

## 8. Ham Gate

**Distance and terrain:** 1,500m long (0.9 miles).

*25m climb up and down the escarpment, including an off-track, uneven section.*

*This is one of a series of self-guided, short nature walks from the Park gates.*

For longer self-guided walks, try our Walks with Remarkable Trees: [www.frp.org.uk/tree-walks/](http://www.frp.org.uk/tree-walks/)

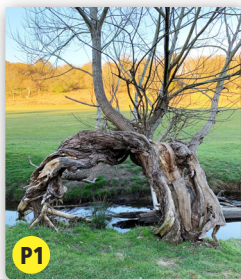
The walk begins by Ham Gate Pond, which was created in 1754. Here you can find a wonderful collection of alder, spectacular with their distinctive cones from last year still on the tree. Depending on when you see this, there may also be catkins on the trees.

There is a wonderful short section along Sudbrook, adjacent to Ham Common. Here you can find willows and more alders, both water-loving trees. In the past, the crack willows (*P1*) would often have been cut at head-height (called 'pollarding') for harvesting willow poles.

Before you climb up the hill, you will see two wind-blown 'phoenix' hornbeams (P2), still alive. At the top of the escarpment there are a further couple of superb veteran hornbeam (P3). There are lots more hornbeam but also English oak (see Martin's Oak), hawthorn and cockspur thorn and horse chestnut. The spectacular Martin's Oak (P4) is perhaps the biggest ancient oak in the Park. It was painted in mid-Victorian times by John Martin, a famous society painter of the time. Martin's Oak is one of the 1,300 veteran trees, for which the Park is so well known.

On the route you will also pass on top of what was probably an old barrow from Saxon times, where VIPs were buried with an excellent 'view' of the Thames Valley.

*Photos: Willow and Phoenix © Christopher Hedley; Veteran hornbeam and Martin's oak © Eric Baldauf.*



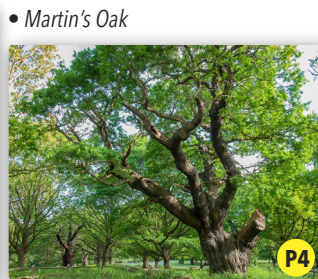
- *Crack willow on Sudbrook.*



- Two 'phoenix' hornbeams in leaf last year



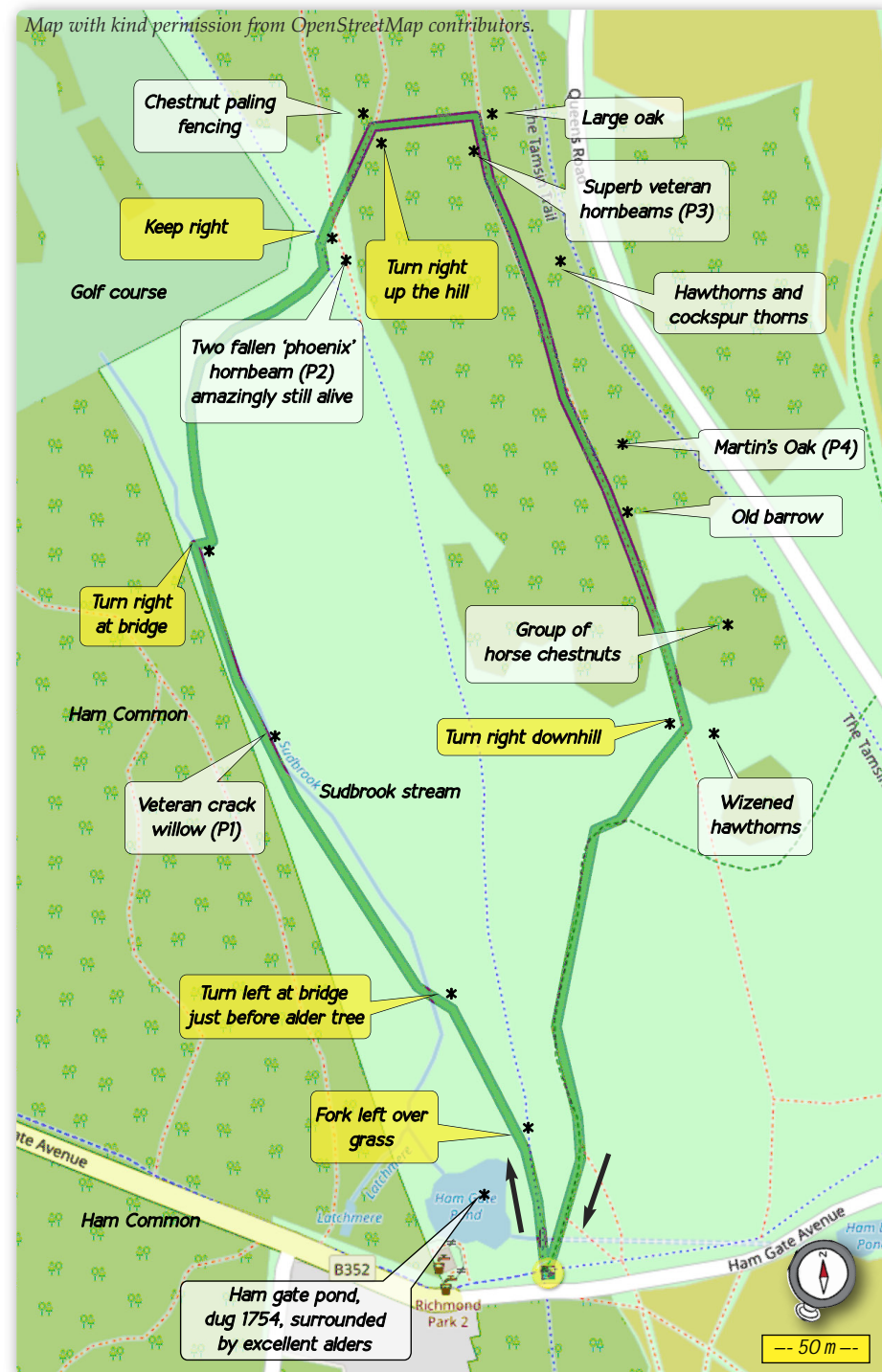
- *Superb veteran hornbeams.*



- *Martin's Oak*

*This series of walks has been devised and written by Christopher Hedley  
and designed by Ken Edwards of the Friends of Richmond Park.*

*With thanks to Simon Richards,  
Manager of Richmond Park, for the original idea.*



*We recommend you take a tree ID book/app when walking this route.*