Issue 11, January 2013

Newsletter

and events calendar

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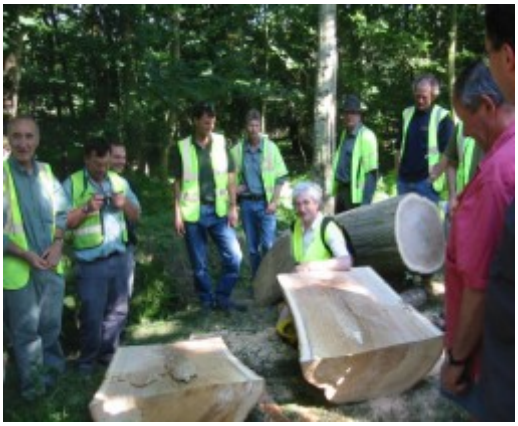
Workshops from QTRA

We have put together our programme of training workshops for the first half of 2013. Beginning in London with QTRA user training and our 'Practitioner's Guide to Visual Tree Assessment' we have events scheduled across the UK and Australia. For the first time, there are workshops scheduled for Cairns and Darwin.



Following on from our successful workshops of May 2012, we revisit Göteborg in June with QTRA user training and a new workshop 'The Ins and Outs of Tree Stability'. Hosted in association with our colleagues at the Swedish arboricultural trades association 'Sveriges Arboristförbund' and co-presented by Dr David Lonsdale, Jon Hartill and Mike Ellison, this two-day event will have a strong practical element of fieldwork. We will not only carry out visual assessment of growth patterns and structural adaptation of trees, but dissect and assess trees and branches to better inform our judgments of tree and branch stability.

This workshop has limited places, so be sure to book early.

Henry VIII's Archers Grew Like Trees

While leading an attack on a French invasion fleet in 1545, Henry VIII's flagship the Mary Rose sank with a company of archers aboard, and a team from Swansea University are analysing skeletons recovered when the ship was raised in 1982.

Studying the effects of a life of using very powerful longbows on the musculoskeletal system, it has been found that shoulder and elbow joints on the right side of the archers are up to 50 percent larger than those on the left. Training from a young age, archers are believed to have progressed from small bows to the giant two metre longbow, gradually building up not only muscle but the skeleton too. In the photograph below, the right arm bone is significantly bigger than the left, which suggests that they are from an archer. Through the study of biomechanics, we have learned that plants and animals are able to accommodate changing mechanical loads. As the human skeleton adapts, becoming stronger if we regularly lift heavy loads and then perhaps lighter into old age, the tree also

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Events Calendar

AUSTRALIA

Perth:

05 Mar 2013 – QTRA
06 Mar 2013 – VTA
07 Mar 2013 – QTRA Update

Melbourne

13 Mar 2013 – QTRA
14 Mar 2013 – VTA
15 Mar 2013 – QTRA Update

Sydney

20 Mar 2013 – QTRA
21 Mar 2013 – VTA
22 Mar 2013 – QTRA Update

Brisbane

20 Mar 2013 – QTRA
21 Mar 2013 – VTA
22 Mar 2013 – QTRA Update

Cairns

26 Mar 2013 – QTRA
27 Mar 2013 – VTA

Darwin

03 Apr 2013 – QTRA
04 Apr 2013 – VTA

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has the capacity for structural adaptation.

The tree's ability to adapt to new loads also comes into play as with age it may become decayed and hollowed by fungi, with cavities developing in stems,

roots and branches. The structural effects of these features capacity for structural adaptation.

The tree's ability to adapt to new loads also comes into play as with age it may become decayed and hollowed by fungi, with cavities developing in stems, roots and branches. The structural effects of these features, that are often misdiagnosed as unacceptable weaknesses, will usually have been remediated by the tree's own adaptive growth.

So, it's worth thinking twice before committing financial resources to devaluing the tree asset by removing that hollow tree, or the branch with cavities. Not least because the hollows, cracks and cavities in trees provide some of the most important wildlife habitats in both our urban and rural environments.

As the oak tree in the photograph has gradually decayed internally, each new annual layer of wood has been produced with special properties to bear the changing load. Just like the archer, the structure of the tree has adapted where the load has increased.

Heads I Win, Tails You Lose The Risk Transfer Gambit

Taking some responsibility for the risks from trees can be beneficial and may help to preserve the tree asset. But at what cost? It's hard to imagine having your house surveyed, perhaps for a re-mortgage or insurance valuation, only to be told that it requires re-wiring, re-roofing and its foundations need to be underpinned. "Just a minute" you might say, "I live here and it seems just fine to me". But we don't always account for the chance that an advisor might cover their indecision with recommendations to re-

mediate, thereby passing the buck to the customer. Perhaps this extreme example simply couldn't happen, but where trees are concerned, don't be too sure. With tree risk assessments, the surveyor may ask "what if?" "What if the branch falls onto the playground?" "Will I be held liable?"

When faced with decisions that are less than simple, the safest option may

Events Calendar

UNITED KINGDOM

London

26 Feb 2013 – QTRA
27 Feb 2013 – VTA

Chorley

05 Mar 2013 – QTRA
06 Mar 2013 – VTA

Bath

23 Apr 2013 – QTRA
24 Apr 2013 – VTA

Norwich

08 May 2013 – QTRA
09 May 2013 – VTA

Birmingham

21 May 2013 – QTRA
22 May 2013 – VTA
23 May 2013 – QTRA Update

IRELAND

Dublin

13 May 2013 – QTRA
14 May 2013 – VTA

SWEDEN

Göteborg

10 June 2013 – QTRA
13 June 2013 – QTRA
11 & 12 June
The Ins and Outs of Tree Stability (Understanding Tree Growth to Appreciate the Structural Implications of decay and defects)
A 2-day event presented in conjunction with Sveriges Arboristförbund

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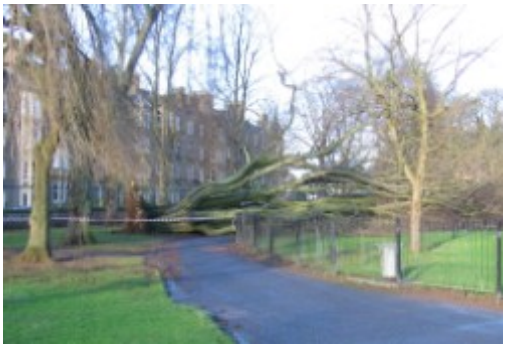
be to pass the risk back to the tree owner by advising "prune this tree, fell that". If communicating the nature of risk and its acceptability or tolerability is restricted to terms such as 'high', 'medium' and 'low' (especially 'medium'), advice is highly likely to be cautious, and cautious risk management costs both money and



trees. Quantified Tree Risk Assessment comes into its own by using measurable inputs to produce a measure of risk, enabling meaningful comparison with society's acceptance or tolerance of risk, and hopefully retaining optimum benefits.

The perception of the legal obligation as being onerous appears to have been driven partly by the legal profession, in seeking to establish culpability where damage or injury has been caused by trees, and by tree experts who have perhaps preferred to communicate to the courts not in terms of likelihood but in terms of prediction. The question of 'foreseeability' arises when the courts ask 'was the risk reasonably foreseeable?' Some arboricultural commentators would have us believe that, where there is some human occupation, the mere presence of a structurally significant defect in a tree constitutes a foreseeable risk, which in turn requires remediation. Fortunately the English courts, at least, tend not to agree with this position, and decisions in the higher English courts have shown that the law should expect only what is reasonable, having accounted for both costs and benefits.

At Quantified Tree Risk Assessment Ltd, we are seeking to guide both tree assessors and decision makers towards a more sustainable approach to tree management. The QTRA method enables a general view to be taken of a tree population in a way that time and money can be focussed on the significant risks, leaving resources to be allocated to proactive management of the tree asset.

Social Media

You can now follow QTRA on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn for the latest developments, training dates and news items. If you have news on tree safety that would be of interest to the arboricultural or tree owning communities, share it with us and inform those who need to know.

If you liked our Newsletter, why not send it to a friend?

To Unsubscribe please contact admin@qtra.info

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