

CHAPTER 8

Nathaniel Richmond (c. 1719–84), ‘scholar of Brown’?

David Brown

Horace Walpole visited Lee Priory in Kent on 28th August 1780 and recorded that ‘Mr. Barrett has much improved the place under the direction of Richmond, Scholar of Browne, & has widened a little stream into a pretty River’ (Figure 8.1).¹

Seven years later Elizabeth Montagu visited Ewhurst in Hampshire, and recorded that ‘Mr. Mackreth was not at home, but we took a view of the place, which had been improved by Mr. Brown’s best élève, Mr. Richmond’.² Dorothy Stroud quoted Walpole’s comment in her influential book on Brown in 1950, noting that Richmond did not appear in Brown’s personal account book held at the Lindley Library.³ David Jacques recorded Richmond’s activity at Danson Park (Kent), Shardeloes (Bucks), Saltram (Devon), and at Stanmer (Sussex), but it was not until 1990 that Deborah Turnbull identified him as the Nathaniel Richmond who appeared in Brown’s bank account at Drummonds.⁴ The name of ‘Mr Richmond’ appeared in the accounts for Beeston Hall, Norfolk, during research for a management plan, and it was soon discovered how little was known of him at that time. At Beeston, he was described as ‘one of the gentleman improvers’ by Henry Hulton, whose brother-in-law was Sir Jacob Preston, owner of Beeston Hall and Richmond’s client there (Figure 8.2).⁵

Richmond died in February 1784, in the 65th year of his age, and his obituary in the *Morning Post* of the 30th March 1784 records that he was an ‘eminent improver of parks and gardens’. It continues that he died as a result of an accident during the course of his work: ‘his foot slipped through a grate over an area, which brought on a mortification of the leg, and was the cause of his death’.

Four years later Humphry Repton wrote to his friend Revd. Norton Nicholls at Costessey, near Norwich, on the 26th August 1788 to announce his intention of becoming a professional improver and continued: ‘Mason, Gilpin, Whatley [sic] and Gerardin have been late my breviary, and the works of Kent, Brown and Richmond

¹ Toynbee, P. (1928). Walpole’s journals of visits to country seats. *Walpole Society*, 16, 9–80.

² Blunt, R. (Ed.). (1923). *Mrs. Montagu, ‘Queen of the Blues’: Her letters and friendships from 1762 to 1800*. Vol. II, 1777–1800 (p. 214). London.

³ Stroud, D. (1950). *Capability Brown* (p. 207).

⁴ Jacques, D. (1990). *Georgian gardens: The reign of nature* (p. 85). London: Batsford; Turnbull, D. (1990). *Thomas White (1739–1811): Eighteenth-century landscape designer and arboriculturist* (pp. 30–31). Unpublished thesis (PhD, University of Hull).

⁵ Letter in private collection.

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Figure 8.2: *Beeston Hall, Norfolk*, drawing by Humphry Repton, from *The Seats of the Nobility and Gentry*, William Watts, 1781, made before Repton commenced his career as a landscape gardener. Copyright and related rights waived under a CC0 licence.

have been the places of my worship'.⁶ It is clear that Richmond was both highly thought of by Walpole, Montagu, and Repton, and widely recognised as a pupil of Brown, as Brown had been of Kent, according to Walpole in 1751: 'one Brown who has set up on a few ideas of Kent and Mr. Southcote'.⁷ In fact, as late as 1779 Walpole commented that Brown 'became the best imitator of Kent, and the most fashionable designer of grounds and gardens'.⁸ This might be construed to be critical of Brown, suggesting him to be a mere copyist rather than a translator, a moderniser, and an 'improver'. However, in Brown's time 'imitation' was not used as the pejorative term most frequently encountered now but was instead considered 'a method of translating looser than paraphrase, in which modern examples and illustrations are used for ancient, and domestick for foreign'.⁹ Similarly,

⁶ Letter to Norton Nicholls, 26 August 1788, Bristol University Library.

⁷ Letter to George Montagu, 22 July 1751, *Horace Walpole's correspondence, Yale edition*, Volume 9 (Yale online 2011), pp. 120–121.

⁸ Toynbee, P. (Ed.). (1926). *Satirical poems ... with notes by Horace Walpole* (p. 41). Oxford. Original published in 1779 and annotated by Horace Walpole in the same year.

⁹ Johnson, S. (1755). *A dictionary of the English Language*. London.

Figure 8.1 (page 106): *Lee Priory, Kent*, John Dixon, 1785, showing Wyatt's gothic enhancements of the house and Richmond's 'river' in the distance (centre), glimpsed between the plantings. Source: Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

in a society accustomed to pupillage and apprenticeship as the normal way in which one learned one's craft, trade, art, or profession, to describe someone as a pupil of someone else implies pedigree. For instance, Joseph Farrington was a pupil of Richard Wilson, and J.M.W. Turner trained under the topographical draughtsman Thomas Malton.¹⁰ What becomes clear for Richmond is that he was already a fully trained surveyor and nurse-ryman by the time he met Brown but nevertheless gained invaluable experience and professional status from his association with Brown.

Little is known of Richmond's life before he appears in Brown's account at Drummonds in 1754. According to his obituary he was most likely to have been born in 1719, or January 1720 at the latest, and is definitely not the Nathanael Richmond baptised in 1732, aged eight, as previously thought.¹¹ The earliest known record of Richmond is as a resident of St. Mary's parish, Warwick, when he married Susannah Neale under licence at Holy Trinity, Stratford-on-Avon, on the 6th February 1745. The Neales were a Warwickshire county family with freehold land in Fenny Compton and Avon Dassett. Susannah's uncle, William Neale, is recorded in Sanderson Miller's diary as riding with Lord Temple, who also held freehold land in Avon Dassett, and Miller to review enclosures.¹² Susannah's father, Matthew, was an apothecary and served as the Gaoler at Warwick during the 1720s.¹³ Her brother, also Matthew and also an apothecary, died in Barbados in 1768, leaving Susannah half of his leasehold estate at Chapel End in Walthamstow.¹⁴

In 1746, Richmond first appears in the accounts at Hewell Grange,¹⁵ the seat of Other Lewis Windsor, 4th Earl of Plymouth (1731–77). It is not clear whether he was directly employed by the estate at that time, but he was certainly supplying trees. However, it seems that he was 'Looking after the garden' between 1747 and December 1749, by which time he appears to have been receiving two shillings a day based on £1-16s for three weeks' work, assuming a six-day week.¹⁶ This would represent an annual rate of approximately £30 p.a. – comparable to Brown's £25 p.a. at Stowe in the same years. It seems most likely that Richmond was 'the Gardener' at Hewell Grange just as Brown was at Stowe.

By the 14th May 1749, when the Richmonds' daughter Sophia was christened at Tardebigge church, adjacent to the Hewell Grange estate in Worcestershire, Richmond was supplying trees to Walter Gough of Perry Hall in Birmingham.¹⁷ He must have already served an apprenticeship as a surveyor as he is recorded as taking an apprentice himself in 1766.¹⁸ He would not have married until he could support a wife and family, making it likely that he was a master surveyor by 1745. It also seems likely that he had a similar 'middling sorts' background to Brown and White, probably attending a grammar school until sixteen before taking an apprenticeship in one of the emerging professions. This speculative timing would have him completing his apprenticeship around 1742.

It is interesting to note that there had been activity at Hewell Grange during the late 1740s, where both Brown and Richmond would work independently later.¹⁹ William Shenstone, poet and improver of his *ferme ornée* at the Leasowes in nearby Halesowen, wrote to his poet friend Richard Jago in January 1754:

Lord Plymouth's piece of water should have been a serpentine river. ... **The park is capable of some considerable beauties.** Lord Plymouth has been once here since, and talks of causing me to come, and design for his environs ...²⁰ [emphasis added]

¹⁰ Finberg, A. J. (1961). *The life of J.M.W. Turner, R.A.* (p. 17). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

¹¹ It is now known that Nathanael died the following year in 1733; Brown, D. (2000). *Nathaniel Richmond (1724–1784): 'gentleman improver'* (p. 36). Unpublished thesis (PhD, University of East Anglia).

¹² 22 [July] 1750 'Rode with Lord Cobham, Mr. Townsend, and Neale round Burton Grounds till 10'. Hawkes, W. (Ed.). (2005). *The diaries of Sanderson Miller of Radway* (p. 152). Stratford-upon-Avon: Dugdale Society in Association with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

¹³ Appointment of gaoler, 26 March 1724, Coventry History Centre (PA309/49).

¹⁴ PRO: PROB 11 piece 941.

¹⁵ 16 October 1746 'Pd. Nathl Richmond for 26 young Trees to plant ag^t y^e Garden Walls ... 1-19-', Glamorgan Archives, Account Book 1757–71, D/D PL 944/4, p. 533. Cited in Cousins, M. (2016). The Not-So-Capable Mr Brown? Hewell Grange, Worcestershire. *Garden History*, 44(1), 51–73.

¹⁶ Cousins, M. (2016). The Not-So-Capable Mr Brown?

¹⁷ MS 3145/278/10, 31 January 1749. Birmingham: Archives, Heritage and Photography Service.

¹⁸ PRO IR1/25 Register of Duties Paid for Apprentices' Indentures, 1710–1811; Friday, 17 October 1766.

¹⁹ Glamorgan Record Office D/D PL 944/3–6, Estate rentals and general estate accounts 1737–54.

²⁰ Shenstone, W. (1779). *Letters to particular friends from the year 1739 to 1763* (p. 221). London.

The term ‘capable’ and ‘capability’ fits integrally with the concept of ‘improvement’ so it is not surprising to find these words being used widely. What is perhaps more interesting is the way in which the ‘capability’ brand became so strongly associated with Brown. It is tempting to conclude that Richmond had been working at Hewell Grange in the late 1740s, carrying out tree planting and possibly assisting with widening the river to form a lake adjacent to the new house. The new house was designed by the Smiths of Warwick, commenced in 1712 but still being completed in the 1740s. The estate possessed its own tree nursery during the 1740s, but the accounts suggest that Richmond was also supplying the estate. Whether or not this was material grown on by him within the estate’s nursery is not known. It was not unusual for a gardener, especially the head gardener, to be paid an amount by the estate but be free to pursue their own activities, including growing and selling stock, even to the estate itself. Brown, of course, is the supreme case in point for this: in charge of the royal gardens at Hampton Court but free to pursue an active career across the whole country.

The Hewell Grange estate seems to have drawn on skills from nearby Warwick, where Richmond was previously resident. He must have trained as a surveyor before he moved to Hewell Grange. A Warwick dynasty of surveyors was James Fish, a father and son of the same name, who were active from the 1680s into the 1730s, including James junior’s plan of Charlecote, near Stratford-on-Avon, of 1736. This social and professional Warwickshire network is where Richmond first comes to light. It is highly likely that he would have been known by, and known of, the work of these people and their clients. At some time between 1749 and 1754 Richmond moved from Warwickshire to Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire. Whether the move was direct or whether he was active elsewhere in these years is not known. He may well have been working with Brown earlier than 1754, as Brown’s bank account at Drummonds Bank only recorded detailed payments from 1754, although it had been opened in 1753.

By 1754, when it is known he was receiving payments from Brown, Richmond was trying to establish a family in Rickmansworth.²¹ He was very likely working on nearby Moor Park, supervising the demolition of Bridgeman’s geometric gardens near to the house, and then creating the new informal pleasure ground with major earthworks defining the prospect toward Watford, all on behalf of Brown. Walpole described the effect of the recently completed works in a letter of 1760:

I was not much struck with it, after all the miracles I had heard Brown had performed there. He has undulated the horizon in so many artificial molehills, that it is full as unnatural as if it was drawn with a rule and compasses.²²

However, the work seems to have matured better than his comments suggest, as Thomas Whately visited less than ten years later and praised the ‘rising ground ... divided into three parts, each so distinct and so different, as to have the effect of several hills’, which he then proceeds to describe in some detail, clearly admiring the effect:

They do more than conceal the sharpness of the edge; they convert a deformity into a beauty, and greatly contribute to the embellishment of this most lovely scene; a scene, however, in which the flat is the principal; and yet a more varied, a more beautiful Landskip, can hardly be desired in a garden.²³

Richmond may have worked at other Brown sites in the 1750s, such as Syon Park, for in 1759 he signed a counterpart lease on land in Marylebone from the successful builder and developer William Baker of Syon Hill.²⁴ The land in question contained a nursery and houses adjacent to Lisson Green and on the ‘New Road’, now Marylebone Road and the site of Marylebone Rail Station (Figure 8.3). It was here, assisted by Alexander Cunningham, that Richmond established a base from which he could supply nursery stock and design advice to his landed clients.

²¹ Rickmansworth Parish Records, Herts. R. O. 29 June 1754, baptism of Susanna (third daughter); 19 October 1755, baptism of Charles (first son); 13 February 1757, baptism of Nathaniel (second son); 6 August 1757, burial of Charles (first son); 1 January 1758, burial of Nathaniel (second son); 26 February 1758, baptism of Charlotte (fourth daughter); 6 June 1758, burial of Charlotte (fourth daughter).

²² Walpole to George Montagu, 4 July 1760, in Dover, G. A. E. & Wright, J. (1844). *The letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford* (Vol. 4, p. 69) London: R. Bentley.

²³ Whately, T. (1770). *Observations on modern gardening, illustrated by descriptions* (p. 34). London.

²⁴ Referred to in Marylebone Archives Deed 456. Richmond apparently countersigned the existing lease between William Henry Portman and William Baker.

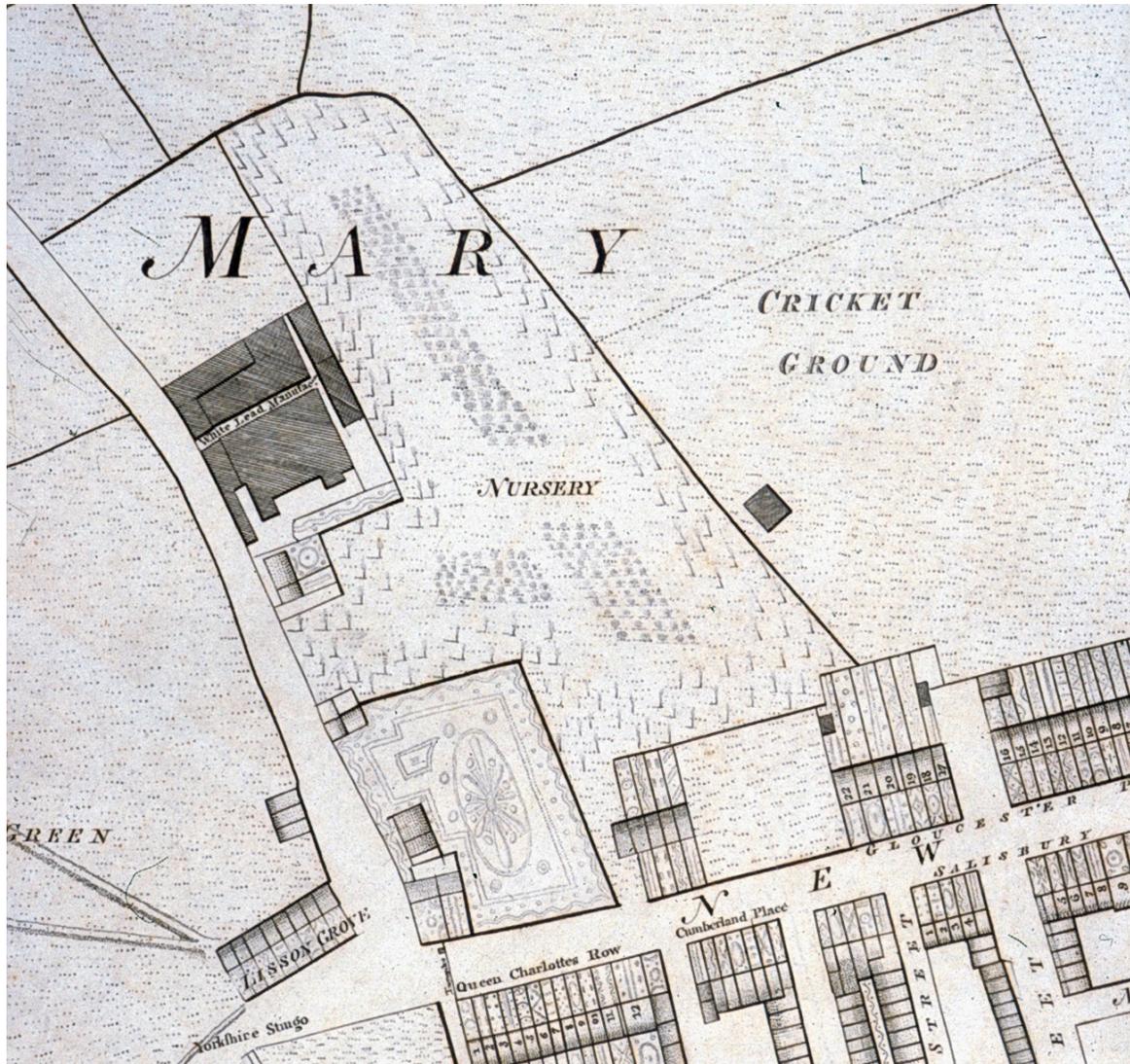


Figure 8.3: Detail from *Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster The Borough of Southwark and Parts Adjoining, Shewing Every House*, Richard Horwood, 1790, showing the nursery, land, and houses Richmond leased in 1759. Photo copyright David Brown, CC BY-NC 4.0.

Although Richmond worked with Brown for five years, he does not appear to have been involved in lake construction for him. However, he was very soon working on three lakes in the early 1760s: at Shardeloes (Bucks),²⁵ Stoke Park (Bucks),²⁶ and Danson Park in Bexley (Kent).²⁷ This suggests that he had experience of lake formation, dams, and controlling water flows before joining Brown, presumably as part of his training as a surveyor. The lake at Shardeloes was being formed in the mid-1750s by naturalising the earlier bason and canal, which had in turn been created in order to form a garden ‘out of a morasse’ for Sir William Drake in the late-seventeenth century.²⁸ Richmond may have been involved in the work on the new lake while at Moor Park, but he certainly finalised the form of the lake in the 1760s.

²⁵ Britton, J. & Brayley, E. W. (1801). *The beauties of England and Wales* (Vol. 1, p. 361). London: Vernor, Hood & Sharpe, etc.: ‘The present mansion is delightfully situated on the brow of the hill, overlooking a broad sheet of water, which was planned by Richmond, and occupies the centre of a narrow valley, covering 35 acres’.

²⁶ Penn, J. (1813). *Account of Stoke Park* (p. 43). London: W. Bulmer.

²⁷ King, R. W. (1980). Joseph Spence of Byfleet (IV). *Garden History*, 8(3), 77–144 (p. 87).

²⁸ Lyons, S. (1806). *Magna Britannia* (Vol. 1, p. 497). London: printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies.

Like Brown, he was not tied to any single contract at any given time. In the 1760s Richmond also naturalised Bridgeman’s geometric woodland blocks and avenues, and created a new serpentine sunk fence to define the new pleasure ground at Shardeloes. By the 1770s it is apparent that Richmond’s practice was taking off and that he could no longer directly supervise all the work that he had secured. By 1765, John Hencher was already working at Shardeloes and was paid regular contract sums by the client alongside continuing smaller consultancy payments to Richmond.²⁹ Hencher (sometimes referred to as Henshaw) worked with Richmond again in the 1770s at Saltram in Devon.³⁰ One of the things Richmond seems to have learned from Brown was to select the best skilled associates to work with. This is the only way in which a good designer could (and can, even today) ensure the standard of the finished work for a client. Of course, a designer’s reputation in the time of Brown relied on the admiration, and discussion, of the completed work. This in turn led to more commissions as word spread. Perhaps one of the more important of Brown’s contributions, as a ‘finishing school’ for his more ambitious associates, was the lesson he provided in how to organise and run a profitable improvement business. Another benefit of working with Brown for a few years was the cachet already attached to his name by the 1760s and the credibility this gave to his former ‘pupils’. It seems that for the spin-off start-ups coming out of the ‘school of Brown’ he was definitely ‘bankability’ Brown. Almost all of Brown’s former assistants traded on his name: William Donn refers to him as ‘my old master’, Thomas White and Robert Robinson are referred to as ‘capability men’, and Richmond’s clients and commentators were clearly aware of his pedigree. It is worth considering here the careers of several of Brown’s other early assistants before and after they worked with him.

William Donn received payments from Brown from 1753 to 1763. He carried out measurements of the building works at Croome Court and seems to have trained as an architect with Brown.³¹ He went on to work as executive architect for Fife House, Whitehall, for Robert Adam and for James Wyatt he worked at Appuldurcombe on the Isle of Wight in the 1770s, as well as carrying out work in his own right as at Estcourt House.³² After leaving Brown in 1763 he briefly teamed up with another Brown associate, James Sanderson, to work on Claydon House (Glos). Sanderson, who worked with Brown from 1754 to 1763, set up a nursery in Caversham and continued to work on Claydon until 1776.³³ Robert Robinson had already executed ‘the designs of Lancelot Brown’ at an unspecified site by 1757, when he advertised his practice and set up independently in Edinburgh and continued to have a very successful career as a ‘capability man’ and architect in Scotland.³⁴ His great competitor in Scotland was another Brown associate, Thomas White. White worked with Brown from 1759 to 1765 at Chillington (Staffs), where he is recorded as ‘gardener’ and it seems likely that he, like Richmond, had already trained as a surveyor. There is a very accomplished survey plan of Chillington of 1761, which is signed by him. White went on to be the most successful improver in the north of England and Scotland. By the time of his death he had an estate of several hundred acres near Consett, Co. Durham, with a new country house, ‘Woodlands’, at its centre. His son, also Thomas, continued the business into the nineteenth century.³⁵

Adam Mickle was the gardener at Badminton in the 1740s, where he would have worked with Kent in the same years that Brown was working with Kent at Stowe.³⁶ Mickle’s son, also Adam, worked with Brown too at Sandbeck (Yorks) and received payments from Brown between 1768 and 1772, between 1774 and 1775, and in 1777. By 1779 father and son were in business together working from their house at Rand Grange, near Bedale in Yorkshire. By April 1780 they were still at Sandbeck, but working in their own right, as it was reported that the Earl of Scarborough ‘has got Mickle there to Brownify the place.’³⁷ By 1781 Mickle junior was working for Lord Grantham at Newby Hall (Yorks), where he carried out major improvements over the next five years. It is very clear from the correspondence that Lancelot Brown was not involved in any way in the work at Newby Hall.³⁸

²⁹ The following analysis is based on Wm Drake’s bank account book, Bucks. RO, D/DR/9/40/3.

³⁰ Saltram Estate Accounts West Devon RO ACC.69/2–12.

³¹ ‘For Journeys and Plans for five years, as also for admeasurements of the work in 1761, & in 1762 some small matters by Donn’. RHS Lindley Library: Lancelot Brown Account Book, 1759–83 [MS 998 BRO BRO]. Available online at <https://www.rhs.org.uk/education-learning/libraries-at-rhs/collections/library-online/capability-brown-account-book>, accessed 27 September 2016.

³² Colvin, H. (2008). *A biographical dictionary of British architects 1600–1840* (4th ed.). London: Yale University Press; *Dictionary of Scottish architects*. Available at www.scottisharchitects.org.uk, accessed 19 August 2019.

³³ Donn and Sanderson hold a joint account at Drummonds Bank from 1763 to 1765. From 1766 the account continues for Donn only.

³⁴ *Dictionary of Scottish architects*; Turnbull, D. (1990). *Thomas White (1739–1811): Eighteenth-century landscape designer and arboriculturist* (p. 87).

³⁵ Turnbull, D. (1990). *Thomas White (1739–1811): Eighteenth-century landscape designer and arboriculturist*.

³⁶ Badminton gardener’s account (Adam Mickle), Gloucestershire Archives, D2700/QB3/3/3 (1746)–1757.

³⁷ Nottingham RO: DD/FJ/11/1/3/201–202.

³⁸ Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Record Service: L 30/14/254, L30/15/54/180.

There are other similar stories, for Brown had many assistants. The consistent feature is that many of Brown's assistants had already developed careers as gardeners, masons, carpenters, surveyors, and other improvement disciplines before they were directly employed by him. This should not be surprising, as a crucial part of Brown's success was in choosing the right people to work with. In a cascade system of industrial expansion, Brown's numerous assistants often went on to establish their own businesses and in turn have assistants of their own, who in turn multiplied similarly. In this way, an industry that saw the earliest recorded ornamental nursery sales in the late-seventeenth century could become a sizeable industry sector employing thousands by the 1770s.³⁹

Richmond was only one of many 'improvers' working in the middle years of the eighteenth century, albeit he was one of the most successful. Between 1740 and 1770 there were also many others working in the field of landscape improvement, people not necessarily associated with Brown at all: in these years the number of nurseries expanded rapidly, both numerically and in geographic cover; many nurserymen offered design and construction in addition to plants; some were also surveyors, such as Richard Woods (1715–93), who is known to have improved around fifty sites. Some worked purely as surveyors and improvers, such as Francis Richardson (1698–1762), who lived in Worksop, carried out a number of commissions in the Nottinghamshire Dukeries from 1748 until at least 1756, and worked further afield in Lancashire and Yorkshire until his death in 1762.⁴⁰ There were also gardeners such as William Emes and even architects such as Robert Adam who would design pleasure grounds as well as the buildings within them. There appears to have been a high degree of flexibility for designers to work with both buildings and landscape at this time. Brown, for instance, was also architect at a number of sites and often for the mansion house as well as for garden buildings. Similarly, Cosmo Wallace, who appears to have been a surveyor/clerk of works associated with Adam, prepared a particularly fine proposals drawing for landscape improvements in the contemporary 'Brownian' style at Kimbolton Castle (Cambs), in 1763.⁴¹

Richmond worked within this context of evolving systems of practice. The changes during his working life were not limited to business organisation, however. The character and style of landscape improvement changed gradually between 1740 and 1770. Charles Bridgeman, William Kent, Francis Richardson, Sanderson Miller, and the Greenings were all active during the 1740s and designing in a style that is now sometimes described as 'rococo'. They have in common with Brown's early work an increasingly relaxed and asymmetric geometry whose lines reflected the elegant ripples, shells, and scrolling found in the interior design of the period and elsewhere. Over time, the geometry became so subtle as to be considered 'natural' (within the context of eighteenth-century ideas). Adam, Brown, and Emes were at the forefront of this evolving 'naturalistic' style during the 1750s and 1760s. Improvers would be very aware of what was being done elsewhere, particularly on high-status 'exemplar' sites, through garden tourism, which was becoming popular at the middle and upper levels of society. Ambitious assistants and associates would set up in their own right, further disseminating ideas and techniques, in an ever-expanding marketplace for landscape improvement at all scales and levels of 'polite society'. This would include the town gardens and small parks of the aspirational urban 'middling sorts' as well as the extensive parks and estates of the rural landed.

This expanding marketplace for landscape goods and services is therefore the commercial context within which Richmond launched his independent career in 1759, leasing a nursery at Lisson Green and receiving payment from Sir Kenrick Clayton for work at Marden Park in the same year. Richmond's work at Marden Park became known through an analysis of surviving bank ledgers from the period 1760–84 at Drummonds Bank, now held by the Royal Bank of Scotland Archives, and those for the same period at Hoares Bank. There are a number of other banks for which records still exist and much further work needs to be done to index the location of eighteenth-century client accounts. These rarely accessed accounts represent a rich vein of information and will no doubt include currently unpublished payments to Brown, Richmond, and the other improvers.

Richmond was paid £400 in 1759, roughly equivalent to £90,000 in current value, by Sir Kenrick Clayton and a further £100 in each of the two following years.⁴² An estate survey map of 1761 shows new serpentine drives and what appear to be a series of dressed walks in the grove on the steep slope behind the house.⁴³ The

³⁹ In 1672 Captain Leonard Gurle's Whitechapel Nursery supplied plants including Dutch limes, laurustinus, spruce firs, and various other ornamental shrubs to Ryston Hall near Downham Market, Norfolk. Norfolk RO Mf/Ro 219/1.

⁴⁰ Brown, D. & Williamson, T. (2016). *Lancelot Brown and the Capability Men: Landscape revolution in eighteenth-century England* (p. 115). London: Reaktion Books.

⁴¹ The Norris Museum, St Ives, Cambridgeshire: MAPS/KIMBN/1763(i).

⁴² Account of Sir Kenrick Clayton at Drummonds Bank payments to Mr Richmond: 1759 13 July £100; 5 October £200; 31 August £100; 1760 9 May £100; 1761 21 February £100; 1766 28 July £66.

⁴³ 'A survey of the estates of Sir Kenrick Clayton, Bart, lying in the County of Surrey', by William Chapman. Surrey History Centre K61/3/2.



Figure 8.4: *Hitchin Priory, Herts*, the line of the earlier approach drive, which Richmond replaced, can be seen as a parch-mark in the grass curving towards the house (right). Photo copyright David Brown, CC BY-NC 4.0.

background to a late seventeenth-century portrait of Sir Robert Clayton as Lord Mayor of London shows a bare hillside behind the house with a short single avenue of trees up the slope on axis with the house.⁴⁴

Richmond was already working on Shardeloes, Stoke Park, and Danson Park in 1763. Later in that year Richmond advised Timothy Caswell of Sacombe Park in Hertfordshire,⁴⁵ a park that had been landscaped by Charles Bridgeman for Thomas Rolt in the 1720s with a canal, octagonal bason, and geometrically arranged walks within angular woodland blocks. Dury and Andrews' map of Hertfordshire, published in 1766, shows the walled garden with its bastion corners, but within a stylised irregular landscape. It seems likely that Richmond had advised on naturalising the geometric layout, removing the formal waters, and rounding the woodland blocks. In 1764, Richmond gave advice to John Seare of Tring Grove, which appears, from later map evidence, to have been a very simple 'lawn' with boundary belts.⁴⁶ In the same year he also advised Jenison Shafto, the infamous gambler and horse-racing devotee, on his grounds at Wrattling Park (Cambs),⁴⁷ and began work on Hitchin Priory (Herts). This latter was a larger project, with regular payments to Richmond for journeys and plants that continued until 1771⁴⁸ accompanied by changes to the Priory by Robert Adam with ceilings by Rose & Co. Richmond created a new entrance drive and planted the park with clumps of trees to hide and reveal successive views of the house on approach (Figure 8.4). He widened the River Hiz and created a three-arched bridge in exposed flintwork.

By 1765 Richmond was at work on proposals for John Ward, 1st Viscount Dudley and Ward, at Himley Hall (Staffs), and received seventy guineas through Ward's account at the Bank of England. Ward was part of the circle of garden enthusiasts that included Sanderson Miller, William Shenstone, and Lord Aylesbury of Hewell Grange, where Richmond had worked in the late 1740s, and presumably became known to Ward. The 2nd Viscount would employ Brown at Himley in 1780 to make a lake to the south of the house, but Richmond's work was a series of

⁴⁴ Laureys a Castro, *Portrait of Sir Robert Clayton*, c. 1780, Bank of England Collection. Clayton was Lord Mayor of London 1679–80 and one of the founder directors of the Bank of England.

⁴⁵ Account of Timothy Caswall at Drummonds Bank: '1763, 8th Dec To Mr Richmond £20'.

⁴⁶ Account of John Seare at Drummonds Bank: '1764, 26th Mar To cash paid Mr. Richmond ... £31'.

⁴⁷ Account of Jenison Shafto Esq. at Drummonds Bank: '1764, 16th Aug To cash paid Nath. Richmond ... £4'.

⁴⁸ Hertfordshire RO: D/ER F219; Account of John Radcliffe at Hoares Bank, Ledger 81 Fol.345: '1770, 15th Feb, To Nath. Richmond, £200-00-00'.



Figure 8.5: Detail from *A Plan for the Alterations proposed at Danson in Kent*, Nathaniel Richmond, c. 1763, showing the curlicue dam detail and planting to cover the level change between the bodies of water. Photo copyright David Brown, CC BY-NC 4.0.

lakes to the north of the house. A rather distressed plan in Dudley Library shows the series of lakes that all possess Richmond's unusual curlicue 'ram's horns' dam wall detail – as at Danson and Shardeloes (Figure 8.5).

Richmond next worked for Richard Cox, army agent and founder of the world's oldest travel agency, possibly at Aspenden Hall (Herts), which he leased as a convenient London retreat, or at his own house in Hampshire, Quarley House, from 1766 to 1768.⁴⁹ The 1803 tithe map for Quarley shows a simple lawn and belts with

⁴⁹ Account of Richard Cox at Drummonds Bank: 1766, 8th Jan Mr. Richmond £26–9; 1767, 22nd Jan Mr. Richmond £39; 1768, 1st Feb To Mr. Richmond ... £56–9.

scattered parkland trees, similar in character to Tring Grove. Another small project was in extending William Pym’s park at The Hasells, near Sandy, Bedfordshire. Richmond spent eleven days there in 1766, for which he charged £17-6s-6d. His usual charge was one guinea per day. For comparison, as already mentioned, Brown’s gardener salary per annum in 1750 at Stowe was £25, demonstrating the elevated status improvers enjoyed over mere gardeners. In 1767, Pym mentions that ‘Colonel Parker told me Mr. Richmond sow’d his Lawn with fifteen bushels of bent seeds and fifteen pounds of Dutch clover to the acre.’⁵⁰ Colonel George Lane Parker was, like Shafto, another horse-racing man, of Woodbury, near Sandy, Bedfordshire, the second son of the Earl of Macclesfield. Both sites are simple small parks, little more than ‘Lawns’ in the contemporary sense. At Hasells Hall Richmond extended the park onto enclosed common ‘waste’ and continued his work there in 1768, supplying fruit trees for the new walled garden. The pleasure ground was wrapped around the walled garden, with a terrace and seat overlooking the lower plain. At Woodbury there was a new walled garden and stables away from the original house and a serpentine ride along the edge of the Greensand ridge from the stables to the house. In the early-nineteenth century a new house was built near the stables and Parker’s Woodbury became separately defined as ‘Old Woodbury’.

Richmond was busy at the dawn of the new decade. Bamber Gascoyne wrote to John Strutt on the 28th February 1770 regarding Richmond’s ‘intentions of visiting Skreens’ so that he could ‘fix the situation of your intended house’ at Terling Place, near Braintree, Essex, designed by the Essex architect John Johnson.⁵¹ Work was still progressing on the new park at Terling in 1781–82, as the Strutt ledgers note: ‘Payments (various) for levelling, new road, and other work including decoy pond and new plantation’, and Richmond received a final payment in May 1783.⁵² Richmond also commenced work on Saltram, Devon, in 1770, for another fancier of bloodstock, John Parker II, later Baron Bovingdon. Parker was married to Theresa Robinson, daughter of Lord Grantham, and brother of Frederick ‘Fritz’ Robinson, mentioned earlier in respect of Mickle. The Parkers and Robinsons were also close friends of the Pelhams of Stanmer, Sussex, where Richmond also worked. In addition to ongoing work at Hitchin Priory and new work at Saltram – which continued until 1774 – Richmond was back at Hewell Grange and also advising Lord Dartrey at Cremorne House at Chelsea.⁵³ A year later he was at Audley End, Essex, designing a new stove house for the walled garden, later demolished to make way for John Hobcraft’s vine house, which remains today.

In the following years Richmond worked on Beeston Hall, Norfolk (1773–78), creating a new lake and demolishing existing walled gardens around the house, and creating a new walled garden some distance away from the house. In 1774 Richmond’s daughter, Mary, married Joseph Rose junior at St. Marylebone.⁵⁴ Rose and his uncle, also Joseph, were the finest Georgian plasterers and worked regularly with Robert Adam. They lived on Queen Anne Street, Marylebone, not far from Richmond’s nursery or the house he moved to in 1780 at 13 Bryanston Street on the Portman Estate. In 1776 Henry Somerset, 5th Duke of Beaufort, employed Richmond to advise him on improvements at Badminton (Glos), and two years later⁵⁵ the Duke wrote to his mother, the Dowager Duchess at Stoke Park, near Bristol:

I have been employ’d all this morning with Mr. Richmond who came here for a few hours to give me his advice in cutting down some trees and set off immediately afterwards for London.⁵⁶

One of the projects under way at Badminton in the 1770s was the creation of a new pleasure ground to the east of the house with a long curving stone-faced ha-ha (Figure 8.6). Richmond had worked for the Dowager Duchess, as administrator to Charles Compton, Earl of Northampton for his daughter and her granddaughter, Lady Elizabeth Compton, at Compton Place near Eastbourne in 1768.⁵⁷ From 1778 to 1782, when she married Henry Cavendish, Richmond worked closely with Lady Elizabeth and Gibbs her agent at Eastbourne, on

⁵⁰ Quoted in James Collett-White, Hasells Hall (Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Record Service) as written on 25 August 1767.

⁵¹ Skreens, near Roxwell, Essex, seat of Thomas Berney Bramston, where Richmond may also have worked. Essex R O: T/B 251/7.

⁵² Strutt Ledgers: 1783, ‘21st May N. Richmond, surveyor of grounds ... £32/11/6d’; Account of John Strutt at Hoares Bank, L16 fol.174: ‘2nd Jun, To N. Richmond, £32–11–’.

⁵³ Account of Earl of Plymouth at Hoares Bank: ‘1770, Oct 12th, To Nath. Richmond ... £25-4-00d’. Account of Lord Dartrey at Drummonds Bank: ‘1770, Nov 20th, Nath. Richmond ... £222-17-5’.

⁵⁴ 1774, 15th Dec Mary Richmond married Joseph Rose at St Marylebone. Witnesses: Edward Webster and Joseph Rose Snr.

⁵⁵ Account of Duke of Beaufort at Hoares Bank: ‘1776, 28th Feb £31-10s [Thirty guineas]’; ‘1780, 4th Mar to Dec 21 £53-11s [Fifty one guineas]’; ‘1782, 16th Feb £37-16s [Thirty six guineas]’.

⁵⁶ Badminton Muniments: FmK 1/2/4(36).

⁵⁷ 1768, ‘Paid N. Richmond for an Alteration in the Front of the House at East Bourne which was an inclosed Court and was to be new paved being greatly gone to decay therefore this was done as the cheapest - £50 and £44-16s-0d in full ... £94-16-0’. Compton papers, Chatsworth archives, Box Q, ‘The accounts of the Duchess of Beaufort as Administratrix of Charles, Earl of Northampton, from his death to the time when Lady Elizabeth Compton came of age (includes a Drummonds bank account book 1763–81)’ unsorted.



Figure 8.6: Richmond's serpentine ha-ha defining the pleasure ground he made at Badminton House. Photo copyright David Brown, CC BY-NC 4.0.

improvements to the grounds. In February 1780, Robert Gibbs the bailiff of Lady Elizabeth Compton at Compton Place wrote to her at her grandmother's house at Stoke Park, Avon:

I must be at Wilmington next Monday but shall be at home in time to receive Mr. Richmond. Last Thursday I finished the planting on the west side of the house (according to the sketch I sent your Ladyship) I collected everything that was here & fit to plant and did not intend to have anything from London this year as it is now sufficiently thick, but when your Ladyship has seen it mak any action to it that you think proper ...

On the 2nd March 1780, Gibbs wrote again:

Mr. Richmond came here on Monday evening and has ordered some things to be planted to cover the new gate and some Beaches to be planted on the west side of the house. Accord'g to his order and your ladyship's letter I have sent for 50 Laurels 30 Beeches 6 Acacias which I hope will be planted this day week ...⁵⁸

Brown's work at Cadland and Richmond's work at Compton Place can be seen as the natural predecessors of Repton, Nash, and Loudon's villa-scale work. The trend towards smaller villa-scale improvement and the rise in the fashion for a Picturesque 'cottage' aesthetic was one that grew during Repton's working life and was one which Repton promoted. The plans by Nash for Brighton Pavilion gardens of 1816 are directly comparable with Richmond's plans for Compton Place, where the royal family had been regular visitors in the 1780s.⁵⁹

Richmond was once again working in Devon in 1776, this time for the impecunious Sir George Yonge at Escot, and for the wealthy John Walter of Stevenstone.⁶⁰ At some time in his career he also worked at Eggesford in Devon, according to Polwhele in his *History of Devonshire* of 1805, the house had been:

⁵⁸ Compton papers, Chatsworth archives, Box Q, 'The accounts of the Duchess of Beaufort'.

⁵⁹ Reproduced in Hinze, V. (1996). The Re-creation of John Nash's Regency Gardens at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton. *Garden History*, 24(1), 45–53 (p. 48, fig. 2); Correspondence, Compton papers, Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth.

⁶⁰ Account of Sir George Yonge at Drummonds Bank: '1776, 11th Mar, To cash paid Nath. Richmond ... £52–10 [Fifty guineas]'; Account of John Walter at Drummonds Bank. 'Payments to Mr Nathaniel Richmond between 1776–1779 totalling £219-6-0'.

Table 8.1: Details of the thirty-one sites Nathaniel Richmond is known to have worked at between c.1759 and 1784.

	Site	County	Owner/Patron	Date	Evidence
1	Marden Park	Surrey	Sir Kenrick Clayton	1759-61	Payments totalling £600 recorded in KC Drummonds account for these years
2	Stoke Park	Bucks	Thomas Penn	Before 1766	<i>Account of Stoke Park</i> , (1813) John Penn: <i>Lake was originally formed by Richmond</i>
3	Chalfont Park	Bucks	Charles Churchill	Before 1763	James Main in <i>Gardeners Magazine</i>
4	Danson Park	Kent	John Boyd	Before 1763	Joseph Spence refers to <i>Mr Richmond's plan</i>
5	Shardeloes	Bucks	Sir William Drake	1763-69	Payments totalling £2,344 to Richmond and his associate John Hencher (Hoares Bank)
6	Sacombe	Herts	Timothy Caswell	1763	Paid £20, advice, visits
7	Tring Grove	Herts	John Seare	1764	Paid £31, advice, visits
8	Wrattling Park	Camb	Jenison Shafto	1764	Paid £47, advice, visits
9	Hitchin Priory	Herts	John Radcliffe	1764-71	Payment of £200 (Hoares Bank) + bill for journeys (Herts RO)
10	Gorhambury	Herts	James Grimston	1760s	Old Gorhambury, possibly also for 3 rd Viscount for new house after 1773
11	Himley Hall	Staffs	John, Viscount Dudley & Ward	1765	Payment of 70 guineas (JW@Bank of England), plan, lakes
12	Aspenden or Quarley	Herts or Hants	Richard Cox	1766-68	Payments totalling £121-18s (RC@Drummonds)
13	Ewhurst	Hants	Sir Robert Mackreth	After 1763	Elizabeth Montagu correspondence
14	Hasells Hall	Beds	William Pym	1766-68	Estate accounts
15	Compton Palace, Eastbourne	East Sussex	Dowager Duchess of Beaufort Lady Elizabeth Compton	1768 1778-82	Compton papers, Chatsworth, paid £94-16s Correspondence, as above
16	Harleyford	Bucks	William Clayton	1769	Paid £20, advice and visits - no payment to Brown in WC@Drummonds
17	Skreens	Essex	Thomas Berney Bramston	1770	Richmond visits (letter, Bamber Gascoyne to John Strutt)
18	Terling	Essex	John Strutt	1770-83	Visits, payment 1783 of 31 guineas
19	Hewell Grange	Worcs	Earl of Plymouth	1770	Paid 24 guineas, Brown had been here carrying out major works in 1760s
20	Cremorne House, Chelsea	Middlesex	Lord Dartrey	1770	Paid £222-17s-5d (LD@Drummonds)
21	Stanmer	Sussex	Thomas Pelham	Before 1770	Referred to in Saltram correspondence
22	Saltram	Devon	John Parker	1770-74	Paid £162, John Hencher on site
23	Audley End	Essex	Sir John Griffin Griffin	1771	Design for a Stove House
24	Beeston Hall	Norfolk	Sir Jacob Preston	1773-78	Payments in estate accounts, Norfolk RO
25	Escot	Devon	Sir George Yonge	1776	Paid 50 guineas (GY@Drummonds)
26	Eggesford	Devon	Henry Arthur Fellowes	1770s	Polwhele, <i>History of Devon</i> , (1806)
27	Stevenstone	Devon	John Walter	1776-78	Paid £291-6s (JW@Drummonds)
28	Badminton	Glos	5 th Duke of Beaufort	1776-82	Paid 117 guineas (DoB@Hoares): pleasure ground, ha-ha, tree work in park
29	Killerton	Devon	Sir Thomas Acland	1777-82	Paid £20 per visit for several visits of a few days each
30	Lamer	Herts	Charles Garrard Drake	1783	Paid £355-5s-6d, last payment to executor
31	Portman Square, Westminster	Middlesex	The Portman Estate	1780-84	Completed by Henry Hewitt after Richmond's death
	Possible site:				
	Woolverstone, Suffolk	Suffolk	William Berners	After 1776	Repton visits in 1787 on his 'Kent, Brown and Richmond' tour

much increased and improved by the present possessor who has also laid out the grounds about it with much elegance and taste under the direction of the late Mr Richmond; woods well interspersed, considerable plantations and the river Taw contributing much to enrich and beautify the scene.

At the end of his career Richmond was once again working for the Drake family, this time for Charles Garrard Drake, who had inherited Lamer (Herts) through his mother.⁶¹ He died before the works were finished and Repton, in his Red Book for Lamer of 1792, set out that he felt he had been 'called in to compleat the plan suggested by the late Mr Richmond'. In typical Repton style he added:

I have always considered the late Mr. Richmond as the only person since the immortal Brown whose ideas were at all correct on the subject: he understood perfectly how to give the most natural shape to artificial ground, how to dress walks in a pleasure garden, and how to leave or plant picturesque groupes of trees, his lines were generally graceful and easy, but his knowledge of the Art was rather technical and executive, than theoretical; he could stake out the detached parts of a place with much taste, but of the great outline he had so little idea that he never delivered any general plan.

It seems clear that Richmond and Brown were acknowledged as the key innovators in the development of landscape design over their careers. Brown's early work in the 1750s was in what is now recognised as a rococo style similar to that of the Greenings, and developed into something more naturalistic by the early 1760s, as did that of his competitors and contemporaries. The evidence does not support the idea of Brown as the inventor of the style for which he is known but suggests an evolving cultural understanding of an idealised natural landscape, which Brown was at the forefront of delivering and popularising. It was an aesthetic understood and shared by the clients, artists, and designers of the period.

The market sector expanded rapidly over the same period and Brown and his 'pupils' were influential in this expansion. One of the trends in the second half of the eighteenth century was the increased economic and political importance of the 'middling sorts', the aspirational group who had most to gain from 'improvement'. This group was both the emerging marketplace for consumer goods and the suppliers of those goods and services. While Brown's clientele contained the ruling elite of the country, the movers and the shakers at court and in Parliament, Richmond's were from a less politically influential, but often equally wealthy, stratum. City money, banking, and East India Company interests were well represented in Richmond's client list, as was the horse-racing fraternity.

Brown's practice spawned many new improvement businesses, as has been shown, of which Richmond, White, and Mickle were perhaps the most high-end, as were his main competitors, Emes and Woods. The style of these improvers is virtually indistinguishable in the finished landscapes on the ground. The variable appears to be the cachet attached to the various names, and perhaps even more so to their client lists, rather than anything necessarily intrinsic in the finished landscape. The expansion in the number of improvers could only be achieved due to the same expansion of demand in the market for improvement and that expansion was not purely in volume but also in the range of potential clients amongst 'the middling sorts', primarily urban-based and aspirational, with increasing amounts of available money and leisure time to spend on goods and services. The smaller grounds to which improvements were increasingly being directed required a different treatment to the extensive country house park, and the pleasure ground provided a better model for this. It is perhaps in this area that the ideas of Brown, Richmond, Emes, Woods, and all the others would be translated into the urban and suburban parks and gardens of the nineteenth century.

Select Bibliography

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

⁶¹ Account of Charles Garrard Drake at Hoares Bank: '1783, 27th Mar To N. Richmond, £200-16-00'; '29th Aug To N. Richmond, £100; 1784', '10th Jun To Edwd. Webster, £54-9-6 [Richmond's Executor]'.