

A well documented yew, described here as early as 1817: 'South of the church stands a venerable yew tree, which has lent its sable shade for many centuries, and measures 26 feet in circumference'.

*Topographical Account of the Hundred of Bosmere* by William Bingley

The 1833 *Register of Religious and Ecclesiastical* described 'a venerable yew tree in the south portion of the church-yard, unquestionably of great antiquity'.

In 1835 this picture appeared in *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*. It was accompanied by a paper originally read to the Verulam Philosophical Society on January 7th of that year. 'Through the kindness of the Rev. William Norris, Rector of Warblington, one of our Honorary Associates, I am enabled to exhibit to your notice, an original portrait of a very ancient yew-tree, in Warblington churchyard. 'It measures,' says this gentleman, 'twenty-six feet in circumference, in the largest part of its trunk, and although it occasionally shows symptoms of decay, it is not hollow. It seems to possess the power of renewing itself, and supplying any decay from its natural resources. It is believed by all judges to be many centuries old ; some think it may have witnessed the Conquest : but there is no story or tradition respecting it.'



When Lowe (1897) measured the yew for *The Yew Trees of Great Britain and Ireland* he incorrectly recorded 26' as a ground measurement, while more accurately recording 30' at 5'. When this information was transferred, 30' at 5' was incorrectly recorded as 30' at 3', and as a result of this the tree was included in a list of 'largest yews' of England, a list which was based on girth recorded at 3'. This is confirmed by Swanton, who wrote in *The Yew Trees of England* (1958) that 'Lowe evidently included this tree in his list of the largest yews in England through having received an erroneous measurement of girth at 3'.'

In 1955 it was measured and described as follows by Rev. R. Stone for Swanton's *The Yew Trees of England*: 'Trunk not hollow, short (5'). Two branches have been cut off at some time round about 6 or 7 feet from the ground. None of the branches is propped'.

1998: Its bole has been much filled with what appears to be flint embedded in concrete. From it rises a main branch and three further substantial branches. It grows on the south side of the church with 4 younger yews in a line east to west. A fine fluted female with low dipping branches grows on the north side.

I have been told that in the vicinity of Warblington a Saxon charter notes a hedge or enclosure of the *lwwara*, 'the people of the yew'. I have not been able to verify this reference.

These photos provide evidence of the slow rate of change in this old yew. Taken 101 years apart from an identical position, they show the tree to be almost unaltered.



Girth:	ground	3'	5'	
1836		26'		Norris
1955		25' 6"	27' 6"	Stone
1984		25' 6" (not avoiding obtrusions)		Meredith
1984		25' (avoiding obtrusions)		Meredith
1998	18' 10"	26' 8"	28' 3"	Hills
1999		8.59m at 1.1m		Cleaver
2011	18' 11" close to ground using embedded nails as a guide			Norton

Photos below - Peter Norton 2011





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