THE JOURNAL OF THE KILVERT SOCIETY

Number 30

March 2010

THE KILVERT SOCIETY

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

Registered Charity No. 1103815

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Cover:
Rhos Goch Mill House. *I crossed one of the streams… and came round the front of the cosy old picturesque ivy-grown mill house with its tall chimney completely covered with ivy.* (26 March 1870).
Photo: Editor

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From the Editor:

This is the last editorial that I shall write for the KSJ and it is with very mixed feelings that I do so. Indeed, one member very recently said to me that I seemed rather wistful when I spoke about giving up the editorship. He was partly right. Those of you who take the trouble to read my musings here will know that I have wanted to relinquish the position and it was originally edition No 27 that was intended to be my last, it was just a question of finding a successor. However, now that the moment has arrived I have come to realise how much I shall miss putting the *Journal* together. I shall miss the contact with contributors and their often unexpected, unsolicited and revelatory articles that arrive in the morning post. I shall miss my visits to the printers and sitting with Jon Clucas as we deal with the proofs, corrections and layout. Still, at least I shall be able to go away on holiday in the spring and early autumn now without worrying about the *Journal*. Suddenly, however, in comparison, that seems a little less appealing when placed alongside the great interest of the editorship.

I took over the role in April 1999 at a time when Edward West combined the editorship of what was then the KS Newsletter with the secretaryship of the Society. However did he manage that, I wondered; he sent the *Journal* out too, addressing the envelopes by hand. Not surprisingly he felt that it was 'getting a bit much', after all he was 85. Anyway, as a result of being approached by the secretary in a street in Hereford (we were both on our way to a KS committee meeting!) I discovered that I was to become the new editor of the Newsletter. Whereupon, very soon, my first and sad task was to compile an edition for August 1999 which was almost entirely a tribute to the memory of Edward who had died on 4 June.

Shortly afterwards the Newsletter, a title which had become increasingly unsuitable, such was its growth under Edward's aegis, became *The Journal* with a modest card cover of seasonal hue. Before long, and thanks to the support of the then treasurer, John Wilks, to whom I remain immensely grateful, I was able to achieve a small ambition, that of converting the *Journal* to a magazine printed on glossy paper and in colour. Now, after eleven years and with *Journal* No 30 I hang up my metaphorical editor's eyeshade, with reluctance and too late now to change my mind, as we have seen. It has been a very great privilege to have edited the public voice of the Society for those years and in particular for the notable year of its Diamond Jubilee.

Now, to the future of *The Journal*. First of all I must introduce and welcome my successor, Charles Boase. Charles lives in Monmouth and has been a member of the Society since 1977. He is eminently suited to his new job, for his background is journalism – he works in Cardiff for *The Western Mail* as what used to be called Night Editor. He is a man of wide interests, for example and in particular, he was for twenty years, until 2008, chaiman of the Monmouth Field and History Society. His maiden article for the *Journal* appears on page five. I hope you will support him with your articles, research, letters, ideas and so on (not forgetting photographs) as some of you have supported me, especially my loyal band of regulars (and you know who you are!). I am most grateful to all of you whose words and pictures have graced these pages.

However, notwithstanding that, I am going to treat myself to one final grumble. Members may recall that from time to time I have complained about the occasional shortage of material for the *Journal* and, oddly enough, this present issue is a case in point. I have received only *two* unsolicited items for this edition since last summer. So, unless we are going to revert to a skinnier *Journal* (Newsletter?) which merely records past Society events and announces future ones, it is obvious that your *Journal* needs your input and, although input is not a word I care for, it succinctly describes what is required. I had hoped to hand over to Charles a bulging file of potential articles – alas! that will not be so. Over to you therefore..... and don't delay, the closing date for the September edition is 12 July.

Next, a volley of thanks. I could not have begun to tackle this job (I have no typing or computing skills) without the unstinting support of Val Dixon. Issue by issue she has uncomplainingly (apparently) dealt with my handwriting and my possibly confusing instructions as she has typed up and put on disc (disk?) the material for each edition. Her husband, Colin, has been invaluable too whenever I have needed to check a detail from *Diary* history or from our past publications. He is now our most knowledgeable Kilvertian and yet he wears his learning very lightly and very modestly. We are lucky indeed to have him as our archivist. I must thank here too my wife Pam for her help with proofreading. She has very patiently borne with what might be termed my fretfulness as publication date approached. Then there is John Young (owner and MD) and his team at the Warwick Printing Company, most notably Jon Clucas, mentioned above, whom I have come to regard as almost my personal typesetter and assistant. He has been a tower of strength, a source of important advice and....caution; whenever he said 'are you sure?', I realised I was about to make a foolish editorial, production or layout decision. I have worked with the Company, in another capacity, since the mid-1980s, very closely with Jon and I shall greatly miss that connection. Finally a word about our treasurer, Richard Weston, who, in addition to counting the Society's money is responsible for the despatch of your *Journal*, stuffing and stamping the envelopes and attaching the labels prepared by our

membership secretary, Sue Rose. You may not have realised that quite so many were involved – no wonder Edward, who did most of the above unaided, thought it was all a bit much!

There it is then, I wish Charles Boase and the KSJ a flourishing future, may they go from strength to strength, and, don't forget that in order to flourish *The Journal* depends on ***your*** written and photographic skills and support.....

Jeff Marshall

Enjoy your retirement from the *Journal* Jeff. It has been a privilege and a pleasure working with you for the past twenty-two years. We will miss you; the trademark car key tap on the window, the witty banter and deciphering your unique 'handwriting'. All the very best for the future and don't hesitate to call in for a coffee if you're passing, or even if you're not! *(Jon Clucas, Warwick Printing)*

From the Secretary

For this year's AGM to be held at 7 p.m. on Friday 23 April at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford, there is to be a change in procedure. You will find published in this edition of the *Journal* the minutes of last year's AGM, the year-end accounts to 31 December 2009 and the agenda for this year's meeting. For those members attending this year's AGM please bring your *Journal* along with you.

Following the business of the evening, and our hugely enjoyable buffet supper, there will be a musical interlude and an audio-visual presentation, so it should be an interesting and entertaining evening. To help our caterer, Sue Rose, it is most important that you return your booking slip to order your buffet suppers.

Saturday's seminar commences at 10.30 a.m. at the *Radnorshire Arms Hotel*, Presteigne, where our speaker is the Kilvert scholar A.L. Le Quesne, the author of *After Kilvert*.

The annual dinner on the evening, at the same venue, will commence at 6.30 for 7 p.m. I hope we have a bumper attendance for the weekend's events. Please return your booking forms as soon as possible.

The Archive Conservation Appeal is going very well. At year end it stood at £26,000, which means we can now start stage 1 of the Conservation Project. I hope by the time of the AGM to be able to give exact details and for those of you unable to attend there will be a full update in the June Newsletter. Thank you to all our members who have contributed to the Appeal, you will soon be able to see the result of your generosity as the conservation of the archive proceeds.

I hope you will support the forthcoming events, for spring and summer, whenever possible.

We gratefully acknowledge donations from the following members to the Appeal received from 31 July 2009 to 10 February 2010. Donations received after this date will be acknowledged in the June Newsletter:

C. Borrows	The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	J. Pyper
J. Caldwell	H. Fisher	M. Ramsden
K. Day	The Reverend W. Harris-Evans	A. Rees
A. and H. Dean	R. Leonard	J. Rees
G. Dodd	E. Meylan	J. Round
R. Downes	J. Palmer	R. Taylor
A. England	The Pilgrim Trust	The Garfield Weston Foundation

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

AGM Weekend 2010

Friday 23 April	7 p.m.	AGM at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford followed by a buffet supper, a musical interlude and an audio-visual presentation.
Saturday 24 April	10.30 a.m.	Seminar at *The Radnorshire Arms* hotel, Presteigne, speaker A.L. Le Quesne. Afternoon Free.
	6.30 for 7 p.m.	*The Radnorshire Arms* hotel – Annual Dinner.

June Weekend

Saturday 26	12 noon	Meet at *The Baskerville Arms*, Clyro for a walk to Bettws and then to the remains of the Old Soldier's Cottage, followed by tea.
Sunday 27	3 p.m.	Commemorative Service at Bettws, followed by tea.

September Weekend

Saturday 25	12 noon	Meet at Llanbedr Church for a walk to the site of the Solitary's Cabin, followed by tea.
Sunday 26		It is hoped to arrange a service at Llanbedr Church, followed by tea.

Edward West at Bettws.
Photo: Lyndall Hancock

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE KILVERT SOCIETY TO BE HELD IN THE GREAT HALL OF THE BISHOP'S PALACE, HEREFORD ON FRIDAY 23 APRIL 2010 AT 7.00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Welcome to Members
2. Secretary's Announcements
3. Apologies
4. Minutes of AGM of 24 April 2009
5. Matters Arising
6. Obituaries
7. Chairman's Remarks
8. Financial Report
9. Election of Officers

i) **Existing Officers offering themselves for re-election:**

Acting-Chairman	Mr A. Brimson
Hon. Vice-Chairman	Mr M. Sharp
Hon. Treasurer	Mr R. Weston
Hon. Auditor	Mr J. Wilks
Hon. Membership Secretary	Mrs S. Rose
Hon. Publications Manager	Mr C. Dixon
Hon. Secretary	Mr A. Brimson

The following are ex-officio Officers:

Hon. Archivist	Mr C. Dixon
Hon. Editor of *The Journal*	Mr C.N. Boase
Hon. Minutes Secretary	Mrs V.J. Dixon

ii) **Existing Committee (in addition to the above Officers)**
Mr E.J. Hall, Mr M.J.Reynolds, Mr P. Beddall, Mrs E. Rowe, Mrs M. Oliver
The existing Committee offer themselves for re-election.

iii) Mr C.J. Marshall is nominated as a committee member.

iv) Nominations for members of the Committee:
Two or more members may nominate one or more members (with their consent) who are eligible, either as officers or ordinary committee members. Such nominations shall be delivered to the Hon. Secretary not less than 30 days before the date of the AGM.

v) The Committee propose Mr James Hughes-Hallett as an Hon. Life Member

10. Any Other Business previously notified to the Secretary.

INTERVAL

Society publications on sale. Refreshments (at £4.50 per head payable on the night) will be provided by Mrs S. Rose, a member of the Committee.

A musical interlude and an audio-visual presentation will follow.

Vote of Thanks Close of meeting

Alan Brimson, Hon. Secretary

For information only:

President:	Dr Ronald Blythe FRSL
Vice-Presidents:	Mrs S. Hooper, Mr A.L. Le Quesne, The Revd Canon D.T.W. Price
Hon. Life Members:	Miss M.R. Mumford, Mrs M.M. Hurlbutt, Mrs M. Morgan, Mrs T. Williams, Revd Dr P.J. Gomes, Mr J. Palmer and Dr W. Mom Lockwood

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THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE KILVERT SOCIETY HELD AT THE BISHOP'S PALACE, HEREFORD ON FRIDAY, 24 APRIL 2009 AT 7 p.m.

The chairman, Michael Sharp, welcomed members to the AGM. He read a letter from our President, apologising for his absence.

Apologies
Apologies for absence were received from: Dr Ronald Blythe, Margaret Burchett, Jim Hall, Joan & Trevor Hockin, Francis & Sheila Hooper, Mr & Mrs D Howell, Lawrie & Pam Jackson, Ms Anne Mallinson, Richard & Heather Vine, Maureen Weston and John & Kathy Wilks.

Secretary's Announcements
The secretary outlined the programme for the rest of the year as listed in the March *Journal* and reminded members of the arrangements for the evening.

Minutes
The Minutes of the AGM of 25 April 2008 which had been distributed were taken as read and signed by the chairman. There were no matters arising.

Obituaries
Members stood in silence in memory of those members who had died during the year – a list was read out.

Chairman's Report
Michael Sharp began by thanking the officers of the Society, in particular Carol Smith (website), John Wilks (auditor) and Anne and Elizabeth Wheeldon, who after a great many years service, had decided not to seek re-election.

He went on to report on the year's events. He was disappointed that the 2008 AGM had not been better supported but on the other hand the Diamond Jubilee dinner and events had been well supported and much appreciated. He referred to the walk, croquet and tea at Kinnersley and to the visits to the Radnorshire Museum, Abbey Cwm-Hir, Llwynbarried and Ysfa. A particular highlight was the selection of *Diary* readings given by James Roose-Evans in St Mary's, Hay.

The Spring visit to Worcester Cathedral, Maria Kilvert's house (the Deanery) and grave attracted a record number of members.

The chairman regretted that despite a number of attempts no new chairman or vice-chairman had been found; as a consequence the committee had recommended an interim measure. The secretary, Alan Brimson, would take over as acting-chairman for one year and, if elected, Michael Sharp would become vice-chairman and continue to chair committee meetings. He stressed that this was for one year only and if by next year no new chairman had been found the Society's future would be in jeopardy.

Another serious matter was the deterioration of the Society's collection of memorabilia at present in the Radnorshire Museum. He referred to a report in the September 2007 *Journal* concerning the appointment of a paper conservator and her report which had cost the Society £1700. It was revealed that the cost of restoring and displaying the Collection would be approximately £40,000. This sum, it was hoped, could be raised by means of grants and members' contributions. The secretary would write in the June 2009 Newsletter with further details and an appeal for donations. The secretary stressed that to do nothing was not an option as the Collection would continue to deteriorate, in which case the Museum could no longer house it or it would have to pass out of the Society's ownership to a body such as the National Library of Wales. He urged members to be generous in their support of the Appeal.

Michael Sharp concluded by remarking that he had been a committee member for 14 years, eight of those as secretary. He felt it was time to step down and wished the Society well for the future.

Alan Brimson taking over as chairman thanked Michael for his years of service, much of it behind the scenes.

Treasurer's Report
The accounts were considered and the treasurer began by once more stressing the importance of Gift Aid. The AGM income was down but the loss had been recouped over the Diamond Jubilee. Interest received was down due to the current economic climate but the takeover by Nationwide of the Portland Building Society had yielded a small bonus. Income overall had gone from £9,376.84 last year to £10,982.42 this year.

Under expenditure he explained that the figure of £1,885.00 under Monuments & Collection included the fee for the paper conservator of £1,700. Also larger than usual donations had been given to the Kilvert churches to mark the Diamond Jubilee. The stationery fund and *Journal* expenses were up partly due to the special Jubilee edition of the *Journal* and partly due to increased postage charges. The printing charges were for the David Lockwood Memorial Book. The AGM expenses were low due to the numbers attending. The final result was a deficit of £1,145.24.

The Treasurer then stressed that the main concern for the future would be the cost of conserving the Collection. This would cost a great deal of money, money which the Society did not have and which would have to be raised from donations and grants. He urged members to support the Appeal which would go out in June. Following questions Michael Sharp proposed that the accounts be accepted. The proposal was carried.

Election of officers:
The following appointments, having been proposed and seconded, were confirmed:

Officers:	President:	Dr R. Blythe, FRLS
	Acting-Chairman:	Mr A. Brimson
	Vice-Chairman:	Mr M. Sharp
	Hon. Secretary:	Mr A. Brimson
	Hon. Treasurer:	Mr R. Weston
	Hon. Subscriptions Treasurer:	Mrs S. Rose
	Hon. Publications Manager:	Mr C.B. Dixon
Ex Officio:	Editor of *The Journal*:	Mr C.J. Marshall
	Hon. Archivist:	Mr C.B. Dixon
	Hon. Minutes Secretary:	Mrs V.J. Dixon
	Publicity Officer:	Vacant

Committee (in addition to the Officers):

Mr E.J. Hall	Mr M.J. Reynolds	Mrs S. Rose
Mr P. Beddall	Mrs E. Rowe	Mrs M. Oliver

It was proposed, seconded and carried that Mr John Wilks continue as the Society's auditor.

Dr W Lockwood was appointed an Honorary Life Member of the Society.

Bouquets were presented to Miss A. Wheeldon and Miss E. Wheeldon who were retiring from the committee.

There being no other business the meeting closed for refreshments.

There followed a talk by Miss Muriel Kilvert entitled 'Francis Kilvert and his Family'.

ACCOUNTS

THE KILVERT SOCIETY: Charity Registration No: 1103813
Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2009

INCOME	**2009**	**2008**
Appeal Donations	£22,808.66	-
Appeal Account Interest	£2.45	-
Subscriptions	£4,490.00	£4,623.00
Donations	£10.00	£177.00
Gift Aid – Appeal Donations	£3,400.00	-
Gift Aid – Subscriptions	£1,021.72	£1,031.74
AGM Income	£294.00	£180.00
Publication Sales	£350.50	£1,391.20
Special Events	£1,736.50	£3,119.15
Legacies	£500.00	£150.00
Interest	£6.88	£310.33
TOTALS	**£34,620.71**	**£10,982.42**
EXPENDITURE		
Grants & Subscriptions	£530.00	£925.00
Monuments & Collection	£240.80	£1,885.00
Committee expenses, postage, stationery, telephone	£408.76	£580.49
Printing	-	£659.00
Publication sales expenses	£13.65	£19.43
Journal Printing & Postage	£3,468.83	£4,383.50
Insurance	£150.00	£150.00
Refunds	-	£85.50
Special Events	£1,312.50	£3,104.54
AGM Expenses	£350.51	£335.20
TOTALS	**£6,475.05**	**£12,127.66**
ASSETS		
Balance Lloyds Hereford	£2,218.86	£791.19
Balance Lloyds Appeal Fund	£26,211.11	-
Nationwide Building Society	£10,912.02	£10,405.14
Income over Expenditure		£28,145.66
	£39,341.99	**£39,341.99**

Richard Weston, Honorary Treasurer

Auditor's Certificate:
I have examined the foregoing income and expenditure account with the relevant records and certify it to be correct and in accordance therewith.

John H C Wilks, Honorary Auditor

SEPTEMBER WEEKEND

By Charles Boase (Monmouth)

26 SEPTEMBER 2009

We immediately felt we were among friends for our visit to Langley Burrell and its neighbourhood. That was not just because thirty or more members met in the churchyard of St Peter's, but it was also true in another sense as Jim Hall, our guide, pointed out the names of 'old friends' on the headstones.

On a brilliant late summer's day, competing with a helicopter and the din of a silage harvester, Jim showed us Kilvert and Ashe graves and those of the families of Bryant, Herriman, Jefferies, Lessiter, Coleman and others familiar from the *Diary*.

Leaving the churchyard we streamed across the park of *Langley House* towards the old Langley School to avoid walking beside the busy 'B' road to Chippenham. Unfortunately, a padlocked gate at the far end was too much for some and they had to retrace their

steps and brave the road, arriving just in time to hear Alan Brimson read the fiercely emotional *Diary* entry for Martinmas Day, 11 November 1874. This is where Mr Ashe orders Miss Bland, the schoolmistress, to keep the windows and door open at all times, except in very cold weather when one window might be shut. *What a speech for an elderly clergyman*, exclaims Kilvert. *Cruel. Barbarous.*

Langley School

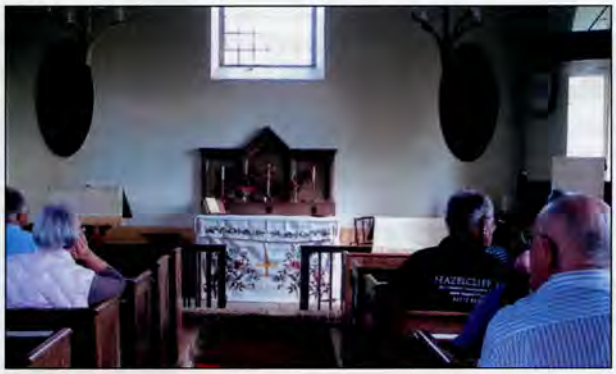
Beside the road, next to the school, still stands the village pound, a little walled-off area, and beyond it is *Pound Cottage* – in Kilvert's time, three cottages. Jim recalled how, in the war, the school was used for making camouflage netting, and across the road there had been an American Army camp. No hint of it is to be seen today.

We turned off the main road on to the very straight approach to Langley Burrell village, a first taste of Maud Heath's Causeway. Orders for lunch had been taken at St Peter's and service at the *Langley Tap* was quick, the food excellent.

Lunch, the editor examines his mussels

Refreshed, we walked to *Langley Lodge*. The owner is Robert Scott-Ashe, a descendant of the Squire. He lives in Canada, but the occupiers, Mr and Mrs Derek Grimshaw, had given Jim permission for us to wander around the garden, where, on 23 July 1874, the Dallins' brief blaze at the *Lodge* had come to an end with a dispersal sale. Kilvert does not explain why they were going, just that, *Everything was sold and most of the really valuable things went cheap, especially the pictures.* The furniture, he said, was sold on the lawn under the elm.

Leaving the line of the Causeway, we cut down to cross the Swindon-Bath railway line by a concrete footbridge of extraordinary ugliness. It overlooks the spot where there used to be a level crossing. There, Alan read the passage (5 June 1876) about Kilvert's contretemps with the railway after he had mistakenly got on the *Flying Dutchman* and had flown through Chippenham, only to come almost to a standstill just behind his house; and his subsequent encounter with the 'jobsworth' ticket-collector.



Inside St Giles' Church

Passing the turning to *Peckingell*, the home of Farmer Austin (the source of several amusing tales, like how to get your wife down off her sick-bed), we entered the flood meadows of the Avon. Kilvert describes (14 June 1876) a throng enjoying the meadows after Mrs Rich's picnic: *As we walked the children made excursions into the mowing grass to gather ox-eye daisies and tall red sorrel and clover and wag wantons* (the last being an old name for quaking grass).

Our idyllic meander through the meadows, beside a languid Avon and its anglers, led us to St Giles's at Kellaways, where we were welcomed by Rosemary Walker. The little, late 18th-century chapel, with its tiny eight-legged bell-turret, has many beautiful touches – the clear-glass leaded windows, marquetry tympanum, improbably large organ, memorial to a lady called Urania (a Christian name that has rather gone out of fashion), sinewy wooden roof, panels with biblical texts with *trefpaffes* and all and exquisite light-holders. A gem of a place. There was a notice recording the height of a bad flood on 7 July 1968. (St Giles, who may have been a hermit near Arles in the ninth century, was one of the most popular saints of the later middle ages, which is remarkable, really, considering how little is known about him. He is the patron of cripples and the indigent.)

Kellaways Mill House gardens

We visited the gardens of *Kellaways Mill House*, glimpsed an amazing variety of poultry in a large and leafy paddock, then walked the short distance to *Kellaways Mill*, where Rosie Walker made us most welcome. We were free to wander her garden on the banks of the Avon, occasionally stumbling across her eye-catching sculptures. Parked in the drive was a Green Goddess, the kind of old fire engine that Muriel Kilvert – the speaker at our last annual meeting – had once driven around the world. At the Mill, its job is to provide a powerful pump to the keep the house dry when the Avon bursts its banks.

Flooding on the Avon has always been a trouble. Maud Heath, a pedlar (evidently a very superior one, notes Pevsner) cannot have liked being stopped getting to town by the flood or her shoes muddy. In 1474 she left enough property to make a road and causeway from Wick Hill to

Chippenham, a distance of four-and-a-half miles, and to maintain it at a rate of £8 a year. The most impressive stretch is the 64-arch section carrying a raised path well above the road across the flood meadow at Kellaways. Wiltshire Council Libraries and Heritage says this section was built in the early 19th century (though it is not clear if this was actually a restoration job), paid for by auctioning the leases on two cottages for a period of fourteen years. This raised £800 – because the occupiers were allowed a vote in parliamentary elections in Chippenham. More money was similarly raised in 1825 to build the bridge and extend the causeway.

Alan reads Photo: Ann Dean

We gathered on the parapet to listen to Alan, standing in the meadow below us, reading the passage (23 May 1874) when Kilvert was gathering ox-eyes in the 'river mead' for Whitsun Day. Two girls saw him from the parapet: '*Moon daisies', said one. 'Gie I some, maister', said the other, and they went on their way smiling*.' At least I've got the accent for it,' joked Alan putting on his broadest Bristol.

Our route back to the car park at St Peter's took us along the Causeway, under the railway, and then across a very uneven hay field to *Manor Farm*. Some among us with dicky hips found the going difficult.

At *Manor Farm*, it was milking time. Perhaps for that reason we were unable to speak to Mr Jack Spencer, who bought the farm off the Scott-Ashes. The farm backs on to *Langley House* and we approached it into a stunning sunset, with the light shafting brilliantly through the trees of the park. The beauty of the country, as Kilvert put it on 6 Nov 1874, walking in the same fields, was dazzling. *On all sides the green meadows were illuminated by the golden light of the yellow elms and the red beeches*. Repeatedly, he refers to the elms. Their loss must be the greatest change to the natural landscape since his time.

At the back of *Langley House* we toured the stables. They seemed utterly unchanged from the days when they were in full use. A film set waiting for the horses.

Tea followed in St Peter's Church, made by Sue Rose. A Kilvert tea is a high point of any outing, some might say *the* highpoint. Squire Ashe might not have liked to see his church used like that but times change and it felt quite right. At least we did not have to leave the doors and windows open.

Before we dispersed, most took the opportunity to visit the Rectory, now known as *Kilvert's Parsonage*. Members may recall the interesting and amusing account given by an American member, the Revd Pamela Lee Cranston, in the *Journal* for September 2002 of her visit to the Rectory in 1994. She had found the owner, David Vickery, sitting in his battered BMW in the drive 'waiting,' he told her, 'for burglars to come'. At that time, the Rectory had fallen into serious disrepair. Subsequently, more than a million pounds was put into its restoration. The builders, Wraxall, say the Grade II* listed building was found in a state of collapse due to rampant dry rot. They worked on it for about thirty months, using 'the most sensitive and green techniques. Not a single litre of dry rot killer was used throughout.'

Inside the room probably used by Kilvert

Now the house is occupied by Mr and Mrs Robert Whitrow and their family. They very generously allowed us full access to explore it and its gardens. Which room was the Diarist's cannot be known for certain, but as our archivist Colin Dixon remarked, Kilvert records hearing the postman on the gravel drive, so it was most likely the room on the first floor on the left when viewed from the front. In the 'back kitchen' stands a range that probably was in the house when Kilvert lived there. It is a 'Trident' model, made or supplied by the firm of Gowen & Stevens of New Road, Chippenham. It was moved from the main kitchen to its present position about five years ago.

Later, Mr Whitrow told me: 'We moved here in Sept 2001, having bought the house from Colin Allen who undertook the very extensive repair work [three years?] required to restore the house to its former glory when he bought it from Mr Vickery's estate in the mid 1990s – I think Mr Vickery must have died not long after [Ms Cranston's] visit.'

The house is clearly in very good hands now, both from the point of view of the care the Whitrows are taking of it and – from the Society's point of view – of their willingness to allow us to visit it. Perhaps it is not just people that can be among friends, but houses, too.

Photos by Val Dixon

THE MEMOIR OF RICHARD LISTER VENABLES

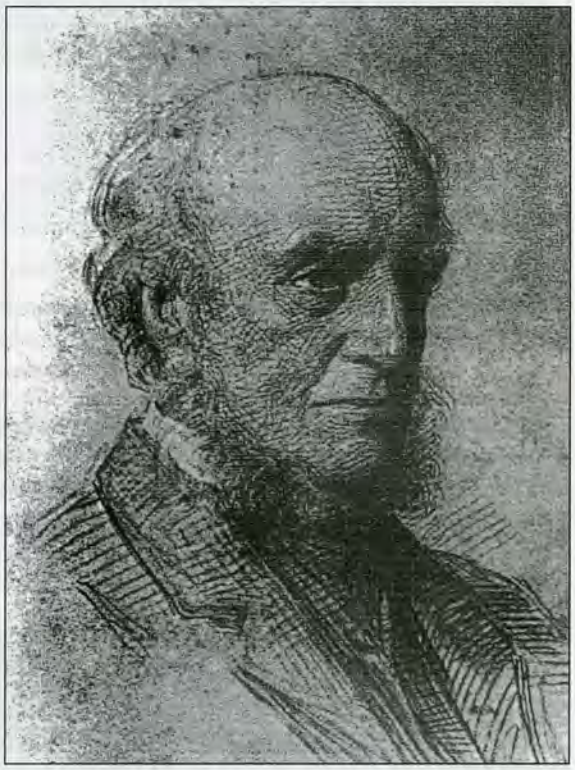
What follows is an abridged version of an article by the late O.W. Jones which appeared in volume LXIV (1994) of the Transactions of the Radnorshire Society.

It is reprinted here by kind permission of the editor of the TRS.

Richard Lister Venables of *Llysdinam Hall* in the County of Breconshire was in his town house, 6 Bolton Row, Mayfair, when on 28 February, 1878, he began to write a memoir. He prefaced it with the remark: This will only interest my children and is intended for no-one but them. With the passage of time there may be a wider interest, at least in those extracts which throw some light on the life of a Welsh (by adoption) squarson. Clerics of that ilk were relatively few in Wales in the nineteenth century but they were not unknown. He began:

> I was born in Chester on 22 May 1809. My father was the Revd Richard Venables, afterwards DD and Archdeacon of Carmarthen. He was a fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, then called Clare Hall. In 1808 he accepted a college living in Yorkshire, Kirkthorpe near Wakefield. On 2 June, 1808, he married my mother, Sophia Lister. She was the youngest child of George Lister of Girsby, Lincolnshire. He was by birth George Stovin. He inherited the Girsby estate under the will of Mrs Lister, not a close relative, and in accordance with her will he took the name and arms of Lister.

A few years later he was able to prove to the College of Arms that he was descended from Gilbert de Venables who accompanied the Norman Conqueror to England in 1066 and established the Barony of Kinderton in Cheshire.



The Revd Richard Lister Venables, MA

It seems strange that the erstwhile Fellow of Clare College should end up in the parish of Clyro in the diocese of St David's, but the explanation proves to be very simple. Venables explains:

> In the year 1810 a Mr Drake who was Vicar of Clyro in Radnorshire exchanged his Living of Clyro with my father for Kirkthorpe, and my father and mother came to live at Clyro which, from that time, continued to be my home till 1873. My father was glad to make the exchange as he preferred residing in Radnorshire to residing in Yorkshire where he was among strangers. He already had friends living near or within reach of Clyro.

Radnorshire was already the most anglicised of the Welsh counties. An Englishman could therefore feel at home there, especially in the Hay area where there were other clerical gentlemen, as opposed to the 'mountain (i.e. Welsh) Clergy' in the western parts of the diocese.

Richard Venables was appointed Archdeacon of Carmarthen in 1832. By modern standards it seems strange that a vicar of Clyro, in the Archdeaconry of Brecon, should receive such an appointment and rarely if ever set foot in the archdeaconry. But at that time in the diocese of St David's the office and work of an archdeacon were purely nominal. Archidioconal functions had been usurped by the bishop since the seventeenth century.

Richard Lister and his brother, George were educated at home, sharing a tutor with the sons of Lord Hereford who lived nearby. They were then sent to a school in Nibley in Gloucestershire.

> We were taken away from Nibley School in the spring of 1821 after being there somewhat more than two years. After the Easter holidays my father took George and me to Eton. His intention was that we should become Collegers i.e. boys on the foundation at Eton; but subsequent enquiries satisfied him that, for various reasons, this would be undesirable and the consequence was that at the beginning of the summer term he removed us from Eton. We found our life there far pleasanter than at Nibley but I believe we were taught little or nothing.

However it was at Eton that he learnt to swim and he was very proud of one of his achievements:

> The longest swim I ever took was across the Rhine, about 12 miles below Coblenz. The current in the Rhine is so strong that in swimming across, I was carried three-quarters of a mile downstream. As I had a boat following me with my clothes, and to bring me back to the side of the river from which I started, there was no inconvenience.

Modest as this may sound today, it was then no mean achievement. Swimming was a minority, even an elite pastime. Lord Byron swam the Hellespont and passed into history for his exploit. Few, if any could match Lister's swim.

The two boys were then sent to Charterhouse, later to be joined by the youngest brother, Henry; and they remained there till they went to Cambridge. Lister entered Emmanuel College in 1827:

> I was what is called at the University 'a reading man'. I had plenty of friends and I lived in a very good set, none of them extravagant men, all professing to read, more or less, others simply qualified for their degrees by three years' residence.

Life at Cambridge was placid enough. He mentions two particular friends, Frederick Watkins, later Archdeacon of York, and Laurence Cameron, later Vicar of Shoreham in Kent.

> I took my degree in January 1831. I remained at Cambridge till about the end of February in order to pass the examinations for the Classical Tripos [he was placed in the second class] and then I finally left the University. I continued to live at home reading for Orders until June 1832. On June 10 1832, I was ordained in London by Murray, then Bishop of Rochester, I became curate to my father at Nantmel and Llanyre which then formed one benefice and which my father held as well as Clyro. My residence was fixed at *Llysdinam* which was fit to occupy though not completed. I had two horses and a groom boy and I spent a great part of my time at Clyro, riding backwards and forwards over the hills. I was ordained priest by the Bishop of St David's – Jenkinson – at his regular ordination at Lampeter in September 1833.

Jenkinson used the Chapel of the recently founded St David's College for his ordinations. His Cathedral was remote and also not in a good state of repair.

Richard Venables had bought a number of properties in the parish of Llanyre which became the nucleus of the Llysdinam estate. A farmhouse, called *Penybanc,* was enlarged and renamed *Llysdinam Hall*. It became and remains the family home.

Llysdinam Hall Photo: Editor

Venables goes into detail about meeting his first wife, no doubt to satisfy the curiosity of those for whom he was writing, the children of his second marriage.

> Among the country houses to which we were occasionally asked was *Newcastle Court* near Presteigne. Mr and Mrs Whittaker who lived there were old friends of my father and mother. In July 1833 George and I went there for a visit of several days. We found as fellow visitors to the house an elderly lady, Mrs Pollen and her niece, also a widow, Mrs Adam. The latter was a capital horsewoman. Mrs Pollen was a first cousin of Mrs Whittaker. She was by birth a Miss Gascoigne. Her father had settled in Russia and eventually was at the head of a Government iron foundry near St Petersburg. He had three daughters. The youngest of the three was the mother of Mrs Adam. She married a Russian gentleman, Alexander Potaratsky, by whom she had two sons and one daughter who was now Mrs Adam. She was born in Russia but her mother died at her birth and her father allowed her aunt, Lady Haddington, to adopt her, take her to England and bring her up as an Englishwoman. She was baptised into the Church of England by the names of Mary Augusta Dalrymple. She married Francis James Adam, a younger son of a well-known Scotch MP. He was a merchant and he had occasion to go on some business, no long time after his marriage, to the West Indies. On his voyage home he died at sea, leaving his wife with one child whom you know as Willie Adam. I found Mrs Adam singularly attractive. She was a good deal older than myself, but my liking increased during my visit and it proved mutual. Mrs Adam spoke French and German to perfection. She also sang very well.

They were married in Richmond parish church 6 February 1834 by the Reverend Lord Thomas Haig, a friend of the bride. They planned to live at *Llysdinam* while Venables would continue to serve the parish of Nantmel and Llanyre, but there was a change of plan, not untypical of clerical politics at that time. Venables had visited his fiancée in Richmond in November 1833.

> Immediately after my return home I received from my old friend Mr Dew – the father of the younger Mr Dew whom you know – the offer of the rectory of Whitney, to hold for his second son, the present Rector, who was then at school and who, from his age, could not possibly receive the living for nine years. The value was £200 a year and I should have gladly accepted it but there was no house.

Archdeacon Venables solved the problem in nineteenth-century manner. He and his wife moved to *Llysdinam*, employing a curate to serve Clyro. The new, if temporary, rector of Whitney occupied the vicarage house at Clyro.

> In those days there was only one service at Whitney, alternately morning and afternoon. I regularly assisted the Clyro curate by taking the morning service at the church, or the afternoon service at Bettws Clyro chapel. This I did not often because it was inconvenient to reach Bettws. The first curate (of Clyro) was my intimate college friend, Frederick Watkins, now Archdeacon of York. Watkins lived at Hay and was comfortably off and kept a pony, his companionship was very agreeable to us and we were much together, Mary and I lived very comfortably.

Indeed it seems likely that Mary was somewhat affluent, more than matching her well-heeled husband. Then came another diversion:

> In the winter of 1836 Mary received letters from her family in Russia pressing us to pay them a visit in order that they might be

> acquainted with me. There were many points to be settled before this visit could be decided on or accomplished. I obtained a year's leave of absence from the living of Whitney. I secured a Mr Coke as my curate, and in May, 1837, we started from home.

They travelled via Hamburg to St Petersburg where they stayed with Mary's father, thence south to the Volga to visit Mary's uncle 'who was Governor there'. Then they travelled north to Tambov and to Moscow where Mary's surviving brother, Alexander, had his country and town houses, and where Mary's father was spending the winter.

The intrepid and seemingly tireless travellers returned to *Llysdinam* towards the end of September. They stayed there for a few weeks and finally returned to Clyro.

Venables kept the parish of Whitney till the end of 1843 when young Henry Dew, being admitted to Priest's Orders, was ready to claim the family inheritance. Venables then became curate of Clyro.

> In December 1846 the Bishop of St David's, to whom my father had some time before applied to resign the Living in my favour, wrote to say that if my father was still inclined to resign he would give me the Living. Early in 1847 my father formally resigned Clyro, and in February I went, by appointment, to Abergwili Palace for two days and was made vicar of Clyro. I spent my time very agreeably during my visit. The Bishop was Thirlwall.

Soon after his return from Russia Venables published his *Domestic Scenes in Russia*, a book which had a modest success, going into two editions. [In the book] Venables was very critical of the state of Russian Society:

> Russia appears to have no elements for a free government on sound principles; and a revolution would be likely to produce nothing but a state of anarchy and confusion.

In the light of events almost a century later, these words were remarkably prophetic.

Venables says nothing about his clerical duties apart from occasional references to reading the services or preaching on Sundays. That he was not unmindful of his pastoral charge is suggested by Kilvert who, in his *Diary* noted, on 14 February 1870, that he and his vicar walked to Hay: *We went to Williams the drapers and looked at blankets, sheets and coverlets as we propose to spend some of the surplus Communion Alms in bedding for the poor people who want it much this vigorous weather.* In the following year he conducted a lengthy correspondence with the War Office on behalf of one of his parishioners and Kilvert recorded:

> Wednesday, 19 April 1871
> *Mr Venables heard this morning from Chelsea Hospital. The authorities have granted a pension of ninepence a day to our old Peninsular veteran John Morgan of the Bronith with arrears from February. Mr V went to the old man's house to announce the good news.*

But when the first instalment arrived, the curate had the task of taking it to the old soldier.

Clyro was then a parish of 883 souls and so, with a curate to assist him there was ample opportunity for extended tours which are mentioned in the memoir, to France and Italy in 1857, to Scotland in 1858, not to mention spending a couple of months each year in London.

Clyro had its parish church of St Michael, a popular dedication in the Welsh border country in the Middle Ages. There was also a chapel-of-ease a few miles away at Bettws (more properly Betws Claerwy), about a mile-and-a-half from Rhydspence, a noted landmark on the road from Hay to Hereford.

> One of the first tasks was the rebuilding of the parish church: In the Autumn of 1851 and the Spring of 1852 I was much occupied in raising funds, settling plans and making preparations for rebuilding Clyro Church which was quite dilapidated. In the Summer of 1852 the old Church was pulled down and the new one was begun. It was roofed in before Winter and completed in the Spring of 1853. There was, as is usual, a building committee, but the chief trouble and responsibility fell on me. In July 1853 the new Church was opened and the Bishop of St David's (Thirlwall) came to stay at Clyro Vicarage and to preach on the occasion. My father and mother were also with us.

To everyone's surprise the Bishop, in his sermon, made no reference to the new church or to him who had planned it all. Indeed Venables does not seem to have had any high opinion of his learned diocesan. In 1852 plans were mooted for the transfer of some Welsh border parishes to the diocese of Hereford. Then he had opposed the idea but now, he told his brother, he had changed his mind: I have rather less taste for Thirlwall who is a very unsatisfactory man; and with the present humbug of assuming that everybody who lives in a Welsh diocese must speak Welsh it is perhaps as well to belong to an English diocese. But nothing came of those plans and Clyro remained in the diocese of St David's.

Venables unwittingly secured posthumous fame for him and his family when he appointed Robert Francis Kilvert as his curate, arriving in Clyro in January 1865. Venables had told his brother, George, that the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol had sent him a good commendation; he liked the young man very much; he was a great improvement on the former curate, a product of St David's College, Lampeter, and he was glad to have a university man. As the son of a clergyman and a graduate of Wadham College, Oxford, Kilvert was socially acceptable, and his vicar was able to introduce him to the members of the county society of the area; but Kilvert was soon to find that his lack of means weighed heavily against him in his aspirations.

He recounted his frequent visits to Hay Castle, the home of the Reverend W.L. Bevan; whereas Bevan's daughter, Mary, makes no reference in her diaries to the curate of Clyro. Therefore his claims must be taken with the proverbial pinch of salt. Yet there is no doubting one occasion which he describes:

> Tuesday 29 March 1870
> *Home at 6; dressed for dinner. At 6.30 Charles with the mail phaeton and the two mares, grey and bay, dashed up to the door in grand style. I was ready and away we went to the Vicarage to pick up the Vicar who took the reins. At Peter's Pool we overtook and passed at a dashing pace the Clyro Court brougham with one horse, wherein were the squire and the Recorder of Hereford. It was refreshing to see the Vicar's stylish equipage, driven by himself, with two servants behind, dashing past the small humble turn-out of the Squire, rather reversing the usual order of things.*

Kilvert's attempt to join the clerical elite of the Hay area by seeking the hand of Frances Eleanor Jane Thomas of *Llanthomas* (a house which has since disappeared) was an abysmal failure. Her squarson father sent him packing. He did not start his diaries until 1870, otherwise he might well have told us something, for he was always a welcome visitor at Clyro vicarage, about the first Mrs Venables who died in 1865.

Venables wrote in his memoir:

> During July and August poor Mary got worse and worse and in September dropsy appeared and the illness became quite hopeless. George was much with us and Henry and Susan came often from *Llysdinam*. After a very sad time of watching and anxiety all was over on the 5 Oct. A few days later my dear wife was buried in Clyro Churchyard.

The funeral was conducted by another 'squarson', W.L. Bevan, the vicar of Hay.

There was another bereavement the following year. The youngest of the three brothers died.

> Henry came down to *Llysdinam* on the advice of a London surgeon. The Great Western Company accommodated him with a through coach from Paddington to Newbridge. He died 15 September 1866 after one year of marriage to Susan and he was buried in Clyro.

He went on to relate that two years later there was a change of circumstances.

> About Easter 1867 I received a letter from Mrs Charles Thomas, your aunt Cara, inviting me to pay them a visit at *Cranmers*, Mitcham, in Surrey. I went to *Cranmers* at the end of April and I found the party in the house to consist of the Charles Thomases, Mrs Pearson and Mrs Thomas's sister Agnes. I had never seen Agnes Pearson but once, viz in Nov 1852 when I escorted her and her mother to the funeral of the Duke of Wellington.
>
> I soon perceived what a change to my then lonely life at home it would be if I could marry Agnes Pearson. Before Agnes left *Cranmers* I had made known my wishes to her, and also to her mother and her sister who cordially wished me success.

In the event, they were married on 1 August, 1867, the officiating minister being Sir Gilbert Lewis, Canon of Worcester. Their first child, Katharine Minna, was born in her parents' house in London 31 May 1870. Venables wrote in his diary:

> Agnes suffered dreadfully. Dr Farre came at 4 and did not go away again. The Duchess of Norfolk came twice in the afternoon, staying sometime and again at half past 9 at night. Sat in the dressing room till 1.05 a.m. when I was told the child was born. Dr Farre went about 2 a.m. Agnes comfortable.

One of those letters reached Clyro on the following day. The curate Francis Kilvert, found the vicarage housemaid about to knock on his door.

> *She had run down breathless with an open letter just received in her hand to announce that Mrs Venables was confined of a nice little girl at 1.5 yesterday. Three cheers. The news flew through the village like wild fire .... And the bells were soon in full peal.* [Wednesday 1 June 1870]

The bells rang at intervals all day and in the evening a bonfire was lit in honour of 'Miss Venables'. Two other children were to follow, Caroline Emily, born in 1872, and Henry George, born in 1874 who died two years later.

Mrs Venables, née Agnes Pearson

R.L. Venables's memoir ends, rather abruptly, with a brief reference to his

retirement from the parish of Clyro and the move to *Llysdinam*. After the death of the youngest brother, Henry, George had taken over responsibility for the family seat, with S.W. Williams as his agent. Now the elderly bachelor was ready to hand over. Considerable extensions had been made under the supervision of the remarkable S.W. Williams of Rhaeadr, architect, railway surveyor, county surveyor, land archaeologist. Venables tells us that he moved to *Llysdinam* in the autumn of 1872 but continued to do occasional duty at Clyro until November 1873. Meanwhile he presided, like his father before him, over the Radnorshire magistrates.

R.L. Venables lived to see his daughter, Katharine, married to Charles Dillwyn-Llewelyn of Penllergaer – later to be styled Sir Charles Dillwyn-Venables-Llewelyn – 23 August 1883 in the church at Newbridge-on-Wye which had been consecrated barely a month before. He died in the following year.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

MORE ON TULLIMAAR

As promised in *Journal* No. 29 here are the descriptions of two visits to *Tullimaar* together with an account of the sale of the house in 1871.

A VISIT TO TULLIMAAR

By the Hon. Secretary (C.T.O. Prosser)

The March newsletter (p.p. 5 and 6, under the heading "Skinners Diary") hinted that a little party of local members were off to Cornwall in April and that a report of this would be in the June newsletter.

Here it is ... Two of our Forest of Dean members organised this visit and invited a few local members (and one from Bath) to join them and make up a party of ten. They hired a minibus and away we went, first to Bath to pick up the last member of the party, then to Camerton (see next item) onwards to Exeter and across Dartmoor to Tavistock and so to Lostwithiel for a visit to Restormel Castle (see footnote), getting to the farm near Truro where we were staying in nice time for the evening meal. Next morning to Rosewarne in Camborne (now a Home for Spastics, but still very much as when Kilvert visited it and was taken out by the "larky" Capt. Parker and later dined on conger eel). As Kilvert and the Hockins drove away afterwards "the granite columns sparkled in the moonlight"; for us they sparkled in the sunlight as we drove away after a rewarding hour there. This visit was, of course, arranged beforehand, as was the meeting there with our Camborne member (Mr. Pascoe) who was our guide to Portreath and Godrevy. At Portreath we noted the now deserted harbour which was the scene of much activity when Kilvert visited it, and the inn where they stabled the horses during that visit; then on along the coastal road to Godrevy – a place which fascinated Kilvert; then to Gwythian to see the church and find the window to the memory of the drowned curate. Next, a drive around St. Ives and on along the coast to Zennor and then to Gurnards Head. Each day it was fine and bright, with wonderful visibility and blue seas, but the wind cold and boisterous .... too much for anyone to venture out on to Gurnards Head as Kilvert did, but some of us went half way and got some good photographs. Then miles more of coastal road to Lands End, for a brief visit. Next to Treen and a walk to the Logan Rock; then via St. Buryan to Penzance for a quick run round before the return to Truro and the farm again.

Next day to Tullimaar, by kind invitation after some correspondence with the new owners. This was the real "highlight" of our few days in Cornwall; such a kindly welcome from folk who have just bought the three volumes after being loaned by a local lady. We were even shown which bedroom Kilvert occupied, for after reading the Diary it becomes very obvious that it could be no other. Everything must be much as Kilvert knew it, but has been sadly neglected of late years by elderly occupants. It is now in good hands and house, grounds and garden will be restored to much as in bygone years. We called at Perranwell Station, just as a train came in from Falmouth, and walked to Perranwell Church, along the route that Kilvert walked with the Hockins. Then on to Falmouth, for a quick run round before making off for the Lizard, but not by the main road, we went as they did, by lesser roads through Stithians and Gweek. Now the Diary tells us that here a horse cast a shoe and they lunched whilst he was re-shod at the smithy. Just before Gweek we lost the tail end of our exhaust pipe, dumped it in the Gweek litter bin and went off to find the smithy ... a dark little place, surely the same as in 1870; AND WE FOUND THE SMITH SHOEING A HORSE!!! On to the Lizard and after that to Kynance and on to Mullion; all just as beautiful as Kilvert found them (and we had it all very much to ourselves, no crowds as later on in the year). The part thatched Old Inn must be very much as when Kilvert and his friends were there, and across the road Mullion Church is well worth a visit. After that, Helston and back to the farm for our evening meal.

Next morning we set off after an early breakfast for home, again by a devious route, for we were determined to visit Tintagel en route (see footnote) and to hug the North Cornwall, Devon and Somerset coast to Bude, Lynmouth and Minehead before we struck the motorway at Bridgwater for the Severn Bridge and home. This we did, and the splendid weather held up for us as far as Lynmouth, after that gentle rain for a while but fine again in the later stages of our journey. A memorable few days in Cornwall.* Anyone wishing to do something similar can have more details from me ... and the address of the farm where we stayed, for it is a place that we can thoroughly recommend, in every way.

*The Secretary is investigating the possibility of a repeat Society visit to Cornwall for the spring of 2011.

Additional Notes

Some time before she destroyed most of Kilvert's 22 black notebooks, Mrs. Hope (his niece) gave one of them to William Plomer; it has now been given by his executor to Durham University (presumably because it was Durham that conferred D.Litt. on William Plomer). Not long before he died Dr. Plomer wrote out (for us) all that is in that notebook that isn't in the Diary. From this we made notes before starting for Cornwall. Now, at the foot of page 201 of Vol. 1. there is a note which reads "A series of expeditions to Tintagel, etc". This covers much more than most would suspect. From it we know that on Tuesday, 2nd. August, Kilvert and the Hockins went on an afternoon train to Lostwithiel, and after booking supper and room for the night at the Royal Talbot, walked out to Restormel Castle, these lonely ruins greatly impressed Francis Kilvert and in Dr. Plomer's written pages there is a long and very interesting account of them and of Kilvert's impressions of them and their surroundings. Next morning the party set off in a wagonette for Tintagel. Between Bodmin and Camelford a violent storm caused them to use much ingenuity to shelter Mrs. Hockin from the worst of it. They dried out at the inn (which we photographed) and then on to Tintagel, putting up at the Wharncliffe Arms (also photographed) for lunch and to rest the horses. Their visit to Tintagel Castle is described in detail. It was interesting to note the ruins of "the little low house which was or had been a mill" down by the stream in the narrow valley by which one approaches the castle, for this is where Kilvert and his friends called for the key and a guide. It was good to have all this additional information on Kilvert's holiday in Cornwall; indeed, we would no doubt have missed Lostwithiel and Restormel Castle without them, and perhaps Tintagel too. In due course it may be possible to make it available to any member wishing to acquire it, though the cost of photostats of Dr. Plomer's ninety handwritten pages may be quite substantial. (Any offers of such photostats at a "cut" price or at part cost would be greatly appreciated).*

From the KS Newsletter of June 1975 and reprinted as in the original.

*These pages were indeed 'photostatted' and published as a booklet by the Society – a booklet rendered redundant in 1989 by the appearance of *Kilvert's Cornish Diary*. (ed.)

Footnote: LINKS WITH NAPOLEON – AND WITH EISENHOWER

In the June newsletter was the account of a few days in Cornwall, enjoyed by a party of members in April – the highlight of which was a visit to Tullimaar. This house is interesting in two other ways in addition to being where Kilvert stayed for his three weeks holiday in Cornwall in 1870.

Princess Bibesco lived there for many years (she died but a few years ago – at a great age I believe). She was a great grand-daughter of Napoleon Bonaparte and at one time there were a number of things relating to him at Tullimaar. The only evidence of the Napoleonic connection to be seen there today is in the dining room which Princess Bibesco had done out completely with glazed chintz in narrow red and white stripes and fashioned to convey the impression that you are in a tent ... Napoleon's tent!!!!!

Something of much later interest is the plaque in the hall – it reads: "IN THIS HOUSE GENERAL EISENHOWER, SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE ALLIED FORCES, DWELT FOR A FORTNIGHT BEFORE D.DAY IN MAY 1944".

Much was planned here, I understand..

From the KS Newsletter of September 1975 and reprinted as in the original

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SALE OF TULLIMAAR 1871

By Barry Smith (Truro)

Tullimaar, Kilvert's place of residence in Cornwall during his memorable visit of 1870, held a special place in his affections. It has also been a source of interest to the not inconsiderable number of Kilvertians who have visited the House, or its grounds, over the years. To these, especially details of the House as it stood in Kilvert's day may be of special interest. Recently discovered particulars of the 1871 auction of *Tullimaar* not only amplify the description of the House as given in the *Diary* but also add to our knowledge of the legal context of the sale.

The earliest *Diary* entries for 1871 give no hint that the Hockins, Kilvert's hosts during his stay in Cornwall the year before, were about to part with *Tullimaar*. They concern the birth of a daughter to the Hockins and their request for Kilvert to act as godfather. However, in the spring of 1871, advertisements started appearing in the local Cornish newspapers, announcing a forthcoming auction. The following one is taken from the *Falmouth Packet* of 22 April 1871:

WEDNESDAY 10TH MAY AT 3.
PARISH OF PERRAN-AR-WORTHAL

A very desirable FAMILY RESIDENCE, standing within its own Ornamental Grounds, situated between Truro and Falmouth, for Sale, with early possession.

MR CORFIELD

Has been directed to SELL by PUBLIC AUCTION, at the ROYAL HOTEL, Truro, on WEDNESDAY, 10th of May next, at 3 in the Afternoon, subject to the conditions to be there and then read, all that very attractive

RESIDENCE
known as
"TULLIMAAR"

With the ornamental pleasure grounds, fish ponds, productive orchards, walled fruit and vegetable gardens and paddocks, including stabling for 11 horses, harness and coach rooms, Gardener's and Coachman's cottages, and all convenient outbuildings belonging thereto, measuring in the whole about 11 acres, be the same more or less, and now in the occupation of the Proprietor, William Hockin, Esq.

This very beautiful Residence is of modern construction, handsomely fitted and decorated throughout, **regardless of expense,** is healthily situated on an eminence, has a southern aspect, abuts a tidal river, overlooking the picturesque and extensive parks and grounds of Carclew, the seat of Col. Tremayne; is approached by a carriage drive, with rustic lodges at the entrances; is within a few minutes' walk of the Parish Church, and about a mile from the Perranwell Railway Station; with good hunting, boating and shooting in the neighbourhood.

The PROPERTY is adapted for a FAMILY of DISTINCTION, and is held on an existing lease granted by the Lord of the Manor, for the term of 99 years determinable on the death of one good life now aged about 33 years, and subject to a conventionary rent of £20 per annum.

On view by card only on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays preceding the sale, from 12 to 4.

For descriptive printed particulars, conditions and cards, application to be made at the Offices of the AUCTIONEER, Falmouth. Dated April 10th, 1871. Falmouth.

Notwithstanding these published blandishments of the desirable property, the Hockins' attempt to dispose of their Cornish home ran into some difficulty. *The Royal Cornwall Gazette* for 13 May, 1871 reports: 'Mr. F. Hearle Cock was the only bidder for Tullimaar, which was offered for sale by Mr. Corfield, at the Royal Hotel, Truro, on Wednesday. Mr. Cock's bid was £500, and as the reserve was £1,200, the property, which is held for one life only, remains unsold.'

Why was there so little apparent interest in this 'very desirable family residence'? Perhaps it was an exaggerated price which deterred potential bidders. It has been suggested that William Hockin was unable to find a suitable occupation in Cornwall and was needing to dispose of his Cornish property in order to establish himself in business 'up country', which he eventually did. He maybe felt impelled to drive a hard bargain for *Tullimaar*.

Kilvert Society member and grandson of William, Mr John Hockin of Swanage, has commented: 'As to the price, the house cost £5,000 to build in 1829. I do not know whether there was any inflation in those 40 years – possibly not. In any case, a leasehold interest for one life only is a gamble which could put the buyer at the mercy of the freeholder (Basset Estate), so William may have been optimistic asking £1,200, unless there was some competition'.

A deal between the Hockins and Hearle Cock was eventually struck, though not till some considerable time had elapsed and perhaps no other buyers had appeared. *The Royal Cornwall Gazette* of 29 July, 1871, reports: 'The beautifully situated residence of *Tullimaar*, in the parish of Perranarworthal, immediately opposite Carclew Park, has been purchased by Mr. F. Hearle Cock, solicitor, and Town Clerk of Truro, and will, it is understood, be his future residence.'

This accords well with the *Diary* entry of 15 August, 1871, when Kilvert writes of a surprise visit by the Hockins to his home in Langley Burrell: *I went down and there were actually in the flesh the Hockins. I could hardly believe my eyes ... They had come up to Warminster to look at a house which Daniell had told them of as they have sold* Tullimaar. *This would not do at all, so they have been house hunting in Bath this morning.*

When the Hockins' residence is next mentioned, they are, in fact, established in Taunton, as the entry for 11 September, 1872, clearly shows: *Our party at Weston broke up today. I went on to Taunton to visit the Hockins, and the rest of the party went home to Langley. The Hockins came to the Taunton Station to meet me and drove me to* The Ferns, *their house at the Nursery Gardens* ... He observes, perhaps wistfully: *Many things about the house and place within and without reminded me strongly of* Tullimaar.

Footnote: *Tullimaar* and its grounds are, of course, private property. However, it is gratifying to learn that one of the present occupants, Lady Golding, is a member of the Kilvert Society, thus providing an interesting link between Kilvert and his Cornish holiday home!

Tullimaar Photo: Collection of the late John Hockin

From the KS Newsletter of March 1993 and reprinted in part as in the original

A LITERARY VISIT

By David Lockwood (Llowes)

In the middle weeks of October last year, my wife and I had a holiday in north Cornwall. On our last day we drove to Perranarworthal south of Truro. We went up the drive to *Tullimaar*, a two-storeyed elegant white house with a pillared porch and, before it, the gravel circling round a flower-bed. Before we even got out of the car our hostess came out and welcomed us: it was so friendly, so trusting and, I like to think, very Kilvertian.

We went into the house and in the hall I felt an immediate familiarity, not from Kilvert's life, but my own, for it was so akin to my last vicarage. In fact *Tullimaar* is about twenty years younger than my old home. It is, however, somewhat grander, my doors were not solid mahogany.

Sitting in the drawing room with its high ceiling and big sash windows I said to myself: 'So, this is where Kilvert sat talking to Mrs Hockin quoting Cowper and Tennyson'. It was a conscious recollection, not an easy and immediate one, because I felt rooted in the present talking over coffee with Mrs Carver, the owner with her brother of this lovely house. She had made a special journey down from Bristol to receive us. Wonderfully kind.

Later we went round the house. The dining room is a spacious chamber and it contained two tables, one large, one smaller by the window, looking out on the thickly layered greenness of the shrubs, trees and many evergreens. I appreciated more than ever before, on this visit after so wet a summer, how temperate the climate of Cornwall is, where there is hardly any frost, so that there is no month in which plants cease to grow. Hence camellias gently riot.

More rooms and the library and everywhere there were books, more than a multitude, most the collection of Sir William Golding. Everywhere the stamp of William Golding and his wife was evident in the pictures and portraits – one was particularly striking, even a little fierce, of the author. It impressed me, but I remember a gentler more 'magical' man when he came to the Hay Festival. There were photographs of their visit to Buckingham Palace when he received his knighthood and others of his being given the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Upstairs to the bedrooms and the one where, it seems possible, Kilvert may have slept, though to my mind the view from the window does not entirely tally with his description. However, Kilert's shade was brushed aside by more recent history. General Eisenhower had used that room, prior to D-Day and to make it even more memorable an American soldier had attempted to shoot him through the window! A small plaque on the window-sill records this event.

Downstairs we went to the rear of the house and into the kitchen. This room, more than any other, made me think of that Cornish holiday in 1870. By the great window I could see in my mind's eye the wicker cage of the doves and my mind's ear could hear their soft cooing. It was a very pre-Raphaelite moment.

Where the range once stood, an Aga now reigns and in front of that a wonderfully large table, made for the Guys, previous owners, the surface of which was two thirds wood and one of slate. Suspended over it a vast oil lamp, originally fuelled by whale oil. Here I could imagine, so easily, the packing of hampers for the many picnics. Because in spite of the splendid modern additions the room was redolent of the high noon of Victorian middle-class life: a way of life wholly dependent on a small army of servants.

Back to the hall where Mrs Carver moved aside a wall-hanging and revealed a large, and I must add, pretentious marble slab proclaiming that General Dwight Eisenhower had dwelt there for a fortnight. The three of us were wholly in agreement that 'dwelt' was an incorrect word to describe so brief a stay. But we forgave the previous owner who had erected it, for she was interesting in herself. She was Princess Bibesco, a Romanian aristocrat with many links with the Bonaparte family. We saw photographs of the house when she lived there, (one could say 'dwelt', it was for a long period). She had turned this very English house with its regular Regency features, though its date is 1828, into a French Château with a tented drawing room, like Napoleon's study at Malmaison, with gilt chairs and tables of the Empire style. It housed her hundreds of mementoes of the Napoleonic era. Fascinating, but far from indigenous. One accepted this time of the house's history because the Princess was one of the very last people to be able to say with truth that she had conversed with Marcel Proust.

So a visit of enchantment trailing through many decades came to an end. On the doorstep we conferred and agreed that *Tullimaar* held an especial attraction for writers. I thought how gratified Kilvert would be to know that he, unwittingly, had started a literary connection with the house so very successfully. For, as we know, he in his lifetime always sought out houses where authors had lived.

Only as we drove away did I tell my wife that the previous day I had slipped on wet leaves in a churchyard, fallen heavily and then slithered bumpily down a flight of slate steps. The mission achieved, I could allow her to examine me and take me home where, indeed, it was discovered that I had broken a rib and badly bruised my spine. But I never for one moment felt any pain in *Tullimaar*!!! I am completely better now.

From the KS Newsletter of March 1999

MOUSE CASTLE

By Lyndall Hancock (Dunedin)

Was the name a corruption of a Welsh name, I wondered? Had it been a true castle? Or a folly? Or something prehistoric? Francis Kilvert gave no explanation when he and two friends climbed the scarp slope (800 ft) to Mouse Castle at Easter 1871. At the summit they found a man and several children, all of whom defied social classification by their clothes and uninhibited behaviour as they merrily chased around and splashed spring water at each other.

I climbed to Mouse Castle in 1988 and alas, there wasn't an echo that day of the *genii loci*, as Kilvert called the group he met. Like him, I started to climb up a steep meadow opposite the farm of *Llydiart-y-wain* and then entered the woods. Soon I found a logging track winding upwards, tiresomely deep in mud. And just when I was fed up with the mud overtopping my shoes and was about to find my own way up to the summit through thick trees, suddenly there it was – the spring and the tiny pool. I'd have missed it if I'd taken a short-cut up from the track. I knelt there in the deep shade and scooped up handfuls of water.

The summit had changed vastly since Kilvert's day. Trees and bushes choked the previously-open area, and the rock ramparts were tumbledown. I hauled myself up by roots and branches but could see nothing to help me understand just what Mouse Castle had once been. Naturally, there was no view.

So unless there has been a summit clearance since then and the logging track has dried out, I think that climbing to Mouse Castle could be good exercise but one can't expect to see what Kilvert saw, except for the little spring below the summit. How fortunate that the loggers passed just below it and not through it, by design or accident.

Submitted to and printed in part in KS Newsletter February 1989

OBITUARY (June 1975)

News of the death of a Cardiff member with a well-known name has only just reached me, though it occurred in January. I refer to the late Mr. T. Chichester who (with Mrs. Chichester) had been a member for many years. He was a kinsman of the famous yachtsman, Sir Francis Chichester. A keen reader of Kilvert's Diary, Mr. Chichester was often asked to give readings at local meetings.

In March the Society lost a founder-member and my predecessor as Hon. Secretary with the death (in his 91st year) of Mr. W.H. Ellis of Hereford. He became Hon. Secretary during the first year of the Society's existence (1948) and held the post during those early years when it was expanding up to the A.G.M. of 1955 when I took over. Mr. Ellis remained on the Committee up to 1968, when he resigned, continuing as a member for the rest of his life. Mrs. Ellis died in 1952. The funeral service was at Eignbrook Church (where he was a Deacon and had attended for the last 40 years or thereabouts) and was largely attended. The Society was represented by Mr. Worsey, Mrs. Peters and myself together with a number of other members.

Another death in March the news of which caused widespread regret was that of the Radio Personality, C. Gordon Glover. Though not a member of this Society he was sympathetic towards it as he was towards most things with a country flavour. A personal recollection of him will be found on another page, headed 'IN KILVERT'S COUNTRY WITH C. GORDON GLOVER.*

*** This will be reprinted in the September 2010 issue.**

ARCHIVE PHOTOGRAPHS

The KS at Wadham College in July 1991
Photo: John Hockin

Lyndall Hancock (New Zealand) entertains Edward West to tea in Hay (1988?)

LONDON ADDRESSES

By John Wilks (Cusop)

A selection of modern photographs, by John Wilks, of some London addresses visited by Kilvert in January 1870, visits described in the opening pages of the *Diary*.

Visited by Kilvert on 19 January 1870

Went with Llewellyn and Owen to London. Called at 3 Hobart Place for Charlie Pearson [...]

Tea at 3 Hobart Place. Mrs. Pearson at home: Col. Pearson hunting in Berkshire. The boys a little over-excited made too much noise at tea.

He went there again on 22 January:

At 3 o'clock Perch and I left for London [...] We parted at Victoria Station and I took a cab to 3 Hobart Place where I stay till Tuesday. Mrs. Peason was at home and some people were calling, among them the Hon. Flora Macdonald, the Maid of Honour, very talkative, rather loud and not over refined. She lives next door.

3 Hobart Place, SW1

Visited by Kilvert on 20 January 1870

I went up to London, escorted Miss Denman, and saw her home to 14 Eaton Place.

14 Eaton Place, SW1

Also on 20 January, Kilvert visited 9 Wilton Crescent, but drew a blank!

At 3 o'clock went to afternoon service at the Abbey and then to 9 Wilton Crescent to call on Lady Frances and Miss Higginson but Miss H was out and Lady Frances engaged.

He had more luck on 28 January:

Came home by the Round Pond and up the Row to 9 Wilton Crescent. Found Lady Frances and Miss H at home and took charge of a parcel from Miss H to Mrs Brewer, a baby's cloak.

9 Wilton Crescent is now The High Commission for the Republic of Singapore.

9 Wilton Crescent, SW1

Cranmers KS Archives

After the failed visit to Wilton Crescent on 20 January Kilvert returned to *Cranmers*:

It was bitterly cold in London, and tried to snow all day with a merciless east wind. Got back to Cranmers *at 5.30 and had tea in the schoolroom.*

Kilvert dined here on 27 January

Dined at Mr. Crichton's, 11 Eaton Place. Mrs. Crichton upstairs with neuralgia but I made the pleasant acquaintance of Mrs. Arthur Crichton, Lord Lifford's sister. She played and sang after dinner. Then Mr. Crichton and I played chess. I played infamously and he slumbered between the moves. A nice collection of rare birds in the house and a pretty picture of Mrs. Henry Crichton of Wye Cliff, with little Lily.

'A Pretty Picture'. The Portrait is now at the National Library of Wales. (See article in Journal *No 19)*

11 Eaton Place, SW1

LOST LEAVES FROM THE DIARY

By Karl Showler (Hay-on-Wye)

Karl Showler imagines some missing entries from the *Diary* from the autumn of 1877.

Tuesday 11 September

A letter from Thersie to say that John Houseman, Vicar of Bredwardine, had entered his eternal rest on Saturday 8th September. He

had been in the habit of taking cold baths and had been advised by his doctor that this might prove a fatal shock to his system, as it turned out.

Friday 14 September

Mr Venables wrote to tell me of Houseman's death, he is a Patron Trustee of the living together with Creasy Evans of Surbiton and Francis Bagley of Cambridge Terrace, Hyde Park. He asks if I would like to be considered for the living. He would write to the Bishop of Hereford suggesting my interest and also to his fellow Trustees. Spent the rest of the morning on my knees in prayer. I need to consider my ministry to the upland people but it would be easier for my parents to visit me and for father and me to share our duties. Thersie is nearby and Andrew Pope, as well as many of my other friends in Clyro and Hay.

Monday 17 September

After an early breakfast went down on the train to *Llysdinam* to talk to Mr and then Mrs Venables and to thank them for their kind support for nominating me for the living at Bredwardine. Mr Venables expressed his pleasure as he felt I was burying myself at St Harmon's and that Bredwardine needed a steady hand particularly as I would be a member of the Jarvis Trust which was facing difficulties over its use of its funds, holding them and not disbursing them to the poor people. I would serve alongside the Bishop who is its chairman and Mr Phillott. Mr Venables spoke highly of James Atlay who was bringing the Hereford Diocese out of its ancient sleep. I mentioned his confirming Pope and that the latter would be a near neighbour as he was now Vicar of Blakemere and Preston-on-Wye and that I had acted as his best man at his wedding to Miss Money-Kyrle in September 1874.

Mr Venables enjoyed the story of the confirmation but he felt that the local clergy were at fault in allowing it to happen also Pope should have brought his gown when attending on his Bishop. At that time the Bishop's zeal was not welcome in all quarters as it disturbed many who were set in their ways. Bishop James had settled down and was proving a kindly and accessible pastor. He was not like so many modern Bishops an ex-headmaster but had experience as a Cambridge tutor, parish priest and then as a canon in industrial Leeds.

Mr Venables advised me to write to the Bishop at once, now that my mind was made up, expressing the wish to wait on him. Mr Venables knows that Bishop Atlay wishes to get to know all his clergy and that the Palace door is always open to those who seek his pastoral advice. Mr Venables will sign and ask Mr Bevan to sign my Letters Testimonial.

Tuesday 18 September

Wrote to the Bishop of Hereford and to the Bishop of St David's telling them of my seeking the living at Bredwardine.

Monday 24 September

A letter from Hereford awaited me on my return from villaging, or in this scattered community walking from farm to farm. A personal letter from James Atlay who has also heard from Mr Venables. The Bishop desires me to come to the Palace for the night of 2 October by which time he will have had a reply from my Bishop [Jones of St David's]. Clearly Mr Venables has given me a good character. The Bishop indicates he will be having a small dinner party that evening and also he has invited William and Thersie to luncheon on the day following so that he may meet them informally. I will write to Thersie too, so that I can spend a few days with them. He also wishes me to give a brief sermon at his family morning prayers.

Sent my Letters Testimonial signed by Mr Venables and Mr Bevan to my own Bishop for countersignature.

I anticipate the livings of Brobury and Bredwardine come to some £300 per year but now that the family have come into Aunt Maria's inheritance we will not be as poor as father thought we might be, if he has to give up his living due to increasing frailty.

Tuesday 2 October

Went down by the morning train to Three Cocks and changed to that going to Hereford. Mr Venables suggested that I should take a cab from the station to the Palace so as not to arrive hot and out of breath and that I should take my gown and evening dress. I had indicated to the Bishop I would expect to arrive before midday.

At the entrance to the Palace a young footman took my bag and showed me into a pleasant parlour with a cheerful fire. A maid brought me some refreshments and a note from the Bishop saying that he had been called on urgent business to the Deanery which could not be put off. He also regretted that Mrs Atlay had already left to attend a meeting of the Hereford Orphanage Trust of which she is secretary. The maid took me to my room, for the Palace is an old rambling building each bishop having done his bit in the rambling. It is divided into two by a large hall with excellent pictures of past bishops.

I returned to the parlour fire to await the Bishop. As I was contemplating what I would say to the Bishop and writing up my pocket book I could hear children's voices outside the door. The door opened and a little head came round, and then retreated. There was clearly a conference and then a boy appeared who asked politely if I had seen George or Miss Nimmo.

On my inviting all the children in, four appeared, they seemed quite used to visitors and were happy to sit on the carpet by the fire. The ringleader said her name was Agnes and that she was seven, then there was Charles aged six and Hugh aged four and Harold aged three.

On my commenting that he must be the baby of the family Agnes said in a firm voice: 'Oh no, there is little Ellen but she is with nurse in the nursery'.

When they were all sitting comfortably I told them the story of the old woman who found a baby dragon, all cold and wet in the hedge when she was out gathering sticks for her fire. She took the little thing home and kept it warm and fed it on bread and milk and bits from her own meagre table so that in a year or two it grew quite big and she kept it under her table to keep her feet warm.

Suddenly the children became restless so I turned round and there standing in the door was the Bishop.

'Pray, Kilvert, do carry on, I want to hear how she managed'.

Then drawing up a chair to the fire and, surrounded by the children, I completed the story.

Luncheon was an informal affair at which I met Emily Nimmo the governess who was in charge of the children. She had been born in London where her parents still lived so that we talked about the Dulwich Art Gallery and the recent Royal Academy pictures. Miss Nimmo had been with the Atlays for some years. She said she had an assistant in the schoolroom and there were two nursemaids to look after the little ones. She had been looking for the children but hearing my talking to them went to find George who was stuck up an apple tree in the garden. I also met Miss Selina and Master Edward who had been born in Leeds and could put on a Yorkshire accent which seemed to upset Emily Nimmo.

As it was a glorious afternoon the Bishop suggested that we should all go and 'touch the Gun'*. Selina, and Edward with George between them walked ahead followed by the Bishop and me. Then Miss Nimmo with Agnes and Charles on either hand and finally Harold and Ellen in their own bassinets pushed by their nursemaids.

The Bishop expressed the view that we should aim to be back in time for the afternoon service in the Cathedral as the Gun was reachable by walking briskly, the youngest and the babies could play on the Castle Green until we returned from the far ramparts having touched the Gun. 'You know Kilvert to "touch the Gun" in my family is a sign that one has left babyhood and is now capable of walking out to see the Crimean Gun on the far corner of the castle ramparts'.

Leading the way the Bishop opened a private door into the cloisters and then through the garden at the rear of the Cathedral to come out beyond the Lady Chapel, the Deanery and the Cathedral School. A side lane took us to St Ethelbert's Well, where Selina gave us a little history lesson. The children chased the sheep who were eating the grass on the Castle Green. The nursemaids did a slow perambulation round the green and we went onto the ramparts overlooking the river, where at the far end was the Gun.

On the way the Bishop spoke about the ill-effects of the Irish disestablishment and said he would do all in his power to prevent the Welsh dioceses going the same way. Our Church had shed its Roman ritual superstitions, was firmly Episcopal. Sadly many clergy were being tempted by the theatre of Roman rites and would have us all fully garbed. Certainly Clergy needed neatness and order and he hoped I had my gown with me. The Bible was the centre of our faith and the basis of his own simple beliefs.

The walk was, in a way, a most informal examination, I could see he must have enjoyed being a tutor at St John's before he was called to accept the burdens of high office.

We returned to the Palace in time for Evening Prayer in the Cathedral and then there was time to change for dinner. Mrs Atlay met us in the anteroom, she had had a busy day dealing with the problems of her orphan girls. I thought she looked tired. It was said the Bishop had married a woman twenty years his junior but there did not seem to be so great a difference. [Frances Atlay was the same age as Kilvert]. She was however a charming lady who explained to me that she now had two sons at Wellington College, James who was doing well and Henry who was a slogger and certainly not academic, she felt there was something in him of her father who had served in John Company's Army in India.

I took Emily Nimmo in to dinner, where I met the Bishop's secretary, Henry Beddoe and his wife Caroline and Mr Phillott and his wife. The latter is deeply involved in the Jarvis Charitable Trust as Rector of Staunton. Sidney Smith one of the Bishop's chaplains came over too, it transpired he had been at the University with the Bishop and was now a canon and prebendary at the Cathedral, at the moment in residence.

After the cloth was drawn, the port circulated, although the Bishop is not a teetotaller, he does not countenance excess. Beddoe enthused over the Bishop's cider which we had in lieu of wine. Beddoe is something of an expert judge in the local drink.

We joined the ladies in the drawing room where Mrs Atlay was discussing the education of her orphans, she and the Bishop are anxious that the girls get a better education than in most orphanages. Phillott is also a diocesan education inspector and told several tales about local schools.

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*The Gun, 'Roaring Meg', is now in Churchill Gardens, Hereford.

Wednesday 3 October

After breakfast the whole household left whatever they were doing and assembled in the Palace Chapel for Morning Prayer. I was asked to do the readings and the Bishop did the prayers. I fear I do not like giving a short address. It was nice to see his staff in their working clothes just as the disciples came to Jesus straight from their nets by the sea.

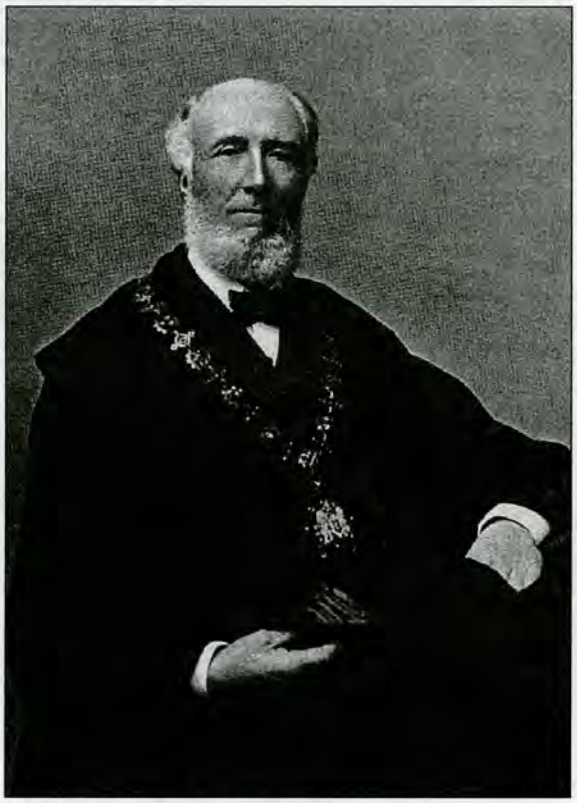
The Bishop, before he went to his papers, of which there was a great mound, asked me to do a turn round the garden. He raised several points about my ministry and expressed his gladness that I planned for my youngest sister Dora to be my housekeeper and that I should be near my oldest sister, Mrs W.R. Smith. The Bishop then remarked that William and Thersie were joining us for lunch so that he would get to know two Kilverts in two days.

WHO WAS HENRY C.BEDDOE?

By Karl Showler, (Hay-on-Wye)

Francis Kilvert had been safely ensconced in Bredwardine Vicarage from the previous November when, as he notes in his Diary: Wednesday 23 January (1877) *sent Mr H.C. Beddoe a cheque for £9.8.1 for the institution fees to Bredwardine and Brobury.*

William Plomer offers no explanation as to who this man was and why the Diarist was sending him money. In the course of my biographical study of Kilvert's diocesan Bishop James Atlay time and again I found references to Henry Child Beddoe, Bishop's Secretary. I therefore felt it useful to devote some space to him.



Mr Henry Child Beddoe, JP

When James Atlay arrived in Hereford he continued to employ the services of Messrs Evans and Beddoe. Thomas Evans (1804-1872) had served as secretary to Bishop George Huntingford, until 1832, to his successors Edward Grey (1832-1837), Thomas Musgrave, (1837-1847), Renn Hampden, (1848-1868) and finally James Atlay. On Thomas Evans' death in 1872, Henry Beddoe (1824-1912) continued the legal practice alone until joined by his son Charles. Henry, 'The Grand Old man of Hereford', served Bishops Musgrave, Hampden, Atlay and Percival.

Henry Child Beddoe son of John Beddoe JP of Bewdley, Shropshire, after attending Bridgnorth School, was articled aged 22 to a solicitor in Ledbury in 1841. He then joined Thomas Evans' Hereford firm in 1846 and was subsequently admitted to the profession in the Hilary Term of 1847. He was to remain in Hereford until he died sixty-six years later aged 88.

In 1851 he formally became a partner with Thomas Evans practising in the Cathedral Close where he acted as Registrar to the Hereford Archdeaconry. Henry Beddoe became interested in local politics being elected to the City Council in 1861, supported by the Liberals. Subsequently he adopted the Conservative cause to return to the Council in 1883. He was elected mayor in 1889, alderman in 1890 and re-elected mayor in 1898 and again in 1903. In 1904 Alderman Beddoe negotiated an agreement with Alderman Wits that instead of the Mayoralty remaining with the majority party on the Council it would alternate between the Liberals and Conservatives and that there would be an equal number of aldermen representing the two parties. This was a realistic assessment that recognised the failing of the theory that on entering the Council Chamber those elected laid aside party loyalty.

HB was a typical Victorian solicitor adding a long list of appointments to his name as the years went by, although much of the actual routine work would, no doubt, be dealt with by his clerks. On the arrival of Bishop James Atley the Chapter Acts' Book records (7005/10) that Henry C. Beddoe, Notary Public, was granted a 'patent' of the office of Registrar of the Archbishop of Salop 30 October 1868 and also the Scribe of the Scribeship of the said Archdeaconry. This was duly signed by the Bishop, so now Henry Beddoe held both Registrarships.

The Chapter Acts' Book, of which there is a long run, contains the record of the collective decisions of the Cathedral, Dean and Chapter acting as a 'corporation'. The wording of the entries follows time-honoured formulae covering the running of the Cathedral and its estates.

As the years passed Henry Beddoe added to his list of appointments which included:

Secretary to the Lord Bishop of the Diocese
Steward and Chapter Clerk to the Custos and Vicars of Hereford Cathedral

Justice of the Peace (JP) for the City of Hereford
Member of the City Council Committees:
Waterworks and Lighting; Finance, Rates and City Debts; Sewers and Outfall works
Treasurer, for the recently formed Hereford County Council
Treasurer of the Hereford and Counties Conservative Club
Treasurer Woolhope Naturalists Field Club
President of the Hereford Gymnasium, Bryngwyn Hall, Barrs Court
President Herefordshire Football Association
Lieutenant No. 1 Company Hereford Volunteers
Deputy Provincial Grand Master Herefordshire Freemasons. (Lodge member for 60 years.)
. . . and many more.

Charles Brindley Beddoe joined his father to practise as H.C. Beddoe and Son at 37 Bridge Street. When at last Henry Beddoe died, Charles continued to serve Bishop Percival until Henry Henson became Bishop when he handed over the secretaryship to F.R James in 1918.

Alderman Beddoe was a man of many parts. In 1889, for instance, he judged cider and perry at the Royal Agricultural Society's Jubilee Show in Windsor Great Park. That June day with two others the three men dealt with 91 entries!

In those days there was time to spend an afternoon in field sports. On September 16, 1890, Beddoe went shooting at King's Pyon with the Bishop's youngest son nine-year-old Marcus. Marcus took aim at a covey of partridges and fired just as sixty-six-year-old Alderman Beddoe stepped into the boy's line of sight. As a result he took the whole charge in his right leg and arm. Fortunately the worthy Alderman was not gravely injured. No doubt he was heavily clothed which would have protected the more delicate parts of his anatomy and the boy would have had a light gun.

This story is related in *The Mayors of Hereford* by William Collins, *Hereford Times* (c. 1911). The published photograph of Beddoe shows a tall, well-built, handsome man looking far less primeval than some of his contemporaries. William Collins produced at least two editions of his *Mayors of Hereford*. In the edition in the *Ball Collection*, which was extended to 1919, Collins wrote that:

> 'Beddoe was more a brother than an official to Bishop Atlay; so much so that the Diocese was supposed to be run by the firm of Atlay and Beddoe'.
>
> Collins also included the following doggerel verses from the *Church Gazette* which reflect the late Victorian view of the 'Firm' and some of the problems facing it.

If the Bishop is in a corner tight
And ugly things are said oh !
He calmly sleeps it over, and
Betakes himself to Beddoe

When ritualists are quarrelling
On azure stoles or red, oh !
Then, to appease their little souls,
He send 'em off to Beddoe.

If some indignant Father screams,
"A man divorced has wed, oh !"
He gives him his quietus by
A reference to Beddoe.

Whene'er his Ludship's amply dined,
And very well has fed, oh !
Out comes the cards, and then for luck,
Why – he goes Nap – on Beddoe.

He's the Bishop's sleeping partner, and
Whene'er their shells are shed, oh !
Pray that their kernels rest in peace,
Of Bishop and of Beddoe.

Bishop James Atlay

When Henry Beddoe 'The grand old man of Hereford' died on 23 March 1912 he was comfortably well off, probate being granted to his son Charles and to Francis Reginald James, Solicitor, in the amount of £14,190-6s-7d. Henry had survived, by three years, his wife Caroline 1830 – 1909. Both were buried under a substantial memorial cross in what is now the lower or old section of the Barton Road Municipal Cemetery.

The Work of the Bishop's Secretary

The bishop's secretary received various fees including those under the Ecclesiastical Dilapidation's Act of 1871.

A cleric seeking an incumbency had fees to pay as set out in the *Diocesan Calendar:* this is the amount Kilvert paid in January 1877:

	£.	s.	d
Chancellor of the Diocese		16	8
Registrar of Diocese	2	2	4
Bishop's Secretary	4	4	0
Apparitor (attendant)		3	6
Sealer		4	6
Record Keeper		2	6
Parchment etc.		3	6
Fee on sequestration during vacancy	1	11	1
	£9	8	1

Even at the end of James' episcopate there were no office aids such a typewriter or a telephone at the Palace for this was still the age of messenger boys and telegrams. The Bishop either used proforma printed letters such as used in his *Letters of Enquiry* to his parish clergy or he wrote longhand on small plain sheets, one of which has survived in his correspondence with the Prime Minister William Gladstone over the small parish of Hopton Cangford on deposit in the St Deiniol's library.

In 2004 the Hereford Cathedral Library staged a display to mark the restoration of one of Henry Beddoe's magnificent photographic albums.

THEN AND NOW

Erwood Station, in the late Fifties Photo: KS Archives

... and today Photo: John Wilks

Passed through many times by Kilvert on his way to Llysdinam and, on 14 September 1874, when returning from Aberedw with Morrell, Prickard and Trumper. The last train to Erwood ran on 31 December 1962. In 1984 the derelict station was turned into a craft centre and café serving home-made cakes etc. There is public parking which makes this an ideal start for a circular walk with the promise of refreshments at the finish.

Horden's as it was when Kilvert bought his notebooks there
Photo by courtesy of the Eric Pugh Collection

'Horden's' as it is today Photo: John Wilks

DISCOVERING KILVERT

By Margaret Roy (Malvern)

When my daughter asked me what I would like for Christmas, a sudden flash of inspiration made me say, 'A subscription to the Kilvert Society, please.' This year I have come across two people in the course of following other hobbies who belong to the Society, both of whom have written articles in recent *Journals*. The envelope duly arrived on Christmas Eve.

I feel I have always known about RFK. My grandmother, my mother and my aunts used to talk about his diaries. All were born in Kington Langley, Langley Fitzurse in Kilvert's day, where my great-grandmother ran the village Post Office at *The Barton*.

I was brought up in Melksham but went to school at Hardenhuish. 'The House' contained our sixth-form classrooms, the library and the Headmaster's office with its view overlooking the playing fields, a view surely shared by anyone visiting Hardenhuish Church just along the path. *Each field and hill and bank has its own bright memories and its own sweet story* (11 March 1876).

In 1985 we settled in Malvern and more Kilvert influences were still to come. We loved to visit Hay-on-Wye and it was there when browsing for nothing in particular at Richard Booth's that I picked up a copy of the *Diary* selections. It was then that I discovered the link with Clyro and Bredwardine. In 2002 we bought a holiday home in Pembrokeshire and found ourselves using the route through either of these two places whenever we travelled there.

By 2007 when I decided to do the Wye Valley Walk for charity sponsorship, I was well prepared to look out for Kilvert pilgrimage spots. I did the *Monnington Walk, a noble avenue of magnificent Scotch firs bordering a broad green ride, stretching from Brobury Scar (a red sandstone precipice beetling over the winds of Wye) to Monnington Court House* (5 April 1875). I picnicked in Monnington Church lych-gate. I crossed Bredwardine bridge with the Wye in spate, the torrent having made the footbridge to the vicarage side of the stream impassable. *The Wye froze across below Bredwardine Bridge between the Vicarage garden and Brobury Shore* (23 December 1878).

Bredwardine Vicarage and church. Photo: Margaret Roy

The route took me to his resting-place and the lovely display inside the church which I was lucky to find open as the flower arranger was busy working. On another occasion I crossed the Wye again at Rhayader where I watched boys jumping into the water. *We watched the spearing* [of salmon] *from the bridge, a most picturesque sight* (25 November 1878). I looked down on distant Builth from the hills and lunched there. *A strange fascination, a beautiful enchantment hangs over Builth and the town is magically transfigured still* (13 April 1875). I walked into Hay from Llowes following the frozen river bank in February. The day was sunny with no breeze and the river afforded wonderful reflections. *I got up early and ran over to Hay across the fields in a keen white bright frost* (11 February 1870).

Hardenhuish House Photo: David Howell

The Poet's Gate Photo: KS Archives

I look forward to attending events both in the Border Country and in Wiltshire and (did I mention that our daughter took out a joint subscription?) hope my husband Colin will join me too. He is an organist so will be interested in the instruments of any churches we may visit.

Another Christmas present was *Figures in a Wiltshire Scene* by Ken Watts, chosen for its chapter on Robin Tanner, my cousin and grandson of the Postmistress. I was delighted that three pages in the chapter are devoted to Kilvert, Robin and Heather being avid readers of the *Diary*. The section includes the photograph of the 'stern-looking Frank' (Editorial March 2009) but he is facing to the right. I was even more amazed to discover that *Old Chapel Field*, where the Tanners lived in Kington Langley, contains the grave of Kilvert's great-grandfather, William Coleman. Robin also purchased the field on the opposite side of the road in order to preserve the view which Kilvert loved: *...there were lovely glimpses of the far blue hills and chalk downs seen through the tops of the luxuriant elms of the Happy Valley, which lay beneath me, a sea of rich bright green foliage* (19 June 1876). Robin had its gate, known as 'Poet's Gate', inscribed to the memory of Kilvert. The elms will have gone but next time I turn at *The Plough Inn* to visit the village, I will be sure to stop and see if the inscription survives.*

*Alas! It does not (ed.)

JOHN KILVERT

A report on the BBC Midland evening news on 20 January described a project whereby a number of local museums have each selected significant artefacts which relate to the history of the Black Country and which have a connection with their respective boroughs. The list of objects so assembled will be part of a History of the World project, a partnership between the BBC, the British Museum and 350 other provincial museums.

The particular interest of this report for Kilvertians is that the Sandwell Museum has selected, as its contribution, a sword belonging to a John Kilvert who had fought in the Crimean War. His regiment, the 11th Hussars, formed part of the famous 600 who took part in The Charge of the Light Brigade on 25 October 1854, during the Battle of Balaclava, an event immortalised by Tennyson in his poem which concludes:

They that had fought so well
Came through the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

John Kilvert, although wounded, was one of the fortunate ones who were 'left'. At the time of the battle he was a 21-year-old corporal; later promoted to Troop Sergeant-Major. He left the army in 1861, settled in Wednesbury, becoming mayor in 1905-06. He died in October 1920.

This seemed to me to be a suitable subject for research for an enthusiastic Kilvertian, to establish whether there was any connection between this soldier and the family of the Diarist, and especially, given the locality, with the Shropshire Kilverts. I was about to write a short piece for the *Journal* urging the above when our resourceful and vigilant archivist (thank you, Colin) told me that such research had already been undertaken by former KS committee member, Maurice White of Birmingham, and the results published in a KS Newsletter article in September 1984. This is reprinted below.

There is still scope for further research, however, because Maurice was unable to establish firmly whether there is any connection between John Ashley Kilvert and the Kilverts who emigrated to Wiltshire.

Editor

Cavalryman John Kilvert
Photo by courtesy of britishempire.co.uk

... and as Mayor of Wednesbury
Photo by courtesy of Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery

JOHN ASHLEY KILVERT

By Maurice W. White (Birmingham)

A recent BBC2 television Time Watch programme dealing with the survivors of the Charge of the Light Brigade, gave mention to a JOHN ASHLEY KILVERT and stated (by the old soldier interviewed) that this John was related to Kilvert the Diarist.

The television programme was inaccurate on two points, one the date of John Ashley Kilvert's death and the other, his place of burial.

His tombstone in Woodgreen Cemetery, Walsall Road, Wednesbury, reads:

Elizabeth Aston
wife of
John Ashley Kilvert
Aged 68 years
who died August 31 1900

Also
George Astley Kilvert
who died December 16 1902
Aged 43 years

Also
John Ashley Kilvert
who died October 17th 1920

(I do not know where George Astley Kilvert fits in – he is probably not a son since JAK married EA in 1861).

Enquiries at Wednesbury Library have unearthed the following:

John Ashley Kilvert, son of George Kilvert (farmer) of High Ercall (Shropshire – near Shrewsbury), was born September 29th 1833 and was educated at High Ercall Grammar School. At the age of fourteen he went into a commercial business career with a wine and spirits merchant in Birmingham, but tired of business life and joined the 11th Hussars aged seventeen years (1850), accepting the Queen's Shilling in Nottingham. He stated in a newspaper interview in about 1910, that one of his uncles had fought under Wellington at Waterloo.

In September 1854 the Regiment (formerly Prince Albert's own) was sent to the Crimea and in the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, John was severely wounded in the leg (a musket ball through the calf of the right leg) and by a sabre cut on the head. His horse got him back to safety, but it had to be destroyed. John was nursed by Florence Nightingale and subsequently returned to England receiving a medal for service in the Crimea from Queen Victoria on 24th May 1855; also he was awarded the Turkish medal and three bars. In 1857 Corporal Kilvert was appointed Troop Sergeant Major and he resigned from the army in 1861.

(Of 110 mounted men only 25 returned and only 198 of the Brigade escaped destruction and of his fifteen tent comrades only one other survived).

John Ashley Kilvert settled in Wednesbury (Staffordshire) in 1861 in which year he had married Elizabeth (née Hayes) and he would appear to have entered the trade of a Pawn Broker at No. 1 Union Street (a chemist shop today).

He entered public life as a member of the then existing Local Board and was elevated to the Aldermen's bench in 1886 (when Wednesbury obtained Borough status). A member of the Wednesbury School Board for seventeen years and 38 years member of Wednesbury Building Society of which he was Vice-President from 1898; Vice-President of the Wednesbury Literary Association, member of the Art Gallery and of the Technical School Institute Committees and Chairman of the Burial Board – all these were clearly sound reasons for his final accolade, Mayor of Wednesbury 1905-1906. His wife having died some five years earlier, he chose as his Lady Mayoress his niece, Mrs H.R. Harris, the daughter of Captain Charles Kilvert of Shrewsbury (John's brother). Contemporary newspaper articles describe him as a tall, commanding figure; and a former Mayor of Wednesbury, a Mr David Chadwick Jackson, a spritely 88-year-old, remembers him by his dignified presence at functions. Two photographs, one in 1905 in his Mayoral Robes shows a portly gentleman with a large forehead, receding hair, full white side-whiskers and moustache (no beard), reminding me very much of Jimmy Edwards – comedian. The other, twenty years earlier when he was about 52 years of age, differs only in the colour of the whiskers.

A novel ancestral trace talks of his pedigree back to 993AD, to a Yorkshire Thane, Kilvert son of Lilf, his mother being Sigen.

The Parish Church of St Bartholomew, at which alderman John Ashley Kilvert was churchwarden (1894-1895-1896) proudly displays a carved panel to his memory. A Kilvert Road is named after him in the town.

He lived in a large house aptly named *Balaclava* in Pritchard Street close to the town centre and though a walk up (and down) the street failed to find the house, a resident misdirected me to the adjacent house which she called Kilvert House. The resident was the aforementioned Mr Jackson who recalled the building of *Balaclava House* and its former years of glory.

Mr Jackson has kindly offered to make contacts for me at the Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery where John Ashley Kilvert's Balaclava uniform, sword and medals are supposedly kept, with a view of possibly tracing Kilvert's ancestry back to Shropshire. I have been in contact with Kilverts from the Wednesbury directory, none of whom knows any direct line through to Wednesbury's Kilvert and it is interesting to note that Mr Jackson himself had never heard of Francis Kilvert the Diarist.

Having got thus far, I shall however, press on, since I feel that somehow it is possible that there is a connection with FK's great-grandfather, Thomas, (of Condover, an adjacent parish not too far from High Ercall).

We are told in Kilvert's Shropshire Ancestry – by Marian Halford (A Kilvert Symposium), that generations back Kilverts were yeomen in Astley (four and a half miles NNE of Shrewsbury also only about four miles from High Ercall – my comment), and that Thomas of Condover had three sons, Richard, Thomas and John (and three daughters). Of these the second son, Thomas, is Francis's great-grandfather upon whose death, in 1782 his widow, Elizabeth and family moved to Bath. This Thomas's younger brother John we hear farmed in Berrington, again not far from High Ercall and died in 1786.

I reason, therefore, that Richard and John are the Kilverts remaining in this part of Shropshire at the end of the eighteenth century.

From the known facts John Ashley Kilvert, born 1833, had a brother Richard and a father George, who would probably be in his twenties when his sons were born and would himself then have been born in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The gap lies then in George's father who should appear at about the time the Bath branch departed.

Could it possibly be that the link comes with Kilvert's father's great-uncle, John of Berrington?

I find it interesting to note that the only reference to the Crimean War comes from Emily Wyndowe in her *Rambling Recollections* (page 95) when she refers to Captain Hugh Clutterbuck at Harnish House 'who had been wounded in the Charge at Balaclava was there wheeling himself about in a self-propelling chair....'

Clearly this branch of the family was in no way in contact with the Shropshire branch. This could suggest that any connection is very weak.

THE MEREDITHS OF BRYN-Y-GARTH, CLYRO

By A.M. Scharf (Solihull)

These Merediths, Elizabeth (née Drew) and Thomas, were my great-great-aunt and uncle. They were tenant farmers and were not related to any of the other Meredith families mentioned in *Kilvert's Diary,* as far as I can discover.

Francis Kilvert makes several references to visits to the Merediths at *Bryn-y-Garth* in his diaries so I can positively identify this family as being my relatives. I quote from his diaries:

Saturday 3 February, 1872. *The whole of the beautiful Cwmgwanon woods are to be felled, the Castle wood and all that exquisite wooded bank up the dingle to the 'tufted copse' and Bryn y garth. The trees have been doomed, measured and numbered. The sale is to take place next week. And then the axe will be heard in the sacred dingle. The cottagers say that these woods are to be felled to pay De Winton's gambling debts.*

(The numbering and selling off of timber was a worrying sign for tenants that their landlord was in financial difficulties, or about to sell up, or both).

Tuesday 26 March, 1872. *On to Bryn y garth across the flushed meadows, clambering over and creeping under the trunks of enormous prostrate ashes. A girl with a merry arch rolling eye who looked as if she knew me let me in. Mrs Meredith talking of the school, said that when her elder boys were at school it was kept by 'a femalekind'.*

She said the old farm house was going all to pieces. No repairs to house or buildings, the usual fate of the Maesllwch farms. The girl with the merry rolling eyes let me out again. Stout jolly red-faced Meredith was drafting sheep in a meadow with his son Danzey. He walked a little way with me towards the 'stonen stile' on the way to Wernewydd, and shook hands heartily with 'Thank you for calling on we.'

Monday 10 March, 1873. *Called on old John Williams the Vicarage gardener in the Cwm. Called also at Bryn y garth on the Merediths and on the Lloyds at Wernnewydd.* [Kilvert's spelling of Wernnewydd is erratic – ed.)

Thursday 20 March, 1873. *The Vicar of Llowes came in to luncheon. A message was brought down that Farmer Meredith of Bryn y garth was dying and we walked up there at once, by way of Llowes Common, Pen y fforest and groes y Feilig, as the road up the Cwm was so bad.*

Thomas and Elizabeth Meredith had farmed firstly at Glascwm and their eldest child, Thomas, was born there, at *Ty-Gwyn,* in 1855. Four more children were born at *Penllanerch Farm* in Glascwm: Samuel in 1857, Dantzey Drew in 1858, Vincent in 1860 and James Edmund in 1861. All five boys were baptised at St David's Church, Glascwm by the Revd Benjamin Marsden, the vicar whom Francis Kilvert visited on Monday 22 May, 1871, having walked over from Clyro. First the Diarist went to the Vicarage where he met the vicar *with his stout frame, ruddy face, white hair, stern long sweeping eyebrows and a merry odd twinkle in his eye. One of the last of the old-fashioned parsons.*

The Vicar, the Revd Benjamin Marsden, gave Kilvert some cider and some bread and butter saying, *I am bishop here*, then fetching the church key he added, *Come and see the Cathedral*.

By 1864 the Meredith family had moved from Glascwm to *Bryn-y-Garth*, the farm which nestles in the valley up in the hills above Clyro, and here two more children were born: a girl, Elizabeth in 1864, and another boy, John, in 1867. These two were baptised at Clyro Church although, strictly speaking, *Bryn-y-Garth* is not entirely in Clyro since the parish boundary runs through the middle of the farmhouse – very handy for non-conformists in the old days!

Dantzey Drew, the Merediths' third son, got his unusual first name, with various spellings, from his Dauntsey ancestors of Glascwm and Drew from his mother's maiden name. Dantzey would have been thirteen years old in March, 1872 when Francis Kilvert saw him drafting sheep with his father in the meadow. Sadly, Dantzey died at *Bryn-y-Garth* three days before Christmas, 1877, aged nineteen and was buried in Clyro churchyard.

Father Thomas Meredith, *stout jolly red-faced Meredith* was thought by his family to be dying in March, 1873 when Francis Kilvert was urgently sent for. But it had all been a false alarm for Farmer Meredith managed to live on for another fifteen years. He died at *Lower House Farm* in June, 1887 aged 62 and was buried in Clyro churchyard. The family had moved to *Lower House* after the death of their son, Dantzey, at *Bryn-y-Garth* in 1877. There are no fewer than fifteen references to *Lower House*, Clyro, in the surviving *Diary,* but a family called Williams lived there then.

Another tragedy struck the Meredith family a few months after the death of their father when on 29 October of the same year, Vincent, their fourth son, died at *Moorhampton Farm*, Yazor, Herefordshire, aged only 27 years. The cause of death was diabetes, and he was buried at Clyro next to his brother, Dantzey. He left a young widow, Mary Ann, aged 22, and a son, Robert, who was only a few months old. His widow, Mary Ann, died in 1902 of a wasting disease, and their only child, Roberet, also died, aged nineteen, in 1906.

In his father's will, Vincent Meredith (who had been set up in farming at *Moorhampton* by his father) was left a sum of money for the care and upkeep of his oldest brother, Thomas, who had special needs. Thomas had been placed in an institution in 1894, and died in 1908 aged 45.

Elizabeth Meredith outlived her husband by fifteen years and died in 1902 aged 74. She was buried at Clyro between her husband, Thomas and son Dantzey. The farmhouse at *Bryn-y-Garth* which had caused her so much concern in 1872 is now in good shape. It is interesting to note from the *Diary* that her elder boys had attended school as this was before the advent of compulsory education, in 1870.

James Edmund Meredith, the fifth child, died a few years after his mother in 1906, aged 44, followed by Samuel, the second oldest son, who died in 1911, aged 54. Both were buried at Clyro and both were unmarried.

Elizabeth Ann Meredith, the only girl in a family of six boys, was the girl with *a merry arch rolling eye who looked as if she knew me* who let Francis Kilvert in when he visited *Bryn-y-Garth* on 26 March, 1872, and *the girl with the merry rolling eyes* who let him out again. Elizabeth was eight years old then. She never married either. She died in 1914 aged 49, and was buried with her brother, Samuel, in a large plot marked by a pink Celtic cross and low railings. The average age at death of the five Meredith children buried near their parents at Clyro works out at only 38 years. These Meredith graves are all situated on the Painscastle Road side of the churchyard.

John Meredith, born at *Bryn-y-Garth* and the youngest of the Meredith children was now the last member of the family left alive. He made a late marriage to Cecilia which produced one son, Samuel. Cecilia died in 1940 aged 59 and John, who was blind, died in 1943, aged 75. They are buried together at Clyro a short distance from the rest of the Meredith family. Out of the seven children of Thomas and Elizabeth Meredith of *Bryn-y-Garth* only two were to marry, and from their marriages there was only one surviving grandson.

Further notes on the Revd Benjamin Marsden

Born at Leek, Staffordshire in late 1803, he married Selina Beavan in 1838 at St Michael's Cathedine, Breconshire, about twelve miles south of Clyro. They had three daughters. Benjamin Marsden would have been in his late sixties at the time of Kilvert's visit in 1871.

He died at Torquay in 1883 aged 79 and his body was brought back to Glascwm to his 'Cathedral' for burial alongside his wife, Selina, who had predeceased him by three decades. She had died in 1853 aged only 44.

NEWISH BOOK

Howards End is on the Landing

This eye-catching title is that of a recent book by Susan Hill, published last year. Its subtitle is 'A year of reading from home' and it owes its genesis to the moment when the author went to the bookshelves on her landing to look for a book she knew was there. It was not, but there were many others, at least a dozen that she realised she had not read. The elusive book was eventually discovered

after a search through several more rooms and more shelves, but it was this search and the discovery of so many unread books which marked the start of a journey, a journey by the author through her library, a mission even, which involved giving up buying new books and spending a year reading only those already in her possession.

Howards End is on the Landing is an account of that fascinating journey. The chapter titles alone are intriguing enough: 'Great Expectations Behind the Sofa', 'Decline and Rise', 'Things that Fall out of Books', 'The Dregs', 'Children 3 Adults 0'. and others, before the last word, the list of 'The Final Forty'. All very interesting, but the particular interest for Kilvertians, perhaps unsurprisingly, is the chapter entitled '....Diaries'. Here very soon, we come upon a lengthy consideration of guess who? '...Lurking in a small bookcase in a dark corner' is a set of Kilvert's Diary 'in three handsome volumes... dust wrappers intact... Kilvert deserves a better home'. The author reveals that she was introduced to the Diaries by Plomer and that she had borrowed something from the them for her novel *In the Springtime of the Year* – a borrowing 'directly from the scene he describes so wonderfully', the Easter Idyll. Here follows a lengthy quotation, part of the entry for Saturday 16 April 1870. The *Diary* is a wonderful book for dipping into, she continues, 'I scarcely know of a better bedside book or a finer companion'. Quite right too.

The narrative moves seamlessly on to an account of the author's friendship with William Plomer: 'A dapper man, rather formal, kind, shrewd, with a fund of excellent stories'...'he was founder [not quite!], leading light and President of the Kilvert Society for many years'.

There is plenty then in this chapter of interest for Kilvertians and for those interested in diaries and diarists in general, because here also are references to Gilbert White, Parson Woodforde, James Lees-Milne (of course!), Frances Partridge, Virginia Woolf and even to Sir Walter Scott whom one does not immediately think of as the keeper of a diary.

I warmly recommend this book to members for its general and specific interest. It offers abundant opportunity to agree and disagree with Susan Hill's opinions (see, for example, her views on Jane Austen and Shakespeare) and it yields interesting insights into the books in her collection and, by extension, into the author herself. Other people's bookshelves are always fascinating and .....revealing, but it is rare to be allowed into the confessional, as here. And what an idea! Save money in these hard economic times, give up buying books and read the unread upon *your* shelves, but first study the chapter entitled: 'Never Got Around to It, Don't Like the Look of It, Couldn't Get Beyond Page Ten and Other Poor Excuses'.

Howards End is on the Landing by Susan Hill, Profile Books Ltd., 2009. pp.234, £12.99. Editor

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CORRESPONDENCE

From Gillian Clarke (Stonesfield)

I have just been re-reading the account by Dudley Green of the Society's visit to Worcester Cathedral in March 2009 (KSJ No 29). It is an altogether fascinating account. However he states in the final line of Note 1 that he was unable to find The Tything on his map of Worcester. The Tything is the continuation of Foregate Street along which he was walking to the station there. The name changes after the junction with Castle Street. In other words Maria Kilvert and her mother moved farther out of town when they left College Green for The Tything.

OBITUARIES

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

Mr Peter Goold of Felindre, Brecon died on 25 November 2008. He had been a member since March 2004.

Mrs Gwen Grice died on 3 September 2009, six weeks after her 99th birthday. She was a Vice-President of the Society and the widow of Fred Grice, the eminent Kilvert scholar and the first Deputy President of the Society. Writing of her in the *Fred Grice Memorial Book* (Kilvert Society Publications 1985) the then Chairman, William Price said:
In all his enterprises Fred was greatly assisted by his gracious, charming wife Gwen.

Gwen's daughter Gillian Clarke writes:

Fred and Gwen moved from their native County Durham to Worcester in 1946, when Fred was appointed to the English department of the newly-created Emergency Training College (which later became Worcester Training College and is now the University of Worcester). Although the move south marked a fresh start for them both, it was particularly beneficial to Gwen. As soon as she arrived in Worcester she felt at home.

When they married in 1939 Fred was a master at Wellfield Grammar School and Gwen a primary teacher. As there was no such thing at that time as a married woman teacher, Gwen had to resign her post immediately, and in less than a year she had become a mother. In 1941 Fred was called up and was soon posted to North Africa as an aircraftman in the RAF. Gwen, now

to all intents and purposes a single parent, found herself at home all day with no job and only a fraction of her husband's teaching salary to live on. Durham had the distinction of being the only local authority in the country to fail to make up the salary of service personnel to the level they would have received as employees. By 1945 she had had enough of financial hardship, poor diet, loneliness and the terrible cold of the north-east, not to mention living under the flight path of bombers heading for Newcastle. She was more than ready to begin again.

Fred and Gwen Grice

In Worcester, Gwen and Fred threw themselves into the life of the new and somewhat experimental teacher training college. Although the former military hospital was unprepossessing, the extensive grounds included a farm and a large Victorian house with a collection of rare trees. The families of the academic staff were required to live on campus, in rooms at first, with a shared, mouse-infested kitchen, then later in small flats located throughout the site and adjacent to lecture rooms. For years the family lived next door to the science labs and opposite the art room. Many of the students in the early years had returned from military service and were much the same age as Gwen and Fred.

The national shortage of teachers at the end of the war meant that the previously excluded married women were now in demand. Gwen started to teach again at St Clement's School, Worcester. Eventually she was appointed Deputy Head of Dines Green School, where she remained until her retirement. She and Fred became ardent supporters of the Arts in Worcester.

Although life had improved enormously for Gwen, it was still not easy. After a busy day in school, she would make a meal for the family, bake a chocolate cake for Fred, then, half dead with exhaustion, she would go with Fred to one of his evening classes in Worcester or Welland near Malvern. A nervous but gifted lecturer, he claimed that he could not cope unless she was in the audience. He had no objection to her falling asleep, as happened occasionally; her physical presence was enough. By the 1960s Fred was an established lecturer and writer of children's books. They moved out of college and bought their own house. Gwen retired once she had earned a half-pension and they settled down to a happy and culturally-rich time together. By now, Gwen, always an avid reader, had time to indulge her interest in history and biography. Every summer they went to the Edinburgh Festival, where they particularly enjoyed Fringe events.

It was in Edinburgh that they began in a modest way to collect modern paintings, prints, sculpture and ceramics, a collection of which Gwen remained justifiably proud. A keen needlewoman, she became an embroiderer for Worcester Cathedral, while Fred helped in the Cathedral library. They were active members of the National Trust, the Worcestershire Archaeological Society, and for the last ten years of Fred's life, the Kilvert Society.

The years in which Fred was preparing to write his last book, *Francis Kilvert and his World,* were probably the happiest in their lives. Through the Kilvert Society they made many friends, all of whom shared their passion for the writings of Francis Kilvert. Fred was absorbed by his research, and Gwen loved nothing more than sharing it with him. Together they heard fascinating talks, went on memorable outings and were drawn through Kilvert to the beautiful landscape of the Welsh borderlands.

Their stimulating and companionable life together came to an abrupt end in February 1983 when Fred died after suffering a massive heart attack. For the second time, Gwen had to draw upon all her resources and construct a life on her own. Now those harsh wartime experiences were to stand her in good stead. This time she was prepared: well established in her adoptive city of Worcester, she was fiercely independent with many interests, many friends and a supportive family.

Fred remained as an invisible but tangible presence, giving her the strength and courage to carry on alone. Shortly after his death Gwen was appointed secretary to the Worcestershire Archaeological Society, a position she held until 1992, when she became membership secretary, finally resigning in 1997 at the grand age of 87. To her delight, she was also elected in 1985 a Vice-President of the Kilvert Society. In both instances she was following in Fred's footsteps. However, having been for so many years the loyal companion, she emerged from his shadow, and she blossomed.

Gradually, as travelling became more difficult, Gwen's involvement with the Kilvert Society waned; her interest, however, never faltered and she kept in touch with her close 'Kilvert' friends. Nothing gave her greater pleasure than entertaining friends of all ages. She continued to bake enthusiastically, and she became an accomplished raconteur. On the occasion of her 90th birthday party she made a memorable speech – she was on dazzling form. Sadly, this marked the beginning of the end. Later that summer she became increasingly confused, and after a series of catastrophic accidents in the following years she had to go into care. Eventually, we moved her to a nursing home near me in Oxfordshire. Happily for Gwen, she had no idea by then that she was no longer in her beloved Worcestershire; sadly, she was also never aware that I was living in Stonesfield, a mere stone's throw from the home of Kilvert's wife in Wootton-by-Woodstock.

I am most grateful to Mrs Clarke for preparing this obituary. (ed.)

*****

Mr Reg Morgan of Hay-on-Wye died on 9 January 2010 aged 90. He had been a member of the Society since 1966 and was its publications manager 1977-1987. He was the author of the Society's publication *Kilvert and the Wordsworth Circle*. He is survived by his wife, Mona, a member since 1960 and author of *Growing up in Kilvert Country* and *Twenty-Four Walks in Kilvert Country*. Reg and Mona Morgan were elected Honorary Life Members in 1991 for their services to the Society.

The obituary which follows was prepared by Reg's son, Ivan, and read at the funeral service at Hay Baptist Church on 28 January, where the Society was represented by Colin and Val Dixon and Elizabeth Rowe.

Reg was born on 3 September 1919 at Thetford in Norfolk to Edward and Dorothy Morgan. He was to be the first of five children. Later he was to have three sisters and a brother.

Reg and Mona Morgan

From an early age Reg was interested in books, classical music and gardening and played the organ and clarinet and was fairly academic. He was also interested in amateur dramatics and with Mary his sister he appeared in a number of plays. He had a very good memory and learned his lines quickly.

When he finished his schooling he started to work for his father who owned his own construction company and worked as an estimator for building projects. On his twentieth birthday in 1939, Britain declared war on Germany and soon after he was called up into the army and went over to Normandy during the D-Day invasion. After the war ended Reg learnt German and became an interpreter before returning to work in his father's business.

In 1950 he married his first wife Maud and in 1951 they had their only son, Ivan. For most of their married life they lived in Chalfont St Peter, a growing village in South Buckinghamshire and Reg developed a thriving orchard and vegetable garden. This culminated in writing a book first published in 1962 called *Construction Work in Your Garden* which detailed the main building and constructional work which may be required in gardens both large and small. It was priced at 12s 6d. This shows how long ago that really was!

After retiring from the building industry in the late Sixties Reg started a small antiquarian book business which resulted in most of the upstairs cupboards of the house becoming full of stored books waiting for a buyer. Fortunately this business did not last long as the whole fabric of the house was beginning to smell of old books!

Also during the late Sixties he bought a weekend bungalow in Dilwyn, Herefordshire and this resulted in fortnightly weekend trips to this rural area. During this time he started becoming interested in the Diary of the Reverend Francis Kilvert and joined the Kilvert Society eventually becoming their publications officer and leading some of the local walks. During Reg's early days in the Society he met a number of people including Mona.

Reg's first marriage unfortunately did not last and in the mid-1970s Maud and Reg were to separate. Reg was to move permanently to Dilwyn in 1974. After two years there he moved to Castle Gardens in Hay. During this time be became a bookseller in one of Richard Booth's bookshops. This continued until his eventual retirement.

In 1976 Reg married Mona and they lived happily in Castle Gardens for nearly 35 years. Always a dapper character in his collar and tie he would daily visit his local shop to fetch the newspapers and any provisions that he and Mona needed.

Then, three years ago Mona broke her hip in a fall and Reg was to care for her in the final few years of his life refusing the help of carers as he was always an independent man. During the later years of his life he suffered from skin cancer and eventually had to go for a serious operation in Worcester hospital in late November last year. Unfortunately, some time after the operation, he had a heart attack which weakened him. He was then moved to Bronllys hospital near Brecon where after a brief period he had a minor stroke and eventually he succumbed to bronchopneumonia on 9 January at the age of 90. He will be missed by his wife Mona, son Ivan and all who knew him.

I am very grateful to Mr Ivan Morgan for his permission to use the above (ed).

*****

Miss Margaret L. Walk of Barmouth, died on 14 September 2009. She had been a member since 1976 and a life member since 1982.

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

ENDPIECES

1. RFK featured in *The Times* crossword on 11 November 2009. Here is the clue: *Diarist in skirt, extremely short (7)*

2. I am pleased to say that the committee has authorised the restoration to its original form of the Kilvert Memorial Bench in Bredwardine churchyard, which was my pet Diamond Jubilee project (ed.).

The Memorial Bench before the supports were vandalised.
Photo: Editor
See cover of *Journal* No. 27

3.

'Kilverting', an all-weather pastime... for some! John Wilks at Twm Tobacco's grave on 17 February 2010.

4. Bredwardine Bridge

After, in due course, a brief pause on the restored bench, stroll down and admire this splendid eighteenth-century red-brick bridge, one of the finest such bridges in Britain. It is was originally a toll bridge and was built in 1769 to replace a ferry. The toll house is on the Bredwardine side and is still in use as a dwelling. There are numerous Diary *entries referring to the bridge, see in particular 28 November 1870 and 11 November 1878.*

Photo: Editor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Society gratefully acknowledges the receipt of a generous bequest by Gordon Rogers of Ross-on-Wye who died in December 2008. Gordon was the Society's honorary auditor for more than thirty years. His obituary appeared in the March 2009 *Journal*.

WANTED

A WEBSITE MANAGER

After some sterling work, Carol Smith wishes to step down as our website manager.

If you have the skills needed for the job and would be interested in running this ever more important means of promoting *Kilvert's Diary* and the Kilvert Society. Then we need to hear from you!!

Please contact the Secretary forthwith.

NEWSLETTERS AND *JOURNALS*

Back numbers of the Society's Newsletters and *Journals* are available from the Publications Manager, priced at £3.00 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

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Contributions for the September 2010 edition of the *Journal* should reach the **NEW EDITOR not later than 12 July 2010**. It would be helpful if contributors having access to a computer could put their article on disc (in Word for Windows).

Digital Images
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Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Kilvert Society nor 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, Seend Park Farm, Semington, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 6LH.

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*.

Back cover:
Cusop Hill in January 2010 and a reminder of our recent winter.
A black bitter wind violent and piercing drove from the East with showers of snow. The mountains and Clyro Hill and Cusop Hill were quite white with snow (11 May 1872). Photo: John Wilks

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