

THE CHOIR EXCAVATIONS OF GLASTONBURY ABBEY

BACKGROUND

In the 1981 interim report Radford published reconstruction drawings of the two major phases of the Romanesque church pre-dating the fire of 1184. The second phase showed the proposed plan of the church begun by Abbot Herlewin (1100-1118), with the nave completed by Abbot Henry de Blois by 1150 (Radford 1981, fig 6). The shaded areas on these plans represent the evidence for the exterior walls comprising occasional masonry and robber trenches. The major criticism of these published plans has been that the reconstructions were based on so little evidence (Abrams). However, it is important to note that the evidence is not confined to the exterior walls: the two published section drawings (Radford 1981, fig 8) across the north transept and the south choir (ibid, fig 9) include additional evidence such as sleeper walls and floor horizons that are not depicted on the reconstructions.

Jerry Sampson suggests that following the fire of 1184, the rebuilding of the eastern arm of the church was probably begun in 1185 (see report *The Worked Stone*) with an hiatus from 1189. It is also suggested that the church was largely completed and roofed by around the mid-1200s. During the mid-14th century Abbot Monington extended the choir eastwards by two bays although the late 12th-century or early 13th-century windows from the original east end were re-used in the side walls of the extension. The south wall and east walls of the choir are still upstanding to arcade height.

This report covers the scope of the historic excavations within the choir, including research objectives where specified, preceding detailed analysis of Radford's archaeological records in relation to the earlier excavations. Evidence of the Saxon monastic enclosure ditch will be presented. The archaeological evidence for the second Romanesque phase and associated features will be re-evaluated. Following the fire of 1184, the siting of the 13th-century choir will be considered in relation to the earlier structure, together with any archaeological evidence for episodes of re-building, enhancement and ultimately post-Dissolution destruction.

Historic Excavations

St John Hope and Bond

The east end of the retrochoir was the focus of Bond's first season of excavations undertaken in 1908. The objective was to establish the number of chapels and to discover whether the chapel mentioned by Leland as having been built by Abbot Bere and dedicated to St Edgar was located to the east. The existence of five chapels was indicated by the width of the two surviving chapels (see A on choir report plan) and from the discovery in 1812 of foundations for partition walls as drawn on John Britton's plan (Bond 1908, 109). The Kerrich diaries are cited as providing details of the upstanding superstructure as recorded in 1812; a sketch of an extant pier shows an octagonal cluster of shafts attributed to the same period as Monington's two-bay choir extension (ibid, 115; fig 3).

The five-chapel arrangement was endorsed by Professor Willis (1866): his plan published in the 'Architectural History of Glastonbury Abbey' shows the central chapel extending eastwards for c 3-3.6m beyond the termination of the other four chapels. However, trenches dug by St John Hope in

1904 confirmed the existence of only four chapels. Having failed to disclose any structural evidence whatsoever, Hope could not endorse the presence of a further building to the east (Bond 1908, 111). Bond concluded that Hope's excavation trenches were located between the likely position of any structural remains or robber trenches and also were insufficiently deep to penetrate beneath the overburden.

Bond's 'First Excavation' trench was positioned from north to south across one of the chapel divisions recorded in 1812-13; this disclosed a robber trench which Bond interpreted as representing the screen-wall between the central chapel (see B on choir report plan) and the chapel to the south (ibid, 114; fig 2). The western end of the robber trench had a rounded termination thought to indicate the foundation of a pier or engaged column, which aligned with the respond on the south aisle wall ((ibid., 114) (see C on choir report plan). A corresponding 'Second Excavation' trench identified the north side of the central chapel (see D on choir report plan). To the east of the central chapel the presence of a further building was confirmed, represented by robber trenches measuring 1.83m wide and 1.37m deep indicative of exterior as opposed to interior walling (ibid, 114-5). Finds recovered from the area comprised a number of broken fragments of mouldings (mostly 14th-century in date), small pieces of glazed floor tile and one or two mouldings or ornaments of black marble (ibid).

The area subsequently underwent extensive clearance ('Third Excavation') which resulted in the discovery of a large rectangular structure represented both by robber trenches and some in situ masonry (ibid, fig 1). This was interpreted as the Edgar Chapel (see E on choir report plan) constructed by Abbot Bere (1493-1524) and completed or extended by Abbot Whiting, a detailed account of which is contained within Bond (ibid, 116-24). On the basis of some surviving walling, the chapel floor was assumed to have been c 2.44m above the choir floor (ibid, 121). The robber trenches yielded many fragments of 16th-century moulded stonework, numerous fragments of contemporary window glass and one small piece of window glass exhibiting a fleur-de-lys and retaining a border of leadwork.

A trial shaft located to the east of the Edgar Chapel identified a deposit of blackened wood (possibly interlaced twigs or small stakes) and one or two rib bones (believed to be human) beneath a deep clay deposit and underlying building stone at a depth of 3.04m below the turf (ibid, 123). It was postulated that these waterlogged remains were traces of very early habitations (ibid, 124).

In 1909 Bond continued his exposure of the Edgar Chapel and also explored the area to the east of the chapel, based on a theory that a further eastward extension was to be expected (see F on choir report plan). An Elizabethan inventory quoted by Warner provided an interior measurement of 594 feet, whereas the total interior length of the Edgar Chapel and church was only 570 feet. Bond argued that these dimensions were seemingly supported by a statement by Leland that Abbot Whiting had 'performed some part' of the building of the Edgar Chapel, which he suggested might imply an extension or addition to Bere's work (Bond 1908-9, 104). Bond anticipated an eastward extension of an angular form (ibid, pl 1) as opposed to the vague semi-circular shape depicted on an 18th-century sketch plan preserved by Warner (ibid, 105). The theory appeared to be confirmed by the discovery of a diagonal wall running north-eastwards from the east end of the Edgar Chapel, although the interior of the wall contained a square drainage channel which had been covered by thin stone slabs similar to others found on the site. The north wall was 0.91m wide and extended

south-eastwards from the east end of the Edgar Chapel; although predominantly robbed, the trench was backfilled with rubble including carved and moulded fragments (ibid, 107), glazed tile and fragments of stained glass (ibid, 108). The two converging walls supposedly formed a theoretical three-sided apse, although no trace of an eastern wall connected them and the drain within the south wall was recorded as continuing for a further 2.44m eastwards of the wall terminations.

Amongst the fragments of glass discovered during the Edgar Chapel excavations were thick, azure-blue glass with geometrical or scroll-like forms in grey semi-opaque lines (possibly G14 and G24 (see [L:1828]) in *The Stained and Painted Medieval Window Glass of Glastonbury Abbey*). This was noted as being quite different from the glass generally found on site, which was usually thin and fragile with richly painted opaque colours on a deep-red brown surface tint. Bond equated the disturbed area with an 1813 discovery recorded in Kerrich's diary of tiles, glass, and architectural fragments found beneath the turf (ibid, 109).

Clearance of the Edgar chapel included evidence of a sacristy or small chantry at the south-east corner (see G on choir report plan). Bond also noted that the floor of the chapel was at least 2.44m above the floor of the retro-choir (ibid, 113). The discovery of a foundation trench of the same dimensions as those of the retro-choir, indicated that the original central chapel of the retro-choir projected by about 3.66m, as depicted on Willis's plan (ibid, 114).

The interior of the Edgar Chapel was reduced to the choir level, digging through a deep layer of rubble above the natural clay. This disclosed an old trench or hollow depression filled with refuse including bones, late Norman or medieval pottery and fragments of blackened stakes or hurdles. Fragments of a circular shaft were discovered embedded in a vertical position upon a flat stone at a central point between the north and south footings of the chapel; this was interpreted as a mason's mark for the rough setting out of the Edgar Chapel (ibid, 116).

The High Altar was explored during the same period, with evidence for a reredos wall behind the altar with an original trio of arches, as at Wells. Immediately west of the foundations for the reredos were traces of the rectangular dais of the High Altar comprising a clay platform surrounded by a slight foundation wall for the steps. Many fragments of black marble-like stone were found in the vicinity of the High Altar, bearing marks of elaborate workmanship (Bond 1915, 133). One small fragment displayed part of an arm in chain-mail and was suggested as being a relic from the tomb of Arthur (ibid, 34). Neither the black marble-like stone nor the chain-mail fragment has been identified within the abbey stone corpus (see *The Worked Stone at Glastonbury Abbey*). Explorations at the east end of Monington's choir indicated that the last bay on the south had been occupied by a screen wall (see H on choir report plan) perhaps indicating the presence of the sanctuary. Near the south-west angle of the altar dais was a water-channel running diagonally across the choir from a position in the south aisle wall where an immense cavity once existed (this has been blocked subsequently). The cavity may indicate the presence of a stone conduit which brought the water to the altar (Bond 1915, 132-133). Although the published and unpublished plans neither record the remains associated with the High Altar nor the water-channel, Radford recorded their locations in 1955.

Finally, the remains of a room or building were found on the external south side of the choir where the string and base-courses had been cut through (see I on choir report plan). The foundations of the

structure indicated that it extended 2.74m from the choir and, given the narrowness of the foundation, was probably late medieval (ibid).

Peers, Clapham and Horne

In 1931, a 1.52m deep trench measuring 49m long was excavated along the central axis of the nave, crossing and the east end, extending as far as the mid 14th-century High Altar (Peers et al 1931, 84) as sited by Bond. The purpose of this trench was to locate the apse or east end of the Norman churches; although no trace of Norman walling was identified the large number of robber trenches in the crossing area was noted (ibid). The trench was carried down to the natural clay, which in the area near the north-east crossing pier was not reached until a depth of 4m (ibid). Further east, in between the third piers from the west, a substantial ashlar-built tomb was encountered; it was postulated that this might be the tomb of King Arthur (ibid) and is identified as such to the present day (see J on choir report plan).

Radford

In 1954 Radford excavated two trenches to the south-east of the Edgar Chapel to examine the soil conditions and levels in a relatively undisturbed area probably not covered by the early monastery (A508). One of the trenches corresponds exactly to one of three trenches proposed for excavation in 1939 by Mrs George van Dusen and Major Marston, as shown in a plan sent to the abbey (GLSGA 1988/1442 E3/5a). There were grave reservations about carrying out the proposals and the outbreak of the Second World War put an end to the matter. However, the offer of sponsorship for new excavations was repeated in 1953 by Mrs van Dusen and by the daughters of Major Marston (Mrs van Harten and Miss Marston). A letter dated 10th August 1954 from Radford to Mrs van Harten (NMR GLA Admin/1/2/8) reveals that he had the original plan re-drawn and that both this trench and a trench to the north of the Lady Chapel were excavated in 1954.

In 1955 Radford excavated five trenches in the area of the south choir aisle, three of which were interconnected. The purpose of the south choir excavations was to make a start on one of the main objectives of the 1951-1964 excavations, the recovery of the plan of the church and buildings begun by Abbot Herlewin (Radford 1981, 127). The two long parallel trenches, Q1 and Q2 (Q3 was amalgamated into Q2 during the excavations), were aligned east-west on the north side of the south arcade and were separated by a c 1m bulk. A north-south trench (Q6) was excavated southwards from Q1 within bay six, with an eastward extension in the centre of the south aisle (Q6 E Ext) into bay seven. A short north-south trench (Q5) was excavated in the third bay of the south choir aisle with a small western extension (Q5 W Ext) and a small rectangular trench just to the east (Q5 E Ext).

METHODOLOGY

The Results section of this report provides a technical stratigraphic account based on the sections, plans, photographs, sketches and notes for each trench.. All contexts have been included on a stratigraphic matrix [M:470]; however it was not possible to deduce relationships for all contexts. The individual sections, plans and the overall site plan (see pdf) should be referred to particularly during the Discussion section where the evidence from the trenches is synthesized. Stratified finds are included per context and unstratified finds are summarised per trench, although finds numbers

are only provided where there is no context (finds with contexts can be accessed through the context record).

The official photographic record for this area consists of only one image; this is incorporated within the Discussion. The first 12.80m of Q1 was drawn from the west end; the Q2, Q6 and the Q6 extension were recorded in section drawings; these trenches and Q5 with western extension were recorded as single multi-context plans while the eastern extension to Q5 (or trial pit) was not drawn. The 1954 SE corner of Edgar Chapel trenches were recorded in one section despite the complete lack of archaeological remains; this may have been a necessary exercise in proving to the American sponsors that the trench was unfruitful. Details of the trenches appear in both Radford's and the volunteer site notebooks with sketches and detailed trench write-ups; these notes, sketches and write-ups have been used critically to construct this report. The results of these excavations were summarised in Radford's 1956 published report while the 1981 interim report added further interpretation; these are referred to in the Discussion together with evidence from the recent geophysical survey.

As far as possible, the interpretative element of these records have been removed, although original labels have been left on the drawings primarily to retain terms of reference between the drawings and the notes. The phased Discussion section provides a critical appraisal of the archaeology from a modern perspective incorporating new dating and spatial evidence from specialist finds reports, the recent geophysical survey (GSB Propection) and the parchmark survey (Hollinrake & Hollinrake 1989). Together with a re-evaluation of both the original recorded and published interpretations, features have been attributed to the earliest possible phase. The Conclusion provides an overview of the archaeology, an assessment of the success of the historic excavations and suggestions for future areas of research.

RESULTS

1954, SE corner of Edgar Chapel

[L:1630] [E:22]. The trenches comprised a long diagonal trench aligned north-east to south-west and a shorter north-south aligned trench extending northwards from the southern end of the diagonal trench. The latter was recorded in section and comprised modern topsoil and turf [C:1550] above three subsoil layers. These comprised a yellow alluvium [C:1551] at the southern end of the trench, overlapping a grey alluvium [C:1552] in the centre of the trench. The latter contained nine fragments of animal bone and teeth although only one sheep/ goat mandible was retained. This overlapped the a natural layer [C:1503] at the northern end of the trench described as Upper Triassic Marl. The deposits within the diagonal trench also comprised marl and alluvium beneath the modern soil. Radford suggested the alluvium related to a water-channel (palaeochannel) and that any archaeological deposits that may have overlain the natural had been removed, possibly during construction of the Edgar Chapel which would have involved terracing into the rising ground to the east.

1955, Q1

[L:1642] [E:42]. Beneath the modern topsoil [C:2451], the irregular edge of the robbed sleeper wall [C:2353] for the late 12th- to early 13th-century south arcade ran along the south side of the trench

extending c 0.30m from the section. The eastern end of the trench had been previously excavated [C:2453] as demonstrated by the backfill of sloping tip lines [C:2452]. The excavation extended to a depth of c 1.6m and cut into the solid natural clay with irregular pick marks in the base.

Several features were preserved beneath the excavation backfill in the base of the trench and therefore were only recorded in plan rather than section. A stone foundation [C:2469] measuring c 1.22m in depth was covered by the same loose stone and mortar fill [C:2352] as noted for the robbed arcade [C:2353]. Above this fill, and at a depth of about 0.45m, were the scanty remains of a stone water channel [C:2470] which crossed the trench from north-west to south-east. On the eastern side of the foundation [C:2469] was a wide north-south robber trench [C:2468] packed with 'almost virgin clay with a very few spalls and dabs of mortar' [C:2467]. Further east were the remains of a stone foundation [C:2450] c 1.22m in depth with the eastern edge represented by a line in the clay.

To the west of the earlier excavations the north section was undisturbed, with the exception of a modern intrusion [C:2471] which extended to a depth of 0.91m from the surface of the modern topsoil [C:2451]. One robber trench [C:2455] was recorded directly beneath the topsoil; this was aligned north-south with one in situ stone [C:2456] in the base described as the remains of a lias foundation. The width of this feature was not ascertained because the eastern side was cut by the earlier excavation trench [C:2453] and the base was not reached at a depth of 1.06m.

The robber trench [C:2455] cut through the mortar bedding [C:2457] of the late 12th- to early 13th-century choir which also directly underlay the topsoil on the north side of the robbed arcade [C:2353]. The mortar layer measured 0.15m thick and extended from the west end of the trench, with a slight rise indicated by the presence of small bedded stones [C:2464] suggesting a step. Another step was suggested by the disappearance of the mortar bedding 0.91m further east. A similar mortar bed (with the same context number) occurred to the east, sagging into an earlier robbed feature [C:2460] and continuing to the east of the modern disturbance [C:2471] where it was cut by the later robber trench [C:2455].

The earlier robbed feature, labelled as a pier base, was described as being 'clearly cut' [C:2460] and was first traceable at 0.46m below the turf and had been dug from the level of the original surface of the discoloured clay [C:2465]. The feature had a flat base and cut the undisturbed clay by 0.38m. To the south this robbed pier base was cut by the late 12th- to early 13th-century robbed arcade [C:2353]. The primary fill [C:2459] comprised loosely packed stones, mortar, debris and some clay and earth to the level of the old surface. The mortar adhering to the stones was darker than that used in the post-1184 masonry. This was covered by a layer of tightly packed clay [C:2458] with some stones and mortar which underlay the mortar bedding [C:2457].

At exactly the same level as the upper fill [C:2458] of the robbed 'pier' base, and described as being 'piled against' it, was an extensive deposit of redeposited clay with soil [C:2463] which overlay the discoloured natural clay [C:2465]. This homogenous make-up layer continued on the eastern side of this feature and directly underlay the mortar bedding [C:2457] throughout the section as far as the robber trench [C:2455] which lay directly beneath the modern topsoil. The redeposited clay [C:2463] contained a fragment of group four glazed medieval floor tile (c 1272-80) and four sherds of Roman pottery.

At the west end of the trench a further robbed pier base [C:2462] also cut the discoloured natural clay [C:2465] and was filled [C:2461] with small stone rubble and mortar with a few stones set towards the base. Notes reveal that the fill [C:2461] was sealed by the clay make-up [C:2463] rather than the mortar bedding [C:2457] as implied from the section. Although this feature was just clear of the section, as depicted on the plan, the disturbances were traceable and the feature annotated onto the section.

Beneath the discoloured natural clay [C:2465] was a stiff yellow natural clay [C:2466] which sloped upwards from west to east and from south to north. Once the discoloured clay had been removed to a depth of c 1.5m the two robbed pier bases [C:2460] [C:2462] were clearly visible in plan where they were filled with tightly packed discoloured clay.

1955, Q2

[L:1641] [E:44]. The modern topsoil [C:2550] sealed an earlier excavation trench [C:2551] [C:2552] at the eastern end of the trench. Three robber trenches were also recorded directly beneath the topsoil [C:2550]. To the west of the earlier excavations, separated by a layer of discoloured clay [C:2553], was a north-south aligned robber trench [C:2555] filled with loose mortar and spalls [C:2554]. The plan shows the southern edge of this feature as a dashed line near the southern edge of the excavation trench. Further west was another north-south aligned robber trench [C:2563] with rather irregular edges (although the trench write-up states it was 'cleanly cut') and an homogenous fill of loose mortar, small stones and spalls [C:2562] labelled as 19th-century robbery.

Both these robber trenches cut through a layer of redeposited clay make-up [C:2556] directly below the modern topsoil [C:2550] and containing two sherds of Roman pottery. A thin layer of late 12th- to early 13th-century mortar bedding [C:2574] was indicated above part of the clay but this is the only evidence for the contemporary pavement level. The redeposited clay [C:2556] was at a similar level to the upper fill [C:2558] of the third robber trench [C:2575], located directly beneath the topsoil and between the other two robber trenches. The mortar and rubble fill [C:2558], with some mixture of clay and soil giving it a darker appearance, overlay the remains of the foundation [C:2559] comprising various large stones (although no Douling) set in a hard coarse cream mortar and yielding two sherds of Roman pottery. The inner, western edge of the foundation was well-defined with a clear curve and was noted as being trench built. However, the stones petered out towards the outer edge where the feature was damaged. Indeed, it appeared to have been cut by the foundation of the high gable to the east (represented by robber trench [C:2555]) but this could be a result of modern stone robbery. The layer of redeposited clay continued on the western side of the apse feature and directly overlay the natural clay (labelled as [C:2561] to the west and [C:2557] to the east).

To the west, the redeposited clay [C:2556] appeared to directly overlay three robbed features and the discoloured natural clay [C:2569]. All three features were cut from the surface of the discoloured clay. A stone and mortar base [C:2571] measuring 0.91m wide extended by 0.23m from the northern edge of the trench. The lowest 0.15m of the fill [C:2565] was of stones and mortar with more mortar at the top, the whole sealed by the layer of clay make-up [C:2556]. Slightly further west was an empty tomb [C:2568] backfilled with earthy clay [C:2567] with a few stones towards the bottom and extending irregularly by 0.15-0.23m from the north face of the trench. The tomb appeared to be sealed by the redeposited clay make-up [C:2556] but no clear line could be seen in section and the

two fills were almost identical. In the north-west corner of the trench was a disturbance [C:2573] filled with clay and soil [C:2572] also visible in plan on the trench floor; this extended 0.1m from the western end of the trench and 0.15m from the north section along the west face.

The surface of the natural clay [C:2570] was discoloured [C:2569] to a depth of c 0.15-0.22m, and sloped up irregularly from west to east.

1955, Q6

[L:1641] [E:41]. A thin layer of modern topsoil [C:2350] overlay a disturbed soil layer [C:2351] which sealed an earlier excavation (not shown in section) at the northern end of the trench. Immediately to the south and directly beneath the disturbed soil [C:2351] was a robber trench [C:2353] filled with a mass of rubble including loose mortar and spalls [C:2352]. This was traced to a depth of 0.76m with a well-defined southern edge and was also recorded running along the south side of Q1. The northern edge was truncated by the earlier excavations, however the south side was recorded in plan running from west to east. On the eastern side of the excavation trench was the robber trench [C:2468] for the late 12th- to early 13th-century east choir wall which extended from Q1 and continued southwards to the foundation [C:2364] of the south choir wall.

Also beneath the disturbed soil [C:2351] a probable grave was exposed but not fully excavated (the skeleton was not reached). The upper fill [C:2354] comprised tightly packed fine soil with some mortar, overlying a mortar layer [C:2355]. This sealed the lower fill [C:2356] of dark earth (also described as fine soil) which Radford states was typical of the grave fills on the site. In plan, the grave was trapezoid in shape and extended from the west side of the trench for 0.91m. The feature [C:2357] cut through an earlier depression, possibly a pit or scaffold-hole, which was also sealed by the disturbed soil [C:2351] and cut through the levelling layer [C:2366] [C:2360] beneath the disturbed soil [C:2351]. Measuring c 1.2 wide this was filled with a c 0.6m deep reddish soil with red and black specks, stones and rubbish [C:2358]. The looser fill [C:2358] contrasted to the tightly packed upper fill [C:2354] of the grave, and it also contained broken fragments of tile, plaster and painted plaster (pink and maroon on a white background) although it has not been possible to identify these items in the finds assemblage.

On the northern side of the probable grave [C:2357], and directly beneath the earth and mortar [C:2360], was a mortar layer [C:2362] at a slightly higher level and darker in colour than the mortar above the grave. This mortar was described as overlying the 'clay surface' at a depth of 0.51m below the trench surface and is described as 'much discoloured' and covered by topsoil. The mortar [C:2362] directly overlay the natural clay [C:2365], however on the south side of the grave the levelling layer [C:2366] directly overlay the natural clay [C:2365]. The levelling layer [C:2360] [C:2366] comprised mortar, discoloured clay and soil and yielded a sherd of samian pottery and two sherds of pottery dated 1100-1250. The record of a further samian sherd found in the black clay under the natural clay [C:2365] suggests that part of this deposit was redeposited, although this was not identified in the assemblage.

Towards the south choir wall was a disturbance [C:2367] cutting through the natural clay [C:2365]. In a volunteer site notebook the label 'foundation trench' is crossed out and replaced by 'scaffolding trench', although Radford subsequently reinterpreted this as a construction trench for the south choir wall. The soil fill [C:2361], from which a sherd of prehistoric pottery appears to have been

recovered, may have been a continuation or at least was contemporary with the levelling layer [C:2366] to the north. The fill [C:2361] lay against the foundation [C:2364] for the south choir wall, which in plan had a ragged termination in the centre of the excavation trench. The foundation was described as being trench built from 0.76m below the pavement level and above this level was built free. Constructed above the foundation was the bench [C:2363] which was abutted by the disturbed soil [C:2351] and topsoil [C:2350].

1955, Q6 E Extn

[L:1642] [E:40] [E:43]. Directly beneath the modern topsoil [C:2404] (south section only) was a modern excavation trench [C:2401] with a characteristic loose fill [C:2400] of stones and tip lines which, according to Radford's trench write-up, cut through an earlier modern disturbance on the south side of the trench. The northern side of the excavation trench [C:2401] cut through a layer of old topsoil [C:2404] which overlay a solid mortar layer [C:2406]. This was directly above the natural brown clay [C:2407] with discolouration reaching to a depth of about 0.45m from the underside of the mortar.

To the west, the excavation trench [C:2401] cut through a wide robber trench [C:2403] with a steep, slightly concave west side and filled with loosely packed stones, small rubble, mortar and some soil [C:2302]. This also cut through the old topsoil layer [C:2304] at the western end of the trench. The base of this feature was not reached but the sides gradually narrowed. The excavation trench [C:2401] must have exposed the foundation [C:2410] which extended from the north section by 0.92m. This was a solid foundation with the remaining surface mostly of Tor Burrs, forming a layer c 0.31m thick. The east face was exposed to a depth of 1.45m and was very large and solid showing that the Tor Burrs lay on a course of lias 0.15m deep set in yellow mortar and set slightly back. The west face was only uncovered to a depth of 1.07m, but was made up of small material with lavish use of mortar and was trench built against the face of the undisturbed clay.

Between the foundation and the robber trench [C:2403] was a layer of clay [C:2411] which continued on the western side of the robber trench and directly underlay the topsoil or make-up layer [C:2404]. The deposit inbetween the robber trench and the foundation was described as redeposited clay [C:2411] above the original ground surface. It is unlikely that the thick layer on the western side of the robber trench was entirely either redeposited clay or natural, rather it is likely to consist of redeposited clay above the natural. The clay [C:2409] on the eastern side of the foundation [C:2410] was labelled as 'white' in section and was either redeposited, perhaps within a construction cut, or a continuation of the stiff yellow clay natural [C:2408] recorded at the eastern end of the trench.

1955, Q5

[L:1643]. The late 12th- to early 13th-century bench [C:2363] remained in situ in front of the south choir wall and the foundation [C:2364] was 0.45m below the modern turf comprising much lias, some probably reused. The irregular face projected up to 0.15m in front of the plinth and the bottom was not reached at 1.47m. At a depth of 0.05-0.07m below the bench plinth and the modern turf were traces of the mortar bedding [C:2371] for the medieval floor; one fragment of group four decorated tile [F:BF2507] dated c 1272-80, was recovered from the trench and may have come from this pavement. Apart from the irregular disturbance caused by modern underpinning which

extended to a depth of 0.45m, the trench was filled with an homogenous layer of redeposited clay [C:2372] which underlay the mortar bedding [C:2371]. In the south-west corner of the trench a scaffold-hole was noted but not properly recorded.

At the north end of the trench the robber trench [C:2353] for the south arcade sleeper wall crossed from east-west with a loose fill [C:2352] of small stones, spalls and mortar and a small amount of soil and rubbish. It included a small fragment of pottery probably of c 1800 (not retained). This robber trench [C:2353] and the south choir wall foundation [C:2364] cut through an earlier foundation [C:2368] which ran from north-south. The foundation first became visible as loose stones and mortar at a depth of 0.7m, which become more frequent in the lower layers until in situ masonry was reached at a depth of 1.14m. The west side was recorded in the west extension to Q5 providing a width for the foundation of 2.13-2.28m and was aligned slightly east of north-south. The base of this foundation was not reached at a depth of 1.47m and there was no trace of a contemporary floor level in the small area exposed. On either side of the foundation [C:2368] and directly beneath the redeposited clay [C:2372] was the natural clay [C:2370]. The west extension to Q5 yielded seventeen sherds of Roman pottery [F:BF2503].

No features were drawn or recorded within the eastern extension (or trial pit) to Q5 with the natural clay [C:2370], which inclined slightly from west to east, overlain by the redeposited clay make-up [C:2372].