

NEWS RELEASE

PR 406

13 September 2005

For Immediate Release

Latest technology reveals extent of abbey's history

A high-tech survey of the grounds at Torre Abbey has revealed exciting new evidence showing the extent of medieval buildings that disappeared from view over two centuries ago.

The ground probing radar was used to look at the buried remains of the Torre Abbey cloister as well as the area behind the chapter house arch - one of the finest surviving features of Torre Abbey.

The work was undertaken in preparation for the construction of a new cloister building and ticketing hall as part of the restoration of Torre Abbey over the next three years. The work has been mainly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Torbay Council.

Councillor Chris Lomas, Executive Member for Community, said: "The restoration of Torre Abbey - the heart of Torbay's heritage - is a very exciting time for all concerned.

"As one of the top ranking archaeological sites in the UK it was important that we used the best and most efficient technology to look at the history below the ground so that we can sympathetically and accurately reflect the abbey's history above ground."

The survey was used to show the depth of the buried features such as a 19th Century sewer trench and the remaining walls of the cloister, as well as the size. The most surprising discovery was to find that the chapter house was much larger than first thought.

Commenting on the survey, Dr Michael Rhodes, Torbay Council's Head of Museum Services, said: "The survey has been invaluable for showing archaeologists where they need to dig and has raised some interesting questions about the restoration of the cloister and the size of the chapter house.

"We needed questions answering before we started the construction work and the survey has provided us with a blueprint. We have now asked the Museum of London to excavate the remainder of the cloister which will be completed by the end of October ready for the contractor to start."

Ends

There is a photo attached showing Peter Barker and Anna Carpenter from Stratascan using the equipment at Torre Abbey.

Further photo opportunities of the site are available please contact Nicola Moorhouse on 01803 208850 to arrange.

For further information please contact: Nicola Moorhouse, Communications Officer on 01803 208850