

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE GARDENS TRUST

RESEARCH AND RECORDING PROJECT 2017–18

SARAH RUTHERFORD

INTRODUCTION

2018 was the 200th anniversary of the death of nationally renowned landscape designer Humphry Repton (1752–1818). This milestone prompted the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust (BGT), along with other County Gardens Trusts, to take the opportunity in 2017 and 2018 to research, understand and publicise the work of this enigmatic but prolific designer in our respective counties. BGT wanted to find out just what Repton contributed as a designer to our historic county (including Milton Keynes and Slough), and to understand its significance within the county and beyond. In this project we were partly funded by a generous grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and raised other funds from our own resources and the Stanley Smith Trust.

In the year of Repton 200 we presented the results of our continuing work to record, understand the significance of and help to preserve the landscapes of Bucks by commemorating the work of this great designer. In our book, *Humphry Repton in Buckinghamshire and Beyond*, we present a series of essays on various aspects of Repton based on the information from our gazetteer of reports on 15 sites previously associated with him, three of which we found unlikely to be his work. We also present contextual information to help set his work in Bucks in the national and international context. This includes essays by economic historian and Bucks resident Prof. Sir Roderick Floud, setting Repton in his times socially and economically, and leading garden historian Jonathan Lovie presenting the context of Repton's patrons and their links beyond Bucks to sites and clients countrywide. Claire de Carle presents an essay on the German garden-maker Prince Pückler-Muskau and the profound influence that Repton's work exerted on the prestigious estates that the Prince designed in Berlin and beyond for himself and the royal family.

Following the death of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown in 1783, by the 1790s Repton was regarded as his successor, the next great improver of landed property. Over 30 years from 1788 he took on perhaps up to 350 commissions, becoming famous for his beguiling 'Red Books' of illustrated advice to help his clients visualise the potential of their properties. However, often his suggestions were not executed, or only partially so, leaving an enigma in many cases about the extent of his contribution that research and site analysis can help to explain. This has been no different in Bucks.

Fifteen sites are generally associated with Repton in the historic county of Bucks (pre-1894, including Slough and Milton Keynes Districts).¹ The sites were attributed to Repton by Stephen Daniels in his authoritative monograph *Humphry Repton* (Yale 1999). Of these, seven are on the Historic England *Register*, indicating national significance, and three have 'Red Books' (a further two Red Books are missing). BGT presents the results of detailed research into Repton's involvement in the design of all these gardens, to uncover and bring together evidence of his work, as well as 'myth-busting' a few misattributions and testing uncertainties about advice and work executed. The documentary research and recording of evidence on site was carried out by 20 volunteers with considerable experience, having been working on the BGT's Research and Recording Project since 2013 (see articles in *Records* 56–58).

The Repton project was launched in spring 2017 with a training seminar at Ashridge House for the volunteers. Then the volunteers, via primary and secondary research and site visits, produced reports on each site to answer a number of questions. These reports have been compiled into the gazetteer in the second half of the book, to identify in each site the main documentary sources, Repton's proposals (where known),

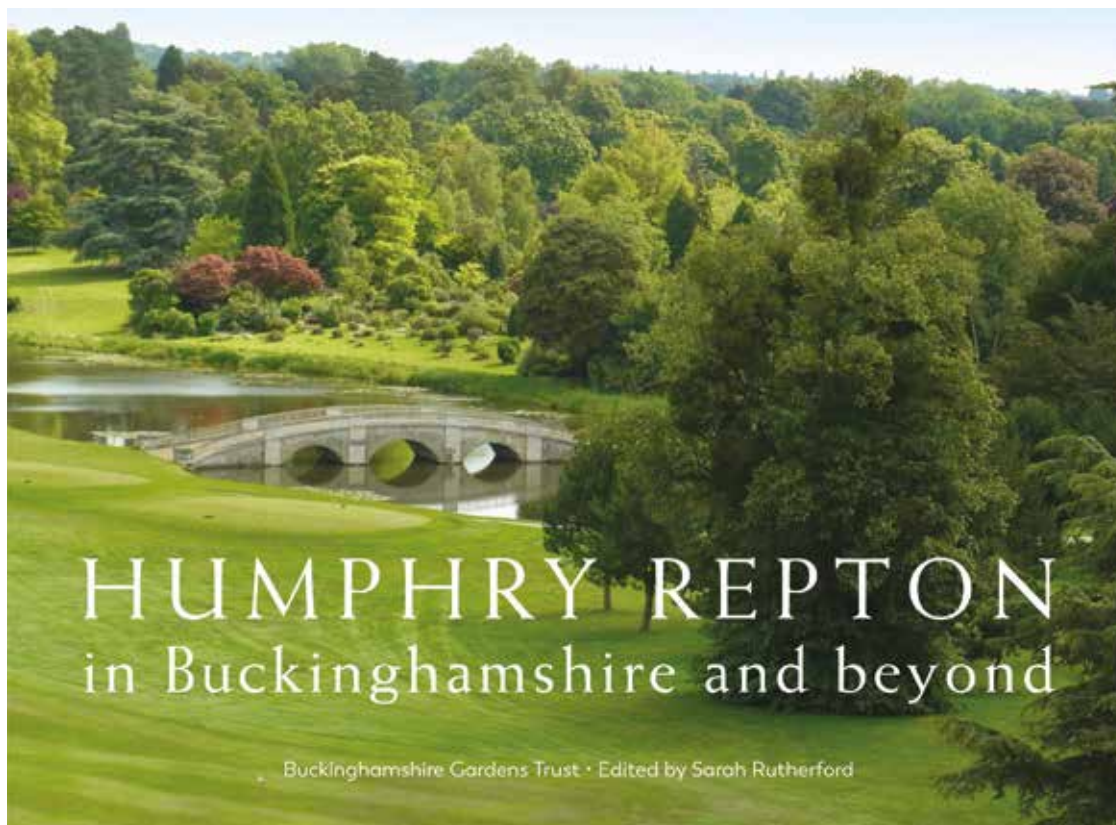


FIGURE 1 Cover of the Bucks Gardens Trust's publication on Humphry Repton

what seems to have been executed and the level of survival, along with key references. Some sites naturally have greater coverage than others, depending on his identified input and the extent of documentary evidence. The material in the reports provides an overview to understand the extent of his work in Bucks and how this sits with his career countrywide. The gazetteer headings are:

1. Introduction and site description
2. Date of the project
3. Client
4. Documentary evidence associated with Repton
5. Repton's proposals for the site
6. What was carried out of Repton's suggestions?
7. What survives of any works implemented?
8. Where in his career/life was this project done?
9. What else was he working on at the time?
10. How significant was this commission to his

career? Was it influential elsewhere? Was it influenced by other sites?

11. Key features of the site associated with Repton (summary)
12. Key references

This research has assembled a new body of work in recognition of Repton's contribution to the designed landscapes of the historic county. The results have been made widely available to all those interested and we will provide updates to both Parks and Gardens UK and Historic England. It fits into a body of publications by County Gardens Trusts focussing on individual counties including Yorkshire, London, Norfolk, Hertfordshire and Kent, published in 2018.

Summary of sites associated with Repton in Buckinghamshire²

<i>Site</i>	<i>Date of Repton's involvement</i>	<i>Parish and District</i>
Ashridge	1813, executed 1816 to early 1820s	Ivinghoe, Pitstone, Chiltern
Bulstrode	1790, Repton then connected with place and client for 20 years	Chalfont St Peter, South Bucks
Chalfont Park	c.1795–99, Repton connected through this period	Chalfont St Peter, South Bucks
Gayhurst	1792–93	Gayhurst, Milton Keynes
Hanslope	1791–92	Hanslope, Milton Keynes
Lampport Manor	– (Repton associated with owner 1793)	Stowe, Aylesbury Vale
Medmenham and Danesfield	Possibly before 1797	Medmenham, Wycombe
Shardeloes	1793–94	Amersham, Chiltern
Stoke Farm	Advised probably in one phase 1792–98	Stoke Poges, South Bucks
Stoke Park	1792–98, Repton connected through this period	Stoke Poges, South Bucks
Taplow Lodge	Before 1796, advised probably in one phase	Taplow, South Bucks
Tyringham	– (HR wrote that he produced a Red Book but John Haverfield is strongly associated in 1790s. Repton was at Gayhurst next door c.1793)	Tyringham, Milton Keynes
West Wycombe	1794–99, Repton connected throughout this period	West Wycombe, Wycombe
Wilton Park	Before 1806, advised probably in one phase	Beaconsfield, South Bucks
Wycombe Abbey	Before 1803, advised probably in one phase	High Wycombe, Wycombe

REPTON, THE DESIGN CONTEXT³

Repton was the last of the outstanding figures in the English landscape garden movement, which flourished around 1720–1820, following in the footsteps of, successively, Charles Bridgeman, William Kent and the great Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown. He was Brown’s self-proclaimed successor, setting up as a landscape designer in 1788, five years after the Master’s death. His ambition was to become the most well-known and prolific landscape designer of his day, which he did. He set out to design in the naturalistic English Landscape style epitomised by Brown. This he did, modifying it in the more complex Picturesque manner, and he reintroduced and promoted the flower garden and terraces around the house, instead of park lawns and live-stock up to the windows. Repton was generally less of a place-maker than Brown, more of a make-over

specialist, using a lighter touch and making small adjustments. His most radical scheme in Bucks was the complex Modern Garden at Ashridge, which he designed from scratch late in his career (1813). Professionally he was a consultant, and he was socially a ‘gentleman’ where Brown was a contractor and engineer as well as a designer, ever a ‘player’ among his clients, who were always his social superiors.

Repton found himself following in the shadow of the landscape master Brown all over the country, including Bucks. Brown had worked at Gayhurst, Wycombe Abbey, Stoke Park, Ashridge and Chalfont Park, to all of which Repton was later called in. In Bucks it seems that Repton did not generally interfere with the work of his great predecessor, but focussed on developing other areas of each landscape. The main exception was Stoke Park, where he remodelled and extended Brown’s park

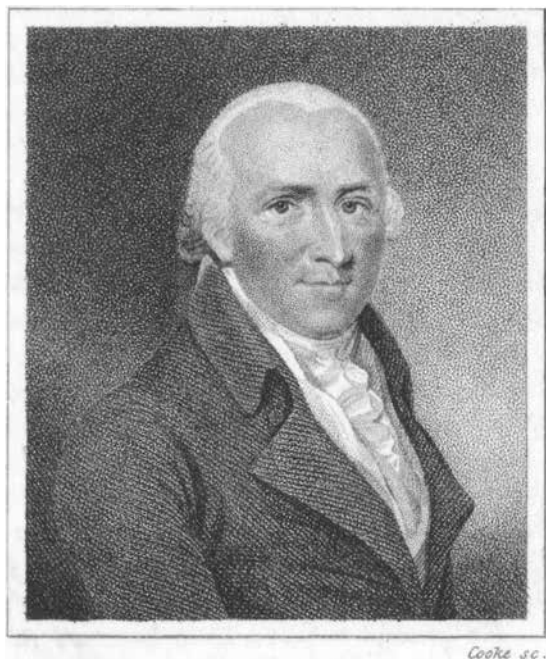


FIGURE 2 Humphry Repton, 1752–1818 (Yale Centre, Mellon collection)

of the 1760s. When a new house was built in the middle of the park, Repton had to turn Brown's park design, including two lakes, to focus on the great white neo-Classical building that enjoyed a view of Windsor Castle. Repton rose to the challenge, building a new bridge as part of a network of sinuous new carriage drives crossing the undulating park to the mansion.

Unlike Brown, Repton was an inveterate self-publicist and published his advice and theories extensively. Clients received his advice in 'Red Books' containing attractive watercolour paintings, using lift-up flaps (confusingly called slides) to show the scenery before and after his proposals.⁴ The Red Books are the most attractive of these sources and almost unique to Repton, presenting his advice in a beguiling and artistic book, each one unique.⁵ They are works of art and highly sought after by collectors. He claimed to have produced more than 400 reports, including Red Books, but the number of the Red Books is unclear. Commonly measuring 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " 11 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (22 x 30cm) in landscape format, each was a roughly A4-sized coffee-table book for the client to display to

visitors, containing handwritten advice interleaved with watercolour views of the landscape proposals. His most complex commissions included Woburn Abbey (Beds), Ashridge (Bucks), Attingham Park (Shropshire), Endsleigh (Devon) and Welbeck Abbey (Notts).

At the end of his career Repton was spearheading the renaissance of the controlled and convenient flower garden around the house, banishing grazed park lawns to a civilised distance. This reinvention of the floral display as seen, smelt and easily reached from the house coincided with the 'Regency' period of the 1790s–1830s. This was most obvious in the garden terrace, which reappeared, separating the landscape park and its inhabitants by a civilising terrace of stone or brick with a parapet or balustrade, or perhaps an ornamental fence. His design for Ashridge was one of his most influential and innovatory schemes. Often the flower garden overlooked a Picturesque park, for the two were ideal companions, as at Endsleigh (1814). The flower garden could also be enclosed and separated from the wider grounds to allow the client to retreat, Ashridge again being a good example of this.

By 1800, a shift in the economy resulted in the social strata burgeoning below the politicians and aristocrats. The emerging middling merchant class required smaller houses and estates. These were the villas which reflected the taste and fashion of the day. Repton, although he acquired major aristocratic clients, benefited considerably from the 'upstart wealth', as he classed it, the men who profited from war contracts and fund-holding during the Napoleonic Wars (roughly 1796–1815) and acquired smaller properties with attractive villas. This resulted in the emphasis on pleasure grounds and gardens in his designs, which gradually became more complex and formal. The profits of Empire and slavery continued percolating through the whole British economy and funded the landscape aspirations of the Regency period. His commissions in Bucks reflect these trends, as will be seen below.

This was the world of the fashionable Regency milieu whose occupants congregated in London, Brighton and Bath,⁶ and of course of Jane Austen, who poked gentle fun at Repton in *Mansfield Park*. The *nouveau riche* Mr Rushworth, comparable with Hibbert at Chalfont Park, Watts at Hanslope or Carrington at Wycombe Abbey, wanted to



FIGURE 3 Repton's trade card, one of which was often fixed inside the cover of his Red Books

improve his country estate. “Your best friend upon such an occasion,” said Miss Bertram calmly, “would be Mr Repton, I imagine.” “That is what I was thinking of. As he has done so well by Smith, I think I had better have him at once. His terms are five guineas a day”.

In Bucks at sites unconnected with Repton little significant occurred in landscape design from the 1790s to 1820. If we accept that Repton was probably not influential at Tyringham in the 1790s (as discussed below), the site becomes the most important landscape of this period in Bucks by another designer. Sir John Soane rebuilt the house on a new site from 1793. Soane's patronage of the notable landscape gardener John Haverfield II (1744–1820), who worked closely with him at Tyringham, gained Haverfield clients over the head of Repton. This may have occurred here, for Repton was advising next door at Gayhurst and had already advised at nearby Hanslope.

Haverfield, like his father and brother, was

previously employed as a royal gardener at Kew, leaving in 1793 for private practice. He accompanied Soane on many visits to Tyringham between 1793 and 1798, as recorded in Soane's journal. Although Haverfield produced designs for glass-houses there in 1794–97 and a plan for the layout of the grounds no earlier than 1799, other detail of Haverfield's involvement is unclear, as he worked independently of Soane and kept separate accounts and archives, now lost. He may have implemented aspects of Repton's advice in the Red Book he mentioned in *Sketches* (1795), or carried out his own scheme.

Elsewhere in Bucks during Repton's career, a few modest villas were erected such as Horsenden Manor. Here the pleasure grounds and small park of a Regency country villa near Princes Risborough are comparable to Stoke Farm and Taplow Lodge, at which Repton did work. Little else of any note has been identified.

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SITES ASSOCIATED WITH REPTON
in chronological order of his involvement**

<i>Site</i>	<i>Parish</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Key evidence</i>
Bulstrode Park	Chalfont St Peter	1790s	Account Book; <i>Observations</i> , 1803; Peacock
Hanslope Park	Hanslope	1791–92	Red Book; Peacock
Stoke Park	Stoke Poges	1792: later in 1790s	Red Book; Peacock
Gayhurst Park	Gayhurst	1792–93	<i>Observations</i> , 1803; Peacock
Lampton Manor	Stowe	c.1793	<i>Memoirs</i>
Tyringham Park	Tyringham	c.1793	<i>Sketches & Hints</i> , 1795
Shardeloes	Amersham	1793–94	Red Book
West Wycombe Park	West Wycombe	1794–99	<i>Observations</i> , 1803; Peacock
Chalfont Park	Chalfont St Peter	c.1795–99	<i>Gardener's Magazine</i> , 1828
Taplow Lodge	Taplow	by 1796	<i>Inquiry</i> , 1806; Peacock
Danesfield/Medmenham	Medmenham	by 1797	Peacock
Wycombe Abbey	High Wycombe	by 1803	<i>Observations</i> , 1803; Peacock
Wilton Park	Beaconsfield	by 1806	<i>Inquiry</i> , 1806; Peacock
Stoke Farm (now Sefton Park)	Stoke Park	by 1808	Peacock
Ashridge	Ivinghoe, Pitstone	1813	Red Book; <i>Fragments</i> , 1816; Peacock

**REPTON SITES NEAR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE BOUNDARIES
in chronological order of his involvement**

<i>Site</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Key evidence</i>
Lamer House	Hertfordshire	1790–92	Account Book; Red Book; Peacock
Wembley Park	Middlesex	by 1793	<i>Sketches</i> ; letter to R Pole Carew ¹
Courteenhall	Northamptonshire	1793	Red Book
Frogmore, Windsor	Berkshire	by 1796	Peacock
Holly Grove (Forest Lodge, Windsor)	Berkshire	1796	<i>Memoirs</i>
Brightwell Place (now Park)	Oxfordshire	by 1797	Peacock
Shirburn Castle	Oxfordshire	by 1797	Peacock; plan, mis-ascribed to H Royston ²
The Grove, Watford	Hertfordshire	by 1798	Peacock
Magdalen College, Oxford	Oxfordshire	1800	Red Book
Cassiobury Park	Hertfordshire	c.1801	<i>Observations</i> ; <i>Memoirs</i>
Ealing Park (Ealing Grove)	Middlesex	by 1802	Peacock; <i>Fragments</i>
Wall Hall	Hertfordshire	1802–03	Red Book; <i>Observations</i> ; Peacock
Woburn Abbey	Bedfordshire	1804–05	Red Book
Battlesden Park	Bedfordshire	by 1808	Peacock; <i>Memoirs</i>
St Leonard's Hill	Berkshire	by 1808	Repton, <i>Designs for the Pavilion at Brighton</i> (1808)

* from Daniels (1999); ¹6 May 1793, Antony House archive, Cornwall; ²Bodleian Library MS Maps, Oxon a7(R) & a9(R)

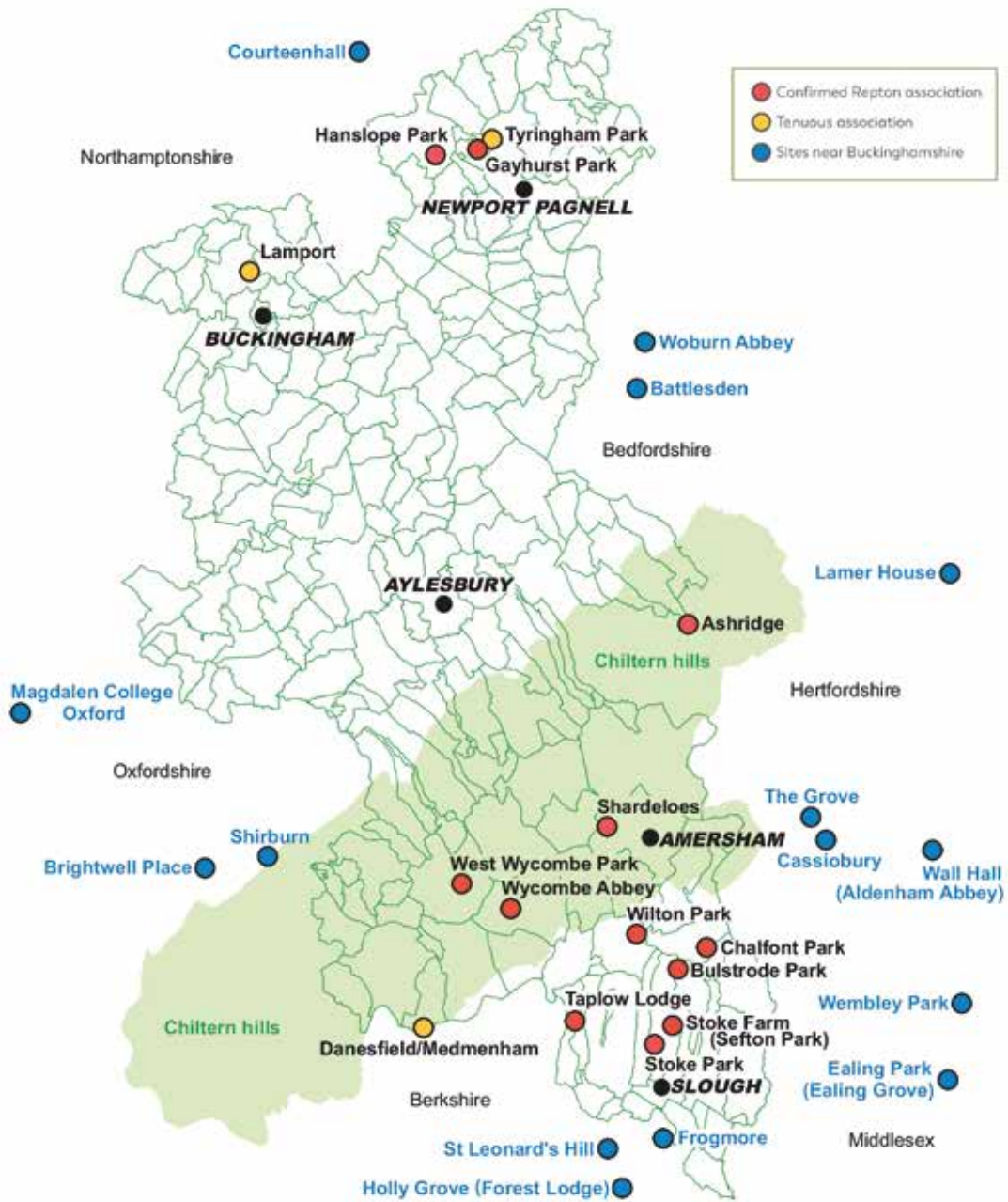


FIGURE 4 Sites in and around historic Bucks associated with Repton. Commissions in the historic county spanned almost all of his career, from 1779–1813 (Bucks County Council)

OVERVIEWS OF SITES IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ASSOCIATED WITH REPTON

The following overviews are based on information presented in the respective site gazetteer entries in the book *Repton in Buckinghamshire*. Sites are presented in chronological order.

Bulstrode Park (1790 onwards) is one of Repton's earliest and most important commissions, for the influential 3rd Duke of Portland who also employed him at Welbeck, Nottinghamshire, paying him a retainer to advise on both sites for 20 years. The connection was made at the beginning of his landscape career and the Duke became one of his main patrons. It seems that the Duke introduced him to other commissions in Bucks, from which a group shortly ensued during the 1790s including Hanslope, Gayhurst, Stoke Park (similarly significant), Shardeloes and West Wycombe. Thus both Bulstrode and Stoke Park were significant and prestigious early commissions. Bulstrode was referred to in two of his books published mid-career, *Observations* (1803) and *Inquiry* (1806), but not his last one, *Fragments* (1816). It seems that his main work was some or all of the extensive circuit drive, but likely that the various themed gardens he mentioned had already been carried out for the 2nd Duchess or her son. It is further of interest as his early day rate of 3 guineas, for a visit to advise on a lodge in spring 1790, is known from his account book. The extent of survival of his work is difficult to assess as it is hard to establish what was executed, but sections of the circuit drive survive and some of the park planting may reflect his advice. The park and circuit drive were sliced through by the M40, affording a panoramic and elevated view of the south half of the park as the motorway curves through it.

Hanslope Park (Red Book 1791–92) is one of Repton's earliest commissions and was largely executed. It has an early, if simple, example of the Red Book technique which very usefully demonstrates his approach to landscape design modifications site-wide. Part of the work was to remodel formal elements, particularly the working area next to the house. The solution was unusual as it retained the key working features including the farmyard and service yard, and a new kitchen garden next to the house, enclosing them from

the park in a belt of ornamental pleasure ground planting. It created a hybrid pleasure ground/service area, in which a wooded circuit walk with views over the park disguised the working elements within. The park he retained as working farmland. While he advised softening the line of part of the avenue he did not advise its complete removal (the removal of avenue trees remained unexecuted). It is the earliest of a cluster of three nearby sites in north Bucks with which he has been associated as advising in the early 1790s, including nearby Gayhurst, Tyringham (doubtful), and Courteenhall (1791–93), just over the border in Northamptonshire. This just predated his work in south Bucks including Stoke Park, Shardeloes and West Wycombe. It is important for Bucks, as although it was a relatively minor commission, much of his design was implemented and a number of key elements survive, including the Long Plantation in the park, and the outline of his pleasure ground and drives among much change and development around the house since the 1940s.

Gayhurst (1792–93) is an early work, typical of the sort of commission that Repton undertook during his career in offering localised modifications to an existing country estate. It is similar to Shardeloes and Chalfont Park in chiefly addressing a remote area of the park to create a destination, in this case a route to a riverside pleasure ground. He mentioned Gayhurst in two of his publications, including the influential *Observations* (1803). It had features that he later used elsewhere, including the garden tunnel or *souterein* such as at Ashridge, very late in his career in 1813 in a more elaborate, rustic form with a grotto and pool. Both the tunnels were curved so that the ends were not intervisible. He suggested a further *souterein* as a carriage drive tunnel under the road at Shardeloes in 1794 that remained unexecuted, and possibly one at Bulstrode. Similar to the views he 'borrowed' of Tyringham across the river from Gayhurst Park, he also 'borrowed' views of an adjacent park owned by another estate between Panshanger and Tewin Park, Hertfordshire. Gayhurst is important in Bucks as a surviving example of his approach to an informal pleasure ground walk, Digby's Walk leading to the Gothic *souterein*. Much of the fabric and woody planting survives.

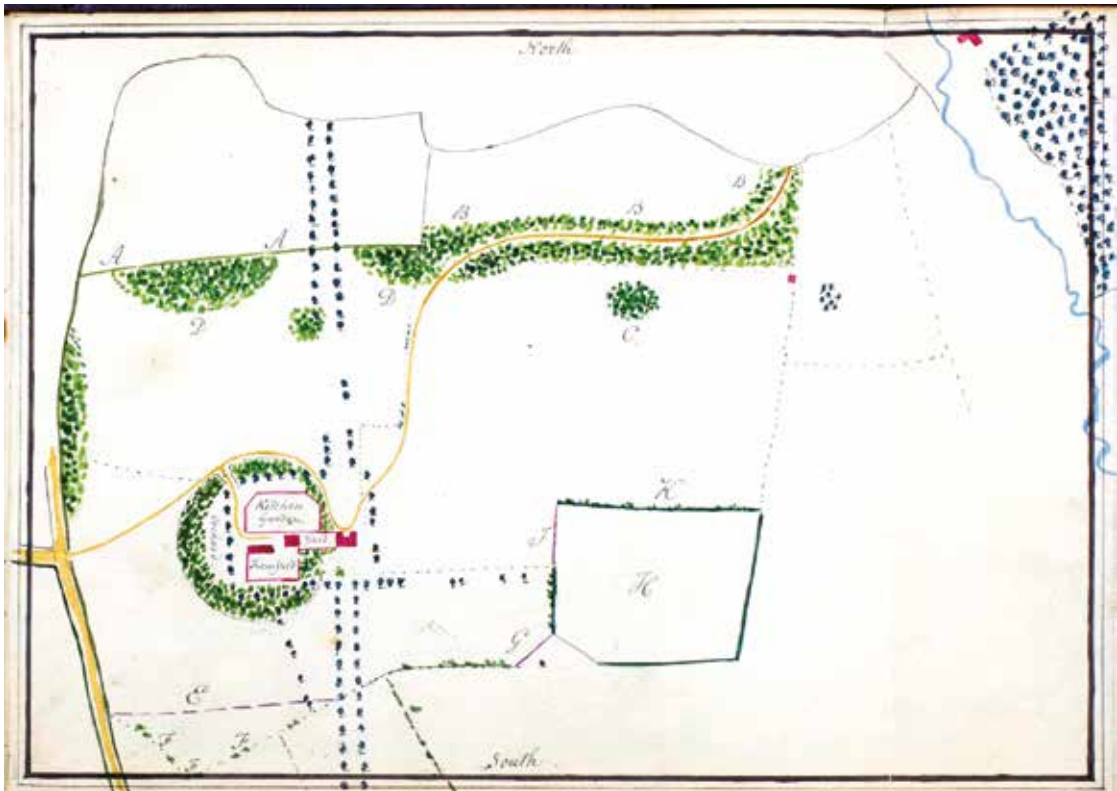


FIGURE 5 Repton's plan in his Red Book of 1791–92 for the ornamental farm and pleasure ground at Hanslope, north Bucks, early in his career (Boston Athenaeum)

Stoke Park (Red Book [missing] 1792–98) is one of Repton's earliest and most important commissions, roughly coeval with his advice at Bulstrode for the Duke of Portland, who may have recommended him to the owner, Penn. Both sites were extensive and prestigious projects, but his advice at Stoke Park is recorded in a Red Book which helps us to understand the detail of what was executed. Much of his advice was followed and survives: it is in the process of restoration. Despite his involvement until at least 1798 (when he selected the spot for Gray's Monument) he only mentioned the commission in one early publication and not in his two most influential ones, *Observations* (1803) and *Fragments* (1816). This commission is of great significance for Bucks and beyond, as, together with Ashridge, it is the best survival in the county of an extensive scheme by him that was largely executed.

Repton's advice at **Shardloes** (Red Book 1793–94) is typical of the many commissions for

an area of an existing landscape in a landed estate. Despite producing one of his more extensive Bucks Red Books (1794), few suggestions were executed (mainly only adjusting tree positions), excluding the most expensive ones relating to structures and layout. The advice is similar to Gayhurst and Chalfont Park in addressing a remote area of the park to make it a destination, in this case a hillside pleasure ground with a temple as an eyecatcher overlooking the distant house. Although little of his work is apparent on the ground, the park scenes in the Red Book (laid out by the landscaper Nathaniel Richmond in the 1760s) are still much as he painted them in the 1790s.

Repton's connection with **Tyringham** (possibly 1793–94) is unclear. He stated in *Sketches* (1795) that he produced a Red Book, probably c.1793–94. At this time Sir John Soane was rebuilding the house. His landscape associate John Haverfield, who is documented at Tyringham on many



FIGURE 6 Stoke Park was one of Repton's most extensive and fully completed commissions in Bucks, carried out in the 1790s for John Penn, incorporating work by Capability Brown

occasions from 1793, is far more likely to have influenced the layout, although he may have incorporated ideas from the Red Book. Thus Repton's input it is at most unclear and possibly absent except for his 'borrowing' the landscape for the adjacent Gayhurst scheme with views of the park from his riverside extension to Digby's Walk. The work at Tyringham is, however, in Bucks the most important of parks of this period that were not worked on by Repton, and much of Haverfield's work of the 1790s survives.

Lampport Manor House is, it seems, unconnected with Repton other than socially. In his *Memoir* he acknowledges that in 1793 he was intimate with Edward Dayrel, the owner of a 'small estate adjoining to Stowe', but does not mention any design advice or visit. The well-documented history of Stowe indicates no connection with Repton.

West Wycombe (Red Book [missing] 1794–99) was a typical lesser work, adjusting elements of the existing extensive and complex landscape, although he also proposed a major change for a new drive that remained unexecuted. The minor changes referred to in his publications were executed, but the statues that were removed have been reinstated. A Red Book was produced but is lost. It is a similar type of commission to Chalfont Park, of particular interest as the fees are known at least in part, with payments over five years totalling £67. A few elements of his advice survive, including the absence of the tower of St Crispins, and the view he advised reinstating by clearing trees, looking across the lake to the mansion.

Chalfont Park (c.1794–99) is a typical lesser commission, similar to others in Bucks such as West Wycombe, in which he offered localised advice on planting and approaches within an established landscape park. It is similar to Shardeloes

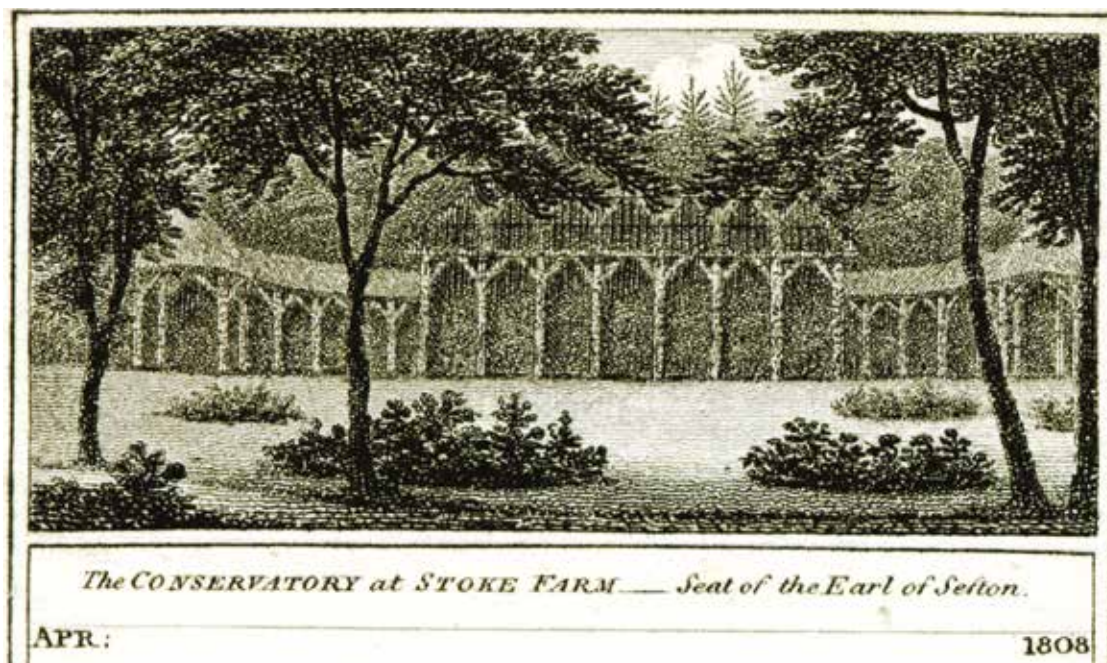


FIGURE 7 Stoke Farm, Stoke Poges, engraving from an illustration by Repton for Peacock's *Polite Repository* in 1808 (The Gardens Trust, Nigel Temple Collection)

and Gayhurst in addressing a remote area of the park to make it a destination, in this case Chalfont Lodge in its own grounds. It is unusual if, as is suggested in the gazetteer, he did indeed advise on the use of a prestigious botanical collection ornamentally. The difficulty in assessing what survives of his work arises from the lack of detail of the commission. The woodland in the north of the park survives, and a drive to Chalfont Lodge across the park may be his.

Stoke Farm (Sefton Park) (c.1795–1808) was of minor significance. Here he advised on small additions to a modest villa landscape comparable in size with a nearby villa, Taplow Lodge (by 1796). The commission was for one of the Prince Regent's aristocratic cronies, and close to the Court at Windsor. Together Stoke Farm and Taplow Lodge were much smaller than some of the other nearby gardens he worked on, particularly Bulstrode and Stoke Park which were country house estates. It is unclear whether Stoke Farm was influential on other gardens, but probably not. The conservatory shows similarities with buildings Repton designed later on.

The conservatory may have been the work of John Adey Repton and is similar to the covered corridor at Woburn and the one at Mr Manning's Villa, Totteridge, Herts. Nothing of the garden remains as the environs of the house (which survives) were redeveloped with offices c.1990, but the small parkland survives to the south, and may reflect his advice.

Taplow Lodge (before 1796) was of minor significance, in which he advised on small additions to a modest villa landscape comparable in size with a nearby villa, Stoke Farm (late 1790s-early 1800s). Together these two were much smaller than some of the other nearby gardens he was involved with, especially the country house estates of Bulstrode and Stoke Park. It is unclear whether it was influential elsewhere, but it is unlikely. Very little of the core survives. The house, garden and conservatory were demolished in 1995. The perimeter belt remains and the parkland is still open.

Medmenham and Danesfield are two parts of a typical site with a tenuous link to Repton only via a Peacock illustration (1797), where the drawing



FIGURE 8 Repton's Flower Garden at Ashridge, Red Book, 1813 (Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles)

may be attributed to him. This is the only site in Bucks without other published references to work by Repton. It is unlikely that there is any evidence of advice implemented by him.

At **Wycombe Abbey** (by 1803), it seems Repton's advice was a minor work for the new owner, Carrington. It is very poorly recorded in both published and other sources, and does not appear in the relevant estate archive, although in 1803 Repton mentioned it and a Peacock view was published. It probably amounted to minor localised advice within the existing design similar to West Wycombe; it is unclear what his advice was, to what extent it was executed and if anything survives relating to it.

Wilton Park (before 1806) was another relatively minor commission it seems, typical in adding or

remodelling localised features, similar to West Wycombe and Chalfont Park. Little is known of his advice or work executed. However, he did mention it in one of his books (*Inquiry*, 1806). A few elements apparently survive, including the drive in the midst of much redevelopment and possibly some of the tree planting.

Ashridge garden (Red Book 1813), half in Bucks when designed, is one of Repton's most significant commissions for its enduring influence on garden design, alongside other prestigious sites including Woburn Abbey and Endsleigh, Devon (advice 1809; Red Book 1814). This style, a garden of gardens, was a major example of a significant change in garden design, part of a transition in style that heralded the return to a series of smaller gardens



FIGURE 9 At Ashridge, late in his career, Repton proposed a novel garden of gardens that heralded the massive popularity of flower gardens in the Victorian period. Red Book plan of the Modern Garden, 1813 (Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles)

close to the house, in the so-called Gardenesque style that was popularised by J.C. Loudon in the 1820s–40s. It was influential in developing garden design nationally, as it was extensively covered in his popular book *Fragments* (1816) and reported by commentators such as Loudon. In modified form it was particularly suited to the smaller gardens that proliferated in Victorian Britain. It is one of his most fully executed commissions, begun c.1816 but not fully implemented until after his death (1818), in the early 1820s. It is a rare example where the execution of Repton's ideas can be traced in detail, being carried out by one of the most significant architects of the day, Jeffrey Wyatt, from c.1816, for which his detailed drawings survive.⁸ It demonstrates Repton's ideas on garden design at their most fully developed at the end of his career, as one of his very last commissions. It reveals a disjointed approach to the arrangement of a number of gardens that was superseded by later garden designers. Rather than seamlessly linking his varied gardens, he scattered them in the extensive lawns below the vast house.

The Rosarium was an early garden dedicated to cultivating one type of plant, in this cases roses. It is also a very early example of a type of garden that became an iconic part of later 19th and early 20th-century garden design. The garden *souterrain* was an unusual and expensive garden feature, but was a type of feature he had proposed elsewhere. At least two other examples were proposed in Bucks, in the early 1790s at Gayhurst (on Digby's Walk, q.v.) and Shardeloes (a carriage route feature, unexecuted, q.v.), and possibly at Bulstrode around the same time. The 'antiquarianism' of his design for the Monks' Garden reflects a desire for stylistic harmony between the garden and the mansion which resembled a vast monastery. This theme was reflected in other late Repton commissions such as Beaudesert, Staffordshire (1813), and which was to dominate discussion of garden design in the ensuing century. The garden survives complete and in good condition and is a remarkable example of Repton's work, one of the two most extensive and important commissions that were executed in Bucks, along with Stoke Park.

Bucks Gardens Trust, *Humphry Repton in Buckinghamshire and Beyond* (2018) is available by post price £20 plus £3.50 postage from Rosemary Jury, 11 Fledglings Way, Winslow MK18 3QU.

Cheques payable to Bucks Gardens Trust.

FOOTNOTES

1. The scope of BGT's territory is generally the area before the major administrative boundary changes of 1974. However, more accurately we should take the boundaries before a series of minor changes of 1894–96 tinkered with the county boundary. This is of particular relevance to Ashridge garden and park, both of which straddled the Bucks/Herts border until then. The two Bucks parishes in which it fell, Pitstone and Ivinghoe, were subject to boundary changes and parts were incorporated into Hertfordshire. This change took the whole of Ashridge gardens into the county of Hertfordshire.
2. From Daniels (1999).
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIZ2sPFyM-s> gives an overview of Repton's career including his major designs for the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, Bloomsbury and Russell Square, Woburn Abbey, Sheringham and Endsleigh.
4. The 'before and after' images pioneered by Repton have become standard design practice in the past 200 years. In the period immediately following Repton's death, the practice of presenting proposals illustrated with 'before and after' slides was adopted by Lewis Kennedy (1789–1877), who produced 'Green' Books (proposals bound in green morocco). Kennedy's Green Books for Pentillie, Cornwall (where he followed Repton in 1813) and Trebartha, Cornwall, survive in private collections.
5. Sheringham Red Book is shown at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRaepMoR8o0>
6. Repton himself rented a house at Bath each winter from 1795, ostensibly to rest; it would also, however, have allowed him to develop his circle of contacts.
7. Sir John Soane's Museum Collections Online (2017) Tyringham House: Design for the grounds by John Haverfield, 1799, ref. SM (163) 64/6/2, <http://collections.soane.org/OBJECT5070>
8. Jeffrey Wyatt was also working for the Duke of Bedford at Woburn and Endsleigh at the same time as Repton was advising on the landscapes.