

St James' Heritage & Environment Group



Newsletter 1

December 2010

Welcome to our first newsletter

Since St James' Heritage & Environment Group was set up earlier this year, we have been very busy. The "First Hundred" recruitment campaign was very successful and we now have twice that number of paid-up members. We have also been active in working to improve the graveyard at St James', and running activities to involve the local community of all ages.

This is the first of what will be a twice-yearly newsletter for members to keep you in touch with what is happening. Thank you for your support, and we hope to see you at our Christmas event on 15th December or at one of our regular Tuesday sessions.

Join us for a Christmas celebration

The Heritage & Environment Group invites you to

An Afternoon of Song & Entertainment

at
St. James' Church

Wednesday 15th December
1.30 p.m. to 3.00 p.m.

Join us for Christmas carols & songs, mince pies and mulled wine, and a seasonal quiz.

Local writer Yvonne Young will take us on a trip down memory lane to recall Christmases past

Do you have an email address?

If you have an email address, please can you let us know it so that we can communicate with you this way in future. This will save postage so that we can spend more on improving the graveyard and running activities.

St James' Heritage and Environment Group

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News from the Graveyard

The Graveyard Group has continued to meet weekly to tidy and clear up the graveyard. This has been a massive job as it was so badly overgrown, but many local residents have commented how much better it is looking already. We will continue to meet during the winter to keep it tidy. We are also planning to improve it with new planting. The first scheme is already underway – a new hedge of native species such as hawthorn is being planted along the southern edge of the churchyard. The idea is that this will attract more birds and butterflies as well as improving the appearance of the graveyard as a whole. We are also hoping to see a fine show of Spring flowers in a few months as a result of the hundreds of bulbs we planted last year.

We are currently fundraising to carry out restoration and improvement work in the oldest part of the graveyard. This is the section nearest to the entrance, which contains the graves of some of the most rich and powerful families in Newcastle during the 19th and early 20th centuries such as Buddle who owned land and coalmines in the west end. The grave of Richard Grainger, the man responsible for the re-development of much of Newcastle city centre, is here but in poor condition. We are hoping that the Council will restore and provide a suitable plaque for this grave as part of the plans to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Grainger's death next year.

The Group has also been busy compiling information about who is buried at St James'. We have a data-base of the 600 or so graves and also copies of the burial records for the 15,000+ people buried there since it first opened in 1833. We receive regular enquiries from people trying to trace where family or friends are buried and have been able to provide information from our records.

If you would like to look around the graveyard or have a query, visit us on a Tuesday afternoon between 2.00 - 3.30pm or ring on 0191 2528675.

Volunteers wanted

The Graveyard Group is looking for more volunteers to help with improving the graveyard. There are a range of jobs to be done from heavy chopping and clearing to litter picking, tea making and doing research on the graves. Regular and occasional helpers welcome.

We meet every Tuesday afternoon from 2.00 to 3.30 pm at St James'. If you are willing to help, come along on a Tuesday or ring on 0191 2528675.

Events and activities

Since it started earlier this year, the Heritage & Environment Group has run a number of events and activities at St James' including a family event making bat and bird boxes for the graveyard and a bat walk for families. We ran some special activities as part of the three Heritage Open Days in September including tours of the graveyard and a wildlife trail.

We are especially keen that local children have opportunities to use the graveyard as a way of learning about their heritage and local history. We have linked up with Bridgewater School to work with pupils to research and develop a children's trail for the graveyard, and we are running a sculpture project with children from the school. We are currently fundraising so that we can do more work with children and families and were delighted recently with our first successful grant application – from the RW Mann Trust for materials.

We would welcome any ideas for future events and activities.