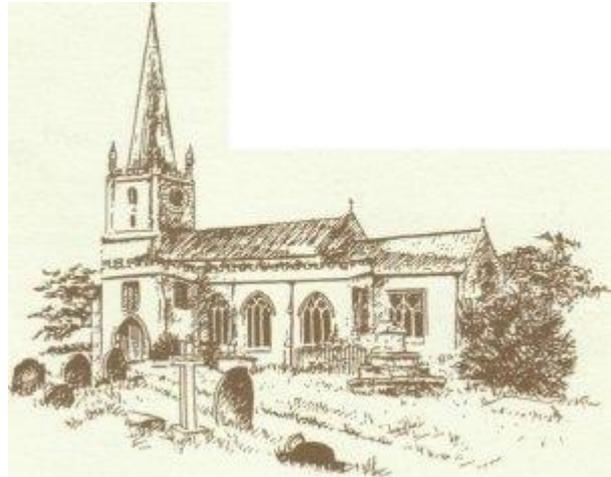


Guided Walk - Churchyard

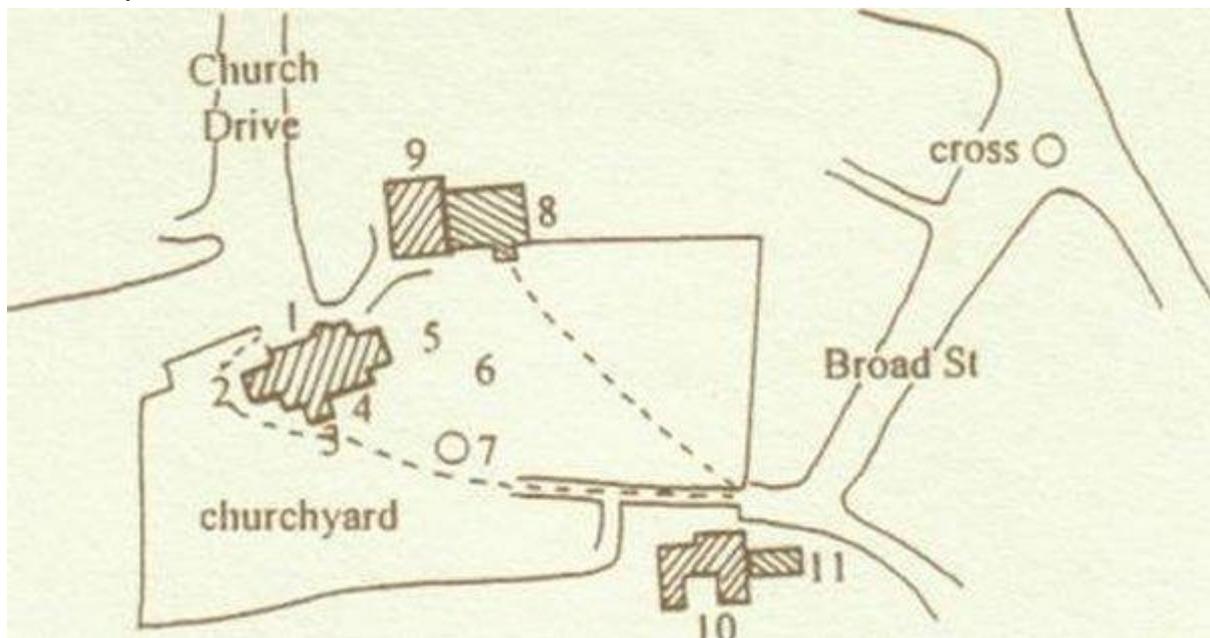
Canon Doble, who studied the legend of St Congar in 1945, suggested he was one of a group of Old Welsh missionaries who worked in the west of England in the late 5th/early 6th centuries

The legend is that he was the son of the Emperor of Constantinople and he ran away from home to avoid marriage. Arriving near Congresbury he dreamt that he should halt where he saw a wild boar. Arriving at what was later named after him Congresbury, a place shut in by water and reed beds, he came upon a boar sleeping in the rushes. Here he founded a wattle oratory and appointed 12 cannons to form a monastic community.



St Congar's Day is celebrated on 27th November and he is also remembered today by his "walking stick" in the churchyard. The remnants of this dead yew, badly vandalised in 1998, are a reminder of the story of how Congar wished for a tree to provide shade from the summer heat. He thrust his yew staff into the ground and the next day it put forth leaves and afterwards grew into a wide spreading tree.

St Congar is also said to have miraculously converted the marshes, which surrounded his monastery, into fields suitable for cultivation.



St Andrew's Church was consecrated on 11th July 1215 but extensively altered and enlarged in the following two centuries. A guide to St Andrews is available within the church.

1. The north door has an enchanting carving of a medieval lady. Look up and you will see an empty niche, where a statue probably stood before the Reformation.
2. The stonework of the west door is extremely weathered but notice the small empty niches.
3. The south porch has a 13th century doorway, perhaps the original doorway before the south aisle and porch were added.

Notice the scratch, or mass, sundial on the right hand side used to tell the time of church services before the advent of clocks.

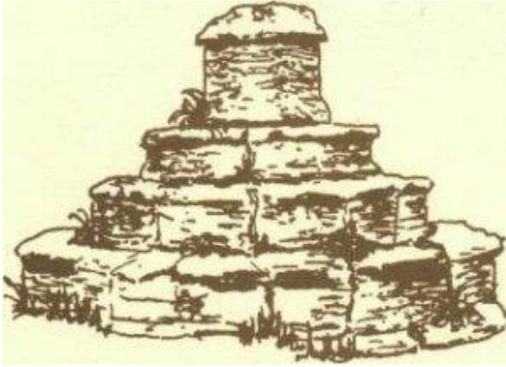
4. The earliest tomb in the churchyard - Seymon Knight, 1615. The churchyard has very few important memorials, possibly because Congresbury never had a resident lord of the manor.
5. St Congar's walking stick. The iron band once held the old yew tree together but the remnants of that yew are now almost surrounded by the beech tree there.
6. The Hardwick memorial. This 3-metre high granite cross is a memorial to a brave farmer who fought off an attack by a highwayman in October 1830. Charles Hardwick, of Hewish, was returning on his horse from Bristol market with a considerable amount of money.

He rode and conversed with a person called Richard Hewlett. Hardwick was not far from home (about one and a half miles from Congresbury towards Weston-super-Mare) when Hewlett drew a pistol and shot him in the shoulder. Hewlett then took fright and galloped away at speed towards Congresbury. Hardwick pursued his assailant and caught up with him at the bridge leading into Congresbury Moor, about a half mile from where he was shot.

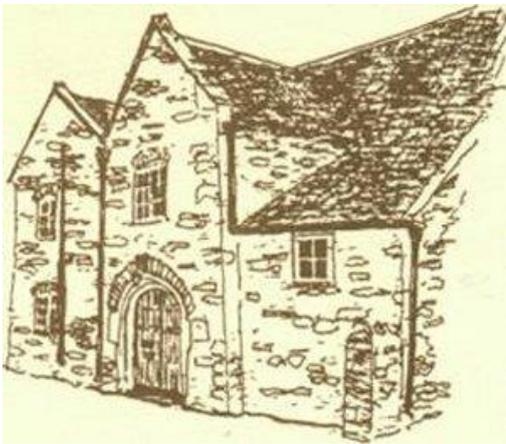
Hewlett then struck the gallant farmer about the head with a large bludgeon, and galloped away towards Congresbury. The farmer pursued Hewlett once again and caught up with him by Congresbury Bridge, after Hewlett's horse fell when swerving to avoid a cart. The two men struggled on the ground and farmer Hardwick received further blows to the head and was stabbed in the side by Hewlett's 7-inch dagger. Despite these further injuries the farmer held on to the highwayman until help arrived.

Hewlett was later tried at Taunton and hanged at Ilchester jail. Farmer Hardwick lay close to death for some time but lived a further 19 years to tell the tale. He was buried at Hutton. In 1871, after a Mr Kinglake had raised a subscription, the granite cross, weighing some three tons, was erected to commemorate this extraordinary event.

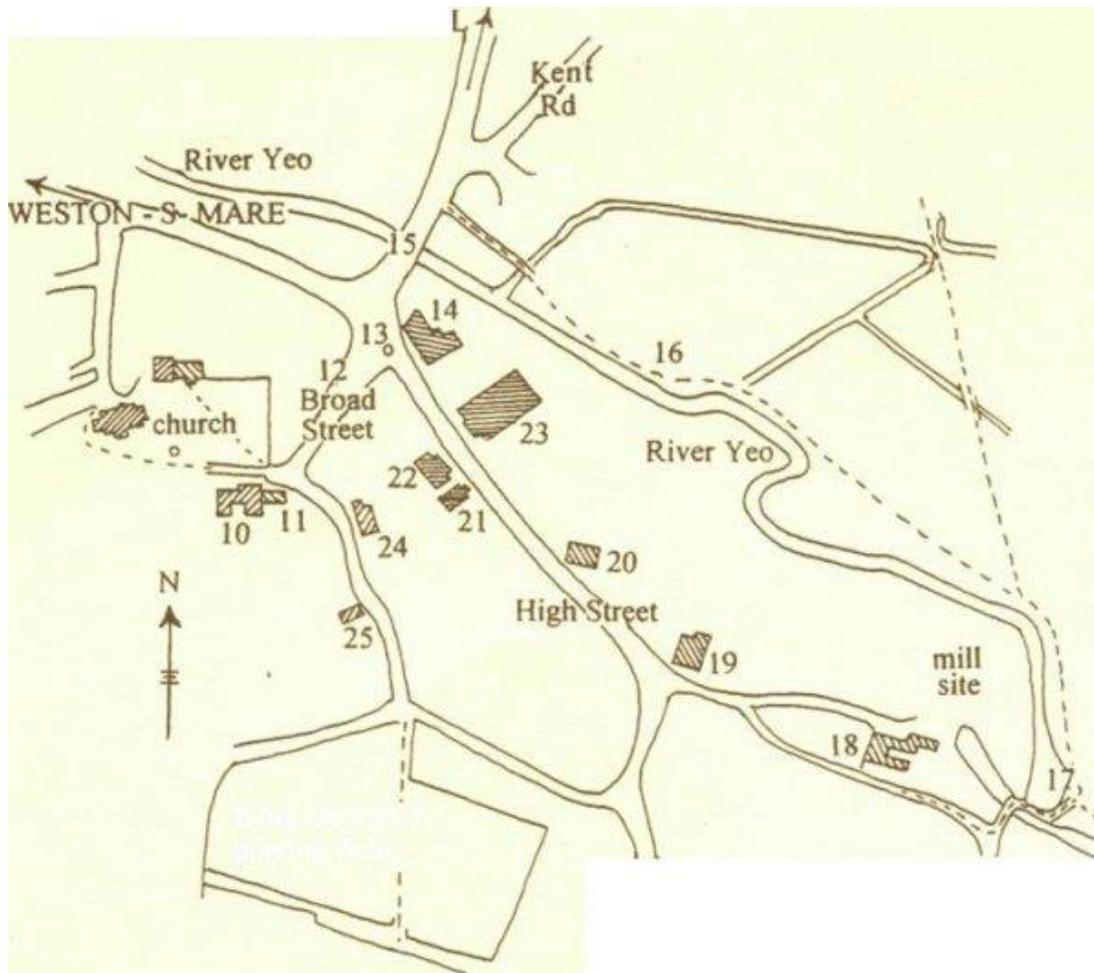
7. The 13th century churchyard cross built to commemorate all the dead in the churchyard before individual memorials were erected. The parish registers show that from 1563 to 1900 over 5,900 people were buried here. It is therefore possible that the total number buried in the churchyard is well over 10,000.



8. The Refectory was the former vicarage and is a grade listed building. It was erected by the Executors of Bishop Beckington of Bath and Wells (who died in 1465). The building indicates the importance of the village in late medieval times.
9. The building to the left of the Refectory is the present vicarage. It was completed in 1824, after the new vicar, the Revd Haythorne, had made representations that the old vicarage was "so old, damp and incommodious, as to render it impossible to reside therein."
10. The Court House, parts of which possibly date back to the late 15th century. This was where the manorial courts were held, which dealt, in the medieval period, with the organisation of the agricultural year and minor infringements of the law. Gradually they came to deal only with tenancy changes until in Congresbury they ceased altogether in the 19th century . A school was housed here from at least 1836 until 1876 when a new school (now called the Old School Rooms) was built in Station Road.



11. Once **The Poor House**, as shown on the 1739 map of Congresbury.



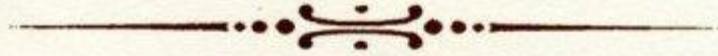
12. **Broad Street.** The unusual width suggests it was a planned arrangement for the weekly market and annual fair (granted in 1227 and lasting until this century). Fair day was the highlight of the year when farmers bought and sold sheep and cattle. Horses were run back and forth to show off their paces and hawkers and peddlers sold their wares. You could even get your teeth extracted in the street! In July 1968 the river overflowed its banks and water in Broad Street covered the top of the telephone box, which was by the trees.
13. **14th/15th century Market Cross** - Congresbury's best known landmark and a meeting place for several hundreds of years.
14. **The Ship and Castle.** The sign on this mainly 18th century building is the coat of arms of Bristol and in 1.658 the Inn was called the Bristol Arms. The sign is a reminder that, from the. end of the 16th century until 1921, Bristol Corporation owned a large part of Congresbury. The rents and profits from the manor were used to support Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Bristol.
15. **Congresbury Bridge.** Both the course of the river and the bridge were moved further from the Ship and Castle in 1924 when the bridge replaced at least two earlier structures.
16. **The River Walk.** The first field you enter is Congresbury's Millennium Green which will be linked, with a bridge, to more land on the south side of the river. Looking

north from here you can see Cadbury Hill, where there is an important Iron Age and post Roman hill fort.

17. **The Weir** which for several centuries was called "Tumbling Weir." Close by is the site of one of Congresbury's mill sites (possibly one of the two mentioned in Domesday Book), although little now remains except the millpond. Surprisingly Congresbury was part of the iron industry, from c1725 to c1750, when this mill was used to turn iron bars into rods for nail making.
18. **The Birches** is an elegant early 18th century Georgian house. Trees inhibit the view of the house during the summer.
19. **The Plough**, another of Congresbury's many pubs. The name reflects that this was once a smallholding.
20. **Yeo Meads**. A house is shown in this position on the parish map of 1739. At the rear is a 300 year old Cedar of Lebanon suggesting that part of the house at least existed at the end of the 17th century.



21. **The Methodist Chapel** was constructed in 1878 to seat 150 people. The porch is a recent addition.
22. **The Old Rectory**. This is probably an early 17th century building "modernised" in the 18th century with the addition of a Georgian facade.
23. **The War Memorial Hall**, constructed in 1920, commemorates Congresbury men and women who served and died in the two World Wars.
24. **The Old Inn**. The building possibly dates back to the 16th century but there is no evidence to suggest it was a pub until much later. The cottages to the left of the Old Inn were all built after 1739 with the nearest built in 1996!
25. **Appleton House**, another house shown on the 1739 map.



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