

Glastonbury

Section CL E-W 1955 South Face Datum 95.51

Length 110' Measurement from W face of inner arcade of E side of Cloister

Cut across central area of Cloister from E-W 30'6" S of and parallel to S walk of Church

The natural subsoil was a stiff yellow clay. The uppermost layers of this clay were much disturbed and discoloured and the natural turf line was nowhere identified.

Between 12'6" and 14'9" was a layer of burnt red clay about 3" thick set directly on the surface of the natural clay. Its surface at – 1'4" to – 1'6" was slightly dished and it lay some 1'6" below the layer of building debris of the early 13th century, which represents the surface of the 12th century cloister and was probably slightly above the surface contemporary with the burnt clay. On the W a single stone in position marked the edge of the burnt surface; no similar stone remained on the E. The stone lay between 14'9" and 15'3" on the section and a space up to 16'4" marks the position of the wall to which the stone belongs [the burnt surface extends S and the section line is near the edge, distorting measurements – the section was drawn before a plum was available]. The burnt surface had a contemporary clearance of soil extending up to 18'6" with a sloping hollow. In the E the surface of the natural clay – 1'4" at 11'6" to – 11" at 9' where the remains were cut by a later disturbance. The burnt surface was left in position but the delimiting wall was almost entirely removed. The hollow was then filled with stones, clay, soil and rubbish, including loose fragments of tile and pieces of burnt clay with a domed smooth surface and irregular outer surface. On E the tip line sloped down following the natural surface of the clay: elsewhere the fill was random. It was not possible to establish the surface from which the structure was dug down but the fill was in position and consolidated when stones on edge were set into it in the 12th century and was sealed by the early 13th century building line. [Glass fragments found in the file were dated by DBH to the 9th century].

From 101'6" to 103'10" a robbed wall trench filled with loose soil and mortar and one block lies in position at the base of the W face. The trench was cut into the natural clay with its base at – 3'. In the west and contemporary with the wall a fugitive line of mortar with its surface at – 2'6" ran as far as 107'10" where it was cut by a later disturbance; it lay directly on the clay [lias and type of fill resembled Dunstan's cloister]. Close to the the walk a posthole 8" across with a loose fill went down to – 3'6". It showed up first in the surface of the natural clay, but appears to be cut through the mortar.

From 46'9" to 48'9" a wall showed in section. It was formed of thin lias slabs set into the surface of the clay and contained below – 1'3". The wall had been demolished before the accumulation of the layer of building debris of the 13th century accumulated [sic] but must have risen almost to the

surface of the 12th century cloister garth. A similar cut with a similar fill runs from 18'6" to 21'3" with its base at -1'3". This is barely distinguishable from the kiln level up, which it cuts. [It was later shown to be opposite the end of the wall running along the N side of the trench and this was shown to be earlier than the 12th century cloister lay out]. It was probably sealed by the clay level representing the pre 13th century surface.

The whole section line apart from the later disturbance was then brought to a plane surface by a layer of clay and soil which has been cultivated forming a fairly stoneless soil. This sloped down regularly from 0' at 9'3" to -9" at 107'6". Into this surface were set vertically slabs of limestone lias. That on section shows at 13'6" to 13'10" with its top at -2" and its base at -1'8" cutting into the burnt clay. [On section it would appear that this slab does not reach the 12th century surface but the slabs were irregular and both this slab further north and others of the same series stood proud].

From 61' to 80'6" a deep trench filled with stones rubbish clay and soil was cleared to a depth of -3'3" where Tor burrs set in yellow mortar began to appear and work was discontinued. From 56' to 58'4" a similar trench was worked but as Tor burrs had appeared in line of section at -3'0" (they were found further north). The trenches were cut through the 12th century surface and could be followed to a level of -6" or higher, well above the early 13th century builders debris.

From 9'3" to 55'9 the 12th century surface was covered with a lay 2" - 4" thick of small stones, mortar etc. including many spalls from the dressing of Douling stone. This area had clearly served as a builders yard when the great church was under construction. The whole area, including that beyond 80'6" was subsequently brought to a level surface, which is, in places immediately overlaid by modern soil and by turf with a level of about 1'3". The base of the foundations between 56' and 80'6" show in the base of this levelling up but cannot be followed in the upper layers of what is clearly a homogenous deposit.

From 0'-8' a solid foundation of Tor burrs set in hard yellow mortar cut through the natural clay. It continued below -1'3". The surface was irregular and had been robbed. [The foundation resembled those between 56' and 80'6" but the mortar was different].

The wall of the arcade of the 15th century cloister was set directly on this foundation. Contemporary with the base of this wall was a loose pile of stones, rubbish, soil etc. including part of a cusped window frame not earlier than c.1300. This covered the robbed foundation was extended irregularly for some distance along the trench cutting into the levelling of this cloister even and at places into earlier deposits. The cut made to effect the robbery of the foundation was carried down to below the surface of the natural clay between 8' and 9' destroying all direct evidence of the relation between the foundation and earlier levels.

From 107'9" to the end of the trench at 110' in robbed foundation trench with a loose fill of stones, mortar clay and soil was followed down to -3'0". It cut through the mortar bedding associated with 'Dunstan's' wall. As the line of the fifteenth century inner face of the cloister ??? lies at 110' the foundation must be of earlier date, but the upper levels are destroyed by a rather wider western trench which goes down to - 1'3".

Section CL E-W N. Extn. 1955 West Face Datum 95.51

Length 12'3" Measurement from N edge of main trench

Cut north between 26' and 30' as far as the N cloister arcade.

At point where a robber foundation ending to the modern soil was seen in the north side of the CL E-W in trench was cut north to the cloister arcade. The foundation was set opposite the abutment for a flying buttress and was not visible in the south face of the main trench.

Natural clay of normal type was found between 10' and 12' in a small trial pit adjacent to outer face of the cloister arcade. The natural surface has been removed. The top was at 94'60. From 5' to 12' this was overlaid by a layer of minor clay and soil with an irregular surface at about 90'50. A stone set obliquely into the close to the arcade resembled those edging the bits of the 12th century but the line did not continue across the trench.

Between 0' and 5' the layer of loose stones, rubble and mortar continued down; it was followed to 94'80. A large slab of black lias showing on section between 3' and 5' and with its surface about 94'90 was the only trace of the foundation uncovered in situ. The layer of loose stones etc continued to the end of the trench covering the layer of clay and soil beyond 5'.

The 15th century arcade foundation had a slight offset at the level of the clay surface, below which it was trench built. No trace of a ??? wall appeared in the line of this section

Section CLE 1 1957 North Face Datum 95.68

Length 12'. Measurement from inner face of C15 cloister arcade.

Across cloister walk (E) continuing line of CH1

The section was drawn in two stages as completion of trench was delayed to allow the extension S so that the kiln could be more adequately explored in one operation. Datum of lower part 95.51

At base below kiln, between 4' and 8'6" in light coloured clay. No trace of iron flecking, but surface may have been altered by heat. Above this with no visible demarcation was a thick layer of dark coloured clay of the same type apparently in situ. There was no trace of its turf line and turf has probably been removed to form a level surface. [The relation does not show work in the section, but was checked elsewhere in trench].

From 4'1" to 9'6" a shallow depression was cut in the clay. It showed most clearly in the lighter clay below but reached up into the darker structure. This hollow was filled by a layer composed of small fragments of burnt clay, ash and soil, on which lay a bowl shaped surface of burnt clay extending in section line from 4'3" to 9'. This hollow had been filled with small stones, fragments of burnt clay and ash similar to that below except for the presence of many fragments of stone. The whole was levelled up into a layer of disturbed clay, the surface level of which has been cut away at a later date.

Into this layer of discoloured clay a foundation trench, with a flat bottom at about 93.75, had been cut. The west edge was clear and had a vertical face at 5'3". This trench certainly extended as far as 9' but there was no clear demarcation; the small stone and mortar fill of the trench gradually ceasing and discoloured clay like that further west reappearing. The fill of the trench was of discoloured clay and soil with many small stones some building spalls, including a few of Doultling, and mortar. This fill was sealed with a thin layer of broken fragments of burnt clay, similar to the fragments associated with the furnace below. It was from 5' 9" to 9' with a surface at about 95.00. Beyond the surface continues as a layer of small stones.

At the west end of the trench continuing up to 4' was a thin layer of mortar forming the bedding for the thirteenth century paving. One slab remained in position against the wall of the cloister arcade; its surface lay at about 95.45. Beyond 4' the mortar had been removed but the burnt clay and structure below had the appearance of a layer of hard core for the step leading to the Chapter House.

These remains were covered with a layer of discoloured clay and soil, which included a few large stones. On its surface were the fugitive remains of a further layer of mortar, indicating a level of about 96.20 for the fifteenth century pavement. This is related to the step in the Chapter House. The remaining stone has a riser at 10' 3" and a surface of 96.70. It has been reset in modern times but the margin of error is negligible. The surface of the stone is rough; it served as the base for a lost paving slab.

Section CLE 2 1957 North Face Datum 96.32

Length Measurement from inner face of 15th century cloister arcade

Cut across the E wall of the cloister 'N of CLE1

At base of trench is the natural stiff yellow clay; no iron flecking was noted and the natural surface was nowhere present.

The earliest feature was a foundation trench with rounded western angles and flat bottom at about 95.25. It extended from 6'3" to 9'6" being cut through at the east end by a later foundation trench. The fill was of clay with much mortar debris and many spalls, the result of dressing stone; they included Douling.

From 0'-3' was a solid foundation of small Tor burrs and other stone set in fine yellow mortar. It continued below the bottom of the trench at 95.20 and probably suggested it extended below 94.00. It extended below the 15th century cloister arcade. The foundation was trench built against the face of the clay. The surface of the clay and the fill of the foundation trench to the east were finished to a level surface at 95.75. A few stones laid flat on the clay suggest the base for a pavement but this unfortunately had left no trace. This level was contemporary with the foundation to W.

A foundation trench has been cut through the filling of the earlier foundation trench. Below it sloped east at an angle of about 45degrees disappearing below the bottom of the trench - here - at. The fill was of clay, mortar, and soil with tip lines sloping down toward the east the top layer mainly of mortar and spalls was cut through the layer of clay to the W., but this appeared to be no more than a phase in a containing accommodation. Both clay and foundation trench were sealed by a thin bedding of yellow mortar for a destroyed pavement. Both clay and mortar bedding sealed the rough top of the foundation at the west end of the trench on which the contemporary arcade of the 15th century cloister was built.