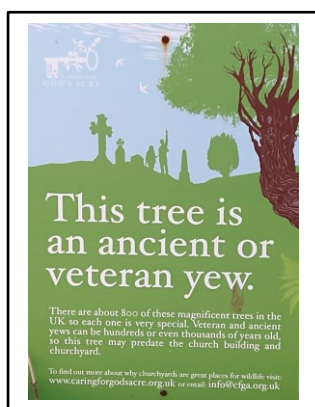


## The following notes comprise casual observations of a mature yew at St Mary the Virgin's Church, Bromfield



**Shropshire  
Hills  
National  
Landscape**



Diocese..... Hereford  
County..... Shropshire  
TPO:..... No.  
Conservation Area..... Yes - Bromfield Conservation Area (16/12/1993)  
Other designations.... The tree is growing alongside the remains of a Benedictine priory, and is important in its context with four listed buildings.  
Assessor..... Dougald Purce Woodland Officer  
Assessment date..... 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

### Location:

Facing the river Onny, on the embankment along the North-East side of the graveyard and approximately halfway between the lychgate & church.

Grid Reference (6 figure):	SO481768
X (Easting) , Y (Northing):	348172 , 276846
Latitude , Longitude (decimal):	52.387176 , -2.7629497
Latitude , Longitude (degs, mins, secs):	52°23'14"N , 002°45'47"W
What3Words:	falters.ferrying.suddenly
Postcode (nearest):	SY8 2JT
St Mary the Virgin's Church, Bromfield Road, Bromfield, Shropshire, England, SY8 2JT	

### Statistics:

**Girth:** 492cm – (Measured as narrowest point on the stem *(See pics. 2 to 4)*).

**Diameter:** 156.6cm - (Measured as narrowest point on the stem *(See pics. 2 to 4)*).

**Form:** Single complete bowl, that from approximately six metres then breaks into three secondary stems. Crown quite compact but mostly uniform with reasonable indications of good health and vigour.

**Height:** +/-10m.

**Gender:** Male.

**Age:** 550 years +/-50 years.  
This is based on a lazy interpretation of the stem diameter of a circle with a circumference of 492cm, this diameter was then considered against the interpretive age model for yew trees presented in figure 6 of Hindson 2019<sup>1</sup>. However, it is unlikely that the stem is exactly circular, and a more detailed assessment might give a more accurate interpretation of age.

**Status:** Notable / Veteran.  
This is based on the age & girth as suggested above. The tree sits on the margin between notable and veteran its situation near a river and relatively protected from draughts and grazing suggest a low stress influence on annual growth across much of the tree's life so far, which might well favour the status of notable passing into veteran over pure veteran. Its condition and situation suggest this tree has potential to achieve ancient status if treated with appropriate respect.

### **Veteran features & characteristics** <sup>4a</sup>

- Small scale deadwood.
- Some small amount of crown dieback, possibly snap-out with small upper crown cavities.
- Presence of a central cavity not visible.
- Pruning wounds and some areas of necrotic bark / vascular tissues on the south and west sides of the lower stem and buttresses.

### **Threats (Perceived or otherwise):**

**Tipping and rubbish** - There is some incidence of the tipping of graveyard rubbish and spoil down the bank onto the tree's buttresses and root plate. Tipping topsoil in small amounts and infrequently can be tolerated by most trees, but large volumes of soil especially subsoil can change the ambient ground conditions around a tree impacting on soil health and the capacity of the tree's roots to function at their best. Tipping other rubbish and logs from felled trees has potential to damage the tree and degrade how people value the area around the tree, in turn this can encourage the tipping of other more noxious substances.

**Ivy** - Ivy has been growing up the stem of this tree and into the crown but has been recently severed. Ivy doesn't kill trees directly but can smother foliage reducing the trees capacity to photosynthesize causing stress and disfunction. Ivy can also significantly increase the physical load and wind load of a trees crown increasing the potential for wind-blow or soil sheer (*Stem, branch, or root failure*). It is recommended that ivy be cut back regularly or completely discouraged from growing up this tree.

**Sale of The Poplars** - I have been informed that The Poplars cottage and grounds has recently be on sale. There is the possibility that new owners might not appreciate the importance of this veteran yew tree and could indirectly cause it damage through a range of activities such as:

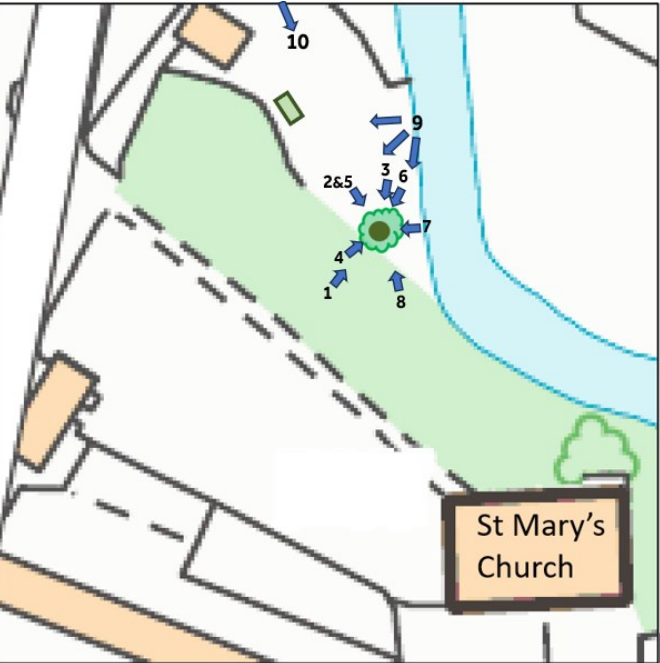
- (i) Damage to the ground or tree during garden clearance (*See Pic. 9*).
- (ii) Damage to the ground or tree through making level changes for flood defences or landscape projects. The garden falls within flood zones 2 & 3 (*See pic. 10*).
- (ii) Fire damage - smoke and heat from bonfires could cause damage to the trees foliage and roots.
- (iv) Soil compaction by the passage of vehicles would impact upon root health.
- (v) Composting and the storage of materials under the tree could impact upon the good condition of the underlying soil to the detriment of the tree (*See Pic. 8*).

**Final Thoughts on further protection** - This tree offers a high amenity both as a tree of significant age and veteran status, but also due to its relationship and context with four listed buildings. It is protected by the conservation area, but is not visually notable and could be undervalued by those unaware of its significance. These factors make a case for the expediency of raising a Tree Preservation Order to more fully protect this notable / veteran yew.



**Photos taken on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

Approximate location and direction of the photos.



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**Pic 1** - The yew tree seen from the grave yard.



**Pic 2** - Base of the tree seen from the North-West.



**Pic 3** - Base of the tree seen from the North-West.

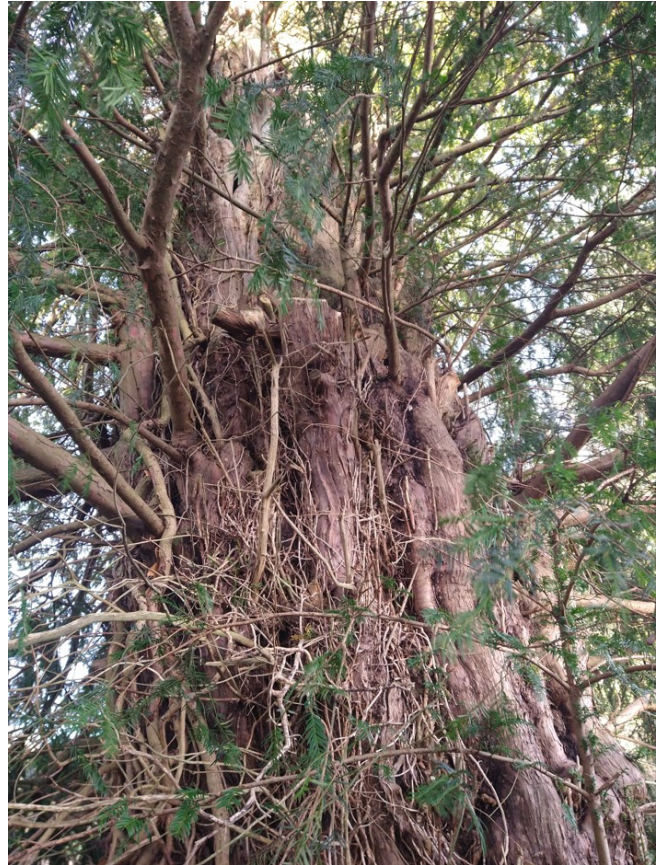




**Pic 4** – The base of the tree seen from the west.



**Pic 5** - middle of the stem seen from the North-West.



**Pic 6** - Root damage, root cut.



**Pic 7** - Root damage, root cut.





**Pic 8** – Spoil from graves, grass cuttings and other detritus tipped down the bank onto the Yew's rootzone.



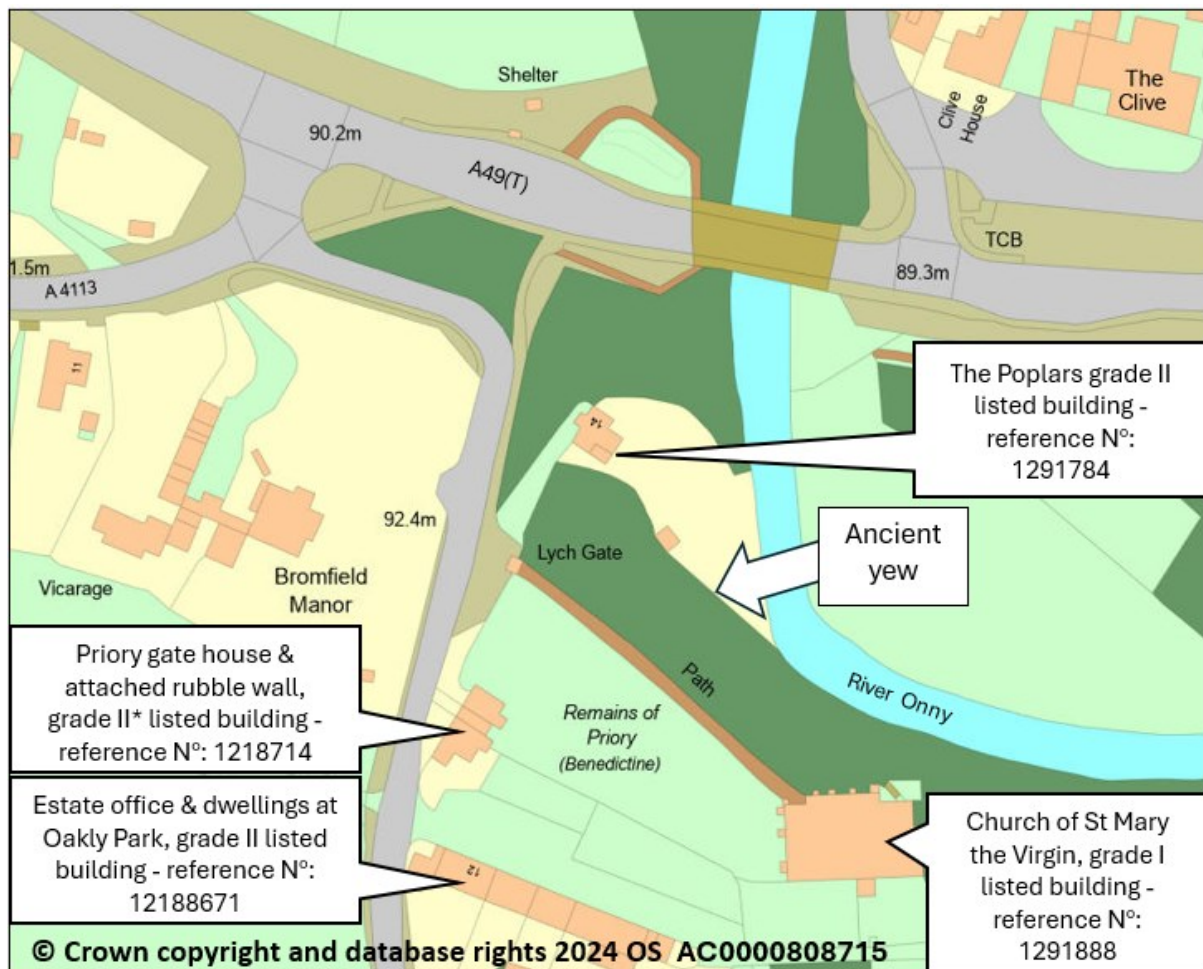
**Pic 9** – Taken from the bottom of the garden at the Poplars showing the yew (Blue arrow) in relation to the garden.



**Pic 10** – View southwards from the public footpath looking across the garden at the poplars, the blue arrows show the approximate location of the yew. The yellow arrow identifies the River Onny.







## References

- 1 Toby Hindson 2019 - Finding ages for large specimens of *Taxus baccata*, The need for a modular approach in cracking a 200 year old conundrum.
- 2 Tim Hills and Toby Hindson 2010 - for the Ancient Yew Group. Ancient, Veteran, Notable and Extraordinary A new classification of the yew population of Great Britain and Ireland -2010.  
(a) PP2 – definition of a veteran.
- 3 Toby Hindson 2010 - for the Ancient Yew Group. Classification Protocols Part II - Ancient, Veteran and Notable: The Specifics of Protocols Application DRAFT 3.2.  
Ancient Yew Group AYG further reading <https://www.ancient-yew.org/research/>
- 4 Natural England (2020) compiled by Helen Read - Veteran Trees: A guide to good management (IN13) - section 2.1.1.  
(a) Chapter 2, section 2.1.1  
<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/75035>
- 5 Ancient Tree Forum (2013) Ancient and other veteran trees: further guidance on management Editor David Lonsdale.  
(a) Section 1.2 fig 1.3: chart of girth in relation to age and developmental classification of trees.  
[http://ancienttreeforum.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/ATF\\_book.pdf](http://ancienttreeforum.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/ATF_book.pdf)