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21 March 2026

Staging Vanbrugh: Theatre, Performance and Architecture



We're delighted to bring you the latest edition of the VANBRUGH300 newsletter, welcoming both returning readers and those joining our celebrations for the first time.

This edition continues our exploration of Vanbrugh and the theatre, featuring an [article by Dr Annette Rubery on John Vanbrugh's farce *The Country House*](#).

We also highlight the work of the community group Northern Butterflies from Cramlington, whose Vanbrugh project will culminate in an [original performance at Seaton Delaval Hall](#) on Saturday 28 March as part of the Vanbrugh300 weekend. Families visiting the Vanbrugh300 weekends can also enjoy a lively 20-minute [interactive storytelling performance](#), bringing Vanbrugh's world to life for younger audiences.

Meanwhile, [Grimsthorpe Castle will host An Evening of Vanbrugh](#) in the magnificent Vanbrugh Hall on Saturday 20 June, where the Cambridge University Amateur Dramatic Club will perform highlights from Vanbrugh's plays alongside newly commissioned responses created especially for the occasion.

Finally, we look ahead to a [packed programme of Vanbrugh300 events](#). To learn more about VANBRUGH300, [visit our website](#) and explore the [What's On page](#) to see upcoming events and activities.

[Visit the VANBRUGH300 Website](#)

John Vanbrugh's farce *The Country House*

By Annette Rubery



When people think of John Vanbrugh the playwright, they tend to recall his original works: *The Relapse* and *The Provok'd Wife*. However, the bulk of his stage career was actually spent translating and adapting French comedies for the London stage.

The Country House was an early translation of Vanbrugh's, from a farce by the French dramatist Florent Carton (aka Dancourt). The plot is simple. Mr Barnard has bought a country house, but finds himself swamped by visitors, all of whom expect to be given lodgings and dinner... [\[READ MORE\]](#)

Northern Butterflies Performance at Seaton Delaval Hall Saturday 28 March

A brand-new community performance is coming to Seaton Delaval Hall as part of their Vanbrugh300 weekend on Saturday 28 March. Working with local community artist Ruth Mary Johnson and Andrew Weatherhead, the Cramlington-based charity Northern Butterflies are exploring the life and work of Sir John Vanbrugh through drama, imagination and play, culminating in their own original performance. Northern Butterflies is a small creative charity in Southeast Northumberland supporting people with learning disabilities and those experiencing mental ill-health, using artistic practice to boost wellbeing and confidence. Their vibrant 10-minute show, *Sir Johnny V* and the Biscuit Club, is one we'd love you to come and support!

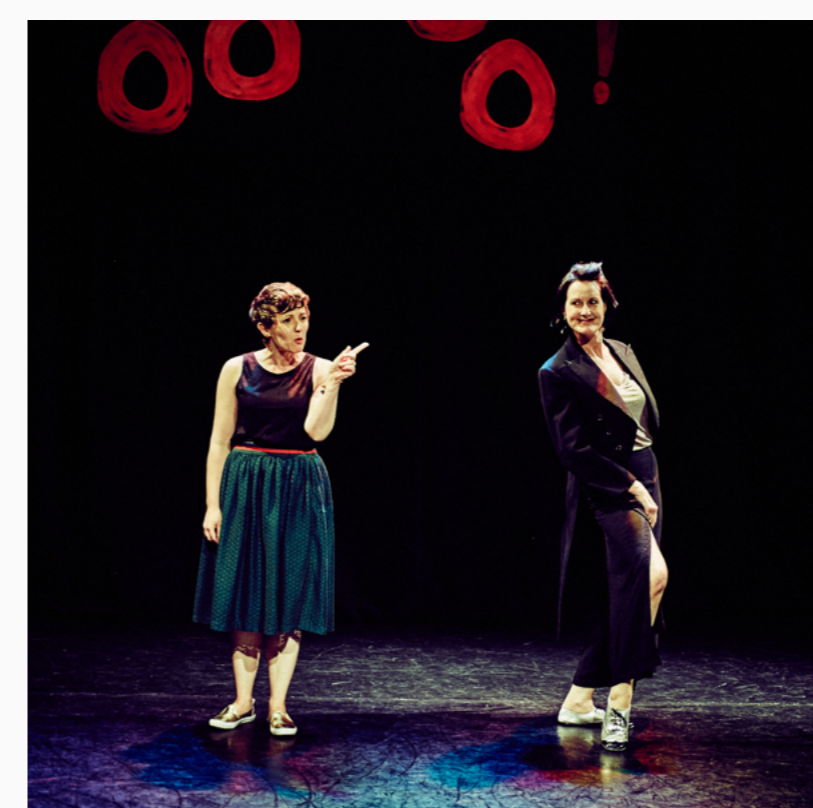


[Find Out More about Seaton Delaval's VANBRUGH300 Weekend](#)

If you're part of a community group interested in getting involved and coming along to our Vanbrugh300 weekends at Castle Howard, Blenheim Palace, Stowe House, Grimsthorpe Castle or Kimbolton Castle, please contact vanbrugh300@georgiangroup.org.uk.

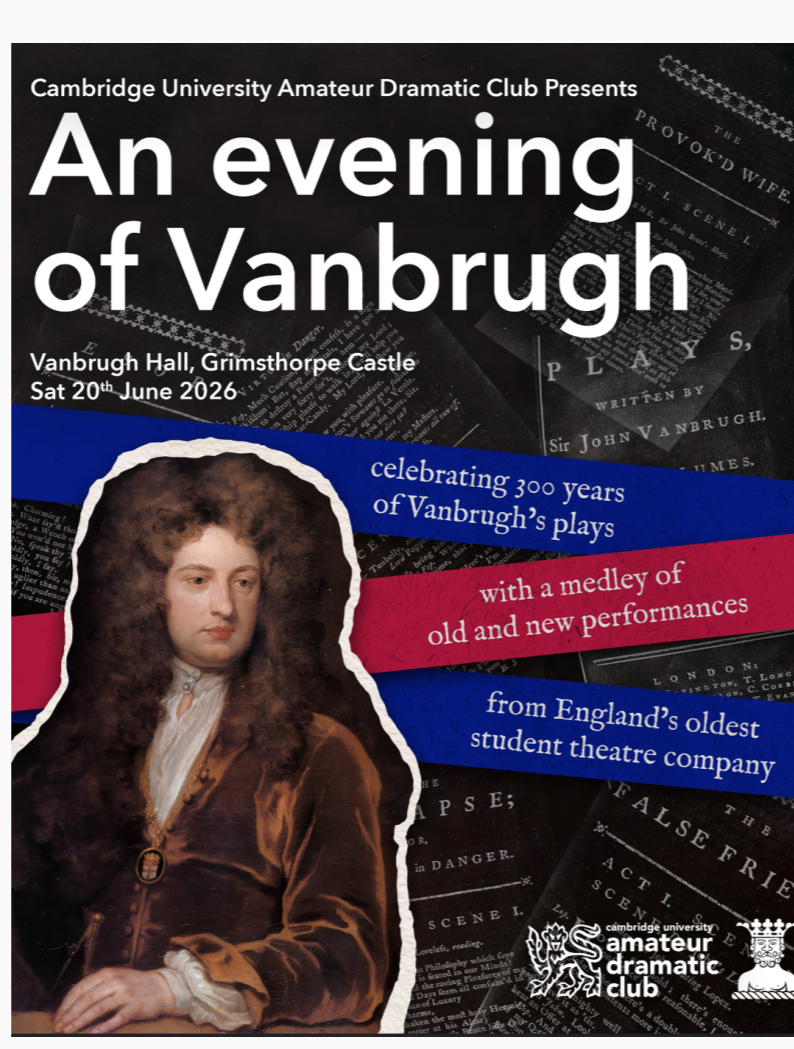
Storytelling Performances at VANBRUGH300 Weekends

This fast-paced, interactive 20-minute family storytelling performance by Lucy Lill and Alys Torrance hurtles through the many hats of one of Britain's most surprising figures. Audience members are invited to step into Vanbrugh's shoes as the chapters of his extraordinary story are revealed. From frantic early travels and time spent in prison, to theatrical triumphs, political intrigue, historic fall-outs, and the creation of some of Britain's most iconic buildings, this is history told at speed and with mischief firmly intact. History has never been quite so busy - or so much fun. Perfect for families and curious minds of all ages!



[Visit our What's On page](#)

An Evening of Vanbrugh at Grimsthorpe Castle Saturday 20 June

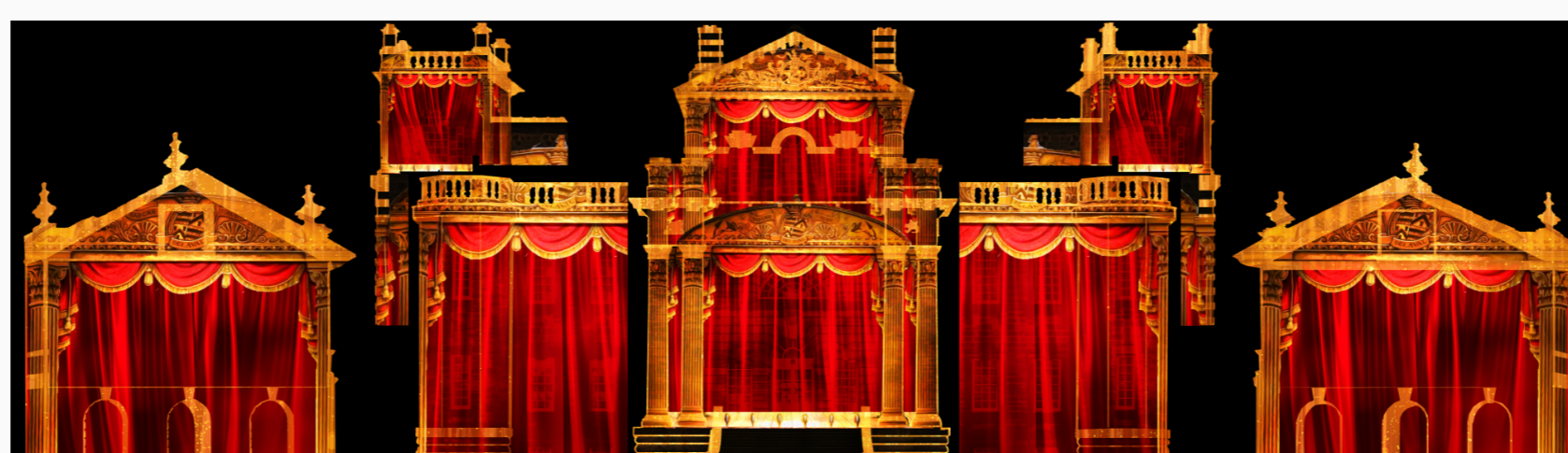


England's oldest student theatre company, the Cambridge University Amateur Dramatic Club, will be celebrating the 300 year anniversary of playwright and architect John Vanbrugh with a medley of his greatest scenes on Saturday 20 June. This evening of laughter and love will be performed at Grimsthorpe Castle, designed by Vanbrugh himself as his last masterpiece. Student actors, directors and designers from Cambridge will travel to the castle to perform highlights from across Vanbrugh's work, alongside newly-written responses commissioned especially for this performance. With Vanbrugh's witty Restoration comedies, the gorgeous setting of his Vanbrugh Hall, and the talent of CUADC artists, this is one evening that you cannot miss!

[Book your Tickets](#)

Dates for your Diary

Projection Artwork at Seaton Delaval Hall Wednesday 25 - Saturday 28 March



This is a celebration of Seaton Delaval Hall, its communities and its architect, Sir John Vanbrugh, capturing the unique blend of grandeur and irreverence. Vanbrugh's iconic building will be reimagined as a vast magical toy theatre, staged and prepared by the flamboyant Delavals, with all their flair for the theatrics contained within. See 300 people (and pets!) celebrating their connections to Seaton Delaval Hall through portraits by photographer Richard Eyers which are brought to life through evening projection and sound by Illuminos. This event is completely free of charge. You do not need to be a National Trust member or pay admission. No booking required.

[Find Out More](#)

Seaton Delaval VANBRUGH300 Weekend Saturday 28 - Sunday 29 March

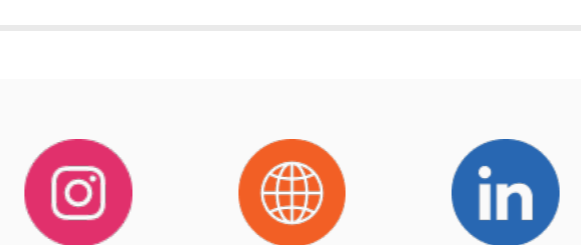
The first VANBRUGH300 weekend of the year is here: get ready for a celebration packed with creativity, discovery, and fun for all ages. Enjoy a lively storytelling performance that brings history and imagination together, then roll up your sleeves in a hands-on workshop where you can craft your very own Vanbrugh-inspired wearable architecture. There will also be a special performance by local community group Northern Butterflies. Whether you're exploring stories, making something unique to take home, or simply soaking up the atmosphere, there's something for everyone!



[Find Out More](#)

- **26 March** - A [commemoration service](#) held at St Stephen Walbrook
- **26 March** - A [celebration of the life and work of Vanbrugh](#) at Claremont
- **27 March** - [Symposium - Vanbrugh: From Stage to Stone](#) (this event is sold out but recordings will be made available)
- **31 March** - [Vanbrugh in India](#): an Online Talk by Rory Fraser
- **11 April** - [Vanbrugh300 Guided Tour](#): Spotlight on Castle Howard's Visionary Architect

[Explore the full programme at Vanbrugh300.co.uk](#)



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