

Parts of the church date back to Saxon times. Some suggest that the name Hewelsfield is derived from the yew tree, citing 'ewe' as an old spelling of yew.

Hilary Lees, in *Hallowed Ground-Churchyards of Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds* considers that 'the circular churchyard indicates that it may have been the site of ancient pagan rituals, where sacrificial ceremonies were carried out to pacify the gods. The churchyard, in its prime position for defence, may well have been a circular ditch containing a fortified camp. This parish, the most westerly in Gloucestershire marks the meeting point of the Province of Canterbury with the Church in Wales'.

The earliest record of this aged yew so far discovered is 1914, in which Cox understates its powerful presence, describing it simply as '...a fine old yew tree'. *Gloucestershire 5th edition*  
In 1946 'an ancient yew, with hollow trunk' is recorded in Cornish's *Churchyard Yew and Immortality*.

1998: The male yew grows on the south side of the church and displays many fine features: a clean trunk, a large girth retained for a considerable height and a cavernous hollow which closes over at 15/18'. Most of its growth is carried on 3 large upright branches, two of which rise side by side and carry the tree to a greater height than is usual in churchyard yews. Many of its branches have been allowed to dip towards the ground.

Girth recorded at 3' illustrates the difficulty of consistent measurement of yews that grow on sloping ground.

1986: 21' 6" at 3' and 20' 7" at 4' Meredith

1998: 20'11" at 3' and 20' 3" at 5' Hills





In Dec 2004 I recorded a 2nd yew, a solid female WNW of the church with particularly lush foliage and branches dipping to the ground on the church side (no photo). Girth was 10' 11" at 4'.