

Makeover for St James' Church Hall

In January 2017 work will start on improvements to the church hall of St James'. There will be a new floor, entrance area, lighting and a curved ceiling which will follow the lines of the arches. This will make the hall light, warm and attractive.

People who know St James' have seen significant improvements already over recent years. Ten years ago, the hall was beset by damp and mould, but through determined fundraising efforts the money was raised for a complete re-roofing followed by re-plastering and painting. But the hall was still marred by the damaged cork flooring, poor lighting and electrical wiring, draughty entrance, inadequate storage space, and the big empty space beneath the roof containing the broken remnants of earlier ceilings which makes the place hard to heat. All this is about to change thanks to grants from the SITA, Garfield Weston, Catherine Cookson and Bernard Sunley Trusts, Newcastle Diocese and from local fundraising.

While the building work is happening, we will continue to run our weekly Tuesday sessions in the main church and vestry. *See our Winter Programme for details.*

History

St James' Church hall was created in the 1980s when a partition was built to separate what had been the south aisle from the rest of the worship area. At the same time the Lady Chapel was made into a vestry. Before that St James' had a Parish Hall on the other side of Atkinson Road (pictured here). After it was demolished, flats were built on the site.



NEWSLETTER 13 November 2016



St James' Heritage & Environment Group

WINTER CELEBRATION EVENT



Tuesday 6th December 1.30 - 4pm
St James' Church, Benwell

Join us at our Winter Event

create a special Christmas card

make your own festive table decoration with a beeswax candle

clog dancing demonstration - chance to have a go yourself

enjoy a performance by storyteller Pascale

Mince pies, mulled wine, tea and coffee

INSIDE

Looking forward to 2017

Elswick exhibition

Coal mining heritage trail

And more

Contact us: c/o Search, 74 Adelaide Terrace, NE4 9JN

Visit us at St James' Church, Benwell Lane, Tuesdays 12-4pm

Email: stjamesbenwell@gmail.com

ST JAMES' GRAVEYARD

Telling the story of Benwell and Scotswood



We have been very busy this year with our new Heritage Lottery Fund project. Anyone who has visited the graveyard recently will have been impressed by the improvements made by our Graveyard Group volunteers since we started to tidy up the mess of weeds and rubbish and replace this with new planting.

The grant from HLF has enabled us to bring in a specialist stonemason/conservator to work with us to repair and restore some of the gravestones. Among those buried at St James' are several people of great importance in the history of Tyneside. The conservator has worked with our volunteers over the summer and autumn to repair several significant graves including those of the coal owner and mining engineer John Buddle, the Grace family who owned a large paper mill in Scotswood, and the Sowerby glass manufacturers. The work will continue next Spring. Visitors are welcome to come and see what has been achieved.



As part of this project, we are also creating a new interpretation board so that visitors to the graveyard can find out more about the people buried there and where to find their graves. Depicted here are Richard and Rachel Grainger.



Future Publications

Benwell's Lost Coal Mines

A new heritage trail tracing the route of the old waggonway which carried coal from Benwell's pits to the river and passing sites connected with the local coal mining industry.

To be published by St James' Heritage & Environment Group in 2017.

WAR GRAVES GUIDE

There are 40 memorials in St James' graveyard to people killed as a result of war. This illustrated guide shows the locations of these and some of the individual stories behind them.

To be published by St James' Heritage & Environment Group in 2017.

Elswick through the Years

Following the success of last year's book *Benwell through the Years* we plan to produce a book of maps and photographs showing the development of the Elswick area over more than two centuries. This will be a joint publication with West Newcastle Picture History Collection whose exhibition of *Elswick through the Years* can be seen at St James' Church until April 2017.

To be published by St James' Heritage & Environment Group in 2017.

Beautiful Benwell

Another highlight of 2016 was our *Making Benwell Beautiful* project funded by the Big Lottery Fund which paid for a programme of activities for people of all ages to take part in, including outings to the gardens at Howick Hall and Wallington, craft activities and school visits to explore the environment of the graveyard.

