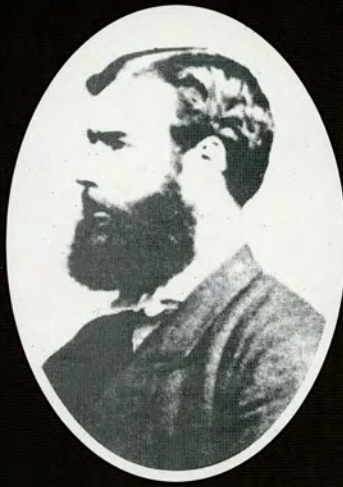
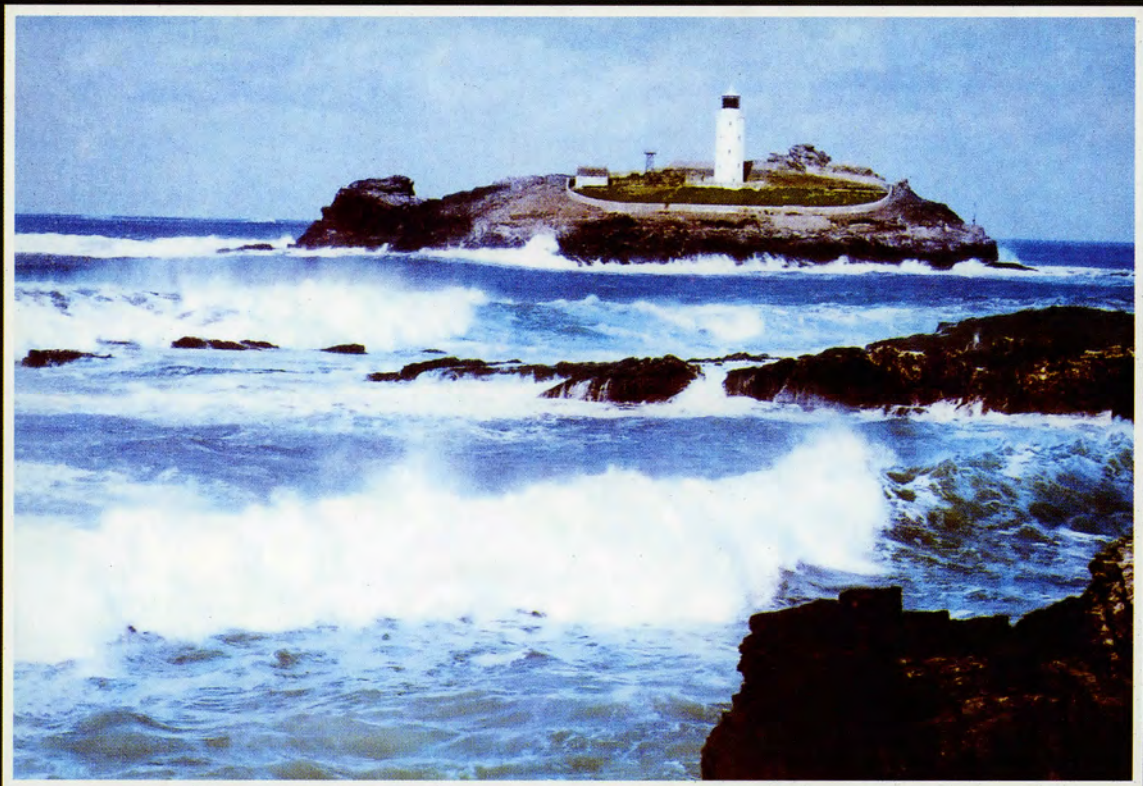




THE
JOURNAL
OF
THE KILVERT SOCIETY



THE KILVERT SOCIETY

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

Registered Charity No. 1103815

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Number 24 September 2007

From the Editor:

An innovation announced in this issue is the first KSJ competition, the details of which appear on page 17; I am hoping for a good response. The winning entry will be published in the March 2008 *Journal*.

This has been rather a lean year for unsolicited contributions for publication and I now urge members, as the long winter evenings approach, to use them... profitably... and write something for inclusion in next year's editions!

I would welcome especially items for the 'Discovering Kilvert' feature and for the occasional series 'Have you been here?' – descriptive accounts of visits to the more out-of-the-way places mentioned in the *Diary*, preferably accompanied by photographs. Items of serious and original research are, of course, essential to a literary journal and here I am frequently amazed at the skill and tenacity revealed by contributors as they explore the life of the Diarist and the background to the *Diary* and who continue, still, to discover new and fascinating material. Articles in a lighter mood are very welcome too, as are comments on and additions to pieces which have already appeared. It all helps to achieve what, I hope, is the right mix in my attempt to please all readers all the time!

I hope to see you at one or other of our forthcoming events and if you are able to attend nothing other than one occasion next year then please make sure you reserve *now* the last weekend in June when the Society will celebrate its Diamond Jubilee. It would be wonderful to see a huge turnout of Kilvertians for that notable anniversary.

From the Secretary:

The AGM weekend 2008 will follow a similar format to that of last year at Presteigne, which was deemed a successful and enjoyable event.

The committee is busily organising the Society's Diamond Jubilee weekend in June. We hope to make it a memorable celebration of the Society's founding in 1948.

Details and booking forms will follow in the March edition of the *Journal* for both the AGM and Jubilee weekends.

The committee is working, in conjunction with KS member John Stoker, to gain greater publicity for the Society and its activities, so as to attract a greater membership. We hope this will become more apparent in 2008 as we celebrate our Diamond Jubilee year.

Our member Carol Smith has volunteered to manage the Society's website in succession to Ann Dean who did sterling work in setting up and managing the site previously.

The committee welcomed new committee members Elizabeth Rowe of Hay and Peter Beddall of Dorstone to its May meeting.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

September Weekend

Saturday 22 September 12 noon

Meet at Pen-y-Craig farm, OS map ref 108458. Walk, seven miles (hilly) to Llewelyn's Cave and the grave of Tom or Twm Tobacco. **(Some members may prefer to walk to the grave only as this is about 3 miles).** Suitable attire advised. The afternoon will conclude with a visit to Erwood Craft Centre where refreshments may be purchased.

Sunday 23 September 3.00 p.m.

Evensong at Glaschw Church followed by optional tea at Erwood Craft Centre.



*The descent to
Glascwm from
Colva*

Photo: Editor

2008:

Winter Event

Wednesday 20 February

Whole day visit to Chippenham. KS member the Revd John Day will lead the walk. Members to make their own arrangements for lunch. **See enclosed booking form.**

AGM weekend

Friday 25 April 7.00 p.m.

AGM at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford.
Interval (Refreshments by committee member Sue Rose).
Talk.

Saturday 26 April 10.30 a.m.
Afternoon 6.30 for 7.00 p.m.

Seminar at the *Radnorshire Arms*, Presteigne
Free.
Annual dinner at the *Radnorshire Arms*, Presteigne
Church services locally as required – no Kilvert service.

Sunday 27 April

June

Friday 27 June 6.30 for 7.00 p.m.
Saturday 28 June 12.00 noon
Sunday 29 June 3.00 p.m.

The Kilvert Society Diamond Jubilee Weekend

Dinner at the *Three Counties Hotel*, Hereford – £23 per head. (With speaker)
Meet at Kinnersley for a walk led by Michael Sharp with tea to follow.
Evensong at Kinnersley Church, followed by tea, archery and croquet on the lawn at the Rectory.

September Weekend

Saturday 27 September 10.30 a.m.
2.00 p.m.
Sunday 28 September 3.00 p.m.

Visit to Llandrindod Wells Museum.
Lunch (members to make their own arrangements)
Visit to Abbey Cwmhir Hall and gardens.
Eucharist service at Ysfa Church.

February 2009

It is hoped to visit Worcester Cathedral and Deanery. (*See p16 Journal No. 22*)

Full details will follow in the March 2008 Journal.

THE JUNE WEEKEND

By Charles Weston (Thornton-le-Dale)

23-24 June

Francis Kilvert's love of the countryside is legendary and so it was appropriate that the June programme for this year should include a walk along byways unchanged in many ways since he wrote his diary. The Saturday walk from Church Barn* Gladestry, the home of Ann and Howard Dean, to Saint David's Church Colva was a gentle uphill stroll of some two miles or so. The lane we walked along may have looked a little different with metalled surfacing and the occasional motorised vehicle which forced us all into the hedge, but the verges were much as Kilvert described them: *beautiful and picturesque with ... wild luxuriant growth of fern and foxgloves ...*

Kilvert had, of course, made the journey to Colva on 26 February 1870 at a cold and cheerless time of the year when *wild, luxuriant growth*, would not have been much in evidence as he approached the village from the south over the Fualt, accompanied by Price Price, a local boy who offered to show him the way. The main reasons for his visit seem to have been to collect the words of some local folk songs from the publican of the *Sun Inn* at Colva and to sample the acoustic delights of the echo reflected from the west wall of the church.

Our group entered the village (or should I say hamlet) from the east, perspiring gently but inspired, not only by the views over the rolling countryside, but also by the flora and fauna observed *en route*. Cow parsley, red and white campion, foxgloves, forget-me-nots, even wild strawberries and wild gooseberries grew in profusion on the more exposed south facing verges. We reached Saint David's

*Church Barn: See p20

with Colva Farm (formerly the *Sun Inn*) alongside it; in Kilvert's day it was a beerhouse run by the Merediths who provided him with ... *beer, some hard sweet homebaked bread, and some hard cheese* (See vol I, p43). No such luck for us – a pint of beer would have been most welcome – however we were only too happy to quaff the tea provided in the church by the good ladies of the Parish.

The Diary refers to ...*the little white-washed church sequestered among its large ancient yews* ... but says nothing about its history or its architectural features. Fortunately for us, as in most ancient churches, leaflets were on hand and we were able to study at leisure the medieval wall paintings, the leper's squint slit-window and the crudely painted 'memento mori' skull and crossbones decoration on the blocked-up north door. Then, it was time to sample the echo, so off we trekked into a wet and overgrown field next to the church to indulge in a little Radnorshire yodelling. There was a general air of scepticism that any sort of meaningful echo could be accomplished; some of those present had been unsuccessful on previous visits. Eventually however, the 'Kilvert spot' was more or less located and satisfaction achieved (See postscript below). David Elvins was so overjoyed that he phoned his wife on his mobile there and then so that she could hear the echo for herself and share the happy moment with him!

The return walk downhill back to Gladestry was somewhat easier than the outward journey, giving us all a chance to savour the moorland scenery along an alternative route back to Church Barn. The exceptional feast and warm welcome that awaited us after our expedition was most welcome and filling. Many thanks Ann and Howard – another sumptuous Kilvert tea to round off the day (David Howell would have been very pleased! – ed.).

The Sunday Evensong service provided members with a chance to meet and worship with local parishioners. The service incorporated traditional hymns that Kilvert would have known well: *Allelulia, Sing to Jesus; The God of Love my Shepherd is; Hark my soul! It is the Lord* and, to conclude, *Glory to Thee, my God this night*. The Rector, Marian Morgan, was so impressed by the standard of singing that she organised us all into singing the final hymn as a canon. Very good it sounded too!

For the second consecutive day a truly gargantuan feast was enjoyed by members – with Sunday's buffet being provided by members of the church. Many thanks to them for all their kindnesses over the weekend. The echo of Kilvert's voice was heard twice in the church over the weekend with appropriate readings made by Colin Dixon and Michael Sharp.

Postscript: Who was the mystery 'local' who watched from the roadway outside the church all our efforts to find the echo spot in the field? He chatted to us as we left the field with a wry and knowing smile on his face but made no comment on what we had been trying to do. As we set off back down the lane in the direction of Gladestry I spotted him ambling into the field with a short wooden post which he stuck firmly into the ground a little farther away to the west from our previous yodelling point. A further visit into the field on the Sunday confirmed my suspicions. The echo was much more pronounced at the spot marked with the post! No, he did not have a bushy black beard nor was he wearing Victorian clerical garb but thanks to him anyway, whoever he is, for helping, in his own small way, to add to the national stock of Kilvert memorabilia!



Ann Dean at home

Photo: Charles Weston



Alan Brimson tests the Echo

Photo: Charles Weston



Outside the former Sun Inn

Photo: Charles Weston



At Church Barn before the start

Photo: Val Dixon

THE COLVA SERMON

It is some months now since I first knew that members of the Kilvert Society would be coming to Colva this year for their annual service of Evensong and Commemoration. It is good to know that the Society goes from strength to strength, keeping alive and nurturing the continuing world-wide interest in the life and writings of Francis Kilvert.

Reflecting on his life and ministry in these border parishes I was struck by a blinding flash of the obvious, that all of my own ministry, apart from a brief sojourn in Hereford, has been spent around the area which he knew so well. My husband and I lived in the old Rectory in Llanigon next to the site of Llanthomas, a house visited often by Kilvert but which, shamefully, was demolished, and where, of course, he met and fell in love with Daisy whose father had been Vicar of Llanigon.

We then moved to the Cusop group of parishes and had the privilege of ministering in Preston-on-Wye, Clifford and Moccas, parishes which Kilvert knew well and in Bredwardine where he was vicar and where he died just five weeks after his marriage. And now, we find ourselves in these parishes among the people whose ancestors were visited by and cared for by this young clergyman who knew their way of life and problems so well.

The *Diary* tells us as much about Kilvert the man as it does of the people and places he visited and the work he did. I ask myself why, as relatively undramatic pieces of writing, have they endured in the way they have? Why have these pen-portraits of the rural landscape and its people generated such interest and fondness for a man who described himself as 'ordinary'?

To read his diary is to be drawn into the lives of the people of his day, into their joy, but more often and more graphically into their pain. His account of the burial of the shepherd's son on Christmas day reflects his tremendous compassion for the boy's parents in their loss.

If Francis Kilvert walked over the hill from Clyro today, what would he find so different? He would, firstly, I am sure, be struck by the architecture of the countryside, mechanically cropped hedges largely replacing those hand-pleached, huge metal and concrete agricultural buildings and the monstrous machinery sitting in what were hay-barns and cowsheds.

What I think would concern him most would be the lack of people. Much of the charm of his writing is in the portrayal of the working lives and social activities of the time. There were huge contrasts between the elegant and formal house and dinner parties of the middle and upper classes, and the informal jollity of the poor.

His descriptions of harvest-time celebrations and those at major church festivals emphasise the extent to which the lives of the people were bound by the foibles of the weather. His accounts of heavy snowfalls and of taking a bath on Christmas Day in a bath of water in which he had to break the ice make one slightly glad of global warming.

Kilvert was, of course, the most keen naturalist and environmentalist. He would approve greatly of our new approach towards conservation and care of the countryside. He died at the peak of the agricultural economy and just before the crisis in farming and the great depression; what would he have made of the Common Agricultural Policy or of 'set-aside' and the single farm payment?

Kilvert aligned himself closely with the poor and the underprivileged; David Lockwood, in his biography writes of him: 'The visiting of the unfortunate, the desperately poor and the shunned was Kilvert's joy. It was, he considered, the major part of his ministry.'

That statement fills me with sadness. Perhaps the thing that Kilvert would notice first about the country parishes in our day would be the absence of clergy from most of them. During his time in Clyro there was an incumbent, Richard Lister Venables, and Kilvert, his curate – to one parish! What a wonderful opportunity that gave for regular visiting, even without the benefit of a car. But, of course, he had the trains with a stop in every village along the line – at Whitney-on-Wye, at Hay, Glasbury, and the major junction at Three Cocks and so on. All now gone following Dr Beeching's axe in the early 60s.

Kilvert would find major changes in the church itself. There was, of course, no Church in Wales in his day, before its disestablishment. The Liturgy is different, we have modern and inclusive language; we have women in church in trousers and no hats! We have very few men and hardly any children in church, and we have women priests! I suspect and hope that Kilvert would have approved. Much of his writing is very disdainful of the middle-class women of his day who did nothing but paint and play the piano – except for the daughters of the Vicar of Newchurch whom he discovered castrating lambs!

I am sure that the changes in private and public morality would be of tremendous concern to him. He was swamped in the social mores and constraints of the mid-Victorian era. He held back from declaring his love for Daisy Thomas because her father thought that she, at 18 was too young, and that Kilvert was not sufficiently comfortably off for his daughter. The profound changes in the role of women, the widespread use of drugs, air travel, and the exploding and complex variety of electronic gadgets would, I am sure, greatly disturb him.

But perhaps the most dramatic and poignant changes would be those taking place in medicine. Childhood infectious diseases, tuberculosis and cholera almost wiped out, and major organ transplant commonplace. It is ironic that Kilvert died from a ruptured appendix and peritonitis, which would not have happened even just a few years later when the surgical removal of an inflamed appendix became possible.

Thanks for the ability to bathe in the nostalgia or days none of us knew, but many would like to; days when life was so much simpler and when communities knew and supported each other.

What a conundrum! Then or now?

The Reverend Marian Morgan.

THE KILVERT QUAKER BACKGROUND: A STORY THAT COULD NOT BE TOLD

By John Toman (Bristol)

(A talk given at the AGM weekend April 2007)

Kilvert's Quaker background is a story that various commentators on Kilvert's origins have either ignored or played down. Thus, Frederick Grice in *Francis Kilvert and his World* has a section on Kilvert's Coleman forbears but makes no mention of the fact that they were a Quaker family for several generations. Grice noted that Walter Coleman, Kilvert's grandfather, had a private mausoleum built in his home village of Kington Langley and that, because it was unfinished when he died, he was buried in the churchyard of Kington St Michael. However, as soon as it was finished, his body was reburied in the burial ground of his own chapel. These facts are stated in Grice's book but no explanation of them is offered, yet the purposes behind Walter Coleman's actions are clear enough: having their own burial grounds meant that Quakers were free from Anglican burial rites. Similarly, Grice was content to explain the fierce resentment of the Ashe family to their daughter's marriage to Kilvert's grandfather simply in terms of Ashe arrogance. Having listed all the virtues of informality, kindness, lack of pride of Walter Coleman as given by Kilvert in his diary, Grice commented: 'It is easy to see from such accounts why the Ashes with their imperious nature did not desire to have him as a member of their family'. David Lockwood took a similar line, attributing Ashe opposition to the marriage as opposition to the 'easygoing Walter Coleman'. Grice put his finger on something important when he stated: 'For some reason Kilvert has far more to say in his Diary about the early Colemans than any other branch of his family'. 'For some reason' – there is a reason: his respect for Quakers.

His respect comes through in *Diary* entries. He noted, for example, that Quakers used to go to the Calne Quakers' Meeting every Sunday morning, as his mother made a point of telling him. Other mentions of Quakers are equally positive. He referred to a widow who died 'a good Quaker' and to 'a grand old Quaker lady' he met at Brinsop Court. It is at such points that it would have been logical and natural for him to mention, perhaps with pride, his own Quaker forbears but he remained silent. A word should be said about the social origins of Quakers. Typically, they were drawn from the yeoman farmer, merchant, tradesman and craftsman class, though initially some were landed gentry. We can see this general pattern in Wiltshire, where many Quakers were involved in agriculture and the cloth trade. The Minute Books of the Chippenham Monthly Meeting of Quakers for the late 17th / early 18th century list blacksmiths, yeomen, a miller, a Chandler, and various men described as cloth-workers, felt-makers, weavers; Adam Goldney, of the Chippenham family that Kilvert was friendly with, is listed as a linen-draper.

Quakerism stemmed from 17th century Puritanism, both motivated by a desire to reject the worldly life. The pattern in Wiltshire of Quakers supporting Methodists is well illustrated by the case of John Cennick, founder of the East Tytherton Moravian community, whose school Kilvert's mother attended. Coming originally from a Quaker family, Cennick came under the influence of Wesley but parted from him to undertake his own evangelical campaign in north Wiltshire, visiting all the villages around Chippenham, including Langley Burrell. The religious societies he formed there were taken over, on his invitation, by the Moravians, which led to the establishment of the East Tytherton community. The entry in *Kilvert's Diary* that deals with Cennick indicates strong sympathy for the man and the trials he endured for his faith on his preaching tours. Kilvert's sympathy stemmed from the respect he had for the local Quaker tradition in which his family, particularly his mother's Coleman branch of it, was involved. The Coleman family owned land in Tytherton Lucas, as well as in Kington Langley, and George Fox, the Quaker leader, wrote in his *Journal* of 'several thousand' Quakers attending a meeting there in 1656. It is important to stress that Kilvert's forbears lived their lives in an area steeped in Quakerism. This Quaker presence was fading when Thermuthis Ashe married Walter Coleman in 1807 (by 1790 Quaker numbers in Wiltshire had fallen to 146; there were only 113 by 1798); nevertheless, its impact could still be felt, as the Ashe resentment to the marriage confirms. The entries about Walter Coleman in Kilvert's *Diary* illustrate the way in which he is presented as a Quaker without actually stating that he was one. See the accounts of old Giles (V2. 281), Robert Kilvert (V2. 402-3), and John Fry (V3. 305-6), which stress the Quaker virtues of plainness, simplicity, lack of pride, egalitarianism, integrity/honesty in business. (Kilvert was acknowledging this last virtue when he noted that it was to Walter Coleman that the destitute Miss Long of Draycot applied for a loan – V2. 395.) The commentators in these entries knew of Coleman's *Quaker* origins and *Quaker* virtues; Kilvert, however, was unable to admit them openly.

The unsympathetic portrayal of the Ashe family is more understandable when we recognise that Kilvert was brought up to feel bitterness over the Ashe opposition to his grandmother's marriage to a *Quaker*. According to Kilvert, Madam Ashe liked to arrange marriages of local people and her failure to choose her daughter's husband particularly rankled. Kilvert quoted his great-grandfather's words to Thermuthis Ashe on one occasion when she was in tears because her marriage had turned out unhappy: 'My dear, we warned you. You made your bed and you must lie on it.' Kilvert added that the Ashes were 'deeply averse' to the marriage. What he doesn't tell us is why. In all important respects and by all the measures of the time, Walter Coleman seemed exemplary. The only factor in his background likely to produce the intense Ashe hostility is that he was a Quaker. With the recognition that a religious objection lay behind the Ashe anger, the import of the *Diary* entry for 9 January 1872 suddenly becomes clear. On that occasion Madam Ashe had said to her daughter, at the end of a violent argument, '“God forgive you”'. Kilvert's mother, then fifteen years old, was present at this encounter and asked, 'Why should God forgive my mother?' Madam Ashe would only repeat her words. The Ashes did not object to Walter Coleman on personal or social grounds; it was pre-eminently sectarian differences that could ignite such fierce hatreds in the early 19th century. God's forgiveness had to be invoked for Thermuthis Ashe because she had married a Quaker and Quakers were not Christians. The arrangements for the marriage show how the Ashes adjusted to the shock it represented. Essentially the ceremony was a compromise for both parties, although the bridegroom made more concessions. It took place in Langley Burrell Church (Walter attended church at this period). The couple was married by licence, which means that the reading of banns could be dispensed with, thus enabling the marriage to be kept quieter. Walter had agreed to be married by a clergyman, even though it was forbidden to Quakers. However, the clergyman was, noticeably, not the Rev Samuel Ashe but his curate Henry Mogg. The witnesses were Robert Ashe junior and Ann Merewether.

In order to understand the fierce hostility of the Ashe family to the marriage of their daughter Thermuthis to Walter Coleman, we need to examine the way Quakers viewed non-Quakers and also the way in which Quakers and Anglican clergy viewed each other. We also need to remind ourselves that the Ashes were not only gentry but also that their menfolk were clergymen. People were hostile to Quakers because of the great importance which the latter attached to the Holy Spirit, or 'Inner Light' as they called it. This caused them to reject the religious doctrines and traditions considered to be the basis of Christian faith. Traditional belief argued that salvation came from the Holy Spirit and study of the Bible whereas Quakers insisted that only obedience to the Inner Light was needed. Quaker belief seemed to destroy the need for scriptural revelation or even the atonement of Christ. In Quakers' view, the indwelling light replaced the Bible as the cornerstone of Christian faith. In addition, Quakers dismissed the sacraments as superstitious and therefore useless. Inevitably, it seemed to many people that Quakers were not Christians at all.

If these Quaker beliefs were not enough to antagonise non-Quakers, especially clergymen, Quakers also declined to distinguish between laity and clergy, arguing that there was no such distinction in the Bible. They thought that clergymen were at best superfluous, at worst interfering and arrogant. Nor did they easily forget that it was clergymen who, over several centuries, had instigated much of the cruel persecution which they had suffered. All true followers of the Inner Light were, Quakers believed, capable of being ministers of God. Vernon Noble, in his biography of George Fox, stated: 'Fox's God was a most approachable God, demanding no intermediary in the form of a clergyman or any set form of service, ritual or dogma'. Quakers could see no reason why clergy should be educated for their role at expensive universities and accorded high social position because of it. Thus, they regarded clergy as 'hirelings', paid to be holy.

The depth of Quaker conviction inevitably caused friction in the social and religious life of the parish. Given their religious views, there was no reason why Quakers should respect the Church and its authority. They considered it highly arrogant that the Church expected that Quakers and others in the parish should be compelled to attend church. Quakers refused to pay church rates and the tithes which were an important part of clergy's salaries. Similarly, Quakers' practice of using their own burial grounds was seen as a sign of their contempt for the Church; it also meant a loss of the burial fees payable to clergy. Quakers rejected the idea that worship was only possible in a building consecrated for the purpose. Fox even refused to use the word 'church', persisting in calling it a 'steeple house'. In his *Journal* he said: 'God, who made the world, did not dwell in temples made with hands ... his people were his temple and he dwelt in them'. Ministers from colleges were 'ministers of their own making but not of Christ'. The way in which the seating in church corresponded to gradations in the social hierarchy also offended Quakers. Their worship challenged this hierarchy by insisting that since all were equal before God, worship should not reflect the class system. Evidence that Kilvert's uncle Francis was influenced by the Quaker leader, William Penn, exists in the fact that among his literary papers was the famous picture of Penn negotiating with Red Indians. William Penn summed up the Quaker position towards class thus: 'Not to respect Persons was and is another of the [Quaker] Doctrines and Practices ... They affirmed it to be sinful to give flattering titles, or ... to give Compliments of Respect'. Quakers' dress and deportment also blurred the distinction between gentry and commoners because gentry status was underpinned by their superior appearance and manners. Quaker refusal to conform to society's expectations regarding behaviour was deeply troubling to society's elite because it represented an entirely different set of social values. Would it not be inevitable that Squire Ashe would view Walter Coleman in this way – as a man whose religion and behaviour undermined the social hierarchy? Stark observed that 'Quakers emerged as the prime incarnation of the [17th century] spirit of religious and social revolt'. It was not so much social equality that Quakers aimed at as equality before the Lord.

Given the deep hostility between Quakerism and the Church, it comes as no surprise that the clergymen of the Kilvert family were reluctant to acknowledge the substantial Quaker strand in their background. Kilvert's dilemma with regard to Nonconformity is seen in a clergyman's story passed on to him. One of the clergyman's parishioners had given his own church a miss in order to attend the Baptist Meeting House at Dauntsey, seven miles from Langley Burrell. The preacher had chosen to illustrate his text – 'They that honour me I will honour' (obviously a hit at Anglican ministers) – by declaring that Church parsons were fond of being honoured, but his advice to his brethren was that if they honoured parsons, they would go to hell. It is clear that Kilvert approved of what the parishioner did on hearing this: he picked up his hat and left. (The fact that the Meeting House was Baptist, not Quaker, is irrelevant; a Quaker minister's attitude would have been identical.) The passage is important because it shows that Kilvert was fully aware of the antagonism between Quakers and the Church. It also helps us to understand why he, as a clergyman, was profoundly uneasy about his Quaker origins and declined to refer to them.

Wherever we turn when tracing Kilvert's origins, we continually stumble over Quaker elements. For example, his paternal great-grandmother, Elizabeth Caink, is a significant Quaker influence; from her the Diarist inherited his love of small children and of hearing and telling stories. His father Robert presents her in his *Memoirs* as stern and Puritanical: she was, he said, 'of strongly marked character'. On one occasion, Robert's brother Richard appeared in the house in clothes the old woman thought dandyish and her reaction was the typical Quaker one to dress that seemed to represent personal vanity: 'Bless us! How fine we are!' – words delivered, Robert said, in 'a tone of repulsion'. The sense of her antipathy to worldly show is increased by what we learn of her own outdoor attire: 'She wore a satin bonnet, always black', and a robe 'of some rich material but always black'. It seems she was wearing the sombre colour and regulation bonnet of Quaker women, and that Robert was getting as close as he dared to acknowledging that she was a Quaker without actually doing so. It is possible that she knew and was influenced by the Quaker families in Condover, Shropshire, where she had lived from her marriage. Her son Francis, the coachbuilder grandfather of the diarist, had come to Bath from Condover in 1780 in company with other Shropshire businessmen. This group not only contained Quakers but they supported each other and traded with each other exactly as Quakers did. Attention was drawn at this point in the talk to the similarities between Walter Coleman's dress, described in *Diary* entries V2. 403 and V3. 85, and typical Quaker dress, and also to his body language – his 'set unmeaning smile' (Quakers avoided jokes, laughter, and facial expressions that made them seem unserious).

We might have expected that when Emily Kilvert wrote about her home in her *Rambling Recollections* she would have mentioned her mother's Quaker background. But we encounter the same reticence that we find in her father's memoirs and her brother's diary. However, an oblique reference exists in her statement: 'I shall never forget a picture [Mama] painted for me once in my copy of "The Children's Year".' The statement's significance lies in the fact that the book's author, Mary Howitt, was a Quaker and the book represents Mrs Kilvert's Quaker roots. Emily also differentiated it from the books given to her by her godmother. I believe *The Children's Year* influenced Kilvert profoundly. Its preface shows the author's (and Mrs Kilvert's) view of the part Nature played in shaping child consciousness. A home would be happy, we are told, 'if the young are induced to desire those lessons from Nature which Nature is so well able to teach'. At some point, under this influence and that of his uncle Francis, Kilvert learned with Herbert, the boy in the story, to appreciate landscape: 'For the first time in his life Herbert saw, this day, the beauty there was in an extensive landscape: he had never thought anything about it before'. Kilvert also showed that he relished the idea that Wordsworth obtained his spiritual insights, not from books but from Nature itself when he recounted a story told him by Mary Hutchinson, niece of the poet's wife: 'When William Howitt was at Rydal Mount looking about after Wordsworth's death he fell in with old James the gardener and asked him which was the poet's study. "This" said James pointing to the arbour and the grass mound from which Rydal Mount takes its name'. Kilvert's exultation in the beauty of landscape, hatred of field sports, and habit of studying and praying outdoors – all bear the impression of Quaker thought, via Wordsworth. Mary Howitt's vision of Nature as the very best teacher of young children was reinforced for Kilvert by his aunt Sophia, who had written in her *Home Discipline*: 'God's bounteous goodness, in the natural creation all around us, is ... our proper theme to our children'.

Kilvert came under Quaker influence also from the education provided by his aunt Sophia. Her book *Home Discipline* tells us what educational philosophy she practised in her home, where Kilvert was a pupil from 1851 until 1858. Her Quaker origins have been played down, as have those of the Coleman family. Grice and Williams, in their booklet on Kilvert's Uncle Francis, cast doubt on her Quaker allegiance by insisting that she was never 'admitted' to the Society of Friends and remained a Catholic. However, considerable importance must attach to the fact that she was brought up from 1793, when she was only four, to 1822 the date of her marriage, in the Quaker household of Thomas Woodruffe Smith. Kilvert's sister Emily was quite certain what the effect of this experience was: 'she was brought up by the Woodruffe Smiths and became a Quaker'. Aunt Sophia's book contains a lengthy tribute to Quakers. She praised the 'beautiful example of order' represented by the Quaker home, its 'dignity of good manners', and the 'serenity felt around its hearth stone'. Quakers were capable, she said, of 'the most exalted acts of charity, forgetful of self'. 'Their plain but sound practical education' fitted them, she said, for any station in life – a notably egalitarian emphasis.

Three other Quaker factors in Kilvert's background, though small, should be noted. Robert Kilvert told how he tutored the son of Sir William Hotham. Always a particularly devout family, the Hothams were Evangelicals when Robert knew them. However, in the days when they lived at Hotham in East Yorkshire they were sympathetic to Quakers. George Fox recorded how he was warmly welcomed by Justice Hotham on his tour of Yorkshire in 1651. On a return visit in 1668, he noted: 'I met with Justice Hotham, always a well-wisher to Friends'. Then there was Thomas Clutterbuck, the Kilverts' Widcombe neighbour. Clutterbuck had married Henrietta Ricardo whose mother was a Quaker. And finally there is Sir Robert Inglis, from whose Clapham home Kilvert's Aunt Sophia married his uncle Francis at Holy Trinity Church there. Sir Robert was not only friendly with the Clapham group of leading Evangelicals but apparently had close links to Quakers in the West of England.

My talk sought to show that the Quaker elements in Kilvert's background were both wide and deep. The Kilvert Quakerism complemented and reinforced the family's Moravianism and Evangelicalism because all three represented a simple, primitive Christianity in which a strong faith and a personal relationship with Christ loomed large. This meant that Kilvert would always have considerable sympathy with Nonconformity. Hugh Stowell succinctly expressed in 1845 the stance that Anglican Evangelicals like himself maintained toward Dissenters: 'We are bound to love the pious dissenter as a brother, we are not bound to love him as a dissenter.' This was Kilvert's stance. Evangelicals were bound to revere such men as Wesley, John Cennick and George Fox for their ability to win converts to Christ. The ambivalent attitude which the Kilvert family had towards Nonconformity disposed it to be reticent about acknowledging particularly the Quaker part of its religious background. (It is evident that Kilvert could acknowledge the Moravian part.) The fact that none of the Kilverts who wrote accounts of their family life – Robert, Emily and Kilvert himself – could bring themselves to utter the word 'Quaker' in relation to it, proves that they were deeply uneasy about the Quaker position vis à vis the Church and its clergy.

The value for us in recognising the Quaker heritage of the Kilvert family is that it explains many things – some of them very important, some actual mysteries – in *Kilvert's Diary*. It explains why Kilvert favoured his Coleman ancestry more than any other element of it, and his resentment of the Ashes. We can also understand why he gave such a loving portrait of the farm of Chieflands and of its tenants the Frys – they had been tenants of Walter Coleman. We can understand odd, unexplained factors in Robert Kilvert's description of Walter Coleman, for example his 'set unmeaning smile'. The mystery of the shot through the window, fired at Mrs Sarah Coleman, Kilvert's great-great-grandmother, becomes clear when we interpret it as resentment against Quakers. (Kilvert was content to offer only a vague explanation for it.) We understand better Kilvert's close friendship with the Goldney family of Chippenham when we remind ourselves they were Quakers. We know why Emily Kilvert singled out, from all her childhood reading, Mary Howitt's *The Children's Year*. Kilvert revered John Cennick not only because he was a man of God, but a Quaker man of God. We understand too why there is not one reference in *Kilvert's Diary* to his education at the school of his beloved uncle – it was another story that couldn't be told. The strong urge Kilvert had to affirm the importance of the soul and the rights of the ordinary man might be attributed in part to his Quaker roots. And finally, his great love of landscape owed a good deal to the fact that uncle Francis had brought him up to love Wordsworth, and probably to read William Howitt, who said that Wordsworth's poems represented 'poetic Quakerism'.

KILVERT IN CORNWALL

By the Editor

I have been rereading A.L. Rowse's *West Country Stories* (Macmillan 1945) written at his then Cornish home, Polmear Mine near St Austell, in the autumn of 1944.

One of the twenty-one 'stories'* is entitled *Kilvert in Cornwall* and it has been interesting to read again the author's views on Kilvert's visit to the far south-west in 1870.

Rowse based his opinions and commentary on the account of the holiday, as then available, in Vol. I (and briefly in Vol. II) of the Plomer edition of the *Diary* which, at the time of writing was but six years old. We are luckier than Rowse of course, because we have the complete chronicle of that visit thanks to the Plomer Notebook *Kilvert's Cornish Diary* so skilfully edited by Angela Tregoning and Richard Maber and published in 1989 by Alison Hodge.

Nevertheless there is more than enough about the holiday available in Vol. I of the *Diary* to furnish Rowse, a great admirer of Kilvert, with plenty of material for his appreciation of and commentary on that visit, his often trenchant tone softened here by his admiration for the Diarist.

He begins: 'Last year there came to light a charming literary discovery, which has a distinct interest for Cornish people and all who want to know what our county looked like in the last century. It was the diary of a young Victorian clergyman ... It is a fascinating picture of country life in the seventies in a remote district, as remote as Cornwall, that he gives.'

Rowse goes on to praise Kilvert's ability as an illuminator of the life of simple country folk and as an observer of nature: 'He had an astonishing eye for beauty, whether of landscape or in men and women, and, what is rarer, the gift of expressing what he saw precisely in words.' He laments the fact 'that Kilvert wasn't curate of a Cornish parish, say Luxulyan, or St Neot's (*sic*), or St Agnes. What a wonderful picture we should have had of Cornish life in the seventies.'

Kilvert, as we well know, went to Cornwall in the July of 1870, 'the summer that the Franco-German war broke out' and at a time too, 'when the mines were still at their height; but a short time and they were to close down and the great emigration from the county began ... a hard time for Cornwall!'

Rowse notes Kilvert's changing opinion of the landscape as the Diarist travels farther and farther west and, in particular, his impression of Brunel's 'great timber viaducts [once 30 or more of them between Plymouth and Penzance] crossing the ravines at a ghastly height in the air, the spider-bridges which were such a feature of Cornwall and such a decoration to our landscape.'

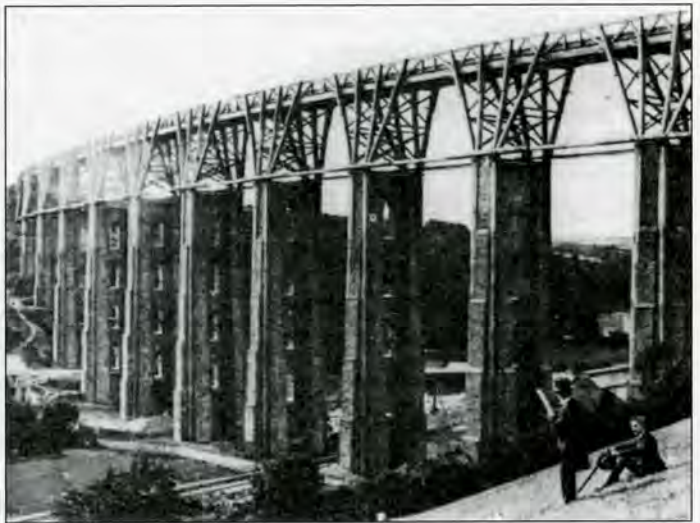
Most of these viaducts still stand, their timbers replaced by masonry, elsewhere only the stone piers remain, rising as sturdily as ever alongside those of a complete replacement viaduct. I particularly remember admiring those at Stowford Cleave, above Ivybridge in Devon. Here the stone pillars of the original timber viaduct still tower alongside the 'new' ones which take the main line over the gorge of the River Erme near the moorland farm, our base for Dartmoor walking holidays in the Eighties.

The arrival at Tullimaar was for Kilvert, *the fulfilment of two years' dream* and he gives us 'an enchanting picture of the place in its best summer colours,' says Rowse.

He continues with a descriptive commentary on the various excursions undertaken by Kilvert with the Hockins and their friends, starting with the market-day visit to Truro: 'market day in the seventies, before ever the Cathedral was built'. Strange, but exactly so, because, although it is difficult to imagine Truro without the dominating presence of Pearson's cathedral (so Breton in its appearance in my view) its construction was begun only in 1880 and not completed until 1910.

Next, the visit to the mining district of Hayle is described, as is the meeting with Mary Mundy at Mullion. Here follows, according to Rowse 'one of the lovely descriptive sentences, so typical of Kilvert and that deserve to make his fortune, *The window looked out over a waving field of reddening wheat which grew close up to the cottage wall, and the swaying ears of which were not far below the window sill.*'

Captain Parker, the wag, who accompanied the group on some of the outings, keeping *the waggonette in a roar* as they travel along, is favourably mentioned as are the details of the provisions for the numerous picnics, 'and quite rightly,' says Rowse, 'for food is,



'A spider-bridge', Moorswater Viaduct near Liskeard as it once was. Photo: Courtesy of The Royal Institution of Cornwall

* In his preface Rowse states that he is using the word 'stories' in its older sense, going back to the Middle Ages, to include narratives both of fact and fiction. He expresses the hope that the narratives of fact are 'not wholly without imagination.'



The Gurnard's Head Hotel, 2007

Photo: Editor

delight, he sees some seals and 'then at the end of the day he notes: *The last longing, hungering farewell look at the Cornish Sea. The white sand towans of Phillack...*'

I know the view of these towans very well, they are easily visible, a mere half-a-mile away, from the upstairs living-room window of my brother-in-law's[†] cottage about a mile north-east of Hayle, together with a distant prospect of St Ives across the bay, a patch of the 'Cornish Sea' and farther around to the left a glimpse of the tower of Phillack Church. Beyond the towans, but unfortunately out of sight, stand the low tower of Gwithian church and the white lighthouse of Godrevy on its island and surrounded by its circular wall.

... Godrevy, Godrevy. With a mournful cadence, Godrevy, farewell. Unknown till yesterday. But now how dear, a possession for ever, ... And now a thing of the past, drifting hourly further away. Farewell, Farewell ... I thought – was it so – that there were tears in those blue eyes when we parted. I know there were tears in mine. Forget me not, oh, forget me not (6 August 1870).

Rowse, summing up this extract writes: 'Kilvert was a sensitive creature, extraordinarily susceptible to the charm of women; moreover, he was a poet, and knew how to express what he felt. Need we be surprised that he had quite lost his heart to the charming young Mrs Hockin?'

After his return to Clyro, a visit to the Hay Flower Show and the sight of an *Asplenium Marinum* there, *carried me back to dear Gurnard's Head and for the moment I forgot the show and people and everything else.*

'In the second volume we hear more about the Hockins, and even a little more about Cornwall, though Kilvert never came here again,' says Rowse before concluding: 'Kilvert went back to the Welsh border again, to become Rector of Bredwardine, not far from Clyro where he had been so happy. But a few years and he was dead ... He left for a memorial of himself this diary, which I think will not soon perish; and from it we may call up that now distant summer in Cornwall, those delicious heat-haze days of the seventies, see the place as it looked to those loving observant eyes, hear again those long-vanished voices of his Cornish friends.'

† Alas, since I wrote this piece my brother-in-law has died. I would like, therefore, to dedicate this short essay to his memory.

perhaps, the most important thing about a picnic, almost as much as the company, and where you are going to only comes last.'... 'Odd how these clerical diarists are so interested in food,' he adds.

The monster excursion of 29 July to Gurnard's Head has a whole page to itself, it was such a long trip that it was almost too much for the horses. Here there is a touch of personal feeling with Kilvert scrambling up the rocks, 'to search for ferns (*Asplenium Marinum*) for Mrs Hockin. He was not very successful and her husband had got her some much finer ones, *but she did not despise mine...*' It is not surprising that, given the distance travelled that day, they did not arrive back at Tullimaar until three o'clock in the morning.

The last excursion on 5 August was to Godrevy on St Ives Bay with 'Kilvert already in the unhappy, nostalgic mood one knows so well when about to leave a place where one has been happy. They called at Rosewarne and at Gwythian (*sic*) to see the remains of the British church there buried in the sand. Later, to Kilvert's



Phillack Church

Photo: Editor

'MRS. H.'

By Margaret Collins (London)

Having read John Hockin's most informative article (*Journal*, March 2005) about his grandparents, Kilvert's friends Emma and William Hockin, I was interested to learn that they were married at St John's church in East Dulwich here in south-east London.

Kilvert's Cornish Diary (edited by Richard Maber and Angela Tregoning) brings the delightful Emma vividly to life. She of the blue eyes whose charm captivated the Diarist, who could not look without envy at the couple as the three of them sat having coffee in the summerhouse at Tullimaar on the afternoon of 24 July 1870. He is reminded of Milton:-

...he in delight
 Both of her beauty and submissive charms
 Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
 On Juno smiles, when he impregns the clouds
 That shed May flowers; and pressed her matron lip
 With kisses pure: *aside the devil turned*
 For envy...

Paradise Lost: Book IV lines 497-503

Whilst on holiday in the west country I visited St Augustine's church in the village of West Monkton near Taunton and found Emma Hockin's grave situated in the shade of a tall silver birch in the peaceful and secluded churchyard. The inscription on the headstone reads:-

IN
 LOVING MEMORY OF
EMMA KATE
 THE BELOVED WIFE OF
WILLIAM HOCKIN
 WHO FELL ASLEEP 19TH JULY 1890
 AGED 46 YEARS

FATHER, IN THY GRACIOUS KEEPING
 LEAVE WE NOW THY SERVANT SLEEPING



'Mrs. H.'

Photo: KS Archives

Interestingly, on page 15 of the same edition of the *Journal* we have John Read's perceptive interpretation of Kilvert's enigmatic and untraceable quotation 'The last sigh of the moon', relating to this Cornish holiday. The two other remaining notebooks, *April-June 1870* (edited by Kathleen Hughes and Dafydd Ifans, i.e. the Sandford notebook) and *June-July 1870* (edited by Dafydd Ifans, i.e. the Harvey notebook) which directly precede the *Cornish Diary*, list many small but significant differences between William Plomer's Volume 1 and the original manuscript. These differences were presumably due in part to the difficulties experienced by Plomer in deciphering Kilvert's handwriting. For example, on p. 163, line 4 of Volume 1 there is reference to a dance *Jim Rufen*. On reading the Harvey notebook it is clear that this was a misreading of *Sir Roger* (de Coverley)! In the light of such discrepancies Mr Read's suggestion is highly credible.

DISCOVERING KILVERT **KILVERT DAYS and KILVERT WAYS** By Peter Morgan Jones (Tredegar)

H.V. Massingham was to blame. Had I not discovered that writer's *Southern Marches* I might never have seen Kilvert striding across the Gospel Pass, shared a burned and blackened potato with him at Snodhill, nor accompanied his visit to the Solitary of Painscastle. Admittedly such experiences existed only in my imagination but as Massingham claimed, 'Imagination, not science, rules the world.' Holding the very same 'Zoetrope Wheel of Life' Kilvert had played with at a Wye Cliff children's party, and similarly watching its painted figures dance and move, the author experienced a special magic. 'Twiddling it myself' he wrote, 'I felt it was a kind of talisman whirling me back into the past.' In much the same way Kilvert's journals would become my personal 'Wheel of Life' to be spun, and wondered at, when visiting places the Diarist described and loved.

Yet my reading did not inspire me to dash off some eulogy, nor attempt to present Kilvert as something he was not by creating an individual beyond reproach, for this was clearly a man with normal human failings and shortcomings. Consider those many expressions of passionate and constant love all of which seem to have faded rapidly. Viewed dispassionately, the Diarist's long-term treatment of Llanigon's Daisy Thomas – she who remained unmarried and whose epitaph was 'Faithful Unto Death' – was not good. On several occasions Kilvert reveals also a typical Victorian-period hypocrisy, along with a degree of Barchester Towers-Mr Slope-like readiness to cultivate those possessing influence. But this was quite normal for his period and class, and it would appear our hero was no better and no worse than many of us today. Super-creature he was not but, Oh how he could write!

It was that ability to encapsulate a scene or mood, bring an event to life so vividly in words, that endeared me to the man. Thoresby Jones's *Welsh Border Country* describes this skill as 'an artless power of communicating the scenery and atmosphere of the countryside itself; its hills and woods, its streams and clouds and effects of light, limned with a conciseness of language which is intensely vivid and graphic, and conveys both the inner effect of the place and the feeling which it gave to him in a tender simplicity that rises to almost perfect art.' A little over-egged perhaps, even qualifying a superlative, but anyone who has read Kilvert knows precisely what he meant. Exploring the border country largely by bicycle Thoresby Jones knew Plomer's 1944 paperback compilation and perhaps this would prove just as invaluable for Begwn and Black Mountain ventures as my own 95p copy, becoming as dog-ear-folded, travel-stained and soiled. My cased three-volume hard-bound set came next, bought in a Monmouth book shop for what was then a most extravagant seventeen pounds but, although this was invaluable in providing reference extracts, it was the Plomer compilation that remained my first love and true companion. Pages became annotated, scribbled sticky notes marked quotes for lectures or guided tours; and often it would be stuffed into rucksacks along with waterproofs and thermos, becoming ever more loose-paged and battered in the process. That particular stain was caused when coffee spilled at Llanbedr Painscastle, and the brown

mark on the cover could have resulted from a Llanthony-consumed Branston Pickle sandwich, or might it have been strawberry jam, Black Mountains' Old Red Sandstone mud, even a combination of both? But then, real books should be used and handled until, worn out, tattered and torn, they are laid to rest like their owners. Whether walking amongst the *grey old men* of Moccas woods, or sitting in Clyro churchyard, all the while there developed a sense of wonder at a Diarist who saw the same views, experienced much the same feelings, but who was able to record them all so vividly. It is true that the rich seam of original Kilvertian information has long since been worked out and, although sometimes replaced by material of no great significance, this matters little as long as the writer's true worth as recorder of social history remains recognised.

Massingham was quite correct in that imagination can be inspired by objects and places, but this is always made easier by way of eyewitness descriptions such as those contained in *Kilvert's Diary*. Visiting Capel-y-ffin's Llanthony Monastery had been worthwhile long before Plomer's compilation came to hand, but how vivid the experience became when viewed through the Diarist's eyes. Now I could see that *buxom, comely wholesome girl* – I see her there still – she with the *white round lusty arms*, washing clothes not far from the chapel that reminded Kilvert of an owl, her eyes *not the blue of the sky but the blue of the sea*. I could share the occasion when Kilvert dined in the open air with Ignatius and his parents, even walk alongside the Lyne's horse and trap on that summer's evening, hearing Ignatius call to the departing Diarist, *Remember us the next time you celebrate Holy Communion* and see the rapidly-striding figure pause to reply *Yes, I will*. This ability of Kilvert's to record events in a way that brings the past to life fed not only my imagination, but a personal appetite for history far more concerned with people than dates and figures. Here was evidence for my own beliefs that those who lived before us possessed much the same loves, hates and fears as ourselves, and that such understanding helps make the past real. Kilvert was no historian in the accepted sense, but his descriptions of border country life with all its joys and tragedy seemed more vital to me than much contained in many learned tomes. Now I could witness late nineteenth-century life in this Welsh borderland, listen to the conversations of dinner party guests, or smell the fetid odours of a mad-woman's imprisonment. This was not the vague imaginary world conjured up by visiting some castle or church, but a factual insight into another time. Limited though these new visions had to be, they resembled a spotlight suddenly and momentarily illuminating a darkened stage, revealing players and events that otherwise would remain largely unseen and unheard.

But sometimes I was puzzled. Even though Kilvert's journals contained, albeit incidentally, fascinating contemporary detail such as how easily in those days the author could travel by train from Hay to almost every part of the kingdom, other matters became visible almost through omission, hinted at but remaining as indistinct as those shadowy figures before the spotlight shone. Certainly daily records, like memories, can be selective but it is interesting that Kilvert made little reference to the Welsh coalfield that began almost on his doorstep, and whose teeming industrial valleys were already affecting even remote Clyro and Bredwardine. Years later author Massingham gazed up at the dark southern hills and, with a literary shudder, dismissed lands beyond as 'the Gehenna of the coal measures.' It is possible Kilvert felt much the same: even today the terms 'South Wales' or 'The Valleys' can still conjure up visions of slag heaps and despoliation, albeit now quite incorrectly I must point out. But this was typical of the lateral thinking these diaries inspired in me, particularly why some things were recorded and others not?

It was obvious that some matters were being obscured, but for what reason? Massingham had mentioned something already of interest to me, one with which Kilvert must have been concerned but about which he says little. The long-established tradition of autonomous church orchestras and choirs was greatly exercising ecclesiastical and lay minds at that time. Music played and sung by these groups during services did not come under clerical control, and often could be employed, so it seems, as pointed comment, even mockery, against individuals of any social rank who had caused them annoyance or irritation. Already harmonium manufacturers were placing adverts in religious journals urging ministers to 'rid yourselves of the tyranny of a church orchestra' because, as one of the church's fixtures and fittings, such an instrument would come under the incumbent's direct authority. In a rare allusion to the subject Kilvert described the squire's wish to install a harmonium in his father's church as 'a tyranny', quite hypocritically it seems, since his opposition faded rapidly and he would very soon be collecting for a similar instrument to be installed at Clyro. But this was one element of the Diary's attraction for me; quite apart from allowing me to discover Kilvertian days and experience his contemporary world, there were so many little mysteries open to conjecture.

Thinking back on all that Kilvertian magic, how can it be possible to select one piece above the rest, or one location where the Diary makes everything especially real? Yet for me personally there is a place that stands supreme, where the Diarist's words can make figures materialise, and I can share the laughter and enjoyment of a wonderful picnic of long ago. Snodhill Castle near Dorstone seems so little changed from on that 1870 June day, its crumbling walls still approached by the same narrow lane winding past cottages whose children rushed out open-mouthed as the gentlefolk passed by. Thanks to Kilvert I can climb the *fearfully slippery* steep mound with those young ladies of the party who *gallantly sprawled and struggled up and slithered down again*. Could that have been a glimpse of ankle? Just there in that hollow they lit a fire and boiled – rather burned – potatoes, for such menial tasks were beyond them. That is the actual stone where Mary Bevan sat to sketch, and it was here the party gathered *in a great circle while the remains of the cup, wine and soda water were handed around*. Then as Snodhill's dappled shadows lengthen with the day's ending *the roll of the carriages* might be heard from the lane below and, like my conjured figures, I also slip away.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

KILVERT COUNTRY AND THE FESTIVAL: A VIEW FROM AFAR

By Lyndall Hancock (Dunedin)

Lyndall Hancock recalls the wonderful Kilvert Festival held in Clyro in September 1988, organised by the then Vicar the Revd Martin Reed.

We read fine things but never feel them to the full until we have gone the same steps as the author. John Keats (Letter, 3 May 1818).

One can read the *Diary*, follow it on large-scale maps, search out background books on the area, even check the meanings of Welsh place names – and yet what a difference there is in actually *being* there!

Last year I was able to plan a trip to Britain to coincide with the Kilvert Festival in September. The Clyro area was new to me and a week there wasn't nearly long enough, but for a few days of that time I was fortunate in having a most knowledgeable guide in Edward West. I drove, he chose (mostly), and much was thus accomplished in a short time. From Llanthony to Arthur's Stone, from Moccas to Llanigon to Painscastle and more, we followed in the same steps as the author – by rental car, the modern equivalent of Shanks's pony.

Many *Diary* places and scenes, even quite minor ones, are still relatively unchanged and came alive for me. I shopped at Horden's unmodernised stationery shop in Hay-on-Wye, as Kilvert did. I saw how quickly the River Wye can run high and discoloured, as he described it; I found the tiny spring high in the woods of Mouse Castle (although there wasn't a sign of his *genii loci* on the now-overgrown ramparts).

But it was the churches of the *Diary* that particularly impressed me. All of them – even remote little Llanddewifach with its only access across the fields – were so very well cared for, and so unexpectedly bright with flowers. At Clyro, Llowes and Bettws, much creative hard work had gone into beautiful Harvest decorations with different themes as part of the Kilvert Festival.

I think of Bredwardine under a lowering sky, with its dark interior and the light coming through *the great south window*. Of Llanbedr, with fresh flowers lying on the Solitary's grave in the big circular churchyard. Of the *grey owl* of a church, tiny Capel-y-ffin. And of Colva at twilight, when a young man and I tested the echo according to Kenneth Clew's instructions and raised not a whisper, alas. (Damp stonework and an encroaching tree were likely reasons, I was later told. But on a second visit I was partly compensated by trying out the acoustics *inside* the empty church when I sang an old Maori hymn about peace and love, 'Tama ngakau marie'. The ancient walls had probably never heard the like!)



The Revd. Martin Reed in Llowes Church with the schoolchildren from Rhos Goch

Photo: Lyndall Hancock



The Victorian Tea at 'Cae Mawr', Clyro.

Photo: Denis Morgan

Bettws Chapel, too, is a special memory. It didn't matter to me that it was completely rebuilt soon after Kilvert left Clyro, for the Chapel field and the long uphill walk and the views of the Black Mountains are still there, unchanged. I was hoping to find the grass billowing against the Chapel walls as on that summer Sunday in 1871 – but the grass was short and dry and full of cowpats on my first visit, and the next time the rain fell for Harvest Evensong and cars churned the field into mud. Oh well, I can now better *imagine* the warm wind and grassy billows!

The Festival was a fitting end to my week. Guided walks around Clyro, church services using the 1870s liturgy, tea parties, a Penny Reading, and scenes from the *Diary* acted most creditably by the Rhos Goch schoolchildren. Flowers everywhere, and many local people in Victorian dress. Exhibits of Clyro and Kilvert interest, too. (Concerning which, is it too late for all Kilvert memorabilia from both Clyro and Hay-on-Wye to be housed in the one place? Perhaps Ashbrook House, as suggested two years ago.)

By the time the Clyro ladies had served their last cup of tea in the village hall, and the Revd Martin Reed's marvellously clear voice was understandably starting to feel the strain, then the Festival ended with a calm and lovely 'Kilvert by Lamplight' service and readings in Clyro Church.

Much money was raised for the Church roof repairs, much pleasure was given to all those who were present. Thank you, everyone, for so many good memories.

PS I now know why, according to Newsletters, every Kilvert Society outing ends with everyone heading for The Burnt House!

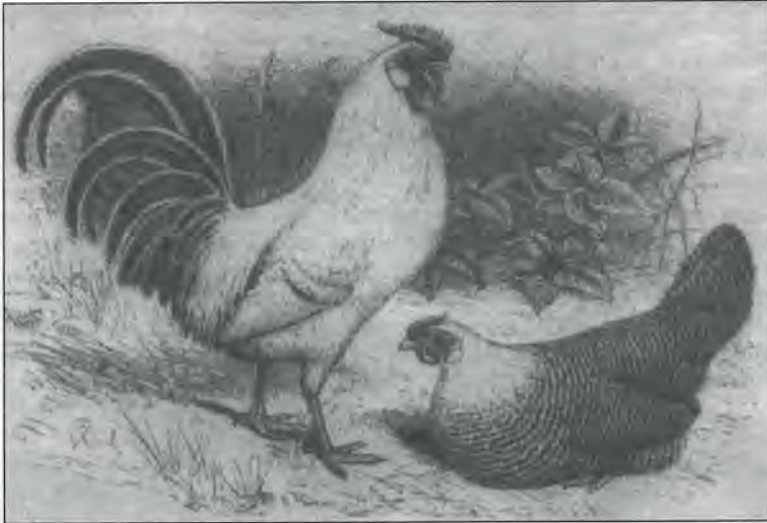
From the Kilvert Society Newsletter of February 1989

KILVERT and COCHINMANIA

By the Reverend David Leese (Epworth)*

Kilvert reflected the concerns and interests of his age. This is part of the appeal of the *Diary*. Not least is this true than in the *Diary* observations of the poultry-keeping enthusiasms of his family and friends, and what the Victorians referred to as *Cochinmania*.

The Victorians, from the Queen down were captivated by the appeal of new and astonishing poultry breeds. Prior to the Victorian age poultry of the time were 'nondescript' breeds (Kilvert's description 28 April 1874), some historically kept for cockfighting, like the cockfighting which John Bryant could not himself remember in the village cockpit (12 February 1874); but then came new breeds!



Silver Pencilled Hamburghs

Following the opening of the China trade consequent upon the cessation of hostilities in 1843, a breed of Asiatic fowl, called China fowl or Cochin was brought to England, and seven presented to Queen Victoria on December 23 1843. The five females and two males were accommodated in her de luxe poultry castle, being depicted in the *Illustrated London News*. The present Poultry Standards of Great Britain describes the sensation the breed caused, because of their immense size (twice the size of most chickens in Britain) and table properties. So began *Cochinmania*, that is enthusiasm for poultry and a seeking for the new breeds; Cochins were displayed at the 1851 Great Exhibition. Development of breeds was simultaneously occurring in America, and another large breed was given the name Brahma in Boston, USA in 1852. Nine of these birds were sent to Queen Victoria in 1852, and it quickly became one of the most sought after breeds. One of the most visually spectacular breeds was the Silver Spangled Hamburgh and this breed features in Kilvert's observations.

This enthusiasm is reflected in the literature depicting this time, as in Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. For many it was a passion, as in Draycot Park where Molly Cary lived in the Keeper's Cottage and the young ladies went to *feed the poultry of which a great number were kept there* (12 December 1873), or as with Mrs Collett of Bettws and her troublesomely aggressive turkey cock (12 March 1870). A passion reflected in the agricultural shows, as on Wednesday 6 August 1873 when together with Mr and Mrs Venables and Mary Bevan, Kilvert went from Builth Road to Garth *to attend the Garth Flower Show, Dog Show, Poultry Show, Bazaar and Athletic Sports all in one*.

Not surprisingly Kilvert names some of the key breeds of the age. They were especially the most prized. Kilvert recorded how on 16 May 1870 he was driven to the station by Morrell who *had put the Brahma cock into a poultry crate. It travelled very well and I had not to pay anything extra for it. ...The Brahma cock travelling in state through Hereford in his tall crate with a brown Holland screen round him inside the wicker work, on the top of the omnibus, created a great sensation, and people in the streets turned round to stare after him*. We might suppose that this cock went to join an already established flock at Langley for on 28 April 1874 it is recorded how poultry was sold from Langley, *2 fine Brahma cocks, 11 old dark Brahma hens ... 1/6d for the cocks, 1/3d each for the pullets...*

On 7 February 1872 at Clyro the Bridges were at home and after tea showed Teddy Bevan and Kilvert *the white Brahmas, the golden-pencilled and silver-spangled Hambros [Hamburghs] and that ferocious wild beast the silver pheasant who has at length been tamed as having his long spurs cut ...*

The exchanging of poultry and livestock from enthusiast to enthusiast was clearly the practice of the time in the search to develop and improve existing flocks, when as with the Brahma cock two years earlier Morrell on 19 February 1872 gave Kilvert a large wicker cage *with a pair of turtle doves or ring doves to take home*.

By 1870 *Cochinmania* had reached both Chippenham and the Wye Valley.

**The Revd David Leese is a member of the Poultry Club of Great Britain.*



Dark Brahma Cockerel

THE REVEREND R. VENABLES: RAILWAY SIGNALMAN?

By David Howell (St Albans)

The Reverend gentleman referred to above, however, is not the Reverend R. Lister Venables of Kilvert's day: somehow I cannot imagine that gentleman as a railway signalman!

The clergyman in question here is the Reverend R.C. Venables who was both Presbyterian minister and railway signalman at Penybont, a village near Llandrindod Wells, in the years just prior to and during WWII.

I have gained the information concerning this versatile character from Mr John Abberley a lifetime resident in the area. I have met John in the past when on holiday and after reading an article by him where he recalls his boyhood days in which Mr Venables features, I have had recent telephone conversations with him.

John attended the Sunday school held in Penybont Chapel where both adults and children were divided into classes, two of which were run by the Venables' girls, daughters of the minister.

As a signalman Mr Venables lived in a railway cottage and he was one of three signalmen, plus a reserve, who manned the signal box, for Penybont was once a very busy station with many trains passing through every day.



Penybont Station, looking north, in the 1950s
Photo from *Penybont, a Village History* (ed. Hughes).



Penybont Station today

Photo: Arianrhod Pazzi-Axworthy

John says that the staff took a great deal of pride in the appearance of the station and it had the reputation of being the best kept on the line. It was a bustling work place with office staff, clerks and delivery drivers working at the various wharfs.

It should be of no surprise to read of a clergyman involved in railways. The Reverend W. Awdry was a great train enthusiast and the author of the *Thomas the Tank Engine* series.

Kilvert, of course, relied so much on train travel; in fact some of the most interesting *Diary* entries describe incidents he experienced when travelling by rail.

There is the account of 18 May 1870 when he was almost suffocated by the fumes from matches lit in the darkened carriage when travelling through Box Tunnel. And who could forget the entry for 19 June 1872 when Kilvert met his Irish Mary and the turmoil he felt on leaving her on the platform at Chester Station.



GWR locomotive, King George V, emerging from Box Tunnel

Photo: KS Archives

Upon his retirement the Reverend R.C. Venables went to live in nearby New Radnor where he and his wife are buried.

The Chapel at Penybont which he graced and where John attended Sunday school was demolished in 1989.

Penybont Station is now part of the Heart of Wales line running from Shrewsbury to Swansea, but sadly it is so different from its former busy days and is now only a request stop with single line and platform. Nonetheless a journey along this line is one of the most attractive in Britain and is highly recommended.

NEW BOOKS

***John Venn and the Friends of the Hereford Poor* by Jean O'Donnell**

We cannot be sure if Kilvert met John Venn but he would certainly have heard of him and indubitably would have approved of his brand of Christianity.

John Venn (1802 – 1890) was born in London and raised in a family who were leading lights in the pioneering Clapham Sect which included William Wilberforce, the great anti-slavery militant.

Arriving in Hereford in 1833 to take up the living of St Peter's Church he found the poor of the city, many in his parish, living in almost medieval conditions. John decided, together with the indefatigable support of his sister Emelia, to improve their standard of living in several practical ways.

Initially financed by himself and his sister, John Venn proceeded over the next half a century to set up a soup kitchen, build a flour mill in the city centre (a considerable building still standing and now used as a business centre), to provide a coal deposit where citizens could buy their winter coal at summer prices, a public washing-house and one of the first public swimming baths in the country. He also set up a dispensary for the provision of medicines, developed allotments, model cottages, a model farm, a garden city and even a 'factory' for producing manure from human waste to fertilise the allotments.

Not all these schemes were totally successful, however, but this energetic philanthropist continued developing schemes to improve the living conditions of his fellow citizens until the end of his life.

In addition, his legacy continued after his death with the construction of alms houses in Hereford through the Hereford Society for Aiding the Industrious which he founded and which still exists today, to distribute grants and loans to qualifying applicants.

Jean O'Donnell presents a fascinating study of this parish priest who helped the people of Hereford in so many ways. She protests, however, that despite this he remains very little remembered today in his adopted city and even his grave lies in a dilapidated state in the graveyard of his old church.

Like Kilvert John Venn's aim was to provide a better life for the poor of his parish and, like Kilvert, he left behind a lasting memory of his work; his was not the written word but through his actions he helped to accelerate the improvement of social services in Hereford.

Richard Weston (Hereford)

***John Venn and the Friends of the Hereford Poor* by Jean O'Donnell is published by Logaston Press, price £9.95**

* * *

***Discovering The Smallest Churches in Wales* by John Kinross**

This companion volume to the author's successful *Discovering England's Smallest Churches* covers almost 50 churches in Wales which have naves of 30 feet or less. The churches are selected from the whole of the Principality and are arranged by county. Some, like Pilleth are on battlefield sites, others such as Llanano have magnificent screens. The book which is lavishly illustrated with colour and black-and-white photographs, drawings and location maps, will appeal to those living in Wales and to visitors from elsewhere. Appendices provide additional information regarding the various church trusts operating in the area and the work they undertake to preserve and publicise the churches of Wales. One trust in particular caught my eye and seems to be, perhaps, the most deserving of support – the Friends of Friendless Churches!

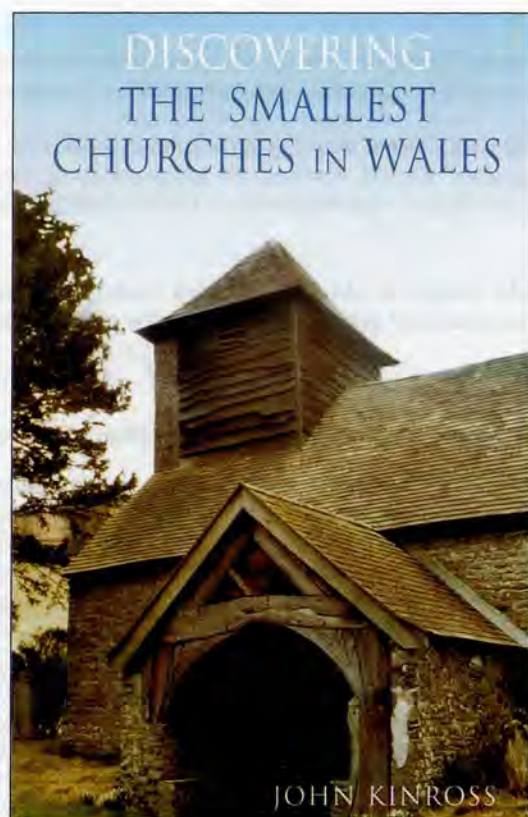
This is a delightful volume.

Editor

* * *

Kilvert Society Members will find much to enjoy in John Kinross' charming book. Kilvert's visit to St Madoc, Llanmadoc, in the Gower in April 1872, is mentioned, with his vivid description of Mr Davies the Anglo-Catholic incumbent, also his visit, on foot from Clyro, to St David's Colva, in February 1870, which Kilvert called *the poor, humble, dear little whitewashed church*.

For me, though, two things were a little saddening. In a highlighted brief biography of Kilvert the author states that the *Diary* was first published by Kilvert's nephew; and he writes of beloved little Capel-y-ffin, so loved by Kilvert, in a rather matter-of-fact way, so that, for me at least, no sense is given of the absolute magic and mystery of that little church. He warns his readers not to approach it from Hay, telling them to use the road from Abergavenny; but



driving over from Hay is part of the wonder of attending services at Capel-y-ffin. The journey through the beautiful countryside between Hay and Capel-y-ffin, wonderful at all seasons of the year, seems a sacred pilgrimage and it is the way Kilvert would have gone.

Perhaps it is unfair and quibbling to mention the above points but I do think lovers of little churches and of Francis Kilvert would love this book.

Elizabeth Rowe (Hay-on-Wye)

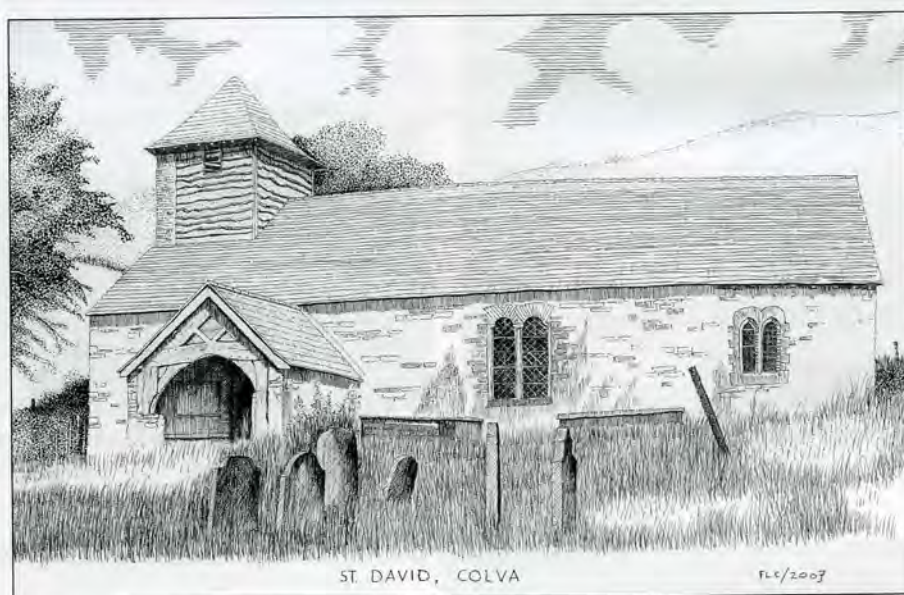
Discovering the Smallest Churches in Wales by John Kinross, 128pp, ISBN 978 0 7524 4101 6 is published by Tempus Publishing Ltd, The Mill, Brinscombe Port, Stroud, Glos., GL5 2QG at £12.99.

Tel: 01453 883300 or sales@tempus-publishing.com

* * *

***Sketching Gower Churches* by Frank Claybrooke**

This interesting little booklet of 28 pages was produced last year in connection with an art exhibition in aid of Gower churches. Twelve churches are described and each is accompanied by one of the author's sketches. (For an example of his work see the sketch of Colva Church below). As we know Kilvert visited Gower on three occasions, staying with a relative of Mrs Venables who was married to the incumbent of Ilston.



Frank Claybrook took up art as a retirement hobby and describes the sketching and painting of country churches as one of the most remarkably rewarding and therapeutic of pastimes.

He is at present working on a similar project on Kilvert churches and has completed pen and wash studies of Clyro, St Harmon, Langley Burrell, Llowes, St Mary's Hay-on-Wye and Moccas; Cusop will be next. He hopes to hold an exhibition later on somewhere in the Radnorshire-Herefordshire borderland.

Editor

The booklet is obtainable direct from the author at: 79 Duvant Road, Killay, Swansea SA2 7NL (Tel: 01792 208486), £1.50 inc. p&p. All proceeds will go to the churches mentioned in the booklet.

* * *

***Beyond the March Walls* by Peter Morgan Jones**

This book of some seventy pages provides fascinating glimpses of people and places throughout the history of the southern Marches. As the author says in his introduction, 'What a poet once romanticized as the "older, golden hills of Wales" were for millennia home to tribes whose looting and destruction produced the Herefordshire wastelands recorded by Domesday Book.' Looking at the peaceful twenty-first century landscape, the reader is brought up sharp by the recounting of numerous episodes of incredible cruelty, treachery and devastation from ancient times up to the sixteenth century. More a case of bloodstained than golden hills! In a revisionist 'take' on the history of the region, the author insists that 'it is a nonsense to claim that the Welsh were driven into the hills either before or after the Norman Conquest' and that Herefordshire remained predominantly Welsh in character for centuries, Welsh being commonly spoken in the city of Hereford as late as the eighteenth century.

This slim volume is packed with interesting facts: how many of us knew that when burning heretics at the stake, if a measure of mercy were deemed appropriate, the use of green wood caused the victims to die of asphyxiation rather than incineration? This aside occurs during an account of Sir John Oldcastle, a noted local Lollard, upon whom Shakespeare's Falstaff was thought to have been based.

Just over the half-way mark ending with the dissolution of the Monasteries, the pace quickens, and we move to Walter Savage Landor at Llanthony, followed by Father Ignatius at Capel-y-ffin. The four pages of the next chapter, entitled 'An Angel Satyr Walks the Hills' are dedicated to Kilvert and retell a couple of well-known episodes from the *Diary*: Kilvert's first visit to Capel-y-ffin when he is captivated by the sight of the girl washing clothes in a tub in the sunshine and goes on to Llanthony, registering his disgust at the two tourists posturing in the ruins; and a second occasion, when the Diarist succeeds in meeting Father Ignatius and finds him to be *a man of gentle, simple, kind manners* with a saintly face and expressive eyes. The theme of 'characters' continues with a chapter on Eric Gill and the artistic community at Capel-y-ffin.

In summation, I can do no better than quote the author's own words at the conclusion of his final chapter: 'The Black Mountains ... are the story of Wales in microcosm. Slowly and gradually, often painfully, these lonely ridges and vales experienced individuals and events that would change them from being remote and hostile to the more hospitable region of today. Yet like all mountains they still possess an individual personality and atmosphere, in their case bestowed by those who ... lived amongst them over the centuries. As the sun sets on these "Hills Before the Light" their ghosts can stir yet.'

Cliff Dunkley (Leicester)

***Beyond the March Wall* by Peter Morgan Jones was published in 2006; 71pp, 21 colour photographs and maps. It is obtainable from local bookshops in the Tredegar area or direct from the author at 15 Harford Street, Tredegar, NP22 4QE. Tel: 01495 722789. e-mail pmarcherlord@aol.com. Price £4.95 plus £1 p&p.**

COMPETITION

Welcome to the first *KS Journal* competition, as threatened in the editorial of issue No. 23.

The competition, as those of you who read my editorials will remember, is to be of a Classical nature, quite in keeping, therefore, with the general elevated tone of this publication!

It was unfortunate that the competition had to be postponed in June owing to possible errors discovered in the set piece for the exercise, the Latin inscription on the memorial tablet to Francis Kilvert, the 'other' Francis Kilvert, in St Mary's, Bathwick. Now, however, thanks to the efforts of our member, Basil Greenslade, who lives near St Mary's, it can be revealed that the transcription as it appears on page five of *Journal* No. 22 did indeed contain a number of errors! I am most grateful to him for struggling in the gloom of St Mary's to obtain, at my request, an accurate transcription.

VIRI REVERENDI FRANCISCI KILVERT A.M.
BATHONIAE NATI, NUTRITI, LITERIS INITIATI
OXONIAE BONAS ARTES EDOCTI
QUI
AB INEUNTE AETATE
CHRISTI PARVULIS ERUDIENDIS
IN URBE, PATRIA
DEDITUS.
CUM VITA TANTUM EXACTA
FERULAM ARTEMQUE
AD CRUCIS PEDEM
DEPOSUIT:
QUI DENIQUE
[SI QUIS ALIUS]
ANTIQUA FIDE, MORUM SANCTITATE
VERBORUM DULCEDINE
CONSPICUUS;
CONCIONATOR GRAVIS, SIMPLEX, PERSPICAX:
JUVENUM INFORMATOR PROBABILIS:
LITERIS ELEGANTIORIBUS APPRIME ORNATUS,
SANCTAE MATRIS ECCLESIAE ANGLICANAE
FILII AMANTISSIMUS.
AMICIS OMNIBUS LUCTUM ET SUI DESIDERIUM
RELINQUENS
IN PACE DECESSIT DIE XVI KAL: OCTOBRIS
ANNO SALUTIS MDCCCLXIII
AETATIS LXX.

A prize of a £20 book token or Kilvert Society publications to the value of £20 is offered for the most accurate and elegant translation of the above. Closing date for entries, which should be sent to me, is 31 December 2007. I will pass them on for judging, as indicated in the June editorial. I look forward to a sackful of entries! The winner's name and the translation will appear in March 2008 *Journal*.

* Part of Basil's letter which accompanied the above and which also contained a copy of the late Ken Clew's brief guide (published 1980) to Langley Burrell church, appears on page 19 under Recent Correspondence.

Editor

THE REV FRANCIS KILVERT MA
Obituary from *The Bath Chronicle*, Thursday 12th November 1863

This accomplished scholar and excellent man was born in Westgate Street¹ in Bath in 1793, the eldest son of Mr Francis Kilvert, and nephew of the Rev Richard Kilvert, Prebendary of Worcester, and Domestic Chaplain to his relative, Bishop Hurd.

Mr Kilvert commenced his education under Dr Rowlandson at Hungerford. Afterwards he was for some years at the Bath Grammar School, and as Head Boy he spoke the annual Latin speech. His attainments and good conduct recommended him to the then head master, Mr Morgan, who engaged him as one of the assistant masters prior to his matriculation at Oxford. He was of Worcester College, which he entered in 1811. He was ordained deacon in 1816, and priest in 1817.

He never sought and never was anxious for preferment, and declined the headship of Queen's College, Birmingham, considering that his position was fixed in his native city.

His first curacy was that of Claverton. The calling was one for which he was particularly fitted; there was about him a holiness of character, and the Christian graces of charity, humility, and purity of mind were in him most happily blended. His very countenance evinced his even placid temper and the goodness of his heart.

In 1837 Mr Kilvert, who had for many years previously taken private pupils in Bath, became possessor of Claverton-lodge, a beautiful spot in the immediate neighbourhood, to which he transferred his pupils, sons of gentlemen of birth and fortune. In this residence and sphere of duty he continued till his death. In his later years few things delighted him more than the testimonials of affection which he was constantly receiving from his old pupils, many of them highly distinguished.

His works included:-

1. A volume of fourteen sermons, preached in St Mary's Church, Bathwick, of which he had been the Evening Lecturer: published in 1837. His sermons are sound practical discourses: plain, earnest, simple, they tend more to the enforcement of the moral duties of the Gospel than to the consideration of subtle points of theology.
2. *Pinacothecae Historicae Specimen iuxta inscriptionum formam expressa*² appeared, 1848-50. This was a collection of original Latin inscriptions, and the gallery was somewhat a promiscuous one: Fox and Fenelon, Laud and Voltaire, are placed in company one with another, with a number of greater and lesser notabilities. A writer in the *Guardian* pronounced the Latinity as very elegant and graceful, though it was admitted that a Latin inscription was a very difficult thing to write, perhaps only less difficult than an English one.
His mastery over the Latin language was especially shewn in these characters, and in the many occasional compositions in Latin verse, in which he commemorated with classic purity and facility of expression the passing events of the day, or invested a compliment to a friend with Ovidian elegance.
3. 'Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Bishop Hurd, with a Selection from his Correspondence,' was published in 1860.

In turning to Mr Kilvert's social character I quote the testimony of one of Mrs Kilvert's correspondents. 'I was impressed with his intense goodness; the servant of God seemed written in every line of his countenance, and in every word he spoke'.

As there never was a particle of bitterness in his heart, there was an attractive charm in his society. In his manner, and in whatever he said or wrote, those Christian graces so conspicuous in his own character were never wanting. An inscription, much admired by Mr Kilvert, may well recur to us at this moment:- 'Vale – heu quanto minus est cum reliquis, quam tui meminisse'.³

In 1822 Mr Kilvert married Adelaide Sophia de Chèvre, a lady of French extraction and a refugee of very ancient and historical family. He has left three daughters, the youngest married to Major Montague Cholmeley, of the Indian army.

Mr Kilvert was buried in the churchyard of Old Widcombe church*, near the grave of his father and two of his brothers.

J.H. Markland, Bath

Gentleman's Magazine

**The Reverend Francis Kilvert's attachment to St Mary's Bathwick, where he is commemorated (as above), may partly be accounted for in his niece Emily's reminiscence that, 'my Uncle Francis was one of the good old fashioned High Church clergy'. However, he and his six brothers and sister, Mary, had been brought up at Caroline Buildings in the parish of Widcombe and it was natural that he should be buried in the churchyard of the Kilverts' parish church, St Thomas, Widcombe.*

I am greatly indebted to our members David Hepworth and Basil Greenslade in connection with the above. David was responsible for reducing this lengthy (and unwieldy) obituary from 2000+ words to just over 600 and Basil supplied the footnote. Thank you both, very much, for lightening the editor's burden!

¹ 'street' is not capitalised

² 'A kind of historical portrait gallery in the form of inscriptions'

³ 'Farewell – memories of you make those left behind feel their loss more keenly'

FROM RECENT CORRESPONDENCE

- i) **Muriel Kilvert** has been in touch from Woodbridge to express her appreciation of the *June Journal*. Unfortunately she is unable to drive any longer but even so she hopes to attend the September weekend in the company of her cousin Henry Kilvert.
- ii) **From Ken Fisher (Tenerife)**
During the course of my studies I come across many instances where I see similarities between the experiences of Francis Kilvert and other well-known people. If you wished to use these as space fillers it occurred to me that other Kilvertians might be amused by them. I call them *Connections*. Here is an example:

Connections: Francis Kilvert and W.H. Auden

During the Easter holidays of 1914, W.H. Auden (aged 7) climbed Cader Idris on the southern tip of Snowdonia. Naturally, he had to be carried some of the way by his father and elder brothers.

Local legend has it that if you spend the night at the peak (2,927 feet), you will awake either a poet or a lunatic.

Although the young Auden, by descending the same day did not comply with the conditions, his later years certainly added weight to the legend.

Forty-three years earlier, Francis Kilvert had carried out the same task with the same result. The legend did not stipulate that you would become a good poet!

At St Edmund's Junior School at Hindhead in Surrey, Auden, as with all the pupils, was compelled to take a cold bath every morning which was prescribed by authority in the belief that cold water subdued the carnal passion. As an adult, Auden claimed that his was the first generation to resolve that, after school, they would never take a cold bath ever again.

Francis Kilvert continued to take a cold bath in adult life, probably to good effect!

- iii) **From Basil Greenslade (Bath)**

I have slipped in an old (1980) guide to Langley Burrell, which I found I had two copies of, in case you have not seen it, because the references to Kilvert and the Society are so good. Incidentally, the reference to Kilvert's christening (just before his death) of 'Amy Dorothy Couzens, the infant daughter of Squire Ashe's gardener', must refer to the family of Tim Couzens, author of *Hand of Fate* about the Draycot Estate, reviewed in the *Journal* way back in March 2002. The Couzens family are a very old Draycot/Langley Burrell family. They are mentioned in the *Diary*, I think, and Tim Couzens' parents, Reuben and Geraldine, whom I met years ago, still live in Draycot and are guardians of the church, only rarely opened and full of tombs of the Longs, Tylney-Longs and Wellesleys.

Mr and Mrs Couzens acted as guides to Draycot when the Kilvert Society visited there in September 2006, which visit was reviewed in Journal No. 22. My apologies for misspelling their surname on that occasion. (ed.)

OBITUARIES

It is with regret that we record the death of the following members:

Mr Geoffrey Gale, Penarth, Glamorgan died on 28th May 2006. He had been a member since 1977. His wife will continue the membership.

Mrs Christine Williams, Scamblesby, Louth, Lincolnshire died on 26 January 2007. She had been a member for just one year. **The Society very gratefully acknowledges a generous donation from her son, Mr Stephen Chappell, in memory of his mother.**

We offer our sincere condolences to the family and friends of the deceased.

SNODHILL CASTLE

It was very warm work on one of the warmest days of our supposed summer for the working party which cleared the track up to Snodhill Castle on Saturday 25 August. The working party consisted of Colin Dixon (chief suspect as the instigator of this excursion), his wife Val, their great-granddaughter Kayla (aged 10), Carol Beddall, wife of KS committee member Peter (and where was he...?) and their daughter Emma.

Members are advised to visit before the next growing season, otherwise, according to Colin, a machete might be an appropriate addition to the picnic basket. The Society is most grateful to Colin and his team of, no doubt, willing volunteers. Well done everybody!

I know one member, from Tredegar, who will be particularly pleased at this piece of news (ed.).



Colin confronts the undergrowth

Photo: Val Dixon

CHURCH BARN

KS member Ann Dean offers B&B accommodation at Church Barn, Gladestry, a tiny, peaceful village which lies on the B4594 five miles from Kington and ten from Hay-on-Wye. The eighteenth-century barn has been splendidly converted and is situated opposite the church and close to the village inn, post office and Offa's Dyke path. The accommodation consists of two double and two single bedrooms, all with en-suite bathrooms. Hearty breakfasts are promised and hot and cold drinks are always available. Further details from Ann Dean, Church Barn, Kington HR5 3NT. Tel: 01544 370372.

This England

An illustrated article on Kilvert appeared in the summer edition of the quarterly magazine *This England*. It was written by our member T.W. Jenkins and is part of a continuing series 'Literary Landscapes of England'.

NEWSLETTERS AND JOURNALS

Back numbers of the Society's Newsletters and *Journals* are available from the Publications Manager, priced at £2.50 each, including postage. Limited availability.

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

Contributions for the March 2008 edition of the *Journal* should reach the editor **not later than 12 January 2008**. It would be helpful if contributors having access to a computer could put their article on disc (in Word for Windows) and send it to Val Dixon (same address as the Publications Manager on the inside cover) and at the same time send a paper copy direct to the editor, thank you. **It would also help if any photographs included could be placed in a separate file on the disc.**

The copyright of an article in the *Journal* rests with the contributor.

Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Kilvert Society or of the editor of the *Journal*.

The current ordinary subscription is now £12.00 (Joint membership £15.00) and is due on 1 January of each year. Cheques payable to The Kilvert Society should be sent to: Mrs Sue Rose 18 York Close, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 0QB.

DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998. 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*.

