

NEWSLETTER

November 2023

WINTER EVENT

Tuesday 5th December 2pm
St James' Church, Benwell



Don't miss this year's Winter Event –

An afternoon of festive activities in good company

As well as the traditional mulled wine and mince pies there will be
Festive crafts using natural materials

Local history picture show Film
Quiz Cardmaking Book stall and

The Shining Dark – a special performance by local storyteller Pascale

Booking essential – see enclosed invitation

INSIDE News Highlights of the year Plans for 2024
Publications and films round-up Your support

Photograph: St James' Graveyard in winter

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2024

We are planning a busy programme of talks, walks and events for next year. More details of the Monday Local History talks and the Big Local History Event are already available – see inserts in this mailing. A programme of guided walks will be available early in the New Year. In addition there will be other talks, tours and activities arranged. Information about these will be sent out in our emailings – if you are not already registered to receive these, contact us on stjamesbenwell@gmail.com and ask to be included.

Local History Mondays at the West End Library

Monday 8th January at 1pm

Forty Years On a talk by West Newcastle Picture History Collection

Monday 5th February at 1pm

Fenham Hall a talk by Theresa Brolly

Monday 4th March at 1pm

The Loss of the Ninth Legion a talk by Nick Hodgson

Monday 15th April at 1pm

Walbottle: A Small Village with a Big History a talk by Roger Parnell

Monday 13th May at 1pm

Lost Farms of the West End a talk by Ian Farrier

Monday 3rd June at 1pm

The Pope who came to Newcastle a talk by John Griffiths

Monday 1st July at 1pm

Out and Proud a talk by Richard Bliss

Monday 2nd September at 1pm

Summerhill Revealed a talk by Olive Taylor

Monday 7th October at 1pm

Exploring the Streets of Pendower: What's in a Name? a talk by Richard Bliss

Monday 4th November at 1pm

From Ireland to Newcastle a talk by Rosie Serdiville

HIDDEN HISTORY

Secrets of Scotswood

Scotswood has seen huge changes during the past decades. Despite this there are still traces of its earlier history remaining in the landscape.

We are in the middle of making a film about the area's heritage, including the old village, bridge, and industries such as coalmining, railways, armaments manufacture, pottery and paper production, clay mining and stone quarrying.

The film will include local voices, bringing this heritage to life again. Can you help? Please get in touch with us if you have memories of living or working in Scotswood. Email us at stjamesbenwell@gmail.com or write c/o 12/14 Sunnybank Avenue, Pendower, Newcastle, NE15 6SD.

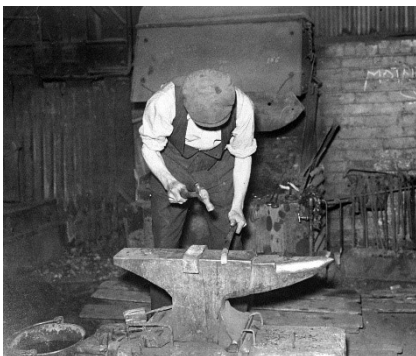


Above: the old Chain Bridge



Left: Scotswood Station pictured in the 1950s

Below left: Inside Vickers Scotswood works, 1950s



Below right: Adamsez factory, c1960



Hidden History: Secrets of Scotswood is funded by the City Council's *Make Your Mark* fund for Benwell & Scotswood

Some of our recent activities

The John Marley Centre, a fine art deco building on Whickham View, was originally opened in 1936 as a secondary school. It has recently had a new lease of life, and is being renovated as a venue for arts and creative activities.



These guided tours of the Centre in October were among several we organised this year.

The theme of the Heritage Open Days festival in September this year was arts and creativity. Our contribution was a week of activities running alongside an exhibition in the West End Library under the title of *Our Creative Community*. The first event was a talk by Pat Lowery about the history behind the Geordie anthem *Blaydon Races*.



Highlights of the exhibition included the *Woolly West* knitted buildings and a display of felting pictures illustrating the area's history.





Participants in our pottery workshops in September made beautiful illustrated vases



Pictured here is a group visiting Walbottle Hall as part of a guided tour of Walbottle Village. in June. This was one of a series of tours of places along the route of Hadrian's Wall through Newcastle.



The memorial to the 38 miners who died in the disaster of 1925 when the Montagu Pit in Scotswood flooded was one of the graves visited during November's guided tour of Newcastle's largest cemetery, St John's in Elswick.

It's Still Wor Wall!

For the past two years, one of our major projects has been aimed at raising awareness of the real route of Hadrian's Wall through the city of Newcastle. This was prompted by the Hadrian's Wall 1900 Festival which made us realise that the official National Path completely misses out the Newcastle section of the actual route of the Wall, diverting south to run along the riverside. We want to reclaim the real route of the Wall through the heart of the city, considering that is an important part of our local heritage. We are delighted to hear that a decision has now been taken in principle to have a waymarked trail showing the route through the city. There is no money for this, but it is a start.

Walking the Wall

We have just published a walk guide to the route of the Wall as it passes through Newcastle, providing detailed instructions for walkers. As well as tracing the line of the Wall and pointing out visible remains, it also points to places of significance from other periods of the city's history. The book is a bargain at £5 – or half price for members of the Heritage & Environment Group. Certificates (pictured here) are available free of charge for everyone who completes the 12 mile walk.



Exploring places on the Wall

During the summer we ran five guided walks/tours to different places of interest along the line of the Wall locally. Pictured here are the visits to Ouseburn (right), Newcastle Castle (below left), Newcastle Arts Centre (below middle) and Segedunum (below right)



New Books

New in 2023 – two very different books about our local history.

Gannin' Along the Wall: Walking Hadrian's Wall through Newcastle is a heritage walk guide to the whole 12 mile route of the Roman Wall through Newcastle – a section missed out by the National Path and by most guide books. It includes information about other places of interest from the city's long and fascinating history. *£5 from Newcastle City Library, Segedunum Fort and Hancock Museum. Half price to members if obtained from us.*

A Potted History of the West End brings to life almost 2000 years of the area's history using images from the Potted History project. *Available from us free*



Have you watched our films?

We have made several short films over recent years. If you haven't already watched them, you can find them on our website (stjamesheritage.com) on the "publications and resources" page.



Gannin' Along the Wall follows a troop of Roman soldiers along the route of Hadrian's Wall from Segedunum to Heddon. Along the way we meet a number of local people living here now as well as characters from Roman times.

Quayside to Paradise takes you on a journey along the Tyne from Newcastle Quayside to Paradise in search of the lost industries that used to occupy the river banks, illustrated by a wealth of old photographs.

Riverside Voices follows the Tyne west, telling the stories of people who worked and lived along the West Newcastle riverside.

Supporting Us

Did you know that the Heritage & Environment Group is wholly run by volunteers who give their time in different ways without any recompense? Our members are also vital to our work and we are enormously grateful for all the support we receive from you. However these are difficult times and we could do with more help. Read on if you think you can help us.

Maintaining the graveyard

Maintaining and improving the historic graveyard of St James' continues to be at the heart of our work. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the small core group of volunteers, we are now struggling to look after the graveyard as well as we would like. We would be delighted if anyone was interested in joining us as a graveyard volunteer – visit us on a Wednesday morning between 10-1 to find out what is involved.

We also welcome occasional help from people who can drop in for a couple of hours to do some weeding or planting, or join in an event such as leaf clearing days or sessions to remove moss from gravestones. Pictured above are two of our supporters helping with flower planting this summer.



Other volunteering

We also welcome help with running events, doing research on local history, fundraising, IT and other tasks vital to keeping our work going. Pictured here is Jan helping to set up the Potted History exhibitions.



Donations

All our activities are free of charge, but we depend on grants and donations to support our work. Fundraising has been more difficult recently, so donations from supporters and people taking part in our activities are more important than ever. Every little bit helps.

CONTACT US

Write: c/o 12/14 Sunnybank Avenue, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 6SD

Email: stjamesbenwell@gmail.com **Website:** <https://stjamesheritage.com>

Visit St James' Graveyard: Wednesdays from 10am-1pm, or by arrangement.