

YCCART

Yatton Congresbury Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team

Newsletter March 2020

Chairman's chat

Soon after we published the December newsletter, Christine Lufflum, a founder member and president of YCCART, passed away on December 19th 2019 aged 73. She will be sadly missed. Janet has kindly produced an obituary.

Last Autumn was a difficult time for YCCART with so many Thursday surveys cancelled due to the rain and just as we were hoping for some drier Spring days the Corvid-19 crisis arrives stopping all surveys and social gatherings. I have been very impressed, inspired and amused by the emails members have been sending - keep it up - its good to feel less isolated and still in contact and part of the team. Lets keep these conversations going until we can meet up again.

While you are self-isolating it is the perfect time to prepare something, however brief, for the next newsletter. If we have enough copy I can produce an additional newsletter for April/May. Remember I need the text as a Word, Pages or RTF document and the images as separate jpegs. Please stay safe during this difficult time.

Arthur Langley

Obituary

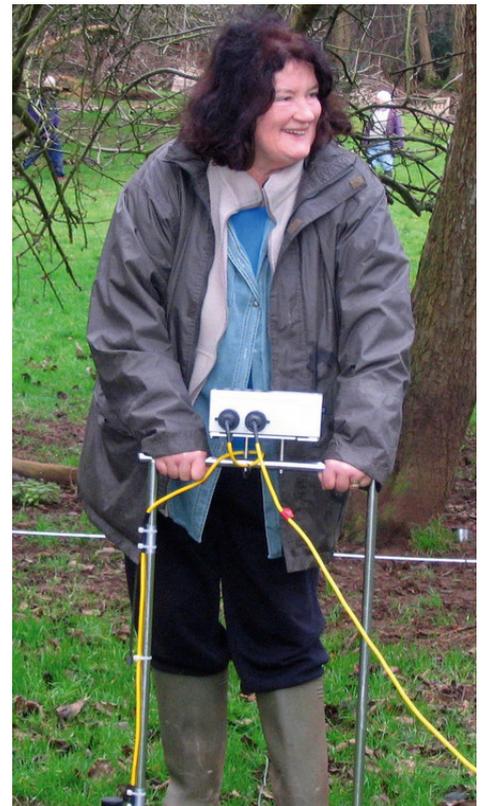
Christine Lufflum, a founder member of YCCART, passed away on December 19th 2019 aged 73.

Christine's early years were spent in Edinburgh where she was born in 1946. At the age of 13 she attended Cleethorpes Grammar School and later Leeds Teacher Training College where she trained to be a primary school teacher. In 1971 she met Derek and they married two years later. She leaves a daughter Sarah and 2 grandsons, Ryan and Brandon.

In later life Christine studied archaeology for 3 years at Bristol University having already obtained GCSE, AS and A level passes in the subject. Her love of archaeology was such that she even started digging up the front garden looking for finds.

She was an active member of YCCART until 2009 when a stroke left her semi-paralysed. Undaunted she continued her interest in archaeology as a prominent member of the Research team and always took a great deal of interest in the field work carried out by YCCART. Up until last summer, when her health took a turn for the worse, Christine regularly came for coffee and an up-date on YCCART's current projects. Her cheerfulness and determination in the face of adversity was recognised by her friends and family and she will be greatly missed by all.

Janet Dickson



Yatton test pits

Building on the interest generated by the Romano-British burial site at Arnold's Way, Cat Lodge, North Somerset County Archaeologist, is keen for local residents to carry out test pits in their own gardens. With YCCART's support she had planned to introduce the project on Saturday May 2nd 1.00

- 3.00pm at Hangstones Pavillion, Yatton, although under current Covid-19 this likely to be postponed. At the session residents will be shown how to excavate a test pit; a follow up session will be arranged later where Vince will identify any finds. Hopefully this project will eventually take place. Please let me know if you are able to support Cat in this venture.

Janet Dickson

Strawberry Line

When the Bristol and Exeter Railway built the railway which was to become known as the Strawberry Line it adopted the Great Western gauge of seven foot and a quarter of an inch. This gauge had considerable advantages in terms load capacity, comfort and speed but created problems when goods had to be unloaded to be carried on the narrower standard gauge (four feet eight and a half inches).

In the mid 1870s, as a result of Government pressure, all Broad Gauge track was converted to standard gauge. This happened in November 1875 on the Strawberry Line. Remnants of the broad gauge track can still be found along the line in the form of fence and gate posts such as that shown in the attached photograph. These are a direct link to the engineering of Mr Brunel.

Peter English



YCCCART and the Congresbury Cross

The cross in the centre of Congresbury is a Scheduled Monument and was constructed before 1390, almost certainly to act as a market focus for the Congresbury Market and Fair.

In 2016 YCCCART carried out an evaluation excavation for Congresbury Parish Council on the east side of the cross and revealed significant basement structures, engineered in the 14th century to provide a stable base for the cross.



Since then YCCCART has regularly, very carefully, cleaned the cross of weeds. Cleaning was undertaken in January 2020 by the small, but enthusiastic, group shown in the photograph.



If you would like to help us keep the cross clean please get in touch.

Janet Dickson

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

These YCCCART events now postponed including -

YCCCART AGM & fish & chip lunch. Bev Knott will be giving a presentation on the Mendip Roman roads

YCCCART - Visit to Axbridge.

The following event has yet to be postponed by Cat Lodge

Saturday May 2nd Cat Lodge Drop in session to introduce the Yatton test pit project 1.00 – 3.00pm Hangstones Pavilion Yatton

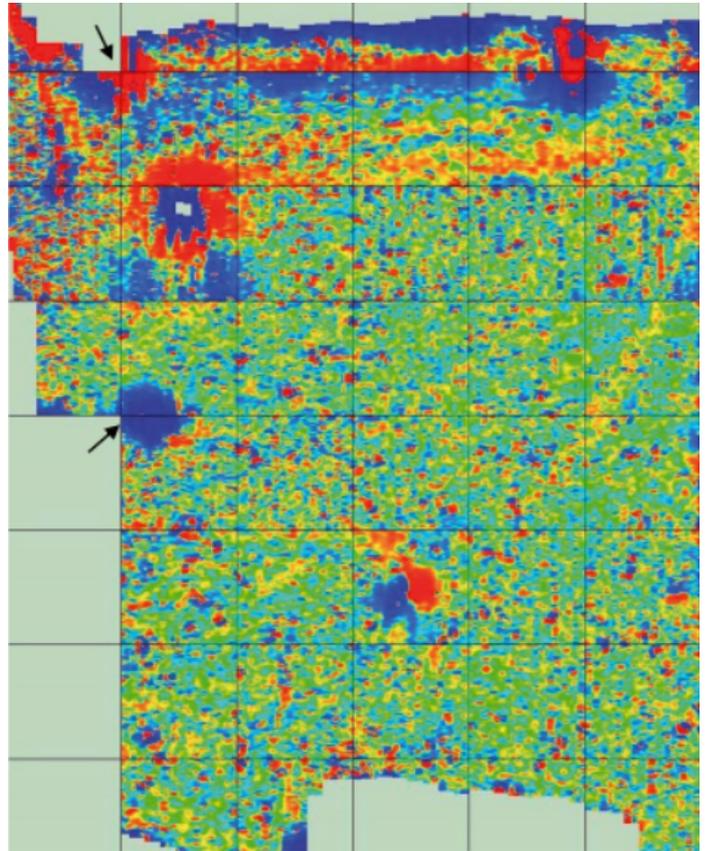
Turn around and it is gone!

Between July and September 2014 YCCART surveyed Cobthorn field (known as Collins 12) as part of the Congresbury Kilns tranche of YCCART's work.

This is an extract from the report. A number of features worthy of further study were identified.



1839 map. Courtesy of Bristol Records Office BRO37959/9. The survey field is number 1514 on the map (red dot)



TerraSurveyor shade view colour filter gradiometer image. High readings are in red



Site indicated by arrow

North Somerset Council granted Sunley Homes Ltd planning permission for the site to be developed. Prior to work starting, the developers engaged a professional archaeologists firm (AC Archaeologists) to repeat the survey and dig the site.

The YCCART and the professional geophysical survey results were closely aligned. The professionals found, amongst other features, evidence of Roman activities including the smelting of iron.



Remains of a furnace found on site for iron smelting



Oven found on site

The excavations were refilled and the site surrendered for the development. The main access road through the site is to be called Furness Way. By this time the developers were Strongvox Ltd.

However, the populous have to live somewhere and most of us live in houses built on fields. Though what this emphasises to me is the importance of our survey work in capturing, properly documenting the findings and publishing the results.

The following photographs on the next page show the development before and now.....



Taking the last hay harvest from Cobthorne in July 2018

Cobthorne development in February 2020

As I said *turn around and it's gone.* And to quote the poet Edward Thomas -

"I never noticed it until 'twas gone....."

Ian Morton
February 2020.

PS I have not realised it before but today's house building methods are essentially the same as those in the ancient times. A man (yes it is usually a man) with a trowel laying bricks in mortar. A time-travelling Roman craftsman could start straight away on today's building sites – always allowing for language, a taste in popular music sounding out all the working day and the metric system of measurement!

Clevedon Torc

This beautiful object which dates from the Iron Age is currently on display at Weston Museum.

It was found near Walton Castle sometime in the 1800's and later bequeathed to the British Museum by antiquarian and curator, Augustus Wollaston Franks, in 1897.



Investigating the dental tartar of Scottish soldiers.

A ground breaking technique of extracting biological evidence from plaque was used upon the teeth of the 28 excavated bodies of Scottish soldiers buried in a mass grave in Palace Green, Durham.

The bodies were of survivors of the Battle of Dunbar who were forced marched to Durham in 1650; these 28 later died of dysentery or were possibly executed.

Analysing the tartar which had built up on their teeth showed evidence of the men's diet and also general health. The mineralised plaque hardens to form calculus which traps a variety of debris from foodstuffs and the environment, as well as storing bacteria.

The starch granules identified a cereal based diet supplemented by leaf vegetables such as cabbage or kale. Soil was present, indicating poorly washed food, as were particles of soot and charcoal suggesting exposure to smoke filled homes. Burnt debris could also have entered mouths by smoking clay pipes.

Dental tartar is rich in ancient bio-molecules. In the case of the Palace Green men, a number of bacteria were identified, including those found in gum disease, as well as some infections associated with respiratory conditions.

Janet Dickson

Note - In the last 2 years I have walked up the very steep hill (good exercise) to the cathedral at Durham, on at least three occasions. It was only over the Christmas holiday that I noticed that Palace Green has been restored, as previously there always seemed to be some works underway. I wonder if this mass grave was discovered during these drainage/construction works. The cathedral is well worth a visit. Stunning location, huge stone decorated pillars supporting the nave, graves of the Venerable Bede and St Cuthbert, a fabulous Treasure House,

wonderful cloister and a very reasonable lunch to be had in the refectory. Archbishop Thomas Langley was Bishop of Durham 1407 - 1437 and founded the Cathedral Grammar and Choral school. The building still stands. However, since 1437 the Langley's relationship with organised religion, grammar and singing seems to have greatly diminished!

Arthur Langley

Hidden in the text are the names of several places in Somerset.

How many can you find?

Our tour of the farm begins in the barn where a bat hung down from every rafter. Some are flying around squeaking.

Outside in the orchard we are surprised to see sheep racing across a field. What was really remarkable, a donkey was chasing them. Seeing his flock in great panic the farmer called his dog to round them up. The dog would circle ever so slowly and drive them into a pen which would be kept shut tonight.

A farm hand nearby was either pushing a wheelbarrow or leaning on a shovel. He was employed mainly for clearing ditches and for digging drains. We were warned that if he swings a pick-axe to stand back well away. Things aren't going well since foot and mouth and he is owed more money than ever. There are millions of snails eating his crops and there was even more trouble yesterday, when a slurry tank spilled its contents. The whole place still smells but on the bright side, transport is heading this way with a new tank.

Answers on the last page.....

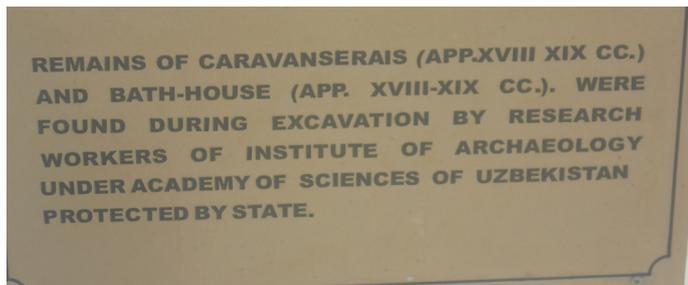
Stop Press

Geoff Pearson's article on FRED at Wemberham Villa will appear in the next volume of the SANHS journal. Congratulations and thanks are in order. More details to follow soon.

Roman Bath-house in Uzbekistan

Philippa has been kindly travelling the world on our behalf to bring us photographs of more ancient architectural remains. Here in Uzbekistan are the remains of a caravanserai and a bath-house.

According to wikipedia a caravanserai (or caravansary) was a roadside inn where travellers (caravans) could rest and recover from the day's journey. Caravanserais supported the flow of commerce, information and people across the network of trade routes covering Asia, North Africa and Southeast Europe, most notably the Silk Road.



These photographs were taken in Bukhara, and are the remains of a caravan trading centre on the Silk Road. Although the remains are 18/19th century, trading has been going on in this location for centuries. From Bukhara the Silk Road goes east to Samarkand.



Philippa Cormack



A restored caravanserai in Morocco - Janet Dickson

Answers to quiz

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Vince's Self-Isolating Corner -

1 Go on Google Earth and have a look at places you've heard of, but never seen: maybe Tahiti, or Timbuctu, or Medicine Hat, or Tuktuktuk.

2 Start indexing your photographs. When you're gone, they'll be no use to anyone if they're not indexed or labelled.

3 Write up old walks, digs and other fieldwork you (or indeed, someone else) has done. Last year I wrote up an excavation from 1962, this year, I'm tackling one begun in 1950...

4 Phone someone you've been meaning to call for ages, but haven't quite got around to. It'll be nice for them, too.

5 Clean out the kitchen cupboard, and chuck out the manky instant porridge packets from five years ago.

6 Sort out the data on your computer and back it up. Twice.

7 Listen to your local radio station, realise how awful it is, and go back to Radio Four

8 Have a virtual stroll around some foreign capitals with Street View on Google Earth. Zoom in on the city, and move the little man onto one of the roads. I've had a stroll around Vienna and Jerusalem last week. Funny how much all cities look the same.