**Humphry Repton factfile**

* Born on 21st April 1752 in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.
* Well-to-do family - son of a tax collector.
* Moved to Norwich during childhood, attended grammar school.
* Aged 12 years was sent to the Netherlands to learn Dutch and prepare for a commercial career.
* 1773 married Mary Clarke, had a much-loved family.
* Parents died in 1778 and he used the small legacy to move to a modest country estate at Sustead, near Aylsham in Norfolk.
* Moved his family to a small cottage near Romford, Essex.
* After unsuccessful times in various employments including the textile trade and as a private secretary, in 1788 he set himself up as a landscape gardener (a job title which he invented).
* He approached his social contacts to ask for work improving their estates. His first two landscape jobs were for Jeremiah Ives, textile merchant and mayor of [Catton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catton_Park,_Old_Catton,_Norwich), and for Thomas Coke of [Holkham Hall](https://www.holkham.co.uk/) in Norfolk.
* Repton wanted to fill the gap left by the death of [Capability Brown](http://www.capabilitybrown.org/sites/default/files/final_cb_generic_leaflet.pdf) in 1783. He initially championed Brown’s landscape style but later adopted the ideas of the [picturesque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Picturesque) movement. His work therefore links the landscape design of the eighteenth century and the [gardenesque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gardenesque" \t "_blank) movement of the early Victorian years.
* His work reintroduced terraces, gravel walks and flower beds into the area around the house, to provide a foreground for views of the landscape. Repton also designed separate flower gardens, with more elaborate ornamental or themed planting, a style which became popular in the nineteenth century.
* Designed around 400 hundred English landscapes and gardens, becoming known as a worthy successor to [Capability Brown](http://www.capabilitybrown.org/).
* Repton only did the design and left the client to implement the work. As a result, many of his designs were never realised, and he never became wealthy.
* Commissions included the picturesque landscape at Bristol’s [Blaise Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blaise_Castle_Estate), [Dyrham Park](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dyrham-park" \t "_blank) in Gloucestershire, [Endsleigh Cottage](http://www.parksandgardens.org/places-and-people/site/1258/summary) in Devon, London’s [Russell Square](https://bloomsburysquares.wordpress.com/russell-square/), [Stoneleigh Abbey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stoneleigh_Abbey) in Warwickshire, [Tatton Park](http://tattonpark.org.uk/home.aspx) in Cheshire, [Uppark House](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/uppark-house-and-garden/features/summer-gardens-at-uppark" \t "_blank) in Sussex, [Valleyfield](http://www.parksandgardens.org/places-and-people/site/3359/summary) in Fife and the themed gardens at [Woburn Abbey](http://www.woburnabbey.co.uk/), Bedfordshire.
* His work included improvements to existing landscape schemes at the estates of aristocratic clients like the Dukes of Bedford and Portland, but also designs for much smaller properties.
* In his memoirs Repton said: ‘In every place I was consulted I found that I was gifted with a peculiar facility for seeing almost immediately the way in which it might be improved.’
* The way Repton presented his landscape designs was a key part of his success. He produced ‘Red Books’ or folios of his plans, drawings, maps and a description of the improvements he proposed to make. They famously include watercolour paintings with overlays showing ‘before’ and ‘after’ views of the estate.
* Repton outlined his approach to landscape gardening in three books: Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening (1795), Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening (1803) and Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening (1816).
* In 1811 Repton had a serious carriage accident, after which he often had to use a wheelchair.
* He died on 24 March 1818 and is buried in [St Michael’s Church, Aylsham](http://www.humphryrepton.org.uk/) in Norfolk.
* At the end of his life he said ‘as a landscape designer I have never been superseded by a more successful rival. My own profession, like myself, was becoming extinct.’
* His ideas about landscape design continue to influence designers today.