

YCCCART 2023/Y2

Crop marks at Woodspring Priory, summer 2013

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RESEARCH TEAM (YCCCART)**

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Crop marks in paddock at Woodspring from church tower, July 2013

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Abstract

Spectacular crop marks were recorded at Woodspring Priory during the dry summer of 2013. While many of these related to modern features, some revealed previously unknown evidence of buildings and structures at the site, subsequently confirmed by geophysical survey. Unfortunately, the extreme low level of photographs from the church tower (compared, for example to air photographs) prevented satisfactory rectification to ground structures, although this is compensated to some degree by comparison with the resistivity surveys of 2019-2022, and the readability of some marks even from ground level.

Acknowledgements

This survey could not have been carried out without the willing permission of the landowner, Landmark Trust; the tenants, the Toogood Partnership; the National Trust for lands outside of the Scheduled Monument, and staff of Landmark Trust, National Trust and Historic England. Again thanks to Les Candal for her sharing of her documentary material re Woodspring.

Introduction

Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team (YCCCART) is one of a number of Community Archaeology teams across northern Somerset, formerly supported by the North Somerset Council Development Management Team.

Our objective is to undertake archaeological fieldwork to enable a better understanding and management of the heritage of the area while recording and publishing the activities and locations of the research carried out.

Obviously, not all photos of the crop marks could be published here, but they can be consulted in the YCCCART archive.

Site location



Fig 1: Woodspring Priory (2018) (starred)

Woodspring Priory (c1214-1536) is a former Victorine (Augustinian) priory beside the [Severn](#) Estuary in the parish of Kewstoke, about 3 miles (5 km) north-east of Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset. Its centre lies at ST34336615. After the Dissolution, it became in turn a country house and hospital, a farm, and for a short period in the early 20th century, a private golf course. It is today in the ownership and care of the Landmark Trust.

Land use and geology

The site lies on the Blue Lias Formation – at this site, it consists of interbedded Mudstone and Limestone. The Lias outcrops in the stream (Sand Rhyne) to the south of the priory. Sand Hill, to the north, has complex geology, among which is the Oxwich series (Carboniferous Limestone) used as rubble construction in the priory and its successor buildings (British Geological Society 2022).

To the south of the priory, Kewstoke Moor consists of the alluvial clays and interbedded peats of the Northmarsh.

Much of the priory site is open to the public, and is used for grazing. Part of the site, including the farmhouse and its adjacent gardens, is let by the Landmark Trust to private individuals and is only open by special arrangement. Vehicular access is by signposted road from Queens Road, Worle. There is limited parking.

Historical & archaeological context

Woodspring Priory is, and always has been, a somewhat remote site, most easily reachable by water through the Woodspring Pill, which lidar and air photographic evidence shows once reached the edge of the priory property, beside the modern entrance bridge.

The site features a number of standing medieval buildings, including the nave of the church, a structure known as the refectory (although this is clearly the former infirmary), and the ruins of other buildings, such as part of the cloister and the entrance gate. Fragments and indications of other buildings survive in arches and old stairs in the walls of surviving buildings. Outside of the precinct that is open to the public is a great medieval barn (although its roof is 20th century pastiche after a fire in the 1920s). This is in private use and is not available for public visits.

In the outer precinct, what appears to be a medieval moated site has been recognised. During heavy rain in the past winters of 2020-22, this was very noticeable and water filled.

The whole site (including the site of the infilled fish ponds and surroundings to the west of the adjacent farm) is Scheduled (SM22847) (LEN1012722: Woodspring Priory and associated fishponds and field system); several structures are also Listed:

Priory Church	LBI
Gatehouse, gates etc	LBI
East cloister wall	LBI (the Listed structure is actually the west wall of the cloister)
West wall chapter house	LBI
Infirmary	LBI
Barn and well	LBI
Farmhouse range	LBII*

Surprisingly little reported archaeological work has been carried out at Woodspring Priory.

An excavation is recorded in the 1885 Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society (Paul 1885) as follows:-

'..excavations commenced in Sept., and continued to the previous Saturday, the foundations of the walls of the choir had been laid bare. Where the high altar had stood, was found a quantity of 14th century pavement, and among the armorial tiles were the arms of England, France, the Isle of Man (with roses between each leg), lion rampant, a portion of the arms of Clare, and fragments. Ten feet from the east wall was found a large hole, containing human remains, including skulls; and four feet beneath the surface, near the tower, were found slabs, which appeared to have formed the end of a vault. Leaden coffins had been found.'

Large pieces of tracery and finials, evidently portions of the choir windows, were also unearthed.; also glazed tiles and some large white squares, either of very fine freestone, or marble. From the position of these relics, it would appear that the pavement of the west end was more plain than at the east, where the more elaborate remains were found.

The total length of the chancel was 43 ft. 5 in., and the width 19 ft. 10 in, the side wall being 3 ft. in thickness..'

Fairly substantial records of Paul's work at the Priory survive in the Somerset Heritage centre, but have not yet been trawled for publication (YCCCART, forthcoming).

An excavation was carried out by Major Vernon Hill in the late 1920s, but the sole remaining record appears to be an article in the Bristol Times and Mirror (BT&M 1927).

In the early 1970s an excavation by Tomalin and Crook resulted in a guidebook (Tomalin 1974; Tomalin & Crook 2007), but no substantial excavation report would seem to have been published.

An unpublished geophysical survey was carried out to the south of the infirmary and to the east end of the church in the early 1990s (GBP Prospection 1998) in conjunction with Bristol University. This has not been published, although there is a copy in the North Somerset HER: it's results, while not as detailed, help to support the basic accuracy of the YCCCART geophysical report.

Substantial (and somewhat repetitive) antiquarian study of the sparse medieval documentary evidence for the priory has been published, but it does not appear that the national archives have been trawled in detail, a process which, for example, Prosser (1996) employed to great effect in his PhD thesis on Keynsham Abbey (B&NES). An earthwork study in the orchard is in the North Somerset HER (Henderson 2012): it identified previously unrecorded earthworks, while a walkover survey in December 2011 identified a previously unrecognised moated site in the outer precinct, from which a collection of high-status 18th century pottery was recovered. (YCCCART 2018). These all tell roughly the same story, of a fairly wealthy Domesday manor replaced in the early 13th century, around 1214, when the Victorines (a branch of the Augustinian canons) arrived from a former site called Doddelynych (whose site is currently unknown). The priory never had more than a handful of occupants and a meagre land-owning, mostly in the surrounding countryside. It was closed at the reformation, with subsequent land owners carrying out work to demolish the chancel of the church and various other demolitions and buildings.

The original place-name of the manor, Worspring, probably derives from 'Worle' + OE '*spring*' (coppice growth), the whole meaning 'coppice wood attached to Worle', and indeed, ten acres of coppice wood is mentioned in its Domesday entry (1086).

One aspect of Woodspring's history is surprisingly, only mentioned by a local historian, F A Knight, who in 'The Seaboard of Mendip' refers to payments by several local parishes to a 'hospital for maimed soldiers' apparently at the site for over a century in the post-medieval period. Woodspring is specifically mentioned as the site of this hospital in the parish records of Kewstoke in 1722 and 1725 (Knight 1902: 193). The earliest map of the site (1768; in private hands) shows buildings that are no longer extant (See Fig 2 below).

An excellent guide book has been produced (Tomalin, D & Crook, C 2007) and further

information can also be found on line at

www.landmarktrust.org.uk/BuildingDetails/Overview/184/Woodspring_Priory

Since 2010, a number of geophysical and other surveys have been carried out by Yatton Congresbury Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team (YCCART): reports on these can be accessed on the YCCART web site (www.yccart.co.uk): full details are given in the reference section.

These surveys have identified several buildings previously unknown at the site, as well as evidence for a potential Tudor garden (probably related to the known 'hospital' at the site in the 17th and 18th centuries) as well as many features related to the subsequent use of the priory as a working farm. A previous report on wall repairs in 2020 (YCCART 2020a) indicated the probable post-priory origins of many of the field walls within the Monument, accounting for the availability of a few scraps of worked medieval freestone (presumably from demolished priory buildings) to appear in the current walls. Other work on the properties belonging to the priory has been published (YCCART 2018; YCCART2021b).



Fig 2: 1768 map of Woodspring Priory. Courtesy of Mr D Ridley. A copy of a second version of this map in the museum at Woodspring Priory has an illustration of the main buildings standing at that time.

It is important to note that the walls around the precinct (apart from that around the

Kewstoke, Photographic record of crop marks (2013), Woodspring Priory, 2023, Y2, v1.

orchard) have all been slightly altered in plan: this map also shows a building west of the farmhouse that corresponds exactly with a building standing in the farm buildings today. Although it today has a 19th century roof, the walls could well be early post-medieval or even monastic in origin: it certainly shares the same axis as the other buildings at the site.

In addition to the text description of the dig at Woodspring in 1885, Paul published a plan of the priory (Fig 3 below).

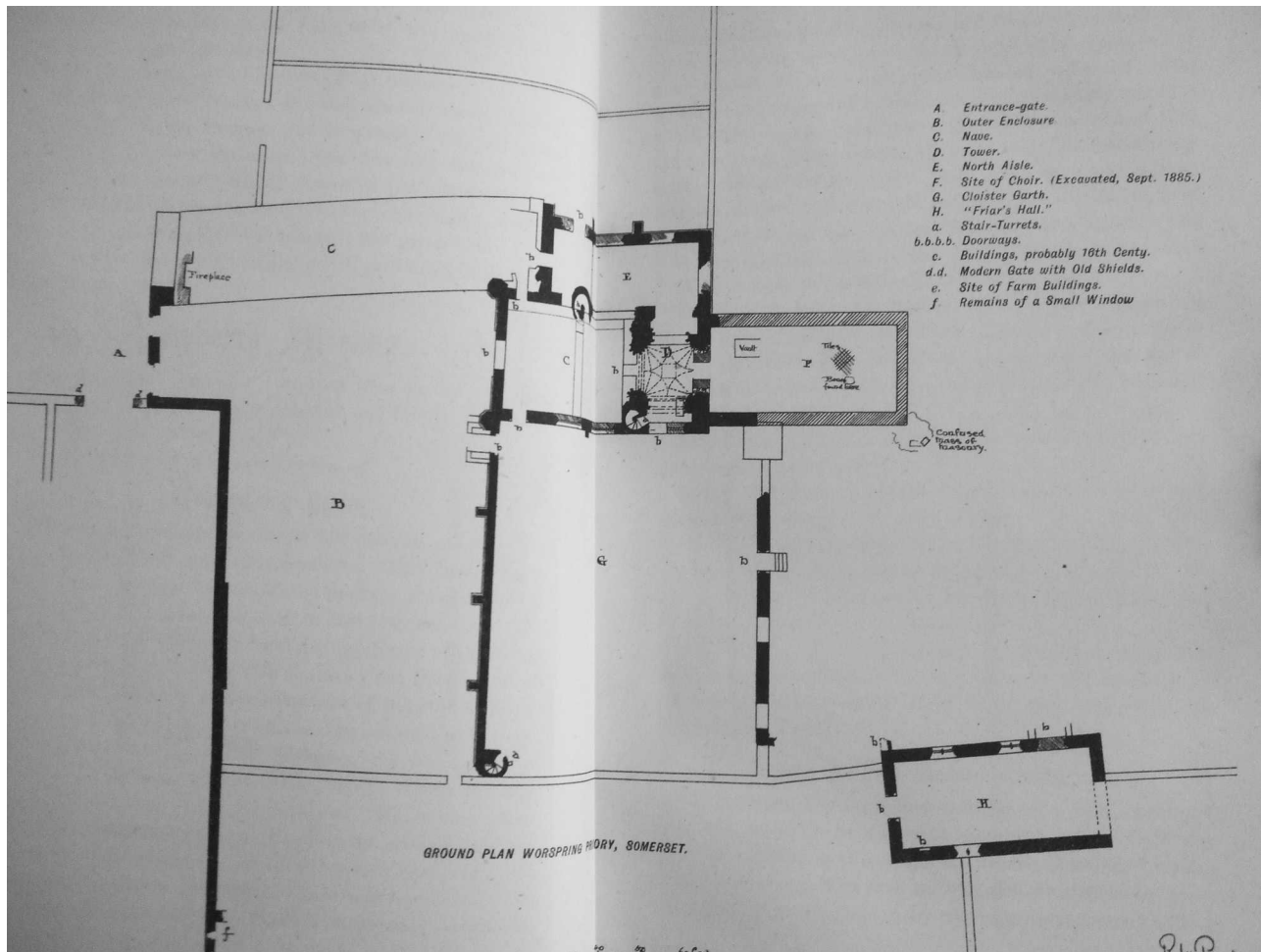
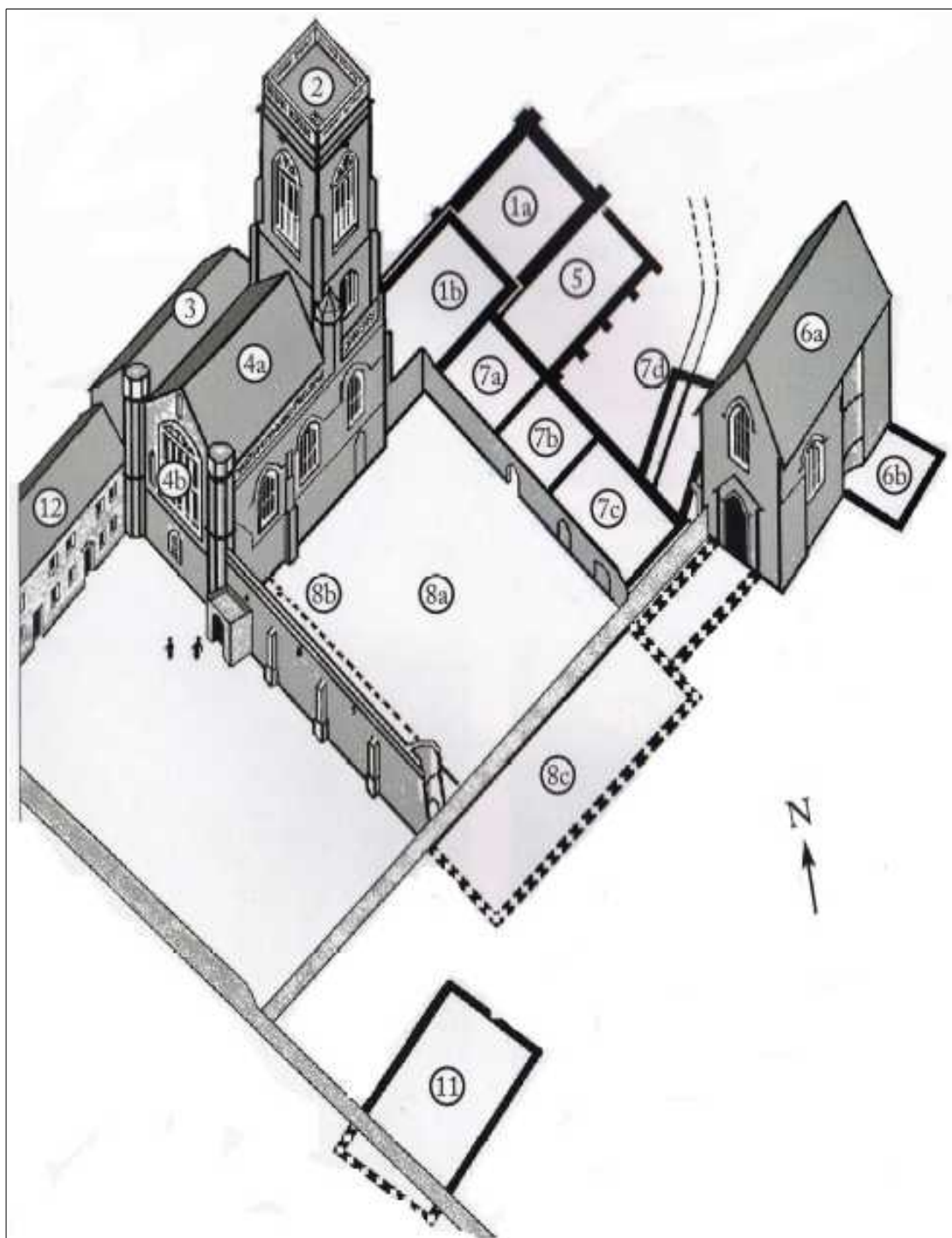


Fig 3: Ground plan of Woodspring Priory and excavation by Paul (1885)

Little of this plan is new. An exception is the state of the infirmary (lower right) with the huge 'entrance' hacked out of its eastern gable in the mid 19th century. Some few details of the dig are present, including the outline of the chancel, the site of a 'confused mass of masonry' to its SE; the 'remains of a small window' (f) in the paddock wall 17, which is no longer extant, but could just possibly have related to the 'missing' building there; the inclusion of the whole of the spiral staircase at the south end of wall 10 (which could have been no more true in 1885 than it is now). He did at least recognise the bogus nature of the northern and southern ends of wall 7, along with the stub of a wall which may have been part of a slype; and the inexplicable thickening of wall 12/15, which on the ground resembles the end of a building on side 12 of the wall, but is not visible on the other (15) side; and the non-monastic (post-Dissolution) dates of walls 6, 9 and 11 (among others) (YCCART 2022).



Worspring (now Woodspring) Priory today. Above- and below-ground remains. (1a), the long chancel of the thirteenth-century church. (1b), the shortened chancel of the fifteenth-century church. (2), the fifteenth-century tower. (3), north aisle. (4a), the nave and later residence. (4b), west front. (5), lady chapel. (6a), infirmary. (6b), infirmary chapel with infirmary's lodging above. (7a), sacristy. (7b), chapter house. (7c), parlour. (7d), reredorter (lavatory). (8a), cloister. (8b), west range. (8c), refectory. (11), gatehouse/guesthouse. (12), the post-Dissolution farmhouse (now available for holidays through the Landmark Trust).

Fig 4: General axonometric plan, Woodspring Priory (Landmark Trust)

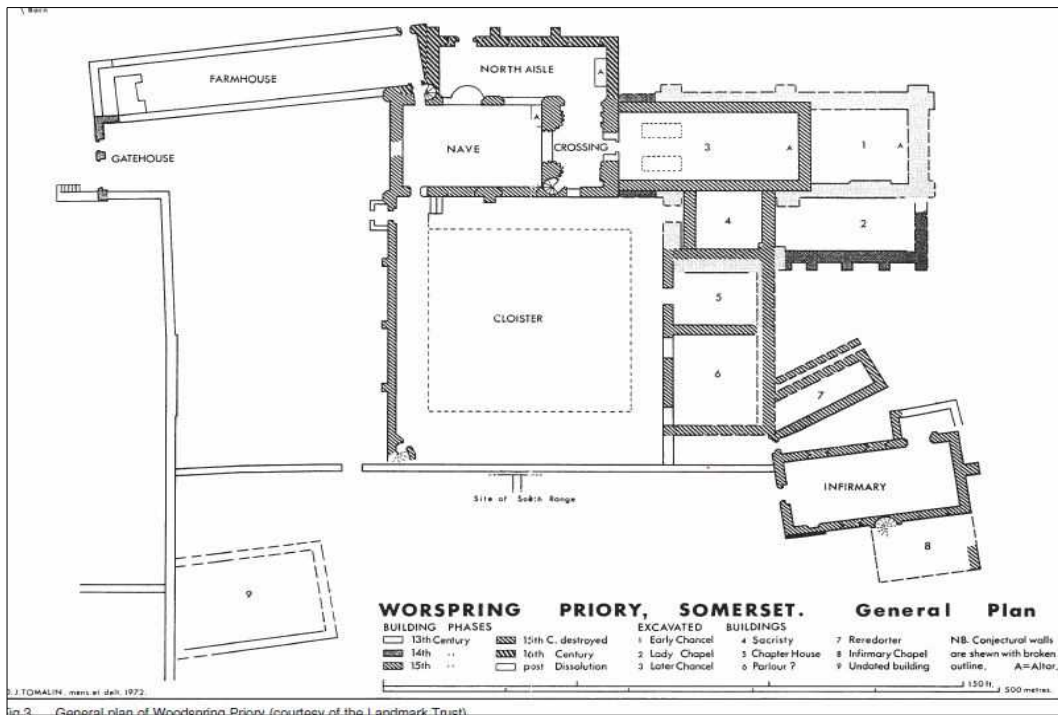
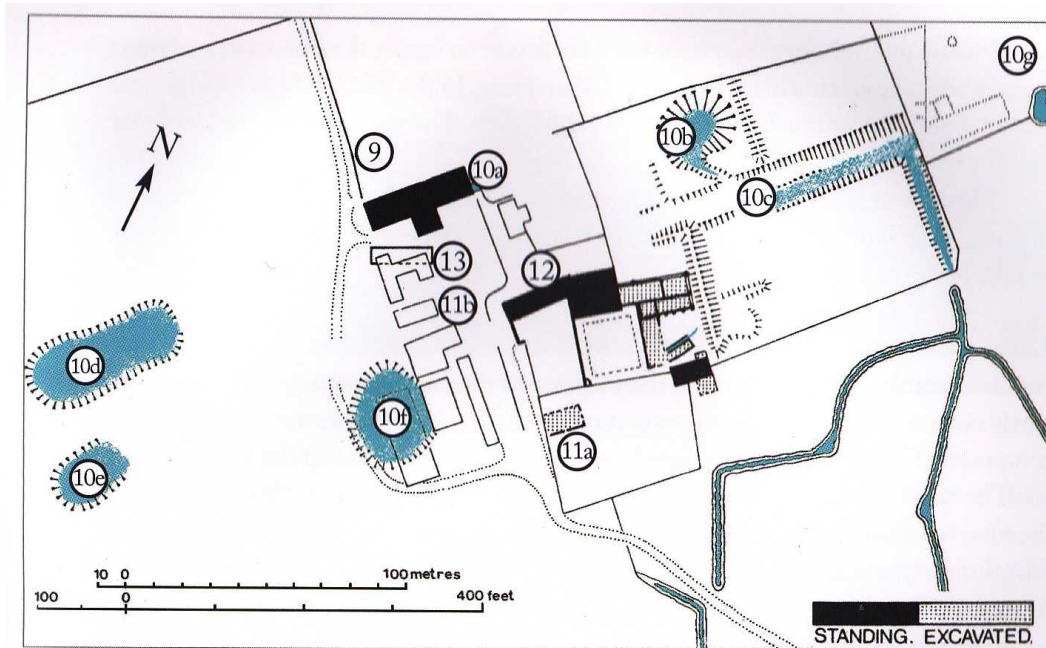


Fig 5: Woodspring Priory general ground plan (Landmark Trust)



Springs and ponds past and present at Woodspring Priory. 10a and 10b are the principal springs. 10c-10f are spring-fed ponds. A further pond at 10g is adjoined by crop-marks that may belong to the lost Norman chapel noted at Five Elms. 11a-b marks the supposed shift of the gatehouse/guesthouse. 12, the later farmhouse range, now let as a Landmark, which incorporates the earlier prior's lodging. 13, lost building of unknown purpose.

Fig 6: Woodspring Priory: ponds and springs (Landmark Trust)

All the ponds shown above have been backfilled, with the exception of the spring in the orchard. The moat in the outer precinct utilises the ditches there: the 'knees' on the ditches are the points where the ditch meets the moat. The ditch on the east side is actually far wider than depicted here.

Two inhumations recovered from St Thomas' Head, some hundreds of meters away at the eastern end of Sand Point, and associated with a parch mark thought to be that of a chapel, radiocarbon date to the 14th/15th century AD, not the Late Antique period as previously expected. It is not clear how this fits into the story of Woodspring Priory as yet (*pers comm* R Smisson c 2011).

Survey objectives

The intention was simply to make a record of the remarkable crop marks that showed in summer 2013. Unfortunately, this was before drones were available to the team, and 'air photos' were taken from the church tower, which being only 20m high, meant that the photographs were extreme obliques which were unable to be rectified meaningfully by available software.

Methodology

The photographs in this report were taken (both ground and tower) with a Sony DSC HX60-V digital camera, and largely subsequently unprocessed.

The report was written in Libre Office 5 Writer.

Photographs were taken by members of YCCCART, and remain the copyright of YCCCART.

Results - The Orchard

It should immediately be said that ground conditions (including the c15cm length of grass over most of the field) were not ideal for recording crop marks, especially from ground level. For location, see especially Figs 4-5.

Chancels

Unfortunately, this area, bounded by the bunds in the orchard, seems to have been dug at least twice, and possibly three times (Paul 1885, Wall 1927, Tomalin and Crook 2007). This probably accounts for the clarity of these cropmarks, since most of the overlying material has been cleared away, leaving only the wall outlines.



Fig 7: Crop marks of demolished church chancels from tower

Kewstoke, Photographic record of crop marks (2013), Woodspring Priory, 2023, Y2, v1.



Fig 8: Chancel crop marks from ground level



Fig 9: Chancel crop marks marked out by common or lawn daisies (Bellis perennis) 1997

Photographs from 1997 show similar markings (*B. perennis* prefers the drier and more calcareous areas over the buried walls). Not unexpectedly, these crop marks do not add a great deal to our knowledge of the chancels.

Kewstoke, Photographic record of crop marks (2013), Woodspring Priory, 2023, Y2, v1.

The reredorter



Fig 10: The reredorter from the tower, to the north of the infirmary building



Fig 11: Telephoto view of the above



Fig 12: Ground view of reredorter crop mark from the east

The crop marks show a broad width over the formerly excavated double wall on its north side (see Fig 5).

At the eastern end of the plotted reredorter (Figs 4 and 5) are the crop marks of a known porch attached to the door on the north side of the infirmary, which from the crop marks may have butted up against the reredorter east wall (if they were contemporary).

What is clear is that the apparent fairly random line of large stones close to the doorway remnant on the north-west corner of the infirmary, is a surviving part of the south wall of the reredorter. Presumably, although this door probably gave access to a slype or similar to its west, the door was accessed from the eastern side (can we perhaps surmise a side door in the infirmary porch?), the area between must have been either open or extremely low, in order to give light access to the northern windows of the infirmary. It seems more likely, in view of the lack of any evidence or scarring on the wall of the infirmary, that it was open.

Finally, in the very dry conditions that July, stonework of the east wall of the reredorter was exposed (see Fig 12).

Claustral buildings

These were unfortunately not under grass, but immediately before recording had been under a dense growth of nettles, and a thick layer of cut and dried nettles still lay over the site, reducing somewhat the usefulness of crop marks in this area.



Fig 13: Claustral buildings area from tower

It is clear from this photograph, however (and Fig 7), that the crop marks of the putative Lady Chapel to the south-east of the chancel can be seen. Other marks are weak or confused at best, although the small section of in-situ walling (lower left of Fig 13) should give further clues as to layouts in the area.

Further clues to the layout in this area are given by the photograph published in the Bristol Times and Mirror of 16 April 1927, showing Major Wall's diggings at the priory from the tower (Fig 14) (this photograph has the limitations of newspaper reproduction: it is not known if the original survives).

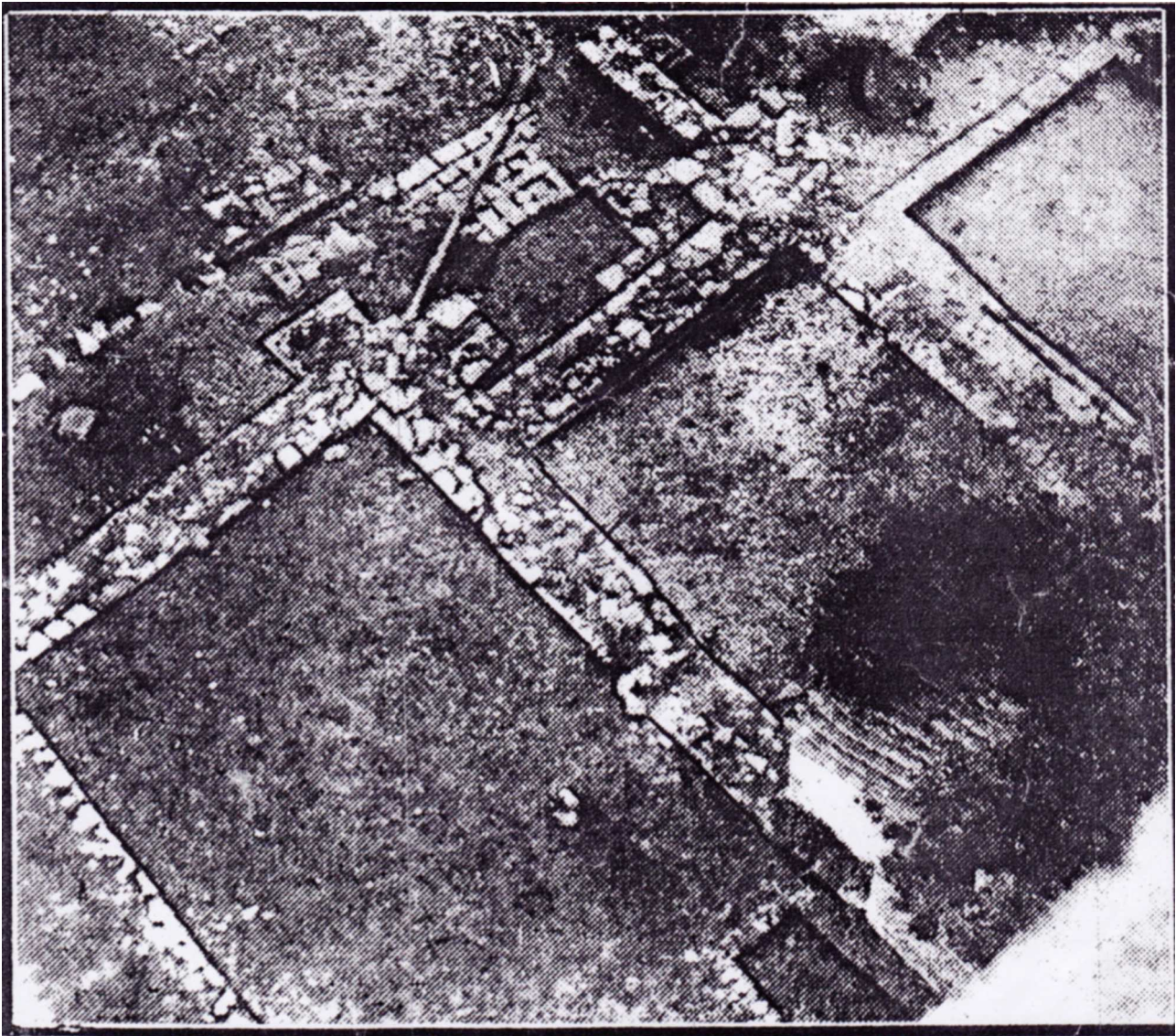
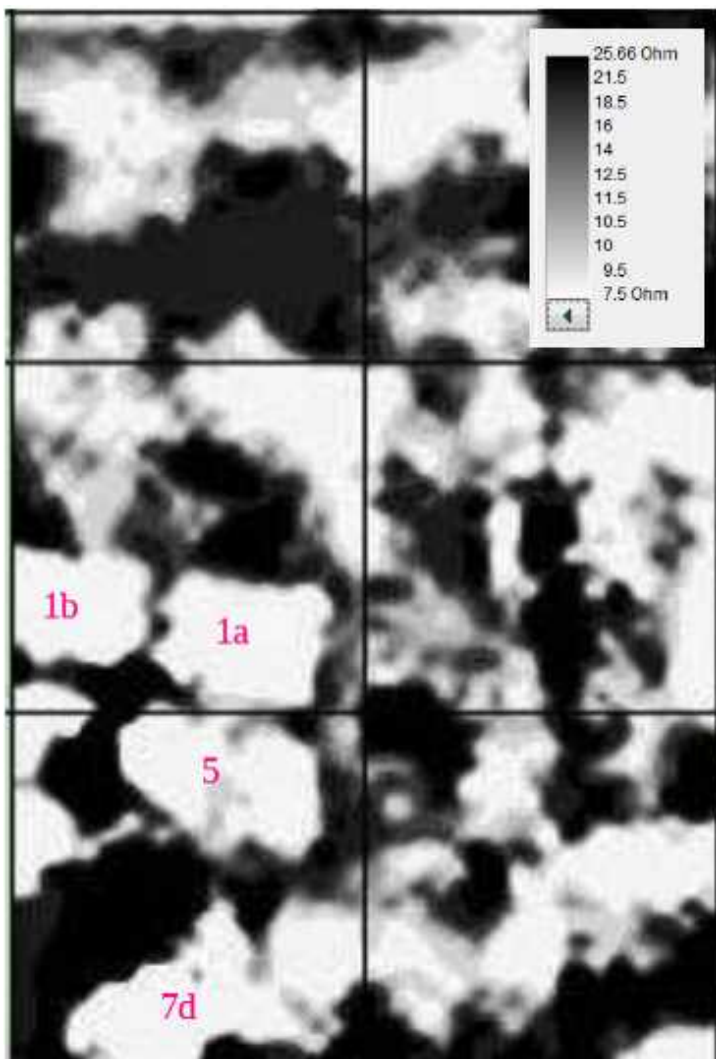


Fig 14: Major Wall's uncovering of walls in the area of the chancels and claustral buldings, 1927, from the tower

Thorough analysis of this photograph would be useful, but for the purposes of this paper, it is sufficient to say that it

1. Clearly reveals the outline of the shorter chancel (building 1b on Tomalin and Crooks Fig 4 above), which also shows well as a crop mark (Fig 7 above), including a 'vault' in the south-west corner, which may be the mysterious 'missing building' of the 1885 OS plan (YCCCART 2022/Y11 Part 1: 37). It includes buttresses at the south-east corner of the chancel.
2. Shows that the 'garden room' at the north-east corner of the garden was at that time roofed.
3. Shows constructed against the chancel is building 7a (sacristy) of Tomalin and Crook, although it is clearly longer than in their plan, and is also clearly thick-walled. although its south wall may have originated as the north wall of the chapter house: the surviving Listed remains of that building are obviously substantially more robust than their surrounding structures.



Beyond this, the photograph is less easily understood: there is clearly a section of paving inside Tomalin and Crook's Lady Chapel, and it apparently shows the Chapel's wall as remarkably thin, almost certainly only capable of supporting one storey (unless the upper were of wood).

Fig 15: Resistivity survey of chancels, claustral buildings and west end of the priory orchard (squares are 20m on a side)

Comparison of the photograph in Fig 7 and the crop marks with the resistivity results from 2012 (YCCCART 2012) show, unsurprisingly, a high degree of agreement. The buildings, largely contained in the left hand column of squares, of the chancels, reredorter and some aspects of the claustral buildings (using Tomalin and Crooks building numbering system: 1a & 1b - Chancels; 5 - Lady Chapel; 7d - Reredorter).

Other features in this figure are discussed in YCCCART 2012.

Overall, the crop marks (unlike those in other parts of the complex - see below) are able to confirm our previous results, but not add much further evidence.

Spring area and linear pond

The spring in the orchard (with its accompanying quince tree) is well-known from former studies and during monastic times, a culvert (seen in Tomalin and Crook 2007: 38), stone-lined and stone capped, was dug to convey its water to the reredorter. Presumably water from this source (and possibly that from the well at the east end of the great barn) was used for drinking, washing and cooking purposes.

The spring does not flow today (2023). The orchard must presumably once have been wetter than now (hence the gaps in the foot of the south wall for drainage: YCCCART2022/Y11), and there must have been sufficient flow to justify the creation of the culvert. Slow water flows are not new, however: The Institute of Geological Sciences Hydrogeology Unit (regarding the well by the barn) recorded in 1986 that there were:

'..15 steps down into water. Stagnant water. When empty takes 3 days to fill. Next to barn, not used, uncovered..'

(scans.bgs.ac.uk/sobi_scans/boreholes/384724/images/14832878.html).

Only at times of very high rainfall (and unmaintained drainage!) is there evidence of surface water at Woodspring today: presumably supply was via run-off from the adjacent Sand Hill, and this source has been cut off by modern agricultural alterations.



Fig 16: Crop marks around the spring, from tower (contrast slightly enhanced), 2013

The crop marks around the spring show a rectangular enclosure, confirmed by the resistivity results (below, Fig 17/18). As discussed in YCCART 2012, this enclosure may serve the wholly secular and practical purpose of preventing animals entering and muddying the spring (there seems no reason why the gardens should not have been used along with the barn, for example, as temporary lambing accommodation in harsh winters).

This would not prevent it also acting as separation of a sacred space from profane (if the spring were regarded in such a light, which is not impossible given the Thomas Becket associations of the place).

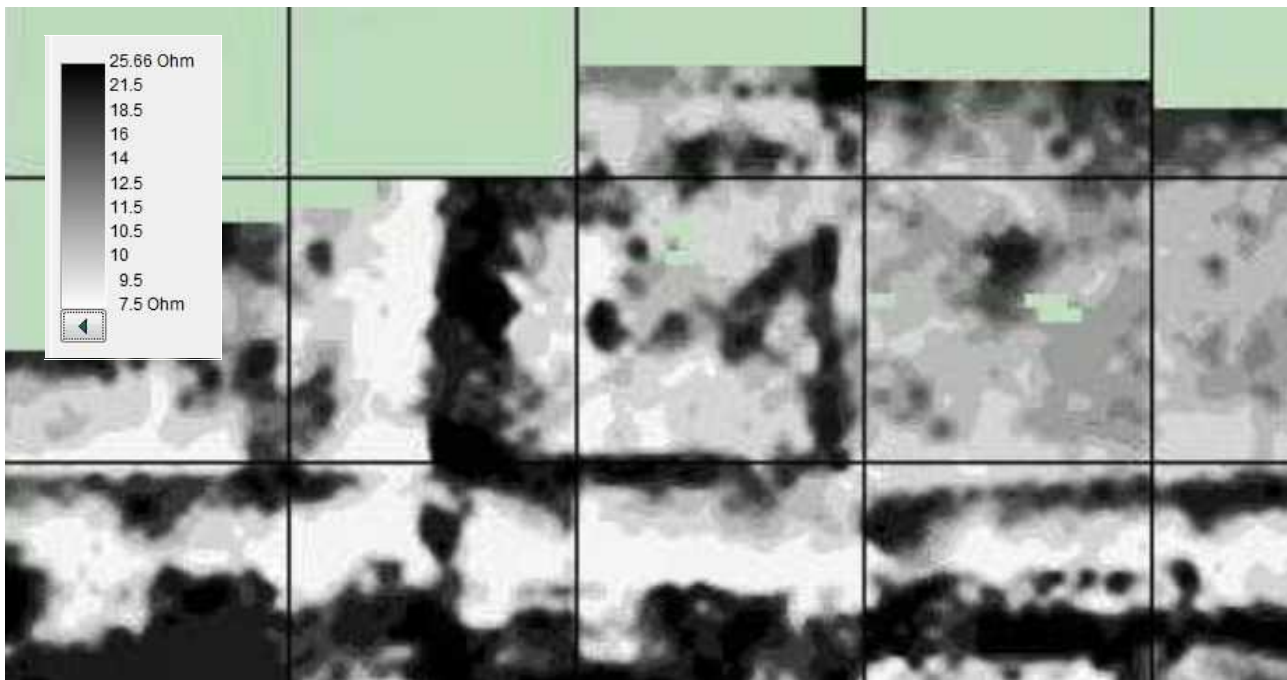


Fig 17: Resistivity survey of spring area, 2012

The crop marks confirm the geophysics findings, especially the narrow nature of the enclosure on its east and south sides (but also see below), and the broad nature of the crop mark / geophysical signal at the west side, which lies at the head of the culvert. This signal is up to 6m wide: it may conceal a header tank for the culvert, something probably only testable with GPR.



Fig 18: Crop marks on south and east side of spring enclosure, 2013



Fig 19: Crop marks of linear pond from tower (2013)

The pond, being further away from the tower, shows less in the crop marks.

The central broad band of parch in Fig 19 corresponds well with the complex linear marking in the geophysics, which was interpreted as later drainage (although curiously, it is slightly above and to the north of the centre of the pond earthwork - see Fig 21 below).

Possible crop marks of wall lines to north and south of the earthworks can be seen, although that on the south has unfortunately been used for the base of a row of apple trees, some looking suspiciously young.

The crop marks also revealed a small building / structure at the head of the pond.



Fig 20: Crop mark of small structure at head of the linear pond

With the benefit of hindsight, this can be picked out of the geophysical survey results, but the crop marks make it very plain. From the spacing of the trees, this structure is about 6m x 4m.



Fig 21: Linear pond from north-west, 2013

The rest of the orchard



Fig 22: Narrow geometric and very clear crop marks in eastern part of the orchard, 2013

Most of the rest of the orchard is dominated by a series of exceptionally clear, very narrow crop marks, often at right angles, and at first understood to be part of the known Tudor garden at the site.

Further study, however, indicated that these were the marks of stone-filled field drains of mid-20th century date. Such drains, while often necessary, were also encouraged by agricultural subsidies at the time, and so can be found in sites where they are completely functionally unnecessary.

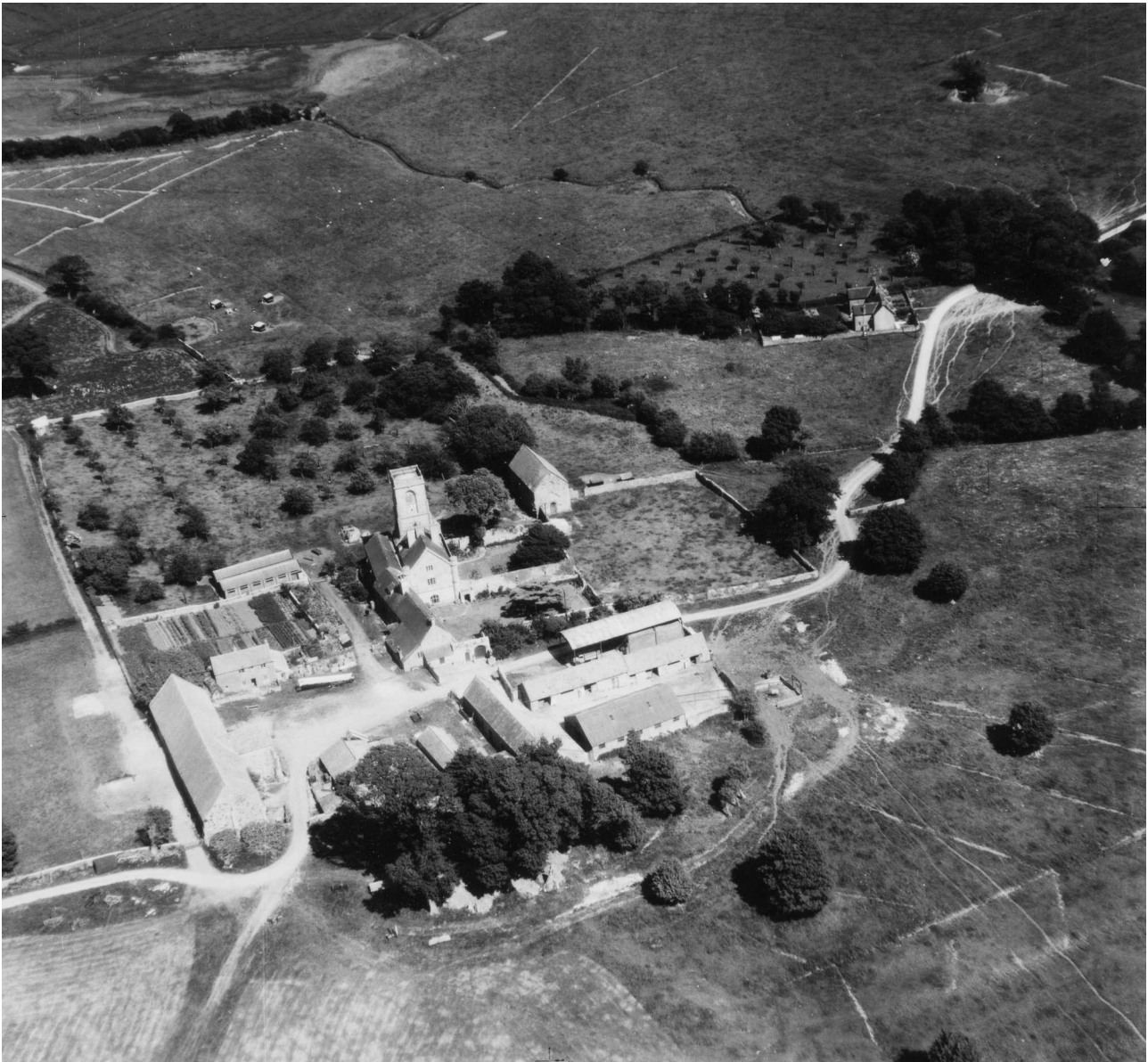


Fig 23: Woodspring Priory 1949 (Cambridge CE003) showing drain installations

Fig 23 shows the contemporary installation of field drains to the east and west of the Priory in 1949: 1950-80 was the period during which much underdraining was installed, and that in the orchard probably dates from this period.

Results - The Paddock

The archaeology in this paddock (immediately south of the cloister and farmhouse garden) is both complex and (slightly) unexpected, despite both Collinson (1791) and Rutter (1829) explicitly stating that building remains were to be found south of the visible structures at Woodspring (south at top, Figs 24 and 25).



Fig 24: Crop marks in the Paddock from tower, 2013

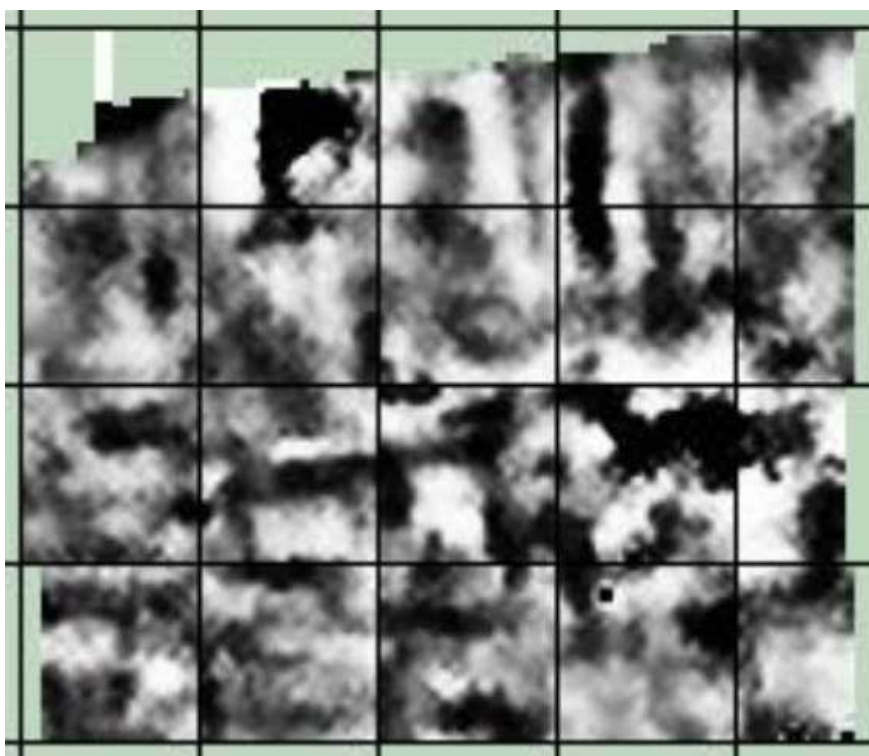


Fig 25: Resistivity survey of paddock, 2021

Comparison of the two figures shows many items clear in both: the condition of crop marks and resistivity responses is probably not helped by the known use of the paddock for rotovating pigs around WW1 (YCCART 2021).

The shallow soil at the site ensures that stones from features actually break the surface at times of drought (see below).



Fig 26: Stones revealed during drought conditions, July 2013

Area 1: north side of field

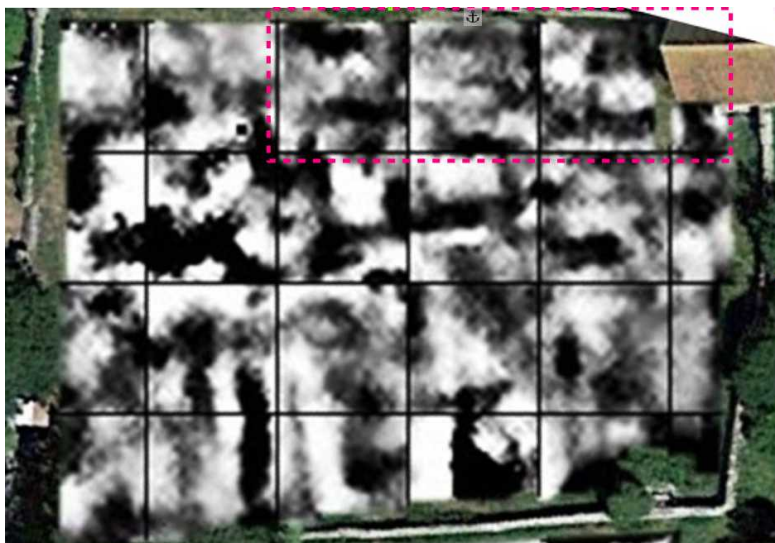


Fig 27: Geophysical survey, Area 1, south of cloister and west of infirmary

This complex area of survey results may include structures relating to the priory refectory (the south side of the cloister is a classic siting for such in Augustinian establishments, but maps and photographs indicate that these (if they can be seen) are montaged with later known features.



Fig 28: Crop marks, Area 1, 2013

Area 1.1 (Fig 27) appears as a solid parch mark on the ground, as well as a high resistance feature on the resistance survey.

This coincides with a feature depicted on the Tithe Map of c1840 (Fig 29).

This appears to be a new 'porch' constructed after the 1768 map, but before the Tithe: it was no longer present in 1885 (OS plan).



Fig 29: Kewstoke Tithe map 1840, showing (?temporary) 'porch' structure to south wall of infirmary

This also corresponds to a thickened area of the south wall of the current infirmary, and a blocked medieval doorway on its interior (Fig 30 below).

This figure also shows a contemporary long building running between the infirmary and the farmhouse garden.

The nature and structure of this building is unknown, but it is quite possible that its construction may have been responsible for the current 'south wall' of the cloister, which is definitely post-monastic (YCCCART 2022).



Fig 30: Medieval doorway to former porch, interior of infirmary building

Returning to the 'long building' (Fig 29 above): the cropmarks clearly show walls/structures running at right angles to the 'south cloister wall' and over the 'long building', however interpreted.

The rest of the paddock presents problems of interpretation.

Rest of the field

The geophysical results (YCCCART 2020: Fig 31 below) indicate complex archaeology that really requires invasive examination to clarify.

Because of the inconclusive, but promising, geophysical results from the Paddock from 2012, it had been decided to repeat the survey at higher resolution (0.5m x 0.5m). Grid sizes are therefore 10m x 10m.

One interpretation of the parchmarks and resistance features is that they are buildings overlain by garden features: unfortunately the outlines of the resistance features are somewhat blurred by the rotovating activities of pigs, who from picture postcard evidence, were kept in the paddock around the time of the First World War.

Our current interpretation of the major features of the results is briefly described below (Fig 31) (numeration from YCCCART 2020). Most of the high resistance features showed as partial parch marks in summer 2013.

14. This high resistance feature, although slightly resembling the outlines of a building

(and there are the remains of a wall along its northern edge) is predominantly the remains of rubble tipped inside the gate of the field, a very common feature in the often boggy fields of the Northmarsh.

15. Two large stone walls at right angles, separating a c30m x 30m area off from the rest of the paddock. This is probably a small stock enclosure, but is not datable other than it not being seen on any map since 1768.

16. Long high resistance feature, parallel to the south wall of the cloister (but see above). If this is a building, it is likely to be the refectory, as it is in an area usually reserved for such in Augustinian sites. It is at maximum 8m wide, although the parallel high resistance feature between it and the current southern cloister wall (which is not the original wall but a replacement a couple of metres north) may be its northern wall, in which case, it would be a more likely 5-6m wide. The position is complicated by the known existence along this line of a building shown on the Tithe Map, but not on that of 1768. Only excavation can distinguish these (and see 19 below). It is probably responsible for the remains of a roofline on the western wall of the infirmary building.

17. This is the mysterious 'missing building' at an angle to the wall of the Paddock, as seen on maps as late as the Tithe Map. From the resistivity, it is up to 15m long, and up to 8m wide, with a potential cross-wall about half-way down its length. It has been suggested that this building may have been demolished and re-used as the current 'gatehouse' into the Priory, but this cannot be, since the 'missing building' was still in place at the time of the Tithe Map (1840), but John Buckler drew the gatehouse in its current form in 1829.

18. This is a rectangular structure, previously unrecognised. Its walls measure perhaps 18m x 5m, with possible stub walls linking it to structure 16. There is an interior feature c2m x 2m attached to the interior of its southern wall, which could be a chimney base. Of course there is the possibility that this may be 'only' a garden feature, but intriguingly, it shares an alignment with building 17.

19. The high resistance features in this corner relate to both pigsties seen on postcards of c1905, and to a concrete floor still visible in air photographs of 1949. It is not clear if the high resistance feature at the edge of the grid containing 19 is its western end, or a wall within the possible refectory 16.

20. A section of wall at right angles to the southern wall of the Paddock, approximately 18m long, but seemingly isolated. This shows up in parch marks, and in conditions of extreme drought, stones can be seen protruding from its surface. Its original function is not clear: the high-resistance 'blob' at its southern end is due to fallen rubble from the paddock wall.

21. A high resistance feature, 12m x 7m, with a stub wall at its northern end. Its southern end coincides with a sill underlying the south Paddock wall. It is assumed this was a building, but its relationship with the wall is intriguing.

22. This looks like a stoned track leading from a blocked gateway in the western wall of the field towards either feature 21 (or possibly, 23). This blocked gateway is itself intriguing, as its sides taper inwards from the top towards the base: presumably, it dates from a period when used by laden haywains, whose loads would have projected from the sides of the wain.

23. The rather confused results in this area belie the clear images seen in the resistivity survey of 2012. This appears to show a small rectangular building with a partially open front (the whole around 8m x 4m) underlying the Paddock wall. Magnetic enhancement at the site shown in the gradiometry survey of that year was interpreted as signs of burning, and the whole as potentially a blacksmith's shop, keeping its dangerous fires and smells well away from the claustral buildings.

24. A series of unconnected linear areas of high resistance in this area correspond with earthworks at the site. The study in the field was enlivened by the local story that a car had been buried here in the 1970s! The story has yet to be tested.

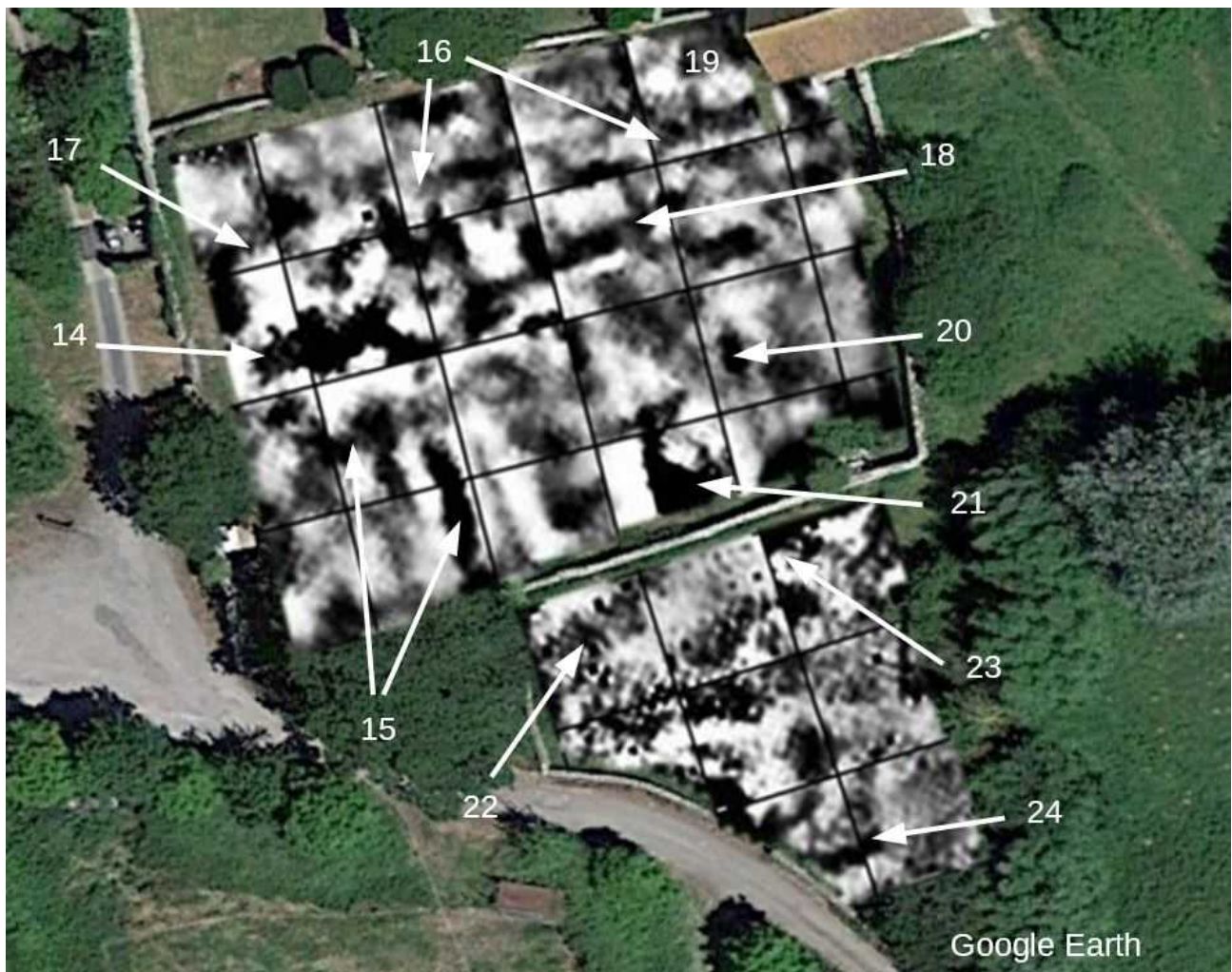


Fig 31: Geophysics results from the paddock and field to south, 2020

Many of these features and results are mirrored in the 2013 cropmarks (Fig 32 below).



Fig 32: Cropmarks in paddock (east)



Fig 33: Cropmarks in paddock (west)

Crop marks in 2013 were marked enough to be visible on the ground: some are included here as illustration (crop mark numbers refer to items shown in Fig 31).

Fig 31:21 is the footings of a rectangular structure some 12m x 8m. In times of extreme drought, the stone footings show through the turf (Fig 34 below): this and the clear representation on the resistivity scan show the entirety of the structure.

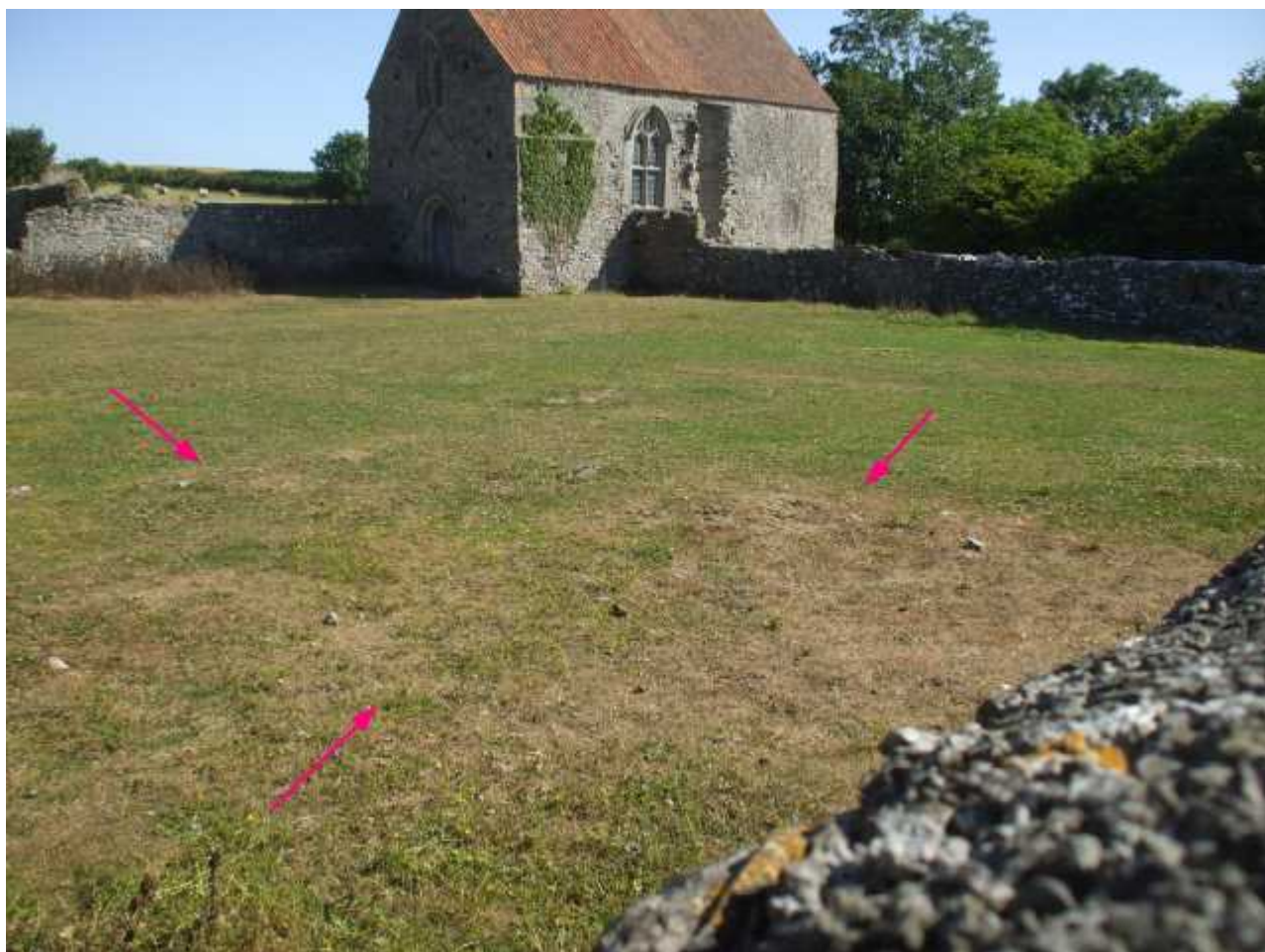


Fig 34: Structure attached to south wall of paddock (from SW)

That this structure shares an alignment with the south wall implies it is probably coeval with, or later than the wall, and thus probably not a priory feature.



Fig 35: Rectangular walled structure at west end of infirmary (Fig 31: 16 & 19)

Kewstoke, Photographic record of crop marks (2013), Woodspring Priory, 2023, Y2, v1.

As discussed above, although clear in the cropmarks, this is probably an amalgam of more than one feature: it could possibly be a trace of the priory refectory, but the Tithe Map 'long building' south of the cloister and the 20th century pig enclosures (YCCCART 2021) may also be part of it.



Fig 36: Rectangular cropmarks south of cloister wall (see also Fig 28 et seq. & Figs 32 & 33)

These cropmarks are less easy to characterise. They are too wide N-S to be related to the refectory, but may be later enclosures or even garden features.

It is also interesting that some features shown clearly in the resistivity surveys do not show clearly as cropmarks (e.g. Fig 31:17 & 18). This is presumably due to local soil conditions, or perhaps even the nature of the construction materials.

Results - north of church



Fig 37: Cropmark to north of church aisle

Unfortunately, the north side of the church was not visible from the tower, but this ground-based photograph shows a mark joining two wells found when the ground level was lowered on the north side of the church (pers comm C Crook).

This is fundamentally undatable.

Results - The farmhouse garden and the cloister

Although some parching was visible in the farmhouse garden, this formed no coherent pattern. The area was fairly heavily landscaped in the farmhouse restoration project, with a number of cobbled surfaces being removed, which may account for some of the cropmark confusion.

Some areas of parching show in the cloister, but these are not particularly helpful in understanding the archaeology of the cloister: it was in use as a garden until recently as shown below (Fig 38) (also see YCCCART 2021).



Fig 38: Cloister in use as a garden in 1949 (air photo in North Somerset HER)

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Date

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