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**Tekst 12**

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LETTERS

**The genius of landscape architect Capability Brown**

Sir, Regarding Robin Lane Fox's column "A Capability for genius" (House & Home, October 29): I was startled and appalled to read that Capability Brown "was son of a land agent<sup>1)</sup> and a chambermaid in Kirkharle... His mother had six children of which Capability was the fifth but I continue to wonder if the local squire<sup>2)</sup> may have fathered him, such was Brown's later talent for art, business and organisation."

Professor Lane Fox manages to insult everyone: Brown, his mother, his father and the local squire, who was not perhaps in the habit of getting chambermaids with child.

Surely the idea that talent is limited to the wealthy has been sufficiently discredited by now that it should not appear in the august *Financial Times*.

**Margaret McGarrahan**

Berkeley, CA, US

Sir, When he suggests the local squire as a more appropriate father for Capability Brown (House & Home, October 29), Robin Lane Fox may be confusing the science behind human achievement with dog or horse breeding.

Many 18th century-born artists, scientists and entrepreneurs came from humble origins, for instance Samuel Johnson, William Blake, Michael Faraday, Richard Arkwright and Thomas Chippendale.

Alternatively this 18th century gardening genius may have inherited his talents from his mother.

**Dr Louise Condon**

Associate Professor,  
College of Human and Health Sciences,  
Swansea University, UK



*Financial Times, 2016*

noot 1 land agent = opzichter

noot 2 squire = landjonker / grootgrondbezitter

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- 1p 37 What inspired both writers to react to Robin Lane Fox's column?  
They disagree with his suggestion that
- A Capability Brown was an arrogant and spoiled child.
  - B children from working-class parents cannot be gifted.
  - C designing gardens was not a respectable profession.
  - D women are by nature intellectually inferior to men.
- 1p 38 How can the tone of the letter by Dr Louise Condon be characterised best?
- A as scornful
  - B as surprised
  - C as sympathetic
  - D as worried