

1880: The yew was noted in the *Journal of Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*. It was recorded as measuring 24' 6" at 4' in 1879.

In that year it was described by Richard Ussher as "quite hollow from the ground to some distance up, and does not appear to be in a flourishing state of health; it has evidently seen its best days." Ussher also mentions a smaller yew, with a branch circumference of 150 feet.

1890: Parish Church Magazine NOV. 1890 - quoted from 'entries in registers'. This contains the first reference to Mugginton's 2nd yew tree, a "Yew tree set SE corner of church 1732, a tree planted by the Rector, Revd. Samuel Pole.

Of course the very ancient Yew Tree to the S.W. is hundreds of years older. That is said to be a Druid Tree planted by the Druids or ancient priests before Christianity was known in this land. No doubt before our church stood on its present site there was an ancient altar and could the old Yew Tree speak, it might tell us strange histories. We are justly proud of the tree which is one of the most famous in the County."

1981: From the Derby Evening Telegraph, 14th April 1981: ANCIENT YEW SAVED BY PARISH

"Tree surgeons have saved an ancient yew where Druids are said to have worshipped on the site of Mugginton Parish Church Yard. The yew, known as the Druid Tree, is thought to be one of the four oldest in the country, and has suffered internally during its long life but can still boast a fine head of foliage.

The tree surgeons who were called in by Mugginton Parish Council, cut away dead wood in the tree's hollow centre to give the wood a chance to grow. A metal bar spanning the tree's centre was put in by an 18th century tree surgeon, - blacksmith, who was also trying to save its life."

1983: The Reverend G.A.Chesterman informed Allen Meredith at the Conservation Foundation as follows: "Both trees have recently had to undergo 'major surgery'. In the case of the larger tree as a result of severe storm damage, whereas the smaller one lost its crown as a result of copper poisoning off the church roof. Both trees are now making steady progress. The large yew tree is now 24ft 6ins in girth at 4ft from the ground, the younger tree, planted in 1732 is 4ft 10ins in girth, very slow growth for 251 years."



1987: A letter from Amber Valley District Council dated 31st December 1987

"The tree to which you refer is not the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. Whilst the District Council has powers to be able to prepare such Orders, under the terms of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, I do not feel that an order can be justified in this particular case in view of the dilapidated condition of its trunk.

I agree, however, that the tree provides a feature of the church yard but I would hope that as long as the Church authorities continue to take a sympathetic view towards its retention it will in any case obviate the need for statutory controls."

Measurements made in July 1988 for the Conservation Foundation.

No1 Ancient yew - attempt made to establish likely shape by placing posts in the missing circumference

Circumference at ground 366 inches - 30' 6"

Circumference at 3ft above ground 350 inches 29' 2"

No 2 yew tree planted in 1732

Circumference at 1 ft above ground 86 inches 7' 2"

Circumference at 3ft above ground 84 inches 7' 0"

1999: The female tree is an elongated shell of which 5' is dead wood. When this decays it will leave two fragment trees with a large space between. The photo shows an attempt to prevent further splitting apart. A small internal stem is visible to the right of the entrance and close to the trunk. Girth: 24' 6" at 4' and 22' 6" at the ground. Tim Hills



Edwin Pretty 2009



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