

Take a look around the outside of the Chapel. Here are some things to spot.



The stonemasons who built the Chapel created a secret beehive in this high roof pinnacle.



Reflecting the Chapel's rural location, this carving shows a farmer's wife saving a goose from the jaws of a fox.



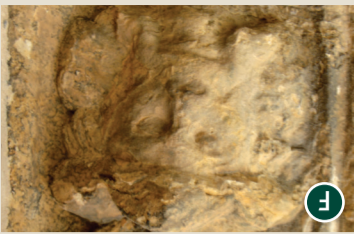
The Victorian baptistery was added in the 19th century.



Carved gargoyles like this act as water spouts.



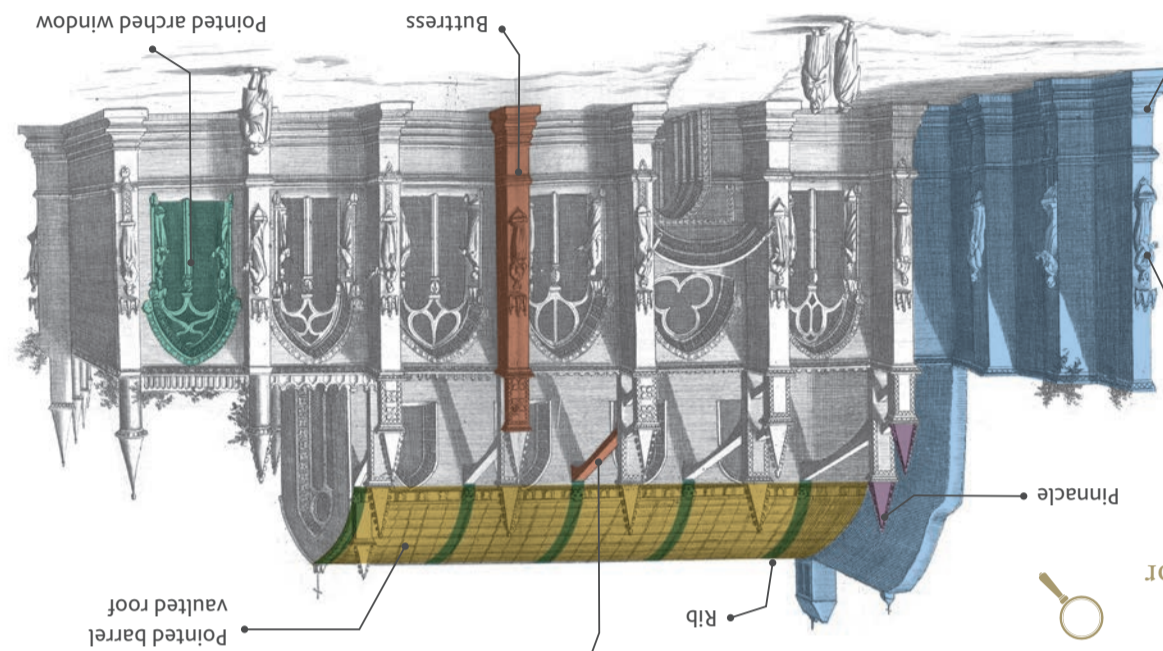
One of the more unusual carvings, this shows a camel. The stonemasons often carved faces of people they knew into their work.



Who might this man have been?

This illustration from 1693 shows statues in the niches on the outside of the Chapel. Today they no longer exist but what happened to them remains a mystery.

**Did you know?**  
The development of the flying buttress, which carried the weight of the roof outside the building, allowed structures to be higher and brighter.



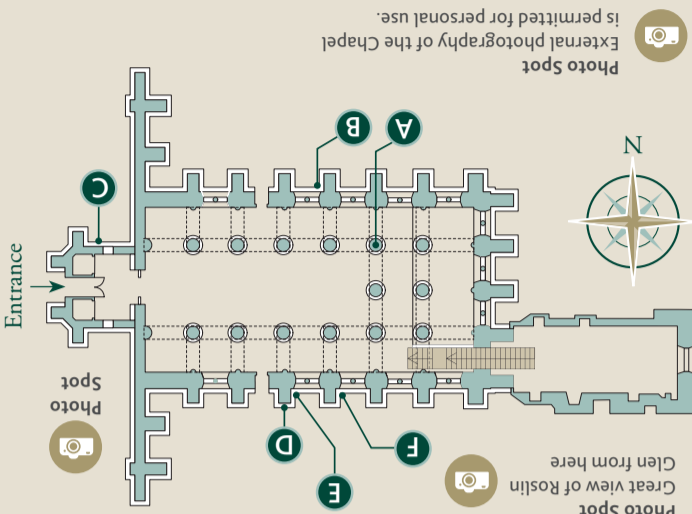
Flying buttresses – these arcs curve out from the building and carry the weight of the roof, dispersing it down into the stone buttress supports below

Rosslyn Chapel is built in the Gothic style of architecture. This emerged in France during the 12th century and spread throughout medieval Europe. Although variations emerged, there are some typical characteristics which help identify the Gothic style.

Here are some things to look for

This illustration from 1693 shows statues in the niches on the outside of the Chapel. Today they no longer exist but what happened to them remains a mystery.

This wall was never intended to form the outside of the Chapel. It marks the start of what would have been the transept, the wider part of the church which joined the choir to the nave.

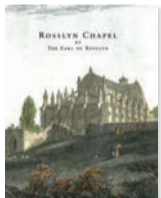


This monument marks the burial place of the 4th Earl of Rosslyn. It is inscribed with a passage from one of the Earl's own sonnets. The picturesque landscape, known as Roslyn Glen, contains the largest surviving stretch of ancient woodland in Midlothian and is a haven for all kinds of wildlife.



## A Gothic Chapel

## Making the Most of Your Visit



Our official guidebook, on sale in the shop, will help you find out much more about the Chapel and its history. It makes a great souvenir of your visit today.

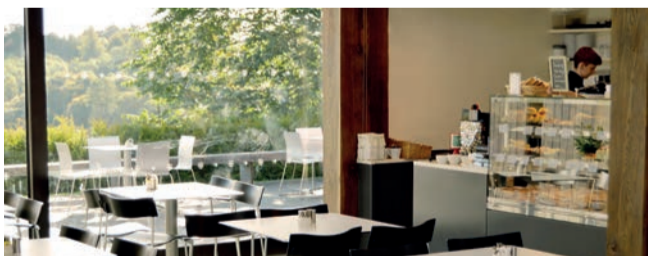
Rosslyn Chapel Guides give introductory talks throughout the day, helping you find out more about the Chapel and its carvings. There is no additional charge for the talk.



Explore the visitor centre with its interactive displays.



Solve the Rosslyn Mysteries told by the UK's Storyteller Laureate.



Enjoy a drink, snack or lunch at our coffee shop. Choose from our gourmet sandwiches, homemade soups and delicious pastries. We also have a great selection of drinks, including locally roasted coffee. Takeaway service available.



Take home an exclusive souvenir from our Gift Shop.

You can turn your day ticket for Rosslyn Chapel into a year's pass, giving you free admission to the Chapel and Visitor Centre for the next twelve months, at no extra cost.

Please ask at reception for details.

*giftaid it*



Thank You For Visiting

We would love your feedback on your visit.

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## Support Our Work

Rosslyn Chapel is managed by Rosslyn Chapel Trust, a charity registered in Scotland number SC024324, which depends on income from visitors, donations and legacies to conserve the Chapel.

You can support our work through volunteering, donations and legacies.

Please ask for details or visit [rosslynchapel.com/support](http://rosslynchapel.com/support)



CCTV images are recorded for the purpose of crime prevention and detection. This scheme is controlled by The Rosslyn Chapel Trust.

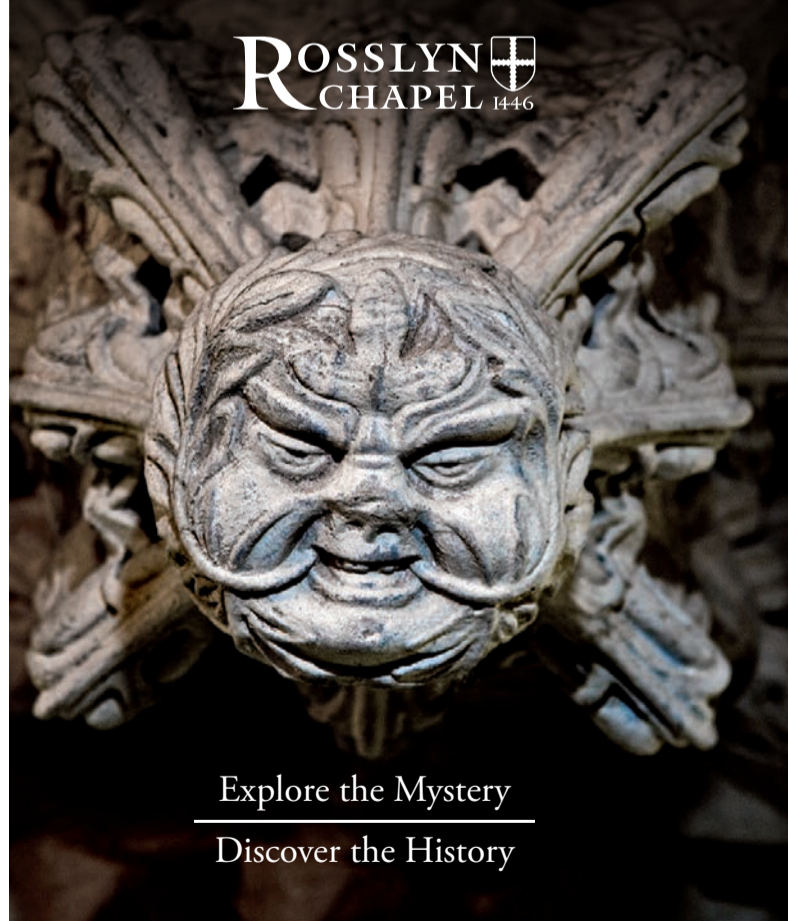
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WELCOME TO ROSSLYN CHAPEL 1446



Explore the Mystery  
Discover the History

We hope you enjoy your visit, which provides vital income to care for the Chapel.

Thank you for your valuable support.

[www.rosslynchapel.com](http://www.rosslynchapel.com)

## The Carvings

Founded in 1446 by Sir William St Clair, as the Collegiate Church of St Matthew, the Chapel took forty years to build. The beauty of its setting and the mysterious symbolism of its stonework have attracted, inspired and intrigued artists and visitors ever since. This plan will help you to find some of the most famous carvings and features in the Chapel.

Please take care, as you walk round, as some of the floors can be uneven in such an old building.

We gratefully acknowledge support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland towards the recent conservation project.



**W1** Trillium

Like maize and aloe vera, trillium is one of the exotic plants carved in the Chapel. It grows in North America and Asia.



**W2** William the Founder

This carving is thought to be of the founder of the Chapel, William St Clair. He began building Rosslyn Chapel in 1446 but died in 1484 before it was complete.



**N1** Devil and Lovers

The devil turns away in anger from the two lovers who gaze towards a carved angel, holding a cross, opposite them.



**N2** The Crucifixion

The ladder in the background of this carving suggests that it depicts Christ's descent from the cross.



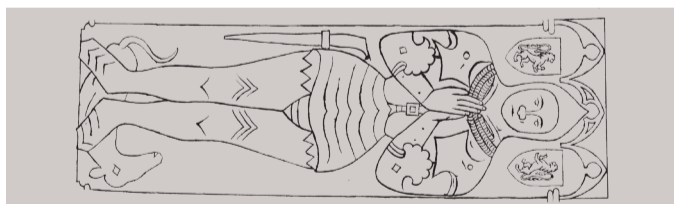
**N3** Lamb of God

As well as being a reference to Christ, the Lamb of God was a symbol used by the Knights Templar, whose aim was to protect pilgrims travelling to the Holy Land during the Crusades.



**N4** Angel with engrailed cross

This angel holds a shield decorated with an engrailed cross – the coat-of-arms of the St Clair family. The engrailed cross is repeated many times throughout Rosslyn Chapel.



**N5** Knight with dog (floor)

The knight etched into the stone floor slab could represent Sir Alexander Sutherland, father-in-law of William St Clair who founded Rosslyn Chapel.



**E1** Dance of Death

These figures are caught in the 'Dance of Death': look for the skeletons pushing and pulling the reluctant people to meet their fate. The carvings symbolise the inevitability of death.



**E2** Angel with bagpipes

This is one of a set of musical angels, at the tops of the pillars, celebrating Christ's birth (see **E5**) and thought to be one of the earliest depictions of bagpipes.



Don't forget to stand in the Chapel and look all around. There are so many more carvings to see!



**E3** Fallen Angel

This unusual carving is said to be Samyaza, the leader of the fallen angels, thrown out of heaven. He is sometimes called Lucifer.



**E4** Green Man (jutting out)

Rosslyn is renowned for its many carvings of the Green Man. The vines sprouting from the figure's mouth represent nature's growth and fertility.



**E5** Birth of Christ (overhead)

This carving in the shape of the eight-pointed star of Bethlehem, depicts Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, three wise men and three shepherds around its sides.



**E6** Mason's Pillar

This pillar carved by the master mason is much simpler than the elaborately carved apprentice pillar (see **E7**), perhaps indicating why the mason flew into a jealous rage.



**E7** Apprentice Pillar

Inspired by a dream, an apprentice mason is said to have carved this pillar in his master's absence. On his return, the master mason flew into a jealous rage killing the apprentice.



**E8** Sacristy

The sacristy is the oldest part of the Chapel and was probably used as a workshop when the upper Chapel was being built. A template for one of the stoncutters is etched into the wall. Please do not touch this fragile sketch.



**S1** Maize

This is one of the more exotic plant carvings in the Chapel. It is thought to be maize, which grows in North America.

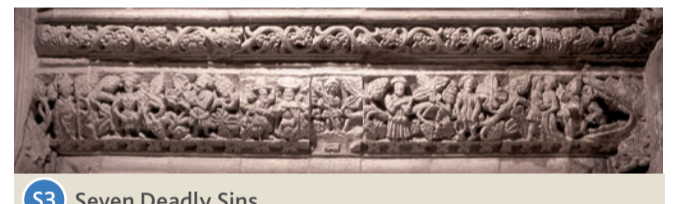
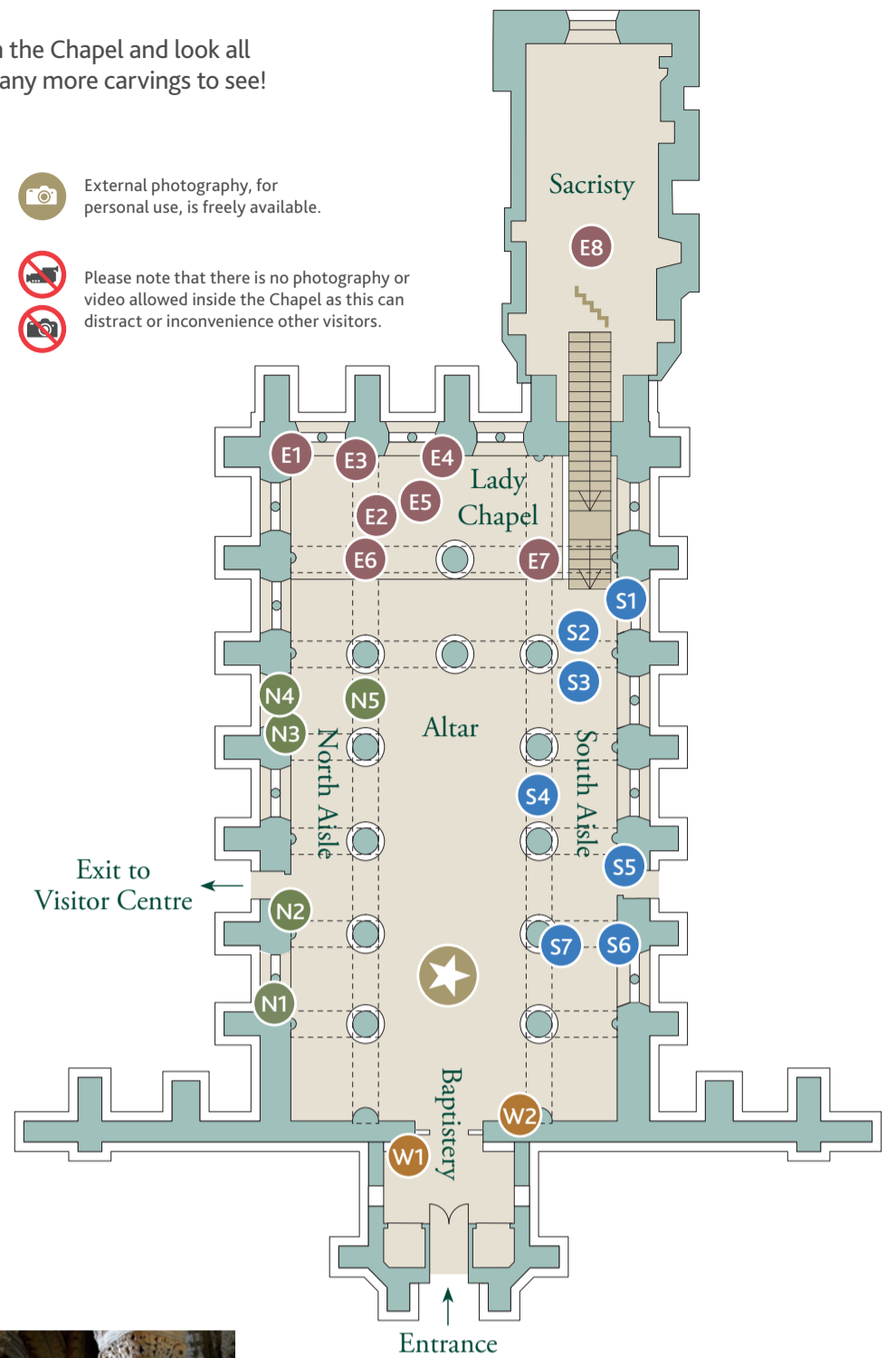


**S2** Seven Acts of Mercy

This lintel is the first part of a moral lesson to demonstrate the seven virtues by which people should live. These include helping the needy and feeding the hungry. One of the Virtues has been transposed with one of the Sins – Greed appears within the Virtues and Charity within the Sins. Was this a simple mistake? Or does it suggest that each of us has the capacity for both good and evil?

External photography, for personal use, is freely available.

Please note that there is no photography or video allowed inside the Chapel as this can distract or inconvenience other visitors.



**S3** Seven Deadly Sins

The second part of the moral lesson on this lintel depicts the deadly sins which people should not commit, including greed, anger and gluttony.



**S4** Tilson Window

Unveiled in 2021, this window was designed by Joe Tilson RA (1928–2023) and marks the 25th anniversary of Rosslyn Chapel Trust.



**S5** Veil of Veronica

Here St Veronica holds up a veil which shows the image of Christ. Legend tells that Christ's features were transferred when he wiped his brow on the veil.



**S6** William the Seemly

This knight could be William 'the Seemly' St Clair, who is said to have escorted Queen Margaret to Scotland for her marriage to King Malcolm Canmore in 1070.



**S7** Aloe Vera

There are lots of carvings of local plants in the Chapel but this one is from further afield. Aloe vera grows in hot, dry places such as India and North Africa. It is known for its medicinal uses.