

The only part of this church older than the 1673 tower is 'one Norman looking window high up at the east end of the north aisle-probably transplanted from the old church'. (Pevsner)

In the 1815 *Parochial Topography*, James Dallaway writes of 'a very remarkable yew tree, of great height, and twenty-eight feet in circumference at a yard from the ground. The trunk is hollow, but the head and branches are large and flourishing.'

The 1848 *Topographical Dictionary of England* noted Stedham's 'fine old yew-tree'.

In 1852 *The British Gazetteer, Political, Commercial, Ecclesiastical, and Historical* by Benjamin Clarke reported that 'in the churchyard there is a remarkably fine yew-tree, which is 28 feet in circumference'.

On May 1st 1880 the yew was recorded in *The Gardeners' Chronicle*: 'I found its girth at about 18ins from the ground to be 28½ feet; higher up the bole swelled out, but the ivy prevented the measurement from being taken. The tree is in full vigour although hollow, but it is to be feared that the ivy will soon injure it if not checked.' (March 1880).

When Swanton visited in 1952 he noted that there were cables and iron rods keeping the branches together. He thought that an encircling fence should be considered for the tree's protection.

1983 Allen Meredith: The gigantic yew is one of the largest in the country, and one of the oldest. Metal cords hold the vast trunk and branches together. It has obviously been cared for, though ivy still grows around part of the trunk. I removed as much as I could. The tree is completely hollow but appears to be quite healthy. It is on the west side of the churchyard.

1999: There is only one gap in the bole of this hollow male yew, too narrow to allow entry into the tree's centre. From all sections of its vast bole is an outpouring of large and small branches. A section of dead wood crosses the hollow centre before being covered with new growth.

Attempts made in the past to arrest the natural outward lean of the tree are still visible, though the thick steel wire is gradually becoming enveloped in new wood. There were also marks where wire has been removed; these too will heal.



Girth:

1852: 28 feet in circumference - Benjamin Clark

1880: 28' 6" at 18" - *The Gardeners' Chronicle*

1952: 28' at its narrowest about 1' from the ground - Swanton *The Yew Trees of England*

1983: 30' 9" at 2' and 35' 9" at 4' - Allen Meredith

1997: 11m tall x 282cm diameter at 0m. - Owen Johnson *Trees of Sussex*

1999: 29' 6" at the ground - Tim Hills

2012: 29' 5" at the ground with a slightly undulating tape (January) - Peter Norton

