

1677: "Sir John Cullum met with a yew tree at Totteridge Churchyard; its trunk everywhere of nearly the same girth, 3' above the ground is 26' in circumference. I measured it myself in 1777, one hundred years after; it was precisely the same size."¹

1796: "In this church-yard is a yew-tree of a very remarkable size, its girth, at three feet from the ground, being 26 feet."²

1883: "The largest yew tree, at the w. end of the church, which I ever saw, whereunder the founder of the church was interred. It may be 1000 years old."³

1923: "...some of the branches were dying back, and the centre of the tree was hollow. The dying branches were cut off, their stumps treated, and the hollow trunk was filled with cement."⁴

1990's "West, female, shell that is suffering badly from inadequate foliage and cover. Serious concerns regarding survival of tree, as rain is hitting the shell directly. Meetings of the Cashio Hundred used to take place under the yew. Tree is hollow filled with internal growth."⁵

2001: The notable feature of this female yew is that almost all of its outer skin is dead wood. I counted only 7 strands of living wood on the outside of its large bole. From a platform within the tree can be seen a young rising central branch; along with this were 6 growth areas, many where new branches grow alongside remnants of the dead branches they replace. This main growth emerges from the ground inside the tree through the layer of humus that makes up the platform. It goes some way to explaining why measurements recorded from as long ago as 1677 show little difference today, since the yew would seem to have been growing from the inside for hundreds of years.

Measurements between 1677 and 1991 were collated by Allen Meredith.

Date	Girth	
1677	26' at 3'	Sir John Cullum
1777	26' at 3'	Richard Gough
1923	27' 2"	Rev. F. Edwin Le Grice
1982	26' at 3'	Allen Meredith
1991	26' at 3'	Allen Meredith
2001	23' 9" at gnd/6"	Tim Hills
2001	25' 10" at 3'	Tim Hills

- 1 The antiquary Gough, in a letter to Rev M. Tyson (Swanton p 39 *The Yew Trees of England* 1958)
- 2 *The Environs of London: volume 4: Counties of Herts, Essex & Kent* (1796) - British History on-line
- 3 The Family Memoirs of the Rev. William Stukeley, M.D. Page 211 by William Stukeley et al.
- 4 The vicar of Totteridge, Rev Edwin Le Grice informed Swanton
- 5 *The Ancient Yew* (2002) Robert Bevan-Jones

The Totteridge Yew in 1800, 1908 and 2001

