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25 July 2026

Discover Vanbrugh at Stowe:
Tours, Trails and Family Fun



Welcome to the latest edition of the Vanbrugh300 newsletter from The Georgian Group.

This issue shines a spotlight on [Stowe House's Vanbrugh300 Weekend](#), taking place on 1–2 August. With a packed programme of tours, family activities, exhibitions and garden trails, there are plenty of opportunities to explore Vanbrugh's remarkable legacy at one of England's most celebrated landscapes!

We are also delighted to feature a fascinating article by Helen Lawrence-Beaton examining [The Relationship Between Sir John Vanbrugh and Thomas Archer](#), offering fresh insights into two of the most influential figures of the English Baroque.

We shine a spotlight on the recent [Vanbrugh300 school visits](#) taking place across the country, as well as the free educational resources available to download from the Vanbrugh300 website.

Finally, we look back on the recent [Vanbrugh Conference at Durham University](#), which explored the architecture and enduring influence of Sir John Vanbrugh in North East England.

To learn more about VANBRUGH300, [visit our website](#) and explore the [What's On](#) page to see upcoming events and activities.

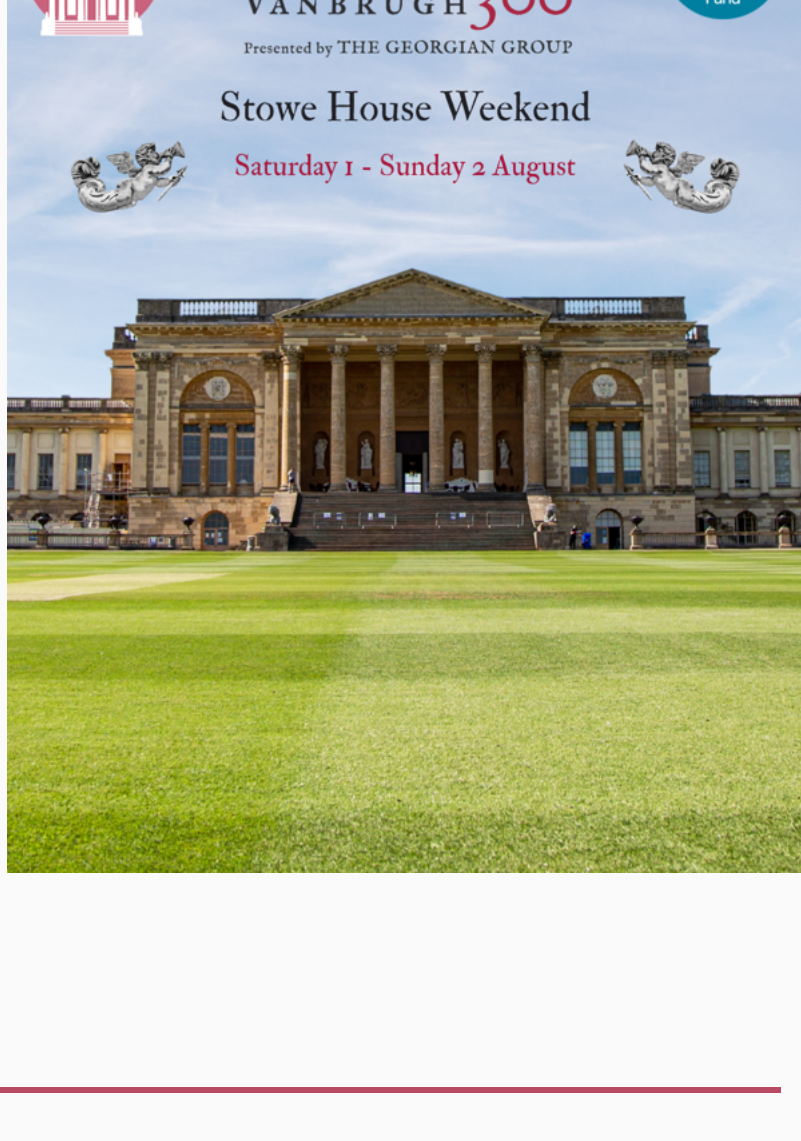
Visit the VANBRUGH300 Website

Vanbrugh300 at Stowe House

Get ready for a weekend filled with creativity, discovery and fun for all ages. Enjoy lively storytelling performances, or channel your inner architect with a hands-on craft activity to design and take home your very own country house. Whether you visit with family, friends or a community group, there's something to inspire every curious mind.

Plus, available throughout the weekend is special anniversary entry to Stowe House for just £3 (under 5s go free)!

And much more besides – see below for the full programme.



Book £3 Tickets

Vanbrugh Guided Tours

These exclusive tours offer a rare opportunity to explore parts of the external House complex not usually accessible to visitors, revealing hidden architectural details that contribute to Stowe's extraordinary design. Led by knowledgeable guides, they'll uncover Vanbrugh's influence on the estate, highlighting key architectural features while also exploring Stowe's distinctive approach to commissioning designers.



Reserve Free Tickets

Vanbrugh Family Workshops

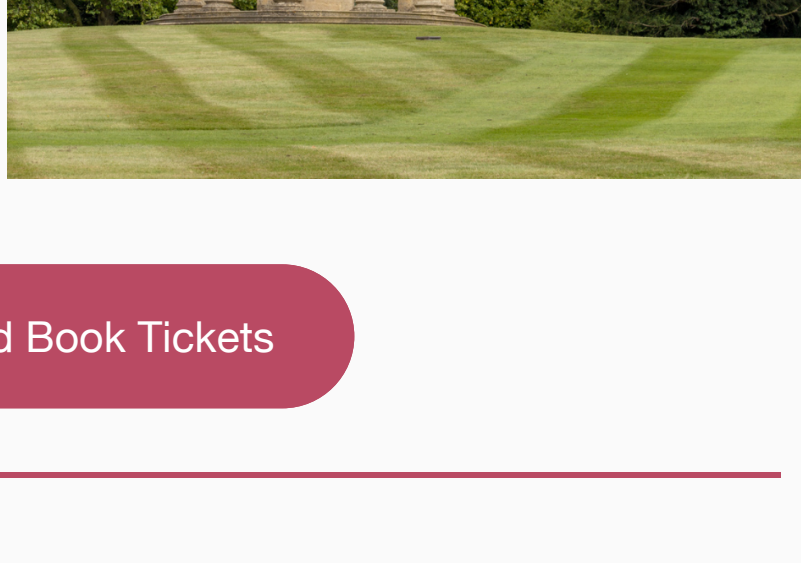
Bring the whole family together for a fast, fun 20-minute drop-in session inspired by the life and imagination of Sir John Vanbrugh. You'll dive into quick games and creative challenges designed for all ages - from energetic little ones to curious teens and grown-ups who love a bit of playful thinking. Explore bold ideas, try teamwork tasks, and discover how Vanbrugh's theatrical spirit shaped this extraordinary place. Drop in, join the fun, and play like Vanbrugh.



Reserve Free Tickets

Stowe Landscape Gardens

Enjoy FREE entry to the National Trust gardens and take part in the Garden Trail. Follow the self-guided map to discover the temples, monuments, and landscapes designed by Sir John Vanbrugh at Stowe.



Download the Trail

The Relationship Between John Vanbrugh and Thomas Archer

By Dr Helen Lawrence-Beaton

Thomas Archer (1668-1743) has long been overlooked in architectural history, so it is unsurprising that nothing has previously been written about his interactions with Vanbrugh. It is time, however, that this is corrected, as their remarkable careers overlapped at several points, with evidence suggesting that they were well acquainted. Similarities between the gentlemen are clear. Both enjoyed successful careers outside of architecture, Vanbrugh within the military and as a playwright, and Archer in the role of Groom Porter, which placed him in charge of gambling across Court. They each created some of the country's best known garden buildings, and crossed over into landscape design, with the... [\[READ MORE\]](#)



Vanbrugh300 School Visits and Free Resources



Education is central to the Vanbrugh300 programme, opening up architecture and history to young people across the UK. More than 2,000 primary school pupils are taking part in free visits to historic houses, engaging directly with Vanbrugh's work in inspiring real-world settings.

The schools programme offers rich, curriculum-linked experiences for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils. Through guided tours and hands-on workshops, children explore how buildings are designed, how architecture tells stories, and how imagination shapes the built environment. Activities encourage observation and creativity - from sketching architectural features to developing their own Baroque-inspired designs.

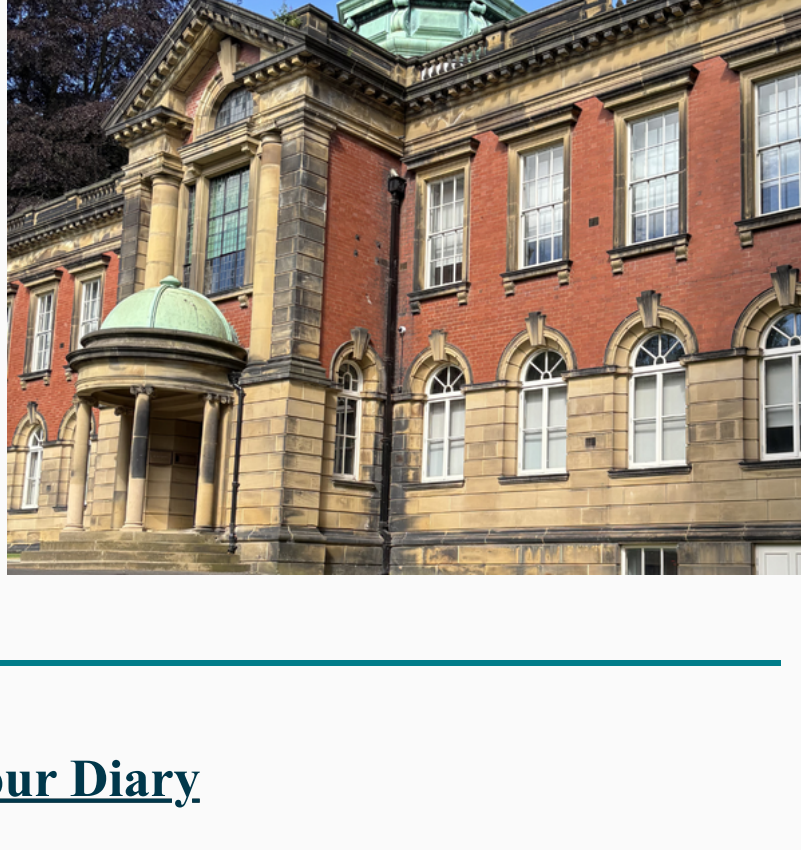
To ensure wider access, a comprehensive suite of free digital resources is also available on the Vanbrugh300 website. These include lesson plans, presentations and adaptable classroom activities, enabling schools everywhere to take part. Whether in the classroom or on-site, the programme fosters curiosity, confidence and a deeper understanding of Britain's architectural heritage.

These school visits have been organised by the Georgian Group in partnership with the participating historic houses. Thanks to support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, we have been able to cover the costs of school visits, workshop materials, facilitators, tailored training for volunteers, educational resources, and CPD training days for teachers ahead of the visits.

Find Out More

Durham University Conference Explores Vanbrugh's
Legacy in North East England

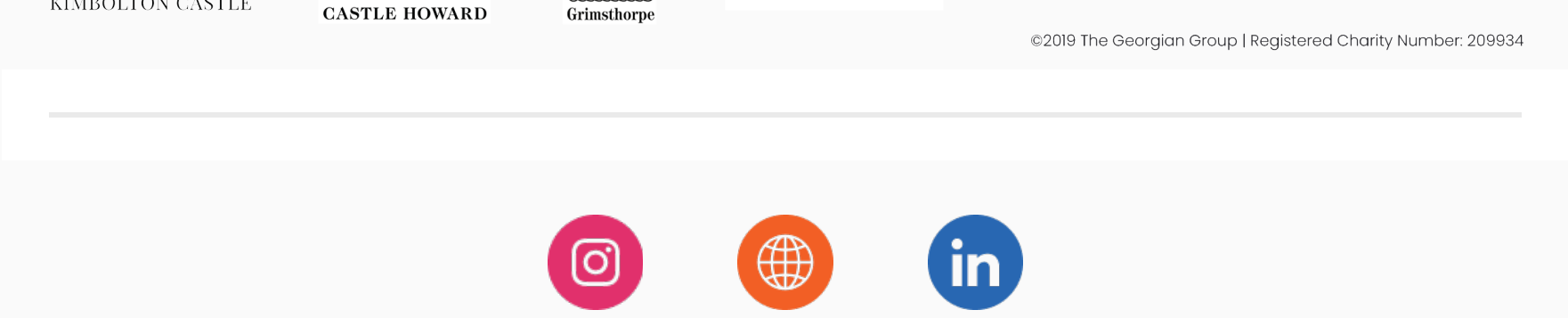
Earlier this month, Durham University hosted *The Architecture and Influence of Sir John Vanbrugh in North East England* at Redhills Miners' Hall. The conference brought together an excellent programme of speakers, including Edmund Thomas, Richard Pears, Jeremy Musson, James Legard, Mark Newman, Elspeth Gould and Martin Roberts, who explored Vanbrugh's work and lasting influence across the North East. Many thanks to Durham University for hosting such an engaging event as part of the Vanbrugh300 programme.



Dates for your Diary

- 17 September - [Vanbrugh's Alterations and Additions to Stowe House](#)
- 19 September - [Claremont Mansion Heritage Open Day](#)
- 20 September - [Vanbrugh300 Celebration at the National Portrait Gallery](#)
- 1 October - [Talk with Sandy Nairne, Charles Saumarez Smith and Mark Newman](#) at Seaton Delaval Hall
- 4 October - [Kimbolton Castle Open Day](#)
- 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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