

A yew with a likely age of 1000 years \pm 150.

This 1807 b/w photograph of a water colour by Petrie shows the tree more than 200 years ago. In 1838 *The Farmers Magazine*, volume 8 recorded that it measured '9 yards in circuit, at the height of four feet from the base'.

In 1936, Mee's *King's England* noted that 'all round the church is a ring of yews. If Eastling had nothing else to see we should come to look at the kingly yew near the porch, which must have been a veteran when Chaucer rode to Canterbury. It is said to be as old as the throne of England, and it looks as flourishing'.

Even Pevsner, who rarely allowed himself to stray from the subject of church architecture, recognised this 'colossally aged yew tree by the W porch'.

In 1982 Meredith recorded a girth of 30' 4" at 4'.



I recorded the yew in March 1999. It is a male tree and inside its hollow can be seen large internal stems fusing with its fluted main branch. Its bole of about 8'9" in height bulges outwards from the base. I recorded a girth of 28' 6" at its narrowest point close to the ground, 30' 9" at 3' and 31' 6" at 5'.

In 2019 Helen Leaf added the following observations: The male yew has quite a few nails in it at low level, between 20cm and 35cm height. There was much twiggy growth on the side next to the path, which has grown since the above photos. There was lots of internal growth - a broad trunk-like root/branch which visually seems continuous with one of the tall upper trunks. Daylight could be seen through this main cavity low down out of the other side of the tree. Invertebrate holes were seen on the dead wood at the top of this main large opening. Girth: 8.84m at 0.3m (narrowest point); 8.93m at 0.35m (using one of the nails left by person unknown). The photos below were taken at the time of this visit.



As well as the ancient yew, the churchyard has a circle of younger trees. Photographs and information are from Helen Leaf 2019.

The 12 yews follow the perimeter of the churchyard. It has been suggested elsewhere that they are in a spiral. This is clearly not the case. Photos are numbered 1 to 12, going clockwise from the north west corner of the church.

Girth was typically between 3.4 and 3.8m at 1m high, and in general the yews had smooth upright trunks. Some had twiggy growth and would have been difficult to measure accurately.

Two of the twelve, numbers 8 and 9, were of different appearance and considerably larger. They measured 5.39m and 5.30m girth at 10cm. Tree 8 had a new stem visible within the trunk - seen through a rough opening rather than a cleanly defined one.

Tree 7 has a major hollowing area.



