

GLA/SITE/3 6

K Wainwright

Glastonbury 1955

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August 3rd

Trench across Cloister E-W. Section 37. Dark clay layers

From E end 9ft 2 ins to 14ft 11 ins. = part of 12thC date within these limits.

From surface 1ft 9 ins to 2ft 3 ins. = as above

Suggestions 1) Grave?

2) Wall trench? (Mr Radford suggests that material is consistent with 12thC filling).

Description: Seen in S wall trench as clearly defined rectangular patch of dark clay. Lime and rubble above. On floor of trench bounded on west side by stones loosely set in the clay.

Aug 4th

Trench across Cloister E to W. Section 37

Dark clay layer now seen to extend to either side of rectangular patch. Still producing pottery of 11-12th C date and one Roman tile (hypocaust?).

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5th August

Trench across cloister E to W. Section 37

Dark clay layer ends at point approx 9'3" from E end of trench (S side). From this point line of stones crosses trench diagonally to point where sherd of pottery is situated. From this line to E end of trench floor of trench consists of stones set in yellow mortar. Joins foundations of cloister wall at east end of trench (N.B. later cloister wall was probably built on foundation of earlier wall destroyed by fire). No dating evidence so far in yellow layer.

Single find of any importance is one piece of pot rim found at junction of dark clay with yellow mortar.

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8th August

Trench across cloister E-W. Section 37

Dark clay layer (from surface 2'2" to 2'5").

Clay very stony westwards from 12'6" from E end of trench.

Finds: 12thC pottery & tiles & glass of uncertain date.

Limits of excavation today: from 10'6" from E end of trench to 16'4".

Trench across cloister E-W. Section 37

9th Aug

Glass frag: (trench across cloister E to W). From E end of trench 9'. From surface 2'4" (dark clay layer). From S sides of trench 4ins.

Glass frag (rim?): From E end of trench 8'4". From surface 2'4" (dark clay layer). From S side of trench 1ft.

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Glass fragment: From E end of trench 8'. From surface 2'7" (dark clay layer near junction with 13thC wall foundation). From S side of trench 1 inch.

Roman??

Little pottery: dark clay layer at depth of about 2'4" contains large and small fragments of tile. Some bone and charcoal (S side especially).

10th August

3 glass frags: (trench across cloister E to W. Dark clay layer (2'7" from surface). From E end of trench 8'.

All from within 1' from S side of trench. One is a small pear shaped piece (claw beaker?).

Now clear that under dark clay layer lies a burnt layer belonging to dark age or earlier. Fragments of tile may belong to oven...

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...for drying corn. Burnt layer disappears on N side of trench, giving way to yellow clay. Suggestions of wattled building appear on floor of trench (N.B. ask Radford about one fragment of what I take to be quite definite daub).

No pottery but glass fragments may be Roman or post-Roman – some bone. Considerable charcoal x 4.30pm. (Memo for tomorrow: could burnt area simply be base of oven or kiln? Now seems to be a patch rather than a post hole & wall). From E end 8' to 10'6" excavated today.

11th August

Across cloister E-W. Section 37

Burnt layer. More glass! (11' to 11'8", depth 2'5" – 2'9").

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More tile (one with vitrified markings on it) & fragments of bone & daub.

PI18757. Sketch of furnace 1 in CLE-W.

Now clear that area between 11' & 12'6" was site of furnace, probably glass (vitrified tile & frag of crucible). Semi-circular line of tiles may represent levels of furnace. From 8' from E end of...

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...trench lie other marks on clay floor of trench which, in conjunction with fragments of daub found throughout burnt layer may yet prove to be part of a building. Could this be likely for an operation like glass smelting?

Cross wall at 12' 6" from E end of trench is cut into furnace area and marks end of burnt layers – Dunstan or 13thC ????

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Trench CL1. Sections 49 & 51

7th Aug

Disturbance layers cleared to surface of yellow floor (i.e. to mortar layer which was probably a mixing floor). Small pit cut in floor at 18'6" from E end of trench yielded ? kiln fragment and 1 pot fragment. Large foundation at E end of trench (to 8'2") covered by disturbance layer containing late medieval pot and one piece of 19thC pot which appeared nearly on the stones of the foundation. Yellow floor begins at 8'2".

8th August

Day mainly devoted to stripping yellow floor. Turf removed from E end of trench & ...

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...disturbed material removed down to remains of cloister wall foundation (date as yet uncertain). It seems certain that the robbing of this wall material took place quite late for with the exception of a little burnt material (kiln wall?) most of the finds are no earlier than 18thC. 19thC pottery is in fact to be found directly on top of the stones.

9th August

Now clear that the great "cloister wall" foundation extends to about 8ft - i.e. to beginning of yellow floor. It may possibly be one of the S transept walls of Romanesque church. Are there 2 builds of Romanesque? N sides of foundation shows extensive robbing – possibly...

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...in order to facilitate the laying down of 13thC cloister wall foundation.

10th August.

Test pit in "Glass Furnace Area".

Test pit from 12'6" E to 15'6" E. Object to pick up the curb of cloister bed (14ft E in 1955 cloister trench). The yellow mixing floor in this area lies above a mixture of mortar, black clay and sharp spalls. Some of the latter appears to be driven into the layer for several inches. Mixed with this material are fragments of 12thC pottery and the whole of the layer appears to be flecked with charcoal. The charcoal appears to be thicker on the N side of the trench, where it is streaked with yellow clay. At this point, also, a rod...

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...of coloured glass made its appearance. These indications make it highly probably that we are now in the level of the 1955 glass kiln area. The test pit has been taken to a depth of 3-4" below the surface of the yellow floor.

13th August

Test pit expanded to E & W to uncover furnace area (i.e. from 8'E & 16'E, starting at end of wall foundation at E end of trench). No trace of cloister bed edging stones but there are possible traces in section of the line they must have followed. Finds include 12thC pottery & some which may be earlier, a kiln fragment, and a minute fragment of clear glass.

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14th August

Wall exposed at approx 16' E. Very tenuous remains: shallow foundations of cement and stone & one large lias slab – presumably in position in S side of trench. (see N section of CL1. Turstin cloister??)

15th August

Note on stratigraphy in CL1 at 12-16'E (i.e. furnace area in 1955 trench). Yellow mortar floor (1) which extends for greater part of trench overlies (2) a mixture of clay & spalls which is followed by (3) a layer of dark clay mixed with charcoal & fragments of tile. Finds are classified accordingly on envelopes.

The clay and charcoal lies at an approximate depth of 2'1" from surface. On the S side of the trench it is relatively soft and...

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...mixed with a yellowish mortar-like material. On the N side is a patch of stiff blueish clay containing large fragments of stone & pieces of tile. This continues E to the wall foundation at 8' and contains a long diagonal streak of hard yellow clay. To the west the charcoal and clay pass beneath the shallow wall foundation (16' approx) to a distance not yet ascertained. The pattern so far revealed does not suggest any obvious structure (i.e. kiln etc) but must clearly have a close connection with the kiln in the 1955 trench, particularly as the clay has yielded some glass & kiln fragments.

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16th Aug

Extension 2 to CLI cut down to yellow floor. 18ft from E end to 20ft from E end. Baulk of 1' left between the extension & 1955 cloister trench. A most noticeable feature is the large semi-elliptical patch of clay & kiln material which appears directly above the mortar floor. Presumably this material is redeposited. It has produced no finds. Rough plan below.

PID18758. Sketch of furnace 1 or 2. South side.

Note on sketch: Baulk over section of ?Turstin's cloister wall (centre approx 18ft).

Note: the yellow mortar floor in Ex II has been removed with the exceptions of baulk over Turstin's cloister wall but time & weather conditions do not permit further excavation.

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17th August

At this stage there appears to be no recognisable pattern which might betray a kiln. The whole area is, however, very heavily flecked with charcoal. A charcoal streak at 10ft on the floor of the main trench may, in conjunction with a streak of yellow clay, indicate the limit of the disturbance caused by the cutting of the foundation trench for the great wall which runs across the E end of CLI (? Transept). Set in the black streaks were a tile & fragment of kiln, Could the foundation trench have destroyed a kiln? At 12'6" -14' the remains of the cloister kerb are now clearly visible. Dark clay at ...

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...E end has not been taken back to 8' mark because of lack of time.

Handwriting changes. DBH (i.e. Donald Harden? Same as handwriting in DH's site notebook. CA).

20th August

Began by cleaning off the surface as left at end of last week in the widening of CL1. Later the baulk between this & the first furnace to the N in 1955 cloister trench was demolished and further clearance of the surface undertaken.

21st August

More surface clearance at c. 2' depth revealed many traces of furnace material, some apparently in situ & it seemed that the area was likely to produce at least one more furnace. Decided to cut two narrow east-west trenches in the area to seek further...

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...sectional view down to natural in order to try to locate these furnaces if they existed. Pottery of 12th and perhaps 11thC, many fragments of Roman tiles and other furnace make-up turned up all over the area.

22 Aug

Narrow sectional cuttings continued throughout whole length of CL1, from c. 8'E & across the N extension to that trench. In the furnace area these went down to c. 3'6" to 4' from surface and became too deep to work in, so decided to cut away the broad bulk between. Also, widened the CLI sectional cutting in a patch further west when same deeper disturbance was revealed; showed a curved dark line in clay...

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...subsoil c. 6"-8" wide across trench - ?what is it.

Meanwhile work on CL1 extension carried S of the 55 CL trench furnace revealed an oven wall apparently in situ and this was partially investigated today. Also, in W end of 55 trench deeper digging revealed what may be the site of another oven or structure, with crucible fragments and other significant finds, 11th-12thC pottery, a piece of Drap. >9 & a 4th cent, flanged bowl rim.

At 5pm, an – Roman coin found on excavated surface of CLI just west of furnace extension.

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23 Aug

Work of further clearance in furnace area began rather later than usual owing to rain. During morning an ash pit revealed & prepared for photography, running past garden Turstin period wall at E corner of area. Also more work on main furnace complex and clearance of W & SW portion of area – partly brought down to mortar layer at 3'9" – 4'0", underlying the furnace levels & perhaps the working floor on which glass works set-up. Afternoon lost- no work worth mentioning.

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24 August

Began by removing baulk left in furnace in 1955 trench and also the baulk left where the twin border stones of garden cut into furnace debris: other worked on W end of area, removing lowest levels above mortar floor and finding much Saxon pottery, half a bead of blue-green glass & other glass fragments. Later self cleaned furnace area without removing fallen structure tiles & stones – many glass frags found, including piece of ruby with lighter trail, also some bits of crucible. Some more clearance of ashpit also after it was photographed, proving definitely that it underlay Turstin wall: but pit not cleaned out fully.

Two photos of furnace area taken, one from E & one from W, in early afternoon.

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Then the further clearance of furnace began and much more glass found in debris and under debris just above mortar floor which began to appear below. Here a piece of square rod of opaque yellow turned up. One of the garden border stones removed.

After 5pm, Peter Hart & Jean Ralston made general plan of area after J & I had cleaned enough of red slope S of 1955 furnace to show that it probably represented a second firing chamber, larger, beside the other area. CARR concurred.

Some fallen stones, S of supposed entrance to 1955 furnace probably represent the entrance to 2nd one. Work closed at quarter to seven pm.

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In CL2. Sections 23 & 50. N of furnace area, Pauline cleaned rectangular hole containing many disturbed stones & fragments of kiln material, Saxon pottery & some bits of glass & the edge of a furnace pit appeared also, W of where P was working. These debris underlay not only Turstin but Dunstan walling. CARR & I decided to leave this for a future season & also other remains of furnace working which appeared in the new trench alongside the S wall of main nave & in the L-shaped cutting S of the main furnace area CL1 Extension.

Last page (in Wainwright's handwriting)

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At 14ft: from E end & 2ft down are the set stones on edge - kerb of cloister bed.

To 30ft from end. 18" down – line of spalls which mark the builders rubbish for building of 13thC church.

12'-16' at 3' deep – Glass furnace remains. No furnace probable.

18-21', 2-3' down – foundations of stone wall.

19-21'- wall – blue lias.

47-49'- similar foundations at 2'6". Same building.

55-56' – stones – kerbing.

0-8ft: at depth of 18ins solid medieval foundation.