



## **NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2013**

In this issue we are paying tribute to **Ted Bunn** from Spencer Gate, who died recently. Ted was one of the founder members of what was to become Friends of Bernards Heath and was a keen supporter of the association over the years, besides being a well known dog walker and litter collector. His wife Rona wishes to thank fellow members and neighbours for all the support they have given her and their daughter Mary at this time.

### **Ariston Site**

Whilst we expected Herts CC to be well on their way to picking a purchaser we are now told that the council has decided to seek a fresh outline planning permission before putting the land out to tender. We understand that it will be “similar” to the application made in 2000 but we will be vigilant in checking it. We would also welcome your views when it is open to public consultation. Meanwhile the Lower Heath is still free for us all to use and enjoy, which brings us to the next item -

### **Survey Results**

In our last newsletter and on Twitter and Facebook we asked you to vote on the top three suggestions as to how local residents would like to see what should become of the Lower Heath. THANK YOU to the 99 who expressed a preference. The result was very close:

A – Sports playing field for use by youth and public – 36%

B – Measured running/walking trail including some exercise equipment - 31%

C – Venue for community events – 32%

We will bear this in mind when we get an opportunity to speak to any potential developer.

### **Draft Greenspace Action Plan for Beech Bottom Dyke**

BBD was formally adopted by FoBH last year (2012) and this year is the centenary of the legislation that now protects Scheduled Ancient Monuments such as the dyke. We marked the adoption and the centenary on 2 June 2013 with a walk along part of it, shared such information as is known and then indulged in speculation about the past.

The latest published thinking (May 2013) about the dyke is that it is a free standing work built at the time of the second Roman invasion (AD43) – perhaps as an outer defence for Verulamium, but there is still no hard archaeology for any interpretation. Over its history it has been used as a road, a very unsuccessful field defence in the Wars of the Roses in 1461, and as a rifle range from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to mid 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Antiquarian and other speculation is that it was an Ancient British chariot racing track or part of an inland waterway system.

Its eastern end was cut off by the railway line in the 1860s but it now2 enjoys the highest level of statutory protection, including from metal detecting. The mature native trees are also protected.

The local authorities are now consulting about options for improving access and interpretation while retaining its biodiversity and at the same time promoting and protecting its heritage value. FoBH are pleased to be engaging with this.

If you want to find out more about the dyke, then FoBH has a leaflet for sale so please contact us.

### **Revised publication in the pipeline**

It is planned that Chris Reynolds's booklet on the history of Bernards Heath, first published about ten years ago, will be updated in the light of new research. In the meantime FoBH intend to fund a small reprint run of the original booklet, so if you have recently moved here and are interested in finding out something about your area, you can order a copy at the modest sum of £3.50. Please fill in the form below.

### **FoBH Mugs**

Our grateful thanks to Hair on the Heath, The Jolly Sailor and Heath Bakery (Londis) for selling our mugs. We are now running very low on stock – so if you want one, buy before they're all gone.

### **Traffic speeding on Sandridge Road**

Following an item in our last newsletter, training for a project to monitor speeding is currently being undertaken by a group of local residents.

### **Dates for your diary**

*Next Heath Walk* 22<sup>nd</sup> September – look out for posters nearer the time.

*AGM* 12<sup>th</sup> October 10.00 at The Jolly Sailor (please advise if this is correct).

*Next Action Day* 20<sup>th</sup> October from 0930 – again look out for posters nearer the time.

And if you missed joining the Friends this year, it is not too late! Please fill in the form below and send a cheque to the treasurer, Sue Swain at 10 Seymour Road, AL3 5HW

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Name.....

Address.....

Telephone.....

Email.....

I enclose a cheque for £10 (payable to Friends of Bernards Heath)

I enclose a cheque for £3.50 for Chris Reynolds's booklet (payable as above)

Signed.....