



An exceptional tree with a well documented history. In 1729 it was clipped into a series of circles and balls, a practice that ceased in about 1825. The engraving on the left shows the tree as it appeared in 1729, the print in the centre shows it in about 1810 and that on the right in 1840, fifteen years after the practice of clipping ceased.

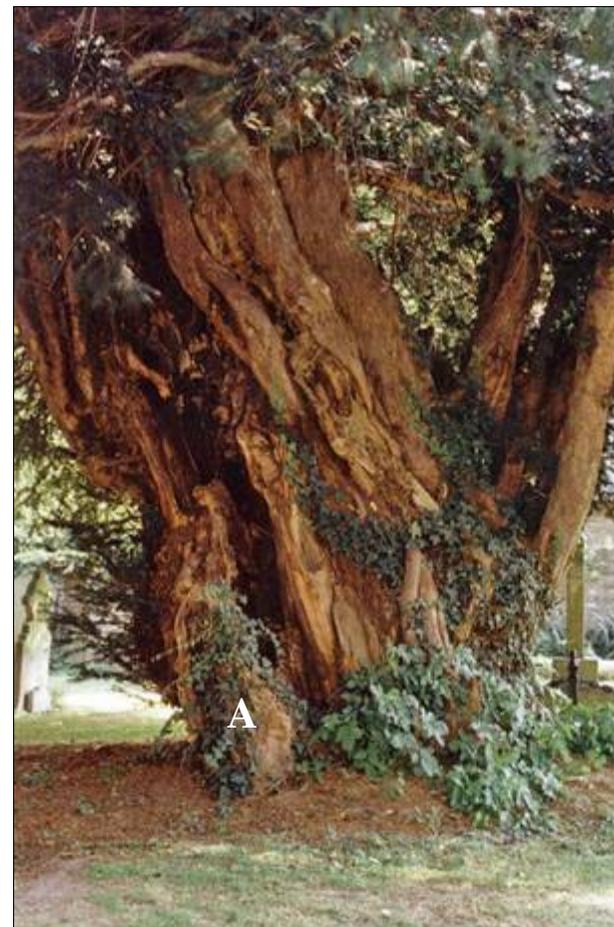
In 1914 a notice in the churchyard informed the public that this tree was 'one of the most famous in England, of vast age, and 'probably more than 1,000 years old'.

The 1958 *Middlesex Quarterly and London Review* informed readers that 'in a recent gale half the old yew in Harlington Churchyard fell, and the other half is in danger'.

Swanton, author of *The Yew Trees of England* (1958) saw it a month after the gale and reported that 'all the large boughs had been removed from the erect half and we gazed upon the wreck of a tree which, three years previously had an umbrage of 60+ in diameter'.

In 1975 an article published in *This England* described how 'the main trunk collapsed, and it took the men of the church council 9 months to saw it up. Fortunately for the continuity of history a substantial stump survived, about 20' high. This has taken on a new lease of life and is growing vigorously'.

I visited in 1999 and found an outpouring of new growth from the 'substantial stump'. At (A) a piece of dead wood 2' high will eventually decay, reducing ground level girth by about 2'.



The tree provides an excellent example of the yew's power of regeneration. A dead branch not only has new wood snaking along the outside (A), but by removing some of the decaying heartwood I exposed a living internal stem. (B)

The Harlington Yew epitomises the ability of *Taxus Baccata* L. to survive against the odds. Its latest struggle has already begun, since this site may be demolished as part of the planned redevelopment of Heathrow Airport.



The Harlington Yew before and after the losses sustained in the storm of 1975.



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