends. My thanks go to Michael Prior for his time in preparing these walks. Advertised elsewhere in this Newsletter you will see a diary of events planned for the coming months by the Friends and the Foundation. I look forward to seeing you at them.

Nigel Smith

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Stansted Park has been fully open for business since the Easter weekend and we seem to be as popular as ever with visitors descending in their droves on the House, Walled Gardens and the Forest. The weather has certainly not been kind but that really does not seem to have deterred anyone! It has taken a little longer than we would have liked to bring the Grounds up together, with Toby being very concerned about the state of the grass and the pathways, but he and his team have made valiant efforts despite the vagaries of our increasingly damp climate. The cricketers also remain frustrated waiting for their Square to dry out and firm up.

We are very pleased to welcome Jan Atkinson as our new Gardener who, with the tireless efforts of the Garden Volunteers, is focussing on some exciting plans for our gardens and borders. The Dutch Garden, in particular, will be subject to a makeover as, sadly, the blight that is affecting Box hedges has made it necessary to remove them. However, there are some wonderful ideas emerging which will restore this area into an even more special place than it has been before. The funds for the appointment of Jan and the Dutch Garden project are being provided by the Bookshop which continues to do extremely well, thanks to all the Volunteers.



The Dining Room
arrangement for private
functions

My thanks, too, to the Friends and all their enduring generosity which allows the Foundation to plan projects for which funding would otherwise be extremely limited. We are looking at options for the production of a new Guide Book for the House, a revamp of the Picnic Area and determining what further work can be accomplished in support of the Visitors' Entrance.

In the Mansion, we are delighted to welcome Kerrie Davidson who has eased seamlessly into the Housekeeping Team and we will be providing her with professional training in respect of the care and maintenance of the Chattels. We have been busy holding prestigious Country House Retreats, Receptions and Talks and consider that we are now well established to deliver these type of events in a highly stylish manner; what we may call 'The Stansted Standard'.

We have been most fortunate to receive significant publicity through the publication of two wonderful articles on Stansted Park in *Country Life** which, we can all agree, is the premier prestigious magazine covering country houses. This kind of exposure and other positive developments are putting us firmly on the map, providing a significant launch pad to improve our offers across a range of activities.

The Summer Season is now firmly upon us and, as we develop our income generation activities, we will be holding a Corporate Launch where we will be showcasing enticing options for Conferences, Board Meetings, Private Functions and Weddings. Hopefully, companies will also sign up for exciting pursuits on the wider Estate, from Archery, Clay Pigeon Shooting and Field Gun Sport to Environmental Tours, Woodland Volunteering projects and other team building activities.

We have the Garden Show and Open Air Cinema in June and our own Stansted Park Summer Festival over the weekend of 13th & 14th July where we hope to see a further increase in the numbers attending our capstone community event. The Proms in August will provide the usual spectacle of Spitfire fly past, parachute drop, fireworks and patriotic fervour. All in all, there is much to enjoy over the months ahead and, although we remain at the mercy of the weather, we are determined that the Show will go on!

I am most grateful for the tremendous support the Friends continue to provide to the Foundation and I hope that you have a very enjoyable Summer.

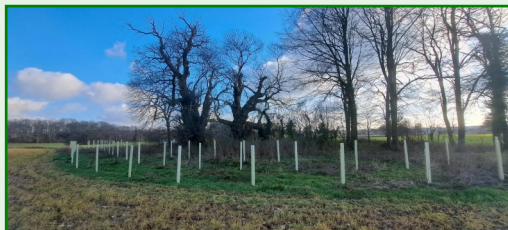
David Bennett

**Editor's Note: Back dated editions of Country Life, dated 17th and 24th April, may be purchased online from:-
<https://www.magazinesdirect.com>*

NEXT FOSP NEWSLETTER COPY DATE FOR ARTICLES

Friday 26th July 2024. NOTE: Hard copies of the Newsletter are available from the Estate Office. *Editor*

HEAD FORESTER'S NOTES - SPRING 2024



East Park new clump

The start of drier weather is most welcome after the excessively wet conditions we have been forced to endure over the winter and into spring. I have had to postpone many tasks to keep vehicle movement on sodden ground to the minimum. In the end, I had to relent and let the extraction of the very large volume of chestnut products cut by our contractors go ahead, so vehicles would not be running over the new shoots emerging from the stools in spring. This has resulted in severe rutting of the rides chosen to get the material out and will mean that we will have several weeks work with the Estate's excavator filling holes and repairing the surfaces. To minimise impact, the shortest, most efficient routes were chosen.

This spring, we opened Oak Copse in the East Park for a couple of weeks so that visitors could enjoy the bluebells as this wood has the most spectacular display of this much loved flower on the Estate. This has proved to be very popular, with many people visiting. Once the bluebells have finished, I will close this small, isolated wood again. Unfortunately, the peace its wildlife will then enjoy will not last long, as a large component of this wood comprises of tall ash trees that will most likely need to be felled this year. This will have impact on the bluebells where the work takes place, as bramble will thrive in the more open conditions. However, a 0.3 hectare area of young oaks I planted in 2012 in the eastern side of the wood has now closed canopy and shaded out the brambles that had grown very thick amongst the young trees, making access for maintenance very difficult at times. This shading effect of the young trees, as their branches meet overhead, has resulted in a fine display of bluebells returning.

One of the planting tasks carried out this last winter was the third of the new landscape clumps in the East Park. This is designed to protect two very ancient sweet chestnuts, which are most likely from the eighteenth century parkland plantings. As these old trees dislike root disturbance from arable operations, with the co-operation of our tenant, we removed a section of the arable field to the north of them and have planted a small clump consisting of sweet chestnut and some disease resistant elms.

The southern side has been left as rough grass and bramble as surrounding them in the shading effect of a complete clump would be detrimental in the future. This leaves the second part of the fourth clump for next winter when some preparation work has been completed. This project has only been possible thanks to the help and understanding of our tenants in this part of the East Park, the Veltoms, for which I am very grateful.

One topic of discussion amongst the forestry world and others at present is the use of plastic tree tubes. In an ideal world, I would not use them but we have not found a better way of quickly and successfully establishing broadleaved trees. All the biodegradable tubes I have looked at do not last very long and are not robust enough for our applications, especially against the bulk of fallow deer. It is very satisfying that Tubex, who supply our shelters now have a recycling scheme and we are awaiting our first collection so a number of years' worth of tubes that have done their job and are stored in our yard can be made into new ones.

Michael Prior



Plastic Tubes ready for Recycling

TREE OF THE MONTH



Tree of the Month for April simply had to be one of the ornamental cherries which seem to have had an excellent flowering season despite the poor weather.

The one pictured is Cheal's Weeping Pink (*Prunus Kiku-shidare-Sakura*) a beautiful small tree with a neat weeping habit.

After the double pink flowers, the leaves unfurl coppery-bronze to start with and they give a fiery autumn display to finish.

An excellent small garden tree liking free draining soil but will not thrive in wet, heavy soil conditions.

Michael Prior

MESSAGE FROM TENERIFE

As most FOSP members know Jill Waring was the FOSP Newsletter editor (and is still sending quarterly articles to me) before she and Tony moved to Tenerife some 11 years ago. Last week I received the following news.

'I've had a difficult fortnight as Tony went into hospital last week for endless tests, MRI, X-Rays and goodness knows what else! The outcome is that the right hip joint is breaking up completely but the medical team couldn't do anything about it after the fall he had in October 2022 due to bleeding to the brain and heart arrhythmia. That, thankfully is now OK so we are seeing the surgeon on 6th May and hoping for joint replacement surgery very soon after.' *Jill Waring*

I am sure that all FOSP Members will wish Tony a swift and successful recovery.

Robert Godwin

MONTHLY PRAYER MEETING ST PAUL'S CHAPEL

On the first Wednesday of the month, there is a short service of Prayer in St Paul's Chapel at 12 noon. Midday Prayer provides a brief pause in the day to spend time with God and is a short service consisting of a psalm, Bible reading and brief reflection, as well as prayers for the House and its community. Refreshments are available after the service.

For more information: Telephone: 023 9241 2265 (Option 5) or Email: enquiry@stanstedpark.co.uk

SUMMER SUPPER PARTY - THURSDAY 27th JUNE 6.30PM AT THE PAVILION TEA ROOM

Our very popular annual summer gathering will be held at the Pavilion Tea Room again this year – do join us!

The evening starts at 6.30pm with fizz (or soft drink) in the Walled Garden, then supper in the Pavilion, with drinks and coffee available at the bar. There will be the usual grand raffle and we would be delighted if you could contribute a raffle prize. Just bring it with you on the evening!

Parking is at the Garden Centre Car Park or, for disabled parking, there is the Bothy Car Park by the Chapel.

For many years now, Clare and her wonderful staff at the Pavilion have supported FOSP and been very generous with their arrangements and charges – we give them all a huge ‘thank you’.

Book your place now, by telephoning the Estate Office 023 9241 2665 Option 5, to pay by card, **giving your details and membership number**. Or, if you’d prefer, pay by cheque payable to Friends of Stansted Park, and send **with names, a contact number and your membership number** to: Anne Burton, Dapplend, Walnut Tree Drive, Woodmancote, Emsworth, PO108QH.

Cost: FOSP Members: £23.00 Non-members £28.00

We look forward to seeing you and, if you’d like to book for the cream tea at the same time, see below:-

CREAM TEA - THURSDAY 8th AUGUST 3.00PM AT STANSTED HOUSE

This event too, has become a much anticipated annual event – traditional scones, jam and clotted cream, accompanied by copious tea, PLUS home-made cake, served in the beautiful rooms at Stansted. We are fortunate that Vanessa Bowler will again be playing the grand piano in the Music Room, to complete the whole experience.

Parking is at the front of Stansted House. Use the North Entrance, go through the black automatic gates and drive down to the right.

Book your place as indicated above, either by card at the office, or by cheque to Anne, giving names and your membership number.

Cost: FOSP Members: £7.50 Non-Member: £9.00

FOSP Committee

THE SUN GOES DOWN

(Taken from ‘A Place in The Forest’ by Earl Bessborough 1958)



The people of Chichester, Westbourne, Havant and Portsmouth, and many from farther afield, are able to stroll under the beeches and along the public footpaths which cross the park and woods. Of a Saturday or Sunday afternoon they may watch a cricket match in front of the house (the Stansted Cricket Club has a fine record!), admire the view and see the sun go down at the end of the long avenue (said to be the only two mile avenue in England) and look out towards the Isle of Wight, as Earl Godwin may have done 900 years ago, or back towards the house as Charles II did at dawn 600 years later. Then indeed the ‘native ghosts return’ recalling the forest courts of

the Earls of Arundel and Henry II’s new buildings there; the Lumleys who built the first glorious house on the present site; George Halifax and Marianne whom he loved; the Indian Nabob, Barwell. and his riches from the East and the Duke of Clarence and his preference for Resurrection Pie. Then, too, we may remember the silver spoons of Lewis Way; George Wilder and his tandem of two hunters and the poet Keats composing lines for *The Eve of St Mark* in the Chapel beyond the trees - the trees beneath which my father and my brothers are buried.



Photographs from eighteenth century pastels.

Myles Ponsonby, The 12th Earl Bessborough, will be giving a talk on ‘75 Years at Stansted’ on Thursday 16th at 2.00pm which is surely not to be missed, so make sure that you have booked your tickets for what will be a fascinating insight into the modern history of this wonderful Estate.

Robert Godwin



SUMMER

The trees are green,
The flowers bloom,
There’s sunshine in the afternoon
And picnickers across the sand.
Oh, summertime is truly grand!

Valerie Godwin - Summer 2024



GARDEN CENTRE BOOKSHOP

As our bookshop celebrates its 10th birthday, volunteer Jenny Bardwell reflects on an ongoing success story.....



Bookshop Volunteers
Pauline and Diana

The American writer Danielle Steel has written over 140 novels and, on some days, it feels as though they have all turned up at the Stansted House bookshop! Other authors donated by the yard are - Lee Child, Harlan Coben, James Patterson, Patricia and (no relation) Bernard Cornwell and Michael Connelly. But as well as the more usual fare, our bookshop in the corner of the Garden Centre sells a range of specialist and out of print books - along with biography and books on history, politics, health, art, transport and science. Cookery and travel also sell surprisingly well, considering the power of Google.

A team of 16 volunteers take in approximately 2,500 books a month. A few donations, especially the good ones, will be put out on the shelves immediately. The faded, dog-eared, scrawled upon, or dropped in the bath offerings will be put into recycling or rubbish. Fortunately, more of our donations have a brand-new feel. We have limited space in our small storeroom, so hundreds more books are boxed up and go over to an external storage facility on site. We also take some to other charity shops and manager, Nigel Smith, sells, on average, 30 each month on eBay. We sell about 65% of what we take in, with about 15% going elsewhere and the rest into recycling or rubbish.

'It looks just like a real bookshop' is what we hear visitors say and it's true that our shop that opened in 2014, bears no relation to the books section in most charity shops. Ours is a richly eclectic selection with many brand-new books coming our way, so it's the ideal place to browse for gifts. A few of our regulars also view it as a refuge and an escape. One said recently, 'I've bought books from here and then sat in the cafe for a cuppa and a

quiet read whilst the children are at school. A rare treat, nobody knows I'm there!'

We volunteers enjoy being responsible for various themed displays, including our own recommendations, Trafalgar Day, Big Garden Birdwatch and World Baking Day. It can be satisfying if you spot a memoir hidden amongst the fiction (or vice versa) and can transfer it to its rightful shelf. It's also great if someone approaches you saying, 'I'm a huge Lucinda Riley fan but I've read the ones I can see here'. Then, if I can pop into the storeroom and reappear with several new titles for the customer, they look so delighted it makes the shift worthwhile. We also keep a requests book, so customers can ask us to look out for individual titles or a particular subject.

It's very easy to get sidetracked. You think - 'I'll just go and find a new local history book for the display' or 'I must remember that there's a largish gap under BR or HA in fiction' but then you spot the recipe books collapsing or you promote a biography of someone recently in the news, or another customer arrives with several heavy bags of hardback fiction (minutes after you have emptied the donations bin) or, you spot a book you rather fancy reading yourself.

As well as the shop, volunteer Lynda Fulford has introduced a series of pop-up stalls to sell more stock at special events and festivals. The pop-up did well at the FOSP coffee morning and the AGM, with more coming up - at the House (in the Servants' Quarters) during the Garden Show from 7th to 9th June 2024.

Our profits are steadily increasing year on year and the latest projects to be funded by the bookshop will be the employment of a part-time gardener to co-ordinate the Garden Volunteers on a Thursday morning and the restoration of the Dutch Garden.

Jenny Bardwell

STANSTED VOLUNTEERS

(Coffee Morning and Induction day - Monday 26th February)



The House and grounds volunteers (currently standing at some 53 in number) consist of House Stewards, Archivists and Gardeners.

An introduction to the morning was given by David Bennett, Stansted's Director, thanking those in attendance for their stalwart interest in being volunteers at this great Historic House. Further information on the content of the morning of the Induction day was given by Jessica Williams (House Steward Co-ordinator).

After the initial introductions, coffee and cake was served, before the more serious presentations and requirements were discussed. Jessica went into the individual roles required to keep Stansted running smoothly and the Health and Safety necessities required by law and common sense! Among the most serious aspects were those of volunteer and House safety. All steward now have access to communication sets which connect direct to Jessica or the Estate Office and are required to be proficient in their use, remembering the various 'codes' required in an emergency!

Normally, there will be at least six stewards on duty at any one time, covering the Housekeepers Room, the Servant's Hall, the Footman's Room and surrounding area, the Blue Drawing Room, the Ponsonby Room and Staircase and finally the Main Hall. The stewards in these positions will be required to answer any questions from the visiting public. On certain days stewards will be required to give guided tours that are programmed into Special Open Days. Some stewards will be asked to cover St Paul's Chapel and some will be trained to drive the 'buggy' to and from the House and Chapel.

Stewards are also requested to 'read and digest' the information manual which contains, among other writings, the history of the House and its owners.

At the end of the Induction day talk, a special mention was made by Jessica of the stalwart work carried out by John and Judy Harvey who have each notched up 25 years of volunteering at the House.

Valerie and Robert Godwin

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

Now that we have changed the membership rules as to when you can join FOSP, do not worry about when you should renew, as we send out reminders to all members at the beginning of the month that membership ends.

To save on costs, and volunteers' time, will you please consider, if you have not yet done so, setting up a Standing Order when you renew. This will be explained more fully to members when they receive their reminder.

IMPORTANT - MEMBERSHIP CARDS

As you know, we no longer send out new cards each year on renewal of your subscriptions, so keep your existing card safely, and delete 'Expiry.....'.

When seeking FOSP Membership discounts at Foundation events, you **must show your card** so Staff, at point of entry, can record your details. Please, therefore, ensure that you have renewed your membership at the appropriate time. At the Garden Show you will be refused the discount unless you have your updated membership card with you!

FOSP Committee

FOSP HEAD FORESTERS WALK - 17th APRIL

Unfortunately neither Valerie or I could attend this walk, and as no FOSP member took notes, there is no script to this article.

However, photographs taken by Michael Parry - for which the editors are grateful - give members an idea on where the Head Forester took the 28 attendees. Perhaps there is a budding reporter who would like to contribute an article about future walks if we are unable to attend!!!

Editors



HEAD FORESTER'S WALKS FOR FRIENDS OF STANSTED PARK

Many of you will have joined Michal Prior on his wonderful walks around the Estate - these walks have always been a free, exclusive benefit for FOSP members but, as they are so popular, some members have brought along their friends as well. We do welcome non-members on the walks, but would ask that they make a voluntary donation to FOSP for the privilege of sharing in these fascinating and informative private guided walks.

A donation can easily be made by telephoning the Estate Office, **023 9241 2265**, option 5 (mornings only) to make a card payment to Friends of Stansted Park.

Alternatively, you could encourage your friends to join the Friends instead! Then they can support this beautiful Estate and enjoy all the other benefits of membership as well. Michael's walks are notified on Page six of this Newsletter.

Nigel Smith

**To join Friends of Stansted, see the FOSP page on the Foundation's website
www.stanstedpark.co.uk**

or

join at the House during opening times.

2024 HOUSE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

GUIDED TOURS OF STANSTED HOUSE

Sunday 12th May, Sunday 2nd June,
Sunday 18th August and Sunday 15th September.
11:00am & 11:45am

JUNE

IAN FLEMING - THE COMPLETE MAN A TALK WITH AUTHOR NICHOLAS SHAKESPEARE

Thursday 5th - 6:30pm - 8.00pm
Tickets (14 + years old) £20.00

THE GARDEN SHOW

Friday 7th until Sunday 9th
10.00am - 5.00pm daily (last entry 4.00pm)
Adult tickets from £11.90

STEELEFORD SUPERCAR SHOW

Sunday 23rd - 10.00am - 3.00pm
Tickets: Adult £16 plus £1.50 online booking fee
Child (6 to 17) £10 plus £1.50 online booking fee

OUTDOOR CINEMA

By Adventure Cinema
28th to 30th

JULY

STANSTED SUMMER FESTIVAL

Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th - 10.00am until 6.00pm

WIND IN THE WILLOWS

Outdoor Theatre by Boxtree Productions
Friday 19th - 6.00pm - 8.00pm (In The Walled Garden)

THE SECRET GARDEN

Outdoor Theatre by The Plandits Theatre Company
Thursday 25th - 6.00pm - 8.00pm (entrance from 5pm)
(In the Walled Garden)

AUGUST

ROBIN HOOD

Outdoor Theatre by The Pantaloons
Thursday 1st - 6.30pm - 8.30pm (In the Walled Garden)

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Outdoor Theatre by Chapterhouse Theatre Company
Wednesday 14th - 6pm - 8pm (doors at 5pm)

UK QUEEN UNDER THE STARS

Friday 16th - Car park opens at 6.00pm

THE PROMS UNDER THE STARS

Saturday 17th - Car park opens 5.30

**For full itinerary of events
see the Stansted website**

For tickets please see:-

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

**For more information, please contact the office on
023 9241 2265 or email enquiry@stanstedpark.co.uk
or visit website:**

<https://www.stanstedpark.co.uk/stansted-house>

**A discount to FOSP members is available on
most Foundation events. Contact the Estate
Office quoting your Membership Number.**

FOSP 2024 DATES

MAY

TALK BY EARL OF BESSBOROUGH

'75 YEARS AT STANSTED'
Thursday 16th at 2.00pm

HEAD FORESTERS WALK (See page 5)

Wednesday 29th at 2.00pm
(Use the North Entrance and park in the Mansion Car Park)

JUNE

VISIT TO THE ROYAL PAVILION BRIGHTON

Wednesday 12th

(See below for booking)

FOSP SUMMER SUPPER PARTY

Thursday 27th - 6.30pm for 7.00pm
(For further details, and booking information see page 3)

JULY

TALK BY NATALIE MARSH

(Sports Physiotherapist to the British Olympic Team 2012)
Wednesday 3rd at 2.00pm

AUGUST

FOSP CREAM TEA

Thursday 8th at 3.00pm
(For booking information see page 3)

HEAD FORESTERS WALK (See page 5)

Wednesday 21st at 2.00pm
(Use the North Entrance and park in the Mansion Car Park)

SEPTEMBER

TALK BY JILL STANLEY

Wednesday 11th at 2.00pm
Fascinating Fungi and Flowers of the Estate

*To book your place for talks, coffee mornings, FOSP events etc,
please telephone 023 9241 2265 (option 5).
This will enable us to arrange appropriate seating and
refreshments.*

**Unless otherwise directed, please use the North Entrance to
attend Foundation and FOSP events. Drive through automatic
gates, veer to the right when the drive forks, and park in front
of the House.**

VISIT TO ROYAL PAVILION BRIGHTON

Just a few places left, if you would like to join us then please
contact the Estate Office and pay by card with membership
details.

COMMITTEE MEMBER CONTACTS

Chairman:- Nigel Smith
ngs.1957@hotmail.com

Secretary:- Anne Burton
anneburton99@gmail.com

Treasurer:- Sarah Hutchinson
hutchsj@yahoo.co.uk

Membership:- Paul Bennett
friendsofstanstedpark@outlook.com

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

**For FOSP Membership Enquiries please contact:-
Paul Bennett.**

**NOTE: Membership Cards will only be issued to NEW
Members.**