



## IN MEMORIUM



It is with great sadness that the Friends mourn the passing of John Spencer Hobhouse on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2009, aged 99.

John and Mary Hobhouse joined the Bath Branch of the RSPCA in 1948; John became Chairman the following year. John was instrumental in persuading Bath City Council to agree that stray dogs could go to the kennels for re-homing rather than being destroyed. Bath Branch was the first one to implement a strict non-destruction policy, which was an immediate success and copied later by other branches. The example of Bath led eventually to a dramatic change in the ethos of the whole RSPCA at national level. In 1955, John was elected to the RSPCA National Council where, after a five-year campaign, a Homeless Animals Committee was set up in 1960 which he chaired. John worked tirelessly to persuade the Finance Committee to fund the building or re-building of an animal centre in each large city. From 1966 to 1972, John was elected Chairman of the RSPCA National Council and was lauded as “the best RSPCA Chairman of the 20<sup>th</sup> century”. Under his stewardship a series of reforms were adopted, and he actively pursued the need for branches to work in partnership with RSPCA HQ.

Latterly, John was President of the Bath Cats & Dogs Home, as well as a trustee. In 1980 a group of animal lovers led by John formed an independent charity, the Friends of Bath Cats & Dogs Home, primarily to raise funds for the development of facilities (including provision of veterinary care) at the Home, and also to support other animal welfare projects which relieved pressure on the Home. John was one of the trustees

from its inception up until his death, and made a substantial contribution to the work of the Friends as well as to the Home.

Few people realize that John was also a war hero, serving as a gunner in the RAF in WWII, and awarded the Air Force Cross (AFC) for his bravery and skill – only 5 air gunners received this award. John then was put in charge of all gunnery crew. In civilian life, he ran a successful import and distribution business for 30 years, with a £3m turnover.

John’s selfless work of the last fifty years is a lasting legacy to animal welfare and to his beloved Bath Cats and Dogs Home. The Home became his life-long campaign, dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation and re-homing of animals and is a lasting tribute to this very special man. His influence at both local and national level is long lasting, and will not be forgotten.

More information on John’s life and work is on the Home’s website [www.bcdh.org.uk](http://www.bcdh.org.uk).

## CHRISTMAS FAYRE



This was held on Sunday 29 November 2009 in the John Hobhouse meeting room at the Home on a cold and wet day. On sale were Christmas goods, presents, books, linens, jewellery, preserves, toys. Refreshments, raffle, tombola and lucky dips were also on offer. Father Christmas opened the Fayre. Despite the awful weather, the Fayre was very well supported, and at times the room was full to bursting! The Fayre raised £2k for the Friends funds. Thank you to all who

supported the event, and all the many volunteers who helped to make it so successful.

### 1000 CLUB FOR 2009

201 people have signed up for the 2010 1000 Club, so the monthly prize is now £100, and giving a profit of over £1,000 for the Friends. Winners for the year so far are:

January	R Williams, Norton St Phillip
February	J Perrott, Midsomer Norton
March	R Ogston, Norton St Phillip

More details for the 1000 Club for 2011 will be enclosed with the Autumn newsletter.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2010

Sunday 4 April <i>11am – 3pm</i>	Refreshments
Sunday 2 May <i>11am – 4pm</i>	Refreshments & Spring Fayre (see enclosed leaflet for details)
Sunday 6 June <i>11am – 4pm</i>	Refreshments
Thursday 24 June <i>From 6.30pm</i>	AGM
Sunday 4 July <i>11am – 3pm</i>	Refreshments
Sunday 1 August <i>11am – 3pm</i>	Refreshments
Sunday 5 September <i>10am – 4pm</i>	Open Day
Sunday 3 October <i>11am- 3pm</i>	Refreshments
Sunday 7 November <i>11am – 3pm</i>	Refreshments
Sunday 28 November <i>11am – 4pm</i>	Christmas Fayre & Refreshments

All events are at the Home. Keep an eye out for more events on our website or notice board at the Home.

### CLOTHES

Do you have any good quality clothes (and in particular designer clothes) for our forthcoming clothes sale later in the year? Please contact Lynda Pearce on 01225 333507, or Sue Forder on 01225 317355 if you can help. Or leave them outside the Friends Office at the Home, clearly marked for the Friends.

### RAFFLE

Please support the Home's RSPCA Week Grand raffle. Two books of tickets are enclosed; please return your completed counterfoils plus payment to Sarah Thorn at the Home. 1<sup>st</sup> prize is £250; 2<sup>nd</sup> prize is a rugby ball and shirt signed by Bath Rugby Team; 3<sup>rd</sup> prize is a 7" digital photo frame, plus many more super prizes.

### HOW YOUR MONEY IS SPENT

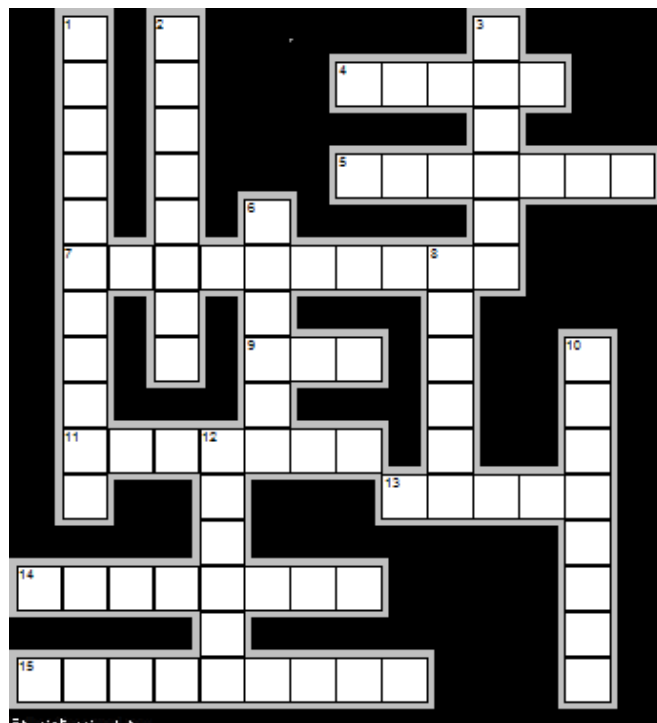
Over the last 11 years or so, the Friends have donated significant sums to the Home – a précis of the major donations is given below.

<b>1999/2002</b>	£1.35m towards the reconstruction of the Home, including new kennels and runs, the new cattery and the new reception
<b>2004/5</b>	£300k towards vets' fees
<b>2006</b>	£450k towards the 2 new circular kennels and runs
<b>2007</b>	£156k towards vets' fees
<b>2008</b>	£170k towards the upkeep of cats; £3k for the new Paw Store
<b>2009</b>	£3.3k dental equipment; £150k towards general costs; £50k towards the upkeep of feral cats; £17k refurbishment of the Frome shop; £11.5k for the new EPOS system

In addition, the Friends also funded some smaller projects at the Home, and donated small sums to other animal welfare organisations which took the pressure off the Home.

### PUZZLING ANIMALS

Send your answer to the editor at the address at the top of this newsletter by 30 May. The first correct answer out of the hat wins a bottle of champagne.



#### Across

4. Shy, forest dweller, relative of primitive horse and rhino (5)

5. Famous dog, finder of stolen World Cup trophy in 1966 (7)
7. Swimming cat (7, 3)
9. Himalayan cattle, produced by crossing a cow with a yak (3)
11. Collective noun for penguins (7)
13. Spotted wild cat, trained by Ancient Egyptians to catch mice (5)
14. Rare Nepalese animal sometimes called the 'cat bear' (3, 5)
15. Fastest flying insect (9)

### Down

1. Tropical American sea bird with 7ft wing span (7, 4)
2. World's smallest type of rhino (8)
3. Medal for animal bravery, first awarded in 1943 (6)
6. Collective noun for kittens (6)
8. Nocturnal Lemur from Madagascar (3, 3)
10. Type of camel, still found wild in the Gobi and Mongolia (8)
12. Flightless bird of New Zealand, also known as the 'Owl Parrot' (6)

### A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN RSPCA TELEPHONIST

*"Bath Cats & Dogs Home, Anne Speaking ....."*

Gentleman with a plague of toads needs advice. Oh, dear, not quite my thing. Tell him his jungle of a garden is too hospitable, how about cutting it down a bit to make them go elsewhere, not into my garden though!

Very nice gentleman has lost his cat, asks what to do. Advise notices on lamp posts. Prepare to make entry in LOST book and find he is calling from French/Swiss border. Don't think I can be more than a sympathetic ear. Turns out he is ex-Bath and needed a friendly English voice.

Dog is ripping up the house, but it is only a pup and that is what they do! On the waiting list – only 30 dogs in front of him.

Foreign gent, with a cat and 6 kittens to bring in, I thought he said Bristol but when he said he would get off the bus at Barking I discovered he actually said PLAISTOW. Hurriedly redirected him to Battersea Dogs Home!

Cat is tearing up a new £2,000 carpet, whoops, on to the waiting list to rehome.

Homechecker rings in to report on a visit to a prospective kitten adopter, not happy as it is a lovely home with nice people but on a very busy trunk road full of heavy lorries – how do we let these people down gently?

Another prospective owner asks if we will home a dog as a guard dog to live outside - definitely not, as we rehome only as a family pet. Caller not impressed with my explanation.

Enquiry – have you got a terrier about 2 years old, white with brown markings, and must be good with children, cats and dogs? Reply as we have over 100 dogs I cannot do this over the phone, better come and visit in person.

Next caller is a dog rescuer from Wales – how many dogs can we take this week? As many as possible please, as Welsh pounds only allow one week before they are put down. We even have cats from as far away as Liverpool as we are one of the few Homes with a non-destruction policy.

Next, a lady caller is on income support and cannot afford vet's bills. Help can be given with neutering both dogs and cats.

The last word to anyone who is thinking of getting rid of their dog for any reason that is not deadly serious, if you could see my tears at the heartbreaking cries of a lovely German shepherd abandoned by his owner, please, please, think again.

We close at 4 o'clock, what a day it has been.

### AGM

The Friends Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 24 June in the John Hobhouse room at the Home, starting with light refreshments at 6.30pm. The meeting will commence at 7.00pm, see details in the attached notice. We always welcome anyone interested in becoming a trustee – please contact the Secretary at the address at the top of this newsletter or email [friends@bcdh.co.uk](mailto:friends@bcdh.co.uk).

Here are some more of your stories about your rehomed pets.

### THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK OR IS IT THE NEW DOG IN THE PACK? ROBIN EASTMAN, MARSHFIELD



For many years my wife Elaine has been aware of my desire to have a rough/long coated dog as I find the slightly scruffy appearance quite endearing. I have always had a soft spot for Irish Wolfhounds, Otter Hounds and the like. Recently we made a decision to act

to increase our pack from three to four so we were looking for a dog that might fit in well with Blaze, (a blind, diabetic collie cross), Charlie (a three legged tan and white greyhound) and Grace (a black greyhound bitch). The word went out that we wanted another dog and eventually the call came that a possible suitable animal had been located. Enter a white, rough coated Lurcher with black ears aged approximately four years old going by the name of "Fabian". Being of the older generation the name Fabian conjured up a vision of an old programme about the Police called "Fabian of the Yard". Unable to bring myself to shout Fabian across the countryside he was quickly renamed "Danny". He had been picked up by the South Gloucestershire Dog Warden in the Almondsbury area of Bristol as a stray and has what is known as a "Knocked up toe" which is a condition where one toe has been dislocated and sticks up slightly from the others. We brought Danny home and he immediately struck up a wonderful partnership with Grace and they chase one another around the garden, tearing the lawn to shreds. He has settled in beautifully despite being the tallest of the four and loves to be fussed and also to lie on the sofa. All of the pack seems to be very well adjusted and at meal times there is never any confrontation, one might say Danny is a perfect fit for our pack and we love him to bits.

#### **PRINCESS, QUEENIE, YOKO & MICHELLE RICHARD & JULIE, PSJ**



Seven months ago we adopted four ex-battery hens from the Bath Cats & Dogs Home. What a sorry looking bunch of girls they were with bald patches and pale droopy combs. The best feathered one we called Princess, while the other three whom we named Queenie, Yoko and Michelle barely shared a full set of feathers between them.

We introduced them into their hutch where they stayed the first evening, preferring to view the great outdoors from their window and they spent their first night snuggled side by side in the nesting box. We heard them cooing quietly when we went to check on them later. The following morning when we opened their door one-by-one they tentatively came down the ramp out into the run and the open air – a new experience for them - and surprise, when we looked into the nesting box one of them had laid our very first egg!

Instinctively, they immediately started scratching and

pecking at the grass and even preening in the sunshine. They all tucked into their seed and water and over a couple of weeks we gradually began to introduce greens into their diet, which they loved.

Over the next few days they became more and more adventurous seemingly enjoying our company (and that of our three cats) in the garden, and were regularly laying eggs. We began to let them have free run of the garden while we were there and they would happily enjoy a biscuit or two with us at coffee time. They soon cottoned on that if anyone was digging the soil or moving pots it was worth hanging around as earthworms, slugs and all manner of bugs would appear.

The downside is that they have discovered the joy of digging and can create a scrape in a very short time, so this Spring we shall have to fence off part of the garden to keep them away from our vegetable plot as they ate more of our vegetables last Summer than we did and were particularly partial to the perpetual spinach.

Over the months their egg laying improved and during the Summer they were regularly laying two, three and even four big brown eggs a day. As their health improved, they put on some weight, their combs went from pale and drooping to bright red and standing upright, and their plumage thickened up and developed deeper colouring.

They have also become quite cheeky and will tap on the patio doors to attract attention. We are amazed that they are so happy in our company given their start in life. The eggs we get don't exactly work out to be cheap but the hens do give us a lot of pleasure and we look on the eggs as being a bonus. During the hard winter they have enjoyed the luxury of days spent in the greenhouse where they have continued to lay an egg or two most days.

If you have pet stories or any other items of interest you would like to put forward for publication in our newsletter, please send them (with photos) to the editor on [friends@bcdh.co.uk](mailto:friends@bcdh.co.uk) or to the address at the top of this newsletter. Please note the editor reserves the right to edit your article.

Finally, we have been donated several limited edition Beswick horses. If any collector is interested, please contact the editor on the address at the top of this newsletter or on [friends@bcdh.co.uk](mailto:friends@bcdh.co.uk).

Val Pritchard  
Chairman of the Friends  
April 2010