

Institution: University of Chester		
Unit of Assessment: 28 History		
Title of case study: Landscapes and Gardens: Using Historic Approaches in 21 st Century Practice		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2010 – ongoing		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Clare Hickman	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Dr, Senior Lecturer	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2012 – ongoing
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 – 2019		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

The 'Landscapes and Gardens' project transformed awareness of the significance of historic approaches to 21st century health and wellbeing. It employed four key mechanisms to collaborate and engage with the public, public, policymakers and practitioners. First, through public storytelling, model gardens, and interactive events; second, through examples of historic practice for Royal Horticultural Society and British Medical Journal reports; third, through educational workshops; and fourth, through films and immersive workshops. By connecting health-care workers, policymakers, teachers, garden practitioners, and the public with the historic roots of gardening for health, this project generated new approaches to wellbeing in mental health, heritage, and education settings.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

'Social prescribing', which includes gardens and gardening, is a priority within Britain's National Health Service. Indeed, in both 2018 and 2019, the Royal Horticultural Society donated a garden from the Chelsea Flower Show to an NHS mental health trust. The current Secretary for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, sees such initiatives as a means to 'combat over-medicalising' patients. Despite the assumed novelty of social prescribing and tailored health care, these practices have a long history. Dr Clare Hickman's path-breaking research over the past decade has uncovered the historic connections between gardens, health, and wellbeing as a means to explore the wide impact of more recent ideas and approaches.

Supported by a Wellcome Fellowship in Medical History and Humanities, Hickman published a monograph on hospital gardens, *Therapeutic Landscapes*, in 2013. The book represents the most complete study of the application of landscapes in medical treatment from the start of the nineteenth century through to the present [1]. In this work, Hickman demonstrates how therapeutic spaces, once a central part of all hospitals, faded with the post-war specialisation of medical practice. Since the publication of this monograph, Hickman has continued to develop her research into the relationship between health and landscapes with specialist case studies on Victorian public parks, lunatic asylum gardens, and the early twentieth-century open-air school movement [1, 2, 3, 5, 6].

Within the academy, Hickman's work has played a crucial role in bringing together the medical and environmental humanities. In the wider public sphere, Hickman has also had considerable influence. Aware that the long precedents for current policy and practice had been largely overlooked, Hickman developed a collaboration with the garden practitioner, Rebecca Smith. This resulted in a Chelsea Fringe exhibition with demonstrable outcomes in visitor numbers and media coverage. Crucially, the exhibition also provided a platform to develop three impact strands. First, it allowed Hickman to capture external funding for further collaborations with garden practitioners – with Linden Groves, on the Finnis Scott Foundation funded project *Experiencing Arcadia*, and with Victoria Bates, on the AHRC/EPSRC funded project: 'A Sense of Place: Exploring nature & wellbeing through the non-visual senses'. Second, these collaborations established Hickman's reputation for meaningful public impact and allowed her to develop a role in shaping the decisions of policymakers – through the King's Fund, the *British Medical Journal*, and Historic England.

Third, this experience in bringing together policy and practice enabled Hickman to develop educational resources and structures for embedding these approaches in schools.

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

1. Clare Hickman, *Therapeutic Landscapes: A History of English Hospital Gardens since 1800* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

- Peer-reviewed book. Can be supplied on request.

2. Clare Hickman, 'The Garden as a Laboratory: The role of domestic gardens as places of scientific exploration', *Post-Mediaeval Archaeology*, 48 (1) (2014), pp. 229-47.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1179/0079423614Z.000000000054>

- Peer-reviewed article. Can be supplied on request.

3. Clare Hickman, 'Curiosity and Instruction: British and Irish botanic gardens and their audiences, 1760-1800', *Environment and History*, 24 (1) (2018) pp. 59-80.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3197/096734018X15137949591846>

- Peer-reviewed article. Listed in REF 2.

4. Clare Hickman, 'Gardens and Open-air Institutions: Therapeutic landscapes in Early Twentieth-century Bromsgrove', in Malcolm Dick and Elaine Mitchell (eds), *Landscape and Green Spaces: Gardens and Garden History in the West Midlands* (Hatfield: Hertfordshire University Press, 2018), pp. 160-85.

- Peer-reviewed publication. Can be supplied on request.

5. Clare Hickman, 'Cheerful Prospects and Tranquil Restoration: The Visual Experience of Landscape as part of the Therapeutic Regime of the British Asylum, 1800-1860', *History of Psychiatry*, 20 (4) (2009), pp. 425-44.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0957154X08338335>

- Peer-reviewed article. Can be supplied on request.

6. Clare Hickman, 'An Exploration of the National Health Society and its Influence on the Movement for Urban Green Spaces in late-nineteenth Century London', *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 118 (2013), pp. 112-19.

- Can be supplied on request.

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

The 'Landscapes and Gardens' project has achieved its intention of transforming awareness of the significance of historic approaches to 21st century health and wellbeing through three sustainable mechanisms: collaborating with garden practitioners on public events; translating insights for policymakers from the history of landscapes, gardens, health and wellbeing; and creating educational methods and resources for engaging school students with landscapes, gardens, health and wellbeing. These achievements can be demonstrated directly through both quantitative statistics and qualitative evidence from statements of perception.

First, a model for collaboration was created that led Hickman to work with a number of garden practitioners to apply historic insights about landscapes and gardens in public events. This has raised public awareness of – and changed public perceptions about – the significance of sensory experiences of landscapes and gardens to health and wellbeing.

In 2015 Hickman teamed up with the garden designer and therapeutic practitioner Rebecca Smith. Taking inspiration from Hickman's monograph, *Therapeutic Landscapes*, the pair designed a unique garden for the Chelsea Fringe – 'Taking a Turn' – that integrated the voices of past and present mental health patients. Displayed in Exchange Square, London, it attracted an estimated 150,000 visitors over a three-week period [1]. As a result of the project, *Gardeners' World* on BBC2 filmed and transmitted a VT on Bethlem Hospital garden history as part of episode 10, 2015. This had a viewing audience of 3.62 million and resulted in viewers calling in to reflect on and debate

the relationship between gardening, health, and wellbeing. *Gardens Illustrated* Online also featured 'Taking a Turn' in its top listing for the Chelsea Fringe events, with the circulation of the digital edition reaching 1,544 [7]. The public events team reflected that they had been encouraged to think differently about their subject [1]. The medical teams who participated reported that the cross-disciplinary nature of the project had revived their professional environment by exposing them to new creative work, opening up new conversations about engaging with patients, forging new impressions of the patients as a result of their articulation of responses, and raising the profile of their institution [1]. The schools collaborators developed a new sense of the demand for this kind of experience in schools and its value in the curriculum [1].

The success of 'Taking a Turn' encouraged further collaborations. In 2016, Hickman worked with the garden history practitioner, Linden Groves, to develop the project 'Experiencing Arcadia'. With funding from the Finnis Scott Foundation, 'Experiencing Arcadia' has sought to foster a greater awareness of digital historic interpretation as a means to experience landscapes in the past. A printed booklet and accompanying website (www.experiencingarcadia.org) have been shared with heritage practitioners throughout Britain. The Head of Landscapes and Gardens at Compton Verney was one of many to embrace the project, adding that he was "convinced" that there was "real mileage in this type of engagement".

The following year, Hickman developed the use of storytelling to connect both the public and garden practitioners with past landscapes. Taking a sensory approach, she staged the 'Sensing the Past' events at Storyhouse Chester, part of the national Being Human Festival, which attracted an audience of 40. Amongst the 15 participants who provided feedback, this event raised awareness of the significance of gardens to health and wellbeing. All but one felt that they had a new sense of the impact and relevance of the humanities and wanted to find out more. One left with "new perspectives on something I thought I knew", another with a "far greater sense of awareness of sensory history", a third with new knowledge of the "history of botany, John Hope, and herbariums", and a fourth with "a new interest in botany!" [3].

Building on this experience, in 2018 and 2019 Hickman collaborated with Victoria Bates on the AHRC/EPSRC project: 'A Sense of Place: Exploring nature & wellbeing through the non-visual senses'. They brought together a cross-disciplinary team involving historians, artists, dancers and even scent manufacturers to understand how the public immerse themselves in nature. Members of the public were invited initially to explore their relationship to nature by completing online questionnaires through the project website (www.naturesenseswellbeing.wordpress.com). They then had the opportunity to partake in a sensory event in Bristol to immerse themselves fully in different landscapes. The participants were struck by the way in which synthetic environments induced apparently real sensory experience and induced a wide range of emotional states, changing their perspectives on the relationship between natural and contrived sensory landscapes and their importance to health and wellbeing. They reflected on where the crucial benefit lay from their perspective – "I think from a therapeutic point of view where the magic comes is the care of the individual artist creating an individual experience for an individual recipient" and from the variety of responses they learnt that "we have to think more about how to design these kinds of experience in ways that give people choice" [9].

This work has gone hand-in-hand with a series of public talks and digital outputs, which have all sought to connect the public to the therapeutic benefits of landscapes. Working with the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, for example, allowed Hickman to place her research in a public forum. The film she produced with the Gardens on John Hope has been viewed over 1,000 times [10]. More recently, Hickman has brought her approach to landscape history to special 'PlantNetwork' training days run at the Eden Project, designed to encourage reflections on the connections between health, wellbeing and gardens.

The second key strand of the 'Landscapes and Gardens' project was to translate insights from the history of landscapes, gardens, health and wellbeing for policymakers. In 2016 Hickman provided historical context for the authors of a report on gardens and health published by The King's Fund and the National Garden Scheme, which demonstrated how gardening could be used to promote

healthy lifestyles, forming the foundation for future strategies about public health [4]. Similarly, in 2017 Hickman provided the underpinning evidence for a *British Medical Journal* article on the return of hospital gardens [5]. More significantly still, Historic England utilised Hickman's research in listing the park and gardens of Brislington House, Bristol, which had originally combined an asylum with therapeutic landscapes [6].

Thanks to this work, Hickman has taken a prominent role as a consultant on recent initiatives to improve public health through therapeutic landscapes. Since 2016, as a member of the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) expert panel on 'Health, Wellbeing and Gardens', she has worked with the RHS's scientific advisors and the gardening charity Thrive. The findings of these initiatives translated to the development of the new Wellbeing Garden at the RHS's National Centre for Horticultural Science and Learning at Wisley. Working directly with the garden's designers, Hickman was able to place the plans within the long history of gardening for health. More recently, Hickman organised a workshop at Chester in June 2017 that brought together public officials, practitioners and academics, including representatives of the National Trust and Historic England. The aim of the network is to find new ways to develop links between health, wellbeing and the public park at a time of public funding cuts.

The third, and final strand, of the 'Landscapes and Gardens' project saw Hickman engage with schools and teaching professionals to create educational methods and resources for engaging school students with landscapes, gardens, health and wellbeing. In 2015, Hickman collaborated with the Chelsea Physic Garden to develop a series of interactive workshops aimed at schoolchildren learning at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. The workshops encouraged pupils to explore the ways in which their emotional senses changed in different spaces, from the outside garden through to the indoors. During the academic year 2015/16, the workshops reached a total of 22 schools from the Greater London area and in total some 2,000 children aged 5-14. The response of the schools was extremely positive. Teachers found new ways to engage with an area of the curriculum that is difficult to timetable and reported a new sense of the importance of the outdoor setting for students' emotional states – they were calmed by the environment – and engagement with the subject – they were inspired to debate by the different space and subject matter. The materials used in the workshops, which are now available through the STEM Learning Centre, York, continue to inspire learners about the history of landscapes and gardens [8].

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

1. Wellcome Trust, 'Taking a Turn', Final Evaluation Report, 2016.
 - Available as a pdf.
2. Testimony – Compton Verney
3. Audience feedback questionnaires from the 'Being Human Festival', Storyhouse Chester, November 2017
4. Senior Fellow at The King's Fund: 'Gardens and Health Implications for Policy and Practice', May 2016:
 - https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/field_publication_file/Gardens_and_health.pdf
5. Digital Content Editor at the British Medical Journal: 'Are Hospital gardens making a comeback?', *British Medical Journal*, December 2017:
 - <https://www.bmj.com/content/359/bmj.j5627>
6. Historic England listing of the gardens of Brislington House:
 - <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001529>
7. *Gardens Illustrated*,
 - Available as a pdf.

8. End of Grant Report: 'Taking a Turn': Mental Health History of Hospital Gardens (September 2016).
 - Available as a pdf.
9. 'A Sense of Place', project film and participant testimony, 2018:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmACpK-kt78>
10. The Royal Botanic Garden, 'The Enlightened Botanist', 2016:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lo-SdKaJT9U&t=461s>