



Above and above left: High Glanau as COUNTRY LIFE photographed it for an article published in 1929. Henry Avray Tipping was an accomplished garden designer and he bought the land in 1922 to create his last house and garden

WORDS can hardly express how I felt when I first saw High Glanau in 2002, a perfect Arts-and-Crafts house, set on a steep hillside above Monmouth with its spectacular views over the Vale of Usk towards the Brecon Beacons. I had vaguely heard of Henry Avray Tipping, who built the house in 1923, as, for more than 50 years, I'd been an avid reader of COUNTRY LIFE. As a child, I had spent Sunday afternoons poring over the adverts of country houses in my grandparents' and parents' collections of the magazine.

Only later did I discover that Tipping had lived in Monmouthshire, in three different houses, for nearly 40 years and that he was the Architectural Editor of COUNTRY LIFE from 1907 until his death in 1933. His weekly articles and large *oeuvre* of books on country houses and their gardens influenced a whole generation in the early 20th century.

The house itself and its perfect unity of vernacular architecture with liberal use of oak panelling and mullion windows as well as its delightful sweep of stone-tiled roofs reminded me of houses designed by Lutyens, but, in fact, it was a collaboration between Tipping and a young Chepstow architect, Eric Carwardine Francis.

From a charming garden room, I surveyed the upper and lower western terraces and the octagonal pool below, from which a flight of moss-covered steps led to the wild garden in a wooded valley. Hidden beneath ivy and brambles, a rustic path winding under species rhododendrons led me down ➤

A journey of exhilarating discovery

High Glanau Manor, Monmouth

Helena Gerrish describes the rescue of a fine Arts-and-Crafts garden at the final home of H. Avray Tipping, which is part of a COUNTRY LIFE exclusive tour later this year



Facing page and above: Following a fallow period in which much of the garden became overgrown, it has been painstakingly reclaimed and restored over the past dozen years by Helena Gerrish. The design of the house was a collaboration between Tipping and a young Chepstow architect, Eric Carwardine Francis



Rhapsody in blue: the restored herbaceous borders, including delphiniums and *Iris sibirica*. Right: Helena Gerrish



‘I’ve been lucky to restore the house and garden of this talented man’

Visit High Glanau with COUNTRY LIFE in September

THE mountains and moorlands marking the borders of England and Wales are carved up by wooded river valleys, verdant farmlands and a rich seam of outstanding private gardens. Our tailor-made exclusive tour, in the soft light and residual warmth of mid-September, will be hosted by Helena Attlee, the engaging author of *The Gardens of Wales*, who has lived in the region for many years.

From the relaxing comfort of our base at Gliffaes Country House Hotel, we will venture forth to a stimulating collection of private gardens, including Brilley Court, surrounding a 16th-century farmhouse; the plantsman’s paradise of Lower House on the edge of Hay-on-Wye; atmospheric Llowes Court; and Sir Roy Strong’s reworked garden at The Laskett.

Medieval Allt-y-Bela, with its ochre render, is the home of garden designer Arne Maynard and Brockhampton Cottage has a hillside garden by Tom Stuart-Smith. At Wyndcliffe Court and High Glanau Manor, we find a pair of superbly restored Arts-and-Crafts gardens connected with H. Avray Tipping, and The Pant reveals a complex contemporary garden with Persian influences.

Run by garden-holiday specialist Boxwood Tours, our borderland sojourn runs from September 14 to 18 and costs £2,348 per person.

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to the remains of an old grist mill by a stream that meandered between ferns and *Rodgersia*, which live in the shadow of ancient oaks and cherry trees.

Returning to the formal garden, I found, to the south, a four-bedded plat with a rustic stone tank set into the wall with steps leading to a swimming pool surrounded by concrete and lamp-posts. Beyond were nut trees obscuring the remains of a pergola with four huge, cylindrical columns, set against a high wall. Through a gate in the wall, there was a dilapidated, 40ft glasshouse with beaver-tail glass and cast-iron ratchets that opened all the windows.

There was no herbaceous planting left in the garden, but the romantic backbones beckoned me to find out more. Owing to my children leaving home for university, I acquired a new-found freedom and, realising my good fortune in inheriting such a garden, I embarked on a garden-design course, signed up for the RHS courses in horticulture and began my gardening career.

I contacted the COUNTRY LIFE Picture Library to find out whether it had any photographs of the house or garden and found it had 24 negatives from glass plates, which they could print for me. Eventually, a brown envelope arrived with marvellous images of a perfect Edwardian garden: huge herbaceous borders with a grass walk between, terraces planted with drifts of peonies, poppies, iris and achilleas softening the hard architectural lines, woodland walks with azaleas and rhododendrons sweeping down over the steep stone path leading down to

the stream garden with its fernery, primula beds along the waterside and a hydraulic ram that sent water 200ft up the hillside for the water features.

The more I worked in the garden, the more intrigued I became with the man who had created such a paradise. I found he had written many important books—nine huge volumes on country houses, books on furniture and wood carving, a book on garden history and a practical garden book, as well as the garden column for *The Observer* and *The Morning Post*. I bought his works on the internet and in old bookshops and began to research the story of his life. I visited everywhere he had lived and each garden he’d designed, discovered who his colleagues were and learnt of his close friendships with William Robinson, Gertrude Jekyll and Harold Peto.

The most exciting discovery was Tipping’s own 1908 diary documenting his social life in London, with Edward Hudson, the owner of COUNTRY LIFE, lunches with Lutyens, ‘tea and warmth’ with Jekyll at Munstead Wood and his visits to most of the great country houses in Britain.

I have been smitten by Tipping and, living in his last Welsh home, I’ve been lucky to be able to restore the house and garden of this talented man, a much-respected academic who was a major influence on the history of taste and who needed rescuing from obscurity. High Glanau is the culmination of his lifetime’s experience of architecture and nurture of the landscape.

Helena Gerrish’s *Edwardian Country Life: The Story of H. Avray Tipping* is published by Frances Lincoln