Unearthing Northumberland roots of England’s



Theatre Sans Frontiers' John Cobb as Capability Brown

As gardens and landscapes across the country celebrate Capability Brown’s 300th birthday this year, more and more people are getting to know the creator of the quintessential English garden.

But do you know where it all began?

Apprentice to legend

Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown has his roots firmly in Northumberland. Born in Kirkharle in 1716 he learnt the tools of his trade as an apprentice gardener on the Kirkharle Estate before leaving at the age of 23 to embark on his now renowned career.

[quote= Ivor Crowther, Head of HLF North East]“Without Capability Brown we wouldn’t have our image of the quintessential English garden.”[/quote]

In 1770, and by then a widely known and hugely respected landscape architect, Brown returned to his hometown and left a sketch of his ideas for how the park could be developed.

His ideas were not made a reality however and the sketch was lost until 1980 when they were discovered in a house nearby. This year the CB300 project, led by Kirkharle Creative and made possible by National Lottery players, will enable the local community and schools to plant 300 trees to bring a small part of Brown's vision to life.

Inspiring great minds

Three decades before he designed Newcastle's Central Station, architect John Dobson created Bolam Lake – one of his only landscape designs.

His inspiration was said to be Capability Brown.

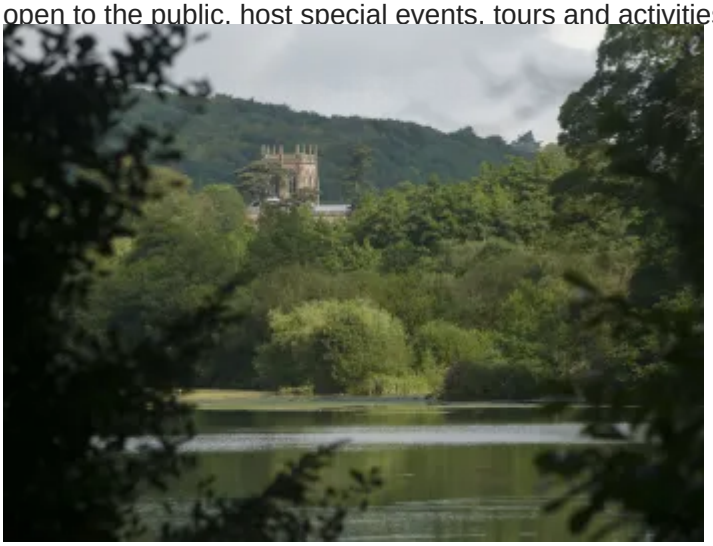
Just a few miles from Kirkharle, Bolam Lake includes a sculpted woodland and lake and is celebrating its 200th anniversary this year.

Northumberland County Council is marking the landscape's bi-centenary by planting 200 trees and collecting 200 memories from visitors. The project will also see a programme of planting and vital repairs.

Celebrating Capability Brown

Ivor Crowther, Head of HLF North East, said: "Without Capability Brown we wouldn't have our image of the quintessential English garden and without National Lottery players we wouldn't be able to spend this year celebrating in the place where he took his first steps to an incredible legacy."

HLF is also supporting the Capability Brown 300 Festival, which will see many Brown sites, including those not normally open to the public, host special events, tours and activities throughout 2016.



The Milton Abbey landscape designed by Capability Brown Milton Abbey

Capability Brown Festival kicks off 300th anniversary celebrations