



Plan showing areas of archaeological interest at Coldingham (hatched) and the existing scheduling around Coldingham Priory (red).

Area of Archaeological Interest

- 1: Abbey Yards Field: area of archaeological excavations (2000)
2. Abbey Yards Field: area of geophysical survey and watching briefs (1999/ 2002)
3. Glebe Field: Area investigated by DigVentures in 2018
4. St Michael's Knowe: area of archaeological investigations 2022

Area 1

in 2000 archaeological excavations were carried out in area 1 as part of a proposal to extend the existing graveyard. Three ditches crossed the area on the same alignment and one was wood-lined. Radiocarbon dating indicated that this boundary had been created in the 7th or early 8th century AD. There were only a few finds but a similarly dated fragment of antler comb and an assemblage of pre-medieval animal bone was recovered. By the middle of the 12th century the priory was dependent on Durham. The edge of the church graveyard was found, with several industrial features immediately outside of it. A second late medieval phase of cemetery was also excavated. Study of the human remains found that the edge of the graveyard suggests that it was used to bury marginalized members of society, with ill health and disability commonly evident among the skeletons. Animal bone associated with the industrial features indicated that activities such as production of glue or tallow and tanning.

The full results of the excavations were published in the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. A link to the report can be found at the bottom of the consultation page.

Area 2

In 1999 a geophysical survey was carried out in area 2 on behalf of Scottish Borders Council. The results of the surveys suggest that at least two rectangular features and a large sub-circular around 35m across are located within area 2. Other additional features were also noted. These features were viewed as two rectangular structures, which may have been buildings or debris from buildings. The large sub-circular feature could have had several interpretations including a Neolithic ritual enclosure or an Iron Age settlement.

A watching brief on works to an electricity pole in 2002, found the corner of a drystone wall made of sandstone blocks. The function of this structure which did not appear on the geophysical surveys remains unclear but was thought to be medieval or post-medieval due to its depth.

These reports are not available online but may be requested through Scottish Borders HER, see link at the bottom of the consultation page.

Area 3

In 2013, a geophysical survey was carried out in the Glebe Field. Several probable boundaries and enclosures were detected, both rectilinear and curvilinear in form. The remains of a ditch in the north-west of the field are almost certainly a continuation of ditches previously excavated in the area 1 and dated to the early medieval period. If the arc of this ditch continued round to form a circle, its centre would be close to the priory. There was a large rectilinear ditched enclosure in the north of the field as well as a concentration of features in the central part of the field and two further possible enclosures were detected in the southern part of the field.

In 2018 DigVentures undertook excavations to examine the features found during the 2013 geophysical survey. Archaeological features were revealed in all the trenches including the presence of a 7th to early 8th century vallum ditch. Features across the field represented a range of dates and indicated that the area had been used for agricultural purposes for a sustained period. Archaeological features included walls, rubble spreads and ditches, with the earliest pottery recovered dating from the 7th to 10th century. The majority of the pottery recovered confirmed a medieval date.

These reports are available online and can be viewed either on the DigVentures website or are available on the Friends of Coldingham Priory website Links to these can be found on the bottom of the consultation page.

Area 4

In early 2022, archaeological work was carried out at St Michael's Knowe. Antiquarian accounts and modern interventions immediately to the north suggested that burials were likely to be present in this area. This area has been definitively revealed to contain an extensive range of complex and overlapping archaeological features and deposits. The recent archaeological excavations confirmed the presence of a number of individual features and a multi-phase site including many pits, ditches and graves. A small Early Medieval styca coin hoard in a pouch with pins and brooch was also uncovered.

The results of the most recent archaeological works is not currently published or available online.