



inside

Compton
Verney

Winter 2016 - Spring 2017

Compton
Verney

2016 A Year in Review
A Chapel Reborn
At Home in the Country

News Bites

Compton Verney First Gallery in England to sign Armed Forces Covenant in Business

The Armed Forces Covenant is a voluntary pledge from businesses, charities and other organisations to show their support for the Armed Forces community. It exists to redress the disadvantages that they may face in comparison to other citizens, and to recognise the sacrifices made.

Dr Steven Parissien, Director of Compton Verney, explains why they decided to get involved: “We are always looking to welcome a new audience and play a greater role in the local community. There are around 45,000 ex-service people in Warwickshire, 27,000 of who live in the adjacent Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon Districts near Compton Verney. When they leave their roles within the forces, we would like to extend an invitation for them to consider becoming an employee of, or volunteer with, the gallery and park. Signing the covenant is indicative of the leading role Compton Verney plays in developing new solutions to ensure the heritage sector’s future diversity, resilience and continued relevance.”

Over the past year, the gallery has established a relationship with the local Armed Forces community. This has already resulted in Forces staff assisting with a number of public events.

Dr Parissien adds: “As the first museum or gallery in England to sign the Armed Forces Covenant in Business, this will, help to ensure that those who

serve or have served in the Armed Forces and their families should face no disadvantage compared to others citizens in terms of employment and the provision of public and commercial services. This partnership will clearly demonstrate the value of the Armed Forces’ contribution to society and – we really hope - serve as a model for arts organisations across the UK.”



Cpl Rachael Mather of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps who is posted to Defence EOD, Munitions and Search Training Regiment and her explosives detecting dog at the Dog Show.



It is with great regret that we say good bye to one of our longest-serving employees, Geoff Wain. Geoff started here in January 2002 following a long and successful career in the private sector. In addition to setting up our financial systems to a rigorous standard, he spent many days lifting and shifting furniture and pitching in wherever there was a need. Geoff was a generous, patient and conscientious colleague and will be much missed.

Contents

- Page 2 News Bites
- Page 3 2016 Highlights
- Page 4 IN-LIGHT; illuminating ‘Capability’ Brown’s Landscape
- Page 6 A Chapel Reborn
- Page 8 At Home in the Country
- Page 9 Castle Clock Plea
- Page 10 Do you Want to Live in the Future?
- Page 12 A Look Ahead at Benefactor, Patron and Supporter Events



Photos from top right: Avondale Vets and Victorian fairground games at the Family Fun Day and Dog Show; Aston Martin Owners Club day; a chance to meet Queen Victoria at the Christmas Weekends and (right) *Park Life’s* Mannered Mob . Cover photo: A Hind’s Daughter (detail), Sir James Guthrie, 1883, National Gallery of Scotland.

2016 Highlights

2016 has been another record-breaking year, with 86,962 visitors and quadruple the number of previous 1,000+ visitor days.

We hosted 19 corporate hires, 35 weddings, 14 private hires, six filming and photography sessions and took home our third 'Best Wedding Events Team' from the Wedding Industry Awards in Birmingham. Our volunteers contributed 8,000 hours and we achieved our best-ever Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme rating from VisitEngland.

We have reached 1,397,134 people on Facebook, a 26% increase on 2015, and at one point our #DogsinPaintings Twitter hashtag became the third highest trending topic globally. Social media also helped us to win the Museums at Night Connect! Competition securing Chinese artist Aowen Jin for our Museums at Night event.

The new events and activities programmed for 2016 were well received and attracted many non-traditional arts visitors. Events such as Park Life, Saxon Sunday, Love Parks, the Dog Show, Segway tours and Wings and Water encouraged visitors to purchase annual memberships, visit more regularly and stay for longer periods which is critical to our financial sustainability. Our Park Learning Programmer, Vix Powell, was nominated for the Learning Outside the Classroom Innovator of the Year.

The Fifties Allotment was a huge success in the grounds, while a newly reed-bed sewage system has been successfully established. Our wildlife are thriving, with the sighting of an osprey in August and regular sighting of kingfishers and our first Horticulture Apprentice joined the team. Through the generosity of Kirsten Suenson-Taylor, we have also been able to commission an extensive lake survey for the Middle and Upper Pools, so that we can care for them and give visitors more access.

It has also been a year of great collaborations which included *Shakespeare in Art*, our first partnership with the RSC, and *Faces of Comedy*, the first ever collaboration with the BBC. *Queen Victoria in Paris* saw a continuation of our close working relationship with The Royal Collection and *Picasso on Paper* revived a previous association with the Museum Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf, an international relationship we are keen to foster for the future.

Last but very far from least, our restored Chapel, new Welcome Centre and extensive new paths and facilities have been accomplished through the generosity of the Heritage Lottery Fund and a raft of other benefactors. Please join us for an even more exciting 2017.

Be sure to check out 2017's [*Seurat to Riley: The Art of Perception*](#) exhibition this summer which has already been named one of the *Guardian's* 'Ten exhibitions to see in 2017'!



IN-LIGHT

ILLUMINATING CAPABILITY BROWN'S LANDSCAPE

In what has to be one of the most stunning installations Compton Verney has ever staged, *In Light* truly did illuminate 'Capability' Brown's landscape.

The brainchild of Creatmosphere, a cross-genre artistic studio that focuses on the exploration of light and its interplay with art, architecture and space, this light installation and the accompanying and integral public role in bringing it to life was a new venture for Compton Verney.

We are well aware that during the dark winter months our lovely rural location can sometimes be a disadvantage. No one who visited during the three weekends in November to see what light can do in a landscape that has no external light pollution will now, we hope, agree.

"I visited recently with a group of friends to enjoy 'In Light' their recent night-time installation/exhibition which saw the beautiful grounds and exterior of the gallery itself illuminated to stunning effect.", a TripAdvisor reviewer wrote, "Quite apart from being almost eerily attractive, it was great fun to use the interactive light controls and to see so many families with young children taking part in the creative activities on offer."

In addition, area youth groups and visiting children helped to create their own light-based art works. Children from three local youth centres made large paper lanterns that were a fabulous addition to the procession on the penultimate evening. In addition to participating, they had a full day of tours, Forest School bonfires and, of course, food.



Gary Timlin, Youth & Community Worker, Lillington Youth Centre remarked, "Projects like these are far reaching; they enable young people who live on the edge of society to be involved, which expands their learning. From experience I can say this project, being an inclusive one, creates the opportunity for our young minds to explore all possibilities available to them now and in their futures. It does not slam the door shut; it welcomes them in and allows them to flourish."

The solar-powered mason jar lanterns made by visiting children also made a huge impact as the hung in sticks around the mansion house and represented various tree species to be found on the property.

In Light is definitely going to feature in Compton Verney's future autumnal programming so if you missed this year, mark your calendars for 2017.



A Chapel Reborn

October 2016 saw the formal re-opening of Compton Verney's Grade I-listed Chapel after decades of neglect.

As you may remember, when the site was purchased for the creation of the gallery in 1993, the plasterwork of William Hiatt's coffered ceiling was decaying badly; the guttering was seriously corroded; the 1929 windows – mottled toilet glass set in poor-quality wooden frames – were boarded up; the original window spandrels (the only elements that Lord Manton, who bought Compton Verney from the Willoughby de Brokes, had left in situ) broken and smashed; and the east end dais covered by an ungainly wooden platform.

During the spring and summer of 2016 – having waited patiently for the bats in the roofspace to get properly settled – restoration commenced overseen by Purcell Architects and Croft Contractors. The work was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, with invaluable additional support from Wyn Grant, James Robinson, the J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Foundation, Country House Foundation, WREN FCC Heritage Fund and Allchurches Trust Limited.

The plasterwork has now been restored, the monuments conserved, and the whole Chapel repainted. Paint analysis by Patrick Baty had shown that the original wall colour was, predictably, a pale stone. Patrick also discovered that much of the applied wall decoration was not part of the original Brown scheme but was

actually added in the 1930s, and was made not of plaster but of papier-mâché. However, the decision was made to retain this work as part of the history of the building. In the windows, the remnants of the six stained-glass window spandrels were used to create three

complete window heads for the north wall. The rest of the openings were filled with leaded panes of high-quality heritage glass from Poland.

Up above, the roof slates were conserved and, where necessary, replaced; the guttering was renewed; and the grouting that had been applied to the underside of the slates' battens in the nineteenth century – which had fallen off over the years and was now pressing heavily upon the plaster ceiling below – was painstakingly removed. More practically, heating and modest lighting were also introduced and the Victorian bellcote restored – with a bellrope re-

introduced into the gallery.

The conservation work has returned a rare, indeed a unique building – Brown designed no similar Chapel in Britain – to life. It can now be used for a variety of purposes, from weddings and lectures to services (the building is still consecrated) and concerts (thanks to its superb acoustic). It provides Compton Verney with an invaluable asset which can be used to build different, diverse audiences as well as to entertain and impress existing visitors.

The plaster ceiling is now pristine; the roof has been repaired; the bellcote (and bellrope) restored; the stained-glass window heads





reassembled and heritage glass installed in the windows. Most strikingly, the original Georgian paint colours have been reapplied so we no longer have sombre pews but elegant stone-coloured furnishings that add to the delicate impression the soaring space makes.

The Chapel now looks better than at any time during the last century, and will now host a wide variety of concerts, lectures, events, artworks and services. Director Steven Parissien

said: “This is a wonderful and much-deserved tribute to our immense achievement not just in rescuing our fantastic, Grade I-listed Chapel from dereliction but also in restoring the historic landscape and its outstanding 'Capability' Brown buildings as a whole. It is also a testimony to the skill and dedication of the architects and craftspeople who have been working on rehabilitating this unique resource over the last five years.”



Supported by
The National Lottery[®]
through the Heritage Lottery Fund





At Home in the Country

Compton Verney's 2017 season will open with a major exhibition *Creating the Countryside* that examines our relationship with the countryside.

The vision of a rural idyll has been shaped by generations of artists and occupies an enduring place in the national imagination. This exhibition brings together an extraordinary range of responses to rural life and landscape, revealing how ideas of the countryside have been framed in art and everyday life from the seventeenth century to the present day. The work of artists including George Clausen, Thomas Gainsborough, Claude Lorrain, Stanley Spencer and Clare Leighton will trace key moments in the representation of the rural, while contemporary responses by artists including Mat Collishaw, Sigrid Holmwood, Hilary Jack, Grayson Perry and Ingrid Pollard will offer new reflections on that most timeless of ideas: the 'green and pleasant land'.

Arranged thematically, *Creating the Countryside* will make original connections between a wide range of images and objects that speak of the

enduring idea of the rural idyll - from Toile de Jouy fabrics and Shell County Guides to country cottage jigsaws and rural-themed computer games - mapping the pastoral as it is played out in everyday life.

The exhibition will also extend into Compton Verney's 'Capability' Brown parkland, reflecting on the role that landscape designers and land ownership have played in shaping perceptions of the countryside. This will be complemented by a new site-specific commission, *The Clearing*, a contemporary 'eye-catcher' by Alex Hartley and Tom James conceived as part of a wider Heritage Lottery Funded project to reinterpret the landscape.

Creating the Countryside is curated by Verity Elson, Compton Verney, and Dr. Rosemary Shirley, Senior Lecturer, Manchester School of Art and author of *Rural Modernity, Everyday Life and Visual Culture* (Ashgate, 2015). The exhibition will span all seven of the purpose-built gallery spaces and will include an engaging events and schools programme as well as an academic symposium organised with Manchester Metropolitan University.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a well-illustrated and accessible book published by Paul Holberton. In bringing together expert contributors from a range of different disciplines including art history, rural history,

literature, poetry and contemporary art, the publication will generate new debates around the highly charged territory of landscape, assessing this concept from both an historical perspective and its influence in contemporary society.

Related events and activities

Why not join us for a day in the country?

1 May May Day

Join in the traditional May day activities involving maypole dancing, May day King and Queen, vintage tractors, music and dancing. Get involved with village games such as tug of war, welly wangling, Aunt Sally, splat the rat & hook a duck.

14 – 17 April Easter drop-in activity

Make your own hat to wear over the Easter weekend. In response to the exhibition *Creating the Countryside* choose flowers, ribbons and stickers to decorate your bonnet.

Included in collections and park admission

Creating the Countryside runs from 18 March – 18 June 2017

Castle Clock Plea

Help us to bring York Castle Museum's famous Automata Clock to Compton Verney for our 2018 Summer exhibition *The Living Machines of Artists' Dreams*

We hope to make York Castle's Automata Clock the star historic loan in our summer show next year. This highly decorated clock, featuring moving figures and sound, dates from the 1780s and is often referred to as being made by the workshop of the famous automata maker James Cox. James Cox's workshop also made the much celebrated Silver Swan which is in the Bowes Museum.

The case is covered in red velvet and the clock is large measuring 1.6metres high. It chimes every quarter of an hour and the figure of Hercules at the top strikes the hours. When the automata is



Photos from left: John Pettie, *The Laird*, 1878, oil on canvas, © The McManus Dundee's Art Gallery and Museum; York Castle Museum Automata Clock

activated the four dancing figures at the base of the temple spin round and stars rotate. The glass rods also revolve to give the impression of waterfalls and a procession of 26 figures move across the front of the clock.

We have recently had the clock assessed by a specialist conservator and all the mechanisms are functioning. We now need to raise money to have some specialist levers fitted and importantly a very supportive case made for its safe transportation. We will then need to have staff trained in winding up the clock and specific maintenance during the run of the exhibition. We will also need to have a reinforced plinth made to support the clock and make sure that it is out of touching distance from the public.

We hope that all of this will be possible and that this spectacular clock will take centre stage in our exhibition next year. Gifts of any size would be very much appreciated, the total cost of required works is £2,000. Call Sophie Howell for more information 01926 645547.

Do you want to Live in the Future?

"Walk down the driveway at Compton Verney, over the footbridge, towards the house, and you'll spot something. There, in the trees, on the side of the lake. It's a dome. Made of scrap metal, it's half futuristic, half rusting and tired. There's smoke coming from the chimney, chickens running around outside. Inside, you can hear people talking, hammering, making. Someone is singing an old Abba song. Who are these people? Where has this dome come from? Is this the future, or the past?

Welcome to The Clearing."

Tom James,
Clearing Blog,
15 December 2016

We're building a living, breathing encampment, in the shadow of the former stately home, where people can come together to learn how to live in the world that's coming our way. From March to December 2017, The Clearing will become part school, part shelter and part folly.

Whenever you start thinking about sustainability, or ecology, or climate change, you inevitably reach a fundamental question: how should we live? What is our role here, on Earth? Are we supposed to be in stasis with the planet, like happy dolphins? Or should we be out there in space, mining asteroids like Bruce Willis?

In the middle of The Clearing is a geodesic dome. Inside the dome, a series of workshops will ponder these questions and teach you the skills



Dropper 2011, Recreation of Drop Rite Dome ©Alex Hartley



Supported by
The National Lottery[®]
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



you'll need once the sea levels rise
and the global economy collapses.
Ever wanted to know how to make mead,
keep chickens or forage for food, this
is the place.

Outside of these workshops, a series of
caretakers will occupy the dome, to
chop wood, feed the chickens, and keep
the vision alive.

The Clearing is a collaborative artwork
by Alex Hartley and Tom James. Alex
Hartley is a UK based artist whose work
explores our understanding of utopian
ideologies. His ambitious works of
land-art, seek to test and expand our
notions of utopia, the individual, and
the critical relationship we have with
the environment.

In 2004 Hartley went to the High Arctic
where he searched for and discovered an
island that had been revealed from
within the melting ice of a retreating
glacier. The island, which was called
Nowhere Island, was taken out into
International Waters where it was
declared a new nation and towed behind
a tug around the South West coast of
England during the 2012 Olympic Games.
At the end of *Nowhereisland*'s journey,
it was broken up and distributed
amongst the 23,003 people from 135
countries who had signed up as
"citizens of *Nowhereisland*".

Tom James is a writer, self-publisher
and artist. He's set up imaginary
tourist boards; published fanzines
about cities; written for biennales;
and blown up cooling towers. His
fanzine project, *GO*, is part of the
permanent collection of the V&A. He is
currently producing a DIY guide to
surviving and thriving in a future
ravaged by climate change and is part
of *Spacemakers*, a utopian regeneration
agency that tries to get inside the
machinery of regeneration.

Workshops 2017 @ The Clearing



[Build a Fire 18 March](#)

[Drink The Water 1 April](#)

[Build A Toilet 15 April](#)

[Food Part 1: Finding It 29 April](#)

[Food Part 2: Growing It 6 May](#)

[Our Daily Bread Part 1 20 May](#)

[Our Daily Bread Part 2 21 May](#)

[Working with wool Saturday 3 June](#)

[Keeping Chickens 17 June](#)

[Soap: Staying Clean in the
Anthropocene 1 July](#)

[Making Medicine 22 July](#)

[Making Mead 12 August](#)

[The Printed Word 26 August](#)

[Harnessing the wind 23 September](#)

[Post-apocalypse Pop 7 October](#)

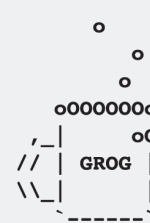
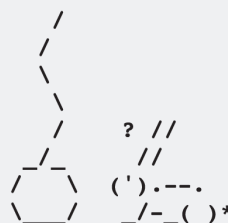
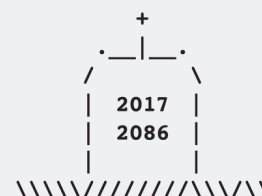
[Listen to the radio 21 October](#)

[Rebuilding democracy 5 November](#)

[Astronomy for survivors 18 November](#)

[How To Die In The Future 2 December](#)

Ticket booking from Feb 2017



A Look Ahead at 2017's Benefactor, Patron and Supporter Events

18 February - Park opens for winter walks and activities
Everyone

17 March - *Creating the Countryside* exhibition and *The Clearing* installation
Private Views Benefactors, Patrons and Supporters

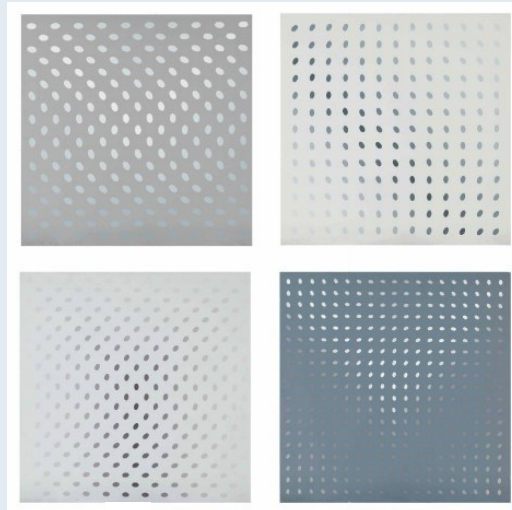
7 April - Holburne Museum and American Museum in Britain, Bath

With its remarkable collection of folk and decorative arts, the American Museum takes you on a journey through the history of America. The Holburne's Grade I-listed building is home to fine and decorative arts including work by Gainsborough, Guardi, Stubbs, Ramsay and Zoffany and we will be given a private curator's tour of their exhibition *Bruegel: Defining a Dynasty*. *Benefactors and Patrons (at cost)*

9 June - Ercol Factory and The Museum of English Rural Life

Tour Ercol's award winning factory to see how their crafts people create furniture of timeless beauty. Then explore how the skills and experiences of rural people, past and present, help shape our lives at The Museum of English Rural Life.
Benefactors, Patrons and Supporters (at cost)

7 July - *From Seurat to Riley; Colour and Perception* Exhibition *Private View*
Benefactors, Patrons and



Photos from top: Riley, 19 Greys from the Seurat to Riley; *Colour and Perception* Exhibition; Leighton House; The Holburne

Supporters

September - Leighton House and 18 Stafford Terrace, London

In company with Prof Steven Parissien, visit two remarkable examples of artists' homes and enjoy a sumptuous lunch. Built over 30 years from the 1860s, Leighton House is noted for its elaborate Orientalist and aesthetic interiors. 18 Stafford terrace was the home of Linley Sambourne, chief political cartoonist of *Punch* and is a unique survival of an 1880s town house, complete with furnishing and decoration. *Benefactors*

8-12 October - Overseas trip to Prague

Probably to most beautiful city in Central Europe, Prague boasts an astonishingly rich cultural history and wealth of magnificent art and architecture. See leaflet for details of this tour including 5 star hotel accommodation, private lunch cruise and an exclusive visit to the home of Art Nouveau artist Alphonse Mucha. *Benefactors and Patrons (at cost)*

20 October- *Quentin Blake: Inside Stories and Lost Words* exhibition *Private Views*
Benefactors, Patrons and Supporters

17 November - Benefactor and Patron Dinner *Benefactors and Patrons*

See a tour for which you aren't eligible? Why not upgrade?

Help Light the Way

We need your help to build awareness about what we are and how we serve the community. As an independent charity, it also helps if people are aware that we need their support through membership, volunteering or donations. Next time you are chatting with someone, why not share your enthusiasm for Compton Verney Art Gallery and Park?

Who are we:

- Compton Verney Art Gallery and Park is an exquisite blend of art, architecture and historic parkland.
- Compton Verney is a place that inspires and where curiosity and creativity flourish.
- Compton Verney was founded to ensure that the arts are accessible to everyone, from first time visitors to active enthusiasts and where all interests and opinions are valued equally
- Compton Verney is fun, inspiring and educational for all ages

What do we do:

- Bring unique exhibitions of world-class art to the Midlands
- Provide an innovative programme of workshops and activity for a broad spectrum of the community including urban and rural schools, adults living with dementia, the Armed Forces community, retirees and pre-schoolers

What we need for the future:

- Endowments that afford us security and the freedom to continue to innovate and collaborate
- Infrastructure and facilities to accommodate visitors young and old
- The opportunity to be daring and fulfil our modest and ambitious aspirations
- Funding for projects that reflect and celebrate the diversity of Compton Verney

- Encourage exploration, reflection and wellbeing in our lovingly restored Capability Brown Park

- Provide a valuable resource for the region and the global arts community

- Collaborate with like-minded partners across the world



Thank you for your support

Thank you to all our Benefactors, Patrons, Supporters and Corporate Members for your continued support. Your membership makes a huge difference to us and contributes towards all aspects of Compton Verney, from our exhibitions and collections to our grounds and educational work.

Benefactors

Dr Catherine MS Alexander
Adrian and Jacqui Beecroft
Paul Cooney
Claire Enders
Wyn Grant

Alex and Mary Robinson
James Robinson
Kirsten Suenson-Taylor
The Lord and Lady Willoughby
de Broke

Patrons

Bridget Barker and Simon Hertridge	Sir Martin & Lady Jacomb
Janet Bell Smith	Laura Lindsay
Professor Robert Buglass CBE &	Mr & Mrs David Loudon
Dr Kerry Buglass	Mrs Michael Markham
Mrs Susan Bridgewater	Victoria Peers
The Brook Family	Mrs Joanne E Perry
David and Sandra Burbidge	David and Jill Pittaway
Nicholas and Marie-France Burton	William and Jane Pusey
Roger Cadbury	Helen Rose and Roger Salmons
Dr & Mrs Munchi Choksey	P E Shirley
Mark & Antonia Davies	Sarah Stoten
Mr & Mrs Ludovic de Walden	Peter Thompson
Peter Gregory-Hood	And those who wish to remain
Diana Henderson	anonymous

Supporters

Clive Barnes	Philip and Lulette Monbiot
Mrs Michelle Boycott	Dr James Mooney
Mike and Joan Broad	Mrs Penny Perriss
Lady Butler	Andrew and Julia Pick
Jenny Grimstone-Jones	Michael Roberts
Sarah Holman	Christopher Trye
Adrian and Clare Hopkinson	Benjamin Wiggin
David Howells	And 30 others who wish to
Howard and Melanie Jackson	remain anonymous, or have
Dr & Mrs Stephen Large	not yet specified how they
Bob and Sandy Marchant	would like to be listed.
N Meades	

Corporate Members

Director's Circle

Bonhams
Farrow & Ball
Lombard Odier
Martinspeed Ltd
Morris & Co.
Robert Welch Designs

Avidity IP Limited
Blackwall Green
Lightmedia Communications Ltd
Mitchell Gallery
Motive Consulting
No.5 Chambers
Renaissance Creative
Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

The Four Pillars



When you purchase a membership at any level and/or make a donation, you are welcome to specify an area of your own interest which your membership/donation will contribute towards:

- The Exhibition Fund for our exhibitions and collections.
- The Adam Fund for our built heritage.
- The Inspire Fund for art education.
- The Capability Fund for our historic landscape.

For further information, or if you would like to support The Four Pillars of Compton Verney, please call Fi Howell on 01926 645 547 or donate online now via the [Big Give](#).

Other ways you can help

Consider leaving us a legacy, organising an event or naming a tree, artwork or room for yourself or a loved one!

Call 01926 645 547 or [visit the website](#) for more information.



Aquarelle Publishing

Compton
Verney

Compton Verney
Warwickshire
CV35 9HZ

T. 01926 645 500
info@comptonverney.org.uk
Book online: www.comptonverney.org.uk
Registered charity no. 1032478

Supported by
The National Lottery®
through the Heritage Lottery Fund

heritage
lottery fund

