FRIENDS *of* RICHMOND PARK

Protecting Richmond Park's peace and natural beauty for future generations

Summer 2016

David Attenborough at 90

Dragonflies and Pollinators

Feathered fishers

Ticks and Oak Processionary Moths

Increases in fencing and bracken

David Attenborough stars in Friends' Richmond Park conservation film

The Friends, supported by The Hearsum Collection, has commissioned a film featuring and narrated by David Attenborough about the wildlife, conservation and protection of Richmond Park.

Experienced wildlife director/cameraman George Chan – who has worked with David Attenborough on a number of BBC and other natural history series and films – has been contracted by our producers, Media Trust, and has been filming in the Park since early March. The filming is continuing throughout the rest of this year to capture the Park in all seasons. So you may see George and others filming birds, bugs, trees, amphibians and a wide range of other flora and fauna.

The film aims to educate visitors on the unique wildlife and ecology of the Park and for them to respect Richmond Park as a special place by inviting them to 'Tread Lightly'. Using both traditional and social media it will reach local people and school children as well as visitors from across London and even overseas. Sir David's authority and love of the Park will help to get the message heard.

For Sir David's 90th birthday, the Friends, together with The Royal Parks and The Holly Lodge Centre, presented him with the first tree to be planted in the new Elm Tree Avenue planned for the Petersham Park area of Richmond Park. In his 'thank you' letter, Sir David said "Elms are close to my heart, the very emblem of English countryside, so I am truly delighted and honoured."

Newsletter people

Production and Layout: Vivienne Press
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Front cover photo

Banded Demoiselle
Male Damselfly
By Nigel Reeve

A special year for Sir David

Years ago, David Attenborough kept a small menagerie of animals in his home. One day a man turned up on his doorstep with a pitiable parrot and bluntly asked: "I can't look after this parrot any more, can you?"

Soon after, the alarm was raised in the Attenborough household: "Oh no, the parrot's escaped, it's on the conservatory roof!" It turned out that the adopted, now healthy parrot was still secure but the Attenboroughs had in fact witnessed a rare, early sighting of a ring neck parakeet!

For Sir David Attenborough, 2016 is a special year; he moved close to Richmond Park 65 years ago. And it's his 90th birthday, as he keeps being reminded. When asked why he chose Richmond, he cheekily replies, "Well, I couldn't afford Hampstead!"

In fact, the reasons he moved to Richmond back in 1951 were that he loved all the open spaces and mostly Richmond Park. His brother, film actor/director/producer, Richard Attenborough, also lived in Richmond and family friends and in-laws the Batten family (Sir John Batten was physician to the Queen) lived in Kew and the close families became known as 'The Battenboroughs'.

"When the children were young, we used to walk in Richmond Park" says Sir David. "We particularly loved the area around Cambrian Gate and I remember fondly the newts in Bishop's Pond".

Sir David has mostly enjoyed the wildlife while walking in the Park: "I've never liked to exercise too vigorously but I did once have to get fit for a gruelling trip to Papua New Guinea. For a couple of months, I marched around the Park's perimeter, but I'm not sure it did me much good".

"Today", he continues, "sadly I don't get into the Park as much as I'd like to but I'm looking forward to working on the Friends' film about the wildlife and protection of the Park".

Sir David reiterated what he said when he opened the restored Poets Corner last year. "Richmond Park is a very special place. It's a miracle it's survived. But, with nearly 5.5m visitors per year, the Park and its wildlife have never been under greater pressure".

We're sure all members of the Friends wish Sir David a very happy 90th birthday and hope he continues as a patron and spokesman for Richmond Park for many years to come.

Friends' Annual General Meeting

Around 90 members attended the Friends' 55th AGM on Saturday 16 April. This year's new format had the formal AGM, speakers and discussion in the morning before lunch, rather than either side of lunch as in previous years. Maybe because of this, attendance at the formal AGM was 50% higher than in 2015.

The present Trustees were re-elected, with two exceptions – John Peake, who sadly died in January, and Rachel Hirschler who stepped down in March. There are 3 Trustee vacancies to be filled this year.

Andrew Scattergood (photo) who became the new Chief Executive of The Royal Parks (TRP) last year, spoke on the changes underway in the status of TRP (see below). He gave assurances that visitors will notice only improvements and that there will be only the current three major events in Richmond Park (see page 14) and that, despite media stories, there will be no increase in commercialisation beyond the present letting of the Park's lodges and catering development.

Simon Richards spoke of the projects in Richmond Park in the last year, including some that are little noticed such as pollarding oaks to create future veteran trees, multiple repairs to the Park wall, clearing up after storm damage and management of Acute Oak Decline. He (and Andrew) thanked the Friends profusely for their support for the Park through volunteer activities, fund-raising and public education.

Change in The Royal Parks status

Plans are well advanced for changing The Royal Parks (TRP) from government agency to charitable public corporation, giving it greater independence from government and flexibility in how it manages itself. It will also merge with The Royal Parks Foundation, which raises charitable donations for the Royal Parks. The new organisation will probably retain The Royal Parks name and will still be overseen by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Unfortunately, there will no more money from government, which will continue to reduce at £500,000 a year from its present £10.8 million. An encouraging note is that three of the new charity's five objectives are to protect and conserve the landscapes and built environment, develop the biodiversity (including the protection of wildlife) and educate the public – all three very similar to the Friends' objectives.

Oak Processionary Moth volunteering

By Alison Glasier

It's a warm June day and I'm standing under a vast oak tree, peering through binoculars into the upper reaches of the branches. Is that one? I step back for a better view, miss my footing and teeter precariously before regaining balance and dignity. I edge round the tree, watching my feet, and clock my head on a low hanging branch.

Welcome to the world of the OPM volunteer. Oak Processionary Moth to the uninitiated. I'm surveying the oak trees in *my* patch of the Park, seeking out the tell-tale webs that lead me to lines of hairy caterpillars and their seething nests of web, pooh and filth. They eat the leaves and clearly do no good, but the main risk seems to be to mankind as the hairs they shed cause itchy skin rashes, sore throats, itchy eyes and asthma attacks. Dogs and horses can also be affected. One thing is sure – they have to go, and I'm on a mission.

I've never had a job that equipped me with hammer and nails before, let alone a GPS tracker, but I carry my kit with pride as I crane my neck ever further backwards to catch sight of my target. Sometimes the caterpillars are low on the tree, processing mindlessly up and down before the 'Top Cat' finds a suitable spot for their des res. In this case, the team is summoned urgently to remove the caterpillars before small picnicking children spread their tablecloth in the line of fire. Otherwise, the tree is tagged, location logged and a report sent to HQ. Later, teams of dangerous looking removal operatives in full protective gear will remove the nests.

OPM volunteering has its risks, but someone has to do it. Apart from the neck-craning, ankle-wrenching and head-banging I also acquired a couple of ticks that had somehow broached my stylish jeans-with-socks-pulled-up protective gear. But hey! My kit included a tick remover. Which worked.

So next time you see a yellow tag on an oak tree or a strange woman with a hammer, rubbing her head and scratching her leg, think of me and give the tree a slightly wider berth.

3543 nests were removed in 2013, 8,000 in 2014 and 10,200 in 2015

Photos by Gillian Jonusas

The feathered fishers of Pen Ponds

By Nigel Jackman

The fish of Pen Ponds are preyed upon by cormorants, herons, great crested grebes, kingfishers, black-headed gulls, common terns and the occasional little egret. Their feeding habits change with their breeding cycle and with the seasons: fishing is severely curtailed by low temperatures and ice in winter. Currently the fish in Pen Ponds appear sufficient to sustain good numbers of fish eaters.

Cormorants eat mainly small fish between 5 and 15cm in length, but have been recorded eating fish of over 40cm and eels over 60cm long. Cormorants often meet their daily food requirements in a short time, and will then 'loaf' for the remainder of the day. An adult cormorant requires around 400g to 500g of food each day.

The diet of **grey herons** is more varied although fish, including carp, roach, pike and eel, is their most common food. An adult grey heron needs 300 to 500g of food a day and the size of fish it catches can vary from 3 to 55cm.

An adult **great crested grebe** (see back cover photo) may eat 200 to 350g of fish a day varying in size from 5 to 20cm. It dives underwater to search for prey and may remain underwater for up to 30 seconds. After spotting a fish, it accelerates in pursuit, twisting with the fish's every movement until it is close enough to strike with its bill. Fish caught underwater are gulped head-first at the surface.

Kingfishers must eat at least their own bodyweight (34 to 46g) of fish, insects and aquatic crustaceans and invertebrates every day. They prefer fish about 23mm long, but will cope with anything up to 80mm. A kingfisher dives into water with its beak opened, but its eye closed by a third eyelid, thus capturing its prey blind. The kingfisher will then return to its perch against which it will strike the fish to kill it before swallowing it head-first. A pair of kingfishers with a large brood of hungry youngsters can catch more than one hundred fish a day. A Kingfisher needs to eat at least 16 minnows a day to survive the winter, when mortality can be high.

Photo: Heron with pike at Lower Pen Pond by Charles Roscorla

Duck and peas

By Vivienne Press

Many generations of children have loved going to Pen Ponds, Adam Pond and Peg's Pond in the Isabella Plantation to feed the ducks. Long may this continue, but not with the traditional bread which is bad for water birds as they can't digest it properly.

To find a healthy alternative to what they called 'junk food' bread, the Canal and River Trust organised a salad-tasting survey last year. They found that ducks and swans love healthy greens – and the trendier the better: kale is their favourite, followed by pea shoots and rocket. However, they don't go much for iceberg lettuces and turn their beaks up at the sight of watercress!

So, next time you take your children to feed the ducks, take your left-over salads and leave the bread at home. Recommended duck treats include corn (fresh, tinned or defrosted frozen), defrosted frozen peas, oats, seeds and cooked rice. Or you can buy prepared swan and duck food at many garden centres.

For more information see https://canalrivertrust.org.uk. *Photo by Richard Gray*

Ten years of the Birds of Richmond Park

The Park's Bird Recording Group has published a four-page leaflet detailing the 169 types of birds that have been recorded in the Park over the last ten years. It has a short comment on each (e.g. '*Reed warbler: Summer visitor; a small number breed in the Pen Ponds reed bed)* and also the years it has been recorded. Paper copies are at the Visitor Centre or you can find it on the Friends' website. It's a fascinating read.

Promoting Park Pollinators

Insects found in Richmond Park that pollinate plants include bumblebees, solitary bees, wasps, moths, butterflies, beetles, flies and honey bees which mostly come from hives managed by beekeepers.

Pollinators are essential for biodiversity, our wider environment and agriculture and they are beautiful and fascinating to observe. Unfortunately their numbers have been declining over the past half century. The main reason in the London area seems to be the reduced availability of food, shelter and nest sites for pollinators caused by building over areas of natural and semi-natural habitats. Managed honey bees have also been particularly affected by pests and pathogens.

Recently, the Royal Parks have published a strategy to help the Park's pollinators by actions including:

Increasing sources of food

- Leaving more long grass and meadow areas to allow native flora to flower and seed
- Selecting formal bedding plants according to their ability to provide forage for pollinators
- In woodland and marginal areas, planting and encouraging a native understory of flowering plants such as hawthorn, blackthorn and honeysuckle
- Ensuring that there are flower resources available throughout the year, from early spring and through the winter e.g. celandines, willow, primroses and grape hyacinth in early spring, ivy and Hebe in autumn and Mahonia in winter.

Improving habitats for nesting and overwintering pollinators

- Ensuring that not all paths and desire lines are hard surfaced or re-turfed as these are important nesting areas
- Where possible, installing suitable bee 'hotels' to encourage mining and leafcutter bees to nest
- Leaving patches of nettles and other larval food plants for breeding butterflies and moths.

For more information see www.royalparks.org.uk/park-management/park-strategies/the-royal-parks-pollinator-strategy

Photo: Marbled White Butterfly by Russell Ritchin

Dragonflies

By Hugh Bradshaw

To some, they are the devil's friend, to others a symbol of purity. Whatever your take on dragonflies, a glimpse of these jewelled nymphs brightens up any walk. And Richmond Park is an excellent place to see them. According to the British Dragonfly Society, over 24 species have been recorded in the Park.

Dragonflies come in two varieties: damselflies, the daintier of the two, with wings that fold back along their bodies, and true dragonflies which are larger and their wings are held out from their bodies.

All species of dragonfly lay their eggs in water and they can be found at the many ponds in the Park. A few species though favour slow-moving water, and it is along the newly restored Beverley Brook that you might glimpse the beautiful Banded Demoiselle. Metallic blue in colour, the males, whose wings have large black bands, perform elegant courtship flights on still summer days.

Like butterflies, dragonflies prefer sunny weather and will usually only fly in the warmer parts of the day. As they are all voracious insect eaters, the adults are absent in the winter. They first start to appear in late spring. The Large Red Damselfly is the earliest to emerge, often in April, and, as its name suggests, it is both large (for a damselfly) and red.

As spring rolls into summer, more and more appear. The Common Blue Damselfly, a delicate creature with blue and black blocks down its abdomen (tail) is often found perching on the pond vegetation in small groups, normally facing in the same direction. Not all, though, are delicate; the Emperor Dragonfly is truly a giant. An active insect found close to ponds, it keeps guard like a police helicopter over its favourite stretch of water.

However, dragonflies are not just restricted to water, and the Hawkers – Southern, Brown and Migrant – may be found anywhere in the Park as they patrol their favourite routes amongst the bracken. The Hawkers are unusual for dragonflies as they may be found flying into the evening.

Numbers start to decline towards the autumn but the Common Darter, an abundant species in the Park, can often be found flying late into October. The males are an orangey-red and they, too, can be seen well away from water.

Photo: Emperor Dragonfly by Ken Billington
www.focusingonwildlife.com

More fencing in the Park

Some Friends have asked why there has been an increase in the amount of fencing used in the Park. The decision to fence off areas is not taken lightly as it affects the accessibility and look of the Park. But sometimes there are good reasons for doing so. Temporary fencing is needed for crowd control, protecting areas of erosion and construction projects, and keeping people away from trees infested with OPM until they can be dealt with. Semi-permanent fencing has been used increasingly over the past two years for three purposes:

- to protect conservation projects
- to protect veteran trees from damage
- to protect the public from the risk of tree collapse and branch failure.

Examples include the Beverley Brook conservation project, in which stretches of the brook have been enclosed to keep out people, dogs and deer. This will enable the badly eroded riverbank, the newly planted marginal vegetation and the nesting birds and mammals to get established. For similar reasons fencing has also been installed around the Ham Ponds, following the removal of invasive weeds and de-silting.

Fencing may mean the difference between keeping a tree, with all its aesthetic, historical and biodiversity value, or having to fell it. With visitor numbers doubling to 5.5 million a year, the oldest trees are vulnerable to damage from trampling, root compaction, people climbing them and from barbecues (which are prohibited.) And in turn more people are exposed to the risk from tree collapse and branch failure, especially in the busiest areas.

A remarkable veteran Hornbeam near Robin Hood Gate, now almost standing on stilts, was in imminent danger of collapse. It had the weight on its decayed trunk reduced by sensitive pruning of the crown, but without fencing to exclude the public from the fall zone, it would have had to be felled.

The Royal Oak (photo above) south of Sidmouth Wood, is a perfect example of the 'grey, gnarled, low-browed knock-kneed' ancient trees described so beautifully by Francis Kilvert in 1876. It is now enclosed because of the public trampling on the path directly below it and the resulting root compaction. The fence also protects the public from a possible return of the hornets, who nested happily in its hollow trunk in 2014.

Managing the bracken

By Hugh Bradshaw

Managing the Park involves balancing the interests of visitors with conservation concerns. However, even within conservation there are competing interests, as bracken management illustrates.

Bracken is found abundantly in the Park where it forms large colonies. Easily recognisable, in spring its uncurled fronds appear like tender green croziers or 'fiddle heads'. By summer, the fronds have unfurled to create waist-high forests that then die back by the end of autumn.

Bracken is a very successful species, the world's most abundant fern. It is invasive, its roots spreading quickly underground, and it outcompetes other plants and grasses that spread by seed germination. It has a liking for acid grassland and a third of Richmond Park's acid grassland is already covered by bracken with the area increasing year by year. Richmond Park's SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) status is partly due to its acid grasslands and bracken is becoming a threat to this status.

It is, of course, not all one sided. Bracken provides vital habitat for many of the Park's rarer birds. Stonechats, Reed Buntings and Meadow Pipits nest in it and in winter, Goldcrests and Dartford Warblers feed in the jungle of dying fronds. It also provides safe havens for resting migrant birds since it creates natural barriers to people and dogs. Deer don't eat bracken, unlike bramble and other scrub, so its useful cover remains for much of the year. Indeed, deer use it to hide their young.

Park management uses two main methods for bracken control – rolling and spraying. Rolling is done by Shire horses, hired from Home Park and stabled at Holly Lodge (The Royal Parks had its own two Shires until 2013). This year it is likely that two horses, Royale and Aragon, will do much of the work. Rolling takes place in summer and involves the horses dragging adapted rollers, which flatten and partly break the stalks. Rolling needs to be repeated for several years and is slow and expensive but arguably longer lasting.

The other method involves spraying the bracken in the summer with a herbicide. This is very effective and poisons the rhizomes (roots). However, there is only a two-month window when it works best and it is difficult to get even cover, and herbicides are often controversial.

A balanced approach to the control of bracken that takes into account the needs of the many species that depend on it should ensure the preservation of its rightful place in the Park's flora but also protect the Park's acid grassland.

Look out for wasp spiders

This lovely photo of a female wasp spider was taken on The Holly Lodge Centre's nature trail by Julia Balfour, Head of Ecology,The Royal Parks.

The female wasp spider is large, colourful and unmistakable; the males are small and pale brown. They were first recorded in the UK in the 1920s, having arrived here from the continent, and have since slowly spread over the south of England. They build large orb webs with a wide, white, central zig-zag strip and attach their silk egg-sacs to grasses. Look out for them in Richmond Park's grasslands in spring and summer.

Mating is a dangerous game for the males; they wait at the edge of the web until the female has moulted into a mature form, then take advantage of her jaws being soft and rush in to mate. However, many males still get eaten!

Information from:
www.wildlifetrusts.org/species/wasp-spider

Preventing Lyme disease

Most of us are not familiar with Lyme disease as it was only recognised 40 years ago, but last year around 3,000 people were infected in England and Wales. It's a serious illness that is caused by a bite from a tick infected with bacteria.

A tick is a tiny blood-sucking member of the spider family and they live on animals including deer so they are common in the Park. Ticks are active all year, but most liable to cause Lyme disease from April to October. They wait on the tips of vegetation for a host – like you – to brush past.

Tick bites may not hurt and you don't always notice you've been bitten. Don't worry – only a small proportion of ticks carry the disease and there are simple ways to reduce your risk of bites and infection. Here are some of the ways:

Tick Tips

- Wear long sleeved tops, trousers tucked into socks and closed shoes, not sandals
- Use insect repellent
- Avoid walking through dense vegetation and stick to paths
- When you get home remove your clothes and do a tick check
- Remove any ticks with special tick removers or tweezers. Ticks frequently break when being removed and even a small part remaining can cause infection
- See your GP if you develop a rash or flu-like symptoms usually within 3-30 days of a bite
- For more information on how to protect yourself, your children and your pets, please see our website: www.frp.org.uk/park/ticks-and-lyme-disease

Beverley Brook planting and water quality improvement

Work on the Beverley Brook restoration project continued over the winter, with the Friends volunteers much involved. In February, seven volunteers planted 200 native trees along the Brook in one day! The trees are mostly on the golf course side, identifiable by the rows of light green plastic guards. Then in April, volunteers from the Friends and the SE Rivers Trust planted a range of marginal plants. The trees and plants were funded by an £8,000 grant from the Tesco carrier bag scheme – very appropriate given the number of bags to be seen in the brook! A big thank you to all the volunteers.

This work to improve the river channel has been complemented by two major projects to improve water quality in the Brook: previously run-off water polluted with oil, metals and litter and choked with silt reached the river firstly from the A3 road (near the Asda store) via the ditches across the golf course and secondly via a storm drain from the Roehampton Estate. Now, a silt trap and reed bed are installed on the golf course and with £70,000 funding from the Environment Agency a hydrodynamic vortex chamber (or downstream defender!) is being installed in the storm drain near Roehampton Gate. As a result, water quality in Beverley Brook will be much improved for wildlife.

With these works, the restoration of two of the four sections of Beverley Brook is complete.

Pen Ponds kiosk

Landscaping work has been completed around the Pen Ponds kiosk to improve the appearance of the site and make it better for the wheelchair athletes who use Pen Ponds car park as a training base. The seating area next to the kiosk has been re-surfaced to prevent the puddles that appeared whenever there was heavy rain and the entrances from the car park and road have been re-aligned and re-surfaced.

White Ash Lodge refurbishment

White Ash Lodge, off the road between Pembroke Lodge and Ham Cross, has been refurbished and will shortly be rented out to private tenants. The other rented lodges are all on the edge of the Park but White Ash Lodge is in a particularly sensitive area, overlooking Pond Slade and the quiet centre of the Park. We understand that the low building and relatively small windows mean light and noise pollution will be very limited and there is enough vehicle parking within the fenced area to avoid parking outside it. Eight of the Park's 12 lodges are now rented – Richmond Gate, Bishop's Gate, Sheen Gate Lodge and Bungalow, Roehampton Gate, Chohole Gate, Robin Hood Gate and White Ash.

Membership and Subscriptions

If want to receive the monthly Friends' bulletin by email, and are not already doing so, then please email bulletins@frp.org.uk with the subject 'Add to bulletin'. You can easily stop it at any time. If you change your email/home address then please let us know so that we can update our records.

Individual membership is now £10 (from £6) and household membership is £15 (from £10). If you have not already updated your standing order, then can I ask that you do so now please. This will ensure that you continue to receive the newsletter and bulletin, but more importantly you continue to support the Friends of Richmond Park and all its projects.

Thank you.

Chris Mason (membership)

Enquiries

Friends: see www.frp.org.uk. If your query is not answered here, please email secretary@frp.org.uk

Park management: contact Park Manager Simon Richards, 0300 061 2200 or email **Richmond@royalparks.gsl.gov.uk**

Police non-emergency telephone number: 101

Daytime Park closures to cars and cyclists

The Park will be closed during the day to cars and cyclists wholly or partially for three major events this summer and autumn. (The Park is always closed to vehicles at night.) Away from the event, the Park is usually empty so it's a great time to visit!

Sunday 31 July
Ride London (full closure)

Sunday 18 September
London Duathlon (partial)

Sunday 30 October
Human Race Halloween (partial)

Also, Petersham Road will be closed for 5 weeks from Monday 1 August, meaning a lot more traffic along the east side of the Park.

Duathlon 2015 by Roehampton Gate

This newsletter is printed on paper which is 50% recycled and 50% from certified sustainable forests.

Friends' Walks

All welcome. Friends' Walks are free, last about two hours and start from a car park. All except Bird Walks are on Saturdays unless otherwise stated. If you need special support or help with the walk, please phone Ian McKenzie on 020 8943 0632 in advance, or 07824 784335 only on the walk day itself. Please keep dogs under control. See also www.frp.org.uk

Date	Starting at 10am from
6 August	Kingston Gate car park
3 September	Robin Hood Gate car park
1 October	Sheen Gate car park (Deer + Walk the Wall)
5 November	Pembroke Lodge car park (Fungi)
3 December	Roehampton Gate car park
26 December	Pembroke Lodge car park Monday

Plus Informal Bird Walks every Friday at 9.30am from Pen Ponds coffee kiosk.

DISCOVERERS

Most young people value activities which are physically challenging, fun, creative and meaningful. Many are concerned about the future of the environment and natural world. *Discoverers* aims to meet these needs with projects that catch the imagination of families, particularly upper primary and lower secondary age children who have many other demands on their time.

For example, recently an enthusiastic group of youngsters from the Surrey Docks Young Farmers Project set about dismantling some play 'dens' which had been built in the Park, using the wood to build dead hedges, and so create wild-life habitats.

For more information and ideas see http://discoverers.frp.org.uk/OutandAbout.ttm

Friends' Courses

Courses begin at 10am and are typically a 30-minute talk at Pembroke Lodge followed by a two-hour walk. Courses are for members of the Friends only and do not need to be booked – just turn up. There is no charge and coffee and tea are provided. See also www.frp.org.uk

8 Oct	Deer – led by Peter Burrows-Smith
22 Oct	Fungi – led by Janet Bostock and Liz Cheesman
26 Nov	Veteran Trees – led by Simon Richards, Park Manager

/thefriendsofrichmondpark

@FRPtweets

www.frp.org.uk

Great crested grebes on Upper Pen Pond Sue Lindenberg

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Richmond Park is a National Nature Reserve,
a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation