

A Sarsen stone forms part of the church foundations, suggesting a site of great antiquity. Wheeler's 1828 account in the *Hampshire and West of England Magazine* tells us a good deal about this yew: 'In the parish of Dean there is a Yew Tree, at which the parish register gives no account. It is entirely hollow, but has a fine head. In the centre of the old patriarch there is a fine young one growing, around which a man of no common size walked, without either touching the trunk or the tree'.

Wheeler's account is of great importance to those who study the unusual appearance of very old yew trees. The 'fine young one' he described was undoubtedly the internal stem seen at A in the photograph. But it is no longer in the centre of the tree, suggesting that a large section of the yew has been lost since Wheeler's account.

In 1848 the *Topographical Dictionary of England* gave this yew the accolade of being 'with one exception, the largest in England'. Even allowing for the lost section, there would have been at least 50 larger girthed churchyard yews at that time.

The 1865 description of 'an enormous yew, rivalling in antiquity the famous tree at Crowhurst in Sussex' is more reasonable.

In 1952 Swanton's *Yew Trees of England* describes that this yew 'has been a bigger tree....it has lost two large branches on the east side, and the head now consists of two large and hollow branches. The trunk is partly hollow, with an opening about 2' wide on one side'. This would have been between C and D. It demonstrates how an internal stem can eventually become a part of the outside of a tree.



1998: This impressive tall, female yew grows north west of the church, close to its Norman doorway.



- Girth:
- 1828: 'The trunk is 21 feet in circumference' - Wheeler
 - 1906: 24 feet at 3 feet from the ground - Cox
 - 1947: 24' 6" at 5' from the ground - Hatton Gardner
 - 1952: 'It measures nearly 24' a yard from the ground' - Swanton
 - 1962: 24' 3" at 3' 6" - Hatton Gardner
 - 1974: 24' 7" at 4' - Hatton Gardner
 - 1982: 27' 4½" at 2' 6" - Hatton Gardner
 - 1995: 24' at 3' and a height of 35/40' - Hants Ancient Yew Survey
 - 1998: 28' 2" at the ground, 25' 6" at 3' and 26' at 5' - Tim Hills
 - 1999: 25'10" (7.87 at 1.1m) - Russell Cleaver
 - 2003: 25' 8" at 2', 25' 7" at 3' and 26' at 5' - Tim Hills
 - 2011: 25' 5" at 2' 6" Five embedded nails were used as a guide. Although the nail heights vary, they do obtain the lowest reading - Peter Norton

Photos below - Peter Norton 2011



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