

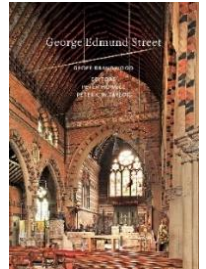
# St James the Less – Friends' Newsletter

## Summer 2024

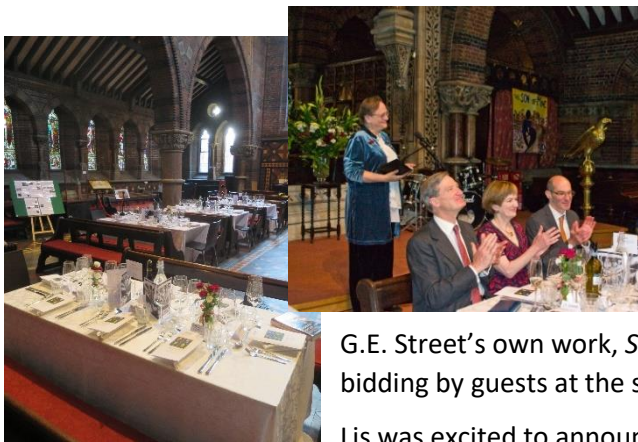


### G. E. Street Bicentenary Celebrations 2024

In association with The Victorian Society, the Friends are still enjoying the bicentenary celebrations for George Edmund Street (20th June 1824-18th December 1881), the remarkable architect of this extraordinary church. The programme started in March with the publication of *The Victorian* magazine, offering several articles about G.E. Street, followed by an introductory talk and then the launch of the first major book about G.E. Street (right), written by the late Geoff Brandwood who also sat on the Friends Restoration Committee. (To buy the book, go to: <https://thevictoriansociety.beaconforms.com/form/d38ed168>).



Informative visits have included St Mary Magdalene, Paddington (1868-78), All Saints', Boyne Hill, Maidenhead (1857-65) and The Guards' Chapel, Wellington Barracks (1877-79).

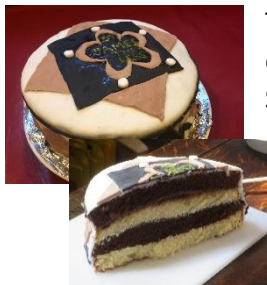


Street's birthday, 20<sup>th</sup> June, provided an opportunity to celebrate in style, with a Gala Dinner here at St James the Less, his first London church. Fifty-six guests enjoyed a very fine meal, prepared and served by *Thoughtful Food*, with a warm welcome from the Reverend Lis Goddard and an entertaining perspective on the Royal Courts of Justice from The Rt Hon Dominic Grieve KC (former Attorney General). Generous donations – including a First Edition of

G.E. Street's own work, *Some Account of Gothic Architecture in Spain* - and keen bidding by guests at the silent auction raised nearly £2,000.

Lis was excited to announce a new name for the restoration project, which will be known as **The Street Project**. The very deliberate double meaning encapsulates the importance of G. E. Street's splendid building, as well as the vital work done by the church congregation for the local community – on and off the neighbouring streets.

On June 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, a coterie of true enthusiasts gathered for some expert papers on Street and two fascinating walks, visiting relevant buildings. We wholeheartedly thank our speakers: Professors Neil Jackson and David Brownlee (all the way from Philadelphia), Michael Hall, Colin Kerr, Dr Richard Peats, and Reverend Lis Goddard, for talks covering Street's European inspirations, the building of the Law Courts, Street's influence on later architects, his ingenious urban design, church restoration in context, and the iconography of St James the Less.



The afternoon visits enhanced the lectures with first-hand observations, thoroughly explained by Professor Neil Jackson, including the Royal Courts of Justice (by Street); All Saints' Church (by William Butterfield) on Margaret Street and Street's Home Chapel nearby; followed by St Stephen's, Rochester Row (by Benjamin Ferrey); St Peter's, Vauxhall (John Loughborough Pearson) and finally returning to St James the Less for tea and a very special *polychromatic* cake – beautifully made by Rasida Rahman.

We are delighted to report that another £5,095.76 (after costs) was added to the restoration fund.

#### Two more events at the church should be most enjoyable:

**9<sup>th</sup> September:** Prof. Alex Bremner explores the importance of the Monk sisters in commissioning this church.

**9<sup>th</sup> October:** Cheese + wine evening: guests who couldn't make the Gala Dinner will be especially welcome.

For details of the rest of the year's events, see SJTL church website: <https://www.sjtl.org/friends/> and The Victorian Society website: <https://www.victoriansociety.org.uk/news/g-e-street-bicentenary-year-2024-events>



**South West Fest 2024:** volunteer teams from both the church and the Friends braved the showers on 6<sup>th</sup> July to take part in the opening day for the SW Fest in the gardens of St George's Square. As usual, the church offered free refreshments and prayer-in-the-square, while the Friends showed off the completed image of St James the Less made of Hama beads. This had been started as our public activity at SW Fest 2023 and this year we invited visitors to guess how many beads were used to make the image (there are 7,254 beads!). £90 was raised in donations, shared between the church general fund and the Street Project.



**Restoration update:** At the end of May, Cliveden Conservation sunk investigative boreholes, one in the south-west corner of the church, and one outside, close to the wall of the Monk Room. This confirmed invasive growth of tree-roots causing structural cracks in both the church and the centre. This gives vital support for the case to the Council to remove the large trees and replace them with smaller ones more appropriate to the surroundings of the church.

We are very pleased to announce that final approval has been granted to appoint a professional fundraiser to work on the next phase of the project, which will be to create a comprehensive plan scoping the overall works and – we hope – to raise further funds for continuing expertise in this area. We aim to recruit after the summer and anyone with demonstrable experience is invited to express an interest in the position. Contact Samantha at [churchadmin@sjtl.org](mailto:churchadmin@sjtl.org).

Work also continues to ensure short-term heating solutions, until the church can be connected to the District Heating Network (c.2029).

**New Committee Members:** we're always delighted to welcome new volunteers to the Friends Street Project Committee, and a couple of new members have already added value: Cheyenne Brown has invaluable experience in website design, marketing and social media and has refreshed the church website, as well as working with Neil Jackson and Samantha McCarthy on publicity material for the G. E. Street events. Adarsh George (known as AG) joins us as Project Manager, bringing professional experience of international engineering projects. We are also grateful for the financial expertise of Andrew Brown, church Treasurer and new member of the Restoration Committee in that role.

**Friends make Friends:** Friends give a modest annual subscription (currently £20pa), and every penny is important. If you're not already signed up, please support this project and pass it on to *your* friends! To help with our recruiting, we invite all our Friends to bring a friend to one of the remaining G. E. Street events over the year – although our Gala weekend is over, it's not too late to inspire fellow enthusiasts!

## Community Activities

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

**Future Events from September – see website for more details: [www.sjtl.org](http://www.sjtl.org)**

**1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month 2.30pm:** Memory Café for people with early-stage memory loss

**13 & 27 September 7-9 pm:** Open Door Meal for homeless and vulnerably-housed people

**Last Sunday of each month - 2.00pm:** Silver Screen, followed by Cream Tea for people over 50

**TBC - Messy & Special Messy Church** with The Pimlico Foundation.

**Plus:** other activities for young people, please contact: [isaac@pimlicofoundation.co.uk](mailto:isaac@pimlicofoundation.co.uk)

Church Centre offers 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)

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