

# *Chilton Candover*

## *The Avenue of Yew*

*A comprehensive report on the yews*

Peter Norton – October 2014  
Assisted by Hugo Egleston



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## 1.0 Introduction

Chilton Candover lies within the Hampshire Downs which extend across central parts of the county of Hampshire and form part of the broad belt of chalk running through southern England, linking Salisbury Plain in the west with the South Downs in the east. The downs form a largely open landscape with large fields associated with intensive arable production.

The geology within the area of Chilton Candover consists of Upper Chalk covered with occasional deposits of clay and flint. The Candover stream flows through the valley, which is orientated approximately northeast-southwest.

## 2.0 Recorded History - taken directly from freely available online documents

**2.1** At the time of the Domesday Survey, the Manor of Candover was recorded as *Candevre*, from the name of the stream which took its name from the British *Caniodubri* meaning 'beautiful waters'. Chilton was sometimes used on its own during medieval times and is from the Old English (OE) *Cilta* 'valley below the steep slope' or 'valley below'.

Chilternecandevre was used around the 14<sup>th</sup> century becoming Chylton Candevour during the 16<sup>th</sup>.

The 1562 the manor was sold to one John Fysher, who then oversaw the depopulation of the village.

John Norden in his manuscript, Chorographical Description of Hampshire - 1595 wrote;

*John Fyssher, is said to have 'depopulated this place, extirping the inhabitants, pulling down the howses... onlie remayneth the church and a ferme'*

The church was the old Church of St Nicholas, which was demolished in 1876, leaving only the graves and the tombstones. In 1925 a buried crypt was discovered which proved to be from the original Norman church. Manor Farm still exists.

The manor changed hands frequently and in 1662 belonged to Sir Henry Worsley and remained in his extended family until 1816. In 1818, Alexander Baring, later Lord Ashburton, bought the manor, which remained in his family until the 1930s, when it passed to the present owners.

**2.2** William Cobbett, writer and commentator, was one of the first to describe this yew avenue in his "Rural Rides". On route from Odiham to Winchester on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1822 he noted that:

*Chalk is the favourite soil of the yew-tree; and at Preston-Candover (the author reported the wrong place name) there is an avenue of yew-trees, probably a mile long, each tree containing, as neatly as I can guess, from twelve to twenty feet of timber, which, as the reader knows, implies a tree of considerable size.*

*They have probably been a century or two in growing; but, in any way that timber can be used, the timber of the yew will last, perhaps, ten times as long as the timber of any other tree that we grow in England.*

**2.3** In his 1839 book, *Sketches of Hampshire: embracing the architectural antiquities, topography & country adjacent to the River Itchen*, John Duthey described the yew avenue:

*The candover brook rises at uncertain points along the valley and only in wet seasons breaks out so high as preston candover: but proceeding down the bourn, the spot will soon be discovered where it usually issues at a pond near the church in chilton candover. Behind the church appears the inclosure which was once the park of chilton house, formally a seat of the Worsleys, and since of the Carteret family.*

*Opposite the site of the old mansion is a fine avenue of yew trees, inclosing a pleasant strip of green sward. The sombre tree of which this avenue is composed, possesses little attraction or beauty, and perhaps of this, among other reasons, it has become comparatively rare; yet this very rarity gives it a value, and the associations connected with it lead the recollection back to the twanging bows, the well fought battles and the hospitable halls of our ancestors. It is besides, most appropriately placed on this spot.*

*It is planted on sheer chalk, the most congenial soil for the yew, and on a northern slope of a bleak hill; It is one of the children of the forest that will thrive in such a situation, for it formed a noble approach and a conspicuous guide to the mansion connected with it from the open downs with which it is surrounded, and it is now, except some obscure foundations and a few old trees in the park-like inclosure attached to it, all that remains of what was once Chilton Old House.*

**2.4** The Hampshire antiquary and naturalist: being the local notes and queries of the Hampshire field Club – 1891

*The finest avenue of yews we have in Hampshire is that at Chilton Candover, near one of the sources of the Candover stream, an upper branch of the Itchen. This avenue is about half a mile long, and is an imposing sight, particularly in winter. The trees may be described as still in a vigorous state of growth, although probably four or five hundred years old. That difference in soil makes a difference in the rate of growth of the yew is well seen at Chilton Candover, where some of the trees in the avenue are considerably larger than others.*

*They have all the appearance of being planted at one time, but the avenue extends from east to west down a chalk slope, consequently there has been considerable rain wash down the slope, and a deeper soil has been formed near the bottom of the slope than remains on the upper part. The largest yews in the avenue are, as might be expected, where the soil is the best.*

**2.5** The Yew Trees of Great Britain and Ireland by John Lowe - 1897

*There is also an avenue of yews at Candover, near Alresford, extending for nearly half a mile; the trees are planted along the road through Lord Ashburton's property, about 50 on either side; they are from 20 to 30 feet high; a good deal broken. They vary from 8 to 12 feet in girth, the latter having much young spray around the trunk. There is no record of the date when they were planted.*

## 3.0 History of Avenues

**3.1** The main development of gardens in the Stuart period (1600 to early 1700's) is that of scale as they were influenced by the vast formal gardens of France, These gardens were designed to be symmetrical with long axial walks and rides stretching into the woods and parks beyond, resulting in the advent of the Avenue.

**3.2** The following text was taken from the 5<sup>th</sup> Council of Europe Conference on the European Landscape Convention – March 2009.

*Tree-lined avenues seem to have made their first appearance on the European continent in the Italian Renaissance gardens of the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They were "imported" to France, where they were soon described using the term "allée" which had been used for passageways in buildings in previous centuries and now came to designate a passageway in a virtual edifice, the garden.*

*These "allées" became inextricably linked with the formal, "French" style of garden design, which used them lavishly to emphasise the main lines of the composition and to guide the eye towards a chosen focal point. Initially this focal point was located within the garden, but designers soon came to prefer vistas which led into the distance.*

*Having invited the gaze to roam beyond the boundaries of the garden itself, tree-lined avenues soon did likewise, moving into the surrounding countryside. This transition came about within just a few decades and affected all countries.*

**3.3** The word 'avenue' was probably first used in the English gardening context by John Evelyn (1620-1706), courtier to Charles II, diarist, writer and gardener. The following is found in his best known work Sylva - Or a Discourse on Forest Trees, 1664:

*But here some may enquire what distances I would generally assign to transplanted trees? To this somewhat is said in the ensuing periods, and as occasion offers; though the promiscuous rising of them in forest-work, wild and natural, is to us, I acknowledge, more pleasing than all the studied accuracy in ranging of them; unless it be where they conduct and lead us to avenues, and are planted for vistas.*

## 4.0 Maps

In Isaac Taylor's one inch map of Hampshire (Fig.1), dated 1759, the avenue is clearly marked and therefore must have been considered noteworthy at that time.

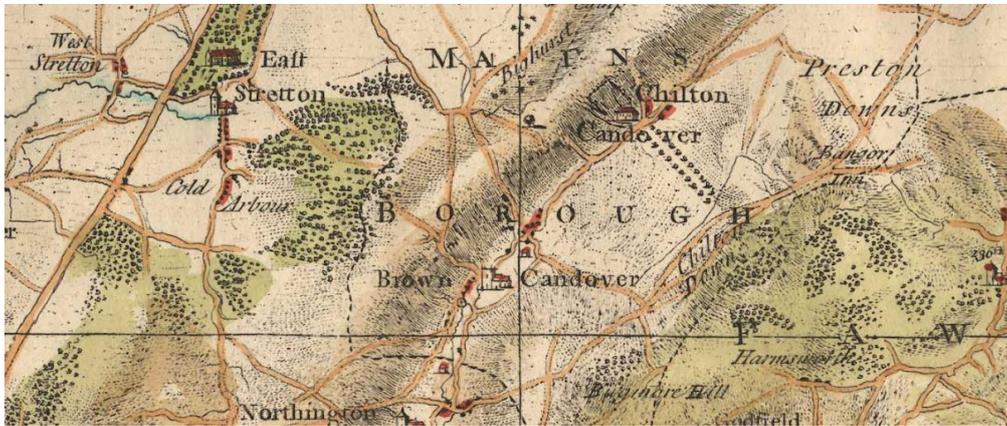


Fig. 1 Isaac Taylor's one inch map of Hampshire, 1759

However, it does not appear in later maps, such as that produced by Thomas Milnes in 1791. It is not until the Ordnance Survey's first series of 1817 (Fig.2) that it appears again.



Fig. 2 Ordnance Survey first series 1817

The latest aerial photograph, 2014 (Fig. 3) clearly shows the total length, while a second close up (Fig. 4) shows some of the larger trees in the original yew avenue.



Fig. 3 An aerial view of The Avenue



Fig. 4 A closer view of The Avenue

## 5.0 Yew Observations

The Avenue, planted in two stages, is on a northwest to southeast axis and has a width historically recorded as 40 yards (120 feet). The original planting possibly led from the old manor (pulled down and replaced in 1937) and continues up the gently sloping valley side towards Chilton Downs, where it ends at a minor road junction. The length of the original Avenue, measured by Global Positioning System (GPS), is 951.28 metres (3,121 feet), and contains 76 yews on each side.

During the 1990's The Avenue was extended by a further 375 metres (1,230 feet), continuing from the minor road junction towards the old Ox Drove and Chilton Down farm.

This newly planted section contains 30 young yews on each side, giving a total of 212 yews. The trees in both sections of the avenue are spaced approximately 40 feet apart.

During the storms of 1987 many of the original yews were weakened and finally fell during the storms of 1990. This survey indicates that 27 on the west and 23 on the east side were replaced with young trees. These are guarded by individual square timber enclosures (post and rail) with chicken wire to protect from mammal predation such as deer and rabbits. The 60 yews on the new extended part of The Avenue are also protected in the same manner. These young trees all had girths in the region of 2 feet.

The survey also noted evidence of a previous problem with uprooted or damaged yews in the original avenue, since there are 28 young yew, 14 on each side, not opposite to each other, with girths around 3 feet 6 inches. These have not been protected with timber enclosures and it seems possible that this damage might have occurred during the 1947 winter storms.

### 5.1 The Yew Survey

This survey, carried out in one visit during October 2014, represents a census of all yews over 3.5 metres in girth that could be measured. 20 trees had actual girths recorded of which 9 are featured, along with photographs within this article. A further 15 had estimated girths.

Observations into the sex of the trees was carried out by looking at the ground close to the tree for both seeds (female) or the remains of the pollen sacs (male). Where the evidence was inconclusive no sex was recorded.

During this survey the minimum measurement was taken and the height recorded. The earliest yew measurements, from centuries ago, were in feet and inches, as was the height at which the tree was measured. This survey continues that tradition and also converts into the metric system within the full listing. (Appendix 1)

## 5.2 Selected Photographs with Observations

Yew 2 Female 11' 6" at 2' 6"



Yew 3 Male 14' 7" at 2'



Yew 5 Female 11' 11" at 2'



Yew 17 Female 14' 10" at 1'



Yew 33 Female 16' 10" at 2'



Yew 58 Female 13' 5" at 2'



Yew 60 Female 14' 1" at 3'



Yew 89 Male with major damage



Yew 100 Female 14' 7" at 2'



The Avenue looking northwest



The Avenue looking southeast



The extended avenue looking southeast



## Figures

Fig. 1 Isaac Taylor's one inch map of Hampshire, 1759

<http://www.geog.port.ac.uk/webmap/hantsmap/hantsmap/taylor4/ty54.htm>

Fig. 2 First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1811.

<http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/maps/?layer=europe&xMin=3234492.3994144&yMin=2750822.2396235&xMax=3264492.3994144&yMax=2780822.2396235>

Figs. 3 & 4

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Chilton+Candover,+Alresford,+Hampshire+SO24/@51.1542921,-1.1526049,1639m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m2!3m1!1s0x487417ec57a04e8d:0x2f15db63f4684ab8?hl=en>

## References

### 2.1 History

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=56778>

### 2.2 Rural Rides:

<http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/travellers/Cobbett/9>

### 2.3 Sketches of Hampshire:

[http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Sketches\\_of\\_Hampshire.html?id=XggHAAAAQAAJ&redir\\_esc=y](http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Sketches_of_Hampshire.html?id=XggHAAAAQAAJ&redir_esc=y)

### 2.4 Hampshire field Club:

[http://archive.org/stream/hampshireantiqua01hampiala/hampshireantiqua01hampiala\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/hampshireantiqua01hampiala/hampshireantiqua01hampiala_djvu.txt)

### 3.1 Avenue (Landscape):

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avenue\\_\(landscape\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avenue_(landscape))

### 3.2 European Landscape Convention:

[http://www.historicroads.org/documents/CEP-CDPATEP-2009-15-TreeAvenues\\_en.pdf](http://www.historicroads.org/documents/CEP-CDPATEP-2009-15-TreeAvenues_en.pdf)

### 3.3 Sylva - Or a Discourse on Forest Trees:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20778/20778-h/20778-h.htm>

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

Listing of the yews covered in the survey.

Peter Norton (2014)

## Appendix 1

### West side of the avenue

No	Sex	Girth			Height measured	Comments
		Ft	Ins	Mtrs		
1	Male	12	5	3.78	3'	
3	Male	14	7	4.44	2'	
5	Female	11	11	3.63	2'	
7	Male			0.00		Damaged
9		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
11		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
13	Female	12	2	3.71	3'	
15	Male			0.00		Heavy spray
17	Female	14	10	4.52	1'	
19	Male	15	3	4.65	2'	
21	Male			0.00		Heavy spray
23		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
25		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
27	Male	17	5	5.31	2'	Heavy lower spray
29				0.00		Guarded Replant 1990
31	Male	16		4.88		Estimated Girth
33	Female	16	2	4.93	2'	
35	Male			0.00		
37	Male	2	2	0.66		Guarded Replant 1990
39		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
41		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
43		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
45		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
47	Female	11	11	3.63	3'	
49				0.00		Lost and not replaced
51	Male	14		4.27		Estimated Girth
53	Female	12		3.66		Estimated Girth
55		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
57		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
59	Female	10	7	3.23	2'	
61	Female	13	7	4.14	2'	
63	Female			0.00		
65	Male			0.00		
67	Male	13		3.96		Estimated Girth
69	Female			0.00		
71	Female	11	9	3.58	2'	
73	Female			0.00		
75		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990

### East side of the avenue

No	Sex	Girth			Height measured	Comments
		Ft	Ins	Mtrs		
2	Female	11	6	3.51	2' 6"	Seedlings around the base
4	Female	3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
6	Female	14	5	4.39	2'	Heavy damage
8		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
10	Female			0.00		
12		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
14	Female	12		3.66		Estimated Girth
16		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
18		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
20	Female			0.00		
22	Male			0.00		
24	Male	12		3.66		Estimated Girth
26	Female			0.00		
28	Male			0.00		
30		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
32		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
34	Female	15	6	4.72	2'	
36	Female			0.00		
38	Male			0.00		
40	Male			0.00		
42	Male	14	5	4.39	1' 6"	
44		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
46		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
48		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
50	Male	14		4.27		Estimated Girth
52	Male			0.00		
54		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
56	Female			0.00		
58	Female	13	5	4.09	2'	
60	Female	14	1	4.29	3'	
62	Female			0.00		
64		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
66	Female			0.00		
68	Male			0.00		major damage
70	Female			0.00		
72		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
74		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
76	Male	14		4.27		Estimated girth

Appendix 1 - continued

West side of the avenue

No	Sex	Girth			Height measured	Comments
		Ft	Ins	Mtrs		
77	Male	12		3.66		Estimated Girth
79		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
81		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
83	Male			0.00		
85		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
87		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
89	Male			0.00		Major damage
91	Male			0.00		Major damage
93	Female			0.00		
95	Male			0.00		
97		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
99		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
101		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
103		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
105		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
107		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
109		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
111		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
113		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
115		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
117		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
119	Male	13		3.96		Estimated Girth
121	Female			0.00		
123		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
125		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
127	Male	13		3.96		Estimated Girth
129		2		0.61		
131		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
133		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
135		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
137		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
139		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
141		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
143		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
145		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
147		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
149		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
151		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****

East side of the avenue

No	Sex	Girth			Height measured	Comments
		Ft	Ins	Mtrs		
78	Male	12		3.66		Estimated girth
80	Female			0.00		
82		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
84	Female	14		4.27		Estimated girth
86		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
88	Female	14		4.27		Estimated girth
90	Male	14	10	4.52	2'	
92		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
94		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
96		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
98		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
100	Female	14	7	4.44	2'	
102	Female			0.00		
104	Female			0.00		
106		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
108	Male			0.00		
110		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
112	Female			0.00		
114	Female			0.00		
116		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
118		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
120		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
122	Female			0.00		
124		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
126		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
128	Male	12		3.66		Estimated girth
130		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
132		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
134		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
136		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
138		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
140	Female			0.00		
142		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
144	Male			0.00		
146		2		0.61		Guarded Replant 1990
148		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
150		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****
152		3	6	1.07		Unguarded Replant ****

The remaining 60 young trees, not listed above, were planted in 2009