

1782: The first recorded measurement was made for the parish records by Dr Burgh.

1825: In Darley church-yard, near Matlock in Derbyshire, is a yew tree, thirty-three feet in girth. *Museum Europæum; or, Select antiquities ... of nature and art, in Europe ...* Charles Hulbert

1835: "In the churchyard is a yew tree, an object of considerable attraction for its immense bulk, its thick foliage, and the great extent of its spreading limbs." *Pigot's Directory*

1838: "A circle was a sacred symbol among the Eastern nations of antiquity; and it would be interesting to know whether the raised platform within a circle of stones, which is sometimes found round our old yews, as in Darley and Llanfoist churchyards, be not a remnant of this superstition."

"This ancient tree stands in the church-yard of Darley in the Dale, Derbyshire. It is a female, with a solid trunk, forking, at 7 ft. above the ground, into two nearly upright boughs, which reach a height of about 55ft." *Arboretum et Fruticetum Britannicum*.



1853: A resident testified that 30 or 40 years earlier the tree was much larger - the branches reaching the churchyard wall, where boys could get onto them from the wall and completely cross to the roof without coming down to the ground.

1885: Lowe recorded that the "gigantic limbs were supported by iron chains, and an iron pallisade surrounded the trunk." He saw in its interior 2 dead trunks, one within the other, showing successive rings of growth. *Yew Trees of Great Britain and Ireland*

1892: In the magazine *News* of July 8th it reported this tree to be "the most venerable yew tree in the world....as much as 3,000 years old.....but its trunk has suffered not a little from the modern goths and vandals who have carved their name in the bark, and employed other methods of mutilation."

The famous yew tree in Darley Dale churchyard suffered somewhat seriously during the recent gale (according to the writer of the pleasant and cultured Derbyshire gossip which appears week by week in the *Sheffield Independent* under the heading of "The Man on the Peak"). I gather (says the writer referred to) from a local reader that a great branch was blown right from the centre of the trunk. Experts in forestry compute the age of this immemorial yew at over 2000 years. Four feet from the ground its girth is something like 32ft., and its branches cover an area of 120ft. Half way up its double trunk there is a cavity that will comfortably accommodate eight ordinary-sized men standing upright.....The Darley yew is one of the institutions of Derbyshire, and it would be a thousand pities were it to become numbered among the 'things that were but are not.' The veteran has of course, been recipient of the usual marks of attention accorded to all "objects of interest" by Messrs. Goth, Ostrogoth, Visigoth, Vandal, and Co., who have scored its bark all over with their vainglorious hieroglyphics, and has naturally suffered considerably in the past from stress of weather. But notwithstanding its almost fabulous age, it still remains a stately tree, in proud contrast to its crippled congener in the churchyard at Fortingall, Perthshire, reported to be "the oldest authentic specimen of vegetation in Europe." The Darley yew is the pride of the beautiful dale which it adorns and dignifies. May its shadow never grow less.



1908: "But the finest thing about Darley Dale is the marvellous old yew tree in the churchyard of Church Town, a few minutes' walk from Darley Station. A church of St. Helen has stood here for many centuries, as the stone coffins and sculptured lids now set up in the porch bear witness." [p.382] "The yew stands opposite the south porch, surrounded - most wisely, considering the vandals with pocket knives who infect the roads - with spiked iron railings. It is not as tall in the bole as most ancient yews, for it divides almost immediately into two main trunks, and then sub-divides again into scores of branches of varying thickness. Many of these were lopped off around 1820" [p.386] Firth, J.B. (1908) "*Highways and Byways in Derbyshire*" MacMillan & Co., London.

1925: Darley Dale - The churchyard is ornamental with one of the largest and most ancient yew trees in the kingdom. It measures 33 feet in girth, and though robbed of many of its branches, still exhibits a singular specimen of luxuriant vegetation. *Kellys Directory of Derbyshire*

1979: An article in the local news of 18 Oct reported that "The Darley Dale Yew was savaged by the cruel winter which broke its limbs under the weight of frozen snow. But the tree..... is so strong it would probably need an Ice Age to kill it. Yesterday it looked full of life, leaves, berries and colour, not a day over 1,000 years!" (*Yarwood letter*)

1999: Some of its huge girth appears to have resulted from regeneration after the cutting away of low level growth. From the bole rise two large branches giving the tree greater height than most churchyard yews. Branches dip downwards all around a healthy yew full of green and plentiful foliage. A second female tree in the churchyard had a girth of 12' 6" at 4'.



	1782 Dr Burgh	1836 J.Bowman	1867 C.Greaves	1876 Dr Cox	1888 Paget Bowman	1950 Rev RJ Stanford	1983
Ground	28'	27' 7"			27'	26' 7"	27' 3"
4'	32'	31' 8"	31'	31' 8"	32' 3"	31' 9"	33' 2"

Notice by the Darley Dale Yew

