

1848: *A Topographical Dictionary of England* noted South Brewham's 'two fine yew-trees'.

1859: The Churchwardens' accounts held by *Somerset Archive and Record Service* have an account of 'a new board round the yew tree'.

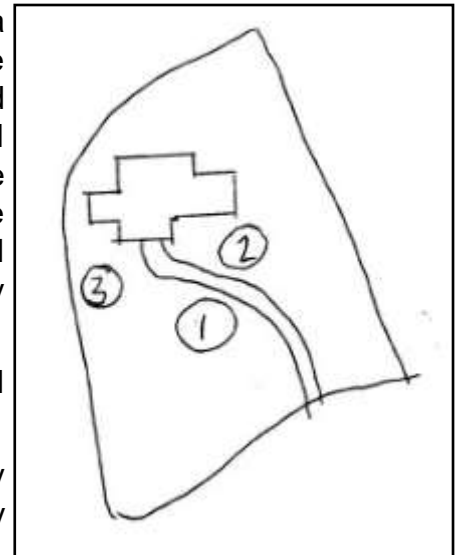
1924: Swanton saw these yews and recorded girths of 15' and 12' 4", each measured at a height of 3'. The larger yew he described as having 'a head which consists of three very large branches'. He also noted its hollow trunk, internal growth and the ivy clad ground around it. The smaller is not described, except that its 'base' was the top of a wall of small stones encircling the trunk.

1941: Mee, writing in *The King's England* wrote that '2 old yews have guarded this shrine since the days of Joan of Arc'.

The two male yews stand a few metres from each other either side of a path south east of the church. The larger girthed is number 1 on the plan, the more westerly of the pair. This was the yew Swanton recorded with a girth of 15' at 3' in 1924. In 2000 I recorded 15' 8" at the ground and 16' 2" at 2', just beneath some bulges. Its bole is elongated in shape and a gash on each side enables you to see through the tree from one side to the other, so the tree is not as solid as it appears. From a small platform at a height of about 5' the three branches Swanton noted nearly 100 years ago have developed into something more substantial.

In 2012 Peter Norton recorded girth as follows: 16' 1" between 6" and the ground (west side of tree), 16' at 1' and 16' 8" at 2'.

In 2016 I considered that it was no longer possible to remeasure reliably at the ground. The yew was measured at 2' above the lowest ground (by the path) with a horizontal tape and 16' 2" was recorded.



In 2000 tree 2 on the plan was engulfed in ivy which was grew high into the canopy. It was harming a tree whose fine qualities were unappreciated because of it. There was even talk of the tree being felled. These photos from 2016 after the removal of the ivy in 2005/6 show how unnecessary that course of action would have been.



At a height of 8'/10' the yew develops into 4 major branches which stretch upwards, and because they are all to one side of the tree, do cause it to lean slightly. On the side facing the path is a hollow, which in 2000 was filled with large quantities of loose and wet crumbling heartwood. This was criss-crossed with small roots, feeding on the goodness. Unfortunately this material, also noted in 2012, appears to have been removed as part of the tidy up of the tree.

Swanton recorded a girth of 12' 4" at 3' in 1924. In 2000 this was 14' 3" at 3' and in 2016 was 14' 8" at 3'. Sandwiched between those dates, in 2012 Peter Norton recorded a girth of 14' 4" at 3' from the top of the mound and close to where the internal decay was flowing out from the bole.

A third yew was recorded in 2016. It had an overall shape more like an Irish yew, though its leaves were that of *Taxus baccata* L. - the common or European yew.

