

History



Find out about Woodspring Priory's past...



Hello! Welcome to Woodspring Priory, my name is Simon and I was a canon here nearly 900 years ago in 1220, just after the priory was built.

Fact:

A **Canon** is a sort of monk or holy man. No, not a big gun – that's a cannon!

The priory was built by a man called William de Courtenay. He felt bad because his grandad, Reginald Fitz-Urse was one of the four knights who killed Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1170. Silly Reg misunderstood King Henry II and was only trying to help. As punishment poor Reg was banished to the Holy Land never to be seen again. Cor – I wouldn't wish that on anyone, I hear they have dragons out there.

It worked out well for us though – if Reg hadn't killed Thomas Becket there wouldn't be a priory here.

I was part of a group of **canons** called the **Victorine Order**. We lived a very simple life. We got up at 2am for morning prayer in the church and went to bed at 7pm. I hated getting up at 2am - too dark and spooky!

Thank goodness we didn't have to pray all day like other monks. We got to go out and farm the land. We grew all sorts of crops – I loved it when it was autumn and all the apples were on the trees. We had apple cake or pie every night. Mmmm. I swear people pretended to be sick so that they could stay in our infirmary (that's what you'd call a hospital) and be given apple cake!

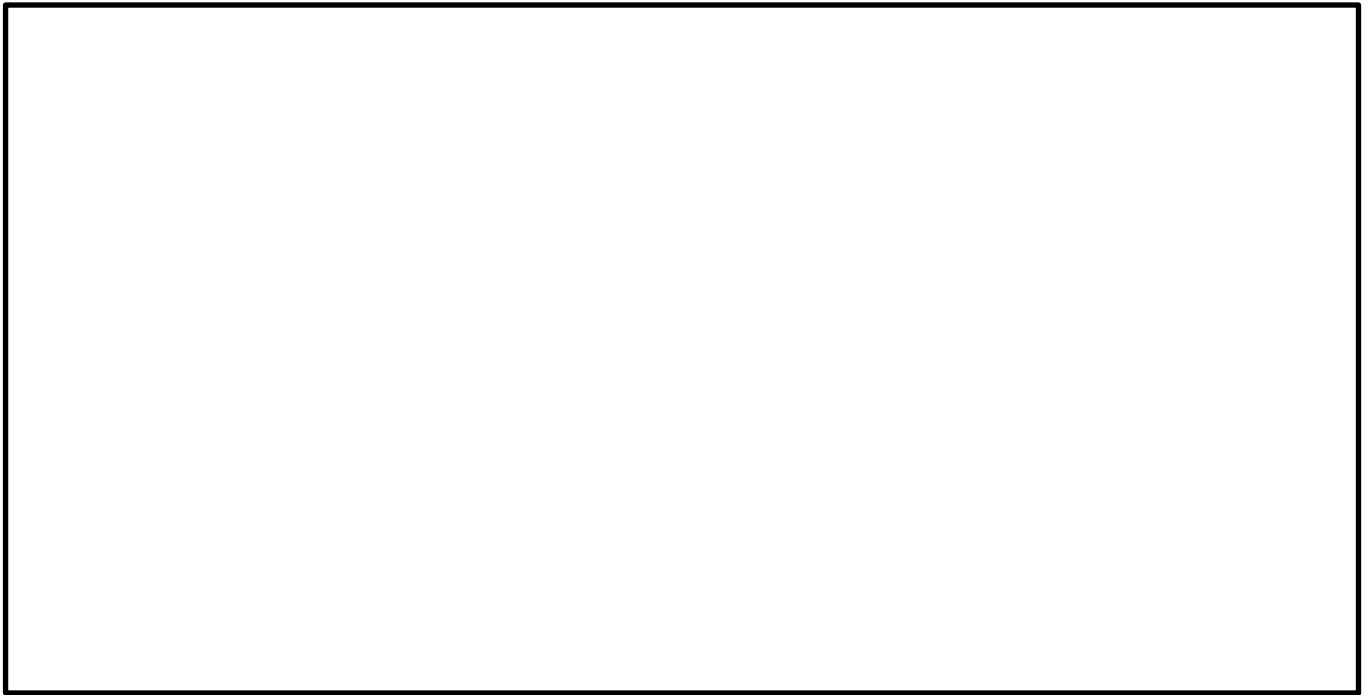
Fact:

Canons of the Victorine Order were priests who followed religious rules written in a letter by St. Augustine of Hippo in around 400 AD.





One night all the sheep escaped from the field. What a nightmare, we woke up and couldn't find them anywhere. The monks and I all split up to look for them. I walked towards the sea and saw one of the sheep stranded on a broken wooden bridge on a big stream. I swear sheep must be the most stupid animals there are – it was just sat there not even trying to help itself. I jumped into the freezing cold stream and managed to carry the sheep on my back over the stream onto the grass. When I got back to the priory all the other monks had found their sheep easily – just my luck that I found the world's silliest sheep! In the box below draw me carrying the sheep over the stream.



Around 1530 King Henry VIII fell out with the Pope in Rome. Henry made himself the head of a new church called The Church of England. He made a law that there were to be no more monasteries and drove us out of Woodspring Priory! Imagine how horrid it was, to have your home taken away at the King's command. And then mostly knocked down. We lost lots all our treasures, and beautiful stained glass.



Woodspring Priory was given to a man called Edward Fettyplace – what a silly surname. I bet he made it up. Edward decided to build a house in part of the church, turning it into a big farmhouse and rented the priory and its lands to a farmer. Most of it fell into ruin.

This story has a happy ending though. In 1969 the priory was saved and repaired by the Landmark Trust so that you can be here today, enjoying a holiday in a little bit of my priory.

Unruly Rulers

Who were the Tudor and Stuart kings and queens?

This lot were a blood thirsty bunch, always chopping off heads. **Tudor** and **Stuart** are the family names of the kings and queens. The first Tudor was Henry VII in 1485 and they lasted till Elizabeth I. Then the Tudors' cousins, the Stuarts, ruled from James I to Anne.



King Edward VI

Henry VIII's only son, he had some big shoes (and clothes) to fill! King at nine and dead at 16. Poor Eddie.



Queen Mary I

Back to Catholics again. Bloody Mary was her name, burning Protestants was her game.



King James I

What a silly king, he kept thinking witches were trying to kill him! He even wrote a book on witches.



Oliver Cromwell

Not a king but still a ruler. He didn't like the royals and made himself Lord Protector of England. He didn't last too long.



King James II

A bit dim was this king. He tried to make everyone Catholic again, then ran away when they said no.



Queen Anne

A sickly queen who loved to eat!

1509

King Henry VIII

6 wives, only 1 son. Angry at the Pope horrible Henry made himself Head of the Church destroying all the Catholics churches.



1547

Lady Jane Grey

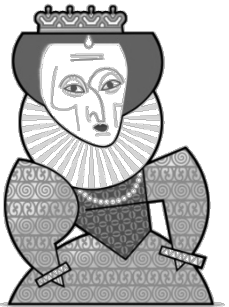
Only 16 when she became Queen for just 9 days before Mary Tudor took the throne. Off with her head!



1553

Queen Elizabeth I

Good Queen Bess knew leaving religion alone was best. (Unless the Catholics attacked!) Had lots of boyfriends but married none.



1158

1603

King Charles I

Bad King Charlie wanted to rule without Parliament. That started a civil war which he lost. Onto the block went Charlie's head. One chop and he was dead.



1625

1649

King Charles II

A merry monarch who brought back fun and games Oliver had banned!



1685

Queen Mary II & William III

She and her husband took her dad, James II's throne in the Glorious Revolution. Not so glorious for James.



1688

1702-1714



Meet King Henry VIII – who stopped Woodspring being a Priory



Hi Henry!

So when did you become king?

I became King on 21 April 1509 when I was 18.

What are you most famous for?

I had six wives – there is even a rhyme about them: Divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived!

What is your favourite thing to do?

I love hunting, jousting and tennis. Especially when there is a big feast afterwards.

What is the naughtiest thing you've ever done?

I made my own church because the Pope (he's the head of the Catholic church) wouldn't let me divorce my first wife. No one can tell me what to do!

Design



What does Woodspring Priory look like?

Can you walk all the way around it?

Can you use any of these words to describe the building? Draw a circle around the ones that do.

Does Woodspring Priory look similar to other buildings in the area?

Castle

Tall

Pretty

Industrial

Stone

Brick

Symmetrical

Home

Square

Elegant

Friendly

Low

Woodspring Priory was built around 1210. It was built as a home for Canons of the Victorine Order. The Priory was built here as it was a quiet area of the countryside where they could live a simple life working on the land, growing food, keeping animals and praying each day.

Woodspring probably only had 10 monks living here at one time. It was a priory for just over 300 years until Henry VIII said no one could be a catholic and the priory was turned into a farmhouse.

Fact:

Did you know that in 1895 a golf course was built at Woodspring Priory!

A surgeon called James Greig-Smith bought Woodspring Priory and turned it into a special member's golf club. There could only be 8 members at one time! All the land was turned into golf greens. After they'd all played golf, he hosted big dinners and meetings inside the priory buildings.





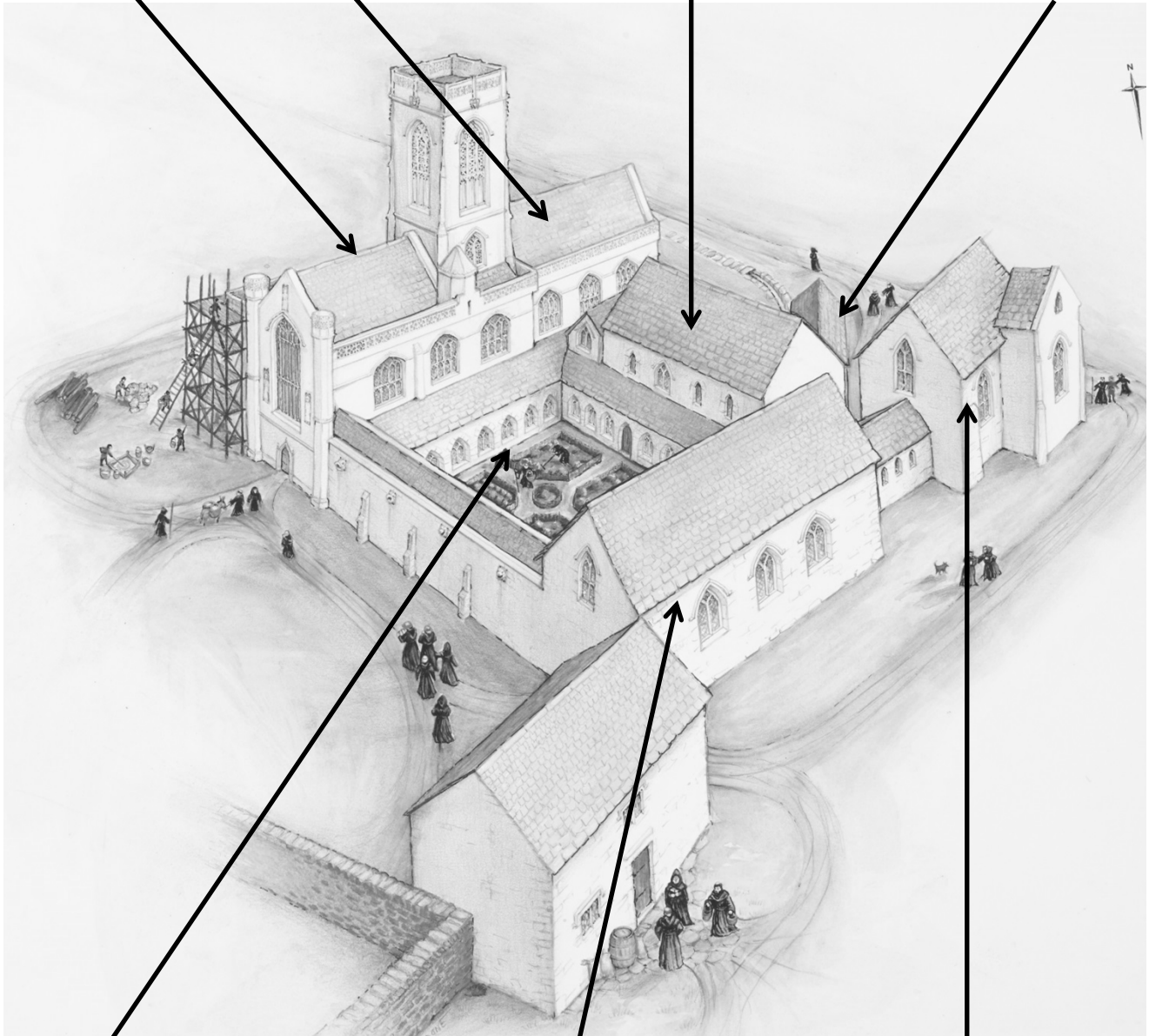
The picture shows how Woodspring Priory had other buildings around the church. The canons had everything they needed, almost like a small village, and lots of servants to help.

The **nave** is the main part of the church.

The **Chancel** is the most holy part, where the altar is.

The **Chapter House** was where the canons would meet to talk and decide things.

The toilet was called a **reredorter** (say 're-re-dor-ter'). It had a line of holes along the wall with no walls to separate them, the monks would all go together. Eww!



A **cloister** (say 'cloy-ster') is a large open space with covered walkways where the canons could sit and read.

The **refectory** was a hall where meals were served, like a school dining room.

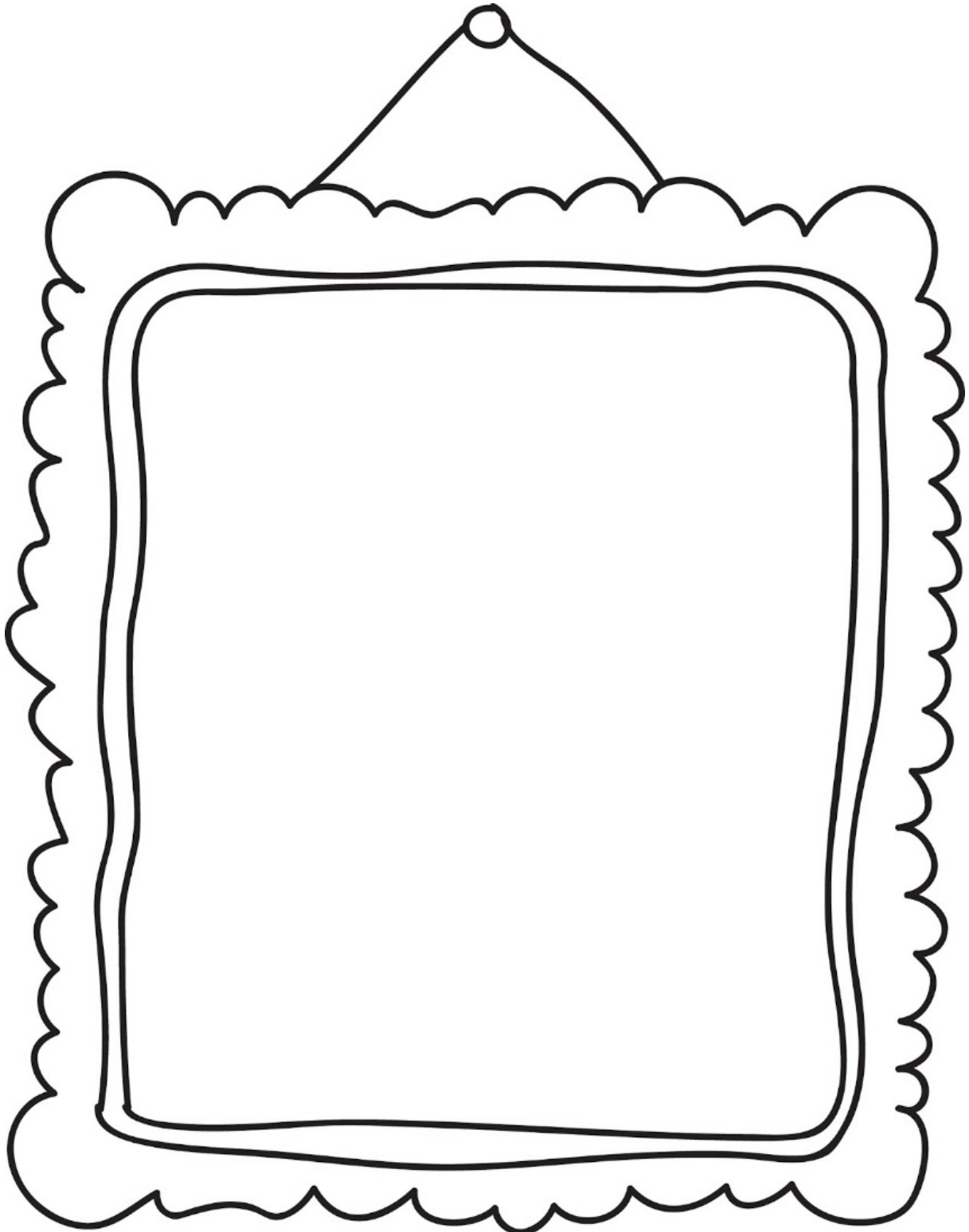
The **infirmary** was the hospital. It had lodging upstairs for the canons looking after the sick to sleep.



Buildings are quite easy to draw. They are usually made up from lots of geometric shapes, like squares, triangles and circles.

Choose a bit of Woodspring Priory and draw it in the frame. It could be the tower, or the bit where you are staying, or the infirmary...

Please tell an adult where you are going so they don't worry about where you are!





What is Woodspring Priory built from?

Fact:

Some buildings were built from stone that was dug out of the ground when farmers ploughed the fields, other buildings were made from stone that was dug out in a quarry and cut into neat shapes and sizes. There are still many stone quarries around the country today, where people get stone out of the ground.

Stone houses were once cheaper to build than brick ones. Once we could move bricks up and down the country on canals and railways, brick buildings become cheaper and more popular.

Stone is the solid foundation of the earth. It exists as huge mountains, rocks, stones or small pebbles washed smooth by water. There are lots of different types of stone, with different colours and textures. Some are better to build with than others.



In medieval and Tudor times stone was taken out of the ground by hand. Today, a quarry is a place where stone is blasted out of the ground with explosives! The one in the picture shows what quarries look like now.

People who work with stone are called stonemasons. They build walls, carve the stone into shapes or add patterns to its surface. Along the tower of Woodspring Priory the stone has been carved into shapes. Imagine how hard it was to carve the curves so neatly! They use a big hammer called a mallet and special tools called chisels to shape the stone.



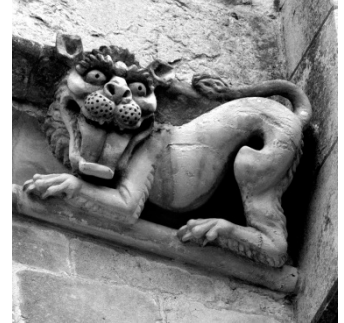
Mallet

Chisels



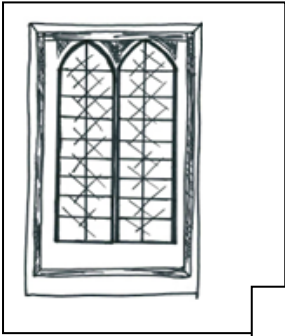


Sometimes stone masons carved faces and animals called gargoyles. You often find these in churches, up near the roof. If you look hard, you'll see a few at Woodspring, though the wind and the rain have worn away the details. Here are some examples. Have a go at designing your own gargoyle. Make it as ugly as you like!

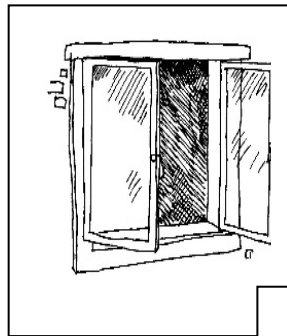




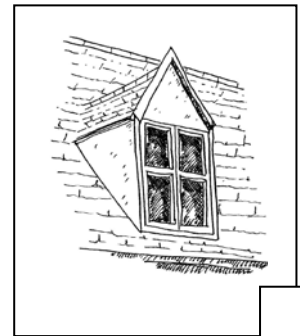
The size and shape of windows tells you a lot about the age and style of the building. What type of windows can you find at Woodspring Priory?



Pointed or Gothic

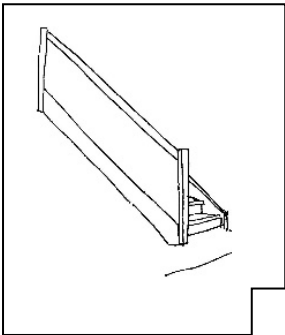


Casement (it opens)

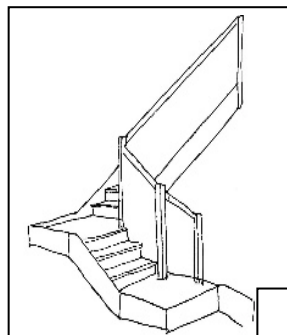


Dormer or attic (in the roof)

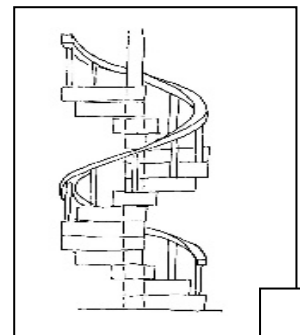
There are many different styles of staircases. Which style is closest to the staircase at Woodspring Priory?



Straight



Quarter turn



Spiral

Fact:

Have you noticed that spiral staircases go clockwise when you're going up and anti-clockwise when you're going down? Most people carry their sword in their right hand and if they were climbing the stairs to attack, they would be showing more of their body to the defender above them.

What other building materials can you find outside and inside Woodspring Priory?

Circle what you can see and note down where you found them.

Stone

Glass

Wood

Plastic

Metal

Clay

Brick

Concrete

Quest



Discover more about Woodspring Priory

Woodspring Priory has seen many changes since it was first built around 1210. That's nearly 900 years ago! During that time, many things have changed both inside and outside the building. Follow this Quest to discover more about it.

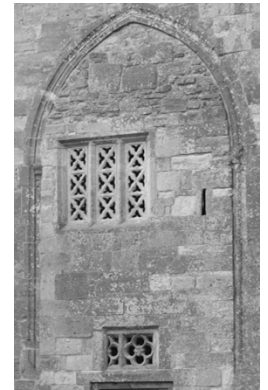
Can you find this outside? Clue: look up as you walk along the front garden path.

With the Dissolution of the Monasteries anything that was a Catholic symbol was attacked. This statue of a saint or bishop in the wall was attacked with hammers so you can't see who it is meant to be.



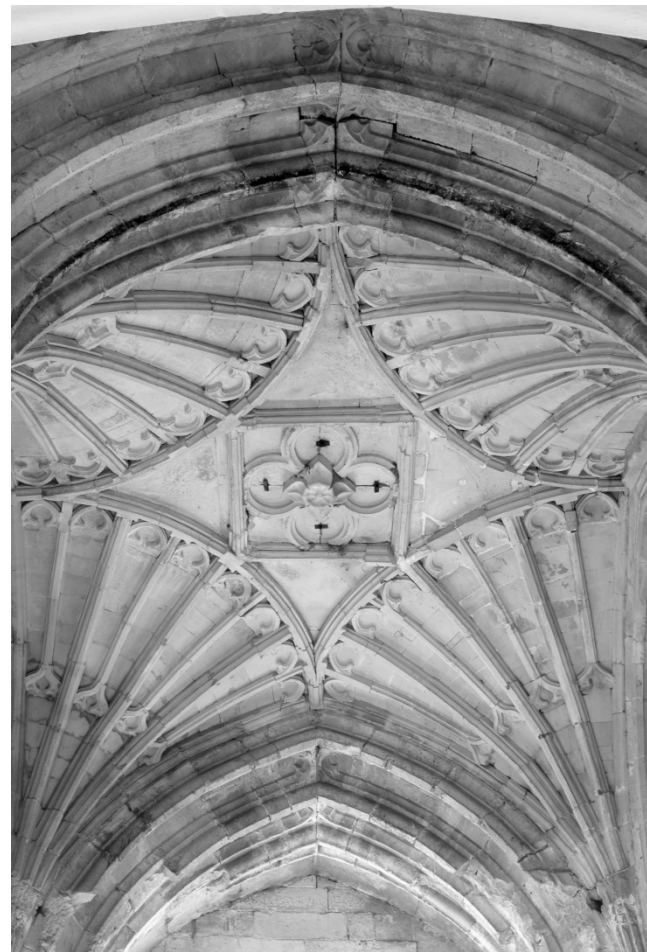
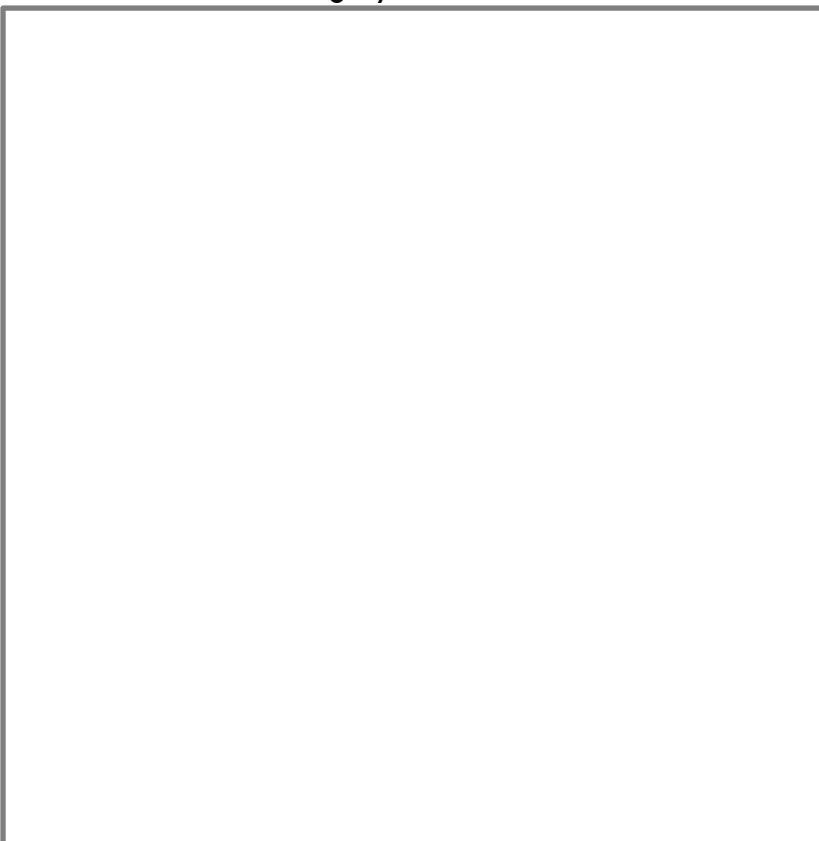
Can you find the blocked window?

Can you see the big arched outline; this was a big stained glass window when Woodspring was a priory. After it was smashed by Henry VIII's men, the next owner filled it in, re-using bits of the smashed up buildings. See how he re-cycled the priory windows?



Can you find this arched roof?

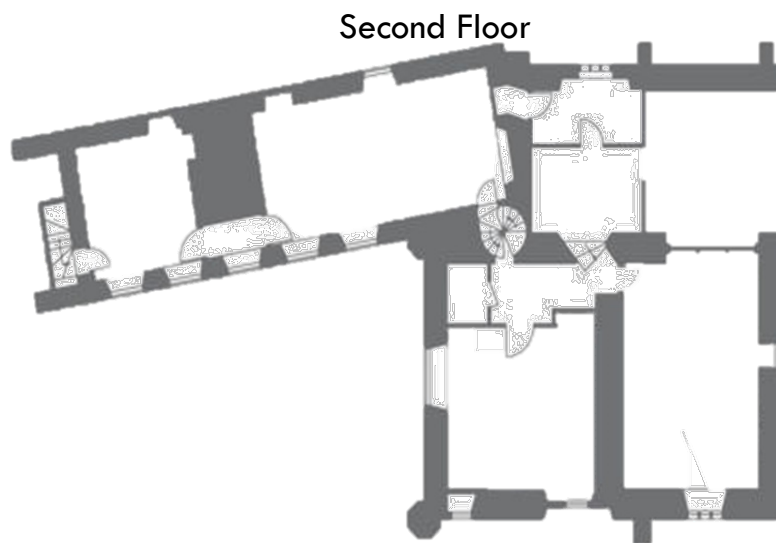
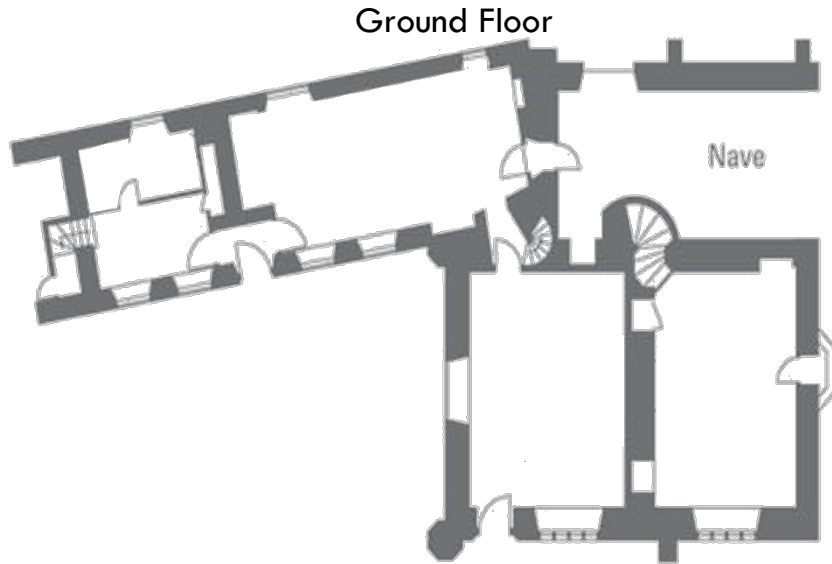
It is called a fan vault. Can you work out why?
In the box below design your own fan vault.





Living in Woodspring Priory

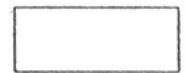
The floorplan of a building is a map of the rooms. Woodspring Priory has two floors. The plans below show you the shape of each room. Take a walk around and write on the plans what each room is used for.



We use these symbols to show where beds, tables and bathrooms are. Add the symbols on to the floorplans to show where the furniture is.



Bed



Rectangular (or a round) table



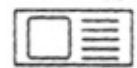
Bathroom



Cooker



Sofa



Kitchen sink



Can you find an example of each of these things inside Woodspring Priory. Describe, or draw the object when you find it.

Your favourite chair

The fireplace (is it an open fire or does it have a stove?)

The pattern of a rug on the floor

Fact:

In 1537 once King Henry VIII became head of the church, the Priory was closed. This was called the Dissolution of the Monasteries. It meant that all the monasteries in England and Wales had to be closed. The King grabbed all their land, buildings and treasure.

In the space below, draw the view from your bedroom window. What can you see in the distance? Are there any animals in the fields or any trees that look very old and interesting?



Can you answer these questions correctly?

1. What is a canon?

A musician

A type of priest

A detective

A soldier

2. What county is Woodspring Priory in?

Wiltshire

Devon

Somerset

Dorset

3. Which cathedral was Thomas Becket killed in?

Salisbury

Canterbury

York

St. Pauls

4. What did monks do most of the day?

Dance

Pray

Sing

Play games

5. Finish the name. St. Augustine of?

Zebra

Lion

Crocodile

Hippo

6. Which one of these materials was not used to make clothes in the medieval period?

Wool

Nylon

Linen

Silk

7. What year was Thomas Becket killed?

1321

1170

1650

450

8. Which one is not a group of monks or nuns?

Cistercians

Benedictines

Goths

Franciscans

9. What year did Henry VIII make it illegal to be Catholic?

1563

1536

1635

1363

10. What could monks not do?

Read

Write

Fight

Farm



Countryside Word Search

Now have a go at the countryside word search. When you were exploring the countryside around Woodspring Priory did you see any of these? The words to find are at the bottom of the page.

L P L K F X T A H K Y H W M A O J B O B
 N T Y I E L Z R A S D B W P F T K R Z Z
 G Q P T R K H U A D M X G W U L C A T E
 N Z H E N S A Q H C R Q A E R Z T C O L
 T E G G D A F F M G T H W L I B O F G U
 M P V D A I S Y B W Y O U B H T Y X X C
 L P A D E Q L A Z D F S R M T K O V G B
 J H O L L Y K T E E P V T A M T T D X C
 G R D S R J S D S H T T G R T R N C A K
 T U M Z V P D R U Z P E Y B E O K R T O
 Q K Z E Z K E H U G M H A E P A V I N L
 Y Y C Q H X W M C P B S T B I S M T J R
 H R A W P U C R E T T U B A P Z R W V I
 C W Z L T V B E Q I S O P K P O V E F I
 W N A I E R H E Y M E P L P O T H Z K G
 O X G I R S N P D L L P X R W O O O X R
 H N R A B U W C I E D H E D G E R O W M
 N H Y I B W W T Y W X X T I L A O V F L
 K C S W O C S I C C S X M G P K H Q J L
 G N U K R L X G M M I W L U M B R K R D

- | | | | |
|----------|---------|-----------|----------|
| HOLLY | OAK | FIELD | TRACTOR |
| HEDGEROW | BARN | SHEEP | COWS |
| HENS | APPLE | TREE | ROOK |
| STILE | DAISY | PHEASANT | FOOTPATH |
| POND | COTTAGE | BUTTERCUP | BRAMBLE |
| STREAM | | | |

How many of these words did you find? Put your score in the box.

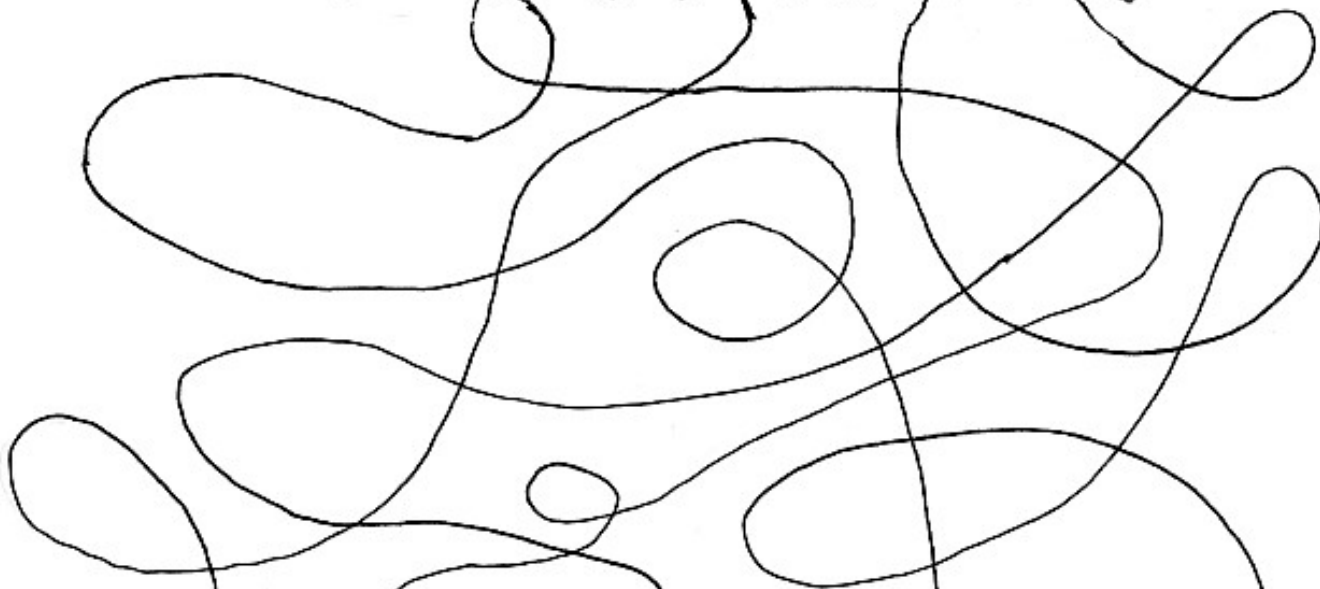
21



Who caught what?

Each object was an important part of a canon's life. Match the canon to the object.

1 2 3 4 5



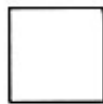
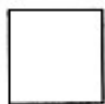
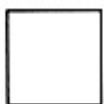
cup

candle

fish

bell

book



Did you match them all correctly? Put your score in the box.

/
5



Answer sheet:

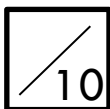
Quiz answers:

1. A type of priest
2. Somerset
3. Canterbury
4. Praying
5. Hippo
6. Nylon
7. 1170
8. Goths
9. 1536
10. Fight

Fact:

I bet you didn't know that there was a place called **Hippo!** In ancient times there were all sorts of funny names for places, Hippo is in Algeria in Africa. I wonder if there are lots of hippos there?

How many did you get right?



In the space below make your own Woodspring Priory quiz and test the adults! Remember to make it super hard!

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Illuminate a letter

Most people in the medieval times couldn't read and write. The canons could, and they recorded history in big beautiful books full of pictures and illuminated letters. Illuminated letters are when the first letter of a page or a paragraph is bigger and in colour while the rest of the text is black. Sometimes the monks made them crazy – like this person with bird's feet and a dragon's tail. Use the first letter of your name and create an illuminated letter. Remember, they loved to use colour in medieval times so make it as bright and bold as you like!





Create your own set of rules

Canons lived by a set of rules. The rules would tell them what they could and could not do. The monks at Woodspring Priory followed the rules written by a man called St. Augustine of Hippo (what a weird name hey!) St. Augustine wrote the rules in a letter which canons followed.

Here are some of the rules the canons had to follow – they weren't allowed to have any fun (how boring!) In the space next to them write your own set of fun rules for Woodspring Priory.

1. No swearing	1.
2. No jokes	2.
3. No laughing	3.
4. Only eat at mealtimes (no snacks!)	4.
5. You have to pray every 3 hours through the day and night	5.
6. You're not allowed to marry or have a girlfriend or boyfriend	6.
7. Not allowed to own anything (not even a book or pen!)	7.
8. Have to spend the day working at the monastery, reading and praying	8.
9. No playing with friends	9.
10. No naughty thoughts	10.



Bake a honey cake

In medieval times cakes were very simple. People either bought the ingredients in a market or grew their own. Honey was used to make things sweeter as sugar came from the Middle East (and later Europe) and was very expensive.

Here's a simple recipe for you to try. You might need the help of an adult.

250g clear honey, plus extra 2 tbsp to glaze	100g dark muscovado sugar
225g unsalted butter	3 large eggs, beaten
	300g self-raising flour

Remember to pre-heat the oven: fan 140 °C or electric 160 °C: Gas 3

- Butter a 20cm round cake tin and line it with baking paper
- Cut the butter into pieces and drop them into a medium pan with the honey and the sugar, let it melt slowly
- When the mixture looks like liquid, turn up the heat under the pan and boil for about 1 minute
- Leave to cool for 15-20 minutes (important - this stops the eggs cooking when they are mixed in!)
- Beat the eggs into the melted honey mixture using a wooden spoon
- Sift the flour into a large bowl and pour in the egg and honey mixture. Beat until you have a smooth, quite runny batter
- Pour the mixture into the cake tin and bake for 50-60 minutes. You can tell it's ready as it will be golden brown and spring back when pressed. Push a skewer into the centre of the cake and it should come out clean.
- Turn the cake out on a wire rack
- Warm 2tbsp honey in a small pan and brush over the top of the cake to give it a sticky glaze, then leave it to cool.
- If you want, serve with vanilla ice cream! This is making me feel hungry...