



Cromarty East Church Newsletter



Issue 1: Autumn 2008

Edited by Caroline Vawdrey

Autumn start for East Church conservation work

Years of detailed planning and fundraising have paid off, and conservation work on the East Church will get underway in September. As Trust Director Victoria Collison-Owen commented:

"We owe a debt of thanks to so many people – in particular to the Friends of the East Church – who have supported us through the years. And of course none of this would have been possible without generous funding."

Drainage work to direct water away from the building is the first priority, after which work can begin on the internal replacement of gypsum plaster with 'breathable' lime plasterwork. The major external works – including removing the cement harl and replacing it with lime will begin in 2009. We'll be keeping you up-to-date with all that's happening in future newsletters and on the East Church website.

The Trust is delighted that work on the church will be undertaken by building conservation experts Laing Traditional Masonry Ltd.



Managing Director, Steven Laing, won the *Balvenie Artisan of the Year Award in 2007* for the company's impressive apprenticeship programme, and dedication to continuing the skills honed by generations of master stonemasons. You can find out more about the company's work at www.laingtraditionalmasonry.co.uk



photos: Iain Sarjeant

Community and church

Local Historian David Alston and Caroline Vawdrey have been jointly appointed as part-time community & education officers.

Caroline and David will be keeping people up-to-date with what's happening at the church through the newsletter, website (www.eastchurchcromarty.co.uk) and in the local press. They'll also be arranging school and local group visits, open days, training workshops and volunteer involvement.

If you'd like to get in touch about a visit, or have a query about the church you can contact David and Caroline by email on info@eastchurchcromarty.co.uk or by phone on 01381 600243.

Sounds a bit fishy!

You might be surprised to hear that the East Church can boast its own mermaid. David Alston was alerted to its possible existence by previously unpublished writing by Hugh Miller, now available on the internet. Nowadays she's tucked away at the back of the eastern boundary wall but once ornamented a bridge crossing the burn on a pathway to Cromarty House. You can find out more about her on the East Church website



photo by Calum Davidson: outline added

Welcoming Visitors

September 20th will be a busy day for the East Church as we'll be taking part in both the Highland Doors Open day and Heritage Lottery Half Billion celebrations from 11.00 to 15.00.

Caroline Vawdrey, and representatives from Lajng Traditional Masonry Ltd will be on hand to tell visitors about the East Church and plans for its conservation.

There are also audio tours of Cromarty available from Cromarty Courthouse Museum – which will be offering free entry to visitors for the day.



Thanks hardly seem enough to convey the Trust's gratitude to Cromarty resident Willie Hogg.

For more than a decade Willie opened and closed the church each day, and made sure that sure that the donations were safely gathered in. Without his dedicated help it would have been impossible for the Trust to keep the church open for the public to enjoy.



photo: Calum Davidson

Cromarty photographer Calum Davidson took this shot of Willie (centre) in 2006 receiving his Ross and Cromarty Community Award for services to the East Church.

Willie decided to take a well-earned retirement in June, and community & education officer David Alston and his son Aidan have been continuing Willie's work until conservation work on the church begins.

Just how much Cromarty Primary school children got from their summer visit to the church can be seen in the work that they produced afterwards.

Highlights for them seemed to be peering under turf at an 18th century Tailor's gravestone, standing in the Anderson tomb – now the vestry – and squeezing in to the back row pews of the west loft.

The children's artwork was on display for the church Open Day in June, and can now be seen in the Cromarty Courthouse Museum until it closes on 28 September.

The open day gave visitors the chance to meet everyone who will be involved in the conservation work, and concluded with a service of thanksgiving and prayer led by Rev John Tallach.

The service included hymns chosen by Mrs Newell – who is celebrating her 100th birthday in September – and was attended by people for whom the church has meant a great deal over the years.



To keep up-to-date with what's happening at the East Church...

- ◇ Check out our website at www.eastchurchcromarty.co.uk
- ◇ Look for updates on our noticeboard at the church gate
- ◇ Contact the community and education officers – Caroline and David – on 01381 600243 or by emailing info@eastchurchcromarty.co.uk

