

The Parish Church of Hambledon is an almost complete simple Saxon Church, thought to have replaced an earlier wooden building. Much has been added to it over the centuries. The extensive churchyard contains many fine trees.



In about 1897 Rev T. White recorded the following measurements for Lowe's *Yew Trees of Great Britain and Ireland*: 17' at the ground, 18' at 3' and with an 8' bole.

In 1904 it was described in the 1st edition of *Little Guide to Hampshire* as a 'grand old yew tree, the trunk of which is now nothing but a skeleton'.

In 1939 *The King's England* (Mee) described the village as 'charm itself; very old and very beautiful .....sheltering under great hills protected by deep woods. It has a big yew, a ruined windmill, fragments of Saxon England and a noble piece of Norman England; and it has a warm place in the heart of every Englishman. For Hambledon is the home of cricket'.

In *The Yew Trees of England* (1952) Swanton was puzzled by contradictory accounts about the state of the tree and visited for himself. He found 'a yew in vigorous growth, a remarkable instance of renewed vitality in a decrepit yew when given proper attention. It is well protected by a 5' light iron palisading. An agile friend got over it and passing the tape around the trunk at 3' from the ground, ascertained that the girth was 19'. The overhanging and comparatively light branches are supported by wooden props near their extremities'. He further noted 2 openings in a hollow trunk with new wood being laid down at the edges. He thought it to be no more than 500 years old, but considered that 'she may live to become a noteworthy veteran in 2952 AD'.

In 1998 I found the light iron palisading to be broken and covered in thick brambles and ivy, preventing access to the bole. I was unable to determine whether it had completely separated into two pieces, but I could see that it had hollowed out as well as evidence of smoke or fire damage to both sections.

One of these rose to about 20', while the other leans and has had many branches removed. It was nonetheless a healthy looking tree, growing vigorously.



19<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015: Peter Norton described an ancient female yew tree that the church history describes as "The Domesday Yew". With the disappearance of thick undergrowth it was possible to see and photograph the tree's two hollowed out fragments.

The smaller of these was supported by a wooden prop, while the larger of the two gives the impression of possible future fragmentation. The tree is truncated at about 20' but the crown looked healthy. The iron railing protection could be opened and he was able to record a girth of 18' 10" at 1', a height marked by several embedded nails.

