

Woolhope Transactions of 1866 said of Cusop churchyard 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, those from 1999 and 2012 are Tim Hills.

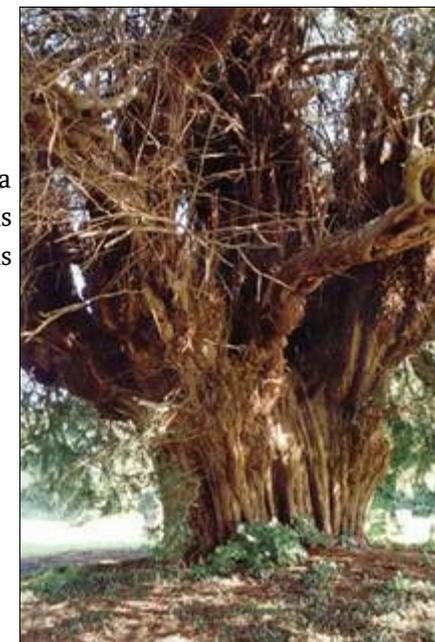
Three of the four are substantial. This male, growing adjacent to the church porch, was described in 1866 as 'a sound healthy tree'. In 1999, though heavily infested with galls, it was still in vigorous good health. With its wealth of thick, spreading branches it has a massive presence so close to the path leading to the church. Its bole, fluted for almost its entire circumference, gives an appearance of great solidity, though two thirds was hidden behind upright 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 red heartwood.



1804: 20' at 4' measured by Duncumb
 In Duncumb's *History and antiquities of the county of Herefordshire* of 1812 is 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.
 1866: 20' 8" at 3'; 24' 7" at 4'
 1889: 23' at 3'; 23' 6" at 5'
 1999: Measured at the ground, beneath the bulging, but allowing the tape to rise over the roots, was 21' 4". By 1' this rises to 24' and by 3' swells to 28'4", a figure enlarged by adventitious growth.
 2012: 21' 10" at the ground.

The female yew, seen here on the right, 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. This tree too was heavily infested with galls, but was otherwise in vigorous good health.

Girth:
 1866: 21' 2" at 3' 22'10" at 4'
 1889: 22' 3" at 3'
 1999: 23' 8" at 1' 26' 11" at 3'
 2012: 24' 1" at 1' 27' 7" at 3' (a difficult height to measure with consistency)





This was described as 'a very fine stately tree' in 1866, and grows NW of the church. It is a male with a knobbly appearance and 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 quantities of ivy close to its trunk were dying but may take several years to disappear. It appeared to be in good health.

Girth: 1866: 17' 10"
1999: 17' 6" between the ground and 1'. Above this it bulges dramatically.
2012: 18' 3" between the ground and 1'.



This female was described in 1866 as 'the smallest of the 4 great trees' with a girth at that time of 10' 10". It grows NE of the church. Girth in 2012 was 14' at 1' and 13' 10" at 3', above which it swells with branch development.

The following extract is from Mee's *The King's England* 1938:

'In the churchyard are 4 ancient yews, three of them mentioned in the Domesday Book. One of these veterans has a girth of 30 ft and all are well preserved. Thrilling it is to think that Saxon and Norman folk alike once stood beneath its shade, and to reflect that it may still be thriving when the two oak trees planted here at the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria have reached their century'.

It is my understanding that there is no mention of yew trees in the Domesday Book.