



Glastonbury Abbey Excavations, 1937

(PLATE XXIV)

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

At a meeting of the Excavation Committee held at the Abbey Gatehouse on 16 March 1937, it was decided that the excavations this year should be directed towards finding the position and foundations, if any, of the monastic kitchen. With this end in view, work was begun on 3 May and continued for ten weeks, until 10 July.

A commencement was made on the south side of the undercroft of the monks' refectory, near the eastern end. Earlier excavations had shewn indications of two walls, 10 feet apart, running south from the refectory undercroft, about 30 feet from its eastern end. These walls were first followed up, to see if they led into a kitchen vault. It was found, however, that they both terminated at a distance of 25 feet from the refectory; the foundations were still in position at the ends of the walls. Between these two walls a hard sloping way, 6 feet wide, leads up to the ground level. This appears to have been one of the entrances to the refectory undercroft.

The easternmost trench was continued about 110 feet to the south, without encountering any kitchen premises. The ground level at the top of the slope was verified by the disclosure of a hard prepared surface, and the foundations of a small and apparently unimportant lean-to building abutting against the west side of the dormitory at its southern end were discovered.

By means of an exploratory trench, 200 feet long, running parallel to the refectory and at a distance of 70 feet from it,

the sought-for building was at length discovered. It is near the western end of the refectory and the space between the two buildings is 35 feet.

In plan, the kitchen is a square of 50 feet, outside measurement; the inside measurement is about 35 feet. Within the outer wall, another square of wall was found, 25 feet by 25 feet outside measurement, enclosing a space 10 feet square.

This inner wall would have been beneath the kitchen floor and served as the sleeper-wall for piers from which sprang the vaulted roof. At Ely there was almost the same arrangement. At this place the roof appears to have been supported on four free-standing piers, and the inner foundation at Glastonbury no doubt indicated a similar arrangement. A piece of wall running towards the refectory may have been part of the corridor connecting the two buildings.

During the excavation nearly 300 yards of trench 3 feet in width were dug, so that the site of the monastic kitchen and its surroundings was thoroughly explored.

The Directors of the excavation recommend that the kitchen thus found be marked in outline on the turf, if the Trustees so approve, and they further hope that facilities will be given them to excavate the Abbot's Lodging and the Guest House, next year, as these buildings evidently lie fairly close to those recently uncovered. The long piece of wall, shown on the plan to the west of the kitchen, appears to be a part of the buildings in question.

The Directors would like to thank Captain G. P. Bowen, R.N., the abbey custodian, for the very careful plans he has made of the excavation, and for his watchful oversight of the digging while it was in progress. Their thanks are also due to W. J. Wedlake, the foreman, whose interpretation of the fragments of wall discovered, was most useful.