



The most significant YEWS in the DIOCESE of SOUTHWARK

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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 Southwark, 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

Significant yews recorded in the Diocese of Southwark

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 Southwark will be able to help us complete the Responsibility for Yew Management column.

Location	Church dedication	Tree Category	Responsibility for Tree Management
Addington	St Mary the Blessed Virgin	1veteran	Croydon Council maintain the churchyard
Charlwood	St Nicholas	1 ancient	
Crowhurst, Surrey	St George	1 ancient	
Farleigh	St Mary the Virgin	1 veteran	
Horley	St Bartholomew	1 ancient	
Tandridge	St Peter	1 ancient	
Warlingham	All Saints	2 veteran	
Woldingham	St Agatha	1 veteran	

Notable yews are recorded at Barnes, Burstow and Limpsfield. p9

Lost yews: p10

Caterham - St Lawrence

Chipstead - St Margaret

Horley - St Bartholemew

Sanderstead - All Saints

Tatsfield - St Mary

Girth of the old yew seen here was recorded in 1880, 1895 and 1913.

July 1999: The healthy female tree, to the left as you enter the churchyard, is split into two. There is evidence of fire damage to parts of the tree. Considerable low growth covered the bole. Girth: 16' 10" at the ground.

To the right of the churchyard entrance grows a second yew. Ivy and elder both in and around the tree made it impossible to examine. The untidy area around the tree had become a rubbish dump.



Gary Shield—2010



1999

Earliest written records of this tree are from 1850. 1999: A hollow shell, with many slithers of new wood on the inner surface of the tree. Wire netting has been used in the past to block the 4' wide entrance. The remaining 19' of its 23' 8" circumference is a thin shell. In spite of this the tree supports many thick branches and vigorous growth.

One of England's best documented yews, with records and stories from as early as 1625.



July 1999: There are only two gaps in this vast bole, one containing the 4' high door. There is much dead wood, and if this decays before new wood envelops it the tree's appearance will be much altered. The structure leans slightly towards the church and supporting wires and chains have been in place for some time. One branch, still attached to the tree, has splintered and rests on the ground.



The tree has been measured on many occasions, below are some of these taken from Lowe, Cornish, Meredith, Swanton and other sources.

Dates visited	Girth measurements	By
1630	30'	Old parish record
1650	30' at 5'	John Aubrey
1664	30'	John Evelyn
1833-45	30' at 5'	Samuel Lewis
1850	30' 9" at 5'	Brayley's <i>History of Surrey</i>
1874	30' 9" at 5'	<i>Gardner's Chronicle</i>
1877	31' at 5'	Mr Jennings
1880	30' 6" at 5'	E. Straker
1890	31' 8" at 4'	Rev Curteis
	32' 6" at 5'
1955	30' 3"	Allen Mitchell (Bean)
1955	33' 9" at ground	Swanton
	33' 2" at 3'	Swanton
1984	31' 6" at approx 5'	Allen Meredith
1994	31' 6" at 5'	Gwyneth Fookes

Yews have been recorded here since 1850.

2000: This female yew presents two faces. The one shown here is open and visible, with a knobbly appearance similar to that seen on the Dartington and Ibstone yews. This occurs as the yew recovers from the removal of small branches. Its other face was obscured by twiggy growth (A) which is seen on major branches throughout the tree.



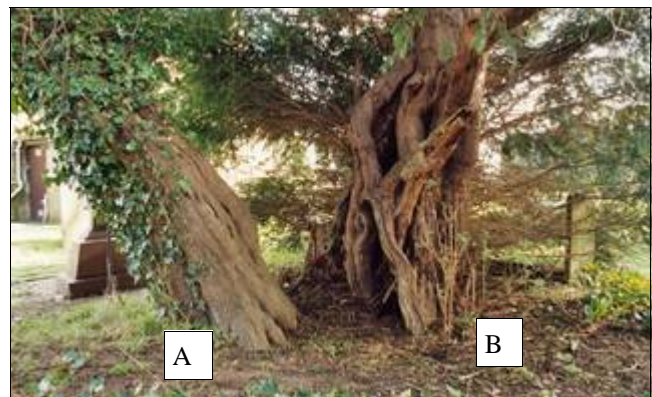
From its bole of about 6' are three main areas of growth. Girth was 17' 4" at the ground and 19' at 4'.

Action had been taken to remove ivy, but the tree was disappointingly being used as the place to store a dustbin, a pile of dried grass and assorted church-yard rubbish.

Earlier records note a yew growing NNW of the church. This has not survived, but a millennium yew in the same position (a cutting from the Newington Yew in Kent) was perhaps planted to replace it.



Records from 1850 to 1936 describe Horley's two large yew trees. Some time between 1936 and 2001 it

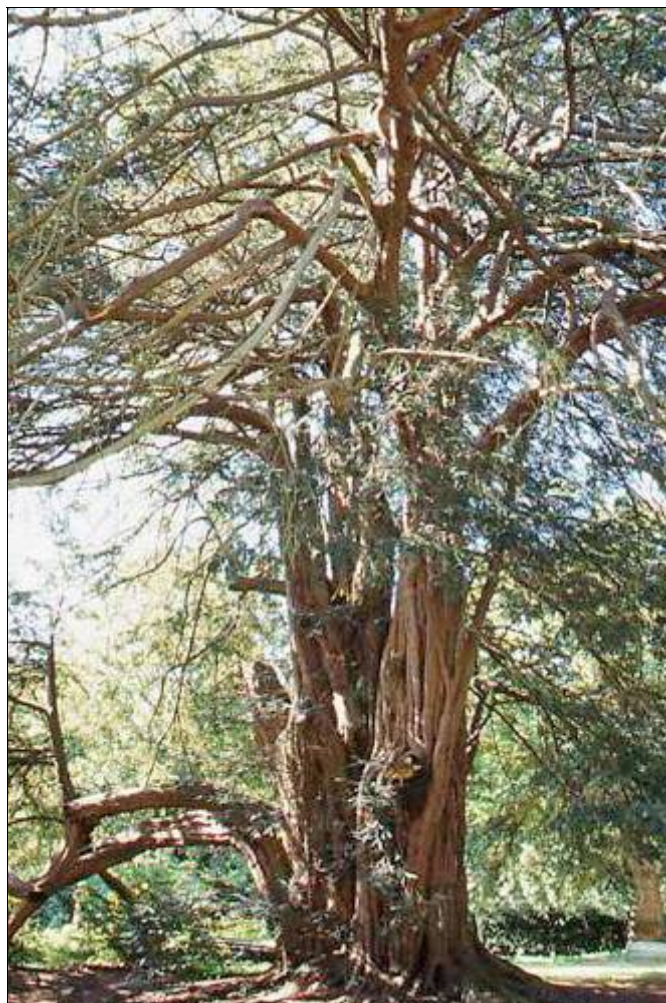


lost one of these. All that remains is this stump, with a girth of 21' 7" at 2'. It grew approximately 10 metres from the surviving tree.

The living yew is now in two pieces, undoubtedly fragments of an ancient split tree. The fragment on the north side (A) is a solid looking trunk almost hidden behind ivy, leaning before straightening. Fragment (B) is more convoluted, consisting of a section of hollowed out shell, with internal stems joined to the trunk. Girth around both fragments at the ground was 24' 5" while (B), complete with internal stems, had a girth of about 17'.

Described in 1850 as a “large decayed yew-tree, split into four or five parts, and in a state of rapid decay.” By 1854 its decay was considered to be “advanced,” but 100 years later in 1958 it was - and still is “a magnificent tree in very vigorous growth.”

If ever evidence was needed of a yew’s power of recovery, this surely is it. The tree is now regarded as one of England’s finest, boasting not only great girth but also considerable height carried on many straight fluted branches. In addition to its vast spreading canopy, younger yews growing nearby appear to have layered from the parent tree. Its cavernous hollow is unfortunately darkened by fire or smoke.



Two yews have been recorded here since 1850. The larger is a male yew growing SE of the church. It was described as 'decaying' in 1865, and a major portion of the tree has broken away, leaving a semi-circle of growth. However this thin shell has already thickened at the edges (A) and supports large branches. It is



likely that the section between will eventually disappear, leaving two separated trees growing close to each other - the Horley Yew (p5) is a good example of this. At X is an internal stem that once grew downwards from a branch through the decaying centre of the tree until it reached the ground and became rooted.

A second yew, seen here on the right, is also male and grows close to the road west of the church. It has a solid bole and a tall straight main branch. Twiggy growth had been cut and larger low level branches removed.

Girth of the larger tree is about 22' and of the smaller about 17'.



In 1850 the churchyard was described as “distinguished, on its south side, by a large and beautiful old yew-tree.”

Between 1999 and 2008 one of the large dead stems at the entrance to the tree’s hollow was removed. Each had been cut off at a height of about 9’/10’. There was much upright and lateral branching providing pleasant shade on a hot summer day. Girth was 16’ 8” at the ground.



Some of Southwark's notable yews:

BARNES Greater London

St Mary

Map176 TQ 085737

May 2009

A well tended green oasis alongside a busy London street. The church is said to have been consecrated by Stephen Langton in the year of Magna Carta.

The yew grows on the south side. Though some consider it to have been planted at the time the church was consecrated (1215), its girth suggests that it is likely to be younger. At some time in the past the trunk was "preserved with about 3 hundredweight of concrete." This at least prevents fires being lit in its once hollow space, though the weight may be contributing to the tree's lean. This year the tree had produced vast quantities of pollen, and discarded pollen sacs covered the ground beneath the tree. Foliage was thin and there appeared to be little new leaf growth. Girth was 11' 2" at 3ft.



BURSTOW Surrey

St. Bartholemew

Map 187 TQ 312 413

Two yews, both measured in 1880 by Straker.

Tree 1

SE of church.

1880: 13' 6" at 5'.

2001: 14' 10" at between the ground and 1' and 15' 11" at 3'. A comparative measurement at 5' would have been inappropriate since branches pull outwards and the tape would need to pass over the remnant of a former stem. The tree has 2 main growth areas, the base of one is hollow.

Tree 2

ESE of church

1880: 9' 9" at 5'

2001: 11' 11" at 5' over a small amount of adventitious bulging. This tree is in two separate pieces at the ground which join at about 6'. One section is hollowed out from the ground, the other begins to hollow at about 2'.

CHELSHAM Surrey

St Leonard

Mee (*King's England*) wrote that the 3 fine yews in the churchyard were "planted by the rector and the schoolmaster in 1746."

Some of Southwark's Lost Yews:

CATERHAM St Lawrence

In 1850 an 'ancient yew-tree, much decayed, and overrun with ivy on the north side.'

In 1994 a 'stump with a girth of 10' 6" to the SSW.'

CHIPSTEAD St Margaret

In 1811 'an old yew tree, measuring 20 feet in circumference 3 feet from the ground.'

When Fookes visited in 1994 the tree was no longer here. It apparently fell in the 1987 hurricane.

HORLEY St Bartholemew

See p5

SANDERSTEAD All Saints

Straker (1880) recorded 3 yews, of which two are gone. The largest, 16ft girth in 1880 was 'felled in 1962.'

TATSFIELD St Mary

A yew of 'great size' recorded since 1865, but gone by 1994.

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