



NEWSLETTER No.1 - JUNE 2009

The last three months have been hectic as responses to the BBC Midlands Today piece about our project flooded in. We have heard from people across some 15 counties - some with news of elm trees that may well be immune or resistant to Dutch Elm Disease. Such was the response that we enlisted the help of Jim Verrechia of im2 Computer Systems (Busyskill Ltd) who generously volunteered his time towards the project. Jim set up a database, developing it with us and then went further by designing the beginnings of a RELIC website accessed via the Kemerton website.

There is only a small window of opportunity within which cuttings can be taken from the 'mother' elm trees and so the race was on to select specimens from all that we were sent, to arrange the necessary permissions and to have someone help in cutting material from the tree and then transporting it to Pershore College Nursery to be processed. We are desperately short of manpower so it was a difficult logistics problem to organise everything by late June. However, we identified 8 target trees and set about the task. At the time of writing cuttings have been taken from 2 trees, more will arrive on 4th and 10th of June and we may yet manage the other 4! Some are accessible from the ground while others require climbers or mechanical hoists.

We are extremely grateful to a number of individuals, naturalists, farmers, gamekeepers and others who have helped but also to Worcester County Council Highways Division, to Bromsgrove District Council, to Gloucester Royal General Hospital and to the Madresfield Estate, for their support and help.

Next step is to try to find funding to establish RELIC at Pershore as the hub of a network of groups and organisations across the counties and regions. Hopefully, they will be able to access the elms reported in their areas and begin propagating young trees from them next year. We will recommend that wherever possible people who want to replant elms will source them locally. We need funding to employ someone who can manage what we have established but also expand and develop the project, liaising with other groups, potential buyers of elms and research bodies who have been working on Dutch Elm Disease and resistant strains.

RELIC has its first public 'showing' at Pershore College Open Day - June 6th.

To contact RELIC go to www.kemerton.org or email jclarkem@btinternet.com