

CONTACT

Spring/
Summer
2017

Frome Society for Local Study
Frome and District Civic Society



GWR's 'City of Truro'

Picture: Ashley Dace

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Annual Subscriptions from 1st January 2017

Single Membership: £10.00

Joint Membership: £15.00

Life Membership Single: £100.00

Life Membership Joint: £150.00

CHEQUE PAYMENTS

The Treasurer asks that all cheques should be made payable to "Frome Society for Local Study" or "F.S.L.S." The bank does not normally allow cheques made out to individuals to be paid into the Society account. The preferred method of payment is by standing order to FSLS, and a form is available from Janet Howard or may be downloaded from the FSLS website, www.fsls.org.uk

Frome Town Walks 2017

The Frome Town Walks are organised by the Frome Society for Local Study and will take place on the second Sunday in May, June, July, August and September, and the third Sunday in July during the Frome Festival. They set off at 2.30 pm outside the Round Tower in Justice Lane and are designed to give an understanding of the history and economy of the town from its foundation in 685 AD by St Aldhelm, through the middle ages to the present day. There is a special emphasis on Frome's listed buildings with their broad range of religious and vernacular architecture.

The guides are Ruth Angel, Cliff Bawden, Alastair MacLeay and Janet Millar. Arrangements for special town walks should be made with Alastair MacLeay on 01373 836595 or info@fsls.org.uk

Copies of the Frome Heritage Trail (£3) and the Buildings of Frome (£9) will be available to buy. Frome Town Walks are free, except for those during the Frome Festival, but contributions to Frome charities are most welcome!

The dates of the walks in 2017 are as follows:

14 May	11 June	9 July
16 July	13 August	10 September

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Report from the Chairman

As my first year as chair comes towards its end I look back over another very successful year for the society, with many old and new members enjoying our usual collection of fascinating visits and enlightening lectures.

In addition to thanking the full members of the main committee, I am sure you would want me to thank those members who spend many hours investigating suitable venues for our visits, finding and arranging the twelve lecturers, acting as guides for Town Walks or organising plaques. I hope you have enjoyed the events taking place during 2016 and are enthusiastic about those still to come.

There is a remarkable variety of outings already arranged for the spring and summer this year. They include visits to several National Trust properties, the Steam museum in Swindon, a tour of Poole pottery and the Lifeboat training establishment, looking for fossils on Charmouth beach, visits to Bridgwater and Ledbury, and many other interesting places during the Cornwall residential visit.

The limited parking at Oakfield Road and the loss of parking at the Vine Tree have caused us to reduce the pick-up points for outings to just the Cricket Club and the Memorial Theatre.. This will be a trial for one year and do let us know how you feel about the new arrangement.

Necessary pieces of administration have taken place during the year. With considerable help and advice from Chris Hare, we have reviewed and revised our constitution that we hope you will ratify at the AGM in March. Other new policies have been prepared, including a detailed review of health and safety issues.

Our previous chairman Peter Clark, and our treasurer, Derek Wilson, are retiring from their posts this year although Derek will continue as a committee member. Clare Kerin has also retired from planning the outings. We shall be very sad to see them go and thank them all for their years of service to the society. Much more will be said on the matter at the AGM on 25th March.

Another note for your diary: **Annual Lunch on 19th March.**

Julian Watson

2017 SUMMER PROGRAMME NOTES

This year we have arranged a varied programme of outings, including two National Trust visits, which we hope you will enjoy.

Bookings: call Pat Eames on **464464** after 9am. If necessary, please leave a message and your phone number. In an emergency call **07493 419398**

Please Note: We are trialling a plan to provide two departure points only:

- **FROME CRICKET CLUB** (advertised departure time)
- **BUS STOP OPPOSITE FROME MEMORIAL THEATRE** (5 minutes later)

The Cricket Club offers a large parking area which will accommodate all members who wish to park their cars there before boarding the coach. ***Please avoid parking next to the Pavilion.***

If you need a **free** National Trust Single Admission pass, send a SAE to Civic Voice (be sure to advise that you belong to Civic Voice via the Frome and District Civic Society) at: 60 Duke Street, Liverpool L1 5AA.

Cancellations must be made not less than 48 hours before the outing. Failure to do so will incur the cost of the coach and possible further costs non-refundable to the Society.

- Any communication must be made to the Society, not to the Coach Company
- The preferred method of payment is by cheque (payable to FSLs) collected when boarding the coach at the end of the trip. The price shown includes coach fare, entrance fees, guides and gratuities.
- Guests will pay a supplementary charge of £3 and are responsible for their own travel insurance.
- There is always a facility for buying lunch, if not included, or you may prefer to take a picnic.

Thursday 13th April Caerleon - The 2nd Roman Legion Army in Wales

The extensive remains of one of the largest Roman military sites, the Fortress of the Second Augustan Legion, are contained in the Welsh village of Caerleon. The 50-acre Fortress housed over 5,000 Legionaries. Outside the Fortress, the massive Amphitheatre would have been used for gladiatorial combats, games and weapons training. In the 20th Century, two Legion museums were built to house the many thousands of artefacts recovered as a result of extensive excavations and archaeological digs.

After included refreshments, our visit will begin with a short walk and introductory talk about the Amphitheatre; continue to the impressive Barracks ruins and on to The Legion Bath House Museum (free) with its very impressive, digitally recreated swimming pool and many areas of original stonework.

Lunch is available at nearby cafes and restaurants. Our afternoon visit will continue in the Roman Legion Museum with a talk and tour of the Museum Gallery led by the Curator, Dr Mark Lewis and will conclude in the basement area for a 'behind the scenes' look at Museum conservation techniques and reconstructed Legionaries quarters. There will be time for refreshments before leaving at 4:30pm.

**8:30am Departure time from Cricket Club
Price £20
Phone booking from 29th March**

Thursday 27th April The Big Pit in Wales

As you will be aware, Frome lies on the edge of a huge coal mining area. To gain some insight into the real working conditions of miners of not so long ago, we shall visit The Big Pit in Wales. We shall be met by the Coal Curator for a ten-minute introduction to the site that has been effectively adapted to provide visitors with an underground and/or surface appreciation of a miner's life.

There is much to see on the surface, with an excellent interactive museum, pithead showers and an exciting simulation of work underground. Lunch can be taken in the Miners Canteen where reasonably priced food and drinks are available. However, for the real experience, we can choose to descend to the coal workings, all kitted out with helmet and lamp. Visits to the coalface, cutting machines and stables are fascinating. An ex-miner will lead the 50-minute tour, involving walking 700 meters carrying a lamp weighing 5kg. There are places where you will need to bend to avoid bumping your head.

Big Pit is an outdoor industrial site. Please wear warm clothing and sensible footwear as the site is on the side of a hill, with some long ramps to reach the different levels.

**8:30am Departure time from Cricket Club
Price £12
Phone bookings from 12th April**

Thursday 11th May Kingston Lacy (NT) (45 Max due to House restrictions)

We will be welcomed with included tea/coffee and biscuits before being divided into smaller groups to visit this Italianate house, built for the Bankes family after the Restoration. On display are paintings by Brueghel, Rubens, Tintoretto, Titian and Van Dyck and also the largest U.K. collection of privately owned Egyptian artefacts.

If there is time, when leaving the house, visit the interesting laundry room and shop before having lunch in the café.



There are walks across the lawns to the Formal Garden, Potting Shed Book Shop, and the Japanese Garden before venturing further along the paths to see the

restored Kitchen Garden. In front of the House are various Egyptian curiosities, including an obelisk, brought to Dorset with the help of a family friend, the 1st Duke of Wellington. There are longer Woodland Walks to see the wildflowers and the famous herd of Ruby Red Devon cattle. There will be time for tea in the café before departure at 4:15pm.

**8:30am Departure time from Cricket Club
Price £16 NT members or £29 non-members
Phone booking from 26th April**

Wednesday 24th May Poole Pottery & Royal National Lifeboat Institution College

The coach will take us to Poole Quay where we can choose to go into Poole Pottery for coffee, (where there is a large restaurant with choice of meals at competitive prices) or walk to the museum and shopping mall.

In the pottery area, there is a large Factory Shop where they sell all grades of famous 'Poole' from

the one-off 'Studio Collection' pieces to quality seconds, also other brands of china, glass, kitchenware, clothing and accessories.

At 11:45am we can visit the studio and watch a free demonstration of artists at work.

At 1:15pm we board the coach for a short drive to the RNLI College where we will be shown how lifeboat crews and lifeguards are trained. This includes the Sea Survival Centre, which hosts wave tank and lifeboat simulators. After the tour there will be time to visit the shop or have tea before boarding the coach for home.

8:45am Departure time from Cricket Club

Price: £18

Phone booking from 10th May (Note: Max 45 persons due to RNLI restriction.)

Monday 12th June Tetbury and Chavenage House

Before visiting historic Chavenage House we shall spend approximately 2 hours in Tetbury, the charming Gloucestershire town that Frome Society members know and like so well. We shall have time to explore the shops, maybe visit the quaint Police Museum (free admission) or the historic parish church and have lunch before moving on to Chavenage House for 2:00pm.

This property is mainly Elizabethan and has been owned by only two families since the Reformation. One of the current owners, from the Lowsely-Williams family, will give us a guided tour and include a talk about the colourful history of the house. These days, Chavenage is greatly in demand as a setting for TV historical dramas including Poldark and fans will recognise many of the rooms and grounds.

Before leaving we have included an afternoon tea of scones, cream and jam.

When booking please indicate if you require gluten-free scones.

8:45am Departure Time from Cricket Club

Price £21

Phone booking from 23rd May

Thursday 22nd June Coleton Fishacre (NT)

You need not be a Gilbert and Sullivan fan to enjoy this country retreat created in 1923 for the D'Oyly Carte heir and his family. However, the house and gardens are a must if Arts and Crafts architecture, Art Deco style and the RHS-accredited gardens are of interest to you. Visitors have spoken of appreciating the elegant saloon, which evokes the glamorous atmosphere of the Jazz Age and then

experiencing the contrast with the light and airy rooms used by the servants. Outside are paths that will take you around the colourful gardens and the nearby motor house where bats roost and swallows annually return to nest. Other paths take you further to ponds, the habitat for many insects and creatures, and give glimpses of the sea through the trees. Many tender plants from around the world thrive in this microclimate above the Devon Coastline and seals have been known to live in the peaceful cove below the gardens.

The Café Coleton sources local produce and locally caught seafood, and has been recommended by the Taste of Devon Awards for their lunches. There will be time for tea before leaving at 4pm.

8:30am Departure time from the Cricket Club

Price £13 NT members or £23 for non-members

Phone bookings from 8th June

Wednesday 26th July Bridgwater Town and Churches Tour

Bridgwater is an ancient port and the birthplace of Oliver Cromwell's admiral, Robert Blake. We will visit Blake's birthplace, now an excellent town museum, and visit two churches. St Mary's parish church is closed for restoration but we have special permission to see inside. The Duke of Monmouth saw the advancing royalist forces from its tower before the Battle of Sedgemoor. The Unitarian Chapel goes back to the 17th century; the poet Coleridge preached from its pulpit. After lunch (included in the price) at a historic pub, Peter Clark will take us on a tour of some elegant Georgian domestic architecture.

8:45am Departure time from Cricket Club

Price £20

Phone Bookings from 12 July

Monday 7th August STEAM - Museum of the Great Western Railway

The Museum of the Great Western Railway tells the story of the men and women who built, operated and travelled on the Great Western Railway.

In early 1840, Swindon was a small, sleepy market town, but in the spring of 1841, work began on the building of the locomotive works and railway village. The carriage and wagon works were built during 1868, making Swindon the main depot for the G.W.R.

The Museum is housed in what remains of the old works as the majority of the works was demolished to make way for the new Designer Outlet Centre.

On arrival at the Museum, there will be a short welcome talk, after which you will be free to wander as you wish, following the history of the birth of the G.W.R. up to the present day.

Platform One Café is open for refreshments and hot and cold meals, (closes at 4pm).

The Designer Outlet Centre is a few minutes' walk from the museum, but you must be back to the entrance of the G.W.R. Museum by 4:00pm for our departure.

9:15am Departure Time from Cricket Club

Price £15.00

Phone Booking from 25th July.

Wednesday 23rd August Nynehead Court Gardens and Sheppy's Cider Farm

On arrival at Nynehead Court, near Wellington, we go to the orangery for included coffee/tea and biscuit followed by a guided tour of the gardens, which are on English Heritage's list of Historic Gardens. There is an icehouse, pinetum, parterre and access to an interesting small church.

At 1pm we board the coach for a short drive to Sheppy's for a simple lunch. Menus will be available on the coach or take a picnic.

Following lunch there will be a guided tour of the farm where we will learn about the orchards and the processes of producing cider. In the museum, we will be shown a DVD and be given a cider tasting.

8:45am Departure time from Cricket Club

Price £23

Booking from 3rd August

Thursday 7th September Fossils and Trams

The seaside Heritage Centre, formerly a cement factory in Charmouth, Dorset, was converted into a museum to display the many fossils and other artefacts found on the Jurassic Coast. After included refreshments, a Warden's introductory talk will prepare us for a walk on the beach to discover our own fossils.

Lunch items can be purchased earlier from the Café as our anticipated morning activities will last until approximately 1:30pm. Alternatively, lunch can be taken at Seaton in Devon, our second destination.

At Seaton, before boarding the tram at 3pm, there will be time to take lunch, walk along the promenade, do some shopping, or visit the Jurassic Centre next to the tram stop.

Our tram journey will be a unique experience as the trams are genuine old working vehicles lovingly restored. The trams run along a track to the village of Colyton, through peaceful water meadows,

beautiful scenery and the sight and sound of interesting water birds.

At Colyton, there is an opportunity for a final cuppa at the station café or visit the Vintage Shed Antiques Centre before boarding our coach for the return journey.

8:15am Departure time from Cricket Club

Price £28

Phone booking from 22nd August

Wednesday 27th September The Black and White Buildings of Ledbury

Ledbury, a historic market town in Herefordshire with 244 listed buildings, is also the birthplace of Poet Laureate John Masefield and for 12 years the home of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

While enjoying included refreshments, our visit will begin with a short introductory talk and slide show of the history of Ledbury. You will receive a complimentary copy of the "Ledbury Heritage Trail" which will be invaluable for the town tour.



Continuing in smaller groups, a 45-minute guided tour will enlighten us on some of the local history connected with the buildings.

Lunch is available in any of the local pubs and restaurants. The afternoon can be spent exploring the interiors of The Painted Room (small entrance fee), the Butcher Row House Museum and the Heritage Centre, all located in Church Lane. St Michael and All Angels Church, 'the premier parish church in Herefordshire' (Sir Niklaus Pevsner), located at the end of Church Lane, is well worth a visit. There will be time for refreshments before our departure at 4:30pm.

8:45am Departure time from Cricket Club

Price £17

Phone Bookings from 6th September

MONDAY JULY 10th 2017 at 7pm

Secret Underground Cities – a talk by Nick McCamley
A Frome Society event for Frome Festival at Rook Lane Chapel

£4.00 to FSLs members (book by April 21st)

CIVIC SOCIETY REVIEW

Civic Society review of 2016

It has been another busy year for Frome and District Civic Society. We reviewed and commented on 267 planning applications in 2016, 10% fewer than in 2015, a high water mark of 295. We are most grateful to John Peverley, Jean Lowe and Tim Rose, our small but committed panel who met on 17 occasions to review applications in Frome in 2016.

We made 58 objections in total, including 25 of the 61 Full Planning Applications and 3 of the 6 Reserved matters applications. These were the largest and most contentious proposals in Frome.

There were 107 householder applications for extensions of which we objected to just 9. Of these 4 were proposals for inappropriate large dormers. We objected to 8 of the 30 Listed Building applications including the conversion to 9 flats of "Iron Gates" and "The Court House", the historic building in Kingsway. This application is still to be determined at the time of writing. Tree works were again popular, with 46 applications in connection with Tree Protection Orders and trees in conservation areas.

Rising house prices

Demand for housing in Frome continues to outstrip supply as reported in the last edition of Contact. Recent national statistics suggest house prices rose in Frome by 14.5% in the year to December 2016. Property prices in Frome apparently rose by £36,000 on average last year, now standing at £284,478. The rise is the third highest recorded in the UK, slightly behind Wellingborough in Northamptonshire at 14.9%. Bath had the highest rise with a whopping 17.8% increase.

Average house prices in Frome are now nearly thirteen times the average full time income of £22,800 in Mendip (April 2015). As the Bank of England has capped the number of mortgages Banks can lend above the 4.5 times income to loans ratio. it seems escalating house prices are being driven by more affluent incomers outbidding local working families in particular.

Increasing property values and affluent incomers seem to be fuelling property upgrades. Extensions and refurbishments are often more affordable than moving, with improvements reflected in enhanced house prices. The design standards of some house makeovers have notably improved. The other side of this coin is the increasing pressure to cram extensions, flats and additional houses into

constrained dwelling boundaries, often to the detriment of neighbouring properties and the street scene. There is continuing and growing pressure on places of employment for conversion or redevelopment for housing as the availability of such sites becomes scarcer.

Local Plan Part II

The shortage of available housing and employment land is being addressed by Mendip District Council under a part of the Local Plan, creatively entitled 'Local Plan Part II'. It will allocate specific sites in and around Frome, primarily to extend the town and some surrounding village development limits where opportunities have been identified. An initial trawl for sites was undertaken in 2016 followed by consultation to which Frome & District Civic Society contributed. Moving forward, the proposed site allocations will be discussed with Parish and Town Councils in the district in the next few weeks. Further public consultation on the proposed sites is due in May before final ratification.

Frome Neighbourhood Plan

December 12th 2016 marked the final hurdle for Frome's Neighbourhood Plan, as it became 'made' by Mendip as the Local Planning Authority. Thus it is now fully adopted to control development alongside the 'Frome Town Design Statement' and Mendip's Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan was voted for by residents at a local referendum earlier last year. It is designed to protect green spaces such as the Frome river corridor and "attract the right developers to the town." Despite the clear intentions set out in the Neighbourhood Plan, the policies it contains are untested as an instrument of planning control.

Ironically, less than a month after the Plan's adoption, approval was granted in January 2017 for three large 3 storey houses in Rodden Meadow. The Planning Officer noted in his report: "It was initially thought that the site might also be within an open area of local significance as it seemed to be included within a diagram within the Frome Neighbourhood Plan where it was suggested that the site was a priority for protection. It however transpires that process to include such land should only be carried out by the District Council through the Local Plan process and its inclusion within the Frome Neighbourhood Plan is a clerical error where only those allocated sites within the Mendip District Local Plan should have been included within the Frome Neighbourhood Plan."

Richard Swann

Chair Frome & District Civic Society

PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

The Butler and Tanner Story	12.00
Book of Frome (fifth edition)	15.00
A History of Mells (third edition)	7.50
The King's Peace	6.00
Villages of the Frome Area	4.50
The History of Nunney	7.50
The Toll-houses of Somerset	9.95
Stoke St Michael in Old Photographs	7.50
A History of Stoke St Michael	8.50
A History of Holcombe	10.00
A History of Wanstrow	10.00
The Book of Leigh upon Mendip	10.00
Marston House	3.00
The Mystery of Fidele	2.50
Frome through the Ages	5.00
Bath Street	3.00
Frome Street and Place Names	4.50
Frome Heritage Trail (second edition)	3.00
Crime and Punishment in Regency Frome	3.50
The Industries of Frome	7.00
The Buildings of Frome (third edition)	9.00
Argyll House	3.00
Blue House	3.00
The Bounds of Selwood	2.00
Experiences of a 19 th Century Gentleman	10.00
The Sheppards and Eighteenth Century Frome on CD	10.00
Future of the Past	1.00
FSLs Yearbooks 1-4 on CD	10.00
FSLs Yearbook Volume 5	3.00
FSLs Yearbooks 6 & 16 on CD	10.00
FSLs Yearbooks 7,8,9,10 & 11	6.00
FSLs Yearbooks 12,13,14,15,17,18 &19	10.00
1838 Frome Map by Dixon & Maitland on CD	10.00
1886 OS Map of Frome on CD	10.00
1886 OS Map of Central Frome (flat or folded)	10.00
1903 OS Map of Frome (flat)	9.00
Historic Inns of Frome	10.00
Frome in the Great War	12.99

Frome Society publications are available from the Hunting Raven Bookshop, Cheap Street, Frome, Frome Museum, Frome Information Centre or direct from Alastair MacLeay, Prospect House, Trudoxhill, Frome, Somerset BA11 5DP (01373 836595 or info@fsls.org.uk). Postage & packing extra at cost.

