

The line of the Harrow Way, one of the oldest roads in England, runs through Long Sutton village. Here is an exceptional site with 3 very old male yews. The largest, which has been much cut in recent years, is almost certainly the tree described in 1660 by Evelyn as 'such another monster at Sutton, near Winchester, of colossal girth, apparently above 50 feet. Gilpin's *Remarks on Forest scenery 1834*

In 1895 Lowe only appears to consider two of the yews to be noteworthy, recording girths of 26' 7" and 15' 5" in *The Yew-Trees of Great Britain and Ireland*.

In 1939 Mee in *The King's England* asks in his inimitable style 'whether the church or its old yew sentinels are older is something of a puzzle, but the two yews are veterans, both hollow and beginning to feel weary of the centuries'.

1979/86: All 3 yews are deemed worthy of mention in *Hampshire Treasures* as 'very fine specimens of great age. Said to be symbolic of the Trinity'.

In 1981 Meredith recorded that 'the largest tree in the churchyard is North from the church, it measured 32ft 6 ins. It is now completely hollow, and the tree has separated into two sections, at this time over 3ft separation has taken place.

In 1998 I recorded that the yew had split into 2 ivy encrusted fragments with a gap of 4'5' separating the two. It had recently undergone radical surgery and much cut wood lay on the ground. A limb has split from the tree and successfully embedded itself, creating new upright growth. The yew appeared to be recovering from its recent surgery and once the ivy has been cleared will again be able to take pride of place in the churchyard. Girth: 28' 6" at the ground.



Peter Norton found a very different scene in 2012 and made the following notes: Fragmented into three distinct areas of which the smallest has no associated regrowth and moves when touched. This will not last long. The 2<sup>nd</sup> largest fragment is supported on its largest branch which is propped. The 3<sup>rd</sup> fragment has lost a major branch and although this now lies on the ground it is still attached to the main trunk and has allowed regeneration of apical growth. This large fragment is currently starting to fragment further and will eventually split into 2 distinct parts. There are two props for this piece, one supports a large branch on the east side and one prop supports the trunk on the north side. None of the 3 have thrust plates to deflect the load. The crown is low domed but looks green and healthy. Of note was the emergence of the young male flowers which were covering much of the tree Girth was 27' 6" at ground level.



1998: The yew SW of the church was largely overrun by ivy. It was with difficulty that I was able to establish that it was hollow and filled with internal growth. There is no leading branch, the bole dividing into three sections. Girth was about 20' at 5' over ivy. In 1981 Meredith wrote that it had a girth of 18ft 10ins. In 2012, when these photos were taken, Peter Norton measured at the root crown, also the height at which 4 nails had been hammered in 1' 6" from the top of the mound at the highest point. He recorded a girth of exactly 18'. He noted its many internal stems and its healthy looking foliage.



1998 Tree 3, SE of the church, may have once been larger. Its elongated bole is splitting into 2, in one section many branches have been removed but are being replaced with new strong growth. An effort had been made to rid the tree of ivy and at the time of my visit the green of the yew was struggling to emerge from the brown, dying ivy. Foliage appeared to be thinly spread. Girth: 18' 6" at 4'.

1981 Meredith: The tree SE measures 17ft 8ins. Judging from the appearance of this tree, the girth of the trunk has much reduced over the years'.



In 2012 Peter Norton measured the yew at the height of 3 nails and recorded 17' 1" at 2' 6". The yew is hollow and has lost a significant part of the outer trunk on the west side of the tree. The outer trunk on the east side is very thin and will eventually disappear leaving this tree in two distinct halves. One prop is supporting a large branch, but has no thrust plate to deflect the force. At one time a flat iron band was used to support/raise a branch that would have hung over the path at the southeast gate. The branch has since been removed.

