

The Old School Room, Swimbridge, Project What's happening?

Supporters Newsletter February 2017

The Friends of St James Church and Swimbridge Pre-school are really grateful for the community support for their project to improve the Old School Room.

It is taking longer than we had expected, but we are confident with your help we can deliver a fantastic project for our community...from our youngest children to our much older residents.

The original idea was to install a disabled toilet and baby change in the Old School Room to serve the church, pre-school and others ...but we have now gone further in our ambition.

The Mervyn Dalling Archive.

Many of you will have known the late Mervyn Dalling and his lifelong passion for local history and recording Swimbridge life and its people.

Mervyn left a huge archive of photos, cuttings, film and video and mainly printed items of interest. His collection passed to his cousin Philip Dalling. Philip and Brenda Dyer have been busy cataloguing the collection and continuing his work by adding contemporary items of village news.

It was Mervyn's hope that his collection would be kept in the village for all to enjoy and consult.

A part of The Upper Room of the Old School Room could be the ideal home for this archive. Combined with Jack Russell items it would be a real asset to our community and addition to village life for years to come, and a focus for community events linked to our shared history.



Brenda and Phillip discussing plans with architect Jim Gardner of David Wilson Partnership.

Including this in the project will give a real boost to the scale of the workand mean lots more work and

fundraising. However, it would mean the Upper Room would be better used and with the full refurbishment it would be an even more special space to be enjoyed. We would hope to make it fully accessible of course...the steep steps are a challenge to some. It would appear to be a project that could attract Heritage Lottery funding. We have worked with Alison Mills of Barnstaple Museum.

The next stage is to raise the £4000 or thereabouts to complete our consultations, gather supporting evidence, get detailed surveys done, the plans drawn, planning and heritage consents in place and obtain the estimates. We can then make the main funding bids and so be ready to deliver the whole project as soon as we can. But we need the funding and your help and support.

The collecting box in the Jack Russell Inn... Landlord Paul Darch, with Pre-school's Khadine Rhuleman and Sarah Smith



The next **Friends Events**, will be held in the Old School Upper Room A series of conversations with leading local personalities. All Wednesdays at 7.30pm. Arnold Bradbury, 8th March, Paul Ellis 22nd March and Michael Gee 5th April. Do come along and support one or more of these evenings.

The Pre-school have a village **Duck Race** planned for Saturday July 15th. Another date for your diary and one to support.

We are sure that together we can do it. If you would like to know more or can help in any way, or have ideas for fundraising please contact either David Netherway 01271 830587, david.netherway@btinternet.com, Sarah Smith 01272 830693 or Philip Dalling, dalling.philip@hotmail.co.uk.

Help us make this ancient community building fit for the 21st Century.

This Newsletter sent on behalf of The Friends of St James Church Swimbridge and Swimbridge Pre-School