

Bolderwood Grounds
in
The New Forest

A survey of the yews

Peter Norton January 2014



Introduction

The New Forest is an area of woodland, heath and marsh which lies in a broad basin between Southampton and the River Avon. It has existed as woodland since the end of the last Ice Age, and its heaths were first cleared and cultivated in the Bronze Age. There are still many barrows and mounds from the Forest's prehistoric era visible today.

The area was known to the Anglo-Saxons as Ytene. "Ytene" (ee-tane) meant of the Jutes, in reference to the area's settlement by the Anglo-Saxon Jutes from the area known today as Jutland in Denmark.

The New Forest we know today remains relatively unchanged since William I (the Conqueror) placed the land in 'foresta' sometime between 1066 and 1086 when the name Nova Foresta first appears in the Domesday Book (1086) and is unusual in that it is the only forest to do so in detail.

Nova Foresta, from the Latin for new hunting ground, did not refer to a forest in the sense of a wooded area, but rather to a protected royal hunting ground, for the pursuit of the 'beasts of the forest' – hart and wild pig, to which specific, often harsh laws applied.



Bolderwood Grounds belong to a restricted category of land in the New Forest known as "Crown Freehold" and as such, are not subject to common rights. Some of the New Forest's best woodland can be seen here and a variety of introduced ornamental and exotic coniferous trees were planted in 1860 forming part of an arboretum (originally known as a pinetum). These include Douglas fir (Oregon pine), deodar cedar (Himalayan cedar, worshiped as a divine tree by Hindus), Lawson's Cyprus (native to Oregon and highly sought after in Japan as coffin wood), western red cedar (Pacific red-cedar), giant redwood (Wellingtonia or sequoia), black pine (Austrian or Corsican pine), Maritime pine and Sitka spruce. There are also approximately 122 common yew that grow in the grounds and unlike Old Sloden these grow as solitaires or in small groups. The vast majority of these yews' girths suggest an age comparable with the 1860 plant date, but a few are considerably older and may date back to the time of the original landscaping. Unfortunately, many trees were lost or damaged in the great storms of 1987 and 1991.



* The following information is taken, but not directly copied, from more than one source.

Bolderwood Grounds are one of the most visited places within the New Forest. As well as its magnificent trees the site also boasts a deer viewing platform from which visitors can watch the wild Fallow deer in the meadow below.

The importance of this site is that it once contained an imposing royal hunting lodge, built over six hundred years ago in 1358 when Edward III issued orders for the construction of four lodges in the New Forest, one of which was then known as Hatheburgh. It was to be built of a timber frame and plaster surrounded by a ditch and roofed with slate. It was reported to have had a great gate and postern, a great chamber for the king, a chapel and a long house for chambers of office, including a kitchen, larder, granary and stables. It was later extended in around 1365.

The Lodge fell into disrepair and a new one was built in the 1500's. Work began on a high status lodge in 1638 which was to become (about 1730) the property of the newly appointed 'Master-Keeper of Boldrewood-walk' Lieutenant-General John West, 1st Earl De La Warr KB, PC, FRS (1693-1766). He was head of a family with inextricable links to the United States in general and the River and State of Delaware in particular. He extended the lodge in 1732 and again in 1747.

As well as being a soldier, courtier and politician, he was friend and confidant of the second Duke of Richmond, grandson of Charles II. His friendship with the Duke was the most relevant to Bolderwood as he ran a pack of hounds in the New Forest and Bolderwood seems to have been the base for fashionable gatherings and hunting parties. The lodge was then retained by several generations of the De La Warrs.



- William Gilpin in his book - Remarks on Forest Scenery and Other Woodland Views Volume II (1791) – describes Bolderwood;

Boldre-wood lodge, the seat of Lord Delawar enjoys one of the finest situations in the forest. It stands high with an extensive lawn before it, from which it commands a vast extent of forest scenery spread around in great variety of distance particularly towards Burley Lodge where the woods spread far and wide beyond a lengthened savannah which sets them to great advantage.

- According to the Hon. Gerald Lascelles, deputy surveyor of the New Forest, in his book Thirty Five years in the New Forest. Pub 1915

All that is left of this magnificence is an old lead pump, rather a curiosity, with Lord de la Warr's initials and coronet thereon, and the shell of the keeper's cottage hard by is reputed to be the remains of the old laundry attached to the mansion since added to.

The last occupant of the house was Lady Londonderry, who continued to reside there after the death of her husband, the master keeper of the walk, in 1821, until her own death in 1833. The house was then pulled down, a great sale of all the materials was held in 1833, and all that remained was a keeper's cottage and the pump!



Map based on surveys undertaken in 1786/87 by Thomas Richardson, William King, Abraham Driver and William Driver. It is commonly known as "Drivers' map".



Thomas Milne's Hampshire, published 1791



The Survey

A survey of the yews was carried out during October 2013, with a grand total of 122 trees observed and a 10 figure grid reference noted either for those in small groups or those which are solitaires.

47 had measurements recorded of their minimum girth: of these, five yews were significantly larger than the average. These 47 account for 39% of the grand total. Those not having their girths recorded were in the region of 3' to 5'.

Also noted were a few seemingly dead yews of which four, still standing, have had their crowns lopped and all branches removed. These sculptured, bleached trunks may appear to be useless, even eyesores, but are important components of the forest wildlife habitat. While it was noted that two of them showed minimal signs of recovery, this sort of pollarding will almost always end in a tree's death.

Observations of the sex of the trees was carried out by looking at the ground close to the tree for both seeds (female) or the remains of the pollen sacs (male). Where the evidence was inconclusive no sex was recorded.

The yews whose girths were recorded would seem to fall into four age groups:

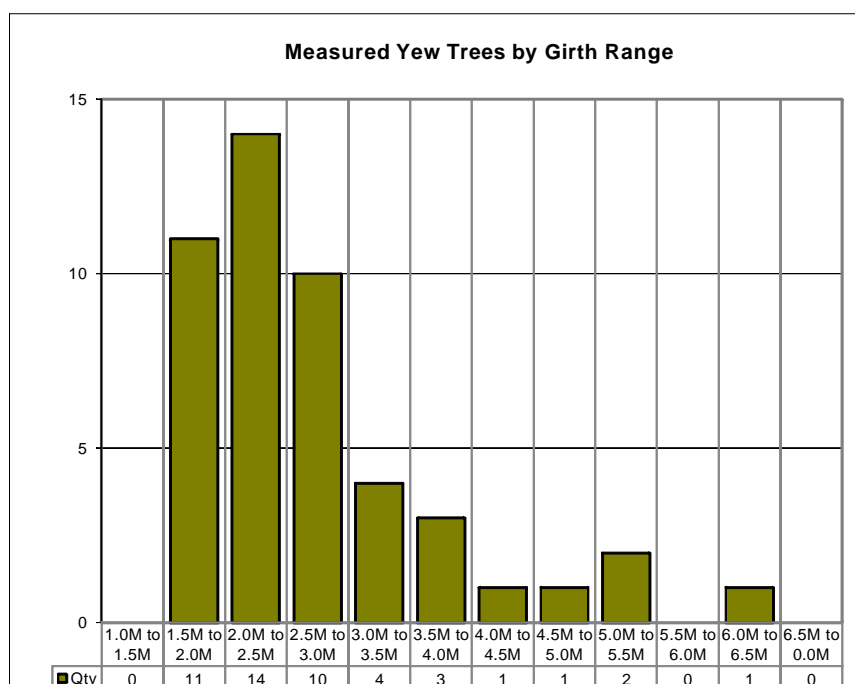
Around 6 feet (1.83M) or less may indicate plantings of 100 years ago or less.

Between 6 and 9 feet (1.84 – 2.75M) and may indicate plantings between 100 and 200 years.

Between 9 and 12 feet (2.75M – 3.66) and may indicate planting between 200 and 300 years.

5 yew are greater than 13 feet (>4.0m) and may indicate planting between 300 and 700 years.

A full listing of the observed yews can be found in Appendix 1.



Yew 6 SU2457508152 Female 12' 3" at root crown
Hollowing and with a fine internal stem



Yew 10 SU2471708201 Female 15' 2" at 2'
Hollow, with a failed internal stem



Yew 16 SU2463408062 Female 17' 4" at 3'
Hollow with a thick healthy internal stem



Yew 19 SU2445607968 Female 17' 1" at 1'

The tree is in the process of hollowing and will eventually split into two parts



Yew 21 SU2443308045 Female 20' at 1'

This twin trunk could be re-growth from a lost bole, they could be layering, they could be two sprouts from one base, or, two that grew close and coalesced so no visible join remains. The individual girths, measured just above the split are 13' and 10'.



Yew 29 SU2412508215 10' 10" at 2' 6"

Yew 33 SU2408608224 Male 10' 2" at 2'



Yew 42 SU2371708184

Female 10' 2" at root crown



Yew 43 SU2380108147

Male 13' 7" at 1' 6"

Sculptured white wood, possibly storm damaged and then lopped but now recovering



Yew 51 SU2392208268

Female 10' 8" at 1' 6"



Yew 55 SU2398908287 Female 12' 3" at 2' 6"

Sculptured white wood, possibly storm damaged and then lopped but starting to recover



Yew 56 SU2402208335

about 12' girth



Appendix 1

No	Grid Loc (SU)	No of trees	Dead	Sex	Estimated	Girth			Height measured	Comments
						Ft	Ins	Mtrs		
1	2450208317	2		Male		8		2.438	1	
2	2453508322	4						0.000		All less than 6'
3	2456408260	3		Female		7	3	2.210		
4	2461608206	1		Male		8	10	2.692	1	Evidence of debarking by deer
5	2463008195	2	1	Male		7	10	2.388	1	
6	2457508152	1		Female		12	3	3.734	Root crown	Hollow along with a fine internal stem
7	2465708183	1		Male				0.000		Young tree, storm damaged new upright growth
8	2466808208	7			Estimated	6		1.829		New outer growth on small yew
9	2468008230	2						0.000		
10	2471708201	1		Female		15	2	4.623	2	Completely hollow and a failed internal stem.
11	2477308172	5			Estimated	6		1.829		
12	2480608144	1				6	10	2.083	1	
13	2479908122	1		Male		7	9	2.362	1	
14	2475308080	1		Male		9	2	2.794	Root crown	Many broken branches caused by fallen beech
15	2465508075	1		Male		8	2	2.489	1' 6"	
16	2463408062	1		Female		17	4	5.283	3	17' 10" at 1' Hollow with fine internal stem. Has grown 1" in three years
17	2457608083	1			Estimated	6		1.829		
18	2454808057	1						0.000		Fallen yew with new phoenix growth
19	2445607968	1		Female		17	1	5.207		The tree is in the process of hollowing and will eventually split into two parts - about one third of the trunk has a gap right through
20	2448007935	1			Estimated	6		1.829		
21	2443308045	1		Female		20		6.096	1	Above 1' it splits into 2 limbs, with girths of 13' and 10' measured below the protrusions and just above the split.
22	2444908032	1		Male		9	6	2.896	1	
23	2421908229	16				6	9	2.057	Root crown	Part of an earth bank with 17 yews along its length. This is the first
24	2428408009	1				9		2.743	Root crown	The last of the 17
25	2412207948	1			Estimated	6		1.829		
26	2410507960	2			Estimated	6		1.829		
27	2402107976	1		Male		8		2.438	Root crown	Large burrow under the root
28	2415008221	16			Estimated	6		1.829		8 off on earth bank plus a further 8 close by
29	2412508215	1				10	10	3.302	2' 6"	Evidence of debarking by deer
30	2411908223	2				8	3	2.515	Root crown	2 close with the largest measured
31	2410408208	1				8	10	2.692	2	Lopped yew starting to recover
32	2410008220	1	1					0.000		Lopped and now dead
33	2408608224	1		Male		10	2	3.099	2	
34	2397108133	1		Male				0.000		A heaved yew with upright growth
35	2395308126	7						0.000		All grow along the earth bank
36	2383908109	1		Male	Estimated	6		1.829		
37	2384608107	1		Male	Estimated	6		1.829		
38	2383108106	1				7	5	2.261	2	
39	2383108106	6				8	3	2.515	2	The largest girthed tree was measured, remaining are much less in girth.
40	2382108123	1		Male		7	7	2.311		
41	2376208114	1		Female		7	3	2.210	1	Moribund
42	2371708184	1		Female		10	2	3.099	Root crown	On edge of earth bank
43	2380108147	1		Male		13	7	4.140	1' 6"	Lopped yew recovering
44	2383408183	1		Male		6	10	2.083		
45	2388908277	1		Male		9	3	2.819	Root crown	
46	2392508238	3	1					0.000		Remaining 2 are moribund
47	2391608220	1		Male		9	7	2.921		
48	2393008221	1		Male		9	10	2.997		
49	2393008235	1		Female		6	6	1.981		
50	2393108248	3			Estimated	6		1.829		
51	2392208268	1		Female		10	8	3.251		
52	2391908297	1		Female		7	7	2.311		
53	2388208282	2						0.000		
54	2386908305	1				7	3	2.210		
55	2398908287	1		Female		12	3	3.734	2' 6"	Loped yew recovering
56	2402208335	1	1		Estimated	12		3.658		Fallen dead
57								0.000		