



kelso

town trail

The Scottish Borders

Scotland's *Leading* short break destination[®]

introduction

kelso

Scottish Borders Council has created the Kelso Town Trail and would like to acknowledge and thank Mr Charles Denoon for kindly allowing the use of material from the Kelso Community Website (www.kelso.bordernet.co.uk/walks). The aim of the trail is to provide the visitor to Kelso with an added dimension to local history and a flavour of the town's development, in particular, the historical growth of the town, its buildings and other items of interest. Along the route there is the opportunity to view structures which may be as old as the 12th century or as new as the year 2000, but all show the architectural richness which together make up the town which locals know and love.

The Trail is approximately 3.5km (2 miles) long. This should take about 1 1/2 to 2 hours to complete. Those with less time to spare may wish to reduce this by referring to the Trail map in the centre pages. The walk starts and finishes in The Square at the Town Hall

which houses the Visitor Information Centre. For those with more time, extensions to the Trail which would add to the enjoyment of the walk are suggested in the text.

In order to guide the visitor, plaques are sited along the route at specific points of interest and information relating to them can be found within this leaflet. As some of the sites along the Trail are houses, we would ask you to respect the owners' privacy.

We hope you will enjoy walking around Kelso Town Trail and trust that you will have a pleasant stay in the town.

An electronic version of this booklet is available on Scottish Borders Council's website (www.scotborders.gov.uk)



historical background

Kelso's history is closely linked with that of the Abbey which was founded here in the 12th century by King David I, who radically reorganised Scotland upon ascending to the throne. King David I grew up in England and was impressed by the Norman system of government. As a new king he stamped his mark upon the country by introducing a new system of ecclesiastical parishes and new government based on the Norman system. In addition to founding new abbeys he constructed Royal Centres of power based on new town (Burghs). The abbey at Kelso was sited close to his Royal Castle at Roxburgh and the important Royal Burgh of the same name, which stood in the fields across the Tweed at modern day Friar's Haugh.

During the Anglo-Scottish conflicts of the late 13th and early 14th centuries, Kelso and the nearby Royal Castle were under English control. In 1460, after more than a century of English occupation, the Scots besieged and

razed Roxburgh Castle. It was during this siege that King James II, who was fascinated with artillery, died when a cannon exploded near where he was standing. His Queen urged the Scots to continue their siege and eventually the castle was taken. Afterwards, King James III was crowned at Kelso Abbey.

Kelso suffered greatly in the 16th century when Anglo-Scottish warfare raged, and in September 1545 the town, its mill and abbey were all destroyed by the Earl of Hertford. Bizarrely, it was Spanish troops, not English, that sacked and plundered the abbey. These troops were part of a multi-national force commanded by the Earl of Hertford under King Henry VIII whose allies including King Charles V of Spain.

In the 17th century, King James VII strove for religious tolerance between the Roman Catholic and Protestant faiths. This led to the Bishop's Wars and the Civil War during which the king was deposed and executed.

In October 1715, during the unsuccessful attempted restoration of 1715-16 (led by James VII's son) the population of Kelso was able to watch the Jacobites gather at the site Wester Kelso (by Floors Castle).

The late 18th and 19th centuries were peaceful years, allowing the town to develop without fear of attack. As a result, Kelso prospered and expanded. For example, the town's optician in the mid-18th century, John Gibson, invented the reflecting microscope and made several models of telescopes which were used by the astronomers of the time.

The present town is mainly Georgian and Victorian in appearance, although here and there we find individual buildings which have survived the ravages of time, fire and war. The basic structure of the town is that of the traditional Scottish Burgh, where there is a market place containing the main public building, with main roads on both sides of the Town Hall and with other routes radiating off the Square. The "island" on which Kelso Town Hall is built is bounded by Woodmarket, Horsemarket and Cross

Street. Bridge Street and Roxburgh Street are the two other major roads leading to and from the Square.

Today, the town is the 4th largest in the Borders and the community is proud of its rich heritage. The Kelso Civic Week, which is held annually in the middle of July, celebrates the history of the town. As in many other Border towns, this tradition has become an established part of the social calendar.

kelso town trail

TOWN HALL

The Trail starts at the Visitor Information Centre in Kelso Town Hall. In 1793 it was reported that *"It is to be regretted, that the elegant square in which the market is held, is not better ornamented with a better town house"*.



Town Hall

Thus, with money raised by public subscription in 1816, this magnificent building replaced an earlier thatched town house. The arched windows at ground floor formed

an open arcade until 1905 at which time the arches were filled in as part of extensive alterations. Above the doorway, you can see the Burgh Arms carved in stone. The building is crowned by

a domed octagonal belfry with a clock which would have been an essential method of time keeping on market days before pocket or wristwatches became common. For many years the building contained the Town Council offices and the facilities for the local court. Today, the hall is used for various civic functions and is one of the finest buildings in the town. Within the entrance hall, there is a plaque gifted to the town by Polish troops who were stationed in the area during World War Two.

The centre of Kelso is dominated by The Square, formerly a large market place and the hub of the town from the Middle Ages onward. Prior to 1790, the majority of buildings were thatched with high pointed gables facing The Square. At its centre is the Kelso Bull Ring where bulls were tethered on market days for farmers to view. Under the ring is a time capsule containing coins, newspapers and other local artefacts. At each coronation new material is added and the contents are updated.

The buildings opposite the Town Hall (the west side of The Square) close the view from the town to the River Tweed. At Numbers 15-20 The Square, you can see a formally designed Georgian building. Although there have been later alterations to this building, the overall effect of the original design can still be seen. One of the features of Kelso is the use of cream coloured bricks for chimneys. These bricks last longer than stone in chimneys. Closer to Roxburgh Street, the buildings are less imposing, being of different style and materials. Behind this side of The Square, a great deal of industrial activity used to take place. Now only one mill still remains, continuing the tradition of milling on the banks of the Tweed which started here around the 12th century.

On the south side of The Square, you see the Royal Bank of Scotland. Built in 1934 to a modern, standard design, with projecting eaves and red brick facings, this building would be more at home in the South of England than a Scottish country town. The adjoining building, on the corner of Bridge Street, is the Bank of Scotland, which is a more traditional Scottish bank building, constructed from

stone. Built in 1833, this building originally housed the British Linen Company Bank.

From May to August look out for Swifts flying rapidly overhead. These birds nest under the eaves of many of the older buildings in the town centre and are remarkable in that they spend most of their lives in the air. The only time they land is when they are nesting. This is due to the fact that they have very long wings and extremely short legs which means that they are unable to perch or land on the ground.

From The Square, turn left into Bridge Street and enter the area of the former precinct of Kelso Abbey.



Aerial view of Kelso

BRIDGE STREET

Leading to Rennie's Bridge across the Tweed, this street is lined with many interesting buildings. To the rear of Numbers 5-7 Bridge Street were the former stables for Havannah House (now Ednam House). These were converted into flats in 1994 and the completed development is called Havannah Court.



Venetian Windows

Numbers 5-7 once formed one of Kelso's original Georgian townhouses, built for the Ormiston's of Hendersyde. Originally Ormiston was a Quaker merchant and banker during the 17th century. Looking up you will see Venetian style windows on the 1st floor.

The building was converted into a shop in the 19th century when the frontage, with internal cast iron columns was inserted.

On the opposite side of the road numbers 10-12 is the building which was formerly occupied by the "Kelso Mail". This local newspaper was founded in 1797 by James Ballantyne, who later became Sir Walter Scott's Publisher.

Numbers 9-11 Bridge Street, now Swan's shoe shop is said to have been the first house in Scotland to be lit by gas when, in February 1818, local coppersmith William Muir, installed the lighting to his house.

During the days of stagecoaches, travellers would rest and have a meal and a drink whilst fresh horses were prepared to take them on the next stage of the journey. The Queen's Head (dating from the 18th century) and the Spread Eagle (early 19th century) hotels both had extensive property to the rear to cater for coaches and horses. In the heyday of Kelso Abbey the properties lay within the graveyard of the abbey, a fact which was highlighted with the discovery of burials beneath the Spread Eagle during redevelopment in the early 1990s.

EDNAM HOUSE

Set back a short distance from the street in simple gardens, this fine mansion house was built in 1761 by James Nisbet as the residence for James Dickson of Ednam. As a youth, Dickson broke a lamp on the town well; in order to escape punishment, he ran off to London and thence to the Caribbean where he made his fortune as a naval agent in Cuba. On his return, he had the house built and named it "Havannah House" as a reminder of his time in Cuba.

This is one of the finest Georgian buildings in the Borders and was at one time a temperance hotel. The hotel has a splendid view of the River Tweed from the dining room at the rear and the interior is richly decorated with fine plaster ceilings. The drawing room ceiling depicts Aurora being pursued across a cloudy sky by Apollo in his chariot. In each of the four corners, one of the four elements is represented. Originally entered from Abbey Court, the present entrance to the hotel grounds was built in the 1930s and it was here that the town's Tron, or weigh beam, was located. Here, market traders would set

their measures against the town standard in order that buyers could be certain that they were getting the correct measure of goods.

Continue on the right hand side of the street and turn right into Abbey Court.

ABBEY COURT

Formerly the access to the bridge over the Tweed, this street was the primary entrance to the town from the south until the

construction of the Kelso Bridge. The first bridge at this point was built by public subscription in 1756 and consisted of six arches. The mason who built the bridge, rather optimistically carved in Latin, the words "*Good mason work lasts forever*". Unfortunately for him, the bridge



was swept away during a flood in 1797. A replacement bridge (see below) was opened six years later in 1803 on a slightly different line, bypassing Abbey Court.

High on the wall of Number 6, you can see a fire insurance plaque. This is a reminder of the days before there was a civil fire brigade.

Then, private companies fought fires, but only if the property displayed such a plaque indicating that the owner had taken out insurance with their company. A fire brigade of whatever sort would have been beneficial to the town in the mid 1680s when a

large part of the town burned down due to an accidental fire and it almost happened again in the 1740s.



Turret House

Across the road from Number 6, the wrought iron gates were at one time the main entrance to Ednam House.

TURRET HOUSE

The next building is known as Turret House. This is built on the site of a single storey house belonging to "John Palmer, boatman in Kelso". The house was rebuilt in 1694 when two floors were added for James Kirkwood, schoolmaster of Kelso Grammar School. Turret House changed hands in 1759 and again in 1764 when it became a skinner's workshop. It was from this that the street that used to run adjacent to the river derived its name, Skinner's Brae. In 1822, the building became a house again and in 1926, the ground floor was turned into a sweet shop owned by Katie Bennet. When Miss Bennet died in 1958, the house passed to her son who sold it to the National Trust for Scotland in 1964, and was used to house the Kelso Museum (1985-98). The building is now a house in private ownership.

Opposite Turret House is St Andrew's Episcopal Church, which was designed in 1861 by Sir Robert Rowand Anderson,

an important Victorian church designer and architect. His designs also include the McEwan Hall and the dome of Old College, both at the University of Edinburgh. Beyond the church is a short row, known as Belmont Place. To the right and down the path, you can get a fine view of Rennie's Bridge and the Tweed.

Return to Bridge Street and directly in front of you, you will see the striking remains of Kelso Abbey.

KELSO ABBEY

This is the oldest and was, at one time, the largest of the Border Abbeys and one of the best examples of Romanesque (Norman) architecture in Scotland. As you enter the Abbey through what was the west porch, notice the diamond patterned carving overhead.

Earl David (later King David I), founded and endowed a monastery near Selkirk for a small colony of monks from Tiron in France around 1113. Because the site near Selkirk was "not suitable for an Abbey", David transferred his

foundation to Kelso in 1128. The move may have been prompted by a desire to have a royal foundation near the Castle and important Royal Burgh of Roxburgh. The Abbey was completed in 1212 and was dedicated by David de Bernham, Bishop of St Andrews, in March 1243 to the Blessed Virgin and to St John. The Abbey prospered and a lucrative woollen trade was established with traders in the Low Countries and other parts of Europe.

Due to its status and proximity to the National Border between Scotland and England, the Abbey suffered a great deal of damage in the frequent outbreaks of cross border warfare. It was attacked during the Wars of Independence and was



Kelso Abbey

repeatedly sacked in the 1500s, culminating in its destruction by the Earl of Hertford in 1545.

In 1649, the western part of the remains was converted into a Parish Church when part of the transept was given a thatched roof. The temporary church ceased to function when the new Parish Church was built in 1773 but it was not until 1919 that the remnants of the temporary church were cleared away. The locals used the Abbey as a source of building materials during the late 18th century and consequently, many buildings in the town contain stones from the Abbey. What little remained was repaired by the Duke of Roxburgh in 1866. Virtually all evidence of the domestic buildings has been obliterated due to the buildings and roads which were subsequently constructed in the area. For those who enjoy a longer walk, it is also worth noting that Kelso Abbey marks the start of the Kelso to Jedburgh section of the Borders Abbeys Way¹.

Nearby is the Memorial Cloister, which was built in 1933 in memory of the 8th Duke of

Roxburgh. This is a modern interpretation of Romanesque architecture and includes a doorway from the original cloister. The noted architect Sir Robert Lorimer designed the war memorial in 1921. Lorimer also designed the war memorial in Galashiels and the Scottish National War Memorial in Edinburgh Castle.

Return to Bridge Street and head towards the Kelso Bridge.

The new houses on your right, as you head towards the bridge, stand within the former Abbey Precinct. Archaeological excavations in 1997 and 1998 revealed evidence that this site was occupied by some high status buildings, possibly guest quarters for visiting dignitaries to the Abbey. From the mid-19th century the site served as the base for the Croall family's business as coachbuilders and later, motor sales, servicing and petrol.

KELSO BRIDGE

The engineer John Rennie designed the elegant bridge that crosses the River Tweed close to Kelso Abbey in 1800. It was to serve

¹ A leaflet detailing this walk is available from Visitor Information Centres.

as a replacement for an earlier bridge which had been washed away in a flood in 1797. This bridge was opened in 1803 and was the first in the world to employ elliptical arches in its construction. This design was the prototype of Rennie's more famous London Bridge across the Thames. London Bridge has since been removed and re-erected in Lake Havasu, Arizona, USA. Rennie also designed the Waterloo and Southwark Bridges in London and when the Waterloo Bridge was demolished, the lamps were salvaged and installed on Kelso Bridge.

On your right as you approach the bridge stands a tollhouse where people using the bridge had to pay tolls. You may notice that there are several dished indentations on the parapet. These are said to have been made as people crossing the bridge rubbed down their coins in protest at having to pay tolls. The money raised through these tolls was intended to cover repayment of the cost of the bridge, although the practice continued long after the debt had been repaid. Public awareness of this led to serious rioting in 1854 and in the resulting pitched battle the

tollhouse was almost destroyed. Thereafter the Bridge Trustees were taken to court and were successfully prosecuted for what was deemed to be exploitation.

From the bridge there are fine views upstream past the Junction Pool over to Floors Castle, the home of the Duke of Roxburgh.

At this point the you can extend the trail by visiting the Junction Pool and a longer circular walk that rejoins the Town Trail by entrance to the garden centre (see below).

For a description of the extended walk please refer to the end of this booklet.



Kelso Bridge

town map



Floors Castle

The Cobby



Visitor Information Centre
(Start of the Town Trail)

kelsö



via trail kelsö town

--- Town Trail
--- Extensions

If you look over the wall beyond the north (town) end of the Bridge, you will see another building below parapet level. This is a “pill box” which dates from the Second World War and was built to defend the bridge; thankfully it was never put to use. You may also notice holes in the wall at pavement level, these are “gun loops” through which the wartime defenders intended to snipe at invading forces.



Tollhouse

From here take the Mayfield Riverside Walk downstream.

This route follows the boundary of the monastic precinct of Kelso Abbey and the land to the left (townwards) probably held its gardens and orchards. On the far side of the river is Maccus' wiel, the fishing pool after which Maxwellheugh was named in the 12th century. Follow the path to a car park

next to the entrance of the Garden Centre. In the 19th century the area now occupied by Mayfield was known as “The Malt Barns”. It is possible that this is where the monks of Kelso Abbey stored their barley from which they used to brew beer. In the Middle Ages beer was widely consumed, as the water supply was often unsafe to drink.

At this point the extended route via Pinnacle Hill rejoins the main trail. Follow this path towards the town centre and after a short distance you reach the Knowes car park.

To the left, are the premises of a local charity group, Abbey Soft Play. This is part of the Borders Parent to Parent Group, who provide soft play facilities for children both partly and fully able. Beside Abbey Soft Play is the Abbey Row Centre. This building, designed for use as a school, was built in 1879 on the site of an earlier Grammar School, attended by a young Sir Walter Scott. The building now serves as the local Community Centre. In front of you, beside the Abbey Centre, you will see the graveyard with many old gravestones. This continued in use after the destruction of the

Abbey, since the western end of the building was utilised as a parish church. The car park now occupies what may be the eastern limit of the graveyard.

WAVERLEY LODGE

At the opposite corner of the Knowes, you can see Waverley Lodge. Named after Sir Walter Scott's novel, the house belonged to his aunt and the author himself stayed here for a while in 1783. To commemorate this, there is a bust of him set on the gable and a sculpture of one of his dogs over the gateway.

The car park and the kirkyard used to form "The Butts". A law was issued by King James IV (1488-1513) which stated that every man of military age had to practice archery on a regular basis. It was here that the men of Kelso practiced and the name derives from the targets that were used.

OLD PARISH CHURCH

Past the Knowes, you will see an octagonal building. This is the Old Parish Church, which was erected between 1771-3 and designed

by the architect of Ednam House, James Nisbet. The octagonal plan is unique and the building is beautifully detailed both inside and out. The church was altered slightly in 1823 but a few years later, it was harshly described as "...the ugliest and least suitable in architecture of all the Parish Churches in Scotland ...an excellent model for a circus". The building is open to the public between May and September.

There are some fine examples of trees within the churchyard including Sycamore, Lime and Giant Redwood. Pairs of Rooks build their nests high in the treetops every year. The soft bark of the Giant Redwoods provides shelter for small birds such as the Treecreeper, which pecks out small hollows in the bark to give itself extra shelter. At night Tawny Owls may be heard here.



Old Parish Church

Turn left at the top of the Knowes and into Abbey Row.

ABBEY ROW

On the edge of the kirkyard Abbey Row is separated from the bustle of Woodmarket and the town by a block of buildings. Pedestrian links through to the town centre are via the East and West Kirk Stiles. The rear of the buildings vary from utilitarian to grand in character.



West Kirk Stile

Make your way back to The Square via West Kirk Stile at the end of the row. Notice as you go the example of a fine Georgian town house with its harled wall and small forecourt.

Once more, you arrive in The Square with the Town Hall and Woodmarket on your right. Walk up Woodmarket.

WOODMARKET

As the name implies, this area is where merchants in the town traded wood. The oldest surviving building is Numbers 1-5, which was built about 1770 and has Venetian style windows on the 1st floor.

Numbers 21-23 are of note in that they were formerly designed as a seed merchant's warehouse around 1865 in the Italianate style. This building now serves as one of the few Scottish branches of Barclay's Bank. The arched front has female heads on the keystones and these have the fruits of the earth woven into their hair. Carved cherubs adorn the roundels in between.



Barclays Bank

Number 25 is the former property of the Bank of Scotland. Designed in the 1860s in a Greek revival style, the entrance is defined by a projecting porch and cast iron tripod lamp on either side of the door. The present building stands on the site of an earlier Bank of Scotland building which was founded in 1774 and was one of the earliest and most successful in the country.

The former Corn Exchange was built in 1855 at a cost of £3,000 which was raised through public subscription.

The exterior, with its 1st floor bay windows, has lost much of its detailing. The interior is quite intact with its hammer beam roof and glazing which allows

light to flood in. There were 71 stalls for merchants' use on the weekly Market Day and a musicians' gallery for when the hall was used on social occasions.

Numbers 22-24 (on the other side of the road) is typical of the mid Georgian period house in Kelso. The architectural firm of J & F Johnston aided in the rehabilitation of the area by retaining the

Georgian frontage whilst inserting new buildings behind. A modern housing development was built as part of the same 1974-9 scheme and this projects slightly into Coalmarket, beyond the former building line.



Corn Exchange



Coalmarket

COALMARKET

This is where the people of Kelso would buy coal which had been carted from Scremerston, 38km (24 miles) away in Northumberland. Sadly, this area is now a busy road junction and has lost its sense of enclosure. The modern buildings do not

add greatly to the architectural quality of the area but the older ones help retain

a sense of dignity.

Among these are the late Georgian corner house and the Waggon Inn. The latter

was used by the coal-carriers who took coal from the station to Coalmarket.



Roxy Cinema

If you continue past Coalmarket, you will arrive at Shedden Park. Mrs Robertson of Ednam House gifted this public park to the people

of Kelso in 1852. It is named after her nephew, Robert Shedden, who died whilst in the Arctic searching for survivors of Sir John Franklin's expedition. The entrance to the park is marked by a triumphal arch, erected and paid for by public subscription by the local community by way of thanks. Within the park are a number of commemorative trees and the elegant Keeper's Lodge.

From Coalmarket, turn left into Cross Street by the Waggon Inn. Continue along Cross Street until you arrive at Horsemarket.

Opposite the junction of Cross Street and Horsemarket you see the Roxy Cinema which was originally built as a church in 1793. In the early 1930s the building was given a new frontage. Turn left into Horsemarket.

HORSEMARKET

The buildings along Horsemarket are good examples of early 19th century architecture. On the right hand side as you head towards The Square is an ornate Edwardian former

Post Office built around 1910 and where the street widens out is Number 22 with its elegant swept corner. At Number 16 at the west end of Horsemarket, is the site of the former Kelso Theatre. Built during the Napoleonic War by French Prisoners of War, when it was open, the theatre was a great social centre for the townspeople or those attending the Kelso races.

Once more you arrive in The Square. Turn sharp right and leave The Square via Bowmont Street. This lane is known locally as "The Dardanelles". In front of you is a public bar and to your right, on the corner with East Bowmont Street, is the former Trinity North



Former Post Office

Church designed and built between 1885-6 by the Edinburgh architect John Starforth. This was built on the site of an earlier 1788 church. Notice the rich Gothic detailing, especially on the spire.

Looking over the car park on your left, you will see the Red Lion in Jamieson's Entry. Although mentioned in a list of traders of 1826, the present building dates from 1905. The building has traditional details such as crowstep gables and corner turret and the ground floor windows are interesting as the Art Nouveau movement has clearly influenced them.



Former Trinity North Church



BOWMONT STREET

If you now walk up Bowmont Street, named after the Marquis of Bowmont, one of the Duke of Roxburghe's titles, you will come to the Kelso Public Library. The library dates from 1905 and is built in a Scottish Renaissance style, after a design by the renowned architects Peddie and Washington Browne.

Large Jacobean windows light the reading room, and the interior has a spectacular trussed roof. Notice the wrought iron gateway and the finely carved stone panel over the entrance.



Public Library

Continue along Bowmont Street.

After passing the bowling club and Poynder Park (the home of Kelso Rugby Football Club) on your right hand side, you arrive at the gates of Kelso

High School. Designed in 1936 by the architects Reid & Forbes, this school building epitomises the styling of the 1930s with the tower over the entrance, the Mayan art deco detailing and the teaching wings on either side of the entrance with horizontal emphasis to the windows. The science block also has a tower, which has curved glass windows. The building was extended in the 1960s and again in the 1990s.

Continue a short distance until you reach the junction of Roxburgh Street on your left.

This was, at one time, the link between the historic burghs of Easter and Wester Kelso. The Burgh of Wester Kelso was inhabited until 1684 when it was destroyed by fire. The Mercat Cross survived until the late 18th century as the only reminder of the Burgh. In 1715, James Francis Stuart (son of King James VII and father of Prince Charles Edward Stuart) was proclaimed King by his followers at the Cross. The proclamation was met with cries from the locals of "No Union, no malt tax, no salt tax" in direct reference to the

1707 Treaty of Union between Scotland and England. Under the terms of Union, punitive taxes were imposed on malts and salt which had been tax free in Scotland.

FLOORS CASTLE

The gates, which you see here, form the main entrance to Floors Castle. The two storey lodges on either side are built of stone rubble and have bellcast slated roofs with square chimney stacks. The lodges are linked by ornate wrought iron gates, which were initially operated electrically. Both the gates and lodges were designed in 1929.

If you have time, a visit to the Castle will allow you to see what is reputedly the largest house in Scotland. The original building was perhaps designed by Sir John Vanbrugh and built in the 1720s. William Adam illustrated the building in the book "Vitruvius Scoticus" and he may have contributed something to the design. The Edinburgh architect, William Playfair, remodelled the building into what you see today, between 1837-47.

A series of archaeological excavations were carried out inside the grounds of Floors Castle close to the entrance at Roxburgh Street in the 1980's. They revealed evidence that the burgh of Wester Kelso was founded in the 12th century and continued to exist into the 16th when it was probably destroyed by English invaders.

Walk along Roxburgh Street, which runs parallel with the River Tweed.



Floors Castle Gates

ROXBURGH STREET

Along Roxburgh Street there are several opportunities to leave the Trail by taking a short walk down to the Cobby Riverside Walk, from where a view of Floors Castle can be gained. This popular walk along the side of the River Tweed is part of the flood plain. Please note there is no formal path and the riverside may be muddy at times.

The height of the garden walls gives an indication of how severe the flooding can be as they are designed to hold back the river when it floods. You can see the islet called Kelso Anna and the Old Mill Weir. Over the River is Springwood Park, the former grounds of Springwood Park House, which was demolished in 1954. The park now serves as the Border Union Showground for various shows such as the internationally renowned Kelso Ram Sales in September of each year.

At the end of the Cobby are what remains of the foundations of the water mill which was associated with the Abbey. The water mill would have been constructed shortly

after the foundation of the Abbey in order to supply it with ground flour. Frequent repairs and maintenance must have been required to mend the damage caused by the Tweed flooding. The site is now occupied by Hogarth's Mill, which dates from the early 19th century.

The Cobby is another area where it is worth looking out for wildlife. On the water there are normally a variety of ducks, including Tufted and Goosanders, as well as Mute Swans, Moorhens and Coots. A Heron often sits on the island where Grey Wagtails are also a common sight.

On your right, near the head of Roxburgh Street, set back slightly from the street and behind a high wall, is Walton Hall. This building was built in 1820 as a fishing lodge for John Ballantyne, Sir Walter Scott's publisher. It is a single storey Georgian house with associated stable buildings and is said to have been built with the money made from publishing Scott's works. Unfortunately, Ballantyne died within a year of it being completed and was unable to enjoy the building to its full potential.

town trail . kelso town trail . kelso town trail

Most of the buildings on the left-hand side of the street are modern but they do not appear to be out of character with the rest of the street.



Former Dispensary

The right hand (west) side of the street is older and most of these properties date from the late 18th and early 19th

century. There is the Kelso Dispensary (a form of hospital) which was established in 1777 after a suggestion by Mrs Baillie of Jerviswood *"for the relief of the diseased among the lower orders of people... on both sides of the border"*. This was the first such building in Scotland. By 1793 there was *"a spacious ward, to accommodate 12 patients"* The Dispensary closed in 1906 when the Cottage Hospital was built at Maxwellheugh.

You will find several fine detached Victorian mansions that have a magnificent view over the confluence of the Rivers Tweed and Teviot and of the countryside beyond.

Continuing along Roxburgh Street brings you to Kelso North Church with its impressive pinnacled spire. The church was built between 1864-6 as the

designs of the architect Frederick Pilkington.



Kelso North Church

Further along, opposite the end of Union Street is Roxburgh House, which is a late Georgian mansion. A coach-house and stable flank either side of its forecourt. Notice the bellcast roof with the central brick chimney stack. You can gain an idea of how many rooms

the house had by counting the chimney cans, each room having one fireplace.

Across the road from Roxburgh House is the former "Ragged School", now a private house (Number 51). This former school was for the education of children of the poor. There is a small cobbled courtyard between the school and what used to be a blacksmith's shop.



Ragged School

Continue along Roxburgh Street with its mix of old and new buildings, most of which are shops at ground floor level. Just past Duns Wynd on your right, you re-enter The Square through "Cunzie Neuk" (Scots: Coin or Gutter Corner). This

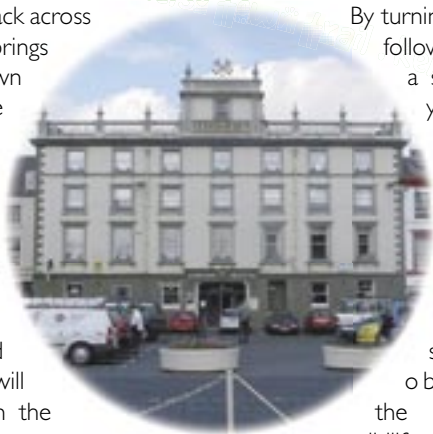
may refer to the fact that until the 16th century, each area of the country had its own mint producing coinage. From 1547, the Scottish Mint was

located in Edinburgh and under the terms of the Treaty of Union in 1707, the mint was to continue here at Kelso but this failed to happen. So until the 16th century it was from this part of Kelso that money was distributed to the surrounding area. The alternative derivation is a little less romantic!

Once you are in The Square, you will see on your left, the Cross Keys Hotel, which was built for James Dickson in 1761. Kelso was at that time the last stop in Scotland on the coach road from Edinburgh to Newcastle. Dickson built the hotel to cater for the travellers on the route. It was certainly the grandest of the stages between the two cities. In 1880, an extra storey was added and this is one of the few four storey buildings in the town.

On your right are shops and flats but behind these are areas of the town that are historically associated with industry. Names such as Oven Wynd, Peat Wynd and Mill Wynd hint at the former usage. Imagine the hustle and bustle around here, especially during market day.

A short walk back across The Square brings you to the Town Hall and the end of the Kelso Town Trail. We hope that you have enjoyed this short walk through the town and trust that you will return Kelso in the near future.



Cross Keys Hotel

EXTENDED WALK VIA HUNTER BRIDGE

At the other end of Kelso Bridge (south side), you can see a triumphal arch. This gateway, known locally as the Douglas Gates and bearing the red heart of the Douglas Family served as the entrance to the Old Springwood Estate. The house was demolished in 1954.

By turning right at the end of the bridge and following the footpath for a short distance a short extension to the trail brings you to the Junction Pool, where the Teviot and Tweed Rivers meet. This is one of a number of places along the Tweed where the story of the river is told².

Junction Pool is an excellent spot to observe the local wildlife. In summer, groups of Sand Martins, House Martins and Swallows hunt for insects over the water and, on the river, Mallard Ducks, Goosander and Mute Swans a common sight. At the water's edge, Oystercatcher, Wagtail and Dipper may be



Junction Pool

² A leaflet "A Journey along the River Tweed" details other viewpoints along the river and is available from Visitor Information Centres.

seen and, if you are patient, you may even catch a glimpse of a Kingfisher flying fast and low over the river.

Whilst sitting and enjoying the view you may also see anglers fishing for Salmon, Trout and Grayling and they are sometimes joined by others searching for eels and other fish. Invasive plants such as Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed grow along

the riverbank with other introduced species such as Himalayan Balsam and Russian Comfrey. The latter may be identified by its bell-shaped purple flowers and large dark green leaves.

To the left at the southern end of the bridge is a flight of steps that will take you into Bridgend Park. Formerly the town rubbish dump, this is now a pleasant and colourful space, particularly in springtime,

when the cherries are in full bloom. Follow the path through the park to a long flight of steps up to the new Millennium Viewpoint. An alternative route, suitable for all abilities, is to follow the footpath beside the road (uphill round the park), which will take you to the same point, but avoids the steps.

From the Millennium Viewpoint walk uphill to reach Sprouston Road. On the right at the top of the hill is Maxwellheugh Cottage, which was known as the Abbey Hotel at the beginning of the 20th century. During the Second World War, a Prisoner of War camp occupied the land beyond the cottage. The prisoners were allowed to roam about the town but due to their distinctive dress, maroon suits with large yellow stripes on the back, it was difficult for them to sneak away!

Incorporated into the garage (before the turn into Sprouston Road) are some buildings that were formerly part of the Pinnaclehill farmsteading. As you can see this former farmland is now developed as housing and further on up the hill, an industrial estate. Turn left into Sprouston Road.



Millennium Viewpoint

After 200m or so you come to the posts of a gateway and a small lodge. This lodge marks the former entrance to Pinnaclehill Estate beyond which once lay Pinnaclehill House and park. Immediately to the left as you enter is a wooded tumulus. This is a prehistoric burial mound (c.4,000 years old) and serves as a reminder that this area has been attractive as a place to live for a very long time.

The less able or those visitors with pushchairs should continue up Sprouston Road, turn left along Sprouston Road and rejoin the route at the entrance to Pinnaclehill Park.

There is a small gate just before the mound. Go through it and follow the path through the woodland down to the river. In the early spring the wooded area is often carpeted with Snowdrops and the woodland provides a home for a good mixture of birds including Tawny Owl and Greater Spotted Woodpecker. Continue downstream before once more returning through Pinnaclehill Park. Turn left onto Sprouston Road and then right to join the new bypass at the Hunter Bridge. This

bridge was opened in August 1998 as part of a traffic relief scheme for Kelso. The bridge provides the opportunity for pleasant and sweeping views of the Tweed. En route you will pass the start of a new footpath from Kelso to Sprouston village along the course of the old railway.

On the north side of the bridge follow the path along the river towards the town to rejoin the main trail.

Photograph Acknowledgements:
Mr Keith Robeson - Wester Kirk Stile.

kelso:

kelso town trail . kelso town trail . kelso town trail . kelso town trail . kelso town trail . kelso town trail . kelso



The production of this publication cost 24p per unit.

Designed by Scottish Borders Council Graphic Design Section
Printed in the Scottish Borders by Kelso Graphics, Kelso.

