

FRIENDS OF



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am sitting in my office, wearing winter clothes, with the start of a cold and wondering whether the Summer has come and gone or if it is due soon?

Fortunately, we had fine weather for the Friends' coach trip to Brighton Pavilion on 12th June. Whilst there, we also had time for a leisurely lunch, a stroll along the sea front and an ice cream on the pier before we returned to Stansted. Many thanks to Chris Freeborough for organising the trip which was well attended and enjoyed by some 39 Friends.

We were again blessed with good weather for the Summer Party on the evening of 27th June at the Pavilion Tea Rooms and this time thanks go to Anne Burton for organising the event which was attended and enjoyed by 72 Friends and their guests.

Many of you will have had occasion to contact the Estate Office for booking Events or making enquiries, and you are most likely to have spoken with Kim, the Estate Office Manager. I take this opportunity to thank Kim, without whom FOSP could not function as it does! We also have tremendous support for FOSP Events from David and his teams - the Estate, Office and House staff, who are endlessly patient and helpful. I know I speak for every Member in thanking them all.

Finally, and wearing my other hat as the Stansted Bookshop Keeper, if you have any books you no longer require, we are short of Fiction books which can be donated at the Shop. *See also page 4.*

Nigel Smith

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Summer was a long time in coming, to say the least, as the seemingly incessant rain dampened the lawns and our spirits while the Estate grounds staff and volunteers heroically attempted to prepare the Gardens for the Season. This was achieved just in the nick of time for The Garden Show which notched up an impressive 30 years of being at Stansted Park. This popular Show will be greatly missed but it does give the Estate an opportunity to examine smaller and slightly more niche events such as our own Summer Festival and the inaugural South Downs Food Festival in September.

My team is already in negotiations with an organiser who wishes to host an event in 2025 which blends art and smart motor cars!



Corporate Launch

We held a really enjoyable Corporate Launch Day in May which attracted over 70 business folk from over 40 separate companies. This allowed us to showcase the wide array of activities that we can lay on here ranging from business conferences, lunches and dinners to archery, clay pigeon shooting, field gun team demonstration (proudly sporting the Stansted Park logo!) yoga and environmental tours. All being well, the casting of these tantalising flies will be snapped up by commercial organisations wishing to enjoy a very special place in which to entertain their clients or promote the well-being of their staff.

The Super Car Rally goes from strength to strength with some impressive, if rather noisy, vehicles on display. Sadly, the Opera had to be dropped this year but this was replaced by an Outdoor Cinema which, over eight screenings during the weekend, attracted in excess of 5,000 patrons!

The fourth year of the Summer Festival is upon us and we hope that we will be spared the 50 mile an hour winds which caused a few issues last year! The event continues to grow nicely and, as well as the usual array of eclectic activities, including 200 Napoleonic Reenactors, we have a demonstration of the Field Gun run which some of you will remember from the days of the Royal Tournament. *(Editors Note: The record for the fastest run at the Royal Tournament was set by Devonport in 1999, the competition's final year, with 80.86 seconds for the "Run Out", 58.65 seconds for the "Run Back" and 20.92 seconds for the "Run Home", an aggregate of 2 minutes, 40.43 seconds.)*

Amongst other guest speakers, we have Sir Sherard Cowper-Cowles talking on the Middle East; he was a former Ambassador to Israel and Saudi Arabia. In an attempt to broaden the subject matter, David Jones a marine environmentalist, will be discussing the plight of the world's oceans and the devastating impact caused by plastic waste. All in all a fascinating and highly entertaining pot pourri of entertainment over the weekend!

We have held a couple of interesting talks, one entitled 'Running on Empty' by Guy Deacon following his tour through Africa, highlighting the difficulties faced by fellow Parkinson's sufferers. Nicholas Shakespeare gave a highly entertaining talk on his new book on Ian Fleming; Nicholas had visited to research Loelia Ponsonby's diaries which our archivist, Diana Roberts, has made available to him.

Elsewhere on the Estate, we are busy conducting essential maintenance to keep the heritage assets, residential cottages and buildings in a good state of repair. The Foundation is developing a new website as well as a strategy to identify where additional income can be generated.

Plans for the new Visitor Entrance and a refresh of the Picnic Area are still being examined and the Foundation is much appreciative of the support given by the Friends to assist in funding these endeavours.

I wish you all a very enjoyable and restful Summer.

David Bennett



Gun Run Team

HEAD FORESTER'S NOTES - AUTUMN 2024



Young oak trees stripped of bark – Oak Copse

My time in May and June has been dominated by squirrels and, despite trapping a record number, damage this year has been severe with bark stripping in many plantations of young broadleaves, which is very frustrating considering the efforts we go to in keeping the population down. I believe several factors have exacerbated this ever present problem for broadleaved woodland. The massive seed crop of beech in the autumn meant squirrels were going into the winter in very good condition after fattening up on this bounty. A mild winter then led to a large breeding population in the spring which has boomed, leading to the damage we have seen. In addition, we are bordered by a number of woodland areas where little or no squirrel control is carried out, leading to a constant influx of replacement animals. This situation is, however, not universal as I know that the gamekeeper for our neighbour has shot a record number of squirrels this spring. Our task is made more difficult as, due to the wide permitted access we give, there are large areas of the forest where I cannot trap. We are very happy to share large areas of the forest that so many people get joy and recreation from visiting. This does, however, mean that we also share it with the ones who do not agree with what we do and theft or destruction of traps can often be the result!

A very positive task this summer has been the removal of the deer/rabbit fence on the plantation in part of Forest Hanger. This area of mixed conifer species was planted in spring 2014 and has grown very well. Where the occasional crop tree has failed, they have been replaced by naturally seeded species such as willow, birch and a few oak. Many of these will be retained in future management work to add additional habitat and diversity of canopy to the plantation. In addition to the fence removal, we have created an access and inspection ride throughout the length of the plantation. This was made possible as the now closed canopy of the planted trees had finally shaded out all the bracken and bramble that had made previous access difficult. This will allow us easy access to remove competing growth and climbers, assess the crop for time of first thinning and carry out pruning of very promising timber stems. It was a very positive experience for Sam, who carried out the majority of this work, as he had planted it ten years before and weeded the crop for three years. Therefore, to see good timber trees emerging from the previous thicket is one of the many very gratifying parts of the forestry profession.

As usual, we had a pair of lapwings nest on Horse Pasture Farm and they hatched off three young, which I saw several times amongst the growing crop. Whether these reached the fledging stage, I know not, as they were not seen after this.

Our barn owls have had another good season, with two broods of two owlets and one of five. Our regular, licenced bird ringer came to put rings on the first two broods but the five were too big at that point. I was also delighted to find two broods of spotted flycatchers on the Estate, as this red-listed bird has declined dramatically. There were two juveniles feeding in mixed woodland in the forest one morning and, in the afternoon of the same day, I found a nest with four young on a ledge of the stable block archway after seeing the parent fly in with food.



Young owl about to be ringed

Michael Prior

(Editor's Note:- According to the European Squirrel Initiative, grey squirrels **cause £40 million damage to the British and European forestry industry** per year. ESI are concerned that unless something is done, there will be no oak, beech, or sweet chestnut mature trees left in the years to come.)

TREE OF THE MONTH - CAUCASIAN WINGNUT



The tree of the Month for June is the Caucasian Wingnut (*Pterocarya fraxinifolia*) which is, as the name suggests, a native of the Caucasus from Iran to the Ukraine. This is ultimately a very large tree with wide spreading branches and so needs plenty of room. It is a member of the family that includes walnuts and hickories and its small seeds are apparently edible and are used in traditional cooking in its native regions. The huge compound leaves are very attractive as are the strings of fruit hanging in profusion from the branches. Its best feature, however, is the stunning chrome-yellow autumn colour. It does have its downsides and, apart from ultimate size which limits planting sites, it is very prone to producing large numbers of suckers. Someone once said that the best way to get a wood quickly was to buy an acre of wingnuts. grass and plant one of these in the middle. In a few years, if no cutting or grazing, was employed you would have an acre of wingnuts.

Michael Prior

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. You will be refused the discount unless you have your membership card!

FOSP Committee

TAKEN FROM THE 'GARDEN HOUSE DIARIES' by RUTH TOMALIN (Circa, September 1934)



Scabious in the meadows, strings of scarlet and yellow bryony berries in the hedgerows, with heart-shaped leaves of pale yellow or green. Lime trees are yellow, beeches gorgeous russet and bronze.

More swallows and martins are assembling, but some are nesting still. Many robins fly about and sing. Thrushes may be heard among the evening calls, chief of which is the pheasants' roosting call from the forest.

Saw painted ladies, tortoiseshells, commas, skippers. A little fluffy red squirrel, with bright black eyes and feathery tail, gathered nuts in a swaying hazel bush.

BARN OWLS RETURN

It is always a huge pleasure to find our population of barn owls is doing well when I check the nest sites in June. I only hope we have a good year for the voles and mice that are their principal prey to feed the young owlets. From this brood of five you can easily see the difference in size between them which is because the



female will start to incubate as soon as she lays rather than waiting until all eggs are laid. This strategy ensures that in a poor year only the strongest and biggest chicks survive to fledge. The need to feed their young means that we often see the adults out hunting in daylight, morning and evening at this time of year. To watch one floating across grassland and occasionally diving into the sward after prey is a magical experience that I will never tire of.

Michael Prior



THE HOPE OF THE SIDE

"The hope of the Side", they called me,
In nineteen forty-four.
The hope of the British Army?
The head of the Fighting Corps?

No, I had better things to do
Than heed the battle cries,
And more important work was mine
Beneath those war-torn skies.

I had to hunt for snowdrops
On February days.
In March I looked for daffodils,
Their yellow gowns ablaze.

In April came the bluebells
And I needed to be there,
To guide their footsteps through the trees
As fragrance filled the air.

In May I called the cuckoo
To be sure he sang his song,
And listened to the blackbird
Just in case he should go wrong.

The roses and wild strawberries,
I had to touch and taste,
And tell the busy honey-bees
The pollen not to waste.

I sat beside the lake and coaxed
The water-lily flowers,
And in the fields of amber corn
Stood I for many hours.

I watched the lovely autumn leaves
To see when they turned gold,
And warned the squirrels hoarding nuts
That winter would be cold.

I checked the ripening hips and haws
And ushered in the snow,
And asked the pretty icicles
To shimmer high and low.

How could the seasons come and go
If they were never told?
The hope of the countryside was I,
At all of three years old.

Valerie Godwin

Valerie's poem was written in remembrance of D-Day, which she can recall at Rookesbury Park, Wickham. It is a tribute to the men and women who gave their lives for the freedom we enjoy. The poem also has her grandfather, with whom she and her mother lived during the war, in mind and who, as Portsmouth's first City Architect, designed the Southsea D-Day War Memorial which has always been the focus for remembering the fallen.

We remember, too, those Canadian troops stationed at Rowlands Castle and Stansted Park - in particular Flying Officer Justin Gerard Clermont, RCA, who lost his life at Stansted one month before D-Day and whose memorial is erected on The Avenue.

"We will remember them"

Robert Godwin



THE GARDEN SHOW-THE END OF AN ERA



The Garden Show at Stansted this year was, almost undoubtedly, its finest. With marquee after marquee, tent after tent, and stall after stall, there really was something for everyone. From the amazingly delicious choices of food and drink to enjoy, and the huge and glorious displays of plants, garden ornaments, garden furniture and other related items to peruse and purchase - it was fabulous.

The vast collection of craft-ware was astounding too, with beautiful sculptures, glass paintings, jewellery, china, leather goods and clothing of all kinds which filled out and spilled from just about every corner.

And then there was Dawn Gracy and the wandering Jazz Band to entertain the crowds, birds of prey to admire and even, for children, a small tent where certain circus skills could be learnt and practiced!

This lovely show is leaving Stansted and will be sadly missed, but it is not moving so far away, for in 2025 it is to be resurrected at Rookesbury Park, Wickham which, incidentally, is where I was born. And it is beautiful there too.

Valerie Godwin



BEING A PHYSIOTHERAPIST AT THE OLYMPICS



On Wednesday 3rd July Natalie March, the owner of Physio-logical, gave us an insight of being a physiotherapist at the 2012 Olympics. After applying in 2010 and going through a rigorous selection process, Natalie was selected and stationed at the sailing events at Weymouth and Portland. She made many friends from all over the world's sailing community and was part of the team paramount in maintaining fitness amongst the athletes. Although the post was as a volunteer, as Cadburys was one of the sponsors, she did enjoy rather too many chocolates!

Having qualified in 2003 at Brunel University, London and having worked in the National Health Service at Basingstoke Hospital for many years, she treats a wide range of orthopaedic and musculoskeletal conditions. She has also worked with local rugby clubs, hockey and football players. Natalie has corporate experience working within Vodafone HQ and is also trained in manipulation and Acupuncture for pain relief. Her specialist areas of expertise are sports rehabilitation and treating musculoskeletal conditions such as neck and back pain, general muscle strains and sporting injuries.

Natalie, and her team, pride themselves in helping people to achieve the high levels of fitness needed for their sporting and working lives. She encouraged those FOSP members present to revive their fitness regime, even if it was only walking or taking gentle exercise. Prevention is better than cure!

To book an appointment or to discuss any questions you may have, please contact them direct at:-

enquiries@physio-logical.net

Robert Godwin

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.

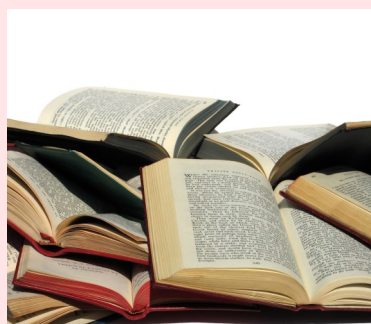
Nigel Smith

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.

AN APPEAL FROM THE BOOKSHOP



The Foundation's Bookshop in the Garden Centre is running short of **fiction** and would be pleased to receive donations of any **hardback or paperback fiction books** that you no longer require.

The Bookshop is run by Volunteers and all of the funds raised goes towards the upkeep of the grounds at Stansted.

Book donations can be made direct to the Shop, or please contact the Estates Office or Nigel Smith direct by email nigs.1957@hotmail.com if you are housebound or have a large donation that you would like to be collected.

Nigel Smith

NOTE:- If you are taking a late summer holiday, the bookshop has an excellent range of books at really good prices. So grab a few to read at the pool with your usual G&T!

FOSP SUMMER PARTY



David Bennett
and
Anne Burton

With sparkling wine or soft drinks in the Walled Garden on arrival, supplemented with beautiful weather reigning over us, what a fantastic evening the Friends had.

This important event in the Friend's calendar, where we can all socialise for chit-chat, is the ideal opportunity to meet old and new Members and friends, reminisce over a glass or two and discuss the latest news!

Nigel Smith gave a short presentation thanking all the volunteers who give of their time to make our Summer Party so special.

The highlight of the evening, Clare's delicious buffet supper, was, as usual, superb with plenty for everyone to enjoy. The support from all was excellent and, with Joan Feltham as customary, organising the raffle and with thanks to the continued generosity of Friends donating a wonderful variety prizes, it certainly went a long way towards the making of an other outstanding occasion.

Robert Godwin



The hardworking bar team! Nigel, Ruth and Roger

RECOLLECTIONS - RUTH TOMALIN

31st January 2009

A rather belated thank you for your lovely Christmas card, which really made me feel that I was standing on the edge of the 'cricket field' and looking across at the trees there and away to the forest. I expect the snowdrops will soon be out in the shrubbery behind the path?



Season's Greetings

A little past history; when I first remember the little building across the lawn on the right, it was decorated like a children's playroom - later to be the first cricket pavilion - and there were two seesaws and a swing in the trees behind, enjoyed by us and no doubt by former owners' child visitors. A mound further to the right contained the old icehouse. The late Queen Mother's tree is across the drive, just beyond this picture.

30th May 2009

Thank you so much for your letter and fascinating newsletter. I especially enjoyed reading Michael Prior's article - how interesting that he comes from the Fenlands. Our Governess, (Head Teacher) at Forestside school (of "The Garden House") also did so and I think was always homesick. Also, I loved

reading about his walks, about Lyels Wood - and glad they heard a cuckoo on the second walk. I hoped we might be lucky enough for one on 22nd April, but no; strange to remember the days of long cuckoo calls in the 1930's...

I've been meaning to write and thank you for your beautiful card showing the flowering cherry in the Dutch Garden - also showing the sloping roof that led to the wagtail's nest and the young cuckoo.... I well remember scrambling over those sun-warmed slates to look at it (see "Garden House Diaries" page 55). Also, I'm afraid the baby wagtails had been murdered.

Gail and I had a surprise on seeing our photo in the newsletter! I realise that I've now been photographed in the Dutch Garden for 84 years - it was a favourite place for family 'snaps'. Gail will send her copy to my cousin Ray (95), the one who took all those tinted photos which you've seen, some of which may be the only ones of the flowerbeds etc. Ray was for years one of the guides and lecturers at Knole - interesting to me as I'd known Vita Sackville-West and Sissinghurst.

Gail and I are hoping we might get to the Old Orchard on Trafalgar Day!

With love (also to Muffin), Ruth

This was Ruth's last letter to me as she found the keys of her old original 'sit-up and beg' typewriter a strain to use and her handwriting more difficult too, but she regularly sent postcards to update me on her publishing and gardening activities and any visits to Stansted she had made. I think she also enjoyed my own news of our move from Hayling Island to Sidmouth beside the Donkey Sanctuary where Tony and I stayed for 10 months before making our home in Tenerife in January 2011.

I met Ruth for the first time in 2005 at the re-opening of the Dutch Garden but, as we shared so many interests and a love of Stansted, a place she had spent much of her childhood, it seemed a natural progression to write to each other and meet when possible. Sadly, I did not see her after my move abroad before she died in November 2012. But I was able to attend the memorial gathering the following spring with all her family and friends and many FOSP members. It was a lively and very happy celebration of her long life.

All of Ruth's books reflect her love of wildlife and her concern for the impact that humanity has on it and on the countryside. Probably best known is the trilogy about Ralph Oliver which includes '*The Garden House*', '*The Spring House*' and '*Away to the West*', truly delightful books and beautifully written. '*The Garden House*' gives a time-warp portrait of Stansted in the 1930s through the years of the young boy, Ralph - possibly her alter ego. A lovely lady who I shall continue to miss.

Jill Waring (Editor's Note: Tony had his long delayed hip operation on Tuesday 2nd July, in Santa Cruz. A big hospital up a hill, with a great view of the city and the sea, but totally without any car parking, so an absolute nightmare for Jill to get to. Jill also had to collect him, and was trying to get him admitted to the local hospital for 2-3 days as he is now 87 and is in a prolonged period of intense pain. He is completely without the strength to lift himself into a standing position, let alone walk, so it was hoped the hospital would come up trumps!)

YULETIDE TEA - 4th DECEMBER



Come and celebrate Christmas and join the Committee for Afternoon Tea. There will be mulled wine on arrival (non - alcoholic available) and this will be followed by savouries, cakes and mince pies. Tea or coffee will also be served. A great way for Members to mix and start the Christmas festivities!

DO KEEP THIS DATE FREE

Further details and costs will be in the next Newsletter.

FOSP Committee

2024 HOUSE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**GUIDED TOURS OF STANSTED HOUSE**

Sunday 18th August and Sunday 15th September

11:00am & 11:45am

AUGUST**ROBIN HOOD**

Outdoor Theatre by The Pantaloons

Thursday 1st - 6.30pm - 8.30pm (In the Walled Garden)

**CALLIGRAPHY WORKSHOP WITH JODIE ROSE
CALLIGRAPHY**

Friday 2nd August 10:00am-12:30pm

**ART & PHOTOGRAPHY SESSION WITH
FAB FALCONRY**

Wednesday 7th August 10:00am -12:00pm

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Wednesday 14th - 6pm - 8pm (doors at 5pm)

Outdoor Theatre by Chapterhouse Theatre Company

UK QUEEN UNDER THE STARS

Friday 16th - Car park opens at 6.00pm

THE PROMS UNDER THE STARS

Saturday 17th - Car park opens 5.30pm

SEPTEMBER**SOUTH DOWNS FOOD FESTIVAL**

Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th from 10.30am to 5.00pm

The Festival will be opened by Dame Prue Leith

Type this website into a web browser page for to secure the early bird ticket price:-

<https://www.eventbrite.com/.../south-downs-food-festival...>

OCTOBER

Tuesday 1st - House closes for season

LO & BEHOLD ANOTHER WEDDING FAIR

Saturday 5th & Sunday 6th 12pm to 4pm

NOVEMBER

Friday 8th Armistice Lecture (To be advised)

Monday 11th Remembrance Service

(Meet at 10.45am in front of the House)

Friday 29th and Saturday 30th Wreath Making Workshop

DECEMBER

Sunday 1st Wreath Making Workshop

For full itinerary of events and tickets see the Stansted website

<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**AUGUST****HEAD FORESTERS WALK (See page 4)**

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 of the Estate

OCTOBER**FOSP COFFEE MORNING**

Thursday 3rd at 10.00am

To book, and for catering purposes, please contact the Estate Office

DECEMBER**YULETIDE TEA**

Wednesday 4th at 3.00pm

(See page 5)

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 where the road forks, and park in front of the House.

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.

**THE NEXT FOSP NEWSLETTER COPY DATE
FOR ARTICLES**

Friday 25th October 2024 NOTE: Hard copies of the Newsletter are available from the Estate Office. *Editor*

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