

# Sponsor an elm!

You are invited to sponsor a tree  
in Richmond Park's beautiful new

## Elm Walk



The Friends of Richmond Park and The Royal Parks are beginning an exciting new project to plant over 40 disease-resistant elms along the path from Petersham Gate, forming a beautiful Elm Walk.

We invite you to be part of this memorable conservation initiative by offering you the opportunity to sponsor an elm in your name or dedicated to another. Read on for more information on why we are doing this and how you can contribute...

*Artist's impression: taking a stroll down Elm Walk 10 years after planting.  
Please note, crates may still be protecting the trees.*

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## Our lost great masterpiece trees

Until 50 years ago, mature elm trees were a familiar sight across the English landscape – there were then 60 million elms in the UK. Tragically, most of these magnificent trees perished in an outbreak of Dutch Elm disease in the 1960s and 70s. This devastating fungal disease is spread by elm bark beetles and causes rapid browning and dieback of the crown followed by death of the tree.

Carol Ann Duffy, the Poet Laureate, in a poem dedicated to our elms, describes them as:

***'great, masterpiece trees,  
who were overwhelmed'***.

English elms do not survive now beyond about 4 metres in height before being attacked by the beetle and re-infected. However, disease-resistant elm varieties have now been developed — see next page.



*Elms by John Constable, in 'The Cornfield'*

## Helping elms to thrive again

Due to Dutch Elm disease, there are now no mature elms in Richmond Park. The Royal Parks, in partnership with The Friends of Richmond Park, and supported by The Richmond Park Charitable Trust, wish to join the conservation effort to help elms thrive again, by planting an avenue of disease-resistant elm trees in the Park.



The new Elm Walk will have over 40 elms, planted along both sides of the path from Petersham Gate. We have chosen this area because in the 18th century this was a landscape with avenues and parterres.

For Sir David Attenborough's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Friends of Richmond Park, together with the Royal Parks and the Holly Lodge Centre, presented him with an elm tree, which will mark the start of the new Elm Walk.

***Sir David said: 'Elms are close to my heart, the very emblem of English countryside, so I am truly delighted and honoured'***.

*Photo: David Attenborough in the Friends' film: Richmond Park National Nature Reserve*

## Disease-resistant elms

Since the 1960s, plant breeders have attempted to develop disease-resistant varieties of elm by injecting different species with a strain of Dutch Elm disease. This has enabled them to select trees more resistant to the fungus and to strengthen resistance further by cross-breeding.

This programme led to a range of elm species known as 'Resista'-elms which have so far proved extremely effective at resisting the disease. Of these, we have selected *Ulmus* 'New Horizon' for the Elm Walk. These have been successfully planted across the UK in a wide variety of conditions. They are highly resistant to current strains of Dutch Elm disease and grow quite quickly at around 50cm a year.



*10 year old planting of *Ulmus* 'New Horizon' Cardiff 2014. Photo by Hilliers Nurseries*

## Encouraging biodiversity

We have chosen elms for the Walk as they are not only beautiful and part of our heritage, but also of great value in terms of biodiversity. Mature English elms were the home of a wide variety of species that have suffered because of the loss of their familiar habitat.

We hope, in time, to enhance biodiversity by attracting wildlife for which elm is a specific host. We also recognise the threats posed to trees from climate change and other pests and diseases and, by diversifying the species of trees within the Park, we hope to reduce the impact of these risks.

## You are invited to sponsor and dedicate an elm

Please join us in this venture to help elms thrive again and dedicate a tree either in your name or that of a loved one. One tree can be sponsored for a donation of £1,750.

All the dedications will be listed on a board at one end of the Elm Walk and you will receive a commemorative certificate with your tree number. You and your guests will also be invited to a planting completion ceremony in April or May 2018.

**An application form with terms and conditions is available to download from [www.frp.org.uk](http://www.frp.org.uk)**

**For more information please email [rpelmappeal@gmail.com](mailto:rpelmappeal@gmail.com)**

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## Who we are

This appeal is designed and administered by the Friends of Richmond Park on behalf of The Royal Parks who will be responsible for the planting and maintenance of the new elms. We are grateful to the Richmond Park Charitable Trust for the idea for this project and for their financial support.

## The Royal Parks

The Royal Parks is a charity responsible for managing all of the eight Royal Parks, including Richmond Park, on behalf of the government. Our responsibilities include:

- To protect, conserve, maintain and care for the Royal Parks, including their natural environment, to a high standard consistent with their environmental importance.
- To maintain and develop the biodiversity of the Royal Parks, including the protection of their wildlife and natural environment.

Richmond Park has protected status as a National Nature Reserve, London's largest Site of Special Scientific Interest and a European Special Area of Conservation. It is an important habitat for ancient trees and rare species of fungi, birds, beetles, bats, grasses and wildflowers. This is largely due to its rare and protected acid grassland. We aim to maintain and enhance the Park's biodiversity through conservation projects such as the Elm Walk.

## The Friends of Richmond Park

The Friends of Richmond Park (FRP), a charity established in 1961, is dedicated to the conservation and protection of Richmond Park for the benefit of the public and future generations. It has 2500 members and 200 volunteers. We work with Park management on conservation, fund conservation projects such as the recent Beverley Brook restoration and undertake practical conservation and litter-picking work.

FRP is also involved in public education — we operate the Park Visitor Centre with 50,000 visitors a year, offer public walks and courses, and provide educational activities for young people. Last year we launched an award-winning film *Richmond Park National Nature Reserve*, narrated by our Patron, Sir David Attenborough, which encourages visitors to Tread Lightly. You can see it at [www.richmondparkfilm.org.uk/](http://www.richmondparkfilm.org.uk/)



Charity number 1133201



Artist's impression: the newly planted Elm Walk



Charity number 1172042