

# Celebrating the father of the English garden

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The East Lawn at Compton Verney Compton Verney

You've probably walked through a landscape created or inspired by him, but how much do you know about the strangely named man known as England's most famous landscape architect?

Lancelot 'Capability' Brown earned his nickname for his skill at spotting the potential (what he called great capabilities) in the gardens of his 18th century clients.

Today there are 250 sites across England and Wales with connections to the Northumberland-born man. From small private gardens to country estates, his carefully constructed rolling landscapes have helped to shape our view of the idyllic English countryside.

One shining example has been seen by millions worldwide as the grounds surrounding the home of the Crawley family in Downton Abbey – or Highclere Castle as it's known as in real life.

The significance of Brown's work is also reflected in the number of projects we see (and fund) which aim to restore and explore his creations, including:

- The spectacular grass staircase at Milton Abbey
- Stowe Gardens (admired on an international scale) one of the first places Brown made his name known
- A rare chapel set in the grounds of Compton Verney
- One of England's largest secret gardens at Wrest Park

Next year is Brown's 300th birthday and thanks to money raised by National Lottery players it won't pass unnoticed.

The nationwide Capability Brown 300 Celebration and Festival will see events and activities take place at sites across the UK to tell his story and celebrate his incredible legacy.

Keep an eye out for an event near you on the [Capability Brown website](#).