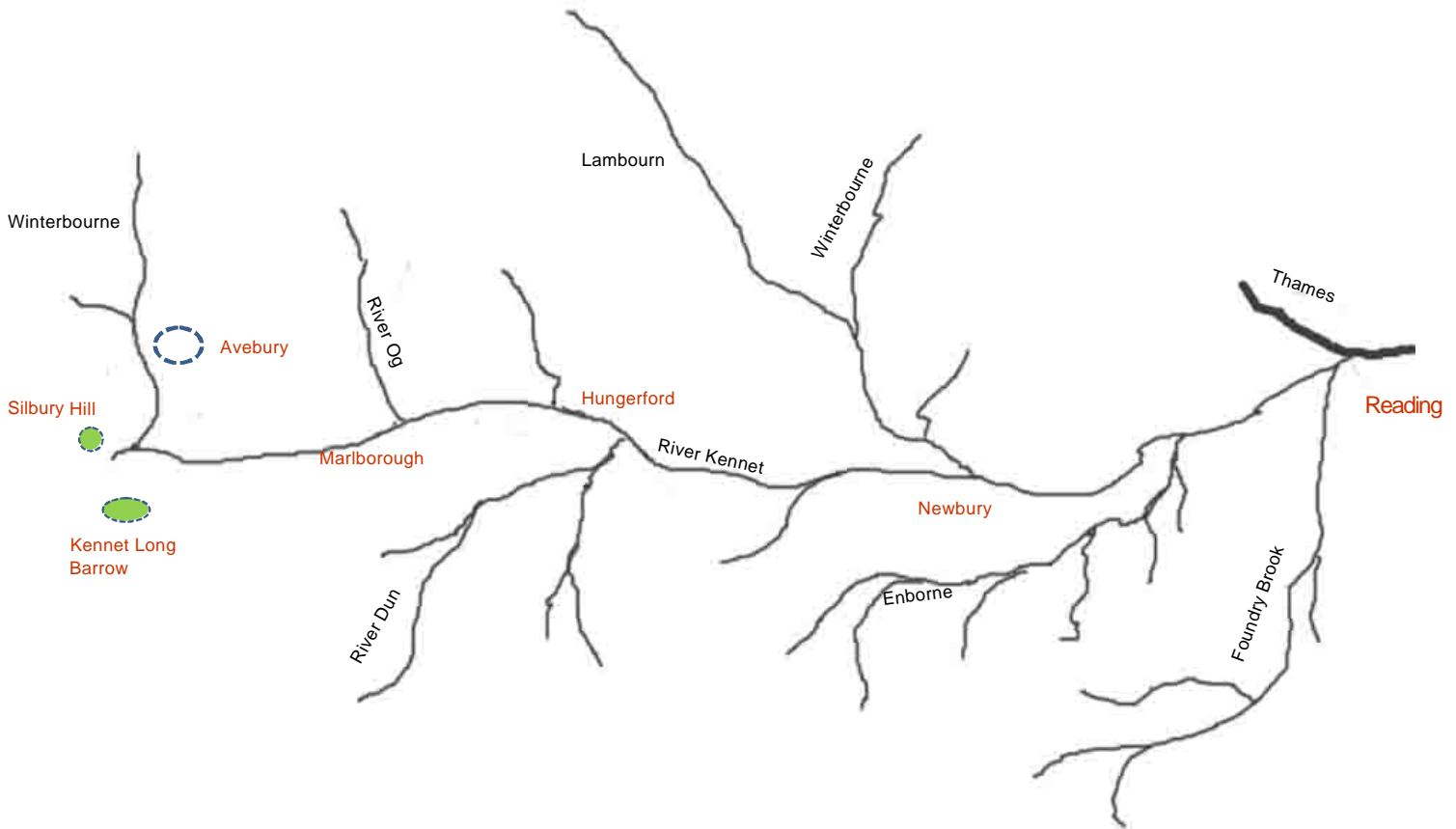


Wiltshire, Berkshire & Hampshire Yews

An Inventory of Churchyard Yews along the River Kennet and its Tributaries

part 2
by Peter Norton



Part 2 of 2 describes the yews along the lower Kennet from Newbury to Reading and the confluence with the Thames.

Shaw - St Mary the Virgin - SU474683 - Berkshire

This was once the site of a Saxon Minster, rebuilt by the Normans in 1140 with the tower added in 1344. Nothing remains of the old church which was rebuilt in 1841.

Six young yews grow here with three on the east perimeter, one south west of the church and a further two close to the main west gate.

Midgham - St Mathew - SU556671 - Berkshire

Midgham had its own chapel from at least 1309. It stood a little to the north-east of the present building, nearer to Midgham House. The present church was built in 1869.

One male yew grows just north east of the church. It has the appearance of a coalesced twin trunked tree, with the one of the trunks (nearest the church) being hollow and full of needle drop. A girth of 18' was recorded at the ground, and 18' 1" at 1', where a nail marks the height.

There is evidence of an internal stem between the main stems.



Woolhampton - St Peter - SU577677 - Berkshire

This 13th century church was fully restored in 1861.

One substantial male yew grows north east of the church and is well hidden by dense vegetation.

Beenham - St Mary - SU590684 - Berkshire

Little remains of the 13th century church. Only the tower survived major fires in 1794 and 1856. The remainder of the church dates from 1859.

Two young females grow close together south of the porch and form a natural arbor.

Theale - The Most Holy Trinity - SU640713 - Berkshire

This is a new church, completed in 1832.

One young female grows south of the church.

- ***The Enborne rises in the hills around Inkpen, before flowing east for some 18 miles to its confluence with the Kennet near to Aldermaston Wharf. For 13 miles of this journey it forms the boundary between Hampshire and Berkshire. On its way it is joined by the Ecchinswell Brook that rises near to Sydmonton, the Kinsclere Brook and many other unnamed streams.***

Inkpen - St Michael - SU357637 - Berkshire



This 13th century church was rebuilt in 1896.

As you enter the churchyard there is a fine sculptured yew hedge with a semicircle cut away over the grave of Rev John Butler (d1895) one of the rectors at St Michael.

This male yew grows south west of the porch. Its girth was 12' 11" at 1' and 14' 2" at 3'.

West Woodhay - St Laurence - SU390631 - Berkshire

St Laurence church was built in 1882-3 to replace an older church which stood in the grounds of West Woodhay House before being demolished in 1882.

All the yews are young, two at the lychgate and a further five west of the church.

East Woodhay - St Martin - SU405615 - Hampshire

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 the churchyard as follows:

Male west of the church.

Two females 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 a female measuring 10' at 1' and 9' 4" at 3'. Next the female shown here, measuring 9' 10" at 1' and 9' 6" at 3'.

Finally a twin stemmed female with an embedded headstone and a male nearby.

An Introduction to Field Archaeology as Illustrated by Hampshire by Williams-Freeman (1915): In a paper in the *Hampshire Antiquary and Naturalist*, two records are given of the size of yews of known age; the yew in East Woodhay churchyard was planted by Bishop Ken, who was rector there about 1669. This was 7ft. 7in. in girth in 1888, which would give it a growth rate of 3' 5" in a century. The yew was cut down and the last remnants having rotted away by the end of the 1980s.

Highclere - St Michael and All Angels - SU440603 - Hampshire

This is a new church built in 1870 to replace the old church which was close to Highclere Castle. Six young yews grow in the north west corner of the churchyard.

Old Burghclere - All Saints - SU468578 - Hampshire



An early Norman church which became dilapidated when the new Church of the Ascension was built. It was restored in 1861, still retaining some of its 12th and 13th century features.

Twelve yews grow here. This is the largest, the most westerly of a group of 4 males on the southern perimeter. Its girth was 10' 9" at 1'.

The remaining trees are much younger and grow along the west perimeter.

Burghclere - Church of the Ascension - SU469610 - Hampshire

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

Two males grow north west of the church, their girths 9' 11" at 1' and 10' 3" at 2'.

At the north east corner of the church is a female girthing 10' 7" near to the ground.

At the north east corner of the grounds an unmeasured female with much spray.

At the south east perimeter two young males.

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



Newtown - St Mary the Virgin and St John the Baptist - SU476636 - Hampshire



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:

A female east of the church.

At the south east 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 is found at the most westerly point, a male girthing 10' at 1'.

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

Greenham - St Mary - SU486656 - Berkshire



The original 13th century church was pulled down and replaced in 1875.

Four yews grow east of the church, three females and one male. The largest, shown here, is female with a girth of 9' 8" at the root crown.

Headley - St Peter - SU514625 - Hampshire

This new church was built in 1868 .

One young male grows south of the church. Many headstones were propped up against it.

Kingsclere - St Mary - SU525586 - Hampshire

There has been a church here since Saxon times. The present building was begun around 1130 and enlarged in the 13th and 15th centuries. Major restoration was carried out in 1848.

Four yews grow in the churchyard. The largest, shown here, grows along the south perimeter. Its girth is 13' 11" at 1' 6" and 13' 8" at both 2' and 3'. North of the church is a female girthing 11' 2" at 1'. East of the church a male with a girth of 9' 2" at 1'. Lastly a young male grows at the north west perimeter corner.



Wolverton - St Catherine - SU551585 - Hampshire

There is mention of a church in Wolverton in 1286, but the present church is brick built and of 18th century design.



Three yews grow along the south perimeter of the churchyard. The male to the south west (above left) has a distorted bole and an active badger sett beneath. Measured at a height of 2' (where four nails have been hammered in) a girth of 13' was recorded. The middle tree is a younger female, and to the south east is the female seen above right, girthing 13' at the root crown and 12' 10" at 2'. A single nail had been hammered into this tree at 2'.

Ashford Hill - St Paul - SU549621 - Hampshire

There is reference to an old church that was burnt down. The present church dates from 1824.

Ten yews grow close to the perimeter. Shown here is the largest girthed, growing west of the church and on the old boundary. It is female with a girth of 12' 3" at 1'.

Along the south perimeter and close to the porch are two females, one girthing 10' 11" at 2' from the top of the bank. Midway along the south perimeter a further five yews lead to a gate with an adjoining property. One on the bank leading down to the south east gate are female and male yews and lastly a young male grows east of the church.



Brimpton - St Peter - SU557647 - Berkshire



The present church was built in 1869 on the site of an original Norman one.

Two yews are found here. The photo shows the largest, growing opposite the porch on the south perimeter. It is a female girthing 11' 10" at the root crown.

A smaller yew grows south east of the church.

Wasing Park - St Nicholas - SU576643 - Berkshire



The church is thought to be of 13th century origin. It was rebuilt in 1761.

A female yew, with much spray around the lower bole, grows south west of the church. Measured close to the ground and avoiding exaggerated root growth, a girth of 14' 6" was recorded.

Close to the drip line two young female trees grow at an angle away from the main tree. These would seem to be successful layering from a branch on the main tree which has now been cut back.

Growing south of the church is a male yew measuring 10' at 1'.

Aldermaston - St Mary the Virgin - SU596649 - Berkshire

This was originally a Saxon Minster, replaced in the early 12th century by a church of Norman design. Its tower was added in the 14th century and there were further additions in the 17th century. The church was restored in 1896.

Four yews grow here. Nails have been hammered into all the trees at a height of about 2'.

North of the church is a male girthing 11' 8" at 1', 11' 7" at 2' and 11' 11" at 3'.

Along the west perimeter and close to a private gate are three females. The first girthed 9' 1" at 1' and 8' 10" at 2'.

The yew just north of the gate girthed 9' 5" at 1' 9". South of the gate is the yew shown in the foreground of the photo, with a girth of 12' 3" at the root crown.



Padworth - St John the Baptist - SU613661 - Berkshire

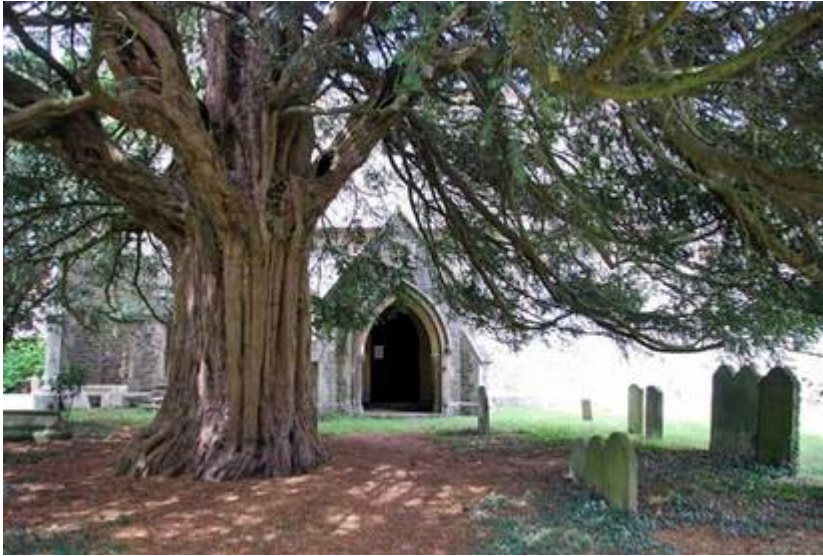


This ancient church was built in 1130 on exactly the same plan as an earlier Saxon church. Since then only the windows and roof have been replaced.

One male yew grows south of the porch. Its girth was 11' 2" at 1' 6" (marked by a nail) and the same at 3'. Foliage was healthy. As with many yews encircled by a bench, the root is considerably swollen beneath the bench height.

Ufton Nervet - St Peter - SU634675 - Berkshire

This is the parish church of the united manors of Ufton Richard (or Nervet) and Ufton Robert. In spite of the fact that the parish is now called Ufton Nervet, St. Peter's is actually the church of Ufton Robert. The ruins of the old church of Ufton Nervet still stand at Ufton Green.



The present church was built in 1862. Nothing remains of the older buildings, whose earliest recorded history dates back to 1222.

Two yews grow here. The male shown here girthed 17' 1" at 3' (marked by nails). Note the swollen root crown.

The smaller female to the south west of the church girthed 11' 5" at the ground - at its highest point - and 11' 10" at 1' from the ground. The main leader is completely hollow.

Sulhamstead Abbots - St Mary the Virgin - SU645679 - Berkshire

The church, built in 1220, was once dedicated to St Bartholomew, and is thought to have changed its dedication around the time of the plague. Full restoration was carried out in 1878.

Three yews grow in the churchyard with this impressive male south east of the porch. It girthed 13' 11" at 2' where a nail marks the height. Many branches have been removed over the years and hollowing is evident.

The remaining two yews are much younger and grow north of the church.



- *Foundry Brook is the easternmost tributary and rises near the Hampshire village of Baughurst and known as Beaumonts Brook. Around Silchester Roman Town its name changes to the Silchester Brook. Once in Berkshire it adopts its final name of Foundry Brook before flowing into the Kennet and Avon canal near a major retail park.*

Baughurst - St Stephen - SU582599 - Hampshire



A modern church built in 1845 on the site of a 12th century building.

This one female yew, girthing 10' 6" at 1' 6", grows south of the porch,

Silchester - St Mary the Virgin - SU643623 - Hampshire

An impressive site with the church standing just inside the east wall of the Roman town. The building retains features from the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries. More recently it was restored between 1872 and 1878.

Two yews grow close to the north porch, the most significant being this large female with a memorial bench around the bole. Beneath the bench can be seen its much swollen root crown. Girths recorded were 13' 7" at 2' (height of nail) and 13' 8" at 3'. The other yew is a young male.



Stratfield Mortimer - St Mary the Virgin - SU668641 - Berkshire

The present church was built in 1869 on the site of a much earlier church. When the tower was dismantled in 1866 a Saxon tombstone was found underneath.

Two yews grow here, the first south east of the church, is a male girthing 10' 1" at 1'. The second is a female growing west of the church close to the gap in the wall leading to the new graveyard.

Grazeley – Holy Trinity - SU699669 - Berkshire

The church was built in 1850 and closed in January 2006.

Two young yews grow to the south and east of the church.

Burghfield - St Mary the Virgin - SU670684 - Berkshire

A church was recorded here in the Domesday Book. It was completely rebuilt in 1853.

One young female grows to the north of the church. Foliage was sparse and it looked to be in terminal decline.

Appendix 1

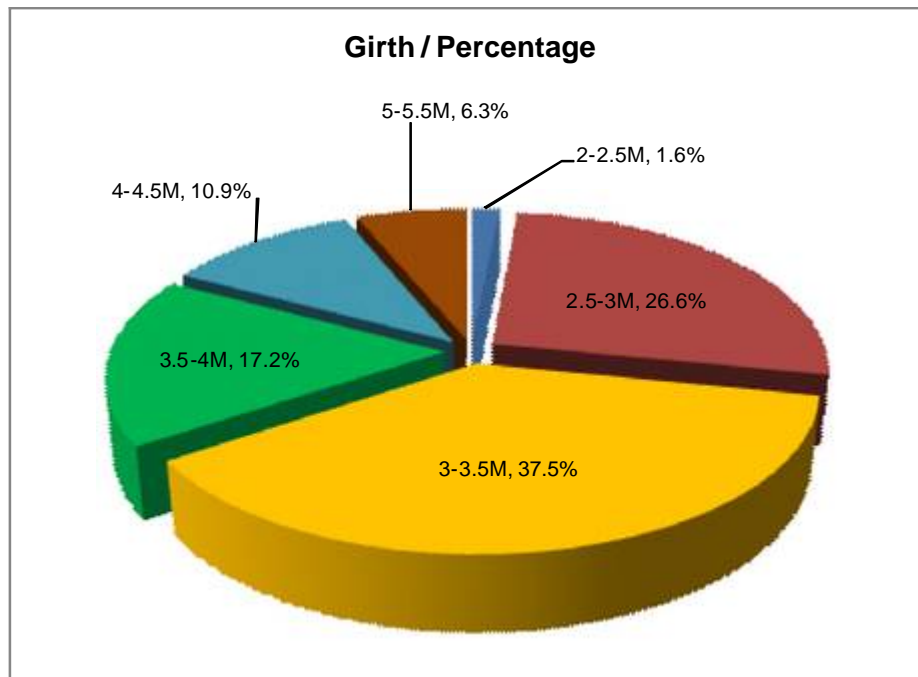
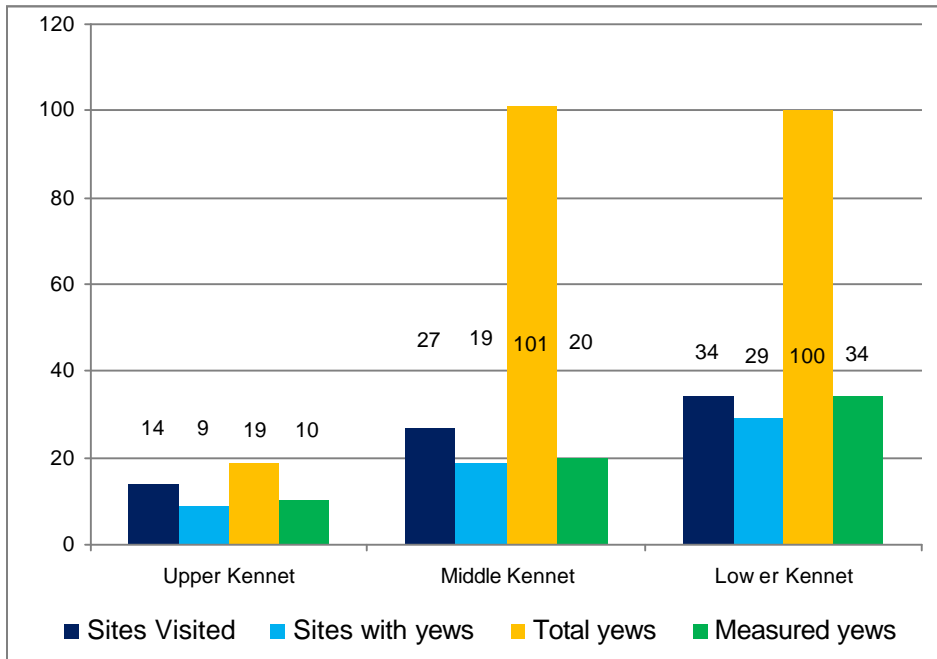
Churches visited

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Broad Hinton | St Peter ad Vincula |
| Winterbourne Bassett | St Katherine and St Peter - No yew recorded |
| Berwick Bassett | St Nicholas - No yew recorded |
| Winterbourne Monkton | St Mary Magdalene - No yew recorded |
| Avebury | St James |
| Yatesbury | All Saints |
| East Kennet | Christ church |
| West Overton | St Michael and All Angels - No yew recorded |
| Fyfield | St Nicholas - No yew recorded |
| Preshute | St George |
| Ogbourne St George | St George |
| Ogbourne St Andrew | St Andrew |
| Marlborough | St Mary the Virgin |
| Marlborough | St Peter & St Paul - Art centre |
| Mildenhall | St John the Baptist |
| Axford | St Michael |
| Ramsbury | Holy Cross - No yew recorded |
| Aldbourn | St Michael - No yew recorded |
| Chilton Foliat | St Mary |
| Great Bedwyn | St Mary the Virgin |
| Little Bedwyn | St Michael |
| Shalbourne | St Michael and all Angels |
| Ham | All Saints |
| Hungerford | St Lawrence |
| Avington | St Mark and St Luke - No yew recorded |
| Kintbury | St Mary the Virgin |
| Hampstead Marshall | St Mary |
| Enborne | St Michael and All Angels - No yew recorded |
| Stock Cross | St John - No yew recorded |
| Lambourn | St Michael and all Angels |
| Eastbury | St James the Greater |
| East Garston | All Saints |
| Great Shefford | St Mary |
| East Shefford | Old church - No yew recorded |
| Welford | St Gregory |
| Wickham | St Swithun - No yew recorded |
| Boxford | St Andrew |
| Chieveley | St Mary |
| Winterbourne | St James the Less |
| Speen | St Mary the Virgin |
| Newbury | St Nicolas - No yew recorded |
| Shaw | St Mary the Virgin |
| Midgham | St Mathew |
| Woolhampton | St Peter |
| Beenham | St Mary |
| Theale | The Most Holy Trinity |
| Inkpen | St Michael |
| West Woodhay | St Laurence |
| East Woodhay | St Martin |
| Woolton Hill | St Thomas |
| Highclere | St Michael and All Angels |
| Old Burghclere | All Saints |
| Burghclere | Church of the Ascension |
| Newtown | St Mary the Virgin and St John the Baptist |

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Greenham | St Mary | |
| Sydmonton | privately owned | - No yew recorded |
| Ecchinswell | St Lawrence | - No yew recorded |
| Headley | St Peter | |
| Kingsclere | St Mary | |
| Wolverton | St Catherine | |
| Ashford Hill | St Paul | |
| Brimpton | St Peter | |
| Wasing Park | St Nicholas | |
| Aldermaston | St Mary the Virgin | |
| Padworth | St John the Baptist | |
| Ufton Nervet | St Peter | |
| Sulhamstead Abbots | St Mary the Virgin | |
| Baughurst | St Stephen | |
| Tadley | St Peter | - No yew recorded |
| Silchester | St Mary the Virgin | |
| Mortimer | St John | - No yew recorded |
| Stratfield Mortimer | St Mary the Virgin | |
| Beech Hill | St Mary the Virgin | - No yew recorded |
| Grazeley | Holy Trinity | |
| Burghfield | St Mary the Virgin | |

Appendix 2

The pie chart shows the percentage of yews in each girth range, while the column graph compares the statistics for each of the three areas visited.



Historical references;

Historical date references have been obtained but not directly copied from;

Wiltshire County Council - http://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/church_search.php

University of London and History of Parliament Trust <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>