

The church is 12th or 13th century, though 'in earlier times villagers would be gathering at the Saxon Cross (late 9th century) for open-air meetings'. *Church guide*

It is perhaps best known as the birth place of Jane Austen in 1775, who spent 25 years of her life living in the rectory, where her father was Rector for 40 years.

In 1904 'Old yew' was first noted in Cox's *Little Guide*.

In 1939 Mee found 'the key hanging on an old yew which must have stirred the wonder of little Jane, for it is big enough to have been here perhaps as long as the church'. *The King's England*

In 1999 I recorded a tall, striking female tree growing NW of the church. From 7/8' upwards to the top of the tree, branches stretch from a bole whose large girth is retained for a considerable height. In its hollow, internal growth is connected to the tree's inner surface. One branch had been propped. Whilst at this site I was given first hand experience of the fascination of such an old tree to some of the local inhabitants. I was instructed by two children not to move the assorted bricks and stones from the base of the tree, since they covered the entrance to a rats nest. They also told me that its hollow interior was a place for them to keep their 'den' items, and that from the hiding place they could frighten people on their way to church! An elderly visitor to the church recalled playing in the tree when he was young - when the hollow was large enough to enable climbing the tree on the inside.



Peter Norton 2011



Tim Hills 1998

Girth:

1999: 19' 10" at 1' 6" (above spreading base) and 22' 2" just above 3' (avoiding the bulges) - Tim Hills

2002: 6.07 at 1.1m (19' 11") - Russell Cleaver

2009: 6.15m at 0.5m (20' 2") Logs piled beneath the tree following recent surgery - Dave Kenny

2011: 20' 2" at 1' - Peter Norton