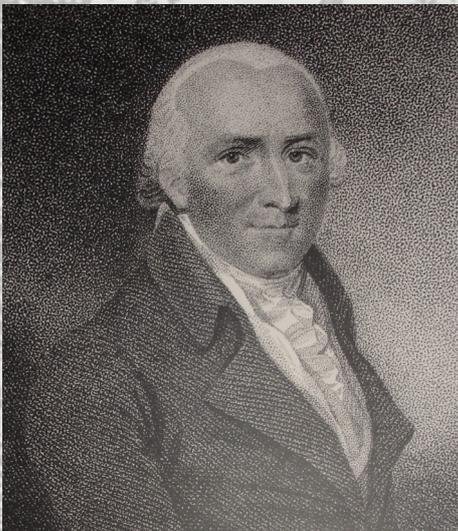


Celebrating **HUMPHRY REPTON** (1752–1818)

A LIFE IN LANDSCAPES
from
PAGE TO GARDEN

This exhibition forms part of The Gardens Trust's national celebration of the life and work of the last great landscape gardener of the eighteenth century in this bicentenary year of his death.



Repton was responsible for some 400 landscapes across Britain, including Longleat (Wiltshire), Woburn Abbey (Bedfordshire) and Russell Square (London).

He had much in common with a modern-day landscape designer and consultant. Unlike “Capability” Brown, who both designed and frequently managed the creation of his vision, Repton only did the design and left the client to implement the work. It is still a mystery as to what extent his designs were executed, if at all, and this is the focus of much of the research in this celebratory year.

“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.”

Extract from Repton's memoirs

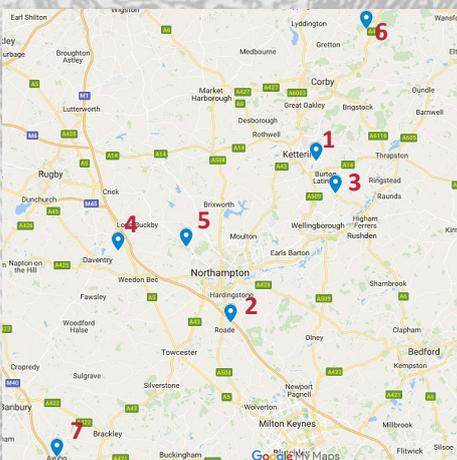
What was he famous for?

Repton became famous for his Red Books which he presented to clients containing plans, beautiful watercolours, descriptions and justifications of his designs.

He worked on eight sites in **Northamptonshire**. He created Red Books for:

- **Barton Hall (1)**
- **Courteenhall (2)**
- **Finedon Hall (3)**
- **Milton Park** (now in Cambridgeshire).

He produced a report for **Norton Hall (4)**; watercolours and correspondence relating to **Harlestone (5)** and **Laxton (6)**; and a letter with accounts relating to **Aynho (7)** has been discovered.



Northamptonshire Gardens Trust
www.northamptonshiregardentrust.org





Celebrating **HUMPHRY REPTON**

(1752–1818)

‘Before’ and ‘After’

The way Repton presented his landscape designs was a key part of his success



‘BEFORE’ Hare Street

“View from my own cottage, in Essex”

‘AFTER’ – lift the flaps to see his improvements

(with thanks to Peter H. Goodchild for the use of these images)

“I will conclude these Fragments with the most interesting subject I have ever known; it is the View from the humble Cottage to which for more than thirty years I have anxiously retreated from the pomp of palace, the elegancies of fashion, or the allurements of dissipation ... that constant moving scene, which I would not exchange for any of the lonely parks, that I have improved for others; some of their Proprietors on viewing the scene I have described, have questioned my taste; but my answer has always been, that in improving places for others I must consult their inclinations; at Harestreet I follow my own.”

Extract from his book *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1816).

His Red Books

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. The books did not all have red covers until he realised that this was a good selling point. He also made drawings and plans in other formats, such as notebooks. The Red Books show Repton’s vision for the landscape and his view that landscaping was an art.

What did he change?

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. His ideas about landscape design continue to influence designers today.

To find out more

Visit our website www.northamptonshiregardenstrust.org

Go to The Gardens Trust website to find out what is happening around the country to celebrate the work of this great landscape designer – www.thegardenstrust.org

Woburn Abbey is a fine example of some of Repton’s plans being carried out. For more information go to www.woburnabbey.co.uk



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Celebrating HUMPHRY REPTON

Timeline (1752–1818)

WORLD EVENTS

HUMPHRY REPTON

1752		Year of birth
1756	Seven Years' War between Britain and France begins.	
1760	George III succeeds his grandfather George I	
1770		Sent to Holland to learn Dutch and prepare for a commercial career, on his return apprenticed to Textile industry
1771	'Factory Age' begins with the opening of Britain's first cotton mill	
1772	22 June – slavery is effectively outlawed in England	
1773	16 December – 'Boston Tea Party'	Marries Mary Clarke
1774	Methodist John Wesley publishes 'Thoughts Upon Slavery'	
1775	18 April – American War of Independence begins	
1783	December – William Pitt the Younger becomes prime minister	Becomes secretary to Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and very briefly resided in Dublin
1786		Moves to Hare Street in Essex
1787	Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade is formed	
1788	Under pressure from abolitionists, parliament investigates the slave trade	Becomes landscape gardener with first paid commission for Norwich merchant Jeremiah Ives, of Catton Hall
1789	French Revolution begins with the storming of the Bastille	
1791		Produces Red Book for Milton (now in Cambridgeshire)
1793	Britain goes to war with France	Designs Red Books for Finedon Hall and Courteenhall
1794		Completes Red Book for Barton Hall
1795		Writes <i>Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening</i> . By now he has worked on over 50 landscape projects.
1796		Visits Aynho
1805	Royal Navy defeats a French and Spanish fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar	
1806		Draws up plans for the garden at Laxton – with his architect son John Adey Repton producing plans for the village
1807	Britain abolishes the slave trade	
1808	British West Africa Squadron is formed to suppress slave trading	
1809		Provides plans and watercolours for Harlestone and design brief for Norton
1811	Luddite protesters attack industrial machinery	In serious carriage accident leaving him semi paralysed
1814		Mentioned in <i>Mansfield Park</i> by Jane Austin
1815	Corn Laws are introduced to protect British agriculture	
1815	Duke of Wellington, defeats Napoleon at Waterloo	
1818		Dies at his home in Hare Street