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27 June 2026

Vanbrugh300 in Full Swing: Films, Performances, Lectures and More



Welcome to the latest edition of the Vanbrugh300 newsletter from The Georgian Group. This month, we're delighted to share our new [Vanbrugh300 film](#), exploring the life, architecture, and legacy of Sir John Vanbrugh!

We feature [Vanbrugh as Herald](#) by James Peill, an article examining the influence of heraldry on Vanbrugh's architecture and offering fresh insight into an often-overlooked aspect of his work. To discover more about Vanbrugh's career as a herald, visitors can now explore three specially created exhibition panels in the historic [Earl Marshall's Court](#).

We look back on [Grimsthorpe's recent Vanbrugh300 celebrations](#), which brought together talks, family activities, displays and performances to explore the life and legacy of Sir John Vanbrugh. Alongside this, we also reflect on this month's successful programme of [free Vanbrugh300 lectures](#) at Grimsthorpe Castle, Stowe House and Castle Howard, which welcomed audiences keen to learn more about Vanbrugh's remarkable life and achievements.

Looking ahead, [Kimbolton Castle will be hosting a series of free events this July](#), including their own Vanbrugh300 lecture by Dr Simon Thurley CBE, Chair of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, alongside Vanbrugh-focused tours led by Castle Curator Andrew Bamford. Visitors will also have the opportunity to view the new display, [Vanbrugh: Rockstar of the English Baroque](#) at these events.

Meanwhile, [Stowe House will unveil its own display of Vanbrugh: Rockstar of the English Baroque](#) on Monday 29 June, continuing the celebrations of Vanbrugh's enduring legacy as we build up to their Vanbrugh300 weekend at the beginning of August.

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](#)

Vanbrugh300 Short Film

Created by TNK Studios, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and presented by The Georgian Group, this new short film explores the life, achievements, and enduring legacy of Sir John Vanbrugh. It also highlights the Vanbrugh300 Festival, showcasing the many events, activities, and partner houses taking part in this nationwide celebration.

[Watch the Film](#)



Vanbrugh as Herald

By James Peill

Vanbrugh was appointed Clarenceux King of Arms, a senior herald at the College of Arms, on 3rd April 1704. The College of Arms dates back to 1484 when King Richard III granted the heralds a charter of incorporation. The Heralds come under the authority of the Earl Marshal, a hereditary office held by the Dukes of Norfolk. When the Earl Marshal's Catholic faith or age prevented him from carrying out his duties, a deputy was appointed, usually a member of the extended Howard family...[\[READ MORE\]](#)



Earl Marshall's Court

Vanbrugh Exhibition Panels

To discover more about Vanbrugh's career as a herald, visitors can now explore three specially created exhibition panels in the historic Earl Marshall's Court. Open Monday to Friday, 10.00am–4.00pm, the display provides a unique opportunity to learn more about this lesser-known aspect of his life and work. Displayed alongside Jonathan Richardson's portrait of Vanbrugh, in a room that remains largely unchanged since his lifetime, the panels also introduces the history and work of the College of Arms and examines the influence of heraldry on Vanbrugh's architectural designs, revealing how his official duties and creative vision were closely connected.

[Find Out More](#)



Vanbrugh300 at Grimsthorpe Castle

The Vanbrugh weekend at Grimsthorpe Castle began with a fascinating talk by Charles Saumarez Smith and Jeremy Musson, who explored Sir John Vanbrugh's life and career through his correspondence. Their discussion shed light on Vanbrugh's work as an architect, playwright, and politician, highlighting both his surviving masterpieces and a number of significant buildings that have been lost over time.



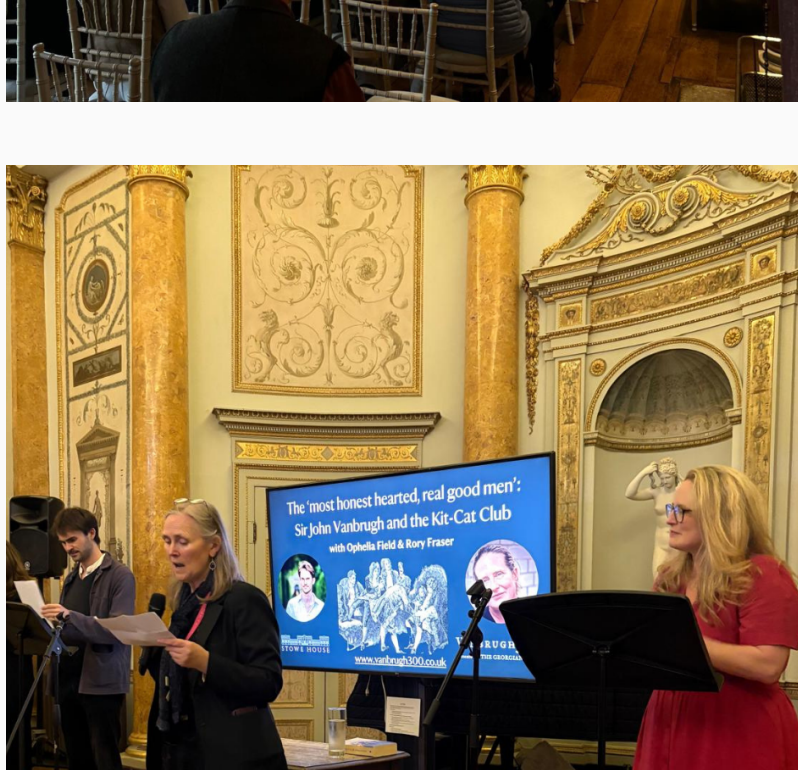
Throughout the weekend, visitors had the opportunity to enjoy a range of family-friendly activities, including Vanbrugh hat-making, creative workshops, and storytelling performances, all helping to bring Vanbrugh's world to life for audiences of all ages.

A particular highlight of the programme was An Evening with Vanbrugh, a production by the University of Cambridge Amateur Dramatic Club, accompanied by music from the Haycock Consort. Featuring scenes from several of Vanbrugh's plays, the performance took place in the magnificent hall he designed, providing a fitting setting in which to celebrate his theatrical achievements. Combining drama, music, and architecture, the event offered a memorable conclusion to the festival and a powerful reminder of the breadth of Vanbrugh's creative legacy.



Vanbrugh300 Free Lecture Series

This month saw three fantastic talks in our free Vanbrugh300 Lecture Series. At Castle Howard, the Hon. Nick Howard, award-winning artist and designer Es Devlin, and architect Francis Terry discussed their *Responses to Vanbrugh*, exploring the continuing impact of Vanbrugh's vision through photography, restoration, and Es Devlin's new installation, *Reflections on Vanbrugh*, in the Temple of the Four Winds. At The Stowe House, author Ophelia Field and Vanbrugh biographer Rory Fraser presented *The 'Most Honest Hearted, Real Good Men': Sir John Vanbrugh and the Kit-Cat Club*, examining the club's often overlooked importance to Vanbrugh's remarkable career and its wider influence on British culture. Meanwhile, at Grimsthorpe Castle, Dr Army Boyington's lecture, *The Theatre of the Feast: Power and Excess in the Georgian Dining Room*, explored how the Georgian elite used architecture, art, and lavish hospitality to reinforce their social status and political influence.



[Find Out More](#)

Vanbrugh300 at Kimbolton Castle

Tickets to these events are ~~free~~ but booking is required to manage capacity.

Courtier, Playwright and Castle: The Unlikely Making of Kimbolton Castle
Thursday 2 July 6pm
As part of the Vanbrugh300 free lecture series, Dr Simon Thurley CBE will be speaking at Kimbolton Castle about his lifelong fascination with Vanbrugh and the architect's transformative work on the Castle.

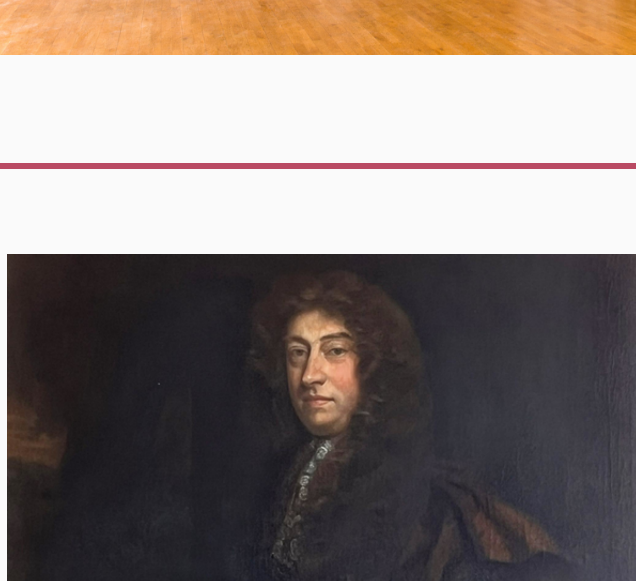
This event is now sold out but you can join the waiting list.



Castle Tours: Vanbrugh Revealed at Kimbolton Castle
Tuesday 7 - Thursday 9 July
An exclusive curator-led experience offering a rare insight into the work of one of Britain's most imaginative architects, set within the historic interiors of Kimbolton Castle. Ideal for those with an interest in architecture, history, and the Georgian period, this 30-minute Vanbrugh-focused tour will be guided by Castle Curator Andrew Bamford.



Vanbrugh and the 4th Earl of Manchester
Monday 13 July 6:45pm
As part of the Huntingdonshire History Festival and Vanbrugh300, Castle Curator Andrew Bamford will explore Sir John Vanbrugh's creative relationship with Charles Montagu, uncovering how their partnership shaped Kimbolton Castle in this fascinating talk.



Plus, at each of these events, visitors will have the opportunity to explore Kimbolton Castle's own display of *Vanbrugh: Rockstar of the English Baroque*, celebrating the life, legacy, and enduring influence of one of Britain's most original architects. This special exhibition offers a fascinating insight into Vanbrugh's remarkable vision and his transformative impact on Kimbolton Castle itself.



[Book Tickets](#)

Rockstar of the English Baroque at Stowe House

On Monday 29 June, *Vanbrugh: Rockstar of the English Baroque* arrives at Stowe House. Stowe's unique display explores how Vanbrugh, commissioned by fellow Kit-Cat Club member Sir Richard Temple, transformed both the house and gardens into one of the great aristocratic seats of the eighteenth century. Featuring contemporary illustrations, the exhibition highlights Vanbrugh's surviving architectural and garden designs, while inviting visitors to discover the features that remain today - including elements that helped inspire the celebrated landscape designer 'Capability' Brown.

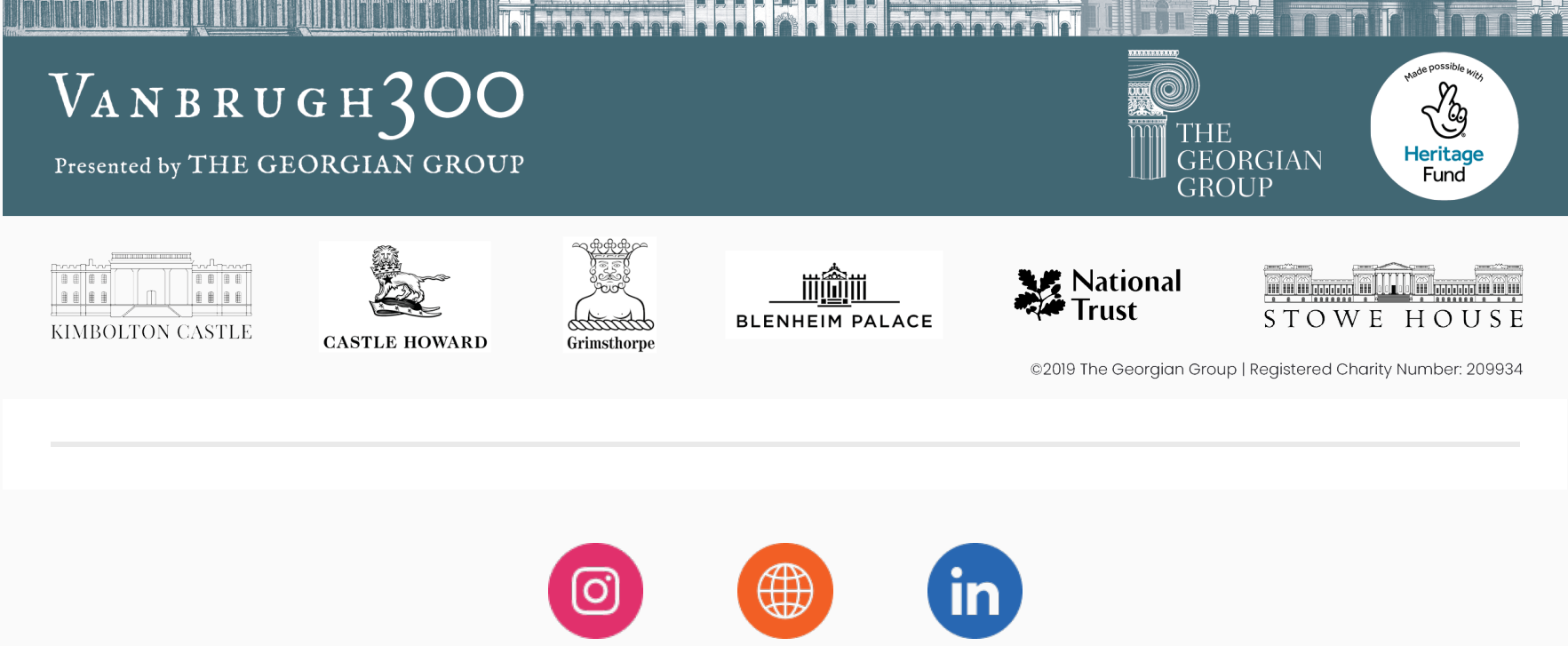
[Find Out More](#)



Dates for your Diary

- **8 July** - Conference: [Vanbrugh in North East England](#)
- **1-2 August** - [Vanbrugh300 Weekend at Stowe House](#)
- **17 September** - [Vanbrugh's Alterations and Additions to Stowe House](#)
- **1 October** - [Talk with Sandy Nairne, Charles Saumarez Smith and Mark Newman](#) at Seaton Delaval Hall
- **8 October** - [Vanbrugh and the Queen's Theatre, Haymarket](#): a free NLHF Lecture with Annette Rubery and Nicholas Helm at Seaton Delaval Hall
- **15 October** - [Sir John Vanbrugh and the Making of Stowe](#) with Michael Bevington
- **15 October** - [Historian Rory Fraser on Vanbrugh](#)

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



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