

**YCCCART 2024/Y5**

**A Third Woodspring Miscellany**

**YATTON, CONGRESBURY, CLAVERHAM AND CLEEVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
RESEARCH TEAM (YCCCART)**

*General Editor: Vince Russett*



North side of Farmhouse during Woodspring District Council visit to Landmark works, 1989

*For Chris Richards, in memory of a fallen brother-in-arms*

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## **Abstract**

*Woodspring's history goes both before and after the Priory, back from Domesday, and forward to 19th and 20th century development schemes (thankfully, never implemented).*

*The work of Roland Paul at Woodspring has not been generally acknowledged, except for a short article in Somerset Proceedings in 1885: it is good to be able to bring his late 19th century work to light.*

*The post-dissolution 'hospital for maimed souldiers' at the site has never been fully investigated: a beginning of publication of the organisation is made here, and studies continue.*

*Finally, two (over)development proposals which would have resulted in very different landscapes at Woodspring and Sand Bay are noted.*

## **Acknowledgements**

The Landmark Trust and National Trust, landowners of and around Woodspring Priory, the Toogood partnership (tenants on the Woodspring estate), and individuals of all three have been very helpful: as always, thanks are due to the staff of the Somerset Heritage Centre for their maintenance of public provision of historic documents relating to Somerset: my colleagues at YCCCART and other local historic bodies have worked for many days at the site for surveys. A hearty West Country thank you one and all.

## **Introduction**

Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team (YCCCART) is a Community Archaeology team working across northern Somerset.

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.

*The day may not be far distant when monuments, such as are described in these pages, may be utterly rooted up and destroyed...should such be their fate, the time I have bestowed to rescue their record from oblivion will not be lost*

Dr Charles Pooley 1877

## **Site location and land use and geology**

These have been described at length in other reports (e.g. YCCCART 2012) and need not detain us needlessly here.

The only real question that has arisen regarding the geology and hydrology of the area is the important question of water availability.

It is clear from the siting of the priory (or any monastic site) that abundant water must have been available for the use of the canons, presumably sourced from the spring in the orchard.

The large culvert uncovered during excavations in the early 1970s is evidence that there was a significant supply to operate a reredorter (toilet block), as well as to supply drinking, cooking, cleaning and other uses for the resident canons.

The usual reason quoted for reduction of water availability in this part of Somerset is abstraction by Water Companies, but it is difficult to see this as a reason at Woodspring. Presumably, the spring was once fed by run-off and drainage from the adjacent Sand Hill; the British Geological Society describe that as long ago as 1933 ([api.bgs.co.uk/sobi-scans/v1/borehole/scans/items/384717](https://api.bgs.co.uk/sobi-scans/v1/borehole/scans/items/384717)), the 'dipping well' at the eastern end of the Priory Barn was stagnant and very slow to refill, so presumably water shortage pre-dates the 1930s.

## Domesday Book and Woodspring before the Priory

One of the mysteries of the Woodspring Priory site is the absence of archaeological evidence of the pre-existing manor of Worspring, and what happened to its inhabitants when the Priory was first established at the end of the first quarter of the 13th century CE.

Despite large-scale geophysical survey at the Priory site by YCCCART (YCCCART 2012; YCCCART 2020a; YCCCART 2021a; YCCCART 2021b; Russett 2021), as well as recording of cropmarks in summer 2013 (YCCCART 2023) nothing has been identified on the ground that does not relate to the priory or the subsequent series of farms at the site.

And yet the Domesday entry for 'Worspring' emphasises its annual value:

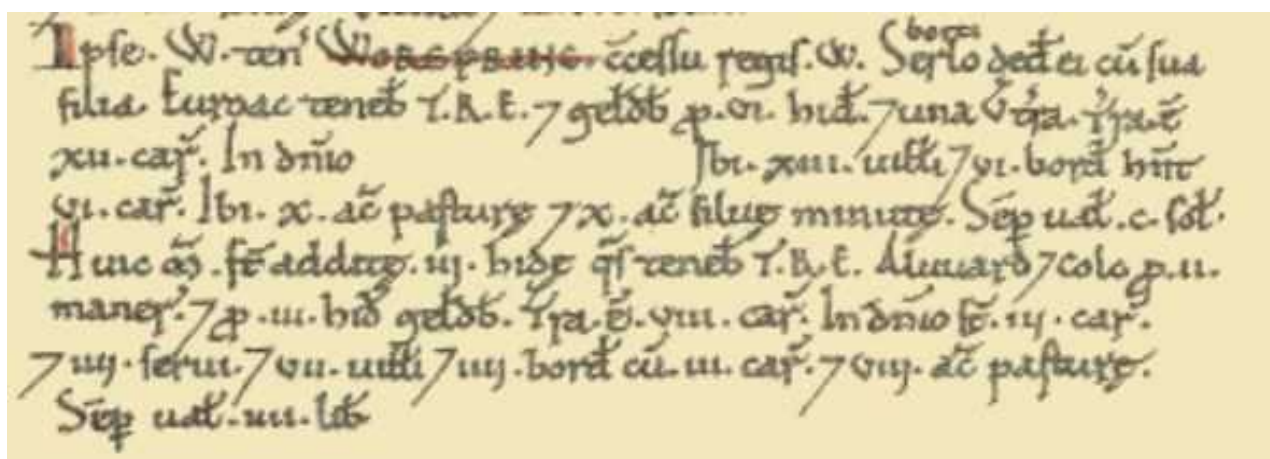


Fig 1: Text of Domesday book for WORSRING (1086)

Without the complex phraseology used in most translations, Domesday.com provides a very useful summary of what this entry means:

*Woodspring was a settlement in Domesday Book, in the hundred of Winterstoke and the county of Somerset.*

*It had a recorded population of 34 households in 1086, putting it in the largest 40% of settlements recorded in Domesday*

### **Land of William of Falaise**

#### *Households*

- Households: 20 villagers. 10 smallholders. 4 slaves.

#### *Land and resources*

- Ploughland: 20 ploughlands. 3 lord's plough teams. 9 men's plough teams.
- Other resources: 7.25 lord's lands. Pasture 18 acres. Woodland 10 acres.

#### *Livestock*

- Livestock in 1086: 16 cattle. 2 pigs. 92 sheep.

#### *Valuation*

- Annual value to lord: 9 pounds in 1086; 9 pounds when acquired by the 1086 owner; 9 pounds in 1066.

### Owners

- *Tenant-in-chief in 1086: William of Falaise.*
- *Lord in 1086: William of Falaise.*
- *Lords in 1066: Alwaker (father of Aelfric); Alward; Cola.*

### Other information

- *Phillimore reference: Somerset 27,3*  
(<https://opendomesday.org/place/ST3466/woodspring/>)

The manor (which probably included Locking, which otherwise does not appear in Domesday) was thus large and wealthy: it was valued at £8 at 1066, and at 1086: Worle, the *caput* of the estate, was itself only worth £9.

Stephen Morland (1990) suggested that Alward and Cola's holdings were those based on Lockinghead and the second manor based in Locking village itself. They probably account for around half the worth of the manor, but this still leaves Worspring itself as a manor worth '100 shillings' (£5), and with what amounts to 19 households.

Crudely speaking, then, we might infer at least 19 dwellings in a Domesday settlement at Worspring, but nothing resembling a village, or even extensive dispersed settlement at Worspring has ever been found. However, 'land for 12 ploughs' and only six ploughs recorded implies an as yet underdeveloped manor: the arable land is unlikely to have been on Kewstoke Moor; only the land around Sand Hill and Collum is dry enough for reliable arable results (although admittedly, the climate was more amenable in the late 11th century, and may have meant that at least some of the moor would be available: environmental studies have not been undertaken to address this possibility).

One interesting Domesday asset is '*10 acres of silva minutae*' (coppice). While this could have been anywhere in the large manor, the place-name Worspring is a clue. The second element is often (mis)understood to have the same meaning as the Mod E '*spring*' = 'a place where water emerges from the ground', and taken to refer to the water source in Woodspring orchard, at the head of the water system of the priory.

While the word was very uncommonly used in OE, which usually used the word '*well/wella*' for such features as, for example in the local parish name 'Backwell' = 'the spring behind (the village)', it does have further meanings, largely based on the same principle 'a springing up, an emergence, a regrowth', and the latter is applied in Mid E, and even today, as 'coppice regrowth'. So a potential interpretation of the place-name Worspring may be 'the coppice-wood appertaining to Worle' (see also below) - it is the only one of Alwaker's manors where Domesday mentions coppice.

The Lord of Worspring in 1066 was one 'Alwaker son of Aelfric'. Late Saxon land-holdings were more often than not, scattered, and Alwaker's holdings were no exception. As well as Worspring, he held fifteen other manors, a loose group of 11 in northern Somerset, a small group of 3 in south Somerset, and outliers at Ashe in Hampshire, and Exwick in Devon (Fig 2). The developed economy of England in the 11th century did not withstand the shock of invasion and occupation: the downfall of the English nobility can be measured by the fact that Alwaker only held one manor, Blackford, by 1086.





Fig 2: Land attributed to Alwaker, son of Aelfric by Domesday (1086)

Most of Alwaker's land was swallowed up by two rapacious Norman lords, Serlo de Burci and Walter of Douai: the Domesday entry for Worspring includes the unusual information that while it now belonged to William of Falaise (in 1086), this was because 'Serlo de Burci had given it to him with his daughter', presumably a dynastic marriage among the newly enriched families of the Norman aristocracy (Williams 1995; Williams 2008).

Around the time of Domesday or just before, the settlements around Worle looked as in Fig 3.

While Weston(-super-Mare) and Locking do not appear in Domesday, Locking was probably part of a double manor with Worspring (Morland 1990), while Weston is thought to have been within the manor of Ashcombe (*Aisecombe* DB 1086), although Weston is actually the site of the parish church. Despite attempts by earlier historians to rubbish the history of Weston (Knight 1915, for example), it was a perfectly normal medieval settlement, with traceable small open fields on the side of Worlebury, and a vigorous fishing industry, documented in the medieval period around Birnbeck island and the adjacent shore.

The place-names of the area suggest a focus on Worle, which until the arrival of the Worle Local History Society, was very poorly served by historians (see discussion below)

As Stephen Rippon (2006) and Mick Aston (pers comm) have both described, Worle seems to have been a pre-Domesday estate centre, to match its neighbours Banwell,

Congresbury and Brent. In the later medieval period, much of this landscape, including virtually all of Locking and Worle, with a substantial estate at Worspring, belonged to Woodspring Priory.

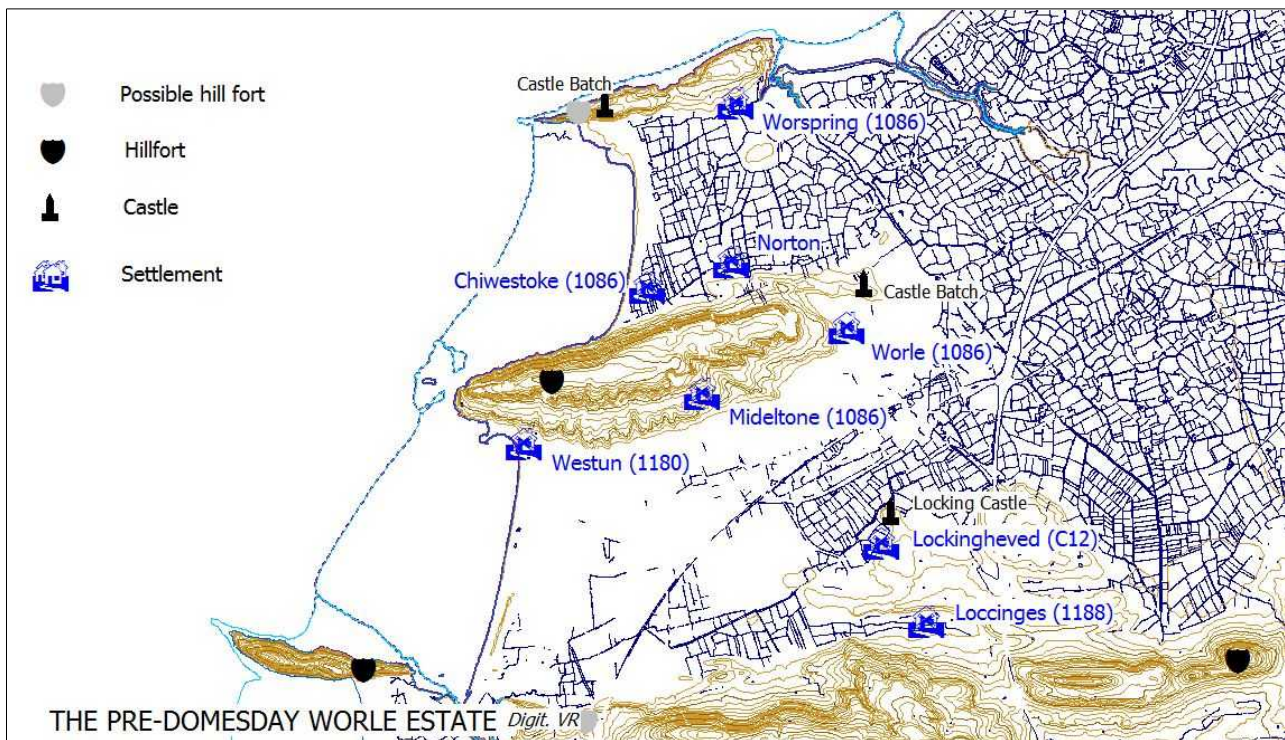


Fig 3: Worle area at or just before Domesday

The easiest names to understand on this basis are Weston (*west-tun*, the west settlement, west of Worle) along with Milton (*Midelstone* 1086, the middle settlement, i.e. between Worle and Weston). Norton is clearly the 'north settlement': Locking (possibly 'the site of an inclosure'), Kewstoke (*Chivestoke* 1086 'the (special) place of boats', or just possibly, 'of St Kew'). While it is not as certain, Uphill (*Opopille* 1086) may be a navigable creek of the estate: while possibly too late to be relevant, the 1804 Rivers Authority document (SHC D/RA/1/2/54) regarding maintenance of Uphill sluice and the little river running to it, shows that virtually all the premises owing works on the sluice and river relate to Woodspring Priory in some way.

In addition, the linking of Kewstoke and its dependent chapel at Milton (Brian Austin, pers comm) shows the interlinking of the whole estate.

Worle also looks like a potential central place, based on the Tithe Map depiction of the village centre (Fig 4). Comparison with the known royal centre of Cheddar (where a huge landscape oval surrounds both the royal 'palace' and Roman centre at Kings of Wessex School, and at least part of which has Roman origins (Dick Broomhead, pers comm) and appears to relate to the 'palace' site which stands at its exact geometric focus), indicates that the large oval at the centre of Worle village may imply something similar. The ground slopes up from Worle High Street to the broad hillspur underlying the fields 447 and 453. The map also reveals an apparently infilled 'market place' to the west of the oval.



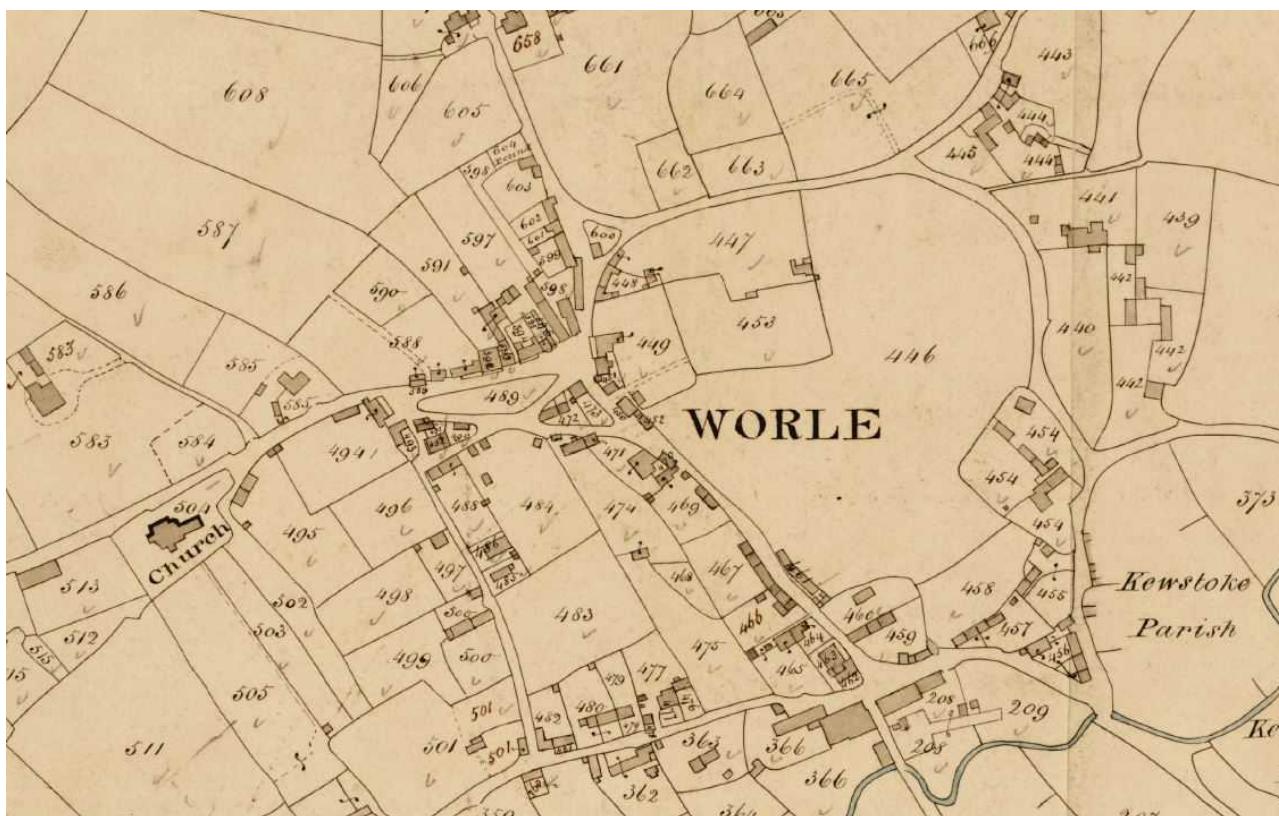


Fig 4: Worle village from the 1840 Tithe Map

This has until very recently been a lack of interest in the Worle / Worlebury / Worspring group of placenames, along with the related names indicating close relationships (see above and Fig 5).

There has also always been a curious reluctance among historians to assign any importance to Worle: even Steve Rippon shied away from according Worle the precedence it surely deserves: he rather coyly refers to a possible estate based on Worle / Kewstoke / Weston as 'Worlebury' (Rippon 2006).

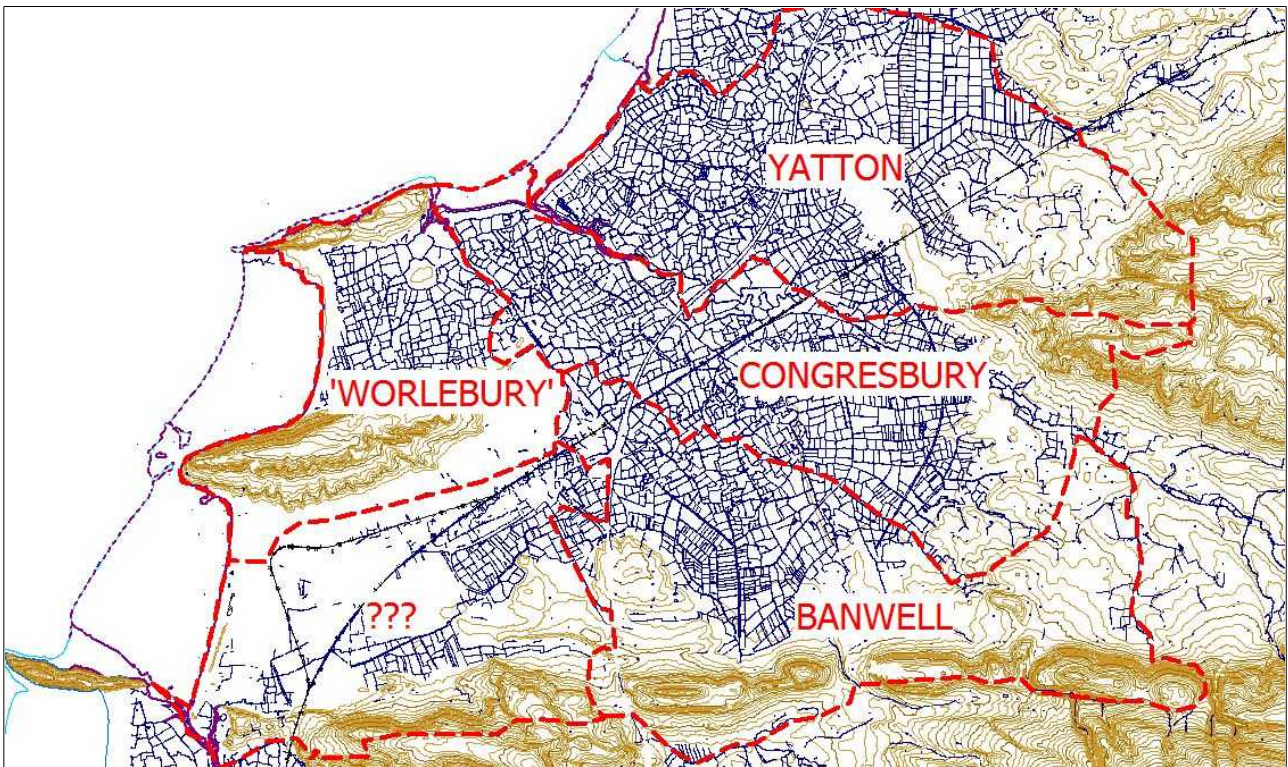
Reconstructions of potential 'early' estates (possibly as early as 7th / 8th century CE) are based on modern (pre-1974) parish boundaries, which are a reasonable approximation, but such boundaries do not extrapolate well to larger scales.

Rippon's estates are based on his 2006 volume.

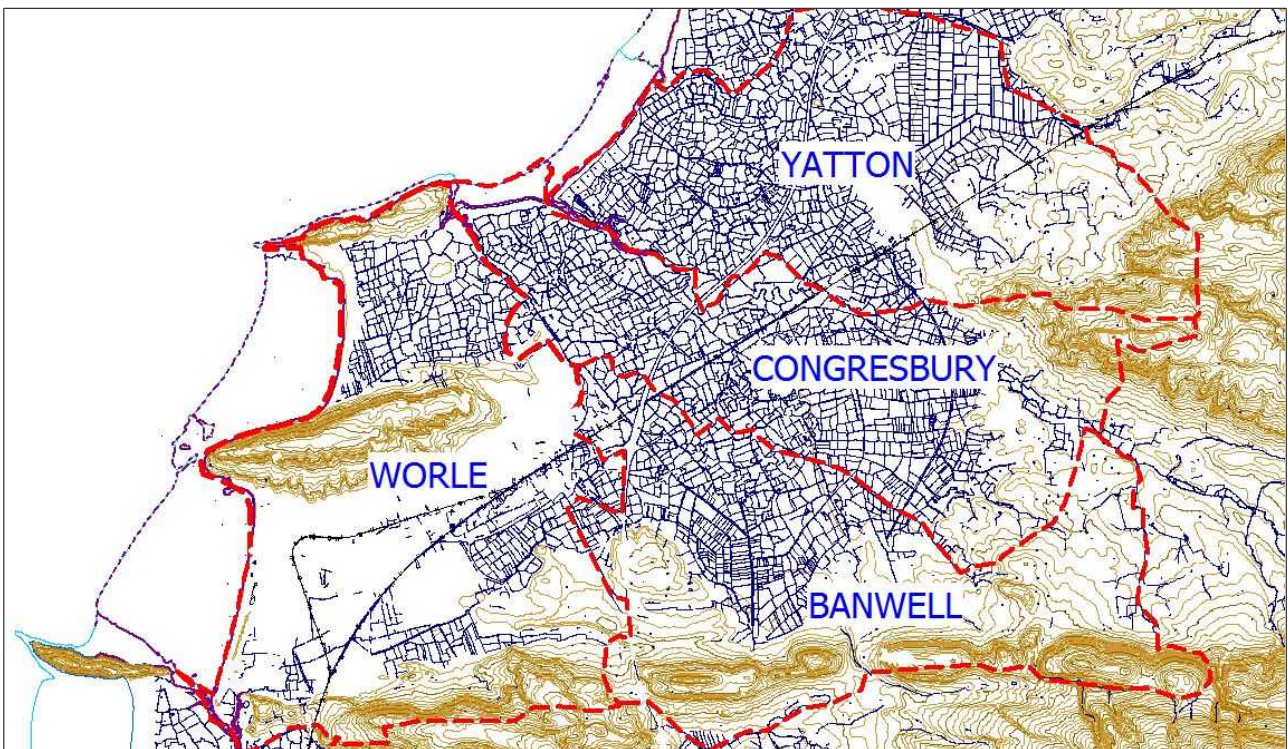
Admittedly, the inclusion of some of the northern Mendip slope parishes like Hutton and Bleadon is perhaps less likely than Locking and Uphill, but there is not really room for a further large estate between Worle and Brent to the south, and no obvious candidate. The second model in Fig 6 would afford Worlebury the literal 'central place' of such an estate. These issues will be considered elsewhere (YCCART, forthcoming).

Such considerations are complicated by the recent geological history of the area, with the deposition of, and then later colonisation of, the post-Roman alluvium.





*Fig 5: Local 'early estates' (Rippon 2006)*



*Fig 6: Suggested modified 'early estates' map (Russett 2012)*

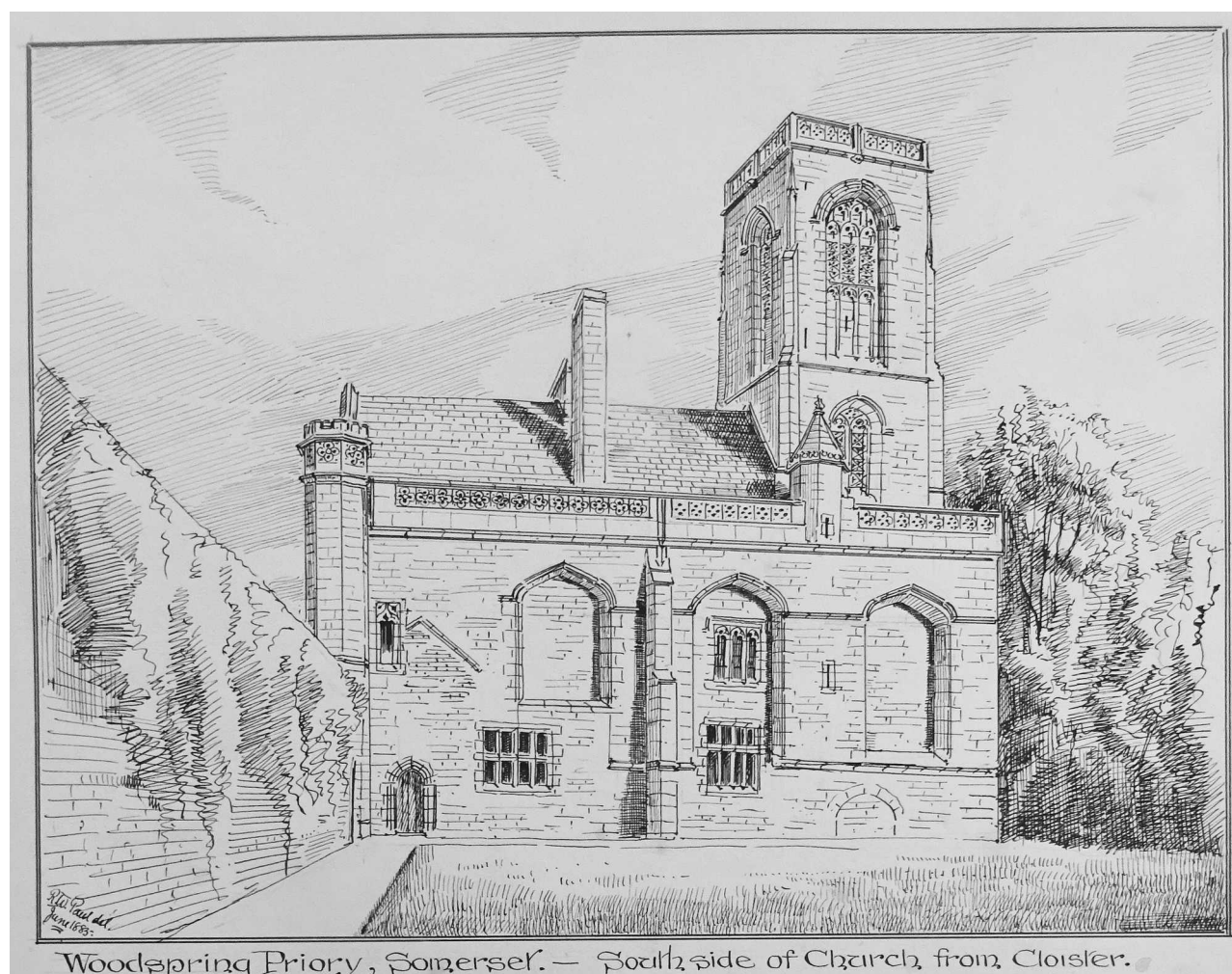
Much remains to be done to reveal the early estates and their internal relationships, and what, if any, relationship they bear to their Roman and earlier antecedents.



## Roland Paul and Woodspring Priory

A short article in the 'Proceedings' section of the Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society in 1885 by a young (very young: 21 years old) man named Roland Paul gave some details about Woodspring Priory, including some illustrations of the Infirmary (then called 'The Friar's Hall' a name wrong on so many levels!), a plan of the main buildings, and some frustratingly sparse details of an excavation over the site of the former choir of the Priory, and possibly of some adjacent foundations of the chapter house.

These turned out to be only the tip of a comprehensive series of sketches and drawings of Woodspring Priory, now available for study in the Somerset Heritage Centre (SHC A/DAS/9/146/various)



*Fig 7: Roland Paul's drawing of Woodspring church from the cloister garth, 1885, usefully almost coeval with the photographs of Frederick Wood c 1890-1900 (see Fig below)*

The immediate advantages of both recording methods are obvious: verifiable detail in the photograph, omission of blockage by trees in the drawing. Both are, of course, well before alterations by Major Hill in the 20th century and Landmark in the late 20th.



*Fig 8: South side of Woodspring Priory church by Frederick Wood, 1890-1900 (courtesy of Weston-super-Mare Public Library)*

This tranche of works, recording the site at the end of the 19th century, does not seem to have been recognised by previous workers at the site: certainly, Paul is not mentioned alongside other antiquaries in the Guide Book (Tomalin & Crook 2007).

## **The man**

Roland Wilmot Paul (1864-1935) was a native of Weston-super-Mare. He was born there in January 1864, and before he was 20 years old, was taking a great interest in antiquities in Somerset, recording visits to sites in diaries and notebooks from the age of 15. His special interests were largely in ecclesiastical buildings, and particularly heraldic glass.

In 1881, he began sketching at Woodspring Priory, initially at the age of just sixteen, when at Spring Grove School in Isleworth, and his work there was largely finished by the age of 22, although he maintained an interest in it, and his papers in the Somerset Heritage Centre include newspaper cuttings up until the early '30s (SHC A/DAS/9/146).

After his work at Woodspring, he became an architect, and published in RIBA Transactions.

He married into the Bulmers cider family, and living in Herefordshire, did much work on the Dore Abbey church and buildings.

Obviously, he was a product of his time, and we should not expect stratigraphic detail from his 'excavations', largely undertaken to recover building layouts (although he does make other useful records at Woodspring (more later)).

A member of Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society from the age of 16 (in 1880), he published some records in PSANHS (Paul 1885), and he became an FSA in 1900.

He was architect to Bristol Cathedral, and published a complete plan of the Cathedral (as then known) in *Archaeologia* 63: 231-50.

He seems to have been a modest person - 'his attainments were not as well known as they should have been' (St George Grey 1935): his best known publication was a volume called 'Vanishing London' (1894), and he also published in *The Builder* ('Churches of the Somerset coast-line' - including Woodspring) (1910) and *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 1904 on his findings at Abbey Dore.

He died in Clifton, in 1932.

### **The work at Woodspring Priory**

Initially, Paul drew and sketched a number of the priory buildings, and produced final drawings for publication of several (the Infirmary, then known as 'The Friar's Hall', several views of the church, the gateway, the barn, and some detail drawings of areas, such as the fine Decorated doorway leading from the orchard into the cloister, but formerly, the entry to the Chapter House from the cloister).

It is worth repeating here the text of Paul's account of his 1885 excavations at Woodspring, as published in PSANHS (1885):

*'..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 14<sup>th</sup> 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 walls being 3 ft. in thickness..' (Paul 1885)*

A sketch plan of the church choir (the apparent subject of Paul's excavation) was added to the plan of the Priory: (Fig 9 below):



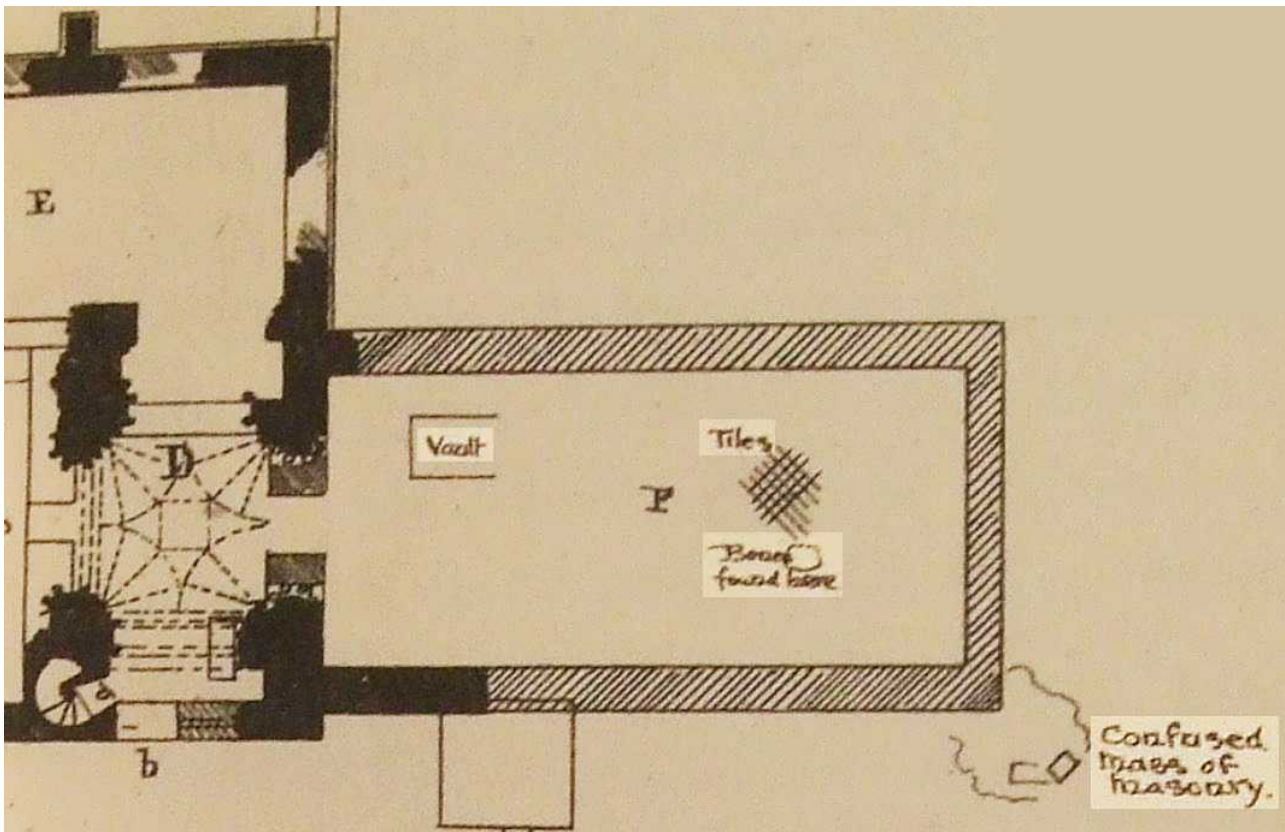


Fig 9: Roland Paul's published record of excavation, 1885

His notes in the Somerset Heritage Centre add further detail to this drawing and the sparse text.

The sketch plan in Figs 10-11 (below) gives some measurements, and records 'Tiles' close to the rectangular negative feature 1, of which only the west side was recorded: the feature is shown as 6 feet (1.83m) east of the tower east wall, and 4 feet (1.22m) wide. It was described above as *'slabs which appeared to have formed the end of a vault'*, although he does not describe any fill or contents of the vault.

A structure which he (almost certainly correctly) called the High Altar [base] is at 2; a line to the SE of the altar site is cautiously labelled 'bones found here' on the published plan, but the more explicit 'skull' on the sketch plan (3). In addition, 'tiles' are also recorded on the site of the altar, to its SE, and on the south wall of the choir.

North of the 'vault' the word 'door' is written on the wall, presumably a recognisable sill was found at this point (4). This seems to be visible as a gap in the resistivity survey by YCCCART (YCCCART 2012: Fig 30), which also shows an apparent building 8m x 6m attached to the north wall of the choir, which Paul does not seem to have noted.

Between the door and the vault 1, (the distance registered as 2' 11" - 0.89m), a label on the plan says 'mullions' (5) (presumably window fragments), as does a note on the SE of the choir, where the published plan shows 'confused mass of masonry' (6).

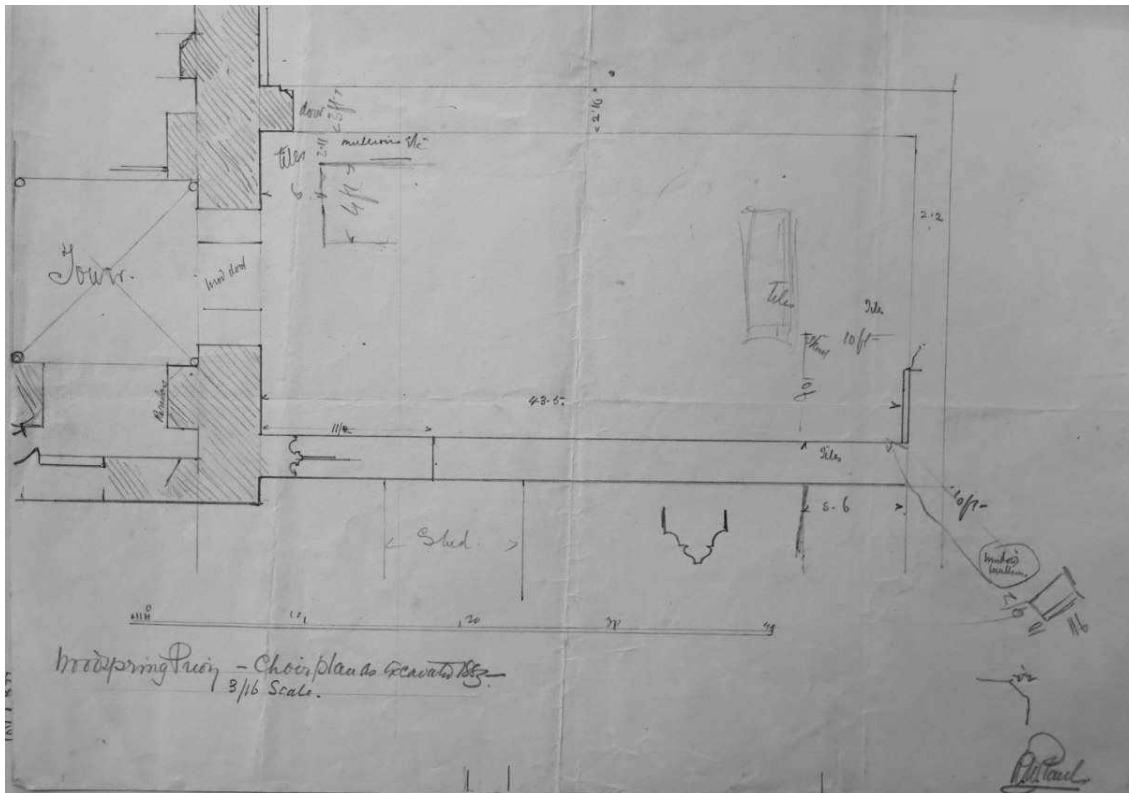


Fig 10:  
Paul's  
sketch plan  
of the  
excavated  
site of the  
choir, 1885

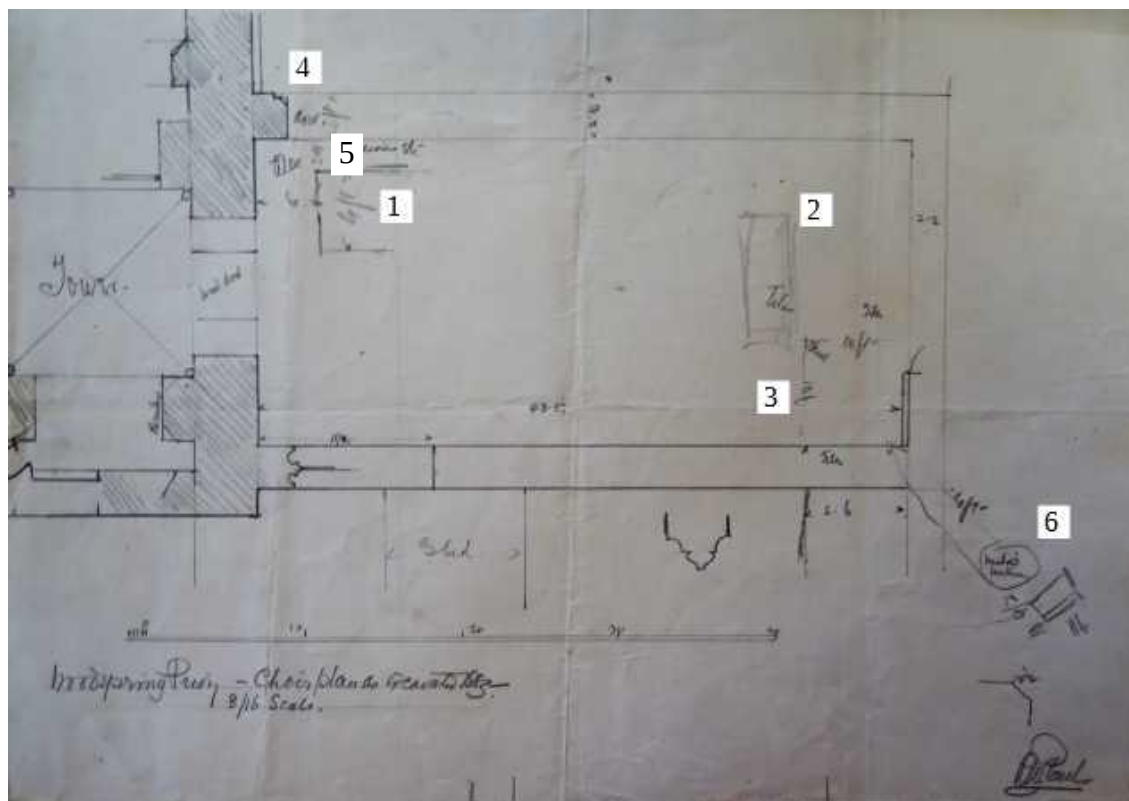


Fig 11:  
  
Annotated  
sketch  
(see text)

A second sketch of Paul's shows the outline of the walls of adjacent buildings (Fig 12 below). The original uses the published plan of the choir (1885), so is largely later, borne out by annotations on the plan itself.



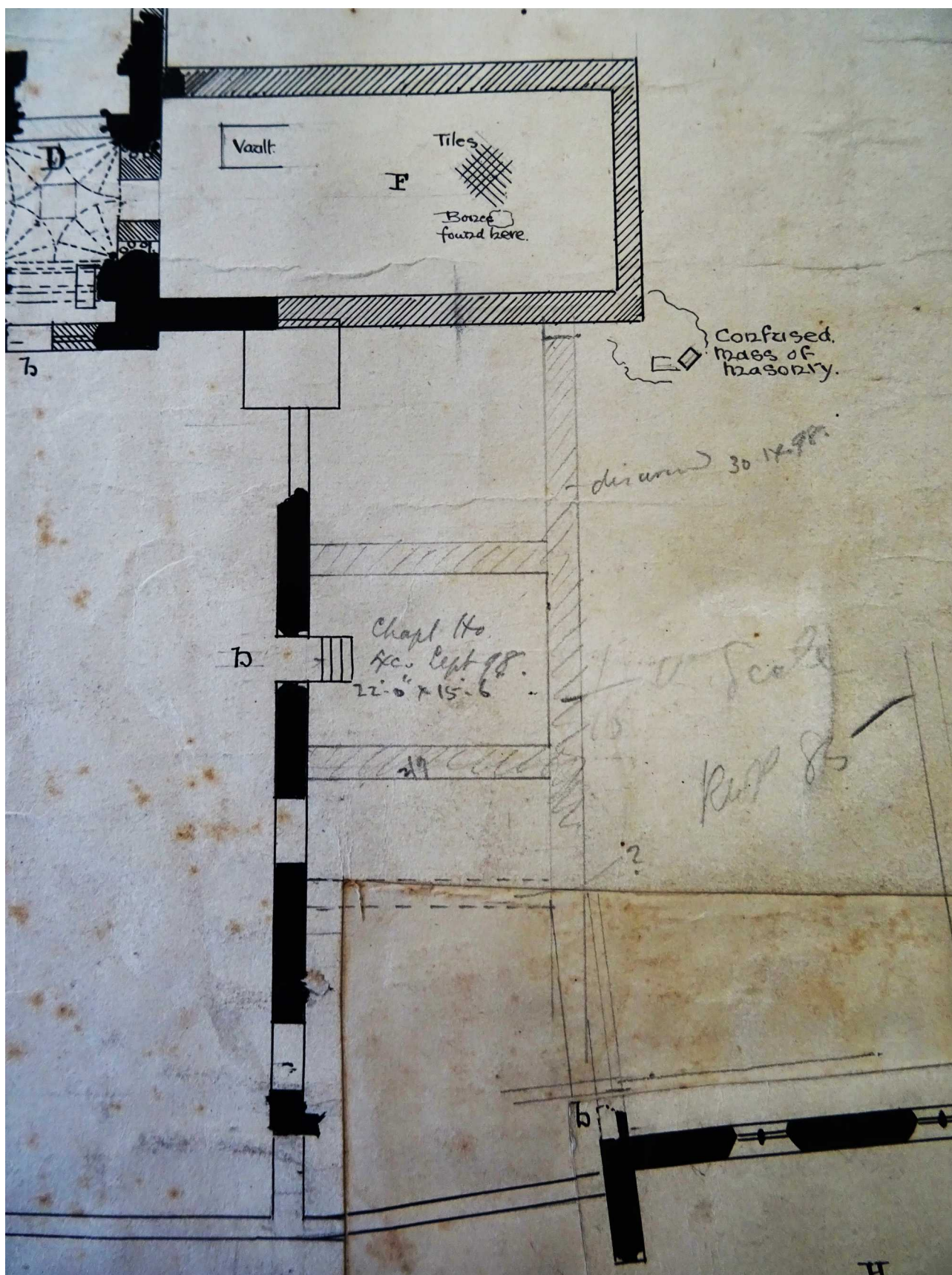


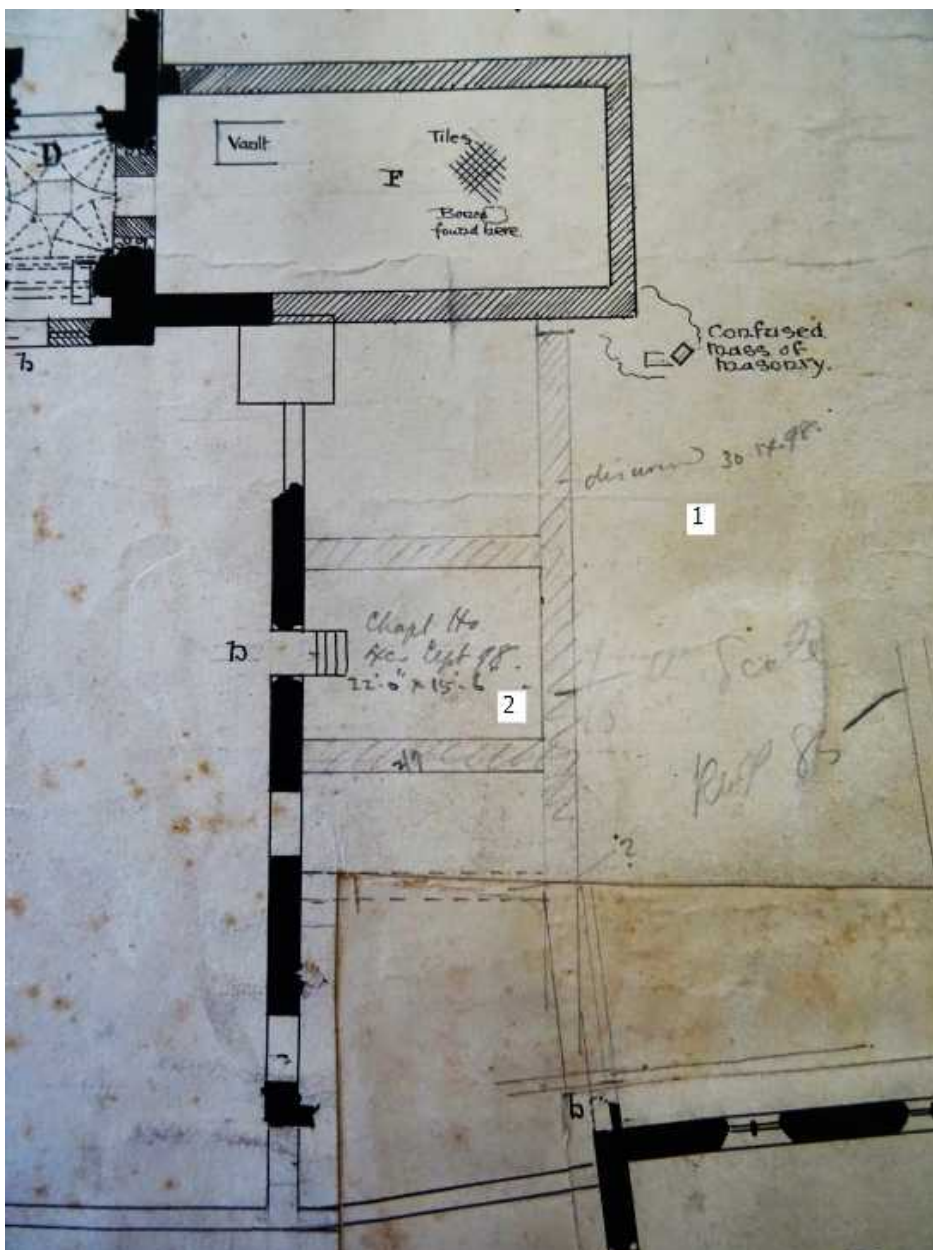
Fig 12: Paul's sketch of outline of buildings south of the choir

The annotation on the north-south (hatched) feature (an apparently continuous wall) at 1 says 'discovered 30 IX 98', while the text at 2 reads 'Chapt Ho / etc Sept 98 / 22' 0" x 15' 6" (6.70m x 4.72m)'. The steps up from the cloister to the chapter house are now buried.

It is not clear whether these measurements were taken from cropmarks (just about possible in September, although according to [climate-change.data.gov.uk](http://climate-change.data.gov.uk), the summer was not particularly hot in 1898), and may have been from digging: subsequent investigations by Major Hill will have obscured any evidence.

Note that Paul's sketch is less sure nearer the Infirmary.

This sketch makes it clear that Paul's work uncovered the later, smaller choir, but not the earlier shown by Tomalin & Crook (2007).



*Fig 13: Annotated sketch (see text)*

At the northern end, nearest the choir, the 'garden room' and the adjacent thinner wall that joins it to the chapter house wall, are shown as recent, which would accord with some of the 19th century drawings of the area.

Paul also depicted some of the tile finds, with watercolour illustrations, including the 'Arms of Man' mentioned in the published excavation text (see below).

Heraldry and heraldic glass especially seems to have been a particular interest of Paul's, which probably accounts for why he portrayed the tiles found in watercolour.





Fig 14: Paul's water colours of tiles found at the site

Unfortunately, Paul's text accompanying the drawings does not appear to have survived, but certainly, some of these tiles are in the museum on site at Woodspring today.

There is no mention in his work of the technology involved, but they appear to be largely later medieval impressed and slip-decorated, with plain border tiles (15, 16) in addition to the heraldic tiles seen below.

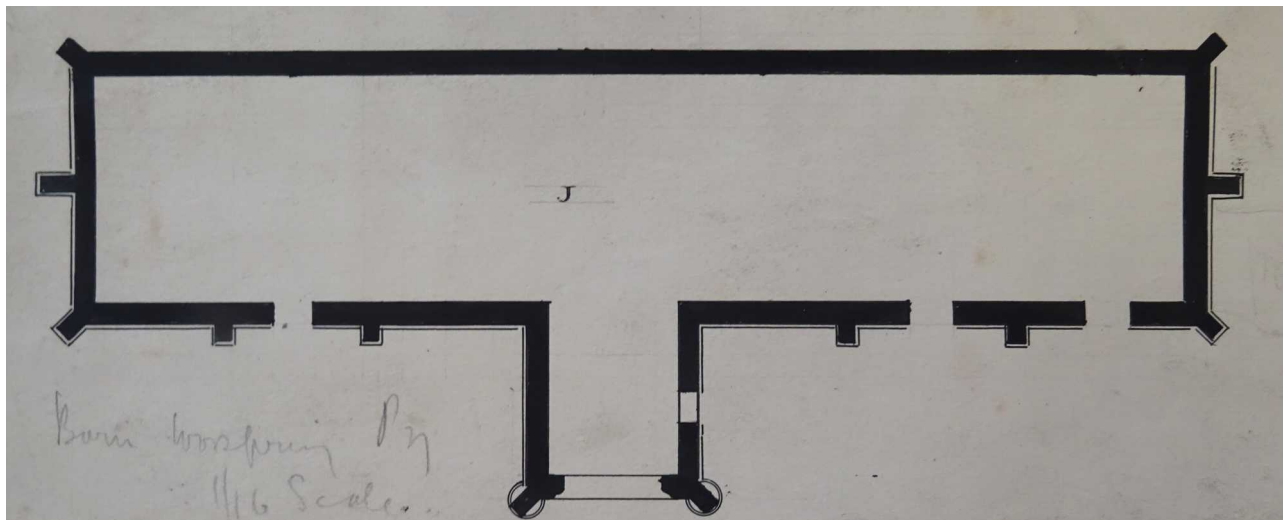
No other finds (pottery, glass, metalwork etc) are recorded from the excavation.

Paul clearly intended to produce a publication on the Priory - some of his completed



drawings are given Plate numbers - but this publication never happened.

One building that Paul recorded - the barn - depicts only features on the south side of the barn - there are original features on the north side facing the field as well:



*Fig 15: Ground plan of monastic barn (Paul 1885)*



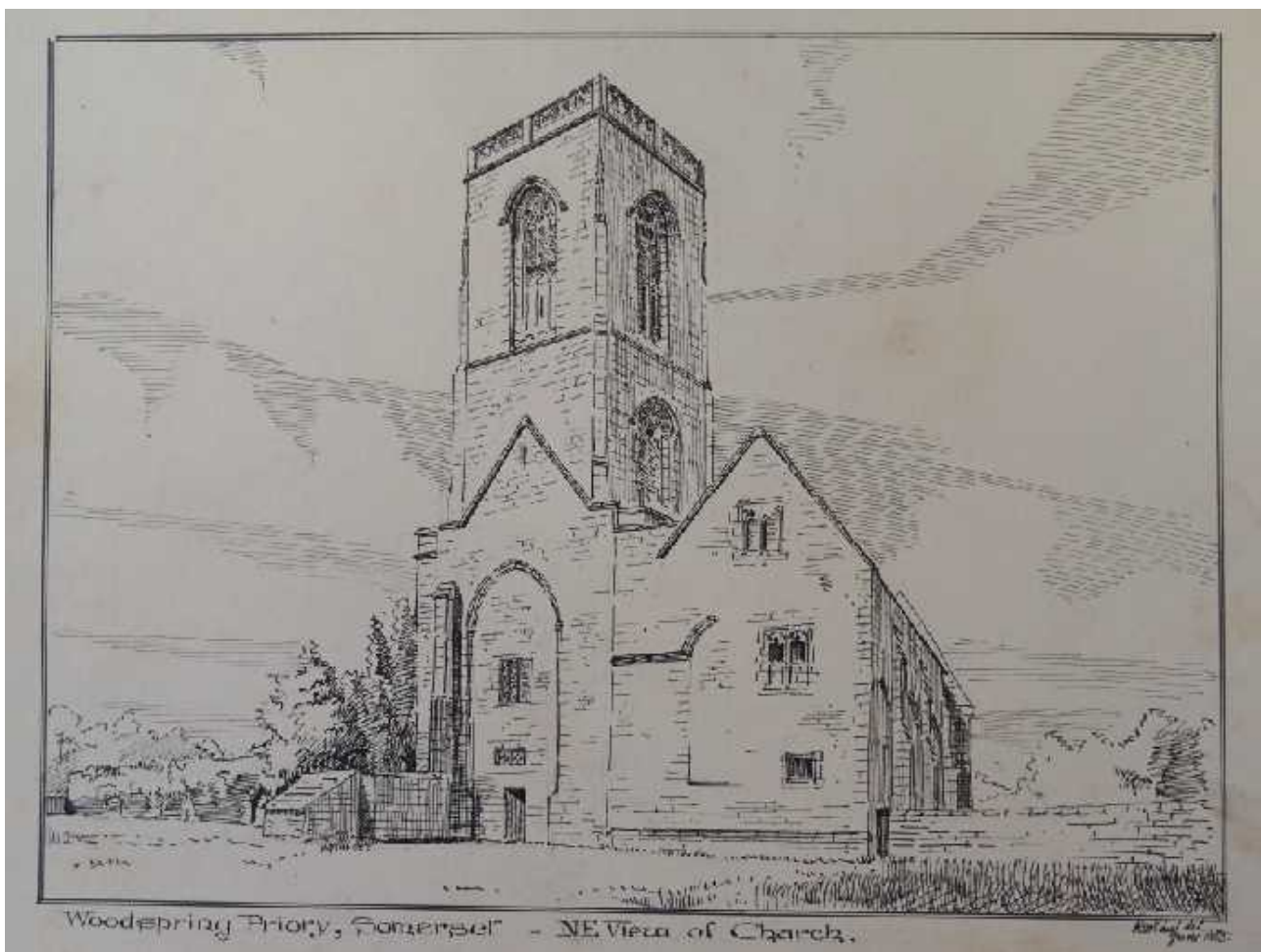
*Fig 16: Features in north wall of barn (2021)*

The scar of a removed former north porch is visible on the north side, along with a ground

floor medieval opening, and a blocked opening at first floor level (Fig 16 above). Neither, uncharacteristically, does he record the blocked west side door of the south porch, which is still blocked today, although the build-up of the main south doorway has since been removed.

Probably Paul's greatest contribution to the study of the Priory was the numerous pencil sketches of various buildings and some details thereof. It is perhaps a little strange that there are no photographs among his papers, but this is not unusual for late 19th century archaeological recording.

Some of the drawings were later worked up into formal drawings intended as 'Plates' for his projected publication:



*Fig 17: Paul's intended 'plate' of the west end of the Priory church*

He also frequently added small sketches of details to earlier sketches, and clearly his work was continuously in mind.

Some architectural fragments were recorded within the farmhouse, which are potentially immediately post-Dissolution in date (e.g. Fig 18 below)



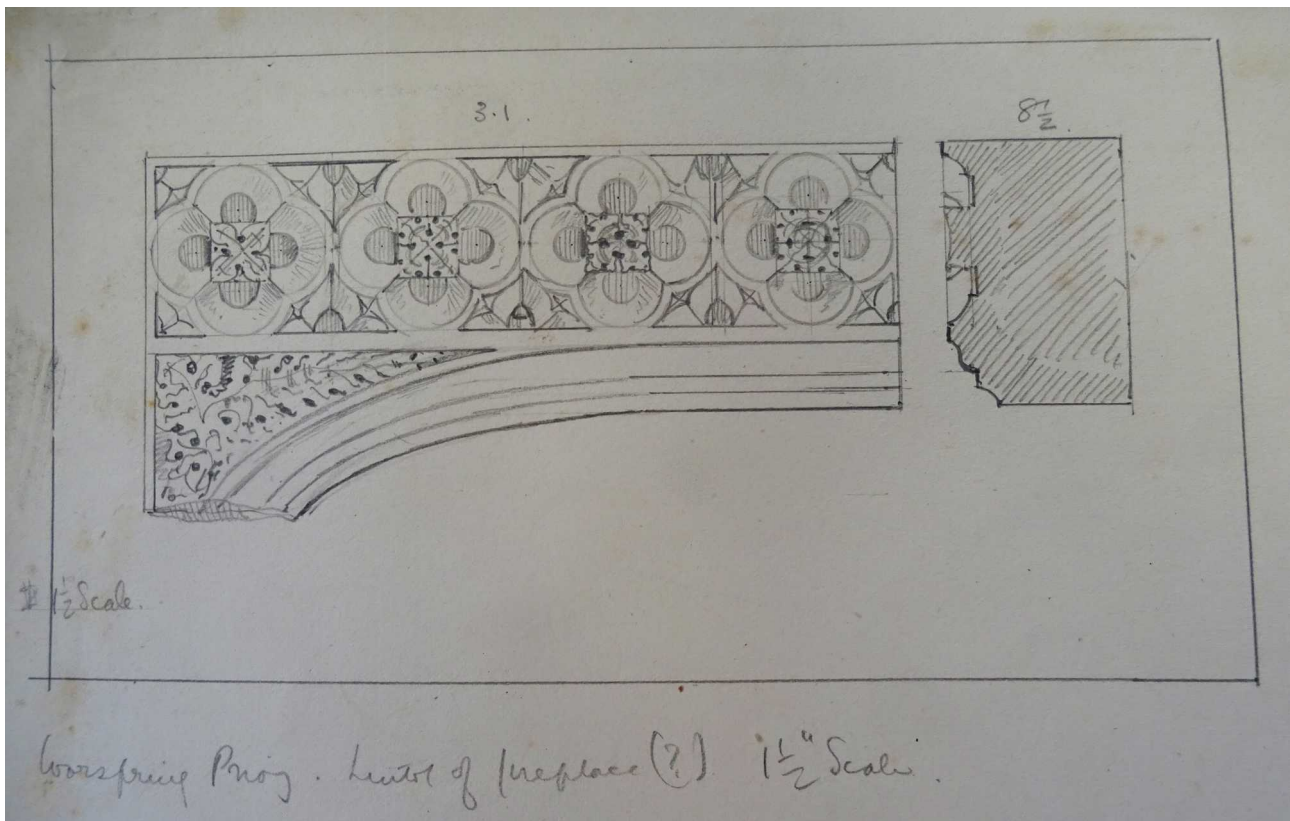


Fig 18: Portion of fireplace in farmhouse (Paul's script reads 'Worspring Priory. Lintel of fireplace (?) 1 1/2" Scale)

This closely resembles a mirror image of a (very worn) fireplace fragment found during repairs to the walls near the gatehouse in 2020 (YCCCART 2020a).

A list of Paul's sketches can be found in Appendix 1.

Many of his finds are still with the site museum at Woodspring Priory, but the lack of publication is now somewhat compensated for by the notes and sketches in the Somerset Heritage Centre.

**Appendix 1: Listing of Paul sketches and notes in the Somerset Heritage Centre (pencil sketches unless otherwise listed)** (later materials, such as newspaper cuttings from the 1920s are considered elsewhere).

A\DAS/9/146/5

'West end of church, Woodspring Priory' nd  
3 x 'Priory Ch Woodspring from S' nd

A\DAS/9/146/8

Ink & pencil 'Woodspring Priory - Church from Sth' nd

A\DAS/9/146/9

Ink & pencil 'Woodspring Priory, Somerset - South side of Church from Cloister' nd  
Ink & pencil 'Woodspring Priory, Somerset, Church from SW' (June 1885)  
Ink 'Woodspring Priory, Somerset - South side of Church from Cloister' nd

A\DAS/9/146/10

Ink & pencil 'Woodspring Priory, Somerset. NW View of church' (June 1885)

A\DAS/9/146/11

Ink 'Woodspring Priory, Somerset - NE View of Church' (June 1885)

A\DAS/9/146/12

[Ground plan of the Priory, with pencil additions] 1881

A\DAS/9/146/13

Pencil & crayon 'WOODSPRING PRIORY. SOMERSET PLAN 1/16 SCALE' (3 Sept 1884)  
(post-Dissolution additions coloured red)

A\DAS/9/146/14

'Woodspring Priory- Choir Plan as excavated 1883'

A\DAS/9/146/15

'Friars Hall Woodspring Priory from NW' nd  
'West end of "Friars" Hall, Woodspring Priory nd

A\DAS/9/146/18

'Woodspring Priory. Lintel of fireplace (?) 1½" scale' nd  
Sketch for above, plus sections 'Head of ?fireplace' nd  
Sketch for second fireplace, with measurements nd

A\DAS/9/146/19

Sketch for second fireplace, with measurements nd  
'Fireplace in W wall of N aisle Worspring Priory' (8.8.1885)

A\DAS/9/146/22

'Worspring -Spandril in outer Court' nd  
'Arch to Chapter house' nd

A\DAS/9/146/23

'Sketch of SE pier of Central Tower Woodspring Showing remains of altar' nd  
'Doorway Chapter Ho to Cloister' nd  
[Sketch of tower fan vaulting with section] nd  
'Door to former Dormitory on SW corner of Cloister Woodspring Priory Somersetshire' nd

A\DAS/9/146/24

'Woodspring Priory The remains of the choir from the north side' (Aug 15 1882)  
'The east wall of tower & N aisle' [random calculations below] nd  
'Tower arches S tr[ansept]

A\DAS/9/146/25

Ink 'WOODSPRING PRIORY DOOR IN EAST WALL OF CLOISTER HALF INCH SCALE'  
(added pencil sketch of sections)

A\DAS/9/146/26

'Arms at entrance' nd  
['Norman' capital] nd  
[6 pencil sketches] nd  
Woodspring Priory - Details  
1,2 Shields from entrance gate  
3 Shield from Barn  
4 Norman capital  
5,6 Effigies from West front  
'Shields on priory gate Woodspring' nd



A\DAS/9/146/27

'Entrance gate, Woodspring Priory' nd

'Woodspring Priory Somerset, shield ½ full size. Near entrance gateway' nd  
[Sketch for above with measurements] nd

A\DAS/9/146/28

Ink 'Woodspring Priory - Entrance Gate'

A\DAS/9/146/29

Pencil & colour wash 'Encaustic Paving Tiles found on site of the Choir of Worspring Priory Somerset September 1885' 1885

A\DAS/9/146/30

Pencil & wash tile fragment drawings

A\DAS/9/146/33

'Barn, Woodspring Priory'

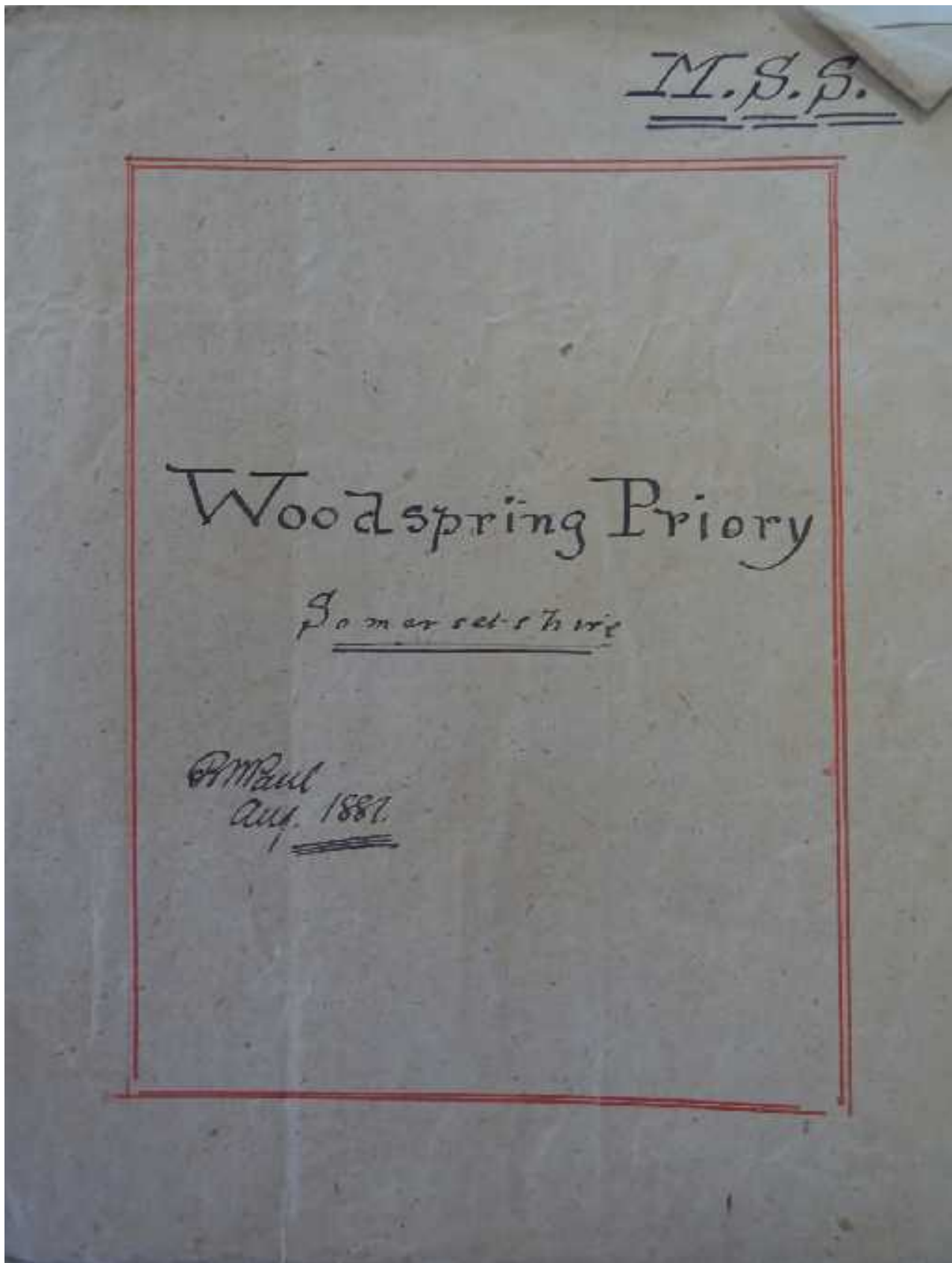
Ink 'Woodspring Priory, The Barn'

A\DAS/9/146/34

[Ground plan of barn]

Ink 'Barn Worspring Priory 1/16 scale'

**Appendix 2: Paul's notes on Woodspring Priory in 1881**



*Fig 19: Cover of Paul's MS notes (bound copy in SHC etc)*

Notes on the

Augustinian Priory of Woodspring  
Somersetshire

with plans of the Church, Cloister & Friars Hall

## Woodspring Priory - additional

### The church (ext)

The West Front of the church has 3 places for figures. the north side niche has the remains of a figure with mitre & crozier supposed to be Thomas à Becket. That opposite has a pointed abbot's hat.

On the South Wall - some of parapet new - near cloister wall on west is a gable marking where the roof of the dormitory came against the nave. Under this is a plain Perp. door wh led from nave to west cloister walk. At east end near E wall of cloister & under easternmost window is a blocked up door. This may have led to the Cloister and formed the "Abbots entrance".

The remains of the choir are only a piece of shattered wall at the S.E. angle of the tower with the remains of the westernmost window of choir consisting of the sill and a part of the jamb. This corresponds to with the windows of the nave and S transeptal chapel.

The eastern tower arch remains but blocked. The arch is brought down on each side onto a moulded capital standing on a circular shaft which is bevilled off into a square at a few feet from the ground.

There are some fragments of windows & parapet built up within the arch. The North Aisle, or "Beckett aisle" is of three bays divided by buttresses - a door in westernmost bay on N side - Traces of a f large east window on E wall - There are also some fragments of windows from other places introduced here. The moulded basement of the east wall extends to the north side of the tower.

### Church (int)

The nave is now a farm-house & filled with rooms in two storeys.

The Beckett Aisle is a cider-cellar & also in two storeys.

The interior of the tower is in good preservation. At the angles are clustered piers, Perp., with good moulded bases & terminating in plain moulded capitals - from these spring four panelled arches & between these is a fine vaulted roof in Caen stone terminating in a centre tillet wh consists of a square enclosing a quatrefoil.

The South Wall of the transeptal Chapel has the blocked window. To the east it is much shattered - The west wall is occupied by the tower stair-turret

The north tower arch is blocked

There was evidently no north walk to the Cloister because (1) the windows were carried too low & (2) no remains exist of such an erection.

The Cloister measures ' ' from N to S ' ' from E to W [measurements blank in MS]

South of this wall is the probable site of the Refectory

This foliated 14th century door was probably the entrance to the Chapter-house

For section of moulded base see sketch of Aug 15 1881.

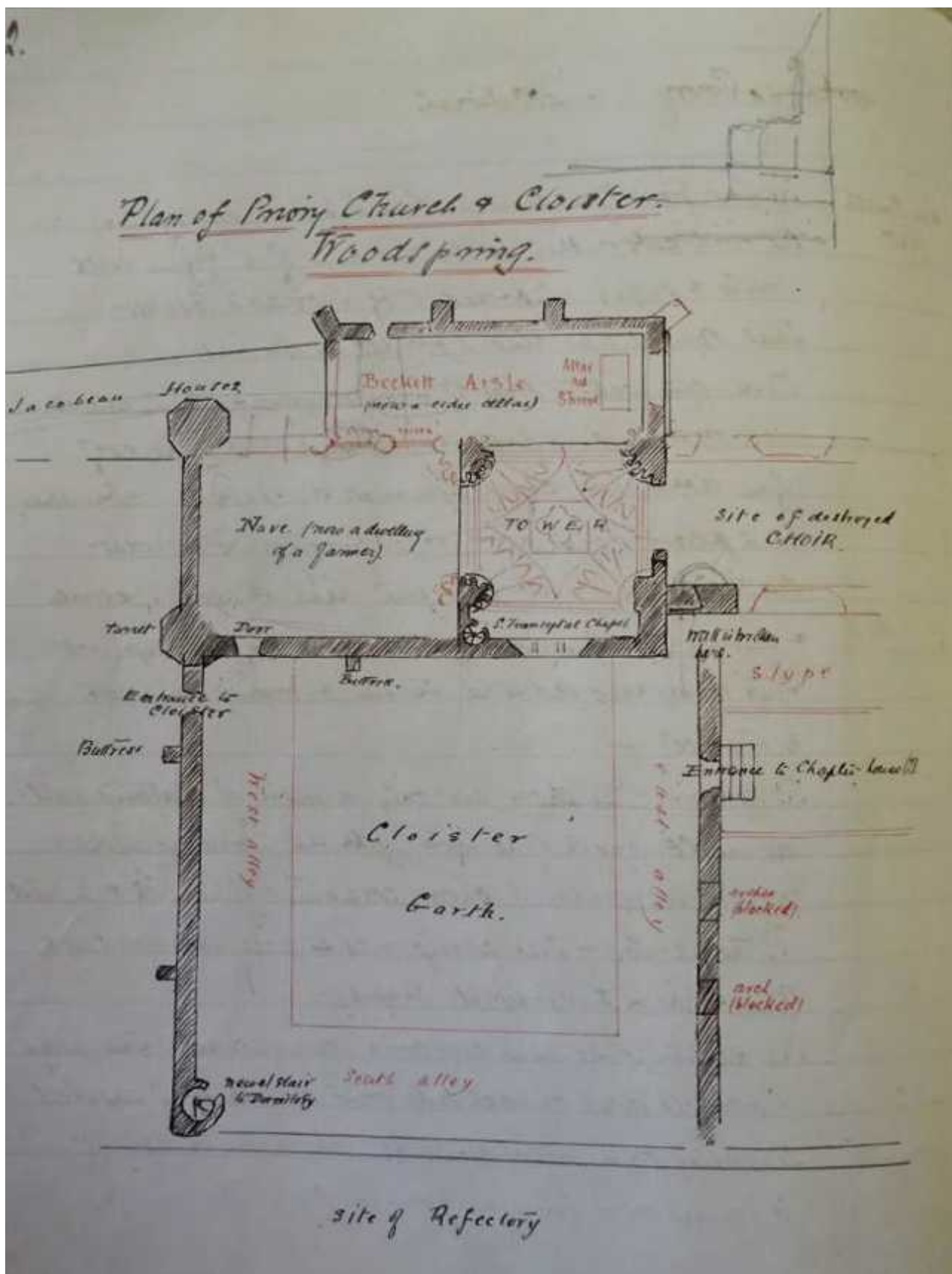


Fig 20: Page 2 of Paul's account: note pencil sketch of remaining fragment of choir south wall in the upper right: he records early (monastic) features in black, and later insertions in red.



The Beckett Aisle was 9 or 10 feet shorter to the west than the nave.

#### Cloister (int)

The cloister is on the south side of the nave.

The west wall has a perpendicular door at North end - Several put-log holes in the masonry - At the south-west corner is the remnant of a winding newel stair wh led to the dormitory & is entered under a moulded doorway. There is a projecting corbel stone on the left of the entrance - the wall had a moulded top.

The South wall is destroyed

The east wall remains tolerably perfect. On It is pierced by three arches. The two southernmost are plain - the north is almost perfect & is of 14th cent (Dec) date. It has a cinquefoiled head in a moulded hood-mould. It has continuous imposts & is constructed of freestone (?). The wall is broken between this & the choir. Note. The wall of the cloister goes up to the first choir window and not the tower chapel.

ext. [of cloister]

The west wall is supported by buttresses & a gargoyle remains near the NW entrance. The wall has a moulded basement.

In the east wall the arches show through although blocked.

#### The Friars hall (Ext)

The "Friars hall (so-called) is a rectangular building of the 16th century at the Sth corner of the cloister court & standing some little distance from it.

The north wall has two two-light windows each light cinquefoiled. To the east of this are traces of a large entrance door with rough projecting walling on one side & a gable over it. At the north west corner is a projecting piece of walling wh reaches about half way up the wall. At the bottom almost on a level with the ground is the head of a doorway. Note. This is not in a line with the lowest of the three arches in the cloister court.

The west wall is in good preservation. Below is a moulded entrance doorway with square dripstone terminations. Above this is a gable of nearly the same pitch as the roof but wh is on the north side broken off & continued with the same pitch a little bit below. Over this gable is a short window (the sill of which is cut by the gable) of the same pattern as those on the north side.

#### Notes

Dimensions of "Friars Hall"

	ft.	in	
Length	48	7½	[14.82m]
Breadth	25	7	[7.80m]
Width of large entrance	6	0	[1.82m]

Height of large entrance; Height of hall to apex of roof; Height of door on west side - [all blank]

Width of door on west side	4	2	[1.27m]
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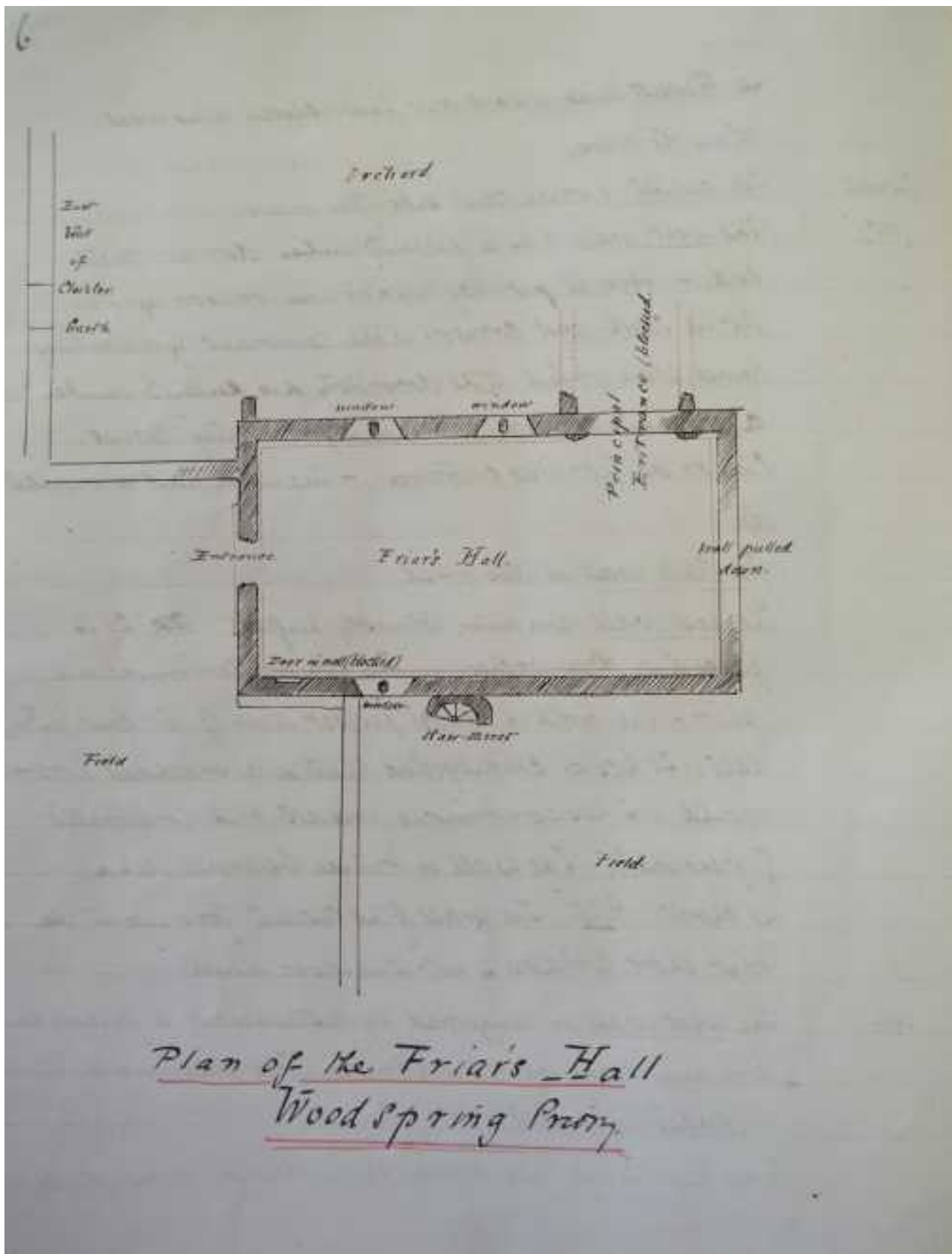


Fig 21: Page 6 of Paul's account. The building depicted is the Infirmary, then known as the 'Friars Hall'. Note the stair turret in the south wall is shown standing proud of the wall by Paul: does this reflect a genuine change in the wall since 1885, or is it a simple mistake?

[Page 8 cont]

Notes. From the height of walling at NW corner some high wall must have run North - A high building could not have been under & against the north wall of the "Hall" because the window-sills are too low down. However either a path or a low building did extend along there as the remains of a low door at the NW corner shows. A range of building also ran from the great N entrance as is shown by the gable. For a similar reason a building ran west from the "Hall" & most likely connected it with the building on the S side of the Cloister court - perhaps the Refectory.

[Page 9] [DSC00656]

The south wall - Opposite the W window on N side is a similar window on S side with weather mould. To the east of this all the remains of a circular stair wh reaches within a very short distance of the roof. Although built against the wall of the "Hall", it is not built into it at all. There are a few fragments of stairs at the bottom.

To the west of the above mentioned window some modern walling has been erected wh increases the height width and causes a slight projection. There is a modern opening further east than the stair turret.

The east wall is rebuilt & partly open.

Friars Hall (interior)

The roof of the Hall is in very fine preservation & is constructed of oak & open to the timbers.

The north wall At the east are the remains of the large entrance. More can be seen inside. It consists of a moulded archway, Perp. with continuous imposts. The two windows on the north side have deep inner splays.

The west has the door and window as on outside.

The South Wall. There are no traces of any door at the bottom of the wall behind where the ext stair is. The wall is perfectly plain up to the 2-light window.

[Page 10] [DSC00658]

Notes

There is no sign of a door at bottom of the newel stairs. On the east side it does not open into the Hall. Therefore it must have been open either to the south or west, and buildings must have adjoined on these sides.

The Perp door on the SW corner of the "Hall" led to some building on the south side - All traces are hidden by the modern walling outside.

[Page 11] [DSC00660]

However between this window & the SW corner is a Perp doorway some few feet from the ground wh led to some building now destroyed and wh is masked on the outside by the modern piece of walling before mentioned.

The entrance to the Priory is early Decorated with two arches (one for carriages & the

other for pedestrians). Arches have simple mouldings & continuous imposts. Inside is a piece of moulded stone apparently from some window-head. Close to these entrances are two projections with sculptured fragments. There are two shields (1) with the Five Wounds & (2) a chev between 3 bugle horns [---] & a crescent, for a difference. Place on the chevron, over (1) is a figure head of Norman date wh was found at St Thomas Head close to the Priory (on the north side of the hill projecting into the channel). The Barn is of two storeys & is situated on the NW of the Priory Church. It has a projecting entrance & buttresses divide off the bays.

R W Paul  
Aug 16/81

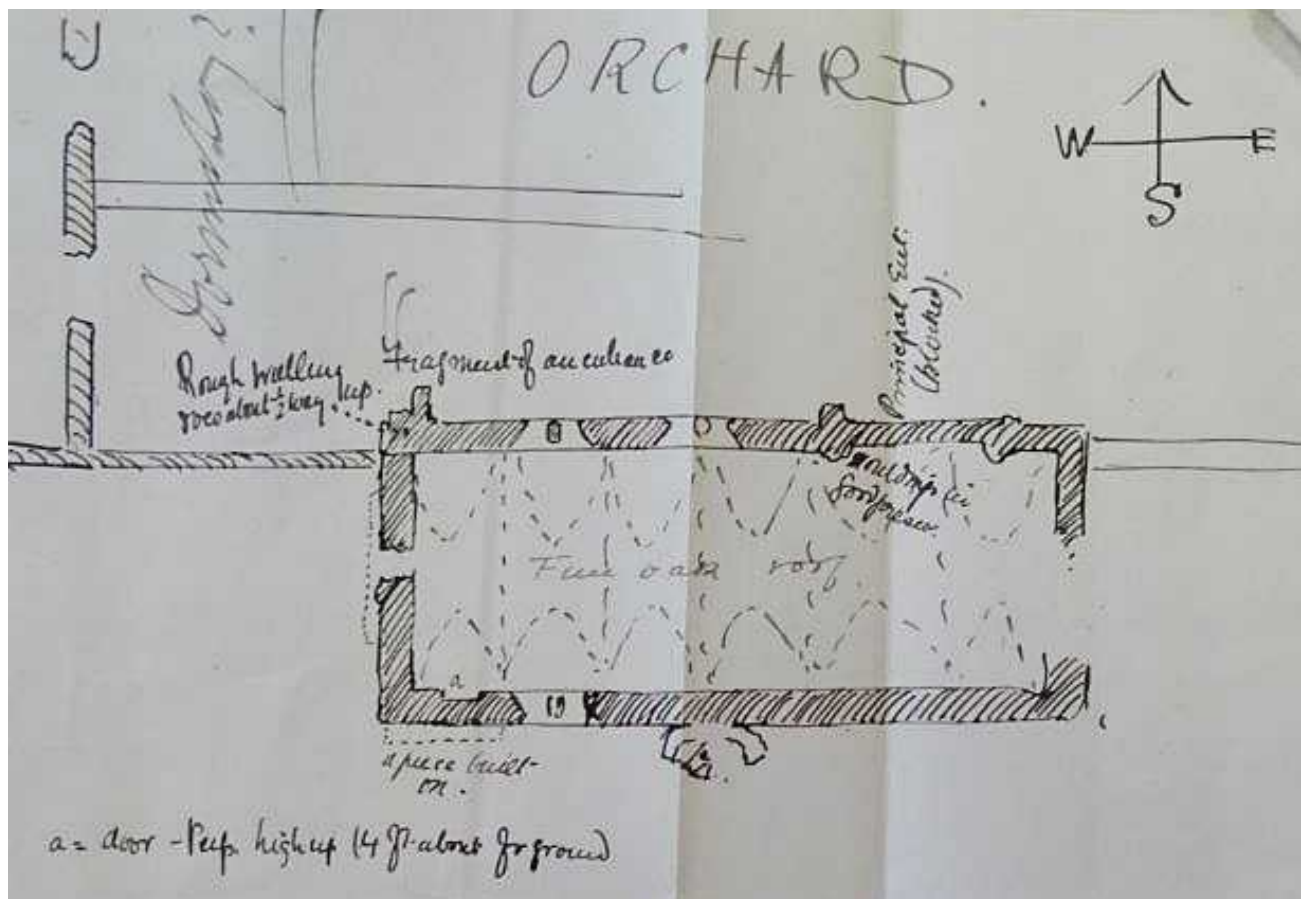


Fig 22: Field sketch of Friars Hall, (not from the above notes) showing the openings in 1881 and also clearly showing the spiral staircase in the south wall standing completely proud of it.



## The 'Woodspring Hospitall'

In the Seaboard of Mendip (1915), F A Knight, a local historian who wrote extensively on local history, quotes Churchwardens accounts from local parishes regarding accounts for monies expended to support a local hospital.

Knight quotes from several parishes, including ones some distance from Woodspring, such as Puxton and Brean.

His quotes are as follows:

Banwell (pp 445-6) : *The Hospital so often referred to in the Churchwardens Accounts of various parishes in the District was at Woodspring, as has already been pointed out.*

*1712. It' paid the Hospitall money for three quarters of a yeare* 00-15-04

*1731 Pd. the hospitall the year* 01-00-00

*Spent at paying it several times* 00-01-09

Brean: (pp295-6): *The first page of the book of Churchwardens Accounts is headed 'Robert Chaplain's disbursements for the Church and Ospitall for the parrish of Brean for the year 1727', and the first entry is of the contribution to the hospital, which as already noted, was established at Woodspring:*

*It. pd. the 4 quartrs Ospitall* 00-13-00

Hutton: (p374): *The Churchwardens Accounts begin in 1725, and from that year until 1734, when such entries cease, payments were made on behalf of a hospital, probably at Woodspring:-*

*1725 Paid the Hospitall money* 1-4-0½

Locking: (p394): *In this book also we find allusion to the Woodspring Hospital:-*

*1654. Impt. for hospitall and maymed souldiers for one wholle yeare*  
10s 8d

Puxton: (p222): *There are several allusions in the Accounts both of the Churchwardens and of the Overseers from 1655 to 1734, when the payments ceased, to contributions to a hospital - no doubt the one which is said to have been established at Woodspring Priory, after the dissolution of the monasteries:-*

*1665. Itm. Paid to the Hospitall and maymed Souldiers at Twelfth tide*  
00-10-07

*1673. I crave allowance for not paying the hospitall rat the time that it was dew at Crismus*  
0-04

Weston-super-Mare (p98): *..five years later, a rate was levied 'after ye proportion of 1s 6d ye pound for ye relief of ye poor maimed Souldiers Hospital and other necessarys'. All the parishes in the district contributed to the support of this hospital, which, as is shown by an entry in the Kewstoke accounts was in Woodspring, probably in the Priory.*

(pp163-4): *Perhaps the most interesting entries in the whole set of books are those which*

*relate to Woodspring. There has always been a tradition in the district...that after the espulsion of the Friars (sic), the Priory was used for a time as a hospital. There are many allusions in the Churchwardens Accounts of neighbouring parishes to contributions to some hospital, which is further described, in some cases, as for 'Maimed Soldiers', but there appeared to be no evidence to connect this institution with the Priory. Mr Ernest E Baker, however, found in the Kewstoke records, these two entries, which while they do not name the Priory, go far to support the tradition:-*

*1722. It. year allowance for Woodspring Hospitall 0-05-0*

*1725. It. year's allowance for Woodspring Hospitall 0-05-0*

*The payments have not been traced later than the year 1734, when it is supposed that the hospital was given up*

*Worle: (p245): Worle, like other Mendip parishes, contributed to the Woodspring Hospital for 'Maimed Soldiers':-*

*It. paid the Ospital for the year '97 00-01-08*

Quite clearly, there is indication of a 'hospital for maimed soldiers' at Woodspring, funded by contributions from local parishes: quite how distant the subsidy was paid, is not at present known.

Looking at the detailed payments from the parish of Puxton (over the years 1665-1754 - D/P/pux 4/1/1), it is clear (see appendix) that the amount paid by the parish declined over the period of recorded payments (1665-1734):

1665	255d/year
1670-6	127.5d per half year i.e. 255 d/year
1677-83	192d/year
1684	164d/year
1686	168d/year
1688-93	164d/year
1693	168d/year
1694	164d/year then 64d/year
1695-1734	64d/year

It is impossible not to notice that all the totals are a multiplier of 8d (or close as makes no difference) and to wonder if the decline in payments is to reflect the number of patients being cared for in the hospital: was 8d per year perhaps the amount Puxton was supposed to pay per patient? In the total absence of administrative documents, this cannot be proved or otherwise.

Note:

11 years @ 256d	=	32x8
7 years @ 192d	=	28x8
11 years @ 164d	=	20.5x8 [perhaps 168d = 21x8]
40 years @ 64d	=	8x8

However, note that in Weston-super-Mare *a rate was levied 'after ye proportion of 1s 6d ye pound for ye relief of ye poor maimed Souldiers Hospital and other necessarys'.*

Other parishes clearly paid different sums: yearly amounts seem from Knight's account as

Banwell	1712	£00-19-02 (given that $\frac{3}{4}$ is £00-15-04) but
	1731	£01-00-00
Brean	1727	£00-13-00
Hutton	1725	£01-04-00½
Locking	1654	£00-10-08
Worle	1697	£00-01-08

The Worle total seems extraordinarily low.

### Where was the hospital?

As Knight points out, there are at least two entries in the Kewstoke Churchwarden's accounts (SHC D/P/kew/4/1/1) referring to 'Woodspring Hospital':

1722. It. year allowance for Woodspring Hospitall	0-05-0
1725. It. year's allowance for Woodspring Hospitall	0-05-0

but of course, Woodspring could be used of a fairly wide area of northern Kewstoke parish. However, Ernest Baker (Knight 1915) seems to have missed the Rates section of the accounts, where in 1719, the phrase

Fig 23: 'John Pigott Esqr for Woodspring for Hospitall - 00.05.0'

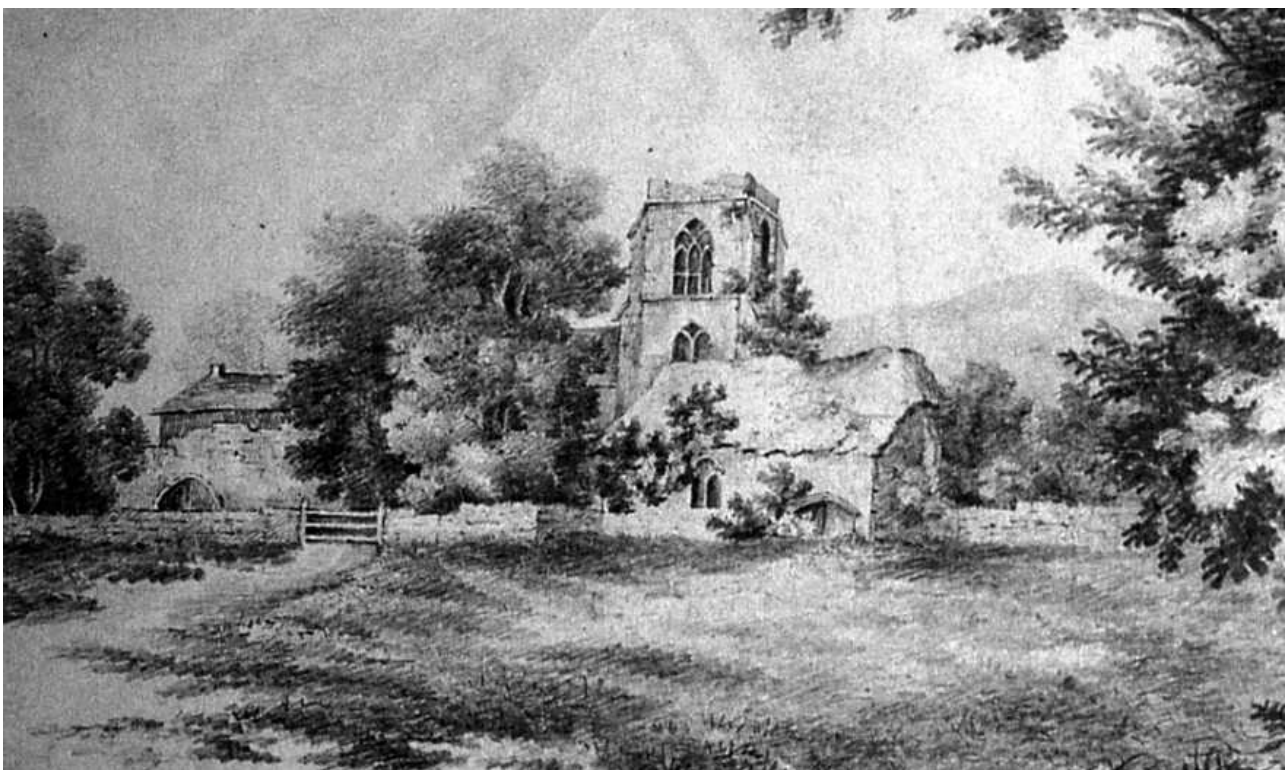
makes it clear that the part of Woodspring where the hospital stands is that owned by John Pigott.

According to the 1768 map (YCCCART 2021), Pigott owned the estate based on the Priory, and the area based around Collum Farm. It is highly likely that at least somewhere, the name Collum / Culm would be used, were the hospital to be sited there, but it never is.

This narrows the search down to the buildings of the Priory. It is always assumed that the building now known as the Infirmary, at the entrance to the Priory grounds, is the building used, although we have to be very careful not to be confused by the name.

Despite the known map of 1768 dating to only 30 years after the known end of the hospital in 1734, there is no clue from it as to where this hospital was sited.

Certainly, there is no traceable fireplace in the infirmary building, which one might expect in a hospital, but the building has undergone many changes both as a farm building, and by Landmark as part of restoration and reconstruction in and after the 1970s. The structure certainly shows no chimneys by the time of this 1818 drawing (Fig 24 below).



*Fig 24: The infirmary in 1818*

One slight possibility is that the hospital was in the 'vanished' building depicted on the 1768 plan of Woodspring Priory: with the end of the usage of the hospital in c1735, it would have no further active use, which may account for its loss not long after the Tithe Map of 1840.

The infirmary would, however, have the benefit of being next to a formal garden (YCCCART 2012) where recuperating soldiers might 'take the air': unfortunately, without knowing exactly what is meant by 'maimed' soldiers, and how severe their symptoms and injuries might be, little can be deduced of the day-to-day work of the hospital.





*Fig 25: The infirmary (A) and 'missing' building (B), possible sites for the hospital*

it is just possible that some of the 18th century finds from the moat site in the outer court are derived from the hospital site (YCCCART 2018), but in view of the extensive earthmoving at the site in the 1970s and 1991, their origin cannot be confirmed.

A final thought is to wonder how the hospital and a working farm so close together could co-exist: they do not seem obvious neighbours.

Further work on parish accounts continues, in the hope that some more clues to the hospital may emerge, but it is clear to say that to date, no one building has shown any convincing evidence that it was the hospital building.

### Appendix 3 Puxton payments 1665-1734

D/P/pux 4/1/1 Mentions of the Hospital in Puxton churchwardens accounts  
[DSC01085-DSC01216]

?1665

Imprimis Paid a yeeres pay to the Hospitale	01-01-03
---------------------------------------------	----------

1668

It. paid the Hospitall	01-01-03
------------------------	----------

1670

It. paide Mr Simons for the Hospitall due at midsomer	10s-07ob
-------------------------------------------------------	----------

It. paide Mr Jarman for the Hospitall due at Cristtide	10s-07ob
--------------------------------------------------------	----------

No 1671 account

1672

It paide the Hospitall to John Beard due at Midsumer	10s 07ob
------------------------------------------------------	----------

It paide Robart Merrick the Hospitall due at Christmas	10s 07ob
--------------------------------------------------------	----------

1673

It. Paide the Hospitall <del>not</del> due at midsumar	10s 07ob
--------------------------------------------------------	----------

It. paide the Hospitall due at Crismas	10s 07ob
----------------------------------------	----------

1674

Itm paide Mr Shallmoore the Hospitale due at midsumare	10s-07ob
--------------------------------------------------------	----------

Itm paide the Hospitall due at Crismas	10s-07ob
----------------------------------------	----------

1675

It. paide the hospitall	01-01-03
-------------------------	----------

1676

Itm. paid the Hospitall for the wholle yeare	01-01-03
----------------------------------------------	----------

1677

Itm. paid Mr Merrell ye years hospitall	00-16-00
-----------------------------------------	----------

1678

Itm. paid ye ospitals due At Midsumer	00-08-00
---------------------------------------	----------

Itm. paid the ospitals due at Chrismas	00-08-00
----------------------------------------	----------

1679

Itm. pd ye ospitals dew at midsum'	00-08-00
------------------------------------	----------

Itm pd ye ospitals dew att Crismus	00-08-00
------------------------------------	----------

1680 & 1681 No mention

1682

Itē paid one Half yeares Ospitall Ended At midsummer to Mr Shepard  
00-08-00

Itē pd ye Hospitall dew att Crismas  
00-04-00

1683

Itē pd Mr ffry 3 quarters Hospitalls  
00-12-00

Itē pd Mr galton one quarters Hospitall deaw At Christms  
00-04-00

1684

pd the hospitall for halfe a yeares pay  
00-06-10

1685

Impms pd the hospitall  
00-14-00

It. pd for tacking of the retaining the hospitall  
01-00-00

It. paide for Riding to bath sessions about the hospitall  
00-03-08

1686

It. Pd the hospitall  
00-03-06

It. pd the hospitall  
00-03-06

It. pd two quarters hospitall  
00-07-00

1687

It. pd a yearese Hospitall  
00-14-00

1688

It. pd one qter for hospitall  
00-03-05

It. pd a quarters hospitall  
00-03-05

It. pd quarters hospital  
00-03-09

1689

It. paid A quarters hospitall  
00-03-05

It. I spend when I Carried in ye hosp.  
00-00-03

It. paid A quarters hospitall  
00-03-05

It. my expence when I pd in ye hospit  
00-00-06

It. pd aquarters hospitall  
00-03-05

It. my expence to carrie it in  
00-00-06

It pd A quarters hospitall  
00-03-05

It. my expence to carrie it in  
00-00-06

1690

It. payd three quarters of a years hospitall and maymed souldier money ending at  
Christmas  
00-10-03

It. for my expences when Carryed in the hospitall  
00-01-00

It pd a quarter hospitall  
00-03-05

1691		
pd 4 q'ters Hospitall @ 3s 5d a pay comes to		00-13-08
1692		
It. pd a years hospitall money & in expences		00-14-00
1693		
It. pd a years hospitall		00-13-08
It spent in Carrying in of ye hospitall		00-00-04
1694		
pd Mr Ricketts a quarter of a years Hospitall due at Midsummer		00-03-05
pd Mr Ricketts a quarter of a years Hospitall Due at Michaelmas		00-03-05
pd Mr William Jacob a quarter of a years Hospitall due at Christmas		00-01-04
pd Mr William Jacob a quarter of a years Hospitall due at our Lady Day 95		00-01-04
spent at sev'all times when I Carryed in the Hospitall money		00-01-00
1695		
paid Mr William Jacob the two first payments of osp muneys		00-02-08
paid thomas Leveredg ye two last payments of ospetal m'		00-02-08
1696		
I spent at 4 severall times paying in of the ospetall moneys		00-00-08
pd Thomas Leveradg ye Ospetall dew at midsummer		00-01-04
1696b		
pd Tho Leveredge ye ospetal dew at mickel mos		00-01-04
pd the Ospetal dew at Crismas		00-01-04
It spent when I paid the ospetal [---]		00-00-08
1697		
It pd for a yeares Hospitall		00-05-04
It spent in Carrying itt in		00-00-08
1698		
Item paid ye ospateal for the whole yeare		00-05-04
It spend at Carin it in		00-00-08
1699		
It paid for a yeares Hospitall		00-05-04
It spent att the paying of itt in		00-00-06



1700	
Item pd the hospatal for a whole yeare	00-05-04
Item spent at in of the hospatal	00-00-10
1701	
It. pd ye years ospitall money	00-05-04
1702	
Pd ye years ospitall	00-05-04
1703	
paid for a years ospetall	00-05-05
1704	
paid for the whole yeare for the ospell	00-05-04
1705	
It. pd 4 quarters Hospitoll	00-05-04
1706	
It pd half a yeares hospeitall & spent	00-03-02
It pd Mr Haine ye last years half yeares Hospitall and for ye returne	00-03-06
It pd Mr Haine ye quarterly hos/pitall fore midsomer 1707	00-01-04
It for carrying in the Hospitall and County Bridge money	00-01-00
No account for 1707	
1708	
Pd Mr Grimstead ye Hospitall money and spent	00-10-09
for carrying of it in	00-00-08
Pd ye Hospitall	00-02-10
It pd ye Hospitall money	00-01-04
It pd ye Hospitall money	00-01-04
It pd the Hospitall mony	00-01-04
It pd Hospitall mony	00-01-04
It. for carrying in the Hospitall money two yeares	00-01-04
No accounts for 1709-10	
1711	
It paid ye Hospitall mony 4 times	00-05-04
1712	
pd in part for the Hospitall	00-01-04

1713	
It pd the Hospitall for the last year	00-01-04
It pd the Hospitall for this yeare	00-01-04
It pd ye Hospitall money	00-01-04
It pd the Hospitall mony	00-01-04
It Pd ye Hospitall mony	00-01-04
It for carrying in ye Hospitall	00-00-08
1714	
Itm pd the years Horspetol	00-05-04
Pd for Carrying it in	00-00-08
1715	
Itm pd a years Hospetol	00-05-04
Itm for Carrying in ye horspetel	00-00-08
1716	
It Pay'd one Quarters Hospetal at misamur	00-01-04
It Payd one Quarters Hospetal at mikelmus	00-01-04
It Pd ye Hospetal mony at Crismus	00-01-04
It Pd ye Hospetal	00-01-04
1717	
It pd the whole years hospetal	00-05-04
It Spent when I payd in ye hospetal	00-00-08
1718	
Itm pd the yeare of Hospetol	00-05-04
Itm Spent when the Hospetol was paid in	00-01-02
Itm for Carrying in ye hospetol	00-00-08
1719	
It pd the Hospitall mony two quarters	00-02-08
Pt for carrying in the hospitall	00-00-08
1720	
It paid the yeares Hosepitall	00-05-04
It for carrying in the Hospital & Spent	00-01-04
1721	
It pd half a yeares Hospitall	00-02-08
It Spent at ye Same tyme	00-00-06
It paid the Hospitall	00-01-04
It for carrying in ye Hospitall	00-00-08
1722	
it paid half a yeares Hospitall	00-02-08
It paid half a year Hospitall	00-02-08

It for Carrying in ye Hospitall	00-00-08
No account for 1723	
1724	
Itm pd the yeares hospetol	00-05-04
Item for Carrying in ye hospetol	00-00-08
1725	
Itm paid three quarters hosspetolls	00-04-00
Itm for Carring in the hospetoll	00-01-00
1726	
Itm paid four Quarters ospetol	00-05-04
Itm for Caring in the Hospetoll	00-01-00
1727	
Itm paid four Quarters Ospetel	00-05-04
Itm for Caring in ye County Stok and ospetel	00-02-00
1728	
Imp's	
paid a years Hospitall	00-05-04
Itt for paying of ye hospitall & County Stock moneys	00-02-00
1729	
Itt pd half a years hospital & spent at ye same time	00-03-00
Itt pd half a years hospitall & spent at ye same time	00-03-02
Itt for Carring of ye Hospital	00-01-00
1730	
It. pd ye Hospitall Money & Expence	00-03-04
It. pd ye Hospitall Money & Expen	00-03-04
It for Carring ye Hospitall Money	00-01-00
1731	
It pd ye Hospitall & County bridg Money	00-10-00
1732	
It pd ye Hospitall money for half a year & spent	00-05-06
It paid half a years Hospital & spent at ye same time	00-03-02
1733	
It. pd 4 Quarters Hospital &	00-05-04
spent at paying ye money	00-01-06

1734

It pd 4 Quarters Hospitall

00-05-04

It for my Journeys to pay ye same

00-02-00

1735 onwards: no entries for hospital.

Note (2024)

References to payments to or through individuals are intriguing. They seem to be relevant for the second half of one year, and the first half of the next. Those referred in the Puxton rates are:

1670	Mr Simons	Mr Jarman
1672	John Beard	Robart Merrick
1674	Mr Shalmoore	
1677	Mr Merrell	
1683	Mr ffry	Mr Galton
1694	Mr Ricketts	Mr William Jacob
1695	Mr William Jacob	Thomas Leveredg(e)
1696	Thomas Leveredge	
1706	Mr Haine	
1708	Mr Grimstead	

These names are presumably those of officials of the hospital: were they sited at Woodspring?

And from 1696 onwards, there are frequent references to a few pence for expenses at 'carrying in' the hospital money: this presumably was maintenance money for physically carrying the money to the hospital.



## Two aborted schemes for Woodspring and Sand Point

The Victorian period (and especially the late Victorian period, when Imperial *chutzpah* was at its height, under the great Queen and Empress) was a time of many abortive schemes for developments which never bore fruit (the possible harbour at Brean Down, which never materialised, and which was indirectly responsible for the rough track that runs behind and west of Ellenborough Crescent in Weston, originally reserved for a railway to the new docks, and never subsequently surfaced, is a good example locally).

What is less well known is that some of these (madcap) schemes could have affected Woodspring / Sand Point / Sand Bay.

The *South Wales Daily News* of 07 February 1887, for example, has the following article:

*'The Bristol Mercury states that a scheme is being privately promoted to construct docks near Weston-super-Mare. The hill extending from Woodspring Priory to Sand Point forms a natural breakwater. On the Kewstoke side of this promontory it is proposed to construct docks and connect the same with the railway system via Puxton station. The estimated cost is by no means gigantic, and moreover, it is not proposed to place the share list in the market. The reason, we understand, for this site is that it is in a direct line with New York; that off the point is the deepest water in the channel, and that mail steamers would be able to accomplish the distance between England and America in something like one day less time than from any*



Fig 26: The site for proposed docks, 1877, as it is today

*other point - certainly an item of considerable importance to those who contract for the transit of mails. The site named has been officially inspected, and those having an interest in adjacent property consulted with the result that the proposal is promised a cordial support'.*

At which we pause for a sharp intake of breath. If this scheme had been successful, like a new Avonmouth, the potential for 'development' in the area would have been immense, with eventually huge railway and road developments (?and possibly heavy bombing in WW2), and a very different alternative history for Weston-super-Mare.

Obviously, nothing came of this grandiloquent scheme.

The fashion for proposed major developments did not go away with the 19th century.

The *Bristol Times and Mirror* of 9th April 1927 announced:

*'The transit facilities, which an era of cheaper motor cars makes easier each succeeding year, give some hope for the realisation of a scheme to develop the district around Woodspring Priory...Major Vernon Hill, who left...Langford for Woodspring Priory...with a successful dairy farm...believe that the Woodspring estate is rapidly maturing for residential development.*

*The Woodspring promontory [Sand Point] is of far larger extent than generally believed...[and]...is one of the few remaining slopes undeveloped in the West of England...motoring of the future should be drawn with the improved road access which is already promised by the Clevedon-Worle road scheme.*

*A London syndicate [of course - VR] have recently viewed the estate with a favouring eye...the attraction would be bungalows...Possibly the ancient Priory might be given a utilitarian value by being developed into a hotel...if the GWR would imitate the LMS in developing an estate within an easy run of London, Woodspring would quickly become a pleasure haunt...'*

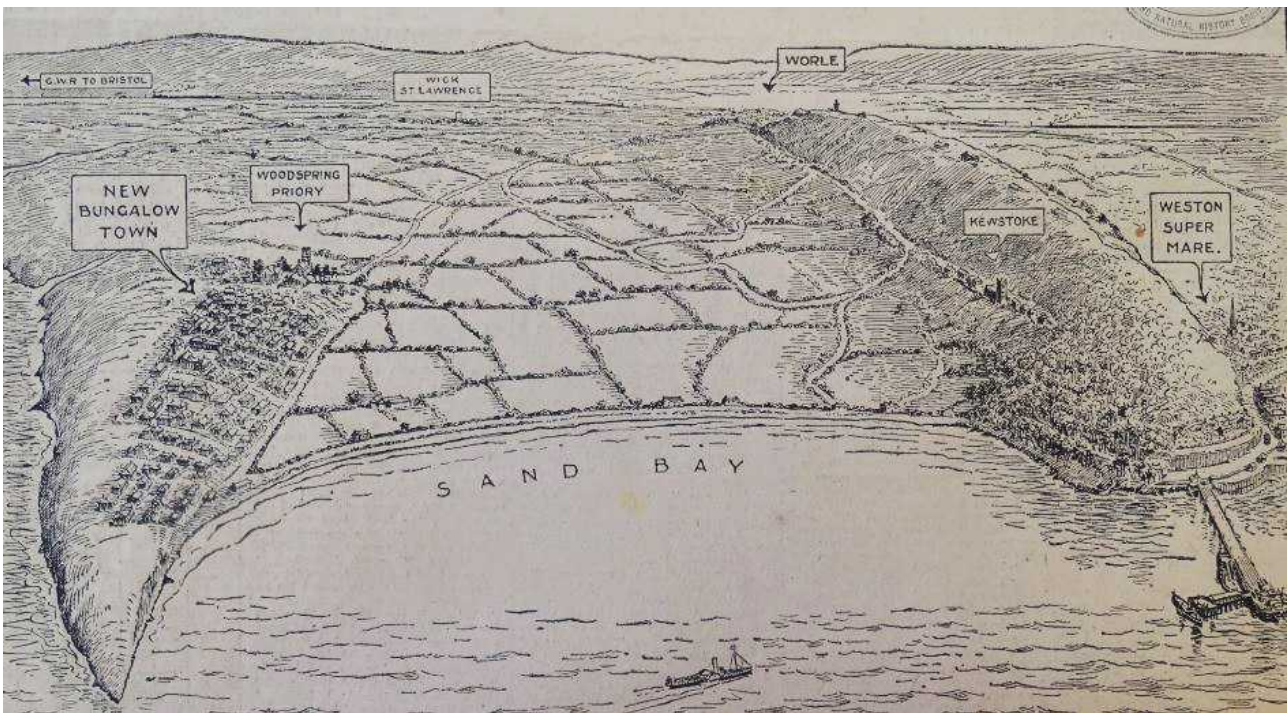
The proposal was pictured by the newspaper (Fig 27 below) showing a dense mass of building stretching from the Priory as far as the Castle Mound on Sand Point, labelled ominously 'New Bungalow Town'.

New roads stretch from Worle across Kewstoke Moor to the Priory, and north of Kewstoke village: you might ask that once this town was established, how long could it be before development spread along the sea front of Sand Bay.

Birnbeck Pier is included to help those unacquainted with Sand Bay to establish where the site is.

Luckily for the proposal, the previous idea for commercial docks had not taken place.

Sometimes we can be grateful for shortage of liquid assets for development proposals.



*Fig 27: Major Hill's proposed bungalow town at Sand Point*

## Recommendations for further work

Much work remains to be carried out at Woodspring. In particular, further work on local churchwardens accounts may help to elucidate details of the Woodspring 'Hospitall', and the gathering together of Major Hills archive (if any). Talks are progressing on publishing the Tomalin and Crook excavations from the early 1970s.

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## Date

St George's Day, 2024