

## Some of the smaller girthed ancient and notable yews recorded in the diocese of Bangor - October 2022

### **ABERGWYNGREGYN (ABER)**

St Bodfan

SH65337266

10 old yews were recorded at this site for a survey in the 1940s. In 2000 I counted 12, of which 3 are large girthed. Two females, each many branched from a short bole had girths between 16' and 17', and a third had a girth of about 14'.

### **BEDDGELEERT**

St Mary

SH58894811

2000: To the NW of the church is a yew with a 2' bole and a small platform from which rise 5 branches. Adventitious and twiggy growth were well developed on 4 of these yet the 5th, growing straighter than the rest, had smooth bark. Measured at the ground its girth was 15' 3".

### **BETTWS-Y-COED**

St Michael with St Mary Virgin

SH79605656

1870: In *The Art Journal - London* were described 'aged yew trees....which seem coeval with the sacred edifice'.

2000: A male between two females grow in line south of the church. Though not of large girth (between 12' and 14') they are fine spreading trees with good, clean boles.



Photos Edwin Pretty

1849: *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales* described 'four large yew-trees' in the churchyard. It is not possible to know whether the word large referred to girth, height, or spread of the trees, so it is unclear whether any of the 3 male yews seen in 2005 were those recorded in 1849.

The largest grows SSW of the church, its girth of 15' 8" at 1' exaggerated by 4 limbs that develop close to the ground. It is a fine looking symmetrical tree with large central leading branch.



Two further yew are as follows:

One grows SE of the church on a steep 3' high mound with what appeared to be a rough wall at the base. It has thick limbs close to the ground and far spreading branches, but carried sparse foliage. Girth was 13' 11" at the ground.

Another grows east of the church, also on a walled mound. A large limb has almost separated from the tree at the ground. Foliage was sparse and it had a girth of about 14'.



Photos - Geoff Garlick

## GYFFIN

St Benedict

SH77637694

1796: In *Observations on the more ancient statutes from Magna Carta to the twenty first of James 1. Cap. XXVII*. The Honourable Daines Barrington wrote the following:

'The last statute of this reign, entitled, *Ne Rector arbores in cœmeterio prosternat*, is a very short one, but deserves to be taken notice of from the preamble's stating, that trees in a church-yard were often planted to skreen the church from the wind: low as churches were built at this time, the thick foliage of the yew answered this purpose better than any other tree. I have been informed accordingly, that the yew-trees in the churchyard of *Gyffin*, near Conway, having been lately felled, the roof of the church hath suffered excessively'.

In 1946 a parishioner informed Cornish of '2 magnificent yews' in Gyffin churchyard.

2000: These are relatively young specimens. To the SW is a tree with a fine spread of branches, girthing 13' 2" at 3'. The yew to the SE had been trimmed all round in an attempt to keep it tidy. A covering of twigggy growth and ivy exaggerates its girth which is probably similar to that of the first tree.

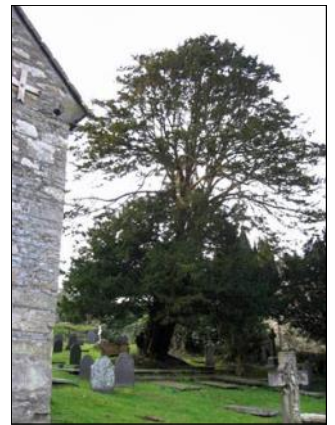
## LLANBEDROG

St Pedrog

SH32943156

In 1897 Lowe noted how 'three yew-trees in Llanbedrog Churchyard, well illustrate the effect of early destruction of the stem.....No. 1 is 21 feet high, and out of its stem, which is nearly on a level with the ground, eight trees grow and make one bush. No. 2 has twelve trees growing in a similar manner, and No.3 has five'.

In 2005 only one of these trees remains, the male yew pictured below. It consists of many straight stems from a short bole with a girth of about 16'. The stump below had a girth of 12' 5".



Photos - Tony Vowell

## LLANBEDR-Y-CENNIN

St Peter

SH76376930

1946: Cornish reported 6 old yews. In 2000 only 2 seemed really old. They are found NE of the church and both grow next to the wall of an adjacent building. There were a further 6 younger yews.

## LLANDEGAI

St Tegai

SH60037100

1849: The church is approached by an avenue of fine yew-trees: it is beautifully situated on an eminence overlooking the river Ogwen'. *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*.

1897: Lowe's list of yews with a girth of 10ft and upwards describes a yew measuring 11ft 1ins at the ground, 8ft 11ins at 3ft 'not hollow, no young shoots'.



This is not one of the avenue trees, but one of several yews growing on a patch of rough ground NE of the church but still within the churchyard. The avenue is well documented, though its precise age seems uncertain.



## LLANFAIRFECHAN

St Mary's and Christchurch

SH68137468

2008: Here is a yew avenue similar to that at nearby Llandegai. The trees line a straight path to the church on the north side, then make a right angled curve as the building is approached. On the left side are 7 in a line, followed by 13 which have been incorporated into adjacent gardens. On the right are 8 in a line and a further 8 lining the path as it turns. Average girth of 8 trees measured was 6' 6".

## LLANGWYFAN

St Cwyfan

SJ12026628

In 1883 there was mention of a 'tombstone under one of five ancient yews' and in 1890 the 'shell of a yew, so old that....'

2004: A visit found nothing of great age and it is likely that all ancient yews have been lost from this site. Of the several younger yews still here, the largest is a female, growing north of the church as part of the perimeter wall, with a girth of 14' 5" at 1'. SE of the church another female girthed 11' 7" at 2'.

## LLANRUG

St Michael and All Angels

SH52706307

2008: A male yew grows south of the church and close to a brick shed. Ivy was established well into the tree's branches. A small gap at the base revealed that the lower part of the trunk is hollowed out. There was living wood around its entire circumference. A large branch that once pointed towards the church had been removed. Rings could be counted and suggested a branch age of about 150 years. The west side of the tree was almost unapproachable with twiggy growth and new branches. Girth estimate about 15'.

## NANT PERIS (Old Llanberis)

St Peris

SH60665829

1946: '3 old yews west of the church'. Cornish

2000: 5 yews grow in this churchyard beneath the mountains. One is very old, the male tree to the right as you enter the churchyard, its girth 14' 7" at 1'.