

YCCCCART

Yatton Congresbury Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team

Newsletter September 2016

Chairman's chat

This is the first issue of the new-style newsletter which we aim to produce about four or five times a year. It will be available as a pdf file on the YCCCCART website and printed copies will be made available to local libraries. I would appreciate your comments on it and any contributions you would like to make to future issues. The latter should be sent to me or to Janet or Arthur, both of whom I would like to thank for the production of this issue.

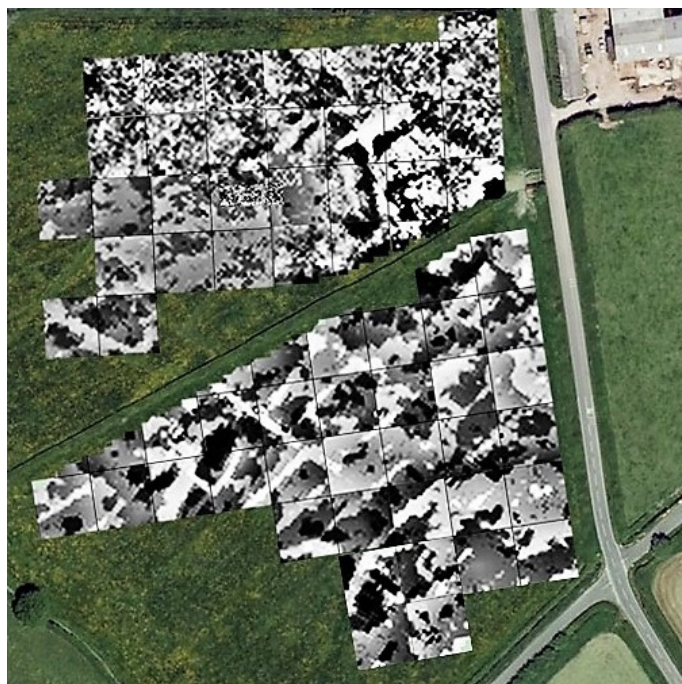
Peter English



Congresburyware bowl reconstructed from found shards - Photograph Janet Dickson

YCCCCART'S BUSY SUMMER 2016.

Once again YCCCCART has had a busy and productive summer with the geophysical surveys from along Kenn Moor Road in Yatton producing some intriguing results; perhaps a possible Romano-British farmstead or another corn drier?



The RM15 resistivity results are shown above. However, all three geophys teams have been involved in the surveys and we will be back soon to continue this work. A great deal of the preparation for this work was done by our research team.

FOR SALE

We now have YCCCCART polo shirts and sweatshirts in all sizes for sale.

Polo shirts - £15.96

Sweatshirts - £21.24

Place your order with John Wilcox.

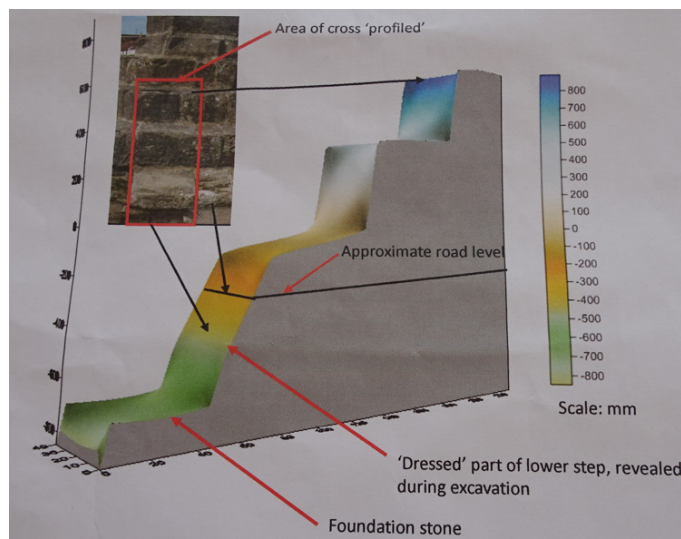
The Congresbury Cross excavation

This excavation, led by Vince generated lots of interest from passersby. The excavation was carried out to determine the extent of the archaeology so that the Cross can be protected from damage and to also prove or disprove the myth of the 'missing steps'!

See last page for Vince's musings.

Fred at the 'Cross'

FRED was used on the recent excavation of Congresbury Cross to record the levels of the contexts. In addition, a 3D image of the section of the three lower steps and the excavated foundation, on the eastern aspect of the cross, was produced, as shown below



Congresbury Parish Boundary Stones

Vince (with his three brave amigos) also spent time mapping and recording the Congresbury Parish boundary stones and the TW stones in King's Wood.

Thomas Wickham was the Rector of Yatton from 1809 until his death in 1829 (Gentleman's Magazine), but significantly, in the 1821 survey of Yatton, he was the owner of King's Wood in Yatton. Although no evidence is currently available, it is assumed he was also occupier of a considerable area of Kings Wood in Congresbury, owned for centuries by Queen Elizabeth's Hospital.



Stone 11 at Cleeve Roddy, showing decorative features.

There was, in the mid-19th century, a considerable iron mining industry in King's Wood. An iron mine agent, Richard Trevithick, was living in Yatton at the time of the census in 1851. It therefore was probably very clear in the 1820s that

a valuable mineral resource was to be found under Kings Wood, and this may explain the rather extraordinary lengths to which Thomas Wickham went to proclaim his ownership of the wood, especially against the holdings of other significant landowners in the area.



TW 23
TW stones were erected by the Rev Thomas Wickham.

Other news

Although we were unable to be part of Yatton's village fete YCCCART attracted some new members at its display at Congresbury's fete.

Cobthorn fields

In June archaeologists began work on the Cobthorn fields using some of YCCCART's survey results in preference to

those carried out by Sunley's archaeologists. The work revealed exciting evidence of iron smelting from the Roman period which extends our knowledge of Congresbury's historic



Evidence of iron smelting on the site - two examples of tapped slag industrial landscape. The team from Archaeology SE are due to return later this year to complete their investigations.

Cadbury Hill interpretive boards

Finally we can report that the new Cadbury Hill interpretive boards have been erected at all the major entrances to the site. The Cadbury Hill Management Group is indebted to Arthur Langley for all his hard work in creating the designs



and Janet Dickson for pushing through this project, organising meetings and taking minutes. Also thanks to Chris and Vince for writing the copy for the Hill fort panel.



Vince's Corner - Congresbury Cross dig diary August 1st – 11th 2016

The fence and signage to close the road went up in brilliant sunshine on 31 July but it was a different story when the excavation actually began. 1st August began dull, and the weather went downhill from there.

Day 2: The gazebo we had left over the excavated area had blown over in the night, and the site was running with water. This meant part of the site was just unworkable, so we initially concentrated on emptying the service trench across the middle of the site. We know this can't be very old, because its upper layers contained lumps of tarmac, but it did include a few earlier finds.



Four men looking into a hole !

Day 3: The excavation of the brown soil showed it was a deep layer, butted against the structure of the cross. At about 12 o'clock, as we were getting towards the bottom of this context, we found a long stone with a straight edge, which got longer.. and longer: Had we found one of the legendary steps? After a little bit of confusion, it became clear that what we had was not a step, but the basement of the cross, the material laid down to prevent its weight sinking the cross into the clay soil. And here it is: a 2m (and counting) long block of what appears to be Liassic Limestone with chock stones between it and the lowest decorated stones of the cross proper: note they have a fairly complex moulding below the junction with the stones above.) Am I pleased? - you betcha!



The basement and lowest step of the cross with chock stones between, 03 August (sorry it's a bit grubby and needs tidying, but we'll be doing that tomorrow).

Day 4: First thing Thursday: guess what? It's rained, and the trench is full of horrible brown water. But it's Thursday, and there's recording to do. Now if you're not an archaeologist, you'll probably think that the work stops at digging. Uh-uh! That's just when it starts. Archaeology is all about destruction (a bit like the b---y pipe trench across our site), except that we record our works as meticulously as possible. So today was the day to draw sections, fill out context sheets, check

the finds catalogues. When writing up the site, the written plans, sections, photos, videos, geophysics results, air photos and many other things, sometimes even folklore form a part of the ingoing information.



Day 6: Just another MANIC MONDAY (with YCCCCART) Wait a minute! Didn't I retire to avoid this kind of thing? Well, Congresbury Cross waits for no man (or me, for that matter). The state of play on Friday night was that we had basically solved the main question ('Are there two more steps under the tarmac?') and replaced it with a more nuanced 'well, no, but there is a basement to the cross which needs protecting, too'

Day 7: Solo effort at Congresbury cross today. Having typed up all the context sheets last night, I had quite a few checks and blanks to deal with, and by that time, the first passers-by were arriving. There's been a lot of public interest in the work at Congresbury cross, and I know Dan is keen to help the public see and understand what is going on here.



There was a lot of public interest in the work and YCCCCART members are there to keep the public fully entertained and informed.

GOODBYE TO ALL THAT: Last day for YCCCCART at Congresbury cross

This morning was the official visit by Mel Barge from Historic England, who seemed pleased with our work. Finally a report on the excavation will be sent to Historic England, NSC, & Congresbury PC before being published on YCCCCART's website later this Autumn.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Review morning
Thursday October 20th 10.00am