

LETTERS

The genius of landscape architect Capability Brown

Sir, Regarding Robin Lane Fox's column "A Capability for genius" (House & Home, October 29): I was startled and appalled to read that Capability Brown "was son of a land agent¹⁾ and a chambermaid in Kirkharle... His mother had six children of which Capability was the fifth but I continue to wonder if the local squire²⁾ may have fathered him, such was Brown's later talent for art, business and organisation."

Professor Lane Fox manages to insult everyone: Brown, his mother, his father and the local squire, who was not perhaps in the habit of getting chambermaids with child.

Surely the idea that talent is limited to the wealthy has been sufficiently discredited by now that it should not appear in the august *Financial Times*.

Margaret McGarrahan

Berkeley, CA, US

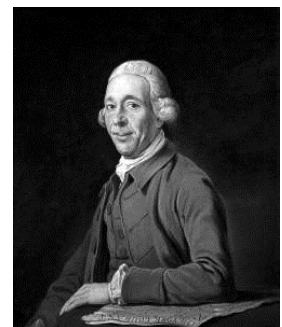
Sir, When he suggests the local squire as a more appropriate father for Capability Brown (House & Home, October 29), Robin Lane Fox may be confusing the science behind human achievement with dog or horse breeding.

Many 18th century-born artists, scientists and entrepreneurs came from humble origins, for instance Samuel Johnson, William Blake, Michael Faraday, Richard Arkwright and Thomas Chippendale.

Alternatively this 18th century gardening genius may have inherited his talents from his mother.

Dr Louise Condon

Associate Professor,
College of Human and Health Sciences,
Swansea University, UK



Financial Times, 2016

noot 1 land agent = opzichter

noot 2 squire = landjonker / grootgrondbezitter