

# Countdown to Capability Brown 300th birthday celebrations begin

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The Capability Brown 300 Celebration and Festival has received a first round pass and will receive £139,200 development funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) it was announced today.

The bid is led by the Landscape Institute on behalf of a partnership which includes the Association of Gardens Trusts, NADFAS, English Heritage, the Garden History Society, the Historic Houses Association, the National Gardens Scheme, Natural England, Parks & Gardens UK, Visit Britain, Visit England, Kolab and the National Trust. They plan to bring the beauty and importance of Brown's landscapes to a wider audience and celebrate the legacy of one of history's most influential landscape architects with the Capability Brown 300 Celebration and Festival.

Known as the 'father of landscape architecture', Brown's surviving landscapes include the World Heritage Site at Blenheim Palace, Highclere Castle (the location of the ITV series Downton Abbey), Alnwick, Chatworsyth, Syon Park and Compton Verney. Capability Brown changed the face of the nation and created a landscape style which forms the backdrop for most people's picture of the quintessential English countryside.

Gilly Drummond, Chair of the Capability Brown 300 Steering Group, said: "Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund and a marvellous partnership we can now give Capability Brown, England's greatest

landscape artist his due recognition and spread the understanding and enjoyment of his genius for sustainable landscape design to a much wider audience, both nationally and internationally. We will move at speed to ensure that Capability Brown's Birthday Celebrations and Festival 2016 will delight and inform as many people as possible all over the country. With the help of owners and managers and the support of volunteers, we hope to be able to have a huge number of Brown's parks and gardens open to the public in 2016."

Paul Lincoln, Director of Policy and Communications for the Landscape Institute said: "As the first ever celebration of Brown's extensive works, the Festival brings together a huge range of events, openings and exhibitions. Detailed information and a full listing of his sites will help build knowledge about Brown and fix him at the forefront of modern thinking on design and management of the natural environment. The Festival will bring together a huge group of volunteers and provide opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to increase their knowledge and understanding of the way in which Brown's legacy remains relevant to how we plan, manage and design our landscapes."

Drew Bennellick, HLF's Head of Landscape and Natural Heritage, said: "As a landscape architect I have always appreciated the thrill Capability Brown must have experienced as he surveyed the land and considered how to transform the English landscape with his designs; moving hills, creating vast lakes and managing distant views. We are delighted to be giving initial support towards this project which offers the chance for more people to understand, experience and enjoy the beauty of Brown's creations, many of which have benefitted from our past investment."

For further information visit [Capability Brown 300 years website](#).

## **Notes to editors**

Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-1783) is the creator of the 'English landscape style' and is regarded by landscape architects as the father of their profession.

His surviving landscapes include the World Heritage Site at Blenheim; sites on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens; listed buildings; scheduled monuments; sites of special scientific interest; semi-natural ancient woodlands; and local sites of important nature conservation.

Brown's landscapes also include designs for the settings of many of the greatest houses in the country, including Blenheim Palace, Alwick, Chatsworth, Bowood, Warwick Castle and Croome, where he also built the main house for Lord Coventry. At Buckingham Palace, Brown did an undated plan for the garden when it was purchased by George III and he proposed a lake for St James's Park similar to that constructed.

The 300th birthday of Capability Brown in 2016 is an opportunity to understand his legacy and to increase appreciation and enjoyment of his landscapes.

## **Aims**

- To celebrate Capability Brown as an artist and landscape designer
- To encourage an increased number of people to visit, learn about and enjoy Brown's landscapes

- To encourage a greater appreciation of our designed landscape heritage

## **Objectives**

- To open as many Brown landscapes, houses and features as possible during 2016 including sites that are not usually open to the public
- To engage volunteers in all aspects of the 2016 celebrations
- To promote the understanding of Brown's art and designs and his influence through supporting and encouraging the development of television programmes, books, and exhibitions
- To stimulate new research
- To encourage and stimulate conservation projects
- To champion and develop conservation skills

## **Timetable**

From 2014 to the end of 2015 we will be working with thousands of volunteers and the owners of Brown landscapes to make preparations for encouraging visitors to their sites and producing information about the history and significance of these important landscapes ready for a launch in early 2016.

## **Birthday events and activities**

An array of events and activities are being planned for 2016, some will be arranged directly by the partnership and others will be locally organised but will benefit from coordinated publicity.

- Thousands of volunteers opening as many sites as possible
- An online calendar of events and activities
- Hub sites and exploration days to provide information, guidance, interpretation, visitor attraction ideas and support to other sites
- Online discussion forum for owners and managers
- National series of guides and site notes
- Online guidance on Brown landscape conservation, biodiversity, management and public access; and special restoration projects
- A major London exhibition and regional exhibitions
- New research by universities, students and volunteers, including collating a national reference resource for all sites on the Parks and Gardens UK online database
- Showcase the work of related professionals to promote landscape conservation
- Conferences, courses, lecture series, and tours – on foot, on bicycle and even on carriages
- New books by a range of Brown experts

The birthday and festival will be managed by the Landscape Institute, the royal chartered body for landscape architects. The LI represents professionals in the UK working across planning, design and the management of urban and rural landscape. Further information can be obtained at [Landscape Institute's website](#).

## **Further information**

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