

Survey of horse chestnut tree in churchyard

The horse chestnut tree in the north-eastern corner of the churchyard was last surveyed in 2011 (Report 2011-14). This report had been followed up by sonic tomography which had shown that 80% of the wood was sound in a section of the stem 150mm above ground level, and that the structural integrity of the stem had not been compromised by the wood decay noted in the tree survey. The crown of the tree had been reduced, and dead branches pruned out in August 2011 (p.1372/13 refers).

The tree had been examined in March 2014 by Peter Kenyon and the Tree Warden. At that time it was decided to re-examine the tree when it was in full leaf. Over the summer the leaves became yellow, and leaves were lost from the ends of most of the branches.

The tree was re-inspected on 5th August, resulting in the report below:

Date: 05 August 2014

Subject: Horse Chestnut in Churchyard

Mr Peat.....

I reinspected the horse chestnut today.

The foliage is small in size and its density becoming noticeably sparse, with some upper branch ends/twigs with no leaves whatsoever. I am unable to say whether these have actually died back or just lost the leaves. There is a low infestation of chestnut leaf-miner (*Cameraria ohridella*), but rather less than on many other chestnuts I have seen.



More importantly, there is a new appearance of a fruiting body of *Ganoderma* spp fungus at the base.



The previously identified cavity and decay do not seem significantly different to their appearance as described by Julian Simpson, but the breakout of an active fruiting body of a basal decay fungus is of concern. Its appearance suggests that the fungus has broken out from any internal chemical barriers previously laid down by the tree, and now has access to 'new' food sources in the otherwise sound wood. This fungus may also be at least partly responsible for the poor appearance and decline of the crown.

Its proximity to the road and the angle of its growth mean that the further decay activity becomes of more concern, but there would be little point in contemplating a crown reduction to lessen the 'sail' of the crown - on a declining tree this would be counter-productive. It would divert energy from roots to twig regrowth which is not wanted, and would reduce the capability to form internal chemical barriers, as well as resulting in an unattractive tree. Unfortunately, all these new factors lead me to conclude that the tree is coming to the end of its safe life and its removal should now be considered.

I trust this helps. Please let me know if you need any further information.

Regards

PRK

Peter R Kenyon BSc For; F.Arbor. A; C.Env.