

## **Friends of St James, Swimbridge Annual Report 2015**

Warm thanks to the Friends' patron Lady Arran and the committee: Rev. Shaun O'Rourke (chair), David Netherway, Richard Fardon and our new churchwarden Pete Miller, plus all our speakers / performers and everyone who helped on events during the year, including publicity in the North Devon Journal by Dr Richard Westcott and Radio Devon announcements courtesy of John Hayes.

### **1. Membership**

Membership grew from 39 members to 50. However, very sadly three much-loved members died this year: Ruth Moore, Anne Hayes and Glenda Langmead. We send our deepest condolences to Gerry Moore, John Hayes and Bernie Langmead. Also, our hon. members the Rev. Bruce and Kathy Dixon have moved to Dorset for family reasons. Jessica Duncan, our very first member, has moved with her husband Peter to Dartmoor. All will be much missed. We have two new hon. members, Syd and Bernie Pring-Ellis of the Post Office, who have been unfailingly generous in helping the Friends since we began. Membership donations for 2015 totalled: £1962 (up from £1752 last year). £430.66 was received from HMRC as Gift Aid from membership subscriptions where Gift Aid has been stipulated: up from £379 last year.

### **2. Events**

#### Spring season

15 April: Hugh Meller on 'Country Houses of Devon'. Attendance: 40.

Refreshments and entrance donations: £91.69 (Hugh's spectacular two volume work on this subject has now been published).

28 April: Personal guided tour of Castle Hill by Lady Arran, followed by a garden tour led by Jessica Duncan and a cream tea kindly donated by Lady Arran: 32 attended. The event raised £560.10. In addition to most generously offering this much-enjoyed event, Lady Arran, already an hon. member, set up an annual donation to the Friends. We are most fortunate in having such a thoughtful and committed Patron.

15 May: Barnstaple Male Voice Choir at the Jubilee Hall. Shared event with the JH. A marvellous evening of beautifully performed music, sung with great clarity – a testimony to the acoustics of the hall. Superb solos by Rachel Phillips (soprano) and delightful mcng by Mike Clift. Ticket sales: £335, of which £100 was paid to the BMVC for their expenses and the remainder shared between the Friends and the JH, thus proceeds of £117.50 to the Friends.

#### Autumn season

7 October: Peter Christie on old photographs of Swimbridge and neighbouring villages. Attendance: 27. Refreshments and entrance donations: £61

14 October: Philip Dalling previewed his book on Swimbridge, subsequently published by Halsgrove to great acclaim. Attendance: 46. Refreshments and entrance donations: £154.80

21 October: John Bradbeer spoke on creating parish wild life surveys. Attendance: 19. Refreshments and entrance donations: £46.

### **3. Receipts from membership and events**

Total for the year from subscriptions, HMRC Gift Aid, and events: £3,306.25 (up from £3,268.40 last year). A cheque for £2,463.00 was passed to Nick Arthur, Treasurer, St James Church, on 12 December. In addition, £537 donated last year but designated for the Church Clock Repair Fund was released to the PCC for use at their discretion. Thus, in real terms, a donation of £3,000 was made to St James church (the same amount as in December 2014).

Wine and other refreshments were donated anonymously by members of the Friends. A folding screen for illustrated lectures was also donated anonymously.

### **4. Expenditure**

#### **A. Brochure for The Friends of St James Church**

£190 for 1000 brochures. These are for use in church and for the incumbent and churchwardens to give out as appropriate to those engaged with the church for baptisms, weddings and funerals.

#### **B. Christmas cards**

Three delightful cards showing the church and village under snow were printed from watercolours by Annette Shilling, who very kindly allowed the use of her work without charge. 1000 cards plus envelopes and sealable display bags were supplied by Matrix Printers, Barnstaple, for £402.26. The cards were sold at £3.50 per bag of six, each bag containing two cards of each of the three designs. Receipts from sales at church (thanks to Matt and Janet for taking care of payments via wall safe), at coffee mornings, Friends' talks and at Swimbridge Post Office (with many thanks to Syd and his team): £460.05. One set was given to the artist and 14 sets (now in the chest in church) remain for sale next year. Profit so far to Friends after paying printings costs: £57.74. The cards were printed on the back with the Friends' mission statement and details of how to join so may help to further the aims of the Friends and attract new members.

### **5. Church Clock Repair Fund**

The Friends are leading the clock repair initiative being managed by committee member David Netherway. The following donations have been received:

Proceeds of Kerscott House open garden, July 2014: £537

Mr Ray Gaydon, descendant of the family firm which made the clock: £1500 via Charities Aid Foundation

Devon County Council £2000 (thanks to Cllr Richard Edgell)  
Ride and Stride donation from Pete Miller via Devon Historic Churches: £20  
Singfest ticket sales via Pete Miller: £303  
Anonymous donation (to be gift aided): £1000  
Donation from Richard and Mary Fardon (to be gift aided): £100  
Donation from Roger and Nikki Thomas, Indiwell Farm (to be gift aided): £460  
Donation from RJ (Roger) Taylor (to be gift aided): £50  
Donation from Martyn Fry and Hazel Dalling (to be gift aided): £100  
Donations from community via collecting box in Swimbridge Post Office: £27.91  
Donation from Christopher and Janet Elworthy (to be gift aided): £50

Church Clock Repair Donations Total: £6,147.91

Nb: Grants (not included in donations list above) have been agreed from local and district councillors

Clock Repair Fund expenditure:

Exeter Diocesan Registry for 'Chancellor's Faculty': £212

Payment to PCC Treasurer who in turn has paid a deposit to the Cumbria Clock Company of £2165.40 (cheque dated 27.1.16)

DN reports: The Cumbria Clock Company is expected to start work on 22nd February and we hope to be able to celebrate it going again with the Swimbridge community in a couple of months. We believe that VAT payable for the repair should be recoverable by the PCC. Starting active fundraising last September, the funds needed to meet the cost of repair, restoration and future maintenance have been raised in record time.

## **6. Streamside Garden donation**

The sum of £773.83, a portion of donations given at the funeral of Anne Hayes, has been generously given by the Hayes family to be used for enhancements to the Streamside Garden, reflecting Anne's passionate dedication to the welfare of children.

## **7. Financial position**

Co-operative Bank account statement dated 2.2.2016 shows balance of £7599.44

This sum includes the Hayes Family donation of £773.83 (para 6) and the Clock Fund donations of £6,147.91 (para 5), minus a payment of £212 for a Chancellor's Faculty paid on 14 December relating to clock repair (para 5). Our payment to PCC Treasurer of £2165.40 (cheque dated 27.1.16, para 5) has not yet been taken from our account. Thus, Friends' funds not earmarked for Streamside Garden or Clock Fund: £345.79

This annual report presented at the Friends' AGM on 3 February 2016 by Mark Haworth-Booth, Secretary & Treasurer, Friends of St James.

