



HISTORIC SCOTLAND
ALBA AOSMHOR

JEDBURGH ABBEY

LARGE PRINT AUDIO GUIDE SCRIPT



1. Intro – Model of the Abbey

Hello and welcome to Jedburgh Abbey. The abbey today gives the impression of majesty, tranquillity – even serenity. But this impression belies a turbulent history. The story of Jedburgh is not only about the creation of one of the most magnificent churches in Scotland. It's one of brutal attacks and fervent rebuilding.

But before we continue with the story of Jedburgh, let me give you some brief instructions about how to use this audio guide.

At the end of every commentary just follow the instructions so that we can give you the best route around the grounds. You can pause this commentary at any time by pressing the red button and get me talking again by pressing the green one. You can adjust the volume with the yellow speaker buttons.

Remember our stewards are here to help you if you have any questions.

Outside the window you can see the magnificent abbey church as it is today. Next to you is a model of how Jedburgh Abbey looked in about 1510.

Of course the abbey church is not all you see when you look out of the window. In front of it are the remains of the cloisters. It's amazing to think that before the 1930s none of this was visible – it was covered with later houses and gardens. It wasn't until nineteen eighty-four, that archaeologists re-examined the whole site and revealed the lower buildings. Now not only can we see the beauty of the church but we also have a fascinating window on how the whole complex of a living breathing medieval abbey functioned.

Jedburgh was a place of worship for over a thousand years. But the story of the Abbey begins when it was founded by King David the first of Scotland. The order he brought into Jedburgh was the Augustinians – the black canons.

King David was a very religious man – but he was also politically very shrewd. To find out more about this fascinating order and the reasons why David was so keen to have them in Jedburgh press the green button.

2. The model of an Augustinian Canon

In the corner of the room is a model showing how the men who lived at Jedburgh dressed. It's the garb of Augustinian Canons. Their life was very similar to monks, but they followed St. Augustine rather than St. Benedict. And while monks were to be found in the peace of the countryside, canons made their home in the middle of towns. For of all the monastic orders, the Augustinians were the most involved in the secular world.

Because of their black habits the Augustinian canons were known as the black canons. The evidence of their success remains even today by the amount of places throughout Britain called "Canongate"; places where Augustinians were established.

King David the first set up several different religious orders throughout the Borders of Scotland and founded Jedburgh Abbey around 1138. It was a time of great religious fervour and as a truly pious man he wanted to spread the word of Christianity. But he also knew that in establishing religious houses he was also creating stability. Monks and canons made areas prosperous, brought in taxes, kept the population under control and wouldn't rebel like some aggressive barons.

But Jedburgh was not an easy posting. For the other thing that King David I was doing in building such a magnificent abbey so close to the English border was making a statement of his power and his claim on the land. Unfortunately for the canons at Jedburgh whenever the English King wanted to make a statement back, it was Jedburgh that was first in the firing line.

However over the years the abbey and the town developed a close relationship. Unlike many monasteries, it managed to be a spiritual centre without cutting itself off from the world. It served as the local parish church, and was used as such for centuries after the reformation. So the town and Jedburgh became interlinked, perhaps due in great part to the devout but out-going canons.

Find the tall glass display case near the model of the canon. In this case is one of the most exciting finds of the excavations of the nineteen eighties – the Jedburgh Comb. Press 201 to hear more about it.

If you'd rather continue the tour outside straight away then head to the exit. Once you're outside carry on across the walkway and stop when you get to the interpretation panel on your right. Then press the green button.

201. Layer – The Jedburgh Comb

On the tallest glass plinth in this display is the Jedburgh Comb. The comb is one of the most spectacular finds of the archaeological excavations of the nineteen eighties. Let's see what we can deduce from looking at this comb – for there are clues that not only help us to learn about medieval objects – they lead us to something much more sinister.

First of all it's a small delicately carved comb made from walrus ivory. Whoever owned this comb was quite well off to have something so fine. What else? It's so small it's pretty impractical for combing hair – so it was probably a man's comb used for a beard and moustache. Have a look at the teeth. You'll see that the finer teeth at the top still look unused because they were too thin to get through the beard: he preferred the larger teeth at the bottom.

Let's examine one of the pictures on the comb. On one side, a man with a shield is having an altercation with a dragon. The shield is the same type that soldiers are depicted using in the Bayeux tapestry so the comb must have been made between ten fifty and eleven seventy five, around the time the Abbey was first founded.

But who is this brave champion? St. George? No. He was usually depicted on a horse. Perhaps it's St. Michael, who also had a bit of a reputation as a dragon slayer at this time. But where are his halo or his angelic wings? No, the clue lies in the object that is situated between the heads of the man and the dragon. It looks like a ball, but it's probably an apple. If so, this is a picture of one of the most popular action heroes of the time – Hercules. His eleventh labour was to fight a dragon to steal a golden apple.

The fact that the pictures on both sides of the comb depict battles and lack any religious symbolism suggests that the man who owned it was not a member of the clergy. We're not sure who he was and this brings us to the intrigue.

The comb, and the objects around it were found in a sewage ditch next to the upper torso of a man. A man who was almost certainly murdered. He was thrown into the sewage ditch to get rid of the body. If it had been an ordinary robbery then the culprits would have surely taken these valuable items. As it is, they are left for us to marvel at.

If you want to find out about an object that is even older than this one, then just beside the comb, near the window you'll see

the fragments of an early Christian shrine. If you'd like to hear about it press 202.

If you'd rather continue the tour outside straight away then head to the exit.. Once you're outside carry on across the walkway and stop when you get to the interpretation panel on your right. Then press the green button.

202. Secondary layer: Early Christian Shrine

This is a wonderful example of Christian worship that existed in this area before the Augustinians arrived. It dates from the seven hundreds. It's part of a Christian shrine and it must have held the body or relics of someone of either great wealth or sanctity.

The carving on it is of various creatures on vines. We have birds at the top and middle and perhaps a dog and a shrew at the bottom. The thing that marks it out as Christian is that the animals are eating grapes – a symbol for the wine of the Eucharist. But the significant thing isn't just that this is Christian – it is that it's carved in the style of *Roman* Christianity. Christianity in Scotland had previously been established two hundred years before – but by monks from Ireland. These Celtic and Roman Catholic factions of Christianity struggled for dominance and it was by no means certain which would prevail.

It's probable that the area around Jedburgh had been a place of worship even before this shrine was carved and that this Roman Catholic abbey was founded at a place which already had established Christian associations. This shrine is proof that by the eighth century the Roman Church was making its presence felt here.

After you have explored the visitors' centre make your way outside. We're going to discover the history of the abbey, examine the delights of the architecture and try to understand what it must have been like for a canon to live and work in Jedburgh Abbey.

Once you're outside carry on across the walkway and stop when you get to the interpretation panel on your right. Then press the green button.

3. Cellars.

This is a good spot for you to get a sense of the size of the range. If you look at the abbey church in front of you, you'll see, below the tower, a huge archway. From the top of that archway extended a roof and it continued right above your head. The roof would have been high above you, still at that height of the top of that arch. The wall that you went over when you crossed the bridge from the visitors' centre was where it ended and it was around twenty metres high. As you can see the land slopes down – so the main floor was at a level above us. We're standing in a cellar.

SFX: Change acoustic to the inside of a cellar.

There was a large amount of storage space at Jedburgh and it was hugely important. In the middle-ages what you could eat depended on what was available that season. Therefore it was very important to store food for winter when there was a dearth of fresh food. And these cellars provided perfect conditions – cool and dark.

The old saying that one bad apple spoils a barrel was a serious issue for the canons, for Jedburgh was famous for the quality of its pears. And if stored properly in their barrels, they could last

for an awfully long time. Of course it wasn't just pears. Perhaps it was grain. Or maybe some nice cheese.

But a century after it was built, the cellar was abandoned – probably due to damage from the Wars of Independence in the early thirteen hundreds. And they built something else.

SFX: The sound of running water

There was a grain mill here. It was driven by water that the canons diverted from the Jed Water. This still runs underneath the visitors centre.

We're going to make our way up to the Chapter House now. Go up the stairs and you'll see another interpretation panel to the right of the path. Press the green button when you get there.

4. Chapter House

You're looking at the remains of the most important building outside the church. It's the Chapter House. It got its name because every morning the canons gathered here and started their meeting with a reading of a chapter from the rule of Saint Augustine. But they'd also hear communal confession, administer punishments and receive instructions or news.

Because it was so important it was one of the first buildings to be constructed. Other buildings were then built around it. The round piece of stone in the centre of the chapter house is the base of a column that supported a stone roof. The stone lines to the right of the column base and the gravelled area behind the small stone wall at the rear of the chapter house represent extensions and reductions to the size of the building as the community shrunk or expanded. The smallest square you can see marked on the ground is the size of the chapter house at the end of the Augustinian's time at Jedburgh when less than ten canons remained.

The four oblong slabs to the left of the column base mark graves. We don't know exactly who was buried here, but whoever they were they must have been highly respected men to be buried in such an important place. Perhaps abbots. We

do know from a study of the bones that they suffered from ailments such as arthritis and gout.

One of the things that the chapter house didn't have on this side of the building, was a door or any glass in the windows. This was because the lack of doors and windows meant that everything that was said here could be overheard and so proved that there were no secrets. Of course it also meant that it must have been, at times, absolutely freezing.

Let's move on into the abbey itself now. Continue along the path and go through the archway into the church. Once you're inside turn right and walk through the arch ahead of you until you find the interpretation panel on the presbytery. Press the play button when you're ready.

5. Walls

The walls of the abbey church at Jedburgh are an architectural history lesson in themselves. They not only reveal the innovation and ingenuity of the builders, but show the scars of destruction and how the abbey was often repaired and restructured.

If you look directly ahead from this board you'll see the remains of a wall with three levels of columns directly on top of each other. The openings on the first two levels are Romanesque in style. This is the style of the earliest parts of the church. It was popular until around the end of the eleven hundreds. It's very solid and the arches are rounded. But if you want to find a different later style, all you have to do is look directly above the Romanesque architecture to the third level of openings. This is the clearstory. The columns are far, far thinner and the arches have points. This is early gothic. Even though the styles are literally on top of one another they're completely unrelated. You can see that not only are the columns on the third level of a different type – they don't even match up to the columns below them. The reason is that this level was built around forty years later and in that time styles – and technology – had moved on.

Look at the remains of the large wall just ahead of you and to your left. You can see that it must have been built right across – completely blocking the presbytery from the choir. This wall is a much later addition. It's there because the Earl of Hertford, leading an English army, destroyed the whole eastern end of the abbey in the fifteen forties. At the time there wasn't the money to rebuild it so they put this wall up right across and just abandoned it. They hoped they'd get back to it when times were better, but they never did.

Abbeys such as Jedburgh weren't built in one go. They were complex and expensive projects. So they'd complete one section, usually the most sacred, and hope to build others later on. It took one hundred and twenty years to complete this church and during that time architectural styles changed and refined. Through looking at the walls in Jedburgh we can trace these changes. In addition, at Jedburgh even more building styles have been added to the mix as a result of war and rebuilding.

Now step down into the open area ahead of you, turn right and head towards the presbytery – there's a small plaque on the ground to let you know you're in the right place - and we'll find out what the walls can tell us there. Press the green button once you're there.

6. Presbytery

This is the spiritual heart of the abbey church for this is the location of the high altar. It was here that the canons performed their intense programme of religious services – roughly one every three hours.

As this was the canons' most sacred space it was the first to be constructed. They needed a presbytery so that the abbey could fulfil its primary function as a place of worship. Once it was functioning they completed other areas of the church. But once that was done then they came back to the presbytery to make it even more impressive, bigger and grander. Even though it's been brutally savaged by English raids – some of its power still remains.

And you can't miss the big Victorian tomb that's at the far end of the presbytery.

This area was a burial plot for the Rutherford family and was built long after the abbey became a ruin. Obviously a family of high status. But the habit of burying people of high status near the altar was true in medieval times too. The higher status you were. The nearer to the altar you were buried.

We are now going to make our way to the South Choir Chapel. Standing with your back to the iron railings, you will find it through the first arch on the left – Stop when you come to an impressive carved tomb in the middle of the floor.

7. Side Chapel/South Choir

Every canon had to say mass daily. This meant that only having one altar in the church wasn't going to be enough. So they had chapels at the side too. And this is one.

The altar was where those three stone tombstones are now: PAUSE. Altars were positioned at the East of a church or chapel to face the rising Sun, a symbol of Christ's resurrection. It was an accepted practice that religious houses didn't just say mass just on their own behalf. The elite of society had orders such as the Augustinians say mass for them. In this way they might spend less time in purgatory and stand a better chance of getting into heaven. In return the abbey might receive land or gifts.

But we can't ignore the tomb cover that you're standing in front of – it's been around Jedburgh for as long as anyone knows. It certainly isn't an original feature of this part of the church. Maybe such a fine tomb cover could have originally stood in front of the high altar. Some think that it's possible it was made for Bishop John of Glasgow. Bishop John was King David I's tutor and was instrumental in founding the Augustinian order at Jedburgh.

A contemporary wrote that the bishop of Glasgow had died and was “by reason of his exceeding virtue a close friend of King David of Scotland: he was buried in the church of Jedburgh in which he had himself arranged the house of canons regular.”

Make your way back to the main body of the church and walk towards the short wooden door in the North Transept. We’re now going to visit the Lothian aisle - the burial place for Marquises of Lothian. Press the green button when you’re inside.

8. Lothian Aisle (new stop)

We're now inside what was originally the north transept of the church but in 1681 was walled off to create this special burial place. The Lothian aisle as it's known, contains tombs and memorials ranging in date from as early as 1524 up to the present day. The memorials you can see around you are to prominent members of the Ker family, wealthy Jedburgh landowners and ancestors to the Marquises of Lothian, who continue to use this site as a burial place to this very day.

You can't help but notice the most striking tomb in this room, a life-sized effigy of William Schomberg Robert Kerr, the 8th Marquis of Lothian. He was buried here in 1870 and nine years later this elaborate monument was erected over his tomb.

William was something of a scholar, a man with literary tastes who went to Oxford University and later published a book on the American Civil War. The sculptor has captured the likeness of his subject, the monument has an air of tranquillity and

repose. It has been attributed to George Frederic Watts, the popular Victorian painter and sculptor and certainly fits in with the romantic style he was known for.

The other notable grave here is the medieval tomb found in an recess underneath the window. This elaborate memorial is to Andrew, the first Lord of Jedburgh who died in 1656.

When you're ready to continue, go back into the main body of the church and turn right. You're now in the nave. Head towards the wall at the far end and find the last interpretation panel on the left. This will be our next stop

9. The Nave

We are now standing in the nave. It's the best preserved part of the church. It was built later than the crossing and the presbytery, only fifty years later – but look at the difference. Once again we can see that this is in a Gothic style with the arches developing a slight point. This was the most modern style of architecture of the time.

The equivalent to our modern architect in the medieval era was a master mason. And abbeys were the places where they could experiment and push the boundaries of what was possible both architecturally and technically. They began to find ways of constructing buildings that could support greater height with less masonry.

Let's take a closer look at the walls. We have three levels. The arches at the bottom level led through to the aisles of the church and the top level contained windows. But the middle levels, though they look like windows, actually weren't. This level was blocked by the roof on the outside.

So why put in the arches at all? The primary reason is structural – there is less weight of masonry but the construction

means that the wall is still strong. The other reason is aesthetic – it looks beautiful.

Romanesque churches such as Jedburgh were solid stone buildings with small windows. But this new architecture was more graceful. The greater amount of window space meant that instead of the interior of abbeys being dark dingy places they became filled with light.

And the religious medieval mind would have been aware of the symbolism. For God was light. And the new modern churches meant that they were filled with his presence.

If you look to the back of the church, at the end where you are standing now, you will see two small doors on either side of the main door (pause). Take the one on the left and follow the arrow up the stairs. Be careful, it's quite narrow, but there's a lovely view down the nave when you get to the top. Press the green button there.

If you'd rather stay at ground level, stand with your back to the large archway and press the green button to listen to the commentary.

10. Gallery

From this marvellous view of the nave let's see if we can imagine what the church looked like eight hundred years ago. Much of the stone work was painted and perhaps the ceiling too. There was a wooden screen that divided the canons' part of the church from the ordinary folk. We can surmise from the location of the door from the cloister that this screen was almost certainly in the arch separating the nave from the crossing. The lay people had their own altar that rested by this screen.

The overall impression would have been of a simple space. In fact there wasn't even any furniture – people had to stand through services. Yet to be here would still have been awe inspiring. And the element that was that created that awe was the architecture. The same architecture that remains today.

The other aspect you notice from up here is the tower directly ahead of you. And again you might think that the big arch in its centre was a window, but it's not. If you look above the arch, indented in the stonework, you can see the shape of the roof and the angle that it sloped down. Once again this arch is not there to provide light – it's to lessen the amount of weight in the structure of the tower itself.

The tower contained bells – the smaller arches at the top are to let the sound out. However there's an interesting footnote to the tower's history that illustrates how the inhabitants of Jedburgh must have often lived under the fear of attack. For in the fourteenth century the abbey was so frequently assaulted that the canon's probably abandoned their dormitory and moved in to the tower as the safest place in the abbey.

But though the abbey suffered many blows – this end of the church is well preserved. There are two reasons for this. The first is that Jedburgh castle is behind us. So whenever Jedburgh was attacked it was tricky to set up big guns between the castle and the abbey. As you can see there was much more open land on the east side of the church and so the Eastern end was battered first.

But the other is that unlike some other orders the Augustinians always let this church be used by the local people. So that, even when the canons left, the people didn't. They continued to use the nave as their place of worship right up until eighteen seventy-five when another parish church was built. This continued use is probably a major factor in the splendid condition of the nave today.

If you went up the stairs then you need to make your way down now. Leave from the other side of the gallery. By the way, when you're at the bottom of the steps look above you. The medieval masons reused a roman altar as building stone in the ceiling.

After that head out of the big West Door, the exit at this end of the church. Once you are at the end of the pathway, turn back to face the church. Press the green button when you're ready to hear more.

11. The Great West Door

This is the magnificent west door. It was one of the grandest Scottish façades of its time. Let's see if we can imagine what it looked like hundreds of years ago in all its glory.

The niches above the door probably contained statues, Christ in the middle, Mary, to whom this church is dedicated, on the left and St. John or St. Peter on the right. Above the niches we can see a tall, narrow arch that was a window. If you look either side of the window you can see where there were four thin columns, about the size of drain pipes, now only one remains on each side. (Pause)The three nearest the arch have broken off at the top but you can see what they looked like because the ones to the farthest edge have survived.

The whole façade is topped by a magnificent round window, called a rose window. This is a later addition, probably in the thirteen hundreds. To complete the picture of how it would have looked you have to imagine that the whole façade was highlighted with the use of paint and even gold leaf.

The Great west door is the door where everyone, other than the canons, entered the abbey. So it was built to impress and inspire awe. It's a tribute to the masons that hundreds of years

later, even with all the damage it's suffered, it still does the same job.

You might want to spend a little time enjoying the remarkable designs and carvings around the door or visit the Stone Display here, where you can see an exhibition of medieval carving and the techniques that masons used to construct Jedburgh.

Press the green button when you're ready to hear the directions to our next stop.

12. Directions

Head back into the church via the Great West Door. When you're inside take the first opening on the right. Go down the steps and stand with the church to your left. Press the green button when you are there.

13. The Cloister

This is the cloister and we're now standing at its Western side. It was an open court, covered at its edges with a wooden roof. It was a ceremonial processional route and a private place of contemplation. It was also a place of work and study. It's on this side of the Abbey, the south side, so that it gets maximum light.

Like the Chapter House the size of this cloister varied depending on the state of the abbey. The hedge around a central planted area is the original extent of the cloister. But when times were good and there were many monks, they had to enlarge it. Obviously they couldn't extend it into the church and they didn't want to knock the buildings down at the other side of the cloister either, so they built the cloister into the ground floor of their refectory range.

The cloister is both literally and symbolically at the centre of the abbey. All around the cloister are the buildings that cater for all the canons' needs. And each side of the cloister had a particular character and function. The far side, near the chapter house, was the business side. The side furthest away from the abbey was the location of the refectory.

The side furthest from the chapter house, where you're standing now, was the side nearest the secular world. But the most important side was the north side to your left; the side adjoining the church. It was both nearest the centre of worship and furthest away from the hubbub of the mills, kitchens and workers. The peaceful, spiritual meditative side. You might want to spend some time here.

If you like to hear more about the gardens here press 121.

Otherwise our next stop is the refectory. Follow the gravel path until you reach the interpretation panel at the end. Press the green button when you're there.

121. Cloister Gardens - secondary layer

Medieval gardeners had a different view of plants to us. There were no rigid classifications of fruit, vegetable or herbs. They'd be viewed according to their uses. And though there were far fewer varieties of plants around than there are today they had many uses.

So for example roses weren't just decorative, they were used to flavour food. As were nettles and dandelions. However fennel, as well as being eaten, was also used as cure for snake bites. Onions were used to improve eyesight. Foxglove to ease the heart. Which shows that they knew a thing or two because it still is today.

Through their study of horticulture, the religious orders led the way in developing gardening techniques and were ahead of their contemporaries in studying plants for medicine.

But the canons were also acutely aware of their symbolic religious significance. For example there were around twelve flowers dedicated to the Virgin Mary alone. So a rose wasn't just food flavouring and a purgative. The white rose symbolised the virgin's purity, the red rose the blood of Christ.

If a canon looked at our juniper tree planted in the centre of the hedged garden, he'd know that its branches were used to sprinkle holy water in the church, its wood was good for smoking fish, its bark could be made into rope and its roots woven into baskets. He might have even known it can cure sheep scab. But in the context of a cloister garden he was probably more aware that it symbolised eternal life.

So this garden was supermarket, chemist, pharmacy and herbalist. But its primary function was to be a meditative and spiritual haven. The splendour, and utility, of flowers were seen as evidence of God's works. enjoy the beauty, the scents and the tranquillity in the same way as the medieval canons.

Now follow the gravel path until you reach the interpretation panel at the end. Press the green button when you're there.

14.The Refectory

The walls directly in front of you extended upwards and on the first floor was the canons refectory – where they ate. Below that was more storage space.

Medieval life was guided much more by the seasons than now. In the winter, when the days were shorter the canons slept longer and only had one meal a day. In the summer they slept less, and because it was harvest time, they'd have been busier and so needed more food. Then they got an extra small meal.

The canons' didn't speak during their meal; the only sound was of one of their brethren reading from an edifying religious tome. There wasn't a fire so sometimes it must have been pretty cold. Their food was generally simple vegetarian fare. Perhaps on feast days their diet might be supplemented by fowl or fish.

These hardships were an everyday fact of the canons' existence. Every area of the canons' life was organised to allow them to better serve god. For example, it was considered that too much meat would lead to sinful thoughts. Therefore meat was limited to the old and the ill who were too weak to succumb to temptation.

For an ordinary peasant these privations wouldn't be much worse than normal life. But many of the canons came from higher born families where there was plenty of food; beef and mutton and many fancy delights. The frugal religious meal was very different from what they was used to.

Now go down the stone steps. Stop at the end of the path between the stone steps on your left and the gravelled area on your right. Press the green button once you're there.

15. Kitchen

It is likely that the kitchen was in this area of the abbey. Given the simplicity of the food that the Abbey's cooks had to prepare and their access to the variety of produce that Jedburgh provided their job might at first seem to be a simple one. After all, the only dish they really cooked for the canons was vegetable stew.

But there was probably more to it.. The abbot, for example, had to have different food. He had a duty to be the abbey's contact with the outside world and this meant wining and dining. Honoured and influential guests couldn't be expected to feast on a canon's meagre rations. And in the later medieval period, the rigour of religious houses grew more lax and the canon's food got fancier. They began to talk of "austerity of the heart" rather than the serious physical austerity of when the orders were first founded. Medieval tales of well fed and watered holy men abound – perhaps the most famous being Robin Hood's Friar Tuck.

And given that these canons lived in a glorious abbey and were surrounded by top quality food, wouldn't it be extraordinary if they had a standard of living that was not much better than a peasant?

Now cross over the wooden step and follow the path down some stone steps until you reach the grey cobbled pathway on the lowest level. When you reach the end of the iron railings around the ditch press the green button for more directions.

16. Directions

Turn to stand with your back to the iron railings now. Directly ahead of you are the remains of a doorway which led into a room. Go into this room and press the green button to hear more

17. Abbot's Residence

Above us is thought to have been the Abbot's residence. Once again there is nothing random about its location in the abbey buildings. It is placed near the cloister but could probably be reached directly from the town. It is symbolic of the abbot's position – he is both a part of the abbey and their main link with the outside world. These remains are of the undercroft beneath the abbot's rooms – but they are of high quality as befits someone of elevated status. Just look at all the imposing column bases that supported it.

The post of Abbot was a vital one. They had to look after the welfare of the abbey in both a spiritual and practical capacity. But at the same time they were important people at court. And here they had more than simply a spiritual role. When the abbey was founded most nobility were illiterate and Abbots gave vital intellectual input into political issues. As well as providing religious leadership they had to be efficient administrators, knowledgeable businessmen and canny politicians.

They could be placed in enormously difficult situations. Especially at a political hot-spot like Jedburgh. For instance during the early years of the Wars of Independence Jedburgh

was held to be pro-English. Why? Because when the English king, Edward I stayed here during his campaign of twelve ninety-six, he naturally put in place an abbot that was sympathetic to his cause. You can imagine how popular that would have been with King Robert the Bruce. As the Scottish King's power increased Abbot William and eleven canons were forced to flee to Yorkshire. The new abbot, Kennock, is credited with keeping the peace around Jedburgh for the next decade through the power of prayer.

Now, let's have a look at an important feature in the daily life and working of the monastery. Go back to the iron railings and then press the green button.

18. Great Drain

This is the mill-lade. It's evidence of the advanced use of water. Ahead of you, behind the hedge row is the Jed Water. The canons' diverted water from it, from a point further up to your right, and directed it for use at the Abbey. It would flow out of the bridge to your left. By this stage it would be pretty dirty, having been used to flush toilets, power a mill and had the drains emptied into it.

Milling was an important factor in the abbey existence though millers were not popular people. In nearly all literature of the period they are not portrayed in good light. A famous example is vulgar drunken miller in Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. This is because millers were the equivalent to our tax collectors. One of the ways that Jedburgh created income was that it took a tithe, which is a form of tax from all its parishes. This tithe was sometimes simply collected as cash— but often it was taken at the milling stage of a community's harvest. The miller milled the corn – but then took a percentage as tax.

There were working mills in the cloister at Jedburgh right up until the nineteen sixties. Water no longer flows through this lade, but underneath the visitors' centre there is still running water.

Let's move down the path, but stop before you go back into the visitors' centre. Press the green button, for one last look at the Abbey.

19. Conclusion

The imposing beauty of the abbey church has survived through the trials and tribulations of the history. The splendour and power of the wonderful Romanesque architecture still moves us centuries after it was built. But while the structure inspires awe, the remains of the cloisters remind us of the people who lived, worked and worshipped here.

Some say that by the sixteenth century, Border abbeys such as Jedburgh were no longer regarded as power houses of the divine but as sources of revenue and positions for royal servants or predatory individuals.

And with the energies of the Canons diverted into more worldly matters, they began to neglect the upkeep of the Church and the Abbey buildings. So if things fell down or were damaged in battle either they didn't get repaired or they were repaired badly.

But it is the people of Jedburgh, who worshipped here before the canons arrived and continued to do so after they left, who are the main reason the church has survived as well as it has. It was, and remains, their abbey.

If you've got the bug for monks and abbeys you might want to visit the Cistercian Abbey of Melrose or find out about the Premonstratensians at Dryburgh. There's information in the visitors' centre about how to get there.

Goodbye and thank you for visiting Jedburgh Abbey.

You've been listening to an Antenna Audio tour.

1. Intro – Model of the Abbey

Hello and welcome to Jedburgh Abbey. The abbey today gives the impression of majesty, tranquillity – even serenity. But this impression belies a turbulent history. The story of Jedburgh is not only about the creation of one of the most magnificent churches in Scotland. It's one of brutal attacks and fervent rebuilding.

But before we continue with the story of Jedburgh, let me give you some brief instructions about how to use this audio guide.

At the end of every commentary just follow the instructions so that we can give you the best route around the grounds. You can pause this commentary at any time by pressing the red button and get me talking again by pressing the green one. You can adjust the volume with the yellow speaker buttons.

Remember our stewards are here to help you if you have any questions.

Outside the window you can see the magnificent abbey church as it is today. Next to you is a model of how Jedburgh Abbey looked in about 1510.

Of course the abbey church is not all you see when you look out of the window. In front of it are the remains of the cloisters. It's amazing to think that before the 1930s none of this was visible – it was covered with later houses and gardens. It wasn't until nineteen eighty-four, that archaeologists re-examined the whole site and revealed the lower buildings. Now not only can we see the beauty of the church but we also have a fascinating window on how the whole complex of a living breathing medieval abbey functioned.

Jedburgh was a place of worship for over a thousand years. But the story of the Abbey begins when it was founded by King David the first of Scotland. The order he brought into Jedburgh was the Augustinians – the black canons.

King David was a very religious man – but he was also politically very shrewd. To find out more about this fascinating order and the reasons why David was so keen to have them in Jedburgh press the green button.

2. The model of an Augustinian Canon

In the corner of the room is a model showing how the men who lived at Jedburgh dressed. It's the garb of Augustinian Canons. Their life was very similar to monks, but they followed St. Augustine rather than St. Benedict. And while monks were to be found in the peace of the countryside, canons made their home in the middle of towns. For of all the monastic orders, the Augustinians were the most involved in the secular world.

Because of their black habits the Augustinian canons were known as the black canons. The evidence of their success remains even today by the amount of places throughout Britain called "Canongate"; places where Augustinians were established.

King David the first set up several different religious orders throughout the Borders of Scotland and founded Jedburgh Abbey around 1138. It was a time of great religious fervour and as a truly pious man he wanted to spread the word of Christianity. But he also knew that in establishing religious houses he was also creating stability. Monks and canons made areas prosperous, brought in taxes, kept the population under control and wouldn't rebel like some aggressive barons.

But Jedburgh was not an easy posting. For the other thing that King David I was doing in building such a magnificent abbey so close to the English border was making a statement of his power and his claim on the land. Unfortunately for the canons at Jedburgh whenever the English King wanted to make a statement back, it was Jedburgh that was first in the firing line.

However over the years the abbey and the town developed a close relationship. Unlike many monasteries, it managed to be a spiritual centre without cutting itself off from the world. It served as the local parish church, and was used as such for centuries after the reformation. So the town and Jedburgh became interlinked, perhaps due in great part to the devout but out-going canons.

Find the tall glass display case near the model of the canon. In this case is one of the most exciting finds of the excavations of the nineteen eighties – the Jedburgh Comb. Press 201 to hear more about it.

If you'd rather continue the tour outside straight away then head to the exit. Once you're outside carry on across the walkway and stop when you get to the interpretation panel on your right. Then press the green button.

201. Layer – The Jedburgh Comb

On the tallest glass plinth in this display is the Jedburgh Comb. The comb is one of the most spectacular finds of the archaeological excavations of the nineteen eighties. Let's see what we can deduce from looking at this comb – for there are clues that not only help us to learn about medieval objects – they lead us to something much more sinister.

First of all it's a small delicately carved comb made from walrus ivory. Whoever owned this comb was quite well off to have something so fine. What else? It's so small it's pretty impractical for combing hair – so it was probably a man's comb used for a beard and moustache. Have a look at the teeth. You'll see that the finer teeth at the top still look unused because they were too thin to get through the beard: he preferred the larger teeth at the bottom.

Let's examine one of the pictures on the comb. On one side, a man with a shield is having an altercation with a dragon. The shield is the same type that soldiers are depicted using in the Bayeux tapestry so the comb must have been made between ten fifty and eleven seventy five, around the time the Abbey was first founded.

But who is this brave champion? St. George? No. He was usually depicted on a horse. Perhaps it's St. Michael, who also had a bit of a reputation as a dragon slayer at this time. But where are his halo or his angelic wings? No, the clue lies in the object that is situated between the heads of the man and the dragon. It looks like a ball, but it's probably an apple. If so, this is a picture of one of the most popular action heroes of the time – Hercules. His eleventh labour was to fight a dragon to steal a golden apple.

The fact that the pictures on both sides of the comb depict battles and lack any religious symbolism suggests that the man who owned it was not a member of the clergy. We're not sure who he was and this brings us to the intrigue.

The comb, and the objects around it were found in a sewage ditch next to the upper torso of a man. A man who was almost certainly murdered. He was thrown into the sewage ditch to get rid of the body. If it had been an ordinary robbery then the culprits would have surely taken these valuable items. As it is, they are left for us to marvel at.

If you want to find out about an object that is even older than this one, then just beside the comb, near the window you'll see

the fragments of an early Christian shrine. If you'd like to hear about it press 202.

If you'd rather continue the tour outside straight away then head to the exit.. Once you're outside carry on across the walkway and stop when you get to the interpretation panel on your right. Then press the green button.

202. Secondary layer: Early Christian Shrine

This is a wonderful example of Christian worship that existed in this area before the Augustinians arrived. It dates from the seven hundreds. It's part of a Christian shrine and it must have held the body or relics of someone of either great wealth or sanctity.

The carving on it is of various creatures on vines. We have birds at the top and middle and perhaps a dog and a shrew at the bottom. The thing that marks it out as Christian is that the animals are eating grapes – a symbol for the wine of the Eucharist. But the significant thing isn't just that this is Christian – it is that it's carved in the style of *Roman* Christianity. Christianity in Scotland had previously been established two hundred years before – but by monks from Ireland. These Celtic and Roman Catholic factions of Christianity struggled for dominance and it was by no means certain which would prevail.

It's probable that the area around Jedburgh had been a place of worship even before this shrine was carved and that this Roman Catholic abbey was founded at a place which already had established Christian associations. This shrine is proof that by the eighth century the Roman Church was making its presence felt here.

After you have explored the visitors' centre make your way outside. We're going to discover the history of the abbey, examine the delights of the architecture and try to understand what it must have been like for a canon to live and work in Jedburgh Abbey.

Once you're outside carry on across the walkway and stop when you get to the interpretation panel on your right. Then press the green button.

3. Cellars.

This is a good spot for you to get a sense of the size of the range. If you look at the abbey church in front of you, you'll see, below the tower, a huge archway. From the top of that archway extended a roof and it continued right above your head. The roof would have been high above you, still at that height of the top of that arch. The wall that you went over when you crossed the bridge from the visitors' centre was where it ended and it was around twenty metres high. As you can see the land slopes down – so the main floor was at a level above us. We're standing in a cellar.

SFX: Change acoustic to the inside of a cellar.

There was a large amount of storage space at Jedburgh and it was hugely important. In the middle-ages what you could eat depended on what was available that season. Therefore it was very important to store food for winter when there was a dearth of fresh food. And these cellars provided perfect conditions – cool and dark.

The old saying that one bad apple spoils a barrel was a serious issue for the canons, for Jedburgh was famous for the quality of its pears. And if stored properly in their barrels, they could last

for an awfully long time. Of course it wasn't just pears. Perhaps it was grain. Or maybe some nice cheese.

But a century after it was built, the cellar was abandoned – probably due to damage from the Wars of Independence in the early thirteen hundreds. And they built something else.

SFX: The sound of running water

There was a grain mill here. It was driven by water that the canons diverted from the Jed Water. This still runs underneath the visitors centre.

We're going to make our way up to the Chapter House now. Go up the stairs and you'll see another interpretation panel to the right of the path. Press the green button when you get there.

4. Chapter House

You're looking at the remains of the most important building outside the church. It's the Chapter House. It got its name because every morning the canons gathered here and started their meeting with a reading of a chapter from the rule of Saint Augustine. But they'd also hear communal confession, administer punishments and receive instructions or news.

Because it was so important it was one of the first buildings to be constructed. Other buildings were then built around it. The round piece of stone in the centre of the chapter house is the base of a column that supported a stone roof. The stone lines to the right of the column base and the gravelled area behind the small stone wall at the rear of the chapter house represent extensions and reductions to the size of the building as the community shrunk or expanded. The smallest square you can see marked on the ground is the size of the chapter house at the end of the Augustinian's time at Jedburgh when less than ten canons remained.

The four oblong slabs to the left of the column base mark graves. We don't know exactly who was buried here, but whoever they were they must have been highly respected men to be buried in such an important place. Perhaps abbots. We

do know from a study of the bones that they suffered from ailments such as arthritis and gout.

One of the things that the chapter house didn't have on this side of the building, was a door or any glass in the windows. This was because the lack of doors and windows meant that everything that was said here could be overheard and so proved that there were no secrets. Of course it also meant that it must have been, at times, absolutely freezing.

Let's move on into the abbey itself now. Continue along the path and go through the archway into the church. Once you're inside turn right and walk through the arch ahead of you until you find the interpretation panel on the presbytery. Press the play button when you're ready.

5. Walls

The walls of the abbey church at Jedburgh are an architectural history lesson in themselves. They not only reveal the innovation and ingenuity of the builders, but show the scars of destruction and how the abbey was often repaired and restructured.

If you look directly ahead from this board you'll see the remains of a wall with three levels of columns directly on top of each other. The openings on the first two levels are Romanesque in style. This is the style of the earliest parts of the church. It was popular until around the end of the eleven hundreds. It's very solid and the arches are rounded. But if you want to find a different later style, all you have to do is look directly above the Romanesque architecture to the third level of openings. This is the clearstory. The columns are far, far thinner and the arches have points. This is early gothic. Even though the styles are literally on top of one another they're completely unrelated. You can see that not only are the columns on the third level of a different type – they don't even match up to the columns below them. The reason is that this level was built around forty years later and in that time styles – and technology – had moved on.

Look at the remains of the large wall just ahead of you and to your left. You can see that it must have been built right across – completely blocking the presbytery from the choir. This wall is a much later addition. It's there because the Earl of Hertford, leading an English army, destroyed the whole eastern end of the abbey in the fifteen forties. At the time there wasn't the money to rebuild it so they put this wall up right across and just abandoned it. They hoped they'd get back to it when times were better, but they never did.

Abbeys such as Jedburgh weren't built in one go. They were complex and expensive projects. So they'd complete one section, usually the most sacred, and hope to build others later on. It took one hundred and twenty years to complete this church and during that time architectural styles changed and refined. Through looking at the walls in Jedburgh we can trace these changes. In addition, at Jedburgh even more building styles have been added to the mix as a result of war and rebuilding.

Now step down into the open area ahead of you, turn right and head towards the presbytery – there's a small plaque on the ground to let you know you're in the right place - and we'll find out what the walls can tell us there. Press the green button once you're there.

6. Presbytery

As this was the canons' most sacred space it was the first to be constructed. They needed a presbytery so that the abbey could fulfil its primary function as a place of worship. Once it was functioning they completed other areas of the church. But once that was done then they came back to the presbytery to make it even more impressive, bigger and grander. Even though it's been brutally savaged by English raids – some of its power still remains.

And you can't miss the big Victorian tomb that's at the far end of the presbytery.

This area was a burial plot for the Rutherford family and was built long after the abbey became a ruin. Obviously a family of high status. But the habit of burying people of high status near the altar was true in medieval times too. The higher status you were. The nearer to the altar you were buried.

We are now going to make our way to the South Choir Chapel. Standing with your back to the iron railings, you will find it through the first arch on the left – Stop when you come to an impressive carved tomb in the middle of the floor.

7. Side Chapel/South Choir

We can't ignore the tomb cover that you're standing in front of – it's been around Jedburgh for as long as anyone knows. It certainly isn't an original feature of this part of the church. Maybe such a fine tomb cover could have originally stood in front of the high altar. Some think that it's possible it was made for Bishop John of Glasgow. Bishop John was King David I's tutor and was instrumental in founding the Augustinian order at Jedburgh.

A contemporary wrote that the bishop of Glasgow had died and was “by reason of his exceeding virtue a close friend of King David of Scotland: he was buried in the church of Jedburgh in which he had himself arranged the house of canons regular.”

Make your way back to the main body of the church and walk towards the short wooden door in the North Transept. We're now going to visit the Lothian aisle - the burial place for Marquises of Lothian. Press the green button when you're inside.

8. Lothian Aisle (new stop)

We're now inside what was originally the north transept of the church but in 1681 was walled off to create this special burial place. The Lothian aisle as it's known, contains tombs and memorials ranging in date from as early as 1524 up to the present day. The memorials you can see around you are to prominent members of the Ker family, wealthy Jedburgh landowners and ancestors to the Marquises of Lothian, who continue to use this site as a burial place to this very day.

You can't help but notice the most striking tomb in this room, a life-sized effigy of William Schomberg Robert Kerr, the 8th Marquis of Lothian. He was buried here in 1870 and nine years later this elaborate monument was erected over his tomb.

William was something of a scholar, a man with literary tastes who went to Oxford University and later published a book on the American Civil War. The sculptor has captured the likeness of his subject, the monument has an air of tranquillity and

repose. It has been attributed to George Frederic Watts, the popular Victorian painter and sculptor and certainly fits in with the romantic style he was known for.

The other notable grave here is the medieval tomb found in an recess underneath the window. This elaborate memorial is to Andrew, the first Lord of Jedburgh who died in 1656.

When you're ready to continue, go back into the main body of the church and turn right. You're now in the nave. Head towards the wall at the far end and find the last interpretation panel on the left. This will be our next stop

9. The Nave

The equivalent to our modern architect in the medieval era was a master mason. And abbeys were the places where they could experiment and push the boundaries of what was possible both architecturally and technically. They began to find ways of constructing buildings that could support greater height with less masonry.

Let's take a closer look at the walls. We have three levels. The arches at the bottom level led through to the aisles of the church and the top level contained windows. But the middle levels, though they look like windows, actually weren't. This level was blocked by the roof on the outside.

So why put in the arches at all? The primary reason is structural – there is less weight of masonry but the construction means that the wall is still strong. The other reason is aesthetic – it looks beautiful.

If you look to the back of the church, at the end where you are standing now, you will see two small doors on either side of the main door (pause). Take the one on the left and follow the arrow up the stairs. Be careful, it's quite narrow, but there's a

lovely view down the nave when you get to the top. Press the green button there.

If you'd rather stay at ground level, stand with your back to the large archway and press the green button to listen to the commentary.

10. Gallery

From this marvellous view of the nave let's see if we can imagine what the church looked like eight hundred years ago. Much of the stone work was painted and perhaps the ceiling too. There was a wooden screen that divided the canons' part of the church from the ordinary folk. We can surmise from the location of the door from the cloister that this screen was almost certainly in the arch separating the nave from the crossing. The lay people had their own altar that rested by this screen.

The overall impression would have been of a simple space. In fact there wasn't even any furniture – people had to stand through services. Yet to be here would still have been awe inspiring. And the element that was that created that awe was the architecture. The same architecture that remains today.

The other aspect you notice from up here is the tower directly ahead of you. And again you might think that the big arch in its centre was a window, but it's not. If you look above the arch, indented in the stonework, you can see the shape of the roof and the angle that it sloped down. Once again this arch is not there to provide light – it's to lessen the amount of weight in the structure of the tower itself.

The tower contained bells – the smaller arches at the top are to let the sound out. However there's an interesting footnote to the tower's history that illustrates how the inhabitants of Jedburgh must have often lived under the fear of attack. For in the fourteenth century the abbey was so frequently assaulted that the canon's probably abandoned their dormitory and moved in to the tower as the safest place in the abbey.

But though the abbey suffered many blows – this end of the church is well preserved. There are two reasons for this. The first is that Jedburgh castle is behind us. So whenever Jedburgh was attacked it was tricky to set up big guns between the castle and the abbey. As you can see there was much more open land on the east side of the church and so the Eastern end was battered first.

But the other is that unlike some other orders the Augustinians always let this church be used by the local people. So that, even when the canons left, the people didn't. They continued to use the nave as their place of worship right up until eighteen seventy-five when another parish church was built. This continued use is probably a major factor in the splendid condition of the nave today.

If you went up the stairs then you need to make your way down now. Leave from the other side of the gallery. By the way, when you're at the bottom of the steps look above you. The medieval masons reused a roman altar as building stone in the ceiling.

After that head out of the big West Door, the exit at this end of the church. Once you are at the end of the pathway, turn back to face the church. Press the green button when you're ready to hear more.

11. The Great West Door

This is the magnificent west door. It was one of the grandest Scottish façades of its time. Let's see if we can imagine what it looked like hundreds of years ago in all its glory.

The niches above the door probably contained statues, Christ in the middle, Mary, to whom this church is dedicated, on the left and St. John or St. Peter on the right. Above the niches we can see a tall, narrow arch that was a window. If you look either side of the window you can see where there were four thin columns, about the size of drain pipes, now only one remains on each side. (Pause)The three nearest the arch have broken off at the top but you can see what they looked like because the ones to the farthest edge have survived.

The whole façade is topped by a magnificent round window, called a rose window. This is a later addition, probably in the thirteen hundreds. To complete the picture of how it would have looked you have to imagine that the whole façade was highlighted with the use of paint and even gold leaf.

The Great west door is the door where everyone, other than the canons, entered the abbey. So it was built to impress and inspire awe. It's a tribute to the masons that hundreds of years

later, even with all the damage it's suffered, it still does the same job.

You might want to spend a little time enjoying the remarkable designs and carvings around the door or visit the Stone Display here, where you can see an exhibition of medieval carving and the techniques that masons used to construct Jedburgh.

Press the green button when you're ready to hear the directions to our next stop.

12. Directions

Head back into the church via the Great West Door. When you're inside take the first opening on the right. Go down the steps and stand with the church to your left. Press the green button when you are there.

13. The Cloister

This is the cloister and we're now standing at its Western side. It was an open court, covered at its edges with a wooden roof. It was a ceremonial processional route and a private place of contemplation. It was also a place of work and study. It's on this side of the Abbey, the south side, so that it gets maximum light.

Like the Chapter House the size of this cloister varied depending on the state of the abbey. The hedge around a central planted area is the original extent of the cloister. But when times were good and there were many monks, they had to enlarge it. Obviously they couldn't extend it into the church and they didn't want to knock the buildings down at the other side of the cloister either, so they built the cloister into the ground floor of their refectory range.

The cloister is both literally and symbolically at the centre of the abbey. All around the cloister are the buildings that cater for all the canons' needs. And each side of the cloister had a particular character and function. The far side, near the chapter house, was the business side. The side furthest away from the abbey was the location of the refectory.

The side furthest from the chapter house, where you're standing now, was the side nearest the secular world. But the most important side was the north side to your left; the side adjoining the church. It was both nearest the centre of worship and furthest away from the hubbub of the mills, kitchens and workers. The peaceful, spiritual meditative side. You might want to spend some time here.

If you like to hear more about the gardens here press 121.

Otherwise our next stop is the refectory. Follow the gravel path until you reach the interpretation panel at the end. Press the green button when you're there.

121. Cloister Gardens - secondary layer

Medieval gardeners had a different view of plants to us. There were no rigid classifications of fruit, vegetable or herbs. They'd be viewed according to their uses. And though there were far fewer varieties of plants around than there are today they had many uses.

So for example roses weren't just decorative, they were used to flavour food. As were nettles and dandelions. However fennel, as well as being eaten, was also used as cure for snake bites. Onions were used to improve eyesight. Foxglove to ease the heart. Which shows that they knew a thing or two because it still is today.

Through their study of horticulture, the religious orders led the way in developing gardening techniques and were ahead of their contemporaries in studying plants for medicine.

But the canons were also acutely aware of their symbolic religious significance. For example there were around twelve flowers dedicated to the Virgin Mary alone. So a rose wasn't just food flavouring and a purgative. The white rose symbolised the virgin's purity, the red rose the blood of Christ.

If a canon looked at our juniper tree planted in the centre of the hedged garden, he'd know that its branches were used to sprinkle holy water in the church, its wood was good for smoking fish, its bark could be made into rope and its roots woven into baskets. He might have even known it can cure sheep scab. But in the context of a cloister garden he was probably more aware that it symbolised eternal life.

Now follow the gravel path until you reach the interpretation panel at the end. Press the green button when you're there.

14.The Refectory

The walls directly in front of you extended upwards and on the first floor was the canons refectory – where they ate. Below that was more storage space.

Medieval life was guided much more by the seasons than now. In the winter, when the days were shorter the canons slept longer and only had one meal a day. In the summer they slept less, and because it was harvest time, they'd have been busier and so needed more food. Then they got an extra small meal.

The canons' didn't speak during their meal; the only sound was of one of their brethren reading from an edifying religious tome. There wasn't a fire so sometimes it must have been pretty cold. Their food was generally simple vegetarian fare. Perhaps on feast days their diet might be supplemented by fowl or fish.

These hardships were an everyday fact of the canons' existence. Every area of the canons' life was organised to allow them to better serve god. For example, it was considered that too much meat would lead to sinful thoughts. Therefore meat was limited to the old and the ill who were too weak to succumb to temptation.

For an ordinary peasant these privations wouldn't be much worse than normal life. But many of the canons came from higher born families where there was plenty of food; beef and mutton and many fancy delights. The frugal religious meal was very different from what they was used to.

Now go down the stone steps. Stop at the end of the path between the stone steps on your left and the gravelled area on your right. Press the green button once you're there.

15. Kitchen

It is likely that the kitchen was in this area of the abbey. Given the simplicity of the food that the Abbey's cooks had to prepare and their access to the variety of produce that Jedburgh provided their job might at first seem to be a simple one. After all, the only dish they really cooked for the canons was vegetable stew.

But there was probably more to it.. The abbot, for example, had to have different food. He had a duty to be the abbey's contact with the outside world and this meant wining and dining. Honoured and influential guests couldn't be expected to feast on a canon's meagre rations. And in the later medieval period, the rigour of religious houses grew more lax and the canon's food got fancier. They began to talk of "austerity of the heart" rather than the serious physical austerity of when the orders were first founded. Medieval tales of well fed and watered holy men abound – perhaps the most famous being Robin Hood's Friar Tuck.

And given that these canons lived in a glorious abbey and were surrounded by top quality food, wouldn't it be extraordinary if they had a standard of living that was not much better than a peasant?

Now cross over the wooden step and follow the path down some stone steps until you reach the grey cobbled pathway on the lowest level. When you reach the end of the iron railings around the ditch press the green button for more directions.

16. Directions

Turn to stand with your back to the iron railings now. Directly ahead of you are the remains of a doorway which led into a room. Go into this room and press the green button to hear more

17. Abbot's Residence

Above us is thought to have been the Abbot's residence. Once again there is nothing random about its location in the abbey buildings. It is placed near the cloister but could probably be reached directly from the town. It is symbolic of the abbot's position – he is both a part of the abbey and their main link with the outside world. These remains are of the undercroft beneath the abbot's rooms – but they are of high quality as befits someone of elevated status. Just look at all the imposing column bases that supported it.

The post of Abbot was a vital one. They had to look after the welfare of the abbey in both a spiritual and practical capacity. But at the same time they were important people at court. And here they had more than simply a spiritual role. When the abbey was founded most nobility were illiterate and Abbots gave vital intellectual input into political issues. As well as providing religious leadership they had to be efficient administrators, knowledgeable businessmen and canny politicians.

They could be placed in enormously difficult situations. Especially at a political hot-spot like Jedburgh. For instance during the early years of the Wars of Independence Jedburgh

was held to be pro-English. Why? Because when the English king, Edward I stayed here during his campaign of twelve ninety-six, he naturally put in place an abbot that was sympathetic to his cause. You can imagine how popular that would have been with King Robert the Bruce. As the Scottish King's power increased Abbot William and eleven canons were forced to flee to Yorkshire. The new abbot, Kennock, is credited with keeping the peace around Jedburgh for the next decade through the power of prayer.

Now, let's have a look at an important feature in the daily life and working of the monastery. Go back to the iron railings and then press the green button.

18. Great Drain

This is the mill-lade. It's evidence of the advanced use of water. Ahead of you, behind the hedge row is the Jed Water. The canons' diverted water from it, from a point further up to your right, and directed it for use at the Abbey. It would flow out of the bridge to your left. By this stage it would be pretty dirty, having been used to flush toilets, power a mill and had the drains emptied into it.

Milling was an important factor in the abbey existence though millers were not popular people. In nearly all literature of the period they are not portrayed in good light. A famous example is vulgar drunken miller in Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. This is because millers were the equivalent to our tax collectors. One of the ways that Jedburgh created income was that it took a tithe, which is a form of tax from all its parishes. This tithe was sometimes simply collected as cash— but often it was taken at the milling stage of a community's harvest. The miller milled the corn – but then took a percentage as tax.

There were working mills in the cloister at Jedburgh right up until the nineteen sixties. Water no longer flows through this lade, but underneath the visitors' centre there is still running water.

Let's move down the path, but stop before you go back into the visitors' centre. Press the green button, for one last look at the Abbey.

19. Conclusion

The imposing beauty of the abbey church has survived through the trials and tribulations of the history. The splendour and power of the wonderful Romanesque architecture still moves us centuries after it was built. But while the structure inspires awe, the remains of the cloisters remind us of the people who lived, worked and worshipped here.

Some say that by the sixteenth century, Border abbeys such as Jedburgh were no longer regarded as power houses of the divine but as sources of revenue and positions for royal servants or predatory individuals.

And with the energies of the Canons diverted into more worldly matters, they began to neglect the upkeep of the Church and the Abbey buildings. So if things fell down or were damaged in battle either they didn't get repaired or they were repaired badly.

But it is the people of Jedburgh, who worshipped here before the canons arrived and continued to do so after they left, who are the main reason the church has survived as well as it has. It was, and remains, their abbey.

If you've got the bug for monks and abbeys you might want to visit the Cistercian Abbey of Melrose or find out about the Premonstratensians at Dryburgh. There's information in the visitors' centre about how to get there.

Goodbye and thank you for visiting Jedburgh Abbey.

You've been listening to an Antenna Audio tour.