St James’ Graveyard is an important part of the heritage of the west end of Newcastle. This area was once home to some of the richest and most powerful families on Tyneside, many of whom are buried in this graveyard. Also here are thousands of other local residents who were not so wealthy and famous, including pitmen, boatmen, miners, soldiers, shopkeepers and engineers.

St James’ Heritage and Environment Group has been looking after the graveyard for more than seven years and has brought about many improvements. Now we have been awarded a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project linked with the graveyard, which will pay for a specialist conservator to work with us to restore damaged gravestones. This display shows some of the improvements that have been made.

The HLF-funded project also includes a new outdoor interpretation board, two new heritage trails and a series of short films about people buried at St James’.

We hold information about all the burials in this graveyard and can also provide advice about family and local history.

For more information, ask one of our volunteers.
TIDYING UP THE OLD GROUND

The earliest part of the graveyard, opposite the church, is referred to in the burial records as the “Old Ground”. In the south west corner of this area, lots of the gravestones were jumbled about and it was difficult to get near them.

The conservator has done a lot of work to turn stones over, line them up and move them back into position on or in front of their plinths. This has made it much easier to move around between the monuments and helped create a safer path for guided tours.
STANDING MEMORIALS UPRIGHT

The earliest part of the graveyard, opposite the church, is referred to in the burial records as the “Old Ground”. In the north west corner of this area, the Henderson monument had fallen forward and the Salkeld monument had fallen backwards on top of it.

The conservator was able to raise both memorials and stand them up securely by digging a suitable trench and packing in the soil to hold them in place. In the second picture, the Salkeld monument is to the left and the Henderson monument to the right, carefully lined up with its neighbouring memorial. The Henderson monument is one of only two in the graveyard where there are inscriptions on both sides.
REPAIRING THE MONUMENTS

The large top section of the monument to Mary Jameson and her married daughter Sarah Ann Fiddes was lying on the grave behind the main part of the monument. With the help of specialist lifting equipment, the conservator was able to restore the top of the monument to its proper position and cement it into place.
MOVING STONES ONTO THEIR GRAVES

The Greensitt monument had fallen backwards off its plinth and was lying in the space to the West.

This is a very heavy piece of stone and the conservator had to carefully manoeuvre it around the plinth to lay it out to the east. This has cleared the path behind the plinth and made it safer for the volunteers and our visitors to use.