

*Norbury Park*  
*And*  
*Fetcham Downs*

*A survey of the yews*

Peter Norton October 2012



## Introduction

Norbury Park, situated in the Mole Valley to the north of Dorking, was acquired by Surrey County Council in 1931. This was their first land purchase and laid the foundation for the Countryside Estate, which is now managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust under a 50 year lease signed in 2002.

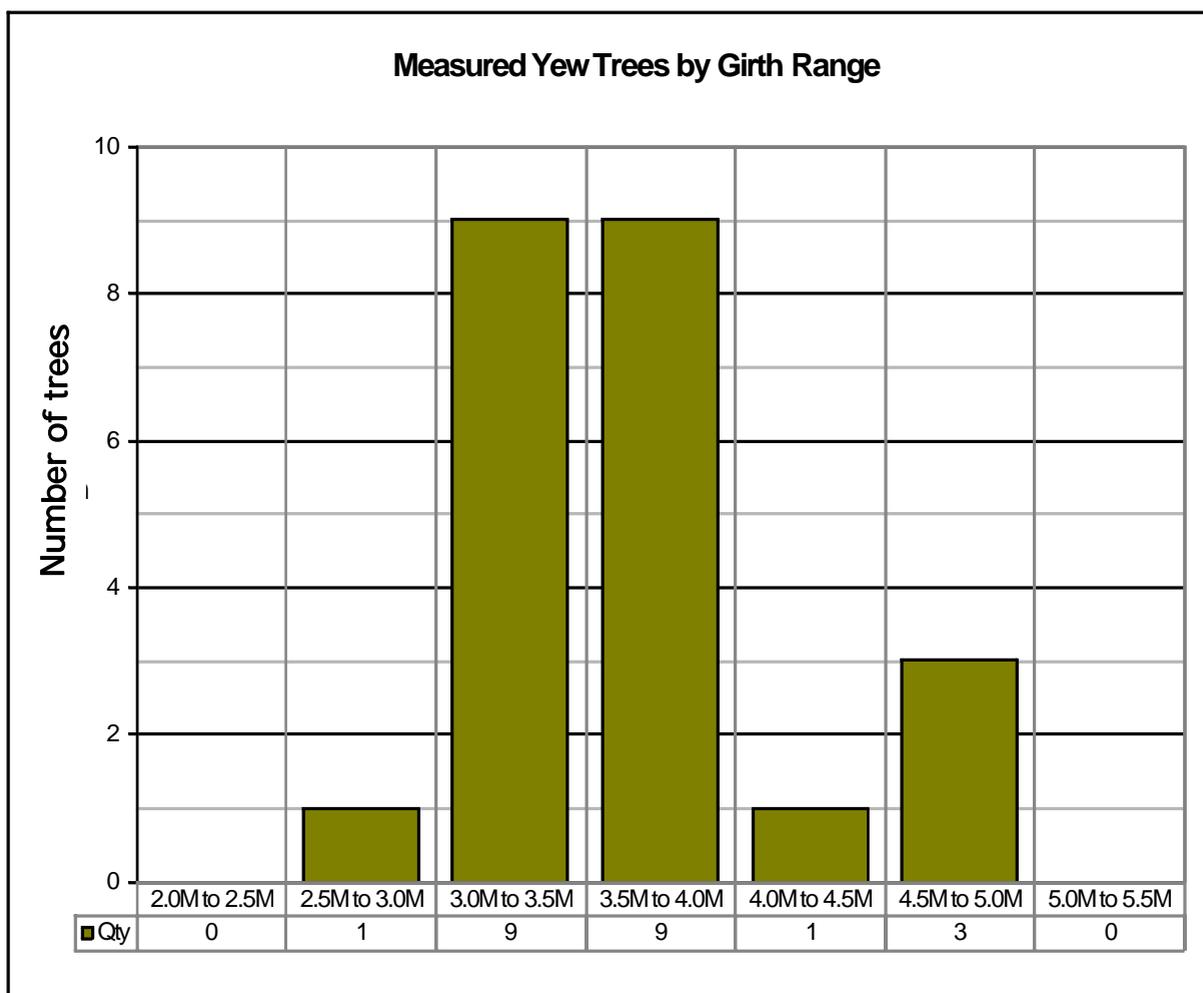
The park is well known for its walk through **Druids Grove** which lies to the south of the estate; however to the north and west are Fetcham Downs, a large tract of open chalk down, of which much had been inclosed, cultivated, or planted.

The downs support both isolated and groups of yews and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC)

In historic terms the yew trees occurring on the downs would have been a more significant feature in the landscape than at present. Some of the trees denoted parish boundaries and many of these are similar in size. With the incursion of natural regeneration over the last 100 years the yews have become less significant in the landscape.

In the past the extent of open grassland was far greater than today. With the decline in winter grazing and the arrival of myxomatosis scrub invasion was allowed to take place.

Approximately 80 yews were observed during this survey of which 23 had their girths recorded and are featured in this article.

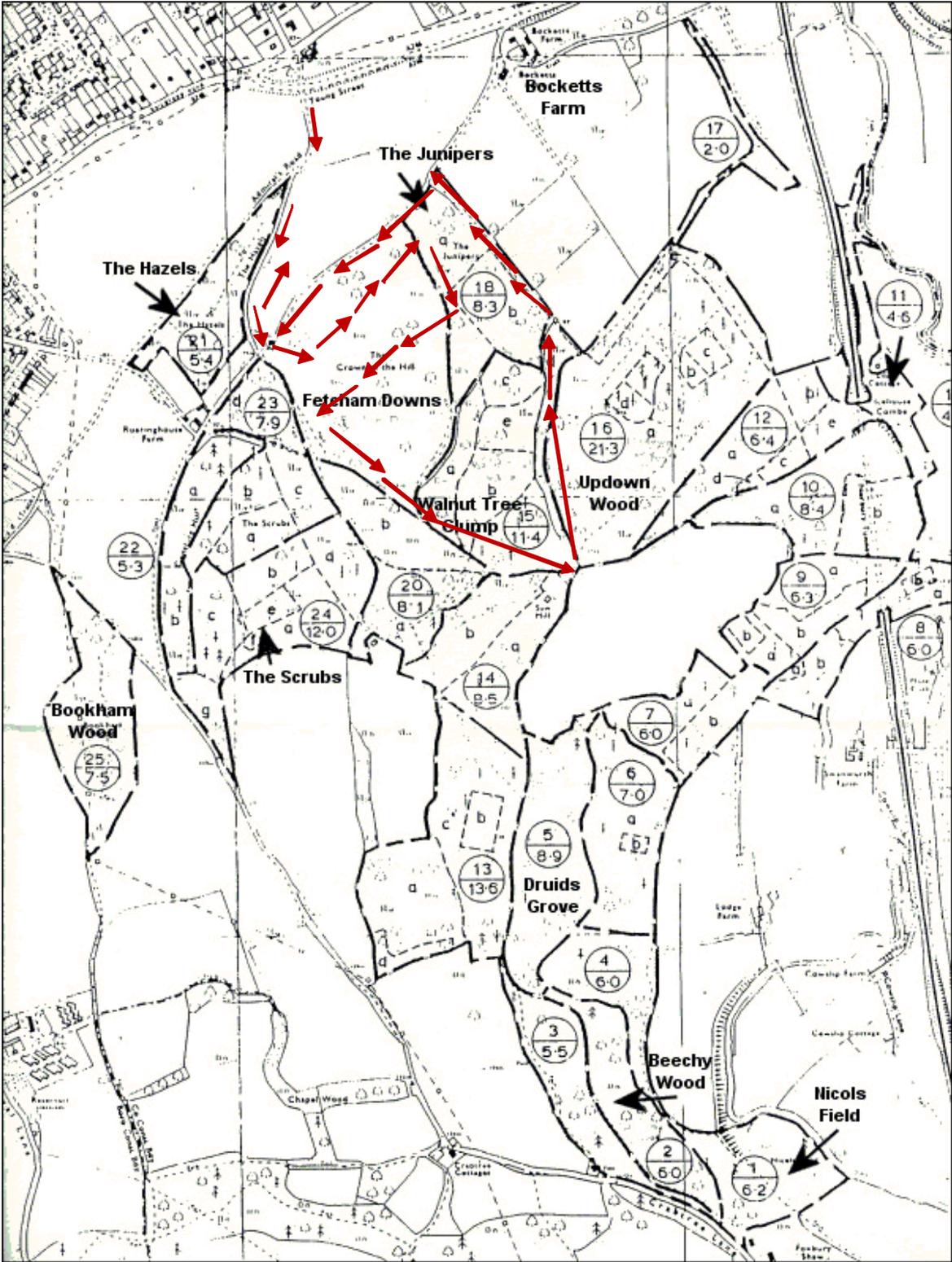


## Observations

Parking is found at Fetcham car park, TQ151548 (just off the roundabout) and then walk south along the made up track. The grid references below will take you on a meandering, circular, anti-clockwise walk.

Grid Loc	Sex	Girth			Height measured	Comments
		Ft	Ins	Mtrs		
TQ1522954314	Male	12		3.66	root crown	
TQ1521754304	Female	13	1	3.99	root crown	
TQ1537154531	Male	11	4	3.45	root crown	One of two yews growing on the chalk downs. Major layering all around the drip line, only one small entrance into this mini grove. Much epicormic growth. Second yew much smaller.
TQ1554954538	Male	11	3	3.43	root crown	2 leaders from a 4' break of crown
TQ1550754554						A stand of 6 yews, no photographs
TQ1549054568	Male	12	11	3.94	root crown	A stand of 10 yews with the largest indicated
TQ1549054568						General photograph
TQ1549054568						Stand of 15 yews with the largest around 10'.
TQ1545054361	Female	11	11	3.63	root crown	
TQ1538554235	Male	13	3	4.04	root crown	
TQ1530554096	Male	12	1	3.68	root crown	Downland yew, Major layering and only one entrance point.
TQ1528054066	Female	9	10	3.00	1' 6"	Edge of track, many others of similar size
TQ1534653946	Female	12	5	3.78	root crown	Downland yew and again difficult to take photos
TQ1573153938	Female	12	1	3.68	2'	First of several yews growing on an earth bank (parish boundary) which is clearly marked on OS maps. Large successful layer
TQ1572054003						Earth bank yew, not measured
TQ1570054244						close to the earth bank this young yew which was a tangle of branch layering, some of which was larger than the parent tree. Memorial plaque close by.
TQ1572154283	Male	11	1	3.38	root crown	Close to earth bank. Sparse foliage
TQ1572354290	Female	10	3	3.12	2'	Measured at the root crown as seen from the top of the bank to miss side limbs (about 2')
TQ1571854303	Male	11		3.35	root crown	Close to the above
TQ1571954331		10		3.05		Group of 9 yew no larger than the 10' earth bank yew
TQ1572754386	Male	10	10	3.30	1'	Earth bank yew measured from the top of the slope
TQ1573454396	Male	16		4.88	root crown	Measured from the root crown as seen at the top of the slope. 2 leaders from a 5' break of crown, some rot evident. A twin trunk yew close by
TQ1563054519	Male	15	2	4.62	root crown	3 leaders from a 5' break of crown
TQ1551854664	Male	10	1	3.07	3' 6"	Height as measured from the lower ground. Last of the yews before you turn southwest along the track.
TQ1535454583	Male	15	1	4.60	root crown	First of the yews that line the track, having 2 leaders from a 5' break of crown
TQ1528954543	Female	11	7	3.53	root crown	2 yews quite close
TQ1528954543	Female	11	6	3.51	root crown	This is the second
TQ1522554499	Female	11	4	3.45	root crown	

Area surveyed and general direction taken



All measurements are taken from the root crown, unless otherwise stated.

TQ1522954314 M 12'



TQ1521754304 F 13' 1"



TQ1537154531 M 11' 4"

One of two yews growing on the chalk downs. Major layering around the drip line with only one small entrance into this mini grove. Much epicormic growth. Second yew much smaller.



TQ1554954538 M 11' 3"  
2 leaders from a 4' break of crown.



TQ1549054568 M 12' 11"  
Grows amongst a stand of ten smaller yews.



TQ1549054568

A stand of around fifteen yews none greater than 10'.



TQ1545054361

F

11' 11"

Much epicormic growth.



TQ1538554235

M

13' 3"



TQ1530554096

M

12' 1"

Downland yew with major layering.



TQ1528054066

F

9' 10" at 1' 6"

Edge of track, many others of similar size.



TQ1534653946

F

12' 5"

Downland yew.



TQ1573153938 F 12' 1" at 2'

First of several yews growing on an earth bank (parish boundary) and clearly marked on OS maps. Large successful layer.



TQ1570054244

Close to the earth bank and marked by a memorial plaque. This young yew was a tangle of branch and root layering, some of which was larger than the parent tree.



TQ1572154283 M 11' 1"

Grows close the earth bank, sparse foliage.



TQ1572354290 F 10' 3" at 2'

Measured to exclude two side limbs.



TQ1571854303

M 11'



TQ1571954331

A stand of nine yews as you walk north.



TQ1573454396

M 16'

The largest yew found grows at the Boundary Post (BP) marked on the OS maps.

Measured from the root crown, as seen at the top of the slope. Two leaders from a 5' break of crown, some rot evident. Other yews close by.



Many younger yews grow along the path until the following is reached.

TQ1563054519

M 15' 2" with three leaders from a 5' break of crown.



General photographs of the younger yew when walking north.



On reaching a major track at the field edge head southwest and the following grow alongside on the raised bank with its own pathway.

TQ1535454583 M 15' 1"

Two leaders from a 5' break of crown, the branches sweep over the path



TQ1528954543

Two female yews on this path the first was 11' 7" the one to the rear was 11' 6". The main track can be clearly seen to the right.



Some general photographs of the younger yew along this westerly path.



You will soon reach the junction of paths that you first met on the outward journey. Head north back to the car.

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