

1782: The first recorded measurement was made for the parish records by Dr Burgh.

1825: In Darley church-yard, near Matlock in Derbyshire, is a yew tree, thirty-three feet in girth. *Museum Europæum; or, Select antiquities ... of nature and art, in Europe ...* Charles Hulbert

1835: "In the churchyard is a yew tree, an object of considerable attraction for its immense bulk, its thick foliage, and the great extent of its spreading limbs." *Pigot's Directory*

1838: "A circle was a sacred symbol among the Eastern nations of antiquity; and it would be interesting to know whether the raised platform within a circle of stones, which is sometimes found round our old yews, as in Darley and Llanfoist churchyards, be not a remnant of this superstition."

"This ancient tree stands in the church-yard of Darley in the Dale, Derbyshire. It is a female, with a solid trunk, forking, at 7 ft. above the ground, into two nearly upright boughs, which reach a height of about 55ft." *Arboretum et Fruticetum Britannicum*.



1853: A resident testified that 30 or 40 years earlier the tree was much larger - the branches reaching the churchyard wall, where boys could get onto them from the wall and completely cross to the roof without coming down to the ground.

1885: Lowe recorded that the "gigantic limbs were supported by iron chains, and an iron pallisade surrounded the trunk." He saw in its interior 2 dead trunks, one within the other, showing successive rings of growth. *Yew Trees of Great Britain and Ireland*

1892: In the magazine *News* of July 8th it reported this tree to be "the most venerable yew tree in the world....as much as 3,000 years old.....but its trunk has suffered not a little from the modern goths and vandals who have carved their name in the bark, and employed other methods of mutilation." (source unknown)



1908: "But the finest thing about Darley Dale is the marvellous old yew tree in the churchyard of Church Town, a few minutes' walk from Darley Station. A church of St. Helen has stood here for many centuries, as the stone coffins and sculptured lids now set up in the porch bear witness." [p.382] "The yew stands opposite the south porch, surrounded - most wisely, considering the vandals with pocket knives who infect the roads - with spiked iron railings. It is not as tall in the bole as most ancient yews, for it divides almost immediately into two main trunks, and then sub-divides again into scores of branches of varying thickness. Many of these were lopped off around 1820" [p.386] Firth, J.B. (1908) "*Highways and Byways in Derbyshire*" MacMillan & Co., London.

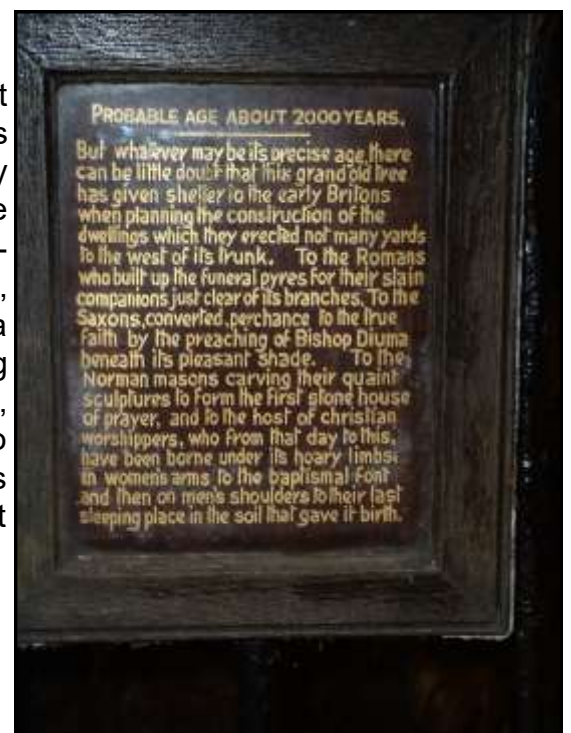
1925: Darley Dale - The churchyard is ornamental with one of the largest and most ancient yew trees in the kingdom. It measures 33 feet in girth, and though robbed of many of its branches, still exhibits a singular specimen of luxuriant vegetation. *Kellys Directory of Derbyshire*

1979: An article in the local news of 18 Oct reported that "The Darley Dale Yew was savaged by the cruel winter which broke its limbs under the weight of frozen snow. But the tree..... is so strong it would probably need an Ice Age to kill it. Yesterday it looked full of life, leaves, berries and colour, not a day over 1,000 years!" (*Yarwood letter*)

The notice attached to the railings is as follows:

Probable age about 2000 years

But whatever may be its precise age, there can be little doubt that this grand old tree has given shelter to the early Britons when planning the construction of the dwellings which they erected not many yards to the west of its trunk. To the Romans who built up the funeral pyres for their slain companions just clear of its branches. To the Saxons, converted, perchance, to the true faith by the preaching of Bishop Diuma beneath its pleasant shade. To the Norman masons carving their quaint sculptures to form the first stone houses of prayer, and to the host of Christian worshippers, who from that day to this, have been borne under its hoary limbs in woman's arms to the baptismal font and then on men's shoulders to their last sleeping place in the soil that gave it birth.



1999: Some of its huge girth appears to have resulted from regeneration after the cutting away of low level growth. From the bole rise two large branches giving the tree greater height than most churchyard yews. Branches dip downwards all around a healthy yew full of green and plentiful foliage.

A second female tree had a girth of 12' 6" girth at 4'.



	1782 Dr Burgh	1836 J.Bowman	1867 C.Greaves	1876 Dr Cox	1888 Paget Bowman	1950 Rev RJ Stanford	1983
Ground	28'	27' 7"			27'	26' 7"	27' 3"
4'	32'	31' 8"	31'	31' 8"	32' 3"	31' 9"	33' 2"