

Yews of Old King Barrows Stonehenge

Peter Norton 2009

Stonehenge is certainly the best known of all megalithic sites and the surrounding landscape contains more than 350 prehistoric burial mounds. Yew trees are found at the prominent eastern King Barrow Ridge, a key barrow cemetery. OS184/SU134426



They may have been planted in the latter part of the 18th century when the barrows were included in the landscape design of the Antrobus Estate. Many trees, mainly beech, were planted along the ridge and on top of some of the round barrows. Most of these were blown over during the great storms of 1987. The area was purchased by the National Trust during the mid 1980's.

King Barrow ridge is divided into two main areas known as Old King Barrows and New King Barrows, both next to The Avenue, a pathway leading from the north east entrance of Stonehenge to the banks of the River Avon some 1.8 miles away.

Parking at Stonehenge is free and The Avenue is well signposted and leads straight down a gentle slope and then up to the ridge where The Avenue crosses the bridleway (leading from the A303). Head north towards a small copse known as Old King Barrows and here are found some twelve yews growing near two burial mounds. At least two have been blown over, one of which continues to grow with its root structure still firmly embedded in the ground.



The yews, a mixture of multi- and single-stemmed trees as well as a few stumps, grow amongst oak, ash, hazel and larch. The largest girths recorded were 10' at about 1'.

