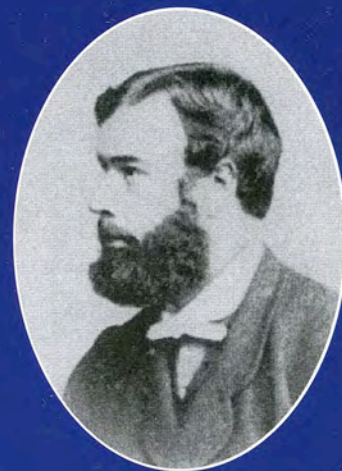


THE
Journal
OF
THE KILVERT SOCIETY



THE KILVERT SOCIETY

*Founded in 1948 to foster an interest in the Reverend Francis Kilvert,
his work, his Diary and the countryside he loved*

Registered Charity No. 1103815

President

RONALD BLYTHE FRSL

Chairman Mr. DAVID ELVINS

Sandalwood, North End Road, Steeple Clayton, Bucks MK18 2PG.

Hon. Secretary Mr. A. BRIMSON

30 Bromley Heath Avenue, Downend, Bristol BS16 6JP.

Vice-Chairman Mr. M.G. SHARP

The Old Forge, Kinnersley, Herefordshire HR3 6QB.

Hon Treasurer Mr. R.G.V. WESTON

35 Harold Street, Hereford HR1 2QU.

Hon Membership Secretary Mrs. S. ROSE

Seend Park Farm, Semington, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 6LH.

Hon Publications Manager and Archivist Mr. C.B. DIXON

Tregothnan, Pentrosfa Crescent, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 5NW.

Editor of the *Journal* CHARLES BOASE

Vauxhall House, Monmouth NP25 3AX. . email: charles.boase@gmail.com

Please submit contributions for the March Journal – by post or email – by 17 July 2011

Website: www.thekilvertsociety.org.uk (for additions or corrections, please email the *Journal* Editor)

Dates for your diary

Wednesday 2nd March

A bracing visit to Francis Kilvert's holiday venue at Weston-Super-Mare (Vol ii, 259-67, Sept 1872). Meet at the entrance to the Grand Pier at 11am.

Friday 15th April

Annual General Meeting at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford, at 7pm. Following the meeting and buffet supper, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles KCMG LVO will speak on 'Kith, Kin and Kilvert, one family's connections to the Country Parson'.

Saturday 16th April

At the Radnorshire Arms Hotel, Presteigne.

10.30am Seminar. Mr. John Toman will speak on 'Blessings on science and her handmaid steam: Kilvert and railways'.

6.30 for 7pm The Kilvert Society annual dinner.

Saturday 25th June

12 noon. Meet at the Pandy Inn, Dorstone, for a walk in the Dorstone area and a visit to Dorstone House, where Kilvert attended a ball.

Sunday 26th June

3pm. Commemorative Service at Clyro (to be confirmed)

Sunday 24th July

The Rev. Dr. Humphrey Fisher's annual Newchurch to Llandewi-fach Pilgrimage

Saturday 24th September

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

Front Cover *There was a gleam of silver over the dark heather stems and Llanbychllyn Pool lay in its hollow like a silver shield.* The light was perfect for distant views on our September walk to sites associated with the Solitary (PICTURE: CHARLES BOASE).

Back cover These three photographs look remote from each other, but they represent a near-180-degree view of, from top, Pen Cwm and its *precipitous grey rocks ... which were the last haunt of the fairies, the last place where the little people were seen.* (PICTURE: VAL DIXON); a little further round the hill, looking towards Llanbedr, this flock put us in mind of 'We like sheep have gone astray' (PICTURE: DAVID ELVINS); and, lastly, the site of Cwm Ceilo, where the Solitary at one time lived. *A well-watered little cwm with sweet waters from the upper and lower springs which welled up through the turf and peat and fen and heathers, and joining their rills trickled away in a tiny stream down the cwm to form a brook* (PICTURE: VAL DIXON).

Three-Volume Diary, packed in slip case, available to members at £60 plus £9.50 p&cp.

Who's Who in Kilvert's Diary At last, a fully comprehensive Who's Who with over 400 biographies and 22 family trees. It took the late Tony O'Brien many years to compile this volume and it makes a fitting memorial to him. £13 including p&cp.

More Chapters from the Kilvert Saga (reprinted) Contents: The Memoirs of the Rev. Robert Kilvert (the Diarist's father) and Recollections of Emily Wyndowe (the Diarist's sister); also extracts from Augustus Hare's account of the school at Hardenhuish Rectory. £5.

Jubilee Praise. The Tom Palmer Memorial Booklet, compiled to celebrate the Society's Jubilee in June 1998. This new publication, edited by our former Chairman, Michael Sharp, is a selection of the best essays from the Newsletters of the last thirty years. £5.

Francis Kilvert Priest & Diarist, by Frederick Grice. This book is a reprint of the 1975 original. £5.

All My Days A selection of articles compiled as a tribute to our late Secretary, E.C.J. West. £5.

Collected Verse Contains the 55 poems of Francis Kilvert printed privately in 1881. £4.50.

The Frederick Grice Memorial Booklet Contents: The Missing Year – Kilvert & 'Kathleen Mavourneen' by Laurence Le Quesne; two hitherto unpublished articles on Kilvert by Frederick Grice; several articles, also by Frederick Grice, reprinted from various newsletters. £4.50.

Kilvert's 'Kathleen Mavourneen'

een', by Eva Farmery and R.B. Taylor. The publication records the painstaking research, extending over some 35 years, into the Heanley family of Croft, Lincolnshire, and the related Cholmeley family, who were related by marriage to the Kilvert Family. Particularly interesting is the section dealing with Katharine Heanley ('Kathleen Mavourneen'), her relationship with the Diarist and her tragic death. £4.50.

A Kilvert Symposium. Eight contributions from members who read papers at the Kilvert Conference held at Attingham Park in 1975. £4.50.

Kilvert and the Wordsworth Circle, by R.I. Morgan The author summarises his researches into the Wordsworth – Monkhouse – Dew connection, in which Kilvert was so interested. £4.50.

Looking Backwards. References to Kilvert's wife, their marriage and honeymoon; accounts of their homecoming to Bredwardine and of Kilvert's death and funeral; extracts from the diary of Hastings Smith (Kilvert's nephew) relating to his enquiries into his uncle's year at St. Harmon, etc. £4.50

Miscellany Two: The Oswin Prosser Memorial Booklet. Contents: The Solitary of Llanbedr by the Rev. D Edmondson-Owen; Radnorshire Legends and Superstitions by Mrs. Essex Hope; Honeymoon Journal by Dora Pitcairn; The Venables Diaries by L. Le Quesne; Memories of the Monk by Ann Mallinson. £4.50.

Kilvert's Poetry: A Study, by Bernard Jones. £3.50.

Twenty-four Walks in the Kilvert Country, by M.M. Morgan. Preceded by a chap-

ter on Kilvert's Clyro. 1980. (In view of the time which has elapsed since this book was written walkers should be aware that some routes may now be overgrown.) £2.50.

David Nicholas Lockwood, President of the Kilvert Society 1999–2005, by Wilhelmina Mom Lockwood. Compiled as a tribute to our late President. £6 incl p&cp.

The Other Francis Kilvert. Francis Kilvert of Claverton (1803–1863), by Teresa Williams and Frederick Grice. The authors, after diligent research, have produced an extremely interesting account of the life and work of the Diarist's Uncle Francis. £2.

Francis Kilvert's River Wye (put together by our American members). As the title suggests this is a selection of Diary extracts in praise of Britain's most beautiful river. £2.

The Books Kilvert Read, by John Toman. £2

Index of Journal/Newsletters 1956–2000, by the late Revd Dr Nigel Rowe. £2.

The Bevan–Dew Extracts. Entries from the original Diary relating to the Bevan and Dew families which were omitted from the published Diary. £1.50.

Kilvert's Cornish Holiday. Contains the previously unpublished parts of the Diary which record Kilvert's three weeks' holiday in Cornwall. In conjunction with the three-volume edition of the Diary they provide an opportunity of reading a lengthy portion of the original Diary in extenso. £1.50.

Kilvert and the Visual Arts, by Rosalind Billingham. A transcript of the authoritative

lecture given by Miss Billingham at the 1979 Annual General Meeting. £1.50.

Christmas Cards. Eight cards (The Otters' Pool, Gospel Pass, A|Black Mountain Farm, The Rhydspnce Inn, Clyro last century, Wiltshire Kilvert Churches, Bredwardine Vicarage, Bredwardine churchyard). £1.50 the set, incl p&cp.

Newsletter/Journals. Back numbers of some Newsletters and Journals. £2.50.

The following list of books can be purchased at good booksellers or obtained via the internet or booksearch:

Francis Kilvert, by David Lockwood. Seren Books, 1990. ISBN 1-85411-033-0 paperback.

Kilvert The Victorian, by David Lockwood. Seren Books, 1992. ISBN 1-85411-077-2.

After Kilvert, by A.L. Le Quesne. OUP, 1978. ISBN 0-19-211748-3.

Francis Kilvert and His World, by Frederick Grice. Caliban Books, 1980. Hardback ISBN 0-904573-52-4; Paperback ISBN 0-904573-78-8.

Kilvert The Homeless Heart, by John Toman. Logaston Press, 2001. ISBN 1-873827-37-7.

Growing up in Kilvert Country, by Mona Morgan. Gomer, 1990. ISBN 0-86383-680-1.

Exploring Kilvert Country, by Chris Barber. Blorenge Books, 2003. ISBN 1-872730-24-8.

Moods of Kilvert Country, by Nick Jenkins and Kevin Thomas. Halsgrove, 2006.

ISBN 1-84114-525-4 / 978-1-84114-525-9.

Kilvert's Diary and Landscape, by John Toman. Paperback, 404 pages, illustrated, 2008. ISBN 9780718830953. £27.50. The Lutterworth Press, PO Box 60 Cambridge CB1 2NT. Tel 01223 350865, email publishing@lutterworth.com

The last three books are copies of Kilvert's original Diaries and are complete – the only surviving examples of his work.

The Diary of Francis Kilvert, April–June 1870 edited by Kathleen Hughes and Dafydd Ifans. National Library of Wales, 1982. ISBN 0-9077158-02-1.

The Diary of Francis Kilvert, June–July 1870 edited by Dafydd Ifans. National Library of Wales, 1989. ISBN 0-907158-02-1.

Kilvert's Cornish Diary, edited by Richard Maber and Angela Tregoning. Alison Hodge (Cornwall), 1989. ISBN 0-906720-19-2.

SEND orders to the Publications Manager, Colin Dixon, Tregothnan, Pentrosfa Crescent, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 5NW (tel 01597 822062).

Prices include UK postage and packing, unless noted. For overseas orders, please see below. If postage prices change, the price list may have to be amended.

Remittances for publications (kept separate from subscriptions and donations etc.) should be made payable to The Kilvert Society and accompany orders.

Overseas members kindly note most items can be sent by surface mail at printed paper rate for an additional charge of £6. For airmail rates please enquire from the Publications Manager. It is regretted that, owing to the prohibitive cost charged by British banks to convert foreign currencies, only drafts in sterling can be accepted.

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Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of The Kilvert Society nor of the Editor of the *Journal*.

Data Protection Act 1998 The names and addresses of members are held on a computerised list exclusively for the distribution of the *Journal* and other mailings about the Society to its members. If you

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

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.

From the Editor

THIS is my second *Journal* and I still feel very new to the job. I have a long way to go before I achieve Jeff Marshall's light and easy touch. My admiration for the way he produced three *Journals* a year (now it is two, plus *Newsletters*) grows steadily.

Achieving a consistency of style is one of the aims of an editor, but that's not easy when you are dealing with the *Diary*, where places appear under several different guises.

That is especially true in this issue, which is very much about the Revd. John Price, the Solitary. Cwm Ceilo, Cel-lo, Celo and Ceilio all have some degree of approval in the *Diary*. But how do we refer to the spot, generally speaking? Readers will see I've had a bit of a struggle achieving consistency, so let's just thank God for variety. I also puzzled over whether to put quotes around the 'Solitary', thus. That's how it appears in old *Newsletters*, but the *Diary* leaves him unadorned. I finally took the *Diary* line, and hope that I have taken out any errant quote marks I had earlier inserted while trying to make up my mind.

Another point of style, and one that sits uneasily with my newspaper background, is the use of full points after abbreviations. However, as the *Journal* is in honour of an eminent Victorian, it seems only right to adopt 19th century style; and it is the style of the three-volume *Diary*, too. Nevertheless, I do draw the line at double spacing after full stops, even though it's the style of the *Diary*.

Traditionally, places mentioned in the *Diary* are picked out in italics or underlined in the *Journal*. I have found it difficult to apply this consistently: how prominent does a place have to be before it qualifies for the accolade? Read-

ers will notice that the style tends to wander on this point. It is something that will take time for me to get right.

The typeface I have chosen is Adobe Caslon, based on an 18th-century English face that was popular all through the 19th century and is so still. I think it gives the *Journal* a nice period feel. If you have views on this or anything else to do with the *Journal*, I would be very pleased to hear them.

Charles Weston, in his report on our September weekend in pursuit of the Solitary, says the account about John Price published in 1907 is as entertaining and readable as the *Diary* itself. It certainly is a curious tale and I have thought it worth reprinting it in full. I know the booklet in which it appears is available from our Publications Manager, but I hope he will forgive me if I cost him a few sales as I think it is worth *Journal*-ising it to give it a wider audience. In fact it will achieve an even wider readership next year when an edited version appears in the magazine of Queens', Cambridge, the Solitary's old college.

Finally, I extend the customary warm invitation to everyone to contribute to your *Journal*; and I also offer my sincere thanks to those who have, in words, pictures or news items, for this edition. Without you...

My particular thanks go as ever to Colin and Val Dixon, whose freely shared knowledge has been invaluable; and, in Val's case, for all the typing she has done for me; and I would also like to thank Nicholas Green for expertly reading proofs and saving me from many a howler. Because of pressures of deadlines he was not able to look at the final proofs, so responsibility for any errors is mine alone.

From the Secretary and Acting Chairman

NOTICE is hereby given for the Annual General Meeting of the Kilvert Society to be held at 7pm at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford on Friday 15th April 2011.

Any two members of the society may nominate one or more members for election to the committee. Such nominations and any items for any other business must be received by the secretary by 15th March 2011.

The A.G.M and seminar weekend is to be held earlier this year to avoid Easter. On the Friday evening, following the business of the meeting and buffet supper, we are privileged to welcome our member Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles KCMG, LVO, who was until recently British Ambassador to Afghanistan. His talk is entitled 'Kith, kin and Kilvert, one family's connections to the Country Parson'.

On the Saturday morning John Toman, our leading scholar on all things Kilvertian, will give a talk, 'Blessings on science and her handmaid steam, Kilvert and railways'.

I am also hopeful that as our archive conservation project draws to a conclusion, we will have in attendance our conservator, Kate Newton, and Will Adams from the Radnorshire Museum for an informal question and answer session on the project. If all goes to plan we will be able to visit the Museum on the Saturday afternoon for the relaunch of the Kilvert Collection. This is subject to confirmation on the Friday evening.

This edition of the *Journal* includes some 'before and after' photographs of one of the oil paintings from the col-

lection, which vividly illustrates the conservation work in progress. It also carries technical updates from Jenny Williamson, who conserved *The Portrait of Smith*, and from Kate Newton. What Kate has to say in this edition, following on from her account in the last, will inform the discussion at the question and answer session.

The Society gratefully acknowledges a donation to the archive conservation appeal from Dennis Wienk of Rochester, New York.

I am pleased to report that the Society has commissioned the cleaning and stabilising of the Kilvert graves at Bredwardine. They are now in pristine condition.

Also in the Churchyard at Bredwardine the Kilvert memorial seat has been restored to its original condition. This project has been financed by the Society and carried out by our committee member Peter Beddall, who has done a first-class job. Peter is proving to be the Society's 'Bob the Builder' following his earlier work on the remains of the Old Soldier's Cottage – well done Peter.

I hope you will support the events planned for this spring and summer – and your suggestions for future outings and events are always welcome. Please return your booking form for the A.G.M. and annual dinner as soon as possible.

And finally, as our *Journal* editor says above, he is always delighted to receive contributions to the *Journal* – both serious and quirky.

Annual General Meeting of the Kilvert Society, 2011

The Annual General Meeting of the Kilvert Society will be held in the Great Hall of the Bishop's Palace, Hereford on Friday 15th April 2011 at 7pm.

AGENDA

1. Welcome to Members.
2. Secretary's Announcements.
3. Apologies.
4. Minutes of A.G.M. of 23th April 2010.
5. Matters Arising.
6. Obituaries.
7. Chairman's Remarks.
8. Financial Report.
9. Election of Officers.

i) Existing Officers offering themselves for re-election:

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

The following are ex-officio Officers.

Hon. Archivist	Mr. C. Dixon
Hon. Editor of the Journal	Mr. C. Boase
Hon. Minutes Secretary	Mrs. V.J. Dixon

ii) Existing Committee (in addition to the above Officers):

Mrs. E. Rowe, Mrs. M. Oliver, Mr. C.J. Marshall, Mr. E.J. Hall, Mr. M.J. Reynolds, Mr. P. Beddall.
The existing Committee offer themselves for re-election.

iii) Nominations for members of the Committee:

Two or more members may nominate one or more members (with their consent) who are eligible, either as officers or ordinary Committee Members. Such nominations shall be delivered to the Hon. Secretary not less than 30 days before the date of the A.G.M.

10. Any Other Business previously notified to The Secretary.

End of A.G.M.

INTERVAL

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

A talk to be given by Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles KCMG LVO entitled 'Kith, kin and Kilvert, one family's connections to the Country Parson.'

Vote of Thanks

Close of meeting

Alan Brimson
Hon. Secretary

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

PRESIDENT: Dr. Ronald Blythe FRSL

VICE-PRESIDENTS: Mrs. S. Hooper, Mr A.L. Le Quesne, The Revd. Canon D.T.W. Price

HON. LIFE MEMBERS: Miss M.R. Mumford, Mrs. Hurlbutt, Mrs. M. Morgan, Mrs. T. Williams,
Revd. Dr. P.J. Gomes, Mr. J. Palmer, Dr. W. Mom Lockwood, Mr. J. Hughes-Hallett.

THE KILVERT SOCIETY: Charity Registration No: 1103813
Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2010

INCOME	2010	2009
Appeal Donations	£10,458.58	£22,808.66
Appeal Account Interest	£10.55	£2.45
Subscriptions	£4,091.00	£4,490.00
Donations	£327.00	£10.00
Gift Aid - Appeal Account	£491.34	£3,400.00
Gift Aid - Subscriptions	£1,100.00	£1,021.72
A.G.M. Income	£276.50	£294.00
Publication Sales	£1,518.52	£350.50
Special Events	£3,896.50	£1,736.50
Legacies	-	£500.00
Interest	£1.09	£6.88
Transfer	£1,700.00	
TOTALS	£23,871.08	£34,620.71
EXPENDITURE		
Grants & Subscriptions	£455.00	£530.00
Monuments & Collection	£17,053.01	£240.80
Committee Expenses, Postage, Stationery, Phone	£619.77	£408.76
Printing	£1,108.00	-
Publication Sales Expenses	£138.00	£13.65
Journal Printing and Postage	£3,644.37	£3,468.83
Insurance	£150.00	£150.00
Special Events	£3,757.00	£1,312.50
A.G.M. Expenses	£439.51	£350.51
Transfer	£1,700.00	
TOTALS	£29,064.66	£6,475.05
ASSETS		
Balance Lloyds Hereford	£4,038.32	£2,218.86
Balance Lloyds Appeal Fund	£19,196.98	£26,211.11
Nationwide Building Society	£10,913.11	£10,912.02
		£39,341.99
Excess Expenditure over Income	£34,148.41	- £5,193.58
		£34,148.41

Richard Weston, Honorary Treasurer

Auditor's Certificate:

I have examined the foregoing income and expenditure account with the relevant records and certify it to be correct and in accordance herewith.

John Wilks, Honorary Auditor

Minutes of the 2010 Annual General Meeting of The Kilvert Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of The Kilvert Society held at the Bishop's Palace, Hereford, on Friday, 23rd April 2010 at 7pm

[Copies of these Minutes will be available at the 2011 Annual General Meeting; they will be taken 'as read']

The Chairman welcomed members and especially new members

to the meeting. He asked that everyone sign the attendance book which would be passed round.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for inability to attend were received from the following people:

Jim Hall (Chippenham), Mrs. Olive Knight (Bromsgrove), Heather and Graham Lovett (Ross-on-Wye), Caroline and Jim Webber (Calne) and Maureen and Charles Weston (Pickering).

SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Secretary outlined the programme for the rest of the year as listed in the March *Journal* and explained how important it was to indicate whether members would be requiring refreshments. He reminded members of the programme for the A.G.M. weekend saying that Laurence Le Quesne would be giving the Saturday morning talk.

Refreshments, provided by member Sue Rose, would be on sale during the interval at a cost of £4.50. Colin Dixon would be selling K.S. publications.

MINUTES:

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 24th April 2009, having been printed in the March *Journal*, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a true record. There were no matters arising.

OBITUARIES:

The Secretary read out the names of those members whose deaths had been notified since last year's A.G.M. (copy with minutes) and members stood in silence as a tribute to their memory.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS:

Alan explained that as a temporary measure he would continue to combine the posts of Chairman and Secretary. He anticipated a change next year and hoped that members would be happy to continue with this arrangement until then.

He thanked all committee members for their work on behalf of the Society and for supporting him in his office. He particularly thanked Michael Sharp as Vice-Chairman for his support and for chairing committee meetings.

He thanked Jeff Marshall, who was relinquishing the post of editor after eleven years. He said that Jeff had provided an outstanding and professional *Journal*. A card and present were given to Jeff who thanked everyone for their kindness and said he looked forward to assisting Charles Boase, the new editor, as and if necessary. He urged members to continue contributing to the *Journal* either through research or personal articles and hoped that it would go from strength to strength.

Alan also asked members to get more involved with the Society. He said he was having difficulty finding speakers or people to organise walks.

Alan then referred to the Appeal last year when it was stated that the Society needed to raise £40,000 for the conservation of its collection. He was delighted to announce that the sum of £37,400 had been raised in just ten months. This meant that conservation work could go ahead and, in fact, would begin in May.

Alan referred to a personal donation of £7,000 from Mr. James Hughes-Hallett, a Trustee of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and said he would like, if possible, to make Mr. Hughes-Hallett an Honorary Life Member of the Society. Discussion took place with members and a resolution was proposed that Mr. Hughes-Hallett be made an Honorary Life Member, having first joined as an ordinary member. This was carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The accounts which had been printed in the March *Journal* were considered.

Richard thanked members for their overwhelming response to the archives appeal and for their generous donations. £22,808.66 had been raised by members plus an additional gift aid sum on this amount of £3,400. Further amounts had been promised by standing orders and grants bringing the total so far to £37,400.

The Society had also received a bequest of £500 from Harley

Dance for which the Society was very grateful.

He said last year we had paid for the conservation report, a sum which could well be paid back into funds from the Appeal Account in due course.

The printing costs last year included the David Lockwood memorial book but the figures for the *Journal* had gone down as only two editions were issued.

He warned that although the accounts looked very good at the moment they would drop as soon as the conservation work commenced in May. This was due to take about one year.

He thanked John Wilks for auditing the accounts and as there were no questions the accounts were accepted.

Alan Brimson then explained that the archives would be taken to the National Library of Wales and the work of conservation would be done by Kate Newton and other colleagues who would replace bindings, etc. It would also be digitised so that the Society could display more valuable archives in the Radnorshire Museum or on the Web.

He said that if the full appeal amount was raised new purpose-built cabinets would be bought to display the newly conserved items.

He said that Heather Pegg of the Radnorshire Museum had been most helpful and supportive.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

No additional nominations having been received Alan said the present officers were willing to stand for re-election:

Officers:	
President:	Dr. R. Blythe, FRSL
Acting Chairman:	Mr. A. Brimson
Vice-Chairman:	Mr. M. Sharp
Hon. Secretary:	Mr. A. Brimson
Hon. Treasurer:	Mr. R. Weston
Hon. Subscriptions Treasurer:	Mrs. S. Rose
Hon. Publications Manager:	Mr. C. B. Dixon
<i>Ex Officio:</i>	
Editor of the <i>Journal</i> :	Mr. C. Boase
Hon. Archivist:	Mr. C. B. Dixon
Hon. Minutes Secretary:	Mrs. V. J. Dixon
Publicity Officer:	Vacant

Committee (in addition to the Officers):

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

The committee recommended that Mr. J. Marshall become a committee member. This was seconded and carried.

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

All the above proposals were agreed.

There being no other business the meeting closed for refreshments.

After the interval members saw the John Betjeman film on Kilvert and heard a piano recital kindly given by Father Richard Williams of St. Mary's Church, Hay-on-Wye.



The Llanbedr weekend, 25-26th September 2010

Charles Weston reports on a walk in glorious Kilvert weather, when the views were unbelievably clear, in pursuit of the 'Solitary', the Rev. John Price, and on the Commemorative Service at St Peter's, Llanbedr

*A little health
A little wealth
A little house and freedom,
And at the end
A little friend
And little cause to need him.*

So wrote the Reverend John Price – the Solitary – the Vicar of Painscastle Llanbedr, on the occasion of Francis Kilvert's visit to his 'little lone hut' on Wednesday 3rd July 1872.

To the hardy band of Kilvertian pilgrims who met up for the September weekend our 'end' was to be the successful search for two of the four sites where John Price was known to have lived in the hills above Llanbedr.

A grand total of 34 enthusiasts (plus two dogs) assembled for the trek outside Llanbedr Church. The weather was idyllic with white cirrus 'mare's tails' stationary above us in an azure blue sky; a perfect setting! None of us could have dared to hope that the conditions and superb visibility would last for one day ... let alone for two. How wrong we were proved to be!

The road ascended gently from our appointed parking places up a wooded valley to the farmstead of Penbedw. Kilvert on his one and only visit would probably have used a farmtrack further east in order to reach John Price's third dwelling at



Heading for the hills in glorious late September sunshine

PICTURES: CHARLES BOASE (ABOVE) AND VAL DIXON





On the hill between Pen Cwm and Cwm Ceilo (CHARLES BOASE); below, Colin Dixon reads at Cwm Ceilo (DAVID ELVINS)

Cwmceilo. However, Colin Dixon, our leader, in planning a circular walk led us initially to the foot of Llanbedr Hill to see the site of John Price's final home at Pen Cwm.

Behind a flattened area of ground stood the rocks of Pen Cwm reputedly *the last haunt of the fairies, the last place the little people were seen*. Below them on this spot would have stood his house; today there was little to see other than a decidedly 20th century pile of plastic sheeting and waste tarmacadam.

Fifty years ago on the occasion of an earlier Kilvert Society visit a pile of stones and a few wooden beams could still be seen on the site; all that remained of the little farmhouse that had been his home for at least 14 years in the latter part of his curacy. It was from here that John Price, aged 86 years, 'looking pale and thin and broken' was taken on his final journey to lodgings in Talgarth where he died on 20th March 1895 having served as Perpetual Curate in Llanbedr for some 35 years.

From Pen Cwm we left the broad track climbing sharply upwards along a narrow bracken-clogged path. The climb was arduous and was punctuated with several stops for breathers, view taking and photo-opportunities. One of our stopping places could not have been far from the very spot where Kilvert himself in the company of John Price on the day of his visit had admired the view of the distant Rocks of Pen Cwm and Llanbychllyn Pool as it *lay in its hollow like a silver shield*. The view remains today virtually unchanged from the one enjoyed by the two of them with a glorious panoramic view of the Brecon Beacons and Black Mountains stretching away to the west.



A sudden dip downwards in the path led us to the site of the Solitary's well-documented cabin at Cwm Ceilo – now just a flattened turfed area with no evidence of any building alongside a dry stone wall. On the day of Kilvert's visit it was described as being *a little grey hut ... built of rough dry stone without mortar, with the thatch thin and broken*. What was the meaning of the word ceilo asked one of our number. It was the same question that Kilvert posed to John Price and an answer was given by the sole Welsh speaking member of our group. Apparently, ceilio (not ceilo) means a retreat, enclosure, shelter or pen for cattle. The location was truly the Solitary's 'Shepherd's Dingle' with *sweet waters* near by which still well up through the turf and peat and fern and heather to trickle away in a tiny stream down the cwm to form a brook.

By this time the toll of fatigue and hunger were beginning to make their mark on some of our number. As an incentive Colin held out the prospect of a tasty Llanbedr Church tea and used the welcome break to promote a booklet which contained an article on the Reverend Price. A stock of these he assured us were in the boot of his car.

'And where exactly is your car?' demanded one weary Kilvertian for whom the two-mile trek had obviously proved sufficient exercise for the day. Sensing mutiny in the ranks Colin swiftly led us down a nearby track. Down we went past the farmstead of Penllan to the delights of afternoon refreshments of sandwiches, cakes and copious amounts of tea served by the stalwarts of Llanbedr Church. A most enjoyable walk blessed with the finest of September weather!



At Pen Cwm where the Rev John Price lived. Fifty years ago there were still stones and timbers remaining from the little farmhouse. Now the site is marked by plastic sheeting and waste tarmacadam, below

PICTURES: CHARLES BOASE (TOP) AND DAVID ELVINS

POSTSCRIPT

The publication that Colin Dixon tempted us with whilst we rested at Cwm Ceilo was the Oswin Prosser Memorial Booklet (Miscellany Two). One of the articles in the booklet – The Solitary of Llanbedr by Rev. D. Edmondson-Owen – provides much of the supplementary information about the Reverend John Price.

Published originally in 1907 only 12 years after his death it contains illuminating anecdotes about his life and work, most notably about his crusading mission and benevolence shown to the 'vagrant classes'. The article intrigued me and led me to make further enquiries about Reverend Price's family history. The article refers to an unhappy love affair prior to his arrival in Llanbedr, presumably during his time as a curate in Lancashire prior to his move to Radnorshire. He had, according to the Edmondson-Owen article been ... 'crossed in love ... a young lady of position, beauty and talents ... had cast him aside...' and in his solitary home he had a '...carefully packed bundle of letters which he often read through...'.

Was there, I wondered, more to this story; had he had perhaps a 'secret life' prior to his arrival in Llanbedr? Had he perhaps been married in his younger life and would this have shown up in the 1851 records?

A trawl through the 1861, 1871, 1881 and 1891 census records at the Ancestry.co.uk website unearthed details of his period of residence in the village but alas no skeletons were found in the database! However, one interesting fact did emerge that casts doubts on a small detail in the article. The Edmondson-Owen article states that John Price's final residence was at Cwmceilo



... the little whitewashed hovel...' However the Census records would appear to show that he died at Pen Cwm.

The Census records show only three residences over the four decade census period (no bathing huts!). They are as follows;

1861 Reverend John Price Age 53 Residence: Gate House No.1

1871 John Price Age 61 Residence: Cwmceilo

1881 John Price Age 72 Residence: New Pencwm

1891 John Price Age 82 Residence: New Pencwm

The Rev. Edmondson-Owen's article thus appears to be inaccurate on this issue – unless of course John Price moved back to Cwm Ceilo at some point after 1891 (surely unlikely?).

The article written 12 years after John Price's death had been based on second-hand accounts of his life by members of a farming family in nearby Llandewifach so perhaps some distortion of the facts was inevitable. Inaccuracies aside, the article offers a wonderful insight into the life of this extraordinary clergyman and is as entertaining and as readable as the *Diary* itself.

Charles Weston concludes his report on the September weekend with an account of Evensong and Commemoration at St. Peter's Church, Llanbedr, on the Sunday

The Sunday Service brought the September weekend to a memorable conclusion.

A slightly smaller group of Kilvertians assembled for a Service planned by the Reverend Doctor Humphrey Fisher.

He is of course well known to those members of the Society who join him every year for his July pilgrimage from Newchurch to Llandewifach. The walk provides a poignant reminder of the tragic early death of Emmeline Vaughan, mentioned in the *Diary* by Kilvert, and stops off en route at St. Peter's for afternoon refreshments of an earthly and spiritual nature. It was thus appropriate that a clergyman so steeped in the history of the area should have been asked to lead the Service.

The Service had, as Dr Fisher alerted us at its beginning, a strong Quaker influence but followed a conventional Anglican Evensong format.

He began by quoting Hilaire Belloc.

*Of courtesy, it is much less
than courage of heart, or holiness;
yet in my walks it seems to me
that the grace of God is in courtesy.*

The twin themes of walking and courtesy were highlighted throughout the Service.

Walking was, as Dr Fisher reminded us, an integral part of Kilvert's pastoral duties and it was through walking that he connected with his parishioners. He highlighted a line of the 16th century prayer by St Theresa of Avila:

*Ours are the feet
with which He is to go about doing good*

as a summary of the life of Kilvert. Several members of the congregation were given card copies of another prayer by Mother Teresa's co-workers in Japan. These we were invited to read out line by line. Dr Fisher told us that he always assessed the impact of his services by how few of the cards were returned to him at the end of the Service; the fewer the cards returned the greater the impact!

He pursued the theme of journeying and doing good in his Sermon. Surprisingly he did not refer to the Reverend Price and the benevolence that he showed to his flock (particularly the tramps and vagrants) but concluded with a reading from the *Diary* entry on May Day 1876.

On that day Kilvert had visited an extremely sick Jane Drew at Whitney Rectory and the entry displayed his quiet compassion to good effect. It ended with his leaving the Rectory to walk back to Clyro. *So we parted, one to an active life of work and enjoyment and one to a passive time of patient and perhaps painful waiting...*

The Evensong Service was punctuated with well-known and loved hymns admirably accompanied on the organ by Miss Annabelle Brown; *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind*, *The God of Love My Shepherd Is*, *Love Divine*, *All Loves Excelling* and concluding with *The Day Thou Gavest Lord Is Ended*.

The weekend ended much as it had begun in warm autumnal sunshine in the churchyard. Many thanks must be offered to the hard working team of volunteers from the Church who helped to make the occasion such a success.



Some of Saturday's walkers linger in the churchyard at St Peter's, Llanbedr, after demolishing the excellent tea provided – on both days – by the ladies of the parish. The church was restored in the Rev. John Price's time. Like others in Radnorshire, the churchyard has no graves on the north side of the church

PICTURE: VAL DIXON



PICTURES: VAL DIXON, DAVID ELVINS AND CHARLES BOASE





The September 2010 Commemorative Service at St Peter's, Llanbedr

The service prepared by the Rev Dr Humphrey Fisher, Non-Stipendiary Minister of Newchurch, took walking as its theme. This is the text of his sermon

God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in our hearts, and in our understanding. Amen

Francis Kilvert lived in a walking world, and I want to share with you some illustrations of this in a moment – though, to be sure, many of you will already know such details of Kilvert's life as well as I do myself – or better. But at the same time I have tried to pick out the strand of walking, like the thread of a tapestry running through much of what we shall read or sing or hear during our service. And, perhaps, we shall find some points of overlap, of correspondence, between the Kilvert record and the other sources upon which we shall draw this afternoon.

We began our service with the lovely, and so perceptive, quatrain from Hilaire Belloc:

*Of courtesy, it is much less,
than courage of heart, or holiness;
yet in my walks it seems to me
that the grace of God is in courtesy.*

'Yet in my walks, yet in my walks', we read these words aloud, together, and we repeated them. It was in the walking, in the walking, that Belloc gained his insight into the grace of God.

I do not know whether Belloc walked alone, but Kilvert often did, and some of the most moving passages in his journal record such solitary experiences.

Then I went over to Gilfach yr rheol. It was perhaps my last journey over the Little Mountain to the sweet Vale of Newchurch and the dear village on the Arrow and Emmeline's grave. Seldom have I seen more lovely the beautiful hills and vales which I shall now see no more. I paid a last visit to the storm blown hawthorn on the mountain top, 'the little lonely tree' among the

fern and carved upon the trunk about two feet from the ground a little cross on the Eastern side of the tree looking across Arrow Vale towards Kington. (Vol. ii 244-5 – 8.viii.1872)

It was just half a year later that Kilvert was back in Clyro, to help with services, and he visited Emmeline's grave on another solitary pilgrimage:

I went on to Newchurch by Dolbedwyn Mount and Tynycwm, I gathered some ferns in the land and as I came in sight of the little church spire snow began again to fall heavily in large flakes. The little village was very quiet.

The Rectory was apparently deserted. The school held there had probably just broken up. I was alone in the Churchyard and no one was in sight. As I stooped over the green grave by the Churchyard gate placing the primrose bunches in a cross upon the turf the large flakes of snow still fell thickly upon us, but melted as they fell, and the great yew tree overhead bent weeping upon the grave. (Vol. ii.336, 14.iii.1873)

We replicate this second visit of Kilvert's in our annual Kilvert pilgrimage (which falls always on the first Sunday after the Royal Welsh Show). Everyone has a posy and, as Kilvert did, we lay these upon the turf, in the form of a cross. Passages from the Bible, and from Kilvert's *Diary*, are read. A trumpet closes the ceremony. The weeping yew, over one thousand years old according to its dimensions, fell on 25th January 1990, in a great storm. Happily, it fell away from the church, not on it. We were able to save some cuttings from the yew, and two of these now stand on either side of the churchyard gate, over which they will, we hope, in due course form an agreeable lycharch. Who among us, here this afternoon, will see the completed arch? We have planted a copper beech, as a short term (say, half a millennium) replace-

ment for the yew. At the tree planting ceremony, I suggested to the Vicar, Peter Ralph-Bowman – do any of you remember him? – I suggested that a child should place the first shovel of earth on the roots. Peter said, no, every child (we were 21 children that day) should add his or her own shovelful. Then, returning years later, he or she would be able to say to children or grandchildren, I helped plant that tree. The copper beech was perhaps a miscalculation: it grows with great gusto, and St Mary's will some day be invisible behind it.

Enough New-church publicity. Too much, maybe. I am sorry. There is solitary walking elsewhere in our service, in Psalm 23. The most solitary of all walking. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death – and, in George Herbert's metrical setting, Well may I walk, not fear.

Back to Hilaire Belloc for a moment. Was he, perhaps, in company when he received, conceived, his poem, so that he might experience, might participate in, that gracious courtesy? Our first hymn locates us, in a group, walking – let us, like them, without a word, rise up and follow thee. The Sentence which follows, speaks of them that wait upon the Lord – they shall rise up with wings as eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint. (Is.40.31) A little strange that walking should thus be singled out for mention alongside running and, even, flying like eagles. And St Theresa of Avila, in her hauntingly beautiful prayer from the sixteenth century, says, 'ours are the feet with which Christ is to go about doing good'. 'Ours are the feet', these words we repeated in our service, just as we repeated at the very beginning, 'yet in my walks'.

Kilvert often walked, in company. *Then all five of us went down to Evening Church at Clyro at 6 o'clock, a merry party at a swinging pace, for we left Llwyn [? = Cwm] Gwillim only at 5.20. We came into Church in the 1st Lesson. I dashed on the surplice over boots and gaiters and sat within the rails and preached on Mizpah to a very attentive congregation...* (iii.280) A swinging pace indeed, and over such a distance, no wonder they arrived late at service. Kilvert and his companions seem often to have formed 'a merry laughing party' (p. 281).

Our second lesson this afternoon, the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, whilst not quite a fully-fledged pilgrim-

age, is one of the best known walking stories in all the Bible. And we read it each year at the end of our pilgrimage, at Evensong in Llandewifach, the little church in the fields.

The two disciples had certainly cast off their moorings. Their hopes had been disappointed: 'But we trusted that it had been he, Jesus, which should have redeemed Israel' (Luke 24.21). Thus the two disciples 'communed together and reasoned'. And Jesus joined them. And stayed with them when they stopped for a meal. And when he blessed the bread, and broke it, and gave it

to them, they realised who it was, Jesus. And Jesus vanished. Then the disciples 'said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way...'. (Luke 24.32)

How lovely it would be if, after our pilgrimage, we could say, of someone who had shared the pilgrimage, did not our heart burn within us, while he, or she, talked with us by the way. And I do believe that it has been so, and will be so, sometimes, for someone. Or more than one.

And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went: and Jesus made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them (Luke 24.28-9).

At the last stile I was going to wish my dear companions 'Goodbye' and return alone to Clyro but Florence [Hill] would not hear of it. Looking up with a pleading grace in her beautiful eyes and a pretty insistence in her voice and manner and one little hand gently detaining me, 'No, please don't go, please come in,' she persisted lovingly. 'You must come in and have some tea, do come in. Father and Mother and Eleanor and all of them will be so glad to see you.' So the beautiful face and the pleading voice and the loving eyes prevailed, how could I resist, and I went again to the happy home and found as kind a welcome as before. (Vol. iii.286)

Two travellers constrained to come in. We can see a parallel. Did such a thought ever cross Kilvert's mind? I guess not.

But, in this activity, of which we have talked so gently, so appreciatively, there may be, can be, is, a dark side. There always is a dark side. Cast your minds back to our first lesson this afternoon. Its opening words captured my heart and mind when I first read them, I think as the title of a book. Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into



Patsy Weston and her husband Richard, our Treasurer, enjoy a serious game of see-saw while having tea after the Commemorative Service PICTURE: DAVID ELVINS

the place which I have prepared. (Ex.23.20) But what follows, is terrible, terrible, terrible. I would gladly have entrusted one of our hymns today, to a printed hymnal, in order to make space in our Order of Service for this passage. For I doubt anyone here, will have taken it fully aboard, just by hearing me read it once. Nor, I imagine, will anyone go home to look up the Biblical reference in order to read the passage for herself, or himself. But it is a passage relevant to us, about keeping 'in the way', about being brought into the place prepared for us, a passage about leadership, the leadership of God's angel. Terrible, terrible, terrible. Ironical to read such a passage, as peace talks resume in Jerusalem. It was only as I sat at my desk, two or three hours ago, putting the finishing touches to this talk, that I realised that the Lord's Prayer itself alludes to the possibility of such misleading leadership. Lead us, lead us, not, into temptation.

The *Old Testament* is full of such ferocity. Even in the most unexpected places. Psalm 23. Thou preparest a table before me – in the presence of mine enemies. But not for you, lads. Dear George Herbert, his metrical version, which we have sung today, omits this detail. Kilvert preached on the *Old Testament*, Mizpah he mentions, in Clyro. What would we give to have the text of this address?

Let me close by reading one of the Kilvert passages that I most

love, and which I have read to you before. Here I find it in 2002, noting that I had read it also the year before. It has some walking, just. (iii.281-2)

Monday, May Day, 1876 ... and then I was taken up into the guest chamber to see poor Janie by her own special request. She lay in bed sweet and fair in a pretty blue dressing jacket and the afternoon sunshine which streamed in rich and warm at the western window and made a glory round her golden hair. From where she lay looking westward through the heavy mullions and transoms of the large window she could see the rounding of the Old Forest and the line of Clyro Hill, as I have so often seen them from that very room and window. Janie was very sweet and kind. She had my tea [not hers?] brought up to her bedside, and after a nice talk she said gently, 'Will you say a prayer for me before you go?' So I knelt by her bedside and we prayed together in the evening sunlight which came into the room like an angel from Heaven descending the golden stairs. So we parted, one to an active life of work and enjoyment, and one to a passive time of patient and perhaps painful waiting.'

A visit, and a prayer. Could Kilvert have done more, in those days? Do we do more, or even as much, for our Janies, older nowadays? *So we parted ... I was obliged to go as I had to walk back to Clyro. To walk, back. Amen.*



Nearly there for a restorative tea at St Peter's, Llanbedr

PICTURE: CHARLES BOASE

'A few centuries back he would most certainly have been canonised'

The extraordinary life of the Solitary of Llanbedr was recorded a dozen years after his death in 'The Treasury' for 1907. That short biography was reprinted in The Oswin Prosser Memorial Booklet, and we reprint it from there, with part of its introduction by Mr Prosser

KILVERT'S account of his visit to the Rev. John Price – on Wednesday the 3rd July, 1872 – in company with the Rev. Thomas Williams, the Vicar of Llowes, is most interesting and can be read on pages 223 to 231 of the second volume.

The description of where they found the hut (or 'cabin' as Kilvert referred to it) of the Vicar of Llanbedr is so good that when a party of the Society went in search of it (some years ago now) they were able to easily decide almost exactly where it stood, although there is nothing whatsoever there to give any material indication.

At that time a little of the chimney end of the house of Pen-common (where they stabled the Rev. Tom Williams' horse) was still to be seen, and this helped to lead the party towards the 'sunny green little cwm' where the cabin once stood. From here the party climbed the hill just as Kilvert and Tom Williams and the Solitary did, and also walked further over until we could see

'Llanbychllyn pool gleaming like silver in its hollow' and over to the right the famous Rocks of Pen Cwm which were *the last haunt of the fairies*. At the foot of these rocks are a pile of stones and a few wooden beams, all that remains of the little farmhouse of Pen Cwm; this is where the Rev. John Price lived for some years until at last a tenant was found for the remote little house and he had to move out; it was then that he went to the three bathing machines (from Aberystwyth?) before his final move to the hut in Cwm Ceilio, where Kilvert and his friend found him.... We present it just as it appeared in 1907, and have no means of knowing whether all that is in it is authentic or otherwise. The Rev. Edmond-Owen was a scholarly man, who wrote for many antiquarian and historical societies, and wrote this article only 12 years after the death of the Rev. John Price. We must leave it to our readers to form their own opinions.

C.T.O. Prosser

The tramps' chaplain: The Simple Annals of a Welsh hermit, by The Reverend David Edmond-Owen

HISTORIANS may know where Painscastle is. For there in the twelfth century stood a strong fortress, around which took place a most sanguinary struggle between Gwenwynyn a great Welsh prince, and William de Breos, the most unscrupulous of Lord Marchers. There also, in a fortress still stranger than the first, built by the great Matilda de Breos, and known as Castle Maud, Henry III held Court for several months in the year 1231. It is the scene of Sir Walter Scott's novel 'The Betrothed' – 'Garde Doloureuse' being merely a playful translation of Painscastle. The place has long since lost its ancient glory.

The mount and moat of the old castle remain, but no particle of masonry is left standing. Near the site of the old fortress is a typical Welsh village. Here and there dotting the open country can be seen the scattered homesteads of the hardy Welsh farmers. The population of the district is scanty. The roads leading to it from Hay on the one side and Builth on the other are narrow, steep and tortuous.

Some distance from the village of Painscastle, in a bleak and exposed position stands the parish church, which is dedicated to St Peter. The emoluments of the 'living' are barely enough to keep body and soul together. But, though insufficient now, they are considerably more than they were forty-eight years ago when the Rev. John Price came from Lancashire to begin his long and unique vicariate. The living had gone a-begging for seven years, when our hero heard of it through his cousin – a Breconshire vicar – and promptly offered his services, which were immediately and gladly accepted.

John Price was the son of a yeoman farmer living near Llandilo in the county of Carmarthen. He was educated at Cambridge, where he was a scholar of Queens' College. After graduating he held several important curacies in different parts of England. He had a little private means, which went a long way with him, for his personal needs were always few.

When he undertook the charge of Painscastle there was hardly a Churchman in the whole parish. Even the Dissenters were not very numerous. Indifference, like a thick chilly fog, had settled over the whole district. There was no vicarage house. The oldest

inhabitant did not remember even a tradition of a resident priest.

For some time the new vicar lodged in a tiny cottage. After that he lived for some years in the dwelling house of a bytack croft. This he had to quit when a tenant for house and land presented himself. He was then stranded, for he could find neither house nor rooms in the whole parish. He could see around him the bad results of absenteeism, and had definitely made up his mind that Painscastle would not suffer from that evil as long as he lived. No money could be found to build a vicarage. So his conscientious scruples were face to face with a trying situation.

He did not parade and advertise his difficulties to win the sympathy and admiration of those more blessed than he. Indeed, it is doubtful whether those difficulties gave him a moment's anxiety, for not many days had passed before he had purchased three large bathing-machines and had them brought to the top of the hill and placed in the corner of an open common about a mile from the church. These three bathing-boxes were the new vicarage. The one was the kitchen, the second the study, the third the bedroom. There he lived for very many years.

No bishop could be prouder of his palace than the Rev John Price was of his new home. He envied no one. He did not crave for preferment, but was more than pleased with the sphere to which he had been sent.

During these early years the services, though regularly held, were but scantily attended. It was difficult to get the children even to attend a Sunday class. In the midst of these discouraging surroundings his hopes never once flickered. He visited his parishioners frequently, and though at first he was but coldly received, his simple life, his guileless character and loving nature ere long won their respect, if not their love. He got many of his parishioners to allow him to join them at their meals whenever he called. For his dinner, no matter how simple the fare, he always paid one shilling and sixpence, for his tea he gave sixpence. So the only meal cooked at 'The Huts', as the vicarage was called, was a frugal breakfast.

But John Price's life-work was not confined to his parishion-



ers. The vagrants who occasionally came up that way found in him a friend at once trusting, sympathetic and generous. In his lonely home on the hilltop he had often thought of their spiritual destitution with a heavy heart. He had prayed for them and, as a result of his contemplations and prayers, had finally decided to hold services for those whose parish was the world, and as such, had no special claim on any priest or preacher.

Calling together three or four tramps, he explained to them his scheme. Every Sunday morning a service would be held for tramps only at half-past ten. To encourage good attendance, and also to compensate those who came for leaving the more profitable main roads for that barren and poor hilltop, he promised a sixpence for each attendance at this novel service.

He made a convert of one neighbouring farmer to his way of thinking. This farmer threw his barn open for the tramps who arrived on Saturday, or were forced by stress of weather to remain over Sunday night.

The news of this service spread fast and far amongst the vagrant classes. Some were touched by the sympathy and good intentions of the hermit priest, and responded by attending as often as they came within reach. Others were drawn to the service by the love of novelty. All felt the magnetic power of the silver coin at the end. It was a certainty. And an occasional penny could be gleaned on the byways that led to and from the church.

The first tramp service took place in early summer. When winter came the attendance did not fall off. In spite of rain, frost and snow, tramps from all parts converged on Painscastle on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings. But there was one serious and genuine grievance. The church was damp and draughty.

The poor old vicar, himself ill-clad, his toes and heels showing, and his clothing far more faded and ragged than those of his congregation, thought nothing of his own discomforts but grieved at the idea of the poor tramps with their wet clothes and damp feet spending an hour in that terribly cold church. Resourceful as ever, he got over the difficulty by buying a small portable oil stove for each pew. These he himself trimmed and cleaned and lit ready for service. Then he asked the congregation to regulate them.

The tramps were as resourceful as the vicar. It was an opportunity not to be missed. They begged for potatoes, eggs and bacon in the cottages and farms around. These they brought to the service and cooked them on the stoves during the sermon, then adjourned to the barn with a priest's blessing to partake of a hot

meal. Often he would join them and share their varied meals and listen to their interesting stories.

As time went on he found that his private income and stipend were not enough for his own scanty needs and the heavy expenses connected with the tramps service. To the dismay of the congregation he announced one Sunday that after that day

the attendance reward would be reduced to fourpence. The tramps held a meeting in the churchyard, discussed the matter carefully, and finally decided to accept the new terms. A year later he asked them to allow him to reduce the fee to threepence. Another meeting took place. The matter was put to the vote, with the result that the majority opposed any further reduction. So the poor old vicar had still more to deny himself the necessities of life to keep the service going. But his care for the tramps was not confined to Sunday mornings. They were always welcomed at The Huts where they never failed to gain a patient hearing to their tales of woe, followed by genuine sympathy and often substantial support.

One day a tramp, who does not seem to have known him very well, called to beg. Mr Price took out a half-crown, shewed it to the man and said: 'There my friend is the last coin I have in the world. If you think you are worse off than I am then in God's name take it'. The tramp refused the gift, and explained in Hay the next day that 'He really could not take it from such a dear old gentleman'.

One thing distressed the saintly vicar greatly: so many tramps ignored the form of marriage merely to save the fees. The Church, he thought, was at fault in demanding payment fees from the poor

for administering any ordinance. One Sunday he preached on this question, and then announced that in future he would not only marry the tramps for nothing, but would start each couple in life with five shillings. This promise led to results both humorous and tragic. It is on record that he married the same couple five times under different names, and through failing eyesight violated some of the Church marriage laws which he himself regarded as sacred and vital.

We have said that Mr Price was a scholar of his college. He graduated in classics, and kept up his knowledge of Greek to the very last. His favourite study was the Greek testament, which he read regularly and systematically. At clerical gatherings and ruridecanal chapter meetings no one was better prepared with the fixed passages than he.

Then he invented three systems of shorthand in his spare moments. These were published in Hereford – of course – at his own cost. But it was a matter of great satisfaction to him that the same publisher had accepted all his little pamphlets on any

*The news of this service
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responded by attending as
often as they came within
reach. All felt the magnetic
power of the silver coin at
the end. It was a certainty*

conditions, and he would refer to the fact sometimes in a spirit of gratitude almost akin to pride.

His sermons were all written in his own systems of shorthand. The last and improved system, however, differed so much from the other two that in his later years when, by mistake, he took to the pulpit sermons written in the discarded systems, he failed lamentably to decipher his own hieroglyphics. Indeed, he never shone as a preacher, and it is no wonder the tramps whiled away the sermon time by cooking their meals!

Occasionally he gave a short address without the aid of his shorthand notes. These addresses invariably commanded a hearing. Some of his quaint and simple sayings are distinctly remembered to this day. During the last fifty years most of the churches in Radnorshire have been either rebuilt or restored. St Peter's Church, Painscastle, is no exception. It was well restored in Mr Price's time. Most of the money was given by one landed proprietor who owned several farms in the parish.

On the day of the re-opening the church was crowded with parishioners and a fair sprinkling of tramps. There was, of course, the orthodox collection to wipe away a trifling debt! During the singing of the last hymn two willow-pattern plates went round. There was time enough for the vicar to count the money on the altar before the last stanza was sung. After pronouncing the blessing he thanked the congregation for the enthusiasm they had displayed that day, and with tears of gratitude in his eyes announced that the collection amounted to £1. 18. 6½d. Then he added 'There has never been such a big collection in this church before, nor will there ever be such again'.

Frontals, vases and very costly communion vessels were given by a clergyman's widow who was interested in the restoration. The old vicar accepted them gladly, but did not know what to do with the little Tudor chalice and paten which had been in use there for so many ages. There was some danger now of their being put away and lost. A happy thought occurred to him. The good man who had loved the church well enough to practically restore it would be the best guardian of its chief treasure. He consulted his churchwardens. They concurred. So he started joyfully on his twelve-mile journey, handed his little parcel to the butler with a note of explanation, and then walked all the way home. The vessels are amongst the most valued treasures of that mansion today.

The farmers of Painscastle love to talk about him, but always

with mingled feelings of pity and respect. One of them, when told that an amusing article had been written about him in a local paper, became very indignant and said, 'Why don't they leave the dear old man alone? There has not been on this earth a more straightforward man than Mr Price of 'The Huts'.

A curious story is told of him by one of his parishioners. Near the 'Vicarage' was a little garden where Mr Price planted his potatoes. In the springtime he found rooks very troublesome. They would come in great numbers in the early morning and dig up his seed potatoes. Once, after setting his garden and finding that all his planted potatoes had been taken away, he called on this farmer and asked him to be good enough to show him

a dead rook. The farmer at once offered to shoot as many as he liked. Mr Price besought him not to do so. He merely wanted to see any dead rook that might be found in his fields. The farmer's curiosity was roused. He told him of a scarecrow rook in his corn-field. 'That will do for me', said the old man; 'I merely wanted to look at it'. The farmer accompanied him to the scare-crow. Then the vicar carefully measured the rook's beak, and with a merry twinkle in his eye, said, 'Now I will set my garden again, and this time I will plant my potatoes a little deeper than the length of the beak'. The farmer smiled significantly, but the result of the second planting is not narrated. In giving us this story the farmer, once more emphasised that 'Mr Price was a tremendously just man'. His brother clergy held him in the highest

esteem. It was quite a common saying amongst them that 'If poor Price had lived a few centuries back he would most certainly have been canonised'.

Perhaps we ought to have said that in his early life Mr Price had been crossed in love. There is ample proof, however, that his simple and aesthetic tenderness were the cause rather than the result of that regrettable incident.

The object of his affections was a young lady of position, beauty and talents. But a more ascetic suitor than he pressed his claim, and was finally accepted, to the discomfiture of our hero. It was like him, however, to remain constant to her in spite of this reverse. It is true that he never saw his faithless sweetheart after the parting, yet his love did not even cool. She was often in his thoughts and prayers, and the one treasure he valued in his solitary home was a carefully packed bundle of her letters which he often read through.

On one occasion when he was from home a tramp broke into



The beach at Aberystwyth in the late 19th century with, in the distance, the kind of wheeled bathing huts that John Price installed at Cwm Ceilo, one for his kitchen, another his study and a third as his bedroom – what he called 'The Huts'

PICTURE COURTESY OF AMGUEDDFA CEREDIGION MUSEUM, ABERYSTWYTH

The Huts, hoping to find money. He was disappointed. The only thing he found of any apparent value was this neatly packed parcel. He did not pause to open it there but carried it to a hiding place on the common, where he found that it contained nothing to help or interest him. In his rage he tore the letters and scattered them about the hill.

When the old man on his return found his treasure missing he was greatly distressed, and made diligent enquiries. At last he was told of some bits of paper that had been seen flying about the common. He promptly went up and found what had happened. Then, for a whole fortnight, in wind and rain, morning, noon and eve, he could be seen, a solitary figure, searching carefully in bracken, furze and 'feg', for the missing parts; nor did he cease to search until he had discovered every particle, which he neatly pieced together. His little bundle was once more complete.

But he was not destined to keep his treasure long. One day, on his return from his round of visits he found that the three huts had been burnt to the ground, and he was not only minus a home but minus the letters he prized so much. His next and last home was a lonely hovel belonging to one of the hill farms. It had been used for years as a hen-house. The poultry were evicted, and their former cot was honoured with the high-sounding name of 'Vicarage'. Here he continued to live to within a few days of his death.

Occasionally he went down to spend an evening with his good friend the Rev. A. Hackman, the Vicar of Llyswen, who was consistently kind to him, and made him more than welcome when he called.

On one of these visits his host, to amuse him, read a few chapters from a very humorous book. He had been reading for some time without response from his guest when he stopped and looked round, wondering at the silence. Mr Price was fast asleep. Soon he awoke with great apologies for his rudeness, and urged his friend to read on. Mr Hackman asked him if he felt comfortable in that chair. He replied that his slumbers, in spite of the amusing chapter, was a sure proof of that. Then, said his host, 'That chair is yours. You must take it, or else I will chop it up for firewood at once.'

His delight in receiving such a gift was very genuine. For the rest of the evening, like a child with a new toy, he scanned and scrutinised the chair with evident pride and delight. Before retiring he asked what time he could start on the morrow. The reply was characteristic of his host, 'Any time between four and eight. Simply tell the maid and you can have breakfast and start

forthwith, but if you wait till nine we will have breakfast together and then start for Painscastle, and we will get a man to carry the chair ahead of us'.

The following morning Mr Hackman got up at the usual hour. On reaching the dining room he found the table laid for one, and

immediately asked the reason why, to find that his words had been taken literally. The hermit vicar had got up at four o'clock, and had started half an hour later on his six-mile journey, carrying the chair on his head.

His end came somewhat suddenly. Mr Hackman called to see him in his little whitewashed hovel, and was shocked to find him looking pale and thin and broken. He himself was not conscious of failing health or strength, and resented the suggestion of change and rest. The following day his friend called again, this time accompanied by a medical

man, who compelled the dear old saint to go with him to Talgarth, which was about twelve miles distant. Lodgings were provided for him in an exceptionally clean and comfortable cottage. The doctor ordered him a hot bath before retiring.

It was obvious he had not only lived without one during those long years at Painscastle, but that he had not even changed his flannels for many years. With the greatest difficulty his clothing was severed from his skin. He was at last placed in bed in an exhausted state, but beaming benedictions on all for their great kindness to him, and wondering what he had done in his life to merit such attention and so many blessings. He slept that night in peace. He never woke. His natural slumbers deepened into the sleep of death. He had been faithful with his few things, and had now been called to be lord over many.

We have recorded a few of the main facts of his life while he is yet well remembered and before legend has had time to tamper with the truth.

Some, after reading this little sketch, may come to the conclusion that he was not a strong character. If so, the writer has failed in his purpose. If to live the simplest of lives in an age of luxury; if to give one's all to the poor in an age of scramble for wealth; if, at the call of duty, to live in a hut on a barren hillside when even farm labourers found country life too dull and were pouring into the towns in search of pleasure; if to see nothing but the good in others when jealousy and slander were rampant; if to be filled with the charity that thinketh no evil in an age of religious strife and bitterness – if all these, we say, spell weakness, then he was indeed weak.

But if they are to be ranked as Christian virtues, John Price of Painscastle will long be remembered as a great spiritual hero.



Colin Dixon reads to us at Cwm Ceilo, the spot to which the Revd. John Price made his final move, to live in a hovel which had been used as a hen-house, after his bathing-machine 'Vicarage' further up the hill had burnt down. There are no remains now of Pencommon (where they stabled the Rev. Tom Williams' horse) but it was somewhere between Penlan Farm (the farm we passed at the end of the walk) and Cwm Ceilo.

Colin believes it would have been nearer to Cwm Ceilo

PICTURE: VAL DIXON

John Price, Queensman

The Solitary may have appeared to live as much like a tramp as those vagrants he ministered to, but he was a Cambridge man, who read his Scriptures in Greek, wrote pamphlets and enjoyed one of the crazes of the age – inventing systems of shorthand

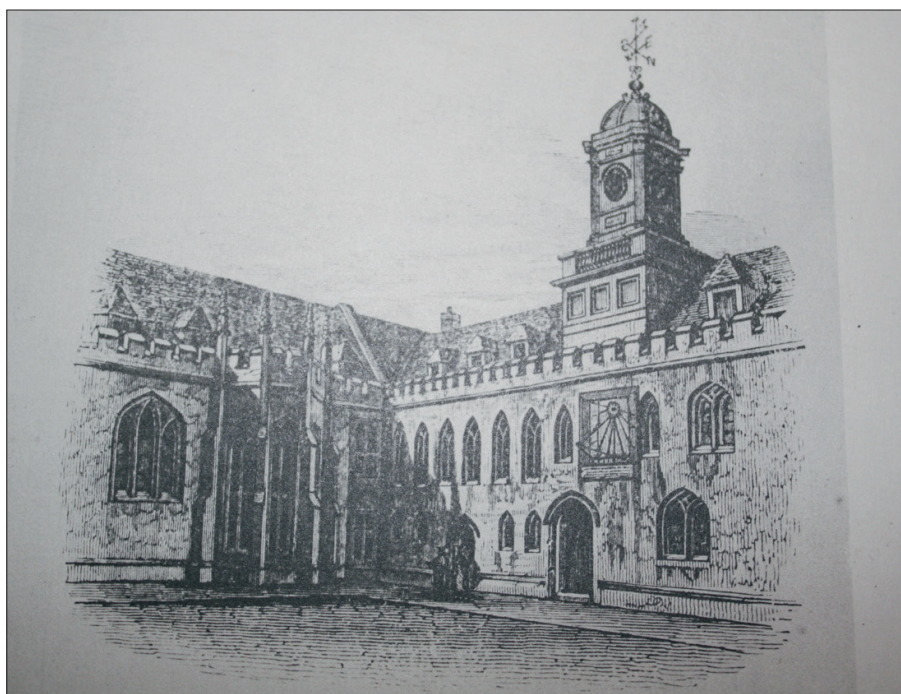
TAKING my cue from the mention in *The Treasury* of 1907 that John Price was a member of Queens', Cambridge, I asked the college what they knew about him. Not very much, came the reply from the Keeper of the Records, the Rev. Dr Jonathan Holmes, who added that the only information they had was what is noted in Venn and Venn's *Alumni Cantabrigiensis*.

Drawing on that, Dr Holmes said: 'He was admitted in February 1829 as a Pensioner (i.e. an ordinary, fee-paying student). He was 'Of Wales' (a not very helpful, but typical entry from the period). He matriculated (i.e. actually started at the University) in the Michaelmas Term that year and graduated Bachelor of Arts in 1833 (he took his Master of Arts degree – no further study or residence required) in 1843. He was ordained deacon (Diocese of Peterborough) in 1834 and was curate of Abthorpe, Northants., until 1839. He was priested in 1835. He was Curate of Astley and Stockingford, Warwicks., 1839-44 and of Hutton Roof, Westmorland, 1844-47 and of Epwell, Oxon 1847-49. He then spent 7 years as Chaplain to the Boxmoor Infirmary in Hertfordshire, before another curacy at Gorton, Lancs., 1856-59. Venn records say he was then Vicar of Llanbedr-Painscastle 1859-95, but I see the censuses say he was Perpetual Curate of Llanbedr and not Vicar. There he is reputed to have lived in a rough stone cabin as a hermit. He invented three systems of shorthand.

'It is recorded he was born in 1809 in Llanastock, Carmarthenshire.'

Dr Holmes has written a memoir of John Price, based on *The Treasury* 1907, to appear in the 2012 Queens' magazine.

CHARLES BOASE



Above, Queens' College, Cambridge, in 1840 as John Price would have known it (the clock tower has since been replaced). Below, the 'Mathematical Bridge' across the Cam and the fifteenth-century President's Lodge

PICTURES COURTESY OF QUEENS' COLLEGE



Two 'sightings' of the Solitary from past Newsletters

Newsletter June 1968

Cutting peat

When Kilvert visited the Rev. John Price in July 1872 he found the 'Solitary' about to fetch 'mawn' (peat) in a 'gambo' (long 2-wheeled cart) provided by his landlord. Peat was for centuries the staple fuel of hilly counties like Radnorshire. It was cut from 'turbaries' or 'mawn pits' on the mountains (the name 'Mawn Pool' is familiar to those with maps of mid-Wales). Parishes round Radnor Forest, for instance, were granted the right of turbarry on the highest point of the forest.

'Mawn' is the Welsh word for peat or turf; in Breconshire it is pronounced in the Welsh way, but in Radnorshire it is

anglicised. On some steep slopes the gambo is replaced by the sledge.

Newsletter June 1988

The Rev. John Price, M.A. (Cantab), had been at Llanbedr Painscastle (population 313, acreage 3877, gross value £85) since 1859. Kilvert had been in the neighbouring parish of Clyro since 1865, but his description of Mr. Price seems to indicate clearly that this was the first occasion on which he had seen or met him. Mr. Price stayed at Llanbedr until his death in 1895.



Mrs Augustus Hare: godmother to the Kilvert children

My Father I know will feel her death' (Kilvert's Diary 16 November 1870).

Maria Hare had a large influence on Robert Kilvert

and his family and on his school at Harnish. All the more

surprising, therefore, writes John Toman, that she is not

mentioned in his 'Memoirs' and barely in Kilvert's 'Diary'

THE Memoirs of Kilvert's father end abruptly in 1833. His Keevil curacy had finished in summer 1832 and he spent three months as curate in Melksham but suffered a breakdown, which he glossed over. He surfaced again as temporary curate in another Wiltshire village, Alton Barnes, the Rector of which was Augustus Hare, who was seriously ill in 1833. His wife Maria wrote to her sister Catherine on 3 October that year from Alton: 'Our new curate is Mr. Robert Kilvert, who seems from his great gentleness of disposition and his earnest desire of doing good, to be just fitted to teach our rustic people ... we shall leave our parish in great comfort'.¹ The Hares then left England for Rome where Augustus hoped to recover his health.

His wife, who was to become godmother to the Kilvert children, was born Maria Leicester in 1798 and in the words of her adoptive son, Augustus, nephew of Augustus senior, she was brought up in rectories where it was possible to combine 'the utmost intellectual refinement with the most serious Christian life'. Her father was the Rev. Oswald Leicester, Rector of Stoke-upon-Terne, Shropshire. She had married Augustus Hare, Rector of Alton Barnes, in 1829. When she was widowed in February 1834, she asked the mother of the infant Augustus to allow her to raise him as her own. Her sister-in-law,² believing it would be a comfort to her in her grief, agreed. (Henceforth Maria will be referred to as Augustus's mother.)

Augustus was brought up in Lime, a large house in Sussex near Hurstmonceaux Rectory, the home of the Rev. Julius Hare, younger brother to Augustus senior. Julius was austere and frightening and was regularly sent for by Augustus's mother to whip him, sometimes with a riding whip. 'In the most literal sense ... I was "brought up at the point of a rod",' he wrote.³ His mother favoured this savage treatment because, he recognised, she was terrified of spoiling him and had 'constant habits of self-examination' which made her feel guilty when she showed any kindness. He managed to love her nevertheless. The fact that uncle Julius had married Esther Maurice, sister of the churchman the Rev. F.D. Maurice, exacerbated the misery of Augustus's childhood. She and her sister Priscilla were, he wrote, 'a fearful

scourge to my childhood', constantly tormenting and bullying him. They perpetrated every kind of cruelty out of a fanatical, religion-driven desire to purge his original sin and to break his spirit. Esther, the worst of the sisters, was 'the Inquisition in person'. Together, they encouraged Augustus's mother in 'a tireless

search after the motes in their brother's eyes'. He struggled to understand why she permitted all of this but believed the reason was her 'extraordinary religious opinions'. She literally believed, he said, that if a person hurt you, you should invite them to hurt you again: it was to be welcomed 'as a fiery trial to be endured'.

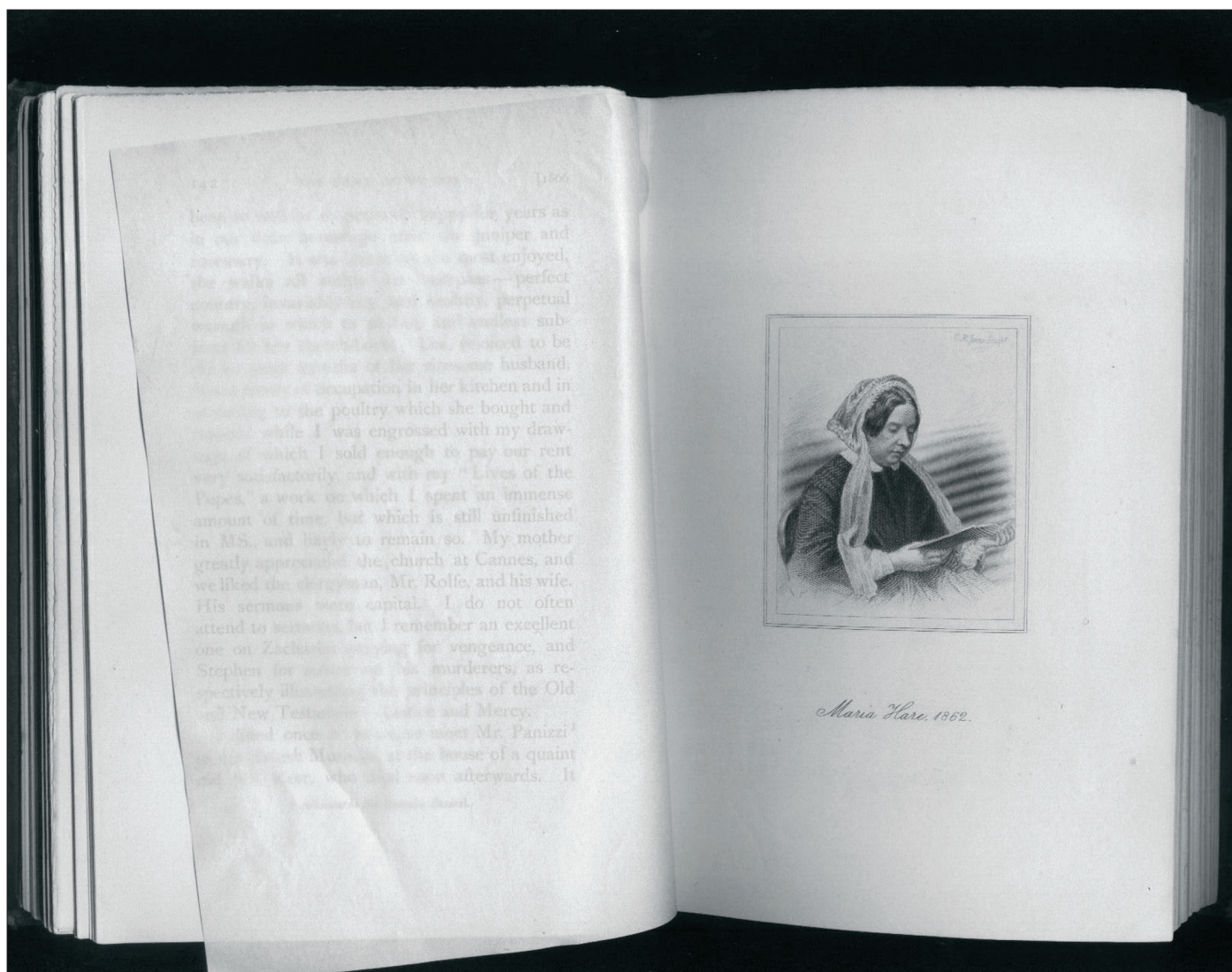
Maria was obsessed by her own sinfulness, recalling in a letter of 13 January 1835 that from childhood she was aware of 'the striving of God's Spirit against my own evil will'. She acknowledged in her journal (September 1834) that there was a 'germ' of truth in Quakerism but it failed to take account of 'the corruption of the world' and of the heart, which must be 'rooted out'. Her Calvinism rejected the idea that many sinners would be received in Heaven: it was only for the chosen few, she insisted. Her letters and journal⁴ show a woman wholly committed to the rigorous self-examination, which Augustus described as 'injurious' and 'unwholesome'.

The letters that Maria and Robert Kilvert exchanged between early 1834 and late 1839 reveal their close spiritual affinity. 'My mother's "religion"

made her think reading any novel ... absolutely wicked,' Augustus wrote. The *Record*, the extreme Evangelical newspaper taken by Robert, had this stance towards fiction.⁵

During her husband's illness, she wrote to Robert thanking him for the 'kind sympathy which one Christian heart must feel for others on whom God has laid a chastening hand'. On 27 February, he wrote referring to her deceased 'sainted husband', who had been witness to 'how I ran the race, especially the ministerial course' in Alton Barnes. Just after departing for Rome, leaving Robert in charge, she wrote (16 July 1834) to Lucy, wife of her brother-in-law Marcus Hare, praising the 'very striking sermon' Robert had preached. For one Evangelical to endorse the preaching of another was itself very significant because Evangelicals not only believed in the power of the pulpit but insisted

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'My mother's "religion"
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Maria Hare in 1862. She was the aunt, but became the adoptive mother of Augustus

on Gospel preaching, which Robert had provided. Maria made a point of citing his text: 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light'. Maria's 11 March 1836 letter to a Miss Miller also expressed approval of Robert's work: 'the blessings of Mr Kilvert's ministrations [were] a call for thanksgiving and prayer'.

It is evident, therefore, that the 'ultra-evangelical divinity' that young Augustus saw as Robert's dominant trait was shared by Maria; they were kindred spirits. Augustus had ample opportunity to study Robert in the period July 1843 to Christmas 1846 as a pupil at the latter's Harnish school, when he was subjected to more harsh religiosity and beatings.⁶ Maria clearly knew what she was doing when she entrusted her son to that school: it was an extension of the regime she had established at Lime. Similarly, Augustus knew all about religious mania from his home life there; he knew it when he encountered it again at school. Kilvert

too was confirming the closeness in outlook between Maria and his father when he wrote on 16 November 1870 of the death of the former: 'My Father I know will feel her death'. Robert had helped her out at Alton Barnes during her husband's illness and she reciprocated by supplying him with a pupil for his Harnish school, illustrating the network of mutual support that existed among Evangelicals. It is odd therefore that Robert's *Memoirs* refer neither to his Alton Barnes curacy nor to his close relationship with Maria, so close that he invited her to become godmother to his children. It is an omission as noteworthy as Kilvert's failure to mention his own experiences at Harnish school – and to speak in any detail about his godmother.

Emily Kilvert's references to Maria are concerned exclusively with the latter's 'most kind gifts of books' (she also noted: 'My Godmother, Mrs Hare, used to give me books

It is evident that the 'ultra-evangelical divinity' that young Augustus saw as Robert Kilvert's dominant trait was shared by Maria; they were kindred spirits. Augustus had ample opportunity to study Robert in the period July 1843 to Christmas 1846 as a pupil at the latter's Harnish school, when he was subjected to more harsh religiosity and beatings

when I was little'). Emily listed six of these gifts so it is clear that Maria was keen to influence the Kilvert children's early reading (the books were presumably not targeted specifically at Emily). One was a book of poems – *The Honeysuckle; or Poetical Sweeties that never cloy*, published by William Darton in 1823. It consists of 100 short poems, almost all religious, some overtly Christian. The poem, *The Honeysuckle*, for example, is subtitled 'Children coming to Christ'. *A Child's Prayer* begins 'Lord, teach a sinful child to pray'. The nature of children is also characterised in the poems as 'idle, passionate and fretful', and the virtues of obedience and self-denial are frequently recommended. *The Voice of Nature* urges readers to see in blue skies and starry heavens 'their great Original' (i.e. God). Two other books from Maria, which Emily said she 'did not care for', were *Food for Babes* and *The Prince of Peace*. The subtitle of the former, by an unknown author, was 'the first sermons that very little children are able to understand' (1839). The latter, subtitled 'Truths for young disciples', had 'prefatory remarks' by the Rev. Edward Bickersteth (London, Darton and Co, 1847).⁷ Bickersteth (1786–1850) was a highly influential Evangelical divine, who would have been known to the Kilvert parents for his work for the Church Missionary Society.⁸ One can understand why Emily found these last named books hard going. Her response to *Spring Blossoms; or familiar dialogues on subjects instructive and entertaining to children* was quite different: 'How I loved that book!' It was first published in 1828 and its author was Charles Feist (a pseudonym for an unknown female author, who also wrote *Summer flowers from the garden of wisdom; culled for the improvement of young persons*, 1833).

In the remaining two books of the six Emily remembered as Maria's gifts, can be seen the concern with natural history that featured strongly in the Kilvert

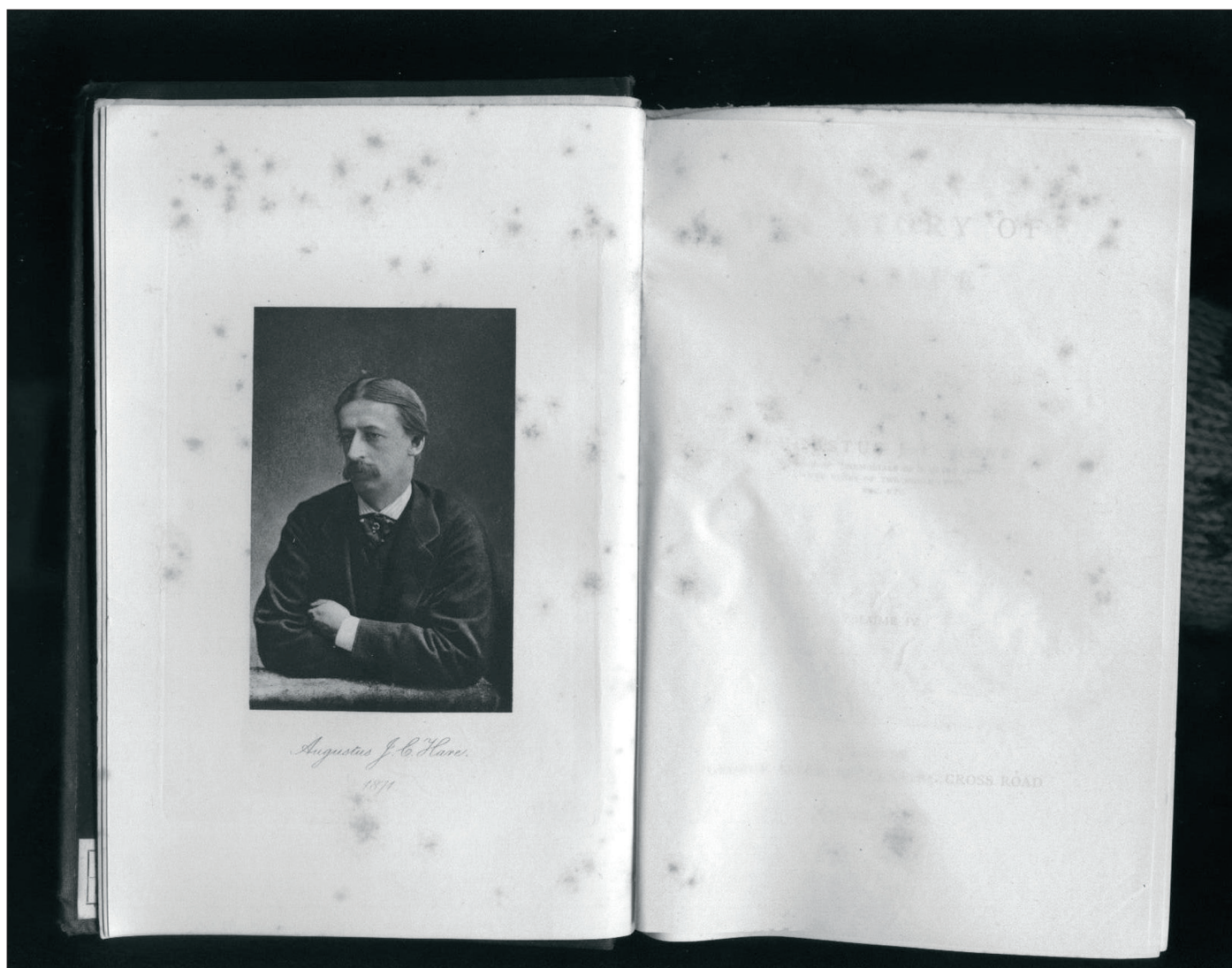
A common denominator in all the childhood reading [given to the Kilvert children by Maria] referred to by Emily was love of natural history and through it love of God. Maria exercised some control over the upbringing of the Kilvert children in gifts which were a clear reflection of her personality and background. Her stern Evangelicalism found favour with Kilvert's father.

household. It featured also in Maria's background. Her son Augustus was brought up with it. He recalled that at his mother's home, Stoke Rectory, he enjoyed reading little books of natural history. He referred in his autobiography to his collection of shells and fossils. Maria knew that this interest would be furthered at Robert Kilvert's Harnish school because in a letter of 24 October 1844 she wrote: 'I daresay Mr Kilvert is today giving you some useful lessons to learn from the harvest fields around you, as he did last year when I was at Harnish'. She recalled, among the few books allowed her at home, one that she made a present of to Emily Kilvert – the very popular *The History of the Robins* (first published in 1786 and often reprinted) by Mrs Trimmer. Its full title was *The robins designed for the instruction of children regarding their treatment of animals*. It traces in parallel the stories of the Benson family and of a family of robins and its theme is that animals deserve humane treatment. The book resembles Maund's *The Botanic Garden*, which had an important place in the Kilvert family's library,⁹ in viewing Nature as God's wonderful creation. Natural history is 'replete with amusement and instruction,' Mrs Trimmer observed. 'It leads the mind to contemplate the perfection of the Supreme Being'.

Emily Kilvert was very enthusiastic about Maria Hare's gift of *The Playmate*: 'it was nearly worn out with reading,' she wrote. In her old age, she had it 'rebound and carefully mended'. Its full title was *The Playmate, a pleasant companion for spare hours* (1847) and it was both written and published by Joseph Cundall, who published stories, heroic tales, history and religious books for children. It too reflects the world of natural history, opening with this address to the reader: 'Let us take a quiet stroll along the meadows... And I will unfold the great marvels of Nature'. It featured articles on 'The Natural History of Birds', 'Historical Sketches', articles on cats, and 'Thoughts of the Little Star-Gazer' by a clergyman.

Further insights into juvenile reading allowed and encouraged in the Kilvert home can be gained from other books Emily mentioned. Two Harnish pupils gave her for a birthday Julia Maitland's *Cat and dog; or memoirs of puss and captain*;

... it is clear that Maria was keen to influence the Kilvert children's early reading.... 'A Child's Prayer' begins 'Lord, teach a sinful child to pray'. The nature of children is also characterised . . . as 'idle, passionate and fretful', and the virtues of obedience and self-denial are frequently recommended. [We can also see Maria's] concern with natural history that featured strongly in the Kilvert household



Augustus Hare, pictured on the frontispiece of his 'The Story of My Life'. Hare, 1834-1903, became well known as a wit, raconteur and author, principally of biographies and somewhat idiosyncratic travel books

PICTURES: JOHN TOMAN

a story founded on fact (1854). Maitland (1808-64), the great-niece of the novelist Fanny Burney, ran (with her first husband) a boys' school in India promoting Christianity. After his death she married an Anglican curate. Emily loved this book and retained it into old age. She also greatly enjoyed *Dr Kitts' Sunday Book* (information on this unavailable but its title shows it was a work approved for 'serious' Sunday reading). A nurse of the Kilvert children made her a present of *Bogatzky's Golden Treasury for the Children of God, consisting of devotional and practical observations for every day of the year* (date ?).¹⁰

It can be seen that the book gifts Maria made to Emily complemented other works we know she read. They combined enjoyable, though morally 'wholesome', stories and poems any child might enjoy with more overtly devotional offerings. A common denominator in all the childhood reading referred to by Emily was love of natural history and through it love of God. Maria exercised some control over the upbringing of the Kilvert children in gifts which were a clear reflection of her personality and background. Her stern Evangelicalism found favour with Kilvert's father. Although her son Augustus, who adored her in spite of the torments he experienced as a child as a result of her 'extraordinary religious opinions', could write of her that the keynote of her life was love – to God, the poor, and her family – one looks in vain for any reference in her correspondence with Robert Kilvert to his children, whose spiritual lives were in her care.

REFERENCES

- 1 *Memorials of a Quiet Life*, vol.1. Kilvert was reading this book by Augustus Hare on 21 July 1873, shortly after it was published.
- 2 She had married Francis George Hare, eldest brother of Augustus.
- 3 Quotations about Augustus's early years are from the 'Childhood' and 'Boyhood' chapters of his *The Story of My Life*, vol.I (1896).
- 4 Quotations from these sources come from Hare's *Memorials of a Quiet Life*, vol.I.
- 5 Some, carefully selected, fiction was allowed in the Kilvert home, as was noted in J. Toman, *Kilvert: The Homeless Heart*, p.47.
- 6 It was argued in *Kilvert: The Homeless Heart* (pp.42-6) that Hare's picture of life at Harnish school was accurate, which is confirmed by the additional evidence presented here.
- 7 Darton and Co. were Quakers and very influential particularly in the realm of children's books, in which they pioneered the use of printed colour. Emily Kilvert frequently commented on good pictures in her books and on the walls of the Kilvert nursery (*Rambling Recollections*, p.99).
- 8 He visited the Sierra Leone colony that was one focus of Mrs. Kilvert's Missionary Working Parties. He was a prolific author. He edited the 'Christian Family's Library'.
- 9 See J. Toman, *A Treasure in the Kilvert Archive*, Kilvert Society, *Journal*, number 31, September 2010.
- 10 Details of books in Emily's childhood come from pp.88-9 and p.103 of her *Rambling Recollections* in *More Chapters from the Kilvert Saga*, Kilvert Society (no date).

An archive to be proud of

The Conservator Kate Newton ACR described in the last 'Journal' the huge task that lay ahead in stabilising the condition of our archive and making it a resource that would both last and be useful. It was difficult, then, to predict how much work each item would need until it had been thoroughly examined. Now, the task is nearly finished. Here Kate tells how the work went and the decisions that had to be made along the way



SINCE I last wrote in the Kilvert Society *Journal* (31) the conservation programme is nearing completion. To summarise: all the pictures are now stabilised. Following treatment of varying degrees all framed objects have been placed back into their original refurbished frames and mounts.

Nineteen loose watercolours have been hinged into 100% rag board mounts and are stored in three museum portfolio boxes.

Loose items from the large albums by Edward Kilvert c.1834 have all been re-attached. The damaged pages of the sketchbooks have been supported with thin Japanese tissue and methylcellulose (an inert and reversible adhesive). All the albums and sketchbooks have been surface cleaned and checked for mould.

Following discussion with the Hon. Secretary Alan Brimson and several conservators it was decided that a priority was to secure the six fragmented sketchbooks, thus their original bindings have been preserved by Julian Thomas ACR, Book Conservator. The portrait oil painting has had full conservation carried out by Jenny Williamson ACR, Easel Paintings Conservator.

Minimal tissue repair has been implemented on some of the textbooks and the Kilvert Family Bible. All volumes



– textbooks, sketchbooks, albums and the Family Bible – are now stored in bespoke boxes made from grey archival boxboard.

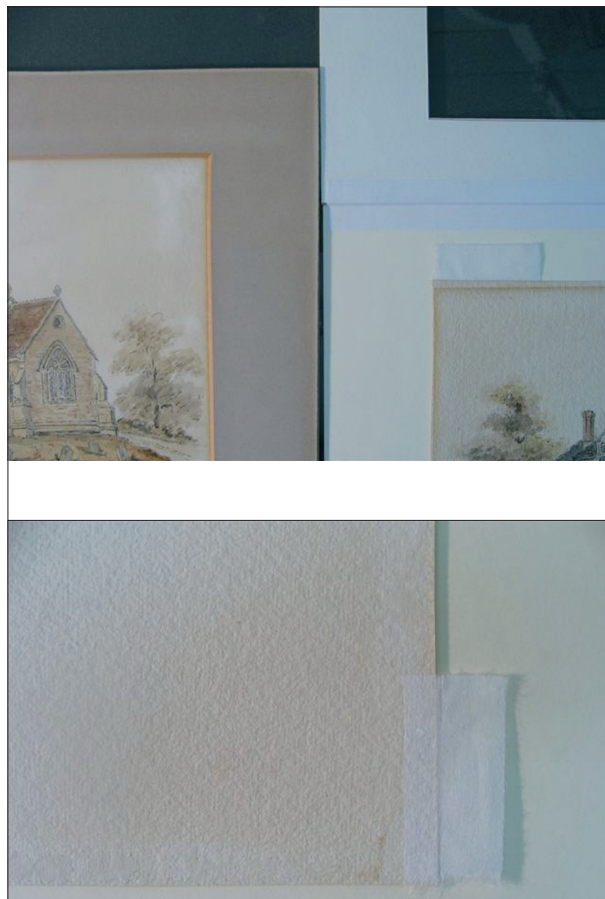
A small number of loose photographs have been surface cleaned, repaired and are stored in melinex (polyester) sleeves in a ringbinder Library box.

This container will provide further storage space for other ephemera such as letters, photographs and postcards.

One large framed photograph, 'Mrs Crichton of Wycliffe', is still undergoing treatment procedures including dry backing removal, as the brittle cracked support board was endangering the paper substrate and image.

The photograph of William Plomer is waiting for a new conservation frame and mount.

I am currently working on the photographs and completing storage procedures, with the view to having everything finished by the middle of March and the Archive back on display or in storage at the Radnorshire Museum for 16th April.



ACR signifies accreditation with ICON, the Institute of Conservation

Putting a shine on 'The Portrait of Smith', by Unknown Artist

Jenny Williamson ACR, Easel Paintings Conservator, explains how she restored our portrait of The Rev. William Robins Smith (1830-1889), husband of Kilvert's oldest sister Thermusis Mary and Rector of Monnington-on-Wye 1874-89. It was the Smiths' son Perceval who brought the 'Diary' to the notice of William Plomer at Cape's, and their daughter Essex (Mrs Hope) who is associated with the disappearance of 19 manuscript notebooks of the 'Diary' in the 1950s

THE painting came to my Studio at the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth where I examined and photographed it. The painting had a layer of grey dirt over the surface, a discoloured yellow brown natural resin varnish and there was also an unusual discontinuous black/brown deposit on the painting surface.

The painting was removed from the frame and lightly cleaned with dilute ammonia solution on cotton wool swabs.

Tests were carried out to establish how to safely remove the varnish without disturbing the paint layer. The discoloured varnish and the black/brown deposits were soluble in acetone which did not affect the paint. It was safely used on cotton wool swabs to remove the varnish and deposits.

The canvas was slack on the non-expandable stretcher. It was removed from the old strainer and re-stretched over a new expandable stretcher. The canvas was re-tensioned on the new stretcher by tapping out the wedges and then they were taped in with brown paper tape.

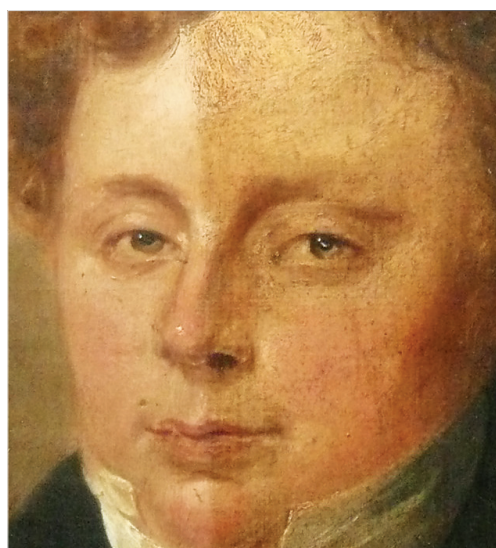
An isolating varnish of the synthetic varnish B72 was applied to separate the painting from the retouching. Then the small losses were filled with an inert filler and textured to match the surrounding paint. The retouching of the losses was carried out with a synthetic paint made of the medium Mowilith 30 in IMS mixed with dry pigment.

A final varnish of the synthetic resin MS2A was brushed on to fully saturate the painting.

The painting was refitted in the frame with glazing and backboard applied to protect the painting.



Above, before and after. Below, details of the restoration work in progress





Return to Much Marcle

Francis Kilvert's account of his friend Andrew Pope's wedding at Much Marcle in 1874 held echoes for Laura Hill and her father Richard Vine when they attended the wedding of friends there last summer

THE bridesmaids wore rose pink and white with the prettiest little mob caps in the world and a cap band of briar roses – so wrote RFK on Wednesday 9th September 1874 with his usual artist's eye for detail. The occasion was the wedding of his friend Andrew Pope, then vicar of Preston on Wye, to Mary Money Kyrle at the church of St. Bartholomew, Much Marcle, Herefordshire.

On 14th August 2010 we attended the wedding of our friends Tim Williams and Sophie Thomas at Much Marcle Church. On this occasion, too, the bridesmaids wore shocking pink with roses in their hair!

RFK was best man and *put up* at the Vicarage, having dinner the night before at the bride's home, *The Homme*, a grand house, picturesquely situated alongside the church. We stayed at The Seven Stars in Ledbury.

The ceremony was performed by ... the bridegroom's uncle, assisted by Mr. Chatfield, the Vicar [an original eccentric man, very amusing, kind hearted and hospitable]. The village people had made the church lovely with flowers.... There was an immense crowd at the Churchyard gate and the bride's path was strewn with flowers.... I took the chief bridesmaid, Miss Alice Money Kyrle, in to breakfast and returned thanks for the bridesmaids.

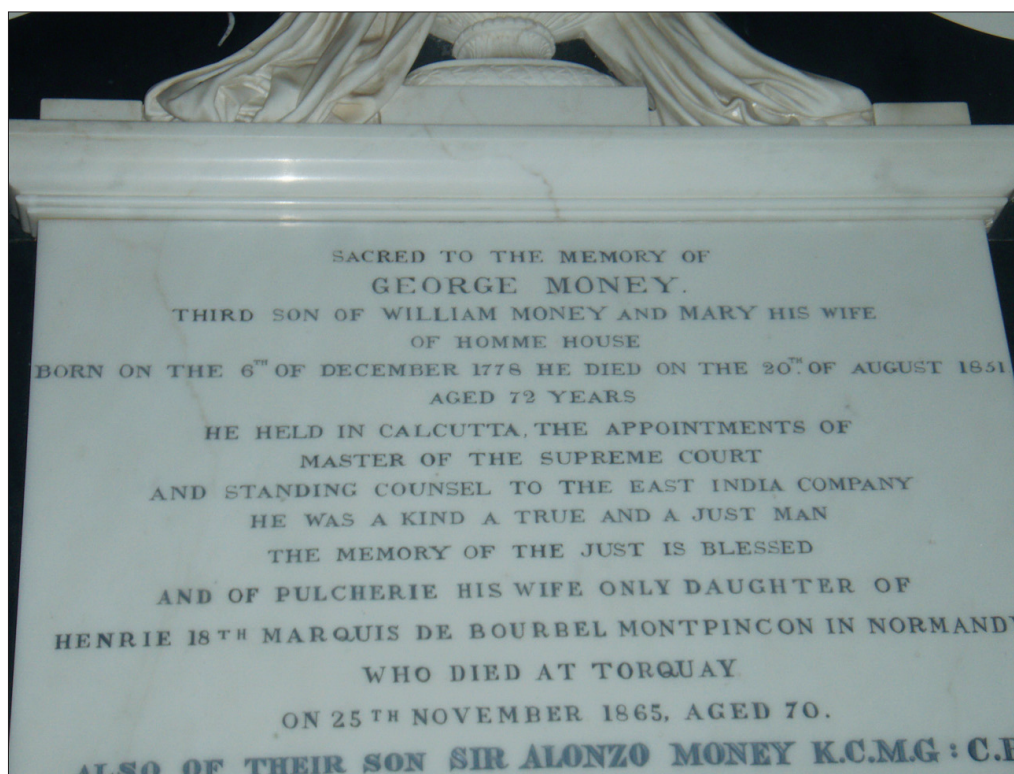
Tim and Sophie's reception was held in a large marquee at her home, a few miles away. The 'breakfast' could have included lunch, tea and dinner as we were not to bed before 2 a.m.! There were two best men who both gave excellent and amusing speeches.

After breakfast the newly married Popes and their party were photographed *grouped on the steps before the house*. Somewhere we are sure we have seen the picture but cannot now lay our hands on it. Our friends had to scuttle for shelter from a sudden, sharp shower whilst they were photographed outside the church. They then left for the reception in a fine Weston Cider four horse carriage (the bride's stepmother is a Weston).

The Popes *went off brilliantly with four greys and scarlet postillions, the bride in a mauve silk travelling dress*.

Andrew Pope will be remembered well by readers of the *Diary* when, as curate of Cusop, he was confirmed in error with his young candidate by the overbearing Bishop Atlay, to his great mortification.

Much Marcle Church is famed for the effigy of Blanche Mortimer (died 1347) ... "an image as lovely as any bequeathed to



us by a medieval Church ... a work of supreme craftsmanship, and yet it lies open to inspection and even touch. Such are the treasures hidden in England's parish churches". (Simon Jenkins, *England's Thousand Best Churches*, for whom Blanche Mortimer, unsurprisingly, is his favourite English effigy). The church also contains some other fine tombs of the Kyrle family.

I am sure RFK enjoyed his time at Much Marcle, as we did. We are constantly amazed at the many threads which so often connect us to his world.

Richard Vine adds: Although my daughter is not strictly a member of the Kilvert Society, she came with us to the first Kilvert winter outing to the Dulwich Picture Gallery and was asked by Jeff to write it up. Our children are Kilvert converts by osmosis!

Notes, Reviews and Obituaries

A walker's Tale

It seems only right after our Commemorative Service in praise of walking that we should have one of the country's greatest practitioners of the art write a piece for us. In the last Journal, Jeff Marshall shared his delight in Christopher Somerville's 'Twelve Literary Walks'. Here Christopher, who writes for The Times, tells how he first became acquainted with the Diarist

MY father had a hardback copy of Kilvert's *Diary* in a green jacket with bent corners, but as a youth I thought it looked too dry and tough to enjoy.

Then the paperback came out, and in my 20s I fell deeply in love with the observant curate of Clyro. I became fascinated by the paradox of the sweet romanticism that flourished side by side with the gritty realism that's there in his *Diary* for anyone to find: the drunken men, the mad women, the beatings and bootings, poverty and ignorance. And I grew to cherish the Clyro countryside (always sunny and teatime-ish) that I'd never actually laid eyes on, or set foot in.

When I did come to include Kilvert in *Twelve Literary Walks*, I found I could make a round that included most of the places I really wanted to see – *Ashbrook House*, of

course; *the Bron*, where he walked so full of hare that he saw stars; Birds Nest Lane, forever sacred to enchanting Gypsy Lizzie; *Pen-y-Cae*, Gipsy's home farm; *Pant-y-cae*, where Kilvert stuck a cowslip in the latch hole by way of a calling card. I found the ceilidh house of *Whitehall*, a tumbledown ruin then as in Kilvert's day, where the curate imagined young dancers flirting and kissing; *Bettws Chapel*, where he arrived one February day with his beard frozen to his mackintosh; *Heartsease*, home of Henry Warnell who got six weeks hard for kicking Price, of the *Swan Inn*, in the bad place. *Llansbïver*, ominous house where a Scots pedlar was murdered and hidden in the moat; *Rhos Goch Mill*, where the fairies would dance to sweet fiddles on the mill floor; the ill-starred *Cwm* whose four dwellings produced three suicides and two mad women.

What misery, what magic, what a rich interweaving of lives! This is one walk I'll never forget.



*'This
is one
walk
I'll
never
forget'*



Who is it? (1)

In Journal' 31, we carried this pen and ink sketch from an exhibition at the Radnorshire Museum of work by Catherine Lyons.

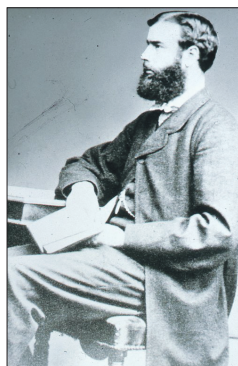
Catherine (1794–1857) was the sister of Caroline Pearson, the mother of Agnes Minna Pearson who in 1865 became the second Mrs. Richard Lister Venables. The curator Heather Pegg was struck by the similarity of the sketch image to that of Mrs. Venables carried in Journal' 30 (right) and wondered if it could be of her mother, Caroline

In response to an invitation to members to comment, **Angela Doggett**, a member for more than 25 years, wrote that she did not think the lady in the pen and ink sketch was Mrs. Pearson, the mother of Mrs. Venables 'because (a) she is obviously quite a young woman and (b) she is dressed in a style (influenced by the eighteenth century) that was popular from about 1871 to 1875. By that time Mrs. Pearson, born in 1810, would have been rather elderly – and her sister Catherine, who died in 1857, could not have been the artist.

'As Heather Pegg has pointed out, there's quite a strong resemblance between the face in the sketch and that of Mrs. Venables in the photograph. So perhaps the lady in the sketch is Mrs. Venables? But Mrs. Venables was married in 1867 and the lady in the sketch is not wearing a wedding ring!'

Mrs. Doggett concluded: 'Quite a puzzle. I do hope someone has the answer.'





The portrait of Francis Kilvert with which we are familiar

PICTURE: VAL DIXON



Who is it? (2)

This photograph created quite a stir when it was shown to members on their outing to Croft and Skegness. It was part of an album collection that Mr. Mark Caudwell, a Heanley descendant, put out for members to look out. The last Journal' posed the question, Is it the Diarist?

Margaret Collins, in her report on the Croft outing in *Journal 31*, wrote: '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.'

Peter and Rosalind Bolton wrote: 'It would be nice to think that the photograph was a much sought after one of our hero but there are several reasons for thinking this not to be the case. The subject of the photograph looks a more stolid figure. Kilvert ap-

parently was a natty dresser with a well-trimmed beard so if it is Kilvert he has seriously let himself go. In addition there are other small details which do not agree such as ear shape.

'There is of course another candidate and that is Katharine Heanley's brother, Robert Marshall Heanley, who was the incumbent of Lincolnshire parishes in the 1870s and 1880s. His appearance in the Croft photographs would be no surprise.'

Dr Wilhelmina Mom Lockwood recalled how she and David, our late Chairman, went to see Katharine Heanley's grave at Croft a few years ago. 'David writes a lot in his book "Francis Kilvert" about their ill-starred love affair,' she wrote. 'I am 100% certain that this new photograph is authentic. Excellent likeness. No name because she broke off their engagement.'

UNDER the headline 'Who'd be seen dead in an ill dressed grave?', the *Daily Telegraph* columnist Christopher Howse wrote: 'Graves are dressed as badly as people in Britain today. It is a betrayal of the dead and the living. Graves ... fail to reach even the standard of smart casual. They are left with sad bunches of flowers still in the cellophane, cheap teddy bears from card shops, and, more bizarrely, food....

'How different it was, we like to think, on April 17, 1870, when the Rev. Francis Kilvert greeted Easter by springing out of bed at five o'clock and going in search of primroses in the frost. His kind, sentimental, intent was to dress the grave of a Mr. Chalmers, whose wife had been unable to find any flowers for the purpose the day before. Their daughter *was in deep distress about it*, the Diarist recorded.

'Kilvert did find the primroses, and the right grave, and admired the effect in his graveyard in the Wye valley. *I wish we could get the people to adopt some little design in the disposition of the flowers upon the graves, instead of sticking sprigs into the turf aimlessly*, he noted wistfully, but concluding, *One does not like to interfere too much with their artless, natural way of showing respect and love for the dead.*

'Had consumer choice progressed to a modern level,' continued Howse, 'he'd have been contemplating among the graves fluffy chicks of plastic fibre, chocolate rabbits in metallic paper, or, if fashion dictated, vampire-themed Easter eggs.'

Jeff Marshall, who noticed the article and sent it to the *Journal*, recalled that Howse had mentioned Kilvert before in the *Telegraph*, as noted in *Journal 14*. Then, Howse, in articles in connection with his then recently published book *Comfort: an anthology*, had mentioned Kilvert in the same breath as Bach, Belloc, Shakespeare and John Clare.



THE little village of Llysdinam is well-known to members of the Kilvert Society, thanks to its Venables connection, but it can't have been that widely known among the general public. Until, that is, the temperature there plumbed the depths at minus 17.3°C (0.86°F) on Sunday 28th November and the village made the national TV and press. That would certainly have produced some sharp ice in the bath and welded a few beards to overcoats.



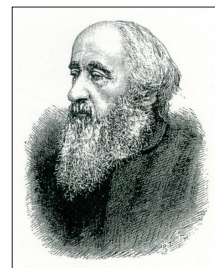
THE photographer Stephen Gould, who took the cover shot for *Journal 31*, sent the Editor a note saying: 'Just a thank you for [sending me a] copy of the magazine with the picture of Ms Heanley. Quite by chance a job we did for the local press was at a caravan site just outside of Skegness and we were asked "what else we had on for that day". I remarked about this job to which the owner replied "wait here" and soon she returned with a framed ladies collar made of lace which she told me belonged to K Heanley! Yep what a small world. Apparently she is a descendant of the family.'



IT'S been a tradition that the William Barnes Society, which honours the memory of the Dorset poet (1801-1886), send us their *Newsletter* and we reciprocate with a copy of the *Journal*. Their programme this year includes a visit to The Old Came Rectory at Winterborne Came on Saturday 21st May.

Members will recall how excited and happy Francis Kilvert was at going to meet *the great idyllic Poet of England* on

May Eve 1874 at Winterborne Came (Vol. ii, p437-442). *I told him I had for many years known him through his writings and had long wished to thank him in person for the many happy hours his poems had given me. He smiled and said he was very glad if he had given me any pleasure.* Kilvert found him with his *Apostolic head a very remarkable and a very remarkable-looking man, half hermit, half enchanter*' (above).



Members can get in touch with the William Barnes Society through Brian Caddy, telephone 01305 260348.



THE death of the son of Southgate, the Druggist mentioned in the *Diary* Vol. 1, page 352 (12th June 1871), is picked up by Powys Family History Society in its *Newsletter No 12* for October 2010 (sent to the *Journal* by Colin Dixon). It reprints a report from *The Brecon & Radnor Express* for 27th July 1944 which reads:

HAY CARPENTER – DEATH OF MR. F.W. SOUTHGATE AN OLD INHABITANT

THE death occurred on Friday at Church Terrace of Mr. Frederick William Southgate, an old and popular figure in the town for very many years.

Deceased, who was 81, was the third son of the late Mr. James Southgate, whom many of the older inhabitants of Hay will recall as an assistant for 25 years, to the late Mr. Thomas Stokoe, chemist in High Town. Before taking this post it is interesting to note that he (deceased's father) was in his own business in Market Street, and is referred to in the first volume of the famous "Kilvert's Diary" as "Southgate, the Druggist."

The late Mr. Fred Southgate was a carpenter by trade and had been in the employ of Messrs. Robert Williams and Sons, Ltd., for over 40 years. A fall caused his retirement some 15 years ago, He held the Long Service Medal for 21 years with the old Hay Volunteers, was a member of the Hay Volunteer Fire Brigade and a drummer with the old Hay Town Band.

SAVED NINETEEN LIVES

A strong swimmer, the deceased in his younger days had saved as many as 19 lives in the water. One of these was in the Bristol Channel, when he dived off a boat to effect a rescue and a number of these exploits had been in the Wye at Hay. He held several certificates and medals of the Royal Humane Society and one of his sons, Arthur, also holds a certificate of this body for a rescue in the Wye in 1937.

Deceased is survived by his wife, four sons (two of whom are serving with the Forces), and four daughters.

Powys Family History Society can be contacted through the Project Leader, Alison Noble at 25, Belle Vue Gardens, Brecon LD3 7NY, Tel 01874 620133, or email anobleajn@btinternet.com



THE *HEREFORD TIMES* for 27th January reported that Peter Glover, the owner of the 14th-century *Rhydspence Inn* at Whitney-on-Wye, was seeking planning permission to turn it into a private dwelling 'after a 10-year attempt to sell the historic pub as a business failed'. The cutting, sent to the *Journal* by John Wilks, carried views that the £750,000 price was unrealistic.

Herefordshire Campaign for Real Ale was reported as saying closure would be an 'absurd tragedy' and was rallying the opposition. Mr Glover, 69, riposted that Camra 'last visited the *Rhyd-spence* 10 years ago and did not appreciate the difference between an old-fashioned pub and a hotel'.

Members will recall the account in the *Diary* for 8th July 1872 of the flood that left four inches of mud in the inn.



THE archivist at Queens' College, Cambridge, Dr Jonathan Holmes, has been immensely helpful to the *Journal* in supplying information about their old member, the Rev John Price, the Solitary of Llanbedr. Dr Holmes, in his turn, was pleased to receive a copy of the 1907 essay about the Solitary by the Rev David Edmondson-Owen.

The account of the eccentric old Queensman was fascinating, Dr Holmes wrote to the Editor, adding: 'I have actually written a short article based on the 1907 memoir for our college magazine - but it will have to be the 2012 issue! I will, of course, acknowledge the Kilvert Society.'



MEMBER Teresa Williams, who has made many 'sightings' of Francis Kilvert over the years in her researches at the British Newspaper Library at Colindale and elsewhere, spotted an advertisement in *The Ecclesiastical Gazette* for Tuesday 13 September 1864 which she thinks possible the Diarist may have seen and responded to. It ran:

Advertisement:

CURATES WANTED –

Assistant Curate in full orders wanted next January in a country village on the Wye. Incumbent resident. No extreme views. Stipend £100. Good lodgings in the village within an easy walk of a Town and Railway Station.

Apply C. Hay, Hereford. (573)

Mrs Williams also saw an item of interest to Kilvertians when she visited the Salt Lake City Library in Utah, and looked up the Parish and Vital Records for the Parish of Langley Burrell, Wiltshire. It read:

THE Bassoon given by me to the Singers of the Parish of Langley Burrell, is Intended for their use in the Parish Church only, the use of Practicing excepted.

I wish it to be kept at the House of the Parish Clerk, that if the Singers should at any time discontinue their singing, there may be a proper Person to preserve the said Instrument for the Use of any future Quire that may be established and I know of none so fit as the Clerk for the time being.

I would have it clearly understood that it is intended for the Use of the Parish Church of **LANGLEY BURRELL**, afore-said, and never to become the Property of any Individual.

July 10th, One Thousand, Seven Hundred and Ninety-six.

(Signed) **SAMUEL ASHE**, Rector.

A **PIECE** written by Sydney Ball which appeared in the *Newsletter* for January 1986 tells us more about the Revd Samuel Ashe (writes the Editor).

When Rector of Langley Burrell, he must have done much more than trying to stop Sunday football on Langley Common.

But the three mentions of him in the *Diary* all refer to Samuel Ashe's dislike of Sunday football (Vol. 2, pages 320 and 417 and Vol. 3, page 96). Samuel Ashe was a son of the Revd. Robert Ashe who had *Langley House* built, and a younger brother of Robert Ashe (1747-1829) whom Kilvert calls 'The Old Squire'. The Revd. Samuel was Rector of Langley Burrell from 1777 to 1807. The old men of Langley were telling Kilvert of times seventy years before.



MONEY raised by the teas we enjoyed in Hay after our Bet-tws and Clyro weekend last June went towards the Hay Parish Church organ fund. The appeal for £130,000 reached its happy conclusion last 6th December when Dr. Roy Massey, Organist Emeritus of Hereford Cathedral and past President of the Royal College of Organists, played an inaugural recital as part of the Hay Festival Winter Weekend.

The Bevington and Sons instrument (said a cutting from the *Hereford Times* sent to the *Journal* by John Wilks) was moved from Holmer Church in an operation managed by the Worcester organ builder Trevor Tipple.

In a note for the *Journal*, Mr Tipple wrote:

MY first visit to St. Mary's Hay prior to the installation of the present organ revealed little, as apart from casework the previous organ had been removed. The National Pipe Organ Register records an instrument installed in 1934 by Hill Norman and Beard.

The casework was originally from Southwell Minster. This was built on the extension system which enabled a small number of pipes to be re-used for quite a large number of stops. This is an economic way of providing a pipe organ but does place restrictions on tonal colours and flexibility musically.

A further instrument was installed in 2004 which was short lived and removed a few years later.

The Bevington organ from Holmer Church in Herefordshire had become redundant and was kindly donated to St. Mary's Church in Hay-on-Wye. This instrument was built in 1883 by Henry Bevington and Sons of Soho and was probably installed in Hatley Hall, Cambridgeshire. After a number of moves it has now been successfully installed in St. Mary's Church.

There were a number of challenges to installing this instrument. The original idea was to transfer the instrument as it was with overhaul but without modification. This proved to be impossible, the space required was inadequate. The decision was taken to convert the mechanism from a mechanical/pneumatic action to an electro pneumatic action thus allowing the instrument to fit within the stepped balcony. This also allowed a remote control console to be fitted enabling the organist to be adjacent to the choir. The wonderfully ornate casework has been retained unaltered, in fact it is now more visible than before.

Tonally opportunity was taken to enhance the pipework with a number of additions. (The organ was originally designed for a much smaller room). By using only the original pipes which are on the same wind pressure the organ can be heard almost exactly as it was; one does have to remember that Hay Church is a much more resonant building therefore the sound is more vibrant.

Dr. Roy Massey, who opened the organ, has written a very complimentary article for *The Organists Review* due out shortly.

Obituaries

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

David Howell (St Albans)

WITH the death last August of David Howell the Kilvert Society has lost one of its most enthusiastic and active members.

David and his wife Pat (pictured right) joined the Society in 1979 and have been life members since 1986. Latterly his attendance had become more spasmodic because of trouble with his eyes but he was a familiar face at A.G.M.s and other events.

He was a most loyal supporter of the *Journal*, with factual articles and quirky ones too. His contributions included 'Kilvert at School' (in *Journal* 6), the report on the A.G.M. weekend (8), 'Following Kilvert' (interesting coincidences) (13), 'A.G.M. takes the biscuit' (lamenting the disappearance of the Ascari buffet) (18), 'Harmony at last' (about the introduction of a harmonium at Langley Burrell, despite Squire Ashe) (20), 'The Reverend R. Venables: Railway Signalman' (24), and a

photograph for a book review in *Journal* 29, among other contributions. Rumours he wrote a piece 'In Praise of Kilvert Teas' may be only slightly exaggerated.

Pat wrote to Jeff: 'David was diagnosed with cancer and within a week he had died. It was such a shock to us all. I had his body brought into [St Albans] Abbey an hour before the funeral and Arianhod, my goddaughter, read Kilvert to him – it was rather a sweet scene, so the *Diary* was being read right to the end. He so enjoyed our visits and was sad when he couldn't go on the walks. Never mind, he had a happy life.'

JEFF MARSHALL



Philip Wilkins (Almeley, Herefordshire)

So many of us were introduced to Francis Kilvert by the BBC 18-part series broadcast in 1977 and again on the centenary of his death two years later. Philip Wilkins and Monica watched the whole thing enraptured and were captivated.

Philip was born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, on 16th March 1935. His mother, who originated in New Zealand, died on his first birthday. His father felt unable to manage him and two elder sisters and an elder brother and, with the best of intentions, he was taken to live with family friends. This, however, was a disaster and Philip was totally unloved and made to feel a complete outsider and unwanted. This marked him for the rest of his life. Eventually his father got to hear of it and rescued him.

He was sent to be educated by the Xaverian brothers at Mayfield College in Sussex. This changed his life and he prospered both in academics and sport. It was expected that he would go to university, but then came another blow. When he was seventeen his father died, once again leaving him unsupported.

It was suggested that banking was a good career and he duly obtained a junior post at the Midland Bank in Eastbourne. During this time he flourished at sport – both cricket and rugby. He was awarded his Rugby colours whilst a player for Eastbourne Rugby Club. His love of sport never left him. To the end he supported Bristol City F.C. and until he became ill he and Monica always attended the home matches.

Philip served his National Service in D Company, 1st Bn The Queen's Royal Regiment and was in Malaya during the Communist insurgency, often being in the jungle for weeks at a time.

While working at Eastbourne Philip was sent on a course at the regional offices of Midland Bank at Bristol. On the same course was Monica. However, Monica lived in East Kent, but two years later she and her mother moved to Eastbourne and romance ensued when they found they were both working in the same bank.

They were married on 4th October 1958 and over the years, as Philip's career developed, moved around to a number of



branches. They both enjoyed singing and usually joined the church choir where they lived. Philip had a superb bass voice and while they were living at Crawley it was suggested he should audition for the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. However Philip felt the commitment required would be too much, considering his young family, and he declined. Philip's family were everything to him. He was determined that Angela, Margaret and Richard would not endure anything of the trauma he had suffered as a child and a very close family was the result.

Philip's faith was the anchor of his life and he took it very seriously. He sang with the Belmont Abbey Choir in Hereford and in earlier days at Clifton Cathedral in Bristol.

His last post with the Midland Bank, in the mid-1980s, was as manager at Kington, Herefordshire, from which he retired in 1991. During this time he and Monica pursued their interest in Kilvert together and early on bought a three-volume set of the *Diary*, but they didn't join the Society until 2003. They also followed their great interest in Gilbert & Sullivan, being members of both Kington Operatic and Hereford Operatic societies, in which Philip sang.

It was around the time that they joined the Society that Philip's health began to fail, with diabetes and heart problems manifesting themselves, but he continued to take an interest, taking part in Kilvert commemorative services and attending the A.G.M. before he became too ill.

Leukaemia was now also diagnosed and the last four years were very difficult. He received great pastoral support from his Parish Priest, Dom Stephen Holdsworth, and from Dom Michael Evans of Belmont. Philip died on 12th December.

His requiem Mass was held at St Mary's, Almeley, on Tuesday 4th January and was conducted by Father Stephen. All the music was Philip's choice and was magnificently sung by the Belmont Abbey Choir and some of Philip's friends. The Society was represented by Liz Russell and Sue and Michael Sharp.

MICHAEL SHARP

