

### **Thomas Hayton Mawson 1861 - 1933**

The life and works of Thomas Mawson are described in Janet Waymark's book, "Thomas Mawson – Life, gardens and landscapes."

He designed in whole or part, 201 private gardens, 28 civic spaces and 24 public parks in the UK, and 24 commissions in Greece, Denmark, Germany, France and Canada. Plymouth's Central Park was his last public park commission and evidently one of the most difficult since he described it like this:

*"Of the very many public parks with which I have been intimately connected during the course of my professional career, practically none had presented so many practical difficulties to overcome as the problem to which you have now entrusted me.*

*"Feeling that this was the most difficult task to which I had as yet set my hand, it nevertheless gave me the opportunity of showing that a successful solution would prove for all time the value of the services of a Landscape Architect and, for your information, I would say that both my staff and I have entered into this work with an enthusiasm which I have rarely felt in any previous schemes with which I have had the honour to be connected."*

Mawson's style can be discerned in the way that he united formal and natural areas, with these being the main hallmarks of his public park designs:

- Bold lineal avenues between the main entrances and meeting areas with reception buildings of some architectural quality to accommodate cafes, toilets and storerooms.
- Formal gardens with paths and borders laid out symmetrically on either side of the entrance avenues.
- Wide terraced areas around the reception buildings.
- Extensive networks of paths that lead into and through the areas of more naturalistic landscapes.
- Water and rock features that imitate natural settings.

The City Engineer's design in 1931 retained all these elements and included others in a Mawson style such as a formal entrance leading from Peverell Park Road.

The most complete example of a Mawson park is at Stanley Park in Blackpool which he designed in 1922, six years before Plymouth's Central Park. Other examples of Mawson-like features can be seen in Norwich where one of his former employees, Captain A. Sandys-Winsch, designed four parks between 1921 and 1929. In each, Mawson's design hallmarks are very evident.