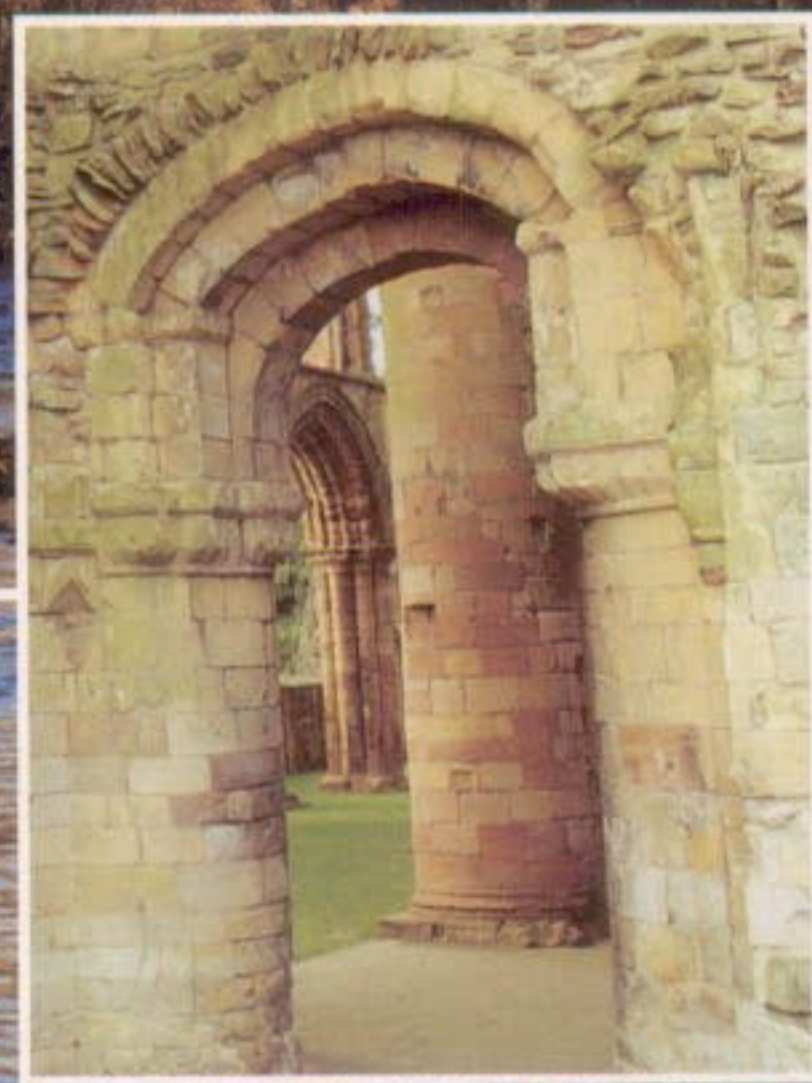


JOHN LEWIS & GORDON EWART

# JEDBURGH ABBNEY

*the archaeology and architecture*



*of a border abbey*

SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF SCOTLAND MONOGRAPH SERIES NUMBER

10



---

**JEDBURGH ABBEY**

---

---

JOHN H LEWIS & GORDON J EWART

---

Cover illustration shows Jedburgh Abbey from the S with insets (left) the walrus ivory comb showing a knight fighting with a dragon and (right) detail of the N side of the choir of the Abbey church.



# JEDBURGH ABBEY

---

THE ARCHAEOLOGY AND ARCHITECTURE  
OF A BORDER ABBEY

---



JOHN H LEWIS & GORDON J EWART

with

RICHARD FAWCETT & DENNIS GALLAGHER

A FOREWORD BY CHRIS TABRAHAM

and contributions by

DAVID H CALDWELL, THEA GABRA-SANDERS, C PAMELA GRAVES,  
RICHARD GROVE, GEORGE HAGGARTY, JOHN HIGGITT,  
NICHOLAS McQ HOLMES, ROBIN MURDOCH, CLARE THOMAS  
& ROBERT WILL

ILLUSTRATION

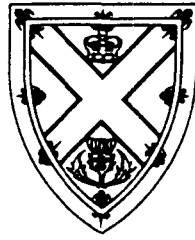
DENNIS GALLAGHER, PAMELA GRAVES, ANGELA TOWNSEND  
& MARION O'NEIL

---

SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF SCOTLAND  
EDINBURGH 1995

---

MONOGRAPH SERIES NUMBER 10



SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES  
OF SCOTLAND

MONOGRAPH SERIES

EDITOR ♦ ALEXANDRA SHEPHERD

This volume is published with the aid of a generous grant from



British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.

A catalogue record for this book is available  
from the British Library.

ISBN 0 903903 10 5

Produced by Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, Stroud, Glos

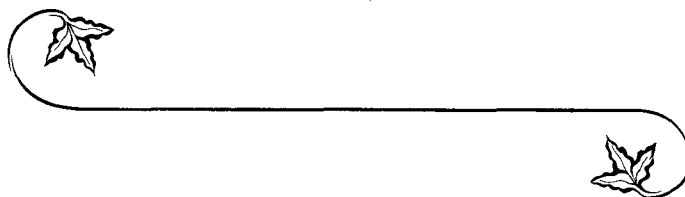
---

## CONTENTS

---

Acknowledgements	vii
List of illustrations	ix
List of tables	xiii
Foreword • Chris Tabraham	xv
 1 Introduction	 1
1.1 Historical background	1
1.2 Location	4
1.3 Physiography	4
1.4 The abbey within the town	7
1.5 Repairs and excavations prior to 1984	12
 2 The 1984 excavations	 16
2.1 Period I: pre-Augustinian activity	16
2.2 Period II: the building of the abbey ( <i>c</i> 1138– <i>c</i> 1300)	19
2.3 Period III: remodelling and rebuilding ( <i>c</i> 1300– <i>c</i> 1480)	52
2.4 Period IV: later repairs and alterations ( <i>c</i> 1480–1559)	68
2.5 Period V: post-Reformation activity (1559–1875)	72
 3 Excavation within the abbey church 1990	 81
 4 The small finds	 82
4.1 Bone and ivory • David H Caldwell	82
The comb, pendant and buckle • John Higgitt	83
4.2 Copper-alloy • David H Caldwell	84
Lace tag discussion • Thea Gabra-Sanders	88
4.3 Lead • David H Caldwell	89
4.4 Iron • David H Caldwell	91
4.5 Coins, tokens and jettons • Nicholas McQ Holmes	93
4.6 Ceramic material • George Haggarty & Robert Will	98
4.7 Stone sculpture • Dennis Gallagher	105
4.8 Window glass • C Pamela Graves	110
4.9 Vessel glass • Robin Murdoch	113
4.10 Leather • Clare Thomas	114
4.11 Textiles • Thea Gabra-Sanders	114
4.12 Clay tobacco pipes • Dennis Gallagher	115
 5 The human burials • Richard Grove	 117
5.1 Monastic burials	118
5.2 Non-monastic burial	128
5.3 Post-monastic burials	128
 6 Discussion of the excavation results	 131
6.1 Pre-Augustinian activity (Period I)	131
6.2 The major building phase of the abbey from 1138 to the beginning of the 14th century (Period II)	132
6.3 Remodelling and rebuilding in the 14th and 15th centuries (Period III)	139
6.4 Later repairs and alterations from the late 15th to the mid-16th centuries (Period IV)	145

6.5	The development of the East range	148
6.6	The abbey fortified?	150
6.7	Post-Reformation activity (Period V)	152
6.8	In conclusion	154
7	The layout of the abbey • Dennis Gallagher	155
7.1	The East end of the church	155
7.2	The nave	155
7.3	The claustral buildings	157
7.4	The size of the cloister	158
8	The architectural development of the abbey church • Richard Fawcett	159
8.1	The construction of the eastern limb and transepts	159
8.2	The remodelling of the presbytery	166
8.3	The addition of the nave	167
8.4	The clerestoreys of the nave and choir	170
8.5	The reconstruction of the North transept	171
8.6	Operations in the area of the crossing and South transept	172
8.7	The final medieval building operations	174
	References	175
	Index	181



---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

The authors would like to express their thanks to the numerous people whose contributions, both in terms of fieldwork and for specialist input, have led to the compilation of this volume. The excavation staff were: John Cannell, Eoin Cox, Richard Grove, Alison Haggarty, David Pollock, David Reed and David Stewart. We would also like to thank the following for their assistance during the excavations: John Godbert, Garrett O'Brien, Alan Radley, David Stalker, Jane Todd, Jonathon Triscott and Jonathon Wordsworth. Those who contributed to the final report as specialists were: Dr David Caldwell, Dr Richard Fawcett, Thea Gabra-Sanders, Dennis Gallagher, Pamela Graves, Richard Grove, George Haggarty, Nicholas Holmes, Robin Murdoch, Clare Thomas and Robert Will. Information concerning the animal bone assemblage, environmental samples and soils was supplied by Lin Barnettson, Dr Brian Moffatt and Dr Robert Shiel respectively. We are also grateful for the advice given to us during the post-excavation process from the following: Dr Michael Baillie, the late Geoffrey Collins, John Higgitt, Roderick McCullagh, Nigel Ruckley and Richard Welander.

The line drawings are the work of Dennis Gallagher. The pottery was drawn by Angela Townsend, the window glass by Pamela Graves and the bone and metal artefacts by Marion O'Neil. All photographs reproduced are Crown copyright.

Finally, the authors wish to express their gratitude to Chris Tabraham for reading several drafts of this paper, for guiding the project from its inception and for his enthusiastic support throughout.

The responsibility for any factual or interpretative errors that remain within this volume rest on the authors' shoulders.

## DISPOSAL OF FINDS AND DOCUMENTS

The site records and the full specialist reports are deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland. The full finds assemblage is in the care of the National Museums of Scotland; the ditch assemblage is on long term loan to Historic Scotland from the Trustees of the National Museums and is on display at Jedburgh Abbey.

John H Lewis & Gordon J Ewart





---

## ILLUSTRATIONS

---

1	Jedburgh Abbey, from the S.	1
2	The West front of the abbey church.	2
3	Location of the abbey and town of Jedburgh.	5
4	Aerial view of the abbey before the 1984 excavation.	6
5	Jedburgh in its topographical context.	7
6	The abbey and its environs in the late 18th century.	11
7	The S side of the abbey church.	12
8	The 1936–37 excavations: a) the view S from the abbey during the excavations; b) the West range; c) the SW corner of the refectory.	13
9	Trial trenching across the W end of The Bow in 1983.	14
10	Plan of the area of excavation in 1984 and 1990.	17
11	View of the excavation of the East range and adjacent area.	18
12	Ditch 928 and adjacent features: a) plan; b) the N terminal of the ditch; c) sections across the ditch.	20
13	Plan of Timber Structures 1 and 2.	21
14	a) Sections through deposits overlying Timber Structure 1; b) section across midden deposits to the S of revetted bank 487.	22
15	The East cloister alley: a) plan; b) view of the alley, showing some of the graves partly exposed.	27
16	The W side of the cloister.	28
17	Drain and the foundations of the walkway in the South cloister alley.	29
18	Plan of Rooms 1 and 2.	30
19	Room 2.	31
20	Plan of the Period II Chapter house.	32
21	Plan of Rooms 4 and 5.	33
22	The probable footings of the day stair in Room 4.	34
23	Room 5.	34
24	Plan of the surviving elements at the S end of the Period II East range.	35
25	The S end of the East range.	36
26	The NE corner of Room 6.	36
27	Plan and section of Period II terracing at the SW corner of the site with location of timber structures and Structure 8.	38
28	Structure 8 and associated drains.	40
29	Isometric drawing of Structures 8 and 9.	41
30	The great S wall of Structures 8 and 13.	42
31	Elevation and plan of the lower courses of the S walls of Structures 8 and 13.	43
32	Detail of cross member 648.	44
33	The great S wall of Structures 8 and 13 with garderobe outlets and timber raft.	45
34	Structure 8.	46
35	Section across pier base 2017.	46
36	The pend leading into Structure 13.	47
37	The W drain.	48
38	Plans of the W drain, phases 1 and 2.	49
39	Elevation of the outlet for the phase 2 W drain.	49
40	The phase 2 W drain.	49
41	Plan of Structures 9 and 10.	50
42	The stepped S wall of Structure 9.	51
43	Outlet of drain 386.	52
44	Schematic plan of the primary and secondary cloisters.	53
45	a) The W side of the cloister during the 1936–37 excavation; b) the West cloister alley in 1984.	54

46	The industrial complex: a) plan; b) view with lead-lined trough at centre; c) close-up of lead-lined trough.	56
47	Plan of the Chapter house in Periods III and IV.	57
48	The E end of the Period III Chapter house.	57
49	Plan of the S end of the East range and adjacent structures of Period III.	58
50	Room 6: Period III cross wall.	59
51	Room 12.	60
52	The doorway between Rooms 6 and 12.	61
53	Plan of Room 11, showing the primary rock-cut drains.	62
54	Plan of Room 11, showing internal occupation surfaces.	62
55	Room 11.	63
56	Diagrammatic plan of Structures 8 and 13.	64
57	Isometric drawing of Structures 8, 9 and 13.	65
58	The S wall of Structure 13.	66
59	Detail of a cross member of the Period III timber raft.	66
60	The N jamb of the entrance to Structure 13.	66
61	Drain 490 and associated sump.	67
62	Lead pipe within linear cut 514.	68
63	Plan of wall 960, outside the Chapter house.	69
64	Plan of Structure 14.	71
65	Structure 13 with paved areas 409 and 502.	72
66	Buttress base 1215.	72
67	Copy of Winter's plan of the abbey, 1760.	73
68	Plan of Rooms 15 and 16.	74
69	Room 15 (Andrew Preston's house).	75
70	Room 16, the smithy, (John Preston's house).	76
71	Plan of post-monastic additions at the S end of the East range.	76
72	The surviving elements of Room 17.	77
73	Town plan of c 1775 by John Ainslie.	78
74	Profile of the post-monastic build up in the SW of the site.	79
75	Plan of the principal features excavated within the abbey church in 1990.	80
76	Base of the altar in the presbytery of the church.	81
77	Bone artefacts (scale 1:2).	82
78	The comb, buckle and pendant, retrieved from ditch 928.	83
79	a, b) Copper-alloy artefacts (scale 1:2).	85, 87
80	Lead artefacts (scale 1:2).	90
81	a, b) Iron artefacts (scale 1:2).	92, 93
82	Pottery: local coarse redwares (scale 1:3).	101
83	Pottery: local white gritty wares (scale 1:3).	103
84	Pottery: miscellaneous decorated vessels (scale 1:3).	104
85	Stone sculpture 1: cross-shaft fragment: a) face A; b) face B.	106
86	Stone sculpture 2 (face A): probable 10th-century grave slab.	107
87	Merelles board carved in stone.	109
88	Painted window glass (scale 1:2).	111
89	Chapter house burials: a) plan of stone-lined graves with capstones; b) plan of burials showing central pier base and grave covers removed.	119
90	Grave 12, overlying Grave 1.	120
91	Partially excavated graves within the Chapter house.	120
92	Group B Graves 6 and 7.	121
93	Group C Graves 10 and 11.	123
94	Plan of Period IV coffin burials in the Chapter house.	123
95	Coffin burials in the S side of the Chapter house.	124
96	Sarcophagus burials (Graves 18, 19 and 20) outside the East range.	127
97	Re-interred burials against the W face of wall 960.	127
98	Plan of possible post-Reformation burials in the N side of the Chapter house.	129
99	The layout of the abbey by the mid-13th century.	135
100	An early 19th-century engraving of the abbey viewed from the E.	137



101	The layout of the abbey in the 14th and 15th centuries.	140
102	Inchcolm Abbey: the refectory over the South cloister alley.	141
103	Arbroath Abbey: the abbot's lodging.	142
104	The layout of the abbey in the early 16th century.	145
105	The principal structural phases of the Chapter house: a) Period II b); Period III; c) Period IV.	146
106	Glenluce Abbey: the interior of the early 16th-century Chapter house.	147
107	The East range in 1987, showing the layout of the three phases of the Chapter house.	149
108	Buildings overlying the ruined East range in the early 19th century.	153
109	Gridded plan of the abbey.	156
110	Plan of the abbey church.	159
111	Wall arcading of the early and later 12th century.	161
112	The external junction of choir and presbytery on the N side at the upper level.	161
113	The external junction of choir and presbytery on the N side at the lower level.	162
114	The original bays of the choir.	163
115	The N side of the choir at gallery and clerestorey levels.	164
116	The N aisle wall of the nave where it joins the North transept.	165
117	The surviving jamb and arch springing of the arch into the apsidal chapel of the South transept.	166
118	Measured elevations of the choir and presbytery.	167
119	The abbey church from the NW.	169
120	Measured elevation of the nave.	171
121	The rebuilt SE crossing pier.	173

Colour section

between pages 96 and 97

- I Aerial view of the excavations in progress in 1984.
- II The SW corner of the site during excavation.
- III The East range viewed from the abbey tower.
- IV The E and S sides of the site during excavation.
- V The two sides of the comb.
- VI The other objects found in the ditch.
- VII Group A Graves 2, 3 and 4.
- VIII The nave of the church, looking E.
- IX The nave of the church, looking W.

---

## LIST OF TABLES

---

1	Historical table showing the main events in the life of the abbey.	9
2	The dimensions of the timber structures.	24-5
3	Dimensions of the elements of the timber raft.	42
4	Date distribution of vessel glass in the vicinity of the East range and the Abbot's Hall.	113



---

## FOREWORD

---

In 1913 the ruined abbey church of Jedburgh was placed in the guardianship of HM Office of Works, the first of the great Border abbeys to pass into state care.

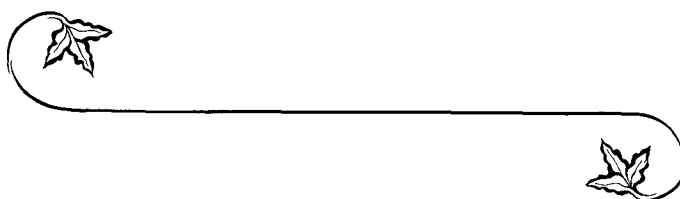
1913 did not mark the beginning of the abbey's new role as a visitor attraction. That effectively had begun in 1875, largely on the initiative and at the expense of the ninth Marquis of Lothian. In that year the old parish kirk that had stood in the nave since 1671 was replaced by a new building on the other side of the Jed Water, enabling work to begin in earnest on repairing the old abbey church.

Such was the scale of that task that thoughts did not turn to excavating and laying out the cloister buildings until the 1930s. Scarcely anything of the conventual buildings survived above ground, but between 1936 and 1937 most of the available ground on the south side of the church was 'excavated' and the exposed wall foundations laid out. No written account was made of those investigations but the drawings and photographs made by the Office of Works formed the basis of the interpretation of the claustral ranges, published by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland in 1956.

The programme of excavation, begun in 1936, had been intended to include all the land between the abbey church and the Jed Water to the south, but war intervened and the scheme was abandoned. In 1983 the plan was resurrected and exploratory excavations were carried out in the area of The Bow. The main excavation followed in 1984. In 1986 the completed scheme, including a new visitor centre, was formally opened by Michael Ancram, the Scottish Office minister responsible for Ancient Monuments and, coincidentally, a descendant of the ninth Marquis of Lothian.

This volume is a record of the archaeological discoveries made by John Lewis and Gordon Ewart and their team in 1984 and financed by the successor to the old Office of Works, the Scottish Development Department (Ancient Monuments). Its own successor, Historic Scotland, has financed a grant towards the publication of this volume. In addition to the record of the excavations, the volume includes some thoughts on the lay-out of the abbey complex by Dennis Gallagher and a re-assessment by Richard Fawcett, Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments, of the architecture of the great abbey church.

Chris Tabraham  
Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments





SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES OF SCOTLAND MONOGRAPH SERIES



Editor ALEXANDRA SHEPHERD

- |   |   |                    |
|---|---|--------------------|
| 1 | CL Curle <i>Pictish and Norse finds from the Brough of Birsay 1934-74.</i>                                      | ISBN 0 903903 01 6 |
| 2 | JC Murray (ed) <i>Excavations in the medieval burgh of Aberdeen 1972-81.</i>                                    | ISBN 0 903903 02 4 |
| 3 | H Fairhurst <i>Excavations at Crosskirk Broch, Caithness.</i>   | ISBN 0 903903 03 2 |
| 4 | JR Hunter <i>Rescue excavations on the Brough of Birsay 1974-82.</i>  | ISBN 0 903903 04 0 |
| 5 | P Holdsworth (ed) <i>Excavations in the medieval burgh of Perth 1979-1981.</i>                                  | ISBN 0 903903 05 9 |
| 6 | JA Stones (ed) <i>Three Scottish Carmelite friaries: excavations at Aberdeen, Linlithgow and Perth 1980-86.</i> | ISBN 0 903903 06 7 |
| 7 | C Wickham-Jones <i>Rhum: Mesolithic and later sites at Kinloch. Excavations 1984-86.</i>                        | ISBN 0 903903 07 5 |
| 8 | R Bradley <i>Altering the earth. The origins of monuments in Britain and Continental Europe.</i>                | ISBN 0 903903 08 3 |
| 9 | B Ballin Smith (ed) <i>Howe: four millennia of Orkney prehistory.</i>   | ISBN 0 903903 09 1 |

This volume is published with the aid of a grant from



ISBN 0 903903 10 5 ISSN 0263-3191