

The one yew in this churchyard is a fluted female which appears from one side to be solid, but from the other reveals separation at a height of about 4'. It grows south of the church in line with the tower and close to the churchyard entrance.



Girths were 12' 4" at root crown (generally 1' above the ground), 12' 1" at 2' and 12' 6" at 3'.



The female yew grows on the north side, by the north porch. It is a solid looking, tall vigorous tree with thick branches from 8'/10' and upwards. Girth was 15' at 2' in 2007 and 15' 4½" at 2' in 2016. An additional girth of 15' 5" at 4' was recorded in 2016.



“At Selworthy there are two commemorative yews. Neither approaches the great age which that species is capable of reaching. They were put there, however, by the famous tree-planting baronet of the region in the last century, Sir Thomas Acland-of whom more presently. The Rev. F. Hancock records that the tree to the east of the church was planted by Sir Thomas on 26th March, 1860, which was the rector’s 90th birthday; the yew on the western side was planted a few days later on 29th March, which was Sir Thomas’ 73rd birthday.”
In 1906 H.J. Elwes and A.H.Henry produced their monumental work upon the trees of this country.
From *The Trees and Woods of Exmoor* by Roger Miles pub1972

I am unclear about where this information came from, but it is important to establish whether or not the trees we see today were 1860 plantings, or whether they have been here for a longer time and that the two 1860 yews failed to thrive. There must surely be some photographic records of such a celebrated place. All yews here are male.

This yew grows by the east perimeter wall. It has a massive low bole from which emerge more than a dozen substantial stems, both around the edge and in the central space. Girth was 15’ 7” attempting to obtain the lowest reading - between the ground and 6”.



This yew grows at the west end on the south side. Its stems are less regular than seen on the first tree. Girth was 17’ 7” at the base.



A little further north is a young yew, presumably planted to celebrate the millennium. Interestingly it has already divided at the ground and has many smaller stems emerging at the base and starting life growing almost along the ground. It suggests that in 150 years it might look similar to one of these old yews.

7th August 2007

The largest yew, female, grows on the south side. It has a bole of about 7', above which branches spread outwards all around the tree, leaving the centre ripe for decay. Some very thick branches had been removed. Girth was 13' 2" at 2'. There is also a row of 6 Irish yews on the west perimeter with a younger common yew by the entrance to the churchyard.

12th October 2016

The significant yew looked enormous, far larger than the 13' in 2007. This was no doubt because of the copious ivy on its trunk that also filled its large canopy.

The young yew at the end of the row of Irish yews was male, with a girth that looked about 7' 8". It was so filled with ivy there was nothing to say about it.



SKILGATE

St John the Baptist

SS98692724

26th October 2015



Two notable yews grow side by side on a strip of land north of the church. A low wall has been built separating this strip of land from the churchyard, but it seemed to me that these were churchyard trees.

The most westerly of the pair (right) had an 8' high bole above which rose many thick branches. A gap on its east side shows that hollowing is taking place. A fallen branch on the east side had come to rest on the 2nd yew. Girth over ivy was 14' 10" at 2' and 16' 4" at 4'.



The most easterly, seen below, is female with a girth of 14' 1" at 1' - a guide only. It had similarities in appearance to the first yew both in bole height and the number of thick branches. There was almost no twiggy growth on either yew.





The yew grows south of and close to the church (which has a north porch). It is female and appeared to be solid. From one side it looked like an ivy tree with large quantities in its branches. Many large branches rise from the bole above a height of about 6', while several others have been cut off at this height. Girth was 13' 10" at 1' in 2006, though ivy accounted for some of these inches. By the time of the 2015 visit ivy had been removed revealing a fine tree. Girth, this time without ivy, was again 13' 10" at 1'. A branch on the church side was hollowing.



A young yew grows in the NE corner of the churchyard on a triangle of land that might or might not be church property.

I gather that this is locally called East Stoke church, since it is separated from Stoke sub Hamdon's west side.

In July 2009 I recorded a tall tree with thick foliage growing NNW of church. There was an oil tank on a concrete base only 1m from the tree and a vast pile of composting grass only 2m from tree. Twiggy growth gives it the appearance of a larger tree than it really is. It seemed to be solid, and at a height of about 8' branches break out from edges and centre of the bole. It was difficult to measure around the twiggy base but it was under 14'. In 2016, with great determination I was able to tape around the base of the tree and recorded 13' 11". Measured a few feet higher would produce a much larger girth.



3 yews grow in line on the north side of the church, a female between 2 males. The largest (left) is furthest from the road, NW of the church. It is of bulky appearance, added to by copious twiggy growth and produces numerous upright and lateral branches. There was much epicormic growth on both trunk and branches. Girth (exaggerated by twiggy growth) was 13' 9" at the ground in 2004. In January 2015 Peter Norton recorded a girth of 13' 5" at about 2'. In June 2015 I observed that in the centre of the tree, several feet above the ground, was an old sapwood shell indicating that the tree was sawn off at some time in the past. This is now covered in mosses and lichens. The replacement stem for the one cut off grows to one side of the tree, rather than centrally. The only place that looked a reasonably reliable indicator of girth was at the ground, taping above a few jutting out pieces of new growth from the base of the tree. This was 13' 5½".

The tree in the centre had tall rising branches and a girth of 9' 4" at 2'.

The tree furthest east (right) was male, again with tall rising branches, and a girth of 8' 8" at 2'.



The yew grows north east of the church. It is a fine looking tree with a straight trunk rising from a very large and spreading root mass. There is much branching above a height of about 8', though many more have been understandably removed on the side facing the church. Girth was 13' 0½" at 3' 6". This young clipped yew grows on the south side.

