

The St. James's Conservation Trust

A Review of 2021

Edition 25

Featured in this edition



**Elephants
welcomed
in parks!**

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dining issues
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takeover
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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN ANDREW LOVE



Featured in this edition



THE TRUST'S AUDIT OF ALFRESCO ISSUES



ST. JAMES'S CONNECTIONS : LORD BYRON



ST. JAMES'S CONNECTIONS : COUNTESS ADA LOVELACE



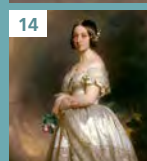
PUBLIC ART AND INNOVATIONS : THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY



PLANNING, HIGHWAYS AND LICENSING



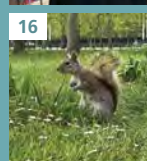
THE RAC VETERAN CAR RUN 125TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT



HISTORIC ROYAL WEDDING DRESS : QUEEN VICTORIA'S DRESSMAKERS



UP-TO-DATE MILLINERY : RACHEL TREVOR-MORGAN



PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The St. James's Conservation Trust has continued throughout this second year of the Covid-19 pandemic. The government actions via vaccinations ,notwithstanding shutdowns have begun the processes of inclusive health and safety, as well as economic recovery across London and these signs are now evident in parts of historic St. James's. We shall always remember this period with sadness, although it is only appropriate that as our cover picture this year records there has also been delight in The Royal Park's elephant artworks to brighten and promote the conservation of these magnificent animals.

Westminster City Council, The Crown Estate , as majority landowners and the Heart of London Business Alliance have all kept businesses informed and supported, wherever possible, with some notable successes. With my Deputy and one of our Trustees it was reassuring to meet that the Leadership of the City Council and our Ward Councillors that a long-running pre-pandemic anti-social activity by street racing cars in St. James's has at last been addressed. Virtual contact with our representatives has enabled our views about the need for more considered, advance consultation on all changes that impact our historic area, in particular those which have in the past been allowed by emergency or highways experimental powers at short notice.

Londoners have taken to increased walking and cycling, enjoying London's historic streets and green spaces, as a relief to home and office working restrictions, and this has reiterated the physical and mental well-being benefits of places with attractive streets, gardens, squares, parks and also accessible landscaped places adjacent to public and private buildings. St. James's is most fortunate in this respect



Mayfair Times At Your Service award 2021

with its borders on The Green Park, St. James's Park and nearby Hyde Park, and at the centre St. James's Square Gardens and St. James's Churchyard.

However this year's extraordinary times have also highlighted some new infrastructure challenges for places in St. James's where safe and attractive active travel for pedestrians, is sometimes competing with the growth of cycling and other essential road users. This Trust Review of the year explains some of these local concerns with the central London six-month private E-Scooter trails and existing private and public bike hire competitors, changes in the space allocations for footways and carriageways in general and new street clutter such as Electric Vehicle rapid charging points.

In this change in the use of streets, the balance of the spaces between St. James's historic buildings, landscapes and townscapes needs constant monitoring. Economic recovery is also being heralded, with an increase of commercial estate sales/purchases and lettings rates, planning

applications for retrofitting existing and replacement of unattractive 1960s buildings with new developments, all of which have implications for new construction and existing residential and business, essential vehicle access

These new trends, in response to Covid-19 have notably included the introduction of temporary measures, which may lead to more permanent measures. A key example is in the relaxation of licensing procedures for applications for external tables and chairs areas to maintain and expand trading of food and beverage sales outdoors, interrupted or limited for restrictions indoors. This alfresco dining in fine weather has proved popular in retaining and attracting customers to a wide and expanded choice of St. James's locations. In the lead up to the end of September 2021, the announced date for



Fortnum & Mason annual display reminds us all of the Happy Christmas season in St. James's.

extensions on these temporary extended alfresco dining procedures for expansion, the Trust decided to commission our professional advisor Peter Heath to

monitor and report on the quantity and impacts on St. James's historic character. In this Review of 2021, we are launching two new reports : "An Audit of Alfresco Issues in St. James's" and a second audit : "The growth of rooftop terraces and balconies in St. James's". The latter report is a response to developments which have sought increases in height, also rooftop terrace and sometimes additional balcony with access for commercial and some residential premises and occupiers. Other developments have also embraced green roof solutions in the interested of improved biodiversity and other benefits, without amenity space access uses.

It is also necessary with sadness, that the we all acknowledge the passing of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, a familiar visitor to St. James's and many of our local communities and institutions.

HRH THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH

"...He organised The Duke of Edinburgh's Study Conference at Oxford in 1956. This sought to address the human problems of industrial communities within the Commonwealth and what was left of the Empire. Three hundred participants came from every part of the globe. Prince Philip conceived the idea from the visits he had paid to different industries when accompanying The Queen to Canada, on the Coronation tour of the Commonwealth and Nigeria. He soon concluded that each workplace was much the same, but the communities that ran them were very different. The aim of the conference was to identify the important things that affected the individual in a world of fast-moving industrial change.

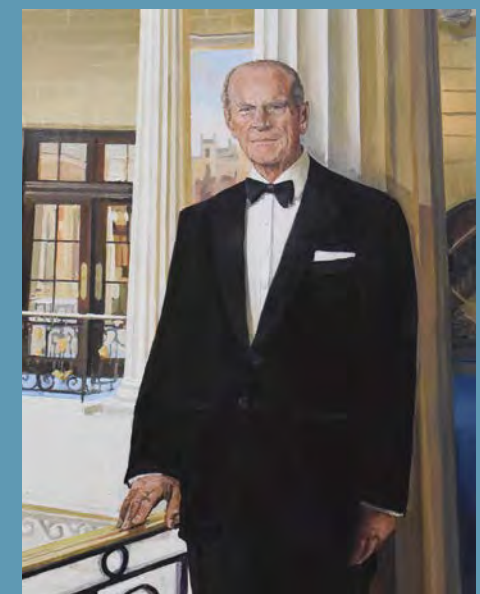
In the same year, he founded The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, to encourage youngsters in outward-bound activities..."



Photographs and personal connections in St. James's : The Ritz (left) and The Royal Automobile Club (right)

Peter Heath, the Trust's architect/planner advisor also has memories (and a DoE Bronze swimming Award!) :

"... not only was I the only architect on the 1995 DoE Study Conference, presenting at The Oxford Union, which was a key education, I also met HRH twice, once when I was presented in my



Antoinette Eugster

role as a Design Council Award Judge and then in 2015, at Windsor Castle in The Waterloo Room as part of my contribution to the 200th anniversary of the Battle and the restoration of Waterloo Place. Not least I felt a connection as my late father shared the same 10 June 1921 birthday – as also does current Trustee, Martin Low..!"

Letters to the editor

The Trustees would welcome letters or emails, with comments or ideas from readers concerning the history, architecture, commerce and social life of St. James's, for inclusion in future Newsletters.

Send your letters to The Trust Architect/Planner, care of Atkins Ltd.

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www.stjamestrust.london

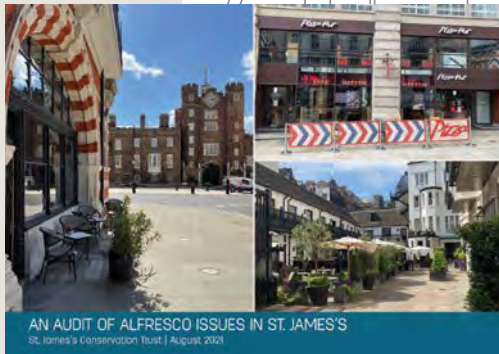
THE TRUST'S AUDIT OF ALFRESCO ISSUES

The latest St. James's Conservation Trust report, is an audit of outdoor dining. The summary data and recommendations are outlined below :

- 50 Premises were identified
- 44 Premises publicly accessible/on public highway
- 22 Outdoor tables and chairs areas have expanded
- 299 Total Tables
- 677 Total Chairs (or catering covers)
- One seat or cover externally has an estimated average revenue of £6,800 pa.

Report recommendations include :

- The Trust and City Council should aim to restore the net, pre-pandemic maximum number of alfresco dining tables and chairs, their square metres in area, and locations, where on streets to reduce the increase in intensity and negative impacts on the character of the Special Policy Area.
- Limit the numbers of alfresco dining areas where tables and chairs areas in low or no vehicle accessible spaces have been increased significantly, even if without negative impacts during relaxations during the pandemic.
- Seek a change for more consultation time than has been possible during the pandemic between temporary applications and approvals for communities to respond to issues.
- Applications must in future show more clearly, the layout and dimensions of residual footway unobstructed space, to include, all street furniture restrictions, as well as from kerb lines to obstructions/frontages, including any low-level trip hazards such as temporary structures for demarcation of enclosures or umbrellas.
- Consider where narrow frontage premises seek in future to extend their tables and chairs areas, that local footway widening either temporary or ideally as permanent public realm improvements – should be directly related to the extent of the accessible frontage for ease of management, safety, service and unobstructed footway space must be maintained.



Above : Plan of sites audited.

Left : Mason's Yard was able to expand tables and chairs.

Right : Private Members' Clubs made full use of their existing terraces for maintaining food and beverage during the restrictions. (Courtesy RAC, Pall Mall.)



Left : Chutney Mary Restaurant on St. James's Street frontage was negotiated by the Trust and City Council to a reduced number of tables and chairs.

All our reports can be accessed online at www.stjamestrust.london

THE TRUST'S NEXT REPORT COMING SOON :



AN AUDIT OF ROOF TERRACE ISSUES IN ST. JAMES'S
St. James's Conservation Trust | August 2021



ST. JAMES'S CONNECTIONS : LORD BYRON

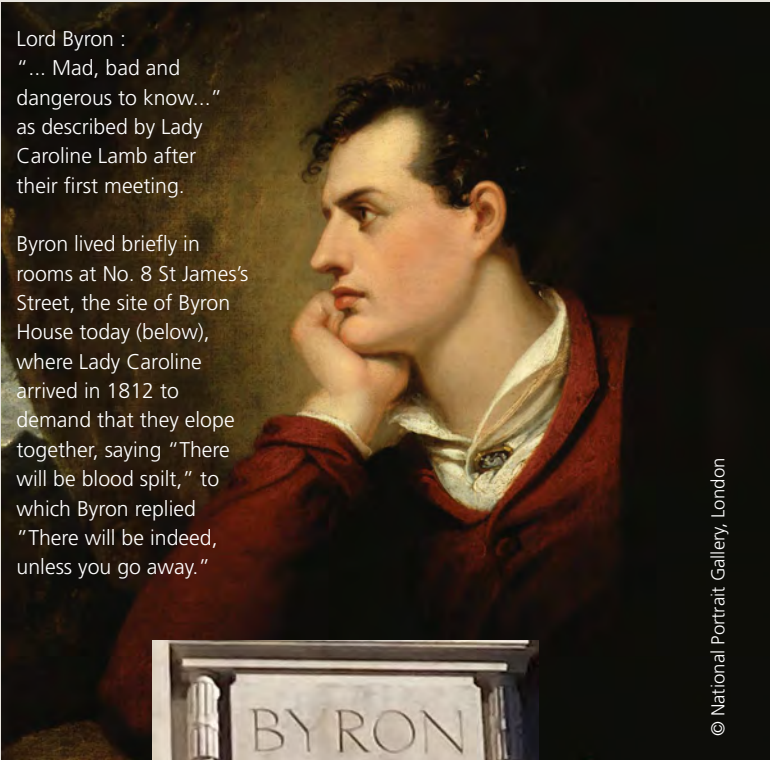
Lord Byron in St. James a weighty literary presence

Whether he dined heartily on steaks and three bottles of Claret, or made do with a “damned anchovy sandwich” and soda water, depended very largely for George Gordon Byron on the verdict of a pair of scales. All his life he skirmished with encroaching corpulence, submitting himself to an astringent diet to keen his figure to the required romantic proportions. Limping his way through boyhood and adolescence, he was bitterly conscious at an early age of the importance of his own appearance; in addition to his poetic genius, it was a blend of good looks and personal magnetism, laced with a brooding Celtic melancholy, that enthralled London fashionable society and made Lord Byron a legend of his own lifetime. Bearing in mind his horror of overweight, his first visit to 3 St. James’s Street as a youth of 17 must have been an occasion of severe shock, for on 4th January, 1806, in boots but no hat, this five-foot eight-inch incipient elegant weighed 13 stone 12! Sorties up to London with his friends to explore the demi-monde and gambling hells – one of the most fashionable of which was at 5 Pickering Place – also made him a familiar figure in St. James’s, and in the summer of 1807, he returned to Number Three twice in July and once in August. Almost three stone lighter than he had been on that last disconcerting occasion, we can imagine Byron’s delight when the scales registered him in his shoes at 10 stone 13 on 8th July.

The summer of 1807 saw the publication of *Hours of Idleness*, which on the whole was well received by the critics and sharpened his appetite for public acclaim. By 1808, the poet’s debts mounted to £12,000, and he began to talk of going abroad. Byron did not return to London until July, 1811; he took rooms at Reddish’s Hotel, St James’s Street, where Robert Charles Dallas, his distant kinsman and literary watchdog, came to visit him on the 15th. Self-consequent and rather fussy, Dallas was nevertheless better equipped to assess the value of his young relative’s work than Byron himself, and it was this visit that eventually led to the publication of *Childe Harold*. The proud author may well have been strolling along to Number 3 to check up on his weight and seek there more entertaining company than his literary adviser, because the records certainly give him credit on that day for a svelte 9 stone 11½.

The poet moved to London again in October, and took up residence at 8 St. James’s Street (today’s Byron House). On 10th March, 1812, *Childe Harold* was published, and Byron awoke one morning in St. James’s Street – just a few doors away from Number 3 – to find himself famous. The first edition was sold out within three days. *Childe Harold* was avidly read by people in all walks of life, and “fan” letters from complete strangers flowed in. With his instinctive sense of showmanship, Byron at first felt flattered, then irritated and finally – hunted. He was, in fact, the prototype of the modern romantic idol...Byron the liberator, the poet, the great lover, the libertine, the eccentric, the good comrade, the haunted Celt – the complexities of his character spin on endlessly.

Edited extract from Number Three Saint James’s Street, Autumn 1958 edition



COUNTESS ADA LOVELACE

A woman ahead of her time.

The Hon. Ada Byron, who became Countess of Lovelace upon marrying, William King, 8th Baron King and when he was created The Earl of Lovelace, in 1838 living in Ockham. Her citation on the Blue Plaque at 12 St. James’s Square is : “Pioneer of Computing” . Ada Lovelace was Byron’s only legitimate child. He separated from her mother a month after Ada was born and left England forever four months later, eventually dying of disease in the Greek War of Independence when Ada was eight in 1824. Ada’s mother remained bitter towards Lord Byron and promoted Ada’s interest in mathematics and logic in an effort to prevent her from developing what she saw as the insanity seen in her father. However, Ada remained interested in Byron despite this (although he never had a relationship with her) and was, upon her eventual death, buried next to him at her request.

Ada worked with mathematician Charles Babbage on the Difference Engine, a calculator, and the Analytical Engine, a mechanical computer for which she wrote the world’s first algorithms. She showed amazing foresight concerning the abilities of computers to do more than deal with numbers. Ada was the world’s first computer programmer and the programming language ADA was named in her honour. She died at 36, the same age as her father. In her final years she was like her father in other ways, including romantic scandals, problems with alcohol and opium, and gambling debts.



ADA LOVELACE

FIRST COMPUTER PROGRAMMER

The Analytical Engine

Lovelace's program turned a complex formula into simple calculations that could be encoded on punched cards and fed into Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine, a mechanical computer that he designed but never built. She published it in 1843, a century before the modern computer age.

"I want to put in something about Bernoulli's Number, in one of my Notes, as an example of how an explicit function may be worked out by the engine, without having been worked out by human head and hands first."

$$\frac{x}{e^x - 1} = \frac{1}{1 + \frac{x}{2} + \frac{x^2}{2 \cdot 3} + \frac{x^3}{2 \cdot 3 \cdot 4} + \&c.}$$

A Universal Computer

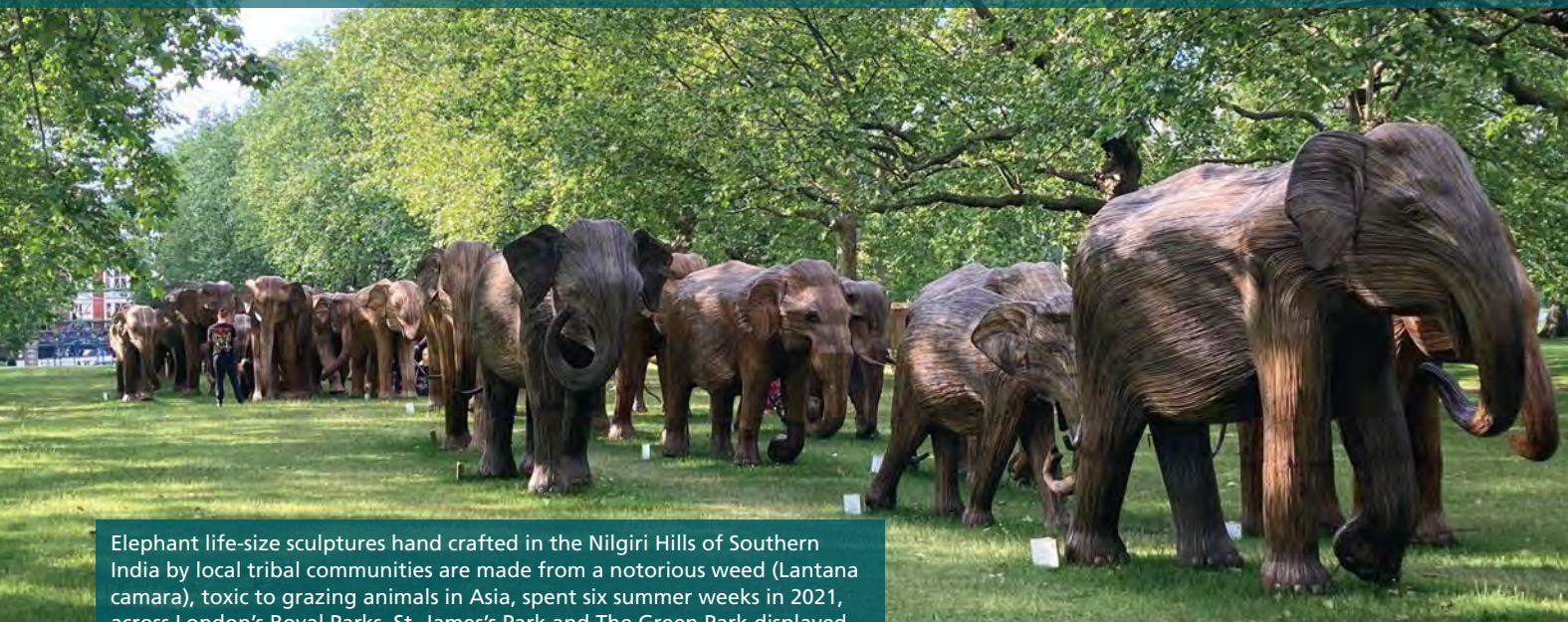
Lovelace did more than write the first computer program. She was also the first person to realise that a general purpose computer could do anything, given the right data and instructions.

"The Analytical Engine weaves algebraic patterns just as the Jacquard loom weaves flowers and leaves."

"Supposing, for instance, that the fundamental relations of pitched sounds in the science of harmony and of musical composition were susceptible of such expression and adaptations, the engine might compose elaborate and scientific pieces of music of any degree of complexity or extent."

Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace
Born: 10 December 1815
Died: 27 November 1852

PUBLIC ART AND INNOVATIONS : THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY



Elephant life-size sculptures hand crafted in the Nilgiri Hills of Southern India by local tribal communities are made from a notorious weed (Lantana camara), toxic to grazing animals in Asia, spent six summer weeks in 2021, across London's Royal Parks. St. James's Park and The Green Park displayed examples of the eight herds of these beautiful unique art pieces, as part of a global fundraising tour to find solutions for safe and harmonious coexistence with humans, not least across tea plantations. The creative minds behind this "CoExistence" project are Shubhra Nayar and Ruth Ganesh. At the time of writing £3,000,000 has already been raised by the charity. Baby elephant sculptures go for £6,000, while to purchase a full-grown Tusker costs £30,000.



One of many examples of painted lion sculptures dotted around St James's, each promoting the well-intended cause, but sadly with over-cluttered advertising graphics on their plinths.

The St. James's area is no stranger to permanent high quality artworks and sculpture and supports the trading of our historic auction houses and galleries. During 2021 an even wider range of art has been introduced to public streets and private spaces including squares and the adjacent parks across London and St. James's. These interventions are well intended, generally temporary and part of art, architecture, Design Festivals and Charitable fundraising events. This year has seen a growth in scale and style, with some Good, Bad and Ugly quality examples, of course always a subjective matter of individual taste. That these aim to aid economic recovery, are temporary and in areas most negatively impacted by Covid-19 restrictions is laudable. The Trust's concern for historic St. James's has been that some projects have managed to be developed without adequate community consultation. The promoters' investments, whether, public, private or for Charity Fundraising could have been guided better, with more discussion, and in some cases which could have facilitated long-term, permanent, rather than a short, sometimes problematic impact. Higher quality improvements for streets and spaces, many already under-funded are still needed in St. James's where art and design can integrate, interpret heritage, architecture, townscape and landscape.



An art strategy for parts of the West End intended to welcome back visitors and aid economic recovery included a number of garish road crossings, that are at odds with the aesthetic of historic St James's.



Electric scooters are being trialled over a six-month period by Transport for London in partnership with Westminster City Council in St James's. Management of the pick-up and parking bays has already proved unsightly.

PLANNING, HIGHWAYS AND LICENSING

The Trust has experienced a very significant growth in applications for changes in the historic St. James's district, whether via planning, adapting and new architecture, initiatives in highways uses and technologies and licensing for existing uses as well as expanded alfresco dining and in particular the trend for ever-longer and later hours of opening for entertainment premises. Some of these are desirable, or minor matters although all need the Trust's scrutiny, including one enforcement action in progress on unauthorised advertising example in Pall Mall reported by a Trustee. The outline lists below do however focus on the most significant developments which have included Trust's support generally, but sadly also objections, some successful, but one or two significant consents by the authorities, have overruled the Trust objections.

Planning Outline Update

Projects in 2021 have included developer and project team consultations with the Trust from the majority landowners, such as The Crown Estate and their long leaseholders as well as other individual owners and businesses. These have included : **French Railways House** fronting Piccadilly and Fortnum & Mason and associated frontage to Jermyn Street . The Trust supported other objections from neighbour properties to the substantial height, roof terraces, with overlooking and bulk increase of a complete corner block of new architecture, which also overlooked the balance of ground level retail to office use on Jermyn Street. The architecture and materials quality did not meet all the principles that the Trust's Design Guide report : "Architecture Suitable for St. James's". The outcome did see a better Jermyn Street balance, and minor amendments at rooftop level, however the overall scheme has been consented. **St. James's Street (Nos. 63, 64-65), Pall Mall (No. 40) and Duke Street St. James's (Christies frontage)** have also seen five recent applications for increased height and new roof terraces for both mixed use including residential (**Crusader House**) and commercial buildings. The Trust, with residential and business communities have successfully objected and had three applications withdrawn, three modified at rooftop levels, although the remainder have received consents.

Other applications in progress or planned which have been the subject of consultations and design advice by the Trust include : **10 Spring Gardens (the former British Council Offices)** refurbishment and ground level setting, plaza improvements adjacent Admiralty Arch and The Mall. **1, St. James's Square (the former BP Headquarters),** a substantially "re-purposed" existing 1997 building, with planned significant façade quality improvements, but also increases in height and bulk.



Site works at Norfolk House



Enforcement action is in progress at this site.

Highways Issues

The local Highways Authorities have powers that permit experimental traffic changes and other orders, some without full, initial consultation requirements, sadly with The Trust, on issues such as **E-Scooter trials, artworks on traffic signal controlled pedestrian road crossings and street lighting changes, replacing gas lanterns and light sources** with electric LED sources (examples at Queen Anne's Gate have recently been viewed by the Trust's advisor with Westminster's lighting representative). As such these and some of the temporary, interim measures for increased social distancing during the pandemic, with footway widening have been put in place before detailed consultation and the ability to make formal objections (which is only possible after implementation and during a monitoring period). Happily our Ward Councillors, Tim Mitchell, Louise Hyams, and Mark Shearer have been active with the Trust on continuing issues of nuisance by **"Boy Racers"** abusing St. James's and a coordinated set of actions has at last been put in place to detect, deter and enforce against these dangerous and noisy antisocial behaviours. In addition there is some comfort recently from Councillor Shearer over the community concerns of the E-Scooter trails : apart from the legal requirements for use only carriageways, not footways, the scooter hire companies have also integrated GPS technology which switches on the brakes of users infringing on footways, parks and garden squares.

Licensing Summary

The Trust's **Alfresco Dining Audit** and report recommendations has been welcomed by Westminster Ward Councillors and other stakeholders. Some negative issues have already been addressed as restrictions have changed and where the authorities have reduced numbers of tables and chairs, and where some inappropriate, non-compliant or unsafe layouts have been operating before the end of September 2021. Licensing conditions and information on all premises, externally and internally have always been a challenge to interpret and the Trust's report has again recommended to the Westminster Licensing Authorities that better quality drawings and illustrations are essential for assessing the impacts, comparable to the quality of those required for Planning Applications. The understandable aims of economic recovery of licensed premises across St. James's has also been acknowledged by the Licensing Authorities with regard to **longer opening hours**, and examples of particular concern are those where late night and early morning hours for entertainment, music, dance and alcohol may cause negative amenity impacts on both residential and business neighbours and communities. St. James's only has one Sexual Entertainment Venue (The Gaslight Club which has demonstrated good management, within its hours in the past) but in **Mason's Yard the music venue ("The Scotch Club")** has seen recent changes and objections based on antisocial behaviours and late night noise. Many of the food and beverage providers have used the precedent of longer hours and temporary event notices to increase their occupancy and the cumulative impact continues to be a Trust concern for the increase of levels of intensity and activity on streets and impacts on the dignity of St. James's.



French Railways House will be replaced with a whole new block with increased height. This project was consented although the Trust made objections.

THE RAC VETERAN CAR RUN 125th ANNIVERSARY EVENT

7TH NOVEMBER 2021



A 1903 Renault driven by Thomas Houlihan and a 1903 Clement driven by Janet Kennet.



The RAC representatives, Miles Wade and Daniel Pereira, kindly advised The St. James's Conservation Trust's architect advisor, Peter Heath on the timings and route, where it passed St. James's, in order to record the contribution these historic, but innovative vehicles have made, to the development of modern road based transportation. The craftwork and elegance of these 100 year old examples of engineering and style still grace the landscape and townscape heritage of St. James's, past, present and even the future of sustainable power sources.

A 1901 Albion driven by Mark Farrall.



The procession of pre-1905 Veteran Cars passing the Duke of York's Column in Waterloo Place

HISTORIC ROYAL WEDDING DRESS... AND UP-TO-DATE MILLINERY



QUEEN VICTORIA'S DRESSMAKERS OF ST JAMES'S



Painter Franz Wintehalter captured Queen Victoria in the wedding dress Mary Bettan made using lace by Jane Bidney.

Mary Bettans (19th century), was a fashionable nineteenth-century British dressmaker. She was the official royal dressmaker of Queen Victoria. Her establishment was at 84 Jermyn Street in London. In 1841, her business was described as "well conducted establishment" with journeymen, in-door apprentices and improvers. Bettans had a long association with Victoria, making mourning clothes for her on the death of her father in 1820, as well as her wedding dress twenty years later. In the 1846 official calendar, Elizabeth

Johnston had the title "Dress Maker Extraordinary" while Mary Bettans was called "Court Dress and Dress Maker". But Mary was not the queen's only dressmaker.

Jane Bidney who ultimately had premises in St. James's Street, close to St. James's Palace, also had a key role in the wedding dress. This order came at a time when the hand-made lace industry was in decline owing to the development of machine-made lace in the early 19th century. Miss Bidney had never left Devon before this commission and while waiting to be received by the Queen in London she fainted from nerves! Queen Victoria's wedding dress was trimmed with lace. The neck and sleeve frills, a flounce forming the front panel, and the veil were all made of lace. The order for this lace was placed with Miss Jane Bidney of Beer in 1839. The work was carried out over six months from May until November 1839 by over one hundred lace-workers and the final cost was £1000. The flounce of the dress measured 4ft 6 ins by 2ft 6 ins. Imagine the celebration the village must have thrown when Miss Jane Bidney, a native of Beer, brought the Royal Commission home and hired 200 tailoresses to begin work on the lace required for the Queen's wedding dress. Working for nine months, these dedicated women made four individual pieces of lace, which featured prominently in the Queen's wedding attire in 1840.

Indeed, it was this exquisite lace that inspired the Queen to choose an ivory-white dress rather than the customary silver for her Royal wedding gown. She felt ivory would prove a more stunning background for the lace. She was most certainly using her position as fashion icon to further the cause of her publicans, a most noble act indeed.

Kay Staniland and Santina Levy, who wrote the book *Queen Victoria's Wedding Dress and Lace*, credit design of the pattern the women followed to the influential artist William Dyce, a Pre-Raphaelite painter.



MILLINER, RACHEL TREVOR-MORGAN

Over 30 years, Rachel Trevor-Morgan has built a thriving and successful business. Rachel operates from her atelier, at 20 Crown Passage, St James's where she delivers private client commissions. Her mission is to provide her clients with the perfect hat or headpiece. She is renowned for her beautiful handwork and design resulting in the glamorous, feminine elegance on which she has built her reputation.

In 2014 Rachel was granted The Royal Warrant of Appointment to Her Majesty The Queen. Since 2006, HM The Queen has worn Rachel's hats on many high profile occasions. Rachel also designs hats for other members of the Royal family.

Rachel is a liveryman of The Worshipful Company of Feltmakers. Each year she organises a millinery design competition on behalf of the Livery for students to encourage and support the millinery trade. She is also a Brother of the Art Worker's Guild and a founder member of The British Hat Guild.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION :

...the "Spirit of St. James's"

For more information contact,
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at: peter.heath@atkinsglobal.com



'Fortnum & Mason's
Blue Whale display'



OUR WINNER!
'CoExistence' by Anon



Royal Automobile Club
'post-Covid welcome back'



'A squirrel wonders if I'm keeping enough
distance' by Paul Shields



'Changing of the Guard
restored' by Anthony Levy

Please consider making a Legacy in favour of the St. James's Conservation Trust,
which would materially ensure the future of our important work of historic protection and enhancement.

Cheque donations or legacies should be made out to:
The St. James's Conservation Trust Ltd and sent to:
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For the attention of F. J. McDowell Esq Email: frank@fjmaccountancy.co.uk

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