

The walk around Fenstanton will illustrate the information of the exhibition. Fenstanton has changed immeasurably since Brown's ownership of the Manor, but there are still some buildings and views of the village remaining as he and his family would have seen them.

Go out of the churchyard by the main gate, walk ahead along Church Street. Turn right at the sharp bend and, at the cross roads, go straight ahead into Bell Lane. Follow Bell Lane to the High Street, then turn right down the hill.

3. The Clock Tower

Pause here to admire this unusual late 17C building that had a dual role as a village 'lock-up' and a Clock Tower. Until the mid 20C Fenstanton High Street was part of the Cambridge to Huntingdon road, and the Clock Tower was a notable feature along the route.

The King William IV Pub is just beyond the Clock Tower, and serves good food and refreshments.

4. Grove House

Admiral John (Jack) Brown, Brown's second son, is said to have lived here around 1800, after his retirement from the Navy, before moving to Stirlloe near Buckden.

At this point, carry straight on for the longer route or, for the shorter route, return to the King William IV pub and turn into Chequer Street where the next stop is marked on the map as 7. For the longer route, continue past Grove House, then turn right into the Low Road. This is a busy road, so keep to the footpath

5. Fenstanton Manor, previously 'The Manor Farm'

The first house on the left is a splendid early 18C building of red brick with a slate roof. It remains rather a mystery why such a fashionable and sizeable house was built on what was essentially a farm homestead. (Fenstanton confusingly has three buildings with the title of Manor – this one, the old vicarage renamed as 'Fen Manor', and the original 'Manor House'). The houses, cottages and their barns that stretch out along the Low Road would have been seen from Brown's Manor House to the east. In the 18C the road ran much closer to these houses and, as a group, these buildings were a significant extension to the medieval outline of the village.

6. Hall Green

At the end of the cricket field turn right at the footpath sign into Michael Behaggy Way. In the field, pause and look towards the village. Brown had his surveyor and assistant, John Snyers, draw up a map of the Fenstanton Manor estate in 1777, and it is now thought that the resultant map contained possibilities for improvements to this area, then called Hall Green, with a small lake and new channels of the brook.

Follow the path across the cricket field, cross the wooden bridge over Hall Green brook, continue into Hall Green Lane and at the end turn left into Chequer Street.

7. The Manor House

The path brings you to the Chapel Green; here on your left you will see the original Manor House easily identified by its pair of topiary hollies. This is a 17C building with the gable ends in the Dutch style – a frequent feature in northern East Anglia in the 17C and 18C. When Brown bought the Manor of Fenstanton in 1767 for £13,000 from the Earl of Northampton, the value was in the 2668 acres and the farm buildings - not this house which was relatively modest. His insurance policy of 1773 valued the Manor House at £145 but the adjacent maitings at £155 and the barley barn at £170. It is considered unlikely that Brown ever lived in Fenstanton, but he may have stayed here briefly when en route to his commissions around the country. The Manor of Fenstanton remained in the Brown family until 1873. Much of the garden of the Manor House was sold for housing in the 1980s and the views across Hall Green were subsequently lost.

8. A possible car journey to Hilton

Brown's purchase of the Manor of Fenstanton included the joint Manor of Hilton - the adjacent village to Fenstanton - about 2 miles south. It is advised to travel by car as there are no footpaths along a busy road; cross the A14 and then take the A1096.

The Manor Farm house in Hilton is a near contemporary of the Fenstanton Manor Farm, and likewise it is a handsome building. It overlooks the Green, an area of 27 acres of Common Land. Snyers produced a map of the Hilton estate in 1778, and although it shows no evidence of Brown's handiwork, the many fine elms and beeches that surrounded the Green until they succumbed to disease and gales, were often considered 'to be worthy' of Brown. The Parish Council has planted a tree in memory of Brown, with a sign that reads: This tree is planted in memory of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, 1716-83, Lord of this Manor, who planted a million others.



This leaflet was published in 2015 by Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust to celebrate the tercentenary of Lancelot Brown. Other leaflets in the series describe the Wimpole Estate, Maddingley Hall and The Backs, Cambridge. The production of the leaflet was generously supported by a Goodlife Award from the Huntingdonshire Local History Society



A Walk around Fenstanton:

The Manor of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown

Welcome to Fenstanton, formerly in the old County of Huntingdonshire but now, since 1974, in Cambridgeshire. Lancelot 'Capability' Brown bought the Manor of Fenstanton and Hilton in 1767. At this time he was working for (amongst many others) the Earl of Hardwicke at Wimpole Hall in Cambridgeshire. Brown was High Sheriff of Huntingdonshire in 1770.

Distance: long route 2 miles. **Time:** 50 minutes: shorter route, 30 minutes. **Terrain:** Mostly pavements, but the footpath across the cricket field can be muddy.

1. Car parking

In the Parish car park in front of the Church. Post code: PE28 9JS. Grid ref: TL32009 68699.

2. St Peter & St Paul's Parish Church

The first and most important stop on the walk is the Parish Church. In the chancel is the Brown family memorial with an elegant and touching eulogy to Lancelot 'Capability' Brown: ...come from the sylvan scenes his Genius grac'd and offer here your tributary sighs...

Take a look at the exhibition about Brown and his Fenstanton Manor, then go outside the church, turning right into the churchyard to find Brown's gravestone. The position of the headstone is an approximation because the exact site of his burial in 1783 and that of his wife Bridget in 1786 is unknown.



