

# INTRODUCTION

## PARKS & GARDENS UK

Welcome to Parks & Gardens UK - a national web resource that brings together a wealth of information on historic parks and gardens across the United Kingdom.

Our towns, cities and countryside contain a wide range of gardens and other forms of landscape that are important to our heritage. Many have been recorded, but others have yet to be discovered and researched.

Recording a garden's history can highlight its value and help to protect it for the future. In some cases, it may prevent a garden from being lost altogether.

This is the third edition of the Volunteer Training Manual, which aims to help and encourage a wide range of people - from the beginner to the more experienced researcher - to research and record gardens in their area, and contribute their findings to Parks & Gardens UK.

Parks & Gardens UK was set up with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and is managed by Parks and Gardens Data Services, a not-for-profit company and charity (Company number:6294532 Charity number:1129545).

It plays a vital role, both in bringing together existing information and in encouraging new research. The aim is to stimulate public interest, and deepen understanding and enjoyment of historic parks, gardens and green spaces in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Parks & Gardens UK is widely used - by schoolchildren, students and teachers, life-long learners, academic researchers, landscape professionals, local authority planners and visitors to the UK – any one, in fact, who is interested in finding out more about their local green spaces.

We want as many volunteers as possible to get involved in researching and recording the history of parks and gardens in their local areas. Their findings will form a significant part of the database, alongside existing records from Gardens Trusts and other organisations.

## Acknowledgements

Much of the material in this manual is based on information contained in *Parks and Gardens: A Researcher's Guide to Sources for Designed Landscapes* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition by David Lambert, Peter Goodchild and Judith Roberts (Landscape Design Trust, 2006), and *Garden Archaeology: A Handbook* by Christopher Currie (Council for British Archaeology, 2005).

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## HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

The manual offers a practical guide to aid volunteers at all levels of experience to research and record parks, gardens and other types of ornamental landscape, and contribute information and materials to the Parks & Gardens UK database.

**Part One** is an introduction to researching and recording parks, gardens and other designed landscapes. If you are new to this kind of work, we suggest that you begin here, to get an idea of what is involved.

Researching the history of parks and gardens can be highly rewarding, but it can also be a demanding and sometimes confusing task for the beginner.

If you are just starting out, we recommend that you consider joining the research team of one of the County Gardens Trusts that operate across England and Wales. Gardens trusts carry out a great deal of research into historic parks and gardens, and can provide help and training, as well as access to a network of contacts and further information. To find your local trust, visit [www.gardenstrusts.org.uk](http://www.gardenstrusts.org.uk)

If you are not able to join a gardens trust, or similar organisation, try to work with a more experienced garden researcher to begin with, who can guide you through the process and help you to avoid some of the pitfalls.

**Part Two** offers in-depth advice on researching a garden's history. This part is intended as a practical guide and reference resource for researchers in the field, and is divided into sections for easy reference to just the material you need at any stage of the process. Team leaders may also find individual sections useful as an aid to training.

**Part Three** of the manual contains detailed contact and bibliographic information relating to the many organisations, publications and other resources referred to in Parts One and Two.

**Part Four** contains the detailed supplementary information that is referred to at various points throughout the manual.

If you would like to contribute your research data to the Parks & Gardens UK database, please email [info@parksandgardens.org](mailto:info@parksandgardens.org).