

The yew was first noted following an excursion of the North Staffs Botanical Society on May 19<sup>th</sup> 1888 led by Mr T.S. Wilkins: 'An ancient yew tree stands to the south of the church, and beneath it are the remains of an elaborate base of a churchyard cross'.

In 1939 Mee's report in *The King's England* thought that 'it is probable that the great yew in the churchyard is as old as the church; it is a vigorous and shapely monster ... though its chief branches have gone'.

The surrounding stone wall has long been a feature of this tree, and can be seen in the Revd Williams painting of 25th August 1790. It is reproduced here with the kind permission of Shropshire Archives: Norbury: 00012371, 6001/372/2 (24/660).



In 1999, when these photos were taken, the wall was clearly breaking up as the tree continues to expand. Its main trunk splits into 3 branches at a height of about 20'. In addition a substantial limb is pulling away from the tree and might eventually require a prop. Small twiggy growth had been removed from much of the lower bole.

The girth measurements of such a tree are likely to be approximate and dependent on the amount of twiggy growth. In 1939 Mee recorded 30', in 1983 Morton recorded 10.7m (35') at the base, in 1999 I recorded approximately 33' close to the ground and in 2016 Paul Wood recorded 35' 2" (10.72m) at the root crown.



Some worries expressed about the health of the yew led to a visit by Paul Wood in 2016. He was able to report that the ancient yew was in superb condition. Most importantly there was growth on every part of the tree with plentiful deep green foliage. He thought that the people of Norbury should be applauded for reinvigorating such a fine specimen.

