

Mrs Rossiter's Paddock
Yew Tree Farm, Venus St, Congresbury.
Gradiometry Survey 2009

YCCCART 2010/1

North Somerset HER 47508

**YATTON, CONGRESBURY, CLAVERHAM AND CLEEVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
RESEARCH TEAM (YCCCART)**

General editor: Vince Russett



Handover of the new Grad 601. Mrs Rossiter's paddock. April 2009.

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1. Abstract

In 1966 two Romano-British pottery kilns were excavated in the paddock belonging to Mr & Mrs Rossiter at Yew Tree Farm, Venus St, Congresbury.

YCCCART has agreed with the Heritage Lottery Fund to undertake a project over two years, commencing May 2009, to establish the extent of the Congresbury Roman pottery kiln sites. The paddock was the first site surveyed.

A number of potential kilns have been identified within the paddock by surveys with a Bartington Gradiometer 601. It is intended to carry out a resistivity survey on the site and produce a pseudosection of targeted potential kilns. Excavation of one kiln will then be considered.

2. Acknowledgements

A Heritage Lottery Grant enabled the purchase, by YCCCART, of a Bartington Gradiometer 601 without which this survey could not have been undertaken.

This survey would also not have been carried out without the willing permission of the landowner, Mrs V Rossiter, who has been extremely supportive and helpful.

The authors are grateful for the hard work by the members of YCCCART in performing the survey and to Geoff Pearson for proof reading.

3. Introduction

Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team (YCCCART) is one of a number of Community Archaeology teams across North Somerset, supported by the North Somerset Council Development Management Team.

The objective of the Community Archaeology in North Somerset (CANS) teams is to carry out archaeological fieldwork, for the purpose of recording, and better understanding of the heritage of North Somerset.

Members of the North Somerset Archaeological Research Group (NSARG) excavated two kilns in this paddock in 1966, but produced no report. However, as a result of this project, Mr Derek Lilly (NSARG) and Mrs Valerie Rossiter have kindly provided YCCCART with notes and photographs taken at the time of the 1960s excavation.

4. Site location



Fig 1: Site location

The site lies in the south east of the village of Congresbury, in the District of North Somerset. The centre of the site lies at ST 4443 6287, some 12 miles south of Bristol

The paddock is privately owned but can be seen from a public footpath which crosses an adjacent field.

5. Land use and geology

The kilns lie on alluvial clay.

Currently the paddock is not grazed but grass from the paddock is used for silage.

6. Historical & archaeological context

The paddock is centred on reference 1848 on the 1839 Congresbury map. This is described, as below, in the Tithe apportionment as an orchard attached to the house at reference number 1850. This house together with the land was owned by John Hugh Smyth Pigott Esq but occupied by George Cavil. George Cavil is described as a farmer aged 50 in the Census of 1841.



Ref No	Name
1842	The Six Acres or Close
1846	The Four Acres
1847	Home Ground
1848	Orchard
1849	Garden
1850	House
1851	Barton
1852	Orchard

Fig 2: 1839 Tithe Map extract. Courtesy of Bristol Record Office

1966 excavation

According to the few notes so far found regarding this site ((North Somerset Museum,MS files, *per* Jane Hill), the site was discovered by Mr Rex Rossiter of Yew Tree Farm, in early summer 1966 while digging a post-hole.

The site seems to have been subsequently excavated by North Somerset Archaeological Research Group, when two Roman pottery kilns were dated as '4th century AD', on the advice of Mr (now Prof.) Philip Rahtz (North Somerset Mercury, 8 Oct 1966).

The surviving records provided by Mr Derek Lilly (NSARG) and Mrs Valerie Rossiter, comprise a series of four photographs, a plan and sections of the kilns, and some notes prepared for a display in the early 1980s.

The kilns can be understood as Swan Type C, with central pedestals and no oven floor (Swan 1984). According to this source, other kilns have been noted, but no records survive of these, although there are two sketch maps in North Somerset Museum, of unknown date and authorship, which give some details which are mostly unhelpful. It has not proved possible to trace finds from the excavation.

7. Survey objectives

This survey had the following objectives.

- 1) To identify the site of the kilns excavated in the 1960s.
- 2) To identify any potential additional kilns.
- 3) To use the survey to train YCCCART members and members of Community Archaeology in North Somerset (CANS) in the use of the Bartington Gradiometer 601.

8. Methodology

An initial survey was undertaken by teams from YCCCART in May 2009. Considerable experienced in the use of the machine was gained over six months and it was decided to re-survey the paddock. The results included in this report are based on this new survey undertaken on 5th November 2009.

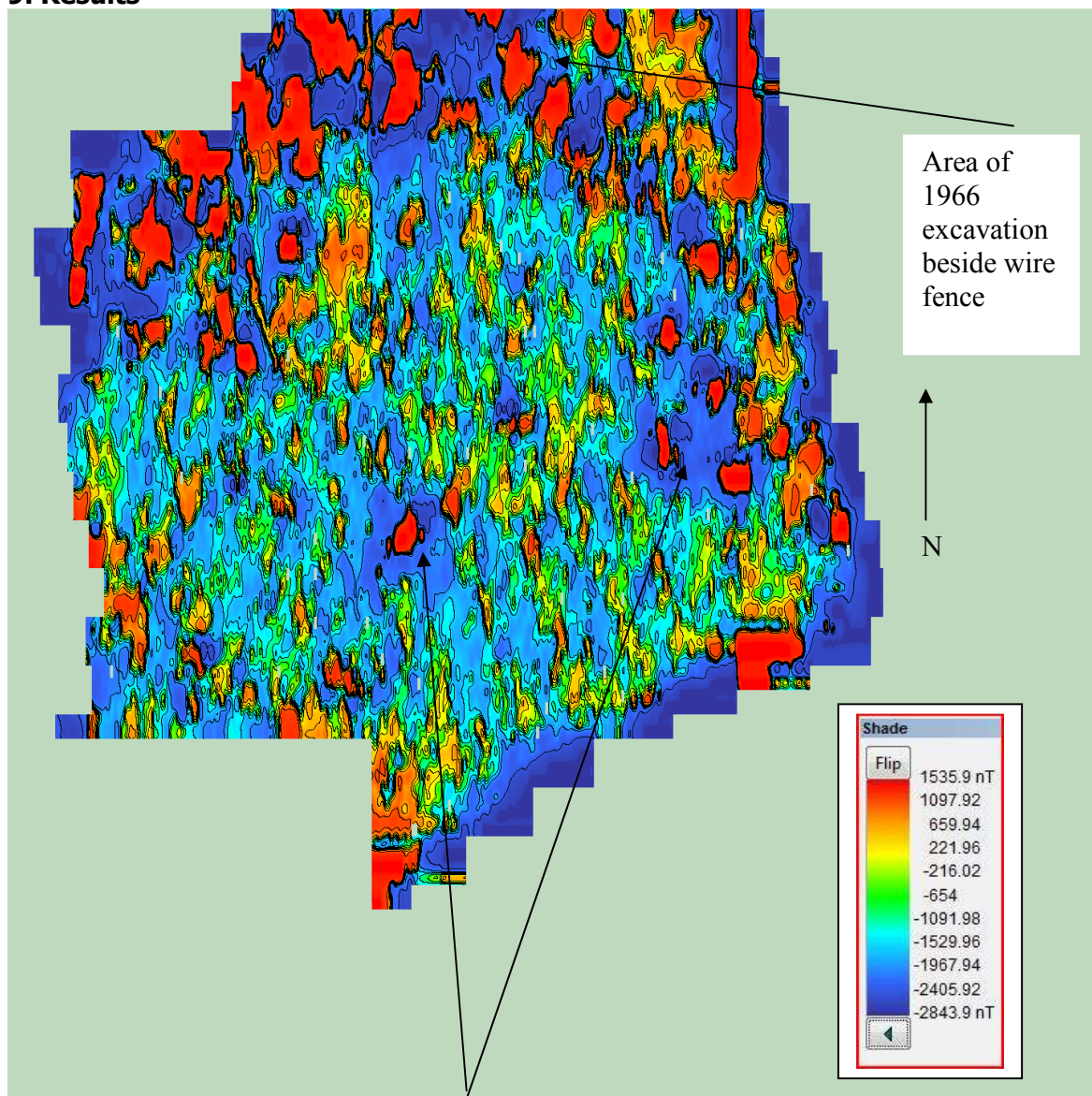
The completed survey was downloaded to an ArcheoSurveyor programme and the resultant composite adjusted using the following filters

- 1) Colour - Red Blue Green 2
- 2) Band weight equaliser
- 3) Grad shade
- 4) Contours
- 5) Destriped
- 6) Despiked

The report was written in Microsoft Word 2003.

Current photographs were taken by members of YCCCART, and remain the copyright of YCCCART.

9. Results



Potential kiln sites

Fig 3: Shade View

Roman pottery kiln sites are generally indicated in gradiometry surveys by strong negative and positive peaks immediately adjacent to each other. In this case, a number show as high positive peaks (in this case, coloured red), and adjacent or surrounding negative peaks (coloured blue). These are shown in the figure above. Other high positive responses around the edges of the field, especially in the north-eastern side, are due to interference from items such as barbed wire and metal waste from the adjacent garden.

Area of 1966
excavation
beside metal
fence

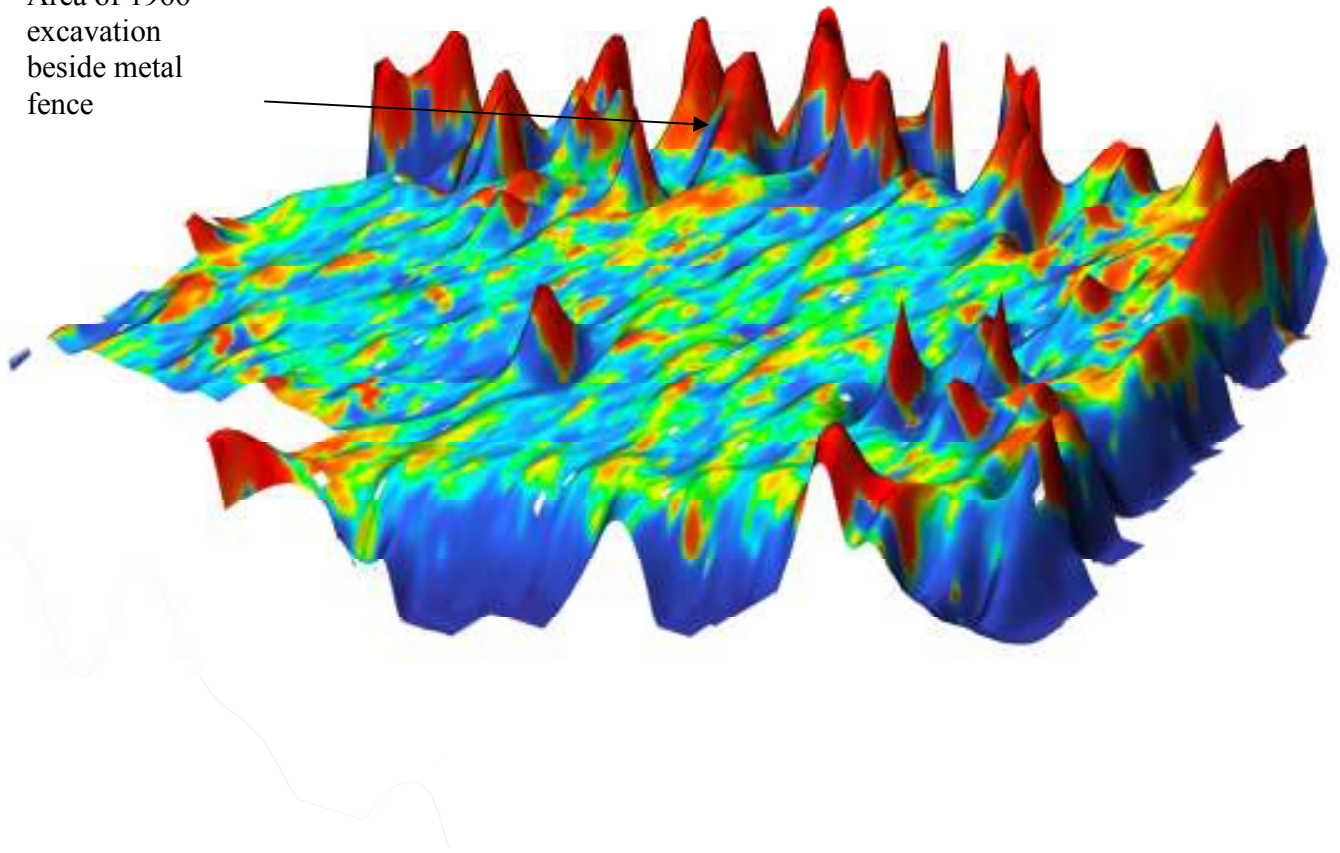


Fig 4: Axonometric view

These results illustrate the points made under the shade view. In this view, the potential kiln sites are indicated by red peaks surrounded by blue anti-peaks. Other high positive responses around the edges of the field are due to interference from items such as barbed wire and metal waste.

10.Recommendations for further work

The extremely useful results obtained in this survey indicate the potential sites of previously unknown Roman pottery kilns. Further geophysical techniques can be used to try and characterise the potential kilns, and so it is recommended that

1) A pseudosectioning survey is required of the anomalies identified (potential kiln sites?) in order that consideration can be given to full excavation of one kiln.

11. References

Extract from 1839 Congresbury Map	<i>BRO 37959/9</i>
1966 excavation by North Somerset Archaeological Research Group	<i>Weston-super-Mare MS files, per Jane Hill</i>
Swan, V. 1984	<i>The pottery kilns of Roman Britain HMSO</i>

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Date. 1 February 2010

12. Appendices

Appendix 1

Summary site record

YCCCART Site Survey Project – Congresbury Kilns						
Survey date		05th November2009				
Report date		05th November 2009				
Type /Instrument		Grad 601				
		Pace :1.5m/s Start: Bottom left Lines/m : 1 Range:100nT Volume: High Sensors:2		Grid size: 30m x30m Pattern : Zig Zag Samples/m:4 Audio: On Threshold:1nT Reject:50 Hz		
Location		Venus Street, Congresbury				
Ref		YCCCART Grad 601/1				
Site name		Rossiter’s Paddock				
Landowner		Val Rossiter				
Tenant		None				
HER ref		NSHER 47508				
Site type		Open field				
Description		Grass				
Period		Unknown				
Geology		Limestone				
Land use		None				
Survey team		Peter English, Mike Fox(part only), Susan Dugas & Ian Morton				
Survey area		notes		readings		
		size	walk direction	max	min	mean
Grid ref # Note survey started at grid # 8	8	30 x 30 m	W to E	+100.0	-100.0	-0.7
	9	30m base Mirror & return	W to E	+12.9	-100.0	-19.1
	10	30 x 30 m Mirror & return Truncated grid	W to E	+99.3	-100.0	-0.4
	11	Mirror & return Truncated grid	W to E	+83.9	-100.0	-11.9
	12	30m base Mirror & return	E to W	+99.8	-100.0	-2.4
	13	30m base Mirror & return	E to W	+95.6	-57.1	+1.1
	14	Mirror & return Truncated grid	W to E	+6.3	-100.0	-17.6
	15	Mirror & return Truncated grid	N to S	+22.7	-100.0	-3.9
	This survey complete					
Summary		Weather: sunny intervals, chilly				
Ian Morton 05/11/09		Version 1				



/// Rossiter field



note

grid #1's start at 8

grid 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 - 5/11/09

→ start point, grid # and direction of travel.

Y = start point set 7/05/09

Appendix 2

Site photos



Vince Russett, North Somerset County Archaeologist undertaking the initial run – May 2009. Members of YCCCART assist from the sidelines.



Downloading to the laptop for the first time.