

## COEDMORE

<b>Ref number</b>	<b>PGW (Dy) 70 (PEM)</b>
<b>OS Map</b>	145
<b>Grid ref</b>	SN 194 434
<b>Former county</b>	Dyfed
<b>Unitary authority</b>	Ceredigion
<b>Community council</b>	Llangoedmor
<b>Designations</b>	Listed building: Coedmore (Grade II)
<b>Site evaluation</b>	<b>Grade II</b>

**Primary reasons for grading** The survival of a picturesque, early nineteenth-century layout of paths, steps and bridges within the extensive woodland grounds on the steep flanks of the dramatic Teifi valley. There is also a fine view of Cilgerran Castle from the house and garden. Within the woodland is a curious, older enclosed garden with a ruined gazebo.

**Type of site** Terraced garden; informal garden; wooded pleasure grounds; kitchen garden

**Main phases of construction** Late seventeenth – early eighteenth century; 1816 - 33

### Site description

Coedmore is a substantial, irregular mansion, situated on the eastern lip of the Teifi valley, just to the north of Cilgerran. Below the house the ground drops precipitously to the river. The house and its service court ranges are now divided into multiple living accommodation. The house is approached from the north by a drive which divides shortly before the house, the western branch leading to a small tarmacked area at the main, north-east, front of the house. The eastern branch leads to the service court to the south-east of the house. The house is orientated north-west/south-east along the top of the valley side. A substantial former service range extends south-east from the house, on the same axis. Two former service wings project from it, to the north-east, enclosing a tarmacked service court.

The two-storey house is stuccoed, with sash windows and slate roofs. On the river side of its south end is a three-storey octagonal tower. Its octagonal roof tapers to a short spire topped by a weather vane. To the south-east of the tower is a two-storey, rubble stone service range, with sash windows and slate roof. At its end is a three-storey corner block with a pyramidal roof topped by a wooden lantern.

The two projecting service wings are of rubble stone with slate roofs. The northern range, the former stables, is two-storey, with sash windows and two round-arched openings, now converted to a door and window. Above the ground floor are

two courses of darker stone with dove holes in them. The southern range is similar in build. The central part is two-storey, with dormer gable windows in the first floor; the end bay is three-storey, topped by a bellcote.

To the south of the former service ranges is another former service building, now converted into a separate dwelling (Garden Cottage). It is detached, single-storey, rubble stone building, with a slate roof.

Little is known of the early house at Coedmore. From the medieval period until 1614 - 15 Coedmore had been part of the estates of the Mortimer family. In 1614 - 15 Rowland Mortimer sold it to Sir John Lewes of Abernantbychan, from whom it descended to John Lewes. Coedmore came into the Lloyd family of Cilgwyn in the late seventeenth century, when John Lewes conveyed the property to his first cousin Walter Lloyd. It then passed to Thomas Lloyd (born about 1696, died 1737), younger son of John Lloyd of Cilgwyn. Through the eighteenth century Lloyds of Coedmore were prominent in the county, serving as Justices of the Peace and High Sheriff. Thomas Lloyd died in 1810 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Thomas Lloyd (died 1857), again a prominent public figure and also a noted athlete. It is he who undoubtedly built the present house in the first half of the nineteenth century. The new house can probably be dated to 1816 - 33: in 1813 Coedmore was described as containing 'nothing very remarkable' (Nicholson, *The Cambrian traveller's guide*) and in 1833 as a noble mansion (Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary*). It is shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1 in. Ordnance Survey map of 1830. The last member of the family to live at Coedmore was Edward Howard Lloyd (born in 1913). It is now in divided ownership.

The earliest depiction of a house at Coedmore dates to about 1810 and shows a plain, compact, three-bay house, whose entrance front faced the river. Behind the main block is a lower range. The house lies in dense woodland. To the north two cottages are shown approximately in the positions of the present walled kitchen garden and Home Farm. On the opposite bank of the river are the ruins of Cilgerran Castle. Thomas Lloyd's new house is shown on the tithe map of 1841 and on an estate map of 1842, by M. and W. Sayce. This shows an irregularly-shaped, large house, with drives approaching the north and east fronts; the axis of the new house was shifted 90 degrees, so that its entrance front faced north. Both house and drives remain today.

Coedmore is approached from the north by a long drive, which winds through mixed deciduous woodland from the Home Farm. Just outside the garden boundary the drive divides. The western branch, leading to the house, passes over a single-arched, gently curving, stone bridge over a deep ravine overgrown with laurel, rhododendron and Portugal laurel. The bridge has low parapet walls with ornamental tops consisting of transverse upright slate stones with bricks set lengthwise between them to form a multiple H-pattern. The entrance gates are situated at the north end of the bridge, with low, rubble stone walls, flanking the drive, leading up to them. There are two square, dressed stone piers about 1.4 m high, that on the east side with a pyramidal top, that on the west without it. Between the piers are simple iron gates. The service drive rises up a short slope, flanked by rubble stone walls, to similar iron gates and square, rubble stone piers topped by large ball finials.

There are two distinct areas of garden and grounds at Coedmore. First, there is the garden in the immediate vicinity of the house and secondly there is the large area of wooded pleasure ground beyond it, to the north-west.

To the north of the house is a gently sloping lawn, crossed by the main drive and bounded by a straight ha-ha. This consists of a rubble stone wall and outer ditch

running north-east/south-west. At its north-east end the wall turns a right-angle corner and continues, in a ruinous state, for a short distance. At its south-west end the ha-ha stops at the edge of the lawn. Beyond the ha-ha is an old orchard and a low rectilinear mound with rhododendrons on it. A path, now grass, but probably formerly gravelled, runs down the south-west side of the lawn to a white painted iron gate into the woodland beyond. Beyond the lawn and former orchard is woodland. Deciduous trees, particularly beech and oak, are predominant, but there are some conifers in the part nearest the garden.

On the south-west side of the house the ground drops increasingly steeply down to the river Teifi. A narrow strip in front of the house has been terraced and retained by a massive revetment wall, now faced with concrete slabs and with a latticework brick parapet. At the north end the wall extends out over the slope, giving a slightly wider garden area opposite the house. The area then narrows to the south, where the wall runs parallel with the former service block, widening again at the south end of the garden, where the wall makes a right-angle projection over the slope. Below the garden is a jungle of wild shrubs and deciduous woodland down to the river.

The garden here is largely lawn, partly level and partly sloping. At the south end a modern flight of brick steps leads down the slope to a narrow grass terrace, probably a former gravelled walk, next to the revetment wall. This is backed by a low stone revetment wall, above which is a short slope to a higher terrace next to the former service range, which is now partly grass and partly paved.

The garden next to the house, to the north, is at this level and the grass walk rises to this level, with stone risers at intervals, towards the north end of the former service range. Here the retaining wall is curved and has a low brick latticework parapet with a stone top. There is fine view across the Teifi valley to the ruined Cilgerran Castle. The grass path around the edge of the garden continues northwards to the sloping lawn to the north of the house.

At the south end of the garden a flight of ten stone steps leads up to a small stone paved platform, with a stone bench on it. It has a low parapet wall on the river side and is backed to the south by a steep, stone-revetted, slope, overhung by a large yew tree. At the top of the slope is a rubble stone wall of uneven height, forming the garden boundary.

The wooded pleasure grounds form the second area of the grounds of Coedmore. In character they are completely different from the garden, being a large area of deciduous, largely beech, woodland through which is threaded an intricate network of winding, unsurfaced, paths. The woods occupy steeply sloping ground above the river Teifi, to the north of the house. Streams running north-east/south-west have cut a number of steep-sided ravines through this area, making it extremely picturesque. The final drop to the river, which bounds it to the west, is precipitous.

From the garden the woodland can be entered in two places, via paths leading northwards from either end of the ha-ha. The northern path runs north-westwards down the slope and curves round to pass along the top of a dam of a former pond, which lay in the valley to the east. Sections of the high, curving, stone revetment wall of the dam remain. To the north the path is flanked by a rubble stone wall on the east side, with a short stretch of wall on the west, followed by stone-revetted banks. The path leads to a wider track, running east-west, which is flanked by a stone-revetted bank on the north and a bank on the south. This track leads from the drive down a side valley to the river and then northwards along it for a short distance. It was probably

utilitarian in origin. To the south of its foot are the remains of a stone building. These consist of corner walls standing up to 2.5 m.

A gateway in its north wall, just south of the path from the south, leads to a winding, picturesque path. This follows the contours of the hills, under a canopy of beech and oak, dipping down to cross two small streams over simple bridges of stone slabs. The northern stream is stone-revetted by the bridge. Near the northern edge of the wood is an old stone wall and a further stone slab bridge over a stream, which is stone-revetted below the bridge. The path continues northwards through a belt of beech trees, along the top of the drop to the river, eventually reaching the south-west corner of the kitchen garden.

The path described above is only one of many similar ones which form an interconnected network throughout the woodland. Most remain accessible and in good condition. All have stone bridges where they cross streams and on steeper slopes there are stone steps. One path, which runs south-westwards from the east-west track, starting opposite the gateway on its north side, leads to an unusual walled enclosure.

The main approach to the enclosure is from this path, which runs over a raised causeway immediately to its north-east. The enclosure is an irregular oval shape, orientated approximately north-south. It is situated on an elevated bluff, with steep drops below on all sides, particularly on the west, where it overlooks the Teifi ravine. Around the enclosure is a rubble stone parapet wall, standing up to 1.3 m high, below which the bluff is faced with a revetment wall, which is 3 m high on the west side. A row of mature beech trees is planted along the top of the south wall and along the outside of the west wall. A ruined gazebo is built into the north side. Its remains consist of ruinous curving rubble stone walls standing up to 1.5 m high. On the inner side there is an opening; on the outer side the wall has fallen. There is a small niche in the east wall and beyond the west wall there is much fallen stone. The south-west end of the enclosure, overlooking the river, is raised and has a large, spreading yew tree on it. The enclosure wall is very ruinous here and part of it has fallen down the steep slope. From here there is a very fine view of the river Teifi and its ravine. In the middle of the south-east side of the enclosure a flight of seven narrow, cut stone steps curves down the revetment wall to a winding path leading into the side valley below.

This path is taken over the stream below on a well built, low-arched, dry-stone bridge. Another path branches off and leads upstream, joining yet another path, eventually arriving at flight of fourteen cut stone steps leading up to the dam of the former pond. Downstream, a path leads down the side valley to the river. Just before reaching the river there are four stone steps under an overhanging rock, followed by a flight of concrete steps to the river itself. Another small path leads northwards from here. The path over the dry-stone bridge, from which other paths branch, eventually leads back to the white-painted iron gate at the west end of the ha-ha. Another path from the gate doubles back southwards below the garden. It has a stone revetment wall on its upper side. After a short distance it becomes completely overgrown and is impassable.

There are probably two main phases in the development of the grounds at Coedmore. The first phase belongs to the walled enclosure within the woodland to the north of the house. This was undoubtedly a garden feature and contains the remains of a gazebo, which, curiously, looks out over the side valley to the north and not the Teifi to the west. The date of this enclosure is problematical but is probably late seventeenth century or eighteenth century. Stylistically it is cruder than and unlike Coedmore's built garden structures of the nineteenth century. Its original entrance was probably over the causeway; later it was incorporated into the picturesque path

network and the 1890 Ordnance Survey map shows cross and perimeter paths within it. The tithe map of 1840 shows four small buildings, now gone, in the woodland near the river. They are near the end of the track which runs down to the river, suggesting a utilitarian function connected with boats and fishing.

The earliest known depiction of Coedmore, dating to about 1810, shows the earlier house set in dense woodland. Trees are shown right up to the front of the house and to its north and south. Cilgerran Castle peeps out of similarly dense woodland on the opposite bank of the river. Henry Skrine, visiting Cilgerran in 1798, remarked that: 'The opposite seat and groves of Coedmore add much to the prospect'. George Nicholson (1813) noted that Coedmore 'takes its name from the handsome and extensive wood in which it stands'. Sir Richard Colt Hoare was much smitten by the situation when he visited in 1793. He describes Coedmore: 'from whose grounds are seen the most beautiful views of Kilgerran Castle ... No description can give an adequate idea of the beautiful scenery on the banks of this river, nor could the most ingenious artist or the man of the greatest taste have placed a ruin in a more happy spot ... In the hands of a man of taste and fortune Coedmore might be rendered one of the most beautiful spots in Europe'. The implication here is that the picturesque walks through the woodland had yet to be made.

It is probable that the garden and grounds took on their present form at the time that, or soon after, the new house was built by Thomas Lloyd in 1816 - 33. There would appear to be no remains of an earlier garden adjacent to the previous house, whose front faced the river. The present revetment wall on this side may conceal an earlier wall, or the previous house may have been set further back from the lip of the ravine than the present one. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1 in. Ordnance Survey map of 1830 is too small-scale for much detail but does show the drives. The tithe map of 1841 also gives little detail but shows the ha-ha and lawns to the north of the house; the area below the ha-ha is called the 'Lower Lawn'. The wooded flank of the Teifi valley is 'the Plantation adjoining the River Tivy'. This layout is also shown on the 1842 estate map, which shows a curving path around the perimeter of the 'Lower Lawn', with a branch off it into the woodland to the north, suggesting that the woodland had already been drawn into the grounds at that time. Both maps show an L-shaped small building at the south end of the garden. This had gone by 1888, when the 1890 25 in. Ordnance Survey map was surveyed.

The 1890 map gives a detailed picture of the garden and grounds at that time. The present-day layout had been achieved by then: all the picturesque walks through the woods are shown, together with the lawns, ha-ha and terrace to the south-west of the house. The second edition of 1906, revised in 1904, gives less detail but shows some new planting in the garden, with trees along the ha-ha and a few on the lower lawn. A small building below the terrace, shown on the 1890 map, is absent from the 1906 one.

The walled kitchen garden lies about 500 m north-west of the house, on ground rising gently to the north, just to the east of the Teifi valley. Access is now by a track from the east and the former gardener's cottage and bothies have been converted into a single private dwelling. Two paths led to the kitchen garden. One approached from the woodland belt along the edge of the Teifi ravine, the other from the south-east. In this direction, where the path crossed the nearby field boundary it passed between two upright stone slabs built into the field walls.

The garden is divided into two walled compartments which together form a rectangular enclosure elongated east-west. The upper, northern compartment is bounded by mortared rubble stone walls about 3.5 m high. The west wall has a

modern doorway at its south end. The south wall, which is the dividing wall between the two compartments, has a slate top and is brick-lined on the south side, where it is about 4 m high. In the middle is a modern entrance through to the south compartment. At the west end of the south wall is a blocked doorway with a wide slate overhang. The western part of the north side of the compartment is formed by the south walls of the converted gardener's cottage and bothies. To their east is the north wall of the garden. It has a low doorway with a wooden lintel in it. The compartment now forms the garden of the converted cottage and bothy. There is no sign of any original layout and the garden is laid out with flower and vegetable beds and a lawn.

The southern compartment has a higher quality wall and arched entrance on the east side which probably indicate that this is where the family would have entered the garden. The wall is of coursed, cut stone, with a slate top, and is about 2 m high. Inside, the wall is of rubble stone. In the centre is a slightly higher doorway of squared, dressed stone, with a gentle arch over the wooden door. The south end of the east wall curves round to the south-west. Part of it has fallen and there is a gap at the south end. This wall is not of cut stone on the outside. There is no wall along the south side of this compartment. In the middle is a low, stone cross wall retaining a break in the slope. Against the north wall of the compartment is a small, lean-to glasshouse with a wooden superstructure on a stone base. In front of it is a slate water tank in working order. To the west of the glasshouse is a large boiler pit and then a dilapidated vine house. This is of earlier date, with closely set glazing bars. All the glass has gone and the superstructure remains but in a ruinous and decayed state. The compartment also contains a stone-lined cold frame. Along its west side is a low stone wall.

It is probable that the kitchen garden was built in the first half of the nineteenth century, when Thomas Lloyd built a new house and laid out the grounds. It certainly pre-dates 1830, when it is shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1 in. Ordnance Survey map, with a building against its north side and the present track leading to it. The 1840 Llangoedmor tithe map shows a slightly smaller garden in three compartments. The northern compartment, with a small building outside its north-west corner, does not extend quite as far towards the river as the present garden. To its south is a second compartment, extending further west, with a curving south-east end. Against the east wall is another small building. A larger building, presumably a glasshouse, lies along the north side of the west end of this compartment. To the south of the west half of the compartment is another, small enclosure, with a rectangular building, presumably again a glasshouse, along its north side.

The 1890 25 in. Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1888) shows the garden in detail. By this time it had achieved its present-day shape and layout. The north compartment had been extended westwards and a new cottage or bothies built against its north wall. The presumed glasshouse against the north wall of the south compartment is not shown and has been replaced by two small buildings in the north-west corner, which have now gone. The small compartment to the south has gone, replaced by a narrow enclosure with three glasshouses along its north side. Two of these survive, the westernmost being the one shown on the tithe map. The small building shown on the tithe map against the east wall is also shown on the 1890 map, at the east end of the path along the south wall of the north compartment. This is undoubtedly the summerhouse which appears in a late nineteenth-century photograph. This shows a square building, with a rendered wall decorated with geometric patterns in a lighter colour and with the date '1694' made out in the same way over the central door. A short flight of steps leads up from a gravel path to the door and 'Tom', a

gardener, stands on the doorstep. This is an enigmatic building, not least because of the date over the door, which may be misleading. There is now no trace of it but there is no doubt that it was located against the east wall of the kitchen garden.

## Sources

### Primary

Llangoedmor tithe map, 1840: National Library of Wales.

Llechryd tithe map, 1841: National Library of Wales.

'Map of Estates in the chapelry of Llechryd in the county of Cardigan. The property of Thomas Lloyd Esq. By M. and W. Sayce January 1842'. National Library of Wales, map 7182.

Photograph of summerhouse, late nineteenth century: private collection.

### Secondary

Skrine, H., *Two successive tours through Wales* (1812 edn).

Nicholson, G., *The Cambrian traveller's guide*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (1813), 330.

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M.W. Thompson (ed), *The journeys of Sir Richard Colt Hoare through Wales and England 1793-1810* (1983), 40 - 42.