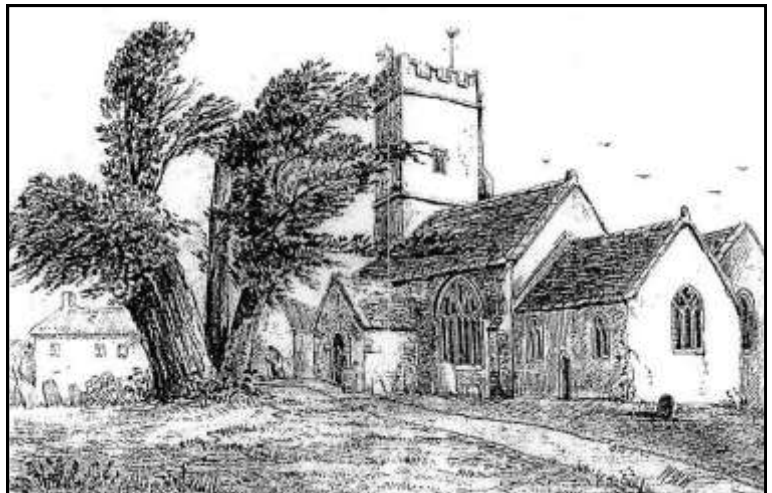


The 1938 edition of *The King's England* described 'an ancient hollow yew on a tumulus more ancient still'. Inclusion of this yew in the list of 50 Great British Trees, selected in 'celebration of our living heritage in Queen Elizabeth II's jubilee year' (2002), should guarantee its future protection. This is undoubtedly a unique site with an oval churchyard and a tumulus thought by some to be Bronze Age, though archaeological evidence has yet to provide confirmation. A skeleton uncovered in the churchyard was apparently buried facing N-S, a practice considered to be Neolithic. Stories abound of battles fought in the area with Roman soldiers, and the heads of defeated warriors carried victoriously back to the site and buried on the mound. Rumour even has it that some headless skeletons were uncovered near to the yew in 1980 and 'quickly reinterred'. Some say a pre-Roman chief is buried here, others that the church was built on a druid circle, with red-stained bones found near the mound testifying to a common pagan practice. I have been unable to verify the original sources of any of this material.

The male yew consists of a central stem, with six more leaning outwards at similar angles, creating an almost symmetrical appearance. Each of these individual stems is of great size, up to 16' in girth. It is generally considered that they are fragments of a vast old yew that would have once filled the empty space. The 1848 drawing by Wheatley shows some of these fragments.

The sources of stories and information presented on this page are Chetan and Brueton's *The Sacred Yew* and Andrew Morton's *Tree Heritage of Britain and Ireland*.

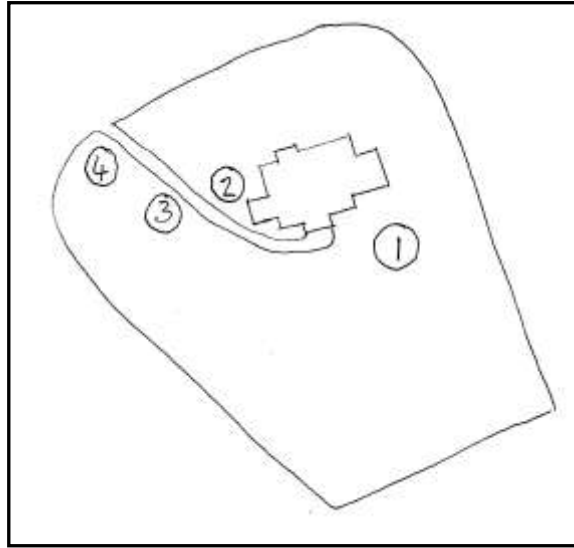
A girth of 39' 11" at the base was recorded in 2015, almost the same as when measured in 1997. The photos on this page show the yew in 1997.



The seven fragments that make up Ashbrittle's yew in 2015



On October 26th 2015 the churchyard's three younger yews, numbered 2, 3 and 4, were also recorded.



Tree 2 is female and grows close to the tower. It is many branched above 6'. Girth was exactly 9', keeping the tape 1' above the sloping ground.

Tree 3 is female with a girth of 5' 6" at about 4".

Tree 4 is male measuring exactly 6' at about 6".

