ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS ON THE SITE OF CHERTSEY ABBEY

by

ROB POULTON
with a major contribution by
the late Group Captain G Knocker

and additional contributions by
J Davinton, G Done, E Eames, J Gower and P Jones

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The photograph on the front cover shows excavations in progress in the lady chapel in 1861. The drawing on the back cover is of a Chertsey tile roundel showing Duke Morgan(?)

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Contents

In Print

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF FIGURES</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF PLATES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Origins and development of the Abbey  
The dissolution and after  
Antiquaries and excavations

CHAPTER 2 THE 1954 EXCAVATIONS

Introduction
Illustrative material
Written material
Artefactual material
Preparation and presentation of the report
The pre-conquest Abbey
The Norman and later church
  The Nave
  North transept
  South transept
  Lady chapel
  Presbytery and ambulatory
  East end of the church
  The walls
  Doors and windows
  Floors
Conclusions
The Norman and later cloister
  The chapter house and adjacent rooms
  Cloister garth and alleys
  Frater range
  Dorter range
  Lesser cloister
Search for Chertsey tile kiln(s)
The burials
  Distribution
  Form and date
Detailed descriptions
The finds
  The decorated floor tiles by E Eames
  The pottery by P Jones
Summary of other finds
Trench summaries

CHAPTER 3 THE 1984-5 EXCAVATIONS

Introduction
The excavation
  Phase 1: Saxo-Norman and earlier
  Phase 2: 12th/13th century
  Phase 3: 13th/14th century
  Phase 4: 19th/20th century
The finds
  The pottery by P Jones
Pottery from the 1984-5 excavation
Stratified pottery from the 1954 excavations
Some unstratified pottery from the 1954 excavations
The building stone
The animal bone by G Done
Conclusions

CHAPTER 4  THE 1983 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY
by Rob Poulton & Joanne Davinton
Area of monastic church and cloister
Area of main entrance
Area of fish ponds

CHAPTER 5  CONCLUSIONS
Future work

BIBLIOGRAPHY

On Microfiche

CHAPTER 1  INTRODUCTION
Catalogue of materials in the Surrey Archaeological Society's research collections relating to the 19th century excavations at Chertsey Abbey

CHAPTER 2  THE 1954 EXCAVATIONS  by G M Knocker & Rob Poulton
G M Knocker's manuscript report
Nave, west end
Nave, north aisle and arcade
Nave, south aisle and arcade
South transept
Lady chapel
East end (12th century)
East end (13/14th century)
North transept and apse
The cloister
Centre of presbytery
The claustral buildings
The search for a tile kiln
Summary of results
Floor levels
Notes
Details of floor levels (table 1)
The finds
Classified list of floor tile designs and the current location of the tiles (table 2) by E Eames
The Roman tile by Rob Poulton & J L Gower
The metalwork
Copper alloy
Iron
Lead
Window glass and lead cames
The vessel glass
Stone
Whetstones
Mouldings etc

CHAPTER 3  THE 1984 EXCAVATIONS
Context descriptions
The finds
The Roman tile by J L Gower
Medieval roof tile by J L Gower
The animal bone by G Done
**List of Figures**

The figure drawings are the work of the drawing office, Planning Department, Surrey County Council, unless otherwise indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | Location of excavations at Chertsey  
*Planning Dept/Rob Poulton* |
| 2 | Plan of excavations in the area of the conventual buildings  
*Rob Poulton* |
| 3 | Key to symbols used in the section drawings  
Facing page 11 |
| 4 | a) Section along trench XIX across the chords of the north and central presbytery apses  
Facing page 11 |
| 5 | Section along trench L in the north aisle of the nave |
| 6 | Section along trench XLIX in the north aisle of the nave |
| 7 | Section along trench LI in the south aisle of the nave |
| 8 | Section along trench LVI in the south aisle of the nave |
| 9 | Section along trench XXXIV on the east side of the north transept |
| 10 | Section along trenches XXXIVA and XXXIX in the area of the north transept apse |
| 11 | Section along trenches II and III, through the east wall of the south transept |
| 12 | Section along trench VIII, at the junction of the presbytery and the south transept apse |
| 13 | Section along trench V, through the south wall of the presbytery |
| 14 | Section along trench I, through the south wall of the lady chapel |
| 15 | Section through the wall bench in the north-west corner of the lady chapel |
| 16 | Section along trench LXI in the centre of the west end of the presbytery |
| 17 | a) Section along trenches III, XIJA and XVI, through the chord of the south aisle apse  
26 |
| 18 | b) Section along trench XVI, through the centre of the south aisle apse |
| 19 | Elevation in the area of trench XII, showing the relationship between the walls of the lady chapel, south aisle apse and reconstructed east end of the church  
27 |
| 20 | a) Section along trench XXV (north side), through the centre of the east end of the church  
27 |
| 21 | b) Section of trench XXV (west side)  
27 |
| 22 | c) Partial section of trench XXV (south side)  
27 |
| 23 | Section along trench XXXII, through the eastern cloister alley and west wall of the chapter house  
32 |
| 24 | Elevation of a blocked entrance between the dorter and frater ranges in trench XLV  
35 |
| 25 | Section along trench XLV on the east side of the frater range  
35 |
| 26 | Section along trenches XLII and XLV on the east side of the frater range |
| 27 | Section along trench LXII in the dorter range |
| 28 | Section along trench LX, through the west wall of the dorter range |
| 29 | Plan of the 1954 excavations in the area to the south of the conventual church  
39 |
| 30 | Burials G7 and G9 in the area of the south aisle apse |
| 31 | Burials G16, G17 and G18 at the junction of the south and east cloister alleys |
| 32 | Burial G19 in the area of the central eastern apse |
| 33 | Decorated tiles of groups II and III  
*British Museum* |
| 34 | Decorated tiles of group III  
*British Museum* |
| 35 | Decorated tiles of groups Iii and Iv  
*British Museum* |
| 36 | Decorated tiles of group Iv  
*British Museum* |
| 37 | Decorated tiles of group Iv  
*British Museum* |
| 38 | Decorated tiles of groups Iv and Ivii  
*British Museum* |
| 39 | Decorated tiles of group Iviii  
*British Museum* |
| 40 | Decorated tiles of group Iviii  
*British Museum* |
| 41 | Decorated tiles of group Iviii  
*British Museum* |
| 42 | Decorated tiles of group II  
*British Museum* |
| 43 | Decorated tiles of group II  
*British Museum* |
| 44 | Small finds of copper alloy  
*Phil Jones* |
| 45 | Pierced whetstone of fine-grained metamorphic rock  
*Phil Jones* |
| 46 | Stone moulding profiles  
*Rob Poulton* |
| 47 | Location of the 1984-5 excavation and plan of the 1983 geophysical survey and earlier work in the area of the outer court  
Rob Poulton |
| 48 | Trench plan and sections of the 1984-5 excavations  
*Amanda Chadburn* |
List of Plates

The Ancient Monuments division of the Ministry of Works (now English Heritage) was responsible for the majority of the photographs. Where this is not the case the name of the photographer, artist or institution responsible is given in full on the first mention and thereafter abbreviated to initials. Drawings and watercolours reproduced as plates are from the research collection of the Surrey Archaeological Society (see M7—M10).

Frontispiece  A painting by M Shurlock of Chertsey tiles discovered in 1861  
1 The Abbey House in the 18th century  Print in the possession of Surrey Archaeological Society  
2 'A Correct Map and Survey of the Abbey-Lands...belonging to Robert Hinde Esqr'  Map in the possession of Chertsey Museum  
Surveyed in the year 1735 by Henry Brumbridge  
3 Stone coffins under excavation in the chapter house in 1855  G W Oakes  
4 Pencil drawing of 12th century relief cable work found in 1861  Randall Druce  
5 Pencil drawing of 13th century spandrel found in 1861, in the lady chapel  RD  
6 Pencil drawing of 13th century crocket found in 1861  RD  
7 Pencil drawing of 12th century corbel head found in 1861  RD  
8 Burials G16, G17 and G18, and some possible pre-Conquest walling  
9 The south face of the north wall of the nave  
10 Reconstruction work in the area of the north transept apse  
11 Angle buttress at the south-west corner of the south transept  
12 Junction of the east wall of the lady chapel and the south wall of the presbytery  
13 The north-east corner of the lady chapel in August 1861  M Shurlock  
14 The north-west corner of the lady chapel and the junction with the south transept in August 1861  MS  
15 Watercolour showing the lady chapel and south aisle apse in 1861  MS  
16 Capitals and fragments in Purbeck marble found in the lady chapel in 1861  MS  
17 Purbeck marble capital found in the lady chapel in 1861  Victoria & Albert Museum  
18 Burial G22 and the south aisle of the presbytery in 1861  MS  
19 The south wall and south aisle of the presbytery in 1861  MS  
20 The south aisle apse wall  
21 Offsets on the south aisle apse wall  
22 Watercolour showing the central apse at the east end of the church in 1861  MS  
23 North-east corner of the cloister garth  
24 South-east corner of the cloister garth  
25 Part of the frater range  
26 An entrance between the dorter and frater ranges  
27 The recess in wall 17, in the frater range
The site of the church and cloister of Chertsey Abbey was extensively excavated in 1954 and the results of this, together with some smaller subsequent investigations, are here presented and related to earlier work, especially the 19th century digging, and to the historical and early cartographic information. Very little evidence was recovered for the site of the pre-Conquest Abbey, but it is possible to reconstruct the later precinct in some detail. The Norman church had apsidal chapels to the transepts and a triple apsed east end projecting beyond the ambulatory, with the cloistral buildings to the north, nearest the Abbey River. This general arrangement was modified, mostly in the period c1250-1300 so that the apses were all squared, the site of the Chertsey tile kiln to the south of the church was covered by a cemetery, and the outer court was sited to the west of the church and cloister. It may have been in the ensuing half century that the precinct was walled and the elaborate system of moats and fishponds established. The site was used as a quarry for materials to build Henry VIII’s palace at Oatlands, near Weybridge, at the dissolution in 1537, and subsequent destruction means that very little now survives above ground.