Yews in Cumbria (formerly Lancashire)  Graham Wilkinson  1997


A. Female. 19' at 3', 16' 7" at base, 17' 9" at 4'. Huge, impressive tree with a multi-trunk split at 8', branching properly from around 12'. Hollowing developing at the base on SSE and at 9'.
B. Female. 17' 6" at 3', 17' 5" at base. Lying just outside the wall now, a large tree with branching from 12'. A hollow branch has been removed on the NW side.
C. Female. 16' 3" at 3', 15' 9" at base. Large, gnarled tree, appearing contemporary with C. Dead section on west side. Branching properly from 12'.
D. Female. 15' 3" at 3', 14' 7" at 4', 14' at base. Impressive, large tree of "bloated" appearance, as Doddington, Greystoke etc., but much bigger.
E. Male. 11' 9" at 3', 11' 10" at 4', 11' 11" at base. Trunk split at approx. 9'. No sign of hollowing. Large and impressive tree.
F. Male. 8' 5" at base. Branching under 3'.
G. Male. 8' 1" at base.
H. Female. Similar in size to F & G, but covered in old, thick-stemmed ivy which prevents a true measure.


Mee: "Norman walls and part of a Norman north doorway at one end, and what was a 16th century chancel at the other."

Notes: All of the large trees above are impressive and important specimens. "Malleson believed that the first church on the site was saxon." Referring to the south wall between the porch and the tower: "This venerable fragment is solidly built of great boulders, 2 to 3 feet across..." Extended in 1547.


A. Male. 14' 7" at 3', 15' 8" at base. An imposing big tree, with some hollowing on the west side, branching from about 10'.
B. Female. 12' 7" at 3', 12' 4.5" at base. Large tree, branching from around 10'. Contemporary companion of tree A.
C. Female. 9' 6" at base, with two-trunk split soon after.
D. A much younger and smaller yew.

Notes: The present church was built by Paley & Austin in 1884, but an 1804 slab to the east of yew A indicates previous use of the site. All of the yews are raised above the present ground level by 2-3', in individual, circular, walled beds. (Did this result from the construction of the new church?) Tree C perches precariously on the west side of its raised bed and appears to be missing some balancing mass to the east. The tree may have been much larger at one time.

Mee: "...has an old chest hollowed from the trunk of a tree in which was kept a scrap of paper signed by Cranmer in 1538, a faculty for the consecration of the church and the burial of the dead. It is now in Preston." Font bowl pre-1538. 1707 collection plate.

A. Female. 11' 8" at 3', 12' 11" at 4', 11' 4" at base. Large, mature, ivy-covered tree, splitting properly into several vertical branches at 7' (below this on the north side). No hollowing.

Notes: Obviously Victorian church, with the oldest stone on site dated 1831, yet the site is much earlier.

Lowick. Lofwick, 1202. Lowyk, 1256.

1. "William de Lancaster (II) is recorded to have granted Lowick to one Robert de Turribus or Towers in the 12th century." "William de Lowick (son of Robert de Turrubis) granted to the monks of Furness a rent of 6s from Lowick for the benefit of his father Robert and mother Avice." (Page p 360.) The Chapel of St. Andrew mentioned in 1292, extensively repaired in 1700 and rebuilt in 1817. Replaced by St. Lukes on the old site in 1885. (Page p 362.)

2. A 1745 map of Furness by Brasier shows "Lowick Chap." on the present site.
(Hindle p 82.)

Coniston. St Andrew (GR: 303976 sheet 96)

A. Female. 10' 10" at 3', 11' 2.5" at 4', 10' 9.5' at base. Large, mature tree with trunk split at 8'. A small, weedy male just to the south.

B. Male. 10' 7.5" at 3' & 4', 10' 7" at base. Mature tree, splitting at 6'. Impressive tree.

C. Male. 10' 4" at 3', 10' 1" at 4', 11', 5" at base. Nice mature tree, with 6' trunk split.

D. Female. 10' 5" at 3', 10' 2" at 4', 10' 3" at base.
Mature tree branching from 5'.

E. Female. 6' 10.5" at base. (2')

F. Female. Mature tree.

Pevsner: 1819 on a 1586 site.

Notes: All the above are impressive, mature yews which seem to be contemporary. Fine trees on an old site. (Ruskin's Grave is here too.)
Cartmel Fell.  St Anthony (GR: 416881 sheet 97)  2/7/1997

A. Male. 10’ at 3’ & 4’, 10’ 1” at base. A large, mature tree splitting from 6’ into several branches. No hollowing, but a tree in the same mould as Doddington, Coniston, etc. Exudation following rain.
B. Female. 7’ 5” at 3’.
C. Female. Smaller tree of 4-5’ in girth.

Pevsner: c.1505 with C16 Cowmire pew. 1698 three-decker pulpit. Wooden torso of Christ, C13?

Notes: Built in 1504 as a chapel of ease to Cartmel Parish. Boxed-off pulpit, with sounding board, a date of 1690 on its door, which has original butterfly hinges. The Cowmire Hall pew lies against the north wall and was "contrived" in 1571 out of the chancel screen. A 1696 pew is next to it. Early stained glass fragments are incorporated in the east window, some may be from the se window: based on a painting from Flander, c.1430 by Rogier van Weyen. Sharpening marks of knives and arrows in the porch. August 30th AD 1714 slab to "Wil Sandys, curate of this chapel" built into the north wall at the west end of the nave.


A. Female. 9’ 11” at 3’, 10’ 4” at 4’, 9’ 3” at base. Large, mature tree, branching from 5’.

Notes: Built 1834-6. Built north/south because of limited space on site.
No previous use of site. Burial ground in use since 1836 when the church was consecrated. Other yews on site, none of similar size. A sheltered, welcoming spot.

Great Urswick. SS Mary & Michael (GR: 268743 sheet 96)  25/6/1997

A. Female. 9’ 10” at base. (Main trunk: another smaller one spouting separately.) Mature tree.
B. Female. 7’ 7” at base. Mature tree branching from 8’.
C. Mature yew, 6’ 11” at base.


Notes: All yews on site are mature trees. Two others west of tree B, as well as one left of the porch door.

A. Female. 9' 10" at base. Branches from 3'. Mature tree.

Pevsner: 1882-5 on a pre-Ref site. C15 glass frags in porch. 1570-1 cover paten. Early font bowl and piscina remains.


A. Male. 9' 2" at 3 & 4'. 10' 6" at base. Gnarled, mature tree, splitting at 12'. Has been "pruned" somewhat.
B. Male. 6' 4" at 3'. Mature tree.

Pevsner: 1724, rebuilt 1873-4 by Paley & Austin.
Notes: The above trees are not placed with any degree of balance or symmetry in mind. Tree B is nearer to the boundary wall than it's much larger brother. Are they then contemporary?


A. Male. Multi-branch split from 3-4', but holly, elder etc. and the general twigginess of the tree make other measurements impossible.
B. Female. Ivy covered, with trunk split at 2'. Twiggy. No measure, but a mature tree.

Pevsner: C16 to mid C17. Date of 1578 in the s aisle. "Has been called Norman, but more likely debased C16. 1711 wall inscriptions. Jambs of n doorway could be C13.
Notes: The above trees appear contemporary. No sign of any great age. An elevated site above the village.

Ulverston.  St Mary (GR: 289786 sheet 96)  16/7/1997

A. Female. 8' 11" at 3', 9' 2" at 4', 8' 6" at base. Large, mature tree leaning away from the church. Branching from around 10'.

Pevsner: Norman s doorway, Perp piers, arches and clerestory, w tower soon after 1540. The rest 1864-6 rebuild by Paley.
Warton.  St Oswald  (GR: 497723 sheet 97)  2/7/1997

A. Male. 8' 5" at 3'.
B. Male. 7' 5" at 3'.
C. Female. 7' 5" at base.
D. Male. 6' 11" at 3'.

Pevsner: C14 oldest evidence on site. Chapel and sedilia pre 1300, Perp tower, 1570/1612 bench ends in rectory. 1661 font.

Notes: 25 yews on site, 22 of which are mature trees, the largest, tree A, the smallest 6' 11". All appear contemporary, which is indicative of the range of girths attainable by such trees.

Staveley.  St Mary  (GR: 379859 sheet 97)  2/7/1997

A. Male. 8' 5" at 3', 8' 4" at base. Mature tree branching at 9'.
B. Male. Too twiggy to measure, but obvious contemporary of A.
C. Male. 7' at 3'.
D. Female with base trunk split.

Pevsner: 1793 but looks earlier. 1618 church on site restored in 1897.

Notes: Two smaller male trees to the south, three smaller females to the north. Pinnacled tower, slate facing to the south wall.

Ireleth.  St Mary  (GR: 223774 sheet 96)  25/6/1997

A. Female. 7' 11" at base. Mature tree with two-branch split from 18" - with companion Irish yew.
Pevsner:1865 on an Episcopal chapel site of 1612.

Notes: Fine views over Duddon Sands to the north and west. Mature yew to the south. Incongously panelled internally with modern wallboard!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>site no.</th>
<th>tree no.</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>sex</th>
<th>3' GIRTH</th>
<th>OTHER MEASURES</th>
<th>GRID REF &amp; NOTES</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Broughton-in-Furness</strong></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>19'</td>
<td>16' 7” at base 17' 9&quot; at 4'</td>
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<td>60' S</td>
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<td>17' 6&quot; at base 17' 5&quot; at base</td>
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<td>16' 3&quot; at base 15' 9&quot; at base</td>
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<td>15' 3&quot; at 4' 14’ 7” at 4’ 14’ at base</td>
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<td><strong>Torver</strong></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>14' 7&quot;</td>
<td>15' 8” at base</td>
<td>GR: 285943 sheet 97</td>
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<td>11' 9&quot; at base 11’ 10” at 4’ 11’ 11” at base</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>12' 7&quot;</td>
<td>12’ 4.5” at base</td>
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<td><strong>Coniston</strong></td>
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<td>10’ 10”</td>
<td>11’ 2.5” at 4’ &amp; 4’</td>
<td>GR: 303976 sheet 96</td>
<td>30’ S</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>10’ 7.5”</td>
<td>10’ 7” at base</td>
<td>10’ 3” at base</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>10’ 2” at 4’</td>
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<td>10’ 4”</td>
<td>10’ 1” at 4’</td>
<td>11’ 5” at base</td>
<td>15’ N</td>
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<td><strong>Cartmel Fell</strong></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>10'</td>
<td>10’ 1” at base</td>
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<td>10’ 8” at 4’</td>
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<td>70’ SW</td>
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<td>10’ 6” at base</td>
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<td>9’ 2” at 4’</td>
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<td>GR: 223774  sheet 96</td>
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<td>6' 11&quot;</td>
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More Lancashire sites where yews are found

**Aldingham.** St. Cuthbert - a couple of yews flank the path by the gate: not very big.

**Backbarrow (Vale of Leven).** St. Ann - small yews.

**Beckside.** St. Cuthbert - small yews.

**Cartmel.** St. Mary & Michael priory church - small yews.

**Coniston.** St. Andrew - numerous mature yews in this rather public spot. Fine trees on an old site. Ruskin's Grave is here too.

**Dendron.** St. Matthew - a couple of yews to the south, one 7' 4" at base.

**Far Sawrey.** St. Peter - yew at west end ? 7'. Another, 100' NE, 9' 4" at 3' and 7' 6" at base.

**Furness Abbey.** Briefly visited, heavy rain prevented survey of this large site, which has at least one mature yew.

**Great Urswick.** SS Mary & Michael - mature yews x 4, but nothing old.

**Low Wray.** St. Margaret - mature yews to the west on private ground.

**Pennington.** St. Michael - yews in nearby graveyard to the east ?7' at most.

**Yealand.** St. Mary - a Catholic, Victorian church with wee yews.

Lancashire sites with no common yews

**Colton.** Holy Trinity - built 1578.

**Rampside.** St. Michael - 1840 on 1621 chapel site.

**Tunstall.** John the Baptist.

**Wittington.** St. Michael - rebuild on 15c site.

**Yealand Conyers.** St. John - Victorian.

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