

All Saints church dates from the 12th century, but with evidence of Roman and Saxon settlement in this area, it is thought likely that a wooden church once existed on the present site.

1849: The 'very fine yew tree' was first noted in the *Ecclesiastical and architectural topography of England*.

1860: *Handbook for Travellers in Berks, Bucks and Oxfordshire* wrote of 'some fine yew-trees' in the plural. This however is the only yew of any size here today.

1883: Kelly's *Directory of Berkshire, Bucks and Oxon*: 'In the churchyard, west of the parish, is a fine old yew.'

In *The Eternal Yew* (1992) Baxter considers that this rugged tree may well predate the church. He described it as 'a survivor whatever the circumstances - a typical eternal yew'.

The postcards below show the yew in 1927 and 1931.



1998: The yew has been severely damaged by arson attacks on more than one occasion in recent years. A piece of old dead white sapwood had been nailed across the entrance to its hollow interior to prevent access. There was also wire netting covering the holes left by branch removal, but these failed to prevent the latest case of arson (2002), when burning material was apparently dropped into the hollow through a small gap further up in the tree.

My second visit was in 2005, after hearing of a serious fire. The photos below show what I found. The top of the tree had been removed, so I assume everything above that height had become unstable following the fire. There were however two large branches that were unscathed and it was hoped the tree would be allowed to recover without further interference to these living parts.



Girth:

1998: 27' 4" at the ground; 22' 8" at 3'. These figures slightly distorted by the white wood panel, so that in 2005 a lower figure of 21' 10" at 3' was recorded - Tim Hills

2007: 6.39m @ 1.25m (20' 11½") It looks fairly healthy and seems to have recovered well from the 2005 fire - Dave Kenny

2013: 21' at 4' - it has a flared base and was measured using the level ground at the second cavity from the church - Peter Norton

Photos below—Peter Norton 2013

