

# FRIENDS' NEWSLETTER

Summer 2025: Issue 110

#### Feedback please...

If you have any suggestions, ideas or articles for future Newsletters please feel free to contact me at peter.dudman1@virginmedia.com

The Autumn FOSP Newsletter copy date for articles will be **Friday**, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2025.

Hard copies of the Newsletter are available from the Estate Office on request.

# ditor musings...

Thoughts of summer are now not so far away and the programme of events for the remainder of the year looks exciting... We'd like to thank everyone for the contributions and suggestions we received since the last Newsletter. We've used some and saved others for later. Keep them coming....

### ews from the Director

The House opened with its usual flourish on Mothering Sunday, proving to be as popular as ever, with the 2025 season of Public Opening starting on Easter Sunday. On Easter Monday there was the additional attraction of a Teddy Bears' Picnic which brought many families to the Estate who had not visited before; hopefully, they will now support many of our other events.

The Estate team has been busy with a programme of planting in the forest, preparing the grounds for the Summer and dealing with the unceasing array of repair and maintenance tasks which bedevils an estate like this and which cannot be ignored. There have been a wide range of events in the House with barely a gap in the diary; if one does appear, then Jess Williams can be relied upon to fill it with a Guided Tour or a Spring Flower Workshop or the

like. We have hosted a visit by 28 VIPs for a Retreat as well as Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, a former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Israel and Afghanistan, who shared his thoughts on the emerging world order. The Estate was also a venue for the Stansted Park Trail Run which drew 500 people to participate over various distances – with the Home Team fielding a total of 9 eager and enthusiastic runners! All good publicity for the Estate and I am impressed with the lengths that some of our staff go to in order to promote Stansted! They certainly go the extra mile.

Commercial office lettings are a little uncertain at present and, in order to keep the overheads of small businesses at a reasonable level, we are reconfiguring a couple of our offices to make them smaller and more affordable; this will hopefully stabilise the situation. The Walled Gardens, on the other hand, always seem to be teeming with people and hopefully, despite the squeeze on domestic finances, folk will still flock to the Park.



We have a full programme of events and plans are well under way for the Stansted Park Summer Festival in July with the South Downs Food Festival being the first of our outdoor events in early June. The very popular Open Air Cinema makes a return as does the Super Car Show and we are reinstating an Opera evening. The Proms will prove to be even more spectacular this year and there is a new Tea Jazz in the Park event. It's going to be a busy

Summer Season but it is really positive to have such a buzz all over the Estate ensuring that Stansted Park remains a living and vibrant entity.

I would like to thanks the Friends for their continuing generosity in providing funds for various projects including a new Guide Book and, hopefully by the next Newsletter, we will have made some progress on a feasibility study for the new Visitors' Entrance and Ticket Booth.

I wish you all a very enjoyable Summer!

David Bennett

# hairman's Report

The Annual General Meeting was extremely well attended and again featured a 'pop up' Bookshop organized by the Foundation. Once the formal business including the election of the Committee was completed, Jess Williams gave a talk on the plans the Foundation have for the coming year and tea and coffee and cake afterwards gave Friends a chance to chat and reconnect. I pass on my thanks to everyone involved in making this a successful event.

Nigel Smith

### ead Forester Notes

Although it has been a pleasure to carry out the extraction of the chestnut coppice and all the timber and firewood from ash trees felled this winter in very dry conditions, I am now wanting some much-needed rain for the trees we have planted. The benefit of the dry period meant that there was no ride damage of the type we saw during the wet conditions we had last spring and there will be very little time used in repairs to surfaces with our excavator which is a bonus.

Apart from the usual chestnut products of stakes and rails we have again thinned some areas of medium sized chestnut stems destined to be timber. This not only gave space for the other trees left to grow on and more light to improve the coppice below but enabled me to send four lorry loads of this specification to English Woodlands Timber where after sawing to dimension and seasoning it is used as high-quality cladding on some prestigious new developments and renovations in Sussex and Hampshire.

a fine chestnut log



I saw our first Pearl-bordered Fritillary on the 25th April whereas in last year's cold and wet spring it was not until the 9th May that the very few

individuals I did see ventured out. It was therefore very gratifying to bump into Neil Hulme who was the catalyst for the 2016 re-introduction of this declining butterfly to Stansted whilst he was striding round our last years coppice coupes to see how they were doing. He had just seen ten individuals in the sun trap of a dell in a recently cut area and although these are not the numbers we would like to be seeing, shows promise after last year when I feared they might die out again.

In February we said goodbye to our faithful tractor and timber crane which has served us so well for many years and had moved a staggering amount of timber. However, it was time for a younger model and so a 2019 Valtra



Ash dieback disease means that trees continue to be felled within the Estate and replanting large areas is costly but an important part of Stansted Park's charitable mission. In the Summer 2022 Newsletter Jane Pickering wrote about

> project whereby members donate and sponsor trees in memory of their members. Although Autumn is the prime time for replanting trees, why

> the Rowlands Castle Women's Institute involvement in this

not think about sponsoring a "Tree for a Tenner" in memory of a family member or friend or to celebrate a special occasion?



A Commemorative Tree photographed on a recent

tractor fitted with a new Botex crane and full forestry guarding was purchased from Jas P Wilsons of Scotland who are experts in the field of forestry machinery.

Sam has soon

mastered the technology in this machine that the old one didn't have and is getting through the backlog of work admirably.

In between other tasks I am now very focused on our squirrel control programme which is essential to minimise the catastrophic bark stripping of trees these animals do even in quite low numbers. Unfortunately, as many people do not know or care about the impact of squirrels and think they are just cute and amusing bundles of fur my work is made very difficult in that there are large areas of the forest where I cannot use traps as they are stolen or destroyed by misguided individuals who think they are saving

The focus of much of the work for the rest of the summer will be continuing to fell disease affected ash trees across the estate. Where they are showing full crown health, I am tending to leave them for the present to see if we have trees with some degree of immunity but once affected, I am getting them down as once dead they can be difficult to deal with in a safe manner. With a number of new plantings to replace ash there will be plenty of opportunities for those wanting to sponsor trees under our Trees for a Tenner Scheme this coming autumn.

Michael Prior

While it won't be possible to identify your individual tree, you will be able to specify which area and species you'd like and know that you have permanently committed to the restoration of the forest. A truly worthy cause. Michael Prior keeps a database of the species chosen, area planted and for whom.

If you would like to help restore the forest to its former state or for more information please visit this link Tree Fund Project or enter the following in your browser -

(https://www.stanstedpark.co.uk/treefundproject)



# What's happening in the gardens..

As we edge towards the summer months the garden has begun to spring into life. The dry heat we have had recently is encouraging early blooms but hopefully we will take some of these through to June and July.

The climbing roses will give us colour and scent along the rose wall for weeks to come as will the new Alliums including; Allium 'Purple

Sensation', 'Miami', 'Haarlem Superglobe' and 'Ping Pong'.

Plants such as the Geums, Scilla peruviana, Geranium phaeum around the central borders will continue to flower for a substantial time and there has been some new planting to add bursts of colour and later flowering. These include Knautia macedonica, Helenium 'Moerheim Beauty', Geum rivale 'Leonards Variety' and Veronicastrum 'Pink Glow'. The usual suspects will provide ongoing summer colour this year such as hardy geraniums, Geum coccineum 'Queen of Orange'., Nepeta 'Six Hills Giant', Alchemilla mollis, Verbena bonariensis, Rudbeckia and Echinacea. Shrubs and trees such as Viburnum plicatum and Weigelia will provide interest in the outer borders as will the wonderful Shuttlecock ferns.







Stansted provides a wonderful mosaic of habitats and this aspect of the garden will be embraced to encourage biodiversity as we develop areas around the gardens.

Jan Atkinson, Contract Gardener

### Stansted Park Cricket Club

We play Sunday and T20 cricket in the grounds of Stansted Park, located on the Hampshire/West Sussex border.

Formed in 2008, we continue the tradition of this great game which has been played at Stansted Park on the lawn in front of the stately home since 1741 when Slindon beat Portsmouth. Upcoming fixtures can be found <a href="https://example.com/here">here</a>

If you are interested in finding out more please contact <u>lan Graham</u>, Club Secretary



### Garden Centre Entertainment

Join us every Friday for live performances from 2.30pm to 4.30pm

Talented local musicians with a mix of instrumental and vocal performances will be treating you to chillout tunes whilst you relax and enjoy a late lunch or afternoon tea. No need to book, just turn up and enjoy the atmosphere!

Γ,	June		July		August		Septer	nber
	6 <sup>th</sup>	Andy Muscat	$4^{th}$	Helen Spooner	1 st	Helen Spooner	5 <sup>th</sup>	Will Tiernay
	$20^{th}$	Louise Sevier	18 <sup>th</sup>	Mica Alice	15 <sup>th</sup>	Jen Parker	19 <sup>th</sup>	Andy Muscat
	27 <sup>th</sup>	Will Tiernay	$25^{th}$	Freddy Sax	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Daniel Spiller	26 <sup>th</sup>	Freddy Sax
		·			29 <sup>th</sup>	Freddy Sax		



# Physio-logical

### Physiotherapy Advice for Staying Pain-Free Outdoors

My name is Natalie March from Physio-logical, a chartered Physiotherapist.

Gardening is a rewarding way to stay active, but it can put stress on your joints and muscles, especially your back, knees, and shoulders. If you struggle with back pain when gardening, this could be due to weak core (deep tummy) and glutes (buttock) muscles. We are seeing a lot of patients who have back pain in our clinic at Stansted Park and there are some exercises you can do to strengthen your core and glutes muscles.



Natalie March Physio-logical

#### What exercises should I do to make sure I am strong for gardening?

We can offer hands on treatment plus exercises to make sure you improve your muscle strength to ease your symptoms fully.

Here are some exercises to do if you have back pain during and/or after gardening. If you are gardening then do these exercises prior to gardening (this will make sure your muscles are switched on and ready to support you), also repeat them four times a week to improve strength.

Please be aware of your body and take advice from your GP before exercising or send an email to (enquiries@physio-logical.net) for advice and guidance. When exercising do not push into sharp pain.

#### Strengthening Exercises for Lower Back Pain

Bridging - This exercise helps strengthen your buttock muscles.



- Lie on your back
- Bend your knees so your feet are flat on the floor
- Push down through your heels and squeeze your buttocks, count for 3 seconds up, hold for 1 second at the top and then 3 seconds back down
- You should feel the bottom muscles working
- Repeat until your muscles feel tired (buttock muscles)
- This might be 5 times it might be 3 lots of 5 times

Superman - This exercise helps strengthen core stability muscles and improves balance.



- Kneel on the floor and place your hands below your shoulders and knees below your hips.
- Extend right leg back and the left arm forward.
- Maintain a straight body line through extended leg, body, and extended arm.
- Repeat with opposite limbs.
- Hold for 10 seconds, repeat 10 times on each side.



### Regular Events

#### St Paul's Chapel Monthly Prayer Meetings

Why not meet with Friends after these Prayer Meetings for complimentary tea, coffee and biscuits. We'd love to see you.

Prayer Meetings take place on the first Thursday of every month at 12 noon. The service consists of a psalm, Bible reading and brief reflection along with prayers for the House and its community.

#### **Guided Tours of Stansted House**

These take place on the first Sunday of every month at 11.00am or 11.45am with future dates of 6<sup>th</sup> July, 3<sup>rd</sup> August and 7<sup>th</sup> September.

If you want any further information regarding these regular events please phone the Office on 023 9241 2265 Option 5



### What's been happening...

### 100th Birthday Celebrations

April saw the 100th Birthday of long serving House Volunteer, Dawn Spencer.

When Stansted Park Foundation was created and the 10<sup>th</sup> Earl first opened the House to visitors in 1984, Dawn was there to help, and she continued to help welcome visitors for many, many years. Only in recent times, and well into her nineties, did Dawn finally say goodbye to her stewarding role. She was a valuable asset with her knowledge, reliability and friendly, welcoming attitude.

Pictured with Dawn, at her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations, is good friend Joan Felton, with Hat Box roses from Stansted Park Foundation. Joan is a former House Steward Manager for the Foundation, former FOSP Membership Secretary, and long term FOSP Member and event supporter.



### Crocus Tea - 5th March

The first Crocus Tea was a great success despite the inability of the crocus to be the centrepiece of each table. It was well attended and Vanessa Bowler provided a soundtrack to the afternoon.

### Notes on the Stansted Forest Walk – 25th April



The recent guided walk through Stansted Forest, led by Michael Prior the Head Forester was, as always, a delight. Michael's experience of the forest and the Estate is second to none and is matched by his deep and insightful knowledge, and concern for wildlife and conservation.

We walked on into the forest where Michael explained that the rides had had to be widened in recent times, to accommodate modern forestry machinery, but edges of the rides were cut on alternate years, so that there was always a strip of natural habitat for insects and butterflies. Michael pointed out some of the different types of trees for timber produced on the Estate, and explained how, although Stansted Forestry was partly a commercial operation, they strove at all times to preserve and create habitats for wildlife.

There were ongoing problems of damage to young trees - a limited problem with rabbits, but much greater damage done by hares, nipping the tops of trees in a new plantation,

and by deer - new plantations had to be fenced, with Michael giving information about construction and maintenance.

Other problem animals on the Estate can be human beings! Lighting fires, discarding bottles and cigarettes create a fire hazard. Michael expressed his desire to keep the Estate open as an amenity for all, but some areas have to be restricted for safety, environmental, and conservation reasons. He explained the particular problem of dry bracken as a fire hazard and how they worked to control the amount of bracken on the Estate and within the plantations. We all need to be careful and considerate to preserve this wonderful and valuable place.

Towards the end of the walk Michael pointed out a beautiful stand of Douglas Firs that had been planted by **Lumberjills\*** from the British Timber Corps at the end of the Second World War that were now reaching maturity. This emphasized the lengthy cycles that a Forester must work planning and working for the benefit of future generations.

#### Andrew Rackham

\*not the same Lumberjills that worked within the British Timber Corps in the War there are a new group of women working with and felling trees within the South Downs National Park. They are called **Lumberjills** after their wartime counterparts. Chloe Goddard talked about their work within the South Downs National Park as part of her talk to FOSP Members on the 8<sup>th</sup> May.

Bloomberg Connects - a new way to explore Arts & Culture in your local area, especially Stansted Park and all it has to offer. Download the app for Android or iOS on Google Play App Store or Apple App Store and start to explore the house, its history and its rooms and contents through the interactive guide.



### Talk by Chloë Goddard - Thursday, 8th May

<u>Chloë Goddard</u> is the Central Area Manager for the South Downs National Park which includes the area around Chichester and Stansted Park. She spoke about her role as Ranger within the park and described the areas that she covered. She also spoke about the varied work that the Rangers and volunteers do to ensure that all areas of the Park which include farmland, woodland and rivers are managed for generations to come.

At the end of her talk she spoke about the <u>National Dormouse Footprint Tunnel</u> <u>Survey</u> and her hope that it may be possible to set up a self-led group of volunteers to monitor dormice on Stansted Estate using tunnels. All materials can be provided



by the National Park and she could train volunteers and give on-going support. If there is enough interest in helping with this, and Michael Prior agrees, a date



will be set up in the not too distant futre when Chloë may help set up some tunnels, give some initial training and explain what information needs to be collected for the surveys. Watch this space for more information....

If you missed her talk and want to know more about the South Downs National Park you can read about it here - <u>Home - South Downs National Park Authority</u>



Late Summer Guided Walk - no need to book - just turn up at the meeting place...

3<sup>rd</sup> September: meet in the Mansion Car Park, North Entrance, staff car park to the left of the House at 2:00pm



Contribution from Vanessa Bowler

A 19th century French Empire mahogany mantel clock with a circular white enamel dial and Arabic numerals, signed "Blanc, Rue St. Honore No. 34." The dial is enclosed within a rectangular case on a sphinx-mounted square base containing a brass movement with silk-hung suspension. Previously in the possession of Blanche, 8th Countess Bessborough, likely purchased in Paris by her mother Lady Charlotte Schreiber. Would originally have been at Bessborough House in Ireland before being transferred to Stansted in 1924 when Blanche's son Vere purchased the house and estate. It is not listed in the 1999 Sotheby's sale catalogue and eventually ended up in America, which implies that it could have travelled back there with Mary Bessborough when she returned to live in the US in 1993 upon the death of her husband Frederick, 10th Earl. The clock was sold along with other items from Stansted at an auction by Freeman's of English and Continental Furniture and Fine Arts in 2014, the year after Mary's death.

If you, or anyone you know, have something interesting to share please let us know...



### What's coming up...

### Summer Supper Party, Pavilion Tea Rooms Thursday 26th June, 6:30pm

Please book for the Summer Supper Party before 11<sup>th</sup> June

We'd love to see you at our Summer Supper Party - fizz in the Walled Garden, followed by a delicious supper in the beautiful Pavilion Tea Rooms. Other drinks, coffee and tea will be available from the bar. Contributions for our Annual Raffle would be welcome too - just bring something on the day.

Book your place now - to pay by card, telephone the Estate Office 023 9241 2265 Option 5, giving your details and membership number OR, if you'd prefer, pay by cheque, payable to Friends of Stansted Park, send details of names, and your membership number to: Anne Burton, Dapplend, Walnut Tree Drive, Woodmancote, Emsworth, PO10 8QH.



Cost FOSP Members £27 Non-members £31

On the day please park in the Garden Centre Car Park, or for those less able, use the Bothy Car Park by the Chapel.

### Wine & Food Tasting Evening - Thursday 31st July, 7:00 – 9:00pm

Another new and exciting exclusive event will be held in the Music Room at Stansted House this Summer



"The Continuing Adventures of the Cape Crusaders"

Join us in the House for this exclusive Tasting, which will be

hosted by Alistair Gibson from Heritage Cellars, who lived in Cape Town for a number of years and visits this beautiful wine region regularly.

The evening will start with an

aperitif on arrival and then Alistair will present 5 wines matched with a selection of seasonal canapés put together by Stansted Farm Shop.

In his annual South African Wine Report, highly regarded English wine journalist Tim Atkin MW has stated that "South

Africa is currently the most exciting New World wine producing nation on the planet". There has been a remarkable transformation over the last few decades in the Cape and there is a real buzz in the air with a whole generation of new young

winemakers making some wonderful wines from old

vines. Stellenbosch and Constantia may be the best-known regions but areas such as Elgin and the Swartland are now producing wines that are every bit as interesting.



After the tasting, you will be able to socialise with access to the South Terrace. Coffee will be available, and music will be provided by our resident pianist Vanessa Bowler

**CANAPÉS & WINE** 

what's not to

Tickets are on sale now but there are a limited number of places for this event, so booking early is a must. Tickets are on a first come first served basis (a reserve list will be held in case of cancellations). Please call the Office on a weekday morning: -023 9241 2265 (Option 5) with your membership number, and your card to hand. Members £30.00 (non-members £35.00). Please let us know if you have any dietary or House access requirements when you book. Access on the day will be via the North Entrance, go through the black automatic gates, and park in front of the House.

### "Of Wars and Petticoats" - Thursday, 2nd October, 10:00am - 12:30pm



Henrietta Ponsonby - portrait by Angelica Kauffman

Another new event which will replace the Autumn Coffee morning.

Following tea and coffee served in the Hall, there will be three specialist talks relating to Stansted House including "The Ponsonby Women" by Jess Williams, the House Visitor & Collections Coordinator. These talks will be followed by a short Q&A session.

After the talks and Q&A session there will be two specialist tours. On booking this event members will be asked to choose either a tour on The Ponsonby Women led by Jess Williams or a Servants Quarters Guided Tour - "a view of Stansted by those who served below stairs" led by Lynda and Anne.

Save the date - further details will follow nearer the time...



### **Diary Dates**

To see the full itinerary of coming events and house tours either visit the Stansted website <a href="www.stanstedpark.co.uk.whatson">www.stanstedpark.co.uk.whatson</a>, or contact the Office by email - <a href="mailto:enquiry@stanstedpark.co.uk">enquiry@stanstedpark.co.uk</a> or phone 023 9241 2265. FOSP Members can get discounts on most Foundation Events. Contact the Office with your Membership number for discount codes.



### FRIENDS OF STANSTED HOUSE EVENTS

Summer Supper Party see Page 7 for more information & booking details	Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> June @ 6:30pm
Wine & Food Tasting Evening see Page 7 for more information	Thursday, 31st July @ 7.00pm - 9.00pm
Cream Tea - save the date - booking and cost details to follow	Thursday, 14 <sup>th</sup> August @ 3:00pm
"Of Wars and Petticoats" see Page 7 for more information	Thursday, 2 <sup>nd</sup> October @ 10:00am-12:30pm
"Deer in the southeast: their impact and management"	Tuesday, 23 <sup>rd</sup> October @ 2:00pm
a talk by Jody Orchard from the Forestry Commission	
Yuletide Tea	

How to get here: Unless otherwise directed, please use the North Entrance to attend FOSP events. Drive through the automatic gates, veer to the right where the drive forks and park in front of the House.

#### **FOUNDATION EVENTS**

June-November 2025 - use links to websites for more information

South Downs Food Festival Steeleford Supercar Show Opera Gala Upstairs, Downstairs Extended House Tour Outdoor Cinema	Saturday, 7 <sup>th</sup> June & Sunday, 8 <sup>th</sup> JuneSunday, 22 <sup>nd</sup> June @ 10:00amSaturday, 28 <sup>th</sup> June @ 7.30pm - 9.45pmFriday, 11 <sup>th</sup> July @ 10am-12pm
Outdoor Cinema	Friday, 11 <sup>th</sup> July, Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> July, Sunday, 13 <sup>th</sup> July
Stansted Summer Festival	Saturday, 19 <sup>th</sup> July, Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> July
Upstairs, Downstairs Extended House Tour	Friday, 1 <sup>st</sup> August @ 10am-12pm
Hamlet.	Thursday, 7 <sup>th</sup> August - doors open 5:30pm
Outdoor Theatre by The Pantaloons in The Walled Garden	
Proms Weekend: Proms in the Park	Saturday, 9 <sup>th</sup> August
Proms Weekend: TeaJazz in the Park	Sunday, 10 <sup>th</sup> August
Proms Weekend: TeaJazz in the Park The Big Bad Wolf Outdoor Theatre	Thursday, 14 <sup>th</sup> August - doors open 5.00pm
The Ponsonby Women in Jane Austen's England House Tour	Friday, 22 <sup>nd</sup> August @ 3:45pm-4:45pm
Audience Choice Austen - Pride & Prejudice or Emma!	Saturday, 6 <sup>th</sup> September @ 6:00pm-8:00pm
Doors open 5:00pm - in the walled garden	
Music Evening - save the date	Thursday, 11 <sup>th</sup> September
Spectral Nights - Paranormal Investigations	Saturday, 27 <sup>th</sup> September @ 7.00pm - midnight
Final House Opening for the Season	Tuesday, 30 <sup>th</sup> September
Final House Opening for the Season  Halloween Outdoor Cinema - save the date	Friday, Saturday & Sunday, 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> October
Music Evening - save the date	Thursday, 9 <sup>th</sup> October
House Armistice Remembrance Service	Tuesday, 11 <sup>th</sup> November @ 11.00am

#### COMMITTEE MEMBER CONTACT DETAILS

Chairman	Nigel Smith- <u>ngs.1957@hotmail.com</u>
Secretary	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Treasurer	Sarah Hutchinson- <u>hutchsi@vahoo.co.uk</u>
Membership Secretary	Paul Bennett-friendsofstanstedpark@outlook.com
Newsletter Editor	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·

For membership enquiries, please contact <u>Paul Bennett</u>. Membership cards will be issued to new members only. <u>Membership Renewals</u>: When renewing your membership, would you please consider setting up a Standing Order to save on volunteer time. Our Bank Details are: Sort Code 60-10-20 Account 61788627. Please give your membership number as a reference.