

## CASTELL MALGWYN

**Ref number** PGW (Dy) 32 (PEM)

**OS Map** 145

**Grid ref** SN 213 435

**Former county** Dyfed

**Unitary authority** Pembrokeshire

**Community council** Manordeifi

**Designations** Listed buildings: Castell Malgwyn (Grade II); Castell Malgwyn Lodge (Grade II); Gatepiers and gates to Castell Malgwyn Hotel (Grade II); Castell Malgwyn bridge (Grade II); Main farmyard group at Castell Malgwyn Farm (Grade II)

Scheduled Ancient Monument: Castell Malgwyn bridge (Pe 383)

**Site evaluation** Grade II\*

**Primary reasons for grading** The survival, almost in its entirety, of intricate and highly picturesque landscaping dating mainly to about 1795 - 1811. Some work was carried out on the grounds by one of the few Welsh professional landscapers of the period, Charles Price of Llechryd. The setting for this landscaping is one of extreme beauty and picturesqueness, with the contrasting valleys of the Teifi and Morgenau included in the grounds. The picturesque walks laid out in these valleys are a rare survival and can be compared with Piercefield (Monmouthshire) and Hafod (Ceredigion). Castell Malgwyn has other landscaping features of interest, including remains of a detached ornamental garden which includes a large fountain.

**Type of site** Small park; gardens; pleasure grounds and walks; walled kitchen garden

**Main phases of construction** 1791 - 1811; 1837 - 49; 1860s - 1914

### Site description

Castell Malgwyn, formerly Castle Malgwyn and now a hotel, is a substantial mansion situated on the south bank of the river Teifi, just to the south-west of the village of Llechryd. It is set within a small park, garden and extensive pleasure grounds between the Teifi, which bounds the north and west sides of the property, the minor road running south from Llechryd Bridge to Boncath and Garnons' Mill Road on the south.

The house is Georgian in style, built of local Cilgerran stone, with sash windows and a hipped slate roof. The main block, which faces east, is three-storey; behind, to the west, is a two-storey wing, with a small, partly cobbled, service court at the end, open to the north. In the centre of the east front is a round-arched front door. A modern extension has been built on to the south side.

The present house dates to about 1795. Richard Fenton, in 1810, called it an 'elegant modern building'. The new house replaced a house called variously Plas, Tyrcoed y Garth and Penygored, and was at first called Ty mawr-y-gwaith. Soon afterwards it became Castle Malgwyn, which it is called on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1 in. Ordnance Survey map of 1830. The house was built by Sir Benjamin Hammet, a wealthy entrepreneur from Taunton, Somerset, who bought the property in 1791. He was attracted by the tin-plate works at Penygored, which had been established by Cornish manufacturers in 1764-70. The works were situated between the house and the river and were powered by water from a canal off the Teifi, which started at Manordeifi and ran westwards to the works, parallel with the river. Sir Benjamin also built a model farm, to the south-east of the house. After his death in 1802 his wife and son John continued at Castle Malgwyn. The tin-plate works were demolished in 1806. John died, aged 43, in 1811, at which point the effects, but not the house and estate, were sold. These were only sold when Lady Louisa, Sir Benjamin's widow, died, in about 1824. They were bought by Abel Anthony Gower, from nearby Glandovan, who let the property. On Abel Anthony's death in 1837 his nephew, Abel Lewes Gower, inherited the property and spent vast sums of money on its improvement until his death, aged 52, in 1849. This included a lodge, grand entrance, stable court, and a new garden next to the kitchen garden. After Abel Lewes's death, according to the Revd J.R. Phillips (1867) his widow Elizabeth remained for many years 'in a state of indifference'. Eventually she revived in the early 1860s, possibly as a result of the arrival in the area of her nephew James Stewart and in 1866 was making preparations to enlarge and remodel the house in the 'castellated style of architecture'. This was not carried out. The weather-vane above the south entrance arch to the farm court, marked 'EG 1867' shows that Elizabeth was also improving the farm buildings at this time.

After Elizabeth Gower's death in 1876 the house and estate were inherited by her brother-in-law, Robert Frederick Gower, who had also inherited Glandovan from Abel Anthony. Robert rented out Glandovan and lived at Clunderwen, in south Pembrokeshire. On Elizabeth's death he moved into Castle Malgwyn but died in 1884, at which point his son, Erasmus, took over. The Gower family continued at Castle Malgwyn and finally sold it in 1948. It became a hotel in 1962 and remains so.

The stable court lies to the north of the house, on low-lying ground next to the river Teifi. It is entered on its east side from the drive through large, square piers, about 3.5 m high, of cut Cilgerran stone. They are topped by large ball finials on curving plinths and are flanked by walls sloping down to lower piers about 1.2 m high. The main piers are set at a slight angle to the drive and stable court, perhaps indicating a different original alignment of the drives. To the south a low wall curves round from the outer pier and continues as the east parapet of the lower bridge.

The former stables and coach houses are ranged around a large square court of single-storey Cilgerran stone buildings with pitched slate roofs. In the centre of the east side is an imposing entrance tower with a high round-arched entrance, upper storey room, stepped gables with stone clock faces in the centre of both outer and inner sides, and a tall octagonal cupola on top with an octagonal dome supported on round, wooden arches. In the north-west corner of the court is a plain, two-storey building with a flat parapet hiding the roof. In its north-east corner is a taller, octagonal dovecote with a curving slate roof topped by a ball finial. Between the stone corner piers are slate panels with triangular openings. The stables and coach houses have been converted into holiday accommodation but double doors remain on

the north (three), south (one) and west (one) sides. The interior has been gravel surfaced.

The stable court was part of the improvement programme of Abel Lewes Gower. It was built in 1844-45, designed by the London architect Ambrose Poynter. He also designed the lodge and entrance piers, which were built at the same time.

A small park lies to the east of the house and pleasure grounds, bounded on the north by the river Teifi, on the west by the wooded and steep-sided valley of Cwm Morgenau and on the south and east by minor roads. The ground drops gently northwards towards the river and is now two large pasture fields in which stand a few isolated deciduous trees, including five limes in the north-east corner. A narrow belt of ornamental trees runs along the west side of the Llechryd-Boncath road bounding the park on the east and there is a strip of woodland along the north side of the Garnon's Mill Road on the south side.

The park was created by Sir Benjamin Hammet in 1791 - 1811 and is contemporary with the house and pleasure grounds. It is shown on the 1819 and 1830 1 in. Ordnance Survey maps and on an 1820 estate map, with an oval clump near its north end and another next to the Boncath road. These are also shown on the 1842 tithe map. Both maps also show belts of planting along the south edge of the park and along the drive to the farm, which would suggest that the large field to the east of the Boncath road was also being treated as parkland at this time. By 1888/89 (25 in. Ordnance Survey map) more planting has been added. The belts have been extended and been given wavy edges; there are two more clumps in the south end of the park and some clumps have been planted in the fields to the east of the Boncath road, where the original large field has been divided into five. The belt along the drive to the farm has now gone and the clumps have been reduced to a few trees.

The drive to the house runs westwards along the north side of the park, from the entrance just south of Llechryd Bridge. The wide entrance is flanked by substantial, rectangular gate piers, about 3.8 m high, of cut Cilgerran stone, with a lodge to the north. The whole ensemble was designed by the architect Ambrose Poynter and built in 1844-45 to terminate the new drive, which is contemporary. The piers are classical in style, with rusticated pilasters on the inner and outer sides flanking round-headed niches. Above are simple entablatures. Large iron gates with spearheads are attached to each pier but the gap between them is too wide for them to close. This is explained by the fact that the south gate was moved, and its outer pedestrian gate destroyed, in 1969/70 (so that the swimming pool could be delivered). On the north side there is a pedestrian gateway, with similar gate and flanking rusticated piers, about 2.2 m high. That on the south side is a short extension to the main gate pier. That on the other side is attached to a curving wall, about 2.1 m high, in front of the lodge. It curves out to the road and ends in a plain square pier, to which is attached a similar wall running westwards to the lodge. On the south side of the entrance there is a short stretch of low wall between the main pier and an outer pier similar to the corresponding one on the other side. An old photograph of the entrance shows that the piers were originally topped by ornate cresting.

The lodge, of the same date, construction and stone as the gatepiers, stands on the north side of the drive, just inside the entrance. It is a small, single-storey building, with pitched slate roof, attic and 'Dutch' gables. In the north gable, facing the river and Llechryd, is a heraldic panel carved with the Gower coat of arms and motto.

On the south side of the entrance the Llechryd-Boncath road crosses a wide, shallow-arched rubble stone bridge, with cut-stone arch. This was built by Sir

Benjamin Hammet in 1799 to carry the road over the newly built canal which supplied power for his tin-plate works. On the east and west sides are cast-iron keystones with Sir Benjamin's crest and, on the east 'Castle Malgwyn Bridge 1799' and on the west 'Sir Benjn Hammet 1799'. The canal became defunct in 1806, when the works was demolished. Its dry bed runs along the south side of the drive.

The public road from Llechryd to Cilgerran originally ran westwards from the bridge, to the south of the canal, and past the east front of the house. Sir Benjamin Hammet was granted permission to have this road closed in 1798 and to build, at his own expense, a new public road further south, skirting the park and grounds. The new road was built by 1800 and the closure of the old removed the major impediment to the creation of an integrated landscaping scheme of park and pleasure grounds. The eastern part of the old road, between Llechryd bridge and the house, was used as the drive until the present one was made in the 1840s.

The tarmac drive runs westwards from the entrance on a raised embankment, revetted on the north side by a dry-stone wall about 1.3 m high. This is mostly in good condition but is crumbling in places. The gently curving drive is flanked by mature ornamental trees, in particular lime, beech and, half way along, a large oak on the south side. As it nears the house the drive divides: ahead, to the west, is the entrance to the stable court. The main drive curves round to the south and crosses a wide-arched stone bridge, with iron fencing in place of parapets, over the river Morgenau. This is of identical construction to the canal bridge at the other end of the drive and was undoubtedly built by Sir Benjamin Hammet, also in about 1799. Originally the Morgenau would have run into the canal just upstream from the bridge, which would have crossed the canal. South of the bridge the drive runs a short distance south-westwards up to a small tarmacked forecourt in front of the house. This stretch is flanked by mature beech trees. A metalled back drive branches westwards after the bridge and leads to the service court, which is partly cobbled. On its south side the drive is built into a slope and is revetted with a dry-stone wall, with a flight of cut stone steps set into it towards its west end. The drive stands on a high revetment wall on its north side. To the west of the service court the drive, now a stony track, leads down to the river and joins two paths descending the slope from the garden. A level area next to the river is a former croquet lawn and hidden in laurels are two lime kilns, which are all that is left of the tin-plate works.

About 50 m below the main drive bridge is another, reached from the back drive. Of similar construction and date, it has a single, wide arch, flat-topped parapets about 0.7 m high and leads to the forecourt of the stable block. Between the two bridges the watercourse is revetted with high rubble stone walls with tops of large cut stones.

The garden and pleasure grounds around the house, although contiguous, are divided into three distinct areas. First, there is the garden next to the house. Secondly there are the woodland pleasure grounds further away. These fall into two areas - the Teifi valley and the Morgenau valley - which run south-west and south from the garden, giving the whole area an inverted Y shape. Thirdly, there is a detached garden at some distance from the house, close to the kitchen garden.

The first area, the main garden, lies to the east and south of the house. To the east the ground slopes down towards the Morgenau valley; to the south it slopes gently upwards towards a plateau between the Morgenau and Teifi valleys. On the east, the garden consists mainly of a large croquet lawn cut into the slope, with a small wooden pavilion at its south end. The drive crosses the north end of the area and

to its north is a bank planted with mixed trees and shrubs, dominated by mature beech trees underplanted with rhododendrons and holly. To the north of this is the back drive. From the forecourt a gravel section of drive curves around the south end of the croquet lawn, backed by a low dry-stone wall, and along its east side. The southern boundary of the lawn to the south, and of the lawn south of the house, is planted with a belt of mixed ornamental trees and shrubs, including conifers.

On the south side of the house there is a steep bank next to the modern extension to the house, above which is a large lawn bounded by trees and shrubs. The lower part of the lawn is levelled and was originally a tennis lawn. Above this the ground slopes up gently to the belt of trees, fringed with rhododendrons and azaleas. In the south corner is a large, multi-stemmed cypress. A modern swimming pool (1969/70) occupies the north-west corner of the garden. Just south of the pool a path, now grassed over but originally gravelled, leads south-westwards across the lawn, through the ornamental shrub belt and into the woodland area flanking the river Teifi. Another path leads into this area from the west side of the swimming pool.

The outer area of pleasure grounds is quite different in character from the main garden. In the two valleys, which are naturally wooded but which have been enhanced with some extra planting of trees and, near the garden, rhododendrons and laurel, a more Picturesque style has been adhered to. Walks have been threaded through the landscape, and a few built structures added, in order to open up and show off its natural beauties. The scenery here is of exceptional beauty and is extraordinarily unspoilt; landscaping has had a minimal impact on its appearance. Although both valleys are steep-sided and wooded they are otherwise of contrasting characters, which enhances the overall appeal of the pleasure grounds.

At Castell Malgwyn the Teifi flows first west, flanked by the drive and park, then turns to run southwards along the west side of the pleasure grounds. The valley sides are precipitous, lightly wooded with mixed deciduous trees, dominated by beech. The broad, dark river occupies the entire valley floor. At the north end of the grounds, nearest the garden, ornamental planting grades into natural, with mixed planting of oak, beech, conifers, sweet chestnut, holly, rhododendrons and bamboos. The main path leads down the slope towards the river. It has a stony surface, is built up above the slope and is overhung with rhododendrons and laurels. Soon after it enters the woodland there are branches to the left and right. That to the right leads to the service track and to the other path from the lawn. That to the left leads to a complex network of paths on the upper part of the slope. The main path leads down to meet the former towpath along the river (a public footpath from Llechryd Bridge downstream). This winds along beside the river, at times cut into the rock. The path from the service track joins this path higher upstream. At the western end of the path, where it reaches an area of quarries to the north-east of Cilgerran, there is a flight of 21 slate steps, with two dates carved into the adjacent slate wall - 26<sup>th</sup> December 1880 and April 1886. These probably commemorate the building, and possibly alteration or repair, of the steps.

The upper network of paths along the Teifi valley is extensive and extremely complex. The main, arterial paths, are easily walkable, with level surfaces, in places cut into the rock, and easy gradients. These tend to follow the contours along the valley, or rise and drop gently. Linking them are a number of smaller, steeper and narrower paths, which in places zig-zag steeply up and down the slope. Although all are traceable, they are more difficult to walk. At the top of the southernmost zig-zag path, on the lip of the valley, is the northern end of a dry-stone wall, of vertically set stones, about 1.2 m high. This runs southwards along the woodland boundary. At its

north end there is a short section of horizontally set wall and a short return at right-angles, towards the south-east. Next to this is a gate between upright slate piers, with another stone wall outside it. The track running north to the lawn starts at this gate. It has a stony, mostly grass-covered surface. This is the former public road to Cilgerran. To the south of the gate are fields and the road/track has gone.

At the northern end of the Teifi section of the pleasure grounds, near the south edge of the garden, is a complicated arrangement of paths; one curves around the wooded belt fringing the lawn and joins the track leading southwards from the south end of the lawn along the plateau. Another branches right off this and leads southwards along the contour, with a spur to the left after a short distance, which runs eastwards and under a bridge. Shortly after this it joins the north-south track along the western lip of the Morgenau valley.

The bridge carries the north-south track, leading to the lawn at the north end and along the lip of the Teifi valley to the south, over a defile in a rocky ridge. The path runs through a high, barrel-vaulted tunnel, with cut stone arches at each end. The walls of the bridge, which fill the gap between the flanking rock faces, are of rough stones, with some tufa and quartz lumps mixed in. On the south-west side there is some revetment walling against the slope.

The Cwm Morgenau part of the pleasure grounds runs southwards from the east side of the garden to Garnon's Mill Road, a distance of about 0.75 km. This is a smaller valley than the Teifi, the Morgenau being a fast-flowing tributary. The valley is narrow, steep-sided and wooded and the river follows a winding course over a rocky bed. One of the contrasts between the valleys, therefore, is that while the Teifi is quite silent, the Morgenau has a constant background noise of rushing water.

Landscaping in the Morgenau valley consisted, as with the Teifi valley, of opening it up with walks and bridges. A track, which is probably earlier in origin, runs along the western lip of the valley. At its north end, where it drops down towards the river, it is cut into the rock and partly revetted with dry-stone walling. The main path runs up the west side of the river for most of its length. At the north end it branches off the track opposite the middle of the lawn south of the house. Soon after this a section has slipped and become overgrown, making access to the remainder of the walk a matter of crossing and re-crossing the river. However, the entire length of the rest of the walk is passable and for the most part well preserved. It is partly cut into the rock and in places revetted with dry-stone walling, both on its lower and upper sides. About two-thirds of the way upstream there is a sharp bend in the river and much of the path has been washed away here. Soon after this, to the south, the walk crosses the river on a slender, single-arched stone bridge. This has a beautiful round arch, cut stone round the arch faces, in the same style as the other bridges, and very low parapets. On its south-east side the bank above the river is revetted and the casing for a ram pump is built into the slope behind. The pump has gone. Immediately to the south of the bridge the stream narrows and there is a noisy artificial cascade, deliberately placed to enhance the picturesque experience at the bridge.

To the south, the path, now on the east side of the valley, climbs the steep valley side, cut into the rock. In places dry-stone walling has been inserted into cracks in the rock-face to make the side more even. On a steeper section of path there is a flight of four cut stone steps. Half-way to the top a narrower path branches off at an acute angle to the left, with a curving flight of cut stone steps at its foot. This lesser path runs back down the east side of the valley, near the top of the slope, with two spurs leading down to the valley floor where formerly there were footbridges. The main path continues southwards to the top of the slope and runs to the Garnon's Mill

Road, with a branch off to the left. A fine stone bridge, Hammet Bridge, carries the road over the river.

Castell Malgwyn has another ornamental garden that is entirely separate from that adjacent to the house. It lies south of Castle Malgwyn Farm and the kitchen garden, about 1.5 km to the south-east of the house. The roughly rectangular area occupied by the garden is now a pasture field with a few deciduous trees near its south side and oaks along the south boundary. From the west end the ground slopes down to a gently rolling area and then rises gently towards the east end. A track runs parallel with the south wall of the kitchen garden, slightly to the north of the main axial walk of the garden, which has gone. At its east end is Gardens Cottage, a one- and two-storey Victorian stone cottage with steeply pitched roofs, barge boards and brick chimneys. The track leads, on the north side of the cottage, to a gate flanked by square piers of cut stone, about 2.5 m high, with 'acorn' finials on curving plinths. Attached to the piers are iron gates with curving, spearhead tops. Outside the gate is a track, bounded by a low stone wall on the garden boundary, which runs around the outside of the garden area and joins a track to the farm on its west side.

The east end of the garden area is levelled, with a scarp on its south side. In this area is a circular pool, about 3.8 m in diameter, sunken about 1 m but no longer holding water. It is bounded by dry-stone walling with curving, cut stone coping. Bounding the north side of this end of the garden is a stone wall, about 3.5 m high. This is the back wall of a range of glasshouses which has now completely disappeared. The wall has vertical grooves at 0.7 m intervals, some with wooden battening still in place. Towards the east end is a door, with a brick chimney over it, and a row of holes just under the top of the wall. On the north side of the wall is a range of single-storey stone bothies, at present in agricultural use.

At the foot of the slope at the west end of the garden is a larger pool, of similar construction, about 9 m in diameter. A trickle of iron-stained water still runs into it, although it no longer holds water. In the centre is a large fountain. This consists of a very large, shallow bowl of reconstituted stone standing on a cylindrical moulded stone column which in turn stands on a rectangular, tapering, dry-stone plinth. The bowl is spalling and full of soil; one section of its edge has broken off. Lying on the ground in the pool is a moulded stone baluster-type ornament, about 0.7 m long, with a central hole through it. This probably stood in the centre of the bowl, supporting another, smaller bowl or ornament.

Half way up the slope to the west is the west boundary wall of the garden. This is now ruinous, standing up to 2 m high, with overhanging slate coping. The north end is set at an angle to the main wall and is revetted into the slope. All that remains of the south boundary wall is a grass bank on which there is a row of oak trees.

The park, gardens and grounds were created in two main phases, in 1791 - 1811 and 1837 - 49. Some further work took place later in the nineteenth century. The greater part of the landscaping was undertaken by Sir Benjamin Hammet in the first phase.

Even before Sir Benjamin built his house and began landscaping, the vicinity was appreciated for its picturesque beauty. Henry Penruddocke Wyndham visited in 1774 and 1777 (1781). He described the Teifi valley below Llechryd Bridge: 'we followed a beautiful shady path, cut from the precipice of the Teivy's bank, for two miles ... The variegated walk by the side of this river, and indeed the whole scene, bears a strong resemblance to the banks of the Wye under the celebrated Persfield'.

This makes it clear that the riverside walk along the Teifi pre-dates Sir Benjamin's improvements and probably originated as a towpath and for general access to the river.

The Revd Richard Warner (1798) makes it clear that by the late 1790s landscaping had begun: 'Much has been done by Sir Benjamin ... in forming the pleasure grounds round Castle Malkwn, but owing to the more important calls on his attention, which the manufactory produced, they are not as yet in a perfect state. A very beautiful feature of them is the little romantic walk, called the glen, formed at the foot of a steep rock, shaded by overhanging wood, and pursuing the windings of a murmuring brook (the Morgenau), shut in on the opposite side by a lofty bank, covered with trees. This is nearly complete, but when entirely so will receive additional interest from a projected cascade, which is intended to make a fall of sixty feet'. The walk remains but the cascade that was built, above the bridge, is only about 3 m high. The stone bridge, an integral part of the walk and similar in style to the other bridges at Castell Malgwyn, must also date to the 1790s.

The Revd Phillips (1867) indicates that much of the credit for the landscaping of the grounds, including in the Morgenau valley, should be given to Mrs Hammet, 'a lady of a very refined taste, as is sufficiently testified by the picturesque and beautiful manner in which the pleasure-grounds around the mansion were arranged; and more especially by the romantic walks which she caused to be constructed through the wild dingle of Morgenau'. However, a professional landscaper was also at work on the grounds at the beginning of the nineteenth century: Charles Price, nurseryman and landscaper, of Llechryd was at work in 1806, as described in a letter from Price to Mrs Elizabeth Hammet, Sir Benjamin's daughter-in-law: 'our work on the 'opposite side Morgenna and 'bounding your Flower Gardens we hope to compleat next week this with its 'slope to Morgenna is large and a very 'fine 'impression Being much altered in the shape of its 'slope well 'cleard of Briars Gorse &c Quie in unison with and in Every respect One with Mr Hammet's Pleasure Ground its appearance I hope will be nothing inferior to the best yet'. This letter implies not only clearance but earth-moving, possibly in the lower part of the Morgenau valley.

In order to create space for the park and grounds Sir Benjamin had the public road to Cilgerran, which ran past the house, diverted further south in 1799-1800. It then took a circuitous route, partly along Garnon's Mill Road, on which Sir Benjamin built Hammet Bridge to carry the road over the Morgenau. It was opened on 21 August 1800. The old road passed in front of the east side of the house and then ran south across what is now the lawn and along the ridge above the Teifi valley. It can be picked up at the south end of the lawn as a garden track running south through the wooded grounds. The tunnel, which passes under it, was probably built in the 1790s, before the new public road was built, in order to give access from the grounds next to the house to the Morgenau valley. The 1888 Ordnance Survey map shows a zig-zag path, now gone, descending into the valley from the tunnel, reinforcing this view. The tunnel appears to be shown on the 1820 estate map and the 1838 tithe map. A section of the old road remains in the grounds south of the house.

Richard Fenton, visiting in 1810, noted that 'The immediate space, as well as the whole of this valley (the Morgenau), forms a pleasure ground, in the design and arrangement of which the greatest taste is displayed'. He approved of the removal of the tin-plate works, by which 'the banks of this beautiful river have reasserted their original character'.

The scale of the early Ordnance Survey maps is too small to show the picturesque walks in the grounds but the 1830 map shows the path beside the Teifi



and that running from the house down to it. It also shows the track along the western lip of the Morgenau valley. The 1820 estate map shows this track and the upper path along the Teifi valley, the two linked by the tunnel. At this time the estate is shown as terminating on the south-west side, at the end of this path, today marked by a gateway flanked by slate posts. Beyond, the Teifi slope was common land belonging to the borough of Cilgerran, which jealously guarded its rights. In order to extend the grounds along the Teifi John Hammet had to lease the ground, which he succeeded in settling in 1808. The area is still labelled 'common land' on the 1838 tithe map.

After John Hammet's death in 1811 the family left Castle Malgwyn and no more work was done on the estate until 1837, when Abel Lewes Gower became owner and took up residence. The 1824 Sale Particulars give a general idea of the grounds at that time: 'The Pleasure Grounds Surrounding the House are tastefully laid out and ornamented with a great Variety of Shrubberies and Forest Trees, with diversified Walks and Drives, much increased in their enchanting effect by a Rivulet on one side, which forms Natural Cascades, and on the other side by the Ancient Castle of Kilgerran, on a commanding precipice over the River, and other Romantic Scenery, altogether of a description not surpassed in the principality'.

In the years until his death in 1849 Abel Lewes Gower instigated an extensive programme of improvements. The stables were built in about 1840 and a few years later a new drive, lodge and entrance gates were added. Gower made improvements in the grounds, including the addition of rustic bridges in the Morgenau valley. These may have been replacements for earlier ones, erected by the Hammets, which had fallen into disrepair. The Revd Phillips's description of 1867 gives a good idea of both the garden and the pleasure grounds at that time. The garden, which he thought 'tastefully set out' and 'a perfect Elysium' was 'prettily embosomed among groves and shrubberies'. It had 'numerous plots of flower gardens ... gaily contrasting with the lovely green of the lawn, and enhanced by the deathlike stillness of the place, which is only broken by the distant murmurs of water as it falls over a small cataract in the romantic dingle of Morgenau'. The 'plots of flower gardens' were island beds cut into the lawns. Phillips described the walk up the Morgenau as gravelled, 'ornamented by a luxuriant growth of many species of ferns, and across the river is thrown many a rustic bridge, which, however, of late have been much neglected, and the very unfrequent use of this sequestered walk has allowed the grass to grow over the same. An artificial cascade was constructed also .... But since the late Mr Abel Lewes Gower's death very little or no notice has been taken of this most picturesque spot, and the greatest number of the rustic bridges which he erected have through sheer neglect long since disappeared'. However, Phillips also noted that Mrs Gower 'now (about 1867) takes great pleasure in improving and beautifying the grounds. A picturesque (though rather inconvenient) carriage-drive is now being constructed across Cefn-coed-y-garth, leading to Cilgerran, which commands one of the loveliest panoramas the eye can feast on'. This drive ran south-westwards from the east side of the garden, along the edge of the Teifi valley and then across fields to a lodge (formerly South Lodge, now Cefn Lodge, a private house) at Cefn-garth. The northern end, within the grounds, survives as a track.

Robert Frederick Gower only lived at Castle Malgwyn from 1876 to 1884 but he may have had a hand in an important part of the landscaping - the creation of the network of paths in the Teifi valley. The date 26<sup>th</sup> December 1880 is cut into the wall next to the steps at the south-west end of one of the paths, where it joins the former towpath. Robert's son Erasmus carried out further changes after 1884. These included the creation of a tennis lawn on the south lawn and a croquet lawn on the lawn east of

the house (his daughter Lily was a top player at the turn of the century). A further date, of 'Apr 1886', at the south-west end of the Teifi path network, may indicate that Erasmus continued work on this area.

Photographs dating to the 1880s show the garden and grounds after Mrs Gower's improvements. The garden, immaculately kept, had gravel paths and island beds cut into the lawns. It would appear that all the walks were gravelled. From the lawn there was a view of the river Teifi down the main path to the valley. This has now been obscured by trees. A flight of steps down the bank at the north end of the main lawn has gone. One photograph shows gardeners smoothing the ground of the main lawn and another shows its north end in use as a tennis lawn. There was also a croquet ground by the river Teifi, shown in an 1899 photograph. Photographs of 'The Dingle' (the Morgenau valley), dating to 1880, show the main path, the stone bridge, which looked then much as it does today, and rustic bridges. These had plank surfaces and simple hand rails of rustic poles tied together. They are not the original rustic bridges, which had disappeared by the late 1860s, but must be replacements dating to the 1870s. They were therefore put in place either by Elizabeth Gower or by her brother-in-law Robert.

The 1891 25 in. Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1888-89) shows the complete layout of walks in the Teifi and Morgenau valleys. In the Morgenau valley the stone bridge and three other footbridges are shown, the latter being the rustic bridges. By 1904 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) these had gone.

The separate garden, south of the kitchen garden, was created by Abel Lewes Gower in the 1840s. Phillips, in 1867, said that Gower 'constructed, at an immense outlay, one of the finest gardens in South Wales, which is situate near the farm-buildings ...'. The curious position of this ornamental garden can probably be explained by its relation to the glasshouses, which faced on to it, and to the contemporary head gardener's cottage at its east end. Photographs of the 1880s give a good idea of the appearance of this garden in its heyday. A wide gravel path ran east-west, aligned on the main gable of the cottage. The circular pool, which survives, with a central, urn-topped, fountain, which has gone, lay on this walk, with a gravel path round it and cross paths leading north and south from it. Along the north side of the east end of the garden was a large range of lean-to glasshouses. The central one was the tallest, the flanking ones smaller. Three chimneys projected from the top of the back wall, which survives. The 1888/89 Ordnance Survey map shows cross and perimeter paths in the rest of the garden. The fountain, now marooned in the middle of the field, probably lay at the path crossing. The photographs show that the many flowerbeds in the garden were richly planted. Flanking the main path were strips of grass with island beds, one clearly shown with a flower basket design of hooped edging and a 'handle' over it. Fruit trees were trained against the south wall of the kitchen garden, which formed this garden's north wall.

A photograph probably dating to the 1880s shows that at that date the farmhouse, to the south of the farm buildings, was smaller than at present and had been made picturesque by lattice-paned windows, rustic bargeboards and a rustic porch. The house was almost doubled in size later by the addition of a block on the north side. A grand flight of cut stone steps leads from the forecourt up to the farm buildings. It is at present in an unsafe state.

The kitchen garden is a D-shaped enclosure, its south side straight, situated to the south-east of the farm buildings. It lies in a dip, the ground sloping down from the east and west to a pool in the centre. The garden is enclosed by walls mostly standing to their full height of about 4 m. The only place where the wall has fallen is the south

end of the west side. The north, east and west sides have stone walls lined with brick on the inside and with flat, overhanging stone coping. Towards the north end of the west wall is a tall arched doorway. The south wall has a stone core and is faced with brick on both sides. At its west end it is about 4.2 m high, with an arched doorway. It then drops to about 3.2 m and is supported on the outside by stone buttresses. At its east end is a wide opening. On the inside the brick facing has fallen in places, revealing some of the internal workings of the wall. Towards the east end is a square, slate-lined hole leading to a flue, with a diagonal hole leading to a horizontal flue below. Further east is a higher square hole.

The pool in the centre of the garden is oval, about 1 m deep and lined with a dry-stone revetment wall. A flight of ruinous stone steps lead down into it on its north-west side.

The kitchen garden is shown on the 1819, 1830 (Ordnance Survey) and 1842 (tithe) maps and was therefore probably built by Sir Benjamin Hammet in 1791 - 1811. The 1888/89 map shows the oval pool and an internal layout of cross and perimeter paths. There was an orchard, now gone, to the north. 1870s/80s photographs, in which there are glimpses of the interior, show fruit trees trained against the walls and some sizeable trees within the garden. The interior is now grassed over and no paths are visible. Evidence of fruit growing against the walls survives in the form of innumerable nails and many lead labels still fixed to them.

## Sources

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