HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AT BLANCHLAND ABBEY

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1.1 Introduction

Blanchland is located on the north bank of the river Derwent, 11 miles west of Shotley Bridge, 10 miles south of Hexham and 9 miles north of Stanhope, in the south-western corner of Northumberland at NGR NY965504. The Derwent is the boundary between Durham and Northumberland at this point, and the village lies at the centre of a small, level, area between the river Derwent and rising land to the north. This area is occupied by fields and extends about a kilometre upstream and downstream from the village. Upstream, at Baybridge, the hills converge to form a narrow, steep sided, valley and two kms further upstream, the source of the Derwent is located at the confluence of the Beldon and Nookton Burns. About a kilometre downstream from Blanchland, the hills converge again to form a narrow valley before this opens out again at Ruffside from where the stream flows into the Derwent Reservoir (Fig. 1).

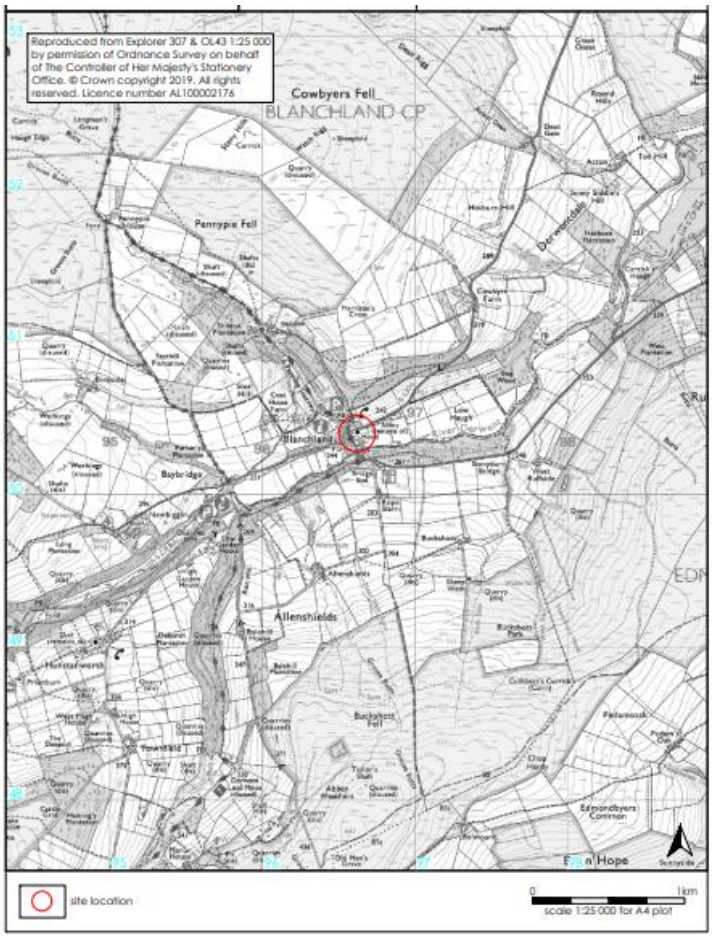

Fig. 1: Village Location.

The village and the Church have developed from the remains of one of only six Premonstratensian Abbeys in North-Eastern England (Fig. 2). It was founded in 1165 by Walter de Bolbec and it is the only Premonstratensian Abbey in the country to retain part of its original Church as the current parish Church. All of the extant Church/Abbey fabric would appear to date to the C13th.

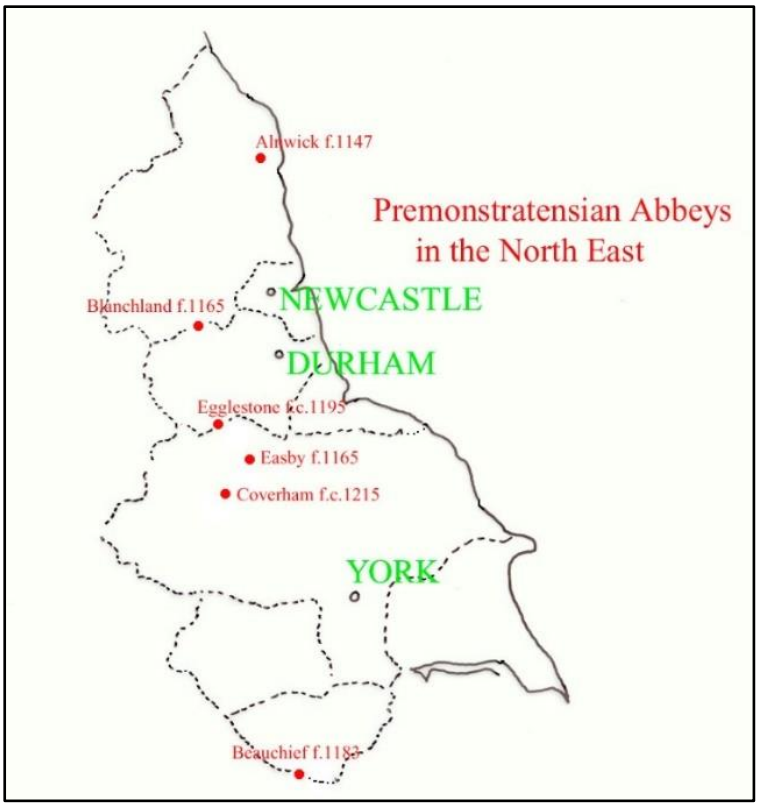

Fig. 2: Premonstratensian Abbeys in the Northeast of England (after P. Ryder).

The Premonstratensian order of 'canons regular' was founded at Prémontré near Laon in France in 1120 by Saint Norbert, (they are also known as 'Norbertines') and at the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII they had 35 religious houses in England. As Ryder has pointed out, 'Blanchland is unique in the manner in which the remains of the monastic complex, both cloister and outer court, were recast in what has been termed a 'model village;' in the 18th century by the Lord Crewe Trustees.' (Ryder, 2012, 1).

The Church itself, and the above ground remains of the priory that can still be seen embedded within the current village structure, were the subject of late nineteenth/very early twentieth century antiquarian interest (e.g., Johnson, 1894; Featherstonehaugh, 1868, 1893; Knowles, 1902; Northumberland County History (NCH), 1902). Recent work on the Church, the Priory and the village in general has been carried out by Peter Ryder and the Newcastle-based Archaeological Practice (see below and Ryder, 1985, 2000, 2005, 2006, 2012, 2017; The Archaeological Practice, 2014).

1.2 The Current Project

As part of the second stage of the Blanchland Community Development Organisation's Lottery funded 'Blanchland Abbey Project', known as the '6 As of Blanchland' (archaeology, acoustics, artefacts, archives, audiences and, not least, the abbey itself), a detailed programme of historical and archaeological research was carried out early in 2023. The overall aim of the Blanchland Abbey Project is to develop strategies for future use and management of the Scheduled and Grade 1 listed parish church, and identify potential for sustainable economic community development.

The archaeological evaluation reported on here was carried out in February 2023 in advance of proposed works relating to one of the identified aims of the Project, namely the construction of a kitchen/toilet extension on the east side of the church tower and works in the church interior relating to floor level alterations necessary for the installation of an underfloor heating system.

The report is in four main sections:

i) A brief history of the origins and development of the Abbey.

ii) A pre-excavation examination of the medieval newel staircase footings under the tower of the church, and the transept floor.

iii) A discussion of late nineteenth and twentieth century changes to Blanchland Abbey (up to c.1970).

iv) The archaeological excavation/evaluation report.

Appendix 1 details the Written Scheme of Investigation, governing the archaeological work.

2. A History of the Origins and Development of Blanchland Abbey

A.C. Newton

2.1 Background

After the Norman Conquest and the Harrying of the North in the 1070s, the once large Earldom of Northumberland was broken down into a number of Baronies, controlled by men who owed their allegiance to the Norman Crown. One of these Baronies, sometimes known under its original Anglian name of Styford[1] was also known as the Barony of Bolbec. Among many others, one of the home manors of this barony was Blanchland and Newbiggin. It was once thought the man upon whom this Barony was conferred was Hugh de Bolbec, but there is much indecision about this and scholars have concluded that it was probably a knight known as Walter de Bolbec, the son of Hugh, who had the honour of the barony and that it was awarded to him by King Henry 1. Walter was a signatory to charters of King Stephen in 1136 and Queen Matilda in 1141 and is thought to have died shortly afterwards, passing the Barony on to his son, Walter II. Walter de Bolbec II died before 1165 and it was for the repose of his soul that his son, Walter de Bolbec III, gave the estate and lands of Blanchland to the Premonstratensian Order. The charter was witnessed by Walter's mother Sibilla, who was the wife of Walter II and by his brother Hugh de Bolbec.

Walter de Bolbec III also endowed the Premonstratensian's with the church and properties of Saint Andrew, Bywell and the three chapels of Apperley, Shotley and Styford. The original charter was for the maintenance of twelve canons unless it was advocated by the bishop that more be maintained in order to uphold the work of the abbey. Why did the Bolbec's endow and support the Premonstratensians with such gifts of land?

2.2 The Premonstratensian Order

By 1165 AD the Premonstratensians were a very large order of monastico-canonical foundations spread throughout Europe and Asia-Minor. Begun in 1118 the order was started by Saint Norbert, who after a somewhat dissolute and privileged life was converted to an individual of monastic zeal who wished to promote Christianity throughout the known world. In this he was very successful and his skills as a diplomat, politician and theologian and his inclination toward a conventual life, led him to instigate the founding of a monastery. In 1119 he founded the abbey at Premontre, near Laon in France. More were soon to follow. It has been suggested that there were more than thirteen hundred Norbertine abbeys after the second century of their establishment [2] and in addition to this there were various small houses attached to larger foundations. Before the Dissolution there were sixty-seven abbeys of Norbertine, Premonstratensian or White Canons[3] throughout England, Scotland and Ireland[4].

The order was far-reaching and probably had political connections with the regions of northern France and Normandy from which the Bolbec family originated. Norbert himself was created

[1] The Northumberland County History Committee. *A History of Northumberland*, Volume 6, page 221. Reid and Co. Newcastle upon Tyne, 1902.
[2] https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12387b.htm
[3] *Norbertines* after Saint Norbert and *White Canons* after the undyed woollen habits worn by the order.
[4] Kirkfleet, C.J. 1916. *History of Saint Norbert*. Herder, Russel Street, London.

Archbishop of Magdeburg in 1126 AD. He was known throughout Europe as a miracle worker and someone who cared for the poor, as well as a peacemaker and law-giver. In addition, we must consider how people of this period viewed their own places in the world. For many it was a precarious existence, even for wealthy families, as the positions of those Anglo-Saxon dynasties who were dispossessed after Hastings illustrates. Most people of the time, who were imperiled by war, famine and disease would do much to ease their passage through life and this included acts of prayer and piety to build up grace and favour with their Almighty Maker.

All levels of society took part in this religious behaviour, each at a level they could afford. Gifts of money, land, grants of churches and rights of patronage could be and were given by lay persons to the monasteries which increased in prestige because of these endowments. The church did not consider that wealth itself was an immoral concept, but that a rich person should be charitable with his resources rather than avaricious. Church leaders suggested that those who utilised their money and land to aid the poor and defenceless would be assured of a comfortable position in the afterlife.

At the time this was a powerful argument as many landowners were concerned to show that they were playing their part in a highly regulated, stratified society. Gifts of land, resources and money to the church were one of the ways that the upper levels of this society could illustrate their piety – and at the same time strong political ties with the church could be invaluable in promoting their own interests.

We do not know what prompted the transfer of part of the Bolbec estates to the Norbertines but there must have been a persuasive religious influence and perhaps a geographical connection between Bolbec family manors and the order. Apart from considerations of spiritual welfare after death, the gift of lands to an abbey was important in maintaining secular influence too. It not only signalled that the benefactor was wealthy and had confidence enough to donate portions of his estate to a religious order but that he would expect political and spiritual support from the recipients.

This type of arrangement of spiritual security in return for charitable donations was continued up to the time of the Dissolution. An extant trust deed for charity for 8th July 1530 between Roger Swynborn, Gentleman, Edward Jay, Prior of Hexham and William Spratham, Abbot of Blanchland reads: - (To) provide a canon at Ovingham and Blanchland to "*syinge satisfactorie and daily to praye and to say masse when he shal be disspoced"* for the souls of Roger Swynborn, his father, mother and their friends.[5]

The charter of 1165 shows that Walter de Bolbec's grant was composed of all the land north of the river Derwent from Akedene Burn (Acton Burn) in the east and the old road to Corbridge on the west. It was enclosed by a line running from Little Akedene (Little Acton) to Widenes and thence by the Carres (the stony ground) and the head of Bradeshaugh (the broad clearing) to Silvedene Burn (Shildon Burn) which it followed to the ford where it was crossed by the Corbridge road[6].

[5] Northumberland Archive Reference: - ZSW/1/175

[6] The Northumberland County History Committee. *A History of Northumberland*, Volume 6, page 313. Reid and Co. Newcastle upon Tyne, 1902.

2.3 Early Developments

At the compilation of the Boldon Buke in 1183 AD, just eighteen years after the foundation of the abbey, a list of the labour, produce and dues owed annually to the Bishop of Durham was published. Surprisingly the entry for Blanchland was very short and consists only of one line, "The land of Blanchland, which was Alan Marescall's, renders half a marc". There is no mention of the abbey and its estate, but perhaps this is not unexpected as the Boldon Buke does not record the estates of large landowners other than the bishop. Walter de Bolbec is recorded as having land adjacent to the clearings and pasture held by the Hospital of Saint Giles. From this we may assume that the monastic estate of Blanchland was not a complete block of land but was interrupted by customary holdings and farms of other tenants and villeins.

In the early 1210s AD, Hugh de Bolbec had granted to the abbey further lands extending down the river Derwent to its confluence with the Wulwardhope[7] burn, onwards from the head of Wulwardhope across Sessinghope Law to the head of Shildon and then down the Corbridge road to the Derwent again.

Once the charter for the transfer of estates and rights was confirmed then the recipient foundation would have begun the construction of the monastic buildings. It is often imagined that this was done by the monks themselves but although it is often said that monks "built" any particular abbey or monastery it should be noted that this in most cases meant commissioned. Professional teams of masons were usually employed in the building of religious houses and the master mason, a man who assumed the occupation of architect, contractor and builder, was responsible to the abbot. The very first buildings on a monastic site were often of timber construction and were followed by stone structures. A good example of this is Fountains Abbey near Aldfield in North Yorkshire. Here a timber building of 4.9 metres by 7.6 metres was found aligned to and beneath the first stone church.[8] This may have been a temporary building to house monks while the other parts of the monastic structures were completed.

To reduce costs stone was acquired from quarries as near to the building site as possible. At Lanercost Priory dressed stone from Hadrian's Wall, which lies approximately one kilometre away has been used in the construction of the conventual buildings. At Rievaulx Abbey a quarry at Penny Piece, just four hundred metres from the abbey site was used.[9] It is possible that stone from Ladycross quarry was used in the construction of Blanchland Abbey, but as it lies more than seven kilometres from the abbey it is probable that closer quarries such as that at Buckshot were exploited. It is known however that stone from Ladycross was used to roof the abbey and many of the houses in the village during reconstruction in 1740.[10] According to the British Geological Survey this quarry has produced stone used for roof slabs and wall building for centuries although its reserves are now probably close to exhaustion.[11]

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[7] Possibly the original name of Blanchland, before the establishment of the Abbey. Dugdale. *Monasticon Anglorum*, Vol 6, p 886.

[8] Greene, J. Patrick. 2005. *Medieval Monasteries.* P 59. London. Continuum.

[9] Rye, H. A. 1900. *Rievaulx Abbey: Its Canals and Building Stone*, P 70. The Archaeological Journal, Volume 57, 1900.

[10] https://www.ecclesiasticalandheritageworld.co.uk/archive

[11] See https://earthwise.bgs.ac.uk/index.php/Building_stone,_geology_and_man,_Northern_England

Despite Blanchland Abbey being founded in 1165 there is little known about any of the buildings until the early thirteenth century. Former commentators on the abbey have suggested that it may have been built upon the foundations of an earlier church. There is little evidence of this in the fabric of the building although Ryder[12] notes a Romanesque capital of the mid twelfth century which now lies on the floor of the tower. Greene suggests that if there is a considerable gap between the foundation date of an abbey and the first dateable buildings (either from archaeological evidence or standing remains) then this would suggest that the original building had been demolished to make way for grander improved constructions.[13] Indeed, there is further evidence from a geophysical survey carried out within the abbey by Archaeological Services, University of Durham (see Appendix 1). At a depth of about one metre two parallel features were recorded using ground penetrating radar. These cross the north transept in line with the choir and the tower and have been interpreted as possible foundations associated with the earlier church.[14] As yet this has not been confirmed by archaeological excavation.

During the Blanchland Abbey excavations in February 2023 the probable medieval floor of the abbey was exposed (see below, Trench 4). This appeared to have been composed of beaten clay, although sections of stone floor slab were also discovered. Parallel excavations in other abbeys have produced similar results as many abbeys constructed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries had floors of beaten clay or plain mortar.[15] It had been expected that glazed or encaustic floor tiles would be encountered but only a few fragments of these were recovered (see finds report below). It is known that monastic buildings of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries used glazed floor tiles but the extent of this use depended on the resources of the foundation. Sometimes there were large expanses of tile, such as at Cleeve Abbey in Somerset or there may have been decorated tile floor perimeters only. The prerogatives of the Court of Augmentations, set up in 1535 to broker financial and property disputes after the Dissolution, allowed the sale of most assets of the monasteries from the lead on the roof to the tiles and stone slabs of the floors. Should any tiles have existed in Blanchland Abbey there is the distinct possibility that they may have been sold leaving behind only bare floor substrates.

2.4 General Construction and Layout

A good general description of the original layout of the abbey was outlined by the Reverend Walker Featherstonhaugh during a visit of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne in June 1893. Standing in the present day square at Blanchland he was able to use it to illustrate his description, “The ground-plan is a formal square of which the church occupied half of the eastern part of the northern side ; the conventual buildings the east, south, and west sides of the cloister enclosure south of the church; whilst the dependents’ dwellings filled up the circuit of the great square, occupying the remainder of the east side, the whole of the south and west sides, and part of the north, joining on to the great gateway tower, which formed the entrance to the whole and was doubtless connected on its eastern side with the western termination of the nave. The church itself is of pure Early English date, and comprehended choir, nave, and north transept; with massive bell tower at the northern end of this last, and chantry chapel on

[12] Ryder, P. F. Saint Mary the Virgin, Blanchland: An Archaeological Assessment. P15. March 2017.
[13] Greene, J. Patrick. 2005. *Medieval Monasteries.* P 91. London. Continuum.
[14] Archaeological Services University of Durham. 2020. *Blanchland Abbey Church, Blanchland, Northumberland.* Report 5237, February 2020.
[15] Greene, J. Patrick. 2005. *Medieval Monasteries.* P 83. London. Continuum.

its eastern side, added at a later date. The nave has almost altogether disappeared, burned (it is said) by the Scots' army: its only remains being a fragment of its northern wall where it joined on to the choir, now fashioned into a buttress, and a portion of the south wall containing a narrow lancet window of pure Early English character, contiguous to the present buildings of the inn. I think it probable that the nave was continued to the western boundary of the churchyard: and, as we see by the depressed base-course, it was sunk nearly three feet below the level of the transept, to accommodate itself to the fall of the ground towards the south. The church never possessed a south transept; probably because it would have thrown all the other buildings too far to the south, and too near to the river and its floods."[16]

Good descriptions of the present abbey building and its architectural peculiarities have been written by Knowles[17] in 1902 and Ryder[18] in 2017 in which most aspects of the building have been studied. Our research hopes to add a little to the understanding of the use of the building after the dissolution and after the 1752 reconstructions.

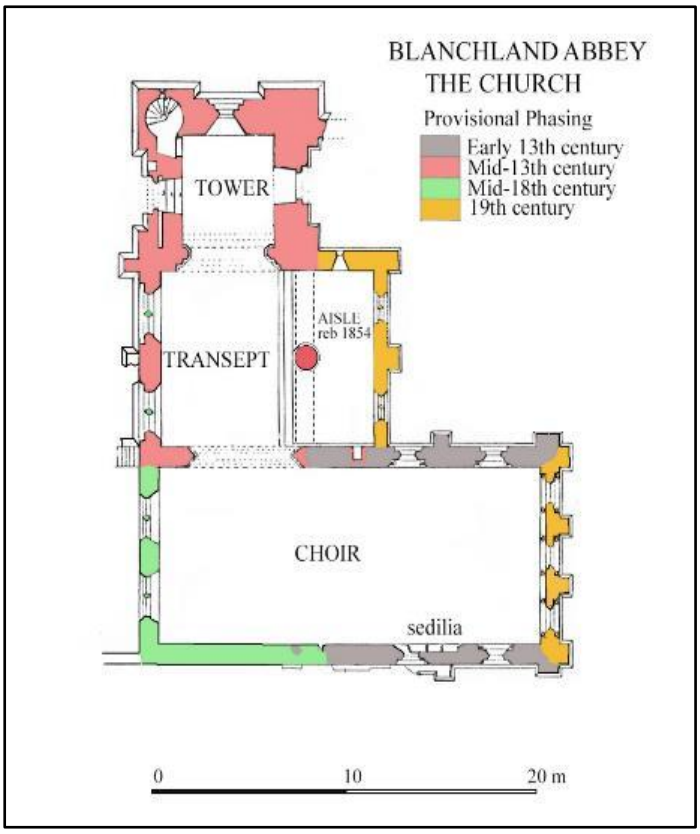


Fig.3: Phase Plan of Blanchland Abbey. By Permission of Peter Ryder, BA, MPhil, FSA. (April 2023).

2.5 Blanchland Abbey in Documents up to the Dissolution

Despite being large in acreage we know that the abbey of Blanchland was relatively poor compared to other religious houses, even in the north of England. This was probably due to its

[16] Featherstonhaugh, W. 1893. Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, Volume VI, No. 6, 1893, p38.
[17] Knowles, W. H. 1902. *The Premonstratensian Abbey of Saint Mary, Blanchland, Northumberland*. The Archaeological Journal, Volume LIX, Pp 328-341. 1902. London.
[18] Ryder, P. F. 2017. Saint Mary the Virgin, Blanchland. An Archaeological Assessment.

situation in the hills, which affected the local climate and therefore its agricultural output and its location at the head of the Derwent Dale which was often used as an entry point into the lusher lands of south Durham and north Yorkshire by Scottish armies, either directed by Scottish authorities or irregulars raiding for whatever valuables they could find. It may be that this disadvantaged location and the relative poverty of the abbey led to fewer interactions between this abbey and others or that documents generated in the abbey were occasionally destroyed by raiders or that many were dispersed at the dissolution

Although there is a sparsity of documents to illustrate the history of the abbey in comparison to many others of the region, what there is can give us clues as to the general activities of the abbey and its status in the hierarchy of monastic foundations. After the charter of 1165, a number of other documents suggest the extent of the land holdings that the abbey had been invested with. A few of these documents are listed below, but there are probably many which have been lost which would give us a clearer picture of the management, wealth and extent of the monastic buildings and holdings and how they were utilised.[19]

Additional rights increasing the land suitable for ploughing and common grazing rights between Blanchland and Slaley were granted by Hugh de Bolbec to the abbey in 1214. These entitlements were confirmed by King John in 1215.

In 1234 the abbey obtained a lease of a small estate of about forty acres named Woodyfield in Teesdale, at the annual rent of one mark (13s and 4d) from the prior of Durham.

An agreement of Prior Thomas and the convent of Durham and the priors and abbots of a number of other religious houses in the north of England saw the Abbot of Blanchland agreeing that the abbey would perform three hundred masses and three hundred psalms during the year. The charter was dated 21st May 1241.

In 1243 the abbot of Blanchland (Alba Landa) set his seal on an agreement or pact between Evesham and Durham. Ten years later the abbot gifted three marks to Henry III's expedition to Gascony. In 1262 it is stated in a charter of Henry III that the abbot of Blanchland held fifteen acres of additional land in Birkenside (about one mile west by north of Blanchland) and paid annually two shillings and sixpence.

During the last few days of July and the beginning of August 1327, King Edward III and his army were in Blanchland pursuing the Scottish army. From Froissart we learn that the abbey was not burnt by the Scots but that the monks complained of their houses being burnt, suggesting that many ancillary buildings and outlying farms may have been put to the torch.[20] A petition was put to the king asking that the abbey was relieved of debts caused by the war with the Scots, citing that it had lost forty acres of wheat and rye, a hundred acres of oats, one hundred acres of pasture and meadow and five hundred sheep. The king granted this petition in September 1327 and John de Carleton of Newcastle was asked to deliver to Blanchland Abbey victuals to the value of twenty marks.[21] By 1331 the abbey had presented another petition to the king complaining of the effects of the Scottish wars and the depredations caused

[19] Most of these documents are listed in: - The Northumberland County History Committee. *A History of Northumberland*, Volume 6. Reid and Co. Newcastle upon Tyne, 1902.
[20] *Chroniques de J. Froissart*, publiees pour la Societe de l'Histoire de France, red. Simeon Luce, 1869, vol. i. p. 61, p. 273, Variantes, MS. de Rome, fol. 19.
[21] The Northumberland County History Committee. *A History of Northumberland*, Volume 6, page 320. Reid and Co. Newcastle upon Tyne, 1902.

by the king's army while stationed in Stanhope Park and at Blanchland. They complained that their fields had lain untilled and they were reduced to beggary to maintain their bodies. On this occasion the king granted them relief on their debts of £28-13s-4d.[22] Two years later a grant of ten quarters of wheat,[23] to be delivered from the Receiver of the King's Victuals at Newcastle was also sent to the abbey.

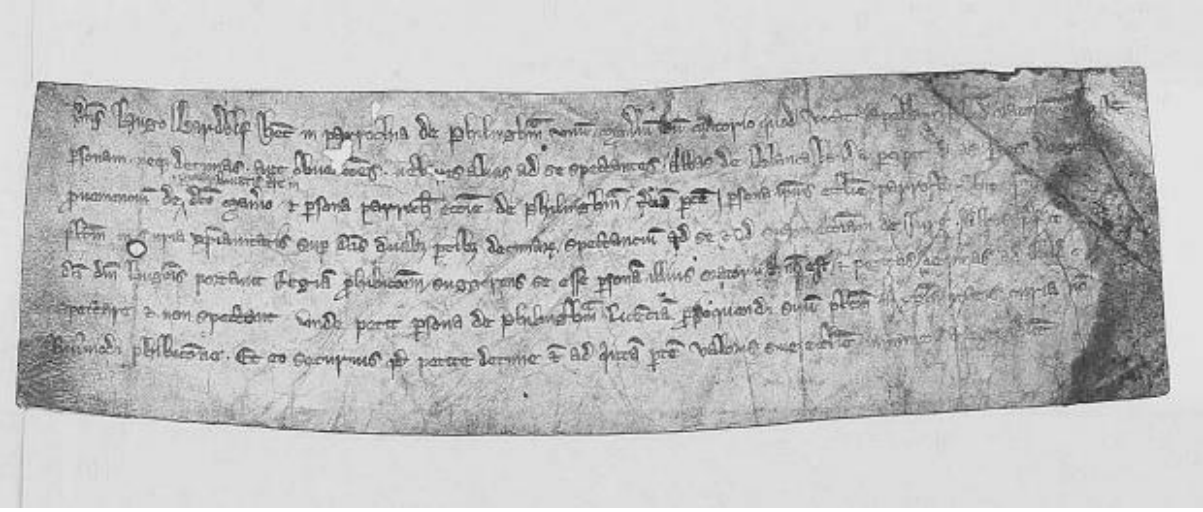


Fig. 4: Petition to King Edward III, 1327. National Archives SC-8/34/1683.

Bishop Hatfield's survey of 1381 has "Albalanda" giving twenty shillings for a holding of nine acres of land at Roughside and in September 1397, "Blauncheland" abbey was gifted ten pounds in the will of Sir Ralph Hastings, who had been Sheriff of York and Governor of York Castle. His connection with Blanchland is unclear but it is known that he was commissioned with Bishop Thomas Hatfield to police the affairs of the Scottish Borders. It is thought he died in York in this year.[24]

A series of visitations or inspections took place between 1478 and 1500 by Richard Redman[25], on behalf of the Abbot of Premontré, to whom Blanchland was subject. These reports indicate that although the abbey was self-supporting in food supplies, they were constantly in debt. There were not enough canons to undertake the management of the estate or to maintain the monastic services of the abbey. At one time only three or four canons remained in the abbey while three or four others ran parishes in other parts of Northumberland. Their debts seem to have arisen from the costs of maintaining the monastic buildings and parish churches for which they were responsible. The reports show that before 1500 the chapter house, dormitory and church were in such bad condition that they were practically unusable.[26] It is generally assumed that, before the dissolution, monastic buildings were kept in pristine condition, but it is clear from the inspections of Blanchland Abbey by Bishop Redman that this was not the case. Redman's notes[27], archived in the Bodleian Library, show a poverty-stricken community which appeared to be crumbling thirty years before the dissolution.

[22] National Archives, Kew. Reference SC 8/34/1683.
[23] At this time, after 1300 AD, a quarter weighed 512 pounds.
[24] Raine, 1836. *York Wills,* vol. i. p. 217; Surtees Society, No. 4.
[25] Richard Redman was Abbot of Shap Abbey and Bishop of St Asaph, Exeter and Ely. He died in 1505.
[26] Addleshaw, G. W. O. 1951. *Blanchland: A Short History*. Sunderland. Vaux Breweries.
[27] Gasquet, F. A. (Editor) 1906. *Collectanea Anglo-Premonstratensia.* Documents drawn from the original register of the order, now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. London. Royal Historical Society.

After a visitation on the 16th September 1478, Redman finds "the house in poverty and ruin. He enjoined the abbot to do his very best to repair and build his house and increase his community, so as to carry out divine office and regular observance properly. The house owes 10 marks; there is a want of all provisions and the place is miserably poor".

In 1482 at the next visitation all appears well but in 1485 we are told "Bishop Redman finds one canon accused of incontinence (not celibate) and cites him to appear for judgment at Shap. To increase number of canons in the monastery, the abbot is directed to recall those serving outside cures. The repair of the house much needed."

Redman cracked down on amusements unbecoming to the abbey in 1488 and a report of the 27th August orders: *Insuper inhibemus, sub pena excommunicacionis majoris, omnimo das venaciones et discursus per nemora et silvas sive alicubi, quia valde inconveniens est religiosis taliter se excercere, omnesque canes sive caniculos a monasterio amovere faciat abbas.* (In addition, we prohibit, under penalty of greater excommunication, that you allow everyone hunting and running about in the woods and forests or anywhere else, because it is very unbecoming of the religious to exercise themselves in this way, and all must let the abbot remove the dogs or hounds from the monastery). All the canons were ordered to sleep in the common dormitory in the visitation of 1488. Three years later the abbey had increased its debt to twenty-five marks due to the expense of maintaining its outlying churches and in 1494 the abbot is exhorted to finish the building of the dormitory and chapter house, which it appears were in a state of disrepair.

The visitation of 24th April 1497 brought more opprobrium. Robert Hutchonson was excommunicated as an apostate; the abbot was urged to make an increase in the numbers of the community and he was ordered to supply the services of a washerwoman and a barber for the canons. By 1500 there seems to have been an improvement in the situation at the abbey but even so the following orders were placed: - *"Bishop Redman finds nothing serious. He again orders the abbot to find a barber, tailor, and washerwoman for the canons: Nulli insuper conventus liceat, post completorium, a dormitorio extra exire, sive potaciones facere.* (There is to be no going out of the dormitory or drinking after Compline): *silence is to be better observed."* At this time a full complement of canons is listed and the general outline of Redman's report seems to suggest that satisfactory progress had been made on building repairs.

2.6 The Dissolution of Blanchland Abbey

The financial condition of monastic estates in general was in a parlous state at the beginning of the sixteenth century. They had been badly mauled by the Black Death in the fourteenth century and many of the monasteries had lost large numbers of personnel. In the northern sees of Durham and York the plague began in March of 1349 and by the autumn so many priests had been killed that there were not enough to administer the sacraments. In 1363 the Prior and Chapter of Durham sought permission "to dispense twenty-four monks aged twenty to be ordained priests, there being by reason of the pestilences a great lack of priests."[28] The lack of priests and the high death rate among agricultural labourers and their families caused a crisis in management of the monastic estates and problems in agricultural production which lasted for a considerable time. The fifteenth century saw the Wars of the Roses and other conflicts,

[28] Mode, P. G. 1916. The Influence of the Black Death on the English Monasteries. P62. PhD Thesis, University of Chicago.

all of which imposed on the monasteries and reduced their incomes from their farms and made it difficult to administer their religious obligations. In addition, throughout the period from the Norman invasion to the end of the Anglo-Scots wars in 1550 there were episodic raids on the northern towns and abbeys by Scottish armies. All of this weakened the economies and the influence of monastic institutions throughout the north of the country and in the case of Blanchland Abbey probably meant that the abbey was relatively poor compared to other foundations.

Various attacks on the autonomy of the monasteries had been made in the earlier years of the sixteenth century and the State Papers of Henry VIII show ample proof of the demands being made by the Court on monastic estates[29]. To counter these demands the foundations attempted to increase the profitability of their estates by enclosing and emparking large tracts of land and allowing tenured peasants only small plots or turning them off the land altogether. This of course led to upset and even insurrection. By the early years of the sixteenth century Lollard[30] sentiments were beginning to be expressed openly and these and the protestant movement began to ease the way for Henry VIII to propose much of the anti-clerical legislation of the English Reformation.

The early part of Henry VIIIs reign was aggravated by severe financial problems: his personal wealth was soon faltering under the strain of maintaining foreign wars and he was forced to levy a series of unpopular taxes and borrow heavily to pay government officials. Henry's break with the Roman Catholic church over the Pope's refusal to grant Henry a divorce from Catherine of Aragon created more enemies and a worsening in the financial situation of the state. In addition, Henry was defending northern England from Scottish raids and attempting to quell insurrections in Ireland.

At this time the church had an enormous amount of wealth at its disposal, perhaps owning as much as one third of available land. This was a tempting target and in 1524 Henry and his ministers had accused certain religious houses of "praemunire"[31] and raised over one hundred thousand pounds from fines and seizure of property[32]. In 1535 Crown Commissioners made a survey of all church property in England and Wales, noting the income and expenditure of each foundation and a report on the behaviour of the monks and nuns of each religious house. Shortly afterwards the Suppression of Religious Houses Act was passed, forcing all monasteries with an annual income of less than two hundred pounds to close. Many of these smaller monasteries were allowed to continue, on the payment of a "fine for continuance" or if they were successful in petitioning the Crown. In 1537 the abbey of Albaland[33] was included on a list of foundations which obtained a Royal Grant to remain undissolved. The Treasurer's Rolls show that on 25th April 1537 a sum of £400 was paid to the treasurer of the Court of Augmentations by Blanchland to remain open as an active abbey.

[29] Gasquet, F. A. 1902. *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*. P30, 31. John Hodges. London.
[30] Lollard beliefs in the fourteenth century included that the Pope was too worldly, monasticism had drifted from its spiritual roots, the Bible should be available to all in their own language and all human beings are brothers and sisters. Despite being suppressed the movement carried on clandestinely until about 1530 AD.
[31] Praemunire was the assertion that the Pope was the supreme church authority.
[32] Peyton, N. 2020. The Dissolution of the English Monasteries: A Quantitative Investigation. Economic History Dept. LSE London.
[33] An occasional alternative name for Blanchland along with Alba Landa and Blauncheland.

Unfortunately, this attempt to transfer the assets of the monasteries to the Crown was not well received and a number of rebellions broke out. One rebellion in Lincolnshire was soon subdued but another, later to be named The Pilgrimage of Grace, broke out across the north of England and was much harder to suppress. This insurrection and other political and religious rationales convinced Henry that the monasteries must be overthrown and so the second wave of dissolutions began.

In 1537 Doctors Legh and Taylor, the commissioners for the Northern Monasteries arrived at Blanchland and immediately reported that the abbey was worth an annual revenue of about forty pounds (Dugdale suggests £40-9s-0d)[34]. They stated that a sacred relic, the girdle of the Blessed Mary, was revered by the church and no charges of laxity were brought against the abbey. This was rather unusual as nearly all of the other religious houses examined by the commissioners were found to be at fault in their morals and in 1536 a report, which was very unbalanced and designed to show that about two thirds of the monastic houses were debauched, had been published.

On December 18th, 1539, Blanchland Abbey was dissolved for the second time and surrendered to the King's Commissioners. The Abbot, canons, brethren and novices were all pensioned, according to their seniority.

After the turmoil of the Pilgrimage of Grace it was realised that some personnel from religious orders were returning to their closed foundations. In order to prevent this the Commissioners were ordered to pull down everything that made the monastic buildings habitable. This happened in a few places such as at Lewes Priory in Sussex and Chertsey Abbey in Surrey. In reality, most religious houses were used in a variety of ways. Some became dwelling places, a few were used as farm buildings while others were just abandoned to gradual decay. Others were used as quarries for various materials and worked stone, floor slabs and tiles, roof tiles, timber, iron, lead pipes, lead window cames and other readily reworkable fabric was all sold off to a keen market. The Crown reserved all bell-metals and lead, whether from roof or windows as these could be used not only in trade but in the production of guns and ammunition for naval vessels. A small hint of the recycling of materials was found during the 2012 excavations of the Blanchland Chapter House when a pit containing a bowl-shaped ingot of lead was discovered. This was probably produced by the in-situ melting of lead from the abbey windows after the dissolution and was found under the former tennis courts of the Lord Crewe Arms.[35]Coloured glass fragments from the windows were also found, stripped of all cames and dumped on the floor of the Chapter House or east range[36].

At Blanchland we have already seen that the church and its ancillary buildings may have been in a state of disrepair before any demolition and reclamation of materials had occurred. Despite this William Grene[37] applied for, and obtained, a lease of Blanchland Abbey and its rectories of Bywell Saint Andrew, Heddon and Kirkharle, granted to him for twenty-one years from May 1st 1540. Five years later Grene was one of a group of landholders who conveyed the abbey

[34] Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglorum*, vol. 6. pt. ii. p. 886;
[35] The Archaeological Practice Ltd. 2014. Blanchland Abbey, Northumberland. Report on Archaeological Investigations, p33. 2012-2014.
[36] The Archaeological Practice Ltd. 2014. Blanchland Abbey, Northumberland. Report on Archaeological Investigations, p22. 2012-2014.
[37] William Grene may have been one of the King's Commissioners. He was a royal rax-gatherer and court official and an official of the Duke of Northumberland.

demesnes and lands, among other places, to John Bellow and John Broxholme who almost immediately transferred the abbey estate to William Farewell for the sum of £200-14s-8$^{1}/_{2}$d on June 6th 1545. Farewell died in 1551 and his wife remarried Anthony Radcliffe, passing the title of Blanchland to him and his family.

Little is known about the condition of the abbey but it is assumed by most authorities that it had been reduced to ruins. The only section of the abbey which appeared generally undamaged was the tower and probably the main part of the north transept. The major parts of the abbey church, the chancel and the nave appear to have been removed save for sections of wall up to about two metres from the ground. Whatever was left, it may have been so filled with rubble that it was inaccessible and could not be used as a church. In order to serve the spiritual needs of the parish a smaller chapel was built onto the west side of the tower[38]. We cannot state the date when this was constructed but it must have been before 1612 as this short extract from the will of Cuthbert Radclyfe suggests: *1612, 30th March. Will of Cuthbert Radclyfe of Blauncheland, esq. To be buried within the chappell of Blauncheland.*[39]

In 1623 Sir Claudius Forster, who had succeeded to the Blanchland estates in 1606, died and was buried at Blanchland. It is assumed he too was buried in the chapel. If this was the case it is possible that grave slabs of Radclyfe and Forster may lie under the soil at the west side of the church tower. Indeed, the geophysical survey carried out here in 2020 showed some evidence of burials at this location.[40]

In the mid eighteenth century this chapel was still in use and in December 1748 several purchases for the chapel were made: A Bible and a Carpet for the Communion Table and a Linning Cloth and a Napkin, allso a Common Prayer Book, and a Surplice given by Sir James Dolbn and Dr. Eden for the use of Blanchland Chapple.[41]

It was at this time, actually in March 1747, when John Wesley made his famous circuits throughout England and upon reaching Blanchland wrote: - *Tues. 24. I rode to Blanchland, about twenty miles from Newcastle. The rough mountains roundabout were still white with snow. In the midst of them is a small winding valley, through which the Derwent runs. On the edge of this the little town stands, which is indeed little more than a heap of ruins. There seems to have been a large cathedral church, by the vast walls which still remain.*

In this description too we are afforded a glimpse of the abbey, although in a ruinous state, although Wesley says nothing about any extant working church in the village.

The last male heir of the Forsters was Ferdinando, Member of Parliament for Northumberland. He was murdered in Newgate Street in Newcastle on 22nd August 1701. His death left the estate in financial trouble with large debts and little prospect of relieving them. The next heirs to the estate were Thomas Forster of Adderstone and his aunt Dorothy who was married to Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham. As the estates were deeply involved in debt, the property was sold by order of the Court of Chancery, the purchaser being Lord Crewe, on May 16th 1709. Lord

[38] Ryder, P. F. Saint Mary the Virgin, Blanchland: An Archaeological Assessment. P4. March 2017.
[39] Raine, 1835. Testamenta Dunelmsia.
[40] Archaeological Services University of Durham. 2020. *Blanchland Abbey Church, Blanchland, Northumberland.* Report 5237, Section 5.31, p10. February 2020.
[41] Wickendene, W. S. 1948. Notes on Blanchland Abbey. Transcribed from the Church Herald, the Parish Magazine of Blanchland and Hunstanworth.

Crewe paid £20,679 for the manor and castle of Bamburgh and the manor of Blanchland with the abbey.

Nathaniel Crewe, third Baron Crewe of Stene and Bishop of Durham died on 18th September 1721. As he had no heirs the barony became extinct and much of his estate was assigned to various charities. Lord Crewe had been a controversial character, rising through church ranks quickly due to support from the Duke of York, later King James II[42]. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688 Crewe was in fear for his career but he weathered the storm by shifting his allegiances to Queen Mary and William of Orange. He retained his estates but never became a politically important individual. Most of his efforts went into maintaining his lands and his private life from this time onward.

After his death, Crewe's will indicated that his income from his estates was about £1312.00 per annum. This is difficult to translate to a present-day value but lies at more than £200,000.00.[43] Crewe had estates throughout the country but only the northern estates of Bamburgh and Blanchland were retained by the Crewe Trustees:- *the manor and castle of Bamburgh, the towns of Shoreston and Sunderland, the Friars, cell of Bamburgh and tithes, Fleetham, the manor of Blanchland, with the monastery and the rectory of Shotley, and all the lands which belonged to Sir William Forster, Knight, William Forster and Ferdinando Forster, in the county of Northumberland ; and also the fishings in the Tweed, the manor and lands of Thornton, Edmund Hills, and other their lands in the county of Durham, were conveyed to Trustees, upon trust for Lord Crewe, his heirs and assignees for ever, as the purchaser thereof.*[44] All his numerous estates in the southern areas of England were left to his nephews and nieces.

For a considerable number of years little was done about the disrepair in Blanchland Abbey and its associated buildings. Documentation is scarce, although glimpses of events can be found in various private books and letters from the earlier eighteenth century. Doctor Sharp mentions that a number of chapels in Northumberland were in a ruinous state but little seems to have been done to restore them. It has been suggested that this may indicate that the rural population was declining and these chapels had diminishing congregations. The Crewe Estate at Blanchland had a few problems in the early years and it is known that in 1736 the estate had to remove the Stewardship of Blanchland from Richard Hornsby after the loss of the rents at his hands, he himself being insolvent.[45]

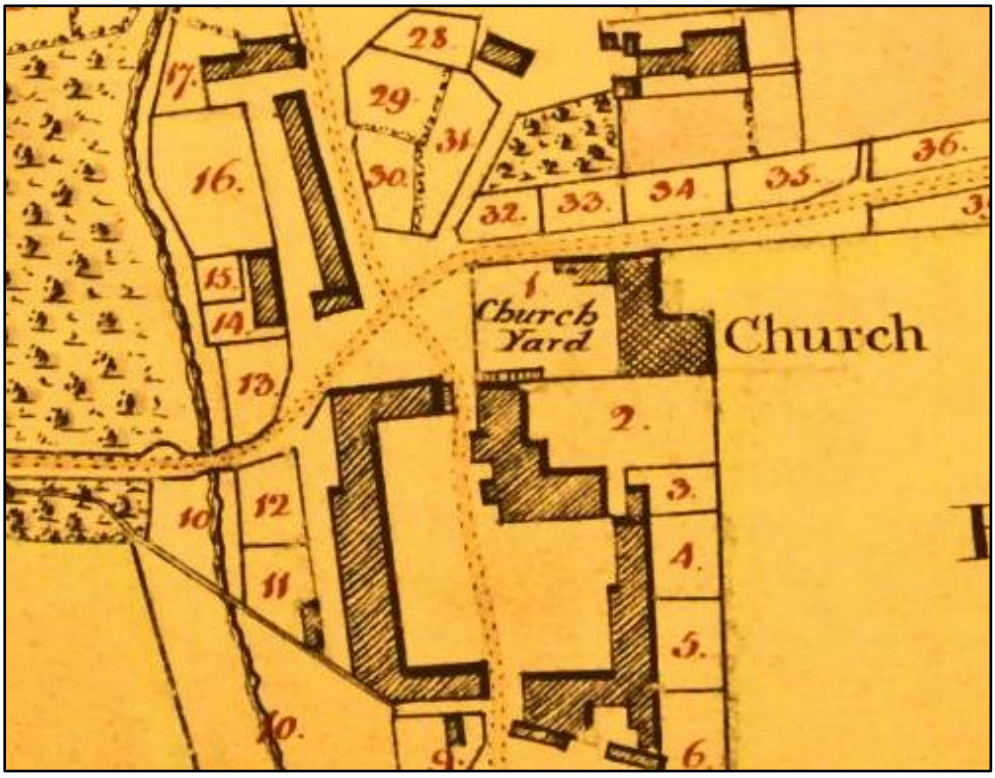
By 1752 Lord Crewe's Charity was sufficiently organised to begin extensive repairs at Blanchland Abbey. From the Minute Book of Reverend John Sharp, it may be seen that finance was being prepared for the repair of Blanchland Chapel. This could have been for the eastern aisle of the North Transept or perhaps for the rebuilding of the chancel of the old abbey as a new church. In July of 1753 (16th-18th) Doctor Sharp himself states, *"Spent these three days in visiting Blanchland church and abbey and ordering what was necessary for completing the church and repairing the decayed tenements in the abbey".* The south and west walls of the chancel date from this time. The east wall must have been adequate, but was rebuilt in 1881 to

[42] Shuler, J. C. 1975. The Pastoral and Ecclesiastical Administration of the Diocese of Durham, 1721-1771; With Particular Reference to the Archdeaconry of Northumberland. Durham. Faculty of Divinity, 1975.
[43] See https://www.measuringworth.com
[44] Dickson, W.M. 1892. Notes on Blanchland P833, 834. Proceedings of the Berwickshire Naturalists Society, Volume 6, 1892.

[45] NRO 00452/J/36. Book of John Sharp, p 8.

1884 with its three lancet windows. On December 12th 1753 Doctor Sharp met Mr. Shirley (a building contractor) and approved the payment of £293-6s-2d to him for the minister's house and repairs to the abbey. This is equivalent to more than £45,000 today. The old chancel was now refurbished and used for Divine Services from December 14th 1752. It is presumably from shortly after this that the old chapel became the school house.

In one letter of 1770 we find that a new schoolmaster being appointed was disagreeable news to the Reverend Hudson of Blanchland *"as the schoolhouse being in the churchyard he looked upon it as part of his freehold and would consult Dr Sharp upon that business".* Hudson felt that it was in his remit to make money from school fees and that he intended to start his own school in Blanchland[46]. Whether Mr Hudson was successful with his schooling we cannot be certain but in July 1778 a petition was sent from the tenants in and around Blanchland to the Trustees of the late Lord Crewe[47]. *"The humble petition of the tenants in and near Blanchland humbly sheweth that the school at Blanchland has for years been neglected and those few who went for instruction little better"* – Local opinion was not encouraging. During the incumbency of Reverend Hudson Barnett (1784-1811) a little more is learnt about the school. Throughout discussions about the requirement for a new schoolmaster it became clear that the school was still in the same location on the west side of the tower and there is a possible hint that it was not being well maintained *"Besides the allowance there is one room with a loft above it in which the master lives – a small garden – and in the churchyard a schoolroom. The master pays no rent for these but must keep them in repair."*[48]



[46] Letter from Mr Robson, Durham Castle to Mr Wood, Bamburgh Castle, 8th October 1770. Ref; NRO 00452/0/8/4/13/34

[47] Petition at Blanchland School, July 1778. Ref; NRO 00452/D/8/4/13/22

[48] Extract from a letter from Mr George Wood (Trustee of Lord Crewe's Charity) to Reverend Mr Smyth, Stanhope. 9th May 1787. (Regarding Blanchland School) (NRO 00452/D/8/4/B)

Fig. 5: 1808. Plan of the Township of Blanchland in the County of Northumberland, belonging to the Trustees of Lord Crewe. Lord Crewe Archive. John Bell. Surveyor.

In 1815 four hundred and fifty pounds was spent on further refurbishment of the church and at this time new pews, a new roof and new stone slab flooring were installed. From 1753 until 1828 the old chapel had been used as the school house. It may possibly have been rebuilt at some time during this period to make it more suitable for its new function. In 1828 the condition of this edifice must have been unsuitable for use as the school and a decision was made to demolish it in 1829. In 1828 however a rather odd decision had been made by the Trustees. Perhaps because there was no other space available a new school was established on the upper floor of the north transept between the arches of the tower and nave. This is thought to have been in use between 1828 until 1851 when funds were provided by the Trustees to build a new school on land to the north west of the churchyard. Information is very sparce about this phase of building work in the abbey and only tantalising glimpses are available.

"Had not a rage for school-houses induced my predecessor to urge his co-trustees to spoil the ante-chapel and to intersect some tall and beautiful arches by a floor for an upstairs school, the entrance would have been very striking. I was at a loss what to do in the matter. It would have been a pity to destroy the schools merely on account of taste, so I contented myself with begging that at least a clear entry might be made to the church, that the schools might be made distinct, and that the children might be kept from all communication with the church"[49].

It is possible to view the locations of two arched windows on the east wall of the north transept, above the two centred arches of the arcade. These windows are now blocked but were thought by Ryder[50] and others to light the schoolroom on the floor constructed in the upper part of the transept. Without these windows the schoolroom would have been impossibly dark; there is however a note in the accounts[51] of Thomas Fenwick for the Lord Crewe Trustees for January 1828 in which Cuthbert Snowball was paid £1-0s-2d for glazing work in the abbey, probably for the windows of the new schoolroom. Fenwick also notes the payment of £1-13-11d to Elizabeth Blenk (the wife of the schoolmaster) for the supply of candles.

In the excavation of trench 3 during the 2023 excavations a curious plinth like structure was uncovered beneath the 1815 floor slabs (see below). This may have been related to the erection of a stairway but the date of its construction is uncertain. In addition, an untidy reconstruction of the internal courses of stone between and below the windows in the west wall of the transept suggests an attempted alteration in the structure of the wall. This internal modification is matched by a more subtle but nevertheless visible amendment on the outside of the west wall. This is suggestive of a blocked doorway (pers. comm. John Niles[52]) which may have been a separate entrance to the schoolroom and possibly an attempt to follow the instructions of Archdeacon Singleton above, "*that the children might be kept from all communication with the church."*[53]

[49] The Northumberland County History Committee. *A History of Northumberland*, Volume 6, page 339. Reid and Co. Newcastle upon Tyne, 1902. Comments by Thomas Singleton, Archdeacon of Northumberland, 1826-1842.
[50] Ryder, P. F. 2017. Saint Mary the Virgin, Blanchland: An Archaeological Assessment. P9. March 2017.
[51] Thomas Fenwick Accounts, January 1828. Ref: NRO 452/E/2/1/4/3.
[52] John Niles, head mason with Durham Stonemasonry and Restoration. January 2023.
[53] Comments by Thomas Singleton, Archdeacon of Northumberland, 1826-1842.

Other than these few notes and the assertions of various incumbents of the time there are very few clues about the structure of this schoolroom.

Another addition to the tower existed on the east side where it can clearly be seen that a sloping stone weather moulding indicates the gable of a building into which the east door once opened. This has been described as a possible vestry or even a sacristy or a chapel; Knowles considers this as being contemporary with the tower and so was perhaps mid-thirteenth century[54]. An attempt to discover more about this construction was made during the excavations of 2023 (see Trench 1 below). Unfortunately, no obvious remains of the building were uncovered, although a large rubble-filled cut for a robbed-out wall was discovered. With no dateable material from the trench, it is difficult to suggest whether the wall was contemporary with the abbey buildings. However, it is known that most abbeys of the period were enclosed by a perimeter wall, a *vallum monasterii* dividing the secular outside world from the spiritual character of the temenos. Blanchland may have had such a perimeter wall and because of its location in an area often subject to border raids is thought to have had another ditch and wall at a greater distance from the abbey itself. The wall surrounding the abbey may have been the first construction on the site, symbolically separating the sacred from the profane.

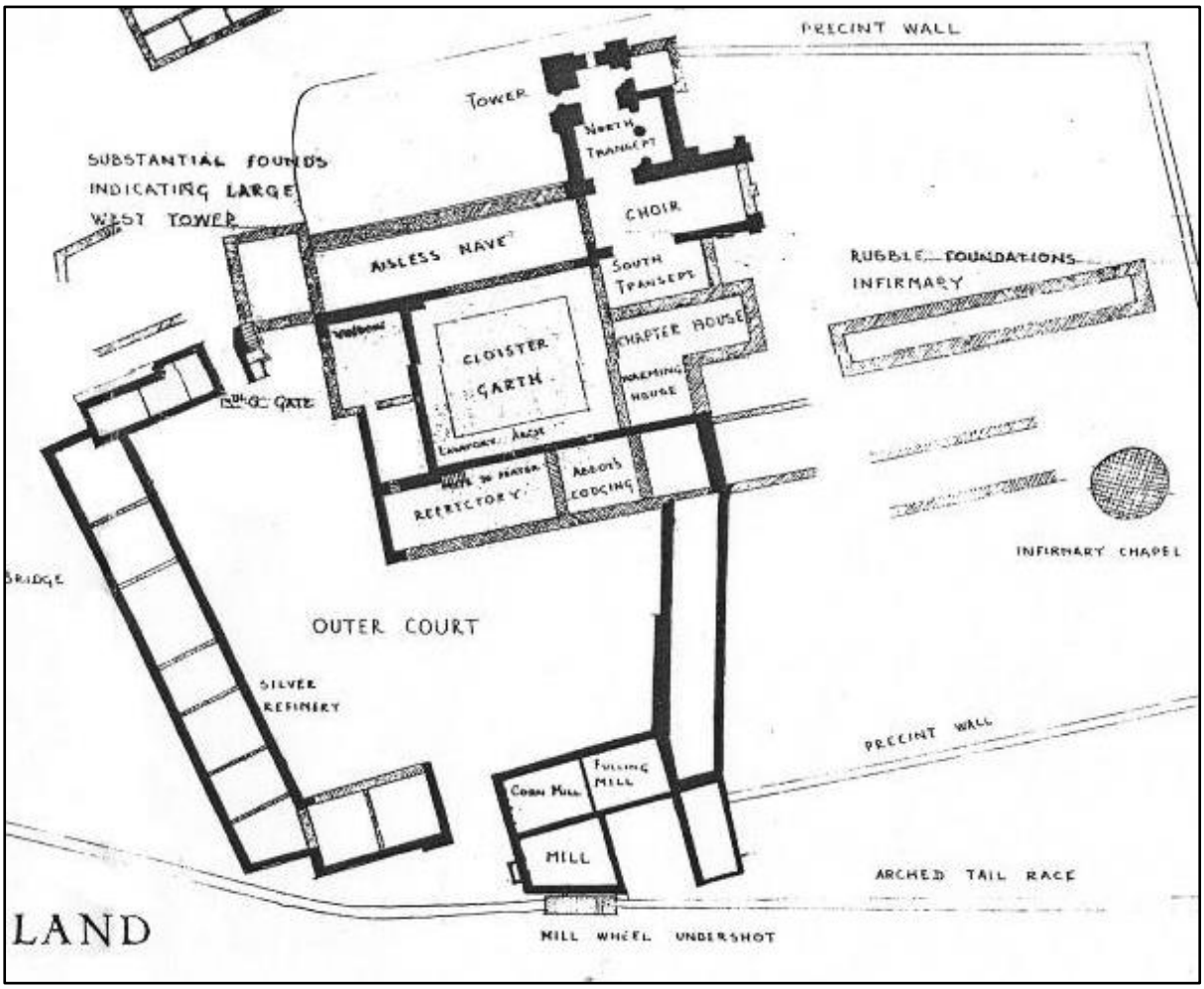


Fig. 6: Blanchland Abbey and Associated Structures. Compiled circa 1950. Anon.

[54] Knowles, W. H. 1902. *The Premonstratensian Abbey of Saint Mary, Blanchland, Northumberland*. The Archaeological Journal, Volume LIX, Pp 328-341. 1902. London.

At a later date, when the tower and its associated building on the eastern side were built this early wall may have been robbed to provide resources for the new vestry/sacristy. A plan of much of the archaeology around Blanchland compiled about 1950 from various sources and by an unfortunately anonymous draughtsman does in fact show such a wall passing through the area of trench 1 of the 2023 excavations (see above). This plan also shows a building on the east side of the tower but the accuracy of this arrangement cannot be guaranteed. Despite the effort which has gone into locating archaeological sites around the abbey by this draughtsman, the chapel/schoolhouse on the west wall of the tower was not identified in this plan.

The phasing of the strata of the excavation in trenches 2, 3 and 4 inside the abbey in 2023 appears to show similar activities in each area beneath the transept floor. The stone slab floor was laid during the refurbishment of 1815 at the same time as a new roof and pews were installed. Immediately beneath the stone floor a fill of fine material, probably waste from the nearby lead mines of Shildon, overlaid layers of clay and stone cobbles and flags within and upon which were included a number of culverts. These culverts were generally of similar dimensions and were constructed by laying a stone bed of flags and then walls of three courses of dry stone. The culverts were then overlaid with further flagstones. One culvert in trench 3 was exceptional in that the overlying flagstones had been replaced with larger boulders. It appeared that in all cases there had been no flow of water through these culverts for a considerable time (if at all).

The construction of the culverts however, does suggest a requirement for the periodic management of water or industrial solutions such as dyes or washes at the site. It also leads to the idea that after the dissolution of 1539 but before the abbey reconstruction in the 1750s there may have been some kind of light industry within the north transept. It is unlikely to have been associated with lead mining as nearly all the local mines processed their ores very close to source and smelting would have required special hearths and chimneys. No archaeological evidence for any of this potential industrial activity was uncovered during the 2023 excavations.

One good candidate for an industrial activity which would require an intermittent flow of water is, however, the process of fulling wool. Most monastic sites ran agricultural estates. It is known that Blanchland Abbey had flocks of sheep (note the petition to King Edward III stating the abbey had lost 500 sheep to raiders) so there must have been a system for shearing sheep and processing their wool. Fulling was a method of thickening spun yarn or woven cloth by beating it in water and other agents such as Fullers Earth or urine. In earlier times this was done by people trampling the cloth in a trough[55] but by the thirteenth century much of this chore had been mechanised and wooden hammers linked to waterwheels were used. Many northern abbeys had fulling mills as part of their estates. Fountains Abbey in North Yorkshire had a mill which began as a store for the abbey's yield of wool and eventually became a fulling mill in the fifteenth century. Byland Abbey and Rievaulx Abbey too had fulling mills as part of arrangements to add value to their wool producing systems.

A new or under-resourced attempt at starting a fulling process in the north transept would have needed to sluice washing water away from troughs used for walking and this may account for the culverts uncovered in trenches 2, 3, and 4. The fact that they drained from north to south towards the river and passed through the ruined nave suggests the transept was partially roofed

[55] This was known as "walking" and gave us the occupational surname "Walker."

and gave shelter to anyone working in this area. Ryder mentions culverts in the Square, draining from north down toward the river.[56] It is possible that these culverts are continuations of the system found beneath the abbey floors. It is known that a fulling mill existed in Blanchland as it is listed in the Patent Rolls of Elizabeth I, part 3, 1569, when Cuthbert Radcliffe sold to John and Reginald Carnaby *"the site of the late monastery of Blanchland and 5 messuages, 1 cottage, 2 tofts, I water-mill, 1 fulling-mill, I dovecot, 2 gardens, 2 orchards, 300 acres of land, 70 acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture, 40 acres of wood, 300 acres of furze and heath, and 500 acres of moor in Blanchland",* etcetera. This mill may be a development of a fulling process that started in the abbey transept. Interestingly, Addleshaw suggests that the fulling mill may not have been pre-dissolution but from the period when the abbey was owned by the Radcliffes or Forsters.[57] The 1569 mill is thought to have been on the site of the present-day dwelling house known as Number 12, The Square. This is based on reports from Addleshaw that he saw numerous drainage channels beneath the floor of this house. Ryder states that this building seems to have been the most recently constructed or modified of the terrace and refers to old drawings which show a single-story structure[58]. There is supposition that this may have been an industrial shop, later refurbished as a dwelling house.

[56] Ryder, P. F. 2012. Blanchland: The Abbey that became a Village: An Archaeological/Architectural Study. Unpublished.
[57] Addleshaw, G. W. O. 1951. *Blanchland: A Short History*. P19. Sunderland. Vaux Breweries.
[58] Ryder, P. F. 2012. Blanchland: The Abbey that became a Village: An Archaeological/Architectural Study. P35. Unpublished.

3. A pre-excavation examination of the medieval newel staircase footings and the transept floor-St Mary the Virgin, Blanchland Abbey.

A.C. Newton and S. Severn Newton

3.1 Introduction

In the presumption that archaeological intervention would be required before proposed building work took place in and around the abbey during the Blanchland 6A's project some preliminary tasks were undertaken. These included public consultation on which building alterations and additions were required, an exhibition of possible designs for this construction and a geophysical survey to ascertain if there were structures underlying the floor of the abbey. In addition, the flagstone floor of the abbey was surveyed by volunteers from the project to determine the overall level of the surface as this may be a factor in positioning ramps, stairs or other structures. In the event of floor slabs being lifted during any investigations these results would enable contractors to replace them at an appropriate level should this be required (see below).

The aim of this exercise was to clean out the base of the tower on the north side of the abbey in which the medieval newel staircase is situated and to determine the structure of the tower footings and foundations. No detailed archaeological intervention was planned as the intention was simply to try and uncover any visual clues as to how the staircase was constructed and upon which type of foundation it might lie.

3.2 The Medieval Newel Stair

At the northern end of the west wall of the tower is the doorway to the medieval newel stair. The fabric of this structure is almost entirely mid thirteenth century, save for a few treads at the bottom which have been renewed.

The door has an unusual shouldered segmental head[59].Through the doorway and a little to the right the stair begins. At the base of the stair a few steps drop into the stair well. The walls of the stair column are of well-laid ashlar and the stair treads, which are open to view, are neatly chamfered on the underside. As the stair ascends the stair treads become square underneath, perhaps reflecting considerations of cost as the tower was built.

Relatively easy trowelling removed some modern items (remains of a kapok mattress, old light fittings, card packaging) and came down immediately onto the natural boulder clay of the locality. At the bottom of the steps lies a stone slab floor, but this does not cover the entirety of the floor under the stairwell. It is probable that the missing floor slabs were removed to facilitate the replacement of the bottom few stair treads. The mortar between the slabs looks relatively modern but could possibly date from the eighteenth century. The rest of the stairwell was unflagged and after the remaining spoil was carefully removed the bottom of the stairwell was exposed. The foundations of the newel stair appeared to be composed of rubble, upon which roughly shaped ashlar had been laid. This foundation was placed directly on the boulder

[59] Ryder, P. 2017. Saint Mary the Virgin, Blanchland: An Archaeological Assessment, P7.

clay. No attempt to cut through it was made as this was not authorised by the DAC, but close inspection would indicate that little further information may be retrieved by this. There were no other structures in this area other than that directly related to the newel stair.

Pl.1: Ashlar stonework and underside of stair treads.

Pl. 2: Floor of stairwell (note 60cm measuring rod).

Pl. 3: Cleaning the stairwell floor.

Pl. 4: Foundations of tower on boulder clay.

3.3 The North Transept Floor Survey

The aim was to look at the level of the transept floor in order to understand more about its structure and whether there is evidence of earlier features within the abbey which are reflected in the floor layout. The tower, transept and choir floors are all at approximately the same level and were laid during general improvements to the abbey in 1815[60]. Immediately to the east the aisle of the north transept was rebuilt in 1854 and this may have had some impact on the adjacent north transept floor. The column in the centre of the western side of the aisle is considered to be mid- thirteenth century. The base of this column lies below the level of the transept floor and may indicate a considerable amount of made ground below the floor slabs (see excavation report).

The floor height was surveyed using a Bosch dumpy level, model GOL 36D. The aim of the work was to ascertain any significant changes in surface height which might indicate the presence of under-floor cavities or walls. As the floor is composed of flagstones of irregular size, too numerous to record without significant volunteer effort, it was gridded into one metre squares.

On the north face of the tower is an official Ordnance Datum Mark (ODM), recorded as being at a height of 241.4083 metres[61]. Transferring heights from this point, a temporary bench mark

[60] Wickendene, Rev. W. S. !947-48. The Church Herald: The Parish magazine of Blanchland and Hunstanworth.
[61] https://www.bench-marks.org.uk/bm15063

was established on the pavement immediately north of the original ODM. This was calculated at 239.5133 m ODM and from this position it was possible to set up another temporary bench mark (TBM), (calculated at 239.4383 m ODM), outside the east door of the tower. Finally, using this last measurement, a further TBM was established inside the tower (calculated at 1.43m (238.0083m)). A series of level measurements was taken across the one metre grid throughout the base of the tower and the floor of the north transept. The grid was based on a line drawn from the centre of the tower arch to the centre of the transept south arch. It was recorded as a scale drawing and the measurements for each square of the grid were recorded on a spreadsheet.

Results of Floor Survey.

The figures obtained by measuring floor heights are very regular. There is little deviation across the floor space and nearly all the measurements fall within two centimetres of each other. There appears to be no ridges or troughs in the floor slabs, but observation of the plinth bases of columns at the centre of the transept aisle, and at the bases of the tower arch and south arch of the transept, may indicate that there is considerable made ground beneath the floor (confirmed by the excavation process). The results of the geophysical survey also suggested that rubble and other material was used to level the area before the slabs of the nineteenth century floor were laid[62].

Beneath one section of the floor (area 5 of the geophysical survey) two clear and well-defined anomalies at a depth of approximately one metre and between one and two metres wide may be the foundations of an earlier nave or choir. It was suggested that they may precede the thirteenth century tower[63]. There is no variation in floor level over these anomalies which indicates they are stable and long standing.

The results of the survey are shown in the following diagram:

[62] Archaeological Services, Durham University. 2020. Blanchland Abbey Church, Northumberland: Geophysical Survey, P10.
[63] Archaeological Services, Durham University. 2020. Blanchland Abbey Church, Northumberland: Geophysical Survey, P10.

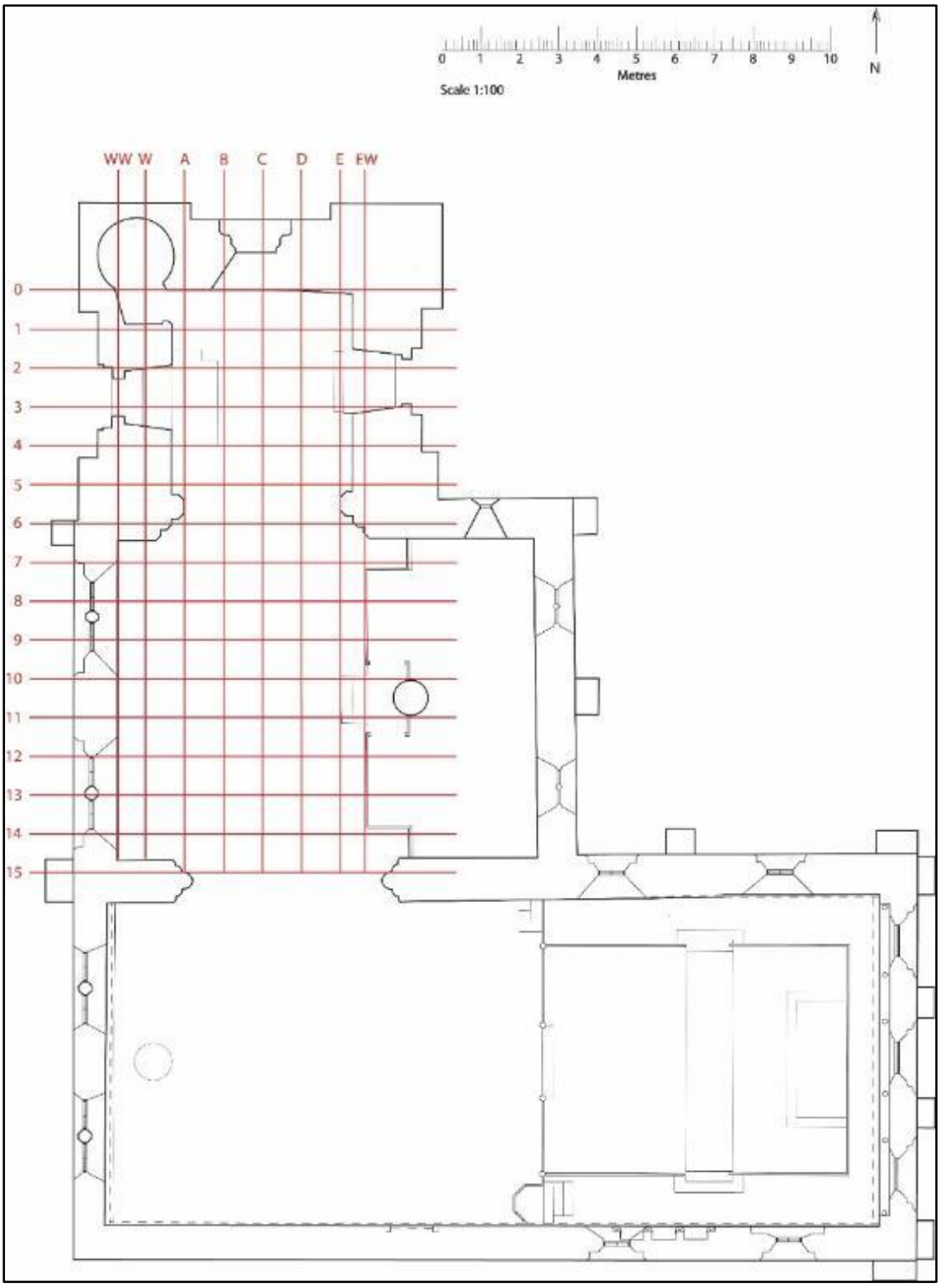


Fig. 7: Blanchland Abbey floor (North Transept) marked out in a one metre Grid.

Readings were taken from the centre of each 1 metre square and recorded on the spreadsheet below:

RESULTS (in metres)

	WW			W			A			B			C			D			E			EW		
	TBM	Reading	Rectified (actual) height AOD	TBM	Reading	Rectified (actual) height AOD	TBM	Reading	Rectified (actual) height AOD	TBM	Reading	Rectified (actual) height AOD	TBM	Reading	Rectified (actual) height AOD	TBM	Reading	Rectified (actual) height AOD	TBM	Reading	Rectified (actual) height AOD	TBM	Reading	Rectified (actual) height AOD
0		-			-		1.43	1.44	237.393	1.43	1.43	237.403	1.43	1.425	237.408	1.43	1.43	237.403	1.43	1.43	237.404		-	
1		-			Safe in way			Safe in way		1.43	1.44	237.393	1.43	1.44	237.393	1.43	1.43	237.403	1.43	1.44	237.393	1.43	1.44	237.393
2		-			Step			Step		1.43	1.43	237.403	1.43	1.43	237.403	1.43	1.43	237.403		Step			-	
3		-			Step			Step		1.43	1.44	237.393	1.43	1.43	237.403	1.43	1.44	237.393		Step			-	
4		-		1.43	1.45	237.383	1.43	1.41	237.423	1.43	1.44	237.393	1.43	1.44	237.393	1.43	1.43	237.403	1.43	1.44	237.393	1.43	1.44	237.393
5		-			-		1.43	1.43	237.403	1.43	1.42	237.413	1.43	1.43	237.403	1.43	1.43	237.403	1.43	1.43	237.403		-	
6		-		1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.49	237.393	1.48	1.49	237.393	1.48	1.50	237.383		-	
7		-		1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.49	237.393	1.48	1.49	237.393	1.48	1.49	237.393
8	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.49	237.393	1.48	1.49	237.393	1.48	1.49	237.393	1.48	1.49	237.393 (against chapel panelling)
9	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.49	237.393	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403
10	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.485	237.398	1.48	1.48	237.403		Chapel step	
11	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.49	237.383	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403		Chapel step	
12	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.48	237.403
13	1.48	1.49	237.383	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403
14	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.46	237.423	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.45	237.433 (graveslab)	1.48	1.46	237.423 (graveslab)
15		-			-		1.48	1.48	237.403 (against arch pilar)	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.48	237.403	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.47	237.413	1.48	1.48	237.403 (against pilar)

4. Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Changes to Blanchland Abbey (to approximately 1970).

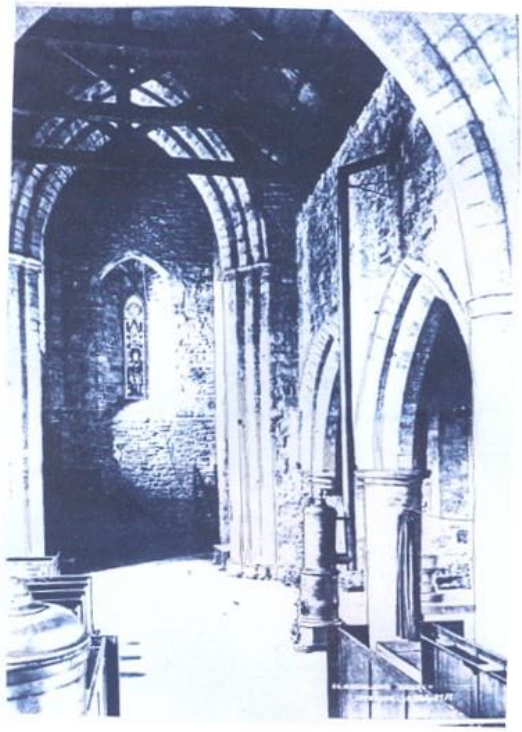
S. Severn Newton

The aim of this section is to clarify and record items of half-remembered history so that they may continue the story of the Abbey with some accuracy. The more recent records of the Abbey have not all found their way into the archives, so that the information is incomplete. While the Minutes of the Vestry meetings continue into the 1970s, in later years they provide little information about the changes that took place in the building. Information from Parochial Church Council meetings ceases in 1960.

The renovations of the Abbey in the eighteenth century paved the way for an extensive series of alteration and improvements in the following centuries. In 1753 Blanchland ceased to be a part of Shotley parish and gained the Revd. Thomas Hudson as its incumbent. The church was put in order and provided with Communion vessels, a lectern Bible and a large prayer book. Revd. Hudson and his family lived in what had been a farmhouse on the site of the later Vicarage which had been renovated for their use. The Lord Crewe Trustees funded more improvements to the church during the subsequent incumbency of Revd Hudson's nephew, Revd Hudson Barnett.[64]

During the 20th century, a subject that notably occupied the deliberations of the Parochial Church Council was the question of how to heat the abbey building. Since this is an ongoing problem, the quandaries of the PCC over the years are summarised here.

[64] Transcription from 'The Church Herald', parish magazine of Blanchland and Hunstanworth, Feb 1947 - Dec 1948.

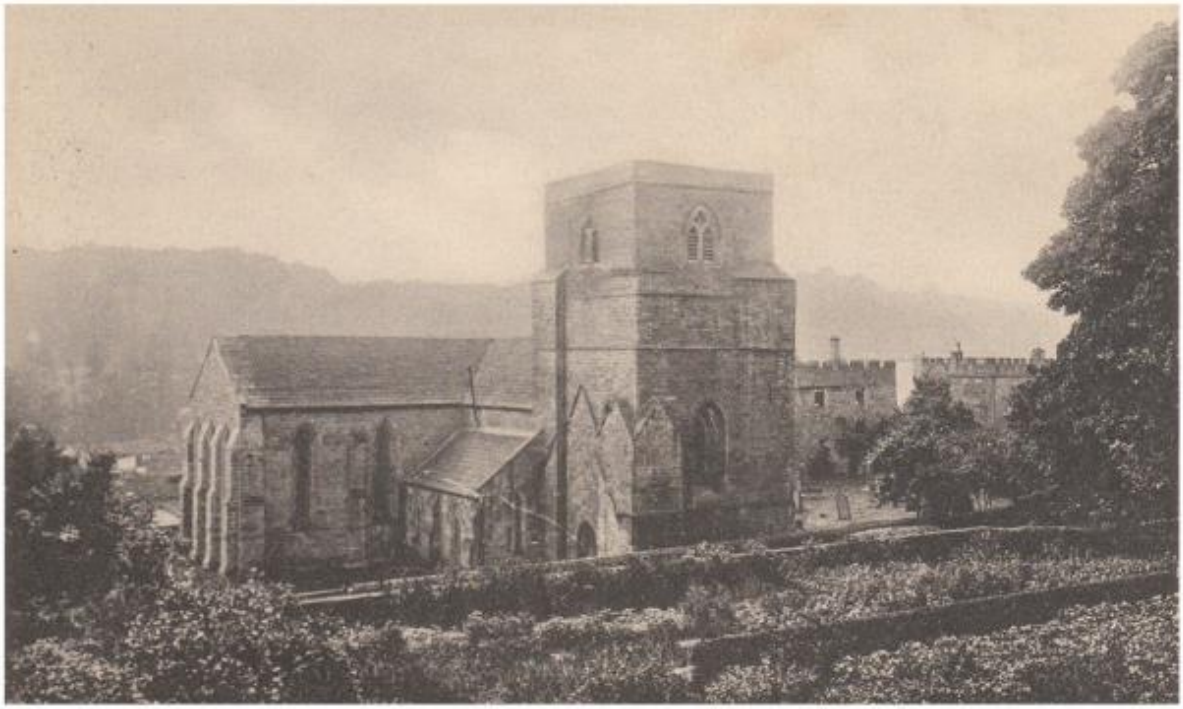


Pl.5: The north transept and the freestanding stoves.

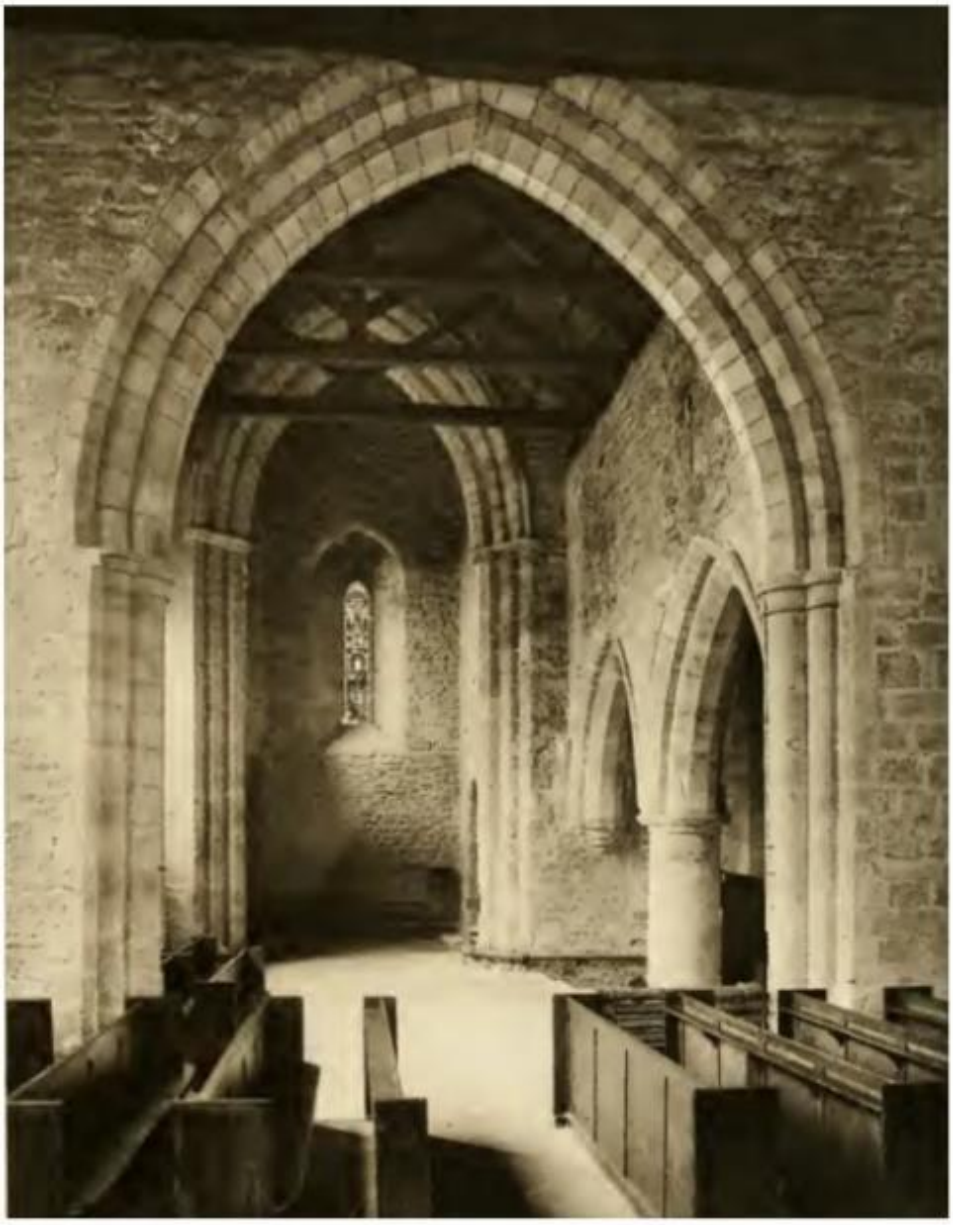
From old photographs (Pl. 5) it is clear that there was at one time a stove which stood in front of the central pillar of the east aisle (which became the chapel). It is visible in one, rather indistinct photograph, with the flue rising to exit through the wall where the blocked-up windows of the former schoolroom are.

Another photograph (Pl. 6) shows the flue on the outside, passing through the wall above the aisle roof. A later, internal, picture (Pl. 7) shows the hole where the flue had passed through the wall. The photograph which shows the stove and flue (Pl. 5) also has an object in the bottom left-hand corner which looks very like a second stove. If this is the case, where did the flue from this stove go? This heating system must have been removed before the aisle was renovated, the roof raised and the later boiler house instituted. It was suggested during the 2023 excavations, that the broad wall found beneath the floor in Trench 3 was the base for the stove. However, this wall must pre-date both the floor and photography, whereas the stove stands upon the 1815 floor and appears in a photograph. Consequently, the two cannot be related. Interestingly, the Trustees paid for coke to heat the church until 1875; this must have been for the freestanding stoves as the Revd. Wickenden relates that a "heating apparatus" was installed in the church during 1889 (Revd J. C. Dunn's incumbency) and a boiler house built.[65] This boiler house appears in several photographs, as does the system of large cast-iron pipes (Pls. 8 and 9) that emanated from it, winding around the internal walls of the abbey. The Trustees contributed £10 to the cost.[66]

[65] Transcription from 'The Church Herald', parish magazine of Blanchland and Hunstanworth, Feb 1947 - Dec 1948.
[66] Ibid.



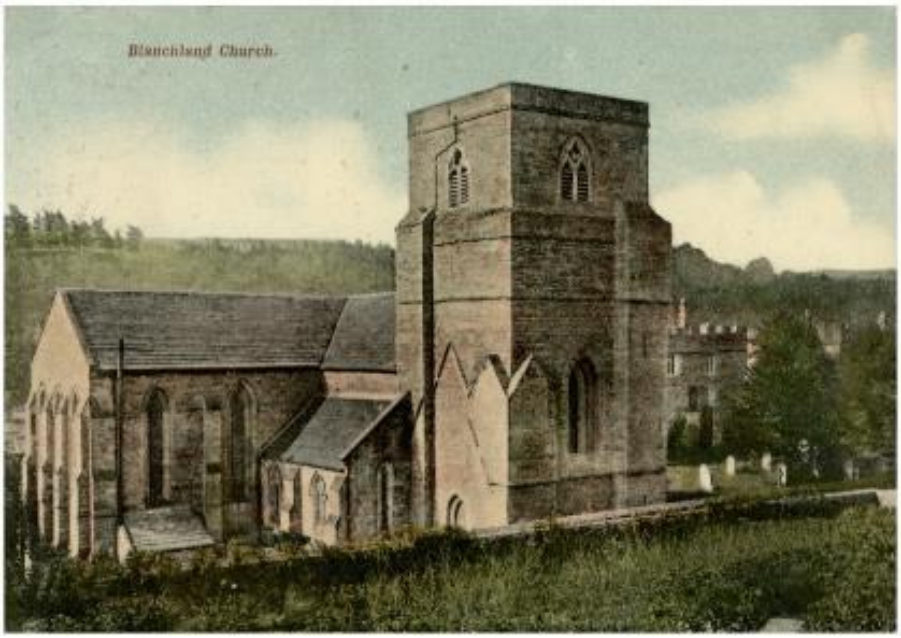
Pl. 6: Photograph showing the flue from the internal stove exiting the building above the chapel roof.



Pl. 7: The exit of the former flue through the wall can be seen on the right, just beyond the arch in the foreground and above the nearer arch of the aisle[67].

At the Vestry Meeting on April 4th, 1921, the condition of the boiler house chimney was causing concern and it was agreed to have an additional length added to it so that smoke was kept off the church wall[68]. In February 1922 a new boiler was provided but, according to the Church Register, this was burst in the following January.[69]

[67] *A History of Northumbria* pub.1902.
[68] Annual Vestry and Church Meetings Minute Book 1907 to 1974 Northumberland Archives EP 30/21
[69] Ibid.



Pl. 8: Later photograph showing the boiler house and chimney against the chancel wall.

Pl. 9: The North Transept, showing the arrangement of heating pipes associated with the boiler house.

The Agenda Book, which has rough notes of the minutes of the PCC meetings, records that in December 1930 the PCC was investigating the possibility of insurance and periodical inspections for the boiler. This was a process that dragged on for several meetings, even after

the North British and Mercantile Insurance Company had been asked to 'quote a rate'. At the meeting on January 15th 1931, a reply had been received but a representative had not been to inspect the boiler. The quote was '£1 6s %' and, if a small boiler, and additional rate against the risk of cracking or fracturing would be between '25/- and 30/- %'.[70] It is not explained whether this means that the quoted premiums are for every £100 of cover and the terminology is unfamiliar today. The PCC decided to write and say that they proposed to cover the boiler for £50. Should the insurance company be unable to provide insurance for less than £100, then that would be acceptable. By the April 16th meeting the North British and Mercantile Insurance Company had sent their Terms and Conditions, which were now stored in the safe.[71]

In October 1934 the PCC was informed that the boiler engineer of the North British and Mercantile Insurance Company had inspected the cast iron "Ideal" heating boiler of 1922 (presumably the replacement or the repaired boiler that, according to Revd. William Walter Adamson, burst in January 1923[72]). The engineer reported that the boiler was cracked for an inch and a half in the front section and there was some leakage. He recommended a new one. A letter had been received from the insurance company in September saying that they would pay £12 towards the total costs of around £30. The PCC decided to get specifications and estimates for the fitting of a "Robin Hood" boiler. In November 1934 they agreed to accept the estimate submitted by Mr. Stephenson of Hexham for a Beeston Robin Hood Boiler with a capacity of 1440 square feet, at £41 including accessories. This was to be fitted immediately and Mr. Stephenson was also to cork up [sic] some of the water pipes in the church which were leaking.[73] It is not clear whether this was actually done, as the heating was again on the agenda on February 11th, 1936, when it was agreed unanimously to ask Mr Stephenson of Hexham to 'recommend an improvement in the heating system of the Abbey' and to estimate the cost of the work.[74] Nothing further is recorded until September 1944 when discussion led to agreement that the Church Architect should be consulted about the heating and other improvements.[75]

It would seem that the architect failed to find a solution, for in the early summer of 1954 it was proposed that the vicar should ask for permission to remove the pipes and boiler from the Abbey. They had not been used for more than fifteen years and proceeds from the sale of any scrap could go to church funds.[76] It was not until October 1960 that the PCC agreed that the boiler house should be removed. Mr. Elliot, who had done other work on the church building, was to be asked to supervise the removal of the remains of the boiler house, and Mr Common offered the use of his tractor and trailer to clear the rubbish away.[77]

[70] PCC Minute Book 1930 - 1960 Northumberland Archives EP 30/23.
[71] Blanchland PCC Agenda Book 1930 – 1949.
[72] Transcription from parish magazine "The Church Herald".
[73] Ibid and PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.
[74] Annual Vestry and Church Meetings Minute Book 1907 to 1974.
[75] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.
[76] PCC Minute Book 1930 - 1960 (undated minutes from meeting held between 3 May and 15 June 1954).
[77] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.

It was not just the church where the lack of heat was a problem. It was decided in July 1942 that a Combination Stove, complete with pipes and cowl, should be obtained from Messrs Bartlett in Newcastle to heat the vestry. Additionally, the PCC agreed to purchase a small oil stove to use in the church room.[78] In 1950 the vicar enquired about the decoration of the church room and was told that Professor Evatt had offered the services of a student to do a mural.[79] Enquiries were to be made about this, but there is no further mention in the minutes.

Heating was not the only major issue with which the PCC was concerned and there were also a number of lesser matters which were discussed. Most of them, like the heating, dragged on from meeting to meeting, sometimes due to the PCC procrastinating but often because of the technicalities involved in organizing work.

One of the larger undertakings with regard to the Abbey interior was the renovation and re-purposing of the east aisle, although it was already in use as a chapel, which required a number of alterations to the fabric of the building. The aisle was clearly a difficult area, open to the north transept and not very comfortable. In August 1947 the vicar announced that he had acquired some partition material from Mr. Tully which would make the area more congenial, and he asked for help in fixing it when it arrived.[80] In November the PCC met in the chapel; more material was needed to do the job and the PCC agreed to meet again when the timber arrived. Mr. Common offered a roll of roofing felt to fill in the northern of the two arches.[81]

In January 1951 the PCC agreed to call the chapel "St Gabriel's Chapel" and in April Mr. Marshall suggested that the "black out" paper be removed and replaced with hardboard at a cost of about £10. October saw the PCC agree to the walls of the chapel being scraped, with the possibility of their being snow-cemmed later.[82] Two of the photographs show that efforts were made at different periods to render the chapel more comfortable; in one there is a curtain for pulling across one of the arches and in the other there is a wooden panel, although this has been moved aside.

The Thanksgiving Services for the 200th Anniversary of the Abbey's restoration as the parish church encouraged the efforts to make improvements to the chapel. Discussions of this in January led to the vicar announcing in May that he was awaiting a letter from Mr. Gillam of Sheffield with information about alterations to the chapel which would cost about £650. Later in the month the PCC approved Mr. Gillam's drawing and tender but queried whether a building licence would be needed. It was also realised that it would be preferable to move the font from the chapel to the west end of the Abbey and so it was agreed that a stonemason would have to be consulted and an estimate obtained.[83] This would not be the first time that the font

[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

had been moved. In 1854, during the incumbency of Revd. Charles Thorp, it had been placed in what was referred to as an ancient chantry chapel which thus became the Baptistery.[84]

However, the Diocesan Advisory Committee were not 'favourably impressed' with Mr. Gillam's plans for the chapel because the arch in the transept would be partially obscured. They did agree to the font being moved and Messrs. Aires of Hexham were to be asked to proceed with this.[85] According to the minutes of the September PCC meeting, the vicar (Revd. Wilfrid Hardy) informed the members that the font would be removed during the following week, although it seems from subsequent meetings that this did not take place. New plans and drawings for the chapel screen, produced by Mr. G E Charlewood, a Newcastle architect, were submitted to the PCC in October. These met with general approval and were sent to the DAC.[86]

In December the PCC discussed in more detail the work that would be done to the chapel. Mr. Charlewood's estimate for the main alterations (woodwork, glass) was £673-12-0 and £30 for clear glass in the upper half of the arch. Other costs were £70 stonemasons' fees, £10 for the removal of the font, £20 for a new altar, and a new frontal and curtains would cost £27. The architect's fees, at 10%, would come to about £80, so the total cost would be £910-12-0. The faculty petition which was submitted read:

Panelled oak screen and Glazing (using existing panels).
A new 4' Dark Oak Altar Table and Blue and Gold Frontal and Blue Wall Curtain.
Removal of Grave Covers (of Abbot and of Forester) from Side Chapel to North Transept to a site south of a new approach with 2 steps on the west side of the pillar and removal of lower step now existing in the chapel using the same stones to fill small recesses formed by the proposed screen at the north and south ends.

The PCC agreed to ask Mr Charlewood whether:

1. Flemish glass could be procured and the effects of this on the cost
2. There was any possibility of a discount on the total account
3. If the upper glass panels could be hinged to aid cleaning.[87]

January 1953 brought Mr. Charlewood's response. He said that clear glass would be put in the upper part of the arch and a light metal grille could easily be installed; Flemish glass was not available; and that Mr. Bramley would allow 2.5% discount if the account was settled within one month. It was proposed that the PCC accept the estimate of Mr. Dixon, stonemason of Rookhope (£25 - less than half the other estimates), if he started work as soon as he could and this was agreed unanimously.[88]

[84] Transcription from parish magazine "The Church Herald".
[85] PCC Minute Book 1930 - 1960 31st July 1952.
[86] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

It was reported to the PCC in April that Mr. Charlewood had written to say that the work in the transept could not be finished by 26th June. This clearly affected the PCC's plans and they decided to ask him to try to have it done for the Dedication Service. Unfortunately, they were disappointed and in June were told that Messrs. Bramley of Newcastle had written to say that they intended to erect the new screening during the second week of August. Thankfully, the Bishop had agreed to be at the Dedication Service on September 9th.[89]

Since the final arrangements for the Dedication Service were being discussed at the PCC meeting on 8th September, it may be assumed that the work had been completed. They also talked about getting a carpet for the chapel and about asking Mr. Charlewood for the cost of a new altar rail for the chapel. Mr. Charlewood had responded in time for the November meeting and had agreed to make an altar rail that fitted in with the new surroundings in the chapel for £33. It was decided to use a bequest to pay for this. For once things moved more rapidly, and by the beginning of May 1954 a carpet had been obtained. This was part of the carpet made especially for Westminster Abbey for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.[90] Some years later it was necessary to dispose of this carpet as it had been irreparably damaged by damp rising through the floor.

In his Report on the Fabric for the Vestry Meeting and APCM in April 1954, the vicar, Revd. Wilfred Hardy, expounded the virtues of the new screen and fittings for St Gabriel's Chapel. He was grateful for the beauty of the work and for the generosity of those who had contributed to it.[91]

The other part of the Abbey which had major works, during the later nineteenth century, was the Chancel. The east wall and its square window had become dilapidated and restoration took place in 1881, at a cost of £355-7-10d, by Messrs. Taylors of Blanchland. The renovated wall was given three lancet windows with monolithic columns 11 feet 4 inches (3.4544m) high made of stone which came from Acton. The Trustees bore the cost of this.[92] The carved ceiling was completed in 1884 at a cost of £236-15-0. In 1890 the Revd. G R Hale gave a "handsome oak reredos with side panels" in memory of his uncle, the Revd. Gurley. The tapestry representing the Crucifixion, apparently from Belgium, was the gift of Colonel A. E. Welby of the Royal Scots Greys, given in December 1892 together with a pair of brass jewelled candlesticks.[93] The tapestry is displayed in the reredos. These can all be seen in Pl.6.
At the Vestry meeting on October 11th 1912, it was proposed, and agreed, that Mr. Hedley's estimate for the Chancel Screen should be accepted and the order for it given; the order for the new seats should be given as soon as there was sufficient funds. A sale of work was suggested at the March meeting, to raise funds for the seats; this to take place on Whit Monday or in

[89] Ibid.
[90] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.
[91] Annual Vestry and Church Meetings Minute Book 1907 – 1974.
[92] Transcription from 'The Church Herald', parish magazine of Blanchland and Hunstanworth, Feb 1947 - Dec 1948.
[93] Ibid.

June.[94] The Trustees contributed £10 and the oak screen and new seats were installed in 1913.[95] Also during the October 1912 Vestry Meeting it was agreed that the organ should be moved further east in the Chancel as well as being renovated.[96] This may have been related to the installation of the new Screen. The PCC, in April 1933, agreed to terminate the contract with Mr. Ward the organ tuner and to make a new contract with Mr. Clapperton of Dunston. Mr. Clapperton apparently charged 4 guineas a year for tuning, voicing and generally caring for the organ. The panel beside the organist's seat was to be removed and Mr Clapperton

Pl. 10: The chancel, showing the arched windows, the paneling, the reredos and screen, with the organ on the left and two hanging oil lamps just visible.

had written recommending the purchase of a secondhand hydraulic engine to power the organ, there being no electricity in the Abbey at the time. This hydraulic engine was to be thoroughly overhauled and fitted to the organ at a cost of £8, plus the cost of laying a water pipe for which Mr Marshall's estimate was about £4.[97] There is no mention in the Minute Book of this being

[94] Annual Vestry and Church Meetings Minute Book 1907 – 1974.
[95] Transcription from 'The Church Herald', parish magazine of Blanchland and Hunstanworth, Feb 1947 - Dec 1948.
[96] Ibid.
[97] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.

done. However, in June 1954 the vicar reported that Mr. Kirkland (it is not clear from the minutes whether he was the organist or the current tuner) said that water must have got into the organ at some time and that there was a crack in the windbox. Could this have come from the hydraulic engine, or was it due to a leak in the roof? Repairs to the roof took priority, but the need to repair the organ was reaffirmed in February 1955, it having been noted in the previous November that bad weather had prevented roof and organ repairs.[98] An estimate for organ repairs had been received from Messrs. Wiggs of Newcastle in time for the September 1955 PCC meeting. This was for £245, which suggests that extensive work was needed. It was decided that Harrisons of Durham and any other willing organ firm should be asked for estimates. The PCC agreed that it was their responsibility to keep the instrument in good order, even if there was presently no organist. At the same meeting it was recorded that the small harmonium had been sent away for repairs.[99]

As with the church roof, the tower was often the subject of PCC discussions, in relation to necessary repairs. The Trustees had resolved in 1829 "that the old vestry in Blanchland churchyard be taken down".[100] Presumably this was the building attached to the west side of the tower and which, at various times had also been used as a chapel and a school. The schoolroom had been transferred to the upper part of the transept but was removed when the new school was built by the Trustees in 1851.[101] Archdeacon Thorp, presented the stained-glass window of St James, located in the tower as a Christmas gift in 1850. Archdeacon Thorp's son, Revd. Charles Thorp, was incumbent between 1850 and 1855, when he left to take the living of Ellingham.[102]

There is little mention of the condition of the tower in the records until the incumbency of the Revd. Charles Knowles when extensive repairs were carried out. Funds were raised for this and, in January 1925, Revd. Knowles reported that the Tower Repairs Fund stood at £320.[103] The records do not indicate whether this was used for the aforementioned repairs or held for future works. In April 1931 the PCC members were made aware of the damage that had been done to the tower by rainwater as a result of defects in the gargoyles. They thought this might be dealt with locally but were still waiting for tenders for the work in the following November. However, the rainwater drainage from the tower had been dealt with by the October 1932 meeting, along with a leak in the roof where it adjoined the tower.[104]

A serious leakage in the tower roof was discussed at the April 1951 PCC meeting and it was agreed to contact Wailes Dove of Newcastle about repairs. By the October meeting an estimate of £95 had been received from Bells of Newcastle for asphalting the tower roof. Mr. Common

[98] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.
[99] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.
[100] Transcription from 'The Church Herald', parish magazine of Blanchland and Hunstanworth, Feb 1947 - Dec 1948.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.

proposed that Mr. Hudson Jameson should be asked to carry out temporary repairs as soon as possible and that further estimates should be sought for pointing the parapet and asphalting the roof in the summer of 1952.[105] The PCC was again concerned about the state of the tower roof according to the minutes of the Vestry Meeting and APCM in April 1954. They had, however, arranged for the repairs and it was reported at the next APCM that they had been completed.[106]

The roof of the rest of the building, and the rainwater goods, came in for attention too. As with other works, the repairs often took some time to organise. The spouts were in need of repainting in January 1937. Before the PCC meeting in September 1953, Mr. Dixon of Rookhope had advised that the roof needed immediate repairs but he had not responded about doing the work by the time of the November meeting. It was therefore decided that Mr. Robinson of Slaley should be asked for advice.[107] No progress seems to have been made for, in June 1954, the PCC opted to ask Messrs. Charltons of Hexham and Mr. Elliot of Tow Law to view the church and tower roofs and give estimates for the work required. In July it was decided to accept Mr. Charlton's estimate and he was expected, in September, to start work shortly, weather permitting, and Mr. Elliot was willing to paint the spouts, gutters and fall pipes. In November, though, it was noted that the weather had prevented the work being done.[108] It was noted in April 1955 that a grant might be available for the roof repairs but it was decided that, to prevent delay, the work should go ahead and that the grant be applied for retrospectively. At the May meeting the PCC members were informed that the repairs had been done.[109]

Despite this, in May 1960 the PCC was informed that Mr. Elliot of Tow Law had visited and that the repairs to the roof and spouts would be carried out by his men at cost price. It was the responsibility of the PCC arrange for scaffolding and they had received prices for this by September 6th and Mr. Elliot was due to visit in the next couple of days. The repairs to the roof, the tower, the spouting and the roof ridge tiles had been done by the October meeting with the painting of the gutters and fall pipes to be done shortly.[110] At the Vestry and PCC meeting in April 1964 it was reported that the fund for roof repairs now exceeded £3000, so the PCC intended to apply for a Faculty in order that work could start.[111] This is the final mention of roof repairs in the Minutes. The PCC Minute Book ends in 1960 and, although the Vestry and Annual Meetings minutes continue until 1974, there seems to be no further mention of roof repairs. There may well be information, especially about the April 1964 intended Faculty application, in the Faculty records.

At the Annual Joint Vestry and PCC Meeting in February 1936 the possibility of having an oak screen under the tower was considered, the architect's plans for it having been perused at the January ordinary meeting. The quote from Mr. Marshall for this was £27. Action on this,

[105] Annual Vestry and Church Meetings Minute Book 1907 – 1974.
[106] Ibid.
[107] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Annual Vestry and Church Meetings Minute Book 1907 – 1974.

however, was postponed and it seems the subject was not pursued.[112] The final mention of the tower in the PCC minutes (June 1959) is regarding one of the large wooden ventilators. This had fallen out of position. Mr. Cook undertook to see if it could be repositioned from inside, but if this was not possible and it had to be done from outside, then help would be required due to the height of the tower.[113]

The church bell, made in London in 1754, crashed through the belfry floor on Sunday November 25th 1877. This must have been quite a frightening event at the time although there seem to have been no human casualties - at least there is no mention in the burial register of anyone perishing as a result of being squashed by the church bell. The available information does not state whether the bell was being rung at the time it fell. The bell was re-cast by Messrs. Watson and Sons of Newcastle and mounted on new timbers on February 19th 1878. The bell weighs 6cwt (almost 305kg) and cast upon it are names of G M Gurley, Vicar, and William Taylor and Thomas Iley, Churchwardens.[114]

Lighting the Abbey, like heating it, was a matter of making use of the best that was available, until the building was wired for electricity. It can be seen from some of the photographs (including 6) that there were hanging oil lamps dotted around the interior. In 1881 Revd. Gurley gave the church a set of duplex lamps[115] which were among the most commonly used oil lamps at the time. In 1937 there was a demonstration of calor gas lighting in the Abbey but the PCC decided to wait until the autumn when details of running costs for such a system might be obtained.[116] A lack of further mention of this idea suggests that it was not taken any further. However, in November 1942, Mr. Bowman, with the support of Miss Porteus and the whole PCC, proposed that a quotation should be obtained for installing Calor Gas in the Vestry.[117] What the minutes do not clarify is whether this was for heating or lighting.

The decision to have electricity installed in the Abbey, like other improvements, required extended deliberations. Enquiries had been made, it seems, by July 1952 when a letter from Reid Ferews was read and the PCC decided to get estimates from other firms. The vicar, Wilfred Hardy, asked at the Vestry and Annual Meeting of April 1953 that they give "preliminary consideration for the guidance of the PCC for the possible installation of Electricity in the church and the sexton's cottage".[118] In the June of that year the PCC concluded that the installation of electricity would be too expensive and the benefits would not outweigh the high cost of the work. However, thanks to donations, the Vicarage and the sexton's cottage would have electricity installed.[119]

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[112] Ibid.
[113] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.
[114] Transcription from 'The Church Herald', parish magazine of Blanchland and Hunstanworth, Feb 1947 - Dec 1948.
[115] Ibid.
[116] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Annual Vestry and Church Meetings Minute Book 1907 – 1974.
[119] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.

In November 1954 Mrs Common, seconded by Miss Chisholm, proposed that further consideration should be given to installing electricity and that, in the meantime, permission should be obtained for this work to be done. The following February the PCC was still of the opinion that the repairs to the roof and organ needed to be done first but they agreed to apply to the DAC for permission to wire the Abbey and to apply for a faculty for the underground cable required to bring power to the building and to install electric lights. By April 1955 a faculty for the electricity had been obtained but the DAC did not give permission for the proposed fittings. Mr. Charlewood was to be asked to provide designs and plans for the light fittings.[120]

Mr. Charlewood must have responded promptly because the May 1955 PCC meeting was told that the scheme was not acceptable as it stood. Mr. Ripley proposed that the plan should be dropped altogether but he had no support from the other members. After much discussion it was decided that Mr. Charlewood be asked for an amended scheme. This turned out to be cheaper than the original and in July this met with approval. Further discussion of the roof repairs and electricity in September caused Mr. Common to propose that they should be carried out "as set out in the faculty". This was carried by 8 votes to one[121] - perhaps Mr. Ripley was the dissenter. Clearly the wiring of the building then went ahead for at the Annual Vestry Meeting in April 1956, Revd. Wilfred Hardy noted that electric and power sockets had been installed[122] and, in July, the PCC agreed to pay the Northern Electricity Board the £20 bill for the electric cable. Moreover, the vicar was pleased to report that extra switches had been put in the chapel so that not all the lights needed to be on at once.[123]

It was no doubt due to the ingress of water through the roof over time and the cold and draughty building that other works were considered and some carried out. It may be assumed that the architect's plan for a screen across the church doors, obtained and considered at the January 1936 PCC meeting, was a step towards reducing the draughts. In the following September, Miss Porteus, supported by Miss Brown, proposed that "the joiner be asked to erect Portable Screens across the Nave, and that a wood ledge be placed over the Pipes on the West and South Wall".[124] Connected with the roof repairs, it was decided (July 1954) that a plasterer should be arranged to undertake repairs in the transept (presumably to the ceiling) and to paint the beams. Mr. Charlewood, however, recommended that the ceiling be stripped of plaster and insulating board be used instead.[125] Revd. Wilfred Hardy reported at the APCM in April 1956 that the plaster of the transept ceiling had been replaced with hardboard and the timbers had been found to be sound, so had been treated with preservative.[126]

[120] Ibid.
[121] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.
[122] Annual Vestry and Church Meetings Minute Book 1907 – 1974.
[123] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Annual Vestry and Church Meetings Minute Book 1907 – 1974.

It was clear by the 1930s that the vicarage was no longer fit for purpose. The old one, adapted from a farmhouse and in use since Revd. Thomas Hudson's incumbency, was damp and dilapidated. It had actually not been occupied for nine years at this stage. In 1936 the Trustees decided to grant £500 towards the cost of a new vicarage.[127] This rebuilding also met with the approval of the parish council for at their 1936 AGM it was reported that "At a meeting held on July 9th it was proposed by Mr. A. Marshall and seconded by Mr. E. Oliver that the plans for the new Vicarage be approved".[128] The new vicarage was completed in 1939.[129]

Outside the building, the churchyard has been extended several times. This took place, maybe not for the first time, in 1835.[130] In 1922 the parish council became involved with the cost of walling another new extension. At a meeting on Wednesday 26th April of that year:

"The matter of the extension of the Churchyard was fully discussed and it was agreed to proceed with the work of walling the piece of land given by the Trustees of Lord Crewe for the purpose of of an extension of the Churchyard".

They decided that £40 should be raised to pay for this, by levying a voluntary rate of sixpence on buildings and threepence on land. The work should proceed as soon as a suitable tender had been accepted. On May 3rd the parish council agreed to accept the tender of Mr. W. Westgarth of Rookhope of £18.1.6d. Subsequently the location of the gate was considered so that the walling could take place. It was decided that the churchyard gate would be moved to where the field gate had been and the existing churchyard entrance should be closed up. Mr. George Bell was to be employed to level the new Churchyard and to be paid 6/8d a day to a maximum of £5. The voluntary rate would be collected forthwith and Mr. Westgarth would be paid £12 for the work he had already done on the walls, with the balance to follow when the work was completed.[131]

A new gate was suggested in January 1937 for the Hexham road entrance to the churchyard[132] and in August 1940 it was suggested by Mr Patrick that the PCC should obtain permission to have the churchyard wall lowered between the gate and the Lord Crewe Arms. Mr Marshall seconded this and subsequently the Bishop's Advisory Council sanctioned it so that the vicar and churchwardens could have the job done. The PCC expressed concern in May 1959 at the number of non-parishioners being buried in the churchyard; space was apparently becoming more limited. The decision was made to ask the Lord Crew Trustees whether there was any possibility of securing more land to extend the graveyard. At the June 5th meeting the vicar

[127] Transcription from 'The Church Herald', parish magazine of Blanchland and Hunstanworth, Feb 1947 - Dec 1948.
[128] Annual Parish Meeting of the Electors of the Township of Shotley High Quarter, Friday April 3rd 1936 in Township of Blanchland Minute Book 1894 – 1974.
[129] Transcription from 'The Church Herald', parish magazine of Blanchland and Hunstanworth, Feb 1947 - Dec 1948.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Annual Parish Meeting of the Electors of the Township of Shotley High Quarter, Friday April 3rd 1936 in Township of Blanchland Minute Book 1894 – 1974.
[132] Annual Vestry and Church Meetings Minute Book 1907 – 1974.

reported that he had spoken to the agent about this and the agent had undertaken to discuss it with the Trustees.[133] Unfortunately these particular records end in 1960 and there is no indication in the minutes of the conclusion to the matter.

At the Annual Vestry Meeting on April 4th 1921 "It was agreed to apply for a Faculty to erect a War Memorial in the Church Yard on the north side of the entrance gate."[134] The exigencies of World War II brought a different perspective and it was agreed by the PCC on October 21st 1941 that the railings in front of the war memorial should be taken for the War Effort.[135] Even though the oil lights that must still have been in use in the 1940s would have been far more muted than electric ones, there was a concern about blackout for the windows. This would have been necessary even in a remote location like Blanchland, just in case any lights might guide enemy bombers or be mistaken for a target. In August 1940 the blackout problem was discussed and, given the size of the windows, it was considered that the cost of the material and fitting would be far too expensive. However, the vicar came up with an innovative idea - he offered to loan a tent to be fitted in the outer church (presumably meaning not in the Chancel), if suitable. So this was tried and, proving to be satisfactory, was gratefully received.[136] It must have been an interesting sight!

Other additions to the Abbey included the purchase of a safe. Mr White of Newcastle had a safe available, presumably surplus to his requirements, which the PCC proposed to buy in January 1934. They were willing to pay £4 plus commission or to bid up to £4. 10s if necessary![137] An emergency meeting was convened on 31st July of that year to consider purchasing chairs for the north transept as they would be needed for a special Open-Air service on August 5th. They certainly were not giving themselves much time to do this. They agreed unanimously, however, that 50 chairs "be purchased from Messrs. Nusenbeaum Ltd as per Illustration No. 100 on their catalogue at 4/11d each". [138]

One item in the minutes, unrelated to the fabric of the Abbey, concerns the Sunday School children. In January 1931 concern was expressed that they were arriving early. Consequently, there were fears that they would damage the furnishings and books. One suggestion was to move the Sunday School to the back of the church but the idea of locking the building until it was time for Sunday School wasn't desirable. The possibility of using the village school was also mooted, but the expense of the hire was also less desirable. The vicar concluded that he hoped the children could be stopped from arriving early and that their behaviour would improve![139]

[133] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.
[134] Annual Vestry and Church Meetings Minute Book 1907 – 1974.
[135] PCC Minute Book 1930 – 1960.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Blanchland PCC Agenda Book 1930 – 1949.

All illustrations are taken from photographs or postcards in the possession of supporters of the 6 As of Blanchland Project.

5. Geophysics Survey and Archaeological Evaluation

R. Young

An archaeological evaluation was carried out from 25th Jan. 2023 to 12th Feb 2023 at Blanchland Abbey. The work was devised as a community archaeology project with volunteers working under professional supervision. Supervisory staff included Dr Robert Young, Dr Sheila Severn Newton, Dr Andrew Charles Newton.

The three internal trenches and one external trench (Fig. 10) were located in relation to the results of a ground penetrating radar survey carried out by Archaeological Services, University of Durham (Figs. 8 and 9). This revealed a range of archaeological features potentially relating to earlier activity on the church site e.g.

- A small rectilinear feature to the east of the tower that it was thought might represent the remains of the northern part of the former chantry chapel (see above). (Trench 1 external)
- Two parallel features in the church interior, crossing the north transept in line with the choir and the tower, which it was thought might represent foundations associated with an earlier church. (Trenches 2 and 3 interior)
- Parallel features identified outside the western side of the tower probably represent the remains of the former school building or chapel.
- Possible evidence of putative acoustic pits has been identified in the choir (Trench 4 interior).
- Several possible unmarked graves have been identified in the churchyard.
- Possible services and landscaping works were also been identified.

The archaeological evaluation was carried out to provide sufficient data for informed decisions to be made regarding:

i) The nature of the archaeological features revealed in the geophysical survey.

ii) Their archaeological significance and importance (*sensu* the National Planning Policy Framework, 2023).

iii) The likely impact of the proposed development works within the church (see above) upon any such features and

iv) The appropriate mitigation of the proposed development's impacts upon those remains.

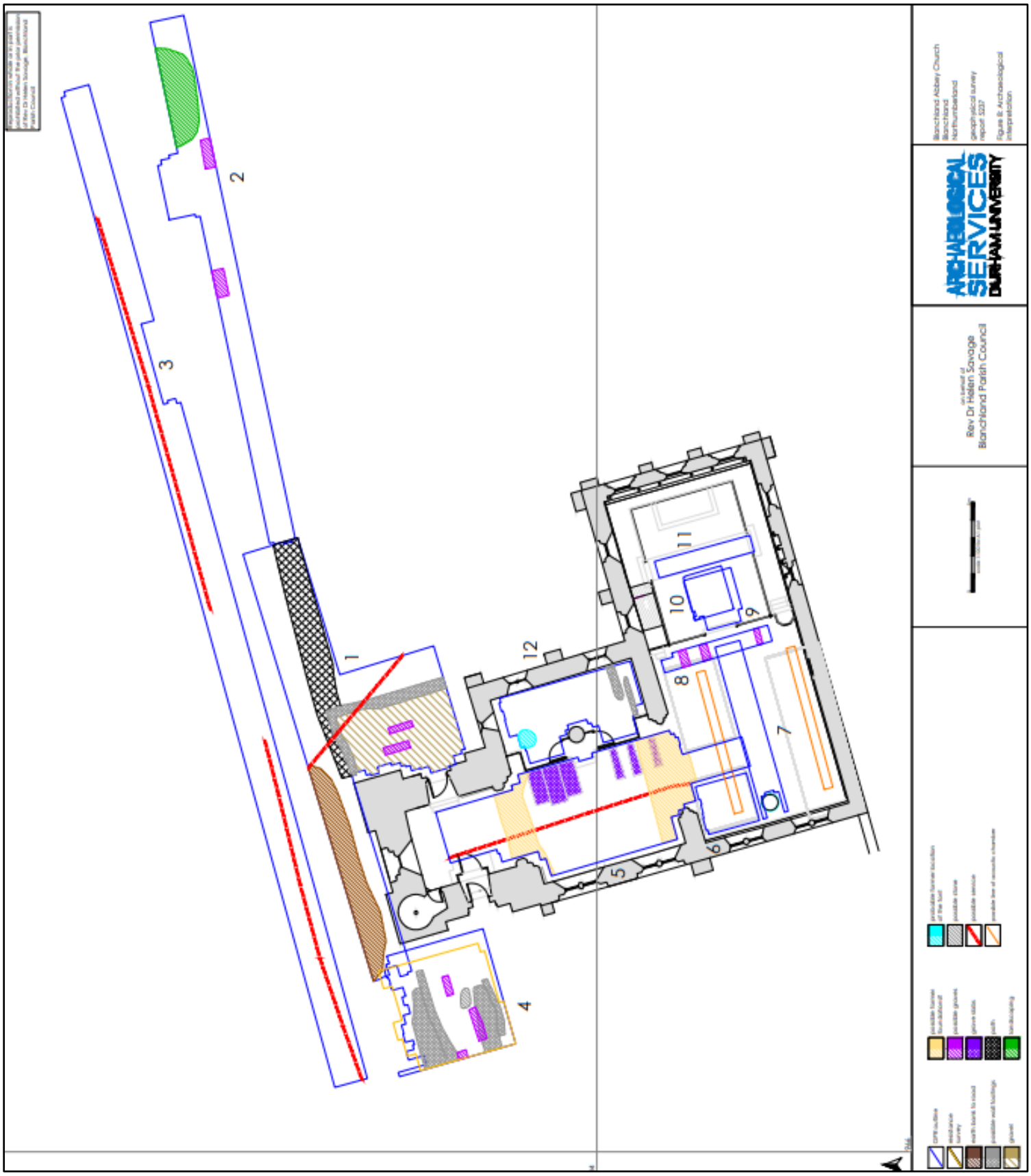


Fig.8: Ground Penetrating Radar Results (Archaeological Services University of Durham).

Fig. 9: Location of Evaluation Trenches in Response to Geophysics Results. (Archaeological Services University of Durham).

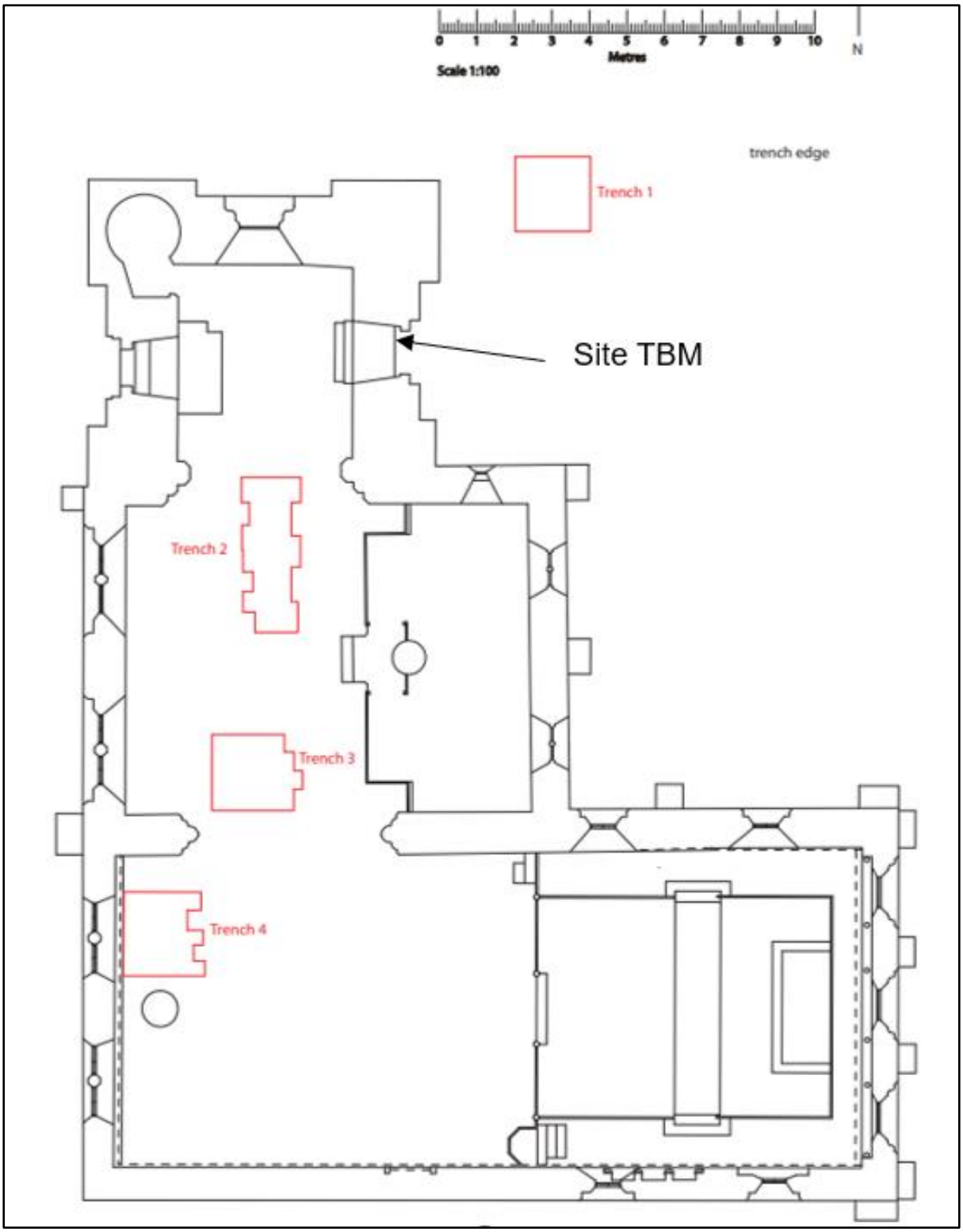


Fig. 10: Internal Plan of Abbey showing Location of Evaluation Trenches (S. Severn Newton).

5.1 Trench 1 (External)

Trench 1 measured 2m x 2m and was located externally to the Abbey at its north end (Fig. 10). Removal of a thin turf/grass layer (101) revealed (102), a regular spread of grey, brown, sandy soil with gravel chips, some 10-30 cms in depth. (Pl. 1.1).

Pl. 1.1: Trench 1 Showing extent of (102) from south.

This was removed to expose (103) in the SW corner of the trench. (103) was a mixture of soil and coarse gravel, compacted with some larger sandstone fragments and was the upper fill of cut (105). (Pl. 1.2; Fig. 1.1).

Pl. 1.2: Trench 1 from East showing (103) and (104) with (102) removed.

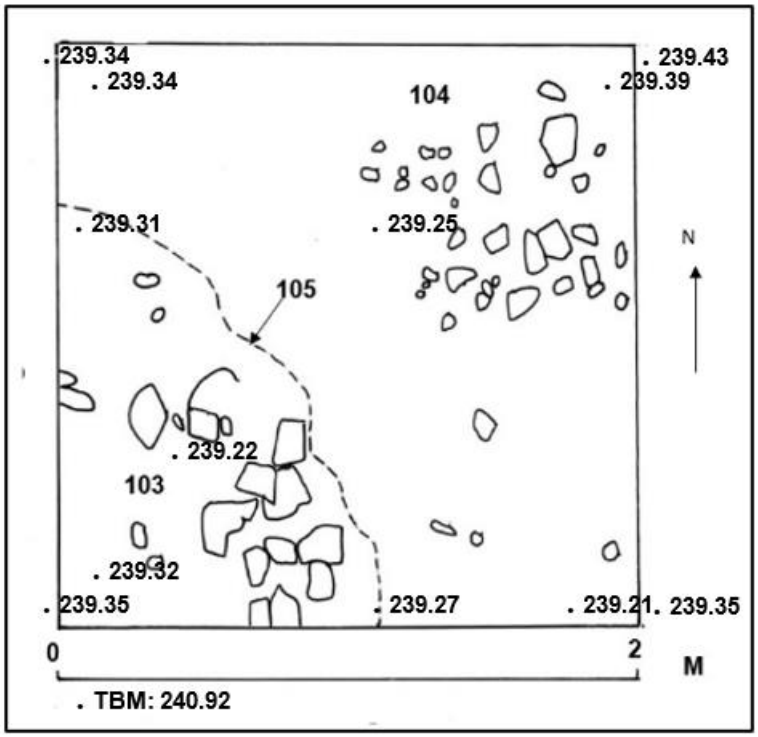


Fig. 1.1: Trench 1. Plan 1 showing (103), (104) and cut (105). (102) removed.

This proved to be the cut for a lead water pipe, some 90 cms wide at the surface and c. 47 cms deep running NW/SE across the trench as revealed by the geophysics survey. Excavation of (103) came down onto a lower fill marked by (107), a dark brown soil with much iron slag. (105) cuts (104), immediately below (102). (104) was an orange/brown clay soil with much broken sandstone (max. depth across the trench c. 40cms) (Pl. 1.2, 1.3; Fig. 1.1), (106) a dark brown clay soil (max. depth c. 20cms) with sandstone fragments was immediately below (104) and above (110) a hard, sticky, dark brown clay which may be the natural subsoil. (Pl. 1.3; 1.7; 1.8; Fig. 1.2. 1.4; 1.5; 1.6). (106) was cut by (105) and a shallow, ephemeral, linear feature (108) c. 3 cms deep and 18cms wide, filled by the overlying (104). (Pl. 1.4; Fig. 1.3).

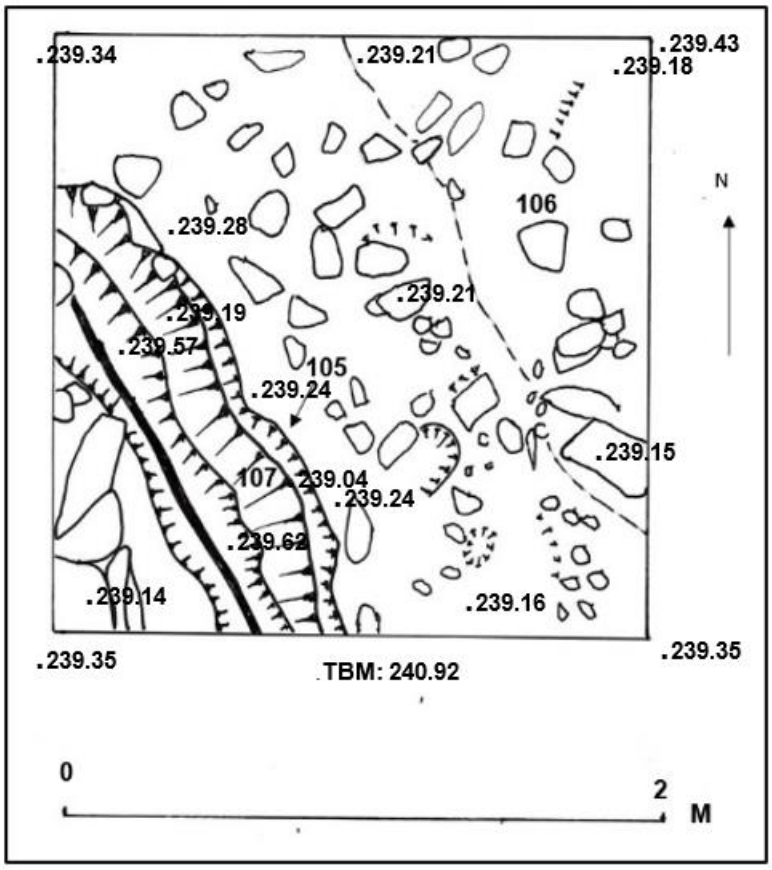


Fig. 1.2: Trench 1. Plan 2 showing (106) (107) and cut (105).

Pl. 1.3: Trench 1 from South showing (105) pipe trench and lead water pipe cutting (104) with (103) and (107) removed.

Pl. 1.4: Trench 1. From south showing (104) removed to reveal (106) cut by (105) and (108) over (110).

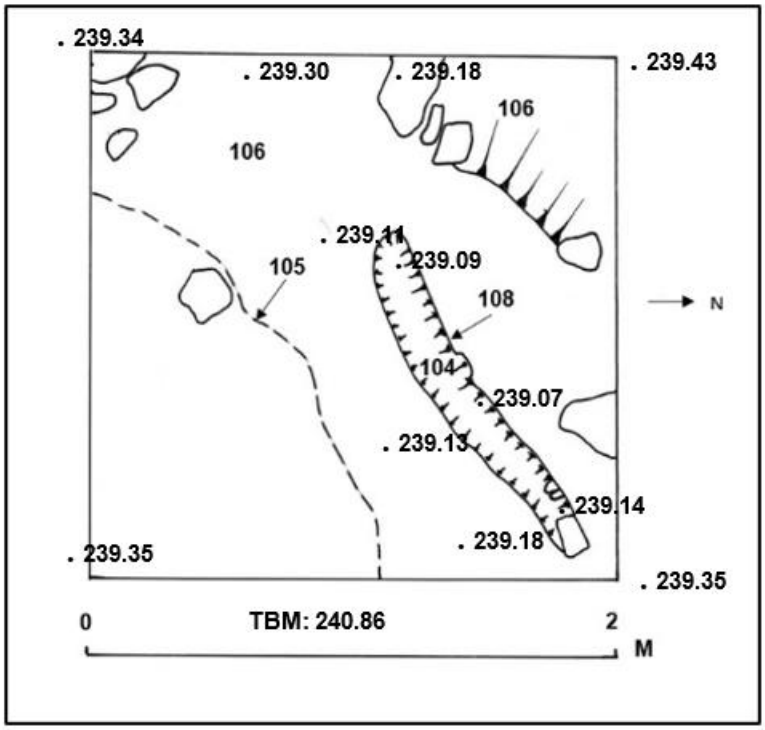


Fig. 1.3: Trench 1. Plan 3 showing (106) cut by (108) (fill 104) and water pipe trench cut (105).

Pl: 1.5: Trench 1 From south showing (110) ? natural cut by (105), robber trench (111) and robber trench fill (109).

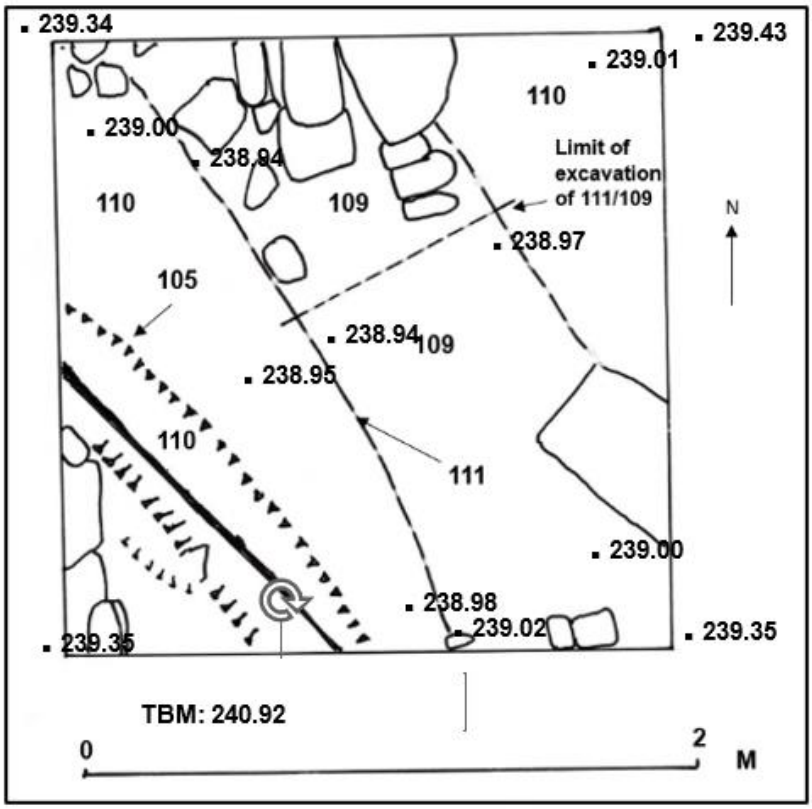


Fig. 1.4: Trench 1. Plan 4 showing (110) (natural) cut by (105) and robber trench cut (111) with fill (109).

(106) overlay (110) and was cut by (111) a robber trench filled with (109), a voided yellow/blue clay layer with much loose masonry rubble, broken sandstone. This was the end product of the backfilling of (111) after the removal of what must have been a substantial wall. The robber trench was c. 70 cms wide and, given time constraints, was not fully excavated. (Pl. 1.5; 1.6; Fig. 1.4; Fig. 1.5)

Pl: 1.6: Trench 1 showing size and fill of robber trench 109 in cut (111) in relation to overlying layers.

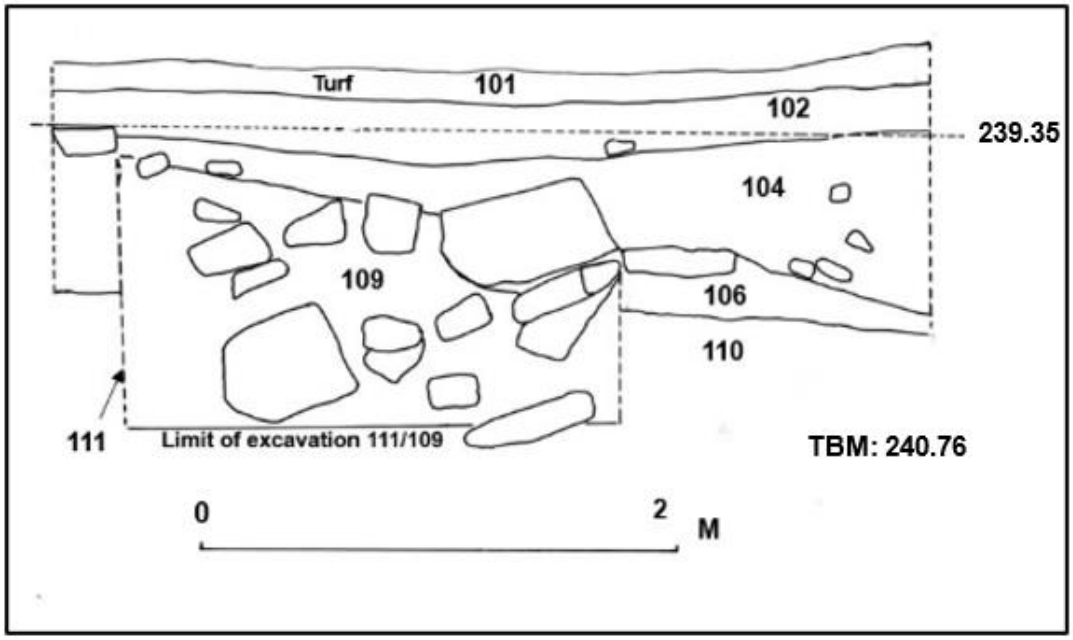


Fig. 1.5: Trench 1. South facing section.

Pl. 1.7: Trench 1. East facing section.

Pl. 1.8: Trench 1. North facing section.

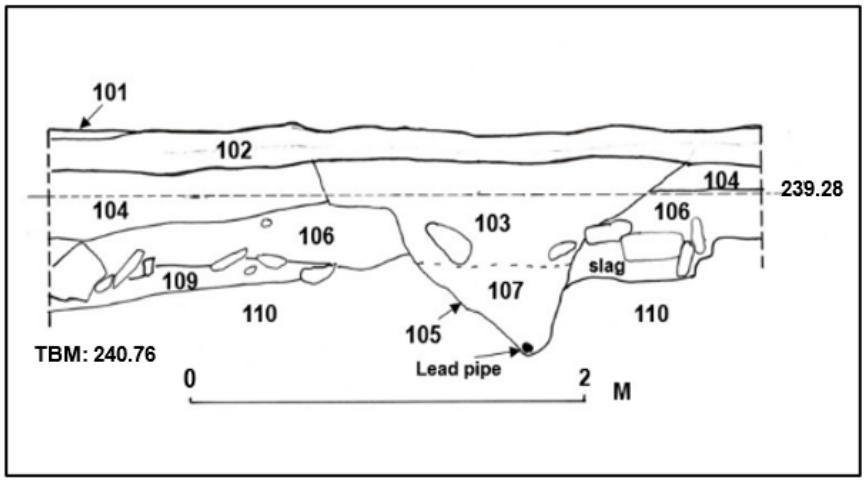


Fig. 1.6 Trench 1: North facing section.

Pl. 1.9: Trench 1. West facing section.

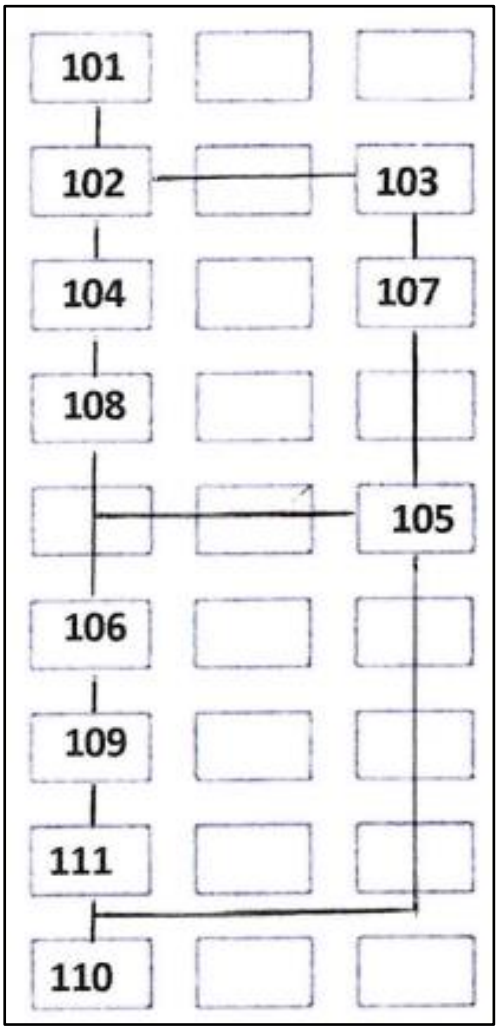


Fig. 1.7: Trench 1 Harris Matrix.

Context List/Description and Finds Concordance – TRENCH 1

Context No.	Description	Finds by category	Finds Dating
101	Shallow turf/moss layer c. 10cms thick	No Finds	Modern
102	Brown/grey sandy soil with fine grit, gravel chips and some sandy clay c. 10-30 cms thick over trench.	No Finds	Modern
103	Dark grey compacted gravel/soil mix. Some quartz and small slag fragments and some sandstone fragments. Upper fill of (105).	1 piece earthenware; 1piece white stone tile; 8 pieces iron slag.	c. C18-19th
104	Orange/brown friable sandy clay with sandstone fragments. Cut by (105). C. 40 cms thick.	4 sherds earthenware; 1 piece bottle glass; 1 iron nail; 3 slag fragments, 1 length thin iron bar ? from window.	c. C18-19th
105	Cut for lead water pipe.	No Finds	
106	Dark grey/brown clay with frequent sandstone fragments. Max. thickness c.20cms.	2 sherds creamware pottery from plate; 1 sherd black glazed earthenware; 1 piece fired furnace bottom, 7 pieces of iron slag; 5 pieces corroded iron ? nail fragments.	c. C18-19th
107	Dark brown slaggy clay.	28 pieces of iron slag.	
108	Cut for ephemeral feature filled with (104)	No Finds	
109	Yellow/blue clay. Fill of robber trench. Much loose rubble, clay and voids.	No Finds	
110	? Natural brown clay.	No Finds	

Phasing and Dating

Phasing the activity within the trench is fairly straightforward on stratigraphical grounds assigning a detailed chronology to the phases is very difficult because of the fact that much material is disturbed and redeposited and finds are not tightly chronologically diagnostic.

Within the limits of the excavation:

Phase 1: The natural clay surface (110) was cut by the trench (111). This may have been a construction trench for wall comprising (109) before robbing.

Phase 2: The wall (111/109) was robbed following the line of its construction trench and at this point the site may have been levelled with (106) and (104).

Phase 3: Levels (104), (106) and (110) were cut by pipe trench (105), backfilled with the lead water pipe and levels (107) and (103).

Phase 4: The whole of the excavated are was sealed by (102).

Pottery from (106) and (104) suggests that the robbing of wall (111/109) and subsequent levelling of the area took place in the late C. 18th - early C. 19th. The slag, ceramics and tile

fragment recorded in (107) and (103) are probably all residual pieces and construction of the water pipe trench probably occurred in the early C. 20th.

5.1.1 Trench 1 Finds

CONTEXT 103

Pottery

Context 103: Cat. 1: One sherd of shiny black glazed earthenware, oxidised orange/red core? C 18th-19th. Max. Dimensions: 20mm x 18mm x 4mm. Weight: 1 gm.

Pl. 1.10: Pottery, tile and iron slag, Context 103.

Tile

Context 103: Cat. 2: 1 piece white stone tile. Max. Dimensions: 42mm x 38mm x 6mm. Weight: 12 gms. Pl. 1.10.

Iron Slag

Context 103: Cat. 3: 8 pieces of vesicular, rounded, iron slag. Total Weight: 830 gms. Pl. 1.10

CONTEXT 104

Pottery

Context 104: Cat. 4: 4 sherds of lustrous, black glazed earthen ware, oxidized orange/red core ? C18th-19th. Max. Dimensions; 21mm x 15mm x 4mm; 22mm x 14mm x 5mm; 23mm x 16mm x 5mm; 15mm x 12mm x 5mm. Total Weight: 8 gms.

Pl.1.11: Pottery and bottle glass fragment. Context 104.

Bottle Glass

Context 104: Cat. 5: One fragment of black/green bottle glass? from C18th 'onion' bottle. Max. Dimensions: 49mm x 23mm x 11mm. Weight: 18 gms. Pl. 1.11.

Corroded Iron Nail and Slag

Context 104: Cat. 6: One corroded iron nail and 3 pieces of iron slag. Weight: 37 gms.

Pl. 1.12 Corroded nail and slag. Context 104.

Context 104: Cat. 7: Square sectioned partially corroded iron bar? from window**.** Max. Dimensions : 780mm x 10mm x 4mm. Weight: 446gms.

Pl. 1.13: Corroded iron bar? from window? Context 104.

CONTEXT 106

Pottery

Context 106: Cat. 8: 2 sherds of cream ware? from plate. C. 18-19th. Max. Dimensions: 18mm x 14mm x 3mm; 47mm x 31mm x 3mm. Total Weight: 8 gms.

Pl. 1.14: Lustrous black glazed ware sherd and two sherds Cream Ware. Context 106.

Context 106: Cat. 9: 1 sherd lustrous black glazed ware, oxidized orange/brown core ? C18-19th. Max. Dimensions: 24mm x 19mm x 5mm. Weight: 1 gm. Pl. 1.14.

Iron Work/Slag

Context 106: Cat 10: 1 piece of ? furnace bottom. Weight: 158gms and 7 pieces of ? iron slag. Weight: 311gms.

PL. 1.15. Furnace bottom (top left) and iron slag. Context 106.

Context 106: Cat. 11: 5 pieces or corroded iron including some nail fragments. Total Weight: 49 gms.

Pl. 1.16. 5 pieces corroded iron, including nail fragments. Context 106.

CONTEXT 107

Iron Slag

Context 107: Cat. 12: 28 pieces of iron slag (sample). Total Weight: 6282 gms.

Pl. 1.17: Nine pieces of iron slag (sample). Context 107.

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 measured 1m x 10m and was orientated in a N/S direction at the northern end of the North Transept. (Fig. 10)

Pl. 2.1: Location of Trench 2 in North Transept.

Removal of the sandstone floor slabs in the area (200) (Pl. 2.1) revealed (201), a levelling deposit consisting of a fine, friable, sandy matrix with many sandstone fragments, and shale and mortar inclusions in profusion, and some 16-19cms thick. (Pl. 2.2).

Pl.2.2: Removal of floor slabs in Trench 2.

This was visible across the whole of the trench. A very thin skim (c. 2-3cms thick) of this material overlay the E/W orientated wall (203/204/205) (Pl. 2.3, Figs. 2.1 and 2.2) located at the southern edge of the excavated area. This fine skim of material also underlay an E/W orientated carved grave slab placed in its current location c. 1880. The action of relaying this grave slab necessitated the cutting of elements (204/205) of the E/W wall. The wall

(203/205/204) was clearly constructed before this levelling episode. (201) was clearly later than the wall, butting as it did the north and south faces of the structure.

Pl. 2.3: Trench 2 from south showing (200), (201) and wall foundation (203-205).

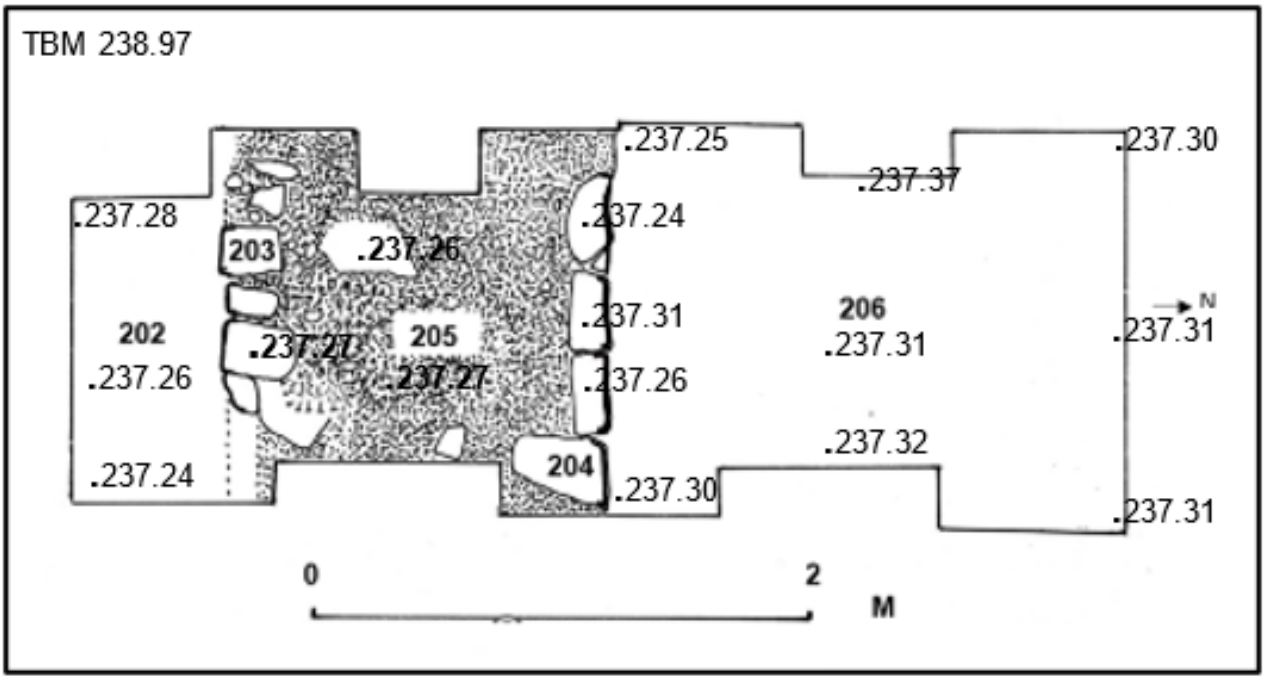


Fig. 2.1: Trench 2. Plan 1 showing (201) removed to reveal E/W wall footing (202), (203), (205), and (204) and (206),

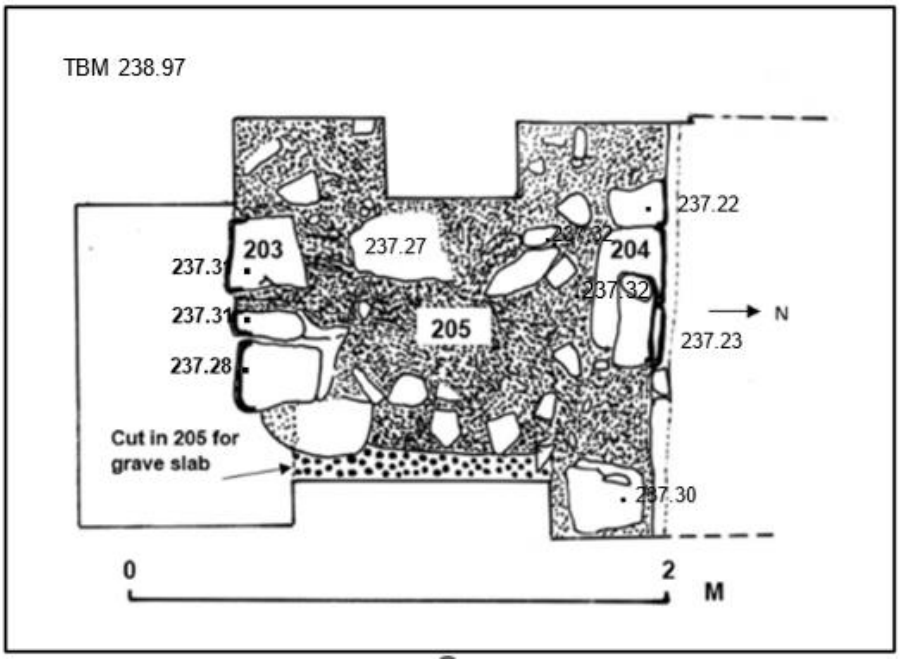
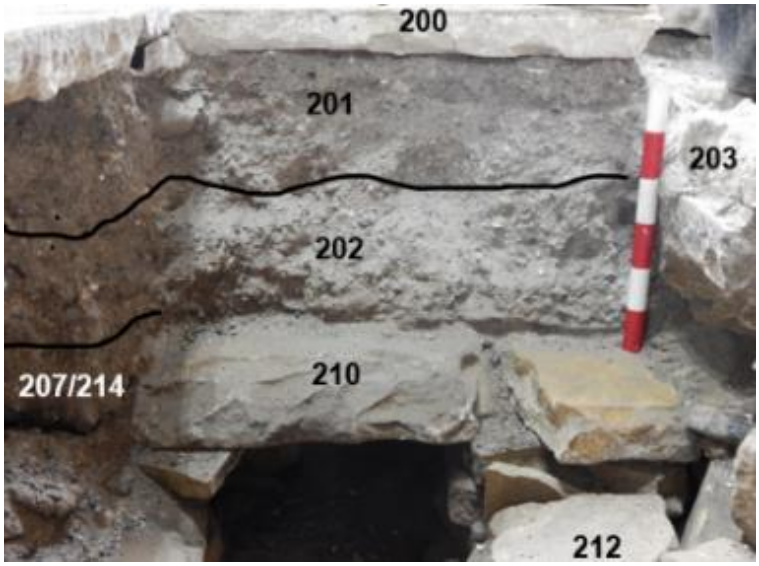


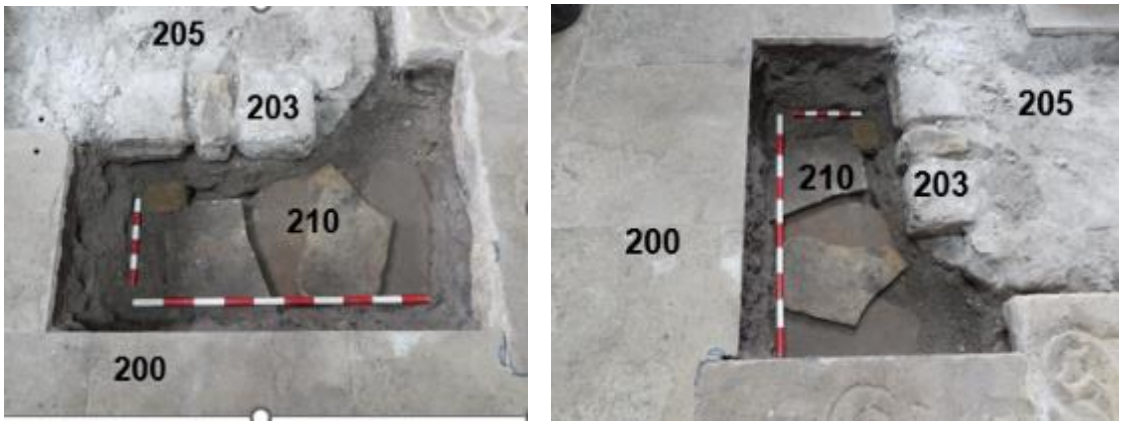
Fig. 2.2: Trench 2. Plan 2. Final excavated plan of E/W wall (203), (205), (204), showing cut into 205 for insertion of re-positioned medieval grave slab.

Once cleaned and clearly defined across the excavated area, (201) was removed to a maximum depth of c. 16-19cms to reveal (202) to the south of the wall and (206) to the north. (202) was darker than (201), but contained the same shale, mortar and sandstone inclusions. At its deepest (202) was c. 15-20 cms, while (206) was c.7 cms thick. (Fig. 2.1)

(202) directly overlay the cover slabs of an east west orientated culvert (210), c. 5-8cms thick. (Pl. 2.4; 2.5, 2.6, 2.7; Fig. 2.3, 2.4).



Pl. 2.4 West facing section Trench 2 showing slabs (200) over (201); (201) overlying (202) and (202) over culvert capstones (210) and side slabs (212).



Pls. 2.5/2.6 showing culvert capstones (210) beneath wall edge (203).

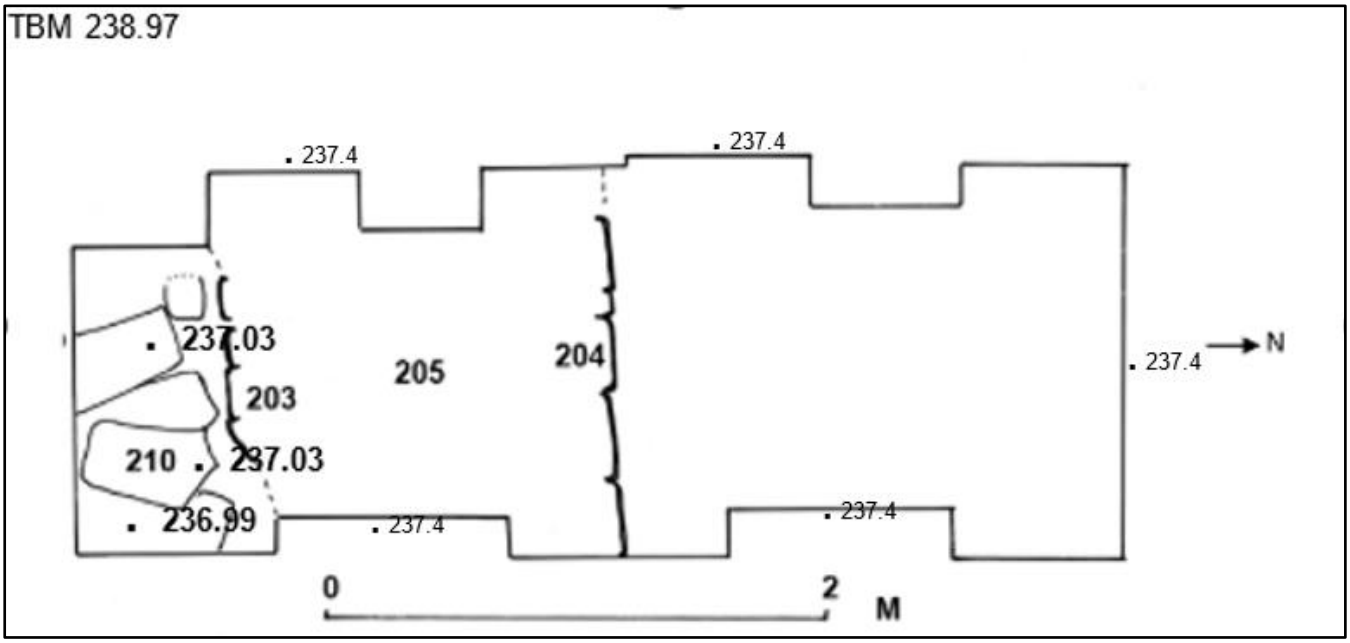
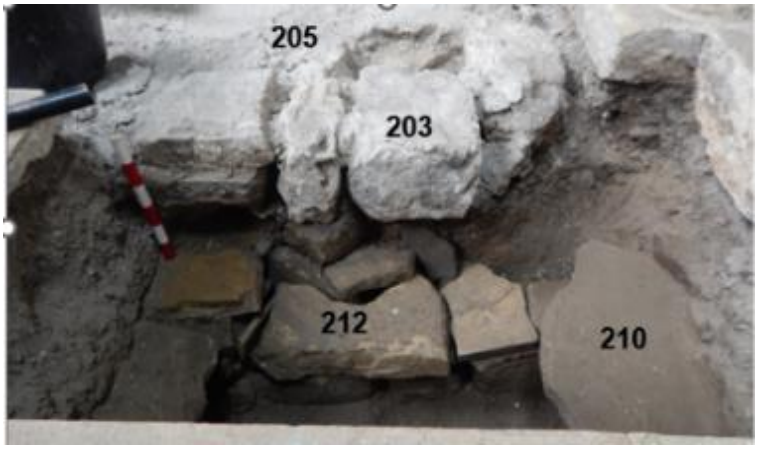


Fig. 2.3: Trench 2. Plan 3. Drain cover (210) under (203).

These cover slabs were re-used stone roofing tiles with overall dimensions of 45cms x 22cms x 5 cms where these could be measured. The culvert (210/212/213), cuts (207) and (214), clay layers which underly the wall (203/205/204) (Pl. 2.7; Fig. 2.4; Fig. 2.5). The wall itself is also clearly later than the culvert. The culvert is of dry-stone construction and its northern edge (212) consisted of three courses at its eastern end and 2 courses at the western end, with a total depth of c. 20cms. (Fig 2.4).



Pl. 2.7 Northern edge of culvert (212) underlying wall foundations (203) and culvert capstones (210).

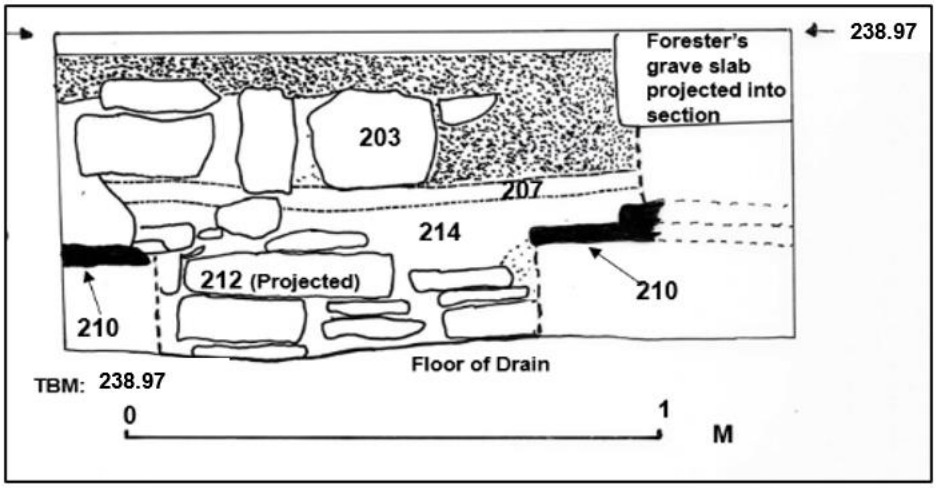


Fig. 2.4: South facing section showing relationship of (210) and (212) to (207), (214) and south face wall (203).

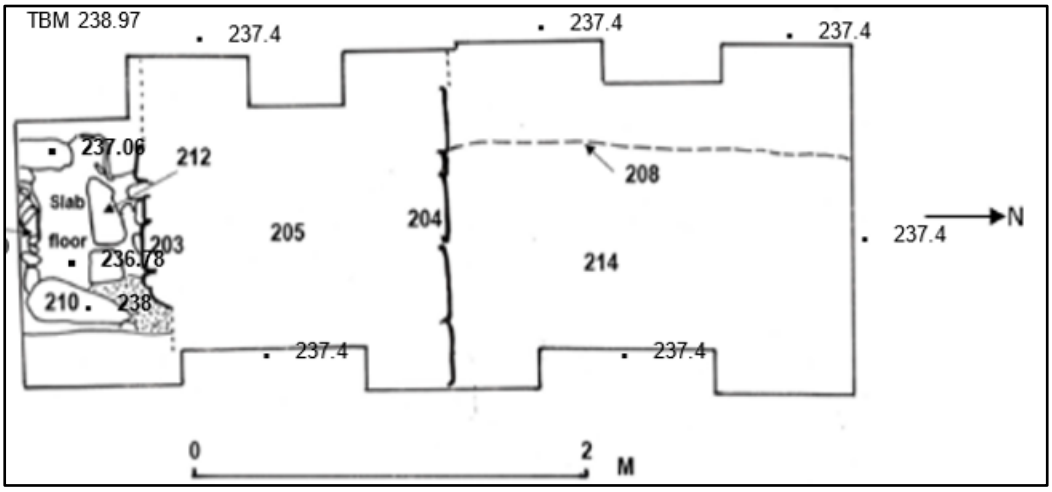


Fig. 2.5: Trench 2. Plan 4. Showing culvert (210), (212) and (213), E/W wall (203), (205), (204) and (214) running beneath E/W wall and cut by (208).

The southern edge (213) consisted of 2 courses of sandstone slabs and stood to a depth of 19-21cms. (Pl. 2.8). Both edges stood on a slab base (216). (Fig. 2.5).

Pl. 2.8: Southern edge of culvert (213) under capstones (210) and (201/202).

To the north of (203/204/205), the filling layer (206), overlay a thin, dark brown, gritty, clay layer with some mortar and coal fragments (207). (Pl. 2.9; Fig. 2.6).

Pl. 2.9: Trench 2 from east showing (207) cut by (216) grave cut filled by (215). (207) and (215) both cut by (208) cut for N/S culvert, capstones (211).

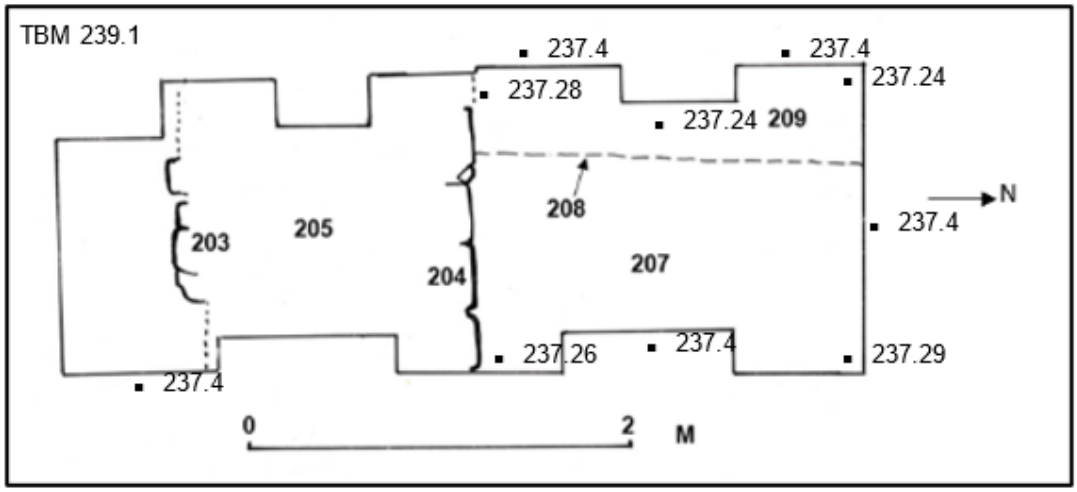


Fig. 2.6: Trench 2. Plan 5. Showing E/W orientated wall (203), (205), (204), (207) cut by (208) with fill (209).

(207) was between 3-5 cms thick and in turn overlay (214) a thicker, heavier, dark brown clay layer with some grey clay lumps, shale fragments, sandstone fragments and some mortar inclusions. (Fig. 2.7; Pl. 2.10). This was removed to a depth c.3-5 cms thick at the northern end of the trench and to a depth of 10-12cms at the south where (207) and (214) both underly wall (203/204/205) (Fig. 2.7). (214) is the earliest excavated deposit in Trench 2. (207) and (214) were both cut by (216) an E/W orientated grave with fill (215). (Fig. 2.8; Pls. 2.10, 2.11). This grave was c.70-80 cms wide.

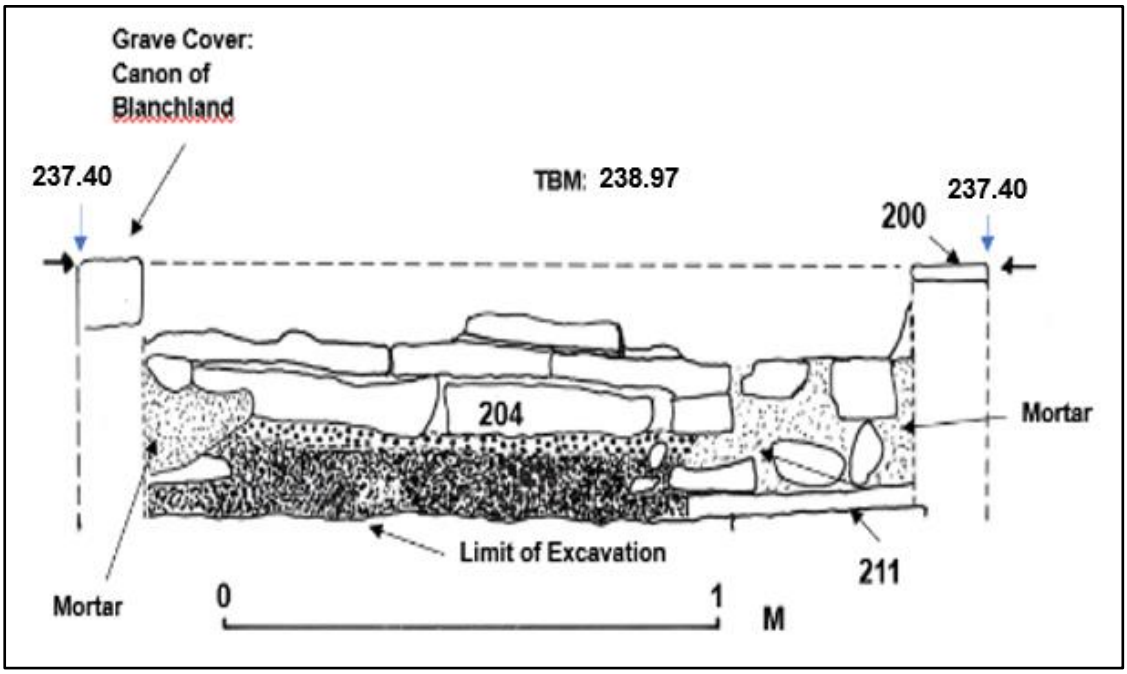
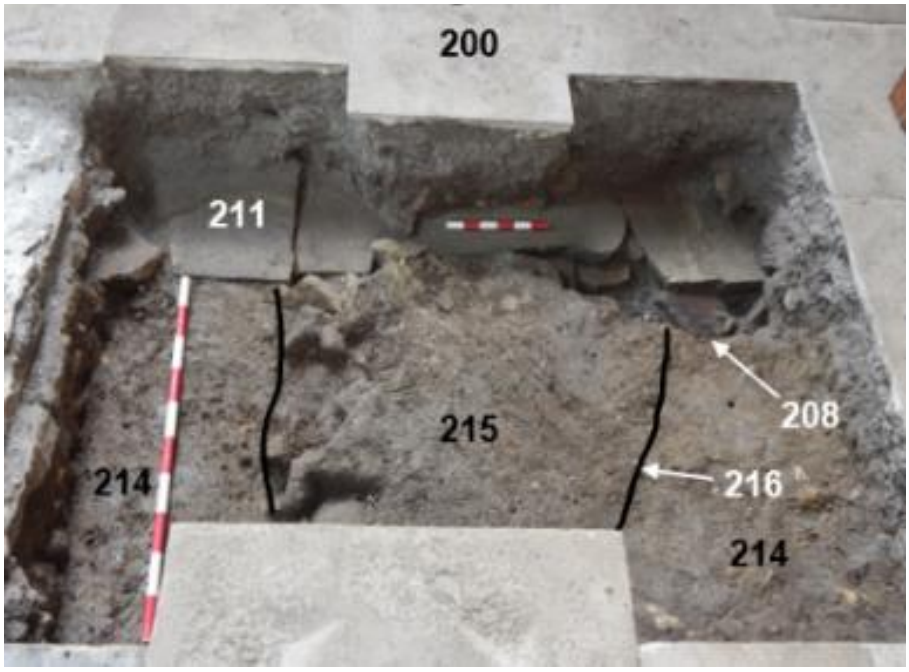


Fig. 2.7: Trench 2. North facing section showing relationship of (207), (214) to north face of E/W wall (204). (207) (214) cut by (208) with culvert slabs (211).



Pl. 2.10: Trench 2 from east revealing (214) cut by (216) with fill (215). Both in turn cut by (208)

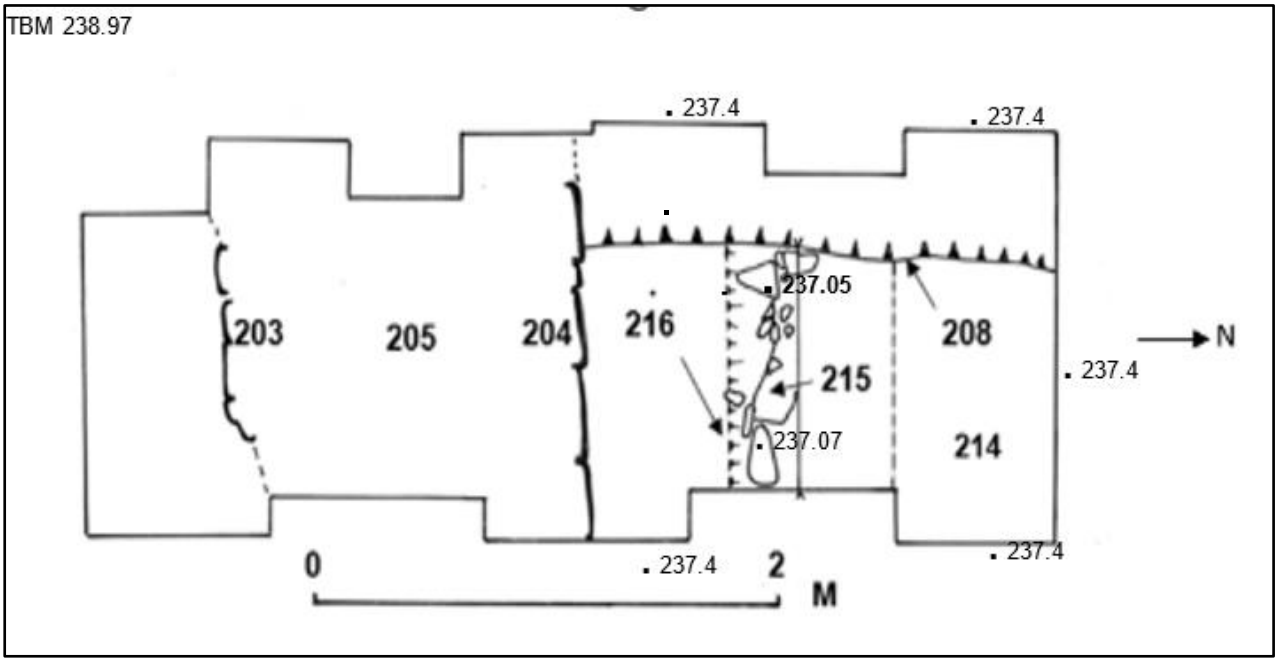


Fig. 2.8: Trench 2. Plan 6. Showing (214) cut by E/W orientated grave (216) and grave fill (215) partially excavated. Grave and (214) cut by (208).

Pl. 2.11: Trench 2 from east showing partial excavation of grave fill (215) sitting in cut (216). (214) and (215) both cut by (208) which holds N/S culvert capstones (211).

(215) was a brown/yellow/grey, wet, silty, clay, containing several large, undressed sandstone lumps? destruction material from the Abbey. This feature was excavated to a depth of just over 30cms when a human rib fragment was encountered. Once the nature of the feature had been determined, work ceased and the rib was reburied as the grave was backfilled. (Pl. 2.10, 2.11; Fig. 2.8)

The grave cut and fill (216/215) and (207) and (214) were, in turn, cut by a culvert (211), running N/S along the western edge of the excavated area. The culvert sits in a cut (208). (Pl. 2.11; Fig. 2.9).

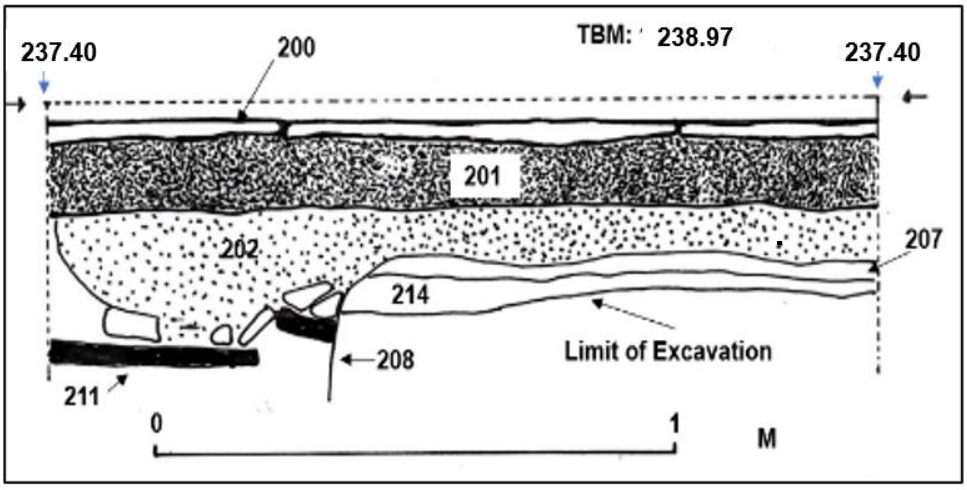
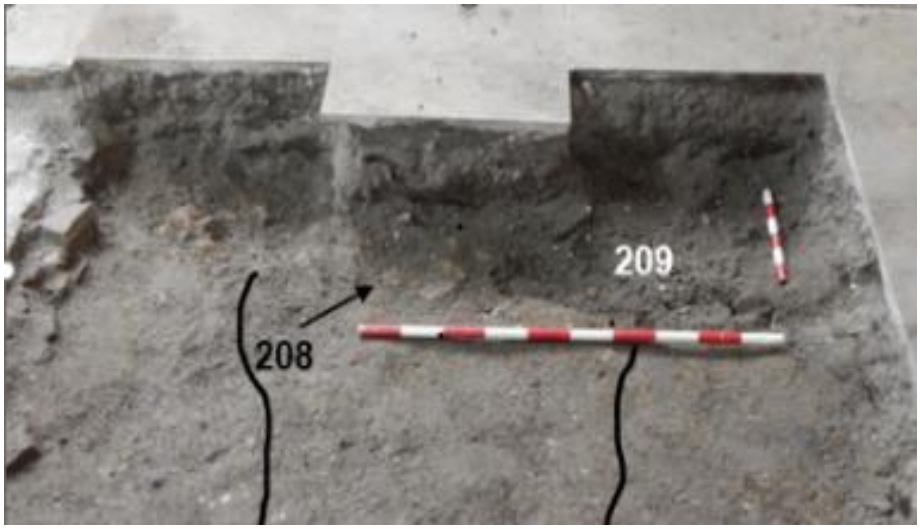


Fig. 2.9: Trench 2. South facing section showing relationship between (207) and (214), beneath (201) and (202). Cut by (208), with culvert slabs (211).

Overlying the slabs of the culvert, and sitting just inside the cut (208), was a fill of small sandstone fragments in a matrix of friable, sandy soil (209). (Pl. 2.12). This was also overlain by (206).



Pl. 2.12: Trench 2 east showing (209) upper fill of culvert cut (208) cutting E/W orientated grave.

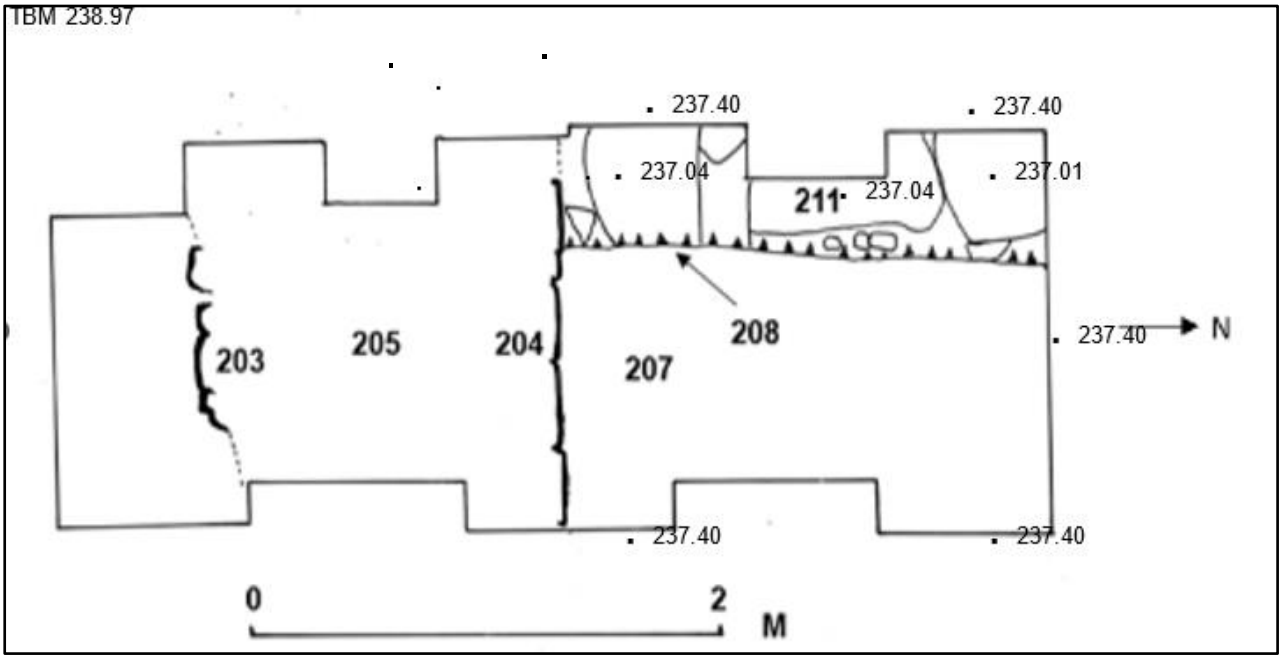


Fig. 2.10: Trench 2. Plan 7. Showing E/W wall (203, 205, 204) and (207) cut by (208) with culvert slabs (211) running under trench edge.

The culvert was not excavated as the overlying cover slabs ran into the trench edge. The culvert also underlay the E/W wall. (Pl. 2.11; Fig. 2.10)

The culverts (210) and (211) seem to be linked, as exploration with an endoscopic camera from (210) showed a junction beneath the wall (203/205/204), with culvert (211) running for at least 8m northward from this junction.

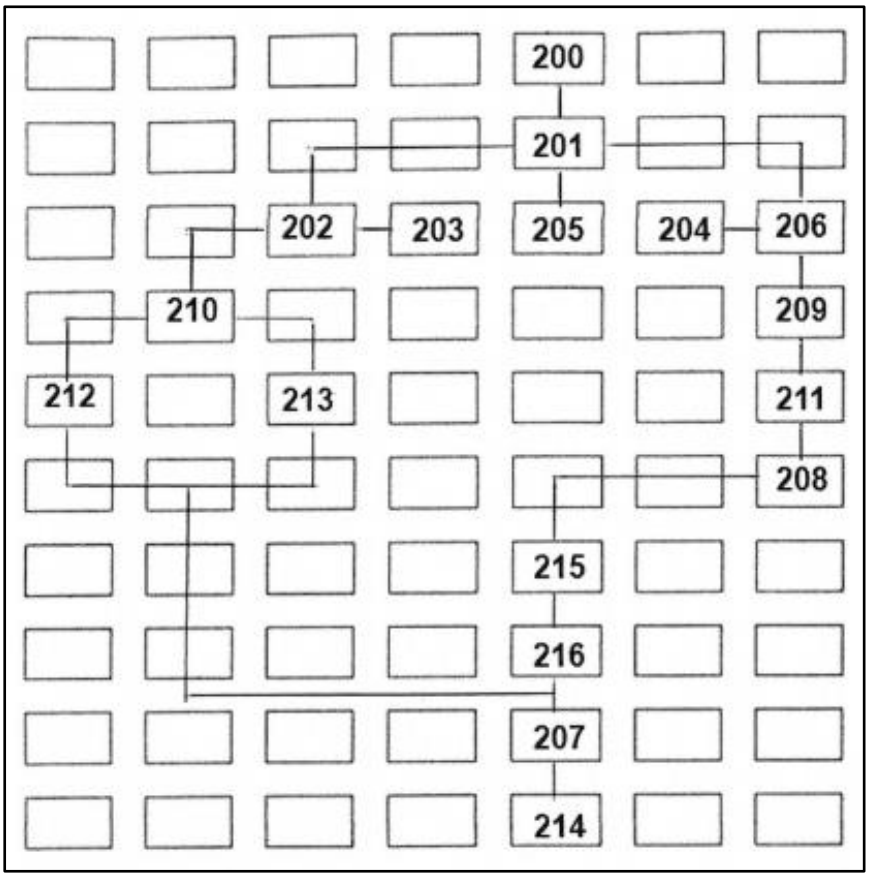


Fig. 2.11: Trench 2. Harris Matrix.

Context List/Description and Finds Concordance – TRENCH 2

Context No.	Description	Finds by category	Finds Dating
201	Grey/brown, coarse, friable, sandy matrix with shale, mortar and sandstone fragments	2 frags. Sandstone floor tile, 3? small whetstones, 11 frags white wall plaster,	Indeterminate
202	Dark brown/grey gritty, sandy soil with mortar fragments	3 split sheep bone roof pegs, 2 corroded hand forged iron nails, 2 fragments of wood	Indeterminate
203	Southern edge N/S wall. Mortared stone 2 courses high.		
204	Northern edge of E/W wall. Mortared stone. 2 courses high.		
205	Mortared core of E/W wall		
206	Dark brown sandy/clay matrix with some sandstone fragments. Levelling deposit.	Base sherd of cream glazed terracotta cream dish, base sherd of transfer print decorated cup, very small sherd of White Ware, 4 frags. Dark green vessel glass,. 2 fragments from the base of a ? C18th, dark green/black, 'onion' wine bottle with omphalos base, 6 angular shards of window glass and two small glass 'blobs', 7 heavily corroded, fragmentary, hand-	Pottery and glass C18-19th. Wall plaster 'Medieval' but clearly redeposited. Other finds indeterminate.

		made nails, 1 large, heavily corroded, hand- made bolt/large nail, 6 pieces of plain plaster ? from wall surface. White, lime-based. Two pieces exhibit? Brown paint, 3 pieces moulded wall plaster, 1 piece lead window came	
207	Dark brown gritty clay soil with mortar fragments, some coal and sandstone fragments.	7 animal bone fragments, 1 piece clay pipe stem,	Indeterminate
208	N/S cut for drain/culvert		
209	Dark brown clay soil in cut 208	7 fragments corroded iron including 1 fragment of hand forged nail	Indeterminate
210	Cover slabs (re-used stone roof tiles) for E/W drain/ culvert, to S of 203/204/205		
211	Cover slabs (re-used stone roof tiles) for N/S culvert/drain in cut 208		
212	Slabs of N edge of drain/culvert beneath 210		
213	Slabs of S edge of drain/culvert beneath 210		
214	Heavy, dark brown grey clay with some shale fragments and rare mortar fragments.	9 pieces wall plaster. 1 fragment of corroded hand forged nail.	Indeterminate
215	Brown/grey sandy/gritty clay with rounded sandstone fragments. Grave fill. E/W orientated		
216	Cut for 215		

Phasing and Dating

Phasing the activity within the trench is fairly straightforward on stratigraphical grounds assigning a detailed chronology to the phases is very difficult because of the fact that much material is disturbed and redeposited and finds are not tightly chronologically diagnostic.

Within the limits of the excavation:

Phase 1: Grave (216, fill 215) cuts surfaces (207) and (214).? Medieval/pre-final Dissolution in 1539. **(Contexts 207, 214, 215, 216)**

Phase 2: Construction of culverts/drains 208 and 210? Pre-1815. **(Contexts 208, 209, 210, 211 212, 213).** If the culverts were laid down at the same time as the example observed in Trench 4 then the timing of construction would appear to be between 1750 (when the west wall of the church was rebuilt – the Trench 4 culvert overlies the construction trench for the wall and butts against it) and 1815.

Phase 3: Base of? stone wall constructed over culverts – post 1750 and pre-1815. **(Contexts 203, 204, 205)**

Phase 4: Levelling of site begins with (206) (202) (201) – pre-the laying of existing stone slabbed floor in 1815. Pottery and glass from (206) suggest a broad late C18th (more likely) early C19th date for this activity. **(Contexts 206, 202, 201)**

Phase 5 Current stone slabbed floor laid c. 1815. **(Context 200)**

It is not possible to give a closer chronology for the designated phases, as properly sealed deposits are few and the levelling materials used prior to the laying of the 1815 floor were probably brought from a number of locations.

5.2.1 Trench 2 Finds

CONTEXT 201

Sandstone Floor Tile

Context 201: Cat. 1: Two fragments of bedded sandstone floor tile, both retaining traces of white mortar.,

a) One fragment with elegantly squared corner. Max. Dimensions: 99mm x 83mm x 18mm. Weight: 206 gms.

b) Sub-rectangular fragment with white mortar on both faces. Max. Dimensions: 103mm x 101mm x 10mm. Weight: 192 gms

Pl. 2.13: Bedded sandstone floor tile. Context 201.

Whetstones.

Context 201: Cat. 2: Three possible rounded, sub rectangular sectioned whetstones. All in grey, fine-grained, sandstone.

a) 43mm x 12mm x 11mm. Weight: 10 gms

b) 51mm x 14mm x 17mm. Weight: 18 gms.

c) 92mm x 22mm x 13mm. Weight: 43 gms.

Pl. 2.14: Three whetstones. Context 201.

Wall Plaster.

Context 201: Cat. 3: 11 fragments of white wall plaster. Two pieces show evidence of painting. The plaster has clearly been applied to a rough-cast backing layer on the Abbey wall. Several pieces exhibit lathe impressions. The two painted pieces show broad red/brown bands.

a) 72mm x 57mm x 28mm. Weight. 59 gms. Exhibits a band of painting some 3cms wide.

b) 67mm x 50mm x 37mm. Weight: 92 gms. Flat surface painted.

9 fragments exhibit flattened and smoothed surfaces on a rough-cast base. Weight: 261 gms.

Pl. 2.15. Wall plaster including two painted pieces. (Bottom left). Context 201.

CONTEXT 202

Animal Bone

Context 202: Cat. 4: 3 longitudinally split sheep bones – used as pegs for stone roof tiles.

a) 97mm x 18mm x 12mm.

b) 78mm x 21mm x 10mm.

c) 75mm x 24mm x 17mm.

Total Weight: 27 gms.

Pl. 2.16: Animal bone. Context 202.

Iron Nails

Context 202: Cat 5: 2 heavily corroded and concreted iron nails. Hand-made.

a) 53mm x 9mm x 11mm Weight: 6 gms.

b) 53mm x 9mm x 10mm. Weight: 6 gms.

Pl. 2.17: Iron nails. Context 206.

Wood

Context 202: Cat. 6: 2 pieces of longitudinally split timber.

a) 102mm x 43mm x 10mm Weight: 10 gms.

b) 56mm x 13mm x 4mm. Weight: Less than 1 gm.

Pl: 2.18 Wood fragments. Context 202.

CONTEXT 206

Pottery

Context 206: Cat.7:

a) Base fragment of C.19th, cream glazed terracotta cream dish. Circular foot ring c. 10 cms diam. Max. Sherd Dimension: 37mm x 33mm x 13mm. Weight: 15gms.

b) Base fragment of transfer print decorated cup fragment. c. 10cms base diameter. Thin foot ring. Max. Sherd Dimension:20mm x 16mm x 3mm. Weight: 2 gms.

c) Very small sherd of White Ware C.19th. Max. Sherd Dimensions:12mm x 8mm x 3mm. Weight: Less than 1 gm.

Pl. 2.19: Pottery fragments. Context 206.

Vessel Glass

Context 206: Cat. 8: 4 fragments of dark green vessel glass. Weight: 5 gms.

Pl. 2.20: Vessel Glass. Context 206.

Bottle Glass

Context 206: Cat.9: 2 fragments from the base of a ? C18th, dark green/black, 'onion' wine bottle with omphalos base. Weight: 10gms.

Pl. 2.21: Bottle Glass. Context 206.

Window Glass

Context 206: Cat. 10: 6 angular shards of window glass and two small glass 'blobs'.

Max. Dimension: 66mm x 16mm x 2mm. Min. Dimension: 17mm x 9mm x 2mm. Total Weight: 7 gms.

Pl. 2.22: Window Glass. Context 206.

Ironwork

Context 206: Cat. 11:

a) 7 heavily corroded, fragmentary, hand-made nails. Total Weight: 54 gms.

b) 1 large, heavily corroded, hand- made bolt/large nail. Weight: 135gms.

Pl. 2.23: Ironwork. Context 206.

Plaster

Context 206: Cat. 12: 6 pieces of plain plaster ? from wall surface. White, lime-based. Two pieces exhibit? brown paint. Max. Dimensions: 72mm x 56mm x 42mm. Min. Dimensions: 32mm x 27mm x 12mm. Total Weight: 182 gms.

Pls. 2.24 – 2.25: Wall plaster fragments, including painted examples. Context 206.

Context 206: Cat. 13: 3 pieces of moulded plaster from wall surface or possibly a screen? Clear traces of roll moulding

a) 44mm x 38mm x 18mm

b) 40mm x 32mm x 25mm

Total Weight: 67 gms.

Pl. 2.26: Moulded Wall Plaster. Context 206.

Lead Window Came

Context 206: Cat: 14: 1 piece of lead sheat window came. Grooved on one face. Max. Dimensions: 30mm x 13mm x 3mm Weight: 4 gms.

Pl. 2.27: Fragment of Lead Window Came. Context 206.

CONTEXT 207

Bone

Context 207: Cat: 15: 7 fragmentary pieces of animal bone.

Pl. 2.28: Animal bone fragments. Context 207.

Clay Pipe

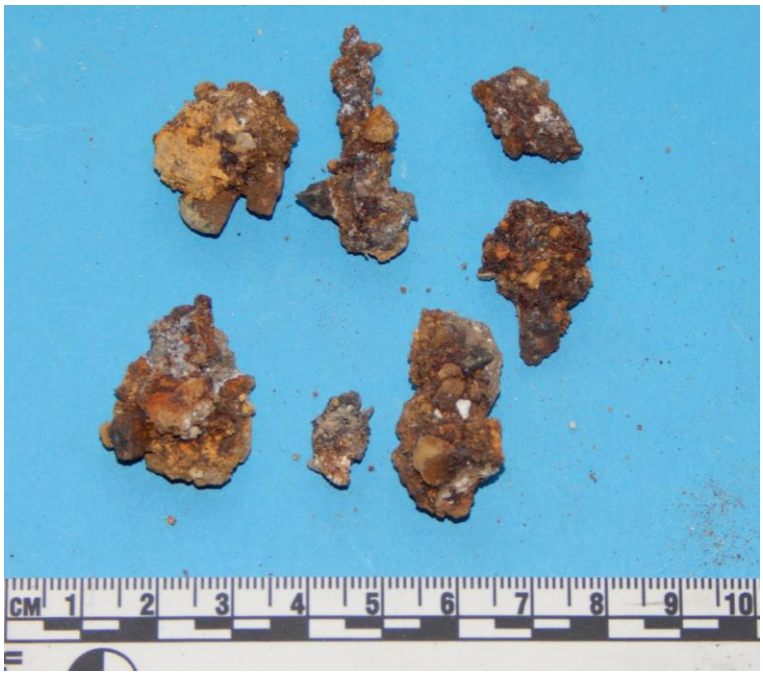
Context 207: Cat. 16: 1 clay pipe stem fragment. Max Length: 28mm x 7mm diam. Bore c. 3mm.

Pl. 2.29: Clay pipe Stem. Context 207.

CONTEXT 209

Ironwork

Context 209: Cat. 17: 7 pieces of heavily corroded iron work including 3 fragmentary hand - made nails. Total Weight: 23 gms.



Pl. 2.30: Miscellaneous corroded ironwork. Context 209.

CONTEXT 214

Wall Plaster

Context 214: Cat. 18: 9 pieces of plain wall plaster. Total Weight: 99 gms.

Pl. 2.31: Wall plaster. Context 214.

Ironwork

Context 214: Cat. 19: 1 corroded iron hand made nail. Max. Dimensions: 41mm x 16mm x 16mm. Weight: 10 gms. **Not illustrated**.

5.3 Trench 3

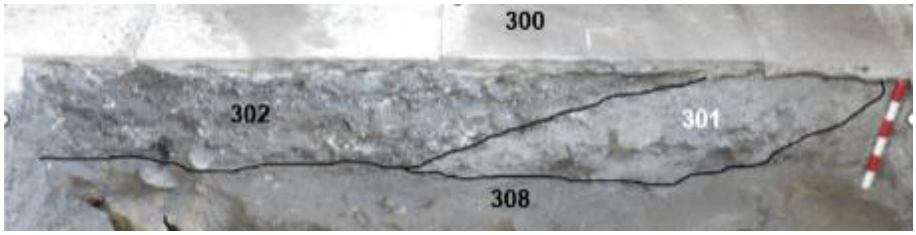
Trench 3 was located centrally to the North transept (Fig: 10). It measured approximately 2m x 2m and was designed to examine features identified during the ground penetrating radar survey carried out by ASUD.

Removal of the transept floor slabs (300) (Pl. 3.1) revealed a levelling layer (301/302) (Pl. 3.2).

Pl. 3.1: Trench 3 from north. Removal of floor slabs.

Pl. 3.2: Trench 3 from east. Removal of (301/302).

This consisted of a fawn/grey, gritty, friable, sandy matrix with mortar, shale, sandstone and slate fragments. This layer was c. 36 cms thick at the southern and of the trench and some 24 cms thick at the northern end. As Pls. 3.3 – 3.5 and Figs. 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3) show, individual tip lines are visible in this material. (301) occurs across the whole of the trench, but in the southeast corner it was overlain by (302) which had the same texture as (301) but which contained much blacker sandy soil.



Pl. 3.3: Trench 3. Tip lines in (301/302) from the North.

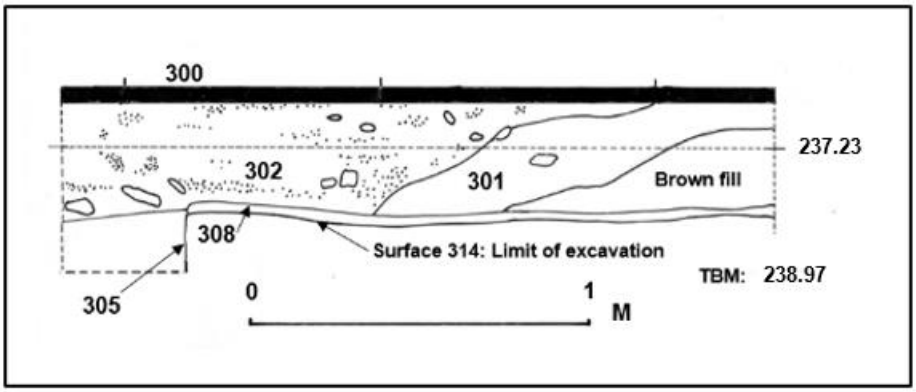
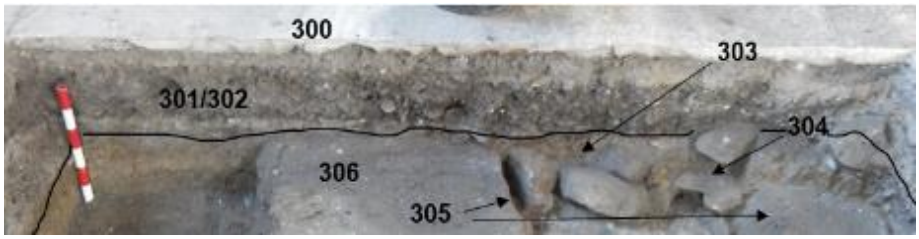


Fig. 3.1 Trench 3. North facing section showing tip lines over (308).



Pl. 3.4: Trench 3. (301/302) over (306) and (303) and (304) from south.

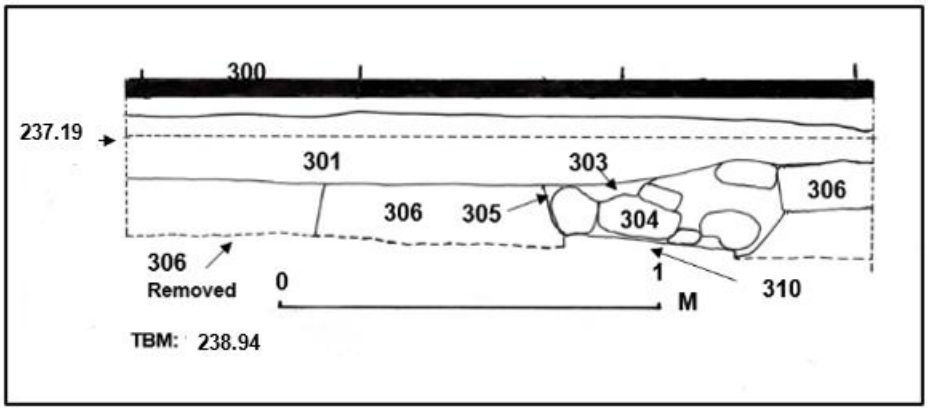
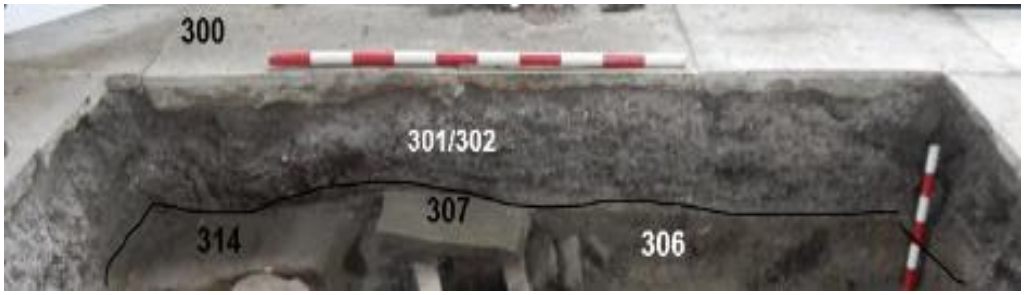


Fig. 3.2. Trench 3. South facing section showing (301) over (306) and (303) (304). (303) and (304) sit in cut (305) and overlie (310).



Pl. 3.5: Trench 3. (301/302) over (306), drain capstones (307) and floor surface (314) from east.

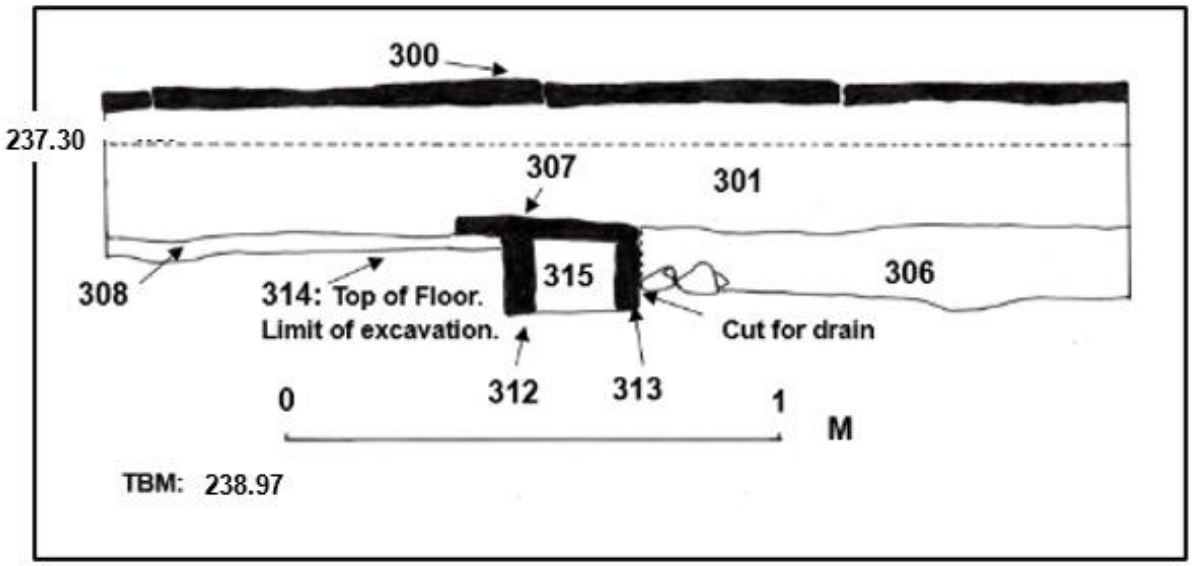
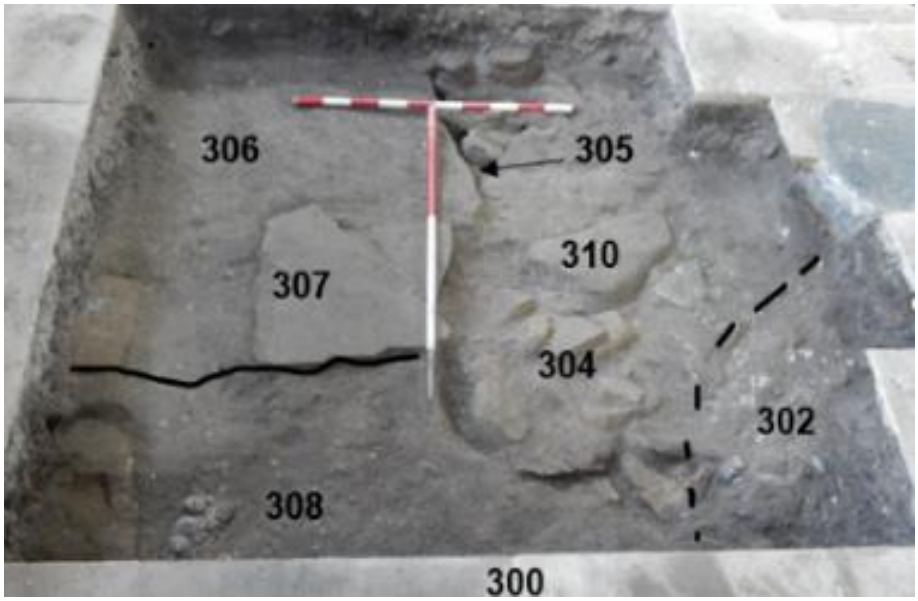


Fig. 3.3. Trench 3. East facing section showing (301/302) over (306), drain capstones (307) and floor surface (314).

(301/302) overlay (308) a c. 5 cm thick layer of silty, dark brown clay with no obvious large inclusions other than a large mortar chunk. It also directly overlay capstones (307), the clay layer (306) and culvert filling (303/304) (Fig. 3.4, 3.5; Pl. 3.6).



Pl. 3.6: Trench 3. (308) from south also showing (307) capstones over (306) emerging, surface of culvert slabs (310) and extent of (302).

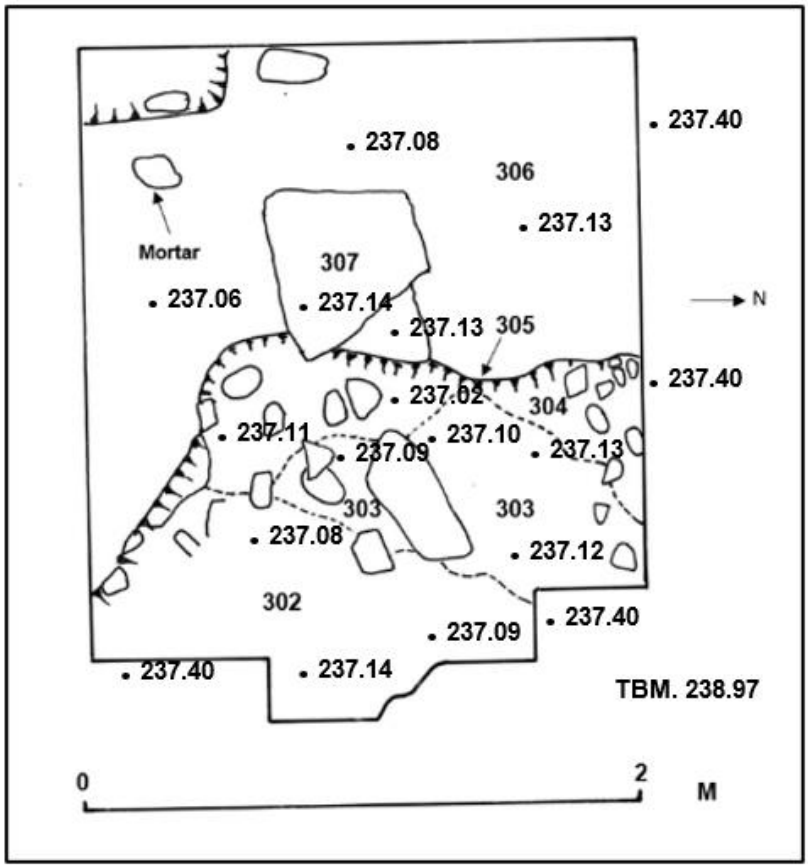


Fig. 3.4: Trench 3. Plan 1. (302), over (303). (303) and (304) sitting in cut (305). (305) cuts (307) and (306).

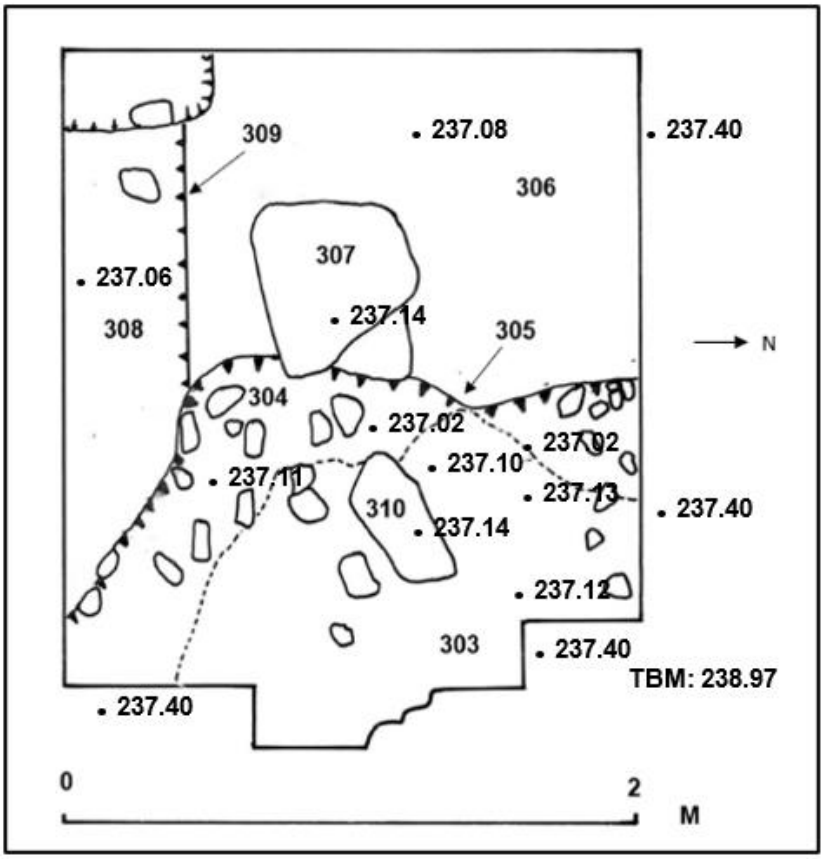


Fig. 3.5: Trench 3. Plan 2. (303/304) over (310) sitting in cut (305). (305 cuts (308), (307) and (306).

(308) overlay the sandstone cobbled surface (311/314) (Fig: 3.6; Pl. 3.7). This possible floor area was set into the surface of a clay layer 306 and it tightly abutted the southern edge of an east/west orientated drain (312) (Figs. 3.6, 3.7; Pl. 3.7). The drain is of a sandstone slab construction, consisting of a southern edge (312), a northern edge (313) and capstones (307). The two edges sit on a sandstone slab base (316). The slabs on the south side of the drain (312) were 15-20cms deep internally and c. 5cms thick, those on the north side (313) were also c. 15-20 cms in depth and 5-7 cms in thickness. The largest capstone (307) has maximum dimensions of 60cm x 60cm x 5 cm, while the smallest measures 26cm x 24cm x 4cm.

The capstones were immediately beneath (301/302). The drain itself cuts the clay layer (306) and the cut for the drain construction (317) was packed with small, flat, upright, sandstone fragments on its north edge (318). (Pls. 3.7, 3.8; Figs. 3.6, 3.7). The cobbled surface (311/314) is also set into (306) and was 22 cms thick. The cobbled surface (311/314), the drain (312, 313, 316, 315, 317, 318), and the clay layer (306) were all cut by (305), the construction trench for a large curving culvert (Figs. 3.6, 3.7; Pls. 3.7, 3.8).

Pl. 3.7: Showing (314) abutting S. edge of drain (312) with drain capstones (307) removed. Also N. edge of drain (313), drain base (316) and drain cut (317/318) cutting (306). All are cut by (305) the construction cut for the large culvert capstones (310).

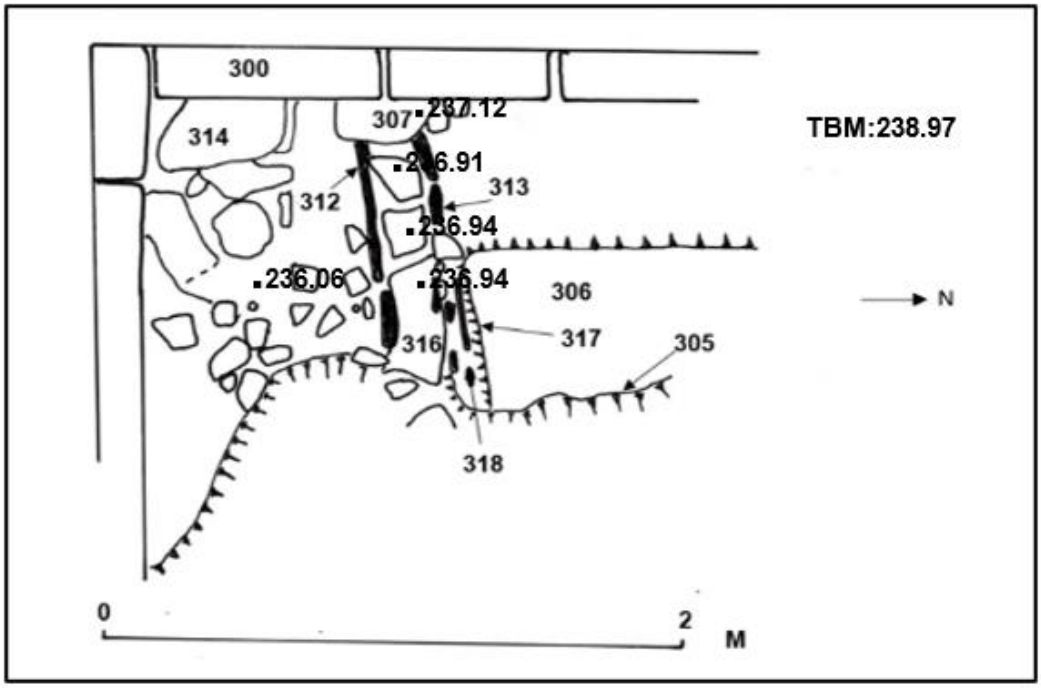
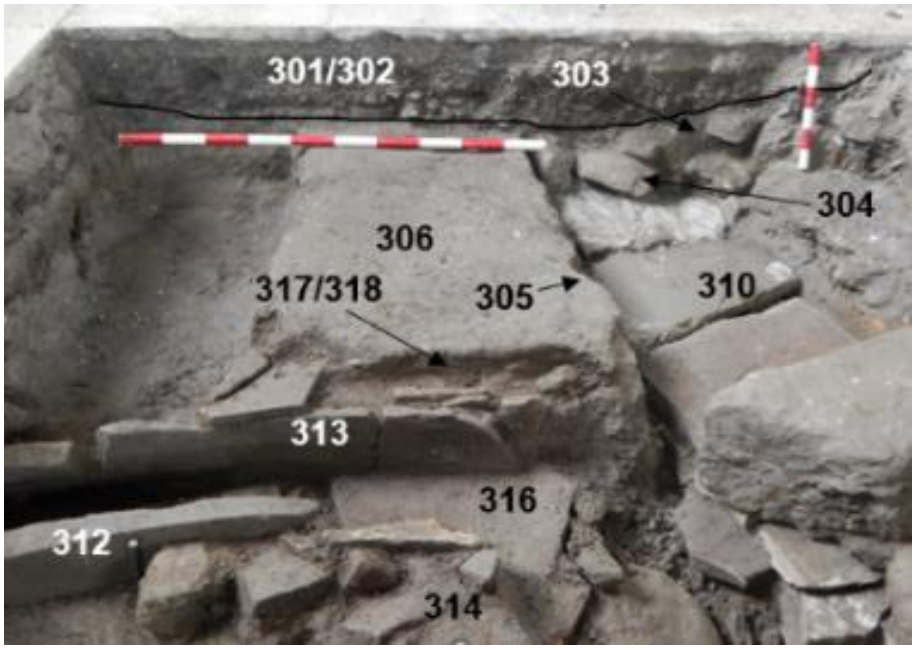


Fig. 3.6: Trench 3. Plan 3 showing drain (312/316/313) in cut (317) with associated packing stone (318). (314) abuts drain and (314) and drain are cut by (305).

Sitting in (305), and directly below (301/302) was (303) a layer of grey/yellow/brown clay with rare mortar fragments some 5-10cms thick (Figs. 3.4, 3.5; Pls. 3.8, 3.9). This in turn overlay (304) a sticky clay and angular sandstone rubble layer c. 24 cms thick, that had been thrown into the cut, covering the culvert capstones (310). (Pl. 3.8, 3.9; Figs. 3.5, 3.8)



Pl. 3.8: Trench 3 from south showing (303) over (304), immediately over (310) in cut (305). Also drain (312, 313, 316) cutting (306) and cut by (305) and flooring (314) also cut by (305).

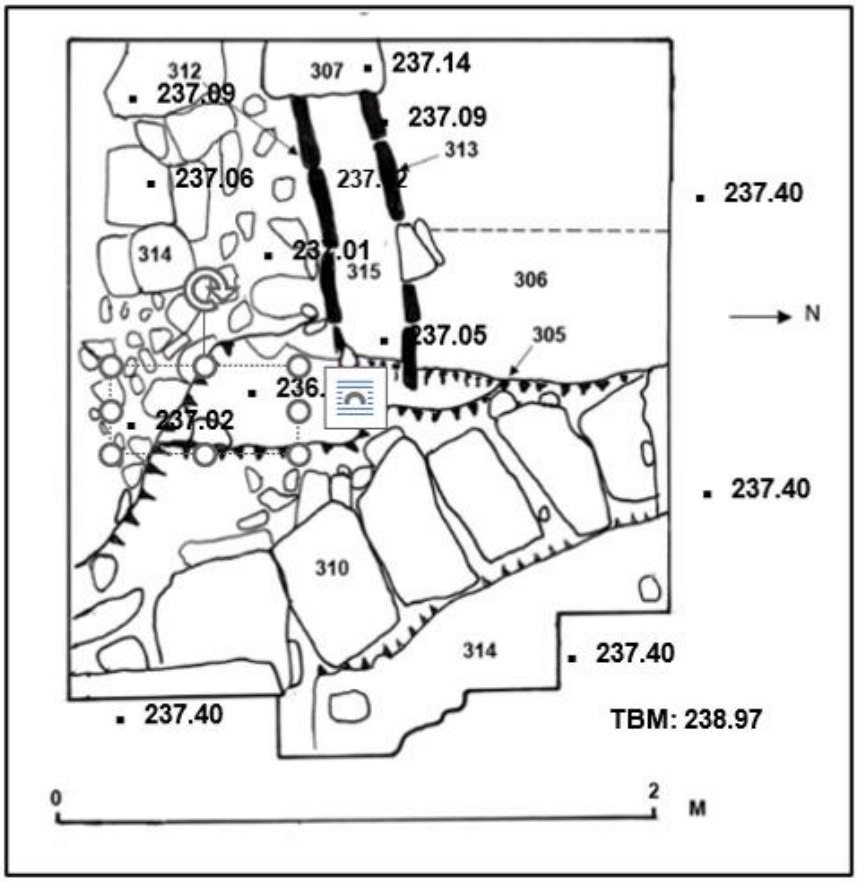


Fig. 3.7: Trench 3. Plan 4: Culvert capstones (310) in cut (305). (305) cuts (306), floor (314) and east/west drain (312/313).

Pl. 3.9: Trench 3 from east showing (304) over (310) in cut (305) cutting (306) and (308) and emerging drain capstones (307).

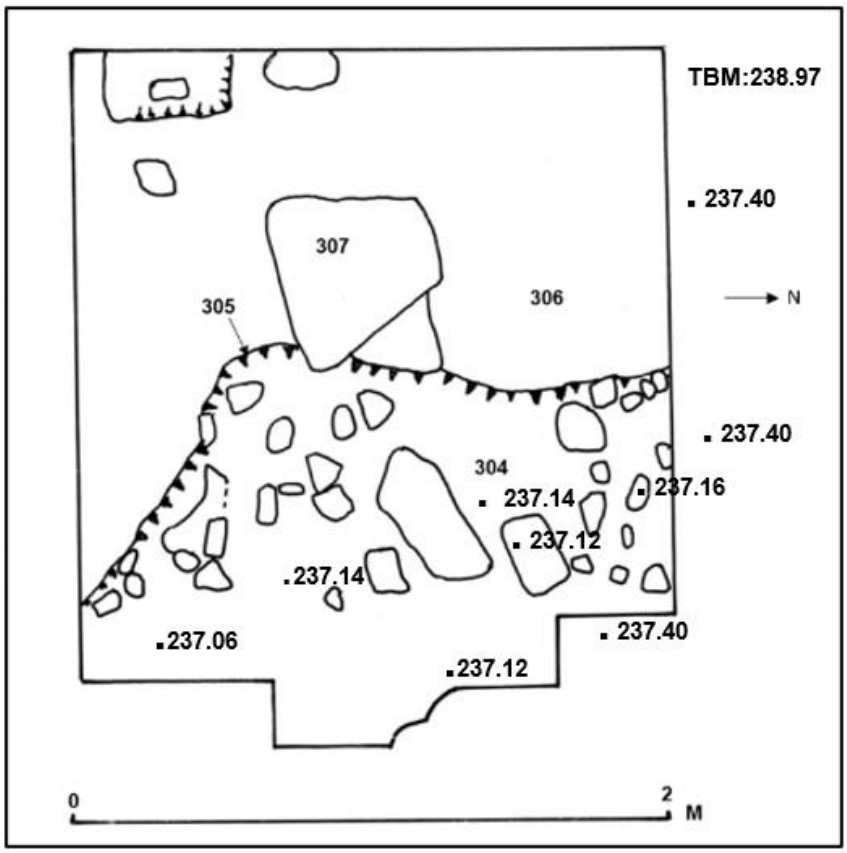


Fig. 3.8: Trench 3. Plan 5. (304) sitting in cut (305)

6 capstones were visible in the cut; all appear to be stones robbed from the structure of the Abbey. Maximum visible dimensions of the capstones, running from south to north, (Fig.3.7,

3.9, Pl. 3.10) are 62cm x 45cm x 12cm; 50cm x 34cm x 14cm; 58cm x 26 cm x 21cm; 46cm x 24cm x 7cm; 32cm x 24cm x 3.5 cm. The fourth slab from the southern end of the culvert was raised to reveal that the culvert sides were of a dry stone, sandstone slab construction of three courses on each side, some 22 cms deep, overlying a sandstone slab base. The culvert interior was devoid of any filling sediment and was clean and dry.

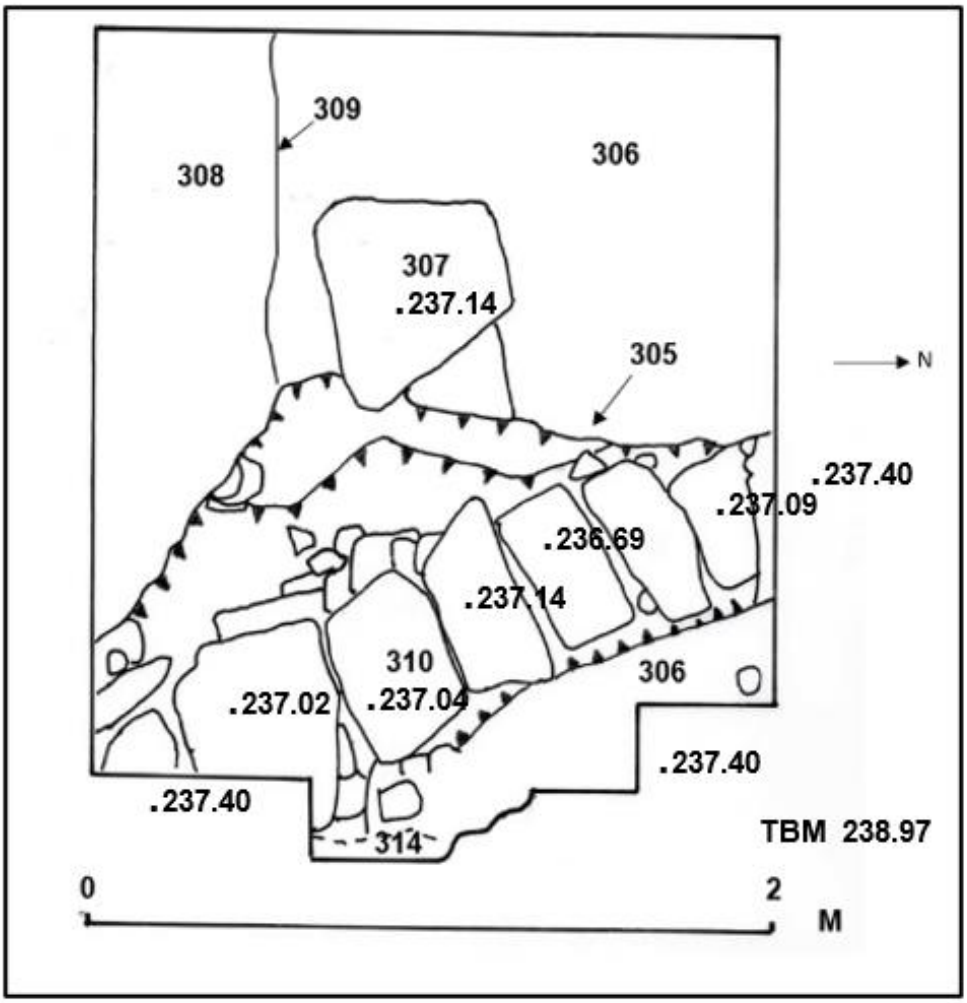


Fig. 3.9: Trench 3. Plan 6. Capstones (310) sitting in cut (305). (305) cuts (306) and (308)

Pl. 3.10: Trench 3 from south showing capstones (310) in cut (305) cutting (306).

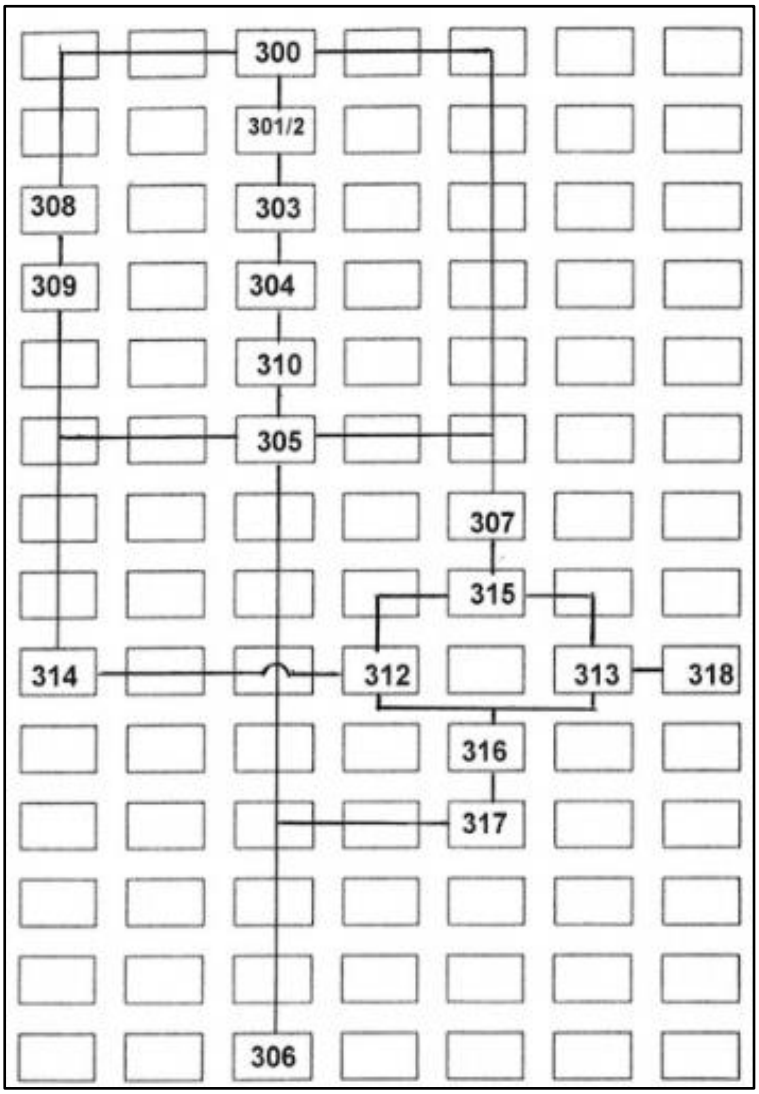


Fig. 3.10: Trench 3 Harris Matrix.

Context List/Description and Finds Concordance – TRENCH 3

Context No.	Description	Finds by category	Finds Dating
301	Fawn/grey, friable, gritty, sandy soil with mortar, coal, shale, slate and sandstone fragments	Body sherd from thin-walled ? bowl or jar. Highly oxidised red/brown core, shiny black glaze on outer and inner surfaces. Very fine sandy clay fabric with no obvious inclusions? Black Ware; Body sherd from thin walled, finely made White/Cream Ware dish or bowl. Highly vitrified and smooth white/cream internal and external glaze?: 4 very fine shards of light green vessel glass; 12 fragments of wood shavings and small, shaped wooden off-cuts, very thin and flat; 10 heavily corroded iron nail fragments; 3 amorphous, vesicular slag fragments; 1worked limestone fragment, flattened surface with right angled corner; 1 cream/white mortared skim ? from wall or floor, laid upon crushed grits and small stones.	Pottery c. C18-19th. Other finds indeterminate.
302	Black/dark grey sandy, gritty, friable coil with mortar, coal, shale slate and sandstone fragments	3 undecorated, broken, white, clay pipe stem fragments. date. Narrow bore; 6 angular fragments of white/ cream wall plaster; 5 longitudinally split ? sheep leg bone fragments. ? split for use as roofing pegs? 1 large longitudinally split ? sheep leg bone; 1 fragment human leg bone; 7 fragments white lime wall plaster.	Pipe stems C. 18th-19th. Other finds indeterminate
303	Grey/brown clay with some mortar fragments		
304	Stone layer set in cut (305). Angular sandstone fragments		
305	Cut through (306)		
306	Dark brown clay surface with some sandy grit. Rare mortar fragments and rare sandstone fragments.	Base sherd from ? medieval Splash Glazed Ware jar/jug, c C13-14th; 2 highly degraded sherds of ? painted Medieval window glass	
307	Stone slabs set in top of 306		
308	Dark brown clay darker than 306		
309	Shallow cut through (306) containing (308)		
310	Capstones for cu1rving drain /culvert		
311	Cobble spread same as (314)		
312	South edge of E/W drain		
313	North edge of E/W drain		
314	Stone spread ? flooring associated with E/W drain.		
315	Grey/black fine silty clay. Fill of E/W drain.		

316	Stone slab base of E/W drain		
317	Cut and fill of construction trench for E/W drain.		

Phasing and Dating

Phasing the activity within the trench is fairly straightforward on stratigraphical grounds assigning a detailed chronology to the phases is very difficult because of the fact that much material is disturbed and redeposited and finds are not tightly chronologically diagnostic.

Within the limits of the excavation:

Phase 1: The clay surface (306) was cut by the E/W orientated drain and overlain by its associated cobbled floor area (311/314). The clay surface (306) may be of Medieval date c. C13-14th (Splash glazed pottery and painted window glass). **(Contexts 306, 307, 311, 312, 313, 315, 316).** The flooring (311/314) recorded in Trench 3 may be the same surface as that identified in Trench 4. Surface levels between the two vary only by a maximum of 7 cms and the construction is similar.

Phase 2: Construction of culvert/drain (305, 310) cutting (306) and E/W drain and flooring (306, 307, 311, 312, 313, 315, 316). The top of cut (305) was filled with (303) and (304) **(Contexts 305, 310, 303, 304).** If the culverts were laid down at the same time as the example observed in Trench 4 then the timing of construction would appear to be between 1750 (when the west wall of the church was rebuilt – the Trench 4 culvert overlies the construction trench for the wall and butts against it) and 1815 when the slab floor was laid.

Phase 3: Levelling of the site began with **(301/302)** – pre-the laying of the existing stone slabbed floor in 1815. Pottery and glass from (301) and (302) suggest a broad late C18th (more likely) early C19th date for this activity.

Phase 4: Current stone slabbed floor laid c. 1815. **(Context 300)**

It is not possible to give a closer chronology for the designated phases, as properly sealed deposits are few and the levelling materials used prior to the laying of the 1815 floor were probably brought from a number of locations.

3.1 Trench 3 Finds

CONTEXT 301

Pottery

Context 301: Cat. 1: Body sherd from thin-walled ? bowl or jar. Highly oxidised red/brown core, shiny black glaze on outer and inner surfaces. Very fine sandy clay fabric with no obvious inclusions? Late C18th-C19th date. Black Ware. Max. Dimensions: 83mm x 37mm x 5mm. Weight: 28 gms.

Context 301: Cat. 2: Body sherd from thin walled, finely made White/Cream Ware dish or bowl. Fine, highly fired, white core no obvious inclusions. Highly vitrified and smooth

white/cream internal and external glaze? Late C18th – C19th date, Max. Dimensions: 41mm x 38mm x 4mm. Weight: 6 gms.

Pl. 3.11: Pottery fragments. Context 301.

Glass

Context 301: Cat. 3: 4 very fine shards of light green vessel glass ? from drinking vessel. Very fresh. Total Weight: 2 gms.

Pl. 3.12: Vessel glass. Context 301.

Wood

Context 301: Cat. 4: 12 fragments of wood shavings and small, shaped wooden off-cuts, very thin and flat. At least one piece appears to be wedge shaped. Max. Dimensions: 113mm x 13mm

x 3mm. Min. Dimensions: 26mm x 13mm x 3mm. I piece of rounded wood ? a piece of dowelling max. Length: 38mm Diam. 8mm. Total Weight of all pieces: 7 gms.

Pl. 3.13: Wood fragments. Context 301.

Iron Work

Context 301: Cat. 5: 10 heavily corroded iron nail fragments. Corrosion/concretions include small, gravel like stones, cement/mortar and much granular sand. Dimensions of smallest frag.: 22mm x 9mm x 9mm. Largest frag.: 90mm x 22mm x 25mm. Total Weight: 148 gms.

*Pl. 3.14: Corroded ironwork. Context 301.***Metallic Slag**

Context 301: Cat. 6: 3 amorphous, vesicular slag fragments. Max. Dimensions: 41mm x 28mm x 18mm. Min. Dimensions: 26mm x12mm x 8mm. Total Weight: 20 gms.

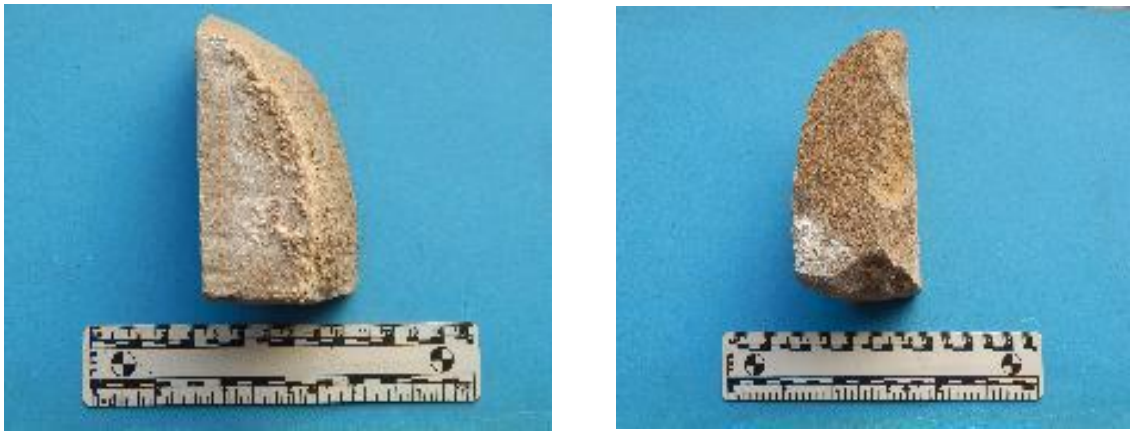
Pl. 3.15: Metallic slag. Context 301.

Worked Stone

Context 301: Cat. 7

a) ? worked limestone fragment. One flattened surface with right angled corner. Weight: 443 gms.

b) Cream/white mortared skim ? from wall or floor, laid upon crushed grits and small stones. Some fragmentary cementitious fragments. Weight: 361 gms.



Pl. 3.16a: Worked stone fragment (two views). Context 301.

Pl. 3.16b: Mortar. Context 301.

CONTEXT 302

Clay Pipe Fragments

Context 302: Cat. 8: 3 undecorated, broken, white, clay pipe stem fragments. ? C 18th-19th date. Narrow bore.

a) 30mm x 6 mm diam. Bore c. 3mm.

b) 20mm x 6mm diam. Bore c. 3mm.

c) 17mm x 6mm diam. Bore c. 2-3 mm.

Pl. 3.17: Three clay pipe stem fragments. Context 302.

Wall Plaster

Context 302: Cat. 9: 6 angular fragments of white/ cream wall plaster. Smoothed outer surface. Max. Dimensions: 47mm x 23mm x 9mm. Min. Dimensions: 17mm x 17mm x 3mm. Total Weight: 21gms.

Pl. 3.18: Smoothed wall plaster. Context 302.

Animal Bone

Context 302: Cat. 10: 5 longitudinally split ? sheep leg bone fragments. ? split for use as roofing pegs? Max. Dimensions: 89mm x 13mm x 4mm. Min. Dimensions: 59mm x 19mm x 5mm. Total Weight: 27 gms.

Pl. 3.19: Animal bone. Context 302.

Context 302: Cat. 11: 1 large longitudinally split ? sheep leg bone fragments. ? split for use as roofing peg?. Max. Dimensions: 113mm x 28mm x 5mm. Weight: 5 gms.

Pl. 3.20: Split sheep leg bone. Context 302.

Human Bone

Context 302: Cat. 12: Shattered fragment from ? human leg bone – to be re-buried**.** Broken at both ends. Max. Dimensions: 89mm x 28mm x 15mm. Weight: 23 gms. Not illustrated.

Lime Mortar

Context 302: Cat. 13

a) 4 fragments of white ? lime mortar/plaster. 1 piece has been clearly shaped around the corner angle of a wall. Max. Dimensions: 22mm x 21mm x 6mm. Weight: 2 gms.

b) 2 amorphous fragments with 1 smoothed surface. Weight: 2 gms.

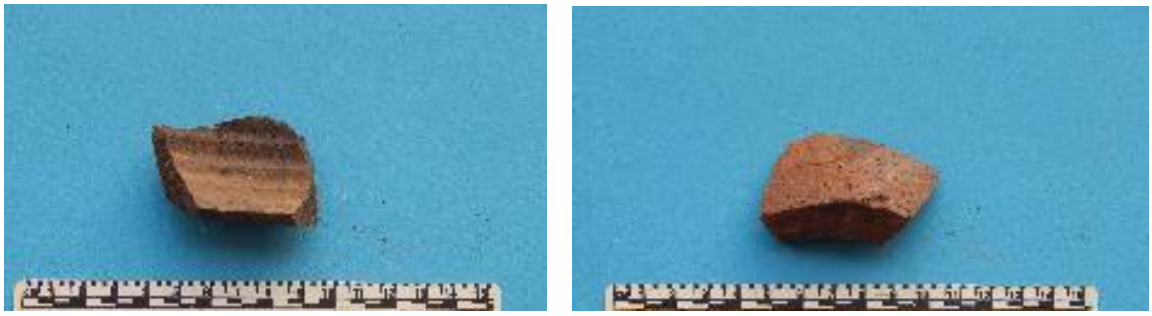
c) 1 fragment with lathe marks on back surface. Rough external surface. Max. Dimensions: 28mm x 26mm x 13mm. Weight: 6 gms.

Pl. 3.21: Lime mortar fragments. Context 302.

CONTEXT 306

Pottery

Context 306: Cat 14: Base sherd from ? medieval Splash Glazed Ware jar/jug, c C13-14th. Throwing wheel rilling visible on interior surface. External base surface exhibits grass/vegetable matter impressions from standing when green/leather hard. Small splashes of ochrous glaze on base and external face. Oxidised red/brown external surface. Black/grey reduced inner surface and core. Very fine sandy clay fabric with rounded quartz fragments and some very rare hard, black, rounded particles. Base Diam.: 8 cms. Max. Dimensions: 52mm x 31mm x 6mm. Weight: 5 gms



Pl. 3.22: Sherd of splash glazed ware. Context 306.

Window Glass

Context 306: Cat 15: 2 highly degraded sherds of ? painted Medieval window glass. Now blackened but showing evidence of the degradation process on chipped corners.

a) Plain glass fragment. Max. Dimensions: 33mm x 22mm x 5mm. Weight: 1 gm.

b) ? Painted fragment. Retains brown lines on one surface but in no discernible pattern. Max. Dimensions: 29mm x 23mm x 4mm. Weight: 2 gms.

Pl. 3.23. Window glass. Context 306.

Iron Work

Context 306: Cat 16: 1 small corroded/rusted nail. Max. Dimensions: 38mm x 17mm x 9mm. Weight: 5 gms. Not Illustrated.

Wall Plaster

Context 306: Cat. 17: 10 angular fragments of smoothed and flattened white/cream wall plaster. Some fragments retain smoothing marks. Max. Dimensions: 34mm x 31mm x 5mm. Min. Dimensions: 8mm x 7mm x 3mm. Total Weight: 13 gms.

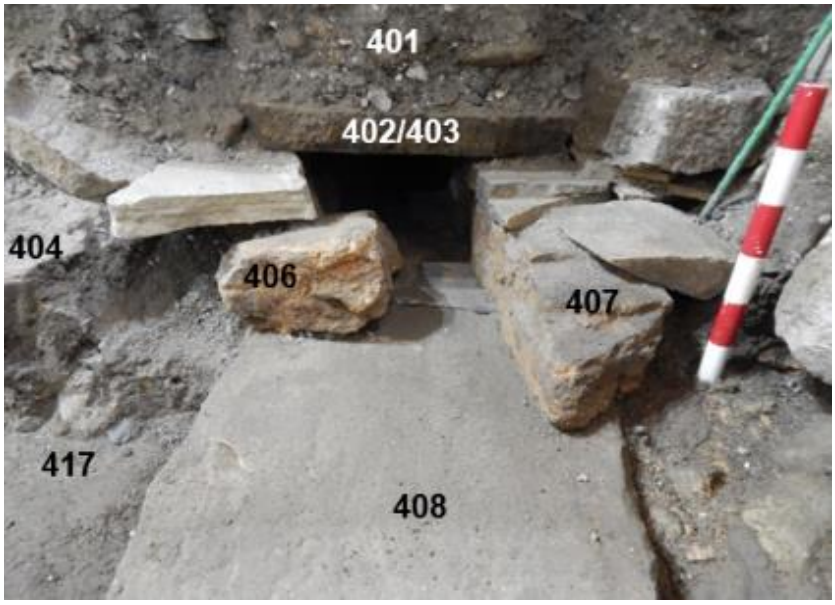
Pl. 3.25: Wall plaster. Context 306.

5.4 Trench 4

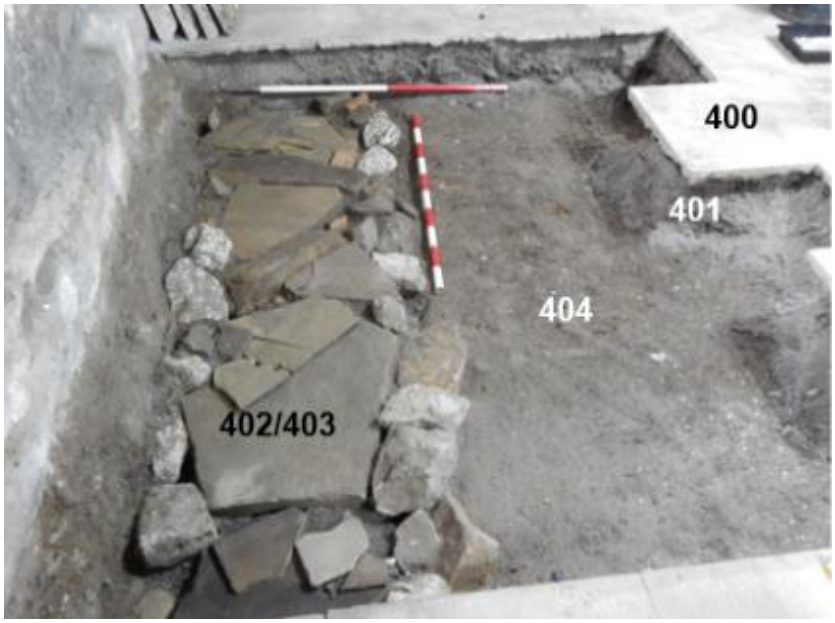
Removal of floor slabs (400), which abutted the western wall of the church nave (416), overlay (401), a loose, fine grained, sandy textured material containing crushed slate fragments, coal fragments, some rare fluorspar pieces and mortar fragments. This layer was c. 39cms thick at the south end of the trench and 23cms thick at the northern end (Pl. 4.1)

Pl. 4.1: Trench 4. Removal of floor slabs (400) revealing levelling layer (401) from east.

(401)also buts against wall (416) and immediately overlies the capstones of a north-south orientated culvert (402/403). These all appear to be perforated dressed, sandstone roof tiles (Pls. 4.2, 4.3; Figs. 4.1, 4.2) with dimensions ranging from 50cms x 22cms x 7 cms; 52cms x 24 cms x 5 cms; 50cms x 24 cms x 5 cms; 46cms x 44 cms x 8 cms; 38 cms x 20cms x 7 cms. The culvert ran across the whole of the western end of the trench and measured some 80cms wide.



Pl. 4.2: Trench 4 showing north facing section. (401) over culvert capstones (402/403 and edging stones of culvert (406) and (407) over base (408).



Pl. 4.3: Trench 4 from south showing capstones and white edging stones of N/S orientated culvert (402/403) abutting wall (416), beneath (401) and cutting (404).

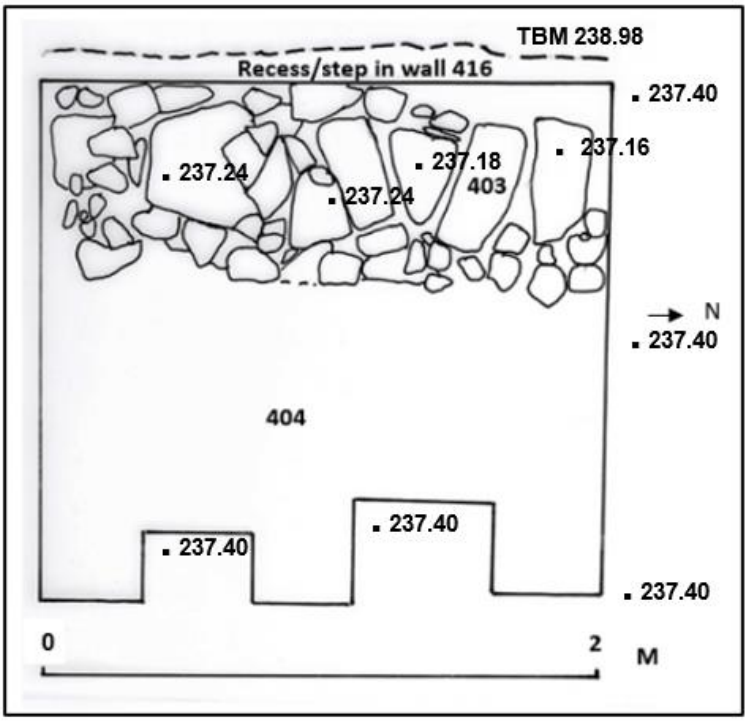


Fig. 4.1: Trench 4. Plan 1. Capstones of culvert (402/403), abutting wall (416) and cutting (404).

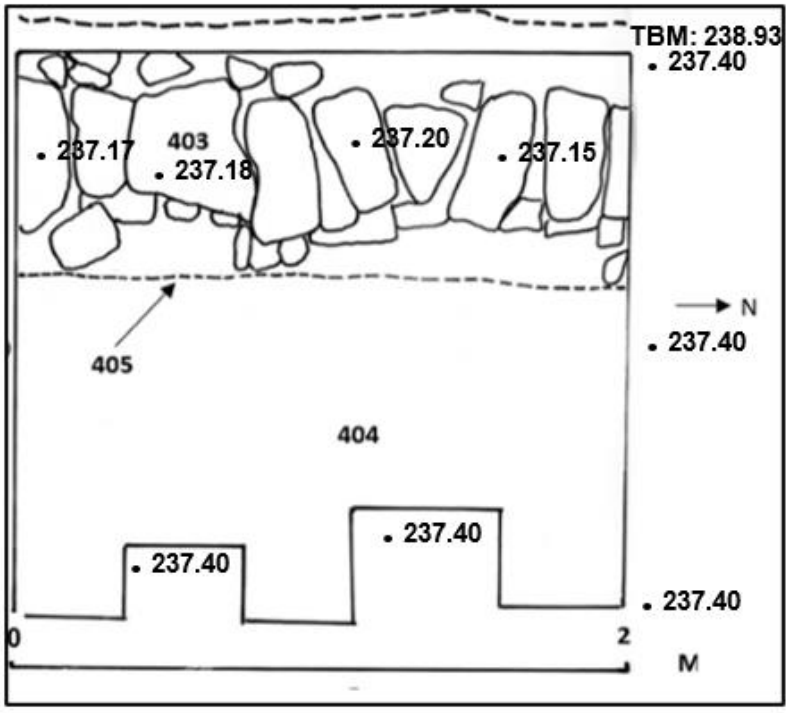
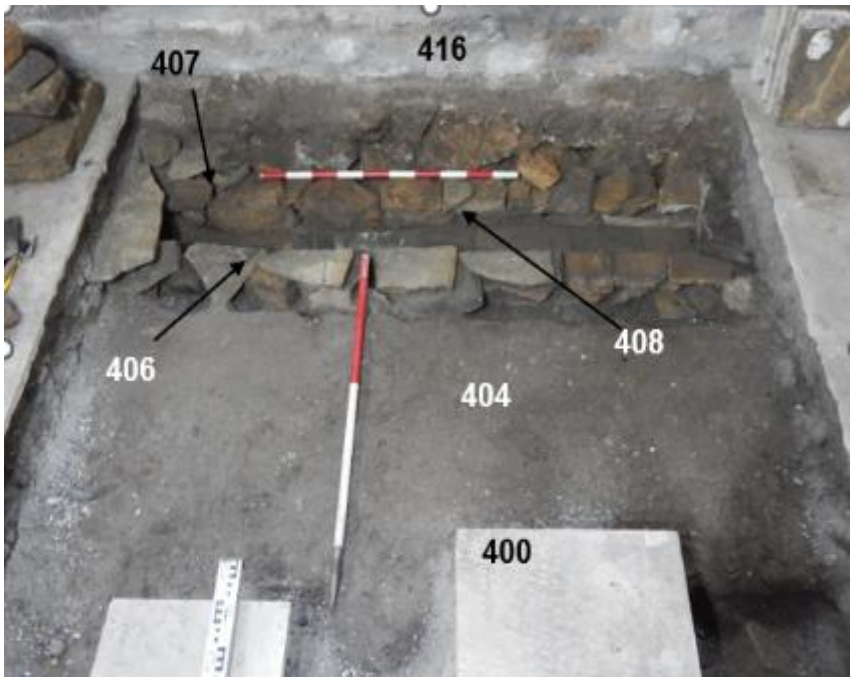


Fig. 4.2: Trench 4. Plan 2. Culvert capstones (403) in cut (405), cutting (404).

(401) also overlies (415) a series of thin sandstone slabs visible in the east side of the trench. (Pl. 4.6; Fig. 4.7). These appear to be a sandstone flooring level sitting directly on (404). They only became visible during the course of the excavation, as the loose levelling (401) slipped

from beneath the floor slabs (400). (401) also overlies (404), a dark brown sandy clay layer containing frequent sandstone fragments, mortar pieces and charcoal flecking.

(404) was cut by (405), the construction trench for the north/south orientated culvert. (Pl.4.5; Figs. 4.2 – 4.6). (405) measured 14-16cms in terms of depth and appeared to have been cut from the surface of (404). (404) and the culvert overlie the basal clay layer (417) (which was the limit of the excavation). (Pl. 4.6; Fig. 4.7). (404) also overlies the grave (412/413) and the floor level (411).



Pl. 4.4: Trench 4 from east showing Eastern and western culvert edges (406) (407) over base (408) cutting (404) and abutting wall (416).

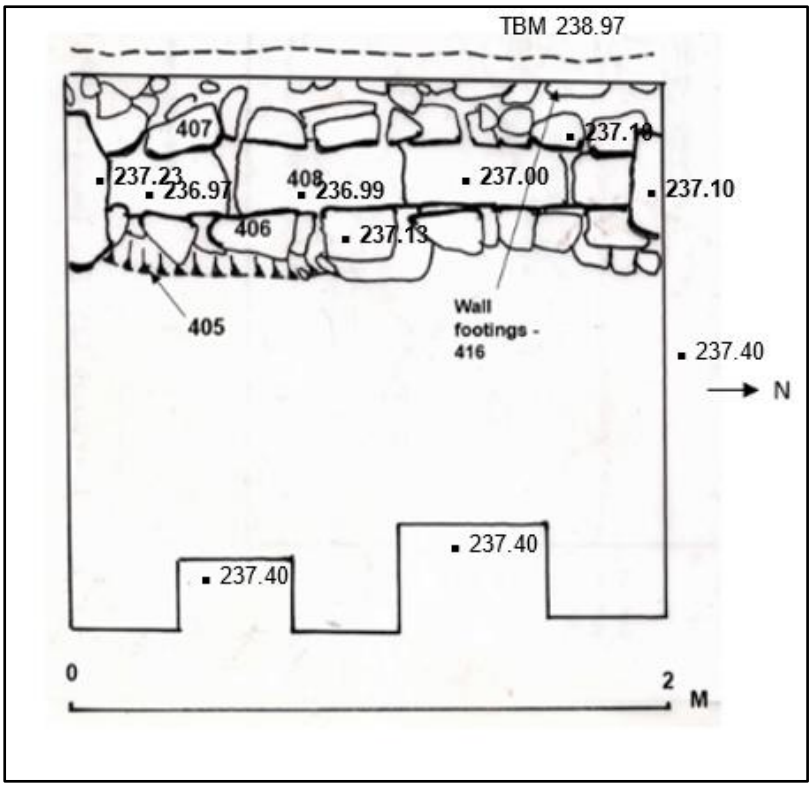


Fig. 4.3: Trench 4. Plan 3. Culvert edges (406), (407) over culvert base (408), sitting in cut (405). Footings of wall (416) visible.

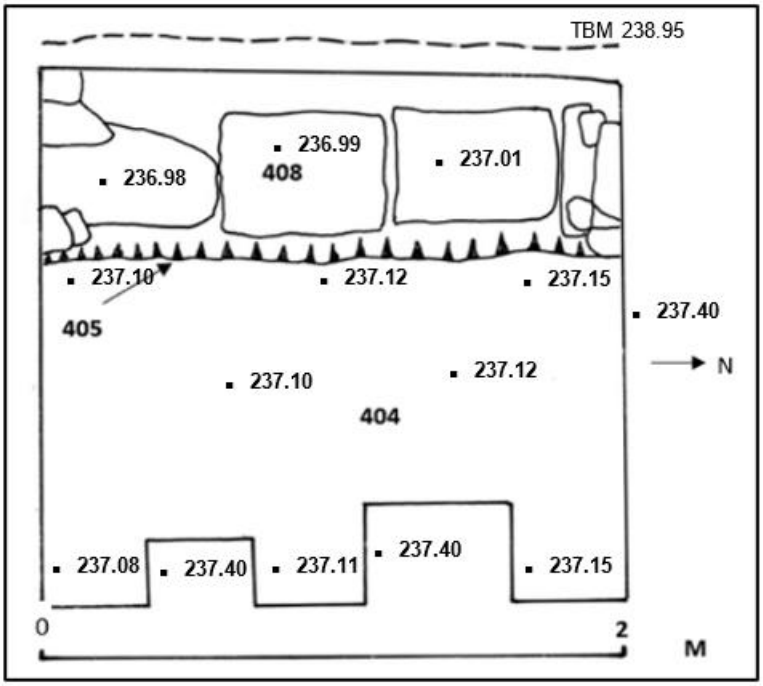


Fig. 4.4: Trench 4. Plan 4. Base of culvert (408) sitting in cut (405), cutting (404).

Pl. 4.5: Trench 4 from south showing culvert cut (405) cutting (404) and containing base of culvert (408) (partially removed) overlying natural clay (417). Edging stones of culvert removed.

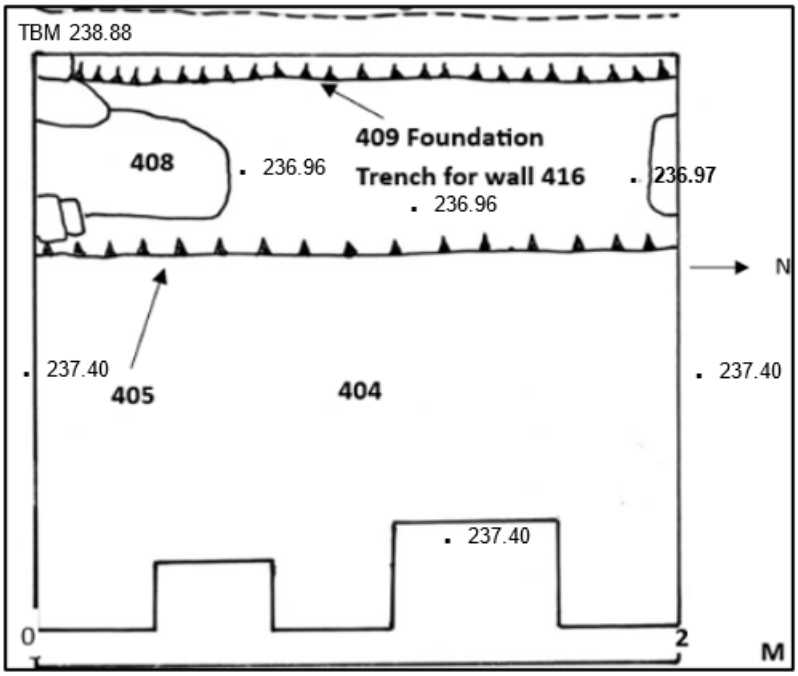
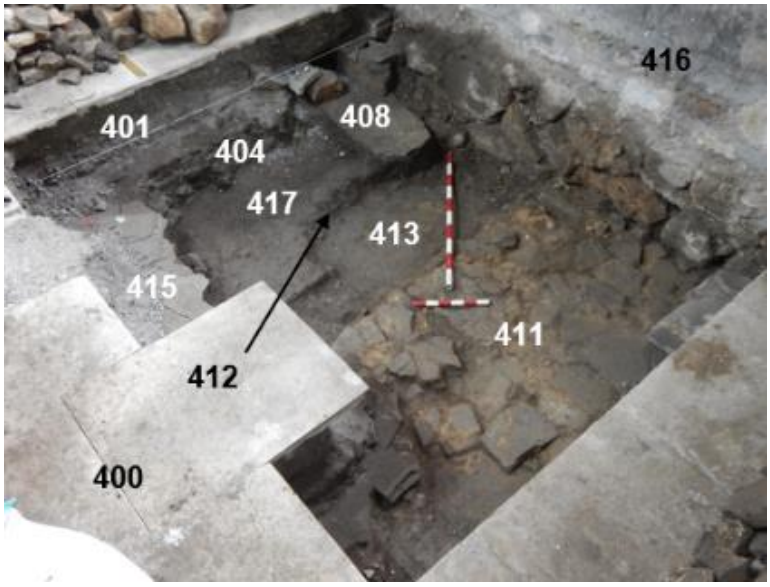


Fig. 4.5: Trench 4. Plan 5. Base of culvert (408) in cut (405) removed to reveal foundation trench (409) for wall (416).

(417) was a much darker, less sandy clay layer than (404), still containing mortar fragments and some small sandstone pieces, it was cut by an east/west orientated grave (cut (412), fill (413), which abuts a sandstone floor level (411) that was also set in (417) and beneath (404) (Pl. 4.6; Fig. 4.7).



Pl. 4.6: Trench 4 from NE showing floor slabs (415), 'natural' (417), floor level (411), grave cut (412) and grave fill (413), c. 60cms wide, under culvert base (408). Grave and floor level run beneath wall (416).

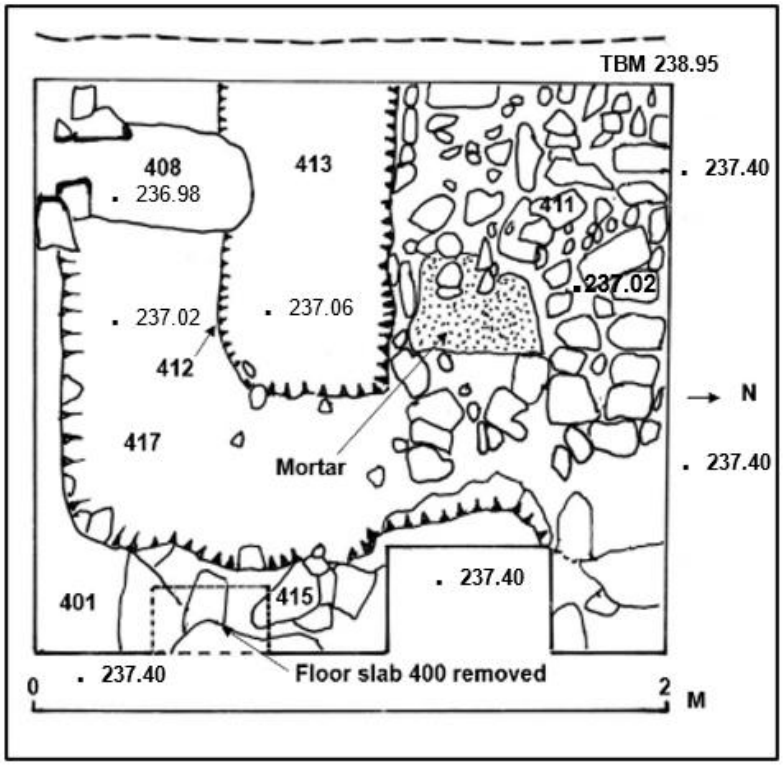


Fig. 4.7: Tench 4. Plan 6. Final trench plan showing grave (412), (413), floor level (411) and natural 417 beneath wall (416).

The grave, floor level and (417) are all cut by (409) the construction trench for the building of the western wall of the nave (416). This was c. 10-15 cms wide and c. 15 cms deep and has a fill (410), a grey/brown sandy soil with mortar flecks and sandstone fragments (Pl. 4.8; Fig. 4.5)

Pl. 4.8: Trench 4 from north showing natural (417) under (408), cut by foundation trench of wall (416) (409) with fill (410).

(417), (412-413) and (411) all underly the wall (416) (Pl. 4.9; Fig. 4.7, 4.8).

Pl. 4.9: Trench 4 from east showing floor (411) beneath wall (416).

The cut (405) contains the culvert capstones, and white edging stones (402/403) overlying the eastern and western edges of the culvert (406) and (407) (Pl. 4.3, 4.10). The eastern edge (406) is a dry-stone construction with small sandstone slabs and some rounded stones and stands some 15 cms deep. The western edge (407) is of a similar construction and dimensions and both edges sit upon a stone base (408), again consisting of perforated, dressed, sandstone roof slabs. Two clearly visible examples measured 60cms x 50cms and 60cms x 44cms.

Pl. 4.10: Trench 4 from east showing culvert edges and culvert base abutting wall (416).

The fall of the culvert is from north to south. (407) and (408) abut the western wall of the nave (416) and also overlie the wall's construction trench and fill (409 – 410).

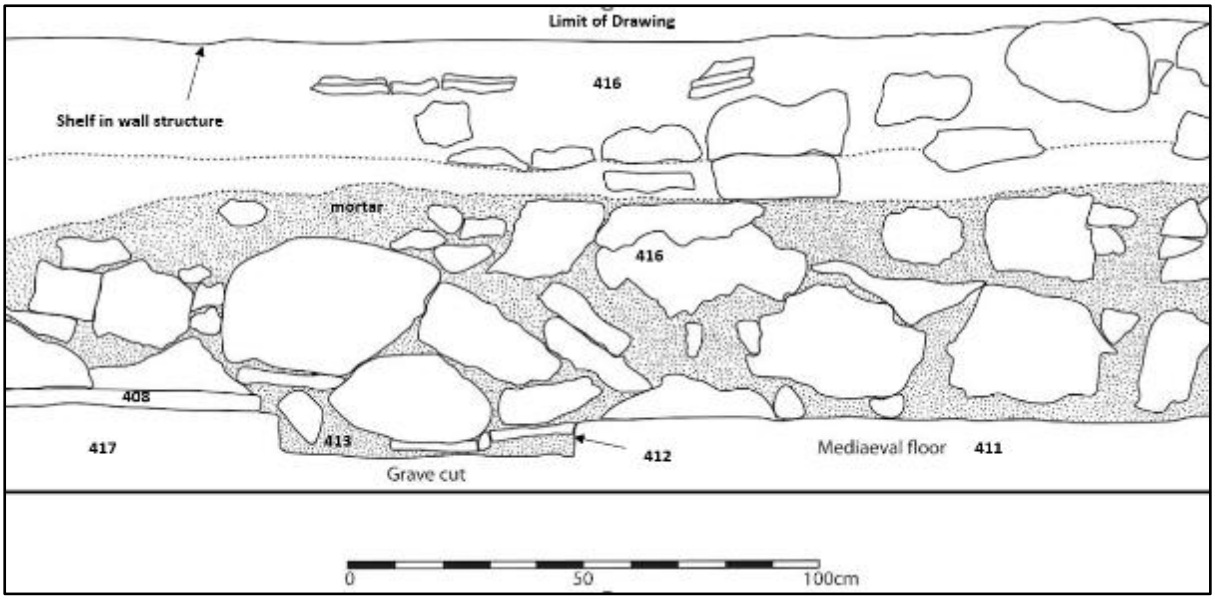


Fig. 4.8 Trench 4: East facing internal elevation wall 416 showing floor (411) grave cut (412) and grave fill (413) running beneath wall (416). (407) removed. (S. Severn Newton).

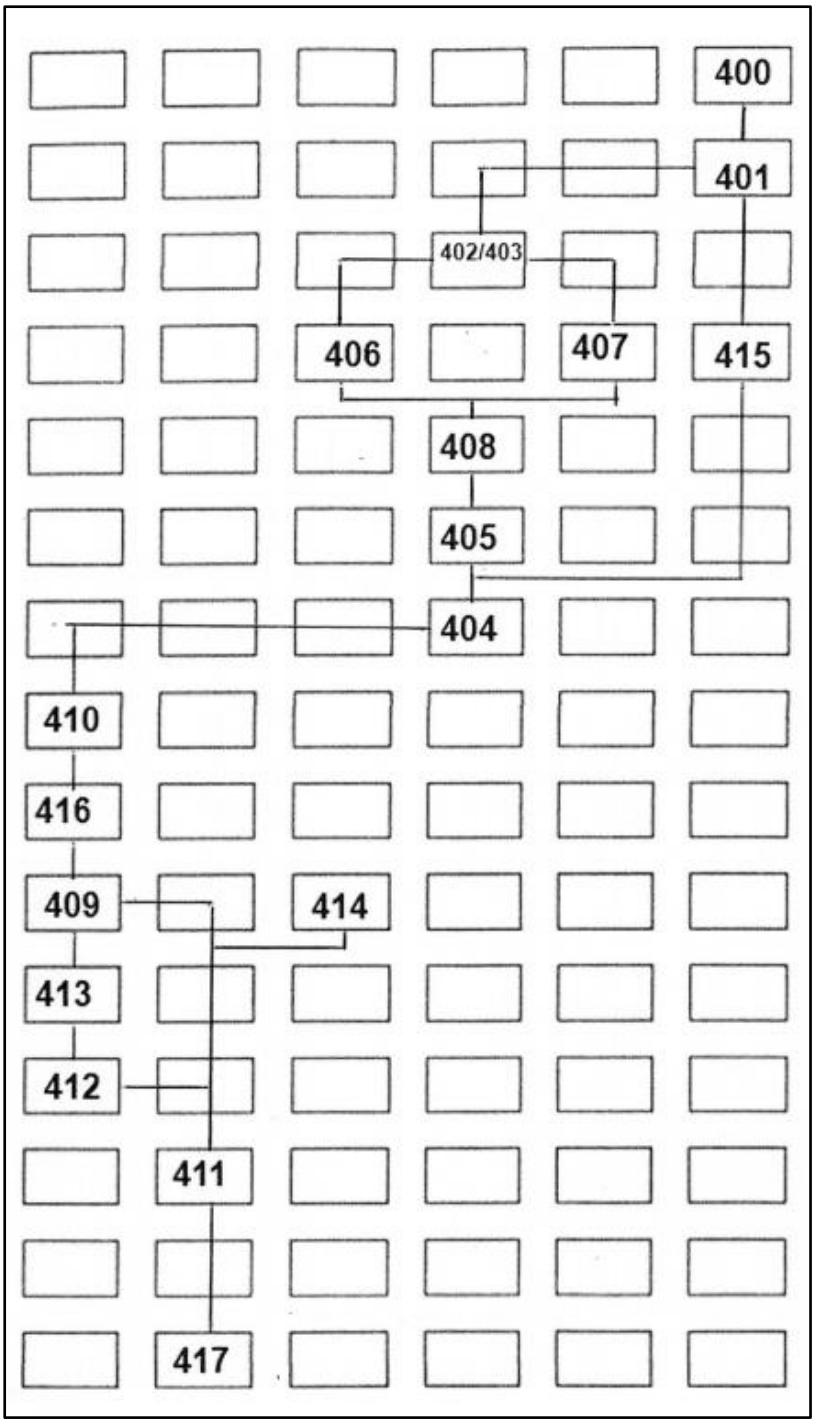


Fig. 4.9: Trench 4 Harris Matrix.

Context List/Description and Finds Concordance – TRENCH 4

Context No.	Description	Finds by category	Finds Dating
401	Loose grey/brown, fine grained levelling material. Contains crushed slate, coal fragments, mortar fragments some small wood fragments and larger mortar chunks. Sandy matrix	Two conjoining sherds willow pattern plate, 1 body sherd , cream glazed earthenware dish, Single shard from black 'onion' wine bottle, 1 piece, narrow bored clay pipe stem, 2 very fragmentary pieces of glazed floor tile, 4 fragments of shattered brick, 17 corroded iron nail/bolt fragments, 2 fragments of grey vesicular industrial slag, 3 indeterminate animal bone fragments, 91 wood offcuts and slivers, 3pieces perforated sandstone roof tile, 3 fragments of sandstone floor tiles, 9 irregular fragments of wall plaster.	C19th pottery, ? C18th wine bottle very eroded, Glazed floor tile, very abraded C13-14^{th,} pipe stem C19th.
402	Sandstone slabs. Re-used roof tiles. Part of culvert cover.		
403	Larger, thicker sandstone slabs. Culvert cover	1 roll moulded architectural fragment, incorporated into drain/culvert cover	
404	Dark brown sandy clay layer, mortar fragments, charcoal flecks and sandstone fragments	Two fragments of Medieval 'splashed ware' (yellow/green glaze), base sherd, Cistercian Ware drinking vessel, one base sherd from a White Ware bowl, 8 fragments of glazed floor tile and 2 unglazed pieces, 1fragment of folded lead window came, 3 highly fragmented pieces of ? mussel shell, 1 corroded iron nail, 3 animal bones fragments including 1 rib fragment.	Splash glazed ware: C11-13th, Cistercian ware:C15-16th, White Ware c. C.18-19th
405	Cut for 406, 407, culvert edges		
406	Eastern edge of drain/culvert		
407	Western edge of drain/culvert		
408	Basal layer of drain/culvert. Re-used perforated stone roof tiles.		
409	Cut for foundation trench for wall 416		
410	Grey/brown silty/sandy soil with mortar flecks and fragments. Some small sandstone pieces. Fill of 409		
411	Sandstone cobble floor set in 417		
412	Cut for grave fill 413.		
413	Dark brown silty loam, grave fill.		
414	Placed flat sandstone slabs.		

415	Slabs in west facing trench section	One fragment of painted window glass. Heavily eroded.	? C13th-14th.
416	West wall of choir, built c. 1750-52.		
417	Basal layer of trench ? Natural surface. Dark brown clay soil with some mortar flecks on surface		

Phasing and Dating

Phasing the activity within the trench is fairly straightforward on stratigraphical grounds assigning a detailed chronology to the phases is very difficult because of the fact that much material is disturbed and redeposited and finds are not tightly chronologically diagnostic.

Within the limits of the excavation:

Phase 1: ? Natural surface **(417)** was overlain by the stone cobbled floor **(411),** this in turn was cut by grave **(412/413).** Slabs **(415)** may have been placed at this time. The flooring (411) recorded in Trench 4 may be the same surface as that identified in Trench 3. Surface levels between the two vary only by a maximum of 7 cms and the construction is similar.

Phase 2: Construction/rebuild of west wall of the church **(416)** c. 1750. Foundation trench **(409)** cuts grave **(412/413)** and floor **(411). (404)** may be a levelling layer associated with this construction. The Splash Glazed Ware (C. 11th-C. 13th) and Cistercian Ware fragment (C. 15th – 16th) are clearly residual pieces from earlier activity on the site and this deposit is better dated by the White Ware fragment (c. C 18th).

Phase 3: N/S orientated culvert/drain **(402/403/405/406/407/408)** constructed post 1750-52 and pre-1815. The feature overlies the construction trench for the wall and butts against it, it also cuts **(404)** and is beneath the 1815 slab floor **(400).**

Phase 4: Levelling of site begins with deposition of **(401)** pre-the laying of existing stone slabbed floor 1815. Pottery and glass from **(401)** suggest a broad late C18th (more likely) early C19th date for this activity. The fragment of glazed floor tile is clearly a residual piece.

Phase 5 Current stone slabbed floor laid c. 1815. **(400).**

It is not possible to give a closer chronology for the designated phases, as properly sealed deposits are few and the levelling materials used prior to the laying of the 1815 floor were probably brought from a number of locations.

5.4.1 Trench 4 Finds

CONTEXT 401

Pottery

Context 401: Cat. 1: Two conjoining sherds from a willow pattern plate. C19th. Sherd Dimensions:
33mm x 22mm x 3mm; 31mm x 21mm x 3mm. Weight: 5 gms.

Pl. 4.11: Willow Pattern pottery. Context 401.

Context 401: Cat. 2: Single body sherd from a C19th dish. Cream glazed on inside surface, red/brown glaze on external surface. Oxidized orange core. Max. Dimensions: 23mm x 15mm x 4mm. Weight: 4 gms.

Pl. 4.12: Cream glazed pottery. Context 401.

Wine Bottle Glass

Context 401: Cat. 3: Single shard from the body of a black 'onion' wine bottle, c. C18th. Very abraded. Max. Dimensions: 60mm x 31mm x 10mm. Weight: 29 gms.

Pl. 4.13: Wine bottle glass. Context 401.

Clay Pipe

Context 401: Cat. 4: One narrow bored (c. 2-3mm) stem fragment. Max. Dimensions: 56mm x 7mm diam. Weight: 3 gms. ? C19th.

Pl. 4.14: Clay pipe stem. Context 401.

Glazed Floor Tile

Context 401: Cat. 5: Two fragments of glazed floor tile very fragmentary, c. C13-14th date.

a) Brown glazed floor tile, irregularly shattered. Totally oxidized orange fabric. Mortar adhering to underside. Max. Dimensions: 146mm x 85mm x 29mm. Weight: 470 gms.
b) Dark brown/black glaze over red/orange oxidized body. Oxidized core. Reduced top surface. Mortar adhering to underside. Max. Dimensions: 95mm x 71mm x 28mm. Weight: 280 gms.

Pl. 4.15: Glazed floor tile. Context 401.

Brick
Context 401: Cat. 6: Four fragments of shattered brick. Total Weight: 6 gms.

Pl. 4.16: Brick fragments. Context 401.

Ironwork
Context 401: Cat: 7: 17 corroded nail/bolt fragments. Max. Dimensions: 77mm x 16mm x 16mm. Min. Dimensions: 26mm x 12mm x 10mm. Weight: 181 gms.
1 corroded iron lump. Weight: 35 gms.

Pl. 4.17: Corroded ironwork. Context 401.

Slag

Context 401: Cat: 8: Two fragments of ? industrial slag. Grey and vesicular. Total Weight: 30 gms.

Pl. 4.18: Slag fragments. Context 401.

Animal Bone Context 401: Cat 9: Three indeterminate fragments of ? animal bone. Total Weight: 3 gms.

Pl. 4.19: Animal bone fragments. Context 401.

Wood

Context 401: Cat 10: Ninety-one fragments of wood shavings and off-cuts. Total Weight: 56 gms.

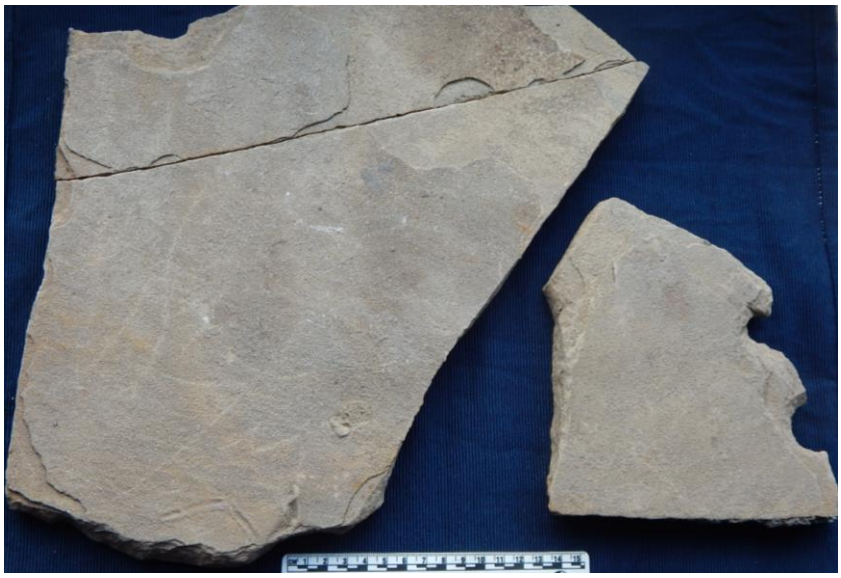
Pl. 4.20: Wood fragments. (sample). Context 401.

Stone Roof Tiles

Context 401: Cat. 11: Three pieces of perforated sandstone roof tile.

i) Two conjoining pieces from a single stone roof tile. One perforation visible. Max. Dimensions of two conjoined pieces: 395mm x 29mm x 16mm. Total Weight: 2656 gms.

ii) One fragment of perforated sandstone roof tile. Two perforations visible. Max. Dimensions: 166mm x 155mm x 15mm. Perforation diameters: 25 mm; 15mm. Total Weight: 163 gms.



Pl. 4.21: Perforated stone roof tiles. Context 401.

Sandstone Floor Tiles

Context 401: Cat. 12: Three fragments of sandstone floor tiles, retaining white/grey mortar. Max. Dimensions:

i) 86mm x 68mm x 20mm

ii) 77mm x 35mm x 5mm

iii) 98mm x 80mm x 26mm.

Total Weight: 590 gms.

Pl. 4.22: Sandstone floor tiles. Context 401.

Wall Plaster

Context 401: Cat 13: 9 fragments of wall plaster (sample) of c. 30 pieces. Some retain imprints from laths and moulding, one retaining paint (Pl. 4.23, top right). Total Weight: 1427 gms.

Pl. 4.23: Wall plaster fragments. Context 401.

CONTEXT 403

Architectural Fragment

Context 403: Cat. 11: Fragment of, sandstone, roll-molded column shaft. Retains some mortar. Max. Dimensions: 162mm x 152mm x 105mm. Weight: 1544 gms.

Pl. 4.21: Architectural fragment. Context 403.

CONTEXT 404

Pottery
Context 404: Cat. 12: Two fragments of Medieval 'splashed ware' (yellow/green glaze). Totally oxidized. Throwing rings visible on internal face. Sandy clay matrix with some rare rounded quartz inclusions and small, hard, black grits – c. late C11th-mid C13th. Max. Sherd Dimensions: 37mm x 20mm x 6mm; 18mm x 11mm x 6mm. Total Weight: 6 gms.

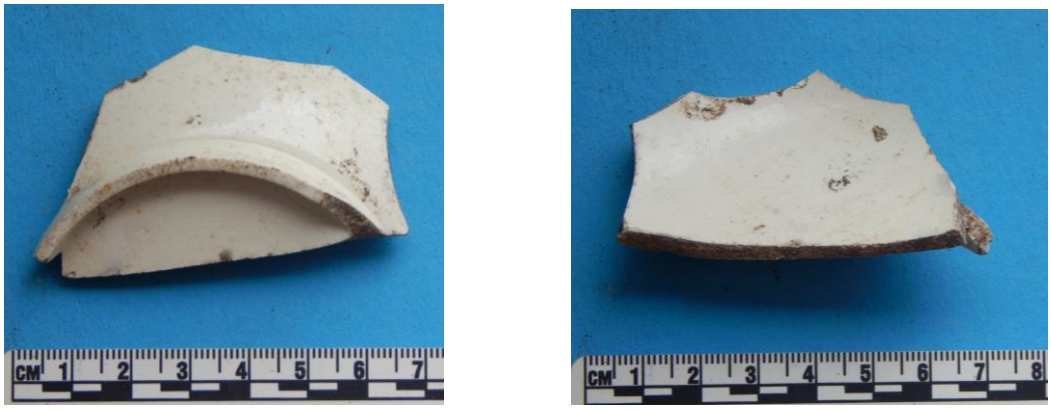
Pl. 4.22: Splash Glazed Pottery. Context 404.

Context 404: Cat. 13: Base sherd from a Cistercian Ware drinking vessel. Rich, red/brown, oxidized fabric with some small white quartz inclusions. Dark brown/purple glaze. C 15th – C16th. Foot ring c. 70mm diam. Max. Dimensions: 28mm x 25mm x 5mm. Weight: 9 gms.

M

Pl. 4.23: Cistercian Ware sherd. Context 404.

Context 404, Cat 14: One base sherd from a White Ware bowl. Fine white clay matrix, vitreous glaze on both internal and external surfaces – c. C18th-C19th. Foot ring 80mm diam. Max. Dimensions: 63mm x 25mm x 4mm. Weight: 18 gms.



Pl. 4.24 and 4.25: White Ware fragment. Context 404.

Glazed Floor Tile

Context 404: Cat. 15: 8 fragments of glazed floor tile and 2 unglazed pieces. All are fully oxidised in terms of clay matrix. 4 of the glazed surfaces are black, 1 is brown and 3 are ochrous yellow. Max. Dimensions: 105mm x 76mm x 34mm. Min. Dimensions: 25mm x 23mm x 14mm. Total weight: 627 gms.

Pl. 4.26: Glazed floor tile fragments. Context 404.

Lead Window Came

Context 404: Cat. 16: Folded lead window kame, exhibiting some grey oxidization. Max. Dimensions: 60mm x 16mm x 15mm. Weight: 16 gms.

Pls. 4.27 and 4.28: Lead window came (two views). Context 404.

Mussel Shell

Context 404: Cat. 17: Three highly fragmented pieces of ? mussel shell Total weight: 1 gm. (Not illustrated).

Ironwork

Context 404: Cat. 18: 1 corroded iron nail. 38mm x 15mm x 12mm. Weight: 6 gms. (Not illustrated)

Bone

Context 404: Cat. 19: 3 animal bones fragments including 1 rib fragment Weight: 9 gms. (Not illustrated).

CONTEXT 415

Painted Window Glass

Context 415: Cat. 20: One fragment of painted window glass. Now black in colour, with red/brown fragment of ? painted letter visible. Highly eroded. Max. Dimensions: 33mm x 25mm x 5mm. Total Weight: 3 gms.

Pl. 4.29: Painted window glass fragment. Context 415.

6. Discussion

As stated above, the archaeological evaluation was carried out to provide data to enable informed decisions to be made regarding:

a) the nature of the archaeological features revealed in the geophysical survey;

b) their archaeological significance and importance (*sensu* the National Planning Policy Framework, 2023),

c) the likely impact of the proposed development works within the church (see above) upon any such features and

d) the appropriate mitigation of the proposed development's impacts upon those remains.

a) The excavations confirmed the presence of important archaeological features both inside and outside of the abbey church. Evaluation trenches were laid out to assess the nature of the results of the GPR survey (Fig. 9), (ASUD, 2020). The results of this survey were presented as 'time slices' at 0.25m, 0.5m and 1m depths. In the area of Trench 1, the geophysical survey suggested the presence of a service pipe and the probable footings of a wall (Fig. 9). Excavation confirmed the presence of the service trench and also the potential Abbey boundary wall footing which appeared as the construction/robber trench, cut (105). In trenches 2 and 3 the geophysical survey also indicated the possible presence of former wall foundations and what appeared to be a linear feature, thought to be a further service pipe. No archaeological features were encountered in either trench in the areas of the supposed early foundations, and no service pipe was observed. However, in Trench 2 a stone capped culvert (211, cut 208) running N/S and a further example running E/W (210) were recorded. Neither of these was definitely revealed in the geophysics survey, though the N/S culvert could correspond to the N/S anomaly identified on the geophysics survey. In addition, in Trench 2, immediately beneath the existing stone slabbed floor, a large, stone-built? wall foundation, (203, 204, 205), initially thought to be the base of the stairs that led up to the early nineteenth century school room on the eastern side of the transept, did not appear in the GPR survey. In Trench 3 the excavations revealed a large stone capped culvert (cut 305) which cut an early drain (317/318) and what appeared to be a ? medieval stone floor (314). None of these features was recorded in the geophysics results in any of the time slices. Trench 4 was located to examine the existence of what were thought to be acoustic pits or an acoustic chamber in the west end of the choir, seemingly revealed in the GPR survey. The existence of these pits was suggested by Ryder (2012) on the basis of observations made by Featherstonehaugh in 1893 when discussing rebuilding works at the east end of the church in 1881. Featherstonehaugh noted 'a marvelous system of drains devised by the monks' (1893, 38). These might relate to the post-medieval culvert system, elements of which were recovered in the excavations in trenches 2-4, however he gives no other details about these structures and no detailed information about their location. Ryder dismissed Featherstonehaugh's features as drains arguing that in his experience drains in a monastic church would be unlikely. He went on to suggest that what was recorded were acoustic pits beneath the choir stalls, designed to amplify the sound of the choir, and similar to those known from the Premonstratensian site at Whalley Abbey in Lancashire. In the event, these 'pits' were

not recorded in the excavation and, as can be seen above, Trench 4 revealed a series of archaeological features that, again, did not appear to show in any of the time slices of the GPR, both abutting and cut by wall (416), the rebuilt (1752) west wall of the parish church. A N/S orientated anomaly visible on the 0.50m time slice in Survey Area 6 (Trench 4) might correlate with the N/S orientated culvert (407). The? medieval floor (411) and grave (412) did not appear in the results of the GPR survey.

b) In assessing the significance of the features revealed during the evaluation exercise we have used criteria outlined in Historic England's policy document *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (2008). This sets out a range of 'heritage values' embodied in heritage assets, a combination of which can be used to move towards a detailed assessment of their significance. These are:

1) Evidential Value: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. This is usually in the form of archaeological or architectural information
2) Historical Value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present – it tends to be illustrative or associative.
3) Aesthetic Value: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
4) Communal Value: the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

The Church of England's *Faculty Jurisdiction Rules* (2013) further suggest that the significance of a Church or other building should be seen:

'*in terms of its special architectural and historic interest (including any contribution made by its setting) and any significant features of artistic or archaeological interest that the Church or other building has so as to enable the potential impact of [development] proposals on its significance, and on any such features, to be understood'*.

The document identifies 5 levels of 'significance':

- **High** – important at national to international levels.
- **Moderate-High** – important at regional or sometimes higher.
- **Moderate** – usually of local value but of regional significance for group or other value (e.g. vernacular architecture).
- **Low-Moderate** – of local value.
- **Low** – adds little or nothing to the value of a site or detracts from it.

The site of the Abbey is an interesting one in terms of heritage designations. It is part Scheduled Monument and part Grade1 Listed Building.

This Scheduled area of the Premonstratensian Abbey is shown on the Historic England map extract below (Fig. 11).

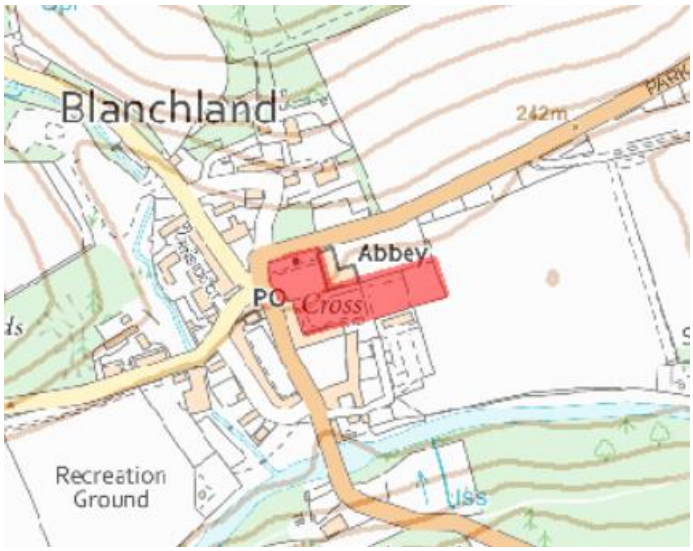


Fig. 11: Extract from Scheduling Map

Given their Scheduled status then all of these remains would be of high significance

The parish church of St Mary's, which comprises the north transept and choir of the monastic church is not part of the Scheduling and has been designated as a Grade 1 Listed Building, making it a structure of exceptional national interest and of high heritage value. Only 2.5% of the national stock of Listed Buildings are Grade I. The Heritage Values of the church itself have been discussed in detail elsewhere (Young, 2012). In the context of the present report, we will concentrate on the evidential value of St. Mary's.

The Grade 1 status of the church clearly indicates the fabric's high evidential value and its national significance. The early work of Knowles (1902) amongst others and the exemplary recent research by Peter Ryder and the Newcastle-based Archaeological Practice (1985, 2005, 2006, 2012, 2014) has clearly shown that it is possible to chart the structural and architectural fortunes and misfortunes of the present Church from the surviving fabric. When this is coupled with what is known of the structural remains of the Abbey currently preserved within the village plan, then this value is enhanced and the contribution to the monument's significance is greatly magnified. It must be remembered that of all the 35 Premonstratensian Abbeys in the country, Blanchland is the only one that has developed into a 'model' village due to the activities of the Lord Crewe Estate and Trust over the centuries, and that St Mary's itself is the only surviving, roofed, element of a Premonstratensian Abbey brought back into use as a 'working' Church.

The potential of the asset to reveal further important insights into its history, development and detailed human usage, before, during and post-the Dissolution, and before the church was rebuilt in the 1750s is also enhanced when the contribution of sub-surface archaeological remains is included in the discussion. Ryder was of the opinion, (proved to be correct by the work reported on here) that significant archaeological remains might survive beneath the floors of the Church, and that any disturbance of these would require careful recording (Ryder, 2012, 10).

The three trenches excavated within the church have produced a series of features (culverts, floor surfaces etc.) that clearly have high evidential value and the potential to significantly enhance our understanding of the post Dissolution history of the site. However, the evaluation work stopped at the level of these features and none was fully excavated. The work did however establish important stratigraphical relationships, establishing a relative chronology for the construction activity. As such all of the features, below the c. C19th levelling deposits (201, 202, 206, 301, 302, 401) should be considered candidates for preservation in situ, being of high significance because of their obvious evidential value, their location and association with developments within a Grade 1 listed structure and the need for future study.

As the National Planning Policy Framework says: *(NPPF, 2023, Para. 203. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage).*

c) Clearly these observations have significant implications for the proposed development scheme within the church. Beneath the current stone slabbed floor which was laid in 1815 there is a consistent deposit of levelling material laid over the culvert system and the extant medieval/postmedieval remains identified above. The thickness of this layer varies between trenches 2-4. In Trench 2 it is between 16-19cms thick, Trench 3: 36-24 cms and Trench 4: 39-23cms, mirroring the topographical slope of the land from north to south. This might be seen as a series of deposits that could be preserved by record and removed in the course of any proposed developments leading to the construction of underfloor heating. Given the potential evidential importance of features below this levelling however, no further archaeological deposits should be removed and preservation in situ is recommended.

d) An appropriate mitigation strategy might involve the actual raising of the internal floor levels of the church to permit heating installation. Alternatively, as suggested above the levelling layers In light of the results of the archaeological evaluation this would need to be worked out in detail with the Abbey Architect, the incumbent, PCC and the Newcastle Diocesan Advisory Committee.

On the basis of recorded stratigraphic relationships in all 4 excavated trenches it is suggested that the majority of archaeological features are probably broadly post-medieval in date. Possible Medieval features include the flooring and grave cut in Trench 4, both of which run

under the western wall of the church (416) and which are cut by the wall's foundation trench. In addition, these features are also overlain by the N/S orientated culvert (406, 407, 408), which also overlies the foundation trench of (416). The construction date for the western wall is c. 1750-52, making it obvious that the culvert which overlies the wall's construction trench and abuts the wall itself must be post 1750-52 in date and pre- the construction of the stone slab floor which was laid c. 1811-1815.

Similarly, in Trench 3, the large culvert (310) sitting in cut (305) predates the levelling layers for the laying of the 1811-1815 slab floor (301, 302). It postdates a ? medieval floor level (314) and also cuts a ?medieval drain (307, 312, 313 and 315) and a thick deposit of clay (306) which has produced shards of medieval painted window glass and a base sherd of medieval pottery. The latter is also cut by (307 – 315).

In Trench 2 the large ? staircase foundation (203, 204, 205) may relate to the later school room in the upper part of the transept. Ryder suggests that this was constructed sometime around 1815 when the church was again re-roofed. The school room was removed in 1854 and the eastern aisle of the transept rebuilt, apparently upon its old foundations (see discussion by A. Newton above). The 'staircase' foundation was clearly in place before the floor was laid c. 1811-1815 as levelling layers (e.g. 201 and 202) for the laying of the floor both abut and overlie the foundation. (203, 204, 205) is also clearly later than the culverts (210, 212, 213) and (208, 211). These also cut deposits running under (203, 204, 205) and the latter cut the ? medieval grave (215, 216).

In the external Trench 1 the lead water pipe sitting in cut (105) is clearly of post medieval and probably C19th date while the robbed wall (109, 111) is possibly a medieval feature (though no firm dating evidence was recovered to confirm this suggestion).

Most of the recovered finds would seem to be related to the destruction of the Abbey church. Most of the ceramic finds would appear to be of C18-19th date though some medieval and early post-medieval ceramics were recovered. Of particular interest here are the sherds of 'splashed glaze ware' and the single sherd of Cistercian Ware noted above. The Cistercian Ware fragment from Trench 4 comes from context (404), a layer cut by (405), the construction trench for the north/south orientated culvert. (Pl.4.5; Figs. 4.2 – 4.6). (404) and the culvert overlie the basal clay layer (417) (which was the limit of the excavation). (Pl. 4.6; Fig. 4.7). (404) also overlies the grave (412/413) and the floor level (411). The context is clearly of post medieval date.

The splash glazed ware sherds date from the later 11th century to the 13th century (Coppack, 1972, 88 and 93; Adams 1977), and are clearly residual pieces from early activity on the site.

The glazed floor tile fragments which show no traces of encaustic designs could date to any period from the 12th-15th century. The fragments from context (401) are clearly residual within the levelling up material beneath the floor slabs, while the fragments from context (404) are in a clear post medieval layer as discussed above. The eroded fragments of painted glass may also fit into an 11th-13th century date range.

The wood shavings and off-cuts and corroded nails etc., recovered from most of the trenches and usually from levelling layers beneath the stone floor slabs, are probably from works carried out to re-roof the building in 1815 (see A. Newton discussion above)

Possible functions for the culverts discovered in trenches 2, 3 and 4 are also discussed by Andrew Newton (above).

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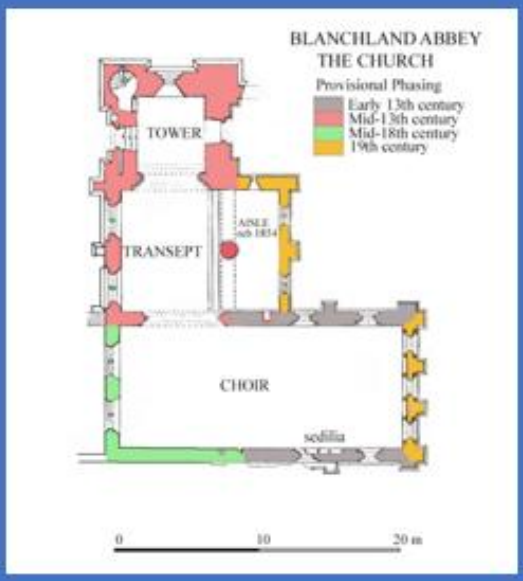
APPENDIX 1: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

THE ABBEY CHURCH OF GOD AND ST. MARY THE VIRGIN,BLANCHLAND, NORTHUMBERLAND.

WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION TRENCHING



PREPARED BY DR ROB YOUNG FOR DR HELEN SAVAGE, NEWCASTLE D.A.C. AND BLANCHLAND P.C.C

1) INTRODUCTION

This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared by Dr Robert Young on behalf of Dr Helen Savage, Newcastle A.D.C. and Blanchland P.C.C. and details the methodology for undertaking a programme of internal and external archaeological evaluation trenching at the Abbey Church of God and St. Mary the Virgin, Blanchland, Northumberland.

Blanchland is located on the north bank of the river Derwent, 11 miles west of Shotley Bridge, 10 miles south of Hexham and 9 miles north of Stanhope, in the south-western corner of Northumberland at NGR NY965504. The Derwent is the boundary between Durham and Northumberland at this point, and the village lies at the centre of a small, level, area between the river Derwent and rising land to the north. This area is occupied by fields and extends about a kilometre upstream and downstream from the village. Upstream, at Baybridge, the hills converge to form a narrow, steep sided, valley and two kms further upstream, the source of the Derwent is located at the confluence of the Beldon and Nookton Burns. About a kilometre downstream from Blanchland, the hills converge again to form a narrow valley before this opens out again at Ruffside from where the stream flows into the Derwent Reservoir (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Village Location

The village and the Church have developed from the remains of one of only six Premonstratensian Abbeys in North-Eastern England (Fig. 2). It was founded in 1165 by Walter de Bolbec and it is the only Premonstratensian Abbey in the country to retain part of its original Church as the current parish Church. All of the extant Church/Abbey fabric would appear to date to the C13th.

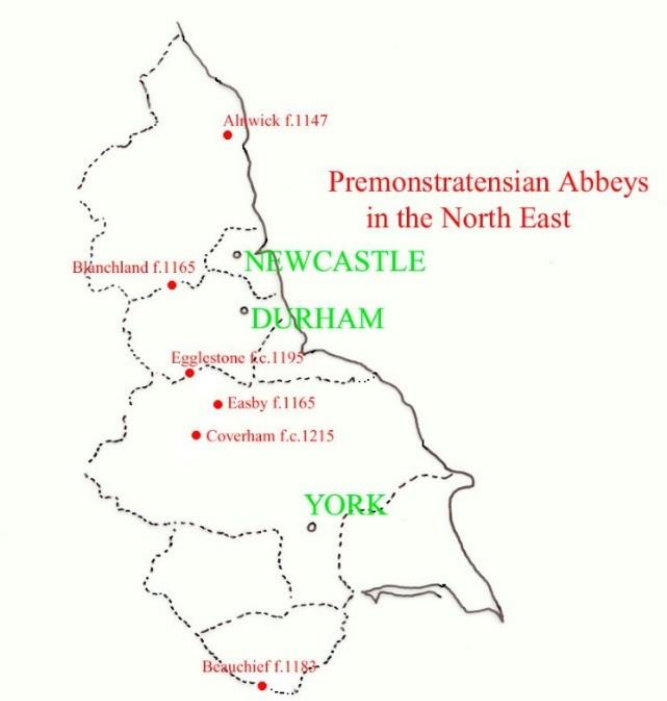


Fig. 2: Premonstratensian Abbeys in the Northeast of England (after P. Ryder).

The Premonstratensian order of 'canons regular' was founded at Prémontré near Laon in France in 1120 by Saint Norbert, (they are also known as 'Norbertines') and at the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII they had 35 religious houses in England. As Ryder has pointed out, 'Blanchland is unique in the manner in which the remains of the monastic complex, both cloister and outer court, were recast in what has been termed a 'model village;' in the 18th century by the Lord Crewe Trustees.' (Ryder, 2012, 1). (Fig. 3).

The Church itself, and the above ground remains of the priory that can still be seen embedded within the current village structure, were the subject of late nineteenth/very early twentieth century antiquarian interest (e.g., Johnson, 1894; Featherstonehaugh, 1868, 1893; Knowles, 1902; Northumberland County History (NCH), 1902). Recent work on the Church, the Priory and the village in general has been carried out by Peter Ryder and the Newcastle-based Archaeological Practice (see below and Ryder, 1985, 2000, 2005, 2006, 2012, 2017; The Archaeological Practice, 2014).

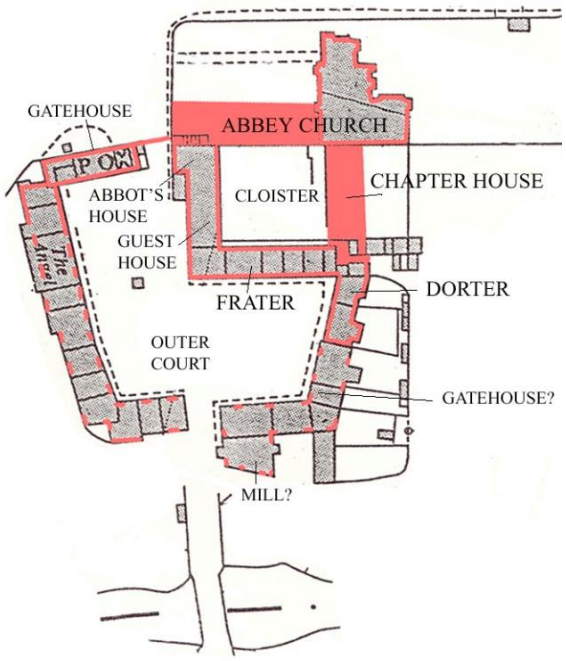


Fig. 3: The Monastic Complex as the modern village of Blanchland (CACA, 2008, 26)

The evaluation is in advance of proposed works relating to the overall aims of the Blanchland Abbey 'Resilient Heritage Project', namely the construction of a kitchen/toilet extension on the east side of the church tower and works in the church interior relating to floor level alterations necessary for the installation of an underfloor heating system.

The work will be carried out as a community archaeology project with volunteers working under professional supervision. Supervisory staff will include Dr Robert Young, Dr Sheila Newton, Dr Andrew Newton. On site and public liability insurance will be covered by the Blanchland Abbey 'Resilient Heritage Project'.

The three proposed internal and one external trench (Fig. 5) have been located in relation to the results of a ground penetrating radar survey carried out by Archaeological Services, University of Durham (Fig. 4)which revealed a range of archaeological features relating to earlier activity on the church site e.g.

- A small rectilinear feature to the east of the tower could represent the remains of the northern part of the former chantry chapel. (Trench 1 external)
- Two parallel features in the church interior, crossing the north transept in line with the choir and the tower, probably represent foundations associated with the earlier church. (Trenches 2 and 3 interior)
- Parallel features identified outside the western side of the tower probably represent the remains of the former school building or chapel.
- Possible evidence of putative acoustic pits has been identified in the choir (Trench 3 interior).
- Several possible unmarked graves have been identified in the churchyard.
- Possible services and landscaping works have been identified.

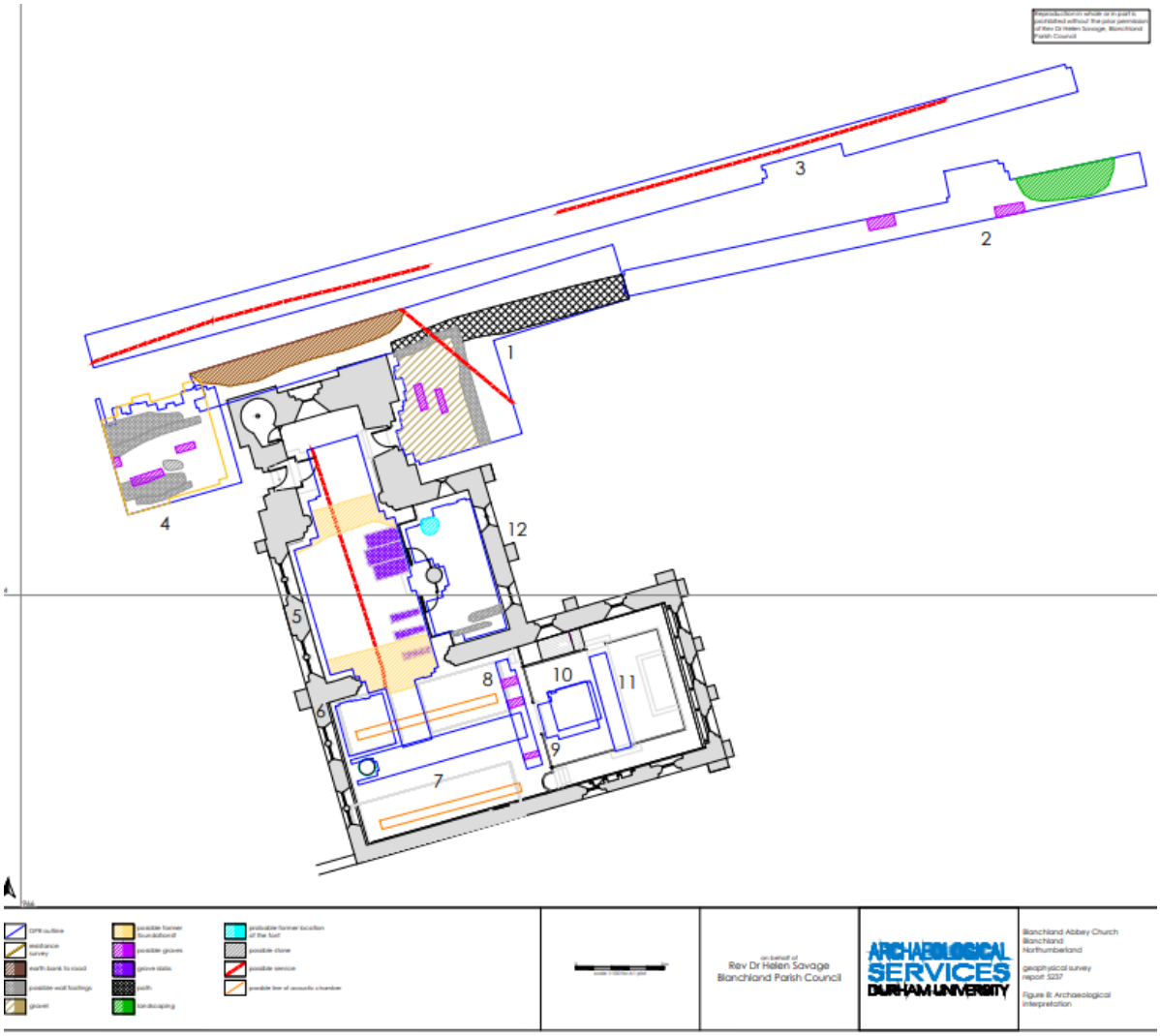


FIG. 4: Ground Penetrating Radar Results

The trial trenching will provide sufficient data for informed decisions to be made regarding:

v) The nature of the archaeological features revealed in the geophysical survey.

vi) Their archaeological significance and importance (*sensu* the National Planning Policy Framework).

vii) The likely impact of the proposed works upon any such features and

viii) The appropriate mitigation of the development's impacts upon those remains.

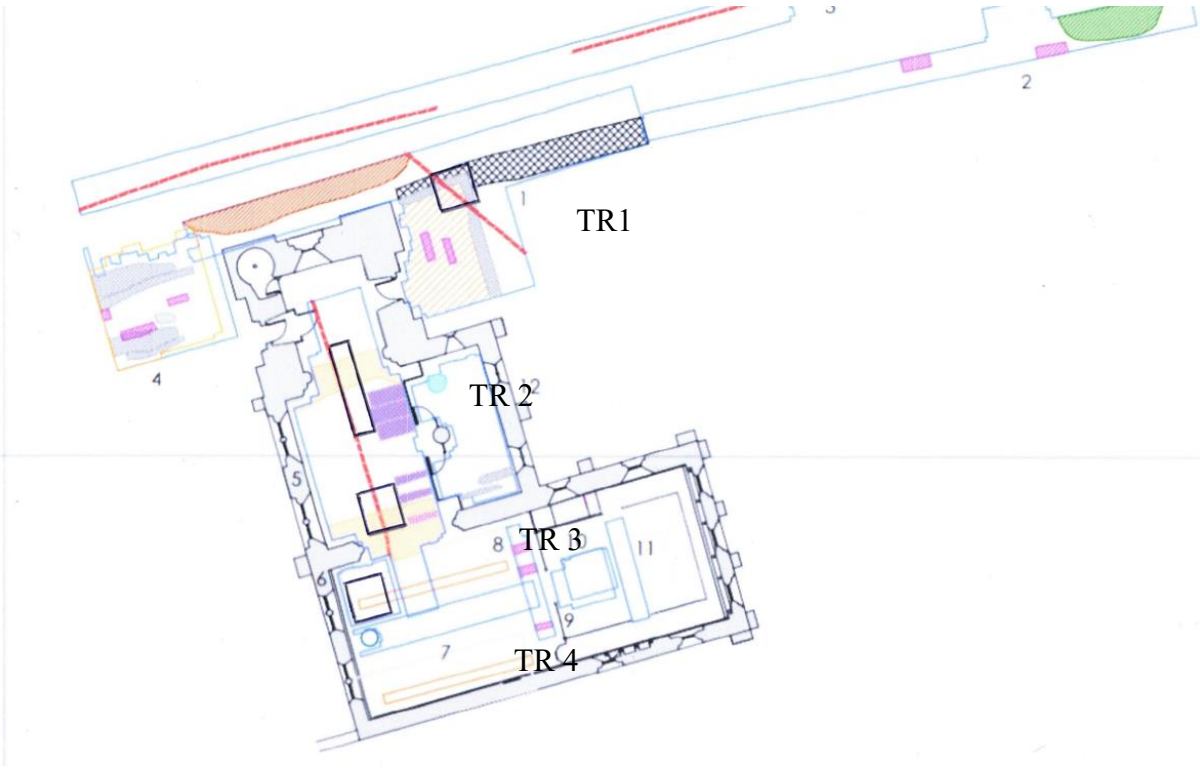


FIG. 5: Location of Evaluation Trenches

2. HISTORICAL/ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Blanchland village and Church have developed from the remains of one of only six Premonstratensian Abbeys in North-Eastern England. It was founded in 1165 by Walter de Bolbec and it is the only Premonstratensian Abbey in the country to retain part of its original Church as the current parish Church. All the extant Church/Abbey fabric would appear to date to the C13th.

The Premonstratensian order of 'canons regular' was founded at Prémontré near Laon in France in 1120 by Saint Norbert, (they are also known as 'Norbertines') and at the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII they had 35 religious houses in England. As Ryder has pointed out, 'Blanchland is unique in the manner in which the remains of the monastic complex, both cloister and outer court, were recast in what has been termed a 'model village;' in the 18th century by the Lord Crewe Trustees.' (Ryder, 2012, 1).

The Church itself, and the above ground remains of the priory that can still be seen embedded within the current village structure, were the subject of late nineteenth/very early twentieth century antiquarian interest (e.g. Johnson, 1894; Featherstonehaugh, 1868, 1893; Knowles, 1902; Northumberland County History (NCH), 1902). Recent archaeological work on the Church, the Priory and the village in general has been carried out by Peter Ryder and the Newcastle-based Archaeological Practice (Ryder, 1985, 2000, 2005, 2006, 2012, 2017; The Archaeological Practice, 2014).

All of this work has been collated in the Conservation Management Plan prepared for Dr Helen Savage, Newcastle DAC and Blanchland PCC by Dr Robert Young and need not be rehearsed in detail here.

3) METHODOLOGY

Project initialisation

i) The contractor will inform the Northumberland County Council Archaeology Officer at least one week in advance of the commencement of fieldwork.

ii) The Great North Museum will be contacted to arrange for a project archive to be created and deposited in accordance with their deposition and archiving standards, in advance of the commencement of fieldwork.

iii) All works will be archived under an accession number to be obtained by the appointed archaeological contractor from The Great North Museum and the archaeological contractor will complete the required archive deposition forms.

iv) Before fieldwork commences an OASIS online record will be initiated and key fields completed on the Details, Location and Creator forms.

FIELDWORK

i) The archaeological evaluation will comprise four trenches, three measuring 2m by 2m (T1,T2 and T4) and one measuring 5m by 1m (T3), (see Figure 5). If required, trench sizes may be expanded to allow for a suitable depth of excavation to be obtained.

ii) After removal of the internal floor slabs by a professional specialist, overburden across the trenches will be stripped by hand down to the first archaeological horizon or natural sub-soil, whichever is arrived at first.

iii) Spoil from the excavation will be scanned by eye and by metal detector to aid the recovery of artefacts.

iv) Topsoil and subsoil from the external trench will be stored separately for re-instatement. Material from each internal trench will also be kept separately for re-instatement.

v) All archaeological features and deposits revealed will be cleaned and excavated in an archaeologically controlled and stratigraphic manner, to establish their extent, form, date, function, and relationship to other features

vi) In the external trench all features will be investigated to understand the full stratigraphic sequence down to naturally occurring deposits where safe or practicable to do so. This trench will provide key information to inform decisions on foundation and drainage system depth and structure for the proposed kitchen/toilet extension to the church.

vii) There will be a presumption of the need to cause the minimum disturbance to the site consistent with adequate evaluation.

viii) Significant archaeological features (e.g., solid, or bonded structural remains, building slots or postholes), will be preserved intact even if fills are sampled.

ix) For linear features, minimum 1m wide slots should be excavated across their width. For discrete features, such as pits, 50% of their fills will be sampled.

x) Excavation will be undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to any archaeological features or deposits which are demonstrably worthy of preservation in situ.

xi) All identified finds and artefacts will be collected and retained and bagged and labelled according to their context. Finds of significant interest will be given a 'small finds' number, and information on their location will be entered on a separate pro-forma sheet that will form part of a dedicated 'Small Finds Register'.

xii) No finds will be discarded without assessment by an appropriate finds specialist, or approval of the Northumberland County Council Archaeology Officer.

xiii) All finds and samples will be treated in a proper manner during the excavation and post-excavation stage and to standards agreed in advance with The Great North Museum.

xiv) If required, conservation will be undertaken by approved conservators in line with the First Aid for Finds guidelines (Watkinson and Neal 1998).

xv) The guidelines for handling post-Roman ceramics produced by the Medieval Pottery Research Group will be followed (MPRG 2001) if required.

xvi) The terms of the Treasure Act 1996, as amended, and the Treasure (Designation) Order 2002 will be followed regarding any finds that might fall within its purview. All finds of gold and silver, and associated objects, will be reported to the coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act 1996 (and the act's amendment of 2003 to include prehistoric objects such as metalworking hoards and other non-precious metal items), after discussion with the DAC Archaeological Adviser, the Northumberland County Council Archaeology Officer, and the County Finds Liaison Officer.

xvii) Ownership of any finds recovered during archaeological works rests with the Diocese and Church Authorities except where other law overrides this (e.g., Treasure Act 1996, Burial Act 1857). However, the contractor will seek to obtain 'in principle' agreement that any recovered artefacts should be donated to The Great North Museum

xviii) A full written, drawn, and photographic record will be made of all features revealed during the archaeological evaluation. Plans will be completed at a scale of 1:20 (as appropriate), with section drawings at a scale of 1:10. All plans will be tied in with the Ordnance Survey National Grid with levels given to above OD

xix) A high resolution digital photographic record will be produced and collated in a designated photographic register. This will be maintained throughout the course of the fieldwork and will include as a minimum:

• the site prior to commencement of fieldwork

• the site during work, showing specific stages of fieldwork

• the layout of archaeological features within each trench

• individual features and, where appropriate, their sections

• groups of features where their relationship is assessed to be important

xx) Following excavation and recording of any archaeological remains, and with the agreement of the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer following a monitoring visit, the evaluation trenches will be backfilled with the previously excavated material.

Archaeological Finds

i) All finds, where appropriate, shall be washed, recorded, and processed in accordance with the guidelines set out in United Kingdom Institute for Conservation's Conservation Guidelines No. 2 (1990) and the CIfA guidelines Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation, and research of archaeological materials (2014d.

ii) All pottery and other finds, where appropriate, shall be marked with the site code and context number.

iii) All finds and samples will be treated in a proper manner during the excavation and post-excavation stage and to standards agreed in advance with the Great North Museum.

iv) If required, conservation will be undertaken by approved conservators in line with the First Aid for Finds guidelines (Watkinson and Neal 1998).

v) The guidelines for handling post-Roman ceramics produced by the Medieval Pottery Research Group will also be followed (MPRG 2001) if required.

vi) The terms of the Treasure Act 1996, as amended, and the Treasure (Designation) Order 2002 will be followed with regard to any finds that might fall within its purview. All finds of gold and silver, and associated objects, will be reported to the coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act 1996 (and the act's amendment of 2003 to include prehistoric objects such as metalworking hoards and other non-precious metal items), after discussion with the client, the

Northumberland County Council Archaeology Officer, and the County Finds Liaison Officer.

vii) Ownership of any finds recovered during archaeological works rests with Newcastle Diocese and the church authorities, except where other law overrides this (e.g., Treasure Act 1996, Burial Act 1857).

viii) The contractor will seek to obtain 'in principle' agreement from the landowner to donate the recovered artefacts to the Great North Museum.

SPECIALIST FINDS CONSULTANTS

Assessment and analysis of finds, environmental samples and human remains will be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced specialists, if required.

Medieval/Post-Medieval Pottery - Dr Rob Young

Medieval/Post-Medieval Metalwork – Dr Rob Young

Building Remains – Peter Ryder

Paleoenvironmental sampling strategy

i) Soil samples will be taken from all suitable features or deposits for palaeoenvironmental and sampling. This will comprise the removal of a bulk sample from every securely sealed and hand-excavated context, excepting those with excessive levels of residuality or those with minimal 'soil' content (such as building rubble).

ii) Bulk samples will comprise the maximum amount of material practicable to collect. These will be used to recover a sub-sample of charred macroplant material, faunal remains and artefacts where necessary, as well as any industrial residues.

iii) If buried soils or other deposits are encountered, column samples may be taken for micromorphological and pollen analysis.

iv) Environmental material will be stored in a controlled environment and specialists consulted during the course of the work if necessary.

v) The post-excavation processing of any palaeoenvironmental samples will be undertaken in line with nationally accepted standards e.g., *Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods from sampling and recovery to post-excavation (2011) a*nd by qualified specialists.

Human remains

i) As the evaluation will be undertaken within an historic churchyard and church interior there is a high potential that the groundworks could disturb human remains from earlier burials. The overriding presumption must be to prevent the disturbance of human remains unless unavoidable.

ii) If human remains are unavoidably disturbed, then the present incumbent and a representative from the DAC must be informed immediately. The remains must then be dealt with in accordance with the guidelines produced by the Church of England and Historic England (2017) and the Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England (2013).

iii) There will be no excavation of the remains beyond the limit of the ground works (Church of England and Historic England 2017, 32, Annex E5).

iv) All remains will be hand-excavated.

v) Where disarticulated human remains are encountered, their location must be recorded and an in situ photographic record made before removal from the ground.

vi) The remains should be briefly assessed on site, to record the anatomical elements present, and then reverently reburied as close as possible to the point of discovery. Depending on the extent of the material encountered an osteoarchaeologist may need to be consulted.

vii) In the event of the discovery of articulated human remains all work on site must cease, and the remains be screened from public view. The DAC must be notified, and an application made to the Court if permission for excavation is sought. To enable an informed decision to be made, the archaeological contractor will need to detail the appropriate treatment of excavated human remains at all stages (including provisions for reburial), propose a realistic timetable for subsequent analysis, and an indication of costs. If permission by the Court is granted, the remains should be hand excavated and recorded in accordance with current guidelines (ADCA 2013; Historic England 2013).

viii) Following recording, the remains may not be removed from site without permission from the Court. Pending the application, the remains should be lifted, bagged, and retained on site and the advice of the DAC sought as to how to proceed.

ix) If an application to remove the remains from site is granted by the Court, the remains should be removed from site, washed, and assessed by a suitably qualified osteoarchaeologist.

x) If the Court does not grant permission for the remains to be removed from site, then the remains must be reverently reburied as close to their point of discovery as possible.

xi) The marking of the reburial site should be discussed with the PCC.

Unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries

i) Should unexpectedly extensive, complex, or significant remains be uncovered that warrant, in the professional judgment of the archaeologist on site or the Northumberland County Council Archaeology Officer, more detailed recording or extensive excavation than is appropriate within the terms of the WSI, the scope of the WSI will be reviewed.

ii) In the event of a review of the WSI being required, the contractor will contact the client and the Northumberland County Council Archaeology Officer with the relevant information to enable them to resolve the matter.

iii) This is likely to require an on-site meeting between the relevant stakeholders to review the archaeological remains on-site and identify a way forward.

iv) Any variations to this WSI will be put in writing and agreed by the relevant stakeholders including the DAC, DAC Archaeological Adviser, the PCC and Northumberland County Council Archaeology Officer Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer.

4. MONITORING

i) The Diocesan Archaeology Adviser, in liaison with the County Archaeology/Heritage Team and Historic England's Regional Inspector of Ancient Monuments, will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project. This will include the fieldwork, post-excavation, and publication stages.

ii) Notification of the start of work will be given by the contractor to the monitoring bodies one week in advance of its commencement.

iii) Any variations to the written scheme of investigation will be agreed with the Diocesan Archaeology Adviser, County Archaeology/Heritage Team, prior to them being carried out (see above).

iv) No backfilling will take place until the Diocesan Archaeology Adviser, in liaison with the County Archaeology/Heritage Team, has inspected trenches and is satisfied that the work has been carried out to an appropriate standard.

5. POST-EXCAVATION ASSESSMENT

The post-excavation assessment work will comprise the following:

- checking of drawn and written records during and on completion of fieldwork.
- production of a stratigraphic matrix of the archaeological deposits and features present on the site, if appropriate

- cataloguing of photographic material
- cleaning, marking, bagging and labelling of finds according to the individual deposits from which they were recovered.
- Processing and assessment of environmental samples
- Finds requiring specialist conservation will be sent to appropriate specialists for assessment, including identification and initial dating.

6. Results and reporting

i) The Archaeological Contractor must produce an interim report of 200 words minimum two weeks after the completion of the fieldwork for the client, and the Diocesan Adviser, and for dissemination to all interested parties.

ii) The full archive report on the trial trenching must be submitted within a length of time (but not exceeding 12 months) from the end of the fieldwork, to be agreed between the client, the Archaeological Contractor, and the Diocesan Archaeology Adviser. Upon agreement of the archive report, copies to be sent to the Northumberland County Council Archaeology Officer, Northumberland County Council HER

The Report must include as a minimum:

- Title page detailing site address, site code and accession number, NGR, author / originating body, client's name and address
- Non-technical summary of the findings of the evaluation
- Description of the topography and geology of the site
- Description of the archaeological background to the site
- Discussion of the aims and methods adopted during the trial trenching programme.
- Location plans of trenches in relation to the plan of the Church.
- Site narrative- interpretation, structural and stratigraphic history of the site, including relevant Harris Matrices.
- Plans showing all major features, and deposit spreads by phase and any section locations.
- Sections of trench axes and through excavated features with levels.
- Plans and Elevations of any walls etc. revealed during the works.
- All drawings to be of publication standard.

- Artefact reports, including full text descriptions and illustrations of finds.
- Tables and matrices summarising feature and artefact sequences.
- A full context list.
- Archive descriptions of contexts grouped by phase (not for publication).
- Deposit sequence summary (for publication/deposition).
- Colour photographs of trenches, archaeological features and finds.
- Any commissioned laboratory reports, summaries of dating and environmental data. with statements of collection methodologies.
- A consideration of the significance of the results of the work within the wider research context (e.g., ref. NERRF).
- Recommendations for further work on the site or further analysis of finds or environmental samples.
- Details of archive location and destination, together with a catalogue of what is contained in that archive.
- References and bibliography of all sources used
- Copy of the OASIS entry form and any entry updates
- Copy of this brief.

7. Archive Preparation and Dissemination

i) All archival material should be deposited with the Great North Museum. The Archaeological Contractor should discuss provision for archive deposition with the Museum Staff, The Diocesan Archaeology Adviser, and Blanchland PCC prior to commencement of the works.

ii) All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the HER.

iii) The Site Archive (records and materials recovered) should be prepared for deposition at the Great North Museum in accordance with:

- Archaeological Archives – A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation (Brown, 2011).
- Standard and Guidance for The Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives (CIFA, 2014)
- Great North Museum Archive Deposition Policy

8. Documentary Archive

i) The Documentary Archive will consist of all records made during the archaeological work (including all those in hard copy and digital form) e.g., all written records, indexes, object records, bulk find records sample records, skeletal records, photographic records, drawing records, drawings, level records, site notebooks, spot dating and conservation records, report drafts, published work, publication drawings and photographs etc.

ii) All paper-based material will be stored in conditions that minimise the risk of damage, deterioration, loss, or theft.

iii) All documents will be marked with the relevant site code or with the museum accessions number.

9. Material Archive

i) The Material Archive comprises all objects (artefacts, building materials, environmental remains) recovered in the course of the works.

ii) All recovered materials will be cleaned as appropriate and packed in appropriate materials to ensure their long-term survival.

iii) All finds must be marked or labelled with the relevant site code and contextual information and, where relevant, small find numbers.

iv) Permanent ink must be used to mark all finds bags.

10. Digital Archive

i) The Digital Archive will consist of a copy of the report on CD and all digital images.

11. Archive Deposition

i) The requirements for archive storage shall be agreed with the appropriate museum (The Great North Museum) and confirmed to the Diocesan Archaeological Adviser and the County Archaeology/Heritage Team.

ii) If the finds and archive are to remain with the landowner, a full copy of the archive shall be housed with the appropriate museum.

iii) The full archive shall be deposited with the appropriate museum within 1 month of the completion of the report and confirmed with Diocesan Archaeology Adviser and the County Archaeology/Heritage Team.

iv) A summary of the contents of the archive shall be supplied to the Diocesan Archaeology Adviser and the County Archaeology/Heritage Team at the time of deposition with the museum.

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY

i) The CIfA Standard guidance for archaeological excavation states that: "Health and Safety regulations and requirements cannot be ignored no matter how imperative the need to record archaeological information; hence Health and Safety will take priority over archaeological matters. All archaeologists undertaking fieldwork must do so under a defined Health and Safety Policy. Archaeologists undertaking fieldwork must observe safe working practices; the Health and Safety arrangements must be agreed and understood by all relevant parties before work commences. Risk assessments must be carried out and documented for every field project, in accordance with Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations…." (CIfA, 2014f, updated October 2020). Health and safety issues will take priority over archaeological matters and all archaeologists will comply with relevant Health and Safety Legislation e.g., the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992, as well as all other relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations, and codes of practice in force at the time.

ii) The Blanchland Community Development Organisation will supply a copy of their Health and Safety Policy and a Risk Assessment will be prepared by the Contractor prior to the start of site works The Risk Assessment will have been read and understood by all staff attending site before any survey and investigation works commence.

iii) In addition to health and safety considerations, in terms of site security, where appropriate, the archaeological excavation area should be adequately fenced.