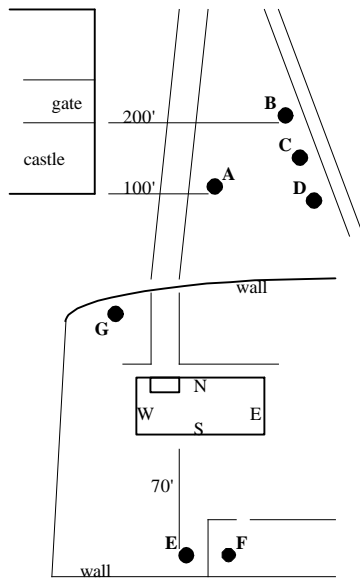


Yews in County Durham Graham Wilkinson 1995 - 1999

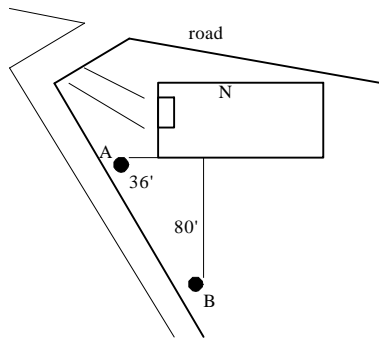
1. Brancepeth. Castle & St Brandon (GR: 224377 sheet 93) 27/9/1995 and 12/4/1996



- A.** Male. 8' 7" at 3', 11' 2" at base, 8' 8" at 4'. A fine, mature tree.
 - B.** Female. 8' 6" at 3', 8' 5" at base, branching awkwardly from just above 3'.
 - C.** Female. 13' 2" at base, then a three-trunk split. An impressive, tree with five grounding branches. Some thoughtful pruning. The main trunk measures 8' 8" after the split.
 - D.** Male. 5' 10" at 3'.
 - E.** Male. 8' 7" at 3', 9' 10" at base, 8' 8" at 4'. Two main trunks from 5'. Clean trunk from a single root-stock. Nice, mature tree. Behind, and obviously associated with, a gravestone dated 1817, in an enclosed plot.
 - F.** Male. 8' 1" at base, branching at 2' 6". With smaller yews, in a wrought iron enclosed plot.
 - G.** Male. 8' 3" at base, then branching. (This tree is shown on an 1843 engraving by R. W. Wittings)
- Pevsner:** A late C12 tower. EE pointed twin windows to the upper storeys.

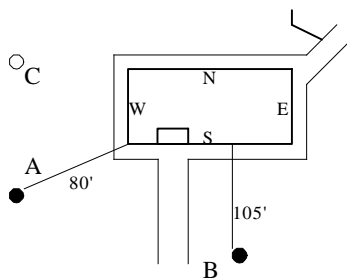
Notes: Trees B, C and D cover quite an area with their extensive, shared canopy, creating a dark, lifeless zone beneath, which is difficult to access, and happily, seems to have discouraged any severe pruning.

2. Bishopton. St Peter (GR: 365213 sheet 93) 27/10/1995



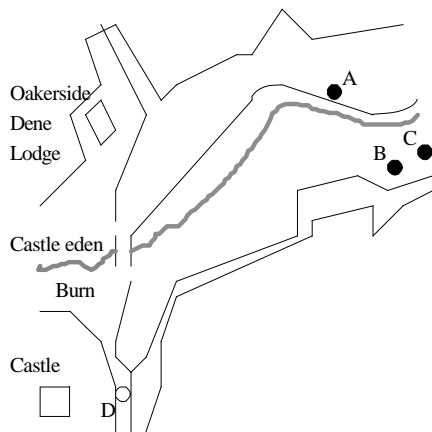
- A.** Female. Messy, twiggy and ivy covered. An impossible measure, but a sizeable tree.
 - B.** Female. 11' 5" at 3', 9' 4" at base. Mature tree smothered in thick ivy and difficult to assess or measure.
- Pevsner:** One late C13 window just north of the chancel arch. Rebuilt 1846-7 by Sharpe & Paley.

3. Aycliffe. St. Andrew (GR: 283222 sheet 93) 13/10/1995



- A.** Female. 9' 6" at 3', 7' 6" at base. (A branch at 3' 6", then further branching at 5'.) Smothered in ivy and clogged with oak leaves from a neighbouring tree.
 - B.** Female. A younger, smaller tree.
 - C.** Female 5 - 6' ?
- Pevsner:** Saxon nave walls + C12, C13. Restored 1882.
- Notes: Tree A has more the appearance of being abused than of any great age. (We couldn't resist cleaning it up on a later visit.)

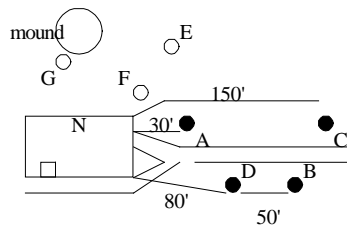
4. Castle Eden Dene. (GR: 346379 & 434395 sheet 93) 2/4/1997



- A.** Female. 9' 0.5" at 3'. Solid, mature tree perched over the path on the north side.
- B.** Female. 7' 11" at 3'.
- C.** Female. 7' 8.5" at 3'.
- D.** Large beech. 20' 11" at 5'.

Notes: Castle Eden Dene, we are told, has been largely untouched and represents "primeval" woodland. The Saxon name "Yoden" meaning "Yew Dene" hints at its antiquity. Where then, are the old yews?

5. Ryton. Holy Cross (GR: 151648 sheet 88) 6/9/1995 and 11/8/1997



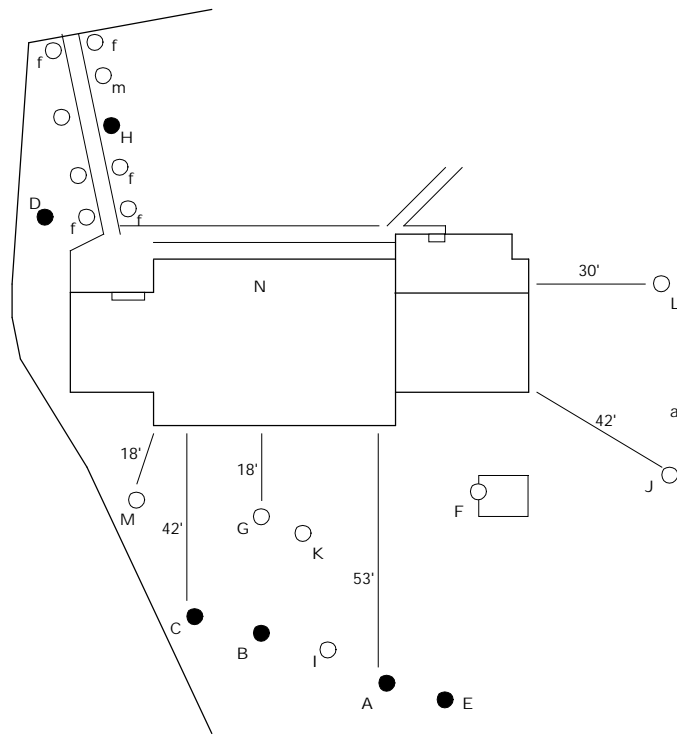
- A.** Male. 8' 11" at 3', 8' 1" at base. A mature, twiggy tree, splitting from just over 3'.
- B.** Male. 7' 3.5" at base. Trunk split from 2'.
- C.** Male. 7' 2" at 3', 7' 5" at base. Large, mature tree, with a trunk split at 5'. Nearby is a stone coffin dated 1610.
- D.** Female. 7' 1" at 3', 7' 5" at base, 6' 8" at 4'. Mature gnarled tree which has been much pruned.

E. Male. 6' 7" at base. **F.** Smaller female. **G.** Mature beech tree, 11' 5" at 5'.

Pevsner: EE plus Perp, east end renewed in 1844. South aisle and wall possibly rebuilt in 1627. Altar rails with carved figures C16. Bronze Age burial in the churchyard. Also one 1m. W and one 1 m. SE of the village.

Notes: Founded 1220. A nice spot, with three mature sweet chestnut trees, hollies, fine beeches. The 1610 stone coffin by yew C, has a 6' 8" hollow, 1684 gravestone and lots of C18 stones. A local woman told us that a local historian reckoned that the mound (said by Pevsner to be bronze age,) was used to site a watch-tower at one point.

6. Lamesley. St Andrew (GR: 253579 sheet 88) 17/9/1999



- A.** Female. 8' 11" at base. A nice, mature tree, and the best on site. The trunk splits at 18" into three main trunks
- B.** Female. 9' at base, but split into two trunks just at 1'. Twiggy spray.
- C.** Male. 8' 9" at base, but a mere 5' 10" at 3'. Spray-covered, straight tree.
- D.** Female. 8' at base. Spray covered and tricky to measure, with a three-trunk split at 2'.
- E.** Female. 7' 2" at base, 6' 10" at 3'. Mature, spray-covered tree.
- F.** Female. 6' 6" at base, 6' 8" at 3'. Splitting thereafter into three trunks. Nice mature tree, raising the 1821 slab.
- G.** Female. 6' 10" at base, 6' 1" at 3'.
- H.** Male. 6' 9" at base, 6' 6" at 3'. A clean trunk. Nicest tree of the avenue.

I. Male. 6' 6" at base.

J. Male. 6' 5" at base. A small, presumably contemporary yew 10' east is losing the battle with an ash tree.

K. Male. 5' 8" at 3'.

L. Male. 5' 10" at base.

M. Female.

Pevsner: "Nothing is visible of the church of 1758. What is visible seems to belong basically to the remodelling of 1821." The chancel rebuilt 1847 and altered in 1884 when the organ chamber and vestry were added.

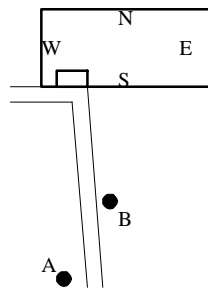
Derek Bell: A chapel of ease was on site in 1286, but the site was in use prior to this. Speculation of Saxon origins. Registers of baptisms, marriages and burials go back to 1603. The old church: A chancel, two bells, north and south porches, a sun-dial, whitewashed interior and flagged floor. "An entry in 1703....'For dressing and mowing woods in the churchyard—one shilling' ".

The church was repaired in 1740, then completely rebuilt in 1759. Restored in 1847 and the chancel rebuilt. 1664 font in the porch, used until 1884. Two medieval grave covers are in the church.

"The death's head grave marker at the south west of the church marks the place where lie 'victims of pestilence'. This is of the common type used at the time (15th/early 17th century) to warn all persons to be wary of the place."

Notes: A nice site, which contrives, with some success, to remain aloof from the nearby heavy traffic. The "The death's head grave marker" mentioned above is nowhere to be seen. A small 1699 stone lies by the path north of the church. A large slab lies to the south, cryptically carved "ANNO DOMINE 16 ZINE"

7. Hart. St Mary Magdalene (GR: 471352 sheet 93) 3/11/1995



A. Male. 8' 10" at base. then a two-trunk split, one cut off at 4'. The surviving trunk splits at 5 - 6'.

B. Male. 7' 1" at base.

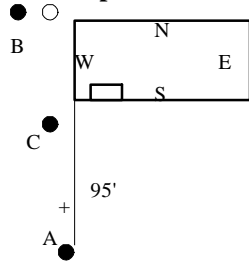
Pevsner: Saxon parts + Norman. C8 font? C15 font. Cross shaft fragments of C9 and C10 in the west end of the nave. c. 1500 panel of St. George in the outer south wall.

Notes: The early carving of St. George and the dragon, set into the exterior south wall of the church, is crisply carved and has suffered little weathering.

8. Witton-le-wear Cemetery (GR: 317147 sheet 92) 11/3/1998

Male. 8' 5" at 3' and 4', 9' 3" at base. Mature tree with a clean trunk, branching at 5'. Near a stone dated 1860, the oldest on site dated 1849.

9. Bishop Middleham. St Michael (GR: 327313 sheet 93) 27/10/1995



A. Female. 8' 4" at 3', 7' 1" at base, 8' 10.5" at 4', then a two-trunk split. A nice mature tree. Single root-stock.

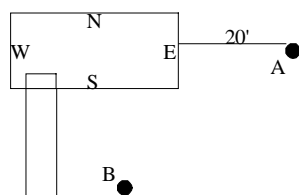
B. Female. Small and severely pruned. (A smaller female is nearby.)

C. Male. 6' at 3'. 6' from the church.
+ Robert Surtees' grave.

Pevsner: Norman, enlarged C13. C13 font of Frosterly marble. 1843 - 6 aises.

Notes: Irish yews on site.

10 Long Newton. St Mary (GR: 383165 sheet 93) 27/10/1995 and 12/4/1996

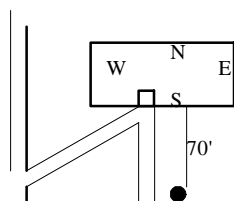


A. Female. 8' 1" at 3', 8' 5" at base, 8' 4" at 4'. A nice, mature tree branching at 5'. Some spray to the west and east sides otherwise a clean trunk. Single root-stock.

B. Five separate trunks from ground level: A multiple planting?

Pevsner: Rebuilt in 1860 on a medieval site.

11. Witton-le-Wear. St Michael & All Angels (GR: 147312 sheet 92) 27/9/1995

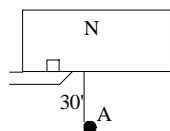


A. Female. 8' 3" at 3', 6' 11" at base. Branching just over 3'.

Pevsner: S doorway undecorated Norman. C13 north arcade. Rebuilt in 1896-1902 by C. Hodgson Fowler.

Notes: Pevsner has it as SS Phillip and James.

12. Eastgate. All Saints (GR: 454388 sheet 92)

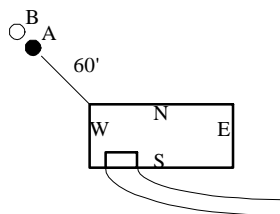


A. Female. 8' at base. Multi-branched from just under 3'. A mature tree with some exudation on the east side.

Pevsner: 1887 by Johnson. The Wesleyan chapel s of the church is of 1826.

Notes: A building all of its period. Nothing special.

13. Great Stainton. All Saints (GR: 3352222 sheet 93) 5/1/1996



A. Male. 7' 10" at 3', 6' 10" at base. Branching at 3'. Twiggy and difficult to measure. Used as the churchyard rubbish dump.

B. A smaller male tree.

Pevsner: 1876-7 by Pritchett. Early C10 cross-shaft frangment in the porch. Cross base, possibly pre-Conquest, at the west end of the church.

Notes: From a distance, an impressive, well-placed building, which loses its charm on closer acquaintance.

The most significant County Durham Yews in order of girth

site no.	tree no.	LOCATION	sex	3' GIRTH	OTHER MEASURES	GRID REF & NOTES	POSITION
1	1	Brancepeth	Castle	F	13' 2"	at base	GR: 224378 sheet 93 200' E
2	2	Bishopton	St. Peter	F	11' 5"		GR: 365213 sheet 93 80' S
	3	Brancepeth	Castle	M	11' 4"	11' 6" at 4'	100' E
3	4	Aycliffe	St. Andrew	F	9' 6"		GR: 283222 sheet 93 80' W
4	5	Castle Eden	Dene	F	9' 0.5"		GR: 436397 sheet 93
5	6	Ryton	Holy Cross	M	8' 11"	8' 1" at base	GR: 151648 sheet 88 30' E
6	7	Lamesley	St. Andrew	F	8' 11"	at base	GR: 253579 sheet 88 53' S
7	8	Hart	St. Mary	M	8' 10"	at base	GR: 471352 sheet 93 100' S
	9	Brancepeth	St. Brandon	M	8' 7"	8' 8" at 4'	GR: 224378 sheet 93 70' S
8	10	Witton-le-Wear 1	Cemetary	M	8' 5"	9' 3" at base	GR: 147312 sheet 92
	11	Brancepeth	Castle	F	8' 6"		200' E
9	12	Bishop Middleham	St. Michael	F	8' 4"	8' 10.5 at 4'	GR: 327313 sheet 93 95' S
	13	Brancepeth	Castle	M	8' 3"	at base	30' NW
	14	Brancepeth	St. Brandon	M	8' 1"	at base	with smaller yews 70' S
10	15	Long Newton	St. Mary	F	8' 1"	8' 4" at 4'	GR: 383165 sheet 93 20' E

11	16	Witton-le-Wear 2	St.Michael	F	8'		GR: 147312 sheet 92	70' S
12	17	Eastgate	All Saints	F	8'	at base	GR: 454388 sheet 92	30' S
	18	Lamesley	St. Andrew	F	8'	at base		18' NW
	19	Castle Eden	Dene	F	7' 11"		GR: 434359 sheet 93	
13	20	Gt.Stainton	All Saints	M	7' 10"		GR: 335222 sheet 93	60' N
	21	Castle Eden	Dene	F	7' 8.5"		GR: 434359 sheet 93	
	22	Ryton	Holy Cross	M	7' 3.5"	at base		130' E
	23	Ryton	Holy Cross	M	7' 2"	7' 5" at base		150' E
	24	Ryton	Holy Cross	F	7' 1"	7' 5" at base		80' E
	25	Lamesley	St. Andrew	F	6' 10"	7' 2" at base		58' S
	26	Lamesley	St. Andrew	F	6' 8"	6' 6" at base		20' S

More County Durham sites where yews are found

Aycliffe. St. Andrew - three yews, the largest with an approximate measure only due to being smothered in a horrible climber we keep seeing everywhere. The poor yew isn't doing very well.

Bishopton. St. Peter - late 13c. Two large yews by the wall, the one opposite the church having bones under it.

Burnopfield. St. James - spindly young yew.

Castle Eden. St. James - a mature male yew 25' NE of church. Two main trunks which split further into spindly off-shoots. Approx 7-8'.

Chester-le-Street. St. Mary & St. Cuthbert - two yews: one female 16' east of the church, 6' 4" at 3', 7' 2" at base. Another female to the ENE, basal split.

Elwick. St. Peter - yews, but no old ones.

Finchale Priory. Near mature woodland to the north, dotted with yews, but nothing large.

Frosterley. St. Michael - male yew at the west end (about 4-5') and two Irish yews to the north.

Gibside. Chapel - the path to the Baqueting House is flanked by numerous yews of no great age, but the building itself has three mature trees of an estimated 7' + in girth, the largest to the north-west. One also just south of Gibside Hall itself right of the path.

Greatham. St. John - pruned yews.

Hamsterly. St. James - one stunted yew NNW of the church. Old but wind-blasted.

Haughton-le-Skerne. St. Andrew - a sad, battered yew, graffiti-covered and scorched by a nearby fire soldiers on.

Heighington. One Yew 7' 5" at 3' found 45' SE of church.

High Coniscliffe. One wee yew.

Hurworth-on-Tees. All Saints - 15c west tower. An old female yew ? 7', 220' SSW of church and a small one by the church door.

Lamesley. St. Andrew - surrounding yews.

Lanchester. All Saints - small yews.

Low Dinsdale. St. John - rebuilt 1843 on 1196 site. Lots of small yews.

Pelton. Holy Trinity - two small yews, annexed to a large grave-yard.

Piercebridge (Darlington). St. Mary - seven uprooted yew stumps by the east wall behind the church. A ring-count of one stump has it at approx 92 years old, with a 6' girth. One male yew remains 50' E of the church, 5' 2" in girth at its base.

Ravensworth Arms. The largest tree is by the inn: a twisted double-trunker of fairly small girth. Lots of other small trees on site but nothing old.

Romaldkirk. St. Romald - one yew (with grounding-branch offspring) absorbing and old gravestone into its trunk. Another stone 2' away dated 1764, is being toppled by its roots.

Shadforth. St. Cuthbert 1834/40 - wee yews including 2 Irish.

Sherburn Hospital Chapel. Two large, topiarised 'pepper-pots' yews at the SE corner of no great girth, and some smaller ones to the ENE of the chapel.

Shincliffe. St. Mary - mature yews, but nothing worth a measure.

Staindrop. St. Mary - yews by the churchyard wall of no great girth. Others across the road in the graveyard: an avenue of them, parallel to the stream and wall, but again, not large.

Stamfordham. St. Mary - young yews.

Sunderland. St. Michael, Bishopwearmouth - newly planted yews.

Whickham. St. Mary - one young yew.

Witton Gilbert. St. Michael & All Angels - two mature yews north of the church in what appears to be the old rectory grounds. Larger is male, the other female.

County Durham sites with no common yews

Auckland. St. Andrews - Irish yews.

Barnard Castle. St. Mary

Baybridge (Blanchland). Wesleyan Chapel of 1867, gate flanked by two Irish yews.

Belmont. Mary Magdalen 1855-7.

Billingham. St. Cuthbert - Saxon W Tower.

Birtley. St. Johns - 1849-50.

Blackhill. St. Aidan - 1885.

Blackhill. St. Mary. R. C. 1854-7.

Bournmoor. St. Barnabas 1867-8.

Burnhope. St. John

Cleadon. All Saints

Cockfield.

Consett. Christ Church - 1866.

Corsenside. St. Cuthbert

Cowshill. (Heatherycleugh) St. Thomas - Victorian.

Croxdale. St. Bartholemew

Dalton-le-Dale. St. Cuthbert

Darlington. St. Cuthbert.
Denton. St. Mary - 1891.
Dipton. St. John the Evangelist
Easington. St. Mary - Norman.
East Boldon. St. George
Ebchester. St. Ebba - 19/20c rebuild on 12c site.
Egglescliffe. St. John. Egles = church: indicative of early site.
Elton. St. John - rebuilt Norman.
Escomb. St. John - small, Saxon church.
Esh. St. Michael
Gainford. St. Mary – 13c on an earlier site. St. Mary's Well nearby. Irish yews.
Grindon. St. Thomas a' Becket - picturesque ruin.
Haltwhistle. Holy Cross - Irish yews.
Hartlepool. Four churches:
All Saints - largely 19c but Norman origin.
Christ Church - being converted into an art gallery-cum-exhibition centre. Orig. EE.
St. Hilda – 13c.
St. Mary. Early English.
Harton. St. Peter
Harwood-in-Teesdale. St. James - redundant, early 18c.
Hetton-le-Hole. St. Nicholas - 1898-1901.
Heworth. St. Mary - 1822.
Horton. Originally Anglo-Saxon. Irish yews.
Houghton-le-Spring. St. Michael & All Angels - Norman parts.
Hunstanworth. St. James
Kelloe. St. Helen - Norman.
Kirk Merrington. An 1850 copy of its predecessor of 1142-4.
Leadgate. St. Ives - 1865-8. One Irish Yew.
Medomsley. St. Mary - 1878 rebuild + EE.
Monkwearmouth. St. Peter & St. Cuthbert
Murton. Holy Trinity - 1876-7.
Newbottle. St. Matthew - late Victorian.
Norton. St. Mary - Saxon crossing tower.
Penshaw. All Saints - 1876-7.
Pittington. St. Laurence - Medieval + 13c.
Redmarshal. St. Cuthbert - Norman.
Rookhope. St. John
Ryal. All Saints - Irish yews.
Ryhope. St. Paul - 1870.
Ryhope. Chapel
Sacrison. St. Peter
Satley.
Seaham. St. Mary - Saxon church.
Sedgefield. St. Edmund - EE.
Sherburn. St. Mary the Virgin - Victorian.
Shotley Bridge. St. Cuthbert
South Shields. St. Hilda – c.1764.
Spennymoor. St. Paul

St. John's Chapel. 1752
Stanhope. St. Thomas - Norman.
Stanley. St. Andrew - 1875-6.
Stanley. United Reform Church.
Tanfield. St. Margaret
Thockrington. Norman church.
Thornley. St. Bartholemew - 1842-3.
Trimdon. St. Mary - Norman.
Washington.
West Boldon. St. Nicholas
West Pelton. St. Pauls - late Victorian.
West Rainton. Surrounded by tree stumps, telling of recent mass slaughter!
Westgate. St. Andrews - 1869.
Whitburn. St. Andrew
Whitworth. Parish Church
Winston-on-Tees. St. Andrew
Wolsingham. SS Mary & Stephen – 12c west tower.