CHESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

Information for

Research and Recorders

Issue 5

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Thank you for expressing an interest in taking part in our Research and Recording project. The project is to research and record the parks and gardens of the historic county of Cheshire.

This information is intended as an introduction for new volunteers and to serve as a handbook for those already undertaking research and recording. It explains the project's objectives and activities, and provides guidance.

The handbook is reviewed and revised with feedback from research and recorders to ensure that it remains up to date.

Contents

1. Introduction - what the project is and what it involves

One of the four aims of the Cheshire Gardens Trust is "to undertake research and recording in collaboration with others." We have now established groups of volunteers who are researching the parks and gardens of the county. This is an important activity; despite several books and research projects, there is a surprising lack of recorded knowledge. New information is being discovered, as well as new gardens. Gardens are ephemeral and in Cheshire we have lost many over the years, including two Gertrude Jekyll gardens.

English Heritage commissioned research projects in 1985 and 1995 to identify parks and gardens of national or international importance for inclusion on the English Heritage Register. Thirty parks and gardens in Cheshire are included on the register. "Registration is a 'material consideration' in the planning process, meaning that planning authorities must consider the impact of any proposed development on the landscapes' special character."

This leaves a huge number of historic designed landscapes unrecorded. Our current research focuses on collecting information that will allow us to understand the range and nature of these gardens across the county.

Aims and objectives

The aim is to record Cheshire's landscape heritage from medieval times through to the 21st century thus creating a gazetteer of historic designed landscapes for the historic county of Cheshire.

The objectives are:

- To raise awareness of the value of designed landscapes – for tourism, the economy, regeneration, and learning
- To raise awareness of designed landscapes among owners and custodians
- To inform planning policies
- To enable us to work effectively with statutory bodies like the Garden History Society
- To enable informed comment on planning applications
- To make the information more widely available through the Cheshire Record Office, Cheshire Historic Environment Record, the UK Parks and Gardens database and via a series of themed publications

Historic Designed Landscapes

Historic designed landscapes are varied. In addition to parks and gardens, they can include some cemeteries, hospitals, industrial and new town landscapes. They have a

clearly expressed design based on contemporary aesthetic principles, often strongly influenced by the economics of landscape management. Historic or cultural landscapes, e.g. enclosure landscapes, could also be described as designed landscapes, but are not the focus of our work.

How we operate

Our research and recorders are drawn from varied backgrounds and have different skills but all have an interest in Cheshire's historic parks and gardens and enjoy sharing their discoveries with others. From experience we have found that people work best and enjoy the project more if they are part of a group that meets on a regular basis. Meetings take place at Arley, over a pub lunch, on site or in member's homes. These meetings are arranged at times to suit those taking part and provide an opportunity to share information, ask questions, discuss issues and agree training needs. We currently have an East Cheshire Research group, a West Cheshire group based in Chester, and a group based in Bowdon comprised of NADFAS heritage volunteers. We are pleased to welcome new people and happy to establish other groups when there is sufficient interest.

Research and recorders work independently or in pairs and at their own pace, putting in as much (or as little) time as life allows, though with too little time it is easy to lose momentum. Volunteers choose from a list of sites which one they would like to investigate. Sometimes researching one site can lead to the discovery of another. The amount of information available varies enormously; the internet can prove a rich source of information and there can be unexpectedly delightful finds in local libraries and archives such as beautifully drawn estate maps or detailed account books. Owners are often willing to share their records with us too.

The research and recording coordinator is there to support the work of volunteers, a first point of contact for any queries. We arrange induction sessions for new volunteers, can provide individual support through mentoring, and organise training. Our procedures are constantly under review and we are always happy to receive comments and ideas.

The research and recording

Research and recorders can acquire skills in basic research procedures and collect and record information which is in the 'public domain'. This involves desktop and archival research, and where possible site survey to assess how much of the designed layout remains. Where a site is in private ownership, volunteers are advised to record observations from public land or public rights of way and only access properties on open days or with the owner's permission. An introductory letter can be sent to the owner to let them know of our proposal to undertake research and to encourage them to contribute to the project. The research and recording coordinator will also write to the owner requesting access where this is required.

Upon completion of the research, a draft report is sent by the coordinator to all owners/managers of public and private parks and gardens so that they have the opportunity to confirm, amend or supplement information. We are very aware of the need for confidentiality in terms of security of private owners and their gardens. The Trust will honour owners' decisions if information or documentary evidence which is not in the public domain is considered to be confidential. Such information will not appear in any publication or website unless approved by the owner/manager of the site.

Working with others

We are working with local authorities in Cheshire to raise awareness of our garden heritage and to contribute information to local lists of historic parks and gardens.

Role Description for Research and Recorders

This provides a summary of the role; what the research and recorder can expect and the support they will receive from Cheshire Gardens Trust.

Research and Recorder

Role Description

Role title	Cheshire Gardens Trust Research and Recorder
Role summary	For volunteers to research and record information about local historic designed landscapes in the historic county of Cheshire. Historic landscapes include parks, gardens and cemeteries.
Principal tasks involved in the role	• Undertake desktop and documentary research in local libraries and archives • Visit the site and record current extent and condition • Prepare a research and recording report for the site
Useful skills for undertaking the role	• An interest in people and places • Enthusiasm for searching out information • Ability to plan and work independently • Some knowledge and interest in history and landscape And also: • Ability to drive • Computer and internet access • Use of a digital camera • An interest in maps and plans
What the role will actually involve	• Organising time to undertake volunteer activities • Attendance at research and recording meetings and training sessions • Undertake research using guidance notes • Prepare draft reports to an agreed format • Liaison with the research and recording coordinator • Working with other volunteers to visit site or share findings • Produce final reports comprising text and illustrations
Duration and outcomes of the project	The project has no specific end date. Completed reports will be made available to those listed below. In due course it is hoped that the records will be added to the Parks and Gardens UK database and may form the basis of a series of themed publications. The information will be used for exhibitions and displays e.g. for Cheshire local history day.
Contact details and support provided	Barbara Moth is the Research and Recording coordinator. Contact: barbara.moth@btinternet.com Tel: 01606 46228. Barbara will: • be the first point of contact for any queries • send draft reports to owners with requesting access • issue final reports to Cheshire Historic Environment Record, Cheshire Archives and Local Studies and the relevant local authority

2. Getting started with research

For the majority of sites there is a 'starter pack' providing a print of a historic Ordnance Survey for the site and some references for researchers. Looking at maps and plans is a useful way to begin as they provide information on location, character and extent. It is recommended that initial desktop research is undertaken using the internet. A search on Google can provide some idea of the site's history, perhaps from a town or village website, and may reveal details of ownership and possibly of designers associated with the property. These are important clues for further searches. Principal books and websites worth checking are included in our list of sources.

Before visiting local libraries or archives it is worth searching their online catalogues. Books may be reference on open shelf and lending copies can be reserved. Archive documents can often be ordered in advance enabling you to make best use of time at the archives. Always check archive hours and arrangements before travelling as it may be necessary to book a place. Each archive has slightly different arrangements so check what identification is required, arrangements for copying or using a digital camera and always take supplies of paper and pencils.

Once there ask for assistance if you need it; the archivists and librarians are there to help. Be careful to note the full titles and references for everything you use so that you can look at items again if you need to and so that reference details can be included in reports. Tailored introductory sessions can be arranged for groups of researchers at Cheshire Record Office. The archivists also hold general introductory sessions or you can arrange to visit with a research colleague.

Keep all notes and copies in a file or folder. A timeline can be a helpful way to sort out the history of a property. An example timeline is included below.

Kings Hall

Date	Notes	Source
1842	Tithe map records hall and park owned by Arthur Smith	Tithe maps on line
1860	John Smith inherits Kings Hall from his uncle	CALS LM/456
1875	First Edition Ordnance Survey indicates development of second lodge and approach drive	1st Edit OS
1899	John Smith dies	Ancestry
1900	Property sold. Sale catalogue describes kitchen garden, pleasure grounds and park	CALS DLA/123

CALS - abbreviation of Cheshire Archives and Local Studies

Documentary sources may provide some specific dates, for example when a property was sold. Maps and plans are incredibly important sources of information

and usually repay careful study. Change can often be detected by comparing one historic map with another. Training on the use of historic maps can be arranged.

It is useful to have some understanding of the history of a site and the sequence of changes before making a site visit.

Useful sources of information

<u>**Desktop research**</u> **-** a good way to start

Google – insert site name – can often come up with information - local history leads and other links.

Cheshire Archives and Local Studies (CALS) - hold records for the historic county of Cheshire http://archives.cheshire.gov.uk/   At the top of the home page are links to:

- "Tithe maps online" where the tithe maps can be compared with contemporary and historic Ordinance Survey maps. By searching the tithe apportionments it is possible to discover land use, e.g. as a garden, and who owned the property or lived there.

- "What we hold" has links Cheshire County Maps online and to trade directories online. The directories give very good, logical description of the towns, services and the social strata too.

- The "catalogue" - search by name of site, owner, designer, parish, maps and plans (including historic Ordnance Survey and estate plans), sale catalogues and photograph collections. Top tip - when searching a place with more than one word, e.g. Kings Hall, under word options be sure to click 'phrase', otherwise you may get everything with 'Kings' and 'Hall' in the catalogue!

- The "Cheshire images" section can be useful too.

- CALS also hold electoral records from 1832 - 2007, pre 1900 on microfiche

County Historic Environment Record (CHER) for archaeological records in the www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk will give you Cheshire West and Chester Home Page, then go - Environment - Historic Built Environment -Heritage- Cheshire Archaeology -Revealing Cheshire's Past, or simply type in Revealing Cheshire's Past into Google. This public version of the CHER has limited park and garden information. Alternatively click Historic Environment Record on http://maps.cheshire.gov.uk/cheshirecc.interactivemapping.web.internet/Default.aspx?region=2#aTabTop1 an interactive county map with various layers providing the location of CHER records, conservation areas, listed building etc.

Parks and Gardens Database www.parksandgardens.ac.uk/ Apart from sites under "Research and Recording" this includes "an overview of Research and Recording

Practice", and under "Downloads" has an extensive section on "References and Sources", very comprehensive but perhaps a bit overwhelming

National Archives www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ go to tab "Search the Archives", then "Access to Archives", type in name of site and it will give references to sources in local repositories

Ancestry - at www.ancestry.co.uk- can be accessed at local libraries and archives.

Cheshire Sheaf - **Being Local Gleanings, Historical and Antiquarian, Relating to Cheshire -** 1880 version with useful index
http://www.archive.org/stream/cheshiresheafbe01browgoog#page/n418/mode/2up

Local Libraries - Local Studies sections hold records or books on local history providing context, background and leads, also contacts for local historical or amenity societies who may have information and be pleased to share local knowledge. Local museums may also hold useful data.

Local areas

Websites with good historic images of local places, but there may be others.

www.frodshamhistoricimages.co.uk

www.bollingtonphotos.co.uk

Books and guides

CALS "A Guide to Garden Records held at Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies" is obtainable for £3.50 or can be referenced at CALS and provides an overview of sources. Apart from primary sources (original documents) look at secondary sources (books and other publications) many of which are on open shelves. Recommended (but not necessarily held at the record office) are:

- Aiken, J, **Description of the Countryside from 30-40 miles around Manchester**, 1795, david and Charles 1968
- Chandler, J, **John Leland's Itinerary**, Sutton Publishing, 1993
- **Cheshire Life** (at record office)
- Desmond, R, **Bibliography of British Gardens,** Gem Publishing Company 1988
- Figueiredo, Peter and Treuherz, Julian, **Cheshire Country Houses**, Phillemore 1988
- Graham, Frank, 1969, **Cheshire 100/150 Years Ago**, CRO CENTRAL 1717 and 1716
- Harris, J, **The Artist and the Country House**, Southerby Parke Bernet Publications Ltd, 1979
- Head, Robert, 1904, **Cheshire at the Opening of the Twentieth Century** CRO C/942/H

- Morris, C, **The Journeys of Celia Fiennes**, Cresset Press, 1947
- Moss, F, **Pilgrimages in Cheshire and Shropshire**, E J Morten, 1901
- Mowl, T, Mako, M, **The Historic Gardens of England: Cheshire**, Redcliffe Press Ltd, 2008
- Neale, J.P., 1818 (2nd ed. 1829), **Views of Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland´**
- **Ormerod**, George, 1819, **The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester**, 3 vols
  CRO CENTRAL 2658 2nd ed. 1882 (expanded, more useful) CRO 213053. Also on CD
- **Old Halls of Cheshire**, (no author, no date)   CRO CENTRAL 250
- Hartwell, C. Hyde, M. Hubbard, E. Pevsner, N. 2011. *The Buildings of England: Cheshire*. London: Yale University Press
- **Photos of Old and Celebrated Halls** (no author, no date) CRO CENTRAL 628
- Twycross**,** 1850, **The Mansions of England and Wales**, The County Palatine of Chester, vol. i
  CRO CENTRAL 33901
- **Victoria County History**
- Walters, J.C.1930, **Romantic Cheshire**

If you know of a **particular date** associated with the property, e.g. Royal visit, opening, national or local celebrations, death of the owner, fire - then it can be worth searching local newspapers for accounts or obituaries. These are held on microfiche and microfiche readers need to be booked in advance. Newspapers are also accessible online http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk

Books on line - Typing in 'Victoria County History Cheshire' will come up with the British History on line site containing access to this useful County series.

Try http://books.google.com/books e.g. The Kitchen Garden by George Johnson, who edited the Journal of Horticulture, Cottage Gardener and Country Gentleman.

3. Visiting site

Site visit guidance notes

Preparation

- Have a current map or extract of it, know where the public footpaths are and plan your route in advance
- Have a sequence of historic maps for the site (or at least one) and identify features to look out
- Consider the changes that have been made, for example has the principal approach drive to the property been altered?
- Check site boundaries and how far the site extends. Include the wider landscape such as a park beyond the 'garden' (often shown as a darker shade on old OS maps). This may no longer look like 'parkland', for example it could be arable rather than pasture, so look for clues, e.g. are there more individual parkland trees? Look for lodges or a home farm.
- Take copies of historic photographs to identify their location and compare with current views
- Complete a site visit risk assessment (see Appendix 5.3)
- Check mobile phone coverage for your site http://ukmobilecoverage.co.uk

Site visit - informal, from public rights of way
- Check views into the site from footpaths and higher ground
- Note land uses especially where changed e.g. parkland now arable
- Consider orientation, prevailing wind, microclimate
- Look at the ground conditions and think how this relates to vegetation cover
- Try to identify dominant or principal tree species; often in the wider landscape these will be a fairly limited range of mostly native species (Oak, Beech, Pine, Lime, Sycamore, Ash, Willow near water)
- Consider the disposition of planting - tree belts (narrow, for shelter, often around boundaries), woodland (larger areas with a mix of species), plantations (one or two species for forestry), clumps, parkland, i.e. individual trees. Note whether there is any new planting
- Look for and note exotic i.e. non-native ornamental planting, its disposition and whether it relates to historic descriptions or records
- Check whether features shown on historic maps are still present and if so in what condition e.g. if there is a lake, is it still full of water
- Consider condition of the site, are the significant features in a vulnerable condition and at risk of loss
- Look out for parkland trees and boundary railings that may indicate the extent of former parkland
- Depending on the light and season, check the ground for lumps and bumps that may be evidence of earlier features

- Make key notes before you leave site and take plenty of photographs

Site visit - with owner's permission

- Check any of the above that you have not been able to check from public rights of way
- Check principal views from the main house and note how these are controlled e.g. focused on distant hills or with screening of undesirable elements
- Encourage the owner to show you interesting features of the site but also seek time unattended to observe and make notes if this is possible
- Ask about features known to have been present but no longer evident
- Ask if they have any historic pictures or records of the site; understandably they may be reluctant to lend these and borrowing them is probably not a good idea, so ask if you can photograph them
- Ask about others who may know about the site e.g. retired gardeners.

Finally we find it's quite tiring, more so than just being out for a walk because you are taking so much information on-board. Take more food and drink than you would normally do when out walking, or treat yourself to that afternoon tea on the way home. You've earned it!

4. Recording - writing up what you have found out

It is easiest to start writing up the report as soon as the majority of the research is complete, and maybe before visiting site. With the report format we are aiming at a degree of consistency *but not uniformity*. Each site is different and the nature of the reports will vary accordingly. Reports will also vary according to the quantity and quality of material available and the recorder.

The first section of the report concerns basic factual information.

SITE NAME: Address	1				
Unitary Authority:	2				
Parish:	3				
Location:	4				
Grid Ref:	5				
Owner:	6				
Recorder:	7	**Date of Site Visit**	8	**Date of Report:**	9

1. If the site name has changed over time, please put the old name in brackets or say "formerly known as........"
2. Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Wirral etc. You can add the former borough in brackets, e.g. Vale Royal Borough Council
3. Not essential but useful, and the name of the parish may well have cropped up during research
4. e.g. 3m SW of Sandbach
5. Follow directions on an Ordnance Survey map or use tithe maps online to obtain the SJ number
6. Add the owners name if known. Some sites may be in multiple ownership in which case it is useful to state this
7. Initials only
8. This may include the dates of multiple site visits, e.g. those on public rights of way or site visits where access has been granted
9. Date each version. For example the first report may be a draft sent to an owner requesting access.

The **Summary** is best completed last. It should describe the salient characteristics of the site such as key period of development and extent of remaining landscape. This enables the reader to understand the type of property recorded and something of its importance at a glance.

Principal remaining features is also best completed towards the end of report writing. In order to describe these features using accepted terminology please refer to the English Heritage thesauri for Gardens, Parks and Urban Spaces:

http://thesaurus.english-heritage.org.uk/thesaurus.asp?thes_no=1.

Each term on the right hand list has a scope note which will appear on the left hand side when the term is selected, or search alphabetically.

The next section of the report is a **History** of the site. This is where the timeline becomes essential. Ideally the history section should identify dates of ownership and development of the landscape starting with the earliest known information. Dates of ownership are important because they often coincide with periods of change resulting from increased or diminished fortunes, or from the introduction of fashionable styles and improvements by new owners. Sale catalogues and plant lists should be noted but full detailed lists and schedules are best included as appendices. Information from secondary sources such as local history booklets should be treated with caution; they are not always right and sometimes simply repeat the inaccuracies of others. Where you are uncertain of the truth, use terms such as 'x states that the park was designed by y', making it clear where the information comes from. Where analysis of information indicates a particular set of circumstances, but these are not proven, distinguish fact from conjecture by using terms such as 'appears' or 'seems likely', e.g. 'it appears that the lake was created by x before the building of the hall'.

Some renowned landscape designers and architects have been involved in the design of several sites in Cheshire. Information about these designers can be included in endnotes as a sort of mini biography. We have prepared a number of 'mini biographies' for use in reports including ones for Edward Kemp, John Webb and Percy Worthington.

The **Description** records the present site describing the different areas and remaining features, views, access and condition. Depending on the nature of the site, it may be best to organise the text with sub headings for principal areas such as 'entrance', 'forecourt', 'park', 'kitchen garden' and so on. Note the extent to which the layout of the site is consistent with historic maps and plans, or how or where this has changed. If, for example, under 'history' the creation of a lake is recorded, it is important under description' to state if the lake remains and is full of water. Record materials used in construction e.g. walls of brick or stone, significant changes of level, and remaining evidence of historic features e.g. avenues and drives.

This is probably the most challenging section to write clearly. Imagine your reader reading it - a description of a site that they have not seen - and see if it makes sense. Consider whether plans and illustrations can be used to tell much of the story rather than text.

The '**Additional information**' section is where any constraints on research and recording can be mentioned such as the inaccessibility of part of the site, or documentary records that have not been investigated perhaps because they are held in a distant archive.

Acknowledge the help of owners and others where appropriate.

Include all sources in a series of endnotes

Endnotes

Author, initial. Date of publication. Title - *in italics.* Place of publication: publisher, page

Sample endnote

Mowl,T and Mako, M. 2008. *The Historic Gardens of England: Cheshire.* Bristol: Redcliffe Press Ltd, 161-163

The **Illustrations** section of the report is a separate word document with the same first factual section repeated as a heading. It should include any plans or images that help tell the story of the site's development and a small selection of site photographs that convey the character of principal areas. It is helpful to include a plan indicating the extent of the remaining designed landscape, principal features, views and the original extent of the designed landscape or important designed setting. We can provide some plan bases and assist in developing these plans.

It may be appropriate to include **Appendices** where there is detailed information that is too lengthy to go in the main report or would interrupt the flow of text. For example an appendix could be used to include a full contemporary account or sales schedule.

Examples of completed reports are often circulated for information and two samples are included in Appendix 5.2.

Finally......

Remember - you are the expert on your site! Be confident in your reporting. In most cases no one knows as much about the site as you do, and none of the information that you have found has ever been brought together before.