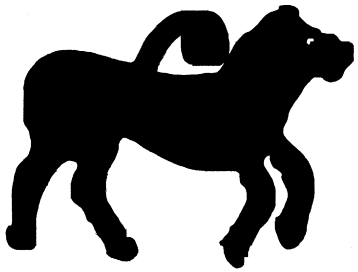


*50 Years of the
Frome Society for
Local Study*



A Short History





Plaque to commemorate Deryck Ingram by Frome Museum, FSLs and the Frome Historic Buildings Trust to mark their appreciation of his help and commitment.

Alastair MacLeay became Treasurer and reinvigorated the sales of FSLs publications and encouraged the publication of new books of local interest. The Society has been fortunate in having the support of the well known author and local historian, Michael McGarvie, many of whose books FSLs has published, and who has edited the Yearbook since its inception in 1987. His practical help and enthusiasm have been inspiring over many years.

Since Alastair MacLeay became Chairman in 2006, the Committee has tried to improve communication with

nearly 300 Members where the knowledge of our IT expert Alan Yeates has been vital. Indeed it is through the help of all Members that the Society is able to thrive: Volunteers deliver Contact and the Newsletter, a group of Members records a regular newspaper for the blind and the winter lectures and summer outings require much study and organisation.

Your Committee hopes that the Golden Anniversary will prove to be a success and that the current format of winter lectures and summer outings will continue to appeal to Members in future. Meanwhile all suggestions from Members will be warmly welcomed! Anne Wallis



Plate commemorating 25th Anniversary of Laurie Bowring's Chairmanship and a Vase presented to Brian and Alison Gill for their long service

The Early Years

The Inaugural Meeting of the Frome Society was held on the 9th of October 1958. The meeting was addressed by Sir Leonard Woolley, the celebrated archaeologist, who said there was a "wonderful chance and bounden duty in a place like Frome to form a Society. One could get a lot of pleasure looking at things with an educated eye - earthworks and field boundaries, architecture, plants and birds - a local society could do a great deal of good for the town". Original plans were for three sections:- Geology, Natural History and Local History.

There was also a section for Caving, but within a year this broke away to form an independent group calling itself the East Mendip Caving Club, which would inform our Society of any significant finds.

By 1961 'for Local Study' had been added to 'The Society', which certainly flourished. In 1962 it held



30 lectures and 17 outings, and the committee paraded in historical costumes. A

small museum was opened on Church Steps.

1970's

The next decade brought considerable changes. Although the Church Steps was an ideal location for a museum, the premises were small. In 1974 the reorganisation of local government meant that the Society lost the financial backing previously received from the old Frome Urban District Council. The new Town Council could only give occasional grants from its limited budget. After much debate the Committee accepted the generous offer made by Mrs Ashworth to lease Wine Street House for the rent of a red rose at midsummer. Shortly afterward she died and



Church Steps



Wine Street House

bequeathed the house to the Society.

1980's

An attempt to use the house for museum purposes failed on account of its distance from the centre of the town, limited space and poor state of repair; it was then used for study purposes and storage, while the museum departed to independent existence in the old Literary Institute. A project to supply Plaques to identify the residences of notable people in the town was continued, as it is still in the 21st century.

The derelict state of Marston House was a concern to the Society, which carried on a campaign for its listing,

until it was finally saved by Mr and Mrs Yeoman, who restored it to a magnificent building.

1990's

By this time, during the long chairmanship of Laurie Bowring, there was an influx of new members, many of them retired and settling down in an unfamiliar environment. More professional lecturers from Bristol University were arranged, but with rising costs this co-operation had to be abandoned; today we engage them directly. Coaches had to replace the private cars originally used for outings, and so longer journeys were possible. In the 1970's an experimental tour had been arranged lasting a few days in a minibus driven by our chairman. Centred at the University of East



Marston House

Anglia, the medieval city of Norwich was explored, with excursions to visit historic houses and the large 'wool' churches of the area. The success of

this trip was followed some years later by coach tours of Herefordshire and Shropshire to see the black and white building in contrast to our local towns and villages This was followed two years later by another tour in the 'Heart of England' based on Keele University to see some great houses of Staffordshire and Yorkshire.

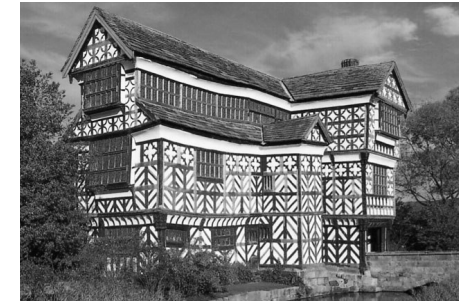
Ruth Coard 2008

1999-2008

The death of Laurie Bowring in 1997 represented the end of an era for the Society, although Phyl Bowring remained closely involved as the Society's first patron until her death in 2007.



Norwich Cathedral



Little Moreton Hall, Cheshire

Brian Gill became Chairman in 1998, with Ruth Coard as Vice-chair and Alison Gill Secretary. Deryck Ingram as Treasurer gave them strong support and was influential in encouraging a good relationship with Frome Museum. The Frome and District Civic Society had already merged with the Frome Society, both having similar objectives.

Anne Wallis became Chairman in 2002 and was ably supported by Ruth Coard, Pat Eames and, until his untimely death two years later by Deryck Ingram. During the next few years, FSLS rented a room from the Museum which was refurbished and is a focal point for Committee meetings and storage of publications and other possessions. The venue for winter lectures was changed to St Catharine's Hall in Park Road.

A plaque to the memory of Deryck Ingram was installed in the Museum