



WOODLAND
TRUST

The Ancient Tree Hunt

Welcome to the Ancient Tree Hunt and our new London Tree Trail. The idea of the trail is to highlight the spectacular wealth of ancient and special trees that can be found in London by creating a zero carbon, cyclable tree trail. The Ancient Tree Hunt's London Tree Trail can be started anywhere in the heart of London with the first stop at Westminster.

The Ancient Tree Hunt's London Tree Trail is designed to give people a quick taster of the many fantastic trees that can be found in the capital. It starts in the heart of the City following Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 4 west along the Thames. It takes you via some of the great trees of London – the 500 year old holm oak at Fulham Palace and "Barney" the giant London Plane in Barnes (more than 8m round). Then on through Richmond Park, which has the highest density of ancient trees anywhere in the capital, before dropping on to the tranquil tow path between Richmond and Kew and ending at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

There are fantastic trees in every borough of London so have a look at our website www.AncientTreeHunt.org.uk and find out which amazing trees are near where you live.

Acknowledgements and links

Books

The Great Trees of London – Time Out
Champion Trees of Britain and Ireland – The Tree Register Handbook – Kew Publishing

Useful web sites

www.london.gov.uk/releaf-london
www.sustrans.org.uk
www.treeregister.org
www.conservationfoundation.co.uk
www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/visitwoods
www.treecouncil.org.uk/community-action/walk-in-the-woods
www.lcc.org.uk



London Tree Trail

www.AncientTreeHunt.org.uk



The Woodland Trust, Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL.

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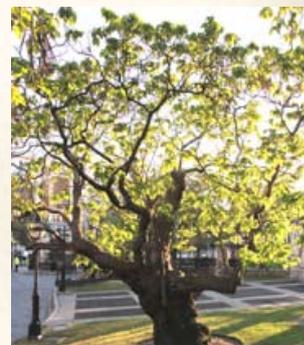
You can enter the **tree number** on the following pages, when using the Ancient Tree Hunt website to find location and information on particular trees.

1 Start at City Hall or Westminster – Westminster Palace Yard (Excellent view of 6 trees through railings) Catalpa (Indian bean trees)

2 miles (20 mins)
Westminster to
Battersea park

Starting at Westminster, you can see six wonderful old **Indian bean** trees through the railings at the Houses of Parliament behind the railings beneath Big Ben. These unusual North American trees have fabulously contorted trunks in old age. In summer the trees have large, blousy-white flowers and are generally recognisable by the extremely large leaves and long bean-like pods that hang down virtually the all year. The age of these trees is uncertain but they are at least 150 years old with a probable planting date of 1857.

Tree number 35419



2 Battersea Park (with facilities) Arbutus (strawberry tree)

2miles (20 mins)
Battersea Park to
Fulham Palace

This beautiful tree is the hybrid **strawberry tree** with the largest girth in the UK and probably dates back to the 1850s. The most striking feature is the tree's brilliant cinnamon-coloured bark which peels off in long, curly strips. It takes its name from the orange/red fruit which provide a striking contrast to its glossy, evergreen foliage.

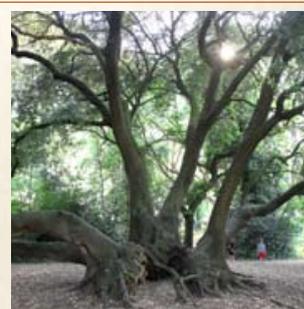
Tree number 55886



3 Fulham Palace (with facilities) 500 year old Holm Oak

The Fulham Palace **Holm Oak** is a spectacular ancient tree that sits quietly in one corner of the gardens. It is a type of oak (*Quercus ilex*) more often associated with the Mediterranean and unlike British oaks is evergreen. The tree is thought to be over 500 years old and although the core of the original trunk has rotted away, the main branches have become new trunks and the tree's glossy green leaves give off an air of health and vitality. The gardens are free to enter and are open every day from early morning until dusk.

Tree number 55623



4 Fulham Palace (with facilities) sycamore

1mile (10 mins) Fulham
Palace to Barney

The Fulham Place **sycamore** is a magnificent tree with a girth of over 6m, the largest in London. Sycamores are a type of maple with large leaves but what is probably their most distinctive feature is the "helicopter" winged seeds that spiral to the ground in late summer/early autumn. Sycamores are believed to have been brought to the UK by the Romans."

Tree number 3045



5 Barnes – London plane (Barney) 8.2 m giant

3 miles (30 mins)
Barney to Royal Oak

The next tree is affectionately referred to as "Barney". It is a huge **London Plane** Tree which has an astonishing girth of 8.2m. It is probably one of the very oldest in London dating close to the 1660s when the London Plane first came into existence. The London Plane is a hybrid that originated when Oriental Plane and American Plane trees cross pollinated. They have become a well-known feature of the capital. London Planes remain relatively unaffected by urban pollution and conditions are probably more favourable today than during Victorian times when thick "pea souper" smogs cloaked the streets of London.

Tree number 21448



6 Richmond Park Oak (8.07m) or Royal Oak

1.5 miles (15mins)
Royal Oak to Park Oak

The **Richmond Royal Oak**. Richmond Park is so rich in beautiful old oaks that it is not necessary to leave the cycle trail to have a great experience of being among ancient trees. If you do, then the Royal oak is probably the most famous tree in the Park and well worth a visit. It is located near the Richmond Gate end of the Park (see page 4 for directions). The tree is wonderfully squat and gnarled after centuries of pollarding (regularly cutting the tree just above the height of grazing animals). It is believed to be over 750 years old and split right down the centre creating a gap large enough for a child to squeeze into the hollow trunk.

Tree number 40404



7 **Richmond Park
Oak and Royal
Oak (6.75)**

1.5 miles (15 mins)
Park oak to
False Acacia

As mentioned, it is possible to enjoy the ancient trees all over the park, but we have selected another large oak close to the road near the Ham Gate end of the Park. This is a great example of an old oak. The wonderful thing about oaks is that as they get older and start having some dead wood in the canopy and hollows in the trunk, they become more valuable for wildlife. There are some insects and even bats that can only survive in areas where the oaks are over 500 years old. Richmond Park is a haven for many of the capital's rarest and most important species. See if you can see delicate hoverflies, stag beetles and birds such as woodpeckers in the trees.

Tree number 40371



8 **Ham – Robinia**

1.5 miles (15 mins)
Acacia to London Plane

Leaving Richmond Park via the Ham Gate is great because it is all downhill to the Thames tow path. As you head out of the Park and are cycling through Ham itself look out for the Royal Oak pub on the corner of Sandy Lane. Here are a selection of rather wonderful false acacia trees. There are several on them on the corner distinguished by their distinctive bean-like pods.

Tree number 41306



9 **Richmond (tow
path) (with
facilities)**

1.5 miles (15 mins)
London Plane to Elms

Once on the tow path, there is a gorgeous ride as you head towards Richmond along the river edge though surroundings that are more like the countryside than central London, with fields of grazing cows and views of woodland. The next tree is London's tallest plane tree which stands in the garden of a restaurant on the river path just before you reach Richmond Bridge. It is a fantastic example which is likely to be around 300 years old and still in fantastic health. Note the patchy "army camouflage" bark. This occurs as plates of bark are regularly shed by the tree, particularly during a hot summer.

Tree number 23534



10 **Kew Gardens –
chestnut-leaved
oak (7.57m)**

The final three trees are all in Kew Gardens. Park your bikes at the Brentford Gate and head on in to the gardens to see them. The first one is about two hundred meters south west of the Orangery. It is a mighty **chestnut-leaved oak** 7.7m in girth. It has large distinctive leaves and goes the most wonderful bronze colour in Autumn.

Tree number 29383



11 **Kew Gardens –
Lucombe Oak
(6.45m)**

Continuing on in a south westerly direction towards the Temperate House brings you to another type of oak tree. It is a hybrid known as the **Lucombe Oak**. The Lucombe Oak became popularised in London when William Lucombe in 1762 noticed in his Exeter tree nursery that some of his seedlings were crosses between a cork oak and a turkey oak. He propagated these seedlings and gave the tree his name. However, the cross occurs naturally in Southern Europe.

Tree number 29382



12 **Kew Gardens –
sweet chestnut
(8.41m)**

Finally, only a hundred meters further on close to the east side of the Temperate House and close to the wide ride along which you can see Pagoda, stand's what is thought to be Kew's oldest tree. It's a **sweet chestnut** over 8 meters round the trunk. It is a magnificent tree planted c.1695 predating the setting up of the garden. Sweet Chestnuts are thought to have been brought to the UK by the Romans. This large tree with its large finger-like looks fabulous in the autumn, when the squirrels dine out on the many delicious seeds it produces.

Tree number 3945



Directions

1 Indian bean trees at House of Parliament

2 **Battersea Park Strawberry Tree**

From Westminster head west along Abingdon Street to the roundabout at Lambeth Bridge. Take the last exit heading away from the river up Horseferry Road and 100m along turn left on to Dean Ryle Street and pick up the Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 4. Carry straight ahead and on to the end of John Islip Street. Turn right and immediately left and pick up the cycle path on Lupus road which takes you back down to the river's edge. Follow for a few hundred meters and then head over the river across Chelsea Bridge. Turn right (west) North Carriage Drive which will take you along the Thames to the north edge of Battersea Park. Head towards the lake in the centre and on the north-west edge is the magnificent strawberry tree.

3 **Fulham Palace holm oak**

Return back to North Carriage Drive and back on to Route 4 and the Thames Path. Follow west until the end. Cross Albert Bridge Road and head north for 50m to the riverside to pick up Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 4 and the Thames path again. Continue on to Battersea Bridge and head back north over the Thames and pick up the cycle route along Cheyene Walk. After 200m fork left onto Lots Road and after another two hundred meters turn left and follow the cycle route along the edge of the river. After about a kilometre the cycle route joins River Walk and then Carwath Road at the end of which it turns sharply north up Broomhouse Lane. The end of the road turn left along Hurlingham Road. Carry along for 200m and then turn left into Napier Road. Turn right into Ranelagh Road and follow on to Putney Bridge Road. Before crossing south over Putney Bridge, follow a cycle path along the river west for a short distance, through an avenue of wonderful London planes for about 200m to the entrance of Fulham Palace Gardens to see the ancient holm oak. Once in the garden almost head back towards the way you came but this time within the fence of the gardens and you will come across the holm oak at the south-east corner of the main lawn.

4 **Fulham Palace sycamore**

Also in the gardens is a magnificent sycamore at the east side of the gardens close to the church. Take the path on the left as you enter the gardens and follow for about 200m until you see the ancient decaying hulk of the sycamore

5 **“Barney” – The giant London Plane**

Head back out on to the cycle path, return to Putney Bridge Road and head south across the river to Putney. Once over the bridge turn immediately right (west) on to the cycle path that follows the south bank of the Thames. Follow for about 600m and then follow the road, left, along Queen Elizabeth Walk towards the London Wetland Centre at Barnes. Stop in front of the centre. Opposite the centre is a car park. Head across the car park and follow the fence that bares left along the side of sports ground. After 100m there is a small brick bridge leading into a small wood. The giant London Plane is about 100m into the wood.

6 **Richmond Royal Oak**

Return to the London Wetland Centre and carry on west along Queen Elizabeth Walk to the traffic lights. Turn left on to Rocks Lane and then right after 200m on to Ranelagh Avenue. Bare right at end on to Glebe Road and then almost immediately left into Laurel Road. Follow cycle route to Cedars Road and then almost immediately on to Station Road. Within 100m turn right into vine Road. Follow vine road to the end and cross the main road and continue on along Priory Lane for 500m and turn right into Bank Lane and then immediately left into Roehampton Gate. This takes you into Richmond Park. Continue on straight in the Park towards Richmond Gate. Carry on over small cross roads for about 500m and take a footpath heading left (south) which heads between two groups of trees towards pen ponds. The Richmond Royal Oak is 300m due south off the road along the path where it can be standing on its own. It's small and squat with a large crack in the trunk.

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Directions

7 Richmond fenced oak

Return to the road and head towards the Richmond Gate. Turn left at the roundabout and head south past Pembroke Lodge for about one kilometre. Just before the road to Ham Gate there is a large oak on the right behind a wooden fence.

8 False acacias

Carry on for a short distance and turn left towards Ham Gate. Follow downhill for 600m and go straight over the traffic lights on to Ham Common which bears left along the Common. At junction turn right into Ham Street. Follow for 200m to the Royal Oak Pub.

9 London's tallest London plane tree

Carry onto the river and tow path along Ham Street to the end of Ham Street (across a car park). Turn right at the river and follow the path until 100m before Richmond Bridge. On the tow path in the garden of the Gaucho Restaurant is London's tallest London plane tree.

10 Chestnut-leaved oak

Follow the tow path for around 2 km until you reach the Brentford Gate of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The first of the three remaining trees is situated just off the path between the Orangery and the Palm House. It is about 150m south east across the grass from the Orangery.

11 Lucombe oak

Within 100m is the Lucombe Oak as you continue south east.

12 The Kew ancient sweet chestnut

And from the lucombe oak head 100m towards the Temperate House to see the large sweet chestnut. All three trees have blue plaques.



Discounted entrance to Kew Gardens

Print out this coupon and present at Kew Gardens to receive discounted entrance (second person enters for half price).

Terms and conditions – Kew Gardens and The Woodland Trust

1. Offer entitles visitors one ticket half price with one full paying adult to Kew Gardens. 2. Offer redeemable by completing this voucher and surrendering it at one of the entry gates. 3. Tickets are non exchangeable, cannot be redeemed for cash, and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. 4. Offer valid from 25.05.11 to 25.09.11 5. One voucher per person. 6. Photocopies are not acceptable. 7. Kew Gardens reserves the right to refuse entry. 8. Please visit www.kew.org for opening times, directions and all further information.

In association with the London Tree Trail

www.AncientTreeHunt.org.uk

Kew
ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS


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