

Fire Protection of the Ancient Tree at Ham Green, Bristol

Specialist works to this tree included pruning and the prevention of fire vandalism to its hollow trunk. The works were carried out by Treework Environmental Practice.

The works specification included a 20% height reduction and a 30% reduction in the weight of major deadwood.

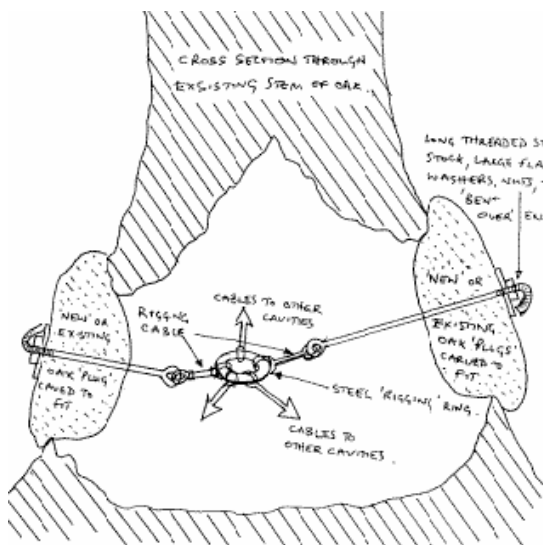
The adjacent picture shows the hollow bole with obvious entry points which required restriction of access to prevent entry by youths and specifically the lighting of fires which had caused extensive damage in the past. The original specification was for a fabricated steel mesh grid to replace the chain-link fencing that had been wrapped around the bole. However, the Treework team decided that steel mesh was at risk of being ripped off the tree and their solution was to cut individual pieces of oak slab



to fit each hole and to cable these to each other through the hollow bole.

The threaded rods could then be tightened from the outside so that the pieces blocked access more securely than a steel mesh, without any damage to live tissue. The result is an unobtrusive, durable and robust method of blocking such cavities; it is less damaging to the tree and potentially less harmful in the future as there is no steel grid for the tree to grow into and around.

Access into the hollow is still possible for small mammals, yet there is less of an opportunity for the space to be filled with rubbish as is often the case with a steel grid.



Holes were drilled through each oak slab and long eye bolts inserted from the inside. Steel cables were passed through each eye and joined together with cables. The slabs could then be tightened against each other from the outside.

This picture illustrates how well the outer sections of the cut log were trimmed to fit.

It is expected that the effects of weathering will ensure that these new sections of oak become more discrete with time.



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