

# Cromarty East Church Newsletter



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Edited by Caroline Vawdrey



## East Church re-opens with sunshine and song

On May Bank Holiday weekend the East Church re-opened to the public with a concert and church service.



The Cromarty Primary school pupils filled the building with song and music during their concert to celebrate the re-opening of the church. Everyone enjoyed the enthusiasm and energy with which they performed - no wonder they are former prize winners - and all agreed that this was just the way in which the new life of the church should begin.



The primary school children have been one of the most regular visitors to the church during its three years of conservation work, and it will be their enthusiasm that will sustain the building in the decades to come.



SRCT chairwoman Ann McCarter addresses the congregation

On Sunday the Church of Scotland congregation and minister kindly agreed to move their service along to the East Church. The building was looking at its finest for their arrival with inspired flower arrangements all in white and green put together by Evelyn Wilson, Sheila Bartlett and Marjorie Watson.



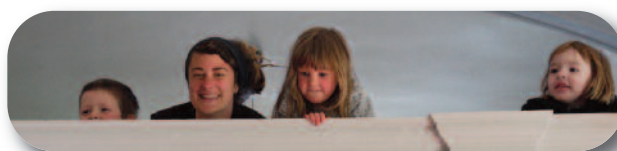
The Reverend Willis Jones had put together a magnificent order of worship - of reflection and of anticipation of the need for Cromarty to embrace new activities in the church.



The service was further enhanced by the choice of hymns that all the congregation could enjoy, by the able accompaniment of Sandy Jack on the harmonium and by the most beautiful solo performance of Psalm 23 by Stephanie Kuleska.



Both concert and service were happy life-affirming occasions for all involved, and surely a good omen for the future of the church.



## ... the SRCT Director

*For the Scottish Redundant Churches Trust it is the churches that take the place of honour. But that place is achieved through the work of the Trust Director Victoria Collison-Owen.*



Victoria has been with the Trust almost from the start – appointed as Director in January 1999 – since when she has seen the charity go from strength to strength. With responsibility for six churches, work for Victoria is very much full time, as she oversees all the Trust's fundraising, building projects and the day-to-day running of the organisation.

And Victoria clearly loves her work, as she comments, "The highlight is the people I meet – whether they are Friends, visitors, contractors, all sorts. So many people have strong feelings about churches, and stories to tell about them, it's fascinating."

The first church which the SRCT undertook major conservation work on was St Peter's Kirk in Orkney. Victoria says that seeing it "transformed from a derelict wreck to a beautifully conserved kirk was a great thing, and it was such an honour to go to Munich to be presented with a Europa Nostra award for our work."

But on many occasions the Trust has to turn down churches that are offered to them, and to Victoria that can be the hardest part of her work, "If a church is closing and the Trust is asked to take it into care, almost always the answer has to be no unless like the East Church, it is of national significance.. Telling people that, when you know how much it means to them for their church to be saved, never gets any easier."

Now that the East Church is open to the public once again, Victoria has been thinking about the three years of conservation work and reflecting on how much she has enjoyed learning about the building "from all the people working on it who have been incredibly generous sharing their knowledge: whether it is as a historian or archaeologist, a mason or a glazier. And from the building itself: the work has uncovered so much in the way of new information and revealed things that would never otherwise have been known."



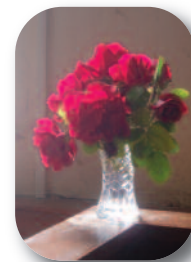
## Victoria Collison-Owen gives thanks

As anyone who has undertaken a historic building repair project will tell you, carrying out the actual work on site is only a small part of the overall scheme and often takes a fraction of the time that the entire project takes. Developing a project can take many years – in the case of the East Church, a decade between acquisition and starting on site in September 2008 – and much of that time will be spent raising the funds necessary to meet the cost of the work.

Securing funding for repairs and materials is only the starting point. Project costs also include professional fees (architect, quantity surveyor, engineer) conservators (furniture, stone, glass, painted finishes), monitoring equipment (environmental conditions, insect activity) and consultants (to advise on everything from business plans to bats and from disabled access to damp). And then there are legal costs, VAT, contingencies...the list goes on. To get on site, all costs must be identified, budgeted for – and covered! But throughout the process costs are in a constant state of flux due to VAT rates, scarcity of materials, inflation, and the overall economic climate.

Assembling a funding package is not for the faint hearted, and the larger the project the more complex the process becomes as more funders are involved. Fifteen funders have supported the East Church project and, together with private donors, have contributed around £1.3 million. With grants from £500 to £640,000, piecing together the funding jigsaw takes some doing, not least because no two applications are the same. All funders have different criteria, and working out if your project meets these, and making the case why you should get a grant rather than someone else, takes patience and persuasion.

Competition is fierce and not all applications are successful. Happily, the East Church has benefitted from the support and generosity of the following funders: **The Heritage Lottery Fund; Historic Scotland; the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme; The Restoration Fund (BBC Restoration Village); The Highland Council; The Pilgrim Trust; The Church of Scotland General Trustees; The Architectural Heritage Fund; The Scottish Churches Architectural Heritage Fund; The Cromarty Trust; The Clan Urquhart Foundation; The Idlewild Trust; The Strathmartine Trust; The Hunter Archaeological Trust; Allchurches Trust.** The thanks of the SRCT and the people of Cromarty go to all these funders, without whom the conservation of the East Church would not have been possible.



## To keep up-to-date with events at the East Church

\* Check out our website at [www.eastchurchcromarty.co.uk](http://www.eastchurchcromarty.co.uk) or email [info@eastchurchcromarty.co.uk](mailto:info@eastchurchcromarty.co.uk)