

No. 53
Winter 2008/09

The restoration of Belle Vue Park, Newport

by John Woods

Park Square was the first public park to open in Newport. Today it lies behind a multi-storey car park of the same name on Commercial Street in the heart of the busy city centre. In the 1880s this little park was reported as mainly serving as a meeting place and playground for children, but by 1889, when Councillor Mark Mordey approached the local landowner Lord Tredegar, the Corporation clearly had aspirations to build a public park that befitted the status of the developing town.

In 1891 following the Town Council's decision "*That a public park should be procured for the town in some suitable locality*", Lord Tredegar expressed an interest in presenting a site to Newport. The following year the fields lying between Belle Vue Lane and Friars' Road were gifted to the Corporation by Lord Tredegar, and advertisements placed for competitive designs with premiums of £50 and £25 being offered for the first and second best designs. The competition was won by Thomas H. Mawson of Windermere with his "*Sea Breeze*" design.

Having secured the necessary finance to construct the park, the Corporation advertised for tenders and the contract was awarded to Mr J.H. Firbank, a name that can still be seen today on a number of roads in the St Julian's area of Newport. The sod cutting ceremony took place in October 1892 and work began in earnest.

The park was officially opened with much pomp and ceremony on Saturday 8th September 1894. The final cost is recorded as being £19,500, with the repayment of this amount and the cost of maintaining the park requiring a 2d rate. During the week leading up to the official opening of the park, the South Wales Argus published a number of descriptive articles featuring sketch drawings of the pavilion and terrace, one of the bridges in the cascade area, and both park lodges, whilst at the same time heaping praise on the merits of the Mawson's design. His commission with the Council ended in February 1895.

Whilst Mawson's original structural planting of trees and shrubs has largely

remained intact, the park has developed steadily since the mid 1890s with the Council adding additional features and facilities sometimes as a result of direct public pressure. In 1896 the Gorsedd Circle was added in readiness for the National Eisteddfod which was held in Newport for the first time in 1897. In the early 1900s, following public pressure, sporting facilities were added: two bowling rinks in 1904 and tennis courts in 1907. The present-day bowls pavilion was built in 1934 and is located centrally between two full size flat bowling greens. Whilst the park pavilion and conservatories were completed in readiness for the official opening, the demand for additional space for both refreshments and shelter brought about the building of the Rustic Tea House in 1910.

Not part of the original park, the adjoining Belle Vue House stood at the junction of Belle Vue Lane and Cardiff Road. This house was demolished in 1953 and an additional eleven acres were absorbed into the park.

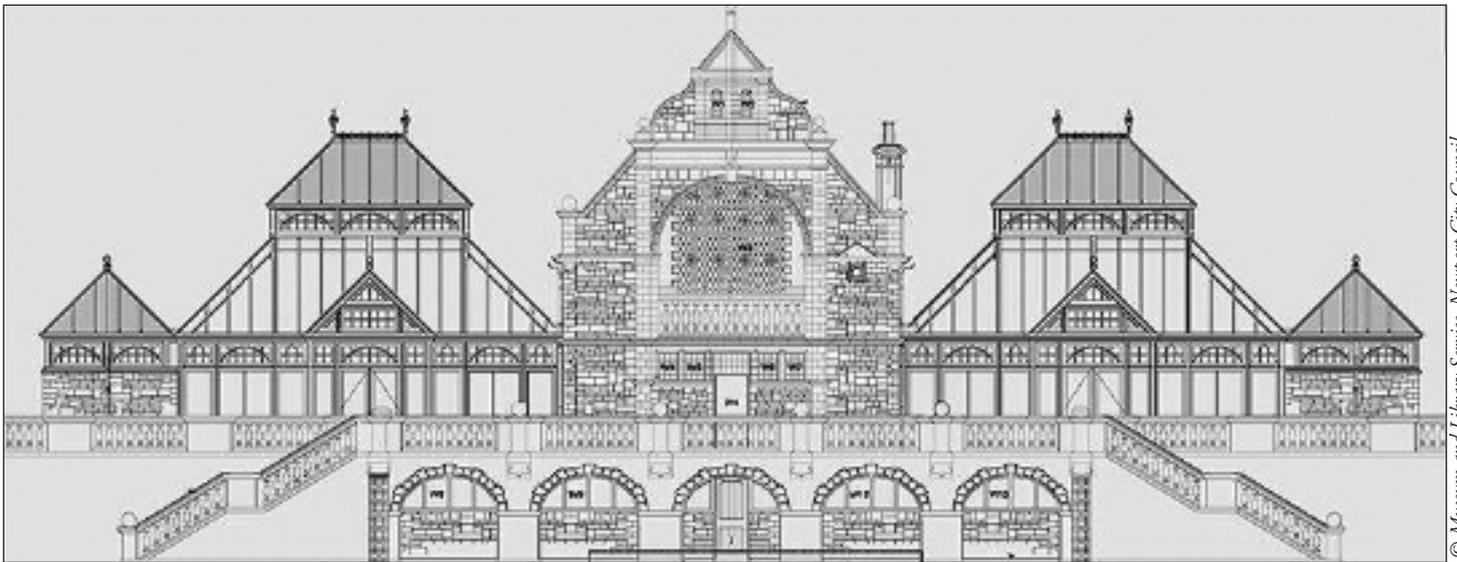
In 1996 Cadw listed the pavilion, conservatories, terrace and bandstand as Grade II. This was followed by the Grade II listing of the gates, gate piers, two lodges and rustic tea house in 2000.

During 1997 the then Newport County Borough Council appointed consultant architects to prepare and submit



An early 20th century postcard depicting the pavilion, conservatory and bandstand.

© Museum and Library Service, Newport City Council



© Museum and Library Service, Newport City Council

The pavilion and conservatories re-drawn by F M Modern Design, Godalming, Surrey, the architects working on the restoration.

restoration proposals for the park to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The future use of the pavilion and conservatories was one of the major considerations, especially given that Lord Tredegar had placed a condition on the deed of gift in 1892 that no major commercial activity could take place on the land. After a lengthy negotiation it was agreed that the restored pavilion and conservatories would be used for community and educational use, and indeed the building has now become a popular venue for a wide range of events.

In spring 2002 the Heritage Lottery awarded £1.564 million towards the restoration of the park and this has been matched with a further £652,000 from Newport City Council. The restoration has sought to recognise that Mawson's design is a unique record of public park design in the late 19th century which merits retention, conservation, and improvement. The pavilion has formed the focus of the restoration master plan.

In May 2003, work began on the ground with the perimeter railings being cleaned, repaired and repainted. At the same time all of the tarmac pathways and driveways were resurfaced. The majority of Mawson's original pathways and driveways were still intact, but where a small number of additional pathways had been added in recent times these were removed in order to achieve the original 1894 layout. It is interesting to note that following a decision by the Council, the paths and driveways had been surfaced for the first time with tarmac in 1936.

In late 2004 work started on replacement tree and shrub planting based on Mawson's original design and including a good percentage of evergreen species. A number of additional flower beds that had been added over time were also removed. In January 2005 the children from St Woolos Primary School replanted the original Silver Lime avenue inside the Friar's Road entrance. A 1932 photograph from the Francis Frith Collection that shows Mawson's original Lime Avenue provided the perfect link for both pupils and teachers on the day, whilst a magnificent Silver Lime at the west end of the park is thought to date from Mawson's original plantings. Other notable trees in the park include *Magnolia campbellii*, *Catalpa fargesii*, and *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*.

June 2005 saw a further restoration milestone achieved with the completion of two new tennis courts and a new

multi-use games area on the same foot print where in recent times there had been three tennis courts. The total cost of this element of the project was £147,000 and without doubt has provided a facility that is both used and respected by a large number of young people who visit the park.

All of the park gates (manufactured originally by Messrs Brown and Co. of Birmingham) were restored during 2005/06 whilst new park furniture was also installed at this time.

The restoration of the pavilion, conservatories, bandstand and rustic tea house began in August 2005 and took thirteen months. A grand opening ceremony involving children from three local schools was held on Friday 8th September 2006 exactly 112 years to the day from when the park originally opened. The guest of honour was Thomas Mawson's grandson David; the school children sang and enjoyed a fancy dress competition, with one of the categories being 'What was the height of fashion in September 1894?' Newport County Borough Band played on the new bandstand that day, and they, together with a number of other local bands, have since entertained park visitors by playing on Sunday afternoons during July and August in what is now an annual concert programme.

The three main horticultural features in the park are the rockery below the bowling greens which is currently being selectively replanted, the cascade, which is being replanted with choice trees and shrubs, and the new Friary Garden near the Friars' Road entrance. As a new addition to the park this garden features an Edwardian pergola, choice planting, and the 'Gardener's Calendar' sculpture which was unveiled in February 2008. The garden provides the perfect haven for quiet reflection and it is to be hoped that if Thomas Mawson were to sit here today, he would be pleased to see that his original design for a public park has been faithfully and sensitively restored, providing an important leisure facility for both residents and visitors to Newport alike for many more years to come. The park was awarded Green Flag status for the first time in 2008.

*John Woods is Park Development Manager,
Newport City Council.*

Ruthin Castle – Inquiry Cancelled

Clwyd WHGT is opposing a planning application for 15 chalets in the listed parkland at Ruthin Castle (see Bulletin No. 51 Summer 2008).

We successfully campaigned to have this planning application called in by the Assembly and we were expecting an Inquiry in March. We have now learnt that the March Inquiry has been cancelled as the Welsh Assembly issued a directive for a submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). An EIA cannot be undertaken by March and until this has been submitted and deemed adequate by the Welsh Ministers further action will not take place.

This has been a surprise as we were busily preparing for a March Inquiry. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust provided details of archaeological research at Ruthin Castle and the National Library of Wales provided an extensive bibliography. The Branch engaged an Independent Planner, Steve Goodwin, and Andrew Deakin, a barrister from 39 Essex Street to act Pro Bono on our behalf. 39 Essex Street Chambers is becoming renowned for its involvement in environmental and planning cases: they are also engaged on behalf of the WHGT at Ruperra.

I would like to thank everyone who has offered their support and time in the last few months. This has been most valuable, as in October the planning committee of Denbigh County Council voted in favour of this planning application

even though the planning consents were no longer in their gift! Some of the Councillors had been led to believe that Cadw were in favour of this scheme although this was not the case. No councillor had actually seen the Cadw statement. Although the Inquiry file is a public document we found that it was not accessible. It was not available at the library in Ruthin and most of the relevant documents were not on the planning portal prior to the meeting. The Inquiry file was only available on request at the county offices in Denbigh so we asked that it could also be viewed in Ruthin. The file can now be read at Trem Clwyd but is still not in the library. Our first attempts before Christmas to gain a copy of these documents were seriously frustrated (50p per page! - later reduced to 5p). Obstacles such as these make proper consultation very difficult.

The owner of Ruthin Castle is now said to be living in Thailand, and Ruthin Castle is on the market, so the future is uncertain. A Trust to save the castle walls should perhaps be formed. The conservation, maintenance and heritage of this site will continue to be of serious concern and it seems that 'enabling development' deals are not an appropriate way to fund the needs of a £1.8 million restoration.

Glynis Shaw, Clwyd

Bute Park – public indignation fans media interest

Notwithstanding a body of objections (Bulletin No. 52) Cardiff County Council celebrated getting Planning Permission for the road constructions in Bute Park on December 5th, which was apparently granted on the grounds that it will make things safer for cyclists and pedestrians than at present. The new access and roadways are also claimed to be needed for deliveries, by 40 ton articulated lorries, to the nursery and for the servicing of the events that the Park hosts each year. The provision of a £1.4 million lorry bridge is part of this proposal.

Various indignant people attended a meeting called by Prof. Kevin Morgan on December 12th at Cardiff University. It was rather one sided, as there was no representation from the Council or the HLF. Elaine Davey (WHGT) opened the debate with an overview of the various developments around the central green spaces which are gradually eroding and affecting the character of the space.

Further to Gavin Stamp's article (Piloti) in **Private Eye**, in which he posed the question **'Why are the ever-supine Cadw and HLF acquiescing in this vandalism?'** the HLF has asked for 'ongoing evidence' of the council's commitment to consult the public, community and conservation groups to ensure public support for the project.

Mark McConkey, writing on behalf of Heritage Minister Alun Ffred Jones, says that *'the HLF takes very seriously the public concerns which have arisen since the summer of 2007 and have discussed with Cardiff County Council the apparent lack of dialogue with stakeholders and park users on this issue.'*

Direct involvement by the public in their heritage is one of HLF's strategic priorities, so it is crucial for the proposed plans to restore the Park that there is a comprehensive programme of public consultation – As part of its monitoring of the grant to the council, HLF continue to keep this under review.'

In an article critical of the situation, **'Lack of Public Debate over Bute Park Could Cost Council Dear'**, David James, **South Wales Echo** (3 January 2009), commented that the lottery fund is run at arms' length from the Assembly Government but that its policy objectives are set in Cardiff Bay.

HLF have hitherto maintained that they wish to see their investment in Bute Park's restoration scheme succeed and therefore tacitly have approved of the Council's plans to improve access to the site in this way. However WHGT feel the whole issue of the scale, sensitivity and appropriateness of the Council's plans for the bridge and access road are being overlooked on these grounds.

Interestingly, Bute Park has been voted the best park in Wales in 2008 in Britain's Best Park Competition sponsored by petrol lawn mower engine manufacturer Briggs and Stratton. Maybe this will help the Council realise, before damage is done, what a precious and fragile asset this park is.

A further debate on the issue of the Cardiff central parks and Bute Park in particular is being organised and it is hoped that the Council and HLF will participate.

Elaine Davey

The campaign for Ruperra - Please help!

The Public Inquiry is now set for 21 April 2009 and expected to last four days. This of course is a costly matter. The new Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust has been created separately from the Ruperra Conservation Trust so as to concentrate on matters pertaining to the castle (see Bulletin No. 52).

We are delighted to announce that a young barrister, Caroline Allen from 39 Essex Street Chambers in London, is very keen to take up our case and will carry out all the preparatory work 'pro bono' and not charge us until the Inquiry actually starts. She specialises both in planning and in environmental matters and so will be invaluable for safeguarding the protected species at Ruperra.

We mustn't fall at the last hurdle having worked so hard and come so far over the last ten years. We need to raise £10,000 to be safe, so we would ask all of you, even if you can't afford to donate yourself, please think up some ways of asking other people to do so. WHGT has agreed to insert our flyer with every Bulletin, which I hope you will use to good effect and help us achieve this goal.

We have also arranged a day conference at Cardiff University to be held on Saturday, 28th February 2009. This should be a marvellous day, and raise funds for the campaign. Please see the advertisement below.

Pat Jones-Jenkins

'Grand Restorations'

A Conference on Historic Buildings Rescue Saturday, 28th February 2009

Hosted by Cardiff University Archaeology Society

Sponsored by Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust

Our theme is the rebirth of great historical buildings suffering from disaster or neglect.

The conference will be held in the Shandon Lecture theatre in the Main Building on Museum Avenue at the centre of Cardiff University. The Vramu Jones Gallery will be available for displays from the Amenity Societies and other interest groups.

Optional finger buffet lunch at extra charge.

Speakers:

10.00: Commander John Curteis, President of Ruperra Castle Preservation Trust

10.15-11.30: Adrian Cook: Restoration of Chiswick House Gardens

11.40-13.00: John Edwards: Cardiff Castle Restoration Project

14.10-15.30: John Thorneycroft: Post Fire Restoration: Windsor Castle

15.30-16.00: Prof John Gwynfor Jones, Cardiff The Morgans of Tredegar

Price £15.00, Students £7.00, Optional extra Buffet £7.50

For tickets contact

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Mark Baker 07950 894727 gcpr@btinternet.com

Pat Jones-Jenkins 01656 741622

patjonesjenkins@googlemail.com

Brecon and Radnor

Saturday 28th March

Branch AGM at Hergest Croft.

Saturday 23rd May

Visit to Avray Tipping gardens High Glanau, Wyndcliffe Court and another site. The theme for the year is to be restoration.

Ceredigion

Saturday 21st March

Branch AGM at Waun Fawr Community Hall Aberystwyth. Ann West, Chairman of the Cambrian Mountains Society will introduce a new film *Secret Wales* by distinguished documentary film-maker Christopher Martin. The film has been made to publicise the importance of this fragile and important natural landscape.

Sunday 17th May 2.30pm

A visit to Monachty, near Pennant, by kind invitation of Nigel Symons Jones.

June (date to be arranged) 2.30pm

A visit to Tŷ Glyn estate and to Tŷ Glvn walled garden, which has been restored for the enjoyment of the community and disabled visitors, to a design by landscape architect Ros Laidlaw.

Clwyd

Saturday 25th April

Study Day and Branch AGM at Erlas, Wrexham. Lectures: 'The Rise & Rise of the Chiswick Walled Garden' by Karen Leibrich, 'Erlas Walled Kitchen Garden Restoration' by Fiona Grant, who will also lead the garden visit.

Sunday 17th May

Plant Hunters' Fair, Tweedmill, St Asaph.

Sunday 21st June

Sychart 'Owen Glyndwr Garden' & Llangedwin Garden Visit.

Saturday 10th October

Rosehill, Overton, Nr Wrexham - Woodland Garden visit and presentation on the classification of trees.

Gwynedd

Thursday 2nd April

AGM at the Celtic Royal Hotel, Caernarfon. Speaker to be arranged.

Saturday 2nd May

Plant Fair - Crûg Farm Nursery, Caernarfon.

Wednesday 20th May

Visit to Craig y Ffynnon, Dolgellau, a delightful Victorian garden owned by Trust members Shân and Jon Lea.

Wednesday 3rd June

Two Gardens on the Llyn Peninsula: Coron, Llanbedrog and Y Felin, Sarn. Lunch at the Mill House Restaurant.

Late June/early July (Date to be arranged)

Garden Party at Goetre Isaf Farmhouse, Bangor, home of Alison and Fred Whowell.

July (Date to be arranged)

Bus trip to the Dorothy Clive Garden and Trentham Gardens both near Stoke on Trent.

Thursday 24th September

Michaelmas Lunch at Mynydd Ednyfed Hotel, Criccieth.

October (Date to be arranged)

Study Day on Garden Ornamentation, Statues, Fountains etc.

Pembrokeshire

Thursday 12th February at 7.30pm

AGM and lecture by Tony Brewis.

Thursday 12th March at 7.30pm

The Making of a Gardener. Lecture by Col. R. Gilbertson at Cuffern Manor.

Thursday 2nd April at 7.30pm

The restoration of the gardens and park at Dinefwr. Lecture by Paul Faulkner. Queens Hall, Narberth.

Thursday 14th May to be arranged.

Wednesday 10th June at 2.30pm

Garden visit to be arranged.

Wednesday 8th July

Day trip to Cowbridge Physic Garden and Duffryn.

Thursday 10th September at 7.30pm

Cider making in Victorian times. Lecture by Nick Sweet at Queens Hall, Narberth.

Thursday 8th October at 7.30pm

Hollies. Lecture by Tony Barnes at Cuffern Manor.

South and Mid Glamorgan

Saturday 14th March at 10.00 am

Study day on Planning Issues in Relation to Historic Landscapes, at Dyffryn Gardens, St Nicholas, Vale of Glamorgan. Lectures; Elisabeth Whittle (Cadw) and Lindsay Cuddy (Cardiff Council). Ros Laidlaw (WHGT) will run a workshop. The cost will be £8 for WHGT members, £10 for non-members. WHGT members from all parts of Wales welcomed. Please let Jean Reader know if you are interested in attending. Either e-mail at jeanreader@btconnect.com or write to: Burdons Farm, Wenvoe, Cardiff. CF5 6BA

Saturday 6th June at 12.00 noon.

Visit to Avray Tipping gardens High Glanau Manor and Wyndcliffe Court, Monmouthshire. A talk on Tipping by the

current owner of High Glanau Manor, Helena Gerrish, will be followed by a guided tour of the recently restored garden. A two course lunch with wine at High Glanau Manor will be provided before a short trip to Wyndcliffe Court. The total cost will be £25.00 including lunch.

Sunday 28th June at 2.00pm

The AGM will be held at Bryngarw House, Bridgend. Gerry Donovan will talk about Japanese gardens and there will be a chance to see the Grade II garden which includes the Japanese garden planted by Captain Onslow Powell Traherne between 1910 and 1918, using Japanese and Chinese plants, pools, rills and oriental buildings.

West Glamorgan

Friday 6th February 7pm-10pm

Winter Social at the Mansion House, Uplands, Swansea. All profits to go to the national body of WHGT Buffet, harpist, singers. Tickets £10.

Thursday 12th February at 2pm

'The History of Saffron'. An illustrated talk by Caroline Riden. St. Paul's Parish Centre, De La Beche Road, Sketty, Swansea.

Thursday 12th March at 2pm

Branch AGM 'Victorian Gardens and the "Bedding Mania"'. A talk by Robin Whalley. St. Paul's Parish Centre, De La Beche Road, Sketty, Swansea.

Sunday 10th May

A visit to Picton Castle gardens, Colby Woodland Garden and Sunday lunch.

Saturday 20th June

A visit to Hidcote Manor Garden and Kiftsgate Court, Gloucestershire.

Saturday 18th July

A visit to Tyntesfield and Bowood.

August (to be arranged)

A visit to a north Devon garden via paddle steamer.

WHGT National Events

Remember to visit us at our stand at the Shows:
Royal Welsh Smallholder and Garden Festival
16 - 17 May 2009

Royal Welsh Show
20 - 23 July 2009

And to attend the **WHGT Annual General Meeting**
on Saturday 6th June.
(Details to be announced).

Members are welcome to attend events outside their own Branch.
For full details approach the appropriate Branch contact (see page 8).

The Life of H. Avray Tipping

by Helena Gerrish

Henry Avray Tipping became during the first half of the twentieth century, the most highly regarded writer on country houses and their history, architecture and gardens in the British Isles. Less well known are his patronage of architecture, his ideas and skills as a garden designer, and his knowledge of furniture, wood carving, china and silver.

His father, William Tipping, born in 1816, was the son of a prominent Liverpool corn merchant. His mother, Maria Walker, was the daughter of a prosperous flax spinner from Leeds. They married in 1844, and had four sons. Henry Avray was born near Paris in 1855 while his parents were residing in France before moving into Brasted Place in Kent. This was a house built by Robert Adam in 1784, for Dr. Turton, physician to George III. Tipping's formative years were spent at Brasted. Tipping was educated in France and then in Middlesex before going up to Christchurch, Oxford in 1874. Lady Congreve, writing a personal recollection after his death, remembers him at this time as "slightly bitten by the fashionable craze for aestheticism; he wore his hair long, and large flowers, such as hyacinths in his buttonhole. She also tells us "He was an important member of the Oxford University Dramatic Society and a very fine actor – he would have made a name for himself professionally if there was not so many other things he was better at than most people. He was very fond of getting up plays for village charities. His versatility was amazing – he was even an accomplished cook."

He left Oxford in 1878 with a First in Modern History. He worked for a short period as a University Lecturer and then joined the staff of the Dictionary of National Biography for Lord Lee. Lord Lee later asked Tipping to design the south garden at Chequers. He then presented Chequers to the nation for the use of the Prime Minister.

Tipping had distinguished himself in Oxford debating circles, and could have made a brilliant politician, but his real love was plants and his love of plants led him to designing gardens, and gardens led to houses. Christopher Hussey in writing about Tipping says "As a young man he was one of a small band of followers that gathered round William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll in their crusade for natural planting.

He started writing articles for *The Garden*, a magazine founded by William Robinson. When *The Garden* became absorbed by *Country Life* in 1905, Tipping became the principal contributor for *Country Life* and transformed it from a country sportman's journal such that the country house and gardens articles became its most characteristic feature. He wrote most of his articles from 1907 to 1933, as well as collating these into nine volumes of *English Homes* published between 1920 and 1928. At the same time, Gertrude Jekyll was writing gardening articles for *Country Life*, and Ralph Edward was writing articles on furniture with Percy Macquoid.

In Tipping's book *Gardens of Today* published in 1933, he mentions that he was first presented with a garden when he was seven years old, and that he had been a gardener for some three score years and ten. Besides studying and practising garden techniques, he also took training in architecture. In pursuing these interests he found a kindred spirit in Harold Peto, practising architect and garden designer. Tipping and Peto found Iford Manor together, and Peto designed the garden there on an

Italian theme.

From about 1880 onwards Tipping bought, occupied and subsequently sold a succession of medium sized estates in Monmouthshire. The sites were all carefully chosen, having regard to historical associations, aspect, soil, rocks and natural water. If there was no stream, Tipping would create one and often a waterfall using water pumped from some distance. The laying out of the garden was a very important part of the overall scheme. The usual design was to have formal gardens close to the house and let this merge gradually into a carefully planned natural garden and woodlands.

Tipping financed these early projects with money inherited from his father. Later his income was augmented by fees charged for giving advice on the restoration of buildings such as Brinsop Court in Herefordshire, and for designing large county gardens. Once he had finished a house and garden, he was restless to start a new challenge and would move onto another project.

In 1894 Tipping bought some land and what remained of some old buildings at Mathern where the Bishops of Llandaff had resided from 1406 to 1706. He renovated the Palace without interfering with its picturesque appearance. He laid out the gardens with an architectural framework intervening between the house and outer areas. Tipping lived at Mathern for nearly 20 years, and wrote about it twice, in *Country Life* in 1915, and in *English Gardens* in 1925. He added a timber clad wing to the Jacobean block in which he created the Oak Parlour.

The Oak Parlour represents an ideal which Tipping



H. Avray Tipping.



High Glanau. The lower West Terrace, in spring 2008.



High Glanau and its gardens photographed by the the author in autumn 2007.

© Helena Gerrish

cherished and returned to again and again in all his houses. It was a simple room, with light entering through several mullioned windows, a floor of oak or quarry tiles, plain walls and an open joisted ceiling. The perfect setting for his oak furniture, pewter plates and ewers. The room at Mathern does not exist now, but he had it carefully photographed for *Country Life*.

In 1912 after the death of his mother aged 91, and the last of his brothers, Tipping sold Brasted Place and Mathern Palace, and started on his most ambitious building project, Mounton House near Chepstow. This was in collaboration with a young Chepstow architect, Eric Francis, who had trained under Guy Dawber and Detmar Blow, two masters of the Arts and Crafts house. He built a fine half-timbered mansion in Jacobean style with a large central oak parlour. He used local stone, much of it quarried on the estate and he laid out extensive gardens. In his bedroom the plasterwork was copied from the gallery ceiling at Chastleton in Oxfordshire. The gardens began with a long flagged terrace, with rockeries intercrossed by paths. There was a pergola garden, a tribute to William Robinson whose great gardens at Gravetye Tipping much admired. There was also a parterre garden. A steam pump was set up to drive water up the hill to the house from the water gardens he had constructed in the sandstone gorge beneath the house. The cost of Mounton, some £40,000, earned it the nickname of “Tipping’s Folly”. Tipping lived in some splendour at Mounton for ten years. The gardens, which were tended by twelve outdoor staff, attracted visitors from all over the world, and he entertained peers and Cabinet Ministers including Lloyd George and Stanley Baldwin, and famous people from the stage and art world.

Tipping’s formula for the design of houses was apparent by 1920. His ideal is that of the first quarter of the seventeenth century, both for inside and out. One of the best examples is Wyndcliffe Court, built for the Clay family and another collaboration with Chepstow architect, Eric Francis. Once again there is a central oak parlour with an ornate plaster ceiling. Tipping added a fascinating garden with terraces, topiary and lawns linking different levels, a sunken garden and a summer house. The terrace is extended by two shallow flights of steps descending to a round pool, very similar to Edwin Lutyens’ and

Gertrude Jekyll’s one at Hestercombe.

By 1922, Tipping had given Mounton to his late brother’s godson, and set about his last Monmouthshire country home and garden at High Glanau on high ground above Monmouth. This, together with his London residence, Harefield House, was to be his home for the last ten years of his life. The many-gabled house in its own woods was designed almost entirely by Eric Francis. Special care was taken with the panelling of the parlour, which was measured out to fit Tipping’s pictures. Again fine plaster ceilings were made for the parlour and living room. In the garden there are formal terraces near the house leading down to pools, pergola and woodland walks, with a hydraulic ram on the stream to pump up 20,000 gallons per 24 hours to the fountains above.

During his life Tipping’s literary output was immense. It is said that there is hardly a historic house throughout Britain that he did not visit at least once. In the early days his travelling was done by horse and carriage or railway, later in a small car, accompanied by a secretary. Tipping also wrote several other books including *Grinling Gibbons and the Woodwork of his Age* (1914), *History of the Welsh Fusiliers* (1916), *English Furniture of the Cabriole Period* (1923), as well as contributing weekly garden articles to *The Observer* and *The Morning Post*.

In November 1933, Tipping died of cancer at Harefield House in Middlesex at the age of 78. He left £100,000 to his head gardener, Walter Wood, aged 31 and to his brother William Wood, chauffeur and valet, aged 28, who nursed him during his final illness. Tipping had started his last project, a water garden in the Cotswolds near Chipping Norton, but died before it was completed. He was buried at St. Martin’s Church in Brasted.

Henry Avray Tipping was an enigma and an eccentric, but also a great scholar with a phenomenal historical mind, who with his boundless energy for houses and gardens has influenced architectural historians, garden designers and interior designers throughout the twentieth century.

Helena Gerrish is an M.A. student in Garden History at Bristol University. She resides at High Glanau.

Meet Catherine Jones

Catherine Jones started working for WHGT in November as Administration Assistant.

Her background is in biomedical science, having worked in NHS diagnostic laboratories for almost 20 years. Also interested in complementary healthcare, she left laboratory work in 2006 and set up a complementary therapies practice in Horsham, West Sussex. She recently relocated to Llandeilo and looks forward to being based in Aberglasney Gardens.

Her first task will be to update the membership database and ensure that claiming Gift Aid will generate as much

revenue as possible for the Trust. She can be found in the Bothy, Aberglasney Gardens, supporting Andrea Dudley for 6 hours per week, initially on Tuesdays.

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Cheap travel insurance can prove false economy



Taking out cheap travel insurance can end up costing holidaymakers dearly, especially if they are heading out to the slopes this winter. One in three travel insurance claims are for medical expenses for people enjoying a winter sports break.

The costs for medical treatment in ski resorts can be very high. For example, inpatient treatment with surgery can cost up to £50,000 in the USA. It is not just the cover levels that are the problem, cheap policies often don't include much needed extras, such as helicopter recovery from the slopes. If consumers simply go for the cheapest travel insurance policy on the market they could discover their claim is rejected and they are left with a huge bill.

A good winter sports travel insurance policy would include cover for skiing or snowboarding, piste closure, ski equipment, luggage, medical costs including rescue and repatriation liability to others.

Two thirds of holidaymakers in the UK continue to buy single-trip travel insurance when it may be more beneficial to purchase annual cover. If you go abroad more than a couple of times a year it's worth taking out an annual policy.

And despite the fact that it is now easier than ever to buy travel insurance, one in ten travellers are still failing to take out cover, sometimes with disastrous and costly consequence as those falling ill or being injured abroad can face hefty bills.

For more information on NFU Mutual's travel insurance contact one of our local agents. Find your local agent at nfmutool.co.uk or call 0800 197 1283.

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UK Passport Service: www.ukps.gov.uk