

The church, mentioned in the Domesday Book, was rebuilt in the 13th century.

Bignor's 'two very large yews' were first noted in the 1858 *Handbook for Travellers in Kent and Sussex*. In 1904 'admirers of yew trees' were advised to 'make a point of visiting Bignor churchyard'. *Highways and Byways in Sussex* E. V. Lucas

In the 1940s when Cornish was gathering information for *The Churchyard Yew and Immortality* he was informed by Major G.B.Hill that here were 'two old yews, the older reckoned to be 600 years'.

In 1952 the same correspondent directed Swanton's attention to the trees and in his 1958 book *The Yew Trees of England*, Swanton wrote about 'the yew in the middle of the churchyard. It is female, with a hollow trunk, 19ft. 6ins. in girth at 3ft. Diameter of umbrage 65ft. There is much ivy near it'. Swanton was the last person to record the 2nd yew: 'A yew near the south door has been drastically pruned to prevent accidents. It is 15ft. 6ins. in girth at 3ft'. It is likely that this drastic pruning led to the tree eventually being felled in 1982. Traces of its trunk were still visible in 2004.

2004: The surviving yew, which grows SE of the church, has a deceptively solid looking bole. Close to the ground are two small gaps which not only reveal it to be hollow, but also that it contains a large girthed internal stem which can be traced to the tree's main branch.



- Girth:
- 1958: 19' 6" at 3' Swanton *The Yew Trees of England*
 - 1997: Height of 15m x 189 cm diameter @ 0.3m. *The Sussex Tree Book* - Owen Johnson
 - 2004: 19' 8" at 1'; 21' 5" at 3' over twiggy growth - Tim Hills
 - 2013: 19' 10" at 1' 6"; 20' at 2' and 20' 8" at 3' - Peter Norton

photos - Peter Norton - 2013



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