

# KINGLEY VALE

West Sussex

A Survey of its oldest yews

Peter Norton - 2012



## Introduction

Kingley Vale is a National Nature Reserve (NNR) near Chichester, West Sussex in southern England and lies within the new South Downs National Park. It covers an area of 160 hectares and is part of the wider Kingley Vale Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It lies at the extremity of a parish, a typical location for ancient woodland (Rackham 2006). Also noted is the profusion of archaeological features within the immediate area, including a former settlement.

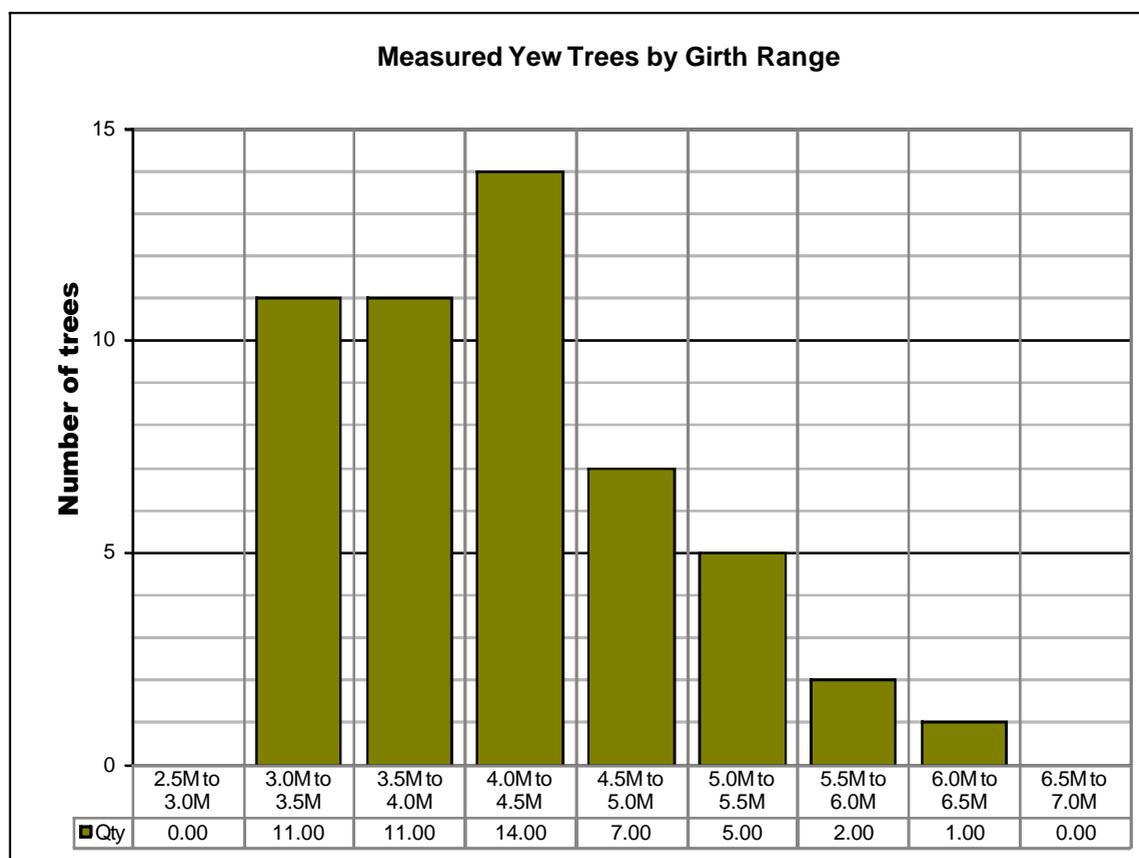
The site is managed by Natural England and has an information centre and a nature trail.

The reserve is a steep sided dry valley, the top of which offers stunning views of the surrounding area, including Chichester harbour and the Isle of Wight. The yews that now cover the escarpment (a hanger woodland) are much younger and may reflect the change in land usage over the last 200 years. The lowest areas of the valley are covered in one of the finest examples of a yew forest in Europe, with the oldest measuring more than 6m in girth.

Their shapes are contorted by time and storms. From some of the huge limbs, new root systems have developed. This natural layering of the yews, coupled with the texture of the old bark, gives some trees the appearance of great age.

The girth of the largest yews suggests that many of the oldest trees predate the time when this land would have been used as sheep walks. Yew is a natural component of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) but most younger yew woodland is believed to have colonised following the decline of extensive downland sheep-farming from around 1880.

Fifty one yews are featured below. Recording was carried out starting at the south end of the valley and walking north, then returning close to the eastern edge. A further stand of younger yew to the west was also investigated. A complete count of yew numbers was not attempted, however this survey is thought to represent a census of all yews over 3.5m



## Table of recordings

The observations contained in the table below are of the larger yews featured in this survey. Photographs of these, identifying their Grid Locations, make up the rest of this report.

Grid Loc	Sex	Girth			Height measured	Comments
		Ft	Ins	Mtrs		
SU8239310011	Male	14		4.2672	2'	Close to the office, One of the tallest yew seen on this site
SU8238010065	Female	16	8	5.0800	1' 6"	Note the small horse shoe shape nearby, was this a layer?
SU8240810297	Male	14	7	4.4450	5'	Having a bulging bole, measurement was just above this large burr.
						To the east of the above a small group of young yew, the largest having a girth of 10' 4"
SU8236510271	Male	16	3	4.9530	1' 6"	4 embedded nails mark the height. May have been 2 trees
SU8232710299	Female	11	10	3.6068	Root Crown	
SU8232910321	Female	11	4	3.4544	1'	
SU8231510310	Female	10	7	3.2258	Root Crown	Hollowing, 2 large layers
SU8231410338	Female	10	2	3.0988		May have been greater than 12'. Note young roots
SU8229710337	Male	12	9	3.8862	1' 6"	Hollow with aerial roots
SU8229310334	Male	18		5.4864	1'	Much rot
SU8229710342	Female	13	2	4.0132	Root Crown	
SU8230110349	Male	14	5	4.3942	At the split	Joined at the root, Tree to the right in the photo
	Male	10		3.0480	At the split	Tree to the left in the photo
SU8228010326	Male	10	8	3.2512	Root Crown	Below the large burr
SU8227310345	Male	11	10	3.6068	Root Crown	Totally hollow but outer shell still intact apart from 2 small cavities
SU8229410351	Female	13	10	4.2164	about 2'	A large internal stem.
SU8229410351	Female	12	3	3.7338	2'	Close to the above, tea lights evident plus flowers.
SU8228710375	Female	11		3.3528	1'	Loss of side limb
SU8228410367	Female	12	8	3.8608	Root Crown	
SU8226610373	Male	17		5.1816	1' 6"	5 embedded nails mark the height
SU8225010398	Female	11	7	3.5306	1'	3 embedded nails mark the height
SU8223410372	Male	13	9	4.1910	Root Crown	Large area of rot
SU8224310419	Male	18	8	5.6896	Root Crown	4 embedded nails mark the height.
SU8223410414	Male	12	9	3.8862	2'	4 embedded nails mark the height.
SU8222010431	Female	14	7	4.4450	1' 6"	Measured just above the root bulge
SU8221310475	Male	16	9	5.1054	1' 6"	2 trees with the largest (hollowing) having 4 embedded nails
	Male	10		3.0480	1' 6"	The smaller has 2 embedded nails.
SU8221310475	Female	15	6	4.7244	Root Crown	Grows close to the above
SU8220810539	Female	13	9	4.1910	Root Crown	Tape was undulating to get the least girth
SU8220610555	Male	15		4.5720	1' 6"	4 embedded nails mark the height
SU8220710560	Male	13	7	4.1402	1'	
SU8221110577	Male	14	9	4.4958	At the split	Joined at the root, Tree to the left in the photo
	Male	14	1	4.2926	At the split	Tree to the right in the photo
SU8221210583	Male	12	4	3.7592	1'	Undulating tape at about 1', completely hollow
SU8220210603	Male	15	2	4.6228	2'	Probably the most spectacular display of layering
						The remaining yews are found near the east edge as you head back to the information hut. A faint trail can be found that links all these sites.
SU8225510501	Female	13	11	4.2418	2'	Nice example of a successful layer
SU8226810508	Female	17	8	5.3848	1'	Much rotted but a nice internal root
SU8227010517	Female	20	10	6.3500	1' 6"	Much rotted and evidence of some of the outer shell to the front of the tree which allowed a measurement of 23'. Note the new growth.
SU8222910538	Female	12	11	3.9370	1'	3 trees appear to share the same root stock, only the centre yew was measured.
SU8224710496	Female	15		4.5720	1' 6"	
SU8227910505	Female	18	9	5.7150	2'	
SU8226010455	Female	13	4	4.0640	2' 6"	
SU8226810434	Female	13		3.9624	Root Crown	
SU8226410423	Male	15	9	4.8006	Root Crown	
SU8226010410	Female	15	3	4.6482	1'	Must be two trees
						The following grow in a stand of yew just west of the main path amongst many yew around the 6' to 9' girth
SU8218310494	Male	13	4	4.0640	Root Crown	Sparse foliage, may even be two trees
SU8211210505	Male	11	5	3.4798	Root Crown	Sparse foliage
SU8209210544	Female	11		3.3528	1'	Debarking evident
SU8202610566	Female	11	4	3.4544	1'	
						Young tree that's attempting to coalesce the yew branch
SU8208010520	Male	11	6	3.5052	Root Crown	Debarking evident
SU8208010501	Female	11	3	3.4290	2'	

SU8239310011 M 14' at 2'



SU8238010065 F 16' 8" at 1' 6"



SU8240810297 M 14' 7" at 5'



SU8236510271 M 16' 3" at 1' 6"



SU8232710299 F 11' 10" at root crown



SU8232910321 11' 4" at 1'



SU8231510310 F 10' 7" at root crown



SU8231410338 F 10' 2"



SU8229710337 M 12' 9" at 1' 6"



SU8229310334 M 18' at 1'



SU8229710342 F 13' 2" at root crown



SU8230110349 M 14' 5" and 10'



SU8228010326

M

10' 8" at root crown



SU8227310345

M

11' 10" at root crown



SU8229410351

F

13' 10" at 2'



SU8229410351

F

12' 3" at 2'



SU8228710375

F

11' at 1'



SU8228410367

F

12' 8" at root crown



SU8226610373

M

17' at 1' 6"



SU8225010398

F

11' 7" at 1'



SU8223410372

M

13' 9" at root crown



SU8224310419

M

18' 8" at root crown



SU8223410414

M

12' 9" at 2'



SU8222010431

F

14' 7" at 1' 6"



SU8221310475

M

16' 9" at 1' 6"



SU8221310475

F

15' 6" at root crown



SU8220810539

F

13' 9" at root crown



SU8220610555

M

15' at 1' 6"



SU8220710560

M

13' 7" at 1'



SU8221110577

M

14' 9" and 14' 1"



SU8221210583

M

12' 4" at 1'



SU8220210603

M

15' at 2'



The previous two photographs show the last yew at the north edge of the grove, the following grow along or close to the east edge as you head back to the start.

SU8225510501

F

13' 11" at 2'



SU8226810508

F

17' 8" at 1'



SU8227010517

F

20' 10" at 1' 6"



SU8222910538

F

12' 11" at 1'



SU8224710496

F

15' at 1' 6"



SU8227910505

F

18' 9" at 2'



SU8226010455

F

13' 4" at 2' 6"



SU8226810434

F

13' at root crown



SU8226410423

M

15' 9" at root crown



SU8226010410

F

15' 3" at 1'



The following grow in a stand of yew just west of the main path amongst many yews around 6' to 9' in girth.

SU8218310494

M

13' 4" at root crown

SU8211210505

M

11' 5" at root crown



SU8209210544

F

11' at 1'

SU8202610566

F

11' 4" at 1'



SU8208010520

M

11' 6" at root crown



SU8208010501

F

11' 3" at 2'



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