



Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust

*To record and conserve the gardens and parks of historic Buckinghamshire
To aid in the creation and restoration of gardens, parks and green spaces within the historic county*

A Research and Recording Project: 'Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire'

HLF REFERENCE NUMBER SH-12-10817

May 2014-July 2015

END OF PROJECT REPORT TO HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND

31 AUGUST 2015



1. Purpose of the Report

This report has been prepared as part of the terms of grant of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) award of 17 December 2013. It has been prepared by Dr Sarah Rutherford, Vice Chair of BGT and Trustee responsible for this project in collaboration with other Bucks Gardens Trust (BGT) team members. It aims to set out the scope of the pilot project, the lessons learnt that can be applied to future phases, and benefits of the HLF funding.

2. The Project: Piloting a Methodology for Community Engagement and Capacity Building

A key aim of the project was to test the methodology to train volunteers to identify the significance of the sites and disseminate this knowledge to the public, owners and decision-makers who are involved in the management of, and potential changes to, these sites. Following the HLF award, from May 2014 to July 2015 20 volunteer researchers/recorders participated in a pilot project funded in part by BGT (£1,100) and to a

larger extent by the HLF (£8,900). This sum was supplemented by considerable contributions in kind from Bucks County Council including staff time, particularly the HER Officer. This included the use of meeting rooms, the provision of historic material from the HER, and, crucially, the licensing of reproduction of Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photographs for these publicly available dossiers.

Recruitment of volunteers came not just from BGT but, as we had predicted, from other local groups including the High Wycombe Society and Bucks Archaeological Society, also individuals who saw the publicity we circulated in the county as part of our recruitment drive, and learnt of the project by word of mouth.

The formal training sessions by a professional trainer (Virginia Hinze) and resultant research and recording by volunteers have been supported by a further 5 members of BGT's Committee and volunteers who are already well trained. Further training in other aspects has been provided by additional experts such as the HER Officer, Julia Wise, as well as the County Archivist and his staff, also BGT members expert in tree identification.

Of the core project management team, Dr Sarah Rutherford (founding and life member, currently Vice Chair) was the designated BGT volunteer trustee who oversaw financial matters and was responsible to fellow trustees for the sound running of the project and its financial integrity. She also participated in training and mentoring volunteers and edited their dossiers. BGT Council Member Claire de Carle served as the Volunteer Co-ordinator, ensuring the optimum engagement of researchers and recorders and recruiting further people to the project as well as carrying out research and recording of sites. This was a key role in liaising with the volunteers and pursuing recruitment opportunities. Rosemary Jury served as a part time paid project manager and administrator for the project for 2 days per month, also an essential role. She is locally based with an understanding of the project within the overall BGT context. Her knowledge and long experience in National Trust and County Gardens Trust conservation approaches complement her expertise in organisational finances, and in managing groups of volunteers.

This project enabled BGT to develop and refine a programme to develop in volunteers a wide range of new skills and a greater understanding of the historic environment by performing research and recording observations on 30 historic Bucks parks and gardens, with 17 dossiers completed to date and more in the early stages of preparation. Our recording volunteers were trained to make visual surveys, interpret maps and illustrations and make site evaluations. They also presented written and illustrated reports on their findings and received plant identification training, particularly on key types of trees likely to be encountered in Bucks. This not only helps volunteers to understand and better relate to the historic environment, but as a key outcome, the knowledge gained is made available to the public and the site owners/custodians. We have

been held up by the Association of Gardens Trusts as a good model for such a project for other county Gardens Trusts.

The information generated by the project is being made available in printed form, and digitally to sources such as Buckinghamshire libraries, record offices, the Historic Environment Record (HER), and the web sites of BGT and UK Parks and Gardens Database.

3. Key Lessons learnt from the Pilot Project

We based our methodology on experience gained in similar successful projects in Kent and Sussex, advised by Virginia Hinze and adapted to the particular circumstances of BGT and Bucks. Thus the model we adopted was to a large extent tested and this was a good foundation to ensure that we have broadly achieved our aims. As was inevitable, we made adaptations to our particular local circumstances. In testing our training and recording methodology in the pilot phase of the project we refined our approach to developing volunteers' skills and presenting the material they generate. This will be reflected in our 2-year continuation phase in which we hope to train further volunteers and produce a further 30 site dossiers.

The key lessons and adaptations are as follows:

a) Formal Training Programme

Our formal training programme was successful. We realised that one of the training sites (chosen in part because of the facilities it offered as well as being a suitable site for assessment), Green Park, was probably a little too complex in its issues for initial training of raw recruits. We will therefore use two relatively simple sites in our future training programmes. Tree identification sessions on site have proved a great success, particularly as group bonding sessions.

b) Building skills of volunteers after Formal Training

We learnt that it takes considerable time, after the formal training phase, for volunteer researchers/recorders to apply the training and gain the skills through their own individual participation thus to be able to produce the site reports in the complex format we adopted (based on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens). Our estimate of the rate of production of the number of site dossiers we anticipated was somewhat optimistic, even though the volunteers were enthusiastic and committed to the project. This was reflected in the slower rate at which we used our grant money and so we were granted an extension by the HLF of 3 months to July 2015. At one point we considered simplifying the reports in the dossiers but decided not to do this as the volunteers seemed willing to persevere with the original format and the results are very worthwhile and useful. Volunteer recorders feel a considerable sense of achievement when their own dossiers are complete.

The amount of input to mentor volunteers and tutor them while preparing site dossiers to the set format has been greater than anticipated, but this has not proved insurmountable.

c) Costs

The estimate of costs overall was about correct, except that one main aspect that we had identified was not used. The crucial expenses were those of the paid trainer and training facilities, the paid project manager/administrator (2 days/month), along with the volunteers' expenses and printing. The paid editor, however, was not used as it was found that one of the managing volunteers, Sarah Rutherford, was best placed to edit the site dossiers, having overseen the process of creating them with each group of volunteers. This saving of £1,500 meant that additional sites could be addressed instead, with the costs spread over the other cost headings and the grant period extended from 12 to 15 months. The complex site initially used for formal training sessions (Green Park) was relatively expensive to hire and the two smaller sites that will replace it will be considerably cheaper. We attach the spreadsheet of expenditure to this report.

d) Retention of Volunteers

We estimated the level of retention of volunteers more or less correctly. We believe that about 10-12 of the 20 trained will be retained into the continuation phase of the project, along with the managing volunteers. They have formed an enthusiastic and cohesive group who wish to apply their newly developed research, analysis and recording skills to further sites of local importance in Bucks.

e) Selection of Sites Recorded

Originally we had intended to target sites in Wycombe District as we believed this particular authority was developing a Local List into which the information could feed. However, despite strong efforts, we did not manage to develop a close working relationship with that authority. More importantly we needed to take into account the interests of our volunteers, who were drawn from county-wide, in their locality, and so (with permission from the HLF) they covered sites throughout the historic county of Bucks (pre-1974 boundary), including a number in Wycombe District. As this was a pilot project we felt we should be flexible in order to understand better how to fit with volunteer recorders' own interests and assist with their recruitment and retention. We believe this flexibility in the geographical location of sites chosen for assessment based on volunteers' wishes was crucial, but we have also adopted a policy where possible of prioritising sites that are at risk of a considerable degree of change (in line with Historic England). We have also prioritised several locally significant Lancelot 'Capability' Brown sites as we wish to contribute to the CB300 Festival work in 2016.

In one case (St John's House, High Wycombe) it was decided that the designed landscape of a chosen site was too incomplete on the ground to warrant a full dossier (a large office block and housing had been built on most of the site). In this case a note of this assessment and its outcome will be lodged with the HER. This approach will be adopted where further sites are identified in which the fabric is too severely degraded to warrant recording.

4. Outcomes

Of the 18 sites fully addressed between May 2014 and 31 July 2015, 17 site dossiers were prepared, distributed to owners, Bucks County Council HER, and Parks and Gardens Database UK. Ten are available on the BGT web site with the rest to be uploaded shortly.

A further 12 sites are in the early stages of further research and recording.

20 volunteers were trained in a defined methodology to carry out the detailed level of research, site appraisal and written recording.

10-12 of these volunteers are likely to progress as a cohesive group into the continuation phase, 2015-17.

Based on the experience learnt in the Pilot Project we will continue this research and recording format for a further two years to 2017, and we hope beyond 2017. We have sufficient funding for this continuation phase acquired from two charities and our own internal funds.

5. Benefits of the HLF Funding

We are and will remain extremely grateful for the HLF financial contribution and endorsement of our aims.

Key benefits include:

1. The funding of the Pilot Project by the HLF has enabled us to run this pilot project and to test and refine our methodology for application in the continuation phase.
2. HLF funding has proved invaluable in our quest for funding for the continuation project. We strongly believe that the HLF's initial confidence in, and endorsement of, the aims and methodology of the project by offering such a level of funding has been a critical element in securing funding from external bodies to continue the project.
3. We have benefitted from the discipline of adhering to the HLF stipulations of the grant award and the associated detailed monitoring of project progress and expenditure which we have adopted. In this way we have kept a close eye on these aspects with a resultant detailed understanding that will benefit future phases of the project.
4. The involvement of the HLF in the project has proved of considerable interest to other County Gardens Trusts and the AGT and may well inspire other groups to apply for HLF funding to initiate similar projects.

6. Acknowledgements

We wish to record our grateful thanks to the HLF for their award and to the casework staff with whom we worked: Lucy Perry and Sue Washington. The relationship was made as easy as possible and we are most grateful to them for their help.

7. Attachments:

Project expenses spreadsheet

17 Site Dossiers prepared during the Pilot Project.

Appendix 1 List of Sites Addressed

Appendix 2 BGT accounts 2014-15

Appendix 1 List of Sites Addressed in BGT Pilot R & R Project (31 July 2015)**Sites Fully or Nearly Completed**

Site Name	Type of Designed Landscape	Ownership/access	Outcome
Alscot Lodge, Princes Risborough	C19 villa garden	Privately owned	Dossier completed
Aylesbury Cemetery	Mid-C19 public cemetery	Publicly owned	Dossier completed
Bletchley Park	Country House park/ garden & WWII intelligence site	Corporately & privately owned	Dossier completed; final editing required
Brands House, H Wycombe	C19 villa garden	Privately owned	Dossier completed
Castle Hill House, High Wycombe Museum	C19 Town garden	Publicly owned	Dossier completed
Chenies Manor House	Tudor park and garden	Privately owned, open for events and to the public regularly	Dossier completed
Dinton Hall	Country House park/ garden	Privately owned	Dossier completed
Green Park (Aston Clinton Park)	Country House park/ garden	Publicly owned	Dossier completed
High Wycombe Cemetery	Mid-C19 public cemetery	Publicly owned	Dossier completed
Horsenden Manor, Princes Risborough	Country House park/ garden	Privately owned	Dossier completed
Lillies, Weedon	Country House park/ garden	Privately owned	Dossier completed
Marlow Cemetery	Mid-C19 public cemetery	Publicly owned	Dossier completed
Princes Risborough Manor House	Town house garden, early origins	National Trust owned	Dossier completed
St John's House, H Wycombe	C19 villa garden	Corporate	Appraised. No dossier as too little survives. HER informed.

St Katherine's, Parmoor	Country House park/ garden	Charitable trust, conference centre	Dossier completed
Stoke Court	Country House park/ garden	Corporately & privately owned	Dossier completed
Stoke Place	Country House park/ garden Capability Brown	Corporate (hotel)	Dossier completed; final editing required
Winslow Hall	Town house garden, late C17 origins	Privately owned, open for events	Dossier completed

Sites in the Early Stages of Research and Recording by 31 July 2015

Barton Hartshorn	Arts and Crafts garden	Privately owned	In progress
Chalfont Park	Country House park/ garden Capability Brown	Corporately & privately owned	Dossier almost completed
Chilton House	Country House park/ garden	Privately owned	In progress
Danesfield House, Marlow	Country House park/ garden	Country house hotel	In progress
Durdant Court, Denham	Country House garden	Corporate	In progress
Heatherden Hall, Iver (Pinewood Studios)	Country House garden	Corporate	In progress
Little Haylings, Denham	Arts and Crafts garden	Privately owned	In progress
Rayners, Penn School	Country House garden	School	In progress
Rignalls, Great Missenden	Arts and Crafts garden	Privately owned	In progress
Uplands House, H Wycombe	C19 villa garden	Corporate	In progress
Wittington House, Marlow	Country House park/ garden	Commercial HQ	In progress
Woodrow High House, Amersham	Country House garden	Corporate	In progress

Appendix 2 BGT Accounts 2014-15

Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Income and Expenditure Accounts for the year ending ending 31st March 2015

	2014			2015		
	<i>General activity</i>	<i>Research & Recording</i>	<i>Totals</i>	<i>General activity</i>	<i>Research & Recording</i>	<i>Totals</i>
INCOME						
HLF Grant		£8,900.00				
Transfer from BGT reserves		£1,000.00				
Members subs	£1,193.12			£1,378.12		
Events	£3,227.90			£4,601.15		
Donations	£55.00	£100.00		£25.00		
Misc	£0.00			£0.00		
Sales	£111.00			£120.48		
Inland Rev-Gift aid	£340.00			£340.00		
Interest on Bank deposit	£3.38			£3.38		
	<u>£4,930.40</u>	<u>£10,000.00</u>	<u>£14,930.40</u>	<u>£6,468.13</u>	<u>£0.00</u>	<u>£6,468.13</u>
EXPENDITURE						
Research & Recording		£2,117.43			£7,101.66	
Admin	£194.03			1475.48		
Postage	£102.45			£213.38		
Events	£2,931.37			£3,538.98		
Printing	£1,247.37			£0.00		
Misc	£592.50			£0.00		
Donations, prizes, grants	£250.00			£100.00		
Schools	£0.00			£0.00		
Purchases	£0.00			£614.41		
Depreciation	£28.00			£24.79		
	<u>£5,345.72</u>	<u>£2,117.43</u>	<u>£7,463.15</u>	<u>£5,967.04</u>	<u>£7,101.66</u>	<u>£13,068.70</u>
Outcome for year	-£415.32	£7,882.57	£7,467.25	£501.09	-£7,101.66	-£6,600.57
			£11,173.72			
Carried forward 1st April			-£1,000.00			£17,640.97
Accumulated funds			<u>£17,640.97</u>			<u>£11,040.40</u>

Balance Sheet

	2014	2015
	£	£
Fixed Assets	£247.86	£223.07
Debtors	£695.00	£1,020.00
Savings Account	£6,721.48	£6,724.86
Bank Current Account	£10,205.38	£3,072.47
Accruals	-£228.75	
Accumulated funds	<u>£17,640.97</u>	<u>£11,040.40</u>