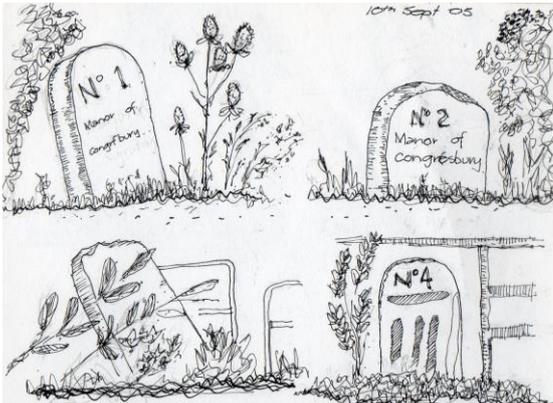


Congresbury Boundary Stones

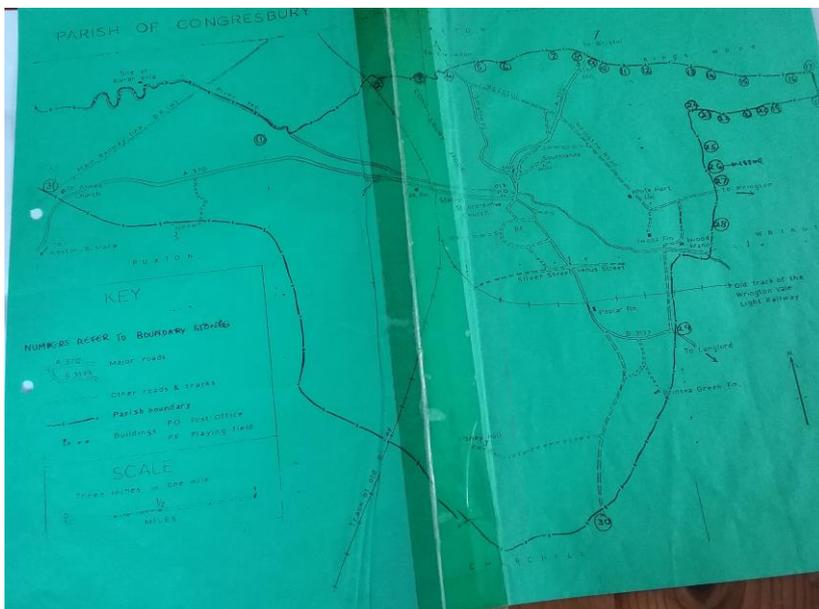
Even for a very fit and energetic Villager it would be impossible to visit all 31 Congresbury Boundary Stones in an hour. That's the time we are allowed to exercise outside each day during the Corona virus restrictions. It would take at least a day to see them all.

But, when we are able to visit Congresbury's boundary stones they are unique and one of only a few villages that have a full set that date from circa 1600. There have been a number of adjustments to the Village boundary since then, but the Historic stones remain.



Boundary stones were erected to mark out the Village. If a 'visitor' sought help from the Churchwardens, who administered the 'Poor Law', they could be taken to the boundary stones with a severe warning not to cross into Congresbury again and sent on their way. Help in those days was only given to those who were born and lived in the Village.

Sketch map of the boundary stones



Thanks to the diligent research undertaken by the late Gill Bedingfield, she found an historic report in the Bristol Record Office about the Perambulation of the boundaries in 1796 by the Governors of Queen Elizabeth Hospital who owned the Village. They sold Congresbury in a grand sale in 1921.

Gill also found reports of walks that had taken place in 1704, 1744, 1751, 1763 and 1770. But the most comprehensive written record is of the visit by the Aldermen of Bristol and the Governors of QEH on 20th and 21st May 1796 – 224 years ago next month.

For around 150 years the ancient tradition of 'Beating the Bounds' passed into history. According to legend Choir boys had their heads bumped on the stones so they didn't forget the location of the Village boundary!

Around 1974 the late Jean Day persuaded the Parish Council to arrange a walk to check that the stones were still in place. Despite many hours searching and clearing of brambles, ivy and blackthorn No 26 had disappeared. It was never found, but to mark the centenary of the Parish Council in 1995 a replacement stone was erected taking the number back to 31. No 1 at the rear of St Anne's School Hewish, disappeared around 2005 and has not been seen since.

Replacement Boundary stone 26.



We hope that it will not be too long before we can all take long walks again and enjoy our lovely Village and its history. Put visiting the Boundary stones on your list. If you find No 1 there might well be a reward!

Keep well and stay safe.

Michael Greaves
April 2020