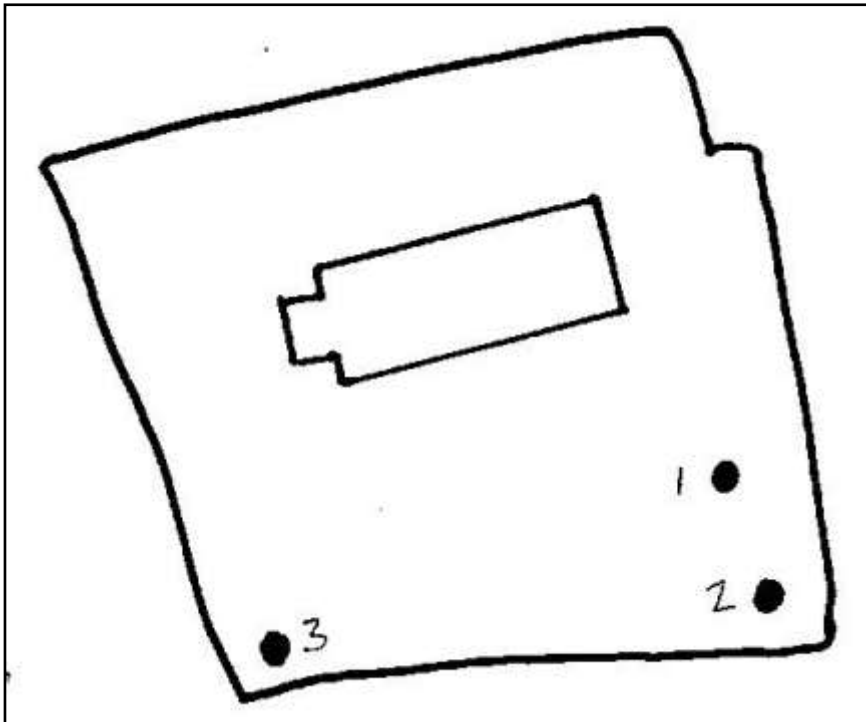


One yew grows at the east end between the road and the church. It consists of many stems from 4' and upwards. Measured at about 1' a girth of 10' 7" was recorded.



Three yews grow here:

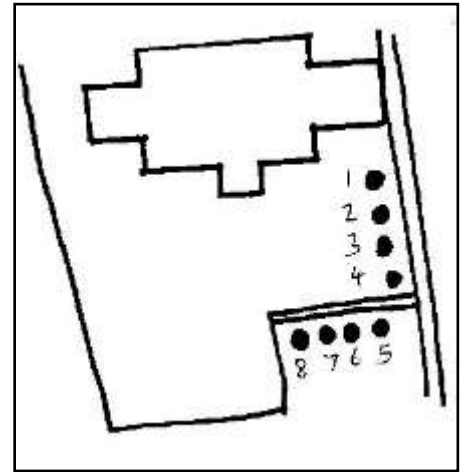
Tree 1, SE of the church on a mound covered in elder, the female yew (above) is multi-stemmed from low down. Girth around all of these was approximately 14'. The tree was overrun by thick stems of ivy, while the space beneath was used as storage for dead and decaying material from the churchyard. Stones from a crumbling tombstone also littered the area.

Tree 2, almost in the SE corner of the churchyard, is a straight single trunked male. Branches below a height of 8' have all been removed. Girth was 5' 7" at 3'.

Tree 3 grows in the SW corner of churchyard on the perimeter. It is a young many stemmed male with a girth of around 5'.

Here are two lines of yew.
This one runs north/south.
Girths are measured at 2',
with the most northerly
first:

- 1: 6' 11³/₄"
- 2: 8' 1"
- 3: 7' 11¹/₂"
- 4: 9' 3"



The line of yews east/west was planted later. Each of its trees was measured at 2' above the highest point of the sloping ground.

- 5: 4' 10¹/₂"
- 6: 4' 4¹/₂"
- 7: 4' 6¹/₂"
- 8: 3' 8"



All 8 yews are columnar and show clearly where branches have been systematically removed below a height of 7'/8'.

BARTON St DAVID no dedication ST53973171 31st July 2015

This female yew grows SW of the church close to a wall. It had become the compost bin of the churchyard in an area filled with brambles. Estimated girth was 8'.

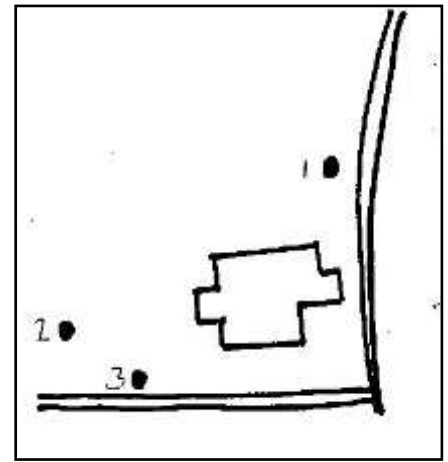


A smaller yew grows in the graveyard extension.

Tree 1, male, grows at the NE corner of the churchyard, close to a path. It has an elongated trunk and a girth of between 8' and 9'. Many of its lower branches had been clipped.

Tree 2, male, grows west of the tower close to a well constructed stepped path that leads upwards through this part of the churchyard. Elder growing close to the tree prevented access. Although one side of its trunk was ivy covered, when seen from the tower it appeared a fine looking tree. It branches above a height of about 4'. Estimated girth 8'/9'.

Tree 3, female, grows SW of the tower and not too far from a precipitous drop to the road below. Its trunk is very straight. Some of the space around it was being used as a dumping ground for polythene sacks, plastic bottles and builders' rubble. Girth was 8' 7" at 2' above the ground on its lower side, closer to 1' where the ground level has been raised.



This male yew grows SE of the church. It has an ivy covered solid looking trunk. Over the years soil appears to have been dumped under the tree, raising the ground level so that it probably conceals the first 2' of its trunk. Branching begins at a height of 5'/6' above the present ground level. Girth was 11' 5" at 1'.



2 substantial female yews grow on the south side of church, presumably planted around the same time.

The yew west of the path (left) had a girth of 11' 7" measured over thick stems of ivy. Some of these had been cut through, while others were in need of the same treatment since ivy has almost overwhelmed the tree. This was pointed out to the person in charge of the churchyard management.

The yew to the east of the path (right) had a girth of 10' 9" at 3' and 11' 1" at 5'. It has a tall leading branch next to an area facing north that appears to have split.



1 female yew grows NE of the church. It has particularly red bark and a girth of 7' 9" at 2'. There are no branches below a height of about 10'.

As the path winds round to the east of the church there is a line of yews behind the fence and not on church property. It is possible that these were once churchyard specimens.



The bushy many stemmed female yew (right) grows on the south side.

NE of the church (below) is a male millennium yew. Its branches stretch outwards rather than upwards. Girth was 1' 0 $\frac{3}{4}$ " between 1" and 2".



Page 294 of *Notes and Queries* no.19 of 9th March 1850 tells us that "In the village of Berkely, near Frome, Somerset, and on the borders of Wiltshire, the church is decorated on Easter Sunday with yew, evidently as an emblem of the Resurrection. Flowers in churches on that day are common, but I believe the use of yew to be unusual."

Arthur Mee's *King's England* in 1940 noted that "the yew is higher than the little tower and its branches sweep to the ground."

In February 2003 I recorded the male yew that grows NNW of the church and leans towards it. It is still a tall tree, but its branches no longer sweep to the ground.

In May 2016, when the photographs were taken, ivy covered the trunk and grew high into its branches. Girth at the ground was about 12'.



The largest of four yews here is male, growing SE of the church. It is tall with abundant foliage and a girth of 12' 4½" between the ground and 1'. Of its three trunks, one had been sawn off at 6', while several more thick branches had also been removed.

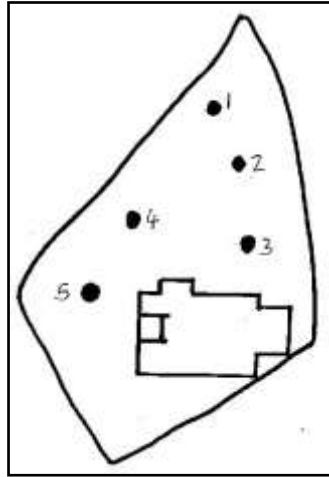


Next to an Irish Yew at the west gate is a small scrappy female yew (no photo). West of church on the north side is a clipped yew (below left) with a 5¼" girth.

An older clipped yew (right), about 5' tall, grows at the SW corner of the churchyard.



Five yews grow on the north side of the church.



Tree 1 is an ivy clad female with a girth of 8' 9" between the ground and 6".

Tree 2 is male with a long straight trunk from which grow numerous small branches. Girth was 8' 1½" at 2'.

Tree 3 is male with numerous branches from 5' and upwards and a girth of 8' 2" at 2'.

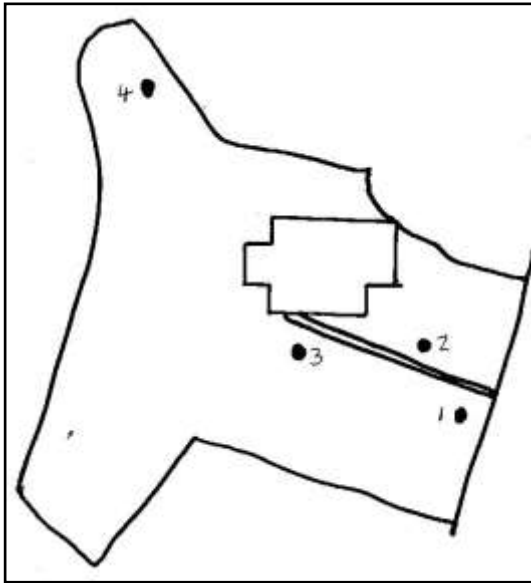
Tree 4 is female, bulgy at a height of 2' where low branches were removed long ago. Girth was 9' 9" at 1'.

Tree 5 is male and retains its large girth to a considerable height. Only at a height of about 20' does it divide into several still rising branches. The tree has obviously been inundated with ivy in the past, but is being transformed by its removal. Girth was an ivy affected 10' 9" at 2'.



As well as the 4 yews on the plan, a millennium yew grows by the path leading to the south door. Its girth was 6½".

Trees 1,2 and 3 are male. Tree 1, at the churchyard entrance, has a twisted trunk and twiggy growth following the removal of branches that would have blocked the path. Girth low on the trunk was 10'11'.



On the right of the path approaching the church, tree 2 has a straight fluted trunk. Girth was 9' 8" at 1' above the higher ground.



Tree 3 grows outside the south door. Its trunk divides low down and girth was 10' 6" approx. at 1' 6".

Tree 4, female, grows NW of the tower at the edge of the churchyard.



Three yews grow here. Southwest of the church is a female with a fluted trunk and lower branches that have been systematically removed. Girth was 10' 11" at 3' in April 2006 and 11' 6½" at 3' in July 2016, an increase in of 7½" in 10 years .



A second female yew, SE of the church, also has a fluted trunk, which develops into numerous upright branches from a height of 10'/12'. Girth was 10' 1" at 3' in 2006 and 10' 9" at 3' in 2016, an increase of 8" in 10 years.



This young yew, NE of the church, has two stems which merge into each other. Girth was 1' 5" close to the ground.



The church is dated 1823. Does the line of yews on its southern perimeter date from that time?

Tree 1 is female girthing exactly 7' at 2'. It has a straight trunk with branching above a height of 5'.

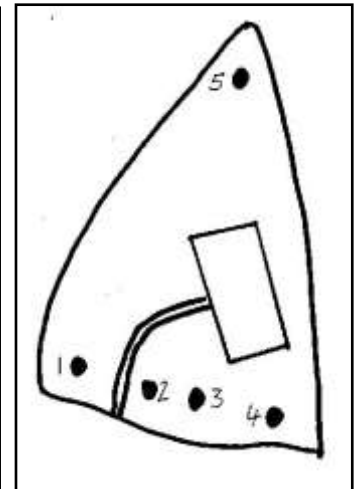
Tree 2 is male with considerable epicormic growth on its trunk and some of its higher branches. It divides into several upright stems at about 6'/7'. Girth was 8' 5" close to the ground.

Tree 3 is male with a smooth trunk that divides into upright branches at a height of 8'/10'. Girth was 7' 2" at 1' above the higher ground.



Tree 4, female, has a smooth straight trunk with no branches below a height of 8'. Girth was 7' 3½" at 1'.

Tree 5, north of the church, was planted by William George Burrough, chairman of the Parish Council on May 6th 1935, on which day King George V fulfilled his 25 years of reign. Girth was 7' 2" above roots. This tree is quite different from the four on the south perimeter, becoming many branched from 3'.



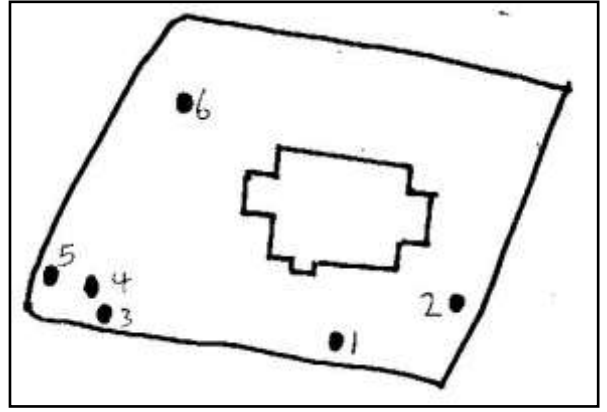
BLAGDON St Andrew ST5041158971 30th October 2012

Of the 6 yews that grow here, tree 1, close to the wall on the south side, is the largest. It is a leaning male with a fluted trunk and a girth of perhaps 10'.

Tree 2 is tall and narrow with an approximate girth of 9'. It grows by the east gate. Ivy filled its canopy.

Trees 3 and 4 are a pair of yews that grow either side of the gate at the south west corner. The more southerly of the pair is female, with a girth of about 8'. The other is male with a girth of 7' 1" at 2'.

Tree 5 is a male girthing 6' 3" at 2' and tree 6 is female with a girth of approximately 5'.



BLEADON St Peter and St Paul ST34145691 8th Sept 2013

The church is an 1858/9 restoration. One female yew grows on the south side, its girth 7' 4" at 1' over a thin covering of ivy. This had been cut and was dying in the branches. There was some old Chicken-of-the-Woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*) bracket fungus on the tree.

BRADFORD-on-TONE St Giles ST17302298 17th Sept 2015



The nondescript young yew seen here grows near the NE corner of the church.

There is also a young female in the NW corner of the churchyard, with a girth of about 1'. It was either planted in the early 1990s as part of the Go for God programme, or to celebrate the millennium.

BREAN St Bridget ST29685595 1st October 2015

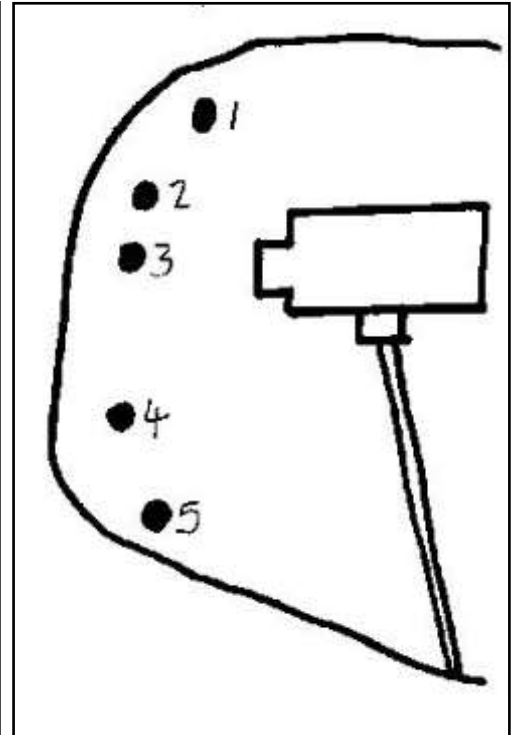
This young female yew grows NW of the church and only 2m from the wall. Its lower branches have been systematically removed. Girth was 1' 7".



In *The History and Antiquities of Somersetshire* 1836 Phelps said "There is a fine yew tree in the church yard; and the view from this spot towards the north-east is peculiarly fine."

On the west perimeter is a line of 5 yews. They grow in a wide strip of land that at the time was filled with nettles. It is not clear that any of these yews would have been worthy of note nearly 200 years ago and it is likely that the tree Phelps described no longer exists.

Tree 1 is male with a girth of 10' 10" at about 1' over ivy. It is many branched from 4' and upwards and has an elongated trunk.



Tree 2 is a female, with branches removal at a height of 4'. Girth was about 9' 6" at the root crown.



Tree 3 is a solid male with an estimated girth of 10' 11'.

Tree 4 is small girthed - perhaps 1' 6" to 2' - and not very tall.

Tree 5 is male with a girth of 6' or so. It was not possible to get close to the tree.

Not shown on the plan is a small girthed yew of about 2' growing south of the church tower on the church yard perimeter. Also in a thicket of growth on the south perimeter, east of the path to the church, is a yew with a girth of about 7' 8'.

Four yews grow here, the largest girthed (left) on sloping ground north of the church. It is a columnar, fluted female, but with the appearance of numerous layers plastered randomly on its trunk. It is also very knobbly around sawn off branches. Measured with a horizontal tape starting at the ground from the highest point above the roots was 11' 8½".

The photo on the right shows a yew growing close to a substantial beech tree. It grows just west of the tower on the south side and is female with a girth of 8' 2" at 2' over some twiggy growth. Its trunk is 8' high before many branches develop. Proximity to the beech has inevitably created a rather one sided yew.



This twin trunked female grows by the west lych gate. Girth was 8' 7" at 1'.

A 4th yew grows NW of the church. It is a young male with numerous branches from the base and some yellow leaves.

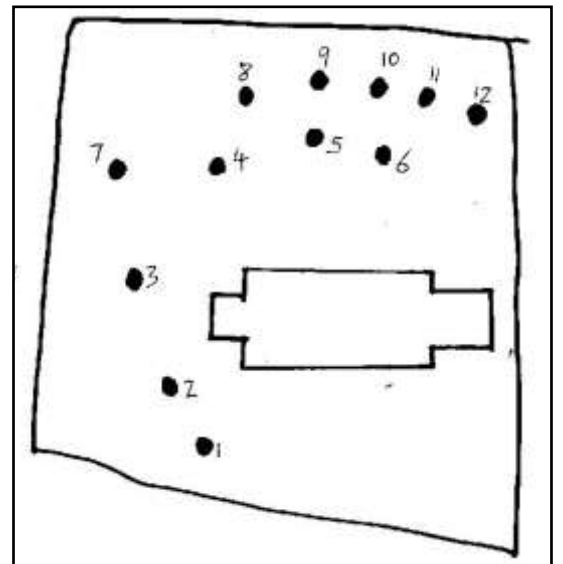


St John the Baptist church at Eastover is a modern church, first consecrated for public worship on August 17th 1846. The first burials in the churchyard took place in the same year.

It would seem likely that the yews were planted around this time – all grow at the west end and are in two curved rows, each containing 6 trees.



- 1: 6' 10½" at 2' - becomes 2 upright stems above about 9', female
- 2 7' 10" at 4' breaks into many upright stems between 5/8'
- 3 7' 7" at 4'
- 4 9' estimated, unmeasurable due to twiggy growth, male
- 5 7' 9" at 2'
- 6 9' 4" at 3'
- 7 5' 11" at 3' leaning
- 8 9' 1" at 2' but has been larger, twin trunked above 2', female
- 9 6' 7" at 2' allowing for lean, female
- 10 5' 5½" at 2' female
- 11 5' 1" at 2' female
- 12 unmeasurable, exceptionally long branches



Average girth of trees 1,2,3,5,6,7,9,10 and 11, which excludes those with twin trunks and those whose girth was estimated, was 7'.

Two young yews here were presumably either planted in the early 1990s as part of the Go for God programme, or in 2000 to celebrate the millennium.

The taller, about 12' in height, has a leading central branch.

Each tree has many low branches spreading out from their bases.



Three yews grow here. The largest (left and centre) is close to the churchyard entrance west of the church. It is female and did not appear to be more than 10'/11' in circumference.

A smaller yew grows NW of the church and close to the road. It has started to look more like a hedgerow tree. Drying grasses were stored beneath.

The millennium yew (right) is about 4' tall, enclosed in wire mesh.

This churchyard once had an ancient yew, described by Collinson in his 1791 *History of Somersetshire* as follows: "There is also an ancient yew tree, the body of which is 14ft in circumference. The trunk is quite hollow, but it has a fine spreading head." It is unfortunate that Vaughan Cornish's 1946 *The Churchyard Yew and Immortality* copied the same description, leading to an assumption that the yew was still alive at that time. The date of this tree's demise could in fact be any time from 1791 onwards.



In June 2000 I recorded the female yew (left) with a girth of 11' 2" at the base. In August 2013 the tree was 11' 3" measured at 1' above the sloping ground. It grows SSW of the church in a private burial ground. Thick stems of ivy had been cut, and now only covered the trunk on one side. There were some large dead branches in the centre.



Here are also a pair of yews either side of the path leading to the church's south entrance. Both are of upright appearance.

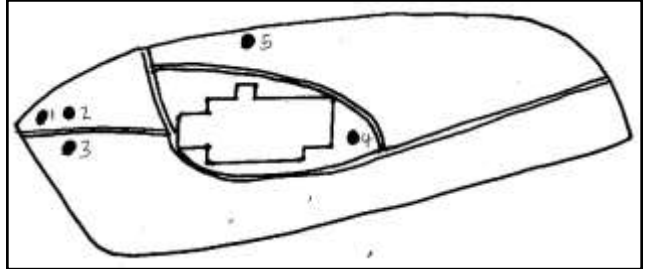
The tree to the west is a female which has had large branches on its south side removed. Girth was 8' 11" at 2' and 9' 1" at 3'.

The smaller male (right) to the east girthed 5' 6½" at 2' and 5' 4" at 3'.

One male yew grows on the N side of church. It has multiple upright stems. Girth could not be recorded because of low twiggy growth.

In *The history and antiquities of Somersetshire* by William Phelps 1836, he speaks of "entering the churchyard through its principal gateway on the west, under the branches of a venerable yew tree..."

Five yews grow here and the tree noted in 1836 must be tree 1, at the west gate. Since its girth suggests a present age close to 300 years only, the word 'venerable' must refer to it being venerated rather than to it being especially old.



1 Today that tree, male, is ivy covered and growing on a slight mound. The ivy will increase its girth by several inches and I recorded 10' 11" at 2'. Beneath the ivy is a fine straight trunk.

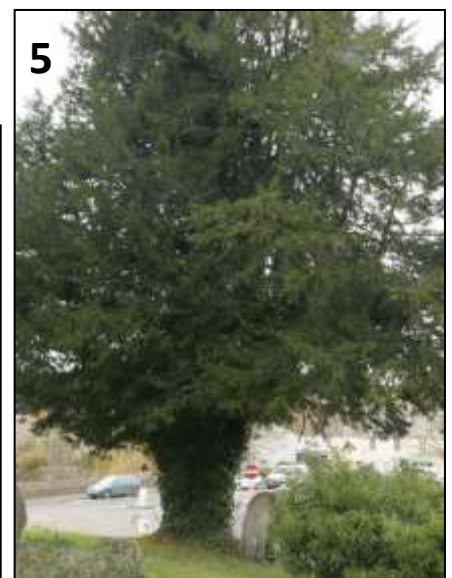


2 Tree 2, close to tree 1, is a young female, bushy from the ground.

Tree 3, female, is many branched from low down and a girth of 8' 2" at 1' over ivy.

Tree 4 is male with a girth of 9' 1" at 1'.

Tree 5 grows close to the wall above a steep drop to the main road, so it was not possible to obtain a girth. Ivy grew on its trunk and into its branches. It appears multi-stemmed from an elongated trunk.



This is in private grounds, though they are open to the public and permission is not needed to visit.



In 2000 I recorded the yew on a slight mound with many roots showing and a variegated holly growing right next to it. The yew had numerous branches from a height of 6' and these dipped all around, though none quite reached the ground. Foliage seemed sparse and many dead twigs were visible. There was also some brown leaves. At 4', just beneath the bulge, it measured 11' 10".



Sixteen years later, when these photos were taken, I was able to report a fine healthy looking tree, covered throughout in rich green foliage. Girth was 11' 11" at 4', just below the bulge as in 2000, but this did not seem to be an easy place for comparative girth readings in the future. This time it was

also measured at 2', above the roots and missing some of the more obvious bulges. A girth of 11' 10" was recorded



Here is also a thick yew hedge on the western perimeter.

Below is a clipped yew on the west side.

At the SE perimeter was a yew stump with a girth of about 5' and just over 100 countable rings.





Four yews grow here. Yew 1, left, is female SW of the church and growing on a slight mound. Many thick branches have been removed from all around the tree, but particularly on its south side. Girth was 10' 5" at 1'.



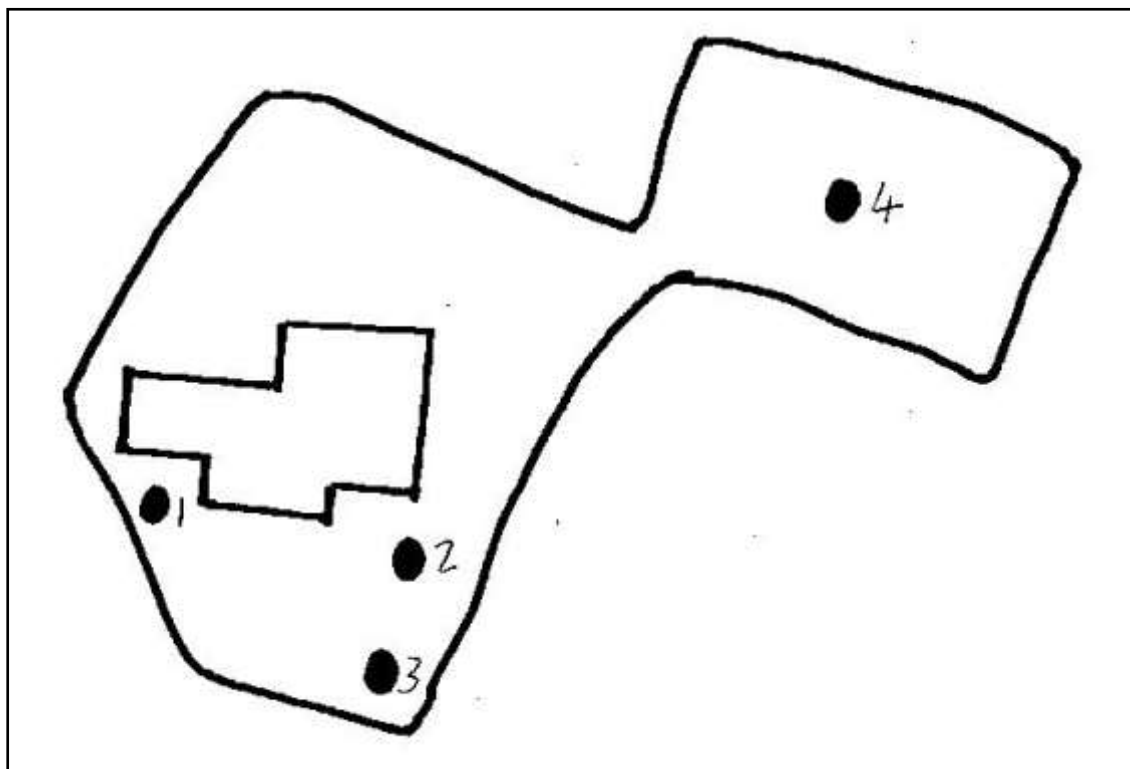
Yew 2, right, is female and grows SE of the church. Management of this tree has created bulging from 3' and above. It has many thick branches. Girth was 9' 9" at 1'.



Yew 3, left, grows by the SE perimeter wall, where 4' 5' of soil and churchyard waste has built up, creating a rather messy wild area. While the yew appears as though it might be very large, by scrambling close to the wall I could see nothing to suggest great age.



Yew 4, right, grows in a newer graveyard NE of the church. It is an ivy clad yew with a bushy first 12' topped by numerous thin branches. Estimated girth was 6' 7'.





Two yews grow on the west side of the church. The tree closest to the church (left) is upright with many small stems plastered to the trunk. From 5'6' up it develops many parallel uprights. Girth was 11' 1" at about 6".

The yew furthest from the church (right) has much low twigggy growth. Girth was 9' 6" at about 6".



BURNHAM - ON - SEA St Andrew ST30464941 1st October 2015

One young male grows at the east end of the church. It consists of several stems above 1'. Girth probably about 2' 6".

BURTLE St Philip and St James ST3953543290 12th April 2016

Here is an 1838 church on the site of a monastery. A female yew with a girth of about 8' grows east of the church. It has a long straight trunk with much branching.



BUTLEIGH St Leonard ST5200333924 31st July 2015



Yews have been extensively planted to separate the grounds of Butleigh Court with the churchyard. Some planting is recent and would seem to maintain a long tradition.



There are two larger yews in the church yard. It seemed to me that they possibly once formed part of a hedge, but have been left to develop into unmanaged trees. Both are female, and the one seen here (right) grows west of the church. Its girth was 9' 6" close to the ground and it divides from low down into 2 distinct sides. The second grows near to a path that leads to the south door. Its girth of 9' 9" at 3' included some thick ivy stems.

