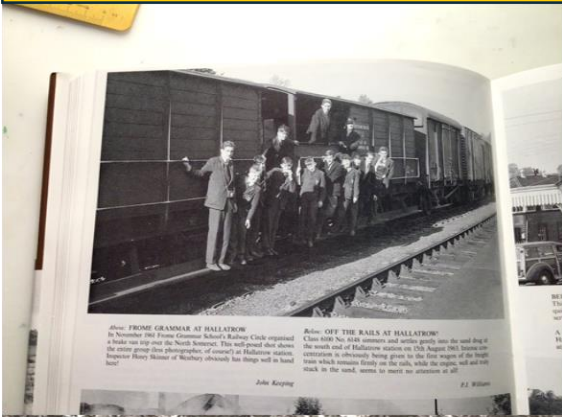




NEWSLETTER 2024



21. 10. 45
My last Summer Holiday
 In my last Summer Holiday I applied with the haymaking and saw the harvest. With haymaking I was usually on the rick or sometimes taking it into the elevator, sometimes did a bit of horse raking or side-fencing. With the harvest I was on a binder when cutting, and when cutting on the rick or wagons. Corn is much easier to handle than hay if it is in bundles, but the worst part of it is working in the blazing sun in the open fields. As it was wet of a Wednesday we used to go to Frome we went to Frome four times and went to Wootton Bassett and Salisbury market and



The 2025 FESA Reunion will take place on Saturday 31st May from 2pm to 5pm at Frome College



FESA - FROME EX STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

FESA is an association for ex-pupils that have attended Frome College or Frome Grammar School and for current and previous staff from those academic institutions

The FESA Newsletter is produced annually, primarily for ex-students and staff who are members of FESA

Welcome to this year's FESA Newsletter!

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2025 FESA REUNION

The 2025 FESA Reunion will take place on Saturday 31st May 2pm to 5pm at in the Futures Building at Frome College. Do make every effort to get there if you can. Our reunions are great opportunities to exchange yarns and we have had a couple of years of low attendance on which we need to improve.

If at all possible, please let our Chair, June Barnes, know that you will be there. June's contact details are:

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Hon Chairman, FESA
12 Styles Close
FROME
BA11 5JS
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jrbarnes222@gmail.com*

Acknowledgement of Assistance of Frome College Staff

Production of this Newsletter, and the FESA Reunion were assisted by staff of Frome College:

Principal - Emma Reynolds: who gave permission for the reunion to take place on college property and also for authorising access to staff and pupils in producing the newsletter.

PA to Principal - Sarah Smallbone: for providing links to staff.

Assistant Principal and Head of Sixth Form - Andrew Davies: facilitating the meeting between FGS Head Girl and Students' President and Vice President.

Jennie Owen – College Promotions: provision of photographs of the college today. Also thanks for the tip to try out the Canva graphics application, which the editor failed to master but learned a lot by his failure!

Simon Head – College Printing: for printing greyscale copies of 2023 Newsletter for the few FESA members without email. And, hopefully, for the same service this year.

Chairmans Report 2024 Newsletter



Hi everyone and welcome to our newsletter for 2024

A big than you to Chris Warren for all his hard work over the years in producing our newsletter and a warm welcome to Adrian Wakeford who has kindly agreed to take on this task.

This job is made easier if you all contribute: put pen to paper and let us know what you have been up to. And where you have been and who you have met.

We had a good reunion this year. But not many of you came, let's hope you can come next year, the last Saturday in May 2p.m. Please let me know if you are coming, it helps with the catering.

I have been in contact with Val Willis (Whitcombe) also Keith Berry, he is on our Carnival committee with me so we meet then.

I was sorry to hear of the death of Stan Light. He was a familiar figure at all of the carnivals here in Somerset. He has been out of the front of the CISP VAN dresses as a Wizard for many years.

Sadly missed.

This is about all of my news for now, a Happy Christmas and a very happy, healthy new year to you all

Yours

June Barnes nee fido M.B.E.

HON CHAIRMAN

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "June Barnes".

Principal's Note to the Newsletter



Thank you for the opportunity to include some words in this most recent FESA newsletter; it is always interesting to read about Frome College alumni and their educational experiences.



Frome College has recently joined a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) named Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership (MNSP). This is a family of around 40 different schools, secondary and primary, who work together to improve educational opportunities for children. The union means teachers and support staff will be able to work closely with some of our more local schools for example

Oakfield and Norton Hill. We all look forward to collaborating in the interests of both our College students and those from the wider community.

Connections across College and the Frome Community continue to be strong, we were particularly delighted with our most recent Careers Morning which saw over 40 companies and charities represented. If there are alumni who would like to come and speak to our students about their careers and work experiences, you would be most welcome. Please contact my PA, SSmallbone@fromecollege.org.uk who can put you in touch with our careers team.



We all look forward to the FESA reunion of 2025 and I hope to see you there.

Kind regards.

Emma Reynolds
Principal
Frome College



There has been a rather good response to the call for articles this year. Perhaps still a few too many shy authors out there but enormous thanks to everybody that provided something for the Newsletter.

The point is that you are all interesting. You all have school memories that are happy, sad, triumphant, nostalgic and all the other emotions. You really are living lives that are interesting to others. You have all been to places, done things and got the T Shirts. (And hopefully some photographs!) So, start thinking about what you might like to tell people about in your journeys through school and through life. Because I am coming back for more next year!



As for this year's Newsletter production, I tried to use a couple of different graphics applications to make the whole thing prettier and

swishier, but either they would not do what I wanted or I would not do what they wanted, or both. So it was back to MS Word but I hope I learnt enough on my 'artistic journey' to make the newsletter swishy enough for you.



In reviewing your items, I made very few changes – a comma here, a split infinitive (remember them) there. The newsletter should be the barely edited and authentic voices of the contributors. I tried to work out some sort of theme and logical running order but your contributions were so diverse (great), that the newsletter more or less just tumbled out in the order that it wanted to. I think we have an interesting mix of snippets and longer pieces. I hope you like it.

If you need to contact me, you can do so at:

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Membership Secretary's Report

After a lot of travelling this autumn, I am reminded by our editor Adrian Wakeford that he is almost ready to finish all his work on this year's edition of the FESA newsletter. I would like to thank Adrian for his continued enthusiasm, writing and communication skills in gathering together these interesting articles for us. While I was in Japan, he was visiting more sombre second world war sites in Europe, a reflection of his many and wide interests.

There is little change in our membership from last year, except of course that we are all a year older and possibly wiser. When we catch a glimpse of ourselves in a shop window, we wonder who that older person is ... but hopefully we are able to enjoy everything that we have experienced to bring us here.

Thank you so much to those of you who sent updated emails in response to our last mailing or wrote with updates and memories. I enjoyed a few emails with former staff who were unlucky enough to have had me misbehaving in class! Our class of 1963-70 continues to meet each year in Frome, and we look forward to it.

Sadly, we have been advised of the deaths of the following members during the year and we send our condolences to their families:

- Mr. Ian Brittain (FGS 1948-56)
- Mr. Timothy Hornsey (FGS 1954-57 – father on staff)
- Mr. Fred Bridges
- Mrs. G J Bennett (FGS 1948-54) (predeceased by Peter Bennett in 2014)

We welcome Hilary Yerbury and Gillian Janes to our membership from Australia and Worcestershire. We do welcome new members, so, if you know of any former students who would like to join us, please ask them to complete and return the application form at the end of this Newsletter.

Wishing you a healthy and happy year for 2025. Our newsletter has articles about several groups of friends from different year groups who continue to meet for lunch during the year. It's such a good reflection of friendships formed at the school.

Hilary Davies, Membership Secretary

Reunion 2024

By Adrian Wakeford

I had huge fun at this year's reunion held in the school on the afternoon of Saturday 18th May. I fell in with a group from my year between whom a spirited dialog took place. In this discussion I may have over-emphasised, ever so slightly, that they all advanced through the school in a higher stream than myself. Hopefully they didn't notice. (Of course they noticed. No point in being an inverted snob if you can't make people notice!) It was also interesting and enlightening to talk to other members of the reunion but I did not really get around to them as much as I should have done. But they looked like they were getting on fine.

Whether people enjoyed themselves or not, there were problems with the reunion that need mentioning: one minor but one fundamental. But before turning to those points, we should mention the most important accolade, which is to June Barnes, our FESA Chair, who did so much to set up and execute the reunion. As well as being our Chair, June is a leading light on the Frome and Somerset carnival scene. She is an important local figure and finds time to balance her FESA and carnival activities.



Sorting ourselves out

and is obviously the principal hostess at the reunion. That's a lot to ask of one individual; June has been doing it for more years than I know of.



Still shuffling about and a bit windy...

2025.

The major problem was that attendance, again for the second year in a row, was poor. There were only thirteen of us. Oddly, so I heard subsequently, there was a separate year reunion on the evening of the same day. The coincidence of date was a complete scheduling fluke. Also I know that there have been rumblings about the preferred form for FESA reunions. Should they be as now with all years coming together or are single year reunions preferred? I think this is a wrong way to look at the issue as there is no reason why both forms of reunion can take place. Obviously if anybody, a year group, or all ex netballers or all ex Duke of Edinburgh graduates or whoever wanted to get together then sort it out and have a great time. Do it any day of the year is convenient. But why not hold your meeting in the evening of the all-year afternoon reunion? Don't we all like "wo for the price of one"...

So on to the problems and firstly the minor one. Access through the southern college gates, for the second year in a row, was not open. This was obviously fixed by people using the Bath Road entrance. So, sorry for the inconvenience, we need to sort this one out in

attendance, again for the second year in a row, there was a



Got there! FESA Reunion 18th May 2024

A Get Together for Pat Werner nee Taylor – by Sue Burgess

By coincidence this was held on the same day as the FESA Reunion though the date was fixed in August last year before that of our reunion! The reason being Pat Taylor and Peter from Germany, who I keep in constant touch with, had to book flights for their stay with us in Yeovil. It was a 'one off,' mainly for the benefit of schoolfriends, and people who keep in touch with, ie. a group of our friends; most of whom are not in the FESA.

The dinner was held in the Bath Arms in Horningsham and was attended by:

Susan-Ann Burgess(nee Jefferies)
Pat Werner(nee Taylor)
Judith Smith(nee Pearce)
Carolyn Bister(nee Maxfield)
Sheila Carpenter (nee Bayfield)
Andrew Baker
Peter Jefferies
Philip George

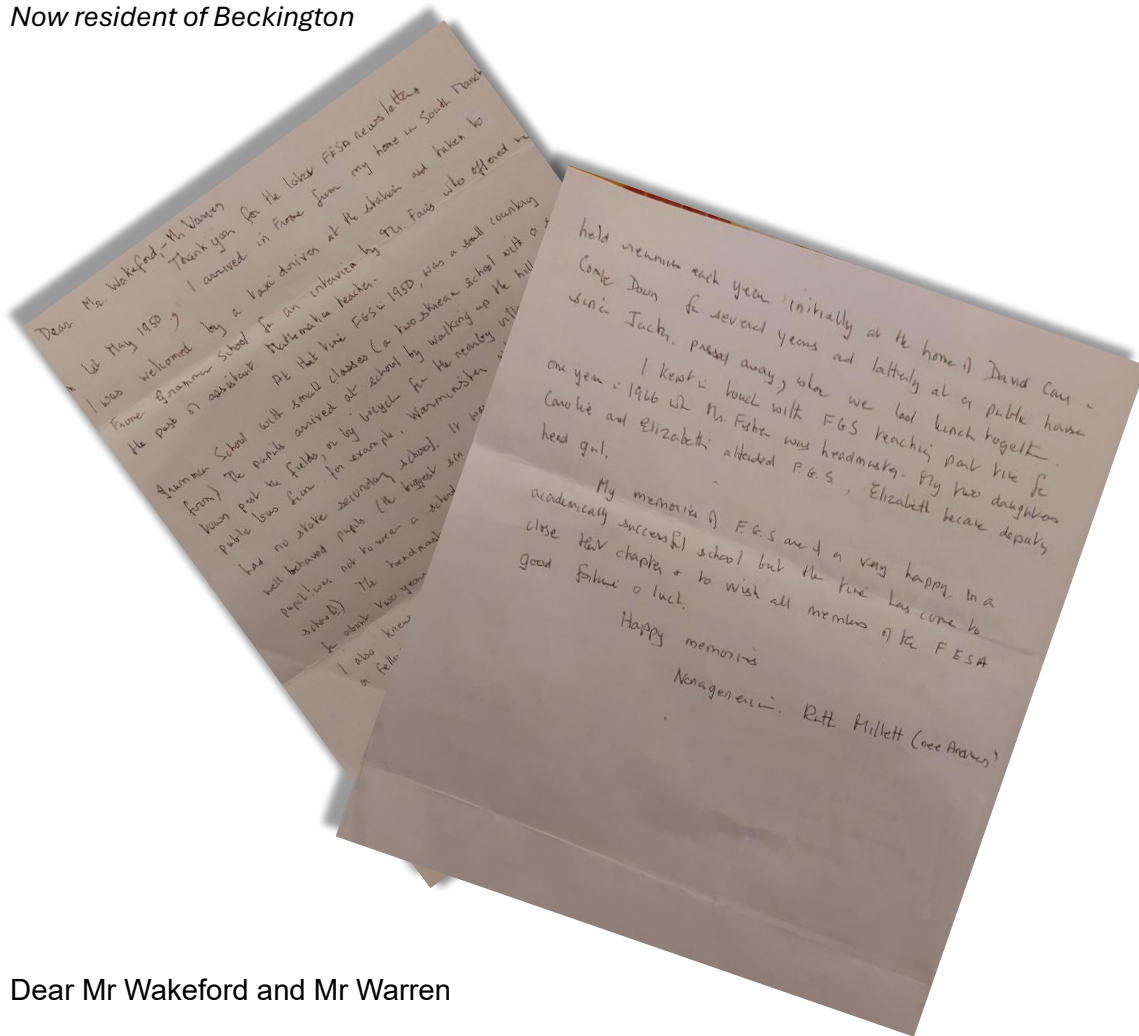
Guy Burgess
Peter Werner
Roger Smith
Steve Bister
Robin Carpenter
Val Baker

Sandra Mead (Fletcher) and her friend Ros Long (Radley) popped in to see Pat before the FESA event, and Rob Carr, his wife and brother came at the end after the FESA reunion. They did not stay for the meal though, and so are not in the photos:



Letter from Ruth Millett (nee Andrews) – Former Teacher at Frome Grammar School

Now resident of Beckington



Dear Mr Wakeford and Mr Warren

Thank you for the latest FESA Newsletter.

On 1st May 1950, I arrived in Frome from my home in South Manchester. I was welcomed by a taxi driver at the station and taken to Frome Grammar School for an interview by Mr Fairs who offered me the post of assistant Mathematics teacher.

At that time FGS in 1950, was a small county Grammar School with small classes (a two stream school with a Sixth Form. The pupils arrived at school by walking up the hill from the town past the fields, or by bicycle from nearby villages, or by a public bus from, for example, Warminster which at that time had no state secondary school. It was a friendly school with well behaved pupils (the biggest sin I have been told by a former pupil! was not to wear a school cap when outdoors and travelling to school!) The Headmaster, Mr Fairs, who had been headmaster for about two years, I think, was a firm but kindly head I also knew Barbara Ivy who had been a fellow student of mine at university.

Mr Fairs was keen to have a well run Old Pupils Association and was very supportive of it.

One day on the ferry returning from France where I had been fairly frequently, I was tapped on the shoulder and asked are you Miss Andrews, by Christine Brittain who was returning to Poole with her husband Ian Brittain. They told me about reunions of former pupils – their fellow classmates held reunions each year initially in the home of David Carr – Combe Down – for several years and latterly at a public house since Jacky passed away, where we had lunch together.

I kept in touch with FGS, teaching part time for one year in 1966 when Mr Fisher was Headmaster. My two daughters, Caroline and Elizabeth, attended FGS. Elizabeth became Deputy Head Girl.

My memories of FGS are of a very happy and an academically successful school but the time has come to close that chapter and to wish all members of the FESA good fortune and luck.

Happy memories

Nonagenarian Ruth Millett (nee Andrews)

A Note from Betty Williams, nee Andrews, 1950 – 1957

Hello Adrian

Thank you for your email. I do not have any particularly exciting or interesting news but I do have an update on my lifestyle.

After spending most of my life living in a rural Wiltshire village with no mains sewerage or gas, and more recently no shop either, I finally decided to become a "towny".

I have moved into a retirement flat in Warminster and I couldn't be happier. With everything now within walking distance I no longer need to drive everyday but I have renewed my driving licence so that I can travel further afield in comfort.

Life is good. I enjoy travelling within the UK, especially to Scotland and North Wales, and try to do seven or eight holidays a year. I keep fit with exercise classes and line dancing.

Best wishes

Betty

Editors Afternote: Seeing that Betty lives close to Ruth Millett who was a teacher at FGS overlapping with her time as a pupil, I asked if they knew each other. Betty confirmed:

"Yes, I do know Ruth and occasionally see her at local events. She taught me Maths and was also a good hockey player if I remember correctly."

The Last Head Girl Goes Back

By Lorna Wheeler

I was reading an article in a national newspaper the other day by the journalist Guy Kelly, on Clare Balding. Apparently, her universal knowledge of all things sporting comes from an ability to cram all the details in beforehand; Clare said 'I'll mug up ... and know it for two weeks. It's like revising for your exams in school'... Clare Balding was Head Girl at Downe House School in Berkshire and Guy Kelly finishes the article by saying: 'Once a Head Girl, always a Head Girl.' So, do Head Girls/Boys come in a mould? How has that changed?

I was the last Head Girl at Frome Grammar School, before it became a comprehensive, now Frome College, fifty (fifty!) years ago. I was asked to present myself at the school, to talk to the current Head Girl and deputy – now President and Vice-President of the Students Union, girl or boy - to see how things had changed. The current team, it turned out, were two delightful girls, Coral Huxley (President) and Solace Deneka (Vice President).

It was fifty years since I had swung through the school gates in a school bus. Being then in the Sixth Form I no longer had a hat to dig out and frantically cram on my head, but there was still a feeling: did I have everything, how well prepared was I for that history essay? The Head at the time, John Fisher, had once said to me: 'I don't want pupils to come through those gates scared, but I do want them apprehensive...' We were certainly that.

So when I drove through those same gates last week that feeling was somehow still there. But times had changed: I didn't even know how to get into the school. The main Crush Hall entrance said 'kitchen deliveries' which was a bit bemusing but I thought I'd give it a go anyway. I walked in to be met by three fourth formers (year 10) who were very helpful, finished off their lunch, grabbed their doughnuts to go and led me across (across!!) the North Quad. Although still more or less grassed, there were pupils sitting at tables and chatting! Last time I was there only the sixth formers were allowed to walk across the hallowed turfs of the North and South Quads. I was then led through blocks of buildings that I didn't recognise, to the Sixth Form building known as the Futures Block, but not the Sixth Form House as we knew it, to meet Andy Davies. Andy is Head of Sixth and Assistant College Head, who was amazed that I had effectively 'broken in' and hadn't been to Reception, been checked in and received a name tag to wear!

I sat down with Coral, Solace and Andy in a small room in the Sixth Form building (Years 12 and 13). Where to start? There are now 300 pupils in the 6th form, with 1200 in the school, double the numbers we had. Coral was studying Maths, Physics and Textiles for 'A' levels, and Solace Psychology, Criminology and History, so both had a full timetable. 'A' levels such as textiles, psychology and criminology were not in existence at the school in the 70s and the list of possible subjects is now very long and varied. However no Latin, certainly no Greek nor Classical Civilisation. But there was Mandarin and German... as well as Spanish and French. To study in the 6th students had to pass 5 GCSEs at Grade 4 higher.

Talking of timetabling, we talked of sport, which today is not obligatory in any form in the 6th form, although the keener ones still do something. Football seems to be the main interest. The days of Sixth Form girls racing up and down the pitch with hockey stick in hand seem to be over... certainly no matches on Saturday mornings any more, or end of term matches between staff and pupils!

We discussed music, and starting the day with assembly, which of course no longer happens. The school now, luckily for them, has a very enthusiastic music master called Mr Hampson. As a result they too have a school orchestra and a choir and put on shows, the last one being Grease. I explained we used to put on Gilbert & Sullivan and Andy interjected

and said, 'I don't expect the girls know who they are!' However, music is very much available which is not necessarily always the case in education today.

We discussed the process of electing the President and Vice-President. There are no



Solace Deneka (Vice President), Lorna Wheeler (Head Girl) Coral Huxley (President)

prefects in the 6th form, although there is a Student Council. Years 9 and 10 (the 4th and 5th years) have prefects. The election process for President and his/her Vice is one whereby they put themselves forward and basically have hustings! I thought that was very brave... the President and Vice run as a pair, and this year these two girls had been elected, but it was often two boys, or one of each. I think we might have had a vote (can anyone remember?) but basically, we were told who the Head Boy & Girl were going to be for the

following year, and their deputies.

The school still has Houses, although of course Randolph, Ames, Hurle and Hobhouse are long gone. Originally, they had famous scientists such as Einstein, Franklin and Newton but it was pointed that they were all men.... So now they have planets: Jupiter, Mars, Neptune, Saturn and Venus (four planets named after male gods and one after a female goddess - so getting there).

Pupils do still come from the Warminster area – in fact Coral comes from Horningsham, the same village as I did! No school bus though, they have to be brought in by parents. That is not an improvement.

The question of discipline reared its head. Coral and Solace were amazed that we still had the cane! I did explain that it wasn't dished out very frequently and the recipients didn't seem too bothered, at least not the ones that I had spoken to at the time, but I think they found us rather Dickensian! Nowadays they have (bad) behaviour points, C3, C2 and C1s with a 'reset room' for those that don't seem able to keep to the straight and narrow. I explained that we had detentions, and more than twelve in a term meant suspension. I remember getting close... and we often had to learn a Shakespearian speech as our 'punishment.' I can still recite a number now...

We discussed uniforms. In the 6th they don't have any but for the lower years they have 'line up checks'. I remembered kneeling in the Crush Hall whilst Miss Hulls, the senior mistress, came round with a ruler to check the length of our skirts above our knees! She must be turning in her grave. Apparently some staff, as ever, are stricter than others, but from what I saw, it all looked fairly relaxed. Certainly no hats!

We talked about career and university guidance. In my day we simply didn't have any, although individual teachers were quite helpful and I rather wish I had listened to them more avidly. However, today's pupils have huge support: university days and trips and a lot of information, which must make the whole process much clearer. Universities are in the business of selling themselves whereas I seem to remember it tended to be the other way

round 50 years ago. Then we were still in a world of grants – paid to go as opposed to ending up with a noose of debt, so perhaps we were the lucky ones.

When it was suggested that we compared the role of Head Girl at the school today with 50 years ago, I wondered how it would work. Everything is so different, and yet still very much the same in many ways. Although the curriculum is much broader and the opportunities much greater now, it is still all about chasing the grades and the university places, at least for those who choose to go. Work and play are still crammed into the school day, albeit with few hockey sticks lying around!

Some things have undoubtedly faded away. When I described our 6th Form House, the Junior and Senior Common Rooms, French windows open onto the lawns and pitches, with Simon & Garfunkel blaring out, it sounded like a different century! As indeed it was, but I was impressed by the girls there today, by the Head of Sixth, and by their positive attitude and demeanour. It was an enlightening and enjoyable experience and I wish them all the best in what lies ahead. FGS was a huge help to me (not that I realised it at the time) and I hope they will feel the same once they leave and head off in their different directions in life. As for, 'Once a Head Girl, always a Head Girl'... well that is not for me to say. Yet maybe in five decades' time people will be wondering of Coral and Solace, 'Once a Student President always... once a Student Vice President, always...'

From David Sharps (Class of '63-'70) - Senior (Boys') Cross-Country Team (68/69?)

Good evening, Adrian,

At long last, I have something to contribute to the FESA Newsletter. I've never thought I had anything to send in but I recently found a photo of the Senior (Boys') Cross-Country Team which had been stored amongst a lot of papers and photos following the clearance of my parents' house.

It was good to hear from you as it is 54+ years since we last spoke or saw each other. That said, because we were 2 - or was it 3? - years apart, we would not have known each other that well or had anything much in common at that time. I do remember you though, but I will not be offended if you have no recollection of me - I had no claim to fame or notoriety during my time at FGS!



The Team members in the attached photo are, back row, L to R: Mr Wallis, me (David Sharps), Alan George and Mr Wright; front row, L to R: Keith Winterbourne, John Hallett and Paul Paniccia. I cannot be sure of the year it was taken as I seem to recall that John H was a couple of years above us and that Mr Wallis joined the school in, I believe, Sept 1968. This suggests the photo was taken in school year 1968-9 but could be a year either side. Keen-eyed Newsletter readers might be able to confirm or correct me on this. Alan, Keith, Paul and I were in the Class of

'63-'70 and we still meet up at our Class Year reunions so they too might well be able to confirm when the picture was taken.

If you choose to publish this photo but it does not scan well, I can get the original over to you as I'm not far away - in Fareham.

Looking forward to the next Newsletter and to meeting up with you sometime - at the next FESA get-together perhaps.

David Sharps

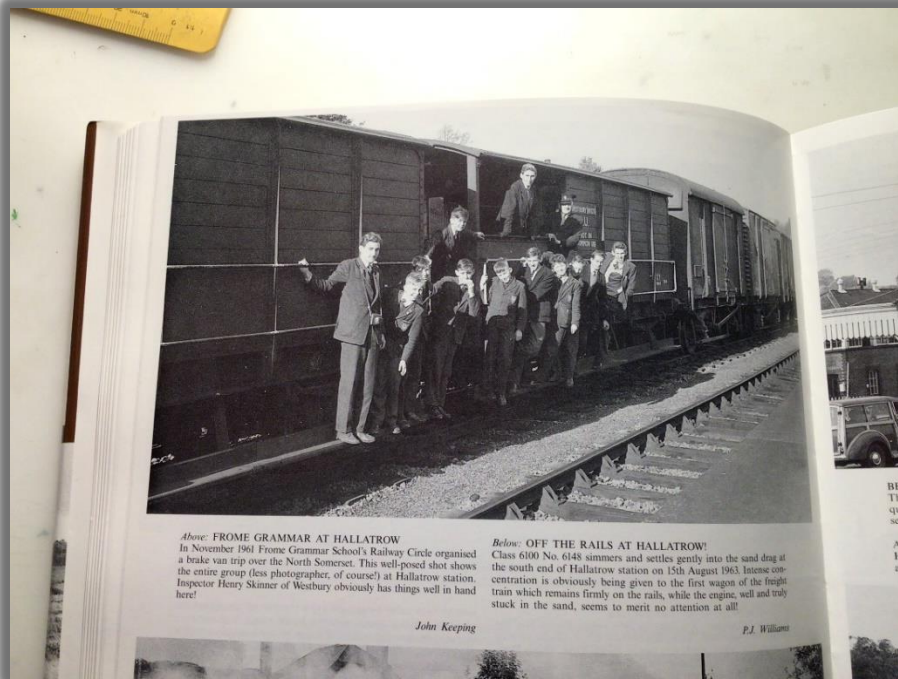
(Class of '63-'70)

From John Millard – The Railway Club and the first boys v girls hockey match

Good afternoon, Adrian,

Came across the attached photograph in a book titled Through Countryside and Coalfield by Mike Vincent published by OPC in 1990. I was never a member of the Railway Club and only

recognise Geoffrey May standing at the rail of the guards van. It might just fill a spot providing it has not been used before.



The second two photos taken in the depth of winter records the first boys v girls hockey match. The umpire was of course John Merritt. The three girls on the left in middle row from the outside are Gillian Thicke, Margaret Harris and Marlene Taylor. John Sherratt is seated and was obviously the goal keeper. Of the boys on the



back row moving from the left are Alan Brightman looking over Marlene Taylor's shoulder! I was fifth along then Colin Eastment, Hanley Hammond, David Sparkes, Colin Fisher and Rob Carr. It is difficult to identify any individuals from the action photograph. I am unable to remember the score but credit was due to Rob Carr for his enthusiasm and drive for establishing a boys hockey team. Chocolate biscuits were sold in the Sixth Form Common Room to finance the purchase of a set of shirts.

Grateful thanks for taking on the task of editing from Chris.

John Millard



A Life in Many Chapters By Richard Ives - Frome Grammar School 1960-65

Many people of my age that I know (blokes almost exclusively) went to school, maybe to university, then into a job where they stayed for decades, rising through the ranks, got married, had 2.4 children, retired with a good pension, with a mortgage paid off, and lived happily ever after. Or not. My older brother is a case in point. He did not get married, but has a long-term partner, is financially secure, but has not been happy for decades.

My start in life was in Mill Hill, Northwest London. Father served as an officer in the Royal Navy in WW2, was a senior bank officer, mother a teacher, and we lived comfortably, even at the back end of wartime rationing. Having passed the 11+ I went to Haberdashers Asks Hampstead School, which was actually in Cricklewood. My daily commute involved a trolleybus ride - oh what a transport of delight that was.

When the family move to Frome in 1960, so my mother could be close to her parents in their final years, I moved early, in order to start at FGS in September. The rest followed on later in the year, so I lived with my maternal grandparents in The Butts.

Having left a boys-only school with around 1,000 pupils, FGS as a mixed school with around 500 pupils was a bit of a culture shock. I had never been particularly aware of girls up to that point. I think that this fact was really significant in my later life, in hindsight.

I arrived in the Fourth Form. Of course, this meant that I parachuted into a cohort that had known each other for three years. Probably I played safe and kept myself to myself. Maybe that is how my natural tendency to be a loner was reinforced. In turn I believe that the friendships that I did make were mostly with like-minded souls, who were all boys, of course. That explains a lot about my later relationships, especially about my non-relationships with girls. In other words - play safe, don't get hurt.

I settled in to learning and began to enjoy subjects like geography, history, technical drawing, maths and physics. I got by with English. My English master at Haberdashers once said that I was close to illiterate, which my parents were upset about of course. I did read, but not literature, rather things like *Buses Illustrated* and the *Railway Magazine*.

Having been an 'omnibologist' in London, I then joined the FGS Railway Club, led by former pupils Peter Fry and John Keeping. I became Treasurer, the first of many volunteer roles. We had some great showings of British Transport Films, the *Night Mail* being one of the most memorable. We also did some good trips, the most memorable of those being a break van trip on the North Somerset railway from Frome West Yard to Bristol. This line closed to passengers in the late 50s. We stopped at various points so the pannier tank locomotive could do some shunting.

One place we stopped was Hallatrow. The station buildings were still in good nick and the waiting room was open. There hanging on the wall was an original Great Western Railway tin map of the complete system. I thought, "I want that," so I wrote to the Bristol District office and asked if I could have it. And lo, it was put on a goods train heading to Bristol, and then sent by road to Frome Station where I picked it up. It's still hanging on my bedroom wall - the wife won't allow it anywhere else!

We also put on exhibitions at the time of the school fete. One year club members produced an extensive model railway, including a canal scene with real water! I displayed some photos of branch lines and steam locomotives that I had taken on trips with Peter Fry and another member of the Railway Club, Bob Doel.

The tin map was the first of several items of railway memorabilia that I accumulated. Another was a 12 foot long, one and half hundredweight cast iron name plate from the closed *Pensford and Bromley Colliery Sidings Signal Box*. How to get it home from Frome West Yard to Weymouth Road was the question. I enlisted the help of Rick Pegrum (more of him later) and Colin Smith. We must have looked a bit odd carrying this thing through town. I thought of renaming the house, but dad would not have it.

Peter Fry and I also 'acquired' the name plate from Foss Cross on the closed Midland and Southwestern Junction Railway. Peter was head of HR for Wally Westons in Vallis Road, so he got one of the firms trucks to collect it. Peter did it up and we kept it under the stage in the Assembly Hall, bringing it out for Railway Club exhibitions.

I did lots of railway photography trips with Peter Fry and others, whilst steam and many branch lines still existed. Five Easters in succession (including after I left FGS) we travelled round Scotland and the Borders, following Stephenson Locomotive Society special trains hauled by preserved steam locomotives.

During my gap between school and university a friend who had been at Sexy's School at Bruton, Anthony Targett, and I took Railway Club members all over the place in a hired minibus, visiting locomotive sheds and the like. These trips could be eventful. On one occasion we were bowling along the A19 between Thirsk and Stockton-on-Tees when one of the rear wheels fell off! I managed to get the thing to a halt by the side of road, conveniently near the Black Swan at Hutton Rudby, where we called for help. One of the club members, the late Will George, sent a postcard to his mum extolling my skill as a driver.

Back to English, Miss Joan Reed, one of the English teachers, the other being Miss OP Jones, in trying to get me to read more lent me a book about the resurrection of the Talylyn Railway in Wales. She obviously knew where my interests lay.

I progressed through O-Levels, and managed to get decent grades, including Grade 1 in both Geography and Technical Drawing (I was complemented on the quality of my ellipses). As a primary school lad I used to draw make-believe Ordnance Survey maps; maybe I should have been a cartographer. One of the Geography teachers, Mr Squires, asked to borrow my notes. I later discovered he was using them as his teaching notes!

At A-Level in those days, one had to decide whether to be a scientist or a non-scientist. There seemed to be no possibility of mixing subjects, so I did Pure and Applied Maths and Physics. I got decent grades in those too, improving them slightly during my 3rd year in the Sixth Form, when I was Head Boy. I failed O-Level Art; I imagine not many people do that.

The next question was what shall I do at University? Everybody assumed that I was going to go to university. Without the benefit of any advice, I decided to do Physics, and went to Imperial College, University of London. Big mistake! There was a really big difference between A-Level and degree level Physics, and my Maths was just not good enough. I made a half-hearted attempt to change to Electrical Engineering. So I ended up with a very poor degree, also partly as a result of spending too much time playing soldiers in the University Officers Training Corps. With hindsight I should have done Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE), as that would have been more appropriate to the sort of jobs I ended up having.

I suppose that I was drawn to Physics by some of the concepts. I well remember borrowing a book from the school library (do such things still exist) by the renowned physicist Sir Arthur Eddington. In explaining the relativistic effects of motion near the speed of light he cited the effect on a tram travelling at relativistic speed. An observer standing on the street would see the tram foreshortened, due to Fitzgerald's Contraction, and redder, due to the Doppler Effect. I pondered about the engineering challenges of getting a tram to travel at that speed!

On the girl front, well, ups and downs but perhaps I had best keep my own counsel. Though there was one party in the Estate Managers apartment at Longleat, which was a bit special...

FGS is where I started my habit of volunteering, which has sort of plagued me throughout my life. Bizarrely I became non-playing Chairman of the Chess Club. Its administration was in a mess, and it needed somebody to manage it.

I did stage lighting for school plays directed by Miss Jones. My partner was Rick Pegrum and between us we did quite well. I was greatly assisted by a couple of books on lighting design lent to me by Miss Jones. I remember I produced a big lighting cue chart, detailing all the plug and switch positions and the dimmer levels for each scene. Later I did stage lighting for the Frome Drama Club.

For school plays David Nimmo and I printed the tickets and programmes on an ancient printing press in an outhouse of Northcott House, then the Sixth Form House.

I became the first pupil chairman of the Sixth Form Council, and as Head Boy reengineered the Prefects Detention system, to make it more robust. I bet the affected pupils loved me! Process improvement seems to have been a thing throughout my working and volunteer lives.

Another bizarre thing - Rick Pegrum having introduced me to the Wesley Youth Club, his father being a lay preacher at Wesley Church, and living in one of the Wesley Manse villas, I became Chairman of the Club. I even attended a Wesley Youth conference in the Central Hall, Westminster, and I'm not even a Wesleyan!

What of my time at FGS? Formative, probably. The late, great Headmaster, Joe Fairs, once said that having a degree is evidence of a trained mind, or a mind capable of being trained. How right he was.

I continued the family tradition of attending FGS, my Mother, Esme Margaret Robertson, having been in only the second cohort to attend the then new Frome County School. She was in Hurlle House as was I.

The “Many Chapters”? Well ... I ended up having a portfolio of many jobs over the decades, ranging from night security guard, through Frome Town Clerk to Army staff officer as a Major. This was long before having a portfolio of jobs became fashionable. After 22 years in NHS national IT, I retired in July 2023, but I've recently started working again as a part-time IT project manager, at the age of 78!

The volunteering and process improvement goes on. Recently I reengineered the application process for the Tiverton Almshouse Trust, of which I am a non-executive director, to make it more robust and efficient.

I still don't really understand women. I married for the first time in 2004. I'm not sure how this happened, but we are approaching our 20th Anniversary, so something must be working! Gail has been a great support during my NHS years especially.

In summary, to borrow the strap line from the updated version of *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*, I've been mostly harmless.

Family Fortunes by Bob Doel

How lucky we were! Three siblings, born in the 1930s but able to live safely through the War on the family farm at Woolverton. With food production a national priority our father had been spared conscription to the army and as we had the good fortune to be living on a farm we never went hungry.

Being brought up on a farm not only kept us safe from the War. It also instilled in us the importance of the work ethos to daily life. We certainly knew how to work but how could we learn about the wider world beyond the farm? How lucky we were! Up to the age of 11 we each first attended the tiny Primary School at Laverton. Here our teacher Marjorie Barrow worked so patiently to prepare us for that all-important move to a secondary school. Gaining a place at a Grammar School was a competitive business. But again how lucky we were! At the age of 11 we were each able to move on to the Grammar School at Frome. The School was only 5 miles from the farm but for us it was a totally different and challenging new world.



My brother Michael started at the Grammar School in 1943. He was there only 4 years as he was then needed to help back on the farm. In 1945 for his English homework he was asked to write about his summer holiday.

His essay shows just how committed he was to the work on the farm. And after he had left School, his careful record of the wild rabbits that he caught and sold showed how keen he was to run an enterprise of his own. When our father died in 1963, Michael took over the family farm and there he remained until he fell ill with cancer and passed away in 2011.

roofing built on a big chicken house and converted the house
 25. 11. 45.
 A day in the life of a Dog
 I am a dog, my name is Bruce, and I am an alsatian. This morning I woke in my kennel just as it was getting light I thought I would go and proude round in the garden. In the corner by the tool shed there are some rats. Poles over one of the neighbours cat I tried to pounce on him but he was too quick. I chased him round several times, then he jumped on the roof of the shed and so he was safe for the time being.
 Soon after my master got home came out with my basket of bread and milk. an hour later

WILD RABBIT CASH 1967

DATE	CAUGHT		£	S	D
22	caught	2 ferrets (own)		5	0
23	caught	2 in wires (own)		5	0
27	caught	1 in gin (own)		2	6
30	caught	14 rabbits	1	6	6
OCTOBER					
2	caught	4 ferrets (B. B.) (own)		5	0
11	caught	3 ferrets (own)		5	0
15	caught	15 by area 47 3 1/2 x 2 1/2	1	6	6
16	caught	1 ferret (B. B.) (own)		2	6
18	caught	4 ferrets (own)		14	6
19	caught	7 ferrets (own)		13	2
31	caught	39 rabbits	3	6	8
NOVEMBER					
1	caught	11 R.P. (own)		17	8
2	caught	1 self (own)		2	9
3	caught	1 self (own)	1	4	11
11	caught	3 self (own)		5	3
13	caught	15 R.P. (own)	1	10	3
17	caught	1 self (own)		2	6
25	caught	3 self (own)		7	9
27	caught	11 R.P. (own)	1	2	9
29	caught	18 R.P. (own)	2	5	3

My sister Mary completed a full 5 years at the Grammar School. When she left in 1952, like Michael, she returned to help on the farm. Her work there, mainly with the poultry and in the house, continued until 1960 when she married Raymond Minty of Garston Nurseries. Together they set up home in Friggle Street. Mary had 4 children but soon also became involved with the office work at the Nursery. This she continued throughout her working life. After suffering from cancer and a series of infections Raymond passed away in May this year. For Mary, falls and osteoarthritis have left her with fractures to her hip and pelvis that cannot be repaired. Her mobility is now severely restricted and she has had to adjust to living with a good deal of pain.

My own time at the Grammar School extended from 1950 to 1957. The extra years meant I was able to benefit from A-Level work in the 6th Form. Prompted by Gilbert Fairs, the Headmaster, my parents agreed I should apply to read Agriculture at University rather than simply return to work on the farm. After graduating from Nottingham in 1960 I committed to a Freedom from Hunger assignment in Borneo. This was followed by 4 years teaching Rural Studies back in England and then came the move into my main career in the government's Agricultural Development and Advisory Service. Dorothy and I had met at University and in 1967 we married and became the proud parents of a daughter and son. In 1980 my work with ADAS brought us to Cambridge and this has been our home ever since.



We were just three siblings from that farm opposite the Red Lion at Woolverton, but thanks to Frome Grammar School we had opportunity to discover there was a world beyond. The school's name has now changed but its work of equipping each new generation for their future goes on. Times were indeed tough in those post-war years, but how lucky we were!

Bob Doel
 November 2024

From Hilary Davies (Membership Secretary) – Her Sixth Form Year



Hilary sent me the wonderful Sixth Form photo above. I was especially impressed by Pete Beard's Dusty Springfield-like beehive hair style! Though he is not the only boy with more than a full head of hair...

I tried to guess which young lady was Hilary back then and got it completely wrong. Hilary today is on the left. Let me know if you can spot Hilary in the photo.

No prizes, just wondering...

From Mike Berry – Some Thoughts on Ian Brittain

Hello Hilary

Your kind reply to my email caused me to scurry to my cardboard boxes of all things historical, seeking my connection with Ian Brittain - although we were in different forms - he was clever! Funnily enough it was my late wife who had the main connection as they were great buddies in their early teens. How or why I don't know as she went to Sunny Hill (I went for the posh ones). We did go to Ian's 80th? Birthday bash at Wool golf club but in between had little contact.



I don't know if you collect odd bits and pieces of old school records but in case you do I attach two photos, the first being the 1949 second eleven cricket team which I captained - with Ian, my vice-captain on my right. And David Carr on my left. The second is the 1950/51 first eleven captained by David Cornish.

The two Masters were Percy Belham (was his name really Percy? - i don't know) and Peter Biddick who was a lovely chap and we became friends post school.

Would you be kind enough to send me David Carr's email address? I thought I had it from our old Round Table/ Rotary days but sadly not. He may just be interested in the cricket photo, and I'd like to ask him why he didn't make the first eleven! - perhaps not - never sensible to tease a GP - they're in charge of the needle.

My best wishes. Mike (1947 - 51)

Tribute to Fred Bridges by Chris Warren

Fred was born in Rode in Somerset on the 11th of February 1936, the son of Albert and Nellie Bridges. He was married to Shirley, father to Alison and Andrew, and grandfather to Oliver, Sebastian and Autumn.

Fred was born in a time and place where very few went on to do anything out of the ordinary and he was probably destined to be a farm worker or a miner, like his father. He fell in love with aviation and dreamt of designing aircraft for a living, an idea likely seen by many as pie in the sky. But he made it happen. He attended Frome Grammar School in Somerset, where he became Head Boy, and met Shirley, the love of his life. He was academically brilliant and won a Senior County University Scholarship to Southampton University to study aeronautical engineering under Professor Brown. He was also awarded the Vickers Armstrong Scholarship for Aeronautical Engineering, which secured him an apprenticeship with that aircraft manufacturer.



After graduating from university, Fred and Shirley were married on the 6th of June 1959, and Shirley joined Fred at Vickers Armstrong in Weybridge in Surrey. They bought their first house in Knaphill before moving to Bisley, where Alison and Andrew were born. In 1969 the family moved to West Parley in Dorset, where Fred headed up the company's Flight Performance Office at nearby Hurn Airport.

When he started designing aircraft, he wasn't doing something that had already been done many times over, he was working at the forefront of a new era in aviation, the jet airliner age. Along with the new aircraft came new technology, in particular computers, which he mastered and put to good use, becoming the first person ever to process flight test data during a test flight. He never shied away from a challenge, instead seeing each challenge as a learning opportunity, and developed an insatiable thirst for knowledge and understanding. He was generous with his knowledge too, always eager to share what he'd learnt with colleagues, friends and family.

At a young age Fred developed a fascination with the world around him, fuelled by encyclopaedias and travel books. As soon as Fred and Shirley were able, they started exploring the world on many adventurous holidays, a tradition that continued until recent years, and took the family on numerous driving holidays all across Europe and as far as Morocco during the 70s and 80s. Later he and Shirley travelled further afield to New Zealand and Australia, Antarctica and the Arctic, America, Hawaii and Canada - usually climbing mountains and glaciers. Fred's love of Spain in particular was no doubt due to his working there for three months in 1965 while flight testing the BAC 1-11. His team was stationed at an American Air Force base near Madrid, and while everyone but Fred ate at the canteen, which catered for the tastes of Americans, he chose to venture into the city and try the local restaurants. He ate at a different restaurant every night for the entire duration of his stay and learned Spanish literally by trial and error, as there were no menus printed in English!

In 1982 Fred started working for Marconi Underwater Systems in Waterlooville and shortly after the family relocated to Fareham. At Marconi Fred's aeronautical background became invaluable. Even though he had no experience of working with underwater vehicles he could see parallels with the world he knew, and his extensive knowledge of fluid dynamics gathered from the aircraft world contributed to the rapid development of some very different vehicles.

Throughout his life he was passionate about music. At a young age he learned to play the piano and sang with the church choir. At the grammar school he was invited to sing in the Staff Choir instead of the student choir! He developed a love for big band music, songs from the shows and orchestral music. During his time working in Spain he developed an interest in Spanish guitar music and Flamenco too. He returned to singing after retirement, at one point singing with four choirs, including the prestigious Hampshire Police Male Voice Choir.

Fred always had a very good sense of right and wrong. Everyone sees grey areas, but he was able to arrange the greys by shade and draw a neat line between them. It was important to him to do the right thing, and he always treated everybody with fairness, but always found room for a little dry humour.

He took pride in everything he did. He'd always say, "If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing well". Sometimes that changed to "If a job's worth doing, do it yourself", advice that he followed. It didn't matter what needed to be done, whether it was building garden furniture, fixing the car, plumbing, gardening or general DIY, he would do the job himself, and always make an excellent job of it. When asked why he never got somebody in to do the job for him he replied, "nobody's going to do as good a job in my house as I am".

Today we celebrate the life and achievements of Fred, a forward-thinking pioneer in all aspects of his life, who inspired and taught others around him.

Fred had both vision and drive, making plans to succeed in both his personal life and career in unchartered territory. He aspired to do right and improve himself and everything around him. He was very well respected by all. A thinker and studier – one of 'the old school'. He was unassuming, never shouting about his achievements, but what a trailblazer, with a track record and positive impact on the world.

Fred, though our hearts are deeply saddened by your passing, your family and friends will always love you, remember you, and miss you.

May you now rest in peace.

Notification of Death - Mrs G J Bennett

We were notified of the death of Mrs G J Bennett, wife of Peter Bennett, of Dilton Marsh, by their daughter. The Membership Secretary passed on our condolences.

Membership Application Form

Frome Ex-Students Association (FESA)

Frome Ex-Students Association Frome Community College.

Bath Road, Frome, Somerset BA11 2HQ of Frome Grammar School, Frome College
Comprehensive, & Frome College

I wish to become a life member of FESA:

Name School Years

Surname while at school (if different)

Address

.....

..... Post Code:

E-mail

Phone (home)

(mobile) Staff (S) or Pupil (P):

The information you have provided will be used by FESA solely to enable us to contact our members. You may request the removal of this data at any time. (See over)

Please circle one of the following:

<i>FESA Life Membership</i>	<i>Paper copy of Newsletter</i>	<i>Email copy of Newsletter</i>
60 or over	- no longer available -	£15
Under 60	- no longer available -	£20

Please return this form and enclose a cheque for the correct amount, made payable to Frome Ex-Students Association, and send to the Membership Secretary

Hilary Davies
37 Portway
Frome BA11 1QU
Email: hilary.davies@me.com
Tel: 01373 473041.

Please contact Hilary for FESA bank details if you wish to return this form by email and pay by bank transfer.

March 2022

Membership of FESA (Frome Ex-Students Association)

New members of FESA are always welcome. We now offer new members Life Membership but with a choice of fees in each of two age groups.

Membership Fees

We are sorry that we are unable to distribute the newsletter by post from 2022. We will send you the newsletter by email, and the fee is £15 or £20 depending on your age. Please see the table on the membership application form.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy

We hold the information that you provide in a computer database. This is only accessible to Officers of FESA and only then to enable them to carry out their functions, including seeking material for the Newsletter, distribution of the Newsletter and of other items of news during the year.

The database is not accessible by any other party. If you request the e-mail address of another member we will assume you have given us authority to send your e-mail address to the other party and we will write to the other member and give them your name and e-mail address so that they can decide whether to respond. In addition, we hold other data about individuals in organisations that we deal with and also some contact details of old pupils who are not necessarily members. This is subject to the same policy as above.

If you wish to have your data removed from our database please contact our Membership Secretary:

Hilary Davies, 37 Portway, Frome BA11 1QU, Somerset,

or by email: hilary.davies@me.com.

March 2023