**Subject Line: Capability Gardens Trusts: Festival Update, April 2016**

Hello!

Spring is here and suddenly it feels like the Capability Brown garden visiting season is upon us! Not surprisingly, things have been moving apace since our last update, so here are a few more items we need to update you on.

**Notes from Capability Brown Festival Project Management Board Meeting (March):**

Caroline attended the 15th March Board meeting, and noted the following items that will be of interest to you.

* **Leaflet maps** – The first batch of leaflet maps is scheduled be ready by May, which is slightly later than hoped as designers are taking time to produce bespoke maps for each site. It is aimed that between 60 and 100 sites will have leaflet maps and we have requested a list of sites to be circulated as soon as possible to allow CGTs time to prepare information if required. Leaflet maps will be available to download from the CBF website.
* **Press** **Launch** – As you will no doubt have noticed, there was an excellent response to the Press Launch on 25 February with five big articles in broadsheets as well as features in diverse publications including Bella, Sainsbury’s Magazine, The Sun and The Star. CGTs can capitalise on this publicity and photos of the press launch are available for CGT newsletters and websites on request from the Festival team. CBF has a spreadsheet recording press coverage, showing articles per month: Dec 2015=43, Jan 2016=105, Feb 2016=183, Mar 2016=22 (up to 15 March).
* **Publicity** – Interest in the Festival is increasing, as reflected in social and digital media: subscribers to CBF newsletter up to 2034 (1066 at last meeting on 25 January), increasing by 8-10 per day; target of 3000 Twitter users will be easily reached (currently 2584, up from 2116 at last meeting); Facebook up 256 from last meeting to 573 likes; website 10,682 sessions last month, with 8,223 users, mainly in UK but also traffic from Germany and France.
* **Website** – Various improvements have been agreed with developers and will be put in place in coming weeks, including colour-coded pins on the interactive map to distinguish opening status of sites (green=open, red=private, amber=sometimes open), events listing is being redesigned on calendar format, whole site will be searchable, events uploading form to replace manual form (details provided will be proofed by CBF then instantly uploaded, saving admin time).
* The Board particularly asked for their thanks to be passed on to Northants Gardens Trust for their successful Audience Development Bid and collaboration with Black History Month, which was viewed as an interesting and innovative project, with great potential to attract new audiences. HLF was impressed overall with the variety and engagement of CBF activities.

**Volunteer Toolkit** **and Education Pack**

The Volunteer Toolkit and Education Pack are both currently being finalised and are with the designers, so we will be able to give you more news soon. A briefing note will be produced by CBF explaining the pedigree of the toolkit and the organisations involved in its production. The toolkit has been designed so that it can be used for non-Brown events beyond the festival year and we’re hoping that it will be a useful source of guidance and information for CGTs planning events and projects in the future.

**Capabili-teas**

Further information, menus and tent signs are now available on the CBF website <http://www.capabilitybrown.org/capabili-teas> and can be used at events.Herts GT had a very successful Capabili-tea at their study day at Woodhall Park on 16 April, offering not only ginger biscuits and seed cake but also recipes from Hannah Glass’s 18th century cookbook.

***They Call Me Capability Brown* film**

The Festival has commissioned a five-minute animated film about Capability Brown, created by cosmic Carrot. This is now available to download from the CBF website <http://www.capabilitybrown.org/news/capability-camera-new-film-introduces-brown-and-his-work>. The film is freely available for use by sites and organisations and CGTs might want to include it on their websites or screen it at exhibitions – contact the Festival team to obtain a copy in the format you require.

**CGT CBF events, research and publications**

As you know, we have been compiling a spreadsheet of CGT activities relating to Brown from your responses to our request for information last year and from publicity we have received. We’ve attached a simplified version of our spreadsheet so you can see the extent and range of County Gardens Trust engagement and offer – very impressive! As you can see, the spreadsheet only contains basic notes for our internal use, but we hope it provides some food for thought and useful leads! This information will be useful as a record of our achievements, and also will form part of the HLF evaluation of the Festival. If your activity isn’t listed, then do please drop us a line at capabiiltycaroline@thegardenstrust.org or capabilitylinden@thegardenstrust.org.

**CBF Press Launch**

The Festival was officially launched to the world’s press on 25 February at an event at Church House Conference Centre in Westminster (see photo for evidence of the packed room!). Journalists were given short presentations from Ceryl, Gilly, Lucy Worsley (HRP), Jim Dixon (HLF), John Hoy (Blenheim) and Sebastian Edwards (HRP) then treated to a Capabili-tea. Linden and Kate were there to promote CGTs activities and involvement in the Festival and, as we have seen, the launch was a great success, resulting in international media coverage.

**CGT Brown Publications**

Congratulations to Kent Gardens Trust on the publication of their book *Capability Brown in Kent*, available from <http://www.kentgardenstrust.org.uk/publications/>. Norfolk Gardens Trust also have a publication in the pipeline with *Capability Brown in Norfolk* due to be published in August, including lots of photographs, documents, maps and illustrations of sites including Kimberley, Langley and Melton Constable Parks. A new book by David Brown and Tom Williamson entitled *Lancelot Brown and the Capability Men: Landscape Revolution in Eighteenth Century England* is due to be published in June.

**CGT Brown publications on The Gardens Trust website**

As introduced in the January update, we have now created a page on The Gardens Trust website (currently temporary site, but will be transferred) to list CGT publications on Capability Brown which links through to your own websites for anyone who wants to buy copies. With a bit of luck, this will bring in some additional sales for you, and be a way of demonstrating the collective value of CGTs’ work. This is launched firstly as a collection of Capability Brown publications, but could be grown to include any other of your publications that you’d like to pop on. Do please send us details of any publications you’d like to add.

**The Gardens Trust Capability conservation project**

Please keep your eyes peeled for an email from The Gardens Trust’s Conservation Officer Margie Hoffnung with some questions about the state of Capability Brown landscapes in your area. She will be asking for your invaluable help in a TGT project to track the general preservation trajectory of Capability Brown sites, ie whether they are in good shape and not under threat of adverse change; or whether they are not in good shape and are, despite their association with the nation’s most well-known landscape designer, subject to inappropriate development or management. Margie has endeavoured to compose questions that involve the least effort for you with the greatest gain for the team’s research, ranging from whether you know of a CMP for the site to the level of interest of the owners to whether the site is intact or not.

It is expected that this project will be a milestone in demonstrating the value of combining the national overview of The Gardens Trust and its conservation log with the local knowledge of CGTs, so do please help if you can.

**The Gardens Trust Annual Summer Conference 2-4 September 2016**

Just a reminder that bookings are now being taken for The Gardens Trust’s Tercentenary Conference on Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown at Robinson College, Cambridge with a great programme of visits, lectures and celebrations <http://www.thegardenstrust.org/annual-conference-2016.html>.

Caroline, Linden and Kate are working with Cambridgeshire to put together a small thank you during this weekend to CGTs for all their hard work on the Festival. Watch this space! This will also see the official launch, with much trumpeting and publicity, of the Brown research that CGTs have put onto PGUK ([www.parksandgardens.org](http://www.parksandgardens.org)). Details of this launch will follow, but in the meantime, do please aim to have your research material with PGUK by the summer, if at all possible.

**Appeal for prizes to boost media interest**

Media coverage of the Festival has already been beyond expectations, so in most cases we are knocking on open doors, but there are a few mass market titles which are proving a bit more tricky to engage. In order to provide additional collateral for the campaign, the Festival is looking for a range of prizes or unique opportunities that can be offered to the media to build on the work being done to promote the Festival. Having interesting or unique prizes could help us secure coverage in places that might not necessarily be interested in the Festival, or help us secure coverage of higher impact. The National Lottery is interested in working with the Festival on this strand, and its massive media presence combined with some great prizes could generate amazing publicity.

The sort of things the Festival is looking for to offer as prizes are:

* Money can’t buy opportunities – something unique that we can offer, perhaps a special tour followed by a champagne Capabili-tea.
* Family friendly activities – something families could enjoy together such as a special performance or the opportunity to meet an expert.
* Tickets or giveaways with some added value, such as a talk or behind-the-scenes tour.

CGTs offering a prize could capitalise on the publicity generated to promote CGTs work and other activities by getting your CGTs name in the press. If you have proposal or any ideas, please send them to pressoffice@capabilitybrown.org or call 01235 835297.

**Gilly does Brown for the BBC**

Gilly Drummond appeared on The Forum on BBC World Service on a programme called Taming Nature, talking about Brown’s influence on the landscape – well worth a listen! <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03ng3cf>

**Brown becomes fashionable!**

Finally, you might be amused to learn that clothes retailer Hobbs has just released a Capability Brown collection of clothing (not endorsed by the Festival), so if you’re so minded you (or a loved one) could be clad from the neck down in Brown-inspired wear.

<https://www.hobbs.co.uk/hobbs-collection-no6>

As ever, do keep us informed of your Brownian activities and we’d love to hear your comments, queries and complaints! Don’t forget the Resource Hub has a new Capability Brown section where we’re gathering lots of information including copies of these updates, CBF stakeholder reports, guidance on press and publicity, and details of Brown publications. Have a look at <http://www.parksandgardens.org/historic-landscape-project/resource-hub> (scroll down to the bottom of the page) and let us know what else you would like to see there.

We’ve just heard that Lindsay McPherson, the CBF Administrator has moved on to a new position, so if you need to get in touch with the Festival team, please email Catherine Hempenstall at festival.admin@capabilitybrown.org who will be providing temporary cover.

And finally, a little treat … don’t forget that Capability Brown’s ban accounts are now available for free viewing at the Royal Bank of Scotland’s website - <http://heritagearchives.rbs.com/subjects/list/lancelot-capability-brown-bank-accounts.html>

Best wishes,

Linden and Caroline

**And here are a few examples of some of the events you’re running this summer (gathering apace now)!**

* **Dorset Gardens Trust’s visit to Milton Abbey**Day at Milton Abbey with tour and talk by John Phibbs, with NADFAS on 11th July.
[www.dorsetgardenstrust.co.uk/images/documents/progsummer16.pdf](http://www.dorsetgardenstrust.co.uk/images/documents/progsummer16.pdf)
* **Surrey Gardens Trust’s Study Day at Gatton Park**Brenda Lewis will talk about the ‘History of Gatton Park’ as well as her role in advising on the Historic Restoration Management Plan, Steffie Shields will discuss her upcoming book Moving Heaven & Earth: Capability Brown’s Gift of Landscape and Louise Miller, Gatton Park Development Officer, will speak about ‘Gatton Park: Present and Future’. There will also be guided tours of the grounds.12th July.
<http://surreygardenstrust.co.uk/events/>
* **Essex Gardens Trust’s conference on Brown in Essex, at Audley End**
Brown and Designed Landscapes in Essex conference at St Mark’s College, Audley End on 24th May.
[www.placeservices.co.uk/news-events/courses/lancelot-capability-brown-and-designed-landscapes-in-essex/](http://www.placeservices.co.uk/news-events/courses/lancelot-capability-brown-and-designed-landscapes-in-essex/)
* **Lancashire Gardens Trust’s day at Lowther with the Heritage Trust for the North West**
 ‘Capability’ Brown at Lowther' visit and talk on 11th May. Lancashire Gardens Trust in association with Heritage Trust for the North West.
[www.lancsgt.org.uk/events%20page.htm](http://www.lancsgt.org.uk/events%20page.htm)
* **Hereford & Worcestershire Gardens Trust’s Brown artistry day with the Barber Institute**
‘Planting & Artistry of Capability Brown’ study day with Barber Institute on 23rd April. [www.hwgt.org.uk/cb300.html](http://www.hwgt.org.uk/cb300.html)
* **Shropshire Gardens Trust’s walk around ‘lost’ Tong**

Had it survived intact, Tong Estate might have been seen as one of Capability Brown's major works. Instead the M54 was just the final straw in the degradation of this 18th Century landscape. SPGT’s ‘CB 300 Tong Walk - Taking the long view’ on 27th July, led by Advolly Richmond, will demonstrate the potential vulnerability of other historic landscapes.
[www.shropshiregardens.org.uk/page/7/events.htm](http://www.shropshiregardens.org.uk/page/7/events.htm)