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Discover the Rivalries, Genius and Ambition of Sir John Vanbrugh



We're delighted to bring you another edition of the VANBRUGH300 newsletter, warmly welcoming both returning readers and those discovering our celebration for the first time.

Over the coming year, these newsletters will explore each of Vanbrugh's great houses in turn, and today we begin with Blenheim Palace to coincide with the launch of their exciting new exhibition [Blueprints of Power](#), which opened on Saturday 14th February. We'll be sharing details of the exhibition and the ideas behind it, alongside [exclusive insight](#) from Blenheim Palace's Carmen Alvarez, Collections and Conservation Manager, and Isabelle Thom, Deputy Collections Manager.

We'll also explore [Vanbrugh's creation of Blenheim](#) itself, and share [further events and key dates](#) for your diary as the VANBRUGH300 festival continues.

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](#)

Blueprints of Power at Blenheim Palace

The new exhibition [Blueprints of Power](#) at Blenheim Palace shines a light on Sir John Vanbrugh's brilliant mind, his rivalries, and his ambition. Through an immersive visual journey, it traces his story from his early life and theatrical career as a playwright to his high-stakes partnership with Sarah Churchill, 1st Duchess of Marlborough, revealing how personality, politics, and power shaped the creation of Blenheim Palace.

Combining immersive experiences with rare archival material, recognisable costumes, and dramatic storytelling, Blueprints of Power invites visitors to step back into the early eighteenth century and discover how Vanbrugh's relationships with high society helped to define an age - and a palace.

Blueprints of Power forms part of the nationwide VANBRUGH300 celebrations, inviting visitors to see Vanbrugh's legacy anew. The exhibition runs until Friday 10 April; book your tickets via the link below!



Visitors can even see costumes from the 2018 film *The Favourite*, including those worn by Rachel Weisz in her portrayal of Sarah Churchill, plus, of course, an array of magnificent wigs!

[Book Your Tickets!](#)

Exclusive Insight into the Exhibition

We are thrilled to bring you exclusive insight from Blenheim Palace's Carmen Alvarez, Collections and Conservation Manager, and Isabelle Thom, Deputy Collections Manager. Drawing on previously unseen archive material, they share the fascinating story behind Vanbrugh's time at Blenheim Palace, a period marked not only by his signature architectural drama but also by the personal and professional conflicts that shaped his work:

"This exhibition has allowed us to give our visitors a glimpse into a fascinating period of Vanbrugh's career. It is not only the architecture of Blenheim Palace that is steeped in his signature drama and theatricality; so were the... [\[READ MORE\]](#)



Article: From Bastille to Blenheim



Blenheim Palace is an original Vanbrugh design. Following the Duke of Marlborough's victory at the Battle of Blenheim in August 1704, Queen Anne sought to reward him with a country house far grander than anything previously seen in England, a fitting monument to his military brilliance. Vanbrugh, whose work at Castle Howard had earned widespread admiration, was tasked with creating a national symbol of monumental scale. Yet his genius came with challenges: fierce rivalries, political intrigue and personal conflicts... [\[READ MORE\]](#)

Dates for your Diary

Kimbolton Castle Open Day - Sunday 1 March



Discover the history and grandeur of Kimbolton Castle on one of just two days a year when it is open to the public. Enjoy a self-guided tour of the impressive state rooms, including the Queen's Room, where Katherine of Aragon died in 1536.

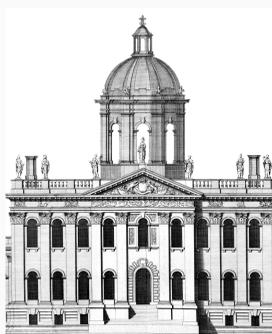
This rare opportunity also allows visitors to explore one of Sir John Vanbrugh's lesser-known architectural masterpieces. The day is complemented by a special exhibition examining the connection between Vanbrugh and Charles Montagu, 4th Earl of Manchester, offering fresh insight into the castle's design and history.

[Book your Tickets!](#)

Sir John Soane's Museum Exhibition - Wednesday 4 March

From 4 March to 28 June, Sir John Soane's Museum presents a free exhibition celebrating the life and legacy of Sir John Vanbrugh. Curated by Charles Saumarez Smith and architect Roz Barr, the exhibition features previously unseen drawings from the collections of the V&A and Sir John Soane's Museum, including works in Vanbrugh's own hand.

Though sometimes overshadowed by Nicholas Hawksmoor and Christopher Wren, Vanbrugh's bold imagination and emotional impact have inspired generations. The exhibition also explores his influence on 20th-century architects Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, alongside a new short film by Anita Naughton and Jim Venturi, shown in the Museum's Foyle Space.



[Book your Tickets!](#)

- **20 March** - [Interview with Charles Saumarez Smith and Annette Rubery](#) on Vanbrugh: The Drama of Architecture at Lichfield Festival
- **25-28 March** - [Projection Artwork at Seaton Delaval Hall](#)
- **26 March** - [A commemoration service](#) held at St Stephen Wallbrook
- **28 March** - [Seaton Delaval Hall VANBRUGH300 Weekend](#)
- **31 March** - [Vanbrugh in India](#): an Online Talk by Rory Fraser

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



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