

KEARSNEY PARKS

KEARSNEY ABBEY • RUSSELL GARDENS

THE RIVER RUNS THROUGH

PHOTOGRAPHY TRAIL

IMAGES OF STREAMS AND LAKES IN THE PARK LANDSCAPE

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Follow this photo trail beside the River Dour and lakes in Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens.

Water is central to the parks' design and flows through the gardens with beauty, elegance, and functional design. At times this water flows fast as a stream with little rapids and falls, while in other areas it slows gracefully to form shallow lakes reflecting the bordering lush foliage and sky.

On this trail you can either use a camera (digital or film) or your smart phone to record what you find. Following the map will guide you beside the River Dour and around the lakes in the parks. It starts at Minnis Lane and finishes at Russell Gardens (although it is perfectly possible to follow the trail in reverse order too).

When viewing a landscape, our eyes tend to scan the whole area while simultaneously zooming in on objects of interest, without us consciously being aware of this.

While the camera can record a scene with great technical accuracy, it is the photographer who decides which objects within the landscape are important enough to be included in the composition and how to show these in an aesthetically pleasing way.

Focusing upon foreground detail will provide a point of interest in the image, whether it's the particular shape of shadows cast, the play of reflections upon the surface of the water or the vivid colour accents of bordering flowers and foliage that catches your eye.

Enjoy wandering along the trail and take lots of beautiful photos!

1. THE WATERFALL VIEWED FROM MINNIS LANE

- Look for areas of detail to focus on. This may be the foliage from an overhanging branch or bordering wild plants to contrast with the fast-flowing water of the falls before the River Dour flows under Minnis Lane.

2. REMAINS OF THE OLD MILL

- A cascading force of channelled water flows over the remains of the old mill as a waterfall. Explore the contrasts between brick, foliage and reflections of sky in the water.
- Take multiple photos – sometimes auto-focus can have difficulty focusing accurately on bright water.
- Water runs fast over falls and can blur, particularly when lighting levels are low, but this gives an impression of movement. If you can select a higher shutter speed, this will make it possible to freeze the movement of the cascading water.
- Explore how water flows around the natural pools in eddies and falls over changes in surface levels.

3. THE MILL POND

- Overgrown and wonderfully jungle-like, the old mill pond is tranquil, yet presents an explosion of rich green foliage in summer.
- On an overcast day under the trees, hold your camera or phone really steady to avoid blur caused by slight movement. Holding the camera against a solid object can help to steady the shot and maximise sharpness.

- Explore reflections of the bordering trees, leaves, shadows and sky.
- Focus on silhouette reflections of leaves that shimmer across the lake surface, occasionally rippled by passing ducks.

4. THE CHALK STREAM

- The stream water is crystal clear, so try photographing the stony bottom viewed through the reflective surface of the water flowing over it, combining both elements within the same shot. Such combinations can produce interesting patterns and colour combinations. Shadows and highlights will provide some additional contrast and interest within the image.
- Look out for interesting tree root shapes, while fallen logs can add a point of focus and interest.
- Watch for bordering plant life and colourful flowers to add visual interest and contrast when set against a background of the water's surface.
- The flow quickens in places and the water surface reflections distort, creating attractive patterns.
- Take care where the river bank is steep in places. It can be slippery if the grass and mud are wet.

5. CASCADING WATER

- Water from the lake flows out over a small weir and cascades down to the lower river level. This is a great vantage point to contrast the still water of the lake and the white water of the fast-flowing cascade. Interesting patterns and reflections can be found in the flowing water and foam.
- Some bordering tree roots present an almost lacelike structure at the water's edge.

6. A VIEW ACROSS THE LAKE

- This is a good vantage point to pause and look at the trees with their various shapes and colours on the opposite bank, reflected in the calm surface of the lake.

7. THE BRIDGE

- The bridge provides an elevated viewpoint over the lake, while either bank serves as a good vantage point from which to photograph the many ducks, gulls and swans that glide gracefully across the water.
- Crossing to the opposite bank, the water can be seen reflecting on the underside arch of the bridge.
- Continue walking along this path beside the lake to number '8' on the map.

8. REFLECTIONS FROM OVERHANGING TREES

- Standing at the edge of the lake under trees that overhang the water is a perfect place to photograph the reflections of leaves as silhouettes against the brighter reflected sky.
- The shapes dance and distort sometimes with ripples caused by the wind or passing ducks, creating constantly changing natural abstract patterns and shapes.

9. THE LAKE AND ISLAND

- Look out for changes in the colour, shapes and reflections of foliage bordering the lake.
- Ducks and swans glide past, ripples forming in their wake, disrupting the surface reflections into wonderful abstract patterns and colours.
- Floating leaves on the water surface cast shadows on the lake bottom.

10. SLUICE GATE

- The warm colours of the sluice gate contrast with the fast-flowing water and vivid green ferns.
- There is a good view from the bridge, looking down the stream, under the trees towards the calmer waters of the lake beyond.

11. PERGOLA BRIDGE, RUSSELL GARDENS

- Crossing the Alkham Road via the puffin crossing and entering Russell Gardens, the river bank meanders from the beautiful lower pergola bridge, with its distinctive red brick and white pillars bordered by bamboo.
- Water from the lake flows under the bridge, before descending as a mini waterfall down to the river level below. This tranquil scene of ornamental architecture and green foliage is punctuated by the sight and sound of fast-flowing white water, which helps to create a drama of contrasting elements.

12. THE LAKE IN RUSSELL GARDENS

- A footpath follows the lower side of the lake beyond the first pergola bridge.
- Watch for reflections in the shallow lake waters.
- Try composing a shot where multiple elements can be seen together at the same time in a single photo. This may be where you can show a combination of (layer 1) patterns on the lake bed, (layer 2) glinting bright colourful aquatic plants growing beneath the surface, (layer 3) floating algae or leaves upon the water surface, (layer 4) reflections of surrounding trees, (layer 5) sky and clouds above reflected upon the surface of the water, all within the same shot. These combinations can produce interesting patterns and colour contrasts.

- Further down the path, looking back it is possible to capture a reflection of the ornamental bridge, the trees and sky on the lake. The ornamental boathouse halfway down provides an elevated viewpoint over the lake.
- At the opposite end of the lake stands a second pergola bridge where the stream flows into the lake over attractive semi-circular brickwork.

This marks the end of the photo trail.

If you enjoyed walking the trail, why not try repeating it at different times of the year to explore the changes in light, colour and atmosphere? With every visit you are sure to find something different that catches your eye, and every season reveals opportunities to photograph the changing colours in the landscape.

Think about how you will display your collection of images from this trail. You could create a digital slide-show, or get some of the images printed out as photographs to frame. You could also combine several images in sequence as a photo collage printed in poster format.

Or you could make a great display by producing a mini book printed with your photos and supplied by online print shops.

Please remember to send your best shots to Kearsney.parks@dover.gov.uk We love to see people's photos and are always looking for images that could appear in the next Kearsney Parks calendar!





