

## CHAPTER 7

# Lancelot Brown's Legacy of Landscape Practice: Samuel Lapidge 'Who Knows My Accounts and the Nature of Them'

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### Introduction

Since Lancelot Brown's aides were first referred to as 'associates' in 2001, this term has been generally applied to the main gardeners who assisted him to realise his various projects.<sup>2</sup> This title represented the overdue acknowledgement of their contribution to the realisation of Brown's landscapes and that perhaps one man alone could not have achieved everything, even though this fitted the modern world view that favours 'great men' and heroes. While this latter acknowledgement has helped to redress the balance and increased our knowledge and understanding of Brown's work and that of others, it has also resulted in considering all aides as associates, when in fact they clearly had different tasks within a certain hierarchy. As a result there are still considerable gaps in our understanding of Brown's landscape practice as a business. Our knowledge of the financial arrangements was increased as a result of access to Brown's private ledgers at Drummonds Bank, but there remain many questions about the arrangements of pay and the flow of money, which were clearly sophisticated and complex.<sup>3</sup> There also remain questions about how projects were approached, organised, and directed and it appears that a strategy of following the money is not going to provide us with the required understanding, as there are too many missing links.

A different strategy to uncover Brown's organisation and manner of directing work would be by means of case studies of individual sites that have good documentation. Unfortunately, there appear to be limited numbers of instances where records survive to a sufficient level to make this possible. However, a case study of

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<sup>1</sup> David Jacques, Val Bott, John Phibbs, David Brown, Tom Williamson, and Steffie Shields all contributed to the text in various helpful ways.

<sup>2</sup> Brown, D. (2001). Lancelot Brown and his associates. *Garden History*, 29(1), 2–11.

<sup>3</sup> Heritage Archives: Lancelot 'Capability' Brown bank accounts. Available online at <https://www.rbs.com/heritage/subjects/lancelot-capability-brown-tercentenary.html>.

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#### How to cite this book chapter:

Woudstra, J. 2020. Lancelot Brown's Legacy of Landscape Practice: Samuel Lapidge 'Who Knows My Accounts and the Nature of Them'. In Finch, J. and Woudstra, J. (Eds.), *Capability Brown, Royal Gardener: The business of place-making in Northern Europe*, pp. 89–104. York: White Rose University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22599/CapabilityBrown.g>. CC BY-NC 4.0

the grounds of Chiswick House illustrates how a small contract was run immediately after Brown's death, and would presumably have been run before it. Detailed accounts of work executed at Chiswick are revealing of the practice as it continued under Samuel Lapidge, assisted by William Ireland. Contracts, drawings, inventories, bills, and vouchers covering the period 1784–85 provide a basis for analysis that is illuminating of the manner of working, general practice of Brown's office, and attributions. In order to get to terms with the general organisation, the contemporary titles are utilised here to analyse and explain the structure and hierarchy.

### Samuel Lapidge in the Brown Milieu

Samuel, son of William Lapidge, was born on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1744,<sup>4</sup> moving to Cassiobury aged four, where his father was a gardener for the Earl of Essex. Together with his brother John, Samuel was predestined to become a gardener, being trained by their father. When the latter was dismissed by Lord Essex in October 1759 after an incident surrounding 'a few runaway Greens &c' taken from the kitchen garden,<sup>5</sup> he had to seek employment elsewhere. A glowing character reference from Richard Woods stated that 'He will Inform you, that he has two sons (wch at present are continued at Lord Essex) but woud be glad they may be imployd under himself, till he can dispose of one or both of them.'<sup>6</sup> Lapidge was soon employed by Sir William Lee at Hartwell (Bucks), for whom he continued Richard Woods's planting schemes. John, Samuel's brother, later became a market gardener near Bath, but in 1762, aged seventeen or eighteen, Samuel joined Lancelot Brown as a 'pupil'<sup>7</sup> and continued to be employed by him until Brown's death in 1783.<sup>8</sup>

Samuel joined a thriving business: 1760 had seen Brown at Chatsworth (Derbys); Alnwick (Northum); Prior Park (Som); Corsham Court (Wilts); Springhill (Worcs); Chillington (Staffs); Aynho (Northants); and Chalfont House (Bucks), amongst other ongoing projects. In 1761 he became involved at Bowood (Wilts); Ugbrooke (Devon); Eaton Hall (Ches), but being in poor health that year he had to rely on James Sanderson, his foreman at Longleat, to give directions at Corsham.<sup>9</sup> In 1762 various new projects clustered around London: Ditton Park, Gatton Park, and Wycombe (all Bucks), but also Temple Newsam (Yorks) and Holkham (Norf), though the latter was not implemented. The work for each project was generally organised by Brown through a foreman, who would provide regular accounts of progress.

Samuel, who frequently accompanied Brown on his travels,<sup>10</sup> was only a few years older than Brown's own children, of whom there were five, the first a daughter named Bridget, after his wife, born in 1746; the first son, Lancelot, was born two years later. There followed John, Margaret, and Thomas, the latter in 1761, when in September the young Lancelot was sent to Eton. Being dubbed Capey, after his father's nickname, it is perhaps not surprising that he was not interested in following in the profession. It would also have been a daunting challenge to live up to the enormous reputation of his father, which was reported as follows: 'Few persons from so humble a sphere of life have been so much talked about as Mr. Brown.' He had received his nickname as a result of a response to a question by Lord Coventry, of Croome Court, where he was first asked for advice in 1750, 'when, having been shewn the place to which much had been done before, his Lordship asked him how he liked it? *Why, my Lord, the place has its capabilities*.'<sup>11</sup>

Various anecdotes reported in the press provide evidence of Brown's abilities and skills, not only at a professional level but also in his ability to convince clients of the right decision:

Mr. Capability Brown, the great Arbiter of British Taste, a few Days ago, standing in Blenheim Park, and surveying with infinite Delight the very magnificent Piece of Water which had been suggested by his Fancy, and finished under his Direction, was overheard to say, Thames! Thames! thou wilt never forgive me for this!<sup>12</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Stroud, D. (1950). *Capability Brown* (p. 103).

<sup>5</sup> Bucks Studies, D/LE/D/6/1.

<sup>6</sup> Bucks Studies, D/LE/D/11/61.

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. Anon., 'Milton Abbey', *Whitehall Evening Post*, 14–17 June 1791.

<sup>8</sup> Stroud, D. (1986). In Jellicoe, G., Jellicoe, S., Goode, P. & Lancaster, M. (Eds.), *Oxford companion to gardens* (p. 329). Oxford: OUP; Stroud, D. (1950). *Capability Brown* (p. 103).

<sup>9</sup> Stroud, D. (1975). *Capability Brown* (p. 87).

<sup>10</sup> Stroud, D. (1950). *Capability Brown* (p. 103).

<sup>11</sup> Anon., 'Anecdotes of Mr. Brown, the gardener', *Morning Post*, 30 July 1776.

<sup>12</sup> Anon., 'Country news', *Public Advertiser*, 9 September 1772.

Other anecdotes reveal him as an astute and confident businessman who was aware of, and able to trade on his reputation:

He was sent for by a gentleman in Staffordshire who had more money than land – and upon being shown the ground – *That hill*, said Brown, *you must clump*. That I cannot do, said the gentleman, for it belongs to Mr Jennings; *Well, – we must pass over that; this valley must be cleared and floated*. Impossible, returned the other, for that is also Mr. Jennings'. *Your most humble servant*, said Brown, taking an abrupt leave, *I think Mr. Jennings should have sent for me, not you*.

When Lord Exeter shewed him Burleigh, and had viewed the ground where the water was to be made; his Lordship asked him what the expence would be? – He replied, *The Goddess of Taste will reproach you, my Lord, if you think of expence in so divine a place*. Still he was urged. *It will take several years to do it, I must have two thousand a year for it 'till it is done*. He would hear of no other term, and has been for some time employed on these terms. Brown certainly laughed when he called it a divine place, and it will be one of his word things.<sup>13</sup>

Brown was a gifted student of gardening and architecture and appears to have been largely self-taught, but he would also have benefited from a mentoring or apprentice system while working at Stowe. Such apprentice systems had been run informally in nurseries, such as Brompton Park, London, but there was as yet no formal pupillage system such as that operated in the Office of Works since the late-seventeenth century. That system was reinvigorated by Sir Robert Taylor (1714–88) and by 1770 had become the generally accepted way of training for professional life by means of working as a pupil with an established architect. Brown, who by this stage was an important architect as well as the leading landscape designer, was clearly a pioneer in the pupillage system when he took on Lapidge in 1762. By 1770 such training lasted from three to seven years, but an average of five; there would be drawing lessons in separate schools and, after its establishment in 1768, attendance at Royal Academy lessons, followed by study abroad. Lapidge's training appears to have lasted some seven years and there is no evidence that he went on a trip abroad, for which he presumably did not have the resources. It is not clear what Lapidge's training included, but there are a number of clues. On completion of his pupillage he was referred to as a surveyor, which was a term used interchangeably with architect well into the eighteenth century, though it was often used to describe persons 'of a more practical turn of mind'.<sup>14</sup>

Another clue is the general practice within Brown's circle. In 1772 he went into practice with Henry Holland junior, then twenty-seven, whilst also taking on the eighteen-year-old John Soane as an assistant for £60 per year. Soane had undertaken his training in the office of George Dance, commencing in 1768, and was admitted to the Royal Academy Schools in 1771. When he set up in practice by himself in 1784 he took on pupils for £50, but with a growing reputation four years later was charging between 100 and 175 guineas, yet in 1804 he allowed the son of a widowed mother to pay a nominal fee of five shillings. In 1811 a pupil started his studies spending eighteen days producing drawings of the architectural orders, and a day on mouldings. Soon after this he produced a survey of a building and drawings for a current project, while also producing illustrations for lectures. Later activities included practical exercises in checking building accounts, squaring carpenters' dimensions, and recording the progress of current work. He would also spend time detailing a small project.<sup>15</sup>

It is not known to what extent Lapidge would have produced architectural as well as landscape drawings, and how much was directly supervised by Brown. It is generally assumed that Brown travelled on horseback by himself, but it is clear that Lapidge often accompanied him to assist with surveys, as these were difficult to accomplish alone. An example is his work at Tottenham Park, Wiltshire, where Brown had started remodelling the gardens in 1764. In early 1765 Charles Bill, the agent of Tottenham Park, reported on the progress of the work to its owner Lord Bruce:

Mr. Brown came here on Sunday to dinner. In the afternoon he took a view of the gardens in a storm of snow. Early this morning, which proved to be tolerably favourable, he allowed lining out and finally settled the serpentine walk, all round the garden, marked such trees as were proposed to be taken away

<sup>13</sup> Anon., 'Anecdotes of Mr. Brown, the gardener', *Morning Post*, 30 July 1776.

<sup>14</sup> Jenkins, F. (1961). *Architect and patron: A survey of professional relations and practice in England from the sixteenth century to the present day* (pp. 93, 107). London: Oxford University Press.

<sup>15</sup> Jenkins, F. (1961). *Architect and patron* (pp. 94–95).

and gave general directions to Winckles upon everything that occur'd. He thinks it best to keep Howse a fortnight or three weeks longer to get the levelling Business forward. In general he approves of what has been done except for the taking away (of) a few trees in one or two places. If the high bank and trees had been taken down, great would have been the fall indeed, Brown would have excommunicated us all ...<sup>16</sup>

While the work of setting out and marking could have been done with local personnel, the text clearly suggests that adjustments were made to devise the desired alignment, and this would have been much quicker together with someone familiar with the practice. However, there is no direct mention of assistance in any of Brown's own records.

After Brown was appointed as Chief Gardener at the Royal Palace at Hampton Court in 1764, he clearly needed more help as his business expanded and he appointed John Spyers (c. 1731–98) specifically as his land surveyor. In fact, Spyers commenced his appointment with a topographical survey of Tottenham Park, and it is possible that Lapidge would also have been involved in his training. Whatever the case, by 1765 Lapidge's development had been sufficient for him to carry out an independent survey at Wrotham Park, Hertfordshire. He may have also carried out a survey of Hanwell, Middlesex, at about the same time.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, regular payments to Lapidge do not appear to have started until 1769 and, although a one-off payment was made in 1767, it suggests that his training may not have been considered completed until the latter date.<sup>18</sup>

Lapidge was based at Hampton Court, from which both architecture and landscape projects were directed. He continued to undertake surveys, such as one at Grimsthorpe, Lincolnshire, in 1771.<sup>19</sup> However, after 1772 the architectural side of the business was primarily conducted from the Mayfair offices by Holland, and Lapidge appears to have remained at Hampton Court, where his responsibilities continued to include landscape surveys but now extended into responsibility for managing and monitoring Brown's account at Drummonds Bank.<sup>20</sup> In 1774 Lapidge surveyed Putney Heath, London,<sup>21</sup> and clearly made Hampton Court his home, marrying Sarah, the daughter of George Lowe (d. 1758), a previous head gardener there, at St. George's Church, Hanover Square, London, on the 8<sup>th</sup> July 1778, with Margaret and Lancelot Brown junior as witnesses (Figure 7.1). Their first son, Edward, was born in 1779 and baptised on the 21<sup>st</sup> June, with Lancelot Brown and Robert Lowe, his brother-in-law, as godfathers, being indicative of the close relationship between the Brown family and Lapidge – Brown had, for example, included Lapidge in his will, made on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 1779.

When Brown died unexpectedly on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 1783, he was described in an obituary as follows:

His great and fine genius stood unrivalled, and it was the peculiar felicity of it that it was allowed by all ranks and degrees of society in this country, and by many noble and great personages in other countries. Those who knew him best, or practised near him, were not able to determine whether the quickness of his eye, or its correctness, were most to be admired. It was comprehensive and elegant, and perhaps it may be said never to have failed him. 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. His truth, his integrity, and his good humour, were very effectual, and will hold a place in the memory of his friends, more likely to continue, though not less to be esteemed.<sup>22</sup>

Brown's will stipulated that any uncompleted contracts were to be finished by Lapidge 'who knows my accounts and the nature of them' – meaning the financial side of the business and how it was organised. Lapidge was also to be given 100 guineas over and above his wages.<sup>23</sup> However, by not handing over the practice but just

<sup>16</sup> Stroud, D. (1950). *Capability Brown* (p. 101).

<sup>17</sup> Stroud, D. (1950). *Capability Brown* (p. 215).

<sup>18</sup> Phibbs, J. (2013). A list of landscapes that have been attributed to Lancelot 'Capability' Brown'. *Garden History*, 41(2), 259.

<sup>19</sup> Hinde, T. (1986). *Capability Brown: The story of a master gardener* (p. 143). London: Hutchinson.

<sup>20</sup> Bank accounts of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and his executors with Drummonds Bank, 1753–89. Available at <http://www.rbs.com/heritage>, accessed 18 August 2019.

<sup>21</sup> Lapidge also surveyed Berrington in Shropshire and Sandleford Priory in 1781, and in 1782 Fornham St. Genevieve, Suffolk. Brown's account book at the RHS Lindley Library names Lapidge as surveyor.

<sup>22</sup> Anon., 'Thursday morning, Feb. 6, 1783, about nine o'clock, died Lancelot Brown', *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 8 February 1783.

<sup>23</sup> Stroud, D. (1950). *Capability Brown* (p. 201): '... I will also that all my contracts which shall remain uncompleted at the time of my decease be faithfully and fully performed and as Mr. Samuel Lapidge of Hampton Court in the County of Middlesex knows my accounts and the nature of them I desire that he may be employed by my Executors hereafter named in settling of my said accounts and for that Business over and above his wages I give the said Samuel Lapidge the sum of one hundred guineas'.





**Figure 7.1:** *Church of St. George, Hanover Square, London.* In July 1778 Samuel Lapidge married Sarah, daughter of George Lowe (d. 1758), a previous gardener at Hampton Court, in this church, with Margaret and Lancelot Brown junior as witnesses. Photo copyright Jan Woudstra, 2016, CC BY-NC 4.0.

stipulating that work should be finished, and retaining Lapidge as an employee, Brown perhaps acknowledged that Lapidge could not continue the business that he had built up around his personality and his clients, whom he counted as his friends.

By the end of February Lapidge had circulated a note to Brown's clients announcing that he was retained by the latter's will 'to finish his Contracted Works', which included Sandleford, where twenty unemployed weavers were engaged to carry out the proposals, and where Brown had employed a former boxer and reformed alcoholic turned gardener as supervisor. This had worked well while Brown was alive, but the gardener developed mental health problems and Lapidge was called upon 'to come with all speed to take care of this poor creature'.<sup>24</sup>

Holland senior's accounts suggest that other work continued at Kew, Wynnstay, and Nuneham Courtenay, managed by Lapidge with William Ireland as foreman.<sup>25</sup> A year and a half later these were largely completed, and Lapidge advertised to confirm his position as the rightful inheritor of the practice and for further work. He continued to be based at Hampton Court, while Mrs Brown had moved to Kensington where she died in 1786:<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Stroud, D. (1950). *Capability Brown* (p. 195); Hinde, T. (1986). *Capability Brown: The story of a master gardener* (p. 203).

<sup>25</sup> Brown, J. (2011). *The omnipotent magician, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, 1716–1783* (p. 303). London: Chatto and Windus.

<sup>26</sup> Anon., 'Mrs Brown, widow of Lancelot Brown, Esq. of Hampton Court, dies at Kensington', *Morning Post*, 5 September 1786.

Hampton-Court, Middlesex, July 6, 1784.

MR. SAMUEL LAPIDGE most respectfully Informs the Nobility and Gentry, that he continues the business of the late Lancelot Brown, Esq. of Hampton Court, whom he served upwards of twenty-one years, and, agreeable to his will, has, since his death, compleated his unfinished works; and now solicits the honour of their employ, on his own account, in the improvement of their seats, &c.

All letters addressed to Mr. Lapidge, at Hampton-Court, Middlesex; or at No. 26, Berkeley-Square, London, will be duly attended to.<sup>27</sup>

### Chiswick

William Cavendish, 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire (1748–1811), may have responded to this advert and commenced correspondence with Lapidge about improvements at Chiswick. The 5<sup>th</sup> Duke's father, also William Cavendish, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire (1720–64), had employed Brown between 1760 and 1765 to make improvements at Chatsworth, with Michael Milliken as foreman, and with labourers directly employed by the estate, so he must have been familiar with the work practices.<sup>28</sup> Chiswick's famous classical gardens, created by Richard Boyle, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Burlington, from 1715 to his death in 1753, had passed through Charlotte, his only surviving daughter, to her husband the Marquess of Hartington (Figure 7.2). When the latter succeeded as the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire in 1755, Charlotte was already dead, having died a year after her father. While general maintenance work continued, and further land was acquired, there were no major improvements and when the Duke died in 1764, it was put in trust for the sixteen-year-old heir.

In 1772 the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke started a process of change by filling in and levelling the formal fish pond and mounds, thus opening views from the house to the river, where the timber Palladian bridge was replaced with a classical bridge, built in Portland stone with Coade stone medallions in 1774 (Figure 7.3). The Duke married Georgiana Spencer (1757–1806) that year, while also having the first child with one of his mistresses. It is probably as a result of his busy and complicated personal arrangements that he had little inclination for further garden improvements, but Chiswick came back into focus in 1778 when his new estate agent, John Heaton, reported that the farm and gardens at Chiswick had been neglected or mismanaged. As a result of this the existing gardener, who also acted as bailiff, John Knowlton, was made redundant and a new gardener, John Teesdale, was appointed, while Mr Auckland became the bailiff. Disuse and lack of care also seems to have affected some of the buildings as both the Bagnio (Cassina) and the 'running water house' (Lord Burlington's Engine House, situated outside the gardens) were demolished that year.<sup>29</sup> While the gardens had improved by 1780, there were now 'misunderstandings' between the house steward, gardener, bailiff, and housekeeper, and in a bid to resolve the issue Teesdale was discharged on the basis that he was the most recently employed.<sup>30</sup> He was replaced by Mr Reed.

While improvement in the management had become evident, in 1781 one visitor noted that the gardens still felt 'forsaken', with little obvious progress as the formal structure of Burlington's classical garden continued to be maintained.<sup>31</sup> By 1784 the Duke decided that he required professional help. Brown's former assistant would have been considered a well-qualified candidate, and, as he was based at Hampton Court, he was only a short ride away. During the summer Lapidge responded to a written request from the Duke, visited Chiswick, and provided him with written suggestions for the west side of the gardens and an outline of costs. These included the opening up of the grounds through clearance of vegetation and the removal of iron railings, the creation of a 'stew pond' – probably a lake, a shady walk from the Classical Bridge to Burlington Lane gate, a gravel walk along the side of the park, and a small gravel walk and shrubbery between the house and cascade. However, while the Duke was keen to start the work as soon as possible, he also wanted to keep the cost down, responding that 'I don't reside much at Chiswick, and am desirous at present not to lay out a large sum of money there',

<sup>27</sup> Anon., 'Mr Samuel Lapidge', *Morning Post*, 6 July 1784.

<sup>28</sup> Williamson, T. (2001). Chatsworth, Derbyshire. *Garden History*, 29(1), 82–90 (pp. 84–85).

<sup>29</sup> They were demolished by November 1778: Chatsworth Archives: Accounts c. 1772–78, f 115; John Ferret's account book 1745–60, ff 201, 235.

<sup>30</sup> Chatsworth Archives, [memo] May 1780, 'Regulations at Chiswick'.

<sup>31</sup> Atkinson, G. (Ed.). (1842). *Journals and letters of the late Samuel Curwen, Judge of Admiralty, etc., an American refugee in England from 1775–1784* (p. 321). New York: C. S. Francis: '1781/ July 28. Went with Mr Arthur Savage on a curiosity walk, to gaze and Chiswick House and gardens; by a card (without which non are admitted) we found an entrance. It is a seat belonging to the Duke of Devonshire, but forsaken by him. ... Walks in Chinese taste, long, straight, and graveled; cut hedges'.





**Figure 7.2: Engraved survey of Chiswick, John Rocque, 1736.** The classical gardens of Chiswick laid out by Lord Burlington during the second quarter of the eighteenth century. The area at the bottom of this survey of the grounds is the western perimeter, which was altered by Samuel Lapidge in 1784. © The Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth Reproduced by permission of Chatsworth Settlement Trustees.

requesting that the expense be reduced. Further work was considered a possibility in the future and provision might be made to this effect, but this year ‘will be levelling and planting the ground as was intended, and making the gravel walk by the side of the park, and the small gravel walk and shrubery between the new house and the cascade. The walk over the terrace may be either finished or not, which ever you think best’.<sup>32</sup> The Duke additionally instructed Lapidge that:

as I am at such a distant present, I shall be glad if you will call upon my agent Mr Heaton to determine with him upon the mode of conducting the work to be done at Chiswick, who will likewise give the necessary orders to the Bailiff & Gardener to assist you in it, with the men who work under them, and will inform you in which parts of the garden I have a right to cut down trees, and where I have not.<sup>33</sup>

The restriction on cutting down the trees probably related to those on the land leased from the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul’s and incorporated within the grounds. With these requirements in mind, Lapidge returned

<sup>32</sup> Chatsworth Archives L114/35, box 1 Chiswick.

<sup>33</sup> Chatsworth Archives L114/35, box 1 Chiswick.





**Figure 7.3:** *The Classical Bridge, Chiswick.* In 1774 the Duke of Devonshire replaced the timber Palladian bridge with the Classical Bridge, suggesting his intention for further improvements to the grounds. Photo copyright Jan Woudstra, 2016, CC BY-NC 4.0.

to the site, staking out the proposals ‘to shew His Grace the Walks & Planting &c &c’ and provided a written description of the intended alterations that also explained the reasoning behind the proposals. It was received by Heaton on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October:

1. To begin at the South West Front of the House and make a Gravel Walk seven feet Wide down to the Head of the Water.
2. To Contract the Gravel Walk from the front Court Gate & bring it into the above Walk in such a manner that it will not be seen, nor the Servants be seen, when they go down it for Water.
3. To fill up with Planting an Angle against the Iron Pallisade and the Present Planting which hides the above Gravel Walk according to the Stakes put in to shew the Line of it. This Planting keeps the Garden more Private than at present, from the Road & Court.
4. To Continue the Gravel Walk over the Head of the Water & lead it upon the Grass Terrace and new making the Level of this Ground to get up the easier &c.
5. To Continue the Gravel Walk over the Grass Terrace and take away certain Parts (if not all) of the two Yew Hedges that may Obstruct the Additional Planting intended to modernise the Accompanyment of this Gravel Walk over the said Terrace, and leading it down, to the Arch Gate Way in the Road opposite the Obelisk in the easiest manner we can from the Terrace- N.B. its likely the Top of the Terrace may be lower’d in Places to make it wider for the Walk & Planting.
6. To Continue the Gravel Walk from the above mention Place to the New Stone Bridge, along the high made Ground, Grubbing up the Trees and underwood, & Leveling the Ground down to a proper Level for the Gravel Walk and also fill up & Make the Ground on each side of it as good a Level as we can, with the Earth to be removed in this Work, and Cart in more, if its thought worth the Expence.
7. To Plant up the Present low back Walks that’s next the Park Pales, & make such judicious openings over it into the Park that may be approved of as Pleasing Views from the Gravel Walk.
8. To Plant up the Ends of the Present Walks under the Terrace, and also the End of the Streight Walk leading from the Obelisk to the new Stone Bridge, and make a new Plantation against that





**Figure 7.4:** *Proposals plan, Chiswick, Samuel Lapidge, 1784*, covering the area of the western perimeter of the pleasure ground included a specification and plan. The plan included proposals superimposed on the existing layout and was folded in a similar manner and size to other correspondence. Photo Jan Woudstra. © The Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth Reproduced by permission of Chatsworth Settlement Trustees.

Walk, intirely hideing it as an Avenue and making the face of it, as marked out upon the Ground, which is intended as a very proper line of Planting to be looked against from out of the New Gravel Walk. Fresh Earth may be wanted for the above Plantations & Levels of the Ground. The Quantity of Gravel required for the New Gravel Walk will be about 350 Loads– The Quantity of Earth is quite uncertain, as Expenses may be saved in this Article.<sup>34</sup>

These proposals must have met with approval, as on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1784, Lapidge returned in order to prepare a plan and estimate. He noted that he had been at Chiswick all day and hoped 'in the Course of the Week to get the Plan & Estimate done for your Inspection & his Graces Information'.<sup>35</sup> This may suggest he forwarded a copy to the Duke (Figure 7.4). He also supplied a list of equipment required for constant use in the work that were to be supplied by the estate: '8 Wheelbarrows; 3 Pick axes; 3 Mattocks; 1 Hatchet; 1 Bill; a Line & Reel to it & Garden Rake; Turfing Iron & Riser; and small Iron Crow'. This shows the heavy emphasis of the work on

<sup>34</sup> Chatsworth Archives L114/35, box 1 Chiswick.

<sup>35</sup> Chatsworth Archives L114/35, box 1 Chiswick.

digging and grubbing. It is notable that spades – which would have been required to fill the wheelbarrows, turning the soil and planting – were not included in this list, and must have either been provided by Lapidge or been considered the standard equipment of workmen that they would carry with them from job to job.

It was proposed that gravel and earth might be supplied by Auckland whenever convenient, while the digging and filling would be done by Lapidge's men, estimating that 350 loads of each might be required, while this would also be a post where savings might be made. The note also stated the preconditions and clauses that the two men 'that assist in taking down the Timber Trees, must have no other director but Mr Lapidge, or his Foreman, nor will Mr Lapidge permit any one to meddle in his Business, if they do, he will leave it, 'till that Liberty is disannulled'. Lapidge was informed that the bailiff, Mr Auckland, potentially had two men available, and Reed four. These would be employed and paid for by Lapidge's foreman.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> October Lapidge sent his plan and estimate for the works at £265-5s-0d, excluding nursery bills, with the affirmation that he had done the utmost in saving on costs. It was confirmed that Reed was to provide four men, which would help to reduce costs, and the work would 'be so managed, to be done by degrees should that be the Duke of Devonshire's Wish, as I shall finish as I go on, & begin at the House'. Ireland, who had been Brown's foreman and had continued with Lapidge, was in charge of the work, and prepared fortnightly statements of expenditure that were forwarded to Heaton, so that he could monitor the expenses. These include lists of names of the workmen and other expenses. As foreman Ireland earned substantially more than the workmen, with a day rate of 3s-6d; he qualified for travel expenses, and was clearly engaged with another job as he was at Chiswick around half the time, although he spent more time there towards the end of the project.

By the 1<sup>st</sup> November there were eleven workmen, with numbers employed in each fortnight fluctuating between nine and twenty-three as the project demanded, on a day rate of 18d. William Humphrey was present on site more than anyone else and was paid 20d a day, presumably as one of Lapidge's men, acting as chargehand. The number of days on which the various workmen were present during each fortnightly period varied greatly, so presumably many of these were local men, who could be called in as and when required for particular tasks. A total of forty-six workmen participated spending from just half a day to c. 166 days on the thirty-one-week project, with a total number of man-days of around 1,860.<sup>36</sup> Between 24<sup>th</sup> February and 20<sup>th</sup> March no work took place and the workmen were off site, due to the adverse weather, losing a potential twenty-one working days. It was a year after the Laki eruption in Iceland, when average temperatures everywhere had dropped by about two degrees Celsius.<sup>37</sup> In England the frost had continued with little intermission and on the 16<sup>th</sup> March it was reported:

that from the 18<sup>th</sup> of October till the present time, which is a period of 149 days, there have been only 26, in which the thermometer has not been one to 18½ degrees below freezing point, which is a more constant succession of cold weather than has been known in this climate.<sup>38</sup>

These had been far from ideal working conditions, but by the 15<sup>th</sup> March the weather began to break and by the end of the week the men were able to return across the water, which may mean that they had been at Hampton Court during the frost.<sup>39</sup> Tree removal and some of the planting and turfing were contracted out to Thomas and Richard Steel, who between the 12<sup>th</sup> November 1784 and 19<sup>th</sup> February 1785 felled 199 trees. These were rated by size, including five trees at 1s; ninety-eight at 1s-6d; ten at 1s-9d; seventy-eight at 2d and eight large ones at 3s.

The work had been organised in such a way that planting progressed as the project advanced; the area near the house was cleared of turf in order to create a planting bed and path, with the turfing iron requiring repairs by the blacksmith the very first day.<sup>40</sup> The bed (the 'Angle') was then planted with evergreens to provide a screen to increase privacy. This included four spruce firs, four large Portuguese laurels, twenty common laurels, ten laurustinus, one large holly, one evergreen oak, two junipers, six evergreen honeysuckles, and six lilacs supplied by Robertson and Hodgson on the 16<sup>th</sup> November.<sup>41</sup> At this stage work was progressing at the cascade, with the

<sup>36</sup> Chatsworth Archives 114/35, box 1 Chiswick.

<sup>37</sup> Year 1700–1799 AD. <http://www.climate4you.com/ClimateAndHistory%201700-1799.htm#1783-1784:%20The%20Laki%20eruption%20in%20Iceland>, accessed 1 May 2016.

<sup>38</sup> Anon., 'A meteorological correspondent assures us..', *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, 16 March 1785.

<sup>39</sup> Chatsworth Archives 114/35, box 1 Chiswick; Voucher, 19 March–2 April; 'Paid for the men crossing the water £0.13s.0d'.

<sup>40</sup> Chatsworth Archives 114/35, box 1 Chiswick; Blacksmith's Bill 15 Sept. 1784 – 26 May 1785; £3-19s-8d.

<sup>41</sup> Chatsworth Archives 114/35.





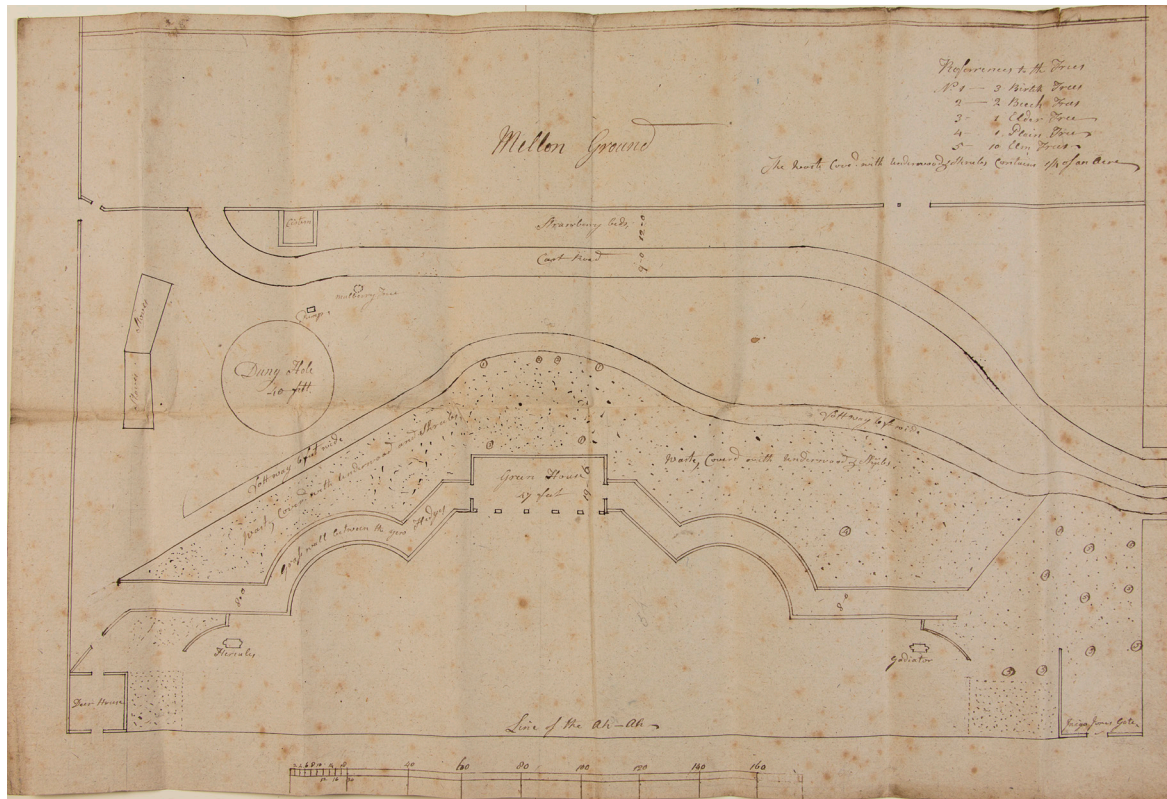
**Figure 7.5:** Detail of *Map of Chiswick*, Peter Potter, 1858. The area covering the western perimeter (to the south west of the pleasure grounds) of the Chiswick estate reveals that Lapidge's design had been executed as proposed. While one of the axes had been retained here, other avenues had been eliminated. © The Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth Reproduced by permission of Chatsworth Settlement Trustees.

wall being raised by Matthew Wright, and completed on the 16<sup>th</sup> November, after which this area was planted primarily with large trees, including twenty planes, six acacias, and twenty limes, and with shrubbery planting including six Swedish junipers, sixteen laurustinus, six lignum vitae, six sweet bays, ten Spanish brooms, twenty broad-leaved phillyrea and six old ones, six myrtle-leaved phillyrea, six guelder roses, twenty lilacs, twenty privets, and ten yews.<sup>42</sup> These were all supplied by Robert Lowe, Lapidge's brother-in-law, on the 8<sup>th</sup> December. Further supplies of plants by Greenwood, Hudson, and Barrit on the 15<sup>th</sup> January, Robertson and Hodgson on the 24<sup>th</sup>, and more from Greenwood et al. on the 25<sup>th</sup> indicate the progress, while the later sections were planted with material from George and James Mitchelson on the 14<sup>th</sup> April and Mess. Ronalds and Sons in April and May 1785 (Figure 7.5).

However, the various nurserymen were not paid for their goods until after the 20<sup>th</sup> August, once Lapidge himself had been reimbursed. The blacksmith who had been on call regularly during the works, particularly

<sup>42</sup> Chatsworth Archives 114/35.





**Figure 7.6:** *Proposals for improvements in the area of the Arcade at Chiswick*, Samuel Lapidge, c. 1784–85. Following the successful completion of the scheme for the western perimeter of the pleasure ground at Chiswick, Lapidge appears to have been asked to prepare a scheme for the improvements in the area of the arcade. © The Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth Reproduced by permission of Chatsworth Settlement Trustees.

sharpening and laying pickaxes and repairs to other equipment, also only invoiced at the end of the project. Other expenses related to the job, besides the blacksmith and bricklayer, were for thirty-five bushels of hayseed, sown during the final week of the project and presumably used in areas where it was not essential to achieve an immediate effect with turfing. The men were rewarded with beer whenever another stage in the project was completed. There were also stationery costs for pencils, pens, paper, and sending letters that were included on the fortnightly vouchers. Travel costs were included for Lapidge and Ireland. Lapidge's final account revealed that he had visited the project thirty times, an average of approximately once a week, and that he had spent five days at home producing sketches and estimates, for which he charged £36-15s-0d and £7-10s-0d in travel expenses.<sup>43</sup> By the time he produced his final invoice, he had been called to the site a number of additional times, for which he charged £3-2s-0d. The cost of the project without Lapidge's charges was £243-3s-5d, while the total cost amounted to £290-10s-0d, which was paid for by a draft on William Dinne Esq & Co on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 1785.<sup>44</sup>

The Duke must have considered the alterations satisfactory as he appears to have engaged Lapidge again for alterations in the arcade area, but, while a drawing survives showing the proposals, any other documentation of this project seems to be missing, presumed lost (Figure 7.6). The project relating to the western perimeter at Chiswick reveals that Lapidge was capable of taking Brown's place in the practice, and continued his manner of working. Similarly, Ireland, who was born in the same year as Lapidge,<sup>45</sup> seems to have been happy to continue his work with Lapidge on further projects.

<sup>43</sup> Chatsworth Archives 114/35.

<sup>44</sup> Chatsworth 114/35, box 1 'The state of the money distributed in Chiswick Gardens for His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, by me Samuel Lapidge of Hampton Court'.

<sup>45</sup> John Phibbs suggests this in his blog: <http://www.thebrownadvisor.com.gridhosted.co.uk/2016/03/04/0197-was-william-ireland-a-bedfordshire-man>, accessed 18 August 2019.



### Lapidge's Later Career

Lapidge's position as the inheritor of Brown's mantle was by no means uncontested and others claimed to succeed or replace him. One of the first to attempt to acquire Brown's clients was Mr Shields, from Lambeth Terrace, who had 'long cultivated an Intimacy and friendly Correspondence with the great Genius' and had had 'the Opportunity of acquiring and adopting many of his ideas' advertised as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> February – four days after Brown's death – ascertaining his affiliation with Brown and offering his services:

to that part of the Nobility and Gentry who delight in the Improvements of modern Gardening, and particularly to those who may have their Works left unfinished by that great Master. He will gladly exert himself, to the utmost of his Power, to compleat any such Work in the best Manner he is capable, and will also give Designs to those who are for ever deprived of the further Assistance of the celebrated Mr. Brown.<sup>46</sup>

Brown's former foremen also sought and found work, but none of them appears to have had the charisma to become a leading light in the profession. It was an outsider, Humphry Repton, who in his admiration of Brown's work approached Brown's executors and extracted maps from Lancelot junior, while consulting his architectural drawings that were held by Holland junior.<sup>47</sup> Holland had also celebrated Brown's qualities:

No man that I ever met with understood so well what was necessary for the habitation of all ranks and degrees of society; no one disposed his offices so well, set his buildings on such good levels, designed such good rooms, or so well provided for the approach, for the drainage, and for the comfort and conveniences of every part of a place he was concerned in. This he did without ever having had one single difference or dispute with any of his employers. He left them pleased, and they remained so as long as he lived ...<sup>48</sup>

His abilities combined not only those of a sensitive designer, with considerable social abilities, but also business skills that included being able to put various people onto tasks for which they had natural skills, and that covered his weaknesses, such as producing drawings, accounting, and running contracts. This was clearly a difficult act to follow, and Repton, who considered himself a gentleman, was not inclined to follow Brown's methods exactly. In looking for a solution he adopted the term 'landscape gardening',<sup>49</sup> which he thought united the powers of the landscape painter and the practical gardener, with the former conceiving the plan and the latter the ability to execute. Yet Repton did not intend to execute his designs, preferring to present them in an innovative manner, combining text and images, with plans and before and after views, presented bound and covered in maroc – his famous Red Books.

Lapidge and Ireland possessed these separate skills to implement schemes and they were soon employed in various of Repton's designs, including at Chalfont and Bulstrode in Buckinghamshire, where Repton produced Red Books in 1790 and where they worked in 1795.<sup>50</sup> The next year they were at Burley on the Hill, Rutland for which the Red Book had been produced in 1795. In other places Repton seems to have followed Lapidge, such as at Cobham in 1790, but perhaps Lapidge was paid to produce a survey a year earlier.<sup>51</sup> Besides this contracting for Repton, Lapidge also continued his own projects. In 1789 he worked at Althorp, Northants, while in 1791 he was at Milton Abbey, Dorset, one of Brown's old projects, where his work was reported positively: 'Mr. Lapidge, the pupil of Capability Browne, is creating a vast piece of water, disposing the grounds, and forming a

<sup>46</sup> Anon., 'Mr Shields being informed...', *Public Advertiser*, 17 February 1783.

<sup>47</sup> Loudon, J. C. (1840). *The landscape gardening and landscape architecture of the late Humphry Repton, Esq.* (pp. 30, 266). Loudon: note in Introduction of Humphry Repton, *Sketches and hints on gardening*: 'I must not, in this place omit to acknowledge my obligations to Lancelot Brown, Esq., late member for Huntingdonshire, the son of my predecessor, for having presented me with the maps of the greatest works which his late father had been consulted, both in their original and improved states'.

<sup>48</sup> Loudon, J. C. (1840). *The landscape gardening and landscape architecture of the late Humphry Repton, Esq.* (p. 267).

<sup>49</sup> This term had initially been proposed as 'landskip gardening' by William Shenstone in his essay 'Unconnected thoughts on gardening' (1764).

<sup>50</sup> Main, J. (1828). Art. I. The Planter's Guide, &c. *The Gardener's Magazine*, 4, 116–117.

<sup>51</sup> The dates for Repton's Red Books are from Daniels, S. (1999). *Humphry Repton: Landscape gardener and the geography of Georgian England*. London: Yale University Press.



**Figure 7.7:** *The Grove*. In 1796 Samuel Lapidge acquired Grove House, or The Grove, Hampton Wick, a substantial property next to the Thames (seen here centre-right) from his in-laws. Photo copyright Jan Woudstra, 2016, CC BY-NC 4.0.

magnificent approach.<sup>52</sup> In 1792 he made improvements at Llanarth House, Monmouthshire;<sup>53</sup> in 1793 he was at Middleton Hall, Carmarthenshire (now the Welsh Botanic Garden); and in 1795 he was at Chippenham Park, Cambridgeshire, where he worked with William Eames, another of Brown's former foremen.<sup>54</sup>

Soon after, however, there were reported issues. In 1798 Theresa Villiers of Cranbourne Delrow, near Aldenham, Hertfordshire, commented on Lapidge, who had been asked to make proposals for the estate. After calling him 'such an emperor of Quizzes, as our old Lapidge' (he was fifty-four), she considered his appearance 'ludicrous' as he was wearing 'a *Serpentine Wig*, probably made in the shape of some of his Gravel Walks, & of much the same Sandy Colour, such a pose! such a manner!'<sup>55</sup> By this stage he also appears not to have empathised with the desires of, or take any cues from his clients. Villiers continued that she compared him 'to nothing but Suet, talks *six & thirty at least* to the Dozen, & in such a ridiculous way! that, indeed may be attributed to the quantity of Brandy & Port wch he drinks all day long, but within half an hour after his arrival'. From the conversation it was clear that Lapidge had not comprehended the scale of thinking, but in the discussions that followed he 'was very well contented to laugh too at his own wit...'. The situation worsened and a couple of months later Villiers reported:

Lapidge came to us on Wednesday, & we could not get rid of him till this Mornng but now thank my Stars he is not of the House & *Dio volente* will never come into it again – Such a Fool! & such a Vulgar! such a Drunkard! however!! – I really do not think he has one Single Idea belonging to him in Architecture or Gardning, & I believe we shall hardly adopt any one of his Propositions.

<sup>52</sup> Anon., 'Milton Abbey', *Whitehall Evening Post*, 14–16 June 1791; Anon., 'Milton-Abbey', *General Evening Post*, 14–16 June 1791; Anon., 'Milton Abbey', *Public Advertiser*, 15 June 1791.

<sup>53</sup> Loudon, J. C. (1828). *An encyclopaedia of gardening* (p. 1075, para. 7567). London. With thanks to David Jacques for this reference.

<sup>54</sup> Loudon, J. C. (1828). *An encyclopaedia of gardening* (p. 1072, para. 7551).

<sup>55</sup> Plymouth and West Devon Record Office, 'Parker of Saltram, Earls of Morley correspondence' transcribed, without dates and references by John Phibbs, on his blog: <http://www.thebrownadvisor.com.gridhosted.co.uk/2016/02/28/0169-who-was-lapidge>, accessed 18 August 2019.





**Figure 7.8:** *St Mary's Parish Church, Hampton – London.* Copyright Jim Linwood, 2011 CC BY 2.0. URL: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/brighton/6022464340>. Samuel Lapidge (d. 1806) was buried in St. Mary's Parish Church, Hampton; his son Edward completed the new church in September 1831.

Lapidge only left after the arrival of the architect John Nash, who was asked to prepare designs for the house and was then in partnership with Repton.

Some thirty years later James Main believed that Lapidge 'gave up business' in the second half of the 1790s,<sup>56</sup> however in 1802 he prepared plans for the Royal Pavilion in Brighton, which were not carried out but for which he was paid £384.<sup>57</sup> Repton followed him there with further proposals in 1805. During the latter period of his career, Lapidge had acquired a substantial property in Hampton Wick from his in-laws in 1796; The Grove or Grove House on the Lower Teddington Road (Figure 7.7). Five years later, in 1801, there was enough property to merit a twenty-two-page will, so it seems that his business had flourished before its later decline.<sup>58</sup> Lapidge died in 1806, aged sixty-one, and was buried on the 20<sup>th</sup> April in St. Mary's Parish Church, Hampton;<sup>59</sup> his wife Sarah followed him in November 1831 (Figure 7.8).<sup>60</sup> Several of their sons prospered – Edward (1779–1860)

<sup>56</sup> Main, J. (1828). Art. I. The Planter's Guide, &c (p. 116–117).

<sup>57</sup> Stroud, D. (1986). In *Oxford companion to gardens* (p. 329). London: Oxford University Press.

<sup>58</sup> The National Archives, prob 11/1446, 'Will of Samuel Lapidge'.

<sup>59</sup> <http://content.yudu.com/Library/A1syw5/ChurchyardSurveyStMa/resources/27.htm>, accessed February 2020.

<sup>60</sup> London Metropolitan Archives: Will: X019/035 445.

as an architect and surveyor;<sup>61</sup> William Frederick (1793–1860) as a Rear Admiral, and Charles Horace (d. 1868) as Commander in the navy.<sup>62</sup>

### Conclusions

This review of Brown's work practices suggests how landscape design was professionalised during the eighteenth century, in line with architectural practice. Brown can be noted as an influential pioneer, adopting a similar pupillage system, with Lapidge, who appears to have been his first and only pupil before his untimely death. In fact, Brown did not distinguish between architectural and landscape practice, which he referred to as 'place-making', while landscape practice alone was referred to as 'work-out-of-doors'. He understood and mastered all aspects of the trade involving buildings and gardens, but even in his own practice a separation in fields of work began to emerge, with the architectural side being run by Holland in Mayfair and the landscape practice by Lapidge from Hampton Court.

Lapidge was not just aware of the accounts but was a skilled organiser, who ensured that Brown was available to meet his clients and was able to organise and fulfil the various contracts. The small contract for improvements at Chiswick House, fulfilled by Lapidge and Ireland soon after Brown's death, is revealing of how projects were run in Brown's office, how they operated, and how they were charged. The logistics of this probably should not be underestimated. These were all skills that Repton did not possess, and he would have been only too delighted to have had the availability of Brown's team for his various projects, even though he perhaps did not acknowledge this. This difference between Brown and Repton was, however, influenced by a changing socio-cultural context; whereas Brown had worked mainly for the nobility, Repton's clients were primarily from the new monied classes, who were more vulnerable to the volatility of the market and would have been more guarded with their resources. For them a Repton Red Book was satisfactory by itself, not only as a status symbol but also a statement of ambition. Thus, despite his financial need, Repton presented landscape gardening as a profession that was suitable for gentlemen, where there was a division between design and implementation. Yet he was frustrated by his lack of reception by clients of Brown's scale, including the lack of generous royal patronage and he never accomplished the recognition he sought. Neither Repton nor Lapidge appears to have had the interpersonal skills to equal Brown's achievements. Brown clearly was a consummate team leader skilled in all aspects of the business, but none of his foremen were quite enough prepared to step in his shoes. They all proved to be trapped in their specialisations, and none were able to emulate his achievements.

### Select Bibliography

A select bibliography is available at the end of this volume, or at: <https://doi.org/10.22599/CapabilityBrown.o>.

<sup>61</sup> <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/16062>, accessed 18 August 2019; he also produced a design for the Royal Botanical Society's Garden in the Inner Circle, Regent's Park in 1839 (not executed).

<sup>62</sup> Anon., 'Deaths', *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, 11 January 1868.