

The present church is dated 1762. It is a rudimentary rectangular hall measuring 25x13 set in an enclosure of ancient yews. The following accounts are from the Woolhope Society, whose members took a keen and sustained interest in the yews at this exceptional site.

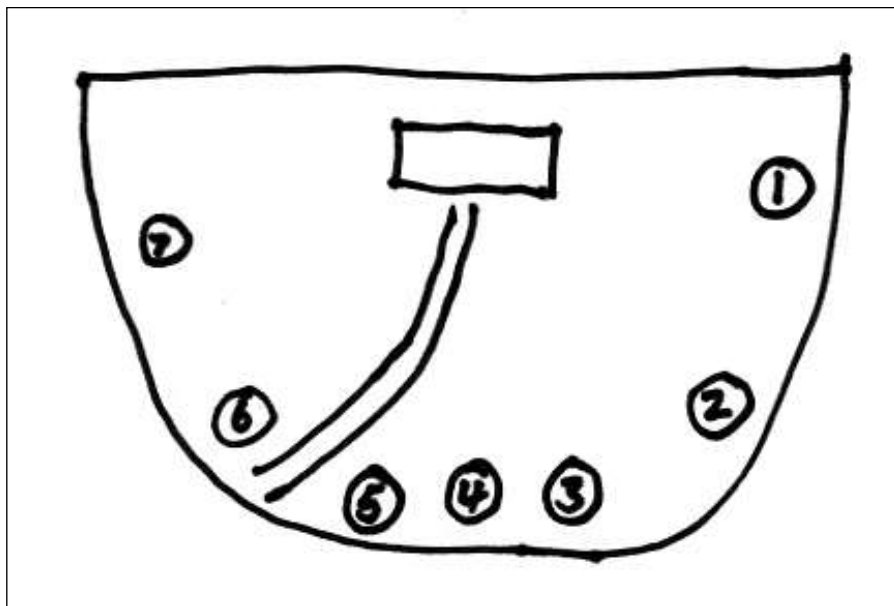
1876: '...not a few visited the ancient yew trees in the churchyard of Capel-y-ffin, and several clerical members made some praiseworthy, but rather unsuccessful efforts, to study the natural history of their cowed brethren in the neighbouring monastery'. (Llanthony)

1891: 'Of seven lofty trees in the churchyard, the largest was found to have a girth of 18ft at the height of 5ft from the ground'.

1898: 'Of the seven trees in the churchyard the largest girths 18ft at 5 feet from the ground; the second largest measures 14ft. There are also two other yew trees close to the churchyard, making a total of nine. Not one is planted upon the north side of the chapel'.

Evans included this site in his *Churchyard Yews of Gwent* (1988). He considered that the dimensions of the two largest (593 cm and 542 cm at 1m) suggested an age of about 500 years. The plan shows that they are mostly to the south of the church, supporting the possibility that they were planted 'where the faithful were interred' - a practice known from the late Middle Ages.

I visited the site in 1998, 2006 and 2012. For the last visit I had a copy of the Woolhope measurements carried out in 1867 and attempted to remeasure each tree at the same height. Slow growth rates suggest these trees could be much older than Evans' estimate.



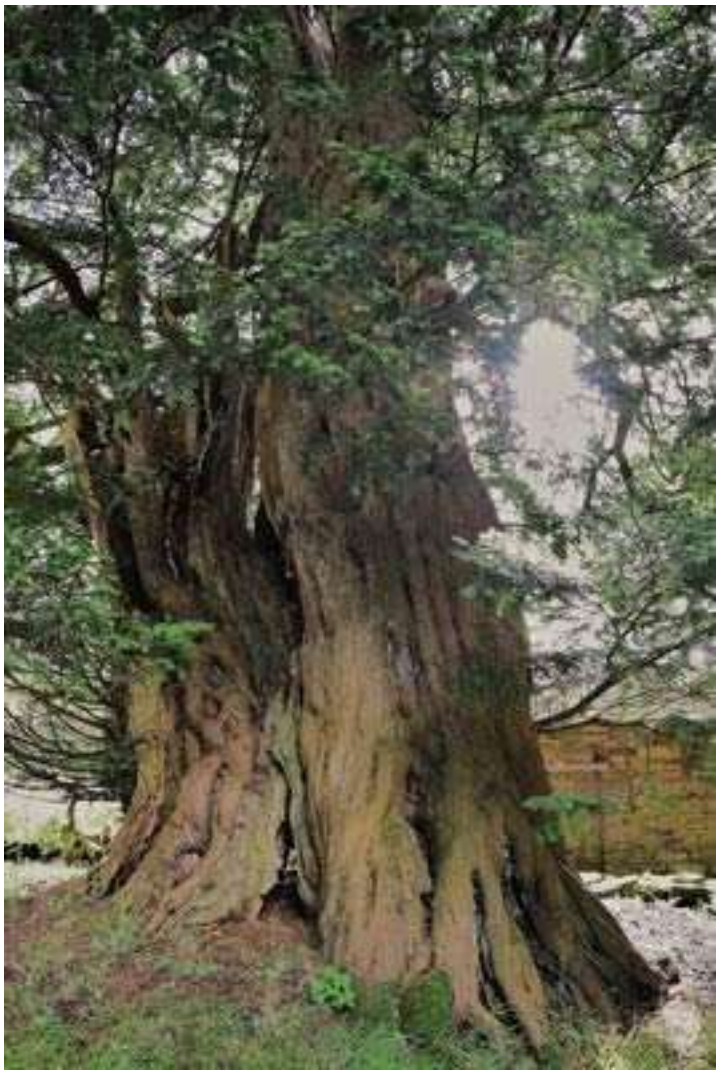


Tree 1: 11' 8" at 5' in 1867
13' 10" at 4' in 2012





Tree 2: 18' 6" at 5' in 1867
21' 2" at 5' in 2012





Tree 3: 13' 6" at 5' in 1867
13' 8" at 5' in 2012





Tree 4: 16' 2" at 5' in 1867
16' 8" at 5' in 2012





Tree 5: 14' 6" at 1' in 1867
16' 1" at 1' in 2012





Tree 6: 13' 10" in 1867
13' 8" at 5' in 2012





Tree 7: 14' 2" at 5' in 1867
15' 5" at 5' in 2012

