



The most significant YEWS in the DIOCESE of BRISTOL

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These pages provide a 'snapshot' of information gathered from many sources during the last 13 years, and which is held on behalf of the Ancient Yew Group. A full account will eventually replace this document.

The yews recorded on these pages are the most important to be found in the churchyards of the Diocese of Bristol, and each one should be adequately protected. See page 2.

Ancient yews are at least 800 years with no upper limit. The Yews for the Millennium project took cuttings from yews considered to be 2000 years old, and there is a growing acceptance that our oldest specimens have reached this age, with some thought to be older still.

Veteran yews are at least 500 and up to 1200 years old.

Notable yews are at least 300 and up to 700 years old. This category also includes younger yews with a known planting date.

Significant yews recorded in the Diocese of Bristol

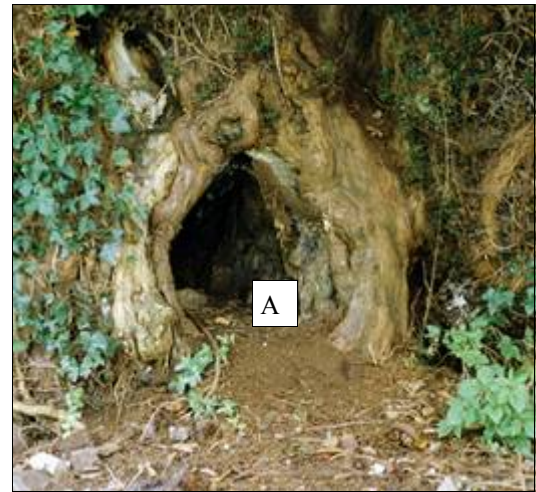
It is not known who is directly responsible for the management of these ancient, veteran or notable yews. Some will be in a Conservation Area, some will be in churchyards whose management has been taken over by the local authority. At others the responsibility for our oldest trees might fall to the Parochial Church Council or the Parish Council, and in some cases the fate of an ancient yew might be determined solely by the vicar acting with their churchwarden.

We are anticipating that the Diocese of Bristol will be able to help us complete the Responsibility for Yew Management column.

Location	Church dedication	County	Tree category	Responsibility for Yew Mmanagement
Abbots Leigh	Holy Trinity	Somerset	1 ancient	
Bitton	St Mary the Virgin	Somerset	1 notable	
Langley Burrell	St Peter	Wiltshire	1 notable	
Oldland	St Anne	Gloucestershire	1 veteran	
Purton St Mary	St Mary	Wiltshire	1 veteran	
Tormarton	St Mary Magdalene	Gloucestershire	Yew avenue	
West Kington	St Mary the Virgin	Wiltshire	1 veteran	

In 1829 an “ancient yew tree” was first noted here. Its girth has been recorded on several occasions since.

2003: It is a healthy female yew growing NNE of the church in a churchyard containing many yews. Most of its bole was covered with live wood. A hole at the ground (A), 16" high and 13" wide, revealed vast hollow spaces within what otherwise appears to be a solid tree. Some of the hollow spaces had been filled with stone or concrete. The large leaning branch which grows from the base of the tree (B) will exaggerate any measurements above 1'. I recorded 23' 10" close to the ground.



2000: A male yew with signs of burn/smoke damage on the inside. A gap of 19" at the ground gradually narrows before closing at a height of 6/7'. Girth was 12' 11" at the ground.

2003: The largest yew here grows ESE of the church and close to a wall separating churchyard from Langley Burrell House. Two feet of soil was piled against the bole and girth at this height was 12' 6".

In 1830 this “venerable yew tree” was described in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

2003: The healthy male yew grows at the perimeter of the churchyard above a 10' drop. The tree leans outwards over the wall. Many new branches are attached to the lower part of its bole, some becoming thick and swelling its girth to the 16' 10" we recorded close to its base. It has a large central branch with a long split revealing its rotting interior. Both on the land below the church grounds and in an adjacent garden were several other yews.

The earliest evidence of a yew at this site is this photo of 1903, held by the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre at Chippenham. It clearly shows the split tree we see today. In 1994 Meredith's gazetteer described it as a hollow and decrepit female tree. The photos below, taken in 1998, show that only fragments of the original shell remain, held together with wire.

The following extract was taken from the *The story of*



Purton :

"An old feature of the graveyard at Purton is the yew, strapped together with its iron bands, and another the stem of the old Preaching Cross, both memorials of the days of open-air worship in God's Acre."

In 2010 Peter Norton recorded its girth as follows: 17' 2" at 1', 16' 3" at 2' and 15' 6" at 3'.



2003: An avenue comprising 7 yews, probably in the order 150/250 years old.

On the left side from the churchyard entrance towards the church:

- 1 female 8' 11" at 2'
- 2 female 8' 3" at 2' a tree with a large dead section and internal growth
- 3 male 7' 7" at 2'

On right side from churchyard entrance towards the church:

- 1 6' 8" at 2'
- 2 4' 11" at 2' – living wood on only a third of its girth
- 3 female 6' 8" at 2'
- 4 female 8' 8" at 2'



2005: Drive through the farm to find parking by the church. The churchyard has a fine outlook towards the SW and in 2000 won a Bishop's Conservation Award.

The male yew with a solid looking bole grows SW of the church inside a 1' high circular wall. The tree bulges following branch removal at 5' on the side facing the church.

A gap at the base reveals portions of the original trunk. At about 15'/18' two main upright branches develop. It is still a many branched and fine looking yew.

Girth: 15' 7" at the ground and 16' 11" at 3'.

The postcard text reads: "Hugh Latimer, the Martyr, who was burned at the stake at Oxford in the reign of Queen Mary, was rector of the parish from the year 1530 to 1535, and, it is said, he was accustomed at times to preach under this tree."



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