

# YCCCART

## Yatton Congresbury Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team

Newsletter May 2019

### Chairman's chat

Welcome to the May edition of the YCCCART newsletter and the first for me as Chairman. After 8 years, of doing an excellent job, Peter English recently stood down as chairman. Therefore, I would like to thank him on behalf of all our members for the hard work, enthusiasm and commitment he has given to YCCCART during his time with the gavel. Peter has always been there to help, inquire how you are, share a joke and pass on his knowledge and long may this continue.

This edition demonstrates the wide range of activities that YCCCART members are involved in. It's not just tramping across fields doing geophysical surveys and digging holes. Colin Campbell is to be commended for his 10 year photographic study monitoring the effects of the vegetation on the archeology of Cadbury hillfort. Geoff Pearson is like a dog with a bone and Dave Long has been reminiscing about time spent in local pubs. Vince's article on silver mining at Charterhouse links to the recent surveying we have done on the Mendips looking for a lost section of Roman road. Janet has given some ideas on where to go locally this summer if you are not tramping across fields, digging holes, researching, writing reports, taking photographs, word processing the text of old deeds, washing pottery shards, maintaining the Website, organising the coffee and biscuits, checking the accounts, planning the visit to Nuny Castle, or cleaning the Cross etc. Its all important - Thank you.

Arthur Langley

### Public House Tokens

Public house tokens were in use from about 1840 to 1914. There are around 10,000 varieties known and possibly more still undiscovered. Unfortunately very little information is available to research them. They are usually made from brass or copper and sometimes bronze, the most common shape is circular, but they can also be found in oval and octagonal shapes. Most were made in Birmingham, with smaller numbers from Bristol, Exeter, Leeds, Liverpool, London and Sheffield.

They typically have the name of the public house and occasionally the name of the publican on one side and the value and sometimes the token manufacturer on the reverse. They seem to have had various uses but mainly for pub games. When a team game such as skittles was played, before the match started both teams would agree the prize, usually a pint of beer. The captain of each team would then collect from each of his team the price of a pint. After the match the cash collected would be handed over the bar and replaced with tokens. These would be handed out to the players who could use them to buy a pint that evening or if they preferred at another time, but only at that pub. They have also been used as a pass to public toilets and by friendly societies as they often held their meetings at a public house.

There are three known tokens that exist for the YCCCART area, The Plough in Congresbury, The Lord Nelson at Cleeve and The Prince of Orange in Yatton. So if you have a collection of old coins that have come down through the family it is possible you might find one of these amongst them.

Tokens are known to have been used in 91 towns or villages in Somerset resulting in about 500 different varieties and possibly more to be discovered.

If you would like to know more about pub tokens Somerset County Council Library Service have produced booklet on Somerset Public House Tokens. The illustrations were taken from the above mentioned booklet.

Dave Long



Cleeve (near Bristol) - Lord Nelson  
Obv - LORD NELSON BOWLING SALOON CLEEVE  
Rev - 3D within a wreath  
Maker - Durning Birmingham  
Brass/26.5mm/milled edge



Congresbury - Plough Inn  
Obv - PLOUGH INN CONGRESBURY  
Rev - 3D within a wreath  
Maker - Durning Birmingham  
Brass/23.6mm/milled edge



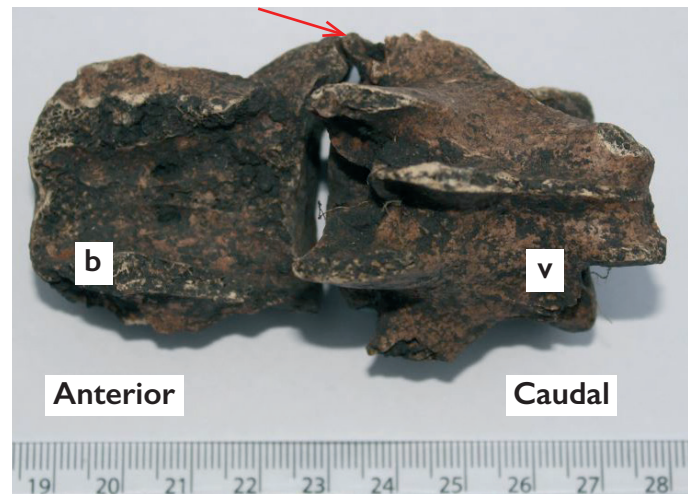
Yatton - Prince of Orange  
Obv - PRINCE OF ORANGE  
Rev - 3D within a wreath  
Maker - Durning Birmingham  
Brass/23.8mm/milled edge

## Just Bones?

During the St Andrew's churchyard excavation in 2011 (YCCCCART Y11/2011), a quantity of animal bones was recovered (Report in preparation!). Most of these were considered to be from food animals (cattle, sheep and pigs), partly due to the recognition of teeth. Unusually, two bones were considered to be from a dog. These were lumbar vertebrae, one partly damaged, and one which included only the body, with the 'arch' absent (see photograph). They were adjacent in the vertebral column and had evidence of inflammation and new bone (osteophyte formation), on the right side of the vertebral bodies (see photograph), known as spondylosis. This change is usually found in older animals.

But when did it die? The other finds were dated from Roman to late Victorian times – so was the dog Roman or later? Carbon dating might help to uncover the mystery – but it's expensive, so we'll probably never know.

**Geoff Pearson**



*Aligned, dorsal aspect of dog vertebral body (b) and whole vertebra (v). Osteophyte formation (red arrow).*

## Cadbury Hillfort vegetation monitoring project

In 2009 the Joint Management Committee of Yatton and Congresbury Parish Councils concluded that important archaeological features of the Hill-fort had become obscured and potentially damaged by the encroachment of woodland. A programme of tree-felling and scrub clearance was begun, and I volunteered to make a photographic record of the ensuing changes.

A total of 17 views were recorded from 8 predetermined sites on the hill-top, in winter, early and late growing seasons, chosen to give adequate coverage of any vegetation changes. Each photograph was identified by site, direction of view and date. Ten years and over 1200 photographs later, we can begin to see the way nature responds, not only to the changes due

to work done, but also to effects of grazing and variations in weather during the growing seasons from year to year. More of the defensive banks and ditches, once hidden in dense woodland, are now colonised by herbaceous plants and more readily appreciated.

Such a long-term pictorial record of vegetation, using standardised techniques is thought to be unusual, possibly unique, and will be of value in monitoring the effect of a ten year management plan of the site agreed in 2014 with Natural England.

**Colin Campbell**



*Figs 1 & 2. View looking North west towards Yatton Church, showing the crab apple at the edge of the wood in 2009.*



*Fig2. View looking North west towards Yatton Church, showing the crab apple at the edge of the wood in 2009 and standing among grasses in 2018.*





Figs 3. View looking South west from the same point as Figs 1 and Fig 2.



Fig 4. View looking South west. Note the removal brambles and bushes as well as trees.



Fig 5. Taken in 2010 after the first scrub and tree removal. This view of the main North Ditch would have been obscured by dense undergrowth before this date.



Fig 6. Common Rockrose, present as only a single plant on the hill, is an example of the limestone grassland flora that will hopefully recover as a result of the wood clearance.

## Somerset Rural Life Museum, Glastonbury

This museum, revamped in 2017, is well worth a visit. Based on the site of the former Abbey Farm the new galleries chart rural life from the 1800's through thematic displays of artefacts, farming implements and tools, old photographs and archive film. The older galleries have also been rearranged, although sadly the John Hodges room has been dismantled so no more pictures of children sitting on the communal toilet!

Outside there's the magnificent 14th century barn and in the courtyard the most beautiful metal sculpture of a carthorse. There is a charge to enter but the ticket does last for a year.

<https://swheritage.org.uk/somerset-rural-life-museum/> for more information and opening hours.

Janet Dickson



Metal horse sculpture in the courtyard at the Somerset Rural life museum

### Where to go this summer

#### National Trust properties -

- Tredegar House Newport Father's day Brewer's Brunch June 16th 11.12.30
- Redcoats and Rebels Dunster Castle June 15th-16th

#### Walking

- Wansdyke- 35 miles through BANES & Wiltshire
- Ham Hill nr Yeovil

#### St Fagan's

- Archaeology at St Fagan's July 27th 10.00am-4.00pm Free

#### M SHED Bristol

- On the set with Aardman - Making Early Man
- An introduction to forensic archaeology July 13th



## Vince's Corner –

### Silver from the mine

Roman mining of Mendip for lead is well-known: less well-known is that their main interest was in the high proportion of silver in the Mendip lead. Silver greased the wheels of the Roman economy, and was sought after in Britain, Spain, Greece and elsewhere in the Roman world.

The Roman open-cast mining at Charterhouse on Mendip was responsible for the 'rakes' (Fig 1), which themselves seem to have cut earlier shaft mines. The huge increase in lead and silver working during the Roman period can be detected in Greenland ice cores today.



*Fig 1: The impressive 'rakes' at Charterhouse are the remains of Roman open-cast mining*

We know (through isotopic analysis) that Mendip lead was being incorporated into bronze objects now in the British Museum, by the middle bronze age (c1100BC), and continued to be used down to the Roman conquest (for example, as lead fishing weights at the 'lake villages' in Somerset). The Romans used it for pipes, tanks and other similar uses.

Later peoples did not realise the rakes were mines, and they were called 'horechyne' ('grey or old gorge') in the medieval period.



*Fig 2: A hoard of Roman silver denarii from Somerset*

Silver was obtained by 'cupellation': once the lead had been smelted from ore, it was re-melted, and air blown through it. This oxidised the lead to litharge (lead oxide, PbO): this solid could be skimmed off the surface of the melt. At the end of the process, the silver remained as a 'button' in the base of the furnace, while the litharge could be resmelted into lead.

The silver mainly went into coins (Fig 2), but decorative objects were also made: the famous Mildenhall bowl (Fig 3) weighs 8kg, and this would have needed the cupellation of 2 tonnes of Mendip lead.



*Fig 3: The exquisite Mildenhall bowl, part of a find of late Roman silver*

**Vince Russett**

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Forthcoming events.

#### JUNE-

- Coffee morning at Bickley date tba
- Congresbury village fete Saturday 29th

#### JULY – Festival of archaeology

- Display at Weston Museum Sat July 20th
- Test pits in Congresbury July 27th-28th

Yatton Fete Saturday July 27th

SEPTEMBER – Visit to Nunny Castle and Charterhouse – date tba – YCCCART members only

OCTOBER – Friday October 4th Annual Social Congresbury Old School Rooms- details to follow.