

<b>Institution: University of Derby</b>		
<b>Unit of Assessment: 34</b>		
<b>Title of case study: From <i>Urban Trees</i> to 'Parks in Wartime': protecting and promoting urban parks and heritage</b>		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014–2020</b>		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Professor Paul Elliott	Professor of Modern History	2008–present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016–2020</b>		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No</b>		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>Community history projects on urban trees and parks promote mutual understandings of shared heritage, improve the wellbeing of participants and promote the conservation agenda for the preservation of nature in towns and cities. This case study describes the impacts of Professor Paul Elliott's research into the history of urban trees and parks. The work has had impacts on <b>public awareness and engagement</b> through community history projects on urban green spaces, particularly in relation to the First World War centenary; <b>pedagogy</b> through student placements and <b>management of the urban environment</b> by informing English Heritage's preservation, restoration and management of public parks.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>The impacts on culture and society described here are rooted in Elliott's longstanding research interests and pedigree, exploring ways in which historical analysis of place and future environmental sustainability are substantially informed by approaches from cultural and historical geography, landscape and environmental history, the history of science and urban history. The research approaches have been intertwined with public engagement methodologies which also support the impact described below.</p> <p>Part of this work focused on the cultural and historical geographies of trees including an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded project on arboreta in collaboration with Professor Charles Watkins and Professor Stephen Daniels at the University of Nottingham (2003-7) and a study of urban trees completed at the University of Derby [3.2]. Elliott explored the science and culture of arboriculture and demonstrated how the development of this was fostered by a variety of factors including global trade and exploration, the popularity of collecting, changes in landscape gardening aesthetics and agricultural and horticultural improvement. Tree collections were idealised as microcosms of nature, miniature encapsulations of the globe and as living museums. His work critically examines the contexts for tree nurturing and planting in order to understand the changing practical, scientific, aesthetic and pedagogical principals that underpinned the design, display and perception of tree collections. Elliott's research into arboricultural history has also had an important international dimension and compares the development of British and Irish arboreta and tree planting with that in Europe, the USA and other countries, whilst the ecological impact of growing trees and the interface between heritage, conservation, restoration and the management of tree collections has also been addressed in a series of publications listed below.</p>		

Elliott has taken his research on trees and urban green spaces forward in various studies. In the *British Arboretum* [3.1], *British Urban Trees* [3.2] and articles on gardening, landscape gardening and public parks [3.3, 3.4 and 3.5] he has explored the relationship between landscape, place and scientific culture with case studies of urban private and botanical gardens, arboretums, public parks and street trees. The research has also been developed in AHRC-funded community history projects on urban green spaces between 2011 and 2016 (see below). As “one of the country’s leading historians of British gardens” (*The Independent*, 2015), Elliott has advanced the argument that studies of the histories and cultures of arboriculture and green spaces can inform future planning for environmental sustainability in a series of blogs arguing that as public awareness concern over the environmental emergency grows and the political climate is changing, the time is now ripe for ambitious culturally and historically-informed re-forestation and re-wilding schemes to be undertaken [5.1]. These would increase the proportion of British forest cover, help to counter the adverse effects of industrialisation, urban expansion, pollution, disease and modern urban living and also reconnect urban communities with the natural world. These measures would provide major social, cultural and economic benefits and more diverse interconnected ecological communities with thriving habitats for flora and fauna, rich with insects, birds and harbouring numerous fungi and plants.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

**3.1** Elliott, P. A., Watkins, C. and Daniels, S. ([2011] 2019) *The British Arboretum: Trees, Science and Culture in the Nineteenth Century*. Paperback edition, Pittsburgh; University of Pittsburgh Press.

*Peer-reviewed and published in academic series by leading international publisher.*

**3.2** Elliott, P. A. (2016) *British Urban Trees: A Social and Cultural History, c. 1800-1914*. Winwick; White Horse Press.

*Peer-reviewed and published by a leading Environmental History publisher.*

**3.3** Elliott, P. and Drew, C., (2016) ‘Victorian gardening, horticulture and arboriculture in the Midlands: John Frederick Wood (1806-1865) of Nottingham and the Midland Florist and Suburban Horticulturist’, *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 120, 121-41.

*Published in leading Nottinghamshire historical and archaeological journal, peer reviewed.*

**3.4** Elliott, P. (2018) ‘Creating suburbia – the gardenesque, place, association and the rustic tradition: the landscape gardening philosophy and practices of Edward Kemp (1817–91)’ in Lee, R. (ed.) ‘Edward Kemp’, *Garden History* 46, special supplement, 51-71.

*Originally presented at international conference on the history of public parks, peer-reviewed.*

**3.5** Beckett, J. V. and Elliott, P. A. (eds.) (2020) *Nottingham’s Victorian Green Spaces: a Social and Cultural History*. Derby: Peregrine Press.

*Published by University of Derby press, chapters cross-reviewed by the four academic members of the AHRC Green Spaces project team.*

### AHRC funding

Nottingham Green Spaces: Two grants as CO-I: AHRC (AH/K007718/1, 1 February 2013-31 January 2014, GBP77,191 and follow-on funding for Stage 2, 2016 (AH/NOO6402/1: GBP92,467).

Centre for the Hidden Histories of the First World War: Two grants as CO-I: (AHRCAH/L008378/1, 1 January 2014-31 December 2016, GBP499,702.26) and Supplementary Call (2014, GBP148,898).

Of these, a total of GBP6,154 covered Elliott's time as CO-I on Stage 2 of the Green Spaces project and GBP9,945 covered his time for the Centre for Hidden Histories.

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Impact has occurred in three main ways. Firstly, by **influencing the management and preservation of the UK's urban green spaces** by informing English Heritage's preservation, restoration and management of public parks and also their Local Authority management. Most significantly, Elliott's research into urban green space history and previous outputs including *The British Arboretum* (2011) [3.1] was utilised by Dr Katy Layton Jones to inform her report on historic urban green spaces for English Heritage specifically concerning the philosophical, aesthetic, horticultural and educational theories underlying the planning, layout, organisation, and management of parks, the links with botanic gardens and scientific developments in the study of forestry and horticulture and the role of parks as recreational spaces, which made the research, "particularly relevant to current interpretations of the evolution of both the form and function of public green space" [5.6]. The results of Elliott's research have been disseminated nationally in various media formats between 2014 and 2020 including articles and blogs [5.7, 5.8] on the history of urban green spaces and interviews about historic urban parks in *The Independent* and *The Daily Telegraph* [5.4]. Elliott has been interviewed by *The Guardian* about the special community role of historic urban parks and arboreta during the COVID-19 Lockdown (*The Guardian*, 27 October 2020) and produced a recorded tour of the Derby Arboretum for BBC Radio Derby (broadcast 13 June 2020) [5.4].

Elliott has forged close working relationships with organisations including Derby and Nottingham City councils, community arts groups and the Friends of Derby Arboretum. For example, in May 2019, Elliott led a co-designed walk around Elvaston Castle Park, Derbyshire with colleague the poet, Adrian Buckner [5.10]. This featured historical talks and readings of poetry about trees specially composed by Buckner as part of Derby Walking Festival in collaboration with Derby City Council's Parks and Active Living Service to provide practical and physical activities with learning opportunities built into walking experiences for public health and educational benefits. Likewise, the research for the Derby World War 1 (WW1) Parks project (2016) was displayed in Derby Library and Council House, helping the successful campaign by Derby Museums, Pauline Latham MP and others to bring the celebrated 'Weeping Window' of ceramic poppies from Paul Cummins' 'Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red' installation at the Tower of London in 2014–15 to Derby for display at the Silk Mill in June and July 2017 [5.9]. Secondly, through **public awareness and engagement** developed from two AHRC funded community history projects on urban green spaces. Elliott was Co-I of the Nottingham Green Spaces Community History project directed by Professor John Beckett of Nottingham University in two stages in 2013–14 and 2016. The project was co-produced and co-researched with the partners Nottingham City Council, Nottingham Women's History Group, Friends of the Forest, Friends of the Arboretum, the Nottingham Women's Centre WoLAN Project, and the Mapperley and Sherwood History group. The 2016 stage focused on imaginative dissemination and community-focused activities designed to engage a wider range of audiences in this history.

The main events included a specially commissioned play called *Breathing Spaces* composed by playwright Andy Barrett utilising historical materials produced by Elliott and project team members, tracing the history, development and use of Nottingham's parks and open spaces and performed during national 'Love Parks Week' in July 2016 in four Nottingham parks by Excavate theatre group to a total audience of c.400. The script, illustrated with performance photographs, was placed on the project website with a downloadable public version as a resource [5.2]. Project talks were given by team members including Elliott along with ten short videos prepared by Barrett and Excavate. After the month-long exhibition in Nottingham Central Library, the panels were installed in the public Pavilion on the Forest in Nottingham and the Nottingham Arboretum with digital versions on the project website. Information was disseminated in other ways including leaflets, websites, television and newspaper interviews, lectures, children's activities and workshops. Elliott and members of the 'Friends' organisation re-designed illustrated historical information panels for

the Nottingham Arboretum, deciding upon the content together, going through a process of critical evaluation, sharing and comparing information.

Additional **public awareness and engagement** impact was achieved by Elliott as Co-I of the AHRC-funded Centre for Hidden Histories of the First World War (2014–2016). Elliott led a 'Derby Parks in Wartime' community history collaborative project funded by this in 2016 with Spiral Arts, a Derby-based community-arts collective, Mark Knight, a doctoral researcher and community activist and a group of volunteers including members of GoldsQUAD (which improves the happiness and wellbeing of those aged over 50 through increased arts participation). Project results were presented artistically through a specially-designed banner, an exhibition with banners and information boards and WW1 themed well dressings. The professional visual artists and project partners at Spiral Arts emphasised that the project gave them new creative skill-sets (e.g. archival research skills) and enhanced their organisation's profile (e.g. Derby's Mayor and government officials came to the public exhibition of the tapestry) [5.3, p. 81]. Building on the research of Keri Facer and Bryony Enright, Larissa Allwork, Impact Fellow at the Centre for Hidden Histories (University of Nottingham, June 2016–September 2017), and now Impact Researcher at the University of Derby (September 2018–present) has emphasised the significant 'embodied legacies' provided by the First World War Engagement Centre Projects, citing the example of a 'Derby Parks in Wartime' participant. In a reflection workshop led by Allwork (25 August 2016), the retired lecturer with a professional background in community work commented: *"This sort of activity can be so therapeutic, as I have experienced, but there isn't enough recognition given to this sort of activity in regards to...people's well-being...[Its value for] The coming together of community...and people recognising the past"* [5.3, p.80].

Thirdly, **pedagogy through student placements**. As part of the AHRC-funded Derby WW1 Green Spaces Community History project, two Derby University undergraduate students won university-funded research bursaries of GBP2,163 to create their own projects. They presented their research findings at the Learning and Teaching Conference (4 July 2016) and displayed their information boards at the public launch event at Derby Arboretum on 21 August 2016 during the 'Lark in the Park' event supported by the Health Lottery and Healthcalm backed by the People's Health Trust [5.5]. One student gave a speech at the event and there were talks from Spiral Arts and Derby Councillor Jangir Khan.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

### Public awareness and engagement

#### 5.1 Group of items evidencing the Nottingham Green Spaces Project:

- *The Social World of Nottingham's Historic Green Spaces* project website. Available at: <http://www.ng-spaces.org.uk/> (Accessed: 16-07-2020).
- Elliott, P., et. al. (2017) 'Nottingham's Historic Green Spaces', *East Midland History Magazine*, 5 [online]. Available at: <http://eastmidlandshistory.org.uk/2017/08/> (Accessed: 16-07-2020).
- Elliott, P. (2020) 'The history of Nottingham's green spaces supports a vision for re-wilding the city and Broadmarsh land, taking it back into Sherwood Forest', blog on *The Social World of Nottingham's Historic Green Spaces*, 13 December [online]. Available at: <http://www.ng-spaces.org.uk/the-history-of-nottinghams-green-spaces-supports-vision-to-rewild-city/> (Accessed: 14-12-2020).

**5.2 Breathing Spaces** script, illustrated with photographs of some of the scenes on the project website with downloadable version for public use. Available at: <http://www.ng-spaces.org.uk/breathing-spaces-the-script/> (Accessed: 16-07-2020).

**5.3** Allwork, L. (2020) “‘Sedimented Histories’ and ‘Embodied Legacies’: Creating an Evaluative Framework for Understanding Public Engagement with the First World War”, *Research For All*, 4, 1, 66-86. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.18546/RFA.04.1.06> (Accessed: 16-07-2020).

**5.4** Group of UK national press articles featuring Elliott commenting on and raising public awareness of the history, preservation and planning of urban green spaces:

- Kirby, D. (2015) ‘Derby Arboretum: How Britain's first public park inspired open spaces around the world’, *The Independent*, 29 August [online]. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/derby-arboretum-how-britain-s-first-public-park-inspired-open-spaces-around-the-world-10478207.html> (Accessed: 2-3-2021).

- Wallop, H. (2015) ‘Britain's public parks: 175 years old, but will they survive?’, *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 October [online]. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/lifestyle/wellbeing/outdoors/11908169/Britains-public-parks-175-years-old-but-will-they-survive.html> (Accessed: 2-3-2021).

- Turner, A. (2020) ‘The meaning of leaf: an autumnal tour of England's arboretums’, *The Guardian*, 27 October [online]: <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/oct/27/autumn-tour-of-uk-arboretums-living-library-of-trees-leaves> (Accessed: 12-1-2021).

### Pedagogy

**5.5** Spiral Arts. (2016) ‘Derby Green Spaces in WW1 Launch Party’, *Spiral Arts* website, 21 August [online]. Available at: <http://spiral-art.blogspot.com/2016/08/derby-green-spaces-in-ww1-launch-party.html> (Accessed: 16-07-2020).

### Management and preservation of urban green spaces

**5.6** Jones, K. L. (2014) *National Review of Research Priorities for Urban Parks, Designed Landscapes and Open Spaces*. Portsmouth: English Heritage.

**5.7** Elliott, P. (2015) ‘People's Parks: Victorian Urban Public Parks in the West Midlands’, *History West Midlands*, 3, 4-8. Available at: <https://historywm.com/category/green-spaces> (Accessed: 16-07-2020).

**5.8** Elliott, P. (2016) ‘Nineteenth-Century Urban Trees: Britain and Europe’, *The White Horse Press Blog*, 18 November [online]. Available at: <https://whitehorsepress.blog/2016/11/18/nineteenth-century-urban-trees-britain-and-europe-part-i/> (Accessed: 16-07-2020).

**5.9** ‘Cascading Poppies attract attention of thousands in Derby City Centre’, Derby City Council Newsroom, 5 July 2017.

### Testimonials

**5.10** Move More Coordinator, Derby City Council (date of testimonial: 21 May 2020).