

Chairman's AGM report – May 2020.

This probably the first YCCCART Chairman's AGM report to be sent out to a virtual AGM. I hope you are all safe and coping with the conditions of lockdown. One day we will be able to meet again, be out in the fields surveying and maybe even carrying out excavations. My thanks go to all of you who have sent out emails to keep us amused, entertained and informed even if little of all this content has anything to do with archaeology. It has helped maintain that sense of camaraderie and confirm that we are all part of successful team.

Since the last AGM meeting we have had the sad news that one of our founder members, Christine died just before Christmas. Many of you will remember her in better times before her stroke when she was actively involved in surveys and excavations. Even when confined to wheelchair she still wanted to be part of the research group and find out what the rest of us had been up to over coffee and biscuits.

Surveying has been hindered since late September 2019. It seemed to rain most Thursdays during the Autumn and the early part of this year. Consequently, the sites were very muddy or under water (Woodspring Priory). The licence from Historic England to survey Woodspring Priory expired and although an extension was granted the Covid 19 lockdown will make it difficult to complete this work by the new deadline. Hopefully Historic England will grant us a new license if/when things return to some type of normality. The survey results we did complete are very promising, especially as we had been experimenting with surveying at a higher resolution than usual.

We continued to operate two surveying teams each week last year, weather permitting, and some weeks a third team using the MARY kit. When no surveying could take place Vince and Chris led a team to survey Puxton church, following on from the successful and well-received published survey of Kingston Seymour Church earlier in the year.

The 601 team continued to survey fields in the North Marsh as we strive to build a survey across a wider continuous landscape, adjacent to the spectacular discoveries excavated on the new housing site at Northend, Yatton. Our thanks go to the landowners Mr Graham Burdge (and his land agent Fred Malton) and Mr David Crossman (and his daughter Michelle).

Attendance for coffee was particularly popular, despite the wet Thursdays. This has helped with our finances. Our thanks go to Philippa and Janet.

We continue to send members to the North Somerset Heritage Forum. At the last meeting on the Thursday 26 October Arthur Langley and Pete Wright attended.

The in-day on the 12 December was well attended with guests from Weston Museum Service, Jane Hill (Museum Community Liaison Officer) and a volunteer, Fraser, who gave us an overview of the 'Know your Place' website.

We continue to publish a quarterly newsletter with Janet kindly cajoling YCCCART members to contribute articles and photographs. An additional 'Lockdown' issue has been published

and second is possible if you can supply sufficient content. Vince's illustrated essays of his local walks surveying the history and archaeology of places have been a delight to read. Indeed, many of us look forward to the next installment being published.

In October we again held a successful social event in the Old School Rooms. The dinner was excellent and Ferdie kindly organized the after-dinner entertainment. We appear to have a range of 'showbiz' talents amongst our group. Again thanks to Janet and Philippa for organising this event.

The lockdown has enabled Chris and Vince to catch up on writing and editing reports for publication. Thanks go to Unsal for uploading them to the Website. According to Vince we now have over 170 reports online. A number of Mendip site publications have become 'guest' reports on the YCCART web site as Vince contributed to them. These reports are important, and it is better to have them published than 'lost'.

Not surprisingly the weather since the lockdown has been superb and we could have made real progress in surveying Woodspring Priory and the North Marsh. No doubt you have all been decorating, gardening and digging your allotments. Stay safe and keep fit as we need you back in the field as soon as it is possible to safely start surveying again.

Arthur Langley
15/05/2020