

Yews of Old King Barrows Stonehenge

Stonehenge is certainly the best known of all megalithic sites and the surrounding landscape contains more than 350 prehistoric burial mounds. At the prominent eastern King Barrow Ridge OS184/SU134426 (a key barrow cemetery) yew trees can be found.



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 when trees, mainly beech were planted along the ridge and on top of some of the round barrows. This area was purchased by the National Trust during the mid 1980's and most of the beech trees were then blown over during the great storms of 1987.

King Barrow ridge is divided into two main areas known as Old King Barrows and New King Barrows by the Avenue, which is 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 you will find some twelve yews growing near two burial mounds. At least two have been blown over but whether this is from 1987 or more recent I do not know, however one male is still growing as some of the root structure is still firmly embedded in the ground.



The yews are a mixture of multi- and single-stemmed trees and grow amongst oak, ash, hazel and larch along with various yew stumps. The largest girths recorded were 10' at about 1'.

