

fountains



Safety Alert!



FALL FROM HEIGHT



Anchor Point

A climber was descending from an Oak tree using a prussic friction hitch descent system having completed some pruning works. About half way down he stopped to free a hanger when he fell between 3 to 5m onto the ground below the tree.

The anchor point and equipment did not fail. The investigation into the causes is ongoing, but is focused on how the Bowline and stopper knots on the end of his climbing rope were tied and connected to his harness during the work and descent.

Although initially able to move about and walk after the fall he was later found to have sustained a hairline fracture in a vertebra and was sent home in a back brace support after spending 5 days in hospital under observation and assessment.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS ON GOOD CLIMBING PRACTICE TO ENSURE YOUR SAFETY WHEN INVOLVED IN AERIAL TREE WORK:

- Always complete pre-climb inspections of all your equipment to ensure it is undamaged and in a safe condition to use.
- Ensure the equipment is safely stored when not in use and that any required cleaning and maintenance is undertaken to keep equipment in full working order and good condition
- Only climb using approved equipment issued by your employer and ensure that a current Thorough Examinations Certificate for the equipment is available
- Consider the most appropriate way of connecting the end of your rope to your harness for the work being undertaken (Spliced eye or knot)
- Before each climb, ensure all knots are correctly tied and karabiners are suitably aligned and gates are fully closed
- Always ensure that a stop knot, e.g. figure of eight, is tied if using a Bowline
- Regularly check your connections and the alignment of your ropes and karabiners when in the tree
- Always carefully select and secure your anchor points and ensure that you load test them including any supporting knots before committing to their use
- It is recommended best practice that a climber should have two separate points of attachment where reasonably practicable, particularly at key points during the climb such as when changing main anchor points; at the work position; and when cutting
- NEVER FREE CLIMB

REMEMBER ALWAYS USE TWO POINTS OF ATTACHMENT WHERE POSSIBLE