

1813: William Barker Daniel wrote: 'In the churchyard at Gresford in this County are growing nineteen Yew Trees. The dimensions of one of them was taken in May 1808, and it is mentioned as a most singular Vegetable Production—The circumference of the Body (or bole) of this said Yew Tree, one foot from the ground, is the enormous size of seven yards eighteen inches; at five feet from the ground, is nine yards nine inches; two of the great arms are dead, and two more are following rapidly, yet there still remains a sound Body, and seven large Arms that are still in a thriving state; and probably will survive another Hundred Years, before it will drop amongst the Graves of the Dead, which it has so many Centuries shaded'. *Rural Sports*

1836: J.E.B. Bowman, writer and Fellow of the Linnean Society described the yew as having 'seven main branches, most of them being divided in their upper reaches into several smaller ones..... It is a male tree, in good condition, and is reputed to be the finest of its species in Wales'.



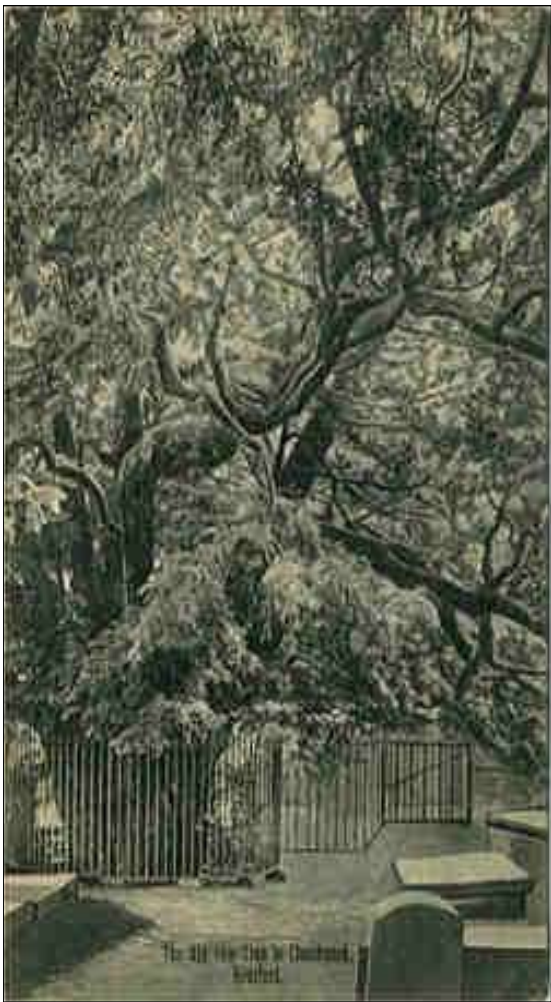
His measurements of 1836 can be compared with those made in 1878 by Sir Robert Christison

	<u>1836</u>	<u>1878</u>
Ground	264" (22')	268.25" (22' 4¼")
At 2'	276" (23')	297" (24' 9")
At 4'	318" (26' 6")	338.25" (28' 2¼")
At 5'4"	348" (29")	365" (30' 5")

Baxter, in *The Eternal Yew* (1992) described it as 'one of the best known trees in Britain, with much speculation about its age'. He noted estimates ranging from 850 to 1,734 years based on 'girth, ring counts from bore holes or decayed wood and imaginative perception'.

1999: Little seems to have changed in 170 years, except for the construction of a high, circular fence around the tree. In addition wire netting had been stretched across some of the holes. The centre of the yew appeared to consist of old and decaying material mixed with brick and concrete slabs. From the bole, which is remarkably free of twiggy growth, I counted at least 8 substantial branches leaning slightly outwards all around the tree, two almost at right angles. One hundred and sixty six years on from Bowman's description, the tree appears to be gaining rather than losing. Here is a classic example of the slow pace of change in an old yew tree.





© Tim Hills - Ancient Yew Group - 2019