# YCCCART

## Yatton Congresbury Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team

Newsletter March 2017

### Chairman's chat

I am pleased that in this issue we have been able to "showcase" the Group's use of the FRED survey system. We think that we are the only group using this equipment in archaeological surveys. We have been extremely pleased with the results it produces and are actively investigating ways in which we can present it to the wider archaeology community.

Finally, a reminder to YCCCART members that the AGM will be held on March 30th. Please put this date in your diaries and tell Philippa that you will be attending so she can arrange food etc.

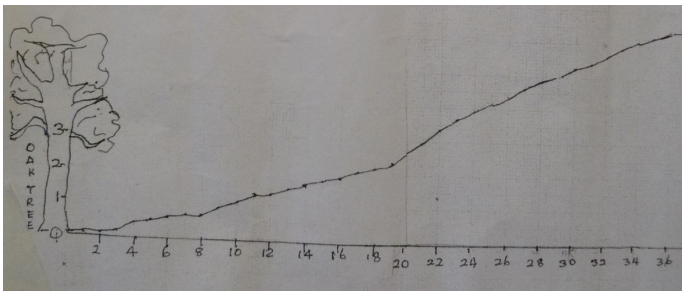
Peter English

### Who (or what) is FRED?

An electronic, hydrostatic level (NIVCOMP), was first used by YCCCART on 9th of September, 2010 to assist with traditional, manual surveying of surface features. It was on loan from Mike Greaves and the first task was to draw a single line profile of the eastern edge of Cadbury Hill Fort. The team on the day were Shirley, Unsal, Brian (Wills) and Geoff.

*Brian and Unsal with a borrowed FRED (arrow) on Cadbury Hill.*

The loan of the electronic, hydrostatic level (NIVCOMP), came about by serendipity. Ian, something of a newcomer, had observed the 'manual team', led by Shirley, painstakingly trying to work out the 'tops and bottoms' of 'lumps and bumps'. Having observed Mike Greaves using a NIVCOMP, Ian arranged for him to demonstrate it to the group. Ian, Chris and Geoff met at Unsal's for a demonstration. Following the triumph on Cadbury Hill Fort, a NIVCOMP was purchased, and became affectionately known as FRED (Field Research Elevation Device). FRED's first outing was in November, 2010, for some more 'line drawing' at Iwood.

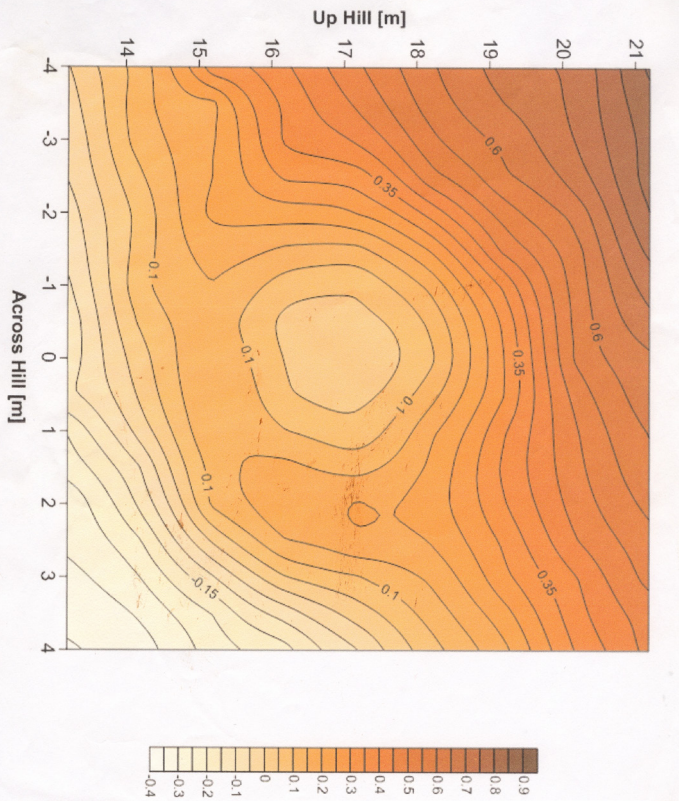



*Above the first result*

After this, it had to wait till the following spring for work on Cadbury Hill Fort. The manual team were surveying features, including house platforms (round houses)', and it was thought that FRED would be useful in drawing profiles, ie, accurately working out 'tops and bottoms' – the reason 'he' had been purchased. Geoff and Unsal set about the task; in Geoff's case with little idea of what he was doing, in Unsal's, with a clear idea of what FRED could do. Having started trying to draw 'profiles' across a 'round house', Unsal suggested we could work systematically over it (recording points on a square grid) and use some computer software.

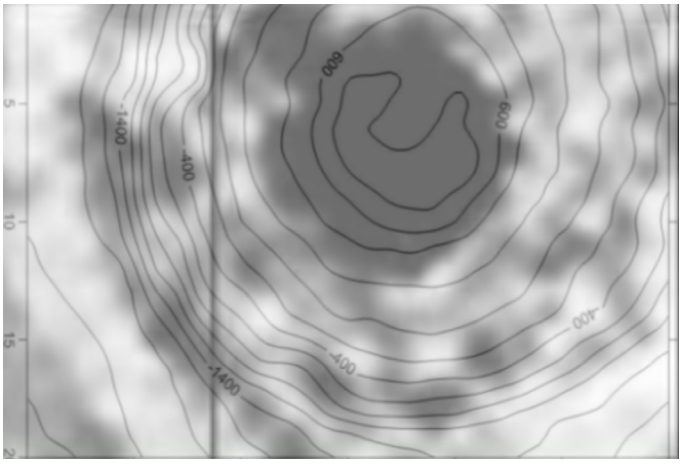

*FRED at Iwood*

The first contour image was produced using a demonstration package of Surfer produced by Golden Software, USA, who kindly gave us a copy at Unsal's request.




*'Round house on' Cadbury Hill Fort*

Subsequently, 3D images of a range of features were produced, from Roman remains at Wemberham villa, further round houses on Cadbury Hill Fort, the well at Woodspring priory, and, most recently, the motte at Locking Head Castle. This latter shows a further use being investigated, looking at RM15 findings with any associated surface features.



*Locking castle motte. FRED result superimposed over RM15 result*

Thus, FRED has made an interesting contribution to YCCCART, and keeps some of us off the streets on a Thursday morning!

Team FRED

## Can you help?

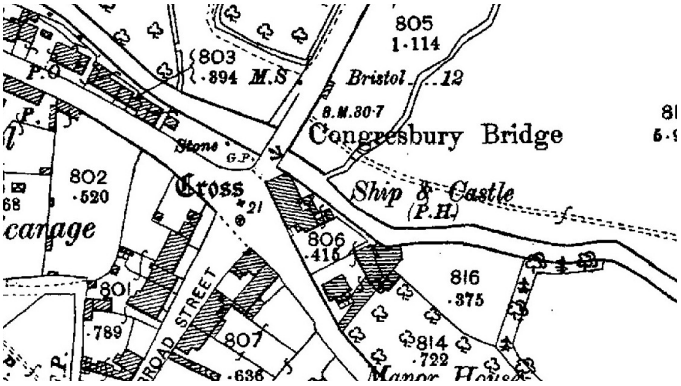
I know that it's a long way off but we need to know who is available to help at this year's summer fetes in Congresbury & Yatton. Dates to be confirmed but they're usually early July & August.
If you can help please let me know on j.dickson7@sky.com

Janet

## A370 Congresbury Road Bridge

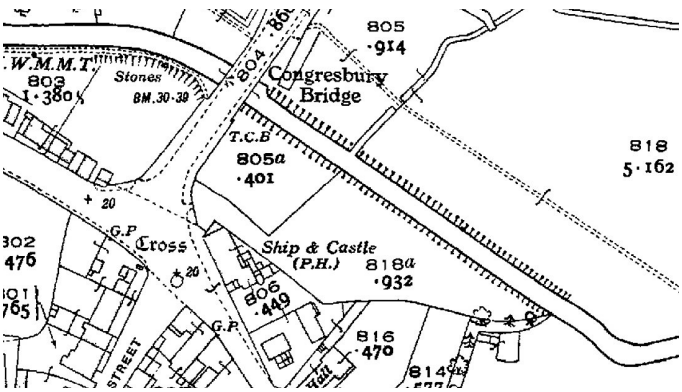
*Congresbury bridge in the 1900's*

Ever wondered what percentage of Congresbury dwellers cross the main A370 bridge over the River Yeo each day and how many of those give it even a moments thought?




*Map showing Congresbury bridge before 1903*

This important structure, the key feature in linking the two parts of the village is the subject of a research project aimed at understanding its past and extending the research activities of YCCCART beyond the continuing suite of geophysical surveys.




*Map showing Congresbury bridge after1930*

The current structure dating from the 1920's appears from the research undertaken so far to be an early application of reinforced concrete. It replaced a bridge which had become a road traffic hazard and unsuitable for the ever increasing volumes of traffic using the A370. This earlier bridge for which photographic records exist was itself altered over time but what proceeded it? Was there for example a Romano-British period structure and associated infrastructure? Anne Dimmock, Maureen Bews and Ian Morton are leading the work with the assistance of the members of YCCCART.

*Bridge and high river levels in September 2013*

*Congresbury bridge, high river levels on the River Yeo and flooding in September 2013*

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 14th December 7.30pm Methodist Hall, YCCCART AGM THURSDAY MARCH 30TH 10.00am- 1.30pm Congresbury Methodist Hall

This year's presentation is a resume of some of YCCCART's highlights over the last 10 years followed by a fish & chip lunch, orders to Philippa please.

Wednesday 17th May
A Gentle Walk from Winscombe to Sandford where we will visit the Railway Heritage Centre – 'The walk will be along the Strawberry Line (approx 1.5 miles) and we have arranged for the Railway Heritage Centre at Sandford to be open for us to look around and light refreshments to be served. YCCCART members might be interested in joining Congresbury History Group on this evening walk.

Meet at the Precinct 6.30pm (time to be confirmed) to sort out lifts to Winscombe. Alternative arrangements can be made for those of you who wish to visit the museum but not do the walk.

## Vince's Corner - Protecting the Protector: Gangwall

At the bottom of Chescombe Road in Yatton, turn left and follow the footpath across the old railway to Gang Wall. This is a large earth bank with ditches either side, at the meeting of Yatton and Congresbury parishes: you can walk down it to the river.

*Photography by Faith Moulin, YACWAG*

After the Romans, the Northmarsh reverted to saltmarsh and watery waste (shades of Beowulf!), and only by enormous effort could it be reclaimed for agriculture. Gang Wall contains at least 17,000 tons of clay. It was built in the medieval period (before 1382) to separate the drainage of Yatton Moor (which had scattered farms in the middle ages) and Congresbury Moor (mostly an open moor until 1815). The parish boundary is the Binhay Rhyne (rising near Cadbury Farm) forming the south ditch of the Gang Wall.

Gang Wall is nationally unusual in that it has no road along it and is a largely unchanged monument of medieval drainage engineering. It also still has that medieval landscape around it, in the ditches and rhynes of the Biddle Street SSSI.

Vince Russett