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THE KILVERT SOCIETY

Formed (in 1948) to foster an interest in the Rev. Francis Kilvert,  
his work, his diary and the countryside he loved.

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FEBRUARY, 1984.

Dear Member,

While I am sure your chief interest will be the 1984 programme, some account must be given of the later events of last year - the Oxford excursion and the Colva weekend. Response to the former was very disappointing, and in the end two carloads (led by our two Treasurers) undertook the expedition. I am told that a long, full day was thoroughly enjoyed; Wadham College, St. Barnabas Church and a visit to "Holly Bank" (where Lady Kerr showed the party round various rooms in Elizabeth Kilvert's family home), being the highlights.

For the Colva weekend, those who went on the Walk were favoured with bright sunshine and clear views. Led by Mr. R.I. Morgan the party proceeded by car to Pencyraig and then walked over the moors towards Rhulen. We were very pleased to meet Miss Madigan (New Zealand) again and to become acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Manson (Stirling). Those whose return journey lay east met for tea at the Burnt House Cafe, and at the same time enjoyed both Mrs. Stutz's homemade cakes and conversation with one another.

"Fifty fewer bricks and the congregation would not have been accommodated!" explained a member at the tea after the Colva service. Despite the inaccuracy of the word "bricks" - for the building is of stone - the remark sums up the scene in the church. For myself, I could not think that in its six hundred years of existence the simple, remote building had ever contained so large a congregation, and certainly not readers (Miss Madigan and Mr. Ray Wood) who had come from the other side of the world! Rev. G.N. Rees (priest-in-charge) conducted the service, our Chairman led the Act of Remembrance and our newest Vice-President, the Archdeacon of Brecon, gave the Blessing. Mrs. Hobby of Colva Farm (Kilvert's "Sun Inn") was the organist - and we are much indebted to her, to Mr. Hobby and the churchwardens for all their assistance. Mr. David Bentley Taylor preached a very interesting, thought-provoking sermon, which he has kindly allowed to be reproduced in this newsletter. Of the tea at Gladestry Parish Hall what can be said other than that the sumptuous meal and the friendly intercourse between hosts and visitors indicated that Radnorshire folk had not changed since the 1870's! A really memorable day, and it was gratifying to learn from Mr. Rees that the little church had benefited from the afternoon to the extent of £100!

COMMITTEE: Mrs. D.M. Davies has resigned. With her herband, our Hon. Archivist, she has served on the Committee for many years. We are very grateful to her for her loyal service.

1984 PROGRAMME

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held in the Great Hall of the Bishop's Palace, Hereford, (by kind permission of the Bishop and Mrs. Easthaugh) at 7.00 p.m., on Friday, May 4th. The arrangements will be as usual: the business first, to be followed by refreshments, opportunity to purchase literature and pay subscriptions. The main item of the evening will be an illustrated talk on the River Arrow by Mr. Basil Butcher, a Committee Member. Parking is strictly forbidden beyond the Palace Gatehouse, but Broad Street and the West end of the Cathedral area (Palace Yard) can be used; also Castle Street at the east end of the Cathedral Close.

A WALK on the following day. Meet at midday at the Baskerville Arms, Clyro. Packed lunch.

THE SUMMER COMMEMORATION SERVICE will be held at HARDWICK (HEREFORDSHIRE) church at 3 p.m. on June 24th. (by kind permission of Rev. Walter King, priest-in-charge).

A WALK on the previous day. Meet as for May 5th.

THE AUTUMN COMMEMORATION SERVICE will be held at BRYNGWYN (RADNOR) church at 3 p.m. on September 23rd. (by kind permission of the Rev. P. Ralph-Bowman, priest-in-charge).

A WALK on the previous day. Meet as for May 5th.

It is hoped to arrange some excursion for early August. Details in the June newsletter.

DERBYSHIRE TOUR - Some ten or dozen members are making a short tour in the Peak District and would be delighted to meet any Northern members who could join them for an afternoon. On May 31st. after attending the Well-Dressing ceremony at Tissington, they go to Kedleston Hall (4½ miles N.W. of Derby) for a sandwich lunch and private viewing. Any members who can join them at Kedleston Hall at 1. 30 p.m. please contact the Subscriptions Treasurer by the end of April if possible.

Yours sincerely,

E.J.C. West

Hon. Secretary

#### OBITUARY

We regret to announce the death of the following members:-

Miss Marjorie Ball (Breinton, Hereford). Though a member for only 4 years, Miss Ball regularly attended such events as her health allowed. She had arranged to travel on the coach to the service at Colva, but died suddenly a few days previously.

Mr. Fred Stokoe (Hay-on-Wye). A nonagenarian, he had lived in Hay all his life, and was a member of the original committee of the Society. He had an unrivalled knowledge of the Hay associations in the Diary.

Mr. S.T. Newing (Weston-super-Mare), who had been a member since 1970.

The Very Rev. Hedley Burrows (Winchester). Born in 1888, he was created Dean of Hereford in 1947 and can be said to have been co-founder with Mr. Sid Wright, of the Society. He chaired the public meeting as a result of which the Society was founded, was the first Vice-President and preached at no fewer than five commemorative services, including the inaugural one at Bredwardine in 1948. Mr. Godfrey Davies tells me that the Dean gave talks on the Diary in most of the villages and church halls in the Hereford Diocese, and that his energy and his enthusiasm for the Diary were boundless. He retired in 1967 to live in Hampshire, but at the age of 80 journeyed to Oxford to meet members there on a day's outing.

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#### FROM SOCIETY CORRESPONDENCE

Those present at the Centenary events at Bredwardine will doubtless recall Archdeacon Hall-Matthews of Queensland, his wife and lively young family. Mrs. Hall-Matthews in sending Christmas greetings to the Society informed me that the Archdeacon is to become Bishop of Carpentaria. He will be enthroned on St. David's Day at the Cathedral of Thursday Island.

Too late to inform members in the last newsletter I heard that Mr. Timothy Davies was to give yet another Kilvert evening at Cardiff. Mr. Jerry Friar has written to tell me of the event. Mr. Davies was introduced by Mr. Meic Stephens of the Welsh Arts Council - a member of the Kilvert Society. Mr. Friar writes "It was another stunning and flawless performance, very moving, very humorous, very real. His choice was very well balanced indeed, and contained all the necessary elements for a highly entertaining dramatic evening. From the audience's response it was obvious that many of them really knew the Diary. Many were also young, in the 20's and 30's, which was refreshing to witness".

I have been asked by our member Mr. J.F. Nunn (Cirencester) if anybody has a Betamax Video Tape of the BBC series on "Kilvert's Diary", and would be willing to loan it. I should be glad to know, for I have been asked previously if such tapes are in existence.

Since this is the season for planning holidays, the following may be of interest. Mrs. Harris of the Crossway Farm, Clyro, Hereford, still offers accommodation. It was there of course that William Plomer stayed to edit the original notebooks for publication, and what remains of Whitty's Mill is on her land.

Secondly, Miss Newton's Cottage is now Bredwardine Hall Guest House, run by Mr. & Mrs. Jancey. Their address, Bredwardine, Hereford. HR3 6DB.

Thirdly, occupying the village school and schoolhouse of Kilvert's day, is the Bredwardine Centre for Field Studies, Outdoor Activities, Community Projects and Crafts. All communications should be addressed to Mrs. A. Whitlock, Curlew Cottage, Heol-y-Gaer, Glasbury, via Hereford. HR3 5NX.

REVIEWS

The Venables Family, Llysddinam and Newbridge.

Members of the Society, and all interested in the history of Breconshire and Radnorshire, will greatly enjoy reading Volume XX of Brycheiniog, the Journal of the Brecknock Society. The Venerable Owain Jones, Archdeacon of Brecon, Editor of Brycheiniog, and Vice-President of the Kilvert Society, has made available the fruits of his wide researches into the history of the Venables family, with whom Francis Kilvert was so closely associated for so many years. With the permission of Lady Delia Dillwyn-Venables-Llewelyn, the Archdeacon was able to consult many previously unknown papers relating to Llysddinam, and his masterly account of the history of the family from its Norman origins before 1066 to the succession of the present Baronet in 1976 is full of interest to Kilvertians.

The association of the family with Clyro began in 1811 when the Rev. Dr. Richard Venables was instituted to that benefice. His son, the Rev. Richard Lister Venables succeeded him at Clyro in 1847, although the father had been living mainly at Llysddinam from about 1830. Much of the Archdeacon's article deals with the 1870s and 1880s, and he provides us with much useful information on Francis Kilvert, on Mrs. R.L. Venables, and on the fascinating George Stovin Venables, R.L. Venables's brother. Two fine illustrations show Llysddinam Hall before the removal of the 1871 extensions described in Kilvert's Diary.

The second part of the article is concerned with the history of the parishes of Llysddinam and Newbridge. The ancient church of the former parish had fallen into ruin by 1700 and, although the area contained one of the oldest nonconformist churches in Wales, it was not until the 1870s that services of the Established Church were again performed in the locality, first in the school-room at Newbridge and then in an iron church (Diary, 7 May 1875 and 7 May 1876). The splendid new parish church of All Saints was designed by S.W. Williams of Rhayader and consecrated in 1883. George Stovin Venables gave almost £8,000 for the building of the church and for the endowment of the parish, and the Rev. R.L. Venables and his wife were also enthusiastic in establishing the church and parish. Many of the windows and fittings in the church are gifts from the family. It is interesting to note that the first vicar's warden was the Rev. R.L. Venables, a rare, if not unique (and surely illegal?), instance of a clerical churchwarden. The article concludes with a full description of the church, with a striking photograph of the massive exterior, and a list of incumbents, the last named being the author.

Many members of the Society will find the whole volume of Brycheiniog of great interest. Four of the articles - all of which are in English - deal with Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Prince of Wales, and with the Builth area in which he died in 1282. Other papers are on menhirs near Bwlch, on William Parry of Tretower (1769-1842), on a tornado at Hay in the sixteenth century, on the bells of Hay church, and on the registers of Ystradfellte. The material on Llysddinam and Newbridge is also available in a separate offprint. They may be obtained from the Archdeacon of Brecon, 10, Camden Crescent, Brecon.

It is heartening to recall that the editorship of Brycheiniog is in the capable and scholarly care of our venerable and enthusiastic Vice-President.

D.T.W.P.

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"Down the Bristol Avon, Including 14 Country Walks" by Roger Jones, with Photographs by Duncan Skene. Ex Libris Press, 1, The Shambles, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire. £3. 50.

In his preface to this very attractive book, Roger Jones says that the Bristol Avon is not always easy or interesting to walk beside and so he branches out and explores the adjoining country, towns and villages. This is much to our advantage as so much of Kilvert's "other" country is thus described and makes his book a "must" for members of the Society who want to know more about the Wiltshire countryside and certainly one to keep on their bookshelves.

Like me, Roger Jones likes places seen through the eyes of travellers of the past and this leads him to give many interesting quotations from Leyland and others and to include among the wealth of illustrations some really lovely photographs - especially of old bridges and lonely reaches of the river - by Duncan Skene and reproductions of charming old prints and pictures. Roger Jones says that he especially enjoyed walking in the country between the motorway and Chippenham in the peaceful Avon meads and this is perhaps the country which concerns us most for here are situated the villages of Langley Burrell, Kington Langley, Draycott and Kington-St-Michael, and their many historical and literary associations. Five carefully set out walks are described in this region alone with accompanying clear route maps, and who could ask for more?



Two local clergymen are written about : the absent minded and eccentric William Bowles who once offered a child a copy of the Bible in which he had inscribed "With the author's compliments", and our own Francis Kilvert. Then there are two local antiquaries, John Aubrey and John Britton both of whom were born in Kington St. Michael a place which the latter described as "rude and illiterate", but of which village a delightful picture is included, which looks as though the painter had sat on a roof top.

I was particularly interested in the section devoted to the Moravian settlement of which, hitherto, I knew nothing, and where there was a School for Ladies which took boarders as well as day girls from adjacent villages and to which, as we know, Kilvert's mother was sent. Again there is a charming photograph.

This is a comparatively small book (ppl36) but it is a very pleasurable read and full of information. The last section is devoted to the 14 walks which many people will want to embark on. There is a very spectacular one given in Leigh Woods in the Avon Gorge opposite Clifton but I know from experience that it is a pretty steep one so read carefully first. Kilvert knew the scenery well on his visits to Clifton but, then, he must have known most of the river from its source(s) to nearly its mouth.

G. Dearlove.

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#### CLIFFORD in Herefordshire.

Our thanks are due to Mr. Kenneth Clew for his enthusiasm and indefatigable energy in compiling and producing a series of Short Guides to illustrate various churches and places of particular interest referred to by Francis Kilvert in his Diary. The latest of these concerns the Parish of Clifford in Herefordshire. It was at Clifford Priory, the home of Squire Benjamin Haigh Allen, that the diarist was frequently a welcome guest. He leaves us in no doubt how much the company he enjoyed on these occasions helped to make his visits so memorable.

This Guide gives a brief historical introduction with a fascinating account of some of the more important events of the past. It also includes a description of the Castle and some precise details about the ancient Parish Church of St. Mary in which Kilvert preached.

The specific directions of the suggested tour of the village should be of great benefit to those who may wish to embark upon it.

G.W.E.R.

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On the eve of the September 1983 Kilvert weekend events, I received in the post my copy of the tape "More from Kilvert's Diary", a further anthology of readings by Timothy Davies.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Jerry Friar of Dubbin Productions for another 'gem'. I already have his previous recordings of Kilvert readings issued on Saydisc Records, and I must say that I find the new tape even better.

It was a delightful coincidence, of course, that the first reading to greet my ears from the car stereo as I journeyed towards Herefordshire that Saturday morning, was the extract that follows Kilvert to Colva and the Sun Inn, as the Society was to hold its commemoration service there the very next day. Sadly the Sun Inn no longer exists as such, but the solitude of that lovely church remains. Kilvert's visit, on 26th February 1874, was in order to enquire of the landlord Mr. Phillips, the words of three old songs. In due course two sets of words were despatched by post and Kilvert received them on the 2nd March. 'One about our Saviour', he remarks, 'has the true ballad swing'.

And now, through this tape, the Diary really comes alive, with the rendering of the Herefordshire version of this ballad, 'The Bitter Withy' sung by a clear unaccompanied solo voice.

Jerry Friar's editing of this section is really superb. The song blends most effectively with the readings, and creates both atmosphere and interest.

Further extracts remind us of Kilvert's love of open spaces, his ascent of Cader Idris with Old Pugh - 'through the rain and white wild mist', his visit to Capel-y-Ffin to meet Father Ignatius, and his absorbing relationships with Gipsie Lizzie, Miss Lyne, Daisy Thomas and Florence Hill.

Interludes of Welsh harp playing, an instrument much loved by Kilvert add yet further enrichment to Timothy Davies' excellent and soothing readings, and remind us again that the Diarist felt most at home in Wales. Happily, to redress the balance towards the other 'Kilvert' country, Jerry Friar has included that lovely account of the walk from Langley Burrell to Kington St. Michael on 24th September 1874,

Here too, is Kilvert's final meeting with Florence Hill at the Upper Noyadd on May Morrow 1874, to the beautiful accompaniment of a concertina, and certainly one is transported into that living room with the Hill family and Kilvert himself.

Prophetically, we follow Kilvert choosing the site of his grave in February 1878, and hear his description of the Daffodil Parsonage at Bredwardine on 6th March 1878. Then to the sound of a single bird singing and the toll of a church bell, there follows a dramatised re-enactment of the Diarist's Burial on 27th September 1879. We hear the grief of family, children and parishioners alike, vividly described by the Hereford Times reporter in attendance.

I have deliberately not mentioned all of the readings on this tape, and in particular the last track. I will leave that to Kilvert Society members to listen to themselves. It is certainly very moving and leaves us in no doubt as to Kilvert's own, final thoughts on the writing of his diaries. It is absolutely true to say, 'He being dead yet speaketh'.

For many the spoken word has now superseded the original writing in terms of sheer enjoyment. This tape is certainly a most worthwhile document, and a unique contribution to the appreciation of Kilvert's Diary.

I do hope that all members will purchase a copy for their own pleasure. It would also make a very pleasant gift.

Maurice W. White.

(Tapes are available from Dubbin Productions, Bradley Hill Farm, Blakeney, Glos. GL15 4AW. at £3. 00. plus 30p post and packing).

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DDUW BO'R DIOLCH : A history of the Thomases of Powys by Richard Thomas, the Signet Press, price £4. 50.

It is a common desire to learn about one's ancestors, but few humans achieve the knowledge. Mr. Richard Thomas writes that he had such a desire, and enthusiasm to fulfil it. His ability to do so was very largely due to a distant cousin, Mr. Melville Thomas, who in his retirement had compiled a genealogical table of the family from the mid 18th c. to the present day. (Mr. Melville Thomas who is a member of the Kilvert Society, kindly gave a copy of the table to the Society, and in its detail and scope it has been much admired by those who have seen it). Mr. Richard Thomas has, in his book, fleshed out his cousin's "skeleton", and with the aid of old records, diaries and other personal papers written a history of his family - a family which features very largely in Kilvert's Diary.

As in any family saga, ambition, ability, marriage and inheritance play their part. Ascendancy began in the 17th. c. when Edward Thomas purchased Llwynmadoc - though Mr. Thomas's research goes back beyond that time. From Edward sprang the descendants who would in time own Pencerrig, Welfield, Llanthomas and other estates in Brecon, Radnor, Glamorgan and Herefordshire, and who in the 19th. c. would be among the wealthiest and largest landowners in those areas.

Of special interest to Kilvertians are the Llanthomas branch and Miss Clara Thomas of Llwynmadoc. The author has some very interesting information concerning Rev. W. Jones Thomas, from which one might well come to deduce the reasons for his high-handedness towards his children; while the account of Miss Clara's yearly travels between her two mansions is as delightful as it is, to our eyes, improbable. Among the many photographs there are three associated with Llanthomas and a most appealing one of Miss Clara.

But beyond the Kilvertian interest, the book is an absorbing account of the fortunes of the family, fortunes that rise and fall according to the social and economic climates. Mr. Thomas has a very lively, entertaining, eminently readable style, and I most warmly recommend his book.

(I have some copies of the book for sale).

E.J.C.W.

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ON THE BLACK HILL by Bruce Chatwin. A Picador paperback at £1. 95.

Occasionally one comes across a book so enthralling to read that it is impossible to put down until one has finished the entire story. On the Black Hill falls into this category. It is a novel about two Welsh hill farmers and their lives from the turn of the century. Based on the hills behind Hay on Wye, thinly disguised in the novel as Rhulen, the author is obviously well familiar with Kilvert's Diary as many of its characters are pastiches of those who Kilvert knew so well.

In no way is the novel a plagiarism of the Diary, but an original work to be enjoyed in its own right as the author has that rare gift of making people and places come alive to the reader. The price of the paperback should be within the range of every member who wishes to have a most enjoyable good read.

K.R. Clew.

THE CURATE OF CLYRO : EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF REV. FRANCIS KILVERT (published by Gwasg Gregnog Ltd., Newtown, Powys, selected by Miss Stephens and with twelve wood engravings by Sarah van Nickerk).

As beautiful a volume as I have viewed, and I have visited the National Libraries of the U.K. as well as those in the States! Carrying a long tradition of the ultimate in the making of books, the Gregnog Press has indeed produced a true gem delightfully out of step with modern presses. The type has been hand-set on hand-made paper, the print is pure, concise and the paper a joy both to sight and feel.

A reader of the Diary for close on forty years, I pondered on paying £45 for a slender anthology, and approached the volume with an air of mild dubiousness. Mr. Meic Stephen's introduction dispelled such feeling. I read with relish his broad, accurate survey of the diarist's life in the Clyro area. But what to choose from the Diary must have been to him - as it would to anybody - much more difficult! Miss van Nickerk, however, has beautifully captured the spirit of the entries. I doubt if there is any admirer of Kilvert who would not rejoice in owning even one print. That illustrating the entry of 24 February 1870, is beautifully detailed, as is that of 5 September 1871. Here in Florida, I look at the illustration for 9 July 1871 - "In the Chapel field the tall brown and purple grasses were all in billows like the sea". The Chapel is not named, but I recognise it immediately as Bettws, and the artist captures the extract admirably. (My own favourite would be "Toby the Cat" (18 October 1870), the diarist interrupted by the noise at the "Swan" and a magnificently executed cat running across the writing desk. If only I could have a print of it hanging in my library beside the moss-covered tile slate from Langley Burrell Church). Kilvert talking to the urchin at the gate, Annie Dyke dressing the graves for Easter, the farmyard at Gilfa (and what sheep!) - all evoke memories of my visits to the Kilvert Country, which Miss van Nickerk's illustrations have enhanced and enriched.

Bill Cummings.

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"The Strength and Weakness of Kilvert's Christianity"  
by David Bentley-Taylor

Colva, Sept. 25th. 1983.

How delightful it is that we too have gone "over the hills to Colva" and find ourselves in this marvellous old church, "sequestered" as Kilvert so beautifully said, "sequestered among its large ancient yews", which he visited on February 26th. 1870, so close to Colva Farm, then the Sun Inn, where he was in such a hurry over his meal that Mrs. Phillips ran in carrying the homemade bread and hard cheese in her arms and then he went and left his precious pocket book behind "among the folds of the table cloth". (i 43).

Until four years ago I had no interest in the Diary of a Victorian clergyman. Then my mother died at the age of 96 and I fell heir to her books, including an early edition of Kilvert. Inside the cover she had written out a quotation from it, "I have lived and I have been loved and no one can take this from me". That's what Kilvert said after visiting a deaf and dumb child in 1875. "When I opened the door of the poor old crazy cottage...the girl uttered a passionate inarticulate cry of joy and running to me she flung her arms round my neck and covered me with kisses. Well. I have lived and I have been loved and no one can take this from me". (iii 197). In her mid-nineties my mother wrote it down and by this sentence I was captured for the Diary, bought the three volumes and have been studying them and doing Kilvert research ever since.

I want to speak to you today about "The Strength and Weakness of Kilvert's Christianity". Of course his fame does not exactly depend on either but upon his brilliant observation, detailed recording and beautiful prose, yet we should not forget that he was a full-time Christian worker. That was his profession. The Diary was a side-show to his real life. How then did he fare as a Christian and a minister?

To deal properly with this subject I must to some extent declare my position. I was brought up on the outer fringes of the Church of England, but came to know Christ as my Saviour when a student at Oxford University. I took my degree in



Theology and have spent my life as a missionary in China, in Indonesia, in the Middle East, and in the Universities of many countries, preaching not only in the Church of England but also in Baptist, Presbyterian and Brethren Churches and in various churches in North America which have no counterpart here. So I do not speak from a purely Anglican standpoint.

Let me start with some general remarks about Kilvert's Christianity. He was a Protestant who did not sympathise with many of the doctrines and practices of Roman Catholicism, such as the Mass, the reservation of the sacrament, prayers for the dead, the life of monks, or what he called 'Mariolatry'. He was also unfavourable to Anglo-Catholicism. His account of ritualism at St. Barnabas Church in Oxford is scathing (iii 319) and he considered the Anglican monks at Capel y Ffin were "going back into the errors of the dark ages" before the Reformation (i 78). Holy Communion is mentioned about 70 times in the Diary but Kilvert never enthused about it except when he took it to the elderly at home, and then it was the condition of the humble poor which excited him rather than the sacrament itself or his own role in administering it. He never called himself a priest except once in the set phrase "ordained Deacon and Priest" (ii 282). He never called his father a priest, nor Mr. Venables, nor any of his regular clerical associates. His words were "clergy", "clergyman" and "parson". His interest in the eccentrics, Father Ignatius and the Solitary did not imply that he agreed with their views or behaviour.

It would also be wrong to call Kilvert an evangelical. He failed to emphasise much that evangelicals wish to stress and his conduct often fell short of what they would endorse. So what was he : High Church or Low Church? Certainly not High Church. Rather 'Low' if the truth be told, but not aggressively so. It is probably best to regard him as a moderate churchman with a small 'm', not to be aligned with any particular group.

#### 1. The Strength of Kilvert's Christianity.

It might be thought that Kilvert's faith was just something he inherited from his father, but many a parson's son has not shared his father's convictions or followed his calling. Kilvert had a mind of his own. He always listened critically to other people's sermons, more than thirty of which are evaluated in the Diary. He had not much use for some preachers he heard, including the Bishop of Hereford, but he always spoke enthusiastically of his own father's sermons. He felt they were "admirable...beautiful...moving...like a spirit preaching without the body" (iii 148). Whatever precisely motivated him, this we may confidently affirm that he chose to share his father's faith and to work as he had seen him work.

It has been pointed out that he never studied theology. Maybe not, but he made the Bible his own, something many students of theology fail to achieve. Its words were in his heart and constantly on his lips. There are literally hundreds of Bible quotations in the Diary. He was incessantly teaching the Bible, in Day School, in Sunday School, in Church services, in Bible classes, in mid-week lectures and in those delightful Cottage Lectures up at Crafta Webb -- "the room crowded, some standing, all very attentive. I spoke on 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?'" (iii 359-360). Wouldn't you like to have been there?

Every one of his 58 sermons of which he gives details was based on a Bible text. In addition he constantly read the Bible to people in their own homes and repeatedly quoted it aptly in conversation. It is this which lies at the heart of the strength of his Christianity. Because the words and truths of the Bible were so vividly etched on his mind he was not content just to take church services. He was for ever out and about in the community, a welcome visitor and a much loved friend. That was why the deaf and dumb child cried out with joy and ran into his arms. "Villaging", as he called it, was a main reason for his effectiveness and popularity. He used to go from cottage to cottage and farm to farm, chatting with people wherever he could find them, meeting them in lanes and fields, at their doors, in their kitchens, or up the ladder ill in bed. Time and again he records "villaging all the afternoon" or "a long round of visits in the parish" (iii 252,55). One September day he was out in the rain morning and afternoon, the Diary listing the names of 28 people he had been with (iii 82-83) and on a return visit to Clyro he was "obliged to run almost all the way between the various houses" (ii 338). He took his Bible with him and the Diary mentions no less than forty occasions on which he read it to those he was visiting. If there was a Bible in the house he would use it. Faced one day with three gloomy women on Clyro Hill, "I read to them the 23rd. 40th. and 103rd. Psalms" (ii 130), choosing precisely those, the Psalm of the Good Shepherd, the Psalm of Deliverance, and the Psalm of God's mercy and forgiveness. He often prayed with people too, particularly with the sick or the dying, and with Little Davey's mother he prayed by the child's dead body.

While his Christianity included a settled belief that God was the Creator who had revealed Himself in Nature's marvels, Kilvert specially liked to refer to Christ

as "our Saviour", for he often faced severe temptation himself. At Bredwardine he once mentioned struggling for his life "with a mysterious and dreadful Power" (iii 433). Indeed he was alarmingly vulnerable. His encounter with Irish Mary on the train at Chester station when "a wild, reckless feeling came over me" showed how dangerously he could play with temptation (ii 208-211), but he survived uncorrupted, which Pepys, an even more famous diarist, was quite unable to do. 1983 has seen the publication of an unexpurgated edition of Pepys' Diary. There are striking similarities between the two men. Pepys was 27 when he began, Kilvert 29. Both wrote for just over nine years, both were brilliant observers of people and events, and both took time to write in great detail and were remarkably frank about their own feelings and failures. But there was a moral gulf between them. Kilvert was a bachelor, Pepys a married man, whose diary records not only the Fire of London and the doings of Parliament, but also his own horrible immoralities. In spite of his churchgoing and good resolutions, Pepys was powerless to control what he called "my devil that is within me". He carried on several secret, seductive, totally selfish relationships simultaneously. One night in 1669 his wife refused to join him after he had lain down. "About 1 o'clock", he wrote, "she came to my side of the bed with the tongs, red-hot at the end, and made as if she had design to pinch me with them, at which I rose up in dismay". (Jan 12, 1669). He richly deserved several pinches of those tongs, but Kilvert did not give in to vice, so his morality ought not to be described as "conventional" or "traditional". Kilvert's morality was resistance morality, Christian morality. It was Pepys who wallowed in the conventional, traditional immorality of self-indulgence. There was plenty of it at Clyro. Kilvert could often see drunken men lying in the road outside the Swan all night and the Diary alludes to other evils going on around him, what he called "the abyss of wickedness in which we are living" (ii 444) -- the cruelty to children the prostitution and adultery, the illegitimacy, the suicides and murders. In spite of his own strong emotions, he refused to capitulate but remained a righteous man. When Charlie Powell proposed to sing a coarse song at a Clyro Penny Reading, "I objected strongly, refused to sit by and hear it sung, and threatened to leave the choir and the platform", which made Charlie so angry that he had to be put out of the room by a policeman.

"You must be a very strong man" a farmer said to him once. "When I was in bed the other day and you shook hands with me I felt as if an electrifying machine had gone all through me" (iii 196) -- and there is still some electrifying power in the Strength of Kilvert's Christianity.

## 2. The Weakness of Kilvert's Christianity.

And yet its weakness is equally clearly revealed in the Diary. My own reaction on first reading the three volumes was that he was too undisciplined to have been an admirable Christian minister. Any pretty face seemed capable of swinging him off course. "Ten miles for a kiss" was a superb caption, but I did not admire a parson who walked to Newchurch, went into the schoolroom, kissed one of the girls at the long desk, offered to kiss her again for every sum she did, and thus had her repeatedly "interrupting her work" to glance at him "shyly but saucily" (i 123).

I notice that he never attempted to read the Bible in the homes of the gentry. Where there was croquet or archery, picnics or dances, he did not manage to remind anyone of the gospel message which he often conveyed so tactfully in farms and cottages. More significantly still, he was prone to forget his calling altogether whenever his affections were aroused. Irish Mary encountered him as a mesmerized, pliable stranger not as a man of God. There is no suggestion that he and Daisy had any conversation about Christian beliefs and experience, or that he stopped to think whether she was likely to make a suitable partner for a Christian minister. When Etty came on the scene he was at once taken by storm. With her "dark wild" eyes she was a "true gipsy beauty", so "striking-looking ... admirably dressed", with such an "exquisite figure" and "shapely, slender throat" plus that magnificent hat, the "rich gold chain necklace" and cheeks like "ripe pomegranates" (iii 229). His account is superlative, but as a servant of Christ he was washed overboard, swept clean away from the wise counsel of that chapter in the Book of Proverbs, "Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting (NIV), but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised" (Proverbs 31:30). There is not a line in the Diary whereby we can test Etty's Christian faith or true character, factors which should have had top priority in his mind. And all the innocent Florence Hill had to do to write her name indelibly in English literature was to stand on the steps of those almshouses which are still there in Hay, with her graceful figure and flowing fair hair, gazing at him with "soft, dark, loving eyes" (ii 427). This produced immortal descriptions of encounters with her on the roads and visits to her mountain home, where he was so charmed with everything that he prayed no prayer and read no Bible.

The weakness to which I am alluding is that Kilvert parked his Christianity



in a lay-by when his affections were seriously aroused. In his search for a wife, his Christian beliefs and calling were left lying passively in the background, by no means abandoned, but not brought forward. There is no suggestion that he sought to find out the will of God. In spite of his vicarage background and Bible knowledge, I am left uncertain whether he had ever surrendered himself to Jesus Christ. His unworthy and inconsiderate behaviour in bathing naked at the seaside (ii 358, iii 37) out of sight of his own parishoners, gives me the impression that he had not taken his faith seriously enough : he was capable of parking it while he pleased himself. And this is also seen in his attitude to Christian believers who were not Anglicans. He usually regarded them as he did the tourist he saw admiring Llanthony Abbey. Instinctively he described the unfortunate man as "vulgar and offensive", even "loathsome" (i 79). He viewed Nonconformist Churches with similar contempt.

One autumn at Clyro a 9-year-old girl named Katie Whitney fell ill. On the very next Sunday Kilvert preached twice and got soaking wet on the way home, but went out again after dark to see how she was. To his surprise he found she was dying. "Jesus loves little children", he said as he bent over her, and he quoted the verse "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven". Then he repeated to her the first verse of Charles Wesley's hymn, "Gentle Jesus meek and mild, Look upon a little child, Pity my simplicity, Suffer me to come to thee". Though she spoke with difficulty, he got her to repeat the Lord's Prayer after him, sentence by sentence. No doubt she was familiar with it. He did quite well, yet by his very moderation he reduced the clarity of the gospel message so that it lost some of its meaning. At such a moment, "Jesus loves you, Katie" was preferable to "Jesus loves little children" and a very simple, personal prayer would have been better than getting her to say "Hallowed be Thy Name...Give us this day our daily bread" when she was already on the borders of eternity (ii 48-49).

At Christmas 1874 a girl named Hannah Williams, whom Kilvert thought very attractive, slipped on the ice when carrying water from the well and badly injured her spine. During the next three weeks he visited her eleven times. On the second occasion, when she was in great pain, he repeated to her the hymn, "Sun of my soul, Thou Saviour dear". On the sixth visit, when she was improving, "I talked to her very seriously about her past wild conduct since her Confirmation and prayed with her". He then tried to read her to sleep with poetry. Later on he took her his musical box, then a book, then several more books. On his eleventh visit, when she was convalescent, "I begged her earnestly to try to be more steady in her conduct when she got well, saying how deeply grieved I should be were she to become wild and wilful again". It is the best account we have of his pastoral care for a teenager.

But then, at the end of this last visit, as she sat alone in her bedroom, he took her by the hand, looked at her lovingly, and said, "You do like me a little bit, don't you? ... I do love you so much. I have loved you through it all ... You will try to be good and steady now, dear, wont you? I do so want you to be a good girl. 'I will try', she said". (iii 125-138). He confuses her by touching her and speaking of his own affection, instead of drawing her attention to God's love and Christ's sacrifice of Himself for her. Then he tells her to "try to be good and steady", instead of encouraging her to perceive her own helplessness and desperate need of Christ to save her and keep her from evil. He fails to fix her mind on the Saviour who could come into her feeble heart and transform her conduct.

It is along these lines that I estimate the Strength and Waakness of Kilvert's Christianity. Fortunately we dont have to balance the account. "To his own Master he stands or falls", but as an example and as a warning he probably has something to teach us all.

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SOME REFLECTIONS OF AN IRISH RECTORY KILVERTIAN  
by Constance Boake, Carlow, Ireland.

I never fail to enjoy recounting the tale of how I, a dweller in Irish rectories of many years, first came in real contact with the Reverend Francis Kilvert. I was as avid a reader as a busy life allowed but though I knew of the Diaries for a long time I had somehow never got down to them. It was in May 1973 that a disastrous sea-crossing from Rosslare to Fishguard, arriving late to find our booked hotel bolted against us - and my husband and I very varied shades of green - this left us with no choice but to drive on through the night in the general direction of Norfolk, our eventual destination. Various stops to try to snatch a little miserable sleep found us at about eight o'clock in the morning by-passing a tiny village where, out of one half-opened bleary eye, I saw an hotel.

'Get me in there - or I'll die!' was about all I could manage..

The hotel wasn't open! In the garden of a strange-looking stone house opposite a

a man was exercising his dog. He enquired if he could be of help. Well ... hardly ... we shorthanded our plight into seasick, driving all night, beds needed. "We are a guesthouse", said the blessed man, and he and his wife had us in those beds in a twinkling. Coming out of oblivion some six hours later I found my recovered other-half dressed and going out for a walk.

'It's a lovely little place!' he told me 'with hills right up to the windows, and apple blossom everywhere, and cuckoos calling'. One hour later he burst back into the room and into excited speech. 'Get up out of that! Do you know where you are? In Kilvert's house!' That, and the portrait in the church vestry, and I was as firmly caught as a fly in a spider's web. The first reading of the diaries proved pure delight. The Kilvert Society's various booklets threw more light on R.F.K.'s life and times, but with the second and third exhaustive studies of the diaries themselves it began to dawn that each perusal was a homecoming into the land of Neveragain, or a sort of warm and indulgent wrapping around oneself of the blanket of life as it used to be, for the clerical families of the Protestant rectories of Ireland (the word Anglican had scarcely been invented then) from my first rememberings in the late nineteen-twenties until far on in our century. We may have thought ourselves products of the twentieth century, but we were Victorians under the skin ... and our rectories and our lives had much still in common with Kilvert's Welsh and English vicarages of the 1870s.

I am the daughter of a rectory, and if I may so put it, was later to become the wife of a rectory - and my mother was the daughter of a rectory also. Her father was an almost exact contemporary of Francis Kilvert, being born in 1845, incidentally into the year of the Great Famine. It is a little unnerving to realise that had Kilvert lived, and had one had the joy of meeting him, one's hero would have been a venerable and grand-fatherly figure! I was seven years old when my venerable grandfather died - aged 86, in 1931. He and my grandmother had brought up a family of eight in a sea-board parish in the West of Ireland, in a neat little Georgian rectory in the shadow of an excessively plain little 'Protestant' church. I do not know many Welsh or English vicarages, but when I saw Haworth Parsonage it reminded me in both style and size of Louisburgh Rectory, Co. Mayo. My grandfather taught his children himself until they were of an age to go to boarding school, but there would not have been room in that establishment to take in even one extra pupil. But in a rectory I was to live in later, the ink-stained study floorboards gave evidence that the room had been for some time used as a schoolroom, and there was a parishioner alive then (the mid-forties) who remembered some of his schooldays there ... linking me with the time of Kilvert's father and his parsonage school. As to boarding schools, I need only mention that my mother and aunts went to the Clergy Daughters' School in Dublin, a train journey of at least 160 miles (shades of the Vaughan girls of Newchurch exiled in Bristol) and when my time came, so did I.

Four of my five uncles fought in the First World War. If Francis Kilvert had lived to have a family, sons of his would probably have done the same, at much the same ages, for my grandparents began their long family in 1878. Three of these uncles returned from their emigrant life in the New World to do their duty as they saw it. All survived, to scatter again at the war's end, and as two of the girls also made their lives in Canada, this left only my mother and her youngest brother in Ireland, he being the son to follow in his father's footsteps and become ordained. One wonders if a comparable scattering would have happened in an English vicarage family, but clerical stipends there probably having been much of a muchness with Irish ones, the scattering to make a way in life would probably have been the same.

My beginning in a rectory was being brought home from the nursing home one early spring day in 1924 and being met, I am told, by a bonfire lit by the villagers to celebrate the first child born to that midland rectory for over a hundred years. Shades, again, of Clyro and "Miss Venables" welcome fifty-four years previously. As to the bell-ringing and the gallons of beer - there was only one bell in the ancient church nearby, and history doesn't tell if it was rung, but no doubt my impecunious father (it was his first benefice) did try to hand out a little hospitality, liquid or otherwise, around the bonfire.

Kilvert's word 'ramshackle' as applied to the old vicarage in Glnsbury always comes to my mind in remembering the little that I do of my first home. Maybe it wasn't quite as bad as that, but the roof certainly leaked, and I will swear that my first memory is of sitting up in my cot howling my head off because the gleaming eyes of a rat were looking down at me from a hole in the corner of the ceiling. I have a slightly older friend who used to play with me in those days and now whenever we con them over she invariably shudders and murmurs 'Oh! Do you remember the rats?'

A few years later, my grandfather, who in 1925 at the age of eighty had been moved to the next-door parish at Westport in Co. Mayo, retired. So 1928 saw my father appointed as his successor. Victorian commitment to the Fifth Commandment, on the part no doubt of parochial nominators and bishops as well as everybody else, saw to



it that it was the young people who moved and changed their lives, so that the older generation could live out theirs in an accustomed setting. This setting now was a more than attractive Georgian house indeed (except for the horrific basement then considered indispensable) - it sat four square and creeper-covered on a hillside over the lawns and shrubberies, its long low wing having elegant French windows wreathed in wisteria. It was a famous house at the time, as shortly before this, its then rector, the Reverend J.I. Hannay had, in the study in that wing, turned himself into the celebrated clerical novelist, George A. Birmingham. My grandfather died in a few year's time, but the sprightly grandmother who survived him was in my formative years (those of her seventies and eighties) a considerable influence. She reared me on Peep of Day and Line Upon Line as no doubt she had reared her own family about fifty years before. I cannot find out when these old Victorian gems were first published. Ward Locke's records were burnt in the last war, so they do not know the dates of the first editions, but one book was evidently in use in 1870 when the eccentric younger Lynes (brother and sister of Father Ignatious) visited Hay and stayed with their parents at the Swan.

'When church was over', Kilvert tells us, 'rain was falling and a number of people blocked the porch. The Lynes were all standing together one behind another. Crichton whispered in Mary Bevan's ear 'Did you ever read a book called Line upon Line?' It is noteworthy also, at the other end of the time-scale, that in 1950 my grandmother (then 96) bought a copy of Peep of Day for an 'adopted' great-grandchild. It cost her half-a-crown. The copy today shows itself as well-used, for the well-remembered red limp cover is worn and mended. The Victorian teaching lingered on. Kilvert would have been pleased. Telling of one of his conversations with the ever-understanding Mrs. Venables he says that if he had children of his own he would teach them to believe 'all the dear old Bible stories'. Taking Sunday school myself all through the seventies of the following century I always found that a Bible story dramatically read or told held the childrens' attention far better than any wishy-washy goody-goody tale of the Billy-and-Betty-being-good-children type. And we were quite capable between us, teacher and children, of digging out the spiritual content of the story. I can't quite remember what that was in the long tale of Joseph, broken up into an exciting serial, but I do remember the verdict of a small boy of seven who told us very seriously that 'That Joseph was a great fellow'. Francois Bedarida in his Social History of England 1851 - 1975 (Metheun 1979) speaks of nineteenth-century England being totally incomprehensible if the power of the Bible in men's lives and hearts at that time is ignored ... the teaching from it until Bible characters were as familiar as the inhabitants of the next street. They were as familiar also to us who lived in Irish rectories in the first half of the twentieth century.

The Fifth Commandment held good also in prescribing conduct that would not offend my grandmother. Matters of dress came under her eye, and even in adolescence when most of my contemporaries might be wearing shorts I wasn't, and when their hair was bobbed mine was still in plaits. Respect for my elders was so inculcated into me that it was a long, long time before I could bring myself to address anyone even slightly older than myself by their Christian name. I am reminded of this every time I read the Bevan/Daw extracts from the Diary ... of the 'four pretty girls whom I have watched grow up and who seem almost like my sister' ... yet when they greet their friend from the train in Chippenham it is not as 'Frank! Frank!' but as 'Mr. Kilvert! Mr. Kilvert!'.

The drawing room of my second rectory was for many years still very much my grandmother's domain ... mantleshef decently clad in bobbled chenille, and walls thickly covered with far-from-flattering or artistic photographs of family, friends and relations. I was more interested in the long bookcase than in any of the furnishings, for as well as my mother's and my aunts' tear-jerking copies of Little Lord Fauntleroy, Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852), Little Women (1868) and The Wide Wide World (?) (the latter three Kilvert could, and probably would, have enjoyed!) there were some of my uncle's books also. Two of them mentioned in the Diary - The Gorilla Hunters and The Young Fur Trappers given by F.K. to Owen and Hugh Thomas in 1872. 'Good old Wordsworth', Byron, Scott, Tennyson, Farrar's Life of Christ - not to mention 'dear little Lorna Doone' - all Diary books - were waiting for me there. 'My mother' Kilvert tells us on his birthday in 1870, 'had given me five shillings to buy a book'. In the event I think he got at least two. How many Nelson Classics, at one and sixpence each, helped fill our bookshelves to overflow for many years yet? Five shillings remained a very respectable present for a booklover, or for anyone else, for a long, long time. In 1914 my youngest uncle, in training at Basingstoke, writing on paper headed with the crest of the Dublin Fusiliers, couldn't quite make it for his sister. 'I am sending you a p.o. for four shillings for Christmas', he says. 'I'll perhaps be able to give more when I get home!' In my Clergy Daughters' schooldays many's the p.o. for five shillings that came like manna through the post in the years of the second World War ... from 1870 to, say, 1940 values had not changed all that much.



Facing the bookcase in our drawing-room was an upright piano around which we sang songs for many years, songs both spiritual and non-spiritual and now when my mind sees us at this pleasant and simple pastime it also sees the Bevans of Hay Castle clustered round their organ, making their own happiness and amusement. We had our croquet outside, and we had our bagatelle board inside (Vol. 2 .. 14th October 1872) and in summer picnics of the bacon sandwich and the kettle-boiled-over-an-open-air fire variety rather than that in the Golden Valley in June 1870 when 'the usual things' included cold chicken, ham and tongue, as well as pies, tarts, champagne, claret, hock, cider and sherry ... the latter always reminding me of Ratty's first picnic provided for Mole ... 'coldtonguecoldhamcoldbeefpickledgherkinssaladfrench rollscresssandwichespottedmeatgingerbeerlemonadesodawater...'

Our household was often augmented by 'visitors staying'. This also pleasant custom was a lingering-on of houses that were large enough to have 'spare' rooms, help-in-the-house of some sort so that there could continue to be exchanges of children, visits of lonely aunts and elderly cousins, the coming of relations from overseas and young men temporarily at a loose end - it all comes back as one reads of Kilvert's frequent visits to friends for holidays.

A 'man in the garden', or about the place, was another thing that made hospitality possible. When I read of the party in Clifford Priory, and the wandering around the garden afterwards, and the 'dear delightful pussy' guarding the strawberry beds, I am overcome with a longing for the walled rectory gardens of my youth, and the well-kept paths with their box edgings, the cold frames and the neat rows of vegetables, the prolific fruit bushes, the soldier-straight sweet-peas grown by my father - and grandmother's herbaceous border. It was mostly the ladies of Irish rectories, with their quota of Anglo-Saxon heritage no doubt, who looked after the flowers and shrubs. I have a post card (one of those capital things 'useful and handy') dated 2.6.17 and stamped with one halfpenny, from an Irish Deanery lady to a rectory lady ... such a mere trifle as a raging World War is not mentioned, rather the "propagation by seeds or division (the original italics) of Incarvillea". Those ladies had their priorities right.

Decoration with flowers, as in the Diary, formed a big part of our lives. I think that the Harvest decorations had tamed down somewhat from the worst of the excesses recorded by Kilvert, but my grandmother's silver epergne for home use, filled with overflowing roses, or those sweet peas, and apt to leak and wobble in the centre of the white damask tablecloth was the bane of my tidy father's life. We too, like the Kilverts, had the custom of greeting visitors with flowers. They had them tied to the gateposts and the pillars of the house when 'Mrs. Wyndowe' returned from India. We tied them to the door knocker. This was a cause of grave concern for some time to our postman who was convinced that we had an unusual number of deaths in the family! When, sadly, my father did die in 1947, it was my mother's great comfort at Easter to make a primrose cross for his grave. On a happier occasion just a few years earlier, when churches were not at all lavishly decorated for weddings, as Kilvert and his sister Dora decorated Langley for Kerren Wood's wedding, I was married under a bridal arch of pampas grasses and greenery specially erected for me by the then Lady of the parish, who at age about eighty, must have been harking back to something in her Victorian past. One thinks of the pathetic bridal arches erected by the welcoming parishioners of Bredwardine, and the happier ones we read of recently in the article about the welcome to Pope and his bride.

My growing-up rectory was a house of what has been called 'frugal comfort' .. even if there were a lot of stained boards around the inadequate carpets! My heart always reaches out to the Kilverts in Langley the day they got back into the dining-room 'to our great comfort.... the old oilcloth having been taken up, and the boards round the new Brussels square stained and varnished'. Our comfort, and hospitality, and upkeep, and warmth was all done on a stipend, I now realise, that in about 1940 differed little from that of the new Vicar of Bredwardine in 1878 .. 'net £375'. I think my father's was about £400. My husband and I moved into rectories in 1944 and 1946 which could only be described as dilapidated. If pressed hard enough, parish and diocese saw to small improvements, and 'charges' were put on the rector's stipend. This in one case reduced a similar stipend to that of Bredwardine in 1878 to £70 a quarter in 1945. Again my heart goes out to Kilvert as he records finding his account overdrawn between thirty and forty pounds, a nightmare to him, and to us later! We reverted to Langleyism and kept a cow (others of our generation of clerics kept hens or goats or any assorted livestock so that, if I may be a bit Irish, such livestock as the wolf might be kept from the door) ... and like Kilvert we sat up half the night hoping she might have twins. If Kilvert can record the incident of the cow that got caught in a crib on a Sunday, we can reciprocate, only in our case it was a pig which rent the captive air with vociferous complaint, broadcasting the dangerous falsehood that the rector was ringing his swine on a Sunday! I am reminded of one truly Victorian lady parishioner who used to bewail the fact regularly to her hard-pressed farmer nephew that 'when I was young the cows

never bellowed like that on the blessed Sabbath'.

There was enacted in our yard more than once the drama of 'two children roaring at once and the turkey triumphant' - only in our case it was the gander who kept the two little neighbours at bay. Then eventually we turned ourselves into a sort of Gilfrach-yr-heol where on many's the evening when the parish work was done, the good rector (or the rector's good wife in emergencies, for the days of the man-in-the-yard were gone) could be met folding his sheep in the yard. Gardening took a back seat, though like Mr. de Winton, Rector of Boughrood, we too were often found setting potatoes on an Easter Monday. But bit by bit the neat walled gardens, the shrubberies, the rockeries, the tennis courts, they all fell into the state known even to Kilvert as 'Ichabod'. Some rectors there were who managed (to their parishioners' great satisfaction - for the financial plight of the clergy was little understood) to hang on to old glory for a little longer, they being, no doubt, in the category of the eventual holder of the living of Malmesbury in 1875 - 'the right man, and one who has some private fortune'. In the 1940s and 50s there was still in Ireland the contrast between the almost-Vaughan type of parson, and the Bevan, if not quite the Venables type. The Victorian set-up of a church every few miles of the road, with a rectory and a rector of its own, and quite possibly a curate, was still the thing just as in Clyro; in Kilvert's time there were 16 clergy within a six-mile radius. Most Irish parishes became curate-less less than half way through this century - possibly the first bastion of Victorianism to fall. But at least then each two churches had a rector between them (as many as six can now share one priest) and there was still the visiting between rectories as recorded in the diaries - but with very simple entertainment. This was a source of strength and encouragement to 'the brethren', now often missed, and meant comradeship and relaxation to their wives. Clerical meetings continued (and do continue) for study and lectures, and always now make me think of the one attended by William Smith of Monnington 'who came back not very deeply impressed by the brilliancy of some of the Herefordshire clergy'!

There was one long-ago Clerical meeting of our time that to me out-Kilverts Kilvert. The rector holding it was a very devout man, and had brought as his lecturer an almost monk-like friend (shades of Father Ignatius!) who had decreed silence for the in-between-times of the proceedings. The slightly recalcitrant clerical gathering, which ordinarily liked its bit of chat and exchange of problems, was taking its silent after-lunch breather on the truly rural rectory avenue when it was electrified by the almost breathless advent of a wild-looking mountainy parishioner yelling for the rector.

'Oh, Mither G.... come quick! Come quick! There's a b----- big bladdher afther fallin' outa the sky and we don't know what to do' !! In deference to Kilvert I leave the qualifying adjective to the imagination ... it was only wrung from the poor man, in the midst of such a clutter of clergy, by his mental distress! The clutter of clergy promptly took to its collective heels, off through the fields, leaving the rector and his astonished friend high and dry. You might say it could only happen in Ireland (it was, by the way, a meteorological device) but I think too of the huge balloon in the shape of a cow which fell in Clyro churchyard in August of 1878, frightening the village children 'almost out of their lives'.

'I remember - I remember'. I remember also the games those children played at their school treat - Oranges and Lemons and Thirds - so did we. I remember CMS meetings and 'a good many children but not many grown people' and I wonder if they too experienced the all-pervading stench of carbide as the 'magic lantern' showed forth its wonders - we experienced it well into the fifties as it was late in the day in our area when the magic poles of our Electricity Supply Board marched across that particular bit of land. I suppose it was in the sixties that we, finally, and for many reasons, left some of our Victorianism behind and marched forward ourselves at last into the new century, and the brash rather than brave new world. It is perhaps only now that we realise how stripped we felt of that warmth and certain clerical cosiness that emanates from the diaries, despite the fact that recognition was given in them that all was not indeed best in the best of all possible worlds. How glad I am that a seasick ferry crossing ten years ago washed me up as it were on the shores of Clyro, and has since given me the pleasures of being reminded (to misinterpret Arthur Clough a little) that as things had been, in clerical circles, they remained for a very long time indeed - and I experienced them.

Constance P. Boake.

KILVERT COUNTRYSIDE MINI-GUIDES

In response to many requests, we list the various mini-guides that have been produced by our member, Mr. K.R. Clew, in aid of the churches concerned. Each mini-guide costs 20p plus a stamped addressed envelope at least 9" x 4". Requests should be sent to the postal secretary for the appropriate mini-guide (see below) - NOT TO THE K.S. PUBLICATIONS MANAGER!

BREDWARDINE - Mr. H.H. Entwisle, Hill Cottage, Bredwardine, Hereford.

CLIFFORD - Rev. W. King, Cusop Rectory, Hay on Wye, Hereford. HR3 5RF.

CLYRO & BETTWS CLYRO - Mr. D. Harling, Penlan House, Clyro, Hereford. HR3 5SW.

COLVA & GLADESTRY - Mrs. V. Hobby, Colva Farm, Kington, Hereford. HR5 3RA.

GLASBURY & LLOWES - Mr. P. Cooper, Treble Hill, Glasbury on Wye, Hereford. HR3 5NT.

HAY, LLANIGON & CAPEL-Y-FFIN - Canon I Davies, The Vicarage, Hay on Wye, Hereford. HR3 5DQ.

KINGTON ST. MICHAEL - Rev. D.N. Copeland, St. Paul's Rectory, 9, Greenway Park, Chippenham, Wiltshire. SN15 1QG.

LANGLEY BURRELL - Mr. J. Payne, Old Brewery House, Langley Burrell, Chippenham, Wiltshire. SN15 4LQ.

MAUD HEATH'S CAUSEWAY - (Chippenham - Langley Burrell - Kellaways - East Tytherton - Wick Hill) - Mr. J. Payne, Old Brewery House, Langley Burrell, Chippenham, Wiltshire. SN15 4LQ.

PAINSCASTLE GROUP (Llanbedr Painscastle, Llandewi Fach, Bryngwyn & Newchurch) - Rev. P. Ralph Bowman, Rhos-goch Rectory, Painscastle, Builth Wells, Powys, LD2. 3JU.

ST. HARMON - Rev. G. Davies, Cwmdeuddwr Rectory, Rhayader, Powys.

SEAGRY - Mr. G. Knapp, Westwood, Startley, Chippenham, Wiltshire.

Large format guides (each 16pp. including old photographs)

These guides cost £1. 00 each (inclusive of postage) and are obtainable from:

KILVERT'S BREDWARDINE - Mr. H. Entwisle, Hill Cottage, Bredwardine, Hereford.

KILVERT'S LANGLEY BURRELL (Includes guide to Hardenhuish Church) - Mr. J. Payne, Old Brewery House, Langley Burrell, Chippenham, Wiltshire. SN15 1QG.

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Our Vice-President, the Ven. Owain W. Jones, has prepared an article on Llysdinam and Newbridge, including a guide to Newbridge Church. Copies of this, reprinted from Brynchaeiniog (The Brecknock Society Transactions) are available at Newbridge Church.

Locally produced church guides are available at Moccas, Wootton Woodstock and Monnington Churches.

THE CHURCH AT LANGLEY BURRELL - Rev. Dr. J.N. Rowe (Bradford)

When I was on holiday in Scarborough recently, I read with great interest Mr. Frederick Grice's book "Francis Kilvert and His World". His account of Kilvert's background, the circles in which he moved, the people with whom he associated, his outlook as shown in the Diary, is most illuminating. It is a book for someone who, like myself, is already acquainted with the Diary, but cannot pretend to have done the detailed research which Mr. Grice has done. On the other hand, it would appear that there are some statements in the book which need qualification. For instance, he states on p.22 that "it is a matter for regret.....that Kilvert, in the published parts of his diary, leaves us virtually no detailed description of Langley Burrell Church as he knew it, except perhaps for two passages" (Vol. 1 328-30 and Vol. 11 284), both of which describe not so much the Church as the Churchyard.

I feel that this statement should not pass unchallenged, because there are several references in the Diary to the internal arrangements of the Church. In Vol. 11 (299-301) there is an account of the decoration of the windows and altar rails for Karen Wood's wedding, and of the dilapidated state of the altar cloth. There is also a reference to a hagioscope (more commonly called a "squint"). On pp. 311 and 312, Kilvert is recorded as discussing the painting of the Church interior with the Squire, and also the question of whether two chairs should be installed in the sanctuary.



In Vol. 111 (97, 98) Kilvert mentions that the Squire had told George Jefferies that he would no longer pay him for leading the singing. On pp. 100 and 101 it is stated that as a result a decision was made to install a harmonium, and that it was in fact installed in the Baptistry near the Font on 29th. October 1874. On p. 102 it is stated that Kilvert's sister Fanny played the harmonium and the congregation were delighted.

On the other hand it would appear that this harmonium did not function satisfactorily, because only a little later (p. 109) it is stated that plans were afoot to buy a new harmonium, and on p. 113 we are informed that it had arrived (on 19th Nov). It was placed (p. 114) "in a little seat behind the pillar at the west end of the Church, where by taking out the back of the seat we made a little chamber for it".

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ROSA BONHEUR'S "HORSE FAIR" - by J.R. OLIVER (CARMARTHEN)

I was most interested to read Mr. Dafydd Ifans' article on this well known picture in the August 1983 Newsletter.

Members of the Society, particularly those living in North America, may be interested in the following extract from "The Day Lincoln was Shot" by Jim Bishop (Harper Bros. 1955):-

"The night, now, was clear. The mist gone. The wind cool and gusty. The moon threw a shadow of Ford's Theatre across the street.

Every few steps, Leale stopped the party and pulled a clot loose. The procession seemed to be interminable. When they got across the street the steady roar of the crowd made it impossible to hear or be heard. Leale wanted to go into the nearest house, but a soldier on the stoop made motions that no-one was at home and made a helpless pantomime with a key. At the next house toward F. Street, Leale saw a man with a lighted candle standing in the doorway, motioning. This was the William Peterson house at 453 Tenth Street. Mr. Peterson was a tailor.

Lincoln was carried up the steps into the house. Part of the crowd followed. They moved down a narrow hall. To the right was a stairway going up to the second floor. To the left was a parlour, with coal grate and black horsehair furniture.

Here, the President was placed on a bed. A soldier on leave, who had rented the room, picked up his gear and left. He was Private William T. Clark of the 13th. Massachusetts Infantry. The room measured fifteen feet by nine feet. The wallpaper was oatmeal in character. A thin reddish rug covered part of the floor. There was a plain maple bureau near the foot of the bed, three straight-backed chairs, a washstand with a white crock bowl and a wood stove. On the wall were framed prints of "The Village Blacksmith" and Rosa Bonheur's "Horse Fair".

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REV. ANDREW POPE (II) - BY THE HON. SECRETARY

In 1881 Pope was appointed to the larger living at Diddlebury in the north of the Hereford diocese. Here he stayed for 10 years. (His memory at Cusop had not faded, for when a new organ was dedicated at that church he was invited to preach, and did so to a packed church). The then vicarage at Diddlebury was little more than a cottage and was over a mile from the village, so Pope built a new one in a central position. (In March 1981 Messrs. Guy and Hugh Dearlove very kindly took me to explore the village. A lady was gardening outside a house which looked like a Victorian vicarage. Mr. Hugh Dearlove braved a huge Irish wolfhound in order to make inquiries. We were told that house bore the date 1884, it had been built by the then vicar and that the fine mature trees in the garden had been planted by him. We had read that Pope carried out some restoration to the church, but this we were unable to verify. Nor did we find information about the school, which was adjacent to the vicarage and looked contemporary with it).

Since then, however, I have been in correspondence with Mrs. M. Halford, Shropshire County Archivist and a member of the Kilvert Society, and I am greatly indebted to her for the material contained in the following two paragraphs.

Pope did indeed carry out work on the church; the re-seating of the church, the converting of the Cornwall pew into an organ chamber and sacristy, raising the

chancel floor, throwing a screen across the chancel and fitting it with oak stalls and choir seats and also building a new porch. The money was raised by subscription, and Pope gave two donations of £50, as well as presenting the church with a Pulpit and Lectern.

The school had been built in 1872, but during Pope's incumbency it had become overcrowded - over 100 children on the roll, and Mrs. Halford thinks it was on his recommendation that an extra classroom was added in 1887. He was a Manager and the Correspondent of the School. A frequent visitor, he instructed the classes in Religious Knowledge and the Catechism, and stepped in to help when Staff were ill. Mrs. Pope also took an interest; for example, she visited the school to inspect the needlework and in especially bad weather provided the children with soup dinners. (On 6 Feb. 1889 105 children were given hot soup). The log book records that among the visitors in 1889 were Miss Ashe and Rev. John Daniell, Rector of Langley Burrell, formerly of Langley Fitzurse (and mentioned in the Diary). On Aug. 23rd. of the same year the School had a treat, and the headmaster noted "the children were highly pleased with their gifts which, as usual, were mainly provided by the kind generosity of Rev. A. Pope who takes a very hearty interest in everything connected with the school". After the departure of the Popes for Upton Bishop, the headmaster made the following entry in the school log book: "Rev. A. Pope and family have now finally left the parish. Their loss will be irreparable to the school, the church, the reading room and in fact everything connected with the parish. They not only took a lively interest in everything connected with the place, but heartily supported and promoted everything which they took an interest in. As a School Manager, Mr. Pope was more than could be desired; while in his office as Minister he never neglected anything which could tend to improve their spiritual necessities. We, as teachers, have lost a firm friend, a kind adviser and a most liberal supporter in our work. The poor will miss him greatly, while the schoolchildren, in whom he took a keen interest, will lose a friend whom they could not only reverence but also trust and love".

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