

Woolhope Transactions of 1866 said of Cusop that it was 'chiefly in the oldest and most secluded churchyards, such as this, that the finest yew-trees are to be found'. All 19th century measurements of these trees are from Woolhope. I recorded the yews in 1999 and 2012 and there are contributions by Geoff Garlick (2003) Peter Norton (2105) and Paul Wood (2016).

YEW 1

This male growing adjacent to the church porch, was described in 1866 as 'a sound healthy tree'. In 1999, though heavily infested with galls, it was in vigorous good health. With a wealth of thick, spreading branches it has a massive presence so close to the path that leads to the church. Its bole, fluted for almost its entire circumference, gives an appearance of great solidity, though two thirds was partially hidden by twiggy growth. It has a platform at the height of about 7'. In the centre were 2 large dead branches, with a third full of small roots feeding from decaying heartwood.



1999



2003

Duncumb's *History and antiquities of the county of Herefordshire* of 1812 has the following description: 'The branches of that which stands in the south-west angle (and which is least mutilated), extend over a circular area measuring seventeen yards in diameter. The girth of the trunk, at four feet from the ground, before any branches are thrown out, and where it is free from any unusual excrescence, measures twenty feet; the smallest circumference of the trunk is more than fifteen feet'.

Girth record:

1812: 15'+ (smallest circumference) and 20' at 4' - Duncumb

1866: 20' 8" at 3'; 24' 7" at 4' - Woolhope p246

1889: 23' 0" at 3'; 23' 6" at 5' - Woolhope p360

1999: Measured at the ground, beneath the bulging, but allowing the tape to rise over the roots, was 21' 4". At a height of 1' this has risen to 24' and by 3' swells to 28' 4", enlarged by twiggy growth - Tim Hills

2012: 21' 10" close to the ground - Tim Hills

2016: Approx. 22' (6.71m) at the ground -Paul Wood

In 2015 Peter Norton found builders material stacked up against the tree while work to dig trenches was being carried out. He considered that the tree's roots might be affected.



2015

YEW 2

SE of the church, this female yew was described in 1866 as the 'finest of the four'. It has a particularly striking fluted bole and a platform at about 6'. Its two main branches, which are not in the centre, rise side by side, while a further six substantial growth areas spread from the bole. There is also one large dead branch. It was heavily infested with galls, but was in vigorous good health.

Girth:				
1866:	21' 2"	at 3'	22'10"	at 4' Woolhope
1889:		22' 3"	at 3'	Woolhope
1999:	23' 8"	at 1'	26' 11"	at 3' Hills
2012:	24' 1"	at 1'	27' 7"	at 3' (a difficult height to measure with consistency) Hills
2015:	24' 2"	(7.37m) at root crown		Norton
2016:	24' 2"	(7.37m) at root crown		Wood



Photos below show the yew in 2015 - Peter Norton



Photos below show the yew in 2016 - Paul Wood



YEW 3

This male yew, which grows NW of the church, was described as 'a very fine stately tree' in 1866. It is seen here in 1999 with much adventitious growth high into its branches. It has a huge central rising branch plus three further main growth areas, one of which might be gradually pulling away from the tree. The large quantity of ivy close to its trunk was dying but may take many years to disappear. It appeared to be in good health.

Girth: 1866: 17' 10" Woolhope
1999: 17' 6" between the ground and 1'. Above this it bulges dramatically - Tim Hills
2012: 18' 3" between the ground and 1' - Tim Hills
2015: 17' 10" at root crown and ground – indicated by nails
Peter Norton





Geoff Garlick
2003



Peter Norton 2016



Paul Wood 2016



YEW 4

The female yew, growing NE of the church, was described in 1866 as 'the smallest of the 4 great trees'.

Girth 1866: 10' 10" - Woolhope

2012: 14' 0" at 1' and 13' 10" at 3', above which it swells because of branch development - Tim Hills

2015: 13' 11" at 1' - Peter Norton

2016 Exactly 14' (4.27m) at 1' - Paul Wood

2003 Geoff Garlick



2012 Tim Hills



2015 Peter Norton



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