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PRESS RELEASE: for immediate release

Nationwide Festival marking 300th Birthday of Capability Brown gets major funding boost

The Capability Brown Festival, which will celebrate the 300th Birthday of the 'father of landscape architecture' with a programme of nationwide events and exhibitions in 2016 has been awarded £911,100 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The Festival, the first ever celebration of Brown's work, unites 17 partner organisations in the UK's largest festival of its kind to date. Organisers hope to open up as many of the 250-plus sites attributed to or connected to Brown, some of which are currently inaccessible to the public, and to develop exhibitions, walks, tours and activities celebrating his distinctive landscapes.

To find out more about the Festival visit www.capabilitybrown.org

Gilly Drummond, Chair of the Capability Brown Festival, said: "This is truly fantastic news. We are currently working with owners and managers of Brown landscapes, and with hundreds of volunteers to stage an exciting and lively nationwide festival celebrating the life and work of the greatest contributor to our amazingly rich heritage of parks, gardens and wider designed landscape. Events and activities for all ages and interests are in the pipeline. Today's news is a wonderful boost to all those efforts and ensures Brown's legacy will be properly celebrated in 2016."

Paul Lincoln, Deputy Chief Executive of the Landscape Institute, said: "As the first ever celebration of Brown's work the Festival has two key strands. The first will increase public access to the sites Brown created and advised on – many of them never seen by the public before. The second will allow us to discover more about his work, and how he created his landscapes. The Festival will fix Brown at the forefront of modern thinking on design and management of the natural environment and celebrate his enduring legacy which is still relevant to how we plan, manage and design our landscapes today."

Drew Bennellick, Head of Landscape and Natural Heritage at HLF, said: "Capability Brown's contribution to this country's landscape heritage deserves to be better known. This Festival marking the 300th anniversary of his birth is an ideal opportunity for people to discover the

far-reaching legacy of a man who shaped our idea of the quintessential English countryside.”

Described as the ‘father of landscape architecture’, Capability Brown changed the face of eighteenth century England through his designs of hundreds of country estates. Nicknamed ‘Capability’ because of his habit of telling clients that their gardens had “great capabilities”, his carefully constructed rolling landscapes using trees, lawns, water, bridges, and buildings have shaped people’s view of the quintessential English countryside.

Working in a natural style Brown’s design influence on parks and gardens spread across Northern Europe to Russia and through Thomas Jefferson to the United States. Hailed as a genius in his day, Brown continues to be recognised world-wide for his holistic, artistic and pragmatic vision, yet many remain unaware of Brown’s contribution to the iconic parks that play a major part in our nation’s landscapes.

There are thought to be over 250 sites attributed to or connected to Brown. They include the World Heritage Site at Blenheim, Highclere Castle (the set for ITV’s Downton Abbey) as well as 140 sites on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens, 180 listed buildings and at least five Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Sites vary from large estates to small gardens, public parks to golf courses and many more. It was recently discovered from a letter in the British Library that Brown may have worked at Shilinglee in Sussex - a site that hadn’t appeared on any previous list of his work. Organisers hope that with more time dedicated to researching Brown’s work other new findings will emerge in time for the Festival.

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Further information

For the Heritage Lottery Fund, contact Tom Williams, Media Officer on tom.williams@hlf.org.uk or 020 7591 6056

For the Capability Brown Festival, Sarah Harrison on 07768 372 892 sarah@sarahharrisonpr.com or Paul Lincoln, Deputy CEO, Landscape Institute pauill@landscapeinstitute.org 020 7685 2646

Notes to editors

The Heritage Lottery Fund

From the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife, we use National Lottery players' money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about. www.hlf.org.uk. @heritagelottery

HLF support for Capability Brown sites

HLF are supporting various restoration projects at Capability Brown – designed sites, including:

- **Compton Verney, West Midlands** - £2.5million will help restore grounds including a rare, Brown-designed Grade I-listed Chapel.

- **Ampt Hill Great Park, East of England** - £606,800 to restore surviving Capability Brown designed landscape
- **Highcliffe Castle, South West England** - initial support for a £2.86 million bid to help improve Brown-designed parkland

The Capability Brown Festival

The Capability Brown Festival is a nationwide celebration of the 300th anniversary of the birth of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown in 2016. The Festival unites 17 partner organisations, in the UK's largest festival of its kind to date. It is funded with a development grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and is managed by the Landscape Institute. The project has two key strands. The first will increase public access to the sites Brown created and advised on. The second strand is dedicated to discovering more about Brown's work.

www.capabilitybrown.org

Founding partners: English Heritage, National Trust, Natural England, Parks & Gardens UK, VisitEngland, The National Garden Scheme, The Historic Houses Association, The Association of Garden Trusts, Kolab, The National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies, Country Landowners Association, Garden History Society.

Festival partners: Blenheim Palace, Royal Horticultural Society, Bridgeman Images.

The Landscape Institute

The Landscape Institute is the royal chartered body for landscape architects. It represents professionals in the UK working across planning, design and the management of urban and rural landscape. The Landscape Institute campaigns to protect conserve and enhance the natural and built environment for public benefit. Through its advocacy programmes it champions landscape, and the landscape profession, in order to inspire great places where people want to live, work and visit. www.landscapeinstitute.org

The Landscape Institute manages the Capability Brown Festival on behalf of the Festival partnership.