

In Memoriam

The Android Tree

? - 2013

It is with great sadness that the South Lakes climbing world has come to learn of the terrible loss of a great and loyal friend. A true giant in the local scene, the *Android Tree* has provided long service, support and assistance to several generations of climbers with barely a creak or a groan by way of complaint. Although in its latter years the strain was beginning to show on this once proud fixture at Chapel Head, it continued to aid progress up the main buttress to anyone who was in need. As is sadly so often the case, the *Android Tree* had appeared to deteriorate rapidly since the loss of its close friend and neighbour the *Super Dupont Holly*. In fact since that time this once, proud and solid specimen had only really been able to provide its valuable service with the aid of roped support, keeping it tied in to the crag. Despite this there was never any suggestion of complaint and not a disability benefit in sight.

Locals have been flocking to the site to pay their last respects and amid many tearful scenes heroic tales have been recounted and shared. It is at moments like this when our close-knit community must come together to provide the necessary comfort and support for one another. *"That tree meant the world to me, I cannot imagine doing those routes without it"* said one Barrow based climbing legend.

First brought into service in 1979 with the ascent of *Android* by Ed Cleasby, the tree went on to provide access to *Perverse Pepere* (7a), *La Mangoustine Scatouflange* (7a+) and *Song for Europe* (7b+). The question now on everybody's lips is – *"what now?"* In a moment of eerie premonition local prophet Dave Birkett foretold of the sad events when he produced his 1992 route *For When the Tree Goes* (7b+). Sadly this is of inferior quality to the routes above and is often damp. It is also clearly a harder proposition to those it would provide access to above. It has been suggested that a fitting tribute to the tree would be some kind of substantial wooden pole, fixed in place (perhaps with a natural wobble at the bottom and alarming flex at the top to recreate the magic that we all remember so fondly).

The tree is survived by two young saplings and a small community of insects.

Nick Wharton

7 May 2013



Local climbers Craig Matheson and Keith Phizacklea mourn the loss of the Android Tree



Happier times, Bob Smith (left) and Ed Edwards making use of the Android Tree