



Peebleshire Archaeological Society

A Walk in the Park

**The Archaeology & History of
Hay Lodge Park, Peebles & its environs**

Sunday 23 September 2012



Guides

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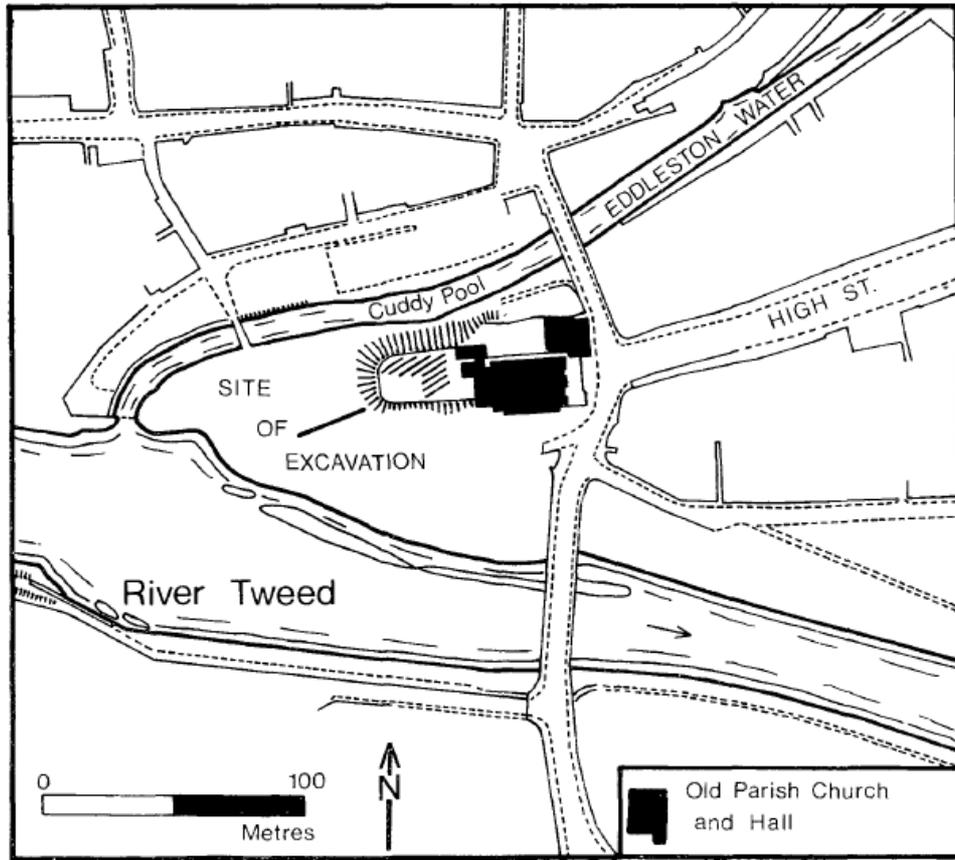


Fig 1. Location of Peebles Castle Hill on promontory between the Tweed and the Eddleston Water (after Murray & Ewart 1980)



Fig 2. Sherds of 13th/14th century pottery found in gardens near the site of Peebles Castle and donated to the National Museum in 1961. L-R: tubular spout from a jug, rim and sherds from strap handles. Photo: T Cowie

1. Castle Hill, Peebles & its surrounds

Castle (site of)

There was a royal castle at Peebles in the reign of David I (1124-53). It occupied the neck of the promontory formed by the junction of the Eddleston Water (The Cuddy) with the River Tweed.

The site is marked by the prominent, steep-sided mound, apparently natural, which has Peebles parish church on its E end. The flat summit measures 21.3 by 39.6m, though it may originally have been longer. There are no visible structural remains but excavations carried out in 1977 in advance of the building of an extension to the church hall revealed two wooden buildings.

The Castle Hill appears to have come into the town's possession in the 15th century. The castle disappeared during the 14th century but a chapel, originally associated with the castle, is thought to have been in existence until close to the end of the 18th century, when it was removed - possibly when the first Parish Church was built in 1782. That one lasted 100 years and was replaced by the present church in 1885 at a cost of £10,000.

In 1720 the top of the mound was laid out as a bowling green.

Mills (site of)

The first known reference to the old corn mill of Peebles is during the reign of Alexander II in the 13th century.

There was a corn mill on the site to the west the bridge in 1461 known as Rood Mill – it received this name because the tenant had to pay 2 merks yearly to uphold the service of the Rood altar in St Andrews Kirk. The lade for this mill ran from a cauld on the Eddleston Water, along the foot of Castle Hill and across the north side of Tweed Green to a waulk mill at the east end of Tweed Green.

There was still a corn mill on the site in 1780 but it is unknown whether it is the same one as the Rood Mill of 1461.

The town council was keen to bring manufacturing industry to the town and in 1856 a large woollen mill was built below the Castle Hill mound – called Tweedside Mill. During the rebuilding, the old lade from the Eddleston Water was abandoned as the cauld there was no longer adequate. A new cauld was created across the river and a new lade brought from the Tweed. The mill burnt down in the 1960s.

The site of the mill is now occupied by Peebles Swimming Pool (1983, architects Morris & Steedman).

Gasworks (site of)

In 1828 gas was introduced to the town – the works was to the west of Castle hill with the gasometer positioned at the end of the promontory.

In 1898 the council took over the manufacturing of gas, consumption increased and in 1905 about 5 acres of land 1½ miles east of the town were fued from the Haystoun Estate and a new larger works was built at a cost of £25,000 (that site in turn is now occupied by the Scottish Borders Council depot at Eshiels)

2. Greenside

World War 2 observation post

Located amongst trees above the level of the path at the W end of Greenside is a small brick and concrete building with a door in one side and a vent hole in two of the other sides. Although it has been recorded as a possible air-raid shelter or ammunition store is, the building is more likely to be an observation post - particularly as the slits are aligned on Tweed Bridge and the former site of the Station.

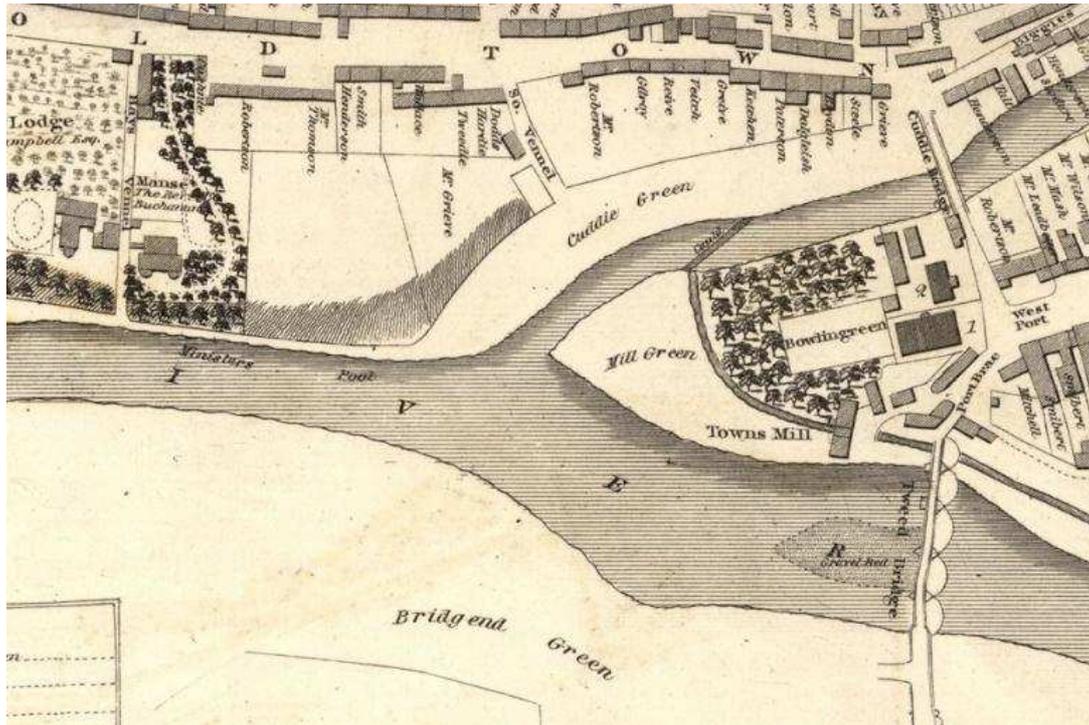


Fig 3. Extract from John Wood's map of Peebles of 1823 (© NLS). According to Wood, the ancient Royal Burgh of Peebles was 'delightfully situated on the northern bank of the River Tweed, over which is an ancient stone bridge of five arches'. At the time the town's main source of revenue was from stocking manufacturing and weaving. Peebles had 2,705 inhabitants in 1821 (source: SCRAN). Hay Lodge is just visible at the left edge.

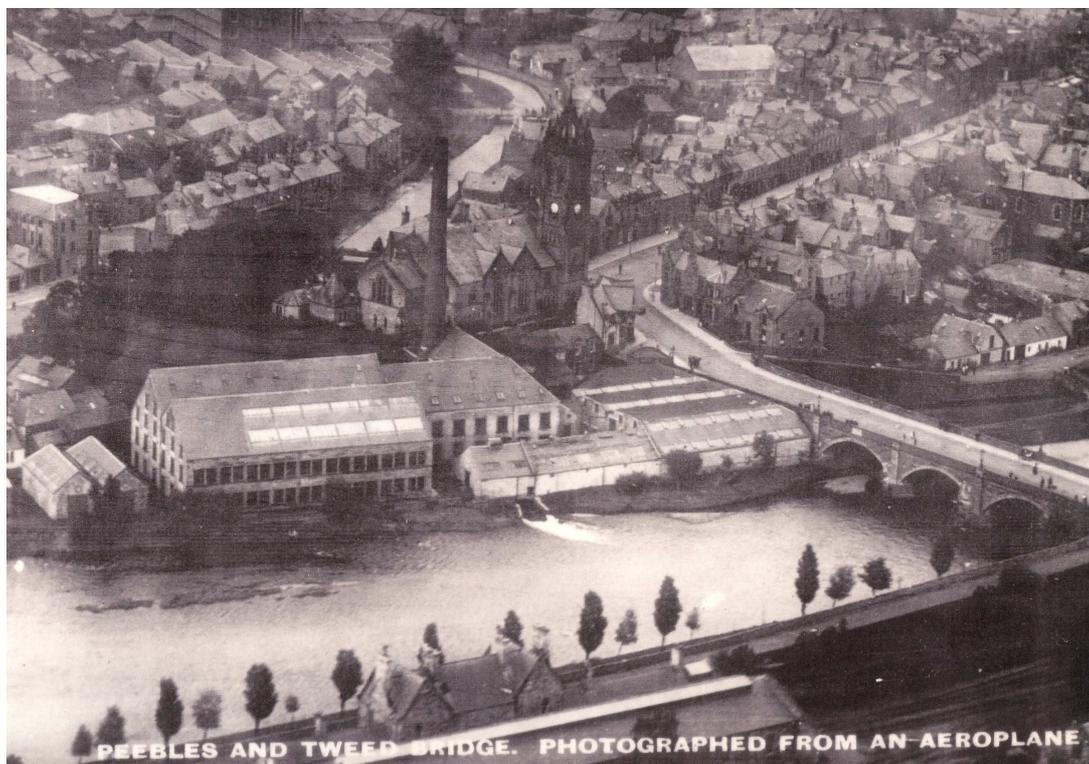


Fig 4. View across Tweed to Tweed Mill and the Parish Church, with the Caledonian Railway Station just visible in the foreground, probably taken in the 1920s or 1930s (Image courtesy of Tweeddale Museum). The caption seems to be a statement of the obvious!

3. Hay Lodge House

18th century house and estate buildings

House. This fine Georgian house, long known as Hay Lodge, was built in 1771 by Captain Adam Hay of Soonhope, a descendant of the Hay family who formerly owned Neidpath Castle. Hay was MP for Perthshire and died in debt.

The house was subsequently sold on to various wealthy people - one being Alexander Campbell who built the enclosing walls. He was a merchant in Glasgow with plantations in the West Indies - and hence owed his wealth to slavery.

Further additions were made to the house in the early 19th century. It now provides staff quarters for Hay Lodge Hospital which was built in the former grounds of the house and opened in 1983.

The house consists of three storeys plus attic and basement. The entrance is to the west. The drawing room has particularly fine details. There is some evidence of earlier masonry internally.

Boundary walls. The carriage arch was at the SE corner. Old maps show the main entrance was probably where the entrance to the Hay Lodge car park is now, while the line of the drive would have swept round to the front door at the west. The building at the NE boundary wall may have been an 18th century municipal well or pump house.

Stables. The former stables lay to the N of the road. These were L-shaped in plan, with a north range where Hay Lodge cottages now stand. The building appears to have been rebuilt between 1775 and 1823.

Ice House. The fine ice house which probably once served Hay Lodge is situated on the N bank of the Tweed. Trees would have been planted to provide maximum shade to this area.

The ice house consisted of a subterranean domed construction of stone or brick covered by tons of insulating earth, providing a highly efficient method for storing food.

The period from c 1600 - 1875 is known to have been a 'Little Ice Age'. Historical paintings of winter scenery then depicted people skating on lakes and ponds (eg Raeburn's minister at Duddingston) and sometimes even rivers froze over. Either blocks of ice would have been chipped out (or brought by cart in lead-lined cases) or snow would have been compacted hard, then straw would have been put over the ice to retain the cold. Meat, fish and other perishable goods were stored. Ice was also stored for medical purposes - eg for administration to patients with high fevers.

4. Hay Lodge Park

Traditional site of encampment during the '45 Rebellion & park land

Named after Hay Lodge or Hay's Lodge, the Georgian house built by Captain Hay of Soonhope. Originally known as Arnotshaugh, the grounds have been Burgh property since 1560, previously having been attached to the 14th century Chapel of St. Mary, Peebles. At the beginning of the 18th century the grounds were bought by the Earl of March, remaining in his family until the end of the century. They then went through a number of owners, being bought back by the Earl of Wemyss and March in 1859, whose family sold them back to the Burgh in 1919.

According to local tradition the forces of Prince Charles Edward, en route to England in 1745, encamped in a field west of Hay Lodge. Whether or not there is any basis for this, General Roy's Military Survey which was undertaken after the Jacobite rising usefully shows the extent of the town at this time.



Fig 5. An aerial view of Hay Lodge in 1968 (image courtesy of Tweeddale Museum)



Fig 6. Detail from the Roy Map (1747-1755) of the area around Peebles (© NLS).

Fermtouns and cultivation patterns are only roughly noted, but Peebles itself is carefully depicted as are estate policies. Peebles High Street was built in the 16th century on the land between Tweed and Eddleston Water, with the 'old town' chiefly on the opposite bank of the Eddleston Water.

5. 'The Dookits', Neidpath

Finds of Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age) flint and chert tools

Around this point of our walk, the archaeology of the very distant past and the recent past coincide. Although it was being used in very different ways, the river provides the common link.

At the end of the last Ice Age, as the glacial ice melted in Tweed valley the gorge became plugged with ice and debris. As a result a lake would have formed upstream, and drained via a channel on the other side of Cademuir. Only when the Neidpath gorge eventually became free of glacial debris did the Tweed assume its present course. As the region recovered from the extreme conditions of the last Ice Age, plants, animals and people recolonised the landscape.

Around 10,000 years ago, small, mobile groups of hunters and fishers would have exploited the resources of the river and its hinterland - and we have evidence for their presence at this very spot!

During the 1980s, thanks to the keen eyes of Bob Knox, a sizeable number of worked chert and flint flakes, including the distinctive tiny tools known as microliths, were recovered from this stretch of the footpath.

Outdoor swimming pool, c 1930s

From 10,000 years ago to less than a hundred years ago... surviving evidence of much more modern archaeology of the river can also be found here.

It takes the form of traces of the diving platforms and revetting of the river bank associated with 'The Dookits', an *al fresco* swimming pool popular in the earlier 20th century.

Eventually changes in the river conditions made swimming here unsafe - leaving these vestiges of 'the archaeology of leisure activity'!

6. Fotheringham Bridge

This footbridge was constructed just downstream of the former site of a ford giving access to Hay Lodge Park from the south bank of the river.

J. S. Fotheringham was a baker who left Peebles in 1904 for South Africa. He prospered and at one time was mayor of Johannesburg. He gifted the bridge which now bears his name to the Burgh and it was opened 24th October 1953 by Provost A.P. Daniels.

7. The Caledonian Railway

The Caledonian was a major Scottish railway company, formed in the early 19th century until its eventual absorption almost a century later into the London, Midland and Scottish Railway.

The Symington, Biggar and Broughton Railway led from the main line at Symington to Broughton. The Caledonian acquired it in 1861 and the line was extended to a new station at Peebles West. The line opened in 1864 and closed to regular passenger traffic in June 1950.

Peebles Tunnel

The impressive Peebles (or Neidpath) Tunnel formerly carried the Peebles-Symington branch line of the Caledonian Railway under South Park Wood and along the S bank of the Tweed.



Fig 7. Worked chert and flint from Mesolithic site near Manor Bridge, just upstream from Neidpath. Similar knapping debris has been found along the north bank of the Tweed - evidence of the presence of hunters and gatherers around 10,000 years ago (© Peeblesshire Archaeological Society)



Fig 8. View of the 'The Dookits', Hay Lodge Park. Traces of the footings of the diving platforms can still be seen today (source Robb & Stevenson 1990)

The 550m long tunnel is brick-lined and entered through stone horseshoe-shaped portals.

As well as being of significance in terms of local industrial archaeology, the tunnel is also the scene of a famous experiment in the history of science. Professor C.T.R. Wilson (1869-1959) was a holder of the Chair of Physics at Cambridge and a Nobel Prize winning scientist. His life's work was devoted to natural phenomena – in particular condensation phenomena and atmospheric electricity.

Although his career was spent in Cambridge, he was born near Glencorse and had family connections in this area. Around 1900, while a young post-graduate, he was investigating the conductivity or ionisation of air. As part of experiments to test whether the production of ions in dust-free air could be explained as being due to radiation from sources outside our atmosphere he made a portable electroscope which he took into the Peebles railway tunnel at night. Wilson failed to appreciate their full significance but the results of this experiment were to lead ultimately to the recognition of cosmic radiation and its development as a field of study.

Neidpath Viaduct

Once it emerges from the tunnel, the line of the railway crosses the Tweed by means of the Neidpath viaduct. This superb seven-span curved skew viaduct was opened in 1864. The bridge was designed by Robert Murray, who lived in Peebles, at Damdale and George Cunningham, Consultant Engineer to the Caledonian Railway.

8. The Cauld

This cauld or weir spans the River Tweed on the SW side of Peebles, at the downstream end of the Minister's Pool, and immediately below the entry of the Eddleston Water.

In 1726 the cauld on the Tweed fell into disrepair and was abandoned, with water required for the corn mill under the Castle Hill being taken from Eddleston Water. This proved unsatisfactory and in 1829 it was decided to build another one on the Tweed. In so doing the builders built it too high, which resulted in flooding upstream.

This upset the landowners, the earl of Weymss on the south side of the river, and Mr. Campbell, the occupier of Hay Lodge, on the north side. The cauld was lowered, but for the next 20 years a dispute rumbled on between the Earl of Wemyss and the Burgh as to what the height should be.

Part of the eventual decision was flood prevention measures to protect the Earl of Weymss' property, with the Edderston burn being diverted to enter the Tweed *below* the cauld, and the embankment on the south side being built up.

9. Dukehaugh, Peebles

Loopholed wall: World War 2 defences or an earlier relic of the Railway Age?

On the S bank of the Tweed, a series of five holes can be seen set low down in the stone wall bordering the riverside walk. Sections of railway line provide support at both the top and bottom.

It has been suggested that these might have been constructed in the wall as part of the defensive measures undertaken in WW2 (the area immediately behind the wall has probably only become banked up with earth in the relatively recent past as a result of the creation of the gardens for the new houses built in Park Drive).

However, as a result of enquiries made locally, it seems more likely that these so-called 'loopholes' are connected with the Caledonian Railway Station, which was formerly located to the rear of the wall.

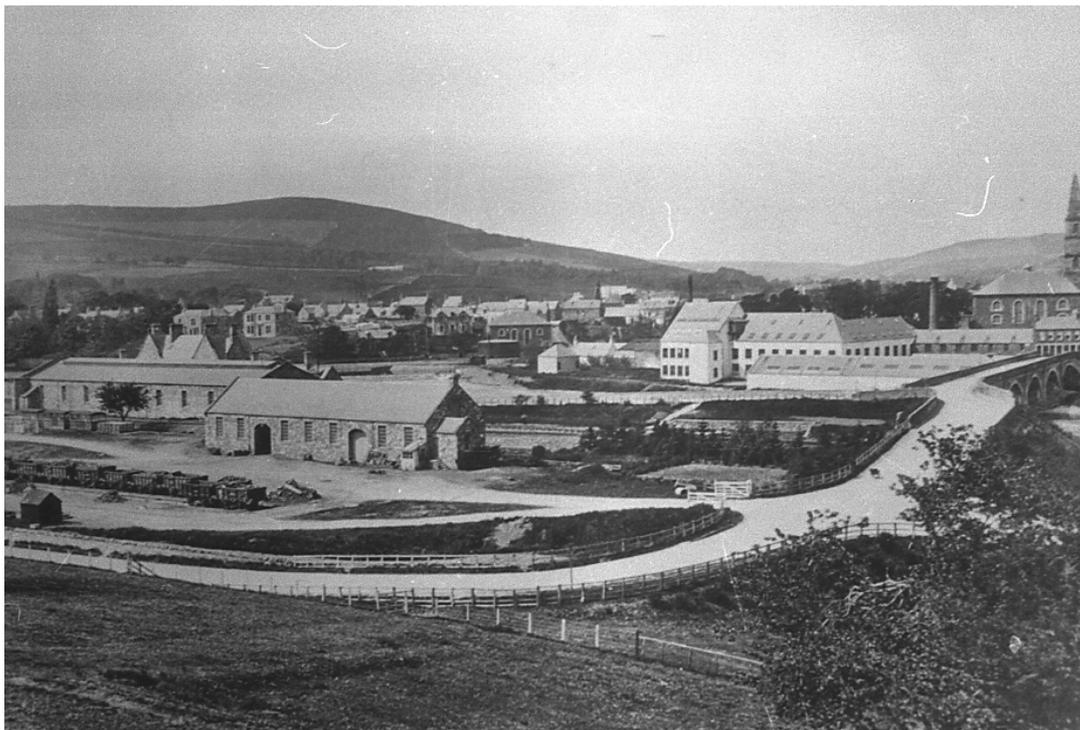


Fig 9. Caledonian Station in 1880 by George Washington Wilson. Note the parish church is still to be rebuilt, and the bridge to be widened (image courtesy of Tweeddale Museum)



Fig 10. Aerial view of Tweed Bridge from the NW (© RCAHMS). The blue circle indicates the location of the WW2 mortar emplacement.

In particular, the engine servicing point and railway turntable were located immediately to the south of these 'loopholes' and drainage was required from these installations.

Similar holes can be found further upstream which may suggest that they possibly also permitted drainage at times when the river was in flood.

10. Tweed Bridge, Peebles

Mounting for World War 2 spigot mortar

Set within a small retaining wall among trees approximately 100m to the south of the south end of the Tweed Bridge, is the mounting for a WW2 spigot mortar. The 'archaeological' remains consist of a circular concrete mounting with a stainless steel pin in the centre.

As part of the WW2 defences the southern approach to Tweed Bridge was also protected by a road block. It was formerly still possible to see the marks in the road where the slots for the road block were situated - but as a result of resurfacing, these are no longer visible. Another example of the erosion of history!



Home Guard soldiers operating a spigot mortar during training in 1943.
© Imperial War Museum

11. Tweed Bridge

Medieval and later bridges

The earliest surviving portions of this splendid bridge probably date from the 15th century but it is very likely that there was a bridge over the Tweed at Peebles long before that.

The earliest bridge is likely to have been of timber construction; we can imagine the strategic importance of Peebles in the 12th century with its bridge defended by the royal castle. Indeed, until the 18th century, Peebles was the location of the only bridge crossing of the Tweed above Kelso.

As noted, the architectural character of the oldest part of the bridge is suggestive of late medieval work, attributable to the 15th century, and this would be in keeping with references in the burgh records to bridge building between 1465 and 1470.

However the records are incomplete for many years and it is often unclear whether reference is being made to repairs to the bridge, reconstruction of the existing bridge or the erection of a new bridge. The original bridge was seemingly only 8ft wide, with 5 segmental arches. The foundations rested on oak logs. The arches were of narrow whinstone with face work and voussoirs of freestone. It may have had safety recesses over the piers. It was said to be "*inconveniently narrow, admitting only one carriage at a time*".

Burgh records show that constant repairs were carried out on the bridge in the 17th and 18th centuries, and three additional arches, since replaced by a railway bridge, were erected in 1799.

Tangible evidence of these works survives at the base of the west cutwater where a re-used stone may be seen, bearing a fragment of incised inscription *Roughly [?Rep]aird July 11 1767*.

The bridge was widened on both sides in 1834 (to 21ft) by John & Thomas Smith of Darnick, and again widened in 1897-1900 (to 40ft) by McTaggart, Cowan & Barker to cope with increased traffic and building development on the S side of the river. Evidence of these widenings can still be seen by inspecting the structure of the bridge.

Masons' marks can be found in abundance all over the Tweed Bridge structure but the bridge's earlier builders are largely anonymous figures, with the exception of John Hislop, a local mason who erected the three arches built in 1799. Sadly he died from injuries received when one of the arches collapsed during the course of construction.

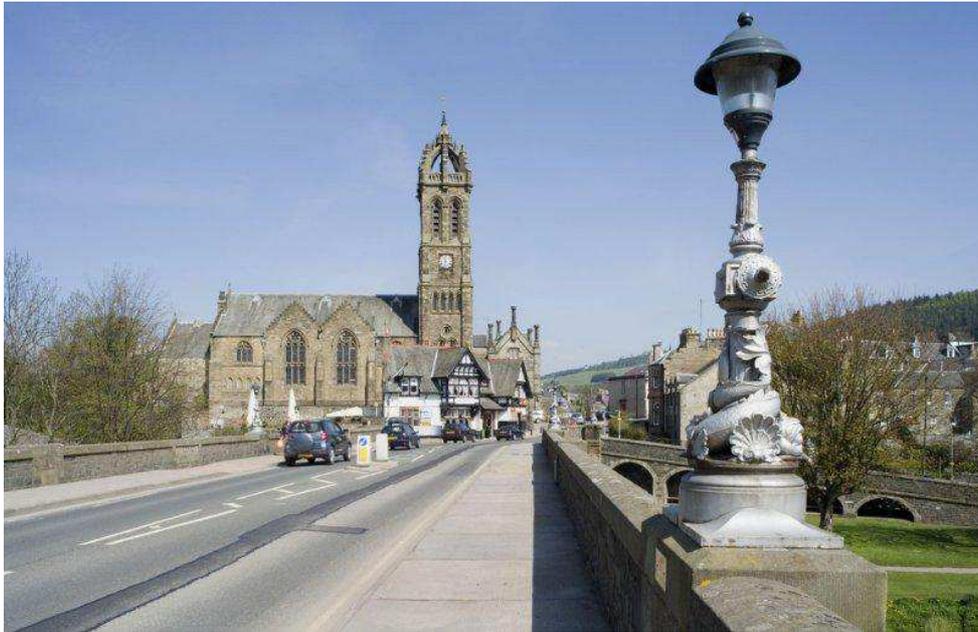


Fig 11. Following the widening of 1900, eight dolphin lamp standards were added as a decorative feature on the parapets of the bridge. © RCAHMS

Front cover:

Aerial photograph around 1950 showing the extent of the Caledonian railway site. The river was kept free of islands as they restricted the intake and outflow of water from the mill. Note the lade in Tweed Green. Image courtesy of Tweeddale Museum

Further reading

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