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David Barnes - an appreciation from Dave Hebden

David Barnes took over the role of RFA Archivist from Fred Beswick in 2001. In the period just prior to that point, I think it is fair to say that the role was largely a passive one, the incumbent being principally responsible for being the custodian of various records and historical items associated with the game of fives. David changed that. Over the years that he held the post, he actively foraged for information, thereby filling gaps in our knowledge of the history of the game, and has collected a treasure trove of books, photos, letters, and fives artifacts, including trophies, fives balls and many other items of interest, all of which have helped our understanding of the evolution of our game. There cannot be too many School and University Archivists in the land who have not been pestered by David in this search for information, but I'm sure that all his targets will have enjoyed the contact, because being pestered by David is something that is never unwelcome.

The legacy of this work is huge, and includes the wonderful series of in-depth features on Schools and Universities that have graced our Annual Reviews over the years. Take a look at the feature on the new Winchester College courts in this year's Review as an example of David's craft. I have had the pleasure of assisting David over the last few years, and I am very aware of the huge amount of time and effort he has devoted to the role. His breadth and depth of knowledge of the game is second to none. I know that David will continue to help those of us who have an interest in fives history, but with his stepping down as Archivist, it is timely for us now to warmly give thanks to him for all his efforts.