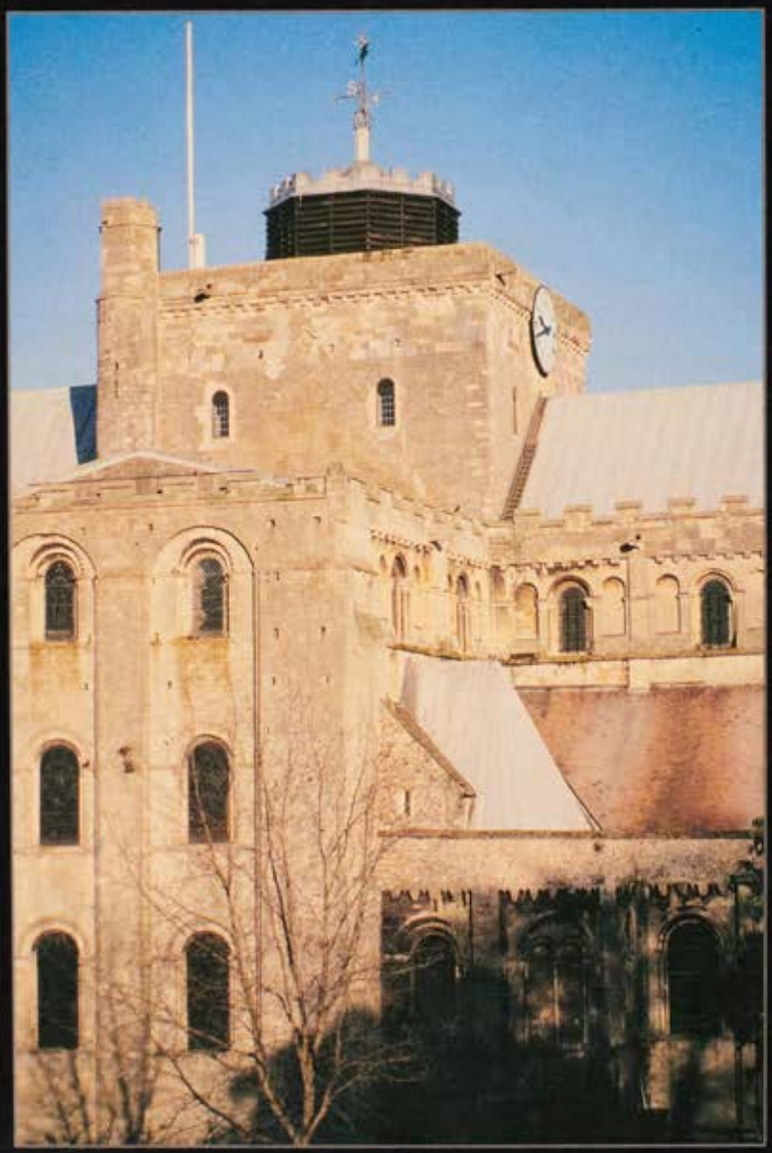
HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB

MONOGRAPH 8 GENERAL EDITOR R WHINNEY

ROMSEY ABBEY
Report on the Excavations 1973-1991



by Ian R Scott

TEST VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Romsey Abbey: Report on the Excavations 1973–1991

ERRATA

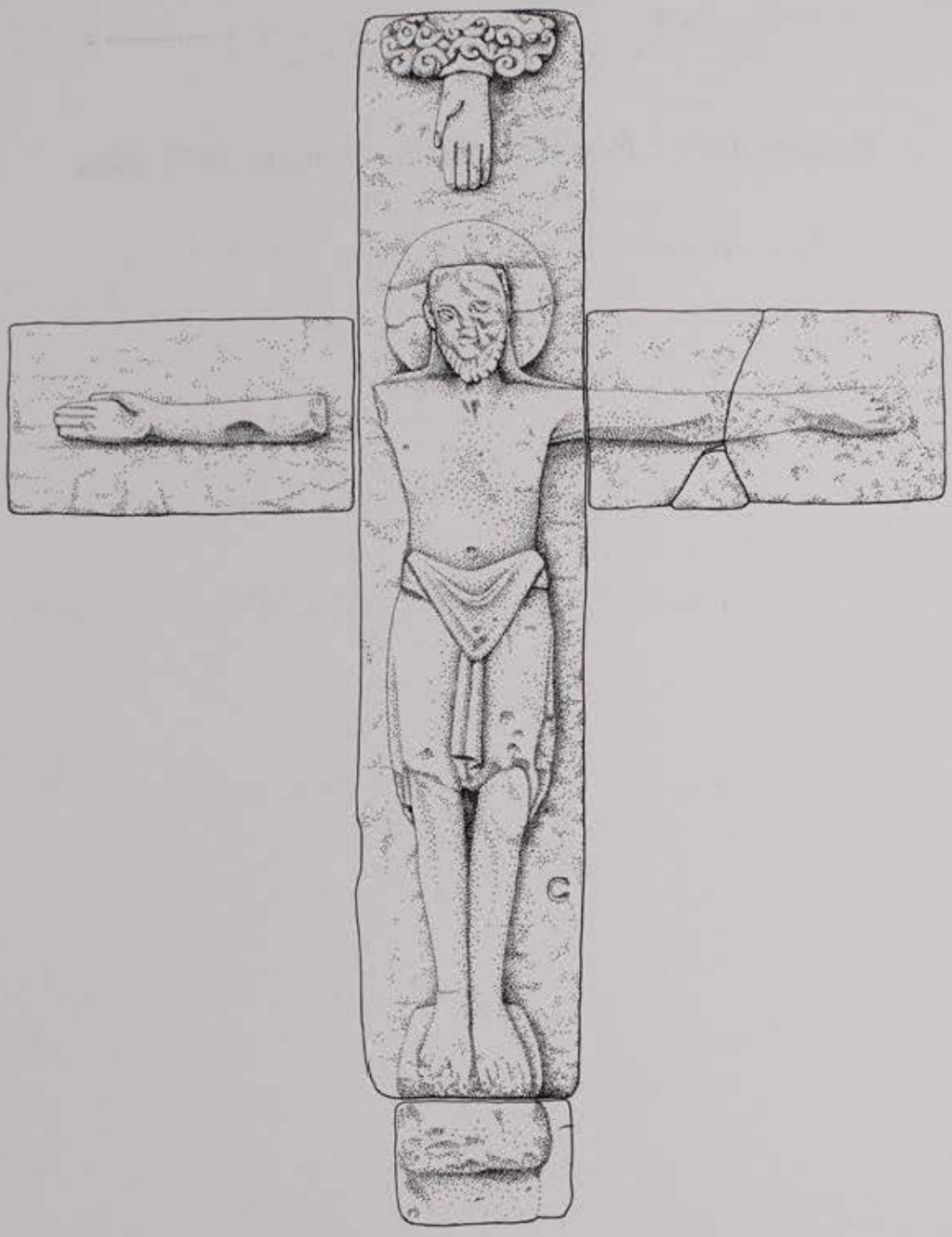
Page xi

Acknowledgements: The sentence which reads: 'David Hinton, who took responsibility for the supervision of the 1979 excavations in the absence of a unit director' should be deleted.

Page 160

Romsey Abbey Excavations 1979: The sentence which reads 'The excavation director was David Hinton' should be deleted.

It must be stressed that David Hinton had no responsibility for the 1979 excavations at Romsey Abbey.



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Frontispiece: Large Saxon rood on west wall of south transept of Romsey Abbey.

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General Editor: Richard Whinney

Romsey Abbey
Report on the Excavations 1973–1991

By Ian R Scott

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Acknowledgements

The excavations within the former Abbey precinct and subsequent post-excavation work have been funded from a number of sources. Funding of the Abbey excavations between 1973 and 1979 was limited and most of the labour was provided by volunteers. Work was financed in part by the Department of the Environment, the Parochial Church Council, The Romsey Archaeological Research Committee and the former Romsey Borough Council. From 1974 excavations were funded by the above with the exception of the defunct Romsey Borough and The Romsey Archaeological Research Committee. Instead work was in part funded by the newly formed Test Valley Borough Council through grant aid to the Test Valley Archaeological Committee, now Test Valley Archaeological Trust. The Abbey excavations in 1988 were funded by English Heritage, those in 1991 by English Heritage and Romsey Parochial Church Council. The United Reformed Church Excavations in 1989 were funded by the Abbey United Reformed Church. The Midland Bank site was funded by the Midland Bank plc, including the post-excavation work. The Vicarage site was excavated by staff employed through the Trust's MSC Community Programme, administered by Hampshire County Council.

Post-excavation work on all but the Midland Bank site was funded by English Heritage as part of the Romsey Post-Excavation Project. Test Valley Borough Council also provided considerable financial assistance. This has been of great importance in filling the gap between the funding provided by English Heritage and the true cost of the work that has culminated in this report. Without the core funding provided by Test Valley Borough Council to the Test Valley Archaeological Trust this work would not easily have come to fruition. This specifically permitted the author to complete work on the manuscript of the monograph while he was working in a post solely funded by Test Valley Borough Council.

TVAT's present Unit Director, Francis J. Green, must be acknowledged for directing all the excavations at Romsey Abbey since 1980, for providing valuable continuity of approach to the formulation of necessary research strategies in advance of excavations, and for undertaking a great deal of the administration necessary to obtain access and funding. Whilst he has had only a general supervisory role in the production of this report, it is important to acknowledge both his field work on all these projects and his efforts in initiating the post-excavation programme and his allocation of the scarce staff and archaeological resources of TVAT. He has read drafts of the text and shared his knowledge of the standing structure of Romsey Abbey and discussed specific points.

Various other excavation directors and supervisors have to be thanked, notably Kevin Stubbs, who was responsible for the direction of the 1973–1977, excavations and David Hinton who undertook responsibility for the supervision of the 1979 excavations in the absence of a unit director. The author directed and recorded the 1988 excavations, whilst Kris Lockyear and Vicky Crosby were responsible for supervising the 1991 excavations. The United Reformed Church excavations were supervised by Neil Campling. The Midland Bank site and the Vicarage excavation were supervised by Martyn Dowell. Francis Green and Andrew Russel supervised or recorded the smaller scale works within the precinct. In addition to those named, thanks are particularly due to all who worked on the excavations. They have not been named individually, because the names of many were not recorded, and it seems invidious to name only those still known to the author. However, Mike Curtis, who assisted Kevin Stubbs, and Steve Cooper should be mentioned. Steve Cooper was able to help with his memories of working on various of the sites.

The present Vicar of Romsey, Canon Neil Crawford-Jones, must be specifically thanked, along with his predecessors, for allowing access to the cellar of the former Vicarage and his patience and humour in acceding to all the varied requests for access to the Abbey church, without which it would have been impossible to undertake a great deal of the work discussed here. Similarly the help and assistance provided by Diane Hargreaves, both in her capacity as Chairman of the Fabric Committee and as a professional architect, have been invaluable. My thanks are due to all who in any way contributed to the archaeological understanding of the Abbey and to all the staff and individuals involved with Romsey Abbey who have given of their time and assisted the archaeologists in their work.

Thanks are also due to the Rev. Alan Green and his wife for their help during the United Reformed Church excavations and also to Colonel and Mrs Christopher Collier and Mrs Aldyth Wellington for access to their front gardens at 21 and 23 The Abbey. The manager and staff of the Midland Bank must also be thanked for all their assistance.

Particular thanks are also due to Karen Nichols, who drew the majority of the plans and sections for this report. Other drawings were by Nick Instone (Figs 1, 3–6) Robert Davis and the author (Figs 27–29). The lettering of plans was undertaken variously by Nick Instone, Robert Davis and the author. Helen Rees provided pottery spot dates for most of the sites discussed and thanks are due to her for her comments on and discussion of the pottery.

Specific acknowledgements are due to a number of other people: first and foremost to Andrew Russel who began the process of bringing the older Abbey excavations to publication. Only someone who has worked on the older excavation records can fully appreciate the effort involved, first in gathering and collating disparate records, and then in teasing out from them the information that they contain. In addition to the floor tile report published in this monograph, his particular contribution to the project was to characterise and record most of the pottery from the Abbey, and from various sites in Romsey, to undertake much of the research on the assemblage, and to produce an archive report (Russel 1990). Barbara Burbridge has shared her knowledge of local history and discussed various matters. She has also undertaken the unenviable task of proof reading. Dr Bruce Eagles has also read the text. Martin Biddle must also be acknowledged for his comments on the pre-1980 excavations at Romsey Abbey and for his many site visits. Without their comments the picture of the Abbey would be the poorer, but they are not responsible for any errors that remain. Thanks are due to Paul Spoerry for his editorial work on the medieval floor tiles.

Finally thanks must also be given to successive Department of the Environment, and latterly English Heritage, inspectors, and, in particular, to Roger Thomas, Gerry Friel and Steve Trow. In the latter stages of the project, particular thanks must be given to Varian Denham for her support when she acted as English Heritage monitor for the project.

The opinions expressed here and any mistakes or omissions remain the responsibility of the author and other contributors.

Summary

The existence of the small late Saxon stone Abbey church preceding the present Norman and later Abbey has been known since the turn of the century when evidence for its apsidal east end was uncovered. The excavations since 1973, although on a small scale, have revealed evidence for more than one phase of activity pre-dating the stone Saxon church. Evidence for three phases (Phases 3–5) of occupation dated middle to late Saxon, uncovered within the west end of the nave of the present church and on the north side, is considered. The evidence includes postholes, hardstandings and food waste in the form of animal bone. The report on the animal bone is published.

Succeeding these phases were two chronologically distinct groups of graves, both pre-dating the late Saxon Abbey church. The earliest group (Phase 6) is aligned NW–SE and located on the north side of the Abbey. It may be contemporary with the head of hair found in 1839 and displayed in the Abbey today. Graves of the second group (Phase 7) are aligned E–W and were found on the north side of the Abbey and in a cemetery some 60m south of the present church. It is suggested that these graves were probably contemporary with the two distinct and substantial chalk footings found sealed beneath the south nave aisle wall, and the possibility that these footings may be evidence for the earliest attested Abbey church of early tenth-century date. The human skeletal material from the graves is discussed.

Knowledge of the late Saxon stone church (Phase 8) has been increased with investigation of its north and south transepts and the discovery of contemporary graves aligned E–W. Phase 8 graves have been found to the north and south of the present nave and in the cemetery to the south, and they include three charcoal burials.

The excavations have also illuminated the structural development of the Norman and later Abbey (Phases 9–16). Most notably the site of the double eastern chapels was investigated. Two phases of chapel are identified: a pair of Norman chapels (Phase 10–12) succeeded by a mid-thirteenth-century chapel (Phase 15). The plan of the early fifteenth-century parish aisle (Phase 16) added to the north side of the nave was also recovered during the excavation work, together with some evidence for the original north porch (Phase 14) which was larger than the present twentieth-century porch.

Only limited excavation of the claustral buildings was undertaken, but the available evidence for the cloisters and the domestic ranges is considered. Finally, the evidence for the destruction associated with the Dissolution is discussed.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Themes and Aims of the Report

Themes

(i) The earlier occupation of the Abbey site, including the late Saxon abbey. The evidence, as will be shown, is limited, but the potential of the site can be demonstrated, and further avenues of research suggested.
(ii) The structural development of the Norman church.
(iii) The evidence for the Abbey precinct and the claustral buildings of the medieval nunnery.
(iv) Finally an attempt is made to link together the limited historical data and the archaeological evidence.

Aims

The primary aim of this report is to make available the archaeological evidence from the various excavations on Romsey Abbey and its medieval precinct, and the analyses of the extant archives. Although there are limitations to the Abbey excavations and archives they do nonetheless provide information relevant to these four themes. It has been thought necessary to publish as fully as possible the relevant evidence to allow future re-interpretation. However, because of the limited nature of some of the archives as they now stand, it has not been thought worthwhile to publish all of the excavations in full detail. So far as is possible the more reliable and relevant evidence has been published fully, while the less important, less reliable evidence has been summarised together with a note on any problems.

The Excavations and the Nature of the Paper and Drawn Archives and Post-Excavation Procedures

The majority of the excavations on the Abbey published in this volume were carried out in the 1970s. The archives for the 1970s excavations, with the single exception of the 1974 excavation, are lacking certain key elements. The nature of the individual archives, and their contents, are summarised briefly in an appendix to this monograph. An outline of the post-excavation procedures adopted to wring from the records as much information as possible is also briefly described in the same place. For fuller descriptions of the archives and post-excavation procedures the reader is directed to the archive reports for the excavations on the Abbey.

The Abbey Excavations and their archives (Figs 1 and 2)

In view of the variable nature and quality of the archives from the excavations in the 1970s, it is essential that the limitations of the extant archives are spelt out at the start of this report, if readers are to be able to assess the evidence, and the interpretation offered, for themselves.

The absence of complete context and stratigraphic information is the major shortcoming of the archives for the earlier excavations. Where the written records exist there is often a complete lack of correlation with the drawn archive. The result is that the links that once existed between the individual contexts and their finds, and their relationships with other stratigraphic units, which the excavations set out to establish, are lost. This of course means that stratigraphic analysis was not possible with the site archives as they survived, and that finds could not be integrated into the stratigraphic sequence even if that could be established. The information available for stratigraphic relationships was not always sufficient for analytical purposes.

Table 1: The Excavations published, or noted in this volume.

Year	Name & Location (and Accession Number)
(i) Main Abbey Excavations	
1973 (A 1991.25)	RA 73: East end Chapels
1974 (A 1991.25)	RA 74: West end of nave of present Abbey
1975 (A 1991.25)	RA 75: North side of present Abbey nave
1977 (A 1991.25)	RA 77: South side of present Abbey nave

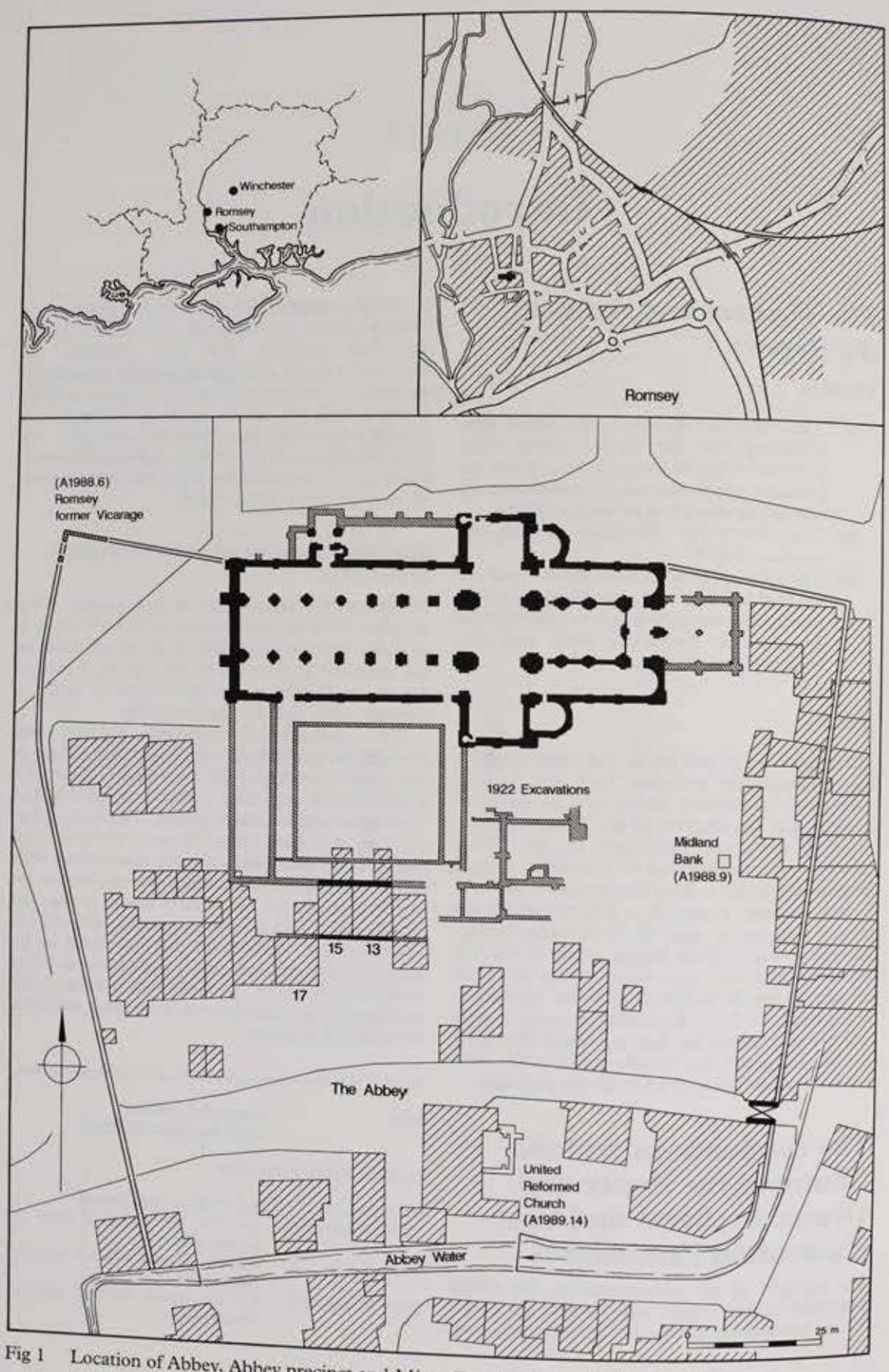

Fig 1 Location of Abbey, Abbey precinct and Minor Excavations within the Precinct.

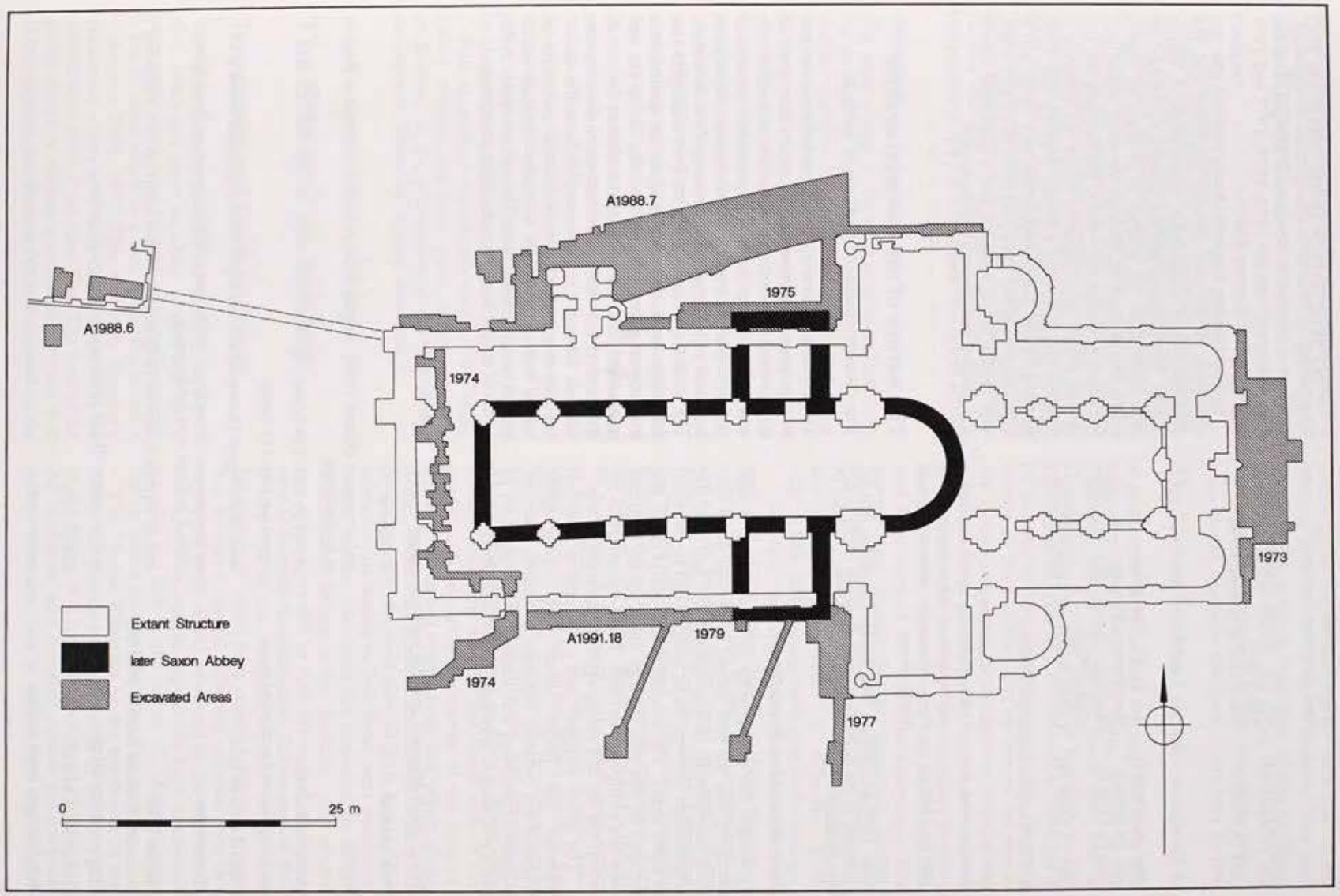

Fig 2 The Abbey Excavations 1973–1991: Location of Trenches and Areas excavated.

Year	Name & Location (and Accession Number)
1979 (A 1991.25)	RA 79: South side of present Abbey nave
1988 (A 1988.7)	North side of present Abbey
1991 (A 1991.18)	South side of present Abbey nave

(ii) Excavations within the Precinct

1980 (A 1980.83)	Nos 13–15, The Abbey
1987 (A 1986.31)	New Romsey Vicarage
1988 (A 1988.9)	Midland Bank, No 10, The Market Place
1989 (A 1989.14)	United Reformed Church Manse

(ii) Observations within the Precinct

1981 (–)	No 17, The Abbey
1984 (A 1984.21)	Abbey Gateway (pipe trench) – wall in front of Abbey gateway
1988 (A 1988.6)	New Vicarage driveway and Abbey Green

Note: 1990 (A 1990.4) Nos 21–23 The Abbey will be published in the next Romsey monograph (Scott *et al.*, forthcoming).

Post-excavation Procedure

To enable the stratigraphy to be analysed, it was necessary that the sites should be broken down into their component stratigraphic units and that the relationships between those units should be recorded in some detail. The records as they stood could not be used in this way, because many of the contexts were not numbered on plans. It was necessary to re-record the site in a stratigraphically meaningful way.

The prime requisite was to be able to establish without too much doubt the stratigraphic relationships between contexts. In theory, given an adequately recorded and reasonably complete set of plans and section drawings with context descriptions, it should be possible to allocate new Archive Context Numbering, to determine stratigraphic relationships, and then to proceed to stratigraphic analysis. This has been attempted with the 1973, 1975, 1977 and 1979 excavations on Romsey Abbey.[1]

Each excavation was individually analysed after the allocation of archive context numbers and the establishment of stratigraphic relationships. A 'Harris Matrix' was prepared and the phasing established for each excavation. An attempt to produce an overall matrix was abandoned, because the result would have been too complex for clarity, particularly for the earliest phases of occupation where the evidence is fragmentary. Instead, a broad phasing has been adopted for the Abbey excavations as a whole and is summarised below.[2] Only two sites, 1974 and 1988, were readily linked together, and a combined matrix and phasing was prepared for these sites.

The nature of the material archive

The main categories of finds are in Table 2.

The limited surviving contextual information has already been noted above. This meant that much of the material recovered in excavation was effectively unstratified. There is also a comparative paucity of finds, particularly from medieval contexts. In part this is a result of the small scale of much of the fieldwork. The limited quantity of finds has been highlighted by the much more numerous and better quality data from recent excavations both on the Abbey site and in the town. This is particularly marked in the case of the pottery groups. Environmental data is also limited: there are no soil samples from the earlier excavations, and only some limited quantities of animal bone. More recent excavations have produced limited environmental data. The one exception is the group of animal bone from the 1988 excavations.[3]

Table 2: Finds Materials and their publication status

Find material	Comment
Pottery	archive report (Russel 1990); pottery from A 1988.7 included in Rees et al forthcoming
Medieval floor tile	report pp 121–144 below
Architectural and sculptural stone	report pp 104–111 below
Painted window glass	assessment report (Summerfield and Kerr, 1990), reprinted below p 115
Animal bone	archive reports (Bourdillon 1988a and 1988b); report on bone from A 1988.7 in Scott et al forthcoming
Human bone (including material from A 1989.14)	archive reports (Osborne 1988 and 1991) and report pp 145–156 below
Bronze casting debris	archive report (Budd 1988) and report p 119 below
Roman brick and tile	archive only
Post-Medieval brick and tile	archive only

Structure and Content of the Report

Content

The proposals drawn up for English Heritage envisaged the publication of a summary report of the Abbey excavations rather than full reports on each of the individual excavations and a full finds report only on the decorated medieval floortiles. Although many of the tiles are unstratified, they nonetheless form a body of evidence worthy of extended analysis, and are particularly linked with the Abbey. Other categories of finds were to be dealt with only briefly, or only be dealt with in a general overview of the finds from the Abbey excavations. The reasons for this approach – limited survival of the site archives and the comparative paucity of finds – have been noted above.

Structure

The main change to the original proposal has been the decision to include the report on the human skeletal material. The main text of the following volume is constructed in such a way as to give, so far as is possible, a phase by phase description of the development of the Abbey, based on a summary of the archive reports, with key evidence published in more detail. Each part of the report deals with a stage in the development of the site, and begins with a section outlining briefly the background and any problems, then presents the key evidence in detail, and concludes with a discussion section which gives an overview of the phase or structure under consideration, drawing on all of the available evidence from the archive reports. The Evidence section attempts to present all the evidence central to the interpretation of the phase. How successful the volume is in achieving its aims, is for the reader to decide.

Full excavation reports for each of the main abbey excavations have been produced as a preliminary to the preparation of the text of this monograph. These will remain in archive.[4]

The Site and its Setting

Topography and Geology (Fig 3)

The name Romsey contains the element '-eg', or '-eye', which can mean an island proper, but also a place partly surrounded by water, or higher ground in a fen, in other words in a wet, or marshy, location (Cameron 1988, 167). This well suits Romsey's position on a terrace of Valley Gravel overlooking the alluvial flood plain of the River Test. The limit of the gravel terrace is marked approximately by the 50ft (17m) contour, and Romsey Abbey is situated on the very edge of the terrace, on the west side of the historic core of the town of Romsey. The wall marking the western boundary of the medieval precinct of the Abbey ran along the edge of the terrace, and lay no more than 30m west of the Abbey.

The Urban Setting

A number of streams flow through the town and influence its layout. The main stream is the Fishlake, which divides off from the Test at Greatbridge, 1.75km north of the Abbey. The Fishlake itself splits into two branches 250m north of the abbey. The western branch was the main stream of the Fishlake, and lay just to the east of the Abbey and marked the eastern edge of the medieval Abbey precinct. The eastern arm, known as the Holbrook, served as the boundary between the parishes of Romsey Infra and Romsey Extra, and later formed the Borough boundary. The stream was crossed by the Hundred Bridge, previously known as Brade, or Broad, Bridge. The Abbess controlled Romsey infra pontem de Bradebrigge (Calendar of Charter Rolls 1257–1300, 102; see also Scott et al forthcoming).

Today the Fishlake, which once delineated the east side of the Abbey precinct, flows through a culvert beneath Church Street, and excavations on the eastern frontage of the street just north of the Abbey in 1989 suggest that the Fishlake's medieval course probably followed a similar line (Newman forthcoming). The stream's course continues along the western side of the Market Place and is hidden by buildings. It continues to the south-west corner of the Market Place. At this point it now flows under the road in front of the Abbey gateway. Just south of the gateway part of the stream was diverted to flow west into the leat serving the Abbey Mill. Now known as Abbey Water, this stream probably marked the south side of the precinct. The medieval course of the original stream continued south from the point where Abbey Water was diverted and flowed behind the properties on the west side of Bell Street. The privies of the houses in Bell Street were positioned over it, and for this reason this section of the stream later became known as the 'Shitlake'. The stream was almost parallel to Bell Street and its course tended towards the south-west. Excavations in Bell Street and at the junction of Bell Street with Middlebridge Street have revealed that this stream has followed several different courses over the centuries, until it was culverted in the nineteenth century. The stream appears to have continued parallel to, and to the north of, Middlebridge Street, before rejoining the main Test stream.

The Market Place lies to the south-east of the Abbey and outside what was probably the main gate to the Abbey. It is located between the Fishlake and the Holbrook, and therefore outside the medieval Abbey precinct, but it was within the secular

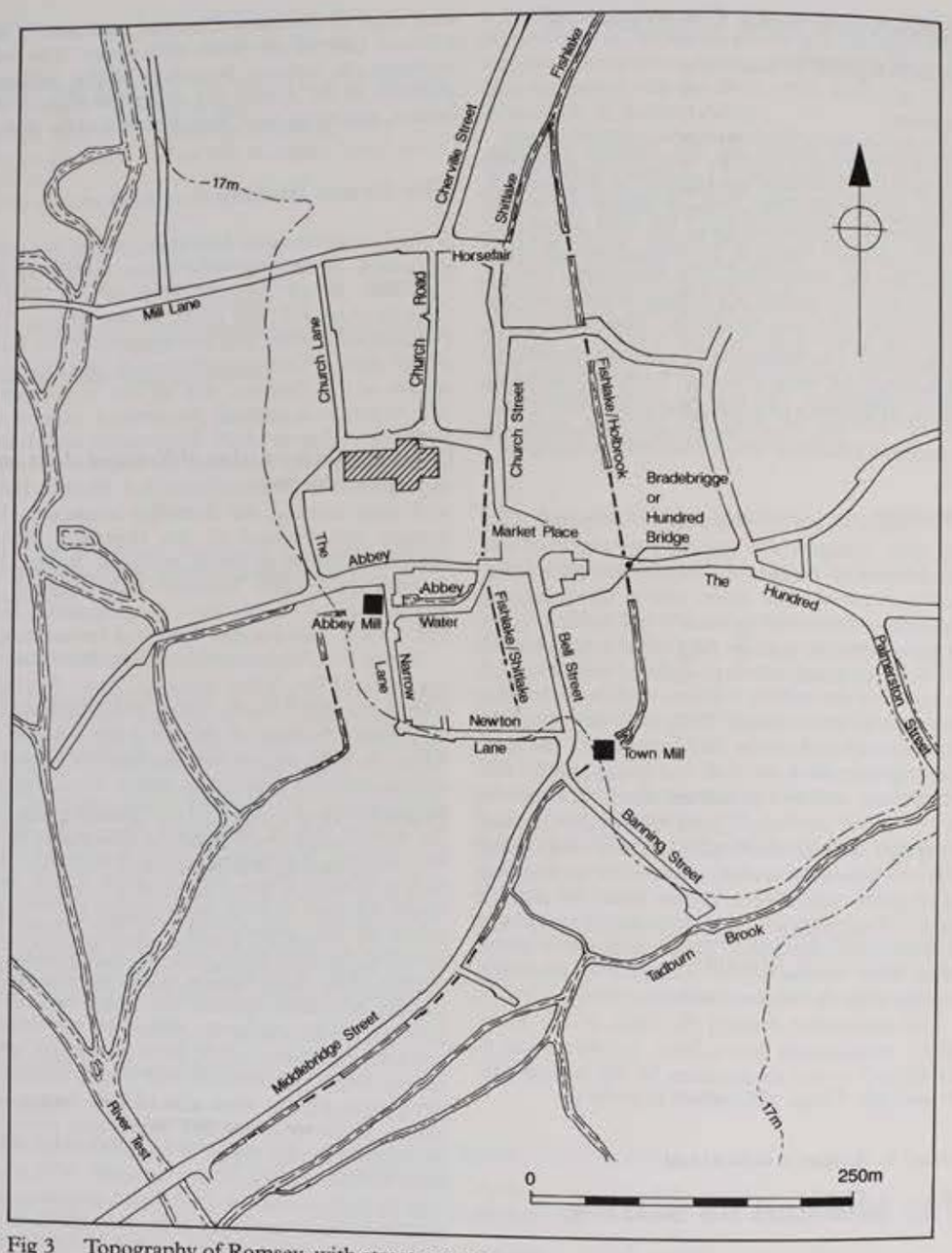

Fig 3 Topography of Romsey, with street names.

jurisdiction of the Abbess. A number of streets lead away from the Market Place and it can be argued that these are of late Saxon origin if indeed they are not older (Scott et al forthcoming). To the south is Bell Street, leading on to Middlebridge Street and the route to the south-west and the New Forest. Banning Street, which heads in a south-east direction and originally ran from the bottom of Bell Street may have been the early route to Southampton. Running east from the Market Place is The Hundred which leads via the Winchester Road eastwards to Winchester, and via Palmerston Street southwards to Southampton. The Hundred lay beyond the Holbrook in Romsey Extra. On the north side of the Market Place is Church Street leading through the Horsefair to Cherville Street and on to Stockbridge and Andover.

Phasing and Summary of Excavations

Phase 1 Pit (undated) sealed beneath the earliest soil horizon

The pit (2023) found in 1974 within the Nave contained no dating evidence.

Phase 2 Earliest soil horizon

The truncated soil horizon found in the 1974 and 1988 excavations contained a little dating evidence.

Phase 3 Features cutting, or sealing, the earliest soil horizon

The features included the chalk structure found to the north of the Abbey in 1988, and the mortar surfaces (hard standings) found in 1974 inside the west end of the nave. Possibly contemporary are the soil horizons with animal bone (contexts 128 and 129) on the Midland Bank site.

Phase 4 Upper soil horizon

Found in 1974 and 1988, this horizon, which probably represents re-use and re-working of the earlier, Phase 2 soil, contained quantities of food waste in the form of animal bone, but no pottery.

Phase 5 Timber structure and clay floor

The structure was found on the north side of the Abbey in 1988, and was aligned WSW–ENE. A grave was found in the 1975 excavations which may possibly be associated with this structure.

Phase 6 Graves aligned NW–SE

These graves pre-date the Saxon Abbey (Phase 8).

Phase 7 Chalk structures and graves aligned E–W

Two chalk structures located on the south side of the present Abbey, in 1979 and 1991, and graves which pre-date the late Saxon Abbey (Phase 8). These were probably part of an earlier ecclesiastical establishment. The graves were found both on the north side of the present Abbey in 1975 and on the south edge of the precinct in 1989.

Phase 8 Late Saxon Abbey and associated E–W graves

Evidence for the late Saxon Abbey came primarily from the 1975, 1977 and 1979 excavations, respectively north and south of the present nave.

Phase 9 Construction of Norman choir and crossing

a) Preparation of the ground, which included filling in the 'dry ditch' found immediately east of choir
b) Construction of the footings of the choir and crossing
c) Construction of the choir and crossing, except the west wall of the crossing.

Phase 10 Demolition of the late Saxon Abbey

There was only very limited stratigraphic evidence uncovered in excavation for this phase.

Phase 11 Completion of the crossing and construction of the first stage in the nave footings and superstructure.

a) Completion of the West Wall of the crossing
b) Construction of the footings for north and south walls and north and south arcades. The footings in Bays 1 and 2 (and possibly 3 and 4) on the south side, and in Bays 1 and 2 on the north side appear to have been completed at this stage. Laying out of partial footings for remainder of nave except for Bay 7 on the south side.
c) Construction of the south nave wall in Bays 1 and 2 up to triforium level.
d) Construction of first column of north and south arcades.

Phase 12 Mid-twelfth-century work (later 'Norman')

a) Construction of Bays 1 to ?4 on the north side, and of Bay 3 and part of Bay 4 on the south side, up to triforium level
b) Construction of columns 2, 3 and 4 of south arcade, and of 2 and 3 of northern arcade.

Phase 13 Late twelfth-century work ('Transitional' style)

a) Completion of footings of north nave wall and northern arcade.
b) Construction of column 4 of northern arcade.

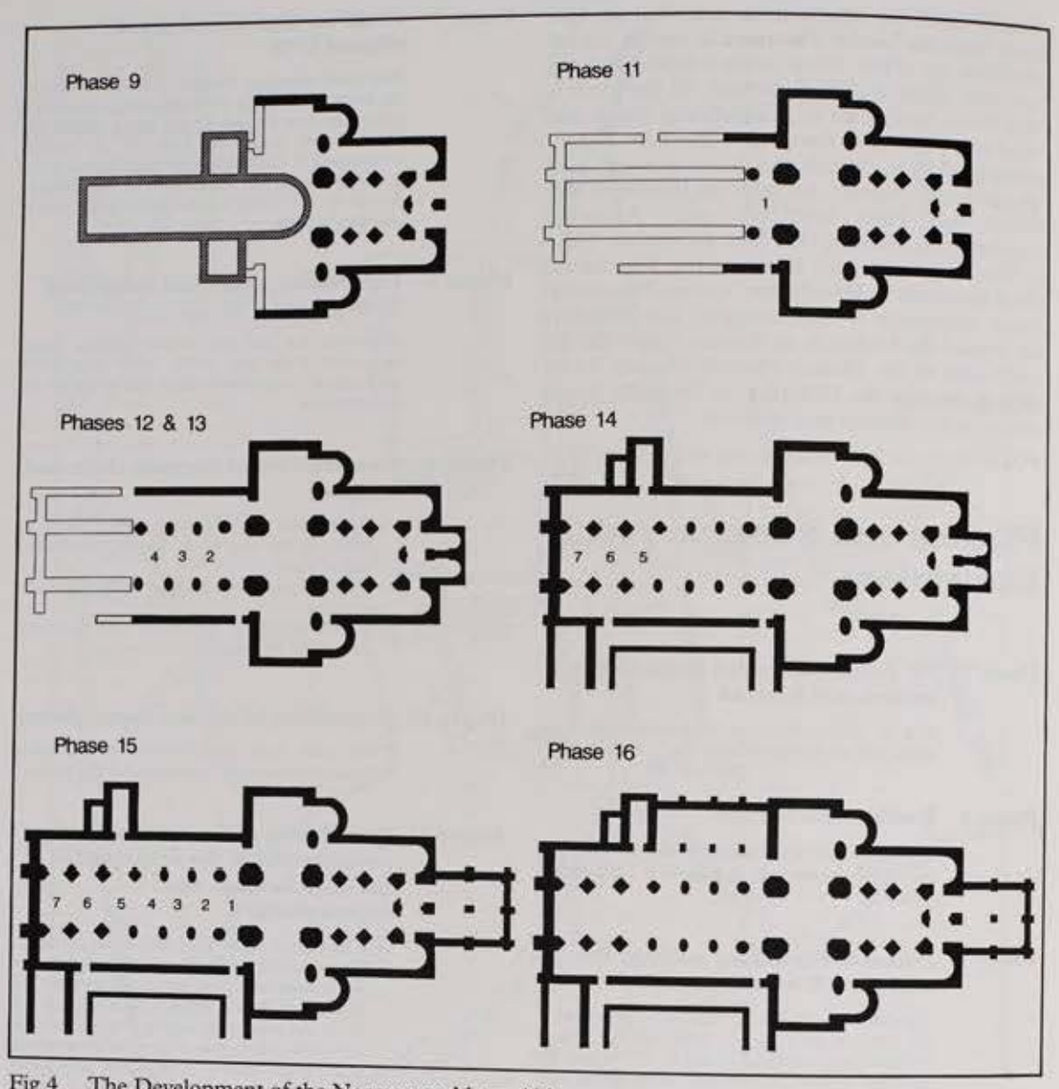

Fig 4 The Development of the Norman and later Abbey.

c) Construction of the clerestory for the first four bays of the nave.
d) Roofing of the first four bays of the nave. It is probable that at this time a screen wall of some description blocked the end of the extant nave.

Phase 14 Completion of the nave in the early thirteenth century ('Early Gothic' or 'Early English' style) and Construction of the cloisters and west domestic range

a) Completion of the footings of the south nave arcade, and construction of the footings of Bay 7 of the nave south wall, and of the west domestic range.
b) Completion of the final three bays of the nave.
c) Construction of the west domestic range and of the cloisters.

Phase 15 Reconstruction of the Lady Chapel in the mid-thirteenth century ('Early Decorated' or 'Geometric' style)

The Lady Chapel was uncovered in the 1973 excavations. (The original chapel, or pair of chapels, was built after the construction of the Choir (Phase 9), and before the completion of the first four bays of the nave in 'Transitional' style (Phase 13).

Phase 16 Construction of the additional parish aisle on the north side

Evidence for the footings of the parish aisle constructed in the early fifteenth century was recovered from the 1975 and 1988 excavations on the north side of the Abbey.

Phase 17 The Dissolution and immediate Post-Dissolution.

Including the demolition of the cloisters and claustral buildings, the Lady Chapel, and the northern parish aisle.

Radiocarbon Dates

Phase 3 Radiocarbon assay on the animal bone from soil horizons 128 and 122, Midland Bank site (A 1988.9)

OxA – 2313 The radiocarbon determination for pig bone from A 1988.9 Context 128 gave a radiocarbon age of 1215 ± 80 BP, which calibrates to the following date ranges:
one sigma (68% confidence) – Cal AD 690–890
two sigma (95% confidence) – Cal AD 665–970

OxA – 2314 The radiocarbon determination for cattle ribs from A 1988.9 Context 122 gave a radiocarbon age of 1355 ± 80 BP, which calibrates to the following date ranges:
one sigma (68% confidence) – Cal AD 610–770
two sigma (95% confidence) – Cal AD 545–875
The calibrations are after van der Plict, J and Mook, W J 1989.

Phase 4 Radiocarbon assay on the animal bone from soil horizon 6030 (A 1988.7)

OxA – 2319 The radiocarbon determination for a cattle bone from A.1988.7 Context (6030) gave a radiocarbon age of 1125 ± 80 BP, which calibrates to the following date ranges:
one sigma (68% confidence) – Cal AD 810–990
two sigma (95% confidence) – Cal AD 690–1030
The calibration is after van der Plict, J and Mook, W J 1989.

Phase 7 Radiocarbon assays of charcoal samples taken from grave associated with the structures with chalk footings.

HAR – 3765 The radiocarbon determination for charcoal from RA 1979 5119 Context (= RA 75 E [6]) gave a radiocarbon age of 1170 ± 70 BP, which calibrates to the following date ranges[5]:
one sigma (68% confidence) – Cal AD 775–960
two sigma (95% confidence) – Cal AD 680–1010
The calibration is after Stuiver, M and Pearson, G W 1986.

Phase 8 Radiocarbon assays of charcoal samples taken from graves associated with the late Saxon Abbey.

HAR – 2527 The radiocarbon determination for charcoal (identified as oak) from RA 1975 Context (3120) (= RA 75 CB 1) gave a radiocarbon age of 1050 + 70 BP, which calibrates to the following date ranges[5]:
one sigma (68% confidence) – Cal AD 895–1025
two sigma (95% confidence) – Cal AD 830–1155

HAR – 3760 The radiocarbon determination for charcoal from RA 1979 Context 5127 (= RA 75 E [5]) gave a radiocarbon age of 1100 ± 70 BP, which calibrates to the following date ranges:
one sigma (68% confidence) – Cal AD 885–1010
two sigma (95% confidence) – Cal AD 780–1030
The calibrations are after Stuiver, M and Pearson, G W 1986.

Notes

1 A more detailed discussion of the archive context numbers will be found in the respective site archives.

2 Correlation between the phasing for individual sites and phasing for the Abbey as whole will be found in the Introduction of each Archive Report.

3 There are two groups of pottery of significance from the Abbey excavations. These are being published not in this monograph, but in articles on aspects of Romsey's archaeology. In particular, one large group excavated in 1988 (Contexts 6006, 6010 & 6012) will be published as part of a study of the late medieval and early post-medieval pottery from Romsey (Rees et al forthcoming). The other material is Saxon pottery also from 1988 (Contexts 6112–6118) which is being published in an article on 'The Evidence for the later Iron Age, Romano-British and Saxon occupation of Romsey' (Scott et al forthcoming). This article will also include a review of the evidence of groups of Middle Saxon animal bone from the Abbey – again from the 1988 excavations (esp. Context 6030) – and other sites in Romsey. See pp 104–119 below for a general comment on the finds from the Abbey excavations.

4 There are seven archive reports, which are listed at the end of this volume in the bibliography. Copies of the reports will be available on request from Test Valley Archaeological Trust.

5 The primary archive for this determination is equivocal. There are two alternative results, and no original certificate. The alternative result has been published in Jordan *et al.* 1994, 145: 1000 ± 70BP
one sigma: cal AD 980–1150
two sigma: cal AD 890–1180.

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Chapter 2

Phases Pre-Dating the Late Saxon Abbey (Phases 1–7)

Introduction

The earliest phases of occupation of the site, those that pre-date the later Saxon Abbey, are marked by fragmentary traces of structures and buildings. It is therefore difficult to provide a coherent overview of their plans without summarising the evidence in some detail. It is also difficult to make chronological links between the various pieces of evidence from the different excavations. The evidence falls naturally into two groups, for structures and occupation on one hand, and for burials on the other. The two groups appear to be broadly of different dates, but this impression may be false and due to the fact that the evidence is limited and derives from different excavations.

The majority of graves were excavated on the north side of the Abbey in 1975, but one grave was found on the south side in the 1979 excavations. In addition a small cemetery was excavated in 1989 some 60m to the south of the south transept of the Abbey. Most of the structures and related features are assigned to Phases 1–5, while the majority of the graves have been assigned to Phases 6 and 7 and are considered below (pp 21–35).

Phases 1–5: The Early Structures and Soil Horizons

The evidence for early structures and soil horizons

Evidence for structures comes from four excavations – 1974, 1979, 1988 and 1991 – and is mainly concentrated at the west end, to the north and the south of the abbey. The evidence from other excavations consists simply of the observation of remnants of the Saxon and Norman soil horizon(s). In 1979 and 1991 two substantial chalk structures were discovered. These are assigned to Phase 7 and will be considered in the next section. The other structures are placed in earlier phases and are considered in the first section of the report.

1988 Soakaway Excavation (Figs 5 & 12). Two soil horizons were found. There was very little to distinguish the two layers either by texture or colour, and it is probable that the later horizon represents a reworking of the earlier one. A number of features cut the lower soil (6056), but were sealed by the upper horizon (context 6030). Furthermore, the upper soil horizon contained a concentration of animal bone, which was almost totally absent from the lower horizon. The lower horizon has been assigned to Phase 2, the upper horizon to Phase 4.

Of the structural features cutting layer (6056) the most interesting was a trench or hollow lined with clay and packed with chalk (context 6093). A block of stone was set in the chalk. The stone was burnt and the clay partly burnt, probably as a result of the burning of demolition debris from the structure. Also in this phase were a number of postholes, one of them (context 6054) originally apparently very large. It is likely that the features represent more than one phase of activity.

These features were sealed by the second soil horizon (contexts 6030=6082=6085). Within this soil was a thick layer of red gravel (contexts 6031=6084), which may have been a floor. The gravel was found both in the soakaway and at the base of the north wall of the nave 7m to the south.

Although there is no pottery from layer (6030), it did produce a quantity of food waste in the form of animal bones. This animal bone differed from the material found in a soil horizon (A 1988.9: context 128) in the **Midland Bank** trench. No ceramics were found but the wide range of species represented in the latter context suggested a much richer diet than that represented in the assemblage from the north of the Abbey (Context 6030). The material is comparable from waste material from Middle Saxon Hamwic, and the dating is confirmed by a radiocarbon date for a cattle bone from the layer. The radiocarbon date (OxA – 2319) of a sample from layer 6030 calibrates to a date range of Cal AD 810–990 (1 sigma).[1]

The second soil horizon was cut by two large postholes (contexts 6034 & 6049) and partly sealed by a red clay layer (6029) (Fig 12). The clay layer was also found by the north nave wall near to the present porch (context 6017). In the soakaway the clay was sealed by a thick charcoal layer (6028); by the porch it retained traces of a charcoal layer which must have been largely scraped away.

1974 Trench G[2] (Fig 6) in the north-west corner of the Abbey. Four layers making up two soil horizons were found approximately 1m below the present Abbey floor. The upper horizon (contexts 2105 & 2106) was a black soil containing a quantity of animal bone, and is probably to be equated with 1988 contexts 2082, 2085, and 2030, and assigned to Phase 4. It was cut by the foundation trench (2104), for the lowest footings (2103) of the Abbey north wall, and was sealed by the mortar and gravel layers (contexts 2098 & 2099). Context 2105 is between 0.95m and 1m below the modern floor surface.

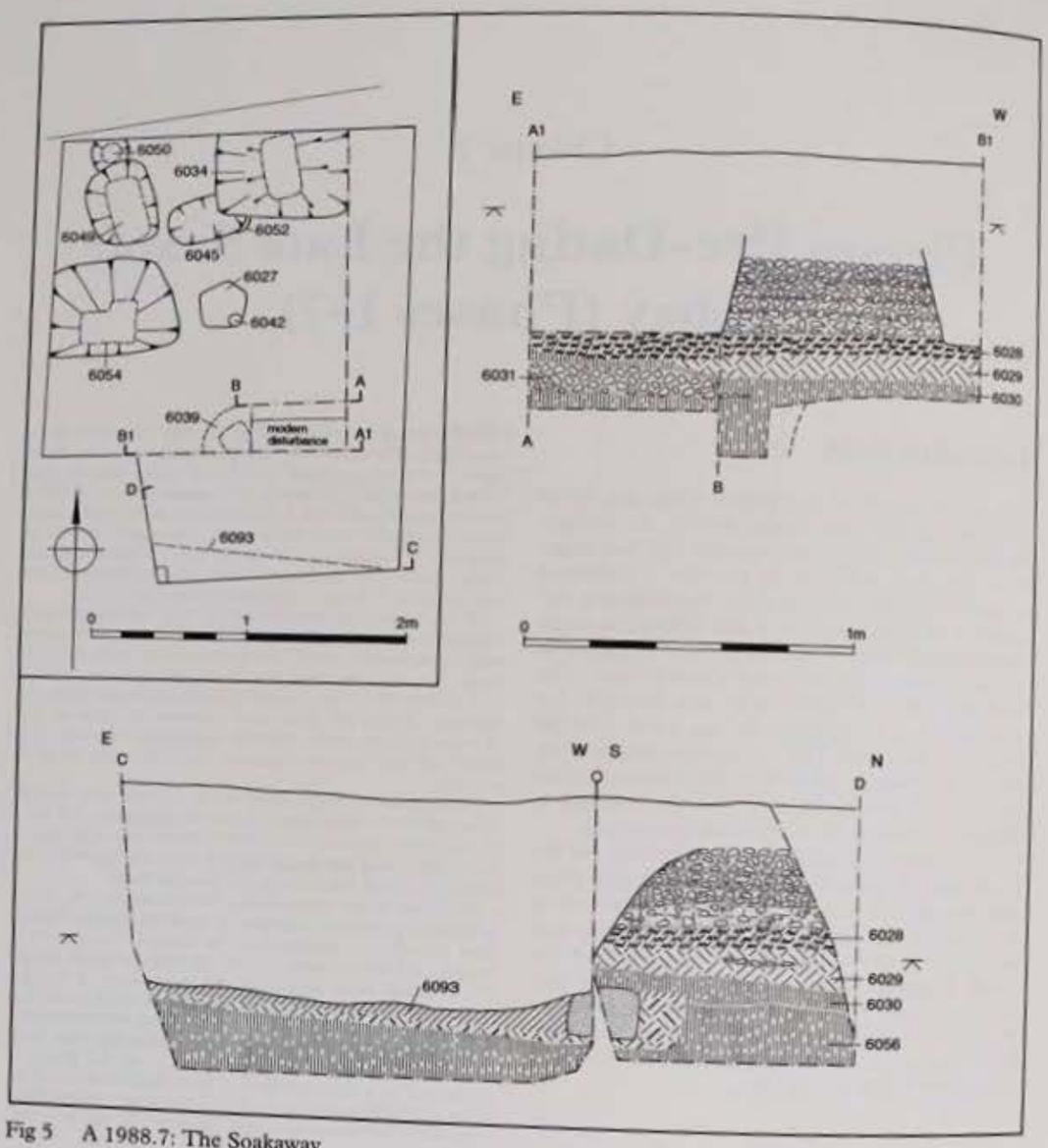

Fig 5 A 1988.7: The Soakaway.

Below contexts 2105 and 2106 was a layer (contexts 2107 & 2108) identified by the excavator as a 'brown leached soil – good turf and buried soil'. It is likely that layers 2107 and 2108 were the Phase 2 horizon.

A note of caution must be struck, because the descriptions of 1974 layer 2107, and context 6056 are contrasted. The turf may have been stripped from layer 6056 to make way for the timber and clay structure (contexts 6034, 6049 & 6029). No evidence for early structures or metalled surfaces was found in Trench G.

1974 Trench FB (Fig 6) on the north side of the north pier arcade. The old ground surface is 1.75m below the present nave floor. The foundation trench (context 2089) for the lower Abbey footing (context 2088), was cut through the soil horizon (context 2090), and sealed by a mortar layer (context 2085) immediately above the soil. There was only one soil horizon identified in this cut. The fact that the upper footing in this trench was much deeper than in other trenches serves to confirm the greater depth at which the old ground surface was found. No evidence for early structures or metalled surfaces was found.

1974 Trench F (Fig 7) in the centre of the nave near the west wall. The gravel (context 2077) at the bottom of the trench may have been the natural gravel which, in other sections, lay below the soil horizon. If this identification is correct, then context 2075, which overlies it, could be identified as the remains of the buried ground surface. This lay 0.86m below the present floor level. Cutting the soil 2075 was a shallow

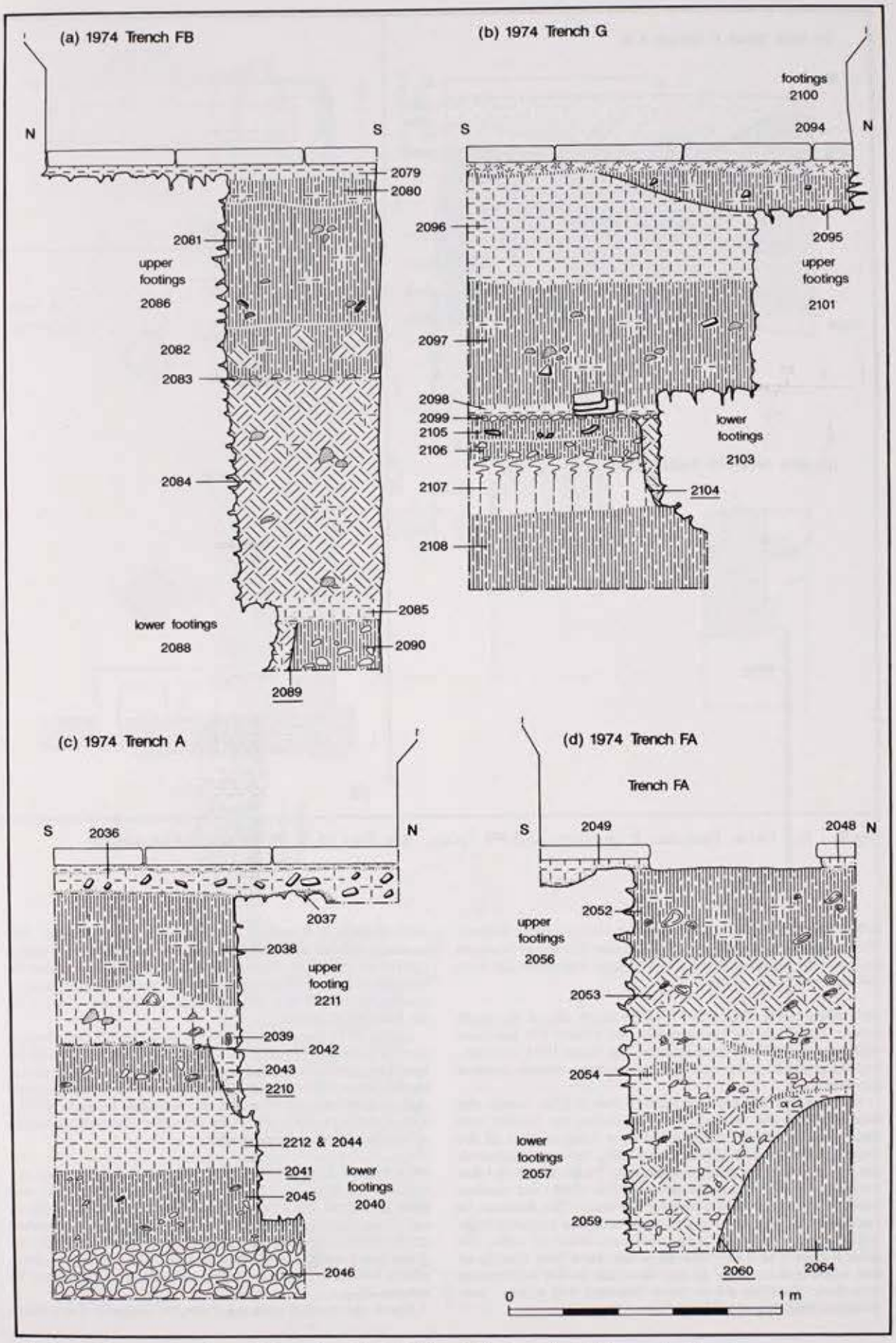

Fig 6 RA 1974: Sections of Trenches FB, G, FA and A. See Fig 25 for section locations.

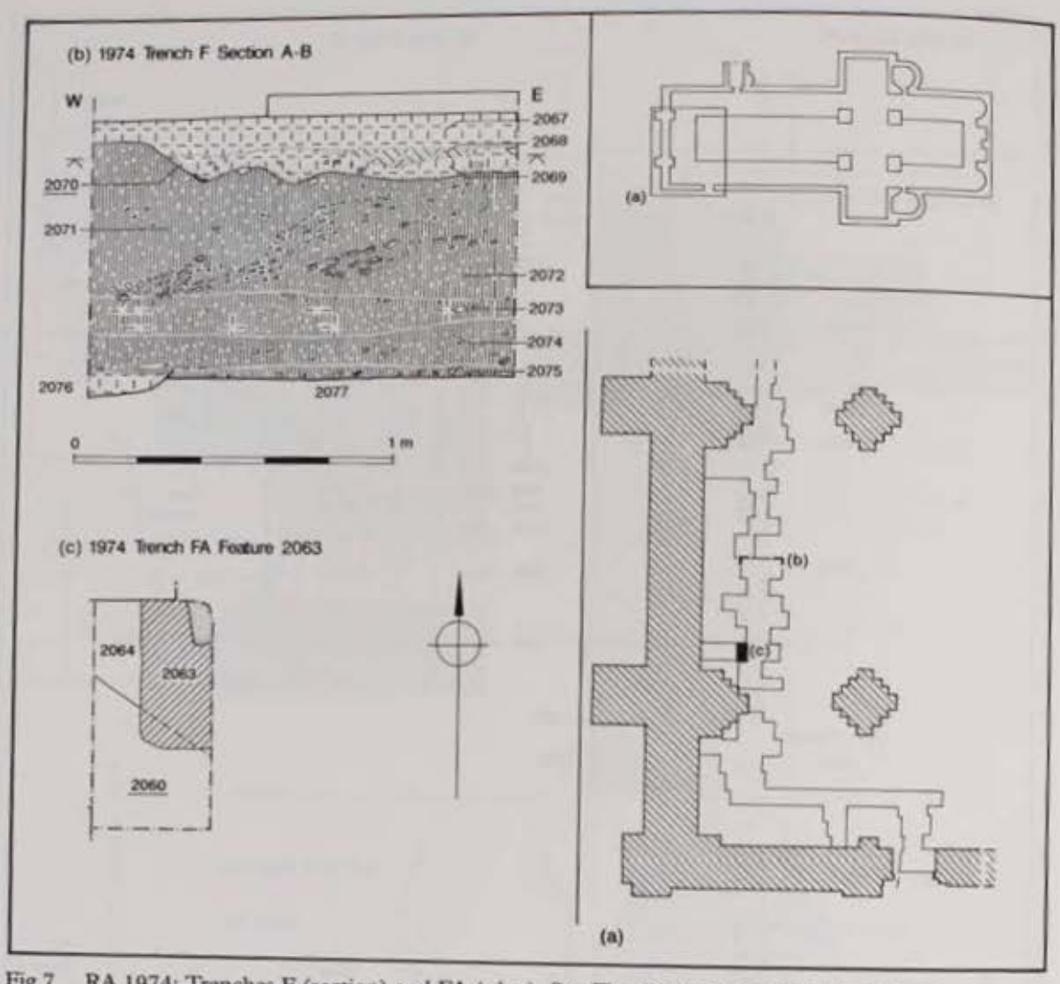

Fig 7 RA 1974: Trenches F (section) and FA (plan). See Figs 25 & 29 for section locations.

hollow filled with mortar (2076), which was possibly a surface. This might serve to confirm that 2075 was a Saxon or Norman surface. The eastern edge of a mortar floor was about 2m from the west wall of the Abbey.

1974 Trench FA (Figs 6 & 7) on the north side of the south arcade. Although the interpretation of Trench FA has been slightly more difficult than some of the other 1974 trenches, the old ground surface was one of the more certain features recorded.

The earliest buried soil (2064) was 0.95m below the modern floor, and was cut by a foundation slot packed with chalk (context 2063). Only a 0.45m x 0.2m section of the south-west corner of the structure (Fig 7c) was excavated. Set on the chalk was a limestone block. There may have been a mortar floor (2062) to the north of this chalk, and another possible soil layer (2061) sealing the floor. The evidence is uncertain. It may be that this structure was contemporary with the clay, chalk and stone structure found in 1988, but there is clearly no direct link, since they lie at least 20m apart and there was no trace of any structure in the intervening trenches.[3] Cutting all of these features was a later pre-Norman ditch (context 2060).

1974 Trench A (Fig 6) to the south of the south arcade. The probable soil horizon (2045) was cut by the foundation trench (2041) for the lower footings (2040), and was 1.2m below the nave floor. It was apparently sealed beneath a mixed layer of mortar, brick and flint (context 2212), which was also cut by the foundation trench.

Layer 2212 may be interpreted as a demolition deposit derived from the clearance of earlier structures. Both it and the foundation trench appear to have been sealed by a further mortar layer (context 2044), which must have accumulated during construction of the upper footings (context 2211). There was only one soil horizon identified. No early structure or mortared surfaces were found.

1974 Trench E (Fig 8) by the south-west door. Only one soil horizon was located. The presumed buried soil (2021) was between 1.25m and 1.35m below site datum, and not cut by the Abbey footings. It was sealed by a mortar layer (context 2020) which apparently ran under the footings (context 2012). There was a marked dip in ground level. The metalled surface, which followed this dip, may have been a yard surface or hardstanding.

Above the mortar layer are three, or probably four, layers

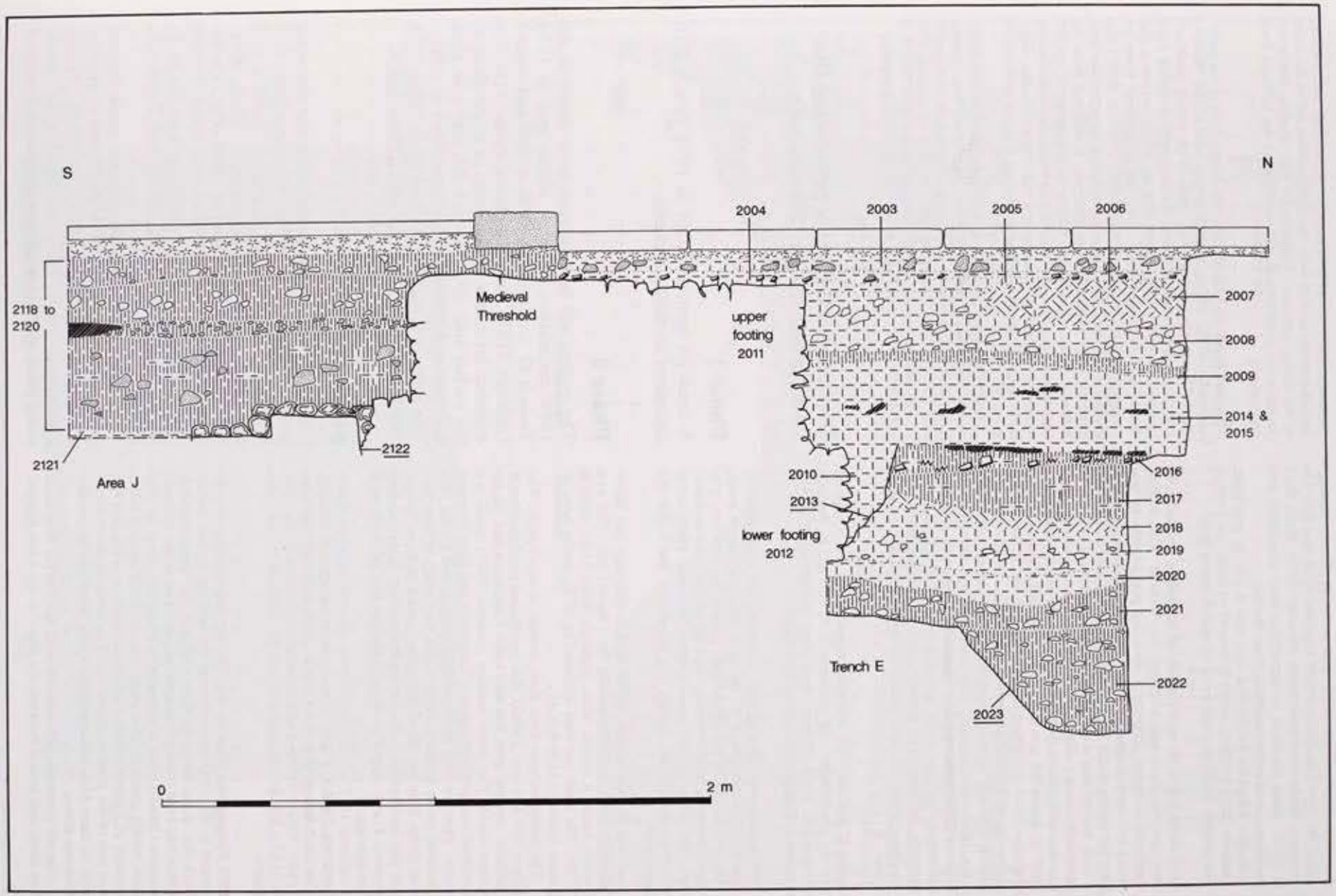

Fig 8 RA 1974: Section of Trench E and Area J.

(contexts 2019, 2018, 2017, and probably 2016), through which the nave foundation trench (context 2013) was cut. The excavator interpreted these layers (contexts 2019, 2018, 2017 & 2016), quite plausibly, as demolition levels associated with the clearance of earlier buildings from the site.

Sealed beneath the buried soil was a pit, or posthole, (contexts 2022 & 2023), which produced no finds, but from its stratigraphic position could be of Roman or earlier date.

1974 Area J (Fig 8) to the south of the Abbey. Evidence for two superimposed soil horizons was located. The slightly confused evidence suggests a situation comparable to that found in Trench G (see above pp 00). Sealed beneath a mortar level belonging to the floor of the cloisters (context 2121) was a dark brown clay soil (2124) which contained pottery of thirteenth-century date. Below this later medieval soil was a fine dark soil (2125) with 'fine white chalk lumps pressed into level' to quote the site notebook. This soil sealed a further layer described as a gravel level with a dark soil (2126), which appears from the site records to have been 1.05m below site datum. The top of the brown clay layer (context 2124) was 0.8m below site datum. The dark fine pre-Norman soil (context 2125) is not clearly delineated on the site drawings, but seems to have been about 0.9m below datum. It is probable that layer 2126 is the Phase 2 horizon and layer 2125 the Phase 4 soil. No early structures or metalled surfaces were found.

Areas K and KX. The evidence, although less clear, suggests that the pre-Norman soil (contexts 2144 and 2151) was at a comparable depth further south from the Abbey. No early structures or metalled surfaces were found.

1979 Soakaways (Fig 9) The soakaways lay approximately 12m south of the nave of the abbey in the open cloister garth. This is reflected in the stratigraphy within the trenches. The upper layers of both trenches were all of late post-medieval date. The main feature was a shallow east–west ditch which was sectioned in each trench – it is assumed that it was the same ditch.

Soakaway B. Immediately below the late fills were two layers (contexts 5007 & 5005) making up a buried soil. This soil horizon sealed a shallow ditch (contexts 5001, 5140, 5180 & 5139). The ditch cut what appeared to be an earlier layer or feature (contexts 5138 & 5181).

The dating evidence from these contexts is very limited. The upper soil horizon (5007) has produced predominantly medieval cooking pots, but also some Laverstock and Tudor Green wares. The lower horizon (context 5005) produced medieval cookpots and jugs and Laverstock and early Verwood wares. They are later medieval assemblages, and typical of a medieval site in Romsey. There is only one group of finds that may derive from the fill of the ditch (context 5140 = ?5006), but the attribution is by no means certain. This context produced one sherd each of Laverstock, Verwood and Scratchware.

Soakaway D. The late layers were directly over the ditch (contexts 5167 & 5166). There was no extant soil horizon. The ditch appeared to cut a north–south flint wall (contexts 5160 = 5163 = 5169), and a possible pit (contexts 5161, 5162 & 5165). No dating evidence can be assigned to the early layers.

1973 Excavation (Figs 10 and 38). No early structures were located in the 1973 excavations at the east end of the Abbey, but a dry 'ditch' (contexts 1070 = 1076 = 1078) was revealed, which had been filled prior to the construction of the Norman Eastern Chapels, that is probably in Phase 10, 11 or 12 (the later twelfth century). The ditch was the dried up and silted remains of a stream which had flowed north to south past the east end of the present Abbey site. The dried up ditch seems still to have been recognisable when work began on the Norman Abbey.

The soil (contexts 1076 D(4) = 1078 A(7)) at the bottom of this ditch and sealed beneath the floor of the Lady Chapel (contexts 1074 = 1075) was rich in charcoal, and possibly included waste derived from the iron smelting site to the south of the Abbey precinct.[4] Evidence for iron smelting debris was found in the small trench excavated behind the Midland Bank (see below).

Midland Bank (A 1988.9) (Fig 11). About 30m to the south-southwest of the Abbey a small trench behind the Midland Bank (Fig 2) was excavated in 1988. This trench produced evidence of iron-smelting debris (context 122) overlying a soil horizon (context 128) containing no ceramics but a rich assemblage of animal bone. Like the assemblage from the excavation to the north of the Abbey (context 6030) this animal bone was food waste, and was comparable with material from Middle Saxon Hamwic. It differed from the material from north of the Abbey in the range of species represented. It seems as if the rubbish being disposed of to the south-east of the Abbey indicates a rich and varied diet, whilst the material from the north of the Abbey, is much more run of the mill.

Two radiocarbon dates have been produced for the layers within the Midland Bank soakaway. One sample from context 122 (OxA – 2314) gave calibrated date ranges of Cal AD 610–770 (1 sigma) and Cal AD 545–875 (2 sigma). The second sample (OxA – 2313) gave calibrated date ranges of Cal AD 690–890 (1 sigma) and Cal AD 665–970 (2 sigma).[5]

Discussion of Phases pre-dating the Late Saxon Abbey (Phases 1–5)

Phase 1

A small pit (context 2022) in 1974 Trench E. It contained no dating evidence.

Phase 2

The earliest soil horizon seen most clearly in the 1988 excavation (context 6056) and in 1974 Trench G (contexts 2107 & 2108) and Area J (context 2126). In all of these cases there was evidence for a later soil horizon, or a reworking of the earlier soil. 1974 Trench FA may also have had two soil horizons (contexts 2064 & 2061). The single soil horizons located in the other 1974 trenches probably represent either Phase 2 or 4.

Phase 3

It can be suggested tentatively that the following were contemporary, or near contemporary, and belong to Phase 3: chalk feature (6093), and associated postholes (contexts 6037, 6039, 6045, 6050, 6052 & 6054) found in 1988 (Fig 12); the chalk structure (context 2063) in 1974 Trench FA, and possibly the metalled surfaces found in 1974 Trenches F (context 2076) and E (context 2020).

A structure based on the possible chalk footing (context 6093) located in the 1988 soakaway would have extended south of the trench. Its size is unknown, but no trace was found in the trench along the north nave wall, nor immediately west of

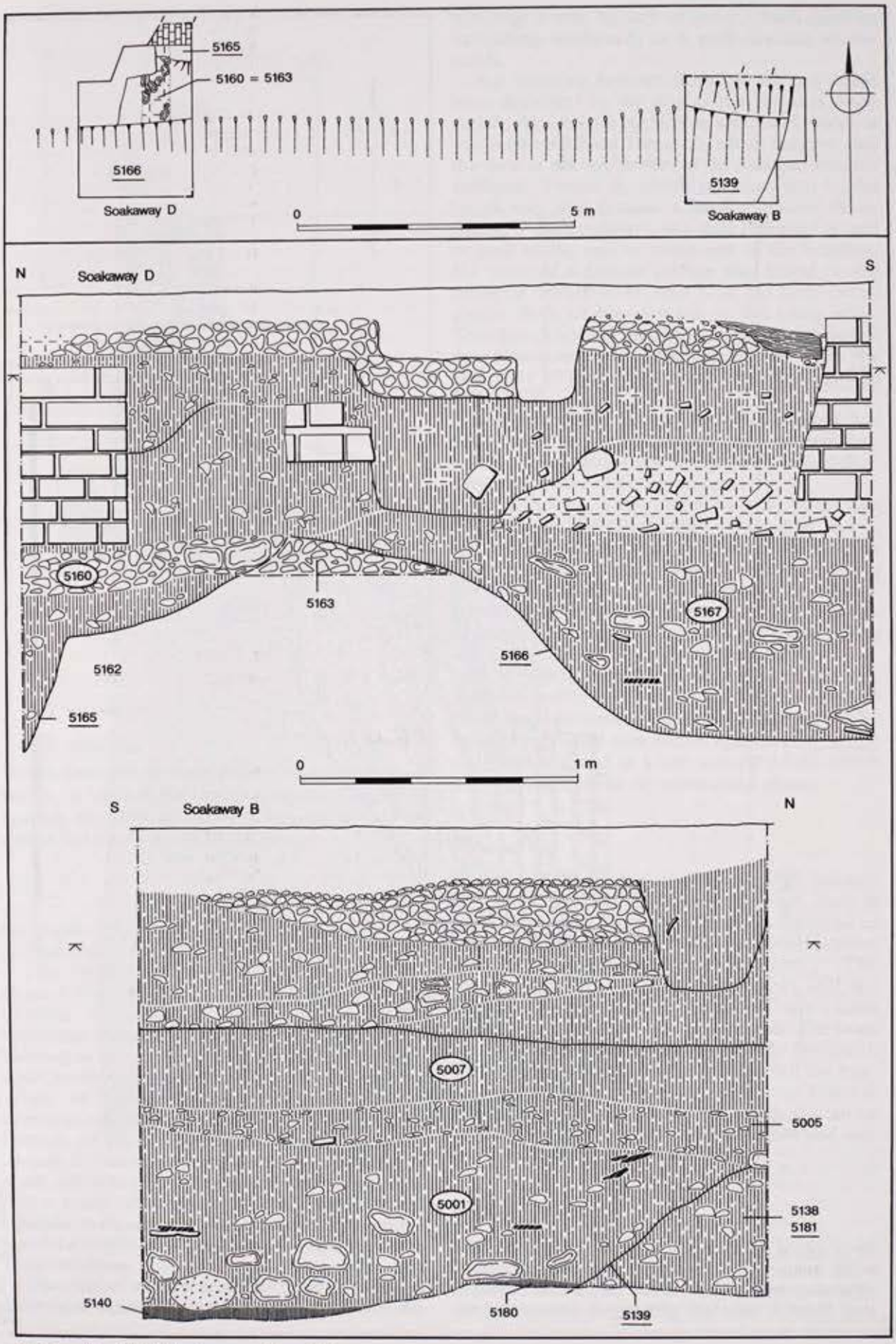

Fig 9 RA 1979: Soakaways B and D.

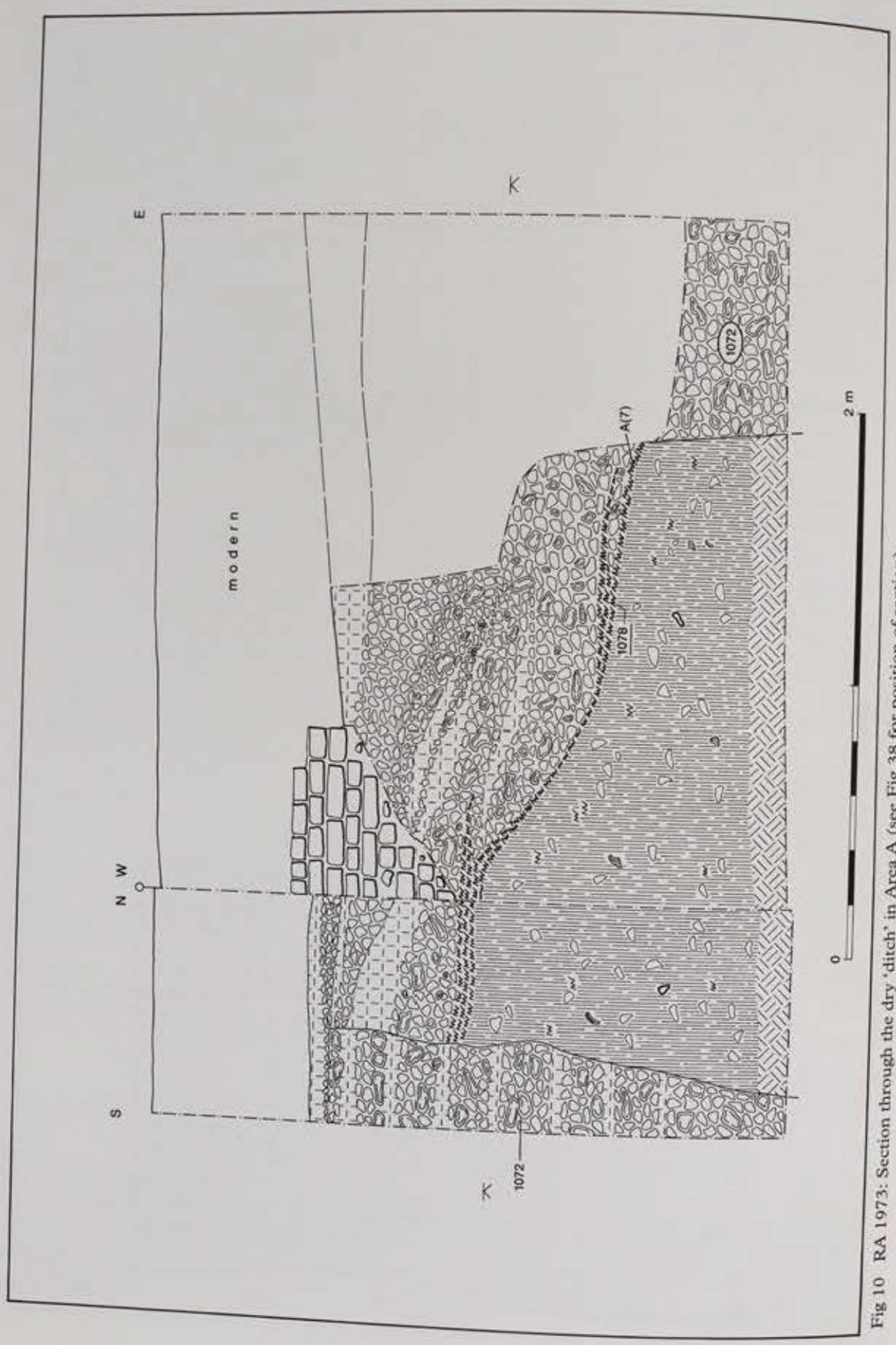

Fig 10 RA 1973: Section through the dry 'ditch' in Area A (see Fig 38 for position of section).

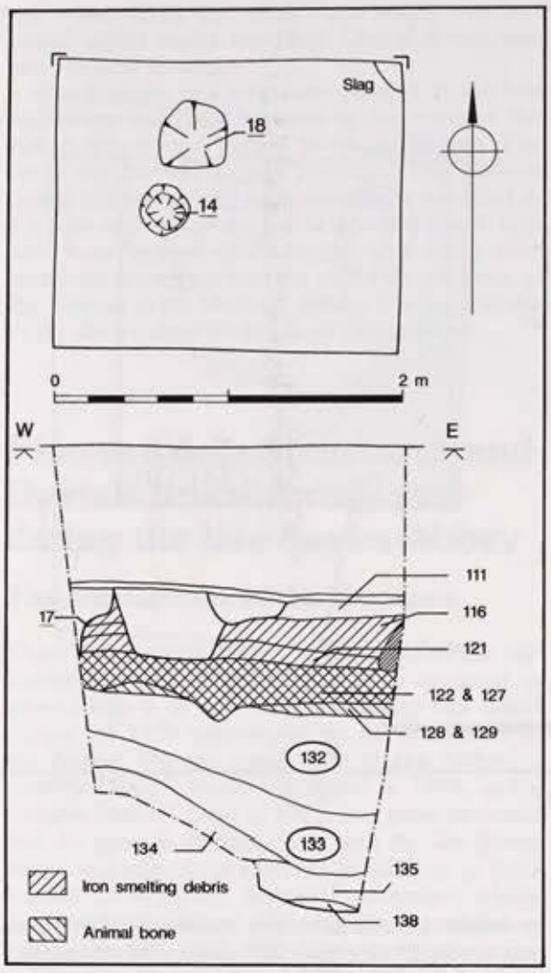

Fig 11 A 1988.9, The Midland Bank: Schematic Section showing layers with concentrations of animal bone and iron smelting debris.

the porch. It can have been no more than 3m (10ft) north to south.

The 1974 chalk structure (context 2063) formed the south-west corner of a possible building. The structure would have lain to the north and east of the trench. The extent of the building is not known, but it can be argued with some confidence that it had been no more than 3.7m, or approximately 12ft wide on its north–south axis, since no trace of the chalk footing, or any related structure was located in Trench F. The east-west extent of the building is more difficult to estimate, but it may be assumed that it could be longer on this axis, which would produce a structure of an acceptable size for a domestic building, or a chapel, forming part of a larger complex.

The mortar surface found in Trench F would have been outside, and to the north-west, of the building. It may be part of either a hard-standing extending westward, or a path leading to the north.

Any evidence between Trenches FA and A has been destroyed by the pier of the Norman south arcade. No mortar surface or structural evidence was recovered from Trench A, which suggests that the area to the south-west of the building was not surfaced. Trench E, which lay some way to the south-east, did contain a hard mortared layer. Again, if contemporary, this may represent a yard or path to the east or south-east of the building. No trace of a mortar surface was found to the south of Trench E in Area J, as has been noted above. Both of the trenches in the south aisle, Trenches A and E, produced layers interpreted as demolition deposits, possibly derived from the clearance of the pre-Norman building found in Trench FA.

The evidence of the mortar layers suggests that such surfaces as were located were intermittent, and represent paths and small yards rather than extensive areas of hard-standing.

In summary, there seem to have been two buildings with chalk footings at the west end of the present Abbey. Both were probably small in size. Associated with them may have been a number of paths, or small yards, and hard-standings. They may have been part of a religious or domestic complex. There was no direct dating evidence for these deposits and features.

It is possible that the earlier contexts with animal bone (layers 128 and 129) at the Midland Bank site were contemporary with this phase. The radiocarbon dates were earlier than those from the soil horizon found in 1988 (context 6030) which has been assigned to the subsequent phase.

Phase 4

The re-worked soil horizon found in 1988 (context 6030) and in 1974 Trench G (contexts 2105 & 2106) and Area J (context 2125) is assigned to Phase 4. There is also a possible re-worked horizon in 1974 Trench FA (context 2061). The radiocarbon date of bone from 6030 and the comparative material for the animal bone both point to a Middle or later Saxon date. The bone may be residual, but its quantity and the fact that it was not abraded suggest that this was not the case. The soil horizon (context 128), which was found in the Midland Bank trench, and which contained animal bone, was probably earlier in date and may be contemporary with Abbey Phase 3.

Phase 5

Post-dating the Phase 4 soil horizon in the 1988 soakaway were a pair of postholes (contexts 6034 & 6049) and a clay floor (6029). The postholes are substantial, suggesting that they formed part

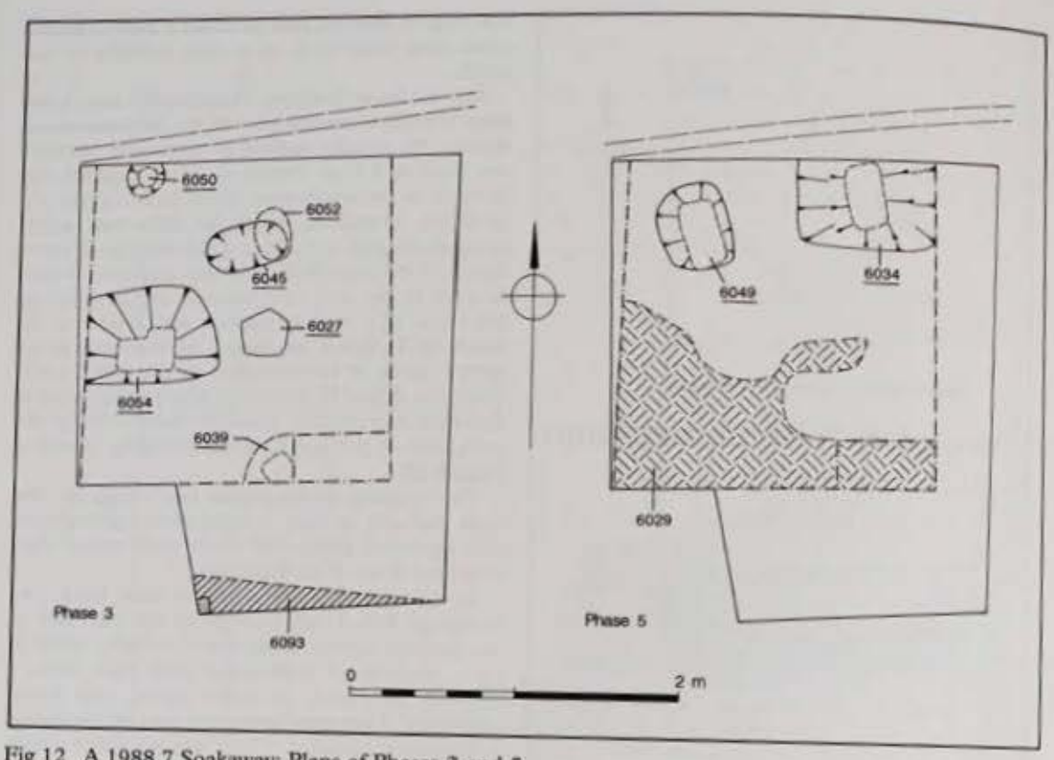

Fig 12 A 1988.7 Soakaway: Plans of Phases 3 and 5.

of a large structure, and this is borne out by the extent of the clay floor, which was found in the drain trench adjacent to the present porch. This gives a minimum of 7.4m for the north-north-west to south-south-east dimension for the structure. It is likely that the building was aligned on this axis, in which case the postholes formed part of its northern end. The two recorded postholes were rectangular, and their larger cross-sectional measurements were aligned on the same axis as that suggested for the building itself.

Aligned at a right angle to this north-north-west – south-south-east axis was a grave (3150) (Fig 15) excavated in 1975 under the foundations of the parish church aisle (contexts 3153 = 3261). This was one of three graves located in a soakaway excavated to the north of the main trench in 1975. The other two graves probably date to Phase 7. There is no stratigraphic or dating evidence to link the grave with any particular phase. It lay immediately under a chalk footing, which was laid down at the beginning of the fifteenth century for the additional north aisle of the parish church. This footing will have destroyed any potential stratigraphic relationships. The only reason to link grave 3150 with the Phase 5 structure is its alignment. Although human skeletons were found in the graves in the 1975 soakaway, it is not now possible to allocate the extant skeletons to particular graves with any degree of confidence (see below pp 24, 35).

It would be tempting to assign the layers which produced iron smelting waste in the Midland Bank trench to this phase but the evidence is very slight. The other possible Phase 5 feature was the ditch (context 2060) 1974 in Trench FA. This ditch, or trench, was aligned on a east-south-east to west-north-west axis. It was filled (context 2059) with mortar, stone, earth and clay.

It is not possible to date securely either the cutting, or the filling of the ditch, beyond saying that it was probably cut after the building with chalk footing was demolished, and filled in before the footings of the present Abbey were laid out. The nature of the fill suggests that the ditch was filled in as part of a building process.

Unphased Contexts

Certain of the earlier features cannot be closely phased. The dry 'ditch' excavated in 1973 cannot be assigned to a specific phase, but it was probably filled in during Phases 9 to 11, prior to the construction of the first, Norman, Lady Chapel in Phase 10, 11 or 12. The charcoal-rich

soil which lined the 'ditch', and which was also found sealed under the Lady Chapel floors, was pre-Norman in origin.

The features and structures located in the two soakaways excavated in 1979 to the south of the Abbey (Fig 9) also cannot be closely phased. The fill of the east–west ditch produced very limited dating evidence, which suggested that it was filled in the later medieval period. It is possible that it may have been opened much earlier, and that it may have been connected with the use of the site prior to the erection of the Norman Abbey. The features cut by the ditch cannot be any more closely dated.

Phases 6 & 7: Structures and Burials immediately pre-dating the late Saxon Abbey

The Limitations of the Evidence

There were several graves, which pre-date the late Saxon Abbey, and which have been assigned to either Phase 6 or 7. The largest group was found during the 1975 excavations on the north side of the Abbey. On the south side of the Abbey, a possible Phase 7 burial was found in 1979, and a possible Phase 7 grave in 1991. It is more probable that the latter is contemporary with the late Saxon Abbey and belongs to Phase 8. In addition to these burials close to the Abbey, a cemetery, which contained some Phase 7 burials, was excavated in 1989 some 60m south of the present church.

The burials found in 1975 are the key to an understanding of the sequence of graves on the Abbey site. Interpretation is difficult, because the precise number of graves found cannot be ascertained. In part this is because many of those which can be identified from the site archive were badly disturbed by later activity, and the cuts for some graves were not identified.

There are also some possible graves for which the evidence is extremely slight. These are graves 3154, 3155, 3157 and 3159 (Fig 21). If these doubtful graves are included it can be suggested there were as many as twenty graves pre-dating the late Saxon Abbey from the 1975 excavations (see Table 3 below). Excluding the doubtful examples there are as few as sixteen graves assignable to Phases 6 and 7.[6] The doubtful graves have been included on the phase plans (Figs 21 and 24), but otherwise have not been included on site plans or reported on because of a lack of information.

Possibly contemporary with the east–west graves assigned to Phase 7 were two chalk structures found on the south side of the present Abbey in 1979 and 1991. There is no direct stratigraphic link between the 1979 and 1991 chalk structures on one hand and the graves excavated in 1975 on the other. The 1979 chalk feature (contexts 5062 = 5058) pre-dated the late Saxon Abbey, but it also cut a soil horizon (5055) which may be the same one as that (context 5107) which sealed a probable Phase 7 grave (context 5119).

Evidence for the Phase 6 Burials on a north-west–south-east alignment

1975 Excavations (Figs 13 & 14). There is evidence certainly for three, and perhaps for five, burials on a north-west–south-east alignment.[7] Of the three graves that can be identified with confidence, two lay to the north of the north transept of the late Saxon Abbey, near to its north-west corner. One of these (context 3257) lay almost immediately above the other

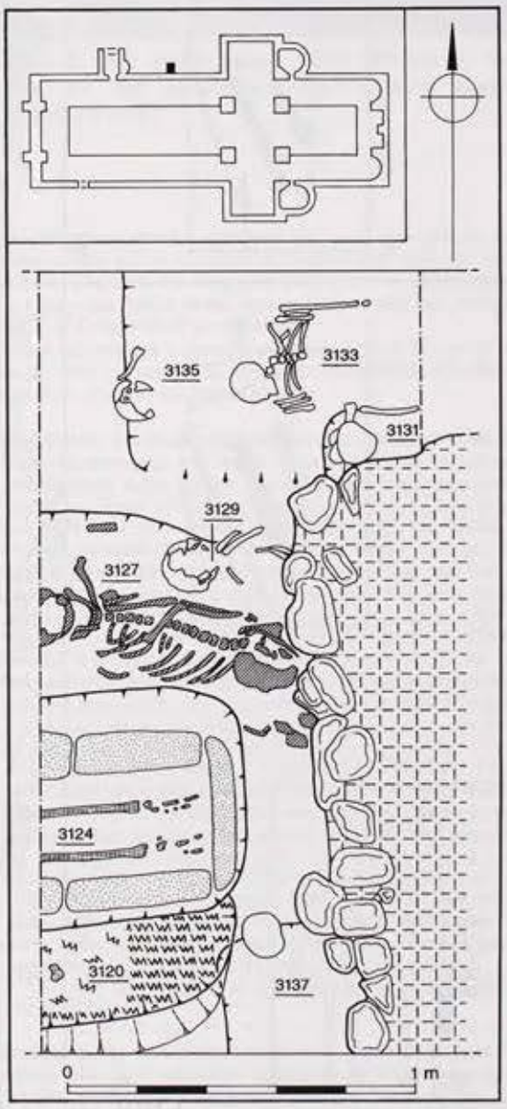

Fig 13 RA 1975: Plan of Phase 6–8 burials west of the Saxon north transept (see Fig 15 for key).

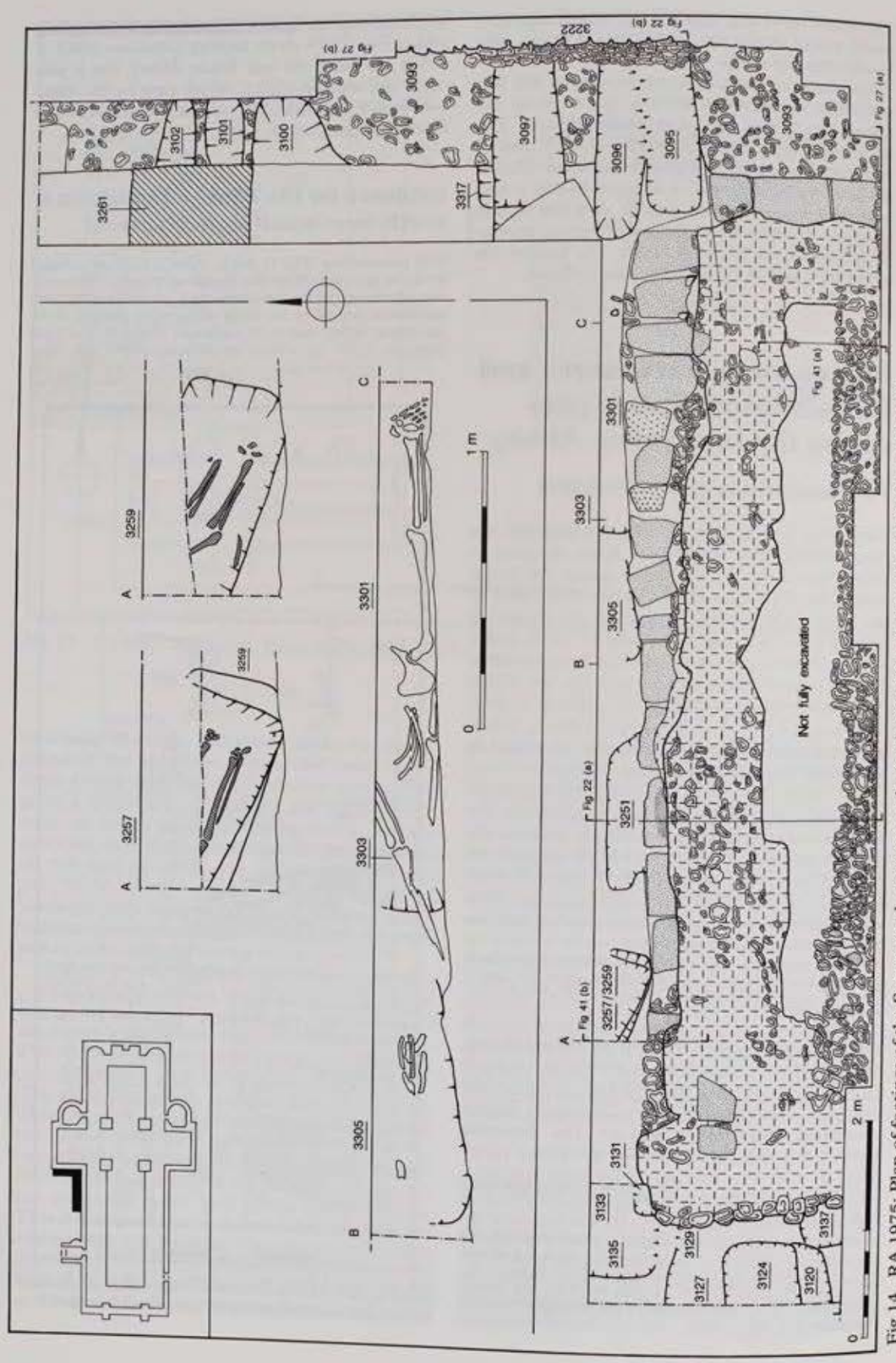

Fig 14 RA 1975: Plan of footings of the Saxon north transept and associated Phase 6–8 burials (see Fig 15 for key).

Plate 1. RA 1975: Grave 3257 (Phase 6). See Fig 14 for location. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

Plate 2. RA 1975: Grave 3259 (Phase 6). See Fig 14 for location. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

(context (3259). Grave 3257 was cut by the foundation trench for the Saxon Abbey. Skeletal material from the upper burial (3257) was in very poor condition and was identified as being from an adult. Only one long bone was identified from grave 3259.[8] Neither grave had any relationship with burials on other alignments.

The third grave (3127) lay to the west of the Saxon north transept. Its relationships with graves of other orientations are critical for the interpretation of the sequence of groups of graves. The very disturbed nature of the remains of a number of graves at the north-west corner of the Saxon transept made it difficult to identify clearly both the limits of individual graves and their relationships. The key relationship is that between the grave 3127 of the group under discussion and grave 3129, which was apparently aligned east–west. Both graves pre-date the Saxon north transept. The record is not unambiguous, but it seems likely that grave 3127 was cut by 3129. That is the interpretation adopted in this report. Following on from that it has been assumed that all of the east–west graves were later in date than all of the northwest–southeast burials, and they have been phased accordingly. It is unfortunate that it is not possible to be more certain about this relationship, because it is critical for the interpretation of the sequence of graves excavated in 1975. The skeleton in grave 3127 was identified as an adult ?female.[9]

The 1839 Discovery (Fig 21). In 1839, a lead coffin was uncovered near the west end of the south nave aisle of the present Abbey during the digging of a grave. One contemporary report of the discovery describes how the men digging the grave had excavated to a depth of four to five feet. The burial that was discovered was orientated northwest–southeast. The lead coffin is described as

> formed of sheet lead, about ¼ of an inch thick; it is made from three pieces, which are overlapped and welded together without soldering. The lid was formed in like manner, and put on like the lid of a pasteboard box, but secured by iron nails to an inner coffin, or lining of oak. The length of the coffin is five feet; and its height 15 inc. The head is somewhat wider than the foot; the former measuring 18 inc. and the latter 13 inc. It weighed from 1½ to 2 cwt.

The coffin contained a split oak log used as a pillow, and resting on the pillow a complete head of hair with the scalp attached. The hair was long and plaited into a single pigtail. The only other 'trace of the human body which has perished upon it, is a slight black incrustation'.[10]

More information is contained in the account by one of the men involved in making the discovery. The account of J Major, the sexton, is worth quoting in extenso:

> [Mr Jenvey, the churchwarden] gave me orders to make the grave 13 foot deep. wee began the work with the pickax and shovell witch is the proper Tools For excavation. wee found the[y] would not do for the Foundation was sollid concrete 5 feet deep. wee then applied other tools witch was Mallet & chissell we made Holes in the concrete with it thrusted the nose of a crow Bar in and raised it be leveredge. wee 3 of us continued this work for 2 days 1/2 and then wee came on the gravel 18 in in the gravell wee came on a Led coffin. I acquainted the Vicar of the discovery. at First he declined having it removed as he supposed thare would be the remains of Bones of whom was Berried. I was to find if thare was any bones in it. if so it was not to be removed. I tried by making a hole on the Top I Thrusted my hand to the head of the coffin to Find the scull. I found no bones but a scalp of Feameal haire as Bright as any Living Ladies haire I ever seen. thare was 1 Finger Bone. it became dust immeadiately the aire came to it. The coffin was mad[e] of verry curius workmanship the Sides was welted togeather the Top shut on the same as a Bandbox thare was a oake pillow & oake shell the haire was preserved by the Tanning Proses in the Oak ... thare is 5 Feet of concrete go w[h]ere you may in the older part of the abby and you must go 8 Feet From the walls befor you Leave it That is the reason thare is not a settlement in the Saxon or Norman part of the Bilding.
>
> This is a Trew History of the haire and th. coffin J Major Oct 5 1839[11]

The lead coffin was clearly found at a depth of at least 5ft (1.5m). The hard 'concrete' described by Major may have been part of the north transept of the late Saxon Abbey, but the location of the discovery is not known with sufficient precision. It was found in the first bay of the south nave aisle, but the plan published by JGN is not accurate in detail. This

Fig 14 RA 1975: Plan of footings of the Saxon north transept and associated Phase 6–8 burials (see Fig 15 for key).

plan shows the coffin lying towards the centre of the western half of the bay. It is possible that it was partly under the Saxon footings and partly under the mortared flint foundation of the south pier arcade of the Norman Abbey. The Rev Cooke Yarborough (1905, 227) thought that it was part of the foundations of an earlier wall, but his plan is flawed. It is probable that the burial was contemporary with the Phase 6 graves found in 1975, and that it pre-dated the late Saxon Abbey.

Evidence for Phase 7 Burials on an east–west alignment

1975 Excavations (Figs 13, 14 & 15) There is evidence for thirteen possible or probable graves orientated on a strict east–west alignment, and a very uncertain grave possibly on the same alignment, on the north side of the Abbey.[12] Of the thirteen graves recorded in the site archive eleven probably belong to Phase 7. There is insufficient stratigraphic evidence for certainty about the other two graves (contexts 3151 & 3152).

One burial (3137) (Fig 13), was located to the west of the Saxon north transept in the angle between it and the Norman nave. It was cut both by the foundation trench (context 3204 = 3248) of the Saxon Abbey, and by the cut for the later charcoal burial (3120). The relationships are clear. There was very little skeletal material surviving in the grave.[13]

A group of four graves was located at the north-west corner of the Saxon transept (Fig 13). All were disturbed. Grave 3129 has already been noted. The small quantity of skeletal material it contained has been identified as being from a young adult, aged 17–25 years, of unknown sex. Graves 3135, 3133 and 3131 can be identified with some confidence. The cuts for graves 3135 and 3131 were recognised, but no cut was located or recorded for 3133. The earliest of these graves was 3135. The skeleton in this grave appears to have been displaced in relation to the presumed cut (Fig 13). This may have been the result of later activity, in particular the cutting of grave 3133. Although no cut for the latter was identified or recorded, the skeletal remains from this burial were among the best preserved and their position in relation to the cut of grave 3135 made clear the stratigraphic relationship. They were in their turn cut by grave 3131. The fill and skeleton of this grave were largely destroyed by the cutting of the foundation trench (context 3104 = 3204) for the late Saxon Abbey. All the skeletal material from these graves was apparently male. Grave 3135 contained an adult ?male aged between 25–35 years, grave 3133 an adult male, age not determined, and grave 3131 an adult male aged 35–45 years.[14]

There were a further three, or four, graves (contexts 3251, 3301, 3303 & 3305) along the north face of the Saxon transept (Fig 14). The most westerly grave (3251) had a well defined cut, but appeared to have been badly disturbed during the construction of the Saxon Abbey, since there was no surviving skeleton. One piece of right femur shaft was identified.[15] There was human bone in the buried soil horizon immediately adjacent to the grave cut, some of the bone being seen in the side of the excavation trench.

The graves (3305, 3303 & 3301) to the east were badly disturbed, and cannot be defined with total confidence. Part of the cut of grave 3305 was clearly defined, but less than a metre of the south edge could be traced. Although the stratigraphic relationship between 3305 and 3301 was lost, it is likely that 3305 was earlier in date than 3301, unless it was a very short grave. A little skeletal material, from an adult, was recovered from grave 3305, in poor condition. The sex of the skeleton could not be determined. Grave 3301 appeared from the site plans to contain the complete ?right side of an adult skeleton, but no skeletal material can be identified confidently with this grave. The rest of the skeleton was apparently lost when the foundation trench (context 3204 = 3248) for the Saxon north transept was dug.[16]

Overlying the western end of grave 3305 was part of a skeleton identified as being from a third grave (3303). No cut was defined, and it is very possible that this skeleton was displaced from a grave which cannot now be identified. No skeletal material has been identified as deriving from this possible burial.

To the east of the Saxon transept, two further possible graves have been identified. Grave 3208 at the north-east corner of the Saxon transept is known only from a section drawing (Fig 22) and was very largely destroyed by the footings of the Norman north transept (3263). To the north was grave 3317, which was almost totally removed by a later medieval grave (context 3396).[17] Skeletal remains seem not to have been recovered from these two graves.

Finally there were two graves (contexts 3151 & 3152) (Fig 15) located in the soakaway north of the main excavation. They were side by side, and sealed beneath later graves and topsoil. They cannot be closely dated, and may not belong to this phase. Skeletons, or parts of skeletons, were recovered, but cannot now be assigned to particular graves.[18]

1979 Excavations (Fig 16). Two charcoal burials (site codes RA 79 E5 and RA 75 E6), both aligned east–west, were identified from this excavation. Radiocarbon samples were taken from both graves. Two graves are clearly shown on the site plans but not labelled; the archive contexts numbers – 5119 and 5127 – were assigned at the post-excavation stage. It is not now possible to identify with certainty which skeleton and radiocarbon date should be assigned to which grave, but possible identifications can be suggested. It is suggested that RA 79 E5 should be identified with (5127) and RA 79 E6 with (5119).[19] The radiocarbon assays gave the following results:

The radiocarbon determination for charcoal from Context E (6) (= 5119) (HAR – 3765) gave calibrated date ranges of Cal AD 775–960 (1 sigma) and Cal AD 680–1010 (2 sigma). The determination from Context E (5) (= 5127) (HAR – 3760) gave date ranges of Cal AD 885–1010 (1 sigma) and Cal AD 780–1030 (2 sigma).[20]

The two graves are assigned to different phases on stratigraphic grounds. Grave 5119 can be assigned to Phase 7. It lay close to the south nave wall just south of grave (5127). 5119 was sealed by a clay layer (5107). Grave 5127 cut this clay layer and is assigned to Phase 8.

There was a skeleton in the grave 5119. The skeleton was recovered for analysis. Unfortunately the upper portion of the body, including the head and shoulders, was destroyed by the cut for a later vault. There was also charcoal in the grave and a sample was taken for dating. The interment was identified as a charcoal burial by the excavators, but there is some doubt about this identification. The only plan (Fig 16) shows the fully excavated feature and it may therefore be misleading since the charcoal may have been removed. The plan suggests that the charcoal was quite sparse and found mainly on the north side of the grave. If the grave did not contain a charcoal burial, this raises a potential problem, for it is possible that the charcoal may have been residual, and therefore not contemporary with the interment. Such a possibility casts doubts on the value of the charcoal for radiocarbon dating. Both of the skeletons recovered in 1979 have been identified as adult ?females.

1989 United Reformed Church Excavations (Figs 17 and 18) In 1989, a badly disturbed cemetery was investigated in a small excavation some 60m south of the south transept of the abbey, in the grounds of the Abbey United Reformed Church Manse.

It is clear from the quantity of disturbed human bone and from the series of later cuts that many of the graves in the cemetery had been destroyed after it ceased to be used. The disturbed bones had in many instances been re-buried. Long bones bundled together, and groups of skulls were found in the more recent soils. The successive digging episodes that were evidenced by the stratigraphy cannot readily be explained.

As a result of the disturbance of the cemetery only a few graves were found with intact inhumations.[21] Up to nine possible graves were uncovered, although only six (contexts 20, 24, 42, 43, 46 & 58) were excavated and defined. Two other

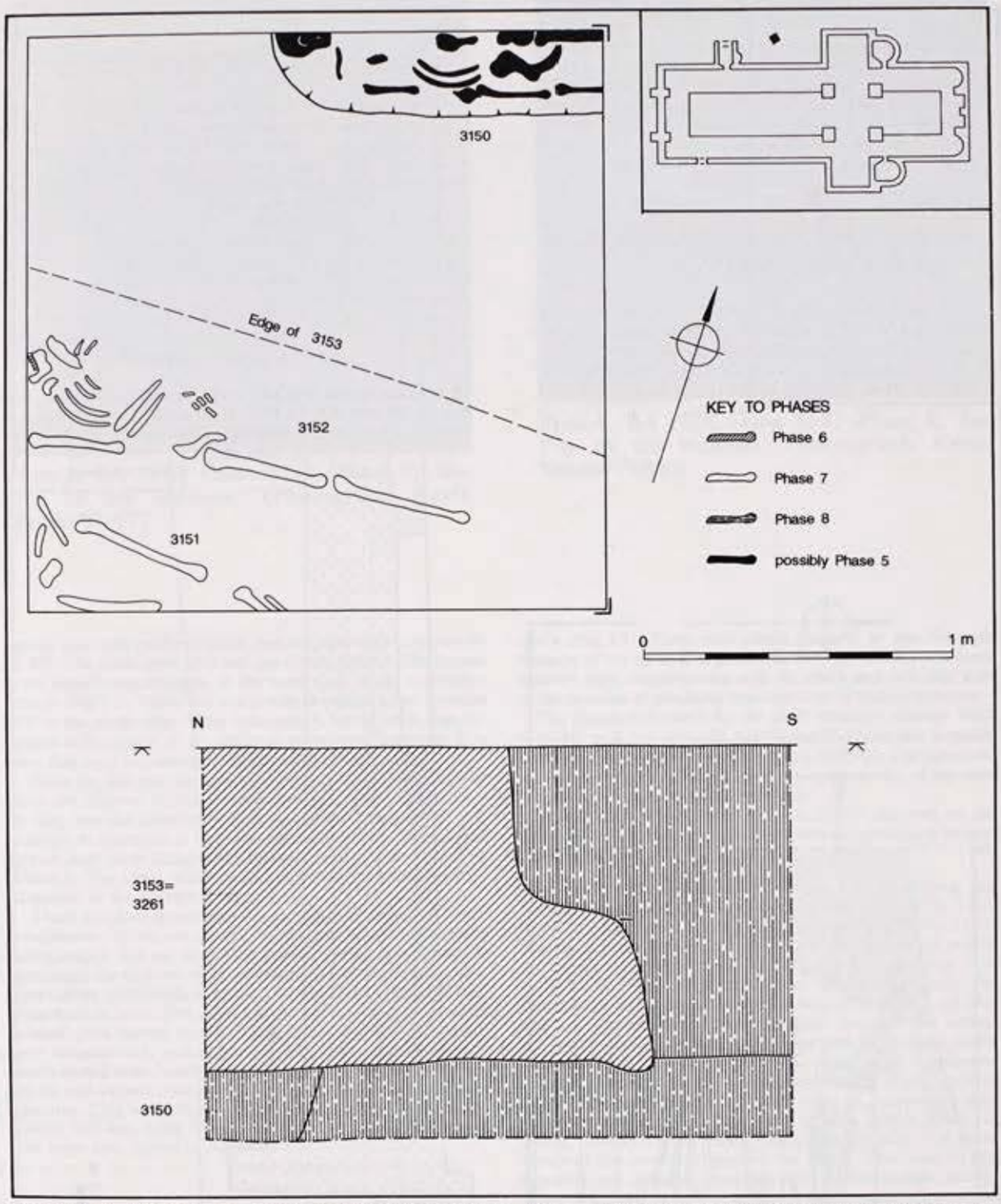

Fig 15 RA 1975 Soakaway: Plan of Burials possibly of Phase 5 (3151 and 3152) and grave of Phase 7 (3150). Section through chalk footing (3153) of the additional parish north aisle.

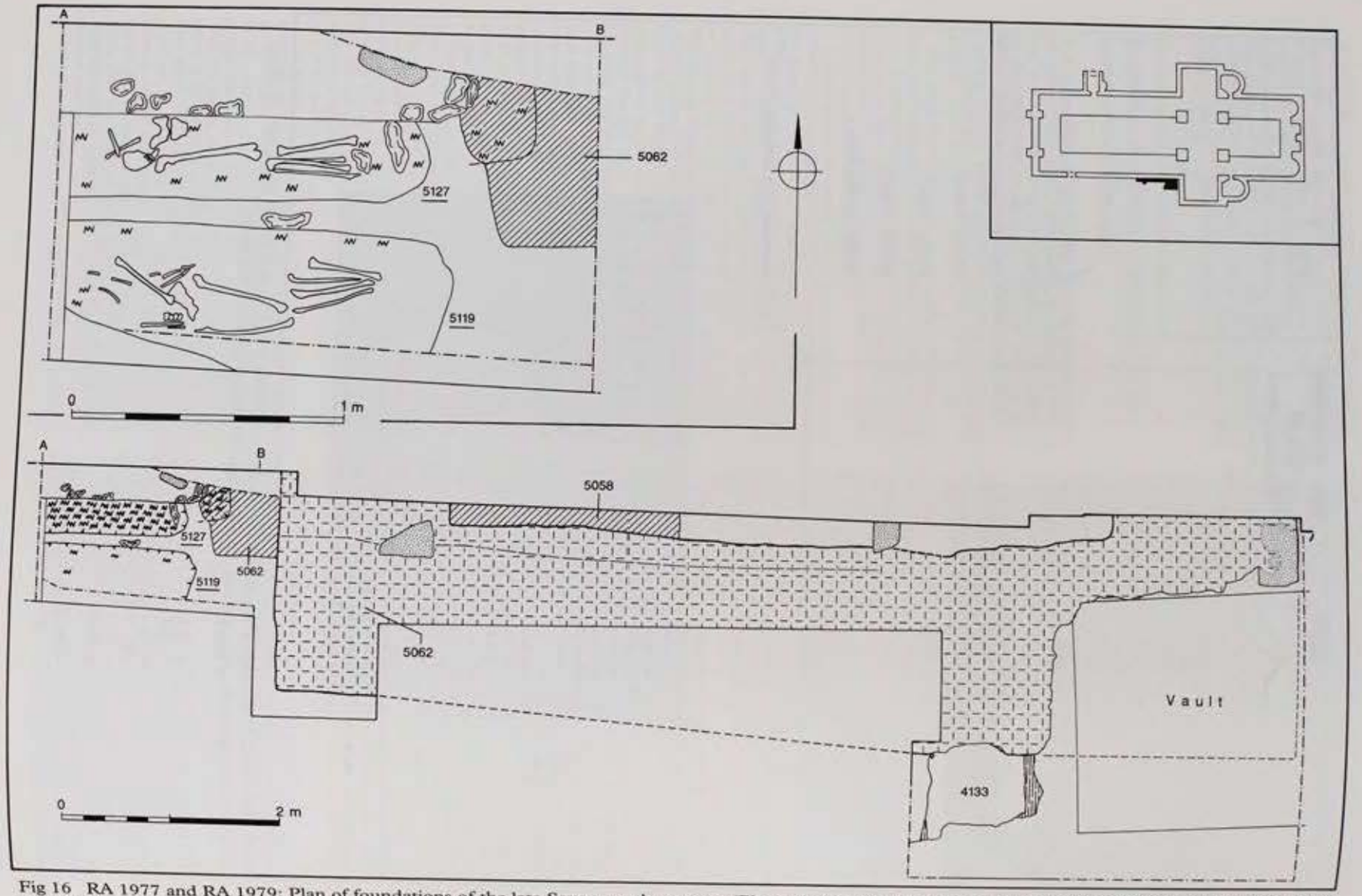

Fig 16 RA 1977 and RA 1979: Plan of foundations of the late Saxon south transept (Phase 8), with earlier chalk structure (5058)=(5062), and burials (5119 and 5127).

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Stubbs/TV2

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Plate 3. RA 1979: Grave 5119 (Phase 7). See Fig 16 for location. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

Plate 4. RA 1979: Grave 5127 (Phase 8). See Fig 16 for location. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

graves were only partly revealed, and not excavated (contexts 60 & 62). The ninth grave (56) was not clearly defined. The burials were mainly concentrated at the north end of the excavation trench (Fig 17). There was one poorly preserved grave (context 43) at the south edge of the cemetery. It would seem that the graves in the centre of the site were completely destroyed. It is here that there is evidence for deep cuts (Fig 18).

From the fact that the excavated graves cut one another, and from the different depths to which the graves were excavated, it is clear that the cemetery was in use over a long period. It is possible to recognise at least two phases of graves. The earliest graves have been assigned to Phase 7, and the later ones to Phase 8. The latter, which included a charcoal burial, will be discussed in the relevant section.

There are three graves that can be assigned to Phase 7 with confidence. These are graves 20, 58 and 60. Grave 60 was unexcavated, but cut by a later grave (context 42). Grave 58 contained the skeleton of an old man, and bones from at least three other individuals (context 27). Grave 20 contained only fragments of bone. Two other graves, which cannot be securely phased, may belong to this group. They are grave 62, which was unexcavated, and grave 43. The latter contained only badly mixed bone (context 37). This grave was cut by the edge of the mill stream (context 31) that ran along the south side of the site. This was almost certainly the original edge of the Abbey mill leat, today known as Abbey Water, and which now lies some 10m further to the south.

The Evidence for the Phase 7 Rammed Chalk Structures

The 1979 Excavation (Figs 16, 19 & 34). The structure lay on the south side of the present Abbey and was 4.3m (14ft 1in) long, and its surviving depth was between 0.65 and 0.7 m. It consisted of rammed chalk with courses of flint. Although later activity had obscured much of its southern edge, as well as its northern extent, it seems probable that the structure was on an east-west alignment.

There was a row of shallow scoops (contexts 5087? = 5094, 5092, 5096 & 5102? = 5125) cut into the top surface of the chalk (Fig 19). They were partly covered by the Norman footings of the nave. It is probable, but not certain, that these features were contemporary with the chalk and that they may be the remains of postholes that supported a timber structure.

The foundation trench for the chalk structure (context 5062 = 5058) was cut through the Saxon/Norman soil horizon (context 5055 = 5063 = 5082 = 5122 =?5078). The structure was cut by the foundations for the south transept of the later Saxon Abbey (contexts 5061 = 5054).

To the west, at a distance of 7.6m (24ft 11in), and on the same alignment was the chalk structure, discussed below, found in 1991.

The 1991 Excavation (Figs 20 & 34). Overlying the Saxon/Norman buried soil (contexts 7014, 7057, 7076, 7101 & 7131) was a patchy gravel layer (contexts 7075, 7100, 7130), and cut through the gravel was the foundation trench (7069) for a feature of rammed chalk and flint (contexts 7055 = 7083 & 7087). The chalk had been tipped into the foundation trench and rammed down, with courses of flint nodules. The overall length of the chalk structure was 4.45m, or approximately 14ft 7in, east to west, and its surviving depth was between 0.5 and 0.6 m. Its north-south extent is unknown because the cloister bench and the foundations of the Norman Abbey obscured it. Its southern edge is, however, clear, although confused by the cutting of later graves (contexts 7023, 7030 & 7089). Grave 7089, in particular, cut away much of the southern edge of the chalk. This edge of the structure was probably originally more or less straight, except where it appears to have respected a large rectangular posthole or small pit (7080) at its south-western corner (Fig 20).

It is probable either that the posthole was already in use when the chalk structure was made, or that it was planned, and that the posthole and the rammed chalk were in contemporary use, although it is less certain how they related structurally, if at all. The fill of the posthole produced plaster and opus signinum,[22] which must have belonged to a previous structure. Similar material has been found in other excavations at Romsey Abbey and has been interpreted as being derived from the structure of the late Saxon Abbey. This may not be the case here. It is more probable that the material is of Roman date; much of the brick, tile and stone used in the Saxon Abbey was re-used Roman material.

Fig 16 RA 1977 and RA 1979: Plan of foundations of the late Saxon south transept (Phase 8), with earlier chalk structure (5058)=(5062), and burials (5119 and 5127).

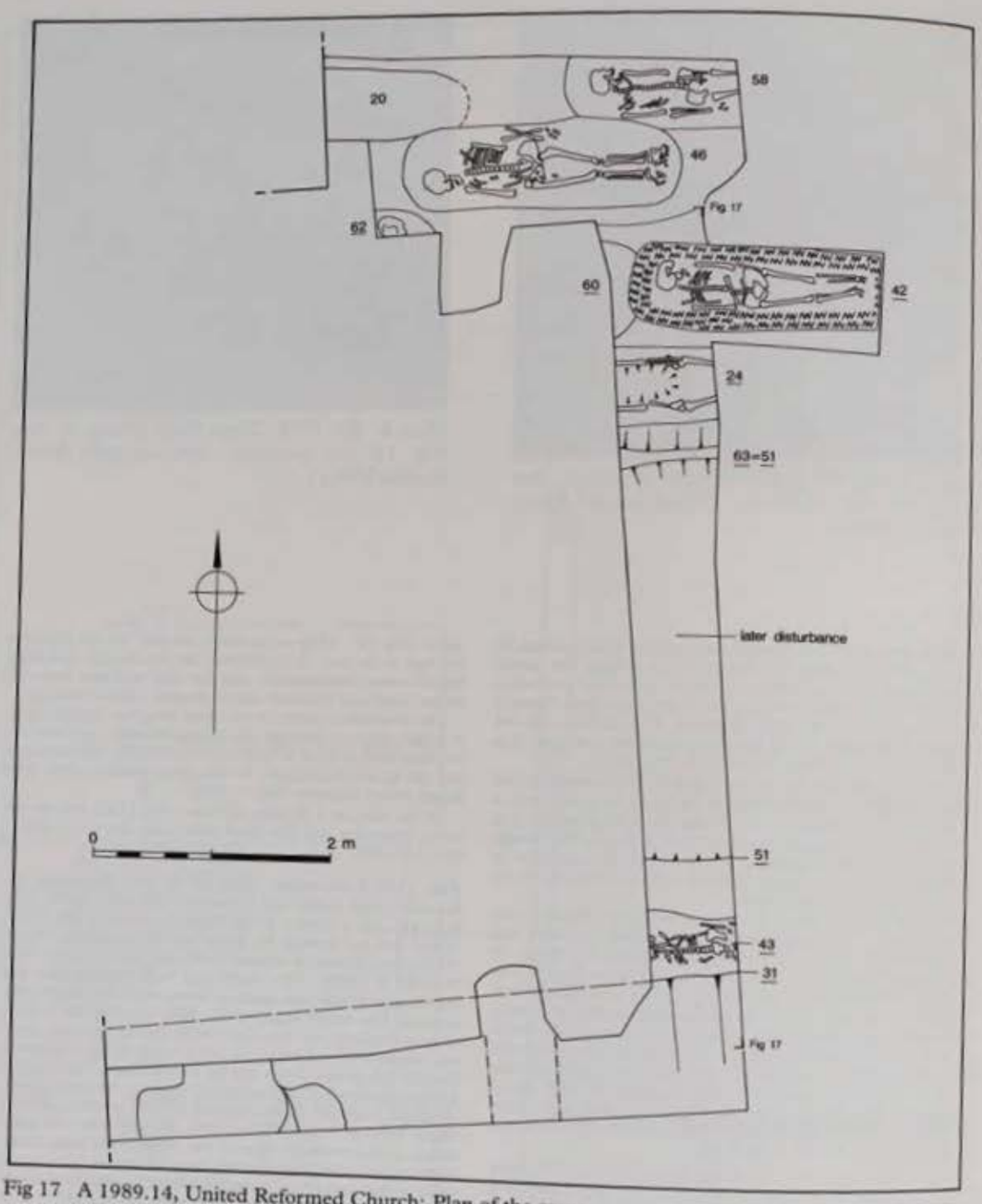

Fig 17 A 1989.14, United Reformed Church: Plan of the graves.

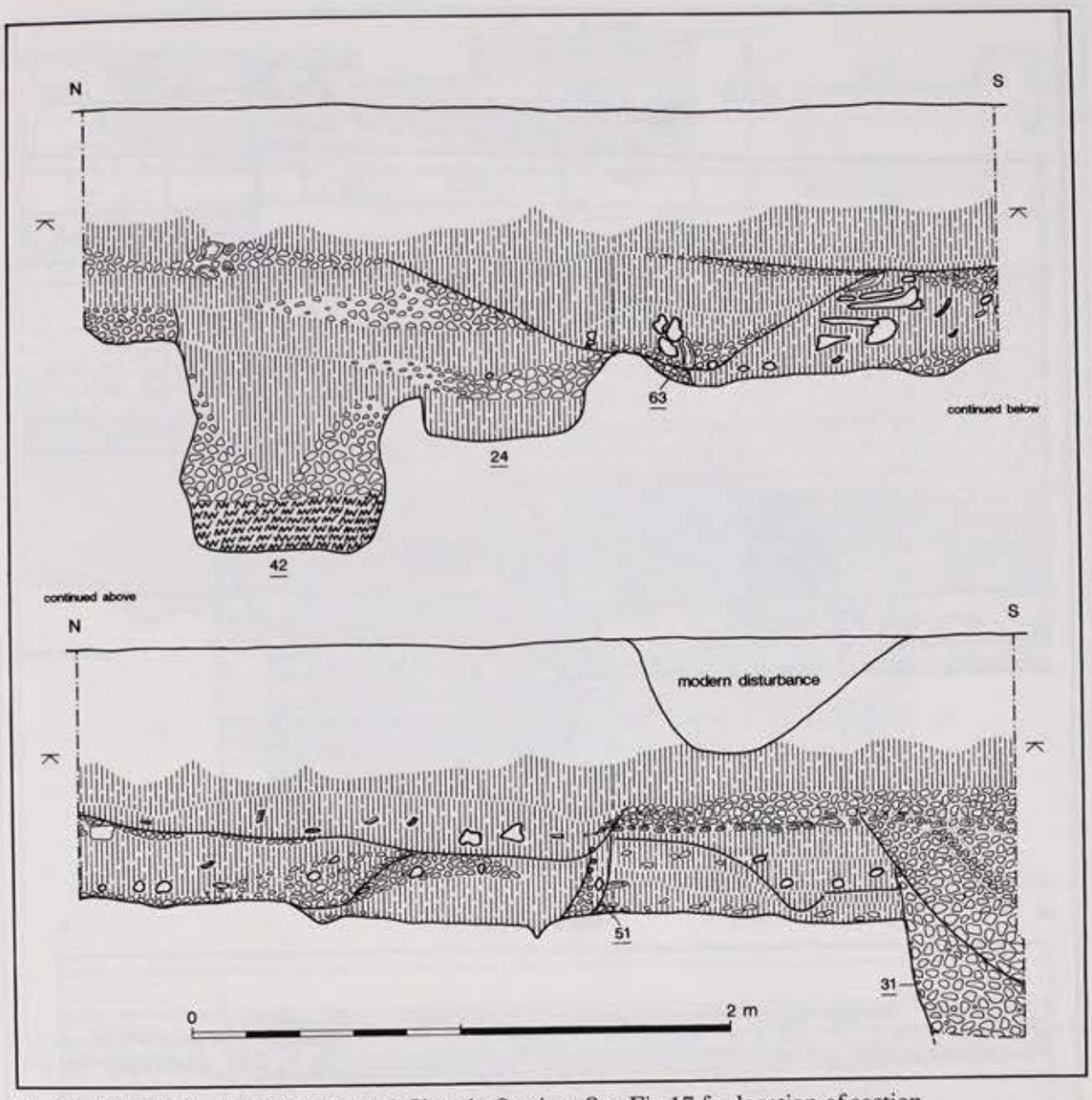

Fig 18 A 1989.14, United Reformed Church: Section. See Fig 17 for location of section.

Discussion and Dating[23]

Middle to Late Saxon Graves (Phases 6 and 7)

The north-west–south-east aligned graves are dated earlier than the east–west graves on the basis of the relationship between graves 3127 and 3129, and they are assigned to Phases 6 and 7 respectively. Both phases of burials pre-dated the late Saxon Abbey, and were cut into the Saxon soil horizon (contexts 3166, 3206, 3238, 3239 & 3294).

This soil must be an horizon either contemporary with, or later than, the soil horizon (6030) found in the 1988 soakaway. Layer 6030 has been assigned to Phase 4, and the timber structures cutting it have been assigned to Phase 5. These structures were orientated on a distinctive alignment, and it has already been argued that a Phase 5 burial (context 3150) can be identified on the basis of its similar west-south-west–east-north-east alignment. It should be noted, however, that there is no reason stratigraphically why the Phase 5 structures should not be assigned to a later phase. It is the orientation of the structures, and their probable association with a similarly aligned grave, which suggest an earlier rather than a later date. Features and structures from Phase 7 onwards appear to be

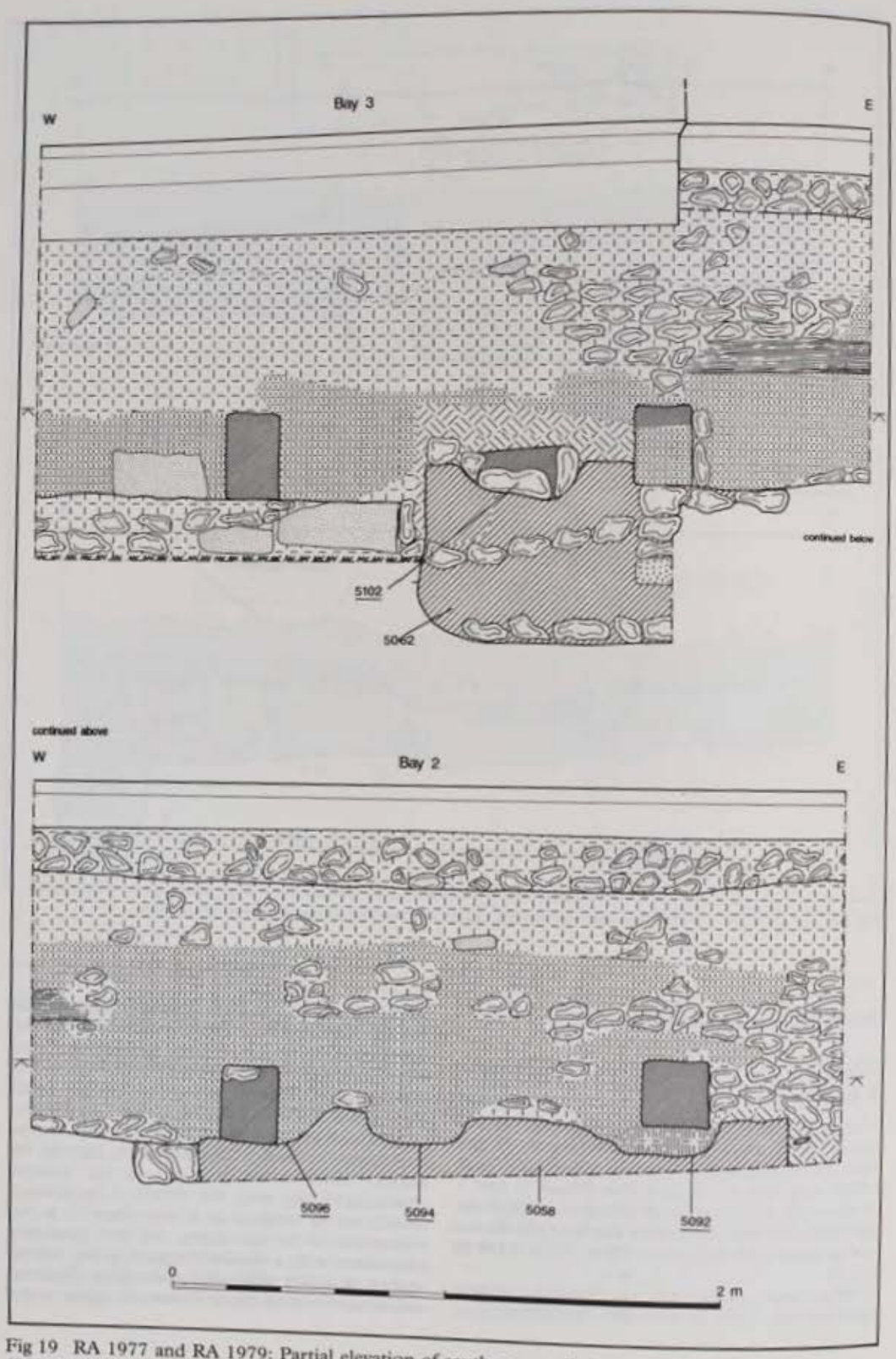

Fig 19 RA 1977 and RA 1979: Partial elevation of south nave wall showing section of chalk structure (5058)=(5062), and shallow cuts (5092, 5094, 5096 and 5102) in its top surface. Note also the rectangular recesses for the timber cloister bench .

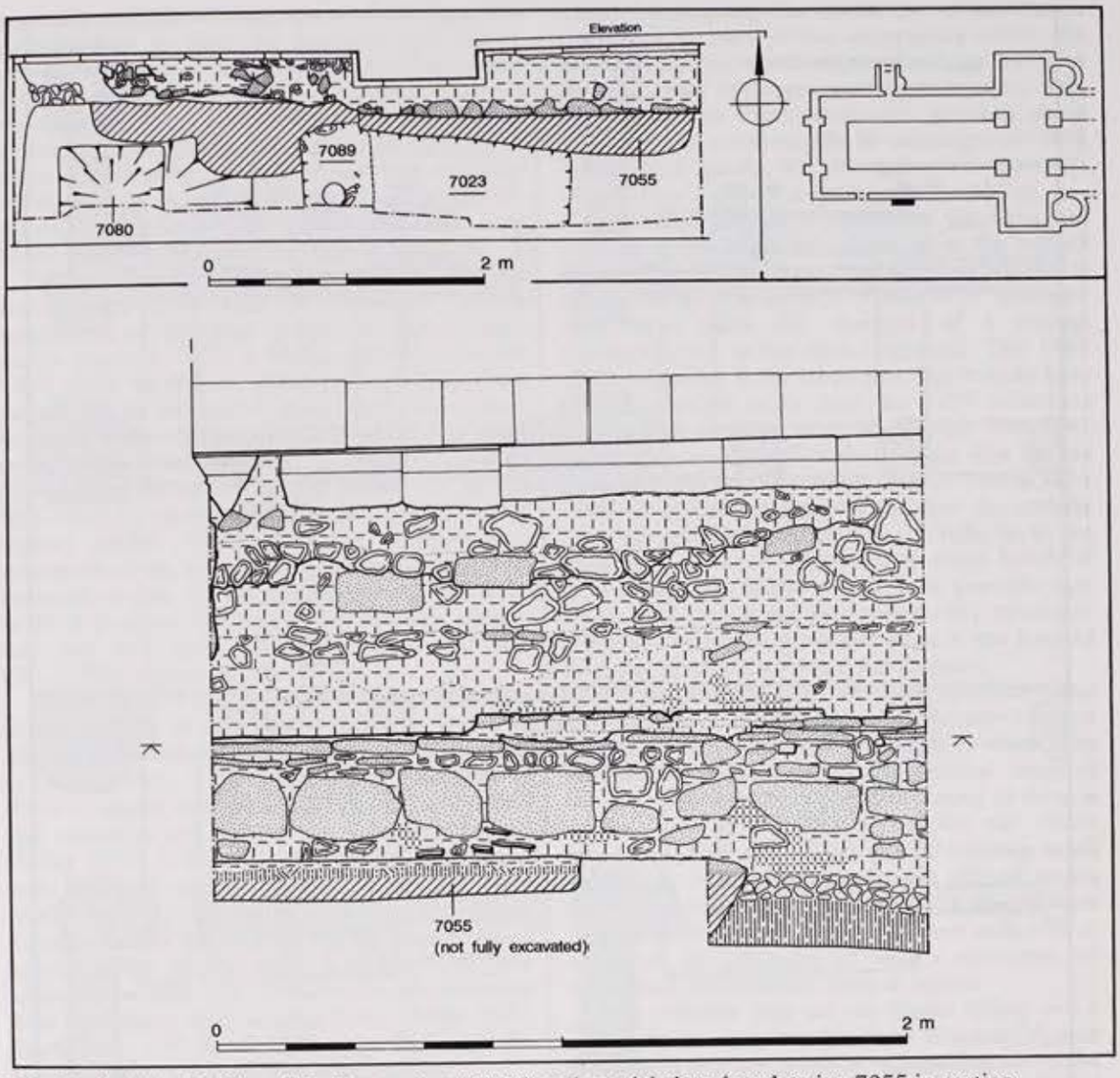

Fig 20 A 1991.18: Plan of chalk structure (7055) and partial elevation showing 7055 in section.

aligned on a strict east–west orientation. Nonetheless, it is possible that the north-west–south-east aligned graves, assigned here to Phase 6, were earlier in date than the single grave and timber structure of Phase 5. The phasing could be reversed, and the latter could be assigned to Phase 6, and the northwest–southeast graves to Phase 5. The stratigraphic evidence such as it is would bear either interpretation. The phasing of the east-west graves of Phase 7 is not affected, whichever interpretation is preferred.

The dating of Phases 6 and 7 is more problematic. The only direct dating evidence is a radiocarbon date for grave 5119 which may belong to Phase 7. The sample of charcoal from this grave gave a date range of Cal AD 775–960 (1 sigma) or Cal AD 680–1010 (2 sigma) (HAR – 3765).

The radiocarbon assay on animal bone from the Phase 4 soil horizon (context 6030) in the 1988 soakaway trench has given calibrated date ranges of Cal AD 810–990 (one sigma), or Cal AD 690–1030 (two sigma) (OxA 2319) (see above p 9 for full citation). Although the date is for the animal bone rather than the soil horizon, the quantity and preservation of animal bone does suggest that the bone was not residual. The similarity in the ranges of dates from the radiocarbon samples from the charcoal burial of Phase 7 and the earlier soil horizon is a problem.

It is possible, but unlikely, that the soil horizon and grave were contemporary. Given the fact that the contexts are on opposite sides of the present abbey, and the difficulties of interpreting the stratigraphy of small trenches, as well as the

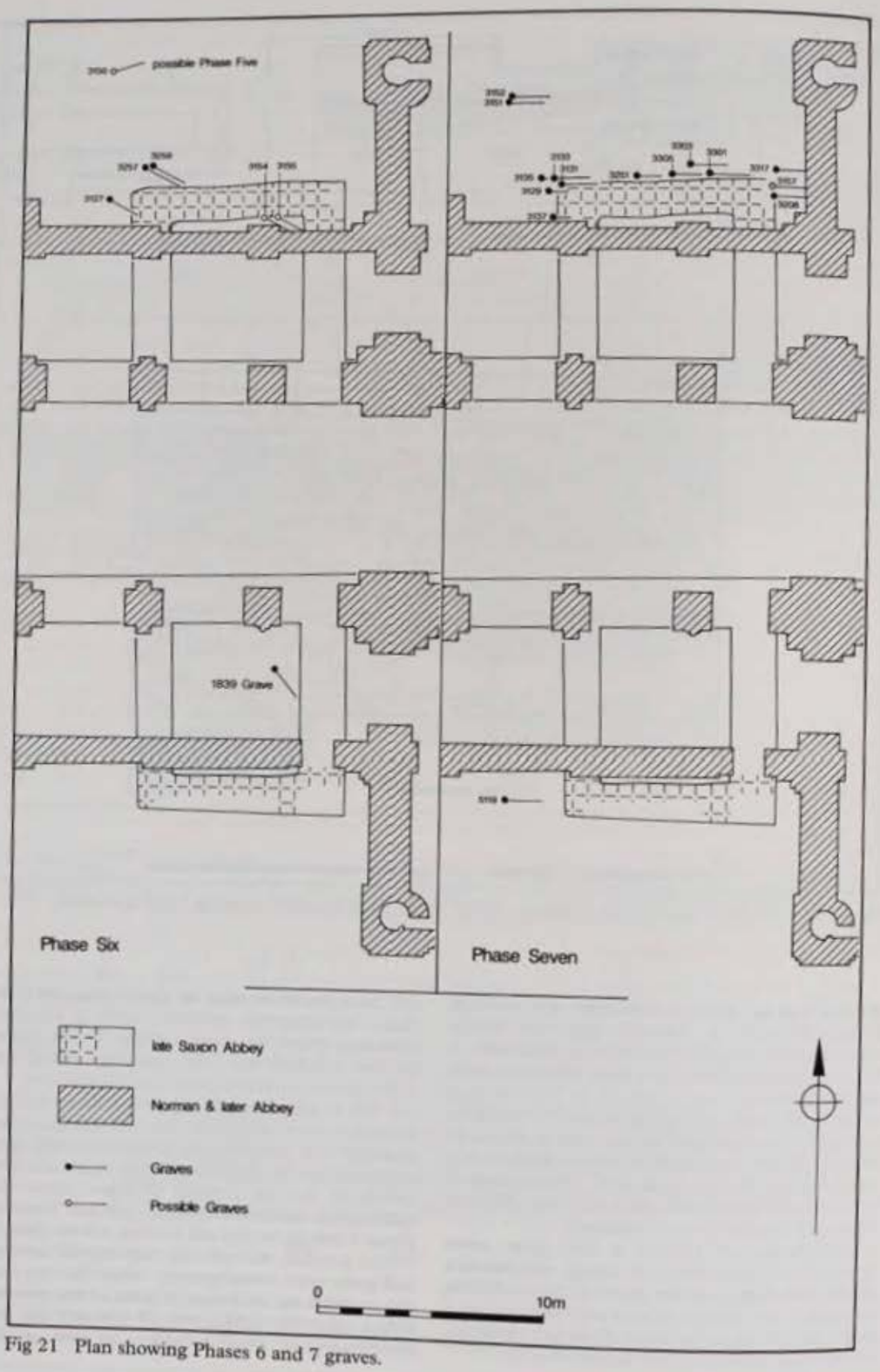

Fig 21 Plan showing Phases 6 and 7 graves.

statistical problems of single radiocarbon dates, it is perhaps best to note the problem and not to attempt to explain it. It should be noted that animal bone as a group from 6030 bears a strong resemblance to animal bone from Middle Saxon Hamwic (J Bourdillon pers comm; Bourdillon, in Scott forthcoming; see also Bourdillon and Coy 1979) and this would suggest that the true date for the soil horizon (6030) lies earlier rather than later in the possible range given by radiocarbon assay.

An end date for Phase 7 is provided by the radiocarbon date for the charcoal burials interpreted as belonging to Phase 8. One of these graves (context 5127 = 5124) actually cuts the 1979 chalk structure. Although a radiocarbon sample can be assigned to grave 5127, this cannot be done with complete confidence as has been noted above. The radiocarbon date assigned to this burial gives calibrated date ranges of Cal AD 885–1010 (1 sigma) and Cal AD 780–1030 (2 sigma) (HAR 3760) (for full citation and discussion of the evidence see p 9 and p 41). The radiocarbon date for the charcoal burial excavated in 1975 (context 3120) gives similar date ranges: Cal AD 895–1025 (1 sigma) and Cal AD 830–1155(2 sigma) (HAR – 2527).

Phases 6 and 7 can be securely dated, therefore, in the middle to late Saxon periods, but it is difficult to be more precise. The lead coffin found in 1839, which, it has been argued, belongs to Phase 6, cannot itself be closely dated. Lead coffins and ossuaries are known from Roman Britain (Toller 1977, 1–11), but they are also recorded from medieval contexts, as with an example from Chelmsford (VCH Essex, Vol 3, 66). Where Romano-British lead coffins are associated with a wooden coffin, the lead coffin is in almost all cases inside the wooden one. Toller notes two examples from Poundbury with wooden liners (Toller 1977, Appendix 1: 1:37 & 38). It is more likely that the Romsey coffin is of later, that is Saxon date.

Phase 7 Chalk Structures

It is not possible to be absolutely certain that the two chalk structures are contemporary, but it is suggested by the fact that they are so similar in size and make up, and on the same alignment. It has been assumed in this report that they were contemporary.

There is no direct stratigraphic link between the 1979 and 1991 chalk structures on the one hand and the graves excavated in 1975 on the other. However, the 1979 chalk feature (context 5062 = 5058) was cut by the footings (context 5061 = 5054) of the late Saxon Abbey, and clearly predated it, as do the Phase 6 and 7 graves. But the 1979 chalk structure also cut a soil horizon (5055) which may be the same horizon (context 5107) as that which sealed a probable Phase 7 grave (5119). If this were the case, and the evidence is far from clear, it would raise questions about the phasing that could not at present be answered. In view of the uncertainty about the evidence for this relationship, it has been assumed that the chalk structures were contemporary with Phase 7 graves. On stratigraphic grounds alone the structures could equally be contemporary with the Phase 6 graves, but the distinctive alignment of the Phase 6 graves is against this possibility.

It is more difficult to determine the form and purpose of the chalk structures, given the limited information that we have. The series of hollows or scoops in the top surface of the 1979 structure may have been the vestiges of a timber superstructure, as has been suggested. The 1991 chalk structure lacks these pits, but it may have been cut down more than the 1979 structure during later building work on the site. The 1991 structure was lowered both to make way for the cloister floor and the stone cloister bench. The 1979 structure was lowered to allow the cloister floor to be laid, but it was not cut right up to the nave wall, because there was no stone bench at that point (see below p 63). It is possible that there were pits in the top of the 1991 structure, but that these were destroyed when it was levelled to make way for the Abbey and cloisters.

If it is accepted that the chalk structures and Phase 7 graves were indeed contemporary, it would be a reasonable assumption that they represented some form of ecclesiastical usage of the site. Evidence for the precise layout or form is inadequate. It is possible that the two chalk structures were either parts of two separate small single cell chapels in an east–west aligned series, or were parts of a single church or chapel with portici and transepts. The evidence is sufficient to establish the presence of such a structure, or structures, but not their form or layout.

It is probable that the late Saxon Abbey was a direct replacement for the chalk structure(s), and that there was no break in occupation or burial practice. The only change between Phase 7 and Phase 8 graves is, possibly, the introduction of charcoal burials. This introduction, however, may be only an aspect of the dating and phasing of the site, and therefore may be more apparent than real. The evidence of the United Reformed Church excavation suggested the possibility of continuity from Phase 7 through Phase 8 and later in the use of the cemetery located on that site.

The obvious comparanda for the chalk structure(s) are the chalk foundations found in excavations at Winchester. One of these, originally dated to the late tenth century, was a chalk structure with side apses linking two earlier buildings and forming part of the Old Minster (Biddle 1969, 316–7 & pls LXIIIb–LXVIb; Biddle 1970, 317–21, at 318). Two oval structures in chalk were also found at other sites. One of these was on the Cathedral Car Park site and was dated to the late tenth or early eleventh century (Biddle and Quirk 1964, 161, fig 3 & pl VIIIb). An almost

identical building found under Wolvesey Palace was given a similar date (Biddle 1965, 258 & fig 6). At Romsey, in view of the relationship of the chalk structures with the later Saxon Abbey, and the radiocarbon dates from the charcoal burials, it is likely that they were earlier than the comparable features at Winchester.

Table 3: Graves pre-dating or contemporary with the late Saxon Abbey and excavated in 1975 on the north side of Romsey Abbey.

Context (cut only)	Alignment	Evidence from drawn archive (and comments)
1 Burials pre-dating the Late Saxon Abbey, Phase 6		
3127	NW–SE	plan
3154*	NW–SE	phase plan only
3155*		phase plan only
3257 = 3116	NW–SE	plan & section
3259 = 3115	NW–SE	plan & section
possibly Phase 6		
3150	WSW–ENE	plan (possibly Phase 5)
2 Burials pre-dating the Late Saxon Abbey, Phase 7		
3129	E–W	plan
3131	E–W	plan
3133	E–W	plan
3135	E–W	plan
3137	E–W	plan & section
3157*	E–W	phase plan only
3208 =?3156*	E–W	section [(3156) appears on phase plan, and is probably to be identified with (3208)]
3251 = 3114	E–W	plan & section
3301 = 3117	E–W	plan
3303 = 3118	E–W	plan
3305 = 3119	E–W	plan
3317 =?3158*	E–W	plan [(3158) appears on phase plan and is probably to be identified with (3317), or possibly (3274)]
possibly Phase 7		
3151	E–W	plan & section (possibly Phase 8)
3152	E–W	plan & section (possibly Phase 8)
3 Burials contemporary with the Late Saxon Abbey, Phase 8		
3120	E–W	plan & section (charcoal burial)
3124	E–W	plan & section (stone cist)
3159*	E–W	phase plan only (charcoal burial)

Note: *Appears on a phase plan prepared for publication under the supervision of KS but not in site archive.

Notes

1 For full citation see p 9 above. The animal bone from 6030 is discussed in Scott et al., forthcoming. A full report on the Abbey animal bone will be found in the site archive: J.Bourdillon, 'Animal Bones from three sites at Romsey Abbey' (Ancient Monuments Laboratory, draft report).

2 The letter codes used here for the 1974 trenches are those used in the site records and given on site.

3 Some idea of the problems of this excavation may be perceived when it is realised that the portion of the trench in question was no more than 0.4m X 0.7m in extent. The drawing in Fig. 6, was prepared from the site drawing and sketch in the site notebook. The fill (Context 2059) of ditch 2060 apparently contained two sherds of Laverstock. However these sherds joined sherds from a post-Dissolution context (Context 2138) outside the south-west doorway. There is no sign of disturbance in context 2059, so the conclusion must be that the pottery has been mixed in post-excavation processing.

4 The evidence for the Middle to Late Saxon ironsmelting activity is to be published in a separate article (Scott et al forthcoming). The evidence for the date and nature of the occupation, including discussion of the animal bone recovered from Romsey sites, and more information about the iron smelting technology will be published in the article. Further details of the ironsmelting can be found in J G McDonnell, 1988.

5 For full citation see Introduction p 9.

6 There may be a few as fourteen burials. Details of the graves are given in Table 3 below.

7 The two possible graves (Contexts 3154 & 3155) of this group are marked on a phase plan prepared for KS, and now in the research archive (Archive Sheet 16), but there is reference to neither burial in the extant site archive, and therefore we must remain sceptical about their existence. They were identified as lying within the Saxon north transept, and have been included on the grave phase plan (Fig 21) for the sake of completeness.

8 It is clear from site plans and photographs that the number of bones preserved in graves 3257 and 3259 was greater than is apparent from the bone report. It is probable that there were more bones recovered from both graves, and that either they have been lost, or else recorded by a different system, and now unidentifiable. There are a number of groups of bones that cannot be identified with excavated graves or contexts (Osborne, 1988). The human bone from identified graves and other selected contexts is published in this monograph (pp 145–156).

9 Osborne, 1988, p 15: RA75 (f), (h) & (j) = 3127

10 The description is given in a letter by J.G.N[ichols?] published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* Vol XIV, Part 2, August 1840, pp 138–41. There is a plan showing the location of the burial and an engraving of the lead coffin and head of hair. The oak lining did not survive because it was cut up and made into souvenir crosses and sold off to visitors. The lead coffin was originally preserved in the Abbey 'within an inclosure formed by iron railing in the apsis (sic) of the south aile (sic) of this very curious Norman church'. N[ichols] goes on to say that 'there I hope it will safely remain'. It has long since been lost, in what circumstances we do not know.

11 Major's description is taken from a notebook held in the Vicarage, Romsey. A transcript of this notebook, and a photocopy of the original notes are held by TVAT. There are photocopies in the Site Archive. The original spelling and punctuation have been retained.

12 The uncertain grave is context 3157, which is marked on a phase plan prepared for KS (Archive Sheet 16) (see Table 3). This grave appears to be otherwise unrecorded in the extant site archive, but has been included on the grave phase plan (Fig 21) for the sake of completeness.

13 The site plan indicates that at least a skull survived in Grave 3137, but no human material can now be identified with this grave.

14 The references to the Human bone report (Osborne, 1988) are as follows:

Grave 3129 – pp.14–5: RA75 (e)
Grave 3131 – p.13: RA75 (a) & (g)
Grave 3133 – p.13: RA75 (b)
Grave 3135 – p.14: RA75 (c)

15 Reference: Osborne 1988, p.9: RA75 (65) = Grave 3251.

16 It is possible that one of the unidentified groups of bone from the excavation (Osborne 1988, p.12: RA75 B1, B2 or B4) may be from grave 3301. The grave appears to have contained the whole of one foot. Group B2 contains predominantly right side bones and a number of foot bones. On this basis this is the group most likely to be identified with grave 3301. Neither of the other groups contains anything resembling a complete foot, although Group RA75 B4 included one foot phalanx. For bones from grave 3305: Osborne 1988, p 9: RA75 (75).

17 Grave 3208 is probably the same as a grave 3156 on Stubb's phase plans (Archive Sheet 16) (see Table 3). Similarly grave 3317 may be the same feature as context 3158 on the same phase plan. The other slight possibility is that 3158 should be equated with context 3275, rather than 3317.

18 Osborne 1988, pp 15–7. The reports on the skeletons from the 1975 soakaway can be found in the bone report (below p 151). There are three groups of bone from the soakaway. The first group is described as from soakaway Pit 1, and is probably to be identified with grave 3150. The other two groups are both from soakaway Pit 2 and are distiguished as Bag 1 and Bag 2. Bag 1 can possibly be identified with grave 3152, and Bag 2 with grave 3151, but there is no proof. Bag 1 represents at least 2 individuals. Neither group provides much information as to the age or sex of the individuals concerned.

19 RA79 E (6) has rib bones and the plan of grave (5119) appears to show ribs. No rib bones are listed for E (5),. Reference: Osborne 1988, pp 17–8: RA79 E5 & RA79 E6; see also pp 152–3 below.

20 See Introduction (pp 9) for full citation.

21 A preliminary scan of the human bone from the site was carried out by Ann Stirland. Based upon her assessment, the better groups and complete skeletons were sent to Christine Osborne for full study. Her archive report (Osborne 1991) can be found in the site archive and forms the basis of the published report (pp 153–156 below). The human skeletal material not selected for full analyis was measured and counted by David Wheatley, and then re-buried. Wheatley's catalogue also forms part of the site archive.

22 The bulk finds record does not record such material from context 7080. Information from the excavator.

23 A selection of samples was taken for radiocarbon assay from the human skeletal material found in the 1975 graves. Unfortunately, since submission the samples have gone astray with the result that no radiocarbon determinations have been established. Restrictions on time and resources have precluded sending more samples for assay.

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Chapter 3

The Late Saxon Abbey and Contemporary Graves (Phase 8)

Historical Evidence

The limited historical sources for Saxon Romsey indicate that the nunnery at Romsey was founded by Edward the Elder (AD 901–924). Florence of Worcester wrote that in 967 'Edgar the Pacific, King of England, placed nuns in the monastery at Romsey founded by his grandfather, Edward the Elder'. Florence was writing in the early twelfth century, but used earlier sources. Traditionally the founding by Edward has been dated to AD 907, and it is likely that the foundation dates to the early part of Edward's reign, to the years of relative peace before 909. In the years following he was occupied with fighting the Danes and enlarging the bounds of Wessex.

The refoundation as a Benedictine house by Edgar is confirmed by a charter of 968 which granted Edington in Wiltshire to the Abbey (Sawyer 1968, No 765). There is a further charter, the authenticity of which is questioned, which confirmed Romsey's privileges. This is dated to 970 or later (Sawyer 1968, No 812). In addition to these charters there is the will of Aelfgifu, which dates sometime between 966 and 975, in which Romsey is bequeathed Whaddon in Buckinghamshire.

There is also a story that the Danes raided Romsey at the end of the tenth century or at the beginning of the eleventh, and that the Abbess Elwina took the Abbey's relics and led the nuns to safety in Winchester. The date of this event, if it did indeed take place, presumably coincides with that of Danish raiding attested by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in the late tenth century and early eleventh century (Liveing 1906, 26–7; Collier 1990, 47–8). It has been suggested that these raids provide the background to a rebuilding of the Abbey (Collier 1990, 51).

The refounding of the nunnery in about 970 did not necessarily involve rebuilding, and rebuilding itself could very well have occurred without any associated charter. However, the additional lands acquired in the latter part of the tenth century, together with the fact that the reign of Edgar saw an extension of and major reforms in the monastic way of life, under the leadership of Dunstan, Ethelwold and Oswald, suggest that it is most likely that the late Saxon Abbey of Phase 8, which is discussed in this part of the report, was built around 970.

The chalk foundations of Phase 6 may be those of the nunnery founded by Edgar's grandfather. This is speculation, and the available evidence will not confirm this attribution. The archaeological evidence, however does provide important information, for it indicates that there was occupation of the site before Edward the Elder founded his nunnery.

There is a growing body of opinion that Romsey was the site of an early minster (Hase 1988, 46). This would provide one explanation for the early occupation and burials (Phases 3, 5 & 6). Hase goes further to suggest that the monastery which Boniface entered to complete his education was at Romsey rather than Nursling. He also suggests that the name Nursling (Nhutscelle) applied to the whole area on the eastern bank of the lower Test. There is no evidence to confirm this view, but there is to date an almost complete lack of evidence for Saxon occupation in the centre of Nursling around the parish church.

The historical sources make clear that close links existed between Romsey and the Royal House of Wessex (VCH Hampshire, Vol 2, 126–27). The nunnery was a royal foundation, royal princesses were educated at Romsey, and some even served as its Abbesses. Aethelflaeda, daughter of Edward the Elder was at Romsey, possibly as Abbess. Her sisters were married to Otto the Great and Charles the Simple, King of the West Franks (Collier 1990, 46–7). The Europe-wide connections of the nunnery, through its royal patrons, should not be overlooked. Later, in the late eleventh century Matilda (Eadgyth) and Mary the daughters of Margaret and Malcolm, King of Scotland were at Romsey to be educated. Margaret's sister Christina was a nun at the Abbey. Margaret and Christina were the daughters of Edmund Ironside, and the sisters of Edward Atheling. Matilda herself was to marry Henry I. Henry granted seven charters to the Abbey. These included granting the privileges of holding fairs and markets (Liveing 1906, 44–5).

Previous Discoveries

Parts of the eastern apse, the north and south transepts and the nave of the late Saxon Abbey were revealed towards the end of 1900 during the re-flooring of the choir and crossing of the present Abbey (Cooke Yarborough 1905; Peers 1901).[1] A plan of the structural elements discovered and a section of the wall of the surviving apse were published by Cooke Yarborough (1905, Plan facing 227). The cross-section showed that the apse wall was about 1.46m (4ft 9in) wide. The extant remains were 1.34m high. Cooke Yarborough made an attempt to reconstruct the layout of the Saxon Abbey. His drawing differs in important details from the plan published by Peers (1901, Pl XLI) and based on the same findings. Peers subsequently published a full description of the Abbey structure in an article in the Victoria County History (VCH Hampshire, Vol 4, 460–67). In this article he discusses and dates the apse found under the Norman crossing to the late eleventh century. Cooke Yarborough's plan suggested that in addition to the choir apse, the church had small transepts to the north and the south, and a nave with north and south aisles. The north and south transepts were small, extending only as far as the north and south walls of the Norman Abbey, and being no wider than a single bay of the later nave walls. Peers' plan reconstructed Saxon transepts that were the width of the first two bays of the Norman nave, but again they extended no further than the Norman nave walls. Both of these reconstructions were based on an erroneous, although understandable, interpretation of the structural history of the Norman Abbey. The lower parts of the first, and second, bay of the south nave wall were thought to be surviving Saxon masonry, rather than Norman, as they are now known to be. Discoveries in 1975, 1977 and 1979 have revealed a more accurate, although still incomplete, plan of the late Saxon Abbey. This confirms that the plan published by Peers was more accurate than Cooke Yarborough's.

The Structural Evidence from the Modern Excavations

The Structural Evidence for the Transepts

The basic structure of the walls of the transepts of the late Saxon Abbey, as revealed in the 1975 and 1977 excavations, is straightforward. The two Saxon transepts differ very little in their positions in relation to the Norman Abbey. The north transept extends between 2m and 2.5m out from the north wall, and the south transept extends between 2m and 2.3m out from the south wall. Although apparently built directly over the Saxon Abbey, the Norman Abbey is not quite symmetrically positioned in relation to its predecessor.

The Saxon North Transept: The 1975 Excavations (Figs 14 & 22). The footings (contexts 3205, 3203 & 3202, 3247, 3250 & 3253) of the north transept were about 0.8m deep. This is the depth recorded from the bottom of the lowest ashlar course (context 3199) to the bottom of the foundation trench. At the bottom of the foundation trench (context 3104 = 3204) was a thin layer of loose yellow mortar (contexts 3247 = 3205). Along the north face of the transept, there were large stone blocks (context 3203) placed on this mortar (see below pp 104–6, and Fig 43). These were packed around with loose mortar and flint nodules (contexts 3253 = 3202). No large blocks appear to have been used on the west side, and there were probably none on the east side. Where no large stones had been used the trench was packed with flints and mortar. It would seem that this flint and mortar base filled most of the foundation trench. It is clear that the large blocks had been re-used because they were worked and shaped. One was a large mortar for mixing plaster and mortar. The probability is that they were taken from a large Roman stone structure and came from outside Romsey, along with other building materials. This is discussed below (pp 41–2, 104–6).

The walls of the Saxon Abbey above ground level consisted of a mortared flint core with an ashlar facing, probably both inside and out. Very little of the ashlar facing survives, but it seems that the stone used is fine Quarr limestone. The mortar in the wall core (contexts 3200 = 3249) was very hard and grey with some pink mixed in. The few in situ ashlar blocks (context 3199) at the east side of the north-east corner of the transept, where they butted the later Norman footings, appear to have been secured with a pink mortar (context 3210) (Fig 22b). It seems that the pink colour was given to the mortar by mixing in crushed Roman brick and tile.

The width of the walls was not readily determined. The records of the 1975 excavation of the interior of the Saxon transept have not survived in full, and there is some ambiguity in those that do survive. From the surviving information it is clear that the walls were at least 1.5m thick. This fits with the evidence from the 1900 discoveries.

There is some evidence that the floor inside the transept consisted of a mortar layer 0.15m thick, and some slightly ambiguous evidence that underlying the mortar there was a substantial mortar and flint raft (contexts 3240–3242 = 3268) (Figs 22 and 27a). The latter, which is perhaps 0.3m deep, may be continuous with the lower part of the wall footing, although not reaching to the same depth.[2] However, the evidence is slight.

The overall thickness of the floor and apparent raft seems to have been about 0.45m. The mortar of the floor is described in one instance as yellow 'with some pink mortar included, [plus] flint and chalk chips'. In another drawing the raft is described as 'interlocking flints, with pink mortar, etc', beneath a floor of 'pink mortar and plaster debris'. It is most probable that the mortar used in finishing the structure of the Saxon Abbey, that is for laying the ashlar blocks and the floor, was predominantly pink.[3] The internal floor level seems to have been about 3ins (7.5cm) above the level of the base of the first ashlar course, although the lack of precise levels and survey information generally means that the figure is not necessarily accurate.

The Saxon South Transept: The 1977 Excavations (Figs 16, 23, 31a and 36). The southeast corner of the transept had been destroyed by the digging of a vault foundation (4053), but this had revealed sections through both the late Saxon (contexts 4093, 4096 = 4102 & 4108) and Norman south

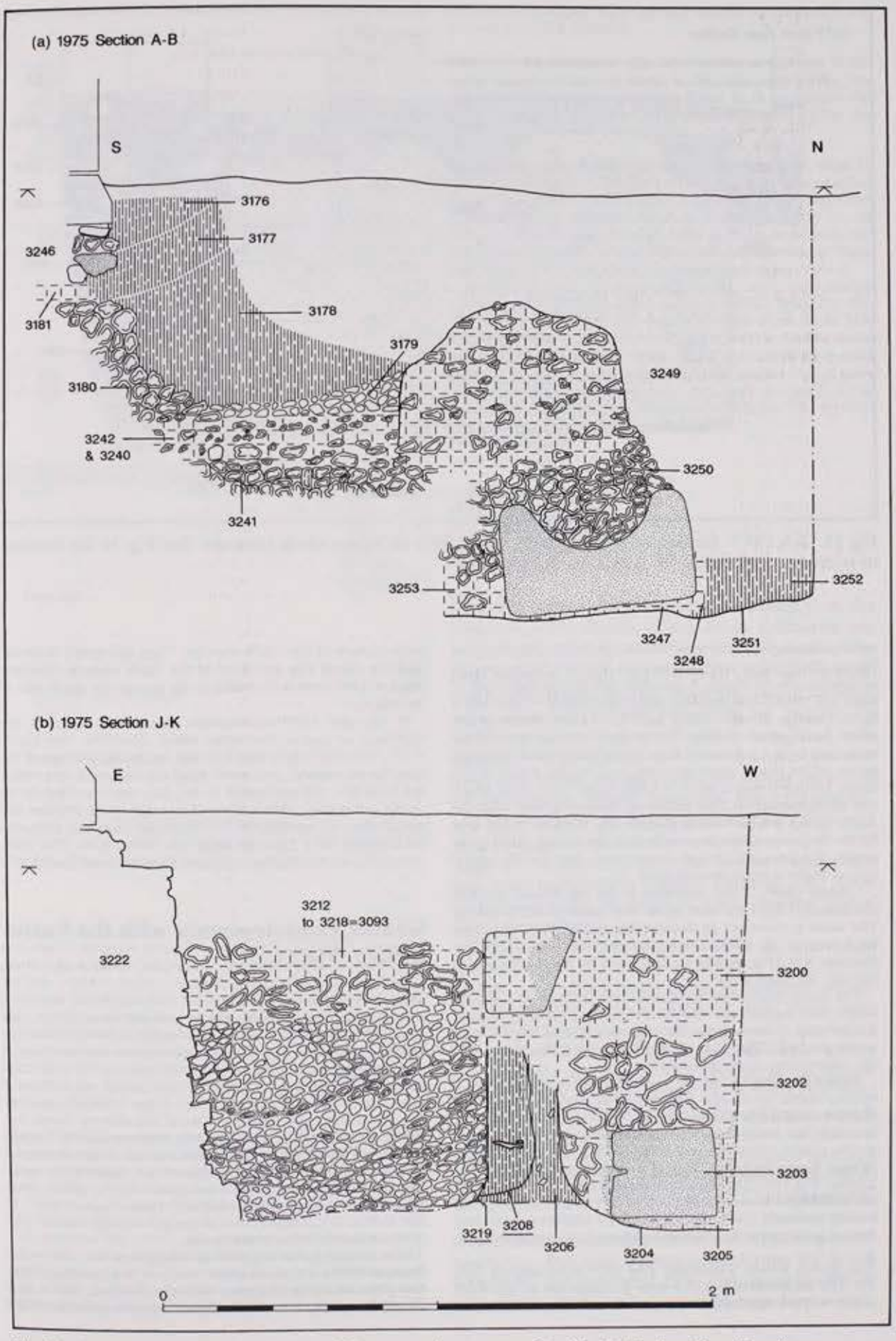


Fig 22 RA 1975: Sections of footing of Saxon north transept. See Fig 14 for location of sections.

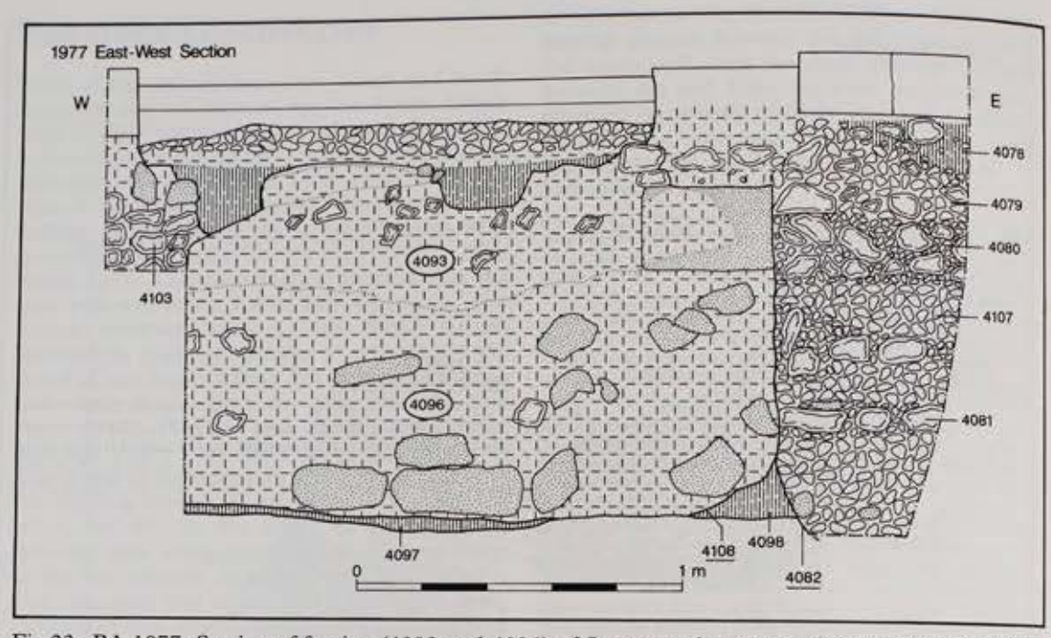


Fig 23 RA 1977: Section of footing (4093 and 4096) of Saxon south transept. See Fig 36 for location of sections.

transept footings (contexts 4078–4082 & 4107) (Fig 23). The Saxon foundation trench was cut down almost to the underlying natural gravel. A very thin and intermittent layer of black soil (4097) was recorded under the footing. There was a further wedge of same black dark soil (4098) between the Saxon and Norman footings. The original depth of the soil can be judged by the position of a surviving ashlar block from the facing of the Saxon south transept, and by the depth of the Saxon footing (context 4096 = 4102) itself. The ashlar block was approximately 0.75m above the natural gravel, and the depth of the Saxon footing proper was between 0.7m and 0.75m. It is reasonable to assume that the footing (4096) was largely, if not entirely, below ground level, and that the ashlar facings began at about ground level.

Context (4096) is not described in the site record, but it is distinguished from the core of the wall (context 4093) above. The latter is described as 'broken flint incorporated into very hard mortar'. It would seem that the construction of the footings was very similar to that used in the north Saxon transept described above.

The Saxon foundation appears to have survived to a greater height just outside the Abbess's doorway, because it later formed part of the base for the steps down from the doorway to the cloisters. Elsewhere the footings were reduced to allow the construction of the cloister walk.

Apparently built against the south face of the transept was a footing made up of pale yellow mortar binding large flint fragments and containing crushed brick (context 4133) (Fig 16). It is clear that this section of footing, which was cut at its south end by a vault trench (context 4138 = 4073), was added to the existing Saxon transept. There is a straight joint between the footings (Fig 31a). The footing presumably supported a wall. It is not possible to know the purpose of this additional length of footing and wall, but it can be surmised that they must have formed some part of the claustral buildings of the Saxon abbey.

The Saxon South Transept: The 1979 Excavations (Fig 16) The excavations in 1979 were an extension of the work begun in 1977 and added very little to the information about the structure of the south transept. They did reveal, however, that the overall size and form of the south transept (contexts 5054 = 5061) was very similar to the one on the north side of the Abbey.

It was the 1979 excavations which first revealed the existence of one of the earlier chalk structures (see above p 27). The 1979 chalk structure was cut by the footings of the later Saxon transept, and partly filled the excavated area within the transept. The remainder of the area was occupied by an earlier soil horizon. The excavated area within the transept was admittedly very narrow, but it is reasonably clear that there was no evidence for a flint raft under the Saxon floor. This must cast doubt on the apparent evidence from the north transept.

Graves Contemporary with the Saxon Abbey (Fig 24)

The 1975 Excavations: (Figs 13 and 14) From the 1975 excavations, there are only two, or possibly three, graves that may have been contemporary with the Saxon Abbey.[4] The two certain graves were both in the angle between the west face of the Saxon north transept and the Norman north wall. The earlier one was a charcoal burial (3120), which cut a Phase 7 grave (3137) and was cut by the later grave, a burial in a stone cist (3124). Only the eastern 0.55m of the charcoal burial was within the excavation trench, and the grave survived to a depth of no more than 0.25m. The limited amount of human skeletal material was all from adults.[5] There is a radiocarbon assay (HAR-2517) for charcoal from grave 3120, which gives calibrated date ranges of Cal AD 895–1025 (1 sigma) and Cal AD 830–1155 (2 sigma) (see above p 9 for full citation and pp 42–3 for discussion of this grave).

The second grave assigned to Phase 8 is the cist burial (context 3124) which cut grave 3120. It is a possibility that this grave was contemporary with the Norman Abbey and should be assigned to a later Phase. Again only 0.6m of the

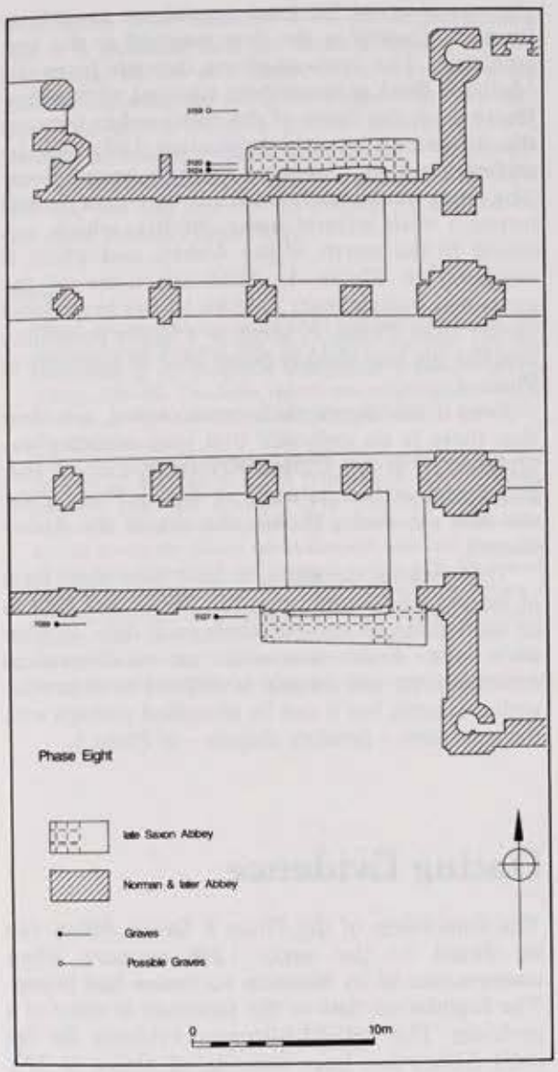


Fig 24 Plan showing Phase 8 graves.

east end of the grave lay in the excavated area. Parts of four of the stones forming the sides of the grave seem to have been located, together with a single stone forming the east end of the grave. The stones were set on their edges, and enclosed an extended inhumation. The stones in the section were at least 0.3m high, but it appears from the site record that the grave may not have been fully excavated. It was cut down to a level below the bottom of the charcoal burial. Only the lower leg bones and the foot bones were found.[6] Apparently no bones were kept from this grave.

The 1979 Excavations: (Fig 16) One charcoal burial (context 5127 = 5124 = 5109) was excavated to the west of the south transept, in the angle with the Norman nave. The grave appears to have cut the rammed chalk structure dated to Phase 7, and was itself cut by the Norman nave footings (5120), and brick vault foundation trench (5113). There was a skeleton in the grave, and charcoal from the grave was taken for radiocarbon assay. The human remains which possibly came from this grave were those of an adult ?female (see above p 24 for discussion). The radiocarbon assay (HAR-3760) gives calibrated date ranges of Cal AD 885–1010 (1 sigma) and Cal AD 780–1030 (2 sigma) (see above p 9 for full citation).

The 1991 Excavations: (Fig 20) One burial (context 7089) orientated east–west was found in the 1991 excavations, but not excavated. It may belong to Phase 8. It post-dated the chalk structure (context 7055) and was sealed below the cloister floor (context 7060 = 7074).

The 1989 United Reformed Church Excavations: (Figs 17 and 18) The Phase 7 graves from the site have been detailed above, and the cemetery briefly described. There were three graves that were definitely dated to Phase 8 (contexts 42, 46 and 56), another (24) probably dated to Phase 8, or later, and two burials (contexts 43 and 62) which perhaps date to Phase 7 or Phase 8. The latter have been described under Phase 7.

Grave 42 was a charcoal burial, and presumably contemporary with the other charcoal burials from the site. The skeleton (context 40) was that of an adult male. It is unusual to find a charcoal burial so far from a church. Grave 46 contained the skeleton (context 28) of a middle aged male, and the bones of at least three other individuals. Little of grave 56 was preserved and there were apparently no bones in the grave. Grave 24 apparently contained a skeleton, but no trace of it can be found in the material archive.[7]

Discussion

Re-used Building Materials

There is some circumstantial evidence that the builders of the Saxon Abbey made deliberate use of Roman building materials in their work. The large stones found in the north transept footings have been noted, as has been the use of crushed brick to produce pink colouring for mortar. In 1988 a cut (context 6083) which was filled with Roman brick and tile, was found at the extreme west end of the trench under the north nave wall of the present Abbey. Although the stratigraphic relationships can be interpreted in more than one way, it is possible that this material was left over from the construction of the Saxon Abbey, and had been deliberately buried. There is little or no evidence for the Norman builders making use of Roman materials.

There is also no evidence to date for substantial Roman stone or brick structures in Romsey. Excavations which have been undertaken widely in the centre of Romsey since the early 1970s have produced for the most part only small quantities of residual Romano-British pottery. Only in the area to the south of the medieval monastic precinct has any evidence for occupation and structures been found. The main evidence comes from the excavations and observations in Narrow Lane in 1979 and 1981. The individual trenches were limited in their extent, but were distributed over a quite extensive area. The structural evidence was unequivocal. It consisted of postholes, ditches and small pits. There was no evidence for any substantial stone or brick structure, nor evidence that such a structure, or structures, had been demolished and removed.

The site had been occupied by a small rural settlement. The evidence of the animal bone would support this view.[8]

The likelihood is that the stone, brick and tile was brought in from outside Romsey. Some of the more monumental stone may have been derived from a Roman stone bridge. The most likely sources are the crossing points at Horsebridge, 6 miles north of Romsey, or Nursling to the south. Stone of good quality derived from a standing structure could have been transported from outside the town, in much the same way as stone derived from quarrying. There is no suitable local quarry for high quality building stone. There were three kinds of stone amongst the large re-used blocks: fine grained oolitic limestone, greensand, and limestone. The oolitic limestone possibly originated in north Wiltshire, the Greensand on the Hampshire/Sussex border, and the limestone in the Isle of Wight, possibly from Bembridge. The conclusion must be that there was considerable re-use of Roman materials in the late Saxon Abbey, and that it is likely that this reflects a policy of deliberately exploiting and salvaging Romano-British building materials.

The Saxon Precinct

The 1989 excavations on the United Reformed Church site produced evidence for the original north edge of the leat serving the Abbey Mill, a stream today known as Abbey Water. Its relationship to the Saxon burials of Phases 7 and 8 was not established, but the leat's position in relation to the cemetery as a whole suggests that it may have been created during the late Saxon period, and that it may have been contemporary with the late Saxon Abbey. Whether or not this was the case there is evidence, albeit slight, that the area of the later medieval monastic precinct was beginning to assume its later form before the building of the late Saxon Abbey.

The United Reformed Church site produced no trace of the iron smelting debris so common on sites to the south of the Abbey. The excavations in Narrow Lane, and behind No 4, Market Place ('Creatures' Pet shop), and observations in the Town Hall carpark produced evidence for iron smelting, in the form of a thick layer of charcoal, burnt clay and iron slag (Scott et al forthcoming). A similar deposit was found in the Midland Bank excavation. That such slag and other debris was absent from the United Reformed Church site implies that this site was reserved for some other use, at a date before the late Saxon Abbey was built, and probably before the construction of the possible chapels with chalk footings identified in Phase 7.

It is possible that the United Reformed Church site was reserved for some special use as early as Phase 4. Central is the date assigned to the iron smelting. The iron-smelting deposit from the Midland Bank is tentatively equated with Abbey Phase 4 on the basis of the relationship between the iron-smelting debris (context 122) and the underlying layer (context 128) with animal bone. The latter was possibly earlier in date than the soil horizon with animal bone (6030), which was found to the north of the Abbey, and which is assigned to Phase 4. Although none of the excavated burials from A 1989.14 has been dated earlier than Phase 7, there is a slight possibility that the site was already being used as cemetery in Phase 4.

Even if this argument is not accepted, it is clear that there is no evidence that iron smelting was undertaken at the United Reformed Church site, and therefore that as early as Abbey Phase 7 the site was set aside, as was the site of the Abbey church.

There seems, therefore, to have been some form of landholding based upon the Abbey and land to its south from an comparatively early date. At what date the first monastic or ecclesiastical establishment was created is difficult to determine with certainty, but it can be identified perhaps with the structures – possibly chapels – of Phase 6.

Dating Evidence

The demolition of the Phase 8 Saxon Abbey can be dated to the early 12th century when construction of its Norman successor had begun. The foundation date of the structure is more of a problem. The limited historical evidence for the early Abbey has been considered above (p 37), and it was suggested that a likely context for the rebuilding of the Abbey church was the re-founding in the reign of Edgar.

However, the problems of linking historical events and archaeological features are fraught. The only independent dating for Phase 8 is provided by the radiocarbon samples taken from the charcoal burials which are thought to be contemporary with the Saxon church. The calibrated date ranges for the sample from charcoal grave 3120 excavated in 1975 (HAR 2527) are Cal AD 895–1025 (1 sigma) and Cal AD 830–1155 (2 sigma). As indicated above (pp 24, 41), the sample from the 1979 charcoal burial (context 5127) cannot now be securely identified, but the sample (HAR – 3760) now assigned to the grave gives ranges of Cal AD 885–1010 (1 sigma) and Cal AD 780–1030 (2 sigma). There are two potential problems with these dates: firstly, it is not possible to know at which stage in the life of the Saxon Abbey the burials were interred, and, secondly, the radiocarbon samples

were taken from charcoal from within the graves, and it is possible that the dates provided by the assays may be too old. However, it must be noted that the radiocarbon dates for Phase 8 fit very well with the dates from a grave (context 5119) thought to belong to the earlier Phase 7 (above pp 29–33), and would fit with a foundation date of c 970 AD for the late Saxon Abbey. It cannot be put more strongly than that.

Notes

1 There are also accounts of the 1900 discoveries in the *Archaeological Journal* Vol. 58 (1901), 99–103, and the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London* XVIII (1901), 246–50. The latter report was submitted by W J C Moens, F S A., who visited the Abbey to view the discoveries.

2 There is no unambiguous drawing of a section across the interior of the Saxon north transept in the 1975 site archive. The best drawing (Fig 22a) is based on a composite section drawing which is confusing. It shows a section across the Saxon north transept wall and a section of the foundations of the Norman north wall. Projected onto it is another drawing, which apparently shows a section through the Saxon floor. It is unclear precisely where the two section drawings separate, and the composite drawing may be misleading. A version of this same drawing prepared under the excavator's supervision does not show any Saxon floor or make up layer. Furthermore it should be noted that there is no hint of a floor level on the section across the choir apse published by Cooke-Yarborough (1905, plan facing p 227).

3 The colour slides in the site archive clearly show that the flint raft under the proposed Saxon floor was predominantly pink. It was sealed beneath the later Norman footings, and there is a clear colour difference between the suggested Saxon footings and the Norman mortared flint rubble.

4 A charcoal burial (Context 3159) is shown on a phase plan prepared for KS (Archive Sheet 16) (see Table 3). Apparently it was located in the trench linking the 1975 soakaway with the main 1975 excavation trench and lay about 3.5m to 4m due north of charcoal burial 3120. There is no other record of the burial. It is included on the grave phase plan for the sake of completeness.

5 References: Osborne 1988, p 11: RA 75 (120) = 3120; pp 10 & 11: RA 75 (81) & (88) = ? 3120. See Human bone report p 150 below.

6 There is no original plan of grave 3124 in the site archive, but a plan for publication prepared for the excavator shows the more of the stone edging and the leg bones. KS has confirmed verbally that there was originally a plan of the grave, and therefore it must be assumed that the plan has been lost from the archive. No human bone that can be positively assigned to this grave has survived.

7 See Chapter 2 note 21 above.

8 The evidence for the Romano-British settlement in Romsey is discussed in Scott et al forthcoming. This article will include publication of the excavations in Narrow Lane.

Chapter 4

Construction of the Norman and Later Abbey (Phases 9–14)

Phase 9: Construction of the Norman Choir and Crossing

Historical Evidence

The beginning of work on the Norman Abbey is conventionally dated to c AD 1120. There is no concrete historical evidence for this date as Liveing notes (1906, 49–50). In 1105, and again in 1110 or 1114, Henry I visited Romsey. His queen was Matilda, daughter of St Margaret of Scotland, who had been educated with her sister at Romsey. Matilda died in 1118. It has been argued that Romsey might have been rebuilt in memory of Henry's wife (Luce 1948, 18–19). However, since the King was just starting to build the Cistercian Monastery of Reading in 1120, it might seem unlikely that he embarked on another major building project at this time.

In the Victoria County History (VCH Hampshire, Vol 2, 126) it was suggested that the building work was started a little later in the time of Abbess Mary (c 1160) and that Henry de Blois, Bishop of Winchester (1129–71), was responsible. Mary was the daughter of King Stephen and the neice of Bishop Henry de Blois. Again there is no direct evidence to link Henry de Blois with the building work. The style of architecture found in the choir and crossing certainly would fit an early twelfth-century date, and that is the date accepted here.

The Evidence for the Footings of the Choir and Crossing

1973: The Retro-Choir Footings The structure of the footings at the east end of the choir was partly revealed in excavations in 1973 on the site of the eastern chapels. The footings of the retro-choir wall consisted of gravel and small flints with mortar, interspersed with bands of larger flints (contexts 1028, 1036, 1040 & 1093). The width and depth of the footings were not explored. It is not certain whether the footings were built as one operation or in stages, but the probability is that they were built in a single operation. Two interesting features need to be noted here, although they will be discussed further in Chapter 6 when the first eastern chapels are considered. Firstly, the footings of the east end chapels were built separately from those of the retro-choir. Secondly, the retro-choir footings are continuous across the east end of the abbey, with no apparent breaks for openings giving access between the retro-choir and chapels.

1975: The North Transept Footings (Fig 22b) The footing for the west wall of the north transept consisted of gravel with some soil (contexts 3212–3218) packed into a trench (3219), and capped by mortared flint (3211). The gravel lower footing which filled the foundation trench was up to 0.75m deep. The top of the gravel footing is more or less on a level with the lower edge of the bottom ashlar course of the Saxon Abbey and would seem to give an indication of the level of the original Saxon and Norman ground surface.

The mortar and flint capping to the footings survived to a depth of 0.25m in front of the west wall of the north transept. There is a difference in level of about 0.25m between the extant top of the capping as recorded in the section across the transept footings and the bottom of the original lower ashlar course of the north nave wall.[1] Originally the mortared flint cap must have extended up to the lower ashlar course and measured about 0.5m thick.

The full width of the footing cannot be determined since no excavation took place within the transept. Outside, the footing extends between 1.2m and 1.4m from the face of the north transept wall. This corresponds with the width of the respond or half buttress in the angle between the transept and the nave. It is likely that the first phase of footings did not extend west of this corner.

1977: The South Transept Footings (Fig 23) The footings of the Norman south transept were revealed in section in the face of a foundation trench for a later burial vault (4053). The foundation trench (context 4082) for the transept was filled with layers of yellow, brown and coarse pale brown gravel, alternating with bands of flint nodules (context 4081), and capped by a layer of yellow gravel (context 4107). The exposed footings under the west wall of the transept (contexts 4039 = 4068 & 4040 = 4021) are coursed flint, variously described as bonded with gravel and yellow clay, and gravel or dull brown clay. The upper part of the footing was composed mainly of flint (contexts 4078, 4079 & 4080) and lapped over the surviving Saxon foundations. As on the north side, the Norman footing was hard against the surviving Saxon foundations, and again as on the north side the only extant Saxon ashlar was wedged in by the Norman footings.

Discussion and Date of the West Walls and Footings of the Transepts

The only clue to the relative dating of the south transept footings is provided by their relationship with the Saxon south transept footings and ashlar. Not only the fact that the Norman footings are built right

up against the Saxon footings, but also the fact that a Saxon ashlar survives where the Norman and Saxon work meet, suggests that the Saxon Abbey was still standing when the Norman footings were built. A similar situation is found on the north side. The only surviving ashlar blocks of the Saxon north transept are those against the north transept footing, at the very point where they would be least accessible for demolition once the Norman transept footings were in place. This suggests that the superstructure of the Saxon abbey was intact when the Norman footings were laid down. It is most probable that the late Saxon Abbey was not demolished until the choir and at least part of the crossing of its Norman successor was in a suitable condition to be used for services.

The ashlar of the Norman choir and much of the transepts consists predominantly of Quarr stone from the Isle of Wight, but the ashlar of the west wall of both the north and south transepts contains large amounts of poorer quality Bembridge stone, also from Wight. This change in the source of building stone may not be significant, but it seems likely that it reflects a break in the building programme, and that the west walls of the crossing were built some time after the choir and the rest of the crossing. It is probable that during the break the Saxon Abbey was demolished, and the footings of the nave carried over the demolished Saxon transept. The inclusion in the west wall of the Norman south transept of a large rood cross cut in fine grained oolitic limestone (Fig 47) (pp 106–111 below), and almost certainly derived from the from the Saxon Abbey, supports this contention, since it is most likely to have been salvaged during demolition.

Phases 10–14: The Construction of the Nave

The interpretation of the archaeological deposits excavated within the Nave in 1974 are central to understanding the constructional history of the nave of Romsey Abbey. For this reason the 1974 evidence is fully discussed in the following section, before brief consideration of the evidence from other excavations. The 1974 excavations lay within the final two bays of the Nave, bays which were completed in the thirteenth century.

1974: The Construction of the Footings of the West End of the Norman Abbey Church (Fig 25)

It will be argued that the footings of the west end of the Abbey were constructed in at least two separate operations and that make-up layers were deposited within the church to build up the floor level at various stages, both during the building of the footings, and after the completion of the superstructure of the west end.

Various sections of the footings of the Abbey church were exposed and recorded during the 1974 excavations. In each excavated section the upper footings at least were built of mortared, coursed flints, and there is some, admittedly slight, evidence that the lower portions of the footings were trench-built.[2] The footings of the north wall were recorded in Trench G (Fig 25), and those of the south wall in Trenches D and E (Fig 25). In Trenches FB, FA and A the footings, or piers, supporting the columns of the nave arcades were recorded. Sections of the footings of the west wall of the Abbey church were uncovered in Trenches G, FB, FA and A, but in no case was the profile, or any usable detail, of the footings recorded, and therefore it is not possible to draw conclusions about the structure of the west wall footings.

Evidence for the Footings of the North and South Walls – 1974 Excavations (Table 4)

Initially, at least, it is necessary to compare like with like and to treat the footings of the north and south walls of the Abbey separately from the footings of the piers. In Trench D, a late brick vault both destroyed the layers adjacent to the lower part of the footing and prevented further investigation of the footing itself. In Trenches G and E the full extent of the footings was exposed and recorded. The overall depth and form of the footings in the two trenches were comparable, and the limited

Table 4: Comparison of Depths of Footings recorded in the Trenches excavated in the West end of the Norman Church in 1974.

Trench	Depth of Footings			Location of the Footing within the Abbey Church
	Upper	Lower	Total	
G	0.65m +0.15m	0.52m	= 1.32m	North Wall
E	0.6m	0.4m	= 1.0m	
D	0.5m	[0.3+m]	= [0.8+m]	South Wall
FB	1.6m	0.25m	= 1.85m	South Walls
FA	0.84m	[0.65+m]	= [1.49+m]	south side, North Arcade
A	0.82m	0.4m	= 1.22m	north side, South Arcade
				south side, South Arcade

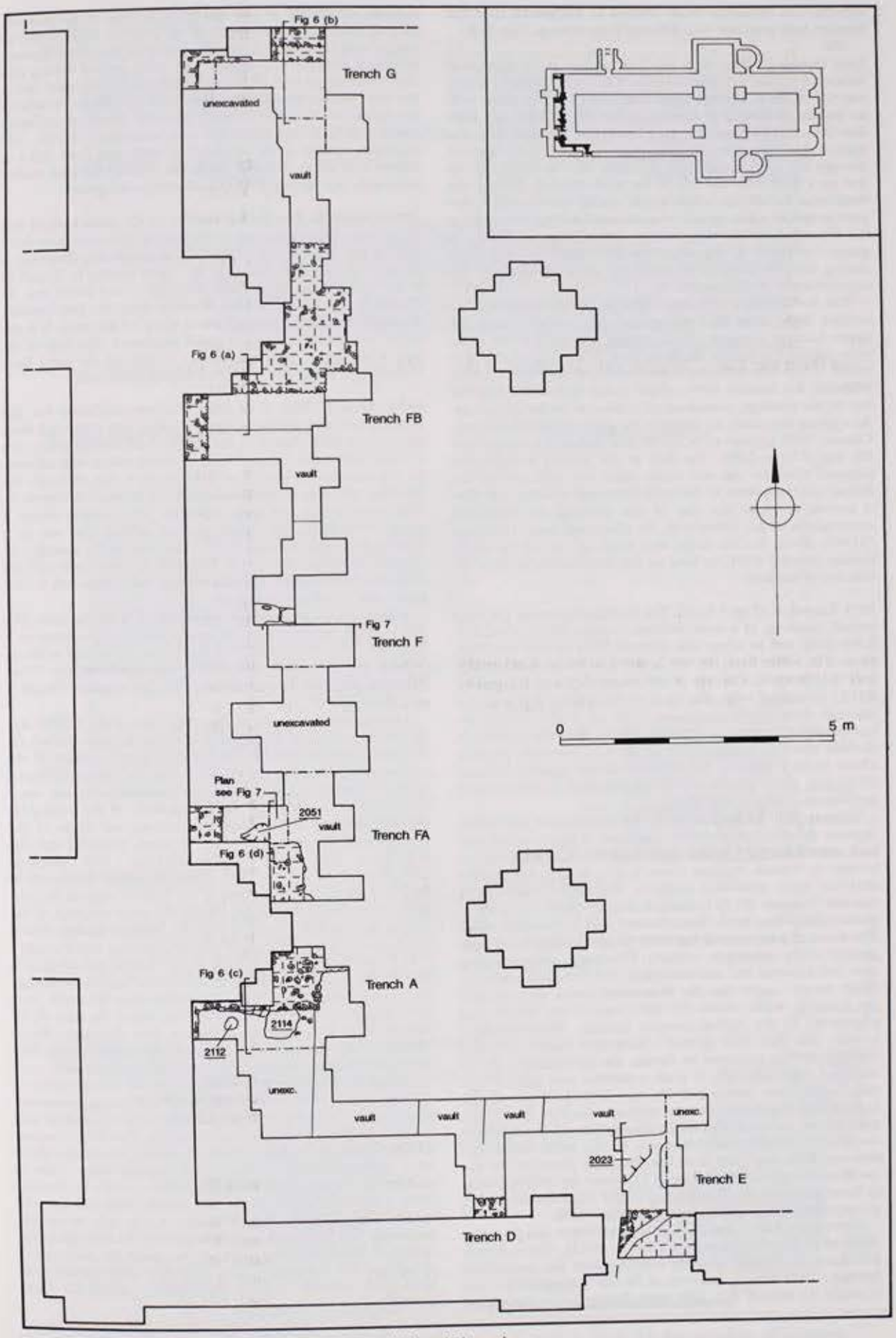


Fig 25 RA 1974: The Norman footings and Trench locations.

information obtained from Trench D suggested that the footings here were not very different from those in Trench E.

1974 Trench G (Figs 6b & 25) The footings of the north wall measured 1.32m in depth overall. The lower footing (2103) was 0.52m deep, and the upper one (2101) 0.65m deep, with an additional section of footing 0.15m deep added at a later date (Fig 6b). The upper footing was set 0.35m back from the edge of the lower one. The foundation trench (2104) was cut through the pre-Norman soil (contexts 2105 & 2106), which was on a level with the top of the lower footing. Sealing the foundation trench was a thin gravel spread (2099), which was itself sealed by a thin spread of mortar and what is described in the site notebook as 'construction debris' (context 2098). It seems reasonable to argue that the latter layer was deposited during the construction of either the upper footings or the superstructure of the church.

The in-fill layers (contexts 2096 & 2097), which sealed context 2098, were piled up against, and probably over, the upper footings (context 2101), making it clear that the latter were completed before the floor level inside the church was raised. These two make-up layers produced no pottery dating evidence, but context 2095, which sealed both 2096, and the top of the footings, contained quantities of medieval pottery. As a group this could be dated to the early thirteenth century. Context 2095 appears to be the fill of a shallow feature cut into the top of layer 2096. The date of the pottery it contained suggests that the cut was made when the west end of the Abbey was completed in the early thirteenth century, and that it served to clear the top of the footings to allow the construction of the Abbey wall. An additional level of footings (2100), about 0.15m deep, was built on top of the main footing (context 2101) to level up the foundations prior to the erection of the wall.

1974 Trench E (Figs 8 & 25) The footings measured 1m deep overall, made up of a lower footing (context 2012) which was 0.4m deep, and an upper one (context 2011) which was 0.6m deep. The offset between the upper and lower footings was only 0.15m wide. The top of the foundation trench (context 2013) coincided with the level of the offset, and was cut through four layers (contexts 2016 to 2019), which are interpreted as demolition deposits derived from the levelling of the site prior to construction of the new Norman church. These layers overlaid a pre-Norman mortar surface (context 2020) (see above pp 14-16). Below this surface was an early pre-Norman soil (context 2021).

Context 2019 at the bottom of the sequence of demolition deposits contained appreciable quantities of chalk, which may have come from the pre-Norman building with chalk footings, located in Trench FA (see above p 14). It also produced a sherd of early medieval cookpot. The uppermost of the deposits (context 2016) contained several sherds of medieval pottery including both 'Scratchware' and Laverstock ware. The sherd of a Laverstock jug dates no earlier than the second quarter of the thirteenth century. This might suggest a very neat link between the archaeological and historical evidence, which would suggest that the foundation trench was cut, and the footings built, when the west end of the Abbey was completed in the mid-thirteenth century. However, it is possible that layer 2016 formed a temporary surface, and that the pottery was trampled in during the construction of the west end superstructure. It gives a *terminus ante quem* rather than a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the foundations. It indicates that the raising of the floor level of the west end on the south side of the church was delayed until the completion of the superstructure in the early thirteenth century. This contrasts with the situation observed on the north side of the Abbey in Trench G, where the infilling seems to have preceded the completion of the superstructure. No pottery was recovered from layers 2017 and 2018.

Above these layers, and sealing the foundation trench, was a series of in-fill levels (contexts 2006 to 2015). These layers, like those in Trench G, were piled against the completed footings. They appear, however, to be less homogeneous, and it might be argued that they were dumped in a piecemeal fashion, rather than as one operation. In view of the presence of a thirteenth-century sherd in layer 2016, and pottery of similar date in context 2008, it is probable that these deposits were laid down in a comparatively short period during and after the construction of the superstructure at the west end in the early thirteenth century. Their lack of uniformity reflects the nature of the material being dumped. Many of the layers contained building materials and associated debris. For example, context 2015 consisted of slate, and layer 2014 of mortar and slates. Context 2009 was a layer of mixed mortar and earth, and layer 2008 a mix of mortar and gravel.

1974 Trench D This trench was cut in the most westerly bay of the nave. The upper part of the footing appears to have been slightly less deep than in Trench E, although the difference is no more than 0.10m. However the upper footing in Trench D is set back almost 0.4m from the edge of the lower one. In Trench E, just 2m to the east, as noted above the step between the upper and lower footings was a mere 0.15m wide. It is the wider, lower footing which is out of alignment. The edge of the upper footing in both trenches is clearly on the same line, immediately below the face of the Abbey south wall.

1974 Area J (Figs 8 & 26b) Further evidence for the construction and dating of these footings was recovered from excavations immediately to the south of the abbey, where two sections across the footings were recorded within and adjacent to the south-west doorway. One section ran through the doorway and was a continuation of the section of Trench E. The footing was not fully exposed. The section shows a stepped footing, the lower part of which was set in a foundation trench (context 2122). The step on the outside is at a higher level than the one in Trench E. On the north side the offset was 0.6m below, but on the south side it was only 0.45m below, the top of the footing

The second section was immediately west of the door (Fig 26b). Here the footing was much wider, and extended a further 0.75m south, with the result that its overall width as recorded in Trench D and Area J was approximately 2.7m. This compares to a measurement of 1.7m between Trench E and Area J.[3]

The excavator suggested that this extra-wide footing was necessary to support the respond or expansion that marked the division between bays. Because of the limited extent of the excavation, it is not possible to say that the footing narrowed again. However, evidence from the excavations on the north side in 1988 suggests that the enlargement of the footing for the responds or expansions was not on the scale of the enlargement uncovered in 1974. It seems probable that the expansion had some other purpose. One possible interpretation is that the wide footing extended for the whole length of the final bay, and that it was built to support the west range of domestic buildings, which was here attached to the Abbey. It is at least arguable that the builders thought that a much more substantial footing was necessary on this account.

It is also interesting that there is no obvious indication of a step in the footings recorded in the second section. Although the footings probably were not exposed to their full depth, they were revealed to a depth of about 1.3m below the level of the Abbey floor. It is unlikely, however, that they were much deeper, or that the section records only the upper footing. The structural evidence suggests that the footings at this point were of one build, but caution is necessary in the interpretation of the site record. Nonetheless, the dating evidence is interesting. The foundation trench cuts through the pre-Norman soil horizon (context 2125), and an overlying clay layer (context 2124). The latter produced medieval pottery, including a sherd of a Laverstock jug of thirteenth-century date. This is comparable to the pottery evidence from Trench E, Context 2016. As already noted above, this pottery need not date the construction of the footings. However, it is at least an outside possibility that the upper and lower parts of the footings in this corner of the Abbey were built as one, when the west end of the Abbey was completed in the early thirteenth century. The west range appears to have been built at about the same period.

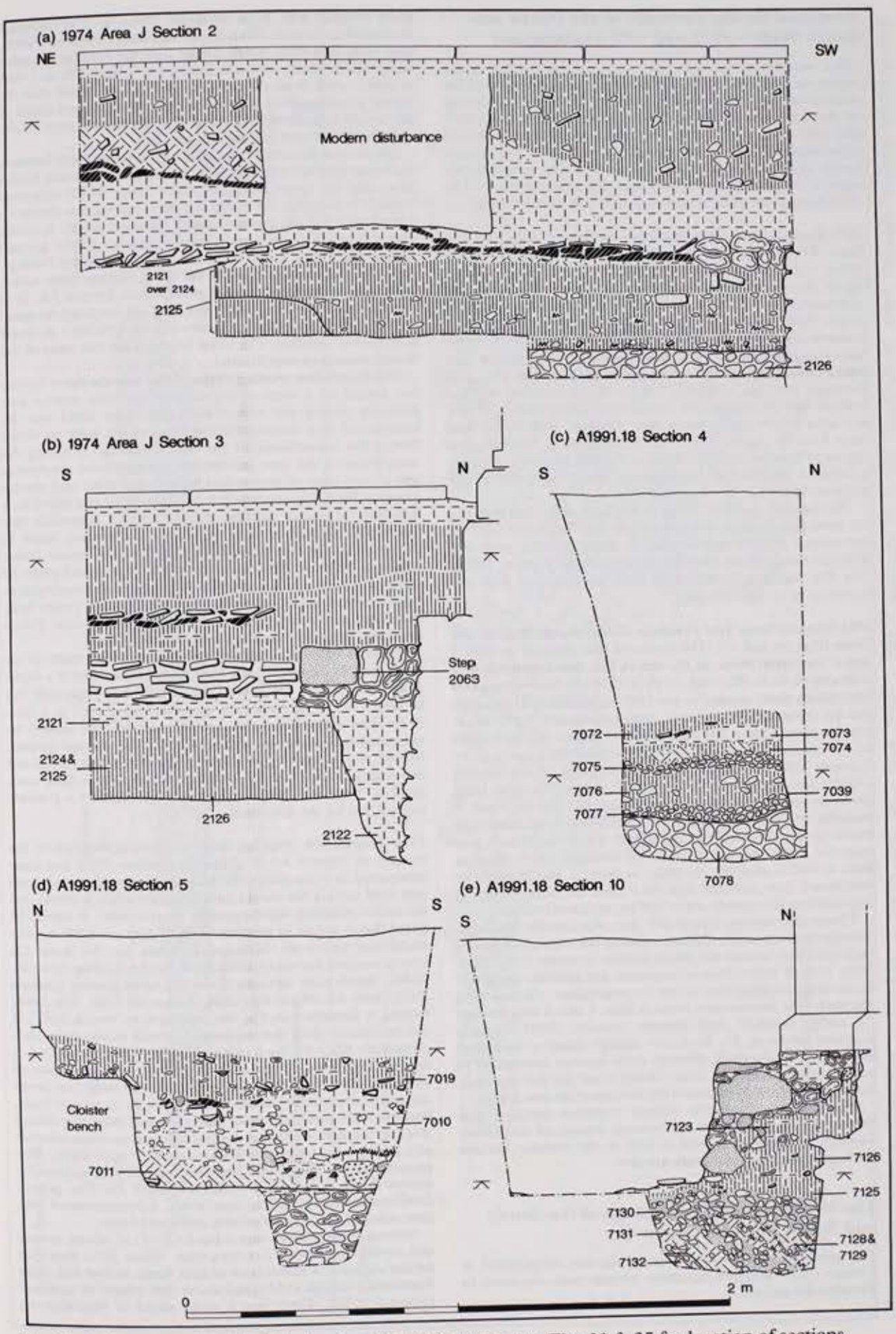


Fig 26 RA 1974 and A 1991.18: Sections in the Cloisters. See Figs 29 & 35 for location of sections.

Evidence for the Footings of the North and South Walls – 1975 and 1991 Excavations

Other excavations on both the north and south sides of the Abbey have revealed some evidence for the development of the structure of the nave. The evidence from the 1975 excavations on the north side is discussed immediately below. The 1977 and 1979 excavations on the south side provided only limited information, in large part because the survival of the cloister bench and the associated mortar and plaster facing of the exposed footings had obscured any potential evidence. The 1991 excavations were more informative and are discussed.

1975 Excavations: The Footings of Bays 1 and 2 of the Nave North wall (Fig 27a) The footings (contexts 3180 = 3188) of the first two bays of the nave north wall were built on top of the demolished remains of the Saxon north transept (contexts 3203 = 3250 & 3200 = 3249). If the interpretation of the floor within the Saxon abbey is correct, then the Norman footings were also built over the Saxon floor levels (contexts 3240–3242). The latter consist of 'pink mortar and plaster debris' with 'interlocking flints, pink mortar, etc'. The Norman footings (context 3180 = 3188) consist of flint nodules laid in courses and bound with yellow mortar. There is a clear distinction between layer 3268 (= 3240–3242) and layer 3180 (= 3188). The Norman footings, as defined here, appear to have been of one build in the first two bays. There is a break in the footings immediately under half buttress 2/3 (context 3267).

The footings (context 3266) to the west of the half buttress 2/3 were later in date. They were not fully explored in 1975, but enough of them was revealed to show that they were of a different construction from the earlier footings (context 3180). The flint was less prominent in their make up and does not appear to be as regularly laid.

1991 Excavations: The Footings of the South Wall of the Nave (Figs 34 and 35) The mortared flint footings in Bays 5 and 6 (contexts 7065, 7125, and 7137), and in Bays 4 & 5 (contexts 7141–7142, 7145, 7166 & 7174) of the Norman and later Abbey were exposed in the 1991 excavations. They could not be investigated in detail, mainly because the cloister benches were built in front of them. At the foot of Bay 5 much of the cloister bench had been destroyed by a later grave (context 7039) and as a result the makeup of the footing (7065) was exposed. Here the profile appears to have been more or less straight with no stepping, but the evidence is probably not reliable, because it is not possible to know how much of the footing was destroyed when the bench was removed. Although the relationship between the footings in Bays 6 and 5 and the footings in Bays 4 and 5 was not established, it is probable that the former are later in date of construction, for reasons which will be discussed below.

Where the cloister bench did not obscure the footings, investigation was made difficult because the exposed portions were faced with mortar and plaster finishes (contexts 7117, 7118, 7134, 7146 & 7169). As a consequence, any possible changes in the footings, resulting from breaks in construction, will have been obscured. The footings laid down in Bays 4 and 5 incorporated the earlier rammed chalk features (context (7055) already discussed (above pp 27, 33–4). No attempt seems to have been made to dig out the chalk, although it was lowered, presumably to accommodate the cloister floor. Clearly it was felt that the chalk was solid enough to form part of the footings of the new Abbey.

Before considering the dating evidence further, and discussing the possible constructional history of the Abbey footings, it would be as well to look at the evidence for the footings of the north and south arcades.

The Evidence for the Footings of the North and South Arcades (Table 4)

The south side of the northern arcade was investigated in Trench FB, while the southern arcade was explored in Trenches FA and A.

1974 Trench FB (Figs 6a & 25; Plate 5) The footings uncovered in Trench FB had two distinctive features. Firstly, they were, at 1.85m, much deeper than the footings recorded in any other trench. Only the footings in Trench FA, at 1.49m or more, were at all comparable. It has been noted that the buried ground surface was located at a much greater depth in this trench (see above p 12), and that this is the reason for the construction of such a deep footing.

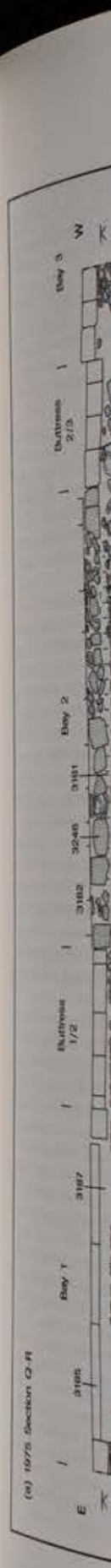
The second feature is the marked disparity in depth between the lower footing (context 2088), which measured only 0.25m deep, and the upper footing (context 2086) which measured 1.6m. It is clear that the top of the lower footing was almost on a level with the old ground surface (context 2090). It seems that the builders followed the undulations in the ground surface when they constructed the lower part of the footings. This obviously makes sense if the lower footings were trench built, as is suggested by the evidence in Trench FA. It is interesting to note that, in this dip, they did not build the lower footing to the same depth – between 0.4m to 0.6m – as found in the other trenches. The offset between the two parts of the footing measured only 0.12m.

The foundation trench (context 2089) for the lower footing was sealed by a layer of mortar (2085). This mortar also partially sealed the lower footing. Layer 2085 can be interpreted as a construction deposit which built up either during the construction of the upper footing, or during the completion of the west end of the Abbey. Above the mortar was a deep layer of brown clay mixed with stone and mortar (context 2084) approximately 0.8m thick. This was sealed by a thin layer of mortar and fine gravel (2083) It is possible that this mortar and gravel layer marks a break between stages in the infilling for the floor void, and that the layers above (contexts 2080 to 2082) were the result of a second phase of infilling, perhaps contemporary with the construction superstructure at the west end. The only pottery comes from layer 2081 and is of twelfth- to thirteenth-century date. This is consistent with the interpretation put forward here.

Trenches FA and A lay respectively north and south of the south pier. In Trench FA the footings were recorded at a depth of at least 1.49m – the base of the footings was apparently not located – while in Trench A they were measured at 1.22m deep. The difference between the two trenches cannot be explained by changes in the level of the old ground surface. Indeed, it has been argued that in Trench FA the buried soil was found at a depth of 0.95m below the present floor level, while in Trench A it was at 1.2m. There follows a possible explanation for the difference.

1974 Trench FA (Figs 6d & 25) The interpretation of the section of Trench FA is difficult. Feature 2060 has been interpreted as a pre-Abbey ditch cut by the arcade foundations and itself cutting the buried soils (contexts 2061 & 2064) and the earlier structure represented by context 2063. It should be noted that it would be possible to argue that cut 2060 was the foundation trench for the arcade footings, but this is not the interpretation favoured here. The upper footing (context 2056), which rises vertically from the lower footing (context 2057) with no offset, was built of coursed flint. The lower footing is described in the site notebook as 'trench built'. If this is correct, then the foundation trench would have been completely filled by the footing. The fill 2059 of cut 2060 is described as loose mortar with stone fragments and lenses of earth and clay. If the fill was indeed loose, this must cast doubt upon the description of the lower footings as trench built, because loose material would have collapsed when any trench was cut through it. It must remain open to question whether any part of the west end footings was trench-built. The presence of the ditch 2060 with its loose fill may explain the greater depth of footing observed in Trench FA. The pottery from context 2059, as has been noted, is contaminated with later material and is not a reliable indicator of date.

Sealing context 2059 was a layer (2054) of mixed mortar and earth. No pottery was recovered. Above 2054 were two further deposits, a mixed layer of clay, flints, mortar and chalk fragments (context 2053), and above that a layer of dark soil (context 2052). There was a single sherd of Michelmersh



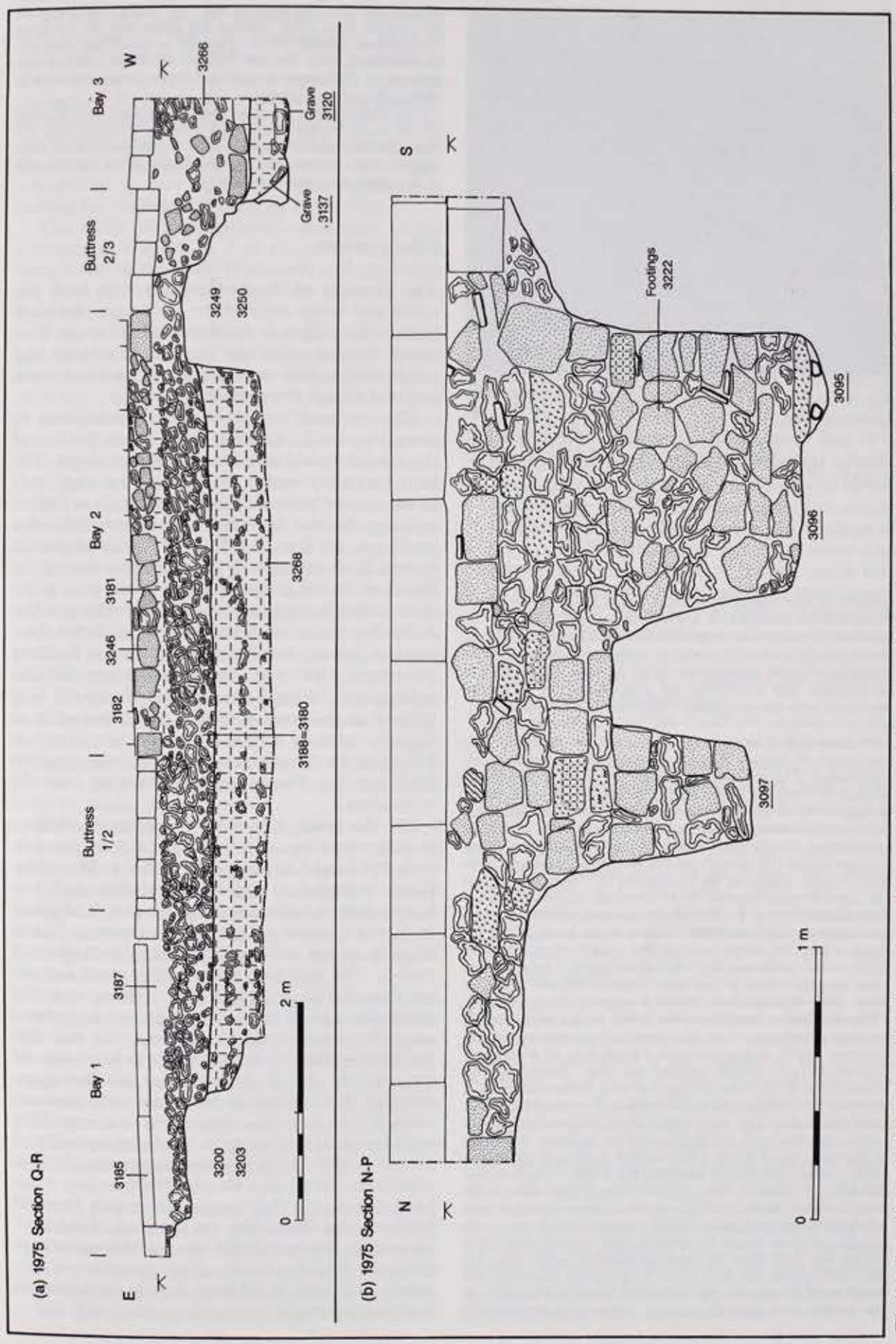


Fig 27 RA 1975: (a) Elevation of footings of north nave aisle wall, Bays 1 and 2 and part of 3. (b) Elevation of north transept footings showing post-Dissolution footing (3222). See Fig 14 for location of sections.

Plate 5. RA 1974: Trench FB viewed from SE, showing the mortared flint footings of the W wall and N arcade of the present Abbey. See Fig 25 for location. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/ TVAT)

pottery of late Saxon date from 2053. The pottery from context 2052 consisted of a group of pottery of twelfth- to thirteenth-century date, with some residual Roman material. It seems likely that infill material was dumped in a single operation after the construction of the footings. However, it is also possible that layer 2052 was dumped later as a separate operation, after the completion of the west end superstructure.

1974 Trench A (Figs 6c & 25) This trench lay immediately to the south of Trench FA; its stratigraphy is more easily interpreted. The difference between the depth of the lower footings in Trenches A and FA has already been noted, and it is suggested that the presence of a possible pre-Norman ditch (context 2060) with loose fill in Trench FA provides a possible explanation for the extra depth of the footing. The upper footings in both Trenches A and FA were of similar depth. The most unusual feature of the foundations in Trench A was that the upper footing (context 2211) overhung the lower footings (context 2040) (Fig 6). The overhang measured 0.07m. The new upper footing was slightly wider than the lower footing on which it sat. This shows not only that these footings were laid down in two operations but, more significantly, it suggests that there may have been a time lapse between the two stages of work. Other evidence from Trench A supports this conclusion.

The foundation trench (context 2041) for the lower footing (context 2040) was clearly cut through both the buried soil (context 2045) and a probable demolition, or clearance, deposit (2212), which overlay the soil. Following the construction of the lower footing, but prior to the construction of the upper footing (2211), it seems that layers of material were dumped in this area. Layer 2044, which consisted of mortar, Roman brick and flints, was most probably laid down at this time. Above it was a layer of dark earth with gravel and flints (context 2043), and overlying this a layer of mortar and brickdust (context 2042). These layers may have been constructional debris, and they appear to have covered, at least partially, the lower footing, so that a trench (2210) had to be cut through them before the upper footing could be built. This trench was back-filled by material (context 2039) that was used to make up the floor level. This context produced one small sherd of medieval jug, in a fabric which can be dated to the twelfth or thirteenth century. There is no evidence to suggest that the final layer of make up (2038) was deposited much after layer 2039. Sealing the whole was the medieval mortar floor (context 2037). It should be noted that there was no evidence from Trench FA that the lower footing was covered by infill deposits, and clearly, the layers observed in Trench A were very localised.

The evidence that the upper footing extended over the edge of the lower footing, combined with the evidence that the lower footing was at least partially buried for a time, does suggest that a period of time elapsed between the construction of the upper and lower footings.

Discussion

The footings of the first two bays on both the north and south sides of the nave were obviously built to full height in the first phase of work. How much further work on the nave footings had progressed before construction ceased is a moot point, although there are clues.

The evidence presented above would seem to show that the footings for the western portion of the nave were laid down in at least two stages. The later footings revealed in 1975 on the north side to the west of buttress 2/3 might be seen as further evidence for this hypothesis. However, there is a problem. In Bay 2 the later medieval parish church floor (context 3181) is visible, sealing the Norman footings. Above the floor is a post-Dissolution footing (3246) for the blocking of Bay 2. In Bay 1 the evidence for the medieval floor was not present, but the post-Dissolution blocking (contexts 3185 and 3187) was clear. Similar evidence is lacking from Bay 3. It seems very likely that the footing in Bay 3 was partially, or largely, rebuilt when the bay was blocked following the Dissolution. Therefore the apparent evidence for two phases of footing may be misleading.

On the south side (Fig 34) there is evidence that the footings may have been completed to their full height in Bays 1, 2, 3 and 4. The ashlar plinth in Bays 2, 3 and 4 is approximately 0.7 m higher than the plinth in Bays 5 and 6. The plinth in Bay 3 consists of two ashlar courses, but in Bays 2 and 4 it has only a single chamfered course. The evidence of the ashlar work and the window forms in Bays 5 and 6 shows that the superstructure of these bays was not completed until the early thirteenth century. The fact that the lower plinth in Bays 5 and 6 was positioned immediately on top of the cloister bench suggests too that the footings in these two bays were not completed until the thirteenth century. This would explain the change in level of the plinth and for the height of the flint footings, particularly in relation to the cloister bench.[5] Furthermore it has been noted that the foundation trench (context 7070) for the footings at the west end of the 1991 excavation (context 7065) was cut through a dark soil possibly of natural origin (context 7126), which may have developed during the hiatus in construction work.

In summary it can be argued that on the south side the earliest Norman footings were built to their full height in Bays 1 and 2, and probably in Bays 3 and 4. It is at least possible that the footings in the latter pair of bays were not finished until immediately before the construction of the ashlar walls there in the later twelfth century. On the north side, the footings of bays 1 and 2 were completed in one operation, but evidence is lacking for the bays immediately to the west.

The 1974 evidence suggests that most of the footings in Bays 5 to 7 at the west end were completed in the early thirteenth century when the west end of the nave and the cloisters were finished.

It has been demonstrated that the pre-Norman ground level at the west end of the present Abbey was a metre, or more, below the present Abbey floor level, and it is clear that this fact is reflected in the structure of the footings. There is evidence that the footings were built for the most part in two sections. On the evidence of the arcade footings in Trench FA, now confirmed by evidence from excavations in 1991 on the south side of the Abbey, the first part would appear to have been trench built. If the lower footings of the north and south arcades and the north and south nave aisle walls were trench built, this would explain why they followed the ground level even where the levels changed dramatically. This has resulted in considerable variation in the depth of the footings, as for example in 1974 Trenches FB and FA. It is argued that the lower footings were built largely in one operation in the 12th century. In the south-west corner there is structural and dating evidence to suggest there the footings may not have been laid out until later, but the evidence is by no means conclusive.

The second part of the foundations consisted of the upper footings which were built almost entirely above the existing ground level. There is evidence, albeit slight, that these were not all completed in one operation, and indications in some places at least that the building of the upper footings was separated from the laying down of the lower one by some period of time.

There are two possible interpretations of the stratigraphic evidence from the 1974 excavations. The first assumes that each stage of the footings at the west end of the Abbey was completed as one operation. The second assumes that this was not necessarily the case, and places more emphasis on the evidence of infilling episodes.

The first interpretation produces a sequence that can be summarised as follows:

> Some preparation of the ground, including the demolition of extant structures and levelling (Trench E), followed by the construction of the lower footings of the nave, perhaps with the exception of the extreme south-west corner, and then some localised infilling (Trench A).
>
> Following a break in the construction work the complete upper footing, and the footing in the southwest corner, were built. Most of the levelling for the floor (Trenches E, FA, FB & G) followed this construction of the footings.
>
> There was then a further break before the completion of the superstructure (Trench G). Some final infilling perhaps took place after the superstructure was completed (Trench FB), to compensate for any settlement of earlier infill.

The second interpretation produces the following sequence of events:

> Preparation of the ground, including demolition of any extant structures, followed by the construction of the lower footings of the north aisle wall and the north and south pier arcades. The lower footings for south aisle wall were also built laid out at this time, with the possible exception of the south-west corner.
>
> The construction of the upper footings of Bays 1 and 2 of the north wall (and probably of the Bays to the west) and of the north pier arcade followed, perhaps after a break. The footings of Bays 1 to 4 of the south nave wall were also built at this time. The floor area on north side of the nave and the north nave aisle were largely levelled up (Trenches G & FB), but there was only some minor infilling on the south side of the nave (Trenches E & A). The evidence from Trench A would seem to indicate that there was then a break in construction.
>
> The completion of the south pier arcade footing (Trench A), and south nave wall, and the construction of the complete footing to the west of the south-west door (Trench E & Area J) may have been contemporaneous, and carried out just prior to the construction of the superstructure of the western nave. The levelling of the floor in the south part of the nave was not completed until the mid-thirteenth century (Trench E), although it is difficult to be certain whether this preceded or followed the completion of the nave superstructure.

It would seem that the second of these two interpretations is closer to the actual pattern of events, but certainty is not possible on the present evidence, and it is at least arguable that the question is of comparatively little moment. Nonetheless, it is perhaps more plausible to think that the process of filling and raising the nave floor level would have been protracted and piecemeal, and that the dumping of material would commence as and when each section of the upper footing was completed. This would have had the advantage of allowing time for the dumped material to settle to ensure that the nave floor had a well-consolidated foundation. It could be argued that the stratigraphic variations that were observed

in the 1974 trenches reflect the progress of, or delays in, the construction of the superstructure at the west end, and that the second interpretation is therefore to be preferred. The slight evidence for the late completion of the footings in the south west corner would fit better with this interpretation.

The Nave Superstructure

Description

Sir Charles Peers in his article in the Victoria County History (VCH *Hampshire*, Vol 4, 460–7) gives a very full and accurate description of the architectural detail of the present Abbey, and it is unnecessary to repeat it. His interpretation has been taken up by others including N Pevsner and D Lloyd (1967, 477–87) and H M Taylor and J Taylor (1965, 520–22). The account of the structural history of the Abbey which Peers presented is, however, to be questioned, and an alternative interpretation is offered here. Observations on the key architectural and structural elements are included in support of the proposed alternative.

The North and South Aisle Walls up to Triforium level

Nave South Side. Externally, the ashlar work in Bays 1 and 2 of the south nave aisle wall is of good quality and quite distinct from the poor quality work seen in Bay 3 and in the eastern portion of Bay 4.

The upper portion and west edge of Bay 4 and the half buttress 4/5 between Bays 4 and 5 were built in a distinctive ashlar, which was intermediate in quality between the poor work of Bay 3 and lower Bay 4, and the good quality work to the west in Bays 5 and 6.

In Bays 5 and 6 the ashlar is of excellent quality and the windows have pointed arches, as befits 'Early Gothic' work. Bay 7, to which the western domestic range was attached is built of flint rubble, and has no window opening, and is therefore quite distinctive.

Nave North Side Both internally and externally there are few clues to the structural phasing of the north wall below triforium level, because of the later alterations. Bays 5, 6 and 7 can clearly be distinguished from the four bays to the east, and formed part of the final construction of the Nave which was completed in the first half of the thirteenth century.

The Pier Arcades

The columns nearest the crossing (Columns 1/2 north and south) of both the north and south pier arcades are round in section. On the south side, the next three columns (Columns 2/3, 3/4 and 4/5) are composite and similar to one another, and to the columns in the choir. On the north side only Columns 2/3 and 3/4 match columns 2/3 to 4/5 on the south side. Column 4/5 on the north side is composite, but in a style different from the other columns. The distinct design of column 4/5 of the north pier arcade suggests that it was a later structure in 'Transitional' style. The most westerly columns (Nos 5/6 and 6/7) on both the north and south sides are all similar and in 'Early Gothic' style.

The Triforium level

The triforium arches in each of the first four bays differ from each other, but each matches its opposite number on the facing wall. The main arch in the first bay on both north and south is round and contains two smaller round arches, which are decorated with dog-tooth patterning. The tympanum above the smaller arches is open, and has a single narrow and centrally placed column. A similar arrangement is found in bays 2 and 3, both north and south. The round arches in both north and south bays 3 were decorated with mouldings, whereas those in north and south bays 2 were plain. None of the arches in these bays have any dog-tooth patterning. The arches in north and south Bays 4 are plain and round. The tympanum above the inner pair of arches is filled with a plain ashlar. There is one difference between the north and south arches in bays 3 and 4. The decoration of the capitals on the south side appears to be less elaborate, almost as if unfinished. Whatever the precise structural history of the triforium in the first four bays of the nave, it is clear that they are unlikely to have been built in one operation.

The Triforium arches in bays 5, 6 and 7 on both north and south sides are similar. The arches are all pointed with trefoil subsidiary arches. The tympanum in each is pierced with a quatrefoil.

The Clerestory level

Externally, the clerestory appears to be stylistically similar in all seven bays, both north and south. Closer inspection shows that there are minor differences in the detailing of the first four bays and the final three bays. The clerestory windows on the north side are pointed and flanked by pointed blind arches. On the south side, which overlooked the cloisters and domestic buildings, the flanking arches were omitted. Internally, the clerestory has a stylistic unity, although there are more obvious differences between the first four bays and the final three western bays. In each bay, both north and south, there is a window within a pointed arch, flanked by arched openings. Above these openings are pointed blind arches or arcades. In the first four bays the lower flanking arches are round, but in the three western bays they are pointed.

The clerestory in the first four bays on both the north and south sides seems to have been of one build. All these bays are in 'Transitional' style and therefore clearly built towards the end of the twelfth century. The final three bays have been constructed in a similar style, probably in an attempt to bring unity to the appearance of the whole structure.

Discussion and Dating

Peers (VCH *Hampshire*, Vol 4, 460–1) suggested that bays 3 and 4 of the south nave aisle wall were constructed in c1090 as an early Norman addition to the existing Saxon abbey. His argument primarily rested on the fact of the irregularity of the south wall, and that the internal respond between bays 2 and 3 was not directly opposite the pier 2/3 of the south arcade. These two observations, combined with the obvious differences in the ashlar work of bays 3 and 4 when compared to the ashlar in the bays to the east and the west, inclined Peers to believe that Bays 3 and 4 preserved earlier Norman work. Hearn (1969) has looked at Peers's arguments and refuted his interpretation of this particular point. It is unlikely, Hearn argues, that a single section of existing wall would be preserved, and that the construction of the new abbey forced to conform to it. The reason that Peers gives, that it

was against this section of wall that the cloister had been constructed, does not bear close examination. However, Hearn's suggestion that it was originally intended to retain the Saxon nave as part of the new Norman church is also scarcely credible.

It is clear from the structural differences which can be observed in the eastern four bays of the nave that they were unlikely to have been completed in one operation, and a possible sequence of construction can be suggested.

Phase 11 The walls of the first two bays in the south aisle were probably built early in the twelfth century, immediately after the demolition of the Saxon Abbey, and the completion of the west wall of the crossing. The first column (1/2) of both the north and south nave arcades were also built at this time. It is possible that the triforium arches in the first two bays on the south side were built at the same time as the construction of the first two bays of the south aisle wall, and perhaps also the triforium arches of Bays 1 and 2 on the north side. On the north side the evidence is scant, but it is possible that progress was more limited here in the first phase, and indeed always lagged behind that on the south. Against this is the fact that the triforium level on the north side appears comparable to the south side.

Phase 12 The poorer quality work in Bays 3 and 4 in the south aisle wall is generally, and plausibly, dated to the mid to late twelfth century. It is still Norman in style, but clearly distinguished from the earlier work. Possibly contemporary with this were columns 2/3, 3/4 and 4/5 on the south side, and columns 2/3 and 3/4 on the north side. At triforium level bay 3 on both the north and south sides, and perhaps Bay 2, may belong to this phase.

Phase 13 It may be that the intermediate work, which completes Bay 4, and half buttress 4/5, was carried out when the first four bays of the nave were completed by the construction of the remaining portions of the triforium and the complete clerestory. At this point the nave was roofed over. The clerestory was built in the 'Transitional' style of the late twelfth century, whereas the triforium is in Norman style.

It is probable that there was never a point when building work ever ceased completely in the twelfth century, but rather that it progressed in fits and starts. There is no historical evidence to indicate that building was being undertaken during the twelfth century, nor any evidence to suggest that work had been stopped for any particular reason. Certainly, the structural and archaeological evidence suggests that the work on the later Norman and Transitional sections was more or less continuous, if fitful. After the completion of the first four bays work seems to have stopped for a period. Not until well into the thirteenth century was the nave completed to the length originally planned.

There is some slight evidence for the date of the construction of the final bays of the nave. In 1251, Henry III granted the Abbess six oaks from the New Forest (*Cal Close Rolls, 1247–1251*, 464), and in 1252 a further 16 oaks (*Cal Close Rolls, 1251–1253*, 295). In June 1253 another sixteen oaks, ad fabricam ecclesie sue, were given to the Abbess (*Cal Close Rolls*, 1251–1253, 375). This suggests that some substantial building work was being undertaken. Further oaks were given to the Abbess in 1271 (*Cal Close Rolls, 1268–1272*, 464), but these may have been for use in the new Lady Chapel (see below p 88). Since it is argued below that the major domestic buildings and the cloisters were constructed in the thirteenth century, the building work need not be concerned solely with the completion of the nave. However, the archaeological evidence does suggest that the final phase of the nave was constructed in the mid-thirteenth century.

It was when work recommenced on the final bays of the nave that the decision was taken to drop the height of the plinth on the south aisle wall. The change in height occurs at the join between the section of intermediate masonry and the 'Early English' ashlar, and the revised single course plinth in Bays 5 and 6 rises directly from the top of the bench. This suggests that the cloister bench was planned, or being built, for the change of plinth height conforms to the height of the finished bench.

The Completion of the Nave Floor

The only excavations within the Abbey were those undertaken in 1974 at the west end of the nave. There is, therefore, no evidence for the floor of the choir or eastern part of the nave. It must be assumed that following the roofing over of the first four bays a floor was laid down in the nave. Whether on completion of the western part of the nave a completely new floor was laid down throughout the nave, or whether just the west end was newly floored is uncertain. The latter is perhaps the more likely.

The Evidence

1974 Excavations: The Nave Floor and associated features At the west end, traces of the medieval floor were found below the level of the present paving, and associated with it was the original threshold (Context 2159) of the south doorway which was preserved 0.22m below, and 0.24m forward of, the present threshold (Fig 8). The stones of the threshold were approximately 0.15m below the level of the present nave floor, and set at the front edge of the upper footings of the south wall. They were approximately 0.18m (7in) deep, and 0.35m (14in) wide.

Immediately behind the threshold was a section of mortar (context 2174), which must have originally extended over the whole footing and formed part of the nave floor. This mortar was between 0.16m and 0.18m below the present floor surface. The rear edge of the footing was approximately 0.2m below the surface of the present paving, and 0.05m below the level of the original threshold, and would have been covered by the medieval floor (Fig 9). In Trench E, the wall footing was sealed by a layer (context 2004) of pink mortar. However, this layer is unlikely to have been the original medieval floor surface, because of its stratigraphic relationship to make-up material associated with the Victorian threshold and external paving. Furthermore, it sealed the mortar surface (2174) associated with the medieval threshold. Sealed beneath layer 2004 was a further, incomplete, mortar layer (context 2005), which sloped down to the edge of the wall footing. This consisted of a thin, yellow grey mortar, and may have been part of the sub-floor of the medieval surface. It was between 0.20m and 0.18m below the present floor (Fig 8).

Further probable sections of the medieval floor were found in Trenches A and D. These layers were only 0.12m to 0.15m below the modern floor surface. In Trench A a thin layer of white mortar (context 2037) was located. In Trench D a thin layer of mortar (context 2027) was revealed but its colour was not recorded. In the other trenches all traces of the floor appear to have been removed either when the Nave was resurfaced in the nineteenth century, or perhaps on some earlier occasion. On the evidence of the threshold and of the surviving sections of mortar surface, it seems that the medieval floor was between 0.12m and 0.15m below its nineteenth-century successor.

There were only three recorded features that arguably could be associated with the medieval floor, or the completion of the west end of the Nave. Cut through the make-up layers (contexts 2038 & 2039) in Trench A, and possibly sealed beneath the mortar floor layer (context 2037), was a posthole (context 2114) the fill (2115) of which contained two Scratchware sherds. The date of these is thirteenth-century or earlier. A second feature (context 2112), which was described as a burnt patch, but which was clearly a small posthole, was also found in the same trench. Its fill (context 2113) contained a sherd of medieval jug handle and a fragment of possible bell mould. The slashed jug handle was in a fabric of later Medieval date. The pit is recorded as cutting the make-up layer (context 2038) immediately below the medieval floor (2037), but whether it also cut, or was sealed by, the mortar floor is uncertain. A similar posthole (context 2051) was located in Trench FA, on the north side of the same arcade. No relationships are recorded, but it seems likely that it was cut into the thirteenth-century make-up layer (2052). There were no dateable finds from the fill (context 2050) of this posthole.

These holes may have supported scaffold poles and may thus be associated with building work on the arcade or on the roof of the Nave, either in the thirteenth century, or, particularly in the case of context 2112, at some later date. The records of the stratigraphic relationships of these post holes are incomplete, and, for this reason, none of them can be assigned with certainty to the construction phases of the Abbey.

Discussion

It is uncertain on present evidence whether the medieval nave floor was tiled. Although numerous tile fragments have been recovered from the excavations, many have been associated with either the eastern chapels, or the Cloisters, and many others are unstratified. The investigation of the nave floor in 1974 was very limited and until more extensive excavation is undertaken within the nave this question will have to remain open. It is likely that any tiles that did exist were destroyed during subsequent re-flooring episodes.

The North Porch

The present north porch was constructed at the beginning of the twentieth century, as a contribution to the Romsey Abbey centenary celebrations. The original porch had been demolished, probably along with the parish aisle, following the Dissolution. During the 1988 excavations substantial parts of the footings of the former porch was uncovered.

The Evidence (Fig 28)

The mortared flint footings (context 6021) of the porch were badly cut about by later burials but a partial plan was recoverable. Overall the porch footings measured 7.5m (24ft 6in) east to west. The footings of the flank walls were approximately 2.2m (c 7ft) wide, and extended at least 9.6m (c 31ft) north of the nave. The exact northward extent of the porch was not determined, because the surviving structure continued beyond the edge of the excavation. However, 7.8m (c 25ft) north of the north nave wall a cross wall was found. This may have been an internal division, or possibly the northern end of the porch.

Attached to the west side of the porch was a room that measured 5m (c 16ft) north to south, and 1.6m (c 5ft) east to west. The west side of this room was formed by a north south wall (context 6013), and an east west cross wall (context 6022) joined 6013 to the porch. 6013 and 6022 were of one build. The construction trench of the present porch had destroyed the junction between 6022 and the main porch. Therefore it was not possible to be certain that the porch and side room were of one build; however, the similarity between the structure of the two sets of footings and the colour of the mortar employed strongly suggested that they were contemporary.

The junction between 6013 and 6022, which formed the northwest corner of this side room was partly cut away by a later pit (context 6011), and it may be that the north to south wall (context 6013) originally extended further north along the side of the porch. The only evidence for such a northward extension of the side structure is the position of a possible buttress footing. This would have been approximately halfway along the side wall of the porch if the latter extended to just beyond the 1988 excavation area. This would have created a second small room to the north measuring approximately 3m (c 10ft) north to south. The walls of the side room were between 0.7m (2ft 4in) and 0.8m (2ft 6in) wide and constructed of mortared flint with rough ashlar quoins, at least in the extant portions. Above ground it is likely that the structure was faced with ashlar.

Within the room was a deposit made up of two layers of

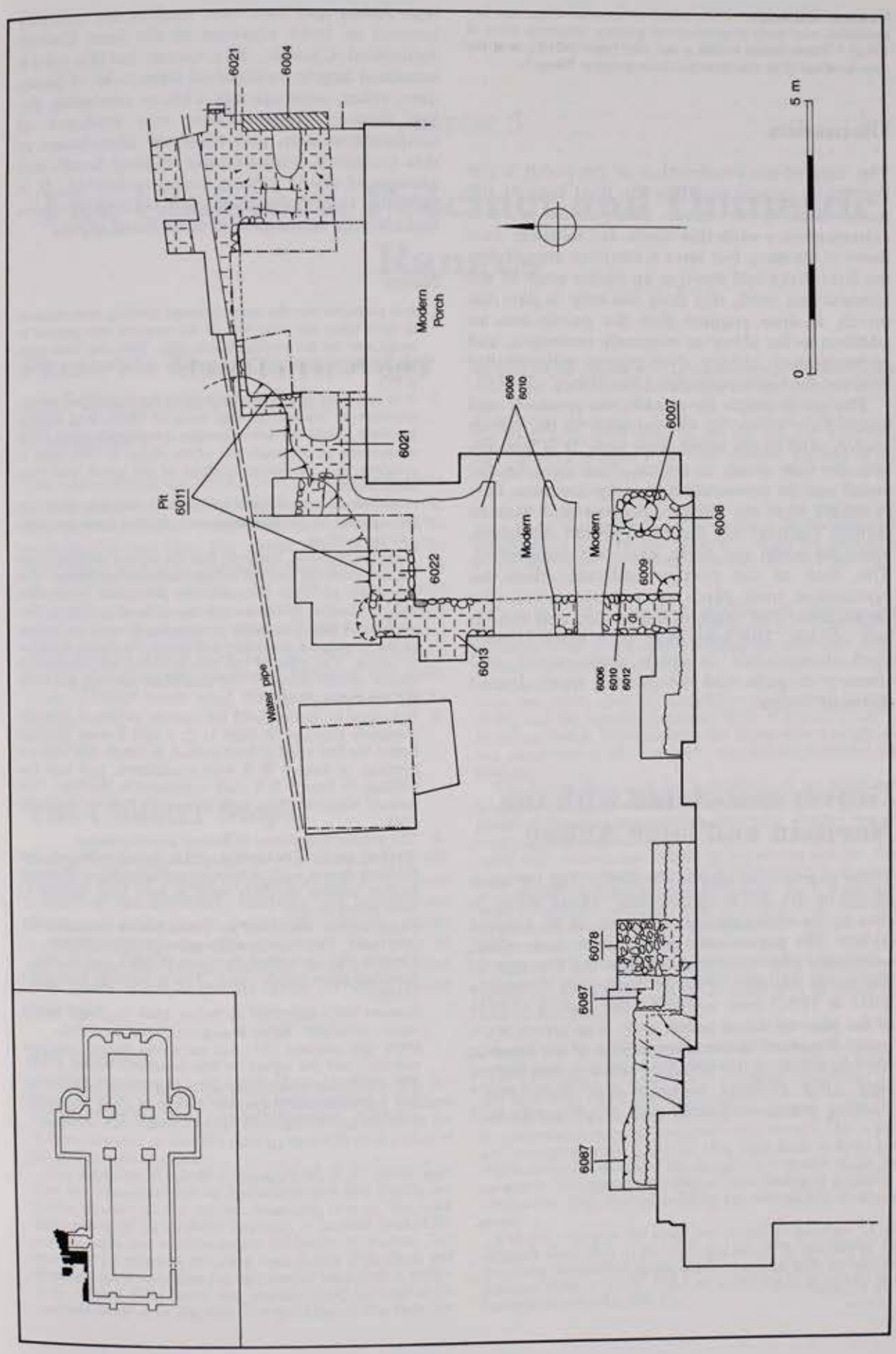


Fig 28 A 1988.7: Plan of the medieval north porch.

limestone and mortar rubble mixed with human bone, and late medieval, and early post-medieval pottery (contexts 6010 & 6012).[6] These layers sealed a red clay layer (6017), and the nave footings. The clay layer has been dated to Phase 5.

Discussion

The date of the construction of the porch is not certain. It cannot pre-date the final bays of the nave, and it is most likely that it was contemporary with this work. Its footings butt those of the nave, but since it has been argued that the latter were laid down at an earlier stage in the construction work, this does not help to date the porch. It does suggest that the porch was an addition to the abbey as originally envisaged, and as such may reflect a changing relationship between the townspeople and the Abbey.

The north porch lay outside the precinct, and would have served as the entrance to the parish church sited in the north nave aisle. It is possible that the side room, or rooms, were used by the parish and its priest rather than by the nuns. It is probable that the rubble, pottery and human skeletal material was deposited within the room, when the porch and north aisle were demolished. The date of the pottery indicates that the demolition took place at, or soon after, the Dissolution. The origin of the pottery and bone is less certain. The bone may have been derived from demolished funerary monuments and chantry chapels, and the pottery from cleared domestic ranges.

Graves associated with the Norman and later Abbey

Three graves (contexts 3100–3102) (Fig 14) were found in the 1975 excavations. These seem to date to the earlier phases of the use of the present Abbey. The graves were parallel with each other, orientated east–west and cut into the footings of the north transept. Two of the graves (contexts 3101 & 3102) were sealed by the footing (3261) of the later medieval parish aisle. The graves were badly disturbed by the construction of the latter at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and only a very little skeletal material was recovered.[7] Further graves associated with the Norman and later Abbey may have been sited in the cemetery located in 1989 adjacent to the later United Reformed Church. The extant burials which remained largely undisturbed seem to be of Saxon date, either contemporary with, or predating, the late Saxon Abbey. There was evidence of considerable later, post-Medieval disturbance of this cemetery, with bundles of long bones and groups of skulls clearly being re-buried. It is possible that these re-buried skeletal remains included the contents of later medieval graves.

Notes

1 It is probable that the north transept footings were reduced in level when the west wall of the transept was pierced to make way for the parish church aisle. This may have been necessary to allow the church floor to be laid (see below p 91).

2 It is recorded in the sitebook that the upper part of the footings in Trench FA was built of 'flints with mortar bonding', while the lower portion was 'trench built'. New excavations on the south side of the Abbey in 1991 seem to confirm that the lower footings of the south wall were trench-built.

3 A precise measurement is not possible because there is a discrepancy in the measurements derived from the plans and the sections.

4 It should be noted, however, that the section drawing made on site presents certain interpretational problems. The particular problem concerns the presumed foundation trench (context 2210) for the upper footing (2211). The cut for this trench is shown as stopping short of the bottom of the footing on the original drawing. As drawn it makes no sense. The plan of the trench shows the foundation trench clearly marked. The published drawing has been emended accordingly.

5 It cannot be determined on current evidence that the complete footings in Bays 1, 2, 3 and 4 were finished before the first stage of work ceased. It maybe that only the footings in Bays 1 & 2 were completed, and that the footings in Bays 3 & 4 were completed in the later 12th century when the Bays were themselves built to clerestory level.

6 The pottery is discussed in Rees et al forthcoming.

7 All three graves were labelled (33) in the site notebook, and the finds do not seem to have been distinguished. However further context numbers seem to have been applied to these graves on site:
Context (44): described as 'burial sealed beneath 1401 (sic) work'. This must be either grave (3101) or (3102).
Context (56): described as 'south of 1401 wall footing – disturbed grave (much bone)'. This is probably from grave (3100).
Context (57): described as 'below 1401 (sic) wall (much bone – reburied)'. Either from grave (3101) or (3102).
Only site context (33) has surviving human skeletal material, and the report on this is printed below, p 150. The material includes bones from an immature individual, and a fragment from an older (adult, or older immature) individual. Reference: Osborne, 1988, p 8: RA 75 (33).

Chapter 5

The Cloisters, Precinct and Domestic Ranges

Phase 14: The Construction and Structures of the Cloisters

The excavations in 1974, 1977, 1979 and 1991 uncovered much of the north walk and north-west and north-east corners of the cloisters. The evidence shows that the north and west walks were tiled, and it is probable that this is true of all the cloister walks. In 1981, the small excavation in the garden of No 17, The Abbey located the position of the southern walk and confirmed its width (Fig 32). At their maximum extent, the cloisters measured between the walls 32m (105ft) both east to west and north to south.

The Cloister Steps

Access between the body of the church and the cloisters was by means of doors at the north-west corner of the cloisters, through the south-west door, and at the north-east angle with the south transept, through the Abbess' Door. The floor of the cloister was lower than the floor of the nave and there were steps in front of both these doorways.

The Evidence

1974: The Steps from the Southwest Doorway (Fig 29) Outside the south-west doorway, beneath the modern flagstones, the remains of steps leading from the church to the cloisters and part of the tiled floor in the north-west corner of the cloister were revealed.

The medieval threshold (context 2159) at the south-west door was uncovered and lay approximately 0.22m below, and 0.24m forward of, the present threshold. (Fig 8) The drop from the top of the medieval threshold to the tiled floor of the cloister walk was approximately 0.55m or 22 inches. The stones of the medieval threshold were 0.18m (7in) deep, and therefore there was room for two further steps with a similar drop. A stone of the lowest step (context 2163) survived to the west side of the door (Fig 26b). It was 0.15m, or 6in, deep, but set with its top 0.22m, or .812 ins, above the mortar bedding (2121) for the tiled floor. Allowing for the thickness of the tiles, this would make the step only a little over 7in deep. The front of this stone was 1.2m, or 48in, forward of the edge of the threshold. A stone of the middle step (context 2164) was also recorded in plan. It lay 26in (0.65m) forward of the threshold, and was approximately 22in (0.55m) behind the edge of the bottom step. Its height was not recorded. Because of the restricted nature of the excavations, the full extent of the steps to the east and west was not defined. To the west they may have run up to the wall of the west range, but there is no proof. To the east it is probable that they formed a right angle and were stepped down.

1977 & 1979: The steps from the Abbess's doorway (Fig 30) Traces of at least four, and probably five, steps can be identified both in the elevation along the west wall of the south transept and in plan (Fig 36). It is probable that these steps had been planned when the footings of the transept were laid down, since the foundations of the steps (context 4046) and the transept (contexts 4039 & 4040) appear to be of one build. Unfortunately the destruction wrought by the construction of vault 4054 has almost removed the evidence.

The lower portion of the foundation of the steps was formed from mortared flint (context 4046), and capped by pieces of tile. It is impossible to determine whether the tile capping represents the original tops of the steps, or if the steps were of stone and bedded on the mortar and tile. The top step, or step bed, (contexts 4055 & 4042) is damaged and partially cut away by a small pit 4041, but it could have been between 0.5 and 0.6m wide. The drop to the next step to the south (context 4043) was 0.18m. This step was 0.42m wide, and between 0.1m and 01.3m deep. Step 4044 was uneven and it seems to slope from the back to the front. It was 0.46m wide and 0.14m deep. The final step (context 4045) was 0.7 m wide and stood about 0.13 m above the tiled cloister floor.

The irregularity of the dimensions of the steps and the unevenness of step 4044 would support the idea that these are just the base of the steps. The front part of step 4045 is formed from large blocks of stone, and is clearly an extant step. The fact that 4045 was 0.7 m wide suggests that the rear half is actually the base for a second step. It would be possible to accommodate a series of steps, each rising about 0.15m (c 6in) and measuring about 0.35m (c 14in) from front to back. It is worth drawing attention to the excavator's comment in the site notebook: 'Foundations possibly of steps leading to doorway – some floor tiles used as bedding for robbed out blocks of stone'.

Further evidence for steps was found to the west of the Abbess's door, both in the 1977 and the 1979 excavations. On top of the demolished Saxon transept, mortar with broken tiles (context 5056 = 5117) (context 4124) set in it served as a bedding for the steps (Fig 31).

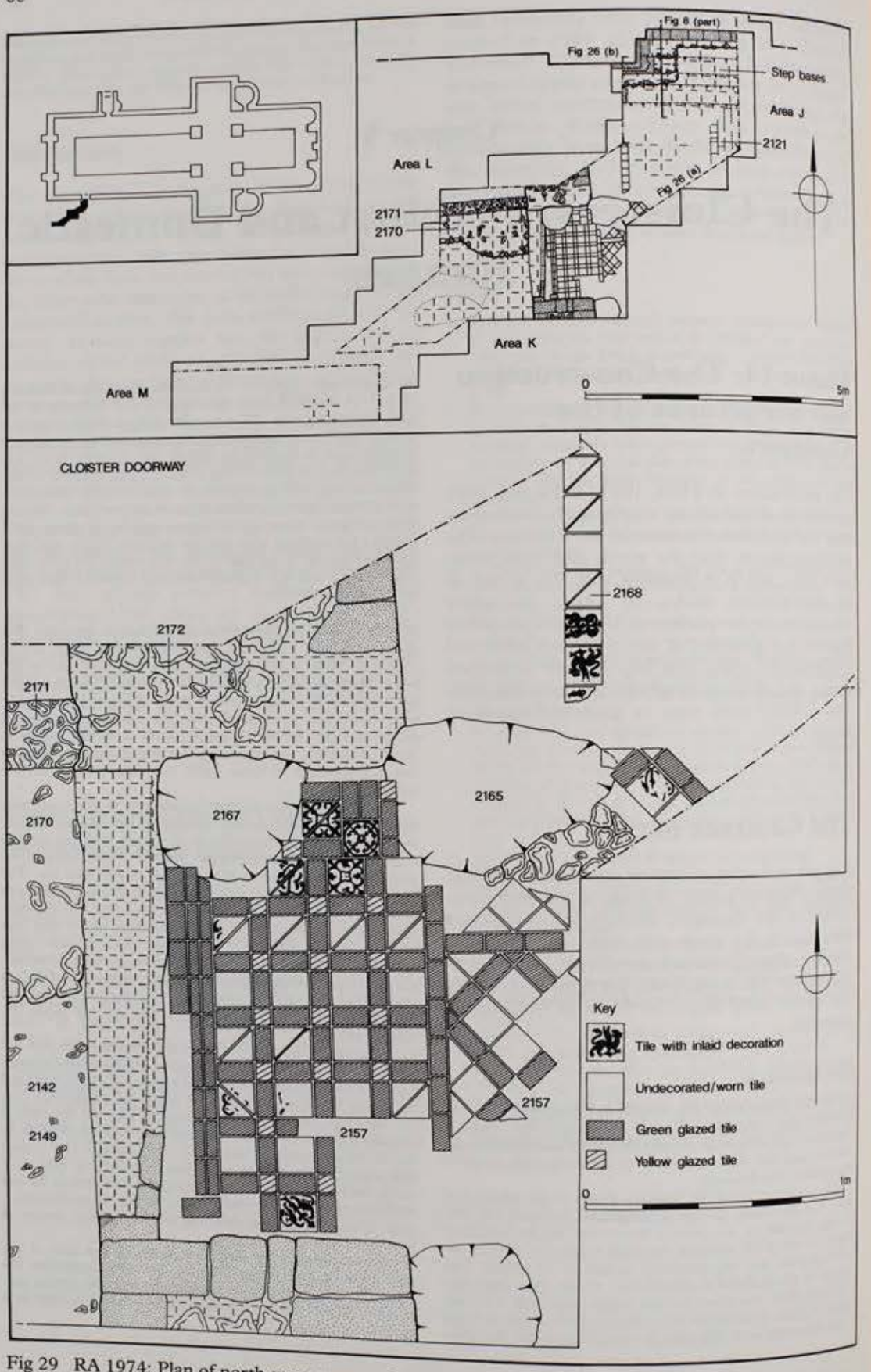


Fig 29 RA 1974: Plan of north-west corner of cloisters and east wall of western domestic range.

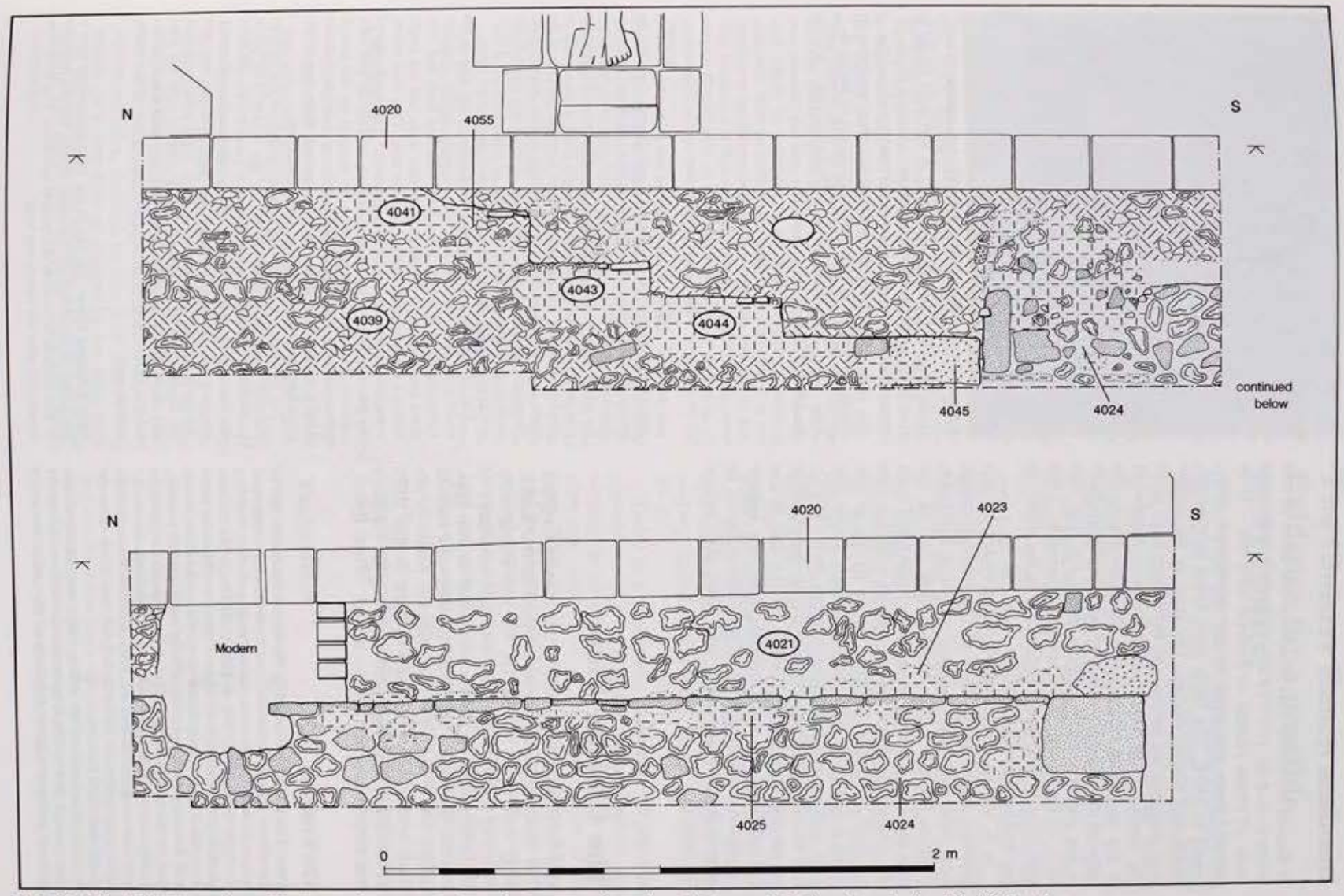


Fig 30 RA 1977: Elevation of footings of west wall of south transept. Step foundations and cloister bench. See Fig 36 for plan.

Discussion

It should be noted that whatever the form of the steps found in 1977/1979 – whether they were built of stone blocks or mortar and tile – they differed from the steps by the south-west door, found in 1974. The latter were fewer in number, wider, and slightly deeper. The steps by the south-west doorway are unlikely to have been built until the western three bays of the nave were completed in the thirteenth century. On the other hand, the steps at the Abbess's doorway were probably built in the earlier twelfth century, when the first two bays of the south nave were completed. This difference in date may be reflected in the differing size and number of the steps.

It is worth noting that the cloister bench (context 4024) at the base of the south transept west wall was built against existing footings, whereas there is some evidence that part of the step bedding (context 4046) was of one build with the transept footings. Further slight evidence can be cited in support of this relative dating of the steps and bench. The cloister bench under the west wall ends against the bottom step (4045), and whereas the cloister bench sits on the possible mortar bedding (context 4060) for the tiles of the cloister floor, the same bedding does not appear to extend under step 4045. The evidence seems to suggest that the steps were built some time before the bench.

Plate 6. RA 1974: Area J: Decorated floor tiles (context 2157) in the doorway in the west range at the NW corner of the cloister viewed from N. Note the threshold (context 2169) to the right of the tiles. The first course of the west range wall (context 2172) is visible in the facing section. See Fig 29 for location. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

The Cloister Floor

Very little of the tiled floor of the cloister survived. The best evidence was uncovered at the north-west corner of the walk, by the south-west doorway to the nave. The evidence consisted of tile impressions in mortar and some in situ tiles. Further tile traces, but no in situ tiles were located in the 1979 and 1991 excavations. Little or no floor traces were recorded in plan in the 1977 excavations, but the mortar bedding for the floor was noted under the cloister bench.

The Evidence

1974: The Cloister Floor (Fig 29) Only a few of the tiles of the cloister walk floor survived, but in addition, the impressed traces of many tiles were found in the mortar bedding (contexts 2121, 2149) that originally held them. In the area (context 2121) immediately south of the steps from the south door, the tiles had been aligned on the main axes of the church and domestic buildings. There were some tile impressions, and, to the west of these, a surviving strip of tiles (context 2168), four of which were worn, or plain, and two decorated.[1] The area of square set tiles ran, probably, from the wall of the west range eastwards for at least 2.8m, and south from the Abbey wall for at least 3m.

About 3.1m south of the Abbey, there were further in situ tiles (context 2157). These lay within the western walk of the cloister, and were aligned diagonally to the axes of the abbey and domestic ranges. They were laid out in a scheme which consisted of a network of plain half and quarter tiles framing panels of four complete decorated tiles. In some instances matching pairs of triangular decorated tiles were substituted for whole tiles within the panels. The tiles were fragmentary and worn, and retained little of their decoration. A pit, or posthole (context 2165), had been cut through this part of the floor. It contained no finds, but it is likely to have been of post-Dissolution, or later, date. This area of tiling was immediately next to the almost complete panel of tiles (context 2157), which survived in situ within the doorway to the west range.

The tiles in the doorway were set square to the axes of the buildings, and were preserved because rubble footings (contexts 2131 & 2156) for a later wall had been laid over them (see below pp 99–100). The tiles were laid out singly within a mesh of plain half and quarter tiles. They were mostly worn but some evidence of inlay survived.[2] The north edge of the panel appears to have been repaired, because the tiles were unworn, and had been laid with no thought for the overall pattern.[3] They had been disturbed by a later pit (context 2167), from which there are no recorded finds, but which must have been of post-Dissolution or later date.

The tile pattern in the north-west corner of the cloister differed from that immediately to the south. The break between the patterns occurred between 3 and 3.1m south from the Abbey wall. It is uncertain whether the north west corner was laid out with a different pattern from both the west and the north walks, or whether the whole north walk, including the corners, used one pattern, which differed from the west and east walks. Whichever was the case, the three metre (or ten foot) measurement must equate to the width of the north cloister walk.

1991: Cloister Floor (Fig 35) In the 1991 excavations only a few scraps of decorated tile remained in situ, but the imprints of tiles were to be seen in the mortar sub-floor. The floor was clearly laid after the bench was built.

The evidence from the 1991 excavations adds to the information from the 1974 excavations. At the west end of the 1991 trench, close by the south west doorway, the surviving mortar sub-floor had impressions of tiles laid diagonally. The impressions of many pairs of triangular tiles were noted. The area of impressions lay at the base of the half-buttress between Bays 5 and 6, and extended for approximately 3m from just east of the half buttress to near the south-west door. This area of tile impressions was approximately 3.2m long and lay 3m from the west end of the cloister walk. This would seem to confirm that the panel in front of the south-west door was limited to the very corner of the cloister walk. A further patch of diagonally aligned tile impressions was found in the 1979 excavations at the base of Bay 2. The extent of the patch was limited. It was approximately 1.8m long and lay 7m (c 23ft) from the east end of the cloister walk.

A further small panel of tile impressions, this time laid square to the main axes of the abbey, was located at the base of Bay 4. This suggests that the north walk was not paved exclusively with diagonally set tiles. This panel of square-set impressions was approximately 2m long and positioned 16.5m (c 54ft) from the eastern end of the walk and 13.5m (c 44ft) from its western end. The exact extent of this panel cannot be determined but, if it were assumed that it was centrally positioned, it would have been originally at least 5m (16ft 6in) long. It appears that the greater part of the north walk was paved with diagonally laid tiles, but that it was broken by a panel of square-set tiles in the middle of the walk.

It should be noted that at the east end of the 1991 trench, there were patches of different coloured mortars and mortar and soil mixes (contexts 7058, 7059, 7061 & 7085). These may represent patching and repair of the original floor, or they may simply be evidence for the frugal use of all building materials. With so little of the tiled floor surviving it is not possible to be certain whether the floor was patched or not. The likelihood is that patching would have been required during the lifetime of the cloisters, and any patching, or replacement of tiles, would have had an effect upon the overall pattern.

1977: The Cloister floor (Fig 36) The high density of later burial vaults had destroyed much of the potential evidence for layout of the cloisters in the angle between the nave and south transept. Although no tiled floor remained in situ, there was some evidence for the mortar bedding and for the structural history of the cloisters. The cloister bench was built on a flat yellow mortar (context 4060) layer, which might have been part of the sub-floor for the supposed tiled cloister walk, but this is by no means certain. There is no other evidence to confirm, or to refute this idea. The relationship between the floor and the cloister bench has to be left open until more evidence comes to light.

Discussion

It is possible that the 10ft 6in (3.2m) module that is suggested for the corners of the cloister walk was reflected in the tiling scheme for the cloisters. However, 10ft 6in (3.2m) divides 10 times into 105ft (32m). This gives an even number of panels, where an odd number would have been more appropriate, since it would allow a single 10ft 6in (3.2m) panel of square-set tiles in the centre of the north walk. The alternative is that there was a 21ft (6.4m) panel (ie. 2 x 10ft 6in) of square-set tiles, flanked by two 31ft 6in (9.6m) panels (3 x 10ft 6in) of diagonally set tiles, with 10ft 6in panels at the corners. The latter scheme would fit with the meagre evidence from excavation.

The Cloister Bench and Evidence for a possible early Cloister

In the 1977 and 1979 excavations evidence was uncovered for a stone built cloister bench against the south transept and nave walls of the Abbey. The excavations in 1991 revealed further lengths of this bench. In places later activity had destroyed, or partly destroyed the bench, but its existence is not in doubt. There was one section of the nave wall which showed no sign of the stone bench. To the west of the Abbess' door in bays 2 and 3 it is almost certain that no stone bench was ever built (Fig 34). The footings were faced with mortar and plaster, and had seven rectangular recesses at regular 3m (10ft) intervals. The recesses span approximately 18m (60ft). The tops of the recesses were on exactly the same level as the top of the stone bench to the west. The likely explanation for them is that they secured part of the frame of a timber bench, which ran between the stone one and the steps up to the Abbess' door. The evidence for the timber structure stops short of the step bedding (context 5056).

The Phase 7 chalk structure (context 5058) which lay behind the proposed timber bench had not been cut down as much as the similar structure which was found in 1991 (context 7055) and was sealed by the stone bench (see above pp 33–4).

There is a possibility, incapable of proof on present evidence, that the timber bench was situated in an earlier, temporary, cloister erected after the completion of the eastern bays of the nave. With the demolition of the Saxon Abbey, and its claustral buildings, there would have been a requirement for a cloister. As an interim measure a smaller timber structure may have been laid out pending the completion of the larger thirteenth-century structure. This hypothesis does not explain the retention of the timber bench in the later cloister. The possible evidence for the superstructure for an early cloister will considered below (pp 67–8).

The Evidence

1977: The Cloister bench (Figs 30, 31b, c & 36) At some time before the construction of the cloister bench, the footings of the south transept were given a mortar facing (contexts 4022 = 4057, 4023 = 4058 & 4049). This consisted of a coarse undercoat (contexts 4022 = 4057) containing pea gravel, and a finer white mortar, or plaster, topcoat (contexts 4023 = 4058). (Fig 31c) The evidence is unequivocal: these finishing coats were applied before the cloister bench was built. At the southern end of the transept the evidence is clear: the footings (context 4021) were undercoated with coarse mortar (context 4022) and finished with fine mortar (context 4023), and then the cloister bench was constructed (Figs 30 & 31).

There is some evidence that the bench was built in two stages. Notes made on site record a mortared flint structure (contexts 4071 = 4034 = 4050 = 4059), tentatively identified

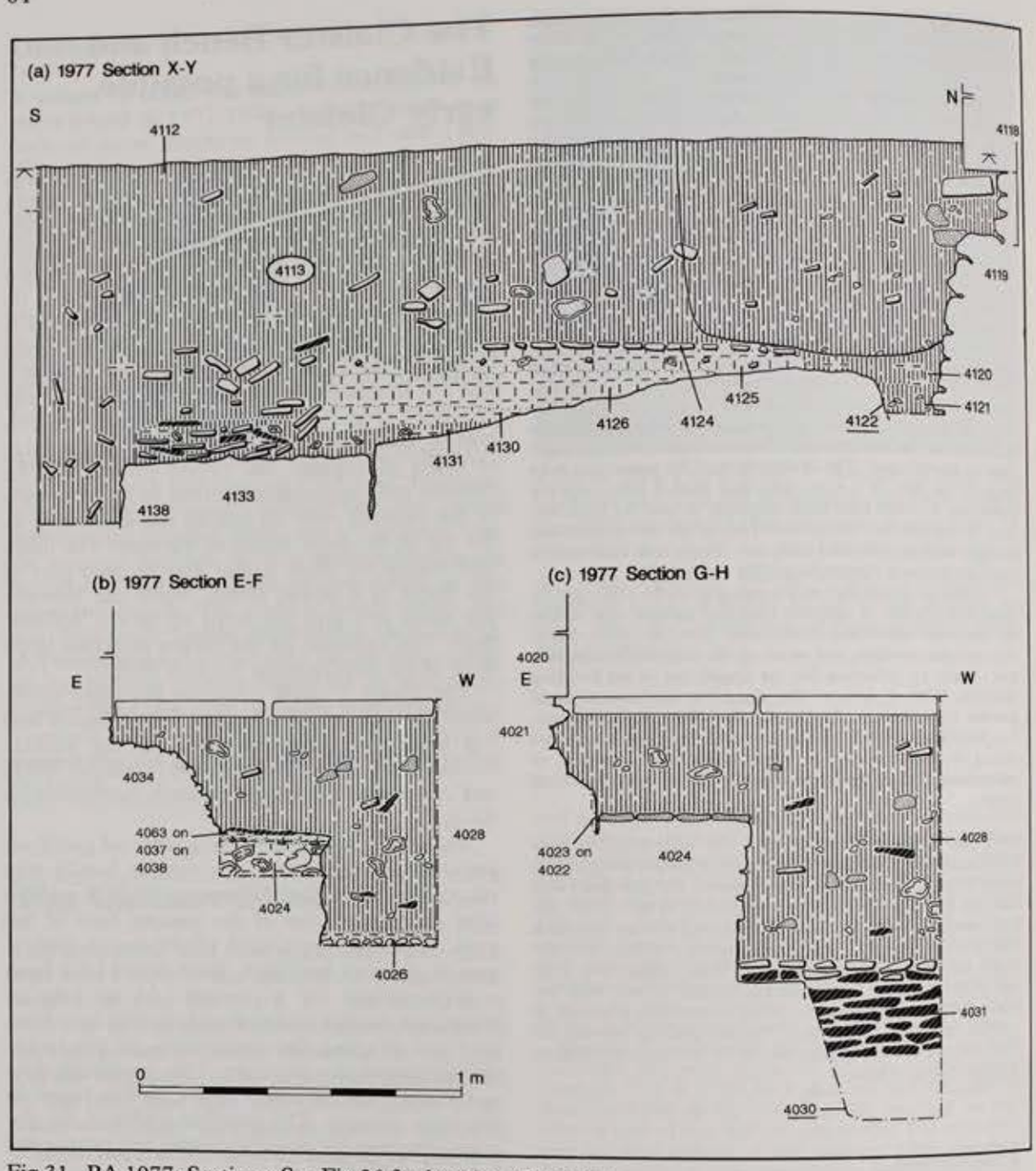


Fig 31 RA 1977: Sections. See Fig 36 for location of sections.

as a possible wall bench, built against the west transept footings in the recess between the two half-buttresses. The site notes record 'traces of mortar face between S. Transept found[ation]s [context 4021] & applied material [4071]'. 4071 is distinguished from 4024 in the site record, implying a clear difference between the two structures. If this is accepted at face value, then at least two stages of construction can be identified. First, the addition of a mortared flint structure (4071) to the transept wall, and then, at some later date, the construction of the cloister bench proper (4024), from the steps at least as far as the end of the transept.

The main argument against this interpretation, relates to the function of the first mortared flint structure (4071 = 4034). It is higher than the later cloister bench, and the surviving evidence suggests that it was not flat topped but rounded (Fig 31b). It could not serve as a bench. It looks as if it were intended to form a filet between the cloister bench and the transept wall where it was set back. If this interpretation is accepted, it would also have to be accepted that the two flint structures are likely to have been contemporary in construction. The round-topped flint structure (context 4071) was faced with pale yellow mortar with pea gravel (context 4035). This appears remarkably like the undercoat layer (4038) that was found in places on top of the main bench (4024) (see below).

The cloister bench seems to have been constructed on top of a mortar layer (context 4060), which was itself laid directly on to brown gravel (context 4026). The mortar, and possibly the

gravel, may be part of the sub-floor for the cloister walk, although the evidence is not absolutely certain. It should be noted that puddled clay, not gravel, was found under the mortar sub-floor in the 1991 excavations.

In one section near the south end of the transept a different and contradictory picture is given. There appears to have been a shallow trench (context 4069) filled with gravel (4062). The trench is cut into the top of the footing of the south transept (context 4063). Although the section is not illustrated, it is almost certain that it reveals a shallow foundation trench for the wall bench. Elsewhere the bench appears to have been built on a yellow mortar layer (context 4060), which seals light brown gravel (context 4026) (Fig 31b). The evidence for a foundation trench appears to be contradicted by all the other sections, but this may be misleading. It may be that the gravel (context 4026) shown in the other sections is the fill of this shallow trench. Although no trench is shown on a site plan, a sketch plan in the site notebook shows just such a trench edge. If this were accepted it would have a significant implication for dating the floor. It can be argued that a floor or path leading from the Abbess's doorway would have been laid shortly after construction of the doorway. That would certainly seem sensible. Assuming that layer 4060 is part of a proposed floor level, and that it was indeed laid over a foundation trench for the cloister bench, this would imply either that the floor was not laid until perhaps the thirteenth century, or that the bench was built earlier than the western part of the cloister excavated in 1974.

The bench was constructed of mortared flint and rough stone blocks, with flat stones edging the top of the structure. The front was finished with a mortar facing (context 4025). The top had an undercoat of coarse yellow mortar with pea gravel (context 4038), on top of which was another yellow mortar layer (context 4037) securing slates (context 4036). (Fig 31b) This flat top may have been intended to support a stone or timber seat, or to serve as a seat itself.

1991: The Cloister Bench (Figs 26e, 34 & 35) Against the south wall of the nave there was a stone bench (contexts 7044 & 7110) with a front of mortared flint and stone (contexts 7095, 7107, 7143, 7150–7151, 7171–7172). There was some variation in the construction of the front, which in some places, for example in front of Bay 4 (context 7107), contained large blocks of stone. The back of the bench was packed with mortar, soil and small rubble (contexts 7056, 7093, 7123 & 7124), and the top capped with mortar and stone slabs (contexts 7063, 7086, 7133 & 7136), or, in front of Bay 6, with mortared flint and stone rubble (context 7157). In places, the bench packing appears to have been set into a slight cut (contexts 7094 & 7096) (not illustrated); in particular, there was a cut (context 7094) into the earlier rammed chalk feature (context 7055). This may have been necessary to reduce the level of the chalk footing. The bench as built was between 0.5 and 0.58 m deep and maximum of 0.4 m high.

Discussion

The excavations brought to light clear evidence for the sequence of the building work. At the east end of the 1991 trench, in Bay 4, the flint footings had been faced with mortar (contexts 7141 & 7142) and finished with plaster (contexts 7146 = 7169 & 7142) before the completion of the top of the bench. It seems that the footings had been faced before the bench was built, because the facing goes behind the cloister bench. In Bay 5, in the middle of the trench, it appears that the footings were faced after the bench top had been finished, that is after the construction of the bench itself.

In Bay 4, the facing of the front of the bench was applied before the floor layers of the cloister were laid. In Bay 6, at the west end of the trench, on the other hand, the front of the bench was apparently faced after the tiled cloister floor was laid down.

It is necessary to exercise caution in the interpretation, however, since it is possible that some of these variations are the result of later repairs that were not clearly identified. The evidence is perhaps in line with what one would expect in a large undertaking such as the construction of a cloister. The various tasks must have started at different points and progressed at different rates. It is very difficult to make a convincing or coherent overall sequence from the evidence.

1 Application of mortar and plaster finishes to footings in Bay 4.
2 Construction of stone cloister bench starting in Bay 4 and working westwards, possibly starting at the same time as 1.
3 Application of mortar and plaster finishes to cloister bench front and top, starting in Bay 4 and working westwards.
4 Application of mortar and plaster finishes to remaining exposed footings in Bay 5. (The footings in much of Bay 5 and all of Bay 6 required no facing).
5 Laying of floor of cloister, including tiling. Working eastwards.
6 Application of mortar and plaster finishes to wall bench front in Bay 6.

What is clear is that a number of major tasks, for example the laying of the cloister walk and the construction and the finishing of the wall bench, were going on at the same time. This means that the cloisters as they survive in their final form, were of one build, and probably date to the early thirteenth century (see below p 68).

As a rider it should be noted that the footings in Bay 4 may have been faced some time prior to work starting on the cloister bench, and that this represents evidence for an earlier, possibly temporary, cloister structure. Certainly there is evidence from the 1979 excavations for an earlier phase. In front of Bays 2 and 3 there never was a stone bench, but there was a timber one of similar dimensions.

The Superstructure of the Cloisters

The corbels are on two levels in Bays 3 to 6 of the south nave aisle wall. The upper line is approximately halfway down the windows in the south wall. Each window in bays 3, 4 and 5 is flanked by two corbels. The lower line of corbels

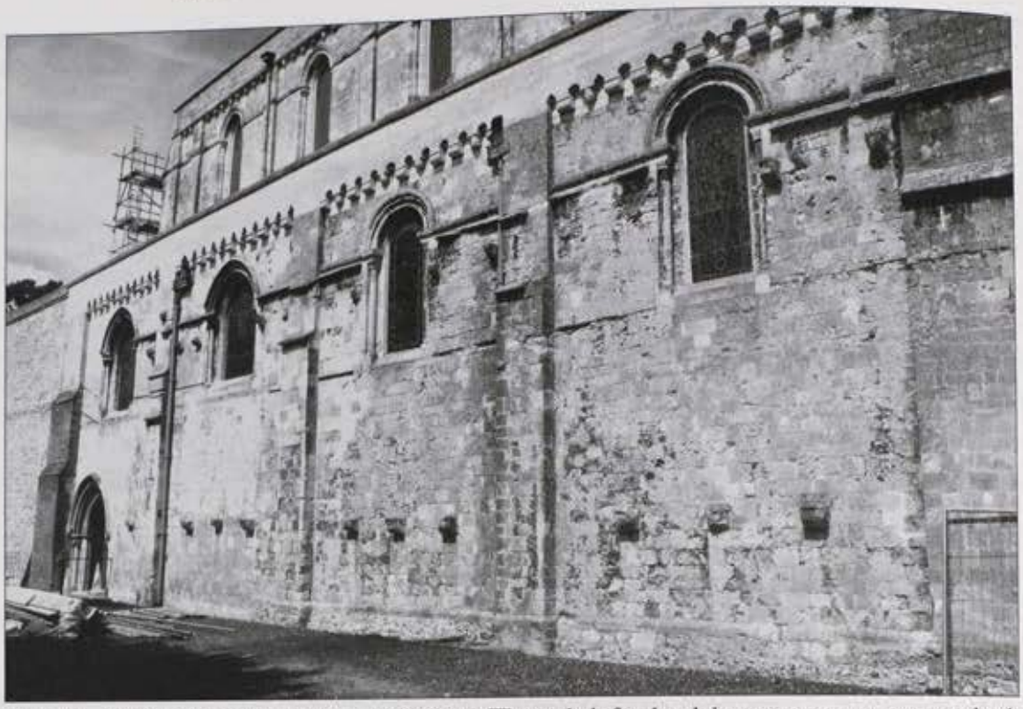


Plate 7. S wall of the nave, showing bays 3 to 7. The corbels for the cloister superstructure at two levels are clearly visible. Note the flint rubble wall in bay 7 farthest from the camera. (Photograph TVAT)

Plate 8. S wall of the nave, detail of bay 4. (Photograph TVAT)

Plate 9. The W side of the S transept, showing two sets of corbels set into the wall. Note the position of the large rood. (Photograph TVAT)

is between 2.65m (8ft 6in) and 2.74m (8ft 10in) above the floor of the cloister. There are three corbels in each of bays 3, 4 and 5. In bay 6 there is one corbel in each line to the east side of the doorway. Since the line of the upper corbels cuts across the windows it is suggested that this upper line represents, not the top, but the lower level of the roof timbers. These two lines of corbels must represent part of the superstructure of the completed cloisters, which were finished only after the completion of the final bays of the nave. The superstructure of the finished cloisters was almost certainly of timber, with a roof-covering of slate or tile. The post-Dissolution deposits sealing the remains of the cloister floor (context 2121) contained layers of both slate and tile (Figs 8, 26 & 32), and for this reason it is not possible to be certain which roofing material was used. The domestic buildings may have been roofed with a different material from the cloisters. If tile were used, as the demolition deposits indicate, this suggests that there may have been a later medieval re-roofing of an existing structure.

The corbels on the south nave wall are on a quite different level from similar corbels on the south transept wall, and the latter may give a clue to the suggested earlier interim cloister structure. In addition, there are the remains of two, and possibly, three roof lines on the first bay on the south wall, which may represent either earlier or later structures. The lowest of these lines, which cuts across the top of the decoration on the arch of the Abbess' door is probably part of a later structure, probably post-Dissolution in date. The present decorated arch is a modern replacement. Early photographs show the original arch with the roof-line cut across it (eg. Luce 1948, facing p 36).

Above this roof-line is a second less steeply sloped line which ends in the angle with the south transept, at the same level as the upper row of corbels on the transept west wall. This may represent an early roof which was replaced by, or

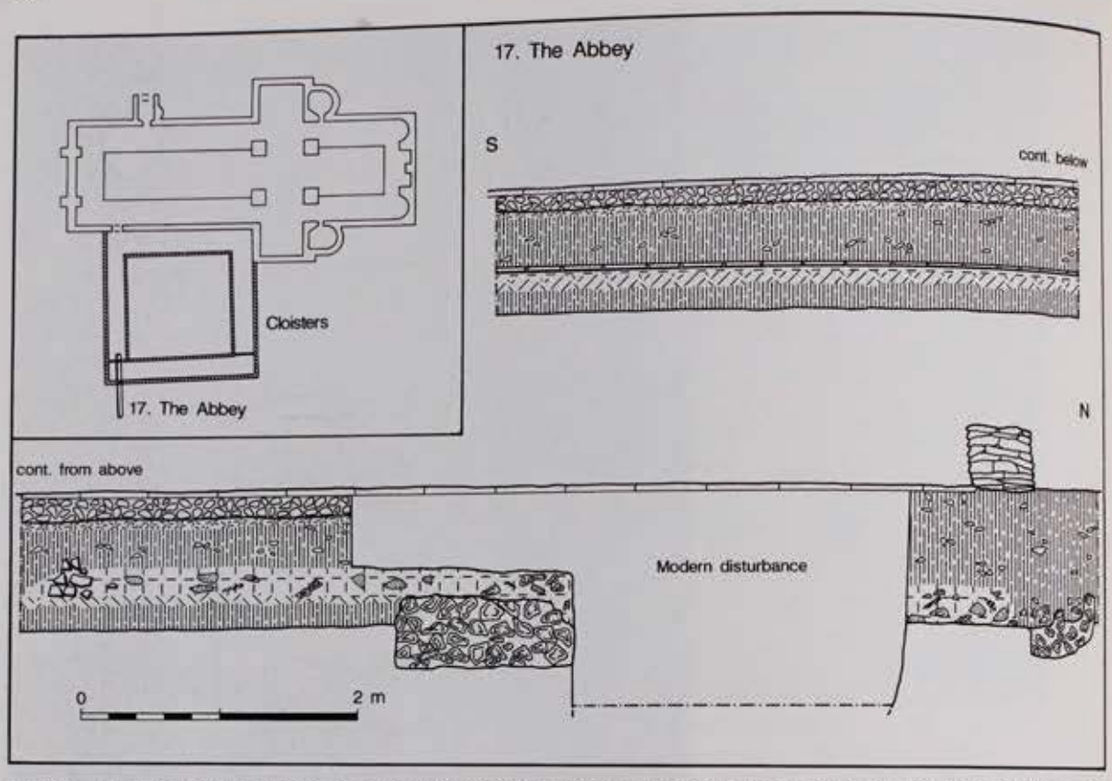


Fig 32 17, The Abbey: Section and plan, showing section through inner wall of cloister walk (a), and north wall of refectory (b).

incorporated into, the final cloister structure. A further possible roof-line can be observed angled to run down towards the south transept. It is unclear what function this could have served, since it would seem to slope in the wrong direction, and, if continued, cut across the upper window in Bay 1. It should be noted that this roof line is on a level with the upper row of corbels on the south wall. The extant remains of cloister structure present an enigma which remains to be unravelled.

The Date of the Construction of the Cloisters

The tiles recovered from the cloister walk and from the entrance to the west range are dated, by analogy with other collections, to the middle part of the thirteenth century (see the Tile Report below pp 123–4). The main dating evidence comes from the 1974 excavations, which produced a small quantity of pottery from contexts stratified beneath the cloister floor. Potsherds, apparently from the mortar of the floor (context 2121), can be dated to the twelfth century. This material, however, is residual as is shown by pottery found in the clay layer (context 2124) underlying the mortar bedding of the cloister floor (context 2121) (Fig 26a). This pottery assemblage, which includes sherds from a Laverstock jug, and a tripod pitcher, gives a terminus post quem for the laying of the cloister floor, and is dated to the thirteenth century. There is also a sherd, possibly from a thirteenth-century tripod pitcher, from a slot (context 2123) sealed by the floor. The excavation evidence therefore dates the completion of the floor, and only indirectly the construction of the cloisters. The limited evidence suggests that the cloisters were built at the same time as the completion of the nave. It is certainly difficult to imagine that the cloisters were completed in their entirety before the west end of the nave was constructed.

Phase 14: The Domestic Ranges

The South Domestic Range (Fig 32)

The cloister was defined on its south side by the north wall of the south range of domestic buildings. Excavated evidence for the south range

Plate 10. S wall of the nave, showing bay 1 with the Abbess's doorway. Note the evidence for at least three roof lines. The date of the rooflines is uncertain, and some, or all, may belong to the period after the Dissolution. Earlier photographs show the steep lower roofline cutting through the arch over the doorway. The arch has been restored. (Photograph TVAT)

is limited. Two houses – Nos 13 and 15, The Abbey – which are out of line with the other properties in the street to the south of the abbey church, preserve in large part the structure of the south range. In particular, the timber roof is largely original twelfth- or thirteenth-century work, with additions of fifteenth-century date (Howlett 1985, 24).

A trench excavated in 1981 in the garden of the adjacent property to the west, No 17, The Abbey, revealed the continuation westwards of the footings of the north wall of the south range (Fig 32). These measured 1.3m wide and 0.5m deep. Part of a later tiled floor of the building was also revealed. This floor consisted of plain glazed floor tiles, the glaze being either very dark green or beige-yellow. The tiles measured 0.25m square and were laid diagonally in a chequer-board pattern. They were very worn and probably date to the fifteenth century.

The West Domestic Range

The west range, which was excavated in 1974, marked the west side of the cloisters, and was a substantial structure. The range ran north–south, and it can be assumed with some confidence that it extended at least the full length of the west side of the cloisters, and joined with the south range.

The Excavated Evidence

1974 Areas J, K and L (Fig 29) The east wall (context 2172) of the western range was 1.15m wide, and was built on a footing (context 2173) that was 2.4m wide (its depth was not recorded). The wall was substantial and clearly intended to support a building of more than one storey. This is confirmed by a close study of the wall of the westernmost bay of the nave south aisle, which was built largely of mortared flint but incorporated some re-used dressed blocks of stone (Fig 33a).[4] Set in this wall, approximately 10ft (3.1m) above the present ground level is a stone-built cupboard (Fig 33c), which must have formed part of the fixtures of the first floor of the west range.

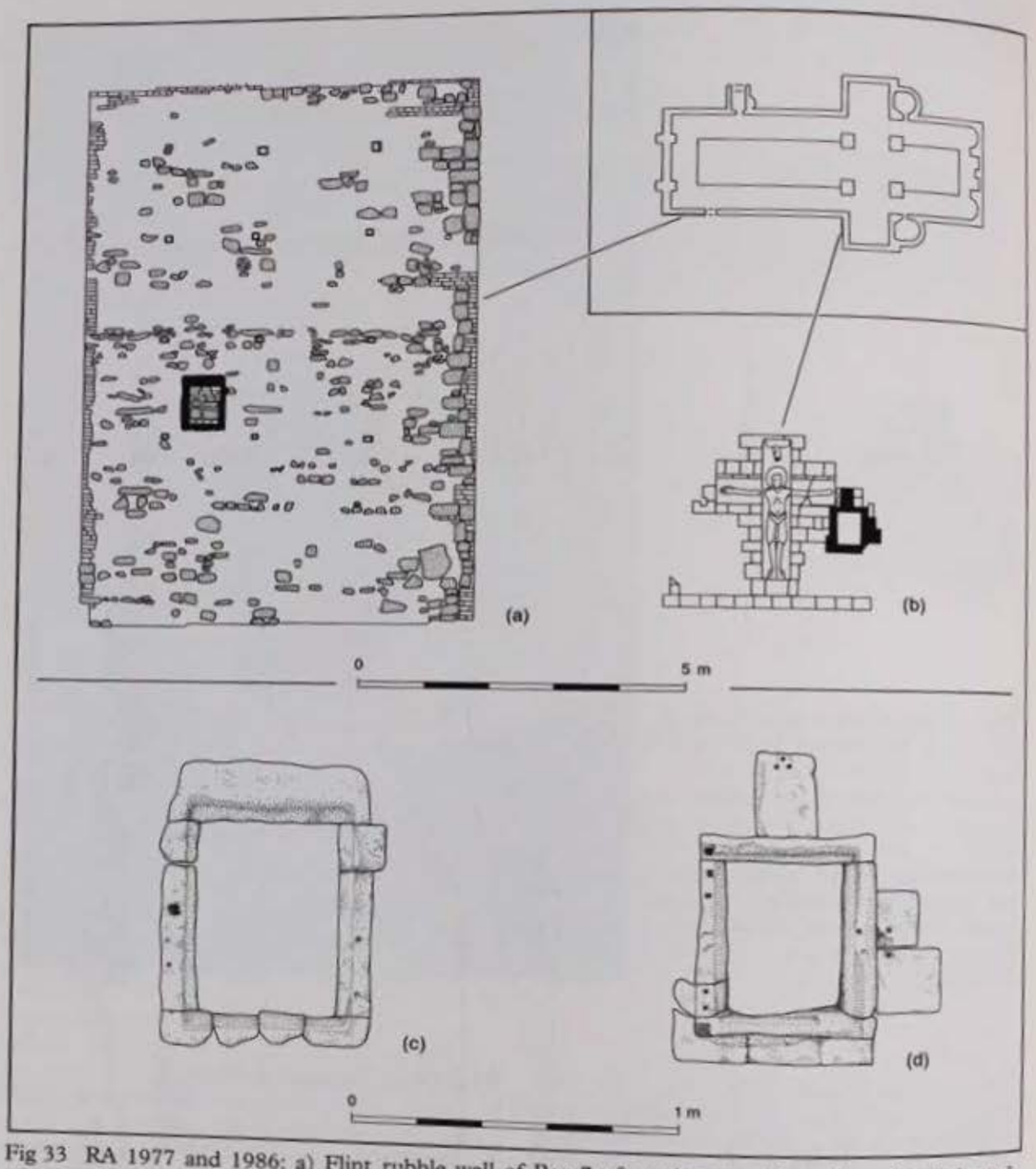


Fig 33 RA 1977 and 1986: a) Flint rubble wall of Bay 7 of south nave aisle, with putlog holes and stone cupboard indicated. b) Saxon rood and associated stone cupboard on west wall of south transept. c) Detail of stone cupboard on (a). d) Detail of stone cupboard on (b).

Approximately 2.5m south of the present brick-faced respond on the nave wall, there was a doorway 1.7m wide. On the south side of the doorway, one course of limestone ashlars survived. On the evidence of these surviving remains it would seem that the wall had ashlar quoins and dressings, at the very least. The ashlars on the north side of the door have been robbed away, but traces of their settings were noted.

The position of the door, or doors, within the entranceway was marked by a low mortar and stone sill, or threshold (context 2169). This was at the western, or inside, edge of the opening. This was matched by an ashlar, which was cut to form a door jamb, on the south side of the opening. The door, or doors, which would have opened out on to the cloisters, would have closed against them. Some stones from the threshold had been robbed out, but their positions were clearly marked by ridges of mortar. The inside edge of the sill was aligned on the inside face of the wall, and it was between 0.25m and 0.35m wide. The depth of the doorway, excluding the sill, was between 0.9m and 0.95m. No evidence for the door, or doors, or their hinges or closures were found. Double doors would have had the advantage of not opening into the cloister walk.

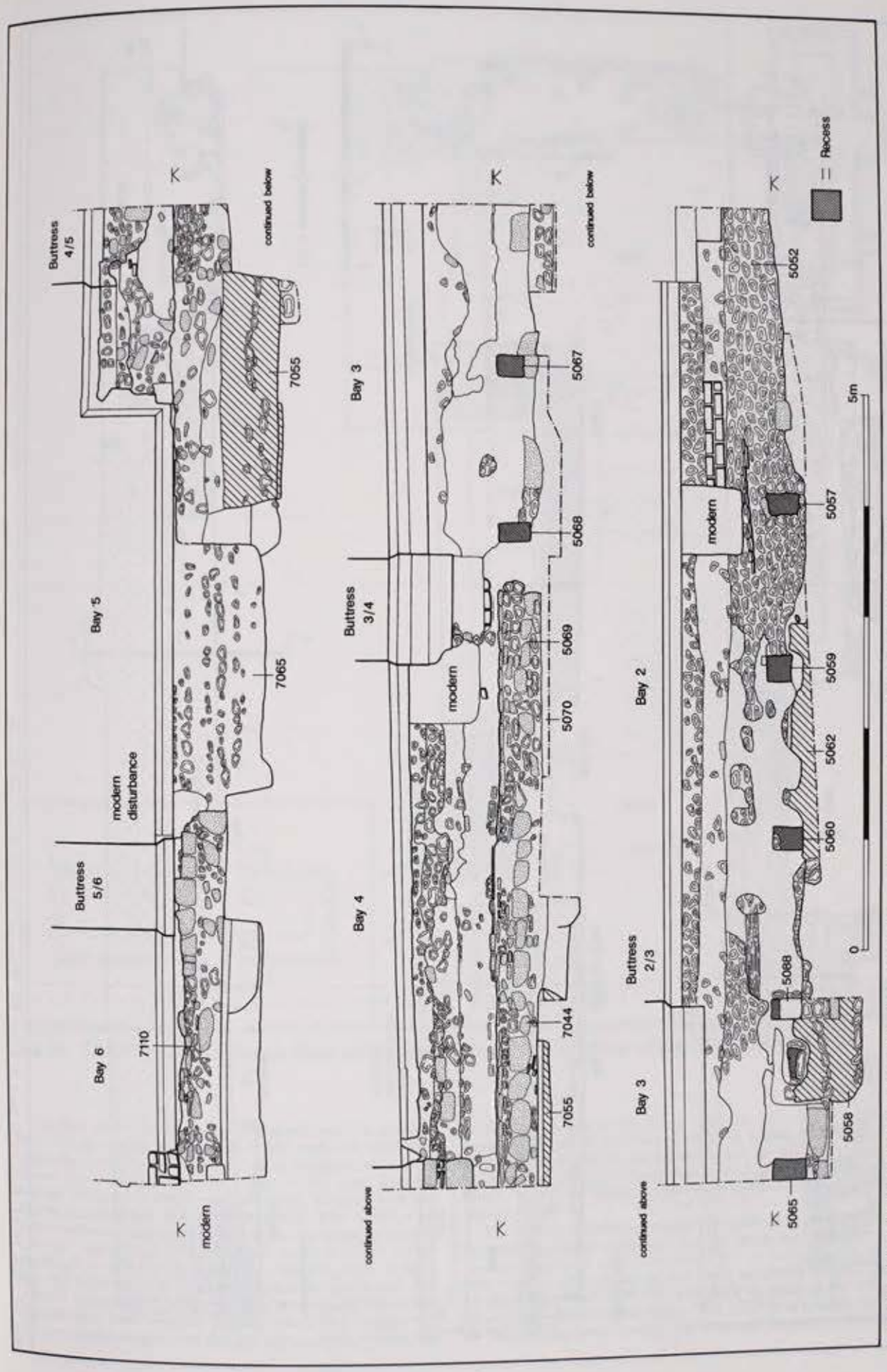


Fig 34 RA 1979 and A 1991.18: Elevation of footings of south nave aisle wall. See Fig 35 for plan.

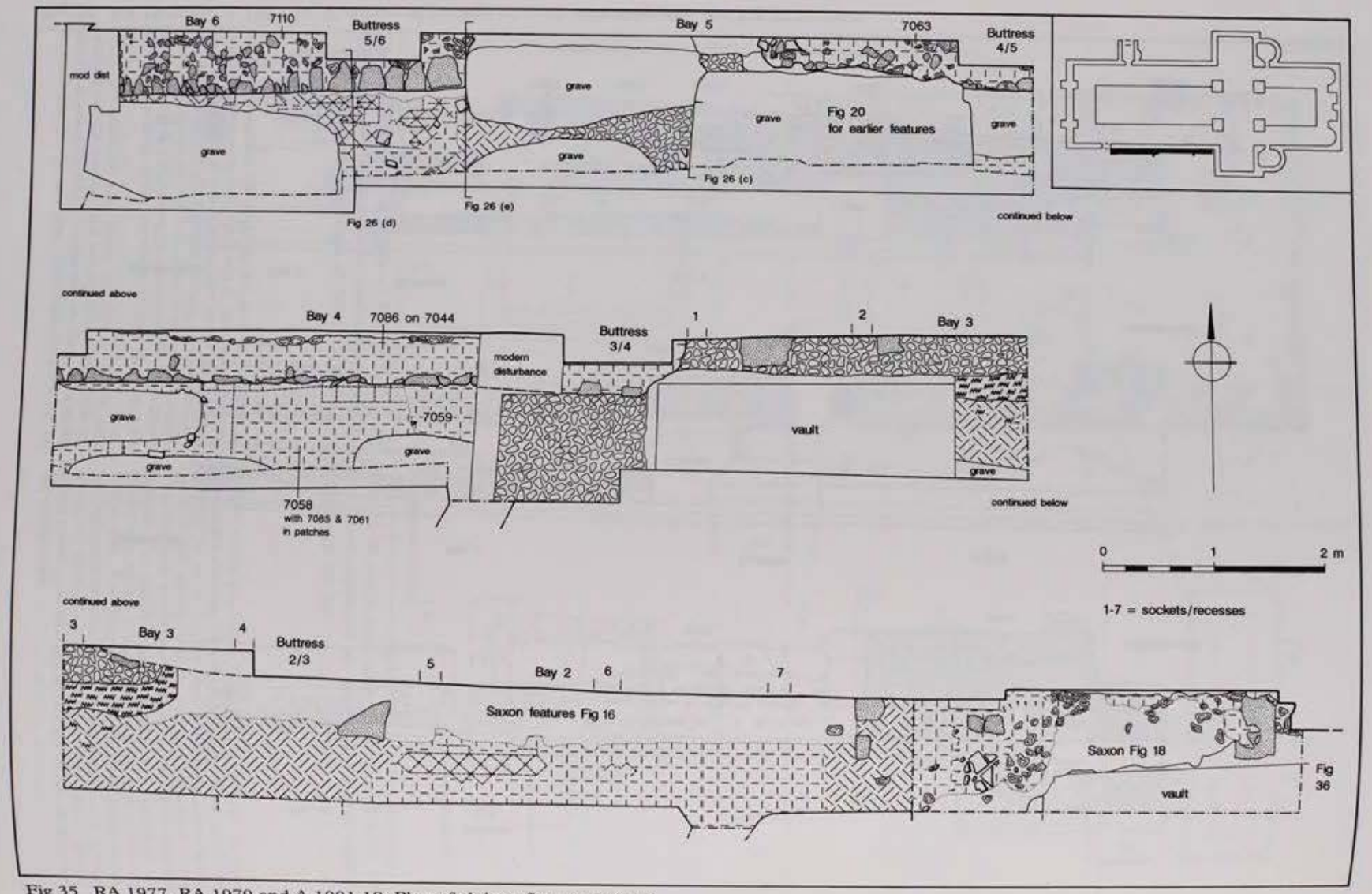


Fig 35 RA 1977, RA 1979 and A 1991.18. Plan of cloister floor and bench.

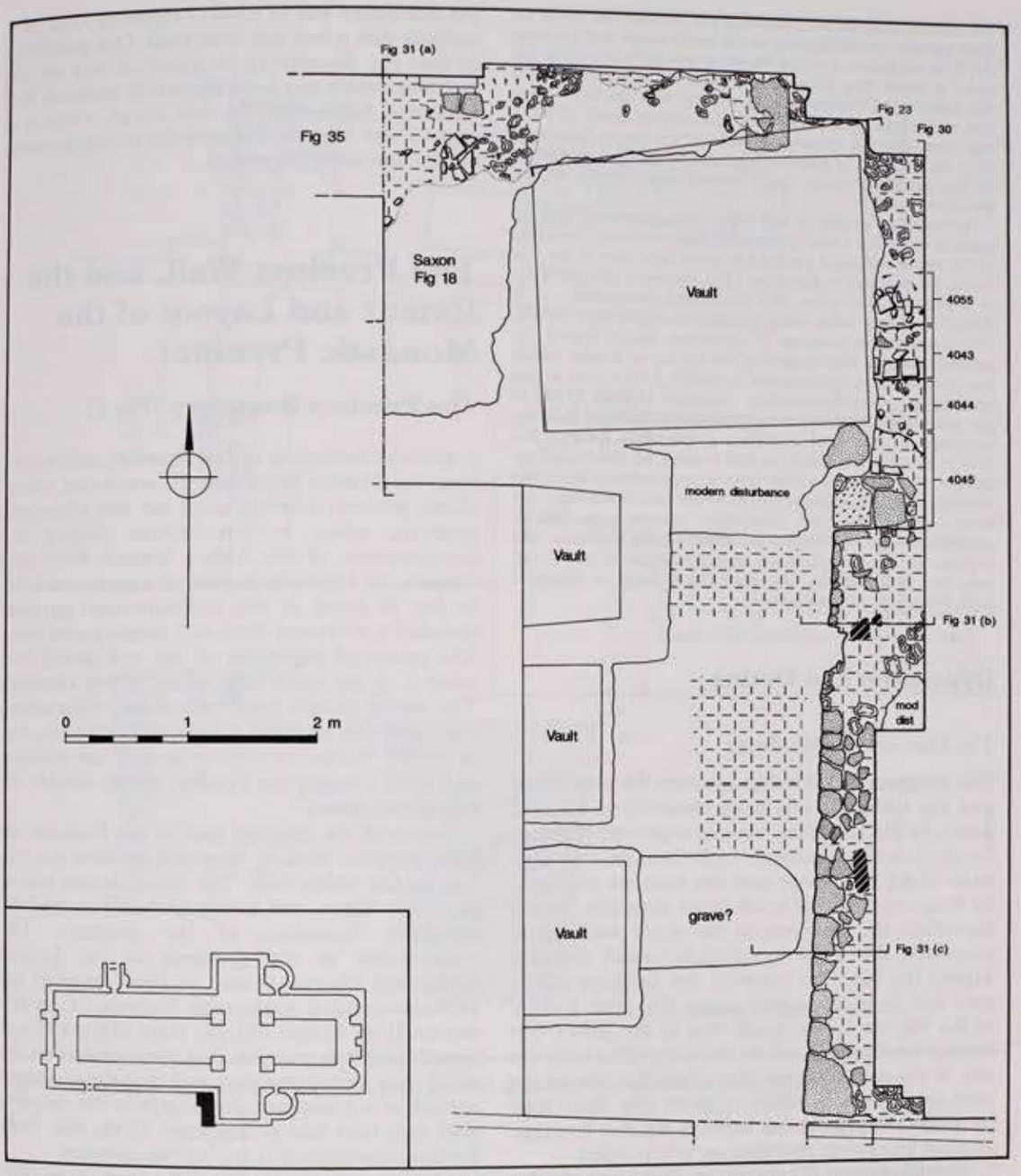


Fig 36 RA 1977: Plan of cloister floor and bench at the northeast corner of the Cloisters.

Fig 35 RA 1977, RA 1979 and A 1991.18. Plan of cloister floor and bench.

The floor on the inside of the building was more or less on a level with the mortar and stone door sill, while the tiled floor within the doorway (context 2157) was at a slightly lower level. These tiles were aligned on the edge of the step, and the mortar bedding for them was, probably, integral with the mortar threshold and floor of the building. The evidence on this point is not completely clear from the surviving excavation records. The mortar floor (contexts 2142 & 2149) of the building is recorded by the excavator as showing signs of wear, but very slight traces of tile impressions were also noted. One possible interpretation is that the floor was originally tiled, but that the tiles were removed, perhaps when they became too worn or were damaged, and that the mortar surface under the tiles then served as the floor until the demolition of the building. However, this interpretation is unlikely, because the impressions of tiles in the mortar would be unlikely to have survived such wear. It is more likely that the tiles were removed either when the building was demolished or very shortly before.

The 1974 excavation revealed few internal features of the building, and the evidence even for these was unclear. A narrow east–west wall (context 2171) lay 2.75m south of, and more or less parallel to, the south aisle wall. It was built of mortared flint and was rendered on both sides with mortar, or plaster. It was only 0.25m wide. It is possible that its foundations were cut into the footings (context 2173) of

the main west range wall, although the evidence for this is far from certain. Its relationship to the north–south wall (context 2172) is not known because the latter was robbed away at the point at which they would have joined, but it is possible that the narrow wall (context 2171) was cut into the face of the east wall of the range. The area immediately north of 2171 was opened in the excavation, but appears not to have been fully excavated. It is possible that, rather than being built to its full height in stone, this flint wall supported a timber partition.

Immediately south of this wall, and apparently laid up against it, was a broad mortared flint structure (context 2170) which had been inserted at some later date. It lay just inside the doorway to the range. The excavator interpreted it as a possible stair base, and this seems reasonable – it is difficult to know what other function it might have served. The stratigraphic evidence is uncertain, but it appears to indicate that the flint structure was on top of a layer which was described as 'occupation' (context 2141), and which overlaid the worn mortar floor (contexts 2142 & 2149) of the west range. If this is correct, it would indicate that not only was the mortared flint base a secondary feature, but that it was inserted late in the history of the building. Indeed, it is possible that it was constructed after the building had been demolished, in which case it will not have been a stair base, but must have served some other, uncertain, purpose. There is no direct dating evidence, and it must be stressed that the interpretation of the small east–west wall and the flint platform is built on evidence both flimsy and contradictory.[5]

Discussion and Dating

The Date of the West Range

The structural relationship between the west range and the nave has not been established beyond doubt. In the first place, the above-ground evidence for the junctions between both the east and west walls of the west range and the nave are obscured by the post-medieval brick-faced responds, which now flank the final bay of the south wall. More seriously, the 1974 excavation trench did not expose the junction between the footings of the nave and those of the west range. The wide footing of the last bay of the south wall of the Abbey has already been noted, and its size contrasted with the rest of the nave footings. It is of similar size to the west range footing, which suggests that there may be a direct structural link between the two footings. It is not impossible that they are of one build.

The evidence of pottery sealed beneath the floor does support the idea that the west range was completed at about the same time as the last three bays of the nave, that is in the early to mid thirteenth century. Pottery from context 2143, beneath the floor, includes eleventh- to twelfth-century forms, and some fabrics found elsewhere in thirteenth-century contexts. The pottery from the mortar of the floor (contexts 2142 & 2149) includes sherds from two jugs, one a Laverstock product. A date in the thirteenth century would be acceptable.

In 1231 Henry III gave the Abbess five good oaks from the wood of 'Milchet' (Melchet) '*ad planchias faciendas ad dormitorium reparandum*'. If the dormitory was in need of repair in 1231, it is unlikely that it had just been built. One possibility is that the dormitory in question was an old building, which was soon afterwards replaced. It is suggested below that the west range, which it is argued was built in the mid-thirteenth century, housed the nuns' dormitory.

The Precinct Wall, and the Extent and Layout of the Monastic Precinct

The Precinct Boundary (Fig 1)

A gateway belonging to the Nunnery and leading from the Market Place into the south-east corner of the precinct survived until the late nineteenth century, when it was rebuilt during the construction of the Abbey United Reformed Church. In 1984 observation of a pipe-trench 5m to 6m in front of the reconstructed gateway revealed a mortared flint wall running east–west. The projected alignment of this wall would have taken it to the south edge of the Abbey Gateway. The wall may have been part of the bridge across the Fishlake in front of the gateway, or, less probably, it may have been part of the precinct wall itself crossing the Fishlake to run outside the line of the stream.

South of the gateway part of the Fishlake has been diverted to flow westward to form the mill leat for the Abbey Mill. The stream is now known as Abbey Water, and it very probably marked the southern boundary of the precinct. The excavations in the grounds of the United Reformed Church manse in 1989 revealed the probable original north edge (context 31) of this stream (Figs 17 and 18). No trace of any wall was found, and it is possible that none existed on the south side of the precinct, and that the leat alone served as a boundary. Alternatively the precinct wall may have lain to the south of the leat. Only further excavation will answer this question.

Moving to the west side of the precinct, in 1988 a watching brief undertaken in advance of the construction of the drive to the new Vicarage revealed a mortared flint wall running approximately north to south (Fig 37). To the west of the wall it was clear that the ground level had been made up in the post-medieval period. On the east side the natural gravel subsoil was found not far below the present ground surface. The wall clearly lay along the original edge of the gravel terrace which is marked by the 50 foot (15m) contour. It was clear from observation of a crack running up the south wall of the nineteenth-century former vicarage, that this structure was built over the precinct wall and lay partly on made

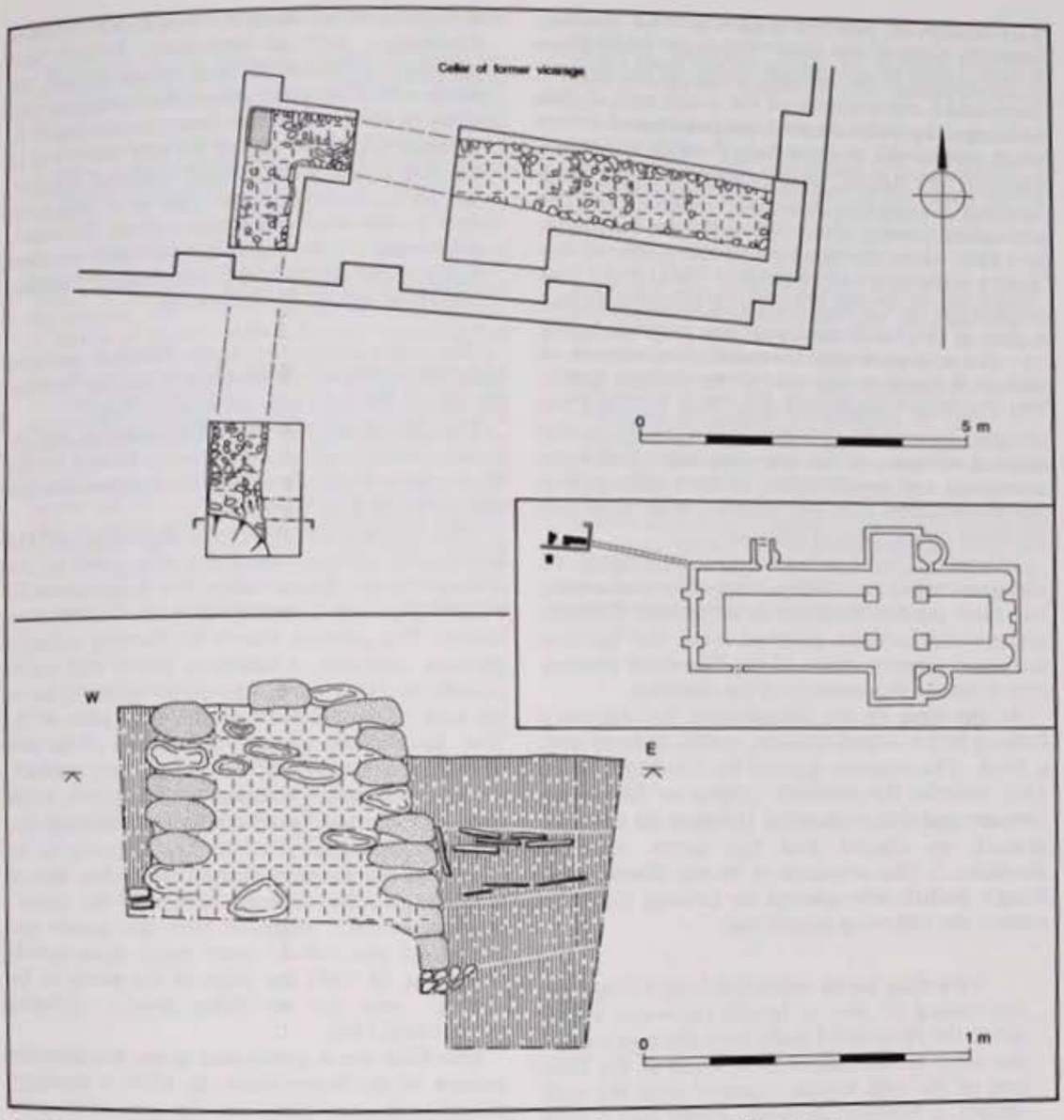


Fig 37 A 1988.6: Section and location plan of wall at northwest corner of precinct.

ground. Investigation of the earth floor in its cellar quickly revealed the north-west corner of the precinct wall, complete with limestone quoin with a chamfered plinth. The wall was planned and its position and orientation plotted. The wall was formed of coursed flint and rough stone and a mortared flint rubble core. It was slightly battered and had a step on the eastern uphill side. There was a layer of pegtile, which might have been derived from a wall capping, dumped against this side of the wall.

The northern line of the wall was aligned on the north-west corner of the nave, and it appears that the Abbey itself formed the northern boundary of the precinct. On the east side the precinct was probably marked by the Fishlake. Whether there was precinct boundary wall as well as the stream only further excavation can reveal. The precise line of the boundary at the north-east corner of the precinct is not known. Presumably it was from this direction that the townspeople reached the Abbey and their parish church in its north aisle.

The Domestic Buildings within the Precinct

The precinct as outlined above is comparatively small. The exact layout of the buildings within it is not known. The southern range, which survives in

part today in Nos 13 and 15, The Abbey, probably housed the nuns' refectory. Excavation in the garden of the adjacent property located the demolished continuation of the north wall of this building. The 1974 excavations investigated a very small part of the western range, which may have included the dorter, or dormitory. By and large modern excavation has been limited to the immediate vicinity of the Abbey church. However, in 1922, when the gardens to the south of the Abbey were laid out, a limited excavation was undertaken by Colonel Ashley of Broadlands and a plan of the buildings found was produced (Fig 1).[6] The area excavated lay mainly to the south of the south transept and east of the cloister garth. The buildings investigated must have included the chapter house and sacristy. It is clear from the internal evidence of the plan that there had been alterations and modifications to the buildings, but the relationships between different walls were not recorded on the copy of the plan.

Other buildings are known to have existed, or can be assumed on analogy with other nunneries, but their precise location is unknown. Certain information can be gleaned from the limited historical sources. Most of the historical sources date from the Suppression of the nunnery.

At the time of the Dissolution the abbess's lodging had a chapel, kitchen, stable, granary and a barn. The sources quoted by Liveing (1906, 264) describe the Abbess's lodging as 'having an upstairs and inner chamber between an upstairs oratory or chapel and the great upstairs chamber...'. The accounts of Henry Warner, the King's Bailiff, also quoted by Liveing (loc cit) contain the following description:

> . . . a dwelling house called Chabbey's lodginge, containing 51 feet in length (between a hall called the Household Hall) from the west end of the same to the chapel of S. Peter at the East end of the said house, together with the said chapel, a kitchen, granary, stable and a new barn in a court called the 'utter courte of the monastery'.

The location of the 'utter court' is not known certainly, but it may have been on the east side of the Precinct. The abbess's chapel was dedicated to St Peter. Originally the chapel had its own chaplain, but it seems that by the Dissolution this position was no longer filled, for it is recorded that in 1536 John Foster, knight, was granted an annuity which had previously been paid to the Chapel of St Peter and the Chapel of St Andrew in the infirmary for two chaplains.[7]

Adjacent to the Abbess's garden and the outer court was the tenement known as the Clerk's chamber. It is described, again in Henry Warner's accounts, and the description given here is quoted from Liveing (1906, 265):

> A tenement commonly called the 'Clerkes Chamber', with all chambers, houses, and buildings between the said tenement and the stone wall of the outer gate of the monastery, and a parcel of the said outer court, containing 60 ft. in length from the end of the said stone wall to the end of the garden called 'Chabbes Garden', and 26 feet in breadth, and a parcel of land at the end of the said tenement called 'Paradise', containing . . . in length from the said tenement to the water course in the parcel called Paradise, including part of the same water.

The water course next to the Paradise may have been the stretch of the Fishlake which lay between the Abbey Precinct and the Market Place.

The chambers over the Abbey gateway and the tenement next to the gate were known as the 'Receyvours lodginge'. After the Suppression this was leased to John Richards.

The Clerk's chamber, the Paradise and the Receiver's lodging were the only parts of the Abbey site not rented after the Suppression by Francis Fleming. Fleming had been the nunnery's lawyer. The portion rented by Fleming included gardens, orchards, a cemetery, ponds and waters (Coldicott 1989, 150). The ponds probably lay to the west of the precinct, on the flood plain of the Test. Excavations in 1987 on the site of the new vicarage revealed deposits that were very probably the fill of the Abbey's fishponds. The ponds would have been formed by diverting and damming one of the braided streams of the Test.[8] Among the lay officers of the nunnery at the Dissolution, there is mention of John Calkyn 'keeper of the swans', whose presence suggests that the ponds and waters of the Abbey were more than merely utilitarian. In 1541 the 'farm of the swans on the rivulet' was let to John Foster (Liveing 1907–1910, 144).

One final site is mentioned in the documentary sources of the Suppression. In 1544 'a messuage called le Systers house at the gate of Romsey abbey . . . in the tenure of Peter Westbroke' was amongst properties granted to John Foster and Richard Marden (*Letters and Papers* Vol XIX part 2 (1544), Item 800 [24]). This messuage need not have been within the precinct, since its description as being 'at the gate' leaves open the possibility that it might have been outside the gate.

Notes

1 Romsey Fabric Group Identifiers (RFGI) 3–24 (RAD 44) (fabric 5) and 5–15 (RAD 62). Both are missing from the archive. See Tile Report, pp 121–144 below.

2 RFGI 2–20 (RAD 78) (fabric 6).

3 The unworn tiles: RFGI 2–29 (RAD 51), 2–28 (RAD 54) and 2–27 (RAD 55) (all fabric 6).

4 The stones used in the wall included Bembridge, Binstead, Chilmark, an orange Oolite, Purbeck, and Quarr, and Greensand. The wall was recorded in some detail in 1986, when repointing work was undertaken by the Abbey

authorities as part of the ongoing conservation programme on the Abbey.

5 The records of this area (L) of the 1974 site are incomplete. The site plan, which is the main record, shows context 2171, and describes it as plastered on both sides. The area to the north of the wall is said to be unexcavated. In the site notebook there is a sketch plan and section said to relate to Area L. The orientation of the plan is not completely clear, but it seems to show both the wall (context 2172) of the west range and the secondary east-west wall (context 2171). If this is correct, it shows the secondary wall rendered with mortar on one face at least, and cutting the footings (context 2173) of the west range. A sketch section, appears to show a cross-section of this secondary wall. On one side, possibly the south, side its footings are cut into a dark soil, which is overlain by a mortar floor. On the other, north(?), side, there is a floor(?) surface shown at a much lower level, apparently at the base of the wall. This is the part of the site that was unexcavated according to the main plan. The evidence is contradictory and uncertain. The only finds that may be from Area L were given the Archive Context number (2154), which cannot be located on any site plan or section. The description as transcribed by Dr Russel reads 'Area L. Mortar level below destruction debris and clay. Mortar floor'. Dr Russel, for reasons that are not entirely clear, thought that this particular group had been mislabelled and should be assigned to the 1975 excavations. The assemblage consists of the following sherds: 2 × early Medieval cookpot; 1 × Laverstock; ; 1 × Medieval jug; 1 × Medieval jug (?Surrey). Dr Russel (1990) would date the group to the thirteenth century or later. Clearly, this pottery has to be ignored for dating purposes.

6 The original plan prepared by the Broadlands Estate Office was copied by W H Herbert in 1924, and is in the Broadlands Archive, now housed in the Southampton University Library. A brief note on the human skeletal material from this excavation was prepared by Sir Arthur Keith, FRS, Conservator of the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, and published in *Proc Hampsh Field Club* IX (1925), 390–91. Keith notes that 'at least 15 individuals, perhaps twice this number, are represented', and comments on the bones and gives some indication of sex and age of some individuals. There is no information about the precise provenance of the material.

7 It is uncertain whether John Foster, knight, is the same man as John Foster, MA and clerk in holy orders who was with his father joint steward of the Abbey.

8 The excavation on the site of the new Vicarage in 1987 (A 1986.31) revealed deposits which have been interpreted as pond silting and infill. In 1988 the excavation of a soakaway and sewer pipe trench to the new vicarage (A 1988.6) revealed black deposits filling a stream channel cut through the natural gravel. These deposits contained late Saxon ceramics (contexts 6112–6118, 6120–21); see Russel 1990, and the discussion by Rees in Scott et al forthcoming. The stream may have drained from the fishponds.

Chapter 6

The Norman and Later East End Chapels

Introduction

Presently, at the east end of the Abbey, there are four chapels. The two chapels in the north and south aisles remain as built, and flank two central chapels dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St Ethelfleda. Originally, the latter chapels extended beyond the present east end of the church. Two phases of structure were identified, and in both phases there seem to have been two chapels, implying a double dedication, probably the same dedications – to the Virgin Mary and St Ethelfleda – as those of their somewhat reduced present day successors.

The Chapels were investigated in the 1973 excavations, and had previously been the subject of investigations by the Rev Berthon in 1866 and by Peers and Bilson in 1909.

Phases 10–12: The first, Norman, Chapels

The Evidence for the Footings of the Chapels

The footings of the first pair of Chapels and the Retro-choir (Fig 39a) The 1973 excavation established that the footings of the Chapels were not laid out or built at the same time as those of the Retro-Choir. The footings (context 1065) of the north wall, those (context 1072) of the central spine wall, and those (context 1073) of the south wall of the Chapels all butted against the footing of the retro-choir. The Chapel footings were also structurally different from those of the retro-choir, being formed of a gravel and flint base, on top of which were thick layers of gravel and flint, alternating with thin bands of lime mortar (Context 1072, Fig 10). The retro-choir footings (contexts 1036, 1093, 1040 & 1028) were constructed of gravel and small flints with mortar, interspersed with bands of larger flints.

The footings of the north wall (context 1065) were 2.8m wide at their narrowest point; those of the south wall (context 1073) were 2.5m wide. The footings of the central spine wall (context 1072) were only 1.2m wide. The depth of the spine wall footings in Area A was about 1.7m (Fig 10). It is probable that the north and south wall footings were of the same depth.

At their west end the three wall footings butted against those of the Retro-Choir wall (contexts 1036, 1093, 1040 & 1028). At their east end they joined to form the footings of the east wall of the Chapel. This footing was only exposed at one point, and lay mainly outside the excavated area. The spine wall footing widened slightly both to the north and the south where it joined the east footing. The south edge of the north wall and the north edge of the south wall curved to meet the east footing. The chapel appears, at footing level at least, to have consisted of two slightly flattened apsidal chambers.

The north edge of the north wall footings seems to have been cut down to accommodate the later doorway (context 1001). The surviving northern edge of the footings could be traced eastwards almost as far as the east edge of the excavation trench. At this point, only a few stones forming the north edge of the footings had survived the destruction wrought by the digging of a grave (context 1082) and by the insertion of a nineteenth-century brick vault 1. Just inside the east edge of the excavation, at a distance of 4.4m from the Retro-Choir wall, a return to the north was identified. The limit of this northwards extension was not defined, but it was at least 1m in length. It seems likely that this return was part of the base for the north-east corner of the Chapel. It is extremely unlikely that it supported a buttress, but the walls will probably have been thickened at the corners. The evidence at the southern corner was destroyed by Vault 9.

Discussion

It is clear that the Chapel footings were built later than the retro-choir footings, but it is not certain whether construction of the Chapels was planned at that stage. The fact that the footings of the Chapels were built in a completely separate operation suggests that they were a later addition to the plan, for if they had been planned for later construction, it might be expected that their footings would have been laid out at the same time as those of the retro-choir. Against this is the lack of evidence for substantial changes to the retro-choir. This deficiency of evidence may be more apparent than real in view of later changes in the structure.

It may be that the break between the laying out of the two sets of footings was forced upon the builders by the presence, on the proposed site of the chapels, of an open 'ditch' (contexts 1070, 1078 & 1076) which involved backfilling and consolidation. This ditch may have served as a

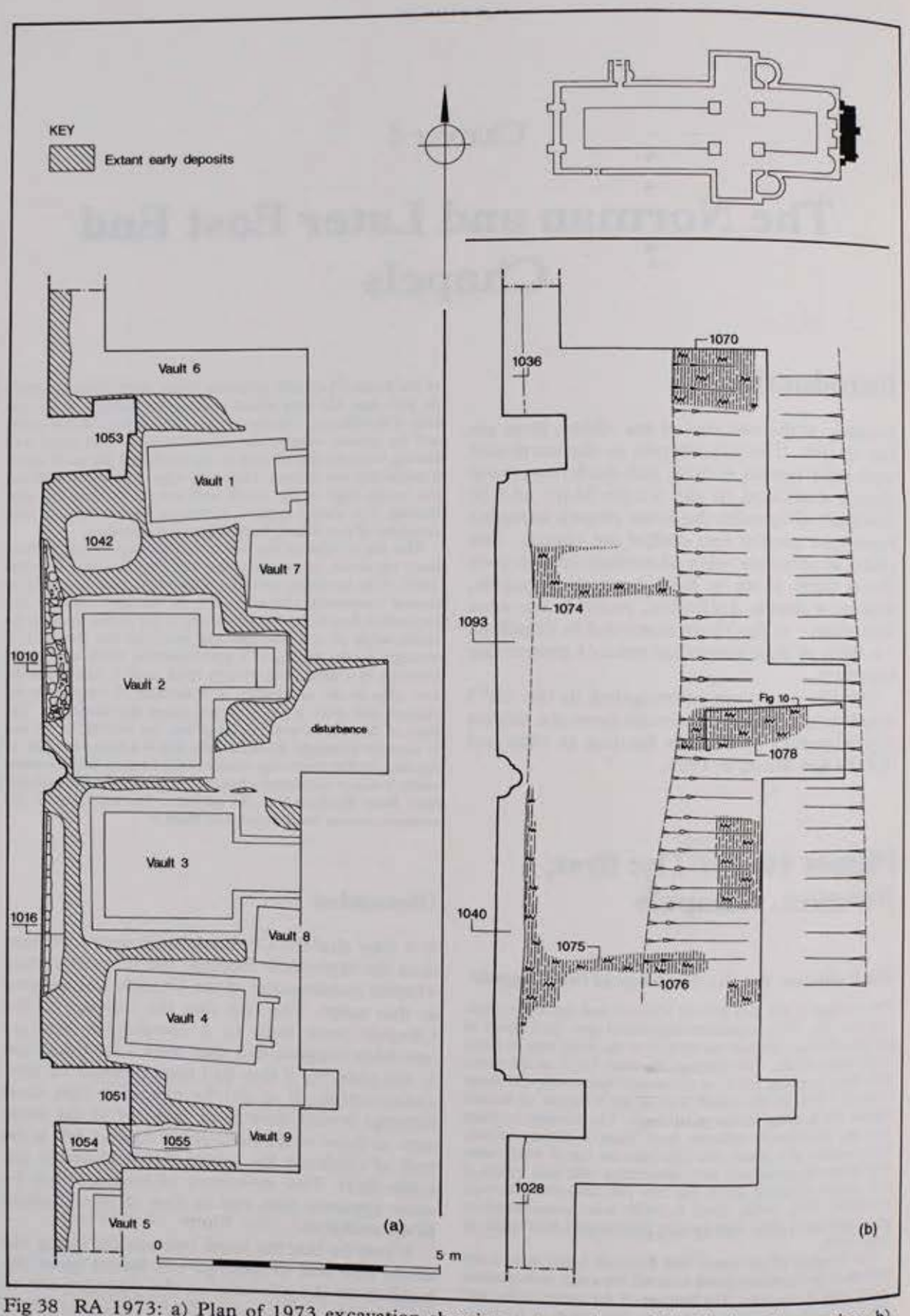


Fig 38 RA 1973: a) Plan of 1973 excavation showing extent of post-Dissolution destruction. b) Features pre-dating the Norman Lady Chapel.

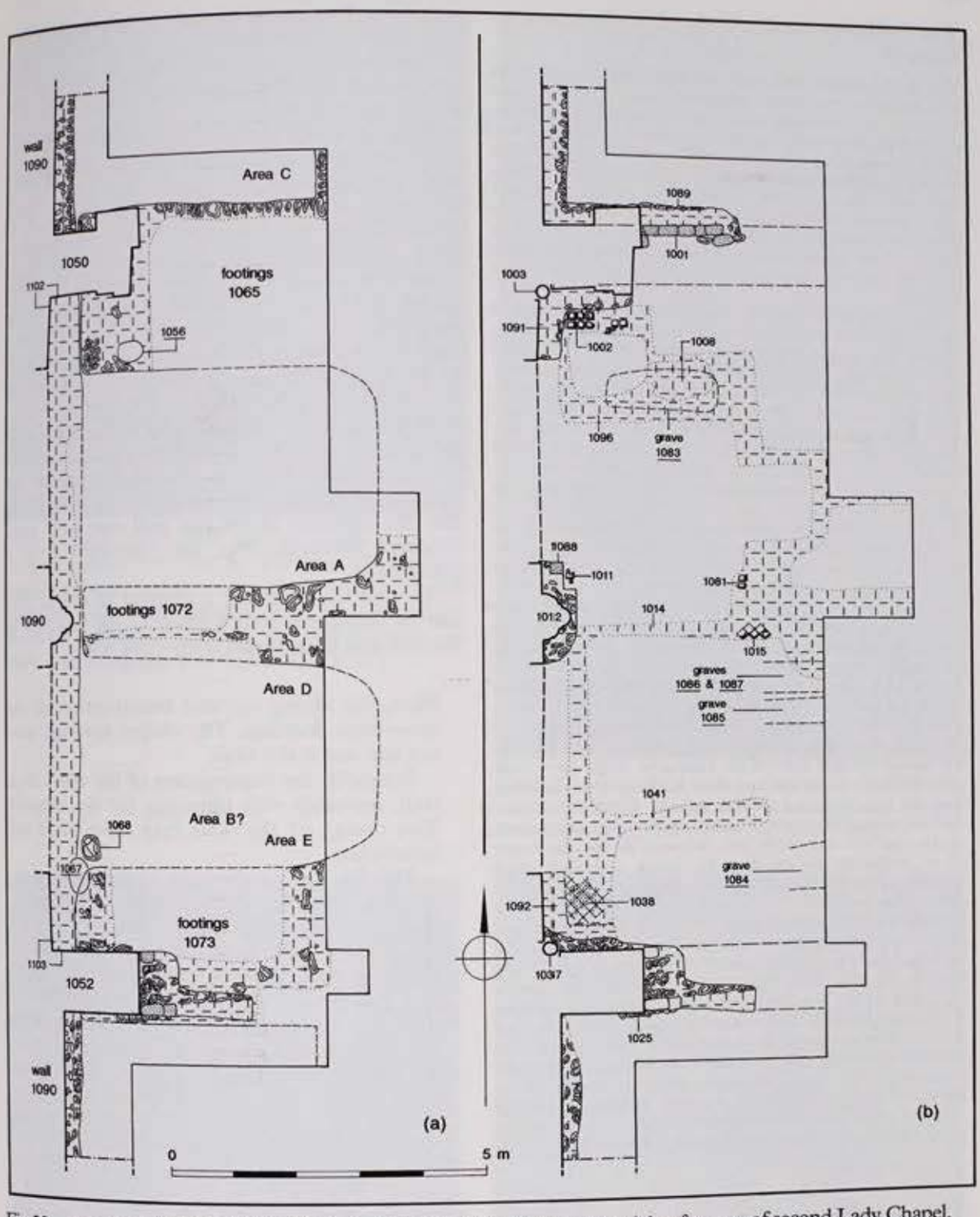


Fig 39 RA 1973: a) Plan of first, Norman, Lady Chapel. b) Plan of surviving features of second Lady Chapel.

boundary to the original monastic precinct, which was being expanded. Whatever the reason, it is certain that there was a delay, of unknown duration, in the laying out of the footings of the chapels. A study of the retro-choir and its relationship with the first chapels might reveal more information.

The Evidence for the Floors of the First, Norman, Chapels

Little or no positive evidence remained of the floors of the first chapels – all the surviving fragments of tiled floor are assigned to the second pair of chapels – and it seems reasonable to suppose that the earlier floors were destroyed in the building of the second pair of chapels. The successive chapel floors are discussed in the section on the rebuilt chapels (pp 85–87 below).

The Evidence for the Walls of the Norman Chapels

The Retro-Choir Wall and the North and South Walls
The Retro-Choir wall to the north and the south of the Chapel was faced with limestone ashlars and had a chamfered plinth, two courses deep, matching that found elsewhere on the Abbey church. The short sections of retro-choir wall within the chapels lacked a chamfered plinth; it is not clear whether they were built without a plinth, or whether the plinth was removed when the wall inside the chapels was re-faced at some later date. The relationship between the retro-choir wall on the one hand, and the extant portions of the chapels north and south walls on the other, may provide some clues to the structural sequence.

The ashlars of the outer faces of both the extant portions of the north and the south walls (contexts 1050 & 1052) of the chapels butt against the retro-choir wall. However, the inner faces (contexts 1102 & 1103) of both walls were clearly properly jointed to the ashlars of the adjacent sections of the retro-choir wall within the chapel. (Fig 39a) These parts of the retro-choir wall within the chapels therefore were either first faced, or re-faced, when the chapel walls were built. It should be noted that the stretches of retro-choir wall within the chapels are set back approximately 0.15m in relation to the line of wall to the north and south of the chapels, and that their faces in the north and south corners of the chapels are at a slight angle to the rest of the wall. This serves to confirm that the walls were faced, or re-faced, during the construction of either the first or the second pair of chapels.

Clearly, the surviving stumps of the north and the south walls formed parts of the second pair of chapels, but as is argued below, there is evidence that they are the walls of the first chapels re-used in the structure of the rebuilt ones. The evidence has already been given for the facing of the interior angles between the chapel walls and the retro-choir (contexts 1102 & 1103). It is particularly significant that the responds in the north-west and south-west corners (contexts 1003 & 1037) are not an integral part of the facing, as might have been expected if the facing was part of the building work connected with the second pair of chapels. Instead, they were inserted into the existing faced wall. A squared recess was cut into each corner, and into each recess were mortared the circular drums of the responds. By contrast, the larger central respond (context 1012) was bonded fully into the existing masonry by the replacement of part of the facing. (Fig 39b) The demolition of the central spine wall of the Norman chapels would have left a portion of the retro-choir wall between the openings needing re-facing, and would have made way for new respond. Sections of the respond were cut as one with some of the facing stones. A number of the new facing stones were cut to unusual shapes to fit the existing facings, which survived adjacent to the edges of the north and south openings. The retained stones may have been part of the original facing of the retro-choir wall. They look similar to the stonework to the north and south of the chapels and may therefore be original Norman work, but it is more probable that they were put into place when the first chapels were added to the retro-choir wall.

Discussion and Date

It can be stated with confidence that the responds are part of the superstructure of the rebuilt chapels. The fact that the responds in the north-west and south-west corners were secondary features, strongly suggests that the walls and facings belonged to the earlier chapels and the responds to the second pair. The probability is that the surviving sections of the north and south walls were originally part of the structure of the first pair of chapels, and that they were refurbished when the chapels were rebuilt. This would best explain the curious way in which the corner responds (contexts 1003 & 1037) were added to the structure, and also the contrast with the central respond.

A study of the exterior of the retro-choir wall does not help in determining whether the wall was built with openings for chapels. The re-facing of the retro-choir wall during the construction and demolition of the successive chapels was not the only alteration to the wall. During the final demolition of the second pair of chapels, the east windows of the chapels were inserted into the openings in the Retro-Choir wall. These windows were lowered under the Rev Berthon's supervision in 1866 in an operation described in detail in Berthon's autobiography (Berthon 1899, 159–60). It cannot now be certain, therefore, that the wall was built with openings to take a planned eastern chapel. The interior stonework of the retro-choir appears more coherent, and suggests that the openings in the east wall may have been original features, but this remains only a possibility.

To sum up, there are a number of events that can be discerned from a study of the footings of the east end chapels and retro-choir wall:

First, the laying out and construction of the retro-choir footings. The chapel footings were not laid out at this time.

Secondly, the construction of the retro-choir wall, probably with openings for the chapels. The facing of the wall may have been left incomplete.

Thirdly, the construction of the first pair of chapels, and the completion of the facings of the retro-choir wall within the chapels.

Fourthly, the rebuilding of the chapels, involving the demolition of the spine wall of the first chapels, but the retention, in large part, of the north and south walls. The responds in the north-west and south-west corners were inserted into existing stonework. The central respond was fully keyed into the retro-choir wall, at the point where the spine wall of the Norman chapels had been removed.

The Evidence for the Superstructure of the Norman Chapels

There are few surviving elements of the superstructure of the first pair of chapels – only such pieces as could be incorporated within the structure of their successors. Principally, this meant that the north and south walls of the original chapels were retained. The footings are the main part of the first, Norman, chapels to survive, and these give an idea of their size and layout, because it is likely that the above ground

Plate 11. RA 1973: NW corner of the east end chapels viewed from the E. The post-Dissolution blocking (1009) of the retro-choir wall is clearly visible to left of the picture. The remains of the respond (context 1003) in the NW corner are visible. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

Plate 12. Detail of the respond (RA 1973, context 1037) in the SW corner of the chapel viewed from the NE. (Photograph TVAT)

Plate 13. RA 1973: SW corner of the east end chapels viewed from the NE. The post-Dissolution blocking (1039) of the retro-choir wall is clearly visible to right of the picture. The remains of the respond (context 1037) in the SW corner are visible. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

Plate 14. RA 1973: E end Chapels. The central pier between the openings through the retro-choir wall viewed from the E. The post-Dissolution blocking of the retro-choir wall is clearly visible to right (1009) and left (1039) of the picture. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

structure of the Norman chapels is reflected in the apsidal shape of the footings.

It is a reasonable assumption that there were two apsidal chapels divided by a central spine wall. If this were the case, the first pair of chapels took a form comparable to the apsidal ends of the aisles, seen today in the Chapels of St George and St Anne. While it is conceivable that there was no dividing wall built on to the spine wall footing, it seems improbable that this was laid down merely for the support of a solitary column. It was narrower than the north and south wall footings because it did not have to carry the same load as the outer walls.

If the above interpretations are correct, it may be assumed that a substantial part of the footings of the original chapels have survived, and this would seem to be confirmed by Berthon's discoveries in 1866. He defined the extent of the Norman and later chapels. The Norman chapels, he considered, were 21ft from east to west, and 30ft from north to south.[1] The excavations in 1973 revealed that they were approximately 45ft (13.5m) from north to south. Their footings, as recovered in the excavation and including the possible extensions at the north and south corners, measured at least 50ft (15m) north to south. The east–west extent was probably about 26ft (8m), where the footings as excavated were 6 m (20ft). Clearly there is a considerable discrepancy between the published measurements of Berthon's excavations and the measurements recovered from the 1973 excavations.

The size of the footings for the chapels requires some comment. The north and south footings are both very wide and deep, much wider and deeper than might be thought necessary. In addition there is the evidence for enlargement at the north-east corner of the chapel. The reason in both cases may be the existence of the 'ditch' (contexts 1070, 1076 & 1078), which ran north–south across the site of the chapels. This feature seems to have been backfilled as a preliminary to their construction (see above p 16 and Fig 10). The 'ditch' was itself in the top of a silted-up water course or stream bed (contexts 1071, 1077 & 1079), but it is not clear that the builders of the Abbey would have been aware of this fact.

Dating

The date of the construction of the first, Norman, chapels is not certain, for although the pottery from the linear feature underlying it gives us a terminus post quem, this is no more than would have been concluded from the fact that the chapels were constructed after the main body of the Choir of the abbey, an event that can be dated with some precision. In all probability, taking into account the fact that openings to the Chapel seem to have been left in the wall of the Retro-choir, it is likely that only a comparatively short time elapsed between the construction of the Choir and the building of the east end chapels. A date in the mid to late 12th century therefore seems reasonable (Phases 10–12).

Phase 15: The second, Thirteenth century, Chapels

The second pair of chapels were larger and quite different in plan from their Norman predecessors. Although there is no evidence that the rebuilt chapels were separated by a dividing wall, there is little doubt that there were two chapels and therefore that the proposed double dedication continued.

It was recorded by Berthon that the rebuilt chapels were 40ft (12m) long, compared with 21ft (6.4m) for the Norman chapels, and 30ft (7.6m) wide.[2] As seen above with regard to the measurements of the Norman chapel, there is reason to treat the recorded measurements of Berthon's excavations with some scepticism. It is undoubtedly correct that the new chapels were larger than their predecessors, and a measurement in the region of 40ft (12m), or a little larger, is possible for the east–west measurement. However the 1973 excavations provide little or no positive evidence to confirm their length.

Demolition of the early chapels

It has been argued that there is evidence that the walls of the second pair of chapels preserved part of the walls of the earlier chapels. If this is accepted, it is clear that the Norman chapels were not totally demolished, but that their roofs and vaulting, and the dividing spine wall, together with their east wall, were taken down. Since only a small part of the chapel walls survive, it is uncertain to what extent the walls of the rebuilt chapels preserved those of their predecessors, and to what extent they were of new construction. However, it is likely that the original north and south walls were largely kept intact, but that since the new chapels were longer east–west than the ones they replaced, part at least of the north and south walls, and also the whole east wall, were new work.

Construction of the new chapels

The relationship between the extant portions of the north and south walls of the new chapels on the one hand and the retro-choir wall on the other has already been discussed (p 82). It has been argued that the responds in the north west and south west corners (contexts 1003 & 1037) were

not an integral part either of the facing of the north and south walls, or of the facing of the retro-choir wall, and that the larger central respond (context 1012) was bonded into the existing masonry left after the removal of the original Norman spine wall.

There is no information about the size or the construction of the new footings that must have continued east of the Norman ones, to support the enlarged chapels. The 1973 excavations did not extend far enough to the east, and Berthon published no details or drawings of his findings.

The two small postholes (contexts 1067 & 1068), found sealed under the presumed floor levels of the rebuilt chapels (context 1041) in the south west corner, may have been scaffold postholes. Posthole 1067 cut into the footings (context 1073) of the earlier chapels, and therefore it is very likely to be associated with the construction of the second pair of chapels. The second pit (1068) cut into the pre-chapel black soil and had a stone packing. It could have been much earlier in date than the rebuilding of the chapels. It contained a single sherd of early Medieval flint-tempered cooking pot. A third hole in the north west corner (context 1056) was cut into the footings (context 1065) of the earlier chapels, but was itself cut by a very late pit (context 1042) and cannot be securely dated.

The Structure and Appearance of the later Chapels

The Floors of the Later Chapels: The Evidence from the 1973 Excavations and Previous Work (Fig 39b)

The north wall of the two chapels was pierced by a doorway, approximately 1.6m east from the retro-choir wall. The neatly made threshold (context 1001) is still in place. It was butted on its northern, outer, edge by a mortar level, which was all that remained of the surface, or path, which led up to the doorway. Only the chamfered forward edge and flat top of the threshold would have been visible when in use. It was inserted into the north wall (context 1050) as part of the work on the new chapels, and the footing of the Norman chapels cut down to accommodate it.[3]

The top of the threshold is approximately 0.25m below the level of the lowest ashlar course in the surviving length of the north wall. The surviving fragments of tiled floor within the chapels were a further 0.1m below the level of the top of the threshold. The gap of approximately 0.35m between the bottom of the ashlar facing of the interior walls of the Chapel and the floor was bridged by a mortar-rendered plinth of mortar and flints. The best preserved portion of plinth (context 1091) was found in the north west corner of the north chapel. Other lengths of plinth were found adjacent to the central respond (context 1012) and in the south west corner of the southern chapel (context 1092). All three surviving pieces had been cut by foundations associated with post-Dissolution building.

Plate 15. RA 1973: NW corner of the east end chapels. Decorated floor tiles (context 1002) set in the angle of the plinth (context 1091). See Fig 39 (b) for location. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

Of the tiled floors of the chapels, only three small fragments survived in situ. The largest of these fragments consisted of ten whole or fragmentary tiles (context 1002), in the north west corner of the north chapel, in the angle formed by the plinth (context 1091). The second fragment (context 1011) was also in the northern chapel and was just to the north of the plinth of the central respond (context 1012). It was made up of a few pieces of tile that were part of the border of the floor. Immediately above this fragment were the remains of a step (context 1088) up to the northern opening to the retro-choir. The floor and step had been cut away by the foundation trench (context 1010) for the post-Dissolution blocking wall. In both 1002 and 1011 the tiles were aligned at right angles to the axes of the Abbey. A small patch of mortar with tile impressions (context 1081) was found immediately east of Vault 2. This too was in the northern half of the chapel and on the same alignment as the tiles.

The third in situ fragment of tile floor was only 0.7m south from context 1081, and consisted of a complete tile and some small fragments (context 1015). These were in the southern chapel and were orientated diagonally to the axes of the church. They lay between Vaults 2 and 3, which had destroyed much of the floor. A large patch of mortar with tile impressions (context 1038) was uncovered in the south west corner of the southern chapel, adjacent to the plinth (context (1092). The tiles had been aligned diagonally, and must have been part of the same floor as 1015. The evidence seems clear. The tiled floors in the north and southern chapels were aligned differently: in the northern Chapel they were set square to the axes of the Abbey, in the south half they were set diagonally. This would seem to confirm that there two new chapels replacing the Norman ones.

The tiled floor was laid on a mortar and gravel subfloor (contexts 1096, 1041 & ?1014). This subfloor had been investigated by Peers and Bilson in 1909. They described it as 'about 10 inches of rough concrete of which an inch at the top was plaster, evidently the floor of the Early Gothic chapel underlying the tiling . . .' (Luce Notebooks, Vol 2, 58). It appears that a quite substantial section of the subfloor (context 1096) survived in the northern chapel. It was cut to the north, south and east by brick-built vaults, and also by the foundation

Plate 16. RA 1973: SW corner of the east end chapels. The mortar bedding for decorated floor tiles with impressions of the tiles (context 1038). See Fig 39 (b) for location. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

trench (context 1010) for post-Dissolution blocking. It was also cut by a grave (context 1083) (see below pp 88–9). In the southern Chapel, a narrow spit of the sub-floor remained between Vaults 3 and 4, and extended towards the south west corner of the Lady Chapel.

Between the existing footings (contexts 1065, 1072 & 1073), the subfloor seems to have been laid directly on the pre-Lady Chapel black soil (contexts 1074 & 1075). It is most likely that the subfloor was laid only between and not over the existing footings. Since the floor of the second chapel is at least a foot (*c* 0.35m) below the bottom ashlar course of the chapel walls, there would have been little space for the subfloor layer above the footings; and there would have been little need for it.

Discussion and Interpretation of the floors

At this point it is appropriate to begin to look in more detail at the discoveries made by the Rev Berthon in 1866. Liveing (1906, 70) gives the fullest account of Berthon's work to be found in print. He describes Berthon as finding

> a concrete floor and the foundations of a forty foot building

and Liveing continues

> But Mr Berthon did more; he pierced the concrete floor, and at the depth of twelve inches he came upon the floor of the earlier Norman chapel, with tooth-pattern tiles of that period; he gave the dimensions of this chapel as 21ft by 25ft . . . He says that this chapel was two steps down below the rest of the church . . .

This account of Berthon's discoveries immediately raises two questions that concern the relationship and identity of both the floor with 'tooth-pattern tiles', and the 'concrete floor' twelve inches above it. The questions are linked. If the earlier floor is tiled, and below a concrete floor, as the account suggests, then it should be considered whether this is the same tiled floor as that found in 1973. The particular problem is the date of the tiles on the 'lower floor' which Berthon thought Norman. More information is also required about the 'concrete' floor which Berthon apparently found and dug through to reach the tiles.

The problem of the date of the tiles found by Berthon is cleared up by Peers and Bilson who investigated the site in September 1909 (Luce Notebooks Vol 2, 56 & 57–8). The account of their work makes it clear that the tiled floor identified by Berthon was the floor, or floors, identified in the 1973 excavations as belonging to the later chapels. The tiles were not Norman, but dated to the time of the reconstruction of the two chapels in the late 13th or early 14th century. There is every reason to suppose that the tiled floor was part of the rebuilt Chapels.

This still leaves the problem of the 'concrete floor' that Berthon apparently cut through to reach the tiled floor. Turning again to the account of the discoveries by Peers and Bilson, it is clear that they too were puzzled, and they suggested that the plinth (contexts 1012, 1091 & 1092), or bench table as they called it, around the edge of the chapels may have been mistaken for a later floor by Berthon. This is a less than totally convincing argument, but in the absence of further evidence may have to suffice. Certainly no other feature that possibly could be identified as a concrete floor was located in 1973. It is conceivable that the 'concrete floor' had existed, and that Berthon completely removed it. If this were the case, it would have represented a re-flooring of late Medieval, or early Post-Medieval, date. But, for what it is worth, the description of Berthon's excavations does not suggest that he completely removed the concrete floor.

This leaves us apparently without any knowledge of the floor of the Norman chapels. The later tiled floor is about 1 foot (0.35m) below the level of the bottom course of the ashlar facings of the retro-choir wall and the north and south chapel walls. It is also below the level of the Abbey floor, and, as seen above, there is evidence for steps (context 1088) leading up to the ambulatory or retro-choir. It has been argued that the stone facings are surviving parts of the Norman chapels (above pp 82–4), and, accepting that argument, it seems probable that the Norman floor was on the same level as the bottom of the ashlar, and

that the later floor was lower. This was the conclusion of Peers and Bilson (Luce Notebooks, Vol 2, 57). Stubbs too was of the opinion that the later floor was lower than the Norman floor (Stubbs 1973). It is also possible that the plinths (contexts 1012, 1091 & 1092) were created out of remaining parts of the Norman floor, but this cannot be proved. The mortar and gravel subfloor (contexts 1041 & 1096) may have been originally part of the first chapels, but it is perhaps more likely that it belongs with the rebuilt chapels, and that it was inserted after the removal or lowering of the Norman floor. The few finds that can be assigned to context 1096 consist of a probably intrusive sherd from the Verwood kilns, a sherd of late Medieval German stoneware, and a small sherd of Medieval cookpot. The dating evidence is scarcely conclusive, but, such as it is, points to a later Medieval date, rather than an earlier one.

It remains to be considered whether there was a practical reason for lowering the floor level. One possibility is that the new Early Gothic vaulting with its pointed arches required more headroom than the rounded Norman arches. With the constraints imposed on the height of the chapels by the existing Abbey structure, and particularly the round archways through the retro-choir wall, it may have been felt necessary to lower the floor of the rebuilt chapels to achieve the desired proportions.

The Superstructure of the second pair of chapels

All of the surviving standing elements of the rebuilt chapels are on its west side, either along the line of the retro-choir wall, or immediately adjacent to it. In addition, the Rev Berthon is recorded by Liveing (1906, 70) as finding

> the foundations of a forty foot building . . . with bases and responds of former columns, corresponding with those on the face of the church. He also found the base of the central column for the support of the groining of the roof.

If this column base still existed in 1973, it lay outside the area of the excavation.

The evidence of the surviving elements of the structure of the chapels suggests that they had stone vaulting with groins supported on columns. The surviving responds have been noted as a secondary feature, and from this has been argued the survival of substantial portions of the Norman chapels in the structure of the later ones. It would be possible to interpret the evidence in a different way, to suggest that the walls of the chapels were substantially rebuilt, and that the responds were added not to surviving Norman masonry but to late 13th–early 14th-century masonry at some subsequent date. The likely reason for the addition of responds would be the replacement of a wooden ceiling by stone vaulting. The weakness in this interpretation is the need to explain the demolition of the Norman walls. It would seem to make more sense to re-use the standing masonry, and to demolish only the east wall and the spine wall to allow for the enlargement and remodelling of the chapels.

On balance, it seems likely that the new chapels had stone vaulting from the beginning. They were not divided by a central wall, but were open, with only a column to support the groining between them. However, although physically open, the evidence that the tiled floors in the north and south chapels were laid on different alignments, does indicate a functional, if not physical, division into two. Presumably the dedications suggested for the original pair of apsidal chapels would have been retained in the remodelled double chapel.

The Decoration of the Later Chapels

On the south side of the present Chapel of St Mary, that is within the archway leading to the northern of the two eastern chapels, there are preserved wall paintings. Four medallions survive, but two are cut by the blocking wall inserted after the demolition of the east chapels. The paintings illustrate three of the miracles of St Nicholas, and have been dated on stylistic grounds to the mid-13th century. Logically it might be expected that they were part of the new scheme for the east end of the Abbey church, but a date in the mid-13th century suggests that they may have been executed before the rebuilding of the chapels, and there is some evidence to support this contention. Latham's notebooks record a further eighteen painted medallions found in 1813 on a wall blocking the south arch behind the main altar.[4] It is likely that these were part of the same scheme of decoration as the four surviving roundels, and that they formed the decoration of the ambulatory, rather than of the Lady Chapel. This would explain their survival after the reconstruction of the Lady Chapel.

There was a fragment of painted stonework described as being from 'the thirteenth century layer of the excavation', and as being part 'of a scheme of masonry pattern'. It has been suggested that this may have been part of a 'simulated ashlar' decoration for the new chapels. It could equally have been a remnant of the decoration of the Norman chapels. Unfortunately, it is not possible now to identify the piece of stone in question, nor its context. The only piece of painted stone that can now be identified is from the top of Grave 1086.[5]

The Dating of the second pair of Chapels

The dating of the new chapels is based on two pieces of evidence. Firstly, the style of the windows. After the demolition of the chapels, their east windows were inserted into the retro-choir wall. These windows are in so-called 'early Decorated' or 'Geometric' style which is conventionally dated to between the mid-thirteenth and mid-fourteenth centuries. The other evidence is provided by the surviving tiles in the chapel floor. These are dated to late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. Luce (1948, 25) was of the opinion that the new chapels were begun in about 1270. Although he does not give his evidence, this date may be based on the record of the gift by Henry III of six oaks from Clarendon Forest to the Abbey in November 1271 (*Cal Close Rolls, 1268–1272*, 448). Liveing (1906, 70) certainly believed that to be the case, and suggested further that the visit of Edward I for two days in January 1275 may have been the occasion of the consecration of the new chapels. The evidence is circumstantial, and the gift of oaks in 1271 could as well be for continuing work on the cloisters or adjoining structures. Pevsner and Lloyd (1967) have suggested a date of 1270–80, while Coldicott (1989, 119) has suggested that the chapels were not rebuilt until the end of the fourteenth century, but this date is unlikely and would be too late for the style of windows used in the chapel. A date towards the end of the thirteenth century or early in the fourteenth century is most probable on stylistic grounds. Unfortunately there is no archaeological dating from the 1973 excavation to help resolve this problem.

The Graves associated with the second pair of chapels (Fig 39b)

Five graves were associated with the rebuilt chapels. Four of them (contexts 1084, 1085, 1086 & 1087) were in the southern chapel, and were only partly preserved. The fifth grave (context 1083) was complete, and lay in the northern chapel.

The Graves in the Southern Chapel. Graves 1084, 1085 and 1086, of the southern group, are all orientated east-west with their heads to the west. Their pits cut the footings of the Norman chapels. This strongly suggests that they belong to the rebuilt chapels, although there is no record of their relationship with the floor levels. The grave pits were all cut at the west end by brick-built vaults, but not in such a way as to totally destroy the upper parts of the skeletons. In graves (1085) and (1086) there were remains of skull and jaw bones, together with bones from the upper torso. Grave (1084) contained no skull fragments, and therefore it may be suggested that the west end of this grave, containing the skull, was destroyed. The eastern portions of these three burials lay outside the excavated area, and few bones below the pelvis were recovered.

The fourth grave in this group (context 1087) was beneath Grave 1086, and had been destroyed in part by Vault 3. Only the leg bones and three coffin nails were recovered. It probably should be assigned to the same broad period as the other graves. The skeletons in all the graves were those of adults. Only two, from graves 1085 and 1086 could be sexed, and they were identified, perhaps surprisingly, as male (see below pp 148–149).[6]

Plate 17. RA 1973: Grave 1084 (Phase 15–16). See Fig 39(b) for location. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

Plate 18. RA 1973: Grave 1085 (Phase 15–16). See Fig 39(b) for location. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

The Grave in the Northern Chapel. The fifth, and best preserved, grave (context 1083) was in the northern chapel. Its relationship to the Lady Chapel is not completely clear, in that the evidence is contradictory. On the one hand, it seems that the grave was sealed by the gravel and mortar subfloor of the chapel, and certainly, except for a mortar patch (context 1008), there is no indication that this level was visibly disturbed when it was first cleared. On the other hand, the patch of mortar which partially, but by no means completely, sealed the grave, was marked with tile, or similar, impressions. These were much larger than the floor tiles found elsewhere on the floors of the chapels. The most satisfactory interpretation is that the grave was inserted through the chapel floor, and that

the subfloor of gravel and mortar was carefully repaired, but that on top of the grave the original floor tiles were not replaced. It is possible that the larger impressions on the mortar patch represent some sort of tomb or monument raised over the grave. The grave contained the skeleton of a man who was 35 to 45 years old at the time of his death. The pathology of the skeleton suggested that the man had been 'richly overfed', and, therefore, he may have been a person of some wealth and status (see below p 148).[7] Immediately adjacent to this grave was part of another grave (context 1101), which cut the first Lady Chapel footings. It was itself largely destroyed by Vault 1.

Discussion

The presence of male burials may be explained in one of two ways. Firstly, they could be the burials of men attached to the nunnery in some official capacity; we know of both clergy, for example chaplains and prebends, and of secular officers. It is perhaps more likely that they are the burials of clergy than minor abbey officials. One would expect the latter to have been interred in their own burial plot within the precinct, or in the parish burial ground. The alternative explanation is that they are the burials of patrons or officials of higher social standing who might well have been accorded a place of such honour.

The East End Chapels: their Function and Name

The chapels are in the position usually occupied by the Lady Chapel. The evidence for a pair of chapels in each phase of construction, and for the double dedication – to the Virgin Mary and St Ethefleda – has been noted above (p 79). It is possible that the two chapels served as the Lady Chapel, and there is some evidence to support this idea. In a statement by the prioress Emma Powes during the visitation of Dr Hede in 1502 reference was made to the roof of the Lady Chapel being in decay (*VCH Hampshire*, Vol 2, 130).

Plate 19. RA 1973: Grave 1083 (Phase 15–16). See Fig 39(b) for location. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

Notes

1 The published figure for the north–south measurement is 25ft (Liveing 1906, 70; Luce 1948, 25), but in notes, presently held in the Vicarage Romsey and apparently made by Berthon for a lecture in 1872, the measurement is given as 30ft. Berthon does not seem to have published his findings. Surprisingly, he does not mention the excavations on the 'Lady Chapel' in the chapter on Romsey Abbey in his published memoirs (Berthon 1899, 153–65).

2 See Note 1 for references.

3 Stubbs 1973, stated that the doorway was a secondary feature inserted into the wall in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century at the time of the construction of the additional aisle on the north side of the Abbey. While accepting that the threshold is a secondary feature – in the essentially Norman north wall – there is no reason to assume that it is not contemporary with the rebuilding of the east end chapels.

4 Latham, *Notebooks*, Vol 2, p 193. In addition to the medallions, there was also a crucifixion scene. The information on the scheme of decoration and on the date of the wall paintings comes from an (incomplete) draft report on the wall paintings by W David Parke (information from Kevin Stubbs). This draft report is part of the site archive.

5 The references to painted stone, and the suggestion about the decoration of the east end chapels, are from the draft report on wall paintings (see Note 4). No context information is given. A painted stone leaf, and an analysis of the pigment is also referred to in the report. No report on the latter analysis is to be found in the archive.

6 The references to the archive Human bone report (Osborne 1988) are as follows:
Grave (1084) – p 4: RA 73 Grave 2
Grave (1085) – pp 4–5: RA 73 Grave 3
Grave (1086) – pp 5–6: RA 73 Grave 4
Grave (1087) – p 6: RA 73 Grave 5

7 Archive bone report: Osborne 1988, pp 2–4, RA 73 Grave 1 [= (1083)]

Chapter 7

The Parish Church Aisle

The Parish Church Aisle and Associated Structures

The Abbey at Romsey not only served as the nuns' church, but also was the location for the townspeople's parish church. The north nave aisle was set aside for this purpose and had a dedication – to St Lawrence – separate from those of the Abbey proper. When the parish first began to use the north aisle is uncertain. The first vicar was appointed by Bishop Asser in 1321, but a deed of the Abbess Cecilia (1238–47) refers to Adam, a Canon of Romsey, who was also rector of St Lawrence. Indeed there had been presbyters and 'clericuli' recorded at Romsey Abbey as early as 1130 (Liveing 1906, 125). In the later thirteenth century there is a reference to 'The Prebend of the Church of St Lawrence the greater in the House or Church of the Monastery of Romsey' (Luce 1948, 30).

By 1403 the side aisle was in need of repair, and possibly no longer adequate to accommodate the townspeople. Bishop William of Wykeham undertook the repair of the north nave aisle and granted a faculty for an increase in the size of the parish church. This enlargement was achieved by building an additional north aisle. The north wall of the new aisle extended from the north transept to the north porch (Fig 40). The first four bays of the Norman north wall were opened up, and the west wall of the north transept was pierced. The transept became the chancel of the enlarged parish church.

The Evidence for the Additional Parish Church North Aisle and Associated Features

The layout of the north aisle was first investigated in a limited way in 1975, but only in 1988 did the opportunity arise to record an almost complete plan of the parish church north wall and part of the plan of the medieval north porch.

1975 Excavations A section was cut across the footing of the additional parish church aisle adjacent to the north transept, and a partial section excavated in the 1975 soakaway (Fig 15). These excavations established that the footing was constructed of rammed chalk. In the section adjacent to the north transept the footing measured approximately 1.2 m wide, and survived to a depth of about 0.3 m. In the section in the soakaway, further to the west, the chalk footing measured at least 0.6 m deep. The difference in the surviving depth of the footing between the two sections may simply be due to the truncation of the section by later activity adjacent to the transept. Unfortunately in the absence of levels from the excavation this cannot be confirmed, and therefore it remains a possibility that the difference relates to the positions of the sections. It is possible that it was felt by the builders to be unnecessary to excavate the footing to the same depth adjacent to the north transept. This question has to remain open.

The new aisle and the existing north nave aisle were joined by the opening out of the first four bays of the Norman north wall. The half buttresses between the bays were left as piers. In the same way the north transept west wall was pierced by an archway. In Bay 2 the floor (context 3181) of the parish church could be seen (Fig 27a). It was made up of a layer variously described as 'yellow mortar' and 'pebbly mortar'. The floor was not visible in Bay 1, and it may have been destroyed or obscured by post-Dissolution work. In Bay 3 it seems to have been obscured or destroyed by later repairs to the footings. Bay 4 was not recorded in the excavation. The floor was not visible in the west wall of the north transept because it had been dug

Plate 20. RA 1975: N nave aisle wall, Bay 2, viewed from the N. The Norman flint rubble footing (context 3188=3180) is sealed by a thin mortar layer (context 3081). Above this is the rubble footing (context 3246) of the post-Dissolution blocking of Bay 2. In the foreground is part of the late Saxon north transept. See Fig 27 (a) for location. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

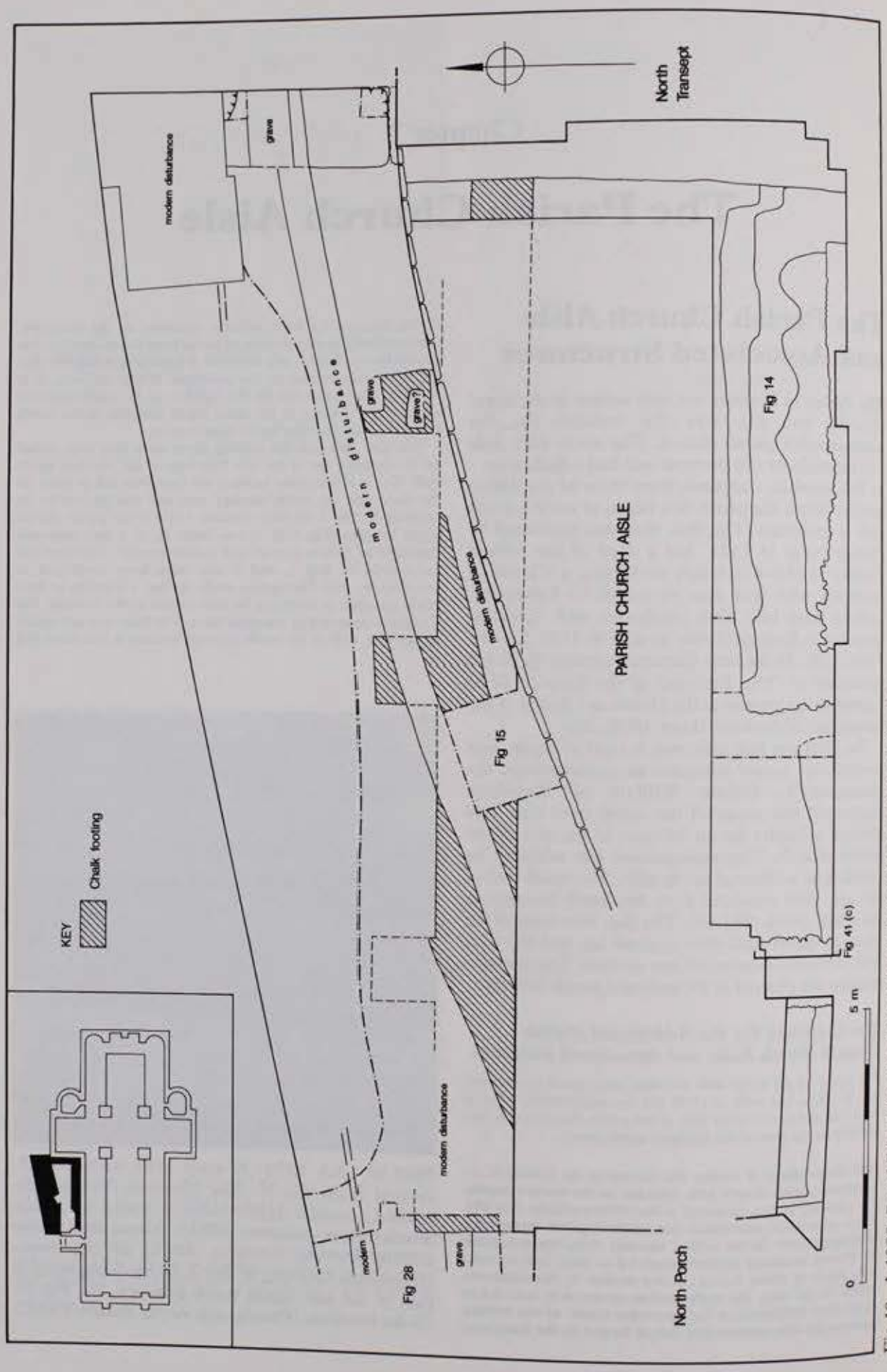


Fig 40 A 1988.7 and RA 1975: Plan of footings of fifteenth-century parish aisle.

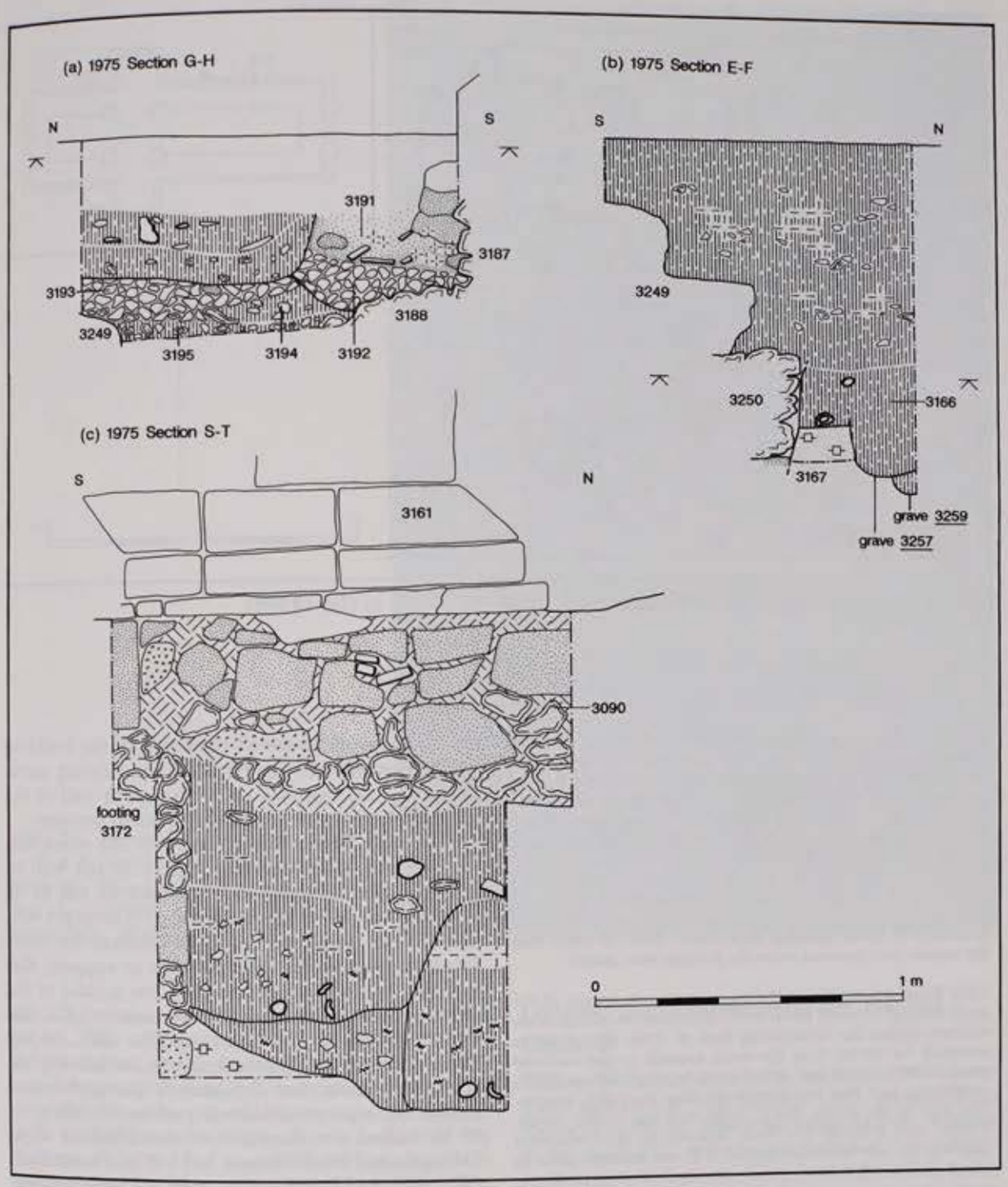


Fig 41 RA 1975: Sections. See Figs 14 & 40 for location of sections.

out after the Dissolution. No unequivocal evidence for the floor was recorded within the aisle, although there are a number of its possible make-up layers (contexts 3193–3196) (Fig 41a).

Following the demolition of the additional aisle the original north nave was re-established. The windows in the restored Bays 3 and 4 are in perpendicular style. Originally there were similar windows in Bays 1 and 2, but they were replaced in the nineteenth century by replica Norman ones. However, the window traceries were salvaged and now form a folly which lies on the boundary between the gardens of the new and former vicarages. Two of the north aisle windows were square-topped and two had pointed arches. All are in Perpendicular style.

The bases of three of the buttresses of the north nave wall were investigated in the excavations. The base of the buttress between bays 1 and 2 was no longer extant. The base of buttress 2/3 (context 3310) was largely complete (Fig 42). It is clear that it post-dated the demolition of the additional aisle, and that it formed part of the restored north nave wall. Both of these buttresses were subsequently removed in the nineteenth century when Bays 1 and 2 were remodelled and the windows replaced. One of the buttresses removed now forms part of the folly in the vicarage garden. The third buttress (Buttress 3/4) between bays 3 and 4 is complete (contexts 3161 & 3090) (Fig 41c).

There are as many as six possible graves which can be

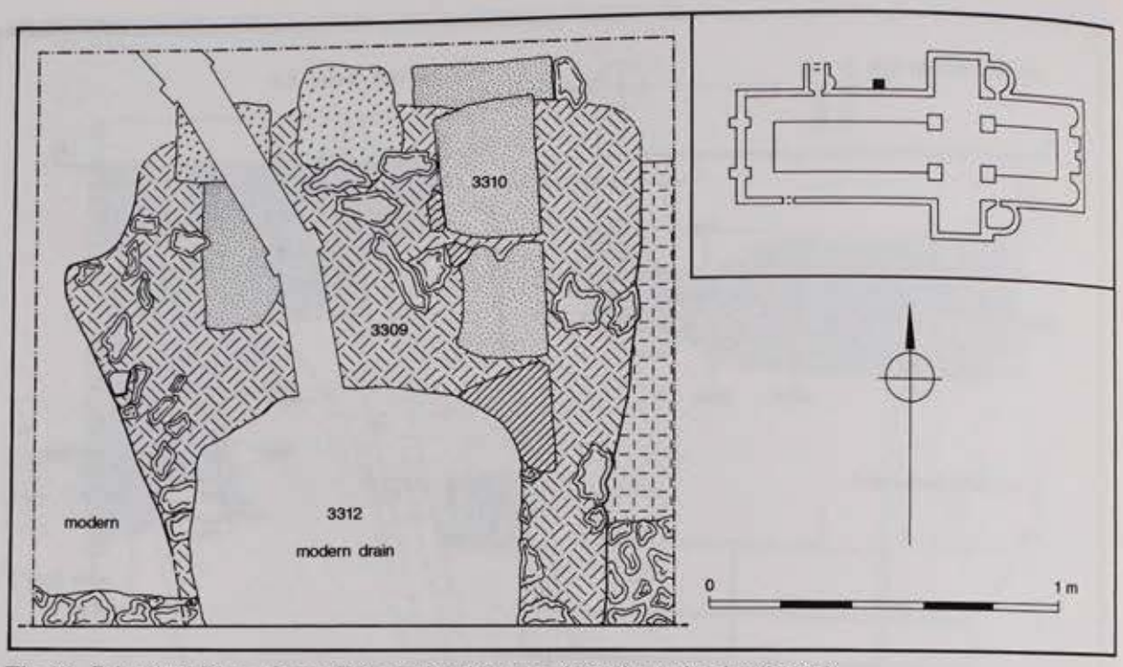


Fig 42 RA 1975: Plan of post-Dissolution buttress (3310), set in clay (3309).

associated with the use of the additional parish church aisle. Of these three can be identified with certainty (contexts 3095, 3096 & 3097) (Fig 14). Other graves are recorded in the site notebook but cannot be located.[1] The three identifiable graves were orientated east-west and lay parallel to one another. They were cut through the footings (context 3093) of the west wall of the north transept. Following the demolition of the aisle, after the Dissolution, the graves were largely emptied and packed with flint and stones (context 3222) to allow the rebuilding of the transept wall. Although there are some fragments of bones, possibly from Grave 3095, it seems that the burials were removed when the footings were rebuilt.[2]

1988 Excavations (Fig 40) Almost the entire length of the chalk footings (context 6004) of the additional north aisle were exposed during the re-surfacing work in 1988. The footings extended for 18.7m from the north transept to the medieval porch. They overlaid part of the porch footing (context 6023), confirming that they had been built after the porch footing. The plan of the parish church north wall was clearly visible. There were footings for three buttresses, approximately opposite the half-buttresses (1/2 & 2/3) and buttress (3/4) on the present north wall.

Discussion

The Foundation and Demolition Date

The date of the construction of the additional north aisle is quite clear. The faculty granted by Bishop William of Wykeham on 10th May 1403 allowed the parishioners to pull down the wall of the north aisle from the transept to the porch, and to rebuild on a larger scale (*VCH Hampshire*, Vol 2, 129). The archaeological evidence suggests that the actual work involved consisted of the building of the new aisle to the north of the existing north aisle, and the opening up of the north wall of the same and of the west wall of the north transept.

Precisely how soon after 1403 the work was carried out is uncertain. There is the will of Thomas Shotter 1464–67 in which he left 6s 8d for 'the fabric of the new aisle' (Liveing 1906, 182). This might be taken to confirm the early fifteenth-century date for the aisle or suggests that building work was delayed until the middle of the century. Shotter also left a bequest for the Brotherhood of St George. The date of the foundation of this brotherhood is not known, but it is interesting that Edward IV granted letters patent for 'a perpetual chantry of one chaplain . . . to be called the chaplain of the Chantry of St George' on 17th February 1475 (Cal Patent Rolls AD 1467–1477, 569). The enlarged parish church must have been almost twice the size of the original church, and the creation of a new chantry may have been made possible because of the additional space created.

The Appearance of the North Aisle

The appearance of the parish aisle can be established with some certainty, because parts of its structure were re-used after its demolition, and still survive.

It is probable that the windows from the demolished parish aisle were used in the re-

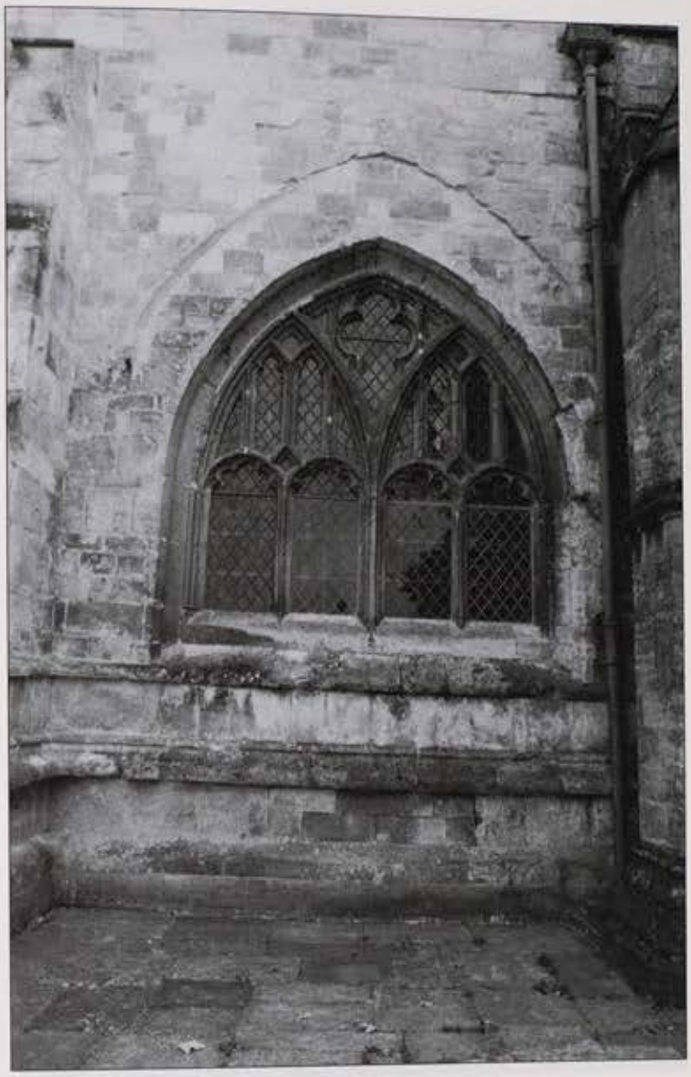


Plate 21. N wall of the nave, detail of Bay 4, showing window inserted after the Dissolution and following the demolition of the additional north aisle. (Photograph TVAT)

blocking of the north nave wall. This cannot be proven. The architectural style of the windows is Perpendicular, which would be appropriate for the date suggested for the construction of the aisle (Fig 22). However, it would also be the current style at the time of the Dissolution, which is the suggested date for the demolition of the aisle. It is unlikely that the town would be able to afford new windows, and more probable that existing windows would be salvaged.

It is similarly suggested that the post-Dissolution buttresses were also derived from the demolished parish aisle. Only one is now still in place (Buttress 3/4), between Bays 3 and 4, but the foundations of the others have been found (Fig 41c).

With this detailed information, and the evidence for the roof line of the additional aisle preserved in the west wall of the north transept (Pl 23), it would be possible to re-construct in some detail the appearance of the parish north aisle.

Graves associated with the Parish Church

William Molens, a dyer, in his will dated 18th August 1494 and proved 10th January 1495, requested his 'body to be buried before the image of Saint Katerin in the north aisle of the parish church of S. Laurence in Romsey, if it please God that I should decease there' (Liveing 1906, 183). As has been seen above (pp 93–4) there are archaeologically attested burials within the north aisle. It can be noted that Molens also left money to the Brotherhood of St George.

The Parish Belfry, or Campanile

The nunnery will have had its own bells and there is evidence to confirm this at least for the period immediately before the Dissolution. In a letter to

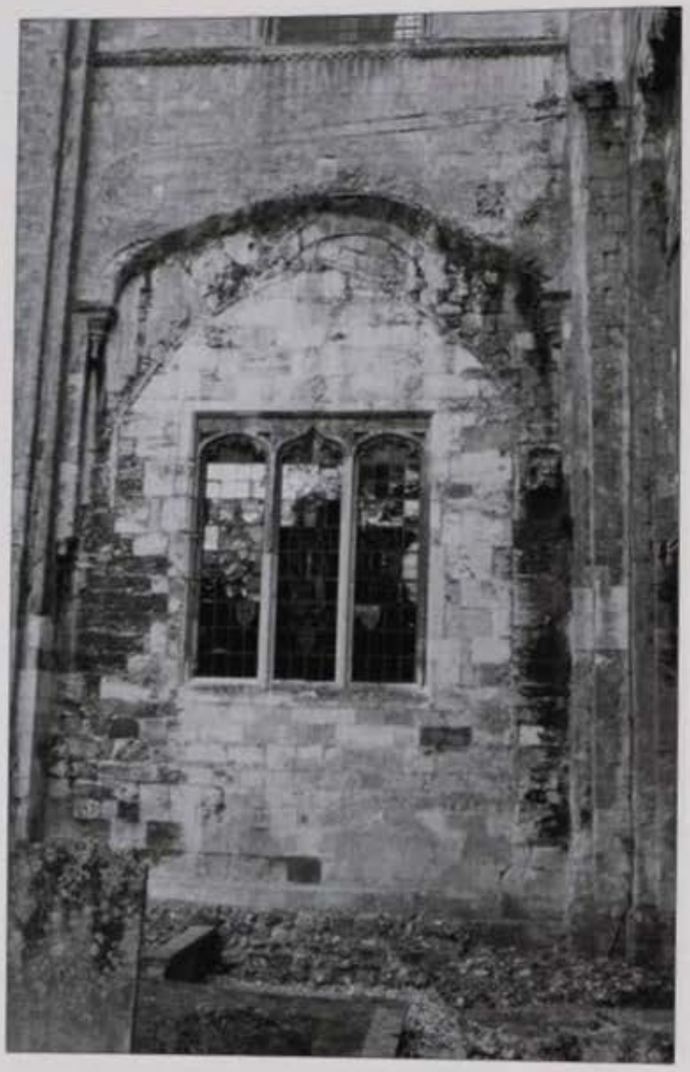


Plate 22. W wall of the N transept, showing blocked archway with inserted window, and the roof line of the additional north aisle demolished after the Dissolution. (Photograph TVAT)

Sir Thomas Seymour, dated from Romsey on 27th December 1538, John Foster, joint receiver of the Abbey lands, wrote 'and better, 6 bells be worth £100 at least' (Coldicott 1989, 138). The 6 bells were sold to John White of London (see below p 99).[3]

The parish bells were separate from those of the Abbey and were hung in a free-standing belfry, which Liveing describes as being sited to the east of the churchyard. It is probable that it stood just to the east of the present Church Road (Fig 3). The precise location is not known, but it is possible, even probable, that it stood on the site later occupied by Belfry Cottages. Liveing comments that the plot was still yielding an income of £6 per annum when he was writing.

Liveing (1906, 270–71), following Latham, suggests that the belfry was finally demolished and the bells re-hung in the Abbey only in 1624. However, it is possible that the bells were transferred from the campanile to the abbey bell tower at an earlier date. The will of Sir Francis Fleming (1558) bequeathed 'towards the hanging of the bells in the tower, 20s', and earlier in 1557 Simon Clerke had left 13s 4d for the same purpose (Liveing 1906, 271). The problem is that 'the hanging of the bells' is not a precise term, and could simply mean the re-hanging of bells in the same belfry.

The question is undoubtedly confused by recent work on the timber frame of the belfry. This project has included a programme of dendrochronological sampling. The felling dates for the main part of the timber belfry are consistent and give an estimated felling date of AD 1512–1538 (Hillam and Groves AML 24/94). Either the timberwork in the belfry was renewed just prior to the Dissolution, or the timberwork was replaced shortly after the Dissolution, possibly when the parish bells were re-hung in the Abbey bell tower.[4]

Notes

1 The details of the unlocated graves are as follows:
Context (3031): described as 'grave cutting with its occupant'. [= (3103) Grave]
Context (3032): described as a 'circular intrusion ... containing fragments of bone and a line of coffin (?) nails'. [= (3108) ? Grave]
Context (3084): described as 'Med. burial below 2nd Bay buttress base'. [= (3123) Grave]
It is not clear where any of these graves were. Context (3032) may not be a grave, as its description suggests. Grave (3084), which was numbered by ADR, could be under the base of half-buttress 1/2, or 2/3. There is no extant evidence for a grave under either buttress. No human bone from any of these contexts appears in the Archive bone report (Osborne 1988).

2 The three graves were not distinguished in the site record. The fill of all three was labelled (12) ('black infilling') or (14) ('rubble footings') in the site notebook. There is a little skeletal material from (14). (Osborne 1988, p 11, RA 75, (14) [=?(3095)].

3 The timber frame of the abbey belfry is currently being recorded. Beneath the current bellframe, which holds eigth bells and dates to the end of the eighteenth century, is the base of an earlier frame. This supported a five bell ring. The belfry project is largely funded by English Heritage, with a contribution from Romsey Parochial Church Council. The latter funding was provided by grant aid from Hampshire County Council and Test Valley Borough Council. Staff of Test Valley Archaeological Trust are undertaking the work and providing management advice for the project.

4 The dendrochronological information is taken from the draft Ancient Monuments Laboratory Report (Hillam and Groves 24/94). The work on the belfry is still in progress (20h November 1993) and full discussion of the structure and dating of the belfry will have to wait for the completion of the project.

Chapter 8

The Dissolution

Historical Evidence[1]

The exact date of the suppression of the nunnery at Romsey is not known. It was still in existence in February 1539, but had been dissolved by Michaelmas of the same year. There is circumstantial evidence that it was surrendered by April 1539. It was in April that Sir William Paulet bought the manor rectory and advowson of the vicarage of the parish church of Itchen Stoke 'belonging to the late monastery of Romsey, Hants' (*Letters and Papers* Vol XIV part 1 (April 1539), Item 906 [1]).

Most of the immediate precinct was purchased by Francis Fleming only in 1546. The following year he also acquired the Broadlands Estate. The only parts of the precinct not acquired by Fleming were the clerk's chamber and adjacent buildings, and the piece of land called 'Paradise', the gatehouse and receiver's lodging and the 'le Systers house'. Apart from the gatehouse, which was sited at the southwest corner of the Market Place the location of these properties is not known (see above pp 75–6).

The Abbey itself was purchased by the churchwardens and parishioners for £100 in 1544. The bells from the abbey had already been sold to John White of London. The preservation of the body of the church was assured by this purchase, which no doubt in part was made possible because of the long established tradition of parish worship within the north aisle of the Abbey. Although the Abbey church was preserved by this purchase, certain structures around it and attached to it were demolished. The cloisters and most of the domestic buildings were cleared, but part of the probable refectory in the south range survives to this day (see above pp 68–9). The additional parish aisle added to the north side of the nave in the fifteenth century was also demolished, presumably because it had become superfluous. Finally the eastern pair of chapels were demolished.

The Demolition of the Cloisters, and the South and West Domestic Ranges[2]

The Archaeological Evidence

1974: West Range (Fig 29) When it was demolished, the large north south wall (context 2172) of the west range was reduced to a surviving height of about 0.20m. On the north side of the doorway the ashlar facing blocks were completely robbed away, while only one course of those on the south side of the doorway survived in situ. Blocking the doorway, and riding up over the demolished wall was a footing of flint and rubble set in clay (context 2131=2156). This too was aligned north–south, and was approximately 0.8m wide.

The dating evidence, limited though it is, supports the idea that the demolition of the west range was carried out after the dissolution. The flint and rubble footing appears to have sealed a layer of demolition debris and a pit (context 2167) within the doorway.[3] There is no dating evidence from the rubble footing itself or from the pit. No pottery can be assigned with complete confidence to the demolition debris sealed by the footing, but there is one pottery group which may have come from such a layer. And there are two other pottery groups that may help to date the demolition of both the west range and the cloisters, and the construction of the north–south flint rubble footing.

The key group of finds is that which can be assigned to a layer (context 2141) which seals the floor of the west range. There is some evidence that this layer was sealed by the rubble footing in the earlier doorway, but the site records are not completely certain on this point. The pottery from this context is of sixteenth to seventeenth century date. This must give a terminus post quem for the burial of the floor, presumably when the west range was demolished. The equivalent context (2120) in the cloister did not produce any datable finds. A layer higher up in the stratigraphic sequence (context (2118) produced only pottery of thirteenth to fourteenth century date. This is quite clearly residual.

The two additional groups of pottery from probable post-dissolution contexts that require comment come from demolition layers. Context 2147 in Area KX, within the west range, was described in the site notebook as 'mixed material relating to blocking and destruction (sic)'. Presumably this is an oblique reference to the construction of the flint and rubble footing (context 2131=2156) under discussion. What is less certain is quite how layer 2147 related to the 'blocking and destruction' represented by the flint footing. It seems most likely to be contemporary, or later in date but the records are uncertain on this point. Context 2147 was possibly equivalent to Layer 2140 in Area K, also within the west range. The latter contained no pottery, but was probably sealed by a further demolition context 2138, which was described as a dark soil

with slate, oyster shell, 'and green glazed pot.'. This layer contained a sizeable group of pottery and may have sealed the rubble footing. The pottery assemblage from context 2147 can probably be dated to the seventeenth century, although it contains a quantity of residual medieval material. The assemblage from context 2138 is made up of a mixture of medieval and post-medieval wares, and could probably be dated to the sixteenth, or seventeenth century. A late sixteenth or seventeenth century date seems most likely. None of the contexts containing these pottery groups are clearly identified on site drawings.

Dating of the West Range demolition

The exact date and function of the rubble structure (context 2131=2156) are uncertain. If it supported a wall, it is unclear what purpose the wall served, particularly if it is accepted that the demolition of the west range occurred after the dissolution, and that it coincided with the end of the useful life of the cloister. However, it is possible that the west range was demolished some time prior to the dissolution, and that the cloister continued in use. In that event, it may be that the flint and rubble footing represented a new structure which replaced the original domestic range on the western side of the cloister. It is conceivable that this structure consisted of both the new north–south wall and the small east–west wall 2171 already discussed (above pp 73–4), in which case, the latter would not have been a secondary feature of the west range, but rather part of a completely new structure.

However, the evidence of the pottery from contexts 2141, 2147 and 2138, if it can be taken at face value, does not completely rule out the earlier demolition of the west range, but does rather suggest that the demolition of the west range followed, rather than pre-dated, the dissolution of the nunnery, and that any structure built on the flint rubble footing was post-Suppression in date and probably in existence for only a brief period.

The Archaeological Evidence

South Range There is little, or no, direct evidence for the date of the demolition of the cloisters from the excavations. As already noted, the south range was only partially demolished, and there is little dating evidence for the date of the demolition of the those parts that were dismantled. The work need not have followed immediately upon the dissolution.

The Cloisters There is little, or no, direct evidence for the date of the demolition of the cloisters from the excavations. For the purposes of this report, it has been assumed that the demolition of the cloisters coincided with the razing of the west range. However there is little evidence from the 1974 excavation within the cloisters to confirm or refute this hypothesis. In 1980, the small excavation in the garden of Nos 13–15, The Abbey (A 1983.81) revealed that part of the area which had been occupied by the south cloister walk had been dug away, perhaps during the building of a cellar, in the sixteenth or, more probably, the seventeenth or even eighteenth century. The pottery from the layers of backfill (contexts 46, 48, 49 & 50) contained a mixture of Verwood and other post-Medieval earthenware. The pottery evidence is not conclusive for it gives only a *terminus ante quem* for the demolition of the cloister.

The Demolition of the East End Chapels

The exact date of the demolition of the chapels at the east end is not recorded, and it has always been assumed, quite reasonably, that it took place following the purchase of the Abbey by the town in 1544. It is recorded that the Lady Chapel was in poor repair in 1501 (Coldicott 1989, 119). If no repairs had been carried out, then it can be presumed that by 1544 the fabric will have deteriorated further. Even had repairs been undertaken, it is possible that by the time the town took over the Abbey the chapels were in a poor state. It would have been a major task because it involved not simply the removal of the chapels, itself a straightforward job, but also the blocking of the resulting openings in the east wall.

After demolition of the chapels their foundations will have survived below ground, only to be destroyed piecemeal by the construction of brick vaults and the digging of graves in the 18th and 19th centuries. It is likely that the chapels were dismantled at the same time as the aisle, which had served as part of the parish church, on the north side of the Abbey church. There is no direct dating evidence from the foundation trenches for the blocking walls.

Plate 23. RA 1973: E end Chapels. The N buttress to the retro-choir wall formed from the cut down N wall of the chapels viewed from the N. The photograph shows the ill-fitting post-Dissolution facing (context 1053) and the threshold (context 1001) of the door through the N wall of the east chapels. (Photograph Kevin Stubbs/TVAT)

The Archaeological Evidence

1973: Evidence for the post-Dissolution Buttresses The north and south walls (contexts 1050 & 1051) survived as stumps where they join the retro-choir wall, and these remnants were preserved as buttresses for the east wall. They were given new east facings (contexts 1051 & 1053), which fit very poorly. This is particularly noticeable in the case of the north buttress (contexts 1050 & 1052), which has a facing that is much wider than the buttress, so that it overlaps markedly. The facing of the southern buttress (contexts 1051 & 1053) is a better fit, but like its northern counterpart it has clearly been made out of already dressed stone that was immediately to hand, rather than stone that was specially cut for the purpose.

1973: The Blocking of the Retro-Choir Wall The openings through the east wall to the ambulatory, or retro-choir, had to be blocked off, and windows inserted. To this end, the windows, put into the Lady Chapel when it was rebuilt at the start of the 14th century, were saved. New, comparatively shallow foundations (contexts 1010 & 1013, and 1016 & 1017), to support the blocking walls (contexts 1009 & 1039), were excavated into the footings of the retro-choir wall (Fig 38a). The stonework of the blocking was of a reasonable quality, and the walls were built with a chamfered plinth to match the rest of the outer walls of the Abbey church. However, no attempt was made to modify the existing walls flanking the newly blocked openings. These sections of wall, as already noted (p 82), had been built without a chamfered plinth, since they were intended to be interior walls. Internally the inserted walls butted up against the wall paintings that decorated the archways to the Lady Chapel. The inner medallions have been cut by the new wall (see above p 87).

The windows, when they were put in, were inserted too high up in the wall, with the result that their tops were cut off by the round Norman arches inside the east end of the Abbey church. To quote Sir Richard Luce, 'This work of re-erecting the displaced windows was done in a curiously careless and inartistic manner. In the case of the Decorated windows in the retro-choir, the fitting was so badly done that room had not been left for the tops of the arches of either . . .' (Luce 1948, 52). It was for this reason that in 1866 the Rev E L Berthon lowered the windows (Berthon 1899, 159–60).

Interpretation

There is clear evidence that the work of demolition, and the necessary making good that followed, was not carried out to a high standard. Presumably funds were in short supply. Comment has already been made on the poor execution of the facings of the newly created buttresses, and Sir Richard Luce's comments quoted concerning the re-setting of the windows. In addition, attention should be drawn to the fact that no attempt seems to have been made to remove the last vestiges of the vaulting for chapels from the east wall of the Abbey church. Parts of the groining, the responds, and the columns survive on the present east wall of the church. This is fortunate for posterity, for as a result evidence that might otherwise have been destroyed has been preserved, and has allowed the reconstruction of the structural history of the successive Chapels in greater detail and with greater confidence.

The Demolition of the Parish Aisle and North Porch

It is probable that the additional parish aisle was demolished following the Dissolution and after the purchase of the abbey by the town in 1544. There is no documentary confirmation of the date of the demolition, but this is the most likely context. With the purchase of the Abbey the north aisle would have been redundant, and a useful source of building materials, either for the repair and upkeep of the Abbey, or for sale to raise money.

The purchase of the Abbey, it has been suggested, removed the need for the extra accommodation provided by the north aisle. If this argument is accepted, then it is reasonable to suppose that the aisle was demolished shortly after the purchase in 1544. The 1975 and 1988 excavations did not provide any evidence to date the demolition. In large part this was because later burials on the north side of the Abbey had destroyed and disturbed those layers which potentially had sealed the footings of the demolished aisle. Again there is no direct dating evidence for the demolition of the aisle.

The Archaeological Evidence

1975: The Blocking of the North Wall The demolition was clearly carried out with some care, since the windows and buttresses of the additional aisle were probably salvaged for re-use in the rebuilt north aisle wall (see above pp 94–5). In Bay 1 the post-Dissolution foundations (context 3187) were revealed, but not the foundation trench, which probably had been destroyed by later activity. The blocking of this bay was subsequently remodelled when a replica Norman window was created. The re-used 'Perpendicular' style window was removed, and now forms part of a folly in the grounds of the old Vicarage, now Folly House. In Bay 2 the foundations (context 3246) were revealed sealing the floor (context 3181) of the additional aisle. Again no foundation trench was recorded, and the bay was remodelled in the nineteenth century. In Bays 3 and 4 the post-Dissolution blocking (contexts 3265 = 3314 & 3315) is still in place, and between the bays the post-Dissolution buttress (3/4) (context 3161) survives. That there were similar buttresses between Bays 1 and 2, and Bays 2 and 3, is shown by the footing (context 3310) at the base of the later respond 2/3 (Fig 42). At the base of Bay 4 the foundation trench (context 3313) was recorded in plan.

1975: Blocking of the West Wall of the North Transept The blocking of the north transept wall was complicated by the presence of three graves (contexts 3095–3097) cut through the west wall footings (context 3093) (Fig 27b). These graves were emptied and packed with stone rubble (context 3222) before the wall was rebuilt.

1975: Demolition of the Porch and associated structures The north porch, which was investigated in 1988 (see above pp 56–8), was very probably demolished at the same time as the additional north aisle. Certainly the presence of late Medieval and early post-Medieval pottery within the probable demolition deposits (contexts 6006, 6010 & 6012) in the west side room supports this idea.[4] The presence of quantities of human bone suggest that burials, possibly including those under the west wall of the north transept (contexts

3095–3097) were cleared from the parish aisle and deliberately reburied. The pottery may have been stored within the porch or some other structure. The presence of quantities of small fragments of late medieval painted window glass testify to the demolition of the aisle, and fragments of late medieval stonework testify to the destruction of monuments, possibly including chantries, within the Abbey and demolished aisle.

Notes

1 A fuller account of the suppression of Romsey will be found in Coldicott 1989, 150–51. The following paragraph is based upon Coldicott's account. Other information is published in Liveing 1906, 241–58.

2 The dating evidence is considered in some detail, but most post-Dissolution contexts are not discussed because they are both ephemeral in nature and probably the result of activity of much later date.

3 No site drawing shows the footing 2156=2131 sealing a demolition deposit, although a section drawing prepared for publication under Stubb's direction does show the relationship. A study of relevant site photographs confirms that a layer, perhaps 0.10m to 0.20m thick, lay between the tiled floor 2157 and later footing. It is uncertain how this layer and pit 2167 related.

4 The ceramics from the demolition deposits associated with the north porch are discussed in Rees et al forthcoming. For the archive pottery report see Russel 1990.

Chapter 9

A Survey of the Finds from Romsey Abbey

Introduction

The initial research design produced in about 1983 for the backlog publication of the excavations undertaken in Romsey in the 1970s and early 1980s, envisaged publication of full reports on the various categories of finds. In particular, the pottery from the excavations was to be analysed and published in detail to provide a basis for future work in Romsey. The full quantification and recording of pottery both from the abbey and other excavations in the town was put in hand, and largely completed by Andrew Russel when he left the project in mid 1986. Other classes of material were also quantified in bulk finds registers.

In early 1991, at the instigation of English Heritage, a re-assessment of the Romsey Post-Excavation project was undertaken, and a revised research design and detailed publication proposal prepared. This proposal envisaged the publication of the results of stratigraphic analysis with supporting dating evidence, and the publication of certain limited groups of finds which had an intrinsic interest. This research design was accepted by English Heritage.

Under this proposal the majority of the finds from the Abbey would not be analysed or published in detail, for three reasons: The limited surviving contextual information for many of the Abbey excavations, created problems in (a) identifying extant groups of finds with recorded contexts, and (b) in analysing stratigraphic relationships. Thirdly, (c) there was the comparative paucity of finds, particularly from medieval contexts. The latter problem was put into perspective by the much more numerous and better quality data from excavations at the Abbey and in the town since 1981–2 and especially since 1986. This was particularly marked in the case of the pottery groups.

The only finds to be published in full in this monograph are the decorated medieval floortiles and the human skeletal material. Although many of the tiles are unstratified, they nonetheless form a body of evidence worthy of extended analysis, and are particularly linked with the abbey. The reports on the tiles and human skeletal material follow this general overview of the other finds from the Abbey excavations.

After a consideration of the pottery, this overview looks at the building materials, and in particular the architectural and sculptural stonework, and the medieval window glass. The Romano-British brick and tile found in the excavations is also briefly considered. The animal bone is then commented on. Other classes of material that are referred to are the metalwork, or lack of it, and the small quantity of evidence for the casting of copper alloy, including fired clay mould material.

The Pottery

A draft report on the pottery from the abbey excavations 1973–79 had been completed by 1988. This report (Russel 1988) will form part of the research archive. The report was subsequently revised to take account of the 1988 material (Russel 1990). The dating evidence and pottery identification used in the structural report is derived in large measure from this later draft report.

The excavations between 1973 and 1979 produced a total of 984 sherds of pottery weighing 22.347kg The excavations in 1988 produced 2602 sherds weighing 32.004kg (Table 5). The excavations on the north side of the Abbey (A.1988.7) alone produced more than the total weight of the pottery from the 1973–1979 excavations. Furthermore, much of the pottery from the earlier excavations was either from late contexts, or unstratified. For example only 27 sherds from the 1973 excavations were from stratified contexts, and many of those contexts could not be identified. The site of the eastern chapels was excavated by the Rev Berthon in the nineteenth century and this accounts for the large quantity of finds of mixed date from the topsoil (see above pp 79–89). The finds from the 1974 excavations could be assigned to identifiable contexts, but many of the contexts particularly to the south of the nave, were of Dissolution, or later, date. There were only 223 sherds in total from the 1974 trenches. The 1975 excavations produced a limited amount of pottery, and again much was of late date or residual, and came from contexts disturbed, or created, by eighteenth and early nineteenth century grave digging, or Victorian and later building and maintenance work. The pottery from within the area of the

Table 5: Pottery

Year	Contexts and Groups of Contexts	No of Contexts	Total wt of pottery (gm)	Total no of sherds
1973	Topsoil	1	5960	274
	Stratified groups	16	264	27
1974	Contexts within the nave	18	968	73
	South of nave	18	2845	150
1975	Topsoil and late disturbances	2	963	69
	Other Contexts	29	865	81
1977	All contexts	3	109	14
1979	Unstratified/Topsoil	5	6654	126
	Stratified	13	3719	170
1973–79	Total	105	22347	984
A 1988.6	All contexts	14	8552	713
A.1988.7	All contexts	22	23452	1889
1988	Total	36	32004	2602
1991	All contexts	17	2432	113
All years	Total	158	56783	3699

Note: Figures for 1973–1988 are taken from the detailed quantifications which form the basis for Dr Russel's draft report (Russel, 1988). The figures for 1991 excavations are from the bulk finds registers

cloisters was limited both in quantity and distribution. The 1977 excavations apparently produced only 14 sherds. This small number was mirrored by the 1991 excavations (A 1991.18) which produced very little stratified pottery, and almost all of that from post-Dissolution contexts. Both of these excavations were carried out within the limits of the cloister walks, and in neither case was there significant excavation below the level of the medieval floor. The little pottery which was recovered was post-Dissolution, or residual. The 1979 excavations were also within the cloisters, but produced more ceramic material. However, most of this came from the two trenches excavated within the cloister garth for soakaways, and much was post-medieval or later in date.

By contrast, and quite fortuitously, both of the 1988 excavations adjacent to the Abbey revealed a small number of well sealed contexts with sizeable groups of pottery. From a trench for a soakaway excavated to the west of the Abbey (A 1988.6) came groups of later Saxon pottery, and from the room to the west of the original thirteenth century porch on the north side came a mixed group of late medieval and early post-medieval ceramics. Both of these groups will be published, but separately from the Abbey report. The Saxon group will be published as part of an article on the evidence for Iron Age, Romano-British and Saxon occupation of Romsey (Scott, Bourdillon and Rees, forthcoming), and the second group will be published as part of a study of the archaeological evidence for later medieval and early post-medieval occupation in Romsey (Rees et al forthcoming)

The Architectural and Sculptural Stone

The excavations at the Abbey in the 1970s produced a number of fragments of architectural stone. Many were drawn at an early stage in the post-excavation process, and the drawings are to be found in the site archive. Although a number of fragments of architectural stone are noted in the bulk finds records, in most instances it has not been possible to identify the relevant pieces since many had lost their labels. The result is that the provenance of almost all of the fragments is unknown, or unidentifiable, and it has been thought worthwhile to publish only a limited number of the pieces.

The drawn and published stone falls into three groups.

Group 1 (Fig 43)

The first group consists of the large blocks (context 3203) that underpinned the footings (context 3249) of the north face of the late Saxon north transept (Phase 8). With one exception, these blocks are from a known context, and are intrinsically interesting. (Figs 14 & 43) The detail available for publication is limited to that shown on the drawings prepared at some time after the 1975 excavation, and additional information found on plans in the site archive. The drawings do not show all faces of all the stones. Some drawings were clearly intended to show the stones in situ (for example Nos 0 & 12). Prior to final drawing, only a limited visual inspection was possible of the blocks themselves, since they now form a rockery in the garden of Romsey Vicarage. Sixteen stones were found in situ, and a seventeenth stone presumed from the spacing. Only nine of the sixteen stones had been drawn. One other stone (Catalogue no 0) had been drawn at the same time, and is included, although its provenance is unknown. It is similar in finish to the stones known to be from the late Saxon footings, and could very well be from the footings.

It is clear that the stones had been re-used, and had been salvaged from some other structure, or structures. There are a number of possibilities, as has already been noted in the structural report. Firstly, they could have been part either of an earlier Saxon church or other building, or of a Romano-British structure. Secondly, it has to be determined whether the building from which they were derived was in Romsey, or much further afield. It has already been argued that there is no evidence for a substantial stone, or brick, Romano-British building from excavations in Romsey (pp 41–2 above).

There is evidence for an earlier Saxon building, or buildings, underlying the later Saxon abbey. The chalk footings (Phase 7)

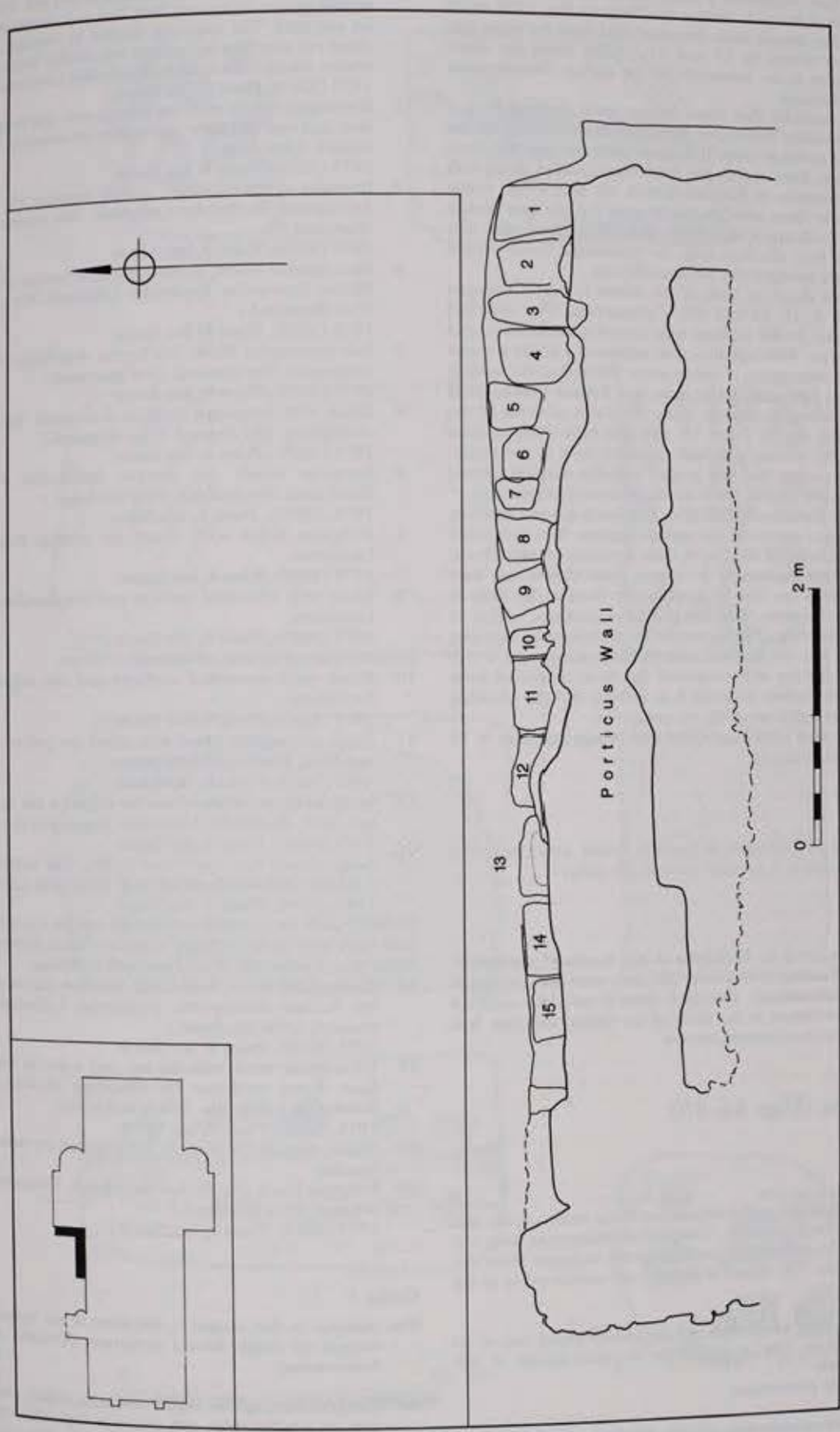


Fig 43 RA 1975: Plan of Saxon north transept showing original positions of Group I stones.

located in the 1979 and 1991 excavations to the south of the nave, may have supported a stone superstructure. The slight evidence for a possible timber building on the 1979 chalk foundation has already been discussed, and must be taken into account (see above pp 27 and 33). Aside from the chalk footings there is no evidence for an earlier Saxon stone building in Romsey.

It seems unlikely that these stones were derived from a building, whether Saxon, or Romano-British, sited in the centre of the modern town. It is more probable that the stone was brought in from outside the immediate locality, along with the large quantities of Romano-British tile and brick, which seems to have been used in the mortar for the late Saxon abbey. The evidence of this brick and tile suggests that it is most likely that the building, or buildings, from which materials were salvaged was Romano-British.

The surface detail on most of the drawn stones (Catalogue Nos 0, 1, 2, 8, 11, 12 and 15) is distinctive. The chiselled hollows, or pits, on the surfaces were probably intended to give a key for mortar. Although they may represent a crude attempt at rusticated decoration, it seems more likely that the surface treatment was not meant to be seen, and formed hidden parts of any structure. The grooves along the faces of some of the blocks, notably nos. 0, 2 and 15, also may have been to assist in securing the stones, although precisely how is uncertain. Possibly, the molten lead was poured into the channel formed between adjacent blocks, but it seems inherently impractical.

There were Romano-British villas and farms around Romsey, but the size and nature of the stones suggests that they came from more substantial structures than domestic or agricultural buildings. If this assumption is correct, these blocks may have been brought up the Test by boat or raft, from as far away as Clausentum (Bitterne, Southampton), or perhaps, nearer to hand, from Nursling. The nature of the settlement at Nursling is uncertain, but the Roman road passed nearby, and a rich collection of pottery and metalwork has been recovered from the parish. On present evidence it is unlikely that the Nursling settlement had buildings of the necessary size.

The three other stones are illustrated (Catalogue Nos 9, 10 and 13) in the catalogue.

Group 2

This consists of fragments of possible Saxon date, including the two stone roods to be seen today in the abbey.

Group 3

Finally, there are three fragments of late medieval stonework. Two pieces (Catalogue Nos 24 & 25) were stratified and found in the 1988 excavations. The third piece is part of a sculpted figure, and was found in the cellar of the former vicarage. It is unstratified but has intrinsic interest.

Catalogue (Figs 44–50)

Group 1

Stone identifications in this section are those made on site and recorded in the site archive. Detailed identifications were not recorded. The published drawings were redrawn from the pencil originals. The stones in group 1 are numbered as in the site record.

0 ?Rectangular block with medial groove along one of its longer faces. One end face has chiselled scoops or pits Limestone.
Unknown provenance.

Although the provenance of this block is not known, its similarity in surface treatment links it with the stones from the later Saxon footings. Drawn as if in situ.

1 Large rectangular block of approximately rectangular cross-section. Apparently damaged at one end. There is a medial groove along one long face and continuing onto an end face. The groove is flanked by regularly spaced chisel cut pits. The top surface was roughly flattened, and retains distinct chisel marks. Bembridge Limestone.
1975 (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

2 Rectangular block with one sloping end. One long face at least and one end have regular pits cut obliquely into the surface. Limestone.
1975 (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

3 Irregular elongated block, slightly tapering. No further description. Bembridge Limestone. Not retained. (Not illustrated.)
1975 (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

4 Rectangular block, apparently with broken edge. No further description. Bembridge Limestone. Not retained. (Not illustrated.)
1975 (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

5 Sub-rectangular block. No further description. Possibly Greensand. Not retained. (Not illustrated.)
1975 (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

6 Block with smoothed surfaces. Limestone. No further description. Not retained. (Not illustrated.)
1975 (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

7 Irregular block. No further description. Possibly Greensand. Not retained. (Not illustrated.)
1975, (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

8 Irregular block with chisel cut pitting. Bembridge Limestone.
1975 (3203) Phase 8, late Saxon

9 Block with smoothed surfaces and two chamfered faces. Limestone.
1975 (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

Probably part of a plinth of buttress, or corner.

10 Block with smoothed surfaces and one angled face. Limestone.
1975 (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

11 Small rectangular block with chisel cut pits on at least two faces. Bembridge Limestone.
1975 (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

12 Irregular block with evidence for chisel cut pits on at least two faces. Bembridge Limestone. Drawn as if in situ.
1975 (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

13 Large mortar with one corner broken. The underside has a regular shallow groove across it. Bembridge Limestone.
1975 (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

Probably used for crushing material for mortar, it is unlikely to have been used in the building of the late Saxon Abbey since it forms part of structure. It may very well be Roman.

14 Rectangular block, with some chiselled pits on surface. No further description. Bembridge Limestone. Not retained. (Not illustrated.)
1975 (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

15 Rectangular block with flat top, and a groove along one face. Some evidence for chiselling of drawn face. Bembridge Limestone. Drawn as if in situ.
1975 (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

16 (Stone missing.) A stone is presumed on the basis of the spacing.

17 Irregular block. No further description. Limestone. Not retained. (Not illustrated.)
1975 (3203), Phase 8, late Saxon

Group 2

The material in this section is discussed in the forthcoming corpus of Anglo-Saxon sculpture (Tweddle et al., forthcoming).

18 Saxon Rood (Fig 47). Figure of Christ, slightly under life size, on a plain cross, and carved in high relief on three blocks of fine grained oolitic limestone. The head and torso, with above them the hand of God, are carved on one long block, which forms the upright of the cross. The

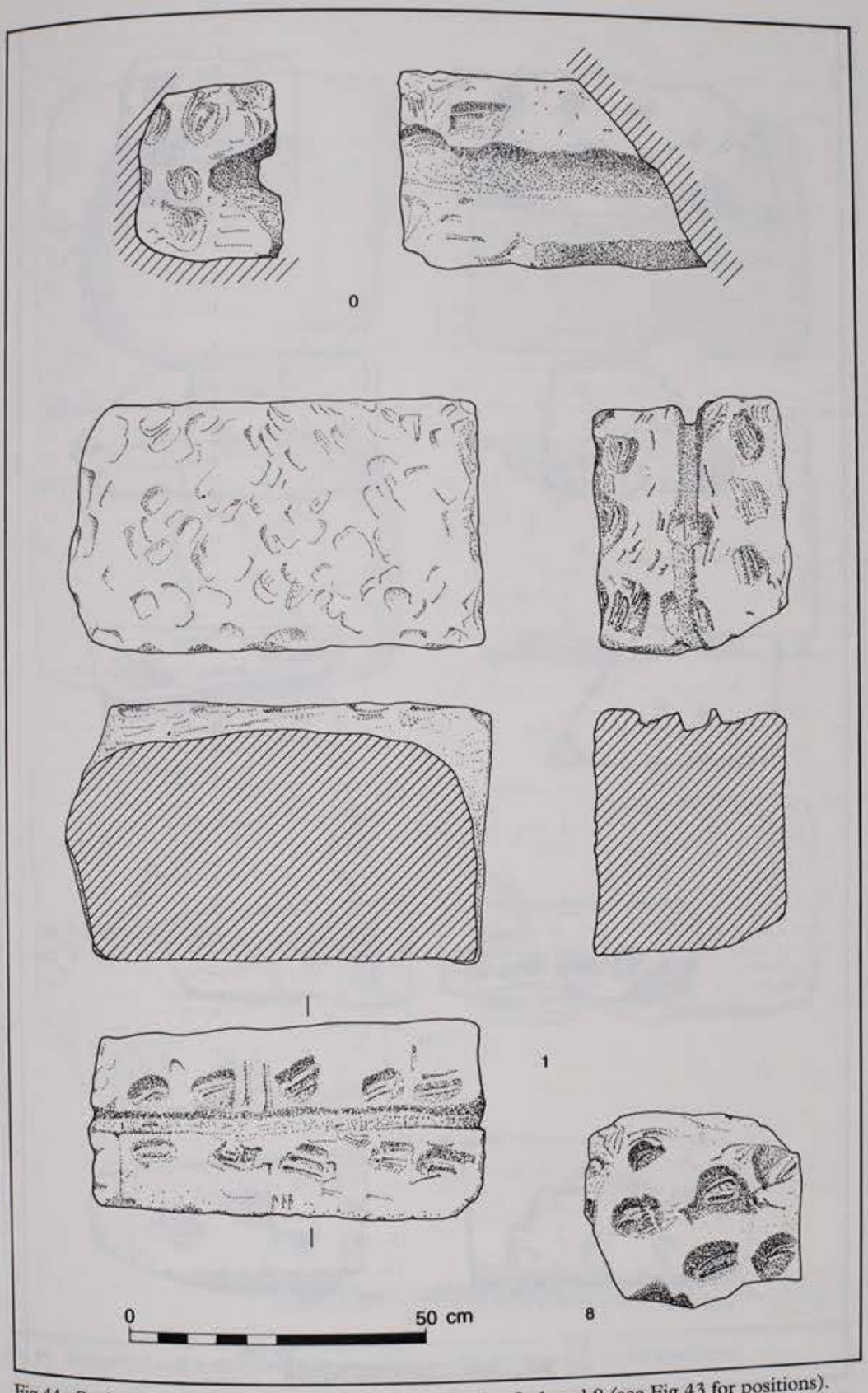


Fig 44 Sculptural and architectural stone: Group 1 Nos 0, 1 and 8 (see Fig 43 for positions).

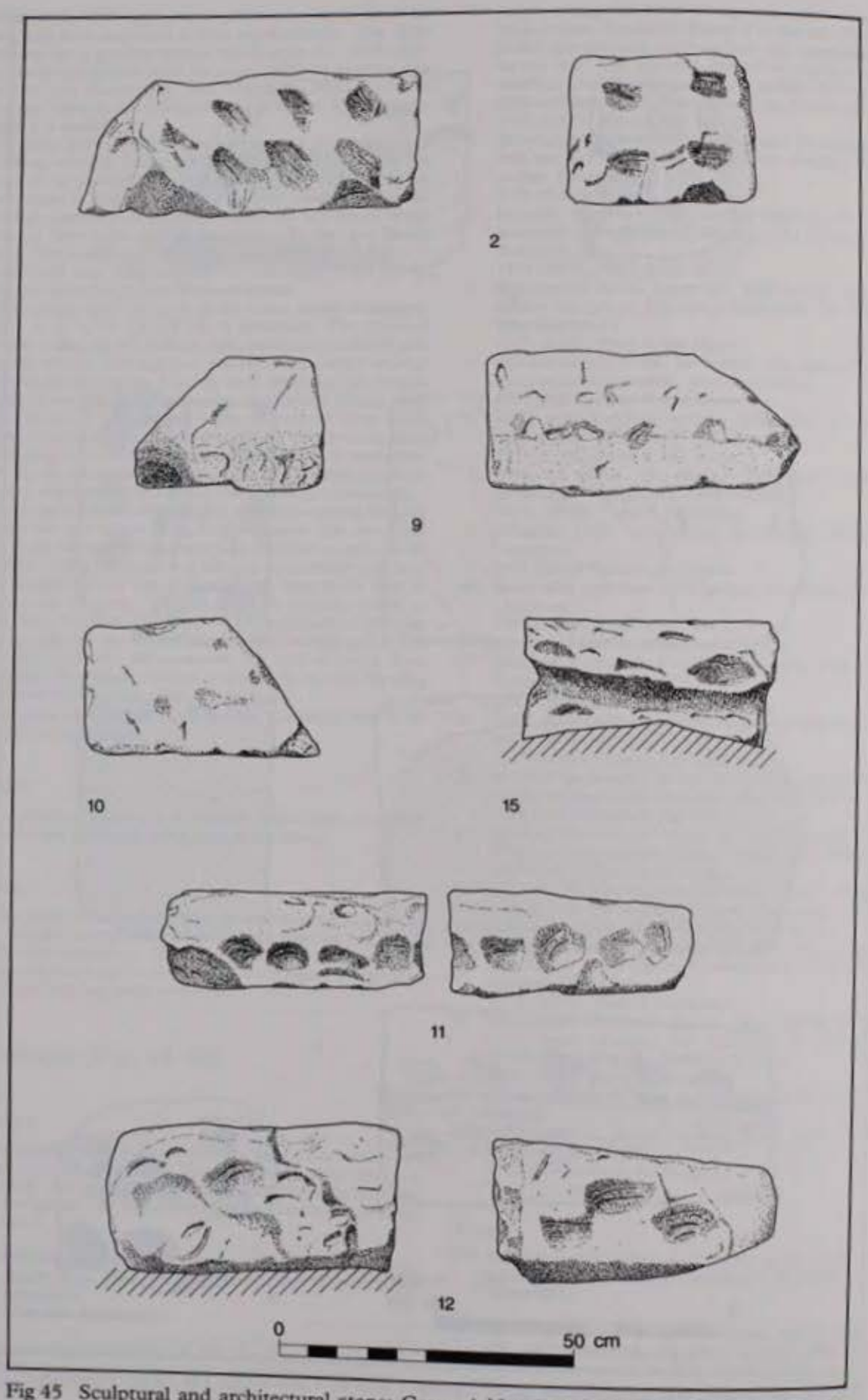


Fig 45 Sculptural and architectural stone: Group 1 Nos 2, 9 to 12, and 15 (see Fig 43 for positions).

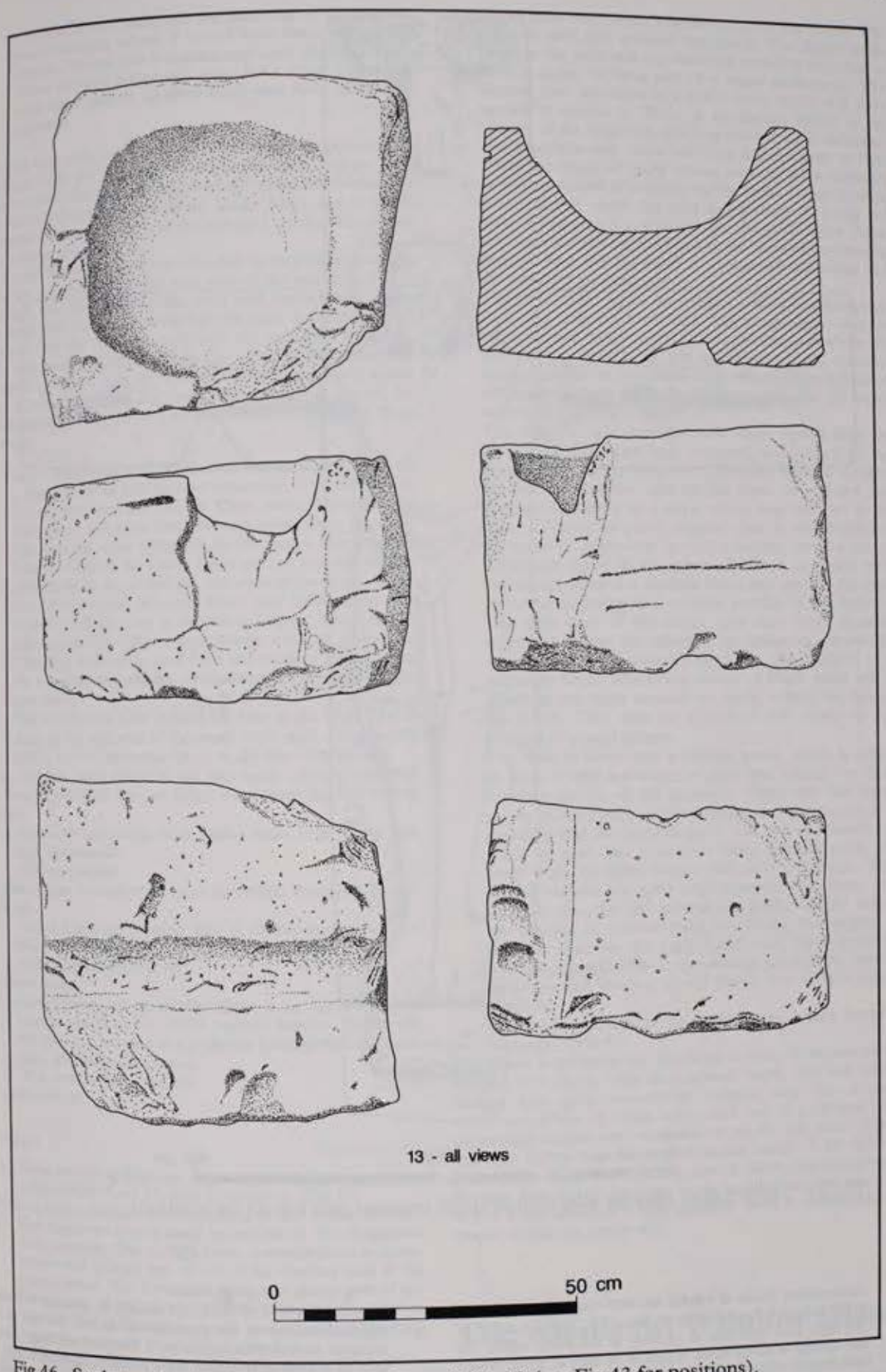


Fig 46 Sculptural and architectural stone: Group 1 No 13 (see Fig 43 for positions).

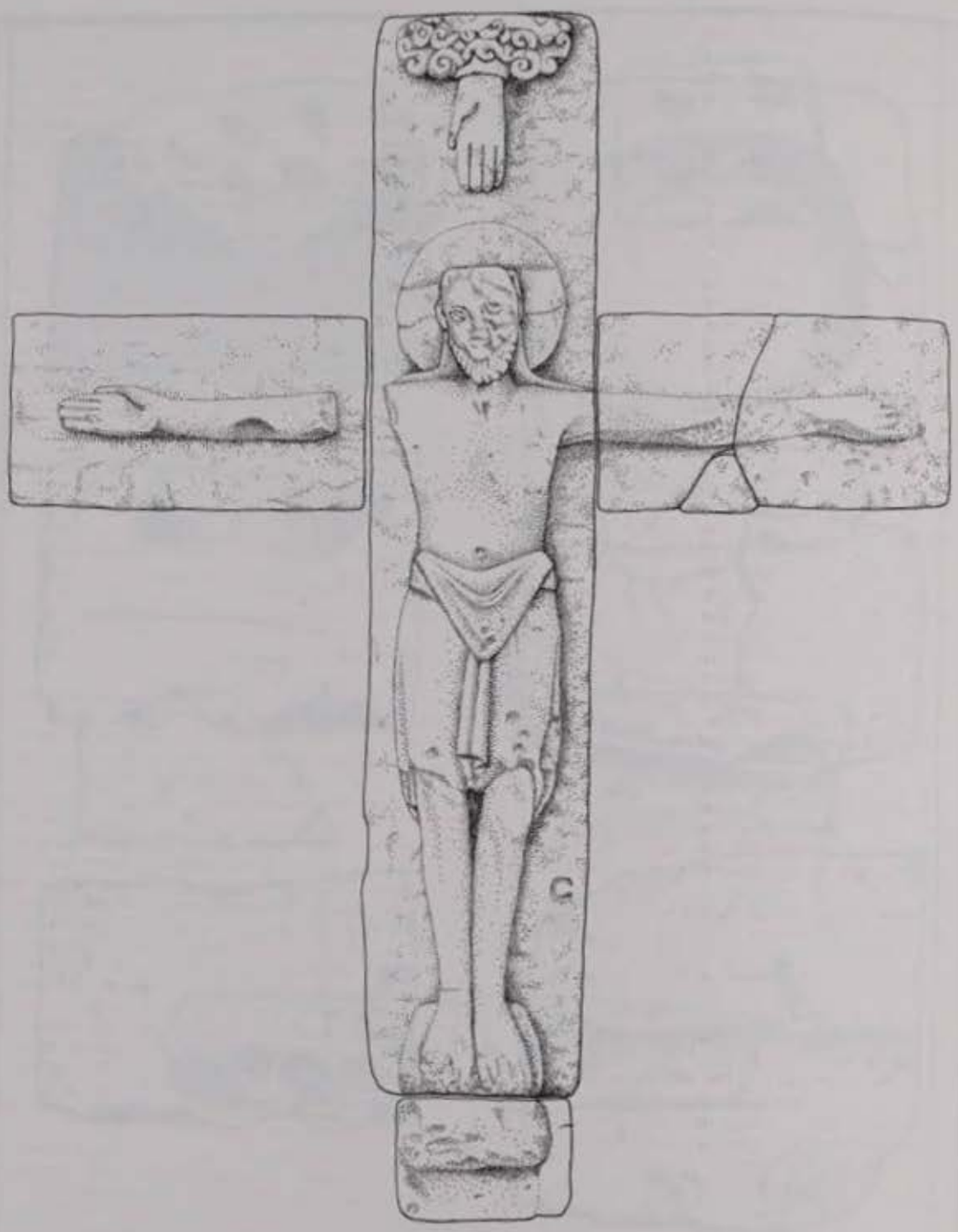


Fig 47 Large Saxon rood on west wall of south transept (see Fig 33 for position).

outstretched limbs of Christ are each carved on separate blocks which form the arms of the cross. There is a gap in the right arm (left arm as viewed) at the point where the two blocks of stone meet. There is no sign of more recent breakage, which suggests that the gap is of some antiquity, if not original. It may well have been filled with mortar or plaster when first erected.

The figure's feet rest on a platform carved in low relief. The feet are not crossed and nailed, in contrast to later representations of the crucifixion. Below the feet is a separate corbel, which may be a Norman addition. The face of Christ is depicted with a beard, and open eyes. The face is weathered, but appears serene rather than drawn and anguished as in the later tradition. Above the head is the hand of God coming down from out of a cloud.

The rood is now built into the west wall of the present south transept, where it would have been within the cloisters. To one side is a stone cupboard (fig 33), which almost certainly served as a niche for a lamp. There is a small stone pierced by three small vent holes above the cupboard.

Possibly early 11th century in date, this rood was presumably salvaged from the structure of the late Saxon Abbey. It is almost certain that originally there would have been flanking or supporting figures representing the Virgin Mary and St John. Presumably these were lost, or not salvaged, during demolition of the Saxon abbey.

It is possible that the rood was inserted in its present position after the construction of the west wall of the transept. There are signs that the ashlars of the west wall immediately above the figure were cut to accommodate the rood. It is more likely, however, that the rood was built into the wall from the start. The thin course of stone above the arms of the cross was inserted to ensure that the ashlar course immediately above was able to maintain its level. This rood is dated by Coutsworth (1988, 168–9) to the late 10th or early 11th century.

19 Saxon Rood (Fig 47). Small rood carved in low relief on a single block of fine grained limestone. It is difficult to identify the stone; it may be Caen stone. Much of the finer detail has been lost through weathering or wear. Christ on the cross is flanked by the Virgin Mary and St John. The feet of the Christ figure are not crossed. Angels with wands sit on, or behind, the arms of the cross. At the foot of the cross, beneath Mary and John stand two Roman soldiers. One is thrusting a spear into Christ's side, while the other offers rough wine in a sponge. Sprouting from cross, as if from the trunk of a living tree, are branches and shoots symbolising the triumph of life over death.

The rood is now sited behind the altar in the Chapel of St Anne at the east end of the south choir aisle. Coutsworth (1988, 167–8) dates this block to the late 10th century.

This rood has been dated to the late tenth century, and was presumably salvaged like the larger rood, from the late Saxon Abbey.

20 Decorative moulding, with barley sugar twist along one edge. Greensand.

1988 unstratified

Probably from a window or door surround. Probably Saxon. (Fig 48)

21 Carved fragment, possibly part of the representation of a fold of textile. Bath stone (Oolitic limestone).

1988 unstratified. (Fig 48)

Probably Saxon.

22 Carved frieze, or moulding. There is an upper band of lozenge and bead cut within straight borders. Below are the damaged remains of a probable floral motif cut in low relief. Bembridge limestone.

1975, unstratified. (Fig 49)

Probably Saxon.

Group 3

23 Relief moulding fragment. Limestone.

1988 (6081) Phase 17, post-Dissolution (Fig 49)

Probably from a window moulding, and of later medieval date.

24 Two fragments from a stone tracery panel. The fragments form a corner. The upright piece, is symmetrical in cross-section and formed part of one of the dividing bars of the tracery panel. The horizontal piece was clearly part of the lower frame of the tracery panel and was asymmetrical in section. The surface looks newly worked, with clear crisp marks from the use of a toothed chisel.

1988 (6081), Phase 17, post-Dissolution (Fig 49)

The piece is probably from a late medieval monument or chantry chapel. Presumably the structure lay within the parish church and was demolished when the parish aisle was taken down after the Dissolution.

25 Upper torso from a small figure carved in the round. The stone is pale fine grained limestone. The figure lacks detail at the back and was therefore probably intended to fit in a niche, or form part of a larger monument. The head is lost, but there is a dowel hole, which will have served to secure it. There is no similar dowel at the bottom of the fragment, which appears roughly flattened. The sculpture may never have had a lower torso or legs. There are traces of black carbon paint on some surfaces, and in particular in recesses on the stone. There is some gold leaf and where the gold is lost there is orange red bole, which served as a fixative for the gold. There is also red paint around the neck and in the folds of the hanging sleeves. This was intended as orange red colouring, and did not have gold leaf over it.

The arms of the figure are broken, and its hands missing. It is clear that the arms were bent at the elbow and the forearms and hands raised. There are fractures where the forearms are broken off, and a further, roughly diamond shaped fracture at the centre of the chest where the hands will have touched the body. It is probable that the hands were held together in prayer.

The figure's right shoulder (left when viewed from the front), is damaged and lowered, and detail of the garments worn has been lost. However, enough survives on the left shoulder and on the chest to indicate that they were covered by a cape, which was fastened at the front. Traces of paint suggest that it was intended perhaps to represent a fur, possibly even ermine. Although there is no trace of white or other pale colouring, there is a distinct black line around the cape about its midpoint and roughly parallel to the bottom. The pale grey of the stone may have been deemed sufficient to give the effect of fur colouring. Above the cape, around the figure's neck are the remains of a probable hood, which has traces of black paint on it. There is red band around the neck, within the line of the hood. This may be a line of red paint, or the remains of a gold border.

The cape is worn over a sleeved gown, which is edged in gold. There are traces of gold leaf edging the deep hanging sleeves of the garment. There are also some traces of red paint, particularly on the right sleeve. It is possible that the sleeved gown was red and had a fur collar or cape, but it is more likely that the gown was black with red lined sleeves and gold trimmings. This would explain the gold edging across the chest, and possibly also the red around the neck.. To the left of the hands, as viewed from the front, the edging is broader than on the right hand side. This probably reflects the difficulty in decorating around the hands. Beneath the sleeved gown there is a simple black cassock.

Unstratified (found in the cellar of the former Romsey Vicarage). (Fig 50)

The figure is probably late Medieval in date. It appears to be dressed as a cleric, with an academic hood. The red sleeve linings and gold trimmings suggest that the person represented was of some note, and use of gold leaf that substantial monies were available to pay for the work. Given that this statue was discovered in the cellar of the former vicarage, it is as likely as not that it came originally from Romsey Abbey, but there can be no certainty on this score. If it was from Romsey, it was possibly from a monument or chapel within the parish aisle.

The Medieval Window Glass

Quantities of window glass fragments were recovered from the Abbey excavations. Most is unstratified, or from late contexts. The amounts found in the different excavations vary little (Table 6).

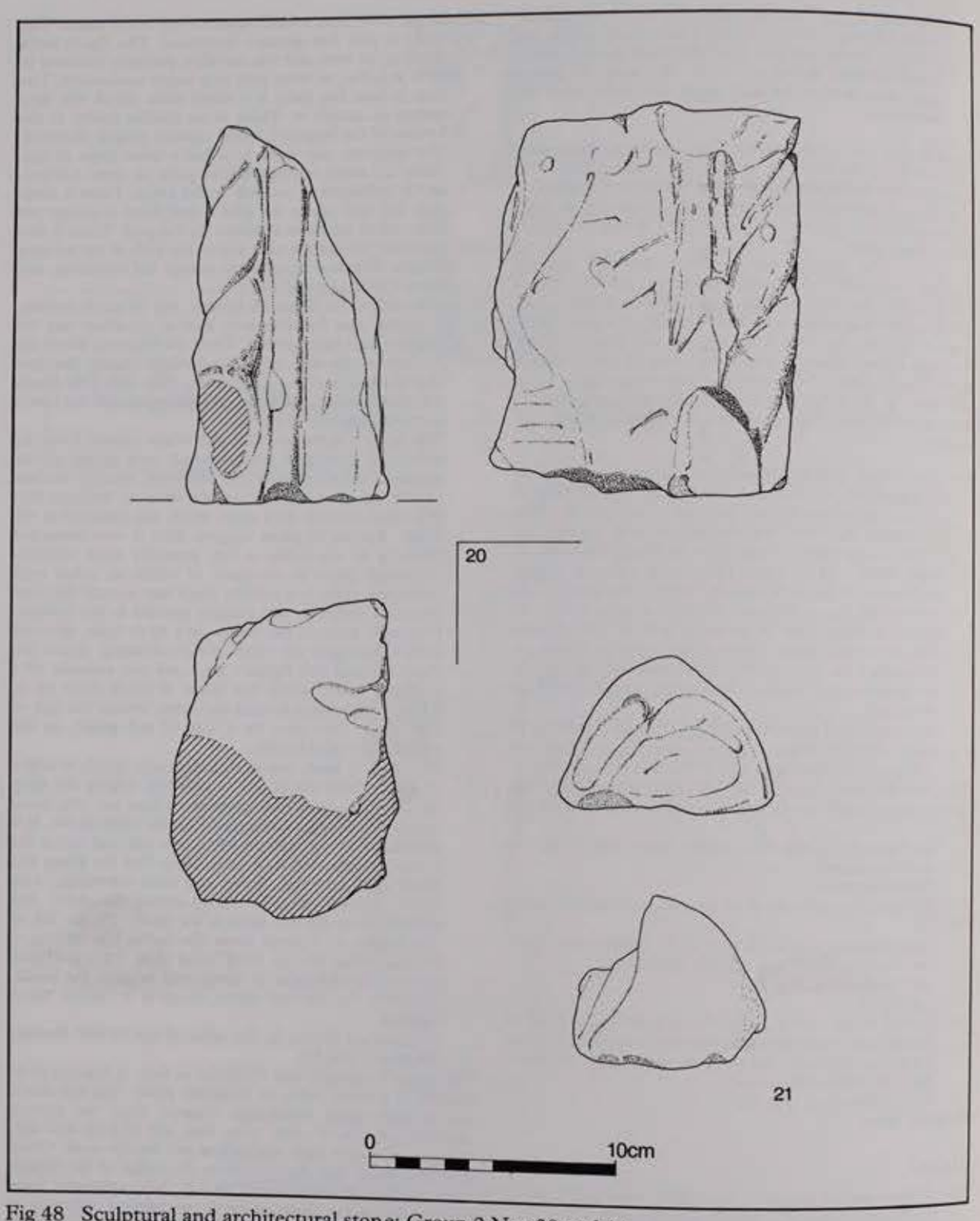


Fig 48 Sculptural and architectural stone: Group 2 Nos 20 and 21.

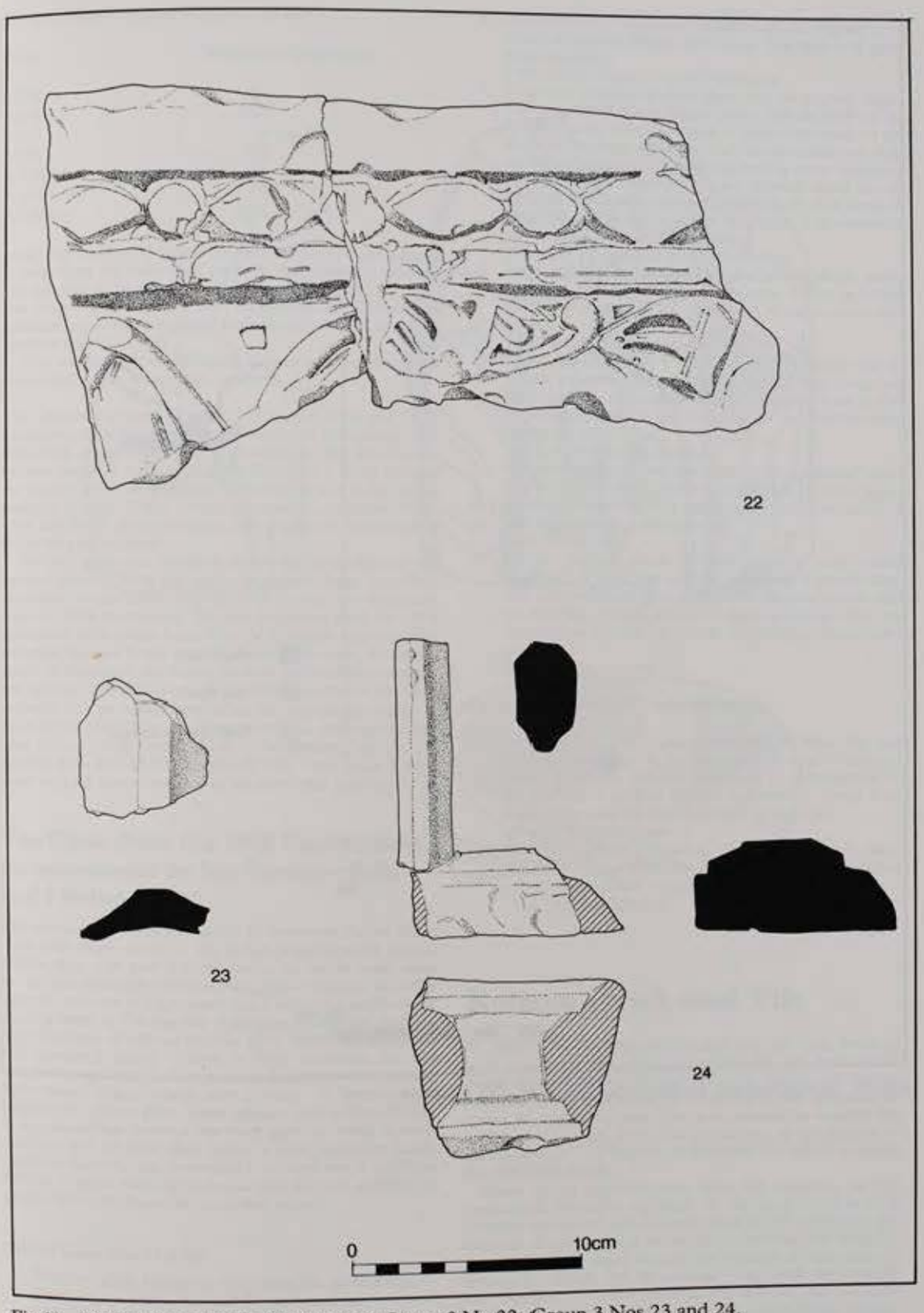


Fig 49 Sculptural and architectural stone: Group 2 No 22; Group 3 Nos 23 and 24.

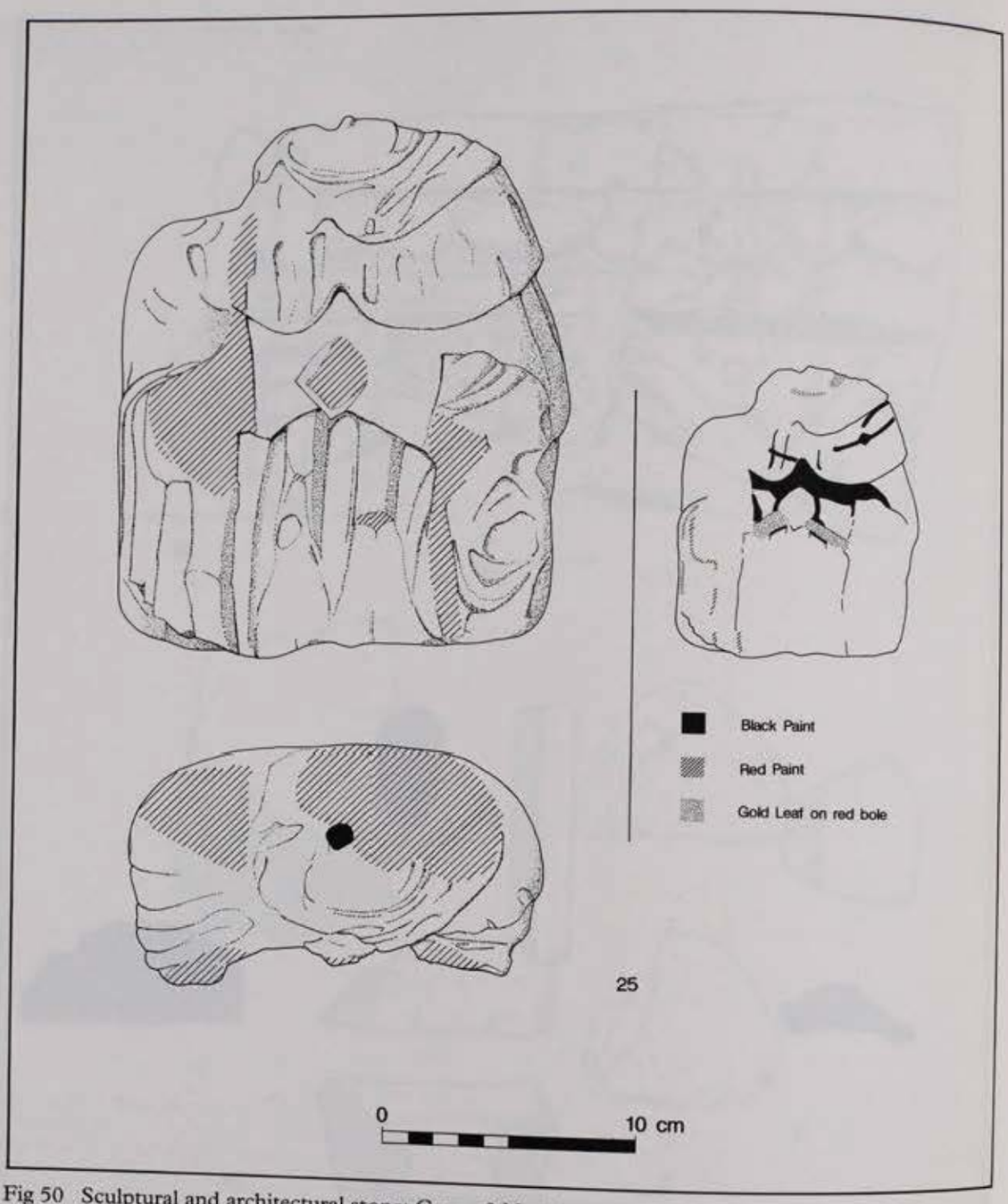


Fig 50 Sculptural and architectural stone: Group 3 No 25.

Table 6: Number of glass fragments by Year

Year	Number of fragments
1974	64
1975	331
1977	2 (or 3)
1979	31
A 1988.7	69
A 1991.18	7
All Years	504 (or 505)

Note: The number of fragments from 1974–1979 excavations is taken from the bulk finds registers and probably gives an over estimate of the actual quantity of medieval glass.
The window glass from the 1973 excavations was all from one disturbed context and included modern reeded glass as well as medieval material.
In 1991 some highly comminuted fragments of window glass were found in post-Dissolution contexts.

The apparent preponderance of the glass from the 1975 excavations on the north side of the abbey is misleading. The bulk finds registers for this excavation do not distinguish between medieval and later window glass, and a check through the window glass has indicated that most of it is in fact post-medieval in date. Three groups of material, (contexts 3001, 3004 and 3025) alone produced 289 fragments, almost all of which are post-medieval.

The only glass that has been drawn for publication is the painted glass. There are eight fragments from the 1988 excavation on the north side (A 1988.7), and two fragments from the 1974 excavations. The two fragments from the 1974 excavation both come from Trench B, which was not fully excavated because it was opened over a brick vault. No drawn record of this trench was made, because the material recovered was residual. The glass from the A 1988.7 excavation has been assessed, and an edited version of the assessment report is given below. The report recommended that the undecorated glass did not justify further study or publication, but that the painted glass should be illustrated. The 1988 glass mainly came from the area to the west of the porch and parish aisle.

The Glass from the 1988 Excavations, an assessment by Jan Summerfield and J Brian Kerr [1]

The excavations in 1988 produced *c* 69 fragments of glass which came from eight contexts. All of the fragments are potash window glass. The glass is poorly preserved and in many cases the surface corrosion obscures the original surface. In some cases the glass was so fragmented that it was not possible to say anything about it. The majority of the glass is plain but there are eight fragments of painted window glass, which are illustrated and described below. There is little evidence for the manufacturing method, though some fragments have straight fire rounded edges, others have a slight "S" profile both indicative of cylinder glass. There appears to be a clear division in this assemblage between the thick glass (2–3mm) in poor condition and the finer glass (1mm or less) usually in better condition. However, the assemblage is so small that it would be difficult to draw meaning from this and it is not possible to assign a date to the fragments on stylistic criteria.

Painted Glass (Figs 51 & 52)

1 Window glass fragment with possible grozed curve. Painted on one face, with curvilinear decoration.
1988 (6010) Phase 17, post-Dissolution

2 Fine glass, with a curved painted line which diverges from a wider painted band with curved edge.
1988 (6010) Phase 17, post-Dissolution

3 Approximately triangular fragment of thick glass with clearly delineated foliage decoration. The glass is in quite poor condition.
1988 (6010) Phase 17, post-Dissolution

4 Fragment, possibly of thick glass, with no original edges. The painted surface is largely intact, but the body of the sherd is badly decayed. There is paint over much of the surface. Towards one edge there is an unpainted strip separating the main painted area from a more elaborate, but incomplete motif. The main painted panel has an intricate rectilinear pattern apparently built up in layers of paint (shown in black on the drawing). It is uncertain whether this was a deliberate effect.
1988 (6010), Phase 17, post-Dissolution

5 Fragment with two grozed edges and a wash of red paint covering over two thirds of its area. There is broad unpainted strip, and a further wash of paint across one corner.
1988 (6062), 18th century or later

6 Small fragment with a small part of a possible leaf or tendril pattern. There is a thick painted line along one edge and two incomplete tendrils springing from it. On the opposite edge of the fragment are two further small patches of paint.
1988 (6070)=(6005), modern

7 Fragment with painted decoration and one grozed edge, but with very poor surface condition. A little paint survives, possibly from a leaf pattern, but there is little if any original edge to the paint.
1988 surface find

8 Painted border piece of thick glass in very sound condition. It has a fire rounded edge, and a grozed edge. The preservation is good. Parallel to the long grozed edge is a thin line of paint, which is separated from a wider line that appears to form the border of a curvilinear decorative scheme
1988 (6064), modern

Painted glass from 1974 excavations

9 Small fragment, with two parallel painted lines near one end. The inner line is thicker than the outer. Possibly a border fragment, although this may be contradicted by the fact that a possible original edge is to be found at an angle to the painted lines. A further grozed edge.
1974 (2110), unphased

10 Roughly square fragment, of thick glass in poor condition. Three sides are grozed. Traces of two broad curved painted lines. Indeterminate pattern.
1974 (2110), unphased

Roman Brick and Tile

As already noted, Roman brick and tile has been found in some quantity in the Abbey excavations. Its use, crushed and mixed into the mortar of the late Saxon Abbey, has already been discussed (above pp 41–2) and it is not proposed to repeat the arguments here. Nor is it intended to consider the brick and tile in any detail. The provenance of the material in the excavations is of interest, in particular the phases in which the material is found.

Much of the material came from late contexts, or was unstratified. However, sufficient tile has been found in early contexts, associated with the late Saxon Abbey to confirm the presence of brick and tile on the site at that date (see Table 7). Caution must be urged because the number of brick and tile fragments is small, and the contexts from which the material was recovered are only a handful. For example, the two early contexts in 1974 produced nearly one quarter of the Roman brick and tile from that particular excavation. One of these contexts may be Romano-British in date, but produced only one fragment of tile (81gm in weight). Caution must be urged

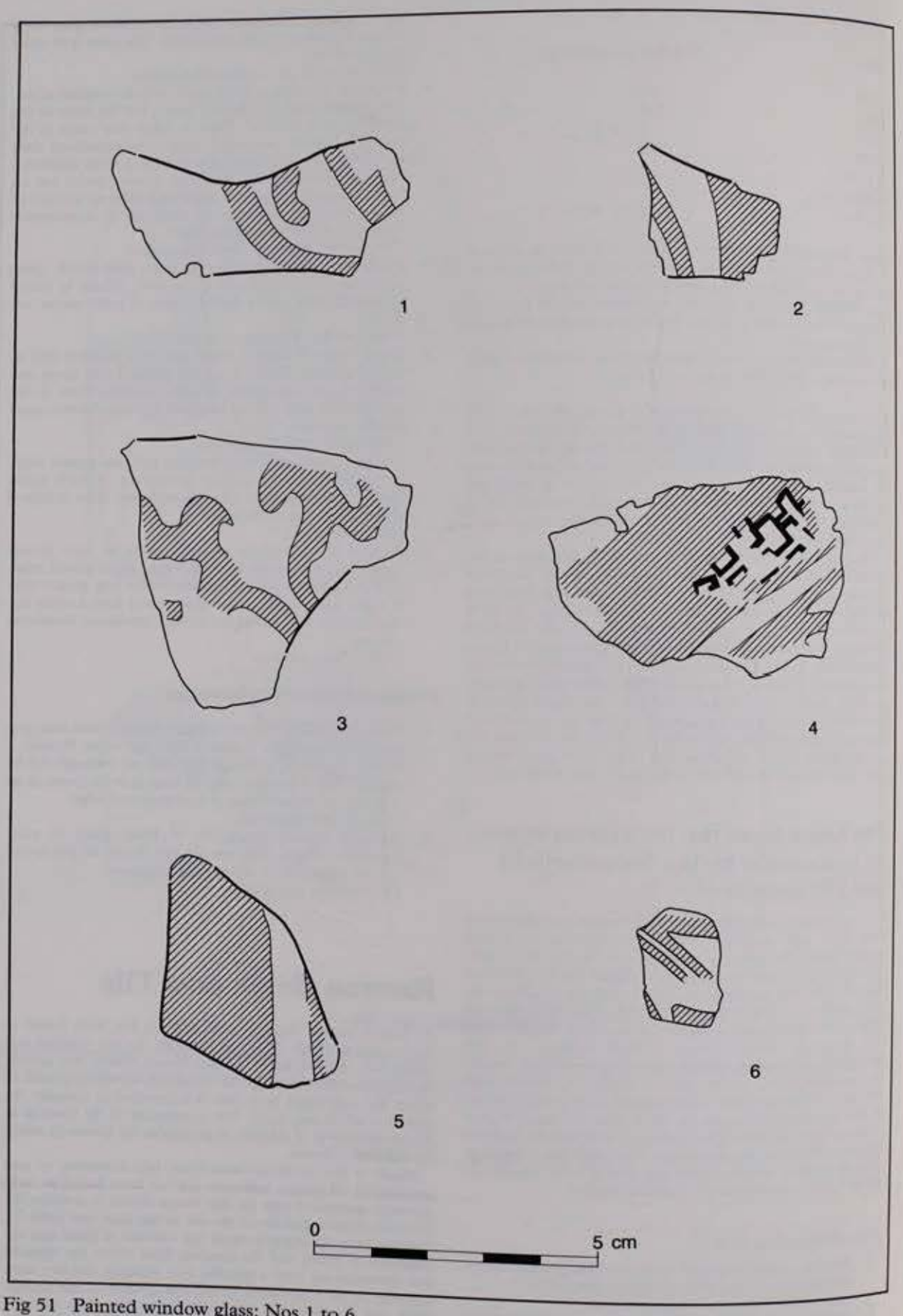


Fig 51 Painted window glass: Nos 1 to 6.

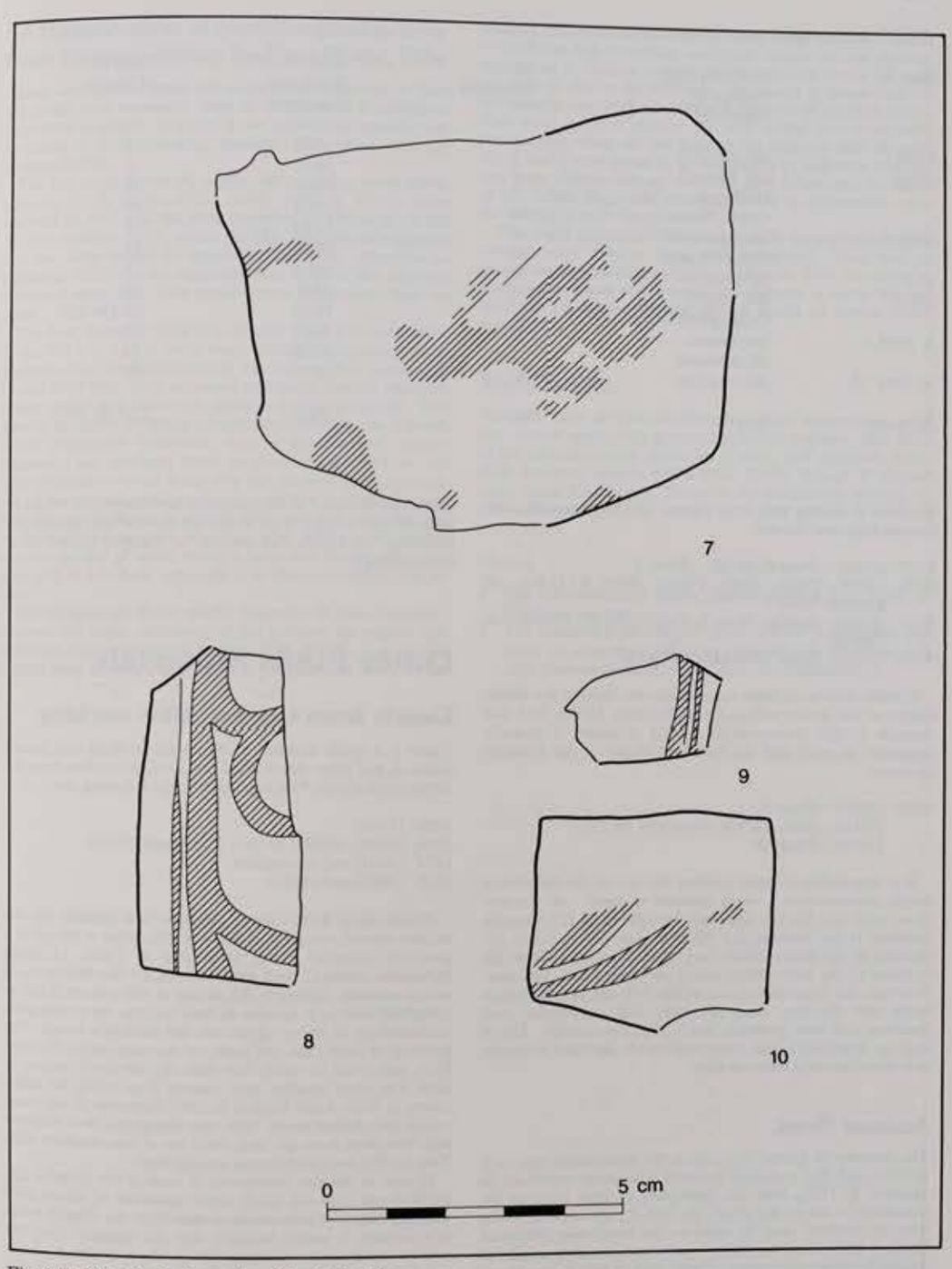


Fig 52 Painted window glass: Nos 7 to 10.

Table 7: Roman Brick and Tile by Year

Year	Contexts and Groups of Contexts	No of Contexts	total wt. of Brick and Tile (gm)	Total no of pieces
1973	All contexts	2	122	2
1974	late Saxon ?	2	3451	2
	Medieval	5	7460	28
	Other Phases	16	14023	56
1975	late Saxon	6	4250	12
	Other Phases	19	5462	39
1977	All contexts	2	1406	4
1979	late Saxon	4	5311	10
	Other phases	12	7654	35 (or 36)
A 1988.7	late Saxon	2	11621	38
	All contexts	7	3720	24
A 1991.18	All contexts	00	00	00
All years	Total	85	53569	220 (or 221)

therefore in dealing with these figures. The early contexts with Roman brick and tile are:

1974 (2105) – Phase 4, (2144) – Phase 2
1975 (3048), (3063), (3080), (3081), (3088) & (3146) – all probably Phase 8
1979 (5018) – possibly Phase 2; (5019), (5021), (5022) – all Phase 8
1988 (9029) – Phase 5; (6083) – ? Phase 8

A small number of other contexts can be dated to the earlier stages of the construction of the Norman Abbey, and one context to the construction of the cloisters. Certainly fragments of brick and tile have been found in the Norman structure.

1974 (2019) – Phase 11;
(2016), (2043), (2098)– Phase (11 or) 12,: ,
(2124) – Phase 14

It is impossible to know whether the use of this material is purely opportunistic – using material to hand – or whether more brick and tile was especially brought in by the Norman builders. It has been argued that this was the case with the builders of the Saxon Abbey, and there is no reason why the builders of the later Abbey could not have done the same. However, the impression given is that Norman use of Roman brick and tile was more sporadic, less calculated, and therefore, it is more probable that it was opportunistic. This is only an impression, and more and better stratified evidence may reveal the impression as false.

Animal Bone

The amount of animal bone from the excavations was very limited, and the stratified material still more restricted in quantity. In 1988, from the excavation of three trenches for soakaways – one to the north (A 1988.7), the second to the west (A 1988.6), and the third to the south-east (Midland Bank, A 1988.9) of the Abbey – good well stratified groups of animal bone were recovered. These were of mid to late Saxon date. In addition, small groups from the 1974 excavation were considered worthy of publication. A report on all of the larger stratified groups of animal bone from the Abbey has been prepared and forms part of the research archive (Bourdillon 1988a). There is a separate archive report on the animal bone from the Midland Bank (Bourdillon 1988b). None of the animal bone is published in this report, although reference is made to its presence on occasion. The groups, which can be dated to the middle to late Saxon periods are to be published as part of an article on the evidence for the late Iron Age to Saxon occupation of Romsey (Scott et al forthcoming).

Other Finds Materials

Debris from Copper Alloy working

There is a small number of fragments of fired clay mould material, and other debris from copper alloy working from the Abbey excavations. This was found in the following contexts:

1973 (1215)
1974 (2026), (2080), (2110), (2111) and (2113).
1975 (3001) and unstratified
1979 (5005) and (5012)

Almost all of these contexts are late. It is possible that the earliest context stratigraphically is 2113, which is the fill of a posthole (context 2112) attributed to Phase 14 (early thirteenth century), and which produced two fragments of mould material. However, the dating of this context is not as straightforward as it appears at first, because the stratigraphic relationships of the posthole are not explicitly stated. The posthole is later than the make-up deposits under the nave floor, and could be much later than the thirteenth century in date. The other possible early context from which the debris comes is 5005, a soil horizon in 1979 Soakaway B, excavated within the cloister garth. This was interpreted as a medieval soil. The finds from the layer 5005 are of later medieval date. This context produced bronze casting waste.

In view of the late provenance of most of the material, and its similarity with the much larger quantities of copper alloy smelting debris of post-medieval date from the Church Street excavations, it seems unlikely that the material from the Abbey excavations is medieval in date. Neither of the apparently early contexts is well sealed. It is more likely that the material is derived from the nearby Church Street site and redeposited.

The fired clay mould material was originally identified as fragments of bell mould. The material has been analysed by Paul Budd, then of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory. His report (Budd 1987) studied not just the material from the Abbey but also metalworking debris from other sites in Romsey. The relevant section is quoted below.

An Examination of Metallurgical debris from Romsey Abbey by Paul Budd, BSc

Copper alloy casting waste and a few small fragments of fired clay mould were examined. Most of this material is thought to be residual in nature: however, it was considered possible that it related to bell-founding, possibly associated with the Norman Abbey.

The few small pieces of copper alloy casting waste (from contexts 1215, 2026, 2111, 3001, 5005 & 5012), were analysed by XRF and the alloy identified as bronze in all but one case (context 1215) where the high zinc signals suggested that the alloy might be more appropriately classified as gunmetal. XRF results suggested that most of the material contained some lead. One piece gave a particularly high tin signal.

The four pieces of fired clay mould (from contexts 2080, 2110, 2111 & 2113) were very similar in appearance to examples from the Church Street excavations (Site Code RCS 77 and 78).[2] They were tempered with finely divided vegetable matter which had burnt out giving a porous structure. Two show a gradation of firing conditions similar to the Church Street fragments. However, two of the Romsey Abbey fragments are oxidised fired on their inner surfaces. All fragments have a white firing clay slip on their inner surfaces. All of the mould surfaces were analysed by XRF for any surviving metal. Traces of copper, lead, and zinc were detected on three of the fragments. However, weak XRF signals suggest that the survival of metal traces is poor and the nature of the alloy cast is not clear, although it is almost certainly copper alloy.

The morphology of the mould fragments is non-diagnostic, although the slight curvatures of the surfaces do suggest that fragments may have originated from both the core and cope of a fairly large mould. Although it is possible that some of the material submitted from Romsey Abbey originated as a result of medieval bell-founding, analytical results for the casting waste tend to indicate bronzes which were too low in tin and too high in lead to be bell-metal. Bell-metal is always high in tin (usually over 20% Sn) and the presence of anything more than trace levels of lead in the alloy would have a severely detrimental effect on the tone of the finished bell. Bronze alloys which were lower in tin and higher in lead were used to cast large objects such as cauldrons and skillets and the form of the mould fragments recovered would be compatible with the casting of such objects.

Two small unstratified fragments (1975, unstratified) from a copper alloy casting were also examined. They had a maximum wall thickness of 3mm and came from the rim of a small bell or vessel with a maximum diameter of about 60mm. XRF results suggest that the alloy is a high tin bronze (bell-metal).

Metalwork

There is little metalwork from the abbey excavations, and that almost exclusively from more recent contexts. The bulk of the metalwork was made up of nails, and probably, from their contexts, mainly coffin nails. Coffin fittings of copper alloy were found also. There is no metalwork worthy of publication.

Notes

1 The full assessment report (Summerfield & Kerr 1992) is in the site archive.

2 The material from Church Street will be published in the paper on aspects of the archaeology of later Medieval and early post-medieval Romsey (Rees et al forthcoming).

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Chapter 10

The Medieval Floor-Tiles of Romsey Abbey

Introduction to the Reports

by Paul Spoerry and Ian R Scott

The reports which follow are the work of Andrew Russel and Paul Spoerry. The main work of studying and analysing the floor tiles was carried out by Dr Russel, initially when employed on the Romsey Post-Excavation project prior to the summer of 1986. All tiles recovered from excavations up to 1979 were studied and, subsequently, the report prepared by Andrew Russel. At a later stage in the project, when the archive reports were being edited and drawn together for publication, Paul Spoerry was employed on the project to edit Andrew Russel's report and to prepare a report on the small corpus of tiles from excavations after 1979. This work was carried out largely within the framework laid down by Andrew Russel. The majority of the designs recorded in the following report were identified by Dr Russel.

The major work on the Romsey Abbey tiles prior to Russel's report had been a study by Wendy Rix. She looked at the extant tiles and the tiles recovered from the 1973 excavations, along with tile designs recorded previously by antiquarians. Rix's report formed a case study in her undergraduate dissertation in the Department of Archaeology at Southampton University (Rix 1974). Rix's work is discussed in Russel's report (p 122).

Quantities and Provenance of the Tiles

The tiles which form the basis of this report are all derived from excavations on Romsey Abbey. The excavations have produced large quantities of floor tile (Table 8), most of it undecorated.

Table 8: Floor tile: Weight and Numbers of Fragments (includes both decorated and undecorated examples)

Year	Number	Weight (gm)
1973	197*	27628*
1974	308	44031
1975	725	100385
1977	60	9087
1979	162	21089
A 1988.7	100	16492
A 1991.18	192	23765
A 1988.6	20	2100
A 1980.83	59	not weighed

Notes: Weights and numbers extracted from the Bulk Finds Registers

* The totals for the 1973 excavation exclude 3 boxes of unquantifed floor tiles from unstratified deposits. Decorated tiles were found amongst the unquantified material.

The aims of the Analysis and Methodology

The majority of the material is unstratified, or effectively unstratified, and therefore, rather than produce a catalogue of all extant floor tiles by context, the aim of the analysis has been to identify all fabrics and designs, and variants of designs, present in the corpus. The intention was to publish this analysis and a discussion of the fabrics and designs and of the comparanda, and to suggest groupings of designs by fabric, which may represent the products of workshops. An illustration of all identified designs is included (Figs 54–64 & 66).

Initially all designs were allocated a Romsey Abbey Design (RAD) number. For publication a revised reference system has been used. This is described in the next section on the Romsey Abbey Tile Design series.

All the decorated tile fragments were examined under a binocular microscope at X 10 and divided into fabrics, and each fabric group was then sorted into designs.

The Romsey Abbey Medieval Floor Tile Design Series

One hundred and nine designs were identified by Dr Russel in his study of the floor tiles from the excavations to 1979. These designs are illustrated in Figures 54 to 64. The Romsey fabric group identifier (RFGI) allocated to each design in the report was superimposed by Spoerry at a later date; it consists of two numbers. Firstly, the designs are ordered in respect of Dr Russel's 'Group' classifications (see succeeding report), which run from Group 1 ('Otterbourne' tiles) to Group 4 (the two

probable later tiles in Fabric 7). In addition, Group 5 has been created which is a 'catch-all' for designs for which the fabric is presently unknown. Such designs are of two derivations; either they are from tiles still in situ in the Abbey and for which the fabric type cannot presently be observed; or they are designs that are only known from documentary illustrations, mostly from 'antiquarian' sources.

The second part of the Fabric Group Identifier identifies the particular design. Within the 'Group' classification the designs are ordered on a typological basis for ease of reference. The typology deals initially with the 'design' as an element in a pavement (eg border, centrepiece etc) and secondarily with the actual representation itself (Floral, Anthropomorphic, Zoomorphic, and Other). The full sequence is as follows:

1st level of ordering:
- Designs that are employed in repetition to fill large areas.
- Designs that are part of borders and/or inscriptions.
- Designs that are part of four-tile groups.
- Designs that are individual in nature, but have some symmetry of design indicating use as centres and/or corners.
- Other individual designs.

2nd level of ordering:
- Floral designs
- Anthropomorphic designs
- Zoomorphic designs
- 'Other' designs

The illustrations of the designs are ordered according to these 'fabric group identifiers' (RFGI's).

The Illustrations

All identified designs, and variants of designs, are illustrated. The drawings in Figures 54–64, 66 are reproduced at one third scale. The inlaid portion of surviving designs, whether on complete tiles, or fragments, are show white on a black ground. Designs have only been reconstructed from partial fragments where it is absolutely certain that there is only one possible final version, and then the reconstructed part has been shown in outline only. Where a design is only known from documentary evidence (eg antiquarian illustrations), it is shown in outline only. Where any doubt exists as to the identity of the design, only the extant fragment has been drawn.

The Report on the Medieval Floor Tiles from Romsey Abbey (from Excavations to 1979) by A D Russel, BA PhD

Introduction and Previous Work

A substantial number of tiles had been recorded at Romsey Abbey before the modern programme of archaeological work began. Dr John Latham, an inhabitant of the town from about 1796 to 1820, drew 26 designs, noting that they were in the vestry and other parts of the church (Latham, Notebooks). He gives the exact location for only two designs – the 'Crusader' tiles (RFGI 3–21 and 3–22 = Romsey Abbey Designs [RAD] 61 and 64) – saying they formed part of a pavement beneath the altar table. Other tiles were recorded on subsequent visits by collectors and other antiquaries. The designs they noted were in some cases new tile designs not recorded by Latham; possibly they had been uncovered by the digging of graves or by the restoration work carried out in the second half of the 19th century. Latham's work is particularly valuable as there is no possibility that he confused tiles found at Romsey with tiles found at other locations – he recorded only the Romsey tiles – and whenever it has been possible to check his other records and drawings they have always proved to be accurate.

The first published work on the Abbey tiles was that of John Henry Parker whose third, 1840, edition of A Glossary of Architecture contained ten drawings of Romsey tiles, two designs being examples not recorded by Latham. In 1841 Charles Spence's Essay on the Abbey included four drawings of tiles on the title page, and in 1845 John Gough Nichols included Romsey designs in his Examples of Decorative Tiles, sometimes termed Encaustic. Lord Alwyne Compton visited the Abbey, probably in 1855, and made tracings of 20 designs. These were never published but are now held by the Society of Antiquaries of London. They include the only record at Romsey of part of a Chertsey-type four-panel crucifixion scene (Eames 1980, 151 Design 1318; RFGI 5–19 [RAD 100] in the present series). Also in the late nineteenth century seven tiles were traced by the Rev W Sparrow-Simpson and three by J R Holliday, both sets of drawings now being held by the Victoria and Albert Museum. The next published work was that of B W Greenfield whose study of the tiles of southern Hampshire was published in the Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club in 1893, giving 31 designs from Romsey, although he states that he found 33 (Greenfield 1893, 146). By the time the excavations began in 1973, 45 designs had been recorded in the Abbey, and one other design had found its way into the Rutland collection. This total of 46 was more than doubled by the excavations.

The five seasons of excavation work at Romsey Abbey from 1973 to 1979 produced many pieces of floor tile with traces of inlaid designs. Little post-excavation work was done until 1985 when the English Heritage sponsored programme began, and in that time some complete tiles from the 1974 excavations had disappeared and others had lost their provenance.

The void is partly filled by the work of Wendy Rix who in 1974 had submitted an undergraduate dissertation to the Department of Archaeology at Southampton University on The Medieval Floor Tiles of Hampshire (Rix 1974). Rix divided the Hampshire tiles into six groups according to the type of design, a system first used by Greenfield (1893). Chapter 3 of the work was a case study of the tiles from Romsey Abbey, particularly those from the 1973 excavations. Rix lists 60 designs as being recovered prior to, or during, the 1973 excavations on the east end chapels (Rix 1974, 73), with 47 designs being found in 1973 (Rix 1974, 20).

Tiles in situ

All the medieval tiles in the Abbey today are in St George's Chapel, at the north east corner of the church. This would seem to be an entirely modern arrangement. Latham records them as being in the vestry, under the altar table, and elsewhere in the church in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and Cattermole's drawings of the Abbey from the same period seem to show floor tiles in the chancel (Britton 1826). Spence (1841) drew attention to 'the very great number and diversity of patterns, in the curious encaustic tiles of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, which abound in the vestry, western end, and at the altar. Immediately under the carpet, before the communion table, are some on which are depicted knights in full charge, with their triangular shields hanging from their necks'. Who was responsible for the removal of the tiles to their present positions is not known, but the Rev. Edward Lyon Berthon, vicar from 1860–1892, records in his autobiography the re-laying of reproduction tiles from the choir (Berthon 1899, 160–6).

Area of the Eastern Chapels During the 1973–79 excavations tiles were found in situ in the east end chapels and in the Cloister. The tiles were present in three areas of the east end chapels. In addition an area of tile-impressed mortar was also found (see above pp 85–6, and Fig 39b).

The more northerly of the two patches of tiles was laid

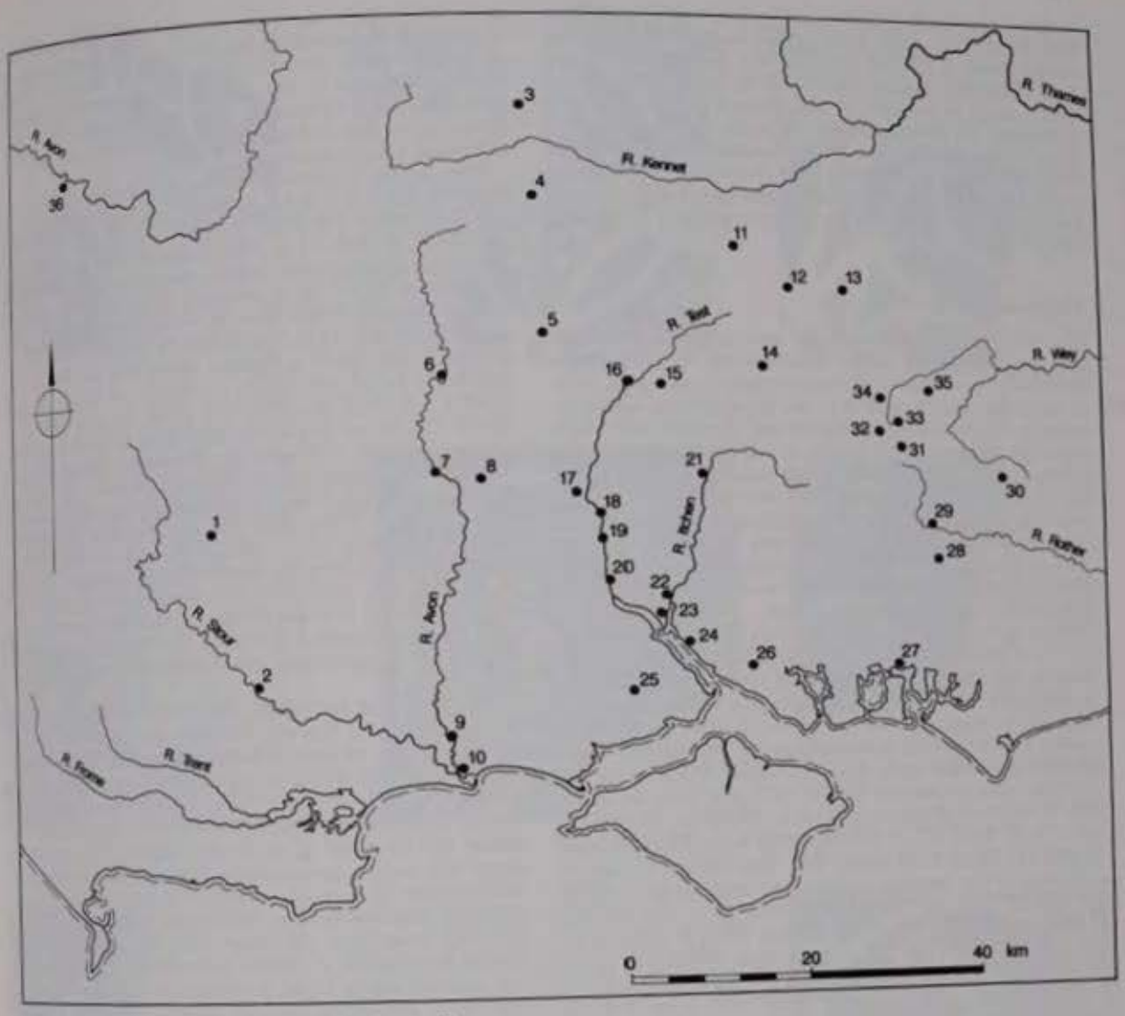


Fig 53 Locations mentioned in the floor tile report

1	Shaftesbury	10	Christchurch	19	Romsey	28	South Harting
2	Tarrant	11	Kingsclere	20	Nursling	29	Durford
3	Aldbourne	12	Wootton St Lawrence	21	Winchester	30	Shulbrede
4	Great Bedwyn	13	Basing	22	St Denys	31	Selborne
5	Kimpton	14	Popham	23	Southampton	32	Farringdon
6	Amesbury	15	Barton Stacey	24	Netley	33	Hartley Mauditt
7	Salisbury	16	Wherwell	25	Beaulieu	34	Alton
8	Clarendon	17	Mottisfont	26	Titchfield	35	Bristol
9	Sopley	18	Timsbury	27	Warblington	36	Keynsham

parallel to the Chapel walls, the southern patch and the mortar impressions were laid at 45 degrees to the walls. The eleven tiles in situ in the north-west corner of the chapel were the best preserved. Here four tiles of RFGI 3–12 (RAD 37) were laid to form the complete design of a cross fleury and there were two tiles of 3–10 (RAD 35) to the east of them, again laid to form the complete design, an encircled cross fleury, although half was missing. The smaller patch further to the east was laid in random fashion, and there was a fragment of a RFGI 2–33 (RAD 24), a lion in a circle, used to fill in against the west wall. The lack of a coherent overall pattern, the mixture of fabrics 4, 5, and 6, and the worn state of tiles close up to the walls suggests that this area had been relaid. The worn fragment of RFGI 3–2 (RAD 39) to the south of this patch, used to fill in the space next to the wall, reinforces this suggestion.

Cloister walk The tiles in situ in the cloister walk were uncovered in the 1974 excavations. They had been preserved under a later blocking of a door opening leading from the cloister into the western range. Within the doorway the tiles had been laid north–south, parallel with the threshold, but in the cloister walk itself there was a change to a diagonal pattern (see Fig 29). The tiles had been laid with a reticulation of plain half tiles allowing a one tile space between the mesh. Most of the inlaid designs had worn away but the area in front of the door had been laid with birds-in-foliage designs of RFGI 2–20 (RAD 78) in fabric 6. The north edge appeared to have been

repaired, to judge by the unworn tiles, but with no attempt to keep the pattern, using plain quarter and half-tiles and one example each of RFGI 2–29 (RAD 51), 2–28 (RAD 54) and 2–27 (RAD 55), all again fabric 6. To the north of the cloister walk a strip of six tiles in situ aligned north–south was uncovered. All but two were worn badly, the two being, to judge by the photographs, pristine examples of RFGI 3–24 (RAD 44), fabric 5, and RFGI 5–15 (RAD 62). This latter tile is the only example from Romsey of this design and is missing from the archive, along with the perfect example of RFGI 3–24 (RAD 44) found with it.

The Designs (Figs 56–64)

The majority of the tile fragments were extremely worn and any decoration they might have carried was no longer identifiable. In a number of cases reduced, ie dark grey, areas on worn tiles could be seen to be the last traces of a design but unless it was particularly distinctive and therefore identifiable it was not included in this report. A total of 544 pieces of tile survive bearing traces of white inlaid decoration. Of these 466 can be identified as to design. The ease with which designs could be identified on the smaller fragments depended to a large extent on the distinctiveness and exclusiveness of the pattern. There are also a number of whole tiles that have been recovered from previous restoration work in and around the Abbey and relaid in St George's Chapel.

There are nineteen designs known only from the drawings or records of previous workers. They have been included here as Romsey tiles and have been allocated Romsey Abbey Design numbers and Group Identifiers, although a certain amount of uncertainty must be attached to them. Four designs not present at Romsey exist as drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. One, RFGI 5–5 (RAD 93), is in the J R Holliday collection number E 3237.1927, and three are in the Rev W Sparrow-Simpson collection. These are D 645.98, RFGI 5–17 (RAD 97); D 639.98, RFGI 5–10 (RAD 98); and D 644.98, RFGI 5–18 (RAD 99). The Alwyne Compton collection of tile drawings contains two extra designs, RFGI 5–19 (RAD 100), and RFGI 5–14 (RAD 107). The Latham drawings have RFGI 5–9 (RAD 84) and RFGI 5–1 (RAD 4). Greenfield's work (1893) includes designs RFGI 5–3 (RAD 102), RFGI 5–12 (RAD 103), RFGI 5–4 (RAD 104), RFGI 5–8 (RAD 105), and RFGI 5–16 (RAD 106), none of which have been seen by other researchers. Rix recorded a fragment of Greenfield's design E9 (here RFGI 5–13 RAD 108) which appears to be no longer present (Greenfield 1893).

A possible further design is that in Parker (1840, plate 86, no 20). This tile has never subsequently been reported from the Abbey, the only one of the ten illustrated that has not, and it could be explained as the grouping of four tiles of RFGI 3–15 (RAD 28). Parker's drawings vary considerably in their accuracy and this design will therefore not be counted as a new addition until corroborative evidence can be found.

All told, 108 designs have been identified in the present work, including the fourteen known only from the drawings, published and unpublished, of previous workers.

Fabric Groups

All tiles were examined under a Vickers binocular microscope at X10 to sort them into groups and the characteristics of each group were noted. Seven fabrics were recognised. Similarities between certain fabrics resulted in them being amalgamated into wider groups.

Group 1 (Fig 54)

This group consists of only one fabric.

Fabric 1

The main body of the fabric is fine sand, less than 0.2mm, and silt, with scattered medium sand grains, up to 0.6mm, of red and white quartz and the occasional angular fragment of flint, up to 1mm. There are lenses of concentrated red and white quartz medium sand which was also used as a parting medium on the base of the tiles. The tiles vary from 23mm to 26mm thick, with a mean of 25mm. Only two tiles have measurable sides which are 147mm (5.75in) and 152mm (6in). The bottom of the tiles is always sanded. The five keys are mostly a half round scoop at an angle to the surface.

Nine designs are present on tiles of this fabric: RFGI 1–1 (RAD 2), RFGI 1–2 (RAD 3), RFGI 1–3 (RAD 1), RFGI 1–4 (RAD 5), RFGI 1–5 (RAD 6), RFGI 1–6 (RAD 76), RFGI 1–7 (RAD 77), RFGI 1–8 (RAD 7) and RGFGI 1–9 (RAD 8). These tiles have the same designs, thin inlay, numbers of keys, and method of keying as Norton's Group 5 at Winchester College (Norton 1974). Four of the six designs of Norton's group 5 (Norton 1974, Fig 3, nos 29, 30, 31, and 34) are present in this fabric at Romsey where they are RFGI 1–2 (RAD 3), RFGI 1–3 (RAD 1), RFGI 1–5 (RAD 6) and RGFGI 1–9 (RAD 8). RFGI 1–6 (RAD 76) and RFGI 1–7 (RAD 77) do not appear to have been published before. Norton was able to identify the Winchester College tiles as being those ordered in 1396 from William Tyelere of Otterbourne at ten shillings a thousand for paving the chantry and the vestry. They were also used to pave Wykeham's Chantry, completed before 1404. At Romsey the tiles of fabric 1 were recovered from the Parish Church extension, granted by Wykeham in 1403, and from the cloisters. Latham saw RFGI 5–1 (RAD 4) inside the church. A single example came from the Lady Chapel. It is possible that the work done on the Parish Church precipitated repairs to flooring in other parts of the Abbey.

Tiles with these and related designs are found in most parts of Hampshire with Romsey, Kimpton, and Beaulieu forming the eastern edge of the distribution, Kingsclere Church being the most northerly find spot and Titchfield the most southerly. Examples of 'Otterbourne' tiles from Romsey, Kimpton, Netley, Titchfield and Winchester have been examined by the author and all appear to be the same fabric. This suggests a single kiln source, presumably at Otterbourne. Petrological examination of a group of tiles bearing similar designs excavated from Otterbourne Old Church would again seem to be of the same fabric (Williams 1990, 83). A possible West Sussex distribution of Otterbourne products needs further investigation owing to the presence of a kiln at Shulbrede, apparently producing identical designs (Green and Green 1949, 28).

The designs of fabric 1 are mostly more elaborate than the earlier designs of the Wessex school, an elaboration perhaps made possible by the technique of printing rather than stamping the design. The exceptions are RFGI 1–8 (RAD 7) and 1–9 (RAD 8) which are much more in the Wessex tradition, with a central heraldic/mythological figure in a roundel. These could be evidence of an earlier industry at Otterbourne, old stamps still in use, or designs made to patch old areas of Wessex type paving. All are unlikely as the tiles are the standard Otterbourne size of six inches square rather than the Wessex five to five and a half inches square and would not fit readily into an older pavement. They instead suggest a continuing popularity for figurative designs as opposed to the repeating patterns of the other Otterbourne designs.

None of the designs present in this fabric are present in other fabrics at Romsey. The known provenances of parallels to the Romsey designs which occur in fabric 1 are given in Table 10.

Group 2 (Figs 55–59)

This group consists of three fabrics that is 2, 3, and 6.

Fabric 2

Fabric 2 is a harsh sandy fabric with abundant, well-sorted medium red, white, and clear quartz sand, 0.2mm to 0.6mm. There are many ferruginous lumps which contain similar quartz grains, and fragments of ironstone up to 3mm in size. The thickness of the tiles varies from 20mm to 27mm but the

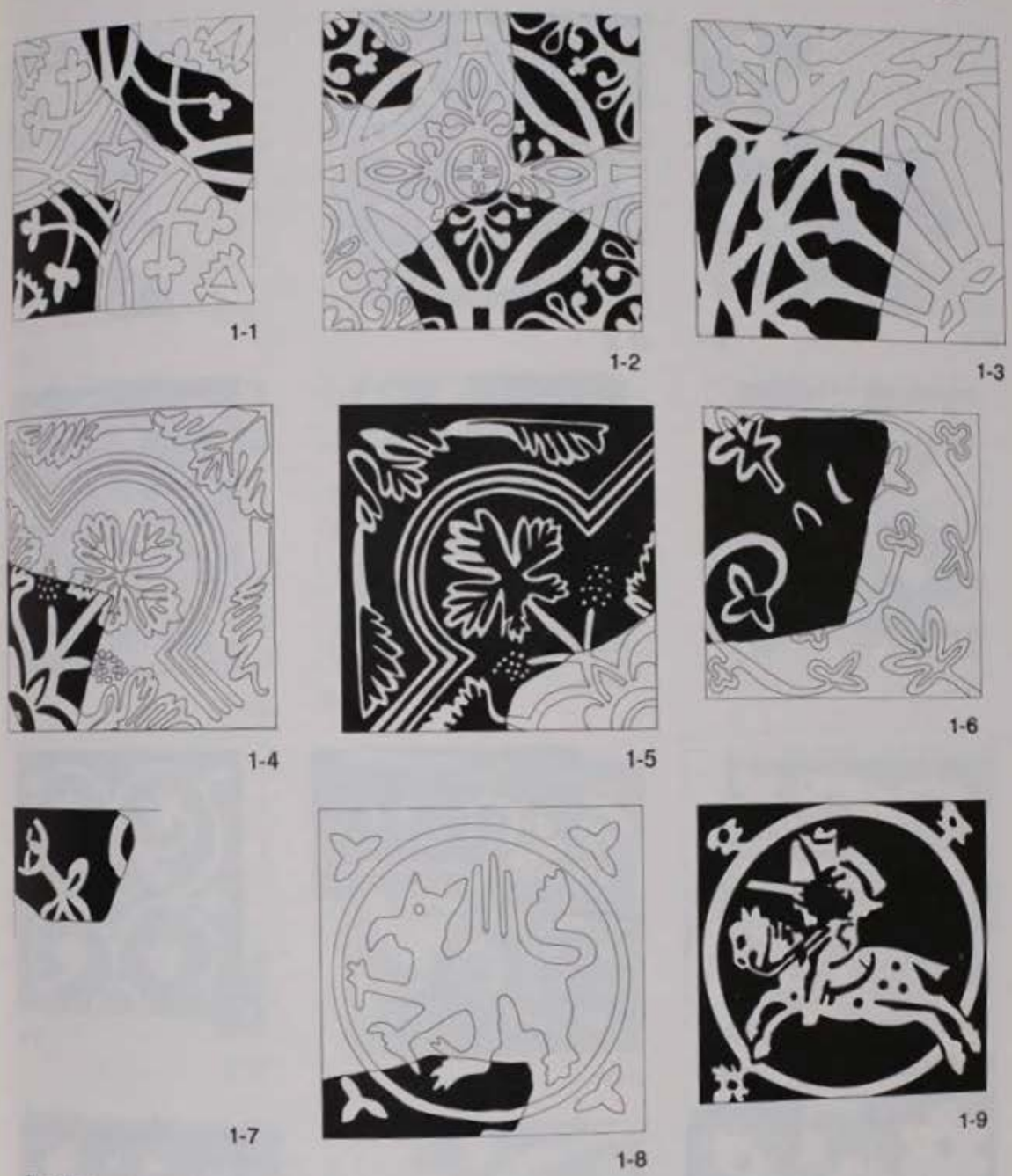


Fig 54 Group 1 tiles

mode is 23mm. The size ranges from 127mm to 140mm (5 to 5.5in square). The undersides are mostly quite smooth. The keys are mostly circular and made perpendicular to the surface but a few examples are angled. Some of the keys are very large. Some tiles have no keys, but most tiles probably had four.

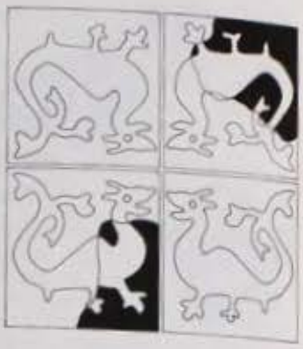
Fourteen designs are present on tiles of fabric 2: RFGI 2–3 (RAD 16), RFGI 2–5 (RAD 14), RFGI 2–6 (RAD 13), RFGI 2–9 (RAD 15), RFGI 2–15 (RAD 9), RFGI 2–16 (RAD 10), RFGI 2–18 (RAD 12), RFGI 2–24 (RAD 11), RFGI 2–25 (RAD 80), RFGI 2–31 (RAD 67), RFGI 2–32 (RAD 21), RFGI 2–38 (RAD 17), RFGI 2–40 (RAD 63) and RFGI 2–45 (RAD 71).

Fabric 3

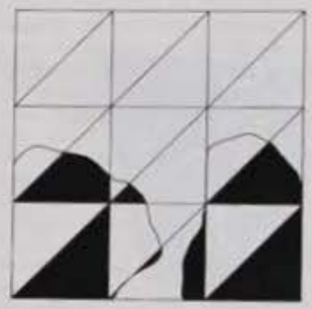
Fabric 3 is a coarse, iron-rich, sandy fabric. It has common, sub-angular to sub rounded grains of clear and white quartz, occasional iron pellets of the same size range, ie 0.5mm to 1mm, and lenses of cream coloured clay. There are rare flint fragments up to 4mm in size. The thickness of the tiles ranges from 21mm to 27mm, mostly towards the lower end of the range. The sizes range from 125mm to 140mm. The undersides are either smooth, sanded, or bore impressions of grass. The keys are all made perpendicular to the surface but some are deep while others are wide and shallow. An example

2-1

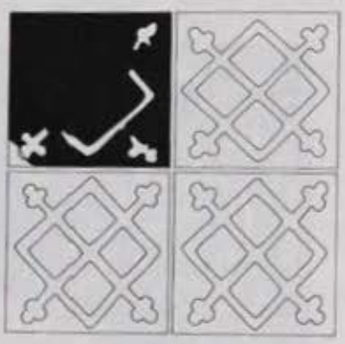
2-2



2-3



2-4



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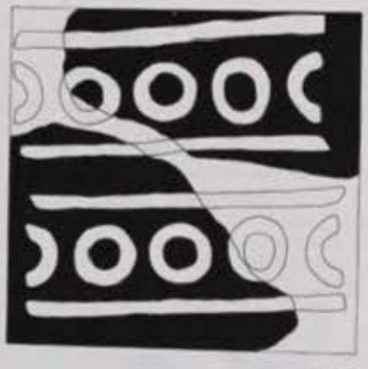
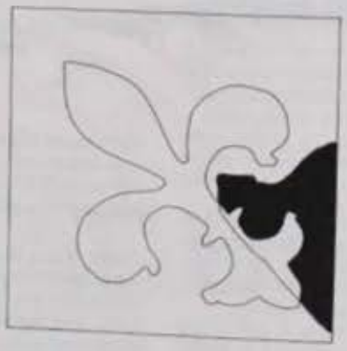
2-7



2-8

2-9



2-10

2-11

Fig 55 Group 2 tiles (i)

2-3

2-6

2-9

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2-17

2-18

2-19

2-20

2-21

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2-23

Fig 56 Group 2 tiles (ii)

2-24

2-25

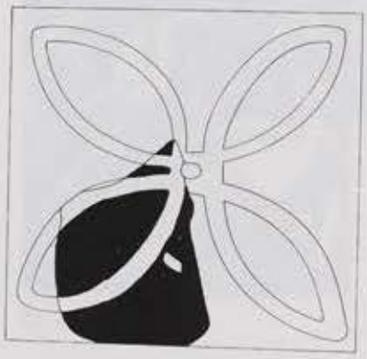
2-26

2-27

2-28

2-29

2-30



2-31

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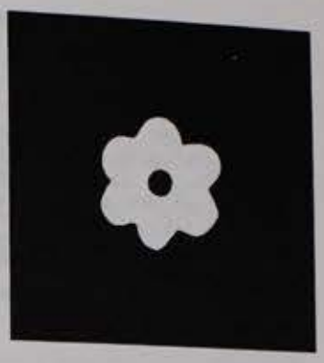
2-35

Fig 57 Group 2 tiles (iii)

2-36

2-37



2-38

2-39

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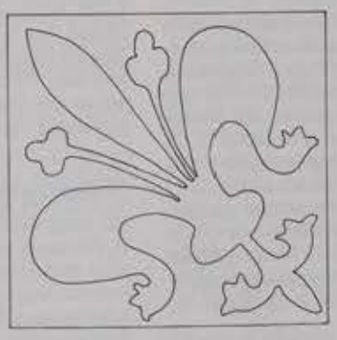
2-42



2-43

2-44

2-45

2-46

Fig 58 Group 2 tiles (iv)

2-47

2-48

Fig 59 Group 2 tiles (v)

of RFGI 2–8 (RAD 23) had a single large key, but most tiles were probably made with four.

Fifteen designs are present in fabric 3: RFGI 2–4 [= 3–3] (RAD 20), RFGI 2–8 (RAD 23), RFGI 2–10 (RAD 91), RFGI 2–11 (RAD 22), RFGI 2–15 (RAD 9), RFGI 2–17 (RAD 18), RFGI 2–21 (RAD 27), RFGI 2–33 (RAD 24), RFGI 2–36 (RAD 25), RFGI 2–37 (RAD 60), RFGI 2–41 (RAD 26), RFGI 2–42 (RAD 19), RFGI 2–46 (RAD 85), RFGI 2–47 (RAD 86) and RFGI 2–48 (RAD 87).

Fabric 6

Fabric 6 is a medium sandy fabric with abundant quartz grains, 0.2mm to 0.6mm. There are common iron-rich pellets, up to 4mm, and lenses of cream coloured clay. Thickness ranges from 21mm to 34mm with a mean of 26mm. The size ranges from 132mm to 144mm. The bottoms are either smooth or sandy, although two tiles, examples of RFGI 2–14 (RAD 47) and RFGI 2–27 (RAD 55), had grass marks. The normal keying method is four keys, all wide and mostly shallow, but a few are deeper. A number of tiles have no keys and a few have one large one. Examples of RFGI 2–8 (RAD 23) have four, one, or no keys and RFGI 2–27 (RAD 55) had four or none. All were perpendicular to the surface except for examples of RFGI 2–23 (RAD 53) and RFGI 2–28 (RAD 54) which had been made at an angle.

There are twenty six designs present in fabric 6 making it the commonest fabric at Romsey: RFGI 2–1 (RAD 50), RFGI 2–2 (RAD 49), RFGI 2–7 (RAD 72), RFGI 2–8 (RAD 23), RFGI 2–12 (RAD 79), RFGI 2–13 (RAD 48), RFGI 2–14 (RAD 47), RFGI 2–19 (RAD 75), RFGI 2–20 (RAD 78), RFGI 2–21 (RAD 27), RFGI 2–22 (RAD 46), RFGI 2–23 (RAD 53), RFGI 2–24 (RAD 11), RFGI 2–26 (RAD 52), RFGI 2–27 (RAD 55), RFGI 2–28 (RAD 54), RFGI 2–29 (RAD 51), RFGI 2–30 (RAD 56), RFGI 2–33 (RAD 24), RFGI 2–34 (RAD 58), RFGI 2–35 (RAD 59), RFGI 2–36 (RAD 25), RFGI 2–39 (RAD 68), RFGI 2–42 (RAD 19), RFGI 2–43 (RAD 57) and RFGI 2–44 (RAD 70).

Winchester College parallels

Fabric 2

RFGI 2–15 (RAD 9) and RFGI 2–31 (RAD 67) are present at Winchester College in Norton's group 1, numbers 6 and 9, and RFGI 2–16 (RAD 10) occurs there in group 3, number 21 (Norton 1974). Norton dated his Group 1 to *c* 1300 based on Emden (1948), since revised to *c* 1280 (Norton 1980, 57), and his Group 3 to probably the early fourteenth century.

Fabric 3

RFGI 2–10 (RAD 91), RFGI 2–11 (RAD 22), RFGI 2–15 (RAD 9), RFGI 2–17 (RAD 18), and RFGI 2–33 (RAD 24), are found in group 1 (Norton 1974, numbers 6, 7, 15, 4 and 14) dating to *c* 1280, and RFGI 2–4 (= 3–3) (RAD 20) and RFGI 2–36 (RAD 25), are found in group two, (Norton 1974, numbers 18 and 25) dating to the early 14th century.

Fabric 6

Four of the fabric 6 designs are found in Norton's Group 1 c 1280: RFGI 2–33 (RAD 24) is Norton number 4, RFGI 2–2 (RAD 49) is Norton number 2, RFGI 2–43 (RAD 57) is Norton number 3, RFGI 2–35 (RAD 59) is Norton number 5; and two, RFGI 2–23 (RAD 53) and RFGI 2–36 (RAD 25), are in his Group 2, numbers 25 and 20 respectively, early fourteenth century.

Christchurch parallels

All three fabrics have design parallels at Christchurch Priory, in Norton's Group 2. The fabric there is described as hard, with many small flinty inclusions and sometimes with large ferrous lumps. This is superficially similar to the Romsey fabrics apart from the flint inclusions. This group is dated by Norton (1982) to the later thirteenth century.

The fabric 2 designs found at Christchurch are RFGI 2–3 (RAD 16), Norton number 15; RFGI 2–5 (RAD 14), number 26; RFGI 2–15 (RAD 9), number 25; and RFGI 2–24 (RAD 11), number 12. The six designs on fabric 3 tiles are RFGI 2–8 (RAD 23), number 35; RFGI 2–11 (RAD 22), number 13; RFGI 2–15 (RAD 9), number 25; RFGI 2–17 (RAD 18), number 9; RFGI 2–21 (RAD 27), number 37; and RFGI 2–33 (RAD 24), number 28. Eleven of the fabric 6 designs are found at Christchurch. They are RFGI 2–1 (RAD 50), number 21; RFGI 2–2 (RAD 49), number 10; RFGI 2–14 (RAD 47), number 17; RFGI 2–21 (RAD 27), number 37; RFGI 2–22 (RAD 46), number 11; RFGI 2–24 (RAD 11), number 12; RFGI 2–27 (RAD 55), number 23; RFGI 2–33 (RAD 24), number 28; RFGI 2–34 (RAD 58); RFGI 2–35 (RAD 59), number 28; and RFGI 2–43 (RAD 57), number 7;.

Salisbury parallels

One of the fabric 2 designs, RFGI 2–3 (RAD 16 – the small dragons), was associated with the Clarendon kiln which Eames (1980, 186) dated to 1237–45. In fabric 3, RFGI 2–48 (RAD 87) is recorded from the Queens Chamber at Clarendon, dated to 1250–2 (Eames 1980, design 2610, 187–8). Fabric 6 has design parallels at Salisbury and Clarendon (Eames 1980).

RFGI 2-39 (RAD 68) is known from Salisbury Chapter House, dated to *c* 1258; RFGI 2-28 (RAD 54) is known from Salisbury *c* 1284; RFGI 2-29 (RAD 51) and RFGI 2-19 (RAD 75) are known from the Queens Chamber, Clarendon, *c* 1250-2.

Romsey parallels

There are design links between the Romsey fabrics in this group

Table 9: Floor Tile: Design links between fabrics

RAD	(RFGI) no	fabric 2	fabric 3	fabric 6	fabric 4
9	(2-15)	x	x		
11	(2-24)	x		x	
20	(2-4 & 3-3)	x			x
23	(2-8)		x	x	
24	(2-33)		x	x	
25	(2-36)		x	x	
27	(2-21)		x	x	

Group 3 (Figs 60-62)

This consists of fabrics 4 and 5.

Fabric 4

The main body of the fabric is silty clay with fine quartz sand, less than 0.2mm, with paler, quartz-free lenses. There are occasional white and red pellets of clay up to 9mm in size. The thickness of the tiles varies from 20mm to 25mm with a mean of 22mm. The sizes range from 123mm to 140mm. The undersides are mostly sanded but a few are smooth and bear marks of grass. The four keys were all small and upright as if an implement had been pushed into the clay and given a twist, often three-quarters of a turn. One tile gave the appearance that it had been stabbed with a spoon-like implement, leaving crescent-shaped impressions.

Eleven designs are present in this fabric: RFGI 3-1 (RAD 33), RFGI 3-3 [= 2-4] (RAD 20), RFGI 3-6 (RAD 34), RFGI 3-7 (RAD 32), RFGI 3-8 (RAD 73), RFGI 3-11 (RAD 29), RFGI 3-15 (RAD 28), RFGI 3-16 (RAD 30), RFGI 3-20 (RAD 31), RFGI 3-28 (RAD 90), and RFGI 3-31 (RAD 83).

Fabric 5

Fabric 5 has a groundmass of coarse silt and fine sand, up to 0.2mm with abundant red (iron-rich) and white (iron-free) clay pellets, both types up to 9mm in size. The thickness of the tiles varies from 20mm to 26mm, with a mean of 24mm. The size range from 120mm to 140mm. The undersides are either smooth or sanded; one example of RFGI 3-18 (RAD 41) had grass marks. All tiles had four upright keys. Some were only three-quarter twists, and one example of RFGI 3-14 (RAD 92), exhibited the spoon-like stabbings found on a tile of fabric 4.

There were twenty designs in this fabric, RFGI 3-2 (RAD 39), RFGI 3-4 (RAD 38), RFGI 3-5 (RAD 42), RFGI 3-9 (RAD 36), RFGI 3-10 (RAD 35), RFGI 3-12 (RAD 37), RFGI 3-13 (RAD 45), RFGI 3-14 (RAD 92), RFGI 3-17 (RAD 40), RFGI 3-18 (RAD 41), RFGI 3-19 (RAD 69), RFGI 3-21 (RAD 61), RFGI 3-22 (RAD 64), RFGI 3-23 (RAD 43), RFGI 3-24 (RAD 44), RFGI 3-25 (RAD 66), RFGI 3-26 (RAD 88), RFGI 3-27 (RAD 89), RFGI 3-29 (RAD 95) and RFGI 3-30 (RAD 94).

Parallels

The designs found on fabric 4 tiles seem to have a limited distribution. RFGI 3-3 (RAD 20) is known from Beaulieu, Sopley, and Winchester Brook Street, Winchester Cathedral, Winchester College (Norton No 18, Group 3, *c* 1300) and Wolvesey Palace. RFGI 3-15 (RAD 28) is known at Beaulieu, Netley, St Cross, Amesbury and Salisbury Chapter House, RFGI 3-11 (RAD 29) is known only from Romsey, RFGI 3-16 (RAD 30) is known at Winchester on the Brook Street site, RFGI 3-20 (RAD 31) is known only from Romsey, RFGI 3-7 (RAD 32) is present at Beaulieu, Netley, Romsey, Selborne Church and Priory and Winchester Brook Street, RFGI 3-1 (RAD 33) is found at Beaulieu, Netley, Winchester Cathedral and Brook Street. RFGI 3-6 (RAD 34) is a letter E for which no exact parallel has been located, and RFGI 3-3-8 (RAD 73), 3-31 (RAD 83), and 3-28 (RAD 90) appear to be unique to Romsey.

The group of designs on fabric 5, as with fabric 4, has a very limited geographical distribution. RFGI 3-2 (RAD 39) has been found at Netley, and Winchester Brook Street. RFGI 3-4 (RAD 38) has been found at Beaulieu, Netley, Winchester Brook Street and Wolvesey Palace. RFGI 3-5 (RAD 42) has been found at Beaulieu and Netley. RFGI 3-9/3-10 (RAD 36/35) has been found at Beaulieu, Netley, Winchester Cathedral, Winchester Brook Street, Sopley, Nursling, and also at Amesbury and at Great Bedwin in Wiltshire. RFGI 3-12 (RAD 37) has been found at Netley, Sopley, Nursling, Selborne, Winchester Cathedral, Winchester Brook Street, Wolvesey Palace, and at Great Bedwin and Amesbury Abbey in Wiltshire. RFGI 3-13 (RAD 45) has been found at Beaulieu, Netley, and Winchester Brook Street. RFGI 3-14 (RAD 92) is known from Beaulieu, Christchurch, and Winchester Cathedral, College, Wolvesey Palace, and St Cross. RFGI 3-17 (RAD 40) has been found at Winchester Brook Street. RFGI 3-18 (RAD 41) has been found at Salisbury Chapter House. RFGI 3-21 (RAD 61) and 3-22 (RAD 64), the combatant knights, are known from Wolvesey Palace in Winchester, Amesbury Abbey, Great Bedwin, and Clarendon. These two designs are more fully discussed by Eames (1980, 192-4). RFGI 3-23 (RAD 43) has been found at Netley and Winchester Brook Street. RFGI 3-24 (RAD 44) has been found at Beaulieu, Netley, Winchester Cathedral and Winchester Brook Street. RFGI 3-25 (RAD 66) is known from Netley, Selborne, Winchester Cathedral and Wolvesey Palace, and Salisbury Cathedral and Chapter House. RFGI 3-19 (RAD 69), 3-26 (RAD 88), 3-27 (RAD 89), and 3-30 (RAD 94) are not known from elsewhere in Hampshire. RFGI 3-29 (RAD 95) is known only from Romsey unless Sparrow-Simpson was correct in recording this tile from Winchester.

None of the designs present in fabric 5 are found in other fabrics, but one of the designs - RAD 20 - in fabric 4 (RFGI 3-3) is found in fabric 3 (RFGI 2-4). The known provenances of parallels to the Romsey designs which occur in Group 3 are given in tables 4 and 5.

Group 4 (Fig 62)

This group consists of only one fabric, namely fabric 7.

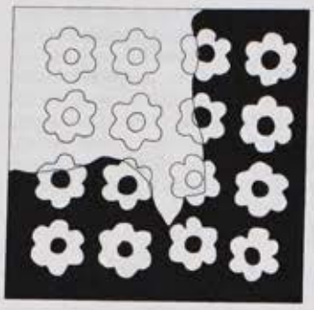
Fabric 7

This is a fine sandy, 0.06 to 0.2mm, fabric, well oxidised to give a bright red colour.

Only two fragments of this fabric were found, both from the cloister excavations. The inlay was not deep, suggesting a late date. Since neither design - RFGI 4-1 (RAD 81) and RFGI 4-2 (RAD 82) - could be identified parallels cannot be discussed.

Tiles of unknown fabrics. (Figs 63 & 64)

There were nineteen tiles which could not be assigned a fabric number. One is in the British Museum's Rutland Collection: RFGI 5-7 (RAD 101); four were only present in St George's Chapel and their glazed surfaces prevented identification: RFGI 5-15 (RAD 62), RFGI 5-11 (RAD 65) RFGI 1-7 (RAD 77), and RFGI 5-6 (RAD 96) ; fourteen are known only from drawings: RFGI 5-9 (RAD 84), RFGI 5-5 (RAD 93), RFGI 5-6 (RAD 96), RFGI 5-17 (RAD 97), RFGI 5-10 (RAD 98), RFGI 5-18 (RAD 99), RFGI 5-19 (RAD 100),



3-1

3-2

3-3

3-4

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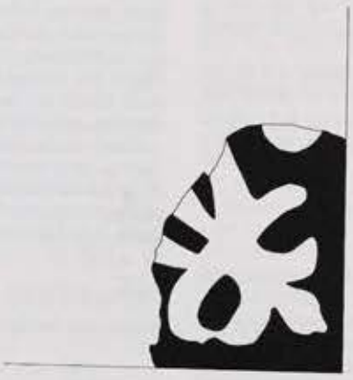
3-7



3-8

3-9

3-10

3-11

3-12

Fig 60 Group 3 tiles (i)

3-3

3-6

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3-19

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3-22

Fig 61 Group 3 tiles (ii)

3-24

3-25

3-26

3-27

3-28

3-29

3-30

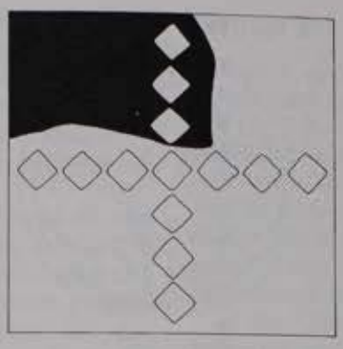
3-31

4-1

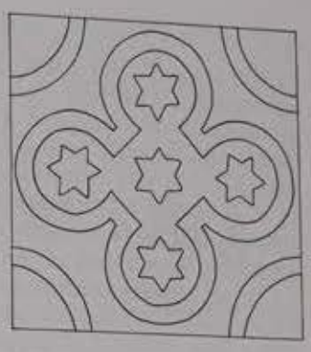
4-2

Fig 62 Group 3 tiles (iii) and Group 4.

5-1

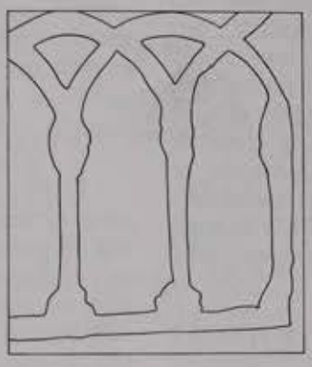


5-2



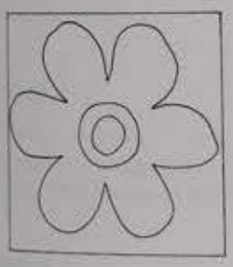
5-3

5-4

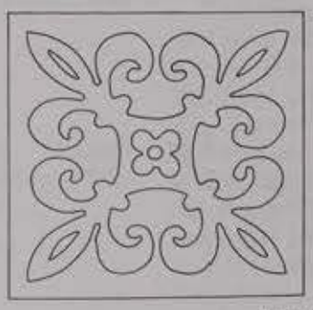


5-5

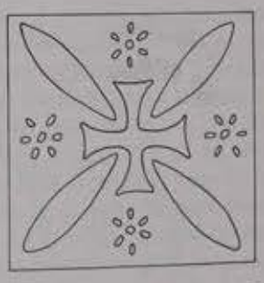
5-6



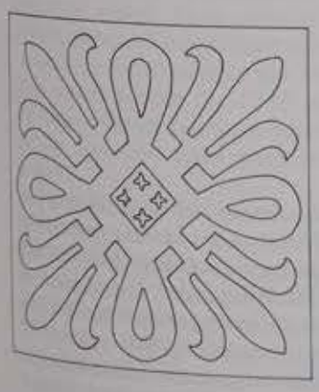
5-7



5-8



5-9



5-10

5-11

5-12

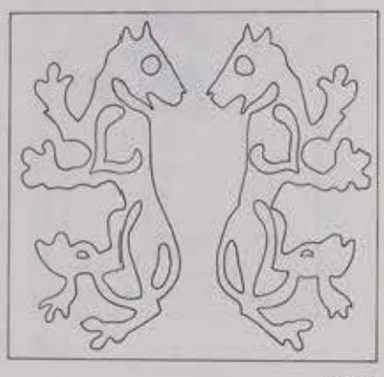
Fig 63 Group 5 tiles (i)

5-13

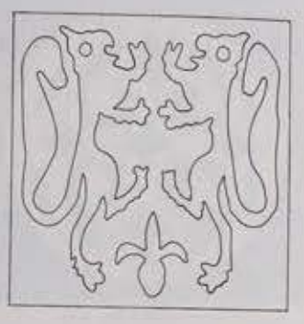
5-14

5-15

5-16



5-17



5-18

5-19

Fig 64 Group 5 tiles (ii)

RFGI 5–3 (RAD 102), RFGI 5–12 (RAD 103), RFGI 5–4 (RAD 104), RFGI 5–8 (RAD 105), RFGI 5–16 (RAD 106), RFGI 5–14 (RAD 107), RFGI 5–13 (RAD 108) (see introduction pp 121–122 above).

Discussion

As would be expected tiles were found in differing quantities during different seasons of excavation, but there would appear to have been large differences in the ratios of identifiable to unidentifiable. These may be the result of different collection or post-excavation policies, but are treated here as real differences. The number of fragments does seem to be dependent on the size of the excavated area, suggesting that all parts of the abbey that were investigated contained similar amounts of tiled areas, except inside the west end of the church.

The five archaeological excavations can be divided into four areas for comparison of the

presence of fabrics; these are the Eastern Chapels ('Lady Chapel') (RA 1973); the Parish Church aisle (RA 1975); inside the west end of the nave of the Abbey (RA 1974); and the Cloister area (RA 1974, 1977, and 1979). The number of tiles from inside the west end of the Abbey is perhaps too small for valid comparisons.

Fabric 1 is most commonly found in the Parish Church and the Cloister area; fabric 2 is most commonly found in the Lady Chapel and the Cloister area; fabric 3 has a more general distribution but with a preference for the Cloister area and a marked absence from the interior of the church; fabrics 4, 5, and 6 have a very similar distribution throughout the Abbey; and fabric 7 is confined to the Cloisters. Fitting the dates of the tiles to the dates of the building phases is difficult (see discussion on dating below).

Dating

The majority of the tiles were found in post Dissolution deposits, so no chronology of tile designs or fabrics can be arrived at independently for Romsey Abbey. Norton's work at Winchester College (1974) and Christchurch (1980), and Eames' (1980) discussion of the Clarendon tiles are the only well argued instances of dateable groups in the locality, and the Romsey tile designs can be directly compared with their work.

Group 1

Norton, relying on Winchester College documents, suggests a late 14th-/early 15th-century date for the 'Otterbourne' tiles.

Group 2

Fabric 2 has fourteen tile designs, six of which have parallels with Norton's 1280 group, and three of which have parallels with his 1300 group. Fabric 3 has fifteen tile designs of which seven have parallels with the 1280 group and two have parallels with the 1300 group. Fabric 6 has 26 tiles of which ten have parallels with the 1280 group and two have parallels with the 1300 group.

Thus all three fabrics, which have design links at Romsey, have a similar relationship to the Christchurch/Winchester groups, with just under half the designs being paralleled in the 1280 group and a small number paralleled in the 1300 group. All three fabrics have design links to the Clarendon tiles but are not confined to any one of Eames' divisions of those tiles, having parallels in the early and late groups, spanning from 1240 to 1280 AD. A date in the late 13th century seems likely.

Group 3

Fabric 4 consists of eleven tile designs, two of which have parallels with Norton's 1300 group. Fabric 5 has twenty designs, one of which is paralleled in his 1280 group. There is one design link with fabric 3 at Romsey. The Christchurch and Winchester College parallel of RFGI 3–14 (RAD 92) in fabric 5 suggests a late 13th-century date for that design but the fabric is very different to Norton's description at those sites.

If the Group 3 tiles are later products of the same tile makers as fabric 2, 3, and 6, with a time difference long enough to account for a replacement of the majority of their tile dies then they had also changed their clay source – or given the difference in fabric they could be contemporary products from a different production centre. The die link would favour the former suggestion, unless it was the personal property of a tiler who moved from one business to the other. The lack of die links to Clarendon, which has close links with the Romsey Group 2 fabrics, would suggest a late 13th or possibly early 14th-century date for Romsey Group 3.

Group 4

Fabric 7 cannot yet be dated, but its printed method of decoration suggests a date in the late 14th or early 15th century.

The dating of the tiles, if correct, suggests that tiles were removed and relaid during the life of the Abbey. This is clearly seen in similarities between the 'Lady Chapel' and the Parish Church extension. The former is thought to date from *c* 1270–80 (Pevsner and Lloyd 1967, 478) and 73% of the tiles found there were the late 13th century Group 2. In the Parish Church extension, thought to have been built after 1403, 78% of the tiles were also of Group 2. It is possible that during demolition following the Dissolution tile rubble was moved around the building.

Production and distribution

There has been much speculation, but little analytical work has been carried out on the production and distribution of inlaid floor tiles of the medieval period in Hampshire. It is generally assumed that the tiles were produced by itinerant workers who were brought to the site along with the other crafts people required (Eames 1980, 180, 198, 278). This may have been true for the larger building projects such as Clarendon (Eames op cit) but it is unlikely that every site where tiles are found was served in this way. There is evidence for this method of production for roof tiles at Selborne (Knapp 1954) and at Highclere Manor in 1406 but it certainly did not happen in Winchester in the late 14th and early 15th century.

In 1395–6 clay was moved from Farnham to Otterbourne to produce tiles that were then transported to Winchester. In 1396–7 45,800 tiles were imported from Flanders and in 1411 tiles and the tiler to lay them were brought from Newbury (Norton 1974, 28–30, 39–41). It could be argued that the great boom in floor tiles was over and the crafts people were few and far between by the later 14th century, but the earliest reference to floor tile production in the county, in 1241–2, involves the production of tiles at Marwell for Winchester Castle some 14km away (Norton 1980, 53).

The similarity of the fabrics used for the same designs in Christchurch, Salisbury, and Winchester (Norton 1980, 57) which seem to be paralleled at Romsey suggests that petrological analysis of the fabrics used to make tiles of the same design could help to solve this problem. Norton's suggestion of seriation could also be used to approach the problem through the designs by examining the degradation of dies and their gradual replacement (Norton 1980, 57). As more work is done it is likely that centralised production with distribution over long distances will be found to have been taking place in the 13th as well as in later centuries.

As the majority of the Romsey tiles have been examined it is possible to make some statements on this subject.

Romsey Group 1 is a product of the Otterbourne industry, some 24km to the west of Romsey. It was operating in the 1390s but possibly ceased by 1411 when Winchester College had to obtain tiles from the Newbury area rather than nearer home (Norton 1974, 30). It has no designs in common with the other fabrics at Romsey. These tiles perhaps mark the zenith of the Hampshire industry with designs being found all over the county. All the tiles so far examined by the author from a number of sites in north and south Hampshire are of the same standard fabric pointing to standardisation, perhaps to a full-time industry.

The Group 2 fabrics 2, 3, and 6, are variations of a hard, sandy clay possibly also used for tiles bearing these designs at Christchurch and elsewhere in Wessex (Norton 1980, 53–55). All were probably produced in the late 13th century. It is argued here that the variations in the fabrics are the results of different episodes of manufacturing at the same production centre. The episodes may not be far removed from each other perhaps reflecting annual cycles of autumnal clay digging, winter weathering, and summer tile making and firing. However, if only a year separated the production of each fabric one would expect more overlap in the designs. The present evidence suggests fabrics 3 and 6 were chronologically closer than 2 and 3 or 2 and 6. One variable, at present unquantified, is the length of time a die might last. The variations in fabrics within the group, the different parting mediums used, and the different methods of making the keys are evidence of a lack of standardisation, perhaps from year to year or from worker to worker. The designs of this group are widespread and they are found in large quantities. If the tilers were itinerant they perhaps moved from area to area supplying a number of sites from a suitable clay source, on the other hand if the fabric variation represents seasonal work they were perhaps only part-time tilers with tile-making fitted into the agricultural cycle.

Of the twenty-eight designs identified, eleven are found at Winchester sites and twelve are found at East Wiltshire sites, with only six being found in both areas. Of the six found in East Wiltshire but not in Winchester, five are not found elsewhere in Hampshire except at Romsey. Six are known only from Romsey, which forms a link between the Wiltshire and Winchester groups. If this fabric group was produced only at one centre these differences could be chronological, with the tile stamps gradually changing over time as the sales area expanded. Analysis of the fabrics of the parallels could well prove fruitful in defining kiln sites or itinerant tile makers but it is outside the scope of this work.

The Group 3 fabrics 4 and 5, are again variations of a single fabric, and could well share a clay source. The designs show less overlap than do fabrics 2, 3, and 6, particularly the lack of lion, griffin, or bird designs in fabric 4, but this may be due to the small numbers of tiles present in that fabric. The distribution of the designs is predominantly in southern Hampshire, with only four out of the 31 designs being paralleled in Wiltshire. A source in southern Hampshire is suggested and a study of the fabrics of the Wiltshire tiles may well show that they were imported from Hampshire.

Fabric 7 is only represented by two fragments out of 544. It may also be the latest fabric. It was possibly a locally made tile made to order for repair work. The small size of the fragments prevents further research into distribution at present.

If medieval tilers did have a standard pattern book of common designs we can see what part of it looked like by combining all design types that are found in more than one fabric at Romsey. These 26 designs are some 30% of the designs in Groups 2 and 3 (Fig 65). The rest of the production from each firing/kiln/production centre and the number of such centres remains to be identified but the Hampshire tiles include nine lions, nine griffins, and ten birds in branches (Rix 1974).

There is obviously scope for a great deal more work to be done on the medieval floor tiles in the counties of Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Dorset,

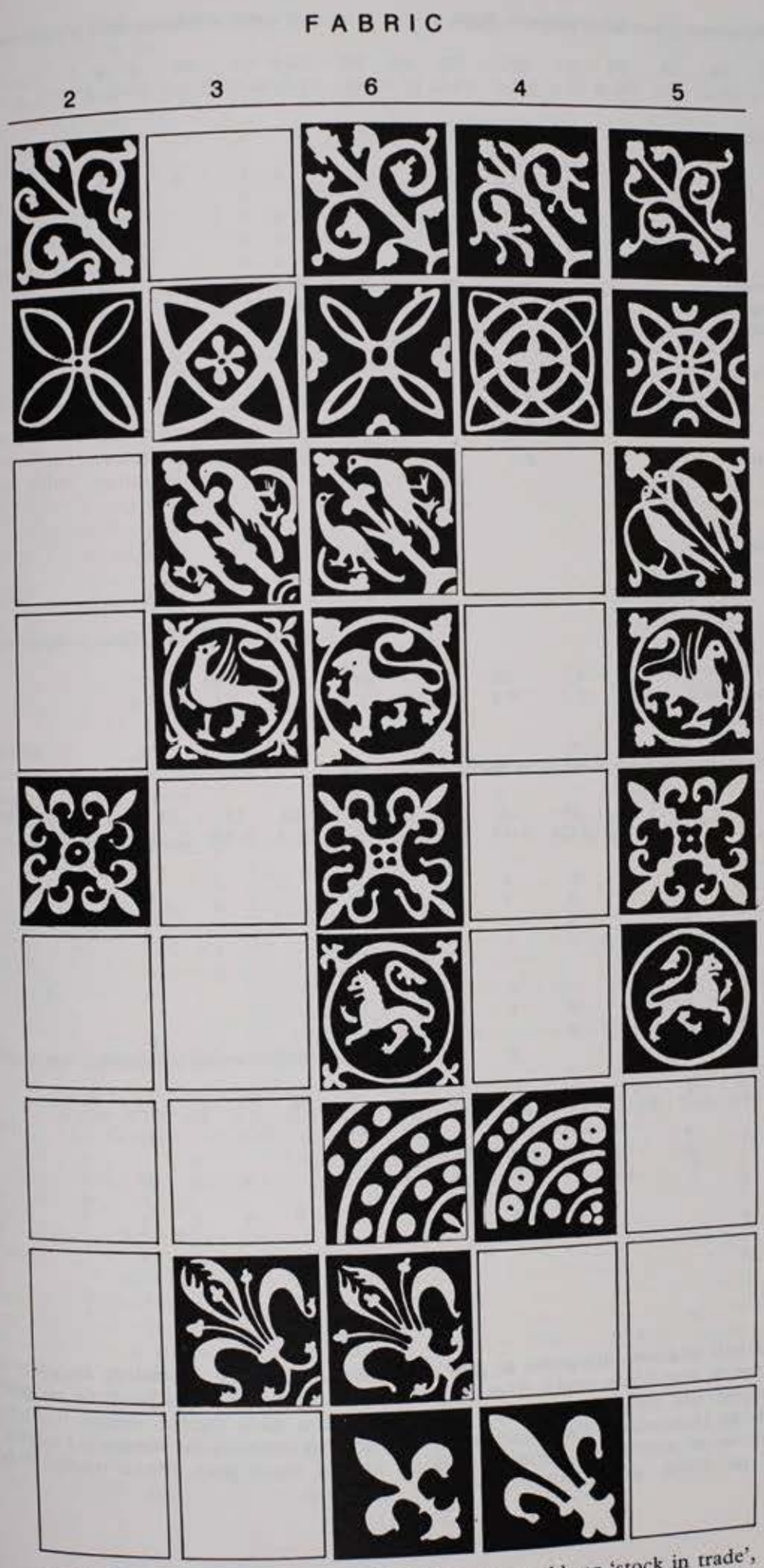


Fig 65 Representation of the standard 'pattern book', or 'stock in trade', across fabrics 2 to 6.

Table 10: Provenances of parallels to designs in Fabric 1

RAD No	1	2	3	5	6	7	8	76	77
RFGI No.	1–3	1–1	1–2	1–4	1–5	1–8	1–9	1–6	1–7
Barton Stacey	x			x					
Kimpton				x					
Netley	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Otterbourne				x					
Popham	x			x	x				
St Cross	x	x	x	x	x				
Wooton	x			x	x				
Winch Cathedral	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Winch College	x		x	x	x		x		
Winch Brooks	x								
Winch Hyde	x		x						
Wolvesey Palace			x			x			
Faringdon		x		x					
Alton		x							
St Denys				x					
Southampton		x				x			
Basing			x	x					
Kingsclere			x						
Selborne			x	x					
South Harting			x	x					
Titchfield			x	x					
Warblington			x	x					
Durford			x	x					
Shulbrede			x	x					
Lewes			x	x					
Binsted				x					

Table 11: Provenances of parallels to designs in Fabric 2

RAD No	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	21	63	67	71	80
RFGI No	2–15	2–16	2–24	2–18	2–6	2–5	2–9	2–3	2–38	2–32	2–40	2–31	2–45	2–25
Beaulieu	x	x												x
St Denys	x	x	x							x	x			
Selborne	x		x											
Winch Cath	x	x	x											
Winch Coll	x	x												
Winch Brooks				x								x		
St Cross	x	x	x	x										
Wolvesey Palace	x		x											
Faringdon		x		x										
Binstead			x											
Christchurch	x							x						
Sopley	x													
Gt Bedwin	x					x								
Amesbury	x					x								
Salisbury		x				x								
Clarendon					x	x		x						
Mottisfont										x				

and Romsey will undoubtedly prove to play an important part in any future study. Romsey has produced more tile designs than any other monastic site in Hampshire. The fact that new tile designs were recovered from the last excavation in 1979, when over 100 had previously been recorded, suggests that the Romsey total has not yet been reached. These two facts taken together suggest that what has so far been recorded for Hampshire throws light on only a small part of the medieval floor tile industry.

Table 12: Provenances of design parallels in Fabric 3.

RAD No	9	18	19	20	22	23	24	25	26	27	60	85	86	87	91
RFGI No	2–15	2–17	2–42	2–4	2–11	2–8	2–33	2–36	2–41	2–21	2–37	2–46	2–47	2–48	2–10
St Denys		x			x			x							
Netley											x				
Beaulieu	x	x		x							x				
Winch Cath	x	x		x	x		x	x			x				
Winch Coll	x	x		x	x		x	x							x
Winch Brooks		x		x				x	x						
Wolvesey Palace		x		x											
St Cross	x	x			x										
Selborne	x	x			x		x								x
Amesbury	x					x				x					
Gt Bedwin					x	x									
Salisbury						x					x				x
Christchurch	x	x													
Clarendon						x	x				x				x
Sopley				x	x										
Titchfield					x										
Faringdon								x							
Kingsclere								x							
Timsbury								x							
Mottisfont											x				

Table 13: Provenances of parallels to designs in Fabric 4.

RAD No	20	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	73	83	90
RFGI No	3–3	3–15	3–11	3–16	3–20	3–7	3–1	3–6	3–8	3–31	3–28
Winch Cathedral	x						x				
Winch Brooks	x			x		x	x				
Winch College	x										
Wolvesey Palace	x										
St Cross		x									
Selborne						x					
Beaulieu	x	x				x	x				
Netley		x				x					
Sopley	x										
Amesbury		x									
Salisbury		x									

Table 14: Provenances of parallels to designs in Fabric 5.

RAD No	35/36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	61/64	66	92	94	95
RFGI No	3–10/9	3–12	3–4	3–2	3–17	3–18	3–5	3–23	3–24	3–13	3–21/22	3–25	3–14	3–30	3–29
Beaulieu	x		x				x		x	x			x		
Netley	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x		x			
Winch Cath	x	x							x			x	x		?
Winch Brook	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x					
Winch Coll													x		
Wolvesey Palace		x	x								x	x	x		
St Cross													x		
Sopley	x	x													
Nursling	x	x										x			
Selborne		x										x			
Salisbury						x									
Amesbury	x	x									x				
Great Bedwin	x	x									x				
Clarendon											x				
Christchurch													x		

Table 15: Occurences of Designs in Fabric 6

RAD number	11	23	24	25	27	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	68	70	72	75	78	79	84
Site																										
Winchester																										
Cathedral	x		x	x		x	x						x	x			x		x						x	
Cathedral Green	x											x					x									
College			x	x					x				x				x		x							
Wolvesey												x					x		x							
St Cross	x					x							x				x								x	
Hyde																	x									
Brook St				x					x				x													
St Mary																	x									
The Brooks									x				x													
Southampton ?Friary																	x									
Southampton St Denys	x			x										x			x								x	
Netley						x			x			x					x	x				x				
Beaulieu						x						x					x		x			x				
Binsted	x																									
Selborne	x		x						x								x	x	x						x	
Nursling						x																				
Faringdon				x									x													
Wherwell																	x									
Hartley Mauditt																		x								
Kingsclere				x																						
Timsbury				x																						
Mottisfont																	x	x								
Titchfield																									x	
Clarendon		x	x		x		x			x	x			x										x		
Amesbury		x			x				x		x								x					x		
Salisbury Cathedral		x			x		x			x				x		x		x						x		
Salisbury Chapter House									x					x				x								
Great Bedwyn		x							x					x					x						x	
Keynsham		x									x															
Aldbourne						x																				
Tarrant							x																			
Shaftesbury		x									x			x	x											
Christchurch	x		x			x	x		x	x					x		x	x	x							
Sopley	x																x		x						x	
RAD number	11	23	24	25	27	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	68	70	72	75	78	79	84

A note on the decorated floor tiles recovered during excavations conducted from 1980 onwards Paul Spoerry, BTech PhD

Excavations since 1979 (Table 16) have produced further examples of decorated floor tile designs as identified in Russel's report. In addition to this, eight of these known designs were recovered in new fabric-design combinations. Four of these new fabric-design combinations resulted in the design being present in more than one of the fabric Groups identified by Russel. This is important because in Russel's report, only one of the 108 designs was found in fabrics from more than one fabric Group. The four new examples identified in Table 17 (right-hand column) therefore make a total of five 'shared' designs between Groups 2 and 3 and the implication is that a greater relationship might have existed between these two 'tile production operations' than had previously been assumed.

Table 16: Excavations

Site Name	HCC Accession Code
13–15 The Abbey	A1980–83
Romsey Abbey West	A1988–6
Romsey Abbey, North Side	A1988–7
Romsey Abbey, South Side of Nave	A1991–18

New Designs (Fig 66)

The 1980 and 1991 excavations also produced a total of nine new tile designs (Table 18). These are shown on Figure 66. Seven of these new designs were recovered in Group 2 Fabrics, whilst two were recovered in Fabric 4, of Group 3.

None of these new designs has been fully reconstructed, although the probable complete form of most is not difficult to guess. Exceptions are RAD 113 (RFGI 2–52) and RAD 115 (RFGI 3–33), unless the latter is simply a variant on RAD 104 (RFGI 5–4).

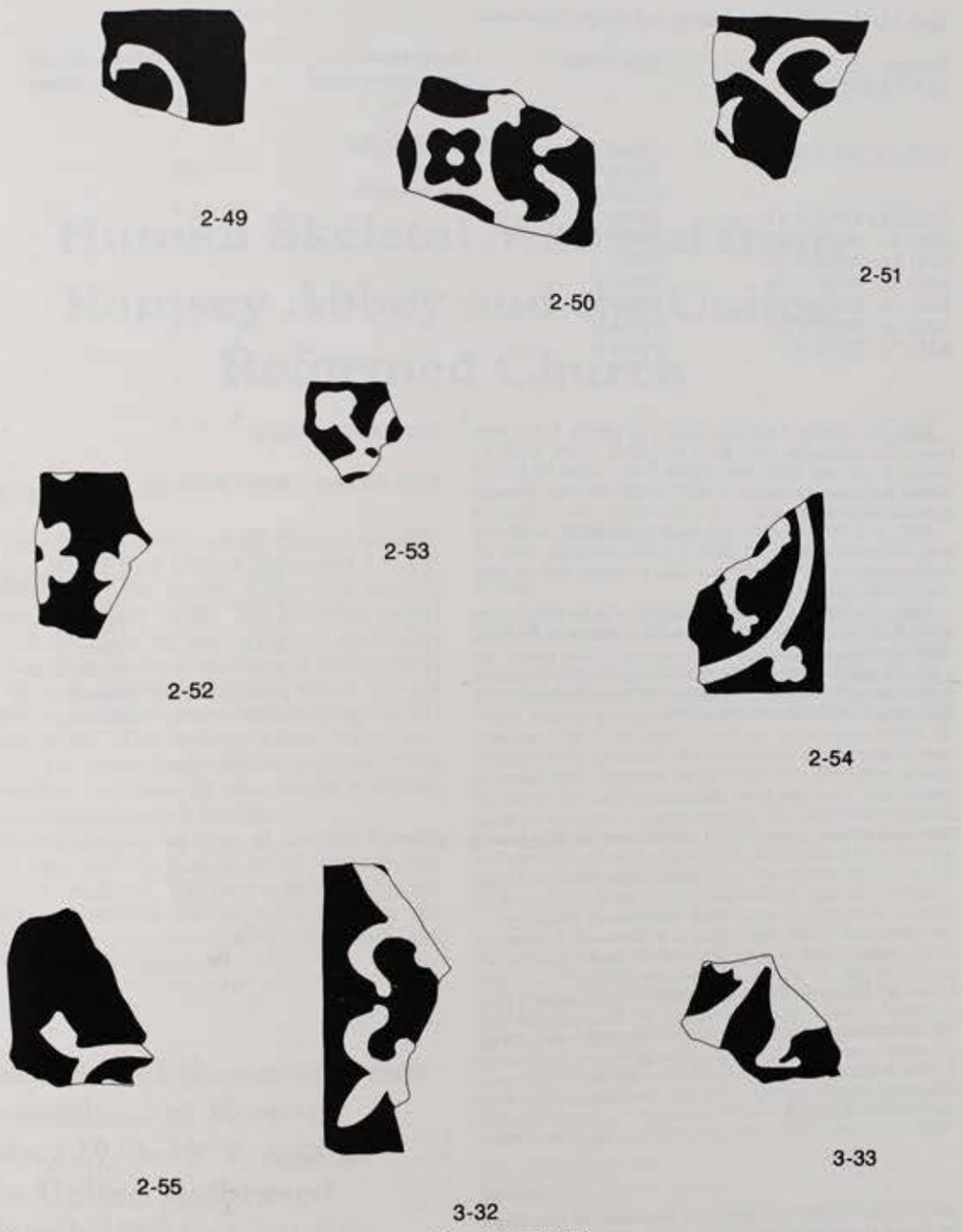


Fig 66 Additional tiles designs from excavations since 1980.

Table 17: Summary of New Fabric and Design Occurrences

Design (RAD & RFGI)	New Fabric	Occurrences (one, unless stated otherwise)	Cross Fabric Group Occurrences (where present)
RAD 22 / RFGI 2–11	Fabric 2	two examples	
	Fabric 4		2/3
	Fabric 6	two examples	
RAD 29 / RFGI 3–11	Fabric 6		2/3
RAD 41 / RFGI 3–18	Fabric 3		2/3
RAD 51 / RFGI 2–29	Fabric 3		
RAD 58 / RFGI 2–34	Fabric 2		
RAD 59 / RFGI 2–35	Fabric 2		
RAD 66 / RFGI 3–25	Fabric 6		2/3
RAD 72 / RFGI 2–7	Fabric 3		

RAD 110 (RFGI 2–50) and RAD 112 (RFGI 3–32) both have some similarities with RAD 40 (RFGI 3–17), RAD 41 (RFGI 3–18) and RAD 105 (RFGI 5–8), whilst RAD 109 (RFGI 2–49) may be similar to RAD 26 (RFGI 2–4), although this is by no means certain.

RAD 111 (RFGI 2–51) and RAD 114 (RFGI 2–53) are both variants on RAD 54 (RFGI 2–28), although they all undoubtedly derive from different dies or blocks and are thus classified as separate designs.

RAD 116 (RFGI 2–54) is a fragment of a heraldic beast, whilst RAD 117 (RFGI 2–55) is possibly a variant on RAD 60 (RFGI 2–37).

On the whole these designs conform to the sort of pattern book previously described by Russel (above p 138) and there is little need to elaborate on them further.

Table 18: New Designs

RAD Number	RFGI Number	Fabric
109	2–49	Fabric 2
110	2–50	Fabric 6
111	2–51	Fabric 2 & Fabric 3
112	3–32	Fabric 4
113	2–52	Fabric 2
114	2–53	Fabric 2
115	3–33	Fabric 4
116	2–54	Fabric 6
117	2–55	Fabric 6

Chapter 11

Human Skeletal Material from Romsey Abbey and the United Reformed Church

Introduction

The full reports on the human skeletal material from the Abbey and United Reformed Church excavations can be found in the site archive (Osborne 1988 and 1990). The following report includes the more or less complete skeletons, including those whose provenance is unidentified, and those fragmentary burials which can be assigned to identified graves with varying degrees of confidence. The entries which have been omitted are those fragmentary material from unidentified contexts, or non-burial contexts, where the human bone is residual.

The Introductory sections of the two reports, and in particular the statements of methodology, have been combined. The entries published in the skeletal inventories are as written, with the addition of the provenance where identified, and the phasing where applicable.

The Skeletal Remains from excavations at Romsey Abbey 1973–1979, and at The United Reformed Church 1989 by Christine Osborne, BTech MSc

Methodology

Sexing

Sexing is based primarily on those characteristics of the skull and pelvis which differ between males and females. Other indicators (though by no means as accurate) include longbone measurements (principally those of femoral head and humeral head diameter and clavicle length) and the general size and robusticity of the bones. It is not possible to sex immature remains as the characteristics of sexual dimorphism only develop during puberty.

Ageing

There are a number of problems associated with the ageing of adult skeletons and it has become increasingly clear that many of the criteria used do not necessarily give accurate results. Because of this an adult skeleton needs to be fairly complete and in a good enough condition to exhibit a number of ageing criteria which include generative disease related to increasing age, changes at the pubic symphysis of the pelvis (only reliable for males), visible epiphyseal fusion lines and the patterns of wear on molar teeth. Although the latter will vary depending on such factors as diet and ante-mortem tooth loss. Even with a fairly complete skeleton in a good condition the age is often restricted to one of three broad ranges – young adult, middle-aged adult and old adult where young indicates individuals in their 20s and early 30s, middle-aged suggests late 30s and 40s, and old would be those of 50+ years. Overlapping of these ranges is inevitable.

The ageing of immature skeletons is considered to be more accurate. If the dentition is present age can be estimated from the different stages of tooth development and eruption, and if immature longbones are complete age can be estimated from their lengths. An individual is classed as immature if it can be seen that fusion of the epiphyses has not occurred (epiphyses are the secondary ossification centres of the bone which are attached by a cartilagenous plate to the primary ossification centres. This allows the main body of bone to grow until it fuses with the epiphyses, and this occurs at different times with different bones). It therefore follows that those individuals where most of the epiphyses have fused will be classed as adult.

Stature

Stature can be calculated from longbone lengths, and in many cases this was not possible due to the fragmentary nature of the bone. Also, sex has to be known as stature calculations differ for males and females.

Dentition

When present, the dentition is recorded using the following formula for adult teeth:

right side maxilla	8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	left side maxilla
right side mandible	8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	left side mandible

where

1 = medial incisor	5 = 2nd premolar
2 = lateral incisor	6 = 1st molar
3 = canine	7 = 2nd molar
4 = first premolar	8 = 3rd molar

Deciduous teeth are recorded using the following formula:

right side maxilla	e d c b a	a b c d e	left side maxilla
right side mandible	e d c b a	a b c d e	left side mandible

where

a = medial milk incisor	d = 1st milk molar
b = lateral milk incisor	e = 2nd milk molar
c = milk canine	

Any tooth loss, either post-mortem or ante-mortem is recorded, along with any pathology and dental anomalies, and the following notation is used:

/ = tooth lost post-mortem
X = tooth lost ante-mortem
A = abcess
C = caries present
U = unerupted, or congenitally absent
O = tooth erupting
– = section of jaw missing (ie both tooth and socket lost post mortem)
NP= not present

Summaries

Abbey Excavations

Sexing

Within the group of bones from the Abbey excavations, many of the contexts lacked those parts of the skeletons which make sexing possible, or were too fragmentary. The group contains at least one female, three possible females, four males and two possible males. The uncertainty arises when only a very few of the characteristics survive, or where a skeleton exhibits both female and male characteristics.

Ageing

One individual within this group was aged 2 years ± 8 months from tooth development. Three of the adults could be classed as young and two as middle-aged.

Dentition

Nine individuals had some surviving dentition (though in only one case was it complete) and one of these six had suffered tooth loss ante-mortem, two had caries and one had suffered from an abcess.

Pathology

Most of the pathology surviving within this group is degenerative in nature, identified by bony lipping, wearing, pitting and eburnation (or polishing) of the bone. Eight individuals display this to a greater or lesser degree, and it is found all over the skeleton though more often than not in the spine. One of the skeletons (Grave 1083 = RA 73 Grave 1) displays diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis (DISH), also a disease of older individuals and a condition which involves excessive production of bone. The same individual had also suffered a probable rupture of the interosseous ligament of the right ankle, and may have had varicose veins indicated by lumpy areas of periosteal reaction (thickening of the bone as a result of damage to the periosteum, either from disease or trauma) on the lower edge.

The skeleton from Grave 1087 (= RA 73 Grave 5) also has some periosteal reaction on its right fibula which may have been caused by the same condition. Four individuals exhibit Schmorl's nodes on the vertebral bodies. These are indentations, or lesions, on the bodies caused by herniation of the intervertebral disc and failure of the cartilaginous end plate. One individual has cranial porosity on fragments of its skull. This is a pitting of the bone of the calvarium and is thought to be indicative of iron deficiency anaemia during childhood. Skeletons from Grave 1087 and 5119 (= ? RA 79 E6) both have probable bunions.

United Reformed Church (A 1989.14)

The minimum number of individuals based upon bone duplication is seventeen (fifteen adults and two immatures). The minimum number of individuals within this group could be as high as 25 (22 adults and three immatures) if it could be assumed (or had been established during excavation) that there has been no mixing of material between the different burial contexts. However it is clear, particularly in the case of contexts 22, 26 and 30 that there had been much disturbance of the cemetery, probably in the period following the Suppression of the nunnery. The skeletal material from contexts 22 and 30 in particular has been interpreted as evidence for the relatively carefull re-burial of the contents of disturbed graves.

Only three of the skeletons from the United Reformed Church site are relatively complete. The rest are represented by a few mixed fragmentary remains, occasionally by just a skull and/or mandible. The condition of the material varies but is generally quite poor, and its nature is such that the amount of information to be gained is greatly restricted. For example ageing and sexing was often not possible (the problems of ageing have been outlined above p 145)

Sexing

Of the twenty-two adults in the United Reformed Church group, eight were male, five were ?male,

seven were of unknown sex and one was female. The only difference with a minimum of fifteen adults is that the number of males falls to seven and two could not be sexed. The uncertainty in sex arises if few or none of the sexual characteristics survive, or if a skeleton exhibits both male and female characteristics.

Ageing

Of the 25 skeletons in this group, 22 have been classed as adult. Only nine of these could be assigned a more specific age range; five are old/older adults, two are middle-aged and two are young. Of the three immatures two could be aged, at six to eleven years and four to eight years. The figures for the age distribution of the adults do not change if one regards the minimum number of individuals as seventeen, and the two immatures included in this total are of the ages given above.

Dentition

There are nineteen sets of surviving dentition, either partially or fully complete and sometimes represented by either just the maxilla or just the mandible. Of these, four had at least one carious lesion, nine has lost teeth ante mortem, four had a slight amount of calculus around their teeth and one suffered with abcesses.Four of the adult skeletons were thought to be relatively older as their teeth were exceptionally worn.

Stature

A number of measurements are usually taken on the adult skull and post cranial skeleton from which various indices can then be calculated. These are then analysed to compare similarities and differences both within and between groups. The nature of the material in this group meant that very few measurements were possible. For example, it was only possible to calculate stature (based on longbone lengths) for one individual, the male from 28. Even if a longbone is unbroken stature can only be calculated if the sex of the skeleton can be established as the equations used vary for males and females.

Pathology

Because so many of the skeletons are incomplete and fragmented much of the pathology has probably been lost, and in the mixed contexts any pathology noted on individual bones usually cannot be related to the rest of the skeleton. That which survives includes evidence of the degenerative wear, pitting and bony lipping which is related to age, trauma or activity. This can be seen in the left elbow, both shoulders and spine of the main skeleton in 27, the upper arm of the main skeleton in 28, vertebral fragments in 30 and 26, and in the spine of the skeleton in 40.

The same skeletons (except 30 and 26) have Schmorl's nodes on their vertebral bodies. These are lesions on the surface of the body caused by a herniation of the nucleous pulposus (soft centre) of the intervertebral disc into the adjacent body surface. This, together with a failure of the cartilagenous end-plate causes the characteristic lesion or node.

The occipital bone from one of the three skulls in 26 has a bony protrusion near the nuchal crest which resembles a mastoid (found behind the ear). It is best described as some kind of longterm neoplasm which, because of its geographical location and the very large muscles which insert on the occiput, has developed morphologically to imitate a mastoid (A Stirland pers comm).

The shaft of the single left tibia in 30 is greatly thickened and bowed in a distal direction. This may be the result of an old fracture or it may be Paget's disease. The bone is very heavy and its structure is disorganised. The cause is unknown but affected bones become thickened with an increase in bone formation and in the later stages of the disease have a tendency to fracture. Paget's disease can affect one bone of the skeleton or many.

An isolated left first metatarsal and proximal foot phalanx in 26 are fused together. Some fragments of longbone in the same context display areas of periosteal reaction. This thickening of the bone is a result of damage to the periosteum either from disease or trauma.

Much of the rest of the pathology seems to relate to stress at various tendinous insertions, observed as spurring of, or lesions in, the bone at sites of tendinous attachment.

Skeletal Inventories

In the Inventory of bone from the Abbey Excavations (A 1991.25), the individual entries are ordered first by year of excavation, and then by the context number; in those instances where the provenance can be identified the new archive number by which the context is referred in the body of the published report is given. The original site code, where known, is also given. Contexts which cannot be identified are listed by original site code. For the United Reformed Church site (A 1989.14) the human bone material is listed in context order.

Of the earlier Abbey excavations, only 1977 appears to have produced no human skeletal material. It should be noted that no human skeletal material was retained from either the 1988 or 1991 excavations. In both instances human bone was uncovered, but almost all of it from more recent burials, or in disturbed contexts. No medieval or earlier burials were uncovered in 1988. Although some charnel deposits, probably of post-Suppression date, were identified, the bone was re-buried immediately. In 1991, one probable Phase 8 grave (context 7089) was identified, but this was not excavated because it was not directly threatened by the conservation works which prompted the excavation.

The human skeletal material from the United Reformed Church site was scanned, and a selection made of bones for further analysis and report. The skeletal inventory is published as written with only the addition of phasing information. The material not published in this report was catalogued by David Wheatley, and his catalogue forms part of the research archive which will be housed with the material archive at the Hampshire County Museum Service.

Romsey Abbey 1973–1979

Romsey Abbey 1973 (RA 73)

Grave 1083 = RA 73 Grave 1

Burial associated with the second phase of the eastern Chapels (Phase 15)
Bones present
Skeleton complete, apart from the left femur and some hand and foot bones.
Dentition

R	876--321	123---78 (A)	L
	87--4321	1234-678	

There is evidence of a possible abcess at upper left 7.
Maxilla – large gaps between the anterior teeth suggest that either the 4's and 5's were lost some time before death, giving time for the other teeth to migrate out of place, or there is a congenital absence of the 4's and / or 5's. The upper left 7 is at a severe angle, leaning inwards in a mesial direction into the space left by the previously lost upper left 6.
The lower left 8 has two main roots and one smaller one (the norm for lower molars is just two roots). The upper 8's each have three main roots and one smaller one (the norm for upper molars is just three roots).
Age Middle-aged adult
Sex male
Stature 1.71m ± 4.57cm (using length of humerus)
Pathology
This skeleton appears to demonstrate the presence of diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis (DISH), a degenerative condition which involves the excessive production of bone. This is best observed on the spine where the vertebral bodies of the thoracic 4 to thoracic 11 (inclusive) are fused together by a line of bony growth running continuously along the right hand side of the vertebral bodies (resembling wax running down a candle). The insertions of the patellae ligaments on the tibiae are spurred. The distal articulations of both first metatarsals demonstrate severe lipping and breakdown of the rims. This is matched on the first right phalanx at its proximal end. There are small exostoses on the medial side of the cuboid. The head of the first left metacarpal, and distal end of the first left proximal phalanx show pitting and expansion of the bone. The distal end of the fifth right metacarpal shows remodelling of the bone with lesions. Some of the costal notches of the sternum have bony lipping, matched by the same on some sternal rib ends. The sternal ends of the first ribs have ossified costal cartilages. The femora have slight bony lipping around their distal articulations, as do both patellae around their articular rims. Both scapulae have roughening and pitting on their acromions where the clavicles articulate. The lateral ends of both clavicles are distorted with roughening and pitting, although this is more severe on the left. The spine also has lipping on the odontoid process of the axis, and on the body rims of cervicals 4, 5 and 6, and thoracic 1, 2 and 3. The articulations of the latter are also affected, as are those of thoracic 5. Bony lipping of the vertebral bodies also occurs further down the spine on thoracic 11 and 12. The vertebral bodies of lumbars 2 to 4 (inclusive) and thoracic 11 have Schmorl's nodes. There is a swelling on the mid-shaft anterior crest of the right tibia, and both tibiae have periosteal reaction on their medial shafts. Both fibulae also have areas of periosteal reaction, distally on the right, and medially and proximally on the left. The left ankle demonstrates severe strain and a probable rupture of the lateral ligaments, resulting in expansion and extra bony growth on the fibula, and much extra bone on the areas of insertion of the interosseous ligament on both fibula and tibia. There is spurring on the area of insertion of the soleous on both tibiae and fibulae. It may be that the periosteal reaction on the fibulae and tibiae, where not associated with ligamentous stress, is due to venous stasis (varicose veins). It could be suggested from the general state of this skeleton that the individual may have been a person of some status and richly overfed.

Grave 1084 = RA 73 Grave 2

Burial associated with the second phase of the eastern Chapels (Phase 15)
Bones present
both clavicles
both scapulae
sternum
manubrium
both humeri
both radii
both ulnae
6 right ribs + fragments
4 thoracic vertebrae
3 lumbar vertebrae
the bones are broken and fragmented.
Age Adult
Sex Unknown
Pathology
The body of the sternum has a lesion perforating the bone near its proximal end. One lumbar vertebra has lipping around the unbroken superior body rim. This also occurs on some of the thoracic vertebral body rim fragments.

Grave 1085 = RA 73 Grave 3

Burial associated with the second phase of the eastern Chapels (Phase 15)
Bones present
fragments of skull
mandible
both clavicles
both scapulae
sternum
manubrium
both humeri
both radii
both ulnae
11 carpals
8 metacarpals
3 hand phalanges
1 right rib
6 thoracic vertebrae
5 lumbar vertebrae
sacrum with all 5 segments
both innominates
both femora
Dentition

R	--------	--------	L
	87------	--------	

Loose teeth include 1 lower molar, 1 upper molar, 6 incisors, 4 canines and 5 premolars.
Age Young adult
Sex Male
Stature 1.77m ± 3.91cm (based on femoral length)
Pathology
Lipping of the body rims of lumbar 5 and upper sacral segment. Schmorl's nodes occur on the two upper lumbar vertebrae. The thoracic vertebrae present are those from the upper spine, and their bodies are elongated in an anterior direction.

Grave 1086 = RA 73 Grave 4

Burial associated with the second phase of the eastern Chapels (Phase 15)
Bones present
fragments of skull
mandible

both clavicles
both scapulae
sternum
both humeri
both radii
both ulnae
3 carpals
6 metacarpals
12 hand phalanges
9 left & 7 right ribs + fragments
5 cervical vertebrae
12 thoracic vertebrae
2 lumbar vertebrae
Dentition

R	8 - - - - - - -	- - - - - - - -	L
	8 - - - - - - -	- - - - - - - 8	

Age Adult
Sex Male
Stature 1.72m ± 4.66cm (based on length of radius)
Pathology
The sternal ends of four ribs and both clavicles have wearing, pitting and bony lipping. Many costal pits of the thoracic vertebrae also show this, with vertebral bodies which are elongated anteriorly and have bony lipping. Thoracics 10 and 11 have Schmorl's nodes.

Grave 1087 = RA 73 Grave 5

Burial associated with the second phase of the eastern Chapels (Phase 15)
Bones present
both femora
both patellae
both tibiae
both fibulae
14 tarsals
9 metatarsals
14 foot phalanges
other bones
animal bones
Age Adult
Sex Unknown
Pathology
The right fibula has an area of non-specific periosteal reaction on the medial shaft. The first metatarsal has a large lesion at the distal end over the point at which the articulation begins – a probable bunion. There is some pitting and eburnation on the volar proximal articulation.

RA 73 F 1 (provenance not identified)
Unphased.
Bones present
fragments of skull
left scapula
both humeri
both radii
both ulnae
2 carpals
4 metacarpals
5 hand phalanges
1 right & 4 left ribs + fragments
4 thoracic vertebrae
1 lumbar vertebra
2 segments of sacrum
both innominates
both femora
both tibiae
right fibula
7 tarsals
9 metatarsals
3 foot phalanges
other bones (not associated with above individual):
1 humeral head
fragment of left innominate
1 metacarpal
animal bones
Dentition

R	- - - - - - - -	- - - - - - - -	L
	- - - - - - - -	- - 3 4 5 - - -	

There is also one other premolar and a lower molar (6th or 7th). The molar demonstrates wear, but it would be misleading to try to age the skeleton from this as (a) it is not clear if the tooth is a 6 or 7, and (b) the upper dentition is unknown, and the opposing molar may have been lost ante mortem.
Age Adult
Sex Female
Pathology
The distal condylar articulations of the femora, and the proximal condyles of the tibiae have lipping around their margins. Also, the lateral edges of the anterior articular surfaces of the femora (where articulation with the patella occurs) demonstrates wear, pitting and eburnation of the bone.

Romsey Abbey 1973: Contexts producing human bone included in the archive report but not published.

Archive Context number	Original Context numbering	Archive Context number	Original Context numbering
1078	= RA 73 context A(3)	1078	= RA 73 context A(8)
1078	= RA 73 context A(7)	1070	= RA 73 'ditch north of Lady Chapel'

Note: (na) indicates a finds context which has no archive context number, and which cannot be identified with any stratigraphic units.

Romsey Abbey 1974 (RA 74)

RA 74 (17) (provenance not identified)
Unphased
Bones present
fragments of skull

4 right femora } 2 pairs & 3 unpaired
3 left femora }

2 right ulnae
1 left ulna

4 left tibiae } 3 pairs &2 unpaired
4 right tibiae }

1 pair radii

1 left humerus } 1 pair & 1 unpaired
2 right humeri }

1 fibula
2 fragments of ?right scapulae
3 right innominates
1 fragment of vertebral body
4 halves of vertebral arches
7 left and 5 right ribs
2 clavicles unpaired
3 metatarsals
2 phalanges
other fragments

All the bones are immature. These bones represent the remains of at least five individuals. No teeth remain, but the size and general development of the bones suggests that all were extremely young.

Romsey Abbey 1974: Contexts producing human bone included in the archive report but not published.

Archive Context number	Original Context numbering	Archive Context number	Original Context numbering
2098	= RA 74 context GA(4a)	2125	= RA 74 context J(7b)
2106	= RA 74 context GA(5a)		

Note: (na) indicates a finds context which has no archive context number, and which cannot be identified with any stratigraphic units.

Romsey Abbey 1975 (RA 75)

Graves 3100, 3101 & 3102 = *RA 75 (33)*

Uncertain phasing. Three parallel graves were sealed by the footings of the Parish Church aisle on the north side (Phase 16) and presumably associated with the Norman and later abbey. The fills of the graves appear to have been excavated as one context.
Bones present
1 right femur
both fibulae
4 metatarsals
skull fragments
3 vertebral bodies
longbone fragments
All immature
Other bones
A fragment of tibial articulation which comes from a larger individual than the above – either an adult, or an older immature individual where the epiphyses are more advanced in development. Therefore this group contains remains from at least two individuals.

Grave 3120 = *RA 75 (81), (88) and (120)* (not site codes)

Phase 8 burial. Identified in Archive report as *RA 75 (81), (88) and (120)*.
(81)
Bones present
shaft of left tibia
2 metatarsals
1 phalanx
All adult
(88)
Bones present
2 fragments of adult pelvis
Sex ?Male
(120)
Bones present
distal articulation of right fibula
7 right tarsals
8 right metatarsals
1st proximal phalanx
All adult

Grave 3127 = *RA 75 (f), (h) & (j)*

Phase 6 burial
Bones present
(f) fragments of skull
mandible
right clavicle
both scapulae
right humerus
radius
left ulna
1 metacarpal
3 phalanges
9 left and 2 right ribs + fragments
fragments of vertebrae
sacrum of 5 segments
both innominates
(h) right femoral head and neck
fragment of rib head
1 other
(j) fragments of ribs
Dentition – skull (f)

R			L
	- - - - - - - -	- - - - - - - -	
	- - - 5 - - - -	- - 3 4 5 - - -	
		C	

There is a caries cavity on the distal crown and root of mandibular left 5
Age (f) Adult
Sex (f) ? Female

Grave 3129 = *RA 75 (e)*

Phase 7 burial
Bones present
fragments of skull
mandible
left clavicle
left scapula
3 left ribs
4 cervical vertebrae
Dentition

R			L
	- - 6 - - - - -	- - - - - - - -	
	8 7 6 - - 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 - 6 7 -	

On the right side of the mandible one of the premolars is congenitally absent, ie. there is only one premolar, lost post mortem. The left side is normal with two premolars, one of which was lost ante mortem.
Age Young adult
Sex Unknown

Grave 3131 3132 = *RA 75 (a) & (g)*

Phase 7 burial
Bones present
(a) skull (no mandible)
(g) fragments of right innominate
right radius
right femoral shaft
4 tarsals
1 incisor or canine, extremely worn
Dentition – skull (a)

R			L
	8 7 6 5 4 3 - -	- - 3 4 5 6 7 8	
	- - - - - - - -	- - - - - - - -	

Age (a) Middle-aged adult
Sex (a) Male

Grave 3133 3134 = *RA 75 (b)*

Phase 7 burial
Bones present
fragments of skull
both clavicles
both scapulae

both humeri
left ulna
7 left ribs and 3 right
6 cervical vertebrae
6 thoracic vertebrae
Dentition

	C		
R	-76--32-	--------	L
	--------	--------	

Maxillary right 3 has a carious lesion on the mesial crown.
Age Adult (absence of any mandibular teeth means that an age obtained from the two maxillary molars based on attrition might be misleading)
Sex Male
Pathology
There is some stress of the area of insertion of the costoclavicular ligament on the left of the clavicle.

Grave 3135 = *RA 75 (c)*

Phase 7 burial
Bones present
fragments of skull
mandible
left humerus
1 thoracic vertebra
left innominate
left femur
Dentition

R	--------	--------	L
	-7-543--	-234567-	
		C	

There are also 3 loose maxillary molars and 2 loose maxillary molars (sic). Mandibular left 6 has a large caries cavity on the mesial crown and root.
Age Young adult
Sex ?Male
Pathology
There is a large Schmorl's node on the inferior body of the thoracic vertebra (the superior body has broken away).

Grave 3150 = possibly *RA 75 soakaway pit 1* (sic)

Possible Phase 6 burial
Bones present
skull fragments
both clavicles
both scapulae
right humerus
right radius
right ulna
1 metacarpal
4 left and 5 right ribs + fragments
fragments of at least 7 vertebrae
both innominates
1 metatarsal
Age adult
Sex unknown
Pathology
Although broken and fragmented, some of the vertebral articulations display severe pitting and roughening. Some of the vertebral bodies show a breakdown of the rims. Two vertebral bodies have Schmorl's nodes on both body sides, and one vertebra has one on its inferior body only.

Grave 3151 = possibly *RA 75 soakaway pit 2 Bag 2* (sic)

Phase 7 burial
Bones present
fragments of skull
fragments of longbone including femur
1 metatarsal
fragments of scapula
Pathology
Some of the skull fragments display cranial porosity (the pitting of the surface of the calvarium thought to be associated with iron deficiency anaemia as a child).

Grave 3152 = possibly *RA 75 soakaway pit 2 bag 1* (sic)

Phase 7 burial
Bones present
fragments of skull
2 left radii
right patella
fragments of scapula
fragments of calcaneus
2 metatarsals
1 hand phalanx
right clavicle
right innominate and other pelvic fragments
1 humerus head
distal fragment of femur
3 right rib fragments
This represents the remains of at least two individuals.

Grave 3251 = site codes *RA 75 context (65) cut (114)*

Phase 7 burial
Bones present
Shaft of right femur
other bones
fragments of animal bone and teeth.

Grave 3257 = *RA 75 context (72) cut (117)*

Phase 6 burial
Bones present
both tibiae
4 tarsals
fragments of longbone including femur, radius and fibula.
The bones are all adult but in very poor condition.

Grave 3259 = *RA 75 context (66) cut (115)*

Phase 6 burial
Bones present
1 fragment of human bone.

Grave 3301 = *RA 75 context (73) cut (117)*

Phase 7 burial. The site notes record an almost complete skeleton (lacking skull one collar bone and upper arm) from context (73). No skeletal material is catalogued under this number. There is a slight possibility that the skeletal material listed in the archive report (Osborne 1988) as RA 75 (B2) (see below pp 00) should be identified with this burial.

Grave 3305 = *RA 75 context (75) cut (119)*

Phase 7 burial
Bones present
1 metacarpal
rib fragments
fragments of scapula
distal fragment of right humerus
The bones are all adult.

RA 75 (41) (provenance not identified)

Unphased
Bones present
fragments of skull
2 left innominates
fragments of sacrum which articulate with one of the innominates

proximal end of a left ulna
proximal end of a left radius
distal end of a left humerus
central shaft fragment of femur
fragment of tibial shaft
other fragments of longbones
6 vertebral bodies
The presence of two left innominates shows that this group contains the remains of at least two individuals both adult.

RA 75 (76) (provenance not identified)

Unphased
Bones present
skull
mandible
both scapula
left humerus
radius
left ulna
1 hand phalanx
4 left ribs and 1 right
1 cervical vertebra
1 thoracic vertebra
2 lumbar vertebrae
2 segments of sacrum
complete pelvis
both femora
both tibiae
1 tarsal
all bones are fragmented
Dentition
Mandibular right 3, 4, 5, 6 present, the rest of the jaw is missing.
Age Adult
Sex ?male

RA 75 (89) (provenance not identified)

Unphased
Bones present
fragments of skull
fragments of mandible
fragments of rib
1 right clavicle
All are immature
Dentition
3 adult molars M6's
3 adult incisors
2 adult canines
} all partly developed

4 deciduous molars
5 deciduous incisors
2 deciduous canines
} not all the roots are fully developed

2 deciduous molars in situ

Age 2 years ± 8 months

RA 75 (B2) [possibly from Grave 3301 = *RA 75 context (73) cut (117)*]

Grave 3301 is a Phase 7 burial. The identification is tentative.
Bones present
left humerus
ulna
right fibula
right patella
4 metatarsals
7 tarsals
tibia
left and right femora
right innominate
All bones are badly fragmented. All are adult.

RA 75 (B4) (provenance not identified)

Unphased
Bones present
fragments of left and right innominate
2 right femora and 1 left
left fibula
left and right tibiae
right humerus
right talus and calcaneus
1 foot phalanx
other fragments
These bones represent some of the remains of at least two individuals. The left femur is too worn and broken to try to pair with the rights. The only femoral head diameter measurement is on the one of the right femora and is 500mm. This indicates a male.

Romsey Abbey 1975: Contexts producing human bone included in the archive report but not published.

Archive Context number	Original Context numbering	Archive Context numbr	Original Context numbering
(3222)	=RA 75 context (14)	(3246)	=RA 75 context (70)
(na)	=RA 75 context (26)	(na)	=RA 75 context (78)
(na)	=RA 75 context (29)	(na)	=RA 75 context (85)
(na)	=RA 75 context (30)	(na)	=RA 75 context (87)
(na)	=RA 75 context (34)	(na)	=RA 75 BI
(na)	=RA 75 context (59)		

Note: (na) indicates a finds context which has no archive context number, and which cannot be identified with any stratigraphic units.

Romsey Abbey 1979 (RA 79)

Grave 5119 = *RA 79 E6*

Phase 7
Bones present
fragments of scapula
both humeri
both radii
both ulnae
3 carpals
9 metacarpals
10 hand phalanges
8 left and 5 right ribs and fragments
6 cervical vertebrae
9 thoracic vertebrae
5 lumbar vertebrae
sacrum of four segments
both innominates
both femora
both patellae
both tibiae
both fibulae
10 tarsals
8 metatarsals
5 foot phalanges
Age adult
Sex ?Female
Pathology
Both patellae, distal femoral articulations and proximal tibial articulations have bony lipping around some areas of their articular rims, and the patellae exhibit roughening and pitting on their medial articular facets. Similarly, both

acetabulae of the pelves have areas of roughening and pitting along their inferior rims. Unfortunately the corresponding areas of the femoral heads are missing.
Degenerative disease also occurs in the spine; all the cervical vertebral bodies and articulations are affected in varying degrees. The symptoms are less marked on the upper thoracics, but increase further down the spine, the lower thoracics also displaying wearing and pitting of the costal pits. The articulations of the lumbar vertebrae are severely distorted in shape, with wear and pitting on their surfaces, as are the vertebral articulations of the sacrum.
The right fibula has an osteophyte on its styloid process, and the radius and ulna have some bony lipping around both distal articulations. The same occurs around the proximal articulations of both 1st metacarpals.
The left 1st metatarsal is distorted with a bony growth at the proximal medial articulation and shaft, a probable bunion.

Grave 5127 = *RA 79 E5*

Phase 8
Bones present
right radius
both ulnae
3 carpals
6 metacarpals
10 hand phalanges
2 lumbar vertebrae
a sacrum of five segments
both innominates
right femur
both patellae
both tibiae
both fibulae
12 tarsals
9 metatarsals
11 foot phalanges
Age adult
Sex ?Female

Romsey Abbey 1979: Contexts producing human bone included in the archive report but not published.

Archive Context number	Original Context numbering	Archive Context numbr	Original Context numbering
5002	=RA 79 context D (3)	5003	=RA 79 context E (2)

Note: The archive numbers given here relate only to the finds; the groups of finds cannot be identified with any stratigraphic units.

United Reformed Church 1989 (A 1989.14)

Grave 42: fill 40

Phase 8
Bones present
Skull
Mandible
Seven cervical vertebrae
Twelve thoracic vertebrae
Five lumbar vertebrae
Sacrum with three surviving segments
Sternum
Both clavicles
Both scapulae
Five left and six right ribs
Both humeri
Both radii
Both ulnae
Five left and five right carpals
Five left and five right metacarpals
25 hand phalanges
Both innominates
Both femora
Both patellae
Both tibiae
Both fibulae
Five left and five right tarsals
Four left and five right metatarsals
Six foot phalanges
This skeleton is in a relatively poor condition.
Dentition

R	876543--	-2345678	L
R	87654321	12345678	L

There is a slight amount of calculus around the teeth.
Age Adult
Sex Male
Pathology
The left ulna has spurring on the olecranon at the insertion of triceps. The right clavicle has a lesion at the insertion of the costoclavicular ligament. The spine has Schmorl's nodes running from thoracic six to eleven (inclusive). There is lipping around both the superior and inferior body rim of lumbar two. There is more marked lipping around the superior body rim of lumbar three which is accompanied by wear and pitting.

Grave 46: fill 28

Phase 8
Bones present
Skull (maxilla only)
Mandible
One cervical vertebra
Twelve thoracic vertebrae
Five lumbar vertebrae
Complete sacrum with coccyx
Manubrium
Both clavicles
Both scapulae
Ten left and nine right ribs
Both humeri
Both radii
Both ulnae
Five left and five right carpals
Four left and five right metacarpals
Nineteen hand phalanges
Both innominates
Both femora
Both patellae
Both tibiae
Both fibulae
Five left and seven right tarsals
Five left and five right metatarsals
Twelve foot phalanges
Four sesamoids
This skeleton is in a relatively good condition.

Dentition

	NP C	NP	
R	876--3--	--345678	L
R	-765432-	--3456--	L
	C C		

Maxillary right six has a moderate sized carious lesion in the occlusal surface. Mandibular right six and seven each have a large lesion in the buccal neck.
Age Middle-aged adult
Sex Male

Stature 1.78m ± 4cm (5'10" ± 1'6")
Pathology
Both calcanii have spurring of the Achilles tendon (on the heels). There are two lesions in the proximal articulation of one of the first proximal foot phalanges. Both patellae have spurring on their anterior surfaces at the insertions of rectus femoris. The spine has Schmorl's nodes running from thoracics five to ten (inclusive). Both fibulae have spurring at the insertions of the anterior talofibular ligaments at their distal ends. Both humeri have lipping accompanied by wear and pitting on their lesser tubercles.
The above represents one individual skeleton.
Also bearing the same context number (28) but boxed separately and not belonging to the above are the following:-
Two broken left femora
A fragment of femoral head too small to belong to either of the above
One first right metatarsal
A fragment of right innominate + other fragments
One right patella
A fragment of one sacral segment
Two fragments of humeral head
One first right metacarpal
One finger phalanx
Fragments of two skulls
One lower molar
The above represents the remains of at least three adult individuals.

Grave 58: fill 27

Phase 7
Bones present
Skull
Mandible
Seven cervical vertebrae
Twelve thoracic vertebrae
Five lumbar vertebrae
Complete sacrum with coccyx
Sternum
Manubrium
Both clavicles
Both scapulae
Six left and nine right ribs
Both humeri
Both radii
Both ulnae
Two left and one right carpal
Five left and five right metacarpals
Fifteen hand phalanges
Both immoninates
Left femur
Both tibiae
One left metatarsal
Also (not belonging to the above skeleton)
One skull
Two mandibles
One thoracic vertebra
One cervical vertebra
Animal bone

The dentition of the main skeleton

R	---------	---------	L
R	---------	------78 CC	L

Mandibular left 7 has one large carious lesion in the mesial crown and one in the distal crown. Left 8 has a medium sized lesion in the mesial neck and one in the buccal neck.
Age Old adult
Sex Male
Pathology
The left radius and ulna have some slight lipping around the rims of their proximal articulations. In the spine there is lipping on the dens of the axis (the second cervical vertebra) and on the inferior body rim of cervical five and superior body rim of cervical six. The body surfaces of the latter two are worn and pitted. Slight lipping can be seen on those thoracic vertebrae where the bodies are unbroken, becoming more marked on the inferior anterior body of thoracic twelve, the inferior right body of lumbar two and both the superior and inferior body rims of lumbar three. The lipping becomes less marked on the superior body rim of lumbar four. There are Schmorl's nodes on the inferior bodies of lumbars one and two. Lumbar five has a partial spondylolysis on the right side ie. the inferior articular process is separated from the superior on the right side. There is ossification of the ligamentum flavum along the spine. The glenoids of both scapulae have lipping around their rims. There is ossification of the costal cartilage at the sternal ends of both first ribs. Both humeri have lesions at the insertions of Latissimus dorsi.
Dentition of the second skull and mandible

R	8765432-	1-345678	L
R	87654321	-2345678	L

There is a slight amount of calculus around the teeth.
Age Adult
Sex Male
Head shape Dolichocranic (narrow/long headed)
The dentition of the third mandible

R	--------	--------	L

The remains from this context represent three adults, at least two of which are male. One of the latter is an older individual.

Context 22

Not a grave. Gravel layer created during later disturbance of cemetery. Contemporary with context 26. Date uncertain, possibly late medieval or post-medieval.
Bones present
1 skull
maxillae from 2 other skulls
6 mandibles
Dentition of maxilla '1'

R	-7--4321	12345678	L

Dentition of maxilla '2'

R	--------	--------	L

The conditions of the maxillae and mandibles is such that it is not possible to see if any go together.

Dentition of mandible '1'

R	87654321 A	-23456-- A	L

There is an abcess around the buccal roots of both 6's. The teeth are all extremely worn suggesting an older individual. The mandible is large and square indicating a possible male.

Dentition of mandible '2'

R	87654321	1-------	L

There is a slight amount of calculus around the teeth. This is a possible male.

Dentition of mandible '3'

R	876543-1 NP	----56-- NP	L

The teeth are all extremely worn suggesting an older individual. This is a possible male.

Dentition of mandible '4'

R	876-432-	--345678	L

This is a possible male.

Dentition of mandible '5'

R	--6-----	-----67-	L

This is a possible male.

Dentition of the skull and mandible '6'
The skull and mandible 6 appear to go together

R	--------	C --34567-	L
R	---5----	----567- C	L

Maxillary left 6 has an abcess around the buccal roots and one around the lingual roots. Mandibular left 6 has an abcess around the buccal roots. The teeth are extremely worn suggesting an older individual. This is a male.
The remains from this context suggest at least six adult individuals of which one is an old male, two are old ? males and three are ? males.

Context 26

This the fill of a feature (48) cut into the upper fill of the charcoal burial (grave 42 above). Contemporary with context 22. Date uncertain, possibly late medieval or post-medieval.
Bones present
Fragments of at least three skulls
Two mandibles
Two cervical vertebrae
Thirteen thoracic vertebrae
Eight lumbar vertebrae
Fragments of sacral segments
One left and two right clavicles + fragments
Three left and one right scapula
One left and three right ribs + many fragments
Two left and four right humeri
Two left and three right radii
Three left and one right ulna
One left and five right carpals
Four left and seven right metacarpals + two others
Sixteen hand phalanges
One left and three right innominates (there is one pair; that of a male)
Four left and three right femora
One left and one right patella
One left and one right tibia + a proximal fragment of one other
One left and one right fibula
Four left and five right tarsals (including a pair of calcanei and a pair of tali)
One left and four right metatarsals + two others
Three foot phalanges
Many fragments of longbones
Immature remains
One mandible
One left scapula
Two right ulnae
One rib
One right tibia
Two metatarsals
Longbone fragments

Dentition of maxilla '1' and mandible '1'
Maxilla '1' and mandible '1' probably go together

R	NP 876543--	-2345---	L
R	8765-3-- NP	----5678	L

Dentition of mandible '2'
Mandible '2' does not appear to go with maxilla '2'.

R	-765432-	--345--8	L

Dentition of maxilla '2'

R	-76543--	--------	L

The surviving teeth demonstrate extreme wear.
Loose teeth:- one upper molar
one canine
one premolar
Dentition of immature mandible

R	-----	-----	L
	--------	--------	

There is one loose premolar and one loose canine. Both have partly developed roots.
The remains from this context contain at least six individuals; four adults and two immatures. One of the latter can be broadly aged as 6 to 11 years. At least one of the adults is a male and one is an older individual.
Pathology
The occipital bone of one of the skulls has, just inferior and to the right of the nuchal crest, a large protrusion of bone which looks exactly like a mastoid process (Plates 1 and 2). It would seem to be some kind of long term neoplasm which, because of its geographical location and the very large muscles which insert on the occiput, has developed morphologically to imitate a mastoid (Ann Stirland, pers comm). The glenoid of one of the left scapulae has lipping around its rim. One right clavicle has a lesion at the insertion of the costoclavicular ligament. A fragment of medial clavicle is worn and pitted with marked lipping. Another fragment of clavicle appears to have been broken ante mortem and remained unhealed. One of the cervical vertebrae has worn and pitted body surfaces. Many of the thoracic vertebrae have worn and pitted apophyseal joints and some body fragments have lipping around the rims. Five of the lumbar vertebrae which seem to come from the same individual have wear and pitting on their body surfaces and apophyseal joints. The body rims have huge flared ostephytes which are especially marked on the left side. A first left metatarsal and first left proximal foot phalanx are fused together. Some fragments of longbone (probably fibula) have marked areas of periosteal reaction.

Context 30

Not a grave. Layer created during later disturbance of cemetery. This context post-dates the disturbance of the cemetery represented by contexts 22 and 26. Possibly post-medieval.
Bones present
Two left and one right ulna (one pair)
Two right and one left radius (one pair)
One right scapula
One right and one left clavicle (a possible pair)
Three right and four left humeri (at least one pair)
One left and one right fibula
Two left and two right femora (two pairs – the diameters of the heads indicate males. The epiphyseal fusion lines of the heads are visible on one of the pairs)

Two left and three right innominates (two pairs – one male and one female)
One right patella
One left tibia
One left first metatarsal + one other
Four phalanges
One left second metacarpal and one left third (which articulate) + two other metacarpals
Four lumbar vertebrae
One thoracic vertebra
One cervical vertebra
Four left and four right ribs + fragments
Fragments from three skulls (no upper dentition)
Two mandibles – one male and one female

Dentition of the female mandible

R	8 7 6 5 – 3 – 1 CCC	– – 3 4 5 – – –	L

Right 8 has a small carious lesion in the occlusal surface. Right 7 has a large lesion in the mesial crown/neck and right 6 is severely affected, the whole tooth having rotted away with only the mesial root surviving. There is a slight amount of calculus around the teeth.

Dentition of the male mandible

R	8 7 6 5 4 – – –	– – – – – – – –	L

Loose teeth:- one upper molar
two premolars
three incisors

Immature remains
One right rib + fragments
One right radius
One fragment of right innominate
One thoracic vertebra
One left tibia
One femoral fragment
Fragments of longbone
Loose teeth:- one deciduous molar
the crown of a permanent canine
the partly developed crown of a permanent molar

The remains from this context represent at least five individuals, four adults and one immature. The latter is 4 to 8 years in age (probably close to the lower end of the range) and of the four adults, one is a young female, one a young male and one a middle-aged male.

Pathology
The single left tibia has a greatly thickened shaft which is bowed in a distal direction (Plates 3 and 4). This may be an old fracture or it may be Paget's disease. The bone is heavy and its structure is disorganised. The cause of the disease is unknown but affected bones become thickened with an increase in bone formation and in the later stages have a tendency to fracture.

A fragment of distal fibula has a spur of bone protruding from the shaft. Three of the lumbar vertebrae which, although broken, probably come from the same individual, have marked osteophytes around their body rims. The body surfaces are worn and pitted. The body of one of the lumbars is compressed on the left side.

Chapter 12

Summary and Conclusions

Summary

Peers in his article for the Victoria County History noted the relative poverty of historical sources for Romsey Abbey and wrote that the Abbey 'as it stands . . . is its own best historian' (VCH, *Hampshire* Vol 4, 460). We can now add archaeological data to the information which survives in the extant structure of the church.

The archaeological investigations have explored, to a greater or lesser extent, four demolished portions of the Abbey complex: these are the domestic ranges and cloister, the successive east end chapels (or 'Lady Chapels'), the original north porch, and the additional parish aisle on the north side. The domestic ranges and cloister were only partly explored, but the dates of their construction in the earlier thirteenth century and their demolition probably after the Suppression were established (Chapter 5 and Chapter 8, 59ff 99ff above). The Norman and later thirteenth century 'Lady Chapels' were explored and their relationship established (Chapter 6). The plan of the additional parish aisle on the north side of the Abbey between the north transept and north porch was uncovered (Chapter 7). This aisle was built in the early fifteenth century and demolished following the Dissolution. Part at least of the plan of the original thirteenth century north porch was established and evidence for an additional room on its west side uncovered (Chapter 4, 56ff above). Its demolition at the same time as the additional parish aisle is suggested (Chapter 8, 101f above). A large group of late medieval and early post-medieval ceramics was found within the side room of the porch. This group which would seem to be a demolition deposit and, if so, would confirm the post-Suppression date of the demolition, is being published separately (Rees et al forthcoming).

The structural development of the present Abbey church is well established (Phase 9 and later: Chapter 4). Although the late Saxon Abbey church (Phase 8: Chapter 3) which preceded it has been identified and much of its plan recovered, little or nothing is known of its domestic buildings. A small number of graves has been identified near this abbey, and further burials in the cemetery adjacent to the present United Reformed Church manse (A 1989.14) (Chapter 3, 40–1ff above).

Pre-dating this late Saxon abbey were the chalk footings and the east–west aligned burials of Phase 7 (Chapter 2, 11ff above). Since the Phase 7 and 8 graves are on the same orientation and share locations, it is reasonable to suggest continuous use of the cemeteries, and by implication it could be argued that the chalk footings represent part of an ecclesiastical establishment replaced by the Phase 8 Abbey. Only a little is known of the chalk footings, and it is not clear whether they formed parts of a single building, or represent separate structures (Chapter 2, 21ff).

These chalk structures succeed earlier burials on a quite different north-west to south-east alignment (Phase 6: Chapter 2, 21ff). It is tempting to associate these burials with an even earlier church on the abbey site, but no structural evidence can be identified for Abbey Phase 6. There is however evidence for a timber structure, and one possible grave in the preceding phase (Phase 5: Chapter 2, 19 and 24ff).

All these features post-date the Phase 4 soil horizon. As noted already (Chapter 2, 11ff), animal bone in this soil has provided a radiocarbon sample giving a middle to late Saxon date range.

Sealed beneath the Phase 4 soil horizon there are structural features – the mortared surfaces, postholes and possible chalk footings – and these may very well be Middle Saxon in date. There is no dating evidence, and no plan can be reconstructed from the tantalisingly fragmentary pieces of evidence. The nature and status of the site in this phase remains something of a mystery. However, the rich variety of animal bone found as food waste in the Midland Bank trench, and which is probably broadly contemporary with the Abbey Phase 3 structures, indicates a wealthy life style. The possibility of a middle Saxon site of some status must be entertained. Balancing this is the lack of any ceramics associated with the structural evidence or the animal bones. The finds record overall is remarkably impoverished.

Discussion

It is possible that the fragments of structures and the graves assigned to Phases 5, 6 or 7 are the archaeological evidence for the earliest religious establishment known from the historical record. The difficulty of identifying historically attested structures with features identified in the archaeological do not need to be rehearsed here.

Traditionally, the foundation of the nunnery is attributed to Edward the Elder and dated to AD 907 (Liveing 1906, 11). The re-foundation by his grandson Edgar in *c* AD 967 is recorded in a twelfth-century source, 'Florence' of Worcester (Coldicott 1989, 6–7). The late tenth century was a period characterised by monastic reform and foundation, and Dumville (1992) has recently presented a case for seeing the reign of Edgar as a culmination of a process of reform begun under Alfred and continued by his successors. The foundation of Romsey in 907 would fit into this context.

It has recently been suggested that Romsey may have been the site of an early Minster (Hase 1988, 46). Hase argues that Romsey is better placed spatially than Nursling in relation to the known minsters at Eling and Southampton, and that the monastery at Nhutscelle which St Boniface entered, was not at Nursling, but rather was the Minster at Romsey. He argues that the possibility of a collegiate Minster church at Romsey, prior to the tenth-century foundation of the nunnery, is given support by the fact that in the later Medieval period there were prebends attached to the Abbey for the cure of the souls of the parish rather than of the nuns.

Furthermore, Hase infers the existence of a royal manor, or hundred, centred on Romsey, from the 14 hides held by the nuns prior to the Norman invasion in 1066 (Berrow 1978, 6), and from the privileges enjoyed by the Abbess within Romsey Infra. The Abbess held the Manor of Romsey, which consisted of both Romsey Infra and Extra. Within Romsey infra pontem the Abbess enjoyed hundredal privileges, independent of the King's Hundred of Somborne (Berrow 1978, 11–14). Romsey Extra, on the other hand, was subject to the manor court of Romsey but within the King's Hundred of Somborne.[1]

The Abbey in its Setting

Hase's arguments for a Minster church at Romsey, and a royal estate centred on Romsey are tempting, but the historical evidence is slight. The archaeological evidence does lend support, but cannot confirm the thesis. To the south of the Abbey, evidence has been recovered for iron smelting in the Middle to Late Saxon period, and evidence for later Saxon settlement has been found elsewhere in the town. The presence of the iron smelting gives some credence to the notion of Romsey as the centre of an estate, possibly royal. However, the dating evidence is not clear cut, and it is conceivable that the iron smelting was established after the foundation of the nunnery, rather than before. That there was a settlement of some kind in the Middle Saxon period is established, but its nature is uncertain. The animal bone assemblage from the Midland Bank site suggests that some of the occupants were of high status. More archaeological data is required to establish conclusively the precise nature of the Middle Saxon settlement.

Although the later historical record is poorer than might be expected of a nunnery founded by a king and patronised by royal princesses, and although the archaeological excavations have been limited in scale, it has been possible to tease out some sense of the development of the Abbey and of the site it occupies. Other excavations within the town have provided evidence for the development and growth of the settlement around the Abbey, and suggest a small urban place developing around a market adjacent to a substantial nunnery.[2]

Notes

1 The evidence presented by Hase (1988) and others is discussed at greater length in Scott et al forthcoming.

2 The archaeological evidence for the Saxon settlement of the town is detailed in Scott et al forthcoming.

KEY

Appendix

Description of the Archives of the Abbey Excavations and Post-Excavation Procedures

The majority of the excavations on the Abbey published in this volume were carried out in the 1970s. The archives for the 1970s excavations, with the single exception of the 1974 excavation, are lacking certain key elements. It was felt that it is necessary to summarise briefly firstly the nature of the individual archives, and their contents, and then to go on to outline the post-excavation procedures adopted to wring from the records as much information as possible.

For fuller descriptions of the archives and post-excavation procedures the reader is directed in the first instance to the archive reports for the excavations on the Abbey. Obviously more detail is to be found in the archives themselves.

The Abbey Excavations and their Archives

The contents of the archives, and the nature of the recording systems are briefly described. Because of the variable nature and quality of the archives from the excavations in the nineteen seventies, it is essential that the limitations of the extant archives is spelt out at the start of this report, if readers are to be able to assess the evidence, and the interpretation offered, for themselves. More detailed descriptions of the archives are to be found in the Archive Reports produced for each of the Abbey Excavations.

RA 1973 (HCC Acc No A 1991.25)

Excavations at the East End of the Abbey on the site of the probable Lady Chapel, directed by Kevin Stubbs, in advance of consolidation work on the foundations of the east end. Previously excavations had been undertaken in 1866 by the then Vicar, the Rev E. L Berthon, but no first hand account of his work has been published. More observations were made by Peers and Bilson in 1909. An account of their findings is to be found in the Notebooks of Sir Richard Luce (Luce, Notebooks) now housed in the Southampton University Archives.

The Archive

There are plans and section drawings – not all are original site drawings – and good photographic archive, but no written records. There are also drawings prepared for publication for the excavator, and a published site summary (Stubbs, 1973).

The Recording System

The archaeological deposits were fragmented, mainly by later brick built vaults, and each block of archaeological deposit appears to have been allocated a single letter code, and the layers within it labelled in a separate numerical sequence. No plan shows the location of the areas. Feature numbers and grave numbers appear to have been allocated as well. Most contexts and features on the plans and sections are not labelled, the recording system being inferred from information on the finds labels. Context descriptions are limited to those found on plans and sections.

Finds

A sequence of Archive numbers (1201–1228) was allocated to groups of finds. This sequence was separate from the numbers allocated to contexts. Only a few groups of finds can be confidently assigned to identifiable contexts. Most must be treated as unstratified.

Post-Excavation

A new series of Archive context numbers (1001–1043; 1050–1103) was allocated to contexts and features identifiable on plans and sections to facilitate identification, and stratigraphic analysis (see below).

RA 1974 (HCC Acc No A 1991.25)

Excavations within the West end of the Nave and to the south of the Abbey, directed by Kevin Stubbs. The excavation was made necessary by the installation of heating pipes.

The Archive

This is by far the most complete of the archives for the earlier excavations. There are original plans and section drawings, a photographic archive, and site notes with context and stratigraphic information, In addition there are drawings prepared for publication for the excavator.

The Recording System

The archaeological deposits within the nave were badly dissected, mainly by later brick vaults, and each small trench excavated was allocated a letter code, and the layers within it labelled in a separate numerical sequence. A similar system was employed in the areas to the south of the Abbey. There were also feature numbers allocated. Almost all contexts and features on the plans and sections are labelled.

Finds

Most of the finds from this excavation can be confidently assigned to identifiable contexts.

Post-Excavation

Stratigraphic analysis was possible on this archive as it stood. However, a new series of context numbers (2001–2155) was allocated to the recorded layers, partly to avoid confusion between similarly number layers in different trenches, but mainly to facilitate the creation of a computer database for finds records. A small number of Archive context numbers was given to features and contexts identifiable on plans and sections (2156–57, 2159, 2163–74, and 2210–12).

RA 1975 (HCC Acc No A 1991.25)

Excavations on the North side of the Abbey, directed by Kevin Stubbs, in advance of drainage work and the consolidation of the foundations of the Norman nave wall. The trenches ran along the west face of the North transept, and along the nave wall almost to the present north porch.

The Archive

There are site plans and section drawings, drawings prepared for publication for the excavator, and a photographic archive, but only limited written records. The written record only describes a small number of contexts, mainly those found early in the excavation and, therefore, late in the stratigraphic sequence. There is no original context numbering on plans or sections.

The Recording System

Contexts and features appear to have been labelled in a single numerical sequence, although some of the graves appear to have been recorded using two quite different systems.

Finds

Few of the finds can be confidently assigned to identifiable contexts. Most must be treated as unstratified.

Post-Excavation

A new series of Archive context numbers (3001–3106; 3108; 3110–3142; 3146; 3150–3326) was allocated to contexts and features identifiable on plans and sections facilitate identification, and stratigraphic analysis (see below).

RA 1977 (HCC Acc No A 1991.25)

Excavations on the South side of the Abbey, directed by Kevin Stubbs, in advance of drainage work and the consolidation of the foundations of the west wall of the Norman south transept. Some recording was undertaken by David Hinton of Southampton University. The trenches were dug along the west face of the transept, and in front of the Abbess's doorway, in the angle between the nave and south transept. The two trenches appear to have been recorded quite separately.

The Archive

There are site plans and section drawings, and a photographic archive, but only very limited written records. The written record only describes a small number of contexts in the trench along the south transept wall.

The Recording System

Those contexts and features which appear to have been labelled were given a single numerical sequence. Only sixteen context numbers appear to have been allocated, all in the trench by the south transept. There is no useable context numbering on plans or sections.

Finds

The finds are to all intents and purposes unstratified.

Post-Excavation

A new series of Archive context numbers (4020–4141) was allocated to contexts and features identifiable on plans and sections facilitate identification, and stratigraphic analysis (see below).

RA 1979 (HCC Acc No A 1991.25)

Excavations on the South side of the Abbey along the south nave wall immediately west of the 1977 excavations. The excavation director was David Hinton. The excavation was carried out in advance of the first satge in the construction of a french drain at the base of the south nave wall. Two soakaways which formed part of the drainage were also excavated. These were about 12m south of the nave and connected by pipe trenches to the main trench.

The Archive

There are site plans and section drawings, and a photographic archive, but no written records.

The Recording System

There is little information about the recording, but it seems that an alpha-numeric system was used. The finds labels are the main source of information. Probably the letters referred to sub divisions of the trench, and the numbers to layers and features. Only the letters allocated to the soakaways are known. They were called B and D and the layers in each labelled in a separate numerical sequence. There is no original context numbering on plans or sections of the main trench, but some contexts are shown on the soakaway drawings.

Finds

The only finds which can be confidently assigned to identifiable contexts are from the two soakaways. The remaining finds must be treated as unstratified.

Post-Excavation

A new series of Archive context numbers (5040–5193) was allocated to contexts and features identifiable on plans and sections facilitate identification, and stratigraphic analysis (see below).

RA 1988 (HCC Acc No A 1988.7)

An extended watching brief and limited excavation during the repaving of the road on the north side of the Abbey. The paved area runs in an arc from the west end of the nave to the north face of the north transept. Features revealed during the stripping of the old tarmacadam were planned, and some limited excavation undertaken. Overall direction was provided by F J Green, Director of the Test Valley Archaeological Trust, and day to day supervision and recording carried out by I R Scott.

The Archive

There is a complete site archive, including written context records, both plans and sections, and photographs.

The Recording System

A single numerical sequence (6000–6068; 6070–6093; 6100–6120) was used for all stratigraphic recording, but separate sequence for the small number of soil samples.

RA 1991 (HCC Acc No A 1991.18)

A trench excavated on the south along the nave wall. The trench extended from the 1979 excavation west almost to the southwest doorway and the 1974 excavation. The work was made necessary by the decision to complete the run of the french drain begun in 1979. Overall direction was by F J Green and I R Scott, and day to day supervision was provided successively by K Lockyear and Dr V Crosby. Post-excavation analysis was by Dr V Crosby.

The Archive

There is a complete site archive, including written context records, both plans and sections, and photographs.

The Recording System

A single numerical sequence (7001–7175) was used for all stratigraphic recording, but separate sequence for the small number of soil samples.

Excavations within the Abbey Precinct

13–15, The Abbey, 1980 (HCC Acc No A 1980.83)

A small trench located on the south side of the cloisters against the wall of the extant portion of the southern Domestic range of the Abbey. The building probably was the refectory. Most of the excavated area had apparently been dug out in the late post-Medieval period to facilitate the creation of a cellar. The finds from the site were few, but a number of decorated tile fragments were recovered. Overall direction was by F J Green, and day to day supervision was provided by Dr A D Russel.

The Archive

There is a small but complete site archive, including written context records, both plans and sections, and photographs.

The Recording System

A single numerical sequence (00–64) was used for all stratigraphic recording, but separate sequence for the small number of soil samples.

Romsey Vicarage, 1987 (HCC Acc No A 1986.31)

A limited excavation was under taken on the site of the proposed new Vicarage, to the west of the Abbey, and the old Vicarage. Overall direction was by F J Green, and recording and day to day supervision by A M Dowell.

The Archive

There is a complete site archive, including written context records, both plans and sections, and photographs.

Recording System

A single numerical sequence (001–063; 100–112) was used for all stratigraphic recording, but separate sequence for the small number of soil samples.

Midland Bank, 1988 (HCC Acc No A 1988.9)

Excavation of a soakaway behind the Midland Bank, which lies on the west side of the Market Place, and within the Abbey precinct. Overall direction was by F J Green, and recording and day to day supervision by A M Dowell.

The Archive

There is a complete site archive, including written context records, both plans and sections, and photographs.

The Recording System

A single numerical sequence (001–030; 102–138) was used for all stratigraphic recording, but separate sequence for the small number of soil samples.

United Reformed Church, 1989 (HCC Acc No A 1989.14)

A small excavation on the south edge of the medieval monastic precinct, revealed part of a later Saxon and medieval cemetery. The work was carried out in advance of the construction of an extension to the United Reformed Church rooms. Overall direction was by F J Green, and day to day supervision was provided by N R Campling. Post-excavation analysis was by Dr V Crosby. A draft stratigraphic report is to be found in the Archive.

The Archive

There is a complete site archive, including written context records, both plans and sections, and photographs.

The Recording System

A single numerical sequence (001–063; 100–112) was used for all stratigraphic recording, but separate sequence for the small number of soil samples.

Observations within the Abbey Precinct

In addition to the excavations described above, a number of observations have been undertaken within the medieval precinct. Information from these is published in this report:

17, The Abbey, 1981

A narrow trench located in the garden of the property adjecent to the extant building of the southern range. At this point the probable refectory had been demolished. The trench located the footings of its north wall, and the inner wall of the cloister walk. The observations were recorded by Dr A D Russel.

The Archive

The site archive, consists of a plan and a drawn section of the trench, with a brief note but no context records. There are a small number of photographs. No finds were recovered.

Abbey Gateway, 1984 (HCC Acc No A 1984.21)

During the laying of a gas pipe through the Abbey gateway and into the road called Abbey Water, a flint rubble wall of possible medieval date was observed by F J Green and recorded.

Romsey Abbey West, 1988 (HCC Acc No A 1988.6)

A watching brief and limited excavation during the completion of services to the new Romsey Vicarage. Overall direction was provided by F J Green, and day to day supervision and recording carried out by I R Scott.

The Archive

There is a site archive, including written context records, both plans and sections, and photographs.

The Recording System

A single numerical sequence (6100–6121) was used for all stratigraphic recording.

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