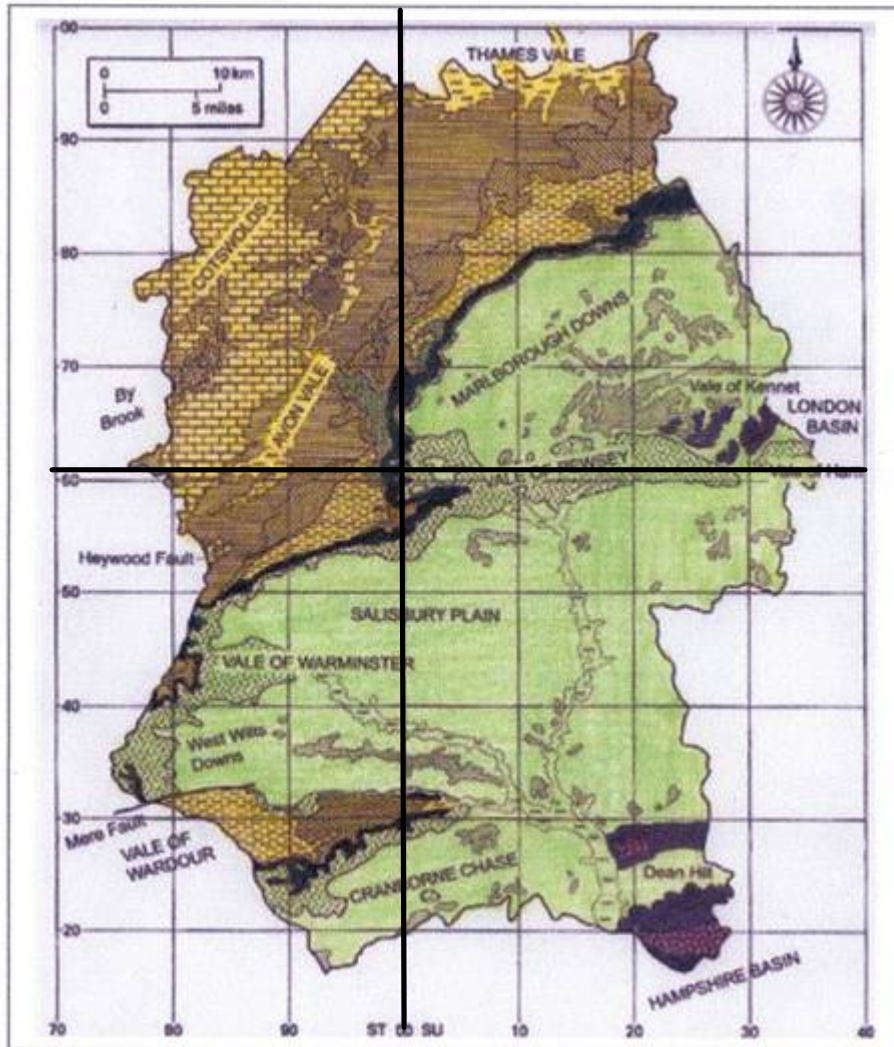


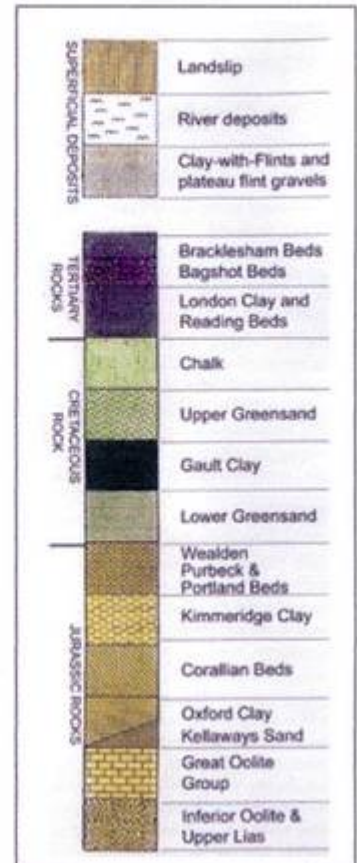
Wiltshire Churchyard Yews

An Inventory

By Peter Norton



Geological map of Wiltshire



By kind permission of the Wiltshire Geology Group

Introduction:

Wiltshire is roughly rectangular in shape, measuring about 54 miles from north to south and 34 from west to east. It is bounded in the north by Gloucestershire, along most of its western edge by Somerset, in the south west by Dorset, in the south east by Hampshire and along about half of its eastern side by Berkshire.

The name is derived from that of the former county town of Wilton, and was recorded as *Wiltunscir* in an 870AD document. Ancient Wilton took the name from the Anglo-Saxon Wilsaetes tribe living on the banks of the River Wylle.

The surface geology of Wiltshire follows relatively simple lines. The former cover of Chalk and earlier Cretaceous rocks has been removed by erosion in the basin of the Wiltshire Avon, leaving a prominent scarp trending generally NE/SW across the centre of the County.

To the northwest, the Jurassic rocks crop out in succession, dipping south eastwards under the Chalk. To the southeast, the Cretaceous rocks form the high ground of the Marlborough Downs and Salisbury plain. In the southeast corner there are some small outcrops of Tertiary rocks at the extreme edge of the Hampshire Basin.

Two major vales finger into the Chalk outcrop, the Vale of Pewsey, floored by Lower Cretaceous rocks, and the Vale of Wardour, which cuts down as far as the Upper Jurassic rocks.

Wiltshire's county records list 451 towns, villages and hamlets. Churches are found in the majority of towns and villages, with 339 having at least one Anglican Church. In total, 365 churchyards were visited, including those at the site of a ruined church, those where the church is now in private ownership and even one Roman Catholic graveyard.

There were yews growing at 241 of these sites, with a total of 1064 recorded. The survey concentrates on trees with a girth above nine feet, and those estimated to be less than this were recorded and in the majority of cases not measured.

The county of Wiltshire has been divided into quadrants covering the NW, NE, SW & SE, using Devizes as the town through which the vertical (OS Northings) line SU00 divides east from west. The horizontal (OS Eastings) line 61 divides north from south. All grid numbers within the report are four figures and therefore encompass a kilometre square and not the exact position of the church.

| Quadrant | Tow ns / Villages | Churches | With Yew | Total Yew |
|----------|-------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| NW | 72 | 74 | 42 | 122 |
| NE | 76 | 84 | 51 | 197 |
| SW | 86 | 92 | 58 | 311 |
| SE | 105 | 115 | 90 | 434 |
| | 339 | 365 | 241 | 1064 |

Many of these sites have also featured in my earlier river catchment area surveys. A list of these appears in the appendix along with all the churchyards visited and allocates each a 4 figure grid reference.

- **The following churches are found in grid 6B**

South Wraxall - St James - ST8364



The church was rebuilt in 1823, retaining some of its 14th century fabric.

Two male yews grow on a small mound southeast of the church. The largest of these girthed 10' 9" at 1'. At the time of the survey there was much rubbish beneath the trees.

Atworth - St Michael and all Angels - ST8565

There has been a church on this site since 1001. It has been rebuilt on 3 occasions, in the 12th, 15th and 19th centuries. In 1831 the whole church (with the exception of the tower) was rebuilt.

Four yews grow here. The largest girthed is this female with a reduced crown, growing just north of the church. Girth was 12' 5" at 2' over a slight cover of ivy.

To the south is a male with much low growth girthing 12', with a younger female close to it.

Another younger yew grows west of the porch.



Great Chalfield (NT) - All Saints - ST8663

This little church is approached through the gatehouse to Great Chalfield Manor. Two small topiary yews grow near to the porch.

Neston - St Philip and St James - ST8668



The church was opened in 1866.

Two yews grow south of the church. The largest is female girthing 12' 11" at 1', with four leaders from a three foot bole. A young yew grows nearby.

Broughton Gifford - St Mary the Virgin - ST8763

A 13th century church restored in the 19th century. Two young yews grow south of the church.

- **The following churches are found in grid 6C**

Melksham - St Michael and all Angels - ST9063



The church dates from the 12th century with alteration and rebuilding in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. It was restored in 1845.

Three yews grow in the churchyard. The largest, shown here, is male with a girth of 11' 10" at 2', and grows close to the north porch. One of its main branches has been propped to avoid damage to the memorials underneath the tree. Many other smaller branches have been removed.

A male with a girth of 11' 3" at 1' grows south of the church. A younger yew grows on the east perimeter.

Beanacre - St Barnabus - ST9065

The church was built in 1846.

This female yew with a girth of 8' 5" at 1' was presumably planted to the southeast of the church at that time.



Lacock - St Cyriac - ST9168

A Norman church. The chancel was rebuilt in 1777 and the church was restored in 1861.

Two male yews grow here, the most notable just south of the church on a large mound. One large branch has been allowed to embed itself in the ground while the others have been cut at the drip line. Two main leaders rise from its fluted bole which has a girth of 11' 7" at about 4" from the top of the mound. An embedded nail marks this height.

The second also growing south of the church is a trimmed millennium yew which appears to be thriving.



Bromham - St Nicholas - ST9655



The oldest part of the church is Norman. It was extensively repaired in 1661 and again during the 1800s.

This one yew grows southwest of the church. It seemed to be recovering from a severe crown reduction in 2010 but a more recent visit shows the new growth to be turning brown.

It is completely hollow and has evidence of aerial roots in the upper bole. Girth at 2' 6" where an embedded nail marks the height was 11' 3".

Rowde - St Mathew - ST9762

A Saxon church was recorded in Rowde, but what remains today dates from the medieval period (11th to 15th centuries). Parts of the church were rebuilt in 1833 and the chancel was raised and a new roof provided in 1901.

Two female yews grow close to the northeast gate, the largest of which girthed 8' 6" at 1'. Three further yews grow just north of the church with a male close to the path on the south side.

Heddington - St Andrew - ST9966

A church was first recorded here in 1130. Alterations were carried out during the 14th, 15th and 17th centuries.

Of the five yews growing in the churchyard, this is the only one of note. It is a shorth trunked male and grows east of the church. Thick stemmed ivy had been cut through and a girth of exactly 16' was recorded near to the ground.



- The following churches are found in grid 7B

North Wraxall - St James the Great - ST8175



Earliest records indicate a church in 1085. Alterations were carried out in the 17th century and in 1797.

This female yew with a girth of 10' 6" at 1' grows just west of the south porch.

Two younger yews are found just to the north.

West Kington - St Mary - ST8177

The church dates from the 13th century and has a 15th century tower. It is reached by a driveway through Church Farm.



Its solitary yew grows southwest of the church. Girth of this male tree was 16' 1" at 1' and 16' 9" at 2' from the top of the 1' retaining wall. This is starting to crack as the tree expands.

Burton - St Mary the Virgin - ST8179

The church dates from around 1290, with some restoration during 1900 and in the 1970s. One young male grows west of the church.

Colerne - St John the Baptist - ST8271

This church, thought to date back to Norman times, was extensively restored in 1877.

Three yews grow in this churchyard. The male, shown here, grows northeast of the church and girthed 8' 6" at 1'.

A female growing east of the church was 7' 10". Near to it is a younger yew.



Ford - St John - ST8474

A new church built in 1896. Three young yews grow along the south perimeter.

Castle Combe - St Andrew - ST8477

A church of Norman origin. During 1850 all but the tower was taken down and it was rebuilt to the same plan.



Three yews grow south of the church. The largest is this female growing at the southeast perimeter. Its girth was 8' 2" close to the top of the mound of grass clippings - about 2' 6" deep.

Two young yews grow north of the church.

Biddestone - St Nicholas - ST8673



A Norman church with Saxon foundations. It was extensively restored in 1850.

Seven yews grow along the south perimeter. The largest is at the southwest corner, a female girthing 9' 8" at 2'. The remaining six are considerably smaller.

Yatton Keynell - St Margaret of Antioch - ST8676

Sir William Keynell had the original Church built around 1250 as an offering for his safe return from a Crusade. It was fully restored around 1868.

Seven yews grow to the north of the church. The largest is the second from the east gate, this male girthing 9' 3" at 1'. Two stumps on the east perimeter were also noted.



Corsham - St Bartholomew - ST8770

A church of Saxon origin, traces of which are still to be found in the building today.

All four yews found here are male. The largest, to the south, had a girth of 9' 6" at 2' 6". Close by it is a thriving millenium yew. The remaining two grow to the north.

Leigh Delamere - St Margaret of Antioch - ST8879



The present church (now redundant) was built in 1846 on the site of a 12th century church.

One female, with a girth of 15' 4" at 1', grows south west of the church. This had to include thick stemmed ivy, the removal of which would probably still give a reading of well over 14'.

- The following churches are found in grid 7C

Hardenhuish (Park) - St Nicholas - ST9074



Built in 1779, replacing a medieval church which stood just below the present site.

One male yew grows just east of the church. It has five leaders from a short bole. Girth was 11' 9" at the root crown and 12' 2" at 2'. Old wooded parkland nearby contained a few yews with girths of up to 10'.

Kington St Michael - St Michael and all Angels - ST9077

A church of Norman origin restored in 1857.

A young twin trunked female grows east of the church, while to the west a millennium male seems to be thriving.

Kington Langley - St Peter - ST9276

This new church was built in 1856 to replace a nearby chapel.

Two young multi-stemmed female yews grow close to the west gate while to the south of the church a young male grows from a small mound. Girth was estimated as 8'.

Draycot Cerne - St James - ST9378

A 12th century church in a private parkland setting is now cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust. It was largely untouched until 1865.

Nine yews grow to the south and east of the church. The largest is female, girthing 8' 10" at 1' 6" and growing south-east.

West of the church is a line of young yews.

Many more yews can be seen in the parkland.



Tytherton Lucas - St Nicholas - ST9474

A 13th century church restored in 1802.

One young yew with an estimated girth around 8' grows north of the church.

Derry Hill - Christ Church - ST9670

A Victorian church dating from 1839.

One female yew girthing 8' at 3' grows west of the church, with a millennium yew close by.

Bremhill - St Martins - ST9773

The church dates from the 13th century, with alterations in 1850 and 1864.

17 yews are scattered around the churchyard perimeter. The largest girthed, at 8' 9", grows northwest of the church.

Foxham - ST John the Baptist - ST9777

A small church built in 1878.
Two young yews grow east and west of the porch.

- **The following churches are found in grid 8B**

Littleton Drew - All Saints - ST8380

The church was largely rebuilt in around 1856.
One young yew grows close to the porch.

Sherston - Holy Cross - ST8586



A Norman church on a Saxon site of worship.
A major rebuild around 1730 and restoration in 1877.

This female yew grows on the south perimeter. It has coalesced with the lychgate and could not be measured.

Norton - All Saints - ST8884

A small church of 12th century origin.
One young male grows north of the church.

Easton Grey - unknown dedication - ST8887

The church was rebuilt in 1836.
One young male grows northeast of the church.

Stanton St Quintin - St Giles – ST8981

A 12th century church, rebuilt and restored during the 1800s.

The largest of five yews in this churchyard grows southeast of the church (left). It is female with a girth of 12' 4" at 1'. The other four grow close to the north perimeter with the most northerly, also female, girthing 11' 3" at 1', the height of an embedded nail. There are two 10' girthed stumps either side of the path leading to the south porch, and a sixth yew in the graveyard extension on the opposite side of the road.



Hullavington - St Mary Magdalene - ST8982

A 12th century church, restored in 1871.
One young yew grows east of the church.

- **The following churches are found in grid 8C**

Brokenborough - St John the Baptist - ST8868

A small church of 12th century origin.
Two young yews grow south of the church.

Rodbourne - Holy Rood - ST9383



A 12th century church with additions during the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries.

One male yew grows southeast of the church. From its 3' bole four leaders emerge. Considerable lower growth hampered measurement and the girth of 15' 4" can only be a guide.

Lea - St Giles - ST9586

The present church probably dates from the 14th century and was rebuilt in 1879.
One young yew grows southwest of the church.

Charlton - St John the Baptist - ST9588

A Norman church with restoration during 1874-5.

Two male yews grow on the south side. The yew southeast has a girth of 12' 4" at 1' and 12' 11" at 3' and grows alongside a shed.

The yew southwest of the church grows on top of a small mound. It has a short bole of approx 5' with 8 main branches. A girth of 10' 10" at 1' (just above the root crown) and 12' at 2' was recorded.



Dauntsey - St James the Great - ST9982

The church dates to before the 12th century. It was restored in 1879.

One male yew, with a girth of 10' 4" at 1' from the top of the mound, grows west of the church.

- **The following churches are found in grid 9C**

Crudwell - All saints - ST9592

There is evidence of a church as this site from the 10th century.

One female yew grows north of the church but a mass of low branches mixed with churchyard debris prevented recording.

Oaksey - All Saints - ST9983

The church dates from the 13th century.

One female yew grows west of the church. Thick ivy prevented measurement and a girth of 10' was estimated.

Appendix 1: Churches Visited

Churches Conservation Trust (CCT)

| Wiltshire Towns & Villages | Grid Ref | Square | Count | Church | CCT | Yews | Previously Recorded In | Largest Recorded | | |
|----------------------------|----------|--------|-------|---------------------------|-----|------|------------------------|------------------|------|------|
| | | | | | | | | Feet | Inch | Mtrs |
| Monkton Farleigh | ST8065 | 6B | 1 | St Peter | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Ashley | ST8168 | 6B | 1 | St James | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Ditteridge | ST8169 | 6B | 1 | St Christopher | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Box | ST8268 | 6B | 1 | St Thomas a Becket | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| South Wraxall | ST8364 | 6B | 1 | St James | | 2 | | 10 | 9 | 3.28 |
| Atworth | ST8565 | 6B | 1 | St Michael and all Angels | | 4 | | 12 | 5 | 3.78 |
| Holt | ST8661 | 6B | 1 | St Katherines | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Great Chalfield (NT) | ST8663 | 6B | 1 | All Saints | | 2 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Neston | ST8668 | 6B | 1 | St Philip and St James | | 2 | | 12 | 11 | 3.94 |
| Broughton Gifford | ST8763 | 6B | 1 | St Mary the Virgin | | 2 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Whaddon (Trow bridge) | ST8861 | 6B | 1 | St Mary the Virgin | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Gastard | ST8868 | 6B | 1 | St John the Baptist | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Shaw | ST8865 | 6B | 1 | Christ Church | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Melksham | ST9063 | 6C | 1 | St Michael and all Angels | | 3 | | 11 | 10 | 3.61 |
| Beanacre | ST9065 | 6C | 1 | St Barnabus | | 1 | | 8 | 5 | 2.57 |
| Lacock | ST9168 | 6C | 1 | St Cyriac | | 2 | | 11 | 7 | 3.53 |
| Bowden Hill | ST9367 | 6C | 1 | St Anne | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Bromham | ST9665 | 6C | 1 | St Nicholas | | 1 | | 11 | 8 | 3.56 |
| Rowde | ST9762 | 6C | 1 | St Mathew | | 6 | | 8 | 6 | 2.59 |
| Sandy Lane | ST9768 | 6C | 1 | St Mary and St Nicholas | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Heddington | ST9966 | 6C | 1 | St Andrew | | 5 | | 16 | | 4.88 |
| North Wraxall | ST8175 | 7B | 1 | St James the Great | | 3 | | 10 | 6 | 3.20 |
| West Kington | ST8177 | 7B | 1 | St Mary | | 1 | | 16 | 1 | 4.90 |
| Burton | ST8179 | 7B | 1 | St Mary the Virgin | | 1 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Coleme | ST8271 | 7B | 1 | St John the Baptist | | 3 | | 8 | 6 | 2.59 |
| Slaughterford | ST8373 | 7B | 1 | St Nicholas | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Ford | ST8474 | 7B | 1 | St John the Baptist | | 3 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Castle Combe | ST8477 | 7B | 1 | St Andrews | | 5 | | 8 | 2 | 2.49 |
| Biddestone | ST8673 | 7B | 1 | St Nicholas | | 7 | | 9 | 8 | 2.95 |
| Yatton Keynell | ST8676 | 7B | 1 | St Margaret of Antioch | | 7 | | 9 | 3 | 2.82 |
| Corsham | ST8770 | 7B | 1 | St Bartholomew | | 4 | | 9 | 6 | 2.90 |
| Leigh Delamere | ST8879 | 7B | 1 | St Margaret of Antioch | CCT | 1 | | 15 | 4 | 4.67 |
| Hardenhuish (Park) | ST9074 | 7C | 1 | St Nicholas | | 1 | | 11 | 9 | 3.58 |
| Kington St Michael | ST9077 | 7C | 1 | St Michael and all Angels | | 2 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Chippenham | ST9173 | 7C | 1 | St Andrew | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Chippenham | ST9173 | 7C | 2 | St Paul | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Chippenham (Frogwell) | ST9173 | 7C | 3 | St Peter | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Langley Burrell | ST9275 | 7C | 1 | St Peter | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Kington Langley | ST9276 | 7C | 1 | St Peter | | 3 | | 8 | | 2.44 |
| Draycot Cerne | ST9378 | 7C | 1 | St James (Redundant) | CCT | 9 | | 8 | 10 | 2.69 |

| Wiltshire Towns & Villages | Grid Ref | Square | Count | Church | CCT | Yews | Previously Recorded In | Largest Recorded | | |
|----------------------------|----------|--------|-------|---------------------------|-----|------|------------------------|------------------|------|------|
| | | | | | | | | Feet | Inch | Mtrs |
| Tytherton Lucas | ST9474 | 7C | 1 | St Nicholas | | 1 | | 8 | | 2.44 |
| Kelloways | ST9475 | 7C | 1 | St Giles | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Sutton Bengier | ST9478 | 7C | 1 | All Saints | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Derry Hill | ST9670 | 7C | 1 | Christ Church | | 3 | | 8 | | 2.44 |
| Christian Malford | ST9678 | 7C | 1 | All Saints | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Bremhill | ST9773 | 7C | 1 | St Martins | | 17 | | 8 | 9 | 2.67 |
| Foxham | ST9777 | 7C | 1 | St John the Baptist | | 2 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Calne | ST9971 | 7C | 1 | St Marys | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Littleton Drew | ST8380 | 8B | 1 | All Saints | | 1 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Alderton | ST8382 | 8B | 1 | St Giles | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Luckington | ST8384 | 8B | 1 | St Mary with St Ethelbert | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Sopworth | ST8386 | 8B | 1 | St Mary the Virgin | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Grittleton | ST8580 | 8B | 1 | St Mary the Virgin | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Sherston | ST8586 | 8B | 1 | Holy Cross | | 1 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Norton | ST8884 | 8B | 1 | All Saints | | 1 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Easton Grey | ST8887 | 8B | 1 | Unknown Dedication | | 1 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Stanton St Quintin | ST8981 | 8B | 1 | St Giles | | 5 | | 12 | 4 | 3.76 |
| Hullavington | ST8982 | 8B | 1 | St Mary Magdalene | | 1 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Foxley | ST8985 | 8B | 1 | Unknown Dedication | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Brokenborough | ST9189 | 8C | 1 | St John the Baptist | | 2 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Corston | ST9283 | 8C | 1 | All Saints | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Rodbourne | ST9383 | 8C | 1 | Holy Rood | | 1 | | 15 | 4 | 4.67 |
| Malmesbury | ST9387 | 8C | 1 | St Peter and St Paul | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Lea | ST9586 | 8C | 1 | St Giles | | 1 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Charlton | ST9588 | 8C | 1 | St John the Baptist | | 2 | | 12 | 4 | 3.76 |
| Lower Seagry | ST9681 | 8C | 1 | St Mary the Virgin | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Great Somerford | ST9682 | 8C | 1 | St Peter and St Paul | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Little Somerford | ST9684 | 8C | 1 | St John the Baptist | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Garsdon | ST9687 | 8C | 1 | All Saints | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Cleverton | ST9785 | 8C | 1 | Chapel | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Dauntsey | ST9982 | 8C | 1 | St James the Great | | 1 | | 10 | 4 | 3.15 |
| Crudwell | ST9592 | 9C | 1 | All Saints | | 1 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Hankerton | ST9790 | 9C | 1 | Holy Cross | | 0 | | 0 | | 0.00 |
| Oaksey | ST9993 | 9C | 1 | All Saints | | 1 | | 10 | | 3.05 |