



January 2012 Newsletter

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Social Exclusion Zones

How safe should trees be before we accept them into civilised society?

[Training Calendar](#)

QTRA Training

United Kingdom

28/02/2012 Warwick
13/03/2012 Guildford
17/04/2012 Chorley
24/04/2012 Exeter
01/05/2012 Cambridge

Australia

05/03/2012 Brisbane
14/03/2012 Melbourne
21/03/2012 Sydney
02/04/2012 Perth

France

05/04/2012 Perigues
13/11/2012 Perigues

Australian QTRA and Visual Tree Assessment

We're starting to get bookings for the forthcoming workshops to be held in Australia during March and April and expect interest to increase now the school holidays are coming to an end Down Under. We've had to put on two additional workshops for a Queensland utilities provider, to leave some places available for those who wish to book onto the Brisbane (Cleveland) dates.

Felbrigg Hall

Further to our item about the case of Bowen and Others v The National Trust - UK court judgment in the last newsletter, we now have permission from the Court to make all the documentation from the case available to the public. To recap, this is the case where a large branch from a European beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica*) failed during a school trip, killing one child and badly injuring three others. The Defendant's expert, Dr David Lonsdale, used QTRA and the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Tolerability of Risk (ToR) framework when assessing the likely level of risk and whether that risk was As Low as Reasonably Practicable (ALARP). The Judge favoured David Lonsdale's evidence and found for the Defendant. The court documents can all be downloaded from the QTRA website at the 'Case Law' section on the 'Tree Manager's Resources' page. In addition to the court documents, David Lonsdale has also written a 'Commentary' on the evidence presented in the case which is also available to download.

United Kingdom Workshops

For spring 2012 we have a series of workshops across England but are holding off booking venues for Ireland, Scotland and Wales until later in the year. Although we have hosted well attended workshops in the past, bookings for Scotland are often slow. If you have any suggestions for a venue that would suit you and your colleagues, let us know and we can arrange an event that's convenient for you.

National Tree Safety Group

In the UK, the National Tree Safety Group (NTSG) has released its main publication 'Common Sense Risk Management of Trees', which along with a couple of spin-off guides for tree owners and managers is

Practitioner's Guide to Visual Tree Assessment Training

United Kingdom

29/02/2012 Warwick
14/03/2012 Guildford
18/04/2012 Chorley
25/04/2012 Exeter
02/05/2012 Cambridge

Australia

06/03/2012 Brisbane
15/03/2012 Melbourne
22/03/2012 Sydney
03/04/2012 Perth

Licensed User Update Training

United Kingdom

15/03/2012 Guildford
19/04/2012 Chorley

Australia

07/03/2012 Brisbane
16/03/2012 Melbourne
23/03/2012 Sydney
04/04/2012 Perth



available here <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4VXJ5B>

It is noteworthy the UK's Health and Safety Executive's ToR framework, with its thresholds of risk 'tolerability' at 1 in 10,000 and 'broadly acceptable' at 1 in 1,000,000, as applied in the current QTRA Practice Note and User Manual, are repeated in this publication. However, on the QTRA and UK Tree Care (UKTC) forums other content and the advice contained in the NTSG guidance have been heavily criticised by some. Download the publications and let us know what you think on the QTRA forums.

Differences of Opinion

With the assessment of trees, and not least the risks from falling trees, there will be differences of opinion, and identifying and judging those differences is an essential component of reasonable decision making. Should we be alarmed or even surprised when Quantified Tree Risk Assessments from two arborists produce widely differing risk values for the same tree? Of course not; it's inevitable that our assessment of the components of risk will be influenced by our experiences and biases. The great thing about the QTRA process is that it produces an audit trail and it is easy to identify whether or not an assessment was sufficient and where the differences lie between assessments.

One difficult area of any tree risk assessment is estimating the likelihood that any given tree will fail and with QTRA we provide benchmarks against which to consider the tree and all of its structural and health characteristics. The tree that has a 1 in 1 probability of failure for the coming year is totally compromised and we expect it to fail before the year is out. At the other end of the scale, our benchmark is the non-compromised whole tree, which we allocate a probability of failure 1 in 1 million. Against these benchmarks, we can consider how much more likely than 1 in 1 million is it that a partially compromised tree will fall in the coming year or how much less likely is it that a substantially compromised tree will fail than the totally compromised 1 in 1 tree?

There is no escape from differences of opinion, but QTRA enables you to consider the validity of any particular assessment. So, be aware that whenever a QTRA assessment appears to have produced an unrealistically high risk, something has probably been overvalued, be it the land use or the likelihood that the tree will fail. Don't forget, ill-informed Quantified Tree Risk Assessments will seldom stand up to scrutiny.

Forthcoming Training

If you want to update your skills in the risk assessment of falling trees or the art and science of assessing the structural condition of trees, take a look at our training calendar for events near you.

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