

My ideal garden: Thomas Mawson



Visit **Russell Gardens** to learn about Edwardian landscape designer **Thomas Mawson** and his work and to inspire pupils to create their own **Thomas Mawson-style garden design**.

Suitable for **KS2**, adaptable for **KS1**



Curriculum areas covered:



**Art & Design
and Arts Award**
Learn about great artists
and analyse and
respond to their work
Sketchbooks



History
Continuity and change
Timescales
Methods of enquiry



Geography
Communicate
geographical
information
in a variety of ways



English
Composition
Non-fiction



Mathematics
Measuring
Shapes and lines
of symmetry
Problem-solving



**Physical
Education**
Sustained
activity

Before your visit:

- Talk to pupils about Thomas Mawson. You can find information on **My ideal garden: Thomas Mawson resource sheet 1** or online here.
<http://www.kearsneyparks.co.uk/About-the-parks/People/Thomas-Mawson.aspx>
- The resource sheet contains images of Dyffryn Gardens in Wales, designed by Mawson six years after Russell Gardens. Ask pupils to note some of the features (e.g., lily pond, steps, topiary, geometry, pavilions on lake, fountain).



Where to go:

- Collect the **PUPILS' GREY RESOURCE RUCKSACKS** then go to Russell Gardens.



During the visit:

- Ask pupils to explore the gardens between the lake and the main house to find as many of the Mawson features they listed as they can find, as well as noting and or sketching/drawing other manmade features they discover.
- Ask pupils to look at old photographs of the gardens as they looked soon after they were built on **My ideal garden: Thomas Mawson resource sheet 2** (or look online here).
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/136100065@N03/sets/72157668939367632/with/26890546703/>
- Ask them to find the places on the photographs and discuss what has changed. They could take a photograph or do a sketch to show how that part of the garden looks today. You could also ask them to look at the photographs of the Barlow family on the **Time travellers resource sheet** as a catalyst to discuss other changes over the past century.
- Talk about the formality and symmetry of the garden layout. Walk from the lake towards the house. How many geometric shapes can they find? Where are the lines of symmetry?
- Ask pupils to find ways to measure the features and the distance between them and to produce a sketch plan of the site, with measurements noted. Look at the **Sketch plan resource sheet** or the aerial view (see **My ideal garden: Thomas Mawson resource sheet 2** or find online below) to check children's perceptions and ask them to revise their plans accordingly.
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/136100065@N03/21303287381/in/album-72157658365364906/>



After the visit:

- Ask pupils to do more research on Thomas Mawson and produce a study of his life and work.
- Ask pupils to transform their sketch plan into a measured drawing.
- Ask pupils to design their own Thomas Mawson-style garden.
- Or ask them to design a single feature to add to the existing park, in the appropriate style.

Resources during visit:

- Use on-site **GREY RESOURCE RUCKSACKS** for **My ideal garden: Thomas Mawson resource sheet 2**, **Time travellers resource sheet** and **Sketch plan resource sheet** as well as clipboards and waterproof mats in case of rain.
- **School to supply:** writing and drawing materials (pens/pencils and paper).

Curriculum links:

Art & Design and Arts Award:

- Produce creative work, exploring their ideas and recording their experiences.
- Become proficient in drawing, painting, sculpture and other art, craft and design techniques.
- Evaluate and analyse creative works using the language of art, craft and design.
- Know about great artists, craft makers and designers, and understand the historical and cultural development of their art forms.

History:

- Understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses.
- Understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed.

Geography:

- Communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including through maps, numerical and quantitative skills and writing at length.

English:

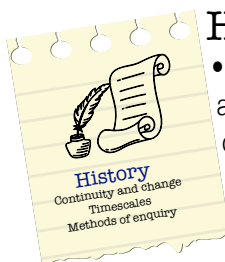
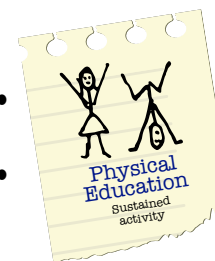
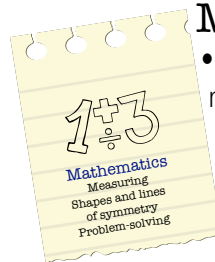
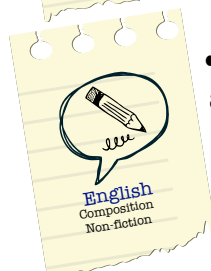
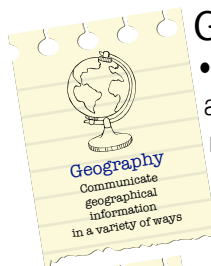
- Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Comprehension (both listening and reading).
- Composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

Mathematics:

- Can solve problems by applying their mathematics to a variety of routine and non-routine problems with increasing sophistication, including breaking down problems into a series of simpler steps and persevering in seeking solutions.

Physical Education:

- Are physically active for sustained periods of time.
- Lead healthy, active lives.



Resource Sheet 1 Thomas Mawson (1861-1933)



Thomas Hayton Mawson (1861-1933) was the most celebrated landscape architect of the Edwardian era and a leading exponent of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The bulk of his work dates from 1890-1920.

Mawson was born near Lancaster and worked with his uncle, a builder.

His early career included setting up the Lakeland Nursery in Windermere. Such was its success that Mawson turned his attention to landscape design.

His first commission was Graythwaite Hall on the shores of Lake Windermere. Mawson went on to have a long association with Cumbria, including designing the gardens at Brockhole which is today the home to the Lake District Visitor Centre.

Mawson worked on many prestigious garden, park and civic space projects across the world, including America, Canada, and Europe. In 1908 he won a competition to design the Peace Palace Gardens at The Hague.

Russell Gardens (originally known as Kearsney Court Gardens) is a rare example of his work in south east England, and is believed to be one of his earliest independent commissions (circa 1901). Several set piece photographs of the gardens appear in Mawson's book, *The Art and Craft of Garden Making* (1901), one of the first books to be profusely illustrated with photographs.

Unlike his contemporary, Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932), Mawson took a more structural/architectural approach to garden design in which the planting was subordinate to the structure. This approach can be clearly seen in Russell Gardens in which his signature features - terracing, canal pond, boathouse and pergola bridges - are the focal points of the park.

In 1923 Mawson became the President of the Town Planning Institute and in 1929 the first President of the Institute of Landscape Architects.

Dyffryn Gardens, Wales

Designed by Thomas Mawson in 1906



Above: The south front of Dyffryn House from the front lawn, Vale of Glamorgan
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Right: The south front of Dyffryn House from the steps on the Great Lawn, Vale of Glamorgan
www.nationaltrust.org.uk



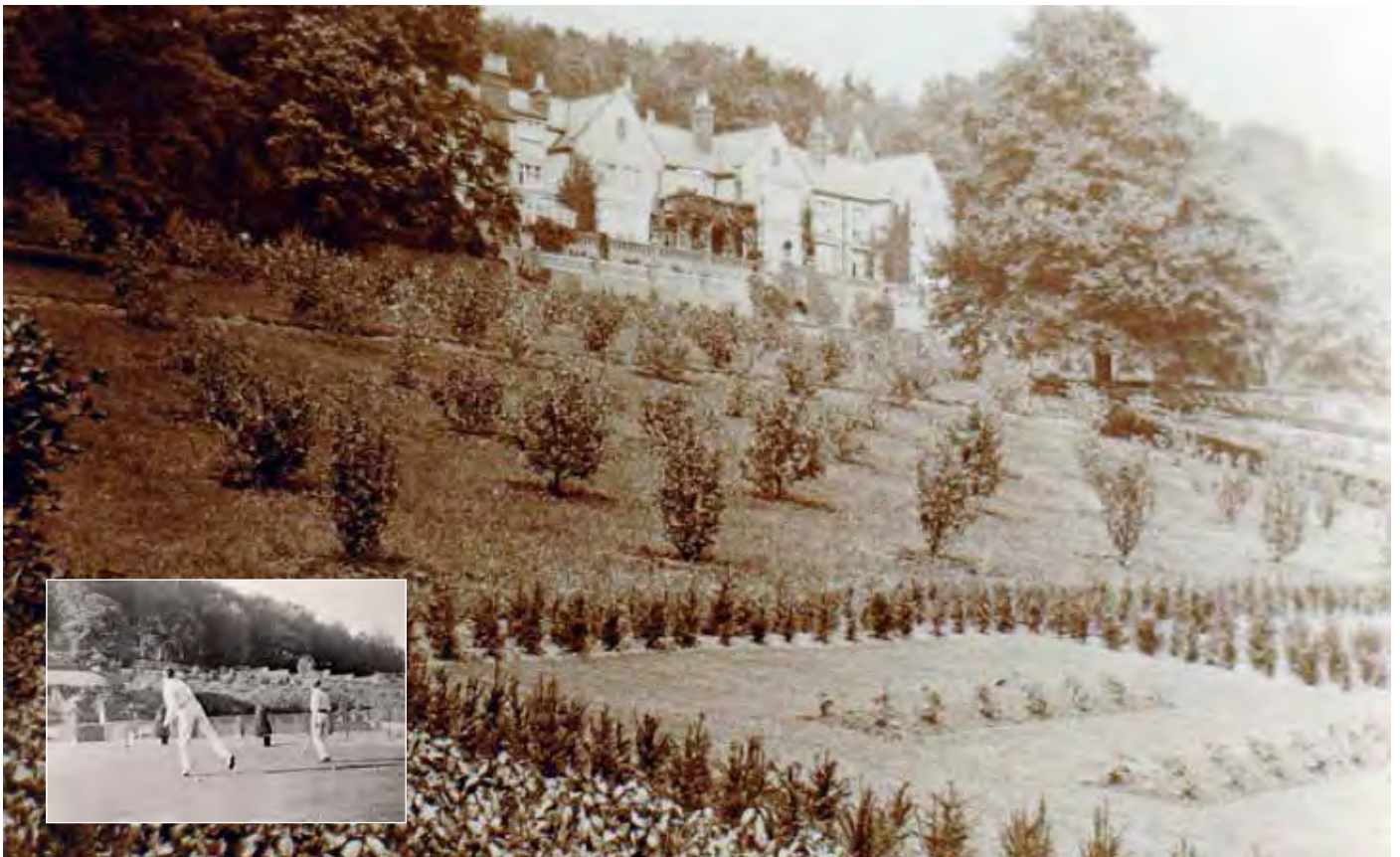
Visitors by the fountain pool at Dyffryn Gardens, Wales
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Resource Sheet 2 (a)

My ideal garden - Thomas Mawson



Resource Sheet 2 (b) My ideal garden - Thomas Mawson



View from the house after 1920 showing the loss of the formal flower beds in the bastion garden. The Barlows and Johnstones had employed seven gardeners who worked full time.

Resource Sheet - Kearsney Parks Sketch Map

