



## WELCOME TO JEDBURGH

Jethart (the town's ancient local name) is situated in a vast and varied countryside area of outstanding beauty. It is the largest town in the 100 miles between Newcastle and Edinburgh (along the A68 trunk road).

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## News

# Gemma's journey to save Fatlips ends in tears

ONE WOMAN's lifelong love affair with an iconic Borders landmark appears to have ended in heartbreak after claiming she was told she was not to "be associated" with the restoration of Fatlips Castle.

Gemma Barnard had campaigned for the last five years to raise the profile of the crumbling castle on Minto Crag. Her website Friends of Fatlips attracted worldwide interest, with messages of support and offers of financial help flooding in from North America and across the UK.

There was widespread rejoicing last November when it was announced Tweed Forum had assembled a £200,000 funding package to secure the future of the castle, which has been in the ownership of successive earls of Minto for many decades. The crags once contained the ancient stronghold of the Turnbull family.

Gemma, who is "an honorary Turnbull" thanks to her tireless efforts to keep Fatlips in the spotlight, even made the castle the subject for her university dissertation as she studied for a Master's degree in Heritage Education and Interpretation. Her home is within sight of the property on the Minto Estates, and she has always been concerned that the castle would disappear completely from the

landscape.

But within days of the restoration project being confirmed Gemma says she was contacted by Tweed Forum and told she was to have no involvement in the restoration project whatsoever, and there was no requirement for fund raising.

"It was a devastating blow, and I confess I burst into tears", Gemma told The Jed Eye. "I was confused and bemused. I have no idea what the reasoning was. I have never been up to the castle since, though I had grand dreams of recording the restoration stage by stage for posterity, and putting that on my website. I even wanted to get married up there."

She says she feels disheartened but at the same time pleased that the castle's being restored and that "we, the public did that great thing".

Gemma added: "I used to go up to the castle almost every weekend and keep the path clear and pick up the rubbish. I bumped into a lot of people and just chatted to them about the place. I believed that the more publicity the castle got the better as this would deter vandalism and increase the public feeling towards the castle."

The 7th Earl of Minto told us he had no wish to denigrate the efforts of Gemma and a number of others who felt



passionately about Fatlips. But the castle was privately owned, and a lot of work had been done behind the scenes during the last ten years before the funding package was put together. "Miss Barnard had not been involved with the project up to now so it would be wrong to say she has been excluded", said Lord Minto. "The castle has not been associated with the Turnbells for 300 years, but I'm delighted their clan association is interested in safeguarding the property."