

# DEWSALL WITH CALLOW

A SHORT HISTORY OF OUR CHURCHES AND OUR VILLAGES



A booklet prepared by the people and  
Clergy of Dewisall with Callow

Price 15p

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### St. Mary's, Callow

The original building on this site may have been dedicated to St. Michael. Some historians believe it is identified in records as Llanmichaegal Cil Lluch, which Bishop Herculand dedicated to St. Michael.

Stranger still is the claim that markings on the font indicate it was carved from a patterned stone used by members of a pre-Christian religion. According to this view, when the ancient inhabitants of Callow became Christians they carved the font from this mysterious stone. But as the font is almost certainly 13th Century, and there was a Christian community in Callow many centuries earlier, it is more likely that the marks indicate that it was carved from a stone cross.

Our first reliable information is found in the Book of Llandaff, written in 1132, in which Callow is referred to as Llanfihangel Caluch, abbreviated to Llancalcuch and later simply Caluch. This reference places the parish in the Deanery of Archenfield, and records a tradition which places the founding of the Church in Callow at the beginning of the 6th Century.

Precisely what went on in Callow during the early 16th Century is nowhere recorded, except that in 1521 Bishop Charles Bothe of Hereford complained of curates celebrating 'clandestine marriages', and he vowed to stamp out the practice.



Callow Font  
showing mystery  
markings.



Dewsall South Porch

constructed from 14th Century Pews.

### St. Michael and All Angels, Dewsall

Dewsall in all probability began as Ffynon Dewi, meaning David's Well, which eventually came to be written and pronounced Deweswell. The original Church is thought to have been constructed on or near the site of springs of running water. Again there is an interesting connection with pre-Christian times, for it is suggested that this was originally a place reserved for the worship of the spirits of wells and streams.

The present building is the result of a major restoration in 1868 of a Church built about 1340, but even earlier the parish is mentioned in the 1291 Taxatio of Pope Nicholas IV.

The shortage of hay is no new problem for local farmers - it is recorded that in 1420 folk from Irchinfield raided the parish, stealing hay to the value of £20 from Dewsall farmer Thomas Barre. But the fact that the parish registers date back to 1582 suggests that Dewsall escaped the widespread destruction of the Civil War, during which most local Churches lost their registers.

These then are our Churches of Callow and Dewsall, mentioned only in passing by historical documents; a sparse history perhaps, but one which stretches back to the time when men first set aside certain areas to be 'holy places'. Our two Churches could have no greater claim to fame than this, that within them the Christian community of our village has kept up a continual pattern of prayer - of thanksgiving and of intercession - across countless centuries. It is here that each generation of villagers have been baptised, married, and finally laid to rest. Here the centuries fold in upon one another and we glimpse something greater than our own fragile existence.



Dewsall Court  
Empty and  
Decaying.

Dewsall Church  
and Medieval  
Preaching  
Cross.



### Callow Characters

Historical archives record important facts and events, yet the real history of our village is written in our memory of those ordinary folk whose names appear in no history-book but whose simple lives influenced the village more than the grand affairs of the Empire. We can recall a few names from a fund of well-loved Callow characters.

Early this century Mr. Lawrence the postman walked around the village each day, blowing his whistle so that anyone with a letter to send could bring it out to him. He was succeeded by Levi, who joined the Yeomanry in the 1941 War, and returned several years later to resume his work as postman.

Mrs Christopher, who regularly carried villagers in her cart as she passed through Callow from Much Dewchurch into Hereford, was the subject of a rhyme local children loved to chant:-

'Mrs Kitty from Dewchurch like lightning she flew,  
Arriving at the City just gone two'

But most popular with the children was the village story-teller, Charles Thomas, who from 1910 acted as the village mole-catcher. Each evening after work a crowd would gather around him to hear his tales, one of which is still told to the young people of Callow:-

'A man went out shooting with his muzzle loader,  
(a gun which was loaded with a rod which pressed  
the charge down), but forgot to remove the rod  
from the barrel. He shot a crow, and the rod  
stuck through the middle of the bird, but it flew  
away. A year later he was out-shooting in the

same field when there flew past him a crow with a rod through its middle and a baby crow sitting on each end.'

Charles Thomas was affectionately known as Dennis the Liar'.

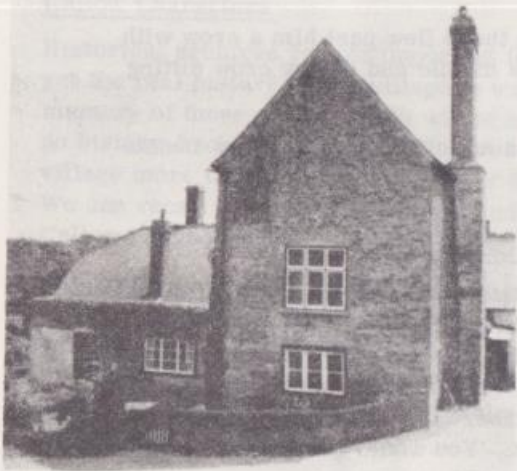
### Machines Come To Callow

At the turn of the century the only means of transport was the carrier's cart, an open horse-cart with a bench fixed across for passengers. The arrival of the first bus in 1919 was not welcomed by all, and Mrs Addis is remembered as shouting at anyone waiting to be picked up by it, 'You would go with that nasty, smelly thing would you?'

But the coming of the machine made its greatest impact on agriculture. Until about 1910 all ploughing was done with horses. Mr Read of Haywood Lodge was the first to use a 12-furrowed plough with two traction steam-engines, one each end of the field. Strong wire ran from the plough to a spindle on each engine; one engine unwound the wire while the other wound it, thus pulling the plough up and down the field. In 1920 Mr Lilwall of Callow Farm became the first local man to have a tractor, and tractors quickly took over all work previously done with horses or traction engines.

Seventy years ago Callow farmers still cut their corn by hand, the women-folk following to tie it into bundles and stand these head-up in sixes to form stooks. The arrival of the mechanical reaper replaced this laborious hand cutting, and eventually the combine harvester made the whole operation much speedier.





Callow Farm -  
Ghost House?

The Ark -  
17th Century  
House.



### The Pearle Family

By the Will of Henry Pearle, who died in the West Indies in 1670, the income from 21 acres of land is annually distributed to any in need within Callow parish. Richard Pearle, who died in 1664, probably laid the foundation of the original Dewsall Court, later rebuilt by the Duke of Buckingham.

Richard appears to have lacked Henry's charitable nature, for we find written in his Will the following allocation:-

'To my aunt, Anne Pearle, for her life, on condition that she will, before Michaelmas Day next coming, get out of the parishes of Calowe and Dewswell and out of Haywood and do not come to dwell in any of them again : 6s. 8d yearly.'

### Callow Ghosts

Callow Farm is an old coaching-station and is the centre of two local ghost stories. The first concerns a ghost house reportedly seen by several present inhabitants of Callow. It is a house which once stood on the left side of Callow Hill as one travels towards Ross, and it is said that corpses of murdered travellers staying overnight at the coaching-station were carried into this empty house. Although it was pulled down many years ago, it is still occasionally seen when travelling up Callow Hill, usually at dusk.

The second story concerns Callow Farm itself. During the early years of this century, often at night the inhabitants would see a figure of a little girl enter a certain bedroom, dressed as if for a ball, always in blue, but missing one slipper. The girl was always weeping and very distressed. About 1920, when structural alterations were made to the building, one wall of that bedroom was demolished, and behind it was discovered a small powder closet and inside it a little blue slipper.

### The Church - Changing Yet Always The Same

During the 1880's the Revd. and Mrs Horton occupied Dewsall Rectory and employed three men in the gardens and four servants indoors. They drove about the parish in their carriage and horses with a coachman and boy on the box. The gravel path which crossed the fields from the Rectory to Dewsall Church was regularly weeded by one of the Rector's servant girls.

Between the two Wars the Revd. Fernandez and his wife took to cycles, a less grand form of transport, although they still maintained three maids and a gardener. He was succeeded by Mr. Manby-Lloyd, called the Motoring Parson as he was the first Callow clergyman to drive a car around the parish.

### OUR VILLAGE



[nb this is numbered 1, but they meant 10]

Today the parish of Dewsall with Callow is included in the St. Martin's Group of Parishes, the clergy serving it are of necessity Motoring Parsons, and of equal necessity have no maids, servants, or coachmen!

These and other changes in the Church may seem to break our continuity with the past. Yet the continuity of worship we maintain as a Christian community, and the fellowship we experience as we meet over coffee in Church Cottage after the morning service, lie at the heart of the unchanging Church.

#### Our Daily Prayer

Holy Father, bless we pray thee  
the people of Callow and Dewsall;  
inspire by thy presence  
those who know thee,  
that those who do not  
may see in them thy glory;  
and let thy Holy Spirit so shine upon us,  
that seeds of faith long sown may ripen  
and raise our lives to thee;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
Amen.