

Here was once an exceptional English multiple yew site. Three of its six yews were lost around 200 years ago, and two more succumbed in the 1987 hurricane.

*Yesterday in Sullington* by RL Hayward, revised in 1981, noted that 'a hundred and fifty years ago there were at least half a dozen age-old yews around the church, which they almost obscured'. One was described as being 'so split as to form a little bower, wherein children have played, tea parties have been held, lovers have plighted their troth, wild duck have roosted, and the farmer stored his potatoes against the frost'.

In 1815 Dallaway recorded that 'three yew trees, of great apparent antiquity, remain in the church-yard; about 20 years ago three others of equal size were cut down. When they were all standing, the appearance of the church, almost buried in a grove of yew trees, was remarkably picturesque'.

In 1882 *The Journal of Forestry and Estates Management Forests and forestry* noted that one of the remaining trio 'sustained much damage from the fall of snow'. The hurricane of 1987 saw the loss of two more, leaving just this one splendid tree. A notice at the church provided the following information: 'Insurance companies paid £4,800 needed for repairs after the October hurricane which blew down the yew tree, damaging parts of the chancel roof and the north and east windows'.

1999: I visited Sullington's last yew, a male that grows SW of the church. Its bole of about 6' divides into 2 areas of growth. The larger of these has been reduced to two main branches while the second consists of 2 younger lateral branches. Concrete filled many of the hollow spaces. Most of this lop-sided tree was below 20' in height.



Girth:

1997: 9m tall x 153cm diameter at 1m - Owen Johnson

1999: 17' 10" at 1'; 16' 2" at 3'; 18' 4" at 5' - Tim Hills

2013: 18' 1" between the ground and 1' with a slightly undulating tape, and 16' 2" at about 3' where there is a natural pinch line - Peter Norton

Peter Norton photographed the yew in 2013 and added notes about Sullington's younger yews: To the east a bushy male, a female grows just south of the east gate, with a girth of 10' 9" at 1'. There is also a millennium yew and a young female.

