

YCCART

The future of the past

Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team

YCCART - A Brief History

The Start

It all began in 2004 when John Atwell of Claverham Farm was concerned about the preservation of his tithe barn. He contacted Vince Russett, the North Somerset County Archaeologist and Brian Bradbury of Yatton History Society, who subsequently met John at the farm with other Yatton History Society members. It was agreed to meet on Thursday mornings to carry out a survey of the barn to record the structure prior to any work being carried out.

There was a lost chapel on the same farm. The next project was to find it. Other areas were then investigated on the farm over a period of some years including a duck decoy, ox house, water courses, leat, a pound and the site of a poor house.

The group increased in size as other interested people decided to come along. Activities expanded as we were made aware of other features in the general area of Yatton that could prove to be of some interest to us.

YCCART Enclosures

Mrs Mary Campbell wanted to investigate a circular feature in the woods of Bickley and we spent a lot of time and effort in clearing away scrub, small trees and brambles until we were able to see that there was a tumble of stone which had originally formed a wall roughly circular on plan. This was our first hill slope enclosure (named Bickley1) Several more hill-slope enclosures on the slopes of Broadfield Down between Cleeve and Bristol International Airport were then recorded.

Formation of YCCART

In 2008 in order to gain access to a Heritage Lottery Fund grant YCCART (Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team) was officially formed with a membership of about twenty and a full committee.

The first grant application was turned down. Then a phone call in early 2009 from the Heritage Lottery Fund invited YCCART to re-apply as they had some additional funding available. We thought that we could do this fairly quickly (they set a tight schedule). Then we discovered they had changed all their application forms and we had to re-work the whole application! We did this within their target time and we received a grant of £34,100 for our project in May 2009. This allowed us to purchase geophysical and other equipment.

2009 to Date

A remarkable and varied amount has been achieved.

Surveys across North Somerset included:

- Scheduled sites – Cadbury Hill Fort Congresbury, Wemberham Villa Yatton, Woodspring Priory, Clevedon Court, Tyntesfield, Locking Castle and Castle Batch, Worle.
- Romano British kiln sites in Congresbury.

Excavations included Congresbury Cross and Iwood.

In addition, photographic and documentary research has been undertaken for example on Congresbury, Puxton and Kingston Seymour churches and Congresbury bridge.

Major New Technique

YCCCART has pioneered the use of a Nivcomp electronic hydrostatic level and Surfer programme (Kindly supplied free by Golden Software, USA). This has enabled any feature over a few millimetres in height to be recorded and displayed as a 3d image.

Newsletter

Newsletters are regularly issued. They not only provide updates on YCCCART activities but contain wide ranging articles on such topics as the Clevedon Torc to the Roman bath house in Uzbekistan.

Web Site

<http://www.ycccart.co.uk/> contains reports on all activities

Social Side

YCCCART has led to the formation of many friendships. The social side is an important part of the group's success.

Vince Russett

None of this would have been achieved without the guidance of a professional archaeologist. Vince has worked incredibly hard and used his humour and patience to great effect. He deserves wider recognition for what he has achieved in throwing so much more light on the heritage of North Somerset and developing a community group of mainly retired individuals who have benefited so much through YCCCART.