

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH US

The Heritage and Environment Group is run by volunteers for the benefit of people who care about the local area, its history and environment. We rely on the support of our members and volunteers.

Visit us

Every Tuesday afternoon throughout the year between about 12 noon and 4pm you will find us working in the graveyard at St James'. We are always ready to welcome visitors and will be happy to show you around the graveyard and tell you about our work. The church hall is open for information and refreshments. If you cannot manage a Tuesday, contact us and we will make a special arrangement for you to visit.



Become a volunteer

We have volunteers doing all sorts of tasks. Every Tuesday afternoon volunteers work in the graveyard, weeding, tidying and planting. Other people do different things such as finding out more about the lives of people buried in the graveyard and about the trees and wildlife there or researching local history. Help is always welcome, whether you want to become a regular or occasional graveyard volunteer or help with a particular project.

Come to a talk

We have a programme of talks, films and activities. These take place at St James' Church and the West End Library in Condercum Road. See our events programme for details or look at our website which has information about forthcoming events as well as our films and publications.

Contact us: Email: stjamesbenwell@gmail.com

Website: www.stjamesheritage.com

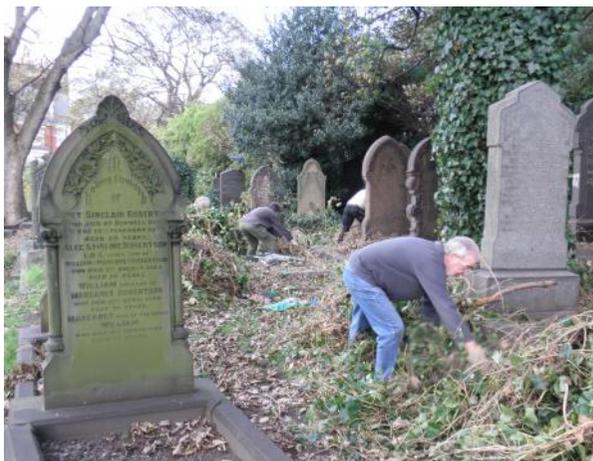
Write: c/o Sunnybank Centre, 12 Sunnybank Ave, NE15 6SD

NEWSLETTER 18

April 2019



St James' Heritage & Environment Group Tenth Birthday Edition



Remember this?

In 2009 we began to clear the historic graveyard of St James' in Benwell. Described in the early 20th century as a 'beautiful little churchyard', the burial place of Richard Grainger and more than 12,000 other local residents had become a wasteland of weeds and rubbish where only a few

graves were visible. Ten years later this is once more a beautiful place. Volunteers work every week throughout the year to weed, tidy, plant and restore the graves, making it a welcoming place for visitors and for wildlife.

As we rescued the graveyard from the years of neglect, we also began to uncover the fascinating history of this area, and we wanted to explore and share this. During these ten years we have produced 27 books and heritage guides, three films and three resource packs for schools, as well as running programmes of talks and activities about local history and environment.

Join us on Tuesday 14th May 2pm

To celebrate our 10th Birthday

*AGM and Summer Event with strawberry cream
tea and indoor and outdoor activities*



News and Events

Book launch

We will be launching our new booklet *A beautiful little churchyard: a short history of St James' Graveyard* in May. Copies will be available at the Summer Event. Like all our publications, this is free of charge. This is your history, and we could not do our work without your help and support.



Plant your own herbs and edible plants

One of the activities available at the Summer Event on 14th May will be a session where you can plant your own herbs and edible plants to take home. The Heritage & Environment Group is active in promoting improvements to the natural environment and understanding of the importance of wildlife and biodiversity. During 2019 there will be a variety of events focusing on trees, flowers, herbs, butterflies and other aspects of our natural world.



Restoring the graveyard

One of our big achievements has been to restore and repair more than 50 of the historic gravestones with the help of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. A film of this work will be shown at the Summer Event, and it is available to view on our website.

You can also take a stroll in the sunshine and explore the historic graveyard with our volunteers.

POTTED HISTORY

A highlight of 2019 will be the Potted History project. We will be working with groups of local people of different ages to create scenes from the history of this area using clay modelling. These will all be brought together at the end of the project in an exhibition to be featured in local and city centre venues. No special skills or talents needed. All materials will be provided, and a pottery tutor will be there to support participants. If you are interested in taking part, contact us (contact details on back page).



One of our first pottery figures

More churches needed

The exhibition now on display at St James' Church is *West End Churches – past and present*. It includes detailed exhibits about St James', St Margaret's Church in Scotswood, and St Joseph's RC Church in Benwell, as well as smaller sections on the Bond Methodist and St Stephen's. We want to expand it to include other local churches – can you help us by sharing information and photographs?



Above: the earliest known place of worship in Benwell is the Roman temple to the God Antenociticus whose statue is in the Hancock Museum.

Thanks to our funders

In March we learned that we had been successful with three funding bids.

- A grant from the Big Lottery's Community Fund will enable us to run a varied programme of creative and enjoyable activities.
- A grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund will support a project with schools and community organisations exploring the local legacy of WW1.
- A grant from the Community Foundation's Leaf fund will fund the creation of a tree and flower trail in the graveyard.

