Hampshire Churchyard Yews

An Inventory

By Peter Norton

GEOLOGICAL MAP OF HAMPSHIRE

Lower Greensand
Upper Greensand and Gault
Chalk
Lower Eocene
Upper Eocene
Oligocene

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- Upper Greensand and Gault
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Introduction:

Hampshire covers an area of 1,400 square miles and is bounded by Dorset to the west, Wiltshire to the northwest, Berkshire to the north, Surrey to the northeast, and West Sussex to the east. The southern boundary is the coastline of the English Channel. It spans approximately 53 miles from east to west and 47 miles from north to south.

Hampshire takes its name from the settlement that is now the city of Southampton. An Old English name for Southampton was *Hantum*. The county was known by the Anglo-Saxons as *Hamtunschire* and was recorded in the Domesday book as *Hantescire*.

Hampshire's geology falls into two categories. In the south, along the coast is the Hampshire Basin, an area of relatively non-resistant Eocene and Oligocene clays and gravels. These low, flat lands support heathland and woodland habitats, a large area of which forms part of the New Forest.

In the north and centre of the county the substrate is the rocks of the Chalk Group, which form Salisbury Plain and the South Downs. These are high hills with steep slopes where they border the clays to the south. The hills dip steeply forming a scarp onto the Thames valley to the north, and dip gently to the south.

Hampshire records list 640 cities, towns, villages and hamlets containing a total of 469 churches. 403 of these were visited with the remaining 66 in the new conurbations of Portsmouth, Southampton and Winchester Urban Areas.

There were yews growing at 241 of these sites, with a total of 1,020 recorded. The survey concentrates on trees with a girth above nine feet, and those estimated to be less than this were recorded, but in the majority of cases were not measured.

The county of Hampshire has been divided into quadrants covering the NW, NE, SW & SE, using the vertical (OS Northings) line SU50 dividing east from west. The horizontal (OS Eastings) line 30 divides north from south.

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469 403 241 1020

Some of these sites have also featured in my earlier river catchment area surveys. A list of these appears in the appendix along with all the churchyards visited and allocates each a 6 figure grid reference.
Hampshire Churchyard Yews
An Inventory

Part 1 – North West Hampshire

In this report the national grid numbers (NGR) have been grouped in 10k squares and designated as 3A through to 6E as shown in the quadrant below.

Towns, villages and hamlets in this quadrant:

Towns and villages with churches: 80  Number of churches visited: 72
Number of churchyards with yews: 56  Number of yews recorded: 198
• The following churches are found in grid 3D

**Broughton - St Mary the Virgin - SU309329**

This 12th century church was extended in 1220 and partially rebuilt after a major fire in 1635. It was restored in 1886.

Two female yews are found in the churchyard. This one grows near to the southwest gate. Some of its outer shell has been lost revealing fine internal growth. Girth close to the ground was 11' 3''.

A younger yew with a girth of 8' 10'' at 1' grows northeast of the church.

**Bossington - St James - SU336309**

This small church, rebuilt in 1839, stands in the middle of a field next to the ancient Saxon village of Bossington. Five yews are found here. A pair of female yews grow west of the church, the one to the northwest measuring 9' 2'' at 1'. To the southeast are a smaller male and two saplings.

**Houghton - All Saints - SU341326**

The present church probably dates from around 1200. It was extended in the 13th century and repaired in 1875.

Four yews are found in the churchyard. The pair of females shown here grow side by side southeast of the church. Their girths were 11' 1'' at 2' and 9' 10'' at 2'.

Northwest of the church are a small girthed male and female.

**Stockbridge - St Peter - SU355351**

This is a recent church dating from 1866. One male yew grows at the southeast corner of the small churchyard. Its lower growth had been clipped to form part of a sculptured perimeter and it was not possible to measure.

**Stockbridge - Old St Peter - SU359350**

All that remains is the 13th chancel; the rest was demolished in 1866. One young yew grows here.
Longstock - St Mary - SU358371

The present church was built 1876-80 in the 13th century style. It replaced an ancient chalk walled building.

A single female yew grows here, on top of a mound at the southwest corner of the churchyard. Its girth was 10’ 2” at the ground and 12’ at 2’.

Kings Somborne - St Peter and St Paul - SU360309

The present church is of 12th century origin with additions and alterations during the 13th and 14th centuries. Extensive restoration was carried out in 1886.

Three yews grow in the churchyard. The largest, shown here, is southwest of the church on the perimeter. It is female with a girth of 11’ 2” at 1’ from the top of the mound. A second female girthed 9’ at 1’, and a smaller male was not measured.

Leckford - St Nicholas - SU374376

The 13th century church was partially rebuilt in the 16th century and restored during the late 19th century.

Two yews are found here. The photo shows the larger of the two south of the church. It is male with a girth of 11’ 2” at 1’ and 10’ at 2’. A young unmeasured female grows northwest of the church.
Little Somborne - All Saints - SU382326

A simple church, recognised as having Saxon origins and declared redundant in 1975. A modest refurbishment was carried out during 1870 with major repairs in 1975. One female grows southeast of the church and girthed 9' 4" at the root crown.

- The following churches are found in grid 3E

Crawley - St Mary - SU424348

A stone church dating from 1086 was rebuilt in the 14th century and extensively restored in 1887.

One female yew grows southeast of the porch. It has a straight fluted bole that divides at about 15' and a girth of 12' 2" at 1'.

Sparsholt - St Stephen - SU453312

The 12th century church replaced a Saxon structure. It was restored in 1882.

This male, growing north of the church, is possibly re-growth from an old stump, with much whitewood and some of the outer shell missing. Girth was 14' 1" close to the ground.
A young female grows close to the south porch.

Lainston - St Peter (ruin) - SU442315

The private 12th century chapel is now a ruin situated in the grounds of Lainston Hotel (Sparsholt). Three male trees grow close to the ruin, the largest with a girth of 8' 11" at about 1'.
Littleton - St Catherine of Alexandria - SU454329

The church, originating in the 11th century, was rebuilt in 1855.

One male yew grows just west of the porch. It has a five foot break of crown with three leaders. Girth was 10' 4" at 1', over a light covering of ivy.

Weeke (or Wyke) - St Mathew - SU468305

This tiny Norman church on the outskirts of Winchester was rebuilt during the 15th century and escaped Victorian refurbishment.

Two tall columnar male yews grow on the north side of the church. Both were measured at 1', the yew to the west was 8' 7" and that to the east was 9' 2".

Wonston - Holy Trinity - SU477395

The church, thought to date back to 901, was rebuilt following a fire in 1714 and restored in 1871-2.

The four female yews noted here grow south of the church, while many younger yews are found against the west perimeter.

This yew is on the east side of the south lychgate. Its four main leaders emerge from a short bole with a girth of 12' 3" at 1'. The yew on the west side of the lychgate girthed 8' 6" at 1'.

The two remaining are on the east side, the largest of these growing on a small mound and girthing 9' 1" near the top of the mound.

Headbourne Worthy - St Swithun - SU487320

A church of Saxon origin, enlarged by the Victorians. One young male yew with a girth of 7' 10" at 1' grows south of the porch. To the northeast is a group of six smaller yews.
Hunton - St John - SU481396
The 13th century church stands alone in a field close to the river’s north bank. Major repairs were carried out in 1834.

Two yews are found here. This male, growing east of the church, has sparse foliage and a girth of 10' 4" at 1'.

A young female grows just southwest of the church.

Stoke Charity - St Mary and St Michael - SU488392
The building, dating back to the 12th/13th centuries, was partially rebuilt in the 15th. It escaped restoration in the Victorian era.

One yew grows here, southwest of the church. It is one of those rare specimens where a single male branch is found on a female tree. This is on the west side of the tree. At the time of the visit pollen sacs were in evidence as well as seeds from the previous year’s growth.

Girth was 14' 9" at 1', 14' at 2' and 13' 9" at 3'.

Kings Worthy - St Mary - SU492323
The church, dating from before the 13th century, was rebuilt in 1864.

Two female yews grow southeast of the church. The largest, seen here overhanging the perimeter bank, has a girth of 12' 6" measured at 2' from the top of the slope to avoid side branches. Much thick stemmed ivy had been cut away.

The second yew was considerably less in girth.
The following churches are found in grid 4C

Shipton Bellinger - St Peter - SU233454

There is evidence of a church on this site during the 10th century. The present church dates from the 17th century with major restoration in 1879.

Nine yews are found at this site, the largest growing near the churchyard’s southwest entrance. This female yew has a girth of 8' 11" at 6" and 8' 8" at 2'.

All of the remaining yews are young trees growing alongside the west perimeter.

Grateley - St Leonard - SU275420

The church is of 13th century origin and was restored in 1851.

Two young female and one male grow west of the church.

Quarley - St Michael and All Angels - SU272440

This 11th century church was restored in 1861.

One male yew with a girth of 11' 3" at 1' 6" grows close to the south porch,

Thruxton - St Peter and St Paul - SU288456

A Saxon church site, rebuilt in the 13th century and restored in 1869.

This male yew grows south of the church. Its four main leaders emerge near to the ground. Girth was 10' 7" at 1'.

To the east of the church is a younger male with a girth of 7' 11" at 1'.
Kimpton - St Peter and St Paul - SU281466
The present church was built around 1220, with alterations and additions over the centuries and a tower added in 1837. Two ivy clad male yews grow near the southwest corner of the building.

Amport - St Mary’s - SU299442
The church was modernised in 1866, removing most of the evidence of its 14th century origins. One young unmeasured female yew grows at the northwest corner of the churchyard.

Fyfield - St Nicholas - SU295463
The building is probably 12th or 13th century. The chancel was rebuilt in the 16th or 17th century and the vestry and porch are both recent.

Two yews grow near to the southwest gate. The larger, shown here, is female with a girth of 10’ 2” at 2’. The male is much younger.

- The following churches are found in grid 4D

Appleshaw - St Peter in the wood - SU303490
The church was rebuilt on the old site in 1836.

A single female yew with a neatly trimmed crown grows at the west gate. There is a thick metal band around the tree as well as a metal rod cemented into the wall. It appeared to be serving no useful purpose and layers of new wood are coalescing with the metal band. Girth was 9’ at 1’ and 8’ 10” at 2’.

Monxton - St Mary - SU313445
The church is of Norman origin and was rebuilt in 1854.

One female yew grows south of the porch. A girth of 10’ 7” at 1’ and 10’ 8” at 2’ was recorded. A nail had been embedded at 1’ 6”.
Weyhill - St Michael and All Angels - SU317466

This early 12th century church was rebuilt in 1863. Three yews grow here, a male and female at the south gate and a second female at the west gate. Due to lower branch growth and thick ivy no measurements were taken.

Penton Mewsey - Holy Trinity - SU329474

The church dates from around 1340 and was restored in 1888.

Two yews grow in the churchyard. The larger, shown here, is outside of the south porch. A memorial bench surrounds this female tree, whose girth was 11' 4" at 1’ and 11’ 1” at 2’. On the south side of the tree a nail has been hammered in at 2’. To the north of the church is a younger male.

Abbots Ann - St Mary the Virgin - SU330435

There are references to a Saxon church but it is not known whether it was on this site. The church we see today was completely rebuilt in 1716.

Four yews grow in the church grounds. The largest, shown here, is one of two males at the northeast gate. Its girth was 10’ 6” at the root crown. Male and female grow at the northwest gate. Of these, the male continues to flourish in spite of having been cut right back.

Upper Clatford - All Saints - SU356435

There is evidence of 12th century construction, but it is thought there might have been an even older building on this site. The church was much altered in the 17th century and during the period between 1890 and 1903.

Seven of the eight yews growing south of the church are quite young. The largest is this female southeast of the church. It has been drastically reduced to a height of about 8’, but four new leaders have emerged from its roots. In 2003 a girth of exactly 11’ was recorded at 2’. Since then this memorial bench has been constructed.
Goodworth Clatford - St Peter - SU366425

An early 12th century church was rebuilt during the 14th and 15th centuries, with restoration in the 19th century.

Two yews grow in the churchyard. This is the larger, a male at the south west corner with a girth of 9' 9" at 1'.

A younger female grows midway along the south perimeter.

Knights Enham - St Michael and All Angels - SU362480

This 11th century church is believed to have replaced an earlier Saxon church. During the 17th century it was largely rebuilt, though some of the 13th century fabric can still be traced. It was enlarged in 1838.

One male yew is found north of the church. Girth was 11' 10" at 1' and 11' 7" at 2'.

Wherwell - St Peter and the Holy Cross - SU391408

The Saxon Church of the Holy Cross at Wherwell was founded by Queen Elfrida in AD 986 and replaced by the Normans in the 12th century. It was completely rebuilt in 1856.

Four yews are found in the churchyard. Starting at the northeast gate is a young male. Next, to the east of the church and growing on a mound, is this female with a girth of 10' 7" at 1' and 10' 10" at 2'.

To the south of the church and on the perimeter is a male of similar girth that could not be measured due to ivy, while to the west is a female of smaller girth.
• The following churches are found in grid 4E

Longparish – St Nicholas - SU426439

The church, found at the western end of Longparish in the heart of the old settlement of Middleton, dates from the early 13th century and was restored in 1846.

Four male yews grow in the churchyard. The largest, seen here, is east of the church and girded 11’ 10” at 1’ and 11’ 6” at 2’.

The remaining three, found near the northwest corner, are much younger.

Barton Stacey - All Saints - SU434411

All Saints Church dates from around 1180 and was restored in 1877.

There are nine yews in the church grounds. To the west of the church are three female and three male trees, the largest of these girding 9’ 7”.

The remaining three are female, the tree shown here grows south of the church and had a girth of 12’ at 1’ and 12’ 2” at 2’. The others grow to the southwest and southeast.

Hurstbourne Priors - St Andrew - SU439466

This was the original manorial church of the ancient manor of Hurstbourne Priors, consecrated in 820 by the Bishop of Winchester. It was rebuilt on the same site by the Normans in the 12th century. The oldest remaining features are 13th century. The church was added to in the 16th and 18th centuries and partially rebuilt in 1870.

Two yews grow here. The largest is this female south of the church. Girth at the root crown was 17’ 1”.

A smaller male grows northeast of the church. Its girth could only be estimated at 9’ due to thick stemmed ivy.
Tufton - St Mary - SU457468

This is a 12th century church, restored in 1877.

One male tree with a girth of 9’ 10” at 1’ grows to the south.

Whitchurch - All Hallows - SU459477

This 13th century church was largely rebuilt in 1866, retaining some of its Norman fabric.

Two yews grow along the south perimeter, of which the larger is this male growing southeast. This ancient specimen has a girth of 25’ at the top of the mound.

Laverstoke - St Mary - SU486488

The ruined church of St Mary (private) is found in Laverstoke Park. A new church was built in 1896 to the west of the original and outside of the grounds of Laverstoke House.

Seven young yews grow around the churchyard perimeter, with a further four of slightly larger girth outside of the churchyard. These may have once formed part of the approach to the house.
The following churches are found in grid 5D

**Tangley - St Thomas of Canterbury - SU334524**

There was a Christian chapel on this site more than 800 years ago. Three sarsen stones in the churchyard suggest earlier pagan worship. The Bishop of Winchester consecrated the chapel in the 1300s. The present church was built in the 1870s on the Norman foundations.

Four yews grow in the churchyard, with three females to the south. The tree growing southwest was not measured, the tree close to the porch was 9’ 8” at the root crown, and the tree southeast had a girth of 10’ 9” at 2’.

The old male, seen below, grows close to the north wall of the church at its northeast corner. It is old and fragmenting and has lost much of its lower bole. Girth in 2006 was recorded as 18’ 5” at the ground but this will reduce over time.

Also of note is its fine internal root.

**Hatherden - St Thomas of Canterbury - SU344503**

The church was built in 1867.

Three young males grow near to the porch, their girths estimated at around 8’. Thick ivy growth was noted.

**Vernham Dean - St Mary the Virgin - SU349569**

The church dates from around 1200 and was fully restored in 1851.

Three large yews are recorded here. The first (below left) grows near to the porch. It is male with a girth was 13’ 7” at the ground. Earth and headstones are piled against the bole.

South of the church is a female yew (below right), also with headstones resting on the root structure. Girth was 17’ 1” just above the root crown. The third, also female, grows near to the south perimeter and is in line with the other two. Its girth was 16’ 3” at about 2’. A further 3 smaller yews grow in the churchyard.
**Linkenholt - St Peter - SU363580**

A 12th century church, sited near to the manor house, was demolished around 1871. A replacement church, using some of the original fabric, was built on a new site.

Four male yews grow south of the church. None could be measured because of thick lower growth.

**Hurstbourne Tarrant - St Peter - SU385529**

The origins of the church are 12th century, with a major rebuild in 1890.

Eleven yews are found in the churchyard, of which nine are young trees growing around the north perimeter. Two larger yews grow on the south side. The male, shown here, had a girth of 9’ 11” measured near to the top of the mound that has built up around its bole. There is a large dead section on the north side of the tree from which many aerial roots could be seen. A female yew with a girth of 10’ 5” at 1’ and 9’ 10” at 2’ grows just southwest of the church. It was being used as a shelter for a maintenance shed.

**Faccombe - St Barnabas - SU390580**

A new church was built in 1866 to replace the 12th century church of St Michael at Netherton. Little of this remains, except the churchyard and lychgate.

A juvenile yew grows south of the porch and a young tree at the southeast corner of the churchyard.

- The following churches are found in grid 5E

**Ashmansworth - St James - SU411566**

The 12th century church was restored in 1899.

Three yews grow close to the south gate. The largest is this female with a girth of 10’ at 1’ and 9’ 10” at 3’.
St Mary Bourne - St Peter - SU422503

This mostly 12th century church was built as a chapel of rest. It was added to and rebuilt between the 14th and 17th centuries, with restoration in 1855.

Of the nine yews growing in the churchyard the most impressive is this male south of the church. A large section of white wood is still attached and is in the process of being covered by a flow of new wood. A girth of 21’ 9” at 1’ was recorded (height taken from the east side of the tree) where an embedded nail and four others undulate around the bole. In 1998 the foliage was described as sparse and browning but on my visit in late 2012 the tree was recovering. Also noted was a healthy thick internal stem.

Close by is another male yew with a known planting date of 1759 and a girth of 8’ 7” at 2’. This height is marked by an embedded nail.

Also of note is a female yew growing east of the church in a group with three others. Massive branches stem from its short bole, with a girth of 10’ 3” at the root crown. The remaining yews are scattered around the churchyard.

Woodcott - St James - SU433548

The present church was built in 1704 and restored/rebuilt in 1853. There are no records giving a date for the earlier building.

One large female yew grows west of the church. It is in two halves and still fragmenting, with sculptured white wood, a small internal stem and a rich green crown almost perfectly domed/formed.

The girth of 22’ 10” was a mixture of root crown and ground with a slightly undulating tape, and included a small stump.
Litchfield - St James the Less - SU461540

The church, possibly 12th century, was restored in 1874.

This pollarded female, with new growth from about 5', grows close to the southwest corner of the church. Girth was 10' 3" at 1' 6".

Close to the southeast corner is another female with a girth of 9' 3" at the root crown.

A smaller yew grows northeast.

- The following churches are found in grid 6E

East Woodhay - St Martin - SU405615

The present building was constructed in 1823 on the site of an older church. There are no records giving a date for the earlier building.

Seven yews grow in this churchyard. A male is found west of the church. Two females grow either side of the path near to the east perimeter, one measuring 9' 10" at the root crown, the other 10' 10" at the root crown and 9' 3" at 3'. Moving north is a female measuring 10' at 1' and 9' 4" at 3'.

The female shown here is next, its girth 9' 10" at 1' and 9' 6" at 3'.

Lastly is a twin stemmed female with an embedded headstone and near to it a young male.

Highclere - St Michael and All Angels - SU440603

This new church was built in 1870 to replace the old church close to Highclere Castle.
Six young yews grow in the northwest corner of the churchyard.

Burghclere - All Saints - SU463608

This early Norman church was restored in 1861, retaining some of its 12th and 13th century features.

Twelve yews grow here. This is the largest, the most westerly of a group of four males on the southern perimeter. Its girth was 10' 9" at 1'.

The remaining trees, growing along the west perimeter, are much younger.
Burghclere - The Ascension - SU463608

This new church, built in 1838, contains several yews within its grounds.

Two males grow northwest of the church, their girths 9' 11" at 1' and 10' 3" at 2'. At the northeast corner of the church is a female girthing 10' 7" near to the ground. At the northeast corner of the grounds is an unmeasured female with much spray. At the southeast perimeter are two young males.

The largest girthed tree, shown here, grows just south of the church and on a large mound with some root exposure. It measured 12' 5" at the root crown.

Newtown - St Mary and St John the Baptist - SU476637

The original chapel was built around 1218, while the present church was built on the old site in 1865.

A total of eight yews grow here, as follows:

One female east of the church.

At the southeast corner is the tree shown here, its girth 13' 2" close to the root crown.

Four male and one female grow south of the church, where there is also a dead yew. The largest of this group, a male girthing 10' at 1', is found at the most westerly point.

In the extended churchyard and at the west gate is a large ivy clad male.

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## Appendix 1: Churches Visited

**Churches Conservation Trust (CCT)**

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