

It is known that a Norman church stood on this site in the latter half of the 11th century. What is less certain is whether a Saxon church preceded this, though the name Wivelsfield is mentioned as early as AD 765 in an Anglo-Saxon charter.

The earliest known mention of the yew is in a 1911 *History of Sussex*, describing simply 'a yew on the north side of the churchyard'.

According to the church guide 'the tree is said by experts to be 1000 years old, so it is even older than the Norman church'.



Photos 1999 - Tim Hills



1999 and 2004: The female yew grows on sloping ground, with its roots reaching downwards to the path. A wire around its trunk stretches to the base of a nearby tree to help prevent it from leaning any further. Its prominent internal stem, seen in the photo left, has a girth of about 5'. It probably developed in the centre of the original decaying trunk, giving us an indication that this was once a tree of far greater girth than today. Three main branches (none of great size) support the bulk of the tree's growth. It seemed well cared for.

Girth

1994: 12m tall x 148cm diameter at 1.5m - Owen Johnson *The Sussex Tree Book*

1999: 15' 3" measured at 5' above the path - Tim Hills

2016: The bole has a flared root and was measured at 3' from the top of the sloping ground. A girth of 15' 4" was recorded - Peter Norton.

Photos 2016 - Peter Norton



Two additional yews were recorded by Peter Norton in 2016:



On the left is a female yew that grows opposite the northeast corner of the church. It consists of a low bole that has nine living stems and many that have been cut. It is an unusual form. All the stems were female and girth around the base was 16' 7".

The yew on the right grows southeast of the porch. The male yew seen here has a slightly bulbous base from which much adventitious growth has been removed. Girth at the root crown was 14' 1". Close by was a fluted male with a girth of 9' 9" at the root crown.

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