

1999: This leaning female fragment grows south of the church and close to its porch. It is half a shell of a once much larger tree. In the future it may split into 3 separated fragments, though it is also possible that new wood being laid down may keep it in one piece. New and vigorous growth filled its many branches.



Yet this ancient fragment, seen above in 1999, which has the potential to live for many more centuries, was almost destroyed after St Mary's parochial church council applied to local planners in 1992 for consent to fell the tree.

The following was taken from the *Salisbury Journal* via the International Press Cutting Bureau:

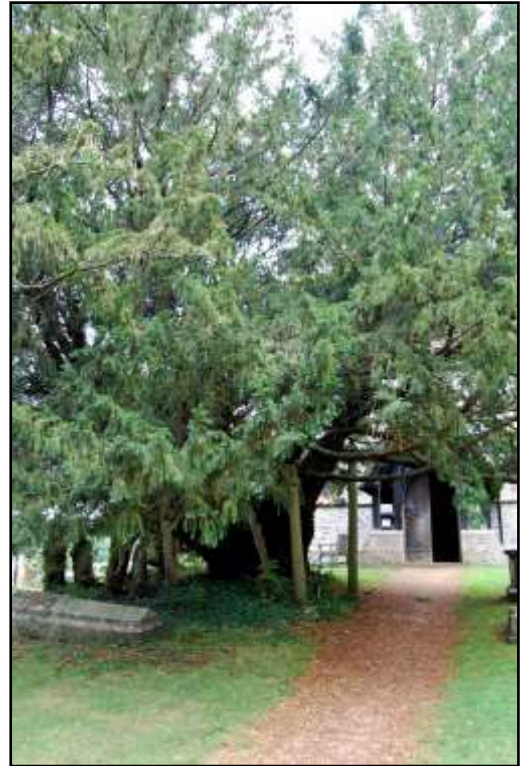
'Alderbury's ancient yew tree which was threatened with the axe has been granted a facelift to ensure its survival. The 1500 year old giant of St Mary's churchyard is to get remedial surgery and a number of props to make it safe following fears that it would come crashing down. Work begins on April 6th to lop off much of the top-heavy crown, reducing the tree by two-thirds. A national conservation group, the Conservation Foundation, spearheaded by naturalist David Bellamy, stepped in and the venerable yew was granted a tree preservation order. Now the foundation has offered to face the bill for the surgery which is estimated to cost around £250'. The age quoted in the press cutting is the age that appears in Chetan and Brueton's *The Sacred Yew* (1994). Whether the tree is really that old is questionable.

The yew is seen below in an 1805 painting by Buckler. It appears to show two distinct fragments, of which only the one on the left lives today.





Photographs taken by Peter Norton in 2009:



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