

CALNE, Wiltshire

Extract from National Gazetteer, 1868

Calne, a parish, market town, municipal and parliamentary borough, in the hundred of Calne, in the county of Wilts, 30 miles to the N.W. of Salisbury, and 87 miles W. from London by road, or 99 miles by the Great Western railway, which has a station at Chippenham, 6 miles from Calne. The parish is crossed by a small stream called the Marlan, a branch of the Avon, and contains the tythings of Beversbrook, Blackland, Calstone, Eastmead-Street, Quemerford, Stock, Stockloy, Studley, Whetham, and Whitley. The town has water communication with London and Bristol, by means of a branch of the Wiltshire and Berkshire canal, and a branch railway to join the Great Western line at Chippenham is designed.

Calne is a very ancient town, and is conjectured to have been connected, in its origin, with a Roman station in the vicinity. It was the site of a palace or castle of the kings of Wessex, of which there are no remains; some local names, however, indicate its existence. A grand synod, over which the famous Archbishop Dunstan presided, was held at Calne in 977, for the settlement of a dispute between the monks and the clergy. The controversy was closed by an irresistible argument: the floor of the room giving way, some of the clergy being killed, and Dunstan and his monks escaping by miracle.

In the Norman survey this town is named Cauna, and is spoken of as a royal demesne. The town is pleasantly situated in a valley, the ground rising eastward towards the chalk downs. It consists chiefly of one long street, with a few smaller ones branching from it. It is paved and lighted with gas; the houses, mostly of stone, presenting a pleasant aspect. There is a convenient townhall with market-house. The woollen cloth manufacture, formerly an important part of the trade of Calne, is no longer carried on. Some of the factories are converted into flour-mills. There are also flax-mills and paper-mills.

Calne is a borough by prescription, and returned members to parliament in the reign of Edward I. From the reign of Richard II. the borough was regularly represented by two members till the passing of the Reform Act in 1832. Under that Act it returns one member. The limits of the parliamentary borough include the parish and old borough, with parts of Blackland and Calstone-Wellington; containing together a population of 5,151, according to the census of 1861, against 5,195 in 1851, showing a decrease of 44 in the decennial period. The local government is vested under the Reform Act in a mayor, 4 aldermen, and 12 councillors, with the style of the guild, stewards, and burgesses of the borough of Calne. Calne is the seat of a Poor-law Union, and the head of a County Court district. There are a Local Board of Health, established by Act of Parliament, 15 and 16 Vict., cap. 42; two branch banks, and a savings-bank. The Union poorhouse is at Northfield; it is a handsome structure in the Italian style.

The living is a vicarage* in the diocese of Salisbury, value £769, in the patronage of the bishop. The church is dedicated to St. Mary. It is a large and handsome structure partly in the early English style, but exhibiting also the Norman and other styles, with a fine embattled and pinnacled tower on the N. side. The latter was erected by Inigo Jones. In the church are several monuments, including one to a gipsy king. The register dates from the year 1529. There is a chapel of ease, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, the curacy of which is annexed to the vicarage. Christ Church is a new district church, founded about 1840, at Derryhill, the living of which is a perpetual curacy*, worth £130, in the gift of the vicar of the parish. The Society of Friends, Baptists, and Wesleyan Methodists have chapels in the town.

There is a free school, founded and endowed by John Bentley in 1660, in connection with which are two exhibitions at Queen's College, Oxford, founded in 1730 by Sir Francis Bridgman. The income of the school is about £50 per annum. A training school for domestic servants is established, and there are also National and infant schools, and a children's hospital. The parochial charities amount altogether to about £160 a year. A literary institute has been founded in the town, and a friendly society, under the patronage of the Marquis of

Lansdowne. Bowood, adjoining this parish, contains the fine seat of the Marquis of Lansdowne, who holds the manor of Calne, anciently belonging to the Cantilupes and the Zouches. Cherhill, with the gigantic figure of a horse, cut about 1780 on the side of a chalk hill, is 3 miles from Calne. In the neighbourhood many interesting fossils are found. Tuesday is the market day, and fairs for the sale of cattle and sheep are held on the 6th May and the 29th September.

BLACKLAND, a tything in the parish and hundred of Calne, in the county of Wilts, not far from Calne.

BOWOOD, an extra-parochial liberty, locally in the parish and hundred of Calne, in the county of Wilts, 2 miles S.W. from Calne, and 3 S.E. from Chippenham. This district was anciently part of the royal Forest of Pewisham, in which James I. is said to have frequently enjoyed the pleasures of the chase. Bowood House is the seat of the Marquis of Lansdowne. The mansion, chiefly built in the Italian style of architecture, after designs by Robert and James Adams, stands in a large and beautiful park, with varied scenery, and sheltered by rich woods. The late Marquis of Lansdowne added a new wing on the west side, 300 feet long, after the model of the Emperor Dioclesian's palace at Spalatro.

A fine lake, of about 30 acres, winds among the grounds, and spreads out in front of the house. On a wooded hill is a mausoleum with a monument to John Earl of Shelburne, who died in 1761. There is a remarkable echo in one part of the grounds, which repeats the sound four times. The mansion contains some valuable paintings, among which are St. John the Baptist, by Raphael, works by Gainsborough and Stanfield, and some interesting portraits. Here is also the statue of Hagar, by Westmacott. Not far from Bowood is Sloperton Cottage, formerly the residence of the poet, Thomas Moore.

CALSTONE, a tything in the parish and hundred of Calne, in the county of Wilts.

DERRY HILL, a hamlet in the parish and hundred of Calne, in the county of Wilts, 27 miles N.W. of Salisbury. It is situated near the river Marlan and the Great Western railway. The living, called Christ Church, is a curacy in the diocese of Salisbury, value £130, in the patronage of the, Vicar of Calne.

EASTMEAD STREET, a tything in the parish of Calne, county Wilts, 2 miles from the town of Calne, and 27 N.W. of Salisbury. It is situated near the river Marlan and the Great Western railway.

OLDBOROUGH, an ancient camp on the White Horse Hill, in the parish and hundred of Calne, county Wilts, 2 miles E. of Calne, and 26 W. by N. of Salisbury. It is supposed to have been formed by the Danes after their defeat at Ethandune, and is surrounded by a double ditch.

QUEMERFORD, a tything in the parish and hundred of Calne, county Wilts, 2 miles from Calne, and 28 N.W. of Salisbury. It is situated on a branch of the Wilts and Berks canal near the river Marlan.

STOCK, a tything in the parish of Calne, county Wilts. **STOCK**,

STOCKLEY, a tything in the parish of Calne, county Wilts, near Calne.

STUDLEY, a tything in the parish of Calne, county Wilts, near the above.

UPPER BEVERSBROOK, (and Lower Beversbrook) a tything partly in the parish and hundred of Calne, partly in the parish of Hillmarton, in the hundred of Kingsbridge, in the county of Wilts, not far from Calne.

WHETHAM, a tything in the parish of Calne, county Wilts.

WHITLEY, a tything in the parish of Calne, county Wilts, 1 mile N. of Calne.