



St James' Heritage & Environment Group

Music, crafts & history Christmas Event

Wednesday 14th December 1.30 -3.30
St James' Church, Benwell

Join us on Wednesday 14th December for our Christmas Event

Try your hand at Christmas crafts or cake decoration
Listen to music and join in a few carols
Watch a local history slide show of the changing west end
Enjoy mince pies, mulled wine and tea/coffee
Meet old friends and make new ones

Free of charge to members of the Heritage & Environment Group (membership costs £2)

News from St James' Heritage & Environment Group

The group has come a long way since it started two years ago as a small group of volunteers clearing up St James' graveyard. We are now an independent community organisation with 270 individual members, and are in the process of becoming a charity.

As well as the money we have raised through membership subscriptions and donations, we have managed to get several grants to develop our work. This has meant that we have been able to run some exciting projects to get people of all ages involved in exploring and enjoying our local heritage and environment. As well as activities and events, we have launched a series of local history publications – starting with *John Buddle: King of the Coal Trade*, a graveyard trail for children and families, and a local heritage walking trail.

What happens to your money?

The group is still wholly run by volunteers and we have no funding for running costs, so your subscriptions are vital to pay for things like postage and stationery, teas and coffees for the graveyard volunteers, and basic equipment and materials for maintaining the graveyard. So your support is vital. Thank you and a merry Christmas to all our members.

A warm and bright future for St James'
See over for news about the graveyard and the church

News about the Graveyard

One of the group's main aims is to make St James' graveyard an attractive green space for people to explore and enjoy. During the last two years, it has improved enormously, but there is still a lot to do. The Graveyard Group meets weekly to chop, prune, pick up litter, and also to do new planting. Graveyards are important places for wildlife in urban areas like Benwell, so we have planted new hedges and other flowering plants that will provide a good environment for birds, bees and butterflies to flourish. These also make the graveyard more attractive and interesting for visitors. Poppies have been planted in front of all the war graves, for example, which brighten it up as well as being a mark of respect.

Progress is being made with the huge task of restoring some of the significant historical graves at St James'. The grave of Richard Grainger was restored in the summer by the City Council and the damaged grave of Bishop Lloyd (the third Bishop of Newcastle) is currently being restored thanks to funding obtained by the present Bishop.

We are still gathering information about everyone who is buried at St James'. We have a data-base of the graves and also copies of the burial records for everyone buried there. 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.

Visit the graveyard

If you would like to help, or just want to look around the graveyard or ask a question, visit us on a Tuesday afternoon between 2.00 – 3.30pm or ring on 0191 2528675. You can get a light lunch before at *Lunchbreak* in the church hall between 12-2pm.

News about St James' Church

The plan to develop a centre for heritage and culture at St James' has taken some major steps forward recently. A big grant from English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund will pay most of the costs of replacing the church roof, which means that the building can be made water-tight – stopping the damage caused by water penetration and making it warmer. More money is needed however to make this happen. All donations are welcome to support the *Raise the Roof* fundraising campaign. You can actually sponsor a slate for only £5 and have your name recorded in the roof for posterity!

Funding has also been raised from various trusts to pay for a part-time worker to develop heritage and culture activities at the church and in the community. This means that there will be even more happening at St James' in future, so keep in touch.

Benwell at War

St James' Church has many associations with the great wars of the 20th century. We are launching a new project as part of the programme of heritage and culture activities. This will run all next year, culminating in a major exhibition and events in October and November 2012. We want to involve local residents, schools and other organisations in researching the stories of people who died in the wars including those who are commemorated at St James', collecting war-time photographs and memorabilia, and finding out about the impact of war on the local community. To find out more or take part, visit us on a Tuesday afternoon at St James' or contact us (details below)

St James' Heritage and Environment Group

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