

## Sources for researching historic parks & gardens

The Woodbury Series, No. 395.



*Arboretum, Nottingham.*

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Slide 1.

In our last session we looked at the many places you can find information about your chosen park or garden, online. From heritage databases to Historic England's Register of Parks and Gardens, and from Victorian Ordnance Survey Maps to 21st Century LiDAR surveys. There is a wealth of informative sources out there, some have been researched and specifically put together for sharing online whilst many are original items which have been photographed or copied. Some of these sources are freely available to view whilst others languish behind paywalls waiting to be discovered.

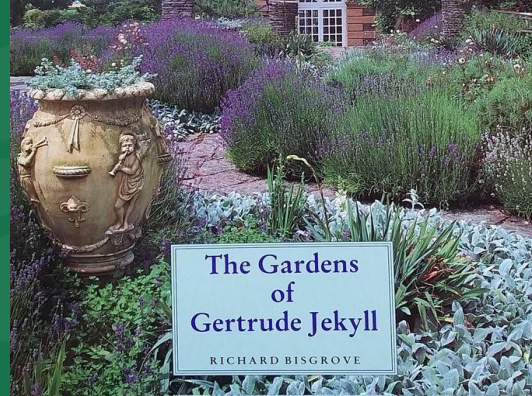
Although this session is part of the Nottinghamshire Gardens Story project, the way we find and interrogate historical sources will be the same for wherever you are researching.

# Primary & Secondary Sources



A primary source is a first-hand or contemporary account of an event or topic.

Secondary sources usually use primary sources and offer interpretation, analysis, or commentary.



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Slide 2.

Sources for historical research fall into 2 main categories – primary sources and secondary sources. Although there are a few tertiary sources out there too – I'll come back to those in a minute.

I looked for some good definitions of primary and secondary sources and the majority agree along these lines.

Primary Sources are anything that was written or created at the point of history you are studying. Yes, they can show bias, either conscious or unconscious, by the person who has written or created the source. But often they are faithful records of events, transactions or activities of their time. Here is a 1990s aerial photograph of Nowton Park in Suffolk, it shows exactly what the park looks like at the time the photo was taken.

Secondary sources are everything else which has been written or created subsequent to the period of history and has been reinterpreted by a third party.

My example: Richard Bisgrove has looked at the plans, plant lists, and gardens associated with Gertrude Jekyll, and produced his book.

Databases      Early Photographs  
 Hand-drawn Plans      Books      Engravings  
 PhD Thesis      Diaries      Old Films      Websites  
 Newspapers      Postcards      Blogs      Letters  
 Sketchbooks      Account Books      ?      Estate Papers  
 O.S. Maps      Census Returns      ?      Magazines  
 Paintings      Conservation Management Plans  
                          Sales particulars



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Slide 3.

Here are some possible sources we can use to find out information about a park or garden, which do you think are Primary Sources?

Letters    Paintings  
Hand-drawn Plans  
Diaries    Sales particulars  
O.S. Maps    Postcards    Newspapers  
Account Books    Books    Databases  
Estate Papers    Old Films    Websites    Blogs  
Early Photographs  
Sketchbooks    Magazines    PhD Thesis  
Census Returns  
Engravings    Conservation Management Plans

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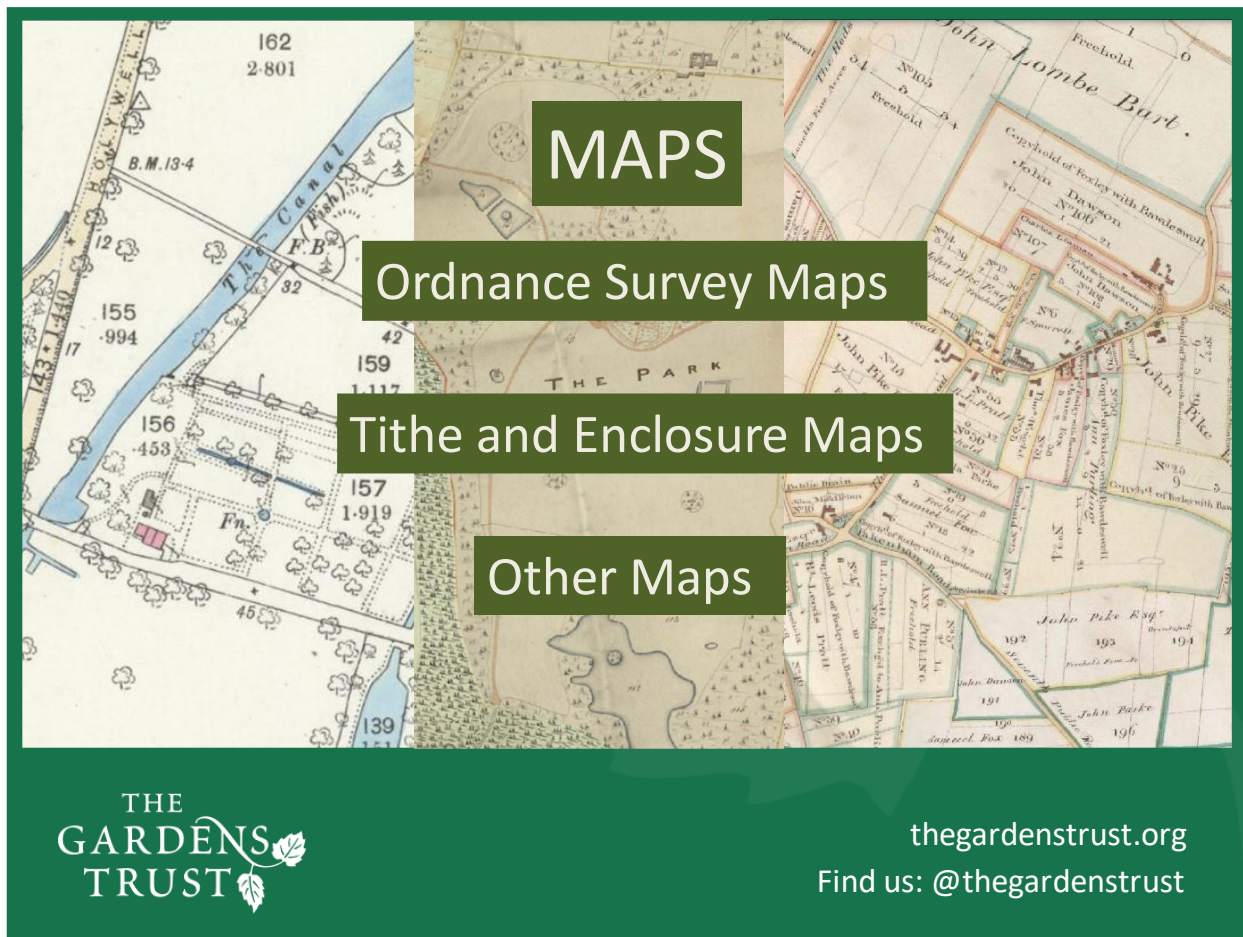
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Slide 4.

I had a think about this and came up with quite a large group of primary sources on the left and not so many secondary on the right – although I had these 5 in the middle which I thought could be both.

I have some doubts even now, but it is important to keep in the back of your mind the origin of the information you are reading or looking at, and whether someone could have misinterpreted or altered it or just presented it with their own spin on things.

I mentioned earlier that there are a few tertiary sources too, these would include encyclopaedias, textbooks and some websites and blogs – in other words whenever secondary sources have been collected together rewritten and published.

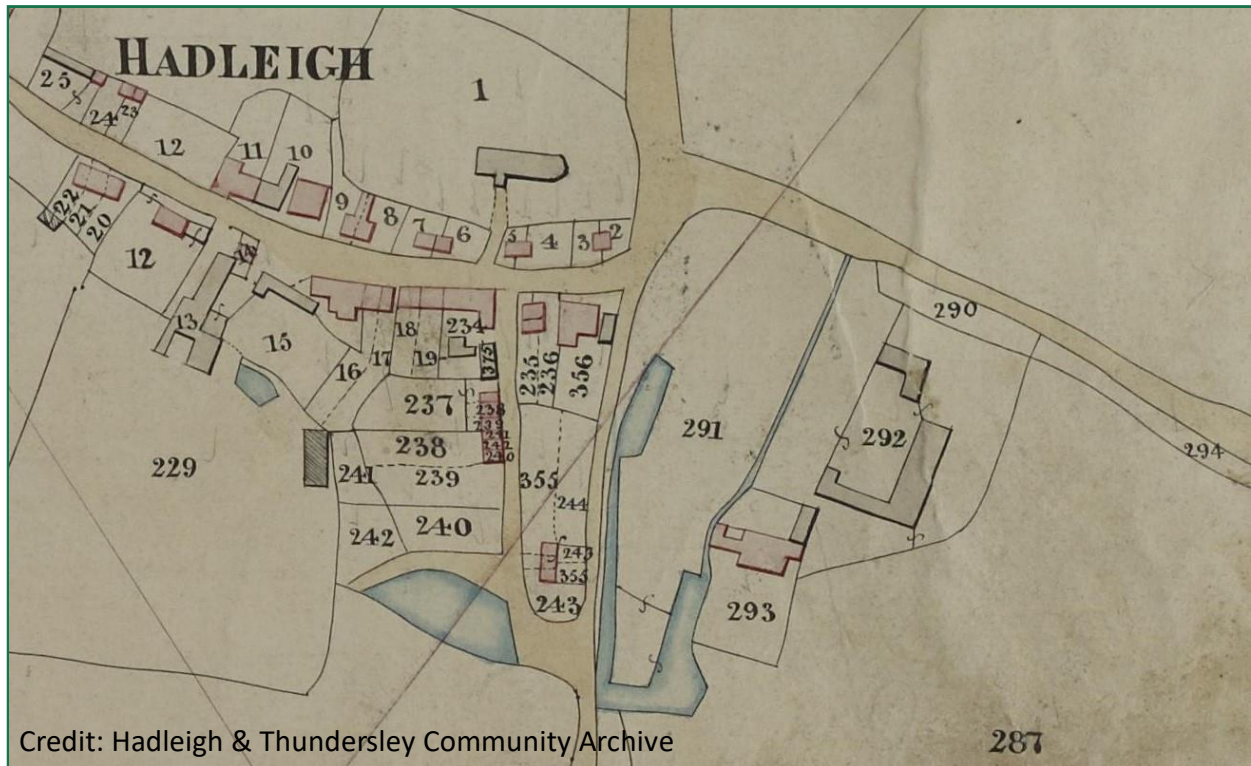


Slide 5.

Let's look at the different types of map that can help us with our research. Maps are usually primary sources. They are surveyed and drawn up to record how the landscape looks at a particular moment in time.

We've just looked at the early Ordnance Survey maps and OS mapping has been pretty accurate from the 1880s, so I think we can safely say that these maps are primary sources, and we can 99% trust the information we find on them.

The next group of maps I'd like to show you, date from the beginning of the 19th century – these are Tithe and Enclosure Maps



Slide 6.

Tithe maps date from the middle of the 19th century.

Before 1836, tithes were paid to the church in 'produce from the land' (crops, animals, timber, fish etc. whatever people could spare) The 1836 Act for the Commutation of Tithes in England and Wales, meant that parishes were responsible for working out the monetary value each householder was due to pay. Therefore, Parish Tithe maps were drawn up to determine the amount of rent payable from each parcel of land, whether it held the dwelling, other buildings or just the land itself.

If you are fortunate to be researching a site in a county where the tithe maps have been digitised, then there is a good chance they are available online. Tithe Maps are all similar and show us a lot of detail particularly if they are accompanied by their apportionment document. Inhabited buildings are shown in red, churches, farm buildings etc are in grey and every single parcel of land has its own number.

The apportionment document will tell you the size of the parcel of land, who owned it, and who lived on it or worked it, if it was not the owner. Often fields have their own name which can give you a clue to what they are used for or their geology or aspect. Not shown on this map detail is woodland, but it is normally shown with tree symbols – often with different symbols for deciduous and evergreen trees.

It is interesting to note that Tithes remained payable on farmland until the 1930s.

How can we view a Tithe Map?

TheGenealogist TreeView Search News & Articles Shop Help & More

Tithe Records

Many family historians want to get an insight into where their ancestors worked and lived. Now they are able to search for their forebears within the fantastic resource that is the comprehensive collection of Tithe records for England and Wales online at TheGenealogist

Other Collections

- The 1939 Register
- Adoption Records
- Birth, Marriage & Death Records
- Census
- WW1 Wounded
- Distinguished Conduct Medal
- Directories
- Education
- Electoral
- Landowner
- Lloyd George Domesday Survey, 1910
- International Records
- Map Explorer
- Military
- Military Medal
- Non-Conformist Records
- Parish Records
- Welsh Parish Records
- Prisoner of War

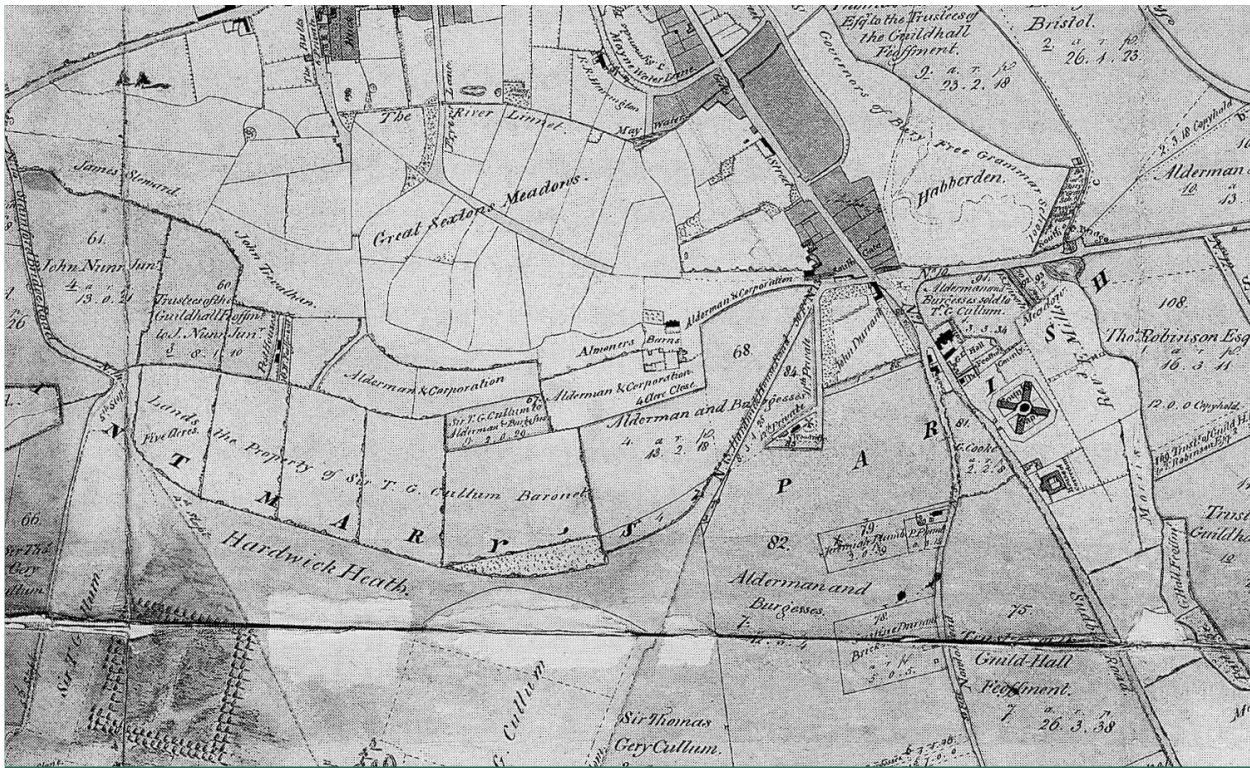
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Slide 7.

Many counties' record offices or local heritage centres have digitised their tithe maps and made them available online. If not, you can visit your local archives in person and ask to see a tithe map – which might be the original or, more likely, a copy of it.

If your search to find a tithe map to view is not successful, then you can view them online on the Genealogist website. There is a short video about Tithe Maps on their website and you can search to see what maps they have, for free. But if you want to view the maps you have to pay a subscription. There are a number of different subscription rates depending on the time span you sign up for or you could sign up for a limited number of searches. If you can, make a list of all the items you would like to see, before you sign up and download or copy them all in the shortest time possible.



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Slide 8.

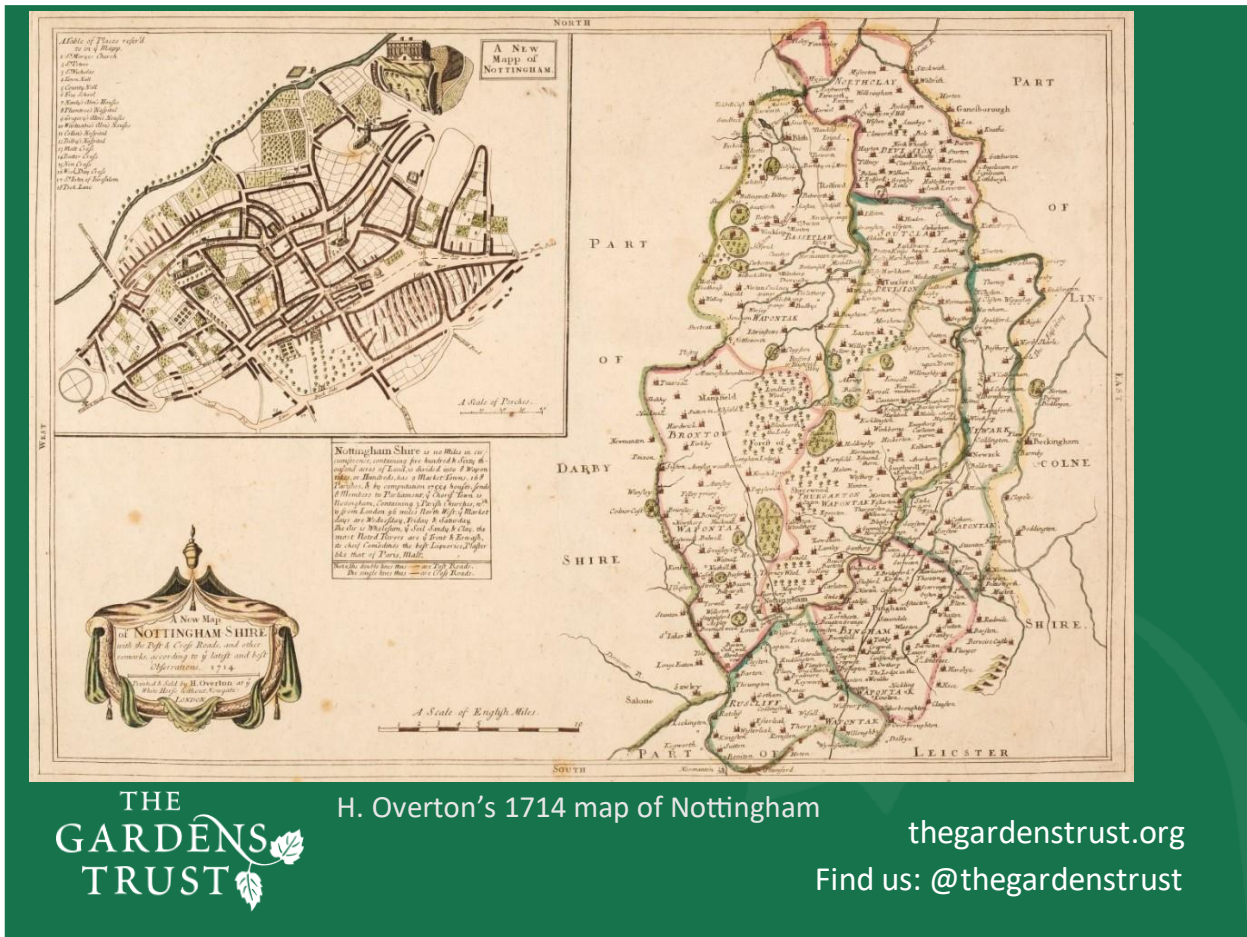
Slightly earlier than Tithe maps are the Enclosure Maps from the early-19th century. However not every parish needed to commission an enclosure map.

Enclosure maps are large scale and of mainly rural areas. Accompanying them are Enclosure Awards, which are legal documents created to record redistribution or reorganisation of land, providing legal proof of historical ownership and the boundaries of landholdings. They may include details of roads, rights of way, waterways, drainage and so on, as well as details of the parcels' landowners, whether they're individuals or institutions. In my opinion they are not as useful to us as the Tithe maps, as they were drawn up to reflect and consolidate the power of the people who commissioned them.

(This is the 1815 Enclosure Map for the area to the south of central Bury St Edmunds, from the St Edmundsbury Chronicle website)

The maps you are interested in might be digitised and online from your local records office or you can enquire at The National Archives in Kew. A book called *The Enclosure Maps of England and Wales*, by Roger J. P. Kain, John Chapman, and Richard R. Oliver 1595-1918 (Cambridge University Press, 2004), might be available to view in the bigger libraries or at Kew, there is mention of a website and the ability to ask for material from the UK Data Archives: hds@essex.ac.uk but I haven't had any personal experience of doing this.





H. Overton's 1714 map of Nottingham

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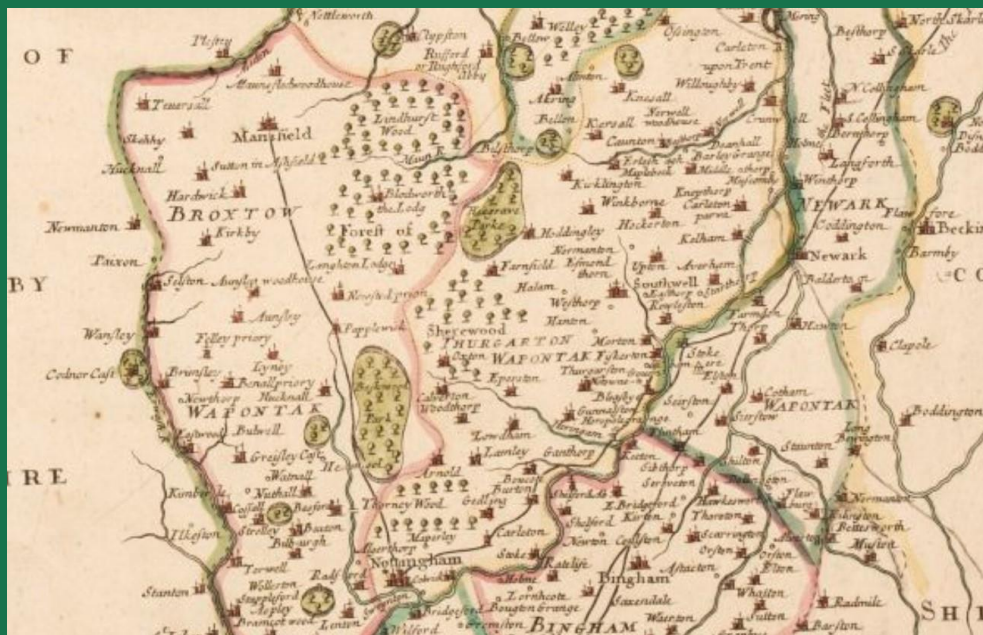
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Slide 9.

We will now take a brief look at earlier maps that you might come across. Always ask yourself, who commissioned the map or drew it and for what purpose? Early maps can have been surveyed with a good degree of accuracy, but they can be way off beam, and it is not always possible to overlay them on an OS map, but studying the relationships between the houses, the church, waterways and the road network can give you a good idea of how they compare with modern maps and the lie of the land today.

Some of these earlier maps will have been digitised and placed online, but a great number will only be available by visiting county record offices or possibly other archives who might hold originals or copies.

This is a 1714 map of Nottinghamshire by H. Overton.



A hundred was the division of a shire for administrative, military and judicial purposes under the common law. Originally, when introduced by the Saxons between 613 and 1017, a hundred had enough land to sustain approximately one hundred households headed by a hundred-man or hundred elder.



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Slide 10.

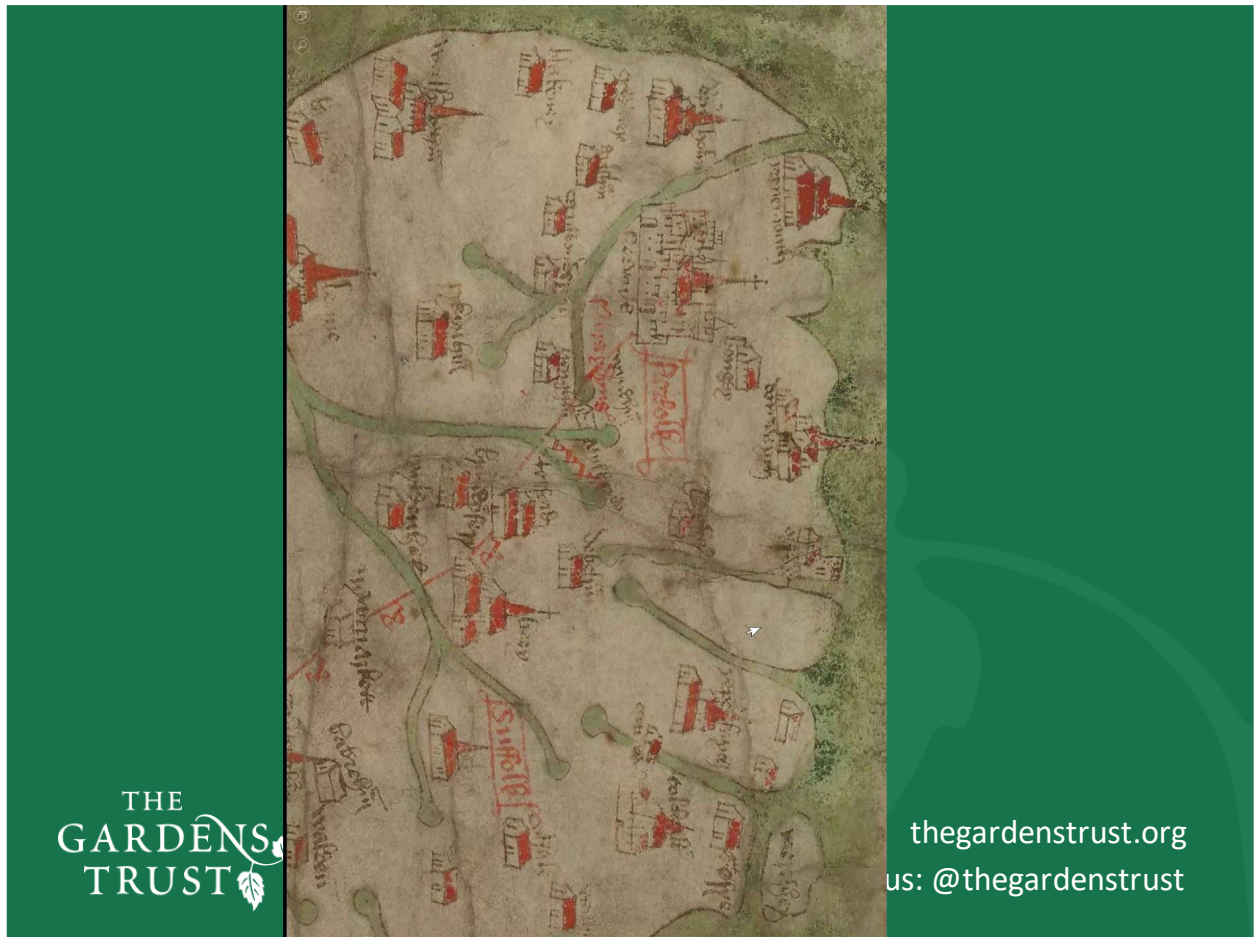
There is a bit of information we can take from county maps such as this, we can see areas of enclosed parkland, which quite often have developed from Medieval deer parks. and the pattern of major routeways between settlements, river courses and some landowners' names. But most importantly we can see how the county was divided into Hundreds – smaller divisions of a county for administrative, military and judicial purposes, shown here by different coloured boundaries on this detail on the Notts map we've just seen.

Knowing which Hundred your park or garden is in, is vital when you go looking for information from older topographies/books on settlements and historic features, because often the parishes are listed alphabetically within each Hundred



Slide 11.

This is part of the Gough Map of around 1410 – it shows monastic sites in Norfolk and Suffolk, not gardens or estates, but it is a good reminder that we are so used to expecting north at the top of maps, but it hasn't always been the case. If I rotate this map, it will make more sense!



Slide 12.

This map is fun to look at but doesn't give us any information about designed landscapes. Hand drawn maps were drawn for a purpose and usually commissioned by a landowner to display their property and holdings. They can be quite detailed and of interest to garden researchers. You might find some of these maps online, but they usually require a trip to an archive or local heritage/history centre.



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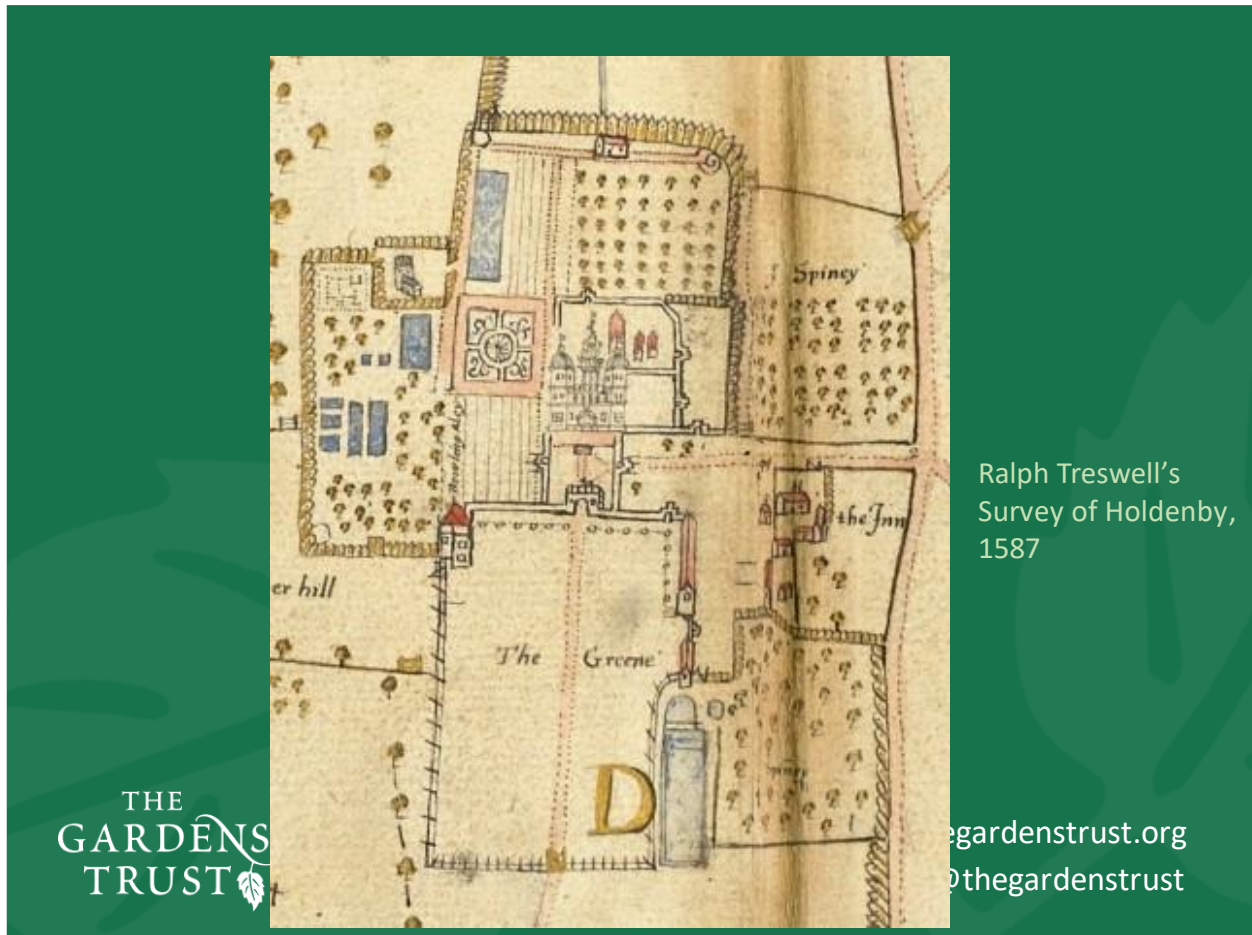
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Slide 13.

This is a delightful 1755 map of small estate belonging to Mr Samuel Wardly, in Worlingworth, Wilby and Brundish. It is on the Cambridge Digital Library website: <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/>  
This is a source well worth having a look at wherever you are researching a park or garden. Both Oxford and Cambridge have items in their archives from across the country.

This plan does not have a scale but does have a table of land parcel sizes so this could be to do with inheritance & drawing up a will or just wanting a record of what Mr Wardly owned. He appears to have a distinct area of orchard across the road from his house. Every access gate is carefully noted along with several ponds in the fields, and a farmyard or stables near the house. In fact, this pond looks like a canal and if we zoom in closer, we can see what looks like a jetty structure. Was the jetty used for fishing or just taking in the views? There is another small building in the garden too – could that be a summerhouse or glasshouse? We can also see from this map who all Mr Wardly's neighbours were!

This is very modest estate compared to some and if you are really fortunate you might come across a hand drawn plan of a much more complicated landscape.



Slide 14.

Hand drawn estate plans survive for larger landscapes and hold wonderful details for us to discover. This plan of 1587 is for Holdenby in Northamptonshire. The Hatton family were movers and shakers in Elizabeth's court with Christopher Hatton rising to the rank of Lord Chancellor. He saw the completion of a grand house with an equally grand landscape and gardens around it. At that time, it was the biggest privately owned house in Western Europe.

As is quite usual, the house itself is lying on its back so you can see one of its main elevations and other smaller buildings are shown in a similar manner. There is so much garden information on this map from the timber paling fence that ran around the formal gardens (to keep the deer out) to trees in straight lines indicating an orchard. There are garden paths and several round features, which look like viewing mounds, including a snail mound in the top right corner. There are walled courts with ornate gateways – some of which still survive – and garden buildings (maybe the tower-like feature was a banqueting house) and a formal parterre to the west, flanked by extensive terraces on the hillside.

Even on more modest sites, early maps and sketch plans can tell you a lot about the status and purse of the owner, how they used the land around their home and if they were following the garden fashions of the period.

There is so much we can learn from maps, from the detailed large-scale OS maps to the quick amateur sketch maps drawn by someone for a specific purpose.

Always keep in mind – who drew up the map, for what purpose and is it original or is it someone's copy?

# Images

Paintings

Engravings

Drawings

Photographs

Aerial Photographs



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Slide 15.

Other pictorial sources come under these categories and, probably everyone's first thought when looking for images is to Google their site using the Images tab and see what comes up. Many useful images have been found this way, so I'm not knocking it! If you are aiming to use these images for a publication or a website, just because they are publicly viewable on the internet, that is not permission enough for you to use them and tracking down the owner to get permission can be incredibly difficult. Copying them for your own research is fine. There is now a wealth of searchable image archives and collections online, so let's have a look at some of the most popular . . .

# UK Online Image Archives

British Library: <https://imagesonline.bl.uk/>

Bridgman Images: <https://www.bridgemanimages.co.uk/en/>

Historic England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/>

National Trust: <http://www.nationaltrustimages.org.uk/>

National Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/photography>

Francis Frith: <https://www.francisfrith.com/uk/search>



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Slide 16.

These sites are all free to search and you can view low resolution images but if you want to purchase digital files of an image, they can get quite expensive. If an image is for your own use or for a non-profit making purpose, it's worth asking if there is a discount to the prices quoted.

British Library (<https://imagesonline.bl.uk/>)

Bridgman Images (<https://www.bridgemanimages.co.uk/en/>)

Historic England (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/>)

National Trust (<http://www.nationaltrustimages.org.uk/>)

National Archives (<https://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/photography>)

Francis Frith is (<https://www.francisfrith.com/uk/search>)



The screenshot displays the Inspire website's search results for 'Annesley Hall'. The page features a search bar with the text 'annesley hall' and a search icon. Below the search bar, there are navigation options for 'LIST VIEW' and 'MAP VIEW'. The search results are presented in a grid of six image thumbnails, each with a caption 'Annesley Hall Grounds' and a unique image ID. Each thumbnail also includes a 'View on Map' link and 'Buy' and 'More' buttons. The background of the slide is a dark green gradient with the text 'THE GARDEN TRUST' and 'gardenstrust.org' visible.

Slide 17.

There are also likely to be image collections in your locality – try the county record office, local heritage libraries, local interest group websites or local press archives.

This is a selection of photos for Annesley Hall on the Nottingham Inspire image archive : <https://www.inspirepicturearchive.org.uk/> These ones are not particularly old but taken in the 1990s before restoration work took place. Most archives have an images collections, so look for some in your county and see what they have.

## US Online Image Archives

Huntingdon Library: <https://hdl.huntington.org/>

Granger Historical Picture Library: <https://www.granger.com/>

Avery Library: <https://library.columbia.edu/libraries/avery.html>

University of Florida: <https://maps.uflib.ufl.edu/>



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Slide 18.

We don't have to confine our search for images to the UK, many overseas universities and fine arts collections have purchased, or been given, UK material. These are four in the United States that I have used in the past but there will be many more, I'm sure. Some, I have had to contact directly to obtain the image files for the pictures I've found on their websites and for others I have been able to download high-resolution images directly.

The US sites are often very generous in allowing you to use their images for free, with the appropriate accreditation. However, if the material you are interested in hasn't been photographed and digitised then you may have to pay quite a lot and then wait several months to see your files produced.



Welbeck in Nottinghamshire by Humphry Repton

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It is wonderful if you find out that paintings and drawings exist for the park or garden you are interested in, and even better if you can see them in person.

With any painting or sketch, you should always allow for some artistic licence, but they can be an accurate record of what the landscape was like, even if they have been executed by an amateur hand. A fine, commissioned painting to hang on a country house wall is not likely to show negative aspects of the landscape but more to demonstrate the good taste and status of the owners.

This is a painting by Humphry Repton showing his design for the grounds around Welbeck House, Notts – can we say that this is what the gardens looked like at the beginning of the 19th century? No, we know that Repton designed parks and gardens for his clients, but we also know that he left it to them to arrange the work with their own staff or local contractors, so we can't say for definite that it did look like this. Other sources from that period might confirm, or not, whether work was carried out. However, Repton's Red Books with his 'before and after' illustrations and written descriptions, do give us an idea of what the landscape looked like at the time of his first visit.

This image is from an online company who produce prints taken from the original works of art.



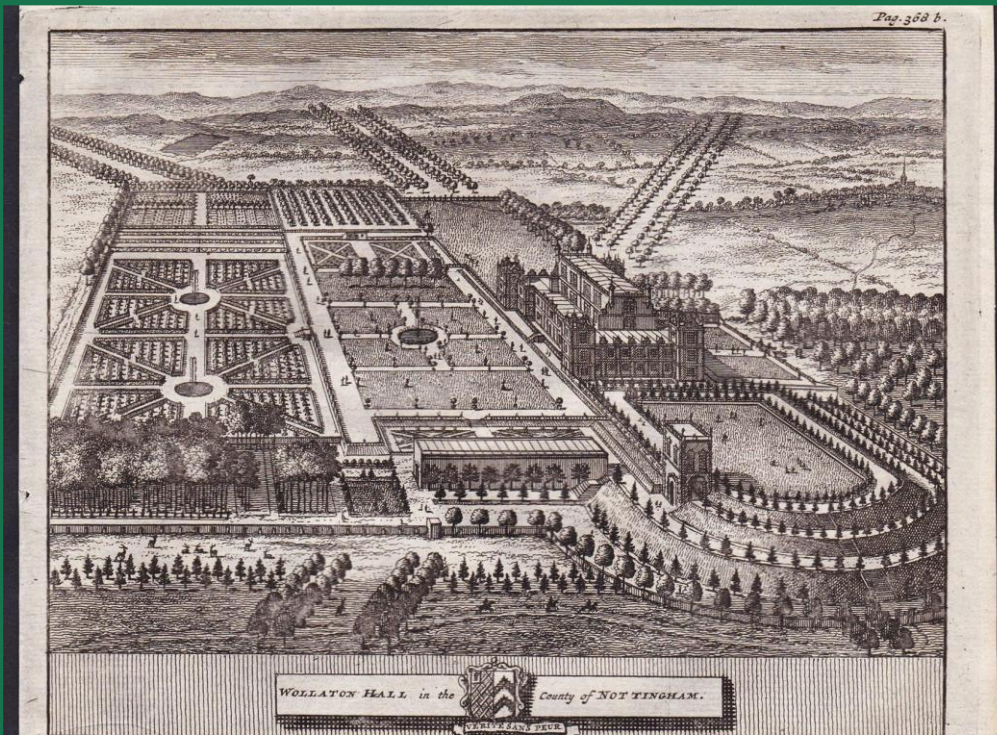
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Slide 20.

This is an example of a painting that garden researchers love! Sorry, this is a detail of a black and white photo of a colourful early 17th century oil painting of Thornham Hall in North Suffolk. To me this looks like it was painted by a keen amateur artist, as the perspective is all over the place, but it is probably a more reliable source showing what the gardens looked like than the Repton painting we have just seen. Formal grass plats lie on either side of the central path to the porch, with circular gravel or earth features, each with a square planter and topiary clipped cone or possibly an obelisk and a climbing plant – we would need to see the original to determine which it is. There is a wall in a foreground creating an enclosed court in front of the house, with many stone or terracotta planters containing single specimens of plants on its top. In front of the wall is an ornamental gate flanked by stone piers topped with pineapples. A fashionable garden for its time and very believable as there appears to be no other reason for creating this painting apart from producing a picture or practising artistic skills .

This is the type of painting which is hidden away in corridors and back bedrooms of houses. So, if you can arrange a visit, do ask if they have any landscape or garden pictures in the house. If the owners are recent to the property, pictures like this might have gone with the family who owned it before – you might enquire with them if they still have images, or plans or documents, of their former family home.



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We can study engravings in the same way as paintings.

This is an engraving of Wollaton Hall by Pieter van da Aa, 1707 – a Grand Manner garden with lots of formal gardens and avenues of trees stretching out into the surrounding countryside. There may be little or no evidence of this garden now, although long avenues do exist and can be seen on aerial photos - but do they date from this time?

Look out for engravings from books, which often come up for sale online and can be relatively inexpensive compared to buying image files from digital archives.



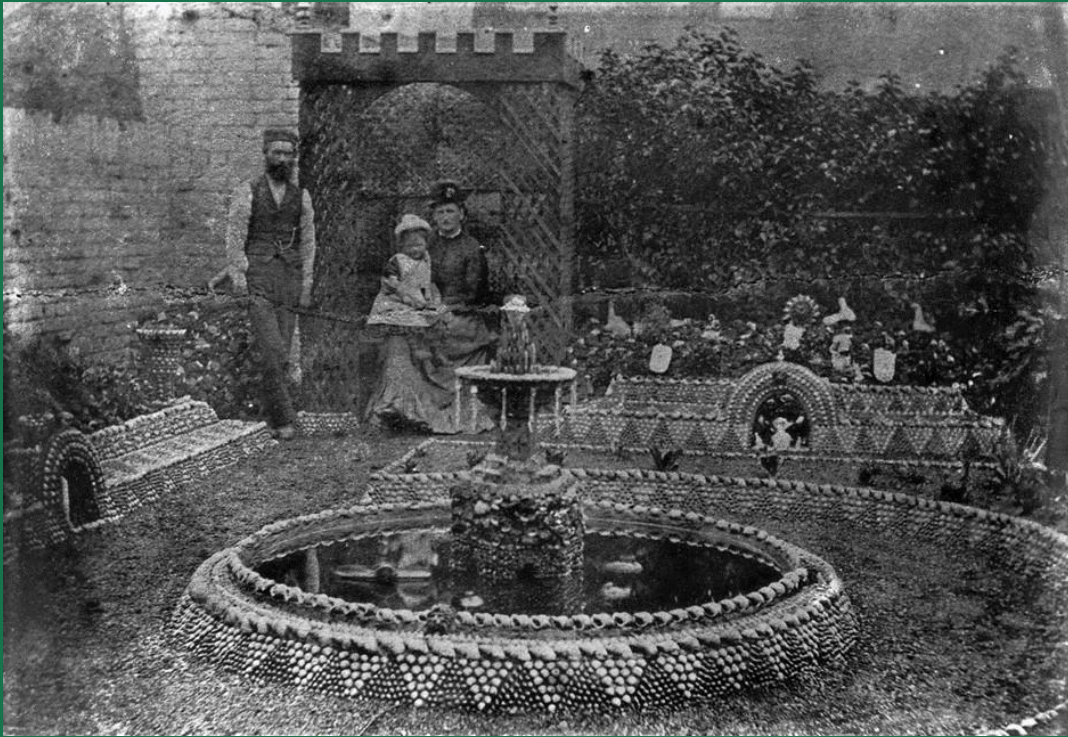
Slide 22.

From the mid-19th century onwards, photography becomes an important recording method. Photographs were taken for private family albums, publications, advertisements, sales particulars and postcards. Sometimes the garden is the central focus and other times it appears in the background of group portraits or special events.

This is a very early 20th century postcard of the avenue at Clifton Grove showing very stately trees dwarfing the three people out on their stroll. I'm wondering if they are Elms and therefore there is no longer an avenue there?

Social media can be a very quick way of identifying parks and gardens too – often in a matter of minutes. Don't keep your images to yourself, if you have permission to share them it's worth posting them in local interest groups on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. You are likely to receive lots of anecdotal history but maybe someone will have new material to share back?

The advent of photography and increasingly affordable cameras led to more modest gardens being recorded too . . .



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Slide 23.

This is my favourite Victorian garden photograph.

Taken in the early 1870s it shows a couple and their son, sitting in this amazing shell garden at the back of their small terraced house in Norwich. It's a rare photograph of a backyard garden, in a city slum area, made from whatever materials they could get hold of - in this case, a variety of shells obtained from the fishmonger's shop around the corner. According to their descendants, it was a well-known garden and the couple welcomed visitors from quite a distance.


It is so fortunate that this photo survives, because this whole area was badly devastated in the 1912 August floods and the shell garden was completely washed away overnight.

Britain from Above Cymraeg | English | Login | Register

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EPW013013 ENGLAND (1925). Wollaton Park, Nottingham, from the west, 1925

◀ Previous (EPW013012)  (EPW013014) Next ▶



[www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/EPW013013](http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/EPW013013) © Historic England



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Slide 24.

Earlier we looked at aerial photography, using Google Earth, for 21st century images but of course aerial photography has been around a lot longer. Your county record office may hold collections taken for military surveys in the 1940s and 50s and there may even be a dedicated section on their website.

This is an example from the Britain from the Air website: <https://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/> and is a resource run by Historic England that makes available a large collection of old aerial photos – this photo was taken in 1925 and shows Wollaton Park and we can see 4 or 5 avenues stretching out from the house.





Charles Barry's 1850s garden at Gawthorpe Hall NT, Lancashire,

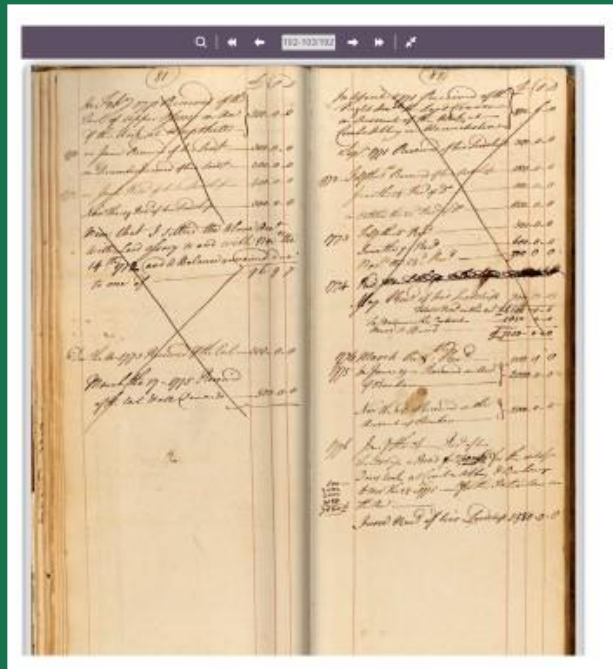
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Slide 25.

Very hot, dry summers and the increasing number of drone operators has seen the growing number of aerial surveys looking for parch marks such as these at Gawthorpe Hall in Lancashire. This garden layout from the 1850s disappeared after the Second World War but its design reappears every so often when the weather conditions are right. The lighter coloured turf indicating drier compacted pathway material beneath the mown grass. Your local archaeological unit or society may have collections of aerial photographs that they have commissioned.

## Accounts Books



<https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/libraries-at-rhs/collections/library-online/capability-brown-account-book>



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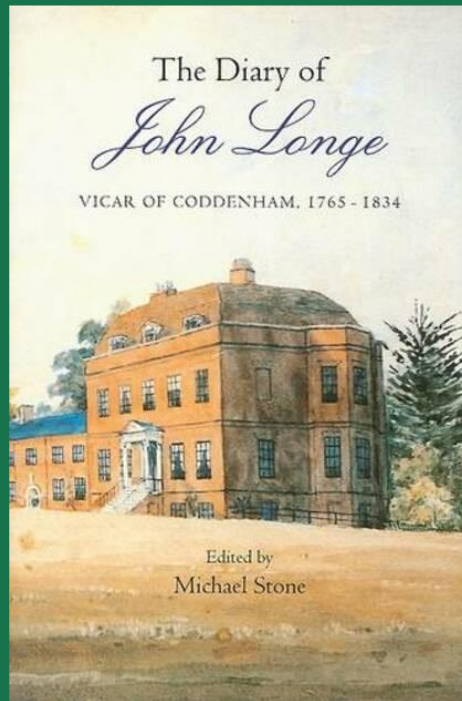
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Slide 26.

Let's start written sources of information by looking at account books and other estate papers. Although the handwriting can be hard to decipher, they can itemise exactly how much money was spent buying a certain number of trees on a certain date, or how many men were required to dig a particular pond. From that information you can extrapolate what existed and when it was created. Unless account books are still with the same family, they are likely to be held in your county record office.

This accounts book belonged to Capability Brown and the RHS have digitised it and made it available online. Each page is given over to one of his clients and every time Brown or the workmen complete a task, the list and the amount due is updated. A very useful document indeed because it tells us where Brown worked, who commissioned him, what he changes he made to the landscape and how much he was paid. If more of his account books are found, who knows what new Brownian sites, we might learn about?

Diaries  
And  
Letters



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Diaries and letters are also invaluable, again, if you can unpick the handwriting. You might find, for example, the 18th century lady of the house writing to her sister and describing her day spent in her garden or reporting on the work that has been carried out on a new garden area or building.

Some diaries have helpfully been transcribed for you – although when published in book form, they are often described as having extracts from a diary rather than the whole thing. If I was researching near Coddenham, north of Ipswich, I might have a quick read of this diary. Many clergymen were avid gardeners and could describe works carried out and the plants in their grounds, or those of their neighbours, in their diary.



## Sales Particulars

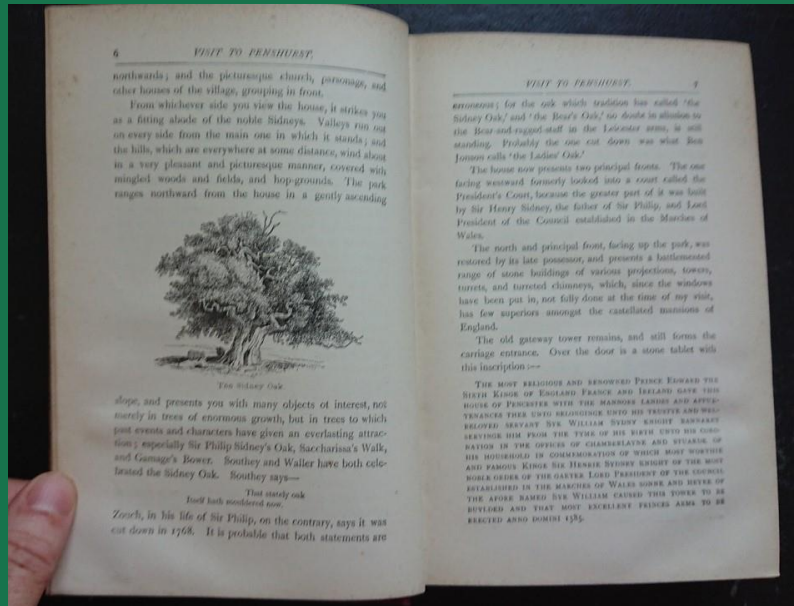
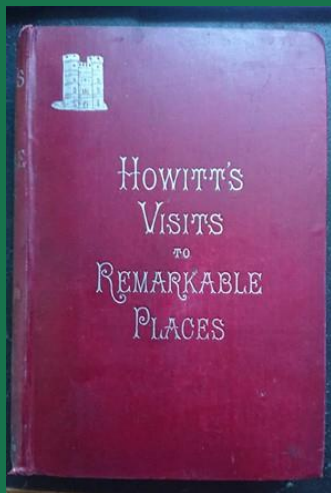


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From the early-19th century onwards, sales and auction particulars become common at the point when a property changed hands. Their descriptions include details of the main dwelling, ancillary buildings, the extent of the grounds and what they are being used for, as well as information about the gardens and glasshouses. For many, the description is accompanied by plans and illustrations, showing the extent of the property and land use.

## Contemporary Books



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Books written in the past can be useful too, although beware of writers showing bias because they did or didn't get on with the owners (some accounts can be quite scathing) or there's been a bit of embellishment because they wanted to sell their book!

The Victorians loved travelling and there are lots of books detailing their journeys and what they saw – these can be very informative. This book from the 1890s, for example, includes a visit to Penshurst, a famous Kent garden, and talks about the trees there which helps us to picture the garden at the time.

Depending on how many copies were published and how rare they are, you may be able borrow books from your library service, or they may be read a reference section in your county record office or local studies centre. The RHS Lindley library lends out books - unless a title is in their archive section, in which case you would need to book an appointment to go and read it in their Research Room.

Many older books are now available online as e-Books. If you search for the title and the site you want, Google Books might show you the relevant part of the book you are interested in.

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## Lindley Library

Our beautiful library in London specialises in botanical art and garden history

The library holds unique collections of early printed books to modern titles on botanical art, the history of horticulture and practical gardening.

It also holds the Botanical Art collection of the RHS, the archives of the RHS and the personal archives of notable gardeners and garden designers.

### Open on two floors

The **Upper Reading Room** allows open access to our lending library and free public exhibition area. See our [exhibitions & events](#).

The **Research Room** is open by advanced appointment to provide access to our

Save 25%  
Join the RHS today  
Join now

#### Exhibitions & events

Find out what's going on at our libraries from fascinating talks to world renowned botanical art exhibitions.

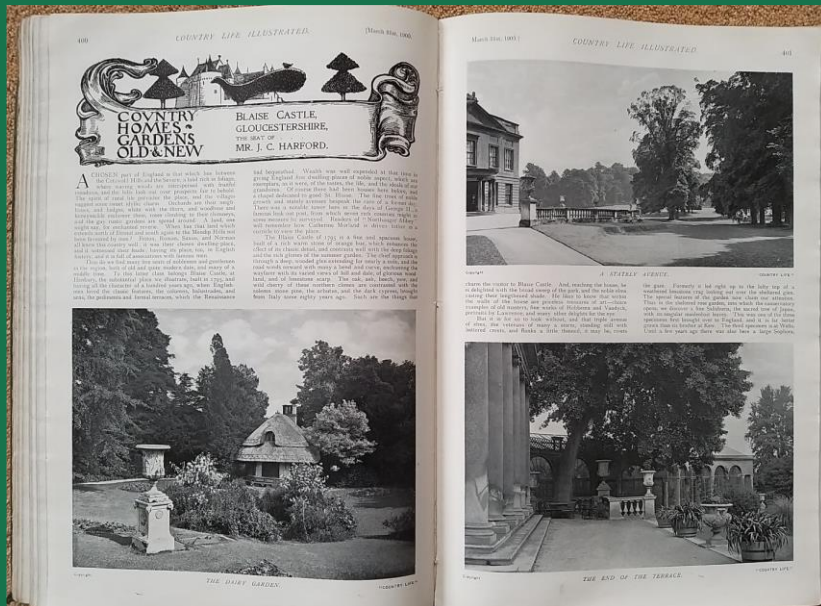
If you are interested in exhibiting art or photography at an RHS Show, please see our **shows and events** section

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This is the website for the RHS Lindley Library with collections in London, Wisley and Harlow Carr. You can search their online catalogues to see if they have the book, you are after <https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/libraries-at-rhs/visit-the-libraries/lindley-library-london>



May 9, 1914.]

THE  
**Gardeners' Chronicle**  
No. 1,428.—SATURDAY, MAY 9, 1914.

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Slide 31. Contemporary magazine and newspaper articles are also great for descriptions of gardens.

Country Life magazine is a very well-used resource for garden historians – as a 20th century UK publication chronicling affairs of interest to the upper class, Country Life has significant coverage of gardens; art history and architecture and local archives may have many editions or all the full run from 1897.

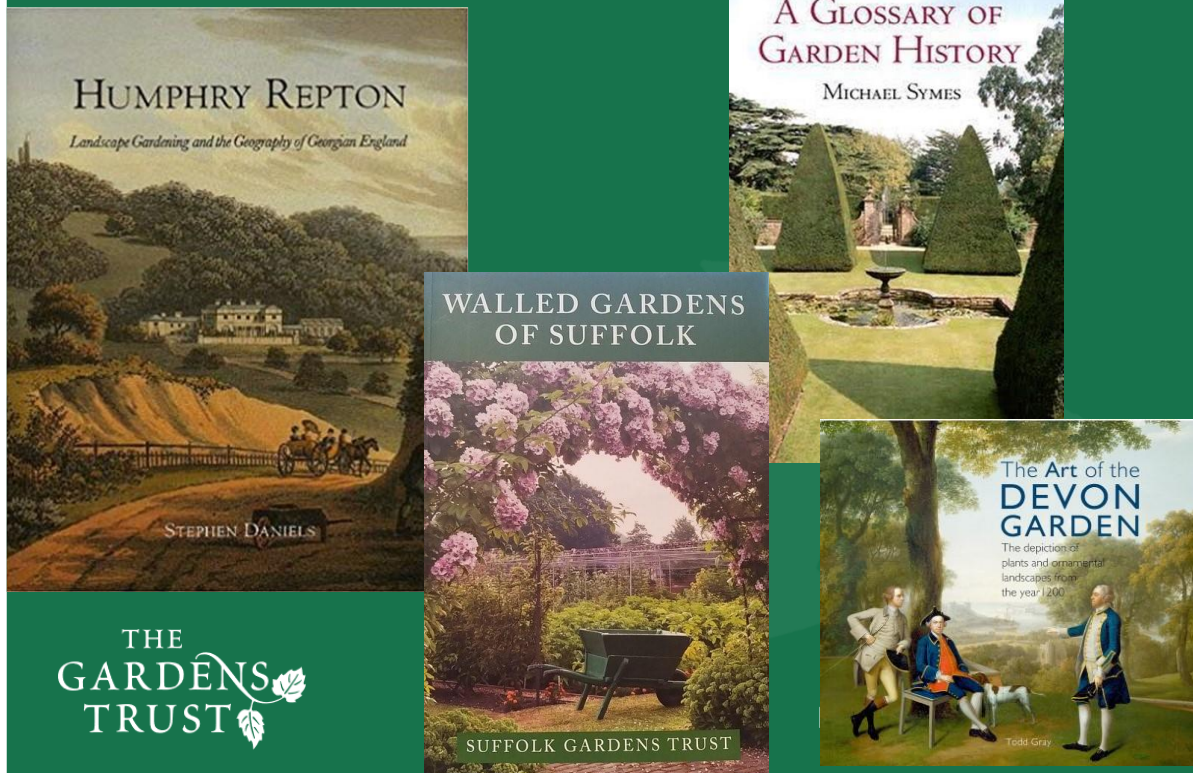
The British Newspaper Library online offers an immense back catalogue of newspapers, and you can find all kinds of descriptions of gardens in there – there's a fee to search the archive but you can pay for short bursts of time, so in order to save money be as organised in advance as you can. <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

The Gardeners' Chronicle is also very useful – it was a British weekly horticultural periodical which ran for nearly 150 years. It was founded in 1841 by the horticulturists: Joseph Paxton, Charles Wentworth and John Lindley and the printer William Bradbury. It originally took the form of a traditional newspaper, with both national and foreign news. Among the vast number of subjects covered there is a lot of material sent in by head gardeners, nurserymen, plant breeders and keen garden owners, covering every conceivable aspect of horticulture. There are lots of descriptions or passing mentions of specific gardens in it, your garden of interest might be there. The adverts are wonderful to study too!

(<https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=gardenerchron>)

Searching these sources is made much easier if you already have the date, or at least the year, of an article, but it can be a long and fruitless search if you have to wade through too many editions in the hope of finding anything of relevance.

Secondary Sources: **Books**, reimagined images, blogs  
and modern: film dramas, magazines and artwork



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Briefly on secondary sources:

There have been lots of books produced in more recent times, although garden history is a relatively young subject so it's unlikely that they'll include a huge amount on your specific site, unless it is a well-known garden, studied by many or the subject of a guidebook.

These are just three examples of the kind of book you might find useful. A good book on the work of a garden designer or landscape architect, will give you information and a comparison with other gardens, if your landscape was created by the same person. This one here is a great overview of Humphry Repton's landscapes by Stephen Daniels.

A good glossary of garden terms and features is this one by Michael Symes, and lastly, your county gardens trust may have published a gazetteer of their historical gardens or a themed book such as this one on the Walled Gardens of Suffolk written by Suffolk Gardens Trust in 2014 or The art of the Devon Garden by Todd Gray.



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Home Topics covered so far... Blog Website

— The Tradescants and their Tomb — Hard Graft and Devastation —

Search


### Growing a 4 Legged Giant

Posted on 09/05/2020 by The Gardens Trust

As gardeners we all know that woody plants are very adaptable. Think of topiary or cloud pruning, of pleaching or hedging where with a little bit of effort we can manipulate trees and shrubs into doing what we want, using their natural instincts to keep growing to our own advantage.

When I saw this 16th miniature I wondered what was going on but as I started looking closer I realised that our manipulation of plants can be taken to a completely different level.

And then I found these much more modern images and they inspired this post.



Darceal's miniature is an illustration to

#### Most Popular Posts during the last 48 hours

- On the Life of a Jobbing Gardener
- The Hanging Gardens of Nineveh?
- The perfect monastic garden?
- Stumperies
- Crackerbox Palace
- Carters Tested Seeds.
- "Fresh Air & Fun": Ada Salter and the Beautification of Bermondsey
- Home
- What is an English Garden?
- The Beasts of Bexley...

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Over the last two decades, blogs have become very popular online and can be a good source of information.

Obviously, I must say here, that David Marsh's weekly blog for the Gardens Trust is the most excellent of them all for us! The link to his blog can be found at the top right corner of the Gardens Trust's homepage and you'll be taken straight to his most recent edition. However, you can search the numerous blogs David has written for a topic or site, using the box on the right. This is a superb example of an eminent garden historian making his research available to all – and for free.

There are, of course, other good blogs out there to discover, but as with any secondary source the content may be highly accurate, or it could be subject to a bit of embellishment or, on occasion, just incorrect.

Nottinghamshire Archives: Castle Meadow Rd:  
<https://www.inspireculture.org.uk/heritage/archives/visiting-archives/>

Nottinghamshire Local Studies Centre, new Central Library,  
Broadmarsh Centre:  
<https://www.nottinghamcitylibraries.co.uk/our-services/local-studies-family-history/>

Nottingham University Archives, Lenton Lane:  
<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/index.aspx>



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Slide 34.

Most, if not all, counties have an Archive Centre and a Local History Centre, and here they are for Nottinghamshire researchers. There will be list of services the archive centre can carry out for you – this can become rather expensive but if you live a long way from an archive and you only want one item copied it could be worthwhile paying for one of these services. If you are looking at documents older than the 18th century you might need some help with transcribing early styles of handwriting.

Making a first visit to a record office or local studies centre can be quite daunting – so maybe go with someone else or look out on their website for a ‘behind the scenes tour’ or an induction session – a lot of archives run these because, believe it or not, they do want us to visit!

County archives or record offices will hold original material and copies of original material (microfilm and microfiche) that is not available to look at anywhere else. Most modern archive buildings have temperature-controlled storerooms and conservation staff who preserve and stabilise material in their collections. There will be some reference books and OS maps available to see, and computer terminals where you can search online databases.

Local History or Heritage Centres hold collections of printed material, including newspapers, local books and magazines. Also, they will have computer terminals with access to databases such as Find My Past.

Plus, at Nottingham University there is a large archive you can search too, by looking up online what you would like to see and then booking an appointment to go in, at least 2 days before your visit.

## Before visiting your county record office or local studies centre

What will you need to obtain a readers' ticket or gain access  
to the search room?



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Before you set off to visit your local archive centre it pays to do some preparation beforehand. It used to be the case that you applied for your readers ticket on your first visit to an archive. This may still be the case, so look on their website to see what you need to provide in the way of identification (passport, driving licence and proof of address are the usual requirement) and whether you can obtain your pass on the day or if you need to apply in advance.

This is my expired reader's pass for the British Library. For the BL, with its photo pass, it is definitely best to apply in advance, to save you a lot of time when you arrive on the day and then you can reserve items in advance too. (<https://www.bl.uk/help/how-to-get-a-reader-pass>)

A lot of county records offices used to be part of the County Archive Research Network, or CARN as it is usually referred to. Your CARN card would give you access to other record offices around the country. This is not always the case now and I know that Bedford, Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire Record Offices are not part of the scheme and maybe others are not too – so check before you visit.

For busy search rooms you would be advised to book a table in advance, for a morning, afternoon or all-day session. If you are hoping to look at maps, tell the staff, so they can assign you a larger table



Slide 36.

All archive centres should have a locker for you to store items you are not allowed to take into the Search Room – so remember to take a £1 coin for those that require it.

The above picture shows what you can take into the Search Room, and as you can see here, I use a clear plastic bag to hold pencils, an eraser, pencil sharpener, tissues and my readers' pass. You can normally take in laptops/phones (on silent) and a notebook but sometimes you may be asked to show there is nothing stowed away in either of these when you leave. Only wear the clothes that you will keep on during your session, scarves and coats etc should be stowed in the locker along with backpacks and handbags.

You must only use pencil in a search room – so take a few in with you and take care not to write on top of any documents. The search room staff can provide you with soft weights to keep documents flat and book cushions to support older items with vulnerable spines.



Slide 37.

**Photographs:** You may know in advance that you want to take pictures of your documents, or you may come across something during your session. You cannot just whip out your phone and take a few snaps, you need to apply for a photography permit from a member of staff. Different archives have different systems – you may be able to pay a small amount for a 30-minute session or pay a bit more for morning, afternoon or all-day permit.

There will be a form to fill in, where you will be asked to give details of what you are photographing and what your purpose is – for your own later reference or for use in a publication etc.

If you want to buy a short-time permit you need to be organised and get everything ready, this will be more difficult if you want to snap a larger number of items and you can only have four items out on your table at a time.

For larger objects such as maps there may be a special low table or a set of steps you can borrow to be able to get a good shot from above.

You will not be able to use a flash and you may be directed to a side of the room away from sunlight – ceiling lights can be a nuisance too, casting shadows or reflecting on items in protective clear sleeves. Ask for help and advice if you need a very clear image.

Not everything you would like to photograph might be permitted, sometimes owners of the deposited items may have placed a photography ban on them, or you may need their permission to reproduce the photos as well as the permission of the archive centre.



Photo courtesy of Essex Archives website



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In all the archive centres, I have worked in, the staff have been incredibly helpful, both answering enquiries in advance and in the search room itself. They can help you navigate the catalogue, find your way around the folders of information and microfilm collections. Often, if you can't find what you need from the catalogue, staff may have knowledge of new, unlisted acquisitions. It is exciting to be presented with a large box of uncatalogued documents, recently arrived from a country estate cellar – however, the documents themselves might be quite grubby and difficult to read – but it's worth a try.

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Resource Hub <http://thegardenstrust.org>



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Thank you for listening and hopefully I have given you lots of information to help you become garden detectives and help find out their origins and histories, as well as record their condition today.

End.