

Undercover Chapel

Visiting the Chapel



The temporary canopy protects the Chapel

One of the things that you will notice during a visit to Rosslyn Chapel is the steel canopy which sits over the building and protects it from the worst of the weather. This canopy was erected in 1997 to enable the stonework inside the Chapel to dry out naturally. It has nearly completed its job and once the works to the roof are finished it will be removed and the Chapel revealed in all its glory.

Most conservation projects use conventional stonemasonry techniques, but the delicate nature of Rosslyn Chapel's ornate stone carvings commands a very different approach. Techniques more usually associated with single pieces of museum sculpture will be painstakingly applied throughout the Chapel.

While plying their skill, the highly specialised conservators will train a new generation of skilled craftspeople. So, in addition to protecting an historic building, we will be protecting skills that will be practised and passed on for years to come.

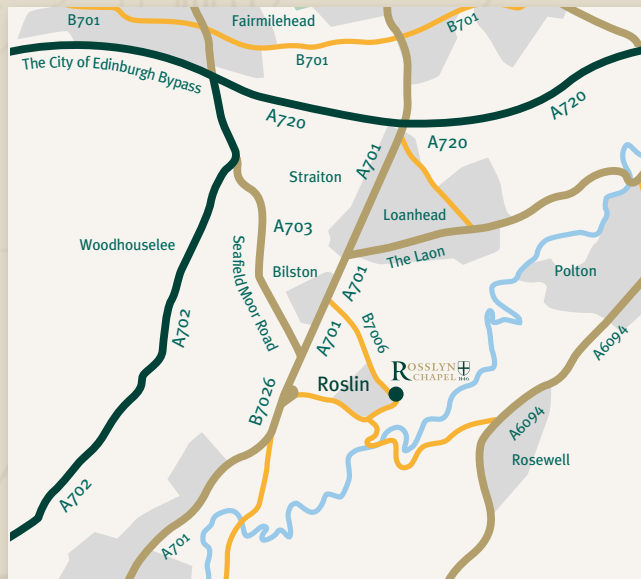


As Rosslyn Chapel undergoes a £7.5 million conservation and site improvement project, this is one of the most exciting times to visit the Chapel.

Whilst there will inevitably be some disruption, you will be able to witness firsthand world-class professionals conserving and protecting this most intriguing of medieval structures.

As well as the work to the Chapel, we are creating new visitor facilities which are due to open in summer 2010. Until then you can enjoy the exhibition, film and shop in our temporary visitor centre. Our experienced guides will also take you on a guided tour of the Chapel and its grounds.

We hope that you will be able to join us during this very significant time in the life of Rosslyn Chapel.



Rosslyn Chapel Trust is grateful for funding and support from



This is an exciting period in the 500 year history of the Chapel. The site works may bring some disruption, however we hope you enjoy your visit to the Chapel and the chance to see the conservation work first-hand.



Founded in 1446 as the Collegiate Chapel of St Matthew by Sir William St Clair, the Chapel took some forty years to complete and was not finished until after Sir William's death in 1484. The beauty of its setting and the mysterious symbolism of its ornate stonework have inspired and intrigued artists and visitors ever since.



The Lady Chapel has four altars which were dedicated in 1523

Rosslyn has survived turbulent times. In 1571, Protestant reformers seized the building, and in 1592 the altars were demolished; the Chapel ceased to be used as a place of worship and over the years fell into a state of disrepair. Although some initial restoration work was carried out in 1736, it was not until the early 1800s that the St Clair family began work in earnest to restore the interior of the building, and by 1862 the Chapel was once more a working church.



Sir William St Clair, Chapel founder



A medieval knight on horseback

Today there are countless theories, myths and legends associated with the Chapel; many of which are impossible to prove or disprove conclusively. Our tour guides will be able to tell you more about these and about the history of the Chapel during your visit.



Angel with the St Clair engrailed cross



One of the Chapel's many green men

After investigation and planning, we are now undertaking a major scheme to conserve the Chapel and provide much improved facilities for visitors.

We are:

- refurbishing the **Chapel roof**
- cleaning and conserving the **stonework**
- repairing and conserving the **stained glass windows**
- restoring the magnificent **Victorian organ**
- **stabilising temperature** fluctuations within the Chapel
- installing **new lighting**
- building a **new visitor centre**

It will cost almost £13 million to carry out this work. In early 2007 Rosslyn Chapel was awarded a combined grant of £7.5 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland. Together with a contribution from the Rosslyn Chapel Trust, this still leaves a sum of over £2 million to be raised from individual donors and charitable foundations to enable the work to be completed.

To find out how you can get involved in our **Conservation Appeal** please visit www.rosslynchapel.com

Sir William dies and is buried in the Chapel.

Rosslyn Chapel is seized during the Reformation.

Cromwell's troops stable their horses in Rosslyn Chapel.

The Chapel is rededicated and Sunday services begin again.

The interior carvings are coated in a cement wash unwittingly causing moisture to become trapped in the stone.

A protective canopy is erected to help dry out the stonework.

Work begins to conserve the Chapel

1484 1446 1571 1592 1650 1803 1862 1881 1950s 1995 1997 2007 2009

The Collegiate Chapel of St Matthew is founded by Sir William St Clair.

The altars are destroyed, the Chapel ceases to be used and falls into disrepair.

Dorothy Wordsworth visits and pronounces the Chapel 'exquisitely beautiful'.

Francis Robert, 4th Earl of Rosslyn, adds the Chapel's baptistry.

The Rosslyn Chapel Trust is formed to care for the Chapel and oversee its conservation.

The Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland award a provisional grant of £7.5 million towards conserving the Chapel.