Welcome to our teachers’ pack for the 2016 tercentenary of the birth of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown.

Lancelot Brown was born in the small village of Kirkhale in Northumberland in 1716. His name is linked with more than 250 estates, throughout England and Wales, including Stowe in Buckinghamshire, Blenheim Palace (Oxfordshire) Dinefwr Park (Carmarthenshire) and, of course Chatsworth. His first visit to Chatsworth was thought to have been in 1758 and he worked on the landscape here for over 10 years, generally visiting about twice a year to discuss plans and peg out markers so that others could get on with creating his vision.

It is thought that Lancelot Brown’s nickname came from his ability to assess a site for his clients, ‘this place has its capabilities’. He was famous for taking away traditional formal gardens and avenues to create ‘natural’ landscapes and believed that if people thought his landscapes were beautiful and natural then he had succeeded.
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![Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown](image-url)
Chatsworth before Brown

The Chatsworth that Brown encountered looked something like this:

![Engraving of Chatsworth by Kip and Knyff published in Britannia Illustrata 1707](image)

The gardens were very formal and organised, both to the front and back of the house. The old road to Chatsworth can be seen running along the bottom of the image, and over the bridge.

Part of the River Derwent, on the left, had been syphoned to form large square ponds and there were many large avenues of trees throughout the gardens. Flora’s Temple can be seen at the bottom left of the image and the old stables are above the house.

In front of the stables was a large pond with a fountain in the middle. The North Wing of the house was not yet built.
This painting is from around the same time, but looking down on the house from what is now Stand wood. The Cascade fountain can be seen running down towards formal lawns.
This view from the South West, painted in 1748 shows the bridge and the continuation of the old road, up towards the edge of the village of Edensor. The old mill can be seen to the right of the bridge.

View from the South-West by Thomas Smith 1748

The 4th Duke inherited Chatsworth in 1755 and wanted to make his mark on the landscape as well as continue the modernising that his father had started. It was he who enlisted the services of Brown to help redesign the surrounding landscape.

The 4th Duke of Devonshire
Brown’s Chatsworth

Having shown your students images of what Chatsworth was like before Brown’s work, discuss with them what they can see that has changed.

This could be done from a number of different points around the Gardens and Estate

Outside the garden:

- Queen Mary’s Bower (the building by the three arched bridge.)
- Outside the stables
- From the Hunting Tower in Stand Wood

Inside the garden

- From the Broadwalk above the house, looking towards Edensor.
- At the top of the Cascade fountain
- The end of the Emperor pond
- Outside Flora’s Temple
Work in the Park

Brown’s first visit to Chatsworth was in 1758 and work was begun on the new Estate almost immediately. The Architect James Paine worked to create new bridges and buildings for the landscape.

By 1758 2,000 Scots Pines were planted in Lindup Wood on the Estate near Beeley and walling and planting of clumps of trees took place on Beeley Moor. Three roads through the Estate were closed or diverted and a new road opened over James Paine’s new one arch bridge.

During 1760-61, work was begun on a new driveway from the west with another bridge, this time a three arched one, which showed off the House and its window gilding as visitors approached. This is how visitors approach the House today.

Eye-catchers

Between 1761 and 1762 a new mill, known as Paine’s Mill, was constructed on the opposite side of the river to the House and a little further down towards Beeley. It was framed by trees and designed to be seen from the garden as an ‘eye-catcher.’

The changes that Brown brought to Chatsworth were in part a response to changes in fashions in garden design and a mood for austerity.

- In what ways does Brown’s style of gardening fit in with an economical approach?
And in 1762, the houses of Edensor that spilled down to the river and were visible from the House were demolished. The lone house now outside the village, on the other side of the road remains.

Why would this view be called an eye-catcher?
Can you spot any other eye-catchers from the garden?
Can you see how the walls of the garden shore up the land around it? This hill was enlarged at the time of the removal of the village.

Why do you think this was done?
- To create a more accentuated rolling landscape.
- To hide the lone house from the view at Chatsworth.

Now the only building in Edensor visible from the house is St Peter’s church.
Queen Mary’s Bower was once part of the formal water garden that was in this area in the 16th century. It is said that the Bower was used as an exercise ground for Mary, Queen of Scots when she was held here in the 1570s. Brown removed the water garden but the 4th Duke decided to retain this feature in the garden as an ‘eye-catcher’, though it has been modified through the centuries.

What makes this spot a good place for Queen Mary to take her exercise in safety?
- It was surrounded by water.
- There was only one way in and out of the Bower.
George Unwin’s plan of 1831 indicating some of the changes that Brown made.
Work in the Garden and near the House

The original site of the Kitchen Garden can be seen in the plan below.

In 1759-60 a new site, north of the House was levelled and cleared of trees. There are records of stone and 33,000 bricks being brought to the site. It took until 1765 to relocate the garden to its new location on the estate; it is now used as a caravan site. A modern kitchen garden is now located much nearer to the house.
The new Stable block (where the café and shop are now situated) was built by James Paine between 1760 and 1761.

Brown’s last correspondence was in 1765 with his foreman, when he discussed finishing off the work and left instructions for gardeners to do.
Back at school, you could…

Design your own garden, using Brownian touches.

Think about

- rolling hills
- clumps of trees to hide or highlight natural or man-made features
- eye-catchers
- no fences, no walls, no interrupted views
- lakes and winding bodies of water

Design a formal garden in contrast.

Think about

- straight lines
- formal bedding
- artificial features
- kitchen garden close to the house

Find out more

There are some resources online related to Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown. A few are listed below. Please note that listing does not indicate endorsement.

http://www.capabilitybrown.org – site for the 2016 Capability Brown Festival celebrating his tercentenary, including resources such as this map of Brown sites across England and Wales http://www.capabilitybrown.org/map

http://www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/6068 - documentary film from 1964 featuring several Brown landscapes, including Chatsworth at 14:58

Alan Titchmarsh documentary on Capability Brown (Channel 4 On Demand)
There’s so much to see and do
As well as The Grand Tour exhibition, we also offer a range of other guided visits and activity sessions that will bring your day at Chatsworth to life. Please see the included booking form for education admission prices. The additional activities listed below can be booked for a small additional charge per head. Please see the education pages of the Chatsworth website for full details.

House and garden
House tour (guided)
Allow 1.5 hours
Experience this amazing 300 year old family home as our friendly guides take you on a journey full of stories about the people and objects that have shaped its history. Your group will learn about key elements of the house and compare and contrast what they see with their own modern lives. From ancient artefacts to contemporary art, our experienced guides will bring the house to life through information and stories. The tour can be adapted to suit children from each key stage and will focus in particular on changes made to the house by the 1st, 6th and current (12th) Dukes.

Garden explores/Sculptures tour
Allow 1.5 hours
The 105 acre garden is full of surprises, with waterworks, inspiring sculptures and amazing plants to discover. Pupils will explore the landscape with an intrepid garden guide to uncover some of its stories and secrets.

Specialist tours can be arranged on request, for example to focus on water features, glasshouses or sculptures.

Farmyard
Farmyard activity – Caring for animals
Allow 1 hour
Children will meet our farm animals and learn how we care for them within the context of a working farm. From fluffy chicks to statuesque shire horses, pupils will get up close to the animals and learn how we care for them. Through ‘hands on’ activities, they will look at health, nutrition and growth and make links between farm animals and the food we eat. In the spring term there may be opportunities to bottle feed a lamb.

Farmyard activity - New life and growth (Animal lifecycles)
Allow 1 hour
Meet our animals and learn about their life processes by comparing, contrasting and classifying them and their young.

Farmyard activity - Products and materials
Allow 1 hour
This tour focuses on the link between the farm and the food we buy and eat. Pupils will learn about where food comes from, how it is processed and also learn about other natural resources such as leather and wool.

All farmyard activities can either be booked as a tour around the farmyard or as a workshop in the Oak Barn. Please select either tour or barn on the booking form.
Outdoor learning

For centuries our unique environment here at Chatsworth has inspired generations. From the resourceful kitchen gardens to the veteran trees of Stand wood to Capability Brown’s picturesque parkland, the Chatsworth Estate provides the perfect setting for outdoor learning.

Our outdoor education sessions provide the opportunity to explore this wonderfully inspiring landscape with fun, engaging and informative activities.

Each session will last approximately 90 minutes, with a capacity of 30 pupils per session. The sessions are charged at £6.75 per pupil, including garden admission.

Dens and shelters - Enjoy building dens and shelters with natural materials that are available in the woodland. Using teamwork and imagination, this session is an exciting and engaging way to promote an understanding of the resources and habitats in the woods.

Woodland discovery trail - Discover Chatsworth’s rich woodland and learn how it is managed throughout the year, its history and its importance and various uses to the estate historically and today. This session will involve some walking and a number of activities within the woods, including storytelling activities for younger groups.

Discover the Kitchen garden - Join us on a tour of our Kitchen garden and discover more about how we grow and use our fruit and vegetables. This unique insight into our Kitchen garden will involve seasonal activities to promote an understanding of the life cycle of plants.

Book one of our outdoor learning sessions and you’ll be based in our newest education space, The Stickyard.
Christmas at Chatsworth

Visiting Chatsworth at Christmas is magical. Each year, a different theme is chosen and the house is decorated to reflect this theme. Explore the house in all its festive glory, complete with costumed guides to help you on your way.

If you would like further information about education visits at Chatsworth, please contact the education team at education@chatsworth.org or call Sara Main on 01246 565341. To make a booking, please contact our Bookings Office on 01246 565430 or visits@chatsworth.org