



# The St. James's Conservation Trust

## A Review of 2019

Edition 23

*Featured in this edition*



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Piccadilly**

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A Family Firm**

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# A WORD FROM OUR CHAIRMAN ANDREW LOVE



*Featured in this edition*

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Last year started with the completion of the improved setting in front of St. James's Palace and includes a new formal island which regulates the traffic as well as a safer zebra crossing. Cleveland Row has also seen an improvement with HRH the Prince of Wales planting an oak tree in March 2019 between Bridgewater House and St. James's Palace. Unfortunately this new space outside the Palace has been subject to spasmodic anti-social behaviour relating to the regular marches and demonstrations that come down St. James's Street. The other issue is the occasional gatherings of The Piccadilly Boy Racers who meet in Waterloo Place usually late at night, then race along Pall Mall causing safety concerns as well as disruption. The island suffers as sections of the chains are cut and some of the bollards are removed. The Trust has collected data on these incidents which has been shared with Westminster Council and recommendations have been suggested.

On a happier note; the improvements all along Jermyn Street have finally been completed resulting in a less cluttered and more visitor friendly space with the natural stone settings creating more space to appreciate both the historic as well as new architecture. One of the latter is the new Marq building and is a Crown Estate development which has gleaming golden threaded art and crafted metalworks created by the architect John McAslan and design team. Across the road from the Marq, Fortnum and Mason are leading with environmental initiatives amongst which are beehives on the roof which produce honey for the store.

During last year the Trust teamed up with the London Art Week, to produce a small brochure available to all the galleries in St. James's. This provided a location map of the galleries along with the history of various historic shops, local restaurants and hotels. This was well received not only by gallery owners but also by visitors. A recent addition to Jermyn Street has been The Wellington Club, a mainly private members club for music and dining. The site has been of concern to the Trust since the demise of Dave West who ran it as a hostel and club and other developers showed interest but withdrew when the Trust applied for strict regulations. It is now a well run and popular haunt which is based on the original Wellington Club in Knightsbridge.

It had been hoped that the Conservation Trust would hold a Summer Garden Party in June as it did for three consecutive years. In 2019 the organisers took a break and were well ahead with sponsorship and contributors for 2020 until the outbreak of the corona virus, since when most businesses who supported the event have had to temporarily close down. It is hoped that by the summer of 2021 the economy will be on the up and there will be another party to celebrate especially as the Trust benefits from the income with which to further its work. In the meantime, the replacement railings around St. James's Square where the party takes place is progressing apace due to the unstinting efforts of the St. James's Square Trust Chairman Ayres de Souza. The Conservation Trust has supported this scheme from the start and is therefore delighted that the improvements are going ahead.



Regular marches and demonstrations that come down St. James's Street.



Boy Racers at Waterloo Place 4/8/19 from a Trustee video screen shot of the nuisance.

## 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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**Credit:** (Front cover) Peter Heath RIBA MRTPI



# DEVELOPMENT, LICENSING AND RECENT ISSUES



Designed by John McAslan & Partners / Rolfe Judd and delivered by Skanska.



Bronze and corner stone artwork designed by artist Jacqueline Poncelet.

As visitors will know there are still signs of development interest and activity across St. James's generally with major scaffolding over a long period. Notable sites currently undergoing works are at Norfolk House for a major new office development by Make Architects, but behind a replica of the familiar post war facade, in the southeast corner of St. James's Square and close to the junction with Pall Mall the restoration and improvement of the corner two buildings, by Eric Parry Architects, with a contemporary roof design. Along Pall Mall a number of sites have continuing improvement works adding to the unfortunate, but relatively short term, accumulation of scaffolding. Out of general view a Crown Estate project at the south end of Babmaes Street, will add an improved colourful façade to a previous rather bland office building.

There are as always a large number of regular applications for commercial premises seeking generally small scale projects, for example, new or restored street level shopfronts, signs and sometimes lighting, improved or replacement air conditioning at roof levels and in lightwells and with retail and entertainment uses, extra hours of trading, whether as standards for sales of alcohol or for temporary events. The Trust has felt necessary only to object so far, to one of these minor type of proposed improvement applications,

considered undesirable and unnecessary, especially in historic St. James's Street. This was for a flagpole advertisement on the same building by an upper level commercial occupier, which at ground level has recently been taken over by Wartski, specialist jewellers. Fixed flagpoles and banner advert signage has always been carefully and rightly controlled by the City Council's Planning Policies and guidance information, to very limited areas and with strict conditions and constraints, to avoid proliferation. This policy, supported by the Trust, is primarily to ensure that historic buildings and street and townscape of quality, which in St. James's is the vast majority, should not be obscured and undermined with an excess of advertisement by flags and banners, in competition with each other for prominence.

The Trust has generally relied on controls via the excellent, existing City of Westminster Planning Guidance (SPG) documentation, which supplements its policies on for example, heritage for Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings (and also with Historic England, for Grade II\* and Grade I Listed Buildings) and the St. James's Special Policy Area (SPA, which is proposed to be extended to include the relevant comparable, specialists uses and buildings in Mayfair, when the new City Plan achieves its final adoption, following consultations and scrutiny).

# THE RETURN OF THE VICTORIAN GAS LAMP STANDARD

The long lost ornate Victorian Gas Lamp standard, that stood at the junction of Pall Mall and St. James's Street could be authentically recreated by the same British-based company William Sugg Lighting who first created it in the 1880s and restore this unique example of civic pride and lighting heritage.

An initiative by The St. James's Conservation Trust, who have promoted many improvements across the Neighbourhood Forum Area since 1998, is seeking funding partners and sponsors to implement this restoration project. The recently completed island and restored, original two way traffic system outside the historic St. James's Palace, the official home of the Monarch is where the lamp standard once stood until the second world war.

The project budget will cost approximately £140,000 and include the use of both modern technologies and traditional craft skills, in preparing patterns for the original decorative cast iron, carving natural stone components and installing the best quality and efficiency of gas mantle light source, all as shown in the 1896 photograph.

The Trust's representatives hope to start the budget rolling with their own fundraising Summer Garden Party 2021 in St. James's Square.

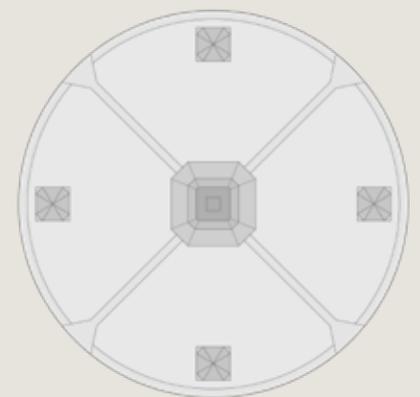
Other sources that have in the past enabled capital works improvement projects in the St. James's area, such as at St. James's Square Waterloo Place and Jermyn Street have been partnerships comprising the City of Westminster, Transport For London, The Heart of London Business Alliance and The Crown Estate, also with local businesses and institutions.

Due to the high levels of craftsmanship involved in recreating this focal point in the history of the area, the Conservation Trust is confident that the public interest will stimulate:

- Grant aid from heritage bodies and trusts
- Local community funding sources
- Commercial organisations
- Landowners public and private donations
- Frontagers overlooking the site



Lantern Plan



Lantern and Base Plan

Historic Photographs c.1896 courtesy of Metropolitan Archive Collection and [former] London Stereoscopic Co. original - George Newnes Ltd., Southampton Street, Strand: Photographer: Meisenbach.

# HISTORIC PICCADILLY - THE EGYPTIAN HALL

## Historic Piccadilly - Our Deputy Chairman, Virginia Chichester reminds us of the lost Egyptian Hall

No's 170 - 173 Piccadilly, today an office block, is the site of The Egyptian Hall built in 1811-12 by architect, Peter Frederick Robinson, but was demolished in 1905. From The "London Encyclopaedia" we learn that the Egyptian Hall was:

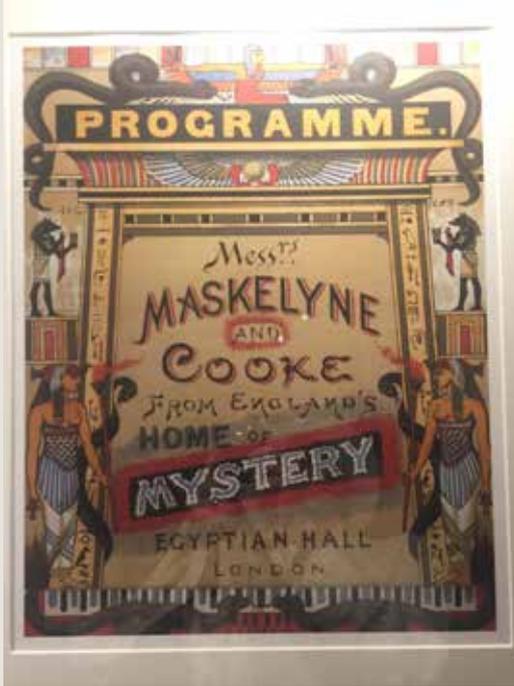
"An exhibition building, officially known as the London Museum, with an Egyptian façade... to hold 'Upwards of Fifteen Thousand Natural and Foreign Curiosities, Antiquities, and Productions of the Fine Arts'. These exhibits belonged to William Bullock, the showman who had previously displayed most of them at the Liverpool Museum. Soon after the exhibition opened Bullock added to its attractions by opening a 'Roman gallery' and in 1815 - 16 made a £35.00 display of Napoleonic relics, including the Emperor's luxurious bullet-proof carriage, an exhibit that drew enormous crowds. Bullock sold the carriage to a coachmaker for £168 and in 1843 it was bought for display by Madame Tussaud's. The remainder of the Egyptian Hall's contents were sold by auction in 1819. In 1820 the hall was hired by Benjamin Robert Haydon to show his picture, Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, from which the artist made a handsome profit. Later exhibitions were of Egyptian art and artefacts, including a tomb found near Thebes, a show of 'Ancient and Modern Mexico', a family of Laplanders 'complete with house and reindeer', 18-year-old Siamese twins, the skeleton of a mammoth and a moving Panorama of the Mississippi painted on 3 miles of canvas... In 1844 the hall was hired by Phineas T. Barnum for the American dwarf, General Tom Thumb.



General Tom Thumb seen arriving at the Egyptian Hall in his miniature coach and four in 1844" - Courtesy of: "The London Encyclopaedia", Edited by Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert.



Lithograph by T S Boys: from "Original Views of London as it is" 1842.



Egyptian Hall - Piccadilly illustration on subway tiles at Hyde Park Corner.

# WARTSKI - A FAMILY FIRM OF ART AND ANTIQUE DEALERS



Wartski is a family business specialising in works of art by Carl Fabergé, antique jewellery, silver and objets de vertu. It was founded by Morris Wartski, originally from Tureck in Poland, in 1865. The firm's first known premises were located in Bangor, North Wales. By 1907, two shops had been established in Mostyn Street in the fashionable seaside town of Llandudno. Wartski thrived under the patronage of King Edward VII and a colourful clientele including the 5th Marquess of Anglesey, also known as the 'Dancing Marquess'.

In 1911, Emanuel Snowman, Morris Wartski's son-in-law, opened a third branch in London. It was then that the firm began its long association with the work of Carl Fabergé. Snowman was one of a pioneering few who made purchases from the Soviet Government department, known as the Antiquariat, between 1927 until 1933. These included a variety of precious objects including the gold chalice given by Catherine the Great to the Cathedral of St. Aleksandr Nevskii Lavra (now in the Hillwood Museum in Washington DC). Amongst the transactions were numerous masterpieces by Carl Fabergé, including several of the now famous Imperial Easter Eggs.

Since the early 1950's, Wartski has built a reputation for scholarship within the trade. The late Kenneth Snowman wrote several books on Carl Fabergé and eighteenth century gold snuff boxes. The tradition for publishing original research continued with former managing director Geoffrey Munn who joined the firm in 1972. He wrote widely about jewellery and goldsmith's work, particularly focusing on 19th Century jewellery design and the work of such firms as Castellani and Giuliano.





### **Katherine Purcell and Kieran McCarthy are the current joint managing directors**

Katherine is a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, Vice-Chairman of the Society of Jewellery Historians and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. She specialises in French nineteenth century jewellery and works of art and has published numerous articles on the subject. She completed her book on the Parisian goldsmith Falize in 1999 and translated Henri Vever's three-volume 'La Bijouterie Française au XIXe Siècle' in 2001. Amongst the exhibitions she has curated for Wartski are 'Fabergé and the Russian Jewellers' (2006), 'Japonisme: From Falize to Fabergé' (2011) and 'Fabergé - A Private Collection' (2012).

Kieran is a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, and a Fellow of the Gemmological Association and of the Society of Antiquaries. He is a member of the advisory board of the Fabergé Museum in St. Petersburg, and has written articles and lectured on many aspects of the Imperial Russian Goldsmith's work. His book 'Fabergé in London: The British branch of the Imperial Russian Goldsmith' was published in 2017.

They are joined on the Board by fellow director Thomas Holman, a specialist in engraved gems, and 19th and early 20th Century jewellery design. He curated the firm's most recent exhibition on engraved gems entitled 'Multum in Parvo: A Collection of Engraved Gems' and wrote the accompanying catalogue. He also lectures on the history of jewellery and lapidary work.

Wartski's recent move to St. James's Street after 40 years in Grafton Street heralds another era for the firm. It finds itself in the company of select, old established businesses that are similarly specialised, and also Royal Warrant holders to H.M. The Queen and H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. In 2005, Wartski made the wedding rings for the Prince and H.R.H. The Duchess of Cornwall, and in 2011 was asked to do so again for the wedding of H.R.H. Prince William and Miss Catherine Middleton.

For the first time in 80 years, Wartski has inherited a Neo-Classical façade; its previous gilt and bronze frontage was drawn by architect John Bruckland, whilst its former premises on Regent Street were designed by Sir Denys Lasdun. The current wide timber window belies the space within, where wood panelling suddenly gives way to a surprisingly avant-garde interior. The gallery itself is divided into three areas, the front gallery, the arcade gallery, and the private room. The walls are clad in ribbed jesmonite simulating concrete, inlaid with specks of slate from the Cwt-y-Bugail quarries of North Wales in homage to Wartski's Welsh origins.

The main gallery houses five showcases containing works by Carl Fabergé on the left, while a jewellery counter and two large cases housing silver and enamelled works of art are located on the right. Through a portal, the walls transform into angular forms punctured by the glow of further showcases, whilst above them the walls are projected and merge with a dramatic coffered ceiling.



In the furthest depths of the gallery one finds the octagonal private room, velvet-lined and more intimate in character and proportion. The form evokes a jewellery casket, dominated by a portrait of Queen Alexandra painted by Isaac Snowman, great uncle of Nicholas Snowman, Chairman of Wartski and great-grandson of the firm's founder Morris Wartski.

Two armchairs from the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg sit below mirrors that upon request can slide within wall recesses to reveal further wonders within. Autographed photographs of the last Tsar Nicholas II and his consort Alexandra Feodorovna are hung on the walls, accompanied by a portrait made by Eugène Fabergé of his father in 1942. It was a personal gift to Kenneth Snowman, in gratitude for mounting the first exhibition devoted to Carl Fabergé's work in 1949.

In doubling its floor space, Wartski can finally exhibit original archival material on its walls, consisting of large pencilled sketches and intimate watercolour designs of objects and jewellery created by the Russian Imperial firm. The firm's stock is wide ranging in date, from medieval posy rings (inscribed within with a secret message known only to the giver and the recipient) to articulated gold bracelets made by Buccellati in the 1960's. The criteria for selection throughout remains impeccable craftsmanship and a timeless design.





The modernity of the monochromatic palette of a pierced silver brooch in the form of a rose, the metal deliberately oxidised to enhance its blackness and stark contrast with the tiny diamonds set within the intricate trellis work forming the petals, is as extraordinary as its truly sculptural quality. Exhibited by Léon Coulon at the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, it was known as 'La Rose Noire'.

Two very different works of art but typical of the variety and intricacy of those confections Wartski specialises in.

Wartski's move to St. James's has been an entirely positive one. To quote Katherine Purcell. 'It feels as if we have come home. We have joined other highly specialised, long established businesses, who care about craftsmanship. St. James's Street itself, with its historic buildings and noble architecture, is one of the most attractive locations one could wish for, and has exceeded all our expectations.'



A tiny example of Carl Fabergé's work, such as a heart shaped frame, embodies a microcosm of the goldsmith's mastery of manifold techniques, from its vivid translucent pink enamel over a radiating guilloché ground, to the setting of rose diamonds round the aperture, to the four coloured gold garlands that decorate the surface.



# FORTNUM & MASON

## 181 PICCADILLY: ROOFTOP BEES

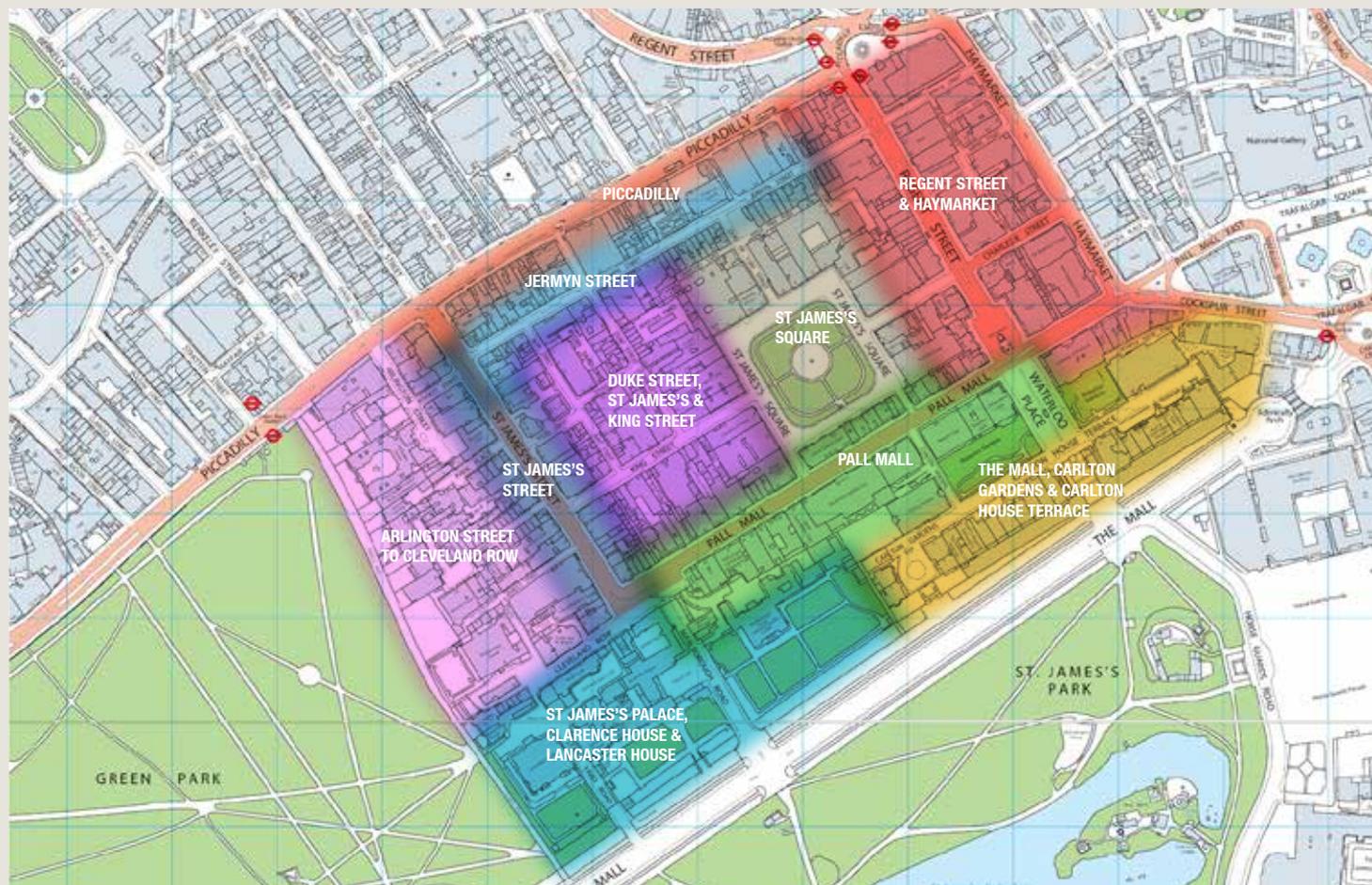


Positioned as we are in the heart of the capital, our rooftop offers extraordinary views across London. But that's not all that can be found on top of 181 Piccadilly. Since 2008, we've kept our own bees in rooftop hives, grown our own herbs and vegetables in our sky-high allotments - even smoked our own salmon, ready to be served in our restaurants below. Native Welsh Black bees, known for their gentle ways and unlikely to ever sting any unsuspecting shopper, they are allowed to fly free in pursuit of nearby flowers to pollinate, and their flight radius includes the gardens of a certain Royal residence not too far from Piccadilly, and the parks in and around St. James's too.

Once a year in September, our head beekeeper Steve Benbow harvests the delicious honey our busy buzzing bees have produced - which is then auctioned alongside the honeys made by our other rooftop London bees in Hoxton, St. Pancras, Somerset House and atop the White Cube Gallery in Bermondsey. The flavour changes subtly each year - but is always extraordinary and mercilessly untainted by pollution; nectar sits deep within a plant and is hoovered up by the bee's proboscis, then taken straight to the hive and sealed into the honeycomb, safe from outside influences. Each jar we produce is highly-prized and always quick to be snapped up. In fact, there's even a waiting list. The hives themselves are special too - coloured in our signature Eau de Nil and topped with gold finials, there are few finer places for a British bee to live and work.



# ST. JAMES'S NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



## St. James's Neighbourhood Plan - St. James's Neighbourhood Forum Chairman's update

2019 was a year of consolidation for the Plan. After the Forum Steering Group, which is a body of around 20 people representative of all major interest groups in St. James's, had approved the Draft, it was then informally considered by Lukas van der Steen, a Principal Policy Officer at Westminster, who subsequently met Forum representatives to make suggestions, prior to the Public Consultation phase.

The Steering Group felt a Public Affairs Agency should be appointed to steer the Plan through the public engagement process and to ensure that as many people as possible are made aware of it and have an opportunity to actively participate in its formulation. A number of firms were considered but Concilio have now been appointed and we look forward to working proactively with them.

All of this requires funding, and the Forum is actively engaged in raising all the finance necessary to see the Plan through from now until its formal adoption after a referendum by Westminster, which hopefully will be within the next eighteen

months. It is very important that the constitution and role of the Forum after the Plan is adopted is considered, and discussions are on-going on this topic to ensure that the Neighbourhood Forum will be best placed in the future to fully represent all interests in St. James's.

**Membership of the Forum is open to everyone and you can join on the website [www.stjamesforum.com](http://www.stjamesforum.com)**



# AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMES HAMBRO



## Peter Heath meets a local legend and an urban myth is uncovered

James Hambro is the paternal grandson of Olaf Hambro - famously associated with Wilton's Restaurant (and a previous of profile by the Trust's Annual Review) and great grandson to Joachim Hambro who founded Hambros Bank. With an education at Eton and Harvard Business School it is therefore unsurprising that Jamie as he is universally known has both co-founded a mergers and acquisitions financial firm and in 2010 founded James Hambro and Partners the now Pall Mall based Wealth Management business.

The Hambro family has long association with the St. James's area and Jamie recognised by his fellow members and diners at White's and other clubs as well as customers of his now **three restaurants** - our first conversation topic. The two well-known restaurants are much loved, equally for their food and character as also their place as historic institutions: **Wilton's** (from an 1742 oyster stall in Haymarket, to a restaurant in 1840 Ryder Street, a Royal Warrant holder in 1884), since 1984 on Jermyn Street, **Franco's** from 1945, (believed to be one of the first Italian Restaurants in London) also in Jermyn Street.

The new enterprise **Locket's** Restaurant was first opened on 21st November 2019 in Smithson (once The Economist) Plaza, 25 St. James's Street with stylish pronouncement and modest description: "In the heart of St. James's, Locket's is a vibrant café by day and an ambient wine bar by night, open weekdays from 7.30am through to 11pm..." When asked about how this was integrated into the famous and / or infamous modern, but Listed Building, Jamie is quick to respond that the Listing conditions were an onerous procedure to address. The St. James's Conservation Trust had offered support to his aim of a new, high quality operation at this location to bring life to the Grade II\* Listed Buildings, but rather empty plaza. The development was originally designed by the historically important "new Brutalist" architects,

Alison and Peter Smithson in 1963. Its building and spaces - loved by 1960s planners and still today by nostalgic modernists. But the Conservation Trust's past Chairman and Trustees, considered to be a good development, but in historic St. James's "very much an unsuitable scale and style of architecture".

When asked which of St. James's many beautiful and historic buildings were his favourites Jamie was quick to identify the oldest of examples, St. James's Palace and St. James's Church. Although unenthusiastic about the modern White Cube Gallery in Mason's Yard, a design and use which was supported by the Trust, he appreciates the pressures on viable art galleries and their importance to the special character of St. James's. He recognises that high quality modern buildings, by the Crown Estate in the St. James's Market area are important examples of how to replace poor quality 1960s buildings.

The positive commercial aim for choice and quality of a full range of mixed uses across the area, has in his opinion been vulnerable to recent economic cycles with particular damage from increases in rents, business rates and oversupply, in some cases of luxury retailers, some in the wrong street locations. These commercial concerns are also not helped by the amount of roadworks of all type, from new utilities, security measures and development-related digging up of the area. The meeting and discussion concludes when presented with back copies of the Trust's Reviews of the Year, Jamie sees the 2014 edition article, on his family interest in Wilton's Restaurant: as well as the caricature illustration of his great grandfather. What catches his eye is the "legendary" story of how Wilton's was purchased by his forebear from the then owner, with the words akin to: "add your sale price to my meal bill..."

**Sadly he says, there is no evidence base for that particular and regularly repeated amusing tale!**

# PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITIONS:

## OUR WINNER

*Wartski*

For more information contact, the Trust's Architect / Planner / Administrator Peter Heath RIBA MRTPI at: [peter.heath@atkinsglobal.com](mailto:peter.heath@atkinsglobal.com)

The Trustees continually review their accessible photographic archive collection and have decided that there are still not enough images that truly capture "The Spirit of St. James's"

The St. James's Conservation Trust Open Photographic Competition therefore invites you to send us photos representing the quality and "spirit" of the area past and present, under headings, perhaps reflecting:

- A Day In the Life of St. James's;
- St. James's Day and Night;
- St. James's over the seasons.

Winners could find themselves on our next front cover!

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



St. James's Market



The Royal Opera Arcade Lanterns



Berry Bros & Rudd Wine Merchants



OUR WINNER! Wartski



Vintage Oak Panel Entrance

## OUR NEW COMPETITION: Personalities and memorials in St. James's



*Can you identify these figures and these locations?*

# NEWS: ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB & D.R. HARRIS PHARMACY



**The Royal Automobile Club's Executive Chef, Philip Corrick, was awarded an MBE in the 2020 New Year's Honours List for his work, not only at the Royal Automobile Club, but also for his work with apprentice chefs and charities, particularly in the local community.**

Philip was Executive Chef of the Royal Automobile Club from 1990-2019, during which he oversaw the production of 5.5 million meals and the training of over 800 chefs, many of whom owe their careers to Philip's leadership. Throughout his time with the Club, Philip raised the standards of food by replacing the kitchens, installing a training academy and upgrading the chefs' facilities, obtaining international accreditation amongst the finest chefs in the world.

He also drove the Club's ambitions, not only to entertain in style and quality, but also to mount creative banquets to mark national events. He produced banquets for Her Majesty the Queen and to mark Club anniversaries, most notably during the Centenary celebrations and annually during Derby Week,

when 2,500 members and their guests dined to the highest standard. Philip is recognised, not only for his service for the Royal Automobile Club, but also his charitable work which had a significant impact upon the lives of disadvantaged young men and women. During his career, he devoted what spare time he had to the Academy of Culinary Arts, encouraging learning and development, teaching chefs, organising events and sponsoring awards and prize giving ceremonies. He earned a reputation for identifying talent, nurturing latent skills and promoting young chefs to launch them on their careers.

**The Club is delighted that Philip Corrick's selfless commitment, service to others and inspirational influence in the culinary and charity worlds has been recognised with this national honour.**



**Alison Moore, St. James's Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Member reports that 2020 is the 230th anniversary of D.R. Harris Pharmacy**

D.R. Harris was founded in 1790 and has been operating in the St. James's area of London ever since.

The Trust's work relies on voluntary funding. Cheque donations or legacies should be made out to:

**The St. James's Conservation Trust Ltd** and sent to:

**FJM Accountancy Limited, 23 Shackleton Court, 2 Maritime Quay, London E14 3QF**

**For the attention of F. J. McDowell Esq Email: frank@fjmaccountancy.co.uk**

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