**MEDIA BRIEFING**

**For immediate release: 3 September 2018**

**The Gardens Trust national celebration**

**of landscape gardener Humphry Repton**

**reaches out to local communities**

**2018 marks bicentenary since the death of Repton**

**Overview**

This year, more than 200 sites and project stakeholders coordinated by the Gardens Trust, have been running activities to celebrate the life, work and legacy of Humphry Repton, the last great landscape gardener of the eighteenth century, responsible for some 400 landscapes across Britain, including Longleat (Wiltshire), Woburn Abbey (Bedfordshire) and Russell Square (London).

In addition to special events such as conferences and public garden openings, a £99,500 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund has made it possible for the Gardens Trust 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 grant will also enable the Gardens Trust to create an infrastructure for sharing skills, guidance materials and training workshops, with other historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes so that they too can offer similar local community events in the future.

These pilot activities are taking place at five renowned Repton sites, working with specific audiences:

* A family excursion to Wicksteed Park, Kettering, with Northamptonshire Gardens Trust on 8 September, with invited guests from the multicultural Victoria Centre community centre in Wellingborough enjoying children’s activities such as paper boat-making and tree-measuring, as well as a tour of the park.

The 20th century amusement and theme park was created in the grounds of Barton Seagrave, for which Repton created a Red Book

over 100 years before. Evidence shows his designs were implemented.

* A family fun day celebrating world cultures and cuisines at the Catton Park Heritage Open Day, Norfolk, on 16 September from 11am to 4pm, in partnership with Norfolk Gardens Trust and Broadland District Council. The family day will be packed full of free activities and entertainment from around the globe, with opportunities for visitors to try their hand at everything from Chinese calligraphy to bushcraft activities to martial arts, Bollywood dancing and other forms of movement inspired by different cultures from around the world.

Visitors will also be able to treat their taste buds and enjoy a global eating experience with food vendors serving a range of cuisines, from Caribbean dishes to Portuguese fare.

Children are also invited to take part in a drawing competition of their favourite garden to feature alongside a display of gardens from around the world, which has been supported by Norfolk Gardens Trust and the Historic Gardens Foundation.

Catton Park was Repton’s first commission. Catton House was strategically built on a hill, and Repton framed the view of the city from the hill with his woodland planting.

* The Warley Woods Big Red Book Project starting in September in Birmingham, at which parents and children from Abbey Junior School, and local residents will learn to research and record their local Repton landscape in a uniquely fun volunteer project. The project includes four training workshops and will result in a leaflet, public presentation and information added to the Historic Environment Record.

Repton was commissioned to transform farmland at Warley Woods into a pleasure garden.

* An introductory conservation workshop for refugees taking place in October, at Kenwood Park, London with London Parks and Gardens Trust and English Heritage, followed by a planting workshop in April 2019, looking at 18th century plantings in the UK as well as gardening styles from the refugees’ countries of origin.

Repton is thought to have influenced the design of some 60 gardens or squares across London, including Kenwood, and these workshops will involve new audiences in ensuring that London’s green spaces are protected into the future for the benefit of London’s residents, workers and visitors.

* A Repton and garden history workshop and tour at Blaise Castle, Bristol with Avon Gardens Trust in 2019.

Repton laid out the park at Blaise on the remains of an early formal layout of around 1700.

Linden Groves, Strategic Development Officer at The Gardens Trust said: “We are really keen for our bicentenary celebrations to raise understanding and appreciation of Repton and our historic landscapes, and to generate a new wave of conservation volunteers and supporters. This forms the main thrust of our pilot activities, which are designed to introduce local communities to Repton landscapes, and then share the learning experience with our professional network.”

For more information about Repton and this year’s celebrations, visit [www.humphryrepton.org](http://www.humphryrepton.org), or follow @humphryrepton, #humphryrepton, #sharingrepton, or fb.com/humphryrepton

**Media opportunities**

* Features
* Photo opportunities
* Outside broadcasts in a Repton landscape
* Expert interviews with leading historians

See Press Office contact details below.

* **Ends –**

For further information, a press pack, or images contact:

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**Notes to Editors**

* Inspired by their role as a partner in the 2016 Capability Brown Festival,

the Gardens Trust is keen to maintain the momentum and legacy of the hugely successful festival by continuing to build collaborative partnerships and raise awareness of our nation’s beautiful, historic landscapes with as wide an audience as possible.

* 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](http://www.humphryrepton.org) for more information about Repton as well as the bicentenary celebrations.

**About Humphry Repton**

Repton was born in 1752 in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. After an unsuccessful start in the textile business, he set himself up as a landscape gardener. He went on to design around 400 hundred English landscapes and gardens, becoming a worthy successor to the great [Capability Brown](http://www.capabilitybrown.org/).

Estates where Repton worked include [Tatton Park](http://www.parksandgardens.org/places-and-people/site/3223) in Cheshire, [Uppark House](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/uppark-house-and-garden/features/summer-gardens-at-uppark" \t "_blank) in West Sussex, [Welbeck Abbey](http://www.parksandgardens.org/places-and-people/site/3450) in Nottinghamshire, and [Woburn Abbey](http://www.parksandgardens.org/places-and-people/site/3551) in Bedfordshire. He famously produced ‘Red Books’ or folios to present his proposed improvements, showing ‘before’ and ‘after’ views of the landscape.

Repton’s ideas about landscape design continue to influence designers today.

### **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 our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk). Follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/heritagelottery), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/heritagelotteryfund/) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/heritagelotteryfund/) and use #NationalLottery and #HLFsupported.