

THE GARDENS TRUST

Research Conserve Campaign



The Gardens Trust
Impact Report 2022





The Gardens Trust is now 7 years old, and in that time we have seen a lot of change.

We are not just 'building back from Covid' – we are ambitious and increasingly strategic. Our members and supporters are critical to our work, so we are producing this Impact Report to share what's been happening. The next few years should be very exciting, and we are grateful to be able to rely on you.

Peter Hughes Chairman, the Gardens Trust

Our statutory consultee work

In 2022 we dealt with 1701 planning application consultations and made 610 written responses, working alongside volunteer colleagues in all 37 County Gardens Trusts. In some these responses have seen successful outcomes in protecting historic designed landscapes, in others, sadly not.

Cases have included:

- › unauthorized development of an intrusive and damaging two-lane access road, car park and café in the parkland of Thornbridge Hall, in Derbyshire, with Grade II Victorian gardens. The Public Inquiry for this case closed in November 2022 and as the year ended we were waiting for the Secretary of State's decision.
- › a huge new development engulfing Hampton Court Station, which was built to bring tourists and give them tempting views of the palace. This development will be highly visible at Hampton Court in key views from many points across the Thames including the main drive, Pond Gardens, Banqueting House and Privy Garden as well as the palace itself. We objected in the strongest terms at various points in the application process and the appeal as the latest chapter in this saga of over two decades.

The appeal inspector took little notice of heritage matters despite many objections on these grounds, and allowed permission. The final resort is an arcane 1913 act of parliament which prohibited development of over fifty foot on South Western Railways land in the vicinity of royal palaces and parks, which this development breaches by some six foot. We await a decision from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.



› a huge new school building in one of the most significant areas of the landscape of Stowe in Buckinghamshire, an internationally iconic Grade I landscape shared across a private boarding school and the National Trust. In this case, Buckinghamshire Council's planning committee approved the application, ignoring advice from all the conservation bodies and experts as well as their own staff recommendation. Our request for the decision to be Called In was refused because the Secretary of State said that planning matters should be decided at a local level unless of national importance, seemingly oblivious that Stowe is not just of national but international significance.

› various iterations of a proposal to put 20 holiday lodges and other associated leisure facility buildings at the heart of a WS Gilpin picturesque landscape around the lake at Marston Park in Somerset, a Grade II registered site in divided ownership. With the Somerset Gardens Trust we have been objecting for several years to these proposals. Most recently, the applicant started offering tent accommodation, without planning permission but applying for a Certificate of Lawful Use, and we feared they were attempting to start a precedent. We wrote a 4th letter of objection opposing any attempt to commercialise such activities at Marston. To our great relief the CLU was comprehensively turned down and Mendip District Council quoted our letter in some detail in their officer's report. Whilst this is encouraging, we doubt we have heard the last of Marston.

- › Following joint Gardens Trust and Northumbria Gardens Trust objections, modifications were made to the proposed residential-retail development south of the Grade II landscape of Belford Hall. We continue to monitor this case.
- › London Parks & Gardens, London's County Gardens Trust, continued to lead the challenge to protect Victoria Tower Gardens in Westminster and took the UK Government to court arguing that legislation setting up the park had been incorrectly overlooked. This historic Grade II* public park is adjacent to Westminster Palace World Heritage Site. It attracts thousands of visitors daily and was a vital space for managing the queue for the late-Queen's Lying-In-State with over a quarter of a million people passing through.
- › The Government selected the site for building a UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre and planning approval was given in 2021 following a planning inquiry. In April 2022, the High Court heard the challenge by London Parks & Gardens and agreed that the London County Council 1900 Act "imposes an enduring obligation to lay out and retain the...land for use as a public garden" thus quashing the planning approval. The Government sought to appeal the decision but the Court of Appeal upheld the earlier judgment in favour of London Parks & Gardens. Sadly, in January 2023 the Prime Minister announced an intention to introduce primary legislation to continue this project and build on the park so the campaign continues.
- › Yorkshire Gardens Trust objected to the installation of a mini golf course in the Grade II Museum Gardens in York, which were laid out by Sir John Murray Naesmyth for the Yorkshire Philosophical Society in 1844 as private pleasure grounds for Society members, designed to provide a setting for the Yorkshire Museum and the ancient monuments in its vicinity, incorporating botanical gardens. We are delighted that permission was refused.

In all these cases, our small team of part time conservation staff worked closely with volunteers from the County Gardens Trusts to put forward robust expert arguments for managing change at these sites. We receive some grant funding for casework from Historic England but much of this work is made possible by crucial income from membership.

"it's worth noting that apart from the high profile cases, consistent pressure from the Gardens Trust and County Gardens Trusts can improve outcomes"

Alison Allighan, Conservation Casework Manager

Planning policy

We worked with others to influence the Planning Reform White Paper and Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and in 2022 were delighted that the Bill provided that the statutory duties for listed buildings and conservation areas will be extended to introduce a statutory special regard to desirability of preserving or enhancing designated heritage assets and their settings not previously covered, ie Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, World Heritage Sites, Protected Wreck Sites and Registered Battlefields. The Gardens Trust will continue to monitor and lobby to ensure that this proposal, or indeed something more robust, becomes law. As 2022 came to a close the government launched a consultation into proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and we moved into gear to comment with County Gardens Trust colleagues.

Communicating

In 2022 we expanded our reach on social media more than ever before. Followers, likes and engagement rates all increased on every one of our three platforms: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. This is due to both an increase in the amount we post as well as the wider range of stories we've shared. We covered topics such as LGBT+ identifying gardeners and horticulturists for LGBT+ History Month; the life of John Ystumllyn for Black History Month; International Women's Day posts on gardeners such as Gertrude Jekyll, Beth Chatto, Rosemary Verey, Margery Fish, Vita Sackville-West, Ellen Willmott, Kitty Lloyd Jones, Beatrix Havergal and Norah Lindsay; the journey of plants to Britain for South Asian Heritage Month; an extremely popular April Fool's Day post featuring hahas; and regular posts on #TopiaryTuesday, #FloralFriday, the weekly

conservation casework list, and 'County Gardens Trusts in Focus'. However, the impact of our social media posts goes beyond the stats. Our social media team now feel more confident in sharing the content that wider audiences will like, and now possess the tools and knowledge to ensure we continue spreading our message and purpose in new and exciting ways.

We are proud to also have a popular monthly eBulletin covering sector highlights. Alongside this, our weekly blog told gripping stories from The Hanging Gardens of Babylon to Floral Clocks via Gardening advice from a squint-eyed monk and Georgian Jubilation.

In 2022 the blog had 93,579 visitors!



Social media stats

Twitter

297 more Followers (+10% increase)
Engagement rate at 3% (1% increase)
Impressions peaked to over 50,000 in April 2022
Profile visits up by 2000



Facebook

Posts have increased reach of up to 2500
Posts reached a combined total of over 21,000 accounts



Instagram

599 more Followers (+31% increase)
Monthly reach increased by 700



Unforgettable Gardens

We have continued to share our **Unforgettable Gardens** theme around Value, Vulnerability and Volunteering in relation to historic designed landscapes from Sandringham in Norfolk, to Hardwick Park in County Durham, to Hestercombe in Somerset, to Princess Gardens in Devon. **Over 1,545,000 people have heard these messages from Unforgettable Gardens** so far, through online lectures, social media, website stories, national media, events and an online exhibition with the Royal Horticultural Society.

thegardenstrust.org/campaigns/unforgettable-gardens-saving-our-garden-heritage



Garden History Journal



We marked the 50th anniversary of our journal by publishing a special 50th anniversary edition, which celebrated and revisited 13 papers from each of the previous decades. This was made possible by charitable grants from the Finnis Scott Foundation and Beford Road Charitable Fund and generous donations from our members. We were delighted to be able to give away 50 copies of the Journal to people working in the field of landscape design and management but new to garden history, via the Professional Gardeners Guild and the Landscape Institute. Thanks to brilliant support from the SDS Group this issue is available online, with plans to develop it into an interactive 'garden history timeline' through 2023.

thegardenstrust.org/research/journal

Leading new research

The annual New Research Symposium welcomed online participants to hear 8 unique lectures packed with new research such as 'Sir Reginald Blomfield - a reappraisal'; 'Through Visitors' Eyes - a data-driven exploration of parks and gardens of the eighteenth century'; 'Margaret Foley's Fountain - Sculpture, Horticulture, 'Imperial-ism at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition' and 'When Men Wore Flowers: The Correspondence of Men's Elite Fashion and Eighteenth-Century English Garden'.

The Mavis Batey Essay Prize is intended to encourage vibrant, scholarly writing and new research, especially by those who have not yet had their work published. This year's entries were so impressive that we were delighted to award it to two winners: Caroline Ikin for her essay 'Force, Fortitude, and Fortune: John Ruskin's gardening at Brantwood'; and Henry Jacob for 'An Imaginary landscape: Bentham's Botanic Vision for the Panopticon'.

'This award has redoubled my commitment to conserve and celebrate landscapes through research. Encouraged by the Gardens Trust, I am currently investigating the history of the Parque Municipal Summit whilst in Panama. I am eager to remain involved with this special community over the coming years.'

Henry Jacob, co-winner of the Mavis Batey Essay Prize 2022



Volunteer support

We are running a 2-year project to support and strengthen volunteers working in the sector, thanks to Historic England funding. 'Volunteers Save Space!' continues the work of the past decade in supporting volunteers in the 37 County Gardens Trusts, but also extends this support to find, engage and train new volunteers from outside of our existing network.

In 2022 a total of 452 people attended our online training webinars. Topics included 'Running a Heritage Open Day'; 'Ways to Future Proof your County Gardens Trust'; and 'Beginning your Garden History Research and Where to Put It'. We were delighted to be able to hold an in-person workshop again in October, with six County Gardens Trusts meeting up at Highbury Hall, Birmingham to talk about finding, recruiting and maintaining volunteers for the range of roles in their Trusts.

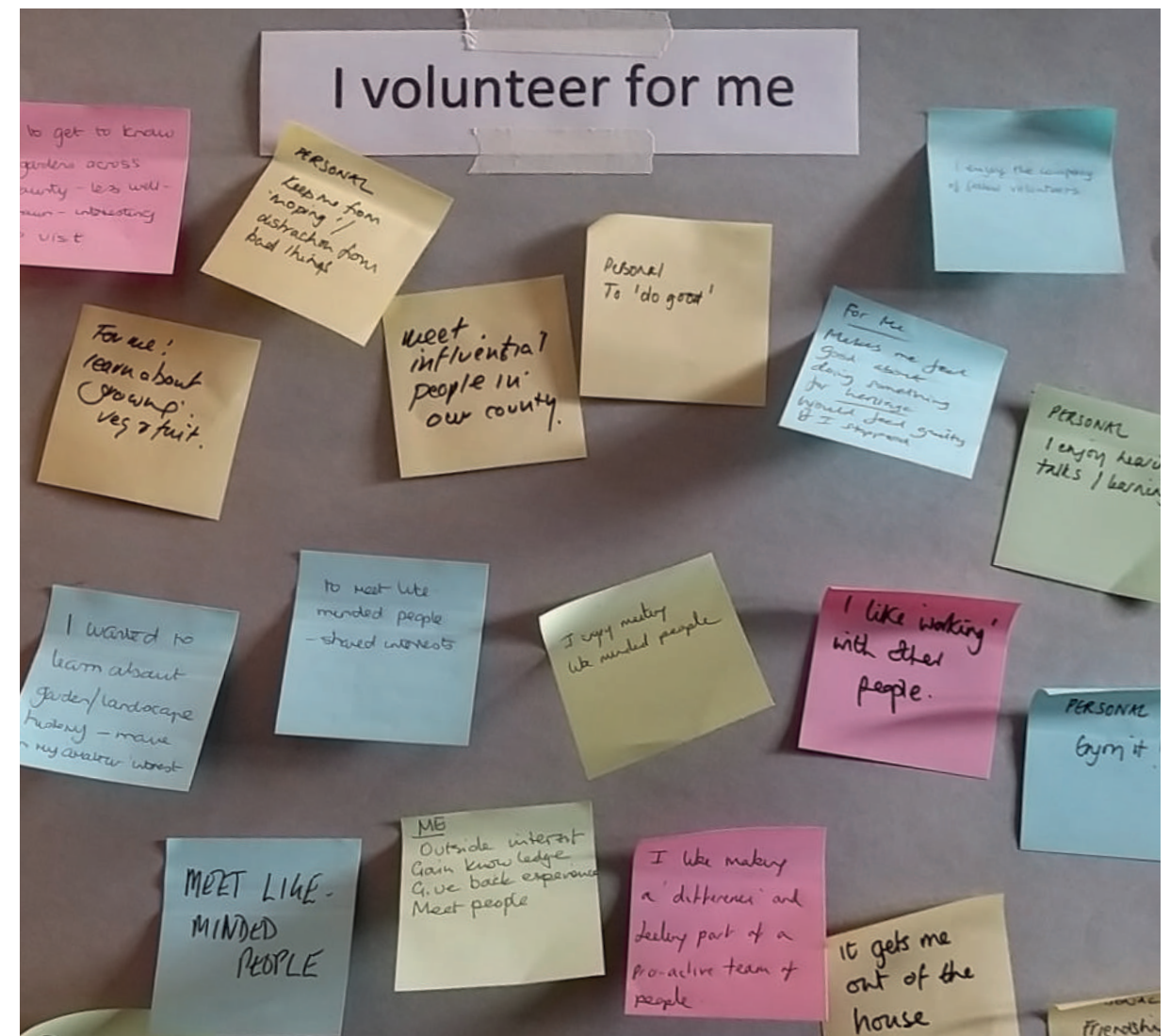
'For years I've wanted a robust introduction to structured research into garden history and how to record findings usefully. So, your course was spot on for me.'

New researcher



'Your presentations gave insights that prompted reflection of current volunteer practice in our own setting, and offering constructive strategies based on successful experiences.'

County Gardens Trust volunteer



The Resource Hub on the Gardens Trust website offers 469 documents, advice notes and presentations. If you need help or advice there's a good chance that someone has covered this before and it's on the Hub!

thegardenstrust.org/research/journal

Suffolk's Unforgettable Garden Story

Working alongside this national volunteer support effort, 'Suffolk's Unforgettable Garden Story' is working with Suffolk Gardens Trust and new volunteers to research and record landscapes in the county, some of which will be added to the National Heritage List. So far, 35 Suffolk volunteers have joined the project as researchers, and have taken part in a programme of research training. This training has also been open to other CGTs, and 89 members nationally signed-up alongside Suffolk volunteers.



'The training has been excellent. The online sessions in particular have been very good (...) well-structured, packed with useful content yet interesting and engaging throughout. (I am) Looking forward immensely to getting stuck in!' ~ **Gareth Thomas**, Volunteer

'I have enjoyed the training a great deal and found it interesting. I like the fact that I could watch the webinars at a time that fitted in with my other commitments. I particularly liked the visit to The Hold in Ipswich and meeting others taking part in the project.' ~ **Lindsay Panton**, Volunteer

Historic England identified 51 sites of interest across Suffolk, 10 of which have been highlighted as a top priority for potential registration. Research is underway on all of these priority sites by volunteers, along with an additional 20 sites from the complete list. Volunteers are also being encouraged to research local sites of meaning to them, and their communities, and 4 further sites, suggested by volunteers, are being researched also.

Christopher Laine, Historic England Landscape Architect, said: "With the help of local people, this fantastic project will help us to learn more about Suffolk's historic designed landscapes. I'm really looking forward to hearing about the Suffolk parks, gardens and green spaces that people love. I'm sure we'll be discovering some hidden historic gems that need protection and support."

'It is always delightful and interesting to meet other people who are also interested in local history. I have already made two contacts at SUGS to whom I have been able to send information.' ~ **Sue Andrews**, Volunteer

Capacity building for County Gardens Trusts



It is essential that we support our affiliated County Gardens Trusts and their volunteers, without whom we would struggle to deliver our planning response work, benefit from local research, or have impact at a local level. For some CGTs, the pandemic has brought opportunities - online lectures and new ways of doing things have brought fresh perspectives and new members. For many though, the past few years have been a real stomach blow.

During the pandemic, 23 of 37 CGTs saw membership numbers decrease, and even those with 300+ members are reporting a shortage of key volunteers coming forward. A survey of CGTs in February 2022 showed that support was particularly required in finding new volunteers to undertake audience development, conservation and planning responses, and research and recording work. To put it bluntly, many stalwart CGT volunteers have had too much on their shoulders for too long, so we need to find ways of sharing that load.

Community Champions

Since the success of our Garden History Lucky Dip activity in the Summer, we have been developing our Community Champions Scheme, due to be piloted in 2023.

This is a project aimed at sharing our Garden History Lucky Dip activity with other groups and organisations, enabling them to introduce garden history to new audiences in their own local communities. We have been busy recruiting volunteers from across the country to help us with this and as a thanks for taking part we're offering free activity training, resource packs and a year's membership of the Gardens Trust. This has already been helping us to build links with new organisations and volunteers and if successful, it will be a very efficient way of reaching out to new audiences across the country. Stay tuned!



Gardens Trust Community Grant

We have been delighted to offer a new Gardens Trust Community Grant, for volunteer projects supporting historic designed landscapes. **The grant is for up to £2,500** and is intended to help seed-fund volunteer projects that will support historic designed landscapes in the UK. This has been made possible by a generous donation from the **Gentian Trust**, established by Peter and Rosy Gent, who are members of the Gardens Trust. We were absolutely thrilled by the responses from some superb community groups, and were able to award the grant to Northamptonshire Gardens Trust to set up a new Friends group for historic Billing Road Cemetery, and to Bradgate Park Trust for new tools and equipment.

We are pleased to be able to offer this Grant again in 2023.

Please visit: thegardenstrust.org/about-us/community-engagement

Extraordinary event offer

Over 20,000 tickets were sold for the online lectures in 2022.

Topics ranged from market gardens to Kew's Palm House to the role of female artists in floral and botanic art. Guests zoomed in from Sweden to India to South Africa to the Netherlands. That is an astronomical number of people across the world who have learnt about garden history!

Historic Landscapes Assembly

We were delighted to be able to host our unique sector networking event for professionals and volunteers in person again in November. We were joined by 76 attendees from 14 County Gardens Trusts, 10 national heritage organisations and plenty of welcome individuals. Particularly valued were a presentation on planning reform by Victoria Thomson, Historic England's Head of National Strategy, and a lively panel discussion on climate change.



A year to strategise

Through 2022 we worked hard to produce our Business Plan 2023-25, which we are now ready to deliver. We also delivered the Engaging with our Future project, to improve our resilience and impact through audience development and fundraising strategies, as well as important digital, outreach and membership pilots.

This has been a £95,700 project, of which £75,700 is a grant award from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to National Lottery players.

Market research

As part of our National Lottery Heritage Fund project, we carried out a unique market survey of those already engaged with our work, and those who were not yet engaged.

This showed that for people interested in our work but not yet involved, protection from development or neglect is by far the main concern when it comes to historic gardens and landscapes. We also found out that amongst the ethnic minority people we surveyed, not knowing anyone who is a member or involved with us was a key barrier. For the under-45s, lack of time and money were notable barriers. We're embedding this new knowledge into our plans for engaging new audiences now and in the future. It is also being shared more widely with County Gardens Trusts, who will be able to use this insight to reach the wider audiences they desperately need to continue protecting historic landscapes long into the future.

Engagement and outreach

This year also saw us share the world of garden history with younger and more diverse audiences. Thanks to Lottery players, we delivered **5 outreach events**, all of which connected with people who hadn't previously engaged with the Gardens Trust.

In the summer, our Audience Development and Engagement Officer ran **Garden History Lucky Dip** and **Make your Own Terrarium** sessions with two organisations in London - Forest Gate Community Garden and a refuge run by the Medaille Trust for those who have been the victims of modern slavery. 35 people from diverse backgrounds have taken part in these activities, most of whom were having their first taste of garden history. Both were keen to be involved with us again in the future, demonstrating there is a wider appetite than expected for garden history. We also ran the Garden History Lucky Dip at the very first Gardeners' World Autumn Fair at Audley End, where we chatted to hundreds of visitors about our mission to protect historic designed landscapes.

As a thanks to Lottery players who have helped support our work over the last few years, we also hosted a special free talk on the landscape history of cemeteries with Sheldon K Goodman. Sheldon remains as a regular speaker at the Gardens Trust, demonstrating the new relationships that our outreach work continues to foster. We're also continuing to reach out to younger audiences by actively involving them in our work. **In 2022 we recruited 6 new young digital volunteers** who have been busy producing TikTok videos as well as working on our Unforgettable Gardens of the Month project, helping us to highlight the wonder and vulnerability of gardens on our website and social media.

thegardenstrust.org
   [thegardenstrust](https://www.instagram.com/thegardenstrust)

Key stats from the Gardens Trust's year:

610 Written responses to planning applications affecting historic designed landscapes

Registered parks and gardens we had planning consultations for **674**

37 County Gardens Trusts we worked with & supported

Volunteers trained **548**

£18,354 Received in donations and legacies

157 online lectures, with ticket sales of **20,000**

300,000+ Views of our social media posts sharing messages about historic parks and gardens

Amount of new papers published in 3 issues of the Garden History Journal **28**

1,215 members, grown from 1,048 in 2021



“We are proud of all that we have achieved since the Gardens Trust was formed. It has been possible only through the support of our loyal team of staff and volunteers together with that of our own members and the members of the County Gardens Trusts.

Now we have a firm foundation on which to broaden the appeal of the Gardens Trust and build for a strong and successful future.”

Linden Groves, Head of Operations and Strategy

Please join or donate!

Our work relies on the generosity of our members & supporters. Please consider joining or donating:

thegardenstrust.org/support-us



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