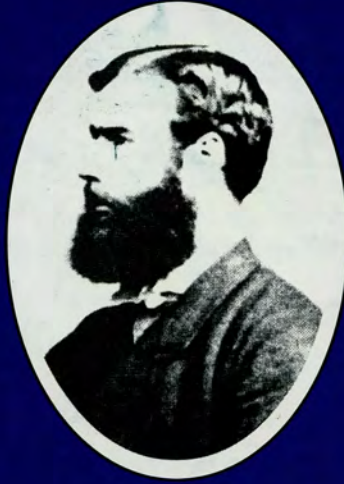




THE
JOURNAL
OF
THE KILVERT SOCIETY



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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Front cover photograph: View across the Wye towards Hay Bluff from Maesyronnen Chapel.

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Number 13 March 2004

From the Editor

There are most important matters to be discussed and resolved at our AGM next month and for the second year in succession too the AGM will be preceded by an Extraordinary General Meeting, where changes to the Constitution are proposed in connection with the abolition of life membership and with the Society's application for charitable status. The AGM will have to consider the suggested raising of the subscription.*

Most important matters therefore which will affect all members of the Society and its future. Please do your best to attend these meetings and make your views known; it will be no use grumbling afterwards if you were not there when it mattered! The complete details of what is proposed are given in John Wilks' paper below. Our treasurer has put in an immense amount of work on our behalf in preparing this and the Committee is greatly indebted to him for that and for undertaking the complicated and delicate negotiations with the Charity Commissioners, the outcome of which has been successful, subject, of course, to the approval of the EGM.

More good news comes from our member Peter Beddall who was very much associated with the campaign opposing the construction of a wind farm on Vagar Hill overlooking the Golden Valley (see *Journal* No 10, March 2003). The energy company involved, Force 9, has withdrawn its plans 'due to lack of interest from landowners in the area,' as one report has it, or because 'they are unable to sight (*sic*) as many turbines as they would wish,' according to another. Mr Beddall emphasises however that continued vigilance is necessary as other local areas may well be endangered later on.

This is perhaps an appropriate moment to point out that whilst the Society will continue to alert members to potential threats to the beauty and tranquillity of the Kilvert Country, it is not a pressure group nor can the *Journal* be used for what might be regarded as political purposes. Indeed, a resolution to that effect was passed unanimously by the Committee at its meeting of 26 November 2003. Of course, such a resolution does not preclude members from making their views known in the event of local developments, which they may wish to oppose ... or even support – merely, that the name of the Kilvert Society should not be used to endorse such representations.

Enclosed with this issue of the *Journal* is a copy of a letter, received recently from the Appeal Committee of St Michael's church, Clyro, which is in urgent need of a large sum of money for repairs to the organ and organ loft (see also page 20), and a booking sheet for the events of the AGM weekend.

Finally, the programme of events for the year is outlined below, I hope you will be able to attend some or all of them and don't forget the AGM – it's important... Have I said that before?

* This is not being done lightly – the Society is, at the moment, running at a loss, £833.41 last year, and this does not include any work on the Kilvert monuments, work which will shortly become necessary.

From the Treasurer

2004 Annual and Extraordinary General Meetings

These proposed changes are significant and will affect all members of the Society – please read this article and make your views known by writing to the Hon. Treasurer and/or by attending and speaking at the general meeting in April. There are three issues to be decided (1) the future of life membership (2) subscription rates and (3) charitable status.

1. LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Background

I hope that the background to these changes will be familiar to most members through my report to the 2003 AGM and my articles in the *Journal*. My sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to the debate by letter or word of mouth, your input has been of real value to the Committee in reaching the following broad conclusions.

I think that before listing the proposed changes it is important to say that the Committee realises that some of these changes are unfair to some members, however we believe that they serve the best interests of the Society as a whole. The member affected most from these changes is the life member who has been generous with donations to the Society, if this is you, please do not be angry, talk to us and let us find a solution that is fair to you and fair to the Society.

Membership

In November 2003 the Society had 246 individual and 82 joint subscribing memberships and 122 individual and 34 joint life memberships. In addition there were 30 life members who had not responded to our attempts to make contact; unless they notify the Society to the contrary, it will be assumed that they have no further interest in the Society and they will be taken off the membership list.

Even with a reduction of 30 in the Society's life membership we still have only two thirds of the membership paying subscriptions, this places an unfair burden on subscribing members when any increase in expenditure is required.

Proposed changes

Clearly the major, though not the only, increase in expenditure of late has been the production of a professional *Journal*. This has been almost unanimously welcomed and proposals to reduce publication to two per year have been vigorously opposed by many of you. The Committee therefore proposes to continue to publish the *Journal* in its latest format three times each year and, in addition, to publish a 'Newsletter'. The 'Newsletter' will only provide the programme of events for the year and details of the Society's officers and committee members.

It is proposed that life members should no longer receive the *Journal*, unless they pay an appropriate subscription; they will however retain all other rights and privileges and receive a 'Newsletter'.

Motion to be placed before an Extraordinary General Meeting – to amend section 3 of the constitution to read as follows (*new wording in italics*)

3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be divided into *five* classes: Honorary, Ordinary, Joint, *Life* and Overseas.

- (a) Honorary life members shall be members of the Society, approved by the Committee and accepted by resolution at an Annual General Meeting, upon whom the Society may see fit to confer an honorary distinction.
- (b) Ordinary members shall be persons who are interested in furthering the objects of the Society and are prepared to abide by its rules. They shall be eligible for election to the Committee and shall be entitled to attend all meetings. They shall be entitled to *receive the Society's Journal* and at General Meetings shall have one vote.
- (c) Joint Members shall be two persons, living at one address, who are interested in *furthering* the objects of the Society and are prepared to abide by its rules. *Each shall be eligible for election to the Committee, entitled to attend all meetings and have one vote at General Meetings.* They shall jointly be entitled to one copy of *the Society's Journal*.
- (d) *Life member, this class of membership is no longer available, existing life members, either joint, individual or overseas, shall be eligible for election to the Committee, entitled to attend all meetings and at general meetings have one vote. Life members wishing to receive the Society's Journal may do so on payment of a subscription equal to that of Ordinary, Joint or Overseas member, as appropriate.*
- (e) Overseas Members shall be persons living outside the UK mainland, they shall share the privileges of ordinary, joint, *or life* members, as appropriate.

2. SUBSCRIPTION RATES

The Committee also proposes the following motion:

That subscriptions are increased from 1 January 2005 as follows :

Ordinary Members		£12.00
Joint Members		£15.00
Overseas members	– Ordinary	£12.00
(<i>Journal</i> by surface mail)	– Joint	£15.00

3. CHARITABLE STATUS

The Committee has decided to register the Society as a Charity with the Charity Commission. The major advantage is that an extra 28 pence in every pound subscribed will be refunded to us by the Inland Revenue, subject to members signing a gift aid certificate.

However, in order to comply with the strict rules of registration the Committee proposes that the following changes to the Society's Constitution are made at the 2004 EGM:

Delete present clause 2 and replace by:-

2. OBJECT

The object of the Society shall be to advance the education of the general public in the life and works of the Rev. Francis Kilvert through the publication of a *Journal*, occasional papers and booklets and the maintenance of archive material and, by so doing, foster an interest in his work, his Diary and the countryside he loved.

Renumber clause 10 as clause 11 and clause 11 as clause 12.
Add a new clause 10 as follows:-

10. COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT TO BE PERSONALLY INTERESTED

- (1) Subject to the provisions of sub-clause (2) of this clause, no member of the Committee shall acquire any interest in property belonging to the Charity (otherwise than as a trustee of the Charity) or receive remuneration or be interested (otherwise than as a member of the Committee) in any contract entered into by the Committee.
- (2) Any member of the Committee for the time being who is a solicitor, accountant or other person engaged in a profession may charge and be paid all the usual professional charges for business done by him or her or by his or her firm when instructed by the other members of the Committee to act in a professional capacity on behalf of the Charity: provided that at no time shall a majority of the members of the Committee benefit under this provision and that a member of the Committee shall withdraw from any meeting at which his or her own instruction or remuneration, or that of his or her firm, is under discussion

Delete present clause 13 and replace by:-

13. CONSTITUTION

- (1) Subject to the following provisions of this clause the Constitution may be altered by resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members present and voting at a general meeting. The notice of the general meeting must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.
- (2) No amendments may be made to clauses 1, 2, 10 and 14 of this clause without prior consent in writing of the Commissioners.
- (3) No amendment may be made which would have the effect of making the Charity cease to be a charity at law.
- (4) The Committee should promptly send to the Commission a copy of any amendment under this clause.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

By Barry Smith (Membership Secretary)

December 2003 was the third occasion on which members renewing membership in cash each year received subscription reminders. Response again was excellent, with just under sixty per cent renewing by the start of the new subscription year – a figure almost identical with last year. Members are thanked for their co-operation.

January is the peak month for payments by standing order, only a handful occurring in other months. 220 such payments were made into the Society's account in January this year, with even more members moving over to this method of payment. Just over 70 per cent of the sum of donations by Society members (who pay by standing order) came from life members.

The year 2003 saw 33 new applications to the Society and 31 terminations of membership. The amount of new applications was virtually identical to the previous year. April proved the most popular month for applications (7), followed by May (5). Surprisingly, the months of June through to September produced only five.

It is noticeable that a small number of life members, in anticipation of possible changes, are relinquishing their life membership and choosing to pay annually.

Reminder: subscriptions for 2004 became due on 1 January. Current subscription rates are shown at the end of the *Journal*.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

AGM Weekend

Friday 23 April:

7 p.m. EGM and AGM at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford.
Buffet £5 per head (Please pay on the day).
Following the buffet K.S. member and author Chris Barber will give an audio-visual presentation 'The Kilvert Country'.

Saturday 24 April:

10 a.m. Coffee at Hay Parish Hall, Lion Street, Hay-on-Wye, followed by:
i) An illustrated talk on the annual Kilvert Pilgrimage (Newchurch – Llanddewi Fach), given by our member Alan Bull.
ii) Nick Jenkins and Kevin Thomas will give a photographic display 'Landscapes of the Kilvert Country'. (See *Journal* No 12 p.18).
Afternoon Free.
Evening 6.30 for 7.00 p.m. Dinner at the Kilvert's Hotel, Hay-on-Wye.
(£20.50 per head)

<u>Sunday 25 April:</u>	9 a.m.	You are invited to join morning service (Eucharist) at St Mary's, Hay-on-Wye
Hay Festival		
<u>Wednesday 2 June:</u>	2 p.m.	Meet at the town clock, Hay, for a walk lasting approximately one hour around the town, led by Michael Sharp, K.S. Chairman, and entitled 'Kilvert's Hay'.
June Weekend		
<u>Saturday 26 June:</u>	2 p.m.	Visit to Monnington-on-Wye followed by tea at the Portway Inn*.
<u>Sunday 27 June:</u>	3 p.m.	Evensong at St Mary's Monnington-on-Wye followed by tea at Oakchurch*
September Weekend		
<u>Saturday 25 Sept:</u>	2 p.m.	Visit to Brobury Gardens, Bredwardine and Snodhill Castle followed by tea at Moccas Village Hall*.
<u>Sunday 26 Sept:</u>	3 p.m.	Evensong at St Andrew's, Bredwardine with tea at Oakchurch*.
* Teas will cost £3.50/£4.00. Entrance to Brobury Gardens will be approx. £2 per person.		
Winter Event 2005		Date and time to be arranged later. Visit to Oxford. Tour of the city by open-top bus followed by lunch (individual arrangements). Afternoon visit to Wadham College.

A booking sheet for the events of the AGM weekend is included with this issue of the *Journal*, please return it to the Secretary, Mr David Elvins, by 29 March at the latest.

THE SEPTEMBER WEEKEND

SATURDAY 27 SEPTEMBER

Visit to the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth By Ann Dean (Hereford)

A perfect autumn morning, crisp and clear, everywhere bathed in golden sunshine, the blue sea shimmered in the distance and apart from a very slight nip in the air, it could have been a summer's day.

About sixty Kilvertians gathered at the foot of the steps of the formidable grey stone National Library of Wales, towering majestically from Penglais Hill over the seaside town of Aberystwyth.

The Royal Charter of the National Library of Wales defines the purpose of the Library as:-

The collection, preservation and maintenance of manuscripts, printed matter, maps, photographs, visual and audio-visual material relating to Wales and Celtic peoples and similar material which furthers the aims of higher education and literary and scientific research. (NLW Annual Report 2001-2002).

Excitedly anticipating another enjoyable Kilvert day, we made first for the Library's excellent restaurant. After coffee, Mr Siôn Jobbins, our host for the morning, provided interesting background information about the Library.

The idea for a national library for Wales came about during the eighteenth century. At that time, valuable books and manuscripts were kept by scholars and intellectual members of the gentry, and, of course, monasteries. It took a long time for the idea to give birth to the actual setting up of the Library but the Royal Charter was finally granted in 1907.

According to the 1911 Copyright Act, the Library is a legal deposit library and is allowed to claim a free copy of any printed item published in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Two of the three remaining Kilvert notebooks as well as other Kilvert artefacts are kept in Aberystwyth and are much prized.

It was in 1979 that the Library began collecting Kilvert items. One of the notebooks, given to Mr Jeremy Sandford by Mrs Essex Hope, was purchased at a sale at Sotheby's and in 1985, Mr Charles E. Harvey sold his original diary manuscript (also a gift from Mrs Hope) to the Library. In the afternoon Mr Dafydd Ifans gave an interesting talk on his involvement in publishing the parts of the *Diary* edited out by William Plomer. Afterwards we viewed a most interesting exhibition, especially set up for us.

Six watercolours by Thersie, the Diarist's sister, were on display and we were interested to see that Clyro school looked much as

it does today. Also on show was a tiny photo album, circa 1840, bought by the Library for £25,000! This had been compiled by Mary Dilwyn, known to *Diary* readers as Mrs Welby, wife of the vicar of Sketty; she was also a keen photographer.

We studied old maps of Clyro, and lingered over parish registers that Kilvert had signed. We tried, in vain sometimes, to decipher his handwriting. It was a privilege to see the actual notebooks where Kilvert had recorded his daily routine over 100 years ago.

We walked through cool passageways where beautiful paintings were stored, the temperature automatically controlled to preserve the artwork, (we didn't hang around here; it was a bit chilly!!). We saw some of the huge stock of books, again stored in a carefully controlled environment.

At the conclusion of our visit we looked around the book and gift shop and then assembled on the steps at the front of the Library, which commands a splendid view of the town and the bay. Our editor, Jeff Marshall, came to Aberystwyth in the mid-fifties to study at the university. He nostalgically pointed out various places of interest and at one point wiped away a pretend tear, eliciting absolutely no sympathy from his audience!

We then drove to Tanybwllch Beach. The afternoon sunlight sparkled and danced on the blue sea as, grouped together, we balanced on large stones on the shingle beach while Jeff read to us part of Kilvert's poem *The Tanybwllch Beach* and Michael Sharp, our chairman, read *To Some Little Friends at Aberystwyth*.

Our day ended as it had begun, bathed in glorious sunshine.



View of Aberystwyth from the steps of the National Library
(Photo by David Howell)



Tanybwllch Beach
(Photo by Ann Dean)

SUNDAY 28 SEPTEMBER

On Sunday members and friends met at St Garmon's church, St Harmon near Rhayader where we shared Eucharist with the local congregation. The Revd Gaynor Tyler led the service. Jeff Marshall read from Numbers 11: 4-6, Gordon Rogers read from James 5: 13-20 and the third reading was from Mark 9: 38-50. The hymns were *O Worship the King*, *O Come Let us Join Our Cheerful Songs* and to finish the rousing *Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer*. The Eucharist hymn was *Here O My Lord, I See Thee Face to Face*. In the absence of an organist, Mr Donald Jones sensitively accompanied the singing on his piano accordion.

The Revd Gaynor Tyler pointed out that St Garmon's, now a beautiful little church, had been rebuilt since Kilvert's time as vicar there. In her sermon she said: 'In choosing Christ, we have become free adult sharers in his mission and must accept the responsibility that goes with it – that is to care for and love one another and all God's people.' I think Kilvert would have said a loud 'Amen!' to that.

After the service, we all enjoyed a wonderful tea, a firmly established tradition at Kilvert events. This was very kindly provided by ladies from the church. As we departed through the churchyard we passed the grave of the station-mistress, Sarah Jones, described by Kilvert as *...a handsome, pleasant-faced woman, very stout, who lives in a cottage on the line...* (Thursday 4 May 1876).

We left the little church, basking in glorious evening sunshine, some to take a leisurely evening stroll by the river, others to make their way homeward – the end of another very enjoyable Kilvert weekend.

KILVERT'S DIARY – LOVE AND REALISM

By John Toman (Bristol)

John Toman replies to Rosalind Bolton's reassessment of the Kilvert-Venables relationship (See *Journal* No 12, September 2003).

'At Kingston St Michael the good Vicar was busy in the village amongst his flock' (Kilvert's Diary, Vol. III. 152).

During my research for *Homeless Heart*, my impression of the depth and intensity of Kilvert's Evangelical fervour grew, and has recently grown even more. It is not the only key to him but understanding of him is impossible without recognition of it. I stressed that he was thoroughly Evangelical in having an overriding belief in the importance of the caring heart and that it was Venables' failings in this regard that troubled him deeply.ⁱ These failings were his frequent absences from the parish and his neglect of parishioners by undertaking no pastoral visits whatever. My book provided a detailed examination of the relationship of Kilvert and Venables and faced squarely the challenging question of Kilvert's dream in which, believing the Venables were trying to 'poison' him, he imagined himself murdering the Vicar of Clyro. The question is of crucial importance.

Of course it is easy to ignore it altogether as Rosalind Bolton (RB henceforth) did in her recent *Journal* article.ⁱⁱ It is disappointing to find that she, having done me the courtesy of reading my book, steadily overlooks the chief arguments of its chapter on Kilvert and Venables, as well as the difficult questions involved in it. Instead, she chooses the easier course of seizing on a number of discrete points of mine she thinks she can rebut, while ignoring the rest. In addition to the question of Kilvert's dream, others relevant to the Venables 'problem', require answers. Why did Kilvert resign his Clyro curacy? Why was he so vehement in rejecting the idea of following Venables as Vicar of the parish he (Kilvert) so loved? Why did Venables pay no tribute to Kilvert's work in the parish in a farewell sermon? None of these is tackled in RB's article, which has its origins in resentment that the 'harmonious friendly relationship' between the two men should ever be questioned. Of course, that relationship was in some respects harmonious and friendly but not completely so, life is rarely that simple. The 'case' that RB presents in response to mine is really no case at all, as I shall show.

She declares that I offer no *hard evidence* for my viewpoint and that it is not available. Her viewpoint depends on ignoring the evidence I do cite, while offering very little of her own. Here are examples of my evidence (more follow later).

Homeless Heart noted that Venables in his book about Russia, declared his love for *influence of property* (as he called it) and for prestigious public duties. When considering Kilvert for appointment as his curate, his criterion was not the quality of his faith but whether he was a gentleman. When family debts threatened the abandonment of Llysdinam, the reaction of Venables' brothers was horror at the prospect of living cheek by jowl with the lowly residents of Hay in an ordinary house.ⁱⁱⁱ Most tellingly of all, in terms of his attitude to his parish responsibilities, Venables told his brother George in a letter that he could always be absent from Clyro between Monday and Saturday, even when Kilvert was absent.^{iv} The *Diary* reveals not one parish visit by Venables and only one by his wife.

And now some evidence to counter points made by RB in her article. Naturally, I agree that in the nineteenth century curates did much of the routine work of a parish and that vicars were often absent. Some were, some weren't. The fact that the aristocratic vicar of RB's nineteenth century parish was is significant. In *Homeless Heart* I advanced the view that Venables was raised in the *aristocratic doctrine that demanded that all clergymen should be gentlemen*.^v That is why he required Kilvert to be one. Venables was patently not the same kind of clergyman as Kilvert. He did not follow his father into the Church out of the same burning faith that led Kilvert to follow his. Venables was primarily interested in status and power and simply settled for the position of Vicar of Clyro knowing he had a guarantee of the really important position of master of Llysdinam. His father set the example, holding eventually four Church positions simultaneously.^{vi} He was also for 25 years Chairman of Radnorshire Quarter Sessions, a position of enormous power and social standing. Venables made sure he followed his father in this respect, if not in being a pluralist. At that time, Venables was not content even to remain in the Church. He had been Rector of Whitney from 1834 but in 1840 was looking for something better. His father had asked Frankland Lewis to sound out Lord John Russell about advancing Venables' career and a university post was the target.^{vii}

It does help to know something about the clergymen we are focusing on, which is why it is pointless for RB to assert lamely *Venables was not the only clergyman to be away from his parish*. No, he wasn't, but he was a particular type of clergyman; Kilvert was quite another. The latter had genuine faith and the former did not. And we have to focus on the likely interaction between these particular clergymen. One way of illustrating the difference between them is to examine their attitude towards church livings. Can we believe that Venables differed substantially from Mr Bolden, who horrified Kilvert by stating: *a man became a clergyman just as he became a gardener by taking up that particular line of life*.^{viii} The worldly Venables found it incomprehensible when Kilvert declined to pursue the Clyro living. On the matter of promotion, Kilvert stood at the opposite pole from Venables: *I have not sought ... any preferment. Indeed I have rather shrunk from it ... it has come ... without my wish ... it seems as if the finger of God were in it and as if I were but following ... His voice*.^{ix} Again, it was a thoroughly Evangelical stance.

That Kilvert, in spite of his undoubted affection for Venables, recognised his vicar's casual approach to the minister's role, should not surprise us. Evangelicalism, from its beginnings had specifically targeted moral and spiritual failings of the middle and upper classes. It encouraged an *intensification of personal religious life* that showed itself in a preoccupation with the nature and meaning of religious activity.^x Evangelicals were well used to casting a critical eye even on the religious activity of clergymen. Joseph Milner, a leading Evangelical of the 1780s, distinguished between downright immoral clergymen and those of *a more decent cast*. To him, the latter were 'as harmful as the openly faithless, perhaps more so'.^{xi}

Evangelicals had particular reverence for the minister's role. John Overton saw it as a representative symbol of Christianity itself. It was, he said, a duty concerned with Christian love and charity, with loving our neighbour *for God's sake*. No partial obedience regarding it was acceptable. *Every omission or commission, excess, defect, deviation from this perfect rule is sin ... No duty ... can be either more important in itself, or more intimately connected with the cause of morality in general, than this is. To have the charge of the immortal*

souls of parish committed to us! ... To have ... solemnly engaged to "teach, admonish, feed and seek after our flocks, that they may be saved through Christ for ever; and never to cease our labour ... and diligence".^{xii} Kilvert, in his poem *The Shepherd's Farewell*, and indeed throughout the *Diary*, showed that he regarded the duties of the minister's office with tenderness and devotion. *I know each sheep within the fold, / I call the lambs by name, / I lead the young, support the old, I bear the sick and lame.*

The import of all this needs to be spelt out: it is about religious faith, about saving souls, about kindness that is the essence of Christianity. And we lose sight of it if we emphasise, as RB does, the industrial tribunal aspects of the relationship of Kilvert and Venables – how much holiday Kilvert had, whether Venables *allowed* him home at Christmas, whether he accepted Venables' *other responsibilities*. Of course he accepted them, but he could see, as we can, that Venables was very often diverted from a minister's essential duties by private interests and pleasures.

Lack of a faith like Kilvert's was one reason for the poor quality of Venables' pastoral care. Aristocratic distance from ordinary people was another; a tendency to see his job largely in secular terms was a third; the fourth one concerned his temperament. We have pretty good evidence about his emotional life but RB either won't look at it or insists it has a different meaning from the one that fits the available facts. She declares, for example, that his diary is not useful evidence when it comes to his emotions and then, bizarrely, quotes Le Quesne in support: *There is ... no sign that he was a man of much imagination or sensibility*. She argues that his diary does not show his true self; I maintain that it does. Le Quesne stated that it contains no description, no observation of nature, no self-revelation, no expression of opinion.^{xiii} I noted in *Homeless Heart* that Venables' personal letters show no reading of literature and no response to scenery or beauty. Expressions of opinion are dogmatic and turn largely on the well-being of his own class.^{xiv} The same flatness and lack of feeling characterise his book on Russia. Its outstanding quality, said a reviewer, was its *passionless imperturbability*.^{xv} Venables' diary entries regarding the birth of his children are admitted by RB to be 'factual and short'. The entry concerning the death of his son contains, she assures us, emotion that is *underlying rather than obvious*, yet she also admits that he recorded the child's life in precisely the same matter-of-fact way in which he recorded Kilvert's death. None of this, she says, tells *the whole story*. Who is reading between the lines now? She finds herself in the strange and totally untenable position of urging that all the available evidence of Venables' lack of feeling is in fact proof of strong feelings under the surface. Yet offers no evidence whatsoever for her assertion.

It is true that Venables, like everyone else, felt more than he showed. The whole issue must centre on what can be deduced from those situations when signs of feeling could reasonably be expected and did not appear. Not to show feeling when other people needed it, deserved it, is a failing, as for example when Kilvert was about to leave Clyro. Venables then had several opportunities to pay tribute to his curate and declined every one of them. That he did so was monstrous. On Kilvert's penultimate Sunday, Venables let Irvine the new curate, preach at Clyro in the morning, while, as Kilvert put it, *Mr Venables sat in his pew*. Can it be denied that Kilvert hinted at least disappointment in his observation? Otherwise, why make such an obvious comment? Venables was in his pew; he should have been in the pulpit. On the previous Saturday, tributes to Kilvert came from Wall, the churchwarden, and from the Clyro Court butler. Venables was there but said nothing. On Kilvert's last Sunday, Venables again let Irvine preach at Clyro in the morning and at Bettws in the afternoon. Kilvert preached at the Clyro afternoon service. He broke down as he had at Bettws a week earlier. It might be expected he would; Venables might have expected he would. Why did he allow it? How could he allow it? RB's explanation that he had strong feelings under the surface simply won't do here. It was his duty to speak.

RB's 'case' might seem stronger if she was prepared to offer explanations for such problematic issues as this one. The sale of Vicar's Hill is another problematic issue but it is not faced adequately by separating completely, as she does, Venables' action in selling it from Baskerville's in buying it; the latter depended on the former. The vicar knew the squire's purpose in buying it and therefore knew that cottagers' rights to the fern would be lost. That is the crux of the matter. It is true that Kilvert can be seen balancing the various rights involved. However, he was uneasy about the fact that two rich men, who already had everything, had struck a deal that denied men who had very little, the chance to make a bit of extra money. RB misrepresented what I said about the affair's financial side, by implying it was my understanding that the sale's profits went to Venables. I did not. I stated: Baskerville paid the Church Commissioners £10,000 for it.^{xvi} I did suggest that Venables probably benefited from the sale of Vicar's Hill, which was his own land. That he did benefit from the sale of the entire glebe is now confirmed by Roger Brown's piece in this issue of the *Journal* (See p.10). It appears that he was seeking to avoid paying dilapidations (loss of value owing to wear and tear) on the glebe when he retired. The parish benefited in the long run.

RB also avoids the real issue in the matter of Mrs Venables and parish visits. I underlined in *Homeless Heart* how Kilvert praised Mrs Venables (his phrase was '*cheered and encouraged*') when he found that for once she was making such a visit. RB perversely takes Kilvert's phrase to refer to a discussion he and she had two weeks before about his love affair with Daisy. And RB accuses me of '*twisting the evidence*' in this matter! The fact must be faced – neither Mrs Venables nor her husband undertook parish visits to the poor and needy.^{xvii} I believe Kilvert felt let down by Mrs Venables when she wrote a letter to him five weeks after her baby was born. There was nothing personal in this letter, nothing about the baby, nothing about his and his family's efforts in holding the parish together. RB, instead of looking squarely at what Kilvert actually says: *A letter from Mrs V, the first I have had from her since her baby was born* (my emphasis), calls attention to what he does not say – his supposed gratitude that she had paid for confirmation caps for girls unable to afford them.

RB's determination to avoid recognising anything she finds distasteful or difficult steadily becomes more ridiculous. Naturally, it was part of my critique of Venables that Kilvert dreamed he murdered him. There is no facing of this dream in RB's 'case'. Kilvert noted in the dream that the Venables were steadily *poisoning* him but that he *baffled them repeatedly*. *All this time*, said Kilvert in his account of the dream, *I was going about visiting the sick at Clyro and preaching at Clyro Church*. This statement seemed to me highly significant, especially in relation to the themes of sermon texts he used when Venables was away and to the fact that we know Venables did not visit the sick and ensured that Kilvert had more than his fair share of preparing sermons. To make such a link seems unavoidable; not to make it seems dishonest.^{xviii} I noted in *In Charge of the Parish* that Venables re-arranged the dates of Kilvert's holiday in a way that was less advantageous to him and more advantageous to Venables. No comment from RB on this nor on the fact that the change meant that Kilvert

had to go to see the Revd Vaughan again. Is there not irritation in his remark: *So I had to set off for Newchurch again, my second visit there this week?* I also pointed out that five clergymen, in addition to Kilvert, and four lay people had undertaken the duties of the parish during Venables' two months' absence. RB ignores this too. Instead she stresses that it was *remarkable and kindly* that Venables *let* him be away from Clyro when he himself was. Of course he did! It was entirely in character that he should do so. Hadn't he told brother George as much?

I acknowledge that I was wrong in stating that Kilvert was being *sarcastic* when he said that Venables was *saving* him a sermon. He was genuinely acknowledging Venables' kindness, as, of course, he always did. However, he could be sarcastic and scathing. Look at the entry dealing with poor Evans' inept violin-playing (22 Oct. 1871) and the one that follows when he had to marry two old people, for whom he would usually have had sympathy and understanding. He was absolutely savage towards them yet their only faults were illiteracy and old age. Where is his characteristic gentleness and kindness? Why was he so angry on both days? It was because he was still hurt and indignant at the excessive duties he had undertaken on 22 October, when Venables was away at Llysdyman. Given his Christian conscience, what, do we suppose, he felt about his attitude to Evans and the old couple afterwards? Guilt, shame, self-disgust – the steady undermining of his faith and conscience that was one part of his internal conflict, of which his sermon texts were another. This was the *poison* that his dream told him stemmed from the Venables. Part of their *poison* was their kindness itself.

To turn now to Kilvert's sermon texts, initially with some general points. First, Evangelicals regarded sermons as of central importance. Second, it was entirely typical of Evangelical clergymen to direct them at local, topical or personal targets. Third, Kilvert often used sermons to relieve his feelings, RB's specific points about my interpretation of sermons are quite without substance. To argue that because two of Kilvert's chosen texts were 'set' ones, they could not be used to point a moral he found particularly relevant is obviously untrue; a text can be developed in whatever way suits its user's purposes, provided respect is shown to its meaning in its original context. Kilvert would have taken into account the general tenor of the whole passage in which his chosen text appeared, not just the text itself. RB argued that he would not, which is erroneous. Even more untenable is her argument that because texts are *briefly* or *briskly* mentioned in the *Diary*, the purposes behind the choices must be correspondingly casual and cannot carry *deeper meanings*.^{xix} This is to argue that Kilvert was a charlatan when we know he was a serious clergyman, who spent hours on sermon preparation.

He could not have felt aggrieved at his father's absence on 18 April 1875, RB assures us, because he was away *for good family reasons* – to meet Emily Kilvert returning from India. The matter was not that simple. Kilvert's parents were, he makes clear, not just meeting Emily but were *to spend a week*. However, not only were they having a week's holiday in Southampton, but there was no certainty when Emily's ship would arrive; it was expected *about* 24 April. Kilvert knew, therefore, that the duties of two Sundays would be his, as in fact was the case. Moreover, his parents' *week* away became a twelve days' absence (15-27 April). Is this situation not somewhat reminiscent of Venables' absence for his wife's confinement? During his father's absence, Kilvert had to cope with taxing parochial demands. On Wednesday, he sought to comfort a mother *distraught and frantic with grief* over the death of her child; on Friday he had to take the child's funeral. Kilvert's father would have known of these impending demands. RB stated that the 'old Clyro sermon' Kilvert preached on 18 April could have no relevance to his father's absence because it was *not specially composed for the occasion*. Exactly: he already had one from Clyro days that was appropriate to a very similar situation.

In the *old Clyro sermon*, Kilvert quoted Mrs Browning's poem *The Mask*: *I have a smiling face, she said/And so you call me gay, she said/Grief taught me this smile, she said/And wrong did teach this jesting bold .. /Face joy's a costly mask to wear; /'Tis bought with pangs long nourished*. The poem ends with the bitter statement that it was more important to grieve for those who claim a compassion they did not feel than for those who were suffering. Kilvert summed up the sermon's theme as *Secret Sorrow*. Do these words not reflect the situation on 18 April, and the one in Clyro with an enormous degree of precision? Then we have the sermon preached on 7 September 1873, another day when Kilvert had a very heavy day of duties. His text was Esther 6.1 which concerns the recognition of the true worth of a subordinate who had been taken for granted. This too was an old Clyro sermon. The odds against all this being coincidence must be millions to one. Those odds multiply hugely when we recognise that several old Clyro sermons have exactly the same themes. Their details are summarised below.

i) 22 October 1871; Venables away for three weeks at Llysdyman; Matthew 5. 23-4 – *you remember that your brother has a grievance against you. Go and make peace with your brother*; verse 22 cautions *Anyone who nurses anger against his brother must be brought to judgment*.

ii) 26 November 1871; Hebrews 2. 17-18 – *It is not angels that he [Christ] takes to himself but the sons of Abraham. And therefore he had to be made like those brothers*. The passage earlier stresses that a priest and his flock should be *all of one stock* and that Christ himself called all men brothers.

iii) 26 November 1871 (afternoon service); text not known but Kilvert said its theme was *citizenship* – a favourite Evangelical theme stressing the equality of men as citizens of heaven.

iv) 16 April 1871 (morning service); James 5.11; the text warns against judging others – *Do not blame your troubles on one another, or you will fall under judgment*; the example of Job bearing hardships with patience is urged.

v) 16 April 1871 (afternoon service); John 21.15 – Christ tests the faith of Simon Peter by telling him that if he loved Christ as he claimed, he would feed His lambs and tend His sheep.

vi) 1 October 1871; Venables at Llysdyman supervising extensions; Kilvert visited on 21 September to see them; John 3.18 – *Love must not be a matter of words and talk; it must show itself in action*.

Kilvert's dilemma – being aware of spiritual faults in another yet compelled to remain silent – is extensively treated in books he read.^{xx}

In *Stepping Heavenward* Kate Mortimer had her faults laid bare by her mother. An example, even more telling and with particular aptness to Kilvert's dilemma, occurs in *Mrs Kitty Trevylyan*.^{xvi} Evelyn, Kitty's cousin, tells her of a sermon by Wesley on the theme of 'evil-speaking' – relating to someone the fault of a third person, who was not there to defend himself. If one declined to tell that person of his fault, one was guilty Wesley said, of a sin of omission. One could comfort oneself by disclosing the fault to another person, thereby becoming guilty of a sin of commission. Wesley's solution to the dilemma was exactly the one Kilvert had urged to his Clyro flock on 22 October 1871, but which he was unable to adopt: if anyone nurses anger against his brother, tell him of his fault and be reconciled with him. Wesley stressed that this was the essential first step – *no alternative is allowed*. This would truly mean he said (alluding to another text that Kilvert used), that we loved each other, not only in words but in deeds. A friend protested to me that I had been too hard on Venables and added: *It seems to me that if Kilvert resented Venables so much he would have made more direct references to this in – what was of course – a private journal. After all we find wholly uncharitable references to Baptists, tourists, smokers – all of which confirm that Kilvert was capable of venting his feelings more directly in his journal. So why wasn't this the case with Venables?* It is a very reasonable question. The answer is that to attack those other targets did not, as was the case with Venables, involve sinful behaviour.

One other aspect of the six sermons considered above should be noted. Three of them were extempore. Sometimes nineteenth century clergymen preached from printed sources; these were specifically rejected by Evangelicals. They favoured ones written by clergymen themselves and delivered from notes. However, they particularly approved of extempore ones – sermons based on a text or theme but delivered without notes – because they provided opportunity for the expression of deep personal feelings and faith. Kilvert's three extempore sermons enabled him to do this (as did the extempore one of the two preached when Venables was in London for his wife's confinement). Kilvert commented after sermons iii) and v) that he preached *with great satisfaction to myself* while after vi) he noted how long his sermon was. The emphasis on *great satisfaction* occurs only in connection with sermons preached when he had to take both the Clyro and Bettws services. (It occurs again on 21 January 1872 when he had both services). The *Diary* contains only one other reference to an extempore sermon after Kilvert ceased to be Venables' curate: the afternoon service on 7 September 1873, when he had all his father's duties.

If the interpretation (in *In Charge of the Parish*) of two other sermon texts chosen by Kilvert in Venables' absence seems equivocal, the same cannot be said of the six examined above. They were all chosen when Venables was unavailable for Sunday duties. They all have a direct, precise application to the situation regarding those duties in Clyro parish. They relate consistently to two main themes: the problem of what to do if someone close to you has disquieting faults and the need for a man of God to accept all men as brothers and to see to their pastoral care. They focus on faults that Venables clearly possessed. The problem on which they dwell was of particular interest to Evangelicals and featured prominently in books Kilvert read. The explanation of the problem, both in the texts and in those books, indicates why Wesley's solution was impossible for Kilvert and why he resorted to sermons as a means of venting his frustration and of turning his personal dilemma to the advantage of others. And finally, the significance for Kilvert of the problem encapsulated in these sermon texts means that they would be accompanied by intense emotional, moral and spiritual torments that could give rise to a dream which cries out to all Kilvert devotees for an explanation.

I believe that the differences between my position and RB's concerning the relationship of Kilvert and Venables have important implications for Kilvert studies. Our Society was formed to foster an interest in him, his work and his diary. Furthering that aim requires a degree of realism. We can be true to it only if we accept the truth of our readings and researches. RB says that if my view of Kilvert and Venables is accepted, it means *we are seeing only a veneer*. This is misleading because it pushes us into an either/or situation: either Kilvert had serious misgivings about Venables' pastoral care or he had none. Unable to accept that Venables was not a particularly warm human being (an impression surely confirmed throughout the *Diary*?), RB has to insist that he was really a man of deep emotions. She cannot bring herself to acknowledge that Kilvert had any criticisms of Venables whatsoever, nor even the right to any. This does great disservice to Kilvert, makes him appear smaller, less significant than he is, makes it appear that I attribute petty, malicious, ignoble feelings to him. I seek to establish the very opposite – that he was a man of deep piety and strong religious conscience, with the highest conception of his role and of pastoral care. What concerned him was not the number or length of Venables' absences but what they signified about his faith and his neglect of the minister's role.

RB can mention Kilvert's dream but cannot even comment on it. It cannot, however, be dismissed as 'merely' a dream. Kilvert attached great importance to dreams and especially to this one: *I knew it was no dream. This at least was a reality ... Nothing now seems to me so real ... as that dream was*.^{xvii} RB insists on another either/or: since (she says) there is no *hard evidence* that Kilvert did not want to be Venables' curate, he must therefore have wanted to be – with no reservations. (Oh, so that's why he resigned from the position?). This simplifying of the issues is a result of her love for Kilvert, but that love, fearful of the idea that he could ever be critical of Venables, denies him his full stature. That love also tends to turn the issue of Kilvert and Venables on its head: Kilvert appears in need of 'defence'. He does not need defence but a fuller appreciation of his strengths. If that diminishes Venables, so be it; he was a lesser man and a lesser Christian. My picture of Kilvert does not diminish him in my eyes. On the contrary, I value him more, I love him more, and I find him more interesting. He followed his conscience and his God.

And remember, he did not actually kill Venables! He needs no defence for that either. Some will be unable to accept that his subconscious could entertain such a desire. That it did is further confirmation of the agony of his dilemma and of the strength of his passions. He was compelled finally, and with great relief, to face the reality of the situation in Clyro. We must be as strong as he was.

Footnotes

ⁱ J Toman, *Kilvert: The Homeless Heart*, pp. 152-3.

ⁱⁱ Rosalind Bolton, *Kilvert and Venables – A Reassessment Reassessed*, Kilvert Society Journal, No. 12, September 2003.

ⁱⁱⁱ Llysdynam Collection, B1072, letter of Henry Venables to Venables, 16 May 1856. Venables as the eldest son and striving to face realities, had raised this possibility. Given his love of prestigious property, it is virtually certain he shared his brothers' response.

^{iv} Ibid, B1419, letter from Venables to George Venables, 1 June 1869 (my italics). The *Diary* shows that Venables was as good as his word: he was absent many times.

- v J Toman, op. cit, p. 134.
- vi Vicars of Nantmel and Clyro, Prebend of Christ Church College, Brecon and (from 1832) Archdeacon of Carmarthen He held all these positions from 1832 to 1847 when he handed Clyro over to his son. He illustrates the accuracy of Trollope's observation : 'An archdeacon almost always holds a good living ... not infrequently more than one. He is a man of private means and has been selected for his position on that account'. Generally wealthy, 'he can take a comfortable place in county society'. *Clergymen of the Church of England*, pp. 43-4.
- vii Llysdyham Collection. B219. Letter from Frankland Lewis to Archdeacon Venables. 28 June 1840. Lewis was from a Radnorshire land-owning family. At this time he was a Poor Law Commissioner and influential in the Liberal party. Later Liberal MP for Herefordshire.
- viii *Kilvert's Diary*, Vol. 1, p. 331.
- ix *Ibid*, Vol. 3, pp 327-8.
- x Frank M Turner, *The Victorian Crisis of Faith*, in *Victorian Faith in Crisis. Essays on Continuity in Nineteenth Century Religious Belief*, ed. Richard J Helmstadter and Bernard Lightman, London, Macmillan, 1990, p. 14.
- xi Quoted in Ford K Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians. The Age of Wilberforce*, London, Cambridge, University Press, 1961, p. 35.
- xii John Overton, *The True Churchmen Ascertained: Or, An apology For Those Of The Regular Clergy Of The Establishment Who Are Sometimes Called Evangelical Ministers*, York, T Wilson and R Spence, 1801, p. 251. Overton was an Evangelical clergyman living in York.
- xiii L Le Quesne, *The Venables Diaries*, in *The Oswin Prosser Memorial Booklet*, Kilvert Society, p. 44.
- xiv J Toman, op. cit, p. 131.
- xv T Mozley, *The British Critic*, April 1838.
- xvi John Toman, op. cit, p. 148.
- xvii Mrs Venables' visit on this occasion was to a wealthy farmer. It was decidedly not the kind of visit Kilvert made. The passage's context makes it clear that Kilvert was focusing on parish visits. He had just come from tending the lice-ridden old Price and he would hardly refer to Mrs Venables as 'an angel in the way' if all he had in mind was her advice about Daisy.
- xviii Kilvert's statement about visiting the sick and preaching is the surest, as well as the only, guide we have as to the tension that gave rise to the dream. He must have thought it significant to underline this, otherwise why mention such routine aspects of his work?
- xix 'Nowhere is the use of the Bible as a vehicle for the expression of personal feeling more startling to the 20th century mind than in the pages of Evangelicals' private diaries' (Elisabeth Jay, *The Religion of the Heart*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979, p. 148).
- xx My *The Books That Kilvert Read* (Kilvert Society 2002) stressed that for him, as for all Evangelicals, books were an important aid to piety. Evangelicals believed that the grace of God could 'descend to ... men and women through the printed page ... It was as indispensable as a daily program of prayer'. (Richard D Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas*, London, Dent, 1973, p. 99).
- xxi Mrs Charles, *Diary of Mrs Kitty Trevylyan*, pp. 168-170.
- xxii *Kilvert's Diary*, Vol. 2, p. 278. Kilvert not only devoted two entire pages to the dream but subjected it to a minute and serious exploration, linking it to his career, his future and his family traditions.

Two riders to Rosalind Bolton's Reassessment:

1. From Canon Roger Brown, vicar of Welshpool

I wonder if I might take up one point in Rosalind Bolton's otherwise excellent defence of Kilvert in her article "Kilvert and Venables." On page 9 she suggests that the profits of the sale of Vicar's Hill went to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners rather than to Venables. Not so. The commissioners were involved, of course, and their permission was required for the sale (as was that of patron and bishop), but their procedure was then to invest the money in trust for the parish (i.e. the incumbent) and to allow him the annual interest thereon.

T W Barker in his *Diocese of St Davids: Particulars relating to Endowments etc., of Livings*, published at Carmarthen in September 1907, volume 4 Archdeaconry of Brecon, states: p 130 for Clyro, gross income 1906 £429, of which £319.1s.8d. was the interest on £10,636.6s.11d. London County Council stock, which represented the proceeds of sale (£10,000) of glebe lands, in the parish of Clyro, sold under the Ecclesiastical Leasing Act in 1872 or 1873. I enclose a photostat of the page. This was a work prepared for the Church's defence against disestablishment.

The land was probably sold because agricultural rents at that time were at a low ebb, and the incumbents were required to pay dilapidations on glebe land as well as on their parsonages when they vacated their living (or, in the case of death, their executors). This was to ensure that the property was in reasonable condition for a new incumbent. The costs often crippled clerics, prevented many from moving to another parish, and sometimes diminished the estate left for the support of a widow. All in all, at that time, an investment in shares was more profitable and far less troublesome.

2. From Rosalind Bolton

Many apologies for misleading readers. I am grateful to Canon Brown for his clear and detailed explanation of the true position. This means that Mr Venables would have received extra income for some nine months between the sale and his resignation of the living. My main point, therefore, survives intact: that it was primarily the Church, not the Venables family that benefited from the sale of Vicar's Hill.

FOLLOWING KILVERT

By David Howell (St Alban's)

Little did I realise that when my School was evacuated during the war to Chippenham to share the premises of the local grammar school that, quite unknowingly, I was to become familiar with so much of the delightful countryside described by Kilvert in the Wiltshire sections of his Diary.

That I had built up such a Kilvertian background I was of course completely unaware until I became acquainted with the delights of the Diary in adult life.

Although it was wartime I spent a very happy year in Chippenham. The school was situated in that part of the town called Hardenhuish or Harnish and was only a short distance from the rectory where a hundred years before Kilvert had been born.

He never forgot Harden Ewyas as he called it and on a return visit he wrote: *A hundred sweet memories stirred within me at the old familiar place and scene. There towered the elms as of old round my birthplace and the church of my baptism* (21 June 1876).

The school included in its grounds Hardenhuish House in which some of our lessons were held; I remember the creaking stairs of the old building. 'The House' as it was called had belonged to: *the beloved and honoured family, the Clutterbucks*, (11 March 1876) who were the patrons of the living at Harnish.

On 15 April 1876 Kilvert writes: *The sinking sun gilded the grey walls of Hardenhuish House and beyond the hills were growing misty blue and Salisbury Plain fading from the sight.*

The school is now a grant maintained secondary and 'the House' as it is still called is the administrative centre and commands a magnificent view from the top floor. I wonder what Squire Clutterbuck would make of all the twenty-first century technology now housed in his old home?



Hardenhuish House. Old home of the Clutterbucks. Still part of the secondary school and referred to as 'the House'. Modern classrooms can be seen in the background.

During my stay in Chippenham I was billeted with two contrasting families; one was very prim and had a maidservant; meals were very formal. On Sundays at St Paul's church I rather felt that I was being paraded as an example of their war effort! Nevertheless I was very well looked after.

The other home where I stayed was a truly Christian one and the family devotion left a lasting impression on me. I must admit however that one of my abiding memories is that of the father, a great character and retired gardener who although he possessed no teeth, could eat anything – except watercress!

Meanwhile I cycled around the countryside which Kilvert knew so well: to Maud Heath's monument for example, on which she sits with her basket on Wick Hill surveying imperiously the panorama before her; and to idyllic villages, like Castle Combe and Lacock. On 21 March, Kilvert writes: *Lacock Abbey was sitting grey, silent and solitary by the river among its great elms and rich meadows.* It was here that William Fox Talbot, the pioneer of photography, lived.



The Rectory at Ilston where Kilvert stayed with the Westthorps. It is now a private house.



St Illtyd's Church, Ilston.

(Photographs by David Howell)

I used the station at Chippenham on occasions, but for Kilvert the railway was the main means of transport. He must have been well known to the porters there but he fell foul of the officious ticket collector, named Ironsides (how appropriate) who refused to accept his ticket when he was forced to arrive from Swindon, not Bath, after he had mistakenly caught the express, the 'Flying Dutchman' which did not stop at Chippenham. A minor jobsworth in Kilvert's day!

That memorable year in Chippenham really did provide me with a marvellous background to many parts of the Diary but again, quite unknowingly more was to follow.

This occurred when I had the good fortune to marry Pat from Swansea; the gateway to that picturesque peninsula in South Wales and with which I was to become so acquainted.

It was here that Kilvert spent happy holidays staying each time at Ilston Rectory the home of the Revd Sterling Westthorp (See p.19 – ed.) and his wife, the sister of Mrs Venables.

Ilston is a lovely village nestling in central Gower with the river sparkling beside St Iltyd's Church. Kilvert writes of, *dear hospitable Ilston Rectory*, (20 April 1872), where, with the Westthorps, he explored the beautiful Gower coast with its attractive bays.

He refers to Langland Bay where: *we had luncheon among the rocks, the ladies drinking wine out of shells as the cup had been forgotten* (16 October 1878).

This was a favourite bay with Pat who, as a girl, would catch the train which ran along the length of Swansea Bay. Kilvert writes of: *a tramway... upon which ply carriages drawn by horses*. (18 April 1872).

It was from the cliffs above that Kilvert saw: *the great fleet of oyster boats which had been out dredging was coming round the lighthouse point with every shade of white and amber sails, gay in the afternoon sun*. Today he would still see sailing boats and sometimes the shapely outline of the Swansea – Cork ferry sailing round the coast.

Pat remembers her grandfather would often take the train to Oystermouth at the western edge of Swansea Bay in order to have a health-giving meal of oysters. Alas today, there is no train and the oysters seem to have gone.

Kilvert loved Wales and felt *so happy... amongst the kindly Welsh*. (12 April 1875). Accompanied by his father he visited many parts of the Principality. When approaching St David's he writes so expressively: *and so we came to the end of the world where the Patron Saint of Wales sleeps by the western sea*. (17 October 1871).

His ascent of Cader Idris is one of the most fascinating passages in the Diary; but then there are so many.

I am very grateful that my own journeying has followed some of Kilvert's own which has added to the pleasure and solace that reading the Diary gives.

It seems as if it was meant to be.

BOOK REVIEWS

Gordon Rogers (Ross-on-Wye) reviews:

All My Days: The Edward West Memorial Book, edited by Michael Sharp.

Published by the Kilvert Society at £4.50 (Incl. p&p) and obtainable from the Publications Manager.

When the editor of our *Journal* wrote to me some time ago enclosing a copy of the above book, which had then only just been published, and suggested that I should review it I was initially somewhat surprised. I imagined there were probably more members, especially among the Society's committee, better qualified than me to undertake this task. However, when he reminded me of my long acquaintance with Edward both within and without the Kilvert Society – I lived very close to him in Ross so we saw each other fairly often – I readily agreed, as I welcomed an opportunity, in the process, to offer my own tribute to a long-standing friend.

Having read carefully through the book I came to the conclusion that this was not a book for which one could offer a review as normally understood. It is a book about one man, as the title indicates, and consists of a pot-pourri of memories, appreciations and tributes from a proportion of the many with whom he came into contact and had an effect upon, during the course of his long life. Add to this a selection culled from his own writings in the Society's Newsletters over the years, plus various quotations from the *Diary* and other sources bearing upon them, and the result is a beautifully rounded portrait from many aspects of one man; a special man; our much-loved late Secretary and friend, Edward West.

At the outset I would like to thank, on behalf of all members, all those involved in contributing to, selecting entries for, and generally bringing together all that is contained in the book, a most worthy tribute to Edward. This must particularly include the editor, Michael Sharp, for all his hard work in that role; also for his own article "A Man of Honour," letting us into his knowledge of and dealings with Edward from the beginning of their acquaintanceship.

As to my own connection with Edward, briefly alluded to in the first paragraph, I have known him for a good many years, but I suppose it was since his retirement when he moved from lodgings in a village some two miles from Ross to his own little house only a short way from my own residence, that we saw more of each other and I got to know him better. Apart from our attendances at Kilvert Society events we occasionally went together to choral concerts in Ross Parish Church – the town has a pretty competent choral society – and also met in town or at home. Here I must mention my regular contacts with him, and also his lifelong friend John Dunabin, whilst ferrying them to and from numerous Society occasions over the years. Michael refers to this in his article (p.4) and I shall return to it later.

As far as a 'review' of the book is concerned, I have noticed in reading through it that a number of contributors comment upon some facet or other of Edward which, in total, build up into a faithful record of his personality and the sort of man he was. These are like little themes in a piece of music growing gradually into a successful and complete whole. I shall therefore pick out some of these to see where they lead, with a few thoughts of my own thrown in.

The comment which occurs more than any other is that Edward was a 'private' man. His old friend John Dunabin, who must have known him as well as anybody over many years, refers (p.11) to his own thoughts and those of others 'that Ted was a very private person'. Reg Morgan (p.44) uses the same term, and David Lockwood (p.54) refers to 'a very private man'. Michael Sharp (p.3) also refers to him as a 'very private person'. I also can concur with such remarks as I found him very much the same, and I certainly felt he would have considered it somewhat unwelcome were I to have attempted to dig into his past, however carefully and discreetly. In my view he was a man of the present – the past is done with so let it lie. It may be that another couple of comments I have extracted could be taken as possibly confirming to some extent this supposition. Thus John Dunabin (p.41), at the time Edward left school, says: 'This is where Ted's inner strength became obvious. There was no lingering, no looking back, and no maintenance of former links with the past.' Also (p.42) he states: 'Nostalgia was never one of his weaknesses'. I wonder whether sad events in his early life (p.42) – loss of father in babyhood, and mother in a fatal accident when still only a young man – steeled him to set aside in his mind remembrances of such sadnesses and, rather than dwell on them, press ahead, enjoy and make the best of the present as it gradually unfolded. We shall, of course, never know now.

A few other comments throw light on his general temperament and manner. Reg Morgan (p.43): 'Edward was the personification of modesty and courtesy, and ... a gentleman'. John Dunabin (p.9): 'Modest and unassuming ... innate kindness'. Michael Sharp (p.3): 'Basically a somewhat shy, modest and extremely self-effacing man'. From such we learn that, although he accomplished much of which to be proud, his 'privacy' prevented him from boasting, or propagating himself in the slightest degree: a truly humble man.

One comment by John Dunabin surprised me (p.42), the fact that in the last war Edward was taught to drive heavy motor vehicles. I used to think he had never learned to drive as he made no mention of it and seemed totally uninterested in motor vehicles, apart from riding in them when necessary. As to his RAF wartime service, although he knew I also had been in the same branch of the services then, he never attempted to invoke any exchange of views between us as to our respective experiences. I therefore felt it expedient to say nothing. Again I suppose a much greater concern with the present than the past which was dead and gone.

Another feature which caught the attention of more than one contributor was Edward's love of music, especially that of Sir Edward Elgar. Interesting comments come from David Lockwood (p.53) wherein he also refers to Edward's resemblance to the great composer. Personally, the latter gave me confirmation of an impression I had held, and confirmed it was not my over-imagination. As to Elgar's music, Edward and I discussed it with enthusiasm on various occasions. As a regular attendee at the annual Three Choirs Festival in one or other of the three local cathedrals, an appearance of one of Elgar's works for performance would usually be Edward's first choice, especially if it happened to be *The Dream of Gerontius*.

David also drew attention (p.53) to Edward's interest in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. I caught some of this enthusiasm from time to time on the much-remembered occasions when he would inevitably kindly ask me back to his abode following a Kilvert walk, when I would spend an enjoyable (and usually late!) evening with him and John. Inevitably at some stage Gilbert and Sullivan would surface, and it was quite common for both to spontaneously burst into song at the mention of some ditty in one of the operas. I was astonished at their intimate knowledge of so much of these works – Edward had a bound book containing possibly the libretti of all the operas. I decided at some stage I must see one of these for myself, which I did, and was quite impressed. Subsequently I added further of them, and eventually was able to venture a minor contribution to any G and S interludes.

One important section of the book is the record of some of Edwards's pupils' impressions of him. These are wonderful testimonials to a well-respected and popular teacher who is even now remembered affectionately by so many who passed through his hands in the past. I think the consensus of opinion on their part can be summed up in the closing line of David Childs' appreciation (p.49): 'A truly remarkable man – the world is a sadder place with his loss'. We can all agree with that; Edward always went beyond the strict boundaries of anything which he undertook.

As to his record as contributor and Newsletter editor (p.15 *et seq*) there is little I can add, as it speaks for itself. It was nostalgic

to browse through these records of years past, and brought to light again and in a collated format for ease of reference, so many of Edward's offerings. They form a welcome selection of his writings over his long secretaryship of the Society, and also reflect his knowledge and love of the English language.

And what of the photographs? To me they seem to confirm my long-held view that it was often possible to discover Edward's feelings of the moment reflected in his countenance. I will leave readers to decide if this is merely a fanciful imagination on my part, or whether there is something in it. Suffice it to say that, for me at any rate, the photo facing the foreword is the quintessence of Edward; this is the way I shall always remember him.

And what better quotation with which to conclude than that ending Reg Morgan's contribution (p.44): 'To know him was to love him'.

David Lockwood introduces:

***Francis Kilvert's Poetry* a study by Bernard Jones**

Published by the Kilvert Society at £3.00 (incl. p&p) and obtainable from the Publications Manager

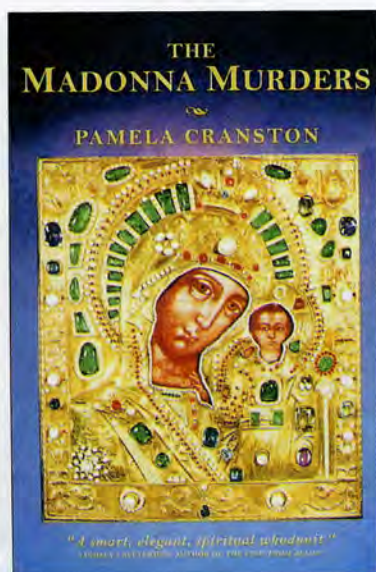
It is very hackneyed indeed to begin a speech, or introduction with the words, "It gives me great pleasure". But it is very apt and very true when I commend to all this very serious and scholarly appraisal of the poetry of Francis Kilvert.

This is a work of keen perception and deep knowledge of English prosody. It is written with distinction and Bernard Jones makes us read the Diarist's poetry with renewed interest and much more care. He shows that Kilvert was steeped in the tradition of English poets and influenced greatly, not just by Wordsworth and Tennyson, but by the incomparable metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century, such as Vaughan and Herbert. He links William Barnes, the Dorset poet whom he visited, with Kilvert most illuminatingly. I knew that Kilvert admired him, but not to the extent that he inspired the poem 'Nutting'. Dr Jones quotes me as judging it as doggerel; he agrees; but temporizes it by calling it 'inspired doggerel'. I must make a bow and acknowledge this.

The study is erudite but shot through with an affectionate understanding of the man. He closes with the words, 'The poems can be enjoyed for their own sake'. Very true.

OTHER NEW BOOKS

Dr Meic Stephens, Professor of Welsh Writing in English at the University of Glamorgan, and a long-standing member of the Society, has published 'a journal with memoirs' in which, among other things, he recounts his twenty-year search for his father's parents in the hills of Radnorshire. He eventually traced his father's mother to the village of Glascwm and, with the help of DNA, was able to establish who the child's father had been. The story is told in *A Semester in Zion* (Carreg Gwalch, £8.95), a diary which Dr Stephens kept while Visiting Professor of English at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. His search was also the subject of a long poem in Welsh with which he came close to winning the Crown at the National Eisteddfod in August 2003.

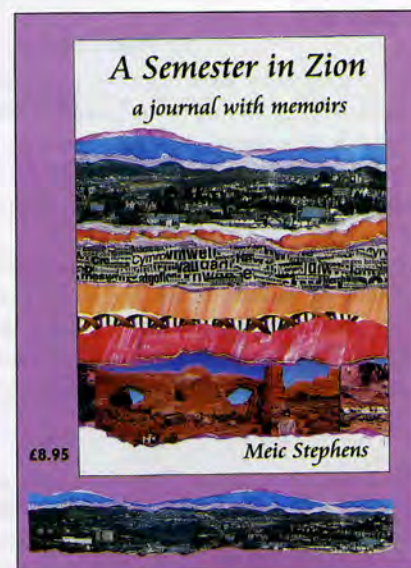


Our member Pamela Cranston writes from Oakland, California with news of a book she has just had published:

The Madonna Murders is a mesmerizing tale full of intrigue, romance and the supernatural about the priceless Icon of Kazan, first made famous by Tolstoy and shown at the 1964 New York World's Fair. It is obtainable in the UK via amazon.co.uk (more details of the book are available on their website) and from Blackwells.

The Revd Pamela Cranston is a poet and writer whose work has appeared in a variety of literary journals and anthologies. She was ordained as an Episcopal priest in 1990. For the past fifteen years she has served churches and hospices in the San Francisco Bay area.

Pamela says that she is now: 'working full-time in a hospice and doing book tours. Crazy!'



EXPLORING KILVERT COUNTRY

Chris Barber (Abergavenny) writes about the genesis of his recently published, lavishly illustrated guide to the Radnorshire Kilvert Country.

It was during a solitary walk on the remote and mysterious Begwn hills above Clyro that I felt inspired to write this book which I have titled *Exploring Kilvert Country*. Visualising the tall black-bearded Francis Kilvert, energetically striding towards Painscastle it suddenly occurred to me that there was a need for a book to guide people who come in search of the many places mentioned in his famous *Diary*.

A few days later, I started work on this project, which was to be my twenty-second book. I then spent the best part of three years researching, exploring and photographing all the locations that could be included in the itinerary of Kilvert enthusiasts visiting this area.

Following Kilvert's footsteps I sought out the secret little valleys, hamlets and little churches in the rolling hills above Clyro, talking to people and taking many photographs. During my wanderings I was intrigued to find that stories concerning the roaming curate of Clyro are preserved in the folklore of this area. Such enduring memories are due to the fact that this sensitive man was regarded with great respect and affection by parishioners, both rich and poor. His social graces took him into the grand homes of the gentry and the humblest of cottages and he has provided us with fascinating cameos of life in those mid-Victorian times.

On my travels I came to realise with great satisfaction that the beautiful countryside that Kilvert once knew and described has changed very little. Some of the mills, cottages and farmhouses that he visited are now in ruins, many of the lanes that he once walked are now tarmacked roads, but the solitude and exquisite beauty of the landscape are still very special.

I have illustrated the book throughout in colour for this is the only way to do full justice to the scenery and I am grateful to Adfywio for agreeing to provide financial assistance to make this possible.

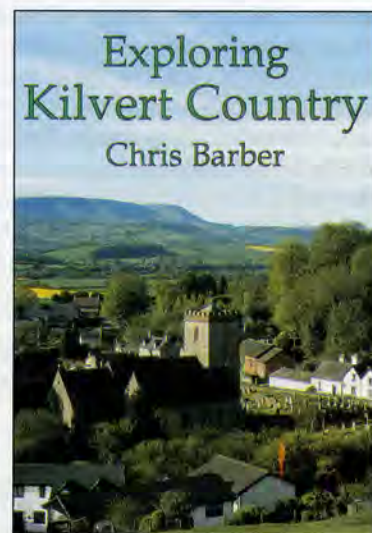
The book includes a number of car tours and walks which will help people to seek out many of the locations featured in Kilvert's writings and the book includes very many relevant and fascinating observations. He was a tireless walker who thought nothing of covering 25 miles in a day. A good example being the occasions that he walked from Clyro via the Gospel Pass into the heart of the Black Mountains to visit Capel-y-ffin and Llanthony, where the famous encounter with the tourists took place. Kilvert's opinion of them would certainly not have pleased the Wales Tourist Board if it had existed in his time, but today, his words of indignation make amusing reading.

Exploring Kilvert Country was launched (July 2003) at the Baskerville Arms hotel in Clyro with numerous members of the Kilvert Society committee present and in order to entertain my guests I showed an audio-visual presentation that I had specially prepared to give a flavour of the content of the book.

I did wonder however, if Kilvert would have approved of this launch taking place in the *Swan* as he called it, despite the fact that the name of this hostelry had been changed to the *Baskerville Arms*. He certainly had no warm feelings towards the place and seemed to regard it as a den of iniquity. However, the launch took place in a fairly modern extension to the original building, so perhaps I can be forgiven!

There have been many books written about Kilvert and his famous *Diary*, but until now there has never been an illustrated guidebook to help people find their way to many of the remote places that he describes. I hope that those who buy my book will enjoy following the journeys and walks that I have described or take pleasure from reading about them from the comfort of their armchairs. I hope that you will enjoy following in my footsteps.

***Exploring Kilvert Country* is available from bookshops at £12.00 or direct from Bloreng Books (01873 856114). It was reviewed in *Journal* No 12, September 2003.**



DISCOVERING KILVERT

By Anne Wheeldon (Hereford)

I grew up in Kington, which is of course very close to the Kilvert Country. My grandfather lived with us, he had been a bank manager there for nearly twenty years, and was particularly fond of Radnorshire. He said that after his retirement he had visited every church in the county.

When he was a boy he used to stay with an uncle and aunt in Penybont. In 1870 his uncle had been appointed Police

Superintendent. In 1873 a new Chief Constable was to be appointed for Radnorshire, and Joseph was among the four candidates. To save money the new Chief Constable was also to act as superintendent. Joseph Wheeldon was appointed. This did not, however, please the family at Llanthomas (we all know who they were!) as they thought the post should have been given to a retired Army officer.

I was about nine or ten when *Kilvert's Diary* was advertised in the *Countryman*. My grandfather was very excited when he heard about the publication, and the family bought him a volume of the *Diary* for each of his next three birthdays.

He used to read extracts to me that he thought I would enjoy. The one I remember most clearly is a story that Francis Kilvert heard about the vicar who was standing in the pulpit during the last verse of the hymn before the sermon, gazing out of the window, watching an old man pulling up a turnip, and saying, *I thought he would*, when the old man fell over backwards, as the turnip came up!

I always knew I wanted to read more of the *Diary*; but it was quite a long time before I got a chance to do this. In about 1955 I read the abridged version, which I enjoyed; but I have since found that it is not nearly as satisfying as reading the three volumes.

I settled in Hereford in 1956, but it was about 1970 before I joined the Society.

The first meeting that I attended with my sister Elizabeth and our mother, was at Wootton-by-Woodstock, the church where Francis Kilvert was married. William Plomer was present at the service.

Since I joined the Kilvert Society I have taken part in as many events as possible, which makes it difficult to decide which have been the most enjoyable.

I particularly enjoy the commemoration services held on the last Sundays in June and September which are important events in the summer and autumn. These still take place in Radnorshire, Wiltshire and Herefordshire and, occasionally, in Oxfordshire, and Shropshire. With the very large number of churches for which one vicar is now responsible it is not so easy to organise. But we are still given a warm welcome, and the preachers still find new and interesting aspects on Francis Kilvert's life and writings to talk about.

As well as the regular annual services and walks, I have memories of quite a number of most enjoyable extra excursions. There was one particular visit led by Wynford Vaughan Thomas, the well-known war-correspondent and broadcaster, who was at that time our president. This was a coach drive round the Gower coast, he gave us a marvellous description of the people and places he had known when he was a boy in Swansea.

In the last few years we have had most enjoyable visits to Dulwich Art Gallery, and the National Library of Wales. Two of our recent summer meetings have been held in the Wiltshire Kilvert Country.

Although I seem to have had a lot to say about events and outings, it doesn't mean that I do not realise that a very large part of the Kilvert Society's interest comes from the *Diary*, the literature that has been written about it and the *Journal* which accounts for the large membership and widespread interest.

In conclusion I must mention, I feel, how much we owe to our present president, the Revd David Lockwood, for the energy and support he has given us now and previously as our chairman.

THE FAMOUS MISPRINT

By Richard Weston (Hereford)

Kilvert's Diary, Saturday 7 October, 1872:

The Hereford Times has misprinted our report of the Clyro Harvest Festival as follows, 'The widows were decorated with Latin and St. Andrew's crosses and other beautiful devices in moss with dazzling flowers.' This was irresistible and the schoolmaster roared with delight.

Newspapers are well known for misspelt words, incorrect names and 'howlers' generally.

The edition of the *Hereford Times* for 7 October 1872 was clearly no exception. On the same day that Kilvert received his copy, he must have scanned it keenly for the report of the Clyro Harvest Festival, held during the previous week on Tuesday 26 September.

The report, as you will see, gives a detailed account of the service and lavishes praise on the elaborate floral decoration of the church, and, whilst commending the service for being 'short and hearty', very much approves of the quality of the singing by the choir and compliments Mr Evans, the schoolmaster, on his 'beautiful anthem'.

The line in the report that was *irresistible and caused Evans to roar with delight* was however the misspelling of the word 'windows'. The misprint immediately conjures up the image of a group of bereaved ladies in their exotic attire and it still causes us to smile today.

The actual report from the *Hereford Times* is reproduced below and the misprint can be clearly seen, still in its uncorrected glory after 130 years!

Kilvert refers in the *Diary to our report* so it is quite possible that he alone or together with Evans, penned it for the newspaper. He does not refer, however, to the other glaring misspelling of 'alter' for 'altar', but doubtless his writer's eye would have spotted that as well!

The *Hereford Times* in 1872 already 40 years old was, and still is, the very respected local weekly newspaper for Herefordshire and part of the old counties of Radnorshire, Breconshire and Montgomeryshire, now Powys.

At the time that Kilvert read it, its price would have been 3½d and the circulation much less than today's; but each copy would, no doubt, have had several readers. It clearly provided a vital conduit of information for the people of the city and the countryside around.

We are very grateful to the *Hereford Times* for allowing us to reproduce this fascinating reminder of the important part that their newspaper played in the life and times of the Diarist.

OLYRO.

HARVEST THANKSGIVING.—A harvest thanksgiving festival was held at the parish church of Olyro on Tuesday, the 28th ultimo. The service, which commenced at 11 a.m., was read by the vicar, the Rev. R. L. Venables, and the lessons by the Rev. R. F. Kilvert, curate of the parish. An able and impressive sermon was delivered to a large congregation by the Rev. W. L. Beavan, vicar of Hay, from a portion of our Saviour's sermon on the mount—St. Matthew vi., 26. A collection was made at the end of the service in aid of Home Missions, when the sum of £10 17s. 9d. was contributed. The church was very tastefully and elaborately decorated for the occasion by one ladies of the parish. At the entrance of the porch was the appropriate text taken from the 100th psalm, "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving." On either side of the east window hung a green banner bearing a white cross; upon the east window sill lay a bank of moss, relieved by brilliant flowers, and beneath the sill extended a text, exquisitely written in letters of white wool upon a red ground, "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness." Upon the altar stood a sheaf of wheat, barley, and oats mixed, and from the sheaf band hung a bunch of purple grapes. A narrow carpet of moss, brilliant with dahlias, bordered the higher altar step at the foot of the rails; and the rails were surmounted by a tastefully mixed ending of flowers, ferns, and corn. Rare and magnificent ferns lined the altar step. The font was dressed in exquisite

taste with moss, white geraniums, and white petunias, while a cross of white flowers floated in the water. The widows were decorated with Latin and St. Andrew's crosses, and other beautiful devices in moss, with dazzling flowers. The pillars were wreathed with ferns and bunches of scarlet berries, and the capitals with Spanish chestnuts, blackberries, elderberries, and brightly coloured leaves. Upon the walls, between the windows, hung St. Andrew's crosses of barley sheaves, the butts looped across with wild hop sprays. The chancel walls and the west wall were adorned with texts of white letters on a scarlet ground, "Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness;" "Thou visitest the earth and blesseth it;" "O, all ye works of the Lord, bleas ye the Lord." The reading desk and the pulpit were hung with violet, ornamented with a deep fringe of oats and flax, looped up with fruit and embroidered with flowers. Upon the violet hangings appeared the sacred monogram, "I.H.S." and a sickle and sheaf and an anchor, a cross and a heart, representing faith, hope, and charity, worked in corn with great taste and beautiful effect.—The service was short and hearty. The Harvest Hymns from the Ancient and Modern Hymn-book, and a beautiful anthem, composed for the occasion by Mr. Evans, the schoolmaster, were admirably sung by the choir with great power, sweetness, and precision. This is the third Harvest Thanksgiving which has been held in this parish, and in point of choral effect, tasteful decoration, and liberal contribution, is the most successful festival which has yet been celebrated.

The Offending Article

FROM RECENT CORRESPONDENCE

- i) **Barry Smith** writes from Abergavenny drawing attention to an article that appeared in *The Guardian* on 10 January 2004
The article entitled *Private Lives* was by Susan Hill and ran to two (tabloid) pages. About one column in all was devoted to Kilvert, together with the usual portrait (facing left!) placed at the head of a gallery of other diarists captioned 'Ten of the Best'. Although you may not agree, the other nine were: Sir Walter Scott, Alan Clark, May Sarton, James Lees-Milne, Virginia Woolf, Gilbert White, Ronald Blythe, Richard Eyre and Harold Nicholson. Susan Hill makes some interesting observations about diarists in general and describes Kilvert as 'the least self-aware of diarists' and the *Diary* as 'one of the greatest and most enjoyable of all diaries'.
- ii) **Angela Bowler (Chesterfield)** writes:
The arrival of the September *Journal* has reminded me of something which I thought might interest members. I recently borrowed a book from my local library entitled *Fourteen Friends* by the late James Lees-Milne. It is a collection of essays about people who made an impression on the author and one chapter is dedicated to William Plomer. I will post a message on my website about the book.
- iii) **Kathleen Chappell (Wotton-under-Edge)** writes:
.... I wonder if the letters of George Woodward (1708-1790) are known to KS members? These were published in 1982 by Alan Sutton (Gloucester) under the title *A Parson in the Vale of White Horse* ... I feel sure these letters, written from the parsonage in East Hendred (Berks) between 1753 and 1761 would appeal to Kilvertians.

iv) **From Christopher Williams (Wrexham):**

I was most interested in your piece on tennis (*Journal* No 12, September 2003). By coincidence, I did some work on this recently as I was commissioned to research a medieval house in Ruthin, Nantclwyd House, which was once the town house of Nantclwyd Hall at Llanelidan in Denbighshire. It was at Nantclwyd Hall that Major Wingfield invented his version of the game in 1873.

THE KILVERT SOCIETY AS MATCHMAKER

Thanks to an interest in RFK and the *Diary* two of our members, Buddug Medi and Alan McParlin, were married last September. Both are life members of the Society and it was Alan's interest in Kilvert that first brought them together and enthused Buddug as well.

The couple are both from Bala but were married in Welshpool, 'in the hope', says Buddug, 'of finding some privacy'. It was not to be however, as they were followed to the ceremony by many friends from their home area! The marriage service was conducted in Welsh and English and, according to Buddug, was highly entertaining. One wonders.

A quiet, happy reception followed before departure for a honeymoon, part of which was spent, appropriately enough, in Hay.

Buddug spoke on the *Diarist* on S4C last October and it is pleasing to note that her talk has generated quite an amount of new interest in Kilvert.

To the best of our knowledge this is the first time that an interest in Kilvert has led to matrimony!



Buddug and Alan sign the register

THE BRITISH DIARIST

The attention of members is drawn to a relatively new publication: *The British Diarist*. The first issue appeared in May 2003 and contains brief mentions of Kilvert on pages 2 and 68. The magazine appears at the beginning of May, August, November and February. The editor is Paul P.B. Minet FSA.

Subscriptions are £15 in the UK and £20 abroad, payment in sterling by cheque or credit card, foreign subscriptions by credit card or sterling draft; dollar cheques are not acceptable.

Further details from and orders to: *The British Diarist*, Church Street, Tilehurst, East Sussex TN5 7AA. Tel 01580 201221, Fax. 01580 200957. Email: minet@btopenworld.com

Ann Dean has written an article on Kilvert which appeared in the November 2003 issue.

THE CRESCENT MOON

By Ann Dean (Hereford)

Kilvert's Diary, Thursday 7 April, 1870:

When I looked out between 11 and 12 before going to bed I saw one of the magnificent sights of the world, the crescent moon setting.

*When down the stormy crescent goes
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns*

And the crescent moon was sinking low over the dingle behind the poplars

A friend has a wonderful astronomy programme on his computer called *Redshift 4* which enables him to go back over time to see where the moon and stars were in the sky at any given moment. Having read the above extract from the *Diary* my friend was intrigued and was able to reproduce on his computer screen an illustration of the position of the stars and moon exactly as Kilvert would have seen them on that April evening in 1870.

Unfortunately the computer screen picture is not good enough for reproduction here but a copy of the chart of the heavens, as they were on that evening, is available from me (ed.).

FROM THE ARCHIVES



*The Revd Sterling Westthorp, Rector of Ilston, Gower.
He married Mrs Venables' sister.*



Mrs Crichton of Wye Cliff, Clyro and Madeline c1870.

FOR SALE

The Revd John Day has a copy of Laurence le Quesne's *After Kilvert* for sale. Please contact him direct: 01747 860984.

OBITUARIES

Norah Butcher

It is with very great sadness that we have to announce the death, in November 2003, of Mrs Norah Butcher, just over a year after that of her husband Basil (see *Journal* No 10, March 2003). They had known each other for 75 years. Norah was in her ninetieth year and was as distinguished a Herefordian as her husband, sharing with him a great love for county, city, cathedral and, above all, in her case, for the Three Choirs Festival.

It was at the age of 19 in 1933 that she made her first appearance in the Festival choir, singing under the baton of Sir Edward Elgar himself, in a performance of his masterpiece *The Dream of Gerontius*. That performance was something, of course, which she would never forget. She would often recall Sir Edward's striking appearance at the opening service of that year: 'He looked most impressive in his costume that included velvet breeches, stockings and silver-buckled shoes'. She apparently found it difficult, however, to follow the great man's beat! 'He expected the chorus to know what they were doing, otherwise they should not be there.' She said.

Norah went on to sing at every Festival until 1981, a quite remarkable Three Choirs career.

A funeral service for her was held in the cathedral on 24 November 2003.



* * * * *

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.

Mr C.B.E. Clarke, Flax Bourton, Nr Bristol, died at Easter 2003, he had been a life member since 1988.

Mrs E.J. (Marjorie) Hall, Chippenham, Wiltshire, died in July 2003, she became a member in 1990 and a life member in 2000. Marjorie was the wife of committee member Jim Hall.

Mr M. (Mike) Howard, Blackheath, London, died on 24 October 1999, a life member since 1986. His wife wrote: "He really loved his trips with the Kilvert Society. They were one of his great pleasures in life."

Just as the *Journal* goes to press we learn of the death, on 11 February, of Miss Rosemary Mumford of Sugwas Court, Swainhill, Hereford. Miss Mumford was a founder member of the Society in 1948. She is survived by her twin sister Mary Rose, who is now almost certainly our last remaining founder member. The sisters were made honorary life members of the Society in 1998.

IN AID OF CHURCH FUNDS

St Andrew's Church, Bredwardine.

Peter Manders, the well-known Hereford artist has allowed reproductions of his drawing of St Andrew's to be sold in aid of church funds. Mounted copies are available at £7.50 post free. Prints mounted and framed are available at £15, but not by post. Contact Mrs Gwyneth MacKenzie for details: Tel. 01981 500606.

St Michael's and All Angels', Clyro.

The PCC of Clyro has greetings cards for sale for the benefit of church funds. The card features a water-colour illustration of St Michael's, viewed from Paradise and the inside is blank for writing your own greeting. The cards are 60p each (50p each for ten or more) plus postage and are obtainable from: Mrs. M. Cuthbertson, Nash Dom, Rhydspence, Whitney-on-Wye, Hereford HR3 6EY.

Because of pressure of space a number of items have had to be held over. My apologies to any disappointed contributors (ed.).

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.

Contributions for the June 2004 edition of the *Journal* should reach the editor not later than 17 April 2004.

The current ordinary subscription is £6.00 (Joint membership £9.00) 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.

