

**YCCCART 2010/Y23  
North Somerset HER 2011/018**

**Congresbury Church - Orchard & Vicarage**

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

*General Editor: Vince Russett*



*YCCCART v trees. Congresbury orchard/prayer garden*

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## **Abstract**

*YCCCART has agreed with the Heritage Lottery Fund to undertake a project over two years, commencing May 2009 to investigate the archaeology of Cadbury Hill Fort and its environs. As part of this study the orchard / prayer garden to the east of the Old Refectory and the area surrounding the vicarage were selected in the grounds of Congresbury church for geophysical study.*

*Results of the resistivity surveys clearly support the documentary and previous archaeological evidence that substantial building or buildings, larger than those extant, have existed in the past. The alignment of survey features suggestive of walls is similar to that of the now demolished wing of the Old Refectory as shown in the 1823 plan.*

*Gradiometry surveys were inconclusive.*

## **Acknowledgements**

A Heritage Lottery Grant enabled YCCCART to purchase a RM15 Resistance Meter and Bartington Gradiometer 601 without which surveys could not have been undertaken.

YCCCART are most grateful to Congresbury Parish Council and St Andrews Church, Congresbury for allowing the surveys to be undertaken and to Richard Broomhead and St Andrews Church, Congresbury for allowing us to publish a selection from the 2008 evaluation report.

The authors are also grateful for the hard work by the members of YCCCART in performing the surveys and Vince Russett for general editing.

## **Introduction**

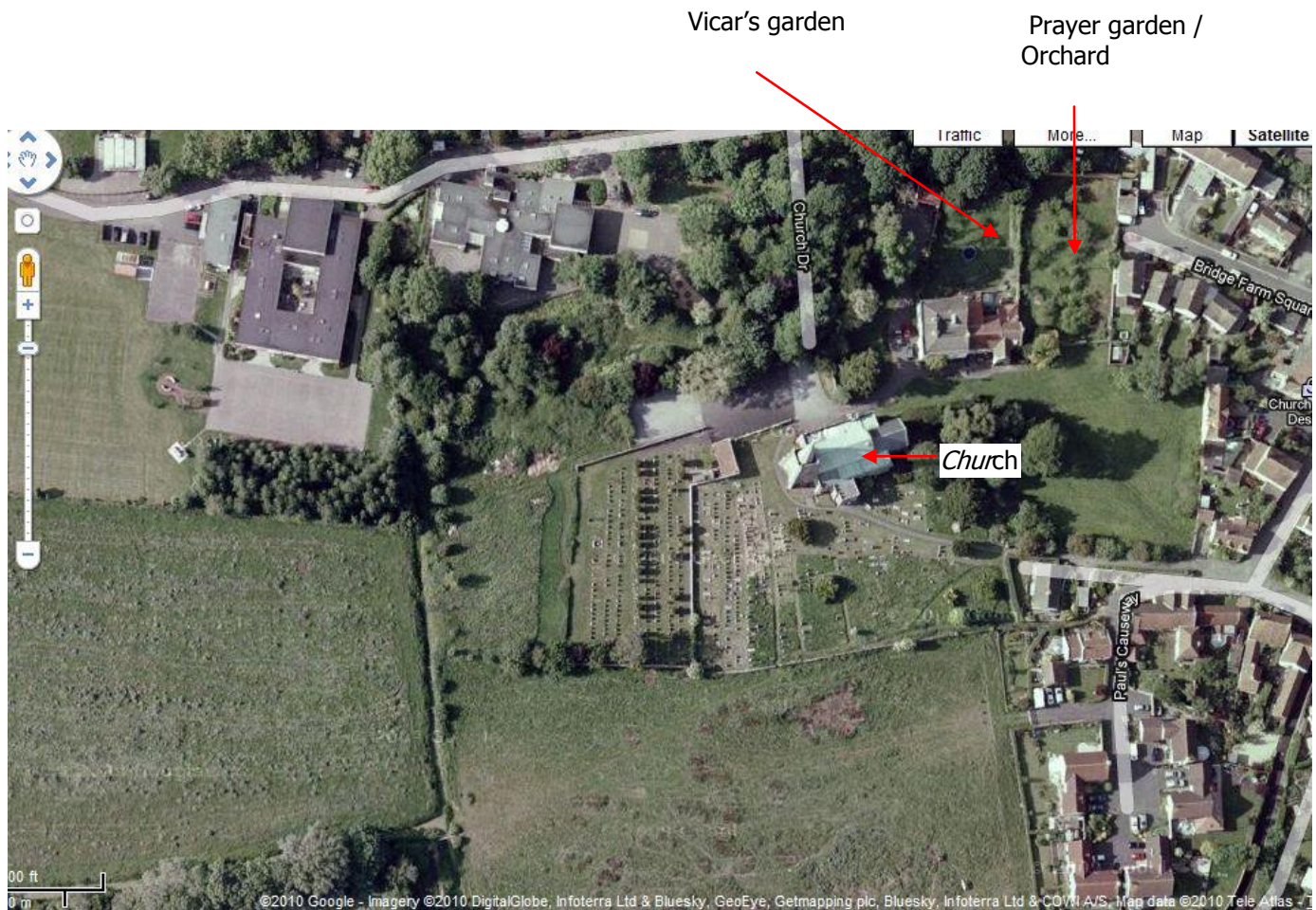
Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team (YCCCART) is one of a number of Community Archaeology teams across North Somerset, supported by the North Somerset Council Development Management Team.

The objective of the Community Archaeology in North Somerset (CANS) teams is to carry out archaeological fieldwork, for the purpose of recording, and better understanding, of the heritage of North Somerset.

For further information, see <http://cansnetwork.co.uk>



## Site location



*Fig1: Site location, showing relationship to church*

The sites lie in the village of Congresbury, in North Somerset, at ST444672, some 12 miles south of Bristol.

The prayer garden / orchard is adjacent to the Grade1 listed 'Refectory', which itself is attached to the 19<sup>th</sup> century vicarage (built 1824). The survey in the rear garden of the vicarage, is separated from the orchard survey by about 7 meters and a high stone wall.

The final Grad 601 survey was in the garden area to the west and south west of the current vicarage.



*Fig 2: Showing the sites in relation to the extant buildings. (Google image)*

## **Land use and geology**

The prayer garden / orchard and the vicar's garden are part of the land used for ecclesiastical purposes.

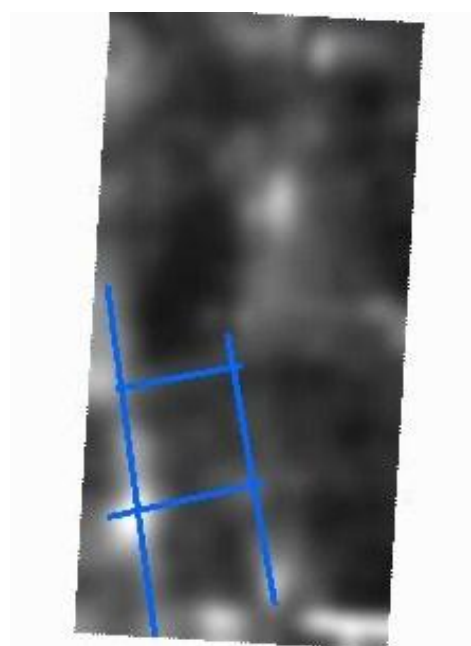
The solid geology is a low knoll of Mercia Mudstone, surrounded on all sides by the alluvium of the North Marsh.

## Historical & archaeological context

*(Please see the report Congresbury Church Y14 for full details regarding possible buildings and finds around the church area).*

Richard Broomhead in his unpublished parish survey mentions that in 1215 'The garden on the east side of the church and the bishop's court' are noted in the charter of endowment of the newly dedicated church of Congresbury. Also that in 1262, William, Bishop of Bath and Wells granted 'A croft which Stephen de Aguste, formerly vicar of the same church, held in the manor of Congresburi, between the way which leads to the cemetery of Congresburi on the north side of the church and the manse of the aforesaid William.' (Broomhead, *in prep*).

## Orchard/Prayer Garden resistivity survey 2008



*Fig 3: Resistivity result from orchard survey*

The result of a previous YCCART orchard survey (Fig 3 above) shows presumed walls illustrated by the blue lines.

A single evaluation trench dug by Richard Broomhead in July/August 2008 (see Figs 4 & 5 below) established the existence of an early 'medieval, building with well preserved archaeology sealed by minimal topsoil and subsoils'. (Broomhead, R.A.: 2008). Could this be the foundations of the vanished bishops court mentioned in 1215?



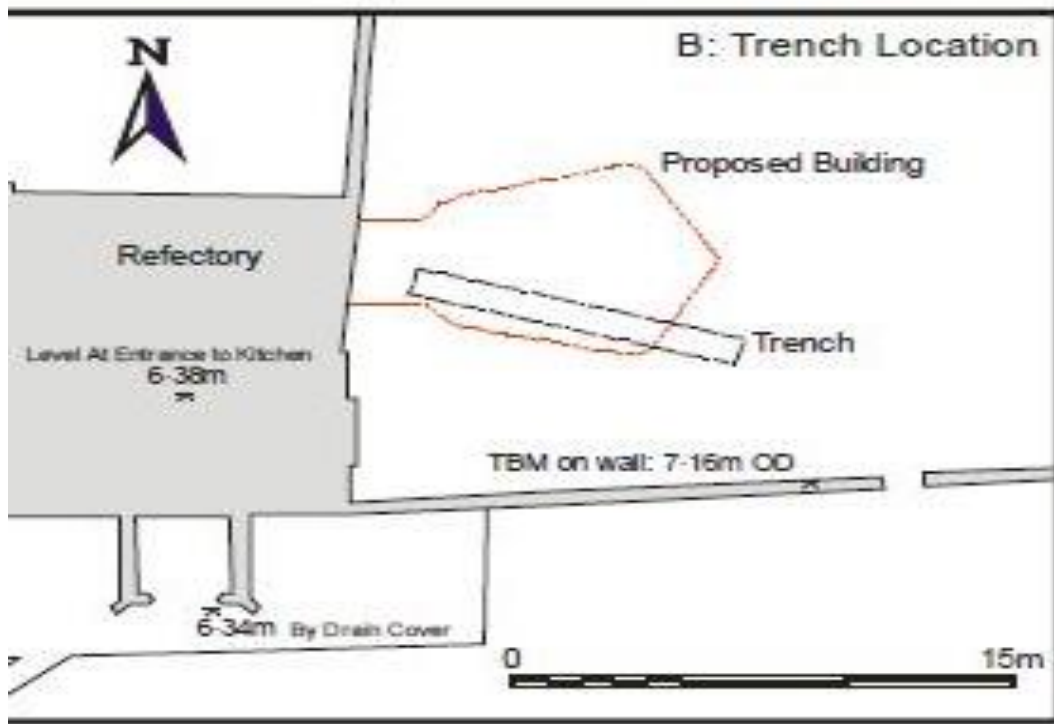


Fig 4: Location of evaluation trench

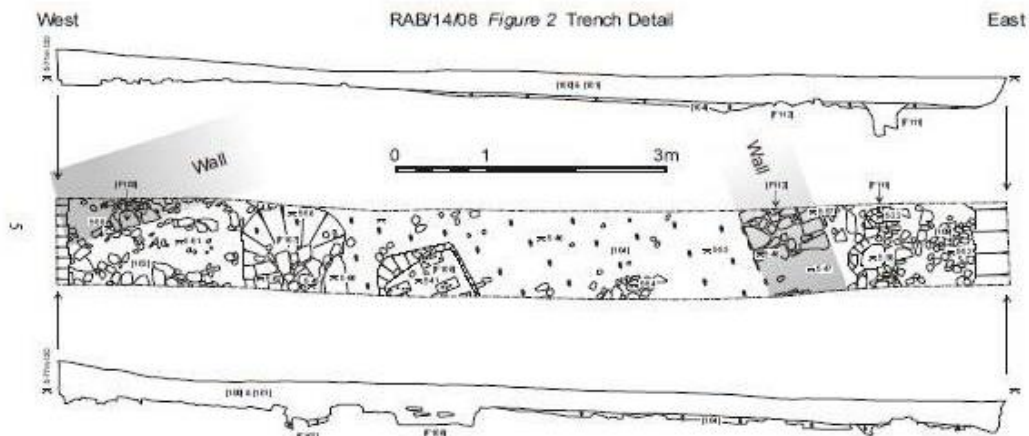


Fig 5: Trench detail showing walls (of potential building).

## **Walking the orchard.**

In 2008 YCCCART also walked the orchard and area around the church

Orchard finds included:

### **A) Roof tiles**

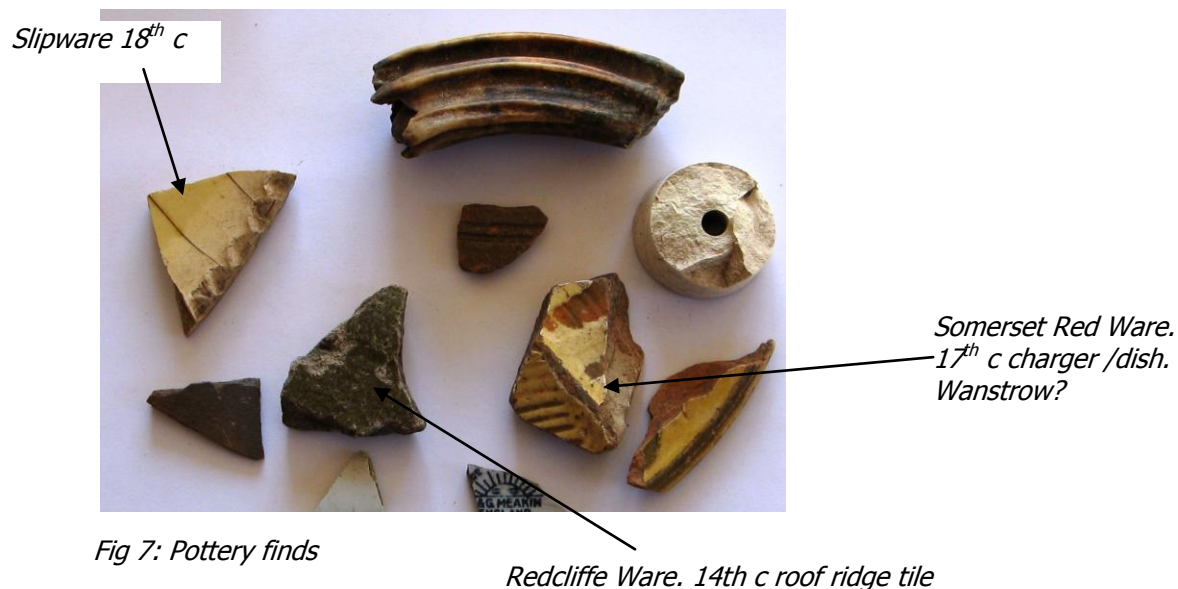


*Figure 6 : Pennant stone roof tile from the church orchard*

Nine fragments of roof tile were found, identified by Prof. Mick Aston as Pennant Sandstone of the medieval period.

### **B) Pottery**

Medieval and later pottery shards were also found including 3 pieces of 13-15<sup>th</sup> century green glazed Redcliffe Ware roof ridge tiles, which often sported a coxcomb crest.



*Fig 7: Pottery finds*

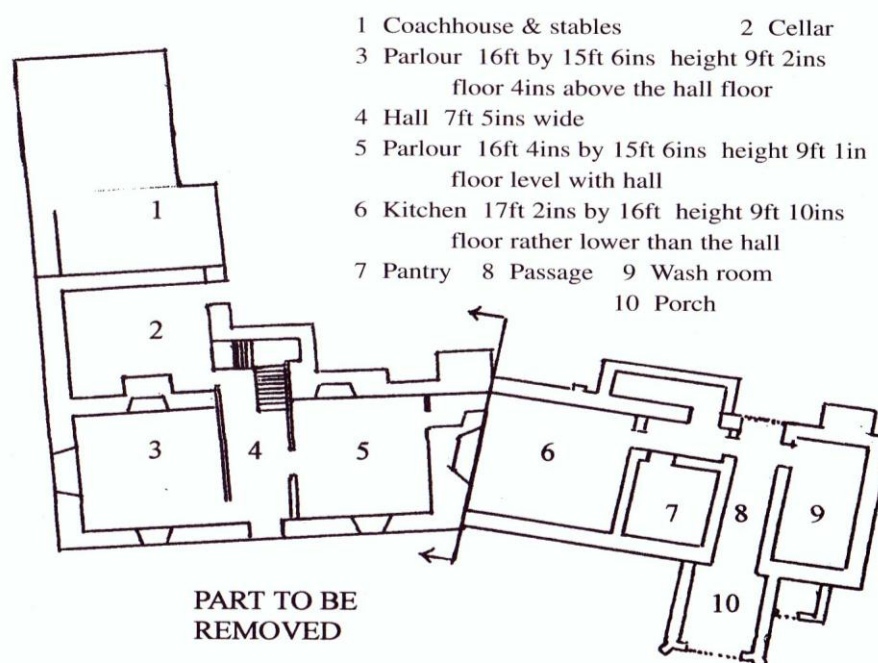
*Redcliffe Ware. 14th c roof ridge tile*



## Refectory

The Refectory is a grade I listed building officially dated as c 1446, although it has been suggested that the porch dates to 1465. From the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century each Congresbury vicar lived here. In 1634 there in addition to the vicar's house there was a stable, dove house, garden and backside all contained in two acres (Bedingfield 2003:4).

In 1823 Joseph Haythorne was appointed vicar and immediately applied for the old vicarage to be rebuilt as it was 'so old and in every respect so low, damp and incommodious as to render it impossible to reside therein with any degree of comfort.' Part of the vicarage was subsequently pulled down and the present vicarage of late Georgian style, attached to the Refectory, was completed by April 1824. (Cran 1983:135). The 1665 Hearth tax records reveal that the building had ten hearths. Only three are shown on the ground floor of the 1823 plan.



NB The Refectory appears to have no windows!

*Fig 8:1823 Plan of Refectory. Copied by Gill Bedingfield from original in Somerset Record Office, SRO D/P.con 3/4/2.*

## **2010 Survey Objectives**

The survey had the following objectives.

- 1) To identify any features indicating lost buildings or earlier occupation of the site.
- 2) To use the survey to further train YCCCART members and members of Community Archaeology in North Somerset (CANS) in the use of the Bartington Gradiometer 601 and Resistance Meter RM15.

## **Methodology**

### **A) Resistivity**

The resistivity survey was undertaken during the period April to June 2010 by teams from YCCCART using a RM15 resistivity meter

The survey was downloaded

Using ArcheoSurveyor 2.4.0.23 and adjusted using the following filters.

- Band weight equaliser
- Grad shade
- Destriped
- Despiked
- Clip SD2

The data were also interpreted using Snuffler software as follows

- 1) Despiked
- 2) Interpolated in two directions.

The resultant image was then adjusted in order to match grids using Microsoft Office Publisher 2007.

### **B) Gradiometry**

The gradiometry survey was undertaken on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2010 (site 1) and 13<sup>th</sup> May 2010 (site 2) by teams from YCCCART using a Bartington Gradiometer 601, with settings as per the site record in Appendix 1.

The completed survey was downloaded using ArcheoSurveyor 2.4.0.23 and the resultant composite adjusted using the following filters.

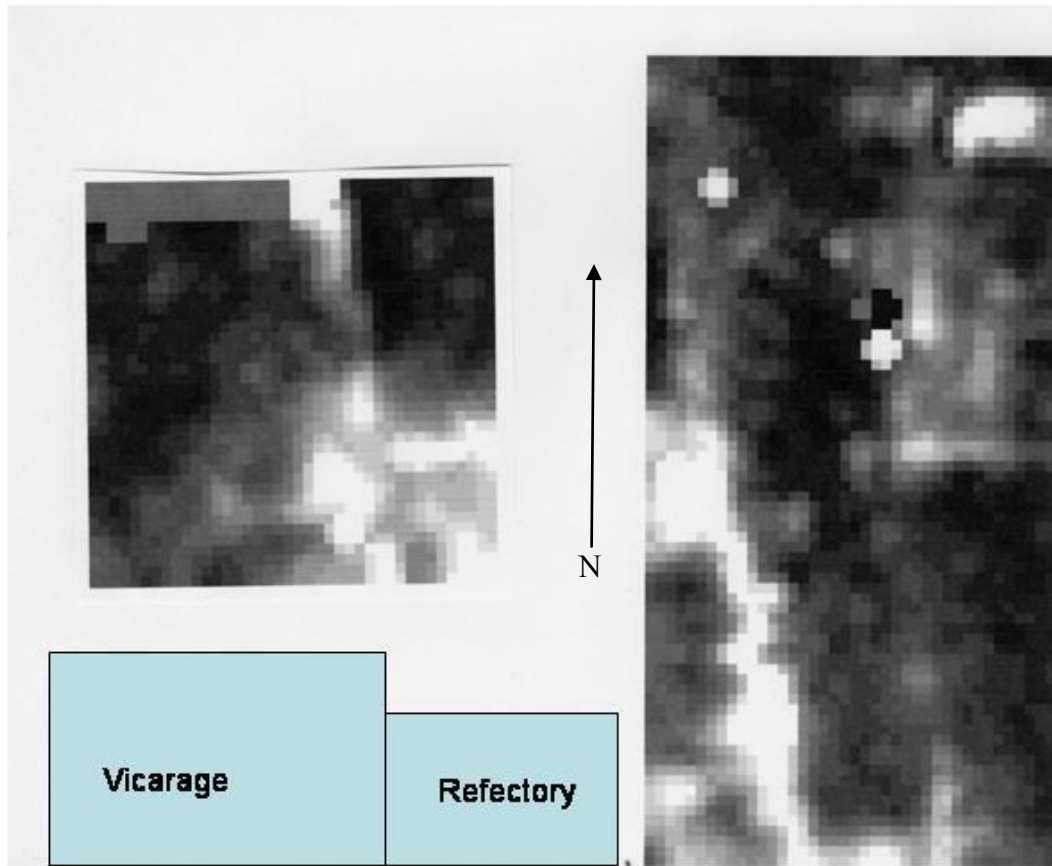
- 1) Colour – Black Green White & Red Blue Green 2
- 2) Band weight equaliser
- 3) Grad shade
- 4) Destriped
- 5) Despiked
- 6) Clip SD2

The report was written in Microsoft Word 2003.

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

## Results

### RM 15 Orchard/Vicarage



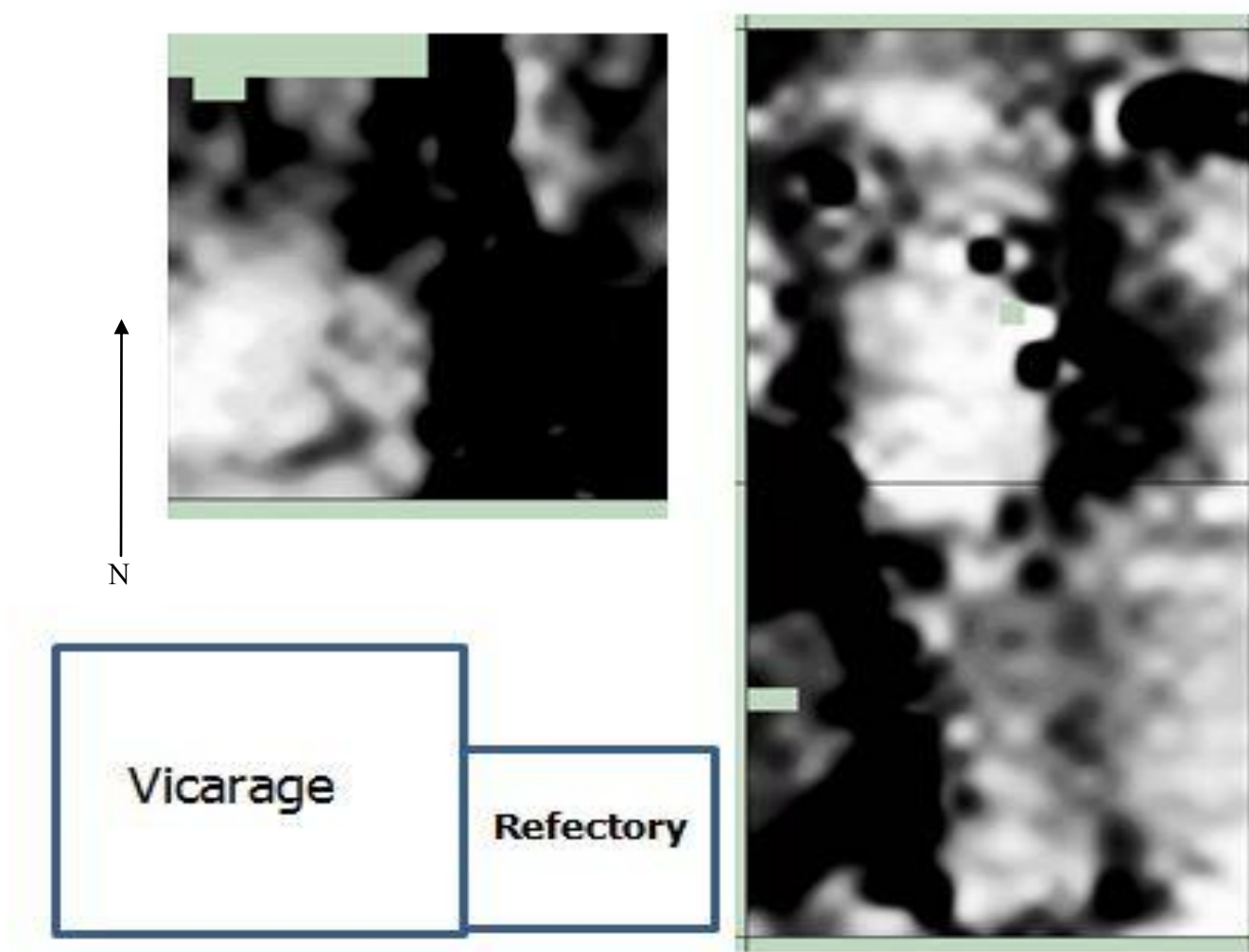
*Fig 9: Resistivity results of Vicarage back garden (left) & orchard (right). Snuffler imaging*

The resistivity results by both Snuffler (Fig 9) and ArcheoSurveyor (Fig 10 below ) imaging showed clear evidence of major linear anomalies (white areas in fig 9 & 10 and black areas in fig 11 & 12) consistent with wall structures aligned approximately NW-by-N to SE-by-S, and several minor ones at right angles to these. It is noticeable that the alignment of this possible building is very close to that of the (now demolished) vicarage rooms shown in the 1823 floor plan. (Fig 10 below)

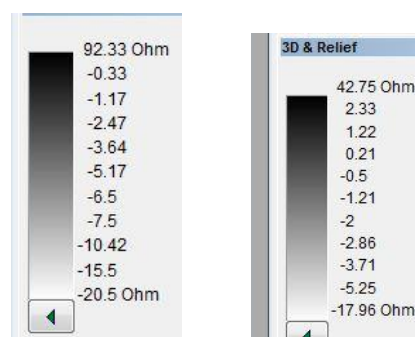


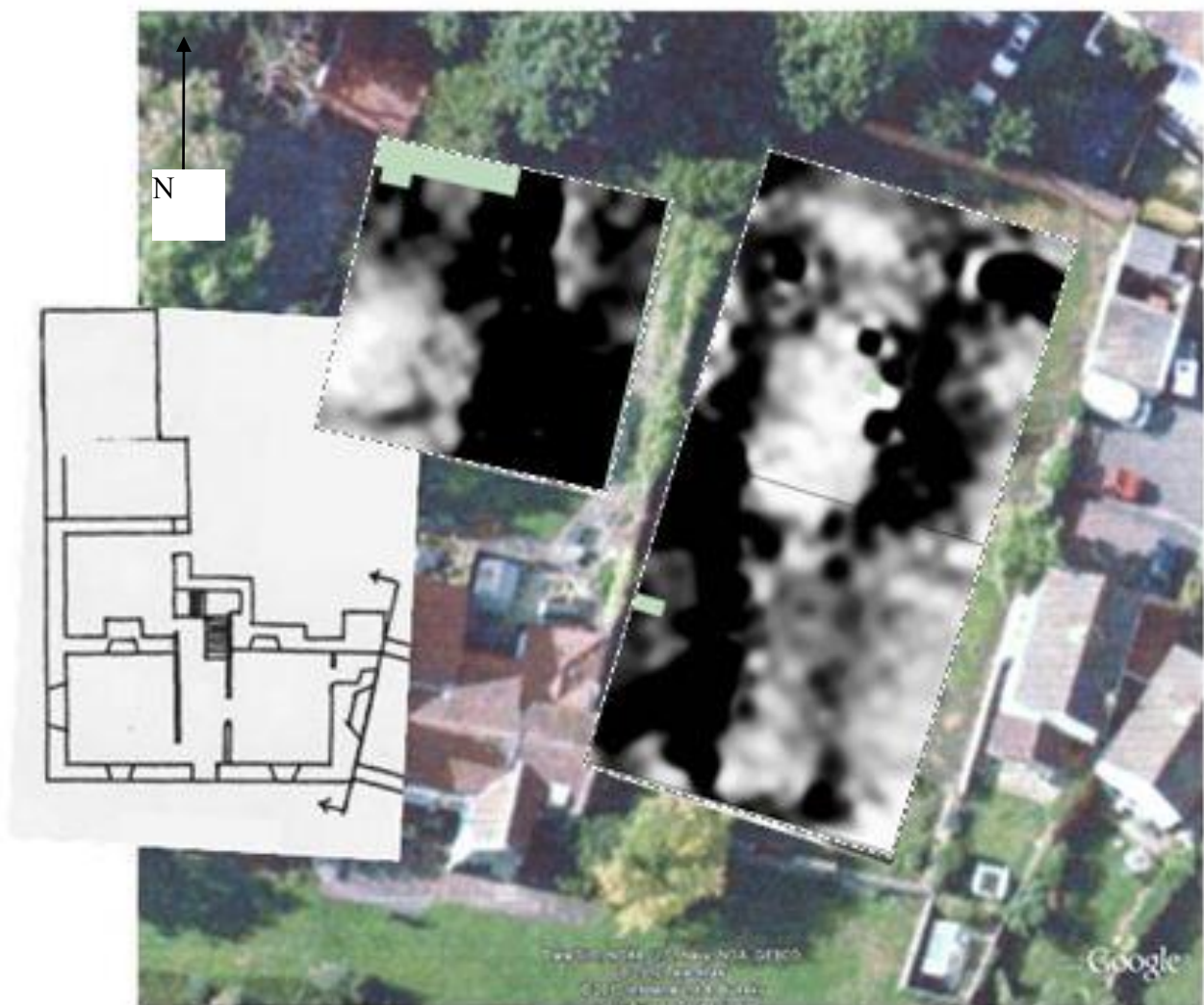


*Fig 10: Combination of Google Earth, 1823 map and superimposed resistivity results from Snuffler*



*Fig 11: Resistivity results from Vicarage back garden (left) & orchard (right). ArcheoSurveyor imaging.  
NB. Resistivity range readings for 2 grids to the right are below right. For grid on left it is below left.*



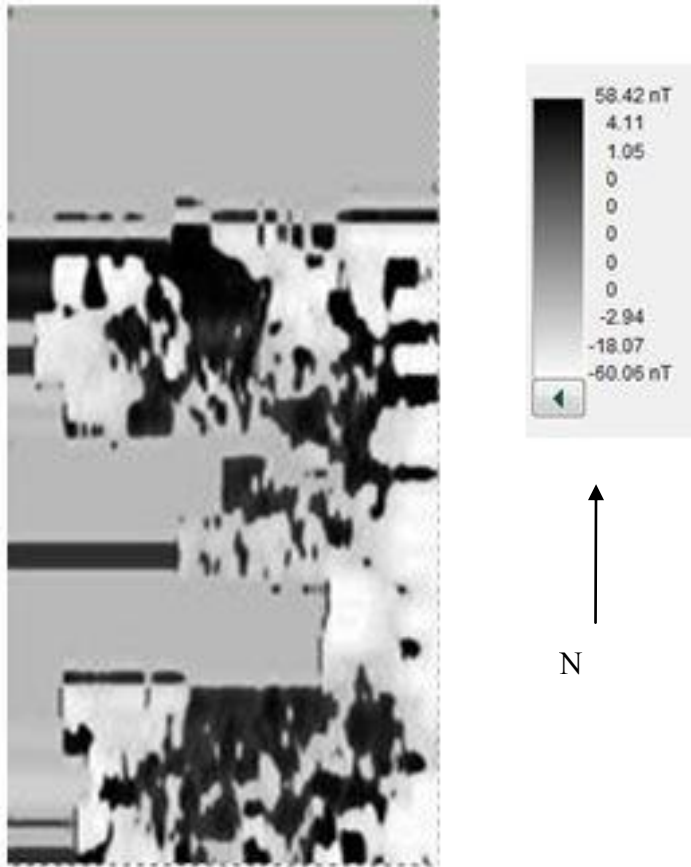


*Fig 12: Combination of Google Earth, 1823 map and superimposed resistivity results from ArcheoSurveyor*



## Grad 601 – Gradiometry survey

Orchard/Prayer Garden



The gradiometry results (Fig. 13) show areas of considerable signal variation but without an obviously discernible pattern.

Please note the survey area shape is irregular because of the presence of trees and undergrowth.

*Fig 13: Gradiometry results, church orchard*

Vicarage garden /west of vicarage

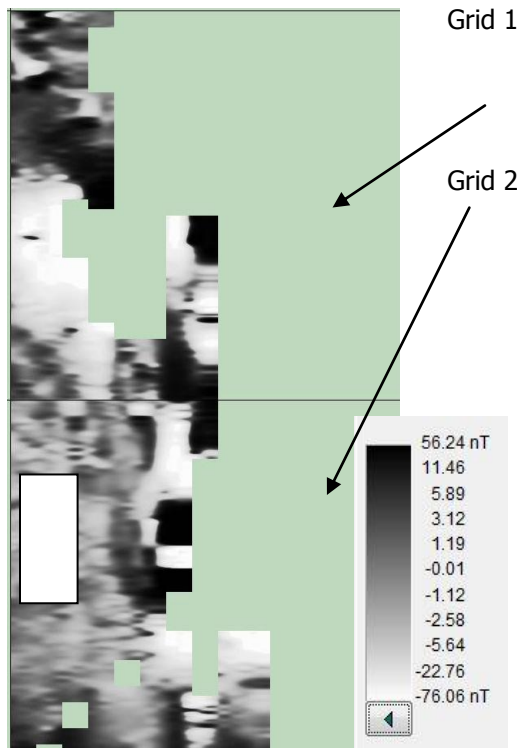


Fig 14: Area to west of current vicarage

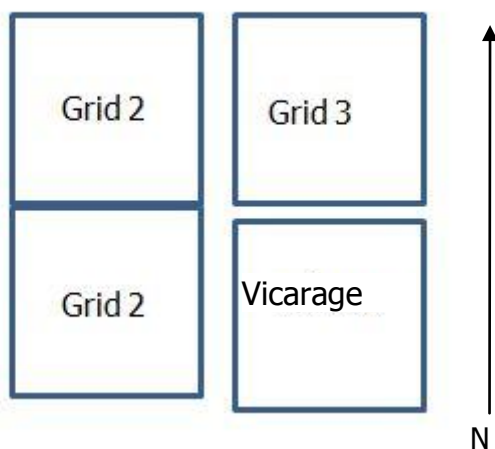
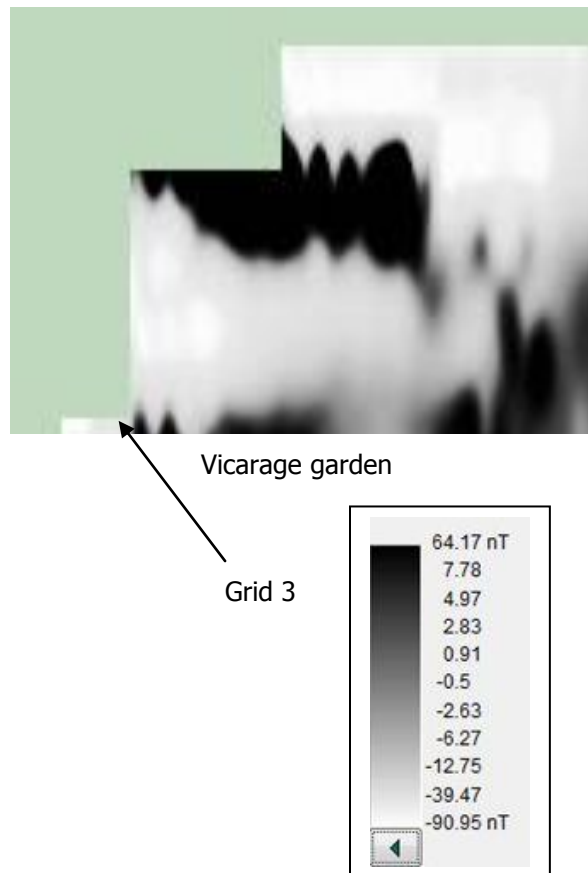


Fig 15: Grad 601 survey plan

The gradiometry results (Fig.14) again show areas of considerable signal variation but without an obviously discernible pattern, except for a weak linear anomaly broadly parallel to several of the resistivity features apparent in the garden and orchard, which could conceivably represent a ditch or drain in the complex.

All grids are probably badly affected by metal from a shed and service pipes to the vicarage.

NB. Plan is not to scale

## Discussion

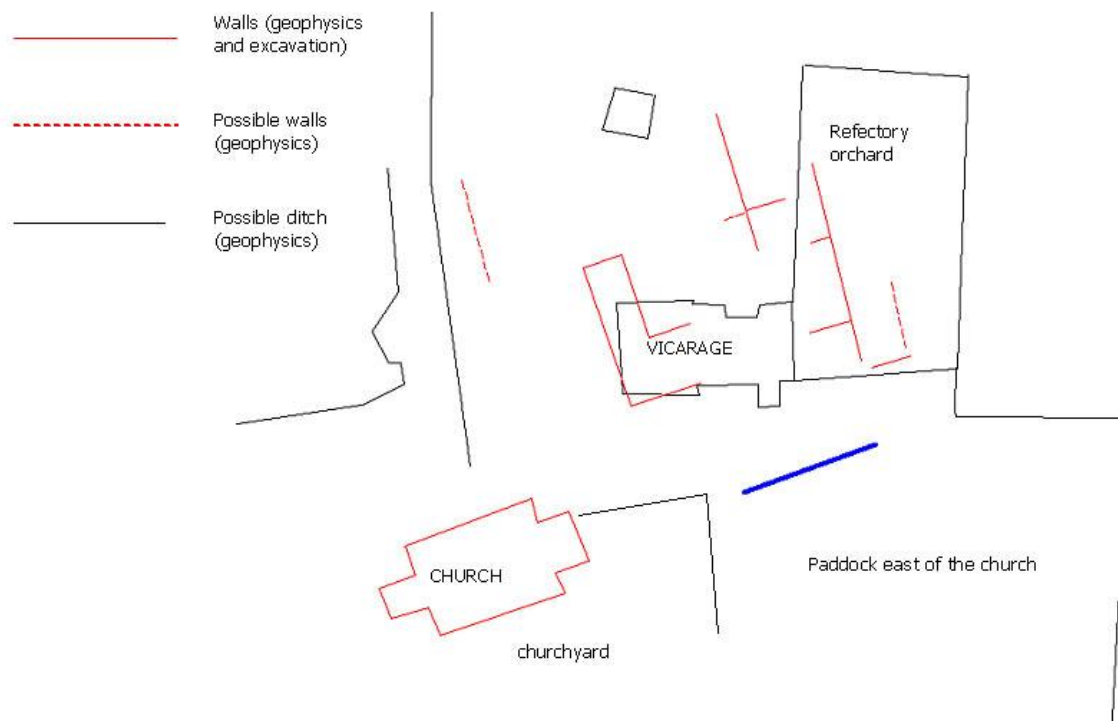
These results, for the first time, reveal the extent of the surviving archaeology of the buildings on the site before the Refectory was built.

From both Broomhead's parish survey (Broomhead, in prep) and his evaluation trench (see p. 7 above) it is clear that the footings of the buildings only seem to remain to one, or possibly two courses, and the clarity of the images also implies this, since this means there are no heaps of rubble to obscure the lines of the walls. Broomhead's evaluation also established that some of the walls were internally plastered, implying a high status building at the southern end of the orchard.

YCCCART's subsequent geophysical surveys (especially the resistivity surveys) have revealed very clear linear high resistance anomalies on the same alignment and at exact right angles to, the walls exposed by Broomhead in the evaluation, and by far the most convincing explanation is that these, too are walls.

The Refectory (which dates to the 15<sup>th</sup> century AD) clearly lies over the line of some of the walls, and on a different alignment. The walls share the same alignments as a broad area of high negative magnetic response revealed in a survey in the paddock to the east of the church. As it is 6 – 7m wide, this could represent a ditch or even a moat outside of the buildings (YCCCART 2010/Y14 on this web site). Another linear feature was seen in the gradiometry results from a survey of a small lawn to the west of the refectory. It is most significant that the section of the refectory demolished in 1823 also shared this alignment, as does the parish church (presumably from which all the other alignments are derived). It is not entirely clear why two of the older pubs in the village (the Old Inn and the Ship and Castle) also share this alignment, unless of course, they too represent the sites of medieval buildings!





*Fig 16: Summary of features on the main alignments (demolished part of vicarage, geophysical features and excavated features)*

The features seen in the geophysics and recorded here are only those that are reasonably obvious, and there are hints in the data of further features on the same alignments.

One obvious question is why this alignment, which after all does respect the parish church, was abandoned when the refectory came to be built. A potential reason is the extreme deviation of the axis of Congresbury church from the 'correct' liturgical east-west alignment (and it is an interesting question why this should be so). Perhaps the opportunity was taken to begin to restore the east-west alignment as the refectory was built; after all, this was an ecclesiastical building just as much as the church. Almost certainly, the pre-existing buildings discovered in the geophysics had long gone, permission having been given for their demolition in 1391, by the Dean of Wells (Broomhead 2008: 4), so they formed no obstruction to this.

One reference in Broomhead 2008 refers to 'the way which leads to the cemetery of Congresburi on the north side of the church' and it seems entirely possible that the north west churchyard wall and the alignment of the former stables building reflect the former existence of this way. Could this (alarmingly) mean that the oldest churchyard at Congresbury was to the west, where occasionally human bone fragments emerge from 'new' grave sites?

## Recommendations for further work

The documentary and previous archaeological evidence support the findings presented here and demonstrate the archaeological importance of the area surrounding the church.

We recommend that an archaeological management plan be compiled for the church grounds.

It is also fairly urgent that the possibility of the 'old' cemetery, being to the west of the church, be tested by trial excavation.

## References

Bedingfield, G. 2003	<i>The Refectory Congresbury.</i> Congresbury History Group. ISBN 0-9544048-1-5
Broomhead, R.A. 2008	RAB/14/08 SMR 47412 <i>The Refectory Orchard, Congresbury: An Archaeological Evaluation on behalf of Congresbury PCC</i> (unpublished report in North Somerset HER)
Broomhead, R.A. (in prep)	<i>Congresbury, the History of a Landscape</i> Unpublished manuscript in the YCCCART archive
Cran, A. S. 1983	<i>The Story of Congresbury</i> , Redcliffe Press Ltd, Bristol
Somerset Record Office	1823 Plan of Refectory. SRO D/P.con 3/4/2.

**Authors:** Colin Campbell & Chris Short

**Date:** September 2010

## Appendix 1 Survey site records

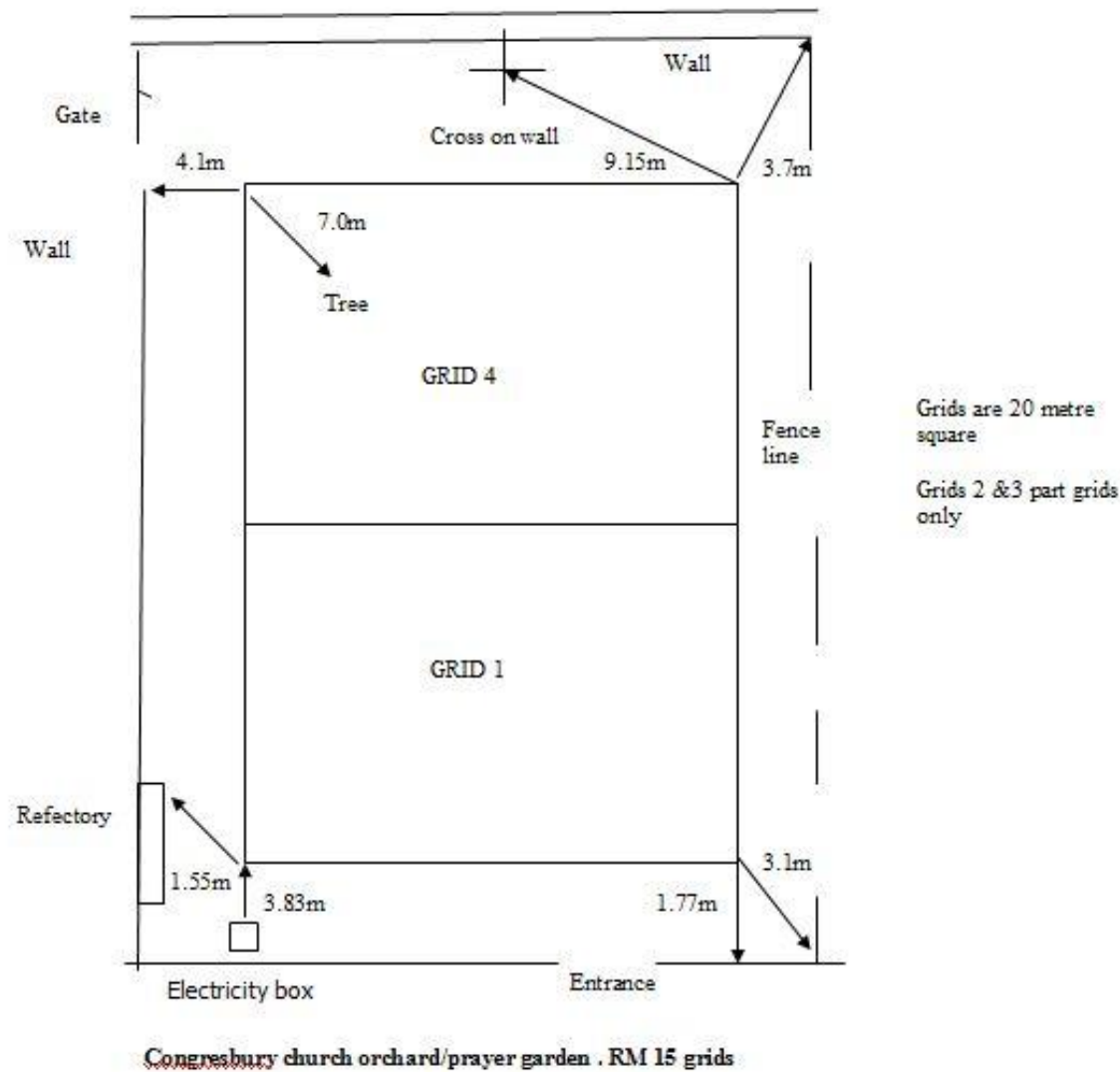
### RM15 –Orchard

YCCCART Site Survey						
Project – <b>Congresbury Church Orchard</b>						
Survey date		10 June to 1st July 2010				
Report date		July 2010				
Type /Instrument		RM15				
		Gain x1, Current 1mA Frequency 137Hz Probes 'Config 1' (2 probes)		Grid size: 20m x20m Pattern : Zig Zag Sample interval 1m Traverse Interval 1m. Mode Zig-Zag		
Weather		17 June – Dry & sunny 24 June - Dry & sunny 1 July - Dry & sunny				
OS Ref or Lat-Longitude		ST				
Site name		Churchyard orchard				
Landowner		Church				
Tenant		none				
HER ref						
Site type		Prayer garden /orchard				
Description		Orchard				
Period		unknown				
Geology		unknown				
Land use		Prayer garden				
Survey team		17 June David Long, Colin Campbell, Robert Cleland, Chris Short & Vince Russett 24 June. Unsal Hussan, Chris Short, Colin Campbell 1 July Philippa Cormack, Geoff Pearson, Colin Campbell & Robert Cleland.				
Survey area		notes		readings		
		size	walk direction			
	17 June Grid 1 – 18 lines only Grid 2 -2 lines only Grid 3 - 20 metre grid started from 9m line on grid 1	3 x 20m	SW			
	24 June Grid 4	20m	SW			
	1 July 10 grid covering part of grid 1	10m	SW			
Summary		Downloaded to ArcheoSurveyor : <i>Church orchard RM 15 246</i> , 17 June 1, 2* & 3* (grids 1-3) , 24 June 1 (Grid 4)				



	& 1 July 1* (NB * Not used in report)
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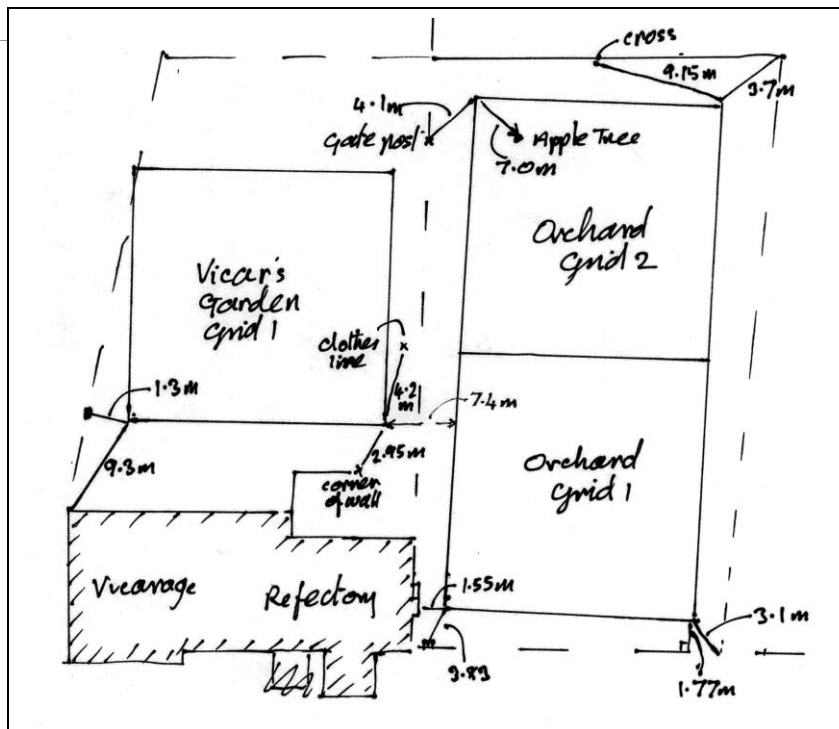
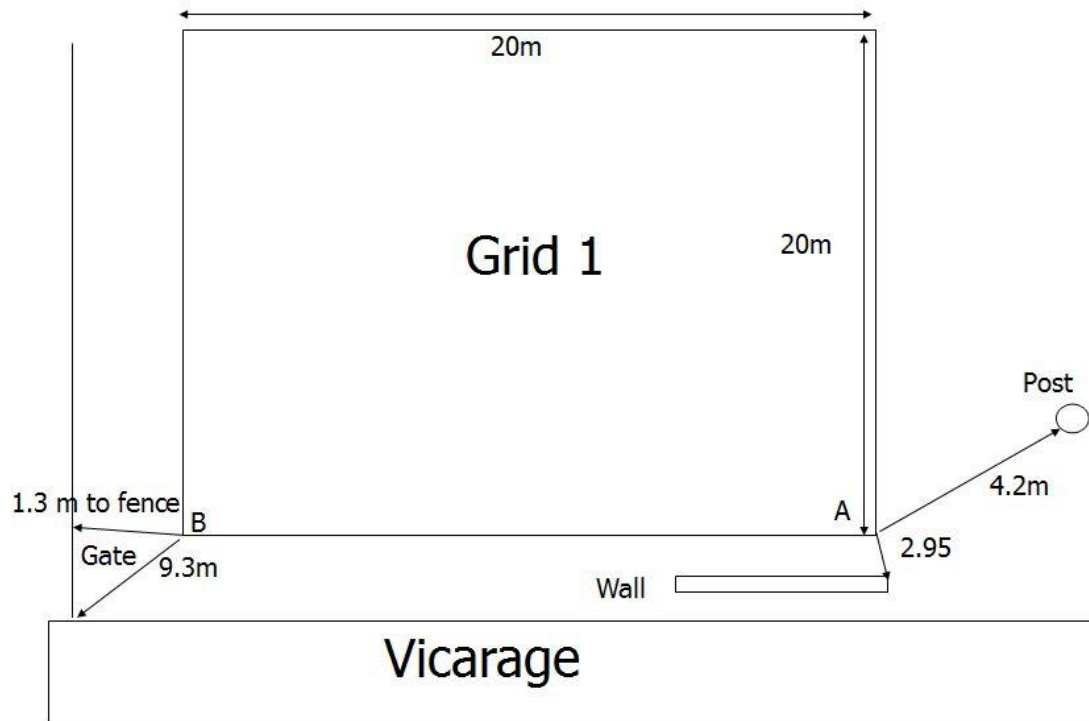
Setting out details



YCCCART Site Survey						
Project – <b>Congresbury Church Vicarage Garden</b>						
Survey date		8th July 2010				
Report date		July 2010				
Type /Instrument		RM15				
		Gain x1, Current 1mA Frequency 137Hz Probes 'Config 1' (2 probes)		Grid size: 20m x20m Pattern : Zig Zag Sample interval 1m Traverse Interval 1m. Mode Zig-Zag		
Weather		8 <sup>th</sup> July - Dry & cloudy. Grass a little damp				
OS Ref or Lat-Longitude		ST				
Site name		Vicarage garden				
Landowner		Church				
Tenant		none				
HER ref						
Site type						
Description		Garden lawn				
Period		unknown				
Geology		unknown				
Land use		Garden				
Survey team		8 <sup>th</sup> July <i>Philippa Cormack, Colin Campbell, Unsal Hussan, Chris Short &amp; Vince Russett</i>				
Survey area		notes			readings	
		size	walk direction			
		1 x 20m	W			
Summary		Downloaded to ArcheoSurveyor: Congresbury church /vicars garden/ 8Jul1				

Not to scale

# RM 15 grid in Vicarage garden 8 July 2010

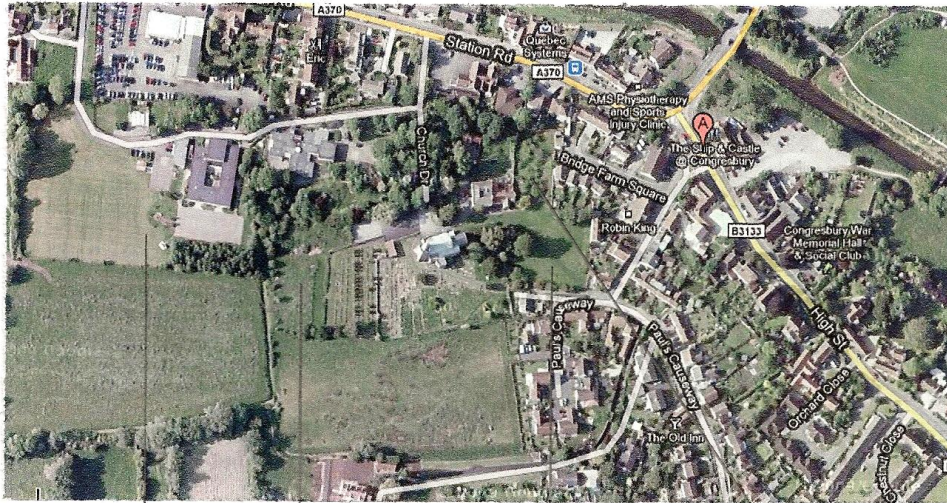


Plan – Relationship of both RM15 sites

## Grad 601

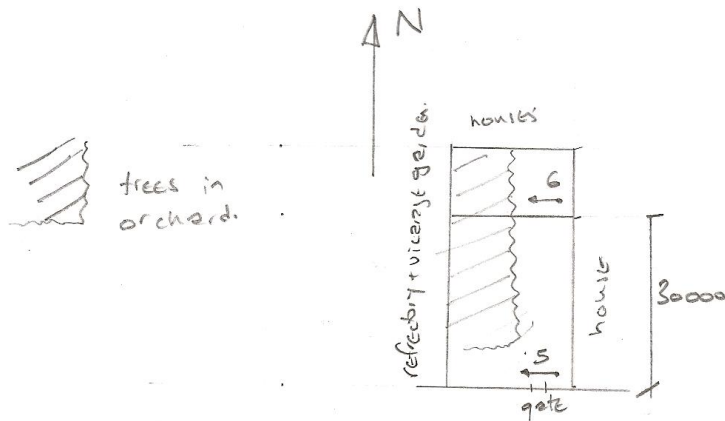
YCCART Site Survey Project – Church and School Environs		
Survey date	10 <sup>th</sup> June 2010	
Report date	10 <sup>th</sup> June 2010	
Type /Instrument	Grad 601	
	Pace :1.5m/s Start: ?? Lines/m : 1 Range:100nT Volume: High Sensors:2	Grid size: 30m x30m Pattern : Zig Zag Samples/m:4 Audio: On Threshold:1nT Reject:50 Hz
Location	Station Road/Church Drive, Congresbury	
Ref	none	
Site name	Orchard by Refectory	
Landowner	St Andrews' Church	
Tenant		
HER ref		
Site type	Orchard	
Description	Grass	
Period	Unknown	
Geology	Limestone	
Land use	None	
Survey team	Peter English, Mike Fox & Ian Morton	

Survey area		notes		readings		
		size	walk direction	max	min	mean
Grid ref #	5	30 x 30m Mirror and return	W	+100.0	-100.0	-3.3
	6	Incomplete grid Mirror and return	W	+100.0	-100.0	-9.5
Summary		2 # grids completed Weather: warm, dry and overcast <b>Survey completed</b>				
Ian Morton 10/06/2010		Version 1				



27/06/10      6/05/10      13/05/10      survey area.

related surveys





YCCART Site Survey Project – Church Environs		
Survey date	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2010	
Report date	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2010	
Type /Instrument	<b>Grad 601</b>	
	Pace :1.5m/s Lines/m : 1 Range:100nT Volume: High Sensors:2	Grid size: 30m x30m Pattern : Zig Zag Samples/m:4 Audio: On Threshold:1nT Reject:50 Hz
Location	Station Road/Church Drive, Congresbury	
Ref	none	
Site name	Rectory Garden	
Landowner	St Andrews' Church	
Tenant		
HER ref		
Site type	Garden	
Description	Grass	
Period	Unknown	
Geology	Limestone	
Land use	None	
Survey team	Peter English, Richard Baker & Ian Morton	

Survey area		notes		readings		
		size	walk direction	max	min	mean
Grid ref #	1	30m x 30m Incomplete grid Mirror and return	N	+65.1 .0	-100.0	+1.2
	2	30m x 30m	N	+100. 0	-100.0	-8.2
	3	Incomplete grid	W	+100. 0	-100.0	-9.5
Summary		3 # grids completed Weather: hot, dry and sunny <b>Survey completed</b>				
Ian Morton 09/07/2010		Version 1.1				

Setting out details

