

THE
JOURNAL
OF
THE KILVERT SOCIETY



Number 31

September 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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Please submit contributions for the next Journal – by post or email – by 1 March 2011

Dates for your diary

2010

Saturday 25 September 2010

12 noon, meet at Llanbedr Church for a picnic lunch and a walk to the site of the Solitary's Cabin. Stout footwear and wet-weather gear if necessary.

Tea at Llanbedr Church, £4.50; please let Alan know if you are intending to stay for tea.

Sunday 26 September

3pm. Commemorative Service at Llanbedr Church.

Tea at Llanbedr Church, £4.50; please let Alan know if you are intending to stay for tea.

2011

Wednesday 2 March

A bracing visit to Francis Kilvert's holiday venue at

Weston-super-Mare.

Friday 15 April

AGM at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford, at 7pm.

Speaker to be confirmed.

Saturday 16 April

At the Radnorshire Arms Hotel Presteigne.

10.30am. Seminar, speakers to be confirmed.

6.30 for 7pm The Kilvert Society annual dinner.

Saturday 25 June

12 noon. Meet at the Pandy Inn, Dorstone,

details of the walk in the March *Journal*.

Sunday 26 June

3pm. Commemorative Service. Venue to be confirmed.

Saturday 24 September

12 noon. Meet at Langley Burrell Church for a pub lunch at the Langley Tap and a walk in the Hardenhuish area.

Details to follow.

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Subscriptions The current ordinary subscription is £12 (Joint membership £15), due on 1 January. Cheques payable to The Kilvert Society should be sent to: Mrs Sue Rose, Seend Park Farm, Semington, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 6LH

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If you would prefer not to have your details stored on computer, the Hon Secretary, who will ask you to provide stamped self-addressed envelopes for your mailings.

Members will notice the page numbering now runs on from the last *Journal*.

Front Cover (PICTURE: STEPHEN GOULD)

The grave of Katharine Heanley ('Kathleen Mavourneen') at Croft, Lincolnshire

Back cover (PICTURES: VAL DIXON):

The view across the Wye to Hay Bluff on the glorious June day of the Commemoration Service at Bettws.

'The three stained glass windows were full of colour and everywhere flowers had been lovingly placed by churchwarden, Margaret Cuthbertson. Asters, foxgloves in pink and white and many other wild flowers decorated the chapel, some with a most beautiful perfume. Bettws is obviously much loved and well cared for.'

THE JOURNAL OF THE KILVERT SOCIETY

Number 31 September 2010

From the Editor

TAKING over as Editor from Jeff Marshall, who created the *Journal* as we know it, was never going to be easy, but the task has been made so much easier by the man himself.

Jeff's friendliness and his generosity of both spirit and time have supported and encouraged me. His obvious reluctance to let go was tinged with relief that a burden was being lifted. And no doubt the restaurateurs of France raised a cheer.

Twice he has taken me out to lunch for us to talk about the task ahead and he has taken time to introduce me to the printers. No-one could have made the handover easier. The result? Well, that is for you all to judge – comments and suggestions welcome – and

no doubt there will be a lunch (at my expense this time, Jeff) for the Master to put in his penn'orth, which I will value.

I have had much help from many people, notably Colin and Val Dixon, who have been remarkably patient with repeated inquiries. Thank you very much to them, and to all those who have contributed in words and pictures.

One of Jeff's ambitions was to involve members more in what goes into the *Journal*. He proposed regular features like 'Discovering Kilvert', 'Then and Now' and 'Have you been there?' I hope members will take up his suggestion. It is your *Journal* and your views and experiences are what make it a success.

From the Secretary

AS I write the digitisation of the Society's archive has been completed by The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. This will enable us in the future to include it on our website and make it available on DVD. The collection will now pass to the conservator for conservation.

Although we are commissioning various aspects of the conservation project, our Treasurer is now writing rather large cheques. We are still short of our target so further contributions to the appeal would be most welcome.

The Society is in the process of having the gravestones of Francis and Elizabeth Kilvert cleaned and stabilised. Also at Bredwardine, work is to be carried out on the memorial seat.

I must take this opportunity to congratulate and thank Val and

Colin Dixon and Jeff Marshall for editing the research of our late member Tony O'Brien and producing the Society's latest publication, *Who's Who in Kilvert's Diary* – a herculean task.

This is now available from our Publications Manager. It includes 22 family trees, 443 entries of individuals and a comprehensive index. Priced at just £13, including postage and packing, it's essential reading for all Kilvertians.

This edition of the *Journal* is produced by our new editor Charles Boase, who we wish all good fortune in his endeavours. He has already made his mark in committee and I am sure the *Journal* will continue to flourish with him at the helm, with support, of course, from you our members with articles for publication.

From the Vice-Chairman

AS the one who, to use Jeff's own words, "accosted him in the street" to persuade him to accept the post of *Journal* Editor some eleven or twelve years ago, I feel I must pay tribute to his achievements at the end of his journalistic career on behalf of the Society.

Jeff had been Editor of the magazine of Warwick School for some many years and had previously let me have sight of a copy of that publication. I was immediately impressed by what I saw and when our need arose, it was Jeff who came to mind.

The first few issues gave some indication of what was to come, but he was not satisfied until he had persuaded the Committee to agree to glossy paper, a pictorial cover and all-colour for illustrations. The transformation can only be described as compre-

hensive and brilliant. Jeff has come to be seen as a gifted journalist. He has long been admired by many of us as a master of the English Language, an essential pre-requisite for a magazine such as ours but his gifts go far beyond that. Essentially, he is blessed with instinctive style, a style not only of language which has an easy elegance, but with an eye for good layout and good manners in his editorial pronouncements.

The *Journal* is the epitome of good reading and stimulating content which is a wonderful tribute to his amazing years of dedication to providing the Society with a superb journal of true professional quality, surely among the best in its class.

"Bene scripsisti."



Betjeman, the blues and a dinner to remember

Ann Dean reports on the eventful weekend of the annual meeting

THE Annual General Meeting of the Kilvert Society took place at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford, on 23 April.

Following the business meeting, there was a break for supper, prepared by members Michael and Sue Rose. As usual, Michael and Sue did a splendid job and everyone ate a hearty meal.

Following the break, we had a lovely surprise, the chance to enjoy a showing of the film Sir John Betjeman made for the BBC about Kilvert's *Diary*. Afterwards, Father Richard Williams of St. Mary's Church, Hay, enthralled us all with a piano recital ranging from classical to blues.

Next morning, everyone congregated on the lawns of *The Radnorshire Arms*, Presteigne, to enjoy coffee and tea in the sunshine.

Mr. Laurence Le Quesne, Society member, spoke on 'The social structure of Kilvert's Clyro' and gave a fascinating analysis of the 1871 census for Clyro (*the text of his lec-*

ture follows below). After a short break, acting chairman Mr. Alan Brimson gave a very interesting account of Handel Shepherd Cossham, M.P. for Bristol East. The information about Cossham in the *Diary* was augmented by information contained in an article in the *Bristol Evening Post*.

Kilvert writes on Friday 30 January 1874, *Drove my mother to Chippenham. A Radical Candidate has taken us all by surprise. Handel Cossham was nominated this morning. Before daylight the town had broken out with a bad eruption of poisonous yellow bills. We thought Goldney was going to walk over the course without opposition.*

Monday, Candlemas Day. *Chippenham Borough Election ... Early in the morning there were reports that Handel Cossham had brought up a number of colliers to intimidate the voters and to make a riot at night and it was said that the mob had begun to break windows in Chippenham already, notably the windows of Goldney's Committee room. All day we have heard the shouting from the town. ... But at 8.30, while I was at the night school, Henemans came to the door to tell Miss Bland that Goldney was returned by a majority of 227. Three cheers. This was the first election by ballot ever held in Chippenham. The Radicals have had a fair field and been beaten.*

Kilvert obviously had no time for Mr. Cossham yet it would seem that the 'Radical' did a lot for the city of Bristol, including building a hospital which is still being used, despite recent attempts to have it closed down.

Cossham's father, Charles, was born in 1747 and married Hester Hale at Old Market's Pip and Jay church. Handel got his middle name from his mother, whose maiden name was Shepherd. As a child, Handel Cossham was greatly influenced by his father and grandfather, inheriting from the latter his amazing energy and ability to function on only a few hours' sleep each night. Jesse, Handel's father, was a carpenter who loved classical music – hence the name Handel.

When Handel was eight years old, his father took him with him to the voting booth. Jesse put his hand on his son's head and said, 'My boy, I expect to be ruined for voting thus but I will not vote against my principles and conscience to please any man.' That night, Handel prayed that he might have his father's integrity.

On 1 August 1834, the day that slavery was finally abolished throughout the British Empire, Handel's father had taken him to see the beautiful sunrise and told him to always remember that glorious morning, the day that brought slavery to an end. Handel became one of a group who campaigned fearlessly for the emancipation of all who were fettered and repressed, whether it



Alan Brimson makes a presentation to Jeff Marshall in recognition of his dozen years of outstanding service as Editor of the Journal. Jeff will continue as a member of the committee

PICTURE: VAL DIXON



John Wilks, left, with Kathie, his wife, and David Elvins at the start of the dinner

PICTURE: ANN DEAN



Members gather on the lawns of The Radnorshire Arms for coffee before the Seminar

PICTURE: DAVID ELVINS

was from the excesses of drink, drugs or even religious and ideological dogma.

A Christian, Handel was known for his strong convictions and was not afraid to express them. He hated war, preferring that international disputes be settled by arbitration or by the wisdom of the pen, rather than by the might of the sword; he believed passionately in religious freedom, separate from state patronage and control; he was opposed to the House of Lords and inherited privilege and he believed in free trade and commerce.

Cossham was, as an M.P., fearless in speaking his mind against the government of his day. His Christianity embraced all races and he abhorred all attempts at ethnic persecution. He was outspoken and was ridiculed and was called the very opposite of what he was. Labelled a fanatic, a demagogue and destructive Radical, yet Handel Cossham worked hard to help the disadvantaged, the marginalised.

As a philanthropist, he was someone with whom one would have expected Francis Kilvert to have had much in common.

This was a fascinating insight into the life and work of someone Kilvert mentions in his diary.

Both Mr. Le Quesne and Alan were thanked for their hard work in bringing to the members of the society two very different, yet equally interesting talks. Before dispersing, the meeting was given a further treat when Alan played a very old recording of the song, *Kathleen Mavourneen*.

In the evening, members met again at *The Radnorshire*

Arms for the annual Kilvert dinner. This was interspersed by readings. Alan Brimson read Margaret Collins' article from March 2009 *Journal* about discovering Kilvert; Michael Reynolds read Tennyson's *May Queen*, (*Diary*, Childermas Day, December 1874); and Jeff Marshall spoke about Susan Hill's book *Howards End is on the Landing* (in which the author describes resolving not to buy any books for a year, but only to read those she owns but has never read – one of which is Kilvert's *Diary*).

Val Dixon read the account from the *Diary* of Kilvert's visit to the Solitary (Wednesday 3 July 1872). The walk on September 25 is to the site of the Solitary's Cabin.

We toasted the Queen and then the immortal memory of Francis Kilvert. I am sure I speak on behalf of all members present at the weekend when I say a huge 'thank you' to the committee for its hard work in providing such a wonderful weekend's programme, especially to Alan and Jean in 'pulling it all together'. It was great – or as Kilvert would probably have said – capital!

❖ At the annual meeting, the night before, Alan presented our retiring (but not shy) Editor, Jeff Marshall, with a piece of fine blue Bristol glass and paid tribute to his achievement in transforming the Society's Newsletter into the handsome *Journal* of which the Society could be proud. At the dinner, Jeff, ever the wag, pretended to read from his presentation card, 'Jeff, you can't spell, you don't know any grammar, you're sacked!' and sat down to cheers and a cry of 'Come back, all forgiven!' from his successor.

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the										Page 3
Civil Parish (for Township) of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town of	Village or Hamlet, &c., of	Local Board, or Improvement Commissioners District of	Ecclesiastical District of			
Clyro							St. Mary's 24			
No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES In, (Total) (1) or (2) or (3)	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON- DITION	AGE of	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN	Whether 1. Deaf-and-Dumb 2. Blind 3. Imbecile or Idiot 4. Lunatic	
			Ann Williams	Serv.		6	Child	Redner Clyro		
			Emily L.	Serv.		2		" "		
10	Cottage	1	William Brannan	Head	Mar.	41	Groom & G. Brannan	" "		
			Anna Ann	Wife	Mar.	37		" "		

The social structure of Kilvert's Clyro

A. L. Le Quesne's address on the 1871 Census to the Society's 2010 seminar

THE British government first took a national census in 1801, and has continued to take one every ten years since then. The census records are made available to the public a hundred years after they were taken, and they are one of the most valuable sources for students of Victorian social history. The census for 1871 thus became available in 1971, at the time when I was working on my book, *After Kilvert*, and I found its detailed record of all the inhabitants of Clyro invaluable. The earliest censuses recorded very little more than a list of names, but each successive census has required fuller information, and by 1871 this is sufficient to provide a clear picture of the social structure of the village.

The 'enumerator' who went round the parish collecting the information listed every household, together with the name of the head of the household and of everybody else who slept there on the night of 4 April 1871, giving their full names, their age, their birthplace, their relation to the head of the household, and their trade or source of income. This makes it possible to draw up a simple family tree for the occupants, who do of course include a lot of familiar figures from the *Diary*. The houses were by our standards very crowded – the census lists 178 households – most of them no more than cottages, and a good many probably not much more than hovels – with no less than 888 people living in them, an average of almost exactly five a house (by 1961, that total had been almost exactly halved, to 443).

The census does not directly define the social class, or the wealth, of the occupants, but it makes it very easy to categorise them pretty accurately, and the overriding impression is of the sharpness of the social divisions in the village – which of course is not surprising, for Victorian Britain was an intensely class-conscious society. Most Victorians took the notion of a three-decker society for granted – a notion perfectly reflected in the three-tier classification of railway carriages (Kilvert never mentions what class ticket he took, but I feel fairly certain that it was a second). This is not to deny that there were also strong social subdivisions within

the three, such as the distinction between upper middle class doctors or lawyers and lower middle class clerks or shopkeepers. Victorians were accustomed to being able to pigeonhole most of the people they met in the street with precision, and sometimes argued about it vigorously. Kilvertians may remember the Bridges of *Pont Vaen* arguing whether Father Ignatius' younger brother was a gentleman or not.

The upper class was the most sharply defined of all, and it was defined by two characteristics in particular. One was hereditary titles – duke, marquess, earl, and baron. The hereditary titled aristocracy were the cream of the cream, and the further back they could trace their titles, the thicker the cream. The other immensely important characteristic of the upper class was the possession of landed property – that is, of large landed estates. The three-tier pattern of British social structure was strongly reflected in the pattern of British land ownership. Land was typically divided into large estates, often extending to thousands of acres, and these estates were then subdivided among a much larger number of tenant farmers, who cultivated them for their own profit with the help of a very large class of landless agricultural labourers, who owned no land and relied entirely on their exiguous wages for their subsistence. Unlike much of the Continent, Britain (especially England) had almost no peasants cultivating small landholdings for their own subsistence.

There were however two other characteristics which came into the definition of upper class status. One was wealth, which – in theory at least – did not in itself confer status, but was assumed to accompany it. The other was the confusing category of 'gentleman', to which great importance was attached. The honorary title of 'gentleman' did not necessarily imply title, or property, or wealth, though it commonly went with them – it was based rather on personal characteristics, like manners, personal integrity, costume, and accent, and hence was closely linked with education. An Oxford or Cambridge degree in particular was a

Page 2]		The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the										
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			Howard C. L.	Son		20		" "				
			Charles Marshall	Governess	Mar.	29	Governess	Widderhampton				
			Maria Bridge	Serv.	W.	48	Book	Widderhampton				
			Anna Bridge	Serv.	W.	34	Nurse	Widderhampton				
			Harriet Bridge	Serv.	W.	26	Widderhampton	Redner Clyro				
			Arch. Bridge	Serv.	W.	18	Nurse	" "				

hallmark of gentry status; so also was Anglican priesthood. There were four unquestionably upper-class households in Clyro – *Clyro Court*, the *Vicarage*, *Wye Cliff*, and *Cae Mawr*. The Baskervilles of *Clyro Court* were in a category of their own. Ralph Baskerville was not merely a wealthy landowner – though he was that: he was the largest landholder in the village, and also owned most of its cottages: he was of course a J.P., one of the elite who controlled the county government. He was the uncrowned king of the village, living in the fine house which bore the village name – *Clyro Court*, as one might say *Clyro Palace* – with the largest household in the village comprising three unmarried younger sisters and eight entirely celibate (or at least entirely unmarried) domestic servants. Mr. Venables, just up the road in the *Vicarage*, also had unquestionable public status as the Vicar of Clyro. Moreover, Mr. Venables had status in his own right. He was an Oxford graduate, he too was a J.P., and above all he was a considerable landowner, though his estate lay not in Clyro but up the Wye Valley at Llysindam. *Cae Mawr* and *Wye Cliff*

were both occupied by landed gentlemen of leisure, whose estates lay elsewhere: both, I think, were J.P.s. Neither had the local roots, or the local status that went with it, that Ralph Baskerville and Mr. Venables had: both (I suspect, but do not know) leased rather than owned, their houses, but they undoubtedly belonged to the landed elite that dominated British society. The Hodgsons, at *Cabalva*, are a more ambiguous case. John Grant Hodgson is not described as a landowner, but (uniquely, in Clyro) as ‘deriving income from dividends’ (you can almost hear the enumerator sniff). Still, they had a very sizeable household, comparable to *Wye Cliff* or *Cae Mawr*: they were pillars of the church, and Kilvert clearly regarded them as among the gentry of the parish, if only birds of passage. There was also Kilvert himself.

How best to classify Kilvert’s social position in the village is not a simple question. He was undoubtedly a gentleman – that was guaranteed by his Oxford degree, and also his clerical status – though as a mere unbeneficed curate, he was on the very bottom rung of the ladder (as Daisy Thomas’ father clearly thought). But on the other hand, he was a poor man. Mr. Venables paid him £100 a year, a sum which was conventionally regarded as the lower limit of a middle class income. Moreover, he was not even a householder, but a mere lodger in Mrs. Chaloner’s house – though the enumerator did stretch a point in his favour, numbering him

separately, one suspects because he was a clergyman. He was undoubtedly a gentleman, and was invited to the local gentry’s social functions, but it must have been a constant embarrassment to him that he was never able to return their hospitality. It is not surprising that, much though he enjoyed their junketings, one often senses in the *Diary* that he was in fact more at home in the farm kitchens.

The middle class were a considerably larger and more varied category, and the core of them were the farmers. There were some still described as ‘agricultural labourers’ into their eighties, and were presumably still earning. There were 41 listed in the 1871 census – rather surprisingly, two of them were women, though their holdings were very small. Within them there was a wide range of wealth and status: the acreage of their farms, which is listed with them, varies from 420 acres (*Clyro Court* farm) to less than 50, and their households varied in size similarly. Some had very large families – John Williams, at *Great Lloyney*, had the largest in the village, ten children aged from 28 to 2, the five eldest all living at home, and no doubt supplying



Laurence and Mary Le Quesne at *The Radnorshire Arms* ANN DEAN

much of the farm’s labour force. Most farms also had some living-in farm servants – agricultural labourers with no households or families of their own. The farmers clearly occupied a higher rung of the social ladder than their labourers: they owned sheep and cattle, and got about on horseback: as ratepayers, they had a voice in village government, and some of them probably even had votes for Parliament. In the mid-nineteenth century, British agriculture was prosperous, and this was reflected in the standard of living of the wealthier farmers – some were buying pianos for their daughters, or even sending them to boarding school.

The lower limits of the middle class were harder to define. Clyro contained a number of village craftsmen, often highly skilled – millers, blacksmiths, tailors, shoemakers, stonemasons, and others, some of whom ranked almost equal with the farmers – especially the millers, who were notorious for their wealth and for having many of the farmers regularly in debt to them. Craftsmen though they were, they mostly worked with their hands, and on that ground were commonly regarded as belonging to the top of the working class, rather than the bottom of the middle class. There was also a tiny handful who might be regarded as clerical workers, and entitled to middle class status on that account, notably the teachers in the village school. Figures like the postmistress and the village policeman, too, might be regarded as denizens of the same social no-man’s-land.

Perhaps, including wives and children, about a quarter of Clyro's population might have been considered middle class. The remainder were working class, and the great majority of these worked on the land, or in trades linked to the land. They were an impoverished class with no property of their own, working on other men's land, not even owning the cottages they lived in, fortunate if they had the use of a small garden, forbidden even to trap rabbits, and lucky if they earned ten shillings a week. They had no prospects of a pension, and in the case of serious misfortune, unemployment (though there was little danger of this in the prosperous mid-Victorian period), illness, or old age, they had nowhere to turn but to the chance of private charity or to the dreaded severities of the Poor Law and Hay workhouse.



There was a great deal of want and severe hardship in Kilvert's Clyro, and it is vividly reflected in the *Diary*: though one should add that there was a good deal of private charity too, often from neighbours, sometimes from the gentry, sometimes from the church. And although there were no old-age pensions for labourers, there was also no retirement age: some were still classed as agricultural labourers in their eighties (as was John Morgan, the

Old Soldier, who was 84 and who was presumably still able to earn some kind of a pittance, as well as the pension that Mr. Venables was eventually able to secure for him).

Women, it should be said, though they are of course included in the census, are rarely shown as wage-earners: most are simply ranked as 'unmarried' or shown as dependent on their husbands. The main exception are domestic servants, of whom there were a considerable number in the houses of the gentry, and a number also in the farms – for most women in Victorian England, indeed, it was the main avenue of employment open to them. I have noted that there were one or two women farmers, as well as teachers and an innkeeper and a postmistress. There was also a number of women described as seamstresses, dressmakers and laundresses, though almost all of these are living at home and presumably making small additions to the family income.

Clyro, in Kilvert's time, was a place in which most people had a clearly defined role, and for the most part both they and their social superiors assumed that this was a natural order, and one which would continue, and this was how Kilvert himself saw it. But he did not only see it: he described it for us, with an intense vividness which enables us to see it and to enter into it to-day, as the bleak record of a census can never do.

It is that vividness that makes the *Diary* the marvellous social and human record that it is, and for which all Kilvertians are grateful.



Clifton and a clipper

A day in Bristol, by Charles Boase

IT WAS just the sort of fun and games Kilvert would have loved. Our acting chairman Alan Brimson regaled us at the Rock Slide on Clifton Down with his rueful but hilarious tale of how, showing children how nice it was to shimmy down the shiny stones, he had ripped the seat out of his trousers. It is difficult not to imagine our Diarist similarly enjoying himself with his sister Emmie's three children when he called on them at *16 Sion Hill*, their lodging just across the grass.

Timing didn't let Alan down either when about 30 of us had gathered earlier outside the Hippodrome in St. Augustine's Parade in Bristol on March 3 for our visit to Clifton, the Floating Harbour and the SS *Great Britain*. No sooner had he opened his mouth than the loud speaker above him in the foyer started blaring out *Happy Birthday Sweet Sixteen*. Alan jived gamely during the interruption.

After hearing him describe how different the street would have been in Kilvert's time, now that it is all culverted and the drawbridge gone (the Hippodrome itself didn't open until 1904), we took a city bus up Park Street and Queen's Road to the Victoria Rooms.

Now the Music Department of Bristol University, the "Vic Rooms" were designed with Corinthian confidence by Charles Dyer in the 1840s "as well for business as festivity". Member Sylvia Townsend recalled hearing Chris Barber and his Band there when it was the university Union.

Kilvert went there on 23 October 1872 for a conference of clergy and laity. *The Bishop gave a good address*, he noted, before admitting, *At luncheon I was tempted to cut the afternoon conference. The weather was so glorious that it seemed a pity to sit in a stuffy room any longer*. So he mouched down to the cathedral where he had been ordained. *It is a grand city*, he wrote. *How much grander than Bath*, read Alan, raising a laugh, as our member Jane McBride is as well-known for her championing of Bath as Alan is of Bristol.

A short stroll up the hill took us to 28 Richmond Park Road, the house that is thought once to have been *1 Carlton Place*, where the Diarist's cousin Adelaide Cholmeley lodged. There is a little uncertainty because the numbers were reordered when the road changed its name. *No 1* is the focus for perhaps the most intense emotional period recorded in the *Diary*. It was at the wedding of Adelaide's daughter Addie (born 1854) to Charles Heanley in Sussex on 11 August 1874 that Kilvert first set eyes on *the tall dark one*, Katharine Mary Heanley, his 'Kathleen Mavourneen'. As Alan reminded us, *No 1* loomed large in Kilvert's life as a place for assignations and news of *Katie, dear Katie*.

On 1 October 1874 he spent the day at *No 1* with Adelaide and 'Kathleen Mavourneen' (then very nearly 24) – *She was looking very pretty and was most sweet and kind in her manner*. He added, *It was a very happy day*, even though it concluded with a bout of neuralgia. And again, at *No 1*, on 10 December 1874: *Adelaide was very kind and encouraged me very much about matters in Lincolnshire*, Katharine's home patch, of course.



On Clifton Down, near the Observatory, overlooking Bristol's 'pride and joy', the Suspension Bridge. Nightingale Valley is away to the right, on the far side of the Avon, and the Zig Zag is just beyond the tower on the left

PICTURES: DAVID ELVINS

Next we crossed Victoria Square, in Kilvert's time less than 30 years old. We think of our suburbs mushrooming, but we have nothing on the Victorians. We briefly visited the elegant Clifton Arcade, now a hive of boutiques, but for a long time a furniture warehouse after it had failed as a Royal Bazaar and Winter Garden soon after opening in 1878. Then we walked the length of Royal York Crescent, a magnificent sweep of housing claimed to be the biggest crescent in Europe. This, the most ambitious Clifton speculation, had taken a long time to complete after falling victim to the economic collapse of 1793. Going further up the hill, we passed the Regency Gothic exuberance of St Vincent's Priory and the entrance to the Clifton Rocks Railway, a terrifying looking installation built to convey the rich of Clifton down to take the waters at Hot Wells on the Avon (and unwittingly to bouts of ill-health). The house at 16 *Sion Hill* where Emmie took up lodgings on 1 June 1875 was pointed out to us as we climbed Clifton Down.

At the Observatory, we took it in turns, in groups of about 10, to enter the cupola to see the view displayed by the camera obscura. The chamber presented a remarkable contrast between intense dark and the perfect Google-Earth-like picture in the dish of the world around us. It was startling how good it was, even to us in the webcam age.

We crossed the *Suspension Bridge* – described by Alan as “our pride and joy”, and returned along the same side because of road works. Some of us were surprised to learn that the bridge – always known as Brunel's – was actually built after the great engineer had died.

This area is intensely entwined with the Diarist's emotional life. Only 10 days after first setting eyes on the *tall dark one* we find him again spending the day at *Carlton*

Place and going up to Clifton Down. While the rest of the party ... went down into the slush and mire and darkness of the *Giant's Cave*, Adelaide and I sat on one of the seats on the edge of the *Cliff* looking down upon the *Suspension Bridge* talking of Kathleen Mavourneen. I shall never now see the *Suspension Bridge* from the *Cliff* without thinking of Kathleen.

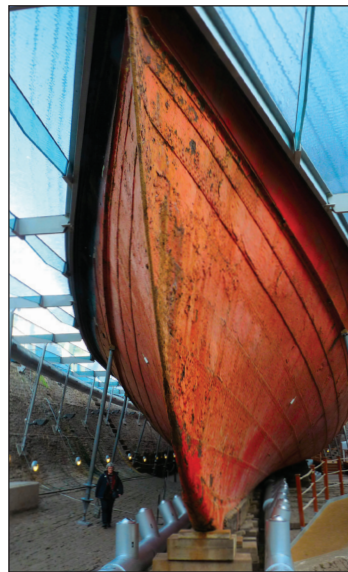
He is back there on 10 December, with Ella and Jessie Russell, walking over the Bridge and along the edge of Nightingale Valley, the Valley he said was inextricably bound up in his thoughts with Katie.

But something changed. The last time he saw her at *Carlton Place*, on 20 June 1876, there is no gushing. *Dear Kathleen Heanley*, he writes rather stiffly, *was very nice and sweet and kind and I spent a happy day*. And there is only one more, oblique reference to her in the *Diary*.

We went down the “Zig Zag” path to the Avon, in Kilvert's frequent footsteps, so to speak, and after some exciting road crossings and frequent pedestrian stairways we emerged on the quayside of Cumberland Basin. As Alan explained, a cut and gates maintain the level of the water, creating a “floating harbour” of 80 acres. It closed as Bristol's harbour in 1975. It sounded

like the docks were a favourite boyhood haunt of our acting chairman, who, with his pals, used to spend many a day exploring the vessels in the port.

Our tour concluded with a visit to the *SS Great Britain*, Brunel's great ocean-going iron ship launched in 1843. By the 1870s she was engaged in taking emigrants to Australia. As an exhibit (*inset, showing how you can walk around its hull in its dry dock, and observe the ongoing battle against rust*), it is a lesson in how well things can be done. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the café, which was somewhat overwhelmed by our numbers.





Matters of the heart in Lincolnshire

Margaret Collins goes on the trail of the enigmatic 'Kathleen Mavourneen'

'Mavourneen, Mavourneen, my sad tears are falling
To think that from Erin and thee I must part,
It may be for years, and it may be for ever
Then why art thou silent, thou voice of my heart?
O why art thou silent, Kathleen Mavourneen?'

JULIA CRAWFORD (?1800–?55)

A pretty bevy of bridesmaids was seen coming up the path in white and green. 'There,' said Miss Sarah Cholmeley to me, 'there is your bridesmaid, the tall dark one behind on the right hand side.'

Tuesday, 11 August 1874

LISTENING as Alan Brimson read this *Diary* entry, we again became bystanders at that fateful first meeting between Francis Kilvert and Katharine Heanley at Addie Cholmeley's wedding. The picturesque church at Findon in the Sussex countryside was an idyllic setting and *the morning broke lovely and glorious, a true wedding morning*. It seemed that all bode well for a romance between the groomsmen and his bridesmaid.

As was his custom with pretty girls, Kilvert gave Katharine Heanley a romantic sobriquet and she became 'Kathleen Mavourneen'. With her green dress, dark hair and her grey eyes (cf *Irish Mary*) Katharine reminded Kilvert of the heroine of this popular Irish ballad. Their story had yet to unfold and he could not have foreseen the irony of his choice, for the 'Kathleen Mavourneen' of the song remains silent and unresponsive to the impassioned pleas of her lover, the implication being that she has jilted him.

On the evening of Tuesday 18 May, twenty-five of us gathered at the North Shore Hotel at Skegness where we were staying for two nights for the Society's first visit to Croft in Lincolnshire, the home of the Heanley family. The hotel, near the shore and with its own golf course, was large and well-chosen for this event which was superbly organised by Alan Brimson in conjunction with local member Ray Taylor. Alan and his wife Jean had made a preliminary planning visit to the area in December. There was an air of cheerful anticipation as Alan welcomed everyone in the bar before dinner and briefed us about our stay.

We enjoyed an excellent meal, seated at two long tables at one end of the spacious dining room. After dinner, Ray Taylor looked in to introduce himself and to leave his Kil-

vert photograph album for us to pass round. Prior to Ray's research and subsequent publication of *Kilvert's Kathleen Mavourneen*, which he wrote with the late Eva Farmery, very little was known about Katharine Heanley apart from the fact that her family were farmers near Skegness. For this trip Ray had prepared some very helpful background notes. Also in our party was Kilvert authority Laurence Le Quesne, whose fine essay 'The Missing Year – Kilvert and Kathleen Mavourneen' is required reading. (*See end for book-lets etc.*)

A pleasant evening followed over coffee which was taken in a lounge reserved exclusively for our use, and we were able to look at Ray's photographs of various Kilvert locations, including Croft. We also saw old photographs of the Heanley family and of the Rev. Evelyn John Monson, vicar of Croft, with his family.

The promise of 'Kilvert weather' held good with glorious sunshine dawning on Wednesday. After breakfast we assembled in the foyer at 9.20 where we were joined by Ray Taylor. We departed in convoy for *All Saints' Church* in the village of Croft, the fields of crops stretching to the horizon as far as the eye could see. At the car park outside Croft church and village hall, formerly the school, we met Mr. Colin Moore, who had opened the church for us. He had known Mrs. Farmery, who had been headteacher of the village school. Also present was a descendant of the Heanley family, local farmer Mr. Mark Caudwell. Alan had earlier mentioned to us that whilst Ray was researching the trip, Mr. Caudwell had shown him some old family photograph albums. It was in one of these that Ray was pretty sure that he had identified a new photograph of Kilvert. Understandably this news had caused a considerable flurry of excitement!

We went first to Katharine's grave beneath a large copper beech, the leaves of which, like Kilvert's poplars, dazzled in the sunshine. The triple-stepped monument and cross had been restored by a local mason as a gesture of goodwill. A silence fell as we stood contemplating the final resting place of the woman who, in her mid-twenties, was the beautiful fiancée of Francis Kilvert. What mysteries did she take with her to her grave when, aged 40, she 'fell asleep' early on a September morning in 1891? Among the forget-me-nots at our feet were other family graves including that of the Findon bride, Addie Cholmeley, who died of scarlet



The Vicar talks about the church bells. Katharine gave 'Kilvert's' 10/- to the tenor bell fund



PICTURES: VAL DIXON



A silence fell as members contemplated the final resting place in Croft churchyard, beneath a large copper beech, of Katharine Heanley, Kilvert's 'Kathleen Mavourneen'

PICTURES: DAVID ELVINS, ABOVE, AND VAL DIXON

fever in March 1879. Sadly the cross had broken off and lay propped against the monument; the inscription, covered with moss and lichen, was very difficult to decipher. Addie's untimely death left three children without their mother. They were brought up by a relative, Ann Finch, whose grave was alongside.

We then went into the cool and peaceful church, parts of which date from the early thirteenth century. We looked around, seeing the impressive 400-year-old brass eagle lec-

tern and the Jacobean canopied pulpit. The organ, situated beneath the pulpit, was the gift of Lord Monson, the Vicar's father; Katharine had frequently played it for church services. The Bond monument from the 16th century on the south wall of the chancel was surmounted by a grim carved skull. The Latin inscription beneath was of much interest and translations were attempted – it would appear that the sentiments expressed were equally grim!

Kilvert would have attended services at Croft church and,





Members pose outside the church for the Croft parish magazine

PICTURE: VAL DIXON

as Katharine's fiancé, have been the focus of much interest in such a small community. His train journeys to Croft were surely full of happy expectation and of hope which was, alas, to be cruelly dashed. The reason for the breaking of the engagement by Katharine has been the subject of much speculation. It would seem that for some reason Katharine felt unable to go through with it. I have two thoughts to contribute to the debate; the first is that Katharine, aged 21 in 1872, was deeply shocked and upset by the marriage of the Vicar, the Rev. Evelyn Monson, to someone else. Was it her subsequent inability or unwillingness to disentangle herself emotionally from this powerful experience of 'first love' that was the key to her rejection of Kilvert?

My other, very different, suggestion is that two years later as Kilvert and Katharine sat on the grass at Chanctonbury Ring on that wedding afternoon, she told him *she deeply regretted the enforced apparent idleness of her life*. Had she taken stock of her life and, ahead of her time, begun to think that she might prefer to pursue a useful career as an independent woman rather than settle for the constraints of life as a Victorian wife? Interestingly, the family tree we were given with our notes shows that Ann Finch, Addie's sister-in-law who kept and paid for the education of Addie's children following their father's bankruptcy, became matron of a London hospital. Could it be that Katharine had discussed a nursing career with her? By 1860 Florence Nightingale had opened her first training school for nurses at St Thomas' in London and other such

schools quickly followed. Nursing had become a much respected profession for a woman.

Whether any of this was the subject of those long talks between Kilvert and Adelaide we cannot know. Sadly, what we do know is that Adelaide and Addie's well-meaning attempts to mend Katharine's broken heart by introducing her to another clergyman ended only in tears.

Our party gathered under the belfry and saw the plaque commemorating the recasting of the tenor bell of Croft church in 1877. Ray Taylor read to us from the passage in the *Diary* (19 December 1878) which tells how, visiting a parishioner, Kilvert by chance glanced through a copy of the *Sunday at Home* for March 1877 and recognised his *poetic paraphrase* of the 23rd Psalm, which Katharine Heanley had sent in and which

the Editor printed. The ten shillings she received went towards the Croft tenor bell fund.

We assembled outside the church for a group photograph for the parish magazine and then proceeded to the adjacent former village school, where Kilvert's visit in March 1877 was recorded in the log book. The building is now a very smartly renovated village hall.

We saw the wall-displays detailing the restoration work on the building and beneath this on two tables were old photographs of the Heanley family and two photograph albums belonging to Mr. Caudwell. This was all absolutely riveting and members clustered round eagerly. The album photographs were slotted in four to a page and were not



Mark Caudwell, a local farmer who is a descendant of the Heanleys PICTURE: VAL DIXON

labelled. One was of Kilvert's uncle Francis 'the Antiquary'. The photograph which Ray Taylor thought may have been Kilvert caused much interest, with people studying it closely and exchanging opinions. Apart from the longer beard it bore a strong resemblance to the well-known portrait, although he looked a little older. Many were convinced, others not so sure – I certainly thought it was Kilvert. However, Ray said that nothing was written on the back and so we have yet another Kilvert mystery.

The other, larger, loose photographs were fascinating. Some had pencilled identification on the back and some not. Among them we saw Addie Cholmeley's three children, one of whom, Thomas, lived to be 100, dying in 1978. There was Addie's father Montague, Charles and Addie, Addie with her daughter Eleanor and one of Aunt Ann Finch taken when she was an old lady. A pretty young woman was identified only as 'Miss Heanley's cousin'. And was the mature lady in formal attire possibly an older Katharine?...or was she perhaps rather too old?

Before we left Croft, thanks were expressed to Colin Moore and Mark Caudwell, who were given a hearty round of applause. We then proceeded to *Croft Grange*, Katharine's family home, a distance of some three miles, passing near to *Clough House* which had been Addie's married home and where Kilvert would have stayed when visiting Croft. We gathered outside *Croft Grange*. Ray Taylor said that in Kilvert's time there would have been no walls or gates as it was very much a working farmhouse, set amid the fields of the flat Lincolnshire landscape in an isolated location, remote from the village. A substantial property, it had been empty for several years and fallen into disrepair but was purchased and renovated internally by the present owners to a very high standard as a family home. We were able to stroll all round the outside of the house which is much as it was in Katharine's time. The owners were away so we did not go inside. I won-

dered with what trepidation Kilvert visited this house to ask Katharine's father, Marshall Heanley, for his daughter's hand in marriage.

Our tour over, we stood on the path near the gate and Alan read to us from *Looking Backwards* (KS booklet) where Addie's young brother recalled Kilvert's visit to *Croft Grange* where he paid *many delicate attentions* to the boy's *pretty*

and vivacious young cousins, Katharine and her sister Ellen. One can almost hear the schoolboy's hoots of derision at Kilvert's sentimental poem about the Findon wedding – which was almost certainly read aloud, for Kilvert took his poetry writing very seriously and would want to give the full effect. Could it be that the girls too found it hard to keep a straight face?

We got back into our cars and drove to Gibraltar Point, a nature reserve managed by the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust. The viewing point was reached by walking along a track bordered by a profusion of wild flowers. Climbing the steps we could see for miles, right to the Wash in one direction. The area around the Point had been used by smugglers in the old days. Tennyson rode at Gibraltar Point and in his notes Ray Taylor



Opinions were divided as to whether this portrait in a Heanley family photograph album was of Francis Kilvert PICTURE: SHEILA BORROWS

wondered if perhaps Kilvert and Katharine had ridden her father's horses along its sands.

After a nice lunch at the well-appointed visitors' centre we departed for the village of Somersby, Tennyson's birthplace, passing en route *Harrington Hall*, home of Tennyson's early muse Rosa Baring, who inspired the poem *Maud*. The birds were in full song as we walked along the lane to Somersby Church.

We saw the Rectory, the front wall of the long house painted pale yellow. Now a private house, this was



Members pause for a reading outside Croft Grange, the Heanley family home

PICTURE: DAVID ELVINS

the home of the large, lively Tennyson family. Opposite was St. Margaret's Church where Alfred's father, George Clayton Tennyson, was Rector. A little local lad joined us, curious to see all these people who had suddenly descended on the village and he was soon joined by his sister. A wall display was studied with interest and told us much about the Poet Laureate and his times. It was in this church that Alfred was baptised on 8 August 1809 and a glass-case display showed a photocopy of the entry of this event in the parish register. There was also Tennyson's quill pen, two of his clay pipes



The gardens at Croft Grange

PICTURE: VAL DIXON



On the drive at Croft Grange, and the house itself



PICTURES: SHEILA BORROWS, LEFT, AND VAL DIXON

and small portraits including one by the society artist G F Watts. In the churchyard we inspected the tomb of Tennyson's father, who died aged 52. Alfred, Lord Tennyson is buried at Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey. We returned to our cars and the two children skipped alongside and waved us off.

Our notes told us that *Stockwith Mill*, our next stop, is thought to have inspired Tennyson's poem *The Miller's Daughter*. Here we enjoyed a leisurely afternoon cream tea, sitting outside by the river before returning to our hotel.

Dinner that evening was a jolly affair at which we were joined by Ray Taylor and his wife Pat.

After the meal Alan Brimson gave a short speech thanking Ray Taylor for the invaluable help he had given in organising this event, which was greatly appreciated. Ray replied saying how pleased he was that the venture had been a success. Richard Weston thanked Alan on behalf of everyone for all he had done to facilitate this occasion and everyone joined in much enthusiastic applause.

Over coffee Alan read from 'Kilvert's Kathleen Mavourneen', the *Candleshoe Magazine* report of the wedding at Croft church of Katharine's younger sister, Sarah Ellen, to Mr. Morse Goulter in September 1877. This wedding had been of great interest in the neighbourhood and the church was full, many people having come some distance. Katharine was chief of the eight bridesmaids all *possessing grace and beauty*. The service was conducted by the bride's brother and her uncle and by the Vicar of Croft, the Rev. Evelyn Monson. We get a fleeting glimpse of Katharine: once again she is a bridesmaid, this time wearing a dress of coral and ivory silk. Her engagement to Kilvert had probably been broken four months earlier. What were her thoughts as she stood behind her sister in Croft church?

The fact that the bride and groom left for London *amid a shower of rice and old shoes* led to a brief, rather inconclusive, discussion of the significance of the shoes in this custom. A little later Ray and Pat Taylor left us and there was much laughter as Ray, going through the door, waved goodbye saying that they were departing 'amid a shower of rice and old shoes'!

Mike Reynolds gave a fine recitation of Tennyson's *The Brook* and Masfield's *The West Wind*. He then read Arthur Mee's description of the Tennyson country and Croft.

The evening ended as we heard again the ballad *Kathleen Mavourneen*, chosen by Kilvert on that summer's day at Findon as a happy allusion to Katharine (*and most beautifully sung by Margaret herself, I am told. Ed*). Sadly, the song was to become for him ever afterwards a lament, a poignant reminder of what might have been.

Next morning after breakfast we made our farewells and



Ray Taylor, the local member to whom we owe much of our knowledge about Katharine Heanley and who did so much to make the Society's visit to Lincolnshire a success.

Below, tea at Stockwith Mill, which is linked to Tennyson

PICTURES: VAL DIXON



went our separate ways – Alan and Jean Brimson setting off to continue their interrupted holiday! We had enjoyed a truly splendid 'Kilvert event', seeing and learning much, and pondering again the enigmatic untold story of Kilvert's 'Kathleen Mavourneen'.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Kilvert's 'Kathleen Mavourneen', by EVA FARMERY and R B TAYLOR (KS Publications)

'The Missing Year – Kilvert and "Kathleen Mavourneen"', by LAURENCE LE QUESNE (*The Frederick Grice Memorial Booklet*, KS Publications)

'Discovering Kilvert...and Kathleen Mavourneen', by RAY TAYLOR, *Journal*, March 2007

'Kilvert, Tennyson and Kathleen Mavourneen', by RAY TAYLOR, *Journal*, March 2006

Francis Kilvert, by DAVID LOCKWOOD, Seren Books
'Bytoft Grange', by MARGARET COLLINS, *Journal*, June 2006



June Weekend, part one

Michael Tod is minded of The Grand Old Duke of York on a sweltering day

IT may not have been the hottest day of the year but it certainly felt like it to the thirty or so members and guests who picnicked in the Clyro churchyard so loved by Kilvert himself. Alan Brimson had hinted that there might be a special extra treat in store other than those of which we had been notified – and there was. Arrangements had been made for us all to visit the *Vicarage* and its grounds where the Rev. Richard Venables (the Vicar of Clyro in Kilvert's time) had lived. We know from the *Diary* that Kilvert himself had been a frequent visitor there.

The present owner, Ashley Williams, was away but we were made welcome and shown around by his father, Graham Williams, and young daughter, Ellen. Because of our numbers, we split into three groups to see the spacious rooms where documents and pictures were on display for us, and Mr. Venables' study from which he could watch passers-by on the road. The servants' quarters were now a holiday-let and some of the grounds had been sold off for modern housing but, to our delight, the 'feel' of the place, as described by FK, still lingered.

Back to the cars for a short drive eastwards to a car park and a steep climb up to see the ruins of the *Old Soldier's Cottage*. This was almost lost in a forest of sycamore trees which had seeded themselves in what the *Diary* tells us was a garden of *dark newly turned mould on which great round, red potatoes lay thick, fresh and clean*.

With his usual perception Kilvert noted that they had *turned up very large and sound, no disease, and no second growth, an unusual thing this year*.

We found the tiny spring where Kilvert had *sat down on the stones by the spring and the old soldier came and sat down on the stones by me while his wife went on picking up the red potatoes. We talked about the war and the loss of the Captain. Mary Morgan brought me some apples, Sam's Crabs and Quinin's. The spring trickled and tinkled behind us and a boy from the keeper's cottage came to draw water in a blue and white jug.*

After describing how it was *very quiet and peaceful in the old soldier's garden as we sat by the spring while the sun grew low and gilded the apples in the trees which he had planted, and the keeper's wife moved about in the garden below, and we heard the distant shots at partridges* – Kilvert, in a gesture typical of the man we all love so much, added – *I dug up the half row*



Before we set off ... picnicking in Clyro churchyard



Exploring the garden of the Vicarage at Clyro



Graham Williams explains the Vicarage drive came in across this lawn



Inside the Vicarage, our hosts had displayed topical papers (and below)





VAL DIXON

It's steeper than it looks ... the climb to the Old Soldier's Cottage



ARCHIVE

The remains of the Old Soldier's Cottage (saved by Peter Beddall's pointing)



DAVID ELVINS

Welcome shade on the Offa's Dyke Path on our climb to Bettws



DAVID ELVINS

A breather in a shady glade. Below, Graham Williams joined us on the walk



DAVID ELVINS

of potatoes for him which he had left unfinished.

In a move calling to mind The Grand Old Duke of York, we all marched back down the hill and into the cars again for another short drive east, to park on the drive of *Upper Cabalva* (thanks to Mrs. Albert). Following in FK's footsteps we climbed a long, long footpath, part of the Offa's Dyke Path. The sun was burning down on us and we were glad when we could get into the shade where the path led through woodland and down to a stone bridge.

Our readings on this section included – *Went to Bettws in the afternoon wrapped in two waistcoats, two coats, a muffler and a mackintosh, and was not at all too warm. Heard the Chapel bell pealing strongly for the second time since I have been here and when I got to the Chapel my beard moustaches and whiskers were so stiff with ice that I could hardly open my mouth and my beard was frozen on to my mackintosh.*

In the heat it was hard to visualise such weather.

A break and rest in a larch wood was followed by a more level section and eventually we reached a tarmac road with the hint of a breeze. Another mile or so and we saw Bettws Chapel across a field. (Bettws is the Welsh word meaning chapel-of-ease.)

Inside we were glad to sit down and rest and hear more readings. One from Sunday 13 February 1870 included *The baby was baptized in ice which was broken and swimming about in the Font*. I trust that it was the ice swimming about and not the baby!

Another reading from Good Friday 29 March 1872 described the attack by a bull on *sweet Emma Griffiths* with the *sweet sky blue eyes*. If you have a copy of the *Diary* near you as you read this, do look up that entry. Kilvert at his very best!

Outside in the sun again, we reflected joyfully that it was all downhill back to the cars, once again following ancient footpaths through meadows with splendid views across the Wye to the Black Mountains. Those who remembered the *Mouse Castle* day (19 April 1870) from the *Diary* which had so amused FK, pointed out the location.

A magnificent tea was prepared for us by the ladies of St Mary's in the Parish Rooms in Hay, in aid of the Organ Fund. It felt a long time since lunch and we were eager to do justice to the vast spread of cakes and sandwiches, with endless cups of tea. The perfect ending for a glorious day.



June Weekend, part two

Val Dixon and a packed congregation attend the Commemorative Service at Bettws

SUNDAY 27 June was yet another warm and sunny day. Twenty-eight Kilvert members found their way up the winding lanes to the little chapel at Bettws (*Holy Trinity* in the parish of St Michael and All Angels, Clyro). The climb by car was considerably easier than it had been via the Offa's Dyke Path the day before!

The chapel, perched on top of a hill with wonderful views over the Wye valley and across to Hay Bluff, looked quite isolated. But there to welcome members was the Vicar, the Rev. David Thomas, and his churchwarden, Robert Tap. The chapel inside was lit by bright sunlight and looked beautiful with all the altar furnishings displayed. The three stained glass windows were full of colour and everywhere flowers had been lovingly placed by churchwarden, Margaret Cuthbertson. Asters, foxgloves in pink and white and many other wild flowers decorated the chapel, some with a most beautiful perfume. Bettws is obviously much loved and well cared for.

Mr. Thomas surveyed a packed chapel and welcomed Kilvert members to *Holy Trinity*. We began the service by singing *Stand up, stand up for Jesus* which was sung enthusiastically and was accompanied by Miss Annabelle Brown

(the organist from the church of St James, Kinnersley) on the harmonium, an instrument which needed careful handling and which she 'tamed' beautifully.

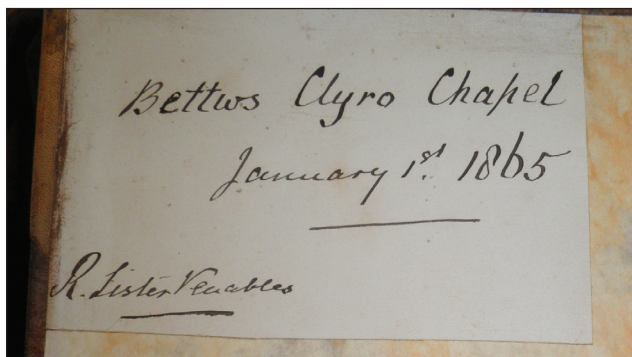
The first reading was given by our past Editor, Jeff Marshall, from a Bible which bore the signature of Richard Lister Venables (*inset*) and the date 1865. The *Magnificat*

and the *Nunc Dimittis* were sung. The second lesson was read by Richard Weston, Treasurer of the Kilvert Society. The second hymn was *Lord, thy word abideth* following which the Vicar said Prayers and the Act of Remembrance. He gave thanks for Kilvert, the beautiful surroundings and for rural life. He prayed for local schools in uncertain times, for those

recently ordained at Brecon, for those lonely and unloved, for those in government and especially for the Queen. He prayed for world peace and for those who had suffered as a result of natural disaster.

The third hymn was *Guide me, O thou great Jehovah* which was sung to the tune of *Cwm Rhondda*.

The *Diary* for Wednesday 25 September 1872 records: *Mrs. Bevan told me of the terrible mistake at Bettws Chapel one Sunday afternoon, when Irvine [the Curate] sitting in the desk and ready to begin service saw the door darkened by a porten-*



The sanctuary at Bettws being prepared for the Commemorative Service

PICTURES: VAL DIXON



Members arrive at Bettws on the Saturday (glad to know it was downhill all the way from there) PICTURE: DAVID HARRISON

tous shadow and heard the terrible voice of Mr. Venables saying, 'Are you aware that there is no one at Clyro Church?' Mr. Venables suspected something was wrong before he entered the Chapel and saw Irvine sitting in his robes, for he heard some one say 'Well, it isn't often we have two parsons at the Chapel'. (Mr. Venables ran back to Clyro to find the service in progress and arrived in time to preach). Irvine was so unnerved by what had happened and the sudden and dreadful apparition of Mr. Venables that he could hardly go through the service.

The sermon on this occasion was given by the Rev. David Thomas who recalled the life, work and ministry of Francis Kilvert. He compared the number of pastoral visits made by Kilvert whilst walking round his parish, getting to know his parishioners and helping them with their problems, with the inability of today's clergy to do something similar in such a busy world. He felt there was much to be said for FK's pastoral approach and said that there was, today, a need to go back to basics.

On this occasion David Thomas had no-one looking over his shoulder during his sermon: *I went to Bettws in light rain and preached extempore on the Good Samaritan from the Gospel for the day. A red cow with a foolish white face came up to the window by the desk and stared in while I was preaching* (Sunday, 3 September 1871). (The chapel was rebuilt in 1878, the window level raised and the roof replaced.)

The final hymn of the day was *Glory to thee, my God this night*.

The service concluded, members chatted and studied the details of the tiny chapel, parts of which date from the 17th century and some even earlier. Bettws Chapel is three miles

from Clyro and serves the scattered homesteads in the hilly and remote corner of the parish. In Kilvert's day, vicar and curate took turns to conduct the Sunday afternoon service. The Walls, *Chapel Farm* (one was churchwarden for twenty-five years), the Dykes, *Upper Cabalva*, the Hodgsons, *Lower Cabalva*, the younger Dykes, *Llwyngwillim*, and Wilding the Clerk from *Tybella*, were the members of the chapel recorded in the *Diary*.

Our thanks given to all concerned at the chapel, members wandered out on to the hillside and admired the wonderful view. One by one the cars made their way back down the winding lanes to the Parish Rooms in Hay-on-Wye where yet another wonderful tea awaited us. The tea had been prepared by the ladies of St. Mary's, Hay to whom our thanks were expressed by loud applause reinforced, as usual, by the barking of Jimmy, the curate (Father Richard's black, standard poodle!).

To round off the weekend and put the cherry on the cake Jeff Marshall had brought along the newly published copies of *Who's Who in Kilvert's Diary*, the wonderful guide to the people mentioned in the *Diary*, so painstakingly prepared by our late member Tony O'Brien and equally painstakingly edited by Jeff. Members were delighted and many copies were purchased on the spot. (Orders are currently being taken by Colin Dixon, Publications Manager, at the advertised price of £13 including p&xp).

There seemed to be a great reluctance to bring the weekend to a close as one by one members left for home, declaring that yet another wonderful Kilvert weekend had been enjoyed by all.



A treasure in the Kilvert Archive

Progress in conserving our valuable collection delights John Toman

KILVERT Society members can be well pleased at their success in securing the future of the Kilvert Archive; clearly they recognised the Archive's importance. In this article, I focus on one element in it – a book about flowers – and show how it casts valuable light on both Kilvert's background and his writing.

In my recent book, *Kilvert's Diary and Landscape* I noted the relative rarity with which he is categorised as a 'naturalist'. We are used to finding in the *Diary* a good deal on natural objects but don't usually think of its author as having the close, systematic, recording and specimen-collecting approach of the true naturalist. In *Kilvert's Diary and Landscape* I was inevitably concerned with Nature's larger forms: mountains, rivers, lakes, valleys, trees, cliffs and coasts. However, it would have been easy to illustrate Kilvert's reverential feel for Nature by reference to passages about, for example, birds or plants of various kinds. The sheer number of *Diary* entries about birds and plants indicates a preoccupation with both.

That preoccupation owed much to the role played in the Kilvert children's upbringing by the books of William and Mary Howitt, particularly the latter's *The Children's Year*, which Emily Kilvert evidently valued highly and which had, significantly I believe, a picture painted in it by her mother. The book details the experiences of natural objects that Mary Howitt's two younger children had during a year. Emily Kilvert's memoirs show a parallel concern in the Kilvert family with exploring the world of Nature. She wrote, 'I was always very fond of living creatures', a statement borne out by her delight in recording encounters with frogs, toads, bats, caterpillars, ants and cuckoos. She also recalled the 'ponies, dogs, cats, rabbits and birds we kept at Harnish'¹.

Some of Emily's emphases suggest there was a deliberate effort to put natural objects before the Kilvert children for the purposes of learning. She noted that she never forgot her 'first sight of a frog's leg under the magnifying glass' and the excitement aroused by natural phenomena on the family visit to the London Polytechnic. The Harnish nursery walls were adorned with 'large pictures of birds and beasts', and the 'birds and beasts' the Kilvert children saw in the grounds of Bowood give the impression that their outings there were partly 'field trips'². The pref-

ace to *The Children's Year* indicates a serious purpose behind its encounters with Nature: we are told that a home would be happy if 'the young are induced to derive those lessons from Nature which Nature is so well able to teach'³. It seems that the Kilvert home had a similarly serious purpose, mediated particularly through Mrs. Kilvert and Mary Howitt's book.

The curiosity about and the knowledge of natural things that characterise Emily Kilvert's memoirs permeates Kilvert's writing. He made explicit in one *Diary* entry the way in which those twin elements complemented each other in his approach to wild flowers. He had met the Morrell children with their governess, Miss Sandell, one of the many ladies of the period who knew botany. Mary Howitt (1799–1888) was deeply influenced by her early teacher, Mrs. Parker, who 'had written books, knew Latin and Greek, and botany, ... who saw the love we had for nature; she had it too, and she sympathised with us'⁴. Miss Thorley fulfilled the same role as governess to Charles Darwin's children. He wrote of her: 'Miss Thorley and I are doing a little botanical work ... making a collection of all the plants, which grow in a field, which has been allowed to run waste for fifteen years'⁵. Miss Sandell was in the same tradition of female botanists and Kilvert was impressed by the collection of wild flowers that the Morrell children had made under her guidance:

They had found the bog bean, the butterwort, milk-wort in four varieties, butterfly orchis, mouse ear, marsh valentine, marsh buttercup, hawkweed fumitory, yellow pimpernel, yellow potentilla. The children showed me what I never found out for myself or knew before, that the bog bean grows in the wern below Great Gwernfydden. And I have walked 14 miles for that flower, when it grew close by. Miss Sandell taught me more about these flowers in ten minutes than I have learnt from books in all my life. She knows a great deal about flowers. She did not know the comfrey or the yellow hill-violet, some of which I promised to bring her from the Warren Hill today⁶ (27 May 1871).

Kilvert's tribute to Miss Sandell is significant in a number of ways. Firstly, he was acknowledging what a good teacher she was, partly because of her comprehensive knowledge, partly because she was a field naturalist, and partly because she had fired the children's enthusiasm. Secondly, he was



revealing his own enthusiasm as a naturalist in his comment about the bog bean. A 'species obsession' dominated the first half of the 19th century, but Kilvert was not intent on finding a *new* species but certainly loved to find rare ones or ones he had not found before. As a child, he had read in *Masterman Ready* of William's response to unknown species of plants: 'I had better make a collection [of unknown ones], and take them back to my father, for he is a very good botanist'⁷. Thirdly, he was revealing that some of his own knowledge came from years reading botanical handbooks. Fourthly, he was acknowledging the limitations of botanical books – discovering and experiencing flowers for oneself was superior to theoretical knowledge.

The distinction Kilvert made between the field naturalist and the armchair variety was one Gilbert White (1720-93), author of *The Natural History of Selborne*, had insisted upon. He took pride in being 'an outdoor naturalist, one that takes his observations from the subject itself, and not from the writings of others'⁸. Kilvert's writing, with its close observation and accurate description, owes a debt to White. Uncle Francis Kilvert had a particularly close friend, Col. H.D. Skrine, who was President of the Bath branch of the Selborne Society; perhaps knowledge of White was transmitted to Kilvert and other pupils at uncle Francis's Claverton Lodge school, which placed heavy emphasis on natural history. White's general influence on naturalists of Kilvert's time was strong. His book was 'an important source of inspiration for every Victorian amateur naturalist'⁹. Its special significance for men like Kilvert may be seen in the fact that it was taken up avidly by the middle class and its author was 'the quintessential clergyman-naturalist, being both meticulous and pious', and demanded correct classification of flora and fauna, details of frequency of sightings, and of actual features¹⁰. All these qualities are found in Kilvert's *Diary*, as is White's strong stress on seasonal change, on objectivity and lack of sentimentality, and his particular interest in birds.

We can identify a botanical handbook that figured in the Kilvert family library: Maund's *The Botanic Garden*, held in the Kilvert Archive. The book is volume one, dated 1825, of what was a thirteen-volume work and was left by Kilvert's mother (she died on 4 July 1889) to her daughter Emily.¹¹ The inscription in it reads: *Thermuthis Kilvert, Langley Burrell Rectory*. The inscription is not dated. Emily had inscribed

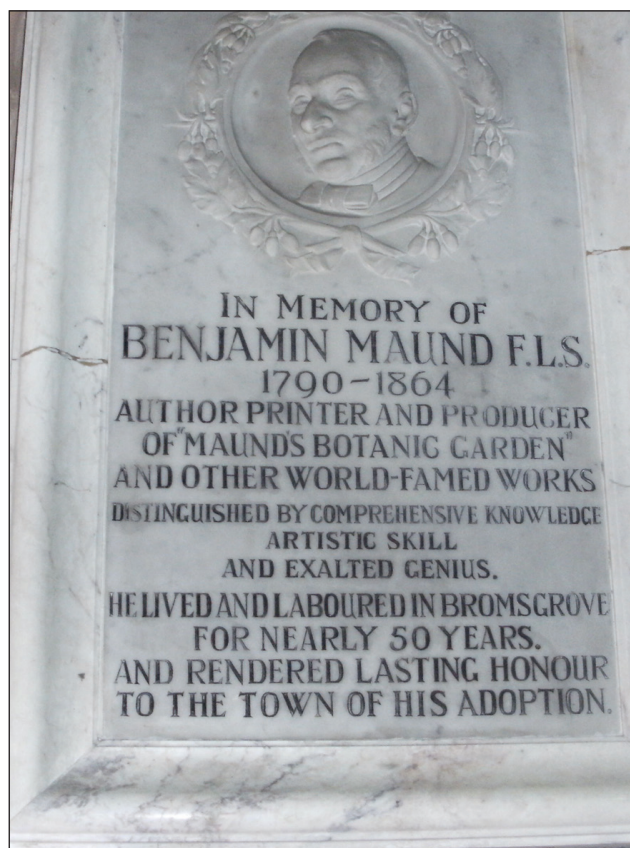
her own name below with the date *September 1889*. It bears the name of a Chippenham bookseller so it might have been bought by Mrs. Kilvert's parents who lived near by (perhaps as a present for her)¹². It is not hard to see why the book should have found favour with the Kilverts when one knows what kind of a man Benjamin Maund (1790-1864) was. He was born at Tenbury, Worcestershire, the son of a farmer, and had some formal education, 'because of the knowledge of the Classics, as well as comprehensive reading and sound knowledge of literature' evident in his writings¹³. He was apprenticed to a printer in Ludlow from the age of 16 and, when he was 23, he bought a printer's business in Bromsgrove, a role he combined with those of stationer, bookseller, publisher and chemist. A model and progressive citizen, he was a churchwarden, member of several parish committees, and 'prime mover in the building of a new town hall and cattle market'¹⁴. Another source noted that 'he did much to raise the town's intellectual tone'¹⁵. He went on to become a Fellow of both the Royal Society and the Linnaean Society.

Before sketching in Maund's religious views, especially as they relate to Nature, further understanding of the Kilvert family's stance towards natural history can be obtained from an article entitled 'The Happy Family', that appeared in *The Evangelical Magazine* within weeks of Kilvert's birth¹⁶. The article established two main sources of the Happy Family's happiness: parental concern for their children's education in piety and love of Nature. In connection with the latter, these points are made. Mr. B-, the head of the family, had followed 'commercial pursuits' but had always craved 'country retirement' and he lived in a beautiful valley. Some of his time was devoted to 'assiduous perusal of the best authors' and to 'reflection', but he was 'wedded to his garden'; 'every day he was to be seen among his plants and flowers'. His 'eminent piety' is then linked to the fact that 'he saw God in his wisdom, power and goodness, in every leaf, every herb, every plant, every tree, every flower'.

Maund's *Botanic Garden* was designed to attract such families as the B-s and the Kilverts. It provided the good pictures that the Kilvert family always craved. Its 56 descriptions of plants were illustrated by Edwin Dalton Smith (1800-52)¹⁷. Maund himself was 'a deeply religious man', according to the *DNB*. John Humphreys stated that 'He must have been a striking personality, with an intense love of nature, and a deeply religious character'¹⁸. The fact that he gave a paper to the Worcestershire Natural History Society in 1835 on the



'Mosaic account of the Formation of the Earth' tells us where he stood in the debate on evolution. Emphases in *The Botanic Garden* confirm his natural theology viewpoint. The preface to volume one (Mrs. Kilvert's volume) stated that 'Man, by nature, inherits the love of flowers', though this 'divine excitement' was often suppressed by 'the busy scenes of life'¹⁹. The volume six preface expressed satisfaction at the increase in Botanical Societies.²⁰ It also observed



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that 'the progress of Natural Science is ... leading to more important views of the objects of Creation ... Is it not desirable to call the soul from worldly pursuits to the contemplation of Divine Wisdom in the beautiful economy of Nature?'

The fullest statement of Maund's natural theology appears in the preface of another ambitious work of his: *The Botanist* (five volumes, 1836-42)²¹:

'The beneficial intentions of Providence are nowhere more distinctly to be understood than in the many testimonies of power and wisdom shown us by the Great Creator in the exquisite symmetry and magnificent design exhibited in the organic structure of different plants.... To a mind impressed with the belief in the infinite wisdom and goodness of the Creator, Botany affords a perpetual course of the very highest description, of mental gratification, in the never-ending proofs it entails of an all-pervading intelligence.'

The first volume of *The Botanist* appeared in 1836 and it is clear from Maund's wording in the above passage that he was intending to make a connection between his work and the recently launched *Bridgewater Treatises* 'on the Power,

Wisdom and Goodness of God, as manifested in the Creation'. The 8th Earl of Bridgewater commissioned a series of works by the leading scientists of the day, in the period 1830-36, designed to show that science and religion complemented each other. Maund was also courting popular appeal by combining, as he put it, 'accurate scientific instruction with an occasional appeal to the imagination and to the moral and religious feelings'. To this end, *The Botanist* 'interspersed quotations from those poets ... who have alluded to Natural History in their writings'. It had therefore something in common with those publications, popular at the time, which combined natural history with sentimental verses. Miss Twamley's, *The Romance of Nature*, is a representative example and was published in the same year (1836) as the first volume of *The Botanist*²². That Maund admired Miss Twamley's book is evident from his reference to it in the preface to volume nine of *The Botanic Garden* as her 'beauteous volume'.

It is fortunate that we have the copy of Maund's book in our Archive, and even more fortunate that it contains an inscription indicative of its significance for the Kilvert family. The inscription is another piece of evidence suggesting that Mrs. Kilvert was a particularly strong influence on her children in encouraging a reverential stance towards Nature. Kilvert's *Diary* shows not only his particularly strong enthusiasm for flowers but also his considerable knowledge of them, knowledge which came in part from *The Botanic Garden*. Knowing the kind of book it was and the kind of man its author was enables us to place the work in the religious, moral and educational outlook of the Kilvert family.

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- 4 *My Own Story; or Autobiography of a Child*, London, WILLIAM TIGG, 1857, p.91 and p.94.
- 5 RANDALL KEYNES, *Charles Darwin, his daughter and human evolution*, London, Fourth Estate, 2002, p.106.
- 6 *Kilvert's Diary*, vol.I, p.349.
- 7 FREDERICK MARRYATT, *Masterman Ready* (1841), London, Dent, 1970, p.218. The diarist indicated that he knew the book as a boy when he wrote: 'I went to see Mary Davies and took her dear old *Masterman Ready* to amuse herself with' (*Kilvert's Diary*, NLW edition, April-June 1970, 29 April).
- 8 *The Natural History of Selborne* (1789), edited by JUNE CHATFIELD, London, Macmillan, 1981, p.104. White's italics.
- 9 LYNN BARBER, *The Heyday of Natural History*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1980, p.15.
- 10 LYNN MERRILL, *The Romance of Victorian Natural History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989, pp.22-4, p.43.
- 11 Its full title is *The Botanic Garden. Highly finished representations of hardy ornamental flowering plants, cultivated in Britain, with their classification, history, culture and other interesting information*, London, Baldwin and Cradock. It appeared between 1825 and 1851.
- 12 If bought in 1825, it could have been a present for Mrs. Kilvert on her 17th birthday (she was born in May 1808). It seems likely that she had the book from an early age.
- 13 JOHN HUMPHREYS, 'A great Bromsgrovian', paper read at the Bromsgrove Institute and published in the *Bromsgrove, Droitwich and Redditch Messenger*, 12 June 1926.
- 14 *Dictionary of National Biography*.
- 15 WILLIAM LEADBETTER, 'The story of Bromsgrove', *Bromsgrove Messenger*, 1949.
- 16 The date of the issue was September 1840. Since the article's sub-title was 'A sketch from life', it may be assumed that the article dealt with a real family.
- 17 Son of an engraver, EDWIN DALTON SMITH was an accomplished pre-early Victorian artist. He is best known for both portrait miniatures and botanical works.
- 18 *Op cit.*
- 19 In this preface, Maund said that he did not intend 'to wade deep in the current of science and research' but to provide 'a nosegay to lovers of a flower garden'.
- 20 The preface to vol III noted that 'it can scarcely be doubted that ... every scientific

establishment will, ere long, enumerate BOTANY among its principal studies'.

- 21 Its full title is *The Botanist, containing accurately coloured figures of tender and hardy Ornamental Plants; with Descriptions, scientific and popular; intended to convey both moral and intellectual Gratification*. Maund's co-author was the Rev. JOHN STEVENS HENSLAW, Professor of Botany at Cambridge. Son of a solicitor, Henslow (1796-1861) attended St John's College, Cambridge, and in 1819 accompanied Cambridge's Professor of Geology, Adam Sedgwick, on a field trip to the Isle of Wight. Henslow's own field classes, combining geology and zoology with botany, were very popular

and Charles Darwin attended them. He and Henslow were lifelong friends.

- 22 LOUISA ANNE TWAMLEY (née Meredith, 1812-1895) was born near Birmingham. She published *Poems* (1835) and *The Annual of British Landscape Scenery* (1839), an account of a tour on the Wye. She drew herself the illustrations of flowers in her *The Romance of Nature*.
- 23 A book lying on a table in a Dorset cottage caught his attention on 8 August 1871: *It was the 'Language of Flowers'*. Clearly it was a work he recognised. Identifying it and exploring its nature would make an interesting article for the Kilvert Society *Journal*.



Kilvert and the medical profession

A J Larner, of the Walton Centre for Neurology and Neurosurgery, Liverpool, has thoughts on our new 'Who's Who in Kilvert's Diary'

AS a member of the medical profession I was interested to note the doctors mentioned in Tony O'Brien's recently published magnum opus *Who's Who in Kilvert's Diary*¹, both those personally known to Kilvert (Dr Peter Giles; *Who's Who* entry 421) and those known only by reputation (Sir Henry Thompson, 128; Sir William Jenner, 359). The entry on Kilvert's dentists, Charles Gaine of Bath and GC McAdam of Hereford (388), was also welcome. I was a little surprised by the omission of Dr David Livingstone (1813-73) whose link with Kilvert I have already noted in the *Journal*².

However, another omission, which disappointed me, and prompts me to make this contribution, or special plea, was that of Dr Clouston. O'Brien mentions Kilvert's long-standing "neuralgia", possibly a form of periodic headache and facial pain disorder known technically as cluster headache^{3 4}, in the context of his visits to Charles Gaine, but has nothing to say on Dr Clouston.

In July 1872 Kilvert suffered one of his episodic bouts, and wrote a note asking Clouston to come. After a sleepless night (7-8 July 1872), Kilvert changed the wording of his note, *begging the doctor to come as soon as possible* but as he gave this missive to the postboy the pain resolved (in Kilvert's words, the *abscess broke*, although there are no grounds for believing that this was the correct diagnosis), and the note was not sent (8 July 1872). Things must have been very bad to prompt the writing of this note, since Kilvert seems to have eschewed medical intervention for his neuralgia. He was ready to resort to self-help measures (including alcohol consumption) for this problem, but seems to have been unwilling to bother the doctor, a possibility which may be exemplified by the fact that he did not seek help from Dr Clouston even when he saw him in the town on the same day (6 December 1871) that he was having symptoms.

Another professional activity in which we see Clouston is mentioned on 14 April 1870: John Watkins of the Cwm, according to Kilvert *a good deal more crazed lately wandering about the country and scarcely master of himself*, was seen by Clouston who *thought him a case for the [Abergavenny] Asylum from the wildness of his talk* but Watkins managed to slip the net, appearing normal when seen by Trumper the magistrate⁵.

Clouston was perhaps a friend or at least an acquaintance of Kilvert's since he is one of the dinner guests on 14 November 1871. On 7 February 1872 a lady mistook Kilvert

for Dr Clouston, who *begged her not to regard the matter as I was used to being mistaken for Dr Clouston*, so presumably the latter was bearded.

What more is known of Dr Clouston? As the name might suggest, he was Scottish, born in Orkney in 1846. In the Medical Directory of 1871 (accessed Liverpool Medical Institution, 13 July 2010) one finds reference on page 328 to CLOUSTON, CHAS. STEWART, Hay, Breconshire, undoubtedly Kilvert's man. He was a graduate of the University of Edinburgh (MB, CM, 1868) and also held the post of Medical Officer to the Radnorshire District Hay Union ('the workhouse').

His obituary⁶ notes that after his graduation he first went to Hay where he 'built up a practice, as large as he could possibly overtake, and was universally esteemed as a man and as a physician. He did not rest contented with relying on former rules of practice, but made accurate observations for himself on many subjects.'

These observations included the use of salicylates (eg aspirin) in the treatment of rheumatism, which observations contributed to his MD thesis of 1881. From Hay, he 'removed to Gunnersbury, London', date unspecified, and there fell victim to an unspecified disease which did not improve despite removal to Orkney, where he died on 16 September 1883, aged 36, 'cut off in the very prime of his life'. So, a worthy contemporary of Kilvert, it would seem.

One final medical note of interest which emerges from Tony O'Brien's book: the case of Ann Beavan and her two sibs with stunted growth (282), which suggests the presence of an inherited disorder.

Along with the aforementioned information on doctors and dentists, this serves to give just one illustration of the immense value of the *Who's Who* for scholars of Kilvert and his world.

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A cuppa with Edward West

Alan Seaburg, former Curator of Manuscripts for the Library of the Harvard Divinity School, revisits his memories of the remarkable friendship he and his brother Carl established with our late Secretary

(This article came about by chance. The Society had lost touch with Dr Seaburg, a Life Member, after he moved house on his retirement, but we managed to track him down in Massachusetts, thanks to the wonders of the internet and email. And, almost as a reward for bringing him back into the fold, he sent us this charming stroll down memory lane. We hope he will forgive us anglicising his spellings. *Ed*)

I SAT in the middle of the last row of pews at Whitney Church – to my right was a young farmer with his family who had been a pupil of Mr. E. J. C. West (Hon. Sec.) – and outside of the entrance door, only a few feet from where I was sitting, a couple of Hereford cows were contently grazing – while in the pulpit delivering an address on Francis Kilvert to the September 1990 gathering of the Kilvert Society was my older brother Carl.

After the service the congregation walked over to the fairly new Village Hall for what I was to learn was the usual ‘sumptuous’ tea, during which David Lockwood, the Chairman of the Society, asked my brother to stand for a round of applause, afterwards giving him a copy of his biography of Kilvert inscribed ‘thank you for a truly magnificent address’.

So began my friendship and cuppas with – at first Mr. West, then Edward West, and finally just ‘Edw’. I might add that fortunately for me during the decade – well almost a decade – that we were friends, the retired schoolmaster put up with my cheekiness.

It all started when Edward asked Carl to give a talk to the Society. A date was agreed upon and we flew from Boston to London and then travelled by First Great Western to Hereford where Edward was punctually waiting for us. He put me in charge just outside the station of the luggage while he went with Carl for the rental car. So with Carl driving, carefully guided by Edward – especially through roundabouts – began a several days visit to Kilvert country and the first of my stays with Edward, the first two times at his little snug home on Lincoln Hill and on later visits at various B&Bs in Ross-on-Wye. One of these was run by a lady who had been one of his students and, like them all, was very fond of him. That was easy to do, for beyond his proper and somewhat distant gentlemanly façade, was a very likeable and honest human being.

Twenty-seven Baker’s Oak was just right for him. It was about a mile from the centre of Ross and he had purchased it when he retired. He told me that he could walk to the village for his immediate needs or take a bus at the foot of Lincoln Hill. We never made that walk – I suspect not because walking had become difficult for him but because one appraisal of this American convinced him that it would be easier all around to take the bus, which was actually a very pleasant, if short, ride.

His ‘castle’ was one of a series of row houses – four in a group – originally built during the very late 1960s. There

was a short lawn in front and then on the left side of the house his front door. Entering it, one first met the steep stairs where on about the third step, so he could sit and talk comfortably, was his phone. Upstairs was a bath, a large bedroom where Carl and I stayed, and a small room, which I believe he regularly used for himself.

The first floor essentially had two rooms. The main room was large enough to be both a sitting room and a dining area. Beyond it could be found his small kitchen, whose sink seemed to me to be always filled with pots, dishes and silverware to be washed or in the process of drying. At its outside wall was the door to his back garden – his ‘happy place’ one could accurately say – and that door was often left slightly ajar so a neighbour’s three-legged cat could come in for a bowl of milk, a bowl which Edward always kept filled.

The house seemed to suit him well. A comfortable chair faced his telly where he enjoyed watching movies from the 1940s and 1950s – especially musicals. There also he could read or quickly polish off the prize crossword in *The Times*. When winter’s darkness arrived he loved the atmosphere created when the front window drapes were pulled tight. During the other three seasons it was his garden that was his fancy. (I remember his ‘lecture’ that the American term ‘Fall’, which suggested to him the fall from grace of Adam, was just plain ugly and without the beauty of the English term for this season – Autumn. And I thought to myself: he’s right. Imagine John Keats’s *To Autumn* as *To Fall*.)

On one of the first Kilvert journeys he took Carl and me on was a side trip up a hilly slope just beyond Hole-in-the-Wall, five miles from Ross, where he had Carl stop the car while he nipped from it with a garden trowel and a plastic bag in hand to dig up some moss he had seen some time before and which he desired for his garden.

Just as vital for him, in addition to his gardening, were his ‘elevenses’ and his afternoon tea. The former was always for ‘a coffee’ and the latter for tea and a sweet – or maybe a digestive biscuit.

My very first tea with Edward was at the *Baskerville Arms* in Clyro after Carl and I had arrived in 1990. This small charming olde worlde hotel claims – but there are other claimants too – to be the real site of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s fictional Baskerville Hall in his story *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Of course when I returned to the States I re-read that story, which was what I am sure that Edward had intended for me to do by introducing me to the *Baskerville Arms*. Here we had a lovely tea and were joined for the



From left, the Rev. Carl Seaburg, Alan Seaburg, Edward West (secretary) and the Rev. David Lockwood (chairman) at Whitney Church in September 1990 when Carl addressed the Society from the pulpit on Francis Kilvert

occasion by the *Arms'* chubby and very friendly yellow cat.

Another volume he got me to read was Robert Louis Stevenson's *Travels With a Donkey in the Cevennes*. This came about through his just talking about once travelling one summer in south-central France in about the same area as had Stevenson and about how much he had enjoyed Stevenson's 1878 account of being there with his – sometimes, perhaps all the time – stubborn donkey. Of course he never meant to suggest, of course he didn't, that travelling with me in any way reminded him of poor Modestine.

There were at least two other teas that I remember especially fondly with Edward. One was at *The Swan Hotel* in Hay-on-Wye where we had arranged to stay overnight so that I could visit – at the appropriate pace – its many local bookshops. We had arrived at the hotel mid-afternoon and before I could shout I see 'ten for a bird that's best to miss' which had just landed in the *Swan's* garden, Edward had persuaded the manageress to serve us tea in that most attractive and secluded garden.

The other was after a Kilvert Society gathering when the tea – featuring homemade scones, strawberry jam and clotted cream – was held at the *Burnt House Barn*, which I believe has burned down. It was run then by an older couple – Peter and Kathleen Stutz – and while their scones were perfect, what was even better was the cook who had made them – Kathleen – for she reminded me so very much of my grandmother on my mother's side of the family. That side had originated in the Isle of Skye, from which some of the family had emigrated to Prince Edward Island, and then finally my grandmother Mary McLeod had left her home on that 'potatoes-every-inch' island for Boston.

Now while all this public tea was excellent, nary a cup compared favorably with a cuppa prepared by Edward West. I am not quite sure why this was but it certainly

had something to do with his choice of tea which when I knew him was always – until near the end when his doctor warned him away from it – PG Tips. Still a brand I favour when in the U.K.

Over our decade together we enjoyed many, may I call them, learning trips through the greater region of Ross-on-Wye. Almost all the Kilvert related places we were able to visit on the 1990 trip while Carl drove the rented car under the direction of its Captain, Mr. West. After that those sites were usually seen when I was there during a Kilvert event. Then it was always by a bus rented by the Kilvertians for the occasion or just Edward and me, usually on Red & White buses. Perhaps he was lame and with a cane, but when riding area buses he was the first up those narrow curving stairs to their tops, and that was of course the only true place to be to see the countryside, for English road hedges can be mighty high. But even in America, when we visited the House of the Seven Gables in Salem, Massachusetts, and the guide took the group up the house's steep narrow twisting hidden staircase Edward was almost the first in line to ascend them. And he did this more nimbly than the rest of us on the tour.

Fortunately for me, there were in addition to these strictly Kilvert adventures, others to nearby special and unique attractions found in this area. For example, we made a bus trip to the market town of Ludlow to enjoy at lunch the hospitality and the Jacobean architecture of *The Feathers Hotel*. It was an area he knew when he was a young man and a place he had forebears in. After our visit he was there later that same year with his adoptive great niece – actually his goddaughter – who was visiting from Australia.

Then there were our numerous visits to Hereford and Gloucester, often because I was arriving at one or the other rail station from Paddington, or simply to see again their

ancient cathedrals, both so much beloved by Edward. At Gloucester we always enjoyed a pub lunch at *The New Inn*, which was housed in a 14th century building, and was – then at least – still an old fashioned pub just down an alley off Westgate Street, one of the city’s main shopping areas.

On a couple of occasions he took me to a shop entitled *The Tailor of Gloucester* and while I would enter this ‘world of Beatrix Potter’ to buy some things for my grand-daughters Lizzie and Sarah he would patiently wait outside, leaning on his cane and smoking yet another cigarette. And whenever we were in Hereford and going to see again its cathedral he would take me down another alley – really I guess just a short pathway – but right beside Elgar’s house when he lived in Hereford. I cannot say that Edward introduced me to one of his favourite composers, but he certainly enlarged my experience of the various musical pieces Elgar had written, for which I still thank him.

Then there were our visits to London, which occurred when he was still able to come up to the capital for an overnight. He always stayed at the *Best Western* at Paddington and we would meet after lunch at the National Gallery. He chose that spot and when I arrived he would be standing by its main entrance door, leaning on his cane, watching – similar almost to the Square’s four lions – the people and traffic down below. Often we would go via the Admiralty Arch to St James’s Park and sit on a bench to watch its aquatic activities. To reach the park we had to cross the zebra by the Arch. Here – really at most zebra crossings he encountered – Edward would raise his cane almost straight up and looking neither right nor left and with supreme confidence that his England was a law-abiding nation, he would march to the sidewalk opposite. I would follow him but with much less confidence than he displayed.

In the evening we took in a Philharmonic Orchestra concert at the Royal Festival Hall at the South Bank or attended a West End theatre production. I wish I could say that we heard a piece by Elgar but I cannot remember what was on the programmes. But in the spirit of being an Old Age Pensioner and in the spirit of fun I will say with Edward’s ‘zebra’ confidence that – Yes, we did! As to the plays we saw – which I chose with Edward in mind – I remember them clearly. The first, *When She Danced*, was about Isadora Duncan, the creator of modern dance, and starred the wonderful actress Vanessa Redgrave. Another, *Some Like It Hot*, was appropriately at the Prince Edward Theatre and starred

Britain’s first great Rock ‘n’ Roll idol Tommy Steele. It was a musical version of the Tony Curtis-Jack Lemmon-Marilyn Monroe movie of the same title. Our evenings ended by walking him to one of the bus stops on the lower end of Regent Street.

Now back to Ross-on-Wye. One afternoon while I was staying at his comfortable little house up near the top of the hillside we went walking near fields and pastures down below. When it was clear that he was tiring we decided it was best to return – probably for yet another cuppa and a sitdown. On an impulse we took a shortcut through an attractive pasture that had just been newly ploughed. Walking in its gaps, more often than not across the furrows of its brown earth, we soon found, at least I did, that what was so very pretty to the eye made in reality hard walking. I was ahead of him and turned and glanced back several times. And there he was patiently trudging along with his cane and probably quoting inside his mind a verse of English poetry and doing it all with a better spirit than I.

It was always a lovely feature of our visits that he recited lines from English literature to me – and constantly seemed surprised that colonial Alan (but he could have been just teasing me) could not do so. And not only that amazed him but also the fact that most of the time colonial Alan couldn’t supply the name of the author or the setting of the quotation. I don’t believe I would have been listed in his mind as one of his better students. But Edward had a sly and quiet sense of humour that could and often did gentle his view of his fellow *Homo sapiens*.

On one of our day jaunts we joined a lady from Australia visiting the Wye area, which had been her childhood home. The three of us were on a mini-bus tour of the River Wye and the southern Welsh county of Monmouthshire. One of our stops was Symonds Yat where we climbed to the Rock for the popular and magnificent view of the valley and the river. A privilege never enjoyed by Kilvert. The highlight for me was visiting Tintern Abbey and a picnic lunch by the banks of the Wye. In 1951 between my freshman and sophomore years at Tufts University I had taken a summer course on the ‘Romantic Poets’. It was one of the most exciting and exhilarating courses I had while at Tufts and my love for the writings of these poets still beats joyfully in my mind.

After our lunch Edward told me to wander off alone and just be a part of this landscape so beloved by Wordsworth.

*‘At most zebra crossings
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he displayed.’*

So I did for about half an hour and even now I still feel the warmth of that day's sun, see the lush greenery of the bank beside the flowing Wye, and experience the sense of peace and joy that Wordsworth expressed so well in *Tintern Abbey*. What was lacking, however, was the ability to recite that poem by memory. Nevertheless the teacher clearly knew his business when he instructed me to experience those moments alone.

I remember yet another of our picnic luncheons. This one was in Builth Wells beside the Wye – perhaps at The Groe riverside park – just before the start of a Kilvert walking outing. We sat on the ground to enjoy our sandwiches with the Michael Sharps. With them, because as Edward had told me earlier he was planning to retire as the Hon. Secretary of the Kilvert Society and it was his intention that Michael Sharp should replace him. So during lunch he proceeded to convince Mr. Michael Sharp to become the next Hon. Sec. And he did, perhaps not then, but eventually.

Whilst this exchange was taking place we also enjoyed a lovely day and a most friendly luncheon. The Sharps knowing my interest in Virginia Woolf told me to be sure to visit Monks House in the village of Rodmell, which I did in the company of two other American Kilvertians, Beverly and Ernest Cassara. To know Edward West was to come to know many other interesting and pleasant folks.

It was a privilege to have been one of his friends – indeed the very friend that Reg Morgan mentioned in his fine remembrance of Edward in the Society's booklet *All My Days*. There he wrote that he and his wife had last seen him at Hay 'when he brought one of his Bostonian friends to see us'. I like that term and liked being one of his Bostonian friends. On that day we had come over to Hay to find a good copy of the three-volume edition of Kilvert's journal for an American member of the Society. And we did just that, at what Edward declared was a fair price.

Before I retired as Curator of Manuscripts for the Library of the Harvard Divinity School I established a small but significant collection of material relating to the Kilvert Society. It includes most of Edward's correspondence with the Seaburg brothers, papers and related material on the Society, its programmes and activities, and photographs of Edward and the Society. Perhaps one day a student searching for an Honors topic or even a future graduate student will stumble upon it, become fascinated with Kilvert and his journal, and go on to write a PhD thesis on Francis.

I would like to close these happy memories – really

poetic and visual happy memories – with two brief images.

The first is a vivid if momentary picture of Edward from the last evening's gathering at *The Green Dragon* during the Golden Jubilee of the Kilvert Society (June 1998.)

At his strong suggestion an old Victorian practice, a Penny Reading, took place consisting of verse, songs and ballads. By now his health was beginning to fail so his contribution was more of being the producer rather than as one of the performers, although he participated that way too. The Penny Readers were at the front of the hall and Edward's position was often at the end of the group. As I write these words I see him sitting there in a chair or maybe it was a stool when – let me put it this way – he was one of those who listened rather than performed. I see him sitting half bent over, his arms resting on his knees, his hands on the side of his forehead. At first I was concerned that he did not feel well until I noticed that his lips were moving as he softly repeated the poem being read or the song being sung. It was amazing. If his body was failing his memory and spirit were as mature as ever. In many ways it was for me a glimpse of the Edward I never knew – the member of St Mary's choir at Ross, the gentleman in the Japanese costume singing Gilbert & Sullivan, or the teacher who, when a student or students called at his home, served them a bowl of shrimp, a Forest Brown, and conversation about literature and music.

The other image took place in London's Paddington Station. He had journeyed up to see me on one of my numerous trips to the United Kingdom for what turned out to be really just for a few hours which is in itself rather symbolic of our late-in-life friendship. I was returning from a visit to my late wife's pen pal Von in Baildon, West Yorkshire, and he had directed me to meet him at the station's statue of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. As my train from Leeds was extremely late we had time for only a conversational luncheon in the station. It was, of course, a traditional full English breakfast, a meal Edward favoured. Then it was time for him to catch his train back home to his beloved Kilvert landscape.

We walked to the platform and the waiting train. He only climbed aboard a moment before it set off and my final image is of him leaning out of the window in the coach door, smiling and waving, a position he held until I could see him no longer. In so doing he created for the remainder of my days the warm image he also left for so many of his students and friends after his passing.

'At Harvard I established a collection of material relating to the Kilvert Society. It includes most of Edward's correspondence with the Seaburg brothers, papers and related material on the Society, its programmes and activities, and photographs. Perhaps one day a student will stumble upon it and write a PhD thesis on Francis.'



A literary walk . . . or twelve

Jeff Marshall's second-hand bookshop habit comes up 'tramps'

I WROTE in *Journal* No 27 about how my haunting of second-hand bookshops had not resulted in the discovery of a Folio Society edition of *Kilvert's Diary*, something which I had long coveted. It is rare, however, that such hauntings fail to produce some treasure or other, which is what happened again not so long ago. The trick seems to be *not* to be looking for anything in particular, but just to gaze gormlessly at the shelves.

The gem acquired on this recent occasion and brought home in triumph (despite my wife's ruling that no more books should enter the house until some were disposed of – one in, one out) was a paperback version of Christopher Somerville's *Twelve Literary Walks*. This was a bargain new, in 1985, at £7.95 and now an even better one at two quid.

Here Somerville, walking correspondent of *The Times*, invites us to follow him on a dozen enjoyable and instructive excursions, following also in the footsteps of twelve very varied characters from fact and fiction. You can probably guess where all this is leading . . . but we are not there, yet.

Each literary walk featured in this splendid collection is accompanied by biographical notes, textual references and quotations. Thus we can join in 'A Prodigious Fine Walk with Parson Woodforde', a cross-country run with Tom Brown, Harry East and the Tadpole, a stroll around Grasmere with Dorothy Wordsworth, a wuthering with Emily Brontë on the way to Top Withens, follow the French Lieutenant's Woman through the Undercliff, and on to Galloway for Dorothy L Sayers and Lord Peter Wimsey.

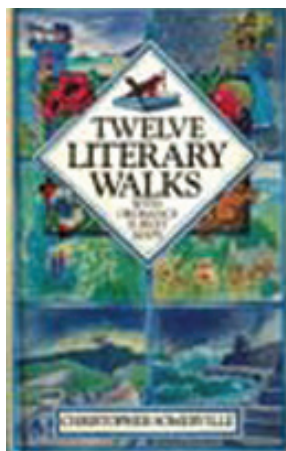
Yet another appeal of this book, for me, at least, is that two of the twelve writers featured were new to me: Russell Thorndike (brother of Dame Sibyl) and Tommy Armstrong. From the former's *Further Adventures of Doctor Syn* we can enjoy 'A Gallop with the Scarecrow on Romney Marsh'. The Scarecrow in question is the smuggler-vicar of Dymchurch, Dr Syn. The latter, Tommy Armstrong, is the 'Pitman Poet' from the North-East and, following him on a circular walk from Beamish Museum, takes one through some of the mining villages of County Durham.

The collection is now completed, almost, by three works that leave me cold: *Cider with Rosie*, and I have no desire to follow the wake or trace the paw-prints of Tarka the otter or cavort with the rabbits on Watership Down.

That's eleven then and you will have guessed by now who might be missing – yes, dear old Frank and this brings me to *A Walk in Kilvert Country* (No 8 in the collection). Sorry!, Wiltshire members, it's the Marches again.

The walk, circular, as most are, is about ten miles of 'fairly easy walking mostly by lanes and footpaths', and indeed for the less athletic almost all of it can be followed by car, and all on a bike, although you would have to push it up the Radnorshire 'pitches' on the way.

Starting at Ashbrook House and finishing at St Michael's,



if you follow this route you will end up with a very good basic knowledge of the Radnorshire Kilvert Country and pass by some key *Diary* landmarks.

On account of RFK, 'Thousands of pilgrims every year leave the [Clyro] by-pass and steer their cars through the narrow village street to the Baskerville Arms and Ashbrook House', writes Somerville. If it really is thousands who do so, then what a great pity that some are not moved to join the Society! The narrative continues with an affectionate portrait of the Diarist, a potted biography and a brief comparison with Woodforde before the description of the walk begins with the stiff

climb up Cutter's Pitch and on to Bird's Nest Lane. Here, says Somerville, 'grass grows through the tarmac, but holy ground for Kilvert', – and we know why. In a little while the route passes *Llwyngwillim* (whence the Christening party of 13 February 1870) and comes to Bettws (properly Betws) Chapel, the scene of our Commemoration service last June. Those of us lucky enough to be present on that occasion will long remember that golden afternoon, the distant views over the valley of the Wye and the little Chapel surrounded by meadows of billowing grass, just as described by Kilvert in the *Diary* entry for 9 July 1871. Here, says our guide writing in 1985, 'there is no mention anywhere of Francis Kilvert [committee please note], who regularly walked the three miles or more from Clyro, all uphill to take the services at this chapel-of-ease'. No mention of Kilvert in the Chapel perhaps, but there was on the lectern a very large Bible with the signature of R. Lister Venables and the date, 1 January 1865, inside the front cover and I was privileged to read from it on 27 June.

The way turns west now to Crowther's Pool and past the lane leading to *Heartsease*, home of the gipsy Henry Warnell (or Warner, see the article in *Journal* No 6); fine views hereabouts, says Somerville, and a contrast with the approach to Rhos Goch, the Red Moor and its gloomy bog. Passing now *Llanshiffr* the route reaches Rhos Goch chapel and mill, the latter pictured on page 113 and, of course, on the cover of the March 2010 *Journal*.

It is not far now to the lane leading to the *Homme*, although the one used by Kilvert was, at the time of writing, overgrown and impassable, but there is a new track below it. Soon, other familiar names appear, the *Cwm*, the remains of *Burnt House* and thence to *Cwmgrwanon* and *White Ash*. Eventually, after a long mile along the road, journey's end comes into sight and a descent to the side of the *Bron* brings the walk to its fitting conclusion at the *Church of St Michael and All Angels*, Clyro. The end of a fine excursion among many others in this delightful book which will slip easily into pocket or rucksack, Alas, it is out of print, but it is worth doing some haunting of your own to seek out a copy if you are lucky enough to have a second-hand bookshop near at hand.

Notes, reviews, obituaries

James Roose-Evans

Opening Doors and Windows

A memoir in four acts

190pp. History Press. £18.99

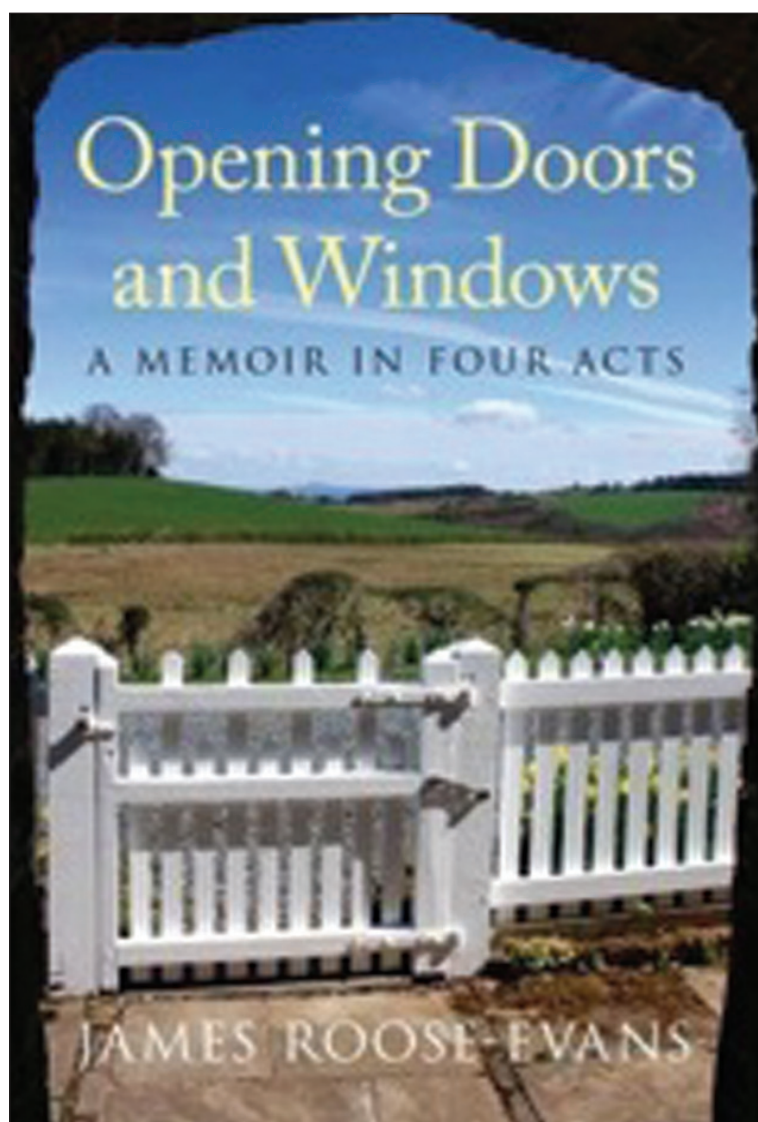
Reviewed by our President

THE doors and windows of James Roose-Evans's title can never have been closed. The entire life of the author – an Anglican priest and distinguished theatre director – has been a bravura performance from start to where it is at this moment, divided between London and a small country church in South Wales. The flow, however, is held in check by some remarkably good writing, and by the mining of a well-kept journal. Thus the rich detail of half a century, Roose-Evans's own experience is staged out, as it were, by a sequence of portraits of authors, rather than actors: Robert Frost, Enid Bagnold, Gabriel Garcia Lorca, Leonard Woolf, as well as personal statements about subjects ranging from religion to army life to the countryside. The freshness and the variety are exciting. Theatre gossip, though inevitable, is held back by an underlying seriousness.

Roose-Evans's youth in Gloucestershire resembled a non-lyrical version of Laurie Lee's. Absent salesman father, hopeless mother, wild connections, but of another class. He came to both Church and stage by the side door, a route which contributed to his toughness and honesty. His achievements are part of post-war theatre history; the creation of the Hampstead Theatre, the founding of the Bleddfa Centre in Wales, and such unexpected triumphs as Helene Hanff's *84 Charing Cross Road*.

Names rain down as they must in a book such as *Opening Doors and Windows*, but its shape and purpose prevent them from drowning the reader. Anecdotes are kept in their place by extended descriptions which display a passionate understanding of drama, criticism and writing. Roose-Evans's description of his day-to-day work is structural, earthy and somehow inspiring. The same is true of his account of his relationship with Hywel Jones.

Although Roose-Evans can be seen to have been on some



kind of Christian pilgrimage all his life, with the customary byroad towards Roman Catholicism, his ordination as an Anglican priest in Herefordshire is as dramatic as any other event in his life. Not that it was easy – the bishops made certain of that. In the light of what went before, however, the outcome was clearly right.

He concludes by speaking of himself as “interstitial”, a term coined by Jonathan Miller to designate a person “who stands at the cross-roads of society, at a frontier . . . whose task is to stand at the intersection of paths and hold the tension of opposites within themselves”.

RONALD BLYTHE

We are grateful to The Times Literary Supplement for permission to reprint this review.

❖ Our President, in a note to the *Journal* editor granting permission to reproduce this review, wrote, ‘I only wish I could take a greater part in the Kilvert Society’s activities but I live so far away, alas, and my role has to be a rather inactive one. But I often mention Francis Kilvert when I give lectures, and in my writings.’

❖ We have happy memories of the occasion when Mr Roose-Evans brought our Diamond Jubilee Year celebrations to a close in October 2008 with a dramatic presentation of his *The Clyro Diaries of the Revd Francis Kilvert* at St Mary’s parish church in Hay-on-Wye. We wish him every success with his *Memoir*.

Robin Saikia
Blue Guide Hay-on-Wye
Blue Guides Limited, Somerset Books Company, 2010.
155pp. £6.95.

THIS beautifully written and beautifully produced pocket book will delight Kilvertians and anyone who loves Hay and books, for it is packed with information about Hay, its environs and its history and about those who made and are still making Hay into the magic rainbow-hued town that it is.

Robin writes appreciatively of Kilvert. In all the different mentions of him, I found nothing that jarred on me. The loving last sentence of his longest and main entry about Kilvert reads: 'His great compassion, his high good humour, the uninhibited freshness with which he engages with beauty – all these mark him out as a man for all time, forever striding purposefully and jubilantly across the fields to Hay.'

Although Robin Saikia made many visits to Hay and stayed with Father Richard at the Vicarage, sad to say there are mistakes which make one wish he had checked the proofs with a Hay person.

He describes Lucy Powell, erstwhile landlady of *The Three Tuns*, where the Committee have met for lunch, as legendary but also as dead. Thank goodness, Lucy seems to find this funny. She will probably live at least another ten years and be sent a telegram by the Queen, becoming ever more legendary all the time.

At the back are two useful maps, a glossary, lists of Welsh place names and books for further reading, including three under the heading Kilvertiana.

Dear Jeff Marshall, with Susan Hill, advised us in the March 2010 *Journal* to 'save money in these hard economic times, give up buying books and read the unread on your shelves'. But do, please, make an exception in this case and buy yourself a book which is useful as well as beautiful, and a joy to read.

ps Those of us who live in Hay are so grateful to those of you who came for tea in our Parish Hall on June 26 and 27. The teas raised £285 for the Organ Fund which means the £110,000 we needed is nearly all gathered in. Thank you, a huge thank you.

ELIZABETH ROWE



New life for our Archive

Work on conserving our Collection is going well

AS members will have learnt from the June Newsletter, the Archive Conservation Appeal, at the end of May, stood at £37,540, just short of the £40,000 target. Of that total, £18,140 had been given by members and the rest had come from Gift Aid and grants.

The scanning of the material by the National Library of Wales, so that it can be stored on computer and made more widely accessible, has been completed and the process has moved on to the conservation stage. This is being handled by the highly regarded conservator, Kate Newton.

Asked to describe how the work was going, Kate Newton wrote:

'All objects have been digitised by the National Library of Wales, I now have the collection here in my studio.

'At the moment I am working on the framed watercolours and photographs. This involves retaining as much of the original character and materials as possible without compromising the long-term preservation of each object.

'For example so far: I have kept all original frames and mounts but replaced most of the degraded back boards, tapes and brads – all back board labels with provenance information are saved. Therefore the mounts have to be lined with archival papers and provided with museum board supports. The objects themselves are surface cleaned, repaired and pressed as required and attached to the refurbished mounts with Japanese tissue hinges (re-attached pictures).

'Problems can occur when there is no mount and the object is touching the glass which can be damaging to both silver/gelatine (photographs), watercolour pigments and graphite pencil. Museum board 'spacers' are cut and toned with raw umber acrylic and attached to the inside of the glass to provide an inconspicuous 2-3mm gap between object and glass.

'I am hoping to mount and box the loose watercolours following their conservation. If material costs become prohibitive some of the less vulnerable objects including photographs can be placed in polyester sleeves and boxed.

'All volumes in the collection have been measured and I'm waiting to hear about archival box costs. Alternatively they can have archival paper wrappers. The text blocks of these books (including sketchbooks) will be surface cleaned and minimal repairs carried out.

'One of the main considerations is keeping treatment times and material costs within the original estimates, and it is difficult to predict this exactly until I examine and work on each object. But I am confident that appropriate conservation measures can be implemented to preserve this collection to the recommended standards within the original remit.

'Procedures such as extensive binding conservation are not the priority, the storage and safe handling of these sketchbooks is more important. Ideally binding repair would be carried out but at a later stage – "the icing on the cake" as it were.'

JEFF MARSHALL has passed on to the *Journal* a New Zealand newspaper cutting – he thinks it's from the *Otago Daily Times* – he was sent by Lyndall Hancock. 'Did you enjoy last Sunday's polar swim?' the columnist asks, before going on to say, 'Mind you, we have some way to go before we can truly claim that our celebratory mid-winter dip is really cool. One of my favourite books is the diary of an English parson, Francis Kilvert, who, when resident in rural Wales in the 1870s, recorded a routine morning bath on Christmas Day.'

He goes on to quote the *Diary* entry for 25 December 1870 about getting into the bath through a sheet of ice, finishing with the characteristically Kilvertian flourish, *The morning was most brilliant....*



UNDER the headline 'Mentioned in history books', the *Hereford Times* property pages of 24 June carried a little piece about Pottery Cottage in Clyro being on the market for a whisker under £300,000. The cutting, sent to the *Journal* by John Wilks, said, 'Although it is no longer listed, Pottery Cottage receives a mention in the diaries of Francis Kilvert from 1870–1879.'

Just one little problem: no one can find any reference to it in the *Diary*.

Our Archivist Colin Dixon says, 'The pottery at Clyro was that little building on the corner opposite the Hay turn that was knocked down for a house to be built. This is the cottage opposite the post office. There is one cottage that backs on to the churchyard and two opposite, numbers 16 and 17 I think. The one of the pair nearest the road is being done up and the cutting called it 'Pottery Cottage as mentioned in *Kilvert's Diary*'. The cottage, or the person living there, is probably mentioned in the *Diary* but not 'Pottery Cottage'.

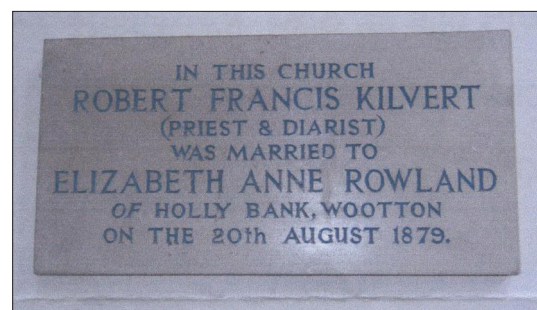
The minutes of the Society's committee meeting in February 2006 record that members were exercised about an application to demolish the Pottery, because it had recently been discovered it could have been the stable to the Vicarage. But the July 2006 committee meeting was told that the appeal had failed. The Pottery had been demolished and foundations were being laid.

The *Hereford Times* said 'visiting historians' believed Pottery Cottage was built with stone from Clyro Castle. It went on to say that the building was formally (sic) a row of cottages and had been converted into one dwelling. It recalled that Adam Dworski, the Polish potter, had worked there.

Perhaps we are talking about two different properties. But what at least can be said is that the property has been withdrawn from the market.



THE induction as the Rector of Bredwardine in March of the Rev. Anand Sodadasi forges a very special Kilvertian link, for one of his previous parishes was Wootton, the home village of Mrs. Kilvert near Oxford (*see inset*).



According to the biographical details from the service of Institution and Induction at Bredwardine sent to the *Journal* by John Wilks Mr. Sodadasi and his wife Shaila were brought up in Andhra Pradesh, India. He was ordained a priest in the Anglican Church of South India and came to the UK in 2004 to pursue his doctoral studies. Shaila, who supported the family with work in a pharmacy, was said at the time of the Induction to be looking for a part-time job and was hoping to do her PhD studies. The notes said the couple have a son who was studying Theology at Lampeter and a daughter who was hoping to go to Sheffield University to study Archaeology.

Bredwardine is not the limit of Mr. Sodadasi's responsibilities, of course. He is also Rector of Cusop w Blakemere, Brobury, Clifford, Dorstone, Hardwicke, Moccas and Preston-on-Wye. As a successor to Francis Kilvert at Bredwardine, we wish him a long and happy ministry.



THE nuggets of news and research in the Society's *Journal* and previously its Newsletter are what has given our fellowship its strength and its ability to survive and thrive after more than half a century. In the days when Edward West combined the editorship with the secretaryship of the Society, there was a particular frisson when the Newsletter landed on the doormat. Now a bundle of these Newsletters from his last ten years have become available.

Mary Campbell, who has been a member of the Society since 1967, is looking for a good home for a number of Newsletters dating from between February 1989 and September 1996 (though two or three are missing). She also has a photocopy of the *Cornish Holiday* in William Plomer's own writing as it was sold to members (later produced in a printed version).

If you are interested in acquiring these back issues, which are crammed with interest, please write to Miss Campbell at Bickley, 2 Main Road, Cleeve, Bristol BS49 4NU, or email her at mvcampbell@sky.com.

In her note to the *Journal* Miss Campbell mentions recently coming across 'a lovely letter from Edward West after he had escorted me for a day in Kilvert Country and giving me details of all the 11 Thomas children.' She continues, 'Unfortunately severe illness – old age! – prevent me from joining you. How I would have loved to join you on June 26 and to have visited Bettws again.'



RECENTLY *Walking Wales Magazine* carried a feature on 'Discovering Kilvert Country' by Guy Vowles. The magazine (sent to the *Journal* by John Wilks) says that although most of its readers 'will know of the Rev. Francis Kilvert whose diaries of country life around Hay on Wye are still published today . . . the remote hills to the north of Hay are certainly little known.' And that, apart from a little panel about his life, is the last mention the Diarist gets as the routes of walks of six and 14 miles in the Begwns are outlined. Perhaps we should fill in some gaps for them.



THE visit of Pope Benedict XVI to England and Scotland (but not Wales) this September to beatify John Henry Newman brings to mind the *Diary* entry for 4 January 1878 about the report that Newman had been elected to an honorary fellowship at Trinity College, Oxford, *which interested my dear Father very much. He remembers Newman well at Oriel. He told me that some years after he had left Oxford, Uncle Francis, who had letters of introduction to Newman, called upon him when he was vicar of St Mary's. He spoke to Newman about my Father. 'I remember him well,' said Newman, 'he left a fragrant memory behind him in Oriel.'*

And on 21 March 1876, *... my dear Father said, 'As you were preaching there came upon my ear an echo of the tones of the sweetest human voice I ever heard, the voice of John Henry Newman. No voice but yours ever reminded me of him.'*



MEMBER Mrs. Pat Dunn has sent the *Journal* an item from the newsletter of the Thomas Traherne Association, that sees much in common between the seventeenth-century, west Herefordshire poet and mystic and Francis Kilvert. 'As good parish priests they knew it was the happiness of their parishioners that mattered above all,' the article ('A little lower than angels') by Richard Birt says.

The Thomas Traherne Association can be contacted at 5 Vineyard Road, Hereford HR1 1TT.



THE text of A. L. Le Quesne's address, carried earlier in this *Journal*, reads splendidly, but it does scant justice to the eloquent, witty and discursive style in which he delivered the talk, assisted in its presentation by his wife Mary. His knowledge of the subject is on such a personal level that the characters in the 1871 Census of Clyro seemed old friends. It hardly seemed a surprise when he mentioned the Anthony family living in the wheelwright's shop when someone in the audience exclaimed, "Mike Anthony's a friend of mine and he lives in the same house". The community still lives.

Le Quesne was living in Ashbrook House (where Kil-

vert lived) when the 1871 Census emerged from its 100-year purdah. He promptly made a "bee-line" to the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane. He found the combination of the Census and Kilvert fascinating. One was the artist, the other was the questioner, and the two methods blended together, he told us.

What was clear was that Clyro was a village with a very great amount of poverty – and that was in 1871, 'just about the climax of prosperity for English agriculture', as Le Quesne put it. He said that Kilvert "gives very vivid and searing accounts of poverty. You can't say Kilvert paints an unduly glamorous picture of life. He devoted a large part of his life and his small income to helping those in need and to visiting them" (one is put in mind of the line in Michael Tod's report on the Summer walk where he talks of Kilvert's gesture in lifting the rest of the potatoes for the Old Soldier as 'typical of the man we all love so much').

Le Quesne talked about Kilvert's station in society, saying that the £100 a year he got from Venables put him at the very bottom level of the middle class. He does go to their social occasions, he said, while recalling the line from the Betjeman film we had seen the night before where the Bevan daughter, Mary, said cuttingly but revealingly that they never even talked about him, not even behind his back.

In a little aside, only hinting at the breadth of his knowledge, Le Quesne remarked Kilvert had no entry for the night of the Census in Plomer, but Venables' diary notes 'Kilvert dined' on April 4. He sang the praises of the 'superb' Index to the *Diary*, saying it ought to be recorded who had done the Index. Did anyone know? he mused.

His reference to the improving work 'Step Heavenward' was taken up by Jeff Marshall in his words of thanks to Le Quesne. He said to much laughter that the title would do for a subject for talks that would do us all good. *Ed.*



TWO different but equally interesting responses were elicited by 'The Memoir of Richard Lister Venables' in the last issue of the *Journal*, and the photograph a few pages later of *Cranmers*, the house in Mitcham, south London, where in 1867 Mr. Venables became reacquainted with Agnes Minna Pearson, who soon became his wife.

Myrtle Campbell, of Great Somerford, Wiltshire, a member since 1988, wrote, 'I was delighted to see *Cranmers* featured in the *Journal*.'

'In the mid 'Thirties we moved into a house in Commons West that backed onto the garden of this house: during the War the land was turned into allotments. The immediate area was bombed frequently during the winter of 1940 and again was in the path of the "doodle bugs" of 1944, but I do not think it suffered from any direct hits.

'I attended the nearby County School, where I belonged to "Cranmer House".

'Thanks for the memory!'

[*Cranmers* was demolished after the War]

The other 'Cranmers connection' is detailed on the facing page.



Who's the lady in the sketch?

IS the woman depicted in this pen and ink sketch shown in an exhibition at the Radnorshire Museum earlier this year the mother of Mrs Venables?

Curator of the museum, Heather Pegg, was struck by the similarity of the image of Mrs. Venables, née Agnes Minna Pearson (*above*), which appeared in the last *Journal*, to that of an unknown woman in a 4in x 6.5in pen and ink sketch (*right*).

Could that unknown woman be Agnes's mother, Caroline Pearson (1810-79)?

Caroline Pearson was also the mother of Caroline (Cara), born 1827, who married Charles Thomas, of *Cranmers*. Charles was one of the Thomases of Radnorshire and Breconshire, and (says Tony O'Brien's *Who's Who*) a distant cousin of Kilvert's Daisy.

It was on a visit to *Cranmers* in April 1867 that Richard Lister Venables, whose first wife had died in 1865, met Agnes Minna Pearson again; they had met once before, in 1852. They married that August. Francis Kilvert had arrived in Clyro in January 1865 and, through the Venables family, had struck

up friendships in the *Cranmers* circle. Plomer inserts a note at the beginning of the *Diary* to say: 'When this record begins [18 January 1870] the diarist is paying a visit to some old friends at Mitcham, a Mr. and Mrs. Thomas'.

The sketch featured in an exhibition held last spring at the Radnorshire Museum of work by Caroline Pearson's sister Catherine Lyons from her sketchbook of France 1834-36.

Catherine Lyons (1794-1857) was the third daughter of John Lyons of Antigua and St Austins, Hampshire. Her sister Caroline (1810-79) was the fifth daughter and she became the wife of Henry Shepherd Pearson; their fifth daughter was Agnes Minna Pearson, later Mrs. Venables.

It was through descendants of Caroline (1810-79) that Catherine Lyons's drawings passed, until donated to the Radnorshire Museum in the 1950s by Sir Michael Dilwyn-Venables-Llewelyn.

According to exhibition notes by Graeme Whitehall:

'The uncertain identity of the sitter raises the question



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of whether Caroline might have been a travelling companion for her sister in France, as other sources indicate Augusta was ill at Malta during the period of the French journey and therefore not with Catherine in France. [Augusta was the wife of their brother Edmund Lyons, the diplomatist and Commander in Chief, Malta; their daughter, Augusta Mary Minna – first cousin of Mrs. Venables – became the Duchess of Norfolk.] The fact that Caroline had just arrived in Malta in the summer of 1833 after illness the previous year and had to probably at least make a passage back to England during the period Kate [Catherine] was away, certainly makes her a candidate.... The mysterious pen and ink drawing of the unknown woman could well be a self portrait or it may be that of a travelling companion, perhaps Caroline.'

What do members think of the likeness?

❖ The *Journal* would like to thank Heather Pegg and Powys Library and Archives Service for their assistance with this item.

Ed.

Obituaries

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

Evelyn Pitcairn Madigan of Dunedin, New Zealand, died on 11 July 2010. She was 95, being born five weeks after the outbreak of World War I.

Lyndall Hancock, another New Zealand member, spoke at her funeral about her involvement with the Kilvert Society. In fact, they had agreed about ten years ago what Miss Madigan wanted her to say.

In a memoir she sent to the *Journal*, Lyndall wrote, 'I'm not sure when Evelyn joined the Kilvert Society but I know she was introduced by a friend, Margaret Groom (?) in Royston, and by the time I also became a member in the mid-1980s she had been going to the UK for some years, every second year, to coincide with KS events. She was pleased and honoured to be asked three times to read a Lesson at Commemorative Services, at Colva, Cusop and Malmesbury Abbey. She didn't drive, but KS friends were only too willing to take her around.

'She was a secretary most of her life, and trained in verse-speaking choirs. She was a keen walker, a member of a great many organisations and she travelled extensively in the UK. Later, after she felt less able to go solo, she travelled in various countries with a NZ coach tour group.

'She was in care for several years, and died of dementia.

'I met her in the mid-1980s after I wrote to the Society to ask about membership, and Edward West replied saying there was one NZ member, Evelyn Madigan of Dunedin, did I know her? So we got together with great profit to us both, and our friendship flourished. Also with Edward, whom I met later at the time of the Clyro Festival in 1988 – Evelyn with oldfashioned courtesy took years before she could bring herself to use his Christian name!'

Margaret and Robert Andrews, of Geraldine, New Zealand, also wrote to Alan Brimson to say Miss Madigan's funeral had been a very moving service. They quoted her as saying, 'The Kilvert Society has been a happy event in my life since 1979, with correspondence, Newsletters and visits to UK to correspond with the three weekends kept yearly for a Church Service, Walks and interesting meetings. Contact with the Kilvert Society folk has been so enriching.'

❖ It is interesting to note Miss Madigan's middle name in view of the Kilvert-Pitcairn connections. *Ed.*

Mr. A.E.G. Wright of Melrose Avenue, Willesden, London, a member since 1978 and a Life Member, has died.

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



