

# HERTFORDSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2016  
THE 'CAPABILITY' BROWN  
FESTIVAL EDITION



## ***From the Chairman:***

*CB300 is finally here. This special newsletter represents the spread and depth of erudition that we are lucky to have amongst our members and it is a captivating picture of Hertfordshire's landscapes. Once we have read about them the special HGT CB300 committee have mapped out some wonderful walks which allow us to experience these landscapes first hand. Then a series of enticing events throughout the year let us explore key places in more depth. I know you will all find something to enjoy and I want to congratulate those who have contributed and worked so hard to put this together. It is a collaboration of so many, including those who have read pages of type, trudged the footpaths on cold wet days, spent hours bent over maps and books, and owners who have generously let us research and explore. They have shown us all it is an anniversary really worth celebrating. Thank you so much.*

***Bella Stuart-Smith***

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**THE CAPABILITY BROWN FESTIVAL 2016**  
**(Challenges and Opportunities for the County Gardens Trusts)**  
**Gilly Drummond—Chair of the Festival Steering Group**



What a huge pleasure to see what the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust has already been up to in promoting the Festival via its 2015 Newsletter and its excellent website! Opportunities for all, to discover and delight in the achievements of

Lancelot Brown and his men—just what is needed. It was good to see, so early in the game, dates for diaries: news of the exhibition on Lancelot Brown's landscape at Digswell, including his original design, at the New Maynard Gallery, Welwyn Garden City; the Study Day at Woodhall Park - what a lovely site; lectures (bang on the Festival target of reaching new audiences); and the Summer Walks programme of guided walks round Brownian sites, making use of public footpaths.

How has all this been achieved? The HGT is blessed with historians and researchers of the calibre of Kate Harwood, Anne Rowe and Tom Williamson whose voluntary commitment is extraordinary, as is their talent for motivating and working with volunteers. How else would one county trust produce 8 major publications appertaining to the garden history of Hertfordshire since 1996? The icing on the cake will be the AGM at Youngsbury, where so much of the 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape – and the plan by Brown of 1769 – survives.

The key challenge for the Festival and all involved in it is how best to use the Festival to build local support for our great heritage of historic parks and gardens; indeed all gardens, parks and green spaces. The focus on the Capability Brown Tercentenary is fortuitous as the sheer number of his sites, from Northumberland down to Devon and over in to Wales, makes them accessible to huge numbers of people and their families. Above all we need to raise the awareness that all parks and gardens, whoever designed them, need volunteers, now and certainly in the future. Local authorities, and indeed the relevant statutory bodies, are having to cut their conservation staff and funding. Heritage support is drying up, except for Heritage Lottery funded new projects, but they too need to involve the general public. This means that almost all existing sites and newly conserved sites are turning increasingly to local people and local organisations to volunteer: for a variety of regular openings, occasional events, and for help in a variety of ways.

The Gardens Trust has made their two Historic Landscape Project Officers available to the Festival; they are joining Kate Harwood and using their combined skills and experience to raise the profile of the event. The variety of Festival events will generate national publicity. In this way the Festival will stimulate interest in research and conservation, giving CGTs an incentive to encourage new members to volunteer for the variety of tasks the Trusts so valiantly undertake. Will they grasp both obvious and subtle opportunities for a membership drive at all their events?

What other opportunities are there for engaging new audiences? One way, tried and tested at Cadland for another significant figure in British history, reaches young children, and therefore young parents (on the valuable premise of 'Give me a child when he is seven, and he is mine for life'!) The Hampshire GT 'Grid for Learning' and 'Helping Schools to Garden' are brilliant, but how to entice them to a Brown site? School visits are so expensive now, due to the cost of transport and supply teachers, but we found a way round this which involves the parents and Year 3 (7-8) from our two primary schools. Our 'Temeraire Picnics', held on a Saturday afternoon, celebrate Nelson and the Battle of Trafalgar. They are very easy to organise: the schools sort out which families want to come, the parents bring the picnics and we supply tea and cold drinks. The Picnics have been running annually since 2005 when we planted one of the Trafalgar Woods in commemoration of the Battle.

The 'Temeraire Picnics' are a huge success and have resulted in this year group from the schools visiting HMS Victory each year. We visit the school and explain about Nelson and Trafalgar just before they visit us. Could this idea, or variations of it, be built in to CGT programmes for Capability Brown sites? The Festival Steering Group is developing information and publicity for 'Capabili-teas': picnics for young people and their parents at local Capability Brown sites. Most owners, public and private, would be happy to host them on just one afternoon a year. Could these be used to supplement the excellent contacts which HGT has formed with Hertfordshire schools?

The Festival Team is hugely grateful and appreciative of the support and the innovative ideas so well put into practice by many county gardens trusts. Keeping 17 partners marching in step has been no easy task. Our thanks are all the more heartfelt for your patience and encouragement.

## The Celebrity of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown - Roger Gedye

Two hypothetical sets of responses for an 'A' level multiple choice 'General Studies' paper:

*'Which of the following designers made a significant contribution to the 18thC English landscape garden?'*

Set 1.

- A Charles Bridgeman
- B Capability Brown
- C Humphry Repton

Set 2.

- A Endeavour Smith
- B Capability Brown
- C Fortitude Jones

Set 1 is easy, there are no incorrect answers! Set 2 is a little more challenging, only response B is correct. It is my contention that response B from *both* sets would be selected by a majority of intelligent students. If that is so, why has the celebrity of Brown outlasted that of others such as Bridgeman and Repton?

Much credit is due to the scholarly research of Dorothy Stroud<sup>1</sup>, first published in book form in 1950, followed, among others, by popular publications from Roger Turner<sup>2</sup> and Jane Brown<sup>3</sup>. Secondly, we have the evidence from the landscape. Brown is credited with the creation of a characteristic style, widely represented as the quintessentially English rural landscape: sweeping parkland vistas across serpentine lakes between artfully planted clumps and belts of trees to some distant architectural 'eye-catcher'. Many of his landscapes have been lost but enough have survived, often with the support of English Heritage and the National Trust, to make them familiar with the general public.

Brown was not notably respectful of the works of his predecessors, such as Bridgeman, which were frequently swept away during the creation of the 'Brownian' landscape. It is true that many of the landscapes by Brown have also been lost to development or neglect or disfigured by golf courses, but his landscapes were imitated by contemporary designers who worked in the 'Brownian' style; 'Woodhall' at Watton and 'Brocket Hall' at Lemsford are among the best preserved 18thC 'Brownian' landscapes in Hertfordshire, both the work of less well-known contemporaries. Garden designers after Brown's death in 1783 worked in a variety of styles: the 'gardenesque' designs associated with Humphry Repton, and the 'picturesque' landscapes associated with the Romantic aesthetic. Repton's later work anticipated the 'house and flower gardens' with which we are familiar today. After Brown no designer had such a profound influence on garden taste and style until the Arts and Crafts movement, associated with Gertrude Jekyll and Edwin Lutyens in the later

Victorian period.

What are the attributes of Capability Brown that set him above his contemporaries, and how did an obscure young man from Northumberland rise to a position as Master Gardener to George III, with the cream of the English aristocracy among his clients? Born in 1716 of good Border stock and baptised 'Lancelot Brown' in the parish church of Kirkharle, Brown was given a sound education to the age of 16 and apprenticed gardener to the local squire, Sir William Lorraine. From all accounts Brown was a diligent and quick learner, acquiring the capacity for hard work that would last throughout his life. The seven years with Sir William gave him an excellent grounding in estate improvement which would later enable him to handle large-scale projects with confidence. Brown may have learned much in the architectural field and the appreciation of scenic values from Sir William.

Early in his career the ambitious young Brown developed a charm and self-confidence which would appeal to wealthy land-owning aristocrats looking to employ a talented head gardener with a mastery of land improvement and a vision for design. In 1739 Brown left Northumberland for Boston in the Fens,



Portrait of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown  
By Richard Cosway  
Courtesy of TGT 'CB300'

where he developed his skills of land drainage and the creation of ornamental water. By 1741 his reputation as a land 'improver' had brought Brown to the attention of Lord Cobham at Stowe in Buckinghamshire. Turner writes that Lord Cobham required someone 'who could continue with him at Stowe, able to converse instructively on his favourite pursuit, but free from vanity and conceit which had rendered his former assistants disinclined to alterations which he had determined upon.' These assistants had included Charles Bridgeman and William Kent, who had helped create, according to Alexander Pope, 'the finest example of what can be achieved in gardening.' The appointment of Brown as Head Gardener at Stowe was an outstanding achievement.

Whilst at Stowe, and using the influence of Lord Cobham, Brown established a network of aristocratic clients which would give him access to many of the wealthiest landowners in the country and to a developing class of bankers and merchants with the wealth to purchase a country house and the need for a talented designer to create a fashionable landscape park around it. Over a professional career of 35 years Brown is

credited with work for over 170 clients. Lord Cobham died in 1749 and Brown was to leave Stowe 18 months later. By then he had married and with his wife, Bridget (whom he had met during his time at Boston), left Stowe with their young family to a house close to the Thames at Hammersmith. It was from here that Brown perfected the management style that enabled him to accept so many clients and develop his vision for landscape that matched to perfection the outdoor lifestyle, of hunting, shooting and fishing, of the 18<sup>th</sup>C nobleman and his guests.

He never spent more than a few days at any one time with his wealthy clients. On his first visit he would walk the ground, making a rapid and unerring assessment of its 'capabilities' for improvement (hence his memorable sobriquet). Following a more detailed survey, paid for by the client, Brown would draw up a detailed plan for the project and appoint a foreman to supervise the work. Subsequently, he

would visit the estate on horseback, organising a tour of his clients in a locality, checking on progress and issuing his orders for further development. He was meticulous in the presentation of his account and in his communication by letter with his clients. Almost invariably he was warmly welcomed on his visits and was widely recommended, not least to King George III who appointed him Master Gardener and granted his family a grace and favour lodging at Hampton Court.

Brown has his detractors. Turner cites Sir William Chambers, Surveyor General (1762), who described Brown's landscapes as 'gardens differing very little from common fields'. By contrast, Turner suggests that a Brown park 'is apparently, a whole 'world'.

This world is Utopian in concept, offering a kind of perfection where every alien or untoward element has been gracefully banished.' The Romantics recoiled from this idea that Nature might be 'improved', praising the natural wilderness of the River Wye and the Lake District over the 'monotony and baldness of improved places' (Uvedale Price, *Essay on the Picturesque* (1794)).

What is remarkable is the paucity of recorded information about the man and his works: no account was published in his lifetime and only one of his account books survives, with a selection of his original drawings and collections of his letters to clients. Brown's legacy is his vision of the English Landscape Park, a vision which revolutionised the great 18<sup>th</sup>C country estates and spread its influence around the world.



*Digswell House and Park (c.1850). Brown's valley and a signature cedar are clearly shown. Compare the same scene today! (p 16)*  
*[Image from the Welwyn Hatfield Museum Service Collection]*

<sup>1</sup>*Capability Brown*, Dorothy Stroud, 1950, Faber and Faber, paperback edition 1984, Faber paperbacks. (ISBN 0-571-13405-X)

<sup>2</sup>*Capability Brown and the Eighteenth-Century English Landscape*, Roger Turner, 1985, Wiedenfeld and Nicolson. Second Edition published by Phillimore and Co Ltd, 1999. (ISBN 86077 114.9)

<sup>3</sup>*Lancelot 'Capability' Brown – The Omnipotent Magician, 1716-1783*, Jane Brown, 2011, Chatto and Windus, paperback edition 2012, Pimlico. (ISBN 9781845951795)

“Dear Annie, Just a line to say this place is grand for anyone which likes walking.” This simple message on an Edwardian postcard scene of Newsells Hall nicely encapsulates three aspects of typically English country pleasures, celebrated in a series of landscape park leaflets prepared by the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust for CB300.

Firstly, the county is blessed with many ‘grand places’ with gardens laid out in the era of the great landscape designers, including Lancelot Brown. When the idea for a series of walk leaflets on a landscape history theme was first mooted, the focus of the HGT drafting group was specifically on Brown’s work and legacy in Hertfordshire. The group, consisting principally of Kate Harwood, Helen Leiper and Jenny Milledge, soon realised that a looser interpretation to encompass more of the landscape gardening movement would do better justice to the idea, and to set Brown’s contribution in context. Moreover, there was much to be said for tracing stewardship of selected landscapes beyond the halcyon period of the long eighteenth century. Other designers and exponents worth mentioning here include Humphry Repton, Richard Woods, William Malcolm, Nathaniel Kent and Jeffry Wyatt. Thus, Brown was one of many influential forces; he did not always sweep away the earlier formality; and when he did, he was not alone in so doing.

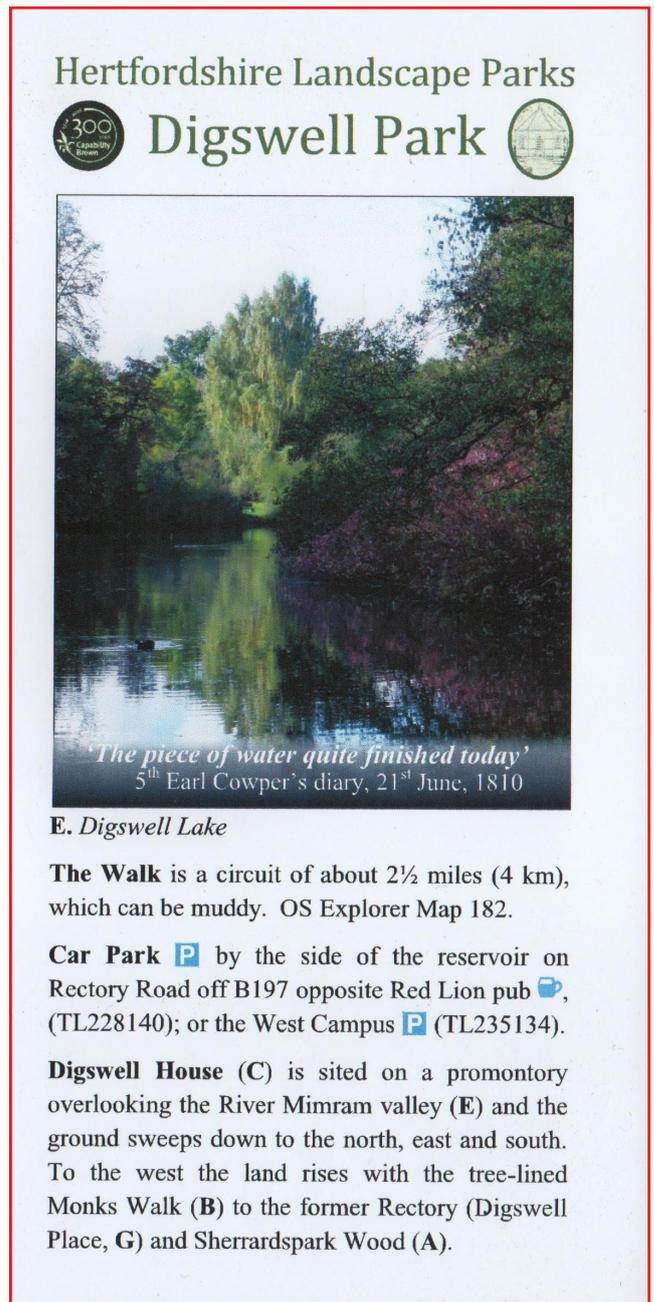


A view of the Broadwater and distant Mansion.  
A ‘Brownian’ landscape from the ‘Woodhall Park’ Walk

It was Jenny’s idea to invite me onto the group to assist with graphic design of the leaflets, to help identify a suitable format, and to iron out the stylistic differences that inevitably arise with multiple authors. The outcome of this evolutionary process is the selection of ten different sites within the county to form the basis for a uniform set of leaflets on

Hertfordshire Landscape Parks, of interest to historians and aficionados alike. The locations of the sites are shown in Figure 1, which also reveals the prevalence of water in the designed landscape.

Secondly, for a typical person who ‘likes walking’ the definition of a good country walk in the twenty-first century is one that has public access, is preferably a circuit, is of reasonable length, and avoids heavy traffic. This means that several Brownian sites that qualify for inclusion in the series on their historic merit have nevertheless been left out because of lack of access.



Cover page of the HGT leaflet for the walk around the Capability Brown/Repton landscape at ‘Digswell Park’

Moor Park near Rickmansworth and Wrotham Park near Potters Bar are examples where the dearth of footpaths and bridleways is problematic. In the case of Newsells the recommended 5½ mile walk (9km) is on the longish side, to avoid a busy road. By and large, there is scope within the series of leaflets for the selection of a suitable walk, or part thereof, to satisfy most requirements.

Thirdly, I like to think that the person who wrote ‘*anyone which*’ on the postcard was sitting enjoying a pint of ale after a nice long walk taking in the sights of Newsells and Cokenach, and that the refreshment might explain the writer’s quirky grammar! Along with many others, I consider a visit to a good pub to be an indispensable part of a country walk and it is reassuring to see that a pub sign often features prominently on the maps depicted in the walk leaflets.

The drafting, editing and formatting of the leaflets has been an interesting process. The format of a double-sided A4 sheet folded in three was soon agreed as being the optimum platform for presenting information to walkers. It is also a format that can be run off from any printer, albeit possibly with some trial-and-error involved to achieve the correct double-sided effect. A centrally positioned map, not-too-much text and plenty of photographs were also considered to be essential features. An introductory paragraph on setting, history and stewardship

coupled with an attractive historical map at the end serve as bookends for the main narrative and walk directions. The draft leaflets would then be tested in the field to identify the most concise and unambiguous ways of describing the routes.

Selecting a template for the layout was made easier by the common elements of many eighteenth and nineteenth century landscape parks. It would seem that, in addition to a mansion, the fashion-conscious owner of a country estate aspired to an avenue, an ornamental lake, a bridge, a ha-ha, a temple or two, a monument perhaps, a pleasure ground, a walled kitchen garden, an orangery, an ice house, a stylish stable block, a home farm, several entrance lodges, some imposing gates and the occasional exotic tree. It is remarkable how much of such a wish list was realised in quite so many places in just one county. Rather than being formulaic or repetitive, I think the leaflets highlight the emphasis of different components in each setting and aid the general understanding of the achievements of the people involved, from owners and designers to gardeners and labourers.

**PDF versions of the ten walk leaflets can be downloaded, free of charge, from:**

[www.hertsgardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.hertsgardenstrust.org.uk)  
(Events and Outings)

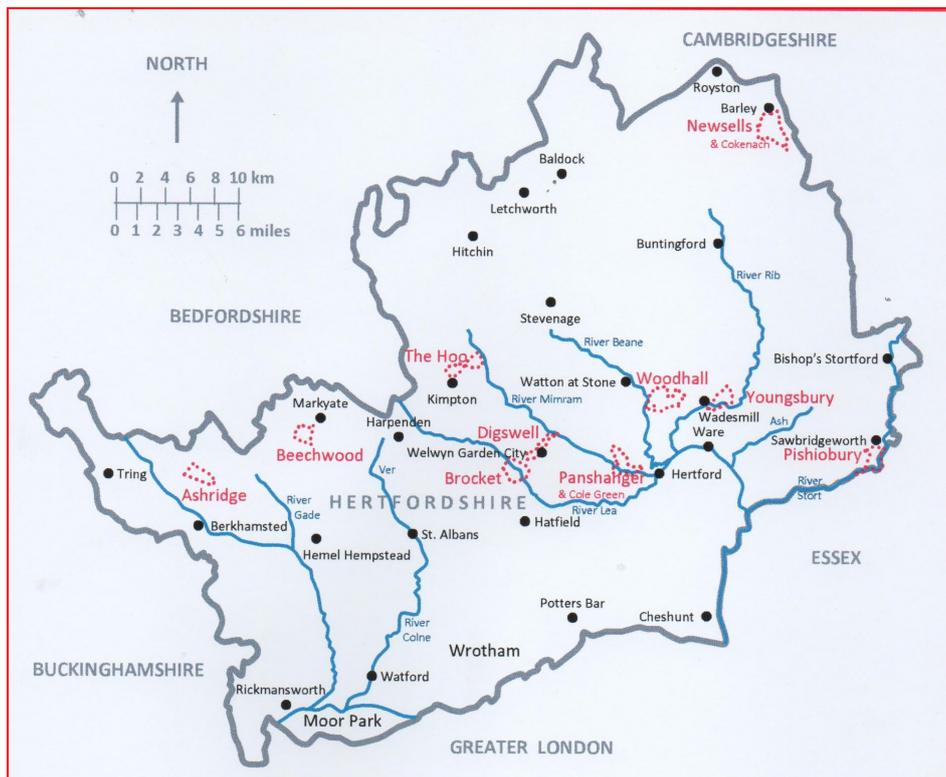


Figure 1. Locations of the ten Hertfordshire Landscape Park walks, outlined in red; rivers in blue.

## Brownian landscapes on the map of Hertfordshire by Dury and Andrews Anne Rowe

The map published by Andrew Dury and John Andrews in 1766 is the earliest county map to portray Hertfordshire's abundant mansions, parks and gardens in any detail and was surveyed at an interesting point in the fashionable development of large scale designed landscapes, just as tastes were beginning to change from formal, geometric styles to more open, naturalistic parkland. The leading advocate for the new style was of course Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.

Lancelot Brown had been working on commissions in Hertfordshire for more than a decade when Dury and Andrews were undertaking their surveys of the county and their map provides a valuable record of the earliest estates to be laid out in the English Landscape style, including Cole Green Park, Beechwood Park near Markyate and The Hoo at Kimpton. Apart from a handful of examples, however, the map portrays very little evidence that the fashion for landscape parks had caught on in the county and even on those estates where he is known to have worked, the features depicted by Dury and Andrews are not necessarily what might be expected of a Brown landscape.

### Moor Park, Rickmansworth

Few readers of the map would detect the influence of Capability Brown at Moor Park, for example, although he had been employed there in the 1750s by Lord Anson, an immensely wealthy naval Admiral. In fact Brown had masterminded a great deal of earth-moving in the park in order to erase the formal gardens designed by Charles Bridgeman thirty years earlier: removing the grand canal and basin on its artificially levelled platform bounded by unnaturally straight edges to the north-east of the house, and remodelling the cruciform lake and cascade on the south-east axis. Despite the huge amounts of effort and cost expended in creating both the Bridgeman and the Brown landscapes (£6,000 by Lord Anson according to Walpole), the most obvious feature depicted on Dury and Andrews' map is the network of straight avenues, many, if not all, of which predated the work of either of these two great designers.



### Cole Green, Hertford

A *patte d'oie* of avenues is also evident in Cole Green park, a site where Brown was employed by the second earl Cowper from at least 1755 until 1764. It was perhaps his earliest work in the county, certainly the best documented, and the map provides valuable evidence of his work here which included a perimeter

tree belt, ha-ha, a menagerie and a temple. The menagerie was probably located in the west of the park at the centre of a fan-like arrangement of paths and vistas, and the temple may have stood in the circle of trees to the south. Brown's ability to create a typical landscape park with a lake was constrained at

Cole Green by the location of the mansion, which was too far from the valley side to take advantage of views of the river Mimram, and by the gravelly soils which made constructing a lake closer to the house unfeasible. The avenues of trees planted at the beginning of the century must have been approaching maturity and were retained by Brown for the grandeur

and sense of antiquity which they gave to an otherwise unremarkable landscape. The map thus provides clear evidence that, both at Cole Green and at Moor Park, Brown was willing to retain avenues of trees where the circumstances – or the client – demanded.



### Beechwood

Avenues also persisted at Beechwood where Brown recommended deformatising the previous layout of straight-sided woods and wilderness walks. His plan drawn up in 1754 for Sir Thomas Sebright proposed removing much of the woodland west of the house to create more open parkland, leaving isolated groups of

trees in curvilinear clumps. Dury and Andrews' map shows that Brown's proposal to convert the formal wildernesses into irregular, serpentine shrubberies had been only partially carried out and it is uncertain whether his plans were ever fully implemented.



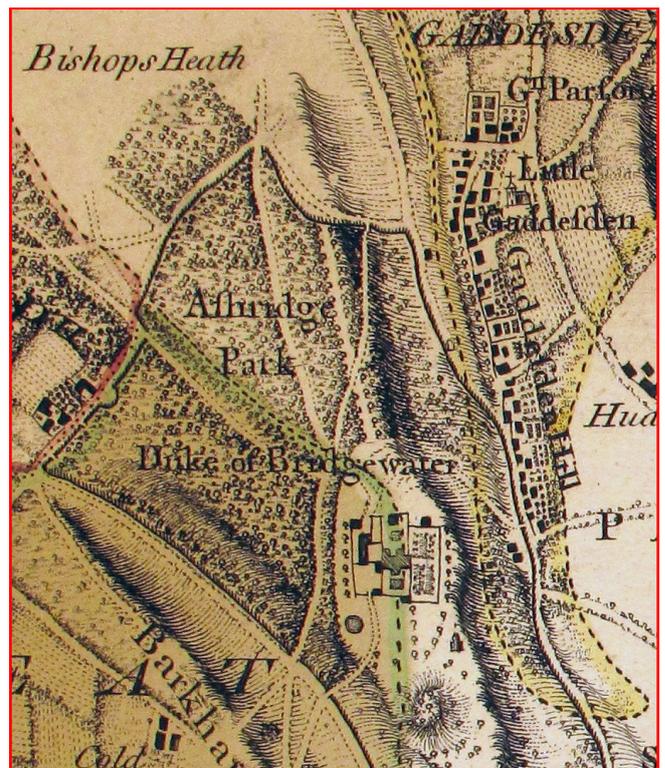
## Kimpton Hoo

At The Hoo near Kimpton the map shows the lake designed by Brown who received a payment of £150 from Thomas Brand in 1758, perhaps for a survey and drawings. The lake was formed by damming the little river Mimram by means of an elegant bridge designed by Sir William Chambers c.1760-62. 'The Lodge' standing beside the bridge at the south-east entrance to the park is annotated on the map, which also provides the first known record of the walled kitchen garden, standing beside another bridge at the north end of the lake. In the centre of the park adjoining the mansion the map shows an area of ornamental woodland with serpentine paths created from the pre-existing Thrift Wood. Chambers' bridge was restored in 2004 and the walled garden still stands but the mansion was demolished in 1958.



## Ashridge

Brown worked at Ashridge for the Duke of Bridgewater between 1759 and 1768 and an estate map of 1762 shows that some of Brown's landscaping had already been completed including the Golden Valley and the clumps of trees to the north of the house. The house, its gardens and deer park are depicted in some detail by Dury and Andrews. The main approach was from the north along a formal avenue set within the wooded northern end of Ashridge Park; to the east of the house is Brown's Golden Valley. The map shows open parkland south of the house containing two ornamental ponds and a knoll or mound which still survives today and perhaps was constructed as a prospect mound in the sixteenth or seventeenth century. This mound is marked with a circle of trees on the 1762 map but neither of the ponds is shown as an ornamental feature at that time, suggesting some development in the designed landscape in the few years between 1762 and the time that the 1766 map was surveyed. There are, however, some striking similarities in the depiction of the house and gardens on both the 1762 estate map and on Dury and Andrews' county map, and it is possible, despite some discrepancies to the west of the house especially, that both maps are portraying much the same scene, namely the house immediately prior to its rebuilding by Henry Holland set within a series of walled courtyards and gardens. An alternative scenario is



that Dury and Andrews' map was depicting the *new* house and that the Duke had chosen to disregard the latest fashion and retain his walled gardens, perhaps not so unlikely given their exposed location on top of the Chiltern Hills!

## Newsells Bury, Barkway

Surprisingly, perhaps the most striking English landscape park depicted on the map - Newsells Bury near Barkway – was not designed by Capability Brown but by one of his lesser-known contemporaries, **Richard Woods** (1715/16–1793). Woods, who was based in Essex, was working for George Jennings at Newsells Bury from 1763. The estate had been bought c.1720 by George's father, Sir John Jennings, fifteenth child of a Shropshire gentry family who had risen to become a lord of the Admiralty. Within a very few years a perimeter belt, complete with sinuous walk, had been planted, there were winding drives, specimen trees and informal clumps within the park and shrubberies threaded with sinuous paths lying each side of a broad vista on the north front of the house. The 'naturalistic' design of Newsells Bury is all the more striking because of its juxtaposition with the very formal, straight lines of the canals and avenues in the neighbouring Cocken Hatch (Cokenach) estate, laid out in the late seventeenth century. Another Hertfordshire estate to benefit from a Richard Woods design was Brocket Park, but not until the 1770s.

## Other 'Brownian' Sites

Another of Brown's associates was **Nathaniel Richmond** (1723/4–1784) who was living in Rickmansworth by 1754 and appears to have been employed by Brown as his foreman at Moor Park until 1759. He subsequently carried out commissions of his own in the county, the earliest of which were undertaken just before Dury and Andrews' map was surveyed. Evidence of his work at Tring Grove, for which he was paid £31 by John Seare in 1764, may be discernible on the map where a small park is depicted in a naturalistic style, featuring scattered trees and a semi-circular grove on the boundary to the south and an apparent intention to screen features such as the walled kitchen garden and buildings in the north-east of the park although, unusually, the park appears to incorporate a field on its west side. In 1763 Richmond was employed by Timothy Caswall at Sacombe Park where an informal scheme was also depicted on the county map, but it is not clear how the meandering woodland walks here related to Bridgeman's earlier geometric design. He also worked on the Gorhambury estate but his contribution to the landscape is uncertain. Richmond's commissions at Hitchin Priory and at Aspenden Hall were probably just too late to be recorded on the map.

Careful analysis of the mansions, parks and gardens depicted by Dury and Andrews shows that some are portrayed in astonishing detail, the accuracy of which



can be verified from other sources. Other estates, in contrast, do not appear to be accurately portrayed, perhaps because the surveyor did not gain access to record what was there. Despite some shortcomings, the map nevertheless provides Hertfordshire's garden historians with a remarkably early and detailed snapshot of the county's designed landscapes in the middle of the eighteenth century.

## Main sources

E. Gatland, 'Richard Woods in Hertfordshire' in A. Rowe (ed.), *Hertfordshire Garden History: A miscellany* (Hatfield, 2007)

Helen Leiper, 'Mr Lancelot Brown and his Hertfordshire clients' in D. Spring (ed.), *Hertfordshire Garden History vol. 2: Gardens pleasant, groves delicious* (Hatfield, 2012)

The Hertfordshire Gardens Trust and Tom Williamson, *The Parks and Gardens of West Hertfordshire* (Hertford, 2000)

*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008

*Photographs of an original Dury and Andrews' map are reproduced courtesy of Andrew Macnair.*

Readers may be interested in a newly-published book which includes a DVD of Dury and Andrews' original map. (Windgather Press; ISBN: 9781909686731)

## 'Youngsbury'—The most complete Brown Landscape Park in Hertfordshire

Tony Savile

David Poole built the current house at Youngsbury in 1745. His ancestor, Richard Wytherall, is known to have owned the 'Manor of the Youngs' two hundred years earlier in 1545. The previous house was some distance to the north-east of the present building in what is now woodland, surrounded by wild garlic, planted - it is rumoured - by the Romans. It would appear that there has been some sort of house or settlement at Youngsbury

since Roman times as nearby there are a pair of tumuli. These were excavated at the end of the nineteenth century and the contents placed in the Verulamium Museum.

In 1760 Lancelot Brown was engaged by the Pooles and produced a plan of the park at Youngsbury. On the plan is written in manuscript "Plan produced by Lancelot Brown for the improvement of Youngsbury, after remarking that nature had done so much that little was wanting but enlarging the river." Brown's original plan of the estate is still at Youngsbury, although there is some uncertainty as to whether the copy in Hertfordshire County Council's archives is actually the original. Brown's scheme including the enlargement of the river, was largely carried out, although it is not clear whether Brown actually oversaw the work himself. However, a survey of "Youngsbury and farm ... the estate of Mr James Poole" of 1768 shows much of Brown's landscaping and by 1793 when the estate was sold to William Shaw, the park had been completed. Shaw also developed the pleasure gardens to the east of the house beyond the tumuli to the Arboretum.



Youngsbury: from a water colour by H.G.Oldfield, late 18th century, in the County Record Office.

'Youngsbury'—David Poole's design of 1745

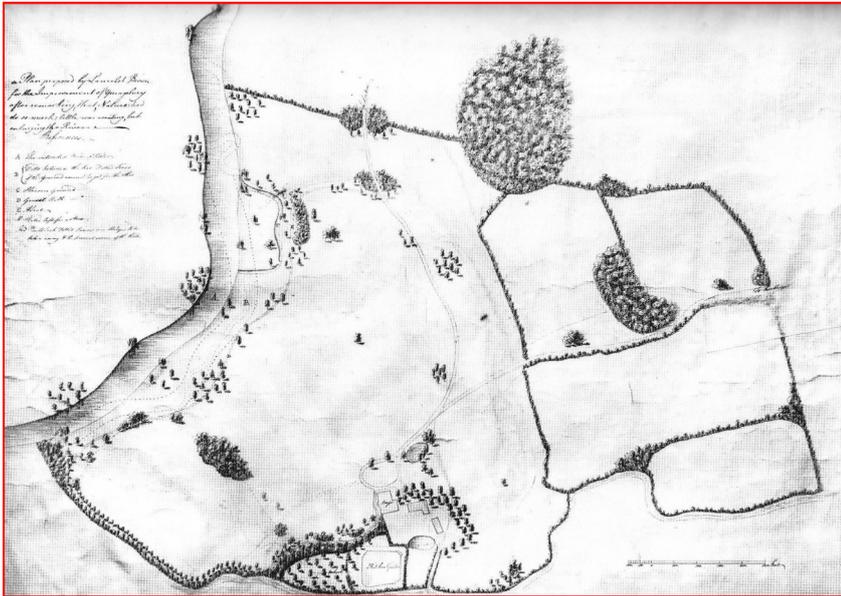
mile from the house and it is reported that Margaret Puller would go down regularly to use it. Sadly it has now been destroyed by vandals.

In 1796, Shaw sold Youngsbury to Daniel Giles, Governor of the Bank of England. His family continued to reside in the property and his last descendant was Margaret Puller who sold Youngsbury in approximately 1946.

During the Second World War much of the parkland was ploughed up and wheat was planted in between the mature trees of the park. Child evacuees from London were accommodated in the main house. Whilst it is reported that the children hid under their beds when Giles Puller was heard coming up the stairs, as they were afraid of him, those evacuees who revisited the house in later life all recalled how happy they were at Youngsbury. Following the Second World War, in about 1948, the top floor of the house was removed by Thomas Byng (Lord Stafford) to make the house a more manageable size, but he never lived in the property.



And today, in its decapitated form following removal of the top storey.



*“Plan produced by Lancelot Brown for the improvement of Youngsbury, after remarking that nature had done so much that little was wanting but enlarging the river.”*

*Brown’s original plan of the estate is still at Youngsbury,*

In the mid-seventies, the landscape of the park was changed dramatically by the loss of more than a hundred mature elm trees which were infected with Dutch Elm Disease and had to be felled. By this time, the congestion in the villages along the A10 had become increasingly problematic. It was therefore proposed that a bypass be built. The cheapest of the proposed routes for a new bypass was across the River Rib and then north through the parkland at Youngsbury along the shallow valley just some 500 yards to the west of the house. Ultimately, it was not possible to save the park from being bisected by the A10 bypass entirely, as the other proposed routes were all ultimately considered too expensive and Hertfordshire County Council continued to propose that the road should be built on the cheapest route through the centre of the park. However, with

strategic tree campaigning, the final route of the A10 bypass, whilst still bisecting the original park, was moved much further to the west. The designer of the bypass agreed to try to protect the majority of the Youngsbury park to the east of the new road and to construct extensive embankments. He stated that he would design the road so that no traffic could be seen from the house at any point. In this aim he was successful and despite the fact that the new A10 passes through the Youngsbury parkland the impact of the A10 bypass is less than might be expected. Today, the house is surrounded by cedar trees and has two walled gardens.

*\*sequoias were shipped back by William Lobb for Veitch Nurseries of Exeter and became a best seller for them (seedlings 2gns each or a dozen for 12gns)*



*Youngsbury—entrance to the walled garden.*



*Youngsbury—view over the lawn and across the ha-ha towards the park.*

## STONE AGE TO SUBURBIA

### (The rise and fall of the Capability Brown landscape at Digswell)

Kate Harwood

Digswell, to many people, is the small village nestling between the Welwyn railway viaduct and the river Mimram and extending north of the river around Welwyn North station. However, in the past the parish covered much of the land south of the river extending up to Sherrards Wood. Finds of worked flints in Sherrards Wood and around prove that man was an early settler in the area but we will skip over the next couple of thousand years – not great ones for garden design.

The 1599 map of the estate in HALS, one of our earliest, gives a good snapshot with the woods to the south, the village and church lying together on the spur of land overlooking the Mimram valley with a system of fishponds and a warren, fields and wood pasture. The main house was a medieval hall house with a garden ground and orchard. The southern oak and hornbeam woods (now called Sherrards Park Wood) covered a larger area including what is now The Campus in the town centre. Today within the woods we can find woodbanks, with outgrown hedges, showing where the parishes of Digswell and Hatfield met. There is another woodbank enclosing an area of about 40 acres – was this for keeping deer? This area has been replanted many times but some old trees



*'The remains of a very old sweet chestnut grove'*

remain including one which could be 450 years old

Capability Brown had been working in Hertfordshire since the 1750s at Moor Park for Admiral Anson, Beechwood Park for Sir Thomas Sebright, and at Colegreen for the 2<sup>nd</sup> earl Cowper. By now Digswell house was owned by Richard Willis [Willes] who had just inherited from his wife's uncle, Thomas Shallcross. He called in Brown in 1770 or maybe a little earlier. Brown was paid the substantial amount of £800 in 1771 (about £50,000 in today's purchasing power) but



*Digswell Park—The valley laid out by Capability Brown*

we have to work out from the ground what he did.

There is no plan by Brown but experts have suggested that the £800 was spent on removing the formal gardens round Digswell House, shown on the 1766 Dury and Andrews map of Hertfordshire, to give a green sweep of grass up to the windows with a pleasure ground surrounding house and church. There is now no sign of the village there as in 1599 – it appears to be centred on Digswell Water. The pleasure grounds include the remains of a very old Sweet Chestnut Grove which predates Brown. The walled kitchen garden, shown on the OSD and still the same quadrant shape in the later Ordnance Survey maps (now housing) seems to have taken the area shown as orchard in 1599.

In the wider landscape he laid out the star-shaped rides in Sherrards Park Wood. These look to be an early 18<sup>th</sup> century feature and not Brownian at all but according to the Dury and Andrews and the Ordnance Survey Drawing, were laid out between 1766 and 1805.



An aerial view of Welwyn Garden City and Digswell

- |                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>A</b> Digswell House      | <b>B</b> Monks Walk     |
| <b>C</b> Sherrards Park Wood | <b>D</b> The New Town   |
| <b>E</b> The Garden City     | <b>F</b> Brown's valley |
| <b>G</b> A1(M)               |                         |

New Wood, near the Rectory at the south-western end of Monks Walk, and Temple Wood next to it, were planted, together with woodland drives and viewpoints looking down over the valley to the river and the Brown clumps of trees. These dot the landscape and in some cases have completely disappeared with not even stumps now remaining. Brown often used 'punctuation' cedars near the house, and tended to balance them with the second tree slightly off axis. Until recently there was a magnificent Cedar of Lebanon at the southwest corner of the house, but it was felled due to safety concerns. A second cedar (*Cedrus Atlantica*) lies slightly to the northeast of the house past the church. Interestingly there was no attempt to lay out a sheet of water, something for which Brown is justly famous. Similarly there was no attempt to lay out a lake at Panshanger. Both these sites had to await the advent of Humphry Repton before they received their crowning glories.

In 1785 the estate was sold to 3<sup>rd</sup> earl Cowper, still residing in Florence, for his son. By 1800, Edward Spencer Cowper, his youngest son had come of age and had met Humphry Repton, the great Regency designer, who was laying out Panshanger for his brother 5<sup>th</sup> earl Cowper and Tewin Water for his cousin Henry Cowper. Repton thought of this stretch of the Mimram valley as a *string of pearls* of his landscapes punctuated with Broadwaters at Panshanger, Tewin Water and Digswell. Although no Red Book has been found for Digswell, as for Tewin Water and

Panshanger, there are entries in the Cowper diaries detailing both Repton's visits to Digswell and Cowper's visits to Panshanger and a great many other estates in his quest for garden knowledge.



Digswell Water

The major development was Digswell Water. ES Cowper noted in his diary on December 1<sup>st</sup> 1809 that he had marked out the site and by 1810 that the lake had been completed and was filling up. The lake is not connected to the river at the upstream or western end and is largely spring-fed. It drops over a weir at the eastern end, joining the river shortly before it flows through Digswell Water. Earthworks around here show the route of the old carriage drive wending its

picturesque way to the house on the hill with the magnificent woods clothing the background. A line of horse chestnuts (still surviving) clings to the south bank of the lake.

Monks Walk, which we first see on the Dury and Andrew map connecting Digswell Rectory and Digswell House was replanted during Regency times with beech trees. When Welwyn Hatfield council announced in 2013 that 30 of the trees had been infected with *Kretzschmaria deusta*, HGT asked if it would be possible to date them to see whether they were Brown or Repton-era plantings. They brought in a dendrochronologist, Dr Andy Moir, who took samples and confirmed that they had been planted at the same time c.1810, the time the lake was filling nicely.

As well as the lake the pleasure grounds were being developed with rhododendrons, *Kalmia Latifolia*, lilacs, laurels, Portuguese laurels, Huntingdon Elms and Azaleas. Bog earth borders were laid out near the house for the newly fashionable American shrubs. Some of these exotic plants were housed in the new conservatory built in 1820. At the same time a new house slightly further south than the old one was being built by Samuel Wyatt, the architect at Holkham Hall, Norfolk.

This was the height of the cottage ornée movement and the ornamented garden ground was increasingly important as design moved away from the Brownian sweeps of lawn. An excellent example of this Regency style is to be found at Swiss Garden at Old Warden near Biggleswade. The lawns were laid out with treillage (trellis work) and Hardenberg baskets. These baskets were very popular and had been developed from *corbeilles* by John Adey Repton, Humphry's architect son who had been articulated to John Nash, builder of the Brighton Pavilion. These hooped wooden or iron flower baskets are named after State Chancellor Hardenberg who wanted them for his estate at Glienecke near Potsdam. Hardenberg's daughter was also a garden enthusiast who married Prince Hermann Pückler-Muskau. They spent his entire



*Hardenberg basket*

fortune on his garden at Braunschweig; then he came to England to look for a heiress so he could continue the work. But that's another story!

The grounds remained as lawn and shrubbery with island beds, as seen in PC Auld's view of the 1850s (p 4) but this time with the addition of an eye-catcher in the form of the railway viaduct opened in 1850. Although the story of the opening ceremony has Queen Victoria being too apprehensive to trust a train across the Bridge – she crossed the valley by coach and joined the train on the other side – this does not



*Digswell House, 2016.*

*Divided into apartments and almost surrounded by housing from the New Town era, c.1960.*

quite tie in with her diary entry for that day when she described the day at 'dear Osborne' (on the Isle of Wight)!

By 1919, Lord Desborough over at Panshanger was selling assets to pay for death duties and this part of the estate was sold. The Garden City Geyser, the nick name for Ebenezer Howard given by his friend GB Shaw of Ayot St Lawrence because he wouldn't stop spouting about his idea, snapped it up for his second Garden City. This was to be designed more on the City Beautiful lines with its magnificent sweeping avenue – not as famous or as recognised as it deserves to be. The Arts and Crafts principles of Parker and Unwin, worked out at New Earswick and Letchworth, were not forgotten with plenty of green space and clever planning. This was concentrated to the south of Digswell and it was not till the New Town was designated in 1948 that Digswell was threatened with housing. By the 1960s some areas, Knightsfield and Harwood Hill, were developed but much greenspace was left and the Brown and Repton landscapes can still be read today. As the Welwyn and Hatfield Development Corporation said in their 1962 'Landscaping of Two Towns' *'The Average Citizen going about his daily life need not seek the beauty of trees and flowers in some remote park.'* As with Christopher Wren and St Paul's so of Brown and Digswell:

***Si Monumentum Requirit Circumspice.***

## Wrotham Park—Brown, but not Brown?

Alan Simpson

Wrotham Park, near Barnet in Hertfordshire, has been the home of the Byng family for over 250 years. It consists of some 250 acres of parkland and garden, in the centre of which sits a substantial Palladian house, designed by Isaac Ware.

At the time construction was started in 1754 by Admiral John Byng, Wrotham Park would have been considered an ideal gentleman's retreat from the city, and a suitable place for him to retire to after a solid, if unspectacular naval career. Unfortunately, a botched campaign in the Mediterranean, followed by an unsympathetic court martial and the hostility of an unpopular administration seeking a scapegoat, saw the Admiral executed in 1757 before he ever had a chance to see his new house, which was completed in the same year. With no direct heirs, Wrotham Park passed to John's brother, George, who went on to purchase a further 50 acres to add to the original 200, and undertook to complete the house and grounds.

At the time, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown was the pre-eminent landscape designer, and George Byng would certainly have approached him, at least for advice about "improving" Wrotham's grounds (in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, grounds were never designed or developed, they were always "improved", signalling Man's mastery over Nature). Brown would have been fully occupied with much larger commissions for much richer clients, but it was his custom to pass on such work to his subordinates, at a reduced fee, but to keep a watching brief over things so that the client could feel he was getting at least some of Brown's expertise for his money.

This appears to be what happened at Wrotham Park and Samuel Lapidge, one of Brown's surveyors, was given the commission. The estate consisted of a number of disparate parcels of common grazing, allotments, part of Enfield Chase and the remnants of a former house and garden, call Pinchbeck, which Admiral Byng had bought as a basis for his new residence. The whole site slopes south west, and then contained the shallow valley of a stream called Margery Mead.

None of Lapidge's original plans have been found in the Wrotham archives, but it would appear that one of his first actions was to surround the entire estate with a perimeter belt of oak, lime, hornbeam, chestnut and ash to screen it off from the roads which surround it. This belt survives today, and continues to fulfil the purpose for which it was planted. Next, a number of copses and individual trees and tree groups, almost exclusively oak, were established, many of which also still exist.

Without his plans, it is difficult to see how much of Lapidge's design was implemented, let alone survives. Those features mentioned above seem likely to be his work on the basis of the age of the trees and the overall design as it fits Brownian principles, but it is entirely possible that this is as far as it went. The Byngs at the time concentrated more on the house, and the parkland grew up in what seems to have been a more haphazard manner. Brown himself visited Wrotham on two occasions, and it seems likely that he was satisfied with progress since there is no record otherwise.



*Aerial View of Wrotham House and Park, c2000*

- A Part of Lapidge's perimeter belt.*
- B 19thC lake, formed from Margery Mead stream*
- C Individual trees and clumps*
- D The house and horseshoe shaped stable block*
- E 19thC model farm*
- F Part of the gardens*

Looking at the estate today, there seems to be a mixture of a Brownian landscape coming up to the house on the south and east, with a more Reptonian separation between garden and parkland to the west and north (Repton, himself, had no connection with Wrotham Park), and this may reflect a more ad hoc approach taken by the Byngs, borrowing from currently fashionable designs in other places.

It is interesting to speculate whether Wrotham Park would have developed differently had Brown himself been directly involved. His energy and, to make no bones about it, expense, might have resulted in a

more focussed implementation of any design he produced, both during construction and later on. As it was, a large part of the parkland nature of the site was compromised in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the then owner, another George Byng, built a model farm on the estate, and had the land converted to pasture and arable production. It was he, too, who created that most Brownian of features, a lake, by damming Margery Mead. The estate probably owes more of its immediate effect to this latter development, but, perhaps, neither Lapidge nor Brown would be completely shocked to see it today.

## **Beechwood: a 21stC perspective on an 18thC landscape park**

### **Lottie Clarke**

It is believed that Capability Brown was consulted on the design of 10 landscaped parks and gardens in Hertfordshire, but few traces of his work remain today.

Brown's clients were all landowners – individuals of means who lived in houses within the grounds he surveyed. Today only two of those houses remain in private ownership, five have been demolished, two are golf clubs, one a management college, one in multiple ownership, and one – Beechwood—is a school.

and it was this mansion which Sir Thomas Saunders Sebright (5<sup>th</sup> Baronet) invited Brown to visit in 1753 in order to survey the land and suggest changes. Brown would have seen a Bridgemanesque landscape, which had strong axial features, bastions and angular stands of trees. His plan clearly shows a more informal style, with the addition of features such as a temple, ornamental barn and gothic folly. His ha-ha, described as a “sunken fence”, and ice house are thought to be the only features which were actually created. The ice



*Beechwood Park Preparatory School, 2016*

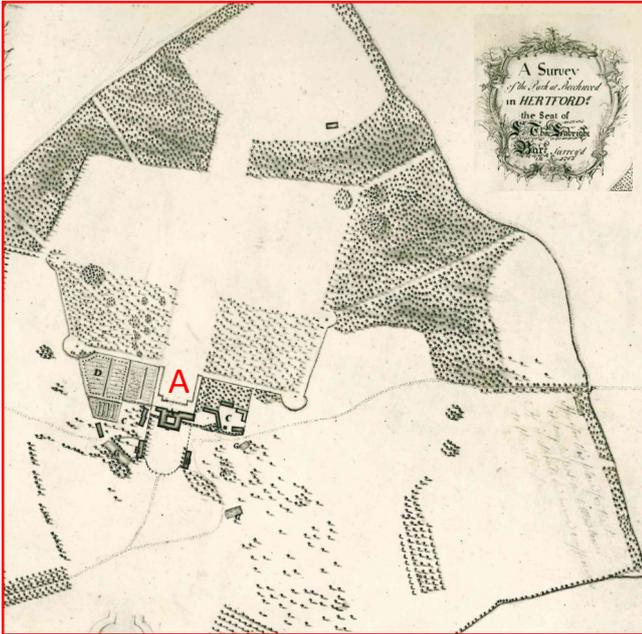


*Beechwood Park, the 'Brownian' landscape, 2016*

In common with similar properties, Beechwood has passed from private ownership through a variety of institutional uses, necessitated by the dwindling finances of the owners. The Sebrights, the last family who owned Beechwood, had owned the property since the 16th century. A series of advantageous marriages to heiresses ensured that several generations of Sebrights could afford to improve the estate and enlarge the house. In 1702, an imposing east front was added to the original Tudor building,

house remains intact, the ha-ha does not.

Subsequent generations of the family amassed further land throughout the country which would have contributed to their income, however it was perhaps the 7<sup>th</sup> Baronet, Sir John, whose lifestyle began to erode the family fortunes and seal Beechwood's fate as a family home. Sir John was an eminent authority on animal breeding, agricultural reform and a noted philanthropist, but also a gambler.



*A section of Brown's survey of Beechwood, 1753: 'a Bridgemanesque landscape, which had strong axial features, bastions and angular stands of trees'.*

**A** marks the position of the mansion



*A similar section of 'Capability' Brown's plan for the improvement of Beechwood Park, 1754. 'A more informal style' with a softening of the outlines of the planting, additional 'clumps' of trees and variation introduced to the woodland areas.*

**A** marks the position of the mansion

He gambled on the outcome of a ploughing match at Beechwood and promoted the last bare-fisted boxing match in England. One of the participants, John Gully, is immortalised in the name of the valley at the front of the mansion, where the contest took place – Gully's Bottom. Sir John accepted a challenge from the Marquis of Salisbury to find four gentlemen who could shoot 200 partridge in one day, with only one gun between them. He lost the bet.

In keeping with Sir John's renaissance character, he entertained artists, scientists, and writers, as well as fellow politicians – another drain on the family fortunes.

From the 1870s the family decided to let the mansion and move into a smaller neighbouring property they owned. In 1886 Sir John was declared bankrupt and attempted to sell Beechwood, this was prevented by the trustees.

From the 1880s the Sebrights often entertained members of the Royal family including Queen Mary, no doubt weakening their finances still further. In 1932 Home Farm was sold and in 1935, a large part of the estate. The family had acquired an outstanding art collection, which was gradually sold off to raise funds. In 1937, 57 paintings were auctioned including a Reynolds, a Raphael, three Leonardos, two Poussins

and two Titians.

During WWII, the mansion became the headquarters of Spillers – the milling company, who had moved from their London offices. They occupied the house between 1939 – 1945. The war signalled the end of occupation of the house as a family home.

The estate stands on a plateau, and offered no scope for one of Capability Brown's signature lakes, but was the perfect site for an airfield. It was therefore requisitioned by the government between 1942 – 1946 to store damaged, surplus or obsolete aircraft. It was well away from any operational airfields, in order to minimise the risk of enemy attack. Numerous Nissen huts were built for maintenance purposes and to accommodate personnel who worked on the aircraft.

From 1946 to 1961, Beechwood was let to Tolmers – a girls' school, by which time it was apparent that both the dilapidated house and neglected grounds were difficult and costly to maintain

In 1961, the Public Trustee ordered the sale of the house, and it was bought to be the home of Shirley House School which in 1964 became Beechwood Park School – the present owners.



**Beechwood House and Park, 1938, towards the end of the Sebright ownership.**

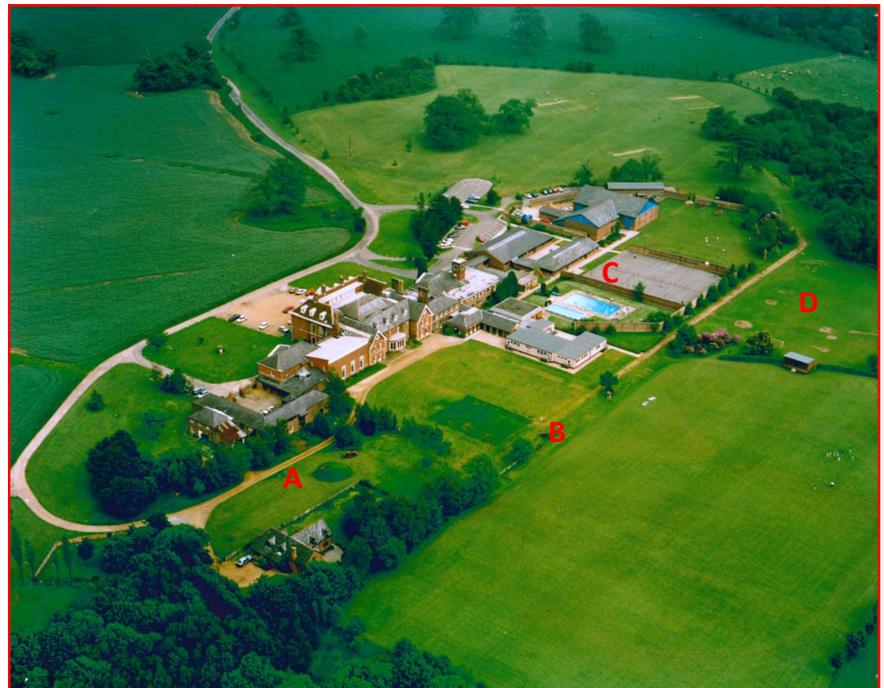
- A** Trees, probably remnants of Brown's planting, removed to cultivate land during WW2.
- B** Small pond, one of those surveyed by Brown, but never 'improved'.
- C** Remains of beech avenue.
- D** Specimen trees destroyed by tornado in 1963.

<http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/cy/image/EPW056932>

© Historic England

**Beechwood Park School, c. 2000.**

- A** Ice house.
- B** Site of former ha-ha, described by Brown as a 'sunken fence'.
- C** Classrooms, swimming pool and tennis courts have replaced the extensive kitchen garden.
- D** Former woodland walk.



Gradually traces of Brown's design were removed by the need to provide accommodation and facilities for the school. Such developments were made very much easier by a tornado which wreaked havoc in the grounds in 1963 and destroyed many large specimen trees, including Wellingtonias, a blue fir and a cedar, which was lifted over a wall and demolished a glasshouse in the walled garden. With the trees gone, it has been possible for the school to expand and develop, gradually replacing the walled garden and its buildings, which had served for the needs of the

household, with facilities catering for the needs of schoolchildren.

As the estate has been sold off, modern agriculture and the institutional use of the mansion have encroached on Brown's landscape; however, the mansion Brown would have known remains in excellent condition and still stands in a landscape whose key features he would no doubt recognise today.

## Events and Outings in 2016.

**Garden Visit to Rutland**  
**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June** £47  
[Departure from Stanborough Green,  
Welwyn Garden City at 9.00am]

England's smallest county contains two fine period houses, built with the local honey-coloured ironstone, that have outstanding gardens. At the **Old Vicarage at Burley**, where we will be welcomed with coffee, Sandra and Jonathan Blaza have created a series of gardens, enclosed by yew hedges and stone walls, with herbaceous planting, and a Mediterranean garden with olive and lemon trees. A rill flows between roses and standard wisterias, while the walled vegetable garden includes dwarf cordon apples, raised herb beds and a fine glasshouse, while orchards and wild flowers lie beyond.

*The Old  
Vicarage at  
Burley*



**Garden Visit to Cambridgeshire**  
**Wednesday June 22<sup>nd</sup>** £47  
[Departure from Stanborough Green,  
Welwyn Garden City at 9.30am]

Upon arrival at **Dullingham House**, we will have coffee and biscuits at this beautiful, early 18thC house. The 9 acre garden overlooks part of a Humphry Repton Park (His Red Book, 1802). Sir Martin Nourse and his wife, Lavinia, purchased Dullingham House just over 20 years ago and have been creating and improving the garden ever since. Features include a large flagstone terrace behind the house and a superb south-facing mixed border. In this sheltered garden, with its low rainfall, strong light and warmth, Lady Nourse is able to grow many unusual plants.



*Dullingham  
House*

After lunch in a nearby pub restaurant we visit the **Old Hall at Market Overton**, the home of Stefa and Tim Hart. Here, below the terraces and lawns with beautifully designed borders, the garden sweeps down to a ha-ha, giving extensive views over the Catmose Vale. A grassy walk between shrubs and mature trees leads back to the terrace, where we will take tea and cake before leaving.



*Old Hall at  
Market  
Overton*

Following a light lunch at the Three Blackbirds, we visit the moated **Kirtling Tower**, the remains of the great 16thC Kirtling Hall and current home of The Lord and Lady Fairhaven. Formal gardens and parkland include a large walled garden with spectacular herbaceous borders. We shall enjoy tea and cake at Kirtling Tower before our departure.



*Kirtling  
Tower*

**Reservations for places on the three garden visits should be made to Mrs Sonja Fillingham, using the 'flyer' which accompanies this Newsletter**

### **Garden Visit to Norfolk**

**Wednesday, July 27th**

**£53**

**[Departure from Stanborough Green, Welwyn Garden City, at 9.00am]**

I realise that this will be a long day, but **Raveningham Hall** is a most beautiful grade II\* garden of 10 acres belonging to Sir Nicholas Bacon. Sir Nicholas is the president of the RHS and his wife, Susan, is a sculptor (a peacock of hers is in the herbaceous border). Sir Nicholas's mother, Priscilla, began to transform the garden in 1950. There are extensive greenhouses, a melon pit and a working kitchen garden. For the enthusiast there are extensive beds of Agapanthus,

and plants will be available for purchase. Raveningham is important both for its park, a well preserved example of 18thC landscape and its garden of Arts and Crafts features, with additions and modifications from the 1950s to the present day. *We will have coffee on arrival and a light lunch before we leave. The journey home will be broken with a stop for tea and scones at the Leaping Hare at Wyken.*

**Approximate time of return: 7.00pm.**



### **'PAINTING THE MODERN GARDEN—MONET TO MATISSE'**

**ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS — FRIDAY 8TH APRIL 2016— ENTRANCE £25**

**Full details of this Exhibition, Lecture and Library visit are to be found on the separate 'flyer' accompanying this Newsletter**

### **'LANCELOT 'CAPABILITY' BROWN FROM AN ARTIST'S PERSPECTIVE'**

**TIM SCOTT BOLTON**

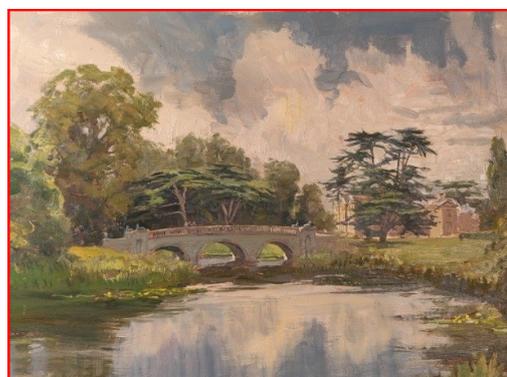
**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

**Beechwood Park School, Markyate, Nr St Albans AL3 8AW**

**(A 'Capability' Brown Landscape)**

In the year of celebrating the tercentenary of Brown's birth, Tim Scott Bolton, a landscape artist, has spent the last year visiting many of the eighteenth century landscapes created by 'Capability' Brown. Painting approximately 90 landscapes, ranging widely across the seasons, Scott Bolton has captured the essential character of Brown's legacy and is author of the book 'A Brush with Brown' to be published in April 2016.

No other contemporary painter is as well known for their ability to capture the enduring appeal of the country house in its rural setting, having spent forty years travelling round Britain painting many of its most distinguished houses.



***Final details of this lecture are still to be completed, but if you are interested in attending this event please email me to express your interest and further information will be sent to you.***

***Mrs Annie Saner, email [johnsaner@btinternet.com](mailto:johnsaner@btinternet.com)  
Tel 01442 843428.***

***Bury Orchard, Hudnall Common, Little Gaddesden,  
Herts HP4 1QL.***

### **HERTS GARDENS TRUST—AGM—2016**

This year's AGM will be held on Thursday, 14th July at 'Youngsbury' at the kind invitation of the owners. The garden will be open from 6.00pm when a glass of wine served. The meeting will start at 7.00pm and members are invited to stay for picnics—please bring tables and chairs (and umbrellas, if wet).

*In 1760, 'Capability' Brown produced a plan of the park on which is written in manuscript: "Plan produced by Lancelot Brown for the improvement of Youngsbury, after remarking that nature had done so much that little was wanting but enlarging the river." We are fortunate to have such a significant and beautiful venue for HGT's celebration of the 300th anniversary year of 'Capability' Brown's birth.*



Youngsbury Park

**Location: Youngsbury, Wadesmill, Ware, SG12 0TZ**

### **GUIDED WALKS AROUND 'BROWNIAN' SITES**

On page 6 Torsten Moller describes the set of Walks around 'Brownian' sites in Hertfordshire that are a central feature of the Trust's celebration of 'CB300'. Copies of all the walks are available from the HGT website:

**PDF versions of the ten walk leaflets can be downloaded, free of charge, from:**  
[www.hertsgardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.hertsgardenstrust.org.uk)  
*(Events and Outings)*

**A series of 6 guided walks to some of our Brownian Landscapes will start with a visit to Wrotham Park on May 12th 2016.**

Other sites will be Digswell, Brocket, Beechwood, Cole Green, and Newsells, all led by an expert who knows that landscape well. Some of these sites are not normally open to the public and numbers will be limited. **Further details will appear on the website, or contact:**

[hertstalks@gmail.com](mailto:hertstalks@gmail.com)

### **STUDY DAY AT WOODHALL—APRIL 16, 2016 (‘The Capability Men’)**

This Study Day was advertised in the 2015 Autumn edition of the newsletter and is now fully subscribed.

**Members who would like to add their names to the waiting list should contact:**

[hertstalks@gmail.com](mailto:hertstalks@gmail.com)

### **LANCELOT "CAPABILITY" BROWN, "THE FINEST GENIUS FOR LAYING OUT A PLEASURE GROUND"**

An exhibition at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) will run from Tuesday 6th September until Saturday 19th October. The exhibition will explore 'Capability' Brown's work in Hertfordshire.

During October (at a date to be arranged) there will be a talk to complement the exhibition. Full details will be given on the website:

[www.hertsgardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.hertsgardenstrust.org.uk)  
*(Events and Outings)*

### **‘CAPABILITY FOUND’ NATIONAL TRUST AT STOWE, BUCKINGHAM 12TH APRIL UNTIL 30TH OCTOBER, 2016**

Members may like to find out more about the events to be held at Stowe, celebrating the life and work of Capability Brown.

In 1741 Brown was appointed Head Gardener by Lord Cobham at Stowe, following in the footsteps of Charles Bridgeman and William Kent (see the article on page 4—5).

**Full details from:**  
[nationaltrust.org.uk/stowe](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/stowe)



[www.hertsgardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.hertsgardenstrust.org.uk)  
[reg. charity no. 1010093]