

FRIENDS OF ST JAMES CHURCH SWIMBRIDGE Q&As 2017

WHAT SHALL WE READ THIS AUTUMN?

All are very welcome to these three talks in the Old School Room on the north side of the churchyard. Admission £3 (Friends free) wine / juices by donation. Please come along and help us fundraise to refurbish the Old School Room for the whole community.

Thursday 26 October at 7.30 pm

Exmoor Landscapes in Literature: A Personal View by Elizabeth McLaughlin

Elizabeth's lecture explores the early Romantic Poets' associations with Exmoor. In addition, she describes how Exmoor's varied landscapes have been portrayed in the work of S.H Burton, R.D. Blackmore, Henry Williamson, Hope Bourne and others. Elizabeth is an arts graduate of the University of Western Australia and has lived in Exmoor's East Lyn valley for over thirteen years. She has given lectures for the Exmoor Society, the Exmoor National Park Authority, the Two Moors Festival and other organisations.

Thursday 9 November at 7.30 pm

John Gay – the Barnstaple boy and *The Beggars' Opera* by Jonathan Edmunds

This talk covers the short but remarkable life of John Gay (1685-1732), one of Barnstaple's most talented sons, with special emphasis on the phenomenal success of *The Beggars' Opera* (1728). It will include a little singing of some airs from that opera. Jonathan is a retired teacher and headmaster (plus a decade inspecting schools) with a lifetime love of history. Jonathan teaches classes for the U3A in South Molton and Tiverton and gives one-off lectures on mainly historical subjects to many groups in North Devon – including a memorable talk on the Rev. John Russell ('Parson Jack') in a previous series for the Friends of St James.

Thursday 23 November at 7.30 pm

Ted Hughes – poet of North Devon and the nation by Mark Haworth-Booth

Ted Hughes (1930-98) needs little introduction, having been a resident of Devon for so long and for serving as the Poet Laureate. He lived at North Tawton from 1961 until his death. Although his themes are universal, Hughes wrote with particular brilliance about wild life and had a strong sense of the specialness of our part of Devon. Mark, a writer and former museum curator, has lived in Swimbridge since 2009. At the age of 19 he attended a reading by Ted Hughes (in 1963) and has followed his work for over fifty years. He met the poet on several occasions and worked with him on the exhibition *Ted Hughes Illustrated Books* at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1979. He will read and discuss favourite Hughes poems and bring along some rare editions.

Further info from Mark Haworth-Booth on 07813 or markhaworthbooth@gmail.com

