



## St James the Less – Friends’ Newsletter – Summer 2023

After the warmest June on record and then a rather soggy July, let’s hope the rest of the summer is just right! Remember to encourage *your* friends to join us as Friends: at just £10/year, it’s the cost of 3 cups of coffee, and every penny will help. Legacies are another way to support the Church and PWW Solicitors offer a free **will-writing service**, if a gift is left to St James the Less: contact the Church Staff Team for more details.

Our summer activities have shown that we *must* improve our marketing and promotion: any skills in this area - and particularly any contacts within press circles - would be an invaluable addition to the Restoration Committee.

As ever, however, *enthusiasm, energy and time* are the most essential qualities – please join us!

### South West Fest

SW Fest ran from 30<sup>th</sup> June to 21<sup>st</sup> July, giving us an opportunity to try and promote the church to a wider local audience, starting with the ‘**Gala Day**’ on 1<sup>st</sup> July: the Church Team offered the annual *Prayer in the Square* and ran a busy stall providing free refreshments. The Friends Team welcomed interest in the history and architecture of the building, offering a set of bookmarks designed by Professor Jackson and launching our *HAMA Bead church*. Thanks to brilliant artwork by Ben and Amabel, a coloured image of St James the Less was made to fit exactly the scale of the HAMA beads. It was popular with children on the day and anyone who’s tried adding beads knows how compulsive and therapeutic it can be! The image will be framed and will be displayed in the Church, where we’ll continue to use it for fund-raising when we ask visitors to *Guess How Many Beads* were used to make it.

**St James the Less - Past, Present and Future:** A fascinating evening of talks from Roy Stallard, Prof Neil Jackson, Lis and Alex Sherratt was very well-received by a small audience. Look out for a repeat performance in due course.

Overall funds raised over the 3 weeks of SW Fest came to just under £300.

### Work so far and next priorities

A memorial plaque is ready to add to the chancel wall and railings and will be installed at a service of dedication in September.

Modern technology continues to enhance work with historic buildings: in April, a drone survey over the church quickly (and cheaply!) confirmed that major works will be needed to the roof. SJtL has been selected as one of only ten churches in London for a free Energy-audit by WCC. This will take place in September and should open doors to future funding. The Diocese has also agreed to help fund a short-term professional fundraiser and we hope to appoint someone in the autumn. Their first task will be to raise the money for the full survey of the church, leading to an assessment of the overall costs of the restoration project.



**Love a Lily – Rescue a Railing:** Meanwhile, we’re still gathering quotes for the work on the wrought iron railings to the front of the church, together with the low supporting wall. We now expect this to cost over £100,000, but the work will transform these Grade-II\* listed railings. The wonderful lily finials were inspired by G E Street’s visit to Barcelona Cathedral, and the Consulate in Barcelona have shown some interest in the project.

## Community Activities – see the website for more information: [www.sjtl.org](http://www.sjtl.org)

While St James the Less is an important building architecturally and historically, the Church is at the heart of the community, offering activities that reach well beyond the regular congregation, to support families, schools, young people and the homeless community.

**Farewell Sarah and Hello Grace!** Sarah Agnew (centre), youth leader for Outbreak, who contributed so enthusiastically to many of our church events, is moving on to a new career opportunity within the Church of England. She will be much missed, but we wish her every success. Meanwhile, we are delighted to welcome Grace Mulera (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) to the Church Team, as our Children and Families Worker. Grace will continue with Messy Church and other activities, and has already started a movie night for families, called Film at Four, held on the first Friday of every month. She will also offer a Homework Club in September and will take over the Change for Life Cookery Classes, as featured in the last Newsletter.



**Thank you Tea-Party:** Lis generously hosted her annual Summer Tea-party at the vicarage to say a big *Thank you* to the regular supporters of the Church community, including Church Wardens, Friends and Members of the Congregation. In spite of a forecast for rain, the afternoon was sunny and warm, and guests enjoyed tea, sandwiches and cake in Lis's colourful garden.

### Future Events

**NB: GALA Dinner postponed!** November's Gala Dinner will now take place next June – see below.

**June 2024 will be the bi-centenary of G E Street's birth.** The Friends of St James the Less will work with The Victorian Society to promote Street's work and the Church Restoration project. A one-day Conference is planned for **June 2024** and the Gala Dinner will be re-scheduled to coincide with these celebrations.

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Church Centre with full catering facilities - available for events, conferences, rehearsals, classes etc.

For information on Services and all other activities, see our website at: [www.sjtl.org](http://www.sjtl.org)

E-mail: [churchadmin@sjtl.org](mailto:churchadmin@sjtl.org) Tel: 0207 630 6282

**Please remember 'Easy Fundraising',** <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/>

**SJTL Friends Restoration Committee:** **Rev Lis Goddard:** Vicar and Chair of Friends Committee; **Paul Hamley:** Chair of PCC's Buildings Committee; **Samantha McCarthy:** SJTL Operations Manager; **Dorothea Gopaul:** Church Warden; **Alex Sherratt:** Conservation Architect; **Prof Neil Jackson:** G.E. Street specialist and Trustee of Victorian Society; **Roy Stallard:** Lillington Gardens resident and SJTL 'Church-sitter'; **Lizzie Iron:** Tachbrook St resident with historical interest; **Rosie Gorman:** Tachbrook St resident with events experience; **Selina Hermer:** Art History student and social media representative.