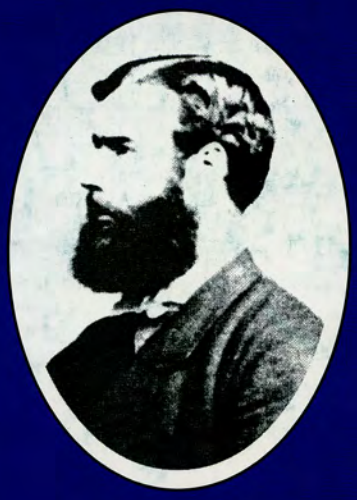

THE JOURNAL OF THE KILVERT SOCIETY

Number 11

June 2003

THE KILVERT SOCIETY

Formed (in 1948) to foster an interest in the Revd Francis Kilvert, his work, his diary and the country he loved

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Cover photographs:
Front: View from Merbach Hill looking along the Wye towards Hay, Clyro and the Radnorshire Hills.
Back: The new banner – photographed by Ann Dean

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From the Editor

Sadly, I have to begin, again, with news of the death of yet another eminent Kilvertian, that of our archivist the Revd Dr Nigel Rowe, who died in April.

Nigel had been a member of the Society since 1970, long before he became our archivist. He was inspired to join by his love of Radnorshire, which he had visited frequently. Indeed, such was his affection for this lovely county that when he retired he and his wife Elizabeth moved from Yorkshire to Clyro. Appropriately his funeral service was held in the church where RFK had served as curate. His obituary appears on page 19.

I am delighted to report that the first Society winter event was a huge success. Over 50 members joined the visit to Dulwich Picture Gallery – some leaving Herefordshire (and in fact from farther west) very early in the morning in order to be there for 11 o'clock. Even so I think they thought it was well worth the effort. We were skilfully shown around the Gallery (inside and outside) by our guides, our member Hilary Rosser and her colleague Elisabeth Bartlett and the visit was greatly enhanced by the excellent arrangements made by Hilary for lunch and the wonderfully sunny, mild, spring-like day – and that was 26 February. Did she arrange the weather too?

Similarly successful was the more recent AGM weekend although we were all very disappointed that Dr Bernard Jones was unwell and therefore unable to conduct his seminar on Kilvert's poetry at *The Swan* on the Saturday morning. We send him our best wishes and hope that his health is now much improved. We look forward to listening to that talk on a future Society occasion.

Both these events are elegantly reported below and, as ever, I send my grateful thanks to the special correspondents who always, so very willingly, agree to write something for the *Journal*.

I am sorry that the March *Journal* appeared so late, this was on account of difficulties at the then printers who were moving premises. In the upheaval two of the photographs in that issue were printed back to front and those familiar with the churches of the Radnorshire Kilvert Country should have noticed one of the errors. Anyway, no one has mentioned it to me and I wonder whether this was out of sympathy for the editor or mere lack of observation! No prizes for spotting it now however.

By the way, I hope members will like the redesigned *Journal*, of course it costs more to produce and distribute than its predecessor and although I have been much supported in this project by our favourite treasurer (see the editorials of *Journals* 6, 7 and 8) he may well have something to say about income and expenditure later on – perhaps in the September edition?

From the Chairman

May I take this opportunity of thanking you all for the confidence you have placed in me by electing me as your Chairman for the ensuing year. I very much look forward to being at your service.

The Annual General Meeting, indeed the whole weekend, was a good and happy occasion, with plenty of opportunity for friends to meet and new friendships to be formed.

I found the one-minute silence for those whose deaths have been notified to the Society in the last twelve months particularly poignant this year, so soon after the death of our archivist, the Revd Dr Nigel Rowe. I am so pleased that Elizabeth was able to join us as we paid tribute to Nigel. I have lost a dear friend, but the Society has lost a faithful and diligent officer and the world has lost both a fine intellect, and an utterly sincere and modest man. To quote from Elizabeth's letter to me – 'he never, ever played the games of one-upmanship.' I cannot think of a finer epitaph.

Ann's year as chairman has been marked by many achievements, notably the development of our website, and, a real first, our presence at the Hay Festival. But she will particularly be remembered for her caring acts of compassion towards members and others for whom life has been affected by illness or tragedy. Sincerity, modesty, diligence, care, compassion and faithfulness, all such Kilvertian virtues. May they mark the Society in the year ahead as it seeks to walk in the footsteps of the one from whom we take our name.

I wish you all a happy 'Kilvert' year ahead and look forward to meeting many of you at our forthcoming events.

David Elvins will succeed me as secretary in October at a date to be decided. I commend him to you and look forward to working with him. I know you will support him as you have me in the last eight years. In the interim I will continue in the secretary's post.

Michael Sharp

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 28 June

It has now been possible to organise a visit to Moccas Court (photograph, page 14) in addition to the planned visit to Moccas Park and church. Please note carefully therefore the amended arrangements for the afternoon:

Meet at Moccas Court (signposted), NOT the Park as previously advised, at 2 p.m. There will follow a guided tour of the court with time to visit the gardens afterwards. Parking is available in front of the building. The cost of the tour is £2 payable on the day.

At 3 p.m. John Wilks will lead the Tree Walk. For this please meet outside the Park gates (parking in the field by the gatehouse). The walk is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles on grass and is not hilly. Tea will be served in the nearby village hall at 5 p.m. and there will be time to visit Moccas church afterwards.

Sunday 29 June

3 p.m. Evensong at Moccas church.

September Weekend

Saturday 28 September

The arrangements for the visit to Aberystwyth are now confirmed:

Meet at the National Library of Wales at 11 a.m. A tour of the Library ($1\frac{1}{2}$ hours) has been arranged and a small exhibition of Kilvert papers, including the Sandford and Harvey notebooks will be prepared by the Library authorities. It is hoped that Dafydd Ifans and Kathleen Hughes who edited the NLW notebooks will be present. There is a cafeteria at the Library. A visit of the town will follow.

A coach will run to Aberystwyth from Hereford, picking up en route – a booking form is enclosed.

Sunday 29 September

Service at St Harmon.

Instead of the customary Evensong this will be Eucharist to accommodate Parish arrangements.

KILVERT IN ABERYSTWYTH

A Prologue to the September visit

By the Editor

In June 1876 Kilvert became vicar of St Harmon, one of the loneliest parishes in Wales. It lies in north Radnorshire about four miles from Rhayader, which stands on the road that leads across Plynlimon to Aberystwyth, about 30 miles away. It is not surprising therefore that Kilvert should visit the resort, which at the time was growing in importance and popularity. Indeed, the neo-gothic fantasy, which stands at the southern end of the promenade, started life as a railway contractor's (Thomas Savin) vision for an exotic hotel to cater for the anticipated influx of visitors brought there by the railway, which had reached the town in 1864. That particular hotel enterprise failed but was turned to profit by the founding fathers of the University of Wales, because in 1872 the buildings were bought at a fraction of their cost, to house the first college of the newly formed university.

In the summer of 1877 Kilvert paid his first visit to the town in the company of his parents and his sister, Dora. Frustratingly, the St Harmon portion of the *Diary* is, as we know, one of the missing sections so there are no details there of that visit. However an item in the local paper of the time, the *Aberystwyth Observer*, provides some information. The paper regularly published a list of visitors to the resort and the Kilverts are recorded in the issue dated 30 June 1877 as staying at 38 Marine Terrace. The house stands in the centre of the curve of elegant buildings on the promenade and it later became part of Carpenter Hall, a university hall of residence, which the present writer remembers as sheltering 'a very nice class' of young lady.

The next mention of Aberystwyth comes in July 1878, by which time Kilvert had become vicar of Bredwardine.

19th July 1878
Today we settled that we should all four go to Aberystwyth next Monday.

As before Kilvert was to be accompanied by his parents and Dora. His parents were visiting Bredwardine and Dora was keeping house for him at the vicarage.

Once again there are, frustratingly, no details of the holiday, Plomer having omitted entries between 19 July and 4 August, inserting an editorial note before the latter entry: *[Kilvert has returned from a holiday at Aberystwyth].*

There are three subsequent brief references to the town:

Wednesday 14th August 1878
I called at the other lodge (at Moccas Court) *and saw Mrs Hicks who said gratefully that the ointment which Dora brought her from Aberystwyth for her exema* (sic) *was doing her great good.*

Tuesday 7th January 1879
..... Indoors all day with a bad headache .... Lizzie Jones sent me a copy of The Aberystwyth Observer *with my lines in it on* The Tanybwlch Beach.

Finally:

Tuesday 18th February 1879
Snow. My father and mother left us this afternoon for Monnington promising to come again in June and go to Aberystwyth if all is well.

We do not know whether this visit took place because the *Diary* ends a month later. It seems unlikely however for, among other things, Kilvert would no doubt have been busy with preparations for his forthcoming wedding on 20 August.

With regard to the entry for 7 January, Aberystwyth seems to have been especially inspirational for Kilvert the poet, because, in addition to the aforementioned *Tanybwlch Beach* he also composed there his *The Fisherman* and *To Some Little Friends at Aberystwyth*, both in July 1877.

Photograph (by Ken Clew) page 15.

THE WINTER EVENT

Society Visit to Dulwich Picture Gallery
26 February 2003
By Laura Vine (Warminster)

Having grown up with the name Francis Kilvert and having had many of his *Diary* entries read to me at every possible opportunity, it was very exciting for me to be involved in not only my first outing with the Kilvert Society but also with its inaugural winter visit. One could hardly have called it a winter visit though as we gathered together in the sunshine outside the Dulwich Picture Gallery. We quite expected to hear *the cuckoo singing from Gypsy Hill* as Kilvert had done as he walked to the gallery from his sister Emmie's house. Over fifty members and friends found their way to *sweet green Dulwich* – for some, a pleasant stroll had not been an option having left their homes well before dawn!

There was such a tremendous turnout that the group had to be split in two for our tour of the Gallery – one led by member and guide Hilary Rosser and the other by Mrs Elisabeth Bartlett. Our tour started off in the mausoleum where the founders of the collection are buried (see Hilary Rosser's entry in the September 2002 *Journal* for a brief synopsis of the Gallery's history) and it was here that we were able to see Kilvert's signature in the visitors' book. The first in the winter of 1872 and the second in the summer of 1876 (See from Recent Correspondence (i)).

The Gallery is an absolute gem containing some very important examples of European painting and we were made aware of this as we wandered past pieces by the likes of Canaletto, Rubens, Gainsborough and Van Dyck. Kilvert had been particularly taken by Rembrandt's *Girl at a Window,* and we too admired her sweet face and calm expression and how the artist had *made her immortal, imperishable and ever young.* The group was keen to seek out the two Murillo portraits that Kilvert had professed were *the gems of the collection. The Flower Girl* and *Invitation to the Game of Pelota* had obviously charmed the curate but I'm afraid that I have to side with John Ruskin's rather scathing critique of the paintings! If I had had the opportunity to walk around with Kilvert I would have steered him towards some of the many other beautiful portraits of which he makes no mention. But I rather like the fact that he seemed moved by the paintings more from a purely personal level than from an artistically informed approach. We also checked that Albert Cuyp's cows still *lay about in the evening glow … looking placidly over the wide level pastures of Holland,* and indeed they did.

After a restorative lunch in Dulwich village we were able to wander freely through the exhibition and go back to our personal favourites as well as having a tour around the outside of the building itself. The architect Sir John Soane had kindly designed the Gallery free of charge and the building provides a majestic home for the art collection.

I thoroughly enjoyed the day, not only seeing a stunning array of paintings but also the privilege of following in the footsteps of Kilvert with such an enthusiastic and informed group of people.

Hilary Rosser writes:

Being London based I had had no opportunity to meet fellow Society members before the Society visit to Dulwich Picture Gallery; first impressions were distinctly favourable!

The other DPG guide, Elisabeth Bartlett, (a Kilvert enthusiast but not a Society member) and I both enjoyed introducing Society members to the Gallery which Kilvert visited twice, and some of whose paintings he enthusiastically admired. Similar enthusiastic admiration was manifested by some of his followers, which is always rewarding for Gallery guides!! The blessing of fine weather and a good lunch contributed to the enjoyable nature of the day. Do come again!

Photograph (by Ann Dean) page 15.

THE AGM WEEKEND (25 – 27 APRIL 2003)

By Richard Vine (Warminster)

Friday Night

Kilvert-v-Woodforde

Hardly had we sat down in the Bishop's Palace at Hereford, flushed from changing in a wood on the way to Hereford from Wiltshire, than your persuasive editor asked me to 'write up' the weekend. Charmingly put, of course, and not to be resisted.

AGMs are generally dreary things – not so that of the Kilvert Society. The glorious setting of the Bishop's Palace was full to bursting with animated conversations on all sides and people positively throwing themselves forward to be elected chairman, secretary and members of the committee. Ann Dean stood down after a bustling year as Chairman –doing all sorts of good things – banners, website and keeping in touch with the unwell. Ann, once described by her mother as 'a proper little madam', has made the Society, dare I say it, a friendlier one; long may that continue. Michael Sharp, a true Kilvertian stalwart, takes over as chairman and David Elvins, in due course, as secretary. Your illustrious editor was thanked for the *Journal* 'which gets better and better' and the treasurer obtained agreement for funding some improvements to it, which if successful, may lead to increased subscriptions next year. We wait with bated breath. Michael Sharp promised to keep the Society very much as it (so successfully) is, to everyone's approval.

With the business rapidly over and everyone happily installed in their new positions we went next door to a vast buffet and tea or coffee. I managed to get John Toman to sign my recent (that evening!) purchase of *The Homeless Heart*. Do you think the Committee might sanction a glass of wine next year?!

Lawrence Le Quesne then gave a most interesting talk on RFK and Parson James Woodforde. Am I alone in finding Mr Le Quesne's *After Kilvert,* now that it is some thirty years old, almost as interesting as a social history of the early 1970s?

There are two clerical diarists in the canon of English Literature – Woodforde and Kilvert. Woodforde was born in 1740 exactly 100 years before Kilvert and both led utterly obscure lives, Woodforde in Somerset and Norfolk, with no indication that either of them would one day become so well known. Mr Le Quesne drew several interesting comparisons (and differences) between the two but in the end you could not get away from the fact that Woodforde's diary is duller, a repetition of daily events and Kilvert's is – well, we all know what Kilvert's is! One comparison that he did not make was of their eating habits. Woodforde is famous for his vast meals, how about?:

28th January 1780 We had for dinner a Calf's Head, boiled Fowl and Tongue, a Saddle of Mutton rosted on the Side Table, and a fine Swan rosted with Currant Jelly Sauce for the first Course. The Second Course a couple of Wild Fowl called Dun Fowls, Larks, Blamange, Tarts, etc., etc., and a good Desert of Fruit after amongst which was a Damson Cheese. I never eat a bit of Swan before, and I think it good eating with sweet sauce. The Swan was killed 3 weeks before it was eat and yet not the lest bad taste in it.

Kilvert too was a good eater: *Ate so much hare, I saw stars,* I recall.

Their Tithe Audit dinners were rather different. Kilvert records (5 February 1878) that after paying their tithe [some] *retired to the back hall and regaled themselves with bread, cheese and beer, some of them eating and drinking the value of the Tithe they had paid! ….. At 7.00 I sat down to dinner with the farmers. The Pen Pistyll turkey boiled looked very noble when it came to table. At the foot of the table there was roast beef, and at the sides jugged hare and beefsteak pie, preceded by pea soup and in due course followed by plum pudding, apple tart, mince pies and blancmange, cheese and dessert. It was a very nice dinner, thanks to Dora, and I think they all liked it and enjoyed themselves.*

Here is part of Woodforde's for the 1 December 1795: *The farmers paid their respective Composition and dined at my house afterwards…. They all behaved remarkably well and were all happy and pleased with the Frolic…. My company did not leave my house till after 2 in the Morn but all parted then in very high Glee…., very much disguised in Liquor …. strong Beer amazingly liked and drunk in great Quantity, six Bottles of Rum made into Punch …. and about five bottles of Port Wine…. They were all extremely well pleased with their Entertainment and very harmonious!*

Mr Le Quesne bravely put the case for Woodforde but a show of hands proved that whilst quite a few members had read some Woodforde, none (except Mr Le Quesne), were members of the Woodforde Society. RFK won convincingly on all points! We all went away very content that he had done so, but grateful to Mr Le Quesne for promoting the contest.*

And so to bed – we to Winforton where I dreamed of Lizzie Thomas of Winforton Rectory and her pretty eyes – whom RFK had taken into the Whitney Harvest Festival Supper (3 October 1871) rather than of the over-zealous Judge Jeffreys who had apparently dispensed justice from the house in which we were staying.

**A redrafted version of Mr Le Quesne's talk will appear in the September* Journal.

Saturday Morning

It will end in tears (was it *that* bad? – ed.)

We met again at *The Swan at Hay* for an entertainment provided by our multi-talented editor (I blush! – ed.) who had been called upon to stand in owing to the unhappy ill-health of Dr Bernard Jones. After coffee (had the greedier members eaten the biscuits or were there none?) Jeff Marshall used the late Ken Clew's remarkable collection of slides to take us through RFK's life from Bath to Wiltshire (pretty Ettie's house Nonsuch being a favourite) to Clyro, Bredwardine and around via Findon in Sussex where Addie Cholmeley was married and RFK met 'Kathleen Mavourneen'. All this with a four 'man' Greek Chorus of chairmen past and present and committee members (Ann Dean, Mike Sharp, Barry Smith and Richard Weston) to read appropriate excerpts from the *Diary*. It ended with Jeff reading two stanzas from RFK's *The Tanybwlch Beach* with just that perfect sense of Welsh *hiraeth* for his days as a student at Aberystwyth. As the lights came up there were tears in my wife's eyes – a sign all had gone very well indeed. There followed a typically endearing Kilvertian discussion about which was the correct way round for the well-known Kilvert portrait, the buttons on his coat being studied closely!

A lot of work goes into these 'entertainments' and Jeff and his Chorus must be thanked for so thoroughly entertaining us and leaving us wanting more, much more!

Saturday Afternoon

At leisure, as the travel brochures say

We went to Arthur's Stone, a Neolithic chambered tomb, to picnic, admire the view and see how many dachshunds (two with us) as opposed to sheep could shelter under it! Then on to Brobury to recoil at the ghastly purple tower beside the church. Then to Brobury Scar where we walked through the woods and quite unexpectedly (to us) out into the great Monnington Avenue of Scotch firs. What a marvellous sight. They were sighing in the wind as RFK describes on several occasions as we walked their entire length to Monnington Court and round the back to St Mary's. And then back again, both we and the dachshunds feeling we had earned our dinner!

Saturday Evening

The Dinner at the Swan

After meeting in the bar we found ourselves most efficiently seated at tables with members of the committee liberally sprinkled amongst us – a very good idea.

Our President David Lockwood opened proceedings with his usual thought-provoking grace. The Swan do things very nicely and the meal was excellent with a great deal of animated chatter in all directions. Our new Chairman rounded off the evening by quoting relevant passages from the *Diary,* for example: *15th July 1870 I went down to the Swan ... to fetch Miss Lyne and her brother to play croquet. They were out and we went into the saloon to wait for them. Presently Miss Lyne passed the window with her quick decided step and we went out into the hall to meet her. She came forward and held out her hand so pleasantly, the beautiful little hand just what a lady's hand should be 'small, soft, white, warm and dry'!* and all this a few feet from where we were sitting!

A thoroughly good evening with many lingering to continue talking afterwards. One small point – what happened to the toast to RFK?

Sunday Morning

Sadly homeward bound

I am afraid we did not make St Mary's, Hay at 9.30, walking down to the Wye at Winforton instead. It had rained heavily in the night but the morning was bright and fresh and we saw many interesting birds on the river – sandpiper, yellow wagtail and a colony of sand martins amongst others.

We then drove back through Hay and up on to the common under Hay Bluff. Although it was 11 o'clock, bright and windy, we had the entire common to ourselves. We wandered up a stream and the dachshunds snuffled at every little hole for imaginary mice. Then back in the car and over the Gospel Pass down to Capel-y-Ffin where a long string of horses was coming down from the Monastery. We then diverted from the road to visit Cwmyoy, a most extraordinary twisted little church in a beautiful setting not visited by RFK as far as I know, but well worth the detour! Standing in the sunny porch we heard a cuckoo across the valley. (We later discovered that our well-travelled and eagle-eyed editor and his wife had followed in our footsteps the following day – the visitors' book providing the necessary evidence!).

It was a fitting end to a wonderful weekend on which our warm thanks must go to all those who spent so much time organising it. We then headed, reluctantly, home to Wiltshire.

Photos (by Ann Dean) of the AGM Weekend appear in the colour section.

IN CHARGE OF THE PARISH

John Toman concludes his article. For Part I see *Journal* No 10, September 2002

A week later the Kilvert family, or some of them, began to arrive in Clyro. First came Perch on 11 June and he was immediately recruited to help his brother at the Sunday School the following day. Kilvert took both the church services. The same pattern was repeated on Sunday 19 June, except that Kilvert had a Confirmation class at 5 p.m. in addition. His father arrived on 20 June and his mother on 23 June. Kilvert was able to take some pleasure as the end of his long period of extra duty approached. There was a two-day fishing trip with his father and Perch, a picnic at Snodhill Castle, and a walk to Llanthony Abbey.

The Kilvert family came in useful for covering parish duties the following weekend: on Sunday 26 June, Mrs Kilvert went with Kilvert to Sunday School; he read the prayers while his father preached; his father took both the afternoon service and the Confirmation class and Kilvert did the Bettws duty. Then two days later, Venables returned (to Clyro and not direct to Presteign) – on Tuesday, 28 June at 9 p.m. In his diary, Kilvert noted without further comment: *He goes to Presteign to Quarter Sessions tomorrow.*

Parish duties continued to make demands and Kilvert had to meet them in Venables' absence. On Friday, 1 July, Clyro School was inspected by an HMI, Mr Hernaman. Venables should have been there to sign papers in connection with it but Kilvert had to send one to Baskerville to sign. However, he forgot to return it and Evans, the schoolmaster, came to Kilvert in great agitation seeking the missing paper on which the inspection depended. *Mr Venables not being at home to entertain him, Mr Hernaman came to us for luncheon.* Venables returned from Presteign the next day.

On Sunday 3 July, Kilvert took the Bettws service because, as he recorded sarcastically, *Mr Venables was kind enough to save me a sermon by preaching himself in the morning and letting me go to Bettws.* As was Kilvert's practice, he chose a text to relieve his feelings now the end of his travail had come and preached extempore, another habit when he needed freedom to express himself. He tells us that he made up his sermon on his walk from Clyro. The subject was the Transfiguration and the chosen text was: *They feared as they entered the cloud* (Luke 9. 34). The passage records how Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him up a high mountain and of how He was *transfigured.* His clothes became dazzlingly white and He was seen in a vision talking with Moses and Elijah. *While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered the cloud.* The author of the entry on this passage in the *Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology* (edited Johannes B Bauer) notes these essential features. First, that the voice from the cloud symbolising God is clearly addressed to the disciples. Second, that it confirms Jesus as the Son of God whose words are to be obeyed. Third, that the figures of Moses and Elijah are there to bear witness to Jesus as the Messiah. Fourth, that Jesus' whiteness confirms his heavenly origin. And Fifth, that in Mark's account of the same episode (9.2), the purpose of the witnessing of the transfiguration by the disciples is linked to the prediction of Jesus' death that occurs just before (8.31) and stresses that He deliberately chose to appear first to men as a lowly servant and not as a king.

It is likely that Kilvert in a general way directed this account of what God should mean to those who follow Him towards Venables, and this is made all the clearer by the particular way in which he developed the text. His sermon was a summary of the spiritual meaning as he saw it of his experience of the previous two months. Its development followed this pattern. *The different kinds of clouds, sickness, misfortune, old age, death. We fear as we enter them. But every cloud except the cloud of sin has a silver lining and from it may be heard the voice of God.* Throughout the period of Venables' absence, Kilvert had to cope with the usual 'clouds' that afflicted his parishioners (the unabridged *Diary* enables us to see clearly the impressive extent of his pastoral care). He had worried over Cooper's illness, baptised dying infants, tried to find places for the old and infirm in the almshouses, attended the workhouse, conducted funerals. He had been deeply affected by the protracted agonies of Gipsy and by her terrible death. It is not hard to imagine Kilvert's feelings when Gipsy's replacement, a thoroughbred that Venables had the leisure and the money to buy at Tattersall's of Knightsbridge, arrived in Clyro on 22 June.

After Kilvert's transfiguration sermon, the farmer, Mr Wall, complimented him on it but told him he was disappointed that Venables did not take the service, especially because he had put off an important visit to a friend in order to see his Vicar. *When I told the Vicar of the great desire his Chapelwarden had to see him and of his disappointment, he was much amused.1,* Kilvert noted meaningfully. Kilvert had stated in his sermon that *the darkest cloud of all is the cloud of sin;* there is no doubt who in his mind was enveloped in that cloud. The entry dealing with the Bettws service on 3 July is the only one in the period that began on 30 April in which Kilvert gives details of the content and theme of his sermon and it is significant that it marked the end of the time when he was in sole charge of the parish. The only other *Diary* passage which gives an inkling of Kilvert's resentment of his Vicar's neglect of the parish is the one concerning Sunday 12 June. He had recorded that on the previous day he was writing a sermon about St Barnabas, the 'Son of Consolation' (11 June was St Barnabas day). The significance of Barnabas in the Bible gives us some insight into the reasons that lay behind Kilvert's choice. We hear most about Barnabas in Acts, a dominant theme of which is the way true followers of Jesus will continue His work through the power of the Holy Spirit. In Kilvert's dream about murdering Venables, the Vicar of Clyro is pictured as guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost. *Barnabas ... is styled as an apostle by the early fathers and by St Luke himself on account of the special commission he received from the Holy Ghost ...2* Barnabas was a Hellenised Jew from Cyprus and became its patron saint.

It is in Acts 2.42 that we hear of the emergence in Jerusalem, as a result of the apostles' inspiration and of the *marvels and signs* they produced, of a *common life* which involved the sale of property and possessions and the general distribution of proceeds

among the church community, which was very poor at the time. Barnabas contributed importantly to this process. Joseph *surnamed Barnabas* (which means Son of Exhortation), *a Levite ... owned an estate, which he sold, he brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.* (Acts 4. 36-8). (It is noticeable that though Barnabas' surname is usually rendered as 'Son of Exhortation' or 'Son of Encouragement', Kilvert chose to give it as 'Son of Consolation', which may have been of particular personal significance at this point in his care of Clyro parish). Acts 9.2 refers to Barnabas as exhorting people *to cleave to the Lord, for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.*[3] This passage forms a clear parallel to Kilvert's situation as he saw it, especially when we add the dimension of Barnabas as an estate holder who, unlike Venables, used his wealth for the benefit of the church and the poor. Barnabas may well have provided *consolation* for Kilvert in difficult times, just as he provided it for Clyro parishioners, as well as a stirring example of man of faith who, like Kilvert, performed lesser duties in the temple of the Lord (this was the role of Levites).

Venables, who performed the higher duties in Clyro parish, had in Kilvert's opinion neglected them grossly in the period 30 April – 3 July. Kilvert had no complaint, of course, with the reason for his Vicar's absence. It was perfectly natural and acceptable that a husband should want to be with his wife on the occasion of the birth of their child. What Kilvert objected to was that an absence of two months should be thought necessary and that Venables left Clyro a month before the birth and returned a month after it. He also had grounds to object to the quite inadequate arrangements Venables had made to cover the duties over such a long period. Kilvert felt that this man of power and wealth was taking advantage of both his servants and his parishioners and was setting a bad example as a Christian.[4] Kilvert also felt let down by Mrs Venables as is evident from the testiness of part of the entry for 8 July. *A letter from Mrs Venables, the first I have had from her since her child was born ...* (the baby had been born on 31 May). *It was chiefly about caps for the confirmation girls.*

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[1] My underlining

[2] Butler's *Lives of the Patron Saints,* edited Michael Walsh. P.65.

[3] This account of Barnabas is based on his role in Acts and on the commentary of A E Harvey, *Companion To The New Testament p.417* and on the *Oxford Companion To The Bible*, edited by Bruce M Metzger and Michael D Coogan, pp 74-75

[4] (In the period of Venables' absence, five clergymen (Welby, Vaughan, Pope, Lloyd, Kilvert's father) had taken his duties, some of them several times; Mrs Welby, Morrell, Perch, and Mrs Kilvert were among the various lay people. Several others had struggled to save Venables' horse, about which he made no comment on the evidence of *Kilvert's Diary).*

NEW SERIES

DISCOVERING KILVERT

By David Lockwood

Jeff Marshall, our persuasive editor, is initiating a series of articles on how some of us became acquainted with Kilvert and he deems it my Presidential task to 'kick off' the series.

Forgive me, dear Reader, if this is rather too autobiographical, but nearly everyone's involvement with Kilvert is personal and it becomes a relationship.

The story of my contact with the Diarist is complicated. I came upon him in my late teens in the public library in Winchester. He was catalogued wrongly and most obscurely, hence the three volumes went unread, which was strange in a cathedral city. I took out the first volume, I read some of it, I was interested but not enthralled. The timing was wrong, I was making momentous decisions and awaiting acceptance at a university. I went to St David's College in Lampeter where I read English. They were three years of near delight, I revelled in my studies and in my spare time I walked, often up to twenty-five miles, with the Rambling Club. That by the bye was my first experience of being a president! I fell in love with Wales and the Welsh countryside. However, Kilvert never once crossed my mind. If only he had, for my following two years at a theological college were harrowing and if I had known Kilvert and the pastoral life that lay before me, my motivation would have been very different.

I found theological writing not just dry, but desiccated. English had appealed to both my senses and my intellect. I felt bereft of my immediate past and on a treadmill. Kilvert was most fortunate; he never had to attend a theological college!

My first living was Great Witley in Worcestershire where I was Rector of the finest baroque church in Britain. It was there I discovered the Diaries. The parish was rural and, at that time, divided between the haves and the have-nots. I visited the council houses and cottages during the day and often, in the evenings, my wife and I dined with the richer parishioners. We made many friends on both sides of the divide.

Witley Court, a splendid ruin, once the home of the Earls of Dudley is a powerful ghost. I used to hear many stories of its magnificence, extravagance and underlying unhappiness from a number of my people. Some, when young, had been employed

there. I learnt to view the Victorian age from many angles, upstairs, downstairs by the back and front stairs, from the garden, farms and the school log-books. The entire school closed when there was a shoot and beaters were needed! I lived in two worlds. One day, going home after visiting, I said to myself: 'you once began reading a diary of a curate who led a life curiously like yours.' I do not think I then recalled his name, but I very soon did.

Reading, first of all, Plomer's abridged edition of the *Diary* I was astounded at the clarity of this reflection from the past that tallied so much with my own life. I was entranced by his use of our language, the apposite word always used, 'the clink and trickle of the brook, the rustling of a swallow swooping round a room' and a famous time when he sought to describe the light shining from a twisting poplar leaf as 'the dazzle'. I loved his awareness of colour and even more his use of the apparently unimportant detail that makes an episode so very alive. Then there was his role and mine as parson which was a bond. The problems of which he wrote are still the same, for human nature modifies only slowly, our circumstances, yes, but the basic human reactions remain the same.

When I left Great Witley the brethren of the Deanery presented me with the three volumes; a greatly treasured gift. In Witley it had been easy to envisage the past of Clyro. Just two instances will illustrate this. One may shock some.

There was an old lady, a farmer's widow, daughter of a tenant farmer who told me how Rachel, Countess of Dudley, as a very young wife, had ridden up to Hill House, where to this day there is a truly spectacular bank of snowdrops, she said: 'I looked up into the face of the most beautiful young woman riding side-saddle. I thought her the loveliest creature I had ever seen. Little did I realise that I was never in my long life, ever to see anyone more beautiful.' The other happening is that I shared with Kilvert the experience of being wished good health and happiness at the altar rails as I administered the chalice to a very jolly communicant on Christmas Eve!

I see very clearly how the church has changed, as the times have changed. When I was ordained in 1953 more than shades of the old order remained. But I, too, helped that change, I remember shocking my Rector by refusing to close my letter to the Bishop as 'Your humble and obedient servant'. The changes, though, increased in rapidity as parishes were, of necessity, grouped.

On a black day, in less than hopeful mood, I quote to myself lines from Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi:*

...here in this open court,
Which now lies naked to the injuries
Of strong weather, some men lie interred
Loved the church so well, and gave largely to 't,
They thought it should have canopied their bones
Till doomsday. But all things have their end.
Churches and cities, which have diseases like to men,
Must have like death that we have.

But more often, thank the Lord, I remember: *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.* I also think of Wordsworth who said: .... *central peace, subsisting at the heart of endless agitation.*

REMEMBERING PLOMER

By David Machin (Bath)

Most issues of the *Journal*, and not least the latest, contain references to William Plomer. In 1966 I wrote to him about various matters concerning his edition of the *Diary*. His reply, in his usual immaculate hand, is dated September 4, and I thought members might be interested in some of what he wrote. For instance: 'I was not nearly such a meticulous editor a I should have wished to be, but the last part of *Kilvert's Diary* had to be edited at a difficult time, 1939-40, when I had a good many complications in my own life on the top of the public ones, and directly I had finished Vol. 3 I was swallowed up by the Naval Intelligence Division.'

Much of the rest of the letter is taken up with a panegyric of the Kilvert Society and its then Hon. Secretary Mr Oswin Prosser. William urged me to join, which I duly did. He also asked if he could pass my letter to Mr Prosser. I hope I agreed, so perhaps it is still knocking around somewhere in the Society's files.

At that time I was working as a literary agent. In his letter William said: 'Since Noah went into the Ark I have been reading for Cape, so if, as a literary agent, you come across anything to interest them, and it is seen by me, I will pay special attention to it'. Little did he or I know when we first corresponded that only four years later I was to be invited to join Jonathan Cape as an editorial director and thus become his colleague until his death in 1973. (I left Cape in 1978 to become General Secretary of the Society of Authors.) It was of course a great pleasure to get to know the Editor of the *Diary* and to be there during the planning and publication of the 1977 edition. It was such a pity that he was not still with us then.

William would come into the office once a week to write his reports on the manuscripts he had been reading and to attend our editorial meeting. We thought of him as the literary conscience of the firm, but the discoverer of James Bond could not be classed purely as an egghead, and his reading and tastes were wide-ranging. He was the most courteous and kindly of men, but with a quietly wicked sense of humour at times. For some reason I particularly remember his concern for me when I put my back out, and his getting up from his desk to demonstrate how to bend the knees when lifting a load!

One other unconnected thought prompted by C J Williams's interesting contribution to the current *Journal* and mention of the Dews of Letton Court: for a few years in the early 1990s my wife and I rented a small black-and-white cottage on the Moccas Estate (similar in size to the Old Weston by the look of the photograph). The previous occupants had been an elderly couple called Dew who I think had worked for the Estate all their lives. I am not sure how common a name it is in Herefordshire. At any rate it is a very attractive one.

I am pleased to see the Society is visiting Moccas again this year. I am sorry we cannot be there. I remember an earlier visit and service not so long after I became a member.

KILVERT'S FAVOURITE HYMN

By Margaret Collins (London)

I was interested to note the suggestion (*Journal,* March 03) that a small choir be formed to lead the singing at Kilvert services. Perhaps Kilvert's favourite hymn could be sung? For Sunday 25 July, St James' Day 1875 he gives us this delightful picture:

My father being away at Shanklin I had the services to myself.

At half past nine 12 children, boys and girls, came up to me to the Rectory to say their lessons and be taught. As the morning was fine I kept them out of doors to their great amusement and pleasure and we all walked up and down the drive under the trees while the children said their lessons and I talked to them about St James. It was like a peripatetic school of philosophy, the philosopher walking in the midst of his scholars. Before the children went away we sang two hymns together as we walked under the lime trees, one of them was my favourite hymn Jerusalem my happy home *to my favourite tune of* Evan *and I thought the children's voices sounded very sweet in the open air of the bright summer morning.*

As a church choir member I am very interested in Kilvert's references to hymns and church singing. I searched vainly in all the hymn books I could find (I did not have access to the *English Hymnal)* for the tune *Evan* and finally found it in *The Congregational Psalmist Hymnal* printed in 1897. The tune was obviously popular as it is printed three times as a setting for different hymns. It was not used here for *Jerusalem my happy home* but for two hymns by Charles Wesley and one by Philip Doddridge. The composer was the Rev W H Havergal M A (1793-1870) who did much research into, and arranging of, church music. Perhaps the best known of his arrangements today is *Winchester New* for the hymn *Ride on, Ride on in majesty*. He was the father of the hymn writer Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-79) who wrote *Take my life and let it be*, *Lord speak to me* and *Who is on the Lord's side?* Which are still in use.

Jerusalem my happy home appears in no less than three versions in *Congregational Praise* (1951), the original having 26 verses! The author is 'FBP', about whom little is known. It first appeared in 1601. The shorter version by Joseph Bromehead (1748-1826) in *Congregational Praise* is the same as that in the hymnal of 1897, so it would be reasonable to suppose this was the version Kilvert knew.

1. *Jerusalem, my happy home;*
   Name ever dear to me!
   When shall my labours have an end
   In joy and peace and thee?

2. *When shall these eyes thy heaven-built walls*
   And pearly gates behold,
   Thy bulwarks, with salvation strong,
   And streets of shining gold?

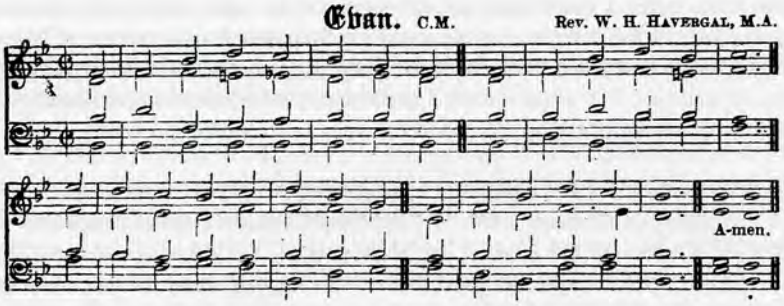
3. *There happier bowers than Eden's bloom,*
   Nor sin nor sorrow know;
   Blest seats! Through rude and stormy scenes,
   I onward press to you.

4. *Why should I shrink from pain and woe*
   Or feel at death dismay?
   I've Canaan's goodly land in view,
   And realms of endless day.

5. *Apostles, martyrs, prophets there,*
   Around my Saviour stand;
   And soon my friends in Christ below,
   Will join the glorious band.

6. *Jerusalem, my happy home,*
   My soul still pants for thee!
   Then shall my labours have an end,
   When I thy joys shall see.

Amen



As with many Victorian hymns, Kilvert's 'favourite' lays great emphasis on the joys of heaven, which is not surprising at a time when life was often hard and death, particularly of the young, was a harsh everyday reality. Kilvert tells how he recited John Keble's *Sun of my soul, Thou saviour dear* to comfort a sick parishioner. This hymn speaks of the power of Christ to uplift the soul above suffering, and ends with the lines:

Till in the ocean of Thy love
We lose ourselves in heaven above.

(Despite spending over an hour looking through the *Diary* I am unable to locate the exact reference – I'm sure this experience is familiar to many Kilvertians!)

In the hymnal of 1897 I was interested to find another tune composed by the Rev W H Havergal (entitled *Havergal*) to a hymn by Augustus Toplady (1740-78, author of *Rock of Ages*). The preoccupations of Toplady's hymn appear typical of the period:

When languor and disease invade
This trembling house of clay,
'Tis sweet to look beyond the cage,
And long to fly away .....

Sweet to look back and see my name
In life's fair book set down
Sweet to look forward and behold
Eternal joys my own .....

Angels will hover round my bed,
And waft my spirit home .....

This Victorian collection has many more hymns in the same vein. The strife of this life must be endured, but there is much detailed imagery of the joys that will be experienced in heaven when all suffering is past.

Kilvert also refers to his enjoyment of the music at Bettws Chapel (Sunday. May Eve 1876) *.....a new harmonium and Annie, dear Annie Dyke, seated at it with her little choir, her brother Willie and her cousins round her. Such nice singing, the Glorias, Canticles and three hymns, one of them* We love the place of God (note: is this *We love the place O God* by William Bullock 1798-1874) *and another my favourite* Lead kindly Light ... This latter well-loved hymn by John Henry Newman is often sung in churches today. I hope Annie Dyke used my own favourite tune for this, *Lux Benigna.* As it was composed by J B Dykes (1823-76) and is the tune used for *Lead, kindly light* in the old Victorian hymnal which led me to Kilvert's favourite tune, *Evan*, I like to think that perhaps she did!

DID KILVERT SPEAK WELSH?

By Barry Smith (Abergavenny)

No, not mine these words! Rather, this intriguing question was the title of a piece which appeared in the Society's Newsletter of 1 October 1969.

The writer was recounting a visit by Society members, a few months previously, to the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. Amongst other documents, members had seen the record of Archdeacons' Visitations (Diocese of St David's), for the previous century. Particular interest had been expressed by members in the visit recorded to St Harmon, Kilvert's Radnorshire parish, on 23 June, 1877.

The article gives the first three lines as:

'Robert Francis Kilvert instituted July 1876
Two full services each Sunday 10.30 and 3 p.m.
Two sermons each Sunday in Welsh.'

At the foot of the second page was noted the familiar signature of R.F. Kilvert.

The writer of the article goes on, a little dramatically:

'What is the solution to this mystery? Did Kilvert speak Welsh? If not, then who preached sermons *each Sunday* in Welsh?

But the mystery deepens when one considers that it has always been thought that services in Welsh had ceased at *all* Radnorshire churches long before 1876. We have several members most interested in all this and they will endeavour to clarify matters. One is on the teaching staff of the University at Aberystwyth and another a Welsh speaking Shropshire member already engaged in just such matters … connected with his own county.'

A glance at Society newsletters for an arbitrary couple of years following the appearance of this article reveals no comment, contribution or correspondence pertinent to the issues raised. Did the 'several members most interested in all of this' and who were to 'endeavour to clarify matters' ever come to any conclusion, however tentative, one wonders? Indeed, are they still around now?

If any readers of the *Journal* have thoughts on the intriguing issues raised by that Archdeacon's visitation, they are invited to send them to the Editor, for general enlightenment!

KILVERT'S TRAIL AND ERIC PRICE, MY BARBER

By T W Jenkins (London SE19)

Many men will tell you that their barber's shop is the best 'Gentlemen's club' going – free newspapers, amiable company and good chat. Mine is no different.

I live in Crystal Palace and my barber, Eric Price, one of the longest serving traders in the area, is a noted local historian, especially of the Crystal Palace itself and his shop is full of photographs of the Great Exhibition after it moved from Hyde Park to the top of Sydenham Hill in south-east London.

One day, while seated in the chair having a No 3 on the top and No 2 on the sides, Eric said to me, 'I'm mongrel Welsh, you know, Taff'.

'Oh really Eric, where from?'

'Capel-y-ffin. We're mentioned in *Kilvert's Diary* you know' and that's how the story began.

It would seem that Eric was not the only one in his family interested in all things antiquarian for his Uncle Percy had passed on to him the family Bible, at the front of which was the Family Register. The first entry was for:

John Whiller Price
Died August 26th 1796
Aged 70 years
Buried at Capel-y-ffin
Near Llanthony Abbey

The second entry was also for another John Whiller Price, son of the above, Merdy Llanigon, Breckonshire (*sic*) who had died, aged 87, on 6 August 1846 and who was also buried at Capel-y-ffin.

There were more entries, in an ancient hand, and Eric himself had brought the list as up to date as he could as the family scattered all over the country as the years passed. Eager to find out more about his antecedents, he contacted the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth and the Revd Canon Evans MA at Llanigon vicarage, in whose parish Capel-y-ffin lay, to ask if he could inspect the records. As we know, a previous incumbent at Llanigon had been William Jones Thomas, father of Kilvert's 'Daisy'. The Revd Thomas who had himself 'married well', refused Kilvert permission to tell his daughter of his affections because of his poor financial prospects. In old age, Daisy was asked why she had never married and said, 'No one ever asked, but I think Mr Kilvert liked me'. Poignant, that.

Uncle Percy, bitten by the family history bug, had visited Capel-y-ffin in August 1969 and in a letter to Eric, wrote: 'the grave stones recorded the burial of Prices from the early 1700s but a lot of the writing was obliterated by age.' The Price family dominated the place but intermarried with Wheelers, Watkins and Parrys which were the only families (or clans) in that area and the John Whiller Price of the Bible may be a corruption of John Wheeler Price. Uncle Percy had also been taken to Llanthony Priory where he spoke to a very old man who could recall his grandfather's tales about the Prices of Capel-y-ffin.

Percy was very taken with 'the spot from whence he sprang' and ended his letter by telling his nephew, 'they appear to have ruled the Black Mountain area as preachers, doctors, vets, farmers, farm workers, horse thieves, sheep thieves etc and were a "clan to be feared".'

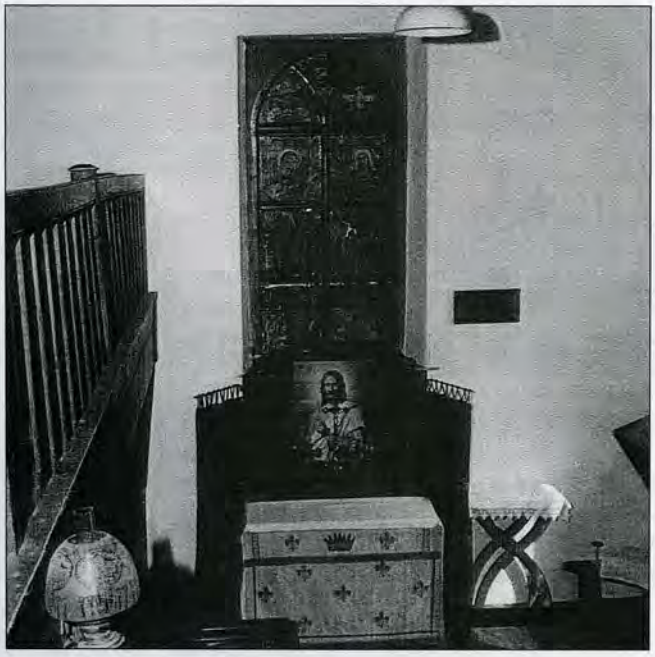
Eventually, in April 1979, Eric Price himself visited the National Library of Wales and Capel-y-ffin. Like his uncle before him, Eric, too, was enchanted by the beauty of the small, white sandstone church and the churchyard where his forebears lay surrounded by yew trees and the stillness of the mountains.

He visited Canon Evans at Llanigon Vicarage where the Canon said 'Your family is mentioned in *Kilvert's Diary*, you know.' Of course, this added fuel to the flames and set Eric off on another quest. He bought the three-volume boxed set of the *Diary*, with illustrations, where there are 26 references in the index to *Price*, most of them in Volume III, many with multiple entries. Canon Price also suggested that the name Whiller may be derived from wheelwright – another mystery solved.

Which is where this account began. It was just as well that Eric wasn't too busy that morning for we had a good old natter and he later brought the Bible and correspondence to show me, from which I gleaned the above information. He also loaned me the *Diary* which really got me hooked and I spent a splendid week in the spring of 2003 following the Kilvert Trail and on returning, joined the Society, all thanks to an exclusive gentlemen's club in Crystal Palace – my barber's shop – and Eric Price, my barber. Many thanks Eric.

Eric Price and the Revd Canon Evans MA
At Llanigon Vicarage in April 1970

Llanigon Vicarage in April 1970



The interior of the Church of St Mary,
Capel-y-ffin, in the parish of Llanigon, 1970

(There is no picture of Jesus on the altar now and the curtains have been removed. The glass in the window behind is now clear and has etched on it, 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills' – through which can be seen the mountains beyond.)

FROM RECENT CORRESPONDENCE

i) **Barry Smith writes from Abergavenny with a rider to the Dulwich visit:**

The June 2002 number of the Society's *Journal* featured an article Kilvert and Dulwich Picture Gallery by Hilary Rosser. This instructive article served as a 'trailer' for the Society's eventual visit to the Gallery of 26 February 2003.

The article mentioned that Kilvert's recorded visit to the Gallery took place on 4 January 1872 and a photo, accompanying the article, shows Kilvert's signature in the visitors' book that day.

Kilvert's diary entry for the day in question has the words: *Sam and I went down to Dulwich to see the picture Gallery at the College* ... The person Kilvert refers to here is his brother-in-law, Samuel Wyndowe, who had married his sister, Emily, in 1865. Wyndowe, a doctor, had joined the Indian Medical Service in 1854 and was to spend most of his working life in India, retiring in 1881, with the rank of Surgeon General.

During the Society's February visit and the 'obligatory' inspection of the visitors' book for 1872 a member commented – 'Isn't it funny that Sam never signed the visitors' book too! Yet a close look at the photo of the visitors' book on page 9 of the *Journal* for June, 2002, shows that Sam had indeed signed it, – just above Kilvert.

Wyndowe, whose full name was Samuel Jardine Wyndowe, had, on this occasion, styled himself as Jardine Wyndowe, hence the non-appearance of Sam in the visitors' book and the member's perplexity! Also, as can be seen, he had recorded his address as *Oriental Club London*, rather than the private residential address, which might have been anticipated.

ii) **Thijs Laeven writes from Harderwijk in the Netherlands expressing his regret that he would be unable to attend the AGM weekend.**

He enclosed a cutting from a major Dutch newspaper, *de Volkskrant*, which recently published an extract from the *Diary* as an example of a diary of English country life in Victorian times. It is reproduced below in full for those members with a knowledge of Dutch or for those who wish to compare Dutch with the English and/or German language.

The extracts are part of those for 31 March and 5 April 1872 (not 1 April as stated).

Dagboek

de Volkskrant 1-4-2003

Slappe lach

Clyro, 1 april 1872

Een zachte warme lenteochtend met afwisselend zon en buien. Ik heb in de kerk nog nooit zo tegen de slappe lach moeten vechten als vanochtend. Ik kon me haast niet bedwingen. De zon scheen fel door de zuidelijke vensters, pal op de hoofden en bijbels van de vrome familie Hodgson. Mevrouw Chinnock probeerde uit alle macht de zonwering te laten zakken, maar die was stuk en liet zich niet naar beneden trekken.

Daarop gebaarde mevrouw Venables naar de koster dat hij moest komen helpen. Het kleine mannetje trok en trok en gaf toen zo'n harde ruk, dat de houten roe met een klap doormidden brak. De restanten bleven geknakt met een gebroken rug in de lucht hangen.

Ik had het al zien aankomen toen de koster aan de slag ging, en toen het gebeurde hield ik het haast niet meer. Ik stikte van de lach en moest opeens aan het verhaal denken dat mijn vader vaak vertelde, over een dominee die tijdens zijn preek wachtte op het einde van de psalm en onderwijl door het kerkraam een oude vrouw zag, die met veel moeite een wortel uit de grond probeerde te trekken. Toen die opeens losschoot en het oude vrouwtje achterover op haar gat viel, riep hij opgetogen: 'Als ik het niet dacht!' – tot stomme verbazing van de gelovigen, die klaar waren met hun psalm en zaten te wachten tot dominee zou voorgaan in gebed.

5 april

Ik at om half zeven in de pastorie en ging om acht uur naar het bal in de priorij van Clifford. Er waren 52 mensen. Daisy beloofde dat ze de vijfde dans, een quadrille, met mij zou dansen en gaf me haar kaartje en een potlood om haar naam te noteren. We gingen al gauw helemaal op in elkaar en in ons gesprek (dat gold in elk geval voor mij) en vergaten helemaal waar we waren.

'Je komt nooit eens naar Clyro', zei ik. 'terwijl het er zo mooi is.' 'Over bloemen gesproken', zei ik, 'weet je nog dat je me in september bloemen gaf die je in je eigen tuin had geplukt?'

'Ja', zei ze, terwijl ze heel lief bloosde en haar ogen neersloeg.

'Ik heb die bloemen nog', zei ik. 'Ik heb ze zorgvuldig bewaard en ze betekenen meer voor me dan ik je kan zeggen.'

Francis Kilvert

Francis Kilvert (1840-1879), dominee in Wales. Zijn in 1932 gepubliceerde dagboek is een van de beste kronieken van het plattelandsleven in het Victoriaanse tijdperk.

iii) **Stephen Hickman writes from Farnham asking whether the Society**

... would be interested to know of a sketch book that I have in my possession by the Revd Edward Kilvert of Binstead vicarage, Alton, Hants, dated 1844. This mainly concerns the Deanery of Alton, but contains portraits of a number of people, including his uncle Dr John Kilvert of Bath. I think this Edward may have been an uncle of Francis Kilvert. (This is being pursued – ed.)

iv) **Elizabeth Miller writes from Thornbury, Gloucestershire**:

She would like to meet another Kilvert enthusiast in this area or in the Forest of Dean. Her telephone number is 01454 – 417931.

PHOTOGRAPHIC FEATURE

Locations

Newchurch church:
Emmeline's grave is on the right.

The road from Colva descending to Glascwm.

Moccas Court

From the Archives

Edward West at the Upper Noyadde in 1989

Croft (Lincs) church and village hall

THE AGM WEEKEND

Friday evening at the Bishop's Palace

Saturday morning at *The Swan*

The Dinner

Val Dixon and friends.

The Editor, his wife and his collection of glassware.

Hilary Rosser greets members at the Dulwich Picture Gallery.

Aberystwyth, looking south towards the old College buildings.

THE HEREFORD SCREEN

By the Editor

A recent visit to the Victoria and Albert museum especially to look at the Hereford Screen, now wondrously restored to its former splendour, caused me to think that KS members may be unaware of this glory – I urge you to go and view it. This great choir screen, one of the monuments of High Victorian art was designed in 1862 by Sir George Gilbert Scott and manufactured, in Coventry, by the metalworking firm of Francis Skidmore. Before its installation in the Cathedral it was a star exhibit at the 1862 International Exhibition in London.

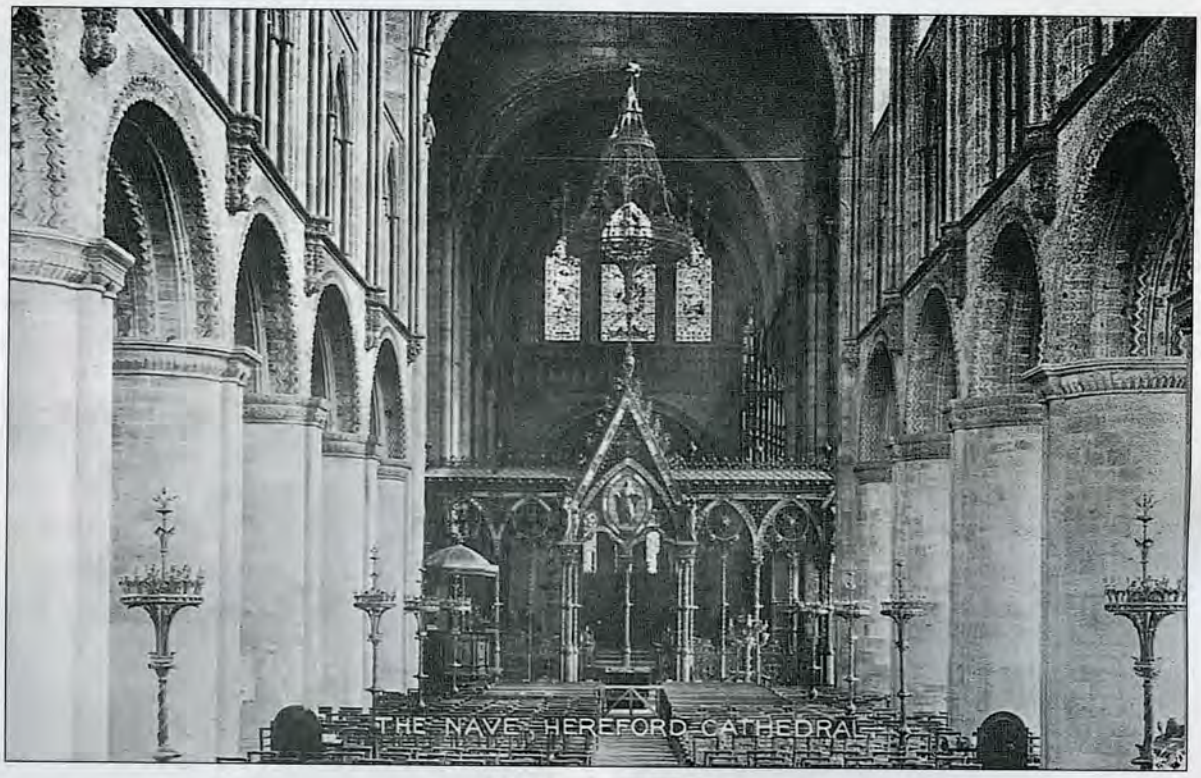
In medieval cathedrals the choir screen acted as a barrier which separated nave from chancel, congregation from clergy and by the nineteenth century most had disappeared. However, in the 1860s Scott began a programme of church restoration and introduced bold, modern versions of the screen, using iron rather than the stone or wood of medieval screens, which were now deemed too costly, and, as far as Scott was concerned, insufficiently 'modern'. Apart from Hereford he completed screens for Lichfield and Salisbury.

However the Hereford Screen fell victim in the 1960s to the then fashionable anti-Victorian prejudice; it was seen as ugly and incongruous and as forming a now unacceptable barrier between worshipper and priest! So, despite a huge and indeed national outcry led by such architectural luminaries as Betjeman and Pevsner the Screen was taken down and sold to the Herbert Museum and Art Gallery in Coventry. There, through lack of funds, it languished and deteriorated until given to the Victoria and Albert in 1983.

The V&A not long ago completed the restoration of this 'the grandest, most triumphant achievement of modern architectural art', as the *Illustrated London News* described it in 1862 and it is now on permanent display in the Ironwork Gallery above the main entrance and is almost the first exhibit that strikes you – if you raise your eyes on entering the museum. It is superbly positioned, even though a complete view is, in my opinion, clumsily interrupted by the V&A rotunda chandelier of blown glass and steel.

Work began on restoring the Screen in 1999, the challenge was to reverse very many years of neglect, deterioration, rust and corrosion. Thirty-eight conservators cleaned, painted and reassembled the Screen, a giant jigsaw puzzle of over 14,000 pieces before finally it was gilded, painted and lacquered. It is the V&A's largest ever conservation project and was made possible by grants from the National Heritage Memorial Fund for half of the estimated £750,000 cost. Private individuals, institutions and trusts generously provided the other half. It was unveiled in May 2001.

Go and see it, it is superb.



The Hereford Screen

HAY STATIONMASTER WAS OLD-SCHOOL GENT

By Anita Howells (*The Hereford Times*)

Hay-on-Wye's last stationmaster, who was renowned in the town for his old fashioned gentlemanly manners, has died peacefully aged 95.

Maurice John was an exceptional community stalwart who won the British Empire Medal for his services to the town, was deeply involved with Hay's organisations and charities and the town's last stationmaster – but was best known for one little detail.

Hay Railway Station c 1904 and the Wye Bridge is as it was in Kilvert's time. Maurice lived in the house immediately above the bridge on the left. The train is a Hereford–Swansea.

"He always wore a hat and whether it was a Trilby, a Panama or his gardening hat, he would always raise it to a lady," said daughter, Rosemary Trinder.

She describes her father, whose funeral was at St Mary's Church on February 24, as a true 'old-fashioned gentleman'.

It was a sad day for Maurice when the station closed. Previously stationmaster on the Oxford to Fairford line, he had arrived in Hay in 1962, only to find the station closing at the end of the year.

But with wife Gladys, he had thrown himself into the life of the town, establishing the Oxfam shop, organising the refurbishment of the almshouses, researching the town's history for a book with the Hay Study Group and filling many roles at St Mary's Church, even taking the odd service when nobody else was available.

"He was extremely well known. The church was well filled for his funeral and a lot of people came back to the Swan for a celebration of his life," added Mrs Trinder.

Article reproduced by courtesy of *The Hereford Times* (March 6 2003).

Maurice John, right, pictured with former GWR signalman Tom Beattie in December 1992, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the station's closure.

Maurice was a member of the Kilvert Society for very many years. We offer our sympathy to Mrs John, to his family and to his many friends.

THE BANNER

By Ann Dean (Hereford)

Those of you who have been to recent Society meetings (or to last year's Hay Festival) will have seen our beautiful banner. Made by Mrs Rachel Sayer, it has been admired by so many people, and rightly so.

I think the idea came to me because of the various banners Rachel has made for our church. She is also wonderful with flowers, producing some beautiful creations. I think my favourite banner, although I like them all, is the one depicting a dove with the fruits of the spirit listed – all done in various and beautiful materials.

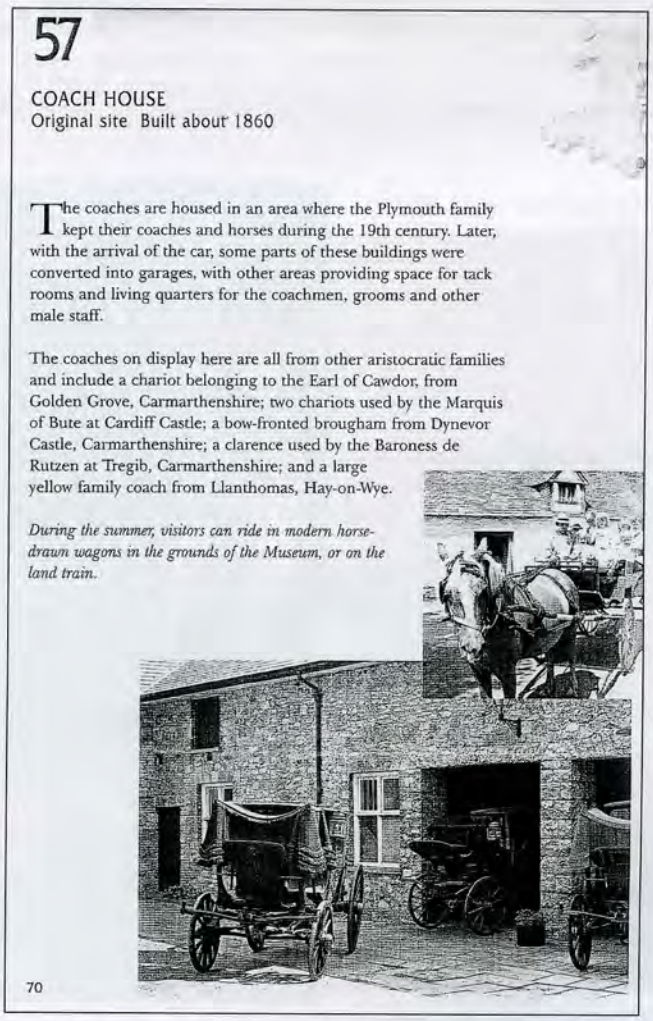
It occurred to me that a banner would be something the Society could put on view at our various meetings and get-togethers. Initially, though, I thought it would be good to have something we could prominently display at our first presence at last year's Hay Literary Festival.

Rachel did all the needlework, (which is just as well, beccause when my daughter was making a ball gown for her GCSEs, I tried to 'help'. The teacher eventually sorted out my efforts with the strict instruction not to let me near it in future!). I copied the vignette on to a transfer using the computer but we did have one tricky moment. When all was finished, I had a niggling feeling there was something wrong. Then the penny dropped. Kilvert was facing the wrong way! So it was 'back to the drawing board'. However, we eventually sorted it out.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members who allowed me to run with this idea and to thank Rachel for doing such a fantastic job.

THE LLANTHOMAS COACH

(See *Journal* No 10, September 2002)



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COACH HOUSE
Original site Built about 1860

The coaches are housed in an area where the Plymouth family kept their coaches and horses during the 19th century. Later, with the arrival of the car, some parts of these buildings were converted into garages, with other areas providing space for tack rooms and living quarters for the coachmen, grooms and other male staff.

The coaches on display here are all from other aristocratic families and include a chariot belonging to the Earl of Cawdor, from Golden Grove, Carmarthenshire; two chariots used by the Marquis of Bute at Cardiff Castle; a bow-fronted brougham from Dynevor Castle, Carmarthenshire; a clarence used by the Baroness de Rutzen at Tregib, Carmarthenshire; and a large yellow family coach from Llanthomas, Hay-on-Wye.

During the summer, visitors can ride in modern horse-drawn wagons in the grounds of the Museum, or on the land train.

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A page from the guidebook of the Museum of Welsh Life showing the Llanthomas coach

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OBITUARIES

The Reverend Doctor Nigel Rowe

It is with a very real sense of sadness that I write this memorial of Nigel Rowe. From his arrival here with Elizabeth, his wife, they have been our friends and it was heartening to see them settle so happily and so usefully into retirement.

Nigel was essentially a deeply modest man who never, never blew his own trumpet, so that even I, who knew him quite well, had little idea, until his death of some of his triumphs.

He was the son of clever parents who encouraged their children to appreciate the wonders of a good education. The boys, like so many 'bright boys of Birmingham' and Warwickshire attended King Edward's School, a centre of excellence. Nigel shone at Classics and won an open scholarship to Balliol, Oxford, at the age of sixteen – he was the youngest undergraduate there. It was wartime and, when he was eighteen and due for military service he was sent to the famed Bletchley Park, where enemy messages were intercepted and decoded. Nigel learnt Japanese and unravelled important and often terrifying information. When the war ended he went back to Balliol and became a research student and gained his Bachelor of Divinity. Thence to Ely Theological College to be trained to be a priest of the Church of England. He really need never have attended for every fibre of his being was Anglican, a priest of the old order: George Herbert and Bishop Ken of the seventeenth century would have been proud of him.

He served two curacies, the first in Grimsby and the second in Gorton outside Manchester. His first living was at Newchurch in Pendle in Lancashire. An historic place, notable for the poor women persecuted as witches by James I. A little later George Fox, the founder of the Quaker Movement first felt his call there. Here Nigel was much loved and well known for his constant walking around his parish and his assiduous visiting. He remained there for twenty years. Then, he moved to the other side of the Pennines, to Denholme in Yorkshire, close to Haworth, the home of the Brontës.

In the late 60s he became deeply interested in Francis Kilvert, he joined the Society and often visited Radnorshire. With Elizabeth he decided that this was the place for their retirement. This was to be of benefit to us all and in particular to the church of All Saints', Glasbury.

Nigel's unstinting devotion to All Saints', and indeed to the other churches in the Wye Valley group of parishes, is duly and gratefully acknowledged in the May edition of *The Messenger*, the group parish magazine.

It was Nigel's nature in everything he undertook, to do it to the very best of his ability, whatever that might be. Hence he conducted many services for us, he preached learned sermons to us. He helped to assemble the magazine. He was a faithful supporter of the Red Cross shop in Hay. He became the Archivist of the Kilvert Society.

David Lockwood

* * * * *

It is with regret that we also have to record the deaths of the following members. We offer our sympathy to their families and friends.

Mrs W Boddy, of Nantmel, died 1991, a member since 1970.

Mr S Cunningham of Sunderland died last August. He had been a member since 1987.

Mr H T Davies, Penarth, died January 2003, a member since 1996.

Mr W G Powell, Devon, died 1991, a member since 1957.

KILVERT PILGRIMAGE

This year's Kilvert pilgrimage, from Newchurch to Llandewifach, will be held on Sunday 27 July (the first Sunday after the Royal Welsh Show). Further details from Humphrey Fisher, Rose Cottage, Newchurch, Kington, HR5 3QF. Tel/Fax: 01544 370632

1662 SERVICES AT NEWCHURCH

On the first Sunday in each month, there are two 1662 services at St Mary's Newchurch, following the liturgy which Kilvert himself would have used: at 9 a.m., a brief Communion service without sermon or hymns, and at 10.30 a full-length Morning Prayer, followed by refreshments at Rose Cottage, next door to the church. Any interested members of the Society would be very welcome indeed.

PUBLICATIONS

SPECIAL OFFER

Sale of Society Christmas Cards: Set of eight cards with envelopes for £1 plus 50p post and packing. They include – Clyro Village, Bredwardine Vicarage, Otters' Pool, Gospel Pass, Black Mountain Farm, Rhydspence Inn, Langley and Harnish Churches, Bredwardine Churchyard. (Usually 25p each).

INDEX TO NEWSLETTERS/*JOURNALS*

A new index covering Newsletters and *Journals* from 1956 to 2000, compiled by the late Revd Dr Nigel Rowe, is now available (A5 size). Copies will be on sale during the June weekend at Moccas for £1.00, or can be obtained by post from Colin Dixon for £1.50 (which includes postage and packing).

The editor is going on holiday, contributions for the September issue of the *Journal* should therefore reach him **no later than 19 July.**

Members are reminded that ALL e-mail communications with the Society or its officers should be made via the dedicated website: communigate.co.uk/here/kilvertsociety.

The current ordinary subscription is £6.00 (Joint membership £9.00 w.e.f. 1.1.02) and is due on 1 January of each year. Cheques payable to The Kilvert Society should be sent to: Barry Smith, Membership Secretary, 25 Prospect Road, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 5DU.

DATA PROTECTION ACT 1984. The names and addresses of members are held on a computerised list exclusively for the distribution of the *Journal* and other information about the Society, to its members. If you object to this, please contact the Hon. Secretary. It has been decided that if any member objected, that member would have to provide **stamped addressed envelopes** for the dispatch of their Journals.

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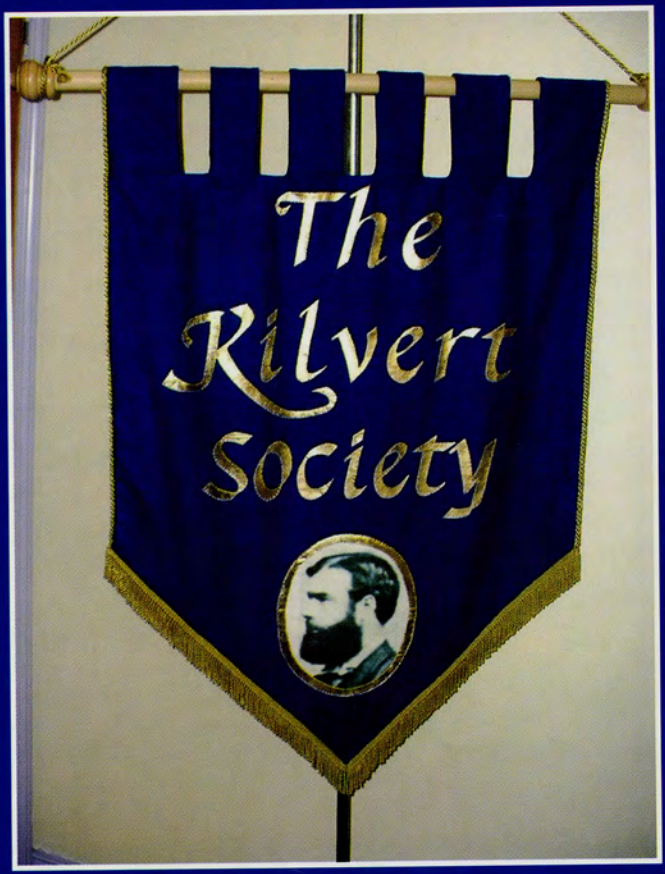
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