

GLASTONBURY.

Trench T 1. North Extension¹

1956

Cut north along the west aisle of the transept across north wall. Started from between 74 ft. 10 ins. and 78 ft. 10 ins. from east wall of transept, on north side of T 1. Total length 40 ft. 6 ins. Only sections 0 - 15 ft. and 27 - 40 ft. 6 ins. dug.

Measurements from north side of T 1. The surface had been lowered in this area, but depths are correlated to main transept level of pavement.

Between 0 and 15 ft.

The surface had been lowered during the layout of the Abbey. Turf was about 3 ft. below the main pavement level of transept; it was set on modern soil, which rested on pared down surface of natural clay. Between 1 ft 6 ins. and 5 ft. 2 ins. a robbed foundation trench running east and west crossed the trench. It was cut to a depth of 1 foot into the clay with a flat bottom about 4 ft. below main pavement level. The fill was of soil and a small amount of rubble and stone. The position and the character of the fill exclude a date in the 13th century or later. The character of the fill resembles that of the early trenches in T 1, which are cut by 12th century foundations and are therefore ascribed to Thurstan's church. It fits on the tentative plan as part of the north wall of the transept.

with
11

Beyond this a modern rumbling drain crossed the trench diagonally from NE. to SW. It incorporated medieval stone fragments

Between 27 and 40 ft. 6 ins.

Between 28 and 36 ft. - on the line of the north wall of the transept, but rather wider - a very deep excavation was cut into the clay with a modern ~~fill~~ fill. The bottom of this fill was not reached at a depth of 3 ft. from the level of the transept pavement. The bank had been made up with some 3 ft. of modern soil at the end of the trench. The whole area has been much disturbed in modern times and contained inter alia much broken window glass, probably from a greenhouse or frames. No trace of the walling of the east end of the Loretto Chapel, as restored by Bond, remained. It is clear that the whole northeast corner including the end of the north wall shown as 'stone debris' lay within the northwest angle of the 13th century transept, of which the wide foundation trench had been dug into the solid clay.

Ms. Hill
modern (not tipped) fill
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Note the exact position of the north wall of the transept in this trench must be checked against the survey.

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Section Trench N. of Lady Chapel. 1954 NE face. Datum 94.26

Length 40 ft. Measurement for section from N. angle of trench. Trench designed to recover relation between 'pyramid' marking original E end of Lady Chapel and adjacent medieval levels. Pyramid is platform explored by Bond and trench has centre as S. angle. Surface of platform 2 ft. below datum; it does not figure on section.

Natural clay nowhere reached.

Lowest stratum uncovered was disturbed clay with some soil and a few stones. Explored only between 15 - 19 ft. and 29 ft. 6 ins. - 32 ft. Excavation reached 5 ft. below datum and bottom not reached. Boring in each part of trench opened revealed no change for another 1 ft.

~~XX~~
Work suspended as Bond warned of presence of graves at this level. Irregular surface at about 3 ft. below datum between 15 - 19 ft and about 2 ft. 6 ins. below datum between 29 ft. 6 ins. and 32 ft. A trench-built rough wall crossed the trench obliquely, running roughly on the same axis as Lady Chapel. It cut section at 21 ft. 6 ins Base at 5 ft. below datum and stands in places two courses (1 ft.) high. (Only found as filling in was about to begin; too late for proper examination.)

Disturbed clay was capped by a layer of fine friable cultivated soil with some fragmented stone and mortar debris and a surface at about 1 ft. below datum. The layer was apparently consistent and continuous but was not excavated between 0 - 4 ft. and 21 - 26 ft.

The soil layer was overlaid by an occupation level consisting of shallow bedded walls, pavements of stone and cobbles and broken up stonework. The level which was associated with 16th century stoneware has a consistent level about 1 ft. below datum. and carried irregular piles of debris from its disuse.

This ruined occupation level was covered by a modern bank of soil, clay and stones above which was the modern humus and turf. This layer was apparently in position at the time of Bond's excavation.

At 35 ft. on section all strata were cut through by a modern disturbance filled with soil, stones and debris, representing Bond's excavation of the platform structure. This curved across the trench on a line roughly concentric with the platform, but the sides appeared to have fallen in badly.

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Trench N. of Lady Chapel. 1954 Datum 94.26
Length 40 ft. by 4 ft. wide. Extension between 4 ft and 8 ft. runs NE. for 11 ft.

Cut diagonally NW. from centre of platform which carried pillar marking original E. end of Lady Chapel. Centre of platform forms S. angle of trench.

Measurements from SE. end of trench.

Section on NE. face so measurements reversed.

From 9 ft. where surface was about 1 ft. above datum ground rose gradually to 16 ft. where surface was about 3 ft. 6 ins. above datum, continuing about this level till NW end of trench. This bank of stones, soil and debris was modern carrying the humus, on which the modern turf grew.

The modern disturbance representing Bond excavations round the platform cut the NE face at 5 ft. and the Sw side at 8 ft. It was an irregular ~~circle~~ circle round this platform and the sides had apparently caved in. Fill soil stones and debris.

At a consistent level about 1 ft. below datum was an occupation layer consisting of rough pavements, slight walls and cobbled areas, associated with 16th century stoneware. It was covered with irregular heaps of debris from the layer and soil. It was not further explored.

This occupation layer lay on a stratum of friable soil with a small amount of fragmented stone and mortar. Between the modern disturbance and 13 ft. this layer was rather over 1 ft. in depth. Between 21 ft. and 25 ft. it was about 2 ft. deep. The base was in neither case clearly defined. Elsewhere the layer was not explored in depth, but it appeared to be a consistent feature and to represent a soil that had been cultivated. It may be equated with the late medieval garden of the Chaplains. The surface of the platform which had carried the pillar lay about 1 ft. below the top of this layer, implying that the uppermost courses, possibly of dressed stone had been removed.

The stratum below this soil was explored only in two sondages between 8 ft. and 10 ft. 6 ins. and 21 ft. and 25 ft., both carried down to 5 ft. below datum. Work was suspended at this level as Bond had suspended his excavation at a slightly lower depth, because of the presence of skeletons. It was not desired in 1954 to open up a part of the early cemetery which could not be properly explored. The lower stratum consisted of disturbed clay with some admixture of soil. There was no clear division between the upper soil and the lower clay; one shaded into the other and the level of demarcation is approximate only. But the contrast between 6 ins. above that noted and 6 ins. below was clear. The lower disturbed clay continued without change down to the base of the sondages and boring for a further 1 ft. in depth produced no evidence of significant change.

Within this stratum a trench-built wall crossed the trench obliquely on a line approximately parallel to the axis of the Lady Chapel. The north wall face cut the section on the NE. side at about 18 ft. 6 ins. The base of the wall lay at 5 ft. below datum and in places it stood two courses (1 ft.) high. It was rough built and appeared a foundation rather than a wall meant to be seen. The wall was only brought to light by the collapse of the side of the sondage at the end of the excavation and could not be fully explored.

Undisturbed clay was nowhere reached.