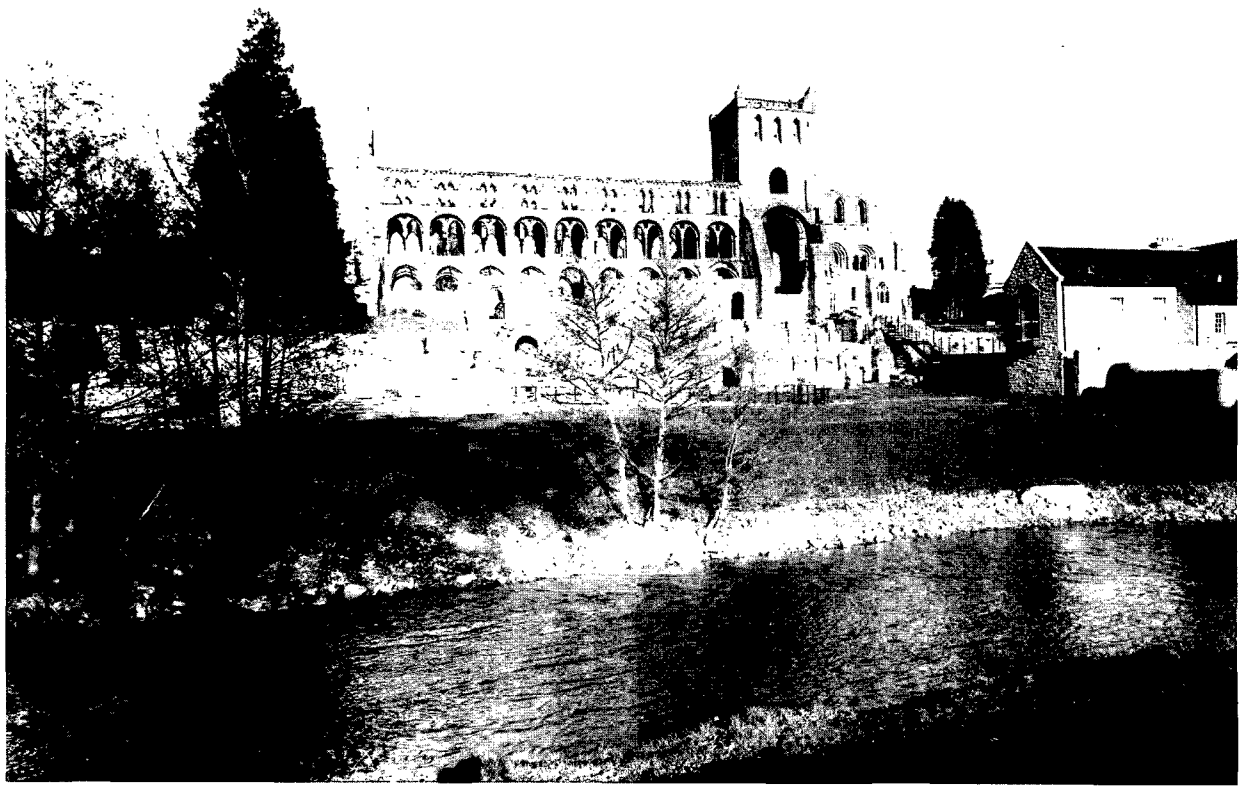
1

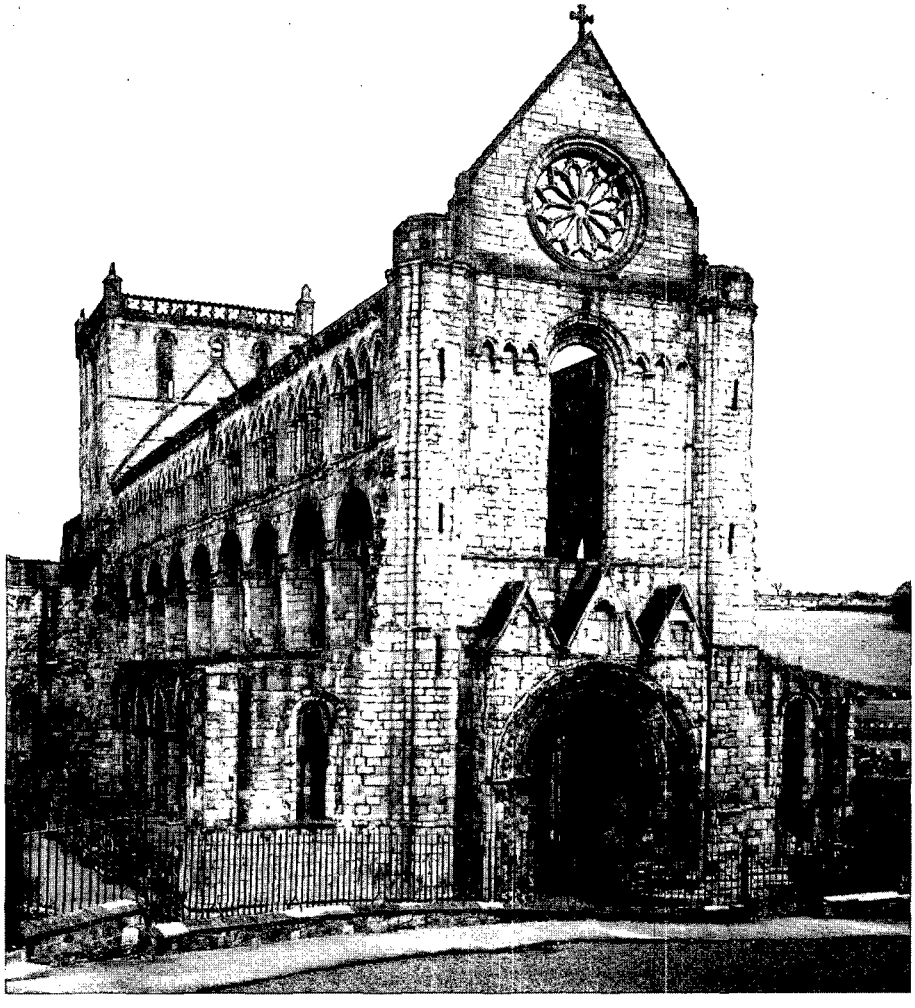
INTRODUCTION

1.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The ruined church of Jedburgh Abbey (illus 1; 2) has long been acknowledged as one of the finest examples of Romanesque architecture in Scotland – an inspiration for generations of poets, writers and artists. However, it was only when the opportunity arose to thoroughly excavate the claustral ranges to the south of the church that direct evidence of the abbey's eventful history emerged. In unravelling the complex sequence of building, clearance and conversion, new information was released regarding the everyday life of the community, from its colonisation to abandonment, as well as showing the abbey in a wider perspective. For the first time, the range and detail of the data retrieved during the excavation revealed the abbey in context – historically, socially and topographically. Evidence retrieved over a large area, and covering an extended period of history, was then synthesised within the broad phases of the abbey's construction, occupation and decline.



Illus 1
Jedburgh Abbey, from the S, after the construction of the new visitor centre. The Jed Water is in the foreground.



Illus 2
The West front of the abbey church.

Despite the paucity of primary documentation concerning the abbey, it is apparent that most of the site's history has been coloured by the frequent warring between Scotland and England. Lying so close to the Border and near an important N–S route for armies of both sides, the abbey's development, and from the late 13th century its decline, became inextricably linked with the effects of war.

The effects were physical, in terms of destruction, repair and fortification, but were felt on a social level, too. The brethren were frequently obliged to be either manifestly partisan or to tread a fine, diplomatic line between the two warring nations. Through necessity, political expediency became a constant aspect at Jedburgh (as at all the Border abbeys), apparently a far cry from the ideals and aspirations of those who first colonised the abbey in the 12th century.

David I, King of Scots, with the assistance of John, Bishop of Glasgow, founded a priory at Jedburgh in *c* 1138 and invited Augustinian canons from Beauvais in northern France to settle there (Cowan & Easson, 1976). The fertile land of the area offered the colonists both prosperity and the potential for expansion. By 1154, its status had been raised to that of an abbey and it eventually came to have dependent priories at Blantyre, Canonbie and Restenneth (*ibid*).

The political climate for such a major investment by the Crown was very favourable. The Border was stable and '. . . it divided communities with the same language. . . the same social structure and agrarian practices.' (Duncan 1975, 538). Up to the late 13th century a stability prevailed which enabled western European monasticism to establish itself securely in the Borders.

Moreover, the foundation of a great house at Jedburgh demonstrated to the English the individual power of King David and the independence of the Scottish church. Bishop John of Glasgow had long been at odds with the Archbishop of York, to the extent of his self-imposed exile in Tiron in 1136–7, and it is likely that John's return to Scotland and the foundation of Jedburgh in 1138 were part of a policy by King David to emphasise his power on the eastern Border.

By 1138 the popularity of the Augustinian order in Scotland owed something to the influence of Bishop Turgot of Durham and two successive Archbishops of York, Thomas and Oswald, on the predecessors of King David, resulting in foundations at Scone, Inchcolm, Loch Tay and St Andrews. King David was, in turn, greatly influenced by his intimate followers: three of his ex-chaplains, Alwin, Osbert and John, were all instrumental in the establishment and running of Augustinian houses at Holyrood and Jedburgh. There were, however, other factors which recommended the regular canons to David.

The order encompassed a wide variety of spiritual ideals embracing almost every aspect of religious life. '. . . No other order offered the founder of a religious house such a choice of spiritual prospects.' (Dickinson 1950, 137). To a very marked extent, this doctrinal adaptability enabled the Augustinians to liaise closely with the *caput baroniae* and to involve themselves with the secular world on a variety of levels. The 'association between the regular canons and the administrative or curial classes . . . became one of the more outstanding characteristics of the first phase of the Augustinian settlement' (Platt 1984, 31) – an association even more significant in Scotland because it involved the royal house itself. The foundation of Jedburgh Abbey close by the royal castle should be viewed alongside those at Holyrood and Cambuskenneth which served the royal castles of Edinburgh and Stirling.

The reoccupation of early Christian sites, both Celtic and Anglian, by the Augustinians was very marked during the 12th and 13th centuries, thus presenting the canons as the most effective vehicle for the promotion of reformed monasticism and the preservation of a tradition of Christian observance. This sense of continuity, combined with sound economic strategies and expertise, proved a successful formula in the peaceful transition towards new attitudes and doctrines, both spiritual and secular.

Thus it was that with the introduction of the Augustinians to Jedburgh, political prestige and effective administration were assured by the combination of royal castle and great abbey. This association had proved highly significant in the Norman conquest and settlement of England – and so could be seen as the key to the effective control of older territorial units in Scotland, whether secular or ecclesiastical.

Having established the need and desirability of such an arrangement, the '. . . principal concern must have been for the physical establishment in the most literal sense. Only as an abbey's future became more secure would the mandated range of first structures become realistic . . .' (Ferguson, 1983, 82). In one sense, this process is colonisation (because of the time taken to construct the great stone ranges) and demonstrates the priorities of the community in establishing key structures to enable the house to start running properly.

At Jedburgh, building in stone was concentrated on the great church, commencing from the E to establish altar and crossing. The community itself was accommodated in various temporary timber structures which were only superseded as the stone building progressed (initially completing the nave of the abbey church and the East range before converging on the S and W of the complex), a process which lasted some 120 years.

When Edward of England's army, under Sir Richard Hastings, became the first on record to damage the abbey in 1305, the great building and the strategy behind it were altered forever. In 1410, 1416, 1464 and 1523 the abbey buildings were variously damaged and subsequently repaired, only to be burned again during the campaign of 1544–5.

The damage caused by the Wars of Independence probably gave rise to the extension of the cloister and consequent development of the South and West ranges. The castle of Jedburgh was destroyed in 1409 and the abbey's defences were extended as a result – including the construction of a series of towers forming a line along Canongate. Damage incurred later in the 15th century is likely to have prompted the rebuilding of the Chapter house. Into the 16th century, the subdivision of larger rooms to form cells towards the SW of the abbey and the presence of a series of crude buttresses outside the S wall of the nave demonstrates the re-use of rubble from demolished buildings and the general decline in numbers of individuals actually living in the abbey.

Whereas the abbey may not have been as well burnt as the Earl of Hertford claimed in 1545, the crude repairs completed by a tiny complement of canons certainly suggest that it was fairly dilapidated. As the community gradually diminished during the early 16th century, the role of the abbey as part of the town defences became increasingly important in the face of English invasion. The most graphic of these changes as a result of war was the partial fortification of the abbey in the mid-16th century by the addition of an earthwork to the E of the East range and the conversion of abbey structures at the SW of the claustral circuit to mount artillery. This conversion probably gave rise to the development of The Bow and marked a period of extensive stone robbing and gradual encroachment by the town. Nevertheless, much of the abbey church survived and, with some modifications, was used by the new, reformed kirk until a completely new church and manse were built on the opposite bank of the river in 1875.

1.2 LOCATION

The town of Jedburgh, in Roxburgh District, lies 80km (50 miles) SE of Edinburgh and just 18km (12 miles) N of the Anglo-Scottish border (illus 3). The medieval burgh developed on the left bank of the Jed Water, a fast-rising river which runs from Carter Hill to the River Teviot, 4km (2.5 miles) to the N of the abbey. At Kelso the Teviot joins the River Tweed which reaches the North Sea at Berwick, an important Scottish burgh and seaport until 1488.

On the S edge of the town the river deviates from its S–N course and flows E for about 200m. Here, on the N bank, the abbey complex (NGR: NT 651 205) was laid out on a series of terraces cut into the sloping ground (illus 4), with the great abbey church at the summit of the slope, some 80m from the present course of the Jed Water. The river's alignment allowed for the standard monastic layout, with the reredorter (latrine-block) positioned at the bottom (S) end of the East range.

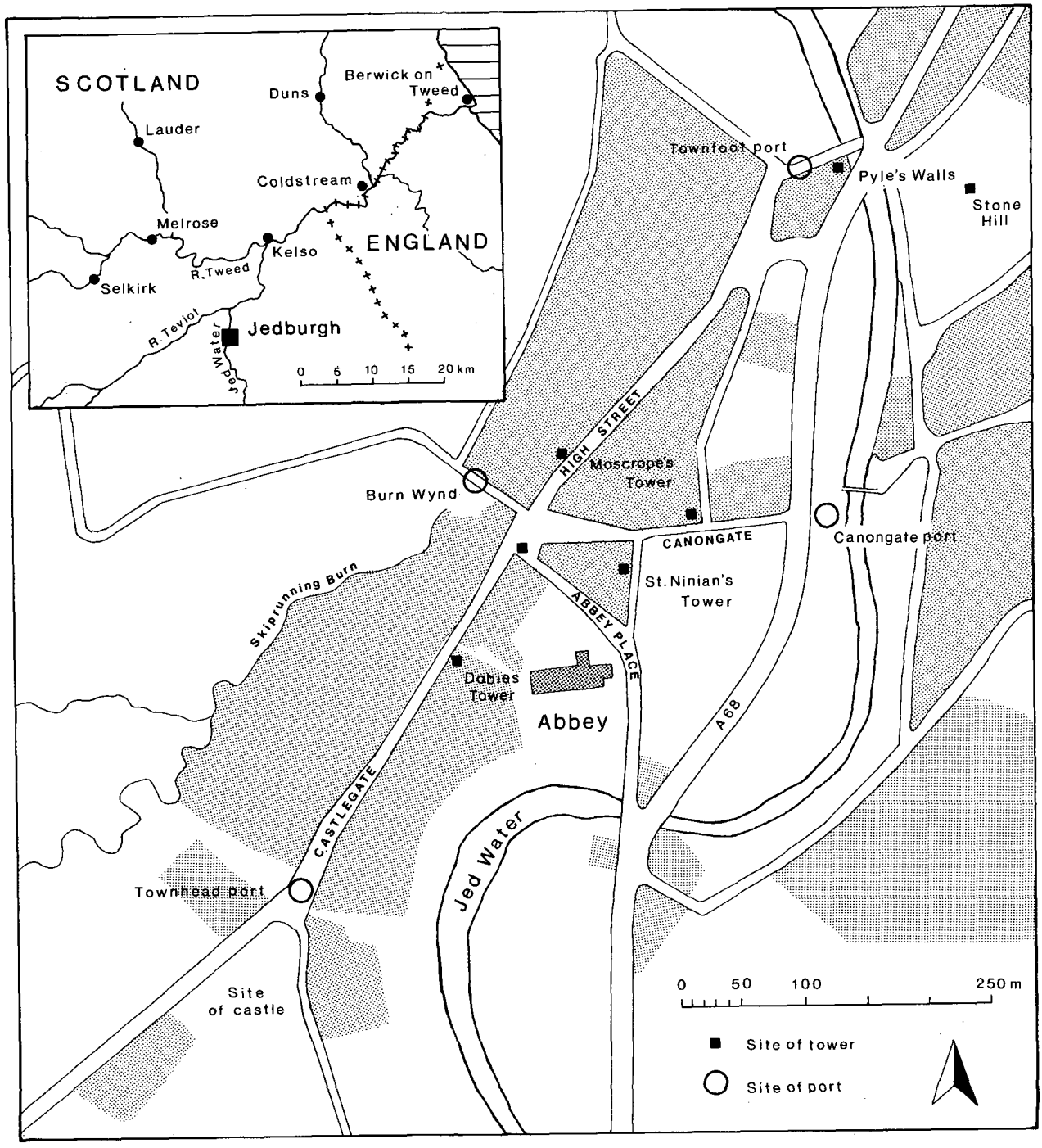
A post-Reformation graveyard to the N of the church and tarmac roads (Abbey Place, The Bow and Abbey Close) on its remaining sides gave the abbey a rather cramped appearance prior to excavation in 1984. The effect was misleading, however, for the monastic precinct had once extended well beyond these limits, particularly to the E and SE. Unfortunately, much of the archaeological record was probably destroyed during the construction of a textile mill in Victorian times. The works were demolished in 1967 and the area (known as Murray's Green) subsequently landscaped as part of the town by-pass development.

1.3 PHYSIOGRAPHY

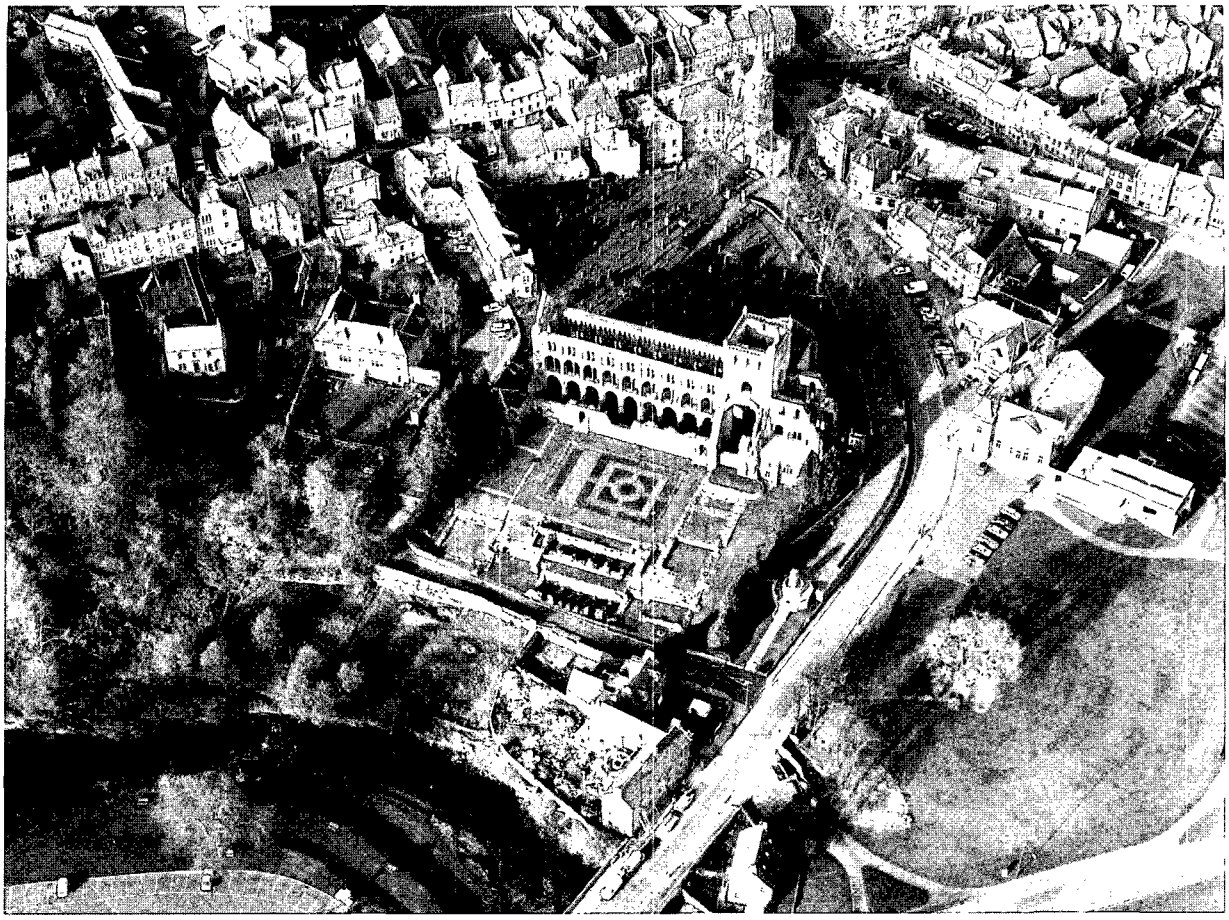
THE GEOLOGY OF THE SITE

The bedrock at Jedburgh is of Upper Old Red Sandstone age. Its soft, dark red, horizontally-bedded strata have been cut by the Jed Water, forming vertical cliffs to the S and E of the town and, in places, exposing the underlying Silurian rock. The solid geology is overlain by a thin layer of glacial till belonging to the Hobkirk Association (Muir 1956, sheet 17) which, on the abbey site, is represented mainly by coarse sands and gravels. The typical soil profile on Old Red Sandstone is a dark brown topsoil (A horizon) over light brown subsoil (B horizon) with a dark red-brown parent material (C horizon). Outside the East range at Jedburgh, the B horizon and some of the A horizon survived, whereas in the W part of the site, the soil had been removed down to the C horizon in antiquity.

Most of the abbey's stonework is derived from the higher levels of the Upper Old Red Sandstone (MacGregor & Eckford 1952, 244) and was quarried from one or more sites close to Jedburgh (illus 5): Ulston Moor (three quarries), Ferniehirst (four quarries), Tudhope and Hundalee (RCAHMS 1956, 239–40). Initially, the very friable sandstone from the abbey's immediate environs was used only for wall-core, but its softness and ease of cleavage prompted its exploitation in later times, particularly during the remodelling of the refectory and the construction of the so-called 'infirmary' to its S (*ibid*, 205). However, although easily worked, this stone laminates readily and consequently the masonry of these two buildings has eroded badly. A major component of wall cores and foundations was dolerite, a dark grey, intrusive igneous rock of Carboniferous age that occurs locally at Lanton Hill, Dunion Hill and Black Law. Although glaciation



Illus 3
Location of the abbey and town of Jedburgh.



Illus 4
Aerial view of the abbey before the 1984 excavation with The Bow extending around the S side of the abbey. The flower beds within the cloister garth were intended to show the two phases of the South and West ranges.

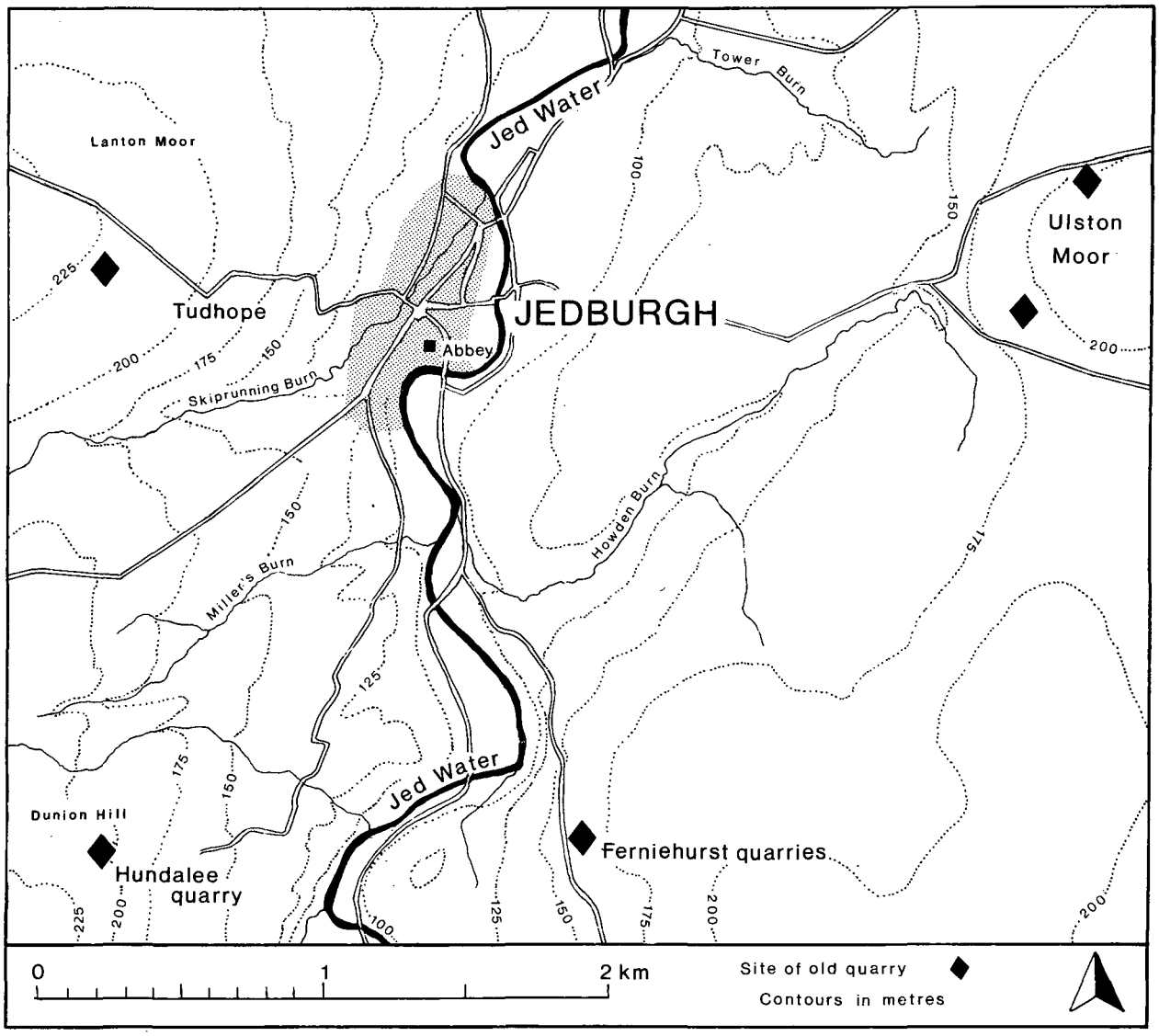
has littered the soils near these outcrops with boulders of this rock, it is unlikely that many of those on the abbey site had been deposited in this way (Dr R Shiels pers comm). Enormous quantities of sandstone were carried more than 2km from the quarries and it is likely that the abbey builders were just as willing to transport dolerite similar distances from its more accessible hilltop sources.

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE SITE

There were considerable problems building a large monastery on such a steep slope. Excavation showed that terraces had been cut into the river bank so that the claustral buildings could stand on level ground and that the crumbling cliff face had been consolidated to protect the buildings close to the river. Furthermore, the Jed Water itself had had to be diverted to allow the S end of the East range to be built.

Terracing the river bank was an enormous task although the excavated material was probably put to good use: topsoil in gardens and orchards; the underlying sand and gravel for making mortar and concrete; bedrock for building stone; and other debris for levelling the ground, particularly at the river's edge. Indeed, there were some positive advantages to the abbey's location. Waste could easily be carried away from the cloister, downhill into the Jed Water, and an elevated situation protected most of the complex from the sudden and severe flooding that still afflicts parts of the town.

The river, however, was probably not the source of the abbey's domestic water supply for its transportation uphill to the claustral ranges would have been a laborious and impractical task. Streams running off hills to the W and NW of the town seem more likely sources. The nearest of these streams is the fast-flowing Skiprunning Burn which courses along a narrow, steep-sided ravine through the W part of the town but which is now culverted from a point 100m NW of the abbey as far as its confluence with the Jed Water. The



Illus 5
Jedburgh in its topographical context, showing the probable quarry sites for the abbey building stone.

route by which water might have been conveyed from the burn to the abbey is open to speculation although piping the water from some distance upstream would have obviated the need to pump it uphill from the ravine. Monastic plumbing was frequently very elaborate. This is apparent at Melrose Abbey and even more so at the Cathedral Priory of Canterbury where lead piping passed along a complicated route through the city walls, workmen being employed to ensure the pipe's regular maintenance (Urry 1967, 205).

Other possible water sources at Jedburgh were rainwater cisterns, of which no evidence has come to light, and wells. However, the two wells so far located within the claustral area were both cut through demolished medieval walls and are therefore assumed to be post-monastic structures.

1.4 THE ABBEY WITHIN THE TOWN

The great antiquity of Jedburgh as a settlement site long before the arrival of the Augustinian canons in the 12th century is attested by numerous finds covering a wide historical spectrum. The advantages of this sheltered valley site, with its strategic significance in terms of natural routeways and river crossings, were exploited from at least the Celtic Iron Age.

The decision to build the abbey on such a steep river bank may have been influenced by existing patterns of land ownership, habitation, river crossings and, perhaps, by the tendency for many Augustinian houses, in contrast to those of other orders, to be founded on earlier religious sites (Robinson 1980, 35). Furthermore, an elevated situation close to a major route through border country could have served as a statement by King David I as to the wealth and power he could exert on even the far corners of his realm.

The following appraisal of the town's early development is based on an analysis of a series of 18th- and 19th-century maps of Jedburgh, the earliest being a survey by John Ainslie which, although undated, was probably the predecessor of his town plan of *c* 1775 (illus 73).

THE EARLY SETTLEMENT

According to Symeon of Durham, in his *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* (Arnold 1885), *Gedwearthe* and *alterum Gedwearthe* were among the lands given by Ecgred of Northumberland to the church of Lindisfarne in AD 830–45. The nature of these settlements is unknown although an ecclesiastical presence near the site of the Augustinian abbey is indicated by several pieces of Anglian sculpture, found before and during the 1984 excavation. These include a fragment of late 8th-century date (Cramp 1983, 280) which suggests that there was a church there prior to Ecgred's donation. However, the earliest documentary reference to an actual church dates to the early 12th century when *Geddewerde* is cited as the burial place of Eadwulf Rus, the murderer of Bishop Walcher (Arnold 1885, 198).

The pre-Augustinian church was probably a minster, a status suggested by a grant to a pre-existing '*Monasterium Jeddew*' in a charter of William I which confirmed the privileges of the Augustinian abbey (Barrow 1971, 163–4). This *monasterium* is likely to have been close to, or even on the site of, the extant abbey church although a position slightly to the N, within the present kirkyard, would have enabled the new building to be constructed whilst the old church continued in use. It may be assumed that some form of secular settlement existed along the line of Canongate, before Castlegate and High Street were laid out.

THE BURGH

The new burgh of Jedburgh was founded by the king before 1170. It was arranged in a line extending NE from the castle. The integral relationship between the castle and the abbey was hinted at in a charter of 1165 x 1170 which refers to Jedburgh '. . . *ubi castellum est* . . .' (Lawrie 1905, 151–52). Its precise extent, however, is uncertain. Originally, the S limit may have been to the W of the castle, on the line of the present drive of Glenburn Hall which appears on Ainslie's plan as Chatows Wynd. Evidence of regular, planned burgage plots survives as far N as the line of Jewellers Wynd and Smith's Wynd. Beyond, in an area later to include the Franciscan Friary, the properties were generally wider and more irregular.

Pronounced angles in the property boundaries suggest that the burgage plots were laid out over the open fields of an earlier settlement. In the S half of the burgh (the present Castlegate), the limits of the plots were restricted by the Jed Water and the Skiprunning Burn. To the N, there were back lanes. Queen Street, known earlier as Walkers Wynd or Back Gate, lies to the E of High Street; Friarsgate, or Back of Friars, lies to the W. In this part of the burgh the burgage plots appear to have been laid across the line of the Skiprunning Burn.

THE MONASTIC PRECINCT

The monastic precinct lay within the area bounded by the Canongate to the N, Castlegate to the W and the Jed Water to the S and E. Its precise limits are unknown although it encompassed an area later occupied by Abbey Close, the High Kirkyard and the properties on the S side of Canongate; all of which remained outside the jurisdiction of the burgh until they were purchased in 1669.

To the W of the abbey was Abbey Close which provided access to the ceremonial West door of the church and the West claustral range. Augustinian canons normally undertook full pastoral duties and the nave of the abbey church would also have served the parish throughout the medieval period. There is a reference, dated 1220, to an altar in the nave which was appropriated for parochial use during a dispute between the Bishop of Glasgow and the canons of Jedburgh (Glasgow Registrum, 97); and a document of 1502 states that a mortgage repayment must be made 'on the altar of the parish church of Jedburgh'

MONARCHS ENGLISH	MONARCHS SCOTTISH		KEY EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE ABBEY		SUPERIORS OF THE HOUSE	
WILLIAM I	MALCOLM III		1080	*Murder of Bishop Walcher of Durham*		PERIOD I
WILLIAM II	DONALD BANE		1087	*Body of Eadwulf Rus cast out by Turgot*		
HENRY I	EDGAR	1100				
	ALEXANDER I					
STEPHEN	DAVID I		1138	*House of Augustinian canons founded*	PRIOR DANIEL	PERIOD II
			1148	*Burial of Bishop John of Glasgow*		
	MALCOLM IV		1152	*Priory raised to abbey status*	ABBOT OSBERT	
HENRY II					RICHARD	
RICHARD I	WILLIAM I	1200			RALPH	
JOHN					HUGH	
	ALEXANDER II				PETER	
HENRY III					HENRY	
	ALEXANDER III				PHILIP	
					ROBERT DE GYSBORNE	
					NICHOLAS DE PRENDERLATHE	
EDWARD I			1285	*King Alexander III married at Jedburgh*	JOHN MOREL	
	JOHN BALIOL		1297	*English army damages abbey*		
		1300			WILLIAM DE JARUM	PERIOD III
EDWARD II	ROBERT I		1315	*Canons flee to Thornton on Humber*	ROBERT	
					JOHN	
EDWARD III	DAVID II		1346	*English forces hold Jedburgh Castle*		
					ROBERT	
RICHARD II	ROBERT II					
	ROBERT III	1400				
HENRY IV			1410	*Castle and abbey damaged by Scots*	JOHN	
HENRY V	JAMES I		1416	*Town and abbey damaged by English*		
HENRY VI	JAMES II					
					WALTER	
EDWARD IV	JAMES III		1464	*Town and abbey damaged by English*		
RICHARD III					ANDREW	PERIOD IV
HENRY VII	JAMES IV	1500			ROBERT	
					JOHN HALL	
HENRY VIII	JAMES V		1523	*Town and abbey damaged by English*	THOMAS CRANSTON	
					ROBERT	
			1544/5	*Town and abbey burnt by English*	ROBERT BLACKADDER	
EDWARD VI	MARY		1548	*French troops occupy Jedburgh*	HENRY	
MARY I					JOHN HOME	
ELIZABETH I	JAMES VI				ANDREW HOME	
		1600				
JAMES I and VI			1606	*Abbey lands combined with those of Coldingham Priory and erected into a temporal lordship*		PERIOD V
CHARLES I						
CHARLES II			1668	*New church built in abbey nave and first manse*		
			71	*built on abbey West range*		
VICTORIA			1875	*New parish church built*		

Table 1 Historical table showing the main events in the life of the abbey.

(Anderson 1899, no 267). Access to the church from the main area of the town was probably through the kirkyard – along the 'Kirkstilegait', according to a charter of 1539 (*ibid*, no 267) – to a door on the N side of the nave.

The graveyard to the N of the abbey church is bounded on the NE by The Rampart. If a 16th-century date is accepted for this earthwork (**6** below), then it is likely that Abbey Place developed as a thoroughfare after its construction and that the medieval graveyard was defined on the E by Deans Close. Ainslie's survey shows the properties to the N of Abbey Close and to the W of Deans Close as having no back properties, suggesting that they were an infill along the N boundary of the graveyard. This was probably the medieval lay cemetery, the monastic burial ground being to the E and SE of the abbey church in the area of Murray's Green (Simpson & Stevenson 1981, 19).

Deans Close may have provided public access to the abbey's industrial buildings, including mills and a building identified as a malt barn, the remains of which lie beneath the public hall in Deans Close (*ibid*, 31). The properties to the S of Canongate and to the E of Deans Close are shown on Ainslie's plan as a very regular block, in contrast to the sinuating property lines of the Castlegate. These may reflect a separate medieval development laid out by the abbey although its chronological relationship to the planned burgh is unknown.

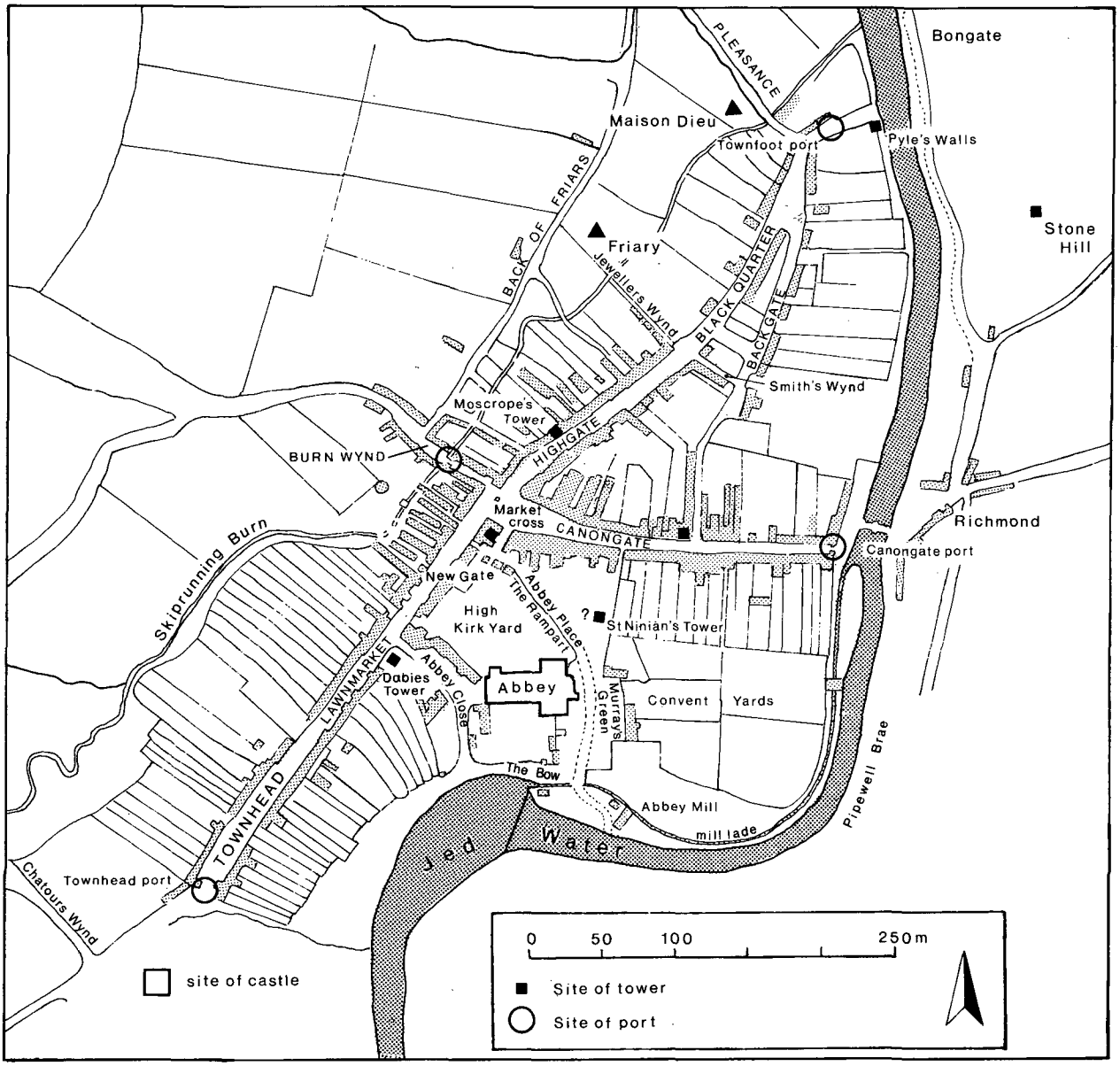
With the exception of the Canongate properties, the area to the E of Deans Close was known during the 18th century as Convent Gardens, or Ladies Yards (illus 6), and was used for orchards and other horticultural purposes until the late 19th century. These properties are described as part of the abbey lands in a charter of 1588 (SRO.CH6/1 f86v), confirming similar usage during the medieval period, and some of the land divisions shown by Ainslie may date from that time.

PORTS AND TOWERS

There is no record of the abbey's precinct walls although there was probably some form of physical boundary between the monastic lands and those of the burgh. There were towers at several points along the abbey boundary (illus 6), three of them defending gates into the precinct. Dabie's Tower, demolished in the mid-17th century, stood at the junction of Abbey Close and Castlegate. Another was sited on the W side of Kirk Wynd, near the junction of Canongate and the Lawnmarket (later to be part of Castlegate) and now within the area of the Market Place. St Ninian's Tower stood at an unlocated point in Dean's Close and, being on abbey land, it probably defended a gate (Simpson & Stevenson 1981, 26). A charter of 1551 (SRO.CH6/1 f32v) describes St. Ninian's Tower as the residence of the chaplain of the altar of St. Ninian's which was in the nave of the abbey – thus confirming that the tower was part of the pre-Reformation abbey properties.

Entry into the burgh was controlled by four ports, situated at the ends of the town's main lines of axis and serving the dual purpose of defence and the regulation of trade by the collection of tolls. A watercolour, painted from a pencil sketch by Thomas Girton in 1800, shows an apparently medieval crenellated wall with a string course extending from the N side of Castlegate. This wall and a corresponding one on the opposite side of the street are indicated on Wilson's 1762 'Plan of the Castle Wood Field of Jedburgh and Castle Hill' (Simpson & Stevenson 1981, 26). Their late survival was probably linked to their use as the Townhead Toll, the building to the S of the gate being the tollkeeper's cottage. This and another two ports are depicted by Ainslie as restrictions of the streets. Other known ports were at the E end of Canongate and at a point where Burn Wynd (now Exchange Street) crossed the Skiprunning Burn. There was evidently another at an unknown location towards the N end of the town (*ibid*, 25).

The ports were complemented by a number of towers (illus 6) whose situations suggest that they defended the burgh rather than the residences of private individuals. One, at 30 Canongate, supervised entry into the town from a back lane (now Queen Street); another, known as Moscrope's Tower, may have controlled the entrance into the market area to the N of the market cross; while from Pyle's Walls watch was kept on the ford that led to Bongate (Simpson & Stevenson 1981, 27).



Illus 6
The abbey and its environs in the late 18th century.

CONCLUSION

The abbey complex was defined by Castlegate, Canongate and the sweep of the Jed Water and protected by a series of defensive towers. The cruciform plan of the burgh, based on Castlegate/High Street and Burn Wynd/Canongate, represents the integration of a primary route between a probable early ford at modern Bongate and the castle hill with the boundary of an abbey precinct defined by the river and Canongate. The monastic area covers some 35,000m^2, with the church and cloister occupying less than 25% of the available ground.

Given the presence of both an 'ancient' church on the site, probably monastic in style, together with a major royal castle close by, the chosen site of the abbey fulfilled two of the main criteria for colonisation by the Order. The Jed Water and its tributaries ensured a good water supply as well as providing defence and power, while the rising ground to the N of the river was well suited to accommodate the full range and mass of the abbey buildings.

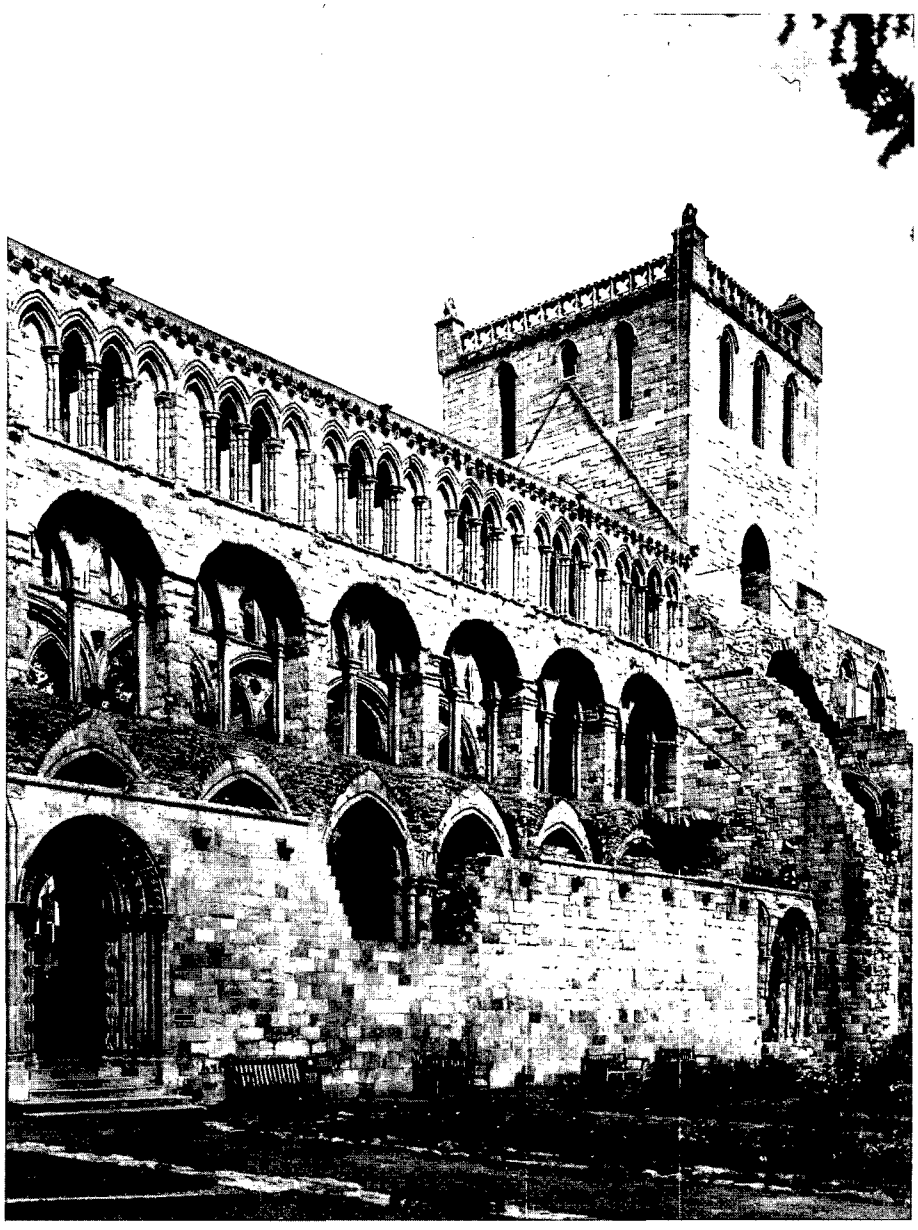
1.5 REPAIRS AND EXCAVATIONS PRIOR TO 1984

THE POST-REFORMATION CHURCH (1560–1875)

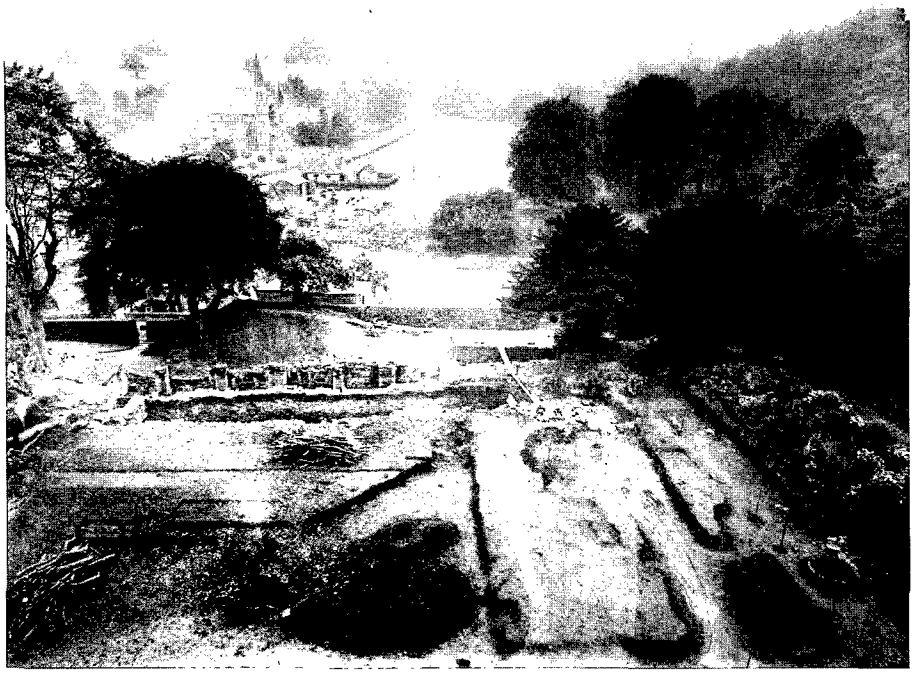
After the suppression of 1559, the abbey church continued in use as a parish kirk until a new kirk was built on the S side of the river in 1875. Immediately after the Reformation the congregation worshipped in makeshift premises below the central crossing tower, but in 1671 they transferred to the W end of the nave. The fabric of the building was repaired many times and on several occasions the Town Council had to prevent the theft of masonry from the decaying edifice. The ordeals of this period are chronicled in some detail by Watson (1894).

REPAIRS TO THE CHURCH (1875–1913)

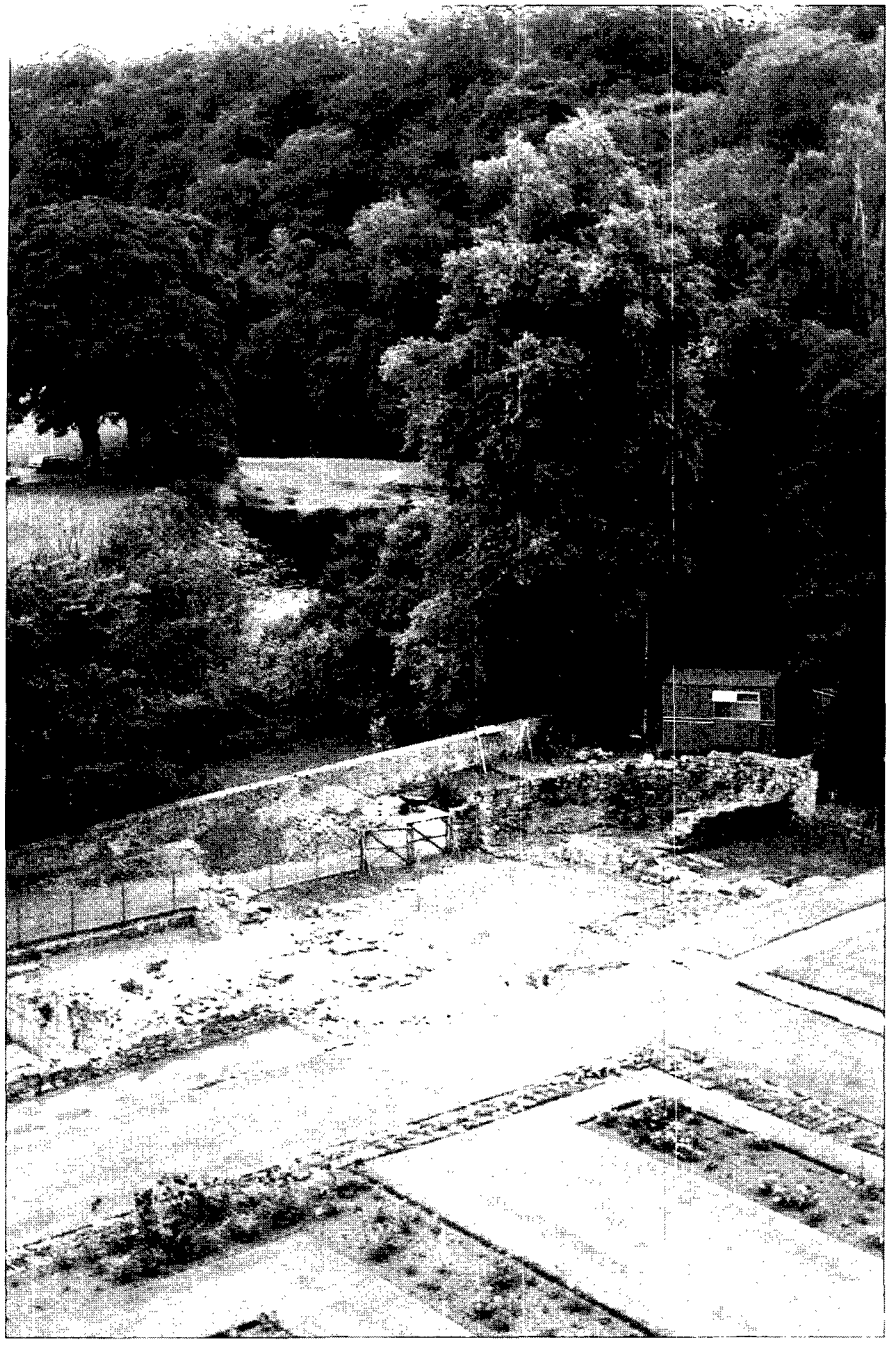
Apart from some consolidation work on the crossing tower between 1824 and 1826 (SRO 1833), little thought was given to preserving the abbey as an historical monument until 1875, when the ninth Marquis of



Ilus 7
The S side of the abbey church. Note the doorway on the left, reconstructed in 1875.



Illus 8
The 1936–37 excavations: a) the view S from the abbey during the excavations; (note the parish kirk of 1875 on the far side of the Jed Water);
b) (below left) the West range from the N; the well in the middle of the picture dates to the occupation of the manse which covered this part of the site;
c) (below right) the SW corner of the *refectory; the depth of soil covering* demolition debris indicates the extent of landscaping over the abbey ruins within the claustral area; from the W.



Illus 9
Trial trenching across the W end of The Bow in 1983.

Lothian undertook to repair and reconstruct some of the church's medieval masonry (illus 7). Lothian wanted to remove all trace of recent work and consequently had to stand the entire costs of the exercise himself (Watson 1894, 102).

Following the demolition of a belfry tower above the N wall, concrete was laid around the bases of the NE and NW piers of the crossing tower and the piers themselves were buttressed. Piers and arches were stripped of 18th-century plaster and paint although no attempt was made to renew any of the arch mouldings or capitals. Some of the pillars and most of the corbelled eaves course on the N side of the clerestorey were replaced and, for reasons of safety, a series of tie beams inserted. The wall heads above the clerestorey were capped with Caithness flags; elsewhere they were sealed with cement. The N wall of the church was partially repaired, the ruined W end of the S wall (demolished in the 1670s for the kirk) was almost completely rebuilt and a reconstructed Romanesque-style doorway inserted into it. However, the alignment of the West cloister walk indicates that the position of the doorway differs somewhat from that of the 12th-century original.

According to Watson (1894, 133): 'No cost was spared to improve the amenity of the Abbey . . .' and consequently the 18th-century manse and several other houses near the church were demolished during this programme of work.

THE ABBEY IN STATE CARE (1913–)

In 1913 the abbey was entrusted into state care, being maintained by HM Office of Works (now Historic Scotland). The first task was to repair the NE and NW piers of the crossing tower, by consolidating the masonry and replacing the cores of soft, crumbly, 12th-century concrete with modern cement concrete. Exposure of the pier foundations revealed numerous human bones, but details of these findings were not recorded (SO 1959). Between 1919 and 1921 several artefacts (mostly post-Reformation coins) were recovered from the 'south end of the cloister' (SRO 1938) (perhaps within or adjacent to the refectory) but whether they were stray finds or unearthed during excavation work is not clear.

In 1936–37 most of the area bounded by the church, Abbey Close, The Bow and Abbey Place was 'excavated' and the foundations, and occasionally upstanding walls, of most of the claustral ranges exposed. No written account of these investigations has been found although the excavation drawings and numerous photographs (illus 8a, b, c) formed the basis of the Royal Commission's interpretation of the claustral ranges (RCAHMS 1956, 194–209). The finds from the excavation were listed on file (SRO MW/1/1088). They comprised mainly post-Reformation coins although a few medieval coins, pottery sherds and other artefacts were also recorded.

Early in World War II the Home Guard commissioned a blacker bombard to be trained upon the road bridge to the SE of the abbey. The mortar was placed within the abbey precinct, '. . . practically under the trees, in the flower bed on the Western range . . .' (SRO 1942) – presumably in the NW corner of the cloister, high enough to command a view of the bridge. The mortar's bedding trench comprised a circular hole, 2.44m (8') in diameter and 1.07m (3' 6") deep, within which was found a 'foundation stone', assumed to be part of the 18th-century manse and evidently considered unworthy of detailed recording before it was removed. The foundation trench for the gun was not located in 1984.

In 1957 a partial re-examination of The Royal Commission's so-called infirmary (RCAHMS 1956, 205) was carried out, probably as part of an investigation into the building's drainage, which continued to be inadequate until the 1984 excavation.

The programme of excavation, begun in 1936, had been intended also to include the area between the 'infirmary' and the Jed Water, thereby removing the road known as The Bow, but work was halted by the outbreak of World War II. There were several proposals to resume the scheme once hostilities ceased but the ground in question did not become available for excavation until 1983, when several exploratory trenches were opened in order to assess the archaeological potential of the abbey's S limits (illus 9) (Lewis 1984, 259). The main excavation work then followed in 1984.