

1842: The sketch by William Spreat, seen below, shows the church in all its glory, with the fine old yew growing west of its tower. Today the tower is all that remains of the church, and while that too will one day crumble, there is no reason why the yew should not live on.

1916: The following extract is taken from *Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries Vol IX Jan 1916 to October 1917 Article entitled: Yew Trees in Devon and Cornwall*.

'During a recent visit by the Teign Naturalists Field Club to Dartington, attention was drawn to the yew tree which still stands to the west of the site once occupied by the parish church, removed, with the exception of the tower, in 1880. The suggestion was made that the yew tree has probably outlasted the sacred edifice in spite of the many occasions on which the original Norman church, probably built by William de Falaise in the 11th century, has been re-built and restored. The yew tree, which stands westward of the ruined tower, was found to measure 25 feet in circumference at 3 feet from the ground, but as this included small lateral outgrowth the circumference of the bole or combination of boles is probably about 23 feet. This dimension indicates considerable age, and the query was advanced that if the planting of yew trees in churchyards was not, at the period of the Conquest, a Norman custom, is it not possible that the ancient yew trees, to be found in the precincts of early churches all over our country, were planted by the Anglo-Saxon settlers, or even date from pre-Christian days? Dartington was given to the Saxon lady Beornwyn in 833, in exchange for her share of her father's estate in West Almer, Dorsetshire, and is perhaps the earliest mention in history of a manor in Devonshire'.

1999: A large portion of the yew's bole is covered in round lumps, each with a black dot in the centre. This is the result of the systematic removal of small branches, after which the wounds must have been treated with a black substance; over time new wood has grown around the cuts. A girth of 21' 7" close to the ground was lower than that recorded in 1787 (when a girth of 23', attributed to Richard Polwhele, was recorded in *The Sacred Yew*) and those recorded in 1916. Girth will be reduced even further after the eventual loss of a large dead section of the bole. Also of note was root growth seen between 8' and 12' up in the centre of the tree. A second yew with a fluted trunk grows nearby, its girth 14' 4" at 5'.

