

Revealing the Lost Buildings of Woodspring Priory

For several weeks during the summer of 2012, archaeologists from the community groups YCCART and WESMART in North Somerset have been investigating the fields and paddocks around Woodspring Priory, 4km north of Weston-super-Mare.

This priory was founded in 1210, at or near the site of a village that had been flourishing at the time of Domesday Book in the late 11th century AD.

Woodspring priory was dedicated to Thomas Becket (the founder was a grandson of Reginald Fitzurse, one of Becket's murderers) and was home to a small community of Victorine Canons.

In the years since the Priory was dissolved (1534) it has variously been a house, a hospital for maimed soldiers and a farmhouse, and is now a property let by the Landmark Trust.

We know that some of the buildings, such as the chancel, were demolished in the 16th century (and were excavated in the 1970s), but other buildings may have existed.

Resistance surveys undertaken by the teams have revealed the sites of not only known, but also many previously unknown structures and buildings.

Once the survey is finished, and the report written, it will be made publicly available.



Using the resistivity meter at Woodspring Priory. The machine measures the resistance of the earth below it, which can detect walls or structures without excavating.



Results of the survey up to 21 August 2012. The church tower is the black area at the centre of the plan: the dark irregular marks all around are structures revealed by the survey, most of which were previously unknown.