

Capability Brown: Perception and Response in a Global Context  
9-11 September 2016  
The University of Bath, UK

## **Session 5: CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.00 Introduction (Steve Brown)
- 9.05 Reflections and Future Directions (Michael Symes)
- 9.30 Discussion
- 10.00 End of Session 5

ICOMOS-IFLA International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes  
ICOMOS-IFLA Comité Scientifique International des Paysages Culturels  
ICOMOS-IFLA Comité Científico Internacional de Paisajes Culturales



Attendees at ISCLL 2016 Annual Meeting

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- The ICOMOS-IFLA International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes (ISCCL) is a supporter of the Capability Brown conference.
- The ISCCL is one of 29 scientific committees of ICOMOS that provide technical and specialist advice concerning cultural heritage conservation practice to ICOMOS.
- The ISCCL has 166 members from 52 countries, many of whom are at this conference.
- The ISCCL 2016 Annual Meeting took place at the University of Bath over the two-days prior to this conference (7-9 September).
- The ISCCL is keen to attract new members from ICOMOS-UK. If you think that you may be interested, please contact: [isccl.president@gmail.com](mailto:isccl.president@gmail.com)

# Session Findings/Challenges

The four conference session Chairs were each asked:

From the session that you chaired,

1. What were two key findings or insights into the work of Capability Brown arising out of the session?
2. What was a key challenge for future research into the work and life of Capability Brown?

## Session 1: Brown in Great Britain

Chair. Marion Harney

### Two key findings

1. The placing of Brown within a Neo-classical formalist aesthetic which situates him within a larger European context – disrupting the notion of Brown as wholly English. The Neo-classical ideals of abstraction, clarity and purity place him firmly in the tradition of improver rather than a radical destroyer of landscapes.
2. The previously unacknowledged and under researched role of women in Brown's designed landscapes and how they related/responded to landscapes in a particular way. And that women could have played a key role – particularly in the handling of shrubbery and flower planting.

### A key challenge

- That little is known of Brown's working practice.
- The role of women in designed landscapes.

## Session 2: Brown as perceived abroad

Chair. David Jacques

### Two key findings

1. That Brown's style did not necessarily transfer to other countries, as shown by those two (Ireland and the American colonies/USA) that one would have thought were closest in cultural terms to Great Britain. This raises the broader question of whether Brown landscapes were peculiarly English, a product of that specific moment and set of conditions.
2. In the case of the USA, the Brownian style got a 'second wind' in the smaller country houses, and afterwards communal landscapes, but never at the scale and boldness of Brown's parks at home.

### A key challenge

Inventorying examples of Brownian landscapes in each country in the hope of describing a sufficient number for a more detailed and robust analysis of the progress of the style and reasons for it.

## Session 3: Brown as perceived abroad

Chair. Michael Symes

Two key findings

1. The difficulty of pinning designs to Brown/Brownian – blurring with ‘English style’ generally.
2. The differences to Brown, e.g. the superimposition of a Masonic scheme at Laeken.

A key challenge

Precision in determining how much was actually known (by Europeans) about Brown, and what exactly did they take from him?

## Session 4: Echoes of Brown

Chair. Peter Goodchild

### Two key findings

1. The need to continue to develop a deeper and wider appreciation of Brown and his work as a landscape gardener and architect.
2. The need to develop the dialogue between scholars, practitioners, managers, and the general public, etc about the history, heritage value, and present-day care and management of historic parks and gardens.

### A key challenge

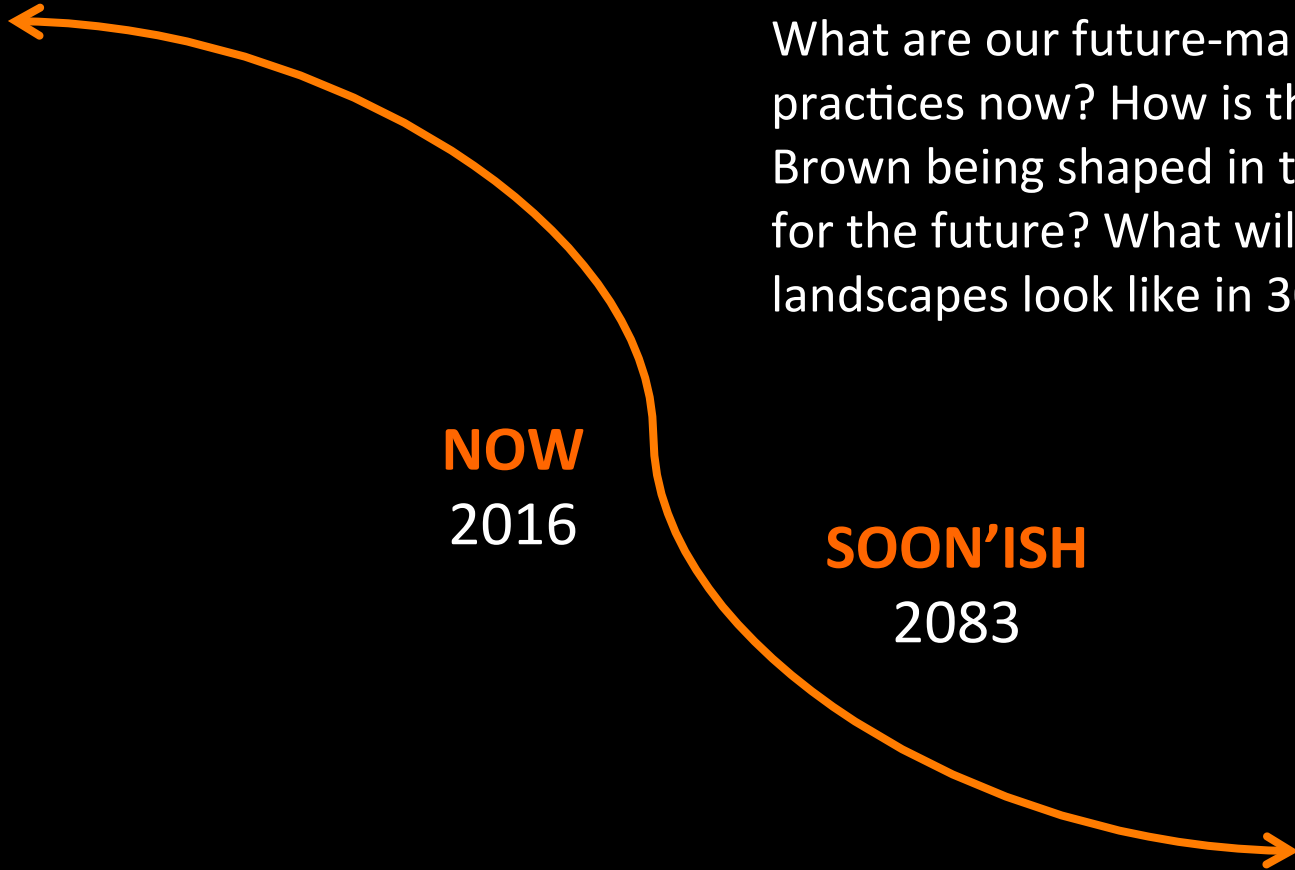
Taking the information about Brown and the English style of gardening and landscape gardening that has been presented to this conference, other recent conferences, and publications, continue the exploration and assessment of:

- the relationships between Brown and the 'English' style of gardening and landscape gardening in the UK and other countries around the world.
- the relationship between Brown and the prevailing circumstances of the times in which he lived and the places at which he worked.
- the national and international significance of Brown.
- the present day reputation of Brown.



**LONG TIME AGO**

1716



What are our future-making practices now? How is the idea of Brown being shaped in the present for the future? What will Brownian landscapes look like in 300 years?

**NOW**

2016

**SOON'ISH**

2083

**LONG TIME AHEAD**

2316

**Michael Symes**

**Reflections and Future Directions**

# Reflections on the Conference

**Discussion**

**THANK YOU**

And onto Croome Court

PowerPoint compiled by Steve Brown. It incorporates responses provided by Marion Harney, David Jacques, Michael Symes and Peter Goodchild