

# The Kynaston Yew

Extract from [www.ancient-yew.org](http://www.ancient-yew.org) by Tim Hills - compiled from accounts collected by Allen Meredith

## The history of a Yew brought up to date

Originally a churchyard yew, its status was to be dramatically altered by the events of 1575:

".....on the 17th of February, at six o'clock in the Evening, the Earth began to open, and a Hill with a Rock under it . . . lifted itself up a great height, and began to travel, bearing along with it the Trees that grew upon it, the Sheep folds and Flocks of Sheep abiding there at the same time. In the place from where it was first mov'd it left a gaping distance forty foot broad, and fourscore ells long; the whole Field was about 20 acres. Passing along, it overthrew a Chapel standing in the way . . ." (1674)<sup>1</sup>

The first account to specifically mention the Yew is found in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1793:

"..... it has left immense chasms of earth and moved stones thence at the magnitude of five or six tons; a number of trees thrown down, some moved standing and now remain so; a large old yew tree was moved nearly sixty feet, and is now standing fine and uninjured."

Dr Fuller's account in 1815 <sup>2</sup> added that the "aged yew-tree, growing in the chapel yard" was removed "from the west to the east".



(Tim Hills 2007)

The Woolhope Club account of 1899 is more cautious about the yew's origins, but provides a clear description of its location:

"The church or chapel at Kynaston was involved in the landslip, and it is believed that the Yew tree, the roots of which are still visible in the hollow beneath the deep cutting in the Upper Ludlow rocks at the crossroads half way up the hill leading to the Cockshoot, originally stood in, or close to, Kynaston churchyard."



(Tim Hills 2007)

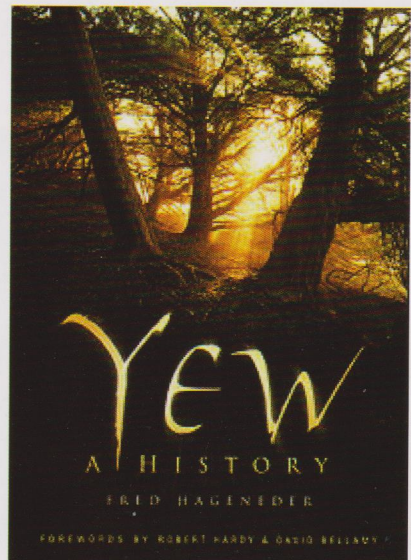
A site visit in July 2007 confirmed that the yew, first noted in the account of 1793, lives on. The exposed roots find their way into the ground many metres away from its leaning trunk, which supports a small but flourishing crown . It would seem very likely that this is a well developed fragment of the original churchyard yew that moved with the land in 1575.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Richard Baker: *A Chronicle of the Kings of England etc.*, 6th impression. London, Ludgate-hill: George Sawbridge, Hosier Lane - found in *A Brief Time of History* by David L.Higgitt

<sup>2</sup> *The Excursion down the Wye, from Ross to Monmouth: Including memoirs and anecdotes of the .....* by Charles Heath and John Kyrle

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