

Historic

# PEEBLES

the archaeological implications  
of development



Robert Gourlay  
Anne Turner

Scottish Burgh Survey  
1977

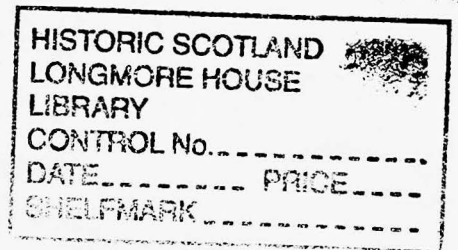
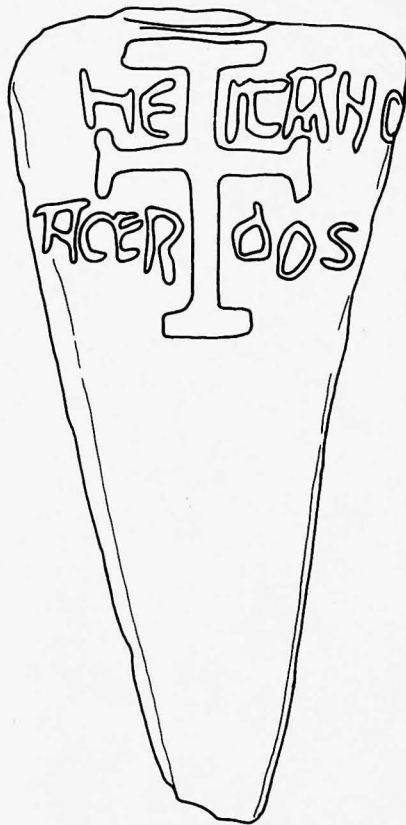
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# Historic PEEBLES

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Robert Gourlay  
Anne Turner

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1977

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## PREFACE

This report of the history and archaeology of the former burgh of Peebles is one of a series of such reports on the historic towns of Scotland. The reports have been commissioned by the Ancient Monuments Division of the Department of the Environment with a view to providing the necessary background information upon which to base a policy for urban research in the future. They are also aimed at providing local authority planning departments with the historical and archaeological information necessary to enable them to assess the archaeological implications of any planning applications.

Each report contains an historical report compiled by Anne Turner, with a short archaeological discussion and a series of illustrative plans compiled and drawn by Robert Gourlay. The reports attempt to identify those areas within the burghs which were developed at various periods of their history up to approximately 1800, and to locate within those areas sites which are of particular historical importance. Areas of nineteenth-century growth and modern suburbs have not been examined.

The survey team would like to acknowledge the assistance of Professor Leslie Alcock and Mr. Eric Talbot who supervised the project at Glasgow University; the Scottish Development Department; Borders Regional Council; Tweeddale District Council; the staff of Peebles Library; and the staff of the Archaeology Division Ordnance Survey, Edinburgh. A special mention must be made to Mr. John Dunbar of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland who read the historical draft and offered valuable comments.



# History

## INTRODUCTION

Site: Peebles lies twenty-one miles (34km) south of Edinburgh and is about fifty-four miles (86km) south-east of Glasgow. The Old Town occupies a low ridge, while further to the east the New Town nestles on a peninsula formed by the Eddleston (or Peebles) Water to the north and the River Tweed to the south. Eddleston Water runs in an almost opposite direction to the Tweed and presents the New Town of Peebles with the anomaly of being bounded on the south by a river running due east and the north by a stream running due west (NSA, 1845, iii, 16).

Place Name: Spelled variously Pobles c.1124 and Pebles c.1126, the place name means 'shiels'. Nicolaisen argues that the basic name is the Welsh word pebyll 'tent pavilion' to which an English plural 's' has been added, presumably because the Welsh original was plural. The form 'Pobles' might show Gaelic influence (compare with the Gaelic pobull) (Nicolaisen, et al., 1970, 149).

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Burgh Status: Peebles burghal origins date to the reign of David I. King William I granted the monks of Kelso Abbey the chapel of Peebles Castle with a carucate of land and with the rent of ten shillings from the firma burgi of Peebles which his grandfather, David I, had assigned to the chapel for the perpetual celebration of mass for the soul of Earl Henry (Barrow, 1960, 24). William also confirmed to the monks their toft in Peebles from David and Malcolm IV (Barrow, 1971, 167). The burgh was represented in the General Council of 1357 and in Parliament from 1468 (Pryde, 1965, 6).

Medieval: Peebles was an early royal centre. Two charters of David I were issued at Peebles (Lawrie, 1905, 55, 137) as were three undated charters of Malcolm IV (Barrow, 1960, 194, 243, 249). William the Lion also issued two charters from Peebles. It has been suggested that Earl Henry, the son of David I, died at Peebles but this has not been substantiated (Barrow, 1960, 24).

Situated as it was on the interior verge of the Border, Peebles was much exposed to the turbulent raids of 'Border reivers' and those of the English. King Edward I was

in Peebles in 1301 and 1304. In 1306 Edward assigned the mill of Peebles and other pertinents to Aymer de Valence, his warder in Scotland (Buchan, 1925, ii, 8). Peebles was burned by Sir Robert Umphraville 'on their market daye' in 1465 (Renwick, 1903, 40) and an entry in the Exchequer Rolls relates that £7 3s 9d was allowed to the bailies on account of the burning of the town by the English (ER, iii, 636). Peebles was again burned by the English in 1549.

Early Modern: Peebles participated in the first national stent of 1535. In that year both Peebles and Lauder were taxed at a rate of £22 10s (RCRB, i, 515). An embassy to the Emperor in the 1550s resulted in the burgh paying twenty-four crowns to help cover costs as opposed to sixteen crowns for Lauder (RCRB, i, 520). Edinburgh in that instance paid a total of 600 crowns (RCRB, i, 519). An embassy sent to the Danish court in 1563 resulted in Peebles and Lauder being stented at the identical rate of £13 11s (RCRB, i, 530).

The Reformation brought a change in the moral climate of the burgh. The Town Council working in tandem with the Kirk Session, became increasingly vigilant in the policing of the morals and habits of Peebles residents. On 20th December, 1560 'adulteroris and fornicatouris' were ordered to 'mary or ellis absteme in tymes cuming' and an 'adulterare' was to appear before the congregation to ask forgiveness for all offences done by him against his lawful wife (Chambers, 1872, 269). Football was also frowned on for the bailies ordained that 'thair be na playing at the fute ball on the Hie Gate in times cuming' under the pain of a fine and the 'cutting of the ball' (Chambers, 1872, 324). The Town Council also supervised church attendance and at the end of the seventeenth century a merchant was found guilty of not attending the kirk and was fined twelve pounds Scots. That merchant was ordered to 'ly in prison' while the fine was being paid (Chambers, 1872, 399).

Peebles suffered a slight decline economically at the end of the seventeenth century. Her position on the stent rolls had suffered somewhat, for in 1683 she was taxed at a rate of twelve shillings, a figure which sank to eleven shillings in 1692 (RCRB, iv, 40, 161). In 1692 she reported a common good of £1722 6s and denied having any foreign or inland trade (RCRB, iv, 637). Hard hit by the failure of the Darien scheme, Peebles sent commissioners to Edinburgh in 1699 to urge that all burghs of barony and regality be forced to pay their fair share of the tax burden. This commission which attested to Peebles' decline in trade, was specifically concerned with 'unfree burghs' in her neighbourhood, including Skirling and West Linton which maintained prosperous markets (Buchan, 1925, ii, 70).

Eighteenth Century: The early eighteenth century was a 'tale of poverty and hard times' (Buchan, 1925, ii, 71). The Town Council, whose finances were in a bad state, was forced to sell off some of the town's common lands to pay debts. In 1700 ten roods of land called the Walkers Land was sold for £860 which the council pointed out was 'profitable to the town, it having paid only twenty-nine pounds of yeirly rent' (Buchan, 1925, ii, 71). The land known as the Gytes was repurchased in 1727 by the magistrates at a loss of £40 to the council (Buchan, 1925, ii, 71). Smuggling was viewed as 'a destructive and pernicious trade'. In 1744 the Town Council issued a strongly worded resolution which spoke of the damage smuggling was causing to the town's trade, manufactures, fishing and grain prices. It resolved to 'detect, disclose and lay open all smuggling or running of French brandy and tea' (Buchan, 1925, ii, 86). Her position on the stent rolls declined slightly. In 1705 and 1714 Peebles paid a tax of nine shillings, a figure which dropped to eight shillings in 1730 and 1737 (RCRB, iv, 371; 140, 507, 631).

An overall population rise was reported for the second half of the eighteenth century. The population of the town in the mid-1770s was put at 1188 (Buchan, 1925, ii, 104) while in 1791 the combined population of Old and New Towns was estimated to be 1480 (Sinclair, 1794, xii, 5). The reporter in the Statistical Account also noted that woollen, linen and cotton weavers were 'making greater exertions' and larger houses were being built for them, thus indicating a rise in manufactures in this period (Sinclair, 1794, xii, 7).

### BURGH MORPHOLOGY

Street Layout: Modern Peebles evidently still preserves the basic form of the medieval town. The first pre-David I establishment of a 'town' took place on the northern side of the Eddleston Water. The Old Town was associated with the parish church of St. Andrews and a later dedication, the Cross Kirk. The main street, designated 'Old Town' on Armstrong's plan, was known as the 'Kingis streit stekhand to the Neidpath Castle' in the fifteenth century (Renwick, 1912, 338). This main street ran from the church of St. Andrews to the Eddleston Water, where the two bridges crossed the stream. The eastmost part of that street has come to be known as Biggies Knowe (a corruption of Bridge House Knowe) and leads to the higher of the two bridges which is an older foundation than the one which leads to the West Port (RCAHM, 1967, 277). A street which provided another access to the parish church of St. Andrews was formerly known as 'Lud Gate' or 'Leid Gate', a corruption of 'Lych Gate' which signified the way dead were brought to the church.

Today it is called Young Street and leads off the main street of the Old Town and its former market place (Alauddin, 1968, 148).

Across the Eddleston Water from Old Town was the King's burgh of Peebles, or what has been called the New Town of Peebles. From the West Port, which was formerly situated under the Castlehill, a single market street, High Street, ran eastwards towards the former site of the market cross which then doglegged slightly into Crocegait (later Eastgate). Northgate provided an exit from the town and was the main route to Edinburgh. Briggait (Bridgegate) was a short street which descended to meet the older of the two bridges over Eddleston Water. All these streets were in existence by the fifteenth century when the records of the burgh become available to us (RCAHM, 1967, 277).

The west end of the High Street was considerably higher in former times than it is now. There was a steep drop on both sides, one which led to a bridge over Eddleston Water and another which lead down Port Brae providing access to both the Green and the bridge over the River Tweed (Buchan, 1925, ii, 93). In 1846 the High Street was lowered two to three feet (0.61m to 0.91m) throughout its length and drains were built, while 'unsightly projecting buildings and stairs were removed' (Chambers, 1856, 57). In the same campaign the sidewalks were cleaned and laid with pavement.

Renwick surmised that Briggait and Eastgate occupied a line of a thoroughfare which traversed the Tweed Valley from the east to the west (1903 (b), 19). In 1566 there is a reference to a piece of ground described as lying in the Briggait foot 'lying betuix Robert Moro house on the eist part and the bairnkyn callit the werk on the north part'. A barmkyn was occasionally constructed as a defensive work at the outskirts of a town. Subsequent to the construction of a bridge (at an as yet unknown date) leading from the Old Town to the West Port the Briggait would no longer have been the chief entrance to the New Town. The barmkyn was probably then dismantled to leave room for more building space (Renwick, 1903 (b), 20). Eastgate was an important exit from the town providing access to the hospital of St. Leonard near Horsburgh.

Peebles, in addition to the four main thoroughfares contained a number of vennels. A vennel led off Eastport to the Tweed Green, while a wynd, Usher's Wynd, provided access to the town's mill from Northgait. The Dean's Wynd which was located opposite Chamber's Institution in the High Street, was in existence at least by the sixteenth century (Renwick, 1903, 58) and there is a 1481 reference to the chaplain of St. Michael's altar who presented a petition craving permission to break through a door and window from his property into St. Michael's Wynd which would allow free



entry 'up throw and down throw' to Peebles Water (Gunn, 1908, 89). A back lane on the south side of High Street, which does not occur in Armstrong's plan of 1775 but does occur on Wood's map of the 1820s, is probably a lane which came into use at the side of the ruined town wall, presumably in the early nineteenth century (Alauddin, 1968, 150).

Market Area: Tuesday was anciently the burgh's market day and by 1692 Peebles not only had a weekly market, she had five yearly fairs as well (RCRB, iv, 637). Although Tuesday was the official day there were other times in the week where tradesmen could bring produce forth for sale. For example, in 1556 the Town Council ordered that malt was to be brought to market on Tuesdays and Saturdays and in 1564 a flesh market was to be held on Saturday, not Sunday (Renwick, 1903 (b), 41). In 1676 the Town Council thought fit to hold the shoe market between the Market Cross and the East Port on the south side of the street while many of the other markets were in the west end of the town (Renwick, 1910, 91-2). A covered flesh market was erected in the 1670s in the Briggait (Renwick, 1910, 83, 92).

The market cross of Peebles formerly stood at the intersection of High Street, Northgait and Eastport and was removed in 1807 due to its 'ruinous' condition. That removal was not a popular decision and one local writer lambasted those responsible:

'At the period of its demolition public sentiment was dead to matters of taste. The men who could entertain the project of transforming the Cross Church into a shop for the sale of coal could feel no remorse in destroying the most significant emblem of civic dignity. May we venture to express a hope that the Cross of Peebles will at no distant time be restored to its former situation'

(Chambers, 1856, 57).

Fortunately, the cross itself was not destroyed and was re-erected in 1895 on its former site, although in 1964 it was transferred a few yards east (RCAHM, 1967, 278). The cross is composed of sandstone and both the capital and the pillars have the appearance of fifteenth-century work (RCAHM, 1967, 278). The shaft is octagonal in section and every other side displays a small plain shield. The capital is also octagonal and is richly carved. There are traces of some cable ornament, while the sides are panelled and the panels contain alternately a quatre-foil and a shield which bear the arms of the Frasers and the burgh of Peebles (RCAHM, 1967, 278). In 1624 a tron was ordered to be established near the cross (Chambers, 1872, 363).

Defences: Previous to the erection of a town wall in the sixteenth century, there

were some defences in and about Peebles. In February 1465-6, primarily for defensive reasons, the town was divided up into quarters, viz., Highgait, Crossgait, Northgait, and Briggait, which roughly corresponded with the four most important streets. Two quartermasters were appointed for each and two were included for the district 'beyond the water', that is, Old Town (Renwick, 1903, 22). The Old Town does not appear to have been fortified in any way, but as invasions and attacks were most likely to have come from the south and east, the New Town was forced to bear the brunt (Renwick, 1903 (b), 18). There is, however, reference to a system of defence on the north side of the town when in 1470 three newly-admitted burgesses agreed to 'mak the dyk of the Venlaw' and to furnish 'treis to the yettis of the Venlaw' (Renwick, 1903, 24). The reporter in the New Statistical Account also claims that there was a deep ditch in front of the West Port which might have been considered a kind of fosse to prevent entrance to the town from the bridge (NSA, 1845, iii, 8).

The 'heid dykes' would also suffice for defensive purposes until 1568 when the Regent Moray urged 'the bigging of ane wall about the burgh to resist the invasioun of thevis' (Buchan, 1925, ii, 27). Thomas Lauder, a mason, undertook in 1570 to build an encircling wall 'with blockhousis as efferis in places convenient' (RCAHM, 1967, 28). From the West Port the wall ran eastwards along the north side of the Tweed Green (a little to the north of the boundary wall indicated by Armstrong). At the foot of the Old Vennel the wall turned north to link with the East Port from which it extended on approximately the same alignment as far as the Borthwick Walls. From this point the wall ran westwards to the North Port, thence along Usher's Wynd to the Eddleston Water. It followed the course of that stream as far as the bridge leading to the Old Town (Cuddy Bridge) where it turned south to meet the West Port (RCAHM, 1967, 280). Stringent regulations were adopted to keep the wall in good repair and the burgesses were strictly forbidden to pass over the wall, the ports being the only acceptable entrance to and exit from the town.

In 1649 when the English were in the neighbourhood an excited Town Council ordered that all persons having property adjacent to the wall should repair the wall and clear off the earth and rubbish from the outside (Renwick, 1910, xvii). The wall was kept in good repair until the 1720s but after 1740 it began to disappear quickly (RCAHM, 1967, 280). The principal remains are two sections linked by a tower off Venlaw Road, and what appears to have been another section of the wall came to light in 1963 when houses were being demolished on the south side of the head of Usher's Wynd (RCAHM, 1967, 280).

Ports: Peebles maintained at least three ports. The East Port which has been located at NT 2537 4047 (Ordnance Survey, Record Cards, Reference NT 24 SE 1.2), was strengthened by the erection of a fortified building called at first the New Wark, but later the East Wark (Buchan, 1925, ii, 16). The West Port at the opposite end of the town was also fortified by the Steeple and appears to have been a pend leaving only a passage of eight feet (2.41m) wide (Renwick, 1903, 25). This port, which has been sited at NT 2505 4039, was removed in 1758 after a Town Council resolution, and the ground about was levelled (Buchan, 1925, ii, 93). The North Port guarded the highway from Lothian and stood in Northgait at the point where that thoroughfare was joined by Usher's Wynd. A 'barimkyn' or 'werk' of an unidentified nature protected the foot of Briggait. The three ports were all incorporated into the town wall of 1570 (Chambers, 1872, 158).

East Wark: The East Wark, or New Wark, stretched across Crocegait (Eastport) and on that account was sometimes called 'the Crocehouse' (Renwick, 1903 (b), 20). Its construction was under way by 1488 for in that year there is reference to the bringing of stones 'to the bigging of the Newark at the est end of Peblis' (Chambers, 1872, 193). Artillery could be mounted on the structure and it has been suggested that the East Port was incorporated in it (Renwick 1903 (b), 20). It was burned by the English in 1549 but not totally destroyed, although the Town Council in 1653 found the East Wark to be 'very ruinous' and 'lyklie to fall' and ordered its removal (Renwick, 1910, 21-2).

Steeple: A fortified structure known as the Steeple was erected at the west end of the High Street between 1488 and 1496 (Buchan, 1925, ii, 16). It was built adjoining a chapel and was for many years used as a jail. The Steeple was not removed until 1776 and its stones were sold as rubbish for £2 1s 6d (Buchan, 1925, ii, 97).

Bridges: The bridge over the Eddleston Water by the church post-dates that of Briggait and before its erection Eddleston Water was crossed by means of a ford at the foot of St. Michael's Wynd (Chambers, 1864, 259). The bridge which connected Old Town with Briggait was constructed at an unknown date although in 1495 there was a reference to its needing repair (Buchan, 1925, ii, 15). Similarly, it is unknown when the first bridge was built across the River Tweed at Peebles; however, in 1465 there is an allusion that either a stone bridge was being repaired or constructed (Buchan, 1925, ii, 15). The bridge does, however, have some fifteenth-century work incorporated in it (RCAHM, 1967, 341). Notices of its repair occur in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and in 1760 it was closed to cart traffic because drovers

complained that the parapet was too low and they suffered loss through sheep and lambs leaping over the sides (Buchan, 1925, ii, 94). The bridge was widened in 1834, increasing it from eight feet (2.41m) to twenty-one feet (6.40m) in width and in 1900 to forty feet (12.19m) (RCAHM, 1967, 341).

### BUILDINGS

Castle: There was a royal castle at Peebles in the reign of David I (Barrow, 1960, 24). High Street runs directly to the site of the castle, believed to be a motte, placed strategically at the confluence of the River Tweed and Eddleston Water. It was a situation of considerable strength.

It is probable that the castle was destroyed during the Wars of Independence, for in 1334 when Edward Baliol, self-styled King of Scots, granted several towns, castles and counties of the Borders to Edward III, including Roxburgh, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Dumfries, only the 'town and county of Peebles' was mentioned, not its castle (CDS, iii, co.1127). Also, from 1327 there ceased to be any mention of the grant of ten shillings annually made to the Chapel of the Castle of Peebles (Gunn, 1908, 50). In the fifteenth century the Castlehill seems to have come into the town's possession and there appear to have been some buildings in its neighbourhood. The mill and other erections on the south side of the Castlehill were expressly confirmed to the town by a 1508 charter (Renwick, 1903 (b), 22).

In 1720 trees were planted around the base of the hill and a site was laid out for a bowling green (Chambers, 1864, 262). Chambers made the claim that Peebles castle was still in existence by the late seventeenth century (1864, 262). This confusion grew out of an entry in the Earl of Tweeddale's Rental Book 1671-1685 in which 'Peebles Castle' is mentioned, but it was simply another name for the nearby tower house, Neidpath Castle (Renwick, 1912, 89).

Churches: Prior to the Reformation the church in the 'Old Town' dedicated to St. Andrews served as the parish church for Peebles. It existed at least as early as the first quarter of the twelfth century (Lawrie, 1905, 46). Little is known of its original fabric or condition. Foundations have occasionally been discovered through gravedigging and it has been suggested that the church had two aisles, one on the north side of the choir and another on the north side of the nave and that it was larger in size than the later dedication, the Cross Kirk (Gunn, 1908, 201). It suffered extensive damage in 1549 when it was burned by the English and the total repair bill was too great for the parishioners to meet. In 1560 the townsmen were



granted use of the Cross Kirk and the church of St. Andrews slowly fell into ruin. Some attempt was made to preserve what fabric and burial ground remained in use, but there was much quarrying and in 1609 a 'dowcot' was built in the church steeple (Williamson, 1895, 10). Tradition maintains that Cromwell stabled his horses in the church during his siege of Neidpath Castle, but this incident is not recorded in the burgh records (Renwick, 1910, xxi). In 1856 the structure consisted of a few broken walls and a massive tower (Chambers, 1856, 51) and the tower was 'drastically' restored in the second half of the nineteenth century (RCAHM, 1967, 210).

A path connected St. Andrews Church with the later dedication, the Cross Kirk, also in the 'Old Town'. The Cross Kirk was established by Alexander III after the 1261 discovery of holy relics on the site, including a cross and the ashes of bones allegedly belonging to 'St. Nicholas the Bishop' (Cowan and Easson, 1976, 109). At first, Cross Kirk was non-conventual and the only building on the site was the church, an aisleless rectangle. A community of Trinitarian friars appears to have been established there with the approval of the bailies by 1448 (Cowan, 1976, 110) and in 1474 the domestic buildings and cloisters were erected to the north of the church (RCAHM, 1967, 204). In January 1560-1, the Trinitarians quit their convent and the Cross Kirk was fitted up as a Protestant place of worship. Despite the change in religious order, the Cross Kirk remained a haunt for pilgrims at least until 1601, when a notice appears that in the year following 'there was no resorting of people into the Croce Kirk to commit any sign of superstition there' (Gunn, 1912, 67). The Cross Kirk served as the parish church until 1784. In the middle of the sixteenth century a western tower was added and alterations to the building in the seventeenth century included the construction of a new parish church on the Castlehill the roof of the Cross Kirk was removed but the walls were kept entire and in 1809 an application was made to turn the church into a coal fold, although this plan was ultimately abandoned (Chambers, 1856, 53). Chambers relates that as late as 1811 the foundations of the cloisters were still visible but they were eventually cleared away when the ground was enclosed and planted (1856, 53). In that same year part of the south wall of the church collapsed (RCAHM, 1967, 204).

The Town Council of Peebles in 1773 agreed to contribute towards the building of a new parish church on the Castlehill and gave the necessary ground between the High Street and the bowling green (Buchan, 1925, ii, 110). Chambers caustically observed that the church stood 'awkwardly awry to the direction of the public street, the fabric generally and the steeple in particular bear the unmistakable marks of the dearth of

taste which pervaded during the reign of George III' (1856, 55). The present parish church on this site dates from the late nineteenth century.

Chapel: A chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin stood in the west end of the High Street some twenty or thirty yards (18m - 27m) to the east of the present parish church (NSA, 1845, iii, 7). It was established in the reign of David II (Buchan, 1925, ii, 10), and appears for some time in the later sixteenth century to have been used as the parish church while the Cross Kirk was undergoing repairs (Renwick, 1903 (b), 102). The chapel was removed close to the end of the eighteenth century (Williamson, 1895, 16) and no trace of the structure now remains. It has been sited at NT 2508 4039 (Ordnance Survey, Record Cards, Reference NT 24 SE 11).

Tolbooth: In 1487 there is a reference to a property on the north side of the 'Briggait' described as being bounded by the 'tolbuith' on the west (Renwick, 1912, 19). The Tolbooth was apparently still in Briggait in 1545 (Gunn, 1908, 127), but by 1572 had moved down to the Steeple (Buchan, 1925, ii, 337). It is probable that the Town Council met in the west end of the High Street until 1753 (Renwick, 1912, 316). In 1749 the Town Council noted that other burghs 'have of late built new houses commonly called Town Houses' and with that Peebles magistrates resolved to do the same (Buchan, 1925, ii, 90). There was difficulty in finding a suitable site, but in 1753 a Town House was duly erected midway down the High Street, on the south side its front projecting seven feet (2.13m) in front of the buildings it is contiguous with (RCAHM, 1967, 279).

Jail: The removal of the Steeple forced the Town Council to look for other premises for a jail. A vault belonging to Lord Elloch was purchased in 1775 on the north side of the High Street opposite the Town House. The cells of this new prison were only protected from the street by means of a grating, with the result that the friends of the prisoners could supply them with liquor and 'other things not necessary' and to prevent 'such inconveniences' an inner grating was built. The Town Council, however, was dissatisfied with this arrangement and a new prison was built in the west end of the High Street near the Parish Church in 1789 (Buchan, 1925, ii, 105).

School: The first mention of a burgh schoolmaster occurs in 1464 (Groome, 1883, iii, 161). It appears that the Tolbooth in Briggait was eventually turned into a school in the mid-sixteenth century (Renwick, 1912, 115) and when that structure was damaged by flood in 1631 the school shifted down to the western end of the High Street (Buchan and Paton, 1927, iii, 646). The Town Council retained tight control over the running of the school. In 1563 they ordered the schoolmaster to wait upon the

bairns and not to go hunting or pursue other pleasures without licence from the aldermen (Groome, 1883, iii, 161). The school day was also quite rigorous. In 1629 classes began at six o'clock in the morning and ran until nine, when there was an hour's break. In this period the master taught 'Latine and Scottis' and following the break, writing. School resumed at 1.30 p.m. and finished at six o'clock in the evening, but the master had the discretion to allow a play period between two and four o'clock on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday afternoons. Then again, the children could be let home on Saturday afternoon if the schoolmaster saw fit (Buchan, 1925, ii, 645).

Houses: Two hotels in Peebles have seventeenth-century portions. The Cross Keys Inn is a much-altered seventeenth-century structure (RCAHM, 1967, 279), while the County Hotel, although with an eighteenth-century facade, has a barrel vaulted cellar at the east end of the building on ground floor level which suggests that a portion of the hostelry might be sixteenth- or seventeenth-century (RCAHM, 1967, 277). The building known as Chambers Institution also maintains some sixteenth- or seventeenth-century portions, although when it was acquired by Mr. Chambers in 1857 the building was completely remodelled to serve as the library, art gallery and museum. It underwent further alterations in 1910 (RCAHM, 1967, 277). In a close known as Parliament Close leading off the south side of High Street is a two-storeyed eighteenth-century structure on the west side of the square (RCAHM, 1967, 277).

Mills: The first mention of a mill at Peebles occurs in the reign of Alexander II who endowed a hospital in the Lammermoor Hills with half a chalders of meal from the mill of Peebles (Buchan, 1925, ii, 15). This mill has been sited at NT 2518 4059 (Ordnance Survey, Record Cards, Reference NT 24 SE 16). A later corn mill constructed on the south side of the Castlehill was erected by 1461 (Buchan, 1925, ii, 15). It was said to have been ruinous in 1687, but was in existence by 1780. A waulk mill was built about 1476 at the east end of the Tweed Green. The district is still called Walkershaugh although the mill has long since vanished (Buchan, 1925, ii, 15). A lade which connected the mill on the south side of the Castlehill (Rood Mill) with the Waulk mill ran along the north side of the Tweed Green. This lade was called a goit (ditch), a word which was corrupted into Gytes (Buchan, 1925, ii, 15). The 'auld mylne upon the water of Peblis' (that is the 'Alexander II' corn mill) was converted into a waulk mill in the eighteenth century and later into a sawmill, but has since vanished (Renwick, 1897, 156).

# Archaeology

## PREVIOUS WORK

No archaeological excavation had taken place in Peebles until the summer of 1977, when investigation of the Castle Hill site was undertaken by the Department of the Environment in advance of the building of an extension to the church hall. Excavations are still in progress at the time of going to press, and a report will be made available in due course. Other than the information which this work will provide, few finds are noted from the burgh, and none of them come from satisfactory archaeological contexts. The most important of these are:

(1) Early Christian cross: This important monument was discovered in the wall of a small public garden in Old Town next to the corner of Young Street. It carries an incised cross on both faces and on the main face an inscription which reads NETTANOS SACERDOS or 'Neitan the Priest (or Bishop)'. Illustrated on the cover of this report, the stone is now in Chamber's Institution, Peebles (Steer, 1969, 127-9).

(2) Early Christian monument: A stone, inscribed LOCUS SANCTI NICOLAI EPISCOPI was reputedly found on the site of the Cross Kirk in 1261, but is now lost. 'If the stone was genuine, and not a medieval invention, the name Nicholas must be a misreading' (Steer, 1969, 127-9). Also see RCAHMS, 1967, Nos. 377 and 480.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

There are a number of problems posed by Peebles which are of interest to the archaeologist and historian alike. The principal one of these must be the relationship of Old Town to the medieval burgh. It is not at all clear what sort of settlement existed west of the Eddleston Water prior to the creation of the burgh proper, nor is it clear how extensive this was. Obviously, therefore archaeological and documentary research is vital to this issue.

Within the burgh itself, that is the area enclosed by the town walls, many important historical questions remain unanswered. One such problem concerns the location of the various tolbooths which the burgh has contained. These are given probable positions on the historical plan at the end of this report, but the sites shown are by no means certain. In relation to the town walls, two of the structures which



defended the ports, at Bridgegate and Eastgate, are imperfectly understood and might profit from excavation. These were respectively the 'Barmkin' and the East Wark. A third structure, the 'steeple' stood at or near the West Port. The Castle too, an important royal stronghold in the time of David I (1127 - 1153), has a very vague history. Hopefully, the excavations at Castle Hill will help to shed some light on this matter.

Perhaps a more fundamental gap in our knowledge lies in our understanding of the domestic conditions in Peebles throughout its history. Little is known for example, of the materials and methods of construction of the town's various public, domestic and industrial buildings or of their distribution within the town. By archaeological excavation of the remains of such buildings it might be possible to discover whether these were built of perishable materials, such as wattle or timber-framing, or of more substantial stone. At the same time, a great deal might be learnt of the material possessions of the townsfolk - their pottery, tools, other domestic items and whatever imported luxuries they were able to afford. Moreover, by scientific study of such remains, much can be learnt of industrial technology, diet, disease and other important matters relating to social conditions.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

Virtually nothing is known of the survival or otherwise of early deposits within the historic area of Peebles. Information from Castle Hill will be derived from an atypical site and will do nothing to assist in this matter. Relatively little of the Old Town or of the burgh within the walls has been redeveloped in the recent past, although many of the buildings have basements, while a large number, on sites which slope steeply to the Tweed Green or the Eddleston Water, are terraced into the natural slope. Much early occupation material is therefore likely to have been lost through earth-moving. The west end of the High Street has been lowered within the last 130 years (above p. 4), and this is likely to have destroyed medieval levels in that area. Nevertheless, all sites within the historic areas of Peebles proper and Old Town must be considered potentially productive at this stage. Some backland areas remain under gardens, and are possibly little disturbed, while some rear properties contain less substantial constructions, with correspondingly shallow foundations which ought to have caused little disturbance to existing levels. These areas should provide the best conditions for survival of early deposits.

Because of the lack of information at present, the true archaeological potential of

the burgh is difficult to assess. Further investigation by archaeological means is necessary to determine those areas where early levels are, or are likely to be, preserved.

#### FUTURE REDEVELOPMENT

A number of sites seem likely to be redeveloped within the foreseeable future and these are shown on the appropriate plan. Two of these sites are of particular importance. The first is that presently occupied by the church hall in Cross Road opposite the Cross Kirk. This site might well have lain within the boundaries of that institution, and may contain material of an early period. Excavation should be allowed for during redevelopment on this site, should such take place.

The widening of Cuddy Bridge will necessitate the removal of portions of the buildings at No. 1. Bridge House Terrace, and No.90 High Street. As both lie in important positions in relation to both Old Town and Peebles itself, investigation should be undertaken. Unfortunately, both buildings have cellars, and the area involved will be very restricted. Nevertheless, any removal of soil or foundations should be carried out under archaeological supervision at least.

Other areas which might prove to be of importance are those along the left bank of the Eddleston Water, where a housing development is likely along Cuddyside, and the creation of a car parking area is possible in the backlands north of High Street. Both areas should be investigated before redevelopment takes place. Finally, one or two other small sites are scheduled for redevelopment elsewhere in the town. These, too, should be given due consideration and time allowed for archaeological investigation before redevelopment.

#### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Several sites which may be of importance are to be redeveloped in the not-too-distant future. While these should be given priority, all sites within the historic core must be considered for investigation. In the first instance, such research should consist of small-scale trial excavations with a view to determining the degree of survival in various areas throughout the burgh. Redevelopment plans should be timetabled to allow such investigation to take place, In the event of substantial preservation of early deposits being found, a decision should be reached by negotiation with the various organisations concerned as to the viability of major excavations taking place. If such a contingency is considered well in advance, delays to developers can be avoided or kept to a minimum.

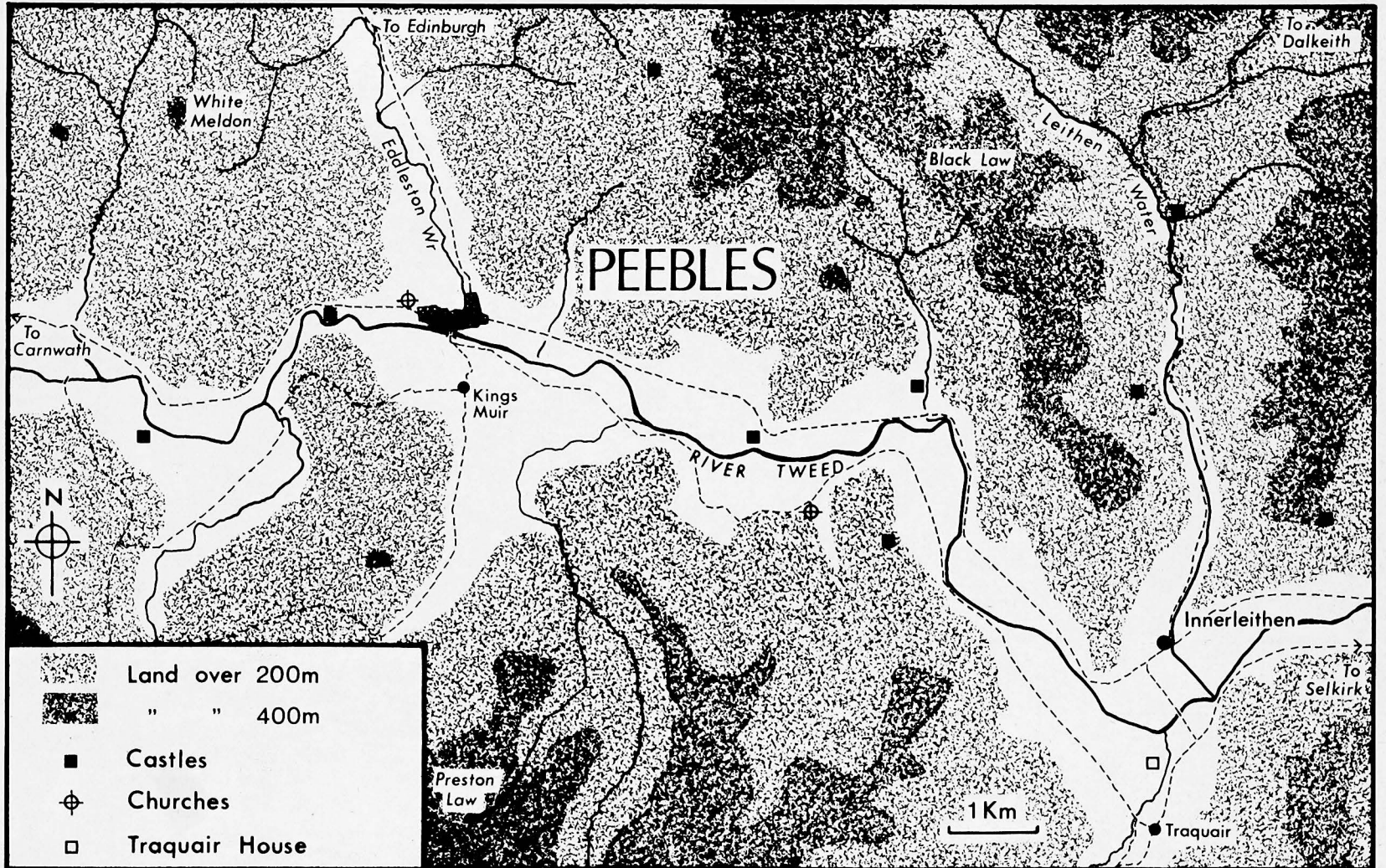
Although Peebles has acted as the nucleus of upper Tweeddale for centuries, relatively little is known of the detail which makes up its history. Such knowledge is not only important in a local context, but also in the national one. Archaeology, with the corresponding documentary research, constitutes the primary method by which such information will be gathered in the future. It is essential that such investigation be allowed to proceed as and when the opportunities arise.

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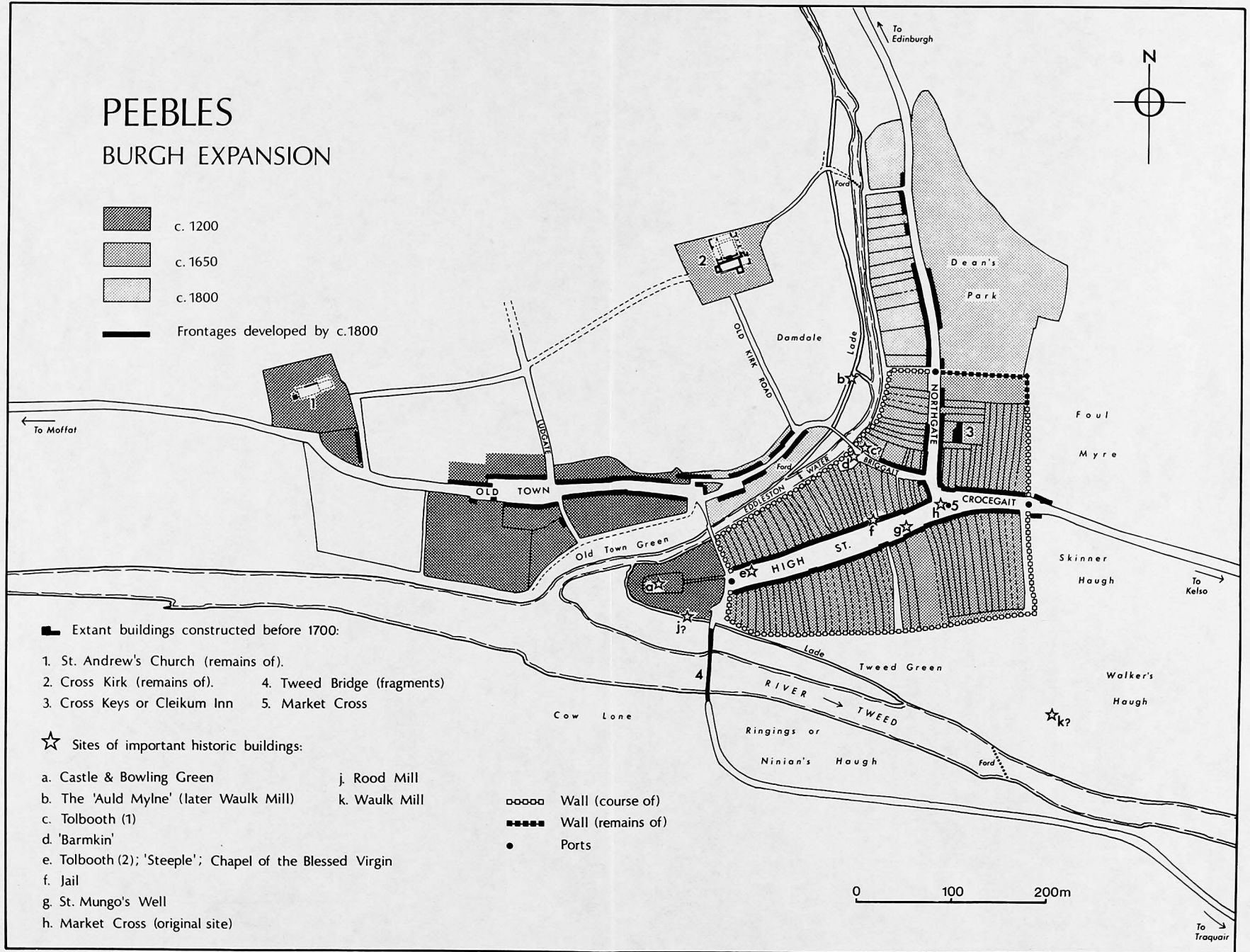
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
# PEEBLES




## BURGH EXPANSION

-  c. 1200
-  c. 1650
-  c. 1800
-  Frontages developed by c.1800



-  Extant buildings constructed before 1700:
- |                                      |                             |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. St. Andrew's Church (remains of). | 4. Tweed Bridge (fragments) |
| 2. Cross Kirk (remains of).          | 5. Market Cross             |
| 3. Cross Keys or Cleikum Inn         |                             |

-  Sites of important historic buildings:
- |                                                          |               |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| a. Castle & Bowling Green                                | j. Rood Mill  |
| b. The 'Auld Mylne' (later Waulk Mill)                   | k. Waulk Mill |
| c. Tolbooth (1)                                          |               |
| d. 'Barmkin'                                             |               |
| e. Tolbooth (2); 'Steeple'; Chapel of the Blessed Virgin |               |
| f. Jail                                                  |               |
| g. St. Mungo's Well                                      |               |
| h. Market Cross (original site)                          |               |






-  Wall (course of)
-  Wall (remains of)
-  Ports

0 100 200m

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# PEEBLES

-  Areas effectively redeveloped
-  Areas open or proposed for redevelopment
-  Cellars or basements where apparent
-  Listed buildings – all categories
-  Conservation Area

