

Press release

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Gardens Trusts reveals new discoveries about landscape gardener Humphry Repton in bicentenary year

Culminating years of research, the Gardens Trusts have shed new light on the work of historic landscape gardener Humphry Repton at a symposium at the Garden Museum in November 2018. The new research was completed by hundreds of volunteers from County and Country Gardens Trusts across the UK as part of the celebrations in the bicentenary year of Repton's death.

In celebrating this important figure, who wanted to fill the gap left by the death of Capability Brown in 1783, the Gardens Trust encouraged volunteers from over 30 counties, and in Wales and Scotland, to present their longstanding research of the special Red Books and other documents. This work was undertaken to grow knowledge of the impressive Humphry Repton, who bridged the style between 18th century landscape design and the Gardenesque movement of the early Victorian years.

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, so-called by Repton due to the distinctive red leather bindings. They famously include watercolour paintings with overlays showing 'before' and 'after' views of the estate using an inventive cut-out flap. While some survive, others are lost and yet people are still discovering new documents such as Repton's account books, drawings and notes, which reveal broader influence on the English landscape. The research also reveals much about the man himself, such as his interest in the arts as a designer, painter, actor and musician, which led to him cultivating influential relationships in his professional and personal life and showed his desire to be part of the elite artistic circle.

In celebration of their discoveries, the Garden Museum is staging an exhibition called "Repton Revealed" running until the 3 February 2019 showcasing 24 Red Books. This exhibition reunites the largest number of Red Books in one place in 25 years and demonstrates some of the



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new findings including newly discovered Repton sites and some of Repton's lesser known design theories.

Hidden gems in the city of London

Within the London landscape are many hidden sites that Repton influenced, surviving only as fragments of his work, but nevertheless recalled in place names or depicted in a Red Book. Kenwood, Hampstead is the largest estate and most complete, and yet so many sites nestled in the landscape are part of his greater body of his work. Grovelands in North London is now a private hospital, but is especially interesting as it is evidence of a brief partnership between Humphry Repton and the famous architect John Nash. Two garden squares, Bloomsbury and Cadogan are now compromised by underground car parks yet Russell Square has been restored to its original layout and is now open to the public rather than restricted to key holders.

Fire at Westminster

A new discovery of various letters from Repton to Charles Abbot, the owner of Kidbrooke Park in Sussex and Speaker of the House of Commons from 1802-17, alongside entries in Abbot's journals refers to work at Westminster. Alongside the illustration for Peacock's Polite Repository, it was this discovery which confirmed that Repton designed the Speaker's Thameside Garden as a commission and revealed details of Repton's proposal. The gardens subsequently disappeared under the new Palace of Westminster, built after the 1834 fire.

Water in the landscape

A chance remark by a member of the Dymoke family in early 2018, led to an exciting discovery in Grimsthorpe Castle library of the Normanton Red Book, that scholars believed had been lost. The Rutland commission illustrates a valley converted to a lake with picturesque gardens, which 180 years later now lies, ironically, under the largest man-made reservoir in England: Rutland Water. Today, Normanton Church, remodelled in Repton's style and saved from flooding by public outcry, now 'floats' in historic Rutland and is depicted in his watercolour proposal as high on the hill.

Patronised by the East India Company

Repton's only executed institutional landscape is the East India College at Haileybury, Hertfordshire for the East India Company. The commission lasted between 1808 and 1810, overseeing both the groundwork undertaken and providing numerous reports on the improvement of the site for the Directors. The surviving papers form part of the East India College collection at the British Library.

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Repton's monetary morals

Repton relished criticising the commercial sources of new money, which was tarnished by 'war profiteering'. Nonetheless, many of his clientele were drawn from the upwardly mobile, with incomes derived from money of commerce (Owston, Bessacarr and Harewood), the military (Mulgrave) and the law (Rudding and Langold). The most dramatic example of Repton's acceptance of new money is thought to be Harewood which took the form of a bound collection of architectural drawings of folio-size.

Repton's influence: for children and Princes

Repton visited Montreal, Kent, where he was observed by two children aged 8 and 11, and created a Red Book in 1812. 20 years later, the child of 11 who had originally watched Repton at work, Sarah Elizabeth, brought his ideas to life and was the driving force behind the completion of the work. Sadly, these designs have now vanished under a housing estate.

Alongside this example, landscape designer Prince Hermann von Pückler also admired Repton and visited 50 sites across the UK including Longleat, Blenheim and Wilton. In 1833, Pückler published *Hints on Landscape Gardening* showing strong influence from Humphry Repton, even using flaps to illustrate before and after designs, a signature trait of Repton's work, showing that Repton's work chimed chords with both the young and the wealthy.

Linden Groves, Strategic Development Officer at the Gardens Trust said: "As part of our bicentenary celebrations of the iconic landscape gardener Humphry Repton, who still continues to influence landscape designers today, we wanted to learn more about Repton and his inventive work. Involving volunteers from across the country has been invaluable to being able to discover new Red Books, new Repton sites, and learn more about his role in designing the British landscape. Humphry Repton has long been in the shadow of Capability Brown, but has every reason to be in the limelight for his contribution to landscape design."

Other research and talks at the Symposium covered many other parts of the country: discovery of another new Repton site in Dorset, exciting finds about Herriard, the links with Druids & Repton's antiquarianism and how research can help restore a Repton site.

In addition to other initiatives linked to the bicentenary celebrations, the County Gardens Trusts have produced books about the research that has been undertaken and these are listed at:

<http://thegardenstrust.org/research/cgt-publications/>

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Also, funded by a £99,500 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Gardens Trust has been able to pilot activities that are designed to welcome wider local communities to Repton landscapes, with a long-term view to nurturing a new wave of volunteers and supporters for these heritage assets. The activities have already seen an increase of people inspired to get involved with their own local landscape, enabled by sharing skills, guidance materials and training workshops with other sites and groups so that they too can offer similar local community events in the future.

For more information about Repton and this year's celebrations, visit www.humphryrepton.org, or follow @humphryrepton, #humphryrepton, #sharingrepton, or fb.com/humphryrepton

- Ends -

For further information, to receive a copy of the press pack, to arrange interviews, or to be provided with images, contact:

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Notes to Editors

Regional sites where Red Books exist, although some sites do not remain:

County	Red Books, reports or drawings by Repton exists
BERKSHIRE	3 Holme Park Purley Sonning Hill
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	3 Hanslope Park Shardeloes Stoke Park
HAMPSHIRE	3 Herriard Park Norman Court Stratton Park
KENT	7 Bayham Abbey Cobham Hall

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	Kippington Langley Montreal Sundridge Park Vinters
OXFORDSHIRE	3 Great Tew Magdalen College Sarsden House
SURREY	5 Betchworth Hatchlands Hayling House Point Pleasant Villa, Clapham
SUSSEX	9 Brightling Park Buckhurst Park Burton Park Compton Place Healthfield Park
AVON	3 Leigh Court Newton Park Royal Fort
CORNWALL	6 Anthony Catchfrench Pentille Port Eliot Tregothnan Trewarthenick
DEVON	2 Endsleigh Luscombe Castle
GLOUCESTERSHIRE	1 Spring/Woodchester Mansion
SOMERSET	1 Ston Easton
WILTSHIRE	3 Corsham Court Longleat New Park
CHESHIRE	5 Aston Park

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	High Leigh Hooton Rode Hall Tatton Park
LANCASHIRE	2 Lathom Scarisbrick Hall
YORKSHIRE	6 Armley House (Gotts Park) Harewood House Mulgrave Castle Oulton Hall Ouston Wentworth Woodhouse
BEDFORDSHIRE	5 Beeston Leasowes The Hazells Moggerhanger park Sutton Park Woburn Abbey
CAMBRIDGESHIRE	4 Dullingham House Gaines Hall Waresley Park Wimpole Hall
ESSEX	12 Claybury Higham Hall Hill Hall Moor Hall Riffham's Spains Hall Stanstead Hall Stubbers The Warren Thornden Hall Wanstead Woodford Hall
HERTFORDSHIRE	6 Ashridge Panshanger Sopwell(New Barnes) Tewin Water Wall Hall Woodhill

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NORFOLK	8 Bracondale Lodge Catton Hall Holkham Hall Honing Hall Northreps Sheringham Witton Wood Hall
SUFFOLK	10 Culford Park Glemham Hall Gleivering Hall Helmingham Hall Henham Livermere Park Nacton Shrubland Hall Tendring Hall Park Wherstead
DERBYSHIRE	1 Wingerworth Hall
LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND	3 Buckminster Burley on the Hill Normanton Park
LINCOLNSHIRE	1 Scrivelsby Court
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	5 Wicksteed Park Courteen Hall Finedon Milton Park Norton Hall
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	3 Babworth Hall Thoresby Park Welbeck Abbey
HEREFORD & WORCS	7 Garnons Hewell Grange Moseley Hall Panson Cottage Stoke Edith Sufton Court

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	Warley Park
SHROPSHIRE	4 Attingham Park Ferney Hall Longner Hall Shavington
STAFFORDSHIRE	3 Aqualate Hall Beaudesert Prestwood
WARWICKSHIRE	1 Stoneleigh Abbey
LONDON	3 Brondesbury/Brandsbury Kenwood Sundridge Park
CLWYD	1 Rhug Hall
GWYNEDD	1 Plas Newydd
POWYS	1 Stanage Park
Scotland: FIFE	1 Valleyfield

About the Gardens Trust bicentenary celebrations

- The Gardens Trust obtained seed-funding of £10,000 from Historic England to set-up and establish a structure for Repton celebrations, as well as a grant of £99,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver audience development projects. Project partners and supporters have provided additional match funding and funding in kind.
- Many Repton sites, including some not normally open to the public, will host special events, tours and activities throughout 2018.
- Visit www.humphryrepton.org for more information.

About The Gardens Trust

The Gardens Trust is a UK national charity dedicated to the research and conservation of designed landscapes and to campaigning on their behalf. The Gardens Trust, as the statutory consultee in England for parks and gardens, play a key conservation role, and more widely supports the County and Country Gardens Trusts in protecting and conserving our landscape heritage. The Gardens Trust was formed in 2015 from the merger of the Garden History Society (GHS) and the Association of Gardens Trust (AGT).

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under

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our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLottery and #HLFsupported.

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