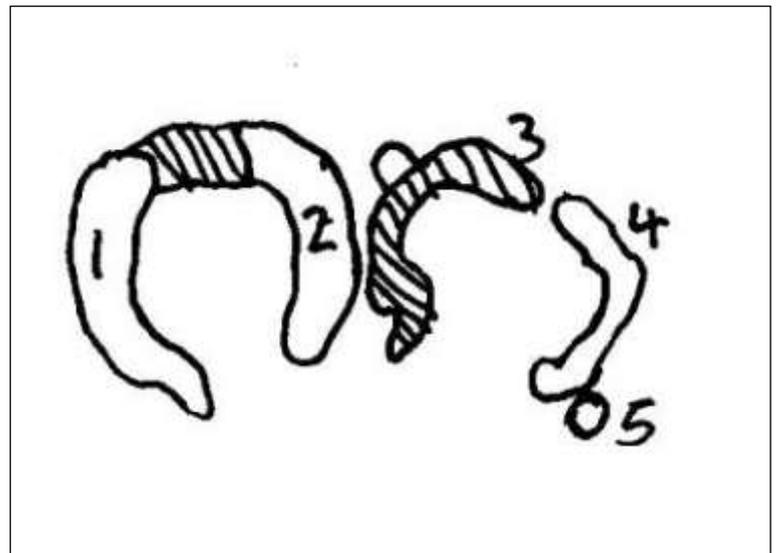
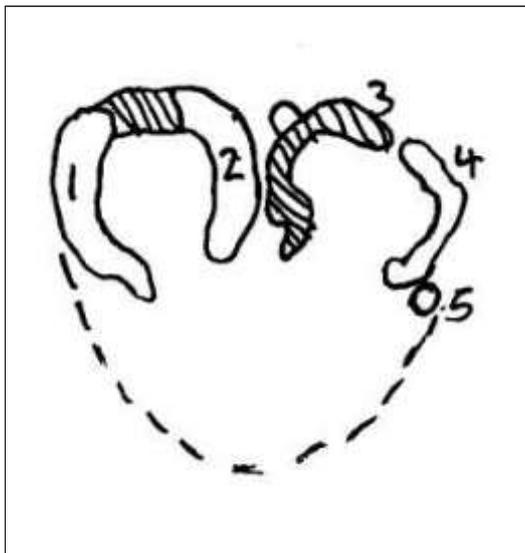


In 1808 *The Gentleman's magazine*, Volume 78 contained an article entitled the *History and antiquities of Dunster*. It described 'a venerable yew of large dimensions' to be found in the churchyard, opposite the west door. The same description appears in the 1830 *History of the hundred of Carhampton* and also in Gomme's 1898 *Topographical History of Shropshire and Somerset*.



In 2003 what remains of the 'venerable yew' are several living fragments interspersed with pieces of dead wood (shaded). When the dead wood eventually decays and the living pieces fill out with new growth, the original more cylindrical tree of centuries ago will have been replaced by what will appear to be several misshapen young yews growing close to each other. In the first diagram the dotted line shows the possible extent of the original tree.

Girth around the fragments as they exist now was 25' 5" close to the ground and 26' 1" including a new stem (5). By following the suggested line in the 1st diagram girth would have been closer to 28' 30", in keeping with its description of 1808. It is yews such as this that are most likely to be misunderstood or considered to be an eyesore. Yet they might well be our most ancient specimens.

There is no other yew growing in the churchyard, though another is seen in an adjacent garden behind this newly built wall SE of the church. I would not be surprised if this was originally in the churchyard.



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