

Fig. 45 (right, top):
Photograph of 18 October 1929 showing the complex operation under way to underpin the north pier of the north transept arcade wall

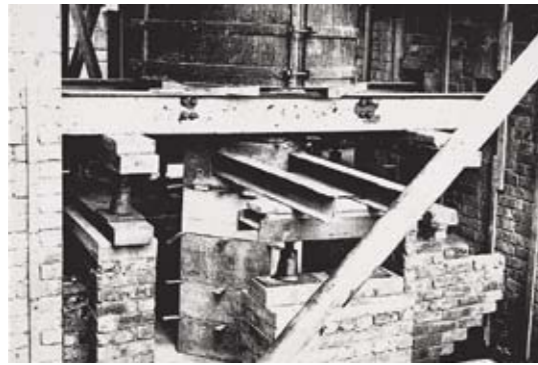
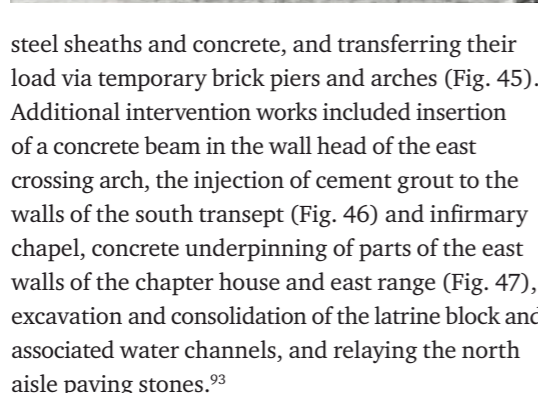


Fig. 46 (far right):
Photograph of 1926 showing the use of the gravity grouting apparatus in the south transept



Fig. 47 (right, below):
Photograph of 26 March 1930 showing underpinning operations in the east range



steel sheaths and concrete, and transferring their load via temporary brick piers and arches (Fig. 45). Additional intervention works included insertion of a concrete beam in the wall head of the east crossing arch, the injection of cement grout to the walls of the south transept (Fig. 46) and infirmary chapel, concrete underpinning of parts of the east walls of the chapter house and east range (Fig. 47), excavation and consolidation of the latrine block and associated water channels, and relaying the north aisle paving stones.⁹³

The engineering work was accompanied by a general 'tidying up' of the abbey grounds, consistent with the Office of Works' 'institutionized' regime of

treatment for ruined sites, introduced by Peers.⁹⁴ This included the burial of fallen architectural fragments, removal of some post-monastic features, and excavations in the inner court, cloisters and elsewhere, so that more of the abbey buildings were uncovered and displayed.⁹⁵

Given this sustained level of public investment it is perhaps surprising that it took until 1943 before the first HMSO official guidebook was produced; and that it was so inadequate.⁹⁶ It would be over another 20 years before this deficiency was put right.⁹⁷ In the meantime, the hotel had closed in 1938 and was subsequently requisitioned by the military. Both the hotel and the station suffered bomb damage in 1941 and at the end

⁹³ To judge from the photographic archive, the order of works was as follows: chapter house (1925–6); south transept and north aisle (1926); north transept (1927–31); east range and latrine block (1930); infirmary chapel (1931); crossing arch (1932).

⁹⁴ For this theme see Anna Keay, 'The presentation of guardianship sites', *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society*, XLVIII, 2004, 7–20.

⁹⁵ The 'Survey Notes on Operations 1924' refer to the removal of 'surplus earth and debris' in the cemetery, nave, southern part of the cloister and west range: Swindon, English Heritage, NMR. A new, colour-coded period ground plan, dated June 1932 (surveyed May 1931), contains the only evidence for some structures which were excavated at this time and subsequently buried: Swindon, English Heritage, NMR MP/FUN0054. The plan was never published.

⁹⁶ S J Garton, *Furness Abbey, Lancashire*, Ministry of Works: Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings, London, 1943.

⁹⁷ John C Dickinson, *Furness Abbey, Lancashire*, Department of the Environment: Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings, London, 1965; republished by English Heritage, with amendments, London, 1987.

Fig. 48: The north transept arcade elevation. One of the detailed record drawings produced as part of the survey in 1989, showing some of the different building periods identified in the church. Key: yellow – early 12th century (Savigniac); green – mid- to late 12th century; blue – early 15th century; red – late 15th century; white – early 20th century



of the war the hotel stood forlorn and neglected. Passenger services were withdrawn in 1950 and the remaining station buildings demolished two years later. Except for part of its north wing, the hotel was demolished in 1953.⁹⁸ The mid-1960s saw further excavations in the inner court for display purposes⁹⁹ and limited conservation experiments to try to counter the weathering of the abbey's friable red sandstone and consequential loss of important architectural detail.¹⁰⁰

It was not until the early 1980s, however, that an extensive programme of conservation was finally planned.¹⁰¹ It was now that the Furness Abbey Survey Project was established as an essential precursor and adjunct to the conservation programme, providing both a record of the standing remains and an archive of useful information to aid the development of the works specifications (see Appendix).

Survey by means of photogrammetry provided the bulk of the information necessary for the production of accurate stone-by-stone architectural drawings and made possible the study of the monument to far higher standards than would otherwise have been achievable.¹⁰² Analysis involved adaptation of archaeological stratigraphic principles to aid assessment of the structural sequence and threw considerable new light on the development of the church (Fig. 48). Although completion of the full analytical record of the whole site was time consuming, and of a magnitude little suspected when the project was begun, the potential benefit was great for both the study and conservation of Furness Abbey and Cistercian architecture in general.¹⁰³

PRESENTATION AND EDUCATION

Apart from the use of the project archive as part of the planned programme of conservation, it was argued that the accuracy and completeness of the

⁹⁸ Joy, op. cit., 130; K J Norman, *The Furness Railway, 1: The Line Described*, Kettering, 2001, 25–6. The remaining wing, which used to house the station's refreshment rooms, is now the Abbey Tavern. The site of the hotel is occupied by the present car park and visitor centre, opened in 1982. For analysis of the Furness Abbey hotel site see Dickinson, 'Furness Abbey', cit., 63–76; for the interim results of excavations in the car park see Jason Wood, 'A watching brief at Furness Abbey, Cumbria', *Contrebis*, XIII, 1987, 42–3.

⁹⁹ The excavations were under the direction of Roy Gilyard-Beer, the Ancient Monuments Inspector for the site: London, Library of the Society of Antiquaries of London, Gilyard-Beer, Notebook 8, 21, 146. Work seems to have begun in February 1963 and was still ongoing two years later when photographed by the County Archaeologist, Ben Edwards, in February 1965. The excavations were never published.

¹⁰⁰ Brian L Clarke and John Ashurst, *Stone Preservation Experiments*, Department of the Environment, Building Research Establishment,



Fig. 49 (top): An early reconstruction drawing of the abbey by R W Johnson, first published 1888

Fig. 50 (above): Frank Gardiner's reconstruction of the church and inner court buildings, 1979. The painting was used in the visitor centre display and on an on-site interpretation panel

London, 1972, 34–6.

¹⁰¹ Department of the Environment, 'Feasibility Study for the Preservation and Presentation of Furness Abbey', unpublished report, Gill, Dockray, Moore and Partners, London, 1982. The major programme of conservation was never commissioned but various cleaning and consolidation works have continued over the years. See also English Heritage, 'Furness Abbey, Cumbria: Quinquennial Inspection Report', unpublished report, Martin Stancliffe Associates, York, 2000, which identified a number of areas requiring attention. As yet, there is no planned programme of fabric works to alleviate the problems.

¹⁰² At the time, Furness Abbey was the largest single survey carried out by English Heritage's Photogrammetric Unit. Additional photogrammetric survey was provided by Engineering Surveys Ltd and Survey International. Ground plans were surveyed by Plowman Craven Associates and Mason Land Surveys Ltd.

¹⁰³ Wood, 'Furness Abbey: an integrated ...', cit.