

KEY SITES OF BONDINGTON

The village is thought to have developed before the 12th century as a satellite of Berwick which was to become Scotland's largest port.

The exact area of the settlement is not known but three religious sites have been identified –

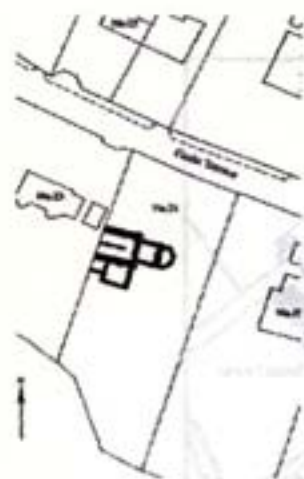
- at 21 Castle Terrace, a church/hospital
- at 48 Castle Terrace, another church,
- off Paxton Road, the Nunnery of St Leonard site.

These sites date from the 12th to the 14th centuries.

The project seeks to gather more information about the village and the Nunnery site in particular.



21 CASTLE TERRACE CHURCH



Plan of the site

Found and partially excavated in 1998, it may be St Lawrence's. It has a chancel with semicircular apse and 1 metre thick walls with external pilaster buttresses. There is a divided nave with a chapel to its south. There are burials within the church. Grave markers, cist graves & much human bone found around it. There are substantial foundations. Mortar bonded sandstone blocks have been much robbed.



Artist's reconstruction of the church

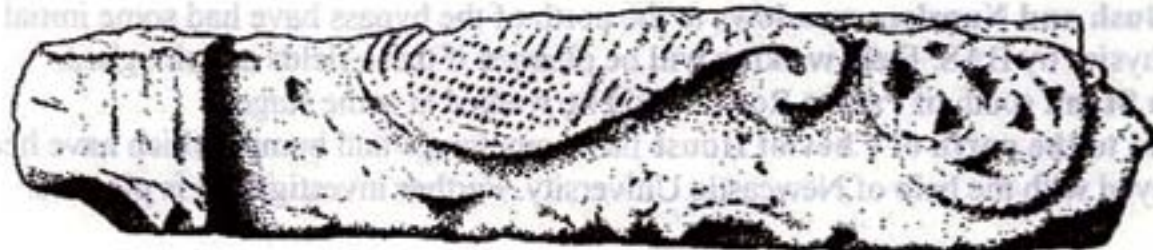
THE CHURCH ON THE SITE OF CHEVIOT HOUSE

Latest thinking is that this may be St Mary's, another church of Bondington, although Scott in his 1888 History of Berwick upon Tweed thought it was St Lawrence's. He saw a graveyard and church foundations with a tower, but gave no further details. In 2000 the present owners, Andrew and Shelagh Phillips, found human bones and a heavily carved grave slab.

A

Grave slab from Cheviot House

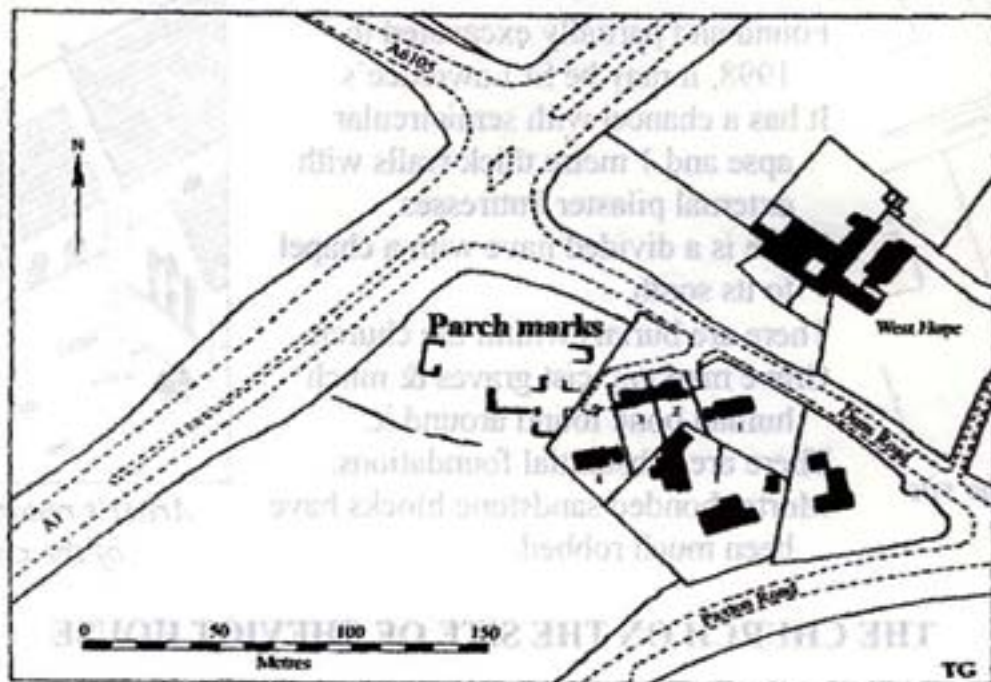
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ST LEONARD'S NUNNERY

The approximate site of the Nunnery has been known from historical records and field names. Documents record its foundation by King David I in about 1140. Ordnance Survey maps have marked a position, thought to be from the evidence of ploughmen, which seems to have been close to its now established site. Human bones and stone coffins were reported during the building of the nearby houses in 1954. Its exact location was established from an aerial photograph taken in 1976. This photograph (below) shows the outline of three buildings and a 60 metre long linear feature which may be a part of the Nunnery. The largest building is cruciform in shape and is surely a church. Recently two large parts of a 12th century grave cover with unusual carvings were discovered in a garden adjoining the site and, during field walking last autumn, a Pilgrim's Badge and piece of lead shot were found. The first use of firearms by an English army against the Scots was in 1326, 7 years before the Battle of Halidon Hill. The presence of a large English siege train may suggest firearms were used and could explain how the Nunnery of St Leonard came to be extensively damaged and burnt in the conflict.

The Nunnery area is a prime site for detailed investigation by the project.



Nunnery of St Leonard. Transcription of parch marks seen in 1976.

OTHER AREAS UNDER INVESTIGATION

Westhope Farm to the north east of the Duns road has already had geophysical surveys (some by the Border Archaeological Society 'BAS' group working with the Bondington Project) and excavation with negative findings.

Alder Bush and Nunslees meadows to the north of the bypass have had some initial geophysics by BAS. Field walking will be planned if these fields are ploughed.

Letham Stank south of Paxton Road should be walked at some stage.

The field to the north of Cheviot House has many lumps and bumps which have been surveyed with the help of Newcastle University. Further investigation is planned.