



The circular churchyard and very old yews are evidence of an ancient site. In *All around the Wrekin* (1860) the ancient yew (A) is described as ‘a patriarchal yew, which looks as old if not older than the church.....the stem by continual growth resembles a grove in itself, of gigantic proportions’. In *Trees of Shropshire* (1986) Morton reports an excavation carried out around the tree by Tom Beardsley of Clun. Tom succeeded in locating the original trunk and recorded a girth of 10.3m (33' 9"). It was his theory that the mound around this and many other yews is created when soil is piled against the trunk during the digging of new graves. Over a period of time, possibly centuries in some instances, this would cause the original base of the yew to be hidden.

In 1998 I recorded a girth of 34' 2" around the base of all the fragments, which consist of a confusion of old and new growth, of live and dead wood. Long overdue attempts were being made to control the growth of ivy. In Revd Williams 1791 watercolour (6001/372/3 - reproduced with the permission of Shropshire Archives), this tree (A) has been moved to the left of its actual position to avoid hiding a large part of the building.

Tree (B) is undergoing an unusual transformation. In 1998 I photographed its fine clean bole, which had a girth of 19'4" at the ground and about 23' at 3'. Revisiting 14 years later the bole had disappeared and what was once a fine spreading tree had become a clipped cone of dense foliage carried on numerous small branches.

