

The Friends of St James Church, Swimbridge

Friends Newsletter May 2013

The Friends came into being earlier this year, with Lady Arran as Patron, to help 'preserve, maintain and enhance' St James Church, Swimbridge. The first two Friends' events received a great boost from a preview article by Richard Westcott in the *North Devon Journal* on 21 March. On 24 April Chris Chapman spoke most compellingly on his 40 year career as a Devon photographer. An audience of over 50 heard and saw this marvelous presentation in St James Church. On 8 May we switched to a new venue, as the Archdeacon's Visitation was taking place in the church. So, Robin Ravillious addressed us - on the Devon archive of her late husband James - in the Old School Room. This fine building on the northern eastern side of the churchyard is probably 17th century, according to English Heritage, which lists it as Grade II. Another very good audience was moved and entertained by Robin's eloquent words and the splendid photographs she showed. As with Chris Chapman's presentation, many in the audience knew the people or places shown and were able to add their own informative comments. Devon has been very well served by these special photographers.



The first season of Swimbridge Q&As under the auspices of the Friends of St James was attended by about 100 people and realised £336.50. As the refreshments and the fee for screen hire were donated, all this will go to church funds. Further valuable income derives from Friends' membership fees - a very special thank you to these kind Friends! We think everyone really enjoyed these first two exceptional evenings. Thank you very much, on behalf of the Friends, to our generous speakers, to all those who attended and to everyone who helped - especially Friends' committee member David Netherway. We were particularly heartened by the philanthropic gentleman who donated a £20 note to the Friends after the talk by Robin Ravillious.

I shall be in touch about the two autumn talks - both about Exmoor and very well worth hearing.

Mark Haworth-Booth
Secretary & Treasurer
The Friends of St James Church, Swimbridge