

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS ON THE SITE OF CHERTSEY ABBEY

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

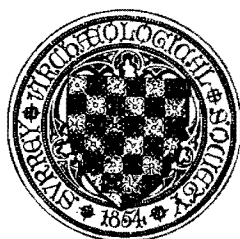
and additional contributions by
J Davinton, G Done, E Eames, J Gower and P Jones

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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	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	v
LIST OF PLATES	vi
SUMMARY	vii
PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	1
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	4
Origins and development of the Abbey	4
The dissolution and after	5
Antiquaries and excavations	6
CHAPTER 2 THE 1954 EXCAVATIONS	11
Introduction	11
Illustrative material	11
Written material	11
Artefactual material	11
Preparation and presentation of the report	12
The pre-conquest Abbey	12
The Norman and later church	16
The Nave	16
North transept	16
South transept	17
Lady chapel	17
Presbytery and ambulatory	23
East end of the church	25
The walls	30
Doors and windows	31
Floors	31
Conclusions	31
The Norman and later cloister	32
The chapter house and adjacent rooms	33
Cloister garth and alleys	33
Frater range	35
Dorter range	38
Lesser cloister	39
Search for Chertsey tile kiln(s)	39
The burials	40
Distribution	40
Form and date	40
Detailed descriptions	40
The finds	49
The decorated floor tiles by <i>E Eames</i>	49
The pottery by <i>P Jones</i>	61
Summary of other finds	61
Trench summaries	69
CHAPTER 3 THE 1984-5 EXCAVATIONS	73
Introduction	73
The excavation	73
Phase 1: Saxo-Norman and earlier	73
Phase 2: 12th/13th century	75
Phase 3: 13th/14th century	75
Phase 4: 19th/20th century	75
The finds	75
The pottery by <i>P Jones</i>	75
Pottery from the 1984-5 excavation	75

Stratified pottery from the 1954 excavations	77
Some unstratified pottery from the 1954 excavations	77
The building stone	78
The animal bone by <i>G Done</i>	78
Conclusions	78
CHAPTER 4 THE 1983 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY	79
by <i>Rob Poulton & Joanne Davinton</i>	
Area of monastic church and cloister	79
Area of main entrance	80
Area of fish ponds	80
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS	81
Future work	85
BIBLIOGRAPHY	86
On Microfiche	Fiche No
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	M2
Catalogue of materials in the Surrey Archaeological Society's research collections relating to the 19th century excavations at Chertsey Abbey	M2
CHAPTER 2 THE 1954 EXCAVATIONS by <i>G M Knocker & Rob Poulton</i>	M16
G M Knocker's manuscript report	M16
Nave, west end	M16
Nave, north aisle and arcade	M17
Nave, south aisle and arcade	M17
South transept	M18
Lady chapel	M19
East end (12th century)	M21
East end (13/14th century)	M23
North transept and apse	M27
The cloister	M28
Centre of presbytery	M31
The claustral buildings	M32
The search for a tile kiln	M34
Summary of results	M34
Floor levels	M35
Notes	M37
Details of floor levels (table 1)	M43
The finds	M45
Classified list of floor tile designs and the current location of the tiles (table 2) by <i>E Eames</i>	M45
The Roman tile by <i>Rob Poulton & J L Gower</i>	M48
The metalwork	M48
Copper alloy	M48
Iron	M52
Lead	M53
Window glass and lead cames	M54
The vessel glass	M55
Stone	M55
Whetstones	M55
Mouldings etc	M56
CHAPTER 3 THE 1984 EXCAVATIONS	M60
Context descriptions	M60
The finds	M65
The Roman tile by <i>J L Gower</i>	M65
Medieval roof tile by <i>J L Gower</i>	M65
The animal bone by <i>G Done</i>	M71

List of Figures

Page

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

1	Location of excavations at Chertsey <i>Planning Dept/Rob Poulton</i>	3
2	Plan of excavations in the area of the conventual buildings <i>Rob Poulton</i>	Pocket
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
	b) Section along trench XXII in the central presbytery apse	Facing page 11
5	Section along trench L in the north aisle of the nave	14
6	Section along trench XLIX in the north aisle of the nave	14
7	Section along trench LI in the south aisle of the nave	15
8	Section along trench LVI in the south aisle of the nave	15
9	Section along trench XXXIV on the east side of the north transept	16
10	Section along trenches XXXIVA and XXXIX in the area of the north transept apse	16
11	Section along trenches II and III, through the east wall of the south transept	17
12	Section along trench VIII, at the junction of the presbytery and the south transept apse	19
13	Section along trench V, through the south wall of the presbytery	19
14	Section along trench I, through the south wall of the lady chapel	20
15	Section through the wall bench in the north-west corner of the lady chapel	20
16	Section along trench LXI in the centre of the west end of the presbytery	24
17	a) Section along trenches III, XIA and XVI, through the chord of the south aisle apse	26
	b) Section along trench XVI, through the centre of the south aisle apse	26
18	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
19	a) Section along trench XXV (north side), through the centre of the east end of the church	27
	b) Section of trench XXV (west side)	27
	c) Partial section of trench XXV (south side)	27
20	Section along trench XXVI, mostly just beyond the east end of the church	28
21	Section along trench XXIV, through the south side of the east end of the church	28
22	Comparative plans of the Norman and later abbey church <i>Rob Poulton</i>	32
23	Section along trench XXXII, through the eastern cloister alley and west wall of the chapter house	33
24	Elevation of a blocked entrance between the dormer 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	36
27	Section along trench LXII in the dormer range	38
28	Section along trench XL, through the west wall of the dormer range	38
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	44
31	Burials G16, G17 and G18 at the junction of the south and east cloister alleys	46
32	Burial G19 in the area of the central eastern apse	47
33	Decorated tiles of groups Ii and Iii <i>British Museum</i>	50
34	Decorated tiles of group Iii <i>British Museum</i>	51
35	Decorated tiles of groups Iiii and Iiv <i>British Museum</i>	52
36	Decorated tiles of group Iv <i>British Museum</i>	53
37	Decorated tiles of group Iv <i>British Museum</i>	54
38	Decorated tiles of groups Ivi and Ivii <i>British Museum</i>	55
39	Decorated tiles of group Iviii <i>British Museum</i>	56
40	Decorated tiles of group Iviii <i>British Museum</i>	57
41	Decorated tiles of group Iviii <i>British Museum</i>	58
42	Decorated tiles of group II <i>British Museum</i>	59
43	Decorated tiles of group II <i>British Museum</i>	60
44	Small finds of copper alloy <i>Phil Jones</i>	67
45	Pierced whetstone of fine-grained metamorphic rock <i>Phil Jones</i>	68
46	Stone moulding profiles <i>Rob Poulton</i>	68
47	Location of the 1984-5 excavation and plan of the 1983 geophysical survey and earlier work in the area of the outer court <i>Rob Poulton</i>	72
48	Trench plan and sections of the 1984-5 excavations <i>Amanda Chadburn</i>	73

49	Pottery from the 1954 and 1984-5 excavations	<i>Phil Jones</i>	76
50	Areas of the 1983 geophysical survey	<i>Planning Department/Rob Poulton</i>	79
51	A reconstruction plan of the abbey as it was in the later middle ages		82
52	Plan of the coffins discovered in the chapter house in 1855 (SyAS research collections, M14/Chy/4)		M13
53	Plan of the coffins discovered in the chapter house in 1855 (from Pocock 1858, between 114 and 115)		M14
54	Plan of the 1855 excavations (from Pocock 1858, opp 107)		M15
55	Plan of the 1861 excavations (from Angell 1862)		M15

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)

	Page
Frontispiece A painting by M Shurlock of Chertsey tiles discovered in 1861	
1 The Abbey House in the 18th century <i>Print in the possession of Surrey Archaeological Society</i>	5
2 'A Correct Map and Survey of the Abbey-Lands...belonging to Robert Hinde Esqr Surveyed in the year 1735 by Henry Brumbridge' <i>Map in the possession of Chertsey Museum</i>	6
3 Stone coffins under excavation in the chapter house in 1855 <i>G W Oakes</i>	7
4 Pencil drawing of 12th century relief cable work found in 1861 <i>Randall Druce</i>	8
5 Pencil drawing of 13th century spandrel found in 1861, in the lady chapel <i>RD</i>	9
6 Pencil drawing of 13th century crocket found in 1861 <i>RD</i>	9
7 Pencil drawing of 12th century corbel head found in 1861 <i>RD</i>	10
8 Burials G16, G17 and G18, and some possible pre-Conquest walling	13
9 The south face of the north wall of the nave	13
10 Reconstruction work in the area of the north transept apse	18
11 Angle buttress at the south-west corner of the south transept	18
12 Junction of the east wall of the lady chapel and the south wall of the presbytery	21
13 The north-east corner of the lady chapel in August 1861 <i>M Shurlock</i>	21
14 The north-west corner of the lady chapel and the junction with the south transept in August 1861 <i>MS</i>	22
15 Watercolour showing the lady chapel and south aisle apse in 1861 <i>MS</i>	22
16 Capitals and fragments in Purbeck marble found in the lady chapel in 1861 <i>MS</i>	23
17 Purbeck marble capital found in the lady chapel in 1861 <i>Victoria & Albert Museum</i>	23
18 Burial G22 and the south aisle of the presbytery in 1861 <i>MS</i>	24
19 The south wall and south aisle of the presbytery in 1861 <i>MS</i>	25
20 The south aisle apse wall	29
21 Offsets on the south aisle apse wall	29
22 Watercolour showing the central apse at the east end of the church in 1861 <i>MS</i>	30
23 North-east corner of the cloister garth	34
24 South-east corner of the cloister garth	34
25 Part of the frater range	36
26 An entrance between the dorter and frater ranges	37
27 The recess in wall 17, in the frater range	37

28	Burials G2 and G4	41
29	Burial G6	41
30	Burials G5 and G6	42
31	Burial G7	43
32	Burials G7 and G9	44
33	Burials G10, G11 and G12	45
34	Headstone of G11 carved with a cross in relief	45
35	Burial G21 in a Purbeck marble coffin MS	48
36	Watercolour of a pewter chalice and paten found with burial G21 MS	48
37	X-rays of iron objects <i>English Heritage Ancient Monuments Laboratory</i>	62
38	Lead fittings of uncertain purpose	63
39	Red painted plaster moulding, perhaps from a tomb canopy of 14-16th century date	63
40	Floriated finial, perhaps from the same tomb canopy as the moulding in pl 39	63
41	12th century cloister arcade arch moulding	64
42	Bull-nosed string and two tracery fragments	64
43	12th century half-round attached shaft	65
44	12th century bowtell moulding	65
45	12th century arch fragments	66
46	Cylindrical object, perhaps part of a piscina	66
47	The precinct wall under excavation in 1984 <i>Rob Poulton</i>	74
48	The precinct wall under excavation 1984-5 <i>RP</i>	74
49	Medieval entrance, now blocked, in the precinct wall <i>Conservation & Archaeology Section, Planning Department, Surrey County Council</i>	83
50	Abbey Farm Barn <i>SCC</i>	84

Summary

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.