

WHERE ARE HIS LANDSCAPES?

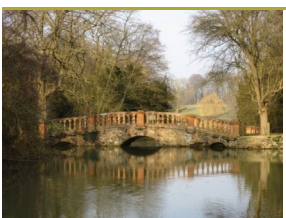
The best way to learn more about Capability Brown's work is to go out and explore the landscape around you!



Brown's ha-ha and Aynho House today.

Aynho Park

Near Brackley, South Northants.
Brown worked c.1760–3 for the Cartwright family. Private – not open to the public but there are public footpaths across the estate.



Bridge linking series of small ponds to the Park Lake.

Castle Ashby

Near Wellingborough.
Brown worked 1761–74 for the Earls of Northampton. Castle Ashby Gardens are open to the public 365 days of the year.



Fawsley Manor and Part of Badby – produced with kind permission of Fawsley Estate.

Fawsley Hall

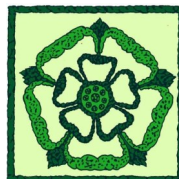
Near Daventry, West Northants.
Brown worked c.1763 for Lucy Knightley. Now a Hotel and Spa. There are public footpaths across the estate.



North-west view of Wakefield Lodge, 1776, Sandby P. (Private collection)

Wakefield Lodge

Near Towcester, South Northants.
Brown worked here 1750–5 for the Duke of Grafton. Private – not open to the public and there are no public footpaths across the estate.



Northamptonshire
Gardens Trust

You are welcome to join us

Northamptonshire Gardens Trust is an educational charity affiliated to The Gardens Trust.

Northamptonshire has a wealth of gardens, from the mediaeval deerparks, the great formal layouts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the landscaped parklands of Capability Brown and Humphry Repton to the more modern gardens of equal value.

We aim to encourage greater awareness of our County's designed landscapes and to enhance our understanding of them.

We have a varied programme of visits, lectures and news for our members.

For more information and details of how to join us:

- visit our website at www.northamptonshiregardenstrust.org
- write to:
Membership Secretary
16 Howard Lane
Boughton
Northampton
NN2 8RS

Supported by The Northamptonshire Record Office



Lancelot 'Capability' Brown The man and his work in Northamptonshire



To see our film of Lancelot Capability Brown's work at Castle Ashby and to learn more about the man, visit www.capabilitybrown.org



Supported by
The National Lottery[®]
through the Heritage Lottery Fund





Portrait of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, c.1770-75, Cosway, Richard (1742-1821), Private Collection / Bridgeman Images

WHO WAS CAPABILITY BROWN?

Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716–1783) was one of the UK's most talented landscape designers who changed the face of Britain for ever. Born in the small Northumberland village of Kirkharle, Brown's name is today linked with more than 250 estates, covering 200 square miles throughout England and Wales. He worked on large country estates and popularised the English landscape style in Britain. The style became fashionable throughout Europe and beyond during the eighteenth century.

A landscape garden may often look completely natural but is, in fact, manmade. Brown believed that if people thought his landscapes were beautiful and natural, then he had been successful in his aim. He created pleasure gardens that were also very practical. Brown's genius was in his ability to see how a work of art could be created out of land or an existing formal garden. His nickname 'Capability' is thought to come from his ability to size up a site, saying to a client, 'the place has its capabilities'.

His talent blossomed while he was Head Gardener in the 1740s at Stowe, Buckinghamshire, then the most famous garden of the day. At Stowe he replaced the parterres and fussy formal gardens, with a smooth open lawn. His first masterpiece there was the romantic Grecian Valley.

'Such, however, was the effect of his genius that when he was the happiest man, he will be least remembered; so closely did he copy nature that his works will be mistaken.' Anon.



A cedar tree stands adjacent to a small garden building at Castle Ashby. The building is separated from the grazed parkland by Brown's curving ha-ha.

WHAT WAS HIS STYLE AND LEGACY?

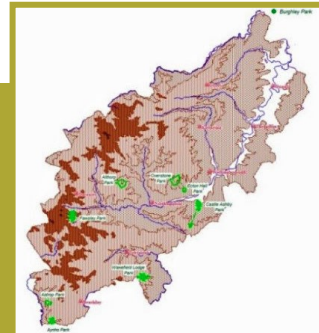
We have come to regard Capability Brown's work in particular as defining the quintessential English landscape park.

But what are the key ingredients of Brown's designs?

- Elongated lakes snaking through a backdrop of sweeping grassland and lawns which ran right up to

the country houses upon which they were focussed.

- Naturalistic clumps of trees and occasional specimen trees relieving the sward, artfully framing views to and from the house and adding perspective to his minimalistic layouts.
- Clumps of trees also often placed on knolls (sometimes beyond the boundary of the park), to emphasise the local landform.
- Enveloping shelter belts of trees hiding hard boundary walls thus giving the impression both of continuity beyond the park whilst within, the grassland perhaps representing a clearing or deer lawn within an ancient forest.
- Meandering carriage drives offering a variety of intended views of his landscaping.



Produced by Northamptonshire County Council's Historic Environment Record ©NCC 2016

WHERE DID HE WORK IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE?

The parks at Althorp, Astrop, Aynho, Castle Ashby, Ecton, Fawsley, Overstone and Wakefield Lodge have all been associated with Capability Brown (shown in green on map).

Documentary evidence of his work has only been found for four of these, at Aynho, Castle Ashby, Fawsley and Wakefield Lodge. (Burghley House, one of Brown's most famous commissions is also shown because it was part of Northamptonshire when his work was undertaken).

As yet, evidence for Brown actually doing any work at Althorp, Astrop, Ecton and Overstone has not been found.

It is interesting that with the exception of Burghley, all of his landscapes lie in the south and west of the county.