

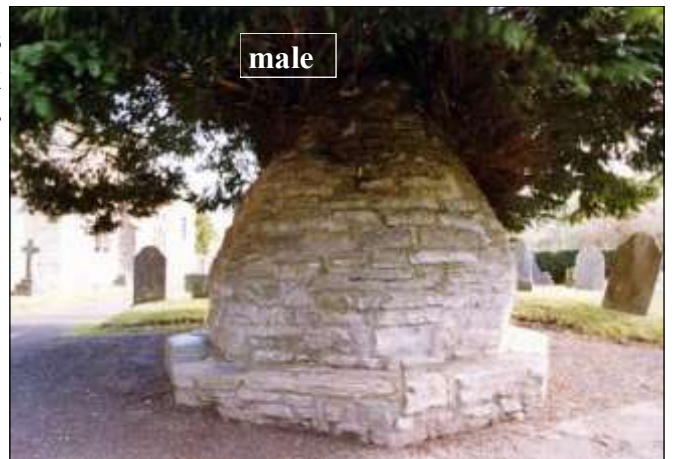
Bampton's almost circular churchyard is a feature common to Saxon and pre-Christian religions. The first stone church was probably built in the 12th century, replacing an earlier wooden building. The old yews are first mentioned in Oulton's *Travellers Guide* of 1805, in which he described 'a large and pleasant church-yard, in which are two yew-trees, remarkable for their age'.

In 1856 John Murray's *Hand-book for travellers in Devon & Cornwall* noted that you could 'seat yourself on stone benches, built around two aged yews, whose chinks are filled in with masonry'.

These postcards from around 1900 show the yews completely encased in their 'stone jackets'. One can only assume that when Rev. M.E. Frayling recorded their girths as 29ft and 27ft in the 1950s, he measured around the stonework.



1998: The male, neatly trimmed and with a vigorous crown, grows close to the church porch. The stonework encases its trunk to a height of 7/8', but it was still possible to see aerial roots in the hollow.



The crown of the female yew, less conical in shape, was also growing vigorously. The stone encloses it to a height of 8' and girth around the top of the casing was 19'.

