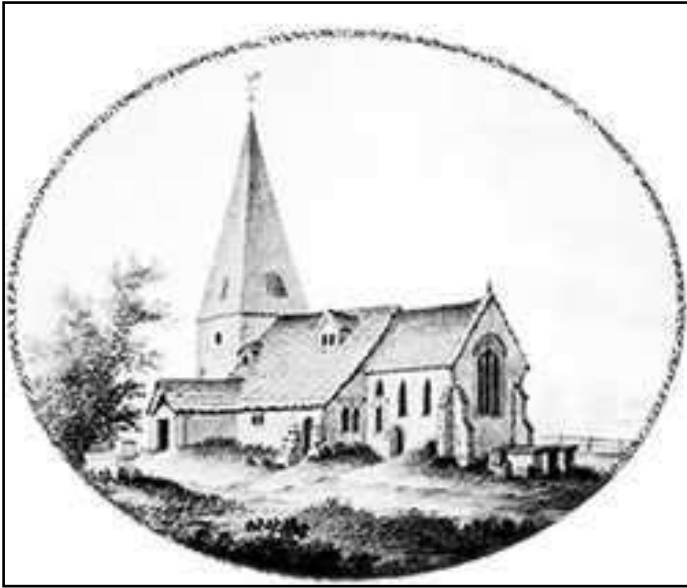


The oldest recorded parts of St Peter's church are 13th Century.



Before any written record the yew appears in these drawings from 1780 and 1845.

The yew is noted in the Sussex Archaeological Collections, with the following description: 'There are two yew trees in the churchyard.... of very great size, and of an age probably coeval with the church itself'. This would seem a more coherent estimate of age for the largest yew than is the (over) estimated 1500 years found in Meredith's *Gazetteer* in *The Sacred Yew*.

In 1911 Horsfield's *History of Sussex* recorded 'several yews in the churchyard, of which two are especially fine and surrounded by seating'.

The yew in Chailey's churchyard has been claimed to stand in the centre of the county, but JH Wilkes dismisses this claim in *Trees of the British Isles in History and Legend*, arguing that 'the site in relation to the irregular outline of Sussex does not qualify it' since the 'boundary has changed over the centuries, especially at the Hampshire border'.

2004: The larger of the two male yews is found close to the south porch, with a seat surrounding two thirds of its circumference. I was able to gain access to the tree's centre at a height of 5'6". It was filled with crumbling red heartwood showing signs of recent decay. Much finely sculpted dead sap wood could also be seen. Numerous young branches provided insurance of this healthy tree's future growth and development.



Girth

1994: 10m tall x 190 cm diameter @ 0.1m - Owen Johnson *The Sussex Tree Book*

1999: 19' 9" at the ground, swelling to almost 28' by 3" (exaggerated by twiggy growth) - Tim Hills

2004: 21' 5" close to the ground over much burry growth - Tim Hills

Photos of the yew in 2015 - Peter Norton



Chailey's 2nd yew

1999 Tim Hills: Chailey's smaller yew also provided seating. Fire or smoke had damaged some upper parts of the tree. Its hollow appeared to have been partly filled with concrete. Girth was 16' 6" at 4'.

2015 Peter Norton confirmed the yew to be hollow and that this has been filled with concrete and bricks, which could be observed through a small cavity in the thin white wall of wood on the north side of the tree. Girth was 18' 9" at 18", tapering to 16' 6" at 3'.





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