
8 CONCLUSIONS, *with Sue Anderson*

The excavation at St Mary's Star of the Sea has revealed evidence of late- to post-medieval activity in South Leith. The site changed from backyards, to a quarry, to a graveyard and then to a manor house and gardens, probably within a timescale of approximately 200 years, with two apparent periods of disuse in between. The excavation has provided new information about the late- to post-medieval development and land use in this part of Leith, and provided some insight into the construction techniques for a large house of the early 17th century and its services.

The radiocarbon dates, along with the finds, confirmed that the skeletons were probably buried in the 16th or early 17th century. This paper considered two explanations for the presence of these burials. The first is that they were originally interred in the graveyard of South Leith parish

church situated in close proximity on Constitution Street, and that the graveyard was truncated during the expansion of Leith Town in the 17th century. The second is that they were the remains of soldiers who died and were buried during the Siege of Leith, particularly in view of the fact that the men were above average height for the time and therefore likely to have been well-nourished. There was no evidence in their bones for any kind of trauma which might have been responsible for their death, but this does not preclude violence or hanging. Whichever explanation is accepted, there is no doubt that they were buried apparently without record and were soon forgotten. Their place of rest was soon to be developed into formal gardens and they lay undisturbed outside the steps of Lord Balmerino's grand mansion until long after its own demise.