

Heritage Sites Around Kelso



Kelso's history is closely linked with that of the Abbey which was founded here in the 12th century. Kelso suffered greatly in the 16th century when Anglo-Scottish warfare raged, and in September 1545, the town, its mill and its abbey were all "brent, rased and cast downe" by the Earl of Hertford. The late 18th and 19th centuries were peaceful years, allowing the town to develop without fear of attack. Today, Kelso is the 4th largest town in Scottish Borders.

Borders Abbeys Way

The Borders Abbeys Way is a route linking the four great ruined Borders Abbeys and also including the towns of Hawick and Selkirk. The full route is approximately 104km/ 65 miles in length and passes a number of sites of archaeological and historic interest.

Floors Castle (NT 7111 3467)

To the north of the town is Floors Castle (reputedly the largest house in Scotland). It was designed and built for the 1st



Duke of Roxburghe by William Adam in 1721-26. Adam also laid out most of the surrounding designed landscape and took some of the building materials from Cessford Castle, near Eckford. The house was extensively remodelled in 1837-45 to give it the imposing appearance that it has today. Open seasonally. Admission charge.

Junction Pool (NT 7249 3382)

The River Tweed enjoys world-wide fame among fishermen as a great salmon river, and the Junction Pool, where the Rivers Tweed and Teviot meet, is its most celebrated beat. A viewpoint on the right bank



tells the story of the pool and provides opportunities to watch fish leaping and anglers at work.

Kelso Abbey (NT 7284 3381)

Tironensian monks moved here from Selkirk around 1128 and founded the oldest and, at one time, the largest of the Borders Abbeys.

Kelso was very wealthy and this, coupled with its proximity to the English border, meant that the abbey was a natural target for marauding English armies. The

buildings were attacked on several occasions before finally being dismantled by Spanish mercenaries on behalf of the Earl of Hertford in 1545. Despite this, the impressive west end with its unusual transepts and central tower still survives.



Kelso Bridge (NT 7279 3362)

The elegant five span bridge which crosses the River Tweed at the entrance to Kelso was designed by John Rennie and constructed between 1800 and 1803. This bridge replaced an earlier one that had been swept away during a flood in 1797. At the

eastern end of the bridge is a tollhouse of the same date and beyond this, a pillbox



with gun-loops built by home defence forces during the Second World War.

Kelso Parish Church (NT 7293 3391)

This unusually shaped building was built in 1773 and recently restored. James Nisbet, who also designed nearby Ednam House, was the architect of this octagonal church. The adjoining graveyard had been the cemetery of Kelso Abbey before the Reformation of 1560.



Kelso Square (NT 7275 3395)

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. At its centre is the Kelso Bull Ring where bulls were tethered on market days for farmers to view.



Maxwellheugh Viewpoint (NT 7280 3339)

This viewpoint was developed to celebrate the Millennium and provides a panorama of Kelso Bridge, town and abbey. This part of the town was originally in the parish of Maxwell (*"Maccus' Well"* in the 12th century) and the home of the first people to bear that surname.

Roxburgh Castle (NT 7130 3372)

Roxburgh Castle is a large 12th century fortress that was the strongest castle in the Borders area. The castle was occupied by both the Scottish and the English



through the centuries and was partly demolished and rebuilt on numerous occasions. Little of this impressive Scottish royal castle survives today. It is still possible to view the fragments of the gatehouse, curtain wall and flanking towers, although little of the original layout is visible as the site was remodelled as an artillery fort by the English in the 16th century.

Sprouston Parish Church (NT 7566 3532)

A church dedicated to St. Michael has been located on this site from as early as the 12th century. This church may



have replaced an earlier Anglian church located at nearby Whitmuirhaugh. The present building dates from 1781 and has been altered on at least two occasions since. An ornamental tympanum (a carved panel from above a door arch) is built into the south wall of the chancel inside the church and a medieval cross base and remains of a shaft can be found about 15m to the south of the building.



Wallace's Tower (NT 7001 3047)

Although associated with William Wallace, this is a 16th century stone built tower house, founded by the Kers of Cessford. The main block has a vaulted basement, with a wing containing a wide spiral stair and an additional square tower at the south corner. The tower now stands to the height of the first floor level. **There is no public access to Wallace's Tower.**

