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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Major Festival launches celebrating the life and legacy of Capability Brown throughout 2016

- **100s of events taking place over 60 sites in England and Wales**
- **Major events, exhibitions, talks and workshops at some of the country's greatest landscapes and some hidden gems to be discovered**
- **Delivered by 21 partner organisations from March to October 2016**
- **Supported by National Lottery funding**

Throughout 2016 the work of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown will be marked with a major Festival of events, celebrating his life, work and legacy in the year of the 300th anniversary of his birth.

Royal Gardener and the grandfather of the profession of landscape architecture, Brown was an engineer, entrepreneur, salesman and extremely effective businessman. It was the combination of these skills which led to his success and his shaping people's picture of the quintessential English countryside that is recognised throughout the world today.

This new Festival, funded by a £911,100 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and managed by the Landscape Institute, brings together for the first time a range of organisations to tell the story of this great man with more Brown sites made accessible for a wide range of audiences, and volunteers supported to develop their skills to help people understand the landscape as much as the house they may be visiting.

The memorable nickname 'Capability' is thought to come from his commenting to potential clients that their estate land had great "capabilities". On launching the programme, **Ceryl Evans, Festival Director** said: 'Brown's amazing career consisted of his advising at around 250 sites covering an area of around 200 square miles, running a business stretching across England and Wales. We are delighted to have so many of these sites taking part in the Festival as they will be helping to tell the story of the impact and importance of this landscaping genius. As part of the legacy of the Festival we want to reach new audiences beyond his existing fans, to those who know nothing of his work but simply enjoy beautiful landscapes.'

Thanks to National Lottery players, the Capability Brown Festival was awarded £911,100 by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). **Jim Dixon, Trustee of the Heritage Lottery Fund**, said: 'Without Capability Brown we wouldn't have such a wonderful image of the quintessential English garden and without National Lottery players, it would not be possible to hold this festival to mark his legacy. We're delighted to be supporting such a unique opportunity to bring together sites from across the country to celebrate the man who shaped them and create new opportunities for people to experience his landscapes and story.'

Events include:

THE LARGE

Brown worked at some of the most famous estates in the country such as Chatsworth, Blenheim and Stowe. Many of these sites will be putting on events to celebrate the tercentenary including:

- Major exhibitions telling his story – *Capability Brown at Blenheim Palace* in Oxfordshire; *Noble Prospects: Capability Brown in Yorkshire* at the Mercer Gallery in Harrogate; *The Empress and the Gardener* exhibition at Hampton Court Palace, showing for the very first time drawings connected with Brown and his workshop, collected by the anglophile Catherine the Great of Russia; as well as others such as at Harewood House, Yorkshire, and Milton Abbey and Highcliffe Castle in Dorset
- Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire will provide the opportunity to explore a newly implemented Brown landscape from a recently rediscovered plan he had drawn up for the estate, seeing what Brown and his clients would have seen when the new landscapes developed.
- A year-long programme of events and exhibitions at Weston Park on the Shropshire/Staffordshire border, showcasing and celebrating Capability Brown, his work on site and in the wider region.

THE SMALL

It wasn't just the major estates that Brown worked with and smaller sites will be putting on activities as well including:

- The public park, Temple Newsam in Yorkshire will be animating the space in the park with a new dance commission. The performers will be made up of participants from the local housing estates and supported by professional dancers to develop and create the choreography
- Euston Hall in Suffolk will welcome classes from the local primary school to learn about the landscapes
- Brown's birthplace, Kirkharle in Northumberland and Fenstanton, his final resting place in Cambridgeshire will be celebrating with a range of events across the year
- Welsh Historic Gardens Trust will tour venues including hotels and churches with a bilingual exhibition to discuss his impact with those gardening for themselves

***Please note, some of these smaller events are for small and specific audiences and will not be advertised widely.**

THE UNUSUAL

As well as site specific events, there are a number of other activities which will encourage people to get involved in new and interesting ways:

- Capabili-Teas – Georgian inspired afternoon teas with authentic recipes from the period available at a number of sites from Easter, with a focus on Brown's birthday month of August. The recipes are also available in the publication Hudson's Historic Houses and Gardens 2016, to encourage people to bake themselves and take their homemade Georgian-inspired picnic when visiting a Brown landscape. These recipes will be downloadable from the Festival website in time for Easter.
- The Embroiderers' Guild is contributing to the celebrations with a series of over 40 unique textile exhibitions at venues across the country, taking inspiration from Brown's designs, as well as the landscape more generally
- In partnership with Warwick Castle, Beatfreaks, an award-winning youth engagement agency, will commission six young artists aged 16-25 from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to create images and poems based on their interpretation of the site's Capability Brown landscape and its links to the Transatlantic Slave Trade. These works will be shared and distributed on site and online
- Rediscovering a lost landscape at Tong Castle, in Shropshire with guided walks on the landscape almost lost beneath the M54 motorway
- Burton Constable in Yorkshire will host an artist in residence exploring the Brownian landscapes alongside a year-long programme of events and exhibitions reaching out to the nearby city of Hull.
- Scampston in north east Yorkshire is running a geocaching project to get people out and about exploring the landscape using GPS to find the geocaches
- Compton Verney in Warwickshire will be running the Capability Brown Express to and from neighbouring towns to help new visitors travel to the site

THE NEW

Attracting new audiences to explore, enjoy and understand our natural landscapes is an important part of the Festival and some specific projects are being funded to support that objective. Although not necessarily open to the public more widely, some examples include:

- A new sensory trail through Brown's 18th Century pleasure grounds at Croome in Worcestershire, cared for by the National Trust, aimed at supporting children and young people with physical and learning difficulties to explore landscapes
- A new music commission is being composed by Graham Ross, the Director of Music at Clare College, Cambridge, as a pastoral piece for solo violin and chamber orchestra, drawing its inspiration from Vaughan Williams' Lark Ascending and a poem by John Clare (1793-1864), an English poet whose love of the English landscape profoundly shaped his writing. It will be premiered at the Fringe in the Fen Festival in Fenstanton in July

- Chatsworth House in Derbyshire will be working with children in care, children with life-limiting medical conditions, and refugees, encouraging them to explore the Capability Brown landscape and learn about Brown's time there.
- Trentham in Staffordshire will be working with their local Wildlife Trust to get city-dwellers out into the countryside
- 11 'Hub' sites will be staging small exhibitions promoting their neighbouring Brown sites, some of which have limited access, as well as setting the scene about Brown and his work to provide impact across the country
- A short animated film providing an engaging introduction to Brown's work, aimed at a family audience
- New discoveries from the Festival's research programme will be communicated widely to encourage other people to share their knowledge about Brown

Gilly Drummond, Chair of the Capability Brown Festival said: 'Inevitably these are just a snapshot of some of the many events that will be taking place across the country from now until the end of October. I am delighted to see how the Festival has grown, through the enthusiasm and support of its partners. It would also not have been possible without the support of National Lottery Funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.'

Lucy Worsley, Chief Curator, Historic Royal Palaces, on hand to help launch the Festival said: 'This year, the nation celebrates the work of the great Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, a man who began his long career being despised as a 'cabbage planter' and ended it lauded as an artist who 'adorned his country'. His ambition was to 'finish England', and he certainly made a good job of it, leaving a legacy of hundreds of parks and gardens up and down the country for us to enjoy as we celebrate the 300th anniversary of his birth this year.'

Visit www.capabilitybrown.org for more information about events and an interactive map of locations.

- ENDS -

NOTES TO EDITORS

A full press pack is available from Firebird PR from Adela Cragg, Susannah Penn or Jane Bevan at Firebird PR on 01235 835297 / 07977 459547 or via email to pressoffice@capabilitybrown.org

About the Capability Brown Festival 2016

- The Capability Brown Festival unites 21 partner organisations in the UK's largest festival of its kind to date. It marks the 300th anniversary of the birth of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown in August 1716.
- The Festival is managed by the Landscape Institute and is funded with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, with additional match funding and funding in kind from the Festival's partners and supporters.
- Many Brown sites, including those not normally open to the public, will host special events, tours and activities throughout 2016.
- More information can be found at www.capabilitybrown.org

About The Landscape Institute

The Landscape Institute manages the Capability Brown Festival on behalf of the Festival Partnership. The Landscape Institute is the Royal Chartered institute for landscape architects. As a professional body and educational charity, it works to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment for the public benefit.

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 @heritagelottery