

A vast tree with no early record apart from its inclusion in Revd Williams watercolour of 1791. It is reproduced here with kind permission of Shropshire Archives: Loughton: 00012547, 6001/372/3 (264/16396) .

In 1939 *The King's England* described it as having 'a hollow trunk measuring about 10 yards round; it has 6 main branches'. Mee went further, stating that 'it is probably as old as Magna Carta, quite 700 years'. But it is certainly older than this.

In Morton's *Trees of Shropshire* (1986) girth measurements of 33' at 3' and 30' at 2' are given, and he describes how the Shropshire branch of the CPRE took a sample of wood from inside the hollow trunk for carbon dating. The result was 550 years (plus or minus 50 years), to which was added the estimated time of 400 years for the tree to grow to the sampling point, giving an age of about 1000 years. Although the earliest record of a chapel here is 1291, the tree is clearly older, providing possible evidence of earlier worship at this site.

Photos are from 1998.

