

DEWSALL LODGE, CALLOW

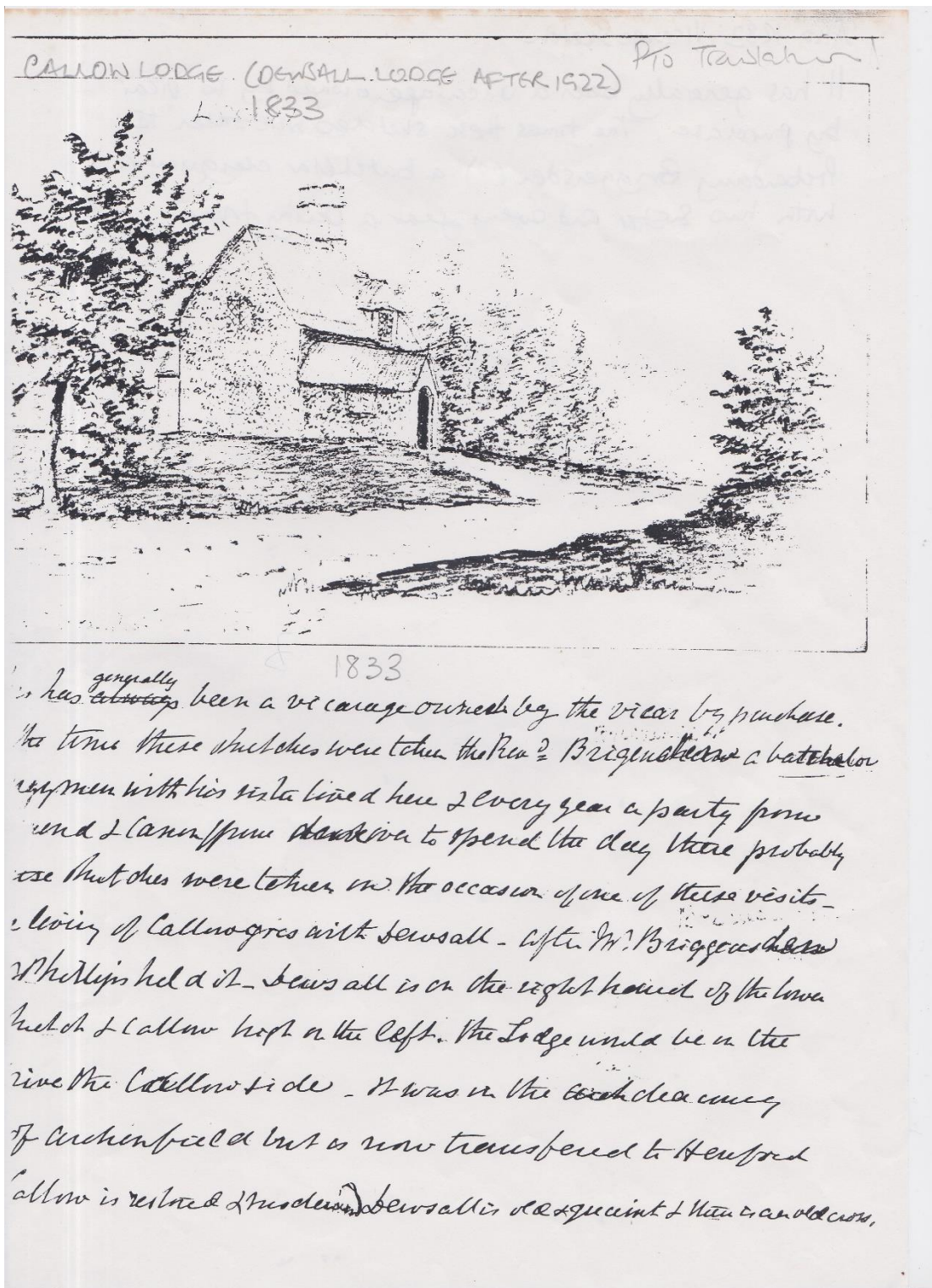
By Vicki Murray



Dewsall Lodge in the 1930s, by Percy Pritchard of Hereford.

Originally called Callow Lodge, Dewsall Lodge was built as an entrance lodge to Belmont estate in the 1790s. A young architect John Nash was commissioned by Colonel John Matthews to design a series of 6 buildings in a picturesque landscape along his eastern drive. Dewsall Lodge sat at the entrance with a lodge gate across Haywood Lane dated 1806. We still have the date and two column stones from this gate which we believe was demolished in the late nineteenth century. The name was changed in 1833. It was adjacent to the oak lined drive to the Rectory (now Farmore) which ran across the adjoining field.

The other Nash Houses were Belmont Cottages, Spring Cottages on Merryhill Lane, Lake Cottage, Belmont Home Farm, Knockerhill Farm (demolished in the 1960's) and landscape features including Beech Grove and the Belmont Pools.



Sketch of Dewalls Lodge, when it was still called Callow Lodge, in the 1830s. It is drawn from the field side, not the road side, of the house. The view of it is different now because the house has been twice extended on this side. The road coming towards the viewer extended across the field to the Vicarage (later Rectory), that is now Farmore; it is now barely a grassy dent running across the field.

John Nash went on to become the leading architect for the Prince Regent (later George IV) designing, amongst many other buildings, Regent Street and Regents Park Terrace

in London, Brighton Pavilion and Buckingham Palace. He recreated Dewsall Lodge and Lake Cottage at Blaise Castle in Bristol as part of a hamlet. These were thatched.



'Circular Cottage, the equivalent of Dewsall Lodge, in Blaise Hamlet, Bristol

The Lodge originally had tall barley sugar chimneys, a full fish scale tiled roof with a pent roof at the front. We have photographs of these in the 1930s. In the 1960s the pent roof was removed and an extension built. The chimneys had also been replaced by that time. A brick coach house and outbuildings stood in the garden, now largely demolished. We have added a further extension and oriel and bay windows. Despite these changes the original cottage is still largely intact.

The cottage remained with the Belmont estate until 1922 under the ownership of the Wegg Prossers although in 1911 it was mortgaged to Lord Harold Arthur Viscount Dillon by the then owner Charles Edward Wegg Prosser. He let it for £10 (presumably p.a.) to Patrick Waldron, a retired policeman, his wife Eliza and Florence, age 19, a niece or possibly granddaughter.

Thomas Gibbs Mercer a later tenant bought it for £300 in 1922, keeping it until 1948. Isabel May Hopkins, who had bought the neighbouring Copper Beeches in 1912 purchased it and sold it on to Margaret Mary Medhurst of Manchester. There appears to be a further sale of which we have no information but in 1953 Ernest Gywn Samuel of Park Street, Hereford purchased it. In 1969 it was acquired by Mr and Mrs A L James of Pudleston, Herefordshire, by Mr and Mrs B W Turner in 1974 of Pengrove Road, Hereford. In 1987 Stephen Powell bought it and sold it to Paul and Vicki Murray of Green Street Hereford in 1990.



Dewsall Lodge in about the 1950s



Dewsall Lodge in about the 1950s. Note that part of the pent roof on the right has been removed to allow more light in to the front ground-floor window.

We have lived in it for 33 years, gardened organically and registered the orchard as a wildflower meadow. We hold the written deeds and the old pictures of Dewsall Lodge shown in this article.

During the course of their varied careers, Paul was a secondary schools inspector in Herefordshire and a drama teacher, playwright and director; Vicki a director of an FE education strategic body, a textile teacher and artist. They are now retired. Both had previously, among other things, worked in rock and roll with groups including the Rolling Stones, Santana and Roxy Music. They met when they were both working for the Pink Floyd.

FOOTNOTE

Belmont Estate (then Old Hill) was acquired by Colonel John Matthews (1755-1826)

He was a physician and poet, the Mayor of Hereford 1793 and MP for Herefordshire 1803-1806.

In 1788-1826 he commissioned architect John Nash to develop the estate modelled on the ideals of the Picturesque Movement.

The drive to Belmont House is assumed to have gone from Dewsall Lodge along Haywood Lane between Belmont Pools and through the park across the current A465 to the east of the house along an oak drive. Oaks can still be seen in the field.

Some of John Nash designs on the estate:

- The Belmont Pools: Newton Brook was developed as part of the picturesque landscape
- Belmont Cottages: largely demolished 1960's – possibly Forest Lodge with a cupola in entrance hall?
- Home Farm: the barn exists with a bell cupola
- Lake Cottage: built as summer house for the family above the southern pool. It still stands, but is largely unrecognisable.
- Spring Grove: a decorative cottage west of Haywood Lane opposite Merryhill Farm. Still standing in the 1930's.
- Beech Grove: a remnant can still be seen east of Haywood Lane, close to Merryhill Farm
- Dewsall Lodge (then Callow Lodge) built as the lodge house in the 1790s, extended in 1960's and 2003.
- Knockerhill Farm: demolished and replaced by current farmhouse in the 1960's

This list may be subject to some error!



The Hunt on the lane in front of Dewsall Lodge in the 1930s, by Percy Pritchard of Hereford.



Horses pulling timber up the hill through the wood below Dewsall Lodge which can be identified by the chimneys, in the 1930s, by Percy Pritchard of Hereford.



Dewsall Lodge today

Vicki Murray
February 2023.