

This formidable male tree has been recorded since 1832, when Robert Mudie referred to it as nearly 40ft in girth and having a ‘vigorous head’. On January 7th 1835 a speaker was addressing The Verulam Philosophical Society on the subject of yews. He said ‘I have seen some very fine ones in the neighbourhood of Maidstone; one at Loose, (if I recollect,) the Rev. Mr. Holloway informed me, measured either twenty-nine or thirty-one feet round (I forget which)’. This appeared in the aptly named *Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*.

Mee’s *The King’s England* describes it as a marvellous old yew that ‘has seen its people come and go for most of a thousand years, for it is 12 yards round, one of the biggest we have seen’.

In 1999 it was protected behind high, spiked railings. Its internal structures are well developed, filling a large area in the hollow, and joining with the external parts to make a tree of great bulk and strength. I was given various accounts of work recently carried out in the churchyard which involved disturbing some of the roots. These ranged from ‘acts of vandalism’ to ‘every possible precaution having been taken’. I was told that it took over a year of wrangling for the church authorities to obtain permission for the work, so that when the sewage pipe was laid any exposed roots were properly lagged to keep them moist.

