

Much has been written about this location and its remarkable yews.

1797: Arthur Aikin's *Journal of a tour through North Wales*

'The churchyard of Mallwyd is remarkable for several large yew-trees, one of which, being far superior in size to the rest, we measured. It rises from the ground with a single stem, but at the height of between three and four feet divides into six large branches; the girth of the trunk at a yard high, is 22 feet 6 inches, that of the stems a foot from the division: (1) 10 feet 9 inches (2) 8 feet 10 inches (3) 7 feet 8 inches (4) 7 feet (5) 6 feet (6) 5 feet 9 inches, nor does any part of the tree show the least symptom of decay, but, on the contrary seems likely to go on increasing for many years to come.

1798: During Warner's *Second walk through Wales* he was 'induced to stroll into the churchyard... remarkable for several enormous yew trees, of which 4 measure 15', and one 27' in circumference. Trees of this sort are indeed found in most churchyards, but I have been in none where they seem to flourish with the vigour, or spread to the extent, that they do here.'

1803: '.....and entering the churchyard, I took a near inspection of a famous old yew-tree, which had arrested my attention in passing to the inn. The trunk is very short, though of great thickness, and is surrounded with a stone seat for the village sages to rest on. A little above this seat, ten principal branches proceed from the same stock, and spreading in a circular direction, occupy a diameter of twenty-four paces in their utmost diameter, making a circumference of little less than two hundred and twenty feet. This amazing tree, which is still flourishing in all its parts, rises to a very great height, and is unquestionably the finest I ever saw'. *The British Tourists: Or, Traveller's Pocket Companion, Through England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland*. William [Fordyce] Mayor

1810: Richard Fenton's *Tours in Wales*: 'In the churchyard are 4 yew trees, 2 very large, the largest of which from a short stalk, has 6 main branches, each large enough for an independent tree, measures around about 25 feet. The other tree measures about 15 feet.'

1815: Hutton was 'taken to the churchyard to see a curious yew tree, from the root of which 9 boles ascend'.

1834 and 1849: Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary of Wales* described '3 remarkably fine yew trees, one measures 28' 3" in girth and from one stem throws out a great number of scions, which spread around it an extensive shade, and together present an appearance of sombre magnificence'.



1840: *The Cambrian traveller's guide, and pocket companion* by George Nicholson: 'In the churchyard are several large yew trees, one of which, far superior, to the rest, rises from the ground with a single stem, but at the height of between 3 and 4 ft. divides into six large branches. The girth of the trunk is 22 ft. 6 in. The average radius of the branches which spread on every side is 39 ft. forming a circumference of about 240 ft. Of the 6 stems 4 spread laterally and 2 rise nearly perpendicular. The height from the root to the summit is about 40 ft. No part of the tree exhibits any symptoms of decay. That at Aldworth, in Berkshire, though its trunk be 9 yards in circumference, is not comparable to this in health and beauty'.

1851: Edwin Lees in *The Botanical Looker Out* described its 'excessively distended branches, spreading 40' from the bole on every side, in singularly gloomy grandeur.'

1854: George Borrow's *Wild Wales* describes that 'An immense yew tree grows in the churchyard and partly overshadows the road with its branches.'

1855: '30 ft with 6 great branches' was noted in *Welsh Timber Trees* 1977 4th Edition H.A.Hyde and S.G.Harrison.

May 17th 1988 - Allen Meredith: 'The church faces SSW/NNE, so the tower is on the south side and the porch is on the east side, the old yew is in an easterly direction opposite the porch.

It is almost impossible to measure the six large branches without help, however a rough estimate for 5 of the branches would be 7ft, 5ft, 7ft, 10ft, 11ft. The tree itself is now quite awkward to measure, owing to many small branches and shoots close to the trunk. I measured it around the base and a few feet further up. It is between 30ft and 31ft in girth, but it would appear much of the trunk is now hidden since the measurements taken 200 years ago.'

1998 - Tim Hills: Only 2 of the 5 yews reported in 1798 have survived. This male, seen here in 2008, had a girth of about 33' at 3' and was in fine condition. The massive vertical stem in the centre, largely dead but with new growth up one side, is clearly an ancient internal stem, for outside of it, forming part of the rim of the original tree, can be seen remains of the wood that would have once encased it. This central trunk of 'white' wood rises to about 15ft. The tree supports three massive areas of growth, each splitting into many thick branches.



The smaller female yew is seen below in 1998 and 2008. In 1998 it had a girth of about 18' 6" at 5'.



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