

Glastonbury Abbey Excavations, 1938

Interim Report

BY THE DIRECTORS, SIR CHARLES R. PEERS, KNT., C.B.E. ;
ALFRED W. CLAPHAM, C.B.E., *Sec. Soc. Antiq.* ; AND THE
VERY REV. PRIOR HORNE, F.S.A.

EXCAVATION work on the site of the Abbot's Lodging began on 16 May 1938 and continued until 23 July.

Eyston in his *Little Monument* states that some part of this building was standing when he first visited Glastonbury in 1712. He says that it faced west and that it jutted out some yards at each end. There is also in existence a rough sketch plan of the ruins dated 17 August 1723 in which the Abbot's Lodging is shown with the measurement 147 feet written against it.

Work began with the examination of the long wall discovered in 1937 running north and south at a distance of about 12 feet to the west of the Monks' Kitchen.¹ It had at first been thought that this was the east wall of the Lodging since it came so close to the Kitchen, but it has proved to be the west wall or front of the building.

After following this wall for 120 feet towards the south, it was found to turn east for 20 feet, and then north, finally connecting up with the s.w. corner of the Monks' Kitchen.

At the south-eastern corner of the building enclosed by these walls, a tank built in a circular form was discovered, 4 feet in diameter. It is part of the sanitary arrangements of the house. This was flushed by a drain which originated outside the Lodging towards its northern end, and which having been brought through the wall ran down the middle of the building under the floor. It evidently carried the rain water collected

¹ The centre of the Abbot's Kitchen is about 230 feet west of the centre of the Monks' Kitchen.

from the roof. When sufficient water had collected in the circular basin, it was released by lifting a sluice door the grooves for which can still be seen, and the flushing joined the main sewer of the monastic rere-dorter.

The east wall of the Lodging was found to continue to the south for 19 feet; it then turns west and becomes the southern boundary wall of the Abbot's garden.

Further examination revealed that additions had been made to the original design. The west wall had been produced southward to meet the garden wall, thus enclosing an area about 20 feet square, and a projection had been built on at the s.w. corner of the old building, also about 20 feet square. This projecting portion had buttresses at its n.w. and s.w. corners, and a cobbled path ran all round the outside of it.

A cobbled pavement 8 feet wide was also found along the greater part of the west front of the building. This cobbling came close up to the wall except at one place near the middle, where it stops about 5 feet short of the wall. This may possibly indicate the position of the front entrance.

Search was made at the northern end of the Lodging for a projection to correspond with the one at the south end, but this has not been found.

More cobbling and walls of several different periods were discovered in this vicinity, but there was not time for a full investigation of this area.

The angle of walling opened up some time ago, which at present is situated in a pit near the Abbot's Kitchen, was proved to be the n.w. corner of the garden wall. The s.w. corner was dug for and found, and thus the extent of the garden is now known.

Among the finds were the following :—

An oval bronze seal of the thirteenth century, engraved with a bird on a branch, and the legend CREDEI MICHI.

A quantity of fragments of stained and painted glass.

A diamond-shaped ornamental lead grille.

A number of jettons, and a penny of Edward II.

A piece of glazed tile of foreign make.

A large quantity of broken pottery.

Most of these objects can be seen on exhibition in the Abbot's

Kitchen, and it is hoped to be able to restore some of the pottery.

The Directors consider that an interesting piece of the old buildings has been uncovered, and they hope that the Trustees will give facilities for completing this excavation in the coming year.

They would like to place on record their thanks to Capt. G. P. Bowen, R.N., the Custodian of the Abbey ruins, for the plans he has made, and for the valuable help he has given during the excavations.