



WINTER NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2014

www.friendsofbcdh.org



Chairman's Report



Firstly may I, on behalf of the Trustees, apologise for the delays in answering any queries you may have had and for any late membership reminders.

I am sure you are aware that there have been significant changes taking place in the way that the Friends' Membership records are held and that a new Membership programme is being installed. This entails some considerable initial work to transfer all our membership records, currently held on a number of separate listings, on to one comprehensive list which will give us the information we need all in one place.

Since the AGM we have had a number of new Trustees, a new Treasurer and a new Membership Secretary. The details of these new Trustees are:

Cary Bush, Treasurer, taking over from Jenny Otridge to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for the hard work she put in bringing the accounts and Gift Aid submissions up-to-date and for all the hours she spent, on our behalf, bringing the Friends' records up-to-date.

Judith Burgess, Membership Secretary, taking over from Anne Meddick who decided to retire at the AGM. Our grateful thanks to Anne for all the hard work she did over the years together with our best wishes.

Louise Atkins and **Dennis Long** are new Trustees - *welcome to the team!*

Activities have continued, especially the Refreshments, which bring in significant revenue for the Friends. Many of you will know that the Fun Day on August Bank Holiday Monday 25th August was challenging to say the least, with heavy rain all day; that said we still managed to raise funds for the Friends and my thanks to all concerned.

The Myrtle Hurle Cattery, whilst still with its problems, is now up and running and should be a considerable asset to the Home.

In conclusion can I assure you we are doing all we can to support the Home in line with our constitution and as ever we are looking at ways to increase our finances. The 1000 club will be re-launched in the Spring of 2015 and we look forward to you all supporting this scheme. Thank you for your continued support.

Robin Eastman, Chairman of Trustees.

MEET OUR NEW Membership Secretary

The Friends are delighted to welcome **Judith Burgess** as our new Membership Secretary. Judith has had a long and valuable association with Bath Cats & Dogs Home.



Her first contact with the Home was in the early 1980s when she adopted a large, fluffy, black and white cat called Theo. Since then, with her family, she has adopted a dog, three cats and several guinea pigs, hamsters and birds.

For some time Judith co-ordinated the fostering and adoption of cage and aviary birds that came into the Home, and with her family she fostered kittens. Judith was also a home visitor. Both of her daughters have grown up helping at the Cats & Dogs Home. Her husband, Nick, has also been involved with the Home in many capacities, and is Vice Chairman of the Friends. Judith worked as a secretary and administrator in the NHS for many years, and since 1998 has owned a pet-sitting business.

She is very happy to be able to take on the job of Membership Secretary and looks forward to hearing from anyone - existing members or someone interested in joining - who has a question related to membership.

There is a new email address for this:

membership.friendsbcdh@gmail.com

Another happy ending for a lost soul

Danny did not have a good start in life. He was found in Wales in a very poor state, a mere shadow of the lovely dog he is today.

He was rescued and brought to Bath Cats & Dogs Home where he was given food and shelter – basic necessities that he was far from used to. We believe Danny had been used as a racer and bait dog which would explain why one of his ears had been badly torn and also the numerous scars on his head and body. It was also evident that Danny had suffered cruelty at the hands of mankind as he was terrified of human beings. He used to hide under a table or find a secure place in a corner.

After several months Danny was adopted. Sadly, the adoption didn't work out and he was returned to the Home. Throughout this period I had been walking Danny and had built a bond with him and gained his trust. I later introduced Danny to my two dogs Shumba and Lucky.



They became friends and Danny gained in confidence from being with them. Needless to say Danny wasn't an easy dog and he would escape from time to time. He was hard to contain but through love, patience and lots of hard work I eventually got there.

It would be true to say that he still has days when the slightest noise or movement makes him nervous but despite this he has become a happy and contented dog and is truly loved.

Lesleyann Teague

Christmas can be a bit of a minefield, can't it, when it comes to the giving and receiving of presents. For every gift that you are delighted to be given, there has to be at least one that is destined to spend the rest of its life at the back of a cupboard.

We all know, however, that one man's trash is another man's treasure. With this in mind, we would be very grateful if you would donate your unwanted Christmas gifts to the Friends so that we can offer them for sale. Please leave your weird and wacky gift gaffes in the basket outside the Friends' office at the Home by the end of January 2015. ***With many thanks.***



Just a Minute

Do we have your current email address?

In order to streamline and update our database and to make sure that you receive news of all our activities it would help us greatly if we had your current email details; it will take just one minute of your time. We will, of course, respect your privacy and will not pass this information to any third parties.

Please send to :- membership.friendsbcdh@gmail.com



A wonderful raffle prize with a little help from the Friends!

As my memory serves me correctly, it was a bleak winter's day when I drove to Bath Cats & Dogs Home to support the Friends' Christmas Fete in December 2013.

Despite the cheerless weather, I had a lovely day for, as well as finding a beautifully made cushion for a Christmas present, I also picked,

by chance, the first prize winning ticket on the Friends' raffle at the door.

To my utter amazement, it was for a day's cookery course at the luxurious spa hotel at Lucknam Park! What a wonderful experience it was. My thrill mounted even as I drove down the beautiful avenue of trees to the entrance of the hotel and the fact that it was such a lovely, warm, sunny spring day was a huge treat in itself - I drove at 10mph just to savour it!

My grateful thanks to 'The Friends of Bath Cats & Dogs Home' for organising such a splendid raffle and, of course, to Lucknam Park, for donating such a generous gift.

Look out for me at this Christmas Fete when I will be buying two more raffle tickets!

Dolores Corrigan

The **cover photograph** is of the gorgeous **Marge** who, at the time of printing, was still at Bath Cats & Dogs Home, hoping to find her forever home.

Some of the current guests at Bath Cats & Dogs Home.....



I have been a volunteer at Bath Cats & Dogs Home for about 12 years now and have helped in many different aspects. I am pleased to have been elected to The Friends' Fundraising Committee, as the Friends fundraising efforts have been instrumental in improving the Home for the welfare of animals. I hope my efforts and commitment will help benefit the Home in its future developments.

Dennis Long

I have recently joined the committee as the treasurer, just one of several voluntary financial positions that I hold. I can trace my time back to the home when my father adopted a dog from the home in the early seventies and I continued the trend in 2000. I hope that over the next couple of years I can build on the excellent work undertaken by the previous treasurer.

Cary Bush

For the last year and a half I have been volunteering at Bath Cats & Dogs Home and I am very proud to have been voted in as Trustee with the 'Friends' at the AGM held in June this year. I have been made very welcome by this friendly, fun committee and hope I can make a positive difference. More volunteers are always welcome so if you have any spare time and energy to join us, please let us know!

Louise Atkins

Queen of the Courtesans

Congratulations to a member of the Friends' Executive and Fundraising Committees, **Dr Barbara White**, on the publication of her recent book *Queen of the Courtesans: Fanny Murray*. Murray, who was born in 1729, was the daughter of an impoverished musician in Bath but rose to become one of the most famous courtesans of her day. On the way, she had a string of famous lovers including Richard 'Beau' Nash, the Master of Ceremonies at Bath, John Montagu 4th Earl of Sandwich, the highwayman, James Maclaine and perhaps even a member of the royal family.

The most famous story about Fanny is that when she was having breakfast with one of her lovers, Sir Richard Atkins, she complained to him of being short of money. Sir Richard immediately gave her a £20 note (about £2,400 in today's money). Fanny looked at him and said, 'Damn your twenty pound! what does it signify?'. She then promptly clapped it between two slices of bread and butter and ate it. The original Atkins diet perhaps!!

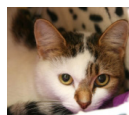
Barbara's biography has received much national attention, particularly in *The Times* and *The Daily Mail* where it was described as 'well written and enjoyable' and as a 'vividly detailed picture of 1750s London that suggests a very modern overlap of sex, celebrity, wealth and scandal'.

Barbara is donating a signed copy of her book to the Friends' Christmas Raffle this year.

Queen of the Courtesans: Fanny Murray is published by The History Press.



Photo: Rob Wilson



From left to right. Dennis Long, Louise Atkins and Cary Bush (new Treasurer).

Megan's story

I volunteer dog-walked for Bath in 2001 after my previous Collie had died. My husband was working in Corsham and I used the time he was working to help out at Bath Cats & Dogs Home. I was keeping an eye out for a Collie to adopt but hadn't seen one that "spoke to me". I first saw Heidi cowering under a bench while I was on my way to walk a lurcher. It was December 2001 and one of the volunteer dog walkers was exercising the smaller dogs. Heidi wasn't a small dog but had been kennelled in the Small Dog block. This lady couldn't coax Heidi out from under the bench so I went to help her, knelt down to have a look and came face to face with a dog that "spoke to me". We adopted Heidi (she was "about three") and renamed her Megan (named by Bath Cats & Dogs Home as Heidi because she hid such a lot) as she had been a stray in Wales and Megan is such a Welsh name - my husband couldn't face calling out "Heidi" to her!

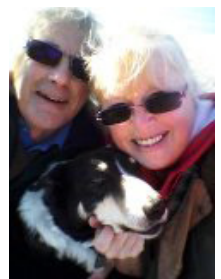
We had a long struggle to gain her trust, there was so much she hadn't experienced and so much that she had experienced that terrified her. She didn't understand buses, sirens, saucepans, kitchen foil or the TV and was terrified of babies, children, footballs, bikes, skateboards, etc., etc. Throughout her life, she has only really been happy and relaxed when it was just me, my husband and her all together in her home.

We had her vaccinated for rabies and have taken her abroad nine times in the twelve years that we have had her. She has travelled through France, Spain and Italy, initially by car and more recently in our motorhome. We have lived in Cornwall since 2007 and she has really taken to beach walks and has many friends, both furry and human. She has adapted very well to lots of changes and her confidence has built up over the years so that now, she soon becomes acclimatised to new circumstances.

In February this year she suffered a severe stroke. She could barely walk, couldn't feed herself, could only drink with lots of dribbling, fell over lots of times and her head was tilted over completely to the right. The vet offered to put her to sleep but suggested we try to treat her as she had been so lively just a few days before. She was put on Vivitonin, I hand-fed her chicken breast and pasta and slept downstairs with her. Within a couple of days, she was eating by herself, was steadier on her feet, her eyes had stopped flickering and she was sleeping through the night and a lot of the day too. Within fifty days she was 99% back to normal, where she has remained (the 1% is only a bit of dribbling and sometimes focussing on where a treat is in someone's hand). She did, however, suffer somewhat from arthritis before the stroke and obviously still suffers from that now. She is on Metacam for that and it's manageable. We are planning on taking the motorhome to the west coast of France this year (not going too far away because of her) and I will get some more Vivitonin from the vet to ensure rapid treatment if it should recur.

She has been a challenge and, even now when she is much quieter, I still can't be complacent when we are out walking. We love her to bits, she has been such a pleasure to share our life with and if I had a £1 for every time she has made me smile, I would be a multi-millionaire ! We are so grateful to have found her at Bath. I don't know how much longer we will have her with us, every day is a bonus.

I attach a photo of the three of us taken on the beach. I hope you've enjoyed reading about her, it's been a pleasure to write it. With very best wishes to everybody involved with Bath Cats & Dogs Home.



Joy and Tony King

ANNE MEDDICK RETIRES

Anne Meddick, who has been a loyal supporter of the Friends for some twenty years, retired this summer as Membership Secretary of the Friends. Over the years, all Friends will have received correspondence from Anne, either receiving information packs on the Friends or renewal notices and reminders, but beyond this, most of you will have little idea of the depth of Anne's involvement with the Friends and Bath Cats & Dogs Home.



Anne remembers the days when Mr Doveton Gerty and Val Cooper ran the Home's office from a makeshift Portakabin just inside the gates of the site. Anne and others, including Friends' committee member Anita Hallam, operated out of an old garage with Anne manning the phones. It struck the more enterprising among this pioneering team, that there was nowhere at the Home for visitors in search of a companion animal, to even get a drink of water! Anne made use of the contacts she had made during her business career to make regular visits to local cash and carry stores to stock up on cans of Coke, Mars bars and Kit-Kats. Stacked high on the Portakabin counters, these went down a storm. Next, an ice-cream fridge was procured which was even more popular, especially on Open Days. It was from these humble beginnings that the immensely successful retailing arm of the Home began.

Anne also remembers the move to the super new reception centre at the Home and the moment Chris Pope, the then Chairman of the Trustees, presented her with the keys of the new shop saying, "here's your empty shop, now you can fill it up". Anne jumped at the challenge and managed to combine ordering everything from refreshments to dog leads and cat litter, to running the shop and continuing with her old job of manning the phones.

Taking a jump through the years, Anne also remembers the Friends' Westgate Street adventure into charity shopping. In particular, she remembers the wonderful Dame Margaret, all dressed up with yellow balloons and ribbons, riding through the streets of Bath in the back of a convertible car. With her royal wave, Dame Margaret was great for publicity. The shop was, recalls Anne, great fun, even though it involved lots of hard work for the Friends' faithful volunteers.

For Anne, the innumerable clothes sales, jumble sales, plant sales and Open Days have filled up the years and continue to do so. It is only failing health, among other factors, that has finally decided Anne that it is now time to retire. The Friends, says Anne, have been part of her life for such a long time, and they are times she will never forget.

In her reminiscences, Anne has been selfless in paying tribute to the many Friends and volunteers who have given freely of their time in order to raise money for the animals, all of whom she describes as "tireless [heroes and] heroines". Well, now is the time to recognise another tireless heroine. Anne Meddick herself. She has offered years of devoted service to the Home and the Friends and worked indefatigably to raise money for the cause and to improve animal welfare, for which we are all immensely grateful. We wish her well in her retirement - she will be greatly missed by everyone in the Friends.



CHAIRMAN'S SPONSORED ZIP SLIDE

Looking for innovative ways to raise funds for the Friends, I hit upon a way to indulge my desire to do something exciting whilst raising money. Having previously done a sponsored Sky Dive and Abseil I thought it might be worth doing a Zip Slide and chose the Velocity Zip Slide at Bethesda in North Wales, in the heart of Snowdonia. The zip wire goes over the Penrhyn Slate Quarry, which is the largest manmade hole in the ground in Europe and also the longest and fastest in Europe, being over a mile long and reaching a speed of 115mph.



My wife Elaine and I set off from home at 8.45am on Thursday 11th September, armed with an AA route and bright sunshine we made our way to North Wales. The route should have been just over four hours but because of roadworks and diversions actually took over five hours causing me to be driving through the Welsh countryside at breakneck speed just to arrive on time. Thankfully we made it, although with only twenty minutes to spare.

The venue was spectacular but the weather had turned cloudy and most of the mountains were shrouded in mist. Having kitted up, the other zip sliders and I were sent down a short(ish) zip slide and then given a guided tour of the quarry where we learnt that only 10% of the slate quarried was usable for splitting. Then it was off to the main Zip Wire. I had previously bought a digital video camera to capture the event but soon realised that it was not practical to hold it whilst doing the slide so I hired a head cam and left Elaine to use the video camera. Unfortunately I forgot to show her how to use the zoom so all she could do was get a long distance view of me flying through the air. The experience was unforgettable as I hurtled over the lake in the bottom of the quarry and over the top of the trees around the perimeter. From my perspective it was a wonderful day and I was able to raise over £1,000 for the Friends. Should anyone still wish to sponsor me they can find me on the Virgin Moneygiving website under Robin Eastman.

Thank you for your support and keep a look out on our website for my next escapade. A fire walk perhaps or even a wing walk, if I am allowed to.

Forthcoming Events

FESTIVE COFFEE MORNING

Sunday 30th November, 11am - 3pm

Small selection of gifts and preserves. Raffle. Refreshments.

Santa's canine companions, Shumba & Lucky, will be collecting food for the animals.



Contact details:

Friends of Bath Cats & Dogs Home

The Avenue
Claverton Down
Bath BA2 7AZ

www.friendsofbcdh.org

friends@bathcatsanddogshome.co.uk

Chairman:

Vice Chairman:

Secretary:

Treasurer:

Robin Eastman

theeastmans139@tiscali.co.uk

Nick Burgess

moggymanor@talktalk.net

Fay Swaffield

fswaffield@yahoo.co.uk

Cary Bush

cary@carybush.co.uk